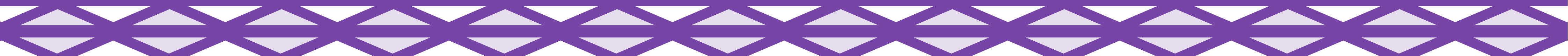




ADPH
North East

Association of Directors of Public Health North East Gambling Harms Programme Stakeholder Impact Report



Executive Summary

The *Association of Directors of Public Health North East (ADPH NE) Gambling Harms Programme* delivers a whole system approach to addressing gambling harms in the North East, focusing on prevention and intervention work.

The ADPH NE Gambling Harms Programme responds to the need for a regional public health approach that supports stakeholders to implement evidence-based gambling harm prevention work.

The *Regional Programme Office (RPO)* engages with North East local authority departments to address gambling harms and the wider determinants of health. The RPO has played an essential role in empowering and increasing capacity to local authority teams, providing support to train and upskill staff members, assisting to embed screening questions into assessments and strengthening referral routes to support services, treatment and other management tools for gambling harms prevention.

The RPO fosters meaningful partnerships across the region with treatment service providers, academic institutions, public health networks, VCSE organisations and local authorities both within the North East and wider partners nationally. The RPO provides support, shares best practice and co-produces resources and research with these partners. Co-production is a core focus of the programme and the RPO works closely with all partners to ensure this is embedded in all prevention and intervention work.

One of the vital outputs of the programme has been the establishment of the *ADPH NE Gambling Harms Lived Experience Forum* which brings together voices of lived experiences from across the North East to ensure all resources are purposeful and targeted to the needs of the community.

The programme contributes valuable data and evidence on the current gambling harms landscape in the North East and nationally via academic research outputs. The RPO produced the first 'Gambling Harms in the North East: Regional Health Needs Assessment' and supports local authorities across the region to conduct their own local gambling harms health needs assessments. Additionally, qualitative and quantitative evaluation is embedded in all prevention work to ensure the programme's efforts are effective, sustainable and will have ongoing impact in the community.

A stakeholder impact survey was conducted to inform this report, where overall programme satisfaction was ranked at 9.3 out of 10. The average satisfaction score for both completed and ongoing outputs of the programme were ranked 9.6 out of 10. Feedback of the programme was received and opportunities for growth are reflected upon in this report.

The programme will continue to develop an evidence-based public health approach to gambling harm prevention in the North East, building upon what has been established and striving to share and contribute to best practice in this space. The RPO will continue to respond to system asks in the next 18 months, including the expansion of the advocacy and communications approach of the programme.

Contents

Executive Summary

Introduction

Highlights

Context

Background and Objectives

Programme Structure

Logic Model

Programme Outputs

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder Feedback

Programme Evaluation

Challenges

What's Next?

References

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

24

27

29

30

31

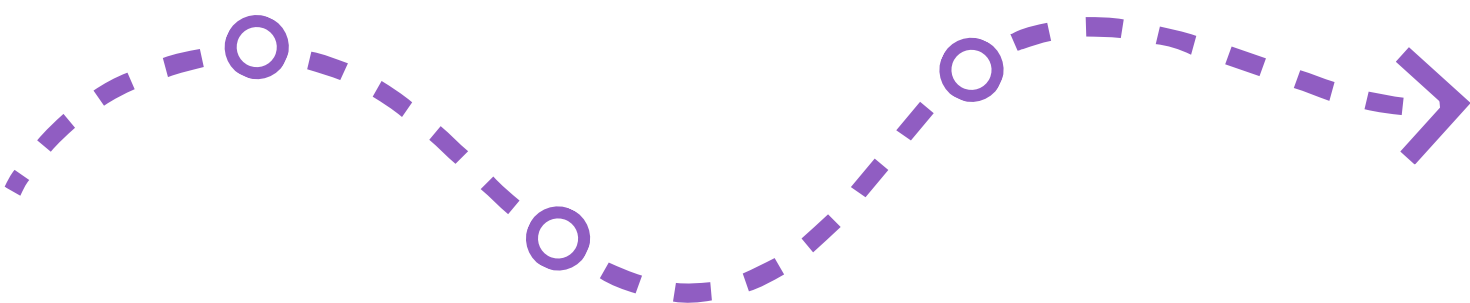
32

Introduction

This report highlights the progress made, challenges faced and opportunities identified for improvement by the ADPH NE Gambling Harms Programme between September 2023 and September 2025. In this time, the dedicated capacity of the programme has had a significant impact on programme stakeholders and resulted in meaningful opportunities for collaboration and co-production.

Stakeholders have expressed a desire for a continued and expanded gambling harms prevention offer from the programme. This includes increased advocacy, training support and continued professional development opportunities for the region.

Continuation of the ADPH NE Gambling Harms Programme provides an opportunity for ongoing learning and improved practice to reduce gambling harms across the North East through pilot projects, data collection and comprehensive evaluation.



Gambling Harms in the North East: Health Needs Assessment

The first gambling harms health needs assessment to capture regional data, insight and recommendations for the North East.

Making Every Contact Count (MECC) and Gambling Harms Training Module

Developed for professionals working with those affected by, or at risk of experiencing, gambling harms. Over 150 professionals trained to date.

100+ Support Requests Actioned

Extensive support and expertise provided to stakeholders across the UK to embed a public health approach to gambling harms prevention.

Innovation in Public Health Practice Award 2024

Awarded to the Regional Programme Team in December 2024 at the North East Public Health Conference.

10 Editions of Programme Newsletter

Sharing resources, best practice and CPD opportunities with 90+ partners nationally.

Gambling Harms Language Guide

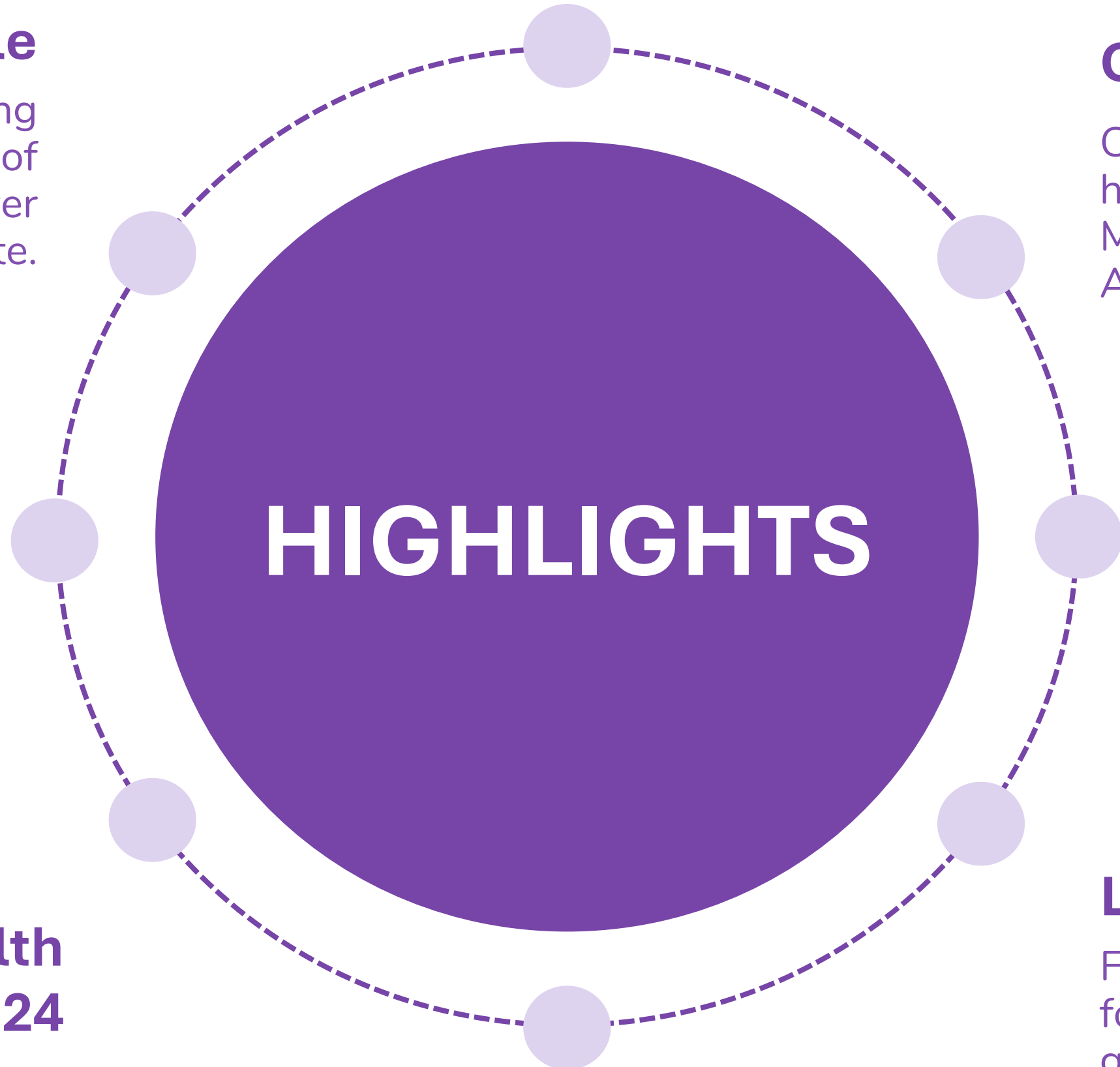
Co-produced with regional gambling harms programmes from Greater Manchester Combined Authority and ADPH Yorkshire and the Humber.

50+ External Stakeholders

Supported via training, consultations, presentations, meetings and sharing of public health resources.

Lived Experience Forum

Formation of a lived experience forum, bringing together voices of gambling harms lived experience in the North East.



HIGHLIGHTS

Context

The North East region of England is comprised of 12 local authorities: Northumberland County Council, Newcastle City Council, North Tyneside Council, South Tyneside Council, Gateshead Council, Sunderland City Council, Hartlepool Borough Council, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, Durham County Council, Darlington Borough Council, Middlesbrough Council and Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council.

