

IMPACT REPORT

2024 - 2025

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FOREWORD

It has been another exceptionally busy year here at BCT, as the whole team continue to provide quality-driven early interventions, education and treatment pathways right across our North West footprint to thousands of beneficiaries. BCT has the largest regional population engagement level in England, in regards to gambling-related harm.

This has been achieved following a year-long proactive campaign to increase awareness and opportunities for early intervention. Delivered through thousands of professionals and community members across healthcare, education, criminal justice and armed forces sectors to identify and respond to gambling harms. Our commissioned programmes reach a broad audience, including parents and professionals working in youth and broader public facing roles.

Here at BCT, we believe we are thought leaders and are the lead provider on a number of national gambling harms programmes.

This strategic leadership role has enabled our programmes to reach in excess of 35,000 beneficiaries across the national footprint. This increase has been achieved, in part, due to our system mobilization across our Armed Forces Programme, which has proven a huge success in its first year of delivery. We are establishing a system leadership role across several contracts and embedding strong formal and informal partnerships across the gambling harms space, by ensuring that we prioritize collaboration via adopting a system-wide perspective across our delivery methodology. As our commissioning landscape changes, we look forward to supporting NHS England and OHID in providing an inclusive and holistic gambling harms support framework.

As always, the senior leadership team at BCT is constantly looking at ways to improve our service offer and provide meaningful engagement with all service users, volunteers, partners and staff, by providing services that are co-produced and informed by close collaboration with service providers and lived experience. This year the organisation volunteered to become the first gambling harms support provider to be audited by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and I am very

proud to say that the report provided by CQC at the end of this process, was exemplary and a credit to the whole team. The drive and ambition that the team possess is a credit to all involved and endorses and evidences the outstanding reach the organisation has achieved over the year. Whether this is our national Armed Forces Programme, our invaluable Paul's Place project, working with marginalised communities such as those experiencing financial harm or ethnic minority communities or delivering training to the Care Quality Commission (CQC). All of this work takes time, and trust needs to be built up, and everyone involved with BCT works hard to ensure that relationships are developed so our service users are provided with services that meet their evolving needs.

It is again my pleasure to thank all those involved with BCT for their compassion, dedication and commitment that is consistently shown in the work they do. I hope you find the following report interesting, informative and uplifting.

Darren Melia

Darren Melia
Chair of Trustees
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.**

SINCE OUR LAST REPORT

Great progress has been made across all of our early intervention and education programmes and within our treatment provision, which is evidenced and reflected across the system impact that has been achieved.

Over the past 12 months, the teams have continued to make huge inroads into affecting system change across the gambling harms space. Focusing on working alongside our lived experience partners has enabled BCT to develop some groundbreaking work and innovative interventions. We have now established a robust, appropriate and informed offer that supports the needs of our neurodiverse, veteran and ethnically diverse communities. Enabling BCT to adapt and mobilise appropriate community-based services, where need has been identified from within their informed lived experience community.

BCT's work is developed and delivered primarily across the Northwest footprint, which supports our region-first approach, including our Paul's Place, which is a suicide postvention service that delivers an amazing service across Merseyside, ensuring that families have a safe space to go to in their hours of need. BCT continually strives to learn, adapt and develop services that reflect its service users diverse and evolving needs. We work hard as an organisation to achieve this ambition, in a manner that is safe, effective and caring by advocating and supporting strong and fair leadership. BCT is ambitious to learn and adapt, whilst being committed to improving the lives of our invaluable service users, staff, volunteers and organisational partners.

This ambition is reflected in the continuous growth and reach that has been achieved year-on-year by the whole team at BCT.

BCT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

Over the past year, BCT has further enhanced and invested in its quality assurance team

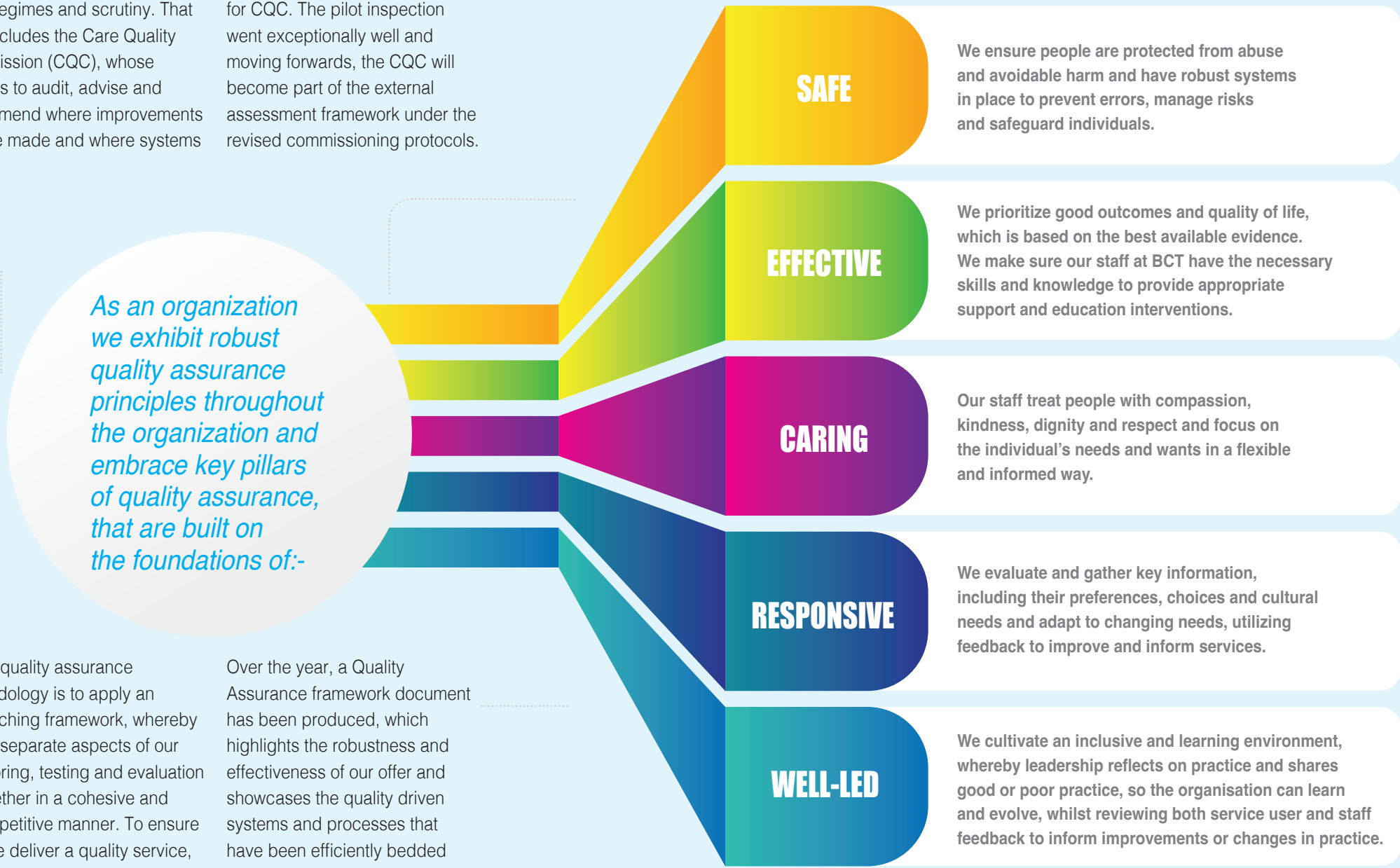
This became a key area of focus due to the increased growth and reach of the organization, that now includes BCT leading on several national programmes, which means that BCT has needed to open its quality assurance systems to additional audit regimes and scrutiny. That now includes the Care Quality Commission (CQC), whose role it is to audit, advise and recommend where improvements can be made and where systems are working well for the service users. BCT volunteered to become a pilot assessment organization to support the CQC in developing a robust audit framework that would be fit for purpose in the gambling harms space, as this was a new remit for CQC. The pilot inspection went exceptionally well and moving forwards, the CQC will become part of the external assessment framework under the revised commissioning protocols.

Our internal quality assurance systems check the quality, timeliness, robustness and integrity of all our prevention, education and treatment pathways.

