
PRESS STATEMENT

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Responsible Gambling Trust issues invitation to tender for gambling-related harm minimisation project in the UK armed forces

The Responsible Gambling Trust (RGT), the UK's leading charity committed to researching, minimising and mitigating gambling-related harm has today (19 February) invited tenders for a programme to develop the most effective ways of reducing the impact of gambling-related harm amongst serving or retired members of the UK's armed forces and their families.

Up to £75,000 has been made available to support the research over two years and the RGT's hope is that the bidders who come forward will also have secured support from public bodies such as the armed forces themselves, or the NHS or local or devolved authorities.

The challenges for those hoping to win a share of the money include:

- How they will measure the need for help and assistance.
- How they will gain access to those serving and former military personnel who are risk – given that this group is often very difficult to reach.
- How they can demonstrate they will use the money to reach those people most at risk.
- How they can get and incorporate feedback from those who actually use their services.
- How the work can be sustained once the initial funding from the RGT has been spent (in particular this will include winning long-term support from public funding agencies).
- How they can spread their work nationally or roll it out nationally after a successful pilot.

Expected outputs from the programme include a report and a programme of wider information sharing.

Dr Jane Rigbye, the RGT's Director of Commissioning said: "Our armed forces do a vital job in defending us and there is an obligation on those of us who rely on their protection to ensure we offer them the best possible care during and after their service.

"There is indicative evidence to suggest those who serve and their families are at a greater risk of gambling-related harm and one of the aims of this programme will be to provide published and peer-reviewed findings about the scale of the risk and about what the best ways of minimising the risk and mitigating the damage.

"We also expect to see practical ideas tested with real people: this is not meant to be merely a desk exercise but a concrete step towards better services for those in the services.

"The RGT is fully committed to an open and transparent programme of research and evidence gathering as well as to supporting the highest quality of services to those who are at risk or who have suffered harm."

Most people who do gamble, including those in HM Armed Forces, do so for fun and leisure and the RGT does not regard proposals to simply restrict gambling as positive or practical.

Dr Rigby said: "Members of the forces, like others in society, should be free to gamble for fun and within the law. The priority for us is to help those who find themselves in difficulty, not to restrict access."

The funding is not available for gambling operators themselves – RGT works with them in other ways.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

- The Responsible Gambling Trust is the leading charity in the UK committed to minimising gambling-related harm. As an independent national charity funded by donations from the gambling industry, the Responsible Gambling Trust funds education, prevention and treatment services and commissions research to broaden public understanding of gambling-related harm. The aim is to stop people getting into problems with their gambling, and ensure that those that do develop problems receive fast and effective treatment and support.
- The Responsible Gambling Trust raises a minimum of £5million each year from the gambling industry operating in Britain within a voluntary (donation based) system and funds research, education, prevention and treatment services. Funding priorities are guided by the national strategy advised by the Responsible Gambling Strategy Board (RGSB) and endorsed by the Gambling Commission. The latest strategy was published in December 2012.