# Learning and evaluation partner for GambleAware's Mobilising Local Systems (MLS) funding programme

## INVITATION TO TENDER

January 2024

## About GambleAware

GambleAware is an independent charity that commissions evidence-informed prevention and treatment services in partnership with the NHS, public health agencies, local authorities, the voluntary sector, and other expert organisations and agencies, across Great Britain.

GambleAware recognises the importance of evaluating and learning from our commissioned projects. We are committed to building evidence of 'what works for whom' to support and inform our commissioning, as well as generating knowledge to contribute to the wider body of evidence, and national policy.

The central aim of GambleAware's purpose and vision is to achieve effective prevention of gambling harms, and access to treatment and support. GambleAware's Organisational Strategy, published in April 2021, outlines our priorities and objectives to guide our work towards our vision of a society where everyone is safe from gambling harms. Our Commissioning Intentions, published last year build on our Organisational Strategy.

## Introduction

GambleAware is seeking to commission a learning and evaluation partner to work with us on the Mobilising Local Systems (MLS) funding programme.

MLS aims to support the continued development of a truly integrated gambling harms support system underpinned by partnership between the public sector and third sector. It aims to ensure that organisations, at a local and regional level, can deliver preventative interventions, support early identification of gambling harms, deliver holistic support and treatment, and that people are able to live in communities that support their ongoing recovery. This in line with one of GambleAware's strategic priorities: *to transform capacity and capability by collaborating with public and voluntary sector organisations across England, Scotland, and Wales to support growth of an integrated system to prevent and reduce gambling harms*.

The funding programme will operate as two phases over two years with the overall ambition to build capacity and capability within systems to provide an integrated response to addressing and preventing gambling harms.

The commissioned learning and evaluation partner is expected to provide support on sharing learning and evaluation capacity with funded programme delivery partners, facilitating shared learning across the project and conducting an integrated outcome and process evaluation.

## Background

Limited integration between local charities, the NHS and local authorities means that individuals experiencing gambling harm may not always experience an efficient user journey; in some instances, individuals are not always directed to the most appropriate services for support.

In line with its strategic priorities, GambleAware is seeking to transform capacity and capability by collaborating with the NHS, public health agencies, local authorities, and voluntary sector organisations across England, Scotland, and Wales to support growth of an integrated system of prevention and treatment provision.

In 2022, GambleAware established the Mobilising Local Systems (MLS) programme, which is part-funded through the regulatory settlement funding allocated to GambleAware by The Gambling Commission in accordance with their Statement of Principles for determining financial penalties. In keeping with the

Gambling Commission's Statement of Principles, funding from regulatory settlements to GambleAware will be used for specific, agreed purposes that accelerate our commissioning plans, including evaluation projects such as this tender.

The MLS programme aims to develop an integrated system to help ensure that statutory organisations, at both the local and national level, can deliver preventative interventions, support early identification, holistic support and treatment as well as ensuring people can live in communities that support their ongoing recovery. Only when gambling harm reduction is embedded across all services will the system be able to make the sustainable progress it needs to reduce gambling harm.

Whilst statutory leaders will remain important to GambleAware's work, the MLS programme will look to focus on community leadership at a local level; creating assets and mobilising energy at the community level.

The project will utilise the 'Regional Boards' being set up in each of the 10 regions/nations of Great Britain[1] through the National Gambling Support Network (NGSN).[2] Each regional/national board (some 'regions' are GB nations) will nominate a lead NGSN provider from that region, and the boards will be supported by GambleAware NGSN System Commissioning Managers and the System Coordinator at GamCare.

Several of these boards are in the process of being set up, with all regional/national boards expected to be established by early 2024. It is intended that these boards will consist of representatives from across their regional/national system, for example, local authorities, police and crime commissioners and other voluntary sector stakeholders to ensure a holistic approach to support people experiencing gambling harm. The motives for collaboration include, but are not limited to, a more integrated and coordinated approach to beneficiary needs, a stronger united voice within the region and better coordination of organisational activities.

A robust and rigorous independent evaluation is required to accompany this funding programme to provide actionable insights and recommendations to inform continued local multi-agency system approaches to preventing and reducing gambling harm. This is of particular importance in the context of gambling policy, following the publication of the government's White Paper and the planned changes to the funding system for prevention and treatment. Greater evidence is needed on the use of public health prevention approaches that involve partnership and joint working across the whole public sector and third sector. We hope that the insights from this work will help inform the transition to an equitable, evidence-based and integrated system.