North East of England Local Authority Map

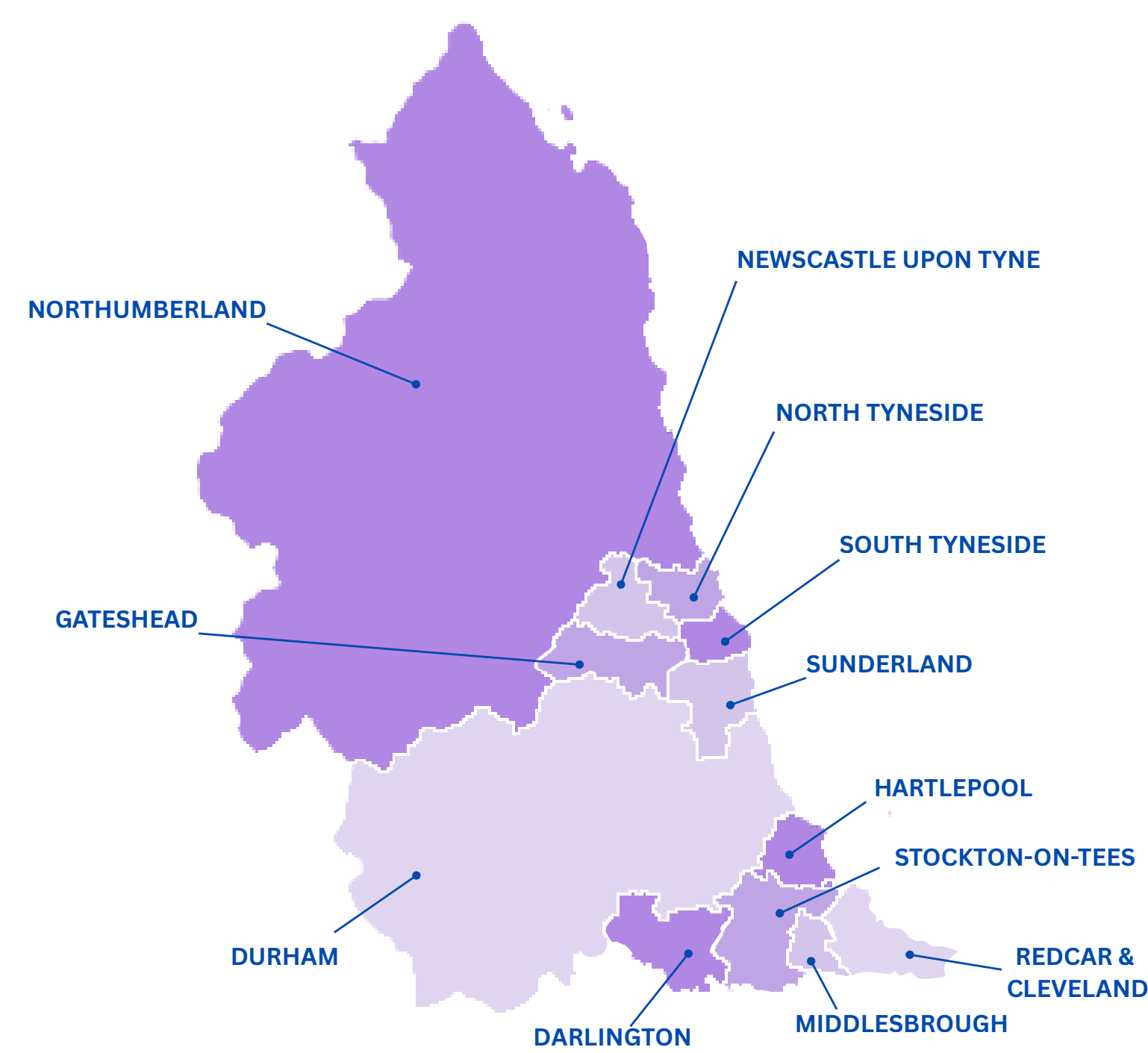


Image sourced from [LEA and Region MAPS](#).

**Please note that this image has been edited for Programme purposes.*

There is a demonstrated need for targeted intervention and prevention work to address gambling harms in the North East.

In England, in 2023, it was estimated that 3.8% of the population were classified as gambling at elevated risk levels (Office for National Statistics, 2024). The 2023 Gambling Survey for Great Britain (GSGB) found 2.5% of all participants had a Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI) score of 8+. A score of 8+ indicates a person is gambling at harmful levels and is likely to experience adverse consequences from their gambling.

Please note the programme does not use the phrase ‘problem gambling’, recognising the individual blame narrative and stigma this phrase can create. ‘Problem gambling’ is used here only to refer to the terminology used by the PGSI.

In the North East, it is estimated that 4.9% of the population (aged 16+) are at-risk gamblers, where they experience some level of negative consequences due to gambling. This equates to 105,437 people of those over 18 (Office for National Statistics, 2024). This is the highest regional estimated prevalence of at-risk gambling in England (Office for Health Improvement & Disparities, 2024).

According to the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) measures, around a third of residents living in the North East live in geographical areas classified as being in the 20% most deprived areas of England (OHID, 2021). Data from the Health Survey England (HSE) shows that the overall average of any gambling activity for the North East was 59%, compared to 41% in England (NHS England, 2021).

Background

In 2023, the Association of Directors of Public Health North East (ADPH NE) were awarded regulatory settlement funding from the Gambling Commission for the creation of a programme to address gambling harms in the North East.

The funding is hosted by Middlesbrough Council and has been used to develop and implement a three-year regional gambling harms prevention programme. The ADPH NE Gambling Harms Programme is a collaborative effort between multiple stakeholders including ADPH NE, 12 North East local authorities, the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) and Newcastle University.

An approach to regional prevention was devised by key stakeholders, adopting the evidence base from regional tobacco control and core public health principles. Termed the ‘Eight Key Pillars’, this approach has enabled the streamlining of key priorities.

Eight Key Pillars of the ADPH NE Gambling Harms Programme	
Support and Partnerships	
Advocacy	
Media, Communications and Education	
Treatment	
Data, Research and Evaluation	
Licensing	
Protecting Young People	
Lived Experience	

Objectives

Objectives have been shaped by the key pillars of the programme and are designed to inform and assess the impact of the programme on individual and community outcomes across the region.

These objectives guide the planning, implementation and evaluation of programme projects across a number of areas. These include public health impacts, academic research, local authority engagement, community benefits, sustainability and scalability.

The evaluation of these objectives will provide valuable empirical data to strengthen the existing evidence base on gambling harms prevention, highlight effective practice and identify areas for future improvements.

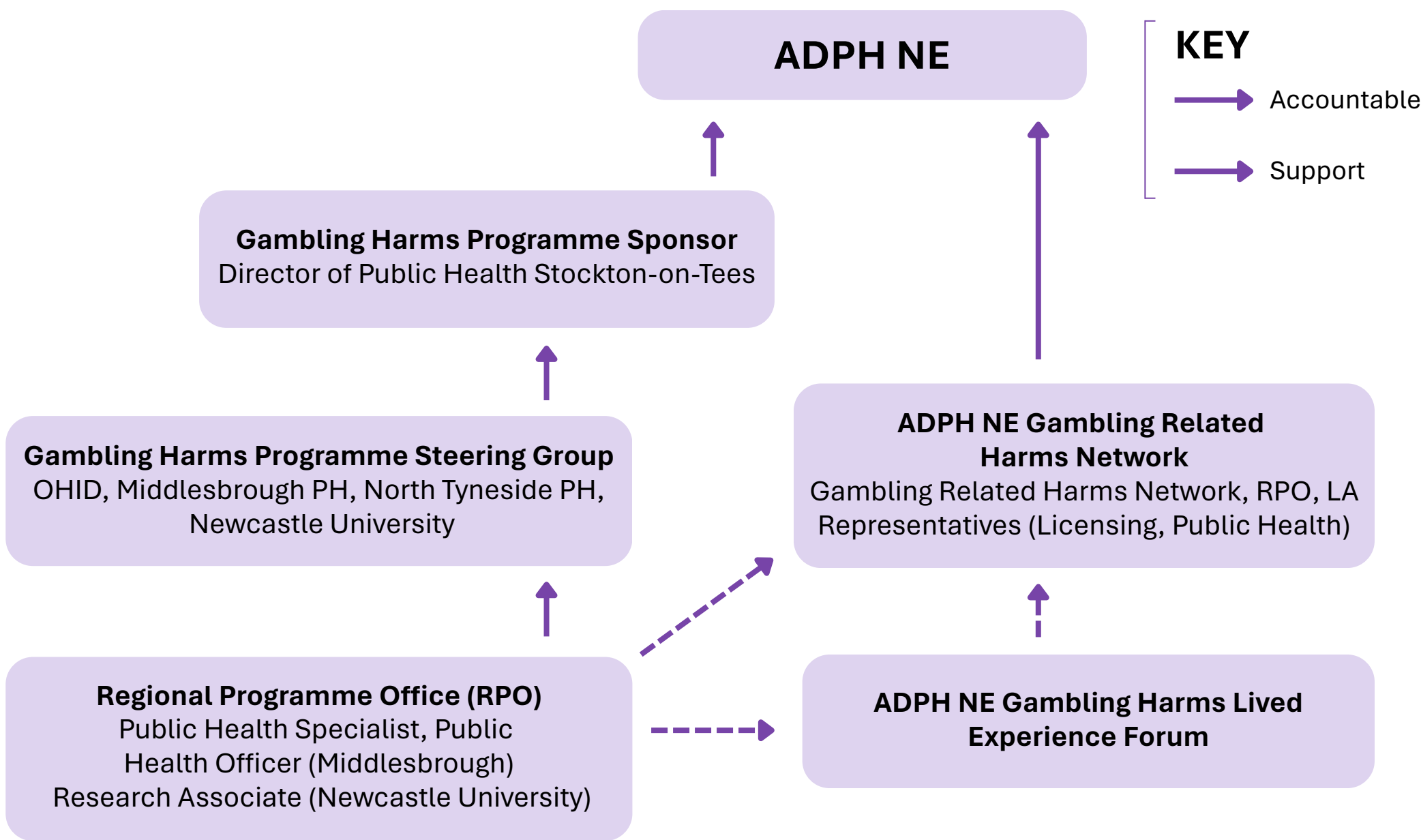
The programme aims to:

1. Develop methods that can be implemented region-wide to highlight the harms associated with gambling, focusing on key groups.
2. Work alongside appropriate stakeholders linked with key settings to improve the delivery of early intervention to encourage those who are experiencing gambling harms to access treatment.
3. Work alongside existing treatment providers in the region to strengthen referral pathways from local settings into relevant treatment services.
4. Contribute to the evidence base of ‘what works well’.
5. Seek to build sustainable capacity in the North East system to address gambling harms that can exist once the programme has ended.

