



## GamCare's Year

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In 2010/11 we received £2.5 million in funding raised by the industry and granted to us by the Responsible Gambling Fund - effectively a standstill budget from the previous year. To that we added money we raised ourselves through other donations and trading.

We used this money to run the national helpline (incorporating our NetLine live chat service and online chatrooms and forums); to provide counselling for gamblers and others affected by gambling; to work with the industry and regulators to improve player protection and to safeguard players' interests; and to develop new initiatives particularly for young people. Our full report will be published later in the year, but here are some early highlights.

### *Helpline*

Calls to our HelpLine and NetLine are on target to exceed 51,000 this year - nearly 1,000 a week, up 6% on the previous year. We are also answering nearly 85% of them, more than ever before, whilst keeping costs down by making better use of our advisers' time through more efficient rotas. 85% of our callers rate our service as excellent or very good - The Government's Central Office of Information (COI) regard 80% as a benchmark so we are very pleased with this achievement.

We offer immediate help and support to those in crisis - and it is very often a major crisis which triggers the call - then our professionally trained advisers explore with the caller how best to support them. This may mean signposting them to debt advice, family therapy, self-exclusion or further counselling - we are always impartial and are guided by what is best for the individual. We work very closely with the National Problem Gambling Clinic in London and our treatment Partners around the country to get help to our callers where and when it is needed.

### *Counselling*

We offer free and confidential counselling, one-to-one or in groups, face-to-face and online, either ourselves or through our network of Partners, covering some 70% of Great Britain. Here the increase in the numbers we are helping has been even more dramatic: we expect to have helped more than 2,500 people - some 20% more than in 2009/10. This is thanks to improved marketing, more efficient use of our resources and the consolidation of services launched in some new areas of the country at the beginning of the year.

The important question, of course, is: does it work? We screen all our gambling clients at the beginning and the end of treatment. Around 90% of them score as problem gamblers when they start in treatment, and this reduces to 30% when they complete treatment - a two-thirds success rate. Of course, we need to do more to find out whether they are able to sustain this improvement, but this evaluation evidence shows that what we do, works.

Is it worth the investment? Using the best available international research, we have estimated that every problem gambler costs the state £8,000 every year - so if there are 450,000 problem gamblers then that is an annual bill to the taxpayer of around £3.6 billion. On average it costs us about £650 to treat each individual - so taking our two thirds success rate, our investment of around £1.7m in treatment produces a return on investment which is greater than 12:1. As a comparison, treatment for drug-users produces a 2.5:1 return. We think that shows that this is money well spent, and that expansion of the existing service should clearly be a priority.

### *Prevention*

Our work with the industry - for which we charge to cover costs - is a major contribution to prevention, and more and more operators are applying for GamCare certification. This is particularly true of online companies who are probably not licensed by the Gambling Commission but who recognise the value of the GamCare kitemark in giving reassurance to their customers. We hope our new e-learning package, about which you can learn more in our next GamCare newsletter to be published next week, will help more companies improve their standards of player protection. Taking this vital work alongside our plans for young people (see *Beating the Odds: Preventing Teenage Problem Gambling* [http://www.gamcare.org.uk/data/files/Beating\\_the\\_Odds.pdf](http://www.gamcare.org.uk/data/files/Beating_the_Odds.pdf)), then our prevention strategy is well and truly launched.

We are proud of our achievements over the last year, but it's those who are vulnerable who benefit most from our partnership with the gambling industry. Over the last couple of years the industry has increased significantly the amount of cash it provides voluntarily for research, education and treatment. We hope that in the year to come we will be able to build on our successes, and use that money to improve education and help more people in need.

With best wishes



Andy McLellan  
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