**Gambling Health Alliance AGM  
25th November 2020, 10-11:30am**

**Attendees**

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| **Name** | **Organisation** |
| Aaron Mansfield | RSPH |
| Agnes Nairn | University of Bristol |
| Alison Mather | Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs |
| Anna Niemczewski | BetKnowMore |
| Chris Webster | Citizens Advice North Oxfordshire |
| Duncan Stephenson | RSPH (GHA Chair) |
| Emily Williams | White Ribbon Association |
| Emma Ryan | Primary Care Gambling Service |
| Florence Gildea | RSPH |
| Gavin McColl | Primary Care Gambling Service |
| Graham England | Addiction Recovery Agency |
| James Close | University pf Plymouth |
| Jan Stewart | Citizens Advice Hampshire |
| Jo Evans | Greater Manchester Combined Authority |
| Jono Baggaley | PSHE Association |
| Katie Fry | Citizens Advice |
| Keith Lewis | Unite the Union |
| Lee Willows | YGAM |
| Louisa Mason | RSPH (GHA Lead) |
| Maeve Walsh | Carnegie UK |
| Matthew Hickey | Gordon Moody Association |
| Matthew Philpott | Healthy Stadia |
| Matt Zarb-Cousin | Clean Up Gambling |
| Meagan Levin | Royal British Legion |
| Myrte Elbers | Leeds City Council |
| Neil Platt | Beacon Counselling Trust |
| Peter Baker | Consultant to RSPH/GHA |
| Robin Pollard | We Are With You |
| Scott Crosby | Association of the Directors of Public Health – Yorkshire and the Humber |
| Simon Watts | NHS Specialist Registrar |
| Tim Bradshaw | YGAM |
| Tracey Kilbane | Medway Council |
| Victoria Sharman | Royal College of Nursing |
| Victoria Taylor-Smith | White Ribbon Association |
| Warren Hughes | Fast Forward |

**Apologies**

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| **Name** | **Organisation** |
| Danny Hames | NHS Substance Misuse Provider |
| Heather Wardle | London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine |
| Justyn Larcombe | Recovery Two |
| Owen Bailey | Citizens Advice North Oxfordshire |
| Rachel Lampard | The Methodist Church |
| Rochelle Beale | Department of Health and Social Care |

1. **Welcome and overview**

Duncan Stephenson welcomed attendees to the first AGM of the Gambling Health Alliance. He highlighted the increasing normalisation of gambling, the shift to online gambling during the pandemic, the rise in the prevalence of problem gambling, the links between gaming and gambling, and the small proportion of problem gamblers who receive treatment. He also highlighted new opportunities for GHA to respond, including the DCMS consultation on loot boxes, the forthcoming Gambling Review, and the ASA consultation on gambling advertising. Duncan reported that GHA has joined the new Coalition Against Gambling Advertising, which launched with a focus on football advertising.

The GHA’s objectives were described and Duncan stated that there are now 50 members from a diverse range of backgrounds.

The current Steering Group members are:

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| **Name** | **Organisation** |
| Danny Hames | NHS Substance Misuse Provider |
| Justyn Larcombe | Recovery Two |
| Katie Fry | Citizens Advice |
| Meagan Levin | Royal British Legion |
| Lee Willows | YGAM |

There are also work streams on policy, communications, and public affairs.

Duncan outlined the membership criteria and informed attendees that GHA will be changing the categories of membership. There will now be two: Full Members and Observers. The Observer category applies to organisations that meet the full eligibility criteria, support most or all of the objectives of GHA but who do not wish to, or are not deemed able to, contribute to or be associated with its policy outputs or public statements. Any members whose status is affected by the new criteria will be contacted shortly.

Duncan stated that GHA is funded by GambleAware and that there is an agreement between the two organisations that specifies the nature of the relationship. GambleAware does not have the power to sign-off GHA’s work and provides advice on GHA’s research work alone.

1. **GHA’s work in Year 1**

Louisa Mason provided a report on the first year of activity. She explained that, following extensive consultations with the members and the Steering Group, it had been decided to follow up the RSPH’s *Skins in the Game* report with a focus on loot boxes. Specifically, GHA is calling for loot boxes to be classified as gambling and made illegal for under 18 year olds.

GHA has responded to the DCMS consultation on loot boxes with a submission based on original survey work with young people and by launching the *#LidOnLoots* campaign in November 2020. Louisa presented some key findings from the survey which are shown in Appendix 1.

Louisa explained that the next steps in the campaign will be to engage with industry (UKIE, PEGI, EA), parents (ParentZone, Mumsnet), and political stakeholders (APPG, Peers, the devolved administrations). GHA will also release its financial impact survey data and respond to the ASA consultation on in-game purchasing, as well as the Gambling Review.

