



Scotland Resource Book





Introduction



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This resource book brings together trusted, accessible, and LGBTQ+ affirming support for anyone affected by gambling harms. It is designed as a practical companion for individuals, families, and communities seeking help, information, and tools for safety, recovery, and empowerment.

The content reflects trauma-informed, culturally competent, and lived experience-led practice, ensuring that every section is inclusive, non-judgemental, and grounded in dignity.

The book includes:

- Overview of gambling harm and how this affects LGBTQ+ people
- National and local charity support for gambling harms
- NHS pathways and specialist services
- Further education and training
- Blocking and exclusion tools for digital safety
- A dedicated section for Recover with Pride services



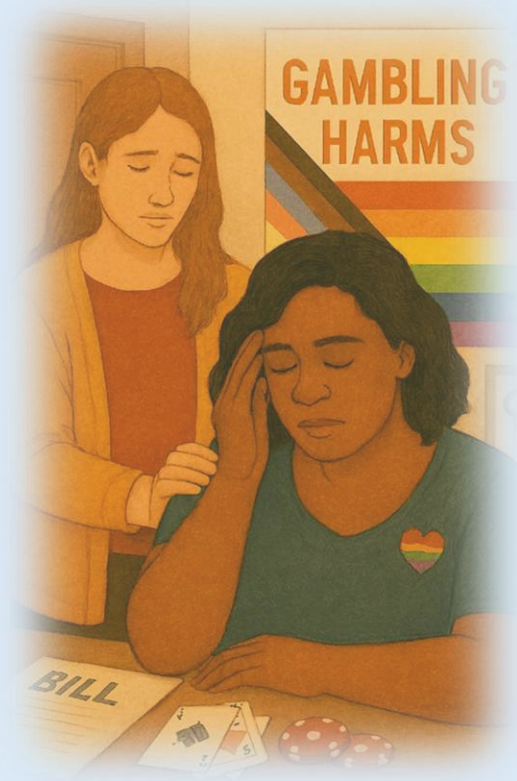


Overview of Harms & LGBTQ+ Community

What is Gambling Harm?

Gambling harms refer to the wide-ranging negative impacts that can arise from someone's gambling behaviour, whether their own or someone else's. These harms can affect emotional wellbeing, mental health, relationships, finances, housing stability, employment, and physical safety.

They often develop gradually and can be hidden, especially for LGBTQ+ people who may already face stigma or isolation. Gambling harms are not limited to "problem gambling"; they include any level of distress, disruption, or risk created by gambling, and they can affect individuals, families, and whole communities.



How do these affect LGBTQ+ People

LGBTQ+ people can face a unique constellation of pressures that heighten vulnerability to gambling harms, often rooted in minority stress, discrimination, and the need to navigate environments that don't always feel safe or affirming.

Experiences such as family rejection, social isolation, or exclusion from community spaces can make gambling feel like a temporary escape or a place to belong, even when it becomes harmful. Targeted marketing towards LGBTQ+ venues and events, alongside higher rates of co-occurring mental health challenges linked to stigma and trauma, can further increase risk.

For some, financial instability caused by discrimination in housing or employment can intensify the cycle of harm. These factors don't define LGBTQ+ people, but they do shape the context in which gambling harms can emerge, making culturally competent, identity-affirming support essential.





LGBTQ+ Factors – A Deeper Look

Minority Stress

Chronic stress from discrimination, stigma, and exclusion can lead to coping behaviours like gambling.

