Gambling Help Services

Annual Activity Report
2016/17

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 2016 to 30 June 2017. Previous reports are available on the Office of Responsible Gambling website.

Only those clients who received at least one counselling session between 1 July 2016 and 30 June 2017 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 54 counselling services funded by the Office of Responsible Gambling (through the Responsible Gambling Fund) during the 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 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

6,848

clients received counselling services in 2016/17

58 minutes

Average session duration for all session types, across all services

33,840

Counselling sessions delivered in 2016/17

Gambling counselling sessions made up 85.4% of all counselling sessions and 14.6% of all sessions were for financial counselling

8%

Increase in number of clients in 2016/17 from 2015/16

14.6%

Increase in number of counselling sessions in 2016/17 from 2015/16

21,906

Individual face-to-face counselling sessions

In addition:

7,202	Telephone sessions
2,473	Group sessions
1,612	Couple/family sessions
647	Online sessions

Client gambling activities

The two most common preferred gambling venues

40.9%

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

36.1%

Clients whose preferred gambling venues were **clubs**

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

89.2%

preferred to access gambling in person

8.7%

preferred to access gambling online

Client demographics

62.8%
Male clients

37.2%
Female clients

18.8%

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

Of these languages, the most commonly spoken were:

Arabic	25.1%
Vietnamese	12.1%
Cantonese	5.9%
Korean	5.6%
Italian	5.3%

Of clients receiving counselling

73.5%
clients with a gambling problem

16%
partners or family members

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

37.8% were diagnosed with anxiety

47% were diagnosed with depression

37.9% had thoughts about committing suicide

11.7% had attempted suicide

29.1% had a problem with alcohol

21% had a problem with other drugs

13.9% had committed an offence related to their gambling problem

Client and Session Numbers

A total of 6,848 clients received counselling services between 1 July 2016 and 30 June 2017.

The number of clients in 2016/17 increased by 8% from 2015/16, while the number of counselling sessions increased by 14.6% (Table 1, Figure 1).

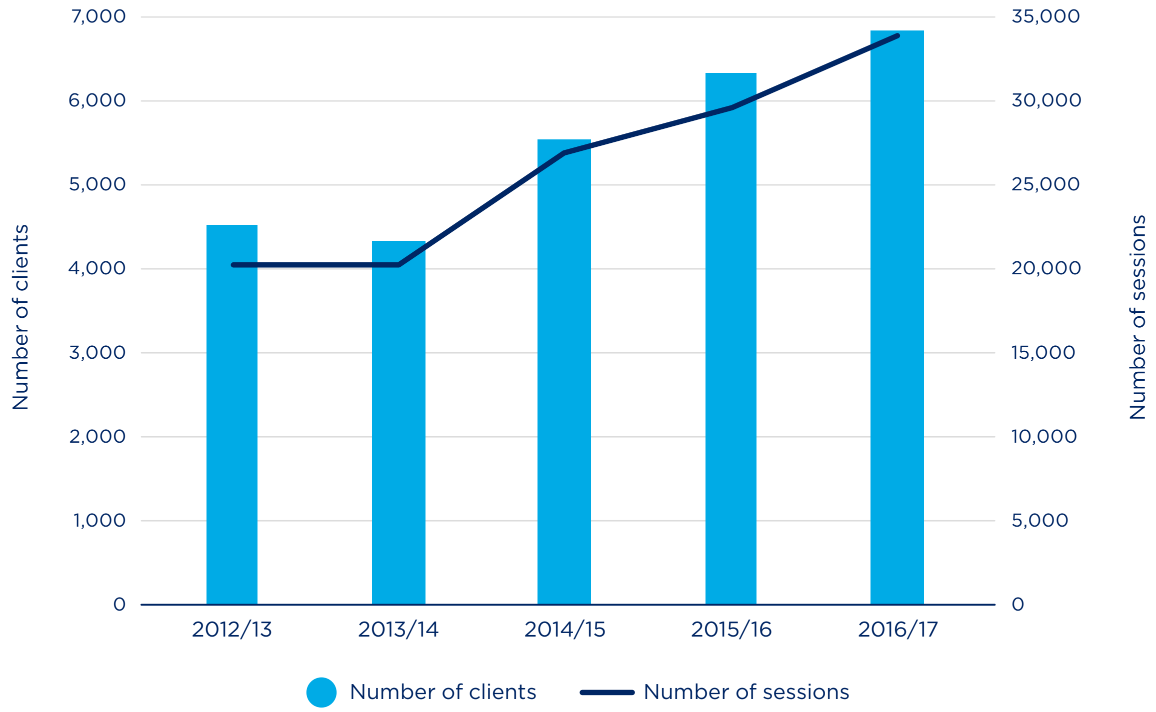
Clients who refused their data collection totalled 939 (13.7%).[1]

