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Press release
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Self-regulatory bodies urge charity research centre to invest more in fundraising matters

- **Latest round of £600,000 funding will not support research into fundraising matters**
- **New campaign aims to persuade funding body – the Economic and Social Research Council – to amend its funding guidelines**
- **PFRA and FRSB are giving official backing to the campaign**

Two fundraising self-regulatory bodies are giving their official backing to a campaign to ensure that more funding is made available for research into areas that will have practical benefits to fundraisers.

The Public Fundraising Regulatory Association (PFRA) and the Fundraising Standards Board (FRSB) are both urging the Economic and Social Research Centre (ESRC) to change its funding guidelines when it allocates £600,000 in January 2010.

The ESRC has previously provided £1.5m to the academics who make up the Centre for Charitable Giving and Philanthropy. However, not only has none of this been directed towards fundraising research, but ESRC's rules also mean that leading fundraising researchers such as Adrian Sargeant, Joe Saxton and others, will not have funding bids considered.

“None of the funding previously allocated by the centre has so far been targeted to improving fundraising practice, enhancing the quality of our donors’ experiences or growing the vast mass individual giving in the UK,” says leading fundraising academic Adrian Sargeant, of Bristol Business School and Indiana University, who has initiated the campaign.

“Instead it has been used to fund projects such as looking at institutionalised giving structures and whether charitable activity might mitigate or reinforce social and economic inequalities.

“Despite the lack of any fundraising research to date, the funders of the centre – the Economic and Social Research Council – have declined to prioritise fundraising in this second and final round. They are also refusing to allocate funds outside of the present structure, effectively excluding fundraising researchers from submitting proposals.

“This is not a question of sour grapes. Fundraising researchers are not trying simply to get their hands on a slice of the pie. We are concerned that this money will fund research that is only of tangential use to fundraisers, while ignoring questions that will help fundraisers do their day-to-day jobs, questions that specialist fundraising researchers are best placed to answer.”

The campaign, which is being co-ordinated by the PFRA after Sargeant approached the organisation for assistance, aims to persuade the ESRC to change its funding guidelines for the 2010 allocation.

Mick Aldridge, ceo of the PFRA, says: “We have experienced with Adrian Sargeant’s statistical analysis of PFRA’s attrition data how research into the mechanics of fundraising can be applied by fundraisers.

“More of this type of research will benefit all types of fundraising, but this is something that fundraisers currently need to pay for themselves out of donated income. Yet the ESRC is sitting on a sum of money that could radically increase the knowledge base available to fundraisers.

“So when Adrian approached us to help get this campaign off the ground, we saw it as our duty to the fundraising sector to assist him as much as we could.”

Alistair McLean, ceo of the FRSB, says: “Fundraisers are responsible for generating the large majority of voluntary income in this country and it is of concern to me that any charitable giving research programme such as this does not have fundraising research at its core. Even a proportion of that money allocated to practical fundraising research could make a massive difference to the effectiveness of charity fundraising teams across the UK.

“That is why we have come together to do what we can to persuade the Economic and Social Research Council of the merits of redirecting some of this funding.”

The campaign launches with a survey (hosted by nfpSynergy) seeking fundraisers’ views on what issues need further research (<http://research.nfpsynergy.net/s/VvPo7jBoKWd2Qfg>), while Sargeant has also produced a short paper outlining the five main issues he believes need further funding. These are:

- How to stem the decline in public trust and confidence in charities
- Best ways to achieve small increases in donor loyalty (which can have exponential long term effects)
- Developing the embryonic area of philanthropic psychology
- Establishing a ‘panel’ of charities willing to share data to benchmark different fundraising strategies

- Developing case studies to assist trainers and academics delivering fundraising training and education.

Sargeant says: “In the survey we are asking for fundraisers’ views how these final funds should be allocated and the projects they believe would make the most difference to our profession. The results will be fed back to the funders in September to ensure that fundraisers are given a voice in the ESCR’s final decision.”

Further campaign options are currently under consideration.

ENDS

For further information or to arrange an interview with Adrian Sargeant, Mick Aldridge or Alastair McLean, contact:

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Notes for editors

Adrian Sargeant

Adrian Sargeant is the Robert F. Hartsook Professor of Fundraising at the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University. He is also Professor of Nonprofit Marketing and Fundraising at Bristol Business School in the U.K. and Adjunct Professor of Philanthropy at the Australian Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies in Brisbane. Professor Sargeant is the editor of the International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing and the author of 'Marketing Management for Nonprofit Organizations' and 'Fundraising Management', published by the Oxford University Press and Routledge, respectively.

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 recognised 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.

Mick Aldridge

Mick Aldridge has been a professional charity fundraiser since 1992, initially in telemarketing and since 2000 in the field of face-to-face fundraising. In both disciplines his focus has always been on regulatory and legal compliance. Prior to that he worked in events management, local government policy development, retail logistics, and directly for a number of different charities. He has been involved in the PFRA since its inception in July 2000 and was a continuous member of its board until he became its second chief executive in April 2006. He is a member of the Institute of Fundraising, fellow of the Institute of Direct Marketing, and sits on the Fundraising Standards Board. In June 2009 he was voted “fourth Most Influential Person in Fundraising” (out of 50) by readers of *Professional Fundraising* magazine.

Fundraising Standards Board

The Fundraising Standards Board (FRSB) administers the self-regulatory scheme for UK fundraising. Launched in 2007, it strives to encourage the highest standards of fundraising practice and for donors to 'give with confidence'. The scheme logo, displayed by all members, is a public commitment to best fundraising practice, to being honest, legal and open in their fundraising activities. Members abide by the Institute of Fundraising's Codes of Fundraising Practice and the FRSB Fundraising Promise. Visit www.frsb.org.uk (for charities) and www.givewithconfidence.org.uk (for the public).

Alistair McLean

Alistair is Chief Executive of the Fundraising Standards Board. He has been involved in fundraising since his Manchester University days (1978-1981) where he served as treasurer and then chair of the Manchester and Salford Students (MASS) Rag, raising over £30,000 in consecutive years. He now volunteers for a number of local charities.

Prior to joining the FRSB (2004-2008), Alistair was CEO of the NGRC which is the self-regulatory arm of the Greyhound Racing Industry. Before that, he worked in the service sector at one of the world's largest business advisory firms and in the professional sports sector in both the commercial and regulatory areas of the industry. He completed an MBA at Bradford Business School in 1990.