



# Gambling in Families

A study on the role and influence of family and parental attitudes and behaviours on gambling-related harm in young people

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Young People, Gambling,  
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# Executive Summary

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## Background to the study

In November 2016, GambleAware appointed Ecorys (UK) to undertake a qualitative research study as part of the research programme: *Young People, Gambling, and Gambling-Related Harm Research*. The specific focus of the study was to understand the role and influence of parental and familial factors on gambling and gambling-related harm in young people.

The study had four main objectives:

1. To understand the types and frequency of gambling behaviours among young people and their families, and how these relate to other forms of risk taking behaviour.
2. To investigate the influence of family and parental attitudes and behaviour as a factor associated with increased risk of gambling-related harm in young people.
3. To investigate the role of family attitudes and behaviours as a protective factor associated with preventing gambling-related harm in young people.
4. To identify key policy and practice messages.

To answer these objectives the research had two key strands:

1. A Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) to review existing literature around the influence of familial and parental factors on gambling-related harm. The review focused particularly on theories underpinning the association, such as parental attitudes; attachment and behavioural learning; and key risk and protective factors related to family and parental relationships. The results of this review informed the development of research tools for the qualitative interviews in the next stage of the study.
2. A series of semi-structured, in-depth, face-to-face and telephone interviews with young people, parents and wider family members with a range of experience of gambling and gambling-related harm. The interviews were conducted between April–November 2017. A total of 37 families were included in the study (comprised of 19 young people and 20 parents).

## Key findings

This study found that young people were gambling almost exclusively using mobile technology and online platforms; whereas parents were gambling both online and offline. Young people and parents generally described similar tastes in gambling as their other family members. Where there were differences, it tended to reflect a wider societal shift within gambling types, towards using mobile-based technology, with sons placing bets using their phones and dads visiting the bookmakers, rather than a wider difference in attitudes across the generations within the family.

The narrative of gambling in families differed by the extent to which young people and parents gambled. Amongst the low-level, social gamblers, parents and young people described being aware of other members of the family gambling but were less likely to describe gambling as a main activity for the family to do together. In contrast, the narratives by at risk gamblers more often described the gambling activity in

their families as a habitual and regular occurrence and an important part of family relationships. However, there was mixed evidence of a familial influence on problem gambling behaviours. Although the majority of young problem gamblers could identify others in their family who gambled, only a few recalled gambling with a family member. Furthermore, there was quite clear evidence that family members had very little role in, or awareness of, a young person gambling, if the young person had a gambling disorder. Young problem gamblers also did not see gambling as a social activity. They typically described their gambling as a solitary behaviour, which they often went to great lengths to hide from their family.

In terms of parental and familial roles, the current research confirmed that parents and family members have the propensity to act both as a risk and as a protective influence in relation to young people's gambling. This manifests itself in a range of ways, including normalising gambling practices during childhood to influencing responsible strategies in moderation into early adulthood.

To summarise the main findings from the research, the familial influence on gambling can be typified in four roles for parent (and wider family members):

**As socialisers:** This role relates to the extent that parents permit gambling in the family context and create an environment where gambling is perceived as a social activity and an acceptable way for people to spend time together. Gender has a role here, as fathers tend to gamble socially with their sons, and mothers with their daughters. Parents as 'socialisers' means that young people are often exposed to the games and rituals of gambling, as well as gambling environments, from a younger age, which may then have a formative influence on their attitudes, norms and behaviours later on. With older children, gambling can also be a social way for family members to bond across generations representing a shared interest. Typically, the social experience of gambling in families was in the absence of risk, either because the gambling involved lower stakes - like race days with the family - or because the parents did not engage in the risks of gambling themselves. While parents' gambling in this context is essentially a way to have fun, the research suggested that it can inadvertently teach young people to associate gambling with making money.

**As facilitators:** This role relates to the ways in which parental gambling can increase the amount that children and young people take part in the activity. At a younger age, parents facilitate a young person's gambling indirectly, such as asking children for tips on a bet or placing bets in a child's name on days out with the family. However, as young adults, parents as facilitators may choose to gamble more regularly with their children, start to participate with them in games with higher stakes, and also engage more directly in discussions about their personal strategies in gambling. When a young person is legally able to gamble on their own, a gambling parent may accept or encourage the young person to take part in more mature types of gambling, particularly if the parent has similar gambling preferences themselves. Through both direct participation, and by permitting advanced types of gambling, the parent may continue to encourage a young person to gamble more than maybe they would have done otherwise.

**As moderators:** This role relates to the moderating influence that parents have on young people's gambling, by either knowingly or unknowingly modelling ways for young people to gamble responsibly (or not), through their role as socialisers and facilitators. For the majority of parents this role commonly focuses on ways to stay in control when gambling, rather than explicitly discussing the risks of gambling disorders or engaging with the realities of gambling-related harm. Parents' ability to act as moderators reflects the parents' own gambling style, and as a result, young people have similar attitudes towards control and self-limiting measures as their parents, in much the same way that they show interest in similar types of gambling as their parents. Although parents have a formative influence on a young person's attitude towards gambling from a young age, they may not take on the role as moderator, and formally engage with the risks, until a young person is older or already gambling.

**As protectors:** This role relates to a range of ways parents can be available to offer support, often as a first-response, for young people who have developed a gambling disorder. This role represents the emotional support drawn from family relationships, but also the parent's position to be able act pragmatically and practically intervene to reduce any financial impact because of the gambling. Furthermore, in their role as protectors, parents are able to research and access services, as well as encourage young people to access professional support if it is needed. In this way, parents continue to have an important role in young people gambling as young adults, and may be significant in minimising the risk of any early experience of problem gambling continuing, or escalating further, into adulthood.

## Policy and practice messages

Parents may face challenges in the support they can offer to limit their children's exposure to gambling-related harm, particularly if young people's gambling is hidden and remains so until any harm escalates. In the research, parents identified several routes that they would take to seek information on how to help their children with gambling-related harm. These ranged from quick internet searches for relevant information to exploring the availability of support from local welfare services. Those familiar with specialist gambling support services indicated they might attend a Gambler's Anonymous meeting with their child. However, some parents considered that there remains a lack of services specifically aimed at parents of those experiencing gambling-related harm.

Young people reported varying levels of parental involvement at times when they had sought help for their gambling behaviour, often viewing the issue as one they could independently deal with. Instead, other sources of information and advice beyond their family were regarded as of more potential value such as listening to those with 'lived experience' of a gambling disorder and its associated harm. Young people had mixed views of the availability of gambling support services they could access; although, where available, the impartiality of support some young people had accessed was highly valued.

Parental intervention to resolve the negative consequences of their children's gambling may not always help tackle the underlying causes or factors of their behaviour and often emotional support is regarded by young people as the most effective approach. A widely held view among both young people and parents was that gambling is often hidden with few obvious signs or symptoms and, as a result, harm is rarely recognised until it is experienced. The evidence from this study indicates whole-family approaches to consider: include creating an environment in which children feel able to speak openly with their parents about any problems they have with gambling; as well as parents being open about any family experiences of gambling-related harm; and offering support at any stage in the process of young people seeking help from specialist services.

## Conclusion

The current research provides evidence about the ways in which parents can directly or inadvertently encourage young people to gamble. However, the study also highlights the importance of the protective roles of parents, where they are able to moderate a young person's gambling and minimise a young person's experience of gambling-related harm. In particular, where parents effectively teach responsible strategies to a young person early on, young people describe feeling more in control, aware of the risks, and less drawn to risky behaviour in their gambling. This is important from a policy perspective, as it suggests that encouraging parents to engage in the risks of gambling and discuss ways to gamble safely, may be as relevant in reducing the risks of gambling-related harm in young people as raising awareness of the risks of gambling with parents and young people.



# 1.0 Introduction

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In November 2016, Ecorys (UK) was appointed to undertake a qualitative research study as part of GambleAware's research programme: *Young People, Gambling, and Gambling-Related Harm Research*. This report presents the findings from this research. This introduction provides a brief background to the subject, the main research objectives and an outline of the methodology. It also presents details of our approach to the recruitment and sampling of participants, as well as a detailed view of their characteristics (e.g. ages, family composition, personal and familial experience of gambling).

## 1.1 Background to the study

For the majority of people, gambling, defined as either gaming, betting or taking part in a lottery (Gambling Act, 2005), offers a fun, thrill-seeking activity, with the potential to win small or significant amounts of money. However, for some people, gambling poses a greater risk. Frequent gambling, and gambling involving large amounts, are indicators of addictive behaviour and, in some cases, a gambling disorder. Gambling disorders are serious and lead to *gambling-related harm*: such as debt, mental health issues, and damage to personal relationships.

The Gambling Act (2005) includes a specific objective to protect children from harm or exploitation from gambling. While almost all regulated gambling is illegal for people under the age of 18, 16 year olds can gamble legally by buying lottery tickets and scratch cards and there is no age limit for entering amusement arcades, taking part in raffles or playing online social games. Although the statistics around youth problem gambling have stayed consistent over the last few years [reported in the most recent national study as the same proportion as in adult populations (0.5 per cent) (IPSOS MORI, 2016)]; policy makers and practitioners are keen understand young people's gambling behaviour and the risks associated with youth problem gambling. This interest exists in the context of a rapidly evolving gambling landscape, related to the almost ubiquitous use of mobile technology and the internet, and the potential this has for changing gambling behaviour and the risks involved.

The purpose of the current study was to enhance understanding about the vulnerability of young people in relation to gambling-related harm. The specific focus was to understand the influence of parental and familial factors on gambling and gambling-related harm in young people. An understanding of how these factors influence gambling and the risks posed to young people may offer important insight for the design and implementation of targeted and prevention strategies for youth populations.

### 1.1.1 The vulnerability of young people in relation to gambling-related harm

This section briefly outlines the current landscape for young people gambling in the UK and some of the factors that relate to the vulnerability of young people and concerns associated with the current gambling landscape.

Firstly, the growing use of mobile-based gambling, and opportunity to gamble on the internet, means that accessibility to gambling is changing. As well as being easier to access, it is arguably easier to gamble secretly online meaning online gambling disorders may be harder to detect (Griffiths, 2003). This is

pertinent to young people, who are digital natives<sup>1</sup>, as the majority are comfortable using new and existing types of technology as part of their day-to-day social and leisure activities.

Secondly, there is growing awareness around the inclusion of gambling-like scenarios in online social gaming, including Esports, skins gambling<sup>2</sup>, and virtual currencies. All of which introduce young people under the legal gambling age to the principles of gambling and the experience of winning from gambling. While some evidence suggests that adolescents who engage in simulated gambling activities online are at greater risk of developing a gambling disorder (King, Delfabbro, Kaptis and Zwaans, 2014); the influence of social games on gambling disorders is not yet fully understood. However, there is concern about the extent to which young people are exposed to gambling in this context.

Lastly, there is a concern around the pervasiveness of gambling advertising online, with the potential to increase exposure and normalise gambling attitudes and behaviours from an earlier age for young people. The national omnibus survey reported that the exposure to gambling advertising online is higher than on billboards, posters and newspapers, and is the highest on social media (IPSOS-MORI, 2016). However, regulators have recently warned gambling operators that gambling advertising must be socially responsible and comply with the UK Code of Non-broadcast Advertising and Direct and Promotional Marketing (CAP Code) and avoid appealing to children and young people in their marketing strategies (Davis, 2017).

In short, the gambling landscape is changing and there is interest to understand how young people's attitudes and behaviours develop and exist in this context. Part of this is to understand the role of the formative social influences on young people. One of which is the role of parents and families, which is the focus of this research.

### 1.1.2 The role and influence of parental and familial factors on gambling and gambling-related harm in young people.

This section outlines the existing research that provides evidence of the role and influence of parental and familial factors in the context of young people gambling and gambling-related harm. This evidence draws from several social theories, including social behavioural learning, the theory of reasoned action, social practice theory and family identity research.

The exploration into the role and influence of familial factors has included both quantitative and qualitative research studies, building an evidence base around the key factors underpinning the transmission in gambling patterns between generations. The existing research has highlighted a relationship between parental attitudes, parental example and early experiences of gambling as potential factors that predict young people's gambling and youth problem gambling (e.g. Dowling, Jackson, Thomas, and Frydenberg 2010).

Much of the evidence has highlighted a relationship between familial factors and youth gambling has reported on different social behavioural theories. For example, using social learning theory, which posits that parents are the main 'socialising agents' for children, the research suggests that if young people observe and experience gambling behaviours through their parents, they are subsequently more likely to gamble (Canale et al, 2016; Leman, Patock-Peckham, Hoff, Krishnan-Sarin, Steinberge, Rule and Potenza,

<sup>1</sup> A person born or brought up during the age of digital technology and so familiar with computers and the Internet from an early age.

<sup>2</sup> 'Skins' gambling is the gambling of virtual goods, which are most commonly cosmetic elements, within online gaming, which have no direct influence on gameplay [such as transferable "skins" for items used in online gaming (e.g. weapons)], as virtual currency to bet on the outcome of professional matches or on other games of chance.

2014). In the 'theory of reasoned action', which posits that the perceived subjective norms regarding a behaviour influence the intention to perform it, youth are more likely to gamble if gambling behaviour has been normalised within their environment. The research suggests that parents have a significant role in normalising the behaviour as they engage children in a range of gambling activities (Gupta and Derevensky, 1997).

Recent qualitative studies have included gamblers' narratives to test these social theories in more depth by exploring gamblers' own views on the early adoption of gambling and the development of later gambling disorders. This has included analysing the influence of families, alongside the influence from peers, colleagues, the environment and social networks (Reith and Dobbie, 2011); as well as analysing the role of family and friends alongside the physical access to gambling (Kristiansen and Reith 2014).

A qualitative study by Westberg, Berverland and Thomas (2017) applied social practice theory and family identity research to understand the influence of familial factors on emergent gambling behaviours and its long term effects. In this study, the authors suggest that gambling in families is important and influential because it links to a number of family identity goals. By engaging in gambling, an individual can successfully fulfil these goals, such as: building and maintaining family boundaries; retaining family cultural traditions; changing family roles; as well as reinforcing the family's identity to be part of a larger collective. In essence, the pursuit of these goals can lead to the normalisation of gambling behaviour in families and relates to the individual adopting, and continuing to participate in, gambling behaviour. This nuanced interpretation, where gambling is viewed in a social, rather individualistic, context, and having multiple roles, suggests that the relationship between familial factors and young people gambling is complex. Pertinently the model outlines the role gambling has in forming and supporting positive relationships in families, as well as a risk factor for gambling-related harm. Considering the range of ways gambling has a role in a family suggests that the associated practices may also function as a protective factor for the young person and their gambling behaviour.

To date the current evidence base does not allow us to explore properly the complexity of the influence or the dynamics of the young person - parent relationship. The qualitative research draws mainly from the young person's perspective of their parents' role and attitudes, rather than from research with parents themselves (Valentine, 2008). There is also less in-depth qualitative research conducted in the UK context, with the studies mentioned above conducted with Danish and Australian gamblers.

## **1.2 Research aim and objectives**

The current study aims to address the evidence gaps in the research (as outlined in section 1.1) by conducting qualitative research in the UK with parents and young people with experience of gambling in their families. Based on the findings, this study aims to make a series of recommendations appropriate to policy and practice.

In the study young people are defined as aged 25 and under. This age range reflects how young people's services typically operate in the UK. Extending the age up to 25 also means that it is possible to capture not only the young person's first and early experiences of gambling, but also how the parental influence may change as a child transitions to young adulthood, as well as the protective roles parents may have throughout a young person's life.

The inclusion of both the views of parents and young people within one study adds value. Firstly, because the study is able to explore both groups' perspectives on the role of parents in young people gambling.

Secondly, the research is able to compare the views of both groups and consider how the differences may relate to the risk and protective factors associated with gambling-related harm.

