



Advocating for Yourself in Services

You Deserve to Be Heard,
Respected and Supported



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You Deserve to Be Heard, Respected and Supported

Seeking support can be a difficult step.

For many affected others, it takes courage to talk about gambling harm, the impact it has had on relationships, finances, wellbeing, and family life. When you finally reach out for support, you should be met with understanding, compassion, and respect.

Unfortunately, this is not always everyone's experience.

Some people encounter services that do not fully understand gambling harm. Others may feel overlooked because they are an affected other rather than the person gambling. LGBTQ+ people may sometimes face additional challenges, including assumptions about relationships, misunderstandings about identity, or concerns about discrimination.

At Recover with Pride, we believe everybody deserves access to safe, affirming, and person-centred support.

This guidance aims to help you feel confident in advocating for yourself and ensuring your voice is heard.



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What Does Good Support Look Like?

Good support should leave you feeling:

- Listened to.
- Respected.
- Valued.
- Safe.
- Included.
- Understood.

You should feel able to talk openly about your experiences without fear of judgement.

Good support should recognise:

- The impact gambling harm has had on you.
- Your individual circumstances.
- Your relationships and support network.
- Your strengths and resilience.
- Your right to make decisions about your own life.

You should never feel dismissed simply because you are an affected other.

Your Experience Matters

Affected others sometimes tell us:

- "The focus was entirely on them."
- "Nobody asked how I was coping."
- "I felt invisible."
- "I didn't think my experiences mattered."

If someone's gambling has affected your wellbeing, your experiences deserve recognition.

Support services should understand that gambling harm can affect:

- Partners.
- Parents.
- Children.
- Siblings.
- Friends.
- Chosen family.
- Housemates.
- Community members.

You have a right to discuss how gambling harm has affected your life.

Speaking Up About Your Needs

Many people find it difficult to ask for what they need.

You may be worried about:

- Being seen as demanding.
- Taking up too much time.
- Appearing critical.
- Being a burden.

However, support works best when services understand your needs.

You might say:

- "I'd like more information about support for affected others."
- "I'd like somebody to consider my wellbeing as well."
- "I'm struggling with trust and would like support around that."
- "I'm feeling isolated and would like to explore peer support."

Advocating for yourself simply means communicating your needs clearly and honestly.

You Are Allowed to Ask Questions

When engaging with support services, it is okay to ask questions.

For example:

- What support is available for affected others?
- How will my information be used?
- Is support confidential?
- What happens if I need additional support?
- Is this service LGBTQ+ inclusive?
- Are there other organisations that may be helpful?

You do not have to accept support without understanding how it works.

LGBTQ+ Inclusive Support Matters

For many LGBTQ+ people and their loved ones, finding support that feels inclusive is important.

You may want services that:

- Respect sexual orientation.
- Respect gender identity.
- Understand chosen family.
- Recognise diverse relationships.
- Create safe and welcoming environments.

Feeling understood can make it easier to speak openly and engage meaningfully with support.



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If You Experience Homophobia, Biphobia or Transphobia

Unfortunately, not everybody's experiences of support services are positive.

If you experience:

- Homophobia.
- Biphobia.
- Transphobia.
- Discrimination.
- Harassment.
- Misgendering.
- Assumptions about your identity or relationships.

It is important to remember:

This is not acceptable.

You deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.

You have the right to challenge discrimination.

Experiencing discrimination is never your fault.



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Making a Complaint

Many people feel uncomfortable about making complaints.

However, complaints can be an important way of improving services and protecting others from similar experiences.

You may wish to raise concerns if:

- You have been treated unfairly.
- Your identity has not been respected.
- You have experienced discrimination.
- You feel unsafe within a service.
- You have not received appropriate support.

Most organisations have formal complaints procedures that explain how concerns can be raised.

Making a complaint does not mean you are causing trouble.

It means you are exercising your right to fair and respectful treatment.

When You Feel Dismissed

Some affected others tell us they felt that their experiences were minimised because they were not the person gambling.

Remember:

The impact of gambling harm extends beyond the individual who gambles.

Your emotional wellbeing, relationships, finances, confidence, and sense of safety matter.

If you feel your experiences are being dismissed, you have every right to say:

"I'd like to discuss how this situation has affected me as well."

Or:

"I feel my own support needs haven't been fully explored."

Advocating for a Loved One

There may be occasions when you need to advocate for somebody you care about.

