

Harmful Gambling Policy

1. Introduction

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council takes the health and wellbeing of our employees very seriously. In this regard, the Council will work collaboratively to tackle gambling related harms in the workplace and community.

Harmful gambling is a health and social concern for all and can affect anyone at any time. This can often be far reaching for individuals and those around them. Harmful gambling may impact on employees mental and physical health, and can cause or contribute to debt, poverty, domestic abuse, isolation, homelessness, crime and suicide.

The effects on the workplace may include poor engagement and performance levels, changes in behaviour, poor conduct and relationships with colleagues, and increased absence.

Sandwell Council should provide the appropriate support to employees who are suffering from gambling related harms. The Council has a responsibility to create a stigma-free environment that encourages open discussion and disclosure; this will encourage employees suffering from harmful gambling to not suffer in silence, and discuss the practical steps needed to support their full recovery.

2. Definition

Harmful gambling is behaviour related to gambling which causes harm to the gambler and those around them.

3. Aims and Objectives

The aims of this policy are to:

- Support employees and managers by setting out the responsibilities and key principles to follow in relation to harmful gambling.
- Foster an environment in which colleagues feel confident disclosing gambling related harms to their line managers and peers.
- Provide direction and clarity on how the Council will deal with issues relating to gambling related harm.

The policy is supported by further guidance and a range of other interventions and support options, such as:

- Education, training and awareness sessions.
- Wellbeing champions network

- Access to both internal and external support services.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council. The principles of the policy are recommended to all partner organisations.

5. Key Principles

The Council recognises that each case will be different. Whilst the action taken will depend on the individual circumstances, the following key principles will be followed in all cases:

Care

- Raise awareness
- Deliver wellbeing initiatives and activities
- Positively respond to voluntary disclosures from employees about themselves or others
- Promote, signpost and help with access to services

Consult

- With the individual and any other representatives involved, depending on the circumstances, which may include Occupational Health, Human Resources and Trade Unions
- Supporting guidance
- Internal and external support resources

Consider

- Regular supportive conversations via [One to One Template](#) and [Sensitive Conversations Guide](#)
- Taking a holistic approach - consider other wellbeing tools or policies
- Workplace adjustments or time off to seek help
- Monitor and review support plans.

6. Duty of Care

Sandwell Council, like all employers have a duty of care to their employees. Health and safety laws ensure workers have the right to a safe working environment where risks to health and wellbeing are considered and dealt with efficiently.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

All employees are responsible for:

- Being open, honest and accountable in conversations with managers, Human Resources and Occupational Health
- Taking responsibility for looking after their health and wellbeing
- Raise any concerns they have in relation to this policy. This may be about themselves, colleagues or activities that may put the council at risk
- Being aware of the support available and engaging in support measures which are put in place

All line managers should:

- Familiarise themselves with the Harmful Gambling Policy and Guidance
- Create a working environment that maximises employee attendance and engagement
- Be ready and willing to have open discussions about harmful gambling, appreciating the personal nature of the conversation, and treating the discussion sensitively and professionally
- Refer to the guidance before agreeing with the individual how best they can be supported, and any adjustments required
- Record any adjustments agreed, and actions to be implemented
- Ensure ongoing dialogue and review dates

Where adjustments are unsuccessful, the line manager may:

- Discuss a referral to Occupational Health for further advice
- Refer the employee to Occupational Health where there are concerns that there is an impact on the employees capability to carry out their duties.
- Review the Occupational Health advice, and implement any recommendations, where reasonably practical
- Continue to review

The role of Human Resources is to:

Provide advice and guidance to managers and employees on the application of policy, including support options available and appropriate action

- Provide tools and training for managers

- Monitor the effectiveness of this policy and seek regular feedback from employees and managers

