

Police Mutual Gambling

The Covid-19 crisis continues to affect everyone across the world. The lockdown has also brought significant consumer behavioural change and major impacts on the gambling industry.

The pandemic has been a struggle for those suffering with a gambling addiction. This is mostly due to boredom and isolation, but with money being freed-up from mortgage, loan and credit card providers increasing the risk. For many people gambling gives feelings of excitement which then leads them to want to feel this again and therefore gamble more. Due to the lack of sporting events at the start of lockdown many problem gamblers moved towards riskier products, such as online casino games.

People are spending more time watching TV or on social media, both of which have an increase in advertisements for online gambling companies. Most gambling can simply be done online using your smartphone or tablet, it is very easy to get addicted and quickly get into debt.

Those who are aware that they have a gambling problem, have the right to 'self-exclude' by putting yourself on a register, which means you are no longer permitted to gamble. This means if you do have a bad day or get drunk and are tempted to gamble you can't. Many feel this self-exclusion framework isn't good enough and doesn't work entirely as you have to register separately with each type of gambling provider. To learn more about gambling self-exclusion [click here](#).

Gambling can lead to problem debt. Worrying about money can be extremely stressful and may lead to mental health conditions.

According to the Royal College of Psychiatrists, problem gamblers are more likely than others to suffer from low self-esteem, develop stress-related disorders, to become anxious, have poor sleep and appetite, to develop a substance misuse problem and suffer from depression. Also, people with mental health problems have a higher than average risk of engaging in problem gambling while unwell.

Are you experiencing all or some or all of the following?

- Extreme emotions or mood swings
- Feeling that gambling is the only thing you enjoy, to the exclusion of other things
- Using gambling as a way to deal with other problems or emotions in your life
- Difficulty sleeping
- Feeling depressed or anxious
- Having suicidal thoughts

If you answered yes to any of these questions, gambling could be a problem. If you're not sure how your gambling is affecting you at this stage, complete a self assessment [here](#).



Gambling can lead to debt problems.

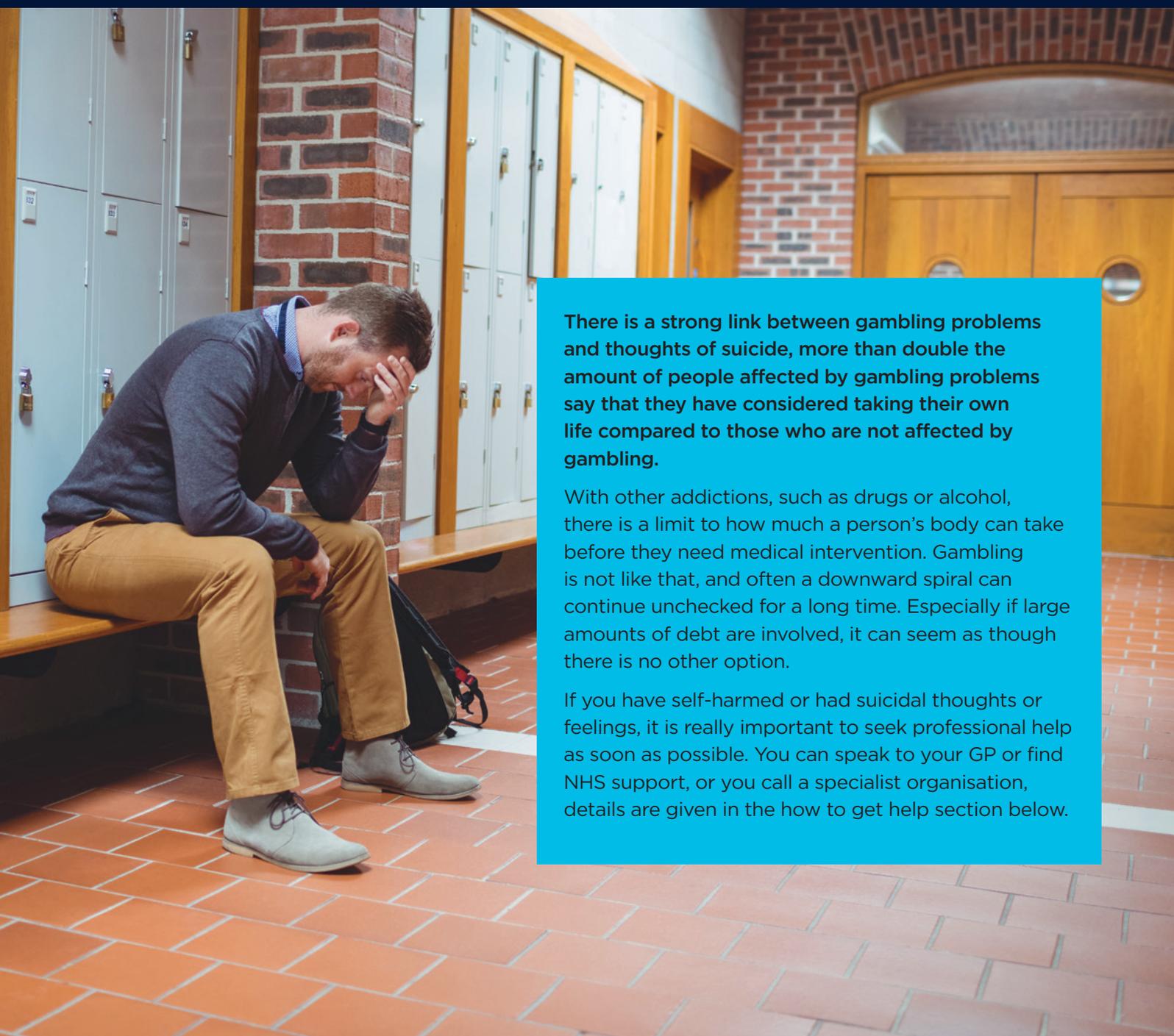
Although a lot of people gamble to escape feelings of depression or other mental health problems, gambling can actually make these conditions worse.

