

## Item 3

17th April 2025



**Glasgow City Council**

**Wellbeing, Equalities, Communities,  
Culture and Engagement City Policy Committee**

**Report by Michelle Booth, Head of Policy and Corporate  
Governance**

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### **Gambling harms in Glasgow update**

#### **Purpose of Report:**

To provide a progress report on the gambling harms work since the last report to members in August 2023

#### **Recommendations:**

Members are asked to:

- Note the work and support the continued action to Tackle Gambling Related Harm
- Continue engagement with the Scottish Government and national bodies
- Advocate for the UK Government to review the Gambling Act and ensure Glasgow is fairly funded to address Gambling Harms
- Write to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and the Minister for Gambling to seek funding assurance enabling a planned public health approach locally to reduce gambling harms in the city.

Ward No(s): All

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ✓

consulted: Yes ☐ No ✓

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Gambling harms are the adverse impacts from gambling on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, communities, and society. In Scotland, it is estimated that more than 200,000 people are at risk of, or currently experiencing, harm related to their own gambling.<sup>1</sup> On average six people are being affected around each of them, family members, loved ones.<sup>2</sup>
- 1.2 In April 2023, the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) estimated that the annual fiscal cost of ‘problem gambling’ (PGSI 8+) is roughly £1.4 billion (in 2023 prices). The fiscal cost of problem gambling in Glasgow is estimated at £15.4 million (Table 1).

Cost of harm associated with gambling	Glasgow City	Great Britain
Health: General Medical Service Consultation (mental health)	£250,908	£21,600,000
Health: Hospital Inpatient	£5,188,907	£446,700,000
Crime: Crime Committed (police call out)	£371,715	£32,000,000
Crime: Court Appearance	£104,545	£9,000,000
Housing: Homelessness Support	£191,665	£16,500,000
Welfare: Universal Credit	£9,296,357	£800,300,000
Fiscal cost (£ millions)	£15,404,097	£1,400,000,000

Source: National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) (2023) The Fiscal Costs and Benefits of Problem Gambling

## 2 Background

- 2.1 Glasgow City Council recognised gambling harms as a public health issue in its 2022-2025 strategic plan, following the earlier very successful development day with members held in the Shettleston Ward in the city.
- 2.2 A Local Action Plan was developed and published in March 2023 as an output of a 3-year pathfinder project funded by Public Health Scotland. Governance of the Glasgow project was through Glasgow City Council’s Public Health Oversight Group (PHOG). The plan was based on continuing collaboration with third sector partners, community planning partners, academics, and those with experience of gambling harms.
- 2.3 The last report to the [Wellbeing, Equalities, Communities, Culture and Engagement City Policy Committee](#) was 10<sup>th</sup> August 2023

## 3 Glasgow’s Whole Systems Local Action Plan progress

- 3.1 Since the action plan’s launch awareness of gambling harms has been successfully raised, within the Council, Communities and wider Third and

<sup>1</sup> Arnot (2018), Scottish Public Health Network gambling update

<sup>2</sup> Goodwin et al. (2017), A typical problem gambler affects six others, International Gambling Studies, 17(2), 276–289.

Public Sector. The most recent partner meeting on gambling harms was convened by Councillor Doherty, City Convener for Neighbourhood Services, in January 2025 with representation from the GCHSCP, Glasgow Life, Simon Community Scotland, GCVS, The Health and Social Care Alliance, The Machine Zone charity, RCA Trust and Fast Forward. Some examples of whole systems work include:

- 3.2 **Young People.** Fast Forward supports young people in making informed decisions about risk-taking behaviors. They host the Scottish Gambling Education Hub & Network, which aims to share best practices, provide support, and help establish, sustain, and expand local gambling education projects. Projects have involved working with [Govan Youth Information Project](#) and [Fuse Youth Café](#) (Shettleston) to raise awareness of gambling harms. This work complements the multiple risk service for young people offered through the nine Youth Health Service hubs in the city.
- 3.3 **Community Action.** A recent stakeholder event “Driving Change Together - Govanhill and Gambling Harm” was hosted by Greater Govanhill CIC in conjunction with Simon Community Scotland and Fast Forward. Councillor Doherty spoke alongside women from Greater Govanhill magazine’s community reporter programme. Through the community reporter programme women have been raising the issues and challenging the stigma around gambling harms. Local people and stakeholders also heard about a new support website for women and resources developed by and for the Roma community.
- 3.4 **Lived experience.** The Health and Social Care Alliance (Alliance) works closely with Public Health Scotland and facilitates a Gambling Harm Life Experience Forum across Scotland. This forum aims to put the voice of people affected by gambling at the heart of action to reduce gambling harms. A significant achievement has been getting gambling harm recognised in Scotland’s ‘Creating Hope Together: suicide prevention strategy 2022 to 2032’
- 3.5 **Those vulnerable to gambling harms.** Simon Community Scotland has developed a [Homelessness and Gambling Harm Toolkit and e:Learning](#) with and for staff, which increased awareness of gambling harm as a factor impacting homelessness. They report that a much higher (one in five) people who have experienced homelessness also experience gambling harm. Simon Community Scotland supports peer group meetings and has created a website for women affected by or experiencing gambling harm. The website has been co-designed with women affected by gambling harms and aims to raise awareness of the harms of gambling, reduce stigma, offer online support, and easily signpost women to dedicated services.

