

**GambleAware<sup>®</sup>**

**KEEPING PEOPLE  
SAFE FROM  
GAMBLING HARMS**

A briefing note

**November 2020**

## THE ISSUE

- Over half of all adults in Great Britain participate in some form of gambling and official statistics estimate that two million adults are experiencing some level of gambling harm, including 340,000 'problem gamblers'. Research commissioned by GambleAware indicates these estimates of gambling harm may be low.
- Research commissioned by the Gambling Commission shows that gambling has become part of everyday life for children and young people. 350,000 (11%) 11-16 year-olds are reported as having spent their own money on gambling in the last week. This rate is lower than for young people drinking alcohol (16%), but higher than for those using e-cigarettes (7%), smoking tobacco cigarettes (6%) or taking illegal drugs (5%). Overall, 1.7% of 11-16 year-olds are classified as 'problem gamblers' and a further 2.7% are 'at risk'.
- **Gambling disorder** is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as an addictive behaviour with implications for mental health, and for some, gambling addiction can result in suicide.
- While only a minority of gamblers develop gambling disorder, the social, health and financial harms associated with gambling can extend beyond the gambler to impact families, communities and wider society. As such, gambling may be considered a public health issue in Great Britain.
- Despite the prevalence of harms associated with gambling in Great Britain, one in two people with a gambling disorder have not accessed any treatment or support. This was highlighted in the first ever **GB Treatment Needs and Gap Analysis** research, commissioned by GambleAware, which also identified the barriers to accessing treatment and support, including a lack of awareness of available services, social stigma and a reluctance to admit gambling problems to one's community and service and healthcare providers.

# A PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE

Gambling harms are best understood as matters of health and wellbeing, and keeping people safe from gambling harms requires a public health response, including:

- **Primary prevention** - universal promotion of a safer environment
- **Secondary prevention** - selective intervention for those who may be 'at risk'
- **Tertiary prevention** - direct support for those with gambling disorder or for those who may be directly affected.

Guided by this public health model, GambleAware commissions prevention and treatment services in England, Scotland and Wales underpinned by research and evaluation. GambleAware works to ensure **evidence-informed services** are developed according to need within a **robust and accountable system**, and that funding is allocated efficiently and independently.

Effective prevention of gambling harms requires a coherent and co-ordinated '**whole systems approach**' involving partnership with the NHS, public health agencies, local authorities, and voluntary sector organisations. This will ensure appropriate referral routes and care pathways are in place for individuals in need of support, including treatment, to receive the right intervention at the right time.

The value of this collaborative approach is acknowledged in the **NHS Mental Health Implementation Plan, 2019-24 (pp 40-41)** in which GambleAware is recognised as an NHS England partner in relation to the NHS commitment to opening 15 specialist problem gambling clinics in the next five years. In Scotland and Wales similar discussions are taking place between the NHS and GambleAware.

# 1 Commissioning the National Gambling Treatment Service

- GambleAware commissions a network of NHS and voluntary sector organisations to deliver the **National Gambling Treatment Service** across Great Britain, free at the point of delivery. The National Gambling Treatment Service works alongside other local agencies, in both the statutory and voluntary sectors, to meet the needs of individuals and their communities, promoting a place-based approach and developing referral routes into treatment.
- GambleAware is leading the development of systems of accountability for the National Gambling Treatment Service, to assure safe, effective delivery of services, to report on activity, and to develop the evidence base which will inform the future expansion and development of services. Priorities for future commissioning will be guided by GambleAware's annual **GB Treatment & Support Demand Survey** and other commissioned research findings, and informed by our programme of work to promote the involvement of people with [lived experience](#).
- A key feature of the National Gambling Treatment Service is the **National Gambling Helpline**, operated by **GamCare**, which is accessible online and by telephone 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It provides the easiest and quickest way for most people to be connected with the service that can best help them. Some people prefer to access all the help they need via the Helpline, because it can be accessed remotely. This includes computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy.
- The National Gambling Treatment Service includes a psychiatrist-led service provided by the **Central and North-West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL)** that GambleAware has funded for a decade. A second NHS service commissioned by GambleAware has recently opened, delivered by **Leeds & York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust**. These services are designed to help people with more serious and complex needs, including people receiving NHS treatment for other conditions.

