



Protecting People who may be Vulnerable – Fundraising Policy

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South Central Ambulance Charity – Protecting People who may be Vulnerable

1. Introduction

South Central Ambulance Charity believes that giving to the charity of your choice should be a positive experience whether you are an existing donor or a new supporter. We are committed to fundraising in an honest and responsible way, so we take care to ensure we act appropriately with people who may be vulnerable. We also understand that people in vulnerable circumstances may need further support before making a decision about whether to make a donation. South Central Ambulance Charity recognises that we have an obligation to protect those who may be vulnerable. Whenever we suspect that someone we engage with is lacking capacity or is in vulnerable circumstances, we will take steps to end the contact in a way which seeks to protect that individual while protecting their dignity and having due regard for any desire they have to support South Central Ambulance Charity.

South Central Ambulance Charity is a member of the Institute of Fundraising (IoF) and is committed to following the Fundraising Regulator Code of Practice. The Fundraising Regulator Code of Practice states that:

- i. Fundraisers must take all reasonable steps to treat a donor fairly, enabling them to make an informed decision about any donation. This must include taking in to account the needs of any potential donor who may be in vulnerable circumstances or require additional care and support to make an informed decision.
- ii. Fundraisers must not exploit the credulity, lack of knowledge, apparent need for care and support or vulnerable circumstance of any donor at any point in time.

South Central Ambulance Charity does not engage in telephone, street or door to door fundraising.

2. Individuals who may need additional care and support, or may be in a vulnerable circumstance

We recognise that it may be difficult in some circumstances to make a clear decision as to whether someone is in a vulnerable circumstance or lacks capacity but our approach is to err on the side of caution. Every donor is an individual with a unique background, experience and circumstance and every interaction between a fundraiser and a donor is different. All people, may at some point in their life, be in a vulnerable circumstance or require additional care and support and this policy aims to recognise the broad range of issues which may impact upon someone's ability to make a decision to donate.

3. Types of Vulnerability

There are a number of factors which can contribute to vulnerability, the following will be used by us to identify someone who is in vulnerable circumstance:

- A particularly frail person
- An individual with a mental disorder, including dementia or personality disorder
- An individual with a significant, and impairing physical or sensory disability
- An individual with a learning disability
- An individual with a severe physical illness
- An individual who is homeless
- An individual who is experiencing financial vulnerability
- An individual with a severely reduced understanding of English.

We recognise that a person's capacity to make a decision can be affected by personal circumstances and the context of the situation. Where we have reason to believe an individual is permanently vulnerable and lacks capacity to make decisions around their financial giving, we will immediately ensure this individual no longer receives fundraising communications from South Central Ambulance Charity including appeal letters and emails.

If it is believed that an individual lacks the capacity to make a decision about the donation then we will not take the donation.

We also recognise that the following can be classed as temporary vulnerability:

- An individual who is experiencing a time of stress or anxiety such as bereavement, unemployment or family break up for example
- An unpaid carer who is overburdened, under severe stress or isolated
- An individual under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

In the case of temporary vulnerability, we will assume the individual may need additional care and support. We will accept that they can still have capacity to choose to donate to a charity. It is the context and circumstance that individuals may be in at the time of making a decision about donating that is relevant. A recently bereaved person may need additional support, but this may change as time progresses. This additional support may include delaying acceptance of the gift to give the donor further time to consider their donation or suggesting the donor gets advice from family and/or friends.

In defining someone as vulnerable we will ascertain whether this is a permanent or current life situation. We will not make sweeping judgements on people. For example, age is not necessarily an indicator of vulnerability and defining as such could be seen to be discriminatory.

4. Identifying a vulnerable contact

There are several agreed indicators that we will use in helping to identify vulnerable adults.

When communicating by telephone or face to face indicators that a person may have a mental health issue include:

- Asking irrelevant and unrelated questions
- Responding in an irrational way to simple questions
- Asking for questions or information to be repeated
- Taking a long time to respond or finding it difficult to respond
- Repeating questions they have been asked
- Wandering off the subject
- Displaying signs of forgetfulness
- Inability to hear or understand what is being said
- Inability to read and understand the information that is being provided to them
- Displaying signs of ill health eg: breathlessness or discontent

When communicating in writing indicators that a person may have a mental issues include:

- A supporter who has written or emailed to tell us they are permanently vulnerable
- The supporters family or carer have indicated they are vulnerable
- The handwriting is particularly shaky and hard to read which may indicate they are frail

We may also be alerted to a supporter being vulnerable by a family member or carer. Where we are given this information we will act upon this, asking what kind of communication, if any, is acceptable.

Our database is updated in all circumstances to reflect the individual's wishes or changes in circumstance.

5. Age

We do not use age to indicate whether a person is vulnerable or not. There are many older people who are active and leading comfortable lifestyles. So we cannot make a judgement based on age. Equally, a much younger supporter could be in a vulnerable position.

Vulnerability is always assessed on the person's circumstances. If a person is aged under 16 then they will be removed from all fundraising appeals and communication.

6. Staff Training

All staff at SCAS regularly undertake dementia awareness and safeguarding training to ensure they are able to understand the signs that someone maybe vulnerable. Staff are expected to seek advice if they are unsure about any fundraising activity that may adversely impact vulnerable people and ensure that risk assessments are carried out prior to the introduction of any new event or fundraising initiative.