

What is the difference between gambling and harmful gambling?

Gambling is simply defined as to 'stake or risk money or anything of value, on the outcome of something involving chance'. Usually gambling is a fun and safe leisure activity involving games of chance for money or material goods. However, when a person has the urge to continuously gamble despite negative and harmful consequences or the desire to stop this is identified as 'harmful gambling' and will often require specialist intervention and support to address the issue.



Why it matters

Gambling related harm (GRH) research findings show that 47% of the population, aged 16 years and over have taken part in some form of gambling in the past 4 weeks. Estimates from various reports published by the Gambling Commission and Gamble Aware respectively indicate there are between 500,000 to 1.4 million problem gamblers in the UK. The Young People and Gambling Survey into 2019 revealed that 11% (350,000) of 11 to 16-year olds self-reported to have spent their own money gambling in the last week. These results were found to be higher than smoking tobacco (6%) and illegal drug use (5%). The report also found that as many as 55,000 young people nationally are classified as problem gamblers



The Impact of Harmful Gambling

The level of impact of harmful gambling on both the individual and affected others indicates mental health and wellbeing issues, higher risk of suicidal ideation/intent, drug and alcohol misuse, financial crisis, problems with education/work, criminality, relationship difficulties and the associated social and psychological impact on affected others. Findings published by the Institute for Public Policy Research in 2016 discovered that harmful gamblers in contrast to the general population are

- 3 times more likely to have visited their GP in the last year due to mental health issues
- 9 times more likely to be accessing mental health services
- 6 times more likely to have been a hospital inpatient within the last 3 months
- 3 times more likely to be claiming job seekers allowance
- 9 times more likely to access homeless services
- 4 times more likely to be in prison

The report also highlighted that the fiscal cost, by harmful gamblers on the public purse could be as much as £1.2 billion per year throughout the UK.



What are the indicators/signs of harmful gambling?

- The indicators that an individual's gambling behaviour is problematic and harmful include
- Preoccupation** - often thinking about or planning to gamble
 - Tolerance** - needing to gamble with more money to get excitement
 - Withdrawal** - negative emotions when trying to cut down on gambling
 - Loss of control** - spending more than you planned to time and money
 - Escape** - the motivation for gambling being to escape negative elements of life
 - Chasing losses** - gambling to try and win the back money that has been lost
 - Lying** - gambling leads to lying to friends/family
 - Illegal acts** - taking money without permission/misusing money to fund gambling
 - Risked relationships** - putting personal relationships at risk



How to respond

If you are worried or concerned, help is available through The National Gambling Helpline. This service is available 24-hours a day 7-days a week through GamCare. The Big Deal Project is a separate service specifically for young people aged 11 - 19 years. You can call both services free on 0808 8020 133 or visiting www.gamcare.org.uk/wwwbigdeal.org.uk



Want to Know more?

RSPH (<https://www.rsph.org.uk/our-services/e-learning/courses/online-course-understanding-and-responding-to-gambling-related-harm.html>) provides a free understanding gambling harm course - 'Understanding and responding to gambling harms': A brief guide will teach you about gambling disorders and how to support someone affected by gambling harms.

<https://www.bigdeal.org.uk/> is a place for young people to find information and support related to gambling, either for themselves or for someone they care about.



Referral to a specialist service provision

ARA Recovery For All is a specialist service providing advice and support to anyone throughout the South West and Wales. They can be contacted on 0330 1340286 or by emailing aragamblingservice@recovery4all.co.uk

<https://www.recovery4all.co.uk/gambling-he>

