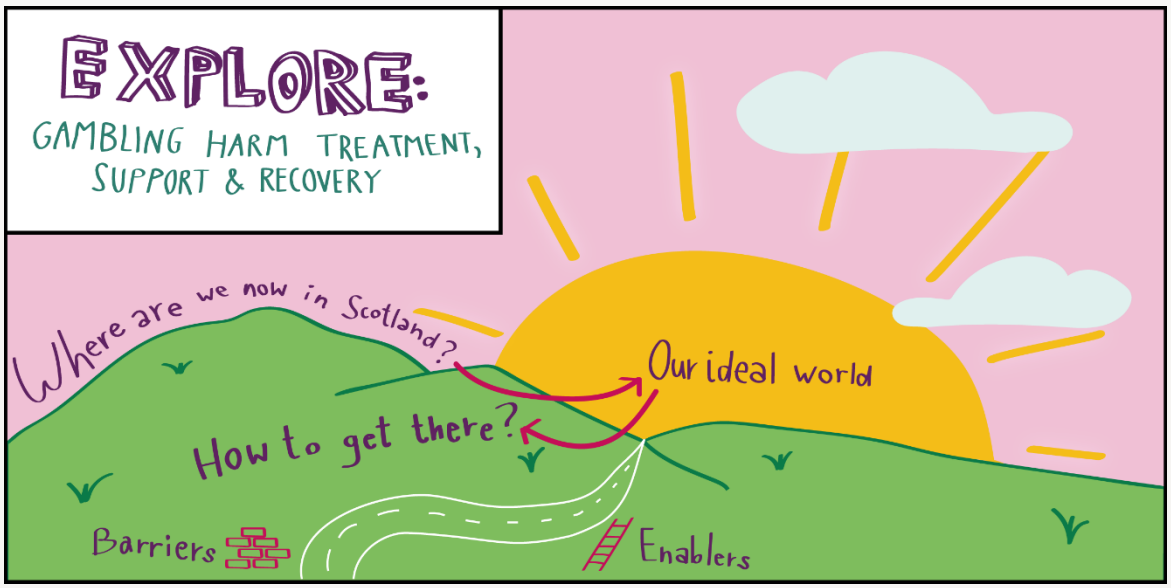
Explore:

Treatment, support, recovery, gambling harm and Scotland



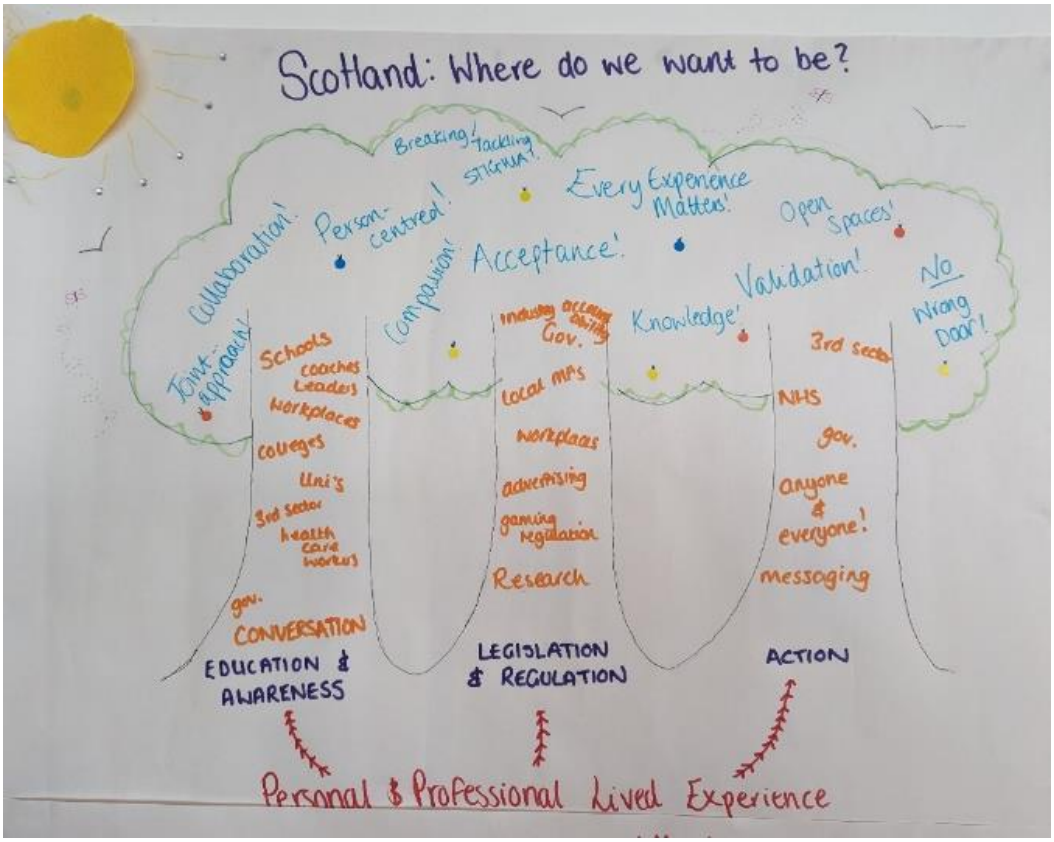
"The focus should move away from individual blame to a public health model where the industry is made accountable."

