



Care Services Report 2007



“How has GamCare Counselling helped me?”

- Provided a lifeline
- Provided counselling (free)
- Provided a format to tell my story about me
- Given me an understanding of some of the reasons why I gambled
- Provided me with tactics when (faced with) that strong urge to go and gamble
- I feel better about myself
- By just being there

I am now a changed person. My bank balance is in the black. I am saving to take my wife on a cruise in 2009. I sleep better and feel better about myself.

Once again, thanks GamCare”

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Foreword

Welcome to the GamCare Care Services Report 2007, covering the activities of all of our support and counselling services during that calendar year.

This Report provides information on those problem gamblers who have come to us for help and who have chosen to disclose information to us. While it is not therefore classifiable as research, and it clearly does not give a substantive overview of the extent of problem gambling in the UK, it does provide a fascinating and useful snapshot of those who seek advice and counselling. What we also hope it might do is to highlight any changes over time in the profile of problem gamblers who come to us, which may then suggest areas for meaningful independent research. To reinforce this message, this year we have presented some of our data in new ways.

September 2007 saw the Gambling Act finally come into force. The social responsibility provisions within the Gambling Commission's Code of Practice require information to be made available on responsible gambling and where to obtain further help and advice. Stickers on gaming machines, posters and leaflets all display our HelpLine number. The rise in the number of calls to our HelpLine, therefore, is partly attributed to awareness of our services promoted in betting and gaming establishments.

Calls to our HelpLine increased by 25% in 2007

In September 2007 the second British Gambling Prevalence Survey was published. While it showed no increase in the overall percentage of problem gamblers in the UK, which remained at between 0.5-0.6% of the population (around 250,000 people), it also revealed that a further 1.4% (around 665,000 people) were classified as at moderate risk of becoming problem gamblers, and a further 5.1% (nearly 2.5 million people) displayed risk factors. There is clearly no room for complacency. We look forward to the time when our HelpLine number appears on all gambling advertisements, which will undoubtedly widen awareness to partners, relatives and dependents. We continue to assess the effectiveness and impact of promoting our service to frontline referrers as well as to the gambling public.

Our own major success during 2007 was the provision of an online equivalent to the HelpLine. The NetLine, launched in March 2007, provides one to one confidential advice and support online. The timeliness of this development was seen in the immediate uptake of the service, with some 150 callers in its first month of operation. NetLine confirmed the need for one to one online facilities and we are carrying out

Many callers found out about our HelpLine from leaflets and posters displayed by industry

practical investigations into online counselling for those for whom this medium is more convenient or preferred for a variety of reasons. We continue to look at new ways to reach problem gamblers and encourage them to seek help. New technological advances in gambling opportunities encourage us to consider a correspondingly wide range of options for those for whom gambling becomes a problem.

Throughout the UK, we deliver face to face counselling through our regional Partners, agencies specially chosen because of their expertise in addictions counselling. We provide additional training related to problem gambling and funding for treatment. In 2007, we brought on board two new Partners and initiated discussions with agencies in several more areas of the country. The extent of coverage and therefore access to counselling is increasing every year.

We also honed our Client Tracking System - the database of information which provides the basis of this Report. Phase 1 launched in the Autumn and Phase 2 is being developed. Our aim is to ensure that the data we gather is consistently and uniformly recorded, improving its usefulness in forward planning of our service provision to meet the future needs of our clients.

The development of the NetLine and of our Partners programme led us to rethink the presentation of this Report. We have grouped together our advice, information and support services and our counselling services, while continuing to present separate statistics where these are relevant or represent trends.

In December 2007, GamCare moved offices from London Bridge to larger premises at Clapham Junction. This enabled us to move more of our HelpLine advisers in-house and to restructure our counselling team.

Such significant changes, of course, meant upheaval, delaying the publication of our Report this year. However, I have no hesitation in recommending to you this Report and in doing so I express my gratitude to all of our advisers and our clinical staff, in London and with our Partners, for their hard work in delivering our services.



Geoffrey Godbold OBE
Chief Executive



Introduction

In 2007 we celebrated the tenth anniversary of the launch of our Care Services. The Care Services were established in order to ensure that problem gamblers and their families would be able to access broad based counselling and support at a time when gambling in the UK was being re-positioned as a mainstream leisure activity. Since then not only has the profile and prevalence of gambling increased considerably but, in response, so have the Care Services. As you will see clearly from the new way we have presented this report, again this year record numbers of people have been calling our Helpline, attending our counselling programmes and utilising our online services.

Not only have numbers increased but so has the range of services that we provide. In March of this year the NetLine came on stream augmenting the already highly successful work of our Forum and Chat Rooms. With the exciting prospect of an online counselling service becoming available next year and the further refining and development of our Client Tracking System, we are now even more able to offer those who may want or need our assistance a unique variety of clear, easy to access and integrated routes to treatment.

Advisers answered over 1,400 NetLine calls

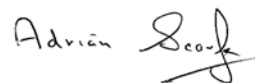
However, as you read the following pages I ask you to bear in mind that our Care Services are as much about what is delivered as about how much is delivered. It is the quality and effectiveness of the work we do that ultimately determines our success. That is why we have included a number of quotes from past and present GamCare callers and clients who have willingly and openly shared their appreciation of the support they have received. A gambling problem can be devastating to gambler and family alike but we always need to bear in mind that gambling takes place within a social context. A gambling problem can therefore have a high impact and as a result serious, though often hidden, cost implications for our health care, social care and criminal justice systems. For this reason we place considerable emphasis on monitoring and evaluating how effective our counselling is. In this report, as in all previous reports, we have included an analysis of the outcomes of counselling not only in terms of addressing the gambling behaviour itself but also the related social and health problems such as personal and family relationships, employment, physical and psychological health and comorbidity.

By closure, 66.7% of London clients had stopped their gambling and sustained abstinence

As we move into the next decade of the Care Services our target is to build upon what we have achieved so far. We therefore aim to continue to expand our service provision and see even more significant increases in those accessing and receiving help across the UK. We will continue to build relationships with our callers and clients by offering them a range of support options so they can choose what is best suited to their own particular needs. We will also continue to place emphasis on quality of service delivery that is benchmarked against best practice and underpinned by good clinical auditing and evaluation.

36% more counselling sessions were delivered to clients in 2007 than in 2006

However, we know that all of the above can only be effective if delivered by skilled, competent and passionate staff. It is the hard and dedicated work of the teams of advisers, counsellors, supervisors, managers and support staff at GamCare and our Partners that have made the Care Services so much of a success in the last eleven years. A big thank you and congratulations to you all.



Adrian Scarfe B.Sc (Econ) MA MTh Grad Cert Ed
Head of Clinical Services



1. The Services

GamCare offers a range of services immediately accessible to all those affected by problem gambling, either online or by telephone.

1.1. Forum

The Forum is open to the widest audience and is especially useful for anyone initially hesitant about seeking formal advice. It is a message board on our website available for contributions from anyone who has been affected by a gambling problem, not exclusive to UK residents. Gamblers, their partners, friends and family can meet online, post their message on the website and provide mutual support and advice. Participants are representative of all stages of coping and recovery and they share their experiences to help one another.

The Forum is moderated by GamCare staff to ensure participants show consideration and respect for others and to encourage equal involvement in the discussions. All messages posted are in the public domain and available to view 24/7. GamCare consistently receives over 5,000 new messages each quarter.

1.2. Chat Rooms

Chat Room sessions invite Forum members to talk to each other and offer peer to peer support for gambling problems. These sessions are also staff moderated. During 2007 we increased the number of Chat Rooms available and now offer at least one live chat session each day, Sunday through to Friday. Each online session lasts for one hour.

“Whenever you share the difficult, the ‘negative’ sounding feelings, you are helping those of us who also experience them.”

- Anonymous Forum member

1.3. HelpLine and NetLine

These telephone and online services provide live one to one information, advice and emotional support.

A skilled team of HelpLine advisers is available 16 hours a day (8am to midnight), 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

The NetLine began operating in March 2007. The online complement to the HelpLine, it provides immediate real time online support for the growing audience of those gambling predominantly online and who prefer communicating in that medium. It also supplements the service for our existing audience. To reflect that the NetLine is the online parallel to the HelpLine, we refer to ‘calls’ and ‘callers’.

HelpLine and NetLine are caller centred, providing tailored help and support to meet the broad and diverse needs of callers to the service. The main target groups are:

- problem gamblers;
- those affected by problem gambling such as partners, family and friends;
- professionals working in the field of gambling dependency or with gambling related issues.

NetLine advisers were chosen from a core of experienced GamCare HelpLine advisers interested in working online and the aim is to have all 30 advisers working across both services in the future. All advisers attend an in-house five day training course and receive ongoing mentoring and support.

By offering a combination of crisis intervention, confidential counselling, advice, information and signposting, HelpLine and NetLine advisers are able to help the caller engage in the support process, possibly for the very first time. This crucial first step can be highly significant and help develop valuable insights into personal circumstances.

“You will find so much support here. It’s like a family here...”

- Anonymous Forum member



The caller may be advised to access face to face counselling with GamCare or one of our regional Partners, to try our other online sources of help, or to seek support from other agencies to help them begin to manage their behaviour.

The average call duration for all personally answered HelpLine calls was around nine minutes. A significant percentage of callers, almost 13%, were silent or hung up when the call was answered.

The NetLine was initially available from Monday to Friday, 10am-6pm. In August 2007, in response to demand, we extended the service to 7pm.

The following section provides a picture of the calls made to the GamCare HelpLine and NetLine during 2007 and the callers who made them. The figures are derived from data provided by the virtual call centre and the NetLine software platform and information disclosed by callers. Because it is a record only of that information which is voluntarily given and callers are often in emotional distress, this report does not represent a proper or thorough analysis of UK problem gamblers and their behaviour.

It does present a snapshot of the gambling behaviour of those callers to NetLine and HelpLine who chose to disclose their gambling activities and the impact gambling has on their lives.

“ I am still in a lot of debt and that will take some time to sort out, but I am not running away from it any more.”

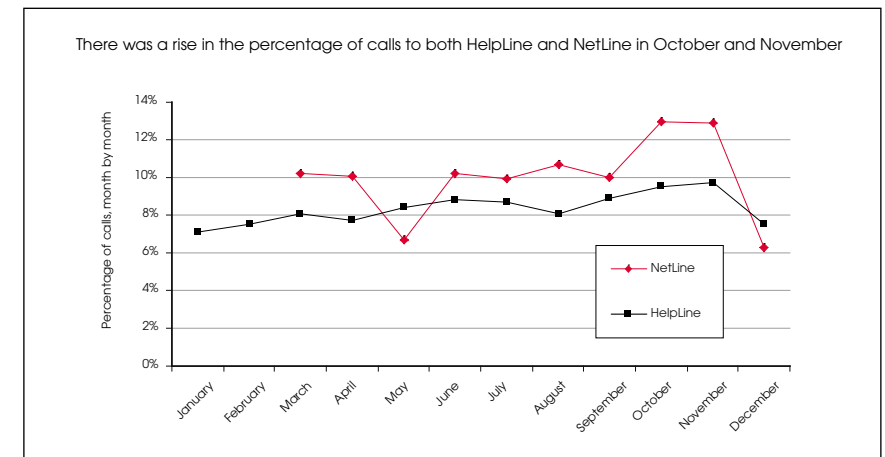
2. Call Analysis

2.1. Total calls

- There was a 25% increase in the total number of inbound calls made to the HelpLine in 2007, to 37,806.

