**Gambling Act 2005**

**Local Area Profile**

Introduction

Background

In 2010, 73% of the adult population participated in some form of gambling. This equates to around 35.5 million adults. In 2017, 45% of respondents to a survey had participated in a form of gambling within the previous four week period. This figure was 31% when excluding those respondents who had only played the National Lottery draw.

The Gambling Act 2005 (the Act) is the primary legislation governing gambling activity in Great Britain. It consolidated and updated previous gambling legislation and, following its full implementation in 2007, brought together the vast majority of commercial gambling into a single regulatory framework. As well as establishing a dedicated national regulator (the Gambling Commission), the Act gave local regulators broad discretion to manage local gambling provision.

The Act has three licensing objectives;

♣ Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder, or being used to support crime

♣ Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way

♣ Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling

These objectives influence the way the Gambling Commission and licensing authorities perform their functions, and the way gambling businesses carry out their activities.

Under S.349 of the Act, licensing authorities are required to publish a statement of licensing principles, commonly known as a policy statement. This statement, typically valid for a three year period, sets out the local approach to regulation and ensures operators have sufficient awareness and understanding of the licensing authorities requirements. The Gambling Commission encourages licensing authorities to produce a policy statement reflective of local issues, in order to identify and reduce risk to the licensing objectives. To assist this process, it is recommended that authorities produce a local area profile.

Aims and Limitations

This profile aims to summarise existing national research relating to gambling related harm, and identify potential risks relating to vulnerable groups and/or geographical areas within Tamworth. Data from various sources will be utilised to identify these risks, which should be considered throughout the application process. Findings should assist the local authority in meeting the licensing objectives and ensure specific needs of local communities are considered and vulnerable groups are protected.

Where groups have been identified as being ‘at risk’ of gambling related harm, datasets have been sought to explore their prevalence within Tamworth. In several areas, data could not be identified, or the data was not available at a local level. As a result, potential risks have not been explored. Where data could be identified, its currency could be questioned (e.g. the Census), or the data was not available at Borough level.

Tamworth

Located towards the south-eastern corner of Staffordshire 15 miles north-east of Birmingham and covers an area of 3,095 hectares and has an estimated population of 78,600.

Vulnerable Groups – The Act and Existing Research

The Gambling Act 2005 identifies children and vulnerable persons as requiring specific regulatory focus to prevent harm and exploitation. Despite this, there is a lack of clarification within the Act as to who could be considered ‘vulnerable’ and what is meant by ‘harm’.

The Gambling Commission states that, for regulatory purposes, vulnerability is likely to include; “people who gamble more than they want to, people who gamble beyond their means and people who may not be able to make informed or balanced decisions about gambling due to, for example, mental health, a learning disability or substance misuse relating to alcohol or drugs.”

In 2015, Manchester City Council and the City of Westminster Council commissioned research to explore area-based vulnerability to gambling-related harm. It stated that gambling behaviour and who experiences harm from gambling varied among different types of people. This includes characteristics relating to the person (age, gender or intellectual functioning), their personal circumstances (employment or income), where people live and the political landscape in which gambling is provided and regulated. These characteristics were explored and a scoping report published.

Good evidence was found to support the following groups as being vulnerable to gambling-related harm;

* Young people
* Those who are unemployed
* Those from certain ethnic backgrounds (Asian/Asian British, Black/Black British and Chinese/other ethnicity)
* Those living in deprived areas
* Those with low IQ
* Those with substance abuse/misuse issues
* Existing problem gamblers
* Those with poor mental health

Those with certain personality traits (cognitive impairments, impulsivity) Limited or emerging evidence was found to suggest those who are homeless, migrants, those with learning difficulties or those with financial difficulties/debt may also be at risk.

Gambling Premises

Licensing authorities, as defined in S.2 of the Act, are responsible for licensing gambling premises. For the purpose of this profile, licences currently in force across the county have been categorised in two ways; those relating to ‘high risk’ premises and those relating to ‘low risk premises.

High risk premises include gaming centres, betting shops, bingo halls and premises with more than two gaming machines and/or machines with higher stakes and pay-outs. Low risk premises include those with two or less low stake gaming machines, and occasional use notices used at sporting events.