SCOTLAND REDUCING Gambling Harm

The Explore Series: discover the hidden harms of gambling

ALLIANCE
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE
ALLIANCE SCOTLAND
people at the centre

“Lots of lone voices full of hope and heart trying our best for change.”



About Scotland Reducing Gambling Harm

The Scotland Reducing Gambling Harm programme works to raise awareness of, and advocate for, a public health approach to tacking gambling harm in Scotland. To support this, it hosts the Scottish Gambling Harm Lived Experience Forum.

The Scottish Gambling Harms Lived Experience Forum’s vision is to put the voice of people affected by gambling at the heart of action to reduce those harms. To achieve this, it is key that people with lived experience have influence over policy and systems development. The Forum, therefore, seeks to engage with external stakeholders through Forum meetings and wider events, putting their priorities forward to strategic decision makers.

EXPLORE: GAMBLING HARM TREATMENT, SUPPORT & RECOVERY

IN SCOTLAND

- NHS
- quality options
- respect
- working with children & young people
- statutory services
- industry
- everyone
- T.S.
- lived experience
- sports
- respectful language
- government
- MPs, MSPs
- No postcode lottery!
- everywhere
- spread out
- welfare/ wellbeing
- spaces
- homes
- schools, unis
- Continuous support
- quality services
- regular training
- education
- options in approaches
- informal/formal
- understanding
- research
- aftercare
- together
- industry scrutiny
- Scotland-focus
- CBT
- peer mentors
- outreach
- wellbeing awareness
- openness & conversation
- raising awareness
- all included
- transparency
- evidence base
- shared vision & established relationships

Our ideal

Enablers

- trained staff
- lived experience
- investment
- local support

Barriers

- tokenism
- lack of funding & political attention
- not a priority
- organisations being left out of conversations

Where are we now?

At the beginning?!

Many bright experiences, voices & different approaches coming together, working together, making positive change

full of hope & heart ♡

To do

- ☐ National Strategy and Action Plan to prevent & reduce gambling harm in Scotland
- ☐ Develop community-specific support
- ☐ Have clear pathways to support
- ☐ Connect gambling harm & mental health
- ☐ Promote Scottish voice at UK level
- ☐ Collect data & evidence of what works
- ☐ Build the system together
- ☐ Make sure it works: evaluate with people

Principles

NO STIGMA · accessibility, inclusion, power shared · PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH · compassion · less isolation, more understanding · person-centred · human rights · lived experience & coproduction · equality

Contents

Introduction

On 27 April 2023 UK Government's Department for Culture, Media, and Sport published the Gambling Act White Paper – 'High stakes: gambling reform for the digital age'. This outlined the plan for reform of gambling regulation following the review of the Gambling Act 2005.

