

Foireann Tacaíochta Forfheidhmithe,
Údarás Rialála Cearrbhachais na hÉireann,
An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt

October 2023

Gambling Regulatory Authority of Ireland,
Implementation Support Team,
Department of Justice



Update from Anne Marie Caulfield

CEO Designate of Údarás Rialála Cearrbhachais na hÉireann, the Gambling Regulatory Authority of Ireland

I was privileged to be appointed the Chief Executive Office (CEO) designate of the anticipated Údarás Rialála Cearrbhachais na hÉireann – the Gambling Regulatory Authority of Ireland.

The Gambling Regulatory Authority of Ireland (GRAI) will be an independent regulator, established to regulate the gambling industry in Ireland. The Authority will have responsibility for the regulation of Gambling, Gaming and Lotteries in Ireland, with the exception of the National Lottery.

The Authority will work to protect the public by operating a credible, robust and pro-active regulatory regime in accordance with law, and in a manner that is fair and transparent. It will also support initiatives to raise awareness of and promote education about problem gambling and establish safeguards to address this issue.

As CEO Designate, I am committed to a regulatory regime that is independent, fit for purpose, and fair. Recognising that the majority of operators act professionally, nevertheless, the Authority will robustly implement sanctions against licensees who do not operate in accordance with the law, as well as those operating illegally.

Over the past few months, a small core Implementation Support Team based in the Department of Justice, has begun a wide range of work in preparation for the establishment of the future Authority. The purpose of this newsletter is to update stakeholders on the preparatory work being undertaken to ensure that there will be a functioning Authority in place once the Gambling Regulation Bill 2022 is enacted, and the Authority is on a firm statutory footing as an independent Regulator.

We look forward to continued engagement with all stakeholders as we build on a strong legislative foundation and put in place an effective regulator for the gambling sector in Ireland.

Anne Marie Caulfield
CEO Designate

“The Gambling Regulatory Authority of Ireland (GRAI) will be an independent regulator, established to regulate the gambling industry in Ireland.”



The Gambling Regulation Bill 2022

The Gambling Regulation Bill 2022, which sets out the framework and legislative basis for the Gambling Regulatory Authority of Ireland, is proceeding through the Houses of the Oireachtas currently and, subject to the consideration and approval of the Oireachtas, it may be enacted later this year.

The new legislation will replace existing outdated laws and will update regulation and licensing functions in order to meet the needs of an ever-changing gambling landscape in Ireland.

Once established, the Gambling Regulatory Authority of Ireland will be responsible for licensing and regulation of gambling services in Ireland and will work to prevent gambling from being a source or facilitator of crime.

A key focus of the Authority will be on public safety and wellbeing related to gambling, both online and in-person.

The Authority is committed to developing safeguards and implementing measures to protect members of the public from the repercussions of problem gambling. These include the establishment of a National Gambling Exclusion Register, as well as a Social Impact Fund which will be used to finance training, education, and research on problem gambling and addiction.

The Bill proposes to introduce new restrictions on the advertising of gambling activities, on television and radio, which will operate between 5:30 AM and 9:00 PM. This protective measure is intended to safeguard children, and individuals who might be vulnerable to compulsive or excessive gambling. The Authority will hold responsibility for ensuring advertisements are adequately restricted as set out in the Bill.

The Gambling Regulation Bill 2022 underwent Committee Stage on 11 July 2023.



Pictured at the launch of the ESRI Literature review were Anne Marie Caulfield, CEO Designate of the Gambling Regulatory Authority of Ireland, Minister of State James Browne, Alan Barrett, Director of the ESRI, and Professor Pete Lunn, Head of the Behavioural Research Unit at the ESRI

Research Partnership with ESRI

One of the functions of the Gambling Regulatory Authority, when established, will be research, to inform policy decisions and to ensure that the measures introduced will be effective in terms of protecting vulnerable gamblers and children.

We were delighted to agree a research programme with the ESRI in December. We have established a Research Steering Group with representatives from the Health Research Board and the Institute of Public Health, to ensure that public sector research on gambling in Ireland is complementary and co-ordinated.

On 20 June 2023 we launched a literature review into problem gambling in Ireland conducted by the ESRI. Problem gambling is defined as an addiction to gambling, resulting in an uncontrollable urge to gamble without regard for its impact on a person's own life or on the lives of their family. Problem gambling is closely associated with substance abuse, unemployment, and deprivation. The literature review examined current research and identified areas of concern for future examination in terms of problem gambling and effective measures to protect the public.

On 5th October, the second such study was launched, 'Measures of Problem Gambling, Gambling Behaviours and Perception of Gambling in Ireland'.

The main aim of this study was to measure the prevalence of Problem Gambling in Ireland but secondary aims included providing measures of gambling activity and perceptions of gambling among the general population..

The findings of this study were stark, with 1 in 30 adults, or 130,000 people, with Problem Gambling in Ireland. In addition, the report records a further 7.1% of the adult population who report multiple problematic behaviours - This equates to 279,000 people with moderate evidence of Problem Gambling. The report records another 15% of adults (590,000) who report at least one negative experience or behaviour associated with gambling.

The third piece of research will consider advertising and inducements. This will give the Gambling Regulatory Authority a strong evidence base to assist in the introduction of related measures, which are provided for in the Bill.