The current study had four main objectives:

1. To understand the types and frequency of gambling behaviours among young people and their families.
2. To investigate the influence of family and parental attitudes and behaviour as a factor associated with increased risk of gambling-related harm in young people.
3. To investigate the role of family attitudes and behaviours as a protective factor associated with preventing gambling-related harm in young people.
4. To identify key policy and practice messages.

### **1.3 Methodology**

The current study had two key strands in the methodology:

1. A Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) of the relevant literature on the familial and parental factors associated with increasing the risk of gambling-related harm in young people, and
2. A series of in-depth interviews with young people (aged up to 25) and parents with experience of gambling in their families.

The Rapid Evidence Assessment comprised a review of literature published in the last 10 years on the influence of family and parental attitudes and behaviours on young people gambling and gambling-related harm. The purpose of this review was to understand the existing theories and evidence and to identify how the current study could build on these findings. References from the REA have been incorporated into this report to provide relevant context for the main findings (a full list is included in Annex 1).

For the in-depth interviews with parents and young people, Ecorys designed semi-structured topic guides, which GambleAware signed off prior to commencing the fieldwork. The topic guides included sections on: the individual's current gambling, gambling in their family, experience of gambling-related harm, perceptions of the risks of gambling and views on ways to support young people experiencing gambling-related harm. Through a reflective questioning approach, the interviewers encouraged an in-depth narrative about the participants' own views and experiences of gambling, views about influences from their family environments, and the influence of other factors. For the young adults in the sample (aged 18 – 25) the reflective narrative approach meant that participants were able to describe the development of their gambling experiences before and after turning 18 and the role of their parents during this period. There was also the opportunity in the research for parents to explore their own experience of intergenerational differences, as some could reflect on the role of their own parents as a factor influencing their gambling and gambling in their family.

Following the interviews, a robust process for codifying the qualitative dataset was designed as a basis for the main framework to compare gambling experiences. This involved coding the participant's personal gambling experiences and then separately coding their descriptions of gambling in their family (see section 1.5 for the gambler typology and analysis). Each interview was coded first by the interviewer who conducted the interview and then again by a second member of the team. The team compared and agreed any differences between the researchers' coding decisions.

### 1.3.1 Ethics process

The ethics of recruitment and conducting the research were considered at the research design and recruitment stages in the study. We discussed our ethics approach with Gamble Aware, and received sign off of all processes and tools, prior to starting any fieldwork. We also followed Ecorys' protocol in conducting research with vulnerable groups (Annex 2 provides full details of this protocol).

## 1.4 Recruitment strategy

Overall, the study included 19 young people and 20 parents<sup>3</sup> with a mix of personal characteristics and gambling experiences. It was particularly important to include young people and parents with a range of gambling experiences in order to be able to explore the potential for both risk and protective influences in the family context, rather than only focusing on the familial influences on problem gambling.

To achieve an appropriate mix amongst the research participants, the study included two broad recruitment routes. Firstly, we recruited participants using a telephone sample of the general public. We employed a short questionnaire to screen participants. This ensured that we only included participants who were either aged 25 or under or with at least one child in their family that age; and had recent personal or familial experience of gambling. This recruitment from the general public ensured the study included a wide range of familial contexts and experiences amongst the research participants. Secondly, we selected and worked with a number of local and national services to recruit young people and parents who had experience of gambling-related harm services. This approach allowed us to safely include young people and parents with experience of problem gambling (Annex 2 provides more details of the two recruitment routes).

### 1.4.1 Young people in the research

This section provides an overview of the personal characteristics of the young people included in the research (summarised in Table 1.1). The majority of the young people were aged over 18 (n = 15), in employment (n = 12), living with their parents (n = 13) and described close family relationships (n = 10); only four young people in the sample were under the age of 18.

While the current study included more young adults, than younger aged children, we implemented an interview approach that was designed to prompt narratives about the young person's current and previous gambling experience, to explore the development of their attitudes and behaviour, as well as the family influences at different ages.

**Table 1.1 Young people sample: personal characteristics**

Characteristics	Group	n=
Age	under 18	4
	18 – 21	6
	22 - 25	9
Gender	Male	11
	Female	8
Education/ employment	Education	5
	Employment	12
	Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET)	2
Living arrangements	With parents or carer	13
	Other	6

<sup>3</sup> The target for the study was 20 young people and 20 parents.

Family relationships	Close	10
	Quite close	2
	Not close	4
	NR	2
N = 19. All characteristics have been coded based on the respondent's description of themselves and their family.		

## 1.4.2 Parents in the research

This section provides an overview of the personal characteristics of the parents included in research (summarised in Table 1.2). The majority of parents had two children, lived with their family and were married. Children of the parent sample were aged 4 – 30 years; with a roughly even spread in the sample of parents with children over 18, under 18 and a mix of both. This variation in the family composition, in terms of their children's ages, enabled the research to explore parents' perspectives and practices towards their children gambling, amongst those who were the gambling legal age and those who were not.

**Table 1.2 Parent sample: personal characteristics**

Characteristics	Group	n=
Number of children	One child	4
	2 children	8
	3 children	6
	4 children	2
Children ages	Under 18	7
	Over 18	7
	Mix of child ages	5
	Not Recorded	1
Living arrangements	With family	17
	Alone	2
Relationship	Partner	5
	Married	13
	Divorced	1
	Widowed	1
	NR	1
Age*	Average	30
	Min	28
	Max	58
N = 20. All characteristics have been coded based on the respondent's description of themselves and their family.*Age was only coded if provided spontaneously by the participant.		

## 1.5 Gambling profiles included in the research

This section describes the gambling profiles of the participants included in the research. Firstly, it describes the profiles of the personal experience of gambling of the young people and parents. The next section describes the level of gambling described the participants about their families.

### 1.5.1 Personal experience of gambling

To analyse different personal experience of gambling, we applied a four-level categorisation of gambler type: *non-gambler*, *social gambler*, *'at risk' gambler*, and *problem gambler*. This categorisation is adapted from the groups used in the Problem Gambling Severity Index assessment (Volberg and Williams, 2012), which is widely used in the existing literature as the basis for a typology of gamblers. A description of each

of the four gambler groups was agreed ahead of the interviews and was used to inform the coding process described above. Researchers coded responses based on the participant's current gambling experience; with the exception of the problem gamblers, as some participants had recently accessed support and were currently not gambling.

All except one of the young people in the research had recent personal experience of gambling (the one young person who was the exception did have recent experience of gambling in their family). Amongst those who did gamble, there was an even number of young people with lower level gambling experience, in the social gambler group, compared to those in the riskier gambling groups (at risk gambler and problem gambler). In the parent sample, all of the parents had personal gambling experience. There was also a roughly even spread of gamblers across the different groups.

Table 1.3 summarises the number of participants in each group, their personal characteristics and gambling experience using this four-level typology of gamblers<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> The one non-gambler (young person) is not included in the table because of the small sample size.

**Table 1.3 Personal experience of gambling by the four gambler groups**

Type of gambler	Personal characteristics of gamblers	Defining features of the personal gambling experience
<p><i>Problem gamblers</i></p> <p>Those whose gambling behaviours disrupt(ed) their own – or their families’ lives.</p> <p>(3 parents, 6 young people)</p>	<p>All the young problem gamblers were male and over 18 (age range 19 – 25). Half of this group lived with their parents, one lived with their partner and two were in temporary accommodation (hostel and sofa surfing). Four of the young problem gamblers were in employment and two were not in education, employment or training (NEET)</p> <p>The parent problem gamblers comprised three mothers and one father. Two of these parents had children under 18, and two had children over 18. One of the parents in this group was living alone; three were still living with their children.</p>	<p>Young people and parents in the problem gambler group described routine, often daily gambling (either currently or previously).</p> <p>Rather than setting limits, parents and young people in the problem gambler group described feeling out of control and it was typical for them to spend all of the money available to them, and often more than they could afford.</p> <p>Both young people and parents who were problem gamblers gave examples of purposively restricting themselves from gambling (online and offline). Some gambling behaviour reported by this group related to criminal activity.</p>
<p><i>At risk gamblers</i></p> <p>Those whose gambling behaviours could worsen if exacerbated by other risk factors.</p> <p>(9 parents, 3 young people)</p>	<p>The young at risk gamblers comprised of two males and one female, aged between 21 and 25 years. All the young people in this group were in employment. Two lived with their parents and one lived with their spouse.</p> <p>The majority of at risk parent gamblers were fathers (7 out of 9). All of the parents were in a relationship (most were married). All but one of the parents lived with their children. The majority of at risk gambler parents (7 out 9) had children under the age of 18.</p>	<p>Parents and young people, who were at risk gamblers, tended to frame their gambling in weekly terms (although some described daily engagement when describing buying scratch cards).</p> <p>It was common for both parents and young people in the at risk group to describe setting personal limits, ranging from £10 - £30 per week.</p> <p>Both parents and young people in the at risk gambler group were more likely to associate gambling with an element of skill or suggest that it added an element of interest to watching sport. They were also more likely to describe habits and convenient ways to gamble (e.g. on the phone/direct debit) so it is easy to do each week.</p> <p>The at risk gambler group included parents and young people who purposively did not engage in more risky types of gambling (e.g. casinos, online) because there would be a risk they would lose more money. Both</p>



Type of gambler	Personal characteristics of gamblers	Defining features of the personal gambling experience
		<p>parents and young people also referenced exit strategies and gambling choices to ensure that their participation did not develop into an addiction.</p> <p>Parent and young people at risk gamblers were more likely to acknowledge that they enjoyed gambling: that they had the ‘bug’ the ‘urge’ or ‘liked a flutter’. For example, <i>“today I spent £2 on a scratch card and I lost...then as soon as I lost I had the urge to do it again, but I brought myself away and said not to do it again”</i>. (Male, 19, at risk gambler)</p>
<p><i>Social gambler</i></p> <p>Those who engage in irregular, recreational gambling.</p> <p>(4 parents, 9 young people)</p>	<p>For young social gamblers, the majority (7 out of 9) were female and were aged between 15 and 25. Five were in employment and four were in education. One lived with housemates, one was at university and the others all lived with their parents.</p> <p>The majority of social gambler parents were mothers (4 out of 7). All but two lived with their children, and all but two were married. The majority of social gambler parents (4 out of 7) had children under 18.</p>	<p>Young social gamblers described occasional participation in gambling, largely associating with special occasions, like birthdays or holidays, rather than as a regular leisure activity. Where young social gamblers mentioned gambling more frequently it was still described as irregular or only ever in very low amounts. Parent social gamblers more commonly framed their gambling as monthly participation.</p> <p>The majority of parent social gamblers and a few young social gamblers described personal limits for their gambling, typically ranging from £5-£20 per month.</p> <p>Both young people and parent social gamblers associated gambling with mood and opportunity (e.g. chance to win big on the lottery) rather than a routine activity. They placed an emphasis on the social elements of gambling, for example, because friends were doing it or the fun involved. The young people and parent social gamblers had limited interest in gambling generally, and typically did not see the activity as a way to make money from the winnings.</p> <p>Young people and parent social gamblers gave no indication that they were concerned about their level of gambling.</p>

## 1.5.2 Gambling in families

This section describes the level of gambling activity reported by the participants about their families.

To analyse different familial experiences of gambling, we used a similar four-level categorisation of family types, as the typology described above: *no gambling*, *occasional gambling*, *frequent gambling*, and *problematic gambling*. The coding incorporated an assessment of all gambling behaviour mentioned by the participant relating to their close family, including children, siblings, partners/spouses, grandparents and cousins. The focus in this assessment was on the frequency of gambling, rather than level of risk. However, if participants described a family member who had experience of gambling-related harm or gambling disorder; then this was coded as problem gambling, adopting a similar approach to the coding of personal experience of gambling.

The majority of the young people in the research (11 out of 19) reported that at least one family member gambled frequently, as well as himself or herself. Young people included the following family members in their descriptions:

- grandparents (4 grandfathers, 3 grandmothers, across 7 families),
- parents (9 fathers, 6 mothers, across 13 family),
- siblings (6 brothers, 1 sister, across 7 families) and,
- wider family members (1 cousin).

There was also a trend towards other family members gambling more than the young people in the research (for example six of the nine social gamblers reported that at least one member of their family frequently gambled) (summarised in Table 1.4).

**Table 1.4 Family gambling by young people gambler groups**

Young people gambler groups	Level of gambling in family			
	No gambling	Occasional gambling	Frequently gambling	Problem gambling
Problem gambler	2		2	2
At risk gambler			3	
Social gambler	1	1	6	1
Non gambler				1

All but two parents reported that other members of their family gambled as well as themselves. In over half of the parent group (12 out of 20) the description included their children gambling (11 sons and 9 daughters across 14 families). The majority (12 out of 20 again) also described their partners/spouses gambling. Other family members mentioned by parents included their grandmothers (1 family), parents (3 mothers, 5 fathers across 4 families), and siblings (1 brother, 3 sisters across four families). There was also a trend towards a higher level of gambling in families where the parent was an at risk or problem gambler (summarised in Table 1.5).

**Table 1.5 Family gambling by parent gambler groups**

Parent gambler groups	Level of gambling in family			
	No gambling	Occasional gambling	Frequent gambling	Problem gambling
Problem gambler			2	2
At risk gambler	1	1	6	1
Social gambler	1	3	3	

## **1.6 Structure of this report**

The remainder of this report is structured around the four main objectives of the current study, with a chapter for each, followed by a conclusions chapter, and two annexes (including references and a Technical Annex with a full description of the methodology and recruitment approaches). The typology of personal and family gambling experiences, described in section 1.5, is used throughout the report to illustrate the differences in views and experiences reported by the participants.

## 2.0 Types and frequency of gambling behaviours among young people and their families

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### Key messages

#### **Types and frequency of gambling**

To an extent, the differences between parents and young people in the research reflected the changing landscape in gambling. There was evidence that young people were gambling more exclusively using mobile technology and online platforms; whereas parents had a mix of gambling experiences, including visiting gambling establishments, like betting shops or bingo halls, as well as playing online gambling games. However, it is likely that both young people and families' gambling may now go beyond a simple 'online' and 'offline' division, as there is recognition of the growing pervasiveness of technology in many types of gambling. Young people and parents discussed the implications of technology in the fast-changing landscape of gambling in terms of increasing the convenience of gambling, but also the risks to young people and how their experiences of gambling differed to older generations.

#### **Gambling and family relationships**

There were differences in the narratives around gambling in families between social, at risk and problem gamblers. Amongst the low-level, social gamblers, parents and young people would describe being aware of other members of the family gambling but were less likely to describe gambling as a main activity for the family to do together. In contrast, the at risk gamblers described gambling in their family as a habitual and regular occurrence. However, parents and young people suggested in their descriptions that the activity was enjoyable, and that those taking part benefited from having a leisure activity and interest that they shared together. The difference between the social and at risk gamblers' narratives suggests a relationship between the extent to which a young person gambles and the type of gambling in their family.

However, amongst the young problem gamblers the evidence of a familial influence was more mixed. Although the majority could identify other family members who gambled, only a few recalled gambling with a family member. Furthermore, there was quite clear evidence that family members had very little role in, or awareness of, the young person gambling if they had a gambling disorder. This was illustrated through the young people's descriptions suggesting that their gambling was typically a solitary behaviour and that they did not see gambling as a social activity. Importantly, though, the perceived impact on close relationships was a main motivation for several of the young problem gamblers to recognise that there was an issue with their gambling, prompting them to seek support.

This chapter looks at the different ways that young people and parents take part in gambling. Firstly, the chapter compares the types of gambling that parents and young people engage in across the gambler groups. It then considers the role of the family context and gambling between the social and at risk gamblers, and then in the context of young problem gamblers. The findings in this chapter aim to provide a relevant framework for the next two chapters in the report, which explore the role and influence of parents and family members as risk and protective factors associated with young people gambling.

