Gambling Help Services

Annual Activity Report
2018/19

NSW GOVERNMENT

Contents

Background

The Office of Responsible Gambling collects data from funded Gambling Help services to monitor performance and trends in gambling treatment within NSW. This report covers the data collection period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019. Previous reports are available on the Office of Responsible Gambling website.

Only those clients who received at least one counselling session between 1 July 2018 and 30 June 2019 were included in the final data set. Non-consenting clients were counted in the current report, though their demographic and gambling-related data were not included.

Data from 53 counselling services funded by the Office of Responsible Gambling (through the Responsible Gambling Fund) during the 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019 period was included in the final data set.

Data on clients seen by volunteer counsellors was included. Client and session data from Wesley Community Legal Service was not included, as this provides legal services rather than gambling counselling or financial counselling services. Where client responses were recorded as 'Data not collected', 'N/A' or 'Not stated/ inadequately described', these data points were excluded from calculations for demographics, gambling, mental health and access to gambling unless otherwise stated.

Data from the Gambling Help telephone service or Gambling Help online service is not included in this report.

Summary of Activity

Client and session numbers

7,401

clients received counselling services in 2018/19

56 minutes

Average session duration for all session types, across all services

36,522

Counselling sessions delivered in 2018/19

Gambling counselling sessions made up 83.3% of all counselling sessions and 16.7% of all sessions were for financial counselling

1.4%

Decrease in number of clients in 2018/19 from 2017/18

2.1%

Decrease in number of counselling sessions in 2018/19 from 2017/18

23,385

Individual face-to-face counselling sessions

In addition:

8,153	Telephone sessions
2,789	Group sessions
1,439	Couple/family sessions
756	Online sessions

Client gambling activities

The two most common preferred gambling venues

41.9%

Clients whose preferred gambling venues were **hotels or pubs**

35.2%

Clients whose preferred gambling venues were **clubs**

The majority of clients with a gambling problem preferred to access gambling in person

89.1%

preferred to access gambling in person

8.4%

preferred to access gambling online

Client demographics

60.3%

Male clients

39.6%

Female clients

Of clients receiving counselling

68.5%

clients with a gambling problem

18.8%

partners or family members

18.5%

of clients reported that they spoke a language other than English at home

Of these languages, the most commonly spoken were:

Arabic	**32.3%**
Vietnamese	**10.3%**
Mandarin	**4.9%**
Korean	**4.6%**
Cantonese	**4.1%**

7.3%

of clients identified themselves as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or both

Client mental health, substance abuse and legal history

Of clients with a gambling problem

38.5% were diagnosed with anxiety

45.7% were diagnosed with depression

36.4% had thoughts about committing suicide

11% had attempted suicide

28.1% had a problem with alcohol

22.8% had a problem with other drugs

15% had committed an offence related to their gambling problem

Client and Session Numbers

A total of 7,401 clients received 36,522 counselling services between 1 July 2018 and 30 June 2019.

The number of clients in 2018/19 decreased by 1.4% from 2017/18, and the number of counselling sessions decreased by 2.1%. This is the first time both number of clients and counselling sessions has decreased year-on-year since 2013/14.

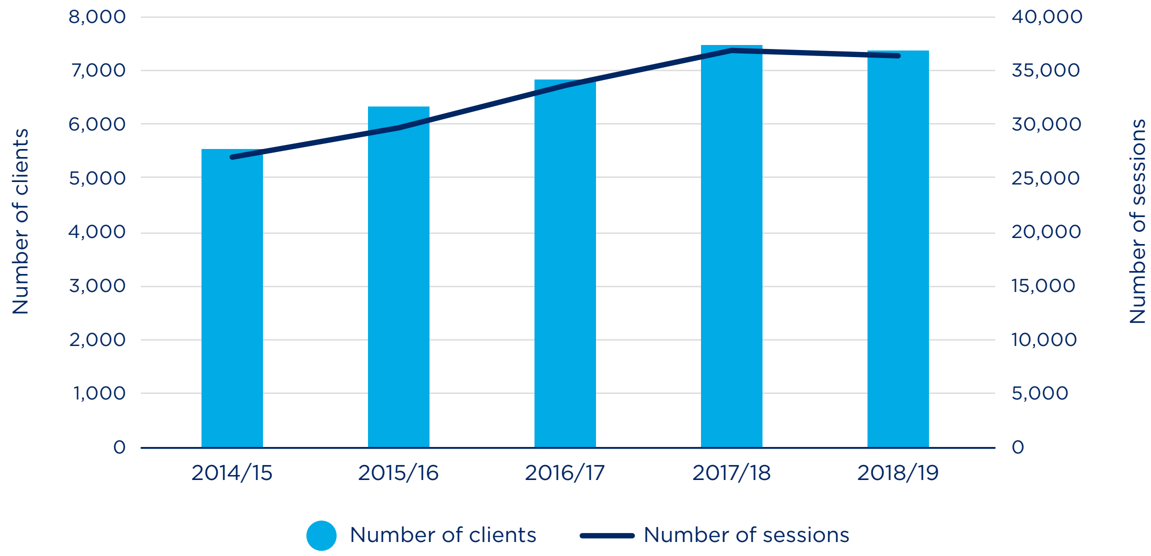
Clients who refused their data collection totalled 1,226 (16.6%).[1]

