

GambleAware

GambleAware
Pennine Place, 2a Charing
Cross Road
WC2H 0HF
+44 (0) 20 7287 1994

info@gambleaware.org
about.gambleaware.org

GambleAware Written Submission for the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on the Treatment of Addiction

Hidden Addiction Series: Black Asian and Minority Ethnic groups

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About GambleAware

1. GambleAware is an independent charity (Charity No. England & Wales 1093910, Scotland SC049433) that champions a public health approach to preventing gambling harms. See: <http://about.gambleaware.org/>
2. GambleAware is a commissioner of integrated prevention, education and treatment services on a national scale, with over £40 million of grant funding under active management. In partnership with gambling treatment providers, GambleAware has spent several years methodically building structures for commissioning a coherent system of brief intervention and treatment services, with clearly defined care pathways and established referral routes to and from the NHS – a National Gambling Treatment Service.
3. GambleAware produces public health campaigns including Bet Regret. A Safer Gambling Board, including representatives from Public Health England, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and GambleAware, is responsible for the design and delivery of a campaign based on best practice in public health education. The Bet Regret campaign is being funded through specific, additional donations to the charity, in line with a commitment given to the government by the broadcasting, advertising and gambling industries.

Submission to the APPG

4. To assist the APPG with its very welcome inquiry, we have summarised some recent research we commissioned on gambling addiction amongst young people from BAME communities.
5. On 12th September research commissioned by GambleAware was published by social and market research company, ClearView. The research examined the experiences

and attitudes that children and young people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities have towards gambling. The project consisted of a number of focus groups and interviews with individuals aged between nine and 24. 188 children and young people were involved in the research. The findings from this research reflect the perceptions of these participants, and are not necessarily replicable across the whole adult population. All conclusions drawn below are those taken from the perceptions of the participants, and not of the adult population.

6 The findings of this research have particular relevance to this APPG's focus on the lives of the BAME community in relation to addiction, and key findings from the research showed that:

6.1 When talking about how they first experienced gambling, participants mentioned scratch cards, seeing gambling advertising in bookmakers and seeing family members bet on a sports match or play the National Lottery as examples.

6.2 Despite references to regular exposure to gambling, many participants shared the view that gambling was not something regularly discussed within their family or within their wider communities. The focus group with children aged between nine and 15 concluded there was a view that gambling is 'worse' than drug taking within their community, while those aged between 16-24 agreed gambling is talked about less than drugs, alcohol and sex. Participants listed a variety of negative consequences associated with problem gambling, such as: mental health issues, developing other addictions, experiencing financial hardship, and loss of relationships.

6.3 The participants were asked about how they saw cultural differences in BAME and white communities as a reason for a difference in perception, from this age group, of gambling activities. In their view, these included:

6.3.1 Religious and parental restrictions: Some young people felt that because of their religious and cultural backgrounds, conversations in relation to gambling are limited within their communities.

6.3.2 Financial limitations: Some participants felt that most people from BAME communities do not have the financial means to spend money on gambling activities.

6.3.3 Gambling introductions: Some suggested that in their view, within BAME communities gambling is seen as less permissible, whereas within white communities it is more acceptable. Consequently, the participants agreed that from their perspective, within BAME communities gambling is seen as a one-off opportunity to generate money at great risk, whereas within white communities it is seen as a risky but pleasurable pass-time.

6.3.4 Location: Some of the young people felt that the location of so many betting operators within BAME communities was the reason why the communities feel so differently about gambling.

6.4 When it came to advertising, the report found that many children and young people from BAME backgrounds are exposed to gambling advertising. 88% of respondents said they come across gambling advertising or marketing activity either 'a lot' or 'all the time'. Television, YouTube and football matches were mentioned as places where they are regularly exposed to gambling promotions. Others also referred to seeing promotions in video games, in apps, and on radio and billboards. However, the responses showed that while exposure to gambling advertising is high, there is not the same exposure to existing support services, creating a potentially dangerous situation which could make these children and young people extremely vulnerable to gambling harm.

6.5 When it came to accessing treatment, more than four in five (82%) interviewees said they would not know where to get help if gambling became a problem for them or for someone else. Many of the interviewees said they would have to search for help, whilst others said they would pray or seek help from their religious institution. However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of the report in drawing conclusions about this aspect of questioning. Young people statistically gamble less than adults, so might be less likely to know what help is available and where to find it compared to the adult population. Therefore, it would be problematic to transfer these findings across the adult population.

7 The report makes three key recommendations:

7.1 A consultation to be undertaken into how gambling education providers and gambling support organisations, together with community leaders, can reach at-risk or vulnerable individuals who are in need of education or support surrounding gambling. An obstacle identified to enacting this recommendation is that gambling is somewhat a taboo in many BAME communities, particularly in those with strong religious affiliation. Consequently, it can be difficult to engage with religious leaders and it is hard to gauge how receptive they will be to the support offered and suggestions made by gambling support organisations. GambleAware would like to see local institutions better equipped to handle gambling in the community.

7.2 A local advertising campaign in ethnic-diverse communities to be trialled to test what is the most effective means for raising awareness of the symptoms as well as what support is available to people from BAME backgrounds. This should coincide with the creation of educational resources on gambling for both formal and informal educational settings (i.e. schools, and also youth clubs) to inform young people about what is considered gambling, what the risks are, and where support is available.

7.3 Further research to be commissioned into specific communities within the BAME umbrella to develop best-practice guidance on how to raise awareness and provide support.

- 8 While this report is valuable in what it shows from the sample questioned, GambleAware feels it important to stress the limitations of exploring different communities with a universal approach. An example of this is the importance of tailoring language when framing the problem of gambling in BAME communities, and the solution. For instance, the term 'safer gambling' is useful in communities where gambling in itself is acceptable in some form, but has limited utility in communities where any form of gambling is a taboo. Therefore, while equipping local institutions (such as religious institutions and schools) to handle gambling addiction in the community is important, these cultural differences should be taken into consideration. It is important to work with communities within their own context, rather than imprinting a universal approach on them.
- 9 A copy of the full report is attached to this submission. GambleAware would be delighted to discuss its findings in detail with the APPG.