



# IMPACT REPORT

## 2022 - 2023



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**Beacon Counselling Trust**  
 263 Townsend Lane, Clubmoor  
 Liverpool L13 9DG  
 0151 226 0696  
 support@beaconcounsellingtrust.co.uk

# FORWARD

**Beacon Counselling Trust (BCT) is proud to present to you our 2022-2023 impact report which provides an opportunity and platform for our wider team, stakeholders and service users to review and celebrate.**

Since our last impact report which was recording BCT's impact during and just after the global pandemic, we are happy to report that our face-to-face offer across all our service provision and specialist programmes is back and growing.

Our organisation continues to grow, which is reflected in our achievements and continued financial growth and stability. This has resulted in a number of very special accolades being awarded to our team over the year and has highlighted specific individuals also. We are very proud of the kindness, compassion and drive that is shown across our organisation, which enables our teams to grow and develop, ensuring the best possible care is provided to our service users.

We are moving into a new era with our National Gambling Commissioner, GambleAware which will bring with it continued opportunity and organisational growth. The team here at BCT relish the challenge and opportunity that this change will present, moving into the future years.

I hope that you find the report both informative and rewarding, and that it gives you an opportunity to see the positive impact that an organisation, which is led by professionals in their field and strategically informed by lived experience, brings to the North West region.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the teams at BCT including our Senior Management Team, Core Staff and Volunteers for their continued hard work, dedication and commitment. I would like to also express my personal thanks to my fellow trustees for the amazing work they undertake to support the people of the North West.

*Paula Bell*

**Paula Bell**  
 Chairperson  
 Beacon Counselling Trust



### OUR PURPOSE

**We aim to make life better for individuals and families who access our services because we believe passionately that people can change their behaviour and their lives, through professionally delivered, structured support and experience, and embrace a different way of living even after the most catastrophic of life changing events.**

### OUR STRATEGIC VISION

**BUILD ON THE PAST,  
 WORK IN THE PRESENT  
 AND PLAN FOR THE FUTURE...**

# PROGRAMMES & PARTNERS

## GAMBLING-RELATED HARMS SUPPORT

One of our main support and treatment programmes continues to be our gambling-related harms service, funded through GambleAware. In April this year, we have seen a change to the current contract, with a specific focus being on a regional approach to our gambling-related education, early intervention, treatment, and system engagement. As one of the lead partners within The National Gambling Support Network (NGSN), BCT supports individuals at-risk of, or experiencing, gambling-related harms, including anyone affected by the gambling behaviour of another individual. We offer low-level advice and guidance to those at-risk, one-to-one therapeutic support to those experiencing gambling harms, and aftercare support on a one-to-one and group basis to maintain recovery.

This free and confidential support is offered to anyone living in the North West of England. We are proud to say that we do not work on a waiting list, and all service-users are triaged within ten working days. Our treatment and therapeutic team will engage with around 3000 individuals this year on our gambling harms programme.

Within the past year we have continued to strengthen our relationships with other gambling-harms support and education services, to offer the most appropriate support to all service-users depending on their needs, and to offer the most holistic approach possible.

In the past 2 years, we have given a lot of focus to our treatment offer for those experiencing gambling-harms, ensuring that appropriate training is given to staff to offer a trauma-informed approach to service-users. We have also incorporated BCT's Wider Determinants of Gambling-Related Harms Model, to educate our teams and service-users on the potential risk factors and events that have led to their harmful relationship with gambling. This approach ensures our treatment uses a 'life journey' model with service-users, as we acknowledge the importance of understanding all touch points of someone's journey into addiction, to ensure we can support them in every aspect of their recovery.



Going forward, we will be focused on engaging with public health professionals and front-facing staff to educate them on gambling-harms and understand the wider determinants to be aware of what makes someone vulnerable to gambling addiction. We will offer the appropriate signposting and referral to those at-risk of or experiencing gambling harms. This emphasis on early intervention and education on a regional basis will be a focus for us over the next year. We will also be building on our aftercare offer, supporting those on a one-to-one and group basis, using lived experience and peer support to facilitate long-term recovery.

## Care Coordination Approach

BCT continues to hold strong relationships with gambling support services, such as the **NHS Northern Gambling Service**, **Gordon Moody**, and **EPIC Restart Foundation**. Working alongside these services allows us to work with a person-centred approach for all service-users, allowing them options to choose what support pathway is right for them.

This year, BCT have developed a relationship with **Adferiad Recovery**. Based in Wales, Adferiad provide support to vulnerable people, families and carers across Wales. Adferiad have been commissioned by **GambleAware** to offer 'tier 4' interventions to individuals presenting with complex mental health and co-morbid addictions, alongside gambling-related harms. Adferiad offer a detox programme and intensive mental health support through their rehabilitation centre, Parkland Place in Wales. BCT's Treatment Team have made several referrals into this service for those that present with these additional issues, and we will continue to work with Adferiad to 'step up' and 'step down' service-users across our organisations, depending on their presentations and where they are in their recovery journey.

BCT's Treatment Team have also developed an integrated working model with the **NHS Primary Care Gambling Service (PCGS)** who are now another support service that we work closely with to refer the appropriate service-users. BCT service-users will have the option to be stepped up to the PCGS if they present with additional support needs and require a multidisciplinary approach, and PCGS service-users can have a stepped down facilitated referral into BCT for community-based support following their treatment within the NHS service.

