

GambleAware

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# LGBTQ+ communities' lived experience of gambling harms

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Regulatory Settlement Funded  
Research Programme

## About GambleAware

GambleAware is the leading independent charity (Charity No. England & Wales 1093910, Scotland SC049433) and strategic commissioner of gambling harm education, prevention and treatment across Great Britain to keep people safe from gambling harms.

GambleAware commissions the National Gambling Support Network (NSGN) which provides, free confidential treatment for almost 7,000 people, as well as the National Gambling Helpline which takes around 44,000 calls a year. The charity is independent and evidence-based, with a robust governance process in place to ensure the industry has absolutely no input or influence on our work.

Gambling harms can affect anyone, not just those who gamble, but also their families and communities. These harms particularly affect communities that already face inequality.

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## Introduction

### The Programme

GambleAware wishes to fund research to build knowledge of the lived experience of the LGBTQ+ community, including people who identify with a minority sexuality or gender identity, in relation to gambling and gambling harms. This programme will build on the findings from the upcoming publication 'LGBTQ+ people and gambling harms: a scoping review',<sup>1</sup> which found that there is evidence of compounding gambling harms for some groups within the LGBTQ+ community, yet a distinct lack of literature exploring LGBTQ+ experiences of gambling harms. This scoping review highlighted the need for further research to explore the lived experience, drivers, and burden of gambling harms within the LGBTQ+ community.

Research should build new evidence on *why* this community is disproportionately impacted by gambling harms, and what needs to be done to address their needs or prevent harm – including actionable and practical recommendations for policy, prevention programmes and treatment and support services. Applicants will need to demonstrate how they will build our understanding of the LGBTQ+ communities experience of gambling harms, barriers to treatment, and needs from service and healthcare providers.

The research programme will commence after the signing of the grant agreement, and the budget envelope for the research grant is £297,900 over 18 months. As this is a research grant, it is outside the scope of VAT.

The successful applicant will not necessarily have specific knowledge of gambling or gambling harms, and instead must have expertise in conducting research with LGBTQ+ communities, and experience of centring the agency, self-determination, and empowerment of respondents and research participants, including research on issues of social exclusion, stigma and discrimination as barriers faced by marginalised communities accessing services, and the contexts in which LGBTQ+ communities live.

### Funding Source

This project is funded by an independent funding source, in the form of the Regulatory Settlement allocated to GambleAware by the GB Gambling Commission in accordance with its Statement of Principles for determining financial penalties. In keeping with these principles, the funding allocated by the Commission to GambleAware will be used for specific, agreed purposes that accelerate GambleAware's commissioning plans, including research projects.

Regulatory settlement funding has previously been used by the Gambling Commission to fund independent research on gambling harms. It is **not** voluntary industry funding, and the gambling industry has no influence over how it is allocated or used.

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<sup>1</sup> The final report has been finalised and will be released in the upcoming months. Interested bidders may contact [research@gambleaware.org](mailto:research@gambleaware.org) for access to the report pre-publication.

## Context

### Gambling Harms and Inequality in Great Britain

Harms associated with gambling can affect certain groups in society in an unequal way which links to a much wider issue of inequality and specifically health inequalities. Individual, societal, and environmental factors can contribute to certain groups disproportionately experiencing gambling harms. Inequalities are often interrelated: disadvantages are concentrated in particular parts of the population and can be mutually reinforcing. Addressing these wider socio-economic inequalities is therefore a crucial part of reducing health inequalities.

Though we are aware of the inequitable burden of gambling harms in GB, it has been widely acknowledged that there remain significant gaps in evidence on the underlying drivers of gambling harm across the population, and of those communities who bear a disproportionate burden of harm, notably “vulnerable and minoritised groups.”<sup>2</sup>

Where there is evidence, we know that there are serious and unaddressed disparities in needs, access to support, and outcomes from support.<sup>3</sup> Detailed primary research on these issues will provide the evidence needed to support improvements in policy, prevention (including information campaigns, education, and training) and treatment (including informal and specialist support). The ultimate purpose of this research is to facilitate greater assurance that prevention and treatment approaches and systems are able to access and address those communities who most need support.

### LGBTQ+ People and Gambling Harm

While there is an existing consensus and understanding of the inequalities experienced by LGBTQ+ populations concerning other health challenges and activities that can be associated with harm, such as alcohol and illicit drug use, far less is understood about the experience of gambling harms or gambling disorder in the LGBTQ+ community, especially in a GB context. This is despite some striking evidence that these communities are bearing a high burden of gambling harm in Britain.

