



Commission on Crime
& Problem Gambling

Howard League
for **Penal Reform**



Exploring the lived experience of ethnic minority communities, crime and gambling-related harms

CALL FOR PEER RESEARCHERS

The Howard League's *Commission on Crime and Problem Gambling* is undertaking research on people from ethnic minority¹ communities, crime and gambling-related harms in order to improve our understanding of this under-researched area.

Gambling-related harms are the negative impacts of gambling on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, communities and society, for example debt, crime, relationship breakdown and poor mental health. The goal of the research is to develop a knowledge base within the criminal justice system that recognises the experiences of minority communities' gambling-related harms and their needs, helping to lower the need for criminal justice interventions in the future.

The research seeks to focus on and amplify the voices of ethnic minority communities directly affected by both gambling-related harms and crime. It aims to highlight the complex interplay between minority ethnicity, crime and gambling-related harms through in-depth qualitative research on lived experiences. This is a peer research project, which means that people from minority ethnic backgrounds with lived experience of gambling-related harms and crime are not only involved as research participants, sharing their thoughts and experiences, but also as researchers, helping shape and implement the entire research project.

¹ We recognise that 'ethnic minority' is an all-encompassing term. There are many tensions and contradictions in grouping communities together in this way; it can render invisible diverse experiences within and between communities, reinforce 'othering' and direct attention away from systemic factors implicated in their lives. We are using the term 'ethnic minority' as a starting point for our work to indicate our interest in capturing the lived experiences of gambling harms and the criminal justice system of representatives from minority communities in the UK. The study will invite participants to self-define and capture both the similarities and differences in the experiences reported.

The role

We hope to involve peer researchers throughout the research process, including with research design, recruitment, data collection, analysis and the production and dissemination of the research outputs. The peer researchers will receive full training and will be able to choose which activities they wish to become involved in. They will be encouraged to reflect upon their participation throughout the project, identifying any areas where they are concerned or uncomfortable or any areas in which they develop a particular interest. They will be free to withdraw from the project at any stage.

In more detail, the peer researchers will be involved through the following stages:

1. *Orientation stage*, when peer researchers will work with the research team to: a) think through and agree how we might best recruit men and women from ethnic communities with lived experience to the study; b) identify possible participants to take part in stakeholder interviews; c) think about the concepts and language we are using and if they are meaningful to those with lived experience; d) identify their research training needs; e) capture peer researchers' ideas about how the research should proceed; and f) clarify roles.
2. *Training*, when peer researchers will receive a combination of online and in-person training that includes the principles of peer research, peer research methods of data collection and analysis, and safeguarding.
3. *Stakeholder interviews*, when peer researchers can interview representatives from key organisations such as the Gambling Commission, Betknowmore, GamCare and those working in the criminal justice system. These interviews will be conducted online/over the phone.
4. *Research with people from ethnic communities with lived experience*, when peer researchers can become involved in conducting co-constructed focus groups and other activities and qualitative interviews. The co-constructed focus groups and activities may be run online in small groups or in-person in settings such as community centres. Peer researchers and participants, in pairs, could choose from a selection of methods used to construct their narratives, for example writing letters, making narrative maps, collaging, etc. The methods available would be decided with the peer researchers in the early stages of co-constructing the research methods, with participants able to choose from the selection offered by the peer researchers. As these activities are undertaken, the conversation between the peer researcher and participant would be audio recorded as data, as well as images of the final creative project (such as the mind map or collage). The whole group would come back together to present their data to each other, where a reflective discussion could take place

comparing the data with their own experiences. Peer researchers may also be able to conduct in-depth interviews with people with lived experiences.

5. *Analysis and write up*, when peer researchers will work with the research team to help interpret and analysis the data.
6. *Outputs and dissemination*, when peer researchers will work with the research team to develop a dissemination strategy that enables the research findings to reach a broader audience. All contributions by the peer researchers to the final outputs will be fully acknowledged where the peer researchers agree to this.

Prerequisites

The role is only open to men and women from ethnic minority communities, in accordance with the exemptions of the Equality Act 2010 pursuant to Schedule 9, Part 1. Applicants should also have lived experience of gambling harms (either through their own gambling or that of someone close to them) and experience of crime and/or knowledge of the criminal justice system.

Support and safeguarding

Care will be taken to ensure that peer researchers are supported and mentored through the research. We recognise the pressure that research can place on peer researchers' lives as they grapple with issues that intersect with their own lived experiences. Betknowmore will provide safeguarding services to the peer researchers, providing access to support workers when necessary, as well as signposting and referrals to other relevant services. We will also provide training to peer researchers on how to address any safeguarding and support concerns that may arise during their work with participants who may be vulnerable and present with safeguarding issues such as risky gambling behaviours, domestic abuse or suicidal ideation. A safeguarding escalation process and monitoring mechanism will be in place throughout the project. In addition to safeguarding, peer researchers will receive research support by the research team, for example helping them manage their time and workload, addressing any concerns around recruitment and data collection and management. Each peer researcher will be assigned a member of the research team who will be their first point of contact for safeguarding and research support.

Timeframe and commitment

The team of peer researchers will begin working on the project in January 2022 and the research will be completed by October 2022. It is anticipated that each of peer researchers will dedicate between 50 and 75 hours to the project, averaging at about 8–10 hours per month for the first six months, when peer researchers will be most heavily involved.

Remuneration

Peer researchers will receive an hourly rate of £15, paid in the form of high street shopping vouchers (in order to not impact upon eligibility for state benefits). This adds up to between £750 and £1,125 in total.

Selection process

An application form can be downloaded [here](#).

The deadline for submission is 12 pm (noon) on Friday 10 December 2021. Applicants will then be invited to attend an informal interview on 16 or 17 December.

Please email your application to: liz@betknowmoreuk.org

Alternatively, if you have any queries or wish to register your interest in the project, please contact:
helen.churcher@howardleague.org