Discrimination in Services

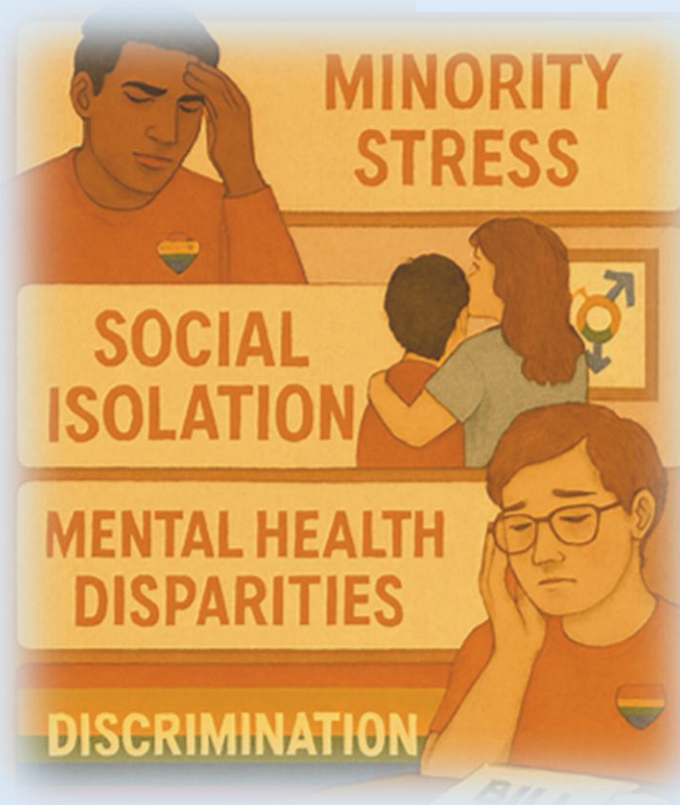
LGBTQ+ people may avoid mainstream support due to fear of judgment, misgendering, or exclusion.

Social Isolation

Lack of family support or community belonging may drive people toward gambling for distraction or connection.

Mental Health Disparities

Higher rates of anxiety, depression, and trauma increase vulnerability to gambling as a form of escape.



Economic Insecurity

LGBTQ+ individuals, especially trans people and youth, face higher rates of poverty and unemployment.

Identity Based Shame

Internalized stigma or rejection can fuel cycles of harm, secrecy, and self-punishment through gambling.

Lack of Affirming Support

Absence of culturally competent services delays help-seeking and deepens harm.



Identifying Gambling Harms in LGBTQ+ People

While the outward signs of gambling harm in LGBTQ+ individuals may mirror those seen in cisgender heterosexual counterparts, such as financial distress, mood changes, or social withdrawal, the underlying causes are often rooted in identity-specific experiences that mainstream services may overlook. Without a deep understanding of minority stress, systemic discrimination, and the impact of exclusion from family, faith, or community, professionals risk misinterpreting these behaviours or missing them entirely. This lack of cultural competence can delay intervention, reinforce shame, and deepen harm, making LGBTQ+ affirming approaches not just preferable, but essential.

Financial Distress

May be compounded by economic marginalization, especially for trans people and LGBTQ+ youth facing housing or employment discrimination.

Social Withdrawal

Can reflect fear of rejection or past trauma from family, faith communities, or services. Isolation may be deeper and harder to interrupt.

Mood Changes

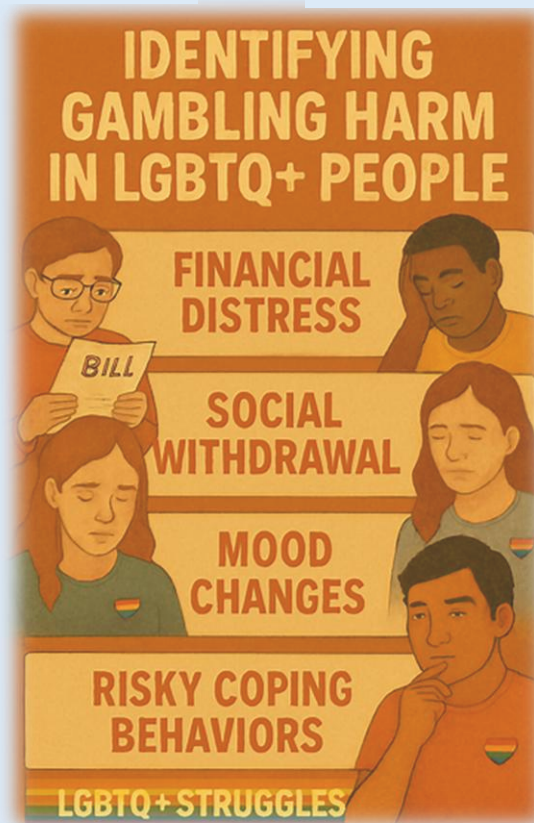
Often linked to minority stress, internalized stigma, or trauma. May be misread or dismissed in mainstream services.

