



News

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National Lottery Retailers Gain Best Ever Test Purchase Results

Record Year of Achievement For Operation Child

Operation Child, Camelot's ground-breaking scheme designed to keep National Lottery retailers vigilant against selling to under-16s, saw its best results ever last year as first refusal rates to test purchasers hit 92.7 per cent.

The National Lottery operator revealed today that out of a total of 10,386 Operation Child visits carried out in 2005, 9,360 retailers refused to sell to a test purchaser on a first visit. This represents a refusal rate of over 92 per cent which is an increase of 5 per cent on last year's results.

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 organizations, and was designed as an educational awareness campaign using test purchasers who look under 16 – but who are in fact older. 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 If they do sell a third time their terminal will be withdrawn.

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. Where sales are refused, a congratulatory letter is sent to each retailer.

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In 2004 one retailer had their terminal taken away as a result of Operation Child. No retailers lost their terminals in 2005.

Camelot's Director of Security, John Branscombe, said: "As these latest results show, National Lottery retailers are taking their responsibilities very seriously. With sales to test purchasers on first visits at their lowest ever in 2005, our pioneering Operation Child initiative continues to successfully drive awareness and to promote prevention rather than punishment, which is what it was designed to do.

"When the scheme was launched in 1999, sales on first visits were running at around 26 per cent. In just over five years that has fallen to only 7 per cent. It is fantastically encouraging and a great result. But this is not a time for resting on our laurels. My message to retailers is 'let's do even better next year. Keep up the good work but don't put yourselves or minors at risk by making assumptions about a customer's age'."

Geographically, Northern Ireland boasted a record of 100per cent refusals on first visits topping the UK's regions, with Scotland only just behind on 97.5per cent. Retailers in the Greater London area have the most work to do with a score of 85 per cent. Supermarkets and independent retailers were neck and neck, both gaining results of over 93% refusals on first visits.

As a responsible operator, Camelot is committed to minimising any risks to vulnerable people including those under the age of 16, on a low income or who are likely to play excessively, and to make sure they are not at risk from National Lottery products.

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In addition to its retailer vigilance campaigns, Camelot also has a series of checks and balances in place to guard against underage and excessive play online. Camelot was the first organisation in the UK to gain GamCare accreditation for its online, interactive TV and mobile phone services and the National Lottery website (www.national-lottery.co.uk) was one of only two gaming or gambling sites from a sample tested by Children's Charity NCH in 2005, which stopped a young person from illegally registering.

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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 £18 billion has been raised for Good Causes by The National Lottery, and more than 230,000 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 £26 billion in prizes and created more than 1,800 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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