One of the key commitments within this was to introduce a new Statutory Levy, designed to increase the funding available for research, education, treatment and support for gambling harm, provide longer term sustainability for those working to tackle it, and establish independence from the gambling industry.

Treatment and support for gambling harm is currently significantly limited in Scotland. There are no statutory services, no free at the point of use residential treatment options and few third sector organisations which provide specialised support for people experiencing gambling harm.

This Statutory Levy offers the opportunity to catalyse activity in Scotland to reduce gambling harm and increase the provision of treatment and support. However, this will only be effective if the Levy's design, implementation and review are considered, meaningful and inclusive. For it to work in practice, there must be sector wide collaboration, where people with lived experience and the third sector are active and equal partners.

Therefore, to explore this, and what our collective ambition for treatment, support and recovery in Scotland is, the Scottish Gambling Harm Lived Experience Forum hosted a roundtable on 15th May 2024.

It brought together people with lived experience, policymakers, representatives across health and social care, and those working to reduce gambling harms.

Photograph of the event 15th May 2024 and participants

Through small group discussions and a creative visualisation activity, delegates spoke through the following three questions:

- What is the current treatment and support landscape in Scotland?
- What would we like it to be?
- How could we get there together?

To help us have this conversation we were joined by the following speakers:

- Lauren Heaney, Simon Community Scotland
- Matt Gaskell, NHS Northern Gambling Service (Video)
- Kelly Doig, Scott Lewis, and Alastair Robb – SMART Recovery
- Nadine Ashworth, Thrivin' Together (Video)
- Alex Crawford and Harp Edwards, Gordon Moody
- Prof. Amanda Roberts, University of Lincoln

From analysing the feedback shared at the event, five themes emerged regarding treatment, support and recovery in Scotland:

1. There must be options
2. Ensuring quality
3. Clear pathways
4. Treatment and support as part of a public health approach
5. Lived and living experience at the heart

"Many bright experiences, voices, opportunities and different approaches coming together, working together, making positive change together"

- Participant

This event is the third in Scotland Reducing Gambling Harm's roundtable series:

- **Explore: Mental Health and Gambling Harm**
- **Explore: gambling harm and the White Paper**

There must be options

One of the prominent themes raised at this event was the need for people to have a range of options for gambling harm treatment and support. This includes available supports for people before they reach crisis point, where residential treatment is a last resort.

Types of treatment and support which people identified as needing to be available included:

- Cognitive behavioural therapy accessible via both the third sector and NHS.
- Women-only spaces, to ensure women feel supported to speak out.
- Statutory treatment options through primary and secondary care.
- Residential treatment, surrounded by pre and post support for people and their families.
- Support for affected others.
- Virtual and online treatment options.
- Treatment and support options embedded in local communities.
- Peer support and recovery communities.
- Community outreach to people and communities currently unconnected to services.

A key point raised was that support should be tailored to the needs of the individual. People should not be forced into a system which does not work for them. Having a range of options makes it easier for people to find support that is effective for them, and successfully promotes their recovery.

Treatment was described as needing to "catch as many people as you can"; no one must be left behind when trying to access gambling harm treatment and support.

Currently, in Scotland, there is no statutory treatment or support available to people experiencing gambling-related harms. There is also no free at the point of use residential treatment and support.

This makes it difficult for people in Scotland to receive the support they need. People with lived experience tell us this has meant they have had to travel to England or pay.

This limited support in Scotland was discussed extensively at the event. Geographic availability of services was raised as a key aspect of addressing this. Any gambling harm treatment and support system should not be a "postcode lottery".

