



Evaluation of the effectiveness of Gambling Blocking Software

Invitation To Tender

10 July 2017

1. Purpose and scope of this document

- 1.1. This document is an invitation to tender for a potential research project to evaluate the effectiveness of blocking software in minimising gambling-related harm.
- 1.2. The purpose and scope of this document is to:
 - 1.2.1. Provide tenderers with sufficient information to enable them to consider the appropriateness of this invitation and to respond
 - 1.2.2. Outline the information required in the responses
 - 1.2.3. Outline the tendering process and timetable
 - 1.2.4. Set out the administrative arrangements for the receipt of proposals.

2. Background

About GambleAware

- 2.1. Guided by the [National Responsible Gambling Strategy](#), GambleAware is an independent charity tasked to fund research, education and treatment services to help minimise gambling-related harm in Great Britain. GambleAware is a commissioning and grant-making body, not a provider of services. The charity's strategic aim is to broaden public understanding of gambling-related harm as a public health issue and to help those that do develop problems get the support and help that they need quickly and effectively.
- 2.2. GambleAware is committed to delivering an independently commissioned research programme that shifts the focus beyond the individual to include the gambling environment and products in line with a public health approach. GambleAware's research activity is guided by the recently published [RGSB Research Programme](#) and its independence is ensured by the [Research Governance and Commissioning Procedure](#) agreed with the Gambling Commission and its independent advisers, the Responsible Gambling Strategy Board. GambleAware has set out its research proposals for the next two years in its [Commissioning Plan](#) and publishes all commissioned research via the [GambleAware InfoHub](#).
- 2.3. There is little or no evidence available on the effectiveness of blocking software in minimising gambling-related harm. Given the rapid growth in remote, online gambling, if such software can be demonstrated to be effective in this regard, GambleAware may wish to consider how it can make such software more widely available, unless it would be superfluous after the new online sector-wide self-exclusion scheme is live.

About GAMSTOP

- 2.4. The Remote Gaming Association appointed KPMG to undertake a scoping study for a sector-wide National Online Self-Exclusion Scheme ("NOSES" – recently branded GAMSTOP) and is now developing the system to deliver this scheme. The go-live date will be the end of 2017.

2.5. It has been argued that GAMSTOP will make blocking software superfluous. However, there are counter-arguments for the continued use of blocking software.

Superfluous	Still required
<p>GAMSTOP will cover all online operators licensed by the GB Gambling Commission.</p>	<p>GAMSTOP does not prevent access to non-licensed operators (domestic and overseas). It may lead to an increase in the use of unlicensed overseas operators – at present determined gamblers have no need to go looking for these as they can find a new licensed operator from which they've not self-excluded. When GAMSTOP prevents that, they may just try harder to find an alternative (And the overseas market may seek harder to oblige).</p>
<p>GAMSTOP will go live by the end of 2017.</p>	<p>Until GAMSTOP is live, there is no way to self-exclude from more than one online licence-holder simultaneously, and GAMSTOP is a complex IT and legal challenge (this is not a reflection on the RGA or KPMG, but based on experience of implementing large IT systems where any integration across organisations and systems or data migration is required).</p>
<p>Given vigorous identification checks for online gambling, those who self-exclude with GAMSTOP will be prevented from opening new accounts.</p>	<p>GAMSTOP will block individuals based on their identity, leaving the opportunity to borrow another person's identity (with or without permission) in order to access gambling from devices accessible to the gambler.</p>
<p>Registration with GAMSTOP may remove users from operator's own direct marketing distribution lists, which is an existing feature of individual operator self-exclusion schemes, and has some impact on affiliate marketing too.</p>	<p>Some blocking software reduces the amount of gambling advertising to which its users are exposed; this includes affiliate marketing which is not directly prevented by GAMSTOP.</p>
<p>Although software blocking might provide a degree of flexibility, the trade-off is that it may offer less protection compared to self-exclusion (i.e. consumers could renege on it,</p>	<p>It may also be possible that blocking software could play a role in harm-minimisation by offering a more flexible alternative to self-exclusion, in that it can be tailored to a gambler's needs e.g. setting limits on time or money.</p>

operators aren't obliged to look out for people trying to subvert it etc.).	
	Blocking software often goes further than NOSES will by blocking gambling-related ads from all sources (including importantly affiliates) and other gambling-related content – so could reduce the risk of those trying to stop or control their gambling being inspired to find non-remote forms of gambling.
	There may be those who are reluctant to “register” with NOSES and prefer the anonymous option of blocking software.

