

Hertfordshire Pilot on Gambling and Crime Releases Final Report and Recommendations



PUBLISHED MAR 8, 2021
BY [PRESSAT](#)

Gambling support charity GamCare is sharing learning and achievements from a two-year pilot project designed to explore and offer specialist gambling support for people in contact with the criminal justice system (CJS) across Hertfordshire – from arrest through to probation. The project was funded and supported by the Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).

Despite being impacted by COVID-19, the Hertfordshire Problem Gambling Project has delivered training to 500 workers across the CJS in Hertfordshire, helping them to identify gambling harms and refer to specialist support provided by GamCare. Screening for gambling harms has been introduced at 14 key points across the system – from police custody suites to prisons and probation services – and a dedicated treatment practitioner for those in contact with the CJS is now available.

GamCare, who were recently awarded Organisation of the Year at the Howard League Community Awards, has also provided an in-cell activity pack, designed to boost wellbeing and raise awareness of gambling harms, to more than 1,000 men in HMP The Mount, as residents have been confined to cells for extended periods of time during the pandemic.

Anna Hemmings, CEO at GamCare, says: “There are established links between gambling and crime, whether crime is committed to support gambling or to pay off gambling-related debts, and research has also found that prison populations are more vulnerable to disordered gambling. Our work focuses on a ‘whole systems’ approach – with initiatives to screen people at arrest and the early stages of the CJS, and responding to needs at various stages in their journey, be it through police, prison, or probation services.

We’re grateful to Hertfordshire PCC for supporting this pilot across

the county. We've demonstrated that this work is scalable and can have positive impacts for those harmed by gambling across the CJS, and I'm proud of our small team for delivering so much through this pilot despite significant challenges presented by the pandemic."

Julia Fazackerley, Head of Development at GamCare, says: "Our recent work has involved building relationships from the ground up and raising awareness about gambling harms. While many police, prison and probation staff know anecdotally about the link between gambling and crime, there are very few structures in place to help assess or address this, and we're focused on changing that. We will continue to emulate the good practice developed through our Hertfordshire project nationally, and will continue to deliver training to CJS staff alongside developing pathways to our support and treatment and bespoke resources."

David Lloyd, Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner, says: "My role includes supporting new and alternative projects which reduce crime in Hertfordshire. For some people gambling harm can be as much a driver of crime as drugs. I supported this project in an effort to reduce the impact on the police and criminal justice system for individual offenders, victims, and their families. By working with offenders and partner agencies we are able to steer people away from committing crime in our communities. I am glad it has been a success."

For more information and to read the full report from the Hertfordshire Problem Gambling Project, visit

Press release distributed by Media Pigeon on behalf of Pressat, on Mar 8, 2021. For more information subscribe and [follow](#) us.

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