

Safer gambling video testing – Online randomised control trial

Call for proposals

September 2024

1. Introduction to GambleAware

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.

GambleAware commissions the National Gambling Support Network (NSGN) which provides, free confidential treatment, as well as the National Gambling Helpline which takes around 44,000 calls or online chats a year. Anyone experiencing gambling harms can access free and confidential advice, tools and support, by searching GambleAware or contacting the National Gambling Helpline, available 24/7, on 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.

We have 5 key outcomes we work towards as a charity (see diagram below).



01

Increase the awareness and understanding of the risks of gambling and its harm (*across the general population*).



02

Prevent gambling harm amongst individuals and communities at greater risk of experiencing it.



03

Prevent the escalation of gambling harm.



04

Ensure individuals and communities receive **a broad range of appropriate services**.



05

Reduce the legacy of gambling harm.

Our vision

A society where people are safe from gambling harm.



To contribute towards outcomes 1-3 directly (and 4-5 indirectly), we have set up a multidisciplinary prevention programme of work which focuses on the following:

1. Reducing risk factors: To reduce exposure and consumption of gambling and/or harmful features of gambling (e.g., marketing, accessibility, product features)
2. Increasing protective factors: To change perceptions of gambling (e.g., something that can be harmful) and empower individuals to self-reflect on behaviour and make change (e.g., using advice, tools and support earlier in their journey)

This project seeks to increase protective factors by delivering against the first outcome of “increasing the awareness and understanding of the risks of gambling and its harm” and indirectly affecting outcomes 2 and 3.

Specifically, this request for proposal outlines a need for primary research which investigates the relative impact of different safer gambling videos created by gambling operators.

2. Context to project

The Gambling Commission's [Licence Conditions and Codes of Practice](#) (LCCP) requires all marketing of gambling products to be undertaken in a ‘socially responsible manner’. In particular, Licensees must comply with the advertising codes of practice issued by the Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP) and the Broadcast Committee of Advertising Practice (BCAP). The Gambling Commission also states that Licensees should follow any relevant industry code on advertising, notably the Industry Group for Responsible Gambling (IGRG) [code for Socially Responsible Advertising](#). These guidelines are created by representatives from gambling companies and co-ordinated by the Betting and Gaming Council. These set out ‘good practice’ but do not have the status of operator licence conditions. The latest code includes a requirement for most operators to direct 20% of all eligible advertising (broadcast and digital) to safer gambling messaging.

Although it is positive that operators are being asked to direct 20% of broadcast and digital to safer gambling messaging there are a number of limitations:

- Operator-led safer gambling messaging lack effectiveness¹², can actually encourage gambling³ and can stigmatise those experiencing gambling harms⁴. There is a need to move beyond messages like “gamble responsibly” that place all the responsibility on the individual, marking those who experience harm as “irresponsible”⁵.
- There is no monitoring of operator marketing spend, nor is there monitoring of spend devoted to safer gambling. This means there is currently no way to ensure that operators are complying with these guidelines.

¹ “When the Fun Stops, Stop”: An analysis of the provenance, framing and evidence of a ‘responsible gambling’ campaign
<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0255145>

² Evaluation of the ‘take time to think’ safer gambling message: a randomised, online experimental study
<https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/9CFD881028DB7C1CFC0E83AD6AEBD67A/S2398063X23000027a.pdf/evaluation-of-the-take-time-to-think-safer-gambling-message-a-randomised-online-experimental-study.pdf>

³ Impact of the “when the fun stops, stop” gambling message on online gambling behaviour: a randomised, online experimental study
<https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2468-2667%2821%2900279-6>

⁴ Editorial: Gambling, stigma, suicidality, and the internalization of the ‘responsible gambling’ mantra
<https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychiatry/articles/10.3389/fpsy.2023.1214531/full>

⁵ ‘Odds Are: They Win’: a disruptive messaging innovation for challenging harmful products and practices of the gambling industry
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0033350623002937>

- There is a lack of available published evidence across industry-led campaigns that outlines the research that led to the campaign alongside evaluations that shows the impact of campaigns. Increasing the evidence available in this area is crucial to gain a better understanding about what does and doesn't work.