2.1. We expect this research to consider the arguments above, and any others, and make a recommendation about the ongoing need for blocking software after GAMSTOP is live.

3. Existing solutions

3.1. Neither GamCare nor GambleAware has done a rigorous assessment of the absolute or relative technical effectiveness of any available solution.

3.2. We regularly receive enquiries about blocking software via the GambleAware consumer-facing website.

3.3. The National Gambling Helpline already directs callers towards the blocking solutions on the GamCare website.

3.4. Without explicit endorsement, GamCare’s website lists five potential blocking software products (with pricing added for reference):

3.4.1. General blocking software (not specific to gambling).

www.netnanny.com (Annual cost: \$39.99 per device; \$44.99 5 devices)

www1.k9webprotection.com - K9 blocks sites in over 70 categories and is compatible with Windows and Mac (As part of the Blue Coat Community Outreach Program, K9 Web Protection is free for home use.)

3.4.2. Gambling-specific blocking software:

www.gamblock.com - Windows computers and Android phones - Annual cost: from \$84.95

www.betfilter.com - Windows or Mac computers and Android phones - Annual cost: from \$69.95

www.gamban.com - Mac OS X or Windows computer - Free

- 3.5. Clearly, with the exception of GamBan and K9, there is a not insignificant recurring cost to this software.
- 3.6. Other solutions may be available, and if potentially suitable, should also be considered as part of this research.

4. Existing evidence of effectiveness

- 4.1. A review of existing evidence about the effectiveness of blocking software offers only limited conclusions:
 - 4.1.1. There is not much (actually none we can find) specific evidence on the effectiveness of blocking software, either in terms of it being technically effective, or therapeutically helpful.
 - 4.1.2. Self-determination theory would suggest blocking software may work better if requested by the gambler themselves, not those around them – (Deci and Ryan 1985, 2000).
 - 4.1.3. General software has been shown to lack effectiveness, in the context of a study looking at access to sites relating to alcohol – (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth CAMY, 2004).

5. Research objectives

- 5.1. Is blocking software effective at reducing gambling-related harm?
- 5.2. Is it more effective when used alongside other forms of treatment?
- 5.3. Is the available blocking software technically effective at preventing access to all forms of online gambling? What are the relative advantages and disadvantages of the currently available solutions? Which should be recommended for use and which should not? Is there any additional functionality not currently available that is necessary for such software to be technically effective?
- 5.4. Does blocking software offer additional benefits beyond those which will be delivered by GAMSTOP sufficient to make a case for making such software more widely available?

6. Programme resources and governance

- 6.1. This research is being commissioned by GambleAware's Research and Evaluation Committee, which comprises only independent trustees i.e. those with no direct interest in the gambling industry.
- 6.2. We would expect suppliers of blocking software to volunteer to participate in this study, so have not made contact with them in advance.
- 6.3. As the primary provider of funding for treatment for problem gambling, we have strong relationships with treatment providers who can assist researchers

in asking clients to test blocking software. Tenders from partnerships between evaluation experts and treatment providers will be welcome.

7. Programme schedule

- 7.1. We would expect this project to be completed over the next six months.
- 7.2. The following are indicative key deliverables and milestones:
 - Project inception – August 2017
 - Emerging findings presentation – December 2017
 - Final report – 31 January 2018.

8. Tendering process and timetable

- 8.1. The proposal should outline the organisation(s) previous experience in this area (or related areas), and provide a candid assessment of the potential strengths and weaknesses of the proposed approach. It should explain the specific benefits of using this approach over others.
- 8.2. Proposals should be explicit about the aims and objectives of the project, and should identify appropriate outputs and outcomes, and explain how these will be measured, monitored, and used in project review and development.
- 8.3. The proposal should detail what inputs the project will require to perform effectively.