The Treatment Team have built relationships this year with other support services across the region, particularly drug and alcohol services, such as **CADAS** in Cumbria and **CGL** services within the region. We plan to build on this collaborative work going forward to ensure that service-users presenting with multiple addictions are able to access appropriate and holistic support, through seamless referrals across organisations. This approach gives individuals the best opportunity at long-term and sustainable recovery.



Furthermore, we are proud to be working in partnership with **Citizens Advice Wirral** on a new project to offer additional practical support to those impacted by gambling harms. The programme provides support to any clients in the Liverpool City Region who may benefit from advice around practical issues (such as housing, employment and general wellbeing), alongside their gambling-related support.

This year, we have built a partnership with **PayPlan**, who are able to offer free debt advice to all BCT service-users. We are able to complete a direct referral for all service-users to PayPlan's specialist vulnerable client team, who will be dealing with all BCT referrals, and providing financial support and advice. Debt and financial problems are unfortunately a common issue amongst many of our clients, specifically those who are experiencing gambling-related harms, and we want to ensure we can assist client's in accessing as much support as possible.

BCT continues to build on their working relationship with **The Big Help Project**. They offer a wide range of practical support to those in immediate need or crisis, such as foodbanks, financial advice, housing, practical support to survivors of domestic abuse and those at-risk of homelessness. BCT offer general mental health therapy to those accessing support and advice through the Big Help Project, and plan to collaborate on further work with the organisation over the next 12 months.

## PROGRAMMES & PARTNERS

### Aftercare Programme, in collaboration with BetKnowMore



This year, **GambleAware** have funded BCT, in collaboration with **BetKnowMore**, to lead on a new and innovative aftercare programme, to further support service-users that have accessed our gambling harms programme. This funding will allow us to offer a holistic aftercare support package to all service-users that have successfully completed treatment and will be tailored to their individual needs.

#### The aftercare will offer:

- 121 peer support delivered by individuals with lived experience of gambling harms.
- Relapse prevention and wellbeing group support for individuals in recovery from gambling addiction.
- Wellbeing group support for affected others.
- Trek Therapy – outdoor walking therapy for those in recovery and affected others.
- Practical support for those in recovery and affected others.
- Holistic therapies.
- Walking football – a free walking football programme led by a lived experience advocate.

### Wider Determinants of Gambling-Related Harms

BCT developed this model to use both as part of their education and awareness-raising, and to incorporate into our support and treatment offer to assist service-users in understanding the factors that may have played a part in the development of their gambling addiction. The model also aims to highlight the many different touch points in which early interventions can take place by professionals within supporting roles, in order to mitigate the risk of a gambling addiction developing further down the line. The model looks at the whole picture of gambling-related harms; incorporating all the different factors that play a part in the development of an individual's harmful relationship with gambling.

#### The Wider Determinants of Gambling-Harms Model addresses:

- Risk factors.
- Biological factors.
- The role of early life experiences and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).
- Introductory factors.
- Maintenance and accelerating factors.

The model is evidence-based and pulls on references from up-to-date research in this area, as well as the many years of professional and anecdotal evidence collated by the wider BCT team. Our aim is that this information raises awareness of gambling harms as a public health issue, and demonstrates the importance of early intervention from professionals in front-facing and supporting roles, to reduce the risk of individuals being impacted by gambling harms.



You can read the full document on our website: <https://beaconcounsellingtrust.co.uk/wider-determinants-of-gambling-related-harms>

### YOUNG PEOPLE'S GAMBLING HARM PREVENTION PROGRAMME



BCT has delivered the **Young People's Gambling Harm Prevention Programme**

in partnership with **Gamcare** for the third consecutive year, achieving great success and outcomes. BCT have continued to exceed their targets, and 2022/23 saw us deliver **162** workshops across the North West, providing education and early prevention to **4,516** young people, **1,818** professionals and **65** parents/carers on the risks associated with gambling-related harms.

The programme has continued to develop and maintain strong relationships with key stakeholders including Childline, Manchester Central Mosque, CADAS and Healthwatch Liverpool. In addition to this, our offer has now been embedded into the services provided by Halton Healthy Schools, Princes Trust, Change Talks, Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership and Bolton University Teacher Training Education, which allows us to work regularly with these organisations. BCT have also built strong partnerships with local authorities and early help teams, working with Chorley, Blackpool, Sefton, Wirral and Blackburn councils as well as Stockport Public Health.

Over the next twelve months BCT aims to continue nurturing existing relationships, as well as identifying target key groups we have not yet engaged with. Our desire is to expand our reach to inform young people about our offer whilst also achieving targets.



### THE SIX TO TEN PROJECT

BCT extended their family support offering in 2022 with **The Six to Ten Project**. It is the first service to offer practical and holistic support for family members and others affected by harmful gambling. In the last 12 months we have worked with housing teams, financial and debt-management services, local authorities, Homestart teams, legal partners and wider social organisations to help our service users, and ensure they receive effective and appropriate support.

