

# Report



## **Scotland Reducing Gambling Harm Launch – engagement during COVID-19**

**The Health and Social Care Alliance (The ALLIANCE) Members Event  
Zoom Meeting, 10 00- 12 00, Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2020  
Event Report**

### **Welcome and introductions**

- Will Griffiths, the ALLIANCE

Will welcomed everyone to the event, briefly explained how the virtual meeting would be conducted and invited the co-facilitators and the attendees to introduce themselves. In addition to the four ALLIANCE facilitators, there were 17 attendees ranging from people with lived experience, third sector and public health colleagues and city councillors.

Will explained the format for the day and reiterated the purpose, which was information-sharing and discussion to:

- Formally launch the Scotland Reducing Gambling Harm programme to ALLIANCE members and people with lived experience
- Update attendees on the programme's engagement plans
- Receive input from attendees on these plans and use this to shape future engagement
- Learn what attendees think are the key issues for the Lived Experience Forum to address

### **Scotland Reducing Gambling Harm – Programme overview**

Will presented on the Scotland Reducing Gambling Harm programme. Its principle is aimed at putting the voices of people affected by harms from gambling at the heart of action to reduce and prevent those harms. The programme will establish a Lived Experience Forum to inform action taking place across Scotland to reduce harms to people's lives from gambling.

To do this it is engaging people throughout Scotland and working with them to set up a Forum, to accelerate the delivery of the National Strategy launched last April by the Gambling Commission. The Forum will develop key recommendations of what needs to be done to reduce gambling harms. Will explained that this launch event was the formal start of the engagement process to set up the Lived Experience Forum.

In light of COVID-19, the programme's engagement plan and timescales have been changed to include:

- Virtual ALLIANCE membership engagement sessions
- Four virtual events across Scotland
- A survey and series of one-to-one interviews with people with lived experience
- Working with the Third Sector Interface network, Self Management Network Scotland and Self Management Fund projects' learning events
- Working and developing engagement through ALISS, Discover Digital, Carer Voices, Community Links Practitioners, and other emerging partnerships.

These engagement activities will take place Summer-Autumn 2020, with the Forum established in late Autumn 2020, Winter 2020/21.

In addition, the programme is: scoping with academics in the field of gambling harm the establishment of a PhD on engaging people with lived experience – 'seldom heard voices'; planning an outcomes focused, co-created evaluation of the programme, based on the programme logic model; and the collection of Digital Voices stories in print and a range of digital media.

The programme is also supporting the involvement of people with lived experience in the work of the Glasgow Gambling Harms Group, a whole system approach to reduce gambling harm hosted by the Scottish Public Health Network.

### **Questions and answers**

During the question and answer session after Will's presentation, the first question asked for more detail on the interaction between the Gambling Commission and the Scottish Lived Experience Forum. The questioner wondered how the feedback loop would be closed between the recommendations emerging from the Forum and the actions of the Gambling Commission. Will noted that it will be important for the Gambling Commission to be involved in the work of the Scottish Lived Experience Forum and that the Gambling Commission would complete written responses to the recommendations emerging from the Forum. The Gambling Commission would also be involved in direct work with the Forum, including presentations to the group on where the powers sit and who can act on key issues to reduce gambling harm. Will noted that the Scottish Implementation Group, made up of the ALLIANCE, Public Health Scotland, Scottish Government, Police Scotland, the Gambling Commission

and others would play a key role in driving forward the recommendations in Scotland.

This led to a discussion of who the key audience for the Lived Experience Forum was, given that gambling is a reserved matter to Westminster, but some of the actions will sit with the Scottish Government and Scottish Local Authorities. Will stated that it is important to ensure that recommendations are pitched at the right audience and at those with the power to act on them. There are several audiences for this work and the Forum will work with the ALLIANCE and Scottish Implementation Group to identify where to pitch them to ensure most impact.

Another question focused on the work underway in the UK to set up Lived Experience Forums on gambling harm – the Experts by Experience Interim Forum informing the work of the Gambling Commission, the Experts by Experience Forum informing the services of GambleAware, and other similar initiatives. Will said that it would be important that these Forums work together to ensure that people with lived experience throughout the UK have their voices heard to best effect, but that the Scottish Lived Experience Forum will be creating recommendations for the Scottish context specifically as well as UK wide recommendations. It will be important to ensure that there is interplay between these Forums.

A final question was asked about advertising as a specific challenge for people experiencing gambling harm. It was agreed that this issue would be discussed in more detail in the second half of the session, which was to explore the key topics the Scottish Lived Experience Forum should discuss.

## **Breakout room discussions**

The group was divided into three breakout rooms, each facilitated by an ALLIANCE member of staff, to discuss the following key issues:

- Who should be engaged in this work?
- How should they be engaged?
- What key issues should the Lived Experience Forum tackle when it is up and running?

The notes below are drawn from the notes of the ALLIANCE facilitators and from the feedback in the plenary.

### **Who should be engaged in this work:**

- Others affected by Gambling – reach out to families and loved ones
- Gambling Commission to come on board -the Dutch have government run casinos – could implement safer gambling more effectively

- Treatment organisations - treatment providers, the voices of people accessing these
- Mental health organisations
- Criminal justice
- Women - 1% are woman who come forward for treatment – more on online slots, bingo
- Gaming and young people, engage with young people
- Whole family approach
- Welfare rights advisor's financial inclusion advisors
- Young people should be engaged in this work. Attendee shared how they were first introduced to gambling at 15 years old. Gambling is increasingly available in the digital world. Prevention through education at a young age is very important.
- Should engage with schools, youth groups and community groups as well as parents around what conversations they are having (or lack of) with their children around gambling
- Wider representation involved this includes BAME Groups, Women, Families, and Students. How do we make sure we are inclusive?
- Inclusion of minority groups
- Rural communities – older generations not as confident online support

### **How should they be engaged in this work?**

- The programme is a great initiative to have in Scotland - Create a platform and be leaders in the UK
- Safe space to share = forum
- Issue of stigma in preventing people coming forward
- Fear of coming forward being judged
- Fear of what seeking help might bring
- Recovery programmes and the stigma around this. Social issues
- Being proactive rather than reactive in engaging people
- Sharing people's stories
- People who do not realise they have a problem
- Impact across the family
- Celebrities influencing – negative when in advertising but could be used for good.
- There is a need for culture change and an opportunity for this to be framed as a 'citizen interest' issue with the growing discourse around gambling related harms being a public health.

