

Scotland Reducing Gambling Harm Towards Establishing the Lived Experience Forum Event Report

Zoom Meeting
Thursday 20th August 2020 14:00-16:00

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 three ALLIANCE facilitators, there was also a note-taker from Matter of Focus (evaluation partner) and nine attendees with lived experience of gambling harm.

Setting the scene

- Cath Cooney and Will Griffiths, the ALLIANCE

Purpose

Will reminded attendees of the purpose of the event:

- Agree the purpose and structure for the Lived Experience Forum
- Generate topics the Lived Experience Forum needs to cover once it is up and running
- Hear from attendees who they wish to hear from at these meetings

Background

Cath shared the background to the three-year National Strategy to Reduce Gambling Harms, which was launched by the Gambling Commission in 2019. Cath noted that she is also Board Member for the Advisory Board for Safe Gambling (ABSG).

The strategy is taking a public health approach to gambling harm. The public health approach means the strategy moves attention onto the context and wider determinants of health; and the things that need to change in our society, rather than blaming people who experience gambling harms for their circumstances. The strategy also puts lived experience at the heart of implementing the strategy.

The ALLIANCE has been funded through regulatory settlement funds which are approved by the Gambling Commission for three years to deliver a programme which fully engages people with lived experience in the implementation of the strategy. In Scotland, the plan is to build a Lived Experience Forum which will develop key recommendations of what needs to change and how people with lived experience can influence that change; and feed this into the Scottish Implementation Group.

The primary audience is the Scottish Implementation Group, though of course there will be recommendations that need to feed up from there to the Gambling Commission and Westminster. The Advisory Board for Safe Gambling (ABSG) is the advisory group made up academics and professionals who advise the Gambling Commission on reducing gambling harm within the context of the National Strategy.

The evaluator of the programme attended to ensure the learning is captured from the outset of how the Lived Experience Forum is formed and then feeds into the implementation of the National Strategy.

Questions and answers

Question	Answer
Concern that people with lived experience are asked to give a lot of time/energy in terms of sharing their stories. But it's not clear whether we can actually influence the Commission. Is it possible for people with lived experience to feed directly into Government's thinking on this area? For	Absolutely agree about the importance of action and change. The purpose we're here for today is to create the infrastructure for influencing government. The Scottish Implementation Group is made up of The Scottish Government, COSLA, Police Scotland, NHS Primary Care, Public

<p>example, can we meet directly with Department of Culture, Media and Sport Civil Servants who are responsible for this issue?</p>	<p>Health Scotland, the Gambling Commission and the ALLIANCE. This Lived Experience Forum will feed directly into the Scotland Implementation group.</p>
<p>Looking for clarity about what the Forum can change and control and power of the Commission: what will the relationship be between the Lived Experience Forum and the Commission?</p>	<p>This programme isn't funded or led by the Gambling Commission. It is funded through a regulatory settlement. We can influence the Commission and Westminster through the Scottish Implementation Group and key partners.</p>
<p>Are we making sure we're engaging all the agencies that can influence and support us to make change?</p>	<p>The ALLIANCE has a network across Scotland which we can use to engage different agencies and other groups of people with lived experience.</p>

Group discussion One: The Lived Experience Forum

Will Griffiths facilitated the group to think about the purpose of the Lived Experience Forum and the way that it could work.

The objective of the Scottish Lived Experience Forum

The group discussed the objective of the Forum as working closely with the National Strategy Scottish Implementation Group, made up of Scottish Government, Public Health Scotland, The ALLIANCE, Police Scotland, COSLA, NHS Primary Care and the Gambling Commission. The Forum should identify key topics of importance which need to be reviewed by the Scottish Implementation Group (potential key topics discussed below). It was proposed that a member or several members of the group should sit on the Scottish Implementation Group and how these members were to be chosen should be discussed.

The attendees also emphasised a role of collective advocacy and raising awareness of the impact of gambling harms on people. It was noted that there is low awareness of gambling harm and the group could play an important role in raising the profile of this topic as a public health issue. There was a desire from participants to ensure that the Forum should seek to influence policy areas not in the direct control of the Scottish Government. It was

proposed that the Forum ought to respond to policy consultations especially in any upcoming review of the Gambling Act 2005.

