

Gambling Harms and Young People in Great Britain: A State of the Nation Report

December 2025

Lauren Hunter,
Maia O'Young Vlies,
Steven Okonkwo

Acknowledgements

We would like to express sincere thanks to all the members of the Youth Advisory Group (YAG) who were Volunteer Student Ambassadors (VSAs) with Ygam (Callum Deakin, Laila, Luca Tin Yau Cheung, Maya Townley, Megan, Tariq Saflo and Tilly Derrett) for generously sharing their time, insights, and experiences throughout the development of this report. Their reflections and feedback were invaluable in shaping the analysis and ensuring that the findings reflect the lived realities of children and young people.

From Ygam, we extend special thanks to Janine Maddison, Claire Patel, Sam Starsmore, and Jessica Parker for their support in engaging with the YAG, coordinating sessions, and facilitating the lived experience component of this work. Additionally, thank you to Amy Bussey, Daniel Bliss and Linda Scollins Smith for support with the case study showcasing good practice included in this report.

We would also like to thank the peer reviewers for their thoughtful comments and contributions, and the designer whose work translated the findings from this report into the accompanying youth-accessible summary.

Introduction

This report provides an overview of the knowledge generated by GambleAware-funded research on gambling-related harms among children and young people (CYP) in Great Britain (GB). In this report, the term CYP includes children under the age of 18 and young people aged 18-24. Gambling can have a significant and wide-ranging impact on young people's lives, affecting their finances, relationships, mental wellbeing, and physical health. This report presents a high-level synthesis of the lived realities of gambling and gambling-related harms of CYP, structured around five key areas of discussion:

1. CYP's experiences and interpretations of gambling and gambling-related harms
2. The role of marketing and advertising as key drivers of harm and the importance of regulation
3. Inequalities in the distribution of harm among sub-groups of CYP
4. Barriers to accessing support and principles for effective intervention
5. Priorities for future research and interventions

Alongside GambleAware-funded research, the report also draws on relevant external research to contextualise findings and set out priorities for future commissioning of research, prevention, and treatment based on the evidence presented. In doing so, it provides an up-to-date picture of the state of gambling-related harms affecting CYP in GB.

Background and context

This section examines the overall prevalence of gambling and gambling-related harm among CYP in GB. It also explores the pathways through which CYP are exposed to and begin participating in gambling, and provides a brief overview of the gambling sector context at the time of writing, which informs how CYP experience gambling and gambling related harms.

Prevalence of gambling and gambling-related harms amongst CYP

Official statistics from the Gambling Commission show that, as of 2025, 30% of 11 to 17 year olds had spent their own money on gambling in the previous 12 months. This represents a 3% increase in the number of CYP gambling from 2024, which the Gambling Commission posits is largely driven by a rise in unregulated gambling (18% in 2025, compared to 15% in 2024). 23% were engaging in regulated forms of gambling, and 1.2% of young people experienced 'problem gambling' (i.e. had a DSM-IV-MR-J score 4 or more).¹ Notably, the Gambling Commission found that young people were more likely to be exposed to gambling-related advertisements online than offline, and 31% of young people reported that they had seen gambling-related content advertised by influencers.¹

These findings are supported by GambleAware's 2024 Annual Treatment and Support Survey, which highlights similar trends among young adults aged 18 -24. While those aged 18-24 are less likely to engage in any form of gambling compared to the general adult population in GB (44% vs. 61%), those who do gamble are over twice as likely to be experiencing 'problem gambling', as defined by scoring 8 or greater on the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI – a 27 point questionnaire used to measure problems with gambling) (19% vs. 6%).² This suggests that although gambling participation may be lower among young adults, those who do gamble face disproportionately higher harms.

Understanding gambling-related harms amongst CYP

Despite gambling being illegal for those under 18 years old, some CYP in GB experience harm from gambling - either through their own gambling behaviour or as an 'affected other', meaning they are negatively impacted by

someone else's gambling. Notably, in 2024, 26% of young people reported that they have seen family members they live with gamble.³ In 2025, this figure rose significantly to 29%.¹

CYP can be particularly susceptible to gambling and gambling-related harms because of developmental factors which influence their decision making.⁴ This can include overestimating their control over outcomes, being more likely to take risks or act impulsively, and limited understanding of statistics and probabilities.⁴ However, gambling-related harms are complex, and are not only the result of individual behaviours or characteristics. They are shaped and amplified by the interplay of the social, political, and economic context in which CYP live.⁵ The harms CYP experience are therefore influenced both by developmental differences, and by broader social drivers such as the normalisation of gambling, targeted marketing practices, and increased barriers to seeking and accessing support.

Technological developments have contributed to the widespread growth and diversification of gambling in GB, across both the regulated and unregulated markets. As a result, CYP are increasingly exposed to gambling marketing, behaviours, and related harms. A third of 11-17 year olds (31%) and just under half of 18-24s (45%) state that in their everyday lives, they see gambling adverts most often on their phones / computers / tablets, through social media, games and apps⁶, yet legislation and regulation in GB do not go far enough to protect CYP, particularly within online environments where much of their exposure occurs.

GB legislative context

In 2023, the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) released a White Paper⁷ outlining the largest proposed reforms to the gambling sector since the 2005 Gambling Act. While the paper represents a step forward, it does not adequately address the harms experienced by CYP, such as exposure to gambling marketing and advertising. It cited a “lack of conclusive evidence on the relationship between advertising and harm” as a reason for inaction. However, experts have argued that this framing is misleading, arguing that gambling advertisements influence CYP in their everyday environments, and called for increased regulation and protections for this group.⁸

One step towards increased protection is the recent introduction of a statutory levy on gambling operators within GB.⁹ This levy will fund independent research (led by United Kingdom Research and Innovation (UKRI)), as well as prevention and treatment services (led by the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) and the National Health Service in England (NHSE)). These structural changes will have positive implications for how CYP encounter and experience gambling, and how harms are identified and addressed in the future.

Methodology

This section provides an overview of the methodology used to review the evidence included in this paper, engage with lived experience, and outlines the limitations of the approach.

Overview and objectives

This report was written between August and December 2025 during a time of sector transition after the introduction of the new statutory levy system and appointment of three new commissioners for gambling harms research, prevention, and treatment.¹⁰ The purpose of this report is to help inform the new commissioners about what the state of gambling harms are for CYP in GB, and present a concise representation of GambleAware-funded research and recommendations for the incoming system.

It synthesises research published between 2020-2025 and includes findings relating to people aged 24 or younger. Research published by GambleAware prior to 2020 was not included, in order to ensure findings are relevant, up-to-date and reflect both GambleAware's organisational strategy and changes in the wider ecosystem. Reports were thematically analysed using an informal evidence mapping approach and the emerging themes were presented to an advisory panel of young adults, the Youth Advisory Group (YAG) for review and comment. The final thematic analysis presented in this report incorporates insights from both the published research reports and reflections from the YAG.

This report has been developed to:

- Contribute to a clearer understanding of how gambling-related harms are experienced by CYP in GB and the factors that shape these harms.
- Distil findings from GambleAware-funded research into clear, actionable insights and recommendations to inform policy, practice, and the commissioning of future research on gambling-related harms among CYP.
- Support the development and commissioning of more effective prevention, support, and treatment initiatives for gambling-related harms among CYP.

Evidence mapping and thematic analysis

To understand the existing body of work on gambling-related harms among CYP in GB, a literature mapping exercise was conducted using reports published in the GambleAware Publication Library between 2020 and 2025 that included findings relevant to CYP up to the age 24.

Each report was summarised to capture its key findings and recommendations. These summaries were then coded thematically to identify cross-cutting insights across GambleAware-funded research, as well as any distinct subgroup findings. The emerging themes were discussed and agreed upon by the report's authors, before being presented to the YAG for review.

The YAG provided feedback through a series of focus group-style sessions, where members challenged, refined, and expanded the themes, particularly highlighting areas where young people felt their experiences or perspectives were missing. A revised version of the themes were presented to the group for further review, and the final themes and report were approved by the YAG prior to publication.