By adopting internal evaluation systems that include the use of data analysis, secure case management systems, spot checks, observations, stress testing and risk analysis. As our role as lead provider

has developed over recent years, we now act as commissioner on several contracts, which also means we monitor, track and evaluate the contractual delivery of not only ourselves but our key partners. To ensure that we work cohesively and objectively, to achieve all our contractual obligations. As a learning organisation, BCT embraces the demands that robust governance

and evolving commissioning frameworks place upon us. We are very committed to constantly adapting and improving our quality assurance practices and protocols, ensuring that we are constantly in-line with NHS protocols and NICE guidelines, whilst encompassing the CQC's assessment framework.



BCT's quality assurance methodology is to apply an overarching framework, whereby all the separate aspects of our monitoring, testing and evaluation fit together in a cohesive and non-repetitive manner. To ensure that we deliver a quality service, that places service users at the heart of treatment and support.

Over the year, a Quality Assurance framework document has been produced, which highlights the robustness and effectiveness of our offer and showcases the quality driven systems and processes that have been efficiently bedded into all our services, which is available on our website.

PROGRAMMES & PARTNERS

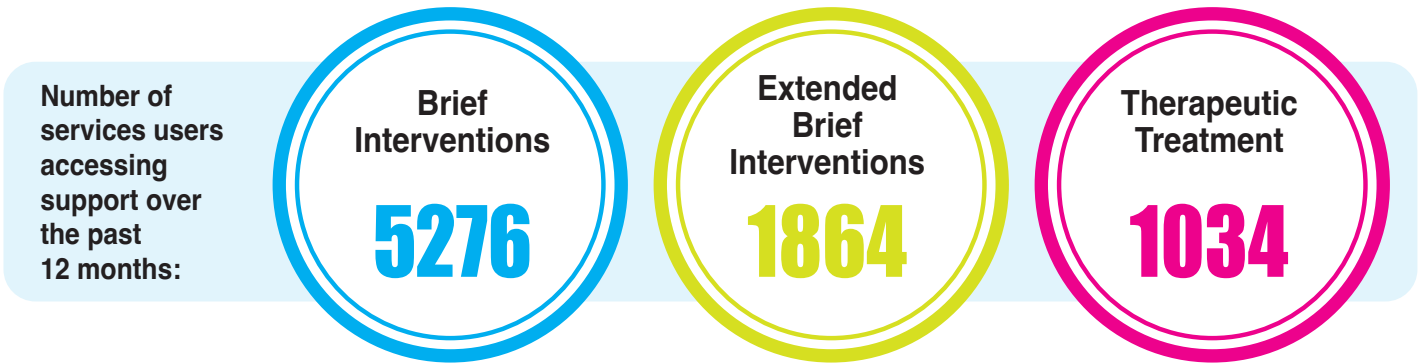
GAMBLING HARMS SUPPORT

BCT continues to work across the North West as a leading provider of education, early intervention, treatment and recovery support within the National Gambling Support Network. This has been BCT's 11th year working in the gambling harms space and our gambling support programmes have gone from strength-to-strength over the past 12 months.



We have seen significant growth in our gambling harms programme this year across our different levels of support, from our tier 1 (Brief Interventions), tier 2 (Extended Brief Interventions) and tier 3 support (one-to-one or couples therapy), as well as our range of holistic recovery support options, which include group support, practical support sessions and Trek Therapy.

GambleAware



Through the promotion of our Gambling Harms Workplace Charter, Bet You Can Help training and our partnership building with organisations such as drug and alcohol services, debt advice services, local community groups, we have really

embedded gambling harms awareness, screening and support pathways across the North West over these 12 months, which has allowed us to support more individuals this year than we ever have before.

NICE Guidelines

This year saw the publication of the long-awaited NICE Guidelines for Gambling-Related Harms Identification, Assessment and Management. This has been important in highlighting gambling harms as a public health issue that requires the attention and understanding of not just those in public health but health care professionals and professionals working in supporting roles. The guideline recommendations around priority groups to engage with, such as those who have engaged in criminality, those with neurodiversity etc, align closely with the target groups BCT have worked with over the past 12 months through our local systems work. It is also positive to see the recommendations of support include practical and holistic support and collaboration with other services to address issues such as debt, homelessness and co-morbid addictions. This has been a big focus at BCT this year (see partnership work). The guideline recommendations around treatment emphasise the importance of including psychoeducation, group and peer support, CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy) and support for affected others – all of which BCT offer for free with no waiting list.

NICE National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

A Stratified Care Approach to Gambling Harms Support

This year, BCT has embedded a stratified care approach to its gambling harms support. The approach refers to the matching of subgroups of service-users to specific support pathways. This allows for our support to be service-user-led and each care pathway is tailored to the individual's needs. These pathways are put in place based on an in-depth comprehensive assessment, which incorporates service-user choice, risk, safeguarding, presentation and wider influences.

This approach ensures everyone has the opportunity to access quality and effective treatment specific to their needs, whether that be at BCT or with one of our trusted partners. Throughout this report, you will see the range of local and national services BCT have partnered with over these 12 months to offer a holistic, stratified care model for all our service-users.

PROGRAMMES & PARTNERS

Our Partners Within the NGSN

BCT continues to work closely with all our partners across the National Gambling Support Network to ensure the right level of support is offered at the right time. Some of these organisations include:

- Adferiad, who offer rehabilitation support for those with long-term mental health issues alongside gambling and detox for those with co-morbid addictions.
- Primary Care Gambling Service, who offer primary care support for physical and mental health issues alongside gambling harms support through one-to-one and group therapy.
- Gordon Moody, who offer residential support for gambling harms.
- As well as many other recovery and peer support services, such as BetKnowMore and Thrivin' Together, who are partnering with us for aftercare.



Primary Care Gambling Service



Impact of Gambling Harms on the Family Unit: A Call for Recognition and Support

Gambling addiction continues to be a significant public health issue with consequences that extend far beyond the individual. Families, often the first line of support, can be significantly impacted by the emotional, financial and psychological challenges that present because of gambling harms.

These impacts on the family unit have been under-recognised in policy and service provision.

By embedding a whole-family lens into service delivery, BCT's stratified care model ensures that no one is left behind in the recovery process.

Between the 1st of April 2024 and the 31st of March 2025, BCT provided Tier 3 structured support to 142 individuals identified as affected others, which included family members, partners and friends impacted by someone else's gambling behaviour.

Recognising and resourcing the family unit is not just compassionate, it is essential for breaking the cycle of gambling harm and building resilient communities in our region.

Through stakeholder events, conferences and regional health platforms including 'It's Mental Live' in Bolton, our brief interventions highlight both the widespread need and the confidence placed in BCT's holistic, trauma-informed approach.

This model follows the launch of the Whole Families Framework in May 2024. The conference served as a regional call to action, promoting a place-based, collaborative approach to tackling gambling harms through the lens of family systems and intergenerational trauma.

THE KEY THEMES OF THIS PROGRAMME INCLUDE:

- The recognition of gambling harm as an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE).
- The importance of early intervention an trauma-informed practice.
- The role of lived experience in shaping services.
- The need for cross-sector collaboration and workplace engagement.
- Core prevention and education learning for public health professionals and local systems.

Our primary focus in this area has been on health and social care, with extension of training and partnerships with Early Help teams, family hubs, social prescribing services, mental health and wellbeing networks, community trusts, legal partners, financial institutions, debt and national family charities, such as The Family Fund. Across the region has also opened doors to other local grassroot third-sector organisations and social enterprises that support whole households.

One of our key partnerships has been with an anti-poverty charity, The Brick, which supports those impacted by financial hardship. This collaboration has encompassed the delivery of Bet You Can Help training to their outreach teams whilst our service users have benefited from access to free household goods from the Brick Multi-Bank. The team at BCT can facilitate delivery of goods for anyone who is currently accessing treatment or recovery support programmes.

The Emergency Essential Needs Programme facilitated by Children in Need and The Family Fund is another of our partners which is there to support children and young people in crisis. BCT are a registered referrer of the programme and so are eligible to make monthly referrals. We have utilised the scheme for the funding of critical household items from kitchen appliances, beds, baby equipment or even emergency clothing.

Recognising the full scope of the gambling harms impact is essential for developing effective, compassionate and inclusive support systems. As we move forward through 2025, our whole families strategy will be focused on encouraging further policy shifts, with systems established to reflect the reality of the impact of families living with gambling harms.

CASE STUDY

“A Fridge, a Future, and a Fresh Start”

In October 2024, a mother-of-three entered treatment with BCT overwhelmed by gambling harms, financial hardship and emotional trauma.

