



# Youth Advisory Board

## Breaking down the barriers for young people engaging in support

Report

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# Background

Since April 2022, GamCare's Youth Advisory Board (YAB) has provided an unique voice within the gambling harm charity sector.

A primary concern of the Youth Advisory Board has been breaking down the barriers for young people when engaging in support or treatment services. This report delves into their efforts to combat this issue.

Over the course of five sessions, in collaboration with GamCare's Young People's Service, the YAB identified the key barriers young people face when potentially engaging in support.

The Youth Advisors further worked together to formulate solutions to the identified barriers.

**Through their identification of these barriers and creation of solutions the Youth Advisory Board have published this report to aid not only gambling support services but all services to foster a more accessible support environment for young people.**



# Demographics

The Youth Advisors that completed this piece of research consist of 55 young people with an average age of 15, from across 21 different ethnicities, a range of genders including representation of neurodiverse young people, LGBTQ+ community and young people with disabilities. Situated across the entire UK.

# Methodology

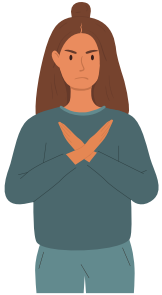
Using an interactive whiteboard (Mural) each Youth Advisor highlighted the key barriers young people face when engaging with support services.

Via the use of voting tools the YAB then indicated which barriers were the highest priority this led to a focused approach using the whiteboard on identifying the solutions needed.

Through discussions within small and large groups using real life case studies from our Young People's Service the YAB were able to pinpoint key moments in engagement that could be developed.

An example of the whiteboard used can be found in Appendix 1.

# Key Findings: Understanding the Challenges



## Stigma & Denial:

A significant barrier is the stigma surrounding gambling harm. Young people fear judgement from their peers and social circles, leading them to avoid admitting they have a problem. This can be compounded by negative stereotypes associated with seeking help, making them feel weak or incapable.



## Service Delivery and Trust Issues:

Trust concerns can be a major hurdle. Young people may be apprehensive about confidentiality practices and worried about potential breaches of privacy. The way services are delivered also plays a role. Inconsistent communication methods (e.g., relying solely on email) and a lack of flexibility in scheduling appointments can make it difficult for young people to engage consistently. Furthermore, unrealistic expectations about the pace of recovery can lead to discouragement if initial progress feels slow.



## Lack of Awareness and Accessibility:

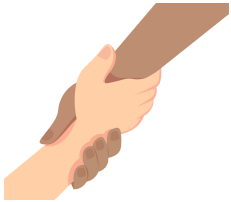
Many young people simply aren't aware of the support services available or how to access them. Traditional outreach methods might not be reaching them in the spaces they frequent, like schools or online communities. Additionally, some services make assumptions about consistent access to technology, creating a barrier for those without reliable devices or internet connections.



## Personal Challenges:

Financial limitations can prevent young people from seeking professional help. Busy schedules or time constraints can make it difficult to maintain consistent appointments. Another challenge is the lack of readily available alternative activities to replace gambling habits, increasing the risk of relapse. The initial steps of seeking help can feel overwhelming, and some young people may be discouraged by past negative experiences with support services.

# Key Findings: Recommendations for Improvement



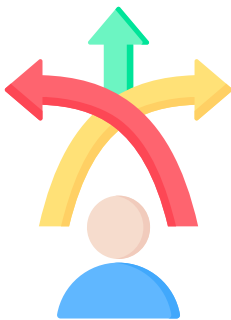
## Promote Awareness and Normalise Help-Seeking:

Increase the visibility of support services in schools, youth centres, and online spaces frequented by young people. Develop targeted campaigns that normalise seeking help for gambling problems and challenge negative stereotypes associated with addiction.



## Multiple Access Points and Clear Communication:

Offer a variety of contact options (phone, text, online chat, apps) to cater to different preferences and comfort levels. Ensure clear communication about confidentiality practices and outline realistic timelines for progress. This transparency can help build trust and manage expectations.



## Tailored Support and Flexible Services:

Develop age-appropriate resources and consider establishing peer support groups specifically for young people. This can provide a safe space for shared experiences and build a sense of community. Additionally, explore alternative, financially accessible support options like online resources or support groups, alongside flexible scheduling options for appointments.



## Building Trust and Success Stories:

Showcase success stories from young people who have overcome gambling problems through support services. Highlighting positive outcomes can inspire others to seek help and demonstrate the effectiveness of available resources.