Internal analysis of GambleAware’s Annual Great Britain Treatment & Support survey suggests that the **burdens of gambling harm are greater among the minority sexuality community in GB**. Results of the survey show that among people who gamble, those who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual are **more likely than their heterosexual counterparts to report experiencing gambling-related harm**, as defined by a PGSI score of 1+ (29% vs 21%). Gay, lesbian, and bisexual respondents were also more likely to score an 8 or higher on the PGSI scale (9% vs 4%). The Treatment and Support Survey data also shows that as minority sexuality groups increase their gambling, their mental health worsens at a greater rate than the general population, suggesting that gambling may have a more deleterious impact on these communities. Internal analysis also indicates that the proportion of gay, lesbian, and bisexual community members experiencing financial harms from gambling (such as not being able to afford rent, bills, or food) was higher at the point of accessing support for gambling than it was among heterosexual people (24% vs 16%). This

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<sup>2</sup> Bowden Jones et al. (2022). Gambling disorder in the UK: key research priorities and the urgent need for independent research funding. *The Lancet*. 9, 4: 321-329. Available [here](#).

<sup>3</sup> Moss, N., Wheeler, J., Sarkany, A., Selvaminiakam, K. & Kapadia, D. (2023). Minority Communities & Gambling Harms: Qualitative and Synthesis Report. Produced for GambleAware: London. Available [here](#).

tells us that LGBTQ+ individuals experience **greater barriers to accessing support, and thus are less likely to get help** until harms are more severe and problems more entrenched, compared to the general population.

Additionally, recent evidence from GambleAware's partners has found that the combination of mental health difficulties and LGBTQ+ identity may be a barrier to accessing treatment for harm, and LGBTQ+ people who experience gambling harms may need specialised treatment to address trauma and mental health difficulties alongside gambling harm.<sup>4</sup> Understanding these additional harms in greater detail is crucial to ensure services and interventions commissioned by GambleAware, and across the sector, are appropriately addressing the specific needs of these populations.

The above evidence, alongside evidence from adjacent sectors, shows that LGBTQ+ communities experience a disproportionate burden of harm and health challenges as a result of their marginalisation, stigmatisation, and social exclusion. For example, the recently published Terence Etherton report also noted that LGBTQ+ people in the military experience compounding harms and stigmatisation,<sup>5</sup> highlighting the need for an intersectional approach to this research. This understanding led to GambleAware commissioning a scoping study to establish what is known about the experience of gambling harms amongst the LGBTQ+ community. The report finds that **there are significant gaps in evidence** on the drivers and experience of gambling harm for the LGBTQ+ communities in GB, along with **serious and unaddressed disparities in needs, access, and outcomes**. The report emphasises that further research, including cross-sectional quantitative research, population-based surveys, longitudinal research and in-depth qualitative exploration, is urgently needed to understand the experience of gambling harms in the LGBTQ+ community.

It emphasises also that further research must collaboratively engage with LGBTQ+ communities to generate appropriate research designs that are representative, participatory, and consider the needs and experiences of the most marginalised individuals or groups. Research should also specifically explore gambling harm for LGBTQ+ people where gender, sexuality, ethnicity, disability and other factors intersect.

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<sup>4</sup> Baker-Frampton, Dragomir, Sharman & Roberts (2023). Harmful gamblers who identify as LGBTQ+ are more likely to have comorbid mental health disorders than heterosexual gamblers. Poster presentation.

<sup>5</sup> Etherton, T. (2023). Final Report – Independent Review into the service and experience of LGBT veterans who served prior to 2000. [Available here.](#)

## Research Scope and Focus

In the context of barriers to and inadequate service provision, and a lack of understanding of the needs and experiences of gambling and gambling harm of these communities, further research is needed to understand the experience of gambling harms in the LGBTQ+ community in GB, and consequently improve the services and interventions available to people experiencing these harms, directly or indirectly.

### Research aims

The following research aims are driven by the recommendations of the scoping study. It emphasises the importance of building our knowledge of the lived experience of LGBTQ+ people experiencing gambling harms in Great Britain. Research proposals will need to demonstrate how they are building upon existing research (as summarised in the scoping study) and creating new evidence or filling knowledge gaps:

1. Establish the ways in which LGBTQ+ people experience gambling harms in GB, both directly and indirectly, and what their lived experience of gambling harms looks like. Approaches to achieving this aim include:
  - a. Establishing the prevalence of gambling and gambling harms in LGBTQ+ populations in Great Britain, as well as any associated risk factors, mediating factors or confounding factors, through new quantitative research such as large-scale, population-based surveys.
  - b. Uncovering a picture of gambling harms across the life course and identifying the protective, risk and causal factors of gambling harms in LGBTQ+ people through in-depth qualitative, ethnographic, and/or longitudinal research.
  - c. Exploring key variables associated with marginalisation and social exclusion that may contribute to or exacerbate gambling harms amongst LGBTQ+ populations, including intersectional and compound stigmatisation, discrimination, hate crime, minority stress, gender dysphoria, drug and alcohol use, and adverse life events or trauma.
2. Establish what effective, evidence-based approaches, systems and interventions for preventing harms amongst LGBTQ+ people or supporting those who are at risk of or experiencing gambling harms may look like. This includes:
  - a. Exploring the patterns of help-seeking for gambling harms amongst the LGBTQ+ community, particularly the motivations and experiences of people who access support or interventions for gambling harms, any barriers that may prevent access to support and how these barriers can be overcome in gambling harm service provision. This should include an exploration of various forms of support, including communication, digital tools, self-help tools, education, screening, and other training interventions
  - b. Exploring the impact that multiple or compounding stigmatisations and discrimination may have on people in this community, as their gender or sexual identity intersects with their lived experience as a person who has experienced gambling harms; and what approaches or interventions are likely to be affected in reducing this stigmatisation.
  - c. Provide specific recommendations or case studies to highlight examples of good practice or promising interventions in preventing and treating gambling harms amongst LGBTQ+

populations, as well as insights on how these principles can be mainstreamed within existing prevention and treatment.

3. Research must be co-produced and/or undertaken with the involvement of community groups and/or LGBTQ+ peers and researchers, including those with lived experience of gambling harms, in order to break down barriers to participation, and increase understanding of meaningful involvement and the challenges of undertaking such research. Targeted community outreach should actively engage with more sidelined and displaced groups of the LGBTQ+ community, notably those who are also members of other marginalised and minoritised communities. All elements of this research should be designed to be robust, respectful, and culturally competent.

## Implications for research grantees

In fulfilling the above aims, and based on existing research, will take a mixed-methods, multidisciplinary approach, incorporating qualitative, quantitative, and theoretical research, and bidders should bid as teams who can deliver the work across these areas. For examples of such an approach, see:

- [Building Knowledge of Women's Lived Experience of Gambling and Gambling Harms Across Great Britain: Final Report](#)
- [Minority Communities & Gambling Harms: Qualitative and Synthesis Report](#).

Applications from a consortium, such as lead research organisations or academic institutions working in partnership with other organisations such as community or third-sector organisations, are particularly encouraged.

## Involvement of community and lived experience

Further to the above, research will need to include some focus on the lived experience of people impacted by gambling harms or at risk of harms, and demonstrate how lived experience will be involved throughout the project.

- Proposals should centre the meaningful involvement of community in the design, response to (as respondents, participants, and interviewees), and monitoring of research foci and fieldwork.
- People with lived experience of gambling harm must be meaningfully involved per the above, and must meaningfully participate in, and be consulted with, as part of each research programme. Proposals will need to outline the resources committed to the involvement and contribution of the lived experience community.
- This must be set out in grant proposals and will be evaluated by proposal reviewers.

## Expected outputs

The research will include qualitative and quantitative elements, as well as the establishment of social constructions and dominant discourses related to LGBTQ+ people and gambling harms. The primary research undertaken will be framed by desk research and be supported by the findings of GambleAware's commissioned study, 'LGBTQ+ People and Gambling Harms: A Scoping Review'.

The primary expected outputs from the research programme will be reports for a) a lay audience, published by GambleAware, and b) papers submitted to peer-reviewed journals for academic publication. The primary outputs should include:

- At least one synthesis lay audience report, published by GambleAware, and lay reports associated with key workstreams of the project (e.g. a report for qualitative and quantitative workstreams).
- At least three papers submitted to peer-reviewed journals for academic publication during the life course of the grant.
- A slide deck for the presentation of key findings for GambleAware and/or an external audience for virtual or face-to-face delivery. Grantees should agree to present findings to stakeholders at least two times throughout the life course of the grant.
- \*All GambleAware reports will be in Word and will be peer-reviewed in line with GambleAware's [Research Publication Guidelines](#).

Additionally, we encourage bidders to suggest other innovative assets and outputs; for example, videos, infographics, blogs, practitioner workshops or community events.



## Proposal and Submission Details

### Budget

The total budget for this work is up to £297,900 over 18 months. On appointment, the successful bidder will be asked to submit a detailed budget using GambleAware's Budget and Reporting Template. As a grant, this is outside the scope of VAT.

### Guideline Timings

The research will be undertaken over a maximum of 18 months. It will commence at a mutually agreed date/time after the final decision and award (see below).