With no joy in gambling, she had faced suicidal thoughts and deep isolation. Through our Whole Families Programme, she received holistic support: mental health referrals, food aid and practical help including emergency funding for a broken fridge-freezer. This small, but vital, intervention through the Family Fund lifted a heavy burden, restoring dignity and stability to her household. Today, she remains abstinent, is studying for exams in preparation for university and is seeking new employment with the help of our referral to SmartWorks charity, which provides women with support to improve their CV-writing and provides clothing for individuals to attend job interviews.

All this proves that compassionate, wrap-around care can transform lives.



Continued support is about restoring family dynamics, rebuilding trust and breaking cycles of harm through both practical and emotional needs. The 142 individuals supported this year and additionally gamblers in recovery support, represent entire family systems that have been stabilised, supported and empowered.

PROGRAMMES & PARTNERS

BCT Lived Experience Alliance: Shaping Strategy Through Shared Experience

In 2024, the Lived Experience Alliance (LEA) at BCT continued to be a driving force behind our mission to deliver responsive, inclusive and impactful support for individuals and families affected by gambling-related harm.

The LEA brings together individuals with lived experience, both those directly affected by gambling and affected others,

that have accessed and completed treatment and support with the service. The core aim of the monthly meetings is to oversee and co-produce services, influence policy and to help steer local community awareness. This year, their contributions have not only deepened the quality of our support but also steered the strategic direction of several key programmes.



KEY CONTRIBUTIONS AND STRATEGIC INFLUENCE

1

Whole Families Programme

LEA conversations were instrumental in the foundation and reshaping our Whole Families Programme. Insights from affected others highlighted the need for:

- Earlier intervention for children and young people.
- Family-inclusive therapy models.
- Greater flexibility in how families access inclusive and culturally sensitive support.

2

Recovery Support and Recovery Cities Model

The LEA has been central to the evolution of our recovery support and recovery cities initiatives. Their lived insights helped:

- Identify gaps in post-treatment support.
- Develop peer-led recovery communities.
- Promote inclusive, stigma-free environments in local recovery hubs.

3

Risk Awareness and Emerging Harms The LEA turned its attention to emerging risks, particularly:

- The normalisation of gambling among young people through online gaming and influencer culture.
- The rise of black-market gambling, which bypasses regulation and increases harm.
- The lack of awareness among parents, educators and frontline professionals.

These discussions will continue to inform new educational campaigns and risk-mitigation strategies, including:

- School-based awareness sessions through our 'Sometimes It's More Than A Game' workshops.
- Community briefings on illegal gambling platforms.
- Advocacy for stronger digital safeguards.

Facilitated by Treatment Manager Lauren Campbell and Family Support Worker Nicola Jaques, the LEA continues to be a powerful agent of change within BCT. Lived experience is not just heard – it is embedded in every layer of BCT's work.

“Being part of the Alliance has helped me turn my experience into something meaningful - we’re building something better for the next generation.”
— LEA Member

As BCT builds on its core programmes, the LEA will remain at the heart of strategy, ensuring that every part of our service delivery and regional community engagement is grounded in empathy, authenticity and the real-world experiences of those we serve.



PROGRAMMES & PARTNERS

Recovery Support Provision

Our recovery support provision has been offered to every client completing their therapeutic journey with BCT in a bid to empower individuals to reclaim their lives after the impacts of gambling-related harms.

Over the last year, our recovery support initiative has delivered targeted, person-centred support to individuals affected by their own gambling or the gambling of a loved one. Through a holistic and compassionate approach, we have supported clients in stabilising their lives, rebuilding relationships and ongoing personal development in a bid to increase their support network, minimise legacy harms and maintain lasting recovery. We have devised a range of tailored support to meet the client where they are in their recovery journey, whilst providing opportunities to reflect and improve in all key aspects of their lives and the lives of their families.

Feedback for the aftercare group:

‘I look forward to our Thursday evenings. I like that I can come on the group and be totally honest about things I wouldn’t want to bring up with my partner’.

‘I’ve loved the group, it’s been brilliant’.

WE HAVE PROVIDED:

Weekly online peer support groups, safe, non-judgemental spaces where clients can share, learn and support each other. We have delivered tailored content around prominent themes in the groups, such as rebuilding relationships, setting boundaries, building self-esteem, sleep hygiene, eating well, mindfulness, meditation and goal setting for the future.

The opportunity for multiple guests to share their lived experiences and offer tips on how they are maintaining their recovery.

Empowering Recovery Through Peer Support, supporting individuals were interested to use their lived experience to become peer supporters, promoting autonomy, Recovery Cities and the Five Ways to Wellbeing, transforming recovery into leadership and community impact.

1-2-1 practical support sessions with focused help on goal setting and signposting into relevant external service partners including finance organisations such as CAB and Payplan, who offer expert guidance to our clients with benefit support to debt management, budgeting and benefits support.

citizens advice

PayPlan®

Housing: Preventing homelessness, sourcing food vouchers and referring into energy suppliers who can support with payment plans and advice for our clients.

Relationships and emotional support: We have built rapport with our clients and have provided regular check-ins to assess their mental health and have referred onto services or referred into our treatment support, as was appropriate for our client’s safeguarding needs. Female-specific support: we have established a referral pathway with ‘Thrivin’ Together’, a network community for women affected by gambling harms.

Trek Therapy wellbeing walks which have been offered to our clients every month with the option for them to bring a friend. Our walks were designed to promote physical and mental wellbeing through nature immersion and movement. Our walks aim to reduce feelings of isolation by offering peer connection and professional support as well as enhancing self-care practices, building resilience and can complement other areas of recovery treatments.

- In March of 2025, the BCT team presenting at Deal Me Out’s Illegal Gambling Market Summit in Manchester



Illegal Gambling Market

In 2025, BCT has intensified its efforts to combat the growing threat of illegal gambling. BCT have been working alongside charity Deal Me Out, culminating in their participation at the Black Market Gambling Summit in Manchester. This landmark event brought together experts, policymakers and individuals with lived experience to address the alarming rise in unregulated gambling, particularly among our vulnerable communities.

BCT’s Clinical Director, Neil Platt, and his team played a key role in the summit, sharing insights on the psychological and social impacts of illegal-market gambling. BCT emphasised the need for education, early intervention and tailored support services to counteract the appeal of unregulated platforms, which often exploit young people and those already experiencing gambling harms.

Deal Me Out’s accompanying Black Market Evaluation Report revealed that over 420,000 UK school children may be engaging with illegal gambling sites, often driven by influencers/content creators.

BCT aim to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing digital landscape with July’s North West Gambling-Related Harm Stakeholder Meeting, which will focus on the Illegal Market. This online event will feature both internal and external speakers aiming to raise awareness of this issue amongst key stakeholders. Moving forward, BCT’s early intervention, education and treatment programmes will all consider the illegal market as a major issue facing our service users, from educational content focusing on the illegal market to service users being screened for any gambling across this market during initial assessment.

PROGRAMMES & PARTNERS

BET YOU CAN HELP PROGRAMME

The ‘Bet You Can Help’ (BYCH) gambling-related harms (GRHs) training programme has been the BCT flagship education offer to professionals, organisations and stakeholders for the previous four years. This programme continues to be well-received, with requests for training constantly coming from a wide range of individuals and groups.

The programme has consistently centred its outcomes in developing participants knowledge, skills and attitude concerning the subject with a focus on supporting learners to develop confidence in understanding the associated risk factors, impacts and specialist support available to those at risk of, or experiencing, gambling-related harms.



Furthermore, the programme seeks to ensure those enrolled on the programme increase their confidence and competence in opening up conversations about gambling, implementing screening and identifying those at risk of gambling harm as early as possible. A cornerstone of BYCH has always incorporated the importance of ‘making every contact count’ in relation to supporting individuals and others who may be vulnerable to gambling-related harm. BCT emphasise and specify the importance of reducing harms, whilst addressing stigma and factors that increase the risk of gambling harm through working on wider determinants such as trauma, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), poverty, comorbidities, loneliness, gambling advertising and marketing factors. The programme, through participant engagement, consistently receives positive feedback across the North West and beyond from the learners and professionals who participate.



• The Care Quality Commission (CQC) receiving the ‘Bet You Can Help’ Level 2 Award training

Programme Reach and Feedback

During the previous 12 months, the BCT Early Intervention and Education Team have delivered 300 BYCH training workshops and reached 4151 individuals who have accessed either the 90-minute version of the programme or the Royal Society of Public Health (RSPH) Level 2 accredited Award.