We have received a total of **73** referrals from the Six to Ten Project over the last 12 months. Working in a one-to-one structured setting with a dedicated family worker, the affected others of gambling-related harms can receive assistance through everyday life challenges. The sessions give both practical help and emotional support, to lessen the impacts of gambling harms and help those impacted regain control of their lives and improve their personal well-being.



## PROGRAMMES & PARTNERS



### SOUTH ASIAN PROGRAMME

Since its inception in 2021, the pioneering 'Breaking the Sharam' project, has increased its impact and contributed greatly to increased awareness of gambling-related harm in South Asian communities. The project has demonstrated outstanding best practice by reaching over **2,100** people in delivering culturally appropriate gambling harm education. In addition, **300+** people from South Asian communities received brief interventions aimed to educate and inform around the risks of gambling.

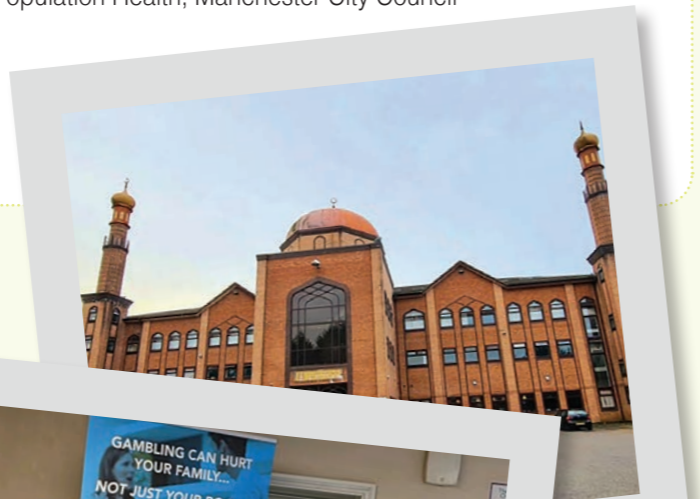
We are also delighted to have delivered the Royal Society for Public Health Level 2 'Bet You Can Help' training in Tackling Gambling Harms to over 70 aspiring faith leaders at the Jamiatul Ilim Wal Huda seminary in Blackburn. We are proud of our engagement with local councils and organisations such as GambleAware, and Leeds, Blackburn and Manchester City Councils, who have consulted with BCT to better understand communities disproportionately affected by gambling-related harm. Manchester City Council have been very proactive in supporting us in developing referral pathways with grassroots charities. An example of this being Hopewell where we managed to deliver key gambling harm messages to women who accessed the centre for social and health related reasons.

### Testimonial

Manchester City Council worked with Suhayl from Beacon Counselling Trust to deliver some engagement/discussion sessions around gambling harms in communities. The feedback from sessions was extremely positive, and in particular attendees were complementary around Suhayl's approach and delivery style in discussing gambling-related harms, a subject often considered with shame, stigma and taboo. Having these sessions delivered by someone with not only lived experience, but a detailed understanding of the challenges and issues facing communities experiencing racial inequalities, was extremely invaluable and generated some interesting discussions and insights which has helped us locally to strengthen our work around gambling-related harms.

Following the initial sessions, attendees were keen to request additional sessions with their individual networks; recognising the importance of raising awareness of the harms from gambling but also the treatment and support offers that are available. A huge thank you to Suhayl for his ongoing support.

**Naaira Zaman,**  
Population Health, Manchester City Council



A CHARTER TO REDUCE  
GAMBLING RELATED HARMS  
IN THE WORKPLACE

### WORKPLACE CHARTER

Throughout the last 12 months, BCT has continued to support organisations in relation to developing systems designed to reduce gambling harms within the workplace. This programme has been able to engage with a wide range of businesses, organisations, and employers to develop protocols, guidance, access to training via the 'Bet You Can Help' programme and pathways into support across The National Gambling Treatment Service (NGTS).

Since our last impact report, BCT has worked in partnership with **13** organisations, who have successfully progressed their way through to becoming signatories of the **Workplace Charter** to Reduce Gambling Harms. This builds on a group of 20 pre-existing signatory organisations, taking the programmes membership up to **33**, with a further **11** interested and in discussion about joining the scheme over the course of the next year.

The organisations who have joined the list of Workplace Charter signatories during 2022-23 have included; Blackpool Council, Glasgow City Council, Sandwell Council, Citizens Advice Wirral, Copeland Borough Council, University of Central Lancashire, Durham Constabulary, Knowsley Council, Healthwatch Knowsley, Citizens Advice Knowsley, One Knowsley, YMCA Liverpool and more recently GambleAware, the commissioner of the National Gambling Treatment Services Network.

Sandwell Council, who adopted the seven key principles embedded within the workplace charter to reducing gambling harms, went the extra mile. Following the implementation of their newly developed gambling harms policy, a range of Local Authority employees from Public Health, Human Resources, Occupational Health and other key departments successfully completed the Royal Society of Public Health accredited Level 2 Award in Tackling Gambling-Related Harms, after participating in BCTs 'Bet You Can Help' programme. This led to Sandwell Council further demonstrating their approach in



supporting their workforce, by going a step further and creating a gambling-related harms online e-learning package for their employees to access via their intranet portal.