## **2.1 Types of gambling**

This section presents the findings on the different types of gambling in which young people and parents engaged. It considers the similarities and differences in typical gambling behaviour between parents and young people and the different gambler groups and then goes on to discuss parents' and young people's views of societal changes in gambling types and the influence, and impact, of technology-based gambling.

### **2.1.1 Similarities and differences in typical gambling between parents and young people and the different gambler groups**

Previous research has reported that, offline, young people tend to participate in gambling by: playing fruit machines, buying lottery tickets, scratch cards, sports betting (including horse racing), playing raffles and card games (such as poker) (Valentine, 2016; Thomas, 2014; Derevenksy and Gilbeau, 2015; Forrest and McHale, 2012; Rossen, Butler and Denny, 2011; Griffiths and Parke, 2010). Online, the research suggests that young people typically engage in video poker, casino games, lottery games and sports gambling (Volberg, Hedberg, Moore, 2008). In the current study, the young people described participation in a similar range of gambling types, although none had recently participated in the National Lottery, which was one of the most common types reported by the parents in the research. The only addition from the types of gambling described in the literature was skins trading; reported by two young people, one aged 18 - 21 and one aged 22 - 25.

In comparing gambling types between parents and young people, the main difference was the extent to which young people chose to gamble online. It was common for young people to gamble online exclusively and rarely did they describe visiting bookmakers or bingo halls. However, it was common for young problem gamblers to have had experience of gambling establishments, such as visiting betting shops and casinos, rather than only gambling online (although all of the young problem gamblers also had experience of online gambling). Parents in the study talked about having a wide mix of gambling experiences, including visiting gambling establishments, like bingo and race days, as well as using mobile apps, or gambling websites.

Within their descriptions of family gambling, young people and parents tended to describe similar types and frequency of gambling behaviour as their other family members. Where there were differences, it often reflected a societal shift within gambling, towards using mobile-based technology, with sons placing bets using their phones and dads visiting the bookmakers, or different preferences for particular types of sports betting, rather than a difference in attitudes across the generations within the family.

When comparing gambling types between the different groups of gamblers (social, at risk, problem gambler) much of the participation for parents and young people was similar (summarised in Table 2.1). This suggests that the difference across the groups relates largely to the frequency of participation, rather than the type of activity. For example, amongst social and at risk gamblers, it was common for both young people and parents to describe taking part in sports betting, scratch cards and horse racing. Parents and young people who were problem gamblers also described taking part in a similar range of gambling types;

however, this was the only group to gamble predominantly online and participate using Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBT).

**Table 2.1 Self-reported recent gambling behaviour**

Gambler Group	Young people (n=19)	Parent (n=20)
Problem gambler	Horse racing (Grand National) Online gambling websites Betting shops/bookmakers Mobile betting apps Sports betting Fixed Odds Betting Terminals Skins gambling Casino Dog racing Roulette	Horse racing (Grand National) Online gambling websites Betting shops/book makers Scratch cards Fruit machines Slot machines Roulette Bingo
At risk gambler	Horse racing (Grand National), Mobile betting apps Sports betting (including football), Scratch cards	Horse racing (Grand National) Mobile sports betting (including football) Scratch cards Slot machines Dog racing Online gambling website Mobile betting apps Betting shops/bookmakers National Lottery Card games (e.g. poker) Bingo Charity raffles
Social gambler	Scratch cards Horse racing (Grand National) Charity Raffles Sports betting Casino Arcades Mobile betting apps Dog racing Slot machines	Scratch cards Horse racing (Grand National) Charity raffles Sports betting Casino Arcades Mobile gambling games (including lottery) National Lottery

*Types of gambling based on unprompted descriptions from participants. Some gambling types are represented across multiple categories (e.g. betting shops, mobile betting apps, sports) to illustrate the range of different ways that participants described their gambling.*

### 2.1.2 The role of technology in gambling amongst young people and parents

While there is value in reviewing gambling behaviours by type, with the increasingly pervasive presence of technology in gambling, particularly mobile technology, the online/offline bisection described above may be too simplistic. Parents described taking part in some types of gambling, such as bingo, the National Lottery and scratch cards, both online and offline. In other examples, parents and young people described ways that online technologies could augment or otherwise facilitate the gambling experience. For example, at horse and dog racing, both young people and parents reported attending the event in person, but then using their phones to place bets.

Reflecting on the increasing role of technology in gambling, young people and parents commented that the risks associated with gambling might also be changing; both from the increased accessibility but also in the addictiveness of the game and design of applications ('apps') for smartphones. Parents and young people

described the convenience associated with using technology to gamble. Young people gave examples of how smart phone apps made it easier and more enjoyable for them to place bets while watching the football in the pub; and similarly, parents reported that they liked using a direct debit to buy their lottery tickets, as it meant that they did not need to go to the shop each week. However, parents and young people commented that the other side of this convenience was unrestricted access to some types of gambling from using mobile technology. Both groups were concerned that this increased the risk of facilitating a gambling disorder. As an illustration of this, one young problem gambler described how it was common for him, when he was gambling, to place a bet using his phone every day from first thing in the morning and then continuing throughout the day whatever he was doing:

*"I would be gambling every day, from the time I woke up on my phone...in lectures [at university] and breaks. I was doing it all the time and at any time."* (Male, 22, problem gambler)

Another common perception by both parents and young people was that with an increase in gambling using computerised systems there was a decrease in the level of skill and 'craft' involved in placing and winning bets. Young people in particular perceived that the types of gambling available to them were designed to be aggressive and commercially focused, and therefore, by design, posed a greater risk of developing addictive behaviours compared to the types of gambling available to older generations. As one young gambler described:

*"When I say gambling, I don't mean like my grandad on the horses, what I mean is like on the roulette, on the slot machines, on the things that you just have nothing left and it's just going to eat you alive."* (Male, age 19, problem gambler)

In addition to comparing newer and older types of gambling, young people compared examples of older members of their family who had gambled for years without any concern from other family members. In fact, the participation was seen largely as a positive part of the individual's life, rather than associated with any addiction. One young person reported that his grandfather's regular betting had meant he was cognitively very capable in his eighties, with excellent mental arithmetic skills. Another young person described how her grandmother regularly spent money on bingo, but largely her family considered this an inoffensive hobby and was the only way her grandmother chose to spend her money. The suggestion in both examples was that there were fewer risks associated with the types of gambling in which the grandparents engaged; whereas the young people thought that their peers using mobile apps, online websites, and other high-risk games, to gamble were potentially at greater risk of developing a gambling disorder.

## **2.2 Family relationships and gambling**

This section describes the role of family relationships in the context of young people and parents gambling. It compares the extent to which parents and young people in the social and the at risk gambler groups gambled together as a family. The next section (2.3) then discusses the role of family relationships in the context of young problem gamblers.

Overall, participants across the at risk and social gambler groups described playing the lottery together, buying scratch cards for family members, and placing bets together on TV shows or football matches. However, the most common type of gambling mentioned as suitable for families to take part in together was attending race days, such as the Grand National. Both young people and parents viewed this type of activity as appropriate for families to do together and some young adults commented that they still went to

race days with their family as a way to spend time together. Social experiences with their families involving the Grand National were also common examples of young gamblers' first introduction to gambling:

*"My first experience was when I was very young, my parents would say we'll all pick a horse and everyone will put 50p on it. So you just pick a horse and we would just watch the Grand National. (Male, 22, problem gambler).*

*"My first experience was when I was 8. I picked a horse out of the newspaper and mum and dad place a bet and it won. They also placed a bet, but I was the only one who won." (Male, 15, social gambler)*

*"When we were kids and the Grand National was on, my dad would offer for us to pick a horse. If it won then they would keep the winnings, if the horse lost I would give my dad a pound." (Male, 24, social gambler)*

Many of the young people and parents considered the Grand National, and other forms of lower level gambling types, acceptable to engage in as a family. It was common for participants to add to their view that other types of gambling would not be appropriate because of the risks associated with developing a gambling disorder. However, there were notable differences between the gambler groups in terms of the extent to which families took part in gambling together.

Amongst the low-level, social gamblers, parents and young people were less likely to describe gambling as a main activity for the family to do together. Instead, they would give examples of friends or colleagues that they would gamble with, if at all. Where the young people and parents from this group described gambling as a social activity in the family, that they may take part in together, the suggestion was that this was sporadic or associated with special occasions, rather than as a common way for the family to bond (examples in Figure 2.1).

### **Figure 2.1 Examples of social gamblers describing gambling in their families**

One young person who placed occasional bets, described asking for advice from his older brother, who he considered a more regular gambler than him. However, gambling itself was not seen as a way for him and his brother to spend time together. (Male, 24, social gambler)

Another young person, who described his current gambling as placing a maximum £5 bet every weekend, was aware that his brother and dad also gambled quite a bit. However, the only reference to gambling together as a family was attending a horse race day, where they would discuss and place bets together; otherwise, this young person considered gambling as an activity that he would take part in socially with his friends rather than his family. (Male, 19, social gambler)

Similarly, a parent, who described spending around £10 a month, was aware that her daughters (aged 18 and 20) would also buy scratch cards or play online gambling games. However, the only occasion where gambling was described as in a family context was if one of her children was given a scratch card as a present, often given by her sister at Christmas, which they would then open and scratch them out while sitting with the family. (Mother, social gambler, occasional gambling in family)

In contrast to the social gamblers, the narratives by the young people and parents in the at risk gambler groups, typically gave examples where they gambled regularly with other members of their family. In this group, examples of family gambling included: parents and grown-up children placing bets and using mobile



gambling apps; fathers and sons discussing and making football bets together every week; fathers involving all of their family every week to place bets on TV shows; families gambling together on holidays; parents buying lottery tickets for their children; and families regularly attending horse racing events together.

Notably, the at risk gamblers described the examples of social gambling in their family as habitual and a regular occurrence. The parents and young people suggested that the activity was enjoyable, and that those taking part benefited from having an interest they shared together – “*the discussions with my dad [on placing bets], is a like another conversation element*” (Male, 24, at risk gambler). Generally, the at risk gamblers saw the gambling in their families as commonplace, suggesting that it was normalised practice, rather than concerning, or even exceptional. Chapter 3 will discuss how the normalisation of gambling in a family may be an influence on a young person’s behaviour.

## 2.3 Family relationships and gambling disorders

The role of the family relationships in the context of young problem gamblers was more mixed than suggested in the social and at risk gambler groups. Although many of the young problem gamblers were at least aware of family members who gambled, there were others who were not; as well as those who knew of family members but did not see any relationship between their personal gambling and gambling in their family. Further to this, none of the young problem gamblers saw gambling as a sociable activity that they would take part in with a family member or in many cases with anyone. However, there was evidence that close relationships had an influence on young people seeking help for their gambling disorder.

In the interviews where young problem gamblers described experience of an immediate family member gambling (i.e. their parent or sibling), there was evidence that their family members had exposed them to different types of gambling from a younger age and that gambling had been a normalised part of their childhood (examples in Figure 2.2).

### Figure 2.2 Examples of young problem gamblers describing close family members gambling

One young person remembered his first gambling experience as going to the arcades with his parents and sister aged nine and learning then that ‘*you could get out more than you could put in*’. Both his parents, stepparents and sister had long histories of gambling as adults. (Male, 25, problem gambler)

Another young person explained that his dad gambled all the time and he had ‘*always been around it*’. This young person remembered, at age six, sitting in bookmakers while his dad placed bets. Then when he was slightly older at 14, he remembered his dad telephoning to ask his advice about the bets he should place. (Male, 22, problem gambler)

A third young person described how he would gamble quite regularly with his cousin and brother, but reflected that they gambled less than he did. In the main, he associated his own online gambling with an introduction from a friend (although he mentioned in passing that her father had introduced her to it). (Male, 22, problem gambler)

While these young problem gamblers described familial influences, they were less explicit about how instrumental this influence had been on their gambling. Instead, young problem gamblers tended to emphasise that their decision to gamble had been their own, without the encouragement from others, including their parents:

*"Mum and dad have gambled in the past, so I have always been around it, but that has never ever made me blame them. I feel like I make my own decisions."* (Male, 25, problem gambler).

*"When I went into the bookies with my dad, I made my own decision, I wasn't shown how to play the game. He said here's £20 but I wasn't pushed into any of it."* (Male, 21, problem gambler)

Amongst the young problem gamblers who did not mention a close family member gambling, there was evidence in a few cases of gambling by wider family members. However, the young people were also not confident this had influenced their own behaviour. Rather, these young problem gamblers reflected that they had started to gamble in a problematic way because they saw it as a way to make money quickly. In the examples below (Figure 2.3), influence from peers, either to keep up with appearances at social events or to take part in a group activity, were main factors in motivating this gambling behaviour.

### **Figure 2.3 Examples of problem gamblers describing wider family members gambling**

One young person knew his grandfather was a heavy gambler, but his parents had strict views against it. In particular, his mum, who had grown up in a dysfunctional family home due to her dad's gambling, disliked gambling a lot. This young person started to gamble because he was using the money he won to pay for holiday and socialising with his friends.

*"I had just turned 18 and was meant to go on holiday with my mates and my girlfriend. I was only earning about £300 a month. I had managed to win a bit before and had paid for things, so I thought I would try and win the money I needed for the holiday and some spending money... it was getting closer to the holiday, and I was gambling more... getting paid on Friday and losing all of my wages by the afternoon."* (Male, 22, problem gambler)

Another young person described how his mum had recently died and he had little involvement with his dad. He explained that he was aware that his grandad regularly placed bets, but, he did not see any relationship with his own gambling because from his perspective the types of gambling were very different – *"it's not even like my granddad gambles, it's just on the horses. He don't go on a roulette machine or a fruit machine"*. This young person started to gamble because he was influenced by his peers.

*"I started hanging around with the wrong people at the wrong time and they influenced me and I'm like, yes, and then I saw them getting money from it, so I was like, right, I'll give that a try. Gave it a try and I got money, so then obviously from then, I basically just got hooked..."* (Male, 19, problem gambler)

There was one example in the research of a young problem gambler who had experienced issues related to his gambling without any direct or obvious familial influence. This young person, did not live with or have any contact with his family. He described his interest in gambling (skins betting) as related to his peer influence – *"I did it out of curiosity to begin with and because my mates were doing it at school, but my dad's never been one to gamble, that I know of"*. He thought that he had then developed an issue because he had felt isolated and the gaming and skins betting helped him to escape this.

*"I wasn't doing very well at school, so I wanted to escape that and video games and CS:GO and the gambling on the side was just an alternate world I could jump into where, nobody could judge you."* (Male, 19, problem gambler)

While the young problem gamblers described a mixed profile of familial influence on their gambling, all of them reported that when they had gambled this was mostly, or exclusively, on their own. None of the young

people took part in gambling regularly with their family members and for half of the young people the gambling activity isolated them from their friends as well. These young people described how, when they were gambling, they did not want to have people around them: because of how the gambling made them feel but also so that they could avoid social judgement from others.

*"You sit on your own...I don't want to be with anyone else when I gamble because they'll see what I'm like, it makes me feel like a monster."* (Male, 22, problem gambler)

*"I went to the casino twice with my friends, but I never enjoyed the experience. If I was losing and he was winning, then I will get frustrated...I had no self-control in the moment, and for me it would never be enough.... A couple of times I went halves on a bet with friend, but it wasn't a social thing for me. Winning was everything. I took it very personally if I didn't."* (Male 22, problem gambler)

*"I would always go on my own. I would know people in there, but I used to do it on my own to keep it separate from my friends. Sometimes I used to go out to casinos and betting shops with my friends, but when I was doing that I kept it fairly social.... when I was on my own I could carry on doing what he was doing."* (Male, 21, problem gambler)

This narrative of solitary and secretive gambling contrasts with the evidence for other gambler groups in the study (at risk gamblers and social gamblers), where young people and parents gave examples of families and friends gambling together in a sociable way. Further to this, where the young people were living with their parents at the time, the young person typically explained the lengths to which they would go, to hide evidence of their gambling from them. A parent of one of the young problem gamblers, who was also interviewed in the research, confirmed that she and her partner only became aware of her son's developing gambling disorder when letters from payday loan companies started to arrive at their house.