The chart below shows the distribution of personally answered calls during 2007, giving the percentage of calls month by month.

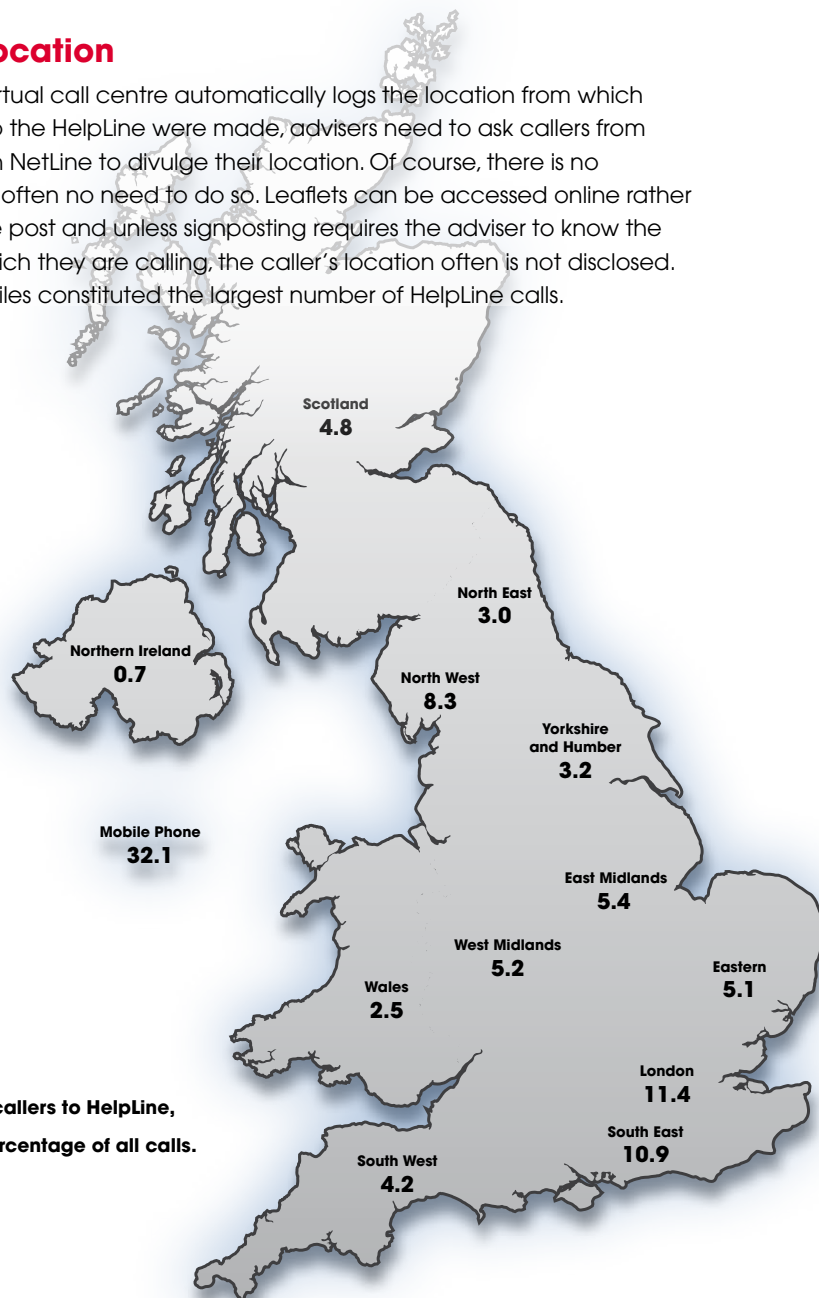
Comparison of the month by month distribution of HelpLine and Netline calls



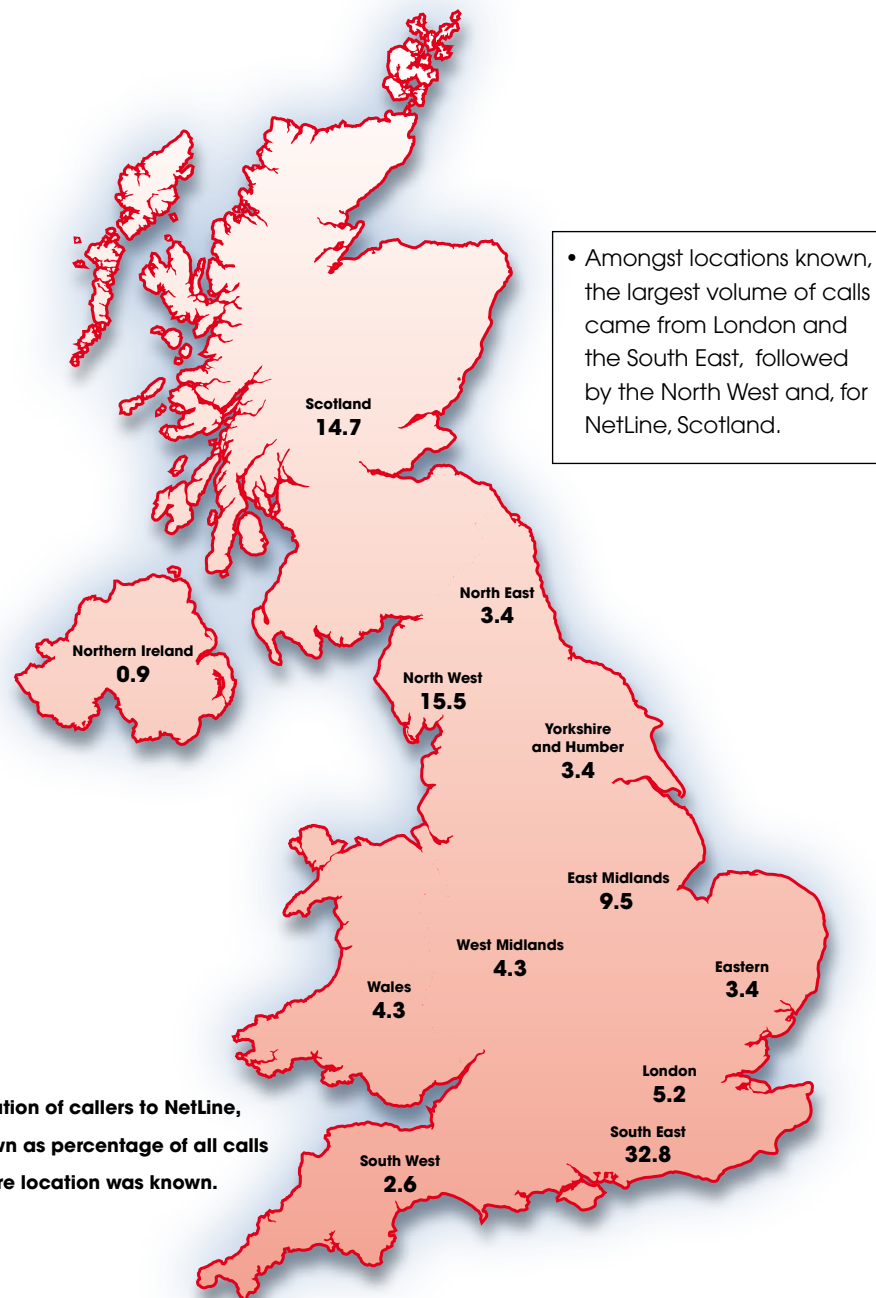
- The rise in calls during October and November is likely to be the result of a greater awareness of our services. Following the implementation of the Gambling Act, to fulfil a condition of their UK licence, many more operators chose to display our HelpLine number and website address on premises and online.
- Since its launch in March 2007, a total of 1,407 calls were answered by NetLine advisers.

2.2. Call location

Whereas the virtual call centre automatically logs the location from which landline calls to the HelpLine were made, advisers need to ask callers from mobiles and on NetLine to divulge their location. Of course, there is no obligation and often no need to do so. Leaflets can be accessed online rather than sent in the post and unless signposting requires the adviser to know the region from which they are calling, the caller's location often is not disclosed. Calls from mobiles constituted the largest number of HelpLine calls.



Location of callers to HelpLine, shown as percentage of all calls.



Location of callers to NetLine, shown as percentage of all calls where location was known.

• Amongst locations known, the largest volume of calls came from London and the South East, followed by the North West and, for NetLine, Scotland.

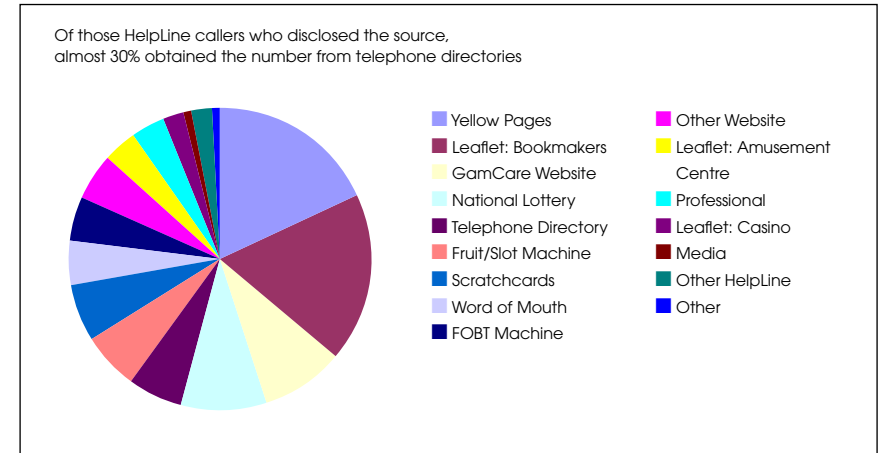
3. Caller Profile

The main point to remember when considering the data in the following sections is that the information presented is voluntarily disclosed by callers, who may well be in crisis and are often anxious and distressed. Utmost in the mind of the HelpLine and NetLine adviser is providing the caller with appropriate help and support. Naturally, some callers will disclose more than others.