As a result, GambleAware commissioned research⁶ and evidence-led guidelines⁷ to build on international best-practice alongside incorporating learnings from GambleAware's own campaigns for over 5 years (most recently our campaign trying to reduce stigma and encourage those experiencing harms to open up about them⁸). The recommendations from this work were to replace current industry marketing messages shown at the bottom of gambling adverts (i.e., Take Time To Think) with three new health warnings, which were shown to be clearer, more impactful, and more memorable to both the public and people who gamble. Specifically, the messages recommended include "Gambling comes at a cost", "Gambling can be addictive" and "Gambling can grip anyone". The same research also found improvements when signposting to GambleAware on adverts, such as locating the GambleAware logo in the top left corner of gambling adverts, within a safer gambling banner, alongside the message advice, tools and support.

It is important to conduct further research in this area as effective safer gambling messaging is a low-cost and high-reach intervention that may help to mitigate gambling-related harm⁹, and is considered as an important component of a comprehensive public health approach¹⁰. Children and young people currently have a high recall of seeing gambling adverts but are much less likely to recall the health messaging on them¹¹. This is problematic given most advertising by operators makes gambling seem like "harmless fun"¹² which shapes societal perceptions towards gambling and is linked with gambling harm in later life. This work is especially crucial in light of the White Paper which outlined the government's ambitions for DHSC, DCMS and the Gambling Commission to work together to develop informational messaging on gambling¹³.

⁶ Executive summary: Improving safer gambling messaging on operator advertising

https://www.gambleaware.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/GambleAware%20-%20Improving%20safer%20gambling%20messaging%20on%20operator%20adverts%20-%20Executive%20summary_1.pdf

⁷ GambleAware Safer Gambling Messaging and Signposting Guidelines

<https://www.gambleaware.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/GambleAware%20Safer%20Gambling%20Messaging%20and%20Signposting%20Guidelines%20May%202024.pdf>

⁸ Let's Open Up About Gambling campaign evaluation

<https://www.gambleaware.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/Stigma%20reduction%20campaign%20evaluation.pdf>

⁹ Visibility of age restriction warnings, harm reduction messages and terms and conditions: a content analysis of paid-for gambling advertising in the United Kingdom. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0033350620301098?via%3Dihub>

¹⁰ Public health gambling messaging intervention

<https://behscipru.nihr.ac.uk/our-projects/public-health-gambling-messaging-intervention/>

¹¹ The effect of marketing and advertising on children, young people and vulnerable people Quantitative Research Report

https://www.begambleaware.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/the-effect-of-gambling-marketing-and-advertising_quant-report.pdf

¹² New Developments in Gambling Marketing: the Rise of Social Media Ads and Its Effect on Youth

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40429-022-00457-0>

¹³ High stakes: gambling reform for the digital age

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-stakes-gambling-reform-for-the-digital-age>

3. Project scope

Objectives

The primary objective of this research is to build evidence on the impact of operator-led safer gambling campaigns across a range of outcome measures.

The outcome of this project is to build a strategic paper for the cross-departmental group on safer gambling messaging outlining what types of marketing approaches impact different outcomes. Specifically, this project will need to show what operator-led messaging is (and isn't) doing and show the role for harm reduction campaigns that are created independently from industry.

Methodology

GambleAware are open to research partners suggesting what they feel would be the best approach given the research context and objectives. Initial preferences are towards a quantitative survey which utilises a split sample (also known as an A/B test) approach to show different 30 second videos from different gambling operators (example video can be found [here](#)). We would be particularly interested in innovative methodologies such as a behavioural experiment element (e.g., mocking up of a gambling environment to measure potential outcomes). This is to increase the ecological validity of the results and build the evidence in different ways individuals can test safer gambling messaging.

