

## Draft topic guide for focus groups: Betting and gaming in everyday life project

### Research goals of the focus groups:

- What do children perceive as gambling activity?
- How do they understand and differentiate different types of activities, including gaming practices?
- What meaning do young people attach to these activities/practices?
- What do these practices give to young people – both positive and negative experiences?

### Introductions (take about 5 mins):

- About the study
- What data will be used for and how data will be used
- Reassurance of confidentiality/anonymity/voluntary nature of participation
- Consent forms and permission to audio-record
- Outline rules of focus group

### First block of focus group (take c.20 mins)

- Use of gambling and non-gambling activity visuals and card sort exercise to explore how groups of young people view and differentiate gambling activities from other types of activity.
  - Visuals on cards to represent a diverse range of activities, from raffles and tombola's, stocks and shares, gaming examples, social media casino examples, penny falls, amusement arcade games, to more traditional forms of gambling, like fruit machines, casinos, betting etc.
  - Researcher makes notes of discussion and debate through the card sort exercise to discuss later.
  - **Discussion:** Ask group to explain their reasoning for grouping things into whether they thought they were gambling activities or not. What was easy and what was difficult to classify, why? What's the difference between them and why is that important to them? What do other people think?
    - *Draw on observations from the card sort exercise to probe around differences of opinions and ask them to elaborate, reflecting language used and comments made.*
    - *Focus on gaming and loot boxes – what do they understand, think and feel about these practices. Why do they think gaming developers use them?*

### Second block of focus group (takes about 20 mins):

- Aim is to better understand what these practices mean to young people, what it offers them in their own words.
- Ask the group what, if any, activities (including gaming practices) they have personally participated in

- Can go round in a circle or be more dynamic and pass a stuffed toy etc.

**Discussion:** Ask why they take part or don't take part; How do they take part? What benefits do they get participation? What holds them back from participating?

*Researcher to make a list of things that participation gives to children and use these to work through. Explore responses with particular focus on the meanings attached to gambling or gaming. Likely to include themes around: self-identity; sense of self; sociability; roles of peers, families and cultures; boredom. Researcher to use reflect the language used by the children to explore these themes as a group.*

*If young people don't take part themselves, then ask about their perceptions of others – why do other people of their age do this. What do they think of that?*

For example: X, you said that this is why you do X - can you tell us more about it?

Continue asking the group:

- Does this reflect other people's experiences?
- If not, why not?
- How important is this to you?

**Discussion:** Ask about downsides of participation, what are their experiences or observations?

*Researchers to document the list of risks and use these to work through. Build on the introduction – recall who mentioned a risk and ask about more details, use the words the children used.*

For example: X, you said you that this happened - can you tell us more about it?

Continue asking the group:

- Has anything like that happened to anyone else?
- Anyone else – can you imagine something like that happened to you?
- What did you do about it?
- (Have you learned anything from the experience? How would you react if something similar happened again?)

Importance of the risk, degree of the risk, risk versus harm:

- (How did you feel at that time?/ What did it feel like to you?)
- You said it was not a problem for you. What could have been different that might have made it problematic? or Can you try to think when ((such a situation)) is fine and when not? When is it /does it start to be a problem?

**Conclusion (takes about 5 minutes):**

- Sum up what has been discussed, mention the positive aspects, compliment and thank the children.
- How did you like talking about the betting and gaming with us?
- Is there anything important to you we haven't mentioned?
- If you want to follow any issues you have talked about, you can contact us (we will be at school on that day, or we can give them contacts) or ... (contact person at school – educational consultant, school psychologist, help lines).

- The participants will be told that if they want to withdraw from the study, their data will not be used.