

# The Mount Camphill Community

## Our Vulnerable People & Fundraising Policy

### Introduction

Our fundraising activities contact members of the public and individual supporters through a variety of communication channels, including in person, mail, email, social media, telephone and on line via our web page and Just Giving.

As a charity we protect the dignity of vulnerable people who choose to donate or raise funds for The Mount Camphill Community.

Fundraising should be a positive experience for our supporters. It is inevitable though that through our fundraising activities we will come into contact with people who are vulnerable and some of these may not be able to make informed decisions about their giving. This can happen either through our own communications or through the agencies who work on our behalf.

This document outlines how, in undertaking fundraising activities, we protect vulnerable people, how these people can be identified and what action to take if we suspect someone is vulnerable.

### Our guiding principles

We are members of the Fundraising Regulator and this is what we promise our supporters:

**We will always be respectful.** This means being mindful of and sensitive to any particular need that a donor may have. It also means striving to respect the wishes and preferences of the donor.

**We will treat our donors fairly.** This includes not discriminating against any group or individual based on their appearance or health conditions.

**We will respond appropriately to the individual needs of our donors.** Our fundraisers will adapt their tone, language and communication technique to suit the needs and requirements of the donor.

**We will always respect people's privacy and encourage supporters to let us know how they want to be contacted.**

**We also ensure it is easy for supporters to opt-out of receiving future communications if they wish.**

**We comply with data protection law.** We will always protect personal data; we will not sell personal details to any other organisation.

**We will ensure that fundraisers, volunteers and fundraising contractors working with us to raise funds, comply with the fundraising code of practice and these principles.**

**We will not put undue pressure on individuals to make a gift.**

**We are clear in our communications about who we are, what we do and how donations will be used.**

**We have a supporter care team who are dedicated to looking after our supporters.**

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**We will be open and honest.** We tell the truth, do not exaggerate and we answer all reasonable questions about our fundraising activities and costs.

**We are accountable for our fundraising activities.** We have a complaints procedure, a copy of which is available on our website or available on request. If we cannot resolve a complaint, we accept the authority of the Fundraising Regulator to make a final adjudication.

#### The Fundraising Regulator Code of Fundraising Practice

We always abide by the Fundraising Regulator's code of fundraising practice. The general principles state:

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 into account the needs of any potential donor who may be in a vulnerable circumstance or require additional care and support to make an informed decision.

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.

If a fundraiser knows or has reasonable grounds for believing that an individual lacks capacity to make a decision to donate, a donation **MUST NOT** be taken.

A donation given by someone who lacked capacity at the time of donating **MUST** be returned.

#### Face-to-face fundraising

Our face-to-face fundraising activities will follow the standards of the Fundraising Regulator's street fundraising rule book, which contains recommendations on how fundraisers must protect vulnerable people and members of the public from behaviour which is an unreasonable intrusion on a person's privacy, is unreasonably persistent and which places undue pressure on a person to give money.

The rule book also stipulates that fundraisers **MUST NOT** sign up any person at any time who they may have reasonable grounds for believing, in the course of their engagement with the individual, that they are in vulnerable circumstances which mean they are unable to make an informed decision to donate. These may include, but are not limited to:

- physical and mental medical conditions
- disability
- learning difficulties
- times of stress or anxiety (e.g. bereavement, redundancy)
- financial vulnerability (where a gift from a donor may impact on their ability to sufficiently care for themselves or leave them in financial hardship)
- Proficiency in English
- Influence of alcohol or drugs
- Fundraisers must not sign up any person under 18 years of age.

#### Fundraising agencies

We have agreements in place with third party fundraising agencies (such as Pebblebeach) who fundraise on behalf of The Mount to ensure adherence to the Code of Fundraising Practice and the

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Charities Act 2016. These agreements stipulate conformity with the law and best fundraising practices and include requirements to protect vulnerable people.

These agreements also stipulate the reporting of any complaints made by the public relating to the fundraising activities.

#### Vulnerability

By vulnerable people we mean those whose circumstances put them at enhanced risk of being vulnerable to neglect or abuse and so might be lacking the ability to make a decision.\* There are a number of factors which can contribute to vulnerability and may indicate whether someone may be incapable of making a decision. These include:

- A particularly frail person
- An individual with a mental disorder, including dementia or a personality disorder
- Someone with a significant and impairing physical or sensory disability
- An individual with a learning disability
- Someone with a severe physical illness
- A homeless person

In addition, for fundraising activities, we define an individual as vulnerable in the case of the following factors:

- An individual who is experiencing financial vulnerability
- An individual with a severely reduced understanding of English
- Where an individual is considered vulnerable we will flag their record on our database as 'Do not contact' and they will never be contacted again.

With face-to-face fundraising, if a fundraiser comes across someone who they feel might be vulnerable, they will not ask them to donate to The Mount.

\* British Medical Association – Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults.

#### Identifying a vulnerable contact

There are several indicators which can help to identify vulnerable adults by different communication channels.

#### **Communicating by telephone or face to face**

Indicators that a person may have a mental health issue, such as dementia:

- 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 asked
- Wandering off the subject
- Displaying signs of forgetfulness

Indicators of physical difficulties:

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- Unable to hear or understand what is being said
- Unable to read and understand the information provided to them
- Displaying signs of ill health e.g. breathlessness or discontent

#### **Written communications**

We can at times identify vulnerable adults through written communications:

- A supporter who has emailed or written to us to tell us they are vulnerable
- The supporter's family member or carer has indicated that they are vulnerable
- Someone whose handwriting is particularly shaky and hard to read. This is an indicator that the supporter is frail and to be cautious, we mark them as 'do not contact'

#### **Family members / carers**

If we are alerted to a supporter being vulnerable by a family member or carer we will ask what kind of communication, if any, is acceptable. Our database is then updated to reflect their wishes.

#### **Fundraising training**

All Mount staff and volunteers involved in fundraising should receive a copy of this policy and should sign to show that they understand its content and agree to adhere to its stipulations. Any new staff and volunteers who are requested to participate in fundraising should receive training as part of their induction.

#### **Is age an indicator of vulnerability?**

No. Age does not 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 should be assessed on the person's circumstances.

If someone is identified as being under the age of 18, then in a face-to-face situation, any fundraising discussions should stop and no donation should be taken. If we have personal data on our database of someone who we discover is under 18, we must remove them from all fundraising appeals and calls.

#### **Responding to the needs of a vulnerable contact**

Be patient and do not rush the conversation. It's better to have a longer call or conversation than to cut this short and leave the supporter confused or agitated in any way.

Ask if the individual would prefer another method of communication, e.g. offer to have some information sent in the post, or via email, so they have time to take in the information.

Ask if they need to speak with anyone else before making a decision.

Check their understanding of what they have agreed to, e.g. ask them to repeat back what they have agreed to.

All of the above will help to make sure that the individual comes first and give them time to make an informed decision, if they are capable of doing this. If it becomes apparent that the person lacks capacity to make a decision then all fundraising must stop.

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