

Raffles & Lotteries Guidance for Volunteers – Northern Ireland

As raffles and lotteries are deemed a form of gambling by the Gambling Commission, it's important to be aware of the laws and restrictions that affect this kind of fundraising activity. Here, we'll talk you through the options for running a raffle or lottery as part of your fundraising.

Our licence

In England, Wales and Scotland, Marie Curie holds a licence that enables the charity to carry out prize led fundraising which brings in £6million per year. This is a requirement of the Gambling Act 2005 and administered by the Gambling Commission.

In Northern Ireland we have a blanket policy of not advertising or running gambling as our licences don't cover that activity and there are complications with attaining licences there.

What is a lottery/raffle in Northern Ireland?

There is no legal definition of the term **lottery** in Northern Ireland, however the Department for Communities Northern Ireland define a lottery similarly to that of the Gambling Commission as having 3 key elements:

1. An arrangement to pay to enter
2. At least one prize awarded
3. Prizes awarded purely on chance

Volunteers and Fundraising Groups should not run any form of online lotteries as we do not want the activity to turn into a licensed one and our policy requires that we do not run any gambling activity in Northern Ireland.

What can volunteers do without a licence?

| | Definition | Examples | Location | Process |
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| Incidental lotteries | <p>The simplest option for fundraising, these are raffles that take place at an existing fundraising event but are not the main purpose of it.</p> <p>All net income must go to Marie Curie.</p> <p>There is a price cap of £500 for any prizes that are bought and not donated.</p> | <p>A raffle at a dinner, tombola at a fete, sweepstake at an event</p> | <p>Tickets can only be sold at a physical location, while the event is taking place. You can't sell tickets online or before the event.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You should let your Community Fundraiser know that you'd like to run a raffle, so that we can make sure the right plans are in place to ensure that the activity complies with the terms of our licence. 2. Make sure you include details of your raffle as part of your event Activity Plan. |
| Prize competitions | <p>A game where there must be a substantial degree of skill, knowledge or judgement used to win a prize. You need to ensure it's challenging enough to deter people from getting the correct answer to avoid it being classed as a lottery.</p> <p>You should make it clear when the competition closes, and how you will inform the winner.</p> | <p>Spot the ball, Guess the number of sweets in a jar, Guess the weight of the cake</p> | <p>We do not allow for these to take place online, but could run for longer than one day, such as taking place in a charity shop.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You'll need written permission from Marie Curie – please complete the prize competition request form, available from your volunteer manager. 2. Your manager and the Fundraising Volunteering team will help you create terms and conditions for the competition. 3. Make sure you include details of your prize competition as part of your event Activity Plan. |
| Free prize draws | <p>Draws where entry is free, and the winner may be chosen at random. You may include a suggested donation when entering.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entries from both the free and paid route must have | <p>Similar to a raffle, e.g. win a signed football shirt, win a donated hotel stay</p> | <p>We do not allow for these to take place online.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You'll need written permission from Marie Curie – please complete the prize competition request form, available from your volunteer manager. 2. Your manager and the Fundraising Volunteering team will help you create |

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| | <p>an equal chance of winning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donating should not increase someone's chances of winning • Prizes are allocated the same for either route • The free entry route must be promoted and displayed at the same level as any paid route | | | <p>terms and conditions for the draw.</p> <p>3. Make sure you include details of your prize draw as part of your event Activity Plan.</p> |
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FAQs

Can my Fundraising Group hold our raffle online instead?

No, we do not allow any form of raffle to be held online unless this is run by our Prize Led Team. This helps us prevent the activity from becoming a licensed one and we don't do any form of licenced gambling in Northern Ireland.

We have sometimes done "Name the Bear" style activities where people choose a name from a list, and the winning name wins the bear. Can we still do those?

Yes, this is part of the approved activity for fundraising volunteers and does not require a licence.

Can we sell tickets beforehand?

Whether you can sell tickets before an event depends on the type of event. For example, you would not be able to sell tickets before the event if you were running an incidental lottery.

My Fundraising Group run events throughout the year. Can we place posters in our local community and on our local social media pages advertising that there will be a raffle at our event?

Yes, if you don't sell any tickets in advance, this is fine.

I saw another charity hold a raffle on Facebook – why can they do it and we can't?

We can't comment on what other charities do, but all lotteries and raffles held by, or on behalf of Marie Curie are covered under our licence. Therefore, to protect the charity's best interests, and the £6million we raise each year, only the Prize Led team can run lotteries under this licence.

Who should we come to with any questions?

If you have any questions about lotteries and gaming, please speak to your Community Fundraiser so we can support you with your plans.