- Twelve-week residential rehabilitation is available for those people whose gambling addiction is so strong that community-based treatment is not sufficient. A Retreat & Counselling service is also offered to people whose personal circumstances make attendance at residential rehabilitation difficult. This treatment is delivered by the **Gordon Moody Association**.
- The majority of gambling treatment in GB is provided by the network of local providers, co-ordinated by **GamCare**, which offers community-based counselling and psychotherapy at locations which are convenient for most people to attend. This includes both individual and group work.
- The National Gambling Treatment Service works with the **criminal justice system** to reduce reoffending related to gambling. To understand better what works, GambleAware has commissioned CNWL to provide screening and treatment for gambling problems across all prisons in Surrey.
- The validation and analysis of output and outcome data is undertaken by **ViewItUK**, using procedures similar to those used for the National Drug Treatment Monitoring System on behalf of Public Health England (PHE).
- GambleAware is working with the **Care Quality Commission** and the Gambling Commission to develop plans for the inspection of gambling treatment services.
- GambleAware has commissioned the **Primary Care Gambling Service** to develop a competency framework for gambling treatment in primary care. This will set out the skills and experience needed by clinicians.

In the 12 months to 31 March 2020, the **National Gambling Treatment Service** treated **9,008** people and the Helpline received **39,000** calls and online chats. Waiting times are short, and compare favourably to NHS IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies) mental health services. Routine monitoring and evaluation demonstrates that current treatment is effective.

GambleAware also runs the **BeGambleAware.org** website with:

- **7.7 MILLION** page views across the website.
- **15%** increase in the average session duration and **36%** improvement in the bounce rate compared to Sept 18 to Oct 19.

**£26 MILLION**  
of committed funding goes  
toward this area of our work

## 2 Public health campaigns & practical support to local services

- GambleAware produces national public health campaigns to support local services and lead awareness and behaviour change campaigns such as **Bet Regret**. This preventative campaign encourages regular sports bettors to **'tap out for time out'** to avoid risky, impulsive bets. Alongside this and during the ongoing pandemic, GambleAware continues to run a campaign to signpost people to help and promote the National Gambling Treatment Service.
- GambleAware has published a **'brief intervention guide'** and an **'e-Learning'** package for professionals who are non-specialists in the treatment of gambling disorder, and is currently working with the **Personal Finance Research Centre** at the University of Bristol to produce resources that focus on preventing gambling disorder across the financial sector.
- Other partnerships include working with the **Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH)** to improve knowledge of gambling harms amongst public health professionals through programmes supporting the **Make Every Contact Count+ (MECC+)** initiative. **Citizens Advice** in Great Britain train debt advisors and other frontline workers (for example in housing associations, local authorities and family support services) to identify and offer support people who may be experiencing gambling harms.
- GambleAware funds **RSPH** to convene a Gambling Health Alliance of professional health-related bodies to promote greater awareness and share perspectives about preventing gambling harms.
- GambleAware commissioned **Fast Forward** to make it possible for every young person in Scotland to have access to gambling education and prevention opportunities. Resources for teachers, parents and carers are also available online following work with **Demos**, the **PSHE Association** and **ParentZone**.
- GambleAware has used the Treatment and Support Demands Survey data to produce an **interactive map** to determine the prevalence of 'problem gambling' across Great Britain. The data has been used to develop a **toolkit** to support a public health response.

The **Bet Regret** campaign reaches **2.4 MILLION** men aged 18 – 34 years, with high campaign recognition against those at risk (67%) and high risk bettors (77%) who rate the campaign as engaging and relevant with strong message outtake.\*

**81%** of the **Bet Regret** campaign audience agreed that **BeGambleAware.org** does a good job at providing useful information about gambling.

