



Chairperson's Statement

December 2016 – May 2017

Problem Gambling Ireland: a Company Limited by Guarantee (Company Number: 593936)

Office: Viewmount House, Viewmount Park, Dunmore Road, Waterford

Introduction

I am pleased to report on the initial 6 months since Problem Gambling Ireland (PGI) was incorporated. The objective of PGI is to prevent and minimise gambling-related harm in Ireland. PGI was incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee on 01.12.2016 and is currently in the process of applying for charitable status.

Background

The Irish Institute of Public Health estimated, in 2010, that there were between 28,000 and 40,000 problem gamblers in Ireland (ROI). Research from the UK has found that, for every person with a gambling problem, an additional 8-10 people are negatively affected. Research by Dr Crystal Fulton, of UCD (2015), found that there was a marked gap in services for people affected by gambling-related harm in Ireland. This research inspired the founding of Problem Gambling Ireland.

Problem Gambling Ireland was established by Waterford-based addiction counsellor, Barry Grant, in early 2016. Barry developed a website, which would provide information to problem gamblers and concerned persons – and which would be independent of gambling industry influence.

In October of 2016, Barry Grant was awarded a Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Elevator Award for his work on Problem Gambling Ireland. Barry then set about assembling a board of Directors and incorporating the company.

Problem Gambling Ireland's vision is to make responsible gambling a reality in Ireland. It aims to do this by focusing on the three pillars of responsible gambling: Responsible Policy, Responsible Provision and Responsible Consumption.

Responsible Policy: We actively lobby government to enact fit-for-purpose gambling legislation and create the Office of the Gambling Regulator.

Responsible Provision: We are in discussions with the Gaming and Leisure Association of Ireland and the Bookmakers Association of Ireland regarding providing responsible gambling training to their employees.

Responsible Consumption: We raise awareness of the risks associated with problem gambling and we provide information and advice to problem gamblers and concerned persons. We also deliver harm-prevention training to groups that are at-risk of developing gambling problems. We operate from a harm-minimisation/harm-reduction standpoint.

Staff

At the time of writing, Barry Grant, CEO, is the only member of staff and works on a part-time basis. Remuneration of the CEO position is set at €20 per hour for a 20-hour week. The CEO is a registered sole-trader and invoices the company on a 4-weekly basis.

Funding

At the time of writing, our sole funder is Social Entrepreneurs Ireland. To date, we have drawn down €15,000 of a €20,000 award.

Half-Year Review

Since incorporation, PGI has engaged in numerous activities, directed towards its objectives:

- piloted a weekend helpline
- provided email, text and telephone supports to problem gamblers and family members
- delivered gambling harm-prevention talks at colleges, secondary schools and sports clubs
- submitted research to University College Dublin and the Department of Justice
- lobbied for the enactment of the Gambling Control Bill
- researched underage gambling, with Trinity College Dublin
- developed programmes for schools, family members and addiction/mental health workers
- raised awareness of the risks associated with gambling on national and local media
- delivered gambling harm-prevention training to USI Welfare Officers
- received just under 10,000 unique visitors to the website

Governance

At the time of writing, there are 7 members of the board of Directors. They are:

Raymond Murray (Secretary)

Stephen Plunkett (Chairperson)

Keith Delaney (Honorary Treasurer)

Lisa Murphy

Jonathan Collins

Jim Bruton

Paul Corcoran

We are in the process of setting up a financial sub-committee. At our March Board Meeting, a resolution was passed to sign the 'On the Journey' document for Governance Code development. We have begun working towards full compliance. At the same meeting, the 'Resolution Regarding Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising' was signed by the Board members in attendance. Work has also begun on achieving full compliance in this area.

Stephen Plunkett

Chairperson

Problem Gambling Ireland. [23.05.2017]