



Insights from community and staff on the NSW GambleAware Helpline experience

A Baseline Survey

GambleAware perceptions baseline study

Background

Wesley Mission undertook a study to gauge perceptions and experiences concerning the gambling helpline service among key stakeholders. This study aimed to (1) Ascertain the public's knowledge of the gambling helpline service and common inquiries; (2) Evaluate how helpline staff perceive their proficiency in client engagement, information delivery and referral quality; and (3) Measure the satisfaction of GambleAware NSW counsellors with the helpline's referral processes.

Stakeholders, including 1,021 NSW residents (aged 18+), 10 helpline staff and 23 GambleAware NSW counsellors and staff, provided their insights via online surveys. Additionally, we analysed service call data from the service's first six months to draw further insights.

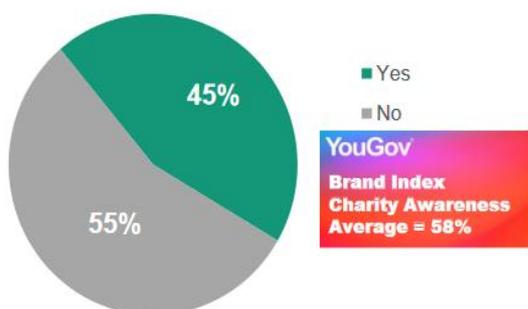
YouGov executed the community perceptions survey, and Wesley Mission collaborated with the Office of Responsible Gambling to survey providers.

Key findings

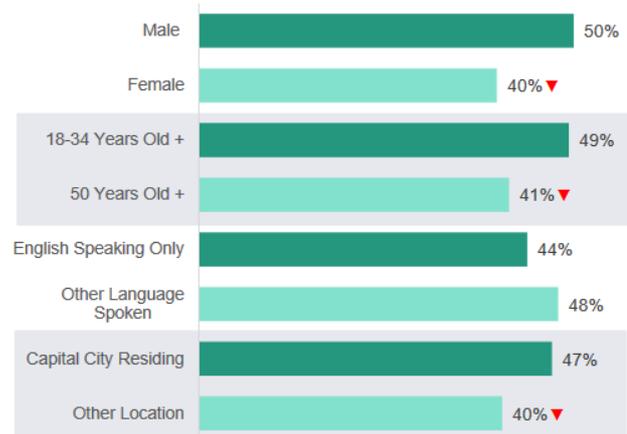
Community awareness of the gambling helpline

- Just under half (45 per cent) of NSW residents 18+ claim to be aware of the GambleAware helpline when prompted, this rises to one in two among men.

Prompted Awareness of Gamble Aware Helpline



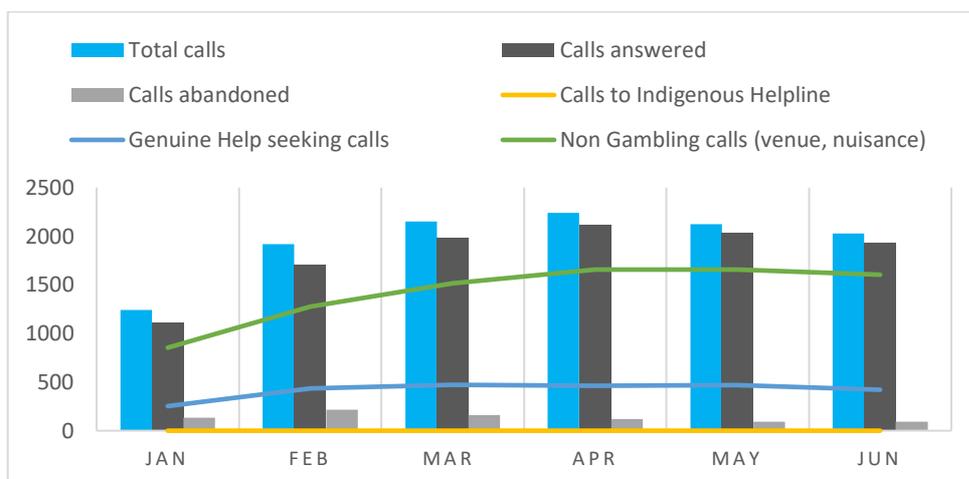
Demographics of those noting 'Yes' Aware of Gamble Aware Helpline



- Lower levels of awareness, around two in five, are noted by women (40 per cent) and respondents aged over 50 years old (41 per cent).
- Main message takeout (when prompted) strongly links the GambleAware helpline with the issue of gambling harm, addiction and seeking help with gambling issues. Message take out was consistent for both; those who were aware of the helpline and for those who were not aware of the helpline.
- Four in five respondents think the GambleAware helpline is for people with gambling-related issues, and two in three think it is for partners of people experiencing gambling difficulties. Women are more likely to think the helpline is for partners and friends of people with gambling-related issues. Correct attribution that the service is for people grappling with gambling challenges and their partner or friends is higher for respondents aged 50+, and declines to lower rates for respondents in younger age groups.
- The GambleAware helpline is the number one ranked source for support for one in four NSW residents. Those 18-24 are less likely to seek help via the GambleAware service, and more likely to seek help from family or friends, similar amongst those who speak another language at home other than English.
- Respondents who are aware of the GambleAware helpline and those who think the service is for people who are experiencing gambling harm and their partners, are more likely to seek help via alternate options (prompted), compared to respondents who are not aware of the service and those noting 'don't know' in response to who the helpline is for.
- Alternate help sources people might consider include Lifeline, Gambling Help Online, counsellors, support groups such as Gamblers Anonymous, family or friends and faith leaders.