Table 1 Annual percentage change in clients and sessions for the past five years

Year	Number of clients	Percentage change from previous year	Number of sessions	Percentage change from previous year
2018/19	7,401	-1.4%	36,522	-2.1%
2017/18	7,508	+9.6%	37,308	+10.2%
2016/17	6,848	+8.0%	33,840	+14.6%
2015/16	6,343	+14.4%	29,541	+10.1%
2014/15	5,543	+27.6%	26,833	+32.6%

1 Where client responses were recorded as 'Data not collected', 'N/A' or 'Not stated/inadequately described', these data points were excluded from calculations for demographics, gambling activities, access to gambling and mental health, unless otherwise stated.

Figure 1 Number of clients and number of sessions for the past five years



A total of 36,522 counselling sessions were delivered in 2018/19. Of these, 30,433 were for gambling counselling and 6,089 were for financial counselling. As shown in Table 2, the average number of sessions per client was 4.9.

Table 2 Session to client ratio for all counselling sessions

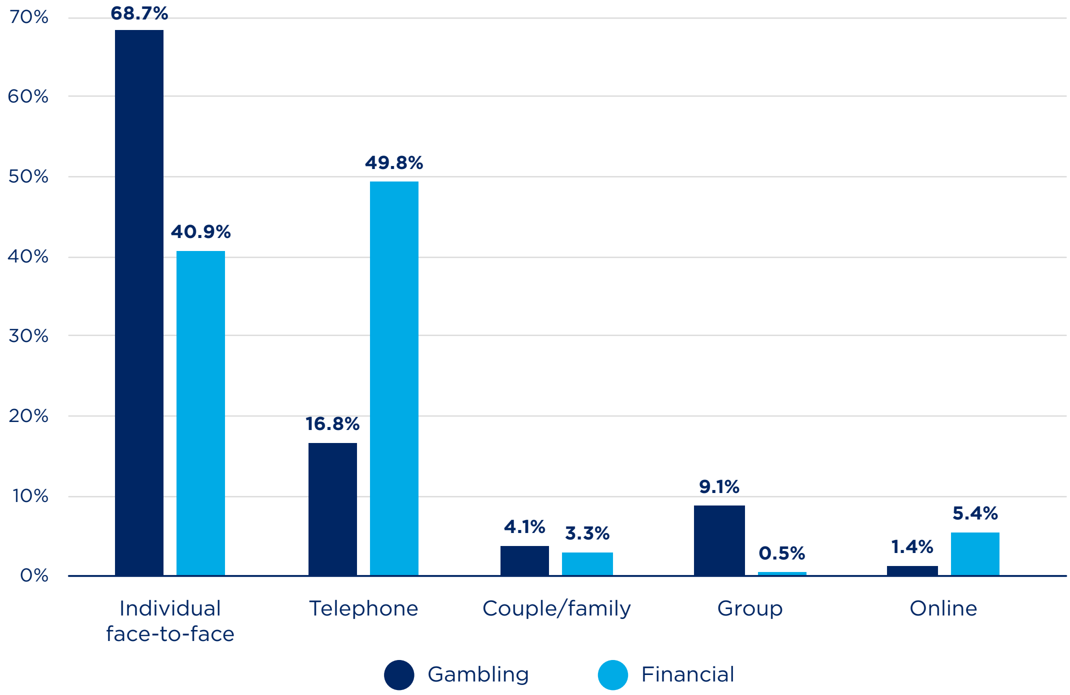
Number of clients	Number of counselling sessions	Average sessions per client
7,401	36,522	4.9

Gambling counselling sessions made up 83.3% of all counselling sessions. Of these, 68.7% of sessions were conducted as individual face-to-face sessions. Online sessions made up 1.4% of gambling counselling sessions conducted in 2018/19. It should be noted that Gambling Help Online counselling sessions are not counted in this report, as it is a national service.

Financial counselling sessions comprised 16.7% of all counselling sessions during the time period. Of all financial counselling sessions, 40.9% were conducted as individual face-to-face sessions, and 5.4% were conducted as online sessions.

