



Testing Safer Gambling Video Advertising: A Randomised Controlled Trial

Experiment summary report by Thinks Insight & Strategy and commissioned by **GambleAware**

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Thinks
— Insight & Strategy —

Contents

1. Key Findings

2. Background to the research

3. Our approach

4. What were we testing?

5. What was the impact of each video on the primary outcome?

6. Additional insights from the experiment

7. Recommendations

8. Appendix

01.

Key findings



Key Findings

- **Backfire Effects: 'Top Tips for Positive Play' (William Hill) and 'Made to Play Safely' (888), led to a significant increase in click-through rates compared to the control.**

These videos may encourage gambling engagement, potentially due to their framing or the promotional nature of their messaging. Attitudinal survey results suggest the videos may reinforce the idea that gambling is safe, create a false sense of security, increase gambling intent, and, despite being perceived as trustworthy, subtly downplay gambling risks.

- **Protective Effects: The 'Magnets' Stigma Campaign video resulted in a statistically significant decrease in click-through rates.**

The serious tone and personal narratives may have contributed to this impact by fostering greater awareness of gambling harms. Attitudinal survey results suggest that the video effectively normalises gambling problems as widespread, encourages self-reflection, counters the idea of gambling as harmless fun, and is perceived as trustworthy, potentially enhancing its protective impact on behaviour.

- **Neutral Effects: The 'Play at Your Best' (Betfair) and 'Take Time to Think' (BGC) videos did not produce significant changes in behaviour .**

This is consistent with previous research showing the 'Take Time To Think' messaging had no effect. The 'play at your best' had a straightforward, clear communication style and did not backfire. Attitudinal survey results suggest these videos could provide useful strategies for managing gambling but do not strongly encourage self-regulation or behaviour change, slightly increase gambling intent, and foster a sense of control without clearly influencing gambling decisions.

Additional insights

- **Many operator led 'Safer gambling' videos increases intentions to gamble. The GambleAware 'Stigma' video decreases intention to gamble - reinforcing the behavioural impact.**
- **Presenting gambling as 'harmless fun' could be a major factor driving the backfire effects.**
- **The results on click through to the gambling app are the same even when we account for other potential driving factors, such as demographics.**
- **There are indications that younger audiences and those experiencing gambling problems may face a higher risk of harm from gambling advertising.**

02.

Background to the research



Background and context to the research

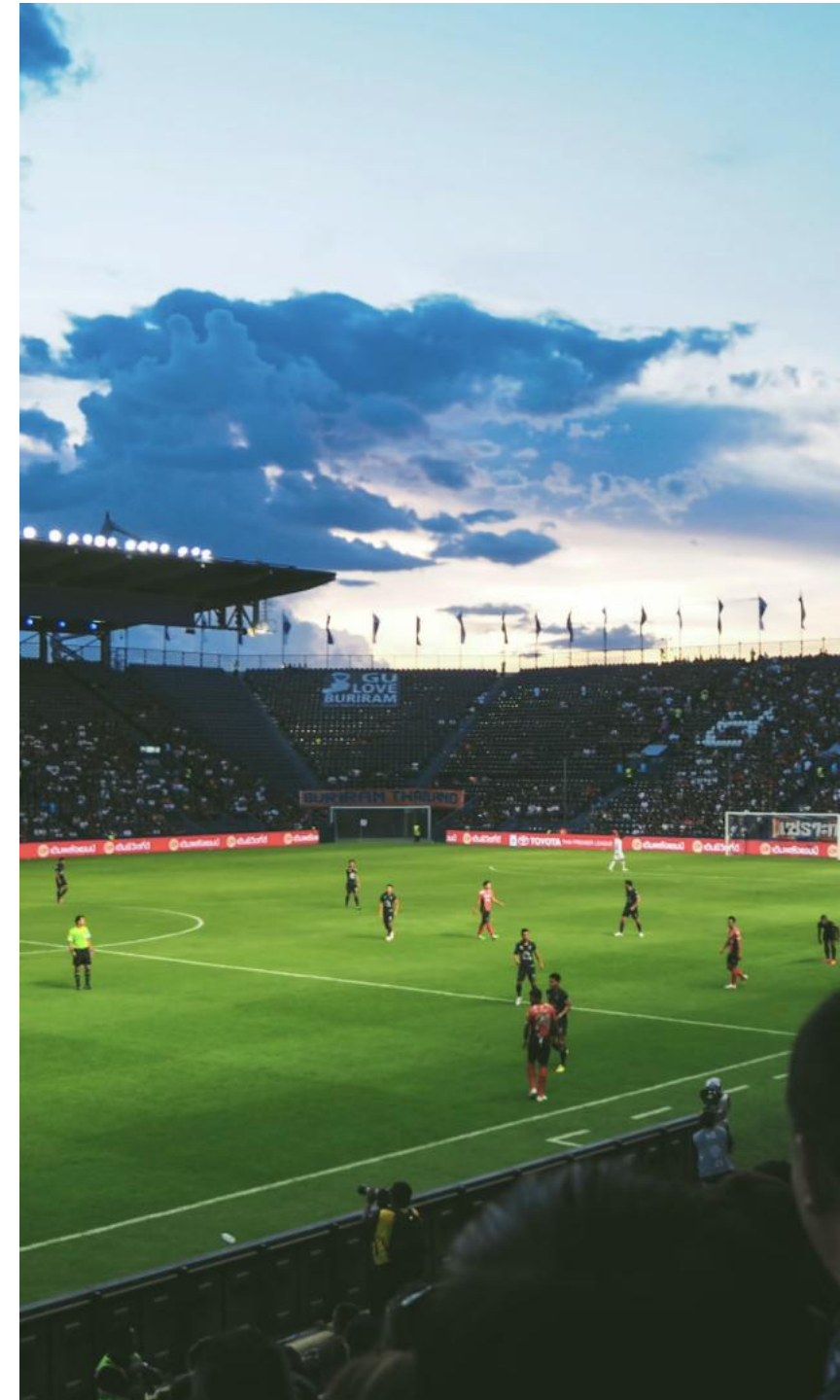
Reducing gambling harm requires a range of effective, evidence-based interventions. Campaigns and advertising videos can play a key role in these efforts, but there is a lack of evidence available on their impact.

Low-cost, high-reach interventions like advertising **videos are appealing because they often achieve small but meaningful effects** across large audiences¹. They can also shape societal perceptions towards gambling, raise awareness of gambling harms and signpost to further support. However, some **messages may inadvertently backfire, potentially encouraging gambling**².

More research is needed to guide the design of effective safer gambling videos and establish standards for measuring their impact. As video-based social media and sports broadcasts grow, and **operators allocate 20% of digital and broadcast budgets to safer gambling messaging**³, the need for rigorous evidence is greater than ever.

As such, GambleAware commissioned Thinks Insight & Strategy alongside academic expert Prof. Elliot Ludvig **to investigate how operator-led, safer gambling campaigns influence key outcomes**. This project aims to supplement previous work by GambleAware, and ongoing work by the cross-departmental government working group on safer gambling messaging⁴.

1. [Newall, P., Torrance, J., Russell, A. M. T., Rockloff, M., Hing, N., & Browne, M. \(2023\). 'Chances are you're about to lose': new independent Australian safer gambling messages tested in UK and USA bettor samples. *Addiction Research & Theory*, 32\(6\), 400–4](#)
2. [Newall, P. W., Weiss-Cohen, L., Singmann, H., Walasek, L., & Ludvig, E. A. \(2022\). Impact of the "when the fun stops, stop" gambling message on online gambling behaviour: A randomised, online experimental study. *The lancet public health*, 7\(5\), e437-e446.](#)
3. [Betting & Gambling Council](#)
4. [High stakes: gambling reform for the digital age](#)

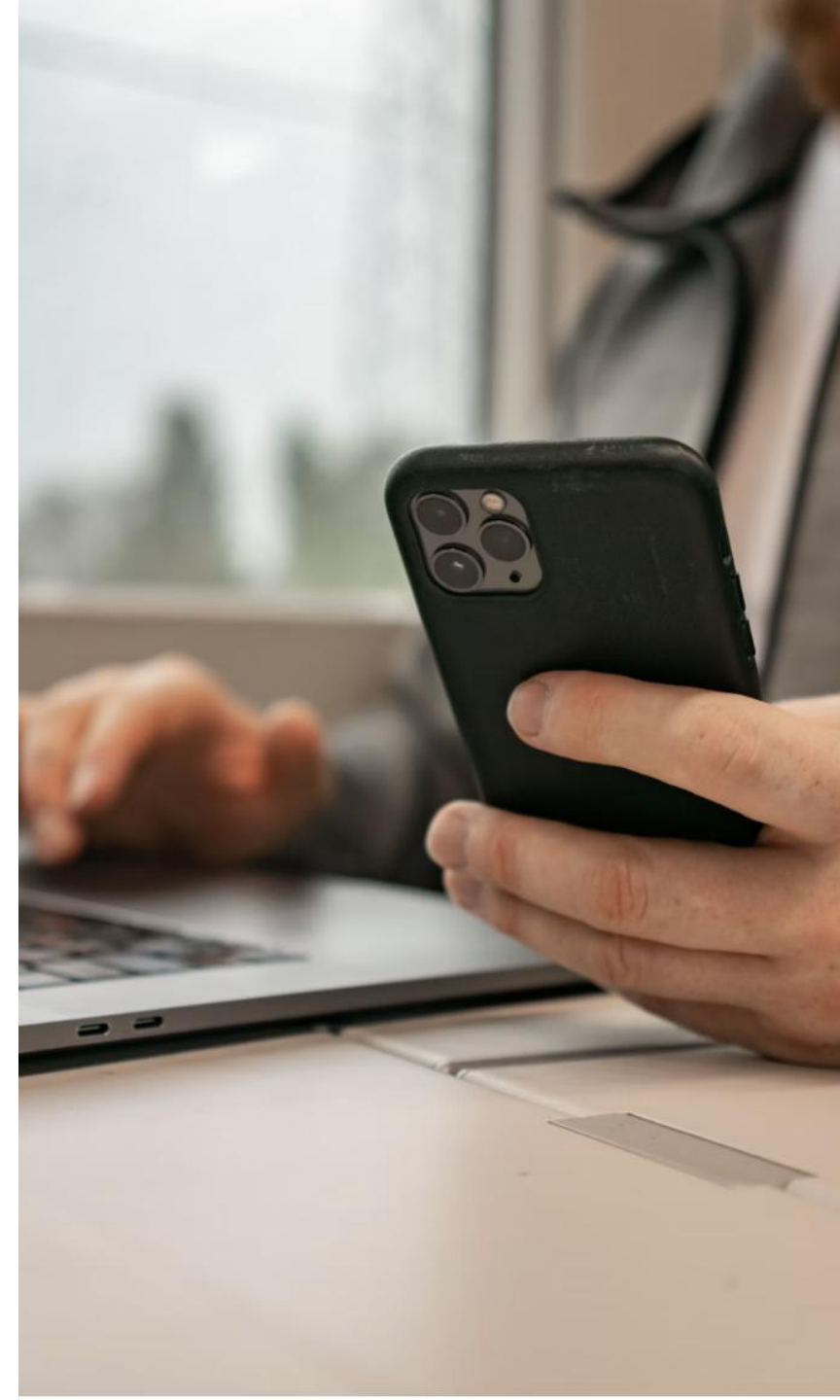


Background and context to the research

This project will explore various outcomes, including actual behaviour in a YouTube-like and gambling app simulation to help us understand how safer gambling videos might work in these contexts.

This study is a Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT). An RCT is a study design in which participants are randomly assigned to different groups to test the causal impact of an intervention by comparing outcomes between the treatment and control groups. RCTs are useful to test safer gambling videos because they allow researchers to isolate the effect of the videos by randomly assigning participants to watch different versions (or none at all), ensuring that any differences in attitudes or behaviours can be confidently attributed to the content of the videos rather than other factors.

This report summarises **results from a RCT** targeted on the behavioural response to gambling adverts after viewing safer gambling videos. A technical report is available containing further details on the experiment.



03.

Our approach



Testing the efficacy of safer gambling advertising videos to help inform GambleAware's strategy

ESTABLISH the key outcomes to measure and priority videos to test

We highlighted the behavioural principles that could drive, or hinder, gambling behaviour for a list of 20 videos selected by GambleAware.

10 videos were chosen for the triage test (n=100) and narrowed down to 5 based on potential efficacy and how distinct they are.

BUILD a robust experiment design and simulation

We created a trial protocol document ([pre-registered on Open Science Framework](#)) with Dr. Elliot Ludvig detailing the method and our analysis plan.

Our experiment included simulations of a video-sharing platform and a gambling app.