Youth Advisory Group (YAG)

The YAG consisted of six young adults aged 18-26 years old, coordinated through Ygam's University Student Panel. Although one panel member was slightly older than the research age range, they had experienced gambling harm between ages 11–24 and were therefore able to provide valuable insights. Three YAG sessions were held to guide the development of the report and the accompanying youth-accessible summary. In each session, participants provided feedback on the research design, themes, structure, and language, helping to ensure the final outputs reflect the voices and lived experiences of CYP in GB.

Participants were provided with briefing notes which outlined the purpose of the sessions, how their feedback would be used, assurance that they may withdraw at any time, and signposting them to support if needed. Informed consent was collected by Ygam staff, and participants were remunerated with a £30 voucher per session. Sessions were facilitated and moderated by a Ygam staff member who the group were familiar with to support open discussion. Sessions were not recorded; instead, two GambleAware staff attended to take anonymised notes which were then used to guide the report's writing.

Limitations

While this approach provides valuable insight into the evidence base on gambling-related harms among CYP in GB, certain limitations should be noted. This synthesis primarily draws on GambleAware-funded research published between 2020 and 2025, with some external research referenced for context, in order to further evidence claims and to add additional perspectives relating to gambling harms and young people not covered within the GambleAware body of research. As the key themes have been shaped by the scope and focus of GambleAware's research, findings may not capture the full breadth of evidence across the wider academic and policy landscape – particularly as the sector is evolving rapidly.

The report followed an informal evidence mapping and thematic synthesis approach, drawing on principles of narrative synthesis¹¹ to identify and interpret findings. While not a systematic review or based on a validated framework, the process was structured and transparent.

Understanding CYPs experiences and interpretation of gambling and gambling-related harm

CYPs experiences and perceptions of gambling are shaped early in life and influenced by a complex interplay of social, cultural, and digital factors. From family environments and peer relationships to the growing overlap between gaming and gambling, these influences normalise gambling behaviours and shape how CYP understand risk, harm, and motivation. This section explores how these experiences evolve over time and contribute to CYPs attitudes, engagement, and emotional responses to gambling.

Early gambling experiences

Early life influences, including family, religious or cultural norms, strongly shape CYPs perceptions and experiences of gambling.¹² For many CYP, their first introduction to gambling is at a young age through family members or friends in social settings.^{13,14} Parents, caregivers or family members may buy them a lottery ticket, place small sports bets on their behalf, or encourage them to play bingo. Among peers, CYP may be introduced through friends when playing games of chance, placing small bets, or playing video games which mirror the experience of gambling.^{13,15} In these early experiences, gambling is often portrayed by family and friends as a casual or social activity, or as a way to bond with others or build social connections.^{13,16}

Attitudes towards gambling evolve over time, and are influenced by factors such as age, relationships, socioeconomic status, or cultural and religious contexts.¹² For example, children who grow up as an 'affected other' are often exposed to gambling harms at a younger age than their peers, and thus can develop an early awareness of the ways in which gambling can harm themselves and loved ones.^{12,13} This exposure and subsequent awareness of gambling can influence perceptions towards gambling, and the uptake or avoidance of their own gambling in later life. For example, children with a parent who experienced problems with gambling (PGSI 8+) came to view gambling as a legitimate or easy way for financial gain, to help support the family as they grew older, or as a form of escapism from difficult life situations.¹³

Belonging to a community where gambling is considered morally unacceptable can act as a protective factor, discouraging CYP from gambling.¹⁷ However, if CYP from these communities do take part in gambling they may be less likely to seek help if they experience harm, due to shame or stigma associated with gambling within their communities.^{17,18} Early exposure to gambling therefore has a complex and nuanced impact on how CYP understand, engage with, and are affected by gambling throughout their lives.^{12,13}

The blurred lines between gambling and gaming

The majority of CYP in GB engage in video gaming, with the UK Government reporting this figure at 91% of CYP aged 3-15.¹⁹ This is most often through online platforms that are also connected to social media and other digital environments.¹⁵ Consequently, over a third of 11-24s (37%) say they have been exposed to gambling-related marketing, in games that feel like gambling. 27% of CYP say they have gone on to interact (like/click/share/watch) with such content.⁶ Increasingly, features that mirror the structural and psychological elements of gambling are being integrated into these games, forming a profitable and deeply embedded aspect of the gaming ecosystem.^{15,20,21} Such features include chance-based mechanics and in-game reward systems like loot boxes, skins betting, gacha mechanics, and betting within esports or on streaming platforms such as Twitch.^{14,15,21} These elements are frequently reinforced through sensory stimuli including bright, flashing colours, cartoon-style graphics, and auditory cues drawn from online gambling environments that are designed to simulate wins or 'near misses'.^{13,21} Together, these features blur the boundary between gambling and gaming and reinforce behaviours that contribute to harm either directly through gameplay, by serving as a 'gateway' into gambling, or by normalising gambling-like behaviours.²¹

This blurred definition between gaming and gambling is further reinforced by the lack of regulation within GB, which currently fails to define gambling-like content as a form of gambling.^{20,22} This leaves CYP exposed to potentially harmful practices within environments that are widely marketed as entertainment. This lack of protection may be particularly harmful for younger CYP or those with special educational needs, who may be especially drawn in to such content by the sensory nature of gambling advertising and marketing, and less able to identify or recognise problematic gambling behaviours.^{12,13} While most CYP can easily identify traditional forms of gambling and recognise UK gambling brands, many do not perceive gambling-like content within gaming as gambling or something that may lead to harm.¹³ Indeed, 64% of 11-24s indicate that gambling ads made gambling seem harmless.⁶

Normalisation of gambling behaviours

From a young age, CYP are exposed to high levels of gambling imagery in their everyday life through family and friends, marketing and advertising, or in online spaces.^{13,14} Betting shops, gambling logos on sports jerseys, hearing family and friends discuss odds, and gambling-like elements in social media content or video games, all contribute to making gambling seem like a normal and fun social activity.^{13,15}

This normalisation is reinforced through the involvement of trusted adults and public figures. Parents or other relatives can model gambling as a routine pastime or bonding activity.¹³ Additionally, influencers and celebrities who livestream gambling or display sponsorships can perpetuate the idea that gambling can enhance social status or provide independence through financial success.^{13,15,23} Social media algorithms which promote this content can create an echo chamber, giving CYP the impression gambling is an ordinary or aspirational part of life.^{13,20}

The impact of the normalisation of gambling is evident in how CYP define gambling. Some CYP exclude certain activities from their personal definition of gambling if they believe that a certain level of skill is involved in the activity (e.g. fantasy football or stock trading), or that low-stakes activities (e.g. scratch cards) are harmless.^{13,15} Advertising and media further perpetuate this idea, often depicting gambling as a fun, glamorous, or even skill-based activity, for example, when encouraging the viewer to make associations between sports betting and sporting knowledge.^{13,15,23} These perceptions reinforce the belief that gambling is controllable, entertaining, or without serious risk, further entrenching its position as a normal feature of CYP's social and digital lives.

