

intervention with football fans (aged 18-55) who gamble regularly to reduce their betting.

**Methods:**

We will present findings from interviews and observations to reflect on the delivery of our 8-week intervention delivered by 4 clubs' Community Trust Coaches - Leicester, Preston North End, Accrington Stanley, and Blackpool. Planned as a feasibility study and pilot RCT, FFAB's feasibility learnings led to the development of a different model than originally proposed.

**Results:**

Preliminary findings suggest (1) there is a clear need for an early health intervention for men looking to reduce their betting. (2) Overcoming shame and stigma are significant barriers to recruitment in a study like this. (3) Conducting independent research with football clubs, given their complex sponsorship arrangements, presents multiple challenges. (4) relatedly, while recruitment was easier in smaller more locally rooted clubs, they faced more challenges for resources which led to difficulties with retention on the programme.

**Conclusions:**

FFAB is the first intervention of its kind and has lessons for interventions with underserved groups more widely. We identified the need for more focused pre-recruitment work on changing understandings of gambling through public health-focused education. We believe more recognition and visibility of a public health approach to gambling in the wider population would help to de-stigmatise language and discussion of gambling and lessen the challenges of engaging our target group. We recommend a more grassroots, localised approach to future early health interventions of this nature. In doing so, we believe that we could minimise many of the challenges we faced in delivery.

**Key messages:**

- There is a clear need for community-based interventions that aim to reduce gambling harm amongst the high-risk population of male sports bettors.
- Feasibility work suggests that refinements to our initial model, utilising more localised, grassroots approaches, are required to successfully engage with this target population.

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**The 'FFAB' project: Lessons learned from an early health intervention for male sports bettors**

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**Background:**

Sports betting is a growth area for the gambling industry with football fans becoming a key target of advertising. This demographic is also one at elevated risk from gambling harm. This paper reflects on the NIHR-funded Football Fans and Betting project (FFAB) - an innovative early health