# Youth Advisory Board: Solutions for identified barriers to engagement



The Youth Advisory Board identified that from the above barriers could collectively be tackled by two main solutions:



## Awareness

(via Social Media)

## Trust



# Youth Advisory Board: Solutions for identified barriers to engagement



## **Awareness** (via Social Media)

The Youth Advisory Board (YAB) highlighted the importance of social media for reaching young people and emphasised the need for content that resonates with them. Here's a breakdown of key considerations for effective social media engagement:

### **Snackable Content for Short Attention Spans:**



Develop concise videos optimised for platforms like YouTube Shorts, Snapchat, and Instagram Stories. Leverage animation, relatable scenarios, and popular music to grab attention quickly and deliver impactful messages within seconds. Consider incorporating subtitles or captions to ensure accessibility for viewers who may not have the sound on.

### **Relatable and Authentic Voice:**

Ditch the patronising tone. Speak directly to young people's experiences and avoid stereotypical portrayals. Humour can be a powerful tool when used strategically, but ensure it remains relatable and avoids trivialising the challenges of gambling harm. Consider using testimonials from young people who have benefited from the service to create a sense of authenticity and shared experience.

### **Visually Appealing with Interactive Elements:**



Incorporate eye-catching visuals and animation to stand out in the crowded social media landscape. Polls, questions, and engaging captions can spark conversation and encourage viewers to think critically about gambling habits and support options. Run contests or challenges that promote healthy alternatives to gambling, like participating in sports or creative activities. This can not only raise awareness but also encourage social interaction among young people seeking support.

# Youth Advisory Board: Solutions for identified barriers to engagement



## Awareness (via Social Media)

The Youth Advisory Board identified the main social media platforms that young people of 2023-24 use today, they feel it is key that organisations publish content on at least 2 of these platforms if they want to increase their youth audience engagement. With TikTok as voted for as used the most.



Snapchat



Instagram



# Youth Advisory Board: Solutions for identified barriers to engagement



## Trust

The YAB also stressed the importance of building trust with young people. Here are some key strategies to move beyond generic statements on websites and foster a sense of security:



### Demystifying Confidentiality:

Develop clear, concise infographics or short videos that explain what information is kept confidential and under what circumstances confidentiality might need to be breached (duty of care). These resources should be easily accessible on your social media platforms and website.



### Accessible Information:

Don't overwhelm young people with lengthy legal jargon. Provide simplified versions of privacy policies and FAQs in clear, understandable language. Consider offering these resources in multiple languages to cater to diverse audiences.



### Humanising the Service:

Showcase the professionals behind the service. Share their stories and commitment to confidentiality and ethical practice. This approach helps young people see the service as staffed by caring individuals, not a faceless entity. You can use short video profiles or interview snippets to introduce staff members and allow young people to connect with the people who will be supporting them.



### Creating a Safe Space:

Assure young people from the outset that their concerns will be heard without judgement. Emphasise that seeking help won't get them into trouble. This can be particularly important for young people who fear repercussions from parents or guardians. Consider offering support groups or online forums specifically designed for young people, where they can connect with others facing similar challenges and feel safe sharing their experiences.



# Youth Advisory Board: Moving Beyond Social Media



While social media offers a powerful outreach tool, it's important to remember that not all young people are active on these platforms. A comprehensive approach should consider these additional strategies:



## Partnerships with Schools and Youth Organisations:

Collaborate with schools, youth centres, and community organisations to raise awareness about gambling harm and available support services. Develop age-appropriate educational resources and presentations that can be delivered in safe and trusted environments.



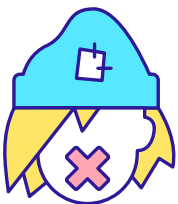
## Public Awareness Campaigns:

Develop targeted campaigns for online and offline spaces frequented by young people. Utilise creative messaging and visuals that resonate with their interests and concerns. Consider collaborating with influencers or young people who can speak authentically to their peers about the challenges of gambling harm.



## Addressing Financial Barriers:

Explore options for providing financial assistance to cover costs associated with treatment, such as therapy sessions or support groups. Partnering with community organisations or charitable foundations can help bridge this gap and ensure that financial limitations don't prevent young people from seeking help.



