

News



11th December 2006

It May Be Christmas... but No ID, No Sale ***Camelot test purchase scheme set for another record year***

With schools breaking up for the Christmas holidays, Camelot is warning retailers to be extra vigilant against selling National Lottery games to underage players.

The message from Camelot comes as it announced the latest results of its unique test purchase scheme, Operation Child. The first nine months of 2006 saw record refusal rates amongst retailers, building on the record full-year 2005 figures, which saw the lowest ever sales to test purchasers since the initiative was launched in 1999.

Refusal rates to a test purchaser on 8390 first visits carried out between mid-January and mid-October 2006 were 94.4%. 7,920 retailers refused to sell a lottery ticket on their first test visit, up from a first refusal rate of 92.7% for the total 10,386 visits carried out in 2005.

Geographically, the North East led the UK's regions with 96% of retailers refusing to sell on a first visit. The North West was very slightly behind on 95.8%, with Scotland & Northern Ireland coming in third at 95.2%. Greater London retailers made a significant improvement on their 2005 score of 85%, rising to 92.2% over the first 9 months of 2006. Retailers in the South West have the most work to do at 88.8% – but there is still time for their scores to increase before the end of the year.

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Independent retailers are slightly ahead of Supermarkets with respective first refusal rates of 95.7% and 94.6%.

Camelot's Director of Security John Branscombe said: "As these Operation Child results show, National Lottery retailers are continuing to take their player protection responsibilities very seriously. We are hoping to better last year's achievements and build on the committed partnership that has been developed between Camelot and its retailer partners in combating the issue of under-age sales."

He added: "My main advice to retailers is don't put yourself at risk by making assumptions about a customer's age – and especially during the holiday season when schools have broken up and their shops are busier. If you need to ask how old the person wanting to play the lottery is, this shows an element of doubt, so nothing short of photographic ID must be presented before the sale can go ahead. And remember that under-16's are not allowed to sell lottery either, so bear that in mind if you take on extra staff to help out over Christmas."

Steve Lucas, Director of Sales for Camelot, said: "While we are always seeking to maximise sales, and returns to Good Causes, we also have to ensure that lottery products are sold responsibly. We work very closely with our retail partners to guard against underage play and provide them with the right sort of support and training to implement the necessary safeguards.

"We also back this up with regular retailer vigilance campaigns, which may include staff room posters covering most common age restricted products, refusal registers, till and terminal stickers. We will continue to work in partnership with lottery retailers to reduce the levels of underage sales and save them from the risk of prosecution."

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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 £19 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 £28.7 billion in prizes and created more than 1,900 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 has been ranked among the top 30 UK companies in Business in the Community's 2005 Corporate Responsibility Index, becoming a sector leader in the leisure category
- 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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