

**Keeping people
safe from
gambling harms**



A briefing note

Introduction

GambleAware is an independent charity that commissions evidence-informed prevention and treatment services in partnership with expert organisations and agencies. Our new five-year strategy, published in April 2021, outlined four key strategic priorities and four commissioning objectives to guide our work towards a vision of a society where everyone is safe from gambling harms.

The recent pledge of £100 million from the four largest gambling companies up to 2024, together with voluntary donations from other operators, has enabled the charity to develop a more integrated and strategic approach to prevent gambling harm. Alongside this, GambleAware will 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.

This briefing note summarises the issue, alongside the role of GambleAware, and the ambition of our Commissioning Strategy, with highlights of key activity that is ongoing, or in development. More detail can be found in the Organisational Strategy which can be found [here](#).

Gambling in Great Britain

Over half of all adults in Great Britain participate in gambling¹ and for many, it does not cause any adverse problems. However, for some, gambling can cause negative effects on people's health and wellbeing. Recent GambleAware commissioned research suggests 0.7%-2.4% of adults across Great Britain are considered 'problem gamblers'².

The World Health Organisation (WHO) classifies gambling disorder as an addictive behaviour whereby the pattern of gambling behaviour results in significant distress or impairment. The Annual GB Treatment and Support survey found that more than one in three people with a gambling disorder do not have access to any treatment or support. Possible barriers to accessing services include a lack of awareness, social stigma, and not acknowledging experiencing gambling harm³. It is also evident that COVID-19 has only served to exacerbate health and social inequalities.

Approximately **350,000** (11%) 11 – 16-year-olds are reported as having spent their own money on gambling in the last week. This is lower than young people drinking alcohol (16%), but higher than 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'⁴.

Referred to as the '**hidden addiction**', the outward signs of gambling disorder often go unnoticed by family and friends, and are also largely 'hidden' from policymakers, health & advice professionals. Whilst alcohol and drug addiction have been recognised as public health challenges, gambling has not been included within the same lexicon.

¹ https://www.begambleaware.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/Annual_GB_Treatment_and_Support_Survey_2020_report_%28FINAL%29_26.03.21.pdf

² ibid

³ ibid

⁴ <https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/PDF/Young-People-Gambling-Report-2019.pdf>

About GambleAware

GambleAware is the leading commissioner of prevention and treatment services for gambling harms in Great Britain. It is an independent charity guided by a Board of trustees, most of whom work in the health sector.

Our vision: A society where everyone is safe from gambling harms

Our purpose: To ensure gambling harms are clearly understood,
Collaborate to deliver a whole-system approach to prevent gambling harms,
Enable people to access the advice, support and treatment they need,
Build and disseminate evidence-based learning and knowledge.

Our values: Independence, integrity, equality, being evidence-based

Achieving effective prevention of gambling harms and access to treatment and support is the central aim of GambleAware's purpose and vision. The charity is guided by a framework for harm prevention through the application of a public health model based on three levels of prevention: universal, secondary and tertiary.

To achieve effective prevention of gambling harms, GambleAware recognises a coherent and coordinated whole system approach is needed. This should involve partnerships and collaboration across a range of agencies including governments, regulators, the NHS and healthcare providers, public health organisations, local authorities, private and voluntary sector organisations.

GambleAware is also informed by evidence from research and evaluation, alongside the expertise of people with lived experience of gambling harms. Engaging with lived experience communities can help strengthen and improve existing services to reduce existing barriers and inequalities, and aid in the design and access to services as well as help prevent relapse.

Strategic priorities

To meet the challenge and successfully reduce and prevent gambling harm, GambleAware set out four key strategic priorities for the next five years, which are:

- **Accelerate engagement and awareness** to deliver targeted activity to raise awareness, reduce stigma and encourage engagement with information and advice, support and treatment services.
- **Transform capacity and capability by collaborating** with the NHS, public health agencies, local authorities, and voluntary sector organisations across England, Scotland and Wales to support growth of an integrated system of prevention provision.
- **Increase equity and champion diversity** to understand and address inequalities in experiences, access to services and outcomes for those experiencing gambling harms. We will take a collaborative approach working with a diversity of communities to ensure that support, services, treatment and pathways to these services are accessible and effective. The COVID-19 pandemic has also only served to deepen the existing health and social inequalities.
- **Deliver best-in-class commissioning** with a focus on improving processes and systems to enhance good governance, maximising transparency and value for money. We will include the voice of those with lived experience in the co-production of awareness-raising support, and treatment services.

