

NATIONAL GAMBLING TREATMENT SERVICE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN – RESEARCH UPDATE

The National Gambling Treatment Service works with, and alongside, the National Health Service. It is free at the point of delivery, provides telephone, online and face-to-face treatment for individuals and groups, across Great Britain. Self-referrals through the 24/7 National Gambling Helpline are the main route for accessing the treatment, which is provided by a network of NHS trusts and voluntary sector organisations.

The NGTS awareness campaign commenced in Spring 2020 with 4 bursts of media targeting men and one specifically targeting women running to date – in newspapers, magazine, out-of-home, radio and online. While aiming for broad awareness, the core audience is high risk gamblers (PGSI rating 8+) already experiencing significant harms. The campaign platform is based on the insight of the all-consuming nature of gambling ('When you are there but not there') and the reassurance that the NGTS can help people experiencing gambling harms start to regain control after one telephone conversation or online chat.

Despite a relatively low share of voice (campaign weight running at under 1% of total gambling operator advertising spend), the campaign has consistently delivered high levels of awareness with regional upweights in areas of high prevalence¹.

Research has been conducted after each burst of media activity to help assess campaign response².

Key findings show the value of a consistent long-term approach to building awareness (figures relate to the male targeted campaign and research samples unless otherwise indicated):

- The need for the NGTS and building awareness of the service continues to grow – as witnessed not just by increasing contacts but also growing numbers of high-risk gamblers saying that they are gambling more as a result of the pandemic (from 24% in May 2020 to 38% in August 2021).
- The campaign is well-targeted, with impact highest amongst its core target audience of high risk male gamblers (PGSI 8+) and 'affected others' (partners, family and friends negatively affected by the gambling of others).

¹ Based on the Treatment Needs and Gap Analysis research and interactive map of gambling prevalence PGSI 1-7 and PGSI 8+ at local authority level across Britain.

² The research was conducted online by Ipsos MORI; with nationally representative samples of regular male gamblers aged 16-44 in May 2020 (600), August 2020 (600), February 2021 (1000) and August 2021 (1000) – plus 1000 regular female gamblers in March 2021.

- The latest campaign tracking study conducted by Ipsos Mori shows that total awareness of the service now stands at 40% of all high-risk male gamblers, and 50% of the important audience of affected others, many of whom also contact the National Gambling Treatment Service (NGTS) for help and support.
- Campaign recognition continues to grow wave on wave, reaching 74% amongst high-risk male gamblers in August 2021, and 79% amongst affected others. Increasing numbers of high-risk gamblers agree that they would contact the NGTS as a first step if they had concerns about their gambling – 60% in August 2021, up from 47% in May 2020.
- There is a notable rise in the number of high-risk male gamblers attempting to change their gambling behaviour who say they have used the National Gambling Treatment Service (NGTS) or National Gambling Helpline (34% in August 2021). 33% of those not yet attempting to change their behaviour say that they would be likely to contact the service if they did.
- This is against a background of increasing demand for help and support – with calls (and online chats) to the National Gambling Treatment Service’s National Gambling Helpline up 41%³ in the past 2 years (year to 31 March 2021 versus year to 31 March 2019).
- The latest campaign was upweighted in London and the Midlands after research⁴ revealed these regions had higher rates of high-risk gamblers⁵. This additional activity resulted in 40% of all male gamblers aged 16-44 in London saying they would be likely contact the NGTS or the National Gambling Helpline should they need support on gambling-related problems, compared to 31% across all Great Britain.

We will continue to update on the NGTS awareness and campaign impacts. From November 2021 measurement of this will be integrated into GambleAware’s ongoing Annual GB Treatment & Support survey.

³ GamCare annual statistics, 2020/21

⁴<https://www.begambleaware.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/treatment-needs-and-gap-analysis-in-great-britain-a-synthesis-of-findings1.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.begambleaware.org/gambleaware-gb-maps>