### **Reflections involving people with lived experience once Forum established:**

- Role of expert by experience and how that is valued. It's a two-way process and not a one way process. Therefore there needs to be feedback.
- It was raised that we need better understanding on devolved powers and what we can impact at a local level. Capacity building among people with lived experience.
- Clear detail and structure. Structure and purpose crucial for Forum.
- Look at the integrity of the group it needs to be an independent voice without other influences - government or industry.

## **What key issues should the Lived Experience Forum tackle when it is up and running?**

### **Prevention and education**

- Education involvement at an early stage. Included in PHSE in England, not in the curriculum in Scotland, however, it is in other nations.
- Awareness Raising – it was raised that people are unaware of the dangers and impact as it is not widely discussed, however, when you speak to people and share your story they agree regarding the impact and what needs done.
- Prevention through learning with people and leading with people at the heart
- Education is important for raising awareness - hard hitting messages like speed awareness campaign have been effective.
- People and families practical support
- Discussion of whether education ought to be number one priority – was there enough evidence for this being effective?

### **Young people and schools**

- How do you involve young people?
- With regards to education is a key issue as it's now where it needs to be. We need to improve education on this and include life skills and budgeting
- It is important that we start early to affect the way children are socialised. We have conversations with kids about online grooming, sex, education, alcohol but how about gambling?
- In an increasingly digital world, we should be thinking about schools education but not just about schools telling you what to do. Education should be about lived experience too. It's important to think about who is engaging with schools to deliver these messages too. Opportunity to use the forum's lived experience to engage with young people online

- Implementing PSHE in schools - this is compulsory in schools in England and should be in Scotland. How is the 'education' delivered - empathetically or top down? At what age is this education first delivered?
- SAG association does a lot of good work about risky behaviour - worth looking into

### **Importance of a whole system and person centred approach**

- Important to take a whole systems approach
- Gambling related harms being a symptom of poor mental health
- Need for engagement to be centred around 'understanding'
- High rates of trauma and addiction can mean that gambling is a form of escapism
- We need to look into how one's quality of life impacts upon their vulnerability to gambling related products and the harms associated with gambling.
- Opportunity to look at international examples and learning from what isn't working abroad as well as what is in order to shape approach here
- The forum should look into the role of the industry and the motivations / attractiveness to begin gambling. Mental health is relevant but so is the financial incentives associated with gambling.
- Evidence is currently patchy and evaluation is paramount.
- There was a discussion of whether this should be considered a standalone issue or interconnected with addiction.
- One attendee shared the need to work with the whole person, not just the gambling problem; we need to agree fundamentally are we going to strategise around gambling as a stand alone issue or is it a whole person and issue that involves every aspect of me and my family and my friends and my community.
- Needs to be support available that includes a person centred approach .
- It was discussed that gambling is lumped in with other addictions but needs to be its own isolated issue

### **Treatment and Support**

- Wide list of organisations that should be involved in this including third sector, community, GPs, National Gambling helpline, Technology Apps, peer aid.
- It was discussed that it needs to be a public health led approach with the NHS involvement.
- Education and prevention is good but we cannot forget those that have needs and require treatment. Lack of recovery/rehabs in Scotland – two attendees shared how they had to go to London for treatment.
- It was shared that during consultations with GP's questions regarding drinking, smoking etc are asked, however, gambling isn't even though that has an impact on health and wellbeing

- With regards to treatment and support we need to know what's available to support people.
- People know how to gamble, but how to get help is more difficult to access

### **Regulation – key issues to address:**

- People with lived experience need to be involved to shape and support this. It is also important to clearly see the impact on the wider community.
- As with cigarette packaging advertising, magazine with information should be available at all places of gambling
- Ring-fenced statutory levy and not just statutory levy.
- Gambling in gaming - Looking at different age groups and how we should meaningfully communicate.
- Linking the activity to the nasty consequences
- More emphasis on the product – focus on the product, online product designed for addiction
- The industry impact on the individual
- Gambling related harms is a hidden addiction
- Gambling does not just happen in 'deprived' areas and casinos and pubs. There is no specific profile for a 'gambler.' It is also happening inside homes and increasingly digital.

### **ALLIANCE overview, next steps, and close**

Following the feedback from the breakout session, Will invited colleague Tommy Whitelaw to present the broader work of the ALLIANCE.

- Tommy outlined the work of the ALLIANCE engaging people with lived experience on a wide array of issues – the Mental Health Services in Tayside review, the new GP contract, Self Directed Support, and more.
- He outlined some of the benefits of being an ALLIANCE member, including keeping up to date on developments in Scotland's health, social care and public health landscape, and invited attendees to get in touch, if of interest.

Will thanked all the attendees and outlined the next steps following the event:

- Note of meeting to be circulated, alongside information on becoming an ALLIANCE member and the presentation slides.

Will reiterated that people are welcome to email him with further ideas about the programme on [william.griffiths@alliance-scotland.org.uk](mailto:william.griffiths@alliance-scotland.org.uk)