

2024.06.11

3.8 Deputy S.M. Ahier of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding the sale of £10 lottery scratch cards (OQ.113/2024)

Will the Minister provide his assessment of whether it remains appropriate for Channel Islands Lottery scratch cards to be sold for £10 each; and will he advise what financial contribution, if any, is made from scratch card sales towards supporting problem gamblers?

Deputy K.F. Morel (The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development):

The Channel Islands Lottery is hugely important in raising funds for our local charitable sector and Members will recall that recently more than £1 million was voted through this Assembly to be distributed locally this year from those lottery proceeds. A Safer Gambling Campaign to promote responsible play and awareness of the services and help available to problem gamblers will be launched this year, I am pleased to say, specifically for the Channel Islands Lottery. Beyond this there is currently a full review being co-ordinated with colleagues in Guernsey of the lottery games, including the £10 tickets and the future direction of the lottery.

3.8.1 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

In August 2019 Camelot ended the sales of its £10 scratch cards because, and I quote: “These particular games over-indexed among problem gamblers.” The U.K. (United Kingdom) Gambling Commission said: “After careful consideration of new evidence both the commission and the licensee agree that all scratch cards at the £10 price point should be removed from sale.” Will the Minister follow the lead from Camelot and the Gambling Commission and ensure the £10 scratch cards are withdrawn at the earliest opportunity?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

As I mentioned in my previous answer, we are working with the Guernsey lottery authorities at the moment on a review of the lottery and that will include a review of those £10 scratch cards.

3.8.2 Deputy A. Curtis of St. Clement:

The Jersey Gambling Commission have a code of practice for those using gaming machines on maximum stakes and the maximum repeated uses. Is the Minister aware if there is any code of practice issued to prevent unlimited purchase of quantities of scratch cards of any denomination?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I have to say I am not aware but obviously can find out and will supply Members with the answer.

3.8.3 Deputy A. Curtis:

If the answer is there is no limit on the quantity of purchase, will the Minister endeavour to look into this when he discusses with Guernsey and with the Gambling Commission?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

As I say, we are undertaking a review. Whether or not that will be part of this review I am unable to say.

3.8.4 Deputy J. Renouf:

Does the Minister accept that in the answer to the first question he emphasised the charitable causes that are helped by scratch cards. Does he accept that there is a risk that the desire to see that money go to good causes might be blinding people to the potential risks of gambling addiction being promoted through the scratch cards?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I believe there is risk in most areas of our lives and gambling is an area that has some risk. Of course it is appropriate that that risk is highlighted to those who take part in gambling of any form. As we know, there is a balance between the enjoyment of people engaging in a game through the lottery, winning through that game in the lottery, providing funding for local charities through their taking part in that game in the lottery and their own personal risk. I am not aware of evidence of any strong level of, if I want to say, misuse of scratch cards. If the Gambling Commission were to bring that to my attention, which they have done in regards of other forms of gambling, I do take that seriously and since I became Minister have engaged with the Gambling Commission very clearly on matters around problem gambling and will continue to do so. I am not aware at this moment of any particular excessive risk around the use of scratch cards or the lottery in general.

3.8.5 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

The Minister mentioned excessive risk. Has he read the report carried out by Liverpool John Moores University in April 2023 on the health impact assessment to assess the needs of the Guernsey population in relation to problem gambling and will he comment on the finding in that report that scratch card use was sufficiently associated with a range of poor health indicators including poor general health, low mental well-being, financial problems and violence perpetration?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I have not read that report so I cannot comment on it other than to say according to the last statement by the Deputy it sounded like correlation rather than causation that was being pointed to.