Although the young problem gamblers typically gambled alone, or hid their gambling from others, a couple who were living with their partners acknowledged that the gambling had a significant negative impact on these relationships. These young people described how they argued frequently with their partners because they felt angry and irrational from losing money from gambling. While this was difficult for the young person, these young people realised that if their gambling continued they would lose the relationships, and it was that which prompted them to seek help with their gambling.

*"[We were] having arguments daily because of it [gambling]. In those arguments, you are always right. You do not care if you fall out...It got to the point where my life was going to go downhill ever further. I would have lost my partner for a fact and that was not something I was prepared to happen."* (Male, 21, problem gambler)

*"If I lost her, I'd lose my head just so fast... it would devastate me".* (Male, 19, problem gambler)

Although the majority of young problem gamblers in the research identified other family members who gambled, only a few recalled gambling with a family member. Furthermore, there was quite clear evidence that family members had very little role in, or awareness of, young people gambling if they had a gambling disorder: as the evidence suggests that this was typically solitary behaviour from which they purposively excluded other people. Importantly, though, the perceived impact on close relationships was a main motivation for several of the young people to recognise there was an issue with their gambling, prompting them to seek support. Both these findings are relevant for the next two chapters, which consider the role of families as a risk factor on the frequency of a young person's gambling, and then their role as a protective influence over a young person's gambling behaviour.

### **Parental and familial factors influencing young people's gambling**

Overall, the evidence suggests that familial factors have an influence on young people's attitudes towards gambling. However, the transmission of gambling preferences is likely to be through the young person's unconscious observation and experience of micro-behaviours, rather than direct encouragement from their parents, and therefore young people may be less aware of the influence while growing up. The young people in the current research described similar gambling preferences and views as their parents and family members. However, they thought that their peers had a stronger influence on their gambling, as they had explicitly encouraged them to gamble, and their parents had not. Parents on the other hand were quite confident that they had a role in normalising gambling practices within the family and influencing young people's attitudes to gambling.

### **Social and family dynamic factors influencing young people's gambling**

For parents and young people who gambled regularly, there was evidence that gambling formed the basis for some of the family's closeness and relationships. There was also evidence to suggest that gambling, as part of the family activities, was a way for members of the family to bond. In families who gambled regularly, young people and parents mostly perceived it as a positive; however, there were examples where the shared interest in gambling and social gambling had facilitated young people to gamble in a riskier way from a younger age than perhaps they would have done otherwise.

### **The influence of familial winning on young people's gambling**

Views in the research suggested that parental openness about winning money from gambling might be an influence on a young person's gambling attitudes. This was partly because promoting the winnings may present a glamorised perspective on gambling. In addition, without an accompanying discussion about losses or the risks involved, it may also teach young people from a young age that gambling is a way to make money. In their interviews, young people described being aware of their parents winning from gambling and it being commonplace for them to talk about it. The parents gave examples of how they would typically use money they won from gambling to treat their family, and problem gambler parents gave examples of using the money from gambling to provide, what they considered was, a better quality of life for their children.

### **Changing roles and relationships during adolescence related to young people's gambling**

The evidence from the interviews confirms that adolescence is a defining period for how a young person then gambles as a young adult. Reaching the legal age(s) for gambling activities, and starting employment, were key points for the young person's gambling to evolve. In some families, there was evidence that parents engaged in different types of gambling with their children after they turned 18 and continued to have a role in influencing their evolving gambling behaviour. However, adolescence was also the period when parents started to engage with a young person about ways to gamble responsibly.

This chapter aims to explore the role and influence that familial factors have in increasing the risk of gambling-related harm experienced by young people. Firstly, it describes how parental factors may have a formative influence on young people developing positive attitudes, shaping their later gambling behaviour. Then it describes the ways in which family dynamics and discussions around winnings from gambling may influence how much a young person gambles. Finally, it discusses how relationships within families change during adolescence and the impact this has on the extent to which parents have an influence on young people gambling.

### 3.1 The influence of parental and familial factors on young people's gambling

This section describes the extent to which parents and family members may have an influence on a young person gambling. While young people were less confident in the extent to which parents encouraged them to gamble, there were similarities in gambling attitudes and behaviours within the families in the research. Parents were also more open about their potential influence on young people gambling.

Reith and Dobbie (2011) describe part of this learning process as the transmission of gambling-related 'cultural capital'. This theory suggests that habits and beliefs around gambling are passed down between generations through the observation of micro-behaviours in others and the routine experience of certain environments, like visiting bingo halls and betting shops. Over time, these small experiences lead gambling to become positively associated for an individual, feeling normal and safe, and therefore have a formative influence on later behaviours, norms and attitudes.

The evidence from the current research supports Reith and Dobbie's behavioural theory to an extent, suggesting that parents have a formative influence on young people's attitudes about gambling, which may then increase the likelihood that the young person enjoys gambling and participates more when he or she is older. This influence is likely to be through observation of parental behaviours and their values (potentially unconsciously), which young people may be less aware of while growing up.

Young people reported that they shared attitudes related to gambling with their family members; and that there were similarities between the ways that they gambled and the ways that other family members gambled, mentioning their siblings, parents and grandparents.

*"Well the fact that I buy scratch cards, is only because my granny did it, otherwise I probably wouldn't have thought about it."* (Female, 25, at risk gambler)

Although the majority of young people shared the same views about gambling as their parents only a few thought that their family members had encouraged them to gamble (and those who did not were more likely to say they did not know their parents' views rather than report that they had different views). However, these few commented that this encouragement was in the context of taking part in the Grand National and, generally, they did not consider this significant encouragement or even that it related to their current gambling. A few others conceded that by permitting the behaviour parents might have had some role in influencing their gambling, but they were still not sure that this was direct encouragement.

*"No-one has ever actively encouraged me to gamble. They have [parents] said I am free to do it. But, they wouldn't haven't actually open encouraged me to gamble."* (Male, 24, social gambler)

Instead, it was more common for young people to comment that their friends and peers had a direct role in encouraging them to gamble, rather than their parents. As well as hearing from their friends about bets where they had, 'won big', young people described the influence of recommendations about bets to place from 'tipsters' on social media.

Young people acknowledged that this form of promotion from their peers was one-sided, but that they could see how it could encourage someone to gamble more. Particularly as there was often a competitive element to the discussion amongst their friends, often in groups, where gambling was associated with being successful or earning more money. Generally, young people perceived these discussions amongst their friends as very different from any gambling discussions taking place in their family.

*"They [his friends] are trying to promote the idea [on group messaging apps] that they are a good gambler and 'good at it. I have seen them saying they are winning a lot – like doing accumulator and bragging about turning their £5 bet into £1,000. But they never post about their losses [on Facebook]."* (Male, 24, social gambler)

*"Sometimes they [his friends] would like to boast in group chats when they bet £50 or £20 on a result and then they make four times that... it's all about the bragging rights".* (Male, 24, social gambler)

*"They [his friends] say oh look, I just won - I put £10 in and I won £3,000, and he shows me the money and that's attracting me to do it"* (Male, 21, at risk gambler)

The parents in the research held similar views to the young people relating to shared attitudes around gambling. The majority of parents thought that their views about gambling were the same as their children's – *'we're all the same, we're just in it to win it!'* (Mother, at risk parent gambler, regular family gambling). A small number of parents had different views to their children, and a few conceded that they did not know because they had not discussed gambling with their family.

Parents did comment on the role of friends as an influencer. However, parents were more certain, compared to the young people, that their actions and attitudes would influence and encourage their children to gamble. They often described the connection between behaviours learnt early on in childhood, from the parents, and how these would then relate to an individual's behaviour as an adult. These views align with the ideas posited in the social learning theories that parents are the main socialising agents for children.

Parents justified their views by explaining that the parent's behaviour would normalise gambling for the children and increase the acceptability of the activity - *'If there are a couple of gamblers in the family then they [children] will probably tag along with that'* (Mother, at risk gambler, regular gambling in family). The normalisation process was associated with the children being around adults gambling and it being commonplace, without any indication, or discussion, of the risks involved. Several parents drew comparisons between gambling and other types of risky behaviours, like drinking alcohol and smoking, as behaviour that children can learn is acceptable by the behaviour they observe in their families.

*"They [my children] see me gambling, they've always seen me gamble, and they must think that 'if it's alright that my dad can do it, it must be alright for me to do it'."* (Father, problem gambler, regular gambling in family)

*"It's like anything; it's a behaviour that they learn. If mum and dad smoke, you are more like to smoke. It becomes the norm. It is an addiction and children that experience it ...."* (Mother, problem gambler, problem gambling in family)

*"You are a product of your own environment. However you're brought up and however it seems, if your dad is in the bookies everyday you're gonna think that that's a very natural thing, like if your family drink every day or your family smoke, it will have a detrimental effect on one, I think."* (Mother, social gambler, regular gambling in family)

Parents were also able to reflect on the role of familial influence on their own attitudes around gambling. Drawing on their own experience from growing up, parents would explain the influence of their parents on their current beliefs about gambling. As one mother reported - *"they [parents] gave me the false idea, that if you don't have any money you can go and gamble and try and get some"* (Mother, problem gambler, problematic gambling in family).

### 3.2 The influence of social and family dynamic factors on young people's gambling

This section considers how gambling can form part of the family's social dynamic. In this context, gambling activity may be an important part of the relationships within the family, as well as facilitating a young person's gambling by creating opportunity for them to do so. These ideas align with Westberg et al's model (2017), which applied social practice theory and family identity research, and suggested that gambling can be a way for individuals to fulfil many goals relating to their family's identity, including building and maintaining family relationships.

As discussed in section 2.2, parents and young people in the at risk gambler groups were more likely than social gamblers to provide examples where their family would take part in types of gambling together. For these parents and young people, gambling formed the basis for some of the family's closeness and 'bringing people together' was a phrase commonly used to describe the purpose of the gambling activity. As in previous research (Shead, Derevensky and Gupta, 2009; Reith and Dobbie, 2011; Kristiansen and Reith, 2014), the current research suggests that gender has a role in these relationships – with fathers gambling more regularly with sons in the family, and mothers with their daughters. For sons and fathers, in particular, placing bets was a common way to spend time together.

*"It [gambling with his dad] was something that I would always look forward to... Even when I was a teenager, y'know, we would have the football bets on the Saturday. There was nothing really wrong with that at that point. It was just a Saturday thing; and every Saturday came around and me and my dad used to spend time together. Didn't manage to spend that much time together because my dad was always away. We were watching the football scores come in, doing that sort of stuff... so every Saturday... we used to just go down together [to the betting shops]... then I got sucked into it and would be in there all weekend in the end."* (Male, 21, problem gambler)

Even in families where there was low-level gambling, there are examples in the current research where gambling as a sociable activity encouraged other family members to start gambling. Evidence included mothers and daughters considering taking part in sports betting, as a way to socialise with their husbands and fathers and sons/brothers in the family. In these cases, family members were not directly encouraged to gamble; instead, they were electing to participate in the gambling as a way to feel included in family activity.

In other examples, gambling was described as a way for parents with grown up children to continue to share a common interest and have fun together. One father (at risk gambler) commented that he would routinely place bets on online apps with his wife and grown up children (18 – 25) and then discuss with each other in the evenings about the bets they had placed and their winnings - *"I must admit, we say I won £100 today or £150 or I lost £150"*. While this parent thought that his wife and children were all *'having fun with it'*, he did think that one of his sons might be gambling more outside the family home and that there could be an issue there.

Further to this, there were examples in the research where the socialising element of gambling in families had led to problematic behaviours developing in young members of the family. This included introducing young people to the concepts of gambling from a young age and facilitating young people to take part in riskier types of gambling before they otherwise would have been legally allowed to (examples in Figure 3.1).

### Figure 3.1 Examples where gambling in families has increased the risks to young people

One mother explained she had stopped playing the lottery and going to race days as a family, when she noticed that her son, aged 10, had used her debit card details to set up an account to buy scratch cards online - *'he was quite stealthy, I only noticed because of the small amounts going down.'* The parent did speak to her son at the time, but changed the debit card details so that he could no longer access the account. The parent reported that her son (now over 18) does continue to buy scratch cards with her husband quite regularly, and visit casinos with his friends. Although, the parent did not think that there was an issue necessarily, she did reflect that he might be vulnerable to developing a gambling disorder given his behaviour when he was younger. (Mother, at risk gambler, regular gambling in family)

Another mother described how her son aged 17 had accompanied her occasionally to play on the slot machines. At the time, she had not thought there was much of an issue with doing this. It was not until a year later that she realised that he had started to develop a problem with this gambling, as he had otherwise kept his gambling private from the family. (Mother, problem gambler, problematic gambling in family)

One young person described a memorable moment at 17 visiting a betting shop with his dad where he bet £10 and won £600. He remembered feeling *'ecstatic'* and celebrating with his dad. From then on, the young person described how he continued to gamble every weekend with his dad, and after a while, this developed into him gambling on his own at the weekend and during the week as well. (Male, 21, problem gambler)

Finally, there was evidence, particularly amongst families where there was generational problem gambling, where the enabling environment from gambling with family members made it harder for individuals to desist from their own gambling and access support if they wanted to. In these families, the gambling activity had become a core part of the family identity and it was hard for family members to change their gambling habits or to acknowledge any developing issue (example in Figure 3.2)

### Figure 3.2 An example of a problem gambler who struggled to reduce their gambling because of familial influences

One mother explained each time she reached the point of wanting to gamble less her sister, who also had a problem with gambling, would phone and suggest going to bingo - *"as we had always done"*. They would both then play on the slot machines at the bingo and she would struggle to reduce her gambling again. She reflected that it was both her sister's encouragement and lack of understanding about her issue that made it difficult for her to stop gambling.

*"When I confided in my sister that I was getting counselling for gambling, she went on the very defensive and said 'I don't have a problem, I'm alright'...so I sort of knew really not to mention it anymore"* (Mother, problem gambler, problematic gambling in family)

## 3.3 The influence of familial winning on young people's gambling

This section describes the influence of parents and family members discussing and sharing their winnings from gambling with young people. Views in the research suggested that parental openness might be influential on a young person's gambling attitudes, as the winnings may present a glamorised perspective on gambling without an accompanying discussion around losses or the risks involved. In particular, parents



may teach young people from a young age that there is a relationship between gambling and making money.

Westberg et al's model describes the prospect of financial gains from gambling in the family identity model as *emotional sustenance*. Broadly the authors suggests that through regular participation in gambling, families aspired for a better life via the winnings and there was a tangible value from even small 'windfalls' in some families, particularly those from lower socio-economic groups.

In the current research, young people described how they were aware of their parents winning from gambling, even if they did not take part together - *"he [his father] actually tells me he wins but he doesn't do it in front of me."* (Male, 19, at risk gambler). Others described how it was almost expected that parents should be open about their winnings, and that it would be more surprising if their parents were not open - *"he [dad] would be in trouble if he won the lottery and did not tell anyone"* (Male, 24, social gambler). Generally, these 'winner' narratives tended to omit reference to losses, which may have been hidden or played down - *"we would talk about the winnings, but not about the losses, because... that would not be interesting to share"*. (Female, 25, social gambler).

Parents also mentioned the role of winnings as part of their family narrative around gambling. Both social and at risk parent gamblers included examples of how they used money that they had won from gambling to treat their family, including a meal out with the children, a round of drinks at a race day, or a holiday with their partner. However, a couple of parents did reflect that by being open about where the money came from for these treats, the generous act might inadvertently promote gambling to the children. One mother described how she and her partner were purposely discrete about playing the National Lottery, as having a weekly direct debit meant the children did not see them buying the tickets. However, she could see how her children may positively associate with her playing the lottery because, when either she or her partner had a winning ticket, it was typical that they would go out together as a family.