On assessment of participants experiences (through pre & post surveys) regarding the programme, individuals overall express that their confidence in understanding the impact of gambling-related harms on health and wellbeing increased by 61% following attendance. Additionally, participants rate their confidence in administering a brief intervention concerning gambling increased by 64% through participating in the programme.

Post-workshop surveys show that participants satisfaction of the course exceeded their expectations 93% universally. One participant, Chorley Council Social Prescriber, commented on their experience of BYCH expressing

“I now know the importance of screening for gambling-related harms. I will be suggesting we change our screening questions to my team this afternoon.”

Participants consistently rate facilitators delivery and the quality of the content as a high and value the inclusion and involvement of lived experiences as extremely positive as a key element of the programme.

Post-training benefits regarding the programme from participants within Blackpool, through BCT’s on-going training collaboration with Blackpool Council’s Public Health Team, found that participants rated their knowledge of gambling-related harms as 6.3 from a possible 10 prior to attendance collectively. This score increased to 9.5 following their attendance from post-evaluation analysis confirming that participants gain considerable insights concerning gambling-related harm from engagement in the programme.

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• Professionals from Warrington and Tameside attending the ‘Bet You Can Help’ training programme



PROGRAMMES & PARTNERS

Feedback on the BYCH programme from Blackpool training cohorts:

- Useful, really informative and definitely think all staff will benefit from it (even non-customer facing).
- Ensure I include appropriate questions in meetings with clients and support where necessary.
- Be confident in asking clients if they feel they have an issue with gambling.
- Excellent course very well delivered.
- This programme has provided a better understanding and confidence to discuss gambling and related harms with families and the support available.
- Nice easy delivery from presenter.
- Lots of practical advice to put into practice and information around signposting.
- Jon and Chris were very good.
- I am going to ask about adding the screening tool to use with parents.
- I will actively promote the Gambling Harm and Beacon Counselling Trust.
- I will ask the screening question when first meet clients.
- Very good and engaging training!
- I now realise there is much more on offer for people struggling with gambling. Thank you!
- We have a gambling harms group at our Hub. I will go back and speak to those that run it and tell them all about this course and what I have learnt. Thank you :-)
- Very informative and I will be more alert to possible alarms. Excellent presenter.

A notable example of the programme supporting individuals considered to be at greater risk and vulnerable to gambling harms is demonstrated through the BYCH programme being delivered at HMP Altcourse in Merseyside. BCT and HMP Altcourse professionals observed that they have seen an increase in gambling-related harms knowledge of 65% with 100% of prison cohort attendees feeling confident enough to talk about gambling harms after the session.

Recently, various inspectorate staff from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) attended the Level 2 Award programme. The rationale for this was for their inspectorate team to gain a greater understanding of gambling harms to support their roles. Additionally, the National Crime Agency (NCA), approved the BYCH programme for all their staff that have supportive roles within

their organisation including mental health first aiders and occupational health.

In the early part of the 2025, BYCH was adopted as the national education offer across the National Gambling Support Network (NGSN), with partners RCA Trust, ARA Recovery for All, BetKnowMore, Breakeven, NECA and Aquarius now all providing this training programme in their regions.

BCT seek to engage more organisations and services both locally and nationally in addressing gambling harms within our communities, in collaboration with partners across the NGSN.

For more information about BYCH, or to express an interest in the programme, email: bych@beaconcounsellingtrust.co.uk



• Blackpool BYCH

YOUNG PEOPLE'S EDUCATION PROGRAMME

This year marked a significant change in our Young People's Gambling Harm Prevention Programme, as our partnership with GamCare came to an end. In November 2024, we hosted the event 'Working Together to Co-Design Our New Gambling Harms Education Programme for Young People and Professionals'.

This event was attended by numerous stakeholders from various capacities across the North West, all dedicated to supporting young people. Following this remarkable event, we developed 'Sometimes It's More Than A Game' (SIMTAG), an exciting new workshop to be delivered across the North West to young people, professionals, parents and carers. Since August 2024, our team has reached over 5,656 young people, 505 professionals and 155 parents and carers.

Our team have been actively building new and strengthening existing relationships with stakeholders throughout the North West. We continue to support The King's Trust, delivering to initiatives across the North West, including Halton Healthy Schools, Wirral Met College, John Moores University, Lancaster Grammar, Stockport School's Healthy Minds Day, various college fresher's events, Bolton Safeguarding Children's Partnership, Stockport Safeguarding Children's Partnership and Upholland High School's Character and Culture Day.

With the introduction of the new programme, we have established new relationships with stakeholders across the North West.



We were invited to deliver SIMTAG to all year 8 students at Archbishops Beck Catholic College and Cockermouth High School. In addition, Formby High School invited our team to deliver assemblies to years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, with workshops planned for years 12 and 13 in the next academic year. SIMTAG also saw our team return to Preston College, where we delivered workshops to students from a variety of courses and backgrounds. In one day, over 200 students engaged with workshops and learned about gambling-related harms in the digital world. Through BCT's partnership with Blackpool Council, our team led Blackpool & Fylde College's 'Gambling Harms Awareness' fortnight. Over two weeks and two campuses, more than 1,100 students participated in SIMTAG workshops. Students provided feedback, saying:

"I learned about all different forms of gambling and where to go if I need help." and "I learned that gambling affects the brain in different ways and you sometimes need support to break these habits. I now know that gambling doesn't just affect older people, but young people as well."

Delivering to professionals, parents and carers is also a crucial part of SIMTAG. Our team has engaged professionals at Blackpool College, all teaching staff at North Liverpool Academy, Preston College, local authorities and Blackpool Family Hub.

As we continue to develop and expand our new programme, our aim is to embed gambling harms education within all our existing relationships and establish new ones in areas of the North West where we are not yet established. We have seen the positive impact our sessions can have in supporting young people. We will continue to develop our stakeholder network, drawing on their expertise and feedback to ensure our programme remains relevant to those we deliver to.



• Young people attending SIMTAG workshops

PROGRAMMES & PARTNERS

DIVERSE COMMUNITIES PROGRAMME

This year, BCT continued its work with diverse communities across the North West, with a strong focus on culturally-sensitive approaches to gambling harm.

A key highlight of this work is the Trust's partnership with Preston Muslim Forum, through which they have delivered the 'Breaking the Sharam' programme within the South Asian Community.

'Breaking the Sharam' aims to challenge stigma and silence around gambling-related harm within South Asian communities, recognising that cultural shame and fear of judgement often prevent individuals from seeking help.



Through this partnership, BCT and Preston Muslim Forum have delivered targeted outreach, included screening for gambling harm in a community setting and provided advice on how to refer anyone impacted into appropriate levels of support. The programme also includes the delivery of the 'Bet You Can Help' programme with specialist content focusing on the gambling in the South Asian Community. So far, over 50 faith leaders, community members and professionals have engaged with the 'Bet You Can Help' programme, with 15 receiving a level two award in tackling gambling-related harm.



Together with Preston Muslim Forum, BCT is breaking barriers, reducing stigma and ensuring that no community is left behind in the journey toward reduce gambling-related harm. BCT have also developed work with several other diverse community organisations, including Wirral Multicultural Organisation, where BCT have attended events to bring focus to gambling harms and discuss the issue with members of many different communities. BCT also presented at the Diversity Network group in Tameside which has led to some excellent engagement and key stakeholder relationships being developed.

WORKPLACE CHARTER

The Workplace Charter to Reduce Gambling Harms (WPC) has been a key initiative as a core element of the work BCT delivers through its support to organisations across the North West and beyond. The programme is often referred to as a 'game-changer'.



A fundamental component incorporated into the initiative is the requirement to develop a gambling harms workplace policy that serves to protect the wellbeing of an organisations employees and support the business with robust human resources structures and protocols. Only recently, a report produced by Liverpool John Moores University and Liverpool City Council provided critical insight into the prevalence and impact of gambling-related harms across Liverpool highlighting the importance of the WPC in its key recommendations.

The WPC, as ever, includes access to education and training through the Royal Society of Public Health (RSPH) accredited 'Bet You Can Help' programme. This training supports organisations to develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes concerning gambling and gambling-related harms to implement screening and pathways into support across The National Gambling Support Network (NGSN). Another important feature of the training is assisting practitioners to develop their professional practice concerning gambling in relations to building confidence in engaging individuals at risk of, or experiencing, gambling-related harms including 'affected others.'

Over the previous twelve months, BCT has worked collaboratively with a range of voluntary and statutory sector organisations, who have demonstrated their commitment to reduce and address gambling-related harms and join the membership of organisations who are registered as WPC signatories.