Trends in call volumes and types of calls

- Despite its primary intention, the helpline service receives calls for a broad spectrum of reasons. Some non-harm related queries include betting services inquiries, account issues, questions about cash outs or services such as TAB or Lotto, login difficulties, casino bookings, wrong numbers, and hoax calls.



- Call demand and content analysis shows better staff performance, marked by quicker connection times, shorter wait times and extended conversations. This suggests increased skill and better support.
- Caller demographics and preferences show majority of callers were young, partnered men. Most were seeking help for their gambling issues or for acquaintances.
- Clubs, hotels and online platforms were the popular gambling spots, with gaming machines and sports betting being the primary activities of choice.
- Callers also varied in their gambling experiences from newcomers to long-term participants. A notable portion have been engaged in gambling for over a decade.
- Adverse effects of gambling were observed across financial, emotional and relationship areas.
- Callers learned about the service from a mix of online sources, direct encounters at gambling venues, GambleAware website, the helpline, online ads and personal recommendations. Following their initial contact, callers were referred to local service providers for further support.
- With client's consent, callers are referred to their local GambleAware provider (GAP). In the first six months, 875 self-help referrals and 1,439 external referrals were made.

Improvement opportunities

1. Streamlining call management can optimise resources for genuine help-seekers, leading to improved outcomes for clients.
2. The data offers valuable insights into the callers of the GambleAware helpline, but there are evident limitations. Respondents are not fully documenting important variables, leading to potential biases or gaps in the data. It's crucial to assess the completion rates and possibly implement follow-up actions to gather comprehensive data.

Helpline staff's feedback on their performance and effectiveness

- Helpline staff derive significant satisfaction from their roles - providing support and making a tangible difference in the lives of callers, lifted by the impact they have on callers, a supportive team environment, CRM system's user-friendliness, and deep fulfilment in the service they offer, both in immediate assistance to callers, and the long-term referrals they provide.
- The helpline service's strengths lie in its availability, professional approach, friendly staff and the quality of its referrals.
- Helpline staff report frequent non-genuine calls, often unrelated to gambling. Common issues include account issues, inquiries about cash outs, betting services such as TAB or Lotto, issues with gambling accounts, login difficulties, bookings for specific casinos, wrong numbers, and hoax calls.

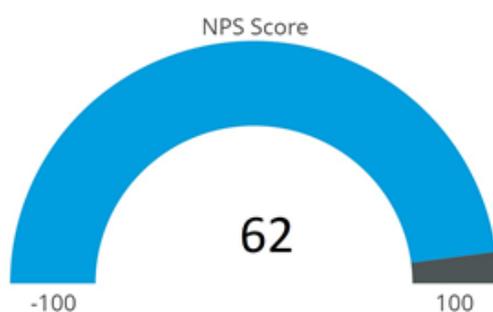
- To increase the frequency of genuine calls, staff suggest the following: highlight the helpline service's purpose and target audience more effectively in marketing communications; provide more information about the risks of gambling to encourage those in need to reach out; feature the contact number more prominently in marketing materials to ensure its easily accessible; and collaborate with gambling venues and online sites to increase the visibility of the helpline and encourage more genuine calls.

These suggestions aim to reduce the frequency of non-genuine calls and promote genuine help-seeking behaviour, making the helpline more effective and efficient in providing support to those in need.

- Helpline staff perceive the referral process as efficient and effective in supporting their work and guiding clients towards relevant resources, which can help facilitate recovery and reduce harm from gambling.

GambleAware NSW counsellors and staff feedback

- There's strong collaboration. The GambleAware helpline staff and GambleAware NSW counsellors collaborate closely, evidenced by a significant 94 per cent of GambleAware NSW counsellors receiving client referrals from the helpline.
- The volume of referrals is high. On average, GambleAware NSW counsellors received around 55 referrals in the first quarter of 2023, suggesting an active and ongoing referral process.
- A significant majority of GambleAware NSW counsellors and staff were satisfied with the referral frequency from the GambleAware helpline.
- Sixty per cent of the GambleAware NSW staff felt that the assistance they received from the helpline was significant.
- The Net Promoter Score is 62 per cent, indicating positive satisfaction levels.



- GambleAware NSW staff appreciated several aspects of the referral method: Efficient process, quality of initial assessments, quick response times, detailed and clear referrals, prompt notifications and clear communication. Notably, the rapid handling of inquiries and the daily referral turnaround were highlighted as exceptional features.

- While most GambleAware NSW counsellors and staff are satisfied with the referral frequency, their feedback also underscores concerns about referral accuracy and intake, and scheduling management. This suggests a need to improve client information handling and refine referral processes.

Improvement opportunities

1. Improving referral flow including better client readiness screening, clearer communication on wait times, correct provider referrals and enhanced client education.
2. Boosting active engagement such as improving helpline staff's knowledge of services, promoting team communication and support, tracking client numbers and setting clear counselling expectations.
3. Expanding information collection, such as caller feedback on Ads, caller satisfaction, effectiveness of referrals, longitudinal data and new research, could provide a more nuanced understanding of the helpline service's effectiveness, identify areas of improvement, and enable more effective strategies for helping people seeking assistance for gambling-related issues.

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