Ultimately, the impact of such normalisation is seen in the high rates at which CYP are able to correctly identify gambling brands (11-17s - 89%, 18-24s - 94%).⁶ Interestingly, a sense of fatigue from this exposure and normalisation may be more common amongst older CYP, with 62% of 18-24s stating that they see too much gambling content/ads, compared to 47% of 11-17s. Still, 60% of all CYP (11-24s) feel that gambling adverts do not give enough warning about the potential risks of gambling - possibly due to the absence of health warnings.⁶

Motivations to gamble

CYP are motivated to gamble for a variety of reasons, including excitement and entertainment, to relieve feelings of boredom/curiosity, the desire to bond with friends or family, or to gain financial or social status. For some, gambling can be a form of escapism or a means of coping with negative emotions.^{13,20} These motivations are influenced by the wider context in which CYP live. Those from religious or ethnic communities where gambling is discouraged or stigmatised may be less motivated to engage in gambling activities.¹⁷ For others, gambling may be socially accepted or even encouraged as a form of recreation or community participation.^{13,18}

Early exposure to gambling also impacts CYP's motivation and emotional responses towards gambling.^{13,16} Parents, friends or family members who gamble model to CYP (whether intentionally or not) that gambling is a normal, harmless, or even rewarding way to socially connect, or to make money.^{12,13} Many CYP are therefore unaware of the harm gambling can cause until significant problems arise, and emotions shift from initial excitement to feelings of regret, anxiety, or shame if relationships, finances, or their wellbeing is impacted.¹³ However, research shows that CYP who are 'affected others' have often grown up around loved ones who have experienced harms, and therefore have an increased understanding of how gambling can be harmful compared to similarly aged peers.¹³ For some, having seen and experienced harm as a result of a loved one's gambling may lead to caution or avoidance of engaging in gambling behaviours themselves due to feelings of anxiety, mistrust, or shame. For others, experiencing harm at a younger age as an 'affected other' can lead to engaging in gambling as a coping strategy or way to manage stress, negative emotions, or gain financial independence or freedom.¹³ Collectively, CYP's motivations to gamble and emotional responses to gambling are nuanced and shaped by the interplay of personal, social, and environmental factors.

Marketing and advertising influence and gaps in regulation

CYP are increasingly exposed to gambling-related marketing through online and digital spaces that blend entertainment, gaming, and para-social interactions. Social media platforms and influencers play an important role in shaping CYP's awareness and perceptions of gambling, often promoting content that is difficult to distinguish from regular online entertainment. Meanwhile, existing regulation has struggled to keep pace with these rapidly changing marketing environments. This section provides an overview of the key channels through which CYP encounter gambling content and the regulatory gaps that allow such exposure to persist.

Key channels where CYP encounter gambling content

Social media and influencers play a significant role in shaping how CYP are exposed to, and make sense of, gambling-related marketing and advertising.^{13,20} This exposure is significantly more of an issue for older CYP aged 18-24, who report coming into contact with gambling-related marketing on social media at almost double the rate that younger CYP do (43% vs. 25%).⁶ Gambling content and messaging frequently appear on social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Twitch and Kick, often through celebrities, influencers, or streamers. These creators may live-stream gambling sessions, post short-form videos, or integrate endorsements, giveaways, and promotions into content.^{15,20} Influencers are particularly persuasive because CYP perceive them as peers or role models, often forming parasocial relationships or one-sided connections that create a sense of familiarity and trust^{23,24}. However, they do not need to be 'likeable' to be persuasive to CYP. Instead, CYP are

influenced to trust influencers and their messages as their content displays traits that CYP value, such as financial success, humour, or skill, making gambling-related messaging feel credible.^{15,23}

The direct and interactive methods through which influencers engage with their audience further the sense of trust and authenticity. Influencers live-stream themselves gambling, offer tips on how to 'win' games, or offer promo-codes to incentivise participation in gambling.^{13,15} Online marketing techniques, such as posting 24-hour Instagram stories, posting sponsorships without clear disclosures, and reposting of promotional or misleading content, allow gambling operators to advertise in ways that evade traditional advertising and marketing regulation.^{20,22} Algorithms and targeted advertising further amplify this exposure by curating content based on user engagement, creating online echo chambers that repeatedly expose CYP to gambling-related material and harmful messaging.^{20,22}

Regulatory gaps

Regulation of gambling marketing and advertising in GB has not kept pace with the rapidly evolving digital landscape where many CYP spend the majority of their time.²⁵ Despite a growing evidence base on the harmful nature of gambling marketing and advertising, GB continues to rely on self-regulation and responsibility for regulating gambling marketing is currently split across multiple government bodies and regulators.²² Additionally, advertising rules and gambling legislation in GB remains largely focused on traditional broadcast and print media, or age-based restrictions such as watershed bans which CYP can easily bypass.^{7,22}

This patchwork approach leaves significant gaps for influencer marketing, gambling-like content within games such as loot boxes and skins betting, and targeting of younger audiences through social media algorithms.^{7,15} As a result, there is a high risk of CYP being exposed to persuasive and harmful gambling marketing within digital spaces that are largely unmonitored or unregulated. This reinforces the blurred lines between gambling and gaming content, and the normalisation of gambling amongst CYP.²⁰

In contrast, several European countries, including the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Belgium, have introduced stronger advertising restrictions in response to evidence that CYP are at risk of harm due to the prolific and addictive nature of online gambling or the normalisation of gambling through marketing and advertising.²⁵ Across GB, both CYP and sector stakeholders have expressed strong support for increased gambling marketing regulation due to concerns over the amount of advertising and its harmful impact.^{13,20,22}

GambleAware's policy position highlights several urgent regulatory priority areas impacting CYP. These include addressing the **persistent exposure to gambling** in-person and online. Frequent exposure normalises gambling and can increase the risk of harm later in life.⁸ When asked about exposure to gambling and gambling adverts, 68% of CYP 18-24 agree that it's difficult to avoid gambling advertising and marketing.⁶ CYP also expressed a desire for less advertising, more honesty, and greater protection for vulnerable people.⁶

Gambling marketing is exacerbating harm of over a million individuals experiencing 'problem gambling' (PGSI 8+). These harms extend to 'affected others' of those who gamble, including CYP.⁶ These impacts are exacerbated by a **lack of effective health messaging** on gambling adverts to inform consumers of the risk of harms and a lack of consistency in signposting to support. In the same survey, CYP shared that they felt gambling operators and advertisers were "grooming children into thinking gambling is exciting and fun and win lots of money. You [advertisers] need to put the dangers and the loss of money on adverts".⁶ Another young person shared that if they could speak to operators/advertisers, they would tell them to "focus more on promoting responsible gambling rather than just excitement or winning. Many adverts make gambling look like an easy way to make

money, which can be misleading. I think adverts should include clearer messages about setting limits, the risks of addiction, and where to get help.”⁶

Additionally, the **over-reliance on self-regulatory mechanisms** has proven ineffective at ensuring best practice and protection for CYP. A multifaced approach to reduce gambling harm through a stronger regulatory system is required. Earlier, it was noted that there was a difference between younger and older CYP in terms of reaching fatigue with the level of gambling content they were exposed to, with the older cohort of CYP significantly more likely to feel this way. However, both groups are in consensus as it relates to regulation; overall, 84% of CYP (both older and younger) agreed that there should be messages about the risk of gambling, on gambling adverts and websites. 73% agreed that more should be done to reduce the amount of advertising they see and 64% agreed that gambling companies shouldn't be allowed to promote their offerings through celebrities and influences.⁶

Among the minority of respondents who believed ads could exist, if they followed stricter practice, there was a desire for increased ethicality. One young person shared that they thought “gambling adverts need to include a message saying that people should gamble at their own risk. Gambling is addictive and can ruin people's lives. It doesn't have to be completely banned, as it can help people, but a warning needs to be put in.”⁶

Inequalities in gambling harm among CYP

Gambling harm among CYP in GB, much like in the adult population, is not experienced evenly. Some groups are consistently exposed to more harm than their peers. These include CYP from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, from minoritised ethnic communities, those who are neurodivergent or have experience mental health challenges, those growing up in families where gambling is normalised, and young boys.^{1,12}

When these influences intersect, such as if a young person experiences both poverty and mental health challenges, the impact can be greater and more complex. The differences in harm experienced are often driven by structural disadvantages, discrimination, and marginalisation, which impact both the likelihood in being exposed to gambling and experiencing harm.^{17,18} This section provides an overview of the key factors associated with increased gambling harm among CYP and how these factors shape different experiences of harm.

