



Growing

Strong:

Celebrating Aila's

First Year





Aila

from a strong place


[ae-la] : noun

*Meaning "from a strong or resilient place" in
Scottish Gaelic*

*Aila was created to provide a safe space for
women who are connected to gambling, but don't
feel they have a community for support or
somewhere they can go to find out information*

People experiencing homelessness are **40 times more likely** to experience significant gambling harm (1 in 5) compared to the general population (1 in 200)

Deutscher et al. (2022)



Simon Community Scotland teamed up with the RCA Trust to develop Aila, responding to the clear evidence that gambling can be both a driver of homelessness and a result of it

We took a gendered approach to this project because women often face specific barriers when seeking support. We recognised that existing services weren't always designed with women's experiences in mind, leaving many feeling unheard and without the right kind of help

'I feel like this whole project has made me grow in a way that I never expected, like blossom'

Aila co-design member





H {CONNECT}
DIGITAL HEALTH
& **CARE** *Scotland*

Digital Service Transformation
Award **WINNER**
2026



Website Stats

(29th April 2025 - 29^h March 2026)



4 5 4 7

unique website users

“Support for Women”

is the most viewed page

53.38%

of Scottish users had
an **“Engaged Session”**

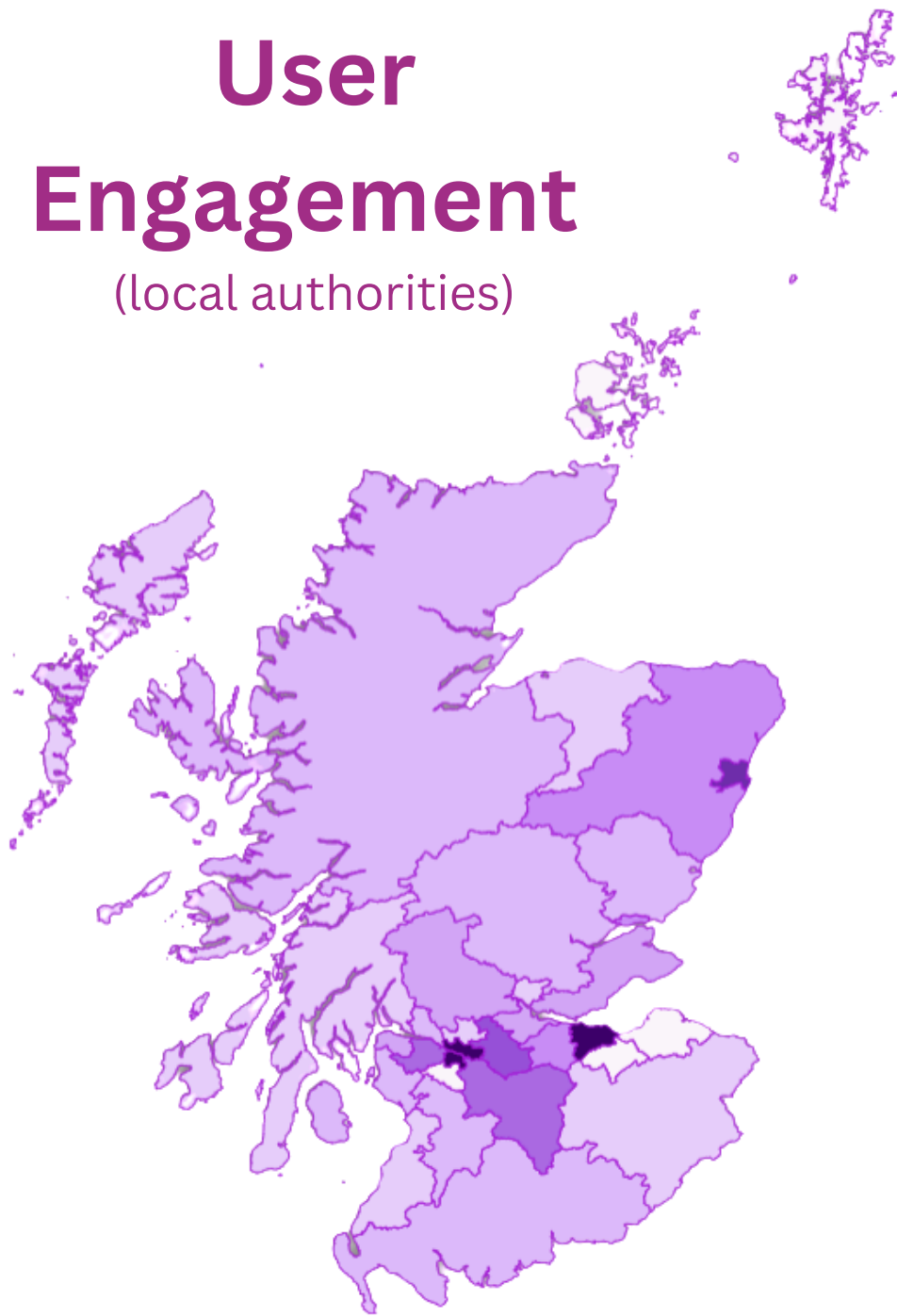


“Lived and Living Library”

is the second most viewed page

User Engagement

(local authorities)



5

387



Aila's (Moving) Living Room

from a strong place

Launched November 2025



12 Sessions

&

16 Participations

A hybrid space for women impacted by their own or someone else's gambling to access information, support and community.

**'The in person group has gave me
such confidence and a way to get out of
the rut I was finding myself in, the staff are
always so friendly and there to help or talk
whenever needed, roll on to next year'**

Aila's Living Room Attendee



SCVO The Gathering 2026



We connected with the community through a stall focused on harm awareness, prevention, and reduction. We celebrated the importance and success of coproduction by hosting a dedicated event



Elevating your work through lived experience: learning from gambling co-production

4

7

attendees

'The session was excellent, it did a really good job of talking about co-production, the need for/purpose of gendered services and women's experiences of gambling. I loved how it was presented, the mix of people from the coproduction who were on the panel, the language used, the way the women lifted each other up and the bravery of presenting from their own experiences. The questions and responses were also good for learning'

Event attendee

'I think the biggest impact it had on me was that it taught me not to be so afraid of speaking out'

Aila co-design member

'A lot of pride in seeing something being created and being involved and being valued'

Aila co-design member

'How the best things
can be created
with communities,
not just for them'

Event attendee

'The true need for
gendered support
responses - for
gambling but for
other areas too!'

