

New research shows there is limited evidence that the voices of those who have lived experience of gambling harms are being heard

London, 28th August 2020: GambleAware has today published the findings of research it commissioned to better understand how the voices of those with lived experience can be used to contribute to the wider debate about gambling harms.

The research, which was carried out by King's College London, found limited evidence to suggest there are platforms or processes in place within the UK gambling sector that involve and engage those who have lived experience of gambling harms. However, researchers did identify that it was likely such engagement exercises were taking place within certain settings, such as service development or peer support groups, but that these were not being recorded or reported in a formal manner.

During workshop discussions for the research, participants with lived experience highlighted a need to widen participation and engagement channels to a more diverse and representative group of people with lived experience of gambling harm. In particular women, people from minority ethnic communities, vulnerable adults and young people were identified as key groups who have been so far underrepresented and should be engaged with to ensure different views are heard and shared.

Researchers identified that in order to ensure a range of voices and views are heard and utilised, the creation of a national, representative group, network or infrastructure could be a way to facilitate more involvement of those with lived experience. These contributions could then be used to support ongoing research, education and treatment initiatives.

Should a new representative entity be created, researchers and workshop participants identified certain criteria they felt such a network should adhere to. These included:

- Being independent of influence from other organisations
- Being fully funded
- Providing a space for contributors to engage in conversations around policy change and priority setting.

In addition to the creation of a representative network of people with lived experience of gambling harms, researchers also identified several other recommendations that organisations, such as regulators, commissioners and gambling support services could adopt. These included:

- Regular review of activities to plan how to engage with those who have lived experience of gambling harm
- Consider recruitment options for those with lived experience to reach a diverse range of views
- Provide opportunities for staff and trustees to engage with training on how to encourage and maintain regular engagement and involvement with those who have lived experience

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- Having community members with lived experience represented in the governance and infrastructure of organisations working with those communities, for example by having lived experience focal points assigned on staff or having seats on boards.

Commenting on the research and its recommendations, **Caroline Norrie, Research Fellow at the Health and Social Care Workforce Unit (HSCWRU) at the Policy Institute at King's College London** said:

“Our research identified a number of recommendations that organisations across the gambling industry could adopt to help strengthen and improve engagement with those who have first-hand experience of gambling harm. We were also able to identify a clear set of requirements for any future forum or network to ensure participants had the right platform to share their experiences, discuss and engage in key policy and priority setting conversations. I look forward to seeing how these recommendations are taken forward across the industry.”

Marc Etches, CEO of GambleAware also commented:

“GambleAware commissioned this research to better understand what engagement methods work best in order to successfully draw on the knowledge and expertise of those who have experienced gambling harms.

“While the research suggests there is already some engagement with these groups, the report has highlighted a clear lack of reporting of such conversations. The findings have shown how important it is to capture the diverse range of views available to help improve and strengthen existing research, education and treatment and prevention initiatives, while making clear that any new representative network of people from the lived experience community would need to be entirely independent.”

To coincide with the research publication, GambleAware hosted a webinar and helped convene conversations amongst key stakeholders and those within the lived experience community to address the findings of the report.

The full report can be viewed [here](#).

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About the research

- The report summarises the evidence on ‘what works’ in involving people with lived experience within public health, health and social care, and addictions services.
- It is a rapid scoping review of UK research to establish the current evidence base about ‘what works’ in relation to building infrastructures and engagement channels that draw on the knowledge of people with lived experience to meaningfully contribute to the wider debate about gambling and gambling related harm and to influence wider policy.
- Two approaches were used to conduct this research:
 - 1) A rapid scoping review and
 - 2) Analysis of the feedback from people with lived experience of harms in relation to ‘what works’.

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About GambleAware

- GambleAware is an independent charity (Charity No. England & Wales 1093910, Scotland SC049433) that champions a public health approach to preventing gambling harms – see <http://about.gambleaware.org/>
- GambleAware is a commissioner of integrated prevention, education and treatment services on a national scale, with over £40 million of grant funding under active management. In partnership with gambling treatment providers, GambleAware has spent several years methodically building structures for commissioning a coherent system of brief intervention and treatment services, with clearly defined care pathways and established referral routes to and from the NHS – a National Gambling Treatment Service.
- The National Gambling Treatment Service brings together a National Gambling Helpline and a network of locally-based providers across Great Britain that works with partner agencies and people with lived experience to design and deliver a system, which meets the needs of individuals. This system delivers a range of treatment services, including brief intervention, counselling (delivered either face-to-face or online), residential programmes and psychiatrist-led care.
- In the 12 months to 31 March 2019, provisional figures show that the National Gambling Treatment Service treated 10,000 people and this is projected to rise to 24,000 people a year by 2021. Helpline activity is currently running at about 30,000 calls and on-line chats per annum. GambleAware also runs the website BeGambleAware.org which helps 4.2 million visitors a year and signposts to a wide range of support services.
- GambleAware produces public health campaigns including Bet Regret. A Safer Gambling Board, including representatives from Public Health England, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and GambleAware, is responsible for the design and delivery of a campaign based on best practice in public health education. The Bet Regret campaign is being funded through specific, additional donations to the charity, in line with a commitment given to the government by the broadcasting, advertising and gambling industries. See <https://about.gambleaware.org/prevention/safer-gambling-campaign/>.