Those who live in rural areas are already less likely to have access to good quality treatment and support options. Therefore, ensuring any treatment and support system is de-centralised and not saturated in the central belt was felt to be key.

The important role of the third sector in delivering treatment in Scotland was repeatedly raised. As there are no statutory services, the third sector for many people is their only route to receive support. Whilst choice is still limited currently, it is essential to note the work the third sector has done to date to establish treatment and support for people experiencing gambling harm, and therefore the unique expertise they hold relating to effectively supporting people in Scotland.

Finally, the need for treatment and support options to be holistic and whole person was emphasised. Treatment must be available for people across the harm spectrum to facilitate

early intervention, and it must promote all aspects of peoples mental, physical and emotional wellbeing.

This point was also echoed at the ALLIANCE's previous 2023 roundtable 'Explore: Mental health and gambling harms':
'...at present there are limited options to recognise or support those experiencing poor mental health in relation to gambling. This results in people not having access to treatment and support they need and feeling forgotten or left behind by services. A holistic approach to supporting people is needed to address this, where the whole person is considered and mental health and gambling harm are assessed in harmony.'

Everyone in Scotland should have access to the treatment and support they need to live happy and healthy lives. Treatment and support options for gambling harm are a vital part of making this a reality.

"There should be more options available for people, linked with mental health." – Participant

Image of an illustration from the day showing people and houses with the words "freedom for families to live free from gambling harm" and "unity and peace to grow"

Example: Gordon Moody

Gordon Moody is the UK's leading charity providing residential treatment and support for gambling-related harm. It also provides support for families and loved ones affected by gambling harm.

At the roundtable event, Alex Crawford (Head of Treatment Services) and Harp Edwards (Residential Treatment Manager: Women's) shared insights from their recently opened residential treatment centre for women impacted by gambling-related harm. This treatment service was set up in response to a surge in women reaching out to Gordon Moody for residential treatment.

The six-week programme addresses women's relationship with gambling, and supports with trauma and mental health. An eight-week aftercare programme and continuous support for up to a year after treatment is also provided with Gordon Moody's wrap-around services.

Currently, Gordon Moody, whose residential services are based in England, experiences a significant demand from people living in Scotland.

More information about Gordon Moody's women's residential treatment centre can be found on their website.

Images of Gordon Moody's new residential treatment service for women harmed by gambling.

Example: UK SMART Recovery

UK SMART Recovery is a registered charity which promotes choice in recovery through a national network of mutual-aid meetings and online training programme. Through their Partnership Scheme, they work with most medium to large treatment providers across the UK as well as prisons, probation, rehab facilities, NHS and supported housing services.

At the roundtable event, Kelly Doig, Scott Lewis and Alastair Robb, a member from the Scottish Gambling Harm Lived Experience Forum, shared their own reflections and presented on some of the methods they use to promote recovery. This included the Cognitive Behaviour Triangle, illustrating the cyclical relationship between our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours.

Images of the presentation from UK SMART Recovery

Ensuring quality

Ensuring that any treatment and support system is of a high quality was a key priority for participants.

Elements of “a high-quality service” were discussed. Key aspects that emerged were:

- Services where people get what they want and need and are demonstrably effective at meeting promoting recovery.
- Recognition and support for the whole person, including their physical, mental and emotional health.
- Consistent support available throughout people’s recovery journey, including after care and community-based support.
- Care which reaches the people who need it, with particular attention and focus to the most marginalised communities.
- Services that are designed, delivered and available to support people experiencing all levels of gambling harm.
- Services which promote people’s inherent dignity, empower them and tackle the stigma surrounding gambling harm.
- A confident, knowledgeable and compassionate workforce.

It was stressed during the event that relationships between organisations are vital to an effective treatment and support system. Participants described aiming for a treatment and support system that is open, transparent and put the needs of people ahead of organisational vested interests.

Cross referring, collaboration and knowledge sharing is crucial to creating a whole system of support, rather than pockets of individual action. However, for this to occur, mutual trust and respect is key. Faith in one another’s effectiveness and quality was expresses as an essential aspect of building this trust.