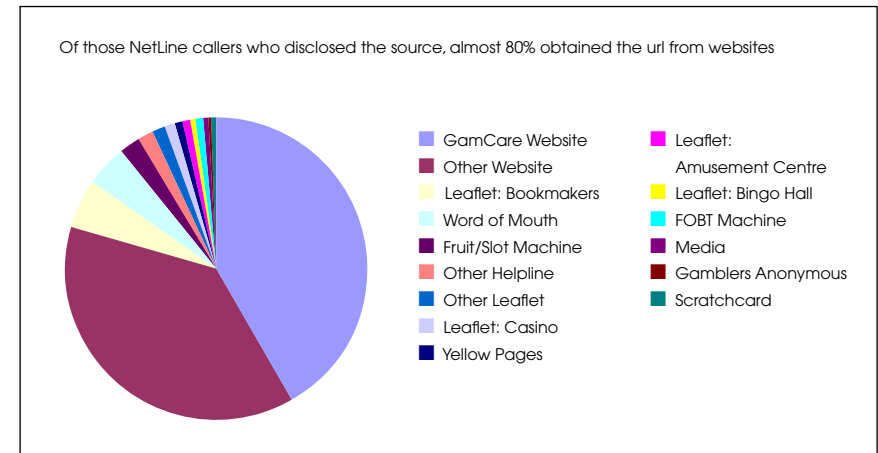
3.1. Initial source of information about HelpLine or NetLine

- Of those Helpline callers who disclosed where they found the number, most (28%) found it in telephone directories, especially Yellow Pages and from leaflets and other sources displayed in the various gambling establishments (33%). The volume of callers finding the number from professional sources and other helplines remains low.
- Around a fifth of NetLine callers said where they found out about it.
- Most found it through the GamCare website (41.7%), with a further 37.8% of callers sourcing the facility from another website, including Google and other search engines and gaming sites carrying the logo and/or a link.
- Leaflets in bookmakers and word of mouth were the next most frequently disclosed as sources of the NetLine URL.

Initial source of information about HelpLine



Initial source of information about NetLine

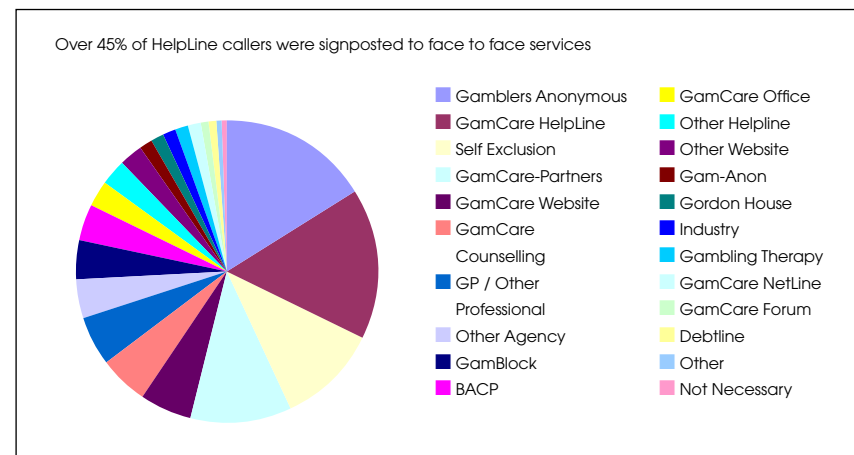


3.2. Signposting destinations

Having made that important first step in calling the HelpLine/NetLine, callers may be signposted to other support services in the process of overcoming the impact of gambling on their lives. GamCare advisers maintain a good knowledge of all the options available. In discussion with the caller, the adviser uses counselling skills to recognise what stage the caller is at and can then suggest the most appropriate next step. Often, more than one destination is suggested.

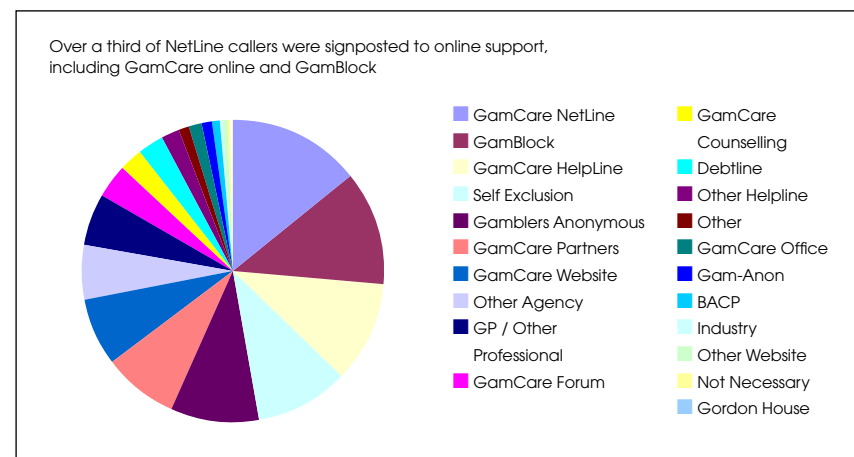
- 20.6% of HelpLine and almost 10% of NetLine callers were signposted to Gamblers Anonymous self help groups operating in many parts of the country, while 10.5% of HelpLine and 8% of NetLine callers were signposted to our regional Partners (see section 6.2).
- Overall, 16.6% of HelpLine and almost 11% of NetLine callers were signposted to GamCare counselling in London or with our Partners.
- Less than 10% of HelpLine callers were referred to GamCare online support services and small percentages were referred to General Practitioners or to the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy.
- There was a continued rise in the number of HelpLine callers who were recommended or requested information about self exclusion, up to 11.6%. 10% of NetLine callers were signposted to self exclusion.
- Most NetLine callers were encouraged to continue using this resource. Significantly, over 12% were referred to software to enable them to block their access to gambling websites (GamBlock), compared to around 3% of HelpLine callers in each of the previous two years. This suggests the use of NetLine by those who are gambling predominantly online.
- Almost 11% of NetLine callers were referred to the HelpLine, perhaps reflecting its current availability at evenings and weekends, when NetLine does not operate, and that NetLine is often the initial contact point with GamCare.

Signposting destinations for HelpLine callers



- Face to face services are: Gamblers Anonymous and GamAnon, GamCare Partners and GamCare Counselling, Gordon House, GPs and psychotherapists.

Signposting destinations for NetLine callers



- Only 28% of NetLine callers were signposted to face to face services.

3.3. Caller type

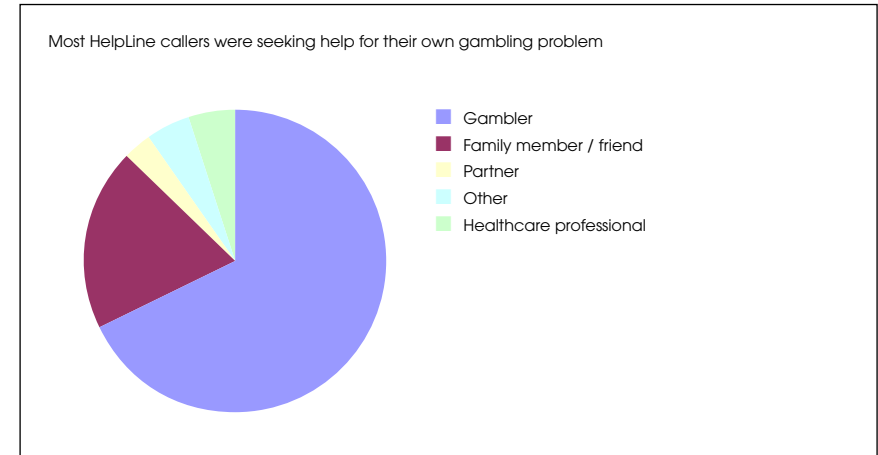
Of those calls where the caller disclosed their connection with problem gambling, most were from the gambler themselves.

Taking HelpLine and NetLine together, of those callers who gave this information:

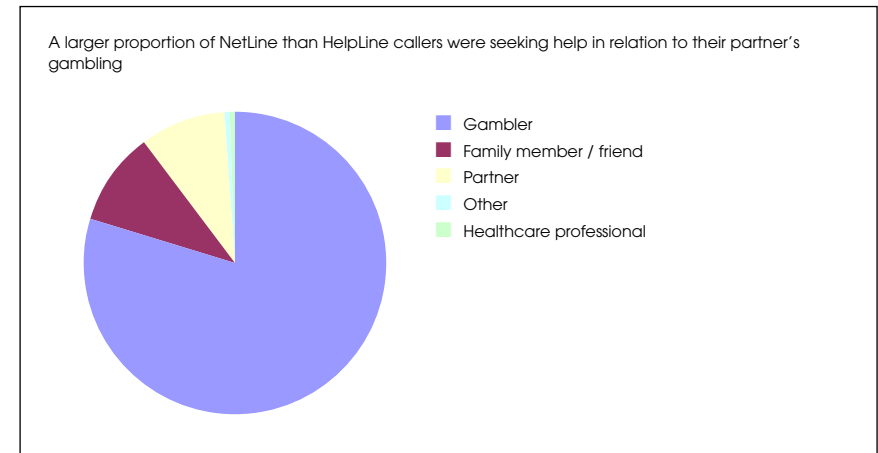
- Over 68% were the gambler and over a fifth were family members or friends.
- Just less than 3% were experiencing the adverse effects of their partner's gambling.
- Less than 4% were healthcare professionals.
- 65% of HelpLine callers were the person with the gambling problem and a quarter were partners, relatives or friends.
- A higher percentage of NetLine callers disclosing their connection with problem gambling, almost 80%, were the gambler. A fifth of NetLine calls were from partners, relatives or friends; callers from partners constituting almost 10%.
- HelpLine callers were also asked if they were calling for the first time, which some 70% were. That just under 30% of callers used the service on more than one occasion shows that it can be used to provide ongoing support. This may be important particularly for those who have not yet reached the stage where they feel able to commit to more structured or formal support, but who need an immediate source of help at times.

“ I would just like to thank GamCare for helping me through a pretty awful time. ”

HelpLine caller type



NetLine caller type



Sections 3.4-5.2 refer only to those who disclosed that they were calling about their own gambling problems.

3.4. Age of callers

Only a relatively small percentage of callers disclosed their age; it is not always appropriate for advisers to request this information.

- Of HelpLine callers who disclosed their age, the majority were 26 to 35, although at 30% this is a reduction compared to 2006.
- More HelpLine than NetLine callers fell into the 26-55 age range.
- Almost 50% of NetLine callers disclosing their age were between 18 and 25.
- No NetLine callers disclosing their age were aged over 65 and very few aged over 55.

