

help for problem gamblers

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# GMA Stakeholder Newsletter

Issue #2 July 2020



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# Welcome...

Dear GMA Supporter,

A very warm welcome to our second GMA newsletter, when I wrote to you in our first newsletter at the end of March it was a very worrying time, the UK had just entered Coronavirus lockdown, we were uncertain about the future, and worried about the welfare of our friends, colleagues, and our families. Now that restrictions are easing and we are moving back to a more normal way of life we cannot help but reflect on the challenges we have faced, recognise the sacrifices many have made and mourn the loss of life. I would like to say a personal thank you and pay tribute to everyone at GMA for their adaptability and passion for the charity during this testing time, not only have we managed to keep our service open but through innovation and new ways of working we are in a strong place to provide our high quality treatment programmes to those most affected by gambling addiction in greater numbers and increased inclusivity going into our 50<sup>th</sup> year. Increasing our outreach capacity during lockdown to enable us to grow from 30 outgoing interactions a month to 250 a week has helped us to understand the varied and complex issues our service users are presenting with as well as guiding the future direction of our service. Use of technology and video conferencing has helped us engage with those waiting for treatment, provide peer support for our ex-residents, run topic groups, women's groups and family and friends groups as well as Q&A sessions where we have collaborated with other providers in the sector to provide support to gamblers in recovery who would otherwise be isolated. We have been busy raising awareness too! We welcomed Sky News to our newly opened treatment centre at Beckenham as well as contributing to articles in industry press, local radio and the BBC. I hope you enjoy the rest of the newsletter, please do get in touch with us at GMA if you would like to find out more about the work that we do, work with us or become a corporate sponsor.

Take care of each other and stay safe.

*Matthew*

CEO, Gordon Moody Association



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# Retreat and Counselling

*We caught up with Retreat and Counselling Programme manager **Jane Fahy** for the lowdown on GMA's versatile service for Men and Women. Jane has Worked for GMA for 10 years and involved in the R&C since it's inception five years ago.*

## Meet the R&C Team



### Kira

Extensive experience of working with problem gamblers in GMA residential and specialist training in mindfulness. She has been working with us for 2 years.



### Laurence

Has been working for GMA for 16 years and is experienced in outreach work and centre management.



### Kerri

A background in substance abuse and lived experience of problem gambling. She has been working with us for 18 months.

**What is R&C?** - The Retreat and Counselling (R&C) programme Previously known as Mixed Model of Care (MMOC) has been running for five years and was initially conceived of due to a significant gap in service provision for women as well as recognition that a different model from the Men's residential programme was required. It quickly became apparent that the service was both needed and effective and the programme has gone from strength to strength over its lifetime. The R&C consists of two residential stays, where participants engage in psychoeducational and experiential workshops, and twelve weeks of remote, one to one therapy, group work and self-guided work. All participants are then offered ongoing support through our outreach service.

**How has the R&C team responded to the challenges of Covid-19?** – The R&C team have responded quickly, effectively and creatively. A lot of the work has recently been reviewed so as a team we were all in a headspace where we were looking at change and it felt like the right time to make a few extra changes to make the programme work online. There were things that we had to learn regarding technology such as getting to grips with zoom, booking everything in, breaking people into groups which we had to practise to make it as seamless as we could. The team has pulled together, conducted focus groups with people who have previously been through the programme to ascertain what works online. So it's been a well rounded response taking into consideration not just how we want to deliver things as facilitators but how people want to receive things, how they want to engage. It was a cumulative effort, we worked together to make sure that the product we were offering is something that wanted and needed to engage in.

**How have your clients responded to the new methods and ways of working?** – Better than expected! We knew that online work works, my post grad is in online therapy so I'm not surprised that working in this way has an impact, I think what we were surprised by was the ability of the group itself to form their own connections with each other because at Poulstone that is something that happens very naturally but online we had to think about how we give them their space to be able to develop these relationships without our input.

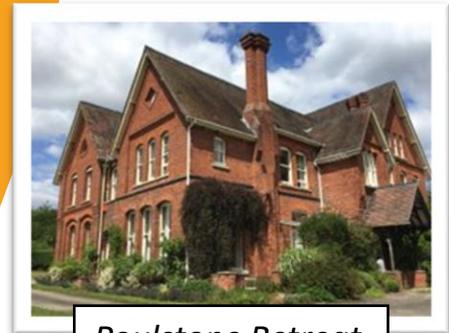
# Retreat and Counselling Continued...