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
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%
2013/14	4,343	-4.0%	20,229	-0.9%
2012/13	4,522	+2.4%	20,410	-0.8%

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 33,840 counselling sessions were delivered in 2016/17. Of these, 28,892 were for gambling counselling and 4,948 were for financial counselling, including counselling sessions for non-consenting clients. 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

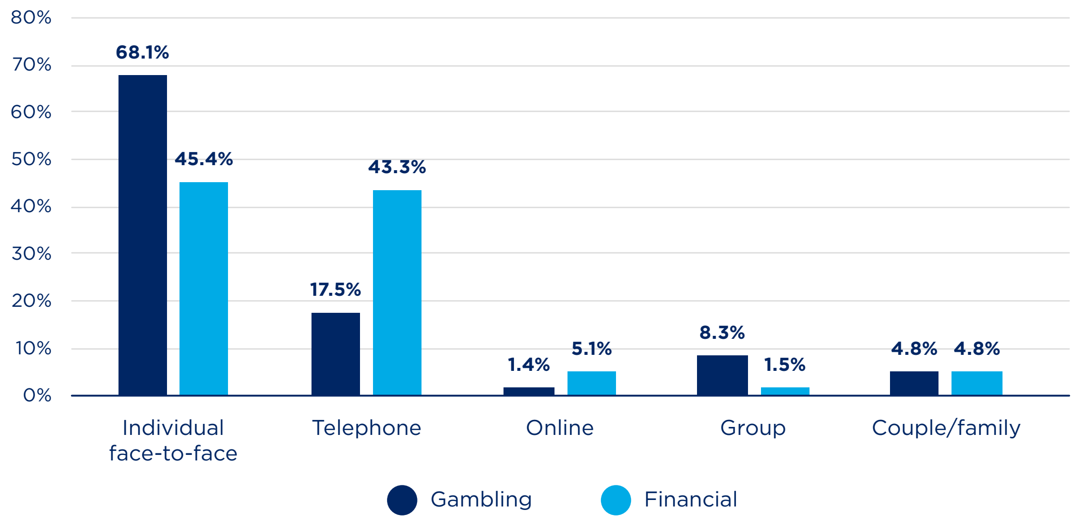
Number of clients	Number of counselling sessions	Average sessions per client
6,848	33,840	4.9

Gambling counselling sessions made up 85.4% of all counselling sessions. Of these, 68.1% of sessions were conducted as individual face-to-face sessions. Online sessions made up the lowest proportion (1.4%) of gambling counselling sessions conducted in 2016/17. It should be noted that the Gambling Help Online counselling sessions are not counted in this report, as it is a national service.

Financial counselling sessions comprised 14.6% of all counselling sessions during the time period. Of all financial counselling sessions, 45.4% were conducted as individual face-to-face sessions, and 5.1% were conducted as online sessions.

The proportion of sessions conducted for problem 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, 27.6% only attended one session (including non-consenting clients), 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
5,634	1,556	27.6%

Of all clients who attended financial counselling, 41.8 % only attended one session (including non-consenting clients), as shown in Table 4.