## Description of the MLS funding programme

The programme is divided into two phases:

- **Phase 1: Regional integration and collaboration** – Establishing regional/national boards and initial relationship building to build partnerships, foster collaboration and develop plans for integrated working.

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[1] The ten regional boards are being set up in the following regions: Wales, Scotland, North East, North West, East Midlands, West Midlands, East of England, South East England, South West England and London.
[2] The NGSN, formerly known as the National Gambling Treatment Service, is a group of organisations across Great Britain who provide free, confidential and personalised support for anyone who's experiencing problems from gambling, as well as those affected by someone else's gambling.

- **Phase 2: Pilot projects** – Delivery of projects where statutory and third-sector organisations work as part of an integrated journey to support those in their local community/region/nation experiencing gambling harms.

The main aim of the funding programme is for each regional/national board to develop collaborative approaches and establish an integrated system in their region/nation.

**Phase 1: Regional integration and collaboration**

Phase 1 will last up to one year. It will provide the newly established NGSN regional/national boards with up to £25k in funding to help convene key stakeholders on the issue of gambling harms. The intention behind the boards is to provide leadership and support the integration of providers, and the broader gambling harms agenda, with regional activity. This funding is intended to be for an outward looking approach; it is not about developing or promoting the work of the NGSN but establishing a wider network among key stakeholders with an association or link to gambling harms in the region/nation to create a more joined up approach.

A key output of phase 1 will be a resource pack for regional/national stakeholders. This will be supported by GambleAware and the NGSN Transition Board Local Systems working group, who will establish a clear structure for the pack and then ask regional/national boards to add regional/national information. This might include:

- Regional/national stats and facts about gambling harm
- Important facts about gambling harm
- Information about services on offer and referral pathways
- Good practice highlights and stigma language guide
- Difference in burdens of harm among minoritised communities in the region/nation
- Role and value of lived experience, e.g. case study or example of best practice

Regional/national boards can establish new relationships (or further develop existing relationships) with whichever bodies/stakeholders are most appropriate, for example, local councils, public health bodies, adjacent third sector organisations, police and crime commissioners and community groups. Once these consortiums of regional/national bodies are established, they can develop and submit an application for phase 2 funding.

Some regional/national boards are more long-established and advanced than others. Boards that can evidence their suitability (e.g. they already have a consortium with a minimum of three organisations committed to the delivery of their project) can apply directly for Phase 2 funding (see below) with Phase 1 funding rolled in.

**Phase 2: Pilot projects**

Phase 2 will provide up to £100k over two years to each regional/national board to allow for them to partner with public or third sector organisations to deliver a pilot project providing new models of prevention, support and referral pathways for people experiencing gambling harms. GambleAware is deliberately taking a less prescriptive approach to phase 2 to allow for boards to pursue the most useful and impactful projects. For example, projects could operate across the region/nation or take a hyper-local approach and focus on a local authority or specific area. However, projects must:

- Specifically address gambling harm **either** in relation to an adjacent issue, such as homelessness or criminal justice, **or** have a community focus and work with a specific minoritised group within a

certain area (or across the region) **or** have a specific geographical focus e.g. rural communities or seaside towns for example.

- Be multi-organisational and take a consortium approach.
- Be driven by local/regional/national stakeholders' priorities and needs (i.e. not just those of NGSN providers).

For projects progressing from Phase 1 to Phase 2, there will be three time points at which regional/national boards can apply for Phase 2 funding: in May 2024, September 2024 or January 2025 (please note that these are subject to change).

## Key aims and objectives for the learning and evaluation partner

The goals for the work of the learning and evaluation partner have been designed with the overall goals of the programme in mind and the post-White Paper landscape. We are aware of the existing evidence supporting local system and multi-agency approaches in adjacent sectors and would expect this work to build upon what is already known about 'what works' for whom and in which circumstances across pre-existing approaches. To help inform this work GambleAware are carrying out a review of the available literature on the evidence supporting these approaches; this will be shared with the appointed supplier in due course.

Actionable learnings should be shared across regional/national boards to support them in achieving their goals, and independent and robust evidence should be provided on the impact of the individual pilot projects and the programme as a whole. As insights will be required to inform discussions and decision-making around the NGSN as they emerge, potential suppliers should consider this a formative evaluation.

