

# Women's prevention campaign evaluation



Key highlights report

# Introduction

## Foreword

This short paper recaps the campaign background, rationale and execution for the women's prevention campaign launched by GambleAware on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022. This paper will also introduce the campaign evaluation approach and some of the key findings from the evaluation to date. This campaign, and the research underpinning it, were developed alongside the support and consultation of women with lived experience of gambling harms, in addition to other charities working to reduce gambling harms.

## Campaign background

The issue of women's experiences of gambling and gambling harms has generally not received the attention it deserves – despite the fact that this is a significant and growing issue (more information below). There are very few, if any, gambling harm prevention campaigns targeted at women anywhere in the world.

To address this, GambleAware has developed and launched the first gambling harm prevention campaign targeted at women. An extensive research programme was conducted as part of the campaign development:

- A detailed scoping exercise was conducted internally in 2020, involving a review of published data and research, as well as engagement with a number of subject matter experts.
- Following this, several stages of strategic and creative development research were conducted in 2021 to ensure that the communications developed resonated strongly with women who gamble and women with lived experience of gambling harms.
- To contribute to building the research base, GambleAware invested £250,000 into new research into women's lived experience of gambling harms with a consortium comprising IFF Research, University of Bristol and the GamCare Women's Programme.
- Our approach is informed by this ongoing research with key publications including:
  - An overview of the first phase (found [here](#) titled: *Building Knowledge of Women's Lived Experience of Gambling and Gambling Harms across Great Britain: Phase 1*)
  - A rapid evidence assessment (found [here](#) titled: *Women's experiences of gambling and gambling harm: A Rapid Evidence Assessment*).
  - There has also been an internal synopsis by GambleAware of the key evidence that led to the campaign (found [here](#) titled: *Background to women's gambling harms prevention*)

## Campaign rationale

A more detailed overview of insights can be found in the *Background to women's gambling harms prevention* report cited above<sup>1</sup>, but the key points are that:

- The number of **women gambling online is growing rapidly** and has been accelerated by the pandemic
- Women are **frequently exposed to gambling adverts**, which often portray gambling as innocent social fun, associated with a lifestyle of social connection and popularity
- The intrinsic nature of many online gambling games (highly accessible, promoting rapid repetitive play) **can lead to low cognitive engagement and in turn loss chasing behaviours**. As a result, those gambling/betting online are more likely than those who gamble in general to have a low to moderate risk of gambling harms or be classified as a "problem gambler"

<sup>1</sup> Key findings are drawn from a synopsis report, with references to direct source available in the synopsis here: <https://www.begambleaware.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/Background%20to%20women%27s%20gambling%20harms%20prevention%20FINAL.pdf>

- **Large numbers of women in Britain are experiencing or at risk of harms from gambling.** Research carried out by YouGov suggests that up 1.1 million are at moderate risk of harms (PGSI 3+), including around 0.5 million who are experiencing harms (PGSI 8+)<sup>2</sup>.
- Figures from the National Gambling Treatment Service also show **the number of women seeking support from the service has more than doubled** in the past five years
- **Women's mental health is more adversely affected by 'problem gambling'** than men's mental health, with women who gamble reporting higher rates of guilt and worse mental health
- Two in five (39%) women experiencing high levels of gambling harm (PGSI 8+) may not seek out help **due to the burden of stigma producing feelings of embarrassment** and not wanting people to know about their gambling
- There is a common **misconception that women's gambling is 'harmless'**; with the main barrier to women accessing support not making a connection between their gambling and harms, or the severity of their gambling problem

Overall, men and women differ on average in why they gamble, how they gamble and the harms they experience as a result of gambling. This means a gendered approach is crucial for the prevention of gambling harms. The research above also demonstrates how this is an emerging public health issue which may be affecting up to a million women in Great Britain, demonstrating the need for campaigns in this area to shift perceptions around women and gambling and signpost areas of support.