The group also emphasised the importance of including people with lived experience in research and building the evidence base around gambling harm.

Hosting the Lived Experience Forum

The ALLIANCE will host the Lived Experience Forum, providing facilitation, venues and catering (when physical meetings are possible). The ALLIANCE will also write the event report to be shared with attendees and published on the ALLIANCE website. The group emphasised that the Lived Experience Forum will determine the key topics for discussion, the nature of the recommendations made to the Scottish Implementation Group. The group will also determine which speakers they wish to hear from. This may include the Gambling Commission, Public Health Scotland, Scottish Government and others.

It was agreed that The ALLIANCE will lead on drafting the reports from the group, but these reports must be approved by the Forum. It was observed that it is useful to have people with different kinds of experience working together, for example, academics, third sector colleagues and people with lived experience.

Representativeness of the Lived Experience Forum:

The group emphasised the importance of representativeness in building the Lived Experience Forum. The below groups were raised as key for engagement. The ALLIANCE is creating an equality impact assessment (EQIA) for the programme to ensure that it engages a wide range of people.

Particular areas of focus mentioned by the group were:

- Women: Expand the group to include women and their experiences of gambling harm, shame and stigma.
- People who are targeted by gambling industry in specific ways, e.g. young sports people.
- People who have experience of abuse, e.g. engage agencies and groups that work with people who are survivors of or experience abuse.
- People who have experience of debt and financial insecurity, e.g. engage agencies or groups that work with people who have experience of poverty, debt, financial insecurity.
- People who live rurally, e.g. engage agencies that work with people who live in more isolated parts of Scotland.

- BAME community members.

What does success look like?

The group were then invited to explore what success would look like for the Lived Experience Forum. The group agreed that a key metric would be showing that people with lived experience can influence policy. This would have to include concrete examples of policy influence and in the longer term demonstrable legislative change. An example of influencing the health profession to ask standard questions about gambling in the manner of smoking and alcohol was raised as an example of this.

Other examples of specific policy change were mentioned and include:

- Influencing social work and social care to identify children and young people who might be at risk of gambling harm
- Concrete examples of industry influence, e.g. the review of the Gambling Commission's award of the lottery contract, which is currently up for renewal
- Support the creation and development of after-care and support for people who are experiencing gambling harm
- People are more knowledgeable and able to make use of public engagement laws
- People have the power to object to new gambling sites in local communities.

A participant who fed in following the event noted that one of the key metrics to the success of the group would be how receptive other stakeholders are to attending and presenting at the Forum. It was noted that without external "interested" parties attending, it will be much hard to affect change in policy and practice.

Group discussion Two: Topics that are important for the Lived Experience to cover

The conversation then moved to a discussion of the key topics that the Lived Experience Forum should discuss once it is up and running. Carmen Paputa-Dutu facilitated the group to discuss and these key topics:

- The way that gambling affects families – the ripple effect

- The way that gambling is targeted at specific communities, e.g. people living in poverty
- After-care support for people with lived experience
- Advertising and sponsorship
- Affordability checks – shouldn't be able to gambled what you can't afford
- Grooming and predatory behaviour from gambling industry – e.g. need for abolition of VIP customers
- Peer-support
- Training and support for educators and schools.
- Overhaul of the Gambling Act (2005)
- Stronger repercussions for gambling industry – e.g. losing license rather than just fines
- Safeguarding and prevention
- Age limit for National Lottery games raised up to 18
- Review of arcades and games in pubs
- Stricter checks when people open gambling accounts
- Work with banks and financial institutions to increase support for people at risk of gambling harm
- Governance – need to review the oversight for the Gambling Commission, e.g. a financial ombudsman
- Dual accountability for the gambler and the company – dump the 'responsible gambling' slogan

Next steps and close

Will thanked the group for the discussion and their contributions. He acknowledged that the agenda was an ambitious one and suggested a future meeting to pick up the discussion about the key items for the Lived Experience Forum to work on and to identify who the group would wish to hear from.

Following the event there will be an:



1. Invitation to meet again: Will to follow-up with everyone after the meeting to arrange a time to continue the discussion and focus on the formation of the Forum
2. Event report to be shared with the group
3. Discussion of Lived Experience engagement in Scotland discussed with Scottish Implementation Group and fed back to next meeting of people with lived experience