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| Integration of Gambling Support Provision within County Durham Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service |
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**Context**

As part of our contract extension for our County Durham Drug and Alcohol Service provision, service commissioners, Durham County Council, have asked us to consider how we can incorporate support for gambling addiction within our service offer. This integrated offer would likely need to include;

* Improving awareness of gambling and gambling’s co-morbidity with drug and alcohol addiction within the service team
* Integrating identification of gambling issues within the service’s assessment and review processes
* Direct provision of brief intervention style support for service users upon identification of need (provision of more comprehensive interventions would need further consideration and mapping)
* Effective referral pathways with providers of specialist gambling support.

On a wider organisational perspective for Humankind, provision of gambling support is also an area of interest for other Public Health Commissioners and ultimately strengthens our multi-thematic offer to better meet the needs of those we work with, their loved ones and communities.

**North East Service Provision**

Within the North East region there are two main sources of gambling support/treatment; NECA’s Gambling Advice and Services (in partnership with GamCare) and the NHS (Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust) Northern Gambling Service. Both are supported by a comprehensive online offer provided largely by GamCare.

**NECA Gambling Advice and Services**

Delivered in partnership with GamCare, NECA offer free support for gamblers and their friends/ families. Their offer includes “a range of short and longer term treatment options either over the phone or face to face across the North East and North Yorkshire”.

Contact with the service is very much promoted as being via a Sunderland based telephone line – 0191 5623309, listed as NECA’s Gambling Hub located on John Street in Sunderland city centre. There is also a generic email address provided – gamcare.referrals@neca.co.uk. More local venues across the North East aren’t listed within NECA’s gambling services website page but are included in their area offices menu;

* Newcastle – New Bridge Street
* Sunderland – John Street
* South Tyneside – Beach Road
* County Durham – Shakespeare Hall, North Road
* Middlesbrough – St, Mary’s Centre, Corporation Road
* Leeds – Merrion House, Merrion Way (Leeds Community Gambling Service’s base)
* York – no address listed

All services are described as being available Monday to Friday, 9.30am – 4.30pm with late appointments available on request. As exact address details aren’t provided for local services, initial contact is made via the telephone line or e-mail address as opposed to being able to present at the service.

There is a specific referral form available to support those within the criminal justice system to refer in to the service.



NECA also deliver education and training programmes for young people aged 11-19 years old via GamCare’s Big Deal Programme. This offer includes gambling awareness workshops for young people, CPD accredited training for those working with young people and resource materials and screening tools for youth services and schools. It would be useful for our children and young person’s services across the region to connect with this offer.

**Northern Gambling Service**

The NHS Northern Gambling Service is provided by Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. The service has a footprint of all of the north of the country including the North Midlands. The central service team is based at Merrion House in Leeds, with the North East’s provision based in Sunderland.

The service team compromises a clinical team of psychologists, therapists, psychiatrists and mental health nurses. The team also includes experts by experience.

The service has detailed referral criteria and describes itself as a specialist service to provide support for people with;

* Gambling addiction (less severe problems are usually referred to GamCare)
* Long term gambling problems with little or no abstinence
* Mental health difficulties such as depression, anxiety, trauma and suicidal feelings
* Alcohol/drug misuse or other compulsive behaviours
* Concerns about risk of harm to self or others
* Homelessness or unstable housing or chronic social isolation
* Frequent involvement with criminal justice system or history of serious offending
* Developmental problems, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or difficulties with cognitive or intellectual functioning
* Adverse experiences in childhood that may underlie the gambling problem
* Serious physical health difficulties

Their website also states that “you may also choose to use the Northern Gambling Service if you have a specific preference for it”.

Referrals are made to the service via;

* Email at referral.ngs@nhs.net providing a contact number
* Calling **0300 3001490** giving a contact number if leaving a message.
* Complete a short online form via the website.

Referrals will be responded to within 3 days and if service criteria is met a more detailed referral form is completed to enable access to the service. Once this form is submitted, contact is made to book in for an assessment at the most convenient service base. For the North East, the clinic is based in Sunderland near the Stadium of Light football ground. Video conferencing is also available for those unable to access a base alongside an offer to see people at a convenient location where possible.

Professionals can refer via a specific referral form. This 7 page document asks for comprehensive information and includes a self-assessment Problem Gambling Severity Index scale. It’s worth noting this is a detailed form for a key worker such as a recovery co-ordinator to complete. Referral forms must be securely e-mailed to the above e-mail address and a phone call can be made to the above number if assistance is required.



**County Durham Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service Offer**

The service will not directly refer into Gamcare funded provision, although this will always be an option for people to access on a self-referral basis. Alternatively, the service will implement a screening/brief advice and onward referral service to the NHS funded provision. The service will also engage with the Peer to Peer Gambling support offer (Gamblers Anonymous) promoting and enabling individuals with gambling issues to engage with peer support interventions. The detail of how the service will achieve this development is detailed below:

The service will add updates to Theseus, where Gambling Events will be included to add into service user files where interventions/referrals have been completed. The service will review with commissioners proposals for the case management of individuals without substance use issues who access gambling brief interventions, in particular how we manage the individuals information.

