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## Lotteries



Last Modified May 14, 2019

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Lotteries are a form of gambling and those wishing to run them are required to ensure that children and other vulnerable people are not exploited by their lottery. Generally, the minimum age for participation in a lottery is 16 years of age, except for certain exempt lotteries such as incidental non-commercial lotteries, private, work and residents' lotteries.

### What is a lottery?

A lottery is defined as an arrangement where people pay to participate for the chance of winning a prize, and will be defined as either simple or complex.

### A simple lottery is where:

- persons are required to pay to participate;
- one or more prizes are allocated to the participants;
- prizes are allocated wholly by chance.

### A complex lottery is where:

- persons are required to pay to participate;
- one or more prizes are allocated to the participants;
- the prizes are allocated by a series of processes; and
- the first of these processes relies wholly on chance.

The [Gambling Commission](#) has issued a [code of practice for lotteries](#)

### Types of Lottery

In general, lotteries may only be run in support of good causes, such as charity fundraising and cannot be run for private or commercial gain.

### Large Society Lotteries

(Proceeds exceeding £20,000 per lottery or £250,000 in a calendar year) - the organisation running them must obtain an operating licence from the [Gambling Commission](#). We have no involvement in licensing these lotteries.

### Small Society Lotteries

(Proceeds less than £20,000 per lottery or £250,000 in a calendar year) - the organisation running them must be registered with us. There is no need for a Gambling Commission operating licence.

[Application form for registration of Non-Commercial society.](#)

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Have you just moved into a new place? You need to be registered at your current address if you want to vote in the General Election on 12 December. Register online today to have your say. Visit [gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://gov.uk/register-to-vote)

## Exempt Lotteries

These do not require to be run under an operating licence or registration, but may not be run for private gain and must be run in accordance with the law:

- Incidental non-commercial lotteries - held at non-commercial events, where all money raised at the event goes entirely to purposes that are not for private or commercial gain;
- Private society, work or residents' lotteries - where tickets can only be sold to society members, workers in or residents of a premises;
- Customer lotteries - run by occupiers of business premises selling tickets only to customers on the premises itself.

Please note that in the case of work, residents or customer lotteries no profit may be made for any purpose, including worthy causes.

If you are not sure whether your lottery falls into one of these categories, please read the relevant document on the [🔗 Gambling Commission web site](#).

## Free draws and prize competitions

Free draws and prize competitions are free from statutory control under the Gambling Act 2005.

Generally, prize competitions are those in which success depends on the exercise of skill, judgement or knowledge by the participants and does not rely on chance, although some prediction schemes where success can be influenced by the use of skill or judgement may amount to betting. A free draw is one where there is no cost of entry for the participant.

## Fees for small society lottery registrations

The first annual fee of £20 under the new Act was due by no later than 1 January 2008. Annual fees are due within the two months prior to the anniversary of the registration. For registrations first issued under the previous legislation, the Lotteries and Amusements Act 1976, before 1st September 2007, the annual fee is due between the start of November and the end of December each year.

## National Lottery

We have no involvement in the regulation of the National Lottery, which is overseen by the Government's Department for Culture, Media and Sport through the [🔗 National Lottery Commission](#)

## Further information

[📄 Notes for guidance](#)

[📄 Lottery registration application forms](#)

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[📄 Lottery return forms](#)

## Related External Links

1. [Gambling Commission](#)



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