Socioeconomic background plays a key role in shaping how gambling-related harms are distributed. Young people growing up in poverty or deprived areas are more likely to encounter gambling, partly as there is a higher distribution of gambling venues in more deprived areas.¹⁸ Financial hardship can also make gambling seem like an attractive way to make money or achieve social status for young people.¹³ Among young adults i.e. 18-24 year olds, those living in the 20% most deprived of areas report more than double the rate of 'problem gambling' (PGSI 8+) compared to their peers living in the 20% least deprived of areas (11% vs. 4%).²⁶ This combination of heightened exposure to gambling and financial pressure can also increase how persuasive gambling marketing feels to these young people. More than half of 11-17 year olds agree that gambling advertisements, particularly those featuring celebrities, make gambling appear to be an 'easy way to make money'.²³ Similarly, when influencers promote gambling, young people are even more likely to view it as a way to gain wealth or popularity and social status.^{13,20}

Socioeconomic status plays a role even when its differences are perceived rather than necessarily true; feelings of relative deprivation or having less than one's peers have also been linked to a greater likelihood of gambling among CYP.¹²

Ethnicity also shapes how gambling is experienced by CYP. Young people from minority ethnic backgrounds or migrant communities often face additional pressures in society, such as racism, discrimination, and marginalisation - particularly income inequality driven by structural discrimination which can increase the motivation for people from ethnic minority communities to gamble for financial reasons.¹⁷ These factors can make gambling feel like a way to escape life's stressors or cope with hardship, while also making it harder to access support.^{17,18} Among 18-25 year olds from ethnic minority backgrounds, those from Black ethnic groups experience the highest rates of harm: 42% report some level of gambling harm (PGSI 1+) vs. 20% of individuals from White, Asian or 'Other' ethnic backgrounds, and 23% experience 'problem gambling' (PGSI 8+), compared to 12% from Asian backgrounds, 6% from White backgrounds and 8% from 'Other' racial backgrounds.²⁶ These inequalities reflect how structural and social exclusion, as well as higher exposure to gambling in disadvantaged areas, create situations in which young people are more likely to experience harm.

Neurodivergent CYP, particularly those who are autistic or have ADHD, are more likely to experience gambling-related harms than their neurotypical peers. Many of the characteristics associated with neurodivergence, such as impulsivity, sensory-seeking, challenges with emotional regulation, and a desire for stimulation, can make gambling particularly appealing.¹⁶ While adults experiencing 'problem gambling' (PGSI 8+) make up just under 3% of the population overall, they account for around 15% of people with ADHD and 26% of those with intermittent explosive disorder.²⁷ Although these figures come from adult data, they point to a similar pattern among 18-25 year olds; neurodivergent 18-25 year olds are nearly three times as likely to experience 'problem gambling' (PGSI 8+) as those who are neurotypical (13% vs. 5%).²⁶ Early exposure also plays an important role for neurodivergent CYP. When gambling is introduced through family members, it is often seen as a way to connect and bond, shaping more positive attitudes that persist into adulthood.^{13,16,28} Children with special educational needs are also drawn to the sensory and visual stimulation online gambling and gambling-like activities, and may experience an 'adrenaline rush' when engaging in these activities.¹³

CYP with mental health challenges are also overrepresented among those who experience gambling harm.^{12,18} Gambling can become a coping mechanism for those dealing with anxiety or low mood, seen as a way to escape negative feelings temporarily, but often leading to worsened emotional wellbeing, disrupted sleep due to stress, and increased feelings of shame.¹³ These experiences can also make it more difficult to recognise gambling as a problem or to seek help.^{13,18} Among 18-24 year olds experiencing any level of gambling problems (PGSI 1+), 45% report low mental wellbeing and nearly a quarter (23%) are at a high risk of suicidality - both worse outcomes than among older people who gamble.²⁶ A meta-analysis of longitudinal studies has also found a clear association between gambling behaviour and depression, highlighting how closely these experiences are linked.¹²

Family environment strongly shapes children's understanding of and engagement with gambling. When gambling is normalised in a household, often by parents or other family members gambling regularly, children are more likely to see it as a normal part of adult life.¹² Compared to children who do not have a close family member that gambles, children in these families have a much greater understanding of what gambling is and are more likely to recognise gambling operator brands.^{13,14} Younger children in these families may be aware that gambling can lead to tension or arguments but may not fully understand the risks until later in life.^{12,13} Families can act as powerful socialisers, potentially teaching young people harmful gambling behaviours. However, families can also be a source of protection if they are able to recognise when harms are occurring, provide emotional support, and help young people access treatment or support when needed.¹²

Gender also plays a role in rates of gambling activity and gambling harm. International evidence consistently shows that young men and boys are more likely to take part in gambling than young women and girls.^{12,15} Boys and young men have also reported participating in more types of gambling activities, including being eight times

more likely to participate in fantasy sports betting, four times more likely to participate in sweep stakes, and three times more likely to participate in esports betting.¹⁵

Overall, gambling harm among CYP is shaped by social and structural inequalities. These inequalities can intersect and reinforce each other, meaning that the greatest harms may be experienced by those already experiencing disadvantage. In order to address them, support can not rely on self-identification of harm or wait until harm is presenting in adulthood. Addressing inequalities in harm must include a consideration of the wider social and economic conditions that surround gambling-related harms in CYP.²⁹

Barriers to accessing support and principles for effective interventions

For CYP experiencing gambling-related harms, barriers to accessing support operate at multiple levels - including individual, family, service, and systemic. These barriers are often most pronounced for young people already experiencing disadvantage or marginalisation (as discussed in Section 3). This section outlines the key barriers to support identified in GambleAware-funded research, as well as the overarching principles that underpin effective interventions for CYP.

A key barrier is that **many CYP do not recognise their gambling as potentially harmful**, nor do they always understand what is considered gambling. Those first exposed to gambling through family members, friends, or online games often see activities such as lottery scratchcards given as gifts, arcade machines, skin betting, loot boxes, or prize draws as 'harmless fun'.¹³ This lack of recognition can delay both self-identification of harm and access to support.^{12,13}

Shame, stigma, and fear of judgment also frequently prevent young people from seeking help. Qualitative evidence shows that many CYP worry about being blamed, getting into trouble, or bringing shame on their families.¹³ Some fear criminal consequences, particularly if they have lost money, taken money from their parents, or gambled before turning 18.¹³ Stigma is heightened in communities where gambling is culturally considered a taboo, or among CYP who already feel scrutinised because of other aspects of their identity. As a result, some choose to hide their gambling to avoid negative assumptions.¹⁶

Barriers also arise when **support services are designed primarily for adults**. Many existing services use clinical language, formal processes, and referral pathways that do not meet the needs of CYP.^{4,13} Young people describe wanting confidential, youth-friendly ways to seek help (such as chat or text services) that feel private and accessible.²⁰ This is particularly important for neurodivergent CYP, who may become anxious or overwhelmed by complex or information-heavy services.¹⁶

Another challenge is **low visibility and awareness of where to find support**. Many CYP, as well as their parents, carers, and schools, are unaware of specialist gambling services or how to access them.¹³ Signposting is often inconsistent, and gambling-related harms are rarely spoken about in everyday conversations, particularly compared with alcohol or drug use.^{4,13}

These challenges are **even more pronounced for CYP from marginalised groups**. CYP from minority ethnic or migrant backgrounds may face language barriers, lack access to culturally representative services, or mistrust of health and support services.¹⁷ CYP who are socioeconomically disadvantaged may find the cost, travel requirements, or competing pressures of daily life difficult.¹⁸ Neurodivergent CYP may encounter sensory environments or communication styles that are inaccessible, while those with mental health challenges often face fragmented support systems that do not integrate gambling support alongside other services they use.^{16,18}

Together, these barriers create multiple layers of exclusion, which leads to many CYP experiencing gambling-related harms struggling to receive the support they need.