EVIDENCE the impact with an RCT with 4,013 participants

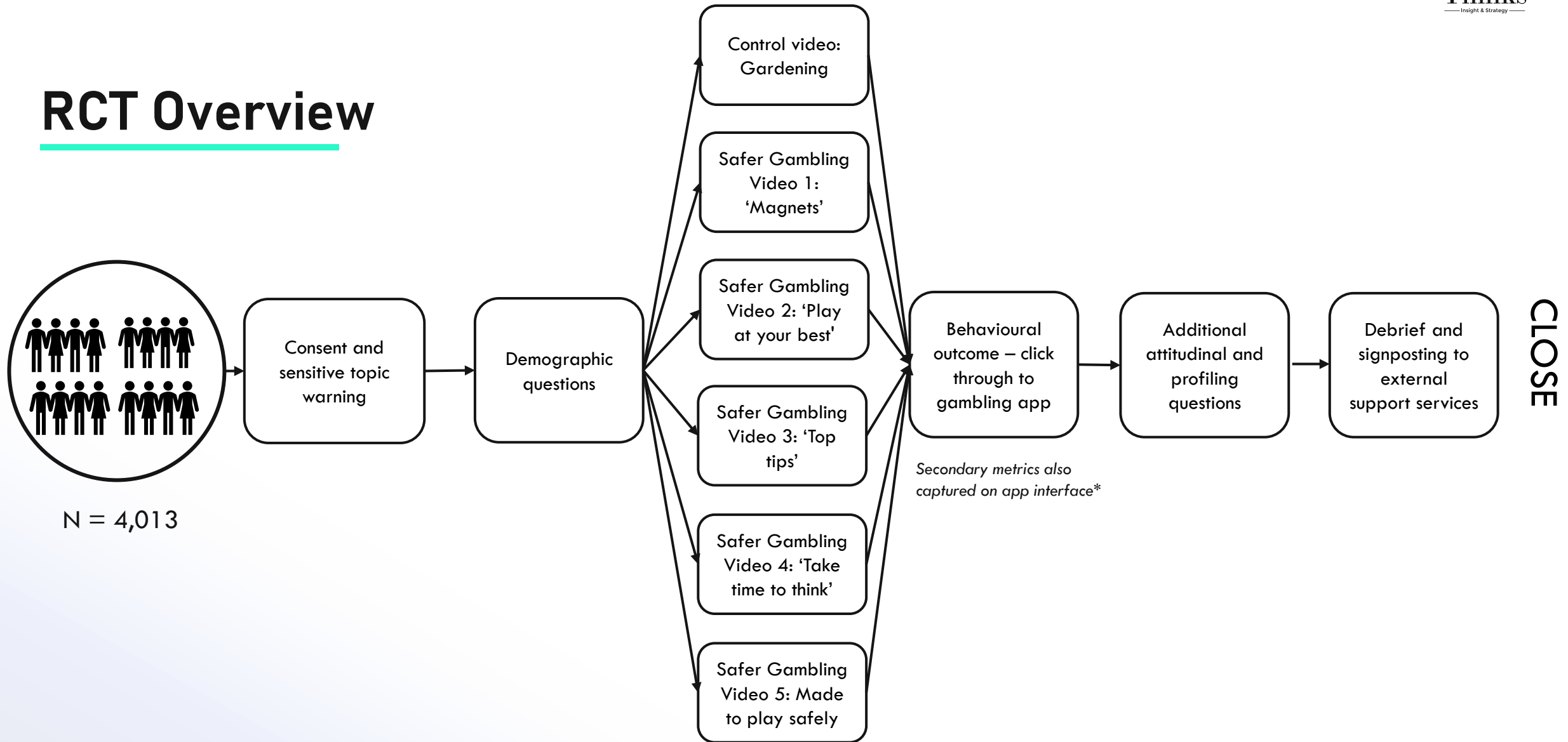
We ran an online experiment testing 5 safer gambling videos vs a control group.

A nationally representative sample was collected with quotas on Age and Gender (interlocking), SEG and Region.

INFORM strategy with technical and summary reporting

This report is available alongside a detailed technical report (building on the trial protocol document) and potential academic journal publication.

RCT Overview



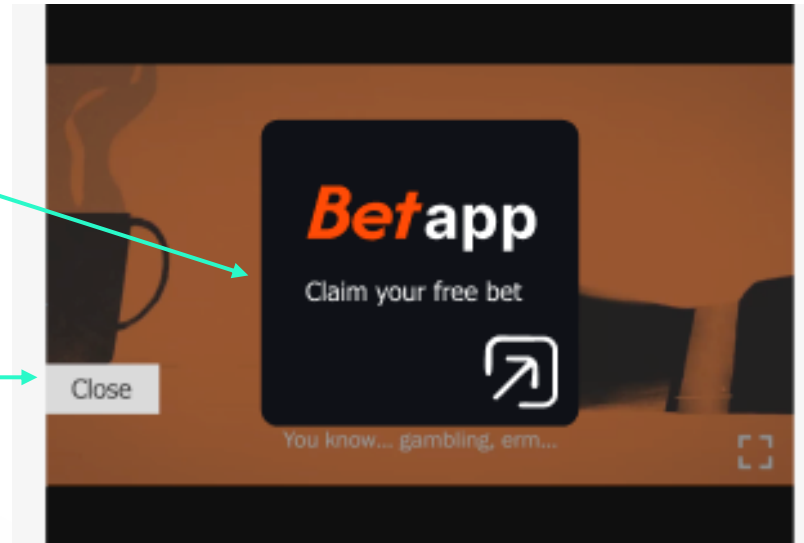
Randomisation between each experiment arm was tested using a series of Chi-squared tests on the distribution of each demographic variable (i.e. age, gender, region, ethnicity and region) across each arm, as well as composite CRT and PGSI scores. No tested variable showed any significant difference across arms.

*Secondary interaction metrics in the app interface are included in the Appendix and in the Technical report.

Our primary outcome

Option 1: Click through to gambling app.

Option 2: Click close on the pop-up.



Example of video player interface

There is a binary choice to click on the pop-up (which takes you through to the gambling app) or click close.

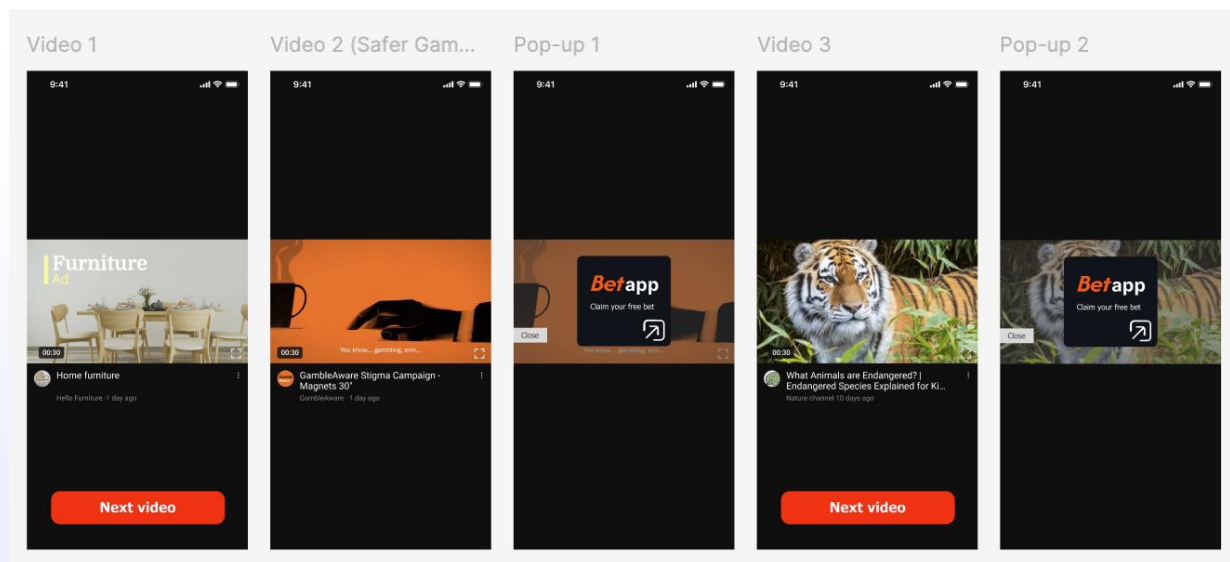
Following workshops between Thinks, GambleAware and external experts including Prof. Elliot Ludvig and Matt Zarb-Cousin, this interaction was chosen as a proxy for gambling behaviour.

We opted not to offer participants money to make a bet as there were ethical concerns with offering a chance to gamble to a large sample of people that may include those at risk of harm. This approach provides a behavioural outcome whilst minimising any risk of harm.

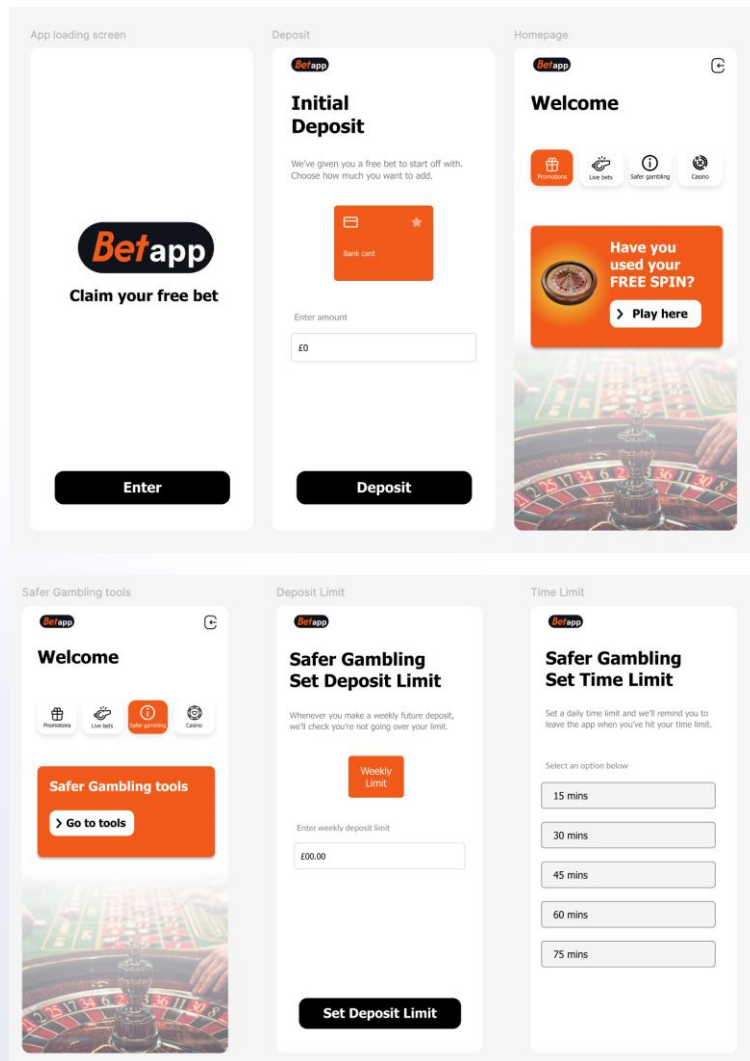
Video player interactions

The steps and actions a participant could take on the video player simulation were as follows:

- Participant enters video player simulation.
- Participant watches first video (on furniture – unrelated to the topic of gambling) and then clicks to watch the second video.
- Participant watches the second video (this is either one of the safer gambling videos).
- Participant sees the pop-up with option to click into gambling app or click close.
- If the participant clicked close on the pop-up they then see another video (video 3) unrelated to gambling (wildlife).
- After watching this video they are exposed to the pop-up again (same design) with the same options to click through to the app or click close.



Gambling app interactions



The steps and actions a participant could take on the gambling app simulation were as follows:

- Only participants who have clicked on the pop-up will be able to interact with this interface.
- Participants are shown a page with the app logo and the message 'Claim your free bet' then click on the button to enter the rest of the app.
- Participants are given the choice to enter deposit amount (by entering a number into the box) then click on the button to confirm the deposit.
- Participants then go on to the homepage of the app. Here they can toggle back and forth to view 'promotions', 'live bets', 'safer gambling' and 'casino'. In terms of action options, they can either 1) click on the button to use their free spin 'Play here', 2) go to the safer gambling tools 'Go to tools' button, or 3) Exit the app altogether via the icon in the top right-hand corner of the homepage.
- For the participants who have chosen to go to the safer gambling tools, they first have the option of setting a deposit limit (by entering a number into the box) then click on the button to confirm the deposit limit.
- Finally, participants who have chosen to go to the safer gambling tools have an option to select a gambling time limit. There are five options to choose from. Once an option is chosen the participant is automatically brought out of the gambling app and on to the remainder of the survey.

04.

What were we testing?



Videos (see [OSF pre-registration](#) for full videos)



1. Control (video unrelated to gambling)



2. 'Magnets' Stigma Campaign (GambleAware)



3. Play at your best (Betfair)



4. Top tips for positive play (William Hill)



5. 'Take time to think' (BGC)



6. Made to play safely (888)

Hypotheses and rationale for inclusion from the triage testing

Video	Hypothesis	Rationale for inclusion in RCT
'Magnets' Stigma Campaign (GambleAware)	<i>Decrease the rate</i> of clicking through to the gambling app.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A serious tone highlighting that anyone can experience gambling harms. Personal stories from real people with lived experience of harms. Emotionally-driven messaging. Created independent of industry and highly trusted messenger.
Play at your best (Betfair)	<i>Increase the rate</i> of clicking through to the gambling app (potentially driven by an attempt to use safer gambling tools).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May over-simplify safer gambling and lead to overconfidence. Shows key tools available within product app. Direct call to action to safer gambling page.
Top tips for positive play (William Hill)	<i>Increase the rate</i> of clicking through to the gambling app.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicative results (from a small sample n=100) show that this video has potential to backfire. Video may suggest gambling is harmless fun. Utilises football culture to communicate messages. Communicates a lot of messages (5).
Take time to think (BGC)	<i>No impact</i> on the rate of clicking through to the gambling app.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Video taps into pause (pre-commitment) CTA. Indicative results (from a small sample n=100) show viewers are sceptical about its impact. Current universal proposition (i.e., not from a specific gambling brand so more trustworthy).
Made to play safely (888)	<i>Increase the rate</i> of clicking through to the gambling app (potentially because the content is similar to a normal gambling ad).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The video may be seen as a promotional ad for gambling due to its energetic production style. Suggests gambling is harmless fun and more likely to increase gambling urges.