Parent problem gamblers, particularly mothers, however, described using the winnings from gambling for a different purpose. In these examples, parents explained that one of their motivations to gamble was to provide for their children or to improve their standard of living. One mother explained that her gambling escalated following a separation from her partner and she was struggling financially. Although this was an element of the parent's reason for gambling, there was evidence from their accounts that the winnings were quite likely spent on continuing to play the game to secure a larger win, rather than on family needs.

*"I [wanted to be] winning money and able to support my family...you just think, once I get a big enough win it will cover it. But it got to £40,000 and it was just getting bigger and bigger."* (Mother, problem gambler, regular gambling in family)

Similar to the other groups of parent gamblers (who reflected on how their winnings may influence their children's attitudes towards gambling) problem gambler parents reflected how spending the money on their families might present a one-sided perspective, rather than the reality of their gambling (examples in Figure 3.3).

### **Figure 3.3 Examples of problem gamblers using winnings from gambling to treat their families**

One mother described how she hid the negative sides to her gambling from her son (under 16) for a long time, but openly spent the money she was winning on treating him - *"he was aware of the gambling but only the glamorous side of it. I was hiding away how much I was spending. When the gambling took hold of me it was making me a thief and liar."* (Mother, problem gambler, regular gambling in family)

Another mother described a time when she had won almost £10,000 from her gambling and she had shared the money and the family then had 'a really good Christmas'. She explained that although her family had experienced quite extensive harm because of her gambling, that Christmas was still a happy memory for the family associated with gambling. (Mother, problem gambler, problem gambling in family)

### 3.4 The shift in parental influence during adolescence

This section examines the shift in parental influence on young people gambling during adolescence, when typically the young person increases in their independence, as they transition into early adulthood. Westberg et al's model (2017) posits that during adolescence a young person's gambling evolves as they mature and this goes part of the way towards achieving their family-identity goal. As parents who gamble in the family accept this evolving gambling behaviour, the young person feels as though they are 'coming-of-age' as they are now able to be part of the long-observed family rituals and traditions.

In the current research, parents considered that as young people gained the freedom to gamble legally and independently, this might diminish the role and influence of the familial factors. The change in familial influence related to both how parents may encourage young people's gambling but also in their ability to monitor them or to prohibit a young person from gambling. Several parents commented that it depended on whether their children were living in the family home or not. One social parent gambler commented that his children still lived in the family home so he was aware of their gambling, but said it would be much more difficult if they had moved out or gone to university.

However, there was evidence from the research that parents were still involved in their children's gambling once they were older. This suggests a potential continuing familial influence as the young person transitions to different types of gambling. One young person described how he started betting with his dad and brother aged 16, which was a 'fun, family bet'. Now aged 19, he continues to bet weekly with his dad, as well as occasionally going to casinos and betting with his friends. Generally, though, this young person felt in control when he gambled and thought that the main influence from his dad had been a positive one as he had been able to teach him sensible strategies for managing his gambling.

Young people and parents both pointed to the young person turning the legal ages to gamble as an important wider context for this 'coming-of-age' period. A couple of social gambler parents commented that when the young person turns 18 the parent role definitively shifts. One social gambler parent said that she would not allow her children to gamble if they were under 18 because it was illegal, but once they were 18 it was their decision. Another mother also described the difficulties of moderating the behaviour of the young adults' - *"between the ages of 18 - 22 they are pretty much free to do whatever they want."* (Mother, at risk gambler, regular gambling in family)

Although parents thought their role would change as the young person turned the legal ages for gambling, they expressed concern that this was also a period where the risks around gambling may be greater for a young person because of the attractiveness of gambling on their own for the first time.

*"There is a window where it [gambling] is especially exciting when gambling actually becomes legal."* (Parent, social gambler, regular gambling in family).

Young people confirmed the salience of these ages in their interviews: quite a few gave examples in which their first experience of gambling was associated with these birthdays and one problem gambler young person described how his gambling escalated around these ages.

*"I bought a lottery ticket when I was 16. It's the thing you did on your 16<sup>th</sup> birthday."* (Male, 24, at risk gambler)

*"It [first sports bet] was probably at a time where all of my friends were turning 18 and they were all doing it on their phones, so you'd just join in because you take an interest in what they do with football and whatnot."* (Male, 24, at risk gambler)

*"My gambling experience was very limited, up until I turned 16 and I started playing the lottery because then I started buying scratch cards...I remember winning quite a lot when I was 17, and getting a buzz from it. Then just before I was about to turn 18, I realised I could get in the bookies and thought I could win more if I went in there."* (Male, 22, problem gambler)

Furthermore, parents were concerned that late adolescence represented an intersection of legally being able to gamble, with the first experience of employment and therefore access to financial means, combined with fewer other responsibilities beyond the young person's self. In this research young people described how gaining access to finances through employment did then lead to them gambling more:

*"Initially it was very harmless, it's quite fun... I was not gambling massive amounts £5 here and there, and it was not affecting the way I was. Then when I got a full time, proper paid job and then the ability to gain credit was easier, because I was working rather than studying... It [his gambling] deteriorated over that period."* (Male, 25, problem gambler)

*"I weren't even that mad on it [gambling] until I started working because obviously I didn't have any money to go gambling but there was this kid at work, he used to gamble all the fucking time and I used to go in there with him and gamble."* (Male, 19, problem gambler)

Parents also reflected that they had gambled more during adolescence than they did currently. They had needed to reduce the amount they were gambling as they gained more responsibilities in early adulthood (example in Figure 3.4)

**Figure 3.4 An example of a parent who reduced their gambling because of increasing responsibilities in early adulthood**

One parent, still a regular gambler, spending up to £40 per week, described how he gambled almost to excess with his friends when he was younger: *"we used to stand there [slot machines in pubs] all night and put our wages in"*. However, he had purposively reduced his level of gambling; partly because he was constantly frustrated at always losing the money, he had earned: *"I was working every week for nothing. Then borrowing money to get through the week it didn't seem right."* He was also beginning to settle down into a serious relationship and this became his priority in his life. In order to curb his gambling, the parent reflected that changing his friendship group was an important first step. While this parent continued to gamble regularly, and with his family, he described how he was more aware of how much he was spending, to ensure that his participation continued to be affordable and controlled. (Father, at risk gambler, problematic gambling in family)

## 4.0 Family attitudes and behaviours as a protective factor associated with preventing gambling-related harm in young people

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### Key messages

#### **The role of parents in discussing risks of gambling with children**

Problem and at risk parent gamblers tended to say that they would draw on their own experiences as a way to talk about the risks of gambling with their children. Parents who gambled socially were comfortable talking about the risks of gambling in principle. However, there was less evidence that they had engaged in the issue with their children, often because these parents thought that their children were too young. Young people in the research reflected that they valued hearing about real-life experiences of gambling disorders, as a way to caution them of the risks of gambling. However, generally, they thought that there was limited discussion about the risks of gambling, at present, from their parents and teachers.

#### **The role of parents in educating children on safe ways to gamble**

Parents who gambled in a controlled way themselves were able to positively influence their children's attitudes to gambling by demonstrating their own effective strategies to keep gambling irregular and in control. However, parents who gambled regularly, without engaging in the risks or using explicit moderation strategies, were less able to give positive advice in this way. Most young people reported that they valued being taught 'common sense' methods by their parents, such as being upfront and explicit about the need to limit spending and ways to manage money generally when gambling. There was also evidence that the young people who gambled socially had often picked up strategies from their parents and put them into practice.

#### **The role of parents and family as a support system for minimising gambling-related harm**

Young people described how parents had a role to offer emotional support to young people, as well as pragmatic advice and practical solutions, to minimise the impact of any gambling-related harm. Examples of parent support included taking direct measures to limit the young person's access to funds and repaying their gambling debt. This immediate support to young people, meant that typically they experienced gambling-related harm differently to an older person in a similar position, who may not necessarily have a family support system and would therefore need to rely on payday loans and other riskier strategies to manage the gambling debt.

#### **The limits to the role of parents in offering support for gambling-related harm**

While parents have a key role in supporting young people, the research also suggested that in practice young people may be so worried about the impact of their gambling on their family that they may try to manage the impact of their gambling on their own first. In other cases, the young person's gambling had caused significant issues within family relationships following the young person's revelations about their gambling disorder, meaning they felt unable to reach out for support with their issues. Young people who had experienced gambling-related harm also reported that parental support was helpful to a point but it was still necessary for young people to access specialist services or someone who understood about gambling disorder.

This chapter aims to explore how family attitudes and behaviours can function as protective factors associated with preventing, and reducing, gambling-related harm for young people. Firstly, it will explore ways parents can exert a positive influence on a young person's gambling attitudes and behaviours, by discussing the risks of gambling as well as modelling responsible ways to gamble. Secondly, the chapter will discuss the role that parents and family members may have in offering emotional and practical support to young people experiencing gambling-related harm. Finally, the chapter will outline the limits of the parental role in reducing gambling-related harm, and when professional support might be needed.

#### **4.1 The role of parents in discussing risks of gambling with children**

This section aims to describe the different ways in which parents discuss the risks of gambling with their children. There were differences amongst the gambler groups, in the extent to which parents had specifically talked about the risks of gambling with their children, and then how much parents had talked about gambling-related harm.

The literature described how parents need to be able to communicate about the risks of gambling to prevent young people having a diminished view about the risks of gambling. However, there was concern raised in the literature that some parents did not engage enough with the risks of gambling (Valentine, 2016; Foros and Simos, 2012; Molinaro et al., 2017; Rahman et al., 2014; Volberg et al, 2008; Canale et al., 2016, Griffiths and Parke, 2010; Derevensky et al., 2008; Campbell et al., 2011; Campbell et al., 2011; Shead et al., 2010; Hamilton-Wright et al., 2016). In the current research, many of the parents reported that they would feel comfortable discussing the risks of gambling with their children, approaching it in much the same way they would discussions about other types of risky behaviour. However, the extent to which parents had actually discussed the risks often depended on the nature of the parent's own gambling, as well as other factors, such as their children's age.

In families where the parents had a gambling disorder, and had accessed support, parents described feeling comfortable, to an extent, discussing the risks of gambling with their children. Principally this was because the parents felt that they knew about the risks through their own experiences. However, these parents acknowledged that prior to their own experience of gambling-related harm, they had not engaged in much discussion with their children about the risks of gambling. This suggests that because of their own problems with gambling they had not been able to think about the risks themselves (examples in Figure 4.1).

#### Figure 4.1 Examples of problem gamblers discussing the risks of gambling with their children

One problem gambler parent described how she felt able to discuss the risks with her son (under 18) now because he had witnessed first-hand her experiencing financial and emotional harm and a suspended prison sentence because of her gambling. However, the parent reflected that she consciously hid the negative side of her gambling up until that point. It was only once she was arrested that her son became aware of the extent of her gambling and she needed to develop a more open discussion with him around her gambling. (Mother, problem gambler, problematic gambling in family)

Another problem gambler parent highlighted how she felt comfortable discussing the risks with her son because they both had a problem with their gambling. Although this parent clarified that she was more comfortable to discuss the issue of gambling, she would find it harder to articulate the risks of gambling disorder and would not necessarily see it as a priority to discuss with her children unless she thought they were having an issue.

*"That's a hard one [discussing risks of gambling]. Can't say that I have ever spoken about the risk before it's happened that there is a risk. Personally, I would find it quite difficult. Unless they are physically doing it [gambling] themselves...Not something to bring up unless it was an issue. I wouldn't bring it up as a topic generally. I wouldn't talk about it, because I wouldn't think I would need to. Especially at an earlier age."* (Mother, problem gambler, problematic gambling in family)

Quite a few of the at risk parents in the research also thought that they would be happy discussing the risks of gambling with their children. These parents explained how they would draw on their own strategies around managing risks, and emphasise the importance of setting limits and deciding ahead of time how much money one could afford to spend. One mother, who gambles regularly, realised that her son (who is now 19) liked to gamble but on realising this, she made it clear to him that he needed to gamble safely and emphasised: *"you should only gamble what you can afford to lose"*. She felt this was an acceptable thing to talk about with her son because she gambled with her husband, and were open about the measures that they took to ensure that they were gambling responsibly.

While some at risk parents were able to talk about their strategies, others in this group were less comfortable in discussing the risks with their children. This is similar to the narrative from the problem gamblers, who engaged little with the risks of gambling prior to their gambling becoming an issue. One father, whose grown up children gambled regularly, did not perceive gambling to be a risk for his children, especially compared to other types of risky behaviours, so he had not discussed it with them.

*"It [gambling] could be worse, they could be doing drugs, they could be out drinking every weekend, I'd rather they just sit here and spend £30 on a slot machine [on their mobile phone], then we know where are".* (Father, at risk gambler, problem gambling in family)."

In families where parents gambled on a social basis, parents stated that they would feel comfortable, in theory, discussing the risks around gambling with their children, although not all had done so. In one case, the father described how his family did not generally discuss gambling much at all, which was the reason he had not spoken to his son about the risks. However, he described having a 'good bond' with his son, so he thought he would feel comfortable speaking about the risks if it was necessary.

However, there was also evidence that some low-level gambling parents did not discuss the risks with their children because they were not aware of them. For example, one mother, who reported only using scratch

cards on an occasional basis, said that she would not know what to say, as she did not know what the risks are.

A further theme to emerge from the interviews, regarding parents discussing risks with young people, related to the extent to which parents felt able to make their children aware of the 'realities' of gambling-related harm. Again, there was general agreement in the parental views that it was important to be realistic with their children about the risks and to be open about the ways in which gambling disorder and excessive gambling can have an impact on one's life. The most effective way to do this was to draw on real life examples, or either from personal experience or otherwise, to illustrate the impact of gambling disorder. In families where the parent was a problem gambler, parents felt they would be able to share their own experiences in order to convey the seriousness of gambling disorder (examples in Figure 4.2).

**Figure 4.2 Examples of parents using real life examples to explain the realities of gambling-related harm**

One father, who had not talked about the risks yet with his children, said that if he thought his child was developing a problem with gambling then he would just tell them about his experiences and hope that it would be enough to discourage them from gambling any more.

*"I'd tell them about how it puts you in moods when you don't win, and I'd tell them about the dangers of gambling when you start chasing it...and how it spirals. I'd tell them that they have to moderate themselves and if they're going to do it, do it in moderation."* (Father, problem gambler, regular gambling in family)

Similarly, a father, who had not experienced any personal issues related to his gambling, but knew of others who had, explained he would also draw on these experience to convey the risks of gambling and remind his children about the importance of gambling safely.

*"You can sit them down and tell them stories about people who have lost their marriage, their money, their car and their house"* (Father, at risk gambler, regular gambling in family)

Across all parent gambler groups - that is, problem, at risk and social gamblers - parents reflected that age was a factor for these discussions about gambling-related harm. Parents with currently young children commented that they had not spoken to them yet about the risks of gambling because they thought they were too young. One problem gambler father commented that he had not yet spoken to his two children, both under 13, about the risks of gambling, but described how he would draw on his own experiences of gambling-related harm if he needed to when his children were older. An at risk parent, similarly felt that given the young age of his children, he did not think it was appropriate to talk about gambling with them yet, but he would discuss the risks if they saw him gambling when they were older.

Young people, particularly those with recent experience of problem gambling, expressed a similar view to parents about the need to discuss the 'real' impacts of excessive gambling. However, young people also reported that there was currently little discussion in this area, from parents, teachers or anyone else. The young people thought this was concerning because a lack of understanding, around the real odds of winning as well as the seriousness of gambling-related harm, could mean that the glamorised lifestyle associated with winning money would prevail for a young person new to gambling (example in Figure 4.3).

