

Getting help with your gambling

It might feel overwhelming to ask for help, but people who receive help and support 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.

While you are in prison there are several support options open to you:

- > **The National Gambling Helpline is free to call from your wing and is open 24 hours a day, every day of the year. You can call our team on 0808 8020 133 whenever you need advice and support.**
- > **You can request an in-cell workbook and our activity pack - ask a staff member from any department to get in touch with us to ask for these resources**
- > **You may also be able to access 121 support, please speak to a member of staff or the person who gave you this leaflet to find out more about what is available.**

In addition, you can speak to a Listener, a Peer Supporter, a Health and Wellbeing Champion or the Chaplaincy about your circumstances (depending on what is available and who you feel comfortable speaking to). They will all be able to contact us on your behalf if you would prefer.

This leaflet is here to help people who are currently in prison, but if you are worried about gambling once you have left prison, read our 'Gambling on Release' leaflet.

> You and your possessions

As well as the people in your life, have a think about what is valuable to you here and now. If you have the urge to gamble with something of value to you, perhaps think about how you will feel in an hours' time, tomorrow, or next week if you are without it. Is it worth it?

Is it common for people who experience gambling problems to feel like they can control the outcome somehow, perhaps by playing a game in a certain way or believing certain rituals give them luck. The definition of gambling is staking something of value on something that you cannot control the outcome of. You cannot control this risk, no matter how you change your approach to gambling.

If you will be unhappy to lose your possession, then do not gamble with it, no matter how small you think the risk is.

And 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.

National Gambling Helpline

Call Free: 0808 8020 133

www.gamcare.org.uk

Managing your gambling in prison

Practical information, ideas and support for people in prison who have been affected by gambling



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If you are in prison and are currently, or have been, affected by a gambling problem, this leaflet is for you.

What gambling looks like can be different in each prison – anything from betting on how many press ups someone can do to betting on card games or the football. Anything of value can be used to gamble - canteen items, personal items or money. For some, it doesn't happen a lot and when it does, it is just for fun or to pass the time. For others, it can be a bigger problem and can have more negative effects.

Negative effects might include financial problems, relationship problems or poor health including mental health issues like stress, anxiety or depression.

Some people enter prison with a gambling problem and some people develop a problem with gambling while they are serving their sentence. You might want to stop gambling all together, or just slow down. You may need advice on how to manage any debt, or you could need a chat with someone on our Helpline for some advice.

If any of the situations described above feel familiar, GamCare can help.

You can call the National Gambling Helpline (provided by GamCare) free from your wing on 0808 8020 133. Our number needs to be on your Global Call List if the call is not to count towards your call allowance. If it is not, speak to a member of staff to have this added.

Our services are for anyone worried about gambling, no matter how much you gamble or what you are gambling on. Get in touch - it is better to get support as soon as possible, rather than wait until your gambling is out of control.

The Helpline is free, confidential, and open 24 hours a day.



Avoiding the temptation

When you are in prison, it is easy to gamble if you want to. 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 also some simple things that help every day, like planning ahead and thinking through where temptation might crop up. For example, if you know that there is a place in prison where people gamble, think about spending your free time elsewhere.

If you need to be removed from the environment you're in, you can talk to a trusted member of staff about being moved to the segregation unit. If the situation is quite serious, and you are feeling pressured or bullied by someone, then it is possible that that person may be moved to a different establishment.

It might be harder to stop gambling while hanging out with certain people or friends. Try and spend time with people who understand and will help you avoid gambling. For example, if you like card games, you do not have to stop if you can find someone you feel comfortable talking to, and who does not pressure you to gamble whilst playing cards.



Dealing with debt

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 face the debts that you owe so you can regain some control. Having debts hanging over you does not help with your urges to gamble.

You can be in debt to someone in different ways. Maybe you have promised to give someone something that you do not have; maybe you owe them money; or maybe you said you would do something that you no longer want to do.

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. Facing up to how much you owe is the first step to getting out of debt, so find out how much you owe, however overwhelming this may feel.

Our Helpline is a confidential and non-judgemental place to talk about your worries. Lots of prisons also run money management courses and offer debt advice. Ask a trusted member of staff for more information.



Work out what's important to you

> You and your time

If you are spending a lot of time gambling, try to think about other things that you enjoy doing instead. What hobbies do you have? You could spend time in the library, with friends, or enrol on a course. Talk to a trusted member of staff to discuss different courses or activities you can take part in.

> 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. It is worth putting effort into your relationships over the long term. This is not easy to do when you are in prison, but if you use this time positively, you give yourself the best chance while in prison and for your life after release.

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?

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