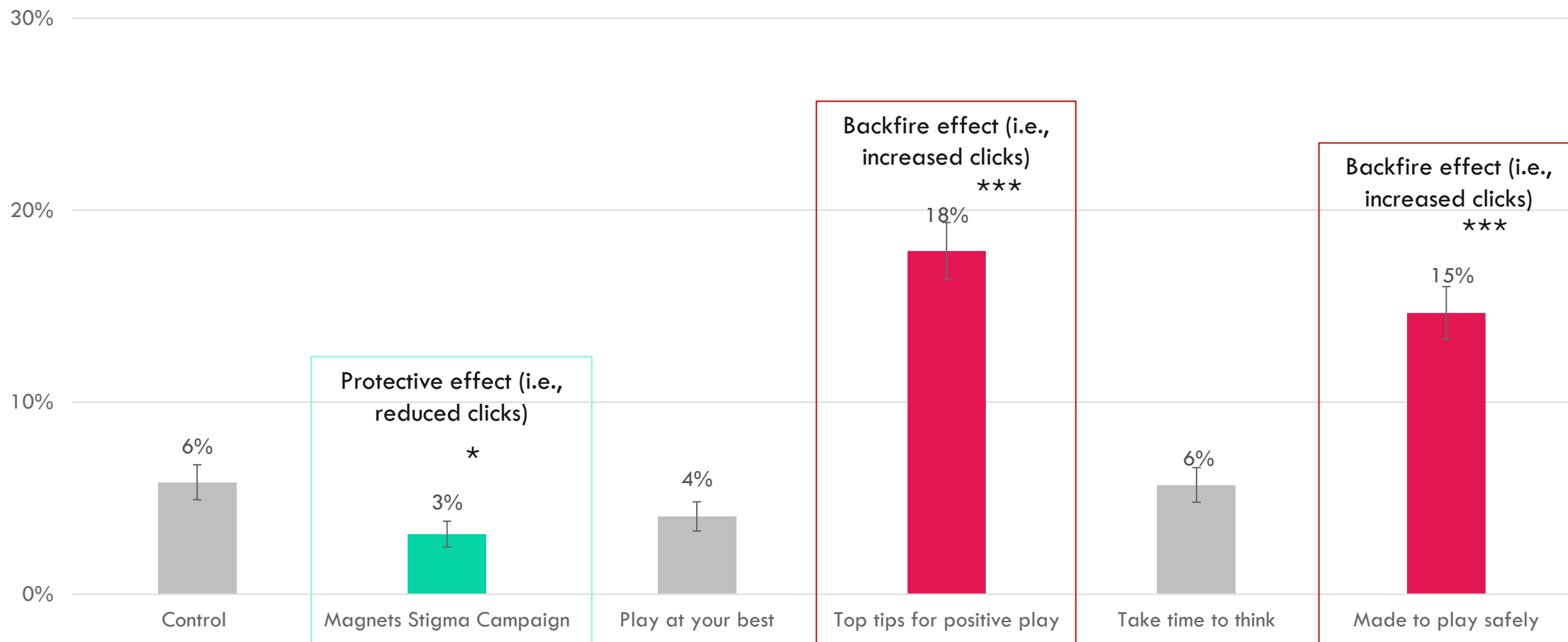
05.

**What was the impact of each
video on the primary outcome?**



Primary outcome – Key results

The 'Magnets' video had a protective effect whilst 'Top tips for positive play' and 'Made to play safely' backfired



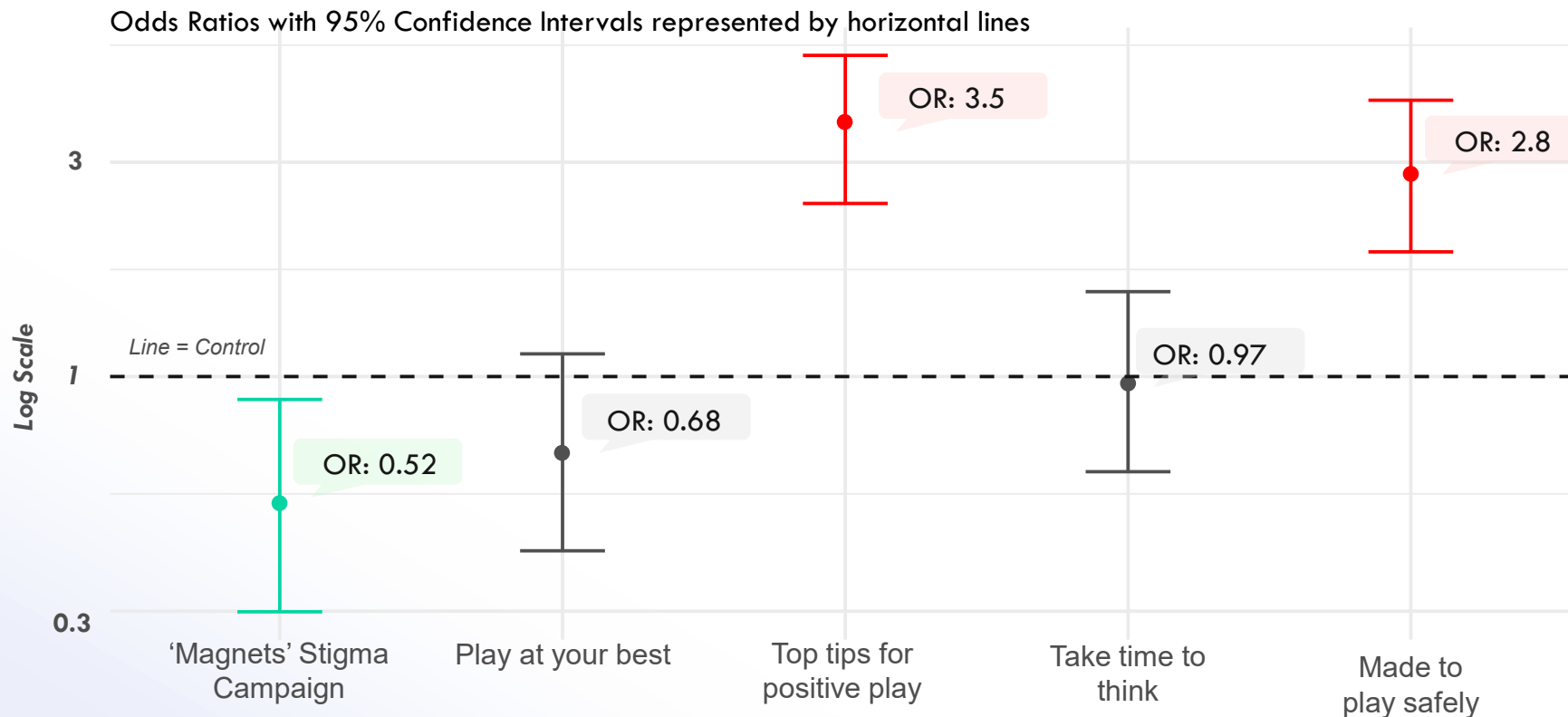
The primary outcome is clicking (vs. not) through to the gambling app. Please note, most participants did not click through to the gambling app. Statistical analysis conducted using a logistic regression.

*There is a statistically significant decrease, $p < 0.05$, in click through for the 'Magnets' Stigma Campaign video.

***There's a statistically significant increase, $p < 0.001$, in click through for both the William Hill Top Tips for Positive Play and 888 Made to Play Safely videos.

Base sizes. Control: 669. 'Magnets' Stigma Campaign: 670. Play at your best: 666. Top tips for positive play: 671. Take time to think: 668. Made to play safely: 669.

Top tips for positive play (William Hill) and Made to play safely (888) increase the odds of entering the app



Explainer

Exposure to the 'Stigma' campaign video decreases participants' odds of clicking through to the gambling app by an estimated 48% (0.52x, OR: 0.52) compared to the control.¹

Exposure to the 'Top tips for positive play' video increases participants' odds of clicking through to the gambling app by an estimated 3.5x [OR: 3.5] compared to the control.²

Exposure to the 'Made to play safely' video increases participants' odds of clicking through by an estimated 2.8x compared to the control.³

The primary outcome is clicking (vs. not) through to the gambling app. Analysis conducted using a logistic regression.

1. **Statistically significant decrease** for GambleAware 'Magnets' Stigma Campaign (odds ratio [OR]=0.523, 95%CI=0.299-0.889; p=0.0189). This equates to 0.52x lower odds. In percent change the odds are 48% lower.

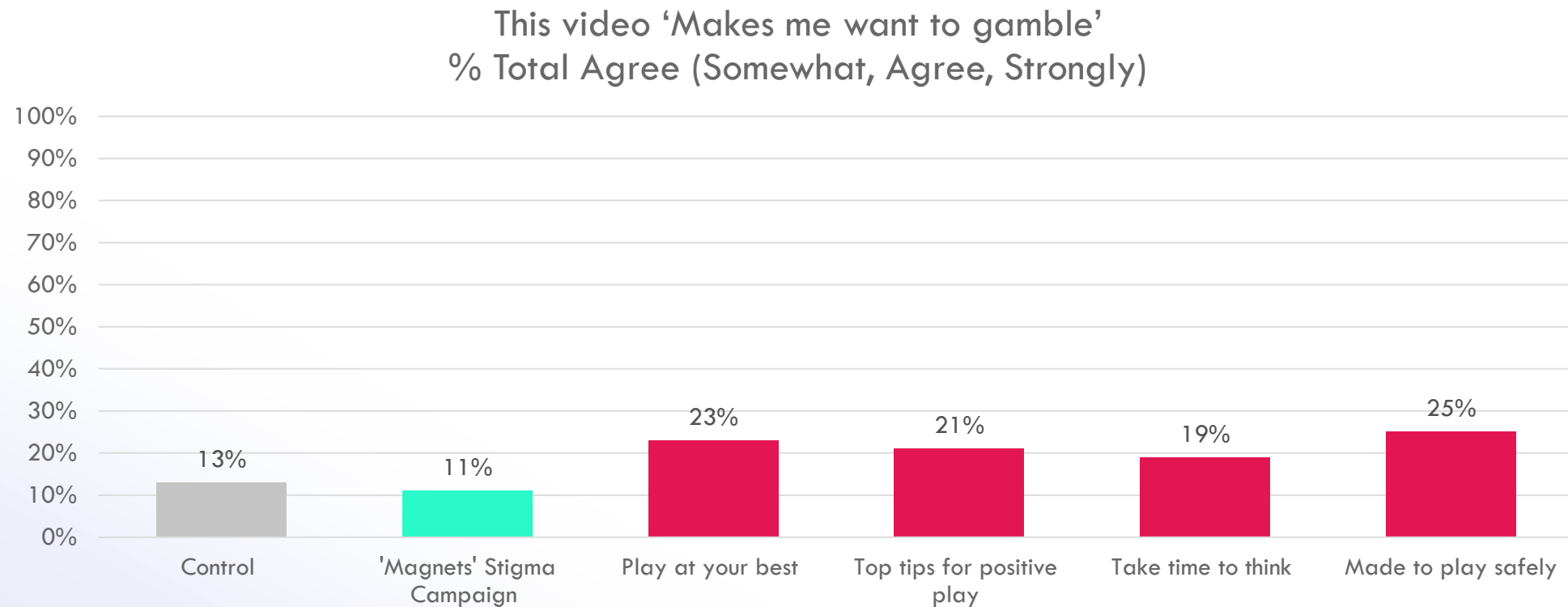
2. **Statistically significant increase** for William Hill Top Tips for Positive Play (odds ratio [OR]=3.518, 95%CI=2.431-5.196; p<0.001). This equates to 3.5x higher odds. In percent change the odds are 250% higher.

3. **Statistically significant increase** for 888 Made to Play Safely (odds ratio [OR]=2.772, 95%CI=1.896-4.128; p<0.001). This equates to 2.8x higher odds. In percent change the odds are 180% higher.

Base sizes. Control: 669. 'Magnets' Stigma Campaign: 670. Play at your best: 666. Top tips for positive play: 671. Take time to think: 668. Made to play safely: 669.

Potential reasons for the protective effect of 'Magnets' Stigma Campaign

The 'Magnets' Stigma campaign video also resulted in the lowest reported intention to gamble

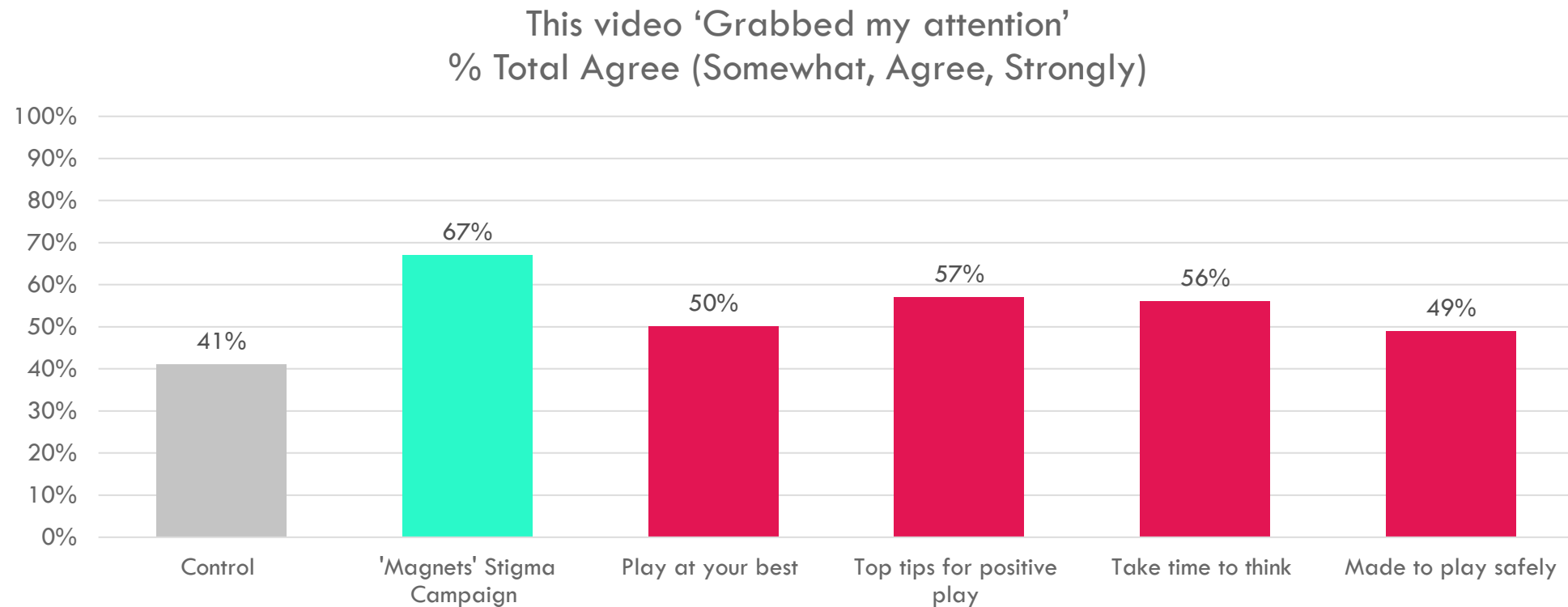


Q13 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: 'The gambling-related video I just watched...

[F - Urge to gamble (backfire)] Makes me want to gamble]

Base sizes. Control: 669. 'Magnets' Stigma Campaign: 670. Play at your best: 666. Top tips for positive play: 671. Take time to think: 668. Made to play safely: 669.

The 'Magnets' Stigma campaign video is the most attention grabbing



Q13 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: 'The gambling-related video I just watched...

