

**DISCUSSION DOCUMENT**

**Ensuring the lived experience voice is at the heart of implementing**

**of the National Strategy to Reduce Gambling Harms**

**The National Strategy to Reduce Gambling Harms which was published in April 2019 set out the importance of collaboration as an enabler to deliver the two priorities of the strategy. It stated that *‘…engagement places the voice of consumers, especially those with lived experience of gambling harms, often referred to as ‘experts by experience’, right at the heart of developing this strategy. As we and others turn the strategy into action there will be a continuing commitment to keep listening to those voices and involving consumers in the dialogue on how to move forward.’***

As well as progressing the actions necessary to deliver the strategy, the Gambling Commission is working with partners to review the existing forums that bring together those who work to reduce gambling harms, and to assess how to fill gaps and reduce duplication between groups. This is likely to lead to Strategy Implementation Groups in each of Scotland, England and Wales to help coordinate activity across partners.

The Commission and our partners have previously engaged with those with lived experience in a number of different ways - for example through individual meetings, consultations, involvement in co-creation workshops and events, involvement in research projects, involvement in evaluation work, attendance at Board meetings and events, using data and intelligence from complaints in policy work, forums for treatment commissioning and provision, online forums, peer support roles etc.

However, together with our partners, we are working to structure this engagement in a more formal way in order to:

* Formalise the role played by experts by experience to achieve greater impact through a collective voice
* Ensure that those who share their lived experience in order to inform measures and activities to prevent and treat gambling harms are appropriately supported
* Ensure a wide and diverse range of voices representing all forms and levels of harm are able to participate
* Reduce the time pressures and burden of attendance by sharing across a greater number of people.

In Scotland, the Health and Social Care Alliance is developing work to create a formal forum for people with lived experience. They intend to kick off this work with collaboration with the very people they want to involve in the forum.

Ahead of this progressing further, and to encourage a discussion about equivalent forums in Wales and England, we have produced this discussion paper to help us all collaborate on the principles and practical arrangements that must be in place to make this work.

This discussion paper invites comments about how to ensure the voice of those with lived experience is truly at the heart of the implementation of the strategy and has the greatest impact to reduce gambling harms.

In preparing this paper for discussion, the Gambling Commission has drawn on the views which people with lived experience have already shared with us. We have also engaged with a number of other partners involved in implementing the Strategy and with bodies who have experience. But this is just a starting point and we seek further discussion.

**Draft principles for placing the lived experience voice at the heart of the National Strategy to Reduce Gambling Harms**

We welcome comments and suggestions on what should be the right principles for parties to uphold to ensure the lived experience voice is properly and fully at the heart of implementing the National Strategy to Reduce Gambling Harms, and have identified the following draft principles for discussion.

**Principle 1: Sustainable and impactful**

1. To put in place *formal* structures to put those with lived experience at the heart of the Strategy and provide the lived experience voice to *all partners* working to reduce gambling harms.
2. To put in place *long-term* structures that will last the life of the Strategy, and can grow and adapt as the implementation of the Strategy develops - a temporary approach is unlikely to be enough.
3. To deliver more formal activities and products, which may include structures for recruitment to research and evaluation projects, formal written outputs and recommendations made public, responses to consultations, support for materials to demonstrate harms (videos, stories etc).
4. To also engage and provide more informal opportunities where appropriate, which may include involvement in meetings and events and participation in online discussions.
5. To ensure contributions are made at a local and national level.
6. To promote transparency of contribution, while also protecting anonymity where appropriate.

**Principle 2: Diverse and representative**

1. To ensure that the voices of those with lived experience include and are representative of the full range of harms - from the most severe as well as those which may be considered less serious, but likely to be experienced by more people.
2. To recognise and acknowledge that speaking to this range of harms requires a broad range of different voices and that harms of all forms of severity are felt and experienced in many different ways by different individuals.
3. To include the experience of those directly affected, as well as others affected such as families and friends.
4. To ensure that groups that may be otherwise under-represented are included, be that based on age, gender, or ethnic or cultural groups.

**Principle 3: Safe, supportive structures and resources**

1. To provide training where this would be beneficial to participants in order to enable full and meaningful contributions.
2. To provide and maintain a supportive environment to enable effective contributions by all participants, which protects against potential combative discussions, and includes ongoing support for vulnerable individuals.
3. To ensure that participants are fully aware of the distinction between inputs for anonymised or named contributions, and are able and empowered to determine the extent of their engagement in different forms.
4. To mitigate against any real or perceived risk of pressure from businesses on the scope or nature of the conversations, or from potential marketing.
5. To consider and take measures to avoid pressure on individuals or groups due to location and frequency of meetings etc, through fair reimbursement of costs and spreading the burden across a diverse, reflective and appropriate number of individuals.

If you are interested in sharing views on these draft principles you can get in touch at safergambling@gamblingcommission.gov.uk to register your interest in staying involved in the conversations.