

**REVIEW OF THE OF THE YOUNG GAMBLERS' EDUCATION TRUST
GAMBLING AWARENESS PROGRAMME**

FINDINGS FROM PHASE 1

Report by Dr Margaret Carran

Correspondence address:

City Law School,

City, University of London

Northampton Square

London EC1V 0HB

Margaret.Carran.1@city.ac.uk

1.1.Purpose of the study

This report discusses findings from Phase 1 of the evaluation of the gambling awareness programme developed by the Young Gamblers' Education Trust (known as YGAM). YGAM is a UK based charity, incorporated in compliance with the Charities Act 2006, that was founded in order to 'inform, educate and safeguard young people against problematic gambling and social gaming'¹. The study consists of two phases. Phase one, reported in this paper, has been facilitated by the YGAM and analysed by the author of this review on a pro-bono basis. It aimed to review the strength and weaknesses of the programme as identified by the participants of the 'teach the trainer' workshops supported by the views of researchers with expertise in gambling – related studies. Phase two will proceed to evaluate the impact of the programme on the ultimate target group, i.e., minors and persons who may be vulnerable to gambling related harm.

1.2.Introduction

The liberalisation of the gambling industry in the United Kingdom facilitated by the Gambling Act 2005 led to a substantial expansion of opportunities to engage in gambling in land based venues and on the Internet via computers, portable laptops, smart-phones and tablets. As of March 2016, the number of land based gambling venues in the UK exceeded 10,000 (8,809 betting shops, 1,721 arcades and 599 bingo halls), in addition to the plethora of online gambling websites that originate from UK and from other jurisdictions². The economic benefits of gambling make it very attractive for prospective governments to position it alongside other forms of leisure activities but this choice carried consequences that extended well beyond a mere proliferation of the market – driven gambling offer. The Gambling Act represented a major shift in legislative policy that stopped viewing gambling as a 'vice' and started treating

¹ YGAM Briefing Paper, 'Minimising Gambling – Related Harm Among Young People'

² Gambling Commission, 'Gambling statistics paint picture of gambling in Great Britain' (30 June 2016)

it as a legitimate form of adult entertainment. This represents an important feature in the ‘normalisation’ effect that subtly but invariably alters how gambling is perceived by the society as whole. While the increase of gambling opportunities has not, as yet, caused a material increase in the overall participation rates³ and the rates of problem gambling appears to be falling⁴, the attitudes towards gambling amongst young people (16 to 24 years old and 25 and 34 years old) were more positive in comparison to other age group categories⁵. This may lead to gambling becoming attractive to wider groups of populations than it has historically been the case or while it may not affect the absolute numbers of gamblers, it may increase the intensity of gambling engagement amongst the traditional players. It may also reduce societal restraints that previously used to limit gambling engagement⁶ or may undermine the development of such restraints amongst the current generation of youth. Over time, this may lead to more people finding themselves vulnerable to the risk of developing a gambling disorder or may cause problem gamblers to experience their issues more intensively and be less able to overcome their problems. The third licensing objective of the Gambling Act that ‘children and other vulnerable persons should not be harmed or exploited by gambling’⁷ was inserted to minimise the potential risks associated with the policy change. However, the proliferation of gambling opportunities, no longer controlled by the previously applicable demand test, coupled with regular stimulation by commercial advertising and incentive to start gambling have not been matched by a commensurate increase in initiatives designed to counterbalance commercial influence.

With the exception of children that have been singled out as vulnerable by the legislation itself, the Act does not define who is or may be vulnerable to gambling related harm. A child is

³ Gambling Commission, ‘Gambling Participation in 2016: behaviour, awareness and attitudes’ (February 2017)

⁴ Health Survey for England 2012, Scotland 2016 and Welsh Gambling Prevalence Survey 2016

⁵ Ibid (n 3)

⁶ J Orford, ‘Gambling in Britain: the Application of Restraint Erosion Theory’ (2012) 107 *Addiction* 2082

⁷ Gambling Act 2005, s 1(c)

statutorily defined as anyone under the age of 16 years old. Despite significant variations between individuals and high rates of natural recovery rates⁸, it has never been seriously disputed that children are in need of specific protection. This stems from their natural limitations in cognitive abilities to understand and to protect themselves from risks associated with any potential hazardous behaviour. Accordingly, the Act's starting premise is to prevent children from being able to access the majority of commercial gambling by criminalising gambling licensees who invite, cause or permit children to gamble on prohibited forms⁹. Despite this criminalisation, children continue to be able to access gambling either by themselves or due to the assistance of a parent, guardian or an older friend. According to the 2016 Gambling Commission's data¹⁰, 16% of children aged between 11 and 15 years old gambled with their own money in the week preceding the survey with 8% gambling in commercial setting. 3% of children gambled online with their own money, 6% played online using their parents online gambling account and 9% accessed free to play 'demo' games. Despite not even reaching the legal age for gambling, 0.4% of children have been identified as experiencing problems with the gambling as identified using the modified DSM-IV-MR-J criteria. Further 1.2% have been categorised as being at risk of developing gambling problems and a further 10.2% were deemed to be social gamblers. Other groups of vulnerable persons are less definitive but it is also generally undisputed that young persons, who are statutorily defined as 16 and 17 years old and young adults (typically defined within the literature as those under the age of 24) also fulfil the criteria of being at a higher risk of developing gambling related problems that it is the case with adults. The Health Survey for England and Scotland

⁸ A Blaszczynski 'and others', 'Operator-Based Approaches to Harm Minimisation in Gambling: Summary, Review and Future Directions' (RGT 2014)

⁹ Gambling Act 2005, s 46, but exception exists. Children are able to gamble, amongst others, on Category D gaming machines, some forms of lotteries and some forms of non-commercial and domestic betting and gaming.

