Gamblers Anonymous England, Wales and Ulster

Under 18’s Policy

This policy has been approved by the National Committee on the 27th of April 2024

Overview

The members of Gamblers Anonymous ("GA") support each other in Groups. As individuals, GA members should be aware of their duties of care to others, and follow the law and best practice regarding safeguarding, when acting in GA’s name.

In most cases it is Illegal for Under 18’s to gamble, however there are exceptions where gambling can take place. See table below.

**Minimum age for participation in different gambling activities.\***

| **Gambling activity/product** | **Minimum legal age to play** |
| --- | --- |
| Private bets with friends or family | Unlicensed - no age limit |
| All Category D gaming machines | No age limit\* |
| Unlicensed lottery products (non-National Lottery) | Varies\* |
| Licensed lottery products (non-National Lottery) | 16 |
| Football pools | 16 |
| Category B & C gaming machines | 18 |
| Betting shops | 18 |
| Bingo halls | 18 |
| Casinos | 18 |
| On course betting at race tracks | 18 |
| National Lottery products | 18 |
| Online betting and gaming | 18 |

***Source:***[***Gambling Commission***](https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/public-and-players/guide/gambling-and-young-people)

### Under 18’s safeguarding requirements

For Under 18’s to be able to attend meetings, GA would be required to meet statutory regulations covered in the two government documents named below.

* **Working\_together\_to\_safeguard\_children\_2023\_-\_statutory\_guidance**
* **Working\_together\_to\_safeguard\_children\_2023\_-\_statutory\_framework**

The Leading Safeguarding Partners (LSP) framework requires all of the following;

1. Designated Safeguarding Officer for each group.
2. Local Authority.
3. Chief of Police.

Sharing information with the LSP’s is required on a regular basis on any named individual under 18 years of age.

In the absence of a designated safeguarding officer at the meeting a deputy must be nominated.

Summary

Safeguarding children in GA would require extensive resource, training & costs. This would also conflict with our unity principles 8 &12.

8. G.A. should remain forever non-professional, but our service centres may employ special workers.

12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of the G.A. programme, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Groups wishing to allow under 18’s into meetings must;

1. Follow the Safeguarding framework for children statutory requirements.
2. Inform the Regional Secretary.
3. Training funded by the individual and not GA.

Under 18’s support

Referrals should be made to the National Problem Gambling Clinic.

### Email: [gambling.cnwl@nhs.net](mailto:gambling.cnwl@nhs.net) Phone: **020 7381 7722**

Review

This policy is reviewed annually by Gamblers Anonymous England, Wales and Ulster (and whenever a change in legislation occurs).