

News



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Lottery Retailers Urged To Remain Vigilant This Spring *Record success for Camelot test purchase scheme*

Operation Child, Camelot's ground-breaking scheme designed to keep National Lottery retailers vigilant against selling to under-16s, saw its best ever year of results in 2006 as first refusal rates to test purchasers rose to 94.5 per cent, from its earlier record of 92.7 per cent in 2005.

The full-year figures for Operation Child in 2006, announced by Camelot today, saw the lowest ever sales to test purchasers since the initiative was launched in 1999. Refusal rates to test purchasers on over 10,000 first visits carried out between January 2006 and January 2007 were 94.5 per cent. Out of 10,236 retailers visited, 9,681 refused to sell a lottery ticket on their first test visit, up nearly 2 per cent in total from the full year results for 2005.

Operation Child is designed to raise awareness of the difficulty in accurately identifying the age of customers when selling lottery and other age-restricted products. The scheme was devised following consultation with retail and trade organisations, and was designed as an educational awareness campaign using test purchasers who look under 16 – but who are in fact older.

All selected retailers are visited once – the minority that do sell to test purchasers will then get a follow-up visit and, if they sell again, a third and final visit – if they do sell a third time their terminal will be withdrawn.

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For retailers that sell on a first or second visit, advice and awareness training is provided in addition to checking that posters, refusal registers, and NLC stickers are in place. Warning letters are sent in the event of a sale. When sales are refused, a congratulatory letter is sent to each retailer.

If retailers needed to be reminded of the seriousness of not asking for proof of age when selling the lottery to potentially underage customers, Camelot points out that one retailer who failed on all three of its Operation Child visits to ask the test purchaser for proof of age had their lottery terminal removed last year.

Camelot's Director of Security John Branscombe said: "We were delighted to see yet another year of fantastic Operation Child results – the best ever in fact, which shows that retailers are continuing to take their responsibilities in player protection very seriously. We would like to thank our retail partners for their efforts in being vigilant and asking for proof of age, but would also like to appeal to all retailers to maintain high vigilance as the school holidays approach – and for the rest of the year."

He added: "My best advice is to protect yourself, your staff and under 16's by never assuming a customer's age. Nothing short of photographic age verification must be accepted before a sale can go ahead – if you have asked for proof of age in the first place then there must be an element of doubt, so see it through and insist on proof verification with a photo attached; there are a number of acceptable proof of age cards that retailers can look out for including CitizenCard, Validate or Young Scot. Make sure new members of staff are fully trained to ask for photographic age verification – and if you take on extra help over the school holidays, ensure that no one under 16 is selling lottery tickets in your store."

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Independent retailers came out slightly ahead of supermarkets with respective first refusal rates of 95.7 per cent and 94.9 per cent. Petrol forecourts have the most to do as a sector with first refusal rates at 88 per cent for the year.

Geographically, the North West came out as the most vigilant area of the UK with a first refusal rate of over 96 per cent, closely followed by their neighbours in the North East who had a first refusal rate of 95.9 per cent. This was just ahead of the Midlands which recorded a first refusal rate of 95.4 per cent.

Retailers in Scotland and Northern Ireland recorded 95 per cent first refusals while retailers in the South West, Greater London and Home Counties all recorded first refusal rates above 90 per cent.

Steve Lucas, Director of Sales for Camelot, said: "Our duty as operator of The National Lottery is to maximise sales and returns to Good Causes in a socially responsible way. We have consistently worked very hard with our retail partners to ensure that training, vigilance campaigns and point of sale material all help to promote a responsible lottery in the UK.

"We were very pleased to see this year's Operation Child results were even better than last year's – but this is not a time for complacency. We will work even harder to improve on these results again in the coming months and years – while making sure that all retailers have the sales and promotional tools they need to make the absolute most of selling the lottery in their stores."

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Notes to Editors:

- Camelot Group plc is the operator of The National Lottery® and is committed to raising money for the Good Causes designated by Parliament. Camelot is not responsible for distributing or awarding these funds
- To date, over £20 billion has been raised for Good Causes by The National Lottery, and more than 250,000 individual awards have been made across the UK – the biggest programme of civic and social regeneration since the 19th Century. The National Lottery has given away over £29 billion in prizes and created more than 2,000 millionaires or multi-millionaires since launch in 1994
- Camelot runs one of the most cost-efficient lotteries in the world, with around 5 per cent of total revenue taken in operating costs. At 40 per cent of total sales (28 per cent to Good Causes and 12 per cent in lottery duty to the Government), Camelot returns a higher proportion of lottery revenue back to society than any other lottery operator in the world,. National Lottery retailers receive 5 per cent of total revenue in commission, and 50 per cent of sales is paid out to players in prizes
- Camelot is committed to the highest standards in player protection and social responsibility in both the retail and interactive environments. The National Lottery website, Sky Active and Play By Text services have been accredited by GamCare, the UK's national centre for information, advice and practical help regarding the social impact of gambling – while Camelot's approach to game design, test purchasing and retailer vigilance campaigns ensures player protection at retail. Camelot is first in the leisure category of Business in the Community's 2005 Corporate Responsibility Index.
- For further information on Camelot, The National Lottery and its games, please visit the following websites: www.camelotgroup.co.uk and www.national-lottery.co.uk
- Players of all National Lottery games must be aged 16 or over.

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