Programme Structure

The ADPH NE Gambling Harms Programme partnership is comprised of the following:

- The Regional Programme Office (RPO): Public Health Specialist (x1), Public Health Officer (x1) and Research Associate (x1).
- The Gambling Harms Programme Steering Group: representatives from Newcastle University (x3), Middlesbrough Council (x3), North Tyneside Council (x1) and OHID (x1).
- The Gambling Harms Programme Sponsor: the Director of Public Health for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.
- The ADPH NE Gambling Related Harms Network: public health representatives from the 12 local authorities, community treatment providers and trading standards/licensing colleagues.
- The Gambling Harms Lived Experience Forum.



Regional Programme Office (RPO)

The RPO offers a unique opportunity for addressing gambling harms through the provision of dedicated capacity to implement prevention work specific to the needs of the North East. Since 2023, the RPO has provided strategic direction, leadership and support, produced resources, conducted research, advocated on behalf of the agenda through national consultations, engaged with international experts and attended conferences to represent the gambling harms agenda locally, regionally and nationally.

Gambling Harms Programme Steering Group

The steering group provides governance and strategic oversight to the RPO. The steering group oversees approval of resources, spending, pilots and research outputs of the RPO.

ADPH NE Gambling Harms Network

The network is a collaborative peer environment that supports efforts to address gambling harms and reduce health inequalities across the North East of England. All 12 local authorities are represented in the network, in addition to colleagues from licensing departments and community treatment providers.

ADPH NE Gambling Harms Lived Experience Forum

The forum is a voluntary group that brings together members of the community from across the North East who have lived experiences of gambling harms and who would like to shape prevention work in the region. Members of the forum may be those who have experienced gambling harms either personally or as an affected other.

Logic Model

Assumptions	Inputs/ Resources	Activities	Mechanisms	Short/Medium Term Impact	Long Term Impact
• Gambling harms have both a land-based and online risk. • Gambling harms impact not only the individual (addiction, mental health) but affected others (friends, family) who also need support through treatments and or interventions. • Gambling harms are also associated with deprivation, substance misuse and poverty. • The NE has areas of high poverty and deprivation, with a culture for bingo and football. • There is a lack of awareness of services and lack of independent funding. • There is limited understanding of gambling harms across the region and in LA's.	• ADPH NE • 12 LA's Public Health Teams • Newcastle University • Middlesbrough Council • Gambling Harms Steering Group • ADPH NE Gambling Related Harms Network • GMCA + ADPH Y&H Group • 3rd Party groups incl. NECA • Academic literature • OHID • Chair of ADPH NE • NIHR / ARC	• Linking with PH teams in all 12 LA's. • Collecting data from interviews, focus groups, online surveys, etc. • Establishing research projects. • Establishing pilots. • Analysing how the regional plan is operationalised, effectiveness of treatment, impact of inequalities and profile of residents. • Assessment of the geography of the program to understand place based partnerships. • Conducting/creating research and resources.	• Collaborating with 12 LA's and PH teams. • Collaborating with 3rd party sectors/stakeholders linked services. • Developing and running the lived experience forum. • NIHR/ARC and other funding bids to support and extend the work. • Work with licensing colleagues across the NE. • Work aligned with the 3 domains of prevention for gambling harms.	• Understanding of the level of gambling harms in the region. • All 12 LA's complete HNA's. • Evidencing gambling harms and the commercial determinants of health. • Promotion of gambling harms resources and treatment pathways. • Increased visibility of programme team across the NE. • Establishing a number of pilots. • Establishing a number of research projects. • Multiple academic publications.	• Evidence the frequency of gambling harms across the 12 LA's. • Help LA's and stakeholders understand treatment pathways. • Increased establishment and awareness of the ADPH NE network . • Ensure stigma free and inclusive language. • Public health staff are better equipped and trained on gambling harms. • Whole system approach to tackling gambling harms in the NE. • Network includes wider stakeholders. • Reduced reliance on industry funding . • Completed pilots and research projects reported and impacted measured. • Publications used for bids and facilitating policy change.

Programme Outputs

A baselining process was conducted with gambling harm leads across the 12 local authorities at the commencement of the programme in September 2023 and again in July 2024. Data and insights gathered during this process have shaped the resources and outputs published by the programme.

During the development and testing phase of outputs, the gambling harm leads across the region were given the opportunity to provide feedback and shape resources. Members of the Lived Experience Forum also shaped and reviewed many of the outputs of the programme. Establishing a co-production approach with stakeholders, network members and the Lived Experience Forum has led to richer outcomes for resources and pilots. Reflections on the impact of outputs have been shared from stakeholders throughout this report.

Outputs are aligned with programme objectives:

- 1 Develop methods that can be implemented region-wide to highlight the harms associated with gambling, focusing on key groups.
- 2 Work alongside appropriate stakeholders linked with key settings to improve the delivery of early intervention and encourage engagement with treatment and support.
- 3 Work alongside existing treatment providers in the region to strengthen referral pathways from local settings into relevant treatment services.
- 4 Contribute to the evidence base of ‘what works well’.
- 5 Seek to build sustainable capacity in the North East system to address gambling harms that can exist once the Programme has ended.

The ADPH NE Gambling Harms Programme Lived Experience Forum ..	<u>10</u>
Gambling Harms ‘How to Guide’ for Local Authorities – A Suite of Resources	<u>11</u>
Academic Slide Decks	<u>13</u>
Gambling Harms in the North East: Regional Health Needs Assessment	<u>14</u>
Words Can Hurt: Gambling Harms Language Guide*	<u>15</u>
ADPH NE Gambling Harms Programme Newsletter	<u>16</u>
Making Every Contact Count (MECC) Gambling Harms Training Module	<u>17</u>
Pilot: Making Every Contact Count (MECC) Gambling Harms Training Module	<u>18</u>
Pilot: Hartlepool Gambling Harms Awareness Sessions	<u>19</u>
Pilot: South Tees Gambling Harms Public Health Website	<u>20</u>
Pilot: School Survey in Stockton on Tees and Sunderland	<u>21</u>
Pilot: Screening Questions in Middlesbrough	<u>21</u>
Research Output: Co-designed Research Priorities	<u>22</u>
Research Output: Understanding Drug and Alcohol Workers' Experiences of Gambling Related Harms in Treatment Settings in the North East	<u>23</u>

**Co-designed with multiple gambling harms regional programmes*

The ADPH NE Gambling Harms Programme Lived Experience Forum is a voluntary group of members of the community living in the North East who have lived experiences of gambling harms. Members of the forum may be those who have experienced gambling harms either personally or as an affected other. Forum members participate in discussions, review materials and provide feedback to the RPO to ensure all efforts are effective, relevant and impactful for those in the North East. Participants are also offered opportunities to participate in specific projects and research internally and externally. The forum connects local authorities with lived experience expertise to strengthen the delivery of local initiatives, building capacity within the region.

As of September 2025, the RPO has facilitated the following opportunities with the forum:

- Supporting the growth of forum membership.
- Facilitating quarterly online meetings.
- Sharing of lived experiences of gambling harms to shape regional pieces of work, such as the Regional HNA.
- Participation in the MECC and Gambling Harms module project group and co-production of the training module.
- Shaping and featuring in short films to illustrate gambling harms conversations for professionals.
- Reviewing regional resources prior to publication.
- Sharing of lived experiences in responses to Government Consultations relating to gambling harm.
- Development of a remuneration policy for forum contributions.

The RPO shares with the forum current and upcoming research opportunities and other relevant projects that are seeking participants with lived experience of gambling harms. Previous opportunities include:

- A research project with Northumbria University and the University of Salford to examine the relationships between experiences of trauma and gambling harms across the life course.
- A research project at Teesside University looking at the relationship between social identification with sports groups and gambling behaviour.

A remuneration policy was developed in recognition of the valuable insight and influence provided by forum members. The policy supports the growth and sustainability of the forum and their ongoing contribution to regional and local work.

Remuneration is provided for all time given to the programme via influence, research and participation activities.

“ *I feel like I’m making a difference and giving something back in my community.*

[I value] getting involved with others, giving my input to hopefully help people going forward.

They [the RPO] take everyone's input seriously and makes them feel heard.

”

FORUM MEMBER FEEDBACK

Gambling Harms ‘How to Guide’ for Local Authorities – Gambling Harms Educational Slide Deck

This suite of resources was developed by the RPO to support gambling harm leads working in the 12 North East local authorities. Resources were developed to upskill and guide local authority colleagues tackling gambling harms, with the aim to provide support in developing health needs assessments, awareness and prevention tools.

The ‘Gambling Harms Educational Slide Deck’ has been designed so that colleagues are able to select the slides that worked best for their audience and time frame, making it a dynamic resource.

This became one of the first freely available gambling harms educational resources that had a public health perspective and was free from all industry influence. Every fact and statement within this resource has been referenced with an academic study.

This resource can be accessed [here](#).

What is gambling?