If you gamble a lot yourself, you may have found the 'high' of anticipating 'the big win' to be extremely exciting, perhaps better than the feelings you experience taking part in any other activity. You may also have found the devastation of losing to be a massive low, leading to feelings of despair.

Feelings of loss and despair following a gambling spree can lead to greater desires to gamble straight away in order to try and get back on a 'high'. However, by continuing to gamble, any negative feelings will only get worse.

The impact of these highs and lows on your mental health can be significant. Studies show that brain chemistry and cell structure can be changed by this type of exposure. The good news is that studies have shown that brain chemistry can be rebalanced, once you get help.

It is important to speak to professionals if you are worried about the impact of gambling on your mental health. Speak to your GP initially, they may then refer you to specialist services. If you are concerned about your gambling, call the National Gambling Helpline, details can be found in the how to get help section below.



There is a strong link between gambling problems and thoughts of suicide, more than double the amount of people affected by gambling problems say that they have considered taking their own life compared to those who are not affected by gambling.

With other addictions, such as drugs or alcohol, there is a limit to how much a person's body can take before they need medical intervention. Gambling is not like that, and often a downward spiral can continue unchecked for a long time. Especially if large amounts of debt are involved, it can seem as though there is no other option.

If you have self-harmed or had suicidal thoughts or feelings, it is really important to seek professional help as soon as possible. You can speak to your GP or find NHS support, or you call a specialist organisation, details are given in the how to get help section below.



Problem gambling in a family can also have an effect on children. The impact of stress within the family unit and potential loss of relationship with a parent can have lasting consequences.

Having a gambling problem can also have a devastating impact on your relationships with other people.

If all of your time and attention is taken up with gambling, friends and family may feel like you don't care about them anymore.

Lying, breaking promises and constantly missing important events can mean your loved ones lose trust in your relationships, and this is very hard to repair. Your loved ones may also start to feel guilty about the situation, especially if they do not realise that you are gambling, as they may think that they are doing something to drive you away.

Once a problem gambler seeks help and enters recovery there can be an opportunity to re-establish relationships. Rebuilding trust can be a difficult task but relationships can heal once the gambler enters recovery. Breaking an addiction is a very difficult process. Recovery takes time, hard work and commitment.

If you are concerned that your relationship with a problem gambler is becoming extremely unhealthy or even violent, it is important to seek help for yourself. Likewise if you feel your children are impacted in an unhealthy way it is important to take action.

Relationships

YoungMinds:

Parents' helpline 0808 802 5544
(Mon-Fri, 9.30am-4pm)

National Domestic Violence Helpline:
0808 2000 247 (24 hours)

Relate: 0300 100 1234



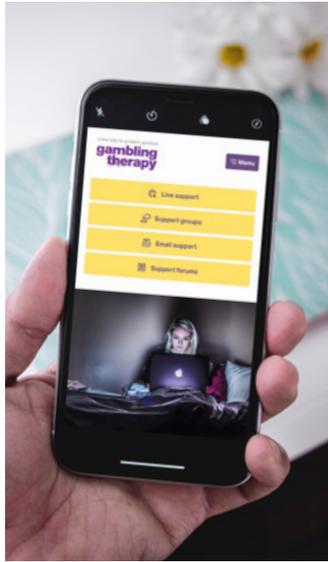
How to get help:

Gambling

GamCare operates the National Gambling HelpLine, providing information, advice and support for anyone affected by gambling problems. Advisers are available 24 hours a day on Freephone **0808 8020 133** or via web chat at www.gamcare.org.uk.

There is also have information available on blocking software and self-exclusion, plus self-help resources [here](#).

You may also wish to download the Gambling Therapy app [here](#).



Mental Health

Our Care Line Service provided by Health Assured can offer advice and information at the end of a phone, helping with a range of concerns including emotional support. To talk to someone please call **0800 028 1708** or take a look at the e-portal:

Health & Wellbeing e-portal:

<https://healthassuredeap.co.uk/>

Username: policemutual Password: careline

Debt

Police Mutual are here to help. We want to break down the stigma surrounding debt and get people talking about money.

We've teamed up with PayPlan, one of the UK's leading free debt advice providers, who offer free and confidential advice to anyone in serious financial difficulties.

They're able to advise you on a range of debt solutions suited to your individual circumstances, helping to protect you and your family with a sustainable way to manage your debt.

[Get free and confidential help to combat your debt, call PayPlan on 0800 197 8433](#)



Don't be afraid to ask for help if your mental health is starting to deteriorate or you're struggling to cope.

To access support, use the links/phone numbers below:

Samaritans:

116 123 (24-hours)

Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM)

For men aged 15-35

Mind:

0300 123 3393 (Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm)

The Mental Health Foundation

For more information about the other products and services available from Police Mutual:

Call us 01543 441630
Visit policemutual.co.uk

We're open from
9am - 5pm Mon - Fri

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