### Campaign execution

As part of GambleAware's ongoing objective to increase awareness and understanding of gambling harms, the charity partnered with M&C Saatchi (creative), Freuds (PR) and GoodStuff (media planning/buying) to develop an integrated multichannel campaign. The campaign aimed to encourage women to look out for the early warning signs of harmful gambling (e.g., losing track of time and money whilst gambling) and direct them to the BeGambleAware.org website for free advice and support to keep their gambling under control. The campaign launched on 31 January 2022 and is one of the first ever gambling harms prevention campaigns focused on women.

The creative assets can be seen [here](#), and brings to life the warning signs that your gambling might be becoming harmful, including losing track of the world around you, losing track of time while gambling, losing track of money while gambling and keeping your gambling a secret from others. The advertising features a woman who is gambling on her phone and is so engrossed that she fails to notice the extraordinary things happening to her family members in their living room. Other executions contain messages stressing the importance of setting time and money limits and taking frequent breaks.

The audience priority was women with low-to medium-risk of gambling harms (defined by a PGSI score of 1-7) aged 25-55 who gamble online. The campaign ran on the following channels between 31<sup>st</sup> January and 28<sup>th</sup> April 2022 with a total media budget of just under £2 million:

- Digital media (c. £630k budget) live between 31<sup>st</sup> Jan and 6<sup>th</sup> April 2022
- TV/VOD (c. £1.15 million budget) live between 31<sup>st</sup> Jan and 28<sup>th</sup> Feb 2022
- Media partnerships (c. £200k budget) live between 24<sup>th</sup> Feb and 28<sup>th</sup> April 2022
- Public relations with most activity during the week of 31<sup>st</sup> Jan 2022 along with some longer-lead pieces

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.begambleaware.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/Annual%20GB%20Treatment%20and%20Support%20Survey%20Report%202021%20%28FINAL%29.pdf>

It is worth noting that GambleAware has an extremely low share of voice (c. 1-3%) when advertising due to the significant spend by the gambling industry.

## Evaluation approach

GambleAware commissioned Ipsos UK to conduct campaign monitoring to feed into a new holistic evaluation approach. This approach has campaign monitoring at its core but also integrates non-survey data to provide a broader view of how the campaign performed, and how it can be improved going forward. Each wave of the Ipsos UK monitoring comprises 2600 interviews through an online survey. The survey collects responses from a general nationally representative population sample of 2000 adults aged 18+ living in the UK and a boosted 'campaign target audience' sample of 600 women aged 18-54 who gamble online. Data are weighted (by age, gender, work status and region) back to the known population profile of the UK to counteract non-response bias.

Fieldwork for the pre-wave (i.e., baseline before launch of the campaign) was carried out between 22 – 31 January 2022, whilst the post-wave (i.e., after the majority of the campaign activity) was conducted between 17 – 28 March 2022.

Overall, there were four core audiences within the campaign monitoring:

1. **Campaign target audience:** Women aged 18-54 who gamble online<sup>3</sup>
2. **Behaviour change audience:** Women aged 18-54 who gamble online and play fast-paced games (e.g. instant win fruit machines, slot machines, online games, online scratchcards) or bingo and who have a PGSI score of 1+
3. **Affected others:** Men and women aged 18+ that are negatively affected by someone else's gambling
4. **General population:** Men and women aged 18+

Most of the results are focused on the 'campaign target audience' due to the campaign's key-performance indicators being set against this audience. This campaign's monitoring data is viewed alongside a host of third-party data below to provide a more 'complete' view of campaign performance, such as website data, owned social media data, paid media/partnership/PR data and social listening.

## Evaluation highlights

From the campaign monitoring data, led by Ipsos UK, there were positive results among our 'campaign target audience' of women aged 18-54 who gamble online. Although the full evaluation of the campaign is still in progress, results below provide an overview of some of the main findings:

- **Strong unprompted and prompted campaign recognition:** The proportion reporting to have seen ads related to staying in control of gambling increased (from 29% to 35%) over the campaign period, demonstrating this topic was more top of mind after the campaign
- Over half recognise at least one element of the campaign (54%), with recognition of the video ad particularly high (47%)
  - Campaign recognition was particularly high amongst the behaviour change audience (64%) and affected others (55%), whilst over a third (36%) of the general population recognised the ads

<sup>3</sup>Base sizes and rough proportion within general population sample. Figures are based on Ipsos panel and may be different to population estimates (such as those from YouGov) due to panel differences, weighting differences, and different age bands (YouGov is 18+ whilst Ipsos is 18-65)

Campaign target audience: Base sizes: n=925 pre wave, n=885 post wave, c.15% of general population sample

Behaviour change audience: Base sizes: n=330 pre wave, n=316 post wave, c.5% of general population sample.