A desire to develop a treatment and support system which was outcome focused and evidence led was expressed throughout the day. However, people raised the lack of research and evidence that currently exists around gambling harm makes this challenging. It was felt that this lagged far behind that for other addictive behaviours.

The role of funding in creating a high-quality treatment and support system was also emphasised. Currently, funding and commissioning structures often have the unintended consequence of undermining sustainable, holistic, whole system ways of working. Short term funding cycles promote instability. Competitive funding discourages cooperation. Disproportionate investment between statutory services and the third sector perpetuates power dynamics and hierarchy. Establishing a funding

mechanism which addresses these issues is essential ahead of the implementation of the statutory levy.

The role of the workforce in delivering a high-quality service was also highlighted. Workers who are trained and confident in recognising and supporting people experiencing gambling harm are vital to developing services which work for people in practice.

Finally, the role of accountability and scrutiny in achieving a high-quality system of treatment and support was highlighted. Effective monitoring and review systems, which are not burdensome or restrictive, are needed to ensure intended outcomes are being achieved. Therefore, developing quality assurance mechanisms collaboratively with commissioners, deliverers and the people these supports are designed to reach is vital.

Clear pathways

A “no wrong door” approach was frequently cited as being a key element of any treatment and support system in Scotland. This means that regardless of how people are identified, or where they present, they reach the appropriate support for them.

Increasing the ways people are identified as experiencing gambling harm was shared as a key aspect of achieving this. Using screening questions in primary care settings was highlighted repeatedly as a key action to implement in Scotland.

Professor Amanda Roberts, from University of Lincoln, joined the event to share learnings from their research into gambling harm and the role of primary care. Professor Roberts raised several key aspects to bear in mind when considering the role of primary care in screening for gambling harm. These included: possible reluctance from people to disclose gambling harm in a primary care setting; the knowledge and awareness of staff in primary care settings about gambling harm; and the availability of treatment and support for people if they are detected.

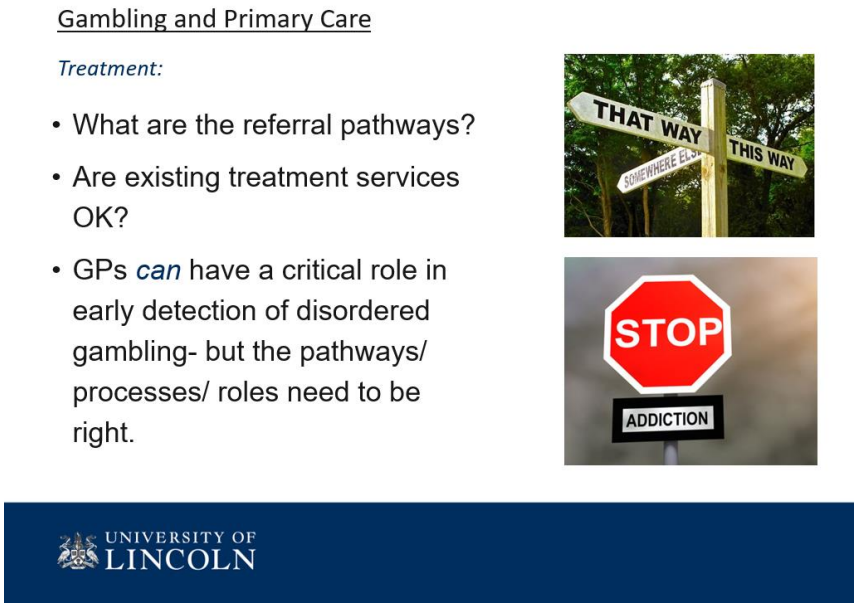
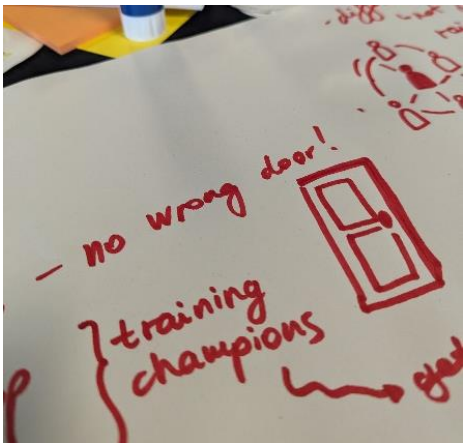