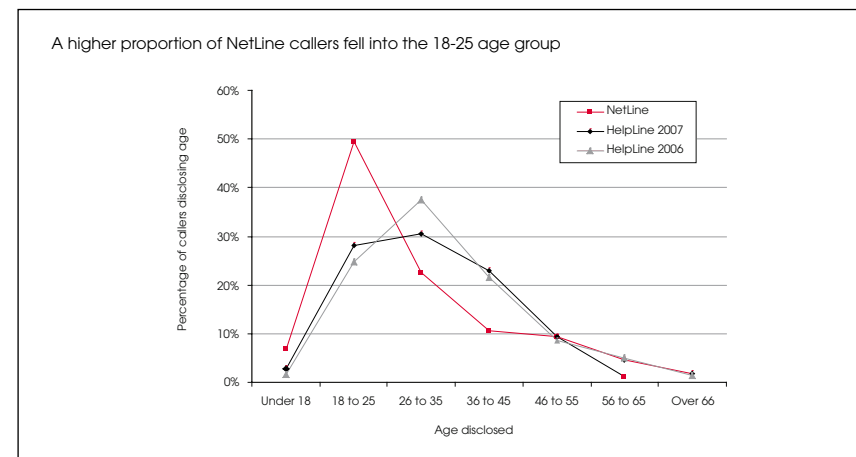
“ I am so in debt to you for helping me deal with the worst time in my life ”

3.5. Gender of callers

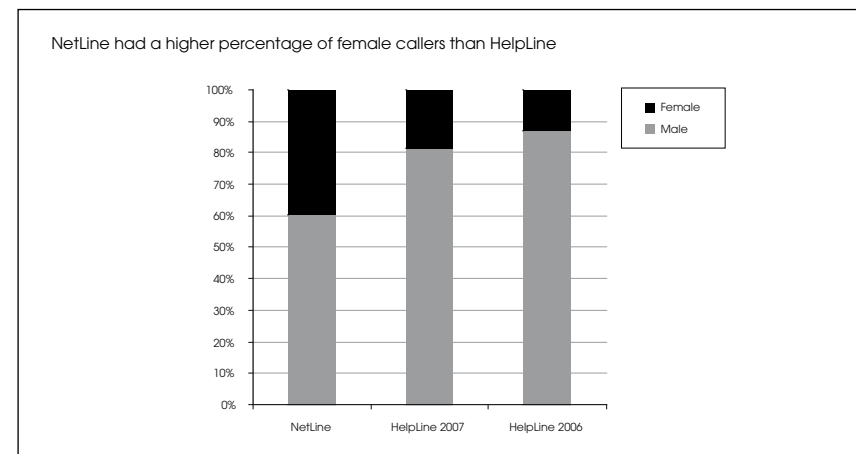
It should be remembered that online, gender has to be actively disclosed.

- Whilst it remained the case that most callers were male, the number of women calling HelpLine about their own gambling problems rose by over 5% from 2006.
- Almost 40% of NetLine callers were female.

Comparison of ages disclosed by NetLine callers and HelpLine callers 2007 and 2006



Comparison of genders disclosed by NetLine callers and HelpLine callers 2007 and 2006



4. Gambling Analysis: Callers

4.1. Gambling activities

Gamblers calling HelpLine were asked what they gamble on. Callers often disclose more than one gambling activity and advisers record all the gambling activities disclosed. It is likely, especially considering the nature of the call, that the caller will focus on those activities which they associate most with their problem gambling, but this cannot be assumed.

The percentages given below are calculated, as in previous years, as percentages of all gambling activities disclosed.

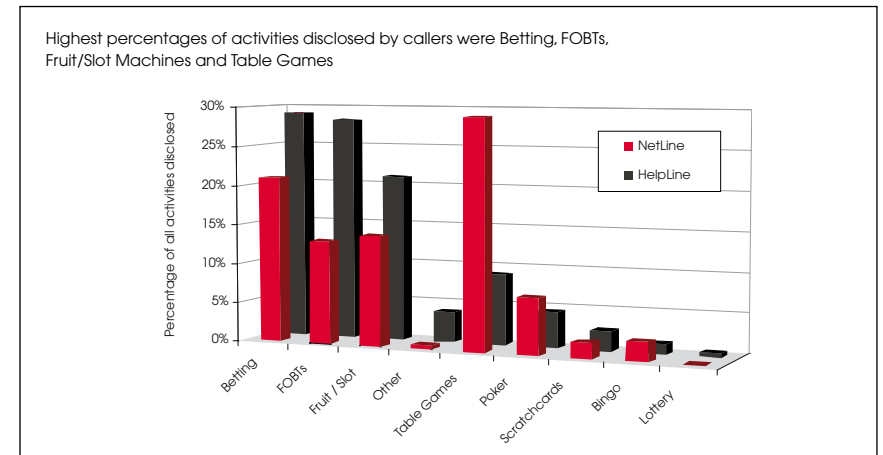
It should be reiterated that the HelpLine advisers' priority is to provide advice, information and emotional support and they are often dealing with callers in crisis. Not all callers disclosed information about their gambling activities.

Activity refers to the game played. It does not take into account whether the activity is pursued on physical premises or remotely (for this, see 4.2 Gambling facilities below). A larger percentage of activities disclosed this year were recorded under the heading of 'Other', reflecting the complexity of gambling opportunities.

“... he plays on fruit machines, live poker, roulette etc. He's spent thousands of our money and all of his own.”

- Anonymous Forum member

Comparison of gambling activities disclosed by HelpLine and NetLine callers

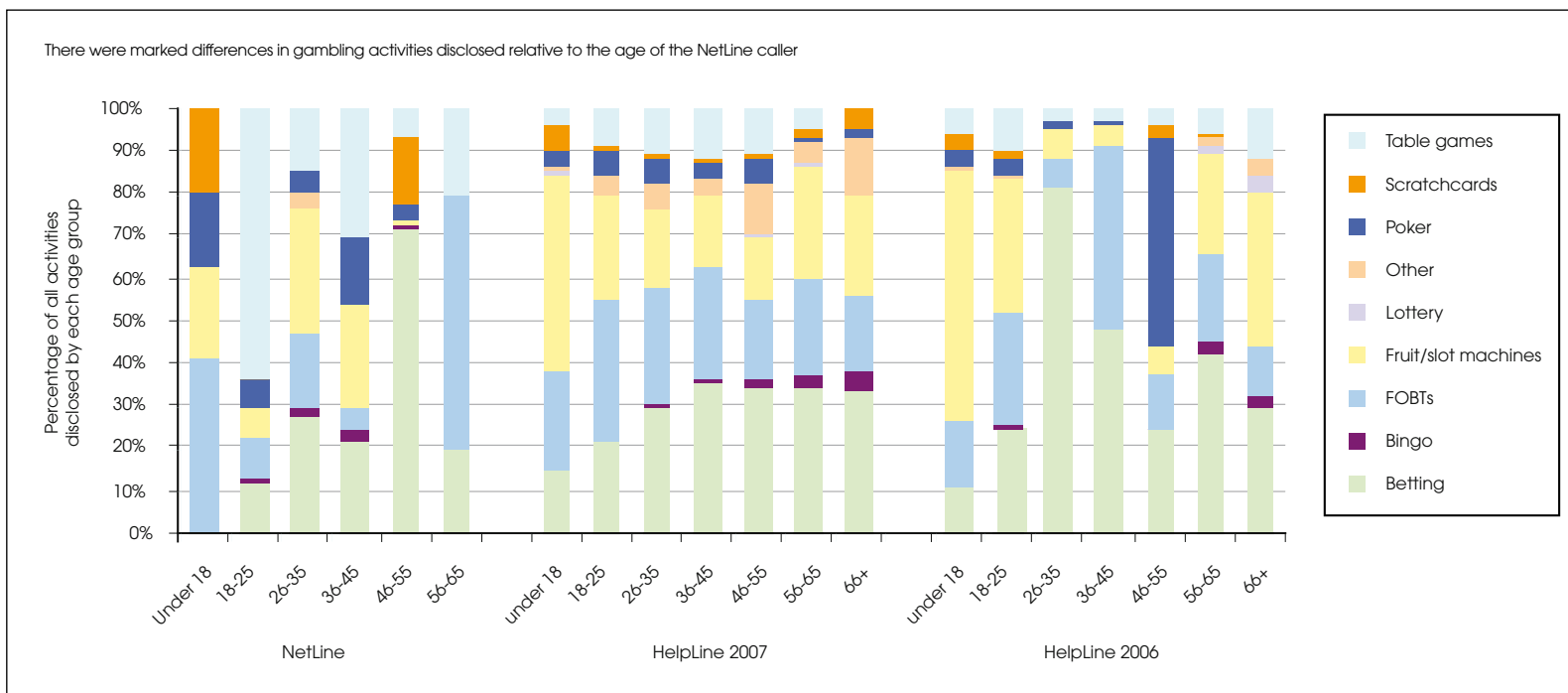


- There were variations in the spread of activities disclosed by callers to each of the support services. Almost 30% of activities disclosed by NetLine callers were table games, compared to betting (some 20%), FOBTs and fruit/slot machines (each around 14%).
- FOBTs comprised over 25% of the activities disclosed by HelpLine callers, a higher percentage than in 2006, while fruit/slot machine playing continued to see a decrease, down to just less than 20% of activities they disclosed.
- Scratchcards remained a very small percentage of all activities disclosed by callers this year, although this was an increase from 2006.
- As before, the number of callers who referred to the lottery was less than half a percentage overall.

4.1.1. Gambling activities by age

The percentages given below are calculated as percentages of all gambling activities disclosed within each age group.

Comparison of gambling activities disclosed by NetLine and HelpLine callers 2007 and 2006 by age



- HelpLine callers who gave their age as under 18 disclosed a wider variety of activities than NetLine callers within this age group. Fruit/slot machine playing comprised 45% of activities they disclosed, while scratchcards, poker and table games each constituted around 4-5% of all activities disclosed by these callers.
- Looking collectively at activities disclosed by under 18s calling HelpLine and NetLine in 2007, fruit/slot machines predominated (35%), with FOBTs at 28%. It should be remembered that callers in this age group form a relatively small percentage of all callers (see 3.4).
- Activities disclosed by HelpLine callers in the middle age ranges of 26-55 differed markedly from those disclosed in 2006, including an increase in the percentage of fruit/slot machine playing. Within the 46-55 age group, more

disclosed betting, while of those giving their age between 26-35, betting reduced from 80% to 30% of activities disclosed.

- Of HelpLine callers in the 36-45 age group, FOBT play comprised 26% of all activities disclosed, a reduction from 43% in 2006, although there was a rise across all other age groups in the percentages disclosing FOBT activity. HelpLine callers aged 18 to 25 disclosed more FOBT play than other activity (33.5%).
- Of NetLine callers within the 18-45 age group, although some disclosed FOBT activity, most disclosed table games, fruit/slot machines and betting.
- Over 60% of activities disclosed by NetLine callers aged 18-25 were table games, while for almost the same percentage of callers within the 46-55 age group it was betting and for the 56-65 group, FOBTs (See 3.4 for the percentage of NetLine callers who disclosed their age as over 55).

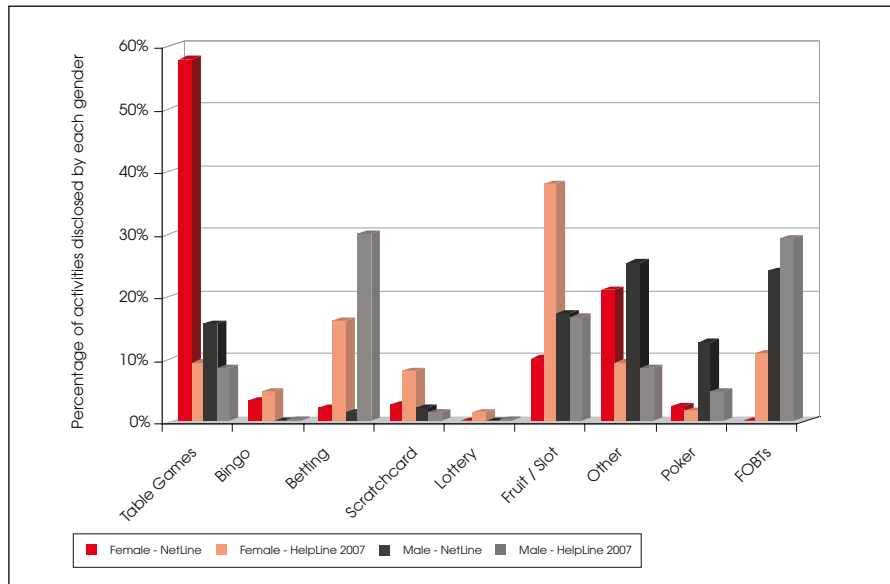


4.1.2. Gambling activities by gender

Not all callers disclosed their gender. Where they did, the percentages given below are calculated as percentages of all gambling activities disclosed by each gender.

