

# How to organise a raffle and source prizes

Your handy guide full of ideas and tips



Shiloh, aged 4  
GOSH patient

Holding an **auction** or **raffle** at your event is a great way of generating big funds with minimal costs. However, as raffles fall under strict laws relating to all lotteries, there are some cases where a license from your local council may be required.

To make sure your raffle is legal and as successful as possible, please take a moment to read the following information as well as guidelines from the Gambling Commission at:

**[gamblingcommission.gov.uk/pdf/Running-a-lottery-quick-guide.pdf](https://gamblingcommission.gov.uk/pdf/Running-a-lottery-quick-guide.pdf)**

**Great Ormond Street Hospital changes the lives of sick children and their families from across the UK and abroad.**

Without the fantastic fundraising of our supporters the hospital simply wouldn't be the great institution that it is.

You can help us to provide world-class care for our patients and families. For more information, visit **[gosh.org](https://gosh.org)**

**Jamie, aged 10**  
**GOSH patient**



# Organising a raffle

### Incidental lotteries

The simplest way to organise a raffle is to have one as an additional fundraising activity at an existing event. This is known as an incidental lottery and does not require a license or registration with your council to run.

This could be run during your afternoon tea event, school fete, dress down day or charity ball. You can make your own tickets or use cloakroom style tickets that you can get in most stationers.

To run an incidental lottery, make sure your raffle meets 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.

### 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 Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity, but not under the charity name as we hold our own license.

### Alternatives to raffles/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 etc. 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.

# Sourcing prizes

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

### Be strategic

- Start asking for items early to ensure you leave yourself enough time before your event, but keep in mind any prizes with expiry dates
- **Don't buy prizes** – ask people to donate them. This will maximise the amount of money that comes directly to the charity
- Contact local businesses and independent firms close to your home, they are more likely to support you than larger national organisations
- Research the businesses you are approaching and what you would ideally like from them
- Think about who your guests are and what kind of prizes would appeal to them
- Make sure you 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. If you're running a raffle consider how much to charge for tickets and how many you will need to sell. If you're auctioning off the prizes think about what you hope to sell them for and make sure you brief the auctioneer accordingly
- Don't have too many prizes – quality is more important than quantity!

### Use your networks

- Think about whether there is anyone you know who has useful connections to local businesses you want to approach
- Signed memorabilia is always popular – do you know anyone who has connections to celebrities, sports figures or artists? Just let us know if you are planning on making any of these kind of approaches

### Think creatively

- Don't just look for items – think outside the box and ask for services. For example, a personal training session or a cookery lesson



**Rosie, aged 4**  
**GOSH patient**

- Group smaller items together to make one package prize. For example, dinner for two and theatre tickets could be grouped together to make a more appealing and valuable prize

## Organising a raffle guide

- Create a donation voucher to take into businesses and ask them to fill it in. This makes it quick and easy for them to donate a prize or a service
- If you're planning an auction, try to source a couple of unique items that will attract interest and encourage your guests to bid high

### Making approaches

- Have a clear message about what you are fundraising for and why. Try to be emotive and explain how their donation will help you to reach your goal
- Make sure you 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
- If you plan to make initial approaches through email, make it personal and try to find a named contact. Always follow up with a phone call
- Send a thank you card or letter to anyone who has donated prizes telling them how much you raised and how that will help the charity

### 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

### Keep it safe and legal

- Please check our fundraising guidelines for everything you need to know to keep it safe and legal: **[gosh.org/guidelines](https://gosh.org/guidelines)**
- Please also see the Gambling Commission website: **[gamblingcommission.gov](https://gamblingcommission.gov)** for guidelines and advice on holding raffles
- If you wish to use the charity logo in connection with your fundraising you must request approval through **[community.events@gosh.org](mailto:community.events@gosh.org)**
- 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.

**Thanks so much for your support and best of luck with your fundraising!**