

Leading gambling addiction services unite to offer more help for those struggling this Christmas



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Online gamblers struggling to control their gambling this Christmas are being offered a trio of services for free to help kick-start their recovery journey. The TalkBanStop campaign is backed by ex-footballer and recovering gambling addict Michael Chopra.

The Christmas period poses a heightened risk to those struggling with gambling, and GamCare warns that the pandemic has only increased common risk factors including isolation, boredom or money worries.

In a new film, ex-Footballer Michael Chopra, 36, spoke with Chris Gilham, 39, about their shared experiences of gambling addiction and what gave them hope on their recovery journey.

Both men fall into the 35-44 age range, which has the highest proportion of people who gamble online.[1]

During the discussion, Michael Chopra spoke of the peer to peer support he received from a former manager. He said: “I never ever let anything get in the way of my football but as soon as the whistle went, my mind just suddenly changed and all of a sudden I was thinking about gambling.

“Then I decided to speak to Roy Keane, he was brilliant. He really took his time to speak to me and took time out of training. It was Roy that really got me the help that I needed.

“There is light at the end of the tunnel. When you’re going through a dark phase you don’t think that. If you’re struggling like I was and need support, head to [TalkBanStop.com](#)”

On starting his recovery journey, Chris Gilham added: “. It wasn’t until my mum said to me ‘he’s ready’ and that it really struck me as she knew I was ready. Until I was ready, it wasn’t going to change.

“I was then able to tell my wife that I needed help and I that was going to change. That was over three years ago and I haven’t gambled since that day.”

The 12-month pilot will highlight the benefits of combining free support and practical tools in helping people to stop gambling.

The three key steps and supporting tools are:

The TalkBanStop web address will take users straight to where they can contact each service, as well as offering additional tips on how to block gambling through banks.

Anna Hemmings, CEO at GamCare, says: “After a particularly challenging year when many have been impacted by job losses and reduced income, Christmas can be a difficult time for those struggling to stop gambling.

The TalkBanStop. campaign sends a message of hope to those who are struggling with gambling but don’t know how to start their recovery journey, by providing free tools and support that give breathing space to reflect on what’s going on.

The first step is simply talking to someone. There is support out there to help you make empowered choices about your recovery, and we urge anyone suffering in silence to be inspired by Michael and Chris. They show it can happen to anyone, but if they can get through it, so can you.”

Neil McArthur, Gambling Commission CEO, said: “Christmas can be a challenging time for those experiencing gambling related harm so we are particularly pleased with this collaborative approach to offer joined up and comprehensive services to consumers.

“We are also happy to approve funding of the blocking software pilot and evaluation element of this work through the

distribution of regulatory settlement money to properly identify what works.”

With just one call, gamblers will be helped on their road to recovery. These three services working together will offer greater protection to those who want to stop gambling, as well as giving gamblers the space to reflect and concentrate on their recovery over the Christmas period, with specialist support.

To find out more, visit www.talkbanstop.com

For more information contact katy.davies@23red.com or call 07535135663

To download the mp4 [Talk.Ban.Stop](#) video with Michael Chopra (90 seconds) visit we.tl/t-Fof6sbtahT or embed from Youtube youtu.be/MKTqx5Z4sdE. Please note embargo of 00:01 Thursday 17 December.

This collaborative partnership will raise awareness of all these services, and the benefits of combining practical tools with support and treatment in tackling gambling related harms and sustaining recovery. Information on the importance of using more than one practical tool – including self-exclusion, blocking software and bank gambling blocks – will also feature on all sites.

Gamban is designed to prevent access to gambling sites and apps on devices. When the software is downloaded it will stop gambling apps working and will prevent web browsers accessing gambling sites. Gamban is as difficult to remove by the user as the respective operating systems will allow.

In 2018, GambleAware commissioned independent research to evaluate the effectiveness of blocking software and to compare existing products. Gamban emerged the most effective. Gamban was also awarded Software Rising Star Award at the EGR B2B Awards in 2018, and in 2019 won RegTech Provider of the Year at The GamblingCompliance Global Regulatory Awards.

GAMSTOP is an online self-exclusion scheme, operated by the

National Online Self-Exclusion Scheme Ltd, an independent not-for profit company.

From March 31st, 2020 it has been a licensing condition for all online gambling operators to be members of GAMSTOP and anyone who registers with the scheme will be able to exclude themselves from all online gambling sites licensed in Great Britain. The first phase of the scheme launched in April 2108.

GAMSTOP is a free service available to all consumers resident within the United Kingdom. Users choose to exclude themselves from all online gambling sites for a specified period and once that minimum period has elapsed they remain self-excluded unless they return to GAMSTOP to ask to be removed and successfully complete the process to end their self-exclusion. Over 174,000 people have registered with GAMSTOP so far.

[1] Gambling Commission reported 29.3 percent of respondents in this group took part in a form of online gambling in the past four weeks - June 2020.

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