Gambling is increasingly recognised as a public health problem. While only a minority of gamblers develop gambling problems, the financial, health and social harms associated with gambling can extend beyond the gambler to impact families, communities and wider society. Understanding the nature of gambling harms, the populations at risk and impacts of policy options can support effective practice to prevent gambling harms in Wales.

- **£14.4 billion** was lost\(^a\) by people gambling in 2017/18 in Great Britain.

- The estimated cost\(^b\) to Welsh public services from problem gamblers in 2015/16 was **£40-£70 million**.

- More than half of adults in Wales participate in gambling:
  - Of Welsh residents aged 16+ years:\(^c\):
    - 55% spent money on gambling in the last year (40% excluding those only playing the National Lottery).
    - 3% were identified as ‘at-risk’ gamblers.
    - 1% were identified as problem gamblers.

- 14% of 11-16 year olds in Great Britain have gambled in the past week\(^d\).

- This is approximately 450,000 children.

- Almost 1 in 5 adults in Great Britain gamble online\(^e\):
  - Laptops are the most commonly used devices for online gambling, but use of mobile phones and tablets is increasing.

- The number of gambling adverts aired on TV in the UK has risen dramatically:\(^f\):
  - 2006: 152,000
  - 2012: 1,390,000

- Exposure to gambling advertisements:
  - Adults: 2 per day
  - Children: 4 per week

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\(^a\)The difference between bets paid in and bets paid out: Gambling Commission 2018;
\(^b\)Conservative estimates of costs of health, welfare, employment, housing and criminal justice services: Thorley et al, 2016;
\(^c\)Data from 2016: Gambling Commission 2017;
\(^d\)Data from 2018: Gambling Commission 2018;
\(^e\)Data from 2017: Gambling Commission 2018;
\(^f\)Data from Ofcom 2013.
Gambling harms are the adverse impacts from gambling upon the health and well-being of individuals, families, communities and society.

Examples of gambling harms include...

**Resources**
- Debt
- Crime
- Job loss
- School drop out
- Financial insecurity
- Lost work productivity
- Increased benefit claims

**Health**
- Stress
- Anxiety
- Suicide
- Depression
- Physical inactivity
- Alcohol misuse
- Substance abuse

**Relationships**
- Neglect
- Loss of trust
- Inequalities
- Domestic abuse
- Social isolation
- Separation and divorce
- Loss of parental support

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**Which groups can be more vulnerable to gambling harms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low income households</th>
<th>Unemployed people</th>
<th>Immigrants</th>
<th>Problem gamblers</th>
<th>Young people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People who have suffered ACEs</td>
<td>Deprived communities</td>
<td>People in debt</td>
<td>Minority ethnic groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People who are homeless</td>
<td>Smokers &amp; alcohol drinkers</td>
<td>People with poor mental health</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Military veterans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**What could Wales do to prevent gambling harms?**

- Increase public awareness of gambling harms, among young people and parents
- Integrate gambling harms as an outcome and factor in other public health policies
- Invest in professional training across multiple agencies e.g. healthcare, education
- Advocate for policy change at UK-level restricting advertising and marketing
- Improve services for those affected by gambling harms, including support for families
- Develop the evidence base of what works to reduce gambling harms in different settings
- Other evidence-based interventions which may be useful:
  - Restrict access to funds while gambling
  - Set limits on the time and money spent on gambling
  - Assist at-risk gamblers to self-exclude from gambling venues and services

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Consensus needs to be found among policy makers and the public on the appropriate level of restrictions on gambling.

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*To find out which areas across Wales have high numbers of people at risk of gambling harms, visit [www.bangor.ac.uk/gambling-and-health-in-wales](http://www.bangor.ac.uk/gambling-and-health-in-wales)*

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