

GambleAware

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Acting now to prevent
gambling harms



April 2022

begambleaware.org

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Who we are

GambleAware is the leading charity working to keep people safe from gambling harms. We do this by leading public health campaigns and driving the transformation of treatment and prevention services. Every year we fund access to free, confidential treatment for nearly 12,000 people and over 41,000 calls to the National Gambling Helpline.

We are the principal commissioner of prevention and treatment services for gambling harms in Great Britain – an independent charity guided by a Board of Trustees, many of whom are experts from the NHS and public health.

We cannot achieve this alone – only in partnership.

GambleAware is a key delivery partner in the ‘National Strategy to Reduce Gambling Harms’. This has been an effective mechanism to align the work of many organisations on the reduction of gambling harm as part of a coalition of expertise – the best way to ensure that support reaches those who need it.

We are also an approved National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) non-commercial partner¹.

GambleAware is dedicated to understanding how to prevent the harm caused by gambling. We do this by adopting a public health approach to prevent gambling harm and work with local authorities, the NHS, and other third-sector organisations.

We deliver this by bringing together public sector and charity partners into a coalition of expertise to provide targeted, innovative, and effective that help reduce gambling harm.

¹ <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/nihr-non-commercial-partner-list/11458#G>

Led by strategy and evidence, GambleAware is focused on **evidence-based decision making** to meet our vision and to bring together public and third sector expertise to create a prevention and treatment network.

This means that we will:

- Continue to generate robust, detailed, and independent evidence through our research, evaluation, and monitoring functions to broaden our knowledge of gambling harms and generate evidence of what works.
- Use this information to inform the commissioning of education, prevention, and treatment programmes that are effective, accessible, inclusive, and recognise barriers experienced by minority and stigmatised groups.

We are working to achieve our vision by:

- Ensuring that gambling harms are clearly understood.
- Collaborating to deliver a whole-system approach to prevent gambling harms.
- Enabling people to access the advice, support, and treatment they need.
- Building and disseminating evidence-based learning and knowledge.

Building a society safe from gambling harms

The ongoing impact of the pandemic, a growing cost-of-living crisis, and shift to online gambling could lead to an increased risk of people experiencing gambling harms that remain unseen until the individual reaches a crisis point. Without action now, many more people and families could suffer.

To prevent this, an urgent focus on delivering a public health approach to gambling harms is required. We do this by making prevention of harm central to all we do, from research and education, to raising awareness, as well as intervention and identification at an early stage.

At GambleAware, we are commissioning experts seeking to enable local action through a national framework that brings together a coalition of expertise to deliver targeted, innovative, and effective prevention services that save lives. We bring together NHS, local authorities, and other third sector organisations, alongside lived experience, to embed prevention and early intervention at all levels.

This reduces disparities and ensures people get the support they need, which is right and specific to them and their needs, before they experience serious harm. We can only achieve this by reaching all communities and engaging at a local level to reduce gambling harm in a way that central government sometimes cannot.

Our commissioning work requires the right, fair funding in place to provide stability and the best-in-class solutions to prevent gambling harms. That is why we are calling on the government to introduce a mandatory 1% levy of Gross Gaming Yield (GGY) on the gambling industry as a condition of licence.

Our principles

Our principles for a transparent engagement with the government and stakeholders.

We believe in:

1. **Supporting those most at risk by reducing inequalities**

The gambling industry must not be allowed to profit from the cost-of-living crisis affecting some of the Britain's most at-risk communities. Evidence suggests those from the most deprived communities are most at risk of gambling harms. As financial hardships accelerate the risks of experiencing gambling harm, dedicated messaging, education, treatment, and support must be increased to prevent people from experiencing harm from gambling.

2. **Mandatory levy as a licence condition**

The industry should take the necessary and responsible steps to address and prevent gambling harms, by committing at least 1% of GGY to treatment, prevention, and research. This should no longer be voluntary but instead be a mandatory levy.

3. **Prioritising prevention and support to reach all communities**

Most people experiencing gambling harm need early intervention through prevention and support programmes. Charities have a specific role to play, which enables local action within a national framework, to deliver locally led prevention and treatment services. This requires reaching all communities in a way government cannot, by tailoring to local need and reaching the most deprived communities. With over 90% of treatment for gambling harm accessed outside the NHS, this approach helps protect the service and allows the NHS to focus primarily on treatment for those with more complex needs.

4. Targeted, innovation-driven support

Our work is underpinned by independent, robust research and evaluation to understand gambling harms. This enables the creation and delivery of an agile, data-led, and innovation-driven approach to prevention and treatment.

5. A coalition of expertise

A coalition of expertise is needed to deliver the broad spectrum of research, prevention, and treatment locally and nationally. Lived experience, the voluntary sector, and the NHS need to work together under a national framework to achieve the same objective of preventing and mitigating gambling harms.

6. Investors must push for change

Investments in the gambling industry should be scrutinised through a health, environmental, social, and governance lens in the same way as other harm-causing sectors. This will force long-term change in industry behaviour, ending products and practices that cause harm and help to create a society which is safe from gambling harm.