Early thoughts on the flow of the experiment have been added to the appendix, but we wish the appointed partner to utilise their expertise to go beyond these ideas and make the research their own with minimal guidance from GambleAware. We have also compiled the following list of questions to discuss with the appointed bidder:

- How many videos should be shown overall (e.g., we have identified 10 videos but what is the optimal balance between number of videos and sample size?)
- How many videos should each respondent see (e.g., if they repeat the experiment with a second video how might this bias respondents?)
- How should we choose which videos to use within the survey (e.g., prioritise top spending brands or ensuring a spread of different types of messaging approaches?)
- What, if anything, should we use as controls or comparators (e.g., advert encouraging gambling, advert unrelated to gambling, GambleAware harm reduction campaign?)
- What other biases do we need to control for within the survey (e.g., what is the potential impact of respondents having seen some videos already real life?)
- What are the potential pros and cons of using videos from other jurisdictions (e.g., Australia)?

Sample

We would like a nationally representative sample of adults aged 18+ in Great Britain (for clarity, please ensure samples exclude Northern Ireland as it is not regulated by the Gambling Commission). We would like to ensure that the sample size is enough to draw robust conclusions and recommendations from the results. This may require the sample to just be based on those who have gambled in the last 12 months rather than being based on the general population, but we are open to bidders recommending a sampling approach based on their expertise.

In terms of sample quotas, we would be looking for the sample frame to quota on age and gender interlocking, region, socioeconomic grade and ethnicity. It is also important to ensure that each cell of the experiment has a large enough base to provide meaningful (but not necessarily statistically significant given sample/budget limitations) results among our key populations of interest, such as those who gamble and/or experience any levels of problems with their gambling (PGSI 1+). To help with cost estimates, please see the natural fallout of the different groups in a relatively recent online quantitative questionnaire with YouGov.

Sample	Prevalence in population ¹⁴	Definition
Non-gamblers	39.2%	Those who have not gambled in the last 12 months
PGSI 0	47.7%	Those scoring 0 on the PGSI scale ¹⁵
PGSI 1+	13.1%	Those scoring 1+ on the PGSI scale
Affected others	7.0%	Those negatively affected by someone else's gambling (this group overlaps with the other 3 groups)

Ethical considerations

It is critical that the research is conducted in an ethical manner. For example, due to the aims of the project we are likely going to have to show individuals adverts from gambling companies to ensure ecological validity. This may be triggering for some respondents meaning we are contemplating the following actions:

- A voluntary opt out within the screener to not be shown gambling advertising.
- Sample excluding those experiencing at least a moderate level of problems with their gambling (PGSI 3+).
- Including direct signposting to GambleAware self-assessment quiz and the National Gambling Helpline at the end of the questionnaire.

¹⁴ See page 149. Annual GB Treatment and Support Survey 2023

https://www.gambleaware.org/sites/default/files/2024-08/GambleAware_2023_Treatment%20and%20Support_Report_FINAL_0.pdf

¹⁵ Problem gambling screens

<https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/publication/problem-gambling-screens>

It is also worth noting that this may be mitigated by the following contextual factors:

- There is a high amount of advertising promoting gambling on TV and social media. As such, the audience is likely exposed to adverts in their day to day life, meaning this situation is not an abnormal situation to put people in.
- The adverts shown are all supposed to encourage safer gambling and/or harm reduction around gambling, rather than attempting to encourage gambling. As such, the risk of triggering respondents should be reduced.
- It is important to build the evidence in this area as it can lead to the reduction of gambling harms if future marketing takes into account the learnings.

We would welcome any additional thoughts around the ethical considerations within the brief.

Outputs

The expected core deliverables are as follows, all of which must be shared with GambleAware by the commissioned agency in line with the latest GDPR guidelines.