Callers often disclose more than one gambling activity.

Comparison of gambling activities disclosed by HelpLine and NetLine callers by gender



- A clear majority of female NetLine callers disclosed table games while for males gambling was spread across five activities.
- Amongst female HelpLine callers, most gave fruit/slot machines as a gambling activity: just over 38%.
- Almost a quarter of male NetLine callers disclosed FOBTs. No female NetLine callers gave FOBTs as gambling activity.
- More female than male callers disclosed their gambling activities as games of chance: table games, scratchcards and bingo, fruit/slot machines, although amongst NetLine callers a higher percentage of the female callers disclosed betting.

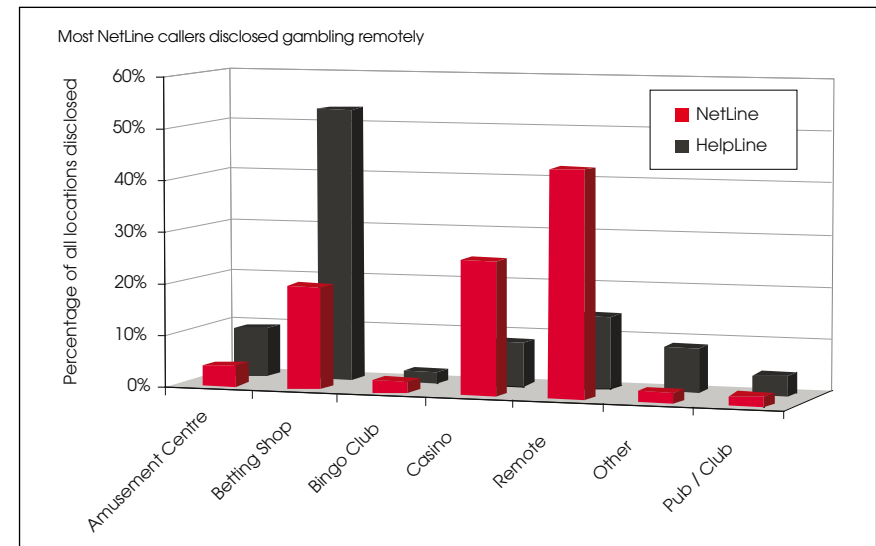
4.2. Gambling facilities

(referred to in previous reports as Location)

Callers were asked about the main facility that they used for gambling (i.e. 'Where do you gamble?'). Facilities include the category 'remote': gambling in which persons participate by the use of remote communication, including the internet, telephone, television or any other kind of electronic or other technology for facilitating communication. In 2006 this category was described simply as 'internet'.

As with gambling activities, callers often disclosed more than one facility and percentages given below are calculated as percentages of all gambling facilities disclosed by callers.

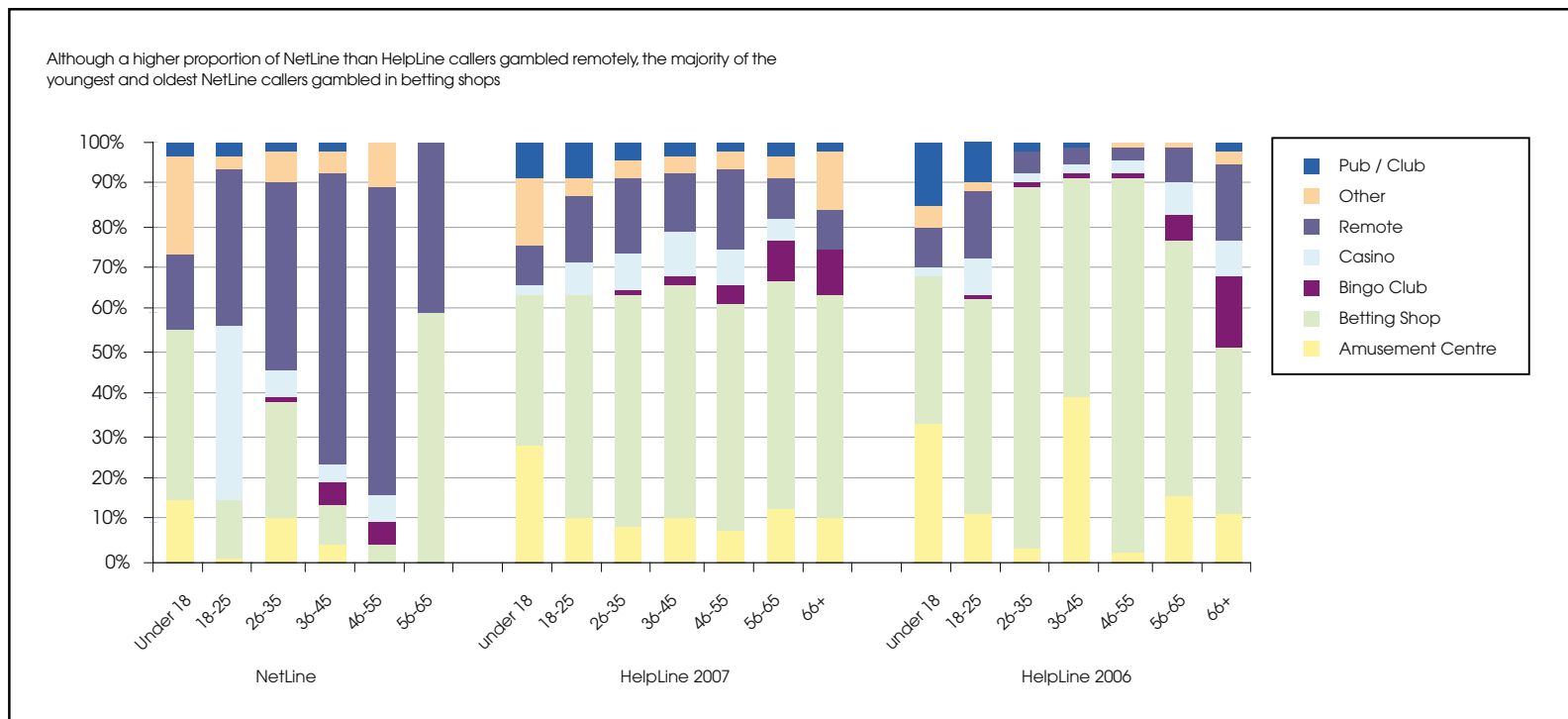
Comparison of gambling facilities disclosed by HelpLine and NetLine callers



- Amongst HelpLine callers the overall percentage disclosing remote gambling was higher than in 2006 (nearly 14% from 9.5% in 2006).
- Amusement centres were mentioned by fewer HelpLine callers (13% down from 17% in 2006).

4.2.1. Gambling facilities by age

Comparison of gambling facilities disclosed by Netline callers and by HelpLine callers 2007 and 2006 by age

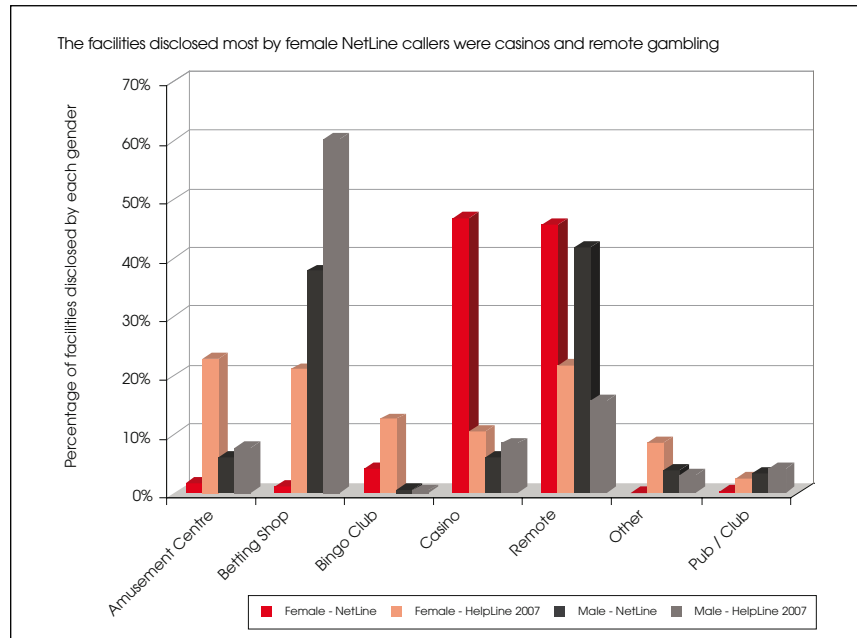


- A higher proportion of HelpLine callers giving their ages as between 26 and 55 disclosed remote gambling, with the percentage more than trebling in each of the three age groups over the period.
- Of the facilities given by HelpLine callers, a higher percentage of casinos were disclosed by the 26-45 year olds in 2007 than in 2006.
- Of facilities disclosed by NetLine callers aged 18-25, 40% were casinos and 37% remote gambling.
- The highest percentage of all facilities disclosed by NetLine callers aged between 26 and 55 was remote gambling and amongst 36-45 year olds it comprised 65% of facilities.



4.2.2. Gambling facilities by gender

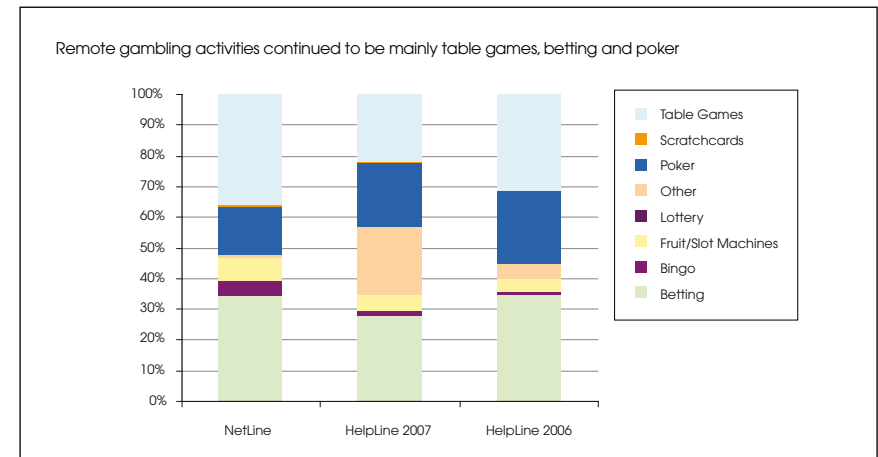
Comparison of gambling facilities disclosed by NetLine and HelpLine callers by gender



- Together, casinos and remote gambling constituted over 85% of all facilities disclosed by female NetLine callers.
- In contrast, amongst male NetLine callers, casinos comprised just 6% of facilities disclosed; most used remote facilities (39.2%) or betting shops (36.9%).
- Betting shops comprised almost 60% of the facilities disclosed by male HelpLine callers, while of facilities disclosed by female HelpLine callers, amusement centres, betting shops and remote each constituted around 20%.
- Amongst female HelpLine callers there was a rise in the amount of remote gambling disclosed (22% from 15% in 2006). This was the only substantial increase across all the facilities disclosed by female HelpLine callers.
- Also amongst facilities disclosed by female HelpLine callers, there was a fall in bingo clubs (12.6% from 17.3% in 2006) and slightly fewer males and females disclosed gambling in pubs/clubs this year.