To date, the WPC now has 41 organisations registered as part of this initiative's membership with a further 33 organisations expressing a commitment to pledge inclusion of the programme.

Organisations who have joined the list of Workplace Charter signatories during the last year include Wirral Council, Involve Northwest and Sefton Council.

Interest in the WPC continues to grow with Lancashire and South Cumbria and Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Boards, expressing a commitment to the initiative along with other organisations such as the Care Quality Commission, Northumbria Police, Bedfordshire Police, Cambridgeshire Police and Hertfordshire Police.

BCT are thrilled and excited with the progress that has been made with the WPC. This initiative has now been embedded into the operations of the wider NGSN partnership as part of the mobilising systems work through the 10-Point Plan approach. Nationally, the WPC is being promoted and supported by RCA Trust in Scotland, ARA Recovery for All in the South West and Wales, BetKnowMore in London and the Home Counties, NECA in the North East, Breakeven in the South East and East of England and Aquarius in the Midlands, encouraging more businesses, employers and organisations to become charter signatories. In doing so, promoting a safer environment for employees, communities and the wider public concerning gambling-related harm.



Wirral Council join the Workplace Charter to Reduce Gambling Related Harms initiative, June 2025



Members of Sefton Council signing the Workplace Charter, June 2025

The WPC has

41 organisation registered with a further 33 expressing a commitment

Cllr Christine Howard, Sefton Council's Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, said:

"At Sefton Council, we are crystal clear that our staff are our greatest asset. They are the ones delivering vital day-to-day services to our residents. That's why it's so important we do everything we can to support them, not just in work, but in facing any wider personal challenges they may be experiencing.

By signing the Gambling Harm Prevention Charter today, gambling harm will be on an equal parity to more visible addictions like alcohol or drugs. This commitment helps break down the stigma that too often surrounds gambling issues.

We now have the skills, knowledge and understanding in place to offer meaningful support to our workforce. Sefton businesses should absolutely sign up to this Charter. The Beacon Counselling Trust can support them with training and guidance to build capacity and create a culture of awareness and support.

The more organisations that sign up, the more we can make Sefton a safer and more supportive place to live and work, and that's something we all want for our community."

PROGRAMMES & PARTNERS

CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROGRAMME

Over the past year, the focus has been on embedding the offer from BCT and the wider NGSN into UK policing organisational policy, processes and systems. Efforts have been made to ensure that all organisations are maximising the use of the BYCH training programme and to gain parity for gambling harms alongside other addictions.

Key successes include the establishment of the National Gambling Taskforce, led by the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC), with representation from all criminal justice organisations and providers. BCT serves as a key stakeholder and Subject Matter Expert within this group. Notable progress has been made through our presentations at the APCC Victims Conference, including the introduction of a refreshed Criminal Justice Handbook that features BCT and BYCH prominently

with good practice examples and ongoing work with the Howard League to influence Sentencing Council guidance—seeking to treat defendants with gambling harms on par with those suffering from other addictions. We are in the early stages of BCT leading a national lived experience group focused on policing and financial investigators are increasingly recognising the compounding impact of Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA)

applications on individuals with gambling harms, particularly the effects on their families and children and the link to Gambling Related Adverse Childhood Experiences (GRACES). Investigation teams are now applying Restitution Orders to secure victim compensation from gambling operators rather than defendants. Additionally, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) is working with police to identify and expand the use of treatment pathways in Out of Court Disposals for relevant cases.

All police forces have now been briefed on the Criminal Justice Pathway to Address Gambling Harm document developed by BCT and partners. There is a marked improvement in screening and diversion rates from custody. Custody systems have also been updated to flag gambling alongside other addictions.

The Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) are now expected to raise gambling-related harms within local partnerships, develop appropriate responses and integrate this issue into key local strategies, such as the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy or local addiction/mental health plans.

A directive is in place requiring all forces to provide custody and offender management staff access to Level 2 BYCH training, while front-line officers and staff must complete Level 1. Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) teams are being asked to include gambling on their vulnerable persons referral forms

and ensure referral pathways to local providers are in place. Furthermore, all forces have been instructed to review the prevalence of suicides linked to gambling harms and ensure robust investigation, particularly in cases tied to financial stress.

The BYCH training has been presented to the National Taskforce for professionals working with offenders and others affected by gambling harms. In addition, we are currently coordinating a joint NPCC/APCC Gambling Conference for 2026, aimed at raising awareness of the links between gambling harms and crime. The conference will encourage collaboration between criminal justice and public health agencies to develop a place-based

approach targeting the most vulnerable communities and promote a unified response to gambling harms through Local and National Criminal Justice Boards.

We are also advocating for His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) to include gambling within their vulnerability and partnership inspections. Finally, work is underway to better understand the prevalence and determinants of gambling harms and assess their broader societal and systemic impacts, including the financial cost to the criminal justice system and implications for prosecution practices such as culpability and mitigation.



• Working in partnership with Merseyside Police and Wirral Multicultural Organisation



Arresting Gambling Harms within the Criminal Justice System

PROGRAMMES & PARTNERS

TREK THERAPY

The Trek Therapy ‘Wellbeing Walks’ programme has been a core element of BCT’s aftercare offer, providing free monthly scheduled activities. This forms part of our therapeutic support offer for both our Paul’s Place Suicide Bereavement Support Service and services users from the Gambling-Related Harms programme, following treatment, through the NGSN.

The benefits to BCT service users of nature connectedness and walking in the outdoors regarding physical and mental health is well-evidenced.

WALKING IN NATURE IS KNOWN TO HAVE THE FOLLOWING BENEFITS:



Reduce stress and anxiety through as this helps to lower cortisol (the stress hormone) and promote calmness.



Walking improves cardiovascular health, joint mobility and balance.



Access to nature stimulates a sense of connection to something larger than yourself.



Improves mood through exposure to sunlight and green spaces, boosting serotonin and dopamine.



Walking supports immunity. Walking in nature (especially forest and woodland environments) increases natural killer cell activity.



Observing nature leads to feelings of appreciation, joy and gratitude.



Time engaging in nature has been shown to improve attention spans and cognitive performance, especially in those with ADHD or high stress levels.



Promotes better sleep. Exposure to natural light helps regulate circadian rhythms.



Time spent in the outdoors can promote positive personal outlook reducing rumination whilst encouraging clarity.



Promotes mindfulness, grounding and being present as nature encourages slower breathing and present-moment awareness.



Sunlight helps the body produce Vitamin D, which is essential for bone and immune health.

During the last twelve months, this complementary offer to BCT service users, delivered by Trek Therapy, has engaged **95** participants who have visited more than **20** amazing outdoor locations such as Darwen Tower and the Lancashire moorlands, Teggs Nose in the Peak District, the Pennine moors, Hilbre Island, Gisburn Forest, Loughrigg Fell, Rydal Water and Dovestone Reservoir.

FEEDBACK FROM SERVICE USERS EMPHASISE HOW THE PROGRAMME AND THE ENVIRONMENT TREK THERAPY OPERATE PROMOTES WELLBEING AND STIMULATES POSITIVE PERSPECTIVE. TREK THERAPY WELLBEING WALKS PARTICIPANT SAID:

“The walk and environment allowed for some peace and quiet that was much needed and time to completely stop, reflect and move forward in a clearer mindset.”

The Trek Therapy programme team and its participants look forward to more outdoor adventures and a deeper health restoring connection to nature throughout 2025-26.



• Earnsdale Reservoir Lancashire



• Trek Therapy participants visit Loughrigg Fell and Anglezarke Reservoir



PROGRAMMES & PARTNERS

ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY PROGRAMME

Armed Forces Gambling Support Network (AFGSN) - Proudly supporting our armed forces community.

In February 2024, BCT launched the development of the AFGSN to deliver work over a three-year period within the armed forces community concerning gambling and gambling-related harms. The core function of the AFGSN seeks to prevent and address gambling related harms targeting the armed forces community whilst promoting awareness, screening, identification and early access to support.

The AFGSN collaboration is brought together and consists of agencies from across the NGSN and includes the following partners BCT (Lead Organisation), ARA Recovery for All, RCA Trust, BetKnowMore and Breakeven. A core number of the programme team are themselves veterans with several practitioners having 'Lived Experience' of gambling-related harms.

