

A Mixed-Methods Study of Exposure of University Students to Gambling Advertising on Walking Routes in Sheffield.



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Background:

- Gambling-related harm is a significant health challenge, poorly addressed compared with other addictive behaviours.
- Young people are known to be influenced by gambling advertising and at particular risk of harm.

Methods:

- In partnership with Sheffield City Council, nine medical students undertook an observational, ethnographic study.

Results:

- They recorded all instances of gambling advertising on four pedestrian routes commonly walked by university students. (Fig 1. Location map; Fig 2. Forms of advertising).
- Main themes were: **Normalisation of Gambling; Links to Sports/Alcohol; Impulsivity; Youth Targeting; Government Endorsement; Bright Colours; Impulsive Purchase.**
- Overall, National Lottery advertising was ubiquitous in shops, seen as attractive to students and young people, and likely to lead to "impulsive participation".
- Links between alcohol and social or sporting events encouraged the uptake of a gambling element.
- Betting shops were seen as less attractive to young people than other settings.

Conclusions

- Walking routes in a UK city had a high density of gambling advertising and marketing. There is a need to reduce out-of-home exposure to gambling advertising, particularly for young people
- Co-produced research undertaken by medical students and the City Council has had an immediate positive impact on local policy debate, raising the profile of a significant public health issue for young people (Fig 3. Letter from DPH to Students).

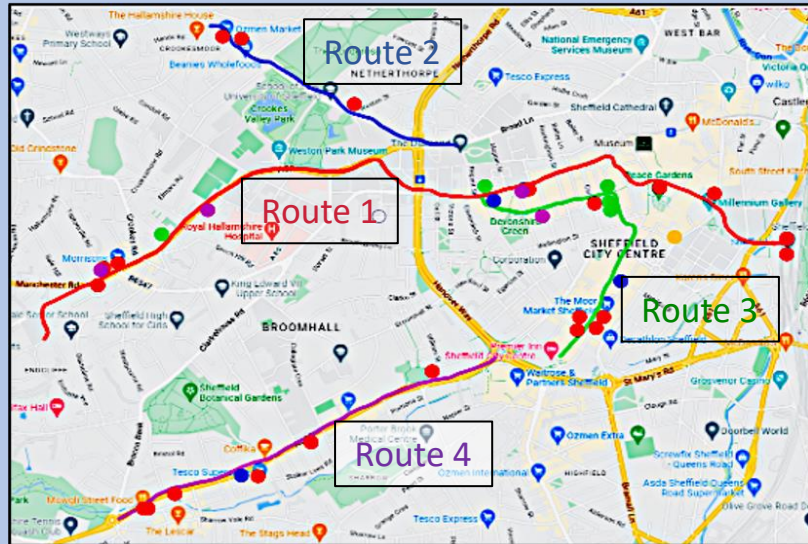


Figure 1. Locations of gambling advertising
Red - National Lottery, Blue - Betting shops
Green - Slot machines, Yellow - Casino

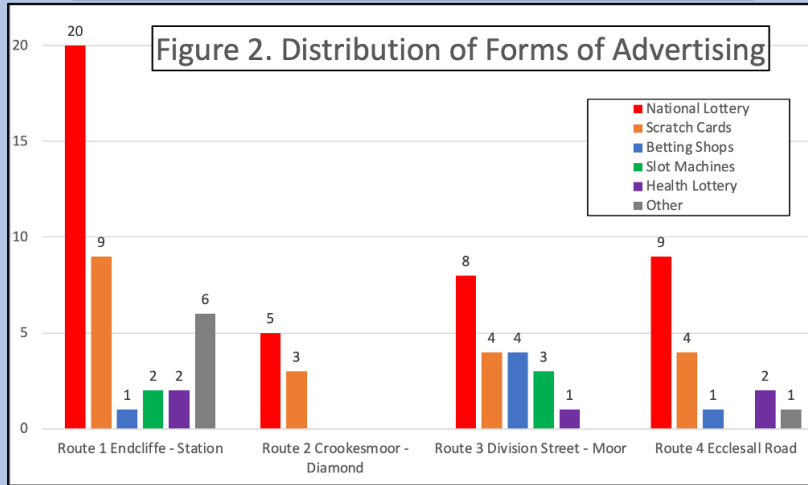


Figure 3. Letter from DPH to Students



Dear Colleague,
I am writing to formally thank you for conducting research on behalf of the Office of the Director of Public Health...Your research into the Commercial Determinants of Health and specifically, the exposure of students to gambling products in Sheffield, has been invaluable... We have used your research in Sheffield in presentations to Health and Wellbeing Board, Sheffield Safeguarding Adults Board, and Sheffield Safeguarding Children's Board and have cited your research in the Gambling-related Harms: Harm Reduction Strategy...

Greg Fell

Greg Fell, Director of Public Health, Sheffield City Council

To: Aoife Culkin, Elinor Elcombe, Kiana Dehghanpuor, Kamran Iqbal, Kyle Trainer, Lauren Appleby, Lawrence Wade, Saoirse Wiberg, Zohaib Hussain