As the Workplace Charter initiative continues to gain momentum, BCT are confident that 2023-24 will see this project go from strength to strength, after seeing a surge in expressions of interest in the early part of 2023. At BCT we are committed to progressing our objective of encouraging as many businesses, employers, and organisations as possible to become charter signatories, and in doing so promote a safer environment for employees, communities and the wider public.

## PROGRAMMES & PARTNERS

### BET YOU CAN HELP

The **'Bet You Can Help' (BYCH) Gambling Harms Training Programme** has been BCT's flagship training package since its inception in 2021. The programme is designed to tackle gambling-related harms, and aims to improve the confidence and competency of participants involved.

The BYCH training programme aims to educate learners, using an accredited, uniform and consistent set of messaging regarding Gambling-Related Harms (GRH) and the associated issues, through an ethos that emphasises a Public Health Approach.

A fundamental aspect of the programme utilises a first-aid methodology that supports learners to competently implement an early brief intervention, with anyone at-risk of, or experiencing, gambling harms, and how to signpost to specialist service providers across the National Gambling Support Network (NGSN).

The programme seeks to prevent a worsening or escalation of the individual's gambling harms situation, by developing participants' understanding of the issue, and improving their confidence in supporting these individuals. Furthermore, participants will develop their ability to guide and signpost individuals to access appropriate specialist services when needed.

The BYCH programme is comprised of 2 options: the full-day 'Bet You Can Help' training programme, and the 1.5-hour 'Bet You Can Help' Now! workshop. The 'Bet You Can Help' programme includes an option for learners to take part in the Level 2 Award in Tackling Gambling-Related Harms, accredited by the Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) and regulated by Ofqual. This full-day training programme involves an in-depth set of modules focusing on the prevalence and different perspectives on gambling-related harms, the identification of gambling-related harms, and the specialist support, treatment and signposting available to help those in need.

The 'Bet You Can Help' Now! is a 1.5-hour condensed training workshop that features the key elements of the tackling gambling harms first-aid approach, alongside a self-guided learning facilitated through the 'Bet You Can Help' handbook.



This course is aimed at people who may be restricted in their ability to attend the full day programme but wish to use the core elements within their professional practice.

To date, the programme has engaged with many organisations including Local Authorities, Public Health Teams, Drug and Alcohol Services, Lived Experience groups, the voluntary sector and individuals from the Faith and community groups to name a few. A considerable success of the programme relates to organisations progressing to become signatories of the Workplace Charter to Reduce Gambling-Related Harms, as this provides a core foundation for stakeholders and partners to develop their own framework in addressing gambling harms.

In total the BYCH training programme has reached more than **4500** individuals with over **700** participating in the Level 2 Award, with a successful accreditation rate of **92%** amongst those who completed the RSPH Award assessment. Feedback from participants shows that **98%** believe the course has improved their ability to provide an appropriate intervention concerning gambling-related harms within their practice.

The team at BCT look forward to working with many more organisations and practitioners, with an abundance of training courses booked for 2023 already filling our calendars.

### CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROGRAMME

Since early January 2022, BCT have been working as part of a joint initiative with partners Ara Recovery for All, and the RCA Trust to engage with the **Criminal Justice System (CJS)** in increasing awareness of gambling harms, whilst at the same time promoting access to specialist support across the National Gambling Support Network (NGSN). This work has been tagged as 'Arresting Gambling Harms'. Key elements of the initiative involve gambling harms awareness, prevention, early intervention, access to treatment and support, and developing systems to enable professionals working in the criminal justice system to identify and make appropriate referrals into the NGSN.

The main emphasis of this work has involved training to UK Police Forces, Probation and Prisons. To provide specialist training to these groups of staff, we incorporated a criminal justice specific module within our Bet You Can Help training.

#### Key learning outcomes for those that attend the training:

- To support professionals working within the Criminal Justice System to develop their knowledge and understanding of gambling-related harms and its links to criminality.
- To promote and support initiatives, and professional practices to incorporate an early intervention in relation to the Integrated Offender Management framework concerning gambling-related harms.
- To increase the numbers of offenders at-risk of, or experiencing, gambling-related harms in accessing the National Gambling Support Network.

The programme has been extremely successful in its first 12 months of operation with the partnership delivering over **130** gambling harms themed training sessions, to **2114** CJS professionals. This has exceeded our original target of 500 trainees, by **1614**.

Feedback from CJS professionals, highlighted that **97%** of participants said the BYCH training met their expectations, resulting in them feeling more confident in engagement with



those at risk of, or experiencing, gambling-related harms. The range of engagement within the programme has seen **14** Police Forces, **8** Prisons and dozens of Probation Service teams participate in structured training, whilst helping to develop Out of Court Disposals and treatment pathways. One of the main successes of the programme has seen the commencement of gambling harms being embedded in the Police Niche Technology Intelligence System to manage the force's intelligence needs used currently by **11** Police Forces.

Other focused work has seen themed events with the Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership (MVRP) host a young people and gambling harms focused Continuing Professional Development (CPD) event in September 2022, and the issue of gambling-related harms and criminality presented to the National Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) Addictions lead with exciting developments underway with all PCC's.