The proportion of sessions conducted for gambling and financial counselling is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Gambling and financial counselling by session type



Of all clients who attended gambling counselling sessions, 28.9% only attended one session, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Number and percentage of clients who attended only one gambling counselling session

Number of clients attending gambling counselling sessions	Number of clients attending only one gambling counselling session	Percentage of clients attending only one gambling counselling session
5,655	1,633	28.9%

Of all clients who attended financial counselling, 43.6% only attended one session, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Number and percentage of clients who attended only one financial counselling session

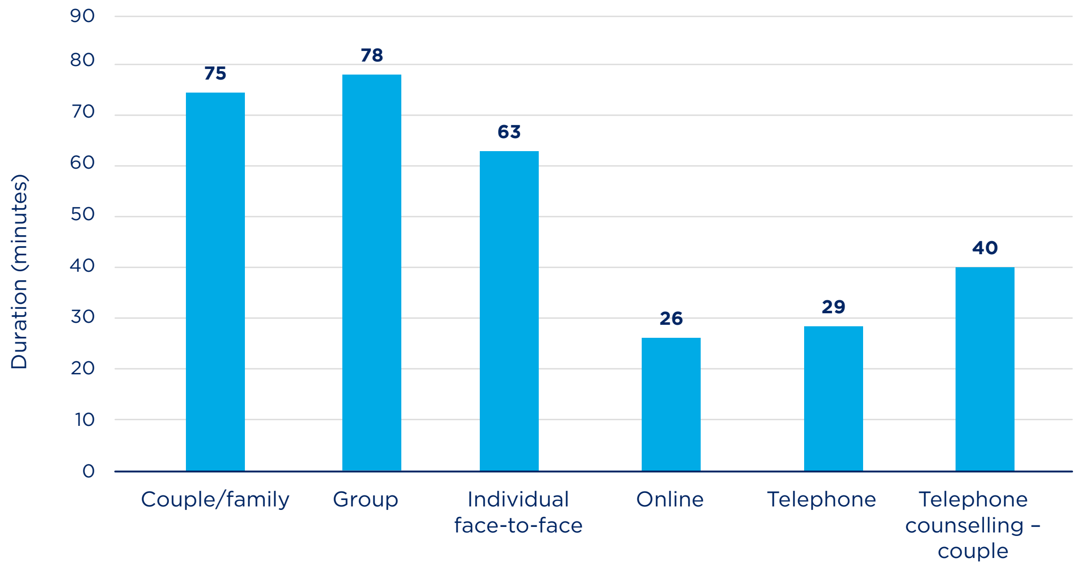
Number of clients attending financial counselling sessions	Number of clients attending only one financial counselling session	Percentage of clients attending only one financial counselling session
1,746	762	43.6%

Session Type, Duration and Location

Session Duration

The average session duration was 56 minutes. Sessions involving more than one client (group and couple/family) had the longest average duration, while sessions with individual clients were twice as long when conducted face-to-face compared to online and telephone sessions (Figure 3).

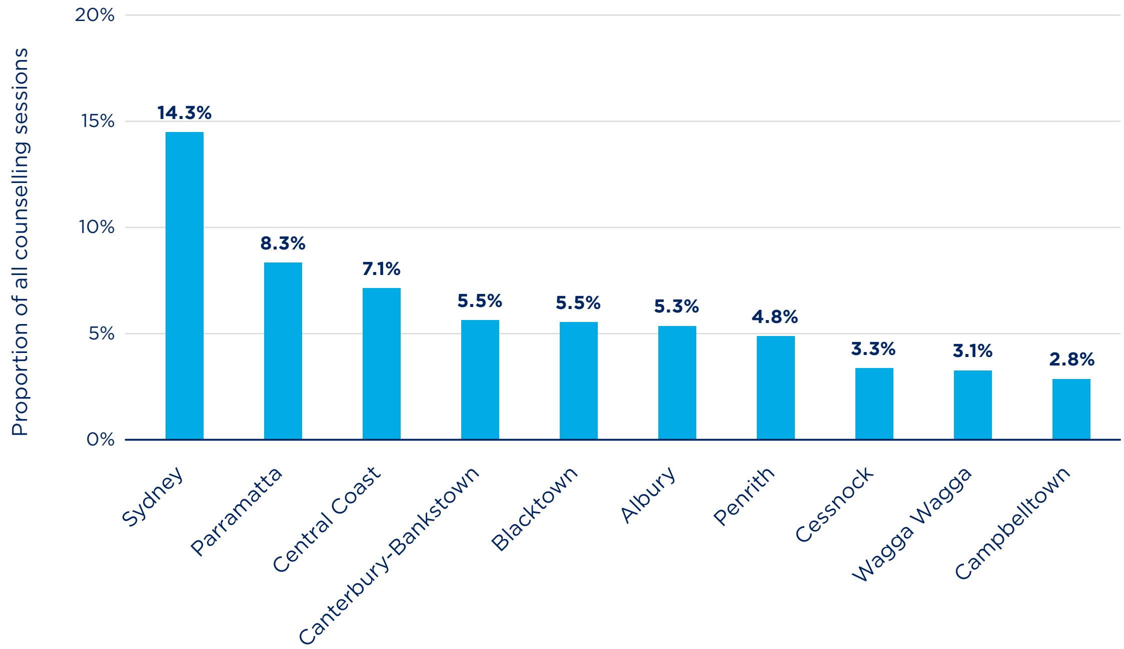
Figure 3 Average duration (minutes) of counselling sessions by session type



Session Location

In 2018/19, counselling sessions were conducted in 78 Local Government Areas. The highest proportion of counselling sessions were conducted in the Sydney LGA (Figure 4).

