

# GambleAware

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## ANNOUNCEMENT

### **New research shows high risk of developing gambling problems during early years of exposure to legal gambling**

**London, 18 September:** New research, funded by GambleAware, suggests a high incidence of new onset problem gambling between ages 18 and 20, with most new cases having shown no signs of problems earlier on. The report, by Professors David Forrest and Ian McHale, University of Liverpool Management School, notes that these are the years following first legal exposure to most forms of gambling. It argues for interventions targeted at young adults. Harm in early adulthood may be lasting, as this is the critical stage at which careers and relationships for the future are defined. Far fewer people report problem gambling at 17, and by age 20 the majority of these showed no gambling problems.

The study analysed data from the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children, which includes information on gambling from parents and young people at 17 and again at 20, along with other social and health information.

The research also looked at the influence of a parent having a problem with gambling on problem gambling in their children. There was evidence of inter-generational transmission of problem gambling but only cross-gender: problem gambling in young men was linked to problem gambling in mothers and problem gambling in young women was linked to problem gambling in the father. In the case of young women, but not young men, other aspects of a mother's lifestyle (smoking, diet, weight) indicative of tolerance of risky and stigmatised behaviours were also associated with problem gambling. In general, young women's regular participation in gambling seemed to be predicted by general household attitudes towards health and risky activities. It may be that as gambling is less socially acceptable for women, it is general household behaviour around health and risk that influences gambling and problem gambling.

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The researchers point out that this gendered pattern limits the extent to which problem gambling in one generation feeds into the pool of problem gambling in the following generation.

**Professor David Forrest, Professor of Economics, University of Liverpool**, said:

*“There is a case for operators, when monitoring players, to adopt lower thresholds to trigger intervention where the customer is under 21. Regulators might introduce additional provisions to Codes of Practice to require operators to be particularly rigorous in their duty of care to young customers. Legislators and regulators might even consider differential access to products for the young, analogous to recent measures to address the high fatality rate among new drivers.*

**Clare Wyllie, Director of Research & Evaluation at GambleAware** said:

*“Education for children and adolescence is important, but this research highlights the need for specific interventions for young adults at the point they are exposed to the wide range of opportunities to gamble legally. While family influence is important, it is also likely that in young adulthood we need to look for influences and risk factors outside of the family.*

**-ENDS-**

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**NOTES**

- The report can be viewed here:  
<https://about.gambleaware.org/media/1799/gambling-and-problem-gambling-among-young-adults-revision-10818-final-publish-002.pdf>.
- Guided by the [National Responsible Gambling Strategy](#), GambleAware is an independent charity tasked to fund research, education and treatment services to help minimise gambling-related harm in Great Britain.
- GambleAware is a commissioning and grant-making body, not a provider of services. The charity’s strategic aim is to broaden public understanding of gambling-related harm as a public health issue and to help those that do develop problems get the support and help that they need quickly and effectively. For more information, please go to:  
<http://about.gambleaware.org/>

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- GambleAware's programme of treatment, education, harm prevention and research is guided by the National Responsible Gambling Strategy, which is defined by the independent Responsible Gambling Strategy Board (RGSB) and endorsed by the Gambling Commission. The RGSB, the Gambling Commission and GambleAware work together under the terms of an agreement in place since 2012: <http://about.gambleaware.org/media/1216/statementofintent.pdf>. Research is conducted under the terms of a 'Research Commissioning and Governance Procedure' agreed in 2016 by the RGSB, the Gambling Commission and GambleAware: <http://about.gambleaware.org/media/1270/research-commissioning-and-governance-procedure-may-2016-final.pdf>.
- GambleAware requires a minimum of £10 million annually to deliver its current responsibilities, and looks to all those that profit from commercial gambling to support the charity. This donation-based system was proposed under the Gambling Act 2005 and is prescribed by the Gambling Commission in its Licence Conditions and Codes of Practice. The RGSB endorsed GambleAware's £10m funding goal in January 2017: <http://www.rgsb.org.uk/press-releases/responsible-gambling-strategy-board-publishes-assessment-of-the-quantum-of-funding-required-to-deliver-the-national-responsible-gambling-strategy.html>
- GambleAware funds the *Gordon Moody Association*, the *NHS National Problem Gambling Clinic*, *GamCare* and a network of charities across Great Britain to provide a full range of free treatment for problem gamblers and support for those affected by them. GambleAware also runs the website **BeGambleAware.org** which helps 2.7 million visitors a year, and supports the **National Gambling Helpline – 0808 8020 133**.