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

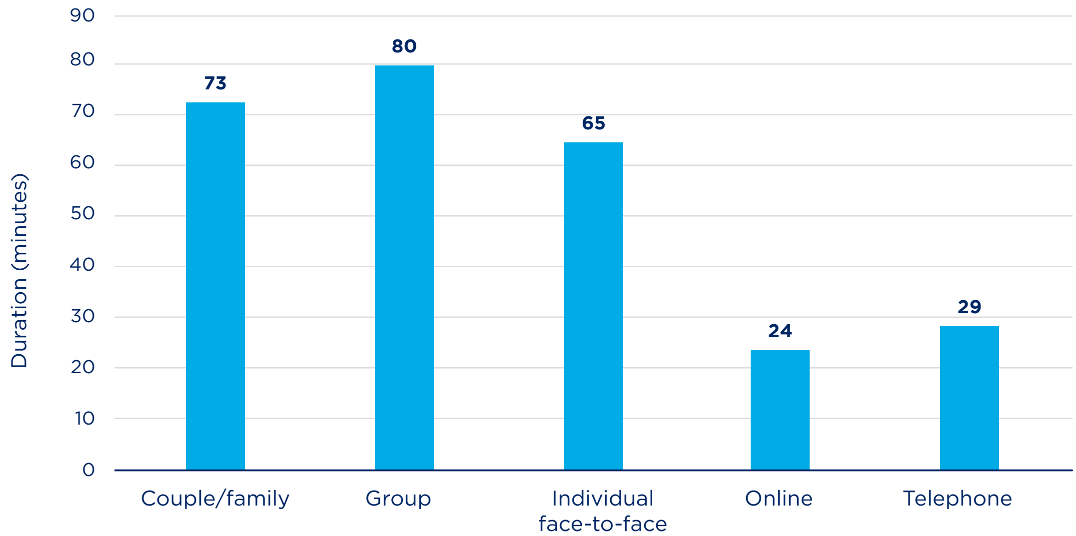
Number of clients attending financial counselling sessions	Number of clients attending only one financial counselling session	Percentage of clients attending only one financial counselling session
1,560	652	41.8%

Session Type, Duration and Location

Session Duration

The average session duration was 58 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).

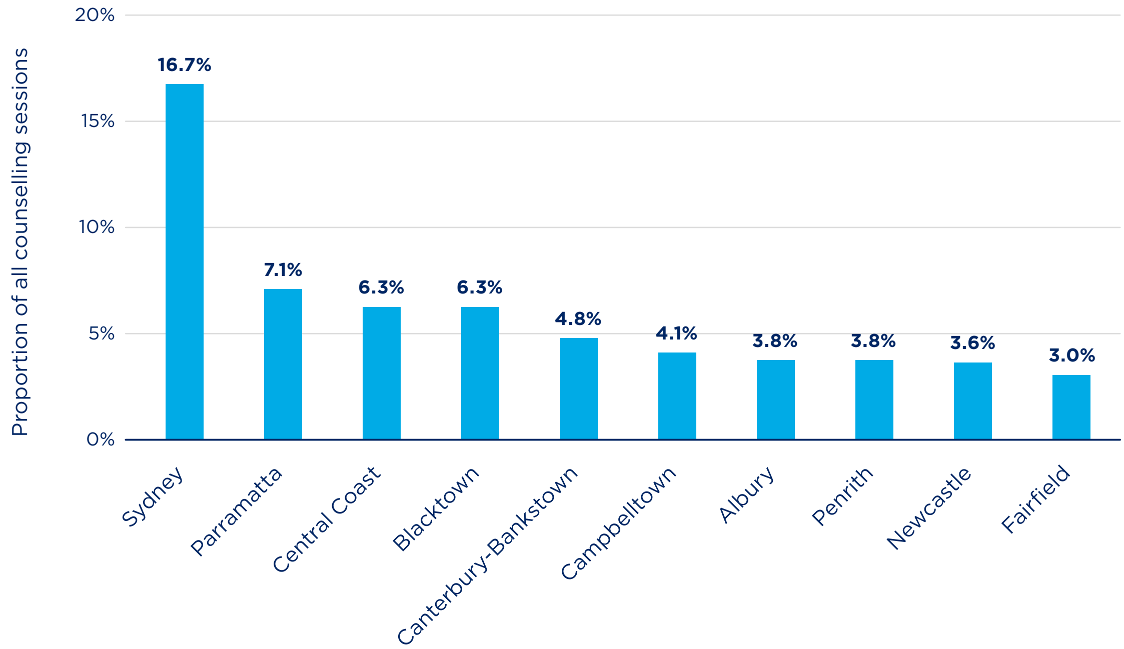
Figure 3 Average duration (minutes) of counselling sessions by session type



Session Location

In 2016/17, counselling sessions were conducted in 88 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 2016/17, 62.8% were male and 37.2% were female. Table 5 displays the breakdown of clients by age and gender. The age group with the highest proportion of clients was 35–49 years (38.7%). This age group consisted of 41.5% of all male clients and 33.9% of all female clients.