The following issues were raised in response:

* How will GHA tackle the issue of enabling over 18s to continue to purchase loot boxes but still prevent younger users from doing so?
* An OFCOM study has found that only 3-6% of all gamers have ever purchased loot boxes and the gaming industry is anyway now developing new monetisation systems.
* GHA will need to engage with the industry to create a self-regulatory code of practice.
* Opposing view that the gaming industry can’t be part of the solution because loot boxes are a form of gambling and therefore need to be regulated as such (by the Gambling Commission).

1. **Breakout discussion 1**

Attendees were asked to consider issues concerning the organisation of GHA. The following points were made:

* The Steering Group should reflect all the issues covered by the campaign and to achieve this it might be necessary to invite specific people as well as recruit through self-nomination.
* There should be a diversity audit of the Steering Group as a step towards greater inclusiveness.
* A job description for the Steering Group is needed now that a call has been put out for members to join the Steering Group.
* The Steering Group-GHA relationship should be better defined.
* Communications with members should be more regular (e.g. monthly or bimonthly bulletins) and there should be opportunities for members to share their work with each other.
* GHA should establish smaller focus groups to discuss specific issues.
* There should be a common # that all members can use.
* Messaging needs to be clear and targeted at young people.
* There should be an engagement plan for different stakeholders.
* Members need more information about the work streams.
* Members need clarification on what evidence is sufficient to demonstrate independence from industry to understand the new types of membership.

1. **Communities in Charge of Gambling**

Aaron Mansfield described a new RSPH/GHA project to create gambling and health champions. Based on the successful RSPH project to create alcohol health champions, the plan is to recruit and train volunteers, initially in NW England, to have brief conversations about gambling and health with their peers and to signpost to specialist support services where appropriate. Female and BAME problem gamblers will be a particular target for the champions. The champions will take an Ofqual-regulated Level 2 qualification that is being developed by RSPH with support from a number of GHA members. If GHA members would like to be involved they should contact Aaron.

1. **GHA’s work in Year 2**

Duncan outlined the current plans for Year 2. These include:

* Continuing the #LidOnLoots campaign.
* Developing the Communities in Charge of Gambling initiative.
* Responding to the Gambling Review.
* Responding to the ASA consultations.

1. **Breakout discussion 2**

Attendees were asked to consider GHA’s work in Year 2. The following points were made:

* GHA should look beyond loot boxes and at the wider issues in gaming, including speed of play, mobile gaming and spins.
* It is important to go ‘upstream’ and talk to games developers and others to understand better where the gaming industry is heading. A research project on this would be useful.
* An overarching code of ethics is needed for the industry which includes building harm minimisation protocols into game design.
* Clarity is needed on GHA’s position on gambling advertising for the submission to the Gambling Review. Work streams could be used to develop position statements for the GHA.
* A communications strategy is needed that all members can contribute to, covering local, regional and national comms. This needs to include engaging gaming influencers.
* GHA should look to recruit members working on problem gambling and criminality and also treatment and education.
* GHA should include the voices of people with lived experience – this is an important area of evidence of harm.
* GHA should promote treatment services, with a focus on reducing stigma and raising awareness.
* Students are a key group in this debate.
* Central coordination is needed to avoid duplication of work.

1. **Member updates**
2. Emma Ryan presented the work of the Primary Care Gambling Service. Emma explained that a pilot project has been established to treat patients and educate staff. A competency framework has been created for healthcare providers which will be passed to the Royal Colleges for approval in January 2021. A simple question in an online questionnaire issued to patients with mental health concerns revealed a surprisingly large number with gambling problems. Emma said she would be interested in presenting the competency framework to a GHA webinar.
3. Tim Bradshaw (YGAM) described the gambling ecosystem using a diagram he had created (see Appendix 2). He particularly highlighted the role of video games influencers who now have a critical role in marketing games directly to consumers.
4. **Meeting close**

Duncan thanked everyone for attending and closed the AGM.

**ACTIONS**

* GHA to contact members affected by change in level of membership.
* GHA to create Steering Group specification, including relationship with GHA, and circulate to members with a view to broaden membership of the SG.
* GHA to seek input from SG on developing the work streams into interest groups.
* Newsletter to include member updates.
* GHA to work with SG to develop policy position on different issues ahead of Gambling Act review.
* GHA to develop targeted communications strategy.
* GHA to approach new members focussing on criminality, lived experience, and students.

**APPENDIX 1**

**Key findings from the #LidOnLoots survey of young people**

* Three quarters (76%) thought that loot boxes should be illegal for under 18s to buy.
* The vast majority (91%) view buying a loot box as a form of gambling. This has increased from the 58% of survey respondents from Skins in the Game who classified purchasing a loot box as a form of gambling.
* One in ten gamers ‘always’ or ‘often’ sell the item won in a loot box for money.
* Two in five (41%) think spending money on a loot box when under 18 would make them more likely to gamble when older.
* Three quarters (75%) feel that buying a loot box is bad for their health, citing feelings of addiction, regret and anger when purchasing loot boxes.

**APPENDIX 2**

**Video games eco-system paper and diagram produced by YGAM**