¹⁰ Gambling Commission, 'Young People and Gambling 2016, a research study amongst 11 and 15 year olds in England and Wales' (November 2016)

and the Welsh Problem Gambling Prevalence Survey and the previous national gambling prevalence surveys consistently identified 16 to 24 and 24 to 34 age groups as being at the highest risk of developing gambling related problems in comparison to other age categories. Young persons are also not allowed to legally engage in most forms of gambling except playing on the Category D gaming machines, non-commercial and domestic betting, lotteries, scratchcards and football pools but their actual participation is difficult to assess due this age group being treated jointly with the 18 to 24 age category by the Health Surveys and the Welsh Gambling Prevalence Studies. According to the same Gambling Commission's report of February 2017, overall, young people's participation (16-24 and 25 – 36) was lower than those in the older group range, but they have seen the largest increases in engagement¹¹ from 33% in 2015 to 38% in 2016 for 16 to 24 years old and 38% in 2015 to 48% in 2016 for 25 to 34 years old¹².

The overall level of gambling participation and at-risk gambling amongst underage players demonstrate that the regulatory measures that aim to prevent underage access are not sufficiently effective at preventing those youngsters who wish to gamble to do so and naturally, upon reaching the legal age of majority they can instantly gamble freely on all forms of commercial and non-commercial gambling. Despite that, the current regulatory initiatives focus predominantly on ensuring that the gambling industry complies with the law on underage access prevention but it has not, as yet, developed a holistic strategy to protect minors over and above the remit of statutory requirements. Similarly, the majority of interventions aimed at adults' gamblers focus on providing players with tools to control their gaming. These are typically voluntary to players and often limited in scope and rarely address the issue of desensitisation towards gambling risk and progressive embedding of gambling as a popular

¹¹ Gambling Commission, 'Gambling Participation in 2016: behaviour, awareness and attitudes' (February 2017)

¹² Ibid (n 11)

form of entertainment resulting from the regular portrayal of gambling from a commercial perspective as opposed to from public health perspective.

These factors led to an increased interest in the development and implementation of educational preventative programmes that may be delivered within schools or youth clubs or which may be designed to generically raise better awareness of gambling related issues amongst young people or the general public. Such initiatives recently became common in many jurisdictions with legalised gambling but they are typically not imposed compulsorily or driven by the governmental agencies. Instead, they are often designed and promoted by charities or socially oriented organisation and the Young Gamblers' Education Trust is one of them. Examples of educational initiatives from other jurisdictions may include 'Betting on Our Future' Programme delivered in the state of California, USA or 'Don't Bet Away Our Future' programme offered in Ontario, Canada. Such programmes can be universal or targeted¹³. Universal programmes deliver gambling – related education to generic cohorts of children, young people or the general public irrespective of the recipients' risk status or propensity to gamble. This method ensures that all children may be targeted in a systematic and structured way which represents one of the best possible facilitation of such programmes¹⁴. Targeted interventions aim to reach out to those who have been identified as being particularly vulnerable or due to specific risks that may affect them¹⁵. Despite differences in their formats and substantive variations in adopted methodologies, the ultimate aim of all such educational initiatives is to minimise gambling – related harm. The majority does not aim to influence the regulatory framework or industry behaviour in the same manner as e.g., road safety programmes delivered in schools do not aim to influence the Highway Code or current drivers'

¹³ B Keen, A Blaszczynski, F Anjoul, 'Systematic Review of Empirically Evaluated School-Based Gambling Education Programs' (2017) 33(1) Journal of Gambling Studies 301

¹⁴ Keen (n 13)

¹⁵ Keen (n 13)

behaviour. Instead, they aim to give young people relevant knowledge, tools and techniques to enable them to develop effective resilience. The underlying rationale behind their creation draws its support from the inoculation and adaption theories¹⁶ as well as from comparisons with similar programmes that are compulsorily delivered within school curriculum on alcohol, drugs or sexual education. This is hoped to make gambling less attractive to them during the minority and to allow them to learn how to protect themselves in the future if they choose to start gambling upon reaching the age of majority. They also aim to counterbalance the ‘normalisation’ of gambling that tends to erode negative attitudes towards gambling that children tend to demonstrate during early years but significantly less so during their teenage / adolescents’ years¹⁷.