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

	Total[2]		Males		Females	
Age	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
<18 years	2	0.0%	1	0.0%	1	0.0%
18–34 years	1,544	26.6%	1,126	30.9%	414	19.2%
35–49 years	2,247	38.7%	1,515	41.5%	732	33.9%
50–64 years	1,462	25.2%	758	20.8%	704	32.6%
65+ years	556	9.6%	248	6.8%	308	14.3%

Indigenous Status

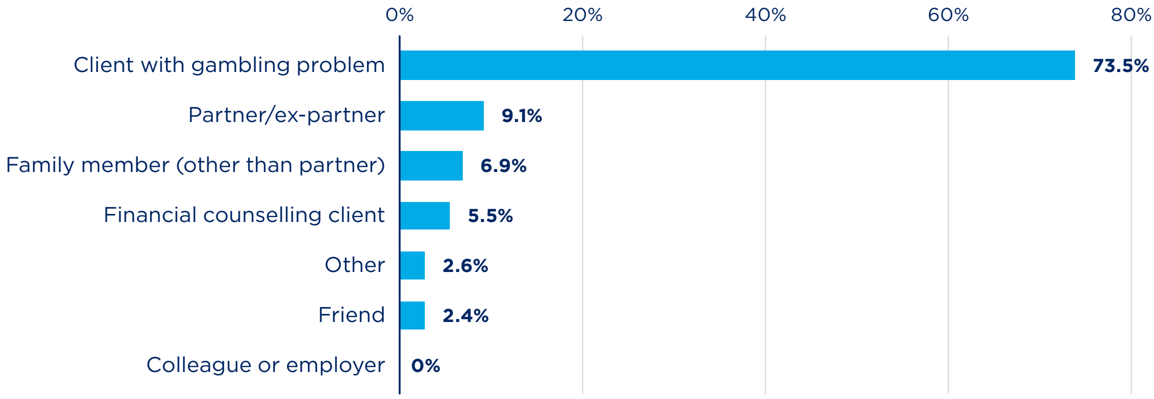
419 (7.3%) of clients reported that they were Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, or both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

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 (73.5%), followed by partners/ex partners (9.1%) (Figure 5).

Figure 5 Proportion of each client type attending counselling service



The percentage of male clients who had a gambling problem (86.7%) was higher than the percentage of female clients who had a gambling problem (51.1%) (Table 6). Of the clients who were partners or ex-partners, 85.3% were female and 14.7% 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	4,295	73.5%	3,180	86.7%	1,113	51.1%
Partner/ex-partner	531	9.1%	78	2.1%	453	20.8%
Family member (other than partner)	405	6.9%	129	3.5%	275	12.6%
Financial counselling client	320	5.5%	165	4.5%	155	7.1%
Other	152	2.6%	50	1.4%	102	4.7%
Friend	141	2.4%	64	1.7%	77	3.5%
Colleague or employer	2	0.0%	1	0.0%	1	0.0%

3 Total count includes clients who did not state their gender

Language

A total of 1,083 clients (18.8%) 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	272	4.7%
Vietnamese	131	2.3%
Cantonese	64	1.1%
Korean	61	1.1%
Italian	57	1.0%
Mandarin	51	0.9%
Spanish	39	0.7%
Hindi	32	0.6%
Greek	28	0.5%
Persian (excluding Dari)	25	0.4%

Of the clients reporting speaking a language other than English at home, 320 (29.5% 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	109	34.1%
Vietnamese	65	20.3%
Cantonese	39	12.2%
Mandarin	28	8.8%
Korean	22	6.9%

4 English-only speakers are included in this data

Suburb of Residence

The top five suburbs/towns of residence for clients during 2016/17 are displayed below in Table 9.

