

Work out what's important to you

> You and your time

How will you spend the time you used to spend gambling? Think about hobbies you used to enjoy doing or something you may have always wanted to try. When the urge to gamble is strong, having a distraction can really help. Likewise, making use of the Helpline or online support at these times can help you overcome the urge.

> You and your relationships

It is important to think about the people in your life. Relationships in your life may have been damaged by your offending, or by your gambling. Relationship problems may make you want to gamble, but supportive relationships can help with your recovery. Investing in your relationships gives you the best chance now and in the future.

Do you have key relationships that should be positive, but have been damaged? How can you rebuild or strengthen them? You may also have some relationships that are damaging to you. Were they a factor in your gambling or crime? Can you be honest with these people and ask them to support you in your recovery? If not, is it time to walk away?

You might be tempted to return to your old life and your old friends, which might lead you to picking up old habits. If those habits include gambling, you might want to try to change this pattern. Try to talk to people you trust about your gambling behaviour, so they can help you manage it better.

If you know that your behaviour will damage an important relationship, then do not gamble on this, no matter how much you convince yourself that they won't mind.

> You and your possessions

It is common for people who experience problem gambling to feel like they can control the risk somehow. The definition of gambling is betting on something that you cannot control the outcome of.

If you have the urge to gamble with something of value to you, think about how you will feel if you end up without it. If you will be unhappy to lose your possession, then do not gamble with it, no matter how small you think the risk is.

Getting help with your gambling

It might feel overwhelming to ask for help, but people who do are more likely to overcome their gambling problems. Knowing that there is someone who understands the situation you are in, the emotions you are feeling, and the urges you are experiencing will help you fight the desire to gamble.

The National Gambling Helpline, provided by GamCare. Our Advisers are available 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Talk to us on Freephone **0808 8020 133** or live chat via **gamcare.org.uk** whenever you need advice and support.

Our team can talk you through all of the options available for support, including free support over the phone, online or in your local area. You can also connect with others in similar situations through the GamCare online Forum and our daily chatrooms at **www.gamcare.org.uk**.

The leaflet will give you some useful tools to help you manage your gambling behaviour as you move on, and getting support will make you stronger when the time comes to challenge your problems with gambling.

You may feel that you have the tools you need to beat the urges on your own, but with support from GamCare, whenever those urges return you'll be in an even stronger place to fight them.

National Gambling Helpline

Call Free: 0808 8020 133

Live chat via www.gamcare.org.uk

Managing your gambling on probation

Practical information, ideas and support for people on probation who have been affected by gambling



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If you are on probation and are currently, or have been, affected by a gambling problem then this leaflet is for you.

Probation can be stressful and challenging but it can also be an opportunity for a fresh start. This leaflet is for you if you are on license, have a community order or a suspended sentence and are worried about your gambling behaviour.

If you were in custody, your relationship with gambling might look different to someone who has not been in custody. Gambling can be part of prison life, so your time spent inside prison might have changed your relationship with gambling - for better or for worse. You might have developed a gambling problem while you were inside and need some support now that you're back in the community. Maybe you gambled before you started your sentence and stopped gambling whilst you were in prison, but now you are back in the community there is a worry that any issues you had will come back.

It may be tempting to ignore any gambling problems you have. Problem gambling often links to or feeds into other issues, such as drug or alcohol use, mental health issues and financial concerns. It is likely that you will not be able to make progress in other areas until you have looked at your gambling as well. You do not have to choose between what you get help with – you can do both.

If your offence was related to gambling in some way, now is the time to work on it to make sure that you can make better decisions for you and people close to you, so that you do not reoffend. Even if you now feel like you have changed, and you wouldn't gamble again, it is worth spending more time on the issue while you are feeling motivated.

People who seek support for gambling problems are less likely to have a relapse. Getting support is not only about dealing with a major problem now, it can also be about preventing your gambling becoming a problem in the future.

Avoiding the temptation

There are lots of opportunities to gamble in the community. Finding ways to make it more difficult for you to gamble gives you time to allow the urge to gamble to pass, and helps you avoid harmful choices.

There are a few things you can set up in advance which mean you don't have to make the decision in the moment when the craving to gamble is strong. You can choose to '**self-exclude**' yourself, which means asking gambling companies not to allow you to gamble with them. With some bank accounts you can also ask your bank to make sure that you can't use your account to pay for gambling.

There are also some simple things that help every day, like planning ahead and thinking through where temptation might crop up. For example, if your journey takes you past a favourite gambling venue, think about planning a different route.

Self exclusion

You can either exclude yourself from one place or website, or there are ways of self-excluding from multiple venues and sites. You may also want to change your email address to avoid marketing offers.

- > GAMSTOP can exclude you from most online gambling companies: www.gamstop.co.uk
- > The Multi Operator Self-exclusion Scheme allows you to choose the betting shops that you would like to be excluded from. Call **0800 294 2060** or visit <https://self-exclusion.co.uk/>
- > SENSE can exclude you from land-based casinos: www.nationalcasinoforum.co.uk/playing-safe/sense-information/
- > The Bingo Association can help you to self-exclude from all bingo halls: www.bingo-association.co.uk
- > BACTA manages self-exclusion for arcades and adult gaming centres: www.bacta.org.uk/self-exclusion
- > www.begambleaware.org also has useful information about self-exclusion.

Blocking software

Blocking software is a computer programme that limits access to websites or other gambling services available over the internet (via a phone, laptop, tablet or PC).

You can find more information about blocking software via our website at www.gamcare.org.uk

Managing your money

Gambling cannot solve money or debt problems, it will only make them worse. You will always lose more than you will win.

Many people who have had a problem with gambling have some debts. It is important that you find out how much you owe and face your debts so you can regain some control, however overwhelming this may feel. Having debts hanging over you does not help with your urges to gamble.

Being in debt to someone can be very stressful and can put you in potentially harmful situations. The first thing you need to do is tell somebody you trust about your situation. Some people find that handing over control of their finances to a trusted person like a partner, family member or friend.

If you are worried, call the National Gambling Helpline and our Advisers can give you details of specialist organisations who can help you with debt.

There is also support available to help you manage your money better. Understanding your budget can help you gain control of your spending – write down what you spend on things like food, bills and travel so you know how much you have left over each month. Planning a treat for yourself when you reach a savings goal can also help you stay on track.

Some bank accounts also let you block gambling transactions – you can find a regularly updated list of these services and how to access them at gamcare.org.uk/self-help/finance-and-debt-management/#banks