## 4 Recent learning & evidence

- 4.1 The [University of Glasgow Gambling Research Group](#) has been at the forefront of analyzing gambling from various perspectives, particularly its effects on vulnerable groups. Local Gambling Harms intelligence has also continued to be captured and reported by partners, as summarized below.
- 4.2 Glasgow has more bookmakers than anywhere in the UK, with a significant concentration in deprived areas; 42% of Glasgow's betting shops are in the most deprived fifth of the city. In contrast, just 2.5% can be found in the most affluent fifth, nearly 17 times less.
- 4.3 The [Glasgow Education Services Health and Wellbeing Census 2021-22](#) found that 25% of pupils (S3, S5 and S6) had spent money on gambling activities in the last month. This included private betting, fruit machines, lottery, placing a bet in a betting shop, gaming websites and bingo.
- 4.4 NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHS) had committed to exploring gambling within their large-scale survey of residents 16+ in Glasgow City. The most recent survey reported on the findings of interviews undertaken with 4,518 adults across the city [Adult Health and Well-being Survey 2024](#). The survey found that one in every ten respondents had spent money on gambling activities (excluding the National Lottery) in the previous month. This was higher (13%) for those aged 25-34 and 55-64, those living in poverty and amongst males. Those who had gambled in the last month were asked how often they had gone back another day to win back the money they lost. Three in four said never, 18% said some of the time, 5% said most of the time, and 1% said every time they lost. This suggests that around 3,000 adults in Glasgow go back all or most of the time to win back the money lost.
- 4.5 A further question (shown in table 6.4) was included to explore the types of impacts of gambling on their lives. Again this suggests that between 850-1,200 adults in Glasgow may be experiencing these symptoms of gambling harms.

**Table 6.4: Responses to Questions about Gambling for those who had Gambled on Anything other than Lottery/Scratchcards in the Last Month**

In the Last 12 months, how often...?	Very often/fairly often	Occasionally	Never
Have you needed to gamble with more and more money to get the excitement you are looking for?	2.2%	9.3%	88.5%
Have you felt restless or irritable when trying to cut down gambling?	1.8%	4.1%	94.1%
Have you gambled to escape from problems or when you are feeling depressed, anxious or bad about yourself?	2.1%	5.3%	92.6%
Have you made unsuccessful attempts to control, cut back or stop gambling?	1.8%	3.5%	94.7%
Have you risked or lost an important relationship, job, educational or work opportunity because of gambling?	1.9%	1.6%	96.6%
Have you asked others to provide money to help with a financial crisis caused by gambling?	1.7%	1.9%	96.4%

- 4.6 A Gamble Aware report, [Survey scale of gambling harms affecting children and young people](#) (Aug 2024) estimated 1.65m children under 18 are growing up in households where an adult is experiencing ‘problem gambling’. Children exposed to gambling were also found to be four times more likely to go on to experience problem gambling themselves compared to those who had never been affected by someone else’s gambling.
- 4.7 These insights into young people’s relationship with gambling and gaming have been added to by a survey by Young Scot and Fast Forward [Views on Gambling, Gaming and Cryptocurrency Survey report \(February 2025\)](#). This revealed the financial toll of in-game purchases with nearly a quarter of young gamers admitting to gambling while playing video games. The survey, which assessed gaming habits over the past year, found that 91% of the 406 respondents had played video games within that period. Of these gamers, 35% reported that gaming had affected their lives in various ways, citing concerns such as strained relationships, financial costs, schoolwork struggles and a negative impact on mental health.