Table 9 The top five suburbs/towns of residence for clients 2016/17

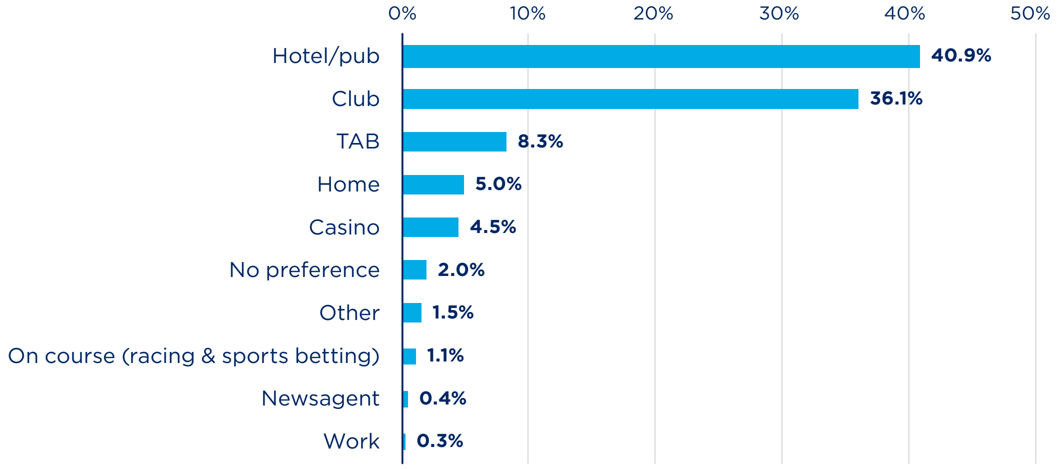
Suburb/Town	Number	Percentage
Wagga Wagga	97	1.6%
Cessnock	90	1.5%
Albury	89	1.5%
Lavington	62	1.1%
Blacktown	57	1.0%

Gambling Activities

Preferred Gambling Venue

Across all gambling counselling clients, the most frequently recorded referred gambling venues were Hotel/pub (40.9%) and Clubs (36.1%) (Figure 6).

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 (74.9%) followed by horse/dog races (12.9%) (Table 10).

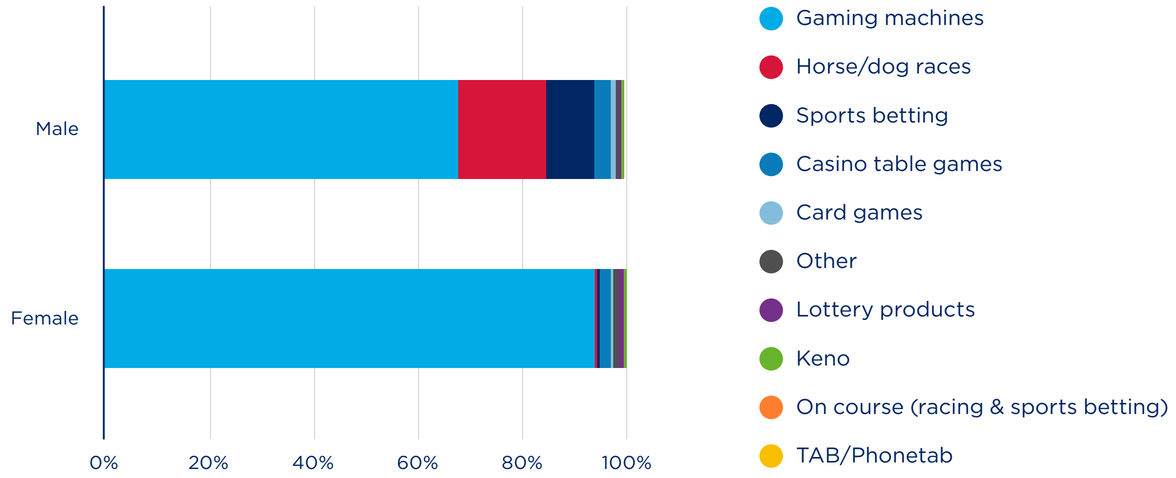
Table 10 Principal gambling activity for all gambling counselling clients

	Total[6]		Male		Female	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Gaming machines	3,120	74.9%	2,097	68.1%	1,022	94.2%
Horse/dog races	539	12.9%	530	17.2%	8	0.7%
Sports betting	278	6.7%	276	9.0%	2	0.2%
Casino table games	126	3.0%	100	3.2%	26	2.4%
Card games	40	1.0%	34	1.1%	6	0.6%
Other	30	0.7%	18	0.6%	12	1.1%
Lottery products	23	0.6%	15	0.5%	8	0.7%
Keno	10	0.2%	9	0.3%	1	0.1%
On course (racing & sports betting)	1	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%
TAB/Phonetab	1	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%

6 Total count includes clients who did not state their gender

The majority of female gambling counselling clients (94.2%) reported gaming machines as their principal gaming activity (Figure 7). Principal gaming activities reported by male gambling counselling clients were more varied, with 68.1% reporting gaming machines as their principal gaming activity, followed by horse/dog races (17.2%) and sports betting (9%) (Figure 7).