Against a limited spend (less than £500k per burst), recognition of the **National Gambling Treatment Service** campaign stands at **69%** amongst high risk gamblers and **52%** have said they would contact the NGTS if they had concerns about gambling.

**Parent Zone** 'Gaming or Gambling' resources have reached nearly **400,000** parents, and the 'Know the Stakes' resources have been accessed by over **130,000** young people.

**Fast Forward** has delivered training to around **2,000** practitioners in the parenting, employability and informal education sectors, and reached **15,000** pupils via more than **60** schools through peer-based theatre performances in secondary schools.

**3,200** professionals have used the **RSPH** e-Learning to enable them to identify and respond effectively to people experiencing gambling harms.

**Citizens Advice England and Wales' Gambling Support Service** has screened over **23,000** clients and has delivered gambling harms training to **6,000** professionals to date.

**Citizens Advice Scotland's Gambling Support Service**, which launched in April 2020, aims to deliver a gambling harms e-Learning module to **500** Citizens Advice advisers and gambling harms training to **900** professionals, over a 2 year period.

**£13 MILLION** of committed funding goes toward this area of our work

\* Ipsos Mori Tracking Study Wave 1-4 Campaign Audience of frequent male gamblers aged 16-44, betting on sports or online casino in the past 4 weeks.

# 3 Commissioning research & evaluation to improve knowledge of what works in prevention

- GambleAware builds the '**what works for whom**' evidence by commissioning research and evaluation to inform and support its education, prevention and treatment activity.
- GambleAware funds individual **research projects and programmes** with an increasing focus on building knowledge to understand why gambling harms disproportionately affect particular communities and parts of the GB population.
- GambleAware is committed to commissioning an **Annual GB Treatment & Support Demand Survey** to maintain a current picture of demand for different types of treatment and support and the barriers and facilitators for accessing them. Commencing in 2019, the 2020 survey comprises two **different sampling methods** to build knowledge of survey accuracy in gathering data in this area.
- Independent **evaluations of the prevention services** GambleAware funds, are also commissioned; for example for Citizens Advice England and Wales Support Services and the Gambling Education Hub in Scotland, delivered by Fast Forward.
- GambleAware funds **foundation evaluations of treatment services** to ensure a solid logic model and data collection framework is in place at the start of service delivery. Used on projects like the **Surrey Prisons Gambling Service** and **Primary Care Gambling Service**, it allows for robust evaluation at a subsequent date.
- GambleAware also helps to **build capacity** in gambling research through a PhD funding programme which is set to grow.
- In 2021, GambleAware is seeking to build capacity in the academic community for a **public health research approach** to preventing and reducing gambling harms via significant funding to a single institution over three to five years.



- The impact of **COVID-19** research was published in October 2020 and found a **10%** reduction in gambling activity overall between March-May 2020, but with significant variations between individuals. In November 2020, the report authors will give evidence at the APPG on Gambling-Related Harms session on 'Gambling and the Impacts of Lockdown'.
- The **Women in Focus** report (published July 2020) and Ethnicity and Gambling (due to be published end of 2020) are both based on the GB Treatment & Support Demand Survey data and provide insights into gambling behaviour, gambling harms, use of treatment and support and barriers to access, in specific populations and communities.
- In response to GambleAware's commissioned research into the **Effect of Gambling Advertising and Marketing on children, young people and vulnerable adults**, the Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP) continues to run a public consultation on new rules to better protect under 18s and other vulnerable groups from potential gambling advertising related harms.
- An invitation to Tender has been issued for a provider to set up an inclusive GB-wide network of people with lived experience of gambling harms, in response to a recommendation in GambleAware commissioned research by Kings College London exploring **'What works' in creating infrastructures and engagement methods for people with lived experience**.
- Formative evaluations of specific interventions and services (**cCBT** and the **Northern Gambling Clinics Leeds Hub**) and a **phase 1 Evaluation of the GambleAware funded treatment system** are helping to build knowledge of what an exemplar gambling treatment system might look like.
- All GambleAware research is independently commissioned, monitored and reviewed. Approved by the **National Institute for Health Research (NIHR)** as an NIHR non-commercial partner, GambleAware follows Research Council Policy regarding research ethics, encouraging and funding open access publication in academic journals and data reuse.