Identity Based

Gambling may intersect with gender dysphoria, sexual identity shame, or trauma from conversion practices or systemic exclusion.

Risky Coping Behaviour

Gambling may be used to cope with identity-based shame, discrimination, or mental health struggles. This is often under-recognized.



Avoidance of Help-Seeking

LGBTQ+ people may avoid mainstream support due to fear of misgendering, judgment, or lack of cultural competence.

Relationship Breakdown

Harms may affect chosen family or peer networks more than traditional family structures, making them less visible to services.

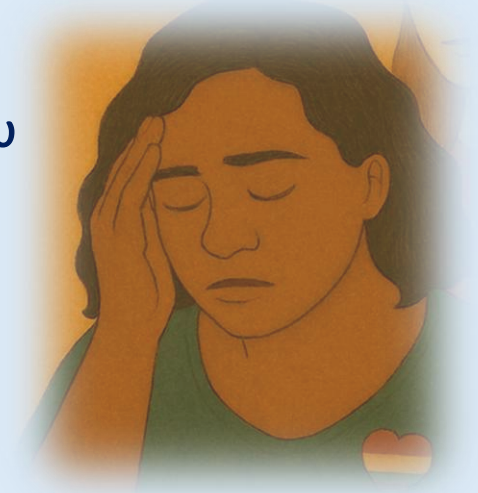


Affected Others Overview

What is an Affected Other

An *affected other* is anyone impacted by someone else's gambling, emotionally, financially, relationally, or psychologically.

This includes partners, family members, friends, colleagues, and chosen family. Affected others often experience harm even if they don't gamble themselves.



Harms Experienced by an Affected Other

- **Emotional distress:** anxiety, depression, trauma responses
- **Financial strain:** shared debt, hidden losses, disrupted housing
- **Relationship breakdown:** secrecy, trust erosion, conflict
- **Social isolation:** shame, stigma, and withdrawal from support
- **Health impacts:** sleep issues, stress-related illness, burnout
- **Role strain:** caregiving, crisis management, and emotional labour

Unique LGBTQ+ Affected Other Considerations

For LGBTQ+ affected others, these harms may be intensified by:

- **Chosen family dynamics:** harm may ripple through peer networks, not just biological ties
- **Minority stress:** compounded by identity-based stigma, discrimination, or exclusion
- **Service barriers:** mainstream support may feel unsafe, misgendering or erasing lived experience
- **Hidden harm:** affected others may not be recognized or validated, especially in non-traditional relationships
- **Intersectional trauma:** gambling harm may intersect with past experiences of rejection, conversion practices, or systemic neglect



Recover with Pride Support Service

What is Recover with Pride?

Recover With Pride is a dedicated LGBTQ+ recovery coaching and harm-reduction service for people affected by gambling harms, including affected others. Designed and delivered by LGBTQ+ community members and people with lived experience, the service offers a psychologically safe, culturally competent, and identity-affirming space for individuals to explore their relationship with gambling, rebuild stability, and strengthen wellbeing. Through one-to-one coaching, group sessions, reflective tools, and practical support, Recover with Pride centres dignity, empowerment, and community connection at every step.



MISSION

To deliver pioneering, peer led gambling harm prevention and recovery services for LGBTQ+ communities, rooted in lived experience, dignity, and inclusion.

Why we Exist

LGBTQ+ people experience disproportionate gambling harms driven by minority stress, stigma, discrimination, social isolation, and exclusion from culturally safe support. Research shows gambling is often used as escapism, a way to cope with shame, concealment, and trauma, while mainstream services frequently feel unwelcoming or unsafe. Offline gambling spaces are described as hostile and hyper-masculine, pushing people toward online environments that offer privacy but enable harm.

Our response is Recover with Pride: the UK's first dedicated, trauma-informed, identity-affirming gambling harm recovery programme designed for and by LGBTQ+ communities. We exist to make recovery safe, visible, and dignified, and to transform systems so LGBTQ+ people are recognised, supported, and never left behind.



