



ARMED FORCES
GAMBLING
SUPPORT NETWORK

OUR OFFER

Who we are

The Armed Forces Gambling Support Network (AFGSN) is a consortium led by Beacon Counselling Trust (BCT) and includes a wide group of stakeholders, including Gordon Moody, BetKnowMore, Primary Care Gambling Service (PCGS), the Awarding Body - The Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH), and the Gambling Research Exchange Ontario (GREO) as the programme's external evaluators.

The AFGSN provides support to the Armed Forces community across the Northwest of England.

**THE AFGSN PROVIDES
EARLY INTERVENTION,
EDUCATION, TREATMENT,
AND SUPPORT
TO THE ARMED FORCES
COMMUNITY TO REDUCE
GAMBLING-RELATED HARMS.**

Gambling-related harms and the Armed Forces

Gambling-related harm has been identified by the Ministry of Defence as one of the most significant issues facing the UK Armed Forces.

The reasons for this are varied, but one contributing factor is that Armed Forces personnel are significantly more likely than the general population to have been exposed to **trauma**: a known trigger for destructive addictions. In addition, the environment members of the armed forces community exist in may contribute or exacerbate risk taking behaviours (such as gambling). These environments are often referred to as 'gambleagenic'; settings that permit, encourage, or promote gambling participation.

Given the increased risk that members of the Armed Forces Community are at of suffering gambling related harm, it is important that there is a determined, focused, and coherent approach to reduce the risk of harm amongst this community.



A recent study by Swansea University has found that veterans are more than ten times more likely than non-veterans to experience gambling harms and to gamble as a way of coping with distress.

(Dymond, Dighton, Wood, 2021)

2-5%

of serving RAF personnel believe gambling is a problem for them

(RAF Benevolent Fund Research 2021).



Education and Early Intervention

A primary focus of the AFGSN is 'Battling the Odds': a tailored armed forces educational offer and first aid approach to tackling gambling-related harms. Members of the armed forces community can access either of the following training offers for free:

Battling the Odds: Bet You Can Help Now!

– A one and a half hour introductory session delivered online providing insight into gambling-related harms and how the Armed Forces Community are impacted.

Battling the Odds: Bet You Can Help Level Two Award

- Accredited by RSPH and Ofqual regulated, this full day programme delves deeper into the issue of gambling-related harms through group discussion and exercises followed by the Level Two award assessment.



Treatment and Support

The Armed Forces Gambling Support Network provides free and confidential treatment and support for any member of the armed forces community experiencing gambling-related harms – this can be for the gambler themselves, or those affected by someone else's gambling.

Across the support providers, we offer brief advice and guidance to those at risk of gambling harms, along with free and confidential local treatment and support for anyone experiencing gambling-related harms. Individuals can access one-to-one and couples therapy, as well as aftercare support. One-to-one therapy gives people the tools to **understand and manage their gambling triggers and urges**, whilst also **addressing the wider impact gambling has had on their lives, relationships, mental health, identity, etc.**



Support with legacy harms

e.g. impact on relationships, mental health, physical health, identity, etc.



Working towards specific goals



Relapse prevention



Practical advice and guidance



Coping strategies



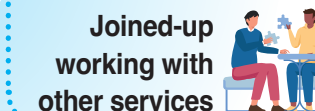
Understanding the development of their harmful relationship with gambling



Psychosocial interventions



Trauma-informed interventions



Joined-up working with other services



Building support networks



Individuals can also access group support led by those with lived experience, provided by **Per Aid**, at **BetKnowMore**.



GORDON MOODY

Individuals who require more intensive support in the form of residential treatment can access this through **Gordon Moody**.

Aftercare

Across support services, 1-2-1 peer support and group support are offered to those impacted by gambling-harms, who have completed 1-2-1 treatment. These groups focus on wellbeing and relapse prevention. Those impacted by another individual's gambling can also access aftercare support in the form of 1-2-1 practical advice and support, and group peer support.

Individuals can also access 'Trek Therapy', a programme which encourages participants to experience 'green therapy' through safe, supported, and meaningful group walking activities, aimed at promoting emotional wellbeing. Trek Therapy uses a combination of qualified outdoor professionals and mental health practitioners to support service users' development.



Armed Forces Gambling Lived Experience Alliance

The Armed Forces Gambling Lived Experience Alliance is comprised of individuals with lived experience of gambling related harms who have also been in the armed forces, facilitated by professionals with expertise of gambling harms. The group utilises the voice of those with these lived experiences to ensure the education and support offered through the AFGSN is tailored to the specific needs of these communities.

The Wider Determinants of Gambling Related Harms

Support services across the AFGSN have worked with individuals that have experienced gambling harms for many years and have supported thousands of individuals that have been impacted by the issues gambling can cause. Using literature and research into addiction and gambling, and personal and anecdotal evidence, a model of the 'Wider Determinants of Gambling Related Harms' has emerged. This model aims to highlight the significant risk factors which may leave certain individuals vulnerable to gambling addiction. These wider determinants include risk factors, biological factors, early life experiences, introductory influences, maintenance and accelerating factors. This 'wider determinants' model is particularly relevant to those within the armed forces community, considering the risk factors this career poses due to the potential traumatic incidents' individuals may experience in this field. Furthermore, individuals

who grow up in an armed forces household may be vulnerable based on the early life experience of having a parent in the armed forces (single parent household), they also may experience significant introductory influences (growing up in a 'gambleogenic' environment due to having a parent who gambles as a result of previous traumatic events within armed forces). There are many links that can be drawn between the armed forces community and the Wider Determinants of Gambling Related Harms.



Additional Education and Early Intervention:

The following additional education and early intervention programmes are also included in the offer for those accessing support via the Armed Forces Gambling Support Network:



Workplace Charter

The Workplace Charter to Reduce Gambling Harms offers practical, evidence-based ways in which employers and staff can commit to promoting the health and wellbeing of their workers experiencing gambling related harms. Support services within the AFGSN have engaged with numerous employers and organisations to raise awareness and help address the issue of gambling-related harms through promotion of the Workplace Charter.



South Asian Project

The South Asian Programme's main focus is work within culturally and linguistically diverse communities. The 'Breaking the Sharam' project aims to address the stigma associated with gambling within the South Asian community. Using community connectors within these communities, the aim is to educate and support those at-risk of, or experiencing, gambling-related harms, using a culturally-informed approach.



Criminal Justice Programme



The 'Arresting Harmful Gambling within the Criminal Justice System' programme delivers training to those working within the criminal justice system to develop knowledge and understanding of gambling-related harms and its links to criminality. We promote and support initiatives and professional practices that incorporate early intervention in relation to the Integrated Offender Management framework concerning gambling-related harms.



Young People's Gambling Harm Prevention Programme

The AFGSN also work collaboration with Gamcare to deliver free workshops for young people aged 10 to 19, parents, carers and professionals working in youth settings, to raise awareness of gambling-related harms.

Contact information



If you would like to find out more about any of the programmes we offer, call us on 0151 226 0696.

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Follow us



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