Young People's Gambling Harm Prevention Programme exceeds first-year targets despite COVID-19 impact

Thursday 28 January, 2021

Leading charities YGAM and GamCare have surpassed the first-year targets for their joint Young People's Gambling Harm Prevention Programme, despite significant challenges imposed by the continuing COVID-19 pandemic.

The four-year national programme is the largest of its kind and aims to deliver evidence-led education, training and support to young people across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as collaborating with other organisations supporting young people across Scotland.

Figures released by YGAM show that the education charity trained 2,906 practitioners in 2020 (up from its original target of 2,592). With this training, those practitioners are expected to reach an impressive 184,700 young people to provide vital educational on gambling and gaming.

In addition, GamCare have trained 4,185 professionals who work with young people and delivered educational workshops directly to 3,947 young people. With just over two months left of their first year of delivery, GamCare has already exceeded training targets by almost 3,000 people to date.

GamCare has also set up the first national young people's support service, offering information, advice and support tailored specifically to the needs of young people impacted by their own gambling or that of a loved one. Young people are now able to access this service online or over the phone, with support available around the clock.

The Young People's Gambling Harm Prevention Programme has been established in all regions of England and Wales, as well as expanding education and support services for young people to Northern Ireland for the first time. Both YGAM and GamCare work closely with other agencies providing education in Scotland.

In response to the tests of a global pandemic, both YGAM and GamCare accelerated the digital transformation of their resources to enable them to deliver their workshops online throughout successive lockdowns. These resources continue to be available to anyone that works with young people, including teachers and youth workers. GamCare has also developed an eLearning resource for young people, which can be made available as part of blended learning packages. YGAM Founder and Chief Executive Lee Willows said: *"I am extremely proud of the enormous success we have already seen from the programme. As 2020 unfolded, we saw the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as an invitation to develop YGAM's digital capacity in all areas of our work. Although this was done as a response to the crisis, the effect has been significantly advantageous for our education programme. Now that the delivery is entirely digital, we have removed enormous barriers which may have prevented some individuals and organisations from taking part. The result is a truly national programme, which is set to continue its fantastic growth in the following years."*

Anna Hemmings, Chief Executive of GamCare said: "*Both GamCare and YGAM believe passionately that education on the risks associated with gambling and gaming is an essential part of preventing harms for young people, and increasing their digital resilience overall.*

I am particularly proud of the team considering the circumstances in which this has been achieved. The pandemic has proved a huge challenge, yet our teams have continued to deliver great engagement with professionals and young people. We've also developed a dedicated support service tailored to the needs of young people.

For any young person worried about gambling, our service is free, flexible, and confidential, and will ensure that each young person receives the most appropriate support for them."

Linda Scollins- Smith, Head of the National Education Programme for YGAM, said: *"We are delighted with the progress over the last year. Our success is testament to the excellent team - most of whom began during lockdown - and the relationships we have with our partner schools and organisations.*

We were able to adapt quickly to move our offer online, ensuring we provide teachers and professionals with the tools to inform, educate and safeguard young people in relation to gaming and gambling and the

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potential risks. We've had overwhelming support from those we've trained, and we will be working together to ensure children and young people have the support and information needed."

The Young People's Gambling Harm Prevention Programme is fully assured and evidence-led, with YGAM and GamCare committed to continual evaluation to ensure that it is providing the most up-to-date and valuable information possible to practitioners.

By 2024, YGAM and GamCare aim to work with a minimum of 13,492 practitioners and partner organisations, ensuing that every young person aged 11-19 has at least one session of gambling awareness education during their secondary/further education.

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Notes to Editors

For further information on the Young People's Gambling Harm Prevention Programme, please see the following article:

The Young Gamers and Gamblers Education Trust (YGAM) is a national charity with a social purpose to inform, educate, safeguard, and build digital resilience amongst young and vulnerable people. Helping them to make informed decisions and understand the consequences around gambling and gaming. More info can be found at www.ygam.org/about

- GamCare is the leading provider of information, advice and support for anyone affected by gambling harms. GamCare is part of the National Gambling Treatment Service, funded by GambleAware.
- The Young People's Gambling Harm Prevention Programme is supported by members of the Betting and Gaming Council (BGC) and is delivered in collaboration with YGAM. 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 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.

YGAM and GamCare have set out the following shared aspirations for the Young People's Gambling Harm Prevention Programme:

1. All 11–19-year-olds in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will receive at least one session of

gambling awareness education during their secondary/further education.
2. All teachers, youth workers and other professionals working with young people should have access to information about the risks of gambling, how to identify gambling related harm in young people and where help can be sought.
3. All parents and families have access to information about young people's gambling, how to keep young people safe, and where they can be referred for help and support.
4. All young people (aged 18 and under) who are 'at risk' of or have developed a problem with gambling, or are affected by the gambling of someone close to them (e.g., a parent), have access to age-appropriate treatment.

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