



# Problem Gambling Scrutiny Spotlight Review

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# Why would a County Council undertake scrutiny of gambling?

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- Scrutiny looks at issues beyond the specific services of the Council
- Councillors were concerned
- Public Health reported but didn't have problem gambling as a priority

# What do we know about problem gambling?

**0.7% of the population are problem gamblers**

**3.6% of the population are at risk of developing gambling problems**

**5400 people in Devon are likely to have a gambling problem**

**6-10 individuals are affected by each problem gambler.**

## Individual

Individual characteristics, life events, personal history and cognitive characteristics that influence the potential experience of harm

*For example: negative motivations for gambling, early gambling experiences, engagement in other risk behaviours that may increase the risk of harm*

## Families and social networks

Factors within an individual's closest relationships, such as family, partners and peers that influence experience of harm

*For example: cultures of gambling within family / peer groups or poor social support that may increase the risk of harm*

## Community

Characteristics of local areas and cultures within local spaces or broader social groups, like schools and workplaces, that may influence experience of harm

*For example: access and availability of gambling locally, poor social / cultural capital or greater deprivation that may increase the risk of harm*

## Societal

Policy and regulatory climates and associated corporate norms and practices that may influence the experience of harm

*For example: ineffective regulation, certain product characteristics, advertising environments or gambling availability that may increase the risk of harm*

Factors that influence problem gambling – Gambling Commission

## Scope of the review

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To understand the underlying causes of problem gambling and the challenges associated with problem gambling.

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To explore the ways in which DCC and partners could work together to prevent people who are at risk of problem gambling reaching crisis point.

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To identify the ways in which DCC and partners could work together to support people in Devon who have gambling addictions.

# Expert witnesses

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Who did the spotlight review speak to?

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**The Gambling Commission**

**Plymouth City Council**

**GamCare**

**Devon and Cornwall Police**

**Tamar Gaming**

**Teignbridge District Council**

**Devon County Council – Public Health**

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# What did the Spotlight review ask?

- **Theme 1: Prevention**
- Are different types of gambling more likely to lead to problems?
- Are there particular routes, backgrounds and behaviours that are more likely to lead to problem gambling? Is problem gambling associated with additional health or social issues?
- What are the economic and social costs of problem gambling?
- Is gambling in Devon the same as in other areas of the UK

# What did the Spotlight review ask?

- **Theme 2: When does gambling become a problem?**
- At what point does 'at risk gambling' turn into 'problem gambling and reach crisis point for gamblers?
- How can DCC and partners prevent gamblers from reaching crisis point?
- How could DCC and partners work with gambling companies/outlets to prevent gamblers from reaching crisis point?

# What did the Spotlight review ask?

- **Theme 3: What support is available when someone is struggling with problem gambling?**
- What support do problem gamblers want and need, and do these gamblers have additional needs met by other services?
- What is DCCs role in supporting people who suffer with problem gambling?
- How can DCC and partners support problem gamblers once they have reached crisis point?

# Case Study: Devon Councillor

Councillor Ian Hall shared his personal experience of having been a problem gambler many years ago. Councillor Hall told the Spotlight Review that he used to play innocuous games with a financial element whilst at school which led to a more serious addiction and a significant deterioration in his mental health as a result.

Cllr Hall recovered with his own determination and support from his friends and family. Cllr Hall also shared his experience of knowing peers with similar problems and serious consequences.

His reflection was **how easy it is to have a competitive game which becomes monetarised, often for very small amounts. This in turn leads to feeling comfortable gambling with higher amounts**, often with the promise of a bigger prize and corresponding serious consequences.



# Recomendations

## **Ambition**

Increase the visibility of the dangers of problem gambling.

Understand the scale of the problem by collaborating on insight and intelligence with partners.

Continue to support responsible gambling across sectors.

Take action when people need help

# Progress against recommendations

- The JSNA now includes a detailed section of available data, including prevalence, age, demographics, gambling restrictions, types of gambling, risks, impacts of gambling, links to other services, suicide, treatment and support services, national local responses.
- The County Council has also taken part in promoting Responsible Gambling Week in both 2018 and 2019.
- The January 2019 NHS Long Term Plan includes commitments to strengthening public health and prevention, including an element directed at gambling.
- DCC Public Health working with coroners to improve coding in death certification following suicide

Questions?