Evaluation process and timeline

- 8.4. The Evaluation Panel will be made up of the GambleAware's Research and Evaluation Committee and other experts or advisers it wishes to appoint.
- 8.5. Tenders will be submitted by 17.00hrs GMT on Friday 18th August 2017.
- 8.6. On receipt of the proposals, a GambleAware selected panel will perform an evaluation of proposals, with a view to selecting one or more organisations to perform the research.
- 8.7. Tenderers may be required to attend a meeting to discuss any aspect of proposals.

Questions

- 8.8. Tenderers may submit, by no later than 17.00hrs GMT on Friday 28th July any queries that tenderers have relating to this ITT. Please submit such queries by email to commissioning@gambleaware.org
- 8.9. If you intend to submit a proposal, you may notify GambleAware at this email address by 17.00hrs GMT on Friday 28th July, and all those who have notified us will be provided with an anonymised summary of our answers to questions raised by other tenderers soon after this deadline.

- 8.10. Any queries should clearly reference any appropriate paragraph in the documentation. As far as is reasonably possible, GambleAware will respond to all reasonable requests for clarification of any aspect of this ITT and supporting documents, if made before the above deadline.
- 8.11. Proposals must be submitted by 17.00hrs GMT on Friday 18th August 2017 to the following e-mail address: commissioning@gambleaware.org. GambleAware reserves the right to extend any deadline. Any extension granted will apply to all tenderers.
- 8.12. GambleAware reserves the right to reject any proposals:
- 8.12.1. received after the deadline; and/or
 - 8.12.2. which do not comply with the conditions and requirements set out in this ITT.
- 8.13. All documents and all correspondence relating to the tender must be written in English. Tenderers should consider only the information contained within this ITT and supporting documents, or otherwise formally communicated to tenderers in writing when making an offer.
- 8.14. The submission of tender documentation should include (unless, where applicable, previously submitted when appointed to the GambleAware Evaluation Panel framework procurement):
- An understanding of the project objectives and work requirements
 - An outline of and justification for proposed research methods
 - A summary of key activities to support specified outputs
 - A timetable linked to key activities (e.g., GANTT chart)
 - A summary of any propriety intellectual property which will be used to carry out the research
 - Full disclosure of costs, including number of days required for each task, day rates for different members of the research team and anticipated expenses
 - A brief risk assessment with proposed remedies relating to identified risks
 - A CV or brief biography for each member of the team
 - Contact details for two referees.

9. Intellectual property

- 9.1. GambleAware is committed to delivering an independently commissioned research programme that focuses on gambling behaviour and the effectiveness of various treatment, prevention and education strategies in minimising gambling-related harm. This is intended to improve knowledge amongst all those involved in this issue, so GambleAware will wish to publish the results of the research it funds. Our requirements below in respect of intellectual property and confidentiality are intended to promote good project management, quality assurance and research integrity, and are not included in order to influence the independent conclusions of this research or its presentation.

- 9.2. The successful supplier will be required to assign to GambleAware all rights in and to any intellectual property created or arising from the work carried out by the supplier (or by the supplier's employees or agents).
- 9.3. GambleAware acknowledges that the supplier may own proprietary software, analytic tools and techniques which may not be assigned to GambleAware. Where such software, tools or techniques exist and will be used by the supplier in the proposed research, the supplier(s) should provide details in its tender of the methodology, to be used in the proposed research highlighting clearly where such software, tools or techniques will not be assigned to GambleAware and/or may not be shared with the public.
- 9.4. On completion of the initiatives, GambleAware plans on publishing a research paper which may include details of the methodology, techniques and tools used by the supplier in carrying out the initiatives.

10. Confidentiality and publicity

- 10.1. The outcome of the tender will be published in GambleAware Board meeting minutes and therefore will be made public.
- 10.2. The successful supplier will be required to enter into a legally binding agreement with GambleAware which will contain, inter alia, confidentiality provisions pursuant to which the supplier will be required to:
 - 10.2.1. keep confidential all intellectual property and know-how, including confidential commercial and financial information, disclosed by GambleAware or any operator to the supplier during the course of the initiative;
 - 10.2.2. not disclose to third parties without the express prior written consent of GambleAware any information arising from the work performed as part of the initiative; and
 - 10.2.3. ensure that all proposed publications are submitted to GambleAware for approval prior to publication with the expectation that approval will be given unless there are reasonable grounds not to do so.
- 10.3. GambleAware may from time to time require that the successful supplier's employees and/or other person working on the initiative enter into a confidentiality agreement with GambleAware.

