New integrated gambling support services launches in Leeds

Wednesday 18 September, 2019

A new, fully integrated support service for people with gambling problems is launching in Leeds.

The **Leeds Community Gambling Service** is the first gambling support service of its kind and involves an ambitious collaboration between leading gambling support charity GamCare, Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (LYPFT) and Leeds City Council.

The new integrated service in Leeds is being funded by national charity GambleAware, and will form part of the wider NHS Northern Gambling Service funded by NHS England.

The NHS Northern Gambling Service will provide care for those with severe addictions, and provide treatment and support for people with additional and complex mental health conditions, impaired social functioning, and those who may present with more risk - such as a risk of suicide. Services will also support family and friends who have been impacted by gambling harms.

In Leeds local residents will benefit from additional prevention, education and treatment for gambling harm provided by GamCare. They will deliver training, outreach and prevention work across the Leeds area to ensure that other local services are aware of how gambling problems may impact their clients, as well as how they can seamlessly refer into dedicated support services. Training will also benefit local primary care and local authority staff in identifying people in need of help and support at all stages – be it before entering treatment, during or after.

GamCare and LYPFT have taken a unified approach to make sure people across the whole spectrum of need are able to access the necessary help and support quickly and easily. The variety of services available will also provide organisations with much-needed insight to help continuously improve treatment for gambling problems elsewhere across the UK.

Marc Etches, Chief Executive of GambleAware says:

“Our aim is to prevent people getting into problems with their gambling, all the while making sure that those who do develop problems receive fast and effective treatment and support. We are delighted to be commissioning this new integrated service, delivered by Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust in partnership with GamCare. These new services will play a vital role in making sure those with more serious and complex needs linked to gambling, will have quick access to free, fast and effective treatment, wherever they may be. We very much look forward to seeing this clinic open and we would welcome the opportunity to potentially replicate this approach in other areas of the UK in the future”

Anna Hemmings, CEO at GamCare, says:

“A wide range of needs arise from gambling-related harms, which can impact on mental health and wellbeing and often creates a sense of isolation for those affected. The range of services we provide can significantly improve quality of life and reduce the adverse impacts of gambling.

For those affected by disordered gambling, our treatment services can offer valuable support and we’d encourage people to get in touch as early as possible, not to let problems build up and get to crisis point.

GamCare is delighted to work in partnership with the NHS to deliver these services so that we can collectively have greater impact and reduce the harms caused through gambling.”

Matt Gaskell, Consultant Psychologist & Clinical Lead for Addictions, Leeds and York Partnership Foundation NHS Trusts, says:

“Through my work in mental health and addictions treatment over the years I’ve seen the harms that problem gambling can inflict on people. I’m proud to be involved in this much needed service. It is vital that we work together to provide a range of accessible and effective services to reduce these harms.

Our services in Leeds and across the North of England will provide specialist addiction support and treatment to people affected by gambling addiction or disorder, as well as those with more complex

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mental health problems such as depression and suicidal feelings."

Local GamCare treatment partner NECA and Leeds City Council championed and showed strong leadership and enthusiasm for the new treatment service to be housed in the city. This interest, plus the commitment to work collaboratively with the NHS and voluntary sectors to deliver support, raise awareness and develop more referral routes into treatment, heavily influenced the decision to host the service in the area.

Councillor Debra Coupar, Leeds City Council Deputy Leader and executive member for communities, says:

"Research shows that 10,000 people in Leeds are affected by problem gambling. We know that problem gambling is now a public health issue which can damage people's lives, significantly affect their health and have a huge impact on families, loved ones, and communities.

"Leeds prides itself on being a compassionate city. As a council we recognise the importance of taking a partnership approach to developing services which support vulnerable people and improve the health of the poorest the fastest. These innovative gambling support services are an important step forward in providing the education, training and support which is so desperately needed."

Leeds was selected as a suitable central hub location for gambling support services across the North of England as it will complement the existing GambleAware funded NHS National Gambling Treatment Service in London.

To find help and support across Leeds now, visit www.gamcare.org.uk/leeds, or call the National Gambling HelpLine on Freephone 0808 80 20 133.

-ENDS-

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NOTES

About GambleAware:

- GambleAware is an independent charity (Charity No. England & Wales 1093910, Scotland SC049433) that champions a public health approach to preventing gambling harms – see http://about.gambleaware.org/
- GambleAware is a commissioner of integrated prevention, education and treatment services on a national scale, with over £40 million of grant funding under active management. In partnership with gambling treatment providers, GambleAware has spent several years methodically building structures for commissioning a coherent system of brief intervention and treatment services, with clearly defined care pathways and established referral routes to and from the NHS – a National Gambling Treatment Service.
- The National Gambling Treatment Service brings together a National Gambling Helpline and a network of locally-based providers across Great Britain that works with partner agencies and people with lived experience to design and deliver a system, which meets the needs of individuals. This system delivers a range of treatment services, including brief intervention, counselling (delivered either face-to-face or online), residential programmes and psychiatrist-led care.
- In the 12 months to 31 March 2019, provisional figures show that the National Gambling Treatment Service treated 10,000 people and this is projected to rise to 24,000 people a year by 2021. Helpline activity is currently running at about 30,000 calls and on-line chats per annum. GambleAware also runs the website BeGambleAware.org which helps 2.7 million visitors a year, and signposts to a wide range of support services.
- GambleAware produces public health campaigns including **Bet Regret**. A Safer Gambling Board, including representatives from Public Health England, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and GambleAware, is responsible for the design and delivery of a campaign based on

best practice in public health education. The Bet Regret campaign is being funded through specific, additional donations to the charity, in line with a commitment given to the government by the broadcasting, advertising and gambling industries.
- See https://about.gambleaware.org/prevention/safer-gambling-campaign/.

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. Currently available 8am – Midnight every day, Advisers will be available 24 hours a day from 1st October 2019.
- 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.

About Leeds Community Gambling Service:

- The Leeds Community Gambling Service offers a range of support which can be provided face-to-face, online or over the phone. The service can support you if you are a gambler, or if you are affected by the gambling behaviour of a family member or friend. All of our services are free of charge and completely confidential.
- Merrion House, Woodhouse Lane, Leeds, LS2 8LX | 0113 388 6466 | www.gamcare.org.uk/leeds | Mon – Fri: 9.00am - 5.00pm
- To contact the service regarding training or outreach, please email Leedscommunitygamblingservice@gamcare.org.uk

More about the NHS Northern Gambling Service

This service is run by Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. It covers theNorth East, North West, Yorkshire and the Humber and counties in the north Midlands. Its first base has opened in Leeds alongside the Leeds Community Gambling Service and there are plans for further bases in Manchester and Sunderland to open in the next six months.

Find out more about the NHS Northern Gambling Service at

www.leedsandyorkpft.nhs.uk/our-services/northern-gambling-service

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