Gambling has a higher prevalence in the armed forces than the wider society, with veterans identified as being ten times more at risk of gambling-related harms adversely impacting them and those around them than the average UK population (Dymond et al 2021). Further evidence, through a study conducted by The RAF Benevolent Fund in 2021 found that 2-5% of serving RAF personnel are considered to suffer severe gambling harms. This evidence reflects the vulnerability in serving personnel to external coercive influences in relation to gambling.

The objective of this programme is to reduce the risk and incidence of gambling-related harms amongst the armed forces community, including 'affected others',

by creating an enduring support service for armed forces serving personnel, including reservists, friends and family members, veterans and cadet forces.

The programme incorporates 'Bet You Can Help' as part of its engagement across the armed forces community targeting serving armed forces personnel and reservists, cadets and adult cadet instructors, veterans and agencies, projects and services who support the armed forces community. Achievements in the first year have seen the project record 554 engagement events facilitating gambling-related harms training to 2343 individuals and delivering 'making every contact count' (MECC) universal interventions with 8833 beneficiaries through awareness raising opportunities, health promotions, community engagement, wellbeing activities and informal discussion groups, drops-ins, breakfast clubs and supporting armed forces networks and forums. The total engagement figure reached by the AFGSN for 2024 -25 stands at 11,176. This exceeded the projects key performance indicator delivery output by 4926.

Additional projects include positive activities through the Armed Forces Gambling Support Group, which engages service users who had the opportunity to participate in a wellbeing and resilience refocused residential programme supported by Wordsworth Grasmere in the Lake District Cumbria. Another successful event has been the development and production of a mini documentary film titled The Unseen Enemy, which provides a platform that enabled the voices of veterans with lived experience of gambling harms to express their experiences and explore the wider factors relating the gambling harms within the military. A proud moment

for the project was also being a recipient of the Armed Forces Covenant Silver Award under the Employers Recognition Scheme.

The range of stakeholders involved the AFGSN work includes organisations such as Op Courage, Army Welfare Service, Defence Medical Services, Help for Heroes, SSAFA, the Royal British Legion, Tom Harrison House, Healthier Heroes, Veterans Launchpad, RAF Wyton, RAF Spadeadam, RAF Valley, RAF Honington, Veterans First, MOD Lyneham, HMS Raleigh, Nelson, Sultan & Collingwood, Dale Barracks, Office for Veterans Affairs, 156 RLC Supply Regiment, Tidworth Garrison, veterans association groups and many third sector organisations who support veterans.



• BCT become Silver Award recipients of the Armed Forces Covenant Employers Recognition Scheme

AFGSN total engagement reached was
11,176
in 2024-25

EXAMPLES THROUGH TESTIMONIALS OF SOME OF THE WORK THE AFGSN PROVIDES IS REFLECTED IN THE FEEDBACK:

"Thank you so much for the training yesterday. It has been very well received. I have no doubts that as Case Managers we will be asking more questions and more on the lookout for the signs that a beneficiary may be struggling with this area." – Help for Heroes



To find out more about the project or to express an interest in the 'Battling the Odds' gambling-related harms training programme please email:
armedforces@beaconcounsellingtrust.co.uk

• The Royal Tank Regiment, Tidworth Garrison attend 'Battling the Odds'

"May I please relay the sentiments from many of our participants including practitioners, therapists and volunteers, who told me how much they enjoyed and valued the Battling the Odds training."

– Tom Harrison House

"I don't mind admitting, I was sceptical of the need at first as gambling has never registered on my radar as a problem. The training has changed my perception. I will be sure to promote the training within Lyneham, and within future roles. I cannot believe it was free, and had it not been, I would still be ill informed and unaware of the dangers. Simply, thank you."

– Capt WT Gazi IEng MIET CMgr MCMI REME

The programme is optimistic as we go into our second year. We will continue to strive forward in making a positive impact in preventing gambling harms with the armed forces community and increasing access to treatment and support pathways for those at risk of or experience gambling-related harms. A forthcoming and key development in the programme in making more people aware of gambling harms within the military has been recognised by the British Forces Broadcasting Service who are working with the AFGSN to feature gambling issues via its various programmes and platforms throughout 2025.

PROGRAMMES & PARTNERS

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

During 2024/2025, BCT has continued working with Wirral Community NHS Foundation Trust, within the weight management service. Working as part of a multi-disciplinary dietetic team, BCT provides a psychotherapeutic service for patients accessing the tier 3 weight management programme. This includes one-to-one counselling sessions, psychoeducation and cognitive behavioural therapy to support patients in achieving their weight loss goals.

Sessions focus on increasing patient’s self-awareness, insight and understanding of their relationship with food and eating behaviour helping them develop healthier lifestyle choices and ways of coping.

Over the past year, BCT has provided therapeutic support to 56 patients on the programme, with a total of 168 counselling and CBT sessions completed.

NHS
Wirral Community Health and Care
NHS Foundation Trust

SESSIONS AIM TO HELP INDIVIDUALS:

- 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 change eating habits.
- Develop healthier ways of coping, to replace emotional ‘self-soothing’ through food.
- Address underlying emotional issues that keeps them ‘stuck’ in unhelpful behaviours.

Feedback from patients continues to be positive. They report sessions have helped them learn about themselves, changed the way they think and feel about food and eating and increased self-confidence.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND LOCAL SYSTEMS ENGAGEMENT

Over the past year, BCT has continued to work with public health teams, the third sector and local systems to raise awareness of, and promote, action on gambling-related harm. One of the key tools for engaging with these systems is the 10-Point Plan, a series of prompts to support the development of good practice for gambling-related harm across our local systems. Approved by the North West Gambling-Related Harm Steering Group in 2023, this plan includes awareness-raising through the delivery of the ‘Bet You Can Help’ training programme, setting up referral pathways, screening for gambling harm and the Workplace Charter amongst others.

BCT promotes the 10-point plan and GambleAware data on the prevalence of gambling harm in each local authority area alongside the take up of treatment and support with each of the Directors of Public Health. Notable engagement includes attending the Lancashire and Cumbria Public Health Directors Network to present the 10-point plan and BCT support available alongside attending Lancashire County Council’s Health and Wellbeing Board.

BCT has continued its work with Blackpool, Blackburn and Darwen, Knowsley, Liverpool City Council, Wirral, Sefton and Cumbria, supporting events in each of these areas and attending their gambling-related harm working/steering groups. Wirral Council and Sefton Council have now signed the Workplace Charter and are promoting the 10-point plan to their local partners. In addition, BCT are working with local authorities across the region to raise awareness and develop frameworks and policies to support both communities and organisations.

SOME OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND LOCAL SYSTEMS BCT ENGAGE WITH INCLUDE:

- Blackburn
- Cumberland
- Westmorland and Furness
- Wirral
- Lancashire
- Tameside
- Knowsley
- Blackpool
- Sefton
- Cheshire East
- Cheshire West and Chester
- St Helens
- Liverpool
- Wigan
- Warrington

BCT is working with the integrated care systems in Lancashire, South Cumbria, Cheshire, Merseyside and both the ICBs have committed to sign the Workplace Charter, raising the profile of gambling-related harm. BCT also presented on gambling-related harm to the safeguarding leads in Cheshire and Merseyside and raised the issue with Greater Manchester, Lancashire and South Cumbria safeguarding leads as it is clear that young people and vulnerable groups are at particular risk of gambling harm.

Work with NHS Trusts and Primary Care has also progressed as the new NICE guidelines on gambling harms have recommended that frontline staff are made aware of the issue. Lancashire and South Cumbria Mental Health Foundation Trust have trained frontline therapists through the ‘Bet You Can Help’ programme and are now extending the training to their initial response service across the whole of Lancashire and

South Cumbria. A key area of success for BCT has been its work with Wirral Council’s public health team and involvement in the Wirral gambling harm steering group. This has led to delivery of three council led workshops for stakeholders across Wirral, the development of an excellent strategy to reduce gambling-related harm with BCT contributed to and the signing of the Workplace Charter.



PROGRAMMES & PARTNERS

GENERAL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

This year, BCT have continued to build on last year’s fantastic stakeholder work both regionally and nationally. We have seen the North West Gambling Related Harm Stakeholder Group reach more participants as we continue to lead the way in the region, covering topics such as neurodiversity, the Armed Forces Community, the workplace, diverse communities and the co-production of the new ‘Sometimes It’s More Than a Game’ young people’s programme.

Our stakeholder work across our local systems remains a key priority in our efforts to reduce gambling-related harm with continued focus on our relationships with anchor institutions such as local authorities, particularly public health teams, health and social care services, the criminal justice system, Armed Forces Community and the community, faith and voluntary sectors.

