



This paper highlights the indicative trends emerging from our 2017/18 data. These statistics are gathered from calls to the National Gambling HelpLine and from the treatment services delivered across our network in England, Scotland and Wales. These statistics are not collected, nor do they have integrity as a dataset, for academic purposes.

Key messages

- Target calls from problem gamblers and affected others increased by 2% to 29,889
- Clients in treatment across Great Britain increased by 3% to 8,310
- We have seen a gradual increase in the number of callers to the National Gambling HelpLine disclosing issues with online gambling, rising from 47% of callers in 2014/15 to 55% of callers in 2017/18.
- Similarly, more clients in treatment are disclosing issues with online gambling, rising from 38% in 2014/15 to 53% in 2017/18.
- Overall, 43% of callers mentions impacts on their mental wellbeing last year, including anxiety, stress, depression, isolation, plus suicidal thoughts and feelings.

HelpLine

During 2017/18, target answered calls from problem gamblers and affected others increased to 29,889 (2016/17: 29,417). This represents an increase of 2% on the previous year. Total answered calls increased by 5% to 45,837.

The majority of callers were gamblers (76%), and the majority of gamblers contacting the HelpLine and NetLine who disclosed a gender were male (91%). This is a consistent trend over the previous five years.

The majority of callers were aged 26 – 35 years, which is consistent with data from the previous five years. Overall, gamblers contacting the HelpLine and NetLine who disclosed how long they had been gambling for before experiencing harm had been gambling for less than five years (42%).

The majority of those currently accessing our services are 'White British'. ONS data shows that 86% of the population of England and Wales is recorded as 'White' (see Ethnicity and National Identity in England and Wales: 2011). We do see more callers from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups seeking support through the HelpLine than through our treatment services.

Overall, 66% of callers in 2017/18 disclosed that they were in some level of debt. This includes gamblers as well as their friends or family members who may have tried to help them and encountered financial problems of their own because of this.

Gambling Facilities

The main gambling facilities (locations) disclosed were online (55%), followed by betting shops (33%).

Gambling Activities

The majority of callers disclosed issues with online gambling (55%), of which the most problematic activities were betting (16%), casino games (14%) and slots (13%).

For those callers who disclosed issues with offline gambling (45%), the most problematic activities were gaming machines in betting shops (18%) and other betting in betting shops (9%).

Treatment

The number of individuals receiving treatment across our network increased by 3% in 2017/18, to 8,310 (2016/17: 8,044).



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According to the Problem Gambling Severity Index, clients who were gambling problematically when entering treatment showed an average improvement of 16.0 (significantly reduced risk) upon successfully completing their treatment plans.

According to Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation (CORE-10), clients showed an average improvement of 13.0 upon successfully completing their treatment plans. CORE-10 specifies: *'The client must improve by 6.0 or more from pre- to post-therapy to be able to say that they have made reliable improvement'*.

The majority of clients were gamblers (90%), and the majority of gamblers who disclosed a gender were male (98%). This is a consistent trend over the last five years.

The majority of clients were aged 26 – 35 years (44%), which is consistent with data from the previous five years. Overall, clients who disclosed how long they had been gambling for before experiencing harm had been gambling for less than five years (32%).

As with callers to the HelpLine, the majority of clients across our network were 'White British' in 2017/18 (86%). We aim to increase treatment take-up for BME groups over the next three years, as we know that recent health surveys in England, Scotland and Wales have shown that they are disproportionately affected by problem gambling.

Similar to callers to the HelpLine who disclosed the amount of debt they had accrued due to gambling problems, the majority of clients across our network disclosed debt of less than £5,000. However, 13% of clients across the network disclosed debts of between £20,000 - £99,999.

Gambling Facilities

The main gambling facilities (locations) discussed by clients were online (53%), followed by betting shops (31%).

Gambling Activities

For clients who disclosed they were mainly affected by online gambling, the main activities discussed were online betting (20%), slots (14%) and casino games (13%).

For those who disclosed they were mainly affected by offline gambling, the main activities discussed were gaming machines in betting shops (16%), and other betting in betting shops (12%).

GamCare Website

There were 2,289,469 unique visitors to the GamCare website during the year. This is a small drop in visitors from the previous year, which is due to better targeting for search traffic, which has led to a reduced bounce rate and increased time spent on the site as users are directed to the information that they need more efficiently.

There were 31,884 Forum posts during 2017/18. We have seen an overall reduction in the number of posts across our Forum in the last two years, as we worked hard to remove spam posts. This leads to better quality interaction between users overall.

We were able to offer 529 chatroom hours in 2017/18 despite difficulties in integrating a new platform into the website.

Review

This year we have expanded our published data set to include data on ethnicity for callers and clients. We will continue to review the data that we publish annually.