

Responsible gambling

The majority of people do gamble responsibly. It may help you to keep your gambling under control by remembering the following;

- You're buying fun, not investing your money
- Before playing, set strict limits on how much time and money you're going to spend
- Quit while you're ahead
- Only gamble with money you can afford to lose
- Don't spend more money on gambling with the hope to win back money that you have lost
- Keep up other interests and hobbies – don't let gambling take over your life
- Don't gamble in order to escape from stress or boredom
- Gambling in moderation is okay

For some however gambling can become a problem. If you are concerned about the amount you are gambling, and feel it is taking over your life (or you are concerned for a friend or relative) then the following questions may help you, to give you some guidance.

- Have others ever criticised your gambling?
- Have you ever lied to cover up the amount you have gambled or time you have spent doing it?
- Do arguments, frustrations or disappointments make you want to gamble?
- Do you gamble alone for long periods?
- Do you stay away from work or college to gamble?
- Do you gamble to escape from a boring or unhappy life?
- Are you reluctant to spend 'gambling money' on anything else?
- Have you lost interest in your family, friends or pastimes due to gambling?
- After losing, do you feel you must try to win back your losses as soon as possible?
- When gambling and you run out of money, do you feel lost and in despair, and need to gamble again as soon as possible?
- Do you gamble until your last penny is gone?
- Have you lied, stolen or borrowed just to get money to gamble or to pay gambling debts?
- Do you feel depressed or even suicidal because of your gambling?

If you feel you have answered 'yes' to several of these questions then it may be that a gambling problem exists. For friendly and helpful advice from trained counsellors call the GambleAware helpline on 0808 8020 133. The helpline is open from 8am to midnight. Sometimes just telling someone about your problem can be a relief and it is the first step towards dealing with your problem. You can also visit the GambleAware website www.gambleaware.co.uk for more information and advice.