

# National Lottery players raise £179m jackpot for the nation

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Jackpot for the nation was celebrated at the Hendrix Museum. The Handel House Trust

National Lottery players raised a staggering £179million for arts, sports, heritage and community projects in January – the highest total ever raised by National Lottery players in a single month.

This was a result of strong sales across all National Lottery games and, in particular, an unprecedented level of demand for Lotto tickets due to a hugely successful rollover series culminating in a record £66m Lotto jackpot. An additional £85m is being paid to the Government in Lottery Duty for the month of January.

John Whittingdale, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, said: “This is great news. The National Lottery’s record-breaking month will make a huge difference to communities right across the UK. It will mean more investment in our culture and heritage sites, improved sporting facilities and greater support for voluntary organisations.”

Alesha Dixon, a judge on *Britain’s Got Talent*, celebrated the record-breaking news at the Jimi Hendrix Museum in London, which has been restored and recently reopened to the public, thanks to £1.2m from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

Alesha said: "National Lottery players have just written a massive cheque for the nation. Everyone who plays the National Lottery should feel proud they are supporting so many people, of all ages, to develop their talents."

Alesha was joined by a group of talented people from a diverse range of National Lottery-funded projects including a young musician, a gymnast, a contemporary dancer and a tai chi instructor who teaches older people.

Twelve-year-old Nathan Dawkins has developed his love of guitar at World Heart Beat Music Academy in Wandsworth, which has received National Lottery funding to inspire young people to achieve excellence in music.

Nathan said: "Going to the World Heart Beat Academy is a big part of my life, which I really look forward to. Playing the guitar makes me feel great. I've also made friends with so many talented musicians and songwriters and learnt so much about music and life in general. Meeting Alesha and learning more about the work of Jimi Hendrix has made today very special for me."

Mary Callaghan, a 68-year-old tai chi instructor with Open Age, which champions an active life for older people, said: "Through funding from the National Lottery, charities like Open Age are able to provide a variety of classes for older people. Attending an exercise class is far more than keeping fit, it increases a sense of wellbeing, provides opportunities to form new friendships and enhances the rest of the week. Thanks to the National Lottery for helping to put smiles on so many faces."

Joining them was Gaius (Jay) Thompson, a 19-year-old gymnast from Basildon, one of 1,300 athletes funded by the National Lottery. He says the £179m provides a welcome cash boost for athletes ahead of the Rio 2016 Olympic Games.

Jay said: "National Lottery funding gives us the best coaching, medical support and facilities. It has been a big part of my career success. Thanks to National Lottery players our athletes are in great shape to go for gold in Rio."

Alesha also met the BBC Young Dancer of the Year 2015, 17-year-old Connor Scott from Blyth in Northumberland. Connor trained at the National Youth Dance Company, which is hosted at Sadler's Wells, both of which have received National Lottery funding.

Connor said: "National Lottery funding is vital to the success of the arts in this country. It funds dance, music and fantastic theatre spaces, allowing artists like me to develop our talents. Thank you to National Lottery players for helping me fulfil my potential."

## **Notes to editors**

Camelot UK Lotteries Limited is the licensed operator of the National Lottery. National Lottery games include Lotto, EuroMillions and the GameStore range of Scratchcards and online Instant Win Games. The National Lottery has so far given away over £57bn in prizes and created more than 4,000 millionaires or multi-millionaires since its launch in 1994.

On average, National Lottery players raise £34m for arts, sport, heritage and community projects across the UK every week. Parliament has determined the money is awarded to the sectors in

these percentages: arts, sport, heritage 20 percent each, and 40 percent to the voluntary sector.

Money raised by National Lottery players is distributed by 12 National Lottery distributors:

- Arts Council England
- Arts Council of Northern Ireland
- Arts Council of Wales
- British Film Institute (BFI)
- Big Lottery Fund (BIG)
- Creative Scotland
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- Sport England
- Sport Northern Ireland
- Sport Scotland
- Sport Wales
- UK Sport

The World Heart Beat Music Academy has received over £160,000 from Arts Council England through five grants. Open Age has received more than £400,000 from BIG. Sadler's Wells has received over £47m of funding from Arts Council England.

## **Further information**

The National Lottery Promotions Unit on tel: 020 7211 3894

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