[A - Attention] grabbed my attention

Base sizes. Control: 669. 'Magnets' Stigma Campaign: 670. Play at your best: 666. Top tips for positive play: 671. Take time to think: 668. Made to play safely: 669.

Feedback from **participants in the experiment** on the 'Magnets' Stigma Campaign (GambleAware) video

- Many participants recognised that the advert encourages people struggling with gambling to seek help and support.
- The advert effectively communicated that gambling can be addictive and problematic.
- Participants noted that the message of responsible gambling and awareness was emphasised.
- The advert was recognised for addressing the stigma around gambling addiction.

"You can get help for gambling addiction, and there's no stigma attached to it." - Female, 65+, PGSI 0

"How addictive gambling can be." – Female, 55-64, PGSI 0

"It's talking about gambling addiction and assurance that there's help in stopping gambling." – Male, 25-34, PGSI 3-7

"This advertisement was about making sure players who gamble are aware of what they are doing and promoting ways to improve their chances." – Male, 18-24, PGSI 8+

"Break the stigma of gambling." – Female, 45-44, PGSI 1-2

In the post-trial survey of the experiment, participants were re-exposed to the video and asked: "What do you think is the main message this advert is trying to get across?"

Triage test feedback on the 'Magnets' Stigma Campaign (GambleAware) video

- The use of a first-person narrative resonated with viewers, helping them connect with the message.
- The focus on an independent messenger was seen as reassuring and more trustworthy (compared to a gambling operator).
- The video was seen as especially effective for those already struggling with gambling addiction but less focused on prevention for casual gamblers.

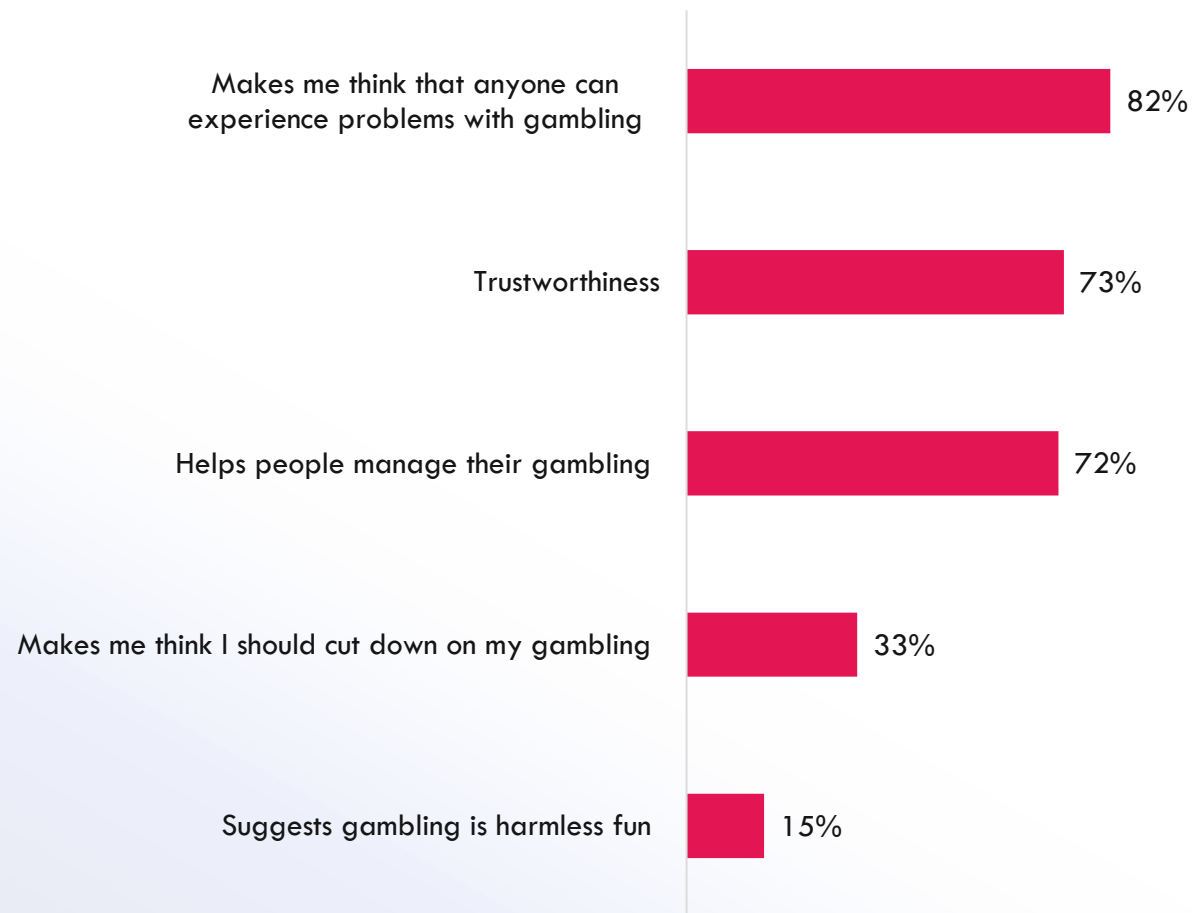
"This is the best advert I've seen regarding gambling. It's very realistic, and the man could be a real person, not an actor. I've seen things like this happen in real life." – Male, 30s, PGSI 3-7

"It comes from a source that isn't a gambling company, so it is a lot more trustworthy." – Male, 30s, PGSI 0

*"It is unpleasant and uncomfortable to watch, and so this would hopefully put people off wanting to gamble as they can see the possible unpleasant results."
"It might scare people from the start, and sometimes this is needed for change, but it might deter some from reaching out for help." – Female, 60s, PGSI 1-2*

The 'Magnets' video discourages gambling app click-through because it emphasises the potential risks and stigma around gambling

The attitudinal survey (% NET Agree) results suggest:



The highest agreement of all videos suggests this campaign effectively normalises the idea that gambling problems can affect anyone, possibly leading to more caution.

High trust in the messenger may increase its effectiveness in changing behaviour.

Second highest after "Take Time to Think," reinforcing a focus on harm reduction.

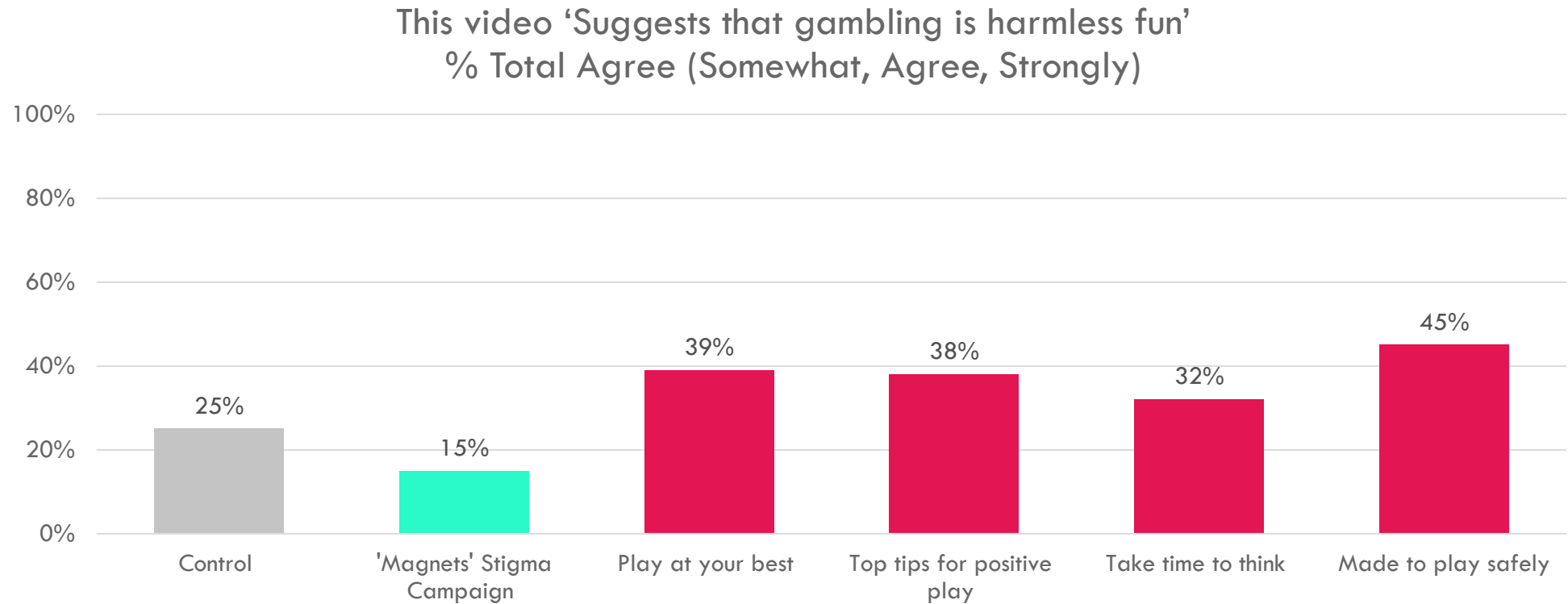
This is higher than other conditions, reinforcing that it may prompt self-reflection.

The lowest score suggests it actively counters any messaging that trivialises gambling.

See Appendix for more

Potential reasons for backfire effect of 'Top Tips for Positive Play' and 'Made to Play Safely'

Participants were more likely to agree that operator produced advertising videos suggest gambling is harmless fun



Q - To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: 'The gambling-related video I just watched...

[B - Harmless fun (backfire)] Suggests gambling is harmless fun

Base sizes. Control: 669. 'Magnets' Stigma Campaign: 670. Play at your best: 666. Top tips for positive play: 671. Take time to think: 668. Made to play safely: 669.

Feedback from **participants in the experiment** on the main message from the 'Top tips for positive play' (William Hill) video

- Participants identified messages about gambling responsibly and following safer gambling practices.
- Responses viewed the advert as primarily promoting the William Hill brand.
- Many participants understood the message to be about setting limits and being aware of gambling habits. Whilst feedback from participants in both experiment and triage test suggest that idea of harmless fun and strong promotion of brand is impacting on behavioural response, clarity of message could be having a positive impact on prevention.

"To bet but to be responsible." – Female, 35-44, PGSI 3-7

*"No idea. I switched off as soon as I saw it was about a gambling company."
– Male, 65+, non-gambler*

"William Hill is a company to consider if you wish to make a bet." – Female, 55-64, PGSI 0

"I think it's giving steps for controlling your gambling and making sure people don't fall into addiction." - Male, 45-54, PGSI 1

In the post-trial survey of the experiment, participants were re-exposed to the video and asked: "What do you think is the main message this advert is trying to get across?"

Triage test feedback on the 'Top tips for positive play' (William Hill) video

- Many viewers appreciate the clear, practical tips provided in the video and the easy-to-understand way in which they are delivered.
- Some viewers feel the humour and football-related content to be inappropriate for a topic as serious as gambling harms. Others feel the content makes the video more engaging and relatable to gamblers, particularly men.
- The tips were often seen as too broad or generic to resonate deeply with people who might be struggling with a gambling problem.

***"It gives clear steps to do to gamble safe."
- Female, 30s, PGSI 1-2***

***"It makes light of a really serious issue so it is not helpful. People need to watch these adverts and know that gambling addiction is a serious issue and not something to joke about."
- Female, 30s, PGSI 3-7***

***"It's really not effective to anyone who has a gambling problem. May help with new players, but not those already stuck in the rabbit hole."
- Male, 40s, PGSI 1-2***

Feedback from **participants in the experiment** on the main message from the 'Made to play safely' (888) video

- Many participants perceived the advert as promoting the 888 brand rather than focusing on safer gambling.
- Focuses in on money and spending money as opposed to stopping or cutting back on this behaviour. It's viewed more as a gambling ad itself which reflects the attitudinal survey data; 25% of participants who watched this video wanted to gamble, the highest scores for this metric, indicating they may inadvertently encourage gambling behaviour.
- Focuses on control. This often comes across as you having control whilst gambling or 888 having control over your gambling.

"Wants people to join 888 online for betting." – Female, 65+, PGSI 0

"Too much about spending money." - Female, 25-34, PGSI 0

"It's trying to advertise a gaming app 888. Where you can deposit, play and win cash." – Female, 25-34, PGSI 3-7

"It's saying you can be in complete control whilst playing." – Female, 65+, PGSI 0

"888 control way you play." - Female, 65+, PGSI 0

"888 helps you place bets." - Female, 55-64, PGSI 0

In the post-trial survey of the experiment, participants were re-exposed to the video and asked: "What do you think is the main message this advert is trying to get across?"

Triage test feedback on the 'Made to play safely' (888) video

- Many criticise the upbeat music, flashy visuals, and slogans like "Made to play," which they feel glamourise gambling rather than promoting safety.
- Practical tips, such as using timers and setting limits, were noted as potentially helpful for casual gamblers.
- Several viewers feel the ad is more focused on promoting the 888 brand and encouraging gambling.

"This video is so unhelpful for gamblers because it sends the wrong message: it tells us to gamble and 'dive in' and that 888 is 'made to play.' – Female, 30s, PGSI 3-7

"It does display clearly how to set up settings while gambling but the overt messaging of this one is to remind players of the app and to remind them to play, all I felt after watching that is it to open an app and play." – Female, 20s, PGSI 0

"It seemed too frivolous. It was more an advertisement for 888." – Male, 50s, PGSI 1-2

Both Top Tips for Positive Play and Made to Play Safely increase gambling app click-through rates.

The attitudinal survey (% NET Agree) results suggest:

- Gambling is harmless fun (Top Tips for Positive Play, 38% and Made to Play Safely, 45%) – These campaigns score much higher than the Magnets Stigma Campaign, which could unintentionally reassure users that gambling is safe.
- Makes me want to gamble (21% and 25%) – These campaigns have the highest scores for this metric, indicating they may inadvertently encourage gambling behaviour.
- Trustworthiness (63% and 53%) – While they are seen as relatively credible, their messaging might be subtly reinforcing the idea that gambling can be done safely rather than emphasising its risks.

06.