#### **Figure 4.3 An example of a young problem gambler raising the issue of there being limited discussion about the realities of gambling disorders**

One young problem gambler, who had experienced recent issues from gambling online, described how in his view there was an asymmetry in how society portrayed gambling. On one hand there was a growing pervasiveness in exposure, with gambling advertising becoming normalised and acceptable, on TV and especially in sport; but, on the other hand, there was not an accompanying conversation or awareness raising on the risks, or the 'reality', of problem gambling. This young person had not felt able to access support for his issues with gambling but thought that knowing about the extreme cases may have dissuaded him from it:

*"Young people should be taught about it first, know about the people who've had to sell their houses and are left with nothing and how bad it could be. People need to know about the reality of it...it's all so normalised these days, and to think all those people could be in the same boat as you is horrible ...if I'd heard someone's experience or a real story then it might have turned me away from wanting to try it." (Male, 24, problem gambler)*

## **4.2 The role of parents in educating children on safe ways to gamble**

This section considers the role parents have in educating young people about safe and responsible ways to gamble. The evidence from the interviews suggests that parents who gamble themselves can exert a positive influence on moderating their children's attitudes to gambling through displaying their own positive behaviours and demonstrating ways to keep gambling irregular and in control.

Almost all parents expressed the view that they preferred to moderate young people's gambling by raising awareness of, and educating them about, ways to gamble responsibly rather than restricting or prohibiting a young person per se. Some parents (particularly problem gamblers who had experienced gambling-related harm) felt that this would be the only approach they would take. Some held this view because they thought it would be hypocritical if they restricted their children from gambling, as they gambled themselves. Others thought that there was little point in telling young people not to gamble, as there was a chance they would then rebel and gamble even more.

*"You don't want a parent to say it's [gambling] outrageous. That doesn't work – [it] turns the child away and causes a rift and doesn't help with the gambling." (Mother, problem gambler, regular gambling in family)*

At risk parent gamblers also emphasised moderation, rather than restriction, in their protective role influencing young people's behaviour. This group of parents typically described teaching young people about the different types of gambling and distinguishing between 'fun' types and the types that have the potential to be more harmful. This group of parents thought this approach, rather than treating all types of gambling as the same, would open up a discussion with a young person about the risks and the ways in which they could gamble that would protect themselves. Some at risk parents also described how they would encourage young people to notice when their experience of gambling changed. For example, one at risk parent, who defined gambling as 'entertainment', explained it was important that his children could recognise when it was time to stop gambling – using the catchphrase – *"when the fun stops, stop"*. The parent also said it was important for parents to stay aware of how much the young person was gambling, as he *"could see how easily young people are led astray"*.



Social gambler parents, who gave a range of examples about how they ensured their gambling was moderate and controlled, thought that their children should also be able to take this safe approach to gambling, if they wanted to and once they were legally able to. One social gambler parent stated it was important to him that his young children saw him gambling, and that they saw it as a fun, irregular thing. This was so children could observe that gambling could be fun but that being in control was part of it. Young people also reported in their interviews that they preferred parents to advocate for responsible gambling, and that teaching ways to stay in control, was more effective, than preventing a young person from gambling (examples in Figure 4.4).

#### **Figure 4.4 Examples of young people who valued their parents' advice and guidance around responsible gambling**

One young person highlighted how he highly valued his parents' measured approach, which had brought him up "*not to go silly*" on gambling. He consciously follows their advice, describing how he puts a limit on what he can spend per week when he gambles. (Male, 24, social gambler)

Another young person highlighted that although his decision to gamble was his own, he felt his parents had given him common sense around managing his money. He describes how he takes on board their suggestions when gambling to ensure that he is sensible with his approach and he is mindful of how often he gambles, to ensure he does not gamble too regularly. (Male, 24, social gambler)

In families where parents have conflicting views about gambling, there was evidence that the difference in opinion within the family may actually serve as a protective factor in providing a balanced view about gambling to the young person (examples in Figure 4.5).

#### **Figure 4.5 Examples of young people who have a balanced view about gambling from their parents**

One young person spoke about how his father is a regular gambler whereas his mother disagrees with it partly on religious grounds. Although the young person does gamble regularly, he is aware of both sides of the argument from his parents, which encouraged him to do some research about gambling disorder, so he is aware of the risks. (Male, 19, at risk gambler)

Another young person explained how he gambles quite regularly with his dad, even though his mum is not "*that keen*" that they do and "*would probably prefer that they never gambled*". Given his mum's disapproval, he tends only to bet small amounts so as not to upset her. This therefore means that he tends not to spend a lot of money when he gambles and is generally quite sensible about his approaches to it. (Male, 24, social gambler)

### **4.3 The role of parents and family members as a support system for minimising gambling-related harm**

This section describes the role parents have as the main protectors in a young person's life, as well as being the main socialising agents. It considers how many young gamblers (compared with older gamblers) receive emotional and practical support from their parents and other family members, to help manage and reduce their experience of gambling-related harm, particularly related to their finances. The immediate practical strategies by parents included taking direct measures to limit their access to funds. However,

another effective approach may be to promote other forms of leisure activity as a distraction from the gambling and as a way to promote the value of spending money in different ways.

In the literature, there is extensive evidence to support the influence of family connectedness and family cohesion as a protective factor in minimising the risks of problem gambling and gambling related for young people. This relates to the extent that a young person experiences parents/carers who are supportive, have open communications, monitor their behaviour and do not openly engage in gambling behaviours in front of their children. (Dickson et al. 2008; Shead et al; 2010; Floros and Simos, 2012; Molinaro et al., 2017; Rossen et al, 2011; Canale et al., 2016; McComb and Sabiston, 2010; Griffiths and Parke, 2010; Campbell et al, 2011). Lussier et al (2013) suggests that young people are more likely to engage in pro-social behaviours if they experience a higher level of connectedness with their family. Under this theory, if young people experience connectedness to their families and communities, they are more likely to accept the prosocial norm of no- or low- levels of gambling and are therefore less likely to engage in problem gambling behaviours. In the current research, there was significant evidence that both the parents and young people valued the closeness of their family relationship and described how having, and maintaining, these relations, was important to minimise the negative influences from gambling.

In the context of experiencing gambling-related harm, young people with a range of different experiences, from non-gamblers to problem gamblers, described how close relationships within families were important and that parents should provide emotional support within the family and not judge the young person. Generally, young people thought parents should just try to support the young person, even if they do not understand the gambling themselves. If the parent had experience related to gambling-related harm, then the young person thought the parent could use this to relate with the young person about the issue. Young people also described how parents had an important role in offering pragmatic advice and solutions to alleviate the gambling-related harm, as well as offering emotional support and family cohesion.

*"Be open. If you have experiences share them, so they [young people] can relate. Be open minded with it." (Male, 25, problem gambler)*

*"[For family members] Not to be angry at them...Just to help them and maybe bring them to - you know places where you can get help from, to prevent gambling...make sure that you watch over them, make sure they don't get upset or anything or anything like that and make sure you support them, because at the end of the day they are still your parents" (Male, 21, at risk gambler)*

Parents and young people also emphasised the important, immediate role of parents in managing the financial impact from the young person's gambling. Both parents and young people gave examples where parents had supported a young person by directly managing and paying off gambling debt. Young problem gamblers gave a range of examples of ways in which parents could offer helpful practical support to other young people. These included: monitoring young people's finances by routinely checking their bank statements; limiting the young person's finances and spending, both by closing their bank account or taking away their credit or debit card; or generally by monitoring the young person's behaviour and by keeping up to date on their socialising. These responses tended to come from the young gamblers own experience, where their parents had implemented measures to moderate their gambling.

However, the common view was that the debt incurred by a young person was also usually 'manageable'. This was partly because young people would have limited access to funds, so less able to gamble a lot of money; but also because young people valued money differently, so they would be more likely to have a lower threshold for what they regarded as a lot of money, especially if they had not had a regular income for long. Young people and parents also thought it was unlikely for a young person to build up significant

debt before someone noticed it. In the current research, young problem gamblers had typically accrued £1,000 - £3,000 in debt before their parents or family members had realised there was an issue.

Parents, who described close family relationships, thought that they would be in a good position to manage and support their children if they experienced any potential financial harm from gambling, as they were aware of their child's situation and would be likely to be able to intervene sufficiently early. One social gambler parent highlighted that even though her son lived away from home at university, she knew that he had a limited income so would know to be suspicious if his lifestyle had changed in any way. Another father explained - *"If you know how much money your kids have got then you're pretty much on top of it"* (Father, at risk gambler, regular gambling in family).

#### **4.4 Limits to the parental role in offering support for gambling-related harm**

This section describes the limits to the parental role in offering support for gambling-related harm. While family openness and close relationships are important protective factors, in practice young people may still try to hide their issues, worry about the impact on their family, and avoid seeking support from others for a long time.

Young people commented on how, unlike in other addictions, there are minimal physical signs of a gambling disorder and young people may go to great lengths to hide how they are feeling, possibly becoming increasingly withdrawn or unreliable with his or her plans. One young person said that one of the hardest aspects of his gambling disorder was coming home and needing to pretend to his family that everything was normal, he explained: *"a lot of people will make sure their family do not know"* (Male, 22, problem gambler).

From the young people interviews, there were two main reasons a young person may hesitate before seeking support from their family. The first was in relation to their concerns about the impact of the debt on the family's finances. The second was the concern that the issue would cause the family to worry about the young person and their gambling. In one example, the young person reported being 'put off' talking to his family because they had reacted badly previously. Generally, the anticipation of this negative response was a main reason young people chose not to pursue help initially from family members.

*"You feel humiliated to start with, and I hate people judging me, especially when I've lost money. I don't want people to think I'm a bad person."* (Male, 22, problem gambler)

*"It doesn't reflect well on you and you make them upset because they will think they haven't raised you properly."* (Male, 24, social gambler)

While the parents may be open to discussing the risks and offering advice in theory, the reality of the gambling-related harm, and its subsequent impact on the family, should not be understated. In the research, it was common for parents and young people with problem gambling experience to describe the role of families as a support system, but also to explain how their gambling issue had been hard for the family to handle.

*"I tried to keep it [gambling issue] from my parents for a while, but I soon realised that was not going to work... it was horrible in my household... It went against every moral that they adhere to. When I faced them and saw the effect on everyone else; it woke me up. They were very upset and angry – their reactions were not great at the start"*. (Male, 22, problem gambler)

*“I went a long time without speaking to one of my brothers due to my gambling I stole a £1,000 off him and used that to gamble with...we’re speaking now, but nowhere near as close as we used to be. My family were kind of the middlemen in that situation... they had to liaise with both sides. So it can’t have been easy for them.”* (Male, 25, problem gambler)

Finally, there was acknowledgement that young people with a gambling disorder may need specialist support with their issue. In their interviews, the young problem gamblers felt that people without personal experience of a gambling disorder may not understand what they were going through. Therefore, while they valued the support from parents and family relationships, the young problem gamblers thought it was important to encourage young people to seek help from professionals as well. The young people commented that, even if a young person chose to access services, there was still an important role for parents to be involved and supportive at this point as well.

## 5.0 Key policy and practice messages

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### Key messages

#### **How might parents access information, advice or support to strengthen their role in protecting their child(ren) from gambling-related harm?**

Parents identified several routes they would take to seek information on how to help their children with gambling-related harm. These ranged from quick internet searches for relevant information, to exploring the availability of support from local information or welfare services. Those familiar with specialist gambling support services indicated that they may attend a session with their child. However, some parents commented that there is a lack of support services specifically aimed at parents of young people experiencing gambling-related harm.

Young people reported varying levels of parental involvement at times when they had sought help for their gambling behaviour, often viewing the issue as one they could deal with independently. Instead, other sources of information and advice beyond their family were regarded as of more potential value such as listening to those with 'lived experience' of a gambling disorder and its associated harm. Young people had mixed views of the availability of gambling support services they could access; although, where available, the impartiality of support that some young people had accessed was highly valued.

Both young people and parents viewed that gambling is often hidden with few obvious signs or symptoms and, as a result, any harm is rarely recognised until it is experienced. Young people in particular highlighted the potential role that schools could play in addressing this, by providing education on gambling and its associated risks, in a similar way to its awareness-raising of other risky behaviours such as smoking or substance misuse.

#### **What might a 'whole family' approach look like, when seeking to mitigate the risks of gambling-related harm and build resilience?**

Overall, the evidence from the research suggests that whole-family approaches should consider creating an environment in which children feel able to speak openly with their parents about their problem. The evidence suggests that parents being open about any family experiences of gambling-related harm and offering support at any stage in the process of young people seeking help from specialist services would also be beneficial for a whole-family approach.

As highlighted in the previous chapters, parents and young people described a range of potentially valuable ways that families might help moderate young people's exposure to gambling-related harm. However, there are limitations in their support, particularly as gambling is often a hidden addiction and parents or families can be unaware until the issue has escalated to harm. At this point, families may not have the capacity or capability to intervene or practically support the young person, and may require additional information, advice or support. This chapter begins by discussing how parents can access such information and advice, drawing on the strategies described in earlier chapters. The chapter then concludes by bringing together the findings of the research to explore what a 'whole family' approach might look like when trying to mitigate the risks of gambling-related harm and build up the resilience of a young person.

## 5.1 How might parents access information, advice or support to strengthen their role in protecting their child(ren) from gambling-related harm?

### 5.1.1 Strategies for supporting young people

The role of parents in supporting a young person once they reach a point where they require support from a service is complicated. As previously highlighted (in section 2.3), they might not be aware that a young person is experiencing problems with gambling until the harm has escalated, or the young person might even access a service without the parents knowing. However, many parents in our study recognised ways in which they could access information in order to support their children if they were aware that they were experiencing gambling-related harm. Some parents were not aware of the specific services that they could go to, so their first action would be searching the internet for sources of help.

*"I don't know, I wouldn't know [where to get help] off the top of my head, I doubt if it would take five minutes to find out." (Father, at risk gambler, regular gambling in family)*

Other parents commented that they would go to generic support services, such as local welfare services, the Citizen's Advice Bureau or their local GP, in order to find out about the availability of any specialist gambling services in the area. Parents that were aware of more specific gambling support services were likely to say that they would accompany their child to a local Gambler's Anonymous meeting, depending on the severity of the problem. However, some parents did note the general lack of information for parents about how they could support a young person to access a relevant service. For instance, one parent pointed out that there are all sorts of helplines and services available for individuals who experienced gambling-related harm, but he was not sure what he could use as a parent of someone experiencing such harm.

The interviews with the young people who had accessed support for their gambling highlighted some of the services that young people access, as well as the varying levels of parental involvement in their intervention. Some young people described several different periods over the last few years where they required intervention, either from parents or from services. Three young people described accessing services for the first time, after realising the impact that their gambling was having on them or others. Despite parents often being involved in supporting the young person at some point in their journey, it was common for young people, after recognising the problem, to think initially that they could make changes themselves without involving or telling anyone. Additionally, the interviews with the young people who had accessed support emphasised that it is often down to the young person to feel confident and motivated to make the initial step to access a service.

The young people in our sample had varied experiences of accessing different services. As highlighted in the previous chapters, for young people experiencing gambling-related harm, hearing the 'lived experience' from people who have had gambling disorders is regarded as a key way to motivate them to stop gambling. One young person valued hearing the lived experience of a gambling disorder from members of his local Gamblers Anonymous group, as it made him understand the impact of gambling-related harm on people who had been gambling their whole lives. However, the broad age range of Gamblers Anonymous could also be a barrier for young people. For example, one person felt that he did not fit in with his local group because he was a younger person and other group members did not take his experience as seriously. Another key service that young people reported using was GamCare's counselling services. The two young people who used this service had 'good' experiences, and particularly valued the impartial support provided by the counsellors.

For the young people that had accessed a support service, their parents had played varying roles. Several young people had accessed and received support without their parents knowing. Others had reported that

their families had noticed their gambling was getting more excessive, and had tried to help them, for example by paying off debts or taking control of finances. However, these interventions often had not helped to tackle the causes of the gambling-related behaviours, meaning that the compulsion to gamble was often still there. Therefore, while parents implementing positive moderating factors can be helpful in curbing the financial harm of gambling, it is not necessarily enough to prevent a gambling disorder. However, our findings suggest that at the point of accessing a service to treat a gambling disorder, often just having emotional support from the family is helpful. One young person commented that his family knowing about him getting support is helpful and gives him motivation to gamble less.