4.2.3. Remote gambling activities

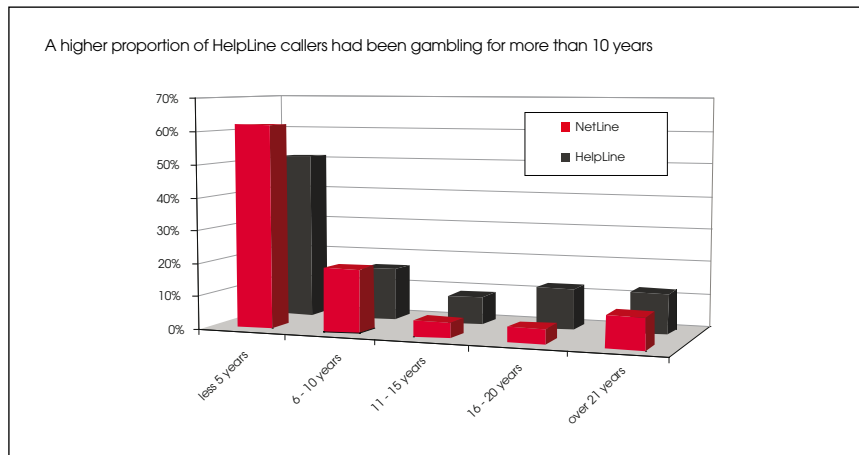
Comparison of remote gambling activities disclosed by NetLine and HelpLine callers



- Of activities given by NetLine callers, table games were the majority at just over 36%.
- Poker comprised almost 16% of remote activities disclosed by NetLine callers.
- There was little difference between the remote gambling activities disclosed by HelpLine and NetLine callers, with very few disclosing scratchcards or the lottery (each less than 0.4% of all activities), but bingo constituted 11% of the remote gambling activities of NetLine callers, as opposed to just 5.5% of those of HelpLine callers.

4.3. Gambling history

Gambling history disclosed by callers



- Of the callers who disclosed how many years they had been gambling, over 50% of HelpLine callers had been gambling for five years or less and almost a quarter had been gambling for 16 years or more. This might suggest that some problem gamblers can continue for many years without seeking help.
- Of NetLine callers who disclosed how long they had been gambling, the highest percentage had been gambling for less than 5 years. Most NetLine callers who disclosed their age were under 25.
- Fewer than 20% of NetLine callers had been gambling for 6-10 years and less than 10% had been gambling for over 21 years.

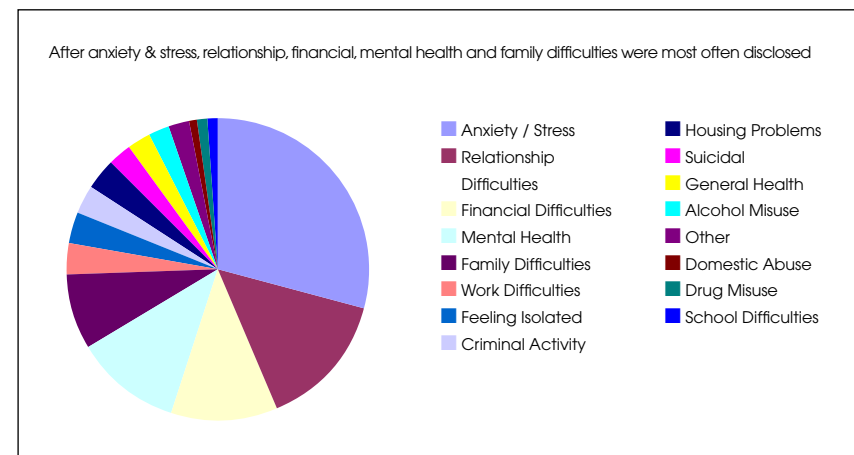
“It’s been hard but probably saved my sanity and maybe my future.”

5. Gambling Impacts: Callers

5.1. Health, emotional and other impacts

Some callers discussed the negative effects that gambling had on their lives, in some cases disclosing a number of impacts.

Health, emotional and other impacts of gambling disclosed by all callers



- Of the callers to the HelpLine who disclosed that gambling was causing a number of difficulties for them, over a third were suffering from anxiety or stress. Almost one fifth experienced worries about their relationships and 11% stated their gambling was causing them physical and/or mental health problems.
- Anxiety and stress were disclosed by over 60% of NetLine callers. A quarter disclosed financial difficulties. One fifth disclosed mental health problems. Between 10 and 16% disclosed relationship, work or family difficulties and 15% feelings of isolation.

5.2. Financial difficulties

The question of debt was not raised by or with all callers.

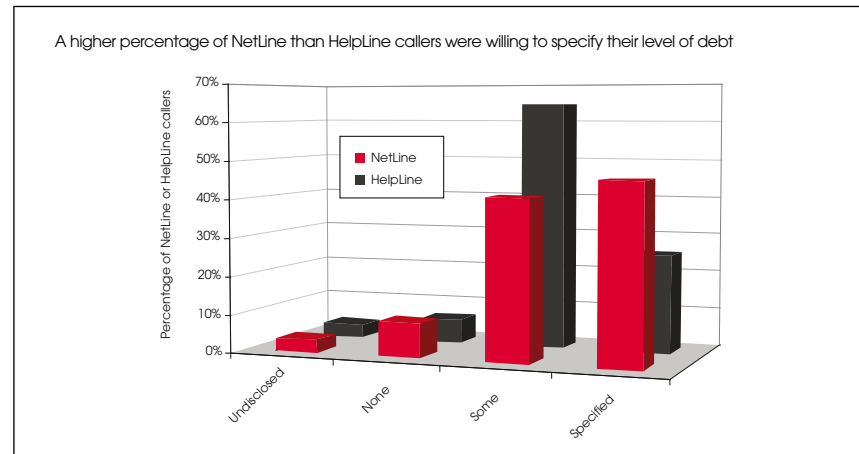
5.2.1. Disclosure of gambling-related debt

When financial difficulties did form part of the discussion with the adviser, the caller did not always disclose whether or not they had debts, or the level of debt.

- Of those HelpLine callers with whom the question of debt arose, 3.5% did not disclose whether or not debt was a problem. However, only 6.2% told us that they had no gambling related debt. A very high proportion (64.7%) of those with whom debt was discussed admitted to having debts but did not disclose the amount.
- A third of all NetLine callers discussed debt. Of these, around 3% did not disclose whether or not they had debts. 9% of these callers said they had no debts, while over 40% disclosed that gambling had caused financial difficulties but did not specify the level of debt.

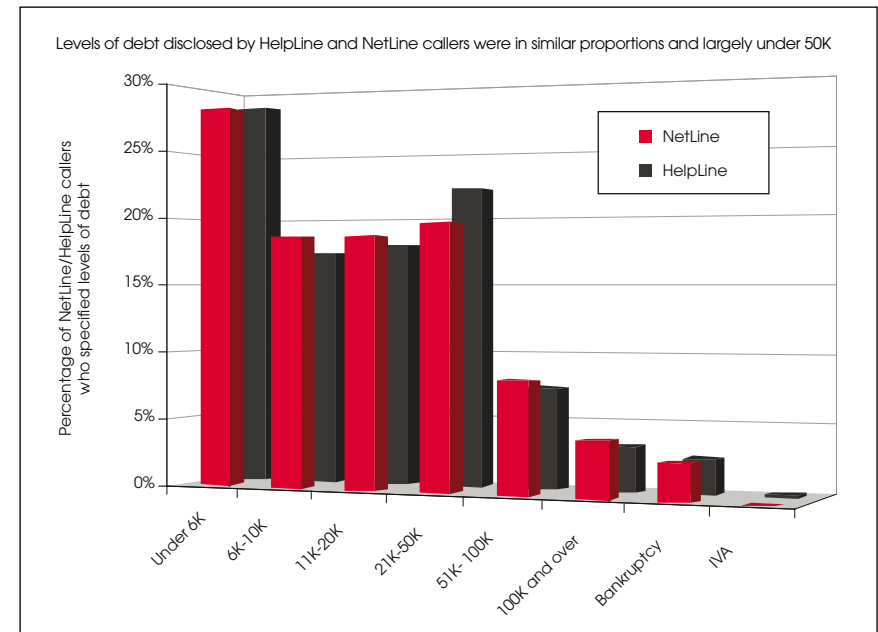
All of this indicates that sensitivity remains around this issue even when discussing gambling problems in confidence.

Disclosure of gambling-related debt by callers



5.2.2. Levels of gambling related debt

Comparison of debts levels disclosed by NetLine and HelpLine callers



- Of those callers who were more specific, almost 30% disclosed levels of debt under 6K.
- Roughly twice that percentage disclosed levels ranging from 6K to 50K.
- 7.5% of HelpLine callers and just over 8% of NetLine callers who disclosed the amount of debt disclosed levels between 50K and 100K.
- 6 to 7% of callers disclosed debts of over 100K or bankruptcy.
- No NetLine callers and only 0.2% of HelpLine callers disclosed having entered into Individual Voluntary Arrangements with creditors for gambling related debt.

“Even when my debt started to mount up and I was so close to having my home repossessed, I still didn’t stop.”

6. The Services

GamCare delivers counselling in London and, via a number of regional Partners, in many other parts of the UK.

The over arching priority of the services is to ensure, as far as possible, that every client's experience of counselling maximises their potential not only to stop or effectively control their gambling but to make significant and sustained improvements in their day to day living and so achieve a balanced lifestyle.

The counselling approach is integrative, using a range of interventions from cognitive behavioural to psychodynamic relevant to the needs of each individual person. This enables both the problem gambling behaviour and underlying issues to be addressed in the counselling process.

6.1. GamCare London

The GamCare London Counselling Service provides specialist individual and group counselling for problem gamblers, partners and family members at three locations in London. The service is confidential and abides by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy Code of Ethics and Practice. All counsellors are qualified and experienced in working with problem gamblers and receive regular supervision of their client work.

6.2. GamCare Partners

The development of the partnership programme is one of the most important areas of GamCare. The aim of the programme is to expand the availability of professional and sustainable problem gambling counselling across the UK. This is achieved by entering into partnership with carefully selected agencies that already provide addiction counselling within a region. GamCare provides training specific to counselling problem gamblers, funding and ongoing support for the management of Partner counsellors. The service is monitored for quality of clinical standards and performance.

