

NEW LAW TO PROTECT VULNERABLE FROM ROGUE FUNDRAISERS

- New law will force charities and fundraisers to have a written agreement showing how vulnerable are protected.
- Government will require major charities to reveal fundraising methods to show fundraising is being conducted properly.
- A wide ranging review of fundraising regulation will be undertaken to consider if further powers needed.

New legislation to protect the vulnerable from aggressive fundraisers and rogue charities will be announced by the Government next week.

The tough new measures, to be introduced as an amendment to the Charities Bill on Monday (July 13), will require all new fundraising contracts between charities and fundraisers to explicitly state how the vulnerable are protected.

Currently, charities are not required to have any written agreement with fundraisers over the ethics of how money is raised.

This new law will require big charities to publish their fundraising activities as part of their trustees' annual reports, and follows a string of damning investigations into the charity sector.

Prime Minister David Cameron said:

“Our charities undertake vital work, bringing communities together and providing support to some of the most vulnerable members of our society.

“But the conduct of some fundraisers used by them is frankly unacceptable and damages the reputation of the sector as a whole, which is why we’re introducing a new law to make sure charities raise funds in the right sort of way.

Under the new rules, charities with incomes over £1 million will set out in their trustees' annual report their fundraising approach, including the use of professional fundraising agencies – as well as steps to prevent inappropriate fundraising from vulnerable people.

The legislation will also require professional fundraisers to set out in fundraising agreements what steps they are taking to protect vulnerable people from high pressure fundraising, best practice they will follow and how the charities are monitoring compliance.

Minister for Civil Society Rob Wilson said:

“After the tragic death of Olive Cooke, I made clear that the behaviour of charities had to change or we would take action - today I am delivering on that promise.

The change will give charities nowhere to hide if fundraisers inappropriately pressurise vulnerable people into donating. And charities will be able to end contracts with fundraisers that break these agreements.

Alongside this, Chief Executive of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) Sir Stuart Etherington will chair an urgent wide ranging review to consider whether further powers are required.

Sir Stuart Etherington said:

“Britain’s charities are the backbone of our society. For every challenge we face, there is a charity that will help – be that facing cancer or saving our precious green spaces. They are able to do this because of the trust, confidence and overwhelming generosity of the British people.

“We simply cannot allow aggressive fundraising tactics to damage this trust. The public demands a simple and effective system of regulation. My review will respond to clear public concern about fundraising that has overstepped the mark. Charities must maintain the highest standards, including taking a firm grip on how the agencies they employ are interacting with the public.”

Notes to editors

Sir Stuart Etherington will chair a review group looking at the effectiveness of the current self-regulatory system for fundraising in the light of recent high-profile cases. The review group will make recommendations to ministers and the charity and fundraising sectors on any changes that might be needed to ensure that self-regulation succeeds in protecting the interests and the confidence of the public, whilst serving beneficiaries.