GambleAware expects the key aims of the learning and evaluation partner activities to include:

- Generating and sharing learning, as well as M&E capacity, across regional boards in support of them achieving their goals and the critical success factors for effective local system and multi-agency working.
- Articulating the expected outcomes and impact of the funding programme through a theory-based approach and providing evidence of impact of individual projects and the programme as a whole.
- Exploring the process and implementation of regional/national boards, relationship building activities and the roll-out of pilot projects.
- Providing recommendations for GambleAware for any future similar projects and with regards to 'what works' in local system and multi-agency approaches.

We invite bids that address each of the aims above, as well as any other aims that would be of benefit to GambleAware and the regional/national boards and their partners. We welcome bids from partnerships / consortiums.

Please note that GambleAware is in the process of commissioning a separate but related underline evaluation of the NGSN as a whole for which there is an engagement event on Thursday 18th January 2024. The MLS evaluation will be discussed in this event in brief as it pertains to the wider NGSN evaluation. Potential suppliers should therefore indicate how they would work in sync not only with the NGSN System Coordinator at GamCare within this work but also with any another evaluation suppliers to minimise research burden for any potential participants and reduce the risk of duplication. There is nothing to stop potential suppliers from applying for

both this work and the wider NGSN evaluation, but we would expect potential suppliers to confirm their capacity to do both and lay out how they intend to do so.

## Learning and evaluation questions

GambleAware invites bidding organisations to provide their own learning and evaluation questions as part of their proposals; these can be refined at project inception. GambleAware expects these questions to include (but not be limited to) the following:

**Learning**

- What learning can regional/national boards, partners, NGSN providers and GambleAware take forward from this project with regards to:
  - o Working with/beyond NGSN providers
  - o Relationship development and management across statutory and third sector organisations
  - o Collaborative/partnership working
- What worked well/less well in the generation/sharing/uptake of learning relating to the regional/national boards' development, relationship building, consortium approach and their individual projects?

**Outcomes and impact**

- To what extent did phase 1 achieve its intended outcomes[3]?
- To what extent did phase 2 achieve its intended outcomes (TBC)?
- To what extent did the MLS funding programme achieve it overall goals?
- Were there any unintended or unexpected outcomes (positive or negative) as a result of this programme?

**Process and implementation**

- To what extent have regional boards engaged with their local systems, wider statutory and third sector organisations, and communities?
- How did regional boards engage with local systems/communities? How appropriate were the approaches taken?
- To what extent have regional boards built new relationships with organisations that work with disadvantaged and marginalised communities?
- How well embedded/integrated are regional boards and their members in their local systems/communities?
  - o What are the critical success factors where this has been done well?
  - o What are the barriers and how have projects worked to overcome these?
- To what extent did pilot projects go to plan?
  - o What were the key enablers/barrier to success?

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[3] GambleAware has developed a logic chain to help guide regional/national boards' activities for Phase 1. This can be shared with the successful bidder. We would expect this work to be built upon for the evaluation.

     ○ How successfully have regional boards, statutory and third-sector organisations come together to support an integrated journey to support those in their local community experiencing gambling harms?

- To what extent have boards and their activities enabled better and more timely identification of and response to unmet need within their regional/national populations?
- Where and how have innovations supported the success of pilot projects/the overall project?
- How scalable/sustainable are pilot projects in the absence of continued funding beyond this funding programme?
- To what extent have pilot projects delivered fiscal/economic benefits to the system?
- What worked well/less well in the development and management of this project from GambleAware's perspective?

We expect a balance of breadth and depth of insight across all regional/national boards. In working to answer the learning and evaluation questions, we expect that this work will include:

- A comprehensive and integrated outcome and process evaluation of the MLS funding programme, with specific learning for GambleAware about 'what works'.
- A mixed-methods approach that triangulates findings from across multiple sources, including (but not limited to):
  - Primary research with key stakeholder groups, as appropriate (eg NHS and treatment providers, local government, police forces, DCMS, Gambling Commission, etc).
  - Secondary analysis of monitoring and project data gathered as part of standard programme reporting (eg on KPIs) and further data gathered as part of self-evaluation activities.
- An approach that ensures data collection covers all key stages of programme design and delivery.
- An evaluation design with a degree of flexibility, in order to accommodate the wide range of potential projects funded under Phase 2 and the emerging nature of the project.
- Actionable insights that guide future development of regional board activities and GambleAware funding programmes.
- A consideration of equity in the approach to learning and evaluation, helping GambleAware to understand the extent to which funding programmes address barriers to equity; consider the interplay of power dynamics in the fund and how these influence what and how the programme progresses.
- An active contribution to creating opportunities for generating and sharing learning across regional/national boards throughout the funding programme.