The partnership programme is now well established and has been progressively extended since it was first launched in 1997. In 2007, GamCare Partners gave problem gamblers access to face to face counselling in Scotland, Cumbria, the North East, Merseyside, the West Midlands, Staffordshire, Nottingham, Norfolk and Suffolk, Bristol and North Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire, Hampshire, Sussex and Kent.

6.3. Provision of services in 2007

By continuing to review and extend opening hours and develop the counselling programmes, the service delivered in London saw a 35% increase in the number of counselling sessions delivered. In total, clients attended 3,158 individual and group counselling sessions.

With new Partners joining in 2007 and existing Partners expanding their capacity, a total of 6,436 counselling sessions were provided outside London, representing a rise in sessions provided by GamCare Partners of 37% from 2006.

Overall, GamCare Counselling Services delivered 9,594 sessions in 2007, representing a rise of 36% on the previous year.

The primary referral source for the service was the GamCare Helpline, with 87% of all disclosed referral requests in London and 64% amongst our Partners having come from those who had used the Helpline for initial support. There also continued to be a level of referrals arising from contact with the GamCare website (6.9% of Partners' referrals came from this source) and the Gordon House Association.

As in all previous years, there were a variety of other channels through which clients were referred for counselling. Collaboration with the probation and prison services has been on-going since GamCare was founded and several clients who were on probation, due to appear in court or serving a custodial sentence were referred for formal assessment at GamCare and where appropriate, accepted for weekly counselling and treatment. Other referral channels included Gamblers Anonymous, Primary Care Trusts, Community Mental Health Teams, health care practitioners and support agencies working, for example, with the homeless or those in supported housing.

7. Client Analysis

7.1. Client type

Although the provision of counselling for the problem gambler will always form the main activity of the service, supporting the partner and family member is of no less significance.

This is especially so when considering the fact that the difficulties arising from the impact of problem gambling on the family, though often hidden, are every bit as complex and painful to cope with as those experienced by the gambler. It is, therefore, disappointing to report that in 2007 only 3.6% of clients seen by GamCare London were partners or family members, although this was roughly comparable to the percentage in 2006 (3.2%).

A slightly higher percentage of clients seen by GamCare Partners were those affected by someone else's gambling so, overall, across all face to face services, 94.5% of clients seen were the gambler and 5.5% family members, friends or partners.

7.2. Gender of gambling clients

15% of clients receiving counselling at GamCare were women. Within London, this was 9%. The enthusiastic commitment from those who attended the specialist womens' group in London that was started during 2007 is very encouraging and as demand grows a second such group will be formed in 2008. The service is committed to being open, sensitive and responsive to the needs of women gamblers in all of the programmes it offers.

As in previous years, Partners saw a higher percentage of female clients than GamCare London, with women accounting for 17% of their clients (16% in 2006).

7.3. Age distribution of gambling clients

The age distribution of clients remains essentially the same each year.

- Over 65% of those in counselling were between 26 and 45 years old.
- While for GamCare London, 18 to 25 year old clients remained at similar levels to 2006, there was a slight increase in the number of clients in this age group seen by Partners.
- There were no under 18s amongst GamCare London's clients and only 0.5% amongst Partners'.

“Over a period of time we discussed and hit on many possible motives for my behaviour and actions. This has enabled me to take action for myself and those who I have affected.”

8. Gambling Analysis of Clients

With the growth in our services and as we refine our Client Tracking System, we continue to develop the way in which we gather and record information. This year, clients were asked about all gambling activities rather than those they associated with their problem gambling. This is in line with data recorded by HelpLine and NetLine advisers although, in the more formal setting of face to face counselling, the client may be slightly more rigorous in detailing all of their gambling activities.

As with HelpLine and NetLine, clients often disclosed more than one gambling activity. The percentages given below are calculated as percentages of all gambling activities disclosed.

Although we know that a large proportion of the population plays the National Lottery, we also recognise that for the majority of problem gamblers it is not an activity associated with their problem gambling (the National Lottery was only 0.5% and 0% respectively of the gambling activities disclosed by HelpLine and NetLine callers). Therefore, in the charts below we have discounted reporting of gambling on the National Lottery with regard to face to face clients. This is also in line with the approach taken in the British Gambling Prevalence Survey 2007.

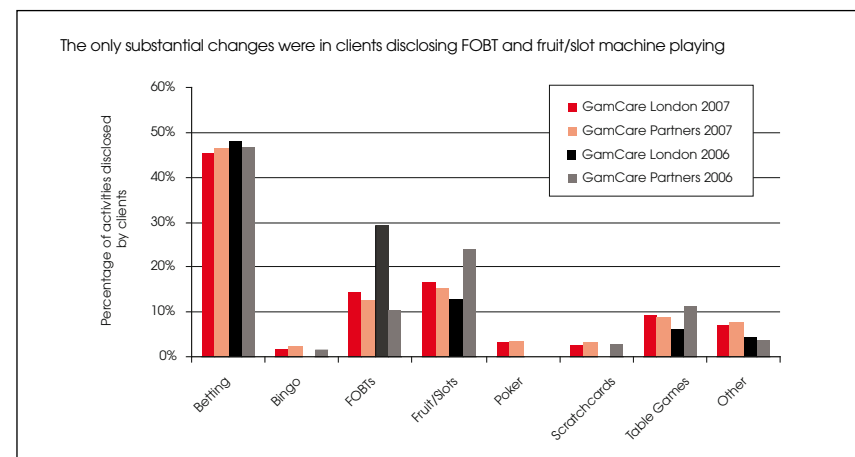
“You don't say much; you let me do most of the talking and you occasionally prompt me. I get the chance to hear myself talk and then I go away and think about what I've found myself saying.”

8.1. Gambling activities of clients

Note: in 2006, for GamCare London clients, poker, scratchcards and bingo were included in the category 'Other' because numbers were negligible.

- In 2007, reported FOBT gambling activity among clients dropped from 15.5% to 13.5% overall and amongst GamCare London clients from 29% to 14%.
- However, clients seen by GamCare Partners disclosed a slight increase in FOBT activity from 10.3% in 2006 to 12.7% in 2007.
- Conversely, amongst Partners' clients there was a reduction in reported fruit/slot machine playing, compared to a small increase amongst London clients.

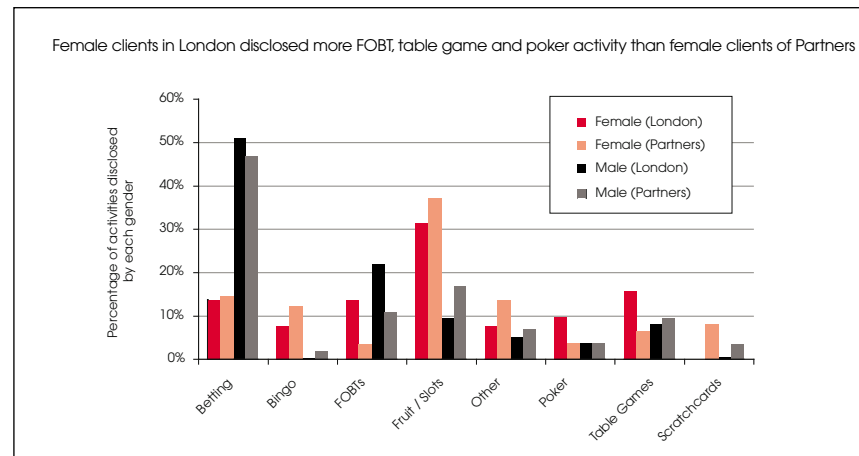
Comparison of gambling activities disclosed in 2007 & 2006, by London and by Partner clients



8.1.1. Gambling activities by gender

- Betting and FOBTs were the predominant activities for men followed by fruit machines, casino table games and poker.
- For women fruit machines remained the activity disclosed most.
- Amongst female clients in London there was a rise in FOBT activity (from 7.5% to nearly 14%).
- There was a rise in the incidence of poker playing amongst female clients in London (negligible in 2006, to almost 10% in 2007).

Gambling activities disclosed by gender and by London and Partner clients



“With the help of you and the group, I did some serious soul searching and learned a lot about myself, which in turn helped me understand a little better why the gambling took such an aggressive hold of me.”

8.1.2. Gambling activities by age

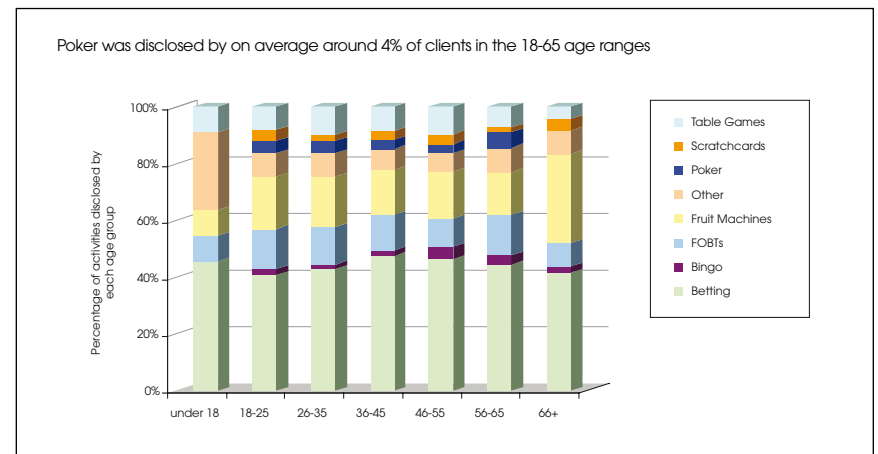
In contrast to the different gambling choices of men and women, when it comes to age gambling modes have tended to be evenly spread. Betting was the majority activity across all age groups, at around 40% of all activities disclosed within each age group.

For the first time, poker was also reported across the age groups, particularly by 18 to 25 year olds where it accounted for 4.5% of their gambling activity. The percentage of under 18s who disclosed that their gambling activities were betting, table games and FOBTs is of particular concern, even though the actual numbers are very low (see 7.3).

The spread of gambling activities relevant to age groups was broadly consistent across our services, with just slight variations.

- Scratchcard playing was disclosed only by clients seen by Partners, across all age groups except the under 18s.
- Partners’ clients of all ages stated bingo playing and it comprised a higher percentage of their activities (at highest, for example, over 5% amongst the 46-55s).
- No clients over 66 gave poker as a gambling activity. It was disclosed by on average around 4% of clients in the 18-55 age ranges.
- In London, FOBTs comprised around 20-30% of activities within each group in the range 18-65. For Partners’ clients, the percentages tended to be around 10%, and less for the over 45s.