Gambling is staking money, or something of value, on the outcome of something involving chance (Lostutter, et al., 2013).

It can include the following:	Arcades
	Betting (online, at an event or in a high street bookmakers)
	Bingo (online or in a bingo hall)
	Casino (online or in a casino)
	Lotteries (raffles, <u>tombolas</u> , sweepstakes etc)
	Gaming machines (fruit machines, fixed odds betting terminals)



I was shocked by the link between children, gambling and gaming.

The variety of ways that people can gamble and the ways people are enticed to gamble was shocking.

I was completely surprised by the levels of gambling harms and the different ways gambling affects people.



STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Gambling Harms ‘How to Guide’ for Local Authorities – Practical Guide for Local Authorities

The ‘Practical Guide for Local Authorities’ provides practical tips and advice for embedding a public health approach to gambling harms. This tool provides support to local authorities to baseline practice and covers the following areas:

- Guidance on beginning a health needs assessment on gambling harms.
- Collaborating with colleagues across local authority departments.
- Updating local authority websites to ensure gambling harms support services are signposted clearly.
- Creating a local steering group for gambling harms within local authority areas.
- Building a local action plan for gambling harms.
- Engaging with the Lived Experience Forum.
- Attending regional network meetings.

This resource can be accessed [here](#).



The guide is comprehensive and easy to understand.

This has been a great tool when developing our local steering group.

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK



Reducing Gambling Harms in your Local Authority

Here are some recommendations of how to begin or continue working to reduce gambling harms in your local authority.

Begin your Health Needs Assessment on Gambling Harms

Understanding the extent of gambling harms in your local authority will help to inform the interventions and prevention work that needs to take place. The first step to take is to conduct a health needs assessment for gambling harm. Data can help to illustrate the levels of harm and the need for intervention within your local authority. There are various data collection opportunities that you can think about. Consider engaging with the local community treatment provider and NHS provider for treatment data by postcode.

You could connect with your local Citizens Advice who can ask their service users about gambling related harms and their experiences. They can then report this back to your local authority. Think about opportunities to ask your service users in public health settings about gambling related harms, for example in annual health surveys to your wider population or at in-house services, such as alcohol and substance misuse appointments that are already taking place.

Think about a one-off survey that you could send out to residents within your local authority to capture data on gambling related harms.

Questions could include:

- What forms of gambling have you engaged in?
- How often do you gamble?
- What gambling harms have you experienced?
- Have you been negatively impacted by someone else’s gambling?
- If you were experiencing negative impacts of gambling, what kinds of support would you welcome?

Gambling Harms Academic Slide Deck

The ‘Gambling Harms Academic Slide Deck’ provides relevant and up-to-date literature to aid colleagues in evidencing gambling harms as a public health concern. This slide deck was the most popular request from a baselining activity of local priorities undertaken by the RPO from June 2024.

The gambling industry funds many academic research opportunities and outputs on gambling, which can influence messaging. This resource has attempted to present as much literature as possible that is free from any conflict of interest (COI). On each slide there are hyperlinks to the academic text, links written in full in the notes sections and full references in order of appearance at the end of the slide deck.

This resource can be accessed [here](#).

“ *This has been a helpful tool to share with students on any projects related to gambling.*

Health Determinants Research Collaboration colleagues have found this beneficial.

It’s great to be able to easily navigate the evidence base for gambling harms.

This is a great tool to begin developing my understanding of this topic area.

”
STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Esports and Video Games Gambling Harms Academic Slide Deck

This ‘Esports and Video Games Gambling Harms Academic Slide Deck’ provides relevant and up-to-date literature to aid colleagues in evidencing gambling harms within esports and videogames as a public health concern.

This resource endeavours to present as much literature as possible that is free from any conflict of interest (COI). On each slide there are hyperlinks to the academic text, links written in full in the notes sections and full references in order of appearance at the end of the slide deck.

The need for this resource was identified by the regional network due to the lack of resources, knowledge and awareness of gambling harms within the esports and video game space, particularly from the perspective of caregivers, educators and public health professionals.

The slide deck is a key resource that will be included in a larger practical toolkit for public health professionals, caregivers and educators on gambling elements in esports and video games, which is currently in development.

This resource can be accessed [here](#).

“ *It’s great to be able to understand some of the different elements in better detail that impact children and young people.*

”
STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

The ‘Gambling Harms in the North East: Regional Health Needs Assessment’ (Regional HNA) is the first report to bring together all available treatment and population data for gambling harms focusing on the North East region. It collates the most up-to-date local and national evidence and data to describe gambling and gambling harms in the North East, as well as providing recommendations for future efforts. The resource also includes insights from members of the Lived Experience Forum and treatment providers in the North East.

The Regional HNA aims to inform decision makers, including Directors of Public Health, about the extent and impact of gambling harms in the community and support front-line teams across health, community, voluntary and public services to better understand gambling harms in the North East.

The Regional HNA provides a comprehensive evidence-based summary of gambling harms. This document breaks down the data of treatment referrals by sex, age and local authority area. In addition to this, it provides insight on the density and types of gambling premises across the North East which are contributing to gambling harms in communities.

The Regional HNA provides insight to support the development of local health needs assessments for gambling harms in each North East local authority. In addition, it provides an evidence base for North East specific recommendations to improve prevention approaches for gambling harms both across the North East and in recommendations nationally via consultations.

This resource can be accessed [here](#).

“
This is great - the team have done a really good job. The content is spot on.
This is a fabulous piece of work.
This is a helpful base to generate our own report locally, thanks.
Having the data in one place is a great help.
”

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

The 2021 HSE found that men (55%) were more likely than women (45%) to take part in gambling activity. This is representative of the evidence that men are more likely to gamble at harmful levels than women (Office for Health Improvement & Disparities, 2023). There is currently limited information regarding gambling participation in those who identify as non-binary or a gender that is different to their sex at birth.

50% of adults aged 16 and over had participated in some form of gambling in the last 12 months. Of this, 36% had participated in gambling other than the National Lottery. The most popular gambling activities were:

- Tickets for National Lottery Draw (34%)
- Tickets for other lotteries (15%)
- Scratchcards (14%)
- Online betting with a bookmaker (8%)
- Betting on horse races at a bookmaker, by phone or at a racecourse (5%).



Figure 6. Gambling participation in the last 4 weeks (Gambling Commission, 2023).

Figure 6 shows the percentage of the population participating in gambling for all gambling, online gambling and in person gambling. Online gambling has increased from 19% in 2018 to 38% in 2023. In person gambling has decreased from 34.8% in 2018 to 24.5% in 2021. It has risen to 29% in 2023. This follows a similar pattern for ‘all gambling’ whereby figures from 2018 of 45.8% dropped to 42% in 2020 and rose to 48% in 2023.

The ADPH NE Gambling Harms Programme has collaborated with other regional gambling harms programmes, including the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and ADPH Yorkshire and the Humber Programmes. The three regional programmes co-produced ‘Words Can Hurt: Language Guide for Gambling Harms’. This resource promotes language choices that reduce the stigma often associated with gambling harms.

This resource has been used to shape website content, communications and resources across the region. It has ensured that conversations and discussions about gambling harms use non-judgemental and non-stigmatising language.

This resource can be accessed [here](#).

“*It’s great to see the narrative changing from one of individual responsibility.*

This is a great practical tool to use.

I’ve used this when developing the website and it’s been very helpful.

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK



Easy dos and don'ts		
Most of these language suggestions move away from individual responsibility, we don't want to suggest the person experiencing harm is the problem, the issues are the gambling industry products and practices. Blaming people affected causes more harm and increases shame – this can make it hard to talk about what's happening. At the same time, we recognise that people can be empowered with the right language and own their recovery.		
Don't say	Do say	Why?
• A lot of people enjoy a flutter • Can be fun • Social/leisure activity	• Avoid referencing any positives of gambling	Referring to gambling as a 'fun' or 'social' activity reinforces perceptions that there is something 'wrong' with anyone who experiences harm or addiction. It can also add to a perception that 'everyone is doing it'.
• Problem gambler • Gambling addict	• Person experiencing gambling harms • Person who is gambling at risky levels • Person being harmed by gambling • Person living with gambling addiction • Person in recovery from a gambling addiction	The person being harmed by gambling is more than just their experience with gambling. Remove the label (as this can be stigmatising), and make them 'a person with/experiencing...'

The ADPH North East Gambling Harms Programme publishes a bi-monthly newsletter. Given the geographic scale of the programme, this is a helpful tool to keep stakeholders and partners informed of new resources from the RPO. The newsletter also shares relevant publications, CPD opportunities, updates from within the North East and local, regional and national news.

Each newsletter has a dedicated section that shares academic articles that are identified as free from industry influence.

As of September 2025, 10 newsletters have been published. 92 partners nationally receive the newsletter publications, generating at a minimum 828 gambling harms information engagement opportunities for the programme. These partners then share this publication with their own networks in turn, creating further gambling harms engagement.

Newsletter editions can be accessed [here](#).



Thanks for this [it is] super interesting.

It's been great to receive this, I have shared with my colleagues.

Newsletter very helpful to have everything in one place.

We feel we can rely on the programme for updates and resources.



STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

APRIL 2025

ADPH
North East

ADPH NE GAMBLING HARMS PROGRAMME

Welcome to the North East Gambling-Related Harms Programme April 2025 newsletter. We are working to develop a regional approach to tackle the harm caused by gambling across the North East.

FREE ONLINE WEBINAR:
Gambling Harm and Neurodiversity
Thu, 26 Jun 2025 10:00 - 12:00 BST
This event from **The Scottish Gambling Education Hub** explores the complex issue of gambling harms and how it affects people with neurodiversity.
Reserve a place [here](#).

FREE ONLINE WEBINAR:
Trauma and Gambling-Related Harms Toolkit Launch Webinar
Tues, 20 May 2025 11:00 - 12:00 BST
This toolkit was commissioned, funded and co-developed by the **Department of Public Health at Manchester City Council** in collaboration with **Chapter One**.
Reserve a place [here](#).