In addition, the Howard League for Penal Reform endorsed the programme referencing the 'Bet You Can Help' training in the Police awareness and practice publication by the Commission of Crime & Gambling Related Harms in April 2022 stating, **'The Bet You Can Help' training programme was designed by police forces and wider criminal justice partners and is freely available. This should be adopted by all forces as recommended by the APCC.'**

As the programme enters its second year, we are already excited about the great work that is unfolding, and we hope to report on further successes in 2023-24.

## PROGRAMMES & PARTNERS



### TREK THERAPY

Throughout 2022 into 2023 our Paul's Place service users have continued to benefit from a wellbeing walk initiative, that has been in operation for the last 18 months, which has gone from strength to strength with the support and facilitation of our colleagues and partners.

More than **50** individuals have taken part in scheduled therapeutic wellbeing walks, with service users enjoying getting into nature and the great outdoors, whilst also benefitting from peer support. Participants have visited some amazing locations including the Tolkien Trail in Lancashire, the Wales Coastal Path in Flintshire, Hale Village, the Mersey Way and Estuary to name a few.

One unique event saw a group of more than **20** Paul's Place service users and practitioners meet up with Mike, Tim and Andy, otherwise known as the 3 Dad's Walking, during their 600-mile journey to each of the four UK parliaments to raise awareness of suicide and seek support for their campaign to make suicide a compulsory part of the school curriculum. It was a fantastic event with Paul's Place joining in as allies to support the 3 Dads as they walked through Delamere Forest, along the Sandstone Trail in Cheshire.

We had the opportunity to further enhance and extend our wellbeing walking programme. Alongside other activities designed to improve emotional wellbeing and reduce social isolation, were massively enhanced through successful funding secured through The National Lottery Communities Fund for a period of three years. This has enabled BCT to purchase a minibus that will enable our service users to venture to more exciting and varied areas of outstanding natural beauty, as our group continues to lace up their walking boots and explore the great outdoors to connect with nature and each other.



Throughout 2023-24 there will be a programme of regularly scheduled wellbeing walks that Paul's Place service users can participate in as part of our complementary therapies offer. The Trek Therapy offer has now also been extended to those that have accessed our gambling related harms programme as part of our new aftercare offer.

### ARMED FORCES PROGRAMME

The **Armed Forces Community (AFC)** are one of BCT's key-target themed cohorts, and known to be a vulnerable group in terms of gambling-related harms. This includes serving personnel, veterans, reservists, cadets and family members from the Army, Royal Air Force and Royal Navy.

Evidence shows that gambling harms prevalence is higher in veterans (1.4%) than non-veterans (0.2%) with figures revealing that veterans are eight times more likely to suffer from gambling-related harms (Dighton et al, 2018). Further research by the RAF Benevolent Fund Research in 2021 found that 2-5% of serving RAF personnel believe gambling is a problem for them. Those who have experienced traumatic events are more at risk of gambling harms, thus leaving those in the armed forces particularly vulnerable. Furthermore, it was found that there is a significantly higher proportion of risk for male veterans, and for those with an increased length of service (4+ years).

As an Armed Forces Covenant Bronze Award recipient and as part of the covenants Employer Recognition Scheme, BCT has been passionately committed to developing their Armed Forces Community engagement, despite having no specific funding. A core element of this work has seen a module linked to the 'Bet You Can Help' gambling harms training programme aimed at the AFC audience and interventions made through the 'Battling the Odds' Project.

During the last 12 months, BCT has been involved in a range of engagements, including gambling harms consultation events

with veterans, gambling harms education with cadets from the Military Preparation College for Training, engagement with the 2nd Battalion of the Yorkshire Regiment and the 1st Battalion of the Duke of Lancashire Regiment at Dale Barracks in Cheshire. As part of structured health fair events, awareness raising events with the members of the Parachute Regimental Association Liverpool Branch, wellbeing focused events, and extended brief interventions and access to support with serving personnel. To date, BCT has worked with over **900** members of the armed forces community.

Taking the 'Battling the Odds' work forward, BCT are pleased to announce that from May 2023 a funded initiative, secured through the Armed Forces Covenant, will see BCT deliver its BYCH Now programme to **300** AFC beneficiaries and the BYCH Level 2 Award to 50 beneficiaries, respectively.



## PROGRAMMES & PARTNERS

### HOMELESS COMMUNITY

In the last year, BCT have developed their offer for professionals working in the **homeless community** and engaged with those directly affected with homelessness.

We are supporting several services both locally and regionally, including YMCA and the Whitechapel Centre, who have provided the 'Bet You Can Help' training programme for staff to help identify and provide appropriate levels of specialist support, for those service users experiencing gambling-related harms. In the next year, we are looking at widening our work to provide further training and engage homeless organisations in signing our workplace charter, for staff working in this field alongside pathways to support for service users.



### ENGLISH GAMBLING EDUCATION HUB

The **English Gambling Education Hub** is a new programme delivered by BCT across the North West of England. In partnership with GamCare and five other regional providers, the Hub aims to support organisations, families and any professionals working in connection with young people on the subject of gambling-related harm.

**Over the next three years, the hub has four key priorities:**

- Develop a network for organisations involved in the gambling harms space to connect and share learning.
- Host insight events.
- Support organisations with content development and accreditation.
- Develop an online space providing information of the education and treatment services available.

The hubs digital portal EduGam will be available from September 2023 and provide access to e-learning and educational resources.