Image from Professor Amanda Roberts presentation “Unveiling the Odds: Detecting Hidden Risks with Routine Screening for Gambling Harm in GP Surgeries”

Participants also emphasised the need to increase the awareness of gambling harm, and the visibility of gambling harm treatment and support services. For people to reach the right services this requires them to know gambling harm exists, be able to recognise they are experiencing it, and be aware of support that is available.



People had lots of suggestions of how to increase this awareness of treatment and support:

- Sharing information in the places people go regularly e.g. supermarkets.
- By connecting with children and young people through education.
- With an awareness raising campaign.
- Through online tools like NHS Inform and ALISS.

Treatment and support as part of a public health approach

Throughout the discussion of treatment and support, it was that emphasised that this will only be effective in reducing harm if it is implemented alongside prevention, education, research and regulation as part of a wider public health approach.

“A public health approach is one based on collective action to advance the public good by promoting health, equity, and social justice, and by adopting a broad and population-level perspective to gambling harms[1].”

“The focus should move away from individual person blame to a public health model where industry is made accountable.”

- Participant

Dr Matt Gaskell, Head of NHS Northern Gambling Service, articulated this during their presentation; drawing attention to the exploitative practices of the gambling industry and underlining that regulation is the most effective action to reduce gambling harm across Great Britain.

Screenshot from Dr Matt Gaskell, Head of NHS Northern Gambling Service, with text “You know what we hear in the clinics is cruelty”

The over saturation of advertisement and marketing across society continues to be a key issue raised by participants at every roundtable. Action to promote long term recovery is undermined by the prevalence of adverts and inducements to gamble in both physical spaces and online. These not only contribute to the normalisation of gambling throughout society, but

[1] https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667(21)00098-0/fulltext

risk triggering individuals who are in recovery from gambling harm. Further regulation of advertisement and marketing is a crucial aspect of reducing gambling harm in Scotland.

The role of research in informing the development of an evidence-led treatment and support system was also highlighted. More data is needed to accurately understand the scale and distribution of harms in Scotland. The need to also direct research towards implementation science and identifying what works in practice to reduce gambling harm was another priority area identified for exploration.

Finally, the role of education in achieving a gambling harm informed, confident and aware population was emphasised. It was suggested that gambling harm could be included within the Curriculum for Excellence to reach young people across Scotland. Another idea was that work should be done to empower parents to introduce and discuss the risks of gambling and gaming with their children.

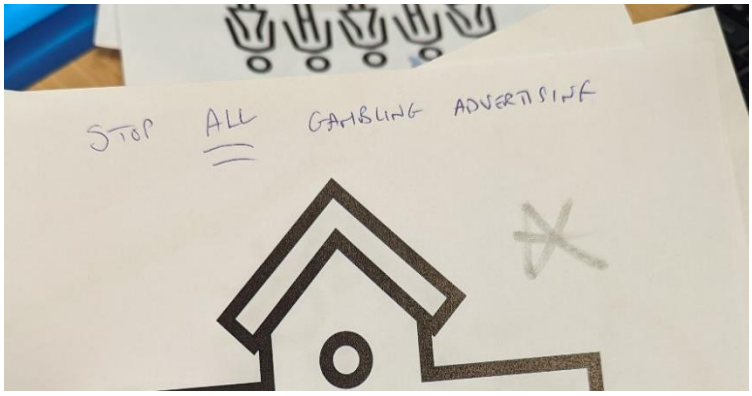


Image from day with the words “stop all gambling advertisement”.

