

Father and son launch programme to digitally support gambling addicts through health sector

Submitted by: ABPC Ltd

Thursday, 7 April 2022

Media Contact Adam Bradford, email: adam@saferonlinegambling.org, tel: 07441 396378

A new project launched today by Adam Bradford, 29, and his father David, 65, a former gambling addict, aims to fill the gaps in awareness and understanding of the condition across the country.

In April 2014, David Bradford from Sheffield was jailed for two years for fraud. He had been stealing money from his work to pay for an out-of-control addiction to online gambling, made even worse by his mounting debts and pressure to keep up his façade with his family. David had told his family that he was travelling away on work business for a few days, but in this time he actually attended a court hearing where he was sentenced to two years' in prison after stealing over 53,000 GBP to fund his habit.

Online slot machines and casino style games on internet betting sites had taken over David's life and over the previous two decades he had amassed over 500,000 GBP in debts including remortgaging the family home. His family were completely unaware of his debts or his gambling habit and only found out on 11th April 2014 when a phone call from a solicitor confirmed that David had been handed a prison sentence and would not be returning home that day.

Son Adam, now 29, a successful entrepreneur and David's wife Denise, 69, had to piece together the masses of debts and financial ruin that David had left behind whilst he was behind bars. His two younger sons Alex and Ryan, both 18 at the time, were due to start University.

After some further investigation David's eldest son Adam found that he had been spending most of his wages on gambling on online betting sites spending almost triple his monthly wage on betting and using loans, credit cards and payday lenders to fill the gap in the family finances. A repossession order was held over the house and the family found it had also had all the equity taken out of it to pay David's debts.

After attending Gamblers Anonymous meetings and getting over the initial trauma, Adam started a national awareness raising campaign to highlight the potential dangers of betting and to encourage the industry to implement more safeguards for players at risk.

Once David had left prison, he teamed up with Adam and the pair formed Safer Online Gambling Group, a charitable organisation which raises awareness of the addiction and designs innovative solutions to provide support to players and the industry itself. Last year Adam and David finished developing 'BetProtect' which is a suite of tools used by the industry to provide enhanced education, awareness and support to players to prevent them from becoming addicted – designed with leading therapists and major gambling companies' support. The app was sold back to the gambling industry in summer last year.

Now, the organisation is today launching its nationwide programme to educate GPs about the signs of a hidden gambling addiction, taking a leaf from David's own story. The programme will involve digital educational resources, training and a suite of self help tools made available to those presenting issues

through primary care and public and private health providers. The pair will also work with employer programmes to increase take up of the programme, which is independently funded with support from the Social Enterprise Support fund, with thanks to National Lottery players.

Adam said: 'Everyone's ultimate aim is to prevent gambling harms as far as possible and we know as a family and from our extensive field work in this area that early detection is key to getting the right levels of support to prevent a potential addiction from escalating. Instead of focusing on political mud slinging and throwing bombs at the gambling industry, as a family we took this opportunity to take practical action in the service of others. We hope this avenue to providing development and support to the healthcare sector to spot the signs in primary care and to strengthen available support through simple practical tools will be a welcome addition to the suite of support already available.'