

# **Open Call for Research Proposals**



## **Regulatory Settlement Research Programme**

**December 2023**

**GambleAware is the leading charity working to keep people safe from gambling harms.** As a commissioner we deliver prevention and treatment services for gambling harms in Great Britain.

Every year we lead major public health campaigns and, fund access to free, confidential treatment for over 7,000 people and over 44,000 calls to the National Gambling Helpline. Anyone experiencing harm can visit [BeGambleAware.org](https://www.begambleaware.org) or call the helpline 0808 8020 133.

We work in close collaboration with the NHS, clinicians, local and national government, gambling treatment providers, as well as other services like mental health, drug and alcohol services, and criminal justice, to ensure that the whole system works together to help people suffering from gambling harms.

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## **Introduction**

### **The Grants**

GambleAware wishes to fund research to build the evidence base of gambling harm across Great Britain, including building knowledge and understanding focussing on communities who bear disproportionate burden of gambling harm. This call is thematically open (subject to very broad parameters listed below), in order to allow for creativity and innovation on the part of prospective grantees, effectively building knowledge about communities where we currently have 'blind spots' in terms of research and in terms of service provision.

Research will build new evidence on why these communities are disproportionately impacted by gambling harms, and what we need to do to address their needs or prevent harm, including what works. This call for proposals will require applicants to demonstrate how they will build our understanding of communities most notably impacted by gambling harms, specific minoritised communities' experience of gambling harms, barriers to treatment, and needs from service and healthcare providers.

A total maximum of 8 research grants will be awarded to grantees with proven track records of undertaking research to build knowledge and understanding in the priority areas set out below. The research programme will commence after the signing of the grant agreement, and the budget envelope for each research grant is £247,900 over 18 months.

The successful applicant will not necessarily have specific knowledge of gambling or gambling harms, and instead will have expertise on the specific subject matter, communities, or drivers of harm and health burdens.

### **Regulatory Settlement Funding**

This project is funded by the Regulatory Settlement allocated to GambleAware by [The Gambling Commission](#) in accordance with their [Statement of Principles](#) for determining financial penalties. In keeping with the Gambling Commission's Statement of Principles, funding from regulatory settlements to GambleAware will be used for specific, agreed purposes that accelerate our commissioning plans, including research projects, such as this Open Call for Research Proposals.

## **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.

The interactions between different kinds of inequality, and the factors that drive them, are often complex and multidirectional. People can find it more difficult to move away from unhealthy behaviours if they are worse off in terms of a range of socio-economic factors and the contexts in which they live. Interventions and services aimed at helping to change behaviours need to be able to adapt to the reality of people’s lives, address the wider circumstances in which behaviours take place, and recognise the difficulty of achieving and maintaining behavioural change under conditions of stress.<sup>1</sup>

### **Drivers and Burdens of Gambling Harm**

We still have significant gaps in evidence on the 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/outcomes. As a result of this, we lack assurance that the programmes, services, and interventions delivered by GambleAware’s providers really access and address those communities who most need support, by being accessible and relevant to those communities bearing disproportionate burdens of gambling harms. We also lack evidence on what kinds of interventions or activities can shift the dial the most in terms of reducing harm at population level.

Though there is a focus within the parameters of communities most impacted by gambling harms and the drivers of those harms, the call will be *open*. Applicants will have to specify how their research will contribute to understanding where currently there is a lack of understanding and knowledge, but the focus of the research will be down to applicants. This will allow for creativity, innovation, and for the sector to determine the direction of research on the part of prospective grantees and will serve to allow GambleAware to effectively build knowledge about communities and focus areas where we are currently have ‘blind spots’, and simply do not yet know what we don’t know.

### **Purpose, Aims, and Focus**

We will award a maximum of 8 research grants (each of £247,900 in value) to institutions (grantees) with proven track records of undertaking research to build knowledge and understanding in the priority areas set out below. Each bid will be evaluated according to GambleAware’s grant evaluation processes on its own merit, and the highest scoring bids will be awarded grants.

The purpose of these research grants is to address key evidence gaps and in doing so build the capacity and the capability of the research community in Great Britain, enabling it to make progress on key priorities that the research community and key academic experts have themselves identified.

Proposals for funding must be for research in the below identified priority areas and must be research programmes that complement our previous research programmes whilst not duplicating or excessively

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<sup>1</sup> Evans and Buck, 2018, Tackling multiple unhealthy risk factors Emerging lessons from practice (London: The King’s Fund)

<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

overlapping with these. These intersecting areas focus on the lived experience of communities who experience higher burdens of gambling harms,<sup>3</sup> are relatively invisible, and who are generally under-represented in many specialist gambling treatment services:<sup>4</sup>

1. **Research on drivers or determinants of gambling harms.**  
This can be interpreted broadly at a range of levels, including individual-level factors, community factors, wider social determinants, as well as features of gambling products or industry practices.
2. **Research on what works to prevent or reduce harm**  
This can be both in general and with a particular focus on what works and for whom (including women, minoritised communities, young people, etc).
3. **Research on other under-served communities** where there is a demonstrable dearth of research and understanding, and their relationships with gambling and gambling harms.
4. **Research on other under-researched issues that are relevant to a public health approach** to reducing gambling harms. For example, legacy harms, compound stigmatisation, and affected others are all known to be under-researched areas; however there will be other themes that applicants may wish to propose.