Lived and living experience at the heart

The coproduction of any treatment and support system with people with lived and living experience was repeatedly raised by participants as crucial.

"Lived experience right at the start, lived experience at the heart." – Participant

Services and systems will only work for people when their voices have been central in designing, implementing and reviewing their success. This is particularly crucial for communities that have been marginalised, disproportionately stigmatised, or not listened to in the gambling harm sector, or across society more broadly.

Nadine Ashworth, Director of Thrivin' Together, highlighted the importance of centring women's voices across the gambling harm sector.

Thriving Together is a space for women impacted by gambling wherever they are on their journey. The organisation's approach is choice, voice and change, to enable women to move forwards with dignity through their recovery. They ask women they work with what they want, and they want to feel heard, to see change and to be involved.

"We want women only spaces. We want lived experience, the choice to be anonymous, flexible choices and long term support"

– Nadine Ashwoorth, Thrivin' Together

Screenshot of Nadine Ashworth's video contribution with the text "there was little consideration for the impacts of policy on women"

Example: Simon Community Scotland

Simon Community Scotland provides support services, which include prevention of rough sleeping, advice and information, intensive outreach, emergency access, supported accommodation, life skills and development groups for people who are experiencing homelessness.

There is a strong link between homelessness and gambling harm[2]. Homelessness can be an adverse result of relationship and family breakdowns, rent and bill arrears, domestic violence, debt and mental health issues.

"The only way for you to grow and evolve is to keep listening, keep moving forward, keep jumping in and trying to experience."

– Lauren Health, Policy and Practice Lead Simon Community Scotland

Simon Community Scotland is an organisation that understands the value and power of lived experience.

They have focused on raising awareness and reducing the stigma of gambling harms by normalising conversations, training staff, facilitating drop-in clinics, hosting awareness raising sessions and co-creating resources with the people they support.

They are now building tailored support pathways for women at their Connect Hub, co-designing and developing this service with the women who will be using it.

More information, e-learning, support and signposting on gambling harm and homelessness can be found on their website.

Image of Lauren Heaney from Simon Community Scotland presenting.

[2] Homelessness and Gambling Harm Toolkit. Simon Community Scotland. https://www.simonscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Gambling-Harms-Homelessness-Toolkit.pdf

The Scotland Reducing Gambling Harm programme would like to thank everyone who contributed to this roundtable discussion and took the time to share their views, expertise, and experiences.

About the ALLIANCE

The Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE) is the national third sector intermediary for health and social care, bringing together a diverse range of people and organisations who share our vision, which is a Scotland where everyone has a strong voice and enjoys their right to live well with dignity and respect.

We are a strategic partner of the Scottish Government and have close working relationships with many NHS Boards, academic institutions and key organisations spanning health, social care, housing and digital technology.

Our purpose is to improve the wellbeing of people and communities across Scotland. We bring together the expertise of people with lived experience, the third sector, and organisations across health and social care to inform policy, practice and service delivery. Together our voice is stronger and we use it to make meaningful change at the local and national level.

The ALLIANCE has a strong and diverse membership of over 3,300 organisations and individuals. Our broad range of programmes and activities deliver support, research and policy development, digital innovation and knowledge sharing. We manage funding and spotlight innovative projects; working with our members and partners to ensure lived experience and third sector expertise is listened to and acted upon by informing national policy and campaigns, and putting people at the centre of designing support and services.

We aim to:

- Ensure disabled people, people with long term conditions and unpaid carers voices, expertise and rights drive policy and sit at the heart of design, delivery and improvement of support and services.
- Support transformational change that works with individual and community assets, helping people to live well, supporting human rights, self management, co-production and independent living.
- Champion and support the third sector as a vital strategic and delivery partner, and foster cross-sector understanding and partnership.

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