Recover with Pride

A UK where LGBTQ+ individuals are free from gambling harms, supported by culturally competent, trauma-informed services that affirm identity and empower recovery.





Recover with Pride Services

One-to-One Recovery Coaching

Participants can access structured, strengths-based coaching with trained LGBTQ+ community members or affected others. Sessions focus on stabilisation, harm reduction, emotional regulation, rebuilding routines, and exploring personal goals in a safe, non-judgemental space.

Group Coaching and Peer Support

Recover With Pride offers facilitated group spaces where people can connect with others who share similar experiences. Groups use reflective exercises, grounding techniques, and community-building activities to reduce isolation and strengthen resilience.

Reflective Worksheets and Tools

Participants receive access to a growing library of trauma-informed worksheets, journaling prompts, and practical guides designed to support insight, self-reflection, and personal growth between sessions.

Harm Reduction and Safety Planning

Coaches support individuals to develop personalised strategies around triggers, urges, money management, digital safety, and stabilisation. This includes guidance on blocking tools, exclusion schemes, and safer-gambling practices.

Support for Affected Others

Recognising that gambling harms ripple through relationships and chosen families, Recover With Pride provides dedicated support for partners, friends, and family members. This includes emotional support, boundary-setting, and practical guidance.

Advocacy and Signposting

The service helps people navigate wider systems—such as housing, benefits, mental health services, and community organisations—ensuring they feel supported, informed, and empowered throughout.

Community Engagement and Awareness

Recover With Pride contributes to wider LGBTQ+ wellbeing by delivering outreach, awareness sessions, and community education that challenge stigma and promote safer, more inclusive conversations about gambling harms.

Training and Workforce Development

Recover With Pride offers specialist training for organisations, frontline teams, and community groups seeking to better understand and respond to gambling harms within LGBTQ+ communities. Training is delivered through a lived-experience lens.



Brighton & Hove LGBT Switchboard Prevention Work

Awareness & Stigma Reduction

Switchboard leads national and local awareness activity to increase understanding of gambling harms and reduce shame within LGBTQ+ communities. This includes digital campaigns, Pride outreach, targeted communications for marginalised groups, and a national LGBTQ+ gambling harm podcast that normalises conversations and increases visibility of early support pathways.

Professional Education & Training

LGBTQ+-affirming gambling harm prevention training is delivered to NHS teams, public health services, LGBTQ+ organisations, and frontline professionals. Training strengthens early identification, culturally competent conversations, and safer referral pathways, embedding inclusive practice across primary care and community health systems.

Preventive Support for at-Risk LGBTQ+ People

Low-threshold workshops, group activities, and digital resources provide early support around minority stress, coping strategies, financial wellbeing, and identity touchpoints such as coming out or transitioning. These interventions build resilience and reduce reliance on gambling as a coping mechanism.

Support for Affected Others

Dedicated prevention activity supports partners, families of origin and choice, friends, and peers. This includes awareness content, podcast inclusion, and early guidance to reduce secondary harms, strengthen understanding, and increase confidence to support loved ones.

Social Action & Systems Change

Switchboard convenes a National LGBTQ+ Gambling Harm Taskforce and a national prevention coalition, developing shared safeguarding and referral frameworks. This work embeds LGBTQ+ inclusion across NHS, public health, and VCSE systems, strengthening national capacity and driving long-term, industry-independent prevention infrastructure.

Stakeholder Training Across Systems

Targeted training is delivered to police and crime commissioners, statutory services, NHS partners, local authorities, VCSE organisations, and migrant/refugee networks. This builds shared understanding of LGBTQ+ gambling harms, strengthens early identification, and opens trusted referral pathways into Recover with Pride.

Community Outreach & Engagement

Place-based and national outreach at LGBTQ+ events, community spaces, and digital platforms engages underserved groups, builds trust, and supports co-production. This ensures prevention activity is culturally responsive, accessible, and rooted in community realities.





Wider Gambling Harm Charity Support

Cyrenians

Offers 121 gambling support for harm reduction, abstinence and long-term aftercare as well as supporting affected others. Group support includes a woman's group in person and LGBT+ group online. Free upskilling is offered to professionals and community groups.