Principles for effective support

1. Co-designed, youth-centred, and tailored to diverse needs.

Support is most effective when it is co-created with CYP. Co-design ensures that services reflect the language, priorities, and lived experiences of CYP, helping to build trust and engagement.^{4,13,16} This approach should extend to how services are delivered- from communication style and content, to visual design and platform choice - particularly to reflect CYP's experience in the digital world.^{4,15,20} Support must also be tailored to meet the needs of CYP with different backgrounds and experiences. This includes providing structured, sensory-aware environments and alternative communication options for neurodivergent CYP;¹⁶ culturally competent support and community partnerships for CYP from minoritised backgrounds;¹⁷ and holistic wellbeing approaches with other services where poverty, parental gambling, or mental health challenges are also experienced.^{13,18} Lived experience from diverse CYP groups should inform service design at every stage.⁴

2. Proactive, early, and embedded in everyday settings.

Interventions should meet CYP where they already are (in schools, youth services, community spaces, and online) rather than relying on them to identify their own needs and seek help.^{4,13,20} Prevention and early intervention should be woven into environments that young people regularly engage with, such as the education curriculum and digital platforms, to normalise conversations about gambling and prevent harm from escalating.^{4,13,20}

3. Engaging families, peers, and communities.

Families and peers strongly shape CYP's attitudes towards gambling. Equipping parents and carers to talk about gambling, set boundaries, and spot signs of harm can reduce stigma and improve early identification of harm.^{13,20} Peer led services can also help to reduce stigma and make support content more relatable.^{4,12,13} Training for educators, youth workers, and support providers about gambling and related topics such as online safety, mental health, and neurodiversity ensures trusted adults feel confident discussing gambling with CYP and signposting them to the right support.^{4,16,18,20}

4. Accessible, visible, and empowering.

Support should be easy to find, understand, and use, with self-referral options, low-barrier onboarding, and digital access such as chat or text. Consistent signposting across CYP-facing settings, and as part of broader conversations around mental health, online safety, or substance use, increases visibility and normalises conversations about gambling harm.^{2,4,13,20} Building on insights co-created with young people in GambleAware-funded research, effective interventions should not only protect CYP from harm, but also empower them to recognise, questions, and navigate risks in digital and social environments.²⁰

Principles in practice

Embedding these principles into delivery ensures that support for CYP is proactive, accessible, and genuinely responsive to their needs. When services are co-designed, collaborative, and rooted in the real environments of young people, they are more likely to build trust, improve engagement, and achieve meaningful outcomes. The short case study below illustrates how applying these principles in practice can strengthen prevention, enhance safeguarding, and create more effective, youth-centred services. An expanded version is provided in Appendix C.

Case Study: Ygam Delivery Programmes – Train the Trainer Approach (Condensed)

Ygam, the UK charity preventing gaming and gambling harms, shows how effective practice principles create impactful, youth-centred services. Its *Train the Trainer* model equips professionals to confidently discuss harms with young people, supported by curriculum-mapped resources and a Family Hub for families.

Co-designed and youth-led: Resources are created with young people, educators, parents, and community groups to ensure they are relevant and inclusive. Advisory panels and student ambassadors with lived experience shape programme development.

Proactive and embedded: With 450+ curriculum-aligned resources, Ygam integrates prevention education across schools, colleges, universities, and youth services. Peer-led university interventions help normalise conversations about gaming and gambling harms.

Engaging families and communities: Programmes support parents, carers, and community groups to spot risks and access support. Research partnerships and community advisers help ensure materials reflect diverse needs, with translation and interpreter options improving accessibility.

Accessible and empowering: Digital tools, workshops, alumni training, and social media content make guidance visible, engaging, and easy to use.

Impact: Ygam has reached over five million young people and trained 32,000+ professionals, with 99% feeling better equipped to safeguard CYP. Independent evaluations and strong partnerships further evidence its effectiveness.

Research gaps and priorities for future work

While the evidence base on gambling-related harms among CYP has grown in recent years, there are several critical gaps in knowledge, prevention and treatment, as well as limitations to the current body of work. Addressing these gaps is critical to reducing harm, improving understanding, and developing effective interventions for CYP. This section identifies key gaps identified by the literature included in this report, priorities for future research, and what areas future prevention or treatment initiatives should focus on.

Research gaps and priorities

Across GambleAware-funded research on CYP, there are gaps and limitations that future research commissioners should prioritise. While there has been significant progress in understanding gambling harm among CYP in recent years, there remains a need for more inclusive, longitudinal, and youth-centred research.

There are several **methodological limitations** in the current evidence base that should be addressed. Many studies rely on small or non-representative samples, which limits the generalisability of findings. Measures of gambling harm are often self-reported and subject to recall bias. Existing studies often adapt measurement tools developed for adults, such as the PGSI, which may not fully capture the experiences of gambling harm among CYP.^{12,20}

There is also a **lack of longitudinal data** tracking how gambling attitudes and behaviours evolve over time, though some longer-term datasets are available.^{3,28} Longitudinal studies are particularly necessary when evaluating interventions for reducing harm later in life for CYP, and to understand how behaviours may change over time. Additionally, there is a need for more co-designed research, where young people are involved in the design, delivery, and dissemination of research to ensure that findings are relevant and meaningful.^{4,20}

Beyond methodology, there are some key gaps in subject matter and focus within the evidence base explored. This includes **research on CYP as affected others**, despite strong emerging evidence that early exposure to harm through a parent's or other family member's gambling shapes CYP's attitudes and behaviours.^{12,13} Further research on **marginalised and minoritised groups of CYP** is also crucial. It is particularly important that research is conducted on the experience of gambling among children outside mainstream education, children from migrant or traveller communities, and CYP who are neurodivergent or with special educational needs.^{12,13,18,20} Further research on CYP from ethnic, linguistic, and religious minority communities is also needed, particularly relating to the nuanced role of culture and religion as both a driver of harm and a protective factor.¹⁷ Again, it is critical that CYP with lived experience of these identities are involved in the research process to ensure findings are relevant and meaningful.

Digital environments and unregulated gambling and gambling-like activities online should be a focus for future research. More understanding of the mechanics of unregulated forms of gambling is needed, as well as greater understanding of how gambling-related content spreads across social media and various online platforms.^{13,15,20} Esports has been identified as an emerging area of gambling among CYP where very little is known about how CYP are engaging with it and what the long term harms could look like. The blurred line between gambling and gaming continues to be an area in which more exploration is needed in order to create targeted initiatives to reduce harm for CYP engaging in both activities.¹³

In summary, future research should focus on longitudinal and participatory approaches with clear and actionable recommendations that reflect the realities of CYP's digital lives and diverse experiences. Co-designed and inclusive methodologies will be crucial to continuing to develop understanding of gambling-related harms among CYP.

Prevention priorities

Evidence across GambleAware-funded research points to the need for proactive, developmentally appropriate prevention measures that reach CYP in their everyday environments.^{4,13,20} Effective prevention must balance protection with empowerment and equip CYP with the knowledge and confidence to navigate gambling and gambling-like activities in online and social spaces.²⁰

GambleAware has created a set of key policy asks, related to the marketing of gambling operators, which shape the perceptions and behaviours of young people. These include:^{8,22}

- **Increase age protections** on social media platforms, to include robust age assurance to view gambling-related content and strengthening device-level age verification on internet-enabled devices.
- **A pre-watershed ban on all broadcast gambling advertising** (TV/Video On Demand/Radio) including broadcast sponsorships
- All gambling marketing to include independent evidence-led **health warnings** with effective signposting to support
- **A ban on gambling marketing at sports events** (including removal of sponsorships from sports clothing, merchandise, and wider stadium).

Beyond policy changes, there is a pressing need to **embed prevention across education, youth services, and digital spaces**. Evidence across GambleAware-funded research identifies several key priorities for prevention activities among CYP. Prevention should prioritise **education and improving media literacy** among CYP, to empower CYP to recognise gambling related marketing, or when and how an ad is trying to influence behaviour.

This is especially important for younger CYP aged 11-17, who are significantly less likely to say that it's easy to tell when gambling posts are ads, compared to older CYP aged 18-24 (43% vs. 50%).⁶ CYP are more likely to seek support through education, health, or youth settings than dedicated gambling services.^{4,13} Gambling awareness, screening, and **brief support should be embedded across schools, youth services, and online wellbeing initiatives**. Education should focus on helping CYP and parents identify gambling and gambling-like activities and content, and raise awareness of the risks of gambling not limited to financial harm but also emotional, relationship, and wellbeing impacts.^{13,20}

Social media and gaming platforms should take greater responsibility for CYP safety by enforcing age-based restrictions, increasing transparency, and include health warnings on gambling and gambling-like products.²⁰ However, only health warnings and self-identification of harm cannot be relied upon. Educators, youth workers, and mental health practitioners should be supported and trained to identify early signs of gambling harm.^{4,12} Integrating training into existing safeguarding training or mental health frameworks would help equip adults with the skills and language needed to support CYP in realising that they are experiencing gambling harm and navigate accessing support for it. Embedding gambling awareness within wider wellbeing and online safety education can help to normalise open conversations and reduce stigma, ensuring gambling-related harms are seen as a public health issue.

