



## 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. Having a distraction can really help you beat an urge to gamble. 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 think that your behaviour will damage an important relationship, then do not gamble on this, no matter how much you convince yourself that the person 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](http://www.gamcare.org.uk)

# Managing your gambling on release from prison

**Practical information, ideas and support for people released from prison who have been affected by gambling**



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## If you are on ROTL, are about to be or have just been released, and you are currently, or have been, affected by a gambling problem then this leaflet is for you.

This leaflet will help you to manage your gambling while you transition from prison back into the community.

It can be a very stressful and challenging time going from a controlled environment like prison to an uncontrolled environment like the wider community. Stress and change can make gambling problems get worse, but there are things you can do to stop that happening and support is always available.

It may be tempting to ignore any gambling problems you have, but facing the problem head on while you are feeling motivated will benefit you now and in the future.

Thinking things through as soon as possible will reduce the chances of old habits creeping back. This leaflet will give you useful tools to help you manage your gambling in new surroundings.

If you need support, or you want to talk through what's going on for you, the National Gambling Helpline is operated by GamCare and available 24 hours a day, every day. You can talk to our Advisers on **Freephone 0808 80 20 133** or live chat via [gamcare.org.uk](https://www.gamcare.org.uk).

If you are worried about your gambling, get in touch - it is better to get support as soon as possible rather than wait until your gambling is out of control.

If you are currently in custody, the Helpline is free to call from your wing and your call will not count towards your allowance.

You can also request a copy of our cell pack, which is a workbook to work through at your own pace to change the relationship you have with gambling so that you can make positive choices going forward. Speak to your Key Worker for more information.

## Avoiding the temptation

When you get out of prison, there are lots of opportunities to gamble. Finding ways to make it more difficult for you to gamble gives you time to allow the urge 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](https://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/](https://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](https://www.bingo-association.co.uk)
- > BACTA manages self-exclusion for arcades and adult gaming centres: [www.bacta.org.uk/self-exclusion](https://www.bacta.org.uk/self-exclusion)
- > [www.begambleaware.org](https://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](https://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](https://www.gamcare.org.uk/self-help/finance-and-debt-management/#banks)