Affected others: Base sizes: n=204 pre wave, n=185 post wave, c.10% of general population sample

General population: Base sizes: n=2000 pre wave, n=2000 post wave, c.100% of general population sample

- **The advertising cut-through and resonated with the audience:** There was a high level of agreement of the ads telling them something useful (69%), being memorable (65%), and standing out from other ads about gambling (60%)
- Key messages within the ads resonated very strongly with the audience, with agreement high for the ads showing...
  - ...the risk of losing track of time/money when gambling online (74%)
  - ...where to go for advice and support to stay in control of gambling (77%)
  - ...the benefits of advice and support to keep in control of gambling (68%)
- **The campaign has increased awareness of the warning signs of gambling harms:** Despite being the first burst of campaign activity (it usually takes sustained campaign activity to drive change) the campaign also improved several key areas of awareness:
  - Identifying “losing track of time/money while gambling” as signs of losing control grew over the campaign period (72% to 77%, statistically significant)
  - Knowing a little/a lot about the early warning signs that someone might be struggling to stay in control of their gambling also increased (61% to 64%, not statistically significant)
- **The campaign awareness is resulting in reported behaviour change:** Amongst those who recognised the campaign, half (49%) claimed to take action as a result of seeing it, demonstrating the strength of the campaign to incite behaviour change
  - This was even higher among the behaviour change audience (73%)

A range of wider data sources also demonstrate the campaign's significant impact:

- The campaign received widespread interest with 1,541 pieces of coverage delivering an estimated 210.8m impressions across broadcast, national print and online, consumer, regional, marketing trade, and gambling trade. This included BBC News, You and Yours, BBC Breakfast, Good Morning Britain, and Sky News
- The campaign assets have been viewed tens of millions of times across media, to date digital media has delivered around 74.5 million impressions, partnerships 2.1 million impressions, and TV 15.9 million impressions demonstrating the wide reach the campaign was able to achieve
- Digital mentions of keywords relating to female gambling rose to their highest levels for at least 3 years in the 24 hours following the campaign launch, demonstrating that the campaign successfully put women and gambling into the public eye and stimulated discussions around the topic<sup>4</sup>
- Organic searches of BeGambleAware on Google were higher during the campaign period (February) than any other month in 2021/2022, demonstrating that the campaigns call to action of searching BeGambleAware for advice, tools and support gained traction and drove behaviour
- All activity successfully drove traffic to the BeGambleAware website showing the large demand for advice, tools and support among women who gamble:
  - Traffic grew by 22% in the week of the campaign launch compared to the week prior
  - Overall, there were 1,407,437 visits over the women’s campaign period
  - Although user demographics are limited by cookie-consent, there were 89,733 female users (a 68% increase on 53,371 seen in equivalent period prior to launch)

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<sup>4</sup> Data supplied by Freuds using Brandwatch social media analytics data within the UK. Terms included “women gambling”~3 OR “female gambling”~3 OR “women gamblers”~3 OR “women who gamble”~3 OR “female gamblers”~3 (note - ~ is a proximity operator, finding the words within the phrase within 3 words of each other)

## **Next steps**

GambleAware is committed to continuing to bring this important public health challenge to life, ensuring to increase awareness of the advice, tools and support that is available and empowering people to access support by searching [begambleaware](https://begambleaware.org).

Following the success of the first burst of this women's prevention campaign, we intend to launch another burst of activity in 2022. We will continue to optimise activity, by incorporating key learnings from the first burst alongside the evolving evidence-base generated by the research into women's lived experience of gambling harms by the consortium comprised of IFF Research, University of Bristol and the GamCare Women's Programme.