Additional insights from the experiment



Demographic insights on primary outcome

Click to the gambling app were driven by those aged 18-34, and those experiencing problems with gambling

Descriptive statistics of click through rates by demographic and arm (e.g. 14% of 18-34 yr olds clicked through to the gambling app)

		Overall	Control	Magnets Stigma Campaign	Play at your best	Top tips for positive play	Take time to think	Made to play safely
Category	Sub-category	n = 4,013*	n = 669	n = 670	n = 666	n = 671	n = 668	n = 669
Age	18-34	14%	8%	5%	9%	34%	4%	23%
	35-54	8%	5%	3%	2%	16%	7%	15%
	55+	4%	5%	2%	2%	5%	5%	6%
Gender	Male	9%	7%	3%	6%	19%	7%	15%
	Female	8%	5%	3%	2%	17%	4%	15%
PGSI	Non-Gambler	6%	5%	2%	0%	12%	6%	11%
	No risk (PGSI 0)	6%	4%	1%	4%	10%	4%	11%
	Low-risk (PGSI 1-2)	11%	8%	3%	6%	27%	9%	14%
	Moderate-risk (PGSI 3-7)	10%	3%	7%	4%	27%	7%	12%
	'Problem gambling' (PGSI 8+)	16%	13%	8%	9%	34%	7%	29%

*Note. Base sizes vary within variables, see ranges below. RED marks variables where data is based on less than 100 respondents.

Age: 18-34 171-211, 35-54 226-245, 55+ 187-213.

Gender: Male 309-343, Female 325-357.

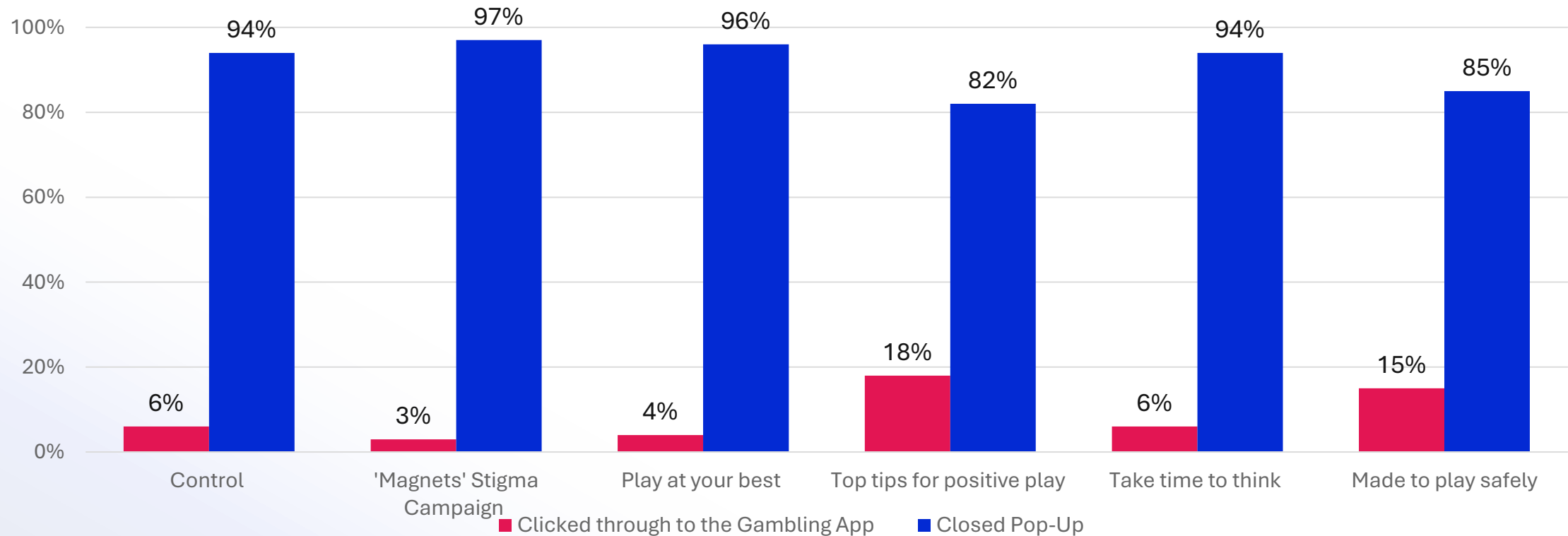
PGSI: Non-gambler 136-151, PGSI 0 254-284, PGSI 1-2 71-86, PGSI 3-7 47-79, PGSI 8+ 99-120

Age and gender analysis excludes 'prefer not to say' / 'other'

PGSI analysis excludes those who answered 'prefer not to say' / 'don't know' to Q16: 'Which of these have you spent any money on in the past 12 months?' and had a score of PGSI 0 (as they could not be classified)

Secondary outcomes – Key results

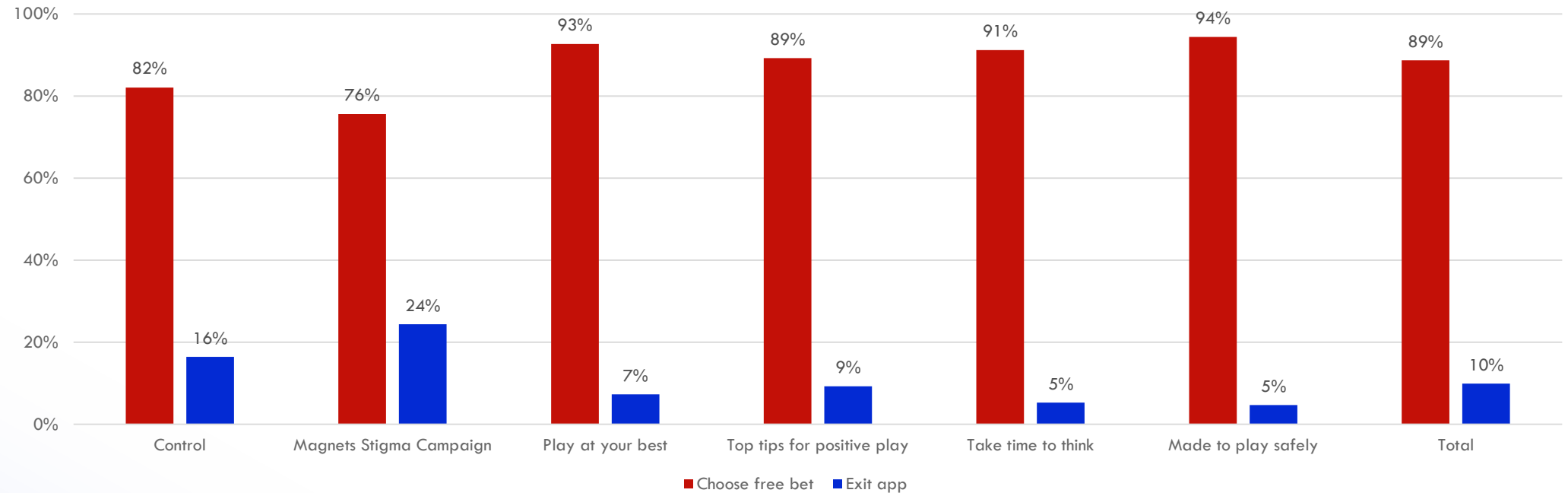
As the majority of participants did not click through to the gambling app, results for secondary outcomes were minimal



Secondary interaction metrics in the app interface are not recorded in this summary report as counts were low.

Base sizes. Control: 669. 'Magnets' Stigma Campaign: 670. Play at your best: 666. Top tips for positive play: 671. Take time to think: 668. Made to play safely: 669.

Despite low base sizes, there was further indicative evidence of the protective effect of the Magnets campaign



Outcome	Control	Magnets Stigma Campaign	Play at your best	Top tips for positive play	Take time to think	Made to play safely	Total
Total (from both pop-ups)	67	41	41	130	57	107	443
Choose free bet	55	31	38	116	52	101	393
Exit app	11	10	3	12	3	5	44

Note some **base sizes are very small** therefore these figures should only be viewed as indicative.

07.

Recommendations



Key takeaways

Why?

So what?

'Magnets' Stigma Campaign video had a protective effect

The usage of personal stories helped resonate and grab attention. Highlighting negative consequences helped normalise gambling harms. Coming from GambleAware rather than a gambling company increased trust in the message.

Harm reduction messages appear most effective when coming from voices outside of the gambling industry. Learnings from this campaign can be used by others (see next slides for recommendations).

'Top Tips for Positive Play' (William Hill) and 'Made to Play Safely' (888) had backfire effects

The videos were perceived to be overly promotional towards the respective brands, with messaging situating gambling as harmless fun rather than providing clear safer gambling messaging.

This adds to the previous evidence showing industry-led campaigns can lack effectiveness and may be doing more harm than good. More accountability is needed for the 20% spent by operators on safer gambling videos and broader messaging.

'Play at Your Best' (Betfair) and 'Take Time to Think' (BGC) videos did not produce significant changes

Although the 'Play at Your Best' was useful at breaking down the tools available, it may lack an emotional pull. The 'Take Time to Think' video may be an overly familiar message that lacks novelty.

This aligns with previous research showing the current universal proposition of 'Take Time to Think' may lack effectiveness. Adverts that focus on tools such as 'Play at Your Best' may need to be paired with other messages to encourage behaviour change.

Young people in general were particularly susceptible to advertising, as were those experiencing harm

Previous research has shown that gambling advertising is more likely to impact those experiencing harms. As those aged 18-34 are most likely to be experiencing harms this could be a confound, but further research could explore this.

Given the high potential for harm of advertising among these groups, more should be done to target harmful advertising away from such groups.

Based on this research, what could work?



1. Relatable and Personal Stories

Participants emphasised the impact of messages that include real-life stories, personal experiences, and relatable scenarios. These messages resonated as they felt genuine and emotionally engaging.

- "Messages that involve people showing their vulnerability and talking about their negative experiences with gambling, as it would then hit home a bit more."
- "A real-life story from someone who has gone through that situation and come out the other side."
- "Probably personal messages, that feel like actual experiences a person has had."



2. Highlighting Negative Consequences

Messages that clearly outline the harmful impacts of gambling on individuals and their loved ones were frequently cited as effective. This includes warnings about addiction, financial ruin, and emotional tolls.

- "The severe dangers gambling can have when you're sucked in."
- "Those that showcase the true negative effects of gambling, i.e., people who have lost everything."
- "Gambling can seriously get in the way of everyday life and start to take over."



3. Practical Advice and Tools for Control

Messages that provided actionable steps, such as setting limits or using available tools, were valued. Participants appreciated content that was constructive and offered solutions. It's important to note that this should be used in conjunction with something that prompts behavioural appraisal (e.g. highlighting the negative consequences).

- "Keep gambling to a limit, always set a timer."
- "Deposit limits, taking breaks, and knowing when to walk away."

*We asked: Which kind of message speaks to you most on a personal level?
Data from the qualitative element of the triage test n=100 preceding the RCT*

Based on this research, what could work?



4. Independent and Non-Judgmental Source

Messages from non-gambling organisations or charities were perceived as more credible and trustworthy. Participants preferred a tone that was supportive rather than judgmental.

- "Messages from independent sources taking the issue seriously."
- "Videos by charities and organisations were far more relatable than those by the bookies."
- "A relatable message that is non-judgmental and shows stories that it's okay to need support."



5. Emotional and Visual Content

Visual storytelling and emotional appeals were noted for their effectiveness, especially when they conveyed the gradual progression of gambling addiction.

- "The cartoon turning into real life is my favourite. I think it has some impact."
- "Messages that are more visual than written, showing how gambling for fun can turn into addiction."
- "The one that shows gambling as something that creeps up on you, always thinking about it and causing stress."



6. Messages that Normalise Seeking Help

Encouraging people to seek help without stigma resonated, particularly when the message acknowledged addiction as a broader societal issue.

- "Letting people know that this can become a problem and it is not the individual's fault, and there are ways of getting help."
- "There is help out there if you are addicted or out of control betting."

*We asked: Which kind of message speaks to you most on a personal level?
Data from the qualitative element of the triage test n=100 preceding the RCT*

Macro recommendations

A standardised process for campaign development and pre-testing is needed

This could include:

- Effective pre-testing of advertising before launch
- A shared evaluation framework with aligned outcomes
- Guidance on creating safer gambling messages / campaigns

Increased accountability throughout the campaign development and evaluation process

This could include:

- More monitoring of the 20% operators are required to spend on safer gambling
- Publication requirements on operators to publish details of their campaigns, budgets, and effectiveness measures to improve transparency / sector learning
- More transparency around campaign data and sharing of data across the industry

Improvements in the safer gambling user journey

This could include:

- Better signposting and education around safer gambling tools
- In-app advertising of safer gambling messages for greater contextual relevance

Further research on this topic

This could include:

- Investigating long-term behavioural effects through follow-up studies
- Test real-world implementation of safer gambling messaging within actual gambling platforms to increase ecological validity
- Testing videos from other countries (e.g., Australia) to build a view of best practice

08.

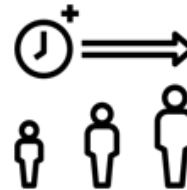
Appendix

We recruited 4,013 nationally representative (Age and Gender interlocking, SEG, Region, Ethnicity) participants from across Great Britain



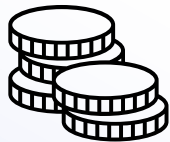
Gender*

Male	Female
1935	2068



Age *

18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
437	748	712	718	687	521



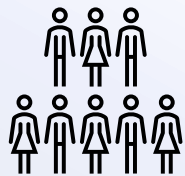
SEG

A	B	C1	C2	D	E
227	1001	1051	785	527	422



Region*

England	Wales	Scotland
3497	195	318



Ethnicity*

White	Black	Asian	Mixed race
3371	200	271	153

PGSI**

Non-gambler	0	1 to 2	3 to 7	8+
860	1651	445	385	657

Randomisation between each experiment arm was tested using a series of Chi-squared tests on the distribution of each demographic variable (i.e. age, gender, region, ethnicity and region) across each arm, as well as composite CRT and PGSI scores. No tested variable showed any significant difference across arms.