## 5 Scottish and UK Developments

- 5.1 The Scottish Government has been supportive of tackling gambling harms, with key meetings and summits held since 2018. The Scottish Government established a Working Group on Gambling Harms in October 2024 in response to advocacy efforts.
- 5.2 The UK Government published its response and confirmation of a Gambling Levy on 27 November 2024. The statutory levy will be a percentage of Gross Gambling Yields (GGY, the profit gambling operators make). Total gross gambling yield (GGY) of the UK gambling industry (April 2023 to March 2024) was £15.6 billion.

- 5.3 The levy will be paid by operators to the UK Gambling Commission, who will administer it to deliver research, prevention and treatment to reduce gambling-related harms. For some operators, including online and remote operators, this will be set at 1%. For land-based casinos/betting and non-remote licenses 0.4% and for land-based arcades and bingo, and society lotteries 0.1%. The aim is to raise £90-£100 million per year by 2027.
- 5.4 The levy distribution will be administered by the Gambling Commission (the regulator for the gambling industry). This will be done under the strategic direction of government with approval from the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) and the UK Treasury, supported by a Levy Board. This cross-government approach is a positive step and reflects the government's decision to tackle gambling-related harm as a public health issue. There will also be an informal Advisory Group which brings together experts from the third sector, research community and with a lived experience background, which will support decision making on how funds are spent.
- 5.5 The UK government's consultation proposes the distribution of funding be split up as:
- Research: 10-20% of funding to UKRI for the establishment of a Gambling Research Programme (GRP).
  - Prevention: 15-30% of funding to create a co-ordinated GB-wide approach to prevention, early intervention and education.
  - Treatment: 40-60% of funding to the NHS in England, Scotland and Wales to commission treatment and support services.
- 5.6 The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) in the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) were appointed to take on the role as lead commissioning body area for England, alongside appropriate bodies in Scotland and Wales. OHID, will develop a comprehensive approach to prevention and early intervention, supporting improvement across respective nations. OHID and appropriate bodies in Scotland and Wales will also undertake necessary design work to determine the final scope of prevention activity with the aim to provide clear and measurable outcomes for the prevention strand of the statutory levy system.
- 5.7 A recent rapid evidence review undertaken by Gambleaware rated evidence for a variety of treatment intervention types, some of which are already available within the NHS in Scotland [Effective interventions for the treatment of gambling that is associated with harm: Rapid Evidence review](#). The review recommended more bespoke treatments for Gambling Harm's. Within a Scottish context Glasgow could be developed as a Centre of Excellence and a regional hub for

a multiagency treatment response. However this would depend on the funding and treatment model options and substantive planning would be required across the NHS system and partners.

- 5.8 It was also agreed that it was vital that the expertise of people with lived experience of gambling-related harm is central to decision making for the levy – helping to inform and improve service provision in the third sector and better legislation and policy.

## 6 Policy and Resource Implications

### Resource Implications:

<i>Financial:</i>	Potential exists for future possible funding to support if the proposed UK Gambling levy is enacted and actioned
<i>Legal:</i>	Licensing and other departments have the opportunity to continue advocating for Gambling legislation to address Scottish anomalies
<i>Personnel:</i>	Our workforce continues to benefit from our updated Gambling policy
<i>Procurement:</i>	None

### Council Strategic Plan:

Grand Challenge 1 – Reduce poverty and inequality in our communities.

Mission 3 – Improve the health and wellbeing of our local communities Commitment – Recognise gambling harms as a public health issue.

### Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

<i>Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.</i>	N/A
<i>What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?</i>	Data suggests that women are more likely to be affected by gambling of others and men are more likely to be harmed by their own gambling. Young people are becoming increasingly exposed to harms via gambling and gaming. Tackling gambling harms effectively via our whole systems local action plan is fundamental to improving the health of Glaswegians and effectively tackling health inequalities.



*Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.*

11% of people living in the most deprived areas are at risk of having gambling problems, compared to 2% of people in the least deprived. Clustering of 'environmental bads' also increase these risks. Our city-wide whole systems local action plan is especially focused on preventing and reducing gambling harms in these areas

**Climate Impacts:**

*Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:*

N/A

*What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?*

N/A

*Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?*

N/A

**Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:**

No data protection impacts noted

## **7 Recommendations**

### **6.1 Members are asked to:**

- Note the work and support the continued action and local levy planning to Tackle Gambling Related Harm
- Continue engagement with the Scottish Government and national bodies
- Advocate for the UK Government to review the Gambling Act and ensure Glasgow is fairly funded to address Gambling Harms
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