Priorities for treatment and support

GambleAware-funded research highlights that while there is treatment and support available for CYP, there is a need for more diverse and accessible services throughout GB. Building on the principles for effective support, there is an opportunity to strengthen and expand youth services and ensure CYP affected by gambling harm are able to access appropriate support.

Treatment and support should **be youth-centred, holistic, and designed around the realities of young people's lives**. Services must continue to develop, with sustainable funding to expand capacity and reach. Support should be easy to find and use as well as offered through channels CYP are already on, such as text, chat, or online platforms.^{4,20} Services should recognise that gambling harm rarely exists in isolation and is often linked to other challenges such as mental health, financial stress, social isolation, and family dynamics.^{12,18,26,27,29}

Involving CYP in shaping, evaluating, and delivering services is essential to ensure support feels relevant and trustworthy.^{4,20} Co-designing should be built into commissioning and delivery processes, with meaningful participation from diverse groups of CYP. Continued investment in evaluation will also be vital for understanding what works best, for whom, and enabling services to adapt and improve.^{4,12}

Together, the priorities outlined above across research, prevention, and treatment highlight the need for a whole-system approach to reduce gambling-related harms among CYP. Progress has been made, but further investment, collaboration, and innovation are required to meet the scale and complexity of young people experiencing gambling harm.

Conclusion

The GambleAware-funded evidence presented in this report clearly shows that gambling-related harms among CYP require urgent, coordinated action. All stakeholders including the Government, commissioners, regulators, service providers, educators, parents, and digital platforms have a vital role to play in reducing exposure to gambling and gambling-related harms, strengthening protections, and ensuring support is available and accessible to all CYP.

Policies should prioritise prevention, restrict marketing and influencer content, and remain adaptable to the rapidly evolving digital environment. Early support and education delivered online, in youth settings, and in schools must be easy to access and responsive to young people's realities. Regulation must evolve alongside technology to address the blurred boundaries between gaming and gambling. Parents and other trusted adults should be supported to have open, non-stigmatising conversations about gambling and gambling-related harms.

Crucially, meaningful progress relies on young people being actively involved in shaping the research, policies, and programmes that affect them. Youth consultation, particularly from those with lived experience of gambling harm, leads to more relevant and effective solutions. A joined-up public health approach that links gambling harm prevention with digital regulation, education, and holistic service provision will be essential to build environments that both protect and empower young people, reducing harm they may experience now and in later life.

References

1. Ipsos. Young People and Gambling 2025: Official statistics [Internet]. London; 2025 Nov [cited 2025 Nov 17]. Available from: <https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/report/young-people-and-gambling-2025-official-statistics>
2. Gosschalk K, Cotton C, Chamberlain Z, Harmer L, Bondareva E, Mackintosh J. Annual GB Treatment and Support Survey 2024 [Internet]. London; 2025 [cited 2025 Oct 6]. Available from: https://www.gambleaware.org/media/5mpnibc4/gambleaware_2024_treatment-and-support_report_v60.pdf
3. Ipsos. Young People and Gambling 2024: Official statistics. London; 2024 Nov.
4. Davis C, Davidson K, Arden-Close E, Bolat E, Panourgia C. Interventions, Practices and Systems to Support Children and Young People at Risk of Gambling Harm: Scoping Review [Internet]. London; 2024 Jan [cited 2025 Oct 6]. Available from: https://www.gambleaware.org/media/11epzvne/cyp-and-gambling-interventions_final.pdf
5. Levy J, O'Driscoll C, Sweet A. Disproportionate Burdens of Gambling Harms Amongst Minority Communities A Review of the Literature Reviewed by [Internet]. 2020. Available from: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362093314>
6. YouGov. Young People's Reflections on Gambling Marketing: A Survey of 11-24-Year-Olds in Great Britain. London; 2025 Dec.
7. DCMS. High stakes: gambling reform for the digital age [Internet]. 2023 Apr [cited 2025 Oct 10]. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-stakes-gambling-reform-for-the-digital-age/high-stakes-gambling-reform-for-the-digital-age#chap2>
8. GambleAware. Gambling marketing in Great Britain: What needs to change and why? [Internet]. London; 2024 Jun [cited 2025 Oct 10]. Available from: <https://www.gambleaware.org/media/diwj4dwt/gambling-marketing-in-great-britain-what-needs-to-change.pdf>
9. Gambling Commission. Statutory Gambling Levy. <https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/guidance/statutory-gambling-levy>. 2025.
10. GambleAware. GambleAware statement on the new statutory gambling harms system and the future of the charity [Internet]. 2025 [cited 2025 Nov 21]. Available from: <https://www.gambleaware.org/what-we-do/news/news-articles/gambleaware-statement-on-the-new-statutory-gambling-harms-system-and-the-future-of-the-charity/>
11. Popay J, Roberts H, Sowden A, Petticrew M, Arai L, Rodgers M, et al. Guidance on the conduct of narrative synthesis in systematic reviews: A product from the ESRC Methods Programme. 2006.
12. Alma Economics. Inequalities, vulnerabilities, and risk factors for gambling harms among children and young people: Scoping Study [Internet]. London; 2023 Aug [cited 2025 Oct 6]. Available from: <https://www.gambleaware.org/media/bhrn2bvi/alma-economics-children-and-young-people-scoping-study.pdf>
13. Chalmers H, Clarke B, Wolfman A, Karet N. Qualitative Research on the Lived Experience and Views of Gambling among Children and Young People Authors of the report [Internet]. London; 2024 Apr [cited 2025 Oct 6]. Available from: https://www.gambleaware.org/media/43vm1ocs/exploring-the-lived-experience-and-views-of-gambling-among-children-and-young-people_final_0.pdf
14. Ipsos Mori. Final Synthesis Report: The impact of gambling marketing and advertising on children, young people and vulnerable adults [Internet]. London; 2020 Mar [cited 2025 Oct 6]. Available from: https://www.gambleaware.org/media/zzfdbvnu/the-effect-of-gambling-marketing-and-advertising-synthesis-report_final.pdf