### WEIGHT MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

During 2022/2023, BCT has continued their work with **Wirral NHS weight management service**, providing psychotherapeutic support to patients joining their tier 3 weight management programme, some of whom wish to access the pathway for bariatric surgery.

Patients receive one-to-one counselling, psychoeducation and CBT sessions, focused on increasing self-awareness and understanding of their relationship with food and their bodies, developing more effective and positive ways of coping.

During the past year, **65** patients accessed the programme, and a total of 246 therapeutic counselling and CBT sessions were provided by BCT.

Feedback from patients has been consistently very positive. They report that sessions have 'really made a difference' to the way they think and feel about food and eating.

#### The programme sessions helped patients to:

- Better understand their relationship with food and their eating behaviour.
- Gain a greater awareness of triggers for overeating or comfort eating.
- Increase motivation, confidence, and ability to control eating habits.
- Develop healthier ways of coping, to replace emotional 'self-soothing' through food.
- Address underlying emotional issues that have kept them 'stuck' in unhelpful habits.

### PUBLIC HEALTH AND LOCAL SYSTEMS ENGAGEMENT

Over the last 12 months, BCT have developed strategic relationships with both the Public Health and the NHS, alongside our continued work within the third sector right across the North West. Our aim is to raise awareness and ensure gambling-related harms are included in local system strategies, to mobilise people facing services and engage with the wider population. BCT have been engaging with over **15** local systems in the region at a variety of levels to deliver training for frontline staff, to develop policies and procedures to protect the workforce and ultimately to support local communities to tackle this issue. Here we look at the success of this approach in the following areas:

#### Blackpool

Blackpool Council have completed the process of signing the Workplace Charter to Reduce Gambling-Related Harms with a newly produced gambling harms policy embedded into their HR framework. As part of this process, BCT have facilitated more than a dozen 'Bet You Can Help' Now courses, which is a 1.5 hour workshop on tackling gambling harms. These workshops have been delivered to many different professionals operating across the borough, from a range of different services.

#### Knowsley

Knowsley Council, led by Public Health, have been working with BCT to bring together key services as part of their Health and Wellbeing Board membership to collectively sign the Workplace Charter to Reduce Gambling-Related Harms. Partners within this group, including Knowsley Council, Healthwatch Knowsley, and Citizens Advice Knowsley, have all commenced developing their own gambling harms policies. Other services including One Knowsley are also seeking to join this collaborative group.

#### Wirral

BCT have worked with Wirral Council for quite some time, particularly feeding into the council's gambling harms report in 2018. Since then, we have engaged with the local authorities gambling harms lead on a regular basis, which has led to a provision for our face-to-face treatment service being set up in Birkenhead. We are currently central to a Wirral working group, to look at a strategy for the area and will be holding a series of events this year to engage with the community to raise awareness of the issue and engage with BCT's education, early intervention, and treatment offer.

#### Cumbria

BCT have been part of a quarterly working group in Cumbria for over 2 years. This led to a successful conference in September of 2021, aimed at raising awareness of gambling harms in the region. Copeland Council have signed our workplace charter and engaged with several training sessions with 'Bet You Can Help' and supported our work by linking us into organisations in the community to provide our education offer for both adults and young people. Through this relationship we have also been able to engage with the biggest employer in the region, Sellafield, who are also in the process of signing our workplace charter.

#### Blackburn with Darwen

BCT have engaged with Blackburn with Darwen Council since 2021 and supported the local authority in developing their gambling-related harms strategy. This strategy included the delivery of our 'Bet You Can Help' Level 2 programme as part of RSPH's Communities in Charge of Gambling offer taking place in June and December of 2022.

#### BCT are also working with local authorities in the following areas:

*Tameside, Lancashire, Halton, Carlisle, Stockport, Bury, Sefton, St Helens and Warrington*



## PROGRAMMES & PARTNERS



### Paul's Place Programme

#### Referrals

Since April 2022, **102** people have accessed our vital Paul's Place Programme. During this period, we have also had a number of requests for support from people outside of the Merseyside area. We continue to respond to such requests by providing the contact details for Suicide&Co, who offer suicide bereavement support to anyone outside of Merseyside. BCT have developed a good relationship with Suicide&Co and are able to facilitate referrals into their service for those that fall outside of our catchment area. Similarly, Suicide&Co will refer individuals to BCT that contact them for support from the Merseyside area.

