



Gambling Harms and the Criminal Justice System

Criminal Justice and Gambling Harm Thematic Workshop #4 November 2022

Summary of key insights and proposed actions for stakeholders

GamCare's Criminal Justice and Gambling Harm (CJGH) programme is an innovative two-year initiative developing a test and learn approach to improve awareness of gambling harms, access to treatment and support for people across the criminal justice system, while contributing to an emerging evidence base. CJGH thematic workshops present the opportunity to gather together sector leading experts and discuss developments and issues in the gambling and criminal justice sectors. Thematic workshops are driving forward the latest thinking and recommendations for actions, to create meaningful systemic change.

Our fourth workshop brought together 86 professionals from academia, criminal justice services, gambling harm organisations, and people with lived experience to explore the question, 'What could good practice within Police settings look like to better support those affected by gambling harms?'

Our panel of speakers highlighted existing good practice within Warwickshire PCC to embed gambling harm awareness and support, as well as disseminating findings from recent research into gambling harm practice and awareness across Police settings. Facilitated discussion from all attendees drew out several emerging themes and recommendations:

- Current practice and solutions i.e. training, resources, multi-agency approaches
- Long term solutions i.e. pilots around Out of Court Disposals
- Staff welfare

Panel Presentations

Dr Helen Churcher, Research and Project Officer, The Howard League for Penal Reform

Overview of research in regards to gambling harm in Police settings

Helen discussed her recent research, 'Police Awareness and Practice regarding gambling related crime' which touches on screening in police settings and the types of gambling related crime. She shared the key findings, insights and recommendations from the paper.

Richard Long, Head of Police and Partnerships, Warwickshire PCC

Overview of operational activity in local area in regard to gambling harm

Richard shared Warwickshire's Police and Crime Commissioner's stance and actions on gambling harm in the Warwickshire area, and shared his perspective on the role of the PCC when looking at gambling harm.



INSIGHTS

i.e. an experience or a piece of learning



RECOMMENDATIONS

i.e. a solution or a suggested change

Current practice and solutions

Resources and Training

- There is currently a lack of parity between screening for gambling harms and treatment referral pathways, and equivalent drug and alcohol services, which are embedded across police settings.
- Every interaction a professional working in police settings has with a detainee is an opportunity to identify gambling harm and offer support – staff need knowledge around both gambling harm and appropriate referral pathways.
- On hand resources are helpful e.g., posters and video clips in and around the custody suite.
- There is a need to raise awareness of gambling as a hidden harm and to normalise the conversation at all levels - stigma is a barrier to identification of harm and support.

Resources and Training

- Police officers and commissioned services, including both Liaison and Diversion (L&D) teams and external providers delivering community diversion schemes, should have access to training that gives them a foundational understanding of gambling harms and its links to crime.
- Police and commissioned services should embed screening questions into their practice.
- Police and commissioned services should have training in how to use a standardised gambling harm screening tool.
- Police and commissioned services should have access to regional gambling treatment services.
- Gambling support resources (including the National Gambling Helpline) should be clearly and routinely displayed across custody settings for detainees to access.
- Police forces and commissioned services can utilise current Gambling harm resources and training, which can be requested via **criminal.justice@gamcare.org.uk**

Multi-agency approach

- Consideration is needed around the pressures police officers currently face. There is value in commissioned services screening for gambling harms and signposting those experiencing gambling harm into support.
- Collaborative work with other partners and charities is important for successful identification and support. *"A lot of help is already out there, so there is something about unpicking what is available rather than reinventing the wheel and creating new things."*
- It is important to understand the similarities and differences between gambling and other vulnerabilities, and to explore the opportunities for collaboration across existing commissioned services, while guarding against gambling becoming subsumed within other areas i.e., substance misuse.

Multi-agency approach

- Commissioned services should receive the same level of awareness training and access to gambling support resources as those in police settings.
- The level of access to awareness training and gambling support resources in police settings should be increased to meet demand; and commissioned services should receive the same level of access to these services
- Commissioned services should add gambling harm screening and regional treatment pathways into their routine assessment and practise.
- Gambling harm treatment providers should have greater, and regular, involvement and presence in regional multi-agency forums and meetings.



INSIGHTS

i.e. an experience or a piece of learning



RECOMMENDATIONS

i.e. a solution or a suggested change

Future practice

- Implementing a diversion scheme for those with gambling problems would meet early intervention and diversion aims, and would support different cohorts to remain outside of the criminal justice system. These pathways would be suitable in Police custody suites, L&D Services and / or community diversion providers.
- For a diversion pathway to be successful, it is vital that influential strategic and operational staff are engaged.
- Warwickshire PCC will feature gambling awareness in their upcoming commissioning specifications, which will mean onboarding providers hold a foundational understanding of gambling harms and the routes to support. This best practice should lead to more people being identified and supported for their gambling harm.

- A test and learn pilot should be developed and rolled out in Police settings and/or commissioned community services in which screening for gambling harm is embedded, referral pathways are introduced, and people are encouraged to enter gambling treatment, which will be provided as part of the pilot. This pilot should explore treatment options such as 121, group work and digital learning modules.
- Best practice, gaps in service provision, and solutions to fill those gaps should be identified through collaborative working between the APCC, the PCC's, individual police custody suites, and gambling treatment and support professionals.
- More PCC commissioning specifications should include gambling harm awareness so that commissioned services can identify, support and make onward referrals to gambling treatment services.

- Liaison & Diversion (L&D) teams receive funding to address various vulnerabilities. This framework could be used to support people affected by gambling.
- L&D will start including gambling harms in its new scope of work from 2023. Services will be informed of requirements to support those impacted by gambling harm.

- L&D should include gambling harm as a vulnerability that triggers a referral into their service.
- The L&D workforce should be upskilled on how to identify gambling harms, and how to deliver interventions.
- Treatment pathways should be established so L&D staff can refer detainees into specialised regional gambling support.

Staff welfare

- Police culture regarding gambling is itself a barrier to identification and support for detainees. As members of both a society that stigmatises gambling harm and a police force with historically punitive attitudes towards gambling harm, police staff may not positively engage in the issue and effectively identify and support detainees.

- Awareness training on gambling harms and referral pathways to treatment and support should be routinely offered to police officers, empowering their work in support of their detainees and clients. Awareness campaigns that destigmatise gambling harm should be rolled out across the police forces.
- The police force one of the UK's biggest employers, with 164,000 police officers and many other staff. Police and L&D HR teams should embed gambling harm awareness and support options for employee welfare. As part of the police's staff health and wellbeing support offer, those staff should have access to awareness campaigns destigmatising gambling harms, and offering pathways to treatment and support. Current internal HR policies should be reviewed to include support for staff experiencing gambling harms, and to minimise stigma.

GamCare's Criminal Justice and Gambling Harm Programme have a wide range of Criminal Justice resources on our website. Head to our website [here](#).

To continue this conversation, or to ask any questions, please contact Chris Walker at chris.walker@gamcare.org.uk.