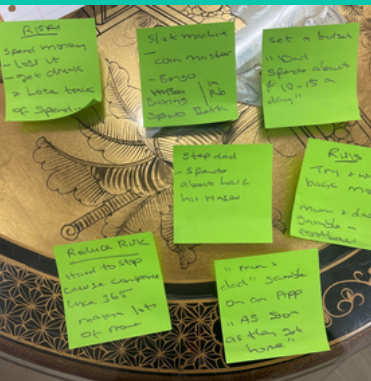




# BILLIE FOCUS GROUPS SUMMARY: A PILOT IMPACT EVALUATION WITH HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS



## BACKGROUND

Fast Forward is passionate about developing new ways to measure the impact of our work with children and young people. This April, we delivered pilot focus groups to test how we can build the quality and depth of our impact data.

We conducted four focus groups with a total of 65 pupils in S2 and S3 (approx. 12-15yo). All four sessions were conducted at Wester Hailes High School where over 80% of pupils live in SIMD quintiles 1 and 2. S2 pupils who participated had seen the Billie play on October.

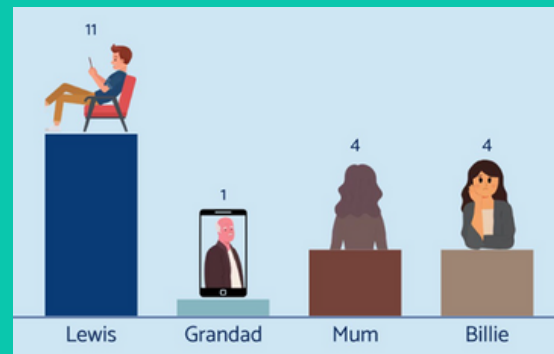
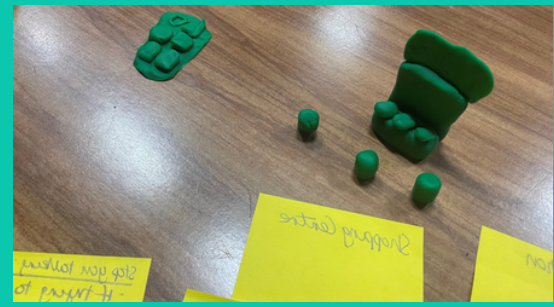
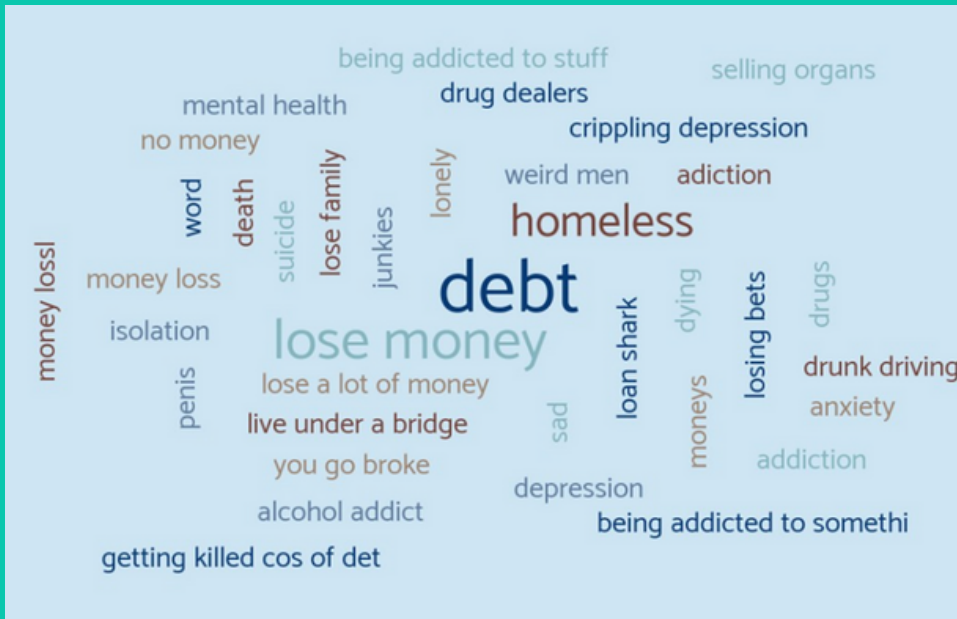
The sessions were delivered using a mixture of Mentimeter interactive slides and hands-on activities using play dough and sticky notes, within one school period (45 minutes).

## FINDINGS

Pupils in all four groups identified harms around poor mental health, self-harm, and suicide due to gambling. Financial harms related to gambling were also a common theme, including debt, losing your money, and experiencing homelessness.

Some groups also identified the potential impacts on relationships (e.g. 'lose family'), involvement in crime (e.g. 'become part of a gang'), and developing other addictions (e.g. 'alcohol addict').

Pupils identified a range of harm reduction techniques, including setting limits, not chasing losses, budgeting, having other interests, and checking in on others. The most common theme for available support was talking to someone they trust.



Group 4: What's the worst that can happen when gambling? What are the risks?

Group 2: Who is experiencing the most harm?

"I'd reach out to her [Billie], ask if she wants to talk or have time out through a sleepover."  
Pupil, Group 1

My stepdad spends "about half his wages" on gambling.  
Pupil, Group 3


"The pupils really got a lot from the discussion and so did we!"  
Teacher


## RECOMMENDATIONS AND LEARNING


This pilot has given us more insight into the impact of the play on young people than we have previously managed to collect using surveys or telephone interviews with young people. This indicates that focus groups can be an effective way to measure impact. The groups of pupils were able to identify:


- A range of gambling harms experienced by characters in the play
- Strategies for reducing harm if someone chooses to gamble
- How they could reach out for support for their own or someone else's gambling

Recall of gambling-specific support services was lower, so future focus groups could spend more time on what some of these services offer. Other learning points include:

 Using visuals and characters helps pupils discuss themes

 Pupils remembered more than they thought they did

 A pre-focus group warmup activity may help make the most of the time

 Consider a variety of learning styles

THANK YOU TO THE PUPILS AND STAFF AT WESTER HAILES!