



National association for gambling care,  
educational resources and training

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## BRIEFING PAPER 1 WHO WE ARE

*"When you first suggested there was a reason for my gambling, I thought that was a mad idea. Now I've learnt there was a reason - I gambled to escape feeling sad and afraid. The choice was gambling or suicide. Now I've learned how to face my feelings I don't need to escape. Thank you. Gamcare has saved my life."*

GamCare is the leading provider of information, advice, support and free counselling for the prevention and treatment of problem gambling. We run the national helpline, provide treatment for problem gamblers and their families, create awareness about responsible gambling and treatment, and encourage an effective approach to responsible gambling within the gambling industry.

### Funding

Most of our funding is raised voluntarily by the gambling industry and channelled through the Responsible Gambling Fund. In 2009/10 we received £2.46million from the RGF and raised a further £250,000 ourselves.

### Governance

We are a charity. Our Board of Trustees is:

|                 |                           |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Vice President  | Sir Nevil Macready Bt CBE |
| Vice President  | Bill Galston OBE          |
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|                 | John Brackenbury CBE      |
|                 | Tom Kavanagh CBE          |

Our Chief Executive is Andy McLellan. We employ 45 people, 39 of whom are trained helpline advisers or qualified counsellors.

### Our services

The GamCare HelpLine (0845 6000 133) and its online equivalent, NetLine, provide live, confidential, one-to-one information, advice and emotional support and signposting to further sources of local or specialist help, including our own counselling services. We answer 100 a day. Advisers are specifically trained and can discuss what options are available, or offer coping strategies to those who want to change their gambling behaviour.

Our Online Forum and Chat Room are available to anyone who wants to share their experiences. Threads include an area for new members, for supporting a problem gambler, recovery diaries, and information about Gamblers Anonymous and Gam-Anon meetings. In 2009/10 there were some 27,000 new posts on the Forum.

We offer individual counselling face-to-face in London, Greater Manchester, and through a growing network of Partners in many other parts of the UK. Around 68% of the UK population are now within reach of our counselling. We also offer counselling online. We deliver more than 1500 counselling sessions each month, and more than 350 clients are in treatment.

*"I would never have been able to stop without the group therapy sessions. I have come out of myself and shared things I never thought I would. There's something about being able to be me that was really healing. I haven't gambled for a year."*

Our therapeutic approach focuses on the needs of the individual. We use a range of interventions as appropriate to help individuals uncover the underlying reasons for their problem gambling behaviour and help them manage and cope with changes in behaviour.

## Responsible Gambling

We provide advice and training on social responsibility and player protection to the gambling industry through GamCare Trade Services, a not-for-profit company wholly owned by the charity, and recognise best practice and adherence to our Codes of Practice through GamCare Certification. Player protection measures include age verification, staff training, facilitating time and spend limits, self-exclusion and displaying information about sources of help. GamCare produces posters and leaflets and stickers for every gaming machine in the country, publicising our Helpline number and website.

We also make an important contribution to research, focussing particularly on projects which will inform both policy and practice.

## Our vision for the future

Less than 1% of those in need of treatment actually seek help. We need to change this - quickly. To do this, we need to raise awareness that help is available. A simple and effective way to do this would be to display the national HelpLine number on every gambling advertisement- print, broadcast and online- in addition to existing publicity in gambling premises.

We also need to reach professionals and volunteers who may encounter individuals affected by problem gambling, for example GPs, money advisers, Citizen Advice Bureaux and other agencies. Without further dedicated funding we can only pursue this piecemeal. With around £150-200,000 we could improve our reach significantly. This is especially important in raising awareness amongst family members affected as well as the gamblers themselves.

Only 68% of people in Great Britain are within reach of our specialist gambling counsellors. Our aim is to have 90% of the UK population in reach of counselling by 2012 - if we have the funds.

Our advisers and counsellors have an unrivalled breadth of experience and expertise in helping gamblers and their families. Working with our Partners, we would like to deploy these skills in new and innovative ways to help encourage responsible gambling and educate the public, particularly young people, about gambling.

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