

Case study: Big Lottery Fund

Big Lottery Fund improves data processing with Experian QAS



Background

The Big Lottery Fund is responsible for distributing half of all the funding raised through The National Lottery to good causes. This equates to approximately £630 million a year. Operating throughout the UK, the Big Lottery Fund employs more than 800 people and has 14 regional offices, along with two operating centres in Newcastle and Birmingham.

Situation

The Big Lottery Fund receives more than 40,000 applications for money annually. As part of its process for making awards, correct contact details are essential to the approval and subsequent payment of funds. There are two key objectives to ensure applications are processed accurately:

- Validation of addresses on each application to maintain data quality and provide an efficient service
- Ensuring that all communication is directed to the correct channels and that money reaches its destination safely and securely

The Big Lottery Fund awards grants, and monitors projects and payments. Simon Edwards, Assistant Director IT, Big Lottery Fund, explains the process: "We receive applications from our offices across the UK, which are then directed to our two operating centres for processing and assessment. We need a holistic view for all address information and need to be confident that the information we get is accurate, correctly formatted and genuine. Experian QAS software validates the data at source. It never lets us down when it comes to getting this detail right."

The need for correct address validation does not stop here. Once a grant has been awarded, the Big Lottery Fund needs to contact people throughout the project, hence the ongoing need for accurate contact details.

Solution

Whilst the primary uses of Experian QAS software are validation of addresses, eradication of errors and assurance when dealing with application information, the emphasis has broadened to support anti-fraud measures. "Using Experian QAS software, the Big Lottery Fund is able to confirm that the address given is valid. Fraud detection and protection is a priority for us", says Simon Edwards.

As part of an ongoing task of data management, the Big Lottery Fund also uses QAS Batch to clean and verify addresses against Experian QAS' enhanced version of the Royal Mail's Postcode Address File (PAF). This enables the Big Lottery Fund to clean and maintain its customer database of 300,000 contacts.

"Essential to an application moving forward is the ability to verify the address details of the applicant organisation. We save approximately £40,000 annually using Experian QAS software."

**Simon Edwards
Assistant Director IT
Big Lottery Fund**



“Experian QAS stands out for its product functionality and delivery. Not only do we receive a significant financial benefit, we drive efficiencies throughout the application process and fewer hours are spent inputting addresses.”

**Simon Edwards
Assistant Director IT
Big Lottery Fund**

Simon Edwards comments, “Trying to keep our data clean and up to date is a constant challenge. We know data enters the system correctly through QAS Pro, but details change over time. QAS Batch prevents data decay, and helps identify duplicates.”

In order to profile and segment applicants, the Big Lottery Fund also use a number of data sets from Experian QAS to add value to records, for example, Local Authority Wards and Local Authority Districts. These are appended to records seamlessly with QAS Batch, providing a more detailed understanding of each applicant and greater opportunities for analysis and profiling. This is a useful tool for the Big Lottery Fund, which reports to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport about where funding is placed across the UK.

Results

Getting customer details correct is of paramount importance to the Big Lottery Fund for a number of reasons:

Efficiencies in data processing

The Big Lottery Fund estimates it saves approximately £40,000 annually using Experian QAS software. Without it, an additional 277 working days would be required to verify and validate applicant addresses.

Simon says, “If we entered all address data manually, a single entry could take up to 10 minutes, compared to the seconds it currently takes. Through Experian QAS, an address can be added in approximately 15 keystrokes or less.

With 40,000 applications going through the system annually, we make significant cost savings.”

Better customer service

The Big Lottery Fund has improved customer communications and response rates by having more accurate data. With fewer re-mailings to customers, and the ability to respond to customers quickly, Experian QAS saves the Big Lottery Fund further money and resources. The Big Lottery Fund can also identify if organisations have applied for funding before, which supports its strategy of delivering superior service to new and existing customers.

Anti-fraud measures

Experian QAS helps the Big Lottery Fund safeguard itself and its customers from the risks of fraud.

Simon Edwards comments, “Accuracy is key when dealing with public funds, and as a non-departmental public body, we have to handle public money in a responsible way. Through address validation Experian QAS supports our excellent anti-fraud measures and this is yet another important function that Experian QAS helps us fulfill.”

Simon concludes, “We have worked with Experian QAS for the past decade and they have become increasingly integral to our business. The nature of address management has changed dramatically and, as our customers demand a better and more prompt service, Experian QAS will remain a vital part of our organisation.”