

Bill introduced at Westminster to change the rules on charity lotteries

The Liberal Democrats are using their opportunity to lodge a Private Members Bill at Westminster to call for a change to charity lottery fundraising.

As it stands lotteries may only raise up to £50 million worth of tickets in one year. This cap limits how much a charity can raise in this way which is regarded as unfair. Other charity fundraising and gambling products are not limited in the same way and Wendy Chamberlain, MP for Fife North East, has lodged a Private Members Bill to change the legal position.

Charity lotteries raise around £420 million for each cause in the UK, usually specialising in long-term unrestricted funding when the money is passed on. The bodies are regulated by the 2005 Gambling Act and although the law was changed in 2020 People's Postcode Lottery (PPL) has called for still more reform. Their fundraising has to be split into many trusts adding to the cost of administration. PPL say that removing the annual cap on sales could free up an additional £175 million for good causes across the next five years for the charities it supports, which would continue to come at no cost to the public purse.

Ms Chamberlain said: "I am delighted to introduce my second Private Members Bill to Parliament, which aims to remove the sales limits on charity lotteries and allow them to maximise

their charity fundraising; and therefore the amount available to charities themselves.

“Charity lotteries play a vital role in supporting charities large and small across Britain, yet they are subject to limits on their sales, which ties them up in red tape, and restricts their effectiveness.

“I have seen for myself the benefit to local charities from lottery funding. Good causes ranging from farming experiences and skill building for people with additional support needs to walking groups and local community projects have received funding within the last year in North East Fife alone.

“These limits have no obvious purpose and removing them would cost the Treasury nothing, yet it will help boost charities at a time when they face a difficult fundraising environment.

“It is bizarre that every other type of gambling product has no limit on sales, yet the product that does so much good for society through supporting our charities is capped.

“That is why I am delighted to be taking action to remove this needless red tape and help boost charity lottery fundraising.”

PPL employs around 300 people in Edinburgh, with offices in Charlotte Square. Clara Govier, Managing Director of PPL said: “The charity lottery sales limits are causing increasing difficulties for charity lottery fundraising at a time when charities need these vital funds to respond to the impact of the cost-of-living crisis. We welcome Wendy Chamberlain bringing forward this Bill and urge MPs cross Parliament to support it.”

One of the other charities affected is Magic Breakfast, who are working to ensure no child is too hungry to learn. Their Chief Executive, Lindsey MacDonald, said: “At Magic Breakfast we are responding to vastly increased need, yet because of the charity lottery sales limits our funding from charity

lotteries cannot increase. We join leaders across the charity sector who are calling on Parliament to take action and resolve this issue as soon as possible. We therefore welcome this Bill from Wendy Chamberlain MP and urge the Government to back it.”

Laura Lee, Chief Executive of Maggie’s, who run cancer centres in the capital and elsewhere in the UK, said: “Charity lotteries have been transformational for so many charities and the important work they do. That has certainly been the case for Maggie’s and it therefore makes no sense that charity lotteries are stymied by Government red tape.

“That is why we warmly welcome Wendy Chamberlain MP bringing forward this Private Members Bill to remove the charity lottery sales limits and help maximise funds for charities like Maggie’s, helping us to help cancer patients and their families across Britain.”



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