Overall, 95 gambling permissions are currently in force across Tamworth. A total of 61 are associated with physical premises, with 7 categorised as high risk. The remaining 34 are small lotteries which are registrations by non commercial societies.

Nationally, gambling premises tend to be found in more urban areas, town centre locations or around coastal areas. Gambling venues also cluster in certain areas within towns and cities.

Exploring ‘At Risk’ Groups in Tamworth

Young People

Protecting children from being harmed or exploited by gambling is a licensing objective of the Act. There is also strong evidence that children, adolescents and young adults are vulnerable to the experience of gambling problems, or at risk of experiencing gambling problems

Generally in the UK, the minimum legal age for gambling is 18. Exceptions to this include lotteries, scratch cards and football pools where the participant can be 16.

In Tamworth it is estimated that 12,252 people, are aged 10 to 24 . This age range was applied in the previously outlined research, and takes into consideration ‘emerging adults’ as well as younger children in ‘transitional life stages

When considering potential risks to young people, the location of the county’s schools, colleges and university are of particular note.

Tamworth has 27 primary schools, 3 infant schools, 2 junior schools, 5 secondary schools & 1 sixth form centre

Those who are unemployed

There is a consistent body of evidence showing those who are unemployed and who gamble are more likely to experience adverse outcomes from their gambling than those in paid employment.

The last census identified around 1,500 people as economically active but unemployed.

Employment deprivation is one of the seven domains that comprise the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). It measures the proportion of the working-age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market. The IMD is explored later in this profile.

A further consideration is the location of job centres as they are accessed by people who are likely to be unemployed, and considered to have a combination of very low income and large amount of personal disposable time. There is 1 jobcentre plus locations in Tamworth.

Those from certain ethnic backgrounds

Surveys have shown a consistent relationship between problem gambling and at-risk gambling and ethnicity. In all studies, problem gambling prevalence rates were higher among those from non-White ethnic backgrounds.

The last census identified 3,930 people, or 5.0% of the population, as being Asian/Asian British, Black/Black British, Chinese or another non-White ethnicity.

Those living in deprived areas

Evidence from a range of surveys has shown that those living in more deprived areas are more likely to experience problems with their gambling behaviour. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is a measure of relative deprivation for small areas in England, and ranks every small area from 1 (most deprived) to 32,844 (least deprived). These small areas are Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs).

The IMD combines information from the following seven domains to produce an overall relative measure;

* Income Deprivation
* Employment Deprivation
* Education, Skills and Training Deprivation
* Health Deprivation and Disability
* Crime
* Barriers to Housing and Services
* Living Environment Deprivation

In Tamworth, 12.6% of the population was income-deprived in 2019. Of the 316 local authorities in England (excluding the Isles of scilly), Tamworth is ranked 116th most income-deprived.

Of the 51 Neighbourhoods in Tamworth 10 were among the 20% most income deprived in England and 11 were in the 20% least income deprived in England.

In the least deprived neighbourhood in Tamworth, 2.0% of people are estimated to be income-deprived. In the most deprived neighbourhood, 38.1% of people are estimated to be income-deprived. The gap between these two, which we will call internal disparity, is 36.1 percentage points in Tamworth. We also know the overall income deprivation score for Tamworth is 12.6%.

We should note a small deprivation gap does not necessarily imply there is no deprivation, it may just mean income deprivation is evenly spread throughout the local authority, rather than concentrated in a few neighbourhoods.

A further objective of the Act is preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder, or being used to support crime. Tamworth is the 26th most dangerous overall out of Staffordshire's 197 towns, villages, and cities. The overall crime rate in Tamworth in 2023 was 90 crimes per 1,000 people. This compares poorly to Staffordshire's overall crime rate, coming in 14% higher than the Staffordshire rate of 78 per 1,000 daytime population. For England, Wales, and Northern Ireland as a whole, Tamworth is the 27th safest major town, and the 1,383rd most dangerous location out of all towns, cities, and villages.