Commissioning objectives

GambleAware has identified clear gaps in existing prevention provision. To overcome these and ensure GambleAware meets its objectives, the charity outlined four key commissioning objectives which are integral to helping prevent gambling harms:

- CO 1: Increase awareness and understanding of gambling harms.
- CO 2: Increase access to services and reduce gambling harm inequalities.
- CO 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.
- CO 4: Deliver effective leadership of the commissioning landscape to improve the coherence, accessibility, diversity, and effectiveness of the National Gambling Treatment Service.

Core activities

To meet these objectives, the charity is working to deliver more than **50** core activities across research, education and treatment, all of which support the delivery of the commissioning objectives.

Detailed work is ongoing to meet these objectives and below are some results and impact from a selection of these activities under the commissioning objective they support:

CO 1: Increase awareness and understanding of gambling harms

- **Results and current activity:**
 - The **Bet Regret** campaign is targeted at regular male online sports bettors and reaches **2.4 million** men aged 18-34 years. After just two bursts of campaign activity and with less than 5% share of voice, **38%** of the Bet Regret campaign audience now try to close

or “Tap Out” of their app before deciding to place a bet and **24%** have used “Tapping Out” as a tool to cut down their gambling.

- GambleAware funds the Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) to convene a **Gambling Health Alliance** of around **50** professional health-related bodies to promote greater awareness and share perspectives about preventing gambling harms.

- **Future activity in development:**

- Developing a **Safer Gambling Campaign** targeted at women.
- GambleAware has invested **£500,000** into **2** new commissioned pieces of research with a focus on lived experience and gambling harms. The research will look at **women** and gambling, and **minority communities** and gambling.

CO 2: Increase access to services to reduce harm inequalities

- **Results and current activity:**

- In the 12 months to August 2021, the BeGambleAware website received **6 million** page views and saw a **14%** increase in users.
- The BeGambleAware brand is recognised by just under **50%** of the public and **81%** of the Safer Gambling Campaign audience.

- **Future activity in development:**

- Commissioning a pilot **Communities of Practice** to bring together frontline workers and community practitioners to discuss best practice when addressing gambling harms.
- In depth scoping study of the current **international evidence base to reduce stigma** associated with gambling harm.

CO 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

- **Results and current activity:**

- GambleAware launched **3** interactive maps that show reported demand for treatment and support in Great Britain, using Treatment & Support Survey data (YouGov).
 - Appointed Expert Link to design and deliver a **GB-wide network** representative of communities of people with lived experience.
 - Published a primary care **competency framework**.
 - Commissioned a **guide for financial services** to support the sector to respond well to those who are vulnerable due to gambling.
 - The **Scottish Gambling Education Hub**, delivered by **Fast Forward**, has trained around **2,600** practitioners and reached over **15,000** pupils via **105** schools.
 - The national **Citizens Advice** team launched the **Gambling Harms Help** project to embed a mainstream approach to gambling harms screening across the Citizens Advice England and Wales network.
 - In Q1 the **Gambling Support Service** led by **Citizens Advice** Scotland delivered training to **441** trainees.
- **Future activity in development:**
 - Investing circa **£2.5m** in the establishment and roll out English and Welsh Gambling Education Hubs based upon the model of the Scottish hub.
 - Investing in a **PhD grant award** for **6** studentships.
 - Investing **£4m** into a new independent Academic Research Hub.
 - Offering **training** to those who work in public facing roles, e.g., primary care, debt advice and the criminal justice system.