Simon Community

Works with people experiencing or at risk of homeless as well as operating AILA, a website designed by women for women and offers inclusive support groups for women. They also have an online toolkit to educate professionals on gambling.

GamCare

GamCare provide treatment and support for those experiencing gambling harms, and those affected by someone else gambling. They also offer a variety of tailored support and peer support options.

RCA Trust

Supports people impacted by gambling related harms through 121 and group and family support. They also support organisations support organisations to implement gambling policies and work towards a gambling harms charter. They also offer accredited training for organisations.



How to Refer & The National Gambling Helpline

All of the above services can be referred into via their individual websites, through the national gambling helpline number on 0808 8020 133

The National Gambling Helpline offers free, confidential 24/7 support for anyone experiencing gambling harm, including affected others. It provides immediate emotional support, practical guidance, and warm transfers into local VCSE and NHS services.





NHS Support for Gambling Harms



For people living in Wales, gambling harm support can be accessed by Individuals speaking to their GP, who has been briefed on how to screen for gambling harms and where to refer people for appropriate specialist support.

This ensures that anyone in Wales experiencing gambling-related harms including LGBTQ+ people and neurodivergent communities, can be safely identified and connected to the right help.



Please do check with your local NHS provider for gambling harms, as some areas are running training, and support such as NHS Fife





Blocking & Self Exclusions

GAMSTOP – Online Gambling Self-Exclusion & Betting Shop / Land-Based Exclusion



GAMSTOP is the UK's national self-exclusion scheme, offering people a way to block themselves from both online and land-based gambling. For online gambling, it provides free and confidential self-exclusion from all UK-licensed operators for 6 months, 1 year, or 5 years, preventing new accounts, log-ins, and marketing contact. For betting shops and other land-based venues, GAMSTOP now incorporates what was previously the Multi-Operator Self-Exclusion Scheme (MOSES), enabling people to exclude themselves from multiple high-street bookmakers in their local area or across wider regions.

BetBlocker

BetBlocker is a free blocking software app, an app that restricts a device from accessing online gambling services, that can be used anonymously. The app allows user to exclude themselves from over 337k gambling operator websites and 1.5k gambling apps.



Gamban – Device-Level Blocking Software

Gamban is a paid software tool that blocks access to gambling websites and apps on phones, tablets, and computers. It works across operating systems and is often used alongside GAMSTOP for added protection. Many banks and treatment providers offer free Gamban licences to people in recovery.

Bank-Level Gambling Blocks

Most major UK banks now offer card-based gambling blocks, allowing customers to instantly prevent gambling transactions. Features typically include:

- A “cooling-off” period before the block can be removed
- Blocking of online and in-person gambling payments
- Compatibility with budgeting and spending-insight tools



SENSE



SENSE is the national self-exclusion programme for land-based casinos in the UK. Once enrolled, a person is excluded from all participating casinos nationwide. The scheme uses photo ID and membership systems to support enforcement and ensure safety.





Blocking & Self Exclusions



Bingo Association – Bingo Self-Exclusion (Bingo SENSE)

Bingo SENSE is the dedicated self-exclusion scheme for bingo halls. It allows people to exclude from one or multiple bingo venues across the UK. Staff are trained to support safe implementation and ensure a welcoming, non-judgemental process.

BACTA – Amusement Arcade & Adult Gaming Centre Exclusion

BACTA operates the national self-exclusion scheme for:

- Adult Gaming Centres (AGCs)
- Family Entertainment Centres (FECs)
- Seaside arcades



The scheme allows people to exclude from multiple venues in their area and is supported by staff training and photo-based recognition systems.

Other Tools Often Missed

National Lottery Self-Exclusion

The National Lottery offers its own exclusion options for online play, scratchcards, and retail purchases.

E-Wallet Gambling Blocks

Some digital wallets (e.g., PayPal) allow users to block gambling transactions, adding another layer of protection.

Mobile Network Restrictions

Some mobile providers allow adult-content filters that can block access to gambling sites, though this is less comprehensive than dedicated software.





