

GAMBLING COMMISSION E-BULLETIN – ISSUE 86

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Welcome to the fortnightly email bulletin from the Gambling Commission (the Commission).

You have registered on our website to receive news and updates from us, and we issue this e-bulletin at fortnightly intervals to keep you up to date.

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1. Gambling Commission annual report and accounts 2008/09

This report and accounts covers the Commission's activity for 2008/09, the first full year under the Gambling Act 2005 which came into force on 1 September 2007.

2. Fee and licence changes from 1 August 2009

New fee arrangements will come into effect on **1 August 2009** following a consultation held jointly with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport on fees. The planned changes to operating licence fees, remote general betting licence type, licence categories and banding are introduced by statutory instrument which, following Parliamentary process, is intended to come into force on 1 August 2009.

3. Advice on allowing poker in alcohol licensed premises

The Commission has published a leaflet which explains the rules regarding playing poker in pubs under the Gambling Act 2005.

The leaflet provides information on the limits on stakes and prizes for games of poker in pubs, poker tournaments, poker leagues and linked gaming. It also provides information on the manner in which prizes can be structured in poker leagues.

4. Skill with prizes machines

The Commission has been reviewing recent developments with respect to skill with prizes machines (SWPs), in order to ascertain whether or not some games described as SWPs are in fact gaming machines.

The Commission is of the view that 'skill games' which are designed to look like recognised games of chance (such as roulette or bingo) are games of chance under the Gambling Act 2005. The Commission also has concerns regarding the compensation or control mechanism used in some types of skill machines.

5. Online mystery shopping programme

The Commission conducts a rolling programme of mystery shopping on gambling websites as part of its ongoing compliance activity. This programme includes operators regulated overseas that advertise their services to the UK market as well as operators licensed by the Commission.

This information note summarises results for the programme between April 2008 and March 2009. The results show that the vast majority of the largest operators and those with the greatest UK facing business have sufficient social responsibility measures in place.

6. Illegal machine supplier convicted

Coinfactory Ltd, a gaming machine supplier based in Oldham has been found guilty of illegally supplying gaming machines under the Gambling Act 2005 (the Act) following a Commission investigation. Coinfactory Ltd was fined £2,000 with costs of £2,500 awarded to the Commission.

7. New Commission website near to completion

By the time you receive the next e-bulletin, an improved version of the www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk website will be in place. The new website is split more easily into the different gambling sectors following consistent feedback requesting this change. There will also be a new section for licensing authorities. E-bulletin will continue to be delivered to you as normal and any links to the current website will be automatically redirected to the improved homepage.