



# **GamCare Annual Review 2016/17**



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# Chairman's Foreword

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In 2016/17, GamCare's support services provided information, advice and treatment for more people affected by problem gambling across England, Scotland and Wales than ever before.

Our Advisers answered upwards of 1,000 more target calls via the National Gambling HelpLine and NetLine than the previous year, our website received more than 2 million unique visitors and our national provider network treated 1,200 more clients than the year before.

Our Education and Prevention service continues to offer valuable services to the industry and beyond, informed by our unique understanding of problem gambling and delivered by our specialist team. Our youth outreach programme and work with the criminal justice system also continue to go from strength to strength.

Gambling-related harm can manifest in many ways. By working to reduce the harms experienced due to gambling, GamCare and our Partners can support individuals and communities and lessen the strain on other services, including the NHS, the criminal justice system and the welfare system.

The social impact of our services can be seen in more sustainable social housing tenancies, more sustainable employment,

a reduction in domestic violence, better money management and fewer suicide attempts. GamCare treatment services can help individuals to improve their mental and physical wellbeing, improve their relationships and reduce isolation.

GamCare and our network providers will continue to evaluate the impact of our services across Great Britain as we grow and develop, providing best-in-class care for all those affected by problem gambling. Our principal funder, GambleAware, extended our existing grant during the last quarter of 2016/17.

Our CEO Dirk Hanson decided to leave in May this year, and I thank Dirk for his work while in post over the last four years.

Simon Thompson was appointed Interim CEO from May, and I would like to thank him for the great progress he has made in driving our work forward. We are now looking forward to the next phase of our journey.

**Sir Ian Prosser, Chairman**

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# CEO Foreword

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This is an exciting time for GamCare, as we work hard to provide vital support services for those who are affected by problem gambling through an increasing range of services.

During 2016/17 we saw an increase in our activity and the quality of our clinical outcomes, meaning we helped more people to lessen the harmful impacts of problem gambling.

We are now further developing our service offerings and the reach of our services through our network providers across Great Britain.

Our primary commissioners, GambleAware, have now devised an exciting new service specification that is both ambitious and more focussed on early interventions, to maximise access to our services and the number of people we can support.

We have a great platform for future development, and we welcome building on our strong performance this year with further activity to strengthen our effectiveness.

Going forward we will be delivering more focussed interventions, and developing more group and online interventions than ever before.

We have also continued to engage the gambling industry with our approach to supporting

*“I fully believe [my counsellor] has managed to unlock a different mindset for me, a much better way of dealing with my emotions and thinking about why I gamble in the first place.*

*Due to this new viewpoint, I believe I am in a far healthier position in life, mentally, physically and financially. The questions posed in our sessions are questions which I feel I would never have pondered if I had not sought help from this service...*

*Again, many thanks... Very much appreciated.”*

socially responsible gambling via training and Certification.

We look forward to continuing our work with GambleAware and all parts of the health and social care system, to support those affected by problem gambling. We put our service users first, and will continue to do so moving forward.

**Simon Thompson, Interim CEO**

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# Frontline Services

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GamCare Advisers provide invaluable information, advice and support to people affected by problem gambling all over Great Britain. Last year our HelpLine, NetLine, Forum and Chatrooms supported more people than ever before.

The National Gambling HelpLine is the only dedicated helpline service for anyone affected by problem gambling in England, Scotland and Wales.

Our specially trained Advisers are available over the phone and via web chat every day, from 8am - Midnight.

In 2016/17, our Advisers answered a total of 43,637 calls and web chats via the HelpLine our NetLine. 87% of calls and chats were answered first time.

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**Last year, a total of 91% of HelpLine and NetLine callers rated our service as 'Excellent' or 'Good'.**



Our Advisers are also trained to moderate the GamCare Forum, accessed via our website and designed to give those affected by problem gambling a safe space to support one another.



During 2016/17, the total number of registered Forum users rose to 34,198 - a 23% increase on the previous year.