Figure 4 Proportion of counselling sessions per LGA



Demographics

Age and Gender

Of the clients counselled during 2018/19, 60.3% identified as male, 39.6% female and 0.1% did not state their gender. The age group with the highest proportion of clients was 35-49 years (38%). This age group consisted of 38.8% of all male clients and 36.8% of all female clients.

Table 5 displays the breakdown of clients by age and gender.

Table 5 The number and percentage of clients by age and gender

	Total[2]		Males		Females	
Age	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**
<18 years	6	0.1%	5	0.1%	1	0.0%
18–34 years	1,874	31.5%	1,318	36.7%	555	23.5%
35–49 years	2,266	38.0%	1,395	38.8%	869	36.8%
50–64 years	1,340	22.5%	672	18.7%	668	28.3%
65+ years	471	7.9%	204	5.7%	267	11.3%

Indigenous Status

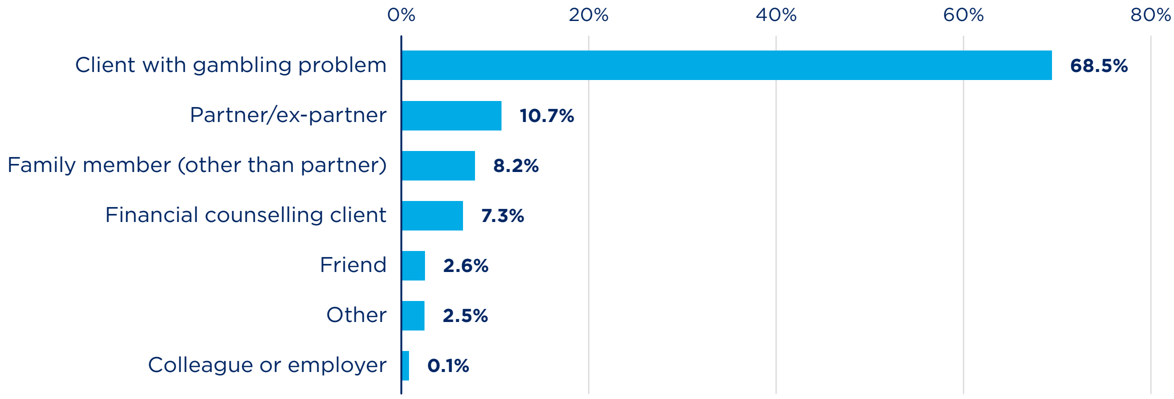
428 (7.3%) of clients reported that they were Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, or both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

2 Total count includes clients who did not state their gender

Client Type

The majority of clients who attended counselling services had a gambling problem (68.5%), followed by partners/ex partners (10.7%) (Figure 5).

Figure 5 Proportion of each client type attending counselling service



The percentage of male clients who had a gambling problem (83.9%) was higher than the percentage of female clients who had a gambling problem (45.2%) (Table 6). Of the clients who were partners or ex-partners, 82.1% were female and 17.9% were male.

Table 6 Number and percentage of client type by gender

	Total[3]		Males		Females	
Client type	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**
Client with gambling problem	4,134	68.5%	3,051	83.9%	1,082	45.2%
Partner/ex-partner	643	10.7%	115	3.2%	527	22.0%
Family member (other than partner)	493	8.2%	173	4.8%	318	13.3%
Financial counselling client	442	7.3%	179	4.9%	263	11.0%
Friend	165	2.7%	86	2.4%	79	3.3%
Other (specify)	153	2.5%	31	0.9%	122	5.1%
Colleague or employer	5	0.1%	3	0.1%	2	0.1%

3 Total count includes clients who did not state their gender

Language

A total of 1,077 clients (18.5%) spoke a language other than English at home. Arabic and Vietnamese are the most frequently reported languages other than English (Table 7).

Table 7 The top ten most frequently reported languages spoken at home by clients other than English

Language	Number	Percentage[4]
Arabic	348	6.0%
Vietnamese	111	1.9%
Mandarin	53	0.9%
Korean	50	0.9%
Cantonese	44	0.8%
Spanish	33	0.6%
Hindi	32	0.6%
Italian	32	0.6%
Greek	23	0.4%
Thai	22	0.4%

Of the clients reporting speaking a language other than English at home, 372 (34.6% of all clients who spoke a language other than English at home) reported speaking English “not at all” or “not well” (Table 8).

