

GamCare’s response to Durham County Council – Consultation on the revision of statement of principles under the Gambling Act 2005

About GamCare:

GamCare is an independent charity and the leading provider of information, advice, and support for anyone affected by gambling harms. We operate the National Gambling Helpline, provide structured support for anyone harmed by gambling, and create awareness about safer gambling and treatments. For 26 years, our confidential, non-judgemental services, have supported more than half a million people to get their lives back on track.

We hold data locally and nationally through our National Gambling Helpline. We also work closely with those who have lived experience in shaping and delivering our services and programmes, ensuring that all our work is coproduced with our lived experience community at its heart.

GamCare’s comments on the revision of the statement of principles:

- We welcome the position Durham County Council is taking to go beyond the mandatory and default conditions of the Gambling Act 2005 in its statement of principles.
- Local authorities can play a greater role in reducing gambling harm, particularly for those of our clients who experience harm in land-based gambling venues, due to council’s licensing responsibilities.
- The recommendations below will help to realise Durham County Council’s wider Plan, in particular “improving health and wellbeing,” due to gambling’s relationship to poor mental health and suicidality. They will also help the council to comply with its obligation to “protect vulnerable people”
- It is vital that Durham County Council develops a local picture of the level of gambling harms, in order to best target resources and tailor service provision. This could be achieved by gathering data from the National Gambling Helpline, as well as those already providing services in the area.
- Building on the proactive approach the council is already taking, we would like to see Durham County Council commit in its statement of principles **to a public health approach** to gambling.
- This commitment should include training frontline and primary care staff to recognise the signs of gambling harm and develop referral pathways to the National Gambling Helpline or local treatment providers such as [NECA](#). GamCare has worked with Haringey Council to implement a similar system, that has received widespread support.
- In the absence of Cumulative Impact Assessments as a method by which the “aim to permit” approach can be challenged, Durham County Council should pursue an approach similar to that pioneered by Westminster Council. They developed a [Local Area Profile](#) that specifically analysed gambling risk, and used this data as a basis from which to scrutinise and possibly oppose a licensing application.
- The changes to Durham County Council’s statement of principles should be viewed in the context of the Gambling Act Review and subsequent process of white paper consultations, so take account of the rapidly changing regulatory environment.



*If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail, please contact Pollyanna Hopkins,
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