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Supporting Young People and Families Affected by Gambling- related Harms



In this slide set, we'll explore:

- What gambling harms can look like in young people
- Early signs to look out for
- Supporting children
- Support services and education

Gambling Harm in young people may look like:

- **Behavioural & Emotional Changes:** May show hopelessness, increased irritability, anxiety
- **Secrecy and Isolation:** Spending long periods alone, withdrawing from family activities, lying about activities
- **Financial Red Flags:** Money missing from accounts, borrowing, selling personal items, unexplained debt
- **Academic:** Declining performance, falling asleep or frequent absences
- **Lifestyle Changes:** Excessive time on phone, computers or gaming consoles, staying up late
- **Physical problems:** Headaches, carpal tunnel syndrome, eye strain

**These signs do not confirm gambling harm but may indicate a need for conversation and support.*

Early signs to look out for:

- ❖ Less interest in hobbies, school or friends
- ❖ Borrowing, spending more or trying to win back losses
- ❖ Overexcited and believing they can “win if I keep trying”
- ❖ Long hours playing. Neglecting sleep, food or personal care
- ❖ Talking or thinking constantly about gaming or gambling
- ❖ Struggling to concentrate & getting frustrated quickly
- ❖ Feeling hopeless or worried about the future
- ❖ Poor mood if not playing or when access is restricted
- ❖ Hiding or lying about online activity

Harms can build over time and may not be obvious at first



How adults can support?

Supporting a young person is not about stopping gambling - it is about understanding, communication and recovery:

- ✓ **Recognising early signs** - helps identify when support may be needed
- ✓ **Talk openly, without blame or judgement** - create a safe and quiet space
- ✓ **Listen and learn their experience** - be curious, young people may feel embarrassed or misunderstood
- ✓ **Set clear boundaries together** - around money and screen time
- ✓ **Encourage alternative activities** - that build self-esteem and social connection
- ✓ **Seek professional support early** - early help can reduce long-term harm
- ✓ **Raise awareness** - education can build critical thinking and resilience
- ✓ **Referral** - if a student is identified, check if your school has an appropriate policy or know where to refer them for help



Protective Measures

There are simple steps parents, carers and guardians can take to help protect children and young people from gambling

- **Be aware of online activity:** Help students reflect on their gaming and social media use
- **Discuss risks:** Explain how gambling works, including risks and how influencers and advertising can shape behaviour
- **Use safety tools:** Encourage use of privacy settings, age restrictions and in-app controls
- **Create open conversations:** Make space for students to talk about what they see and do online without judgement
- **Promote healthy screen habits:** Encourage balanced screen time and regular breaks from devices
- **Model behaviours:** Demonstrate healthy digital habits and attitudes towards risk



Gambling Support Services in Wales

- **All Wales Gambling Treatment Service and 24/7 Helpline 0808 281 9265**

Referrals are welcome from any individual or professionals to the Treatment Service.

Email: GamblingService@wales.nhs.uk

- **GambleAware** www.gambleaware.org

- **NHS National Centre for Gaming Disorders (London)**

Specialist treatment for gaming disorder for those aged 13 and over. Online access from Wales. www.cnwl.nhs.uk/national-centre-gaming-disorders

*Please note that the support services listed may be subject to change as commissioning arrangements are updated.

References

The information provided in this slide set took references from the following:

- Welsh Government Statement (2025) <https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-gambling-support-and-treatment-services-wales>
- GambleAware [GambleAware®: Gambling Help & Gambling Addiction](#)
- Gambling Commission – Gambling and Young People
<https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/public-and-players/guide/gambling-and-young-people>
- Gambling Commission (2021) - Tips for Parents: Children and Online Gaming
<https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/public-and-players/guide/page/tips-for-parents-children-and-online-gaming>