

## **Project brief: Gambling-related suicide – Data analysis and scoping study**

**Executive summary** - Produced by the Gambling Commission in September 2018

1. Gambling-related harms take many forms, with negative impacts possible on peoples' resources, relationships and health. Suicide is one of the most serious of the possible harms associated with gambling. This research is intended to provide greater insights into the prevalence of this form of gambling-related harm. This study will focus on analysis of existing data sets. The project will examine data on suicides, as well as suicide attempts, suicide ideation and self-harm.
2. This study will also identify the scope for a second phase of research, which may require new primary research and data collection. We envisage that this scoping will be informed by discussion with an organisation representing people directly affected by suicides associated with gambling.

### **Introduction and policy context**

3. The [National Responsible Gambling Strategy](#) sets the objective of making progress towards a better understanding of gambling-related harms and their measurement. Work to achieve this is being led by an expert group, appointed by GambleAware. It will shortly publish a discussion paper setting out the expert group's view on defining gambling-related harms and how it can be measured.
4. The discussion paper will also set out a priority types of harm that where the expert group believe relatively quick progress could be made in terms of data collection and analysis.
5. Suicide is one of these priority themes. It is clearly one of the most serious forms of gambling related harm. When it occurs it will also have devastating consequences for families, friends and communities. This project is intended to allow progress to be made on understanding this important issue and to provide a template for how research could be conducted to develop our understanding of other areas of gambling-related harm.

### **Research objective**

6. The research objectives are:
  - A. To carry our secondary analysis of existing datasets to provide insights into rates of suicides, suicide attempts, suicide ideation and self-harm which are associated with problem gambling. This will compare prevalence between those reporting different risk factors (e.g. alcohol dependency, drug-misuse, other health problems).

- B. To identify the scope for further research on this form of gambling-related harm – demonstrating how this can support GambleAware’s wider thematic research on gambling-related harms.

## **Research requirements**

### Part A

7. The data analysis component of the study will:
- Make use of data from the Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey (APMS) and other available relevant datasets.
  - Analyse available data on suicide, suicide attempts, suicide ideation and self-harm.
  - Compare rates of these incidents amongst problem gamblers, and those at-risk of problem gambling, with rates found in those reporting other risk factors – e.g. problematic use of alcohol, drugs, and health problems. Where possible, the analysis may also need to control for the effects of underlying risk factors, such as psychiatric disorders, life events, and family history.
8. Tender responses should be clear about the datasets the researchers intend to use what they believe to be possible within the constraints of the datasets available to them.

### Part B

9. The study will also set out the scope for a second phase of research. This will:
- Identify what else can be achieved through secondary analysis of existing data sets.
  - Recommend what other data should be collected and how this could be achieved – either through primary research or by reviewing and coding information recorded by agencies who work with people effected by suicide. E.g. exploring whether coroner court records could be used to provide relevant information.
  - Review the potential for further qualitative research on this topic – particularly in relation to improving understanding of factors that influence causation.
  - Be informed by discussion with those with first-hand experience of issues related to suicides associated with gambling. This could be achieved through discussion with Gambling with Lives, a group set up to support and represent the families of victims of suicides associated with gambling.

## Research governance

10. In September 2016, the Responsible Gambling Strategy Board (RGSB) and GambleAware published a Research Commissioning and Governance Procedure<sup>1</sup> which describes how research priorities are set and how research programmes are commissioned under the tripartite agreement between the Board, GambleAware and the Gambling Commission.
11. The purpose of the Procedure is to give transparency about the arrangements and to provide assurance that research priorities are set independently and are delivered with integrity.
12. The Research Procedure makes clear that the Responsible Gambling Strategy Board, not GambleAware, is responsible for producing the briefs that set out the questions and context for the research that is then commissioned by GambleAware.

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<sup>1</sup> [Research Commissioning and Governance Procedure](#), RGSB, September 2016