BCT continue to influence gambling harm strategy at place with involvement in a number of gambling-related harm forums or working groups in areas such as Wirral, Warrington, Liverpool, Cumbria and Blackpool.



• Our Clinical Director Neil Platt, opens our Stakeholder Group Event in Liverpool

NEURODIVERSITY

Beacon Counselling Trust (BCT) recognises that neurodivergent individuals—particularly those with ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)—are disproportionately affected by gambling-related harm. In response, BCT has partnered with Deflect + Protect to embed neuroinclusive practices across its services, ensuring that support is accessible, empathetic and effective for all.

This collaboration is rooted in the understanding that inclusive environments benefit everyone. BCT has created a therapeutic space where individual needs are acknowledged and respected. This includes adapting counselling approaches, physical environments and digital content to reduce sensory overload and improve communication with the neurodivergent population.

Deflect and Protect have provided neurodiversity training for all of BCT’s members of staff tailored to both education and treatment teams. BCT have also developed educational content for the ‘Bet You Can Help’ programme to raise awareness of how the neurodiverse community are a high-risk group for gambling harm. BCT is also redesigning its website and social media content to reflect its neuroinclusive ethos.



• Ali from Deflect and Protect, supporting BCT with their neurodiversity work

PAUL’S PLACE SUICIDE
BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT PROGRAMME



Referrals – Client Support

From April 2024 to March 2025, we have had 102 people access our vital Paul’s Place Suicide Bereavement service resulting in 1087 client hours of therapy.

During this period, we have also had a number of requests for support from people outside of Merseyside. We continue to respond to such requests by signposting to “Suicide&Co”, who offer a similar service to ours. Their catchment area is anywhere in the UK except Merseyside. They too will provide our details to anyone from Merseyside who seeks out support with them. We have also clarified Amparo’s service offer locally and will make referrals to their service on occasions where clients may not be suitable for service with Paul’s Place. Amparo continue to make referrals into Paul’s Place in return. At the moment, we are happy to continue with this method of working, as it benefits all involved.

We also continue to receive referrals for people who, on assessment, have presented as having more complex mental health needs or co-morbidities that indicate that, at that time, they require support to be focused in other areas. Through GP contact and other signposting, we are able to request timely interventions that give opportunity for these clients to re-access Paul’s Place at a future date.

Community, Partnerships and Outreach Work

As we look to diversify future funding streams, we have started to build relationships with a number of organisations. In early 2025, Liverpool FC Foundation agreed to offer support to our Paul’s Place Programme and, whilst this is in the early stages, we have been encouraged by the support offered already. Our Team have also attended events at Barclays, Pub Invest Group and appeared on regional podcast The Man Hug and on Radio Merseyside.

In 2024, local celebrity and member of Frankie Goes to Hollywood, Brian “Nasher” Nash, was officially appointed as our first ever Paul’s Place Ambassador. Through his work in local arts and as a celebrant, Brian continues to promote and raise awareness of the service and he has already provided invaluable help in his contributions to the organisation of the May 2024 Skydiving event as well as providing helpful local connections.

We look forward to working further with Nasher in future.

In early 2025, we became a member of Support After Suicide Partnership who support a wide range of organisations to adopt best practice in suicide bereavement service provision.

• Our Paul’s Place Ambassador Nasher/Brian Nash with our fundraising team at the Wirral Coastal Walk

• Cheque presentation with Bermans Solicitors for Paul’s Place BCT



In a 12 month period
102
people accessed
our service
resulting in
1087
client hours
of therapy

Lottery



• Paul's Place
Journey of Discovery

Paul's Place is in the final year of funding from The National Lottery Community Fund for our aftercare and holistic support programme.

Having met with the Regional Funding Officer in mid-January 2025 to discuss the positive community impacts of our work, we were encouraged to make a further bid for support from The National Lottery Community Fund over the next few years. Stage 1 of this bid will be completed in early-to-mid 2025 with the outcome due in 6 months.

Past funding helped secure the purchase of a minibus which has been vital in ensuring that service users are given opportunities to connect with others through shared experiences whilst also making connections with nature and environment. The groups offer great variety in experiences and continue to be well-subscribed and appreciated. In 2025, we have further extended our Journeys of Discovery offer and the feedback from Service Users has been excellent:

"Thanks to Paul's Place who have helped me so much"

"We had a wonderful time together, it was so lovely, everyone was happy and relaxed. Thank you to Paul's Place for all of your planning, I will always remember our lovely time together"

"I can't thank you all enough for the most wonderful couple of days that I have had in years, I feel very blessed. Thank you to everyone for bringing colour back into my life"

OUR WELLBEING GROUP HAVE ALSO PROVIDED FEEDBACK HIGHLIGHTING THE IMPORTANCE OF THESE GROUPS IN PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT TO SERVICE USERS:

"It's good to gain understanding the mechanics of how your body responds to trauma. It's helpful to understand why certain things are happening both physically and mentally."

"It helped me dealing with my grief and breathing methods to help me relax"

"I feel that I have bonded with the group and that I care about them and that they care about me. We talk openly about things that are affecting us."

"I have found it a great support psychologically, emotionally and educationally."

SERVICE-USER
FEEDBACK AND
ACHIEVEMENT

Feedback from Service Users

GAMBLING
SERVICE USERS

"It was a great service that gave me support in a time in need and put me on a path of improvement. I feel without this service my life would have fell apart. Thank you."

"I've not gambled a penny since my sessions finished, it has changed my life for the better. Getting the help was 100% worth it, getting things off my chest over the phone to someone who wouldn't judge me or put me down. Thanks for the Help Beacon. You're all amazing!"

PAUL'S PLACE
SERVICE USERS

"Paul's Place was very helpful in me coping with the loss of my Son to suicide. Paul's Place is so important and everyone is so caring and understanding."

"Support from Paul's Place has been invaluable, from my first contact I've found it a warm and easy to access resource. The facilities are really nice (as are the staff!) and I've found it a safe environment to address difficult feelings I'd be scared to address elsewhere. It's really helped me and helped me to help myself."

AFFECTED OTHER
SERVICE USERS

"My therapist just understood me and my situation. She didn't judge what was going on. She listened to how I had been affected by a close family member and their gambling addiction. It was hard to speak up about it as I wasn't the one with the addiction but needed therapy? But that's one of the key points about addictions, its not just about the person who has the addiction, its how it affects those around them. Those closest to them that have to deal with it all. Those around them that feel helpless, guilty and fearful for what happened next. I have managed to put barriers up to help me, and look at the situation from the outside in, realising what I am doing is enough. I honestly cannot thank Beacon enough for helping me."

"Thank you for everything. I wouldn't be where I am today if it wasn't for BCT. Since getting support, I have healed physically, mentally and I am much happier."

Fundraising Events and Donations

Between April 2024 and March 2025, Paul's Place has received over £100,000 in donations. This amount includes a wide variety of fundraising events, legacy donations, one-off personal donations and donations from charitable sources, as well as the regular donations we receive from individuals and organisations. We are optimistic that, between April 2025 and March 2026, we can match or increase this amount.

In May 2024, a Team of 25 people, including Paul's Place Service Users and their friends and family members helped to raise an incredible £19,597 by taking part in a Tandem Skydive event. This is the most raised from one single event since Paul's Place was founded.

In 2024, we again raised funds through the annual Wirral Coastal Walk. From 2025, there is a change in the organisation of the event with Mid Wirral Rotary Club taking over, we have engaged closely with them to ensure that participant numbers, and hopefully fundraising, for Paul's Place increases. This year's Wirral Coastal Walk is on 06/07/2025 and there is already increased interest in the event.

In September 2024, Quest hotel in Liverpool raised over £1000 through completing the Yorkshire 3-Peaks Challenge.

In early 2025, we were approached by a regional hospitality chain which put on a white-collar boxing event.

Pub Invest Group were keen to use an event to raise funds for Paul's Place and, on 31/03/2025, an event was hosted at one of their venues that involved 34 staff members taking part in 17 bouts – they had participated in an 8 week boot camp prior to this – over £8,500 was raised through this event and we look forward to fostering this relationship and working again with this group going forwards.

We have also continued to receive amazing support from Bermans Solicitors, RGS Golf Society and The Rose of Mossley amongst other local organisations. We will continue to work with individuals and organisations to support them in raising vital

funds for Paul's Place through fundraising events whilst also looking to generate new sustainable funding streams through partnerships with supportive local companies.