*This excludes 'prefer not to say' / 'other'

** This excludes those who answered 'prefer not to say' / 'don't know' to Q16: 'Which of these have you spent any money on in the past 12 months?' and had a score of PGSI 0 (as they could not be classified)

Limitations of study

We have flagged several limitations or caveats to our approach below:

- There may have been potential priming of participants with the sensitive content warning around gambling harms. During trial design, a step was taken to mitigate this by introducing a second 'sensitive topic' (i.e. endangered animals) in an effort to reduce experimental demand effects.
- The experiment measured click-through rates to a gambling app and click through to potentially get a free spin on the app, but did not measure an actual wager placed. While the measures serve as an engagement proxy, they do not provide direct evidence of financial expenditure or actual gambling harm. Although gambling with real money within the experiment was discussed, this option was decided against due to ethical concerns of exposing potentially vulnerable participants to such situations.
- The small number of participants who entered the gambling app (443 participants across all experimental arms) limited the power of secondary analyses, making it difficult to draw strong conclusions about behavioural patterns within the app.
- The positioning of the post-trial survey questions at the very end of the experiment could have meant that participants were cognitively fatigued when they reached this moment in the survey which may have affected data quality and inflated PGSI scores. Moreover, exposure to the pop-up, videos, gambling app interface and other mentions of gambling throughout may have led participants to think more deeply about their previous gambling behaviour and answer the PGSI questions differently from how they might have otherwise (without any previous prompts regarding gambling). It's worth noting that PGSI questions were placed at the end of the experiment so as to not bias responses to any earlier tasks or questions.
- The large number of arms within the experiment increased the risk of a Type 1 error. In general, more experimental arms increase the number of comparisons being made, raising the risk of false positives due to multiple testing (this is why we ran additional robustness checks – see post hoc Bonferroni corrections in technical report). This is also true of the large number of survey questions asked in the post-trial survey – we have therefore chosen to report the findings from the survey in a descriptive way.

Main results of experiment still hold accounting for demographics, PGSI and other factors

When factoring in other variables (as covariates) into our model (e.g. demographic variables, Cognitive Reflection Test scores, PGSI scores) our main results still hold.

In other words, **the impact of exposure** to ‘Top tips for positive play’ (William Hill) (Arm4), ‘Made to play safely’ (888) (Arm6) and the ‘Magnets Stigma Campaign’ (GambleAware) (Arm2) **still exists regardless of other factors** (demographic variables, Cognitive Reflection Test scores and PGSI scores).

Coefficients:					
	Estimate	Std. Error	z	value	Pr(> z)
(Intercept)	-2.12696	0.32282	-6.589	4.44e-11	***
Armr1Arm 2	-0.63663	0.28092	-2.266	0.02344	*
Armr1Arm 3	-0.40024	0.26409	-1.516	0.12963	
Armr1Arm 4	1.34607	0.19887	6.769	1.30e-11	***
Armr1Arm 5	0.01877	0.23954	0.078	0.93755	
Armr1Arm 6	1.04515	0.20344	5.137	2.79e-07	***
PGSI_categoryNon-problem gambler	-0.01509	0.18566	-0.081	0.93524	
PGSI_categoryLow-risk gambler	0.58366	0.21995	2.654	0.00796	**
PGSI_categoryModerate-risk gambler	0.27803	0.23951	1.161	0.24570	
PGSI_categoryProblem gambler	0.84592	0.19846	4.262	2.02e-05	***
CRT_Combined	0.20262	0.06295	3.219	0.00129	**
Q7_Age35-54 years	-0.43578	0.14008	-3.111	0.00187	**
Q7_Age55+	-1.00962	0.18926	-5.335	9.58e-08	***
Q7_AgePrefer not to say	-1.04063	0.38942	-2.672	0.00753	**
Q8_GenderFemale	-0.13149	0.12261	-1.072	0.28353	
Q8_GenderOther/Prefer not to say	0.55211	0.83065	0.665	0.50626	
S9_SEG_recodeB	-0.67624	0.22346	-3.026	0.00248	**
S9_SEG_recodeC1	-0.59272	0.22388	-2.647	0.00811	**
S9_SEG_recodeC2	-0.82457	0.23418	-3.521	0.00043	***
S9_SEG_recodeD	-1.11265	0.27170	-4.095	4.22e-05	***
S9_SEG_recodeE	-0.82801	0.29514	-2.805	0.00502	**
Q10_RegionWales	-0.21339	0.29708	-0.718	0.47257	
Q10_RegionScotland	0.03719	0.22483	0.165	0.86862	
Q10_RegionPrefer not to say	1.23476	1.36087	0.907	0.36423	
Q11_EthnicityMixed	0.30371	0.26346	1.153	0.24901	
Q11_EthnicityAsian	0.14105	0.22073	0.639	0.52281	
Q11_EthnicityBlack	-0.29386	0.26895	-1.093	0.27456	
Q11_EthnicityOther/Prefer not to say	0.03497	0.57127	0.061	0.95119	

Signif. codes: '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05

Interactions with the video player and gambling app. Shown as percentages and average amounts.

		Control	Magnets stigma campaign	Play at your best	Top tips for positive play	Take time to think	Made to play safely	Total
Interactions in the video player simulation		<i>n</i> = 669	<i>n</i> = 670	<i>n</i> = 666	<i>n</i> = 671	<i>n</i> = 668	<i>n</i> = 669	<i>n</i> = 4,013
Click through	After first pop-up	6%	3%	4%	18%	6%	15%	9%
	After second pop-up	4%	3%	2%	1%	3%	1%	2%
	Total (both pop-ups)	10%	6%	6%	19%	9%	16%	11%
Interactions in the gambling app interface		<i>n</i> = 67	<i>n</i> = 41	<i>n</i> = 41	<i>n</i> = 130	<i>n</i> = 57	<i>n</i> = 107	<i>n</i> = 443
Deposit Amount	Amount	£15.70	£12.75	£25.90	£110.86	£10.63	£22.05	£32.98
Choice on homepage	Choose free bet	82%	76%	93%	89%	91%	94%	89%
	Safer gambling tools	1%	0%	0%	2%	4%	1%	1%
	Exit app	16%	24%	7%	9%	5%	5%	10%

Caution should be taken when interpreting deposit amount, choice on homepage, deposit limit and time limit as overall counts are small. Statistical analysis shows there were no significant differences in secondary outcomes, all $p > 0.05$. Note outliers (+3 SD from the mean) removed on deposit amounts.

Counts and average amounts: click throughs, interactions with gambling app interface

	Outcome	Control	Magnets Stigma Campaign	Play at your best	Top tips for positive play	Take time to think	Made to play safely	Total
Click throughs	After first pop-up	39	21	27	120	38	98	343
	After second pop-up	28	20	14	10	19	9	100
	Total (from both pop-ups)	67	41	41	130	57	107	443
Deposit Amount	Amount Average	£15.70	£12.75	£25.90	£110.86	£10.63	£22.05	£32.98
Choice on homepage	Choose free bet	55	31	38	116	52	101	393
	Safer gambling tools	1	0	0	2	2	1	6
	Exit app	11	10	3	12	3	5	44
Deposit limit	Amount Average	£0.00	-	-	£30.00	£1.00	£25.00	£14.50
Time limit	15 mins	1	0	0	1	1	0	3
	30 mins	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
	45 mins	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
	60 mins	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	90 mins	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Caution should be taken when interpreting deposit amount, choice on homepage, deposit limit and time limit as overall counts are small. Statistical analysis shows there were no significant differences in secondary outcomes, all $p > 0.05$. Note outliers (+3 SD from the mean) removed on deposit amounts.

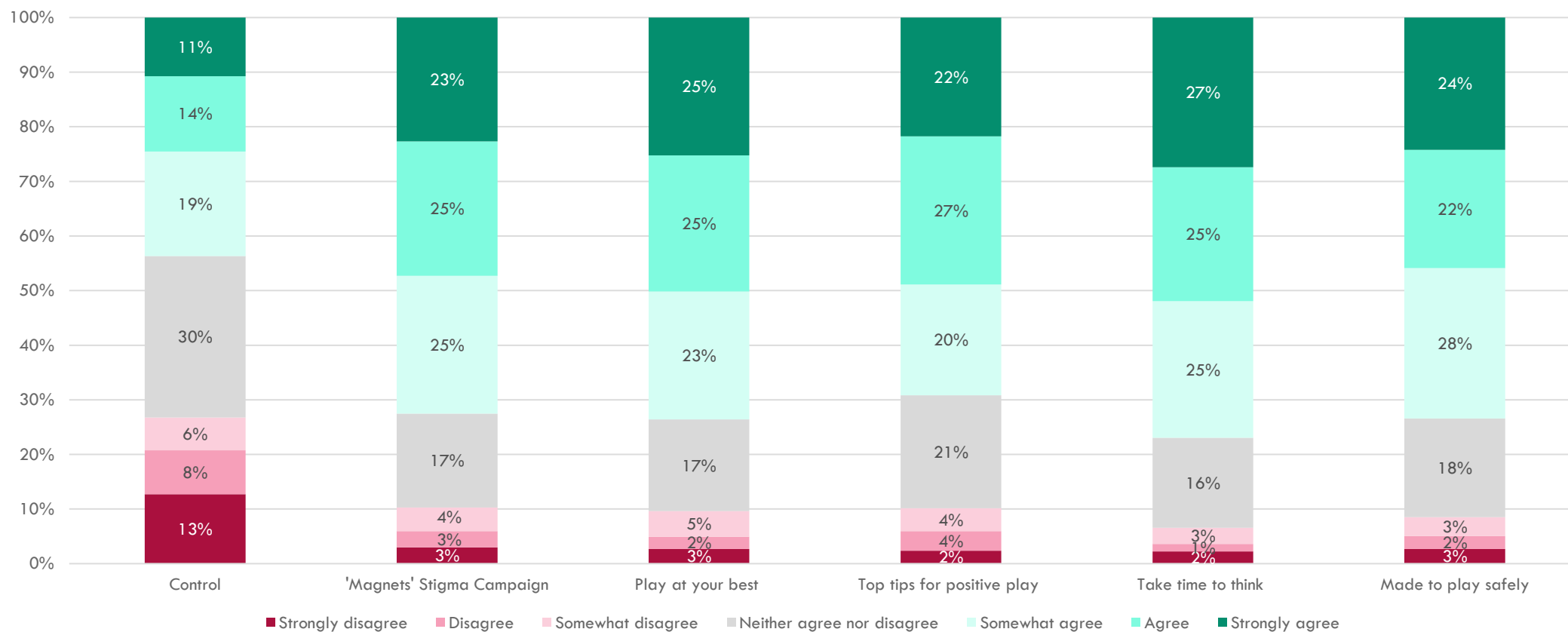
Attitudinal statements by video (% NET Agree)

	Control (video not related to gambling)	Magnets Stigma Campaign	Play at your best	Top tips for positive play	Take time to think	Made to play safely
Makes me think that everyone who gambles should use safer gambling tools	44%	73%	74%	69%	77%	73%
Makes me think that anyone can experience problems with gambling	44%	82%	76%	76%	76%	72%
Grabbed my attention	41%	67%	50%	57%	56%	49%
Is from a trustworthy source	30%	73%	64%	63%	65%	53%
Is relevant to me	26%	22%	30%	31%	31%	31%
Confident in staying safe whilst gambling	24%	49%	58%	55%	59%	52%
Helps people manage their gambling	20%	72%	68%	60%	72%	58%
Makes me think I should cut down on my gambling	19%	33%	25%	24%	29%	25%
Suggests gambling is harmless fun	25%	15%	39%	38%	32%	45%
Makes me want to gamble	13%	11%	23%	21%	19%	25%

Attitudinal statements % NET Agree, Green: indicates most positive in relation to promoting safer gambling, Red: indicates least positive in relation to promoting safer gambling. Control group not colour-coded.

Q – To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: ‘The gambling-related video I just watched...

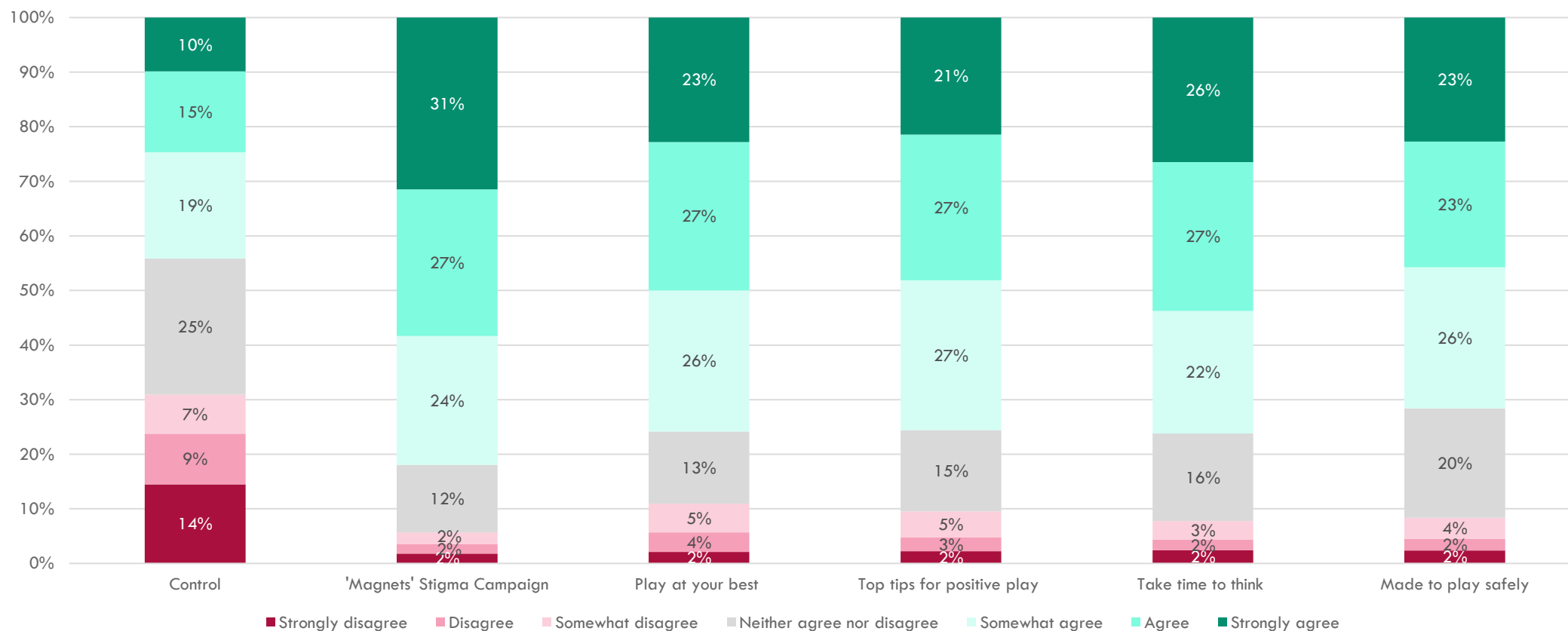
[A – Normalisation] Makes me think that everyone who gambles should use safer gambling tools



Base sizes. Control: 669. 'Magnets' Stigma Campaign: 670. Play at your best: 666. Top tips for positive play: 671. Take time to think: 668. Made to play safely: 669.