PODCAST: Inside the Commission
This new podcast from The Gambling Commission explores the principles, challenges, and operations behind the regulation of betting, gaming, and lotteries.
You can access the first two episodes via YouTube [here](#).
The podcast is also available on Spotify and Apple Podcasts.

PODCAST: Changing the Odds
BBC Radio 4
Journalist Lydia Thomas teams up with industry insider Stewart Kenny, one of the founders of betting giant Paddy Power, to examine the impact of the 2005 Gambling Act 20 years later.
The podcast can be found online [here](#).

In this edition, you'll find national, regional and local updates and insight.

Regionally, we share details of the new Making Every Contact Count (MECC) Gambling Harms training module that is soon to launch and an updated Regional Gambling Harms Health Needs Assessment.

Across the 12 North East Local Authorities, steering groups are growing and Health Needs Assessments have been published or are in development. Please see an opportunity below to share insight via the Hartlepool Borough Council survey.

Thank you for the continued efforts in working to tackle gambling harms.

MECC (Making Every Contact Count) Gambling Harms Training Module

A new MECC Gambling Harms training module will shortly be launched. This has been co-produced by a variety of stakeholders across the region.



The module aims to upskill professionals about the topic area of gambling harms, how to deliver a gambling harms brief intervention and where to signpost to for treatment and support services across the North East.

A huge thank you to everyone that has been involved in supporting the development of this regional resource.

We will share more soon, but you can keep an eye out for the module via the [MECC Boost Platform](#) and find out more about support services in the North East via the [MECC Gambling Harms page](#).

A key need identified during baselining with local authority gambling harm leads was the need for evidence-based training resources that were free from industry influence for both public health teams and other local authority staff, especially those working in front-line services.

The ‘MECC and Gambling Harms’ training module was co-produced with a project group, comprising representatives from the RPO, local authority leads, OHID, NECA and members of the Lived Experience Forum. The module was modelled on a successful pilot in the North East between Making Every Contact Count North East North Cumbria and the Money and Pensions Service.



I was lucky to have the opportunity to chair the project group for the MECC module. The approach taken to co-produce with a range of regional colleagues incl. lived experience was fantastic. The team provided excellent expertise and advice combined with a fantastic work ethic to produce a fantastic product that evaluated very well in terms of its impact on staff knowledge and confidence.

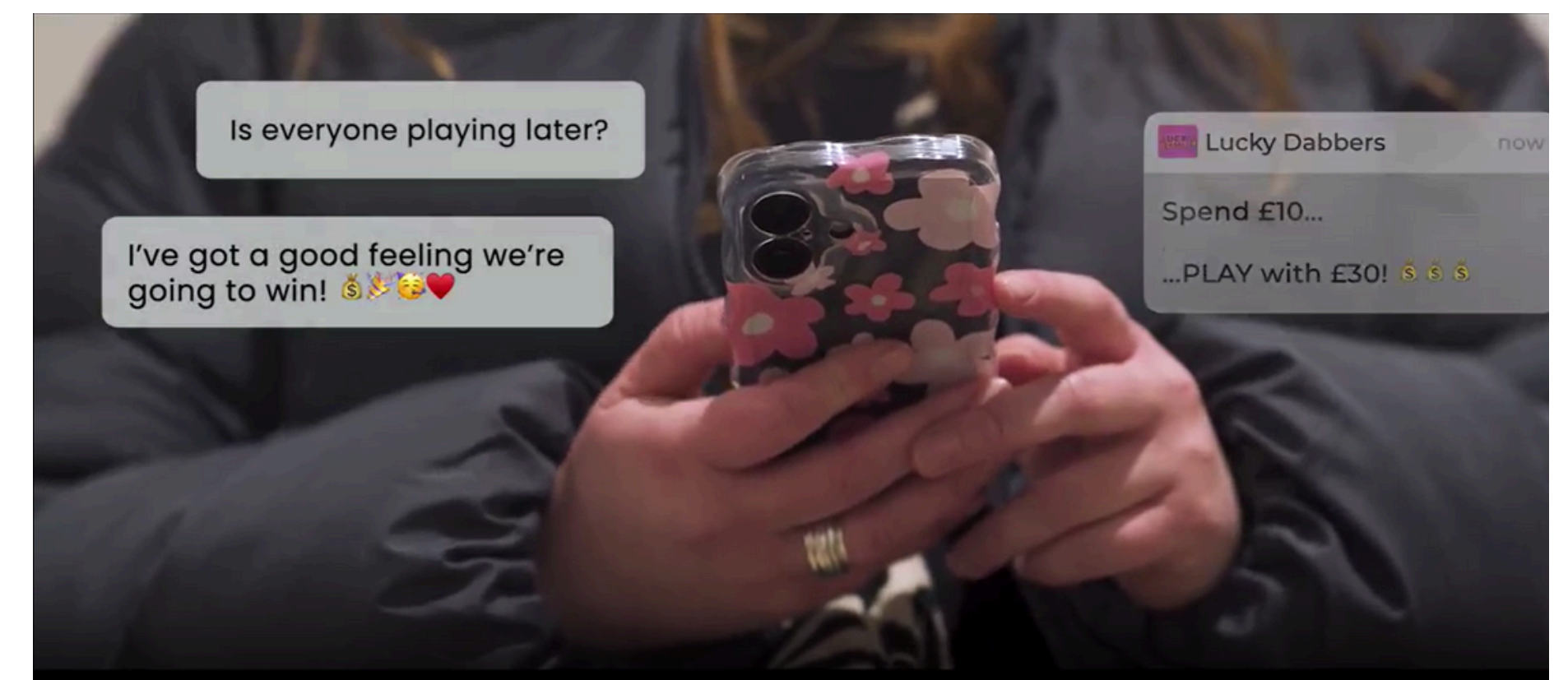


The module covers key areas including: **PROJECT GROUP CHAIR FEEDBACK**

- What is gambling and how can people gamble?
- What are gambling harms and who can they impact?
- A shared story and insights from the Lived Experience Forum members.
- The continuum of gambling harm and how to recognise signs of harm.
- The gambling environment and what makes gambling products addictive.
- How to support somebody who may be experiencing gambling harms with language choices, the MECC 3 A's model of ‘Ask, Assist and Act’.
- A thorough overview of treatment for gambling harms in the North East and how professionals can refer into these services.
- An overview of blocking and self-exclusion tools.

MECC Conversations: Short Films

A core feature of the MECC module was the development of 2x short films demonstrating how to have a brief intervention conversation about gambling harms. Films depict conversations in two different settings: one in a clinical setting and one in a community advice centre. These have been developed to show the conversation happening in three ways: simple, complex and challenging.



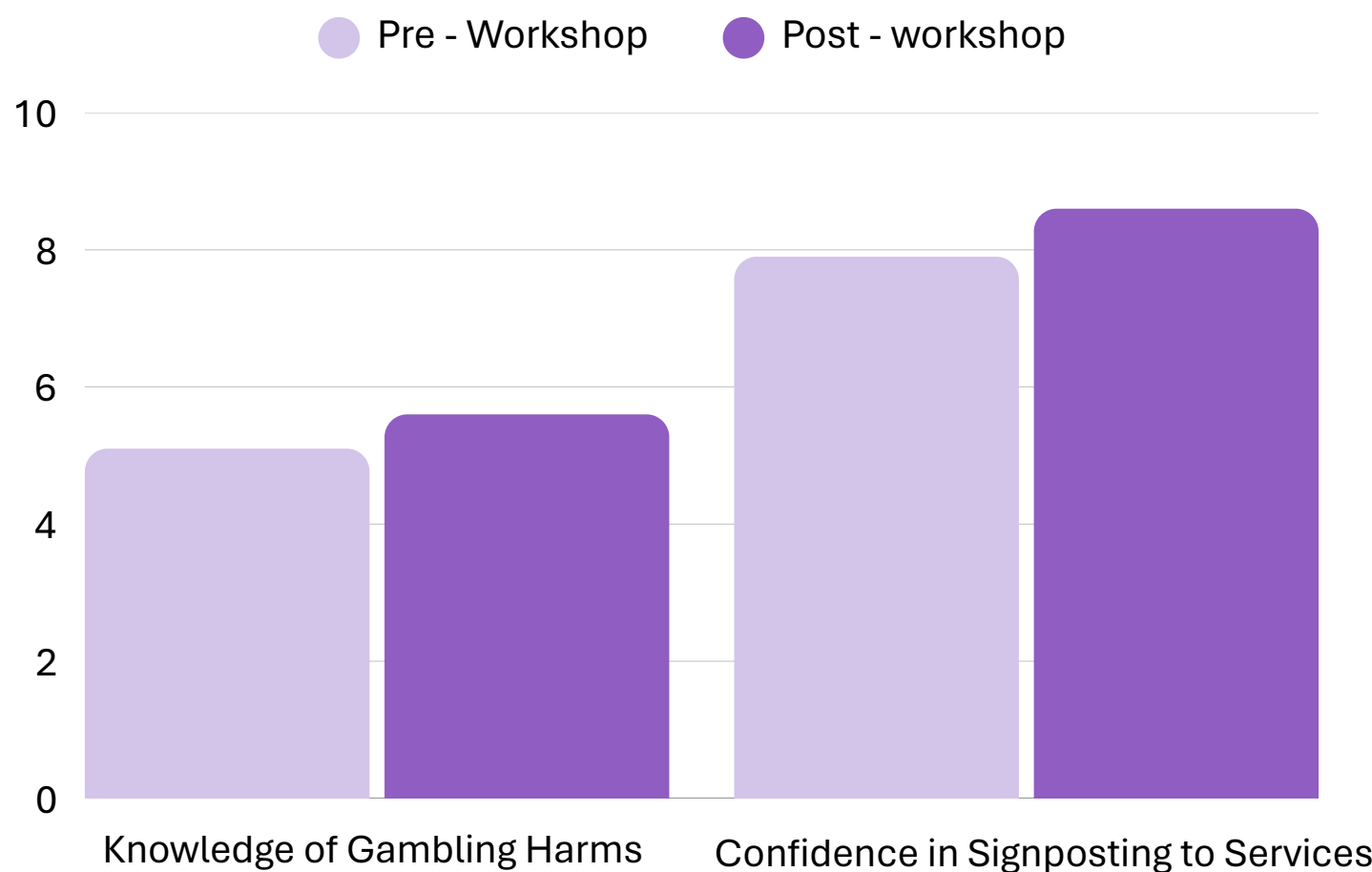
Pilot testing was conducted of the ‘MECC and Gambling Harms’ training module at four locations within the North East region: Hartlepool, Sunderland, Newcastle upon Tyne and Durham. The MECC Lead for North East and North Cumbria and the Public Health Specialist from the RPO delivered the training on four dates across January and February 2025. Audience members were invited by local authority gambling harm leads. Evaluation was embedded throughout the pilots at all stages.

