

Supporter Guidance: Raffles and Lotteries

Legal, open, honest and respectful

Raffles and lotteries are heavily regulated because they are a form of gambling. Compliance is governed by the **Gambling Commission (GC)** and the **Fundraising Regulator (FR)** (via the Code of Fundraising Practice).

When running any lottery or raffle in aid of Acorns, all supporters must ensure the activity is: **legal, open, honest and respectful**.

Incidental Lotteries (raffles at events)

This is the most common and easiest type of raffle for supporters to run. It **does not require a licence**, but it **MUST** meet all of the following criteria:

Requirement	Details
Purpose	Must be held to raise money for a good cause (such as Acorns).
Location	Tickets can only be sold at the location of a non-commercial event (like a coffee morning fete or fundraising dinner).
Timing	Tickets can only be sold during the event. You cannot sell them in advance.
Main attraction	The raffle cannot be the main reason for the event. There must be another primary activity
Tickets	Tickets or other records of participation should be provided and must clearly identify entrants for the draw (e.g. cloakroom tickets). Lottery tickets must not be sold to anyone under the age of 16.
Online sales	Not permitted for incidental lotteries. You cannot sell tickets online, via email, social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, etc.), or text message, or advertise the ticket price online.
Prize/cost limits	You can spend a maximum of £500 on prizes and a maximum of £100 on expenses (e.g., ticket printing) from the proceeds. <i>Note: Donated prizes do not count towards the £500 limit.</i>

Key action for supporters: If you are running an incidental raffle, make sure all ticket sales happen physically, face-to-face, at the event itself.

Society Lotteries (licensed raffles)

In most fundraising situations, selling raffle tickets outside a single event or in advance of the draw will require the lottery to be run as a registered Society Lottery. Alternative legal arrangements may apply in limited circumstances.

- **Small Society Lottery:** Requires registration with your local council if ticket sales are under £20,000 for a single draw or under £250,000 total in a year.
- **Large Society Lottery:** Requires an operating licence from the Gambling Commission.

Mandatory Financial Requirement for all Small and Large Society Lotteries:

- A **minimum of 20%** of the total proceeds must be allocated to the good cause (such as Acorns).
- A **maximum of 80%** of the proceeds can be spent on prizes and expenses.

Online and social media sales

The Gambling Commission is very clear on online lotteries:

- > If you sell tickets online (via social media, a website, or email), it is NOT an Incidental Lottery.
- > Selling tickets online (even via WhatsApp or a private Facebook group) without a licence constitutes an **illegal lottery**.
- > If a supporter wants to run a paid-for raffle online they **must register as a Small Society Lottery** with their local council and ensure all legal ticket requirements are met.

Alternative: Free Prize Draws

If you want to run an online promotion where money is raised for Acorns, we recommend structuring it as a “Free Prize Draw” that encourages a voluntary donation:

1. **Entry must be free:** You must offer a genuinely free method of entry that has the same chance of winning as a paid-for entry (e.g. “Enter by donation or by sending a postcard to [address]”).
2. **Voluntary donation:** You can then ask entrants for a separate, voluntary donation to Acorns. The entry mechanism and the donation must be clearly separate.

Fundraising code of practice: Key supporter responsibilities

The new Code focuses heavily on ethical standards and governance. When running any fundraising activity, including raffles, you must also adhere to these standards:

Responsibility	Code requirement
Honesty and transparency	Be completely open about how the draw works, the prize and how much of the money raised will actually go to Acorns (especially important for Society Lotteries).
Vulnerable circumstances	Take all reasonable steps to treat people fairly. Do not put pressure on individuals to participate, particularly if you suspect they may be in vulnerable circumstances. Fundraisers must not exploit a person’s circumstances, vulnerability, or lack of capacity to make an informed decision. Lottery tickets must not be sold to anyone under the age of 16.
Promoter	The lottery must have a named promoter who is legally responsible for ensuring compliance with lottery legislation. Supporters should seek approval from Acorns before using the charity’s name or branding.
Advertising	Licensed or registered lotteries have specific statutory requirements regarding information that must appear on tickets and promotional materials. Supporters should seek guidance before advertising a society lottery.
Record keeping	Supporters running registered lotteries must maintain appropriate records of ticket sales, proceeds, prizes and expenses in accordance with legal requirements.

Supporter checklist

Check	Incidental Lottery (raffles at events)	Society Lottery (licensed raffle)
Registration/licence	Not required (but must meet all Gambling Commission criteria)	Yes (Local council or Gambling Commission)
Tickets sold online	No	Yes but only with a licence/registration.
Tickets sold in advance	No	Yes
Minimum % to Acorns	Not legally specified but must be reasonable	20% minimum (80% max on prizes/costs)
Cash handling	When your fundraising is complete, please pay the funds you have raised to Acorns using one of the following methods: pay online, pay at an Acorns shop or your local Acorns Children's Hospice, or pay directly into our bank account by bank transfer or using a paying-in slip.	

Paying in your fundraising

Thank you for supporting Acorns Children's Hospice. When your fundraising is complete, please pay the funds you have raised using one of the following methods.

Option 1: Pay online

You can pay your fundraising online via the Acorns website. When making your donation, please select the option "I am paying in money that I have fundraised" where prompted. This helps us identify your payment as fundraising income.

Option 2: Pay at an Acorns shop or hospice

You can pay your fundraising at any Acorns shop or your local Acorns Children's Hospice. A member of the team will process your donation and arrange for it to be banked.

Option 3: Pay into our bank account

If you would prefer to pay your fundraising directly into our bank account, you can do so by bank transfer or by using a paying-in slip at your local bank.

Please contact the Supporter Services team to request our bank details or a paying-in slip. You will also be provided with a unique reference number, which should be used when making your payment. This helps us identify your fundraising and ensure your donation is allocated correctly.

For bank details, a paying-in slip, or if you have any questions, please contact the Supporter Services team at supporter.services@acorns.org.uk or on 01564 825037.

Fundraiser protection

Acorns is committed to protecting our fundraisers. You have the right to a safe environment and should immediately report any instances of harassment or safety concerns to the Acorns Supporter Services team at supporter.services@acorns.org.uk or on 01564 825037.

Any complaints relating to fundraising activity should be reported to Acorns immediately.

Fundraisers should never place themselves in unsafe situations and should work in accordance with Acorns safeguarding and lone-working guidance.

DISCLAIMER: This guidance is based on the Fundraising Code of Practice and Gambling Commission rules. It is not a substitute for legal advice. Always contact the Acorns Fundraising team with any questions, or if further guidance is required.