Table 8 The top five most frequently reported languages other than English spoken by clients with reported English proficiency of “not well” or “not at all”

Language	Number	Percentage of clients with English proficiency “not well” or “not at all”
Arabic	177	47.6%
Vietnamese	62	16.7%
Mandarin	26	7.0%
Korean	24	6.5%
Cantonese	23	6.2%

4 English-only speakers are included in this data

Suburb of Residence

The top five suburbs/towns of residence for clients during 2018/19 are displayed in Table 9.

Table 9 The top five suburbs/towns of residence for clients 2018/19

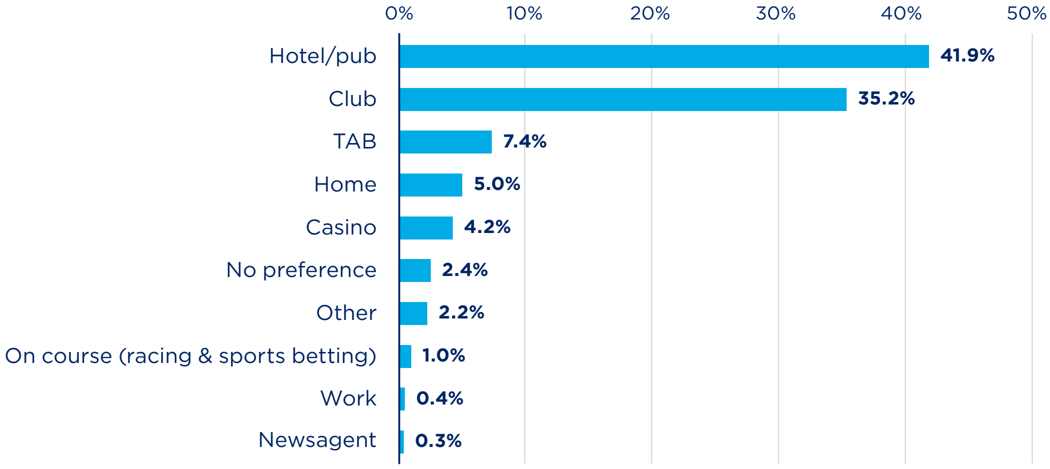
Suburb/Town	Number	Percentage
Wagga Wagga	194	3.2%
Cessnock	135	2.2%
Lavington	104	1.7%
Albury	99	1.6%
Werrington	84	1.4%

Gambling Activities

Preferred Gambling Venue

Across all gambling counselling clients, the most frequently recorded preferred gambling venues were Hotel/pub (41.9%) and Clubs (35.2%).

Figure 6 Preferred gambling venue for gambling counselling clients[5]



5 'Online' is not an option within this dataset

Principal Gambling Activity

For all gambling counselling clients specifying a principal gaming activity, gaming machines was the most common (75.3%) followed by horse/dog races (12.1%) (Table 10).

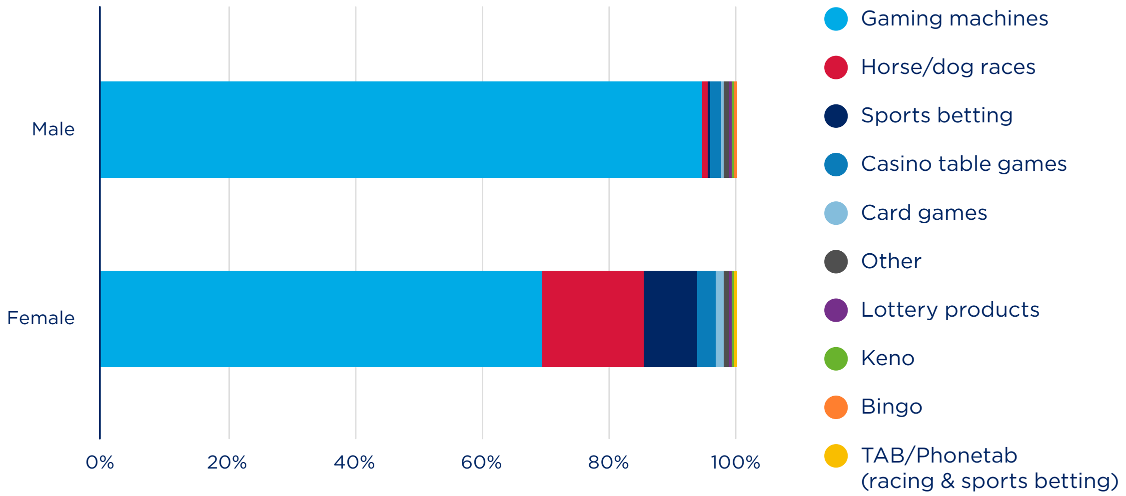
Table 10 Principal gambling activity for all gambling counselling clients

