

Anger over lotteries prize limits

By Hannah Jordan

The Government's move to increase the maximum prize that charity lotteries can offer and the amount they are allowed to raise does not go far enough, according to the Lotteries Council.

Last week, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport announced that it planned to increase the maximum permissible proceeds from a single lottery from £2m to £4m and allow top prizes of £400,000 instead of £200,000 (*Third Sector Online*, 16 July).

But the council, which represents more than 170 organisations, said voluntary groups were still prohibited from raising more than £10m a year from lottery games. It accused the Government of continuing to limit charity draws because of fears that large third sector lotteries could threaten the National Lottery.

Currently, 630 charities are licensed by the Gambling Commission.

"The DCMS is terrified that charities could construct a large, successful lottery that would compete



with the National Lottery, and that has been clear from the outset," said Clive Mollet, chair of the Lotteries Council. "There is simply no evidence to substantiate that claim.

"The contribution that individual charity lotteries make to individual good causes is substantially higher and far more efficient than the very small amount that goes to charity through the National Lottery."

He said that lotteries could be one of the best methods of fundraising during tough economic

Numbers game: top prizes still limited

times because charities are able to offer prizes to donors, which, he said, significantly increases responses.

Mollet said there was no justification for having an upper limit on lottery fundraising for individual charities, and pledged that the council would continue to lobby to have the overall limit removed.

"We need to continue to make the case in a way that recognises in good grace that a concession has been made," he said. "But we need to make the point that it is artificial, arbitrary and

Lucky numbers

Funds raised through charity lotteries in 2007:

£100.5m Combined total for charity lotteries licensed by the Gambling Commission

£42m Hospice Lotteries Association (100 hospices)

£3.87m PDSA

£1.1m Help the Aged

£540,000 Scope

unfair to put a restriction on genuine good-cause fundraising activities."

A spokeswoman for the DCMS said: "The reason for not proposing to increase the annual society lotteries proceeds limit of £10m is that no single society lottery has yet hit that limit in one year. However, if, as a result of the proposed increases for single draws, charities do begin to reach the annual limit then we will consider the case for increasing it."

The DCMS has launched a three-month consultation on the proposals.