Financial Support Services

Financial harm is one of the most immediate and devastating impacts of gambling. When gambling becomes harmful, people often experience a rapid cycle of debt, missed payments, borrowing to cover losses, and escalating financial pressure. This strain can spill into every part of life, affecting housing stability, relationships, mental health, and overall wellbeing. Because gambling harms are often hidden, people may delay seeking help until the situation feels overwhelming. That's why clear, accessible, non-judgemental debt support is essential for LGBTQ+ communities, and anyone affected by gambling harms.

StepChange is the UK's largest free debt-advice charity, supporting over 630,000 people each year with impartial, confidential guidance. They offer:

- Free Debt Management Plans (DMPs) and other solutions such as IVAs
- Online and phone-based advice, including budgeting support and tailored action plans
- Negotiation with creditors to freeze interest and reduce payments, helping people regain control of their finances
- Their website provides self-referral tools and immediate online assessments: StepChange website: <https://www.stepchange.org/how-we-help/debt-advice.aspx>



PayPlan is one of the UK's largest free debt-advice providers, funded by the credit industry so support is free at the point of use. They offer:



- Free Debt Management Plans, IVAs, and other debt solutions
- Tools and guidance to understand debt options and manage repayments
- A freephone debt line and online resources to help people take the first step towards stability
- Their website includes debt-help tools and information: PayPlan website: <https://www.payplan.com>





Further Gambling Harm Training



Bet You Can Help Training

The Bet You Can Help Now course uses a public health approach, underpinned by a first aid model and is relevant to anyone that wishes to improve their understanding of gambling-related harms and their impacts on the individual, their loved ones and wider society. The course provides candidates with an understanding of the nature, concepts and impacts of harmful gambling and gambling related harm, it enables them to identify, and signpost affected individuals to sources of reliable information, advice, guidance and support through VCSE services

Gambling Harm UK

Gambling Harm UK offers a specialist Training Hub designed to help healthcare professionals, educators, and employers understand, prevent, and respond to gambling harms with confidence. Their training supports three key groups:

- Healthcare Professionals
- Education Professionals
- Organisational and Employers



Chapter One

Chapter One is a specialist gambling-harm training organisation that focuses on improving awareness, early identification, and safe responses across workplaces, education settings, and community services. Their training is grounded in public health principles and shaped by lived experience, helping professionals understand how gambling harms develop, how to spot early warning signs, and how to offer trauma-informed, non-judgemental support. They provide tailored sessions for frontline staff, safeguarding teams, youth workers, and employers, ensuring each group gains practical skills, confidence, and clear referral pathways.





Screening & Referrals

Alongside this resource pack, you have been sent screening and referral information, here is an overview of other resources sent to you

LGBTQ+ Gambling Harms Screening Framework

This framework provides a trauma-informed, culturally competent two-question screening model for identifying gambling involvement and harm among LGBTQ+ people. It integrates the Mini PGSI, Full PGSI, and inclusive scripts to ensure safe, stigma-free conversations across all service touchpoints.

LGBTQ+ Affirming & Stigma-Free Scripts for Mini & Full PGSI Screening

This script set supports frontline staff to deliver PGSI screening in a way that affirms LGBTQ+ identities and avoids shame-based language. It includes opening scripts, question phrasing, referral offers and closing affirmations.

Mini & Full PGSI Screening Overview

This operational guide explains how to use the Mini and Full PGSI tools within an LGBTQ+ affirming pathway. It outlines scoring, interpretation, and referral actions, with trauma-informed scripts and contextual notes for LGBTQ+ communities.

Recover With Pride – Referral Process

This guide outlines how organisations can safely and effectively refer LGBTQ+ people into the Recover with Pride programme. It details consent protocols, referral steps, safeguarding exceptions, and joint working.

LGBTQ+ and Gambling Stigma & Language Guide

This guide helps staff communicate in ways that reduce stigma, affirm identity, and support safe disclosure. It explains minority stress, intersectional harm, and offers practical language swaps.



Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to read this resource pack.

We hope it supports you, your community, or the people you work with in navigating gambling harms with clarity, dignity, and confidence.

If you need any further information, guidance, or support, please contact ben.howard@switchboard.org.uk.