15. Social Finance. Understanding trends between online gambling content, and gambling attitudes and behaviours among children and young people [Internet]. London; 2025 Sep [cited 2025 Oct 6]. Available from: https://www.gambleaware.org/media/auqdc04v/social-finance_quantitative-report_september-2025.pdf
16. IFF Research. Gambling Harms and Neurodivergence: Understanding the Context and Support for Neurodivergent People in Gambling [Internet]. London; 2025 Mar [cited 2025 Oct 6]. Available from: https://www.gambleaware.org/media/ukrkd0x2/gambling-harms-and-neurodivergence_understanding-the-context-and-support-for-neurodivergent-people-in-gambling.pdf
17. Moss N, Wheeler J, Sarkany A, Selvamanickam K, Kapadia D. Minority Communities & Gambling Harms: Qualitative and Synthesis Report [Internet]. London; 2023 Dec [cited 2025 Oct 6]. Available from: <https://www.gambleaware.org/media/2zlce2gh/minority-communities-gambling-harm-qualitative-and-synthesis-analysis.pdf>
18. Martin I, Trégan F, Bennetto R, Black OC, Brearley-Bayliss H, Sawdon E, et al. Gambling Harms and Coping with Marginalisation and Inequality: Marginalisation, Isolation and Criminalisation in Great Britain [Internet]. London; 2024 Mar [cited 2025 Oct 6]. Available from: <https://www.gambleaware.org/media/qemn1ifk/gambling-harms-among-marginalised-communities.pdf>
19. Ofcom. Online Nation: 2022 Report [Internet]. London; 2022 Jun [cited 2025 Dec 5]. Available from: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/siteassets/resources/documents/research-and-data/online-research/online-nation/2022/online-nation-2022-report.pdf?v=327992>
20. Braig L, Kelly M, Maddison J, Bussey A, de Vos C. Young people and gambling-related influencer content: Understanding exposure to and impact of gambling-related influencer content on young people and identifying potential strategies for change [Internet]. London; 2025 Sep [cited 2025 Oct 6]. Available from: https://www.gambleaware.org/media/pkfj3qir/social-finance_young-people-and-influencer-content_september-2025.pdf
21. Close J, Lloyd J. Lifting the Lid on Loot-Boxes Chance-Based Purchases in Video Games and the Convergence of Gaming and Gambling [Internet]. [cited 2025 Oct 9]. Available from: https://www.gambleaware.org/media/egljnu4x/gaming_and_gambling_report_final_0.pdf
22. Riley D, Moimoi E. Online gambling marketing: Are current regulations fit for the digital age? . London; 2025.
23. Sherbert Research, CultureStudio. The Appeal of Celebrity Ambassadors to Children & Young People Aged 11-17 [Internet]. London; 2025 Sep [cited 2025 Oct 6]. Available from: https://www.gambleaware.org/media/edhhhgcu/sherbert-research_cyp-and-celebrity-appeal_september-2025.pdf
24. Chalmers H, Karet N, Perkins J. Research on the “strong appeal” of personalities in advertising [Internet]. London; 2024 Oct [cited 2025 Oct 10]. Available from: <https://www.asa.org.uk/static/6e68135e-a8af-428c-ab3f7b4f824cf22f/Strong-appeal-of-personalities-in-advertising-ASA-Research-03-25.pdf>
25. Wilson J, Rossi R, Bransden N, Amos M, Sakis P. Drivers of Gambling Marketing Restrictions-An International Comparison [Internet]. London; 2024 Nov [cited 2025 Oct 10]. Available from: <https://www.gambleaware.org/media/bjqev1hx/drivers-of-gambling-marketing-restrictions-an-international-comparison-v3.pdf>
26. Moimoi E, Roychoudhury P. Gambling and mental health harms among young adults in Great Britain. London; 2025 Oct.
27. Alma Economics. Gambling and Mental Health: Analysis of the Annual GB Treatment and Support Survey [Internet]. London; 2023 Jun [cited 2025 Oct 6]. Available from: https://www.gambleaware.org/media/fginsrf0/gambleaware-secondary-analysis-final-report-june-2023-alma-economics_0.pdf

28. IFF Research, Sweet A, Morris T. Gambling Harms and Neurodivergence: Mapping the Evidence Landscape [Internet]. London; 2024 Oct [cited 2025 Oct 6]. Available from: https://www.gambleaware.org/media/odvfeq4j/gambling-harms-and-neurodivergence_mapping-the-evidence-landscape.pdf
29. Moimoi E, Roychoudhury P, Okonkwo S, Levy J. The Gambling Harms Inequalities Framework. London; 2025 Oct.

Appendices

Appendix A: GambleAware-Funded Research Included in Evidence Mapping

The table below lists the GambleAware-funded studies included in the evidence mapping exercise that informed this synthesis. It summarises research published between 2020 and 2025 with findings relevant to children and young people (CYP) up to age 25. The table includes details of each project's authors, methods, focus, and key themes. External research referenced in this report is not included here but is cited in the main reference list.

GambleAware-funded Research					
Title	Year	Authors / Organisations	Methodology / Approach	Focus / Population	Summary of key themes
The Appeal of Celebrity Ambassadors to Children & Young People Aged 11-17	2025	Sherbert Research; Culture Studio	Literature review; survey (n=2,100); paired depth interviews (n=24)	CYP aged 11-17	Influence of celebrity ambassadors; appeal and recognition of gambling brands among CYP
Young people and gambling-related influencer content: Understanding exposure to and impact of gambling-related influencer content on young people and identifying potential strategies for change	2025	Luisa Braig, Meg Kelly (Social Finance); Janine Maddison, Amy Bussey (Ygam); Craig de Vos (GamCare)	Interviews with sector experts (n=4); literature review; content analysis; survey (n=634); scenario testing and co-design workshops	CYP aged 11-25	Exposure to influencer content; impact on attitudes and behaviours; co-designed strategies for prevention
Understanding trends between online gambling content, and gambling attitudes and behaviours among children and young people	2025	Social Finance	Online survey (n=634)	CYP aged 11–17	Relationship between online gambling content and gambling attitudes/behaviours
Gambling Harms and Neurodivergence: Understanding the Context and Support for	2025	IFF Research	In-depth interviews and online communities (n=45)	Neurodivergent adults (18+)	Experiences of gambling harm; gaps in support; implications for CYP with similar profiles

Neurodivergent People in Gambling					
Annual GB Treatment and Support Survey 2024	2025	Kate Gosschalk, Conor Cotton, Zoë Chamberlain, Lois Harmer, Evelina Bondareva, Jack Mackintosh (YouGov)	National survey (n=17,933); depth interviews (n=24)	Adults 18+	Gambling participation and harm prevalence; mental wellbeing; treatment access
Gambling and mental health harms among young adults in Great Britain	2025	Emily Moimoi, Priyanka Roychoudhury (GambleAware)	Secondary analysis of Treatment and Support Survey data (n=5,850)	Young adults aged 18–24	Relationship between gambling and mental health outcomes
Qualitative Research on the Lived Experience and Views of Gambling among Children and Young People	2024	Nikki Karet (Sherbert Research); Hanna Chalmers (Culture Studio); Barbie Clarke, Anouchka Wolfman (Family Kids and Youth)	Depth interviews (n=34); follow-up parent interviews (n=5); online focus groups; school workshops (n=55); semiotic analysis	CYP aged 11–25, including low-SES and ‘affected others’	Lived experiences; blurred definitions of gambling; early exposure; family influence
Interventions, Practices and Systems to Support Children and Young People at Risk of Gambling-Related Harm: Scoping Review	2024	Christina Davis, Kevin Davidson, Emily Arden-Close, Elvira Bolat, Constantina Panourgia (Bournemouth University)	Scoping review of peer-reviewed and grey literature	CYP under 25	Effective interventions; role of parents and schools; prevention systems
Gambling Harms and Neurodivergence: Mapping the Evidence Landscape	2024	IFF Research; Amy Sweet, Tim Morris (University of Bristol)	Rapid evidence assessment; secondary analysis of ALSPAC data	Neurodivergent adults (18+)	Evidence base on neurodivergence and gambling; implications for prevention
Gambling Harms and Coping with Marginalisation and Inequality:	2024	Imogen Martin, Florence Trégan, Robyn Bennetto, Olivia Cottis	Rapid evidence assessment of peer-reviewed	Adults 18+ experiencing marginalisation	Intersection of inequality, isolation, and gambling harms

<u>Marginalisation, Isolation and Criminalisation in Great Britain</u>		Black, Hannah Brearley-Bayliss, Emily Sawdon, Sokratis Dinos (NatCen)	and grey literature		
<u>Inequalities, vulnerabilities, and risk factors for gambling harms among children and young people</u>	2023	Alma Economics	Rapid evidence assessment of peer-reviewed and grey literature	CYP up to 25	Drivers of harm; exposure pathways; socioeconomic and mental health inequalities
<u>Gambling and Mental Health: Analysis of the Annual GB Treatment and Support Survey</u>	2023	Alma Economics	Secondary Analysis of Treatment and Support Survey data	Adults 18+	Association between gambling and mental health harms
<u>Minority Communities & Gambling Harms: Qualitative and Synthesis Report</u>	2023	Nicola Moss, Joe Wheeler, Alice Sarkany, Kaviya Selvamanickam (Ipsos); Dharmi Kapadia (University of Manchester)	Longitudinal interviews (n=21); AppLife diaries (n=25)	Adults 18+ from minority ethnic, language, or religious backgrounds	Cultural stigma; discrimination and marginalisation; barriers to support
<u>Lifting the Lid on Loot-Boxes: Chance-Based Purchases in Video Games and the Convergence of Gaming and Gambling</u>	2021	James Close (University of Plymouth); Joanne Lloyd (University of Wolverhampton)	Literature review; qualitative interviews (n=28); survey screen (n=13,115)	Adults 18+ who play video games	Relationship between gambling and video games; psychological impact of gaming
<u>The effect of gambling marketing and advertising on children, young people and vulnerable adults</u>	2020	Ipsos MORI	Literature review; media monitoring; social media and content analysis; survey (n=1,091); depth interviews (n=28); focus groups (n=83)	CYP aged 11–24; vulnerable adults	Marketing exposure; appeal of advertising; normalisation of gambling
<u>The effect of marketing and</u>	2020	Andy MacGregor, Claire Elliott,	Survey (n=1091)	CYP aged 11–24	Quantitative evidence on exposure, recall,

advertising on children, young people and vulnerable people: Quantitative Research Report		Jessica Shields (ScotCen Social Research)			and advertising influence
---	--	---	--	--	---------------------------

