Health and Wellbeing Board Briefing: Gambling Harms Prevention in Bury

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Executive Summary

Bury has made strong progress in establishing the foundations of a whole-system prevention approach. A Gambling Harms Alliance has been established to provide strategic leadership and coordinate activity across partners. Early priorities include workforce development, public awareness campaigns, community engagement, improved referral pathways and the development of community grant funding to support locally led prevention initiatives.

The programme is increasingly aligned with wider priorities around financial resilience, mental wellbeing, suicide prevention, inclusion health and neighbourhood-based prevention. Opportunities are also being explored to develop a Bury Gambling Harms Workplace Charter, strengthen links with the Crisis Relief Fund and embed gambling harms within the Greater Manchester Live Well framework.

The Health and Wellbeing Board has a key role in championing gambling harms as a health inequalities issue, advocating for prevention across the system, and ensuring partner organisations contribute through leadership, workforce development and service delivery. Continued Board support will help maximise the impact of Levy-funded activity and ensure gambling harms prevention becomes embedded within Bury's wider ambition to reduce inequalities and improve wellbeing for all residents.

Purpose

To provide an update on Bury's progress in responding to the opportunities presented by the Statutory Gambling Levy and to seek continued system-wide support for gambling harms prevention.

Background

The Statutory Gambling Levy was introduced in April 2025, creating a sustainable funding mechanism for gambling harms prevention, treatment and research. Importantly, it recognises gambling-related harm as a public health issue rather than solely an individual responsibility, with dedicated investment available to support local prevention activity.

Gambling harms contribute to and exacerbate health inequalities. Evidence shows harms are disproportionately experienced by people living in deprived communities, those facing financial hardship, individuals with poor mental health, people affected by substance misuse, and vulnerable families. The consequences extend beyond gambling behaviour itself, impacting debt, housing stability, employment, relationships, wellbeing and, in some cases, increasing the risk of suicide.

These harms often compound existing disadvantage, making prevention a critical component of Bury's wider inequalities agenda.

Progress in Bury

Bury has made strong early progress in developing a whole-system prevention approach through the formation of the Gambling Harms Alliance, bringing together partners across health, local government, VCSE, education and community sectors to provide strategic leadership and coordination.

Current priorities include:

- Developing a borough-wide communications and awareness programme.
- Upskilling frontline staff to identify gambling harms, provide brief interventions and signpost support.
- Embedding gambling harms within wider prevention pathways, including wellbeing, financial inclusion and social prescribing services.
- Establishing community grant opportunities to support grassroots and neighbourhood-led prevention activity.
- Strengthening local intelligence and understanding of gambling harms across Bury.
- Exploring the development of a local digital information and support hub.

Future Opportunities

Further opportunities exist to integrate gambling harms prevention across the wider system, including:

- Development of a Bury Gambling Harms Workplace Charter, supporting employers to create healthier workplaces through awareness raising, training and early intervention.
- Stronger links with the Crisis Relief Fund, welfare advice and debt support services to identify residents at risk before harms escalate.
- Alignment with GM Live Well principles and hallmarks, ensuring gambling harms are recognised within broader prevention, community resilience and health inequalities work.

What the Health and Wellbeing Board Can Do

The Board is invited to:

- Champion gambling harms as a significant health inequalities issue.
- Advocate for gambling harms prevention within partner organisations and strategic plans.
- Cascade awareness through organisational networks and governance structures.
- Encourage all partner organisations to participate in workforce training and awareness activity.

Bury Council