The creation and promotion of such educational programmes tend to be labour intensive and expensive. The relevant charities draw their funding from public donations, donations from the gambling industry that may include grants distributed by the National Lottery and also from the use of the gift-aid scheme that all charities in the UK can benefit from. This means, that, at least some of the costs of those initiatives are borne by the general taxpayer. This brings to the fore the need to evaluate their role within the society and their actual effectiveness. Reviews of educational programmes from other jurisdictions such as Canada and Australia produced very mixed results and gave concerns that such initiatives may have a rather limited long – term impact¹⁸. Nevertheless, certain characteristics have been identified as positively contributing to effectiveness of such programmes. From administrative and design perspective, those features, identified in the context of prevention programmes relating to drug, alcohol and

¹⁶ S Planzer, H Wardle, ‘The Comparative Effectiveness of Regulatory Approaches and the Impact of Advertising on Propensity for Problem Gambling’ (RGF 2011)

¹⁷ L Lemerai, JC Chebat, ‘Resists or Comply: Promoting Responsible Gambling Among Youth’ (2013) 66 Journal of Business Research 134

¹⁸ Keen (n 13)

tobacco use but equally relevant to gambling, have been summarised by Maury et al¹⁹. Those are ‘(a) comprehensiveness of teaching materials, (b) inclusion of varied teaching methods, (c) provision of sufficient dosage, (d) being theory driven, (e) provide opportunity for positive relationships, (f) are appropriately timed, (g) are socio-culturally relevant, (h) are delivered by well – trained staff, and (i) include outcome evaluation. Other studies further identified that interactive programmes tend to be superior to more passive forms of deliveries or merely giving general advice or warnings²⁰. With regards to substantive content of the programmes, lessons learned from the drug preventative programmes offer meaningful insight. Theoretical model for drug prevention programme analysed by Vadrucchi et al²¹ incorporated learning materials based on several theories consisting of ‘social learning theory’, ‘problem behaviour theory’, ‘health belief model’, ‘reasoned action’ and ‘social norm theory’. Principles established by those theories were then used to develop the programme as a whole and influenced how individual factors, identified as contributory in the development of drug use, were mediated. Those dealt with “normative beliefs, critical and creative thinking, relationship skills, communication skills, assertiveness, refusal skills, ability to manage emotions and to cope with stress, empathy, problem solving and decision – making skills”²². While the authors were unable to assess the impact of each individual components, the combination of included factors has proved to be effective at their intended aims²³.

This study reviews the Young Gamblers’ Education Trust’s provisions and resources against this background. It aims to contribute to the continuing enhancement of the initiative that

¹⁹ Maury ‘and others’, ‘What Works in Prevention: Principles of Effective Prevention Programs’ (2003) 58(6-7) American Psychologist 449

²⁰ P Cuijpers, ‘Effective Ingredients of School-Based Drug Prevention Programs: A Systematic Review’ (2002) 27(6) Addictive Behaviour 1009; see also NS Tobbler, HH Straton, ‘Effectiveness of School – Based Drug Prevention Programs: A Meta – Analysis of the Research’ (1997) 18(1) Journal of Primary Prevention 71

²¹ S Vadrucchi ‘and others’ , ‘The Theoretical Model of the School – Based Prevention Programme *Unplugged*’ (2016) 23(4) IUHPE – Global Health Promotion 49

²² Vadrucchi (n 21)

²³ Vadrucchi (n 21)

ultimately should benefit the end users and target groups. Evaluation of the final impact remains the most important. However, the focus on the achievement of the ultimate aim misses many interim benefits that such programmes offer. Due to the multitude of factors that determine whether and how individuals develop gambling-related problems, the definitive answer to whether educational programmes are or are not effective on harm-minimisation is likely to remain elusive. But this does not mean that such programmes do not have any value as other benefits may often be as important as the ultimate goal. Such benefits arise out of raising the overall awareness of relevant issues, increasing the confidence of teachers, educators and youth community workers to address gambling – related issues as and when appropriate and contribute to the potential reduction in stigmatisation that still affects problem gambling. Such programmes often fill identified gaps in the market and allow for individual with personal interests to educate themselves. The continuing development of such programmes in accordance with currently known best practices and their ongoing evaluation and introduction of potential new approaches may eventually contribute to the establishment of the most effective methodology. This further supports the need for their existence. Accordingly, this project consists of two parts. The first one assesses interim benefits by evaluating the workshops' overall success rate and its contribution to the overall YGAM's activity and by assessing the suitability of the resources. Phase two is planned to focus on the ultimate impact.

Here it is important to note that this review does not aim to compare YGAM's initiative to other programmes that currently exists on the market as such task is outside the scope of this project.

1.3.Current study

The Young Gamblers' Education trust aim to satisfy its public benefit requirements in three independent activities. Those are: (1) peer education projects; (2) development of retail qualification in Safeguarding and Harm Minimisation through the trading subsidiary YGAM Innovations, and (3) delivery of the 'Train the Trainer' workshops and the provision of PSHE and ASDAN accredited teaching and learning materials. Peer education projects operate in conjunction with a selection of universities (currently University of Sussex, Milton Keynes College and University of East London). Year 2 and 3 students become accredited mentors who deliver a variety of gambling – awareness project to their peers. The development of retail qualification aims to help gambling operators to deliver appropriate training to their retail gambling licensees on harm minimisation. The 'Train the Trainer' workshop that is analysed in this paper, together with the provision of comprehensive teaching materials, aims to train others to enable them to deliver gambling – awareness education within their own working environments. To date, YGAM delivered 21 workshops during the study duration and trained 248 delegates. The format of the workshop follows the same patterns and includes presentation about gambling in the United Kingdom, the issues and complexities caused by the 'secret' nature of gambling addiction and the content of the YGAM curriculum as well as small group discussions and exercises on topics relating to attitudes towards gambling and social gaming, YGAM programme and available resources. The workshops are delivered by the trustees and employees of the charity. This adds personal dimension to the sessions. Available resources have been developed for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 curriculum. They offer a choice of 2 hours or 10 hours lesson plans and a wide selection of challenges that can be delivered individually or as a comprehensive gambling – awareness programme on the following topics: (1) why people gamble; (2) probability and luck; (3) the gambling industry; (4) money and debt; (5) addiction and mental health. In order to meet the educational aim of the units, each