Both quantitative and qualitative data was recorded to measure and record the impact of the MECC and Gambling Harms module.

Learning Effect Pre- and Post- Training

Participants rated their knowledge on the subject and their confidence in signposting to services on a scale of 1-10 both pre- and post- training, with 1 being the lowest measure and 10 being the highest.

Participants knowledge of gambling harms increase by 2.8, and their confidence in signposting increased by 3.0 points following the workshop.



What was your favourite part of the training?

[The Lived Experience] story was powerful. We need to increase education and knowledge across the board to increase support.

Learning about support available for affected others as well as individuals experiencing gambling harms.

Explanation of types of gambling and harms [was] very enlightening.

Understanding where to signpost or refer people to.

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

How will you use the training?

I will access the website and cascade to my team members and will apply learning to relevant clients.

Refer clients to MECC site. [I] think all staff should complete this course.

To show during team meetings to ensure colleagues are able to develop their knowledge and skills.

I will make sure our local authority website is up to date with services.

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Two gambling harms workshops have taken place with Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations in Hartlepool, led by the Advanced Public Health Practitioner for Hartlepool Borough Council and supported by the RPO’s Public Health Specialist.

The workshops trained 32 volunteers and professionals in advice centres in Hartlepool in June and July 2024 using the ‘ADPH NE Gambling Harms Slide Deck’ as its base with discussion. There were dedicated discussion elements in the session, with prompts such as:

- Do you see people that have been affected by gambling?
- Do you ever suspect someone’s financial issues may be caused by gambling?
- Do you know where to signpost or support someone experiencing gambling harms?
- How confident do you feel having conversations about gambling harms?

Noted observations from the workshops were that the majority of those who attended the workshops did not know where to signpost to locally. There was also considerable apprehension to ask gambling harm questions for fear of appearing ‘nosey’. The now available ‘MECC and Gambling Harms’ training module is designed to address this gap in knowledge and confidence.



I found the session very informative, thank you.

This was really interesting and well presented.

I enjoyed the discussions.

The slide deck could also be updated as more local intelligence is gathered with Hartlepool specific data.

Imagery could be inserted that would resonate with local residents, such as council owned images or photos of local services.



PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK
‘HOW YOU WILL USE THE TRAINING’

Supporting local authorities at various stages of their gambling harm prevention work has shown the value of a pilot approach, whereby learning can be taken from ‘what works well’ in local authorities who are progressing at pace and best practice shared with local authorities that have reduced capacity. The RPO has adopted this learning with further local authority pilots to contribute to the evidence-base of best practice approaches to gambling harms prevention.

The RPO has supported local authorities across the region to embed gambling harms information onto their websites and to include this in any public health or financial support guidance. The RPO worked with public health teams in South Tees (Middlesbrough Council and Redcar and Cleveland Council), who were in the process of developing a new public health specific website, to ensure the inclusion of gambling harms support and treatment options. Information about gambling harms has been featured alongside financial support on the website.

This new resource provides residents of South Tees with information and support for gambling harms, alongside blocking tools and treatment services. It is interactive and the reading age of content has been made suitable for residents.

The website content that was developed for South Tees has been shared across the region with all local authorities so that they can embed this content or similar onto their own web pages. The RPO has provided both a long and short version of this content, depending on the web space that is available across the region. This approach aims to improve accessibility of information for residents across the North East in relation to preventing and treating gambling harms. Data will be analysed when it becomes available as these sites are developed across the region.



I work as a Health Improvement Specialist for Public Health South Tees. I’m currently leading the development of our new website, which aims to strengthen how we communicate with both residents and partners. At present, our messaging is fragmented across multiple social media accounts and websites, lacking a clear identity and consistent representation of who we are and what we do as a Public Health team.

Early in the project, I met with [the RPO] and was introduced to “Gambling Harms” as a recent addition to the Public Health South Tees vulnerabilities programme. That initial meeting was incredibly insightful, offering a deeper understanding of the various workstreams and services [the RPO] are involved with. Since then, I’ve been able to share information about the support available with colleagues and clients, particularly around gambling and its associated harms.

[The RPO] has been extremely supportive throughout the process, providing clear, relevant information and useful links for the new website. [The RPO] also kindly took part in one of my university dissertation interviews, offering thoughtful recommendations on improving accessibility and engagement with services. I believe the Gambling Harms page will be a valuable resource, especially as we’ve not previously had a centralised space where people can easily access tailored advice and guidance. I have really enjoyed working with [the RPO] and look forward to working together on future projects. Thank you for the support!

REFLECTION FROM HEALTH IMPROVEMENT SPECIALIST FROM SOUTH TEES
PUBLIC HEALTH

Pilot: School Survey in Stockton on Tees and Sunderland



The RPO were approached by Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and Sunderland City Council to support with embedding gambling harms questions into their school health surveys. In Stockton-on-Tees, this survey is called the Schools Health Education Unit Survey and in Sunderland it is called the Health Related Behaviour Survey. The RPO were able to support the recommendations of definitions to be included and screening questions for these surveys, including differentiation of questions for different age groups.

Through the influence of the RPO, both local authorities included questions based on advice given in their respective surveys. Outputs from these surveys are still outstanding but once available will be used to shape recommendations for future school surveys across the North East.

“
Thank you to the team for the feedback on the gambling harms questions. We very much appreciate your input.

Support with this has been amazing! Thank you.



STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Pilot: Gambling Harms Screening Questions in Middlesbrough



The RPO has been supporting Middlesbrough Council to embed gambling harms screening questions into in-house services. This includes drug and alcohol services, housing and homelessness services. Learning from embedding screening questions within these services will be taken for other departments within Middlesbrough Council and results will be shared across the region.

The RPO has been able to provide options for screening questions and the evidence base for these questions. In addition to this, the ‘MECC and Gambling Harms’ training module has been used to train front line staff within these services to give them confidence to ask questions and knowledge of where to signpost and refer to locally.

This pilot will be monitored and feedback will be gathered from front line staff to see how successful these interactions have been.

Research is also underway to explore the viability of screening questions more broadly in drug and alcohol settings. Learning from the Middlesbrough pilot will be reviewed and evaluated before further recommendations are made.

“
There is definitely a need for this. It’s been great to get staff trained in MECC for Gambling Harms alongside this.

I’m looking forward to seeing how this develops.



STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

The research arm of the programme is designed to evaluate health and wellbeing outcomes caused by gambling harms, alongside bespoke research projects for the ADPH NE Regional Gambling Related Harms Network.

Newcastle University provides system and research support to the RPO to help evaluate programme outputs, network requested research projects and support local authority gambling harm leads to embed research activity.

To inform the research priorities of the research arm, five proposed research projects were presented to each representative of the 12 North East local authorities to score which project they wished to commission. This was conducted via a research prioritisation matrix, which was co-produced between members of the Gambling Harms Steering Group and Newcastle University.

The research arm of the programme has been tasked to action the following top three projects voted on by representatives.

Research Question 1

‘Gambling Harms Educational Toolkit on Esports and Gaming for Teachers and Parents.’

“ This piece of work could change perceptions of health needs. The area is under reported and possibly undervalued. This could provide a solution to a gap teachers may face.

[This] would produce valuable resources that could immediately be useful for all LA areas, partners, and stakeholders.

NETWORK MEMBER FEEDBACK ”

Research Question 2

‘Interviewing North East Drug and Alcohol Worker’s Experiences with Patients Experiencing Gambling Related Harms: Prevalence, Education and Harm Reduction Practices.’

“ It would absolutely meet local needs. There is too little local data available in terms of detailed knowledge of the issues, gaps and what would help from a supportive/interventions perspective.

Holistic approach for vulnerable people – high priority. Could save LA’s and wider public services a huge amount of money if this leads to interventions.

NETWORK MEMBER FEEDBACK ”

Research Question 3

‘Betting Clusters and the Commercial Determinants of Health: Analysis of National and North East Bookmakers, Bingo Halls and Casinos.’

“ Very similar to fast food takeaway work. Would bring focus to the commercial determinants of health. Could be used to campaign at a national level.

This would be very helpful to understand the level of need and where interventions should be focused. Licensing colleagues would appreciate this too.

NETWORK MEMBER FEEDBACK ”

Aim:

To investigate the barriers and enablers for drug and alcohol workers in the North East to address gambling harms in substance misuse settings.

Objectives:

- Assess and understand the range and proportion of service users with gambling harm in North East drug and alcohol treatment services.
- Investigate if screening tools and protocols are used to assess and refer patients with gambling harm in drug and alcohol settings.
- Determine the type of gambling harm training drug and alcohol staff receive.
- Understand the barriers and enablers to embedding gambling harm education and or support within drug and alcohol settings.

The proposal aims to address an identified gap in the literature regarding the intersection of substance misuse and gambling harms. The project is motivated by the lack of existing research in this area, despite strong evidence linking gambling harms with other addictions.