### 5.1.2 Beyond the family: raising awareness through education

So far, the findings from this research have demonstrated how parents and families can influence young people to gamble, their gambling behaviours, and the support they receive. The research has also found that families are not the only influencing factor for young people and that some families may not be close enough to provide support. In this respect, the findings show that families cannot fully protect young people from gambling-related harm and emphasise the importance of framing the help that parents and families can provide in relation to other sources of support.

A strong finding to emerge from the research was that gambling is often viewed as a 'hidden' addiction. As a result, there is less understanding about the signs and symptoms of a gambling disorder, so both young people and parents do not identify it as such until the harm is experienced. The research highlighted how schools could play an important role in teaching young people about the risks of gambling. Young people mentioned that there was not the same education in schools on gambling compared to other risky behaviours such as smoking or substance misuse. Young people thought schools had a role in providing this information in a non-targeted way, particularly as a young person who may be experiencing an issue may not realise it. Importantly, young people did not think that discussing the issue of gambling would promote the idea or encourage it.

*"It's important to be told that there are risks involved. People at school get told about drugs so maybe they should be told how to bet safely. People are going to do it anyway if they want to and people that won't just won't, it won't encourage them."* (Male, 24, at risk gambler)

A number of young people suggested that schools should bring in people who have a lived experience of gambling, so they can share their story of the impact that it has had on their lives. They felt that young people would be more likely to be dissuaded from gambling if they heard it from someone who had experienced it, rather than from teachers.

*"I think that if someone were to come into my school and talk about gambling, and talk about the issues with gambling, that could actually be very beneficial to someone, who may actually gamble but hasn't told anyone."* (Female, 16, social gambler)

*"If I'd heard someone's experience or a real story then it might have turned me away from wanting to try it."* (Male, 24, problem gambler)

*"People that have experience of gambling disorder should come to schools and speak about their experiences and encourage kids not to do it. Although it's not being talked about, it's a very – like a very big issue, in my opinion"* (Male, 21, at risk gambler)

The interviews highlighted that gambling charities could have a role in educating young people about the potential harms of gambling, as they would be able to bring in someone with a lived experience of gambling

disorder. Additionally, charities are well placed to provide relevant and up-to-date information about the various sources of support that young people could access.

It is clear, therefore, that the young people and parents interviewed felt that a multi-pronged approach to educating young people about gambling is needed, where schools, charities and parents are all engaged in doing so. This finding builds on that of previous research identified in the REA. For example, as part of their research exploring Oregon Youths' attitudes to gambling, Volberg et al (2008) highlighted a need to ensure that members of school staff must be aware about the risks of gambling amongst young people, and that any school-based programme should be accompanied by a programme that encourages parents and families to be aware of gambling-related problems related to young people. Additionally, following a survey on parents' perceptions of adolescent gambling, Campbell et al (2011) concluded that parents should become partners in prevention initiatives in order to moderate young people's gambling.

## **5.2 What might a 'whole family' approach look like, when seeking to mitigate the risks of gambling-related harm and build resilience?**

Our research has highlighted a range of ways in which families can moderate young people's gambling behaviours and how they can mitigate the risks of gambling-related harm. It has highlighted that although financial harm can be a significant consequence of problem gambling, the resultant emotional harm often has a greater impact on the young person. The interviews with the young people highlighted that perhaps the most important way families can help young people is to be supportive when they disclose that they have a gambling problem. Young people stressed the importance of being able to speak openly to their parents about their problem, and to discuss it without receiving judgement or anger. Even if a young person has accessed support without telling their parents – as some of the young people in our sample had done – subsequent support from the parent could be helpful for motivating them to continue accessing help.

Among people who have needed support with their gambling, it was common to think such support is most effective if it comes from people with lived experiences of gambling. They reported that people without experience tend to have difficulties understanding why people continue to gamble and the range or types of gambling that they take part in. Families can support a young person by opening up about their own – or wider family members' – experiences of gambling-related harm, as it might help the young person relate. If this is not possible, parents can support young people by raising awareness of - or identifying - potential sources of support, such as local Gamblers Anonymous meetings or GamCare counselling sessions, so that they can receive appropriate help from a professional.

Families can also play an important role in implementing interventions to help moderate a young person's gambling behaviours. As highlighted in previous chapters, families often mitigate the impact of gambling-related financial harm for young people, by supporting them directly in managing their debt (for example, by monitoring bank accounts, or cutting off access to debit or credit cards) or reducing the debt. Although these approaches might not address the root causes of the young person's gambling, they do help in mitigating the levels of gambling-related harm. In addition, through implementing these interventions, families can also play a role in building up the resilience of the young person. Our interviews highlighted how young people often moderated their own gambling after their parents taught them about managing their money, where they take a sensible and 'common sense' approach to spending it. This approach does not necessarily mean that the young person will not gamble, but it can help them to manage their own gambling behaviours to minimise the risk of them experiencing gambling-related harm.

The evidence also highlights the role of the family in supporting a young person to substitute their gambling behaviours for another hobby or activity. Encouraging a young person to have a hobby was one way to



help the young person prioritise their time so that they are less inclined to spend time gambling. A hobby can help to build up a young person's capacity and interest in something else.

Alongside highlighting what a 'whole family' approach to supporting young people affected by gambling-related harm might look like, the evidence also emphasises the things that have not worked for young people. As discussed, families not providing emotional support can be damaging for the young person and can exacerbate the emotional harm they are already experiencing. Several young people highlighted that parents getting angry or judgemental would just worsen the situation.

In addition, the interviews highlighted the problematic nature of families continuing to gamble – or positively reinforcing gambling behaviours – while the young person is experiencing gambling-related harm. Several parents commented that they would stop gambling if their child was experiencing their own issues related to gambling, to help normalise a 'no-gambling' environment. One young person, who was struggling with controlling his gambling, commented how his family would positively reinforce his gambling when he won a large amount (expecting that he would tell them about it), but would get angry and disappointed with him if he lost the money. This can be problematic as it reinforces the 'chasing the win' mentality that gamblers can often experience. It is important, therefore, that families have a united and consistent message about gambling and seek to discourage excessive gambling regardless of whether it results in a win or a loss.

Overall, the evidence highlights that the family has a key role in supporting a young person experiencing gambling-related harm. Although the family may not have the capacity and capabilities to practically support the young person they can help to minimise the risks of gambling-related harm, and reduce the likelihood of them experiencing it again in the future, in a range of other ways. These other forms of support include: knowing how to signpost their child(ren) on to professional support; providing them with emotional support and motivation throughout the professional intervention; and implementing ways to moderate gambling behaviours.

## 6.0 Conclusions

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This report has presented the views and experiences of young people and parents in relation to their personal gambling and that of their families. It has sought to explore the extent to which parents, and other family members, may increase the risk, or have a protective influencing role, in the gambling attitudes and behaviours of young people. The report has also outlined how this learning may be relevant for parents and professionals supporting young people who have experienced gambling-related harm. In this final chapter, we reflect upon the findings and outline the main ways in which parents have a role in young people's gambling and highlight some of the key areas for further investigation.

### 6.1 The role of parents in relation to young people's gambling

Broadly, the current research confirmed that parents and family members have the propensity to act both as a risk and a protective influence in relation to young people's gambling. The evidence suggests that from childhood to early adulthood parents have an ongoing influence which affects both how young people value and regard gambling, but also how they may regulate their gambling behaviour. Even beyond these influencing roles, the research finds that if the young person develops a gambling disorder, then it is common for the parent to take on an immediate protective role in order to minimise the young person's experience of gambling-related harm.

The inclusion of a parental perspective in the research, alongside that of young people, has enabled the study to build on previous research and build a strong narrative around the different roles and the extent of the influence exerted by parents and other family members. In the main, there has been harmony between the two perspectives as well as recognition from both young people and parents that the familial factors will interplay with other factors in the environment; such as influence from peers and the level of accessibility to gambling.

The different familial influences, mainly from parents but also relevant to the influence from siblings and grandparents, can be typified through four main roles.

- **As socialisers:** the role in which parents permit gambling to take place within the family context, creating an environment where gambling is normalised as an acceptable way for people to socialise and spend time together, and potentially as a way to bring people within the family closer.
- **As facilitators:** the role in which parents may seek opportunities to gamble with their child or through their own behaviour inadvertently increase the amount that young people take part in gambling.
- **As moderators:** the role in which parents may regulate young people's gambling by either knowingly or unknowingly modelling ways for young people to gamble responsibly.
- **As protectors:** the role in which parents may be able available to offer, often as a first-response, emotional and practical support to a young person with a gambling disorder. By offering support the parent is able to minimise and mitigate the young person's experience of gambling-related harm.

The nuanced role of parents, with both risk and protective features, builds on this idea of multiple functions of gambling discussed by Westberg et al. (2017), which posited how the game playing in gambling functions to achieve many of the core goals within the family: by maintaining family relationships and of family practices (micro goals), building family identity (meso goals) and enforcing family culture (macro goals).

Therefore to be effective in moderating and challenging a young person's gambling, a parent or practitioner may need to consider the behaviour needs as part of the young person's wider family identity, rather than by simply challenging the young person's individual goals.

The evidence in the current research confirms the findings from previous research that suggest that in families where gambling is regular and common place, this exposure and normalisation process is likely to begin from an earlier age. Further to this, because much of this socialised gambling is normalised, and commonly exists as an unexceptional part of family life, parents may not necessarily recognise the potential risks of their own gambling or think to engage in discussing them with their children. A further important dimension relates to the discussion, and sharing, of winnings from gambling within the family. Young people described being aware of their parent's winnings from gambling, and parents gave examples of treating or providing for their children with the money they won from gambling. However, there was a notable absence in the winning narrative about the associated risks of gambling, the potential for losses, or the broader issue of gambling disorder. This suggests that even families with only low-levels of gambling, may inadvertently present a glamorised perspective of gambling to young people, if they discuss or share their winnings in this way. Furthermore, promoting winnings may present the idea, from an early age, that gambling is an acceptable way to make money. This may then become an important belief as young people gain access to other types of gambling when they can gamble legally and with larger amounts.

However, the current research suggests that only considering the parental influence in terms of the risks posed to young people is too simplistic. As a young person transitions into early adulthood and their relationship with their parent changes, so too does their exposure to gambling through family relationships. Although some parents may continue to encourage a young person to gamble, adolescence and early adulthood is also commonly the stage where parents start to engage in discussing the risks of gambling with a young person, as the young person is now legally able to gamble. In addition, there was evidence that where parents teach protective 'common sense' strategies and awareness of the risks, then any social gambling in the family does not appear to increase young people's risk of experiencing gambling-related harm. In fact, young people describe feeling more in control and aware of the risks where they have been modelled and taught safe ways to gamble. Therefore, on balance, the parents' roles as moderators is important because it illustrates that families can take part in social gambling together without necessarily increasing the risk to a young person.

Crucially, in all four areas of influence, the parent's own values, views and experiences of gambling define the extent to which they take on these roles in the context of their children gambling. That is, the parent's own gambling directly defines the formative influence on their child's developing attitudes and behaviour. This is partly through teaching of the concepts and complex rules, both directly and inadvertently, but also by modelling strategies of responsible gambling with adolescences and young adults. In many examples the parent's role in prevention - such as teaching about risks or responsible gambling strategies - was only as effective as the parents own practices in gambling. Where parents lacked understanding about the risks of gambling, and/or believed that gambling could lead to making money, then it proved harder for them to take a protective role and share effective strategies in moderation and control.

## **6.2 The role of parents in relation to young people experiencing gambling-related harm**

There was evidence in the current research that parents (and other family members) may increase the risk of problem gambling for young people. It was common that young people and parents who had experienced gambling-related harm knew other family members who gambled frequently, had early memories of taking

part in gambling in a family context (in both childhood and late adolescence) and recalled limited positive influence from family members to explain the risks of gambling or model responsible behaviours.

However, the familial influence on young people developing a gambling disorder was not conclusive in the current research. In this qualitative research study, several young people had never gambled with a close family member; even those who had were clear about their autonomy in their decision-making. Instead of the familial influence, the young people cited other personal motivations for wanting to gamble more, including wanting to make money or seeing gambling as a form of escapism. This suggests, therefore, that although parents may encourage or facilitate certain behaviours and attitudes around gambling, other societal factors may have a more direct role in triggering the onset of a gambling disorder.

Furthermore, during periods of problematic gambling, young problem gamblers commonly reported gambling secretly and alone. This suggests that, even in families where parents or siblings who were also gambling, there was still little or no familial influence at the point when a young person was developing a gambling disorder. It was also common in the current research for the young problem gamblers to hide their gambling and for parents to be unaware that an issue was developing. This suggests a possible transition period for a young person, as they move away from gambling socially with others, to gambling as a more secretive preoccupation. Though, for some of the young people who go on to develop an addiction, they may never see gambling as a social activity at all.

Reith and Dobbie (2011) theorise that, similar to other addictions, a person 'becomes' a gambling addict through a complex process of observation, facilitation and learning. Our research supports this idea and highlights the role of parents and family members in this learning process. Specifically, there is parental influence by introducing and normalising certain attitudes and behaviours towards gambling from a younger age; as well as through accepting and sometimes encouraging maturing gambling behaviours in early adulthood. However, our research also highlights that other factors are critical to the development process, and in some cases there may be no link to a familial influence and a young person having a gambling disorder.

Finally, the research emphasised the role of parents in providing emotional and practical support as a first response to gambling-related harm. This immediate support means that the experience of young people is different to an older person in a similar position, who may not necessarily have a family support system and then needs to rely on payday loans and other riskier strategies. Furthermore, parents are key agents in encouraging young people to access services and parents often take an active role by researching advice online and attending meetings with a young person. This is relevant because both young people and parents acknowledge that a gambling disorder is a need that requires specialist support and therefore a young person experiencing this harm should be encouraged to speak to a professional that understands the complexity of the issue.

# Annexes

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# Annex 1: References

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# Annex 2: Technical Annex

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## Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA)

Rapid evidence assessments (REA) are used in public policy research to access existing literature within the shorter-time frame of the project. These steps are similar to a full-scale systematic literature review, but due to the timeframe, they are restricted to electronic databases and 'grey' literature rather than an attempt to access all available literature. The purpose of current REA was to inform the design of our main research task to interview young people and parents with experience of gambling. As the focus of the study was on the role of parental and familial factors in influencing gambling-related harm in young people, the REA specifically focused on the existing literature in this area.

### REA objectives

The principal objective of the REA was to review existing literature around the influence of family and parental attitudes and behaviours on gambling-related harm. In particular, the REA aimed to identify the extent to which existing literature addresses the main research objectives, and to highlight any gaps in the evidence base. To achieve this the main research questions posed in the REA were closely aligned to the research objectives. An additional purpose of the review was to investigate the methodological considerations used in previous studies, be able to inform the current approach, sample composition and data collection methods.

The four questions posed in the REA were:

- 1) What is known about types and frequency of harmful gambling behaviours among young people and their families, and how do these relate to other forms of risk-taking behaviour?
- 2) What is known about the influence of family and parental attitudes and behaviour as a factor associated with increased risk of gambling-related harm in young people?
- 3) What is known about the role of family and parental attitudes and behaviours as a protective factor associated with preventing gambling-related harm?
- 4) What research designs (including methodology) are used to explore parental/family associations with gambling-related harm in young people?

### REA methodology

There were four stages to the REA<sup>5</sup>, which was set out in the proposal and agreed with GambleAware in advance:

- planning a search strategy
- searching electronic databases
- critically appraising the evidence and
- providing an overview of the research findings.

