Leading gambling addiction services unite to offer more help for those struggling this Christmas

Thursday 17 December, 2020

- ***TalkBanStop*** *campaign launches as a 12-month pilot to offer three free tools to help people stop gambling – support via GamCare's National Gambling Helpline, Gamban blocking software and GAMSTOP self-exclusion.*
- *Christmas can be a tough time for people struggling to control their gambling – the pandemic has also increased common risks of isolation and money worries, but finding help is easier than ever before*
- *Former gambling addict and successful footballer Michael Chopra in conversation with fellow ex-gambler to highlight how recovery journey starts*

Online gamblers struggling to control their gambling this Christmas are being offered a trio of services for free to help kick-start their recovery journey. The **TalkBanStop** campaign is backed by ex-footballer and recovering gambling addict Michael Chopra.

The Christmas period poses a heightened risk to those struggling with gambling, and GamCare warns that the pandemic has only increased common risk factors including isolation, boredom or money worries.

It's good to talk

In a new film, ex-Footballer Michael Chopra, 36, spoke with Chris Gilham, 39, about their shared experiences of gambling addiction and what gave them hope on their recovery journey.

Both men fall into the 35-44 age range, which has the highest proportion of people who gamble online.[1]

During the discussion, Michael Chopra spoke of the peer to peer support he received from a former manager. He said: "*I never ever let anything get in the way of my football but as soon as the whistle went, my mind just suddenly changed and all of a sudden I was thinking about gambling.*

"Then I decided to speak to Roy Keane, he was brilliant. He really took his time to speak to me and took time out of training. It was Roy that really got me the help that I needed.

"There is light at the end of the tunnel. When you're going through a dark phase you don't think that. If you're struggling like I was and need support, head to TalkBanStop.com"

On starting his recovery journey, Chris Gilham added:
". It wasn't until my mum said to me 'he's ready' and that it really struck me as she knew I was ready. Until I was ready, it wasn't going to change.

"I was then able to tell my wife that I needed help and I that was going to change. That was over three years ago and I haven't gambled since that day."

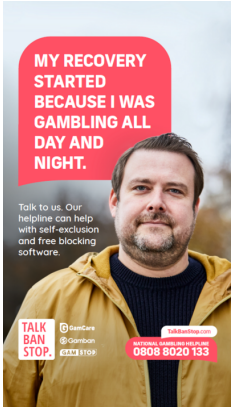
Giving space for hope

The 12-month pilot will highlight the benefits of combining free support and practical tools in helping people to stop gambling.

The three key steps and supporting tools are:

- **Talk:** By speaking to one of **GamCare's** trained advisers on the National Gambling Helpline (over the phone or via live chat), gamblers and their loved ones can access expert information, advice and support, including arranging access to peer-to-peer support or an NHS referral if appropriate.
- **Ban: Gamban's** software blocks access to thousands of global gambling sites and apps, and can be installed on up to 15 devices - including those in the household. This would usually cost £24.99 per year, and is now being offered free to anyone contacting the Helpline.
- **Stop: GAMSTOP** self-exclusion prevents access and creation of new gambling accounts with all online gambling operators across the UK, free of charge. Users will also stop receiving marketing messages from gambling businesses.

Media:



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The **TalkBanStop** web address will take users straight to where they can contact each service, as well as offering additional tips on how to block gambling through banks.

Anna Hemmings, CEO at GamCare, says: *"After a particularly challenging year when many have been impacted by job losses and reduced income, Christmas can be a difficult time for those struggling to stop gambling.*

*The **TalkBanStop**. campaign sends a message of hope to those who are struggling with gambling but don't know how to start their recovery journey, by providing free tools and support that give breathing space to reflect on what's going on.*

The first step is simply talking to someone. There is support out there to help you make empowered choices about your recovery, and we urge anyone suffering in silence to be inspired by Michael and Chris. They show it can happen to anyone, but if they can get through it, so can you."

Neil McArthur, Gambling Commission CEO, said: *"Christmas can be a challenging time for those experiencing gambling related harm so we are particularly pleased with this collaborative approach to offer joined up and comprehensive services to consumers.*

"We are also happy to approve funding of the blocking software pilot and evaluation element of this work through the distribution of regulatory settlement money to properly identify what works."

With just one call, gamblers will be helped on their road to recovery. These three services working together will offer greater protection to those who want to stop gambling, as well as giving gamblers the space to reflect and concentrate on their recovery over the Christmas period, with specialist support.