- A slide deck report in PowerPoint (c. 25 slides) to bring together the core insights together, to include:
 - Background slides (e.g. overview, sampling approach, fieldwork dates)
 - Report split by different audiences where appropriate (e.g., general population, those who gamble, affected others, PGSI 1+)
 - Limitations of approach and considerations for further research in this area
 - Key findings and recommendations slides (all recommendations must be actionable and practical in line with the objectives, relevant parties within GambleAware can contribute towards their co-creation)
 - Including virtual or London based debrief to run through report
 - Written in accordance with GambleAware's [Research Guidelines](#).
- An executive summary on Word (c. 2 pages) for a policy-making audience. An example of which can be found for our research on [Improving safer gambling messaging on operator advertising](#) (although for a smaller project such as this, we would expect a shorter report).
- To organise and host an online webinar to share the findings more widely to a diverse group of external stakeholders.
- Data tables in Excel formatting (with relevant crossbreaks signed off by GambleAware), a weighted SPSS file and a technical report of the analysis so they can be repeated. Quantitative analyses must meet our open code policy [here](#)).

We are keen for the appointed partner to be actively engaged in the topic area and wanting to engage with key senior stakeholders (e.g., policymakers, politicians) to turn the results into

actions. Ideally the partner would also have the capability to produce an article for submission into a journal or is willing to partner with an academic institution in order to do this.

Please note that this project will be required to be reviewed by two internal GambleAware colleagues, and peer reviewed by one external subject matter expert prior to publication. GambleAware will find and pay for peer reviewers separately from this contract.

Budget

£36,500 excluding VAT (£43,800 including VAT). Please note, if this is awarded as a grant, it is outside the scope of VAT. In terms of invoicing, 50% of the budget will be paid on commission of the project (upon signing the relevant statement of work / contract being in place) whilst 50% of the budget will be paid on delivery of the final report.

Timelines

The research (and associated dissemination activities) will be undertaken over a maximum of 9 months from the signing of contracts. The guideline timings for this research programme are below:

Milestone	Deadline
Request for proposal set live	9 th September 2024
Questions and / or an expression of interest to receive question answers	5pm 20 th September 2024
Answers distributed	5pm 23 rd September 2024
Proposal deadline	5pm 7 th October 2024
Scoring will be completed	W/C 7 th October 2024
Award of successful bid and project kick off call	W/C 14 th October 2024
Research	October / November / December 2024
1 st draft of report	January 2025
2 nd draft of report	February 2025
Peer review & final report	March 2025

Evaluation criteria

The evaluation criteria for this work can be found below. The proposal for each phase must be submitted within a maximum of 8 sides of A4 (approximately 4000 words). If there are any issues with the suggested word count given the requirements below, or any questions, please contact us at procurement@gambleaware.org.

Framework Evaluation Criteria	Framework Criteria Weighting	Criteria	Criteria weighting
		Confirmation that you have not received any funds directly from gambling industry operators in the past 12 months	Pass/Fail
Quality	50%	1. Demonstration of understanding of research aims and requirement	20%
		2. Provision of a robust methodological response to the brief	20%
		3. Overview of the proposed research team members, their relevant expertise and experience, and roles in delivering the analysis	10%
Delivery	30%	4. Ability to meet the timetable and deliver the proposed outputs (please provide specific breakdown of timings)	15%
		5. Ability to deliver proposed outputs within budget (please provide an estimated breakdown of costs including number of hours for each level of staff on the project)	15%
Innovation	20%	6. Going “beyond the brief” to build on the current analysis plan based on the research theme (please note that these ideas must be within budget envelope allocated to the project)	20%
TOTAL	100%		100%

Please include with your proposal the following (these do not contribute towards the word count):

- A list of no more than three 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.
- GambleAware’s work centres around the principles of equality, inclusion, and diversity at all levels of governance, human resources, policy, and commissioning. Please set out separately, how equality, inclusion, and diversity inform and support your proposal at all stages of design and delivery.

