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Press release
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PFRA sets up working party to look at approved register of fundraisers

- **Tiny minority of 'rogue' fundraisers inventing donors just to keep getting paid**
- **'Approved register' for street and door fundraisers under consideration**

The Public Fundraising Regulatory Association – the self-regulatory body for face-to-face (F2F) and door-to-door (D2D) fundraising – has established a working party to look at establishing an approved register of fundraisers.

The working party was agreed at a meeting of the PFRA's executive board in July, and follows a request from Together Fundraising at the organisation's AGM in June to look into the issue of 'rogue' fundraisers.

Rogue fundraisers are a tiny minority of fundraisers who sign 'phantom' donors, friends and family who they know will cancel before the first payment, or use other fraudulent measures to fill in direct debit mandates, simply to ensure they receive their weekly wage. If they are caught, or even before they are caught, they will leave the agency or charity they are working for and start with another.

Top of the list of options will be an 'approved register', along the lines of the one operated by the Energy Retail Association – only those accredited under the ERA's EnergySure scheme are allowed to sell energy supplies door-to-door.

But the working party will also look at other ways to tackle this problem, including a standardised inter-agency referencing process and tighter contracts for fundraisers.

PFRA ceo Mick Aldridge says: "Just a tiny minority of the thousands of people who fundraise on the street and door could ever be classified as 'rogues'. But they are clearly of concern to our members so we have decided to act and stop this problem.

“Rogue fundraisers are scamming charities and their employer fundraising agencies rather than members of the public. They are not generally conning people out of their bank details, but filling in forms with the names of non-existent donors or people they know will cancel.

“As it’s charities and agencies that bear the cost of this malpractice, it’s imperative that we find a cost-effective and easy-to-implement procedure to stop it.”

The working party will be chaired by Graham Bunce, who, as a general manager of professional fundraising organisation Support Direct, is part of the Cobra Group, which supplies door-to-door sales people for energy companies under the EnergySure scheme.

Other members of the working party are:

- Milly Ahmed, co-managing director, Gift Fundraising
- Richard Verden, head of individual giving, British Red Cross
- Anna Walsh, head of social fundraising, Bluefrog
- James Davis, managing director, Dialogue Direct

The working party will set its terms of reference at a first meeting during August with a view to reporting in October.

“This working party present us with a fantastic opportunity to drive up the already high standards of F2F and D2D fundraising,” says Bunce.

“I would like to see this operate along similar lines to a parliamentary enquiry, considering submitted evidence from PFRA members and other interested parties and stakeholders, as well as actively seeking ideas from outside the fundraising sector.

“We will look at all the options, not just an approved register, and make a recommendation to the PFRA board about how we should protect agencies and charities – and of course, the giving public – from rogue fundraisers.

“There are issues with tackling human resources problems such as this, but they are not insurmountable. If sectors such as energy retailing can overcome them, I am sure that fundraising can do it as well.”

ENDS

For further information or to arrange an interview with Mick Aldridge or Graham Bunce, contact: Ian MacQuillin, head of communications, ian@pfra.org.uk, 020 7401 845, 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.

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.

Graham Bunce

Graham Bunce has been in the professional fundraising sector with Support Direct since 2003. He was part of the senior management team that set-up and re-launched Support Direct as a PFO in its own right in March 2008. He has experience in other non-fundraising areas of the Cobra Group, having worked with and managed programmes for telecommunications and financial clients industries that are both heavily regulated. Prior to joining the Cobra Group, he had a long history of working directly within the telecommunications industry. He has been involved with the PFRA since March 2008 and was elected to the executive board this year as a full member.