Part of the power of the R&C is around the group itself, it's about meeting other women who've had or have a gambling problem when a lot of these women may not ever have seen, let alone spoken to another female problem gambler.

**Taking into account this success, will any of these new ways of working form part of the programme post lockdown?** – Most definitely, in terms of the current programme as it is at Poulstone we will continue to strip out some of the stuff so online pre-support stays in 1 to 1 therapy because that gives us more space to do the work that has to be done in a group environment. Also what I was doing previously was running a group every two weeks in the time when people were at home, I was doing this online but it was with text and I think what we have learned apart from anything else is that faces matter. It's been very important, it's easier to develop empathy and it's easier to see how people are responding, it's a quicker response when you have faces so we will continue to use video rather than the text based method.

**What does the future hold for R&C?** – What we would like to see is that we re-create this as an online retreat and counselling product, available for example to people who can't perhaps get out of the house due to disability, can't get away due to childcare, can't get away because of their work considerations, maybe there is social anxiety there. Whatever the reason we know that there are people who are isolated, who can't come to Poulstone despite the fact that it is a short retreat. It's incredibly adaptable, it is something that you can pick up as is and you can deliver it in other areas so it can be moved physically. It is something that you can take components out of and you can deliver them as part of a product that another organisation offering supporting other rehabs such as drugs and alcohol where there is a crossover and they have people there with gambling issues. It is something that I am very keen in the future to deliver in prisons as there really is woefully inadequate provisions in prisons for women. Also there are communities where we know people struggle to access help or have different needs, BAME, LGBTQ+ for example, there may be a language barrier or cultural implications of accessing help or speaking outside of the family. This is something we can deliver quietly, discreetly, we can get to these people whether it is face to face or online. R&C is something that is so flexible and so adaptable that it would be irresponsible not to take advantage of that.

**Thank you Jane, finally how can you apply for a place on the R&C programme?** – You would need to go online [www.gordonmoody.org.uk](http://www.gordonmoody.org.uk) all the information for how to apply is there.



*Poulstone Retreat*

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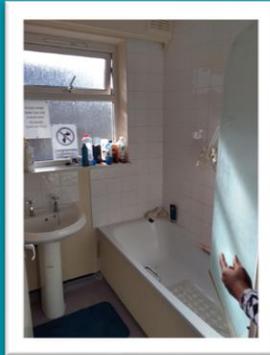


# Beckenham Re-opens

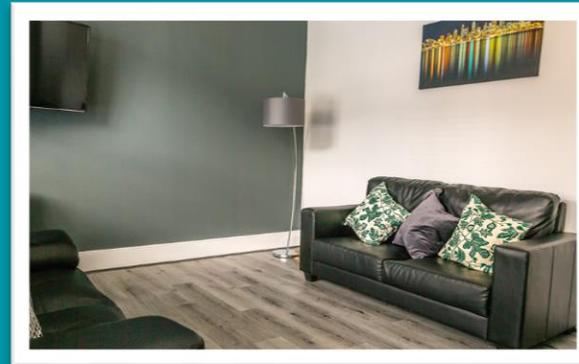
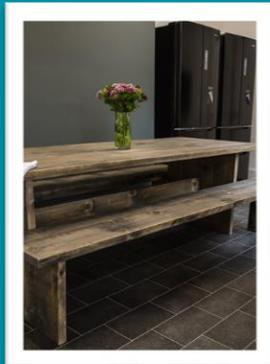
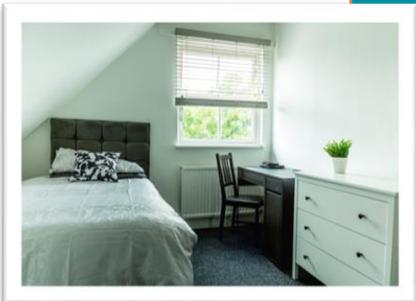
*GMA Director of Operations Tracey King on the re-opening and refurbishment of our South London residential treatment centre.*