For example:

- Helping them access support.
- Explaining specific support needs.
- Challenging discrimination.
- Requesting reasonable adjustments.
- Supporting communication.

However, it is important to balance advocacy with respect for the other person's autonomy and choices.

Supporting somebody does not mean speaking for them at every opportunity.

Trans and Non-Binary Inclusion

If you are supporting a trans or non-binary person, inclusive support should include:

- Respecting names and pronouns.
- Avoiding assumptions about identity.
- Using affirming language.
- Challenging discriminatory behaviour.

If a service repeatedly fails to respect somebody's identity, it may be appropriate to raise concerns or seek a more inclusive provider.

Everyone deserves to feel safe when accessing support.

Chosen Family Should Be Recognised

Many LGBTQ+ people rely on chosen family networks rather than biological relatives. Unfortunately, some services may still focus solely on traditional family structures.

At Recover with Pride, we recognise that:

- Friends can be affected others.
- Former partners can be affected others.
- Housemates can be affected others.
- Chosen family members can be affected others.

Your role in somebody's life does not need official recognition to be meaningful.

Remember That You Have Rights

When accessing support, you have a right to:

- Be treated with respect.
- Be listened to.
- Be treated fairly.
- Access confidential support.
- Have your identity respected.
- Raise concerns when things go wrong.
- Ask questions.
- Make informed decisions.

You should never feel pressured to accept poor treatment.

Building Confidence in Self-Advocacy

Self-advocacy can feel intimidating, especially if you have spent a long time focusing on other people's needs.

It can help to remember:

- Your experiences are valid.
- Your needs matter.
- Asking questions is reasonable.
- Seeking inclusive support is reasonable.
- Challenging discrimination is reasonable.

The more confident you become in communicating your needs, the more likely you are to receive support that works for you.

How Recover with Pride Can Help

At Recover with Pride, we believe affected others deserve to feel heard, respected, and understood.

We provide a safe and inclusive space where you can:

- Explore your experiences.
- Discuss barriers to support.
- Develop confidence in self-advocacy.
- Access LGBTQ+ affirming guidance.
- Challenge isolation and stigma.
- Focus on your wellbeing and recovery.

You deserve support that recognises who you are and what you have experienced.



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Key Takeaway

You should never have to fight to be treated with dignity, respect, and understanding. Whether you are seeking support for yourself or helping somebody you care about, you have the right to ask questions, express your needs, challenge discrimination, and access services that recognise and value your experiences.

Your voice matters. Your experiences matter. And you deserve support that reflects both.

Key Message

Advocating for yourself is not about being demanding. It is about recognising that your wellbeing, identity, experiences, and support needs deserve to be heard, respected, and valued.

Refer for support here:

www.switchboard.org.uk/service/recover-with-pride/referral/



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Support for Affected Others



Aila

Aila is a website for women in Scotland experiencing or affected by gambling harm, developed by women with lived and living experience. If you are being harmed by someone else's gambling, Aila brings together emotional support, financial and debt advice, and practical guidance on navigating conversations and setting boundaries, helping you find the right service at the right time. Our monthly Living Room offers a welcoming in-person and online space for women affected by their own or someone else's gambling, and the Lived and Living Library shares stories from women across Scotland. You are not alone.

Links

Website

aila-scotland.co.uk/explore-available-support/support-for-affected-others/

aila-scotland.co.uk/explore-available-support/are-you-supporting-someone-else/

aila-scotland.co.uk

Contact

hello@aila-scotland.co.uk



Ara

Ara provides free support for people across the South West affected by someone else's gambling, including partners, family members, friends and colleagues. Support includes one-to-one counselling delivered face-to-face, by telephone or online by professionally accredited, CBT-qualified counsellors. Sessions focus on emotional wellbeing, coping strategies, recovery and rebuilding confidence.

Ara also offers specialist relationship counselling support, where gambling has impacted trust, communication, finances or family life, helping people to rebuild relationships and move forward together. In addition, our easy access workshops provide practical advice, digital safety support, understanding gambling-related harms, and action planning for those seeking support at the earliest opportunity.

Links

Website

www.recovery4all.co.uk/

Refer for support here:

www.switchboard.org.uk/service/recover-with-pride/referral/



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Support for Affected Others



Betknowmore UK

Behind every person experiencing gambling harm, an estimated 6-10 other people may be affected.