11. Budget

- 11.1. The total overall budget for the project is up to £25,000. GambleAware intends to offer a restricted grant and so no VAT will usually be payable.

12. Eligibility

- 12.1. Applications will be accepted from all locations. Those teams located outside Great Britain must ensure they specify, in their proposal, how they will facilitate meetings with GambleAware, industry collaborators and other stakeholders and manage communication during the project. Cost proposals must be inclusive of travel expenses.

13. Conditions of tender

- 13.1. GambleAware reserves the right to issue the response to any clarification request made by tenderers to all tenderers unless tenderers expressly require it to be kept confidential at the time the request is made.
- 13.2. The information contained in this ITT and the supporting documents and in any related written or oral communication is believed to be correct at the time of issue but GambleAware does not accept any liability for its accuracy, adequacy or completeness and no warranty is given as such. This exclusion does not extend to any fraudulent misrepresentation made by or on behalf of GambleAware or to any other liability which cannot be excluded at law.
- 13.3. By issuing this ITT, GambleAware is not bound in any way to enter into any contractual or other arrangement with tenderers or any other party.
- 13.4. It is intended that the remainder of this procurement will take place in accordance with the provisions of this ITT but GambleAware reserves the right to terminate, amend or vary the tendering process by notice to all tendering organisations in writing. GambleAware does not accept any liability for any losses caused to tenderers as a result of such termination, amendment or variation.
- 13.5. Tenderers will not be entitled to claim from GambleAware any cost or expenses that tenderers may incur in preparing a proposal irrespective of whether or not the tender is successful.
- 13.6. All information supplied to tenderers by GambleAware, either in writing or orally, must be treated in confidence and not disclosed to any third party (save to professional advisers) unless the information is already in the public domain.
- 13.7. There must be no publicity by tenderers regarding the project or the future award of any contract unless GambleAware has given express written consent to the relevant communication.
- 13.8. **Tenderers must declare any potential conflicts of interest within their proposal and state how these would be managed.** GambleAware reserves the right to refuse any application based on such conflicts.

14. Evaluation criteria

- 14.1. The principal purpose of this evaluation is to determine the tender(s) which best meet the requirements of the GambleAware and deliver best value for

money. The evaluation should be a rigorous examination and comparison of all submissions received on an equal and consistent basis without bias.

14.2. Tenders will be subject to an initial compliance check to confirm that:

- Tenders have been submitted on time, completed correctly and meet the requirements of the invitation to tender.
- Tenders are sufficiently complete to enable them to be evaluated in accordance with these criteria.
- The Tenderer has not contravened any of the terms and conditions of the tender process.

14.3. Tenders that do not meet these requirements may be rejected at this stage. Tenders that pass the initial screening assessment check will be distributed to Evaluation Panel members who are expected to subject them to a detailed evaluation in accordance with the criteria as set out in this document.

14.4. All tenders will be scored in accordance with the marking system set out below:

Score Key Assessment	Score	Interpretation
Excellent	5	Excellent standard with no reservations about acceptability
Good	4	Good standard with no reservations about acceptability
Acceptable +	3	Acceptable standard with minor reservations about acceptability
Acceptable -	2	Acceptable standard with reservations that require review
Serious Reservations	1	Meets minimum requirements - but serious reservations
Unacceptable	0	Fails to meet the minimum requirements

The following table will be used to guide the evaluation.

Theme	Criteria	Score (0-5)	Comments
The tenderer	The tenderer demonstrates sufficient depth and breadth of relevant experience		
	The tenderer has a relevant corporate or personal network to support their work		
	The tenderer will command credibility with key stakeholders		
The project	The approach outlined in the tender will achieve the project goal		
	The tender outlines sufficient internal project governance		
	The tenderer adopts effective quality assurance procedures		

	The approach to testing and evaluation is robust		
	The timescale is within that outlined in the ITT		
The cost	The costs are clearly explained and certain		
	The benefits of an economy of scale are clear and reasonable if bidding for more than one initiative		
	The overall tender cost represents value for money		
	There are sufficient resources of suitable quality allocated to deliver the project		