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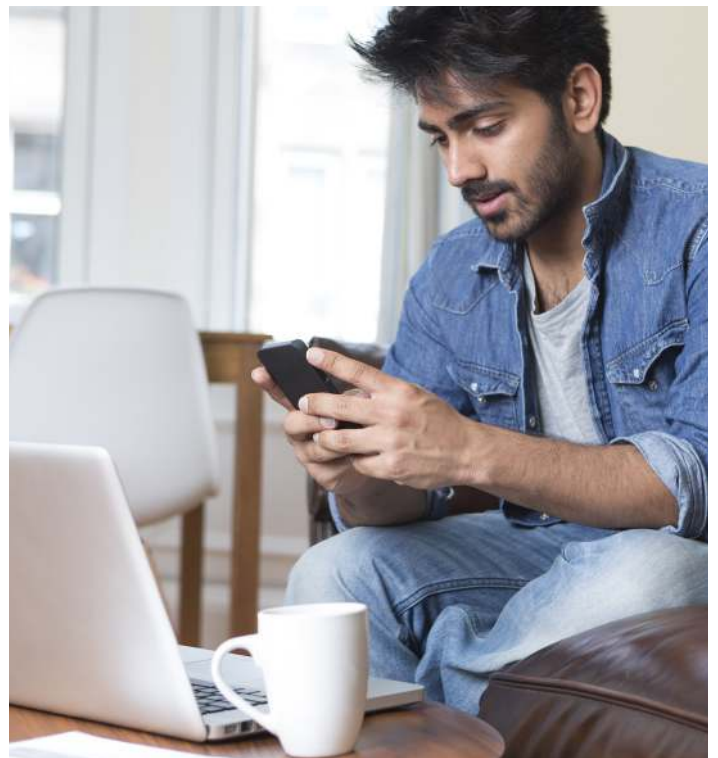
We also offer a daily schedule of live hour-long chatrooms, which provide members with real-time peer support.

In 2016/17 we were able to offer 643 chatroom hours, supporting 5,000 people. This is a 90% increase in attendance from the previous year.

*“It’s good to have somewhere, someone, to chat with without the pressure of family and friends being around. It gives you more confidence to speak out. The help and advice offered is genuine and you are not made to feel a failure while trying to tackle your problems.”*

Our website provides simple advice pages and a self-assessment test, as well as a gateway to our interactive services. Overall, the number of unique visitors to our website in 2016/17 was almost double the previous year, reflecting our increased investment in online promotion and awareness.

*“This site has saved my life and will save others.”*



**Last year, 94% of HelpLine and NetLine callers told us they would recommend our services to others.**

*“I was scared about contacting you, but the Adviser made me feel so comfortable in talking about my problem and my feelings - thank you.”*

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# 2016/17: At A Glance

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The National Gambling HelpLine and NetLine answered **4%** more target calls than the previous year



**91%** of callers rated the HelpLine and NetLine 'Good' or 'Excellent'

Our treatment network saw **8,044** clients across England, Scotland and Wales. This is an **18%** increase from the previous year.



Clients rated our treatment services an average **4.9** stars, and **98%** of clients would recommend us

Our Youth Outreach Programme is now active in **four areas** across Great Britain



**609** screenings have taken place in our pilot project in Cheshire, referring people in police custody into treatment

More than **1,000** people received GamCare training about problem gambling this year



**27** gambling operators engaged with GamCare through Certification this year

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# Education and Awareness

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GamCare's refreshed Youth Outreach Programme was on the ground in February 2017, and our work with the UK criminal justice system continues to develop.

Informed by pilot work in partnership with ARA in Bristol and the South West, GamCare has now launched a refreshed Youth Outreach programme in London, Bristol, Manchester/Liverpool and Birmingham.

The long-term aim of the programme is to bring about a reduction in gambling related harm in young people. Our activities include delivering group awareness workshops to young people, and delivering training to the professional workforce supporting young people.

The areas we are working in will become 'youth hubs', with our local Partner agencies embedded in the local community.



GamCare is working with Partner agency Beacon Counselling Trust to train Cheshire Constabulary staff to screen for problem gambling, understand the complexities of the issue and, where possible, to signpost to local support services.

Since our pilot project launched in three custody suites across Cheshire, 609 screenings have taken place and 85 (14%) resulted in a brief intervention to minimise gambling-related harm. 17 of those people (20%) have been referred into more structured counselling treatment with local providers.

We are now exploring a similar pilot in custody suites in Merseyside, with support from People's Postcode Trust, as well as West Sussex.

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# Treatment Services

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GamCare provides free counselling treatment to anyone affected by problem gambling across Great Britain. This can be face-to-face or online, either as an individual or as part of a group.

We delivered counselling to 8,044 clients nationwide in 2016/17, an increase of 18% compared to 6,832 in 2015/16. 90% of clients were problem gamblers.