Our impact: 2021/2022

Over the last year, some of our main initiatives have included:

- Awarding **£24.6 million funding to deliver our vision of preventing harm from gambling** and ensuring that everyone who needs it receives effective treatment and support – funding focused on local projects and partnerships with local communities to deliver support and treatment services which are tailored and specific to local needs.
- Funding the **National Gambling Treatment Service (NGTS)** which brings together the National Gambling Helpline and a network of locally based providers across Great Britain:
 - **8,490** individuals received treatment for gambling disorder through the NGTS in 2020–21.
 - The Helpline received **41,000 calls** in 2020–2021, an increase of **9%** on the previous year.
- Building **frontline, local capacity** by funding gambling harm awareness programmes run by **Citizens Advice** across England, Scotland, and Wales, training over **8,500** on-the-ground professionals to recognise and support those suffering from gambling harms.
- Delivering three public health advertising campaigns to bring about behaviour change through raising awareness:
 - The **‘Bet Regret’ campaign** focused on raising awareness of gambling harms among young men aged 18–34 who gamble regularly on sport. This has translated into action amongst the target audience with half of those in the highest risk band now saying they try to ‘tap out’ of their app before deciding to place a bet.

- Our new **Women’s campaign** was the first ever gambling harms prevention campaign focused on women, who are often under-represented in this area. The campaign raised awareness of the gambling harms women experience, showed how to spot the early warning signs of harmful gambling and signposted women to advice and support to keep their gambling under control. Amongst women who gamble aged 18–54, over half recognised the campaign, and amongst those **49% reported taking action** as a result. We also saw a significant increase amongst the target audience in understanding of the early warning signs of harmful gambling.

- Our successful **National Gambling Treatment Service (NGTS) campaign** encouraged people experiencing gambling harms to access free, confidential, and effective support from the NGTS. The campaign generated more than **1,000 pieces of media coverage**, social posts reached more than **14 million** and **visits to the NGTS website increased by more than 2,000%**.

- Investing **£2.58 million** into two **new Education Hubs** across England and Wales to help prevent and reduce gambling harms among children. In Scotland, a similar initiative reached **15,000** secondary school pupils and trained **3,000** practitioners working with children and young people.

- Increasing **targeted funding** for treatment and support to ensure services continued to operate effectively throughout the pandemic, including:
 - Funding to enhance pre and post **residential wrap around care**.

- Funding to **reduce waiting lists** and address capacity issues in October 2021.
- Funding to increase the capacity of the National Gambling Helpline to **enable 24/7 operation**.
- **Mobilising local area awareness** by funding **primary research** into population needs for support and treatment for gambling harm and barriers, as well as prevalence and usage. This includes the Annual Great Britain Treatment and Support Survey and interactive maps.
- **5.4 million** BeGambleAware.org website users and **6.9 million** page views.

We cannot achieve these results alone, and we are grateful to the many local delivery partners who we work with, supporting people on the ground in communities around Britain. We can only deliver by bringing together public sector and charity partners into a coalition of expertise to provide targeted, innovative, and effective prevention and treatment services that save lives.

We look forward to building on these successes next year and beyond, continuing our work to create a society safe from gambling harms.

For more information on any of the above, for a copy of our full Impact Report, or if you have any questions about GambleAware, please contact info@gambleaware.org.

Looking ahead to 2022/23

Our future activities continue to focus on GambleAware's Organisational Strategy 2021–26 (the 'Strategy') which at its heart has four commissioning objectives:

1. Increase awareness and understanding of gambling harms.
2. Increase access to services and reduce gambling harm inequalities.
3. Build capacity amongst healthcare professionals, social prescribers, debt advisers, faith leaders, community services, and others so they are better equipped to respond to gambling harms.
4. Deliver effective leadership of the commissioning landscape to improve the coherence, accessibility, diversity, and effectiveness of the National Gambling Treatment Service.

GambleAware's commitment to these four commissioning objectives is clear – with half of our annual budget supporting existing and new programmes for the year ahead including:

- Major prevention campaigns for women and men which will continue to deliver against existing NGTS commitments and support prevention in the wider population as well as our targeted approach to those at risk/being harmed.
- The development of new commissioning arrangements that will support the delivery of a transformed NGTS. Our new Outcomes Framework and Delivery Model for the NGTS was developed in 2021/22 and its implementation will accelerate our ability to support local communities and provide support to those at risk of gambling harm.
- Implementation of Education Hubs in England and Wales.
- Harms awareness training being rolled out to the target groups.

In addition, new commissioning activity for 2022/23 will put focus on programmes where we can make greatest impact with a specific focus on four key emerging themes:

- **Treatment & Prevention Innovation:** To increase access to early intervention, support and treatment to population groups that experience barriers to access. To do this we will work with a wider range of delivery partners and providers that provide culturally competent services and work collaboratively with their communities.
- **Children and Young People:** To develop a multi-year commissioning plan across all four commissioning objectives to ensure that GambleAware delivers on its commitment to Children and Young People through a comprehensive plan based on a deep understanding of the different needs within Children and Young People relating to gambling related harm.
- **Mobilising Local Systems:** To increase the number of local systems taking action on gambling related harm through the development of data and tools that can be readily used to create the case for change at a local level. So that delivery partners are able to act as leaders in gambling harm prevention, early identification, and support in their local systems through improved partnership with non-gambling related harm organisations.
- **Stigma:** By undertaking a major campaign across the entire population to increase awareness of gambling harm we want to reduce the barriers to people accessing the support they need. To ensure people are supported when they reach out, we need to make sure key professionals are ready and able to respond to what we hope will be an increase in numbers of people asking for help.

As part of GambleAware's effort to promote transparency and collaboration, an Annual Report will be published in May 2022.

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Briefing Pack

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About GambleAware:

GambleAware is an independent charity (Charity No. England & Wales 1093910, Scotland (SC049433) that champions a public health approach to preventing gambling harms. GambleAware is a commissioner of integrated prevention, education and treatment services on a national scale, with over £56 million of funding under active management.

For further information about the content of the report please contact info@gambleaware.org.