

GAMBLING COMMISSION

Robin Grossmith
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Also by email to: robin.grossmith@frb.org.uk

Dear Robin,

Under-age test purchasing of on course bookmakers at Ascot Racecourse 2014

The Gambling Commission (“the Commission”) is working with local authorities and police across England and Wales to assess the controls put in place by gambling operators to prevent under-age gambling.¹ On 20 June 2014 the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead licensing authority undertook a number of underage gambling test purchases at Ascot racecourse. A Commission officer was present. Using a 16 year old test subject, a random sample of 20 on-course bookmakers were approached in order to place a bet. I have to report that all 20 operators accepted a bet without challenging the young person or asking for proof of age and therefore failed the test purchase. You will not need me to explain that this represents a failure rate of 100%.

You will no doubt share the Commission’s view that these results are unacceptable. The Commission is writing to the operators separately but I am asking you to ensure that your members are aware of their obligations under the Gambling Act and the Licence Conditions and Code of Practice (LCCP) to prevent underage gambling.

The Commission’s LCCP require all bookmakers to have and put into effect policies and procedures designed to prevent underage gambling, and to monitor the effectiveness of these. The results from this test purchase exercise demonstrate that the policies and procedures put in place by the operators concerned were not effective on this occasion. The conduct of the operators fell below the standard the Commission expects from those it licenses and I expect below the standard that is demanded by responsible businesses in the on course betting sector.

While the bookmakers tested at Ascot on 20 June may not necessarily be affiliated with your member associations, we would seek to enlist your support in ensuring a considerably more robust performance in these areas going forward. In doing so, your members will want to satisfy themselves that their members are compliant with the Gambling Act and the conditions attached to each of their operating licences to monitor underage gambling procedures.

¹ Gambling Commission [Press Release](#), 5 December 2013

I should however be clear that if our future test purchase exercises with local authorities demonstrate that serious weaknesses persist, we will consider regulatory action against individual operators.

We would therefore encourage the members of your member associations to consider how they can satisfy themselves fully that they are delivering their obligations under the Gambling Act and operating licences, and how they can demonstrate their commitment to social responsibility without the need for formal regulatory action.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MH', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Matthew Hill
Director Regulatory Risk and Analysis