National Gambling HelpLine to Operate 24 Hours a Day

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The National Gambling HelpLine, operated by GamCare and funded by GambleAware, is extending its hours and will now operate 24-hours a day from the 1st October 2019.

Available via a Freephone number as well as web chat , the National Gambling HelpLine provides advice, information and support around the clock to those suffering from gambling related harm, whether their own or someone else's. In 2018/9, the National Gambling Helpline, on 0808 8020 133, received over 30,000 calls, and this figure is rising year on year.

The Gambling Commission estimates there are around 340,000 problem gamblers nationally, with up to 2 million at risk of developing a gambling issue. A wide range of gambling activities are now available throughout the night, a time when people experiencing problems may feel the most isolated. The new extended helpline hours reflect this degree of availability and will mean that expert support is available 24/7, every day of the year, to those who need it.

GamCare Advisers respond to caller's needs, giving them space to listen and explore their issues in confidence. Advisers can provide support online, by telephone and, should people want them to, they can also connect callers with local treatment services.

Anna Hemmings, CEO at GamCare, says: *"It is important that treatment and support services reflect the availability of gambling. As such, we are delighted to be able to extend the hours of operation of the National Gambling Helpline to further support those affected by gambling related harm. With the 24-hour nature of gambling, people sometimes feel at their most isolated overnight, when other support services are closed. They will now be able to reach our highly trained advisers 24 hours a day, who can offer immediate support, advice and referral to our network of treatment services nationally."*

Helen Garratt, Director of Clinical Services, says: *"GamCare provides a wide range of services to people in need, and we are very pleased that the helpline hours can now extend this support throughout the night. People can be trying hard to change their gambling, but the sheer availability of gambling options makes it a struggle. We hope that the new availability of the National Gambling Helpline will be able to match this round-the-clock activity and offer even more support."*

Marc Etches, CEO of GambleAware, says: "GambleAware is responsible for commissioning the National Gambling Helpline, which is a core element of an emerging National Gambling Treatment Service. Our priority is to keep people safe and to ensure support services are easily accessible. As such, we are pleased to be funding an extension to the helpline's operating hours, and we will evaluate its performance over time."

Tim Miller, Executive Director at the Gambling Commission, says: *"The pilot to extend the hours of the National Gambling Helpline is a very welcome step. GamCare's specialist advisers are now there if people need support at any hour of the day. This change arose out of the input of people with lived experience into research and demonstrates why that continued input is vital."*

The National Gambling Helpline will be running 24-hours a day from the 1st October.

For more information visit www.gamcare.org.uk/get-support/talk-to-us-now/

ENDS

For more information contact Catherine Sweet, GamCare Head of Marketing and Communications: catherine.sweet@gamcare.org.uk / 020 7801 7000.

GamCare – Working to minimise gambling-related harm

- 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 also provides a range of free treatment (face to face, online or over the phone) for anyone affected by problem gambling across England, Scotland and Wales, funded by GambleAware, as well as Forum and daily chatrooms so that people can speak to others

experiencing similar issues and seek support.
- GamCare's organisational strategy is available to download at www.gamcare.org.uk/publications, along with their latest Annual Review and Statistics.

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