New Partnerships to Tackle Gambling Harm for Young People Across Northern Ireland

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- *Leading UK gambling support charity can provide help to young people harmed by gambling across Northern Ireland for the first time*
- *Christmas can be a difficult period for those struggling with gambling, or being harmed by someone else's gambling – now help is easier to find than ever before*

GamCare, the largest provider of support and treatment for gambling related harms across Great Britain, has expanded its Young People's Gambling Harm Prevention Programme across Northern Ireland, and for the first time GamCare is able to provide dedicated support services for under 18s.

GamCare and the Young Gamers and Gamblers Education Trust (YGAM) are working together to deliver this evidence-based programme of education and training for young people across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Where issues with gambling are identified for young people (either their own gambling or that of a loved one), GamCare is now able to offer tailored support for under 18s via specially trained youth practitioners across the whole of the UK.

Anna Hemmings, CEO at GamCare, says: *"The expansion of our work into Northern Ireland is a fantastic step for this programme. The Young People's Gambling Harm Prevention Programme will give young people in Northern Ireland the opportunity to explore how gambling might be affecting them in a safe and trusted environment, and will give them the tools to make good decisions. GamCare is able to provide dedicated support to suit their needs, ensuring that every young person worried about gambling is listened to and fully supported.*

We know that Christmas can be very challenging time for people affected by gambling, when financial worries are top of mind, compounded this year by the pandemic and subsequent restrictions which may leave people isolated and away from their support networks. We offer support for young people and their loved ones around the clock on Freephone 0808 80 20 133, and young people can also access live chat through our dedicated site www.BigDeal.org.uk."

Gary McMichael, Chief Executive at ASCERT, says: *"We very much welcome the Young People's Gambling Harm Prevention Programme, including a dedicated young people's support service delivered by GamCare.*

The risks for young people from gambling harm is an issue of growing concern. As a charity working with alcohol and drug addiction, ASCERT are seeing more and more young people that are experiencing financial problems, and risks of addiction from gambling that add additional complications to their alcohol or substance use issues.

GamCare have provided training to our staff and this has been very helpful to ensuring that we can support these young people and connect them to the right support around their gambling or the harms they are experiencing because of a loved one's gambling."

Robbie Butler MLA, Chair of the Gambling Related Harm APG in Stormont, also recently welcomed a partnership with YGAM and Youth Work Alliance, based in Belfast, to deliver training to teachers and youth workers. Mr Butler has campaigned for new laws to help protect people from gambling related harms.

For dedicated information for young people, parents and teachers about gambling harms and how to access workshops and training, please visit www.BigDeal.org.uk

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Notes to Editors

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 gambling harms, funded by GambleAware. Advisers are available 24/7, every day of the year.
- GamCare is part of the National Gambling Treatment Service, funded by GambleAware.
- The Young People's Gambling Harm Prevention Programme is delivered in collaboration with YGAM: https://www.gamcare.org.uk/our-work/youth-outreach-programme/
- A dedicated website for young people, parents and teachers can be found at www.BigDeal.org.uk
- GamCare's Young People's Service is for anyone aged 11-18 who is worried about their own gambling or about the gambling of someone close to them. We have a dedicated team of practitioners providing safe and effective support to young people.
- Our free, flexible and confidential service is designed to ensure each young person receives the most appropriate support for them. We offer information, advice and guidance, Brief Interventions, and self-help tools, as well as structured interventions tailored to each young person's needs. We will ensure every young person worried about gambling is listened to and fully supported.
- Our free Young People Service can be accessed through:
- 0808 8020 133 – 24 hours, seven days a week
- Using live chat via BigDeal.org.uk
- YoungPeopleService@gamcare.org.uk
- We also provide guidance and support for **parents and professionals** who are worried about a young person. Professionals supporting young people, parents/carers and young people can refer into our service. Anyone who would like to contact the service can get in touch via: YoungPeopleService@gamcare.org.uk or 02020926964.
- GamCare delivers free gambling awareness workshops to young people and professionals as part of the Young People's Gambling Harm Prevention Programme. To book a workshop or find out more email: hello@bigdeal.org.uk

More information on the Northern Ireland Gambling Prevalence Survey (2016) can be found at https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/news/2016-northern-ireland-gambling-prevalence-survey-published

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