Process for appointment

The proposals will be reviewed and scored against the above evaluation criteria by the Review Panel (made up of two internal reviewers from the GambleAware Team and one external reviewer). Each section is scored with the following:

- 0 - Did not provide a substantive response in relation to the criterion
- 1 - Provided an adequate response to the criterion, displaying a good level of knowledge

- 2 - Provided a good response to the criterion, setting out clear examples
- 3 - Provided a comprehensive response to the criterion, including examples, and articulating real context and clarity

After all bids have been scored independently by each individual, the final moderation will total all scores and discuss the bids in detail. Funding will be awarded to the highest scoring proposal. All bidders will be notified of the outcome, and offered feedback on the scoring of their proposal by the Review Panel. The successful bidder will enter into a joint contract and the project will commence thenceforth.

Terms and conditions

To ensure expediency, we ask that any questions or clarifications regarding our Terms and Conditions are sent to procurement@gambleaware.org by 5pm on 20th September 2024. Bidders are unable to make amendments to the Terms and Conditions post tender award. If there is no correspondence received by 5pm on 20th September 2024 GambleAware will take this as acceptance to the Terms and Conditions.

Below are attachments of both our Service Agreement Terms and Grant Agreement terms. Upon award, we will determine which agreement is most suitable for use.

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

[STANDARD Template Services Agreement.pdf \(gambleaware.org\)](#)

4. Appendix

Methodology (Additional thoughts)

Going into the survey we would like to ask standard demographics (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, region) and randomly distribute the sample into comparable groups. The number of groups the sample is split into would be decided in collaboration with the agency appointed.

Each group would then be shown one 30-second “safer gambling” video created by an operator. After seeing the video we would like to have a behavioural measure of the impact on the individuals gambling behaviour. The aim of this is to get closer to the real-life impact that these adverts could potentially have. We have previously attempted to do this via a mocked up

deposit limit (see details below), but would be interested in hearing more innovative suggestions on this.


After seeing their assigned message in the survey, participants were given a simulated decision-making scenario and then asked to use a deposit limit page, followed by further questions

We set the scene by asking people:

Imagine that you have opened a betting account from the ad you just saw.

During the signing up process, you are given the option to set up a deposit limit. A deposit limit allows you to control the amount of money you can deposit into your gambling account per month.

Note that we had to use hypothetical wording given the sample included people who don't gamble.



The image shows a screenshot of a simulated decision-making scenario. A pink box labeled 'Simulated decision-making scenario' has a red arrow pointing down to a form titled 'Set a deposit limit?'. The form contains the following text: 'Set a limit on the amount you can deposit for a period you choose. This will reset at the end of each frequency limit.' Below this, there is a section 'Set a frequency limit' with a dropdown menu labeled 'Select'. Underneath is a text input field for 'Limit amount (£)'. At the bottom, there is a checkbox labeled 'N/A - I would not set a deposit limit'.

We would then like to ask a range of additional self-reported outcomes such as:

- Unprompted message takeout.
- Prompted element takeout (e.g., 18+ logo, GambleAware logo, TakeTimeToThink logo, operator logo).
- Claimed actions as a result of seeing the adverts (e.g., searching for more information / monitoring / reducing / stopping gambling / talking to someone about gambling / setting limits).
- Standard advertising metrics (e.g., salience, relevance, shareability, memorability, credibility).
- Specific safer gambling advertising metrics (e.g., made me see gambling as harmless fun, made me think differently about my own gambling, made me motivated to change my own gambling) backfire effect measurements (e.g., made me want to gamble / gamble more), and measures of stigma (e.g., made me feel those who experience problems with gambling are solely to blame, those experiencing gambling harms are different to me)
- Impact of advert on perceptions of gambling brand / GambleAware (e.g., what extent do they feel GambleAware has been involved in the advert, positivity towards brands)

Lastly, we would like to ask some additional profiling questions such as:

- Before today, had the individual seen the video?
- Gambling activity in the last 12 months
- [Problem Gambling Severity Index](#) score

- Affected other status