

FEBRUARY 2026 ONLINE SAFETY UPDATE

For this month's online safety update, our theme is: Online gambling addiction.

Online gambling addiction is a compulsive pattern of gambling through websites, apps, or games, where a person feels unable to stop despite negative consequences.

While gambling is usually associated with adults, some children and teenagers are exposed to gambling-like activities in online games, including popular platforms like Roblox, Fortnite, or mobile apps. These games often include "loot boxes," in-game currency, or randomised rewards that mimic gambling mechanics such as spinning for rare items or paying real money for chances to win virtual prizes. This can teach young people that gambling is normal, exciting, and rewarding.

Young people with additional needs may be more vulnerable for several reasons. They may spend more time online due to social or mobility limitations, making exposure to these mechanisms more frequent. Some may have difficulties with impulse control, understanding risk, or recognising advertising and manipulative game design. They may also seek social connection in online spaces where gambling-like features are common. Early exposure can increase the risk of developing unhealthy gambling behaviours, financial loss, and emotional stress.

What to do:

- Monitor game content, perhaps play WITH your child in order to show how they can avoid the gambling opportunities
- Talk openly about the risks, and encourage safe, alternative ways to play and socialise online
- Set limits on in-game purchases and keep gaming devices in a communal area

Remember, the pastoral team are here to support you with any online safety concerns. Just call them on 0121 569 7089.

