



ASA Ruling on WHG (International) Ltd

⚖ Upheld

| Internet (social networking)

| 15 May 2019

Ad description

A paid-for message from William Hill seen on the dating app Tinder, on 11 March 2019, stated "Stuck in the friend zone? You won't be for much longer if you use this Cheltenham free bet offer. Join William Hill with code W40 and bet £10 on any Cheltenham race to get 4 X £10 free bets. T&Cs apply". This was followed by a link to download the William Hill app.

Issue

The complainant challenged whether the ad breached the Code by linking gambling to sexual success.

Response

WHG (International) Ltd t/a William Hill said that customers were known to be savvy and “shop around” for the best odds/offers, using the William Hill website and odds as a comparison to choose the best deal. Should the customer sign up, they would enter into a relationship with William Hill, where they would have access to all areas of the site and the services they offered. They said that the promotion was supposed to relate the offer to the nature of the business they were advertising on (Tinder). Upon reflection, they agreed that it had the potential to be interpreted differently, but it was not their intention to link gambling to sexual success. They had removed the ad and were in the process of conducting a full review of existing content on the platform.

Tinder said they initially reviewed the ad to ensure its content was not socially irresponsible, offensive or targeting minors, and having passed their initial screening, published it on their platform. The ad was no longer live and they had not received any other complaints about it.

Assessment

Upheld

The CAP Code required that marketing communications for gambling must be socially responsible and that they must not link gambling to seduction, sexual success or enhanced attractiveness. The ASA acknowledged that William Hill had removed the ad. However, we considered that the text “Stuck in

the friend zone? You won't be for much longer if you use this Cheltenham free bet offer" suggested that those who gambled would be more likely to develop a friendship into a sexual relationship and therefore linked gambling with sexual success. We therefore concluded that the ad breached the Code.

The ad breached CAP Code (edition 12) rules [16.3](#) and [16.3.8](#) (Gambling).

Action

The ad must not appear again in the form complained about. We told WHG (International) Ltd t/a William Hill to ensure they did not link gambling to sexual success.

CAP Code (Edition 12)

[16.3](#) [16.3.8](#)

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