



Policy Guidelines

Briefing on Gambling Regulation Act 2024

2 June 2026



OVERVIEW

- The **Gambling Regulation Act 2024 (GRA)** replaces legislation that is nearly 70 years old and represents the most significant transformation of gambling law in Ireland. The Government has stated that the GRA is a public health measure, with a particular focus on protecting children and vulnerable individuals.
 - The Gambling Regulatory Authority of Ireland (GRAI) was formally established on 9 February 2026. The Act is being implemented on a phased basis: the GRAI began accepting applications for **Business-to-Consumer (B2C) licences** in early 2026, with first licences expected to be issued in July 2026.
 - While complaints related to **advertising and sponsorship restrictions** may be submitted from the time the first licences are issued, the relevant provisions of the Act will not take full effect until formally commenced by the Minister, at which point the regulator will begin enforcement.
 - On a call with the GRAI it was confirmed there will be a **lead-in period** before such measures (including the Watershed ban) are introduced. An announcement is expected by the end of June to confirm the lead-in period.
 - Sanctions are targeted at **entities regulated** by the GRAI (e.g. gambling companies).
 - **Guidance material (with examples)** related to the full set of changes for advertising is [available here](#).
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KEY ADVERTISING RESTRICTIONS

- **Targeting advertisements at children** is prohibited across all media.
- **Electronic communications** (email, SMS, telephone) may only be used to send gambling advertising if the recipient has given explicit affirmative consent (Section 147).
- **On-demand services** (Section 145): advertising relevant content on audiovisual on-demand or on-demand sound services is prohibited unless the intended recipient has an account with the service.
- **Social media and video-sharing platforms** (Section 146): licensees may only advertise to users who both have an account with the platform and follow/subscribe to the licensee's account on that platform. This restriction significantly limits reach and creates a substantial barrier for operators without an existing follower base.

- **Influencers and digital content creators** may not advertise gambling content unless the intended recipient follows both the influencer/creator and the licensee on the same social media platform.
 - Advertising **must not portray gambling as attractive** to children, condone excessive or compulsive gambling, or mislead the public about the social or financial advantages of gambling (Section 148).
 - **Branded merchandise** (clothing, flags, scarves etc.) bearing a licensee's name or logo may not be sold or distributed at events that children may attend. A 12-month grace period applies to this provision. Breach is a criminal offence.
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THE BROADCAST WATERSHED – SECTION 149

- Section 149 of the Act will introduce a **statutory advertising watershed** for gambling content across broadcast and on-demand media. The watershed prohibits licensees from advertising 'relevant content' — defined as covering a betting activity, a game, a lottery, or advertising the licensee itself — between the hours of 5:30am and 9:00pm on:
 - **Linear television and radio broadcasters**
 - **Audiovisual on-demand media services (including streaming and catch-up TV)**
 - **On-demand sound services**
 - Gambling advertising will therefore be restricted to a 9:00pm to 5:30am window on these platforms. The watershed applies regardless of the nature of the content being broadcast at the time — it is not programme-linked. Note: the watershed does not apply to social media services or video-sharing platforms, which are governed by separate targeting restrictions.
 - Exception: The watershed does not apply to the incidental broadcast of a licensee's name or logo at a sporting event (e.g. on advertising hoardings at a football match or horse racing meeting). Arrangements between content producers and a licensee published on an audiovisual on-demand service are also outside scope.
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CELEBRITY, ATHLETE & SPONSORSHIP RESTRICTIONS

- The Act significantly restricts the use of **sports stars, celebrities and public figures** in gambling marketing. Individuals who are, or are likely to be, regarded as heroes or role models of children — including athletes and sports personalities — may not appear in gambling advertising where the advertisement is liable to be of particular appeal to children.

- On **sponsorship**, Section 159 of the Act prohibits B2C and B2B licensees from sponsoring: events aimed at children or where the majority of attendees are children; any organisation, club or team where children are members; or any premises used by such an establishment.
 - The **definition** of 'sponsor' is broad — it covers any public or private contribution with the aim or direct or indirect effect of promoting gambling. These provisions may significantly restrict sponsorship arrangements with GAA clubs, youth sports organisations and community groups.
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TIMELINE

Date	Milestone
Oct 2024	Gambling Regulation Act 2024 signed into law
9 Feb 2026	GRAI formally established
Early 2026	GRAI begins accepting B2C licence applications
June / July 2026 (expected)	• First licences issued • GRAI to confirm advertising commencement timeline

Please note this guideline is not to be taken as legal advice.