## Audience and intended use

There are four key audience groups for the work of the learning and evaluation partner:

- **Regional/national boards and their partners:** Share learning with one another and benefit from findings of learning and evaluation activities; supporting them to develop their learning and evaluation capacity.

- **Wider National Gambling Support Network (NGSN) providers and their stakeholders, including the NGSN System Coordinator at GamCare[4]:** Supporting the sharing of key learnings to accelerate the overall goals of the NGSN integrating fully with regional/national systems.
- **GambleAware:** Supporting us to learn and improve with regards to grant-making and commissioning; understanding better how we can work with and support regional organisations and local communities.
- **Wider system stakeholders:** The future 'Prevention Commissioner', DCMS, NHS provider collaboratives, NHS England, the Gambling Commission and other stakeholders involved in influencing the post-White Paper landscape.

## Outputs

Potential suppliers are invited to propose their own ideas for outputs that meet and align to the aims and priorities of the programme. GambleAware is particularly interested in 'innovative' outputs, designed to engage specific audiences with relevant findings, at appropriate points in the evaluation.

Final outputs will be required by Spring 2026, however we expect early and interim findings to be disseminated to GambleAware and regional/national boards sooner/on a more regular basis, where possible. In this way, this work should be seen as a formative evaluation that provides insights and evidence of impact as they are generated in order to inform ongoing discussions around the White Paper. We expect to agree the exact nature and format of outputs with the chosen supplier at project inception.

Subject to the exact approach of the commissioned organisation(s), deliverables should also include:

- **Collated datasets** – anonymised quantitative data generated or analysed in the course of the research, in Excel format
- **Data collection tools** – final versions of any data collection tools designed in the course of the research.

Any written reports must be prepared in a clear, accessible, and concise manner, and the first draft should be of publishable standard, in line with GambleAware's Research Publication Guidelines. Furthermore, three drafts of outputs may be required before final versions are agreed, and potential suppliers should allow for this in the timetable and costs they propose.

## Contract management

The contract will be managed by an evaluation lead at GambleAware, who will be responsible for day-to-day liaison with the contractor, and for agreeing final versions of all data collection tools and outputs.

Other key stakeholders for this work are GambleAware's Director of Evidence and Insights and the Director of Strategy.

An inception meeting will be held at the start of the contract.

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[4] As part of the recommissioning of the National Gambling Treatment Service (NGTS) as the National Gambling Support Network, GambleAware commissioned GamCare to act as system coordinator and facilitate the integration of the network and the sharing of learnings across NGSN providers.

Contractors will be expected to:

- Provide regular (eg fortnightly) progress updates to GambleAware (by email) – these may be required more frequently during key periods of evaluation activity
- Attend (virtual) strategic review meetings with GambleAware following completion of each key evaluation phase.

## Timetable

It is anticipated that this work will commence as soon as possible in 2024 and be completed by Spring 2026.

Proposals should include a timeline for the evaluation, with indicative timelines for different phases.

It may be necessary to invite shortlisted suppliers to give a short presentation of their proposal before a decision is made. If required these will take place on Thursday 15th and Friday 16th February 2024.

A detailed timeline will be agreed with the contractor, which will form part of the contract. The indicative timetable for procurement is as follows.

| Task | Date |
|------|------|
| ITT issued | Wednesday 10th January 2024 |
| Clarification question deadline | Tuesday 23rd January 2024 at 17:00 |
| Clarification question responses circulated | Thursday 25th January 2024 at 17:00 |
| Proposals submitted | Thursday 8th February 2024 at 17:00 |
| Contractor presentations (if required) | Thursday 15th and Friday 16th February 2024 |
| Contractor notified | Monday 19th February 2024 |
| Inception meeting | Late February 2024 |
| Final outputs delivered and project close | Spring 2026 |

## Contract price

This evaluation work is funded through regulatory settlement funding from the Gambling Commission. A budget of up to £200,000 (incl. VAT) is available for this work. This must cover liability for all costs including staff costs, attendance at meetings, equipment, access to data, any reimbursement of research participants, travel and subsistence, overheads, and participation in any dissemination of the research included in your proposal.

Payments will be phased and linked to the successful completion of key stages of the work. Proposals liable for VAT should indicate this in their proposal. Full costs must be outlined. All potential suppliers must submit, alongside their written proposal, a completed costs spreadsheet in the template provided by GambleAware.