	Total[6]		Male		Female	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Gaming machines	2,964	75.3%	2,005	68.9%	958	93.4%
Horse/dog races	476	12.1%	457	15.7%	19	1.9%
Sports betting	283	7.2%	279	9.6%	4	0.4%
Casino table games	102	2.6%	87	3.0%	15	1.5%
Card games	36	0.9%	31	1.1%	5	0.5%
Other	35	0.9%	28	1.0%	7	0.7%
Lottery products	17	0.4%	10	0.3%	7	0.7%
Keno	14	0.4%	7	0.2%	7	0.7%
Bingo	5	0.1%	1	0.0%	4	0.4%
TAB/Phonetab	3	0.1%	3	0.1%	0	0.0%

6 Total count includes clients who did not state their gender

The majority of female gambling counselling clients (93.4%) reported gaming machines as their principal gaming activity. Principal gaming activities reported by male gambling counselling clients were more varied, with 68.9% reporting gaming machines as their principal gaming activity, followed by horse/dog races (15.7%) and sports betting (9.6%) (Figure 7).

Figure 7 Principal gambling activity of gambling counselling clients by gender



Secondary Gambling Activity

Across all clients undertaking gambling counselling, 38.7% reported a secondary gambling activity (Table 11).

Table 11 Secondary gambling activity for gambling counselling clients

Secondary Gambling Activity	Number	Percentage[7]
Horse/dog races	550	23.2%
Sports betting	505	21.3%
Gaming machines	322	13.6%
Lottery products	280	11.8%
Keno	253	10.7%
Casino table games	203	8.5%
Card games	163	6.9%
Bingo	50	2.1%
Other	46	1.9%
On course (racing & sports betting)	2	0.1%
TAB/Phonetab	1	0.0%

7 Percentages were calculated according to the number of clients with a gambling problem who specified a secondary gambling activity

Preferred Means of Accessing Gambling

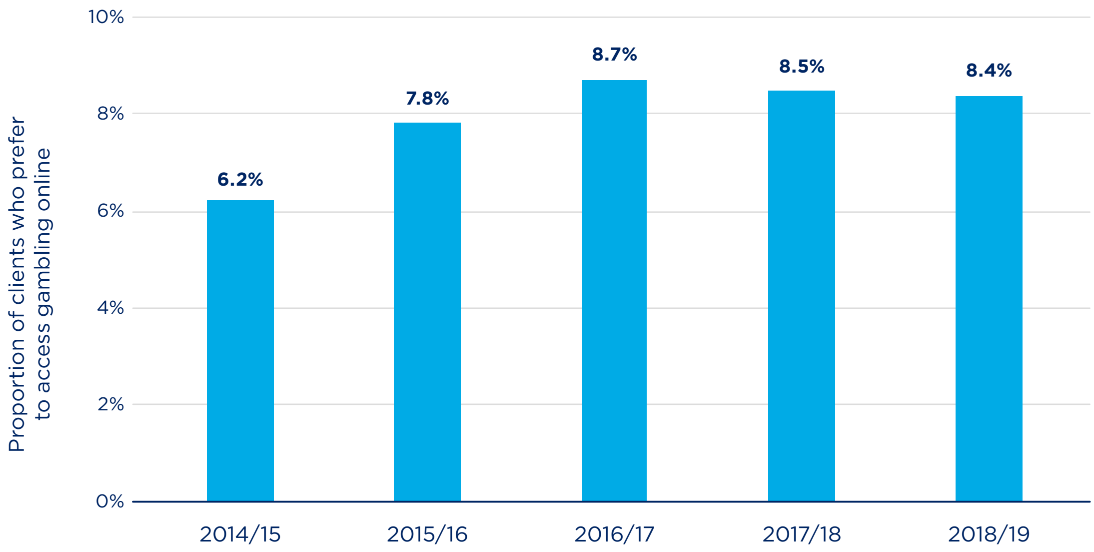
Across all all clients undertaking gambling counselling, the vast majority preferred to gamble in person (89.1%) (Table 12).

Table 12 Preferred means of accessing gambling for clients undertaking gambling counselling

	Number	Percentage
In person	3,546	89.1%
Online	333	8.4%
Telephone	78	2.0%
No Preference	17	0.4%
Other	6	0.2%

The proportion of clients using Gambling Help services who prefer to access gambling online has remained generally steady after several years of continually rising (Figure 8).