This study recognises the combination of high levels of substance misuse and gambling harms in the North East.

The research arm of the programme conducted qualitative interviews with drug and alcohol stakeholders affiliated with a local authority to provide treatment and support services. In total, 34 participants across 11 different job categories, who are represented by 17 males and 17 females, that encompass all 12 North East local authorities were recruited.

Four themes were identified from interviews. Three manuscripts will be produced from these identified themes, with the first paper to be submitted to a journal in 2025.

Current Advances in Gambling Research (CAGR) Conference

An invite was received to present at the Current Advances in Gambling Research (CAGR) Conference hosted by both the University of Glasgow and the Academic Forum for the Study of Gambling (AFSG). This took place on June 16th - 17th 2025. The Research Associate from the programme presented on Research Project 1 regarding drug and alcohol workers' experiences of gambling harms in the North East of England.



I am the regional lead for Drugs and Alcohol and my role is to provide advice, guidance, and support to Local Authorities around reducing drug and alcohol related harm.

I work with Local Authorities and collaborate with a range of key partners, including health, housing, police, probation, prisons, and voluntary organisations, to jointly deliver regional projects to support quality improvement. A significant part of my role is around creating and facilitating opportunities to enable cross sector working to identify areas for improvement, for example improving referral pathways and strengthening integration between services.

The Regional D&A network were keen to support the Gambling Related Harm Programme to investigate the barriers and enablers for drug and alcohol workers' to address gambling related harm in substance misuse settings. The project provided an opportunity for D&A services to review current practice and identify training gaps to improve knowledge and awareness to support the embedding of gambling related harm education and support within their services.



**REFLECTION FROM HEALTH AND WELLBEING PROGRAMME MANAGER
NORTH EAST OHID**

Stakeholder Engagement

ADPH NE Gambling Related Harms Network

The ADPH NE Gambling Related Harms Network is a collaborative peer environment with representation from all 12 local authorities, in addition to colleagues from licensing departments, ADPH NE and OHID. The RPO benefits from network expertise and contributions to planning and co-production of projects. Network members receive support from the RPO to inform their gambling harms work within their specific local authority.

The network aims are:

- To support the delivery of the ADPH NE Gambling Harms Programme.
- To continue to develop a collaborative peer environment that supports efforts to address gambling harms and reduce health inequalities in the North East of England.
- To bring together local authority, community treatment provider and NHS stakeholders across the North East to facilitate planning to address common priorities.

The RPO plays a vital role in the facilitation of network meetings and by sharing best practice and resources to assist gambling harm leads in their public health approach. Co-opted representatives from other relevant bodies, such as treatment providers, may be invited to attend network meetings where relevant and with majority support from members.

Between October 2023 and September 2025, the RPO have responded to more than 75 gambling harms queries and support requests from the 12 local authority gambling harm leads in the North East.

Key Network Achievements

- Co-production of the ‘Making Every Contact Count (MECC) and Gambling Harms’ training module.
- Establishing the research priorities of the programme, via a Research Consultation Matrix where multiple research topics were voted on to measure regional need.
- Four local steering groups established by local gambling harms leads, with support from the RPO, in Sunderland City Council, Newcastle City Council, North Tyneside Council and Durham County Council .
- Four local gambling harms health needs assessments produced, with another four in development.
- Aiding with planning and licensing applications to refuse further proliferation of gambling premises in North East communities, such as supporting the refusal of an additional betting premises on Middlesbrough’s Linthorpe Road.
- Supporting a ‘Health in All Policies’ approach via the inclusion of gambling harms in reports, such as Sunderland City Council’s ‘Domestic Violence Report’.
- Supporting with updating ‘Statement of Licensing’ Policies.
- Connecting local authority colleagues with research happening regionally on gambling harms.

Wider Stakeholder Engagement

Treatment Providers

The RPO has a close working relationships with **NECA**, the community treatment provider in the North East. One of the key outcomes of this collaboration was the co-production of the ‘MECC and Gambling Harms’ training module, developed in partnership with NECA and other stakeholders. NECA has also contributed valuable treatment data and insights, supporting the development of the Regional HNA and ensuring that the report reflects local treatment trends and needs.

While establishing a relationship with the **NHS Northern Gambling Service** was initially challenging due to capacity constraints, progress has been made in the second year of the programme. Further collaboration with the NHS Northern Gambling Clinic will strengthen the network of treatment providers involved in the programme.

Multiple **Drug and Alcohol Support Services** who are affiliated with local authorities have received introductory training on gambling harms and referral pathways for treatment providers. The RPO has supported the incorporation of screening questions on gambling harms into service intakes and questionnaires.

Primary stakeholders from drug and alcohol services were included in interviews to inform the research project ‘Understanding Drug and Alcohol Workers’ Experiences of Gambling Related Harms in Treatment Settings in the North East’. This input has been invaluable in understanding how gambling harms intersect with substance misuse and how treatment services can better address both issues.

Academic and Research Partners

The RPO has developed key partnerships with universities across the North East to address gambling harm prevention for students and staff.

At **Newcastle University**, the RPO has supported the integration of gambling harm prevention into the student wellbeing service and trained staff to conduct brief interventions. Similarly, the RPO has assisted **Northumbria University** in developing their own approach to gambling harm support.

Teesside University engaged the RPO to support a Masters student’s dissertation as part of their ‘Impact Lab’ programme. Literature and insights from the ADPH NE Gambling Harms Programme were provided by the RPO, helping the student shape their research.

The RPO also collaborated with the **University of Edinburgh** on the PRoGRAM-A (Preventing Gambling Related Harm in Adolescents) project, a peer-led intervention aimed at preventing gambling harm in young people. The intervention, tested through a pilot randomised control trial, showed promise as an effective school-based approach to gambling prevention.

These partnerships help advance gambling harm prevention efforts while providing valuable research opportunities for students and academics, and enhancing community health initiatives.

VCSE Organisations

The RPO has worked with **Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE)** organisations to provide evidence on the prevalence and impact of gambling harms. These interactions have helped to align efforts across the sector and enhance the collective impact of gambling harm initiatives. The RPO has also supported these organisations by providing signposting information, helping them to connect individuals with the appropriate services and resources.

Local Authorities

The RPO has also worked with local authorities outside of the North East to share insights and support gambling harm prevention efforts.

In November 2024, the RPO presented the North East's whole systems approach to gambling harm prevention at an Inquiry Meeting held by **Southampton City Council**. This led to Southampton's decision to engage academic and government partners to develop a multiagency harm reduction programme. The presentation also encouraged the council to adopt the 'Words Can Hurt' language guide to improve communication around gambling harm.

Sandwell Council reached out to the RPO for guidance as they begin their own gambling harm work in the Midlands. The RPO shared resources and insights from the North East's pilots, which were well received by the Sandwell team. This collaboration is helping shape gambling harm strategies in the Midlands while promoting cross-regional knowledge exchange.

NHS Trusts and Integrated Care Boards (ICBs)

The results of the programme's drug and alcohol project were shared with key stakeholders from the **Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust** and **North East North Cumbria Integrated Care Board**, sparking further discussions on how these findings could inform the development of practical tools. The research demonstrates a significant overlap between substance misuse and gambling harms, which prompted stakeholders to explore co-producing a screening tool or short-item questionnaire to serve as an early identification mechanism for gambling harms, ensuring quicker referrals to treatment services and ultimately improving patient outcomes.

The RPO engaged with **Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust** to address the link between suicide, suicide ideation and gambling harms. The RPO provided essential academic evidence and resources to assist in their work, which focuses on understanding and raising awareness of the intersection between gambling and mental health. These resources are currently in development and will serve as key materials for healthcare professionals to better identify and respond to patients at risk.

Regional Gambling Harms Programmes

The North East programme has worked closely with other regional public health approaches to gambling harm prevention. This includes collaboration with the regional gambling harms programmes from the **Greater Manchester Combined Authority** and **ADPH Yorkshire and the Humber**.

In addition to sharing findings and best practice, the three regional programmes co-produced the 'Words Can Hurt: Gambling Harms Language Guide'.

Stakeholder Feedback: ADPH NE Gambling Related Harms Network

Members of the ADPH NE Gambling Related Harms Network provided feedback on their experiences working with the ADPH NE Gambling Harms Programme.



