

Gambling Harm Support: Community Workbook 2022 - 2023

Introduction

Who is GamCare?

GamCare is the leading national provider of information, advice and support for anyone harmed by gambling in the UK. We work with gamblers and those who have been affected by someone else's gambling.

In **2021 – 2022**, over **40,000** people contacted us on the National Gambling Helpline, and over **10,000** people accessed treatment. GamCare also run Forums, Chatrooms, group work and online CBT treatment too. Visit our website to find out more: www.gamcare.org.uk

If you are struggling with gambling, call us today on **0808 8020 133**.

Who is this workbook for?

This workbook has two aims: to educate and to support.

To the person on probation: we want this workbook to increase your understanding of gambling and help you think about your own gambling, whether there may be any problems related to it, and whether you might want further support with it; **page 15** outlines how to access support. At the end of each section, there's a box to tick when the section has been completed so you can see your progress.

Note for the probation officer: use this workbook with anyone on your caseload who is experiencing gambling harm. Use this workbook as you see fit - you could work through a page per session or over a number of sessions; it'll depend on the needs of the person you're working with.

2 What's in this workbook?

Section 1 looks to explore gambling behaviour by looking at where someone might gamble, what with, when and why.

Section 2 looks at the different gambling related harms, including debt, mental health and relationship breakdown and uses activities to explore potential behaviour change. There is an action plan that can be completed on **page 14**.

Section 3 looks at how to access support.

We hope you find this workbook useful.

Acknowledgements go to the service users with lived experience of gambling harm and the criminal justice system, as well as probation staff and GamCare staff, who helped to design this workbook.



Part 1: Knowledge

Definitions

It's useful to understand the issue before it is tackled. Below are some definitions.

What is gambling?

Gambling is risking money, or anything of value, on the outcome of something involving chance.

What is problem gambling?

It is continuing to gamble despite harmful consequences e.g. stress, anxiety, depression, losing a partner or a friend, not being able to pay the rent, losing a home, or a job.

What are gambling related harms?

They are "the adverse impacts from gambling on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, communities and society."

3



What do you gamble on?

Tick the ones that apply to you. If you've come out of prison, the listed options might not apply to you. If they don't, use the 'other' option to write down what you've gambled on.



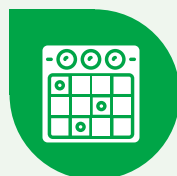
National Lottery



Scratchcards



Fruit or slot machines



Bingo



Horse races



Dog races



Sports betting



Poker



Private betting



Casino

Other:

When do you gamble?

Tick the ones that apply to you. If you've come out of prison, the listed options might not apply to you. If they don't, use the 'other' option to write down when you've gambled.



At the weekend



During the week



In the evening



In the morning



Whenever possible



During the day



During a lunch break



Alone



With your friends

Other:

Where do you gamble?

Tick the ones that apply to you. If you've come out of prison, the listed options might not apply to you. If they don't, use the 'other' option to write down where you've gambled.

Bingo venue



Bookies



Local shop



Online



Arcade



Casino



At home



During a commute



In secret



Other:

Why do you gamble?

People gamble for different reasons. Some gamble to win, to have fun, or as a social activity. For some, they gamble because they are bored or curious. Others gamble as it is a good way to distract themselves from an unpleasant situation or memory, to escape an unhealthy situation, as a result of peer pressure or to pay off debts.

For John, his gambling started at a young age, as his dad and his grandad gambled a lot. It started as a family activity but as he got older it developed into a problem driven first by the buzz but then by the need to pay off his debts. When John used the money he and his wife had saved together in their joint account, John knew it was time to get support. John's been a critical GamCare Forum member and has gone on to support others with similar experiences.

Activity:

Reflect on 3 occasions you have gambled previously, in prison or in the community, and ask yourself these questions:

- What led you to gamble? Have your motivations changed over time?
- How did you feel before you gambled?
- How did you feel after you gambled?

Section completed:



Part 2: Behaviour change

Leanne’s commute to and from work took her past numerous bookies, and she found lunchtime particularly difficult as this is when she’d usually gamble. For her, seeing the place she used to gamble, and having free time during lunch were key triggers. With the help of a Helpline Adviser, Leanne identified these triggers and adapted her day to avoid and manage them. She changed her route home, and she filled her lunchtimes with other activities like reading, walking or going to the gym.

Urges and cravings

Urges (“I have to do it now”) and cravings (“I want it badly”) are a normal part of the journey for someone who is cutting down or stopping an addictive behaviour.

Urges and cravings to gamble will become less and less intense as time passes, and they’ll pass more quickly too. With practice and hard work, you’ll soon be able to control them when they come up.

Triggers

There are two types of triggers that can kickstart an urge or a craving: internal triggers and external triggers.

Internal triggers include a thought, a positive or negative emotion like joy or frustration, and a physical sensation like a headache. **External triggers** include people, places, items, or a time of day.

It’ll be easier to avoid external triggers but it’s still important to be able to identify internal triggers.

If you’re transitioning from prison to community, there’ll be a lot more internal and external triggers that might activate urges and cravings to gamble. Being mindful of what they might be will allow you to manage them when they come up. Can you think of ways to help you identify and manage your urges and cravings? Put some ideas down here:

8

Also, complete the activity on triggers on page 9.

“I made it to 4 weeks without a bet. Very happy with that. Knew it would be hard but with everyday what passes, it definitely gets easier with the urge to gamble subsiding.”

