

# **Acting now to prevent gambling harms**



August 2022



## Who we are

**GambleAware is the leading charity working to keep people safe from gambling harms.**

We are a leading commissioner for gambling harms, support and treatment services across Great Britain. As an independent charity, we work in close collaboration with the NHS, clinicians, local and national government, gambling treatment providers, as well as other mental health services to reduce gambling harms.

Our commissioned services currently deliver free and confidential treatment to 12,000 people and over 41,000 calls were made to the GambleAware commissioned, National Gambling Helpline last year. Anyone experiencing harm can visit **BeGambleAware.org** or call the helpline **0808 8020 133**.

We have an extremely robust system of governance, and we are accountable to the Charity Commission. Our independent Board of trustees are leaders within the NHS and public health sector, and we work alongside DCMS, DHSC, OHID, the Gambling Commission and the Advisory Board for Safer Gambling (ABSG). The gambling industry has absolutely no input, influence or authority over any of our activity and those with lived experience of gambling harm inform and guide our work.

We are also an approved National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) non-commercial partner<sup>1</sup> and a key delivery partner in the 'National Strategy to Reduce Gambling Harms'. 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 support reaches those who need it.

GambleAware is dedicated to understanding how to prevent the harm caused by gambling and do this by adopting a public health approach to prevent gambling.

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

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.

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

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

We are concerned that the ongoing impact of the pandemic, coupled with the unprecedented and growing cost-of-living crisis, alongside the growth in 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.

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 compulsory 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 Compulsory levy as a licence condition**

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

## Achievements this year – National Gambling Treatment Service

Since the start of this financial year, we have delivered a range of programmes to meet our commissioning objectives and help achieve our vision of a society free from gambling harm. A key focus for this year has been around the recommissioning of the National Gambling Treatment Service to ensure the system responds to the growing needs of people at risk of gambling harm.

GambleAware commissioned a strategic review to establish a long-term commissioning strategy for the National Gambling Treatment Service (NGTS) to ensure the system responds to the growing needs of people at risk of gambling harm. The future system will support service providers to work closely with Local Authorities and local partners to deliver targeted support.

We worked with TPXImpact to develop a set of new independent and evidence informed commissioning arrangements and intentions to inform the future design of the National Gambling Treatment Service. As part of this, we have issued an Expression of Interest (EOI) for the establishment of regional treatment and support alliances. This work is designed to:

- Provide long-term stability and cohesion across the support and treatment space to ensure providers can focus on delivery of services rather than future income.
- Inform key stakeholders and partners of how we plan to work with them to deliver integrated, high-quality, cost-effective national and localised services to greater numbers of people experiencing gambling harm.
- Ensure providers have a clear framework and set of goals to enable the delivery of high-quality outcomes consistently across all regions and measure success.

The review involved in depth engagement with gambling harm providers, lived experience representatives and our wider partners, across the NHS and Local Authorities, to understand what is working well, while also identifying where we can improve the access and effectiveness of the services we currently commission. In summary we need to:

- Build services around the needs of people experiencing gambling harms.
- Undertake joined-up awareness raising of gambling harms in our communities.
- Develop a coherent delivery model that integrates with local systems.
- Facilitate referrals, not only signpost.
- Invest in early intervention.
- Values short-term support and treatment in tandem with support to manage in the long-term.
- Establish clear intent, and funding, for innovation.

Underpinning these key points, the strategic review resulted in the development of an Outcomes Framework and a Service Blueprint that have informed the development of a new delivery model and a commissioning strategy for that delivery model to determine it serves as a strong mechanism for us to reduce gambling harm.

# Achievements this year - Strategic pillars

Other achievements throughout the year includes progress against the four specific themes we identified where can make the greatest impact:

## Treatment & Prevention Innovation

- To increase access to early intervention, support and treatment to population groups that experience barriers to access. To date, we have:
  - Launched a new Organisational Resilience Fund (ORF) which has been made available to all GambleAware funded treatment providers to support the impact of the cost-of-living crisis.

## Children and Young People

- To develop a multi-year commissioning plan across all four commissioning objectives which will facilitate a deep understanding of the different needs within Children and Young People relating to gambling related harm. Since April 2022, we have:
  - Hosted an outcomes workshop to identify key questions and evidence gaps in this area. Future activity will include the commissioning of research to address these gaps and develop a strategic partnership to bring interested organisations together.

