

Gambling safely – a quick guide for parents and others



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All commercial gambling in Great Britain is regulated by the Gambling Commission.

Any organisation offering gambling facilities (an operator) that is licensed by the Commission is listed on our [public register of licensees](#). If offering online gambling, an operator will have a link to the register on their website. Here you will find information such as the operator's address, website domain names, trading names and current licence status.



All licensed operators must provide:

- information on how to gamble safely
- a robust complaints procedure (so if you have a disagreement you will know what to do)
- procedures to protect young and vulnerable people.

If an operator does not have a Commission licence, they are acting illegally by offering gambling to consumers in Great Britain. As a result, they may have their payment facilities withdrawn by the major payment systems organisations - notably MasterCard, PayPal and Visa.

Protecting young people

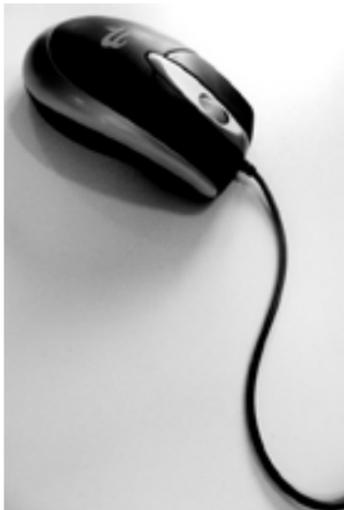
Age restrictions

Generally, the minimum legal age for gambling in Great Britain is 18 years of age. This applies to adult gaming centres, betting shops, bingo halls, casinos, racetracks and online gambling. The exceptions are the National Lottery and scratchcards where you can take part from the age of 16.

I want to block gambling websites from a computer or mobile phone

- The [Internet Matters](#) website, run by an independent not-for-profit organisation to help parents keep their children safe online, provides a guide on how to set parental controls on computers and mobile devices.

- There are also a number of companies that offer software that will block access to gambling websites. [GambleAware](#) provides information about this software.



Do websites prevent underage people from gambling?

All gambling websites regulated by the Commission must have:

- up to date policies and procedures designed to prevent underage gambling
- a warning that underage gambling is an offence
- a requirement that customers affirm they are legally old enough to gamble.

Gambling safely

The [BigDeal](#) website is run by GamCare, the organisation that runs the National Problem Gambling HelpLine and NetLine, and provides information about gambling specifically for young people.



Protecting players' funds

Operators licensed by the Commission must:

- keep customer funds in a separate bank account/s, but there is no guarantee that this will ensure that you get all your money back if the company goes bust
- set out clearly in their terms and conditions whether customer funds are protected in the event of insolvency, the level of such protection and the method by which this is achieved.

Be aware that money staked or deposited with a gambling operator is not protected in the way personal bank deposits are, whether or not the operator is licensed.

Playing gaming machines

All gaming machines are required to display clearly the percentage 'return to player' (RTP) or the odds of winning a prize from using the machine. The RTP tells the player what proportion of the money they put into the machine they can expect to get back – but only over a very large number of games (generally 10,000 to 100,000 games or more). So, players should not use the RTP as a guide to how much they may win or lose in a gaming session.



Some machines (including those in betting shops) allow you to set limits on the amount you deposit and let you know when you've reached that limit. Some operators provide accounts with 'smart cards' which help you to keep track of your total spend.

Gambling safely contd...

Playing gaming machines or gambling online

Players may be able to:

- set limits on the amount of money or time they spend with an operator or playing on a machine
- set timers or other forms of reminders or 'reality checks' to help ensure they don't lose track of time or how much they are spending.



Helping those who may have a problem with their gambling



- **GambleAware** provides information about how to gamble safely and where to get help if you, or someone you know, has problems with their gambling machine
- the Commission's **responsible gambling page** provides information on organisations that provide help and support.

**GAMBLING
COMMISSION**

keeping gambling fair and safe for all

Gambling Commission ■ Victoria Square House ■ Birmingham ■ B2 4BP
Tel: 0121 230 6666 ■ www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk

ADV 14/19