
PRESS RELEASE

NEW REPORT REVEALS THAT 94% OF NATIONAL GAMBLING TREATMENT SERVICE USERS IN WALES REDUCED THEIR PROBLEM GAMBLING SCORE

- GambleAware has today launched its first ever detailed statistical report on Welsh resident use of the National Gambling Treatment Service, which reports almost all (94%) gamblers who completed treatment in 2019/20 showed improvement on the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI) scale, which is used to measure severity of gambling disorder.
- The report also showed that among those defined as ‘problem gamblers’¹ at the start of treatment, over half (57%) were no longer in this category at the end of treatment.
- The analysis found for those clients² that completed their treatment, over three quarters (87%) recorded an improvement on their CORE-10 score, a measure of psychological distress.
- The report demonstrated that between 2015/16 and 2019/20 the proportion of clients completing scheduled treatment increased from 64% to 80%, whilst the proportion dropping out of treatment decreased from 28% to 15%.
- The report illustrated that professional referral rates are higher in Wales than across Great Britain: GP referral rates stood at 4% compared to 1.5%, and other services at 9% compared to 2.7%.

18 February 2021: GambleAware has today released a new report, using data collated by ViewItUK, on Welsh resident access to the National Gambling Treatment Service (NGTS). Commissioned by GambleAware, the NGTS is a network of organisations working together to provide confidential treatment and support for anyone experiencing gambling harms. This is the first time GambleAware has published a detailed report outlining statistics on Welsh resident use of the NGTS.

The research revealed that the majority (94%) of gamblers who completed treatment between 2019 and 2020 showed improvement on the PGSI scale³. When reviewing how many gamblers were classified as ‘problem gamblers’ at the start vs the end of treatment, it was found that over half (57%) were no longer defined as such by the end, with the remainder likely to need more than one round of treatment for them to no longer be defined as a ‘problem gambler’.

¹ The criteria for PGSI classification as a ‘problem gambler’ is a score within the range of between 8 and 27.

² ‘Clients’ of gambling treatment services can either be gamblers themselves, ‘affected others’ or persons at risk of developing a gambling problem.

³ The PGSI is the most widely used measure of problem gambling in Great Britain. It consists of nine items and each item is assessed on a four-point scale: never, sometimes, most of the time, almost always.

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Another assessment measure used by the services, alongside the PGSI score, is the CORE-10⁴ scale, which is used to monitor psychological distress. The research found that for those clients that ended treatment, their CORE-10 score reduced by an average of eight points, with 80% classed as below the threshold of 'moderate' distress. For those clients who completed treatment, the majority (87%) improved their CORE-10 score.

The report found that 84% of referrals for treatment were self-made and that half (50%) of individuals were seen within four days of referral and three quarters (75%) within seven days. The report also demonstrated that professional referral rates in Wales are higher than those in Great Britain (GB), with GP referral rates in Wales standing at 4% compared with 1.5% in GB and referral rates from other services at 9% in Wales compared with 2.7% GB.

Elsewhere, the report revealed that most clients (80%) completed their scheduled treatment, whilst 15% dropped out before a scheduled end point. It is possible for service users to drop out of one treatment in favour of another, however further research and follow up is necessary to determine drop out cause.

When examining the profile of the gamblers using the service within 2019/20 the analysis found:

- A total of 271⁵ Welsh residents were treated, of which 68% were male.
- Nearly all (95%) were from a White ethnic background, including 92% White British. The next most commonly reported ethnic backgrounds were Asian or Asian British (3%), and Black or Black British (1%).
- The majority of clients were employed (69%), with smaller proportions unable to work due to illness (15%), unemployed (7%), retired (3%), homemaker (3%) or student (2%).

The report went on to illustrate that on average gamblers in treatment reported spending £1,330 on gambling 30 days before assessment. It also found nearly two thirds (65%) using the treatment service reported having debt due to their gambling. One in 10 (10%) reported experiencing job loss through gambling, whilst over three in 10 (31%) had experienced relationship loss.

Dr Jane Rigbye, GambleAware Interim Director of Commissioning: *"We are pleased to see the improvement in the rate of treatment completion and that 94% of those service users who did complete treatment showed improvement when measured against the Problem Gambling Severity Index. Also, we are encouraged to see a relatively high level of professional referrals through GPs and other services.*

"However, this report makes clear there is still much to be done to improve awareness and take-up of treatment services available to those who are experiencing gambling harms in Wales. GambleAware is committed to pursuing greater collaboration with the NHS, public health bodies, local authorities and the third sector across Wales to improve awareness of the National Gambling Treatment Service,

⁴ The CORE-10 score measures psychological distress. A score of 40 (the maximum) would be classed as severe distress, 25 = moderate to severe, 20 = moderate, 15 = mild with 10 or under below the clinical cut off

⁵ The majority of those seen by gambling services were gamblers (233, 86%). However, 34 (13%) referrals related to 'affected others' that is, individuals who are not necessarily gamblers but whose lives have been affected by those who are. A small number of referrals (2, 1%) related to persons at risk of developing a gambling problem.

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including the National Gambling Helpline, and develop the most appropriate care pathways and referral routes to get more people into treatment.”.

Diana Yorath, Wales Development Officer, ARA Cymru/Wales, said: “ARA is dedicated to increasing uptake in the National Gambling Treatment Service offerings across Wales. We are actively collaborating with NHS partners to improve referral routes to ensure individuals have access to the best treatment for them. Alongside this, we are working to build awareness both of gambling harms and of the NGTS and Helpline through engaging with grassroot community initiatives.”

-ENDS-

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About the Report

- This is the first time GambleAware have published a report detailing statistics for the Welsh [National Gambling Treatment Service](#).
- The data was collated and analysed by ViewItUK before being shared with GambleAware.
- The collection of data on clients receiving treatment from the National Gambling Treatment Service is managed through a nationally co-ordinated dataset known as the Data Reporting Framework (DRF), initiated in 2015.
- The report looks at services between 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020.
- The [GB](#) and [Scotland](#) report have also been published.

About ViewItUK

- ViewItUK Ltd is a University of Manchester start-up company, supported by GC Business Growth Hub, specialising in data management and analysis to provide a platform for simple reporting.
- The company originates from the team that provides National Statistics production and validation for National Drug Treatment Monitoring Service outputs on behalf of Public Health England.

About GambleAware

- GambleAware is an independent charity (Charity No. England & Wales 1093910, Scotland SC049433) that champions a public health approach to preventing gambling harms – see <http://about.gambleaware.org/>
- GambleAware is a commissioner of integrated prevention, education, and treatment services on a national scale, with over £40 million of grant funding under active management. In partnership with gambling treatment providers, GambleAware has spent several years methodically building structures for commissioning a coherent system of brief intervention and treatment services, with clearly defined care pathways and established referral routes to and from the NHS – a National Gambling Treatment Service.
- The National Gambling Treatment Service brings together a National Gambling Helpline and a network of locally-based providers across England, Scotland and Wales that works with partner agencies and people with lived experience to design and deliver a system, which meets the needs of individuals. This system delivers a range of treatment services, including

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brief intervention, counselling (delivered either face-to-face or online), residential programmes and psychiatrist-led care.

- GambleAware produces public health campaigns including Bet Regret. A Safer Gambling Board is responsible for the design and delivery of a campaign based on best practice in public health education. The Bet Regret campaign is being funded through specific, additional donations to the charity, in line with a commitment given to the government by the broadcasting, advertising, and gambling industries. See <https://about.gambleaware.org/prevention/safer-gambling-campaign/>.