

MP seeks result for armed forces playing National Lottery

Mark Lancaster is attempting to get a result for soldiers who want to play the National Lottery abroad.

During defence questions yesterday (Monday), the MP asked whether the Government could look into allowing them to indulge in this 'simple pleasure'.

The Milton Keynes North member previously uncovered the fact that from December 13, operator Camelot intends to change its rules, which will prevent many members of our armed forces who are serving overseas from playing the lottery.

Andrew Robathan, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, said it was 'news to us', adding: "I assure my honourable and gallant Friend that I will certainly look into it and let him have a proper answer when I have done so."

It follows an answer to Mr Lancaster's written question last week, which stated that currently, in the majority of countries, local laws forbid the purchase of foreign lottery tickets. Changes in December mean players will only be able to set up or amend their direct debit, or purchase games online, when they are physically located in the UK.

After the debate, Mr Lancaster, a serving Territorial Army officer who pointed out that the armed forces still pay UK tax, said: "I understand that there are laws against foreign gambling in certain countries. But this surely does not apply to all the countries where our armed forces are based. What about Germany and Cyprus, for example?"

"I don't see why we need to adopt a blanket ban. We should endeavour to make lottery playing possible for troops in places where it is legal. It is a simple thing, but it brings some of them enjoyment and a link with their home country."

He currently has a follow-up written question pending, seeking to find out which countries will be affected.

Yesterday's exchange can be found at: <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=2010-11-08a.17.5&s=speaker%3A11715#g22.2>

The original written question is at: <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2010-11-01b.19721.h&s=speaker%3A11715#g19721.q0>