“It has been a privilege to lead on the redevelopment and re-launch of the Beckenham service, building on the legacy of the charity started by the Reverend Gordon Moody almost 50 years ago”. I have spoken with service users past and present together with colleagues to ensure the new Beckenham service not only honours the memory of our founder but provides a fresh, safe, modern environment for our new residents taking their first steps towards recovery. I am really proud of the work we have achieved and I hope you enjoy seeing the changes for yourself here” <https://vimeo.com/428244053>

## Before



## After



# Gambling in Lockdown

What has life been like for those that gamble during lockdown? With no land based gambling available it is inevitable that more people will gamble online. Whilst data is available and many operators have implemented programmes to detect gambling harm, it cannot be ignored that there are no face to face, safer gambling interactions taking place and that many people are gambling in isolation. Boredom, financial pressure and lack of face to face support can all contribute to a difficult environment for anyone experiencing gambling harm. Whilst calls to our helpline decreased during the early stages of lockdown they soon increased dramatically and the severity of the content of the calls intensified with our advisors experiencing themes of co-morbidity and suicide ideation. The return of live sport and re-opening of land based gambling establishments being common triggers, below are some examples of such calls.

*"I desperately need the help. I don't want to keep spending money on it but I just can't help myself. I try to withdraw from it but then I just log back in. I've set limits but made other accounts. Please. I know I can win a lot but I lose more than I win and I know that but I still bet"* (Lancs)

*"I quit gambling for 1 year I did it my self and when lockdown started 4 month ago I started again I have not gambled in 2 days I came looking for someone to talk to rather than gamble"* (Sunderland)

*"Feel very lost, lost a lot of money and don't know what to do - A few years I would say but a lot recently due to there being nothing to do and each time I lose I just deposit more"* – (Ashburton)

*Basically, I've blew everything, all savings, all my bank account money, I can't speak to my family about it because they'd be disgusted* – (Kensington)

*"4 months no gambling gambled today – absolutely gutted"* – (UK)



Helpline  
calls increased

**63%**

**23%**  
Fall in  
Website  
hits

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# #Dontgetdrawnbackin

In response to a growing concern amongst our ex-resident population and through calls we were receiving through our Gambling Therapy helpline we took to social media to raise awareness of help and support available to those worried about....

- The threat of relapse due to the return of sports betting
- The re-opening of gambling establishments and cash betting
- Using gambling to escape feelings of anxiety and isolation
- Using gambling as a way out of financial difficulty

## Follow GMA on Social Media!

On LinkedIn.....



Gordon Moody Association

On Facebook.....



Gordon Moody Association

Or on our Twitter pages.....



@gordonmoody



@gamblingtherap

Join the Conversation!



# Support GMA

We have had a fantastic response from our supporters in quarter one enabling us to begin work on a number of projects from renovating our premises to developing our online platforms.

But there is still a long way to go and we need your help!!!

To discuss becoming a corporate sponsor, making a donation or working with GMA to help us achieve our key challenges as detailed below please don't hesitate to get in touch with **Robert Mabbett**, Head of Development and Partnerships at GMA.

[rob.mabbett@gordonmoody.org.uk](mailto:rob.mabbett@gordonmoody.org.uk) We look forward to hearing from you.



## Gordon Moody Range of Treatment Services

- Premises purchase
- Refurbishments
- Awareness

Residential



- Activities
- Social enterprise
- Refurbishments

Recovery Housing



- Increased capacity
- Service user strategy

Outreach



- Women's treatment centre
- Access for LGBTQ+ and BAME groups

Retreat and counselling



- Media Assets
- IT Development
- International development

Gambling Therapy



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# Covid-19 Response

The lockdown situation as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic has been particularly challenging for our service users in recovery making it difficult for them to access help and support. Our outreach therapist **David Hollingsworth** explains how we have risen to the challenge at GMA.

“The first quarter of this financial year coincided with the unprecedented lockdown situation that the UK found itself in. The response from the outreach team was rapid and comprehensive. Working from home and the different logistics this entails didn't prevent us from establishing extra online groups through Gambling Therapy as well as trialling and subsequently establishing support groups via video chat.

Using the GMA WhatsApp group to share information with over 30 ex residents meant that communicating what we were doing on a daily basis was straightforward and allowed our clients to pick the groups that appealed to them and were at times that suited them. Some prefer to listen , others love to participate but all the feedback we have received tells us how valuable the groups have been and this is reflected in the numbers.