To find out more, visit **www.talkbanstop.com**

-ENDS-

For more information contact katy.davies@23red.com or call 07535135663

Notes to editors

To download the mp4 Talk.Ban.Stop video with Michael Chopra (90 seconds) visit https://we.tl/t-Fof6sbtahT or embed from Youtube https://youtu.be/MKTqx5Z4sdE. Please note embargo of 00:01 Thursday 17 December.

About TalkBanStop

www.talkbanstop.com

- This partnership brings together a combination of tools and support that will help those suffering from gambling harm.
- Three leading organisations who offer vital support to those suffering from gambling harm have come together to offer a free combination of:
    - Support and treatment via **GamCare's** National Gambling Helpline, available on Freephone **0808 8020 133** or via web chat
- **Gamban** blocking software that can block gambling sites and apps on up to 15 devices
- **GAMSTOP** registration – the national online self-exclusion scheme for UK gambling sites, blocking direct marketing too
- This partnership is between GamCare, GAMSTOP and Gamban, has been partly funded by a regulatory settlement approved by the Gambling Commission for 12 months, and aims to provide tools and support which can help someone stop gambling and maintain a successful recovery from gambling related harms. The 12-month pilot is being evaluated by Ipsos MORI.
- Callers to the National Gambling Helpline will be offered a free Gamban blocking software licence, which normally costs £24.99 per year, which can be installed on up to 15 devices (phones, tablets and laptops/PCs).
- Callers will also be signposted to register for GAMSTOP – the free national online self-exclusion scheme preventing people from accessing all licensed gambling sites in the UK. This service is already offered free of charge.
- Everyone registering for GAMSTOP will also be able to connect straight through to the National Gambling Helpline over the phone or via web chat for additional support and a free Gamban licence. Likewise, Gamban users will also be signposted to register with GAMSTOP.
- User will be able to choose a free Gamban licence to block their devices for between 6 months and five years, which can match their period of self-exclusion via GAMSTOP. GAMSTOP remains

free for as long as users need it.
- We believe that the combination of software, self-exclusion and support gives those struggling to control their gambling the tools and treatment they need to live a full and rewarding life.

This collaborative partnership will raise awareness of all these services, and the benefits of combining practical tools with support and treatment in tackling gambling related harms and sustaining recovery. Information on the importance of using more than one practical tool – including self-exclusion, blocking software and bank gambling blocks – will also feature on all sites.

About GamCare

- GamCare operates the National Gambling Helpline on Freephone 0808 8020 133 or via web chat at www.gamcare.org.uk, providing information, advice and support for anyone affected by problem gambling, funded by GambleAware. Advisers are available 24/7, every day of the year.
- GamCare provides a range of free treatment and support services to anyone affected by gambling harms across England, Scotland, Wales, as well as a moderated online Forum and daily chatrooms so that people can speak to others experiencing similar issues and seek support. Find out more at www.gamcare.org.uk
- GamCare is part of the National Gambling Treatment Service, funded by GambleAware.

About Gamban

Gamban is designed to prevent access to gambling sites and apps on devices. When the software is downloaded it will stop gambling apps working and will prevent web browsers accessing gambling sites. Gamban is as difficult to remove by the user as the respective operating systems will allow.

In 2018, GambleAware commissioned independent research to evaluate the effectiveness of blocking software and to compare existing products. Gamban emerged the most effective. Gamban was also awarded Software Rising Star Award at the EGR B2B Awards in 2018, and in 2019 won RegTech Provider of the Year at The GamblingCompliance Global Regulatory Awards.

About GAMSTOP

GAMSTOP is an online self-exclusion scheme, operated by the National Online Self-Exclusion Scheme Ltd, an independent not-for profit company.

From March 31st, 2020 it has been a licensing condition for all online gambling operators to be members of GAMSTOP and anyone who registers with the scheme will be able to exclude themselves from all online gambling sites licensed in Great Britain. The first phase of the scheme launched in April 2108.

GAMSTOP is a free service available to all consumers resident within the United Kingdom. Users choose to exclude themselves from all online gambling sites for a specified period and once that minimum period has elapsed they remain self-excluded unless they return to GAMSTOP to ask to be removed and successfully complete the process to end their self-exclusion. Over 174,000 people have registered with GAMSTOP so far.

[1] Gambling Commission reported 29.3 percent of respondents in this group took part in a form of online gambling in the past four weeks - June 2020.

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