

Odds Are: They Win

Campaign Evaluation



ODDS ARE
THEY WIN

Campaign Background

Over the last five years revenues generated by the gambling industry have increased by a staggering 62% generated by intensive marketing and advertising efforts that promote a misleading portrayal of gambling solely as a fun, social and financially rewarding activity. This is exacerbated by the fact that online bookies are now open for bets 24/7, 365 days of the year, online.

The consequences of this for the people of Greater Manchester (GM) are vast, and include that;

- A staggering 1 in 15 people experience harms related to gambling. Harms are not just financial, with impacts on health and wellbeing and friends and family
- 20% of online bingo players suffer harm as a result of gambling
- 25% of fixed odds betting terminal players experience harm as a result of gambling
- And watching football on TV could expose adults and children to a gambling advert every 10 seconds

The Odds Are: They Win campaign, is a GM-wide anti-gambling harms campaign.

Delivered by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), and targeted at the GM public across a range of digital and out-of-home channels, this campaign hinged on an anti-gambling harms narrative, rather than anti-gambling itself.

Campaign Objectives

Our aims were;

- Firstly, to make people more aware of the risks they face when gambling, to think about their gambling, possibly for the first time, and the impact it is having on their lives or might have on their lives in future, ultimately leading to a change in behaviour to prevent and reduce gambling related harms
- To encourage people to share the campaign message, reflect and have open conversations about their experiences of gambling
- To raise awareness of the campaign amongst organisations and officials across the country

Rather than signposting to specific tools or support, we wanted to equip people to identify triggers that their gambling behaviour has shifted into something concerning and to provide them with a way to talk about this.

The desired behaviour change was;

- People who gamble regularly at low levels to not increase their gambling frequency
- People who gamble regularly at low levels to not move to other gambling products
- People who don't gamble to not start gambling

An important distinction with this campaign was that we wanted to shift perceptions away from an individual narrative, instead to lift the lid on gambling products and practices as being the source of a common - but often hidden - harm.

The campaign sought to move beyond the narrative of 'responsible' gambling. And away from individual ownership towards the fact that whatever the gambling product, whoever the gambling operator and whichever way you look at it, the Odds Are: They Win.

Target audiences

Audience 1:

Men aged 18-40 years old who live in GM and regularly bet on sports. They are employed or are students, socio-economic groups A-C2.

- Betting is seen as a social activity around sporting events, and usually involves some level of alcohol consumption.
- This group could be at risk of gambling more often, gambling on more harmful products, gambling could move beyond socialising and towards gambling alone at home, they might be hiding how much they gamble from friends and family.

Audience 2:

Young families (men and women) who live in GM with cost of living concerns, socio-economic groups C2-E.

- They may be gambling online (slots, roulette, poker, gambling games) or in person (scratchcards and FOBTs). Deprived communities are likely to be using or considering using the most harmful products.
- They may be gambling to make money. They may turn to gambling to improve the other stresses in life. They may be gambling with money they can't afford to spend on gambling, and they may be hiding losses. Gambling can be an escape from reality or a way to pass the time, particularly for women.

Campaign timing

We decided that the campaign would be best deployed ahead of and then during the 2022 Football World Cup (Nov 2022). We were confident that this would resonate at the right time to influence behaviour ahead of a peak time for gambling and gambling industry promotions, particularly amongst Audience 1, as well as this being a winter period that would impact Audience 2, with raised cost of living concerns, energy price increases and Christmas on the horizon. This enabled us to align campaign content to World Cup gambling sponsorship and other popular TV during this period, such as 'I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!'

Odds Are: They Win
@OddsAreTheyWin

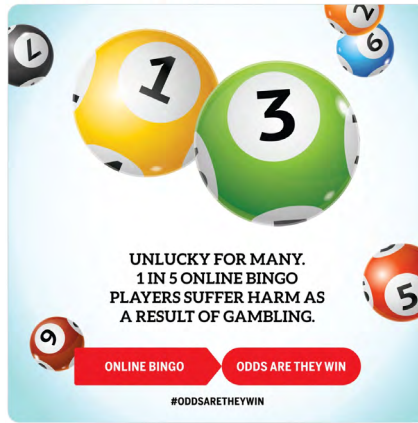
During ad breaks for the England v USA game there were 8 major ads for gambling products, with an average of 15.1m viewers. Increased exposure to gambling ads can put young people@risk of harm. Learn more & reduce your risk; greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/oddsaretheywin #FIFAWorldCup #OddsAreTheyWin



Odds Are: They Win
@OddsAreTheyWin

The final of I'm a Celebrity was watched by an average of 10.1 million viewers. Shockingly there were 14 adverts for gambling products during the breaks.