## Addressing Stigma:

Develop anti-stigma campaigns that challenge negative stereotypes associated with gambling harm. Promote positive narratives that showcase the courage and strength it takes to seek help and overcome addiction. Partner with young people who have recovered from gambling harm to share their stories and inspire others.

# Key Findings: Conclusion



In conclusion, this report sheds light on the intricate web of challenges young people face when seeking help for gambling problems. Fear of judgement, lack of awareness about available resources, anxieties surrounding confidentiality, and limited accessibility of services all contribute to low engagement and service dropout rates. These findings underscore the urgent need for a multifaceted approach that dismantles these barriers and fosters a more supportive environment for young people struggling with gambling harm or any other challenge.

The Youth Advisory Board (YAB) offered invaluable insights into how to bridge this gap. Social media presents a powerful platform for reaching young people with engaging and relatable content. Short, visually-appealing videos with clear messaging and authentic testimonials from young people who have overcome challenges can resonate with their peers and encourage them to seek help. Building trust is also paramount. Clear communication about confidentiality practices, readily available information in accessible formats, and showcasing the human faces behind the service can all contribute to a sense of security and encourage young people to take that first step towards recovery.

By implementing the recommendations outlined in this report, not just gambling harm prevention and treatment services, but all services that work directly with young people, can evolve to become more approachable and youth-friendly. This not only empowers young people to seek the help they need but also fosters a positive shift in the wider landscape of youth support services. Investing in accessible and supportive services for young people contributes to a healthier and more responsible environment for everyone, creating a ripple effect of positive change throughout society.

# Key Findings: Appendix



## This week

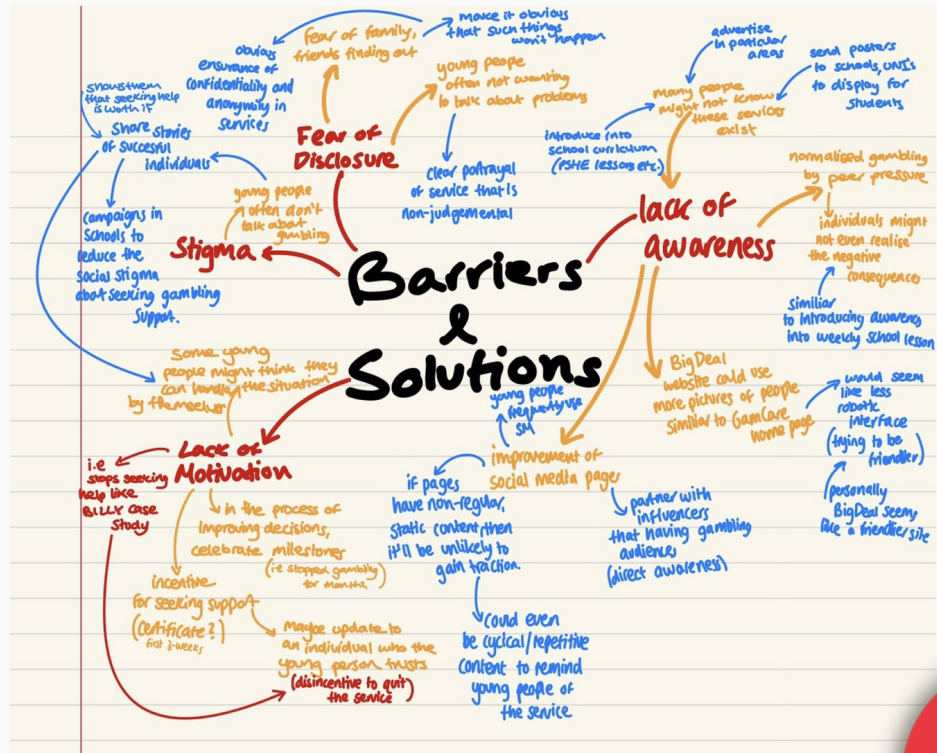
Identify Barriers to Engagement

10 minutes

Write down what you think are the potential reasons/barriers that young people don't engage in services or drop out of services after first engagement



WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED COME BACK TO ZOOM TO VOTE FOR YOUR TOP 3 BARRIERS



# Key Findings: Appendix



## Solutions to the barriers you identified last week



### Social Media

- What is engaging?
- What would you want this content to look like?

