



GAMBLING ADDICTION AND ONLINE GAMING

Gambling problems can happen to anyone from any walk of life, including young adults and children. Gambling can go from a fun, harmless diversion to an unhealthy obsession with profound consequences. Those caught up in gambling may even do things they never thought they would, like running up huge debts, lying to friends and family or even stealing money to gamble.

GAMBLING ADDICTION - also known as pathological gambling, compulsive gambling or gambling disorder is an impulse-control disorder. If you're a compulsive gambler, you can't control the impulse to gamble, even when it has negative consequences for you or your loved ones. You'll gamble whether you're up or down, broke, or flush, and you'll keep gambling regardless of the consequences even when you know that the odds are against you and you can't afford to lose.

Of course, you can also have a gambling problem without being totally out of control.

PROBLEM GAMBLING - is any gambling behaviour that disrupts your life. If you're preoccupied with gambling and spending time and money to access it, running up additional debts despite the impact on your life, then you have a gambling problem.

The minimum legal age for gambling in the UK is 18 years old. This applies to adult gaming centres, betting shops, bingo halls, casinos, racetracks, and online gambling and also applies to all National Lottery products.

Myth: *You have to gamble every day to be a problem gambler.*

Fact: A problem gambler may gamble frequently or infrequently. Gambling is a problem if it causes problems.

Myth: *Gambling is not a problem if the person gambling can afford it.*

Fact: Problems with gambling are not just financial as they can also lead to relationship problems, legal issues, job loss and mental health problems including depression, anxiety and even suicide.

Gambling is defined as;

*"To **stake or risk money**, or **anything of value**, on the outcome of something involving **chance**."*

YOUNG PEOPLE AND GAMBLING IN THE UK

The Young People and Gambling Report by the Gambling Commission, highlighted that:

- for 23% of 11-16 year-olds their first experience of gambling was playing on fruit/slot machines
- 11% of 11-16 year-olds had gambled in the last seven days spending an average of £17.

ONLINE GAMING

Digital access has become part of everyday life for many young people, providing access to a multitude of gambling and gaming platforms. The minimum legal age for gambling in the UK is 18 years old, but whilst gaming products are growing in popularity, they currently fall outside the jurisdiction of the Gambling Commission. The detrimental effects of gambling on young people can include poor performance at school, truancy, disruption of peer and family relationships, alcohol or substance misuse, anti-social behaviour and even crime.

Online games have many forms and tricks. Some online games e.g., Candy Crush use the “freemium” model, which means they give you some content for free. However, for access to full game features payment is required. The freemium model has rapidly evolved to offer subscriptions, expanded functionality, virtual currencies, weaponry, special abilities, or other accessories in exchange for credit payments, thus encouraging the player to gamble.

GamCare reported that the two most prominent products in games are loot boxes and skin betting. Loot boxes are mystery items embedded within games that can be purchased for randomised rewards, including skins. Mystery items are mostly made up of content that can give the player a significant in-game advantage over their peers, whereas skins are entirely cosmetic items that can be used by the player to customise their avatars and stand out. Young people can end up spending significant sums of their parent’s money in the hope of uncovering something of value.

It is not always easy being a parent and it’s difficult to keep track of digital access in your children’s everyday life. However, ask questions if you are concerned about what they are doing online and have regular open conversations to help keep your child safe.

- Never give out your card number for any freemium games as it may be automatically charged for in-game purchases.
- For subscription-based games, such as those accessed via Apple or Google Play, activate the purchase password feature in account settings.
- Regularly check your bank and credit card statements to ensure you are not being charged for purchases you didn’t approve.
- If you allow your children to use your smartphone or tablet to play games, consider switching off the in-app updates/purchases.
- Set a limit to the time your child is allowed to play online games each day and make them aware of the gambling and financial dangers involved.



USEFUL ORGANISATIONS

GamCare – A UK provider of free information, advice, and support for anyone harmed by gambling.
www.gamcare.org.uk Call Freephone 24-7 National Gambling Helpline (operated by GamCare): 0800 8020 133

Gamblers Anonymous – A range of gambling recovery tools including a chat room, online forum, and daily support meetings throughout England, Wales, and Ulster.
www.gamblersanonymous.org.uk
Email: info@gamblersanonymous.org.uk
Information line – National: 0330 094 0322,
North-East: 07771 427 429 | North-West: 07974 668 999 |
Ulster: (028) 7135 1329

Gordon Moody Association – Leading provider of gambling therapy services in the UK for those whose lives have been severely affected by gambling addiction. gordonmoody.org.uk
Email: help@gordonmoody.org.uk Tel: 01384 241292

Samaritans – Someone who will listen and chat through whatever you need to talk about, judgement-free – available 24/7 over the phone, face-to-face or online.
www.samaritans.org Call: 116 123 for free
Email: jo@samaritans.org (response time – 24 hours).



Officers' Association, Grants and Welfare
T: 020 7808 4175 | E: help@officersassociation.org.uk
officersassociation.org.uk

**EVERY OFFICER
EVERY FAMILY**



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