The guideline timings for this call for proposals are below:

Milestone	Planned start date	Planned end date
Call for Proposals launch (RFP)	12/01/24	12/01/24
Clarification of tender questions deadline	29/01/24	29/01/24
Clarification of tender answers circulated	05/02/24	05/02/24
Proposals submissions deadline	12/02/24	12/02/24
Outcomes communicated to bidders	01/03/24	05/03/24
Financial due diligence	12/02/24	13/03/24
Contract negotiation and signing	28/02/24	25/03/24

### Proposal requirements

Please include with your proposal the following:

- A proposal of no longer than 30,000 words in total (excluding publication and contact lists). Proposals must engage with the scoping study and detail the meaningful involvement of communities with lived experience of gambling harm.
- A list of recent relevant publications by research team members and a short overview of each publication/piece of research.
- The names and contact details of two clients whom you would be content for us to contact if you are shortlisted.
- How impact and promotion of the findings and research will be maximised by your consortium further to GambleAware's own communications and promotion. This should include:
  - Ensuring longevity of the research, and this work resulting in further research.
  - How this research will strive to change the dominant and stigmatising discourses.
- GambleAware's work centres around the principles of equality, inclusion, and diversity at all levels of governance, human resources, policy, and commissioning. As part of your proposal, please set out how

equality, inclusion, and diversity play a part in your organisation. Please include any policies, procedures, and approaches to governance.

- A detailed Gantt chart outlining the proposed timeline for this research. Note that this timeline must demonstrate how time/resource has been committed and considered for recruitment of participants and respondents, given the nature of the research and the historical othering and mistreatment of members of the LGBTQ+ community in GB.
- Funds and resources must be made available, where relevant, to support and remunerate the meaningful involvement of lived experience communities.
- Any proposals submitted should include responses to our pass/fail eligibility criteria (see below).

## Submission

Proposals and all associated documentation will need to be submitted by **5pm on the 12th of February** via email to [procurement@gambleaware.org](mailto:procurement@gambleaware.org) with the subject title 'LGBTQ+ call for proposals' and we will acknowledge upon receipt. Any proposals submitted after this time will not be considered.

## Evaluation criteria

Framework Evaluation Criteria	Criteria	Criteria weighting <sup>6</sup>	Max Available Score
1.	Confirmation that researchers have not received any funds directly from gambling industry operators in the past 12 months	Pass/Fail	
2.	Demonstration of prior experience of directly and meaningfully involving LGBTQ+ communities and people with lived experience of gambling harms in research.	Pass/Fail	
3.	Proven demonstration of culturally competent research with LGBTQ+ communities, with examples of how the nuanced and complex needs of people in these communities have been considered in previous research.	Pass/Fail	
Quality	Understanding of the research aims, requirements and challenges.	20%	100 (5 x 20)
	Demonstration of a rigorous and robust methodology, particularly taking into account the challenges and intricacies of sensitively and respectfully researching with affected communities, including an outline of analyses and outputs.	15%	75 (5 x 15)
	Extent of meaningful involvement of lived experience communities throughout, with investment (financial or in-kind) allocated to this clearly set out	10%	50 (5 x 10)

<sup>6</sup> Note that any organization that does not pass evaluation criteria (1), (2) and (3) will not be eligible for funding through this grant.

	Overview of the proposed research team members, their relevant expertise and experience, and roles in delivering the programme.	15%	75 (5 x 15)
	Potential scale of impact of research, through policy, frontline practice, service commissioning or other mechanisms	15%	75 (5 x 15)
<b>Delivery</b>	Proven ability to meet the timetable and deliver the proposed outputs.	10%	50 (5 x 10)
<b>Cost</b>	Cost and value for money	15%	75 (5 x 15)
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100%</b>	<b>500</b>

## Process for appointment

The process for appointment will be:

1. Review and scoring of proposals against the above evaluation criteria by the Review Panel (made up of two internal reviewers from the GambleAware Evidence and Insights Team and one external independent Subject Matter Expert).
2. Final moderation with funding awarded to the highest-scoring proposals.
3. All bidders will be notified of the outcome and offered feedback on the scoring of their proposal by the Review Panel, and the successful bidders will be awarded the grant funding.

## Terms and conditions

To ensure expediency, we ask that any questions or clarifications regarding our Terms and Conditions are sent to [procurement@gambleaware.org](mailto:procurement@gambleaware.org) by 29 January 2024. Bidders are unable to make amendments to the Terms and Conditions post-tender award. If there is no correspondence received by 29 January 2024, GambleAware will take this as acceptance of the Terms and Conditions.

[STANDARD Template Grant Agreement.pdf \(begambleaware.org\)](#)