

SELF-EXCLUSION FROM GAMBLING

Committee name	Licensing Committee
Officer reporting	Ian Meens, Residents Services
Papers with report	Self-exclusion request form
Ward	All

HEADLINES

The Chairman has requested the Committee receive further information relating to what is known as “Self-Exclusion” - a procedure operated within gambling establishments throughout the United Kingdom. This initiative has been implemented from the Gambling Commission’s Licence Conditions and Codes of Practice under the terms of the Gambling Act 2014. Through “self-exclusion” a problem gambler can exclude themselves from the ability of being able to gamble.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee note the information.

INFORMATION

Self-exclusion is the system by which a person who identifies that they have a gambling problem can voluntarily make arrangements to prohibit themselves from being able to use gambling premises.

There are different means by which a person wishing to be excluded from gambling premises can achieve this. All licensed gambling venues and online gambling businesses operate a self-exclusion scheme. It is now possible to self-exclude from more than one establishment at the same time, making the process of self-exclusion much easier.

Arcades, betting shops, bingo venues and casinos all run the Multi-Operator Self-Exclusion Schemes (MOSES). In addition, all licensed gambling businesses do have to have their own self-exclusion arrangements to help those who decide to self-exclude.

The Multi Operator Self Exclusion Scheme (MOSES) works on the basis of the individual contacting the Multi Operator Self Exclusion Scheme by telephone and registering, as Betting shops are open to all adults, the scheme is based on people submitting photos that can be shared with operators to help staff recognise someone who has self-excluded and intervene if he or she breaches that undertaking of exclusion.

As online gambling has become such a large industry, there will also a dedicated national self-exclusion scheme for online gamblers being set up. It is expected that the scheme,

created by the Remote Gambling Association (RGA) trade association, will be called GAMSTOP. This should be operational by the end of 2017.

The scheme will enable UK consumers to exclude themselves via a single website process from all online gambling operators that are licensed by the Gambling Commission. Once an individual makes a self-exclusion agreement, the gambling company must close that person's account and return any money in the account to them. It must also remove their name and details from any marketing databases it uses.

Self-exclusion can also be made at specific operators by the completion of the self-exclusion forms and adding photographs. This will be limited to the same operator locally and will not incorporate all other operators.

The MOSES scheme covers the five main areas of Gambling:

- Arcades
- Betting shops
- Bingo
- Casino
- Online

Risk Assessment and the Local Area

As of 6th April 2016, bookmakers and other licensed gambling premises have been required to conduct a local area risk assessment for each of their premises to ensure that suitable controls and procedures are in place to protect vulnerable people.

The risk assessments are carried out to take into account risks presented in the local area, such as exposure to particular vulnerable groups and crime. The aim of this is to enable operators and local authorities to engage in constructive dialogue at an early stage, reducing the likelihood of costly enforcement action at a later date. This should identify and help vulnerable people.

Time scales for self-exclusion.

The time scale that a person can request to be excluded from gambling can vary from 6 months to 5 years, with betting shops being a minimum twelve month period. Some internet sites offer a 'timeout' option as well as self-exclusion such as 24 hours, 48 hours, 7 days, or 30 days or the ability to limit to an area of betting i.e. horses, dogs, sport etc...

Online operators

Someone who enters into a self-exclusion agreement with a popular operator online will be prevented from using their account for the specific period. At the end of the period a person can re-open the account. Twenty four hours is then given to the customer as a cooling off period by some operators before Gambling can re commence. No reactivation is allowed during the exclusion period.

Due to the extensive range of betting and gambling areas, the system of self-exclusion is far from being 100% successful. Internet databases rely on names or email accounts and small differences in spellings or a creation of a different email address or a different method of payment has circumvented previous exclusions.

Does self-exclusion work?

Self-exclusion is one of the tools available to people who feel they may be developing a problem with their gambling. It is a tool that may not work on its own and may require other interventions and support to help the problem gambler.

Responsibility for sticking with this lies with the individual, but they can expect the operator to do all they reasonably can to help them. Many problem gamblers have found they have been allowed to bet again unchallenged in betting shops from which they have excluded themselves.

Awareness of Self Exclusion

Data produced by the Gambling Commission published in February 2017 from a recent survey in 2016 showed that 6 percent of those who took part in the survey had self-excluded, however, just under 60 percent had not self-excluded and were not aware of the self-exclusion initiative. It is worth noting that gamblers who are aware of self-exclusion, but had not used this option, rose by 8 percent from 2015 to 2016.

Implications on related Council policies

The Council's Statement of Gambling Policy sets out the Council's objectives. However, Problem gambling and addiction is an issue for regulators, who may have to consider new laws and legislation to deal with ongoing issues – these issues could affect future policies within local government.

Legal implications

None at this stage

Financial Implications

None at this stage

Background Papers / Further Reading Material

[Gambling Commission Information](#)