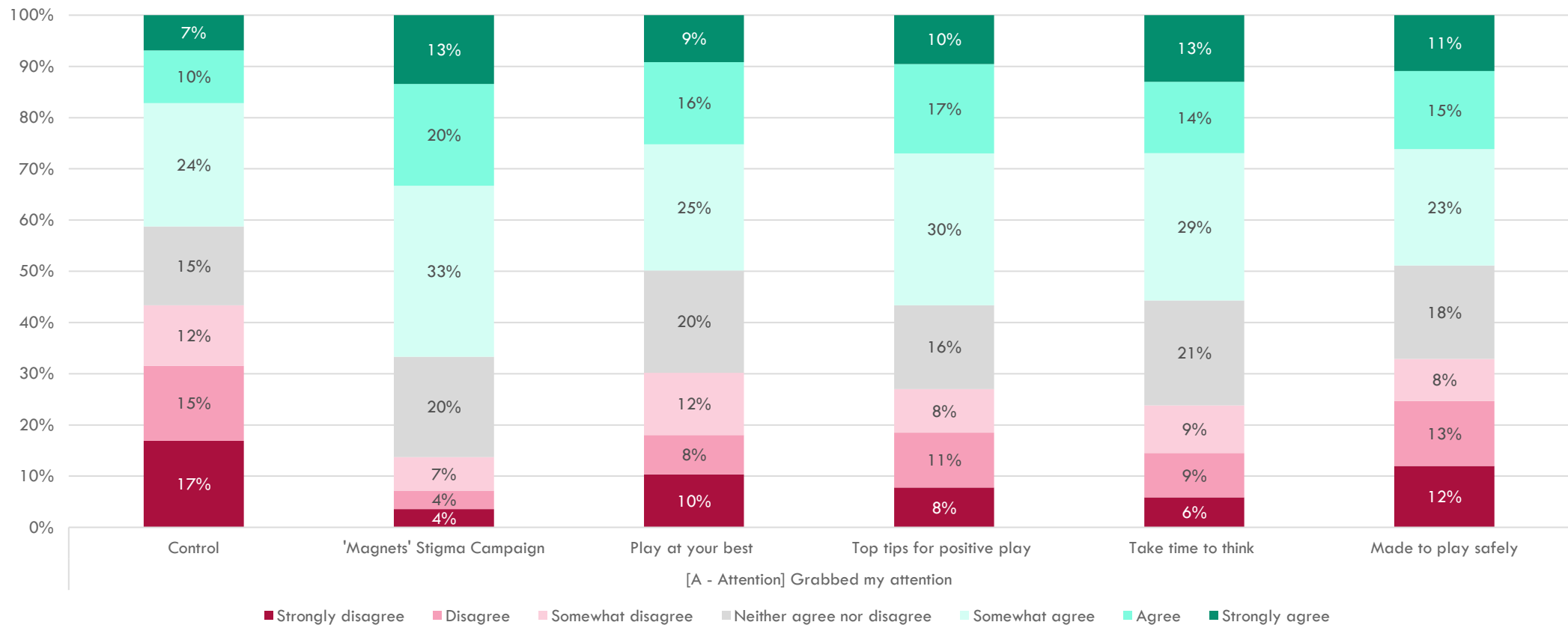
Q - To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: 'The gambling-related video I just watched...

[B - Normalisation] Makes me think that anyone can experience problems with gambling



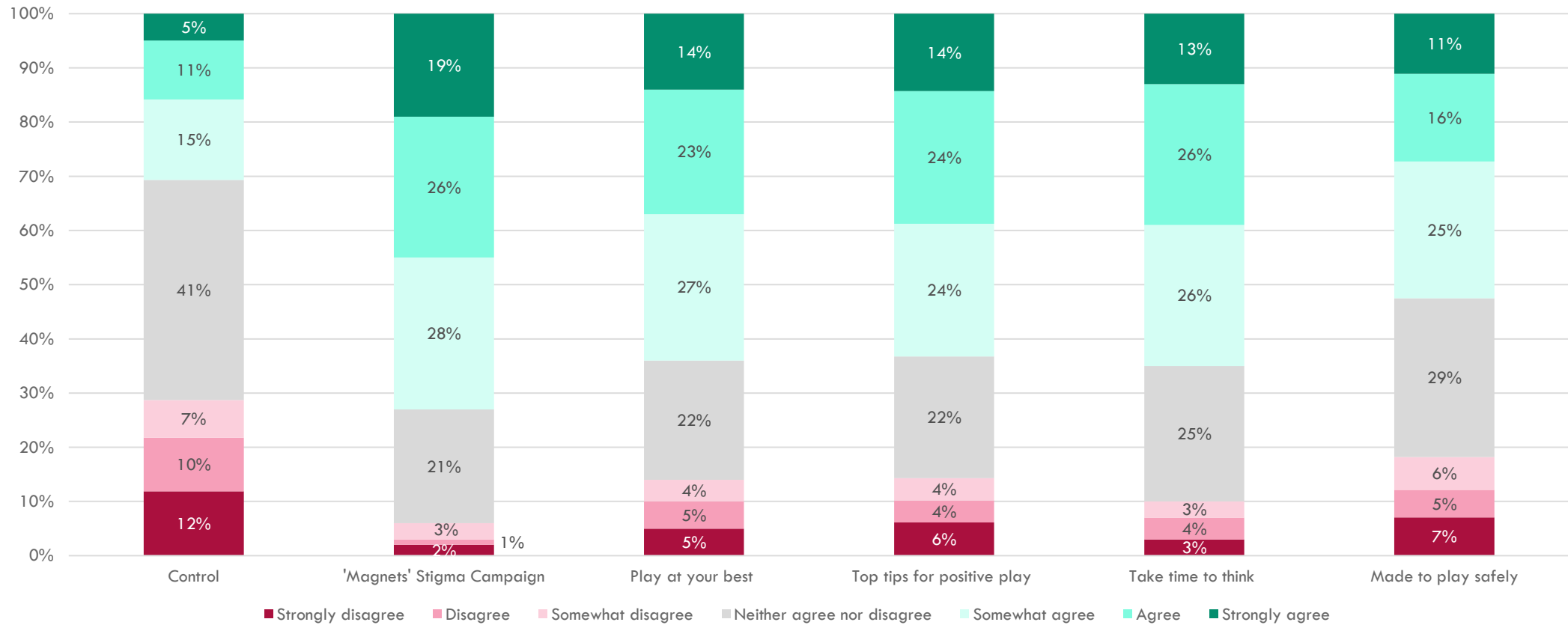
Base sizes. Control: 669. 'Magnets' Stigma Campaign: 670. Play at your best: 666. Top tips for positive play: 671. Take time to think: 668. Made to play safely: 669.

Q – To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: ‘The gambling-related video I just watched... [Attention] Grabbed my attention



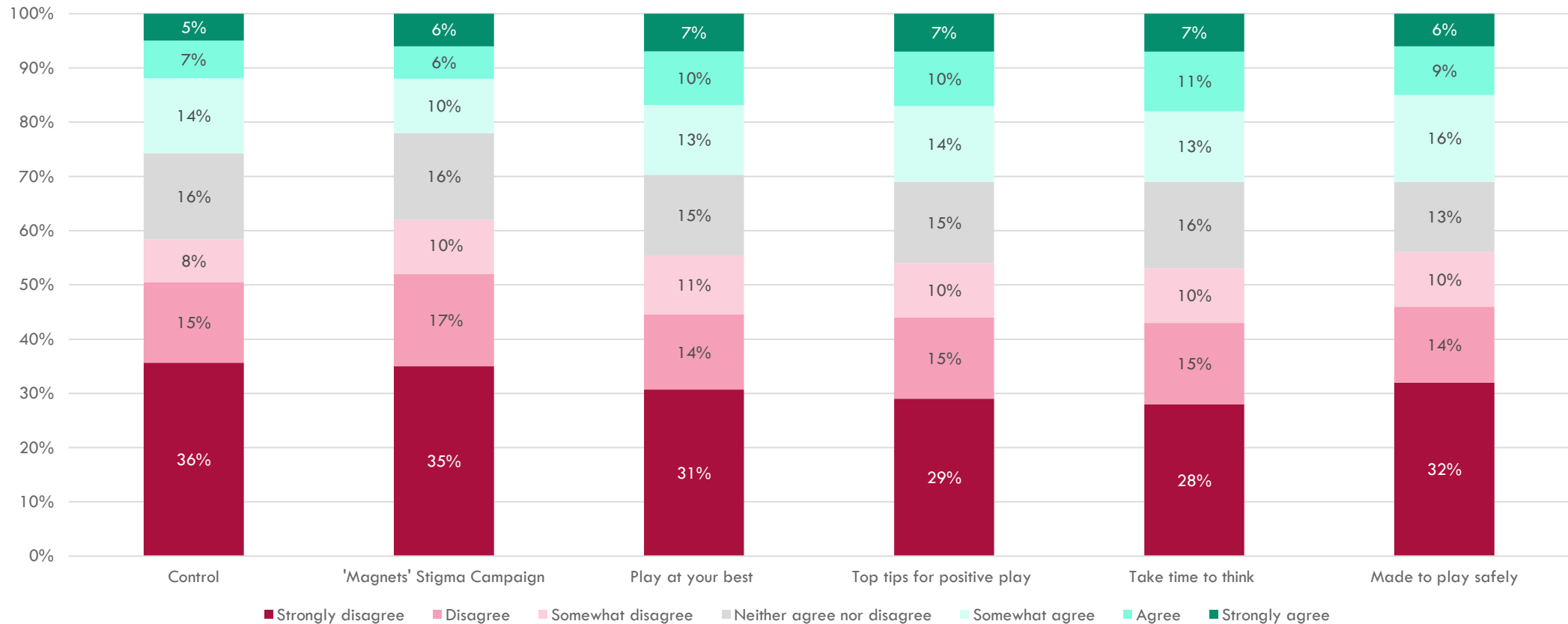
Base sizes. Control: 669. 'Magnets' Stigma Campaign: 670. Play at your best: 666. Top tips for positive play: 671. Take time to think: 668. Made to play safely: 669.

Q – To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: 'The gambling-related video I just watched... [Trustworthy source] Is from a trustworthy source



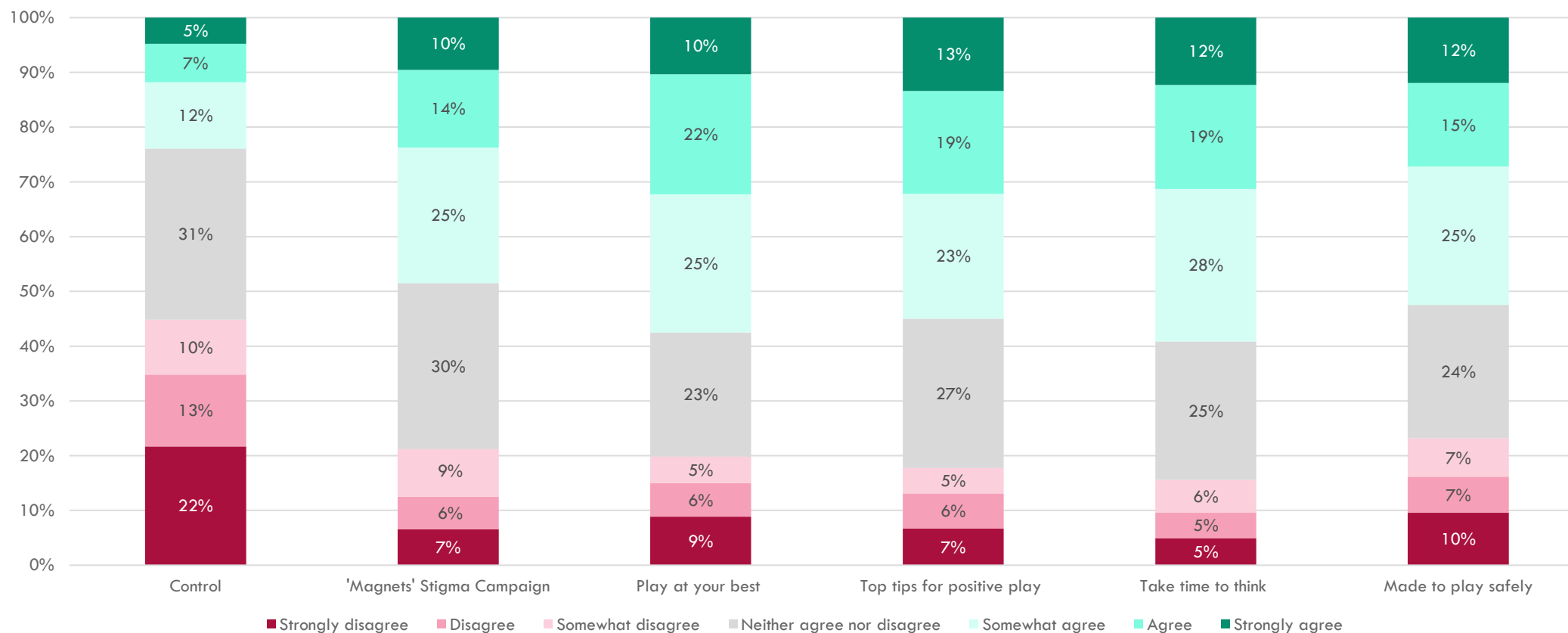
Base sizes. Control: 669. 'Magnets' Stigma Campaign: 670. Play at your best: 666. Top tips for positive play: 671. Take time to think: 668. Made to play safely: 669.