Event attendee

Outreach

3 launch events
attended by over **100** people



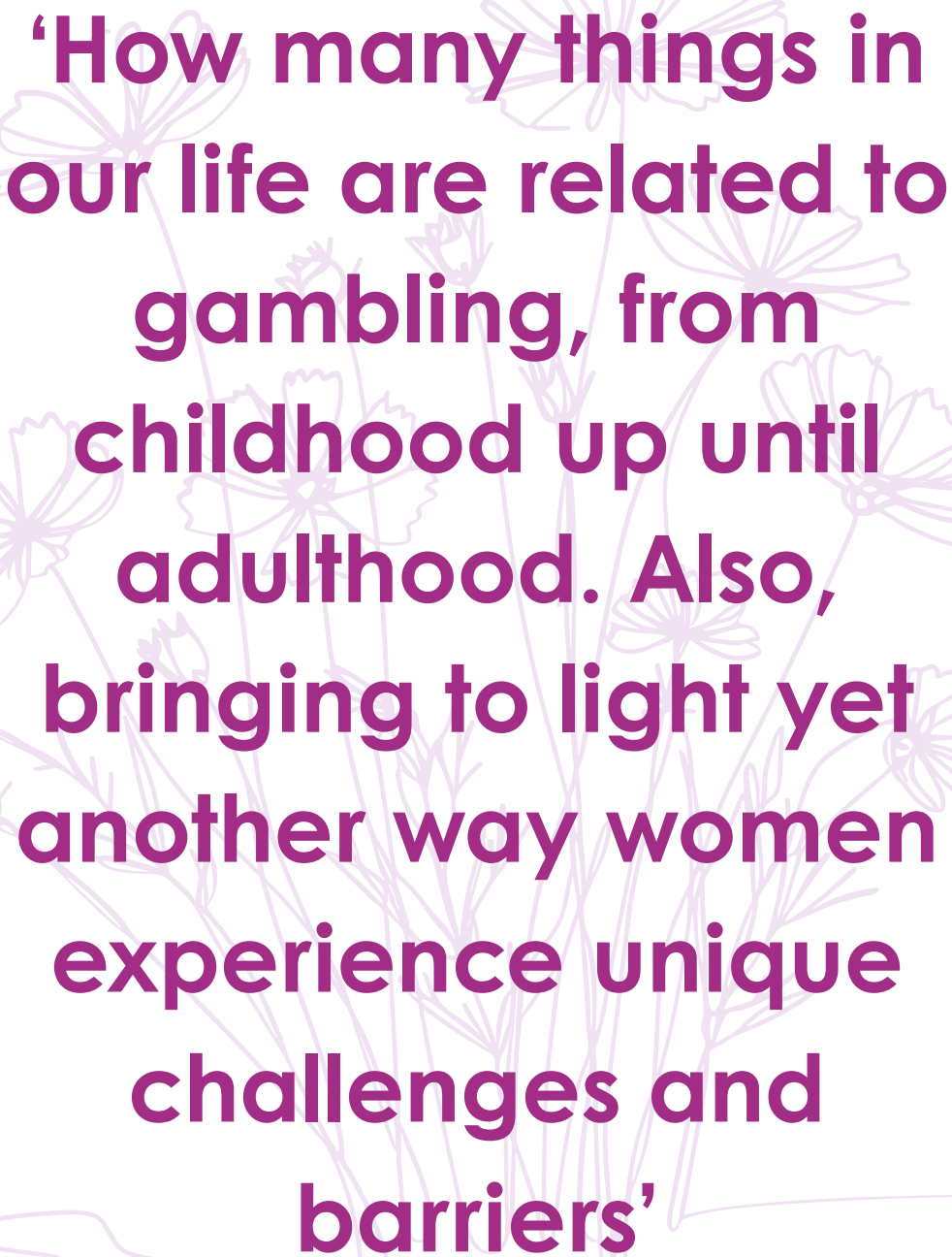
Aila has been represented at **32**
additional events across Scotland



46 community
sessions

connecting with professionals and
individuals

15 training sessions delivered



‘How many things in our life are related to gambling, from childhood up until adulthood. Also, bringing to light yet another way women experience unique challenges and barriers’

Event attendee

'I realise how much
Gambling could
harm and affect
women's life on
daily basis'

Workshop attendee

'Not knowing how
gambling has
affected so many
women as we only
think it's a man's thing'

Workshop attendee

Lifestyle in Photojournalism

Undertaken by Alison Johansson at Edinburgh College

'I had a clear idea of what I wanted to achieve, and she was so generous with her time and willingness to dress up! We had access to a real sheltered accommodation apartment and gathered props that could signify signs of harm from gambling'
Alison Johansson



'It was interesting! I became more explorative and did a bit more research on elderly gambling. I now use the photo to start conversations with people about gambling' Aila co-design member

Safe Spaces Research

Undertaken by Fay Laidler at University of Glasgow

Six women from the Aila community participated in a workshop focused on better understanding safer spaces for women experiencing harm from gambling (their own, or someone else's)

Circles of Safety

Defining safe spaces for women experiencing gambling harm



These are draft findings, full report will be released later in 2026

Songwriting Research

Undertaken by Sharon Martin at University of Bristol

This project aimed to use collaborative songwriting to help better understand women's lived experience of gambling and to understand expert views on songwriting and creativity in supporting women with lived experience of gambling.



3 women from the Aila community contributed to this research

The research is due to be published later this year and the songs created will be shared in the **Lived and Living Library** at aila-scotland.co.uk



‘I knew in my heart I wanted to be involved because it would be good for not only my recovery, but 4 years ago, there was nothing like Aila, what became Aila, and I thought that is why I have to be involved because this is going to give an opportunity for women to find some sort of support through a website that I didn't have’

Aila co-design member



**Thank you to
everyone who
has been a part
of our journey so
far, and to all the
amazing women
who make Aila
what it is**





Aila

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Stay connected to
see whats to come!