maybe short ads on snapchat	Short form content (because of short attention spans)	Focus on your target audience by using one platform like YouTube shorts for ads and Facebook for adults	Ensure its relatable and makes people reflect.	Use examples for why people could engage (such as general and how they can help reach out)	focus on youtube shorts with people speaking directly?
Use popular audios or songs to reach a larger audience	If you can use a well known person to endorse them, that they already know to encourage your content and help.	Use popular audios or songs to reach a larger audience	If it is not immediately seen as an ad or boring	Use examples for why people could engage (such as general and how they can help reach out)	focus on youtube shorts with people speaking directly?
The most engaging forms of content are typically short-form, with captions	Colourful and short too make people listen and engage.	Attention grabbing ads to keep the attention of young audiences or advertising when advertising on platforms such as Snap or Tiktok	A lot of videos I see that I engage with, have subtitles alongside the video get shorts	make it unmissable and make people want to see and go back to it.	start with a striking question directly to the viewer?
Maybe comic strips illustration type posts that are easy to take in information.	Content breaking - e.g. the same content used for tips + some form of challenge or hobby	social media posts with user to boost engagement and promote training about gambling support	shorter, more engaging videos as teenagers' attention span is quite small	Multipurpose content e.g. IT shorts can easily be repurposed for Tiktok, IG etc.	people like to feel recognised so relatable content is key!!
consistent post schedule to convey a sense of quality + trustworthiness of the service	Engaging with trends like Ryanair and duolingo	Engagement with Memes has been successful with Duolingo	Colourful or using popular or viral audios to catch attention	Engaging with popular or viral audios to catch attention	Engaging with popular or viral audios to catch attention



### Trust

- How do we build trust?
- We have confidentiality statements on our website, what more can we do to be more reassuring?

Spend time building trust and making it known that they are not alone	Spend more time building up a sense of trust and connection	make the people know that you are in a safe space and nothing will be shared if they don't want them to.	Maybe give accounts from people who have reached out	Let the attendees know that they are not the only ones to experience this - include environment	make these policies and this information visible and clearly available
Make people know that the service always there if they need it.	Show the areas outside of the service and what they are doing so they know you are always there and you are open to their job role.	Make it known that the specialist are human as well they have problems and won't break them.	make sure that people know that you are not just a face behind a screen but that you are helping and you are not judging them	emphasise a lot that it is a good thing to reach out and that you are helping and protecting them	Making it known that they are not alone and the specialists will not judge you
Make sure that the attendees feel like they are in a safe environment	Be realistic with your approach. Ensure you come across as a friend rather than a boss.	spend quality time with them on other stuff than help them with their problem.	You can use ambiguous language that indicates that you won't report to authorities, yet not explicitly saying so	reiterate that it is in the service's interest to find you put forward your own for authorities	emphasise more points of support that you have support beyond the service
if say just start by friends saying that is confidential because kids are worried about getting in trouble	Make it known that the specialists are there to help and can be trusted	make an anonymous questions / anonymous report sheet?	the specialist don't need to be a specialist they may not need to be a specialist they are a human	reiterate that it is in the service's interest to find you put forward your own for authorities	emphasise more points of support that you have support beyond the service
Make a short infographic video outlining the terms and services, showing these might have to be put on a screen that is visible to all but not the health of a child taking games like these and explain to them you are on YouTube	Make an easily accessible infographic version of your policy statement so that it can be shared and read by all. It should be a short video or infographic that can be shared on social media and printed out for attendees.	Make an easily accessible infographic version of your policy statement so that it can be shared and read by all. It should be a short video or infographic that can be shared on social media and printed out for attendees.	Make an easily accessible infographic version of your policy statement so that it can be shared and read by all. It should be a short video or infographic that can be shared on social media and printed out for attendees.	Make an easily accessible infographic version of your policy statement so that it can be shared and read by all. It should be a short video or infographic that can be shared on social media and printed out for attendees.	Make an easily accessible infographic version of your policy statement so that it can be shared and read by all. It should be a short video or infographic that can be shared on social media and printed out for attendees.



# Key Findings: Acknowledgements



The following people/services are highlighted in having collaborated and contributed to this report.

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**Isabella Brobbey,**

**Young People's Support Lead, GamCare**



**All of the Youth Advisors within GamCare's Youth Advisory Board.**

**This group work continuously week after week to ensure a youth voice and influence is embedded into all that GamCare do.**





**Questions?**  
**Want a youth  
perspective on gambling?**  
**Contact us.**

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