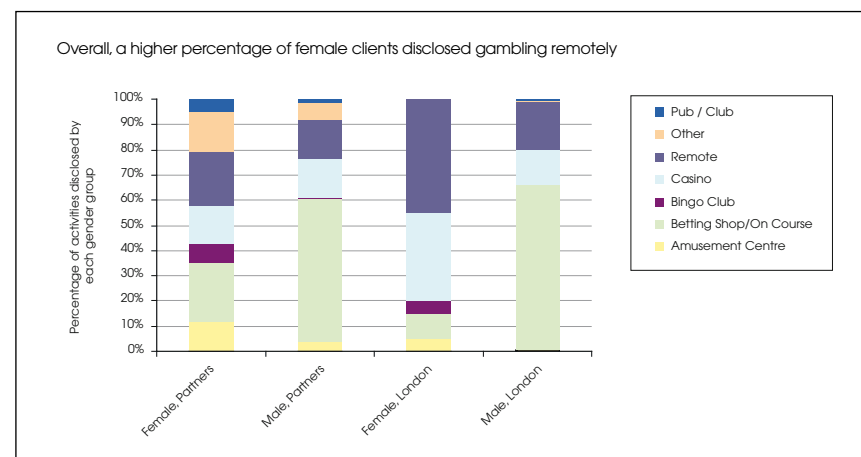
Gambling activities disclosed by clients, by age



8.2. Gambling facilities

- Amongst clients seen by GamCare Partners, the percentage disclosing that they gambled remotely doubled in 2007 to 15.8%.
- More female than male clients disclosed using remote gambling facilities (24% of women, as opposed to 17% of males).
- Female clients seen by GamCare London disclosed more remote and casino gambling (45% and 35% respectively), while female clients seen by Partners disclosed a wider spread of gambling locations, including greater use than London female clients of amusement centres, pubs/clubs and bingo halls.

Gambling facilities disclosed by gender and by London and Partner clients



9. Closure of Counselling - GamCare London

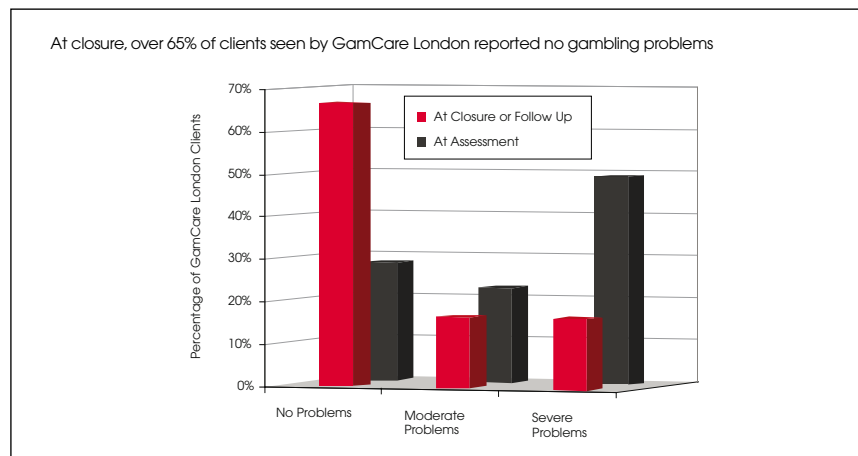
When gambling becomes a problem it can have devastating repercussions on a person's everyday life and functioning. For many clients who come to GamCare for counselling, this may mean the breakdown or near breakdown of their relationships, damage to their physical and psychological health and substantial financial loss and debt. For others it may also involve loss of job or occupation, illegal and criminal activity, the occasional or frequent misuse of alcohol and drugs and in some instances, attempted suicide. Each year, therefore, GamCare London has reported on the impact that problem gambling has had on clients seen for counselling during that year and the outcomes of the counselling they have received. This analysis is drawn from the administration of *The Christo Inventory for Gambling Services* (CIGS) during assessment and closure procedures. You can see CIGS online at <http://www.druglibrary.stir.ac.uk/documents/christo.pdf>.

“At first I was sceptical about talking about my feelings but I've seen how years of not paying them attention have made me just keep on repeating the same mistakes.”



9.1. Gambling behaviour

Changes in gambling behaviour of London clients, as assessed using CIGS



- At the time of being assessed, 49.3% of clients were regularly gambling or binge gambling at a severe level. A further 22.5% were gambling periodically and experiencing considerable negative impacts on their lives. The other 28.2% of clients were not actively gambling at the time they were assessed even though they had recent and often long-standing, histories of moderate to severe gambling problems.
- By closure 66.7% of clients had stopped their gambling and sustained abstinence prior to ending and a further 16.7% had been able to reduce or manage their gambling without the associated loss and harm when it was out of control.

9.2. Social functioning

- The vast majority of clients (80.3%) at assessment reported that their partners and family members were supportive of them entering in to counselling. However, 19.7% had less stable relationships and as a consequence were experiencing problems.
- By closure 83.3% of clients reported that their relationships were stable and supportive and those with less stability fell to 16.7%.

9.3. General and psychological health

- Although problem gambling can have a detrimental effect on general health, it is psychological health that is often more severely impacted. At assessment, 21.1% of clients were experiencing moderate general health problems. In contrast, 73.2% reported having general anxiety, mood swings, poor sleep, low self-esteem or feeling unhappy and dissatisfied with their lives. While 9.9% of clients were suffering from poor general health, 5.6% had severe psychological and mental health issues such as neurotic disorders, recently attempted or seriously considered suicide, depression, manic-depression and in some cases paranoia and schizophrenia.
- By closure, no clients reported general health problems and those with moderate psychological problems dropped to 58.3%. Of the latter it was esteem issues that tended to remain even when anxiety and unhappiness levels had improved. Furthermore, some clients with severe psychological issues experienced a deterioration. In some cases this was due to poor adherence to health and medication regimes. All this serves to highlight the complex relationship between problem gambling and health and just how difficult it can be to effect change in this area.

9.4. Financial and legal affairs

- Financial crisis brought on by problem gambling and sometimes accompanied by criminal behaviour, is often what precipitates that significant first step to seeking help and counselling. At assessment, 39.4% of clients reported having moderate levels of debt and 4.2% severe debts. The average specified debt was £17,581.19.
- By closure, 83.3% had stopped accruing debt through gambling and addressed their financial problems or were in the process of doing so. There were no clients who reported severe debt levels that were still out of control.

9.5. Occupation and employment

- Lack of occupation and employment, especially when combined with an inability to cope with boredom, is a powerful trigger for problem gambling. It is also a major contribution to poor self-esteem. Although the majority of clients (70.4%) had full-time occupations at the time of assessment, 7% were only in part-time employment and a size-able 22.5% were wholly unoccupied with no real social pastime.
- By closure, clients in full-time occupation had risen to 83.3% and the remainder were in part-time occupation.

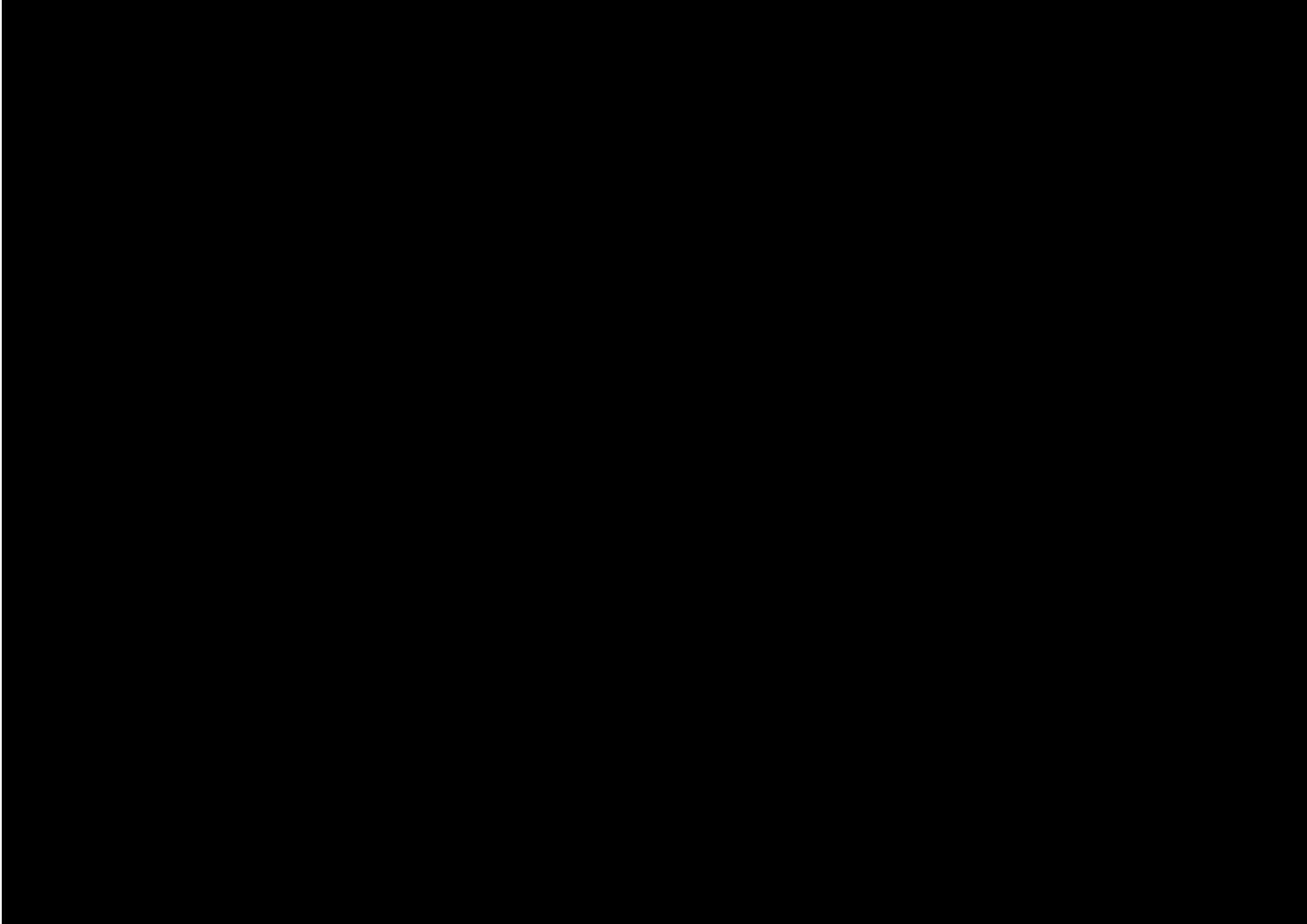
9.6. Drug and alcohol misuse

- Positive changes in terms of clients who have a comorbidity with drugs or alcohol have traditionally been either limited or difficult to sustain compared to the other areas of client functioning. At the time of assessment, comorbidity rates were low with 9.9% of clients periodically misusing drugs and/or alcohol and only 1.4% regularly misusing.
- By closure, no clients reported drug/alcohol misuse.

9.7. Support, compliance and working relationship

- Support, compliance and the working relationship are very important if counselling is to be effective. The vast majority of clients (80.3%) entered counselling having had no previous, or at best, only patchy support structures in place. However, levels of motivation and commitment were generally high and although 18.3% of clients were either quite demanding to work with or had multiple needs, a compliance rate of 83.3% was able to be maintained through the counselling process to closure.

“ If I had not had you there for me during my time of crisis I really feel that I would be dead by now. ”





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