lesson plan and a challenge under each topic is linked with a specific set of transferable skills and is referred to specific modules taught in secondary schools in the UK. The transferable skills include leadership and teamwork; learning and sharing; creating thinking and exploration; research and presentation; preparation and discussion. The quality and fit of the resources within the English National Curriculum and their compliance with educational requirements has been assured by the receipt of accreditation from the PSHE Association (Association for the Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) and by ASDAN (Curriculum Development Organisation and Awarding Body) and accordingly, these aspects do not have to be reviewed here. The original design of the workshop aimed to target teachers and instructors within the educational sectors. However, the workshop proved very popular not only to the target group but also to other professionals. In addition to teachers and educators attendees included professionals working with or being directly or indirectly involved with young or otherwise vulnerable people in the criminal justice system and the police as well as individuals working or volunteering for local authorities, safeguarding teams, football clubs, money advice clinics and others.

1.3.1. Methodology

This paper presents the results from Phase 1 of the project as outlined in the introduction. This phase aimed to review the strength and weakness of the programme as identified by the participants of the ‘Teach the Trainer’ workshop and gambling experts and to identify the extent to which the YGAM’s provisions meet participants’ expectation.

Data was collected via two surveys carried out with attendees of the workshop collected during the period of six months between November 2016 and June 2017, and via a short questionnaire completed by academic experts who carry out research in the gambling field. Ethical approval for the project was sought and granted by the City Law Schools’ Ethics Committee of the City,

University of London and the process complied with the ethical principles established by the Socio-Legal Association Code of Ethical Practice. To this effect, all participants were given full explanation of the purpose of the study and granted their informed consent. Participation was entirely voluntary. The first survey (pre-workshop) survey was administered prior to the commencement of the training session and was designed to assess participants' reasons for attending the sessions, their overall attitudes towards gambling awareness education, exposure to dealing with individual who may be affected by gambling and their self-assessment of confidence in their ability to help when needed. The second survey (post – workshop survey) was administered upon conclusion of the workshop and examined participants' assessment of the workshop content, extent to which it met their needs, their intention and plans regarding the implementation of the whole or parts of the programme within their organisational settings and potential reasons that may hinder successful implementation. The questionnaire sent to researchers asked them to give their professional opinion on the role of gambling awareness education in the context of protection of children and young people from gambling-related harm, what they view as key features that such educational programmes should have in order to ensure effectiveness, their assessment of the YGAM's material and who should be targeted with such initiatives.

The final sample reflects the views expressed by 139 responses to pre – and post – workshop surveys, 2 in-depth interviews and 4 expert opinions. In total 159 responses to pre- and post – workshop surveys have been received but 20 of them have been disregarded due to incompleteness, illegibility of comments or if participants declared connection with YGAM either by way of employment or by being a trustee for the charity. Responses that belonged to the latest group have been disregarded in order to prevent bias. Expert views reflect the opinions of four academics: two from the United Kingdom, one from Canada and one from Australia.

Given that the aim of the study was to identify strength and weaknesses of the programme, their utility in meeting the needs of the participants and their role in raising awareness of the need for gambling – awareness education with the view of continuing improvements, qualitative method has been chosen. Primary statistical evaluation is included to support the analysis but, given the aims, focus has been placed on qualitative findings as it is better equipped in providing meaningful insight into participants' views and underlying reasons behind them in comparison to quantitative approaches. The findings are reported using thematic and realist approach to ensure that the analysis of the workshop participants' and expert' opinions has not been influenced by the views of the author of the report.

1.3.2. Results

Initial motivations for attendance

Study participants' rationales for signing up and attending the workshop were very diverse but all could be classified under three broad categories. The most salient reason that motivated the majority of participants with various levels of intensity related to the need / desire to acquire better understanding and knowledge of gambling and gaming, what prompts young people to engage in these forms of entertainment, how gambling – related harms manifest themselves, and what solutions and interventions are available that may suit their individual needs. Some participants were directly exposed to individuals who experienced gambling issues while others became concerned due to more indirect factors or personal beliefs. Secondary reason that is directly interlinked with the first, can be attributed to the need to gain access to suitable materials and other resources that could be utilised within one's organisation or for personal development. The desirability of attending such training often transpired in the course of the participants' line of work or voluntary commitments. Through several comments it became apparent that many professionals found themselves in a position when they may be required

and even expected to address gambling issues or deal with individuals affected by such issues but for which adequate preparation or training was missing. This analysis has been further supported by the direct admission of many participants that their individual confidence levels at being able to help affected youngster or another vulnerable person was rather low. Of the 139 responses to the related two questions, 62 individuals stipulated that they have come across someone who experienced gambling related harm. For some participants, this represented a 'prevalent' problem amongst the particular group of young people and their families that they worked with. For example, one participant referred to meeting students whose financial anxiety and debts clearly could have been attributed to gambling or gaming and another worked with young people who purchase significant amount of scratchcards and / or use roulette machines at the bookies or play online games. However, only 12 (20%) of them were able to agree or strongly agree with the statement that they had sufficient knowledge and abilities to offer appropriate help. 32 respondents (52%) either disagreed (25, 41%) or strongly disagreed (7, 11%) and 17 (28%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposition. This means that over half of the respondent felt that may not be sufficiently well equipped to address gambling – related issues that may arise and affect them at work. More specific motives under the first two categories included, amongst others, the need to gain better understanding of:

