



19 December 2003

Please ask for:
Ian Sumnall
Strategy
Ext: 37600

The Rt Hon David Blunkett MP
 Secretary of State for the Home Department
 Home Office
 50 Queen Anne's Gate
 LONDON
 SW1H 9AT

RECEIVED BY

Culture, Media and Sport	
DATE:	13 JAN 2004
Deadline	06-02-04
Action	Great Offices
Treat As App	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
For information only	
PCU REF:	03/19/18 JCMAS

Your Ref:

Our Ref: IS/py

Dear Secretary of State

CHILD SAFETY IN AMUSEMENT ARCADES

This Council has recently debated, with some considerable concern, the issue of child safety in amusement arcades. Amusement arcades can be a magnet for children and are, more often than not, designed to be so. Regrettably, this means that they can also be attractive to those who prey on such children. In Bognor Regis we have had recent experience of a 10 year old child being abducted and assaulted from such a premises.

You will appreciate that in relation to particularly our main seaside resorts of Bognor Regis and Littlehampton, providing a safe environment for families with children is a significant part of the attractiveness of the area. For instance, as a Council we provide a very effective beach patrol system both on the promenade and at sea which, on many occasions, has been able to "find lost children", and we believe that increasing the public's trust in amusement arcades would be extremely beneficial.

Having reviewed the current legislative framework there appears to be little in place to tackle this obvious danger or encourage its management, either by intervention of enforcement authorities, or self-policing by the trade itself. The Council is aware though that in HM The Queen's Speech announced on the 26th of November there is a proposal for a Gambling Bill (draft), and the Council would very much wish you to consider whether there is the opportunity to include further measures to ensure that child safety in amusement arcades, as we are advocating, can be legislated for. We believe that this will be welcomed in resorts and in town and city centres, and we are going to seek the support of the LGA in campaigning for this. It may be though that you could suggest another way of proceeding to achieve the same end?

As a Council we are united, cross-party, in our concern and would ask you to consider what measures can be put in place to overcome this. In particular, we would ask you to consider the following :

- Applying legislative restriction on young people's unsupervised access to arcades.

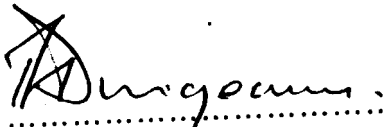
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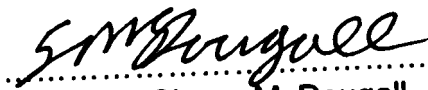
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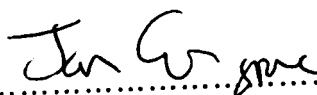
- The implementation of criminal records checks for staff employed in amusement arcades.
- A Code of Practice for arcade operators setting down minimum operating standards.

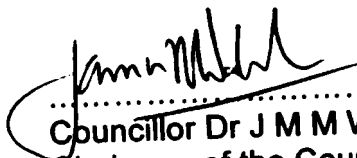
It is hoped you might be able to include these items as part of the review of gaming which is currently being undertaken, although our concern is such that we would encourage you to bring about additional controls as swiftly as possible.

Yours sincerely


.....
Councillor Norman Dingemans
Leader of the Council
Group


.....
Councillor Simon McDougall
Leader of the Liberal Democrat


.....
Councillor Jan Cosgrove
Leader of the Labour Group


.....
Councillor Dr J M M Walsh RD
Chairman of the Council

c.c. Sir Brian Briscoe, LGA; Nick Gibb, MP; Howard Flight MP; Peter Bottomley MP;
P Unsworth, Head of Environmental Health; Councillor S Brookman, Cabinet Member
for Environment; W E Minton, Head of External Liaison and Deputy Strategy Director