In June 2020, Tamworth had the worst crime rate in Staffordshire for shoplifting, with 3 crimes reported and a crime rate of 0.04 per 1,000 daytime population. July 2020 was also a bad month for Tamworth residents, when it was Staffordshire's most dangerous area for shoplifting, recording 2 crimes at a rate of 0.03 per 1,000 daytime population.

The most common crimes in Tamworth are violence and sexual offences, with 2,961 offences during 2023, giving a crime rate of 43. This is 9% higher than 2022's figure of 2,709 offences and a difference of 3.66 from 2022's crime rate of 39. Tamworth's least common crime is theft from the person, with 37 offences recorded in 2023, a decrease of 24% from 2022's figure of 49 crimes.

Those with substance abuse/misuse issues and existing problem gamblers

Treatment centres and support groups for alcohol, drug or gambling dependency are places frequented by potentially vulnerable people.

Health in summary

The health of people in Tamworth is varied compared with the England average. About 16.1% (2,400) children live in low income families. Life expectancy for both men and women is similar to the England average.

Health inequalities

Life expectancy is 9.4 years lower for men and 7.8 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Tamworth than in the least deprived areas.

Child health

In Year 6, 21.3% (192) of children are classified as obese. The rate for alcohol-specific hospital admissions among those under 18 is 40\*. This represents 7 admissions per year. Levels of GCSE attainment (average attainment 8 score), breastfeeding and smoking in pregnancy are worse than the England average.

Adult health

The rate for alcohol-related harm hospital admissions is 728\*, worse than the average for England. This represents 543 admissions per year. The rate for self-harm hospital admissions is 219\*. This represents 165 admissions per year. The rates of new sexually transmitted infections, killed and seriously injured on roads and new cases of tuberculosis are better than the England average. The rates of statutory homelessness and violent crime (hospital admissions for violence) are better than the England average.

Data from 2016/17 suggests 1,700 people across the county were in treatment at specialist drug misuse services. In addition, The rate for alcohol-related harm hospital admissions is 728, worse than the average for England. This represents 543 admissions per year. treatment at alcohol misuse services.

There are 2 support groups specifically for gambling dependency located in Tamworth.

Those with poor mental health

There is a consistent body of evidence demonstrating a strong association between gambling problems and many mental health conditions. This suggests that those with Common Mental Disorders (CMD), substance use/abuse problems, psychoses and other conditions have higher rates of problem or at-risk gambling than those without these conditions.

* In Staffordshire there were 1 in 3 (33%) emergency hospital admissions for adults with a mental health diagnosis in 2020/21 – lower than national. East Staffordshire and Tamworth have the highest admission rates & statistically higher than national. Tamworth also having higher than average GP recorded depression.
* Staffordshire also has the 5th highest rate among similar authorities for emergency admissions for intentional self-harm (all ages). Newcastle, Stafford and Cannock Chase among the highest in the West Midlands.
* More recent unpublished data (2020/21) sees a general fall in admissions due to COVID-19 with rates similar to national, however Stafford and Tamworth remain high.
* There are nearly 95 suicides in Staffordshire each year, with rates of suicide rising to 12.2 per 100,000 (2018-20) and higher than national (10.4 per 100,000).
* Three quarters of deaths from suicides in Staffordshire are males, yet the suicide rate in females is increasing and higher than national.
* Those aged 30-59 are overrepresented in suicides, with 57% of suicides coming from 44% of the Staffordshire population.
* GP recorded depression (12%) in Staffordshire adults continues to increase – a trend that has doubled since 2012/13 and is higher than national.
* Positively there are lower levels of GP recorded severe mental illness.
* Over half of Staffordshire’s districts have higher than average GP recorded depression - Stafford, Staffordshire Moorlands, Tamworth, Cannock Chase and Newcastle.

Findings

A total of 95 gambling permissions are currently in force across Tamworth with 61 relating to physical premises and 7 categorised as high risk.

In keeping with national research, the majority of permissions relate to premises in urban areas. Despite having the largest number of high risk permissions the low prevalence of vulnerable groups in Tamworth means the Borough is not considered to be an area of significant risk.

It is therefore recommended that regard is given to applications concerning premises located within Tamworth, to ensure necessary measures are in place to safeguard vulnerable groups and uphold the licensing objectives of the Act.