- How to identify warning signs of gambling harm;
- How to differentiate between social gaming and real money gambling;
- How to improve knowledge and raise more awareness of associated risks, especially amongst people who may not be particularly receptive to warnings
- What support services are available and how to signpost individuals to them
- The 'real' picture of gambling and actual scale of the problems
- How gambling issues may affect family life
- What interventions are suitable and available

- What educational tools are available and how gambling topics can be introduced to young people and their families
- How to recognise trigger points and methods of avoiding them.

One participant specifically attended the training to see whether similar initiative could be developed and introduced in the Netherlands.

Study participants were not specifically asked why they have opted to attend YGAM's sessions in preference to other providers but some responses strongly alluded to the severe paucity of available training opportunities on the topic of gambling and how it does or may affect young people. This has been reiterated in the two in-depth interviews that were carried out after the collection of the surveys. When asked directly, both participants stated that to their knowledge, at the time of signing up for the training, no other, comparable opportunities existed on the market.

The demand for the workshop appeared to have been further influenced by the opinion, expressed in some of the responses, that the potential problems surrounding gambling and gaming amongst young people is a growing concern but of which there is a very little awareness. This could be attributed to the strong perception that gambling is becoming increasingly normalised. 71% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that gambling is seen as an increasingly normal recreation by youth but despite that gambling – awareness programmes are not yet compulsorily included in the PSHE education alongside discussions relating to drugs, alcohol or sexual activities. Those expressing such views were likely to attend the workshop with the intention of acquiring sufficient information and materials for further dissemination either in group sessions or via one to one counselling. Finally, some participants attended the training upon specific request or recommendation from an employer, work

manager or a colleague due to work requirements or opportunistically when an individual signed up for the workshop but later on found himself or herself unable to attend.

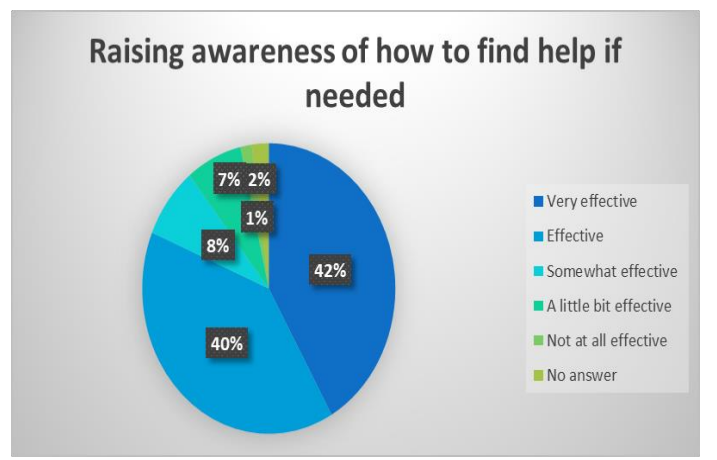
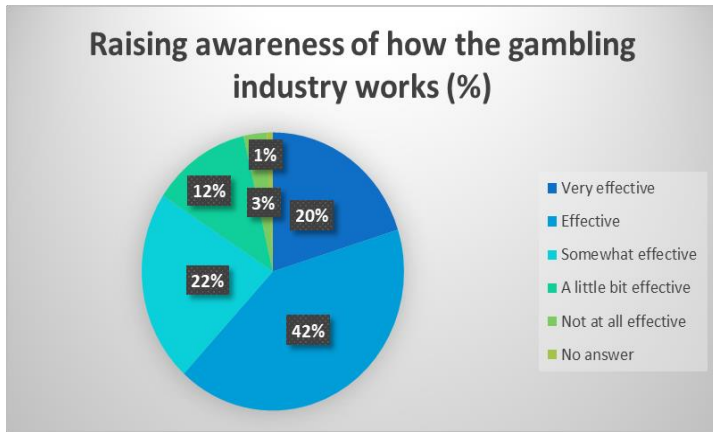
Prevalence of existing educational programmes and perceptions of their effectiveness

Survey participants were asked to specify whether their institutions currently deliver information about gambling and gambling – related harm and if so, in what format. They were also asked to indicate how important, in their view, it is for schools to have educational and prevention activities for gambling and whether they think such programmes are affective on (a) raising awareness of how the gambling industry works, (b) raising awareness of problem gambling and gambling related risks; (c) raising awareness of how to find help if needed, and (d) impacting behaviour to make your people more cautious about gambling.

A good number of respondents (38) highlighted that their organisations already offer some form of gambling related education. Seven distributes relevant information via leaflets, six via lessons or workshops either to a selection of students or to the whole cohorts, twelve delivers it during individual counselling or one to one sessions when and as appropriate and in 3 institutions a comprehensive gambling programme has already been implemented. Other individual responses included the use of signposting sheets of available services; use of own resources to minimise gambling – related harm, via forum, during work as a responsible gambling manager, or via subcontracting the delivery of such awareness sessions to a separate organisation.