• Top: Quest Hotel Team
Bottom: 2024 Wirral Coastal Walk



BCT AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

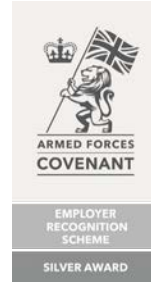
Skydive for Paul's Place

In May 2024, 25 fundraisers skydived for Paul's Place raising in excess of £19,000. This is the largest amount of funds we have ever raised through a fundraising event. We want to take this opportunity to thank all of those who took part in the skydive and to their families and friends who attended in support. This will allow us to provide free and specialist support to those bereaved by suicide in the Merseyside area.



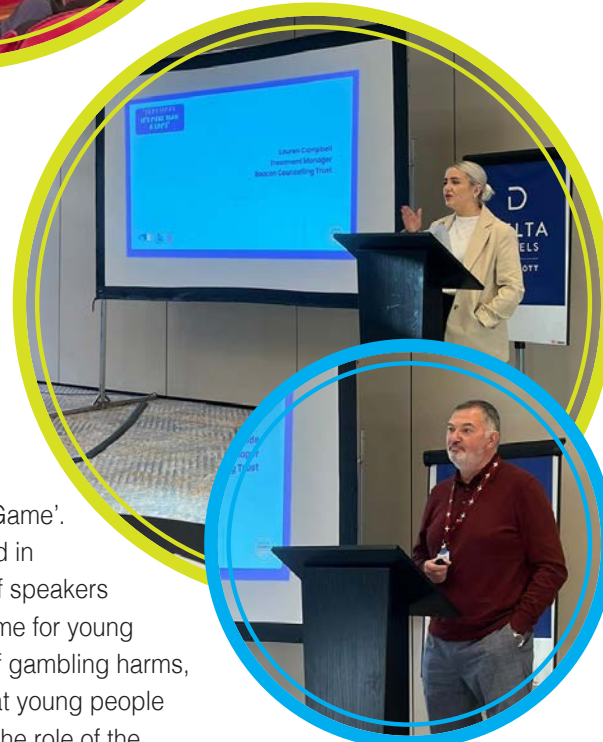
Armed Forces Covenant Silver Award

We were delighted to announce that, in June 2024, we had been awarded a Silver in the Defence Relationship Management (DRM) Employer Recognition Scheme. Everyone at BCT was thrilled to celebrate this fantastic news and we are proud to support our Armed Forces Community.



North West Gambling Harms Stakeholder Event

In November 2024, BCT hosted a stakeholder event in Liverpool focusing on the development and co-production of our new gambling-related harms programme for young people, 'Sometimes It's More Than A Game'. Over 50 stakeholders attended in person to hear from a range of speakers about the need for a programme for young people to address the issue of gambling harms, new and emerging themes that young people face related to gambling and the role of the illegal gambling market as a particularly risky behaviour for young people.



The First Screening of 'The Unseen Enemy'

In January 2025, we were proud to showcase the first screening of 'The Unseen Enemy', a short film that explores gambling-related harms within the armed forces and veterans' community. Partner organisations include ARA Recovery for All, RCA Trust, Breakeven, BetKnowMore, HopeGill Media and the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust. We received excellent feedback from the event.

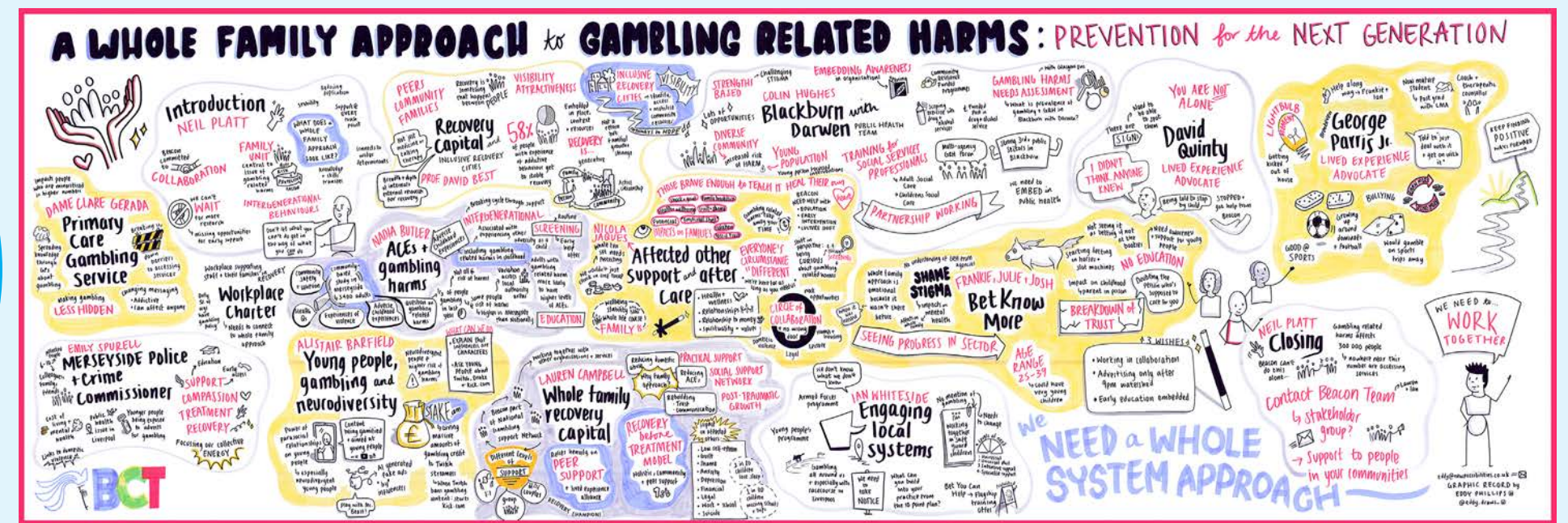


Our Paul's Place Ambassador is.... Brian Nasher

We were delighted to announce and welcome a newly appointed ambassador to our Paul's Place service, Brian 'Nasher', Nash from Liverpool 80's music legends Frankie Goes To Hollywood! Nasher has already been involved in supporting our Paul's Place service and it was important for us to have someone who we know had a real understanding of the service and support we offer.

A Whole Family Approach to Gambling-Related Harms Conference

BCT held its 'Whole Family Approach to Gambling Harms' Conference, the first of its kind within this sector and it was amazing to see the conference oversubscribed with attendees from the NHS, the third sector, public health, mental health, lived experience services and criminal justice. Highlights from the conference were shared across our socials and website, through images, clips and feedback.



BCT AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Sian on This Morning

In April 2025, our Early Intervention and Education Lead, Sian, bravely spoke on 'This Morning' ITV show about her lived experience of gambling-related harm and how BCT supported her. We are extremely proud of Sian and the work she carries out across our Education Team here at BCT.



Nicola named MBE for Services to Prevention of Gambling Harm

BCT'S Family Support and Intervention Worker, Nicola Jaques, was named in the Honours list as a recipient of an MBE for Services to Prevention of Gambling Harm. We are very proud of Nicola to receive this special award. It is a huge recognition of the dedication and excellent work carried out by Nicola and everyone at BCT.



Staff Wellbeing & Appreciation Group (SWAG)

Last year, a new group was formed a BCT, with the purpose of creating a platform where team representatives could share feedback from their teams on ways to improve staff wellbeing and plan social events. To date the SWAG group have attended multiple team meetings, sent out staff wellbeing questionnaires and planned events to crazy golf, comedy clubs and walks around local parks. To allow staff to enjoy some sociable time outside of work environments and create some team-building relationships. We look forward to planning more SWAG meetings and events in the next year which will hopefully improve overall staff wellbeing and appreciation at BCT.

BCT Team attend the House of Commons

BCT were thrilled to attend the House of Commons in June 2025. The event was held in support of our work with the Armed Forces Gambling Support Network a national programme committed to preventing and reducing gambling-related harms with the armed forces and veterans' community. The event was extremely well-attended by a range of key stakeholders seeking to address gambling harms within the armed forces community and engage with our offer. Receiving support from prominent politicians, including Alex Ballinger MP, will help promote this programme across all sectors but fundamentally those that support our armed forces.





BEACON COUNSELLING TRUST

Reg. Charity No. 1140011

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@BCTNorthWest



Beacon Counselling Trust

263 Townsend Lane, Clubmoor

Liverpool L13 9DG

0151 226 0696

support@beaconcounsellingtrust.co.uk

www.beaconcounsellingtrust.co.uk

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