Figure 7 Principal gambling activity of gambling counselling clients by gender



Secondary Gambling Activity

Across all clients undertaking gambling counselling, 42.2% reported a secondary gambling activity.

Table 11 Secondary gambling activity for gambling counselling clients

Secondary Gambling Activity	Number	Percentage[7]
Horse/dog races	627	22.6%
Sports betting	564	20.3%
Gaming machines	346	12.5%
Lottery products	304	11.0%
Casino table games	290	10.5%
Keno	283	10.2%
Card games	229	8.3%
Bingo	71	2.6%
Other	55	2.0%
TAB/Phonetab	4	0.1%
On course (racing & sports betting)	2	0.1%

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

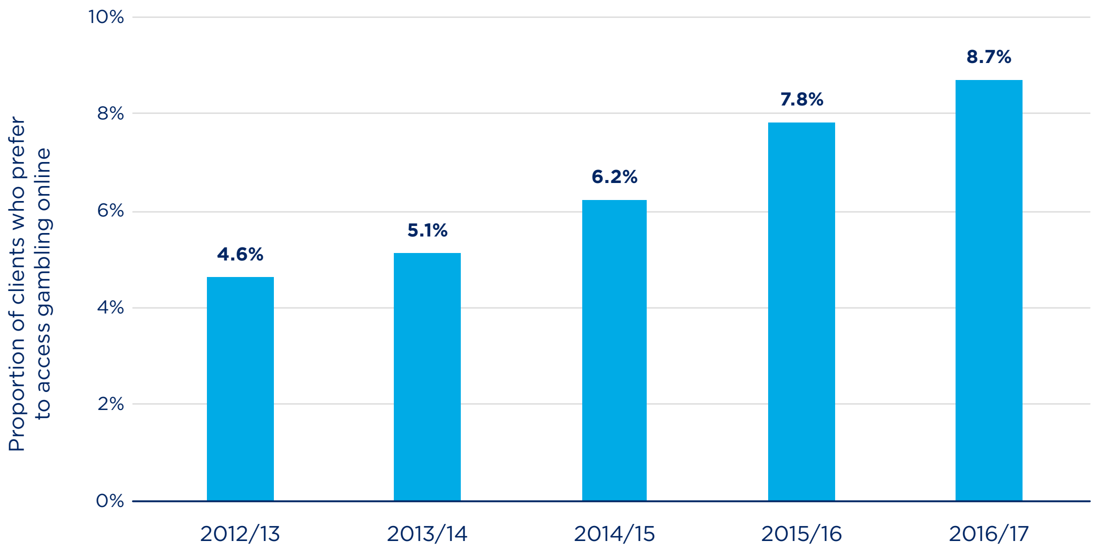
Across all all clients undertaking gambling counselling, the vast majority preferred to gamble in person (89.2%) (Table 12).

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

	Number	Percentage
In person	3,726	89.2%
Online	362	8.7%
Telephone	66	1.6%
No preference	17	0.4%
Other	8	0.2%

The proportion of clients using Gambling Help services who prefer to access gambling online continues to rise (Figure 8).