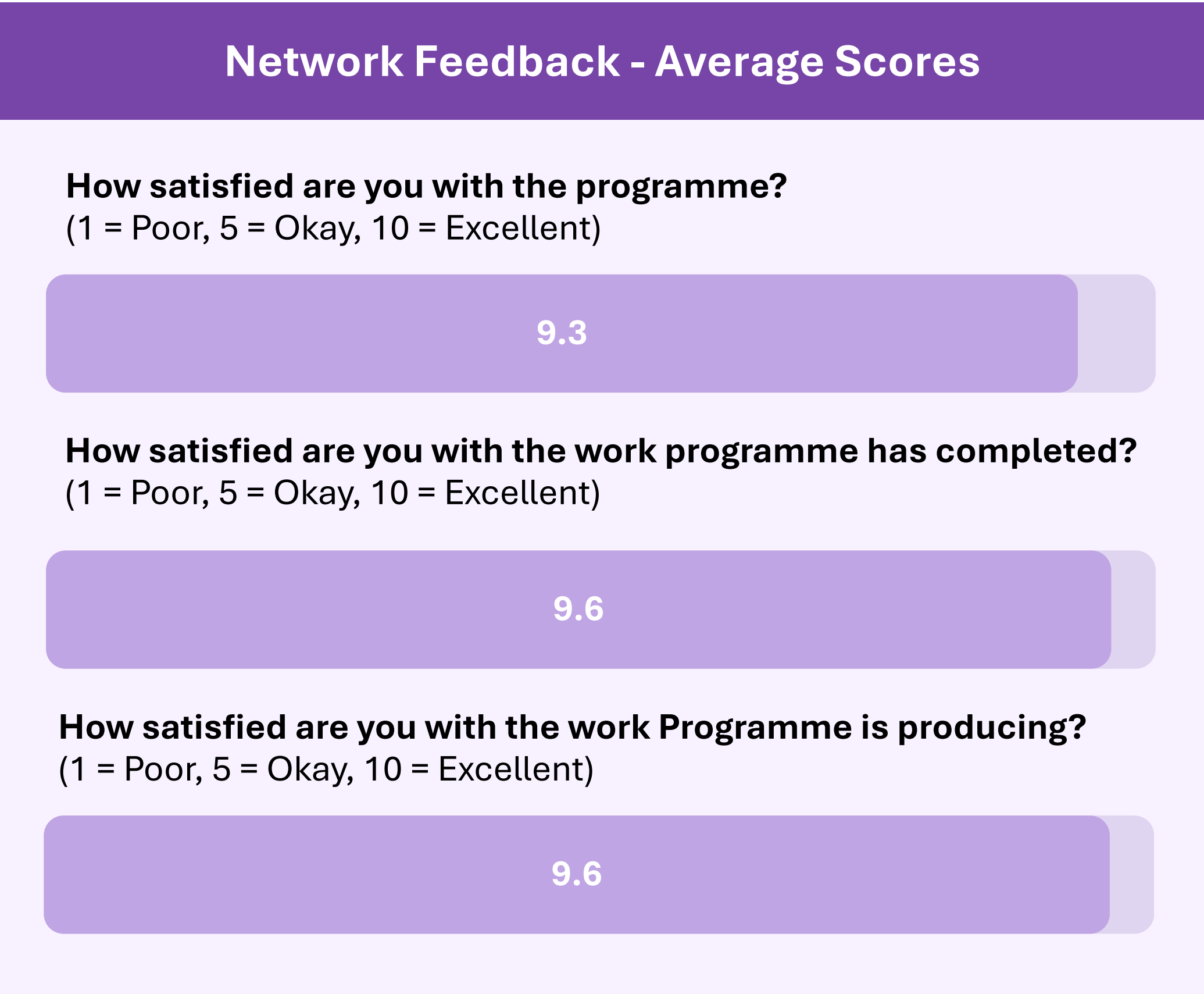
“ Although only a small part of my role I feel having the [Gambling Harm Network and RPO] support has made this an enjoyable work experience

I always feel like my advice and feedback is valued and also actioned in a proportionate way.

The team are so easy to work with and I'm thoroughly enjoying supporting their overarching aims and objectives, which is obviously beneficial for me locally, too!

The strong relationship I have with the team is invaluable. I know I can come to them for advice/guidance/support anytime and they'll always give me more than I need.

”



FEEDBACK FROM NETWORK MEMBERS

Stakeholder Feedback: MECC and Gambling Harms Module Launch

An event was held in May 2025 to launch the ‘MECC and Gambling Harms’ training module, bringing together over 70 stakeholders from across the North East. Attendees heard a powerful story of lived experience, perspectives from clinical expertise and received further details about the creation of the ‘MECC and Gambling Harms’ training module. The afternoon featured a workshop on how to deliver the training, where MECC trained staff from across the region were equipped with the knowledge and resources to deliver this training across their local authority area.



70+

Attendees from across the North East



157

Professionals trained since module launch

MECC Launch Attendee Feedback - Average Scores

Overall Satisfaction with the Event - How satisfied were you with the overall MECC Launch event? (1 = Poor, 5 = Okay, 10 = Excellent)

9.4

Relevance of Content - How relevant did you find the content presented during the event to your role and professional interests? (1 = Not Relevant, 5 = Somewhat Relevant, 10 = Highly Relevant)

9.4

“

Great course with plenty of help to deliver- good job.

Learning about what help is available in the North East for people who have or are experiencing gambling related harms [was valuable].

[I enjoyed] seeing the content of training, networking, listening to other’s thoughts. The lived experience aspect of the day was powerful.

All [of the event] was valuable.

”

FEEDBACK FROM LAUNCH ATTENDEES



Training for the MECC module can be accessed via the [Boost Learning Academy](#) and resources are housed on NHS futures. Further evaluation is being conducted as the training is rolled out across the region.

Innovation in Public Health Award 2024

The RPO were nominated for an award by the Association of Directors of Public Health North East (ADPH NE) at the 2024 North East Public Health Conference.

The North East Public Health Conference 2024 brought together public health professionals to share and celebrate the fantastic work being undertaken across the region.

The RPO was nominated for the category “Innovation in Public Health Practice in 2024”. The RPO received this award in December 2024.

The full list of nominations and award categories can be found here: [North East Public Health Awards: Presentation | North East](#)



Image sourced from [Public Health Conference 2024 Event Pack](#)

Programme Evaluation

Evaluation of the programme will be undertaken by researchers from the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) and Applied Research Collaboration North East and North Cumbria (ARC NENC) at Newcastle University.

Evaluation has been embedded throughout the life course of the programme to date. The evaluation framework for the programme will adopt a mixed-methods approach to test the effectiveness and acceptability of preventative interventions.

The primary objectives of the evaluation are:

- *Public Health Impact:* Explore the impact of the programme in informing and improving public health strategies to mitigate gambling harms.
- *Academic Contribution:* Evaluate the contributions of the research arm of the programme to evidence-based knowledge on gambling harms and dissemination through publications and conferences.
- *Local Authority Engagement:* Determine how well the programme has influenced policymaking, resource allocation and service delivery within local government structures.
- *Community Outcomes:* Measure changes in gambling harms indicators within the region.
- *Sustainability and Scalability:* Examine the feasibility of continuing and expanding interventions informed by research and national policy and or legislation.
- *Prevention Contribution:* Evaluate how programme resources and activities have contributed to gambling harm prevention locally, regionally and nationally.

Challenges

The programme has encountered barriers to implementing a regional approach to gambling harms prevention in the North East. Ongoing evaluation and reflection provides the opportunity to learn from and overcome these challenges, and will continue to inform how the programme addresses barriers in future projects.

Data Collection

The lack of national, regional and local data for gambling harms made initial intelligence gathering efforts from the programme challenging. The RPO built relationships with treatment providers in the North East to better understand and share available evidence. In addition to this, the RPO has developed surveys for local and regional use to support further data collection. The programme has advocated for improved national data gathering and sharing during multiple consultations.

Engagement with Local Authorities across the Region

There have been varying levels of engagement and capacity within the 12 local authorities in the North East to embed the programme-led regional approach. Varying capacity in different local authority areas has hampered the ability to share knowledge and experience across the region. The programme is committed to increasing engagement by communicating the value of a regional approach to gambling harms, facilitating collaboration between local authorities and providing resources to support the development of local health needs assessments.

Programme Capacity

Delays in establishing a full working team for the programme resulted from recruitment and workforce challenges. This resulted in delays in outcomes and initially slow progress on resource production. The recruitment of a full team means the programme can now continue at pace.

Programme Sustainability

The political turbulence of the new Gambling Statutory Levy, which came into effect in April 2025, has caused uncertainty in the gambling harms prevention and treatment space. This has presented challenges in collaborating with wider stakeholders. Further clarity on the levy and future public health approaches is needed. Challenges regarding funding sources of support organisations have made some public health approaches difficult, given the impact of commercial determinants on health. The introduction of the statutory levy and development of the national public health approach to gambling harms will hopefully aid the challenges faced in this agenda.

Stakeholder Engagement

There have been some challenges to engage with all the treatment providers in the North East, primarily due to capacity in some treatment settings. However, these stakeholder relationships are progressing.

Lived Experience Forum Diversity

Members of the Lived Experience Forum make a significant contribution to the work being produced by the programme. Forum members and other wider stakeholders have expressed a desire for greater diversity in the demographic representation on the forum. The RPO is actively working to expand the forum and reach a wider audience to ensure recruitment of members that can provide a range of experiences to inform outputs.

What's Next?

The RPO will continue to develop an evidence-based public health approach to gambling harm prevention in the North East, building upon what has been established and striving to share and contribute to best practice in this space going forward. The RPO will build upon existing work to achieve its key aims and objectives. Outputs and resources will continue to be developed and multiple research outputs are scheduled to be published. All future endeavours of the RPO will continue to seek input and expertise from the Lived Experience Forum and wider stakeholders.

Key stakeholders of the programme were consulted to hear their insights and requests for developing the prevention approach over the next 18 months.

- “Continue to deliver ever more tangible outputs and outcomes, particularly those that have a real impact on individuals who have suffered gambling related harms.
- Meaningful evidence-based interventions which can provide best practice across the region.
- The development of tools, training and/or resources for drug and alcohol services to support them to address gambling harms alongside substance misuse issues. Strengthen referral pathways from drug and alcohol treatment services into gambling harms services and vice versa.
- Ensure that there remains a gambling network, with a clear role and remit, in place within the North East.
- Insights research with members of the public [to understand] where people in the North East are at with a range of issues such as the Commercial Determinants of Health, availability of support, [and] attitudes towards adverts, loot boxes, in-play betting. Exploration with mental health trusts would also be valuable.

STAKEHOLDER INSIGHTS AND REQUESTS

Stakeholders also provided their visions for the legacy of the programme:

- “A legacy of improved knowledge, resources and better support options across the North East.
- A framework for local authorities to use in order to implement meaningful work, and evidence-based practice, regardless of their progress in the area.
- It has already established a strong network so I would like to see this remain a priority area within the ADPH workstreams.

STAKEHOLDER VISIONS FOR PROGRAMME LEGACY

The RPO will be incorporating these requests and insights into the next 18 months of the programme. There are already key pieces of work in development including:

- A regional survey template for gambling harms
- Development and testing of gambling harm screening questions
- Production of Lived Experience short films sharing stories of gambling harms from within the North East

New areas of work, including greater advocacy and education for children and young people, are beginning. Collaboration with others working on this agenda nationally continues to allow sharing of best practice and co-production.

Alongside developing the programme, all efforts will be made to secure future funding to extend the life of the ADPH NE Gambling Harms Programme.

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