The service will identify 6 Gambling Leads (2 in each of the main Recovery Centres).

The Problem Gambling Severity Index screening tool will be added to the assessment pack.

There will be a SPOC number provided for any individual who wishes to make contact to complete screening.

A gambling intervention pathway will be developed which will include a brief intervention package and an onward referral pathway for those who need it to more intense provision provided by the NHS.

The service will work with wider providers to ensure there is consistency of provision such as Double Impact and Gamblers Anonymous for peer support methodologies and interventions. Alongside the NHS Northern Gambling Service provided by Leeds and York NHS Trust, <https://www.leedsandyorkpft.nhs.uk/our-services/northern-gambling-service/>

The service also plans to link with individuals who are engaged with the development of the NICE Guidance due out in February 2024, link to development is included here. <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/indevelopment/gid-ng10210>

The service will appoint a Project Manager to lead the development of these proposals operationally under the leadership of the Assistant Director who will oversee the projects implementation over 22/23.

Anticipated timelines are to include the GAST, PGSI, referral pathway into the NHS provision and updates to Theseus for current CDDARS clients by the end of Quarter 2. The development of a Brief Intervention Package is anticipated by the end of Q3.

**Pathways into NHS Provision**

When developing effective referral pathways from the CDDARS Service into specialist provision we will need to produce and share guidance with our teams to provide clarity on whether the service should deliver a brief intervention or make a referral to the NHS Northern Gambling service. Looking at the above criteria it’s likely that a significant proportion could be to the NHS specialist service (any client scoring over 8 on the PGSI is identified as having a severe gambling issue).

Once a referral is accepted, an assessment appointment will be offered at the earliest opportunity (no timescale provided). Following assessment a personalised care plan will be agreed and the person will join the active therapy programme. First steps include blocking opportunities to gamble, changes to money management and a meeting with family/loved ones to ensure everyone impacted understands the recovery process and is able to engage in support. The service’s core programme of 8-10 CBT based group work sessions will then be delivered, alongside provision of resources to undertake work from the sessions. Once all sessions are complete there will be second meeting with family/loved ones to identify recovery capital and a relapse prevention plan. Access to peer support is available throughout. There is a graduate group available after programme completion for continued support.

The service also offers standalone family intervention support to those impacted by a loved one’s gambling, even if that person is not in treatment.

On the service website there are a wide range of marketing resources readily available to promote the service.

**Online and Remote Resources**

There are significant resources available online or remotely for gambling support. It is likely that this offer has developed during the COVID pandemic but also in response to the shift to much more gambling activity taking place online so interaction online being a familiar medium for this cohort.

Many of these resources are provided by GamCare within their role in the National Treatment Service and include;

* GamCare National Helpline – 0808 8020 133, available 24hrs 7 days a week
* GamCare Live Chat function on their website
* GamCare Forum for online message board peer support
* GamCare daily group chat rooms
* GamCare Women’s chat room
* GamCare Family/Loved Ones chat room every Wednesday 7pm
* GamCare Self Assesment Tool
* Safer Gambling Calculator
* Self Exclusion scheme (not exclusive to GamCare)
* Blocking software
* Money and debt management
* GamCare Self-Help Work Book
* GamCare online GameChange course (8 modules of CBT supported by a weekly call with a practitioner)

**Gamblers Anonymous**

GA adopts the 12 step fellowship approach to support for gambling addiction and might be the preferred treatment route for some of our service users. Treatment is structured across a Unity Programme and a Recovery Programme. There are a number of GA meetings listed in the North East that could be accessible if desired by County Durham service users;

* Durham – Monday evening
* Sunderland – Wednesday evening
* Newcastle – Monday, Tuesday and Thursday
* Hartlepool – Thursday
* Billingham – Wednesday
* Darlington – Tuesday and Friday

**Training Options for Service Team Members**

Through their role within the National Treatment Service, GamCare are a key provider of training for professionals. They offer a range of free and paid for training programmes to help teams to identify people who may be experiencing gambling related harms, provide structured brief interventions and refer to the most appropriate source of support.

Specific training programmes include;

* Youth Outreach programmes (delivered by NECA in the North East)
* Women’s Programme – our County Durham service team are currently being booked on to this provision
* Gambling related financial harm
* Working within the criminal justice system (including an in-cell awareness resource pack)

It is difficult to source training for staff that isn’t connected to the Gamcare funding, therefore, if service autonomy from the funding is a requirement there is a need to develop our own packages. This would be possible through the dedicated training team with an anticipated timeline of this being available in quarter 4 given other priorities and the time required to develop evidence-based packages.