

UK Gambling Watchdog to Weigh Allowing Punters to Pay in Crypto

By Olivia Solon and Emily Nicolle
February 27, 2026 at 8:16 AM GMT-3

The UK Gambling Commission plans to explore permitting gamblers to pay for their bets with cryptocurrencies as Britain moves toward adopting digital-asset regulations.

The Financial Conduct Authority is expected to finalize rules governing crypto activities this year, with the regulations taking effect in late 2027. Gambling firms may be among those that apply for crypto licenses under the new regime, Tim Miller, the Gambling Commission's executive director of research and policy, said in a speech on Thursday.

"That, as well as the growing appetite we see from punters, means we do now want to start looking at what the potential path forward would be to create a way for cryptoassets to be used as a consumer payment option for licensed and regulated gambling in Great Britain," Miller said at the Betting and Gaming Council's annual general meeting in London.

Around 8% of the UK's adult population own cryptocurrencies, a figure that declined last year even as Bitcoin rallied to a record in October before slumping. The crypto industry has pushed to build ties with UK regulators and lawmakers, seeking to influence policy in a country that's fallen behind the US and European Union in passing digital-asset legislation.

Miller said he's asked the Industry Forum, an advisory group representing gambling sector workers, to examine how crypto payments could be "progressed sensibly." Allowing bettors to pay with digital assets on regulated venues could help reduce the risks posed by illegal sites, he added.

"There will be significant challenges and risks to overcome in considering this topic but I am keen that we approach this in the spirit of exploring the art of the possible rather than starting from a position of finding all the reasons not to innovate," Miller said.

Illegal gambling operators captured 71% of Europe's online betting and casino market in 2024, according to data from Yield Sec published in August. In the UK, unlicensed gambling operators have used pirated streaming sites to grow to 9% of the country's gambling market, a separate Yield Sec report published in January found.

[Read More: Illegal Sports Streaming in UK Soared 33% in First Half of 2025](#)

Miller said allowing cryptocurrency payments in betting doesn't necessarily mean crypto casinos will be regulated in the UK, since they are unlikely to pass known-your-customer and suitability checks.

"If they had been operating illegally up to this point, they would struggle to pass a suitability test," he said in a text message response to questions from Bloomberg News.