Perceptions of the importance and effectiveness of such programme varied but perhaps unsurprisingly, given that the surveys were completed by voluntary attendees of the workshop, most placed at least some confidence that such programmes have a role to play within educational sector and believed in their utility. 121 respondents (88%) viewed gambling awareness education within schools as either very important (50%) or important (38%).

Participants' opinions about the programmes' effectiveness were more diverse and are represented in the following charts:



More controversially, a small but a significant number of participants was concerned that schools based gambling awareness programmes may have the unintended consequences of attracting pupils to gambling when they were previously not so attracted. 24 individuals either agreed or strongly agreed that such a consequence is a possibility and 54 respondents had no specific view on the matter (they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement).

Meeting participants' expectations and implementation plans

Participants' satisfaction with the training was assessed via the post - workshop survey that was administered upon completion of the workshop. Of the 139 responses, 107 participants stated that the workshop met their expectation completely and 26 indicated that overall it met their expectation although they felt that some improvement would be enhance their experience. Many comments rated the workshop as excellent, exemplary, fun and engaging, honest and delivered in a relaxed atmosphere. Only 4 respondents stated that the workshop only met their expectation little, 1 person was completely dissatisfied and 1 person did not answer this question. Suggested improvements related to three main themes. The most important one related to the suitability of the developed materials for use outside schools' or groups' setting. This raised the issue of some divergence between the target and actual attendees. Some participants felt that the workshop was designed primarily with teachers in mind and would benefit from some adaptation to audiences from different fields and felt that currently available resources, while beneficial for personal development, have been seen by some as not suitable to utilise during one to one counselling sessions with individual pupils or students, or other affected persons.

Second theme related to the need to include more details about available interventions, where to direct those who have been identified as suffering from gambling – related problems and how to help them in the interim period before an individual is able to access formal mental health services. Thirdly, it was felt by some that the workshop would be further enhanced by the inclusion of more resources / activities on underlying reasons as to why someone may develop a gambling addiction, better details about the gambling industry itself, and an opportunity to try out some of the gambling and gaming apps that are particularly interesting to children and young people. This would allow the participants to gain better understanding of why they may be attractive to the youngsters. Some participants expressed interest in seeing

how some of the materials have already been delivered in schools and in seeing examples of projects carried out by pupils or students. Other individual suggestions were less material and related more to administrative issues regarding the workshop format, layout or font used in the presentations, and other ancillary matters.

Reassuringly, the majority of participants had a clear intention to implement part or the whole of the programme within their organisation or to use it in supportive capacity in their professional roles. Of the 131 respondent who answered the question on how likely they were to implement the programme, 58 (44%) answered ‘very likely’, 56 (43%) ‘likely’ and only 7 (5%) thought that it was unlikely or 2 (1%) very unlikely. Most anticipated that implementation would be feasible within 6 months (57, 44%) or within one school year (42, 33%) but 32 (23%) felt that a longer period of e.g., one full calendar year or two years would be necessary. However, many participants were also conscious of the potential obstacles that may hinder their implementation plans. The main one could be attributed to constraints and limitations on funding, staff and organisation’s resources and potential difficulties into fitting the workshops into an already very busy curriculum. All organisations need to balance the variety of competing needs and it has been recognised that priority may have to be given to other issues that may be seen or perceived by the decision makers as more pressing or more important. Lack of interest from the young people themselves or their refusal to engage has been identified as another potential but important barrier as well as lack of buy-in from colleagues or managers. Some participants felt that interventions should be targeted rather than universal which meant that if gambling related issues was not seen as relevant information to the young people they would be working with, they would not include it generically.

Assessment of the resources²⁴

²⁴ The views of all experts are combined and the summary is composed of views of all of them even if individual views have been expressed only by one of the experts.

The number of workshop participants who commented on the quality of the available YGAM's resources were relatively small but those who did were generally very complementary. Resources were seen as informative, well presented, useful for group works and easy to use. Suggestions for improvements tended to be minor. For example, one recommendation related to adding some pictures that would be attractive to young people and another one referred to the need to avoid using 'big' words that may not be easily compressible to the younger cohorts. The assessment carried out by the academic researchers focused on identifying areas for improvements against the criteria deemed by them essential for effectiveness of harm prevention programmes. The requisite features, adopted cumulatively from the experts' opinions, could broadly be described as follows:

- Educational programmes must target the right predictive variables of what leads to problem gambling. Comprehensive and sound theoretical understanding of the development of the disorder is essential in identifying what is and what is incapable of being changed via education.
- Recommended resources need to be attractive to the specific target groups.
- The target audience must be allowed to take control over their own learning. They must be able to express their own feelings towards the discussed issues in order to conceptualise the associated risks by themselves. This is essential as children and young people are not typically receptive to straightforward warnings given by adults.
- The resources must aim to focus on altering cognitive variables that are capable of modification over short and long term and which can correct misconceptions regarding gambling.
- Training initiatives must deal honestly and frankly not only with the potential dangers associated with the given activity but also with the pleasures that such activities provide.

