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## Clarification sought on gambling events

By Paul Jump, Third Sector, 7 July 2009

### Charities find block on fundraising events at sports stadiums

Many local authorities are still refusing to allow charity fundraising events at sports stadiums if they involve gambling on sporting events taking place elsewhere, despite the Gambling Commission's view that they are legal, according to a firm of solicitors.

[MFG Solicitors](#), based in Kidderminster, Worcestershire, asked the [Gambling Commission](#) to clarify the relevant section of the Gambling Act 2005 after Wychavon District Council refused permission for an event. The fundraiser, held at Worcester Rugby Club, was in aid of disabled children's charity Wooden Spoon and Worcester hospice St Richard's. Guests were to bet on Royal Ascot races shown on a big screen.

The council eventually allowed the event to take place after the Gambling Commission announced that gambling on events at any 'remote sporting stadium' was in its view permissible.

Alexander Hall, a solicitor for MFG, said many similar fundraisers had been held across the country, but some councils insisted the Gambling Act allowed them to take place only if they were held at dog or horse racing tracks and not at other stadiums.

Hall called on the commission to pass on its view to all local authorities. But he said that some senior local authority figures that had been made aware of its views refused to be moved on the issue. He said only the courts could give a definitive interpretation but no one would be willing to fund a test case.

"No local authority is going to go to court to stop a charity event because the PR would be awful. But saying 'our reading of the law is that you shouldn't do it' is enough to put most people off," he said.

A spokesman for the Gambling Commission said the regulator was looking into a number of issues related to non-commercial gambling and intended to issue further advice later on in the year. He said charities should take legal advice until then.

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