Figure 8 Online gambling as preferred means of accessing gambling over the past five years



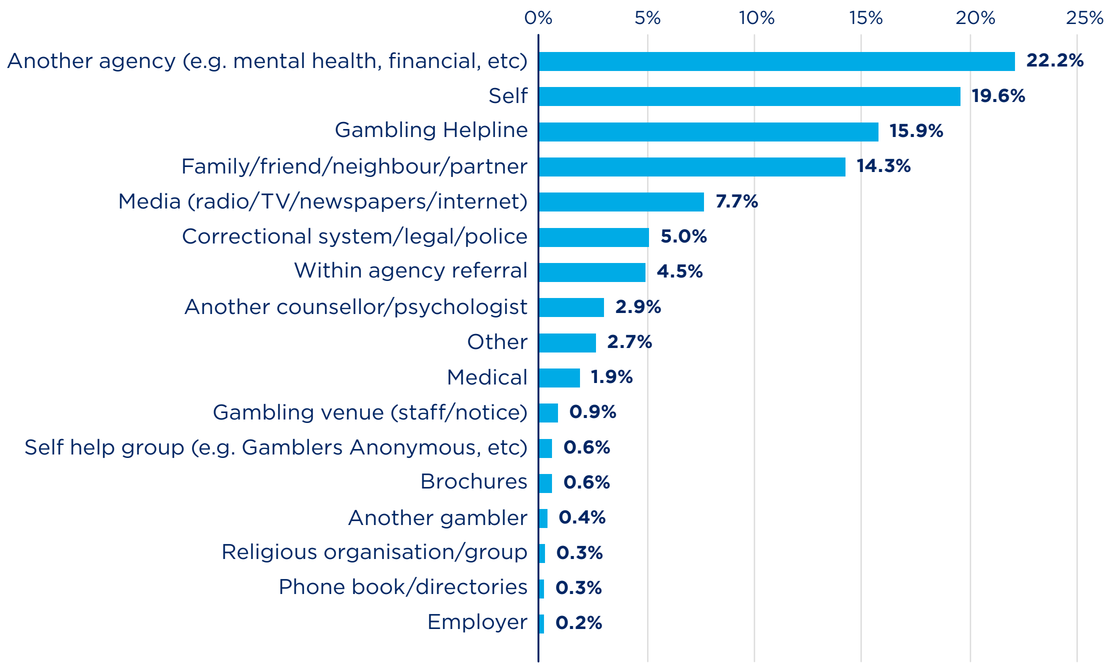
Access to Services

Referral Source

Of clients who noted a referral source, 22.2% reported 'Another Agency' as the most recent referral source,[8] 19.6% self-referred and 15.9% reported Gambling Helpline (Figure 9).

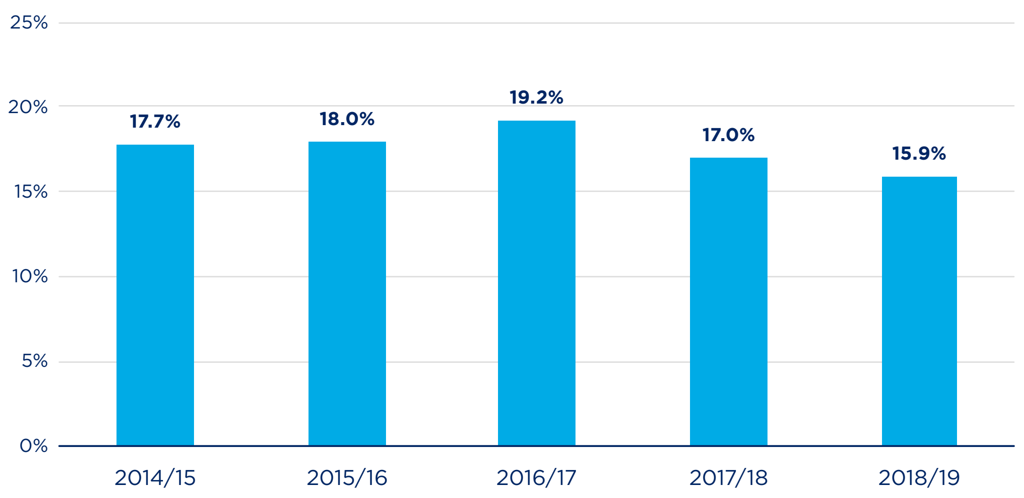
The proportion of clients reporting Gambling Helpline as their most recent referral has remained gradually reduced over the past three years (Figure 10).

Figure 9 Proportion of clients per most recent referral source



8 'Another Agency' includes all mental health and financial services agencies that are not listed at Figure 9

