

Problem Gambling

What is problem gambling?

There is no agreed definition of problem gambling, but a problem gambler might display some of the following characteristics:

- Uncontrolled spending e.g. a person spending more money than they want to or can afford.
- Significant amounts of time spent gambling.
- Concealing or lying about gambling behaviour.
- A persons gambling impacts on their relationships with family and friends.
- Withdrawal from family or other social activities.
- Spending lots of time on a computer.
- No apparent interests or leisure pursuits.
- Absence from school, college or work.

What can I do if I am worried about my gambling?

If you are concerned about your own gambling, you should seek professional support to help you. There are lots of different support agencies that are able to offer safe, confidential and non-judgmental help:

Healthy Lifestyles Gloucestershire (*link to website*)

Ara Recovery4all – 0330 1340 286 (*link to website*)

Gamcare has a telephone number **0808 8020 133**, an online forum and chatroom and NetLine. (*link to website*)

Gamblers Anonymous (*link to website*)

NHS Choices (*link to website*)

If you would like to speak to somebody about a gambling problem the GamCare Helpline provides confidential advice, information and emotional support throughout the UK to anyone experiencing problems. You can speak to one of their trained advisors by calling 0808 8020 133, 8am to midnight 7 days a week.

I know somebody who I think is a problem gambler, what should I do?

Consider the following questions:

- Is their gambling habit causing you or them to get into financial difficulties?
- Are they defensive or aggressive when challenged about the amount of time that they are gambling?
- Have they asked you to lie for them, or sworn you to secrecy about their gambling?

- Is their gambling habit putting a strain on your relationship?
- Have they asked to borrow money from you, or have they taken money from you, or have they taken money without your permission to use for gambling?
- If the answer to any of the above questions is 'yes' and you feel worried or anxious about the situation then you should seek professional support to help you and them.

If you would like to speak to somebody about a gambling problem you can contact the GamCare helpline by calling 0808 8020 133.

GamAnon is an organization linked to Gamblers Anonymous which provides support and encouragement for the families and friends of compulsive gamblers, and helps them to understand the problem and to help overcome it.

What responsibility do the operators have?

Under the Gambling Act 2005 all gambling companies licensed in the UK have a duty of care to their customers and must carry out their operations with a view to protecting the children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling. Operators are encouraged to use the following measures to help achieve this objective.

- Place leaflets on the premises in a prominent position that contain assistance to problem gamblers.
- Offer customers the opportunity to self exclude
- Place stickers or notices on gaming machines to identify the stakes/prizes
- Place stickers/posters with GamCare helpline and website in prominent locations such as on ATM machines.
- Consider the positioning of ATM machines on premises to ensure customers have to stop gambling in order to make cash withdrawals.

If you are an operator who would like further advice on any of the above schemes please contact us. You can also get further advice by contacting the Gambling Commission