CO 4: Improve accessibility and effectiveness of the National Gambling Treatment Service

- **Results and current activity:**
 - In the 12 months to 31 March 2021, the **National Gambling Treatment Service** treated nearly **12,000** people and the **National Gambling Helpline** handled **40,250** targeted calls.
 - **National Gambling Treatment Service** campaign recognition has grown to **72%** amongst high-risk male gamblers and **76%** among

- high-risk female gamblers. **57%** of high-risk male, and **63%** of high-risk female gamblers said they would contact the service.
- Awarded grant funding to specialist interest group '**ALERTS**' for people with lived experience of treatment for gambling harm.
- **Future activity in development:**
 - Engage consultancy support to develop an **outcomes framework and delivery model** to inform the future commissioning of the **National Gambling Treatment Service**.
 - New campaign to reduce **stigma**.
 - Released an invitation to tender to expand the National Gambling Treatment Service **Residential Treatment Programme**.
 - Develop and apply an improved **Quality Assurance Framework** across all National Gambling Treatment Service providers.
 - Work with the **Care Quality Commission** to pilot the inclusion of inspection of gambling treatment services into their remit.
 - Provide additional funding to address issues in relation to **capacity and demand** within the existing provision.

Research, data and evaluation

GambleAware is committed to building evidence of 'what works for whom' at the three levels of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention of gambling harms. This informs education, early intervention approaches, treatment and support service design, and commissioning, which contributes to knowledge generation for the wider system.

The charity is also committed to ensuring evidence-based learning and knowledge dissemination reaches colleagues working at all levels of prevention across the range of roles and sectors. A Strategic Framework for Evaluation and an Evaluation Protocol has also been developed to create a robust framework for evaluation. These will monitor and measure the progress of interventions in reducing gambling harms, and build the evidence base to inform future commissioned work.

Knowledge creation will also be delivered through a commissioned research portfolio, a commissioned evaluation portfolio, an evaluation hub, and a PhD grant programme for universities to build knowledge of specific harms. There will also be a comprehensive system of annual surveys and data collection to support and inform service development and commissioning of activities at a local, regional and national level.

GambleAware also launched an interactive **GB prevalence map**, using Treatment & Support Survey data. The [map](#) shows the prevalence of problem gambling severity in each local authority and ward area, as well as usage of and reported demand for treatment and support for gambling.

Research and Evaluation published **6 reports** between May to July 2021:

- **An Evidence Review of Remote Intervention and Support for Gambling Harms** (Responsible Gambling Council)
- **Survey Methodology Review** (Prof Patrick Sturgis)
- **Bank Transactional Data Analysis x2** (Monzo & HSBC, Behavioural Insights Team)
- **Evaluation of the Gambling Support Service (Citizens Advice) England & Wales** (Kantar Public)
- **Applying Behavioural Insights for Safer Gambling Tools: Part 2 Commitment Trial** (Behavioural Insights Team)

Events

GambleAware hosts regular webinars, to promote our commissioned projects to our key audiences and stakeholders. Between May and July, we hosted **2 webinars**, each with around **200 registrations**. These events coincided with the release of the Methodology Review, interactive maps and the Bank Transactional Data Analysis and new financial guide.

Governance and structure

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 commissioning decisions. Recent funding certainty has given GambleAware the opportunity to develop its new five-year strategy. GambleAware continues to endorse a mandatory levy to ensure continued funding certainty in the future. GambleAware is guided by an independent expert board of trustees, the majority of whom work in the health sector:

Board of trustees

- **Kate Lampard, CBE** - Chair of Board of Trustees, lead non-executive of DHSC board
- **Saffron Cordery** - Director of Policy & Strategy and Deputy Chief Executive, NHS Providers
- **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
- **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
- **Rachel Pearce** - Regional Director of Commissioning, NHSE South West
- **Paul Simpson** - Chief Finance Officer & Deputy Chief Executive, Surrey & Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust

Keeping people safe from gambling harms

GambleAware briefing note

Briefing note published by GambleAware August 2021

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). Its charitable objectives are:

- a) The advancement of education aimed at preventing gambling harms for the benefit of the public in Great Britain, in particular young people and those who are most vulnerable, by carrying out research, by providing advice and information, by raising awareness, and by making grants.
- b) Working to keep people in Great Britain safe from gambling harms through the application of a public health model based on three levels of prevention: primary – universal promotion of a safer environment; secondary – selective intervention for those who may be ‘at risk’; and, tertiary – direct support for those directly or in directly affected by gambling disorder, by carrying out research, by providing advice and information, by raising awareness, and by making grants for the provision of effective treatment, interventions and support.

For further information about GambleAware please contact info@gambleaware.org.