Problem Gambling Report

Codes of Practice

The Authority is currently drafting Codes of Practice as provided for under the legislation. These codes will

- (a) set standards for the provision of relevant gambling activities, and**
- (b) provide practical guidance to licensees in relation to the application and operation of the Gambling Regulation Act or any regulations made under it.**

We will engage in a broader consultation with licensees on the draft Codes of Practice, once the legislation is enacted.

The purpose of the consultation will be to hear industry and stakeholder viewpoints through submissions, which will inform amendments to a final draft of the Codes.

Establishing the Licensing Function

Licensing will be one cornerstone of the legislation and regulation, and we are currently mapping out the business processes and vetting requirements to qualify for a gambling license in Ireland by drawing on best practice from elsewhere in Europe.

We are also designing a licensing fee regime to ensure that the Authority will be self-financed and funded by the gambling industry in the future. This advance work and analysis will assist the Authority with prescribing license fees and related regulations upon establishment.

Given the rapidly changing nature of online gambling, our approach is focused on digital aspects of regulation and licensing that must be able to match the speed at which online gambling is growing and evolving. We have prepared and published a public tender for ICT systems for the new Authority on the Office of Government Procurement website.

Licensing will also be subject to adherence to Codes of Practice set out by the Bill which strongly emphasizes the protection of vulnerable people, problem gamblers, and children, and will be a key condition upon which licenses are granted. We have commenced the first phases of research on other Codes of Practice in the regulation of gambling elsewhere in the world that will inform codes to be adopted by the Authority in due course.

The Authority will also operate a Gambler Exclusion Scheme, which will allow people to voluntarily exclude themselves from online gambling, we are conducting preliminary research into existing schemes to inform the establishment of a National Gambling Exclusion Register by the Authority.



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Considerable Progress in Stakeholder Engagement

The CEO Designate engages regularly with Minister Browne and Department of Justice officials on the progress being made in establishing the Gambling Regulatory Authority and on the primary legislation to give effect to the role, functions and powers of the Authority.

As part of a comprehensive stakeholder engagement process, the Implementation Support Team of the Authority has met with a wide range of organisations and stakeholders from Ireland, and other jurisdictions over the first half of this year. We will continue to do so as we move towards establishment. It is important to note that we do not discuss the draft legislation or policy matters with any stakeholder, as these are matters for government.

The stakeholder engagement process has centred on four main interest groups:

- ▶ Gambling Care
- ▶ Statutory Bodies
- ▶ European Regulator Counterparts
- ▶ Industry Representatives.

In terms of Gambling Care, the Implementation Support Team has held informal meetings with numerous academics, care providers, addiction experts and support services to gauge their views on gambling related harm and the scale of the problem.

We have also met with people who have lived experience of gambling addiction and we are grateful to them for sharing openly with us the impact of problem gambling on their own lives and on their wider family and friends.

We have also met with charities, sporting organisations and advocacy groups.

Our meetings with industry representatives has allowed us to outline what can be expected from the new regulatory regime which will be introduced once the legislation is enacted. These meetings have been helpful, as a relationship with licencees is important to foster open and transparent dialogue into the future.

Our outreach to other European Regulators and Statutory Bodies has been of huge value to the Implementation Support Team in terms of analysing best practice and what has worked well in other jurisdictions. They have been very generous in sharing their experiences as we establish the new Gambling Regulatory Authority of Ireland.

Stakeholder outreach continues to be a vital part of our preparations for establishment and is ongoing.



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Building the Team

A small core Implementation Support Team, complemented by contractors in specialist functions, is currently in place, working with the CEO Designate and Department of Justice officials to ensure the Gambling Regulatory Authority can begin its work once the Gambling Regulation Bill 2022 is enacted and the Authority is established.

The CEO Designate and Implementation Support Team are working temporarily under the auspices of the Department of Justice until the legislation is enacted and the Authority is established.

The resourcing of the Implementation Support Team is overseen by a Programme Board within the Department of Justice. In the coming months the Department of Justice will be appointing a number of Directors on behalf of the Implementation Support Team. The areas which will be filled at Principal Officer level will be in Licencing, IT/Digital First and Corporate/People. Upon establishment of the Authority, this core team together with the CEO will constitute the Senior Management Team, and each Director will have responsibility for their area and report directly to the CEO. Other positions are planned to follow.

The Implementation Support Team has also initiated a recruitment campaign to hire additional staff at various levels, with the first tranche concentrating on Higher Executive Officer and Executive Officer level appointees.



Gambling Regulation Bill 2022

Digital First Approach

The Authority will be adopting a digital first approach to its regulatory functions and the implementation of robust IT systems will be central to supporting the Authority in its regulatory functions.

Tendering for the appointment of a technology partner to work with the Implementation Support Team to develop the systems needed is progressing. This will be a competitive tendering process, published through the government eTenders website, which will be completed over the coming weeks and months.

In addition a website is being developed, supported by OGCIO, for stakeholders to access information about the work of the Implementation Support Team in preparation for the establishment of the Authority. Currently information about the work of the Implementation Support Team can be found at: www.gov.ie/en/publication/52611-gambling-regulatory-authority-of-ireland/

Contact Details

If you would like to contact the Gambling Regulatory Authority of Ireland, please use the e-mail address below:

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