- The resources need to make clear distinctions between different forms of gambling and gaming and should include age – appropriate case studies.

Accordingly, the main highlighted strengths of the resources were the variety and comprehensiveness of learning outcomes, good range of relevant topics, accessible infographics, scope for interactive and pupils/students' led discussions, and reference to the very important topic of Facebook gambling style games. Additionally, the overall strategy of the charity to train those who may then introduce the relevant sessions to others on a universal basis has also been highlighted as an important strength. Targeting only those who may be deemed to be vulnerable is seen as inappropriate primarily due to the theoretical and practical disagreements as to what groups, if not everyone at any point in time, meet the threshold of vulnerability. Offering the space and time to discuss gambling – related issues in a non-judgmental, generic way to all young people irrespective of their risk status, may help those with problems as well as it may prompt them to recognise the symptoms in themselves and prompt them to seek help. Suggestions for improvements related to the continuing need to develop and update the course materials to ensure currency, up-to-date correctness and accuracy, relevance and the need to avoid the use of difficult phraseology or abstract examples. For instance, 'being crushed by a meteor is considerably more likely than winning lottery, with odds of 1 in 700,000' was seen as ineffective because 'no one has ever heard of anyone being crushed by meteor [but] you hear about people winning the lottery all the time. Biases of salience, representativeness, and availability must be explored to fully comprehend why we ignore such odds and continue to gamble'. Specific suggestions included 'adding more specific information (from which the educators can select) about different forms of gambling' or 'adding more explanations about addiction as a mental health issue and its consequences', 'making it more interactive with more multimedia resources, such as ThinkUKnow

campaigns'²⁵, and adding clearer expositions of the issue of enjoyment and pleasures that gambling gives in order to place the discussion into the relevant context. Secondly, it has been suggested that some of the materials' presentation should be adjusted to remove negative overtones in some portrayals (e.g., regarding family influences) and replace it with a more neutral or even positive exposition. In the context of familial influence, while it is correct to say that often parents or older relatives and friends introduce children to gambling at too early stage without giving due consideration to the risks, familial influence often have the opposite, highly protective effects. Finally, the current underlying concepts that underpin existing resources represents the current understanding of preventative education but existing methods have been proven to be largely ineffective. Nevertheless, educational methodology that permits young people to discuss issues and take informed choices compares better to programmes that rely exclusively on encouraging abstinence such as some that are carried out in Canada.

All agreed that educational programmes play a beneficial role in the overall efforts to help young people learn how to protect themselves. They enable them to learn important skills, gain accurate awareness of the nature of gambling and the gambling industry, and to modify their potential misconceptions. They also represent an important positive influence that may be particularly important if other influences that the young person may be exposed to are more negative. Most importantly, they give your people the tools to make their own, individual choices. What those subsequent choices will ultimately be made, is essentially outside the scope of what education can achieve.

1.3.3. Discussion

Evaluation of effectiveness of any awareness or prevention programme is permeated with difficulties and gambling initiatives succumb to the same issues as well. Multitudes of variables

²⁵ <https://www.thinkunow.co.uk>

that contribute to the development of gambling – related problems, conceptual and theoretical classification difficulties of vulnerability coupled with lack of necessary association between being vulnerable and actually developing gambling disorder mean that robust and accurate assessment of long term impact on harm minimisation remains elusive. However, interim benefits such as raising overall awareness, contributing to testing and evaluating existing approaches and satisfying the expectations of those who feel the need to enhance their knowledge on a given topic are more susceptible of measurement and evaluation. They are equally important as the ultimate aim and should not be disregarded as they also provide important insight into the utility or lack of specific programmes. To this effect, Phase 1 of the review has been able to establish that the YGAM’s initiative has filled in an important gap on the market. Until recently²⁶, there was a relative paucity of training opportunities for those outside the gambling sector but a real need and appetite for their existence. Such training needs to strike a delicate balance between providing the relevant information in an accessible format without making it overly complex or burdensome. The motivations for attending the course varied but broadly all related to the need to be better prepared for addressing issues that have largely been neglected, from the educational point of view, prior to the introduction of the Gambling Act 2005. The study confirmed that teachers and educators’ confidence in dealing with gambling – related issues would benefit from further enhancement. This is unsurprising. Studies in other jurisdictions, (e.g., Canada) also identified that professionals working with minors often feel less confident to help a pupil with a gambling problem compared to, for example, an alcohol problem²⁷. Some participants of the workshops also demonstrated that they were not themselves immune to misconceptions about the prevalence of gambling and problem gambling amongst young people. Through the medium of the ‘Train the Trainer’

