

## **Policy for Communications with Vulnerable Supporters**

### **Introduction**

To ensure that we take all reasonable care to protect vulnerable adults, Dame Vera Lynn Children's Charity complies with the Institute of Fundraising guidance set out in the document called "Treating Donors Fairly: Responding To The Needs Of People In Vulnerable Circumstances And Helping Donors Make Informed Decisions".

Dame Vera Lynn Children's Charity requires its staff and any agencies contacting members of the public on our behalf to comply with guidelines provided by the Direct Marketing Association and the Public Fundraising Regulatory Association. These guidelines do not cover children and young people under the age of 18, and we do not actively seek donations from them.

Dame Vera Lynn Children's Charity relies entirely on donations from individuals and grants from organisations to fund our work with children with cerebral palsy and their families. We aim to communicate with supporters in the ways in which they are most comfortable and this includes mail, email, phone and in person.

Every donor is an individual with a unique background, experiences and circumstances – and every interaction between a fundraiser and donor is different. Dame Vera Lynn Children's Charity does not identify vulnerable adults based on broad personal characteristics such as disability or age. We believe that everyone should have the opportunity to donate if they are willing and able to do so, and that denying people the chance to give based on appearance, age or behaviour may be considered discriminatory.

It is inevitable that we will come into contact with people who are vulnerable and not able to make informed decisions about their giving. This can happen either through our own communications or through communications from the agencies who work on our behalf. This document outlines how we take all reasonable care to identify supporters who may be vulnerable, and what action we take if we suspect a person is vulnerable.

### **Complying with regulation and best practice**

The Institute of Fundraising General Principles clause 1.2 e) states that: "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. 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."

**Dame Vera Lynn Children's Charity fundraising abides by the four key principles of the Institute of Fundraising's "Treating Donors Fairly" policy, which are:**

1. Respect – treating all members of the public respectfully. 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, whatever they may be.
2. Fairness – all donors should be treated fairly. This includes not discriminating against any group or individual based on their appearance or any personal characteristic.
3. Responsive – this means responding appropriately to the different needs that a donor may have. The onus should be on the fundraiser to adapt his or her approach (tone, language, communication technique) to suit the needs and requirements of the donor.
4. Accountable – it is up to fundraisers and charities to take responsibility and care to ensure that their fundraising is happening to a high standard. When thinking about ways of communicating with different people and fundraising appropriately, different charities should consider what processes and procedures they may need in place. Charities may want to develop their own internal guidance on this area and consider how to ensure that their fundraisers are appropriately trained and supported.

**What we do if we suspect a supporter is vulnerable**

We follow the Institute of Fundraising guidance if we suspect that a donor lacks the capacity to make a decision about the donation which states that "a donation should not be taken. If after the donation is taken the charity receives evidence that the person lacked capacity to make the decision to donate, then the charity can and should return the donation because the original donation was invalid. ... If a donor is found to lack capacity, the organisation should put in place measures to ensure that donations are not solicited from them in the future."