

# Organising a raffle and sourcing prizes

Your handy guide



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## Organising your raffle

Holding an auction or raffle, is a great way of generating funds with minimal costs. However, you must ensure it is legal for it to be as successful as possible!

Please read the information and guidelines from the Gambling Commission at:

**[gamblingcommission.gov.uk/for-the-public/Fundraising-and-promotions/Fundraising-and-promotions.aspx](https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/for-the-public/Fundraising-and-promotions/Fundraising-and-promotions.aspx)**

## Incidental lotteries

An incidental lottery is when you organise your raffle as an extra fundraising activity at an existing event – simple! It doesn't need a license or registration with your council.

Your raffle must meet these requirements:

- the selling of tickets and the draw must both take place during the event
- all tickets must cost the same, i.e. you cannot sell five £1 tickets for £4
- children under 16 may not sell or buy tickets
- deductions for prizes must not exceed £500, although it is best practice to have these donated to ensure the maximum benefit to the charity.

## Alternatives to raffles and lotteries

Instead of a raffle you could also organise a 'prize competition' or 'free draw'. These do not require licenses.

A prize competition can have a cost to enter, but must require the participant to have certain knowledge or skills that will limit the number of people who can win, e.g. an answer to a question or the first to enter. The rules for which must be clear to all participants at the point of purchase.

A free draw can only request a voluntary donation and can be used as an addition to other fundraising events and activities.





## Small Society Lotteries

Society lotteries are lotteries promoted for the benefit of a non-commercial society i.e. for charity or to support a sporting, athletics or a cultural society activity.

For these raffle tickets can be sold in advance and the draw can be advertised to the general public. To run a small society lottery, a gaming board license is not required but you must register your raffle with your local authority licensing department, incurring a fee of about £40.

A small society lottery can raise up to £20,000 in a single draw and up to £200,000 over a year but does require careful administration and you must follow the guidance on how to apply and run this activity from the Gambling Commission.

You will need a person registered as the 'promoter', who is responsible for the lottery and what must be printed on all tickets.

You can register your name or group as the promoter raising money for Mental Health UK, but not under the charity name itself, as we hold our own license.





# Sourcing prizes

## Our top tips

- Contact local businesses close to your home, they are more likely to support you than larger national organisations
- Start asking **early** (but keep in mind any prizes with expiry dates!)
- Don't buy prizes – ask people to donate them
- Research businesses before you approach for what you would ideally like from them
- Think about who are your guests? What kind of prizes would they like?
- Have a variety of prizes that will appeal to everyone in the room
- Think about the value of your prizes and how much you hope to raise. Consider how much you should charge for tickets and how many you will need to sell. For auctions, think about what you hope to sell them for



## Making approaches

Here are our top tips for sourcing tempting prizes to encourage your guests to dig deep and give generously!

- Have a clear message about what you are fundraising for and why. Be emotive and explain how their donation will help you reach your goal.
- For emails, make it personal and try to find a named contact. Always follow up with a phone call.
- Explain what you can offer them in return for their donation. For example, a 'thank you' in the programme and exposure to potential new clients in the audience.
- Send a thank you card or letter to anyone who has donated prizes after your event, telling them how much you raised and how that will help the charity.

# Important bits

## Terms and conditions

- Agree on any terms and conditions with the donor. Establish whether there are any restrictions and agree on an expiry date, for example, within 12 months. Make sure your guests are fully aware of any terms and conditions.
- Make sure you know what the prizes you've been given are worth so you can make the most of the donation

## Take note

- If you wish to use the charity logo in connection with your fundraising you must request approval by emailing [events@mentalhealth-uk.org](mailto:events@mentalhealth-uk.org)
- Please also see the Gambling Commission website: [gamblingcommission.gov.uk](http://gamblingcommission.gov.uk) for guidelines and advice on holding raffles
- Please note that if you are an organisation and you wish to use our name and/or logo in your fundraising then there may be VAT and tax implications for your organisation. If you think this may be the case we would recommend that you confirm this with the HMRC or your accountants.

Mental Health UK. Registered charity number: 1170815.  
Registered office: 89 Albert Embankment, London, SE1 7TP

# Now you're ready to go!

**Thank you** so much for choosing to support people affected by mental health problems



**We're always on hand to help.**

Contact [events@mentalhealth-uk.org](mailto:events@mentalhealth-uk.org)  
or visit [mentalhealth-uk.org](http://mentalhealth-uk.org)