Activity: Triggers

Reflect on 3 occasions where you have gambled previously, in prison or in the community, and ask yourself these questions:

- Can you spot your triggers?
- Can you think of ways to avoid those triggers?
- Can you think of ways to manage those triggers?
- Can you imagine how you'd feel if you avoided and/or managed these triggers?

Section completed:

Debt and Finances

In 2020-2021, 66% of people who called the National Gambling Helpline reported having debt issues, and 75% of people reported being impacted by financial difficulties as a result of their gambling.

It is often the case that people are released from prison with debts that have built up during their sentence. If you have a gambling problem this could be a significant trigger to gamble. Look back at page 5 and 6 to help you manage your triggers.

"At my lowest point, I was in my local bookies gambling with hundreds of pounds a day and more often than not, leaving with less than I'd come in with. I'd been gambling for 7 years and after stealing from my partner, decided I'd finally had enough. I called the National Gambling Helpline, who referred me to a debt management agency. It's been a rocky road, but I'm in a much better place – financially and emotionally."

Activity:

Reflect on 3 occasions where you have gambled previously, in prison or in the community, and ask yourself these questions:

- Where did you get the money you used to gamble? i.e. employment, benefits, loans, savings, theft, other?
- Has your gambling affected your finances?
- If so, in what way(s)?

N.B: If you feel like you want or need support with your finances, check out the support options on page 15.

Section completed:

Mental health

We have found that 76% of gamblers and 74% of affected others who called the National Gambling Helpline in 2020/21 reported directly experiencing anxiety and stress. We also know that waiting for sentencing and being sentenced can be a distressing time.

Hillary found that her gambling made her feel really isolated and alone. She felt guilty that no one knew about how much money she was spending, so she started finding it hard to sleep at night. The tiredness, mixed with the guilt, became unbearable and in 2020, Hillary reached out and asked for support. She's now 11 months into her recovery and is in a much better place.

Activity:

Reflect on 3 occasions where you have gambled previously, in prison or in the community, and ask yourself these questions:

- Has your gambling affected your mental health?
- If so, in what way(s)?

N.B: If you feel like you want or need support with your mental health, check out the support options on page 15.

Section completed:

Relationships

We know that 49% of gamblers and 81% of affected others reported an impact on their relationships as a result of gambling in 2020/21. We also know that healthy relationships with friends and family increases the success of rebuilding your life after sentencing.

"I found the secrecy the hardest part. Feeling like I couldn't tell my daughter or my wife where I was or what I was doing was eating me up. They knew something was wrong, and my Mrs once accused me of cheating. When I missed my little girl's 11th birthday, I felt awful. But when I missed my 5th wedding anniversary with my wife? I knew it was time to come clean. As soon as I did, I felt more in control. It was my family that encouraged me to get help with GamCare, and I can't say it's been easy, but I'd never look back."

Activity:

Reflect on 3 occasions where you have gambled previously, in prison or in the community, and ask yourself these questions:

- Has your gambling affected your relationships?
- If so, in what way(s)?

N.B: If you feel like you want or need support, check out the support options on page 15.

Crime

We know that gambling related crime is often driven by the need to pay off debts, continue gambling or to meet a gap in finances such as bills, food or rent. In the case of theft, it is from friends and family, but it also occurs with employers and colleagues. Sometimes gambling links to Domestic Abuse and other offences such as criminal damage.

Alex didn't even mean to steal from his employer. He genuinely believed it was a temporary loan and that he would pay it back when he next won enough money. The only thing is, that big win never came and Alex ended up stealing more and more until eventually, he was found out. His employer pressed charges and Alex was sentenced to 3 years in prison. Before he was sentenced he accessed support and was able to work on himself and his gambling whilst he was inside. Now he's back in the community, he's rebuilding his relationships with his family and is attending weekly group sessions.

Activity:

Reflect on 3 occasions where you have gambled previously, in prison or in the community, and ask yourself these questions:

- Is your gambling linked to your offence?
- If so, in what way(s)?

N.B: If you feel like you want or need support, check out the support options on page 15.

Section completed:

Action plan

Now you've completed all the sections, how about completing the action plan below?

If you do have some concerns about your gambling, it is useful to think about how much you want to make some changes. Ask yourself, **how important is it to you to make some changes?** Use the scale of 1 to 10 below (10 being making changes is very important to me).

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This is a good time to think about what you want in your life, and what changes you would like in the future.

In the 'map' below, jot down things you might want to change in your future (these may be linked to your gambling) using the activities you've completed in the previous pages to guide you.

14

Relationships	Work/education	Finances and Debt
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My future goals

Crime	Mental health	Other
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Section completed:

Signposting and support

Self-referral

Whether you are looking for support for yourself, a friend or a family member, GamCare can help.

National Gambling Helpline

The National Gambling Helpline gives confidential information, advice and support for anyone affected by gambling problems in England, Scotland and Wales.

You can speak with our Advisers one-to-one over the phone or on live chat 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

They will listen to what is going on for you, and talk through options for support in your local area, online or over the phone.



Find local support

We offer a range of free support and treatment across England, Scotland and Wales. If this is the right option for you we can do this face to face, online or over the phone.

Our treatment is free, confidential and flexible. Find out more information about your local provider and where to find them on our website: www.gamcare.org.uk/get-support



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