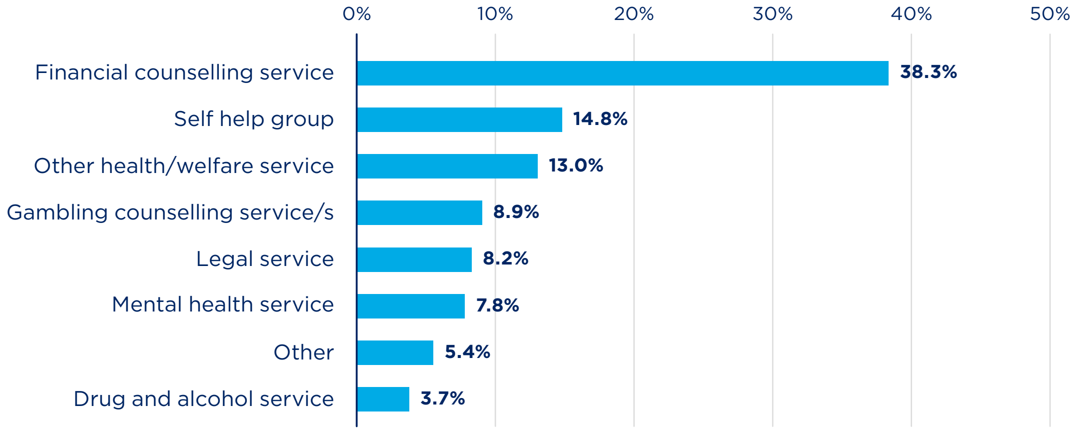
Figure 10 Proportion of all clients referred by Gambling Helpline



Referrals of clients to other service providers

Across all clients, 41% were referred to another service provider. Clients were most commonly referred to financial counselling service providers, self-help groups and other health/welfare services (Figure 11).

Figure 11 Proportion of services clients were referred to[9]



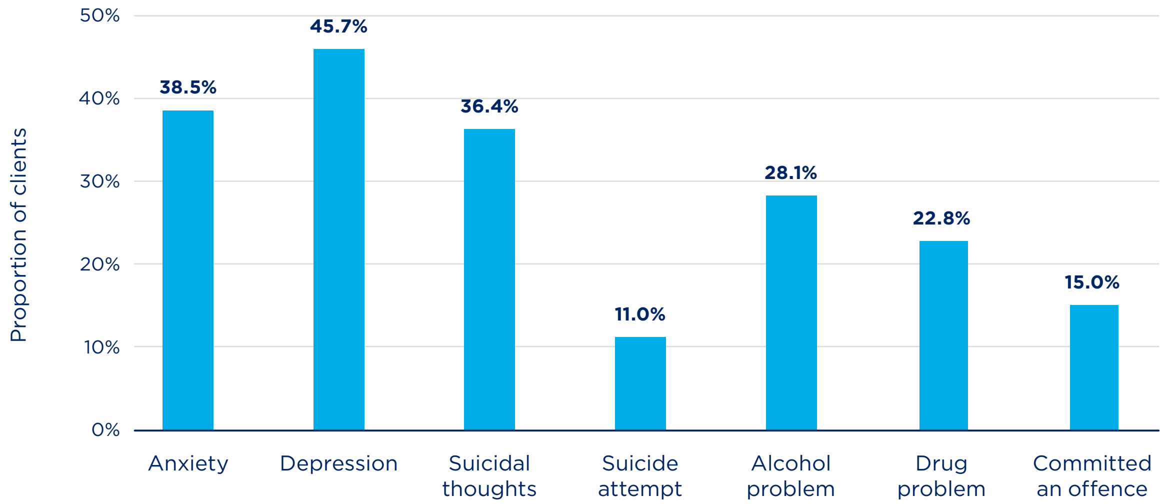
9 Percentages do not include clients not referred to another service provider

Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Legal History

Significant numbers of clients with a gambling problem who undertook gambling counselling reported having mental health, substance abuse or legal issues (Figure 12).[10]

13.3% of clients reported no mental health, substance abuse or legal issues.

Figure 12 Proportion of clients who reported a mental health, substance abuse or legal issue



10 Percentages are limited to clients with a gambling problem who responded either 'Yes' or 'No'

Anxiety

Across all clients, 38.5% (1,434) stated they had been diagnosed with anxiety. Of these clients, the percentage was higher for males (64.9%) than for females (35.1%).

Depression

Across all clients, 45.7% (1,701)[11] had been diagnosed with depression. Of these clients, the percentage was higher for males (65.5%) than for females (34.5%).

Suicide Thoughts

Across all clients, 36.4% (1,336) have had thoughts of committing suicide. Of these clients, the percentage was higher for males (71.8%) than for females (28.2%).

Suicide Attempt

Across all clients, 11% (401) had attempted suicide. Of these clients, the percentage was higher for males (62.8%) than for females (37.2%).

Alcohol Problem

Across all clients, 28.1% (1,046)[12] have had a problem with alcohol. Of these clients, the percentage was higher for males (79%) than for females (21%).

Drug Problem

Across all clients, 22.8% (852)[13] have had a problem with other drugs. Of these clients, the percentage was higher for males (81%) than for females (19%).

Legal History[14]

Across all clients, 15% (558) reported a legal history of having committed an offence relating to their gambling. Of these clients, the percentage was higher for males (77.6%) than for females (22.4%).

11 Count includes clients who did not state their gender

12 Count includes clients who did not state their gender

13 Count includes clients who did not state their gender

14 Legal History refers to having committed an offence relating to gambling

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