



23 June 2010

Press release

## **Third year of PFRA's attrition and retention survey reveals doorstep attrition lowest for six years**

- **Doorstep F2F attrition levels at lowest for six years**
- **Effect of recession on street F2F attrition offset by better stewardship**

Attrition levels of donors recruited through doorstep face-to-face fundraising are at their lowest levels since **Public Fundraising Regulatory Association** began analysing attrition and retention levels through its Donor Attrition and Retention Survey (DARS).

The 2010 instalment of the annual survey – which has previously been run in 2008 and 2009 – shows that attrition of doorstep-recruited donors after five months of 2009 stands at 30.5 per cent. Previous DARS have covered campaigns run in 2004 and 2006-08 inclusive. Average attrition in all previous years after five months was around 33 per cent.\* (In other words, 33 per cent of people who made a first payment had cancelled their Direct Debit after three months.)

“If this trend continues for the rest of the year, we should see doorstep attrition come in at around 44 or 45 per cent, which would represent our best year since we began our analysis, as most years have returned annual attrition levels of 48-50 per cent,” says Rupert Tappin, managing director of Future Fundraising who, along with Morag Fleming of Scottish social care charity Quarriers, co-devised DARS.

“There could be many reasons for this fall in attrition, but I think this is definitely a reflection of how charities are holding their provider agencies more accountable for the quality of the donors they recruit. There has traditionally been a focus on getting as many new donors as possible. What I think we are now seeing is a balance between finding new donors and ensuring that those donors who do sign up stay for longer.”

Regarding street F2F, the 2009 survey predicted street F2F attrition levels for 2008 would be 56 per cent. However, with a full year of data, the 2010 DARS now finds that this figure will be closer to 53 per cent. Street F2F attrition for first five months of 2009 is not significantly different (better or worse) than 2008.

Morag Fleming says: “The recession has certainly caused us problems, but perhaps they are not as bad as we might have feared. However, that is probably because street fundraising is experiencing the same improvement in donor care and stewardship that has led to improved doorstep attrition levels and so this is offsetting the worst effects of the recession.”

Other observations:

- Street In-house teams show higher attrition than agency teams in 2006, 2007 and 2008 but by 2009 have reversed the pattern with 24 per cent attrition at three months against 30 per cent for agency teams
- The percentage of donors signing up to Gift Aid has dropped on the door from a high of 88 per cent in 2006 to 73 per cent in 2009. Street averages have suffered to a lesser degree, dropping from a high of 76 per cent in 2007 to 73 per cent in 2009.
- Average gift on the door, excluding Gift Aid dropped between 2006 and 2008 from £7.92 to £7.33 but has risen again in 2009 to £8.06. However the drop in Gift Aid take up rate means that the average gift including Gift Aid has fallen from £9.88 in 2006 to £9.72 in 2009. Average gift on the street has followed a similar pattern dropping from a high of £9.21 including Gift Aid in 2007 to £8.71 in 2009.
- New for DARS 2010 is an analysis of the data to produce trendlines for estimated five-year attrition levels which predict 2006 five-year attrition to be around 85 per cent for door and 84 per cent for street (with a five per cent tolerance). Using the same analysis, 2009 five-year attrition is predicted to be around 60 per cent for door and 77 per cent for street (but with a 15-20 per cent tolerance).

Twenty-seven charities submitted data for DARS 2010 for campaigns that encompassed 750,000 donors spanning 2006-2009. More than £68m of regular giving income has been banked by participating charities over the survey period.

The DARS 2010 analysis was presented by Rupert Tappin and Morag Fleming to delegates at special seminar following the PFRA's AGM in London yesterday [22 June 2010].

*\* It is not possible to take the analysis beyond the first five months of the previous calendar year because all donors recruited from any campaign will not have had the opportunity to make more than five payments by the time the analysis is conducted, so attrition levels over the year cannot be calculated.*

## **ENDS**

For further information or to arrange an interview with Rupert Tappin or Morag Fleming, contact: Ian MacQuillin, head of communications [ian@pfra.org.uk](mailto:ian@pfra.org.uk), 020 7401 8452, 07977 422273

## **Notes for editors**

### **The PFRA**

The Public Fundraising Regulatory Association (PFRA) is the nationally recognised self-regulator for all forms of face-to-face (F2F) fundraising activity – direct debit solicitation or data-capture – conducted in public spaces by charities and good causes anywhere in the UK. Supported by the Office of the Third Sector and the Charity Commission but without drawing on public funds, PFRA seeks to guarantee the sustainability of F2F with the donating public by working in partnership with local

authorities, TCMs and BIDs to provide and enforce bespoke and free-to-user durable and Charities Act 2006-compliant local voluntary management solutions within the framework of the Institute of Fundraising national Code of Practice.

Our work and effectiveness is recognized by the Institute of Licensing, NALEO, and the Association of Town Centre Managers, all of whom occupy observer seats on our board of management. We were among the founder members of, and occupy a seat on the board of, the Fundraising Standards Board. We are a corporate affiliate of the Trading Standards Institute – committed to fair trading and consumer protection.

### **Rupert Tappin**

Rupert Tappin is managing director of Future Fundraising Ltd and chief executive of Fundraising Recruitment Ltd. He has previously established two separate fundraising agency operations: face-to-face for NTT ActionAid – now Face 2 Face Fundraising Ltd, part of the Dialogue Group; and door-to-door for Front Door Fundraising. Rupert has been an active member of the PFRA since 2002, and an executive board member since 2006.

### **Morag Fleming**

Morag Fleming is head of fundraising at Quarriers. Morag has been with Quarriers for eight years running face-to-face campaigns every year over that period. She was responsible for the implementation of a direct marketing strategy that increased income from individuals by 500 per cent over a three-year period. Morag has been an executive board member of PFRA since 2002 and is convenor of PFRA Scotland.

### **Future Fundraising**

Future Fundraising was launched in 2004 as a consultancy primarily to help charities to either implement or improve their regular giving income streams, primarily through face-to-face and door-to-door fundraising.

Clients include:

- World Vision
- Oxfam
- NSPCC
- Amnesty International
- Christian Aid
- Brainwave
- St Mungo's.

Future Fundraising specializes in helping charities maximize their income from face-to-face, through proactive retention management.

### **Quarriers**

Quarriers is a Scottish charity providing care and support for children, adults and families. We challenge inequality of opportunity and choice to bring about a positive change in people's lives.