



Social Impact of Gambling

Andy Todd
Counselling Manager
RCA Trust
Paisley

The RCA Trust



Our service was established in 1978 as an independent voluntary service

We aim to limit the damaging affects of problem behaviours and addictions on the individual, their families and the wider community as a whole

The methods we use include one to one counselling, education, advice, harm prevention, information and rehabilitation services

All our services are confidential, with all our staff trained to national quality assured standards

We take a non-judgmental approach to gambling

The RCA Trust (cont)



Work in partnership with The Responsible Gambling Trust, Gamcare, PFA Scotland, Money Advice Scotland, several Local Authorities throughout Scotland and the charitable sector

Not only the individual affected but family, friends, work colleagues, employers and the wider community as a whole

The problems associated with problem gambling are multi – faceted and complex.

When gambling becomes a problem, it impacts on every aspect of life.

Gambling in the UK



Gambling is a popular past time in the UK and is enjoyed by millions regularly

Over £1 Billion is spent on gambling activities per week in the UK, in fact it is closer to £1.7 Billion. (ONS and Gambling Commission)

Popular forms of gambling activities include the Lottery, scratch cards, horse racing and dog racing.

Definition of gambling



“Wagering money or something of material value on an event with an uncertain outcome with the primary intent of winning additional money and or material goods.”

Gambling is hidden and not as well recognised as drugs and alcohol. Yet causes the same problems

Gambling related harm – How big is the problem?



- The British Gambling Prevalence Survey 2010 estimated the number of problem gamblers to be 0.9% of the general population, approximately 451,000 people
- For Scotland roughly 45,000 people directly affected. X5 for those indirectly affected

Others affected include family, friends, employers, work colleagues and a range of other institutions and services



How big is the problem – (cont)

Scottish Health Survey 2012

0.7% of the population classed as being problem gamblers. Therefore, approximately 30,500 people classed as problem gamblers.

Men were more likely to be a problem gambler than women

Since the Gambling Act 2005, our service has seen a convergence of the genders across gambling activities

The Social Impact of Gambling



- Family breakdown
- Mental and Physical Health
- Criminal Behaviour
- Anti Social Behaviour and domestic abuse
- Co-morbid disorders (Alcohol and Drug Abuse)
- Finances and Debts – Banks, Pawn Shops, Pay Day Lenders and Illegal Money Lending
- Homelessness
- Suicide

The impact on people is real and can be life changing.

Case Study



Margaret was a 72 year woman who enjoyed a game of bingo. She would play the fruit machines during the break as a form of socialising with her friends. Gradually she would spend more time and money playing, until she became addicted and was playing everyday across several locations.

Margaret was able to access credit due to being a homeowner. Despite her age she was able to access £50,000 of equity from her £100,000 home. She reckoned she had spent at least £40,000 of that equity on gambling. She will be 92 years of age when she has paid off her home again.

Case study – Billy



Billy is a 39 year male, who is employed within the gambling industry. He is married with 2 kids. He gambles on roulette machines in the bookies. He moves around with work so finds it difficult to self exclude. He has been abstinent and then has lapsed several times. He admits openly that he struggles sometimes to cope.

Billy is very familiar with High Street Payday lenders and was able to gain £600 in total over the course of 3 visits to the same lender in a 90 minute gambling spree. He reported being served by the same customer advisor twice.

We recognise personal responsibility, however, this does seem excessive.

Conclusion



Gambling has a real impact on lives when it becomes a problem.

There remains a lack of understanding about the relationship between gambling and pay day lending.

We have to formulate and deliver a fully integrative approach, utilising a bottom – up and top - down approach.

Contact details



Andy Todd

RCA Trust

Mirren House

Back Sneddon Street

Paisley

PA3 2AF

Telephone no. – 0141 887 0880

Email – atodd@rcatrust.org.uk