**£6.5 MILLION** of committed funding goes toward this area of our work

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Keeping people safe from gambling harms requires a **coherent, co-ordinated and well-funded 'whole systems approach'** to prevention and treatment, which is underpinned by effective partnership working.

The recent pledge of up to £100 million from the gambling industry to fund prevention and treatment services, will enable GambleAware to continue to work in partnership with the NHS, public health agencies, local authorities and voluntary sector organisations across England, Scotland and Wales to further develop the **National Gambling Treatment Service**. A new five-year strategy will be published in 2021. In the meantime, GambleAware will continue to focus on:

- Public health campaigns on a national scale such as **Bet Regret**, to help build resilience against gambling harms for children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Providing **practical support** to GP services, debt and other advice agencies, mental health services, prisons, military personnel, professional sports, schools and youth workers, specifically:
  - To **build resilience** for children, young people and vulnerable adults
  - To provide **advice and training materials** to primary care professionals and other support services, and promoting collaboration between trusted intermediaries.
- Extending the **National Gambling Treatment Service** in collaboration with the NHS, public health bodies, healthcare professionals, voluntary organisations and local authorities.
- GambleAware's **Lived Experience Programme** including facilitating a special interest group for people who have been through treatment for their own gambling harms and collaborating on establishing an inclusive GB-wide membership network for all who have experienced gambling harms.
- Evaluating **'what works for whom'** via a framework that measures consequential change, informs service design and can be widely shared.

# ABOUT GAMBLEAWARE

Regulated by the Charity Commission for England and Wales, and the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR), GambleAware is wholly independent and has a framework agreement with the [Gambling Commission](#) to deliver the National Strategy to Reduce Gambling Harms within the context of arrangements based on voluntary donations from the gambling industry.

Guided by an **independent expert board of trustees**, the majority of whom work in the health sector, evidence-informed services are commissioned according to need within a robust and accountable system of governance processes and procedures that ensures the industry has no influence over our commissioning decisions.

**Kate Lampard, CBE** - Chair of Board of Trustees, lead non-executive of DHSC board

**Rachel Pearce** - Regional Director of Commissioning, NHSE South West

**Professor Sian Griffiths, OBE** - Chair of the Global Health Committee, Associate Non-Executive of the Board of PHE and a former President of the UK Faculty of Public Health and Deputy Chair of trustees and Chair of Safer Gambling campaign

**Paul Simpson** - Chief Finance Officer & Deputy Chief Executive, Surrey & Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust

**Saffron Cordery** - Director of Policy & Strategy and Deputy Chief Executive, NHS Providers

**Professor Marcantonio Spada** - Professor of Addictive Behaviours and Mental Health at London South Bank University & editor-in-chief of the international peer-reviewed journal, Addictive Behaviors

**Michelle Highman** - Chief Executive, The Money Charity

**Professor Anthony Kessel** - Clinical Director at NHS England and NHS Improvement; Honorary Professor & Co-ordinator of the International Programme for Ethics, Public Health & Human Rights at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

GambleAware is a member of a joint-working group on preventing gambling harms co-chaired by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and Department for Health and Social Care, and a member of the National Suicide Prevention Strategy Advisory Group. GambleAware has established advisory boards in Wales and Scotland to guide future commissioning plans in those nations.



# When you're there, but not there.

We are here to help. Chat to us online or call for free, confidential advice and start to regain control of your gambling after one conversation.

---

**0808 8020 133**  
**[begambleaware.org/ngts](https://begambleaware.org/ngts)**



GambleAware  
Pennine Place,  
2a Charing Cross Road,  
WC2H 0HF

020 7287 1994  
[info@gambleaware.org](mailto:info@gambleaware.org)  
[about.gambleaware.org](https://about.gambleaware.org)