A partner losing sleep. A parent caught between worry and responsibility. A young person living with tension in their home. A friend who wants to help but doesn't know how. A colleague covering up mistakes at work.

If this is you, Betknowmore UK is right behind you.

We offer digital peer support service for anyone aged 18 and above. Our Peer Supporters have City and Guilds assured training and lived experience of gambling harms. They understand what you are going through.

Supporting you through shared lived experience

As part of the statutory levy, Betknowmore UK is funded to provide 1:1 and group support to affected others in England and Scotland.

This support aims to ensure that through peer-led engagement and intervention, people are offered the most appropriate support to address their specific needs.

Links

Website

www.betknowmoreuk.org/affected-other

Breakeven

Breakeven

Breakeven offers counselling support for partners, family members and friends affected by someone else's gambling. Gambling harm can put pressure on relationships, finances and the wider household, and support is available for you too.

You can receive support even if the person who gambles is not ready to seek help. Breakeven works with affected family members and friends to help them understand their experiences and find ways to cope with the impact.

Its family and friends resources also offer guidance on looking after yourself, understanding gambling harms and having supportive, non-judgemental conversations.

Links

Website

www.breakeven.org.uk/family-and-friends

Refer for support here:

www.switchboard.org.uk/service/recover-with-pride/referral/



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Support for Affected Others



Chances

As part of Cyrenians' homelessness prevention strategy – Chances offers person-centred, non-judgemental, and non-time limited support to anyone aged 16+ in Scotland who is impacted by gambling harm. For affected others - the service adopts a Community Reinforcement & Family Training approach focused on their recovery and not the person gambling and supports with:

- Promoting self-care, general wellbeing, independence, and boundary setting
- Understanding gambling behaviour and a loved one's triggers
- Improving communication with the person gambling through positive reinforcement techniques
- Guidance & tools to encourage the person gambling to reduce the harms experienced

Online and phone options are offered Scotland wide and in-person in Edinburgh, the Lothians and Falkirk. Organisational and self-referrals are welcome via email or phone on **07983 137239**. Alternatively, a referral form can be completed (available upon request).

Links

Website

[Chances: Gambling Support](#)

Contact

[07983 137239](tel:07983137239)

chances@cyrenians.scot



Gambling Recovery Therapy

Founded by Lorraine Perrons and Claire Jones, Gambling Recovery for All CIC and Gambling Recovery Therapy Limited combine family experience of gambling harm with specialist professional training.

The CIC's Rebuild & Rise: Reclaim Your Life is a fully funded, trauma-informed 12-week online programme for eligible women across the UK affected by someone else's gambling. It focuses on emotional wellbeing, financial resilience, boundaries, confidence and rebuilding a sense of choice and control. Women can seek support whether or not the person who gambles has stopped or sought help.

Gambling Recovery Therapy Limited also offers private paid one-to-one therapy for people experiencing gambling harm and those affected by someone else's gambling, with a complimentary 30-minute introductory conversation.

Links

Website

www.gamblingrecoverytherapy.com/affected-other

forms.gle/aMA4fJbgDMSpg0Tb9

www.gamblingrecoverytherapy.com/brochure

Contact

contact@gamblingrecoverytherapy.com

Refer for support here:

www.switchboard.org.uk/service/recover-with-pride/referral/



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Support for Affected Others



Recover Together

Recover Together provides a safe and supportive space for people affected by gambling harm, including family members, partners, friends and others impacted by someone else's gambling. Reaching out can feel difficult, and people may not always know what support they need or where to start. We're here to listen and walk alongside them, helping them find a way forward that feels right for them. Our approach is shaped by lived experience of gambling harm and recovery, and we meet people with empathy, honesty and no judgement, providing support, understanding and connection.

Links

Website

recovertogether.org/what-we-do/affected-others/



Shiltons' Silverlining

Shiltons' Silverlining supports partners, family members, friends and loved ones affected by someone else's gambling. Its Affected Others service offers a confidential space to talk, be heard and feel understood.

The charity recognises that someone else's gambling can bring anxiety, financial pressure, relationship difficulties and isolation. It offers emotional support, guidance and information to help people cope with the impact and find a way forward.

Built on lived experience, the service recognises that affected family members and friends need support for their own mental health, wellbeing and relationships too.

Links

Website

shiltonssilverlining.org/affected-others/

Refer for support here:

www.switchboard.org.uk/service/recover-with-pride/referral/



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