This above scope has been structured so as to provide a relatively broad framework of research themes can span the range from upstream prevention through to treatment and support, as well universal and targeted research questions.

However, research with a strong medical or clinical focus – e.g. evaluations of pharmacological treatments or animal studies – would not fall within this scope.

Regardless of subject matter or topic, all research projects 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:

- Grantee partners must 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 outline the resource committed to the involvement and contribution of the lived experience community.
- This must be set out in grant proposals by grantee partners and will be evaluated by proposal reviewers.

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<sup>3</sup> Conolly, A, Davies, B., Fuller, E., Heinze, N., Wardle, H., 2018, *Gambling behaviour in Great Britain in 2016 Evidence from*

*England, Scotland and Wales* (London: NatCen Social Research)

<sup>4</sup> Dinos, S., Windle, K., Crowley, J., Khambhaita, P., 2020, *Treatment Needs And Gap Analysis In Great Britain Synthesis Of Findings From A Programme Of Studies* (London: NatCen Social Research)

## Research Methodological Approach

Each research grant will be for primary research (qualitative and/or quantitative) alongside literature reviews and systematic reviews where appropriate.

Given the scope and ambition of this research, we expect that proposals for each grant will:

- Have a mixed-methods, multidisciplinary and multi-sector approach to achieve the aims of the research programme.
- Be from consortium and multidisciplinary teams that include research agencies and/or academics and institutions.
- Have committed resources to the meaningful involvement and contribution of the lived experience community.

For example, of such an approach, see [Minority Communities & Gambling Harms: Quantitative Report](#)

## Expected Outputs

All grants awarded will be for independent research, undertaken by partners entirely independently of GambleAware, and as per proposals submitted independently by partners to GambleAware.

At a minimum, the expected outputs from each research programme will be:

- 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 two papers submitted to peer reviewed journals for academic publication during the life course of the grant.
- A slide deck for presentation of key findings for GambleAware and / or an external audience for virtual or face-to-face delivery.
- \*All GambleAware reports will be in Word and will be peer reviewed in line with GambleAware's [Research Publication Guidelines](#).

However, other forms of output, including novel forms of reporting and dissemination of research findings, especially other digital media, are also welcome.

## Budget

Each successful grantee will be awarded a grant of £247,900 per grant over 18 months.

As a grant, this is outside the scope of VAT. As part of your proposal, please submit a detailed budget.

## Guideline Timings

The research will be undertaken over a maximum of 18 months, as agreed with grantees.

The research programme will commence at a mutually agreed date/time after the final decision and award (see below).

The guideline timings for this call for proposal are below:

Milestone	Planned start date	Planned end date
Call for Proposals launch (RFP)	15/12/23	15/01/24
Clarification of tender questions deadline	15/12/23	11/01/24
Clarification of tender answers circulated (estimated)	15/01/24	19/01/24
Proposals submissions deadline	COB 31/01/24	COB 31/01/24
Panel review completed (estimated)	31/01/24	09/02/24
Panel moderation meeting (estimated)	09/02/24	09/02/24
Outcomes communicated to bidders (estimated)	12/02/24	16/02/24

## 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), aligned with the topics outlined in this document, and detailing 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.
- 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).
- 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.

## Submission

Proposals and all associated documentation will need to be submitted by **5pm on 31 January** via email to [procurement@gambleaware.org](mailto:procurement@gambleaware.org) with the subject title 'Open research grants – call for proposal' and we will acknowledge upon receipt.

## Evaluation criteria

Framework Evaluation Criteria	Criteria	Criteria weighting	Max Available Score
	Confirmation that researchers have not received any funds directly from gambling industry operators in the past 12 months	Pass/Fail	
	Demonstration of prior experience of directly and meaningfully involving communities of lived experience that are relevant to proposal	Pass/Fail	
<b>Quality</b>	1. Innovation and originality of proposed research, alongside understanding of the research topic of choice, requirements and challenges.	20%	100 (5 x 20)
	2. Demonstration of a rigorous and robust methodology, including an outline of analyses and outputs.	15%	75 (5 x 15)
	3. 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)
	4. Overview of the proposed research team members, their relevant expertise and experience, and roles in delivering the programme.	15%	75 (5 x 15)
	5. Potential societal impact of research, through regulation, policy, public debate, services or other mechanisms	15%	75 (5 x 15)
<b>Delivery</b>	6. Ability to meet the timetable and deliver the proposed outputs.	10%	50 (5 x 10)
<b>Cost</b>	7. 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 one programme lead; two internal peer reviewers from the GambleAware Evidence & Insights Team and two external independent Subject Matter Expert peer reviewers).
2. Final moderation with funding awarded to the highest scoring eligible proposals. Where bids focus on the same theme as one another (e.g.: two focussed on transgender communities and gambling harm), only one bid will be awarded a grant (the higher scoring bid).
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 contract.

## 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 11th January 2024. Bidders are unable to make amendments to the Terms and Conditions post tender award. If there is no correspondence received by 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at GambleAware will take this as acceptance to the Terms and Conditions.

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