We have had over 50 people use our groups with over 600 attendees this quarter. 30 are ex Beckenham residents, a further 13 from Dudley and 9 who came through the Retreat and Counselling programme. The vast majority are regular users and it's been impressive to see how they have managed their own recoveries in terms of their self awareness and becoming too reliant on the groups. In the early part of the quarter some were using the groups daily but have quite rightly scaled back as they return to work and aren't able to commit to so many groups.

As well as the structured support groups we have run Q and A sessions every week. These have been facilitated by recovering gambling addicts and have proved extremely popular in the ex residents' community. Recovering addicts from the sector along with a whole host of guys who have gone through the GMA programmes and are living their lives in recovery have told their stories and then fielded questions. It has been an empowering experience for the speakers and enhanced their own recoveries.

- Ex-Resident Groups
- Women's Groups
- 1 to 1 sessions
- Family and Friend Groups
- Topic Groups
- Q&A Sessions
- Over 600 attendees since March
- Pre-treatment support
- Peer support

# Covid-19 Response Continued...

We have also been running topic groups, We've covered risk taking behaviour, impulsive behaviour, working on recovery, among many other things and as with the other sessions, these have proved really popular.

We would ordinarily have had face to face meetings at Beckenham for our ex residents on a monthly basis. We have successfully moved these to Teams and it has provided the continuity the clients need at this time. It has also allowed those who don't live near Beckenham and who ordinarily wouldn't be able to come to the meetings to attend these and feel a real part of the GMA community.

Mindfulness has also been offered to our ex residents throughout lockdown. It had an excellent initial take up and has maintained a hardcore of users who have really benefitted from a different kind of therapy. A real success for us and all who have used it.

This quarter has seen us launch pre support for clients on our waiting list and who would have been in treatment were we open. This has been a great success backed up by how ready the new residents in Beckenham were as soon as they arrived for assessment. Coupled with the hugely successful launch of our family and friends support we now offer a complete wrap around service for clients and their loved ones alike. Group support is now offered through our expanded outreach service as well as one to one support for those who prefer that. This benefits the family member and offers comfort and reassurance to the residents in treatment who know their loved ones are also getting help. A seismic shift for us as an organisation.

Overall this quarter has seen unprecedented growth in our outreach service and we are having over 200 contacts a week. Not everyone uses the groups and lots are receiving one to one support . 41 ex Beckenham residents have had some kind of contact in this period, a further 24 from Dudley and 35 from the R & C. That's 100 of our service users plus an ever increasing number using our family and friends service.

The lockdown has enabled us to really look at how we deliver outreach and how best to take it forward in future. The support groups are here to stay and we will be embedding them into our treatment programmes too so that current residents get to hear from their peers in the community."

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# In Other News...



## Sky News Visit Beckenham

- Sky spoke to our ex-resident Bray about the dangers for gamblers in recovery amid the return of live sport follow the link for the full article <https://t.co/YWmjvDI69a>



## GMA Exhibit at the SBC LATAM Digital Summit

- Our Gambling Therapy service experiences a high level of traffic from Latin America so it was a great opportunity to be able to exhibit at SBC's LATAM Digital Summit and raise awareness. To support the event GT Clinical service manager Paul Dent produced an article for SBC news which you can read here <https://sbcnews.co.uk/features/comment/2020/06/10/more-than-just-a-logo-how-gambling-therapy-is-providing-global-support-to-those-most-in-need/>



## GMA Supports Mental Health Awareness Week

- Being aware of our mental health has never been so important and we were proud to take part in the Mental Health Foundations Mental Health Awareness Week in May. As a team we shared our own experiences of our mental health during lockdown and shared books, films, music, places and activities that make us feel good. Mindfulness sessions were introduced for colleagues and service users and we all had the opportunity to take 3 hours from our working week to focus on our own wellbeing.

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# Contact Us...

For all enquiries contact Head of Development and Partnerships – Rob Mabbett



[rob.mabbett@gordonmoody.org.uk](mailto:rob.mabbett@gordonmoody.org.uk)



07961 538296

To apply for a place or enquire about our treatment services



[www.gordonmoody.org.uk](http://www.gordonmoody.org.uk)



[help@gordonmoody.org.uk](mailto:help@gordonmoody.org.uk)



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