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



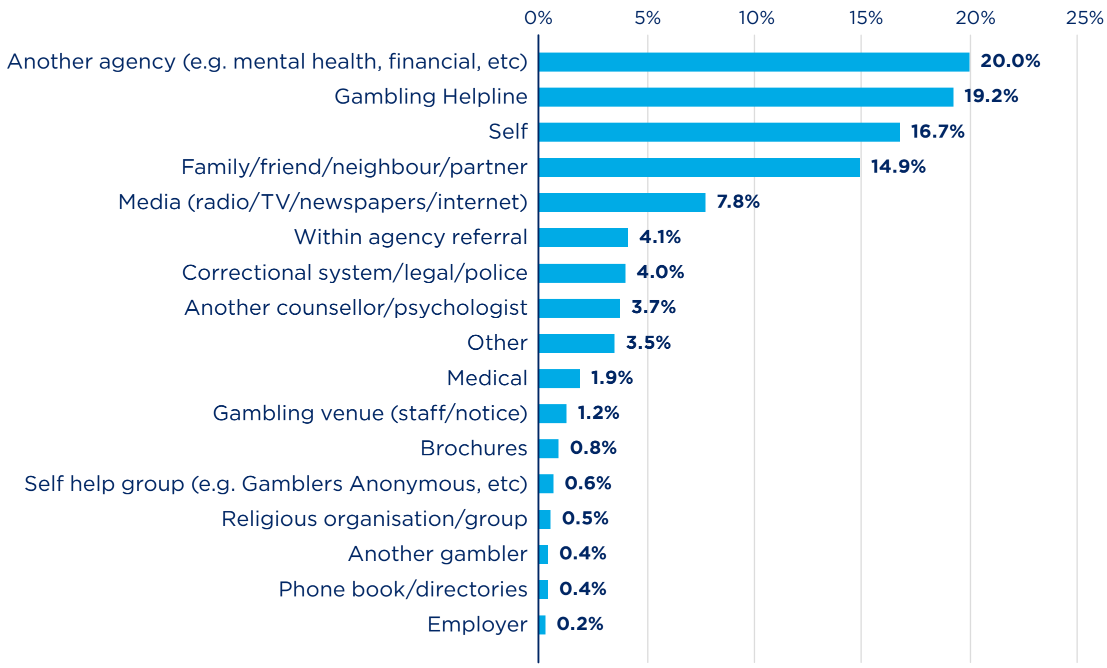
Access to Services

Referral Source

Of clients who noted a referral source, 20% reported 'Another Agency' as the most recent referral source,[8] 19.2% reported the Gambling Helpline and 16.7% self-referred (Figure 9).

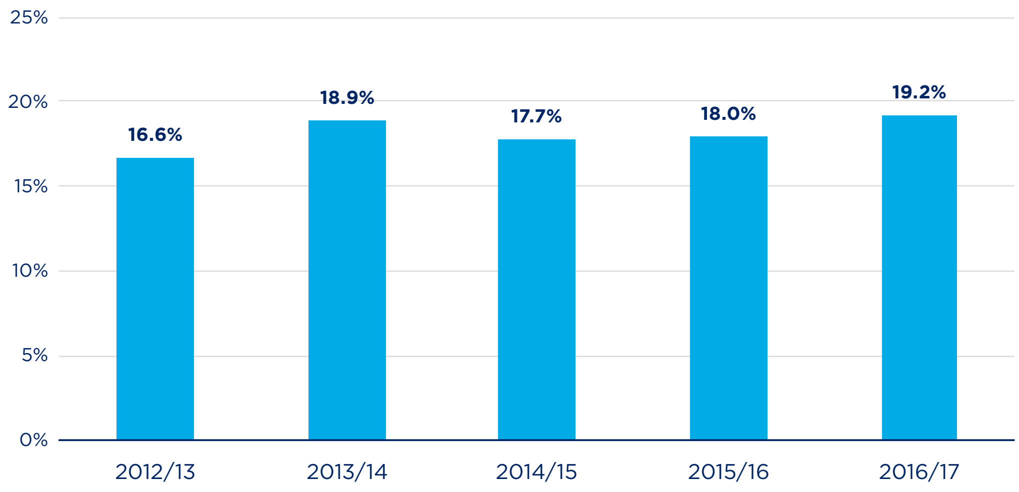
The proportion of clients reporting Gambling Helpline as their most recent referral has remained relatively consistent over the past five years (Figure 10).