Learn more about how you can protect yourself & others from gambling harms greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/hea... #OddsAreTheyWin #ImACeleb

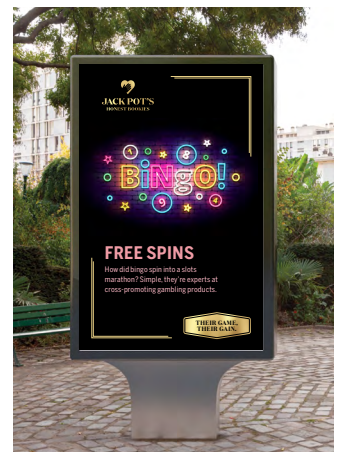


Initial Campaign Response

In order to ensure that this campaign was different to existing and previous campaigns, we developed two new creative concepts for the campaign.

The first hinged on the characterisation of the bookie and was a deliberate creative attempt to mimic the industry approach that Audience 1 in particular, would be frequently exposed to.

The second focused on bold and impactful statements, linked directly to exposing the tactics of the gambling industry across a range of gambling products, but again emulating the style of existing gambling industry promotions.



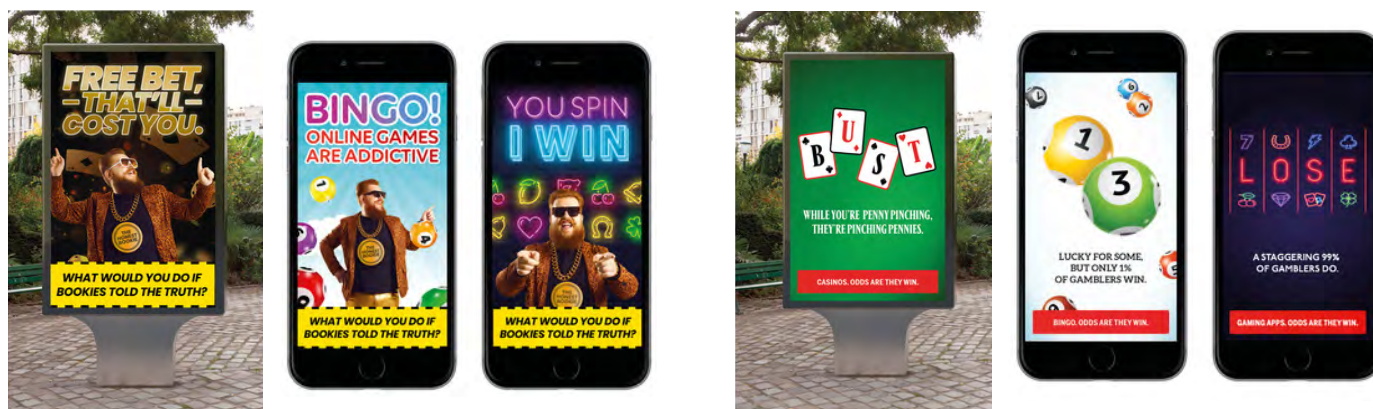
Testing and Insight

Focus groups

A core aim of the creative development phase of the campaign was to ensure the inclusion of GaMHive, the lived experience group already working closely with the GMCA to reduce the stigma of gambling related harm in GM.

The Focus group insight challenged us to be bolder and clearer with our campaign messages, which hugely contributed to the success of the campaign look and feel, narrative and messaging.

Survey



A summary of findings from the survey established that;

- 58% of respondents preferred the second route
- 70% of respondents stated that the second route communicated the main message either extremely or very well
- Multiple respondents found the first route confusing in its message and meaning
- Multiple respondents suggested that the first route could be misinterpreted as a gambling campaign (rather than anti-gambling)/ the message missed due to the creative style
- Responses to route 2 indicated greater reflection, understanding and engagement on the route's message

Campaign tone and messaging

We ensured that all industry stats and facts included were completely provable and approved by GMCA legal team, balancing being bold and impactful, whilst also remaining objective and sensitive to any triggering issues surrounding gambling addiction.

Language also focused on destigmatising gambling harms and avoiding the use of referencing, blaming or demanding a change on individual actions or behaviours.

* The statistics used in concept testing were not evidenced. They were used purely to understand audience reactions to simple facts and statistics.