Q – To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: ‘The gambling-related video I just watched... [Relevance] Is relevant to me



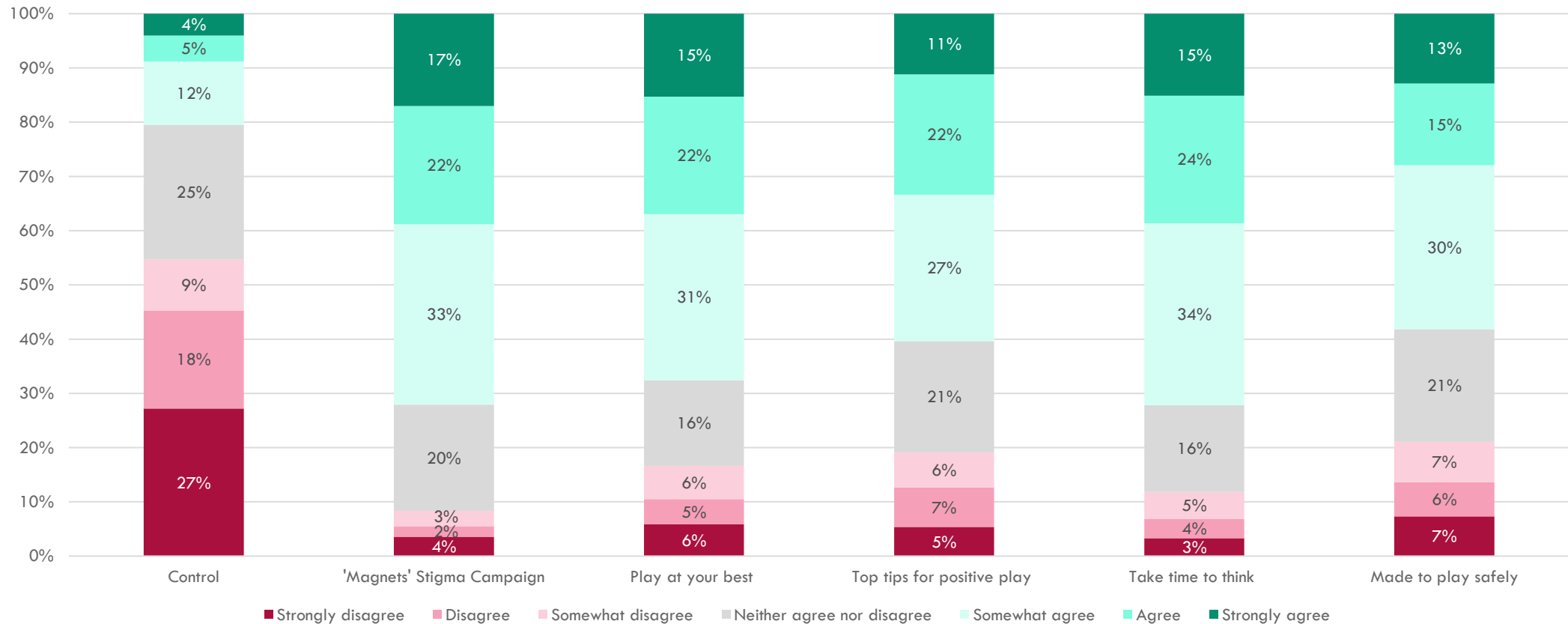
Base sizes. Control: 669. 'Magnets' Stigma Campaign: 670. Play at your best: 666. Top tips for positive play: 671. Take time to think: 668. Made to play safely: 669.

Q - To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: 'The gambling-related video I just watched... [Confident in staying safe] Makes me feel confident I can stay safe whilst gambling



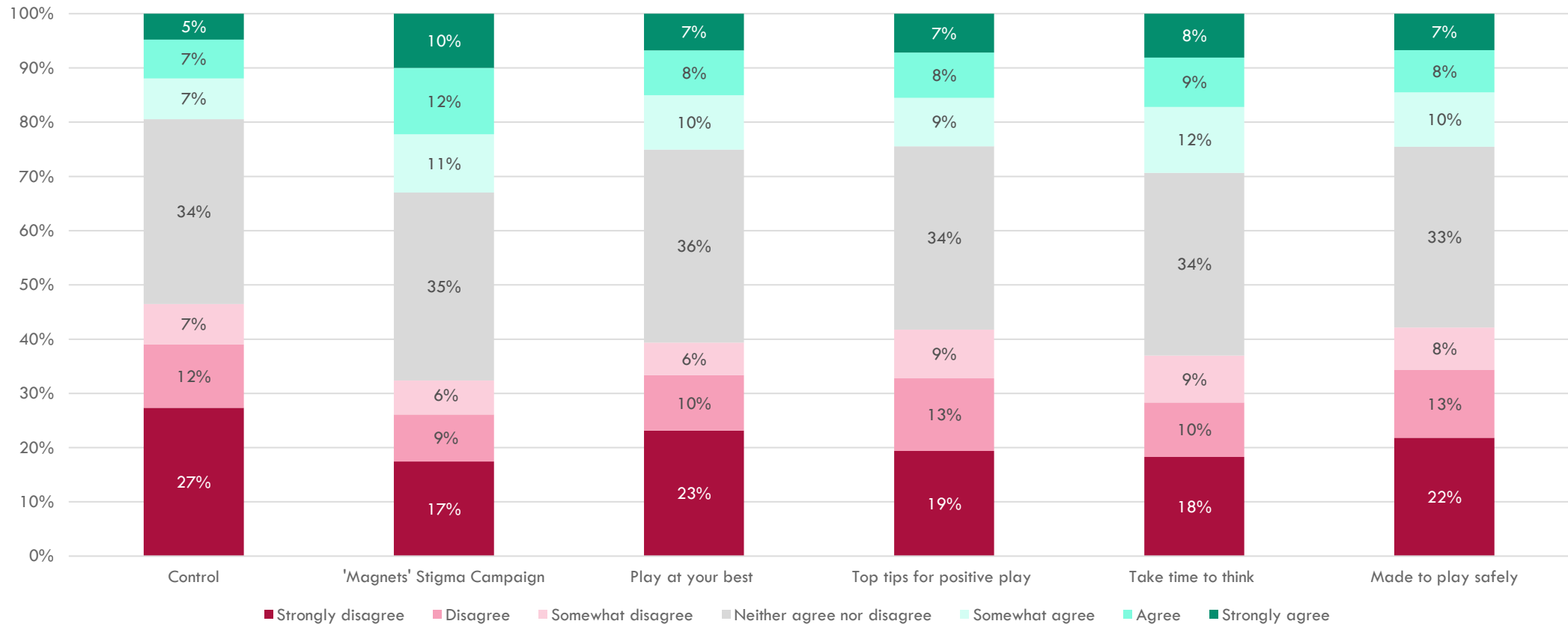
Base sizes. Control: 669. 'Magnets' Stigma Campaign: 670. Play at your best: 666. Top tips for positive play: 671. Take time to think: 668. Made to play safely: 669.

Q – To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: 'The gambling-related video I just watched... [Helps manage gambling] Helps people manage their gambling



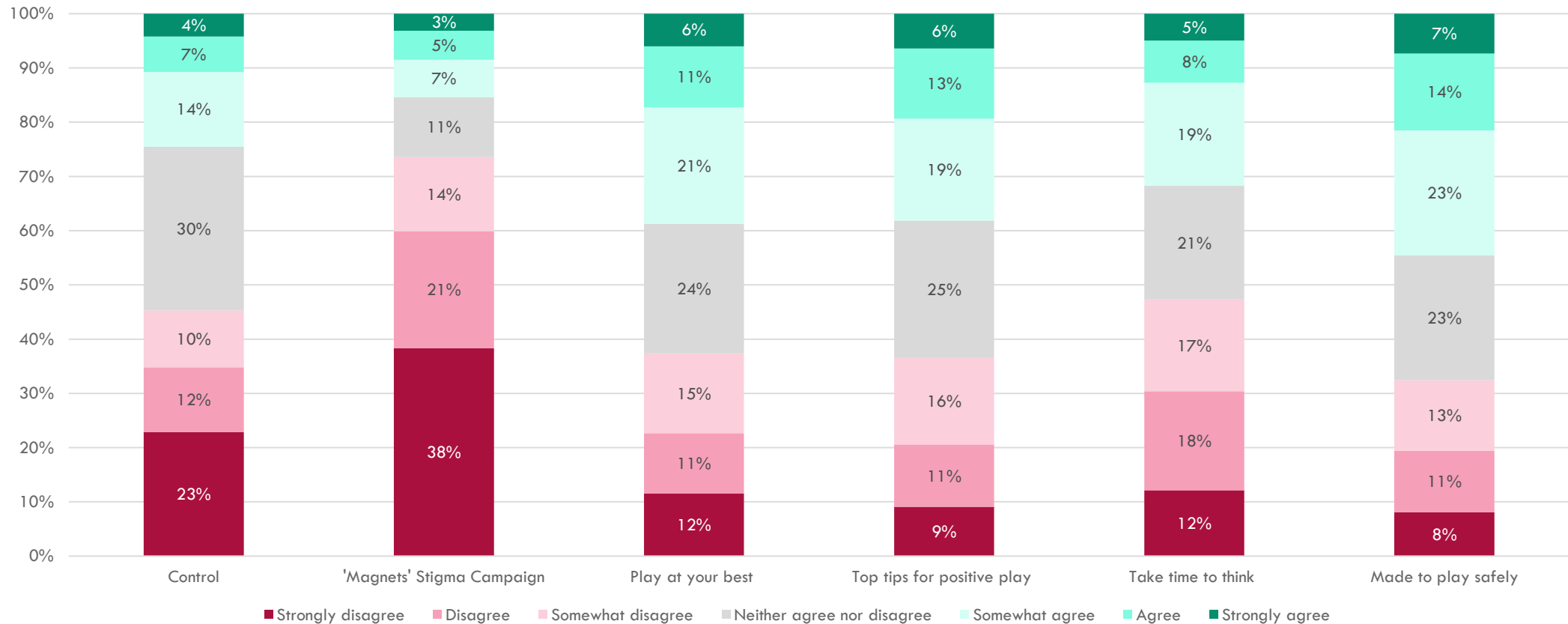
Base sizes. Control: 669. 'Magnets' Stigma Campaign: 670. Play at your best: 666. Top tips for positive play: 671. Take time to think: 668. Made to play safely: 669.

Q – To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: 'The gambling-related video I just watched... [Self-reflection] Makes me think I should cut down on my gambling



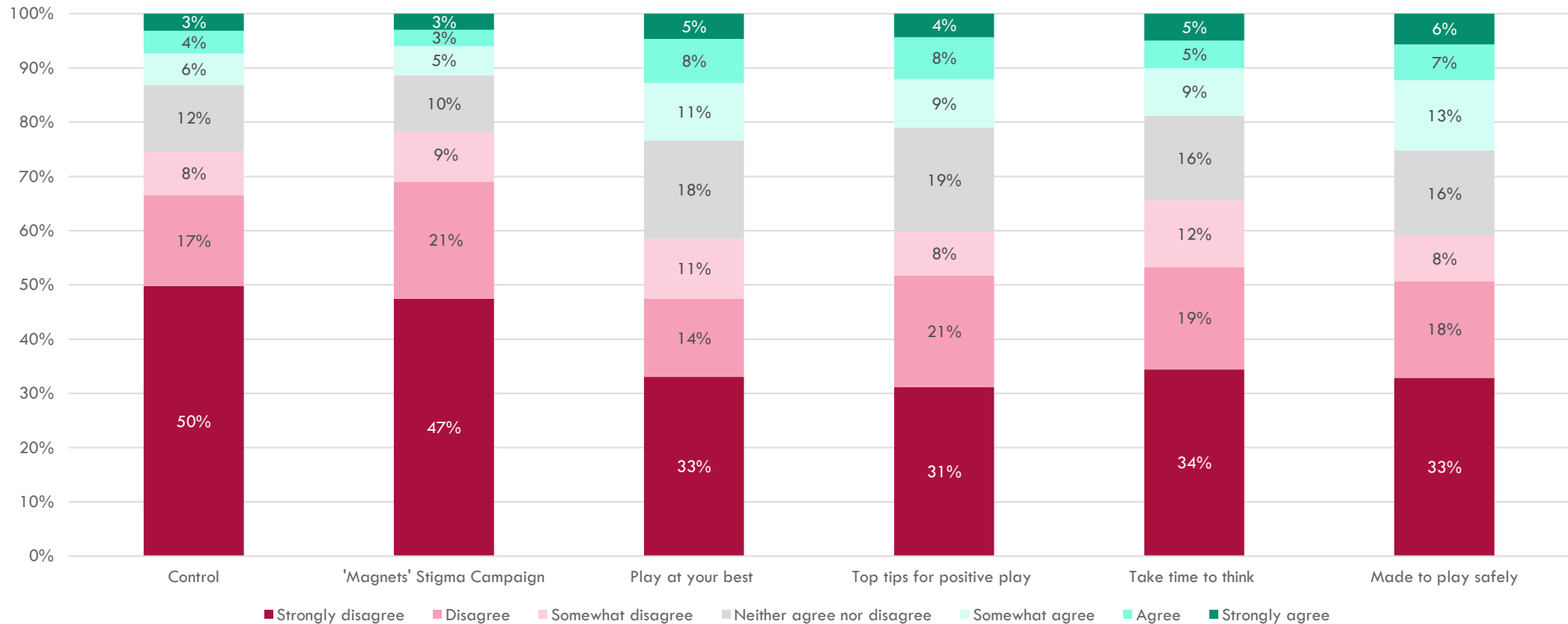
Base sizes. Control: 669. 'Magnets' Stigma Campaign: 670. Play at your best: 666. Top tips for positive play: 671. Take time to think: 668. Made to play safely: 669.

Q – To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: 'The gambling-related video I just watched... [Harmless fun (backfire)] Suggests gambling is harmless fun



Base sizes. Control: 669. 'Magnets' Stigma Campaign: 670. Play at your best: 666. Top tips for positive play: 671. Take time to think: 668. Made to play safely: 669.

Q – To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: ‘The gambling-related video I just watched... [Urge to gamble (backfire)] Makes made me want to gamble



Base sizes. Control: 669. 'Magnets' Stigma Campaign: 670. Play at your best: 666. Top tips for positive play: 671. Take time to think: 668. Made to play safely: 669.

Thank you

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