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

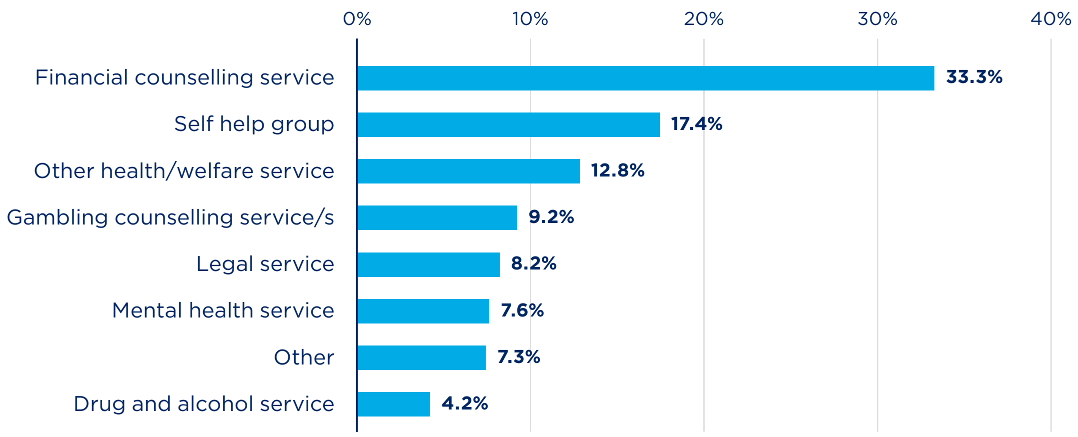
Figure 10 Proportion of all clients referred by Gambling Helpline



Referrals of clients to other service providers

Across all clients, 48.2% 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]



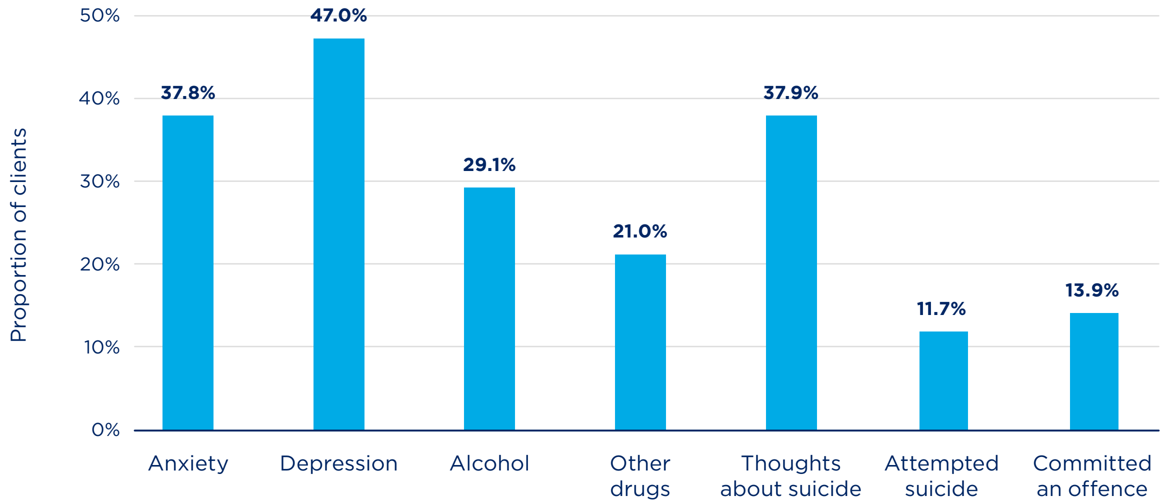
9 Percentages do not include clients not referred to another service provider

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]

14.6% 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, 37.8% (1,478) stated they had been diagnosed with anxiety. Of these clients, the percentage was higher for males (65.6%) than for females (34.4%).

Depression

Across all clients, 47% (1,846)[11] had been diagnosed with depression. Of these clients, the percentage was higher for males (66.7%) than for males (33.3%).

Alcohol

Across all clients, 29.1% (1,144)[12] have had a problem with alcohol. Of these clients, the percentage was higher for males (78.7%) than for females (21.3%).

Other Drugs

Across all clients, 21% (830) have had a problem with other drugs. Of these clients, the percentage was higher for males (81.7%) than for females (18.3%).

Thoughts of suicide

Across all clients, 37.9% (1,474) 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, 11.7% (452) had attempted suicide. Of these clients, the percentage was higher for males (66.6%) than for females (33.4%).

Legal History[13]

Across all clients, 13.9% (535) reported a legal history of having committed an offence relating to their gambling. Of these clients, the percentage was higher for males (75.3%) than for females (24.7%).

11 Count includes clients who did not state their gender

12 Count includes clients who did not state their gender

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

Office of Responsible Gambling
GPO Box 7060
Sydney NSW 2001
Email: info@responsiblegambling.nsw.gov.au
Phone: (02) 9995 0992