²⁶ Now, new programme has been developed through the GambleAware

²⁷ JL Derevensky ‘and others’, ‘Teacher Awareness and Attitudes Regarding Adolescents Risky Behaviours – Is Adolescent Gambling Perceived to be a Problem?’ (2014) 30(2) J Gamb Stud 435

workshop YGAM helps those who are concerned about gambling issues or who come across individuals suffering from gambling related problems to be better equipped with the relevant knowledge and understanding of the topic and help them with being better prepared to offer assistance or helpful advice, when required. The vast majority of workshop participants were entirely satisfied, clearly indicating that the workshop succeeded in striking the required balance and met the expectation of the attendees. The YGAM's marketing strategy and extensive availability of the workshop also ensure the programmes' popularity and wide reach. While this may be stating the obvious, it is worth highlighting that preventative programmes have little utility if there is only a very small number of those who can implement them to the general cohorts of pupils and students. As gambling awareness education is not compulsory within the PHSE curriculum and no mandatory training is being provided, such programmes have to be able to reach out to a wide range of professionals and the YGAM's workshop has been proved popular to a many people working in different sectors. The initiative also teaches educators and youth workers how to deliver the programme and provides them with bespoke materials. This is a critical aspect that satisfies one of the key characteristics identified previously as a necessary pre-requisite effectiveness of any preventative programme; i.e., 'well-trained staff'²⁸. However, the intended target group of the training would benefit from further clarification. Current design primarily caters for educators and teachers in secondary schools as per their primary intention but this no longer corresponds to the actual attendees. This require reviewing. The format of the training, i.e., a wide selection of 2 – hour or 10 – hour interactive challenges that pupils / students can own themselves corresponds well to the 'best practice' requirements of interactivity and the use of a variety of teaching methods. The resources cover a selection of relevant topics with different links to curriculum and a good range of learning outcomes. However, the theoretical basis that underpins the materials is not

²⁸ Keen (n 13)

easily discerned from the resources themselves. The examples of challenges appeared to have been substantially influenced by the problem behaviour²⁹ and social norm theories³⁰. Some evidence also emerged of reference to the ‘social learning’³¹ principles and to the health belief model³² but their respective weighting and overall coherence could not have been determined. In the context of implementation plans, workshop participants were clearly conscious of the potential obstacle that may prevent them from being able to introduce the challenges to pupils or students on a regular and ongoing basis. While identified obstacle varied, time and financial limitations as well as competing priorities appeared to have been the most significant. Until gambling education becomes compulsory, it is likely that the majority of the schools will have to focus their attention and priorities to other obligatory initiatives such as ‘Prevent’. This means that regulatory or governmental interventions may have to be necessary before gambling – awareness education becomes more universal.

1.4. Conclusion and recommendations

This report discussed findings from Phase 1 of the evaluation of the Young Gamblers’ Education Trust’s programme. The YGAM is a young charity that has been established in response to identified lack of training opportunities or easily accessible non-technical and non-commercial information regarding gambling as a whole and gambling related harm. The trustees’ and employees’ strive to continually evaluate and enhance their training and available resources, their desire to create a highly effective product and a genuine willingness to learn and improve is highly commendable. Their workshops met a large variety of expectations of attendees and encouraged many individuals to further disseminate what they have learned.

²⁹ S Vadrucci ‘and others’, ‘The Theoretical Model of the School – Based Prevention Programme *Unplugged*’ (2016) 23(4) IUHPE – Global Health Promotion 49

³⁰ HW Perkins, AD Berkowitz (1986) ‘Perceiving the Community Norms of Alcohol Use Amongst Students: Some Research Implications for Campus Alcohol Education Programming’ (1986) 21 Int J Addiction 961

³¹ A Bandura, ‘Social Learning Theory’ (1977) Eaglewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall

³² Vadrucci (n 29)

Those are highly positive features of the initiatives. As with any new venture, it is unsurprising that this review identified areas and possible suggestions for improvements which would allow for further refinement of the initiative before Phase 2 of the evaluation commences.

Recommendations:

Firstly, it is recommended that the purpose of the workshop is clarified. It has been designed with the primary intention of being delivered to teachers and educators but it has proved very popular to other groups of professionals working in different industries. It would be beneficial to develop a sub-type of the training to better cater to those who simply want to acquire better understanding of gambling related issues or those who primarily work with children and young people or their families on a one – to – one basis rather than in groups. Existing workshop should focus on training teachers and educators more intensively on how to deliver the overall programme within schools' curriculum. Directly related to this is the second recommendation that suggests expanding the portfolio of existing resources to materials that are suitable for use directly or as a reference point during one – to – one counselling or advice sessions with persons who may be affected by gambling problems. Current resources have been designed for universal group – based programme but they are not easily convertible for use on an individual basis. This would likely secure an ongoing appeal of the training to a wide range of professionals. The workshop could also be extended to include more sessions or exercises on the underlying causes of gambling disorders, information on available interventions to which those that already developed problem gambling may be referred to and resources on symptoms' spotting. Thirdly, the materials need to be regularly reviewed to ensure that they continue to be current, accurate, relevant and age appropriate. Words that are overly sophisticated and abstract concept should be avoided as they are largely ineffective and existing challenges should be supplemented by those that would allow pupils / students to explore not only the negative aspects of gambling but also their positive (fun and enjoyment) elements. All units should be

overly linked to specific variables that they aim to moderate and those should be clearly underpinned by relevant theoretical and conceptual framework to ensure that the suggested challenges are indeed effective at modifying the intended variable. Finally, regular evaluation of the programme should be carried out internally in a systematic way to ensure ongoing currency and relevance of the initiative.

1.5. Limitations

Study participants consisted of those who voluntarily signed up to gambling – awareness workshops. It is accordingly likely that those individuals would have been positively predisposed to such forms of training. This does not undermine the results as it was clear that despite the inherent predisposition participants reviewed the workshop critically and offered constructive suggestions. There was no risk of bias that could be attributed to academic researchers who commented on the materials.

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