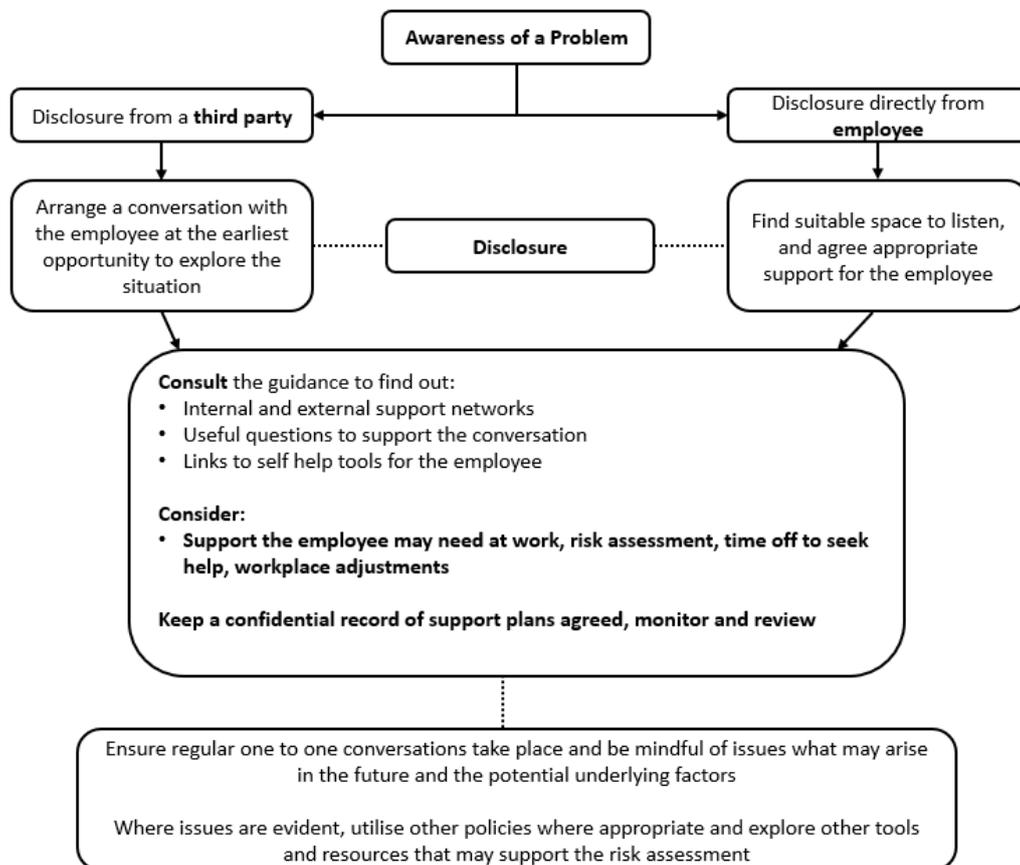
The role of Occupational Health is to:

- Signpost to appropriate sources of help and advice
- Provide support and advice to HR and Line Managers in determining and agreeing reasonable adjustments, if required

Employee Assistance and Counselling Service will:

- Provide access to 24/7 telephone counselling and face-to-face counselling for all employees on 0808 168 2143.

8. Process



9. Confidentiality

It is recognised that certain personnel records will be necessary. However, any discussion on the nature of an employee's gambling problems and the record of any treatment will be strictly confidential, unless the employee agrees otherwise.

10. Internal Support Services

- Harmful Gambling Guidance (link)
- Harmful Gambling Workplace Charter (link)
- [One to One Template](#)
- [Approaching Sensitive Conversations – Guide and Template](#)
- [My Wellbeing Hub](#)
- [Occupational Health](#)
- [Employee Assistance and Counselling Service](#)

11. External Support Services

- [NHS Inform – Problem Gambling](#)
- [Gam Care](#)
- [Beacon Counselling Trust – Problematic Gambling](#)
- [Citizens Advice - Gambling](#)
- [Mind – Gambling Addiction Support](#)

This policy was developed in conjunction with Sandwell Council's recognised Trade Union colleagues and Occupational Health.