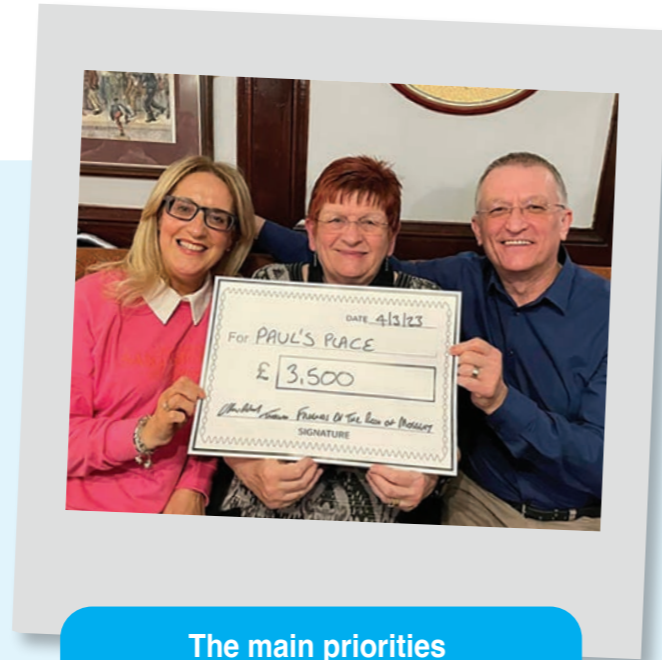
#### Fundraising and donations

Paul's Place does not receive any NHS or Government funding and through a wide variety of fundraising events, one off donations, donations from charitable sources, as well as the regular donations, Paul's Place has received in the region of £50,000 over the past 12 months. We are optimistic that over the next 12 months, we will achieve our aim of raising an additional £50,000, which will allow us to continue to run our free specialist and unique suicide bereavement support programme for people in the Merseyside area.



#### Lottery Funding

Paul's Place received some wonderful news after submitting a lottery bid in September of 2022, via the Community Grants Funding Strand. The whole bidding process was well supported by our local grants officer, and the final project submission was met with a very positive and supportive response from the awards committee and subsequently awarded a grant of £300,800 over 3 years. The funding is to support the phase 2 development of Paul's Place and possesses 3 key priorities, to support those families and individuals who have been profoundly affected by the suicide of a loved one.



### The main priorities of the lottery funding are:

1. To support those affected by suicide by building their social support networks, and bringing them together with individuals that have similar lived experience. There will be a particular focus on personal wellbeing and self-care, as well as skills development as the next step to support following their 121 therapy.
2. To provide holistic, intensive support that will include specialist aftercare group support led by BCT therapists that specialise in suicide bereavement.
3. To facilitate access to regular outdoor therapeutic scenic walks to promote holistic health and wellbeing.

The aim of this funding is primarily to provide ongoing aftercare support to our Paul's Place service users. The funding bid included a request for the purchase of a minibus, which was granted and we are happy to say has now been bought and in use for our service users.

The project is aimed at individuals across Merseyside who have been profoundly affected by and bereaved by suicide, by helping them to reduce and prevent severe mental health concerns, which unfortunately, often manifests in those affected by the suicide of a loved one. Paul's Place works with this community to ensure that their voice is heard, and practical help and support is offered at a level and pace that is suitable to them, ensuring that resilience is built and hope for the future remains in their heart and lives.

### Paul's Place 5-year anniversary

Paul's Place Suicide Bereavement Support Service was launched in October 2017. In the 5 plus years since then, we have seen over **1000** people access our unique and lifesaving service and have learnt a great deal during this time. We already knew the massive benefits of providing one to one specialist therapy and that will always remain key to the work we do here at Paul's Place BCT. However, we also realised how important it is to offer our service users various forms of ongoing group support, too.

Our Paul's Place Aftercare Programme is designed to provide our service users with a variety of support groups and/or activities, which may benefit them going forward.

### We are presently able to offer the following:

- Peer Support Group (held on Tuesday mornings and on the last Wednesday evening of the month).
- Trek Therapy Walks (held fortnightly, of a weekend).
- Wellbeing Support Group (held fortnightly, on Wednesdays).
- Journeys of Discovery (held fortnightly on opposite Wednesdays to the Wellbeing Group).
- Craft Group (held fortnightly, on a Thursday).

Our aim is to be as inclusive as we possibly can within our Aftercare Programme. However, we must always ensure that we remain committed and compliant to safety regulations, and Paul's Place guidelines regarding ratio of group facilitators to participants and in ensuring that the safe environment we provide in-house, is also adhered to during our outdoor group events.



### TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE

BCT understands the importance of being trauma-informed in all aspects of the support we provide, but this is particularly important when looking at our two main treatment programmes; gambling addiction and suicide bereavement. Traumatic life events put individuals at an increased likelihood of developing addictions. It is therefore important that our team are confident in identifying, acknowledging, and working effectively with trauma, particularly when supporting those experiencing a gambling addiction, given the relationship between the two. The loss of someone to suicide is a traumatic experience, and often leads to complex grief. It is important that we are able to understand suicide bereavement as a traumatic grief, in order to work with our Paul's Place service-users in the most appropriate and effective way.

Over the past 12 months, we have built on our clinical understanding and therapeutic practice regarding trauma-informed care. Our team have attended several **trauma-focused training sessions**, to incorporate this practice into their work both on the gambling addiction, and the suicide bereavement programme. BCT have arranged for further trauma and addiction training to be carried out with staff later this year. This ongoing training allows us to ensure we are offering safe and effective treatment that is specific to the individual's needs, and our practice evolves with the ever-growing literature and evidence-based treatment for both addiction, and suicide bereavement. The development of our trauma-informed work will also further benefit any additional treatment programmes BCT work on in the future.