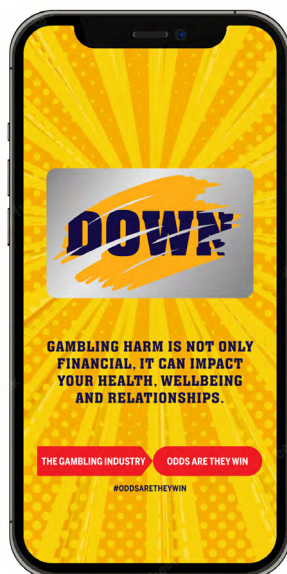
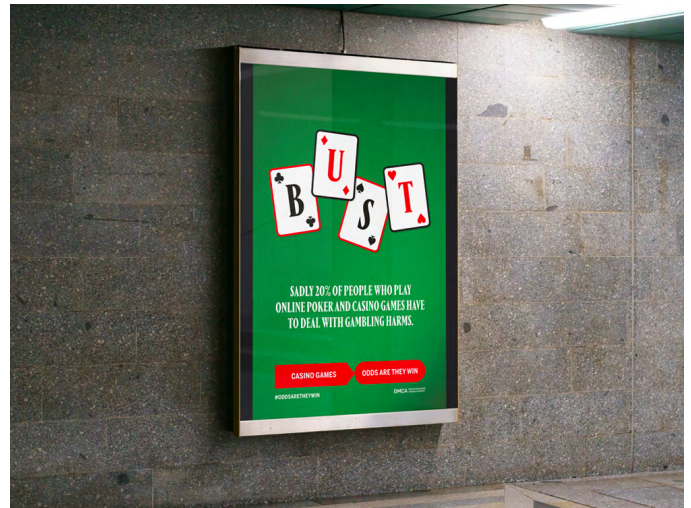
Communications Campaign

Channels and media approach

A comprehensive marketing plan was formulated to achieve the stated objectives, including:

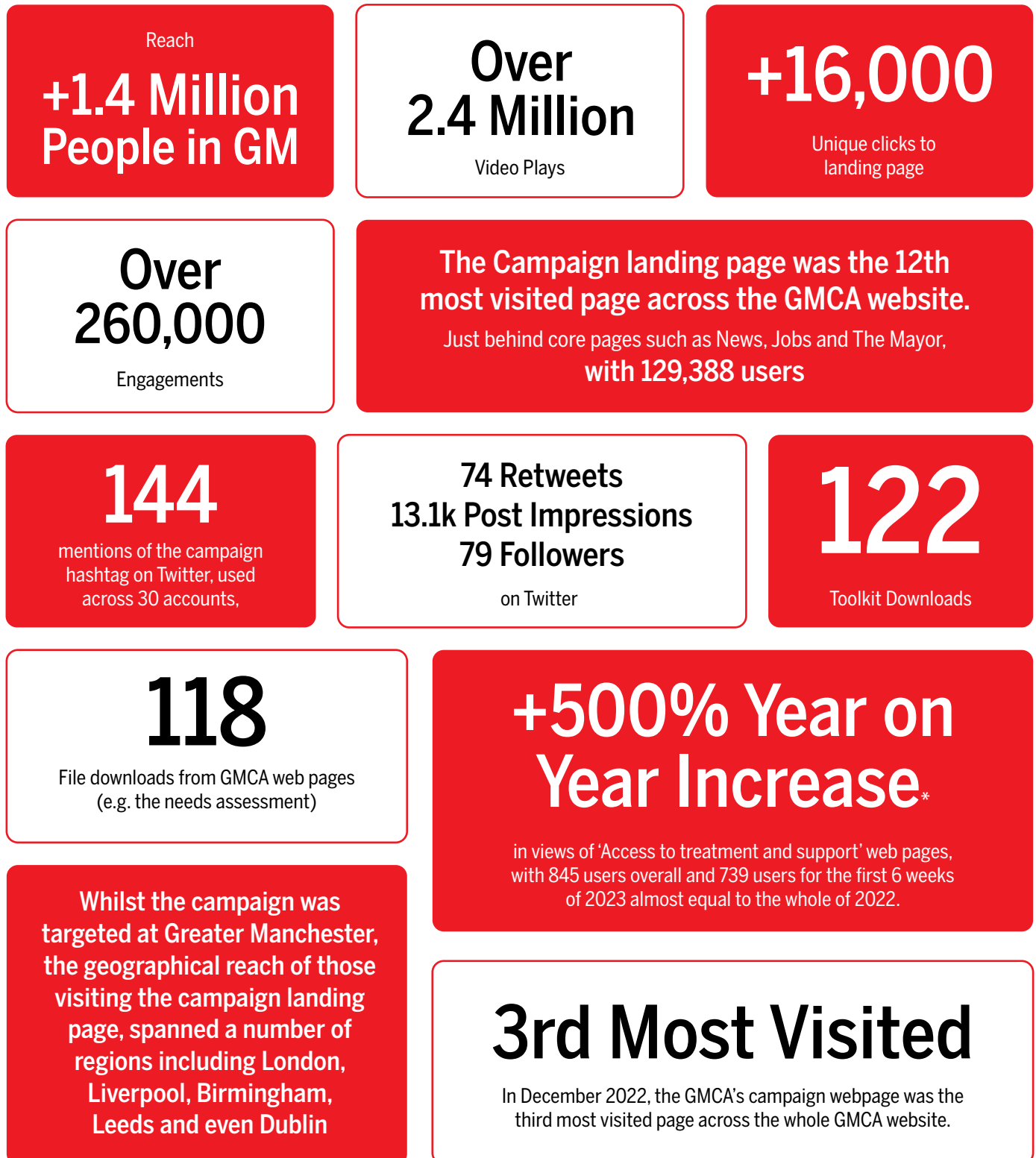
- Out-of-home advertising
- Paid/organic social media with animations and static adverts
- A widely circulated partner toolkit
- Public relations activity

To ensure that the campaign was addressing the two target audiences' typical gambling activity, assets covered a range of gambling products: bingo, slot machines, sports betting, and casino games.



