

Patterns of play Q&A

Research approach

Q: What is the core aim of this project?

A: We need to understand how gambling behaviour and patterns of play vary across different products and environments. We also need to understand if, how and why some gambling environments, products and characteristics are more harmful than others. This will require descriptive analysis of play data, much of which is held by industry.

Q: What role will gambling operators play in the research?

A: Achieving the aims of this project will involve an extensive analysis of real play data provided by the gambling industry. It will also require effort to allow data to be collected from players on their demographics, socio-economic status and problem gambling status. To achieve this, all sectors of the gambling industry will need to regularly share data and make it available for research. They will also need to help gain consent from players for additional data to be collected. The Gambling Commission is committed to supporting this process.

Q: Are you interested in exploring vulnerable populations?

A: The core aim of this programme of work is to conduct descriptive analysis of real play data to explore patterns of play, and where possible link this with consumer data to individuals' demographic data, socio-economic background, and problem gambling status. We don't envisage this involving the use of samples specifically targeting certain vulnerable populations. There are however some products where data will not be available and qualitative or ethnographic methods may be required. It may be feasible that, for a product like scratchcards for example, this work is focussed on groups that we know are more vulnerable, such as young men.

Q: Could experimental approaches be used, as well as secondary analysis of datasets?

A: The overall aim of this research is to understand how people gamble in real life. As per the project brief we have set out a preferred approach to achieving this, however we would be open to the use of experimental approaches which analyse real play data if bidders can demonstrate how they will be used to answer the research questions.

Q: Are you interested in teams identifying interventions or solutions that could be triggered by markers of harm identified in play data?

A: The design and development of interventions falls outside of the scope of this programme of work. Research in this area is important, but it will be covered by a separate research theme in the RGSB Research Programme.

Data availability

Q: To what extent is data already available?

A: We have conducted an extensive mapping exercise which provides an overview of the various sectors and products, and the nature of and extent to which data is available. We are not currently in possession of all the data required to conduct this research, and so we will be requesting that

operators share data for analysis. Obtaining usable data is likely to be the first stage of this work, and the Gambling Commission are committed to supporting this.

Q: Will the Gambling Commission use its powers to obtain the data we need?

A: The Gambling Commission does not currently hold the data that is needed for this research. We intend to work with research teams to identify what data is needed and available. The Commission will lead a single co-ordinated data request to the industry. We hope that the industry will comply with this request, but the Commission has powers to compel the provision of the required data if necessary.

Q: What variables will the datasets contain?

A: The variables will vary by sector, and often by operator/product within those sectors, depending on the sophistication of the data capture in place. More disaggregated play data will generally be available for online gambling products. The sector mapping spreadsheet we have provided gives an overview of the types of variable that should be available for analysis.

Q: Will the data contain any demographic variables?

A: In the online sector all play is account-based, so we should have basic demographic information for all players. It might be able to derive secondary variables to supplement the picture (e.g. postcode could be used to work out IMD), however it is also likely that survey will need to be conducted with players to enable us to explore further demographic and socio-economic factors, as well as problem gambling status.

Q: Are you interested in the use of qualitative methods to understand patterns of play?

A: We envisage that this project will require extensive analysis of quantitative data, and we have prioritised key products and sectors based on both risk of harm and the likely availability of data. There are however other risky gambling products where data is not systematically recorded. We are keen to explore the possible methodologies that could be used in these areas (e.g. casino table games, scratchcards, and National Lottery draw based games), which is likely to include the use of qualitative or ethnographic approaches. These products will fall in phase 2 of this research and will be commissioned at a later date.

Q: Are you only interested in British data?

A: The aim of this project is to explore patterns of play in Great Britain. We have prioritised the analysis of British data, however there may be some sectors where data is not available but international datasets can be used as a proxy. We will be open to the use of these datasets, where appropriate.

Q: Will this project be affected by GDPR? How will you ensure a secure process for data protection and exchange during the project?

A: We expect bidders to be GDPR compliant. Play data retrieved from operators will be anonymised or by its nature will not have any associated personal data included. Any survey work developed by the successful research team will need to be GDPR compliant.

Commissioning

Q: Why is the project being commissioned in this way?

A: Different people have different skills and we need people to work together to address this large research programme. We'd like to encourage people to work together - you can either submit a bid as fully formed project team or come to us and we'll help to connect you.

Q: Does my bid need to cover the full scope of the project?

A: We welcome bids that propose an approach to answering all of the research questions. However, we think it is likely that different people will have different skills and experience and be able to add value in different ways. We will therefore also be accepting bids from consortiums, and bids focussing on a smaller number of research areas from teams who would be willing to join a larger research team.

Q: Who will be forming the research teams?

A: Bidders are welcome to propose their own research team, covering some or all of the priority research areas. Alternatively, GambleAware will be able to help connect people and identify smaller teams who can still make a valuable contribution to this work.

Q: Who will be responsible for project management?

A: Within the successful project team, we need a specified project management lead and knowledge manager whose role it will be to oversee all work of the team, make sure that each aspect of work is feeding into the others. They will also need to liaise with GambleAware about progress. The project manager/s will need to not only have good project management skills but needs to be really engaged in the wider topic area so that they can see what the whole picture of delivery is, how the projects work together, how findings complement each other and provide critical challenge where necessary.

Q: Will the names of workshop delegates and their areas of expertise be shared to facilitate the formation of the consortium?

A: Yes, where they have agreed for it to be shared. All bidders will be asked to indicate on the Request for Information form which areas of the project they are interested in and give a brief overview of their skills/ key areas of expertise. They will also be asked whether they are happy for this information to be shared with other potential bidders.

Q: Can I change my Request for Information form after it has been submitted?

A: Yes. We would appreciate an early indication of your skills and areas of expertise to help us assess the level of interest and enable bidders to start getting in touch with potential partners. However we also understand that things might change as you develop your ideas. You will be able to log back in to your completed Request for Information and make amends at any point during commissioning.

Q: Will you accept bids that include international team members?

A: Yes, we encourage bidders to form teams with people that have the right skills and experience to answer the core research questions, regardless of where they are based.

Reviewing and assessing bids

Q: Who will be reviewing the bids?

A: Please see attached document entitled "Overview of commissioning process"

Q: Will unsuccessful bidders receive feedback on their proposal?

A: We will provide feedback indicating strengths and weaknesses

Q: Will the successful proposal/s be published?

A: No

Q: Who will sit on the steering group for this project?

A: Please see attached document entitled "Overview of commissioning process"

Q: Would it be possible to create a multidisciplinary expert panel to as a resource for project teams (providing advice, support, and review at each stage to avoid pitfalls)?

A: Please see attached document entitled "Overview of commissioning process"