# BCT AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS



## The One Show (One Big Thank You) Award

In 2022, Kathy Devlin the Clinical Manager and one of Co-founders of Paul's Place BCT received a One Big Thank You Award from the BBC, presented by Strictly's Shirley Ballas. Over the last 5 years since Paul's Place was launched, Kathy has helped so many individuals and families who have been bereaved by suicide across Merseyside. Kathy was under the impression she had been invited to be interviewed about Paul's Place, but it was up to Shirley to break the news to Kathy that today was all about her. "I'm here on behalf of The One Show to give you a One Big Thank You for all the work that you have done to help so many families, to be there for people, for everything that you've created in Liverpool." We are so proud of Kathy for everything she's created at Paul's Place.

We believe we can say on behalf of our community, *One BIG Thank You Kathy.*



## HELLO Magazine Inspirational Award

Paul's Place BCT won the HELLO magazine inspirational Awards 2022. Paul's Place Co-founders, Kathy Devlin, Agnes and Joe Williams attended the event and collected the inspirational award.

Speaking to HELLO about winning the award Kathy Devlin said: "This was born from personal tragedy in both families and for the people that are left behind, because there isn't any help out there.

We've got to strive; our mission is to get a Paul's Place in every city. Suicide affects everybody, not just the poor or rich. The people left behind need help."



## Impact Community Award

We are delighted and so very proud to announce that our Paul's Place Suicide Bereavement Support Service received the Liverpool Community Impact 2023 Award, from Shantanu Kundu, CEO of the BE FREE Campaign. We felt very privileged to be sat amongst so many inspiring people, who work tirelessly, day by day, to promote social inclusion, champion social justice and, above all, provide vital support to vulnerable groups.

Thank you to everyone involved with the event, it was a fantastic evening, and we are overjoyed with our award.



## Dr Rosena Allin-Khan MP, as our Patron

During her visit to Liverpool for the Labour Party Conference, Dr Rosena Allin-Khan, MP (Shadow Cabinet Minister for Mental Health) accepted our invitation to visit our Paul's Place BCT. After hearing from people who share a lived experience of losing loved ones to suicide, she was visibly moved and vowed to support us in any way she possibly could. During her visit to us, she commented that "one of the things about suicide bereavement is it is unique, in how it affects people. It would be fantastic if such services (as Paul's Place) could be replicated around the country; because we know suicide is all too common." The nature of her work as an A&E doctor in a busy London hospital, means she frequently deals with not only people who are suicidal, but also those bereaved by suicide. She has witnessed first-hand, the devastation that suicide brings and how no specialist support exists, for these very vulnerable people. Before she left, we asked Dr Khan if she would consider being a Patron for Paul's Place BCT and we are absolutely delighted to say she agreed.

## BCT First Conference - Building for the Future

In March 2022, BCT held their first conference in Liverpool. It was an all-day event, consisting of team members from BCT presenting and sharing all the programmes and projects they work on. We had guest speakers from GamCare, Ara Recovery for All, Unite the Union, Gordon Moody, and Epic Restart Foundation, who discussed the services they offer and their collaborative work with BCT. It was a day of discussion and insight, an opportunity to learn and share the work we do and services we offer to help others. It was a successful, informative, and collaborative event, which we are very proud of.

## Make Every Contact Count (MECC) for Mental Health Training

This year, several members of the BCT team became trainers in the MECC for Mental Health course, accredited by Royal Society for Public Health. The course aims to raise awareness and instil confidence in professionals in supporting roles, and to engage in meaningful conversations with individuals about their mental health using evidence-based approaches. The training gives trainees the tools to have brief yet effective conversations with individuals about their mental health, and the information to signpost and refer to appropriate mental health support services. The team have started rolling this training out to our internal team, as well as external organisations and look forward to continuing this training with other organisations going forward.

# SERVICE USER FEEDBACK

## GAMBLING SERVICE USERS...

Thank you for helping me. I have not bet once or even thought about betting. Having the right things in place to make it impossible to gamble and also the support from yourselves and my girlfriend. I have completely changed my priorities. I can't thank you enough!

I feel a new person compared to the person who gambled last year. I have closed the gambling chapter in my life and will never gamble again. The counselling that was on offer helped me through this. Thank you!

## AFFECTED OTHER SERVICE USERS...

You were so helpful at a time when I didn't know where to turn. As I uncovered my husband's gambling it was a scary place to be in and you helped me navigate all of this.

Since me and my partner (who had the gambling issues) have completed our counselling, we have been in a really good place. He hasn't relapsed and our problems have massively deteriorated. Our finances have improved drastically, so I feel a lot more at ease and stable. I do believe that he has made the changes, and is refraining from gambling. Thank you for all of your help.

## PAUL'S PLACE SERVICE USERS...

Talking to someone who has that specialist and personal understanding of suicide and suicide bereavement was key. Compassionate and listening ear along with suggesting strategies that were realistic and beneficial. Knowing that other family members could also access counselling sessions too was a big weight of my shoulders.

To go through something so traumatic, having someone to speak to was a great help. To hear how I was feeling was normal in the circumstances. To have an objective person to try and help make sense of something that there was no making sense off. I do not know if I would have coped without Paul's Place.



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**Phone:** 0151 226 0696

**Email:** [support@beaconcounsellingtrust.co.uk](mailto:support@beaconcounsellingtrust.co.uk)

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**BUILD ON THE PAST,  
WORK IN THE PRESENT  
AND PLAN FOR THE FUTURE...**