Overarching results – 18/10/22 - 17/02/23

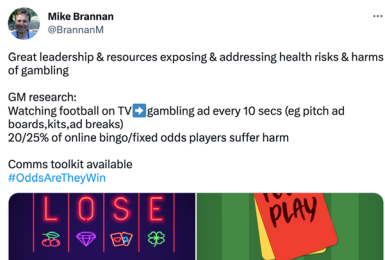
Across a nearly eleven week 'live' period (two weeks before and coinciding with the World Cup, and afterwards) the campaign achieved the following results:



Campaign Feedback And Responses

As well as being shared by all GM borough authorities with extremely positive feedback, the campaign has been shared and applauded by key stakeholders and authorities in Merseyside, Wakefield and even as far afield as East Sussex and Glasgow.

Further reactions to the campaign have included Sarah Gardner, the Deputy Chief Executive of the Gambling Commission, mentioning the GM campaign in a speech to the Local Government Association on 8 February, 2023 - the only UK campaign highlighted, as well as an article featured in Coin Slot, offering insight into some of the industry's opposing reaction to the campaign.



"The campaign has been really helpful for us to push out subtle messages around raising awareness of the tactics used by the gambling industry. At a local level, we would not have the resource needed to develop and deliver a high profile campaign like this. The fact that there was sub regional ownership of this campaign, gives the campaign more weight and demonstrates that there is unity in our approach and messaging around anti-gambling harms."

Project Manager, Manchester Public Health Team, Manchester City Council

"Looks great. So refreshing to see counter narratives about gambling harm"

Clinical Director NHS Northern Gambling Service

"I particularly love your messaging; it has impact but it's not preaching, it's just stating the fact and think that will go down extremely well across the city."

Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust Board Member

"The messaging was appropriate for a GM wide campaign. The social media copy was straight to the point, and therefore effective due to the severity of gambling. This is the best way to get a point across"

Bolton Council comms team

"I would also like to mention The Greater Manchester Combined Authority's ongoing campaign to raise awareness of some of the harms linked to gambling. They are clear it is not an anti-gambling campaign, but an anti-gambling harms one. And according to their strategic needs assessment, there are over 18,000 adults experiencing gambling harms across Greater Manchester, so it is an important message to get across."

Sarah Gardner, Deputy Chief Executive of the Gambling Commission

Campaign Learning And Recommendations

Successes

Our second burst of paid social media tested different types of engagement. What was obvious from these results was that public polls were considerably more successful than other engagement adverts, and a strong mechanism to engage people with the campaign message and landing pages.

As the campaign developed, we took the opportunity to also increase traffic ads, signposting individuals through clearer call to actions to the GMCA campaign landing page, and then gambling support pages, for more information. It's clear that despite the campaign not being targeted at those experiencing severe gambling harms or with gambling addictions, there was still a high number of clicks to find out more about gambling industry tactics, gambling harms and support for gambling harms.

It is worth noting that animated content strongly performed better than static content in paid social media, across all metrics, there are clearly wider reach and engagement benefits to taking the time, when possible, to create moving content both for paid and organic toolkits.

We were also able to gain strong reach (unpaid) on organic Twitter content, by making it relevant in real-time with gambling advertising on televised World Cup matches and other popular and trending TV. This strategy was successful in engaging key campaign stakeholders to share the campaign message further afield and could be an amplified and coordinated strategy for future campaigns.

Learnings

A key learning from the paid social media activity was being mindful of delays to activating campaigns, due to gambling promotions restrictions by Facebook. It may also be beneficial to avoid using the word 'gambling' or related words in campaign, adset and advert titles within Facebook and minimising their use if possible, in captions and on landing pages and/or urls.

Conclusion/future recommendations

We have achieved a lot with a relatively small overall budget and media budget. With additional resource, budget and time, further consideration could be given to a wider mix of channels and tactics to engage the GM public and to develop more tailored research, creative and marketing/public relations activity to reach groups within our target audiences across a wider spectrum of gambling stages, to stimulate reflection, dialogue and measurable behaviour change.

Gambling and gambling advertising is on the rise and it's clear that this work and the learnings from this campaign will only become more relevant both to the region and nationally. Momentum must continue, particularly with bolder, anti-gambling harms and counter- industry narratives, if we are to see positive behaviour changes amongst the population.