Appendix B. Youth Advisory Group Engagement Summary

To ensure this report reflects the lived experiences of CYP, we engaged the YAG through three sessions to review emerging themes, challenge assumptions, and shape recommendations. Discussions explored how CYP understand and experience gambling, how marketing and online environments influence harm, what effective support looks like, and where responsibility for protecting CYP should lie.

The visual below summarises how feedback from the YAG informed the development of this report, highlighting what young people told us and how their insights were incorporated into the final report.

The YAG told us some recommendations felt **too vague** and not specific to gambling- the report needed **more detail needed on how change should happen**

- We created **clearer, more specific** recommendations
- We included a **case study** with a real-life example of good practice
- We focused on what is unique to gambling - particularly how it **overlaps with gaming**

The YAG told us to focus on the **digital world** young people live in - they said social media, lootboxes, esports, and other forms of unregulated gambling are more relevant to young people than traditional forms of gambling

- We shifted focus from exposure to gambling on TV/radio to **social media** platforms young people use
- We focused on **platform accountability** and unregulated ads as a key recommendation
- We emphasised **the blurred lines** between gambling and gaming
- Esports was called out as a priority for research and action

The YAG told us not focus on individuals recognising harm, instead focus on **environmental factors** - particularly as gambling is so normalised, relying on health warnings or young people knowing their behaviour is harmful won't work.

- We built in ideas around **early prevention**, not just self-disclosure
- We highlighted risk and protective factors (e.g. **culture, religion, neurodivergence**)
- Prevention recommendation now centre on **reducing harm in everyday settings**, not just stopping gambling

The YAG told us that support needs to be **tailored** to different groups, **especially neurodiverse** CYP. CYP should be **involved in the design** of education and support, not just receiving it.

- "Inequalities" section highlights the need for **tailored interventions**
- We recommended **co-design with CYP** as a key principle across research, prevention, and treatment

Appendix C. Full Case Study - Ygam Train the Trainer Model

This appendix provides a detailed version of the case study introduced earlier, illustrating how the principles for effective practice can be applied in real-world service delivery. It offers additional examples, context, and evidence to demonstrate how these approaches translate into meaningful impact for children, young people, and the professionals who support them.

Ygam Delivery Programmes - Train the Trainer Approach

Ygam is the UK's leading charity dedicated to preventing gaming and gambling harms amongst young people, through generating awareness of harms, education and research. Ygam's work offers a practical example of how the principles outlined in this report can be put into action to maximise impact through collaboration and reduce gambling harm among CYP.

Ygam offers a range of evidence-based programmes to ensure that children and young people are safeguarded at every level, through their education, their homelife and through their local communities and peers. Ygam's programmes are designed for those working in Education and Youth Work, Parents and Carers, Community and Faith Leaders, Universities and Health and Social Care, as well as the new Gaming and Esports Programme. Ygam's portfolio of programmes ensure that there is a holistic approach to prevention and awareness raising. Ygam operate a 'Train the Trainer' approach, empowering those that work with children and young people to open up conversations around gaming and gambling harms and feel confident signposting to support. Ygam also offer a suite of resources to accompany the training, all mapped to the relevant curriculums and schemes of work, as well as to topical issues that arise. Ygam provides a dedicated Family Hub on its website, offering families and communities access to advice, information, and practical tools to give them the confidence to manage and monitor children's digital activity.

Ygam's programme offer reflects the principles for effective support through co-design, a pro-active approach, engagement with those surround children and young people, and accessible youth friendly resources.

Co-designed, youth-centred, and tailored to diverse needs

Ygam's resources are developed in consultation with children and young people, educators and youth facing professionals, and parents. Examples include Ygam's work in the LGBTQIA+ training, designed in consultation with Bournemouth University, its Scouts partnership work, where training and resources were co-designed with children and young people, as well as Scouts leaders, Ygam's work on the English Gambling Education Hub (EGEH) and Do It For Her films, which were co-designed and filmed with children and young people, as well as Ygam's Education Programme offer, which was codesigned with Primary and Secondary teachers. Ygam also has several advisory panels, and a panel of Volunteer Student Ambassadors, some of whom have lived experience. These panels shape the design of the programmes and resources, as well as any projects and research work Ygam undertake. By working with its stakeholders to design the programmes and resources, Ygam ensures its content is inclusive and accessible and reflects the lived experience of its stakeholders.

Proactive, early, and embedded in everyday settings

Ygam embeds prevention education into schools, colleges, youth services, and community spaces. Ygam has created over 450+ PSHE/RSE curriculum-aligned resources that are mapped across England and the devolved nations and maintain relationships with stakeholders to support in embedding the training and resources into everyday practice. Ygam has also led several innovative projects that embed work into real life settings, such as recent work on a peer-led brief intervention initiative with university students to normalise conversations about gambling and gaming harms.

Engage families, peers, and communities

Ygam's Parent and Carers Programme works with families, as well as foster carers, social workers and adoptive parents, to support those looking after children and young people to spot signs of harm, open up conversations and signpost to support. Ygam also works with parents on research projects, such as an annual Mumsnet survey, which gathers insights to better understand parents' experiences and perceptions of their children's video gaming. Additionally, Ygam has established several Advisory Panels, including one made up of community and faith leaders, to ensure the organisation continually listens to its target audiences and that its programmes meet their needs and reflect the realities of their experiences. Ygam also has a network of Volunteer Student Ambassadors who helped shape the Silence the Stigma campaign, which encourages university students to look out for signs of gambling harm among their peers and to start conversations on campus to raise awareness. Ygam also make their training and resources accessible by providing translations and interpreter support for communities whose first language is not English.

Accessible, visible, and youth-friendly

Ygam offers digital access to resources and quick, easy options for booking both online and bespoke face to face workshops, as well as publishing an Alumni newsletter that offers a range of engaging Alumni workshops that focus in on specific areas such as lived experience, monetisation in gaming and neurodiversity. Ygam are also active on social media platforms, and run an engaging Let's Explore series that dives into the different games that young people are playing and the risks involved such as monetisation, so that young people and parents can be more aware of the content and potential risks within popular games. Ygam also ensure that there is consistent signposting across all programmes, resources and wider work, so that visibility for support is always there.

Impact of the Initiative

Ygam's work has demonstrated significant impact across multiple domains; education, family engagement, and within communities, making it a leading example of effective gambling harm prevention for children and young people. Ygam has reached over 5 million children and young people across the UK since its inception, and has trained more than 32,000 individuals, 99% who say they feel better equipped to safeguard children and young people. Ygam's programmes are

externally evaluated and show the positive impact that the training and resources are having for both professionals and children and young people. Ygam have also developed key partnerships with key universities such as Bournemouth, Birmingham, Bristol and QMUL, as well as other youth facing organisation such as The Scouts.

Ygam exemplifies how a collaborative, lived experience and youth-centred, evidence-based approach can deliver impactful gambling harm prevention. By embedding support in everyday environments, engaging families and professionals and the wider communities, and tailoring content to diverse needs, Ygam demonstrates the power of education and inclusive design in safeguarding children and young people against gaming and gambling harms.