## Terms and conditions

To ensure expediency, we ask that any questions or clarifications regarding our Terms and Conditions are sent to procurement@gambleaware.org by 23rd January 2024. Bidders are unable to make amendments to the Terms and Conditions post tender award. If there is no correspondence received by 23rd January 2024 at GambleAware will take this as acceptance to the Terms and Conditions.

STANDARD TEMPLATE Service Agreement

## Criteria for evaluation of proposals

Proposals will be assessed on the following criteria and weighting. Potential suppliers should be aware that if a proposal is judged unsatisfactory (ie a score of 0) on any of the below criteria it may be ruled out of further consideration.

Each criterion has been allocated a weighting of 0-4 (indicating importance); this weighting will be multiplied by a 0-4 score determined by a reviewer.

By way of example, a question allocated the maximum weighting of 4 and that has been answered comprehensively, scoring a maximum score of 4, will have scored a total of 4x4=16.

| Score | Score Description |
|-------|-------------------|
| 0 | Did not provide a substantive response in relation to the criterion |
| 1 | Provided a response which partially met the criterion |
| 2 | Provided an adequate response to the criterion, displaying a good level of knowledge |
| 3 | Provided a very good response to the criterion, setting out clear examples |
| 4 | Provided a comprehensive response to the criterion, including examples, and articulating real context and clarity |

| Framework Evaluation Criteria | Criteria | Criteria weighting | Max available Score |
|-------------------------------|----------|--------------------|---------------------|
| **Quality** | Demonstrating an understanding of:<br>- the subject matter<br>- the evaluation aims, requirements and challenges | 3 | 12 |
| | Suitability of the proposed methodology to meet the evaluation objectives | 4 | 16 |
| | Experience and expertise of building monitoring and evaluation capability in relevant fields (eg health, mental health, addiction etc) | 3 | 12 |

| | Suitability of the proposed method for facilitating the sharing of learning | 4 | 16 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Quality control mechanisms, risk management, and assessment of research ethics | 3 | 12 |
| **Delivery** | Ability to meet the timetable and deliver outputs | 3 | 12 |
| **Equality, Diversity, Inclusion** | An understanding of equality, diversity, and inclusion, and how this would be embedded in practice | 3 | 12 |
| **Cost** | Cost and value for money | 2 | 8 |
| **TOTAL** | | 25 | 100 |

## Guidance for submitting a proposal

The following information should be included in your proposal:

- **Organisation name** and named contact and their role
- A brief statement detailing an **understanding and interpretation** of the purpose, specific objectives, and scope of the learning and evaluation activities required
- A description of your **proposed methodology** for this learning and evaluation work, including the specific approach and methods you anticipate would be useful in conducting the evaluation and how these meet the needs of the project
- A brief summary of any **learning, evaluation and subject matter expertise** specifically relevant to this programme, particularly in relation to:
  - Evaluations of interventions focusing on system-level change with multiple stakeholders
  - Managing a range of diverse stakeholders as part of participatory learning and evaluation processes – including in a landscape where other evaluation activity in ongoing
  - Learning approaches that cater to a wide range of stakeholders with differing needs, expectations and availability
  - Robust impact and process evaluation methodologies that draw out actionable insights
  - Flexibility in the course of learning and evaluation activities to ensure appropriate management of risk and that emerging opportunities can be taken advantage of
- Proposed **timescales**, including dates for the completion of discrete stages of the work as detailed in this brief
- Your **proposed team**, including details of their roles and the tasks they will be involved in, their relevant expertise, and time input in person days (including, where applicable, staff not yet appointed) and associated management arrangements for the project
- **Proposal price** and **costs**
- Identification of the **ethical issues** that might be expected to arise in the design and delivery of the evaluation, and how these will be addressed
- Approach to **equality**, **diversity and inclusion** in the evaluation
- A **risk assessment** for the evaluation and learning work, detailing potential risks, likelihood, measures to reduce their likelihood, and plans to deal with risks that do materialise.

Proposals should be no longer than 15 pages, including any appendices.

Responses should be based on the information provided in this request for proposals, and upon the professional knowledge and expertise of potential suppliers.

Clarification of specific points can also be sought by e-mail from procurement@gambleaware.org by Tuesday 23$^{rd}$ January 2024. Anonymised questions and GambleAware's subsequent responses will be forwarded, for information, to all contractors involved in the application process. Please let us know at procurement@gambleaware.org if you would like to receive a copy of the collated clarification questions and responses.

Proposals must arrive no later than 17:00 on Wednesday 7$^{th}$ February, and be submitted to procurement@gambleaware.org with the subject line 'MLS funding programme - Learning and evaluation partner'.

GambleAware