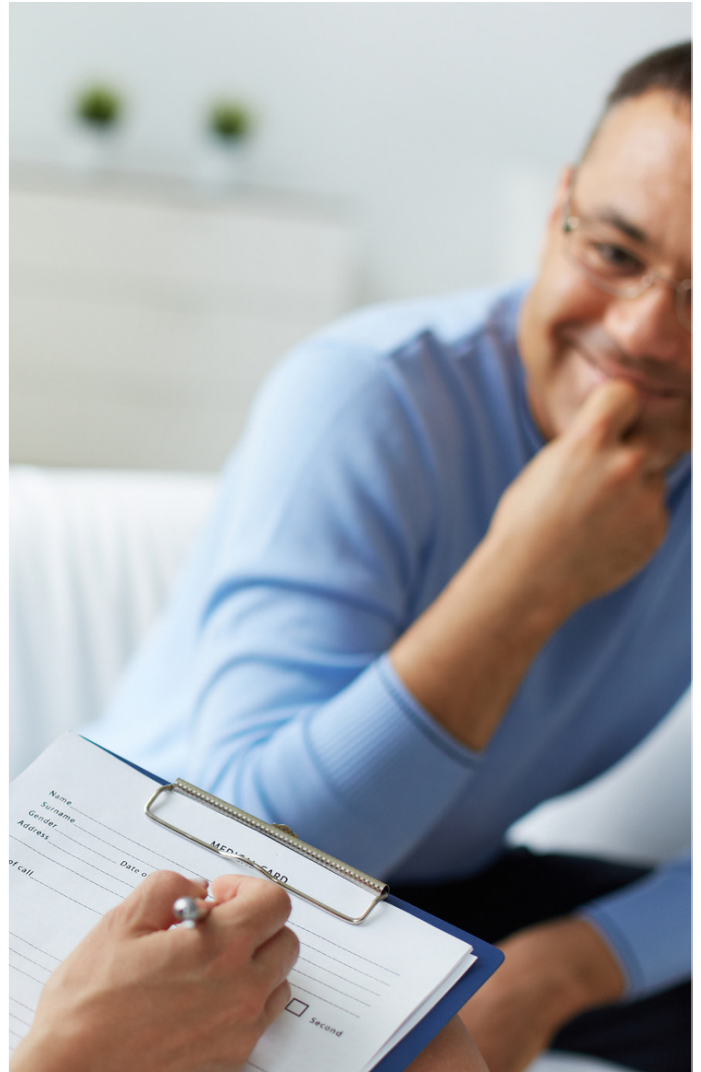
We significantly expanded our offer of online treatment services throughout the year. This included offering weekend appointments.

*“[Counselling] has given me a massive relief and saved my relationship! I cannot thank my counsellor enough - I feel absolutely brilliant now. Thank you for all your help.”*

Last year, clients rated our counselling treatment services 4.9/5 overall.

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98% of clients would recommend our treatment service to someone else.



*“These sessions have changed my outlook on gambling. I now have more insight and understanding of the problem and how best to support my partner.”*





We support clients to stop or reduce their harmful gambling behaviour, or to lessen the harmful impacts caused by the gambling of someone close to them.

GamCare services are underpinned by the principle of recovery - essentially, that every client has a network of existing skills and assets which they can use to reach their goals.

It is the job of the practitioner to work with the client to develop that network of assets and skills as well as overcome obstacles or barriers to that development.

The impact of our work with clients affected by problem gambling is tangible.

Clients tell us that they are more able to cope with urges to gamble problematically by understanding

*“Excellent service. Was provided a counselling appointment much quicker than I had expected... the sessions have helped me to understand my gambling and enabled me to address the underlying issues. Cannot recommend highly enough.”*

their triggers better, and that they are able to connect better with their own support networks to further their recovery.

The family members and friends we support tell us that our interventions are ‘instrumental’ in helping them move forward, including in rebuilding their relationships.



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# Training and Certification

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GamCare's Education and Prevention team deliver training to the gambling industry, healthcare professionals, regulators, financial services, the military and more.

In 2016/17 we trained more than 1,000 people across Great Britain to understand more about problem gambling and ensure that anyone affected gets the right support.

This includes university staff, healthcare professionals and more. We also provided refresher workshops for the Gambling Commission.

Our training solutions for the gambling industry are tailored to educate and support organisations to strengthen consumer protection, their staff knowledge and skills, and their customer care and interaction.

This is supported by GamCare Certification, which is awarded to both remote and land-based



gambling companies that have successfully implemented player protection policy and practice relevant to their platform and gambling service.

GamCare Certification is a voluntary process and is valid for two years.

27 licensed operators were awarded or renewed their GamCare Certification last year.



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# Future Plans and Development

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GamCare's focus for the year ahead is organisational growth, increased productivity and better value for money so that we can provide valuable services to even more people.

- We are working toward securing future funding from GambleAware for our core services, and we aim to develop a partnership with an organisation or university to provide on-going evaluation of our work.
- We are further developing the clinical training offer across the network, and ensuring information and best practice is disseminated effectively.
- We are reviewing our fundraising strategy, and identifying niche projects which will contribute to the delivery of the Responsible Gambling Strategy Board (RGSB) strategy.
- We are now reviewing our national marketing and communications strategy.
- We are further developing our service user feedback frameworks, including the introduction of a Service User Panel.
- We aim to reach more people year on year, so we are refreshing the range of treatment options we offer across Great Britain. We aim to ensure that every client gets the right intervention for their level of need, balanced with their preferred method of contact.





## HelpLine

0808 8020 133

## NetLine, Forum and Chatroom

[www.gamcare.org.uk](http://www.gamcare.org.uk)

## GamCare

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