<sup>5</sup> Davies, P. (2003) The Magenta Book. Guidance Notes for Policy Evaluation and Analysis. Chapter 2: What Do We Already Know? London: Cabinet Office

The REA was conducted in an Excel document with an individual tab for each of the REA objectives. Once documents were identified from the searches, each were reviewed for their relevance to one or more of the four objectives and then an entry was made in the Excel document under the following headings: Database accessed, title, author organisation, date of publication, key points from the document and relevance. In addition to summarising the key points in the document a researcher rated the document from 1 (low) to 3 (high) on its relevance to the research objective. The next stage was to review the completed table for all the documents and write a summary of the findings from the literature.

## REA Sources

The following sources were included in the search strategy:

- Grey literature / freely available online
- Published in the last 10 years (since 2008)
- Access via online databases (e.g. Google Scholar, Science Direct, Research Gateway)
- Publications/ research commissioned by GambleAware / Responsible Gambling Trust, including outputs from the following (where available):

## REA Search terms

The key search terms in the search strategy included: young people, gambling-related harm, parents, family, siblings, mothers, fathers, risk, risk factors, protective factors, motivations, effects of gambling, impact of gambling, support, services, social learning, modelling, transgenerational, support, prevent, problem gambling, attachment theory, behavioural learning theory, parenting, supervision, control

## Qualitative research with young people and parents

Between May and November 2017, Ecorys researchers conducted 39 in-depth semi-structured interviews with young people (25 and under) and parents (with children aged 25 and under) to explore their views and experience of gambling in their families. The interviews were conducted by telephone and face to face, with the participant being able to choose what they would prefer. 19 interviews with young people were conducted in total (2 face to face). 20 interviews were conducted with parents (4 face to face).

A few adjustments were needed to the proposed methodology to ensure that the study could be completed within appropriate timescales. The adjustments did not affect the validity or reliability of the findings. The original aspiration of the project was to recruit pairs of young people and parents – to explore different views on experiences of gambling within the same family. 3 pairs (3 young people and 3 parents) were included in the study, all recruited through services. However, it proved more challenging than expected to recruit families in this way within reasonable timescales for the project. On reflection was possibly related to the theme of privacy of gambling within a family, as young people and parents may not want to disclose to their family that they had taken part in the research or there was no-one appropriate that they could reasonably or easily ask. Some participants asked their family members if they would like to take part and they declined without giving a reason. Therefore the methodology was adjusted and young people and parents were recruited from separate families. In the three recruited pairs, both the parent and young person were receiving support by services and therefore felt more comfortable talking about their shared issues of gambling.

Topic guides were designed to structure the interviews with young people and with parents to ensure that the discussion answered the four research objectives. GambleAware approved these prior to commencing the research.

## Ethics

The ethics of recruitment and conducting the research were considered at the research design and recruitment stages in the study. We discussed with Gamble Aware, and received sign off for all processes and tools, prior to starting any fieldwork. We then followed Ecorys best practice protocol in conducting research with vulnerable groups, including in the following ways:

- **Informed consent:** we sought informed consent prior to making contact with all participants in the study, either through the key professional who was supporting the participants through a service; or via Ecorys' in-house survey team, who conducted the telephone recruitment with the general public. We sought informed consent for all young people in the research and additional parental consent for young people under the age of 16. We also sought consent prior to recording any interviews.
- **Information Sheets:** we gave detailed, age appropriate information about the study objectives and research methods at the point of seeking consent. Young people and parents who participated in a face-to-face interview signed consent forms with accompanying information letters. For interviews completed by telephone, researchers gave full information about the study and sought consent prior to passing on the contact details for the interview.
- **Safeguarding and minimising harm:** we outlined the limits of confidentiality at the beginning of all interviews and robust mechanisms were in place to manage disclosures. Following the interviews we shared information about help lines and services (where interviews were completed by telephone these information sheets were sent out in the post to the participants). All the researchers conducting the interviews had extensive prior experience conducting research with children and families and were well-versed in discussing sensitive issues relating to a range of vulnerable in a sympathetic way with research participants.
- **Inclusive participation:** we offered telephone and in-person interviews, as well as appointments in the day and evenings, to enable young people and parents with different needs and commitments to participate in the study. Where participants were receiving support through services we worked with the key professional to ensure that appropriate adjustments were made, and the participant felt fully supported and briefed on the purpose of the study.

## Recruitment

To identify parents and young people to take part in our research, Ecorys originally proposed two recruitment strategies to ensure that we are able to engage families with a range of gambling experiences in the study, which was important to be able to understand both the experiences of risk and protective factors in the sample. The two proposed routes were via services and via social media. However, recruitment via social media was less effective, following four rounds of advertising on Facebook and Twitter. A few contact details from the adverts, but it was challenging to convert the contact details into successful interviews. Despite paid advertising and promotion on social media channels of relevant and related organisations, the social media recruitment route was concluded as unsuccessful and subsequently abandoned. Instead, the second route for recruitment was via telephone using a general public sample of

known gamblers – a separate sample was purchased for young people (25 and under) and parents. Utilising both strategies ensured a mix in gambling activity and experience in the sample. The remainder of this section outlines the recruitment routes, including the recruitment script and screening questions for the general public route.

*Recruitment via services*

Ecorys identified services across England and worked with professionals to identify young people who may be interested in taking part in the research. The participants (7 young people and 5 parents) recruited through this route had experienced a level of gambling-related harm and had reduced or stopped their gambling recently.

**Services supporting the study**

Table A1 lists the services that supported the research by promoting the research with their service users and helping us to recruit participants to the study.

**Table A1: List of services supporting the research**

<b>Name of project - location</b>
Big Lottery Funded Improving Futures Project - Tyne Gateway
GamCare Aquarius – Birmingham
YouthLink - Scotland
Go Digital CIC – Nottingham
Betknowmore UK - London
<a href="http://www.themix.org.uk">http://www.themix.org.uk</a> – online forum
Addiction Recovery - Bristol
GamCare - Liverpool
Breakeven GamCare - Brighton, Kent, Essex, Sussex, Cambridgeshire
Aquarius – Birmingham
BigDeal workshops GamCare – Birmingham

**Recruitment through the General Public**

Ecorys recruited participants by telephone using a sample of known gamblers in the general population.

Ecorys bought a sample of parents and sample of young people and set up a recruitment script for the research (included in the remainder of this section). If a participant was eligible based on their answers, Ecorys would arrange a time to call the participant back for the main interview. At this point the researcher would provide more information about the research and ask for verbal consent from the participant. Parental consent was obtained for any young people under the age of 16 who were expressed an interest in the research; however, no consent was returned that was sent out for parents. Therefore all the young people recruited through this route were over the age of 16.

Participants recruited through this route had experience ranging from social to higher levels of gambling.

*Introduction*

Hello, my name is <INTEWRVIEWER NAME> Ecorys UK is an independent research organisation (uk.ecorys.com). We are currently conducting a piece of research where we are looking to speak to young

people/ parents to ask if they would be willing to take part in research which is about their experience of gambling in families.

We are interested to speak to people/parents who take part in a broad range of gambling activities either themselves, or who have a family / child in their family who takes part.

Is now a good time to speak to explain a little more about the research?

**INTERVIEWER IF NOT ASK WHEN WOULD BE A BETTER TIME TO CALL BACK.**

Ok thank you, to confirm this research is being conducted on behalf of GambleAware, a leading charity in the UK committed to minimising gambling-related harm.

To establish if you are eligible to participate in this research please may I ask you a couple of very quick screening questions it only takes a minute?

### *Screening questions: parents sample*

Thinking now about gambling in its broadest sense, I am going to read a list of gambling activities that you may have taken part in, this could be taking part only now and then with friends or family, or more frequently.

Please could you tell me if **you yourself** have recent or current experiences in any of the gambling activities from this list? By gambling activities, this could include small amounts spent on scratch cards, up to any amount spent in casinos, poker, or online gambling sites. It could include taking part only now and then with friends or family, or more frequently.

1. Lottery
2. Raffles
3. Scratch cards
4. Bingo
5. Slot or fruit machines
6. Sports betting (including dog or horse racing)
7. Casino games (including games like poker or roulette).
8. Skins betting within online gaming or games (such as counterstrike)
9. Online Gaming e.g. Eight Ball Ball, Betfair, Coral, Bet way Casino, Net Bet, Royal Panda, Mansion Casino.
10. Other (please specify).
11. Don't know

Thinking again about gambling in its broadest sense, I am going to read you the same list of gambling activities but this time if you could please consider if you are aware of **any of your children** have had recent or current experiences in any of the gambling activities from this list?

Just to recap by gambling activities, this could include small amounts spent on scratch cards, up to any amount spent in casinos, poker, or online gambling sites. It could include taking part only now and then with friends or family, or more frequently.

1. Lottery
2. Raffles
3. Scratch cards

4. Bingo
5. Slot or fruit machines
6. Sports betting (including dog or horse racing)
7. Casino games (including games like poker or roulette).
8. Skins betting within online gaming or games (such as counterstrike)
9. Online Gaming e.g. Betfair, Coral, Bet way Casino, Net Bet, Royal Panda, Mansion Casino.
10. Other (please specify).
11. Don't know

That's great, I can confirm that you would be eligible to participate in our research study. Just to say again this research is being conducting on behalf of GambleAware, a leading charity in the UK committed to minimising gambling-related harm and takes the form of a telephone interview. We are looking to speak to people like yourself who would be interested in supporting our research. This would take the form of a telephone interview at your convenience with one of our researchers lasting approximately 40 minutes. In return for your time, we are offering £15 of love2shop vouchers after you have completed the interview as a thank you for your time. The aim of the research study is to understand how young people and parents participate in gambling activity and the role it plays in their family life and relationships. The researcher will also discuss ways that gambling can cause issues for young people and families and the types of services they can access.

**More information about how the research findings (if requested).** *With the findings from our research, Ecorys will be writing a report, which may be published. This will include recommendations on how support could be offered to young people and parents. Gamble Aware may use the evidence to develop guidance for young people and parents on how to minimise the risk of gambling-related harm.*

### *Screening questions: young people sample*

#### **PN: Screen 1**

Which of the following statements best describes you?

1. I am a young person aged 11 to 15
2. I am a young person aged 16 to 25

Thinking now about gambling in its broadest sense, I am going to read a list of gambling activities that you may have taken part in, this could be taking part only now and then with friends or family, or more frequently.

Please could you tell me if **you yourself** have ever participated in any of the gambling activities from this list? By gambling activities, this could include small amounts spent on scratch cards, up to any amount spent in casinos, poker, or online gambling sites. It could include taking part only now and then with friends or family, or more frequently.

1. Lottery
2. Raffles
3. Scratch cards
4. Bingo
5. Slot or fruit machines
6. Sports betting (including dog or horse racing)
7. Casino games (including games like poker or roulette).

8. Skins betting within online gaming or games (such as counterstrike)
9. Online Gaming e.g. Eight Ball Ball, Betfair, Coral, Bet way Casino, Net Bet, Royal Panda, Mansion Casino.
10. Other (please specify).
11. Don't know

## **Screen 2b**

Thinking again about gambling in its broadest sense, I am going to read you the same list of gambling activities but this time if you could please consider if you are aware of **any of your immediate family (i.e. your parents/guardians or your siblings)** who have ever participated in any of the gambling activities from this list?

Just to recap by gambling activities, this could include small amounts spent on scratch cards, up to any amount spent in casinos, poker, or online gambling sites. It could include taking part only now and then with friends or family, or more frequently.

1. Lottery
2. Raffles
3. Scratch cards
4. Bingo
5. Slot or fruit machines
6. Sports betting (including dog or horse racing)
7. Casino games (including games like poker or roulette).
8. Skins betting within online gaming or games (such as counterstrike)
9. Online Gaming e.g. Betfair, Coral, Bet way Casino, Net Bet, Royal Panda, Mansion Casino.
10. Other (please specify).
11. Don't know

That's great, I can confirm that you would be eligible to participate in our research study. We are looking to speak to people like yourself who would be interested in supporting our research. This would take the form of a telephone interview at your convenience with one of our researchers lasting approximately 40 minutes. In return for your time, we are offering £15 of love2shop vouchers after you have completed the interview as a thank you for your time.

The aim of the research study is to understand how young people and parents participate in gambling activity and the role it plays in their family life and relationships. The researcher will also discuss ways that gambling can cause issues for young people and families and the types of services they can access.

***INTERVIEWER IF NEEDED - More information about how the research findings (if requested).*** With the findings from our research, Ecorys will be writing a report, which may be published. This will include recommendations on how support could be offered to young people and parents. Gamble Aware may use the evidence to develop guidance for young people and parents on how to minimise the risk of gambling-related harm.

## **Coding the interviews**

All participants in the study had recent experience of gambling, either themselves or with another close family member. Following the interviews, the researchers coded each participant's level of personal gambling experience and their families' level of gambling experience. Table A2 provides a summary of

these scores for the young people and parents included in the research. Further analysis of this information is provided in the Sample description.

**Table A2: Gambling profiles of young people and parents in the current research**

Ppt. profile	Category description	Young people N = 19	Parents N = 20
Personal gambling	Non gambler	1	0
	Social Gambler	9	7
	At risk gambler	3	9
	Problem gambler (or with history of problem gambler)	6	4
Gambling in families	None of the family members gamble	3	2
	At least one member of the family gambles occasionally	1	4
	At least one member of the family gamble regularly	11	11
	At least one member of the family have been by gambling-related harm.	4	3

**Please code the following based on information from the interview:**

**1. Which of the following best describes the respondent?**

<p><b>1).</b> Non gambler <i>Those who do not engage in any gambling activities</i></p>	<p><b>2).</b> Social gambler <i>Those who engage in irregular, recreational gambling</i></p>	<p><b>3).</b> At risk gambler <i>Those whose gambling behaviours could worsen if exacerbated by other risk factors</i></p>	<p><b>4).</b> Problem/pathological gambler <i>Those who gambling behaviours disrupt their own – or their families’ lives</i></p>
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**2. To what extent are other family members involved in gambling?**

<p><b>1).</b> None of the family members gamble</p>	<p><b>2).</b> One or more member of the family gambles occasionally</p>	<p><b>3).</b> One or more members of family gambles regularly</p>	<p><b>4).</b> The parent is concerned that one or more members of their family is affected by gambling-related harm.</p>
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## Analysis

Following the interviews, the researchers wrote detailed notes from the interviews using the recordings to ensure that a high level of detail was incorporated for the analysis and supported by verbatim quotes for key points. These notes were completed in an Excel grid, designed to be mapped closely to the study objectives and the research objectives underlying the topic guide design. A selection of the interviews with young people and parents were transcribed to allow for further analysis of language and nuance of the discussion. Notes from these transcripts were added to the grids to ensure that the documents included all data from the interviews and supported full analysis of the themes for the report.

In addition to writing up the findings from the interview, the research coded the interview with two numbers: 1). participant’s level of personal gambling experience and 2). their families’ level of gambling experience. The purpose of this coding was to provide a high-level categorisation of the gambling profile and family



experience for each interview, which would then be used to form some of the basis for the qualitative analysis in comparing different views and experiences.

The researchers conducting the interview analysis used a systematic approach, reading across all the Excel templates first to ensure that they understood the breadth of experience of gambling in the families. From this first reading, notes were made for the four research objectives in relation to the ways family members were mentioned and roles they had in relation to the young people gambling – i.e. the types and motivations of gambling, the role of families in relation to risk and protective factors and key policy and practice messages. Once we had established the evidence for these broad themes, further analysis was conducted to explore the detail of the experiences and compared and contrasted across parent and young people reports, different family compositions, and different views on gambling (e.g. young people with positive experiences compared to young people negative experiences). This analysis then prompted a further layer of themes to build on the initial analysis. With the key points emerging for the report, notes were kept on examples and quotes as supportive evidence. Before developing a fuller structure for the report, the emerging findings were crosschecked with the findings from literature review, to establish the degree to which the different data sources supported or refuted each other.

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