## Mobilising Local Systems

- To increase the number of local systems taking action on gambling harm and enable delivery partners to act as leaders in gambling harm prevention. Activity over the past few months has included:
  - The launch of a £1 million Community Resilience Fund to provide short-term funding to address inequalities experienced by disadvantaged communities exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis. Over 60 organisations submitted applications for this fund and GambleAware will work with successful applicants to understand the impact of their work and support them to better evidence the need they are addressing in their community.

## Stigma

- Launch a major campaign across Great Britain, to increase awareness of gambling harm, reduce barriers to people accessing the support they need and ensure professionals are ready to respond to requests for help. As part of this workstream, we have:
  - Published a new Stigma Scoping Study, including guidance and recommendations for best practice for avoiding stigmatising language in future activity.
  - Started work with the Royal College of General Practitioners to develop a GP training programme to help them identify patients experiencing gambling harms.
  - Started planning for a new public health campaign to address and reduce stigma related to gambling harm, with activity due to launch in 2023.

## Commissioning Objective Updates

All GambleAware work continues to focus on our Organisational Strategy and the four commissioning objectives at the heart of this:

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.

Since April 2022, we have made significant progress in the delivery of work against these objectives, including:

- **Gambling Harms Research Centre:** The launch of a pioneering new £4 million Gambling Harms Research Centre at the University of Bristol to build greater understanding and evidence around the growing and diverse impact of gambling harms across Great Britain.
- **New Lived Experience Council:** We released a call for applications for a new Lived Experience Council as part of our commitment to engage with communities of people who have experienced gambling harms.
- **Patterns of Play Research:** Carried out by researchers from the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) and the University of Liverpool. The report was designed to better understand online gambling behaviour in Great Britain and found that participation and spend on gaming products such as slot, casino and bingo games online are disproportionately concentrated in the most deprived areas of Great Britain.
- **Updated interactive maps:** We launched new maps based on three years of Treatment and Support Survey data to identify gambling harms prevalence by local area based on data from our annual Treatment and support Survey.

- **Aftercare Funding Programme:** We launched a new £2 million fund for applications for projects which will help prevent relapse for people in recovery from gambling harm. Successful applications will be funded for 2-3 years and an evaluation cohort will be commissioned to build evidence in this area of work.
- **Community Resilience Fund and Organisational Resilience Fund:** We launched a £1.5m Community and Organisational Resilience Fund to provide short-term funding to address inequalities experienced by disadvantaged communities exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis
  - The Organisation fund has been made available to all GambleAware funded treatment providers.
  - Over 60 organisations submitted applications for the Community fund and GambleAware will work with successful applicants to understand the impact of their work and support them to better evidence the need they are addressing in their community.
- **Gambling Harms Framework:** A small scoping study to assess and review existing frameworks of gambling harms has been launched and will provide a comprehensive summary and appraisal of existing frameworks including screening tools and harm for other behaviours. The work will inform future recommendations for new research to support the development of improved ways to define and measure gambling harms.

## Looking ahead to Q3/Q4 2022/23

We have a range of projects, campaigns and programmes of work which will be published and launched before the end of the year. These include:

- **Public health campaigns**

- **Women's Prevention Campaign:**

In September 2022, we will be launching the next phase of our Women's Gambling Harm Prevention Campaign which will expand on the overall strategic route of 'losing track of the world around you when you gamble'. This phase of the campaign is designed to encourage conversation around gambling and gambling harm to help break down the barriers and encourage women to talk about their gambling and seek help and support should they need it.

- **World Cup Campaign:** Ahead of the 2022 World Cup, we will be launching our next gambling harm prevention campaign aimed at regular male sports bettors. As part of this activity, we will be encouraging bettors to enjoy the World Cup without feelings of Bet Regret.

- **NGTS Annuals Stats:** The official statistics for the National Gambling Treatment Service tier 3 and 4 treatment and support will be published before the end of the year, detailing how many people have accessed treatment and the overall outcomes of the service.
- **Tier 3 and 4 treatment evaluation:** examining the impact of treatment on changes in measures of gambling behaviour and wellbeing.
- **Primary Care Gambling Service evaluation:** This explores the implementation journey of the PCGS, a primary care based pilot service in London for adults experiencing harm from gambling.
- **GambleAware 10th Annual Conference:** This is due to take place at The King's Fund in London. The theme for the event this year is: 'Taking action to tackle gambling harms as a public health issue'.

### **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. As an independent charity, GambleAware is regulated by the Charity Commission for England and Wales, and the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

For further information about GambleAware please contact  
**[info@gambleaware.org](mailto:info@gambleaware.org)**.