

FRSB Complaints Report, Government review of self-regulation & maintaining fundraising standards

HOME Fundraising statement

FRSB Complaints Report

The Fundraising Standards Board (FRSB) published their annual Complaints Report on Tuesday 7th July at the Institute of Fundraising's (IoF) National Fundraising Convention. The report presents an overview of charity fundraising complaints recorded in 2014.

According to the FRSB, door-to-door fundraising experienced an 8% increase in complaints, with 7,618 complaints recorded in 2014 however this can largely be attributed to the number of charities reporting activity which rose by 11% from 1,203 (2013) to 1,338 (2014). The report states that door-to-door fundraising activity (the number of doors knocked) in 2014 dropped below 2012 levels. HOME Fundraising will also be seeking clarification from the FRSB regarding the methodology behind statistical inaccuracies and calculations for the reported door-to-door complaints data.

In 2014 HOME Fundraising had nearly 3 million engagements at the doorstep and recruited over 200,000 new regular givers. This represents over a third of the overall market. HOME Fundraising has not seen any evidence to support a reduction in fundraising volume during 2014. HOME's data shows that for those charities investing in door-to-door it remains a sustainable and stable channel delivering consistent results. The Public Fundraising Regulatory Association (PFRA) states that its members reported an overall 10% increase in donors recruited through door-to-door fundraising to 688,035. The PFRA have calculated that the value of these donors is considerable, generating annual pledges worth an estimated £66 to £82m to support a wide range of charities and good causes (the cumulative/ongoing income from door-to-door will run into the hundreds of millions).

Complaint ratios in door-to-door fundraising remain low, figures from the FRSB show that door-to-door fundraising generated 7,618 complaints from 42,610,955 doors knocked in 2014, resulting in a complaint ratio of just 0.02%. Whilst any complaint is regrettable, HOME believe complaints need to be viewed in the wider context of the revenue generated by door-to-door fundraising for charities (and therefore directly aiding beneficiaries), against the relatively small proportion of incidents relating to poor practice.

No Cold Calling Stickers

In light of the recent IoF rule change and the forthcoming guidance discussions regarding No Cold Calling Stickers it is interesting to note that within the FRSB's complaint report's breakdown of causes for complaints, "no cold calling stickers" classified under 'Ignored signs' are responsible for only 5% of all reported complaints for door-to-door fundraising.

The wider benefits of door-to-door fundraising

The research report '*Fundraising Media DNA - 2015, the engagement of donors with different fundraising channels*' conducted by the research company Fast Map and the IoF, identified the key characteristics of door-to-door as 'seen as convenient by donors'; 'welcomed by potential donors'; 'seems personalised and tailored' and 'leads to immediate donation/response'.

In fact, the successful outcome for charities from door-to-door fundraising is a 1st stage commitment with a significant per donor value (between £8-£12 per month on average).

Conversations that don't result in a gift still act as very strong positive awareness for the charity and bearing in mind over 42 million doors were knocked in the course of the year, this is a value-added for charities when considering their investment in the channel. Furthermore, good experiences are likely to be discussed beyond just family and neighbours, but also amongst friends and peers. This ripple effect means that positive awareness about causes and campaigns can often go further than the conversation between Fundraiser and supporter.

Government review of self-regulation of fundraising

The Minister for Civil Society, Rob Wilson, announced on the 11th July that the Government will be conducting a review of self-regulation led by Sir Stuart Etherington, chief executive of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO). He will be joined on the review panel by Lord Leigh of Hurley (Conservative), Baroness Pitkeathley (Labour) and Lord Wallace of Saltaire (Liberal Democrat), the review panel will present their recommendations in September.

HOME Fundraising will work with all relevant parties, including the panel led by Sir Stuart Etherington, charities and/or the regulatory bodies in any way required, if the scope of their review covers any area of our operations.

Maintaining fundraising standards

HOME Fundraising is a best practice provider with an industry leading quality control program overseen by a dedicated Standards, Policy and Access department.

HOME Fundraising has an active voice on regulatory matters and is an accredited member of the PFRA, IoF and FRSB, and is bound by the IoF Code of fundraising conduct.

As HOME has stated previously, it is our belief that the best route to effective and ethical fundraising is not merely through rules and regulations, but rather a commitment to best practice in all areas of a fundraising operation, whether in-house or commercial. Fundraiser conduct is core to this issue as is how individuals are trained to deal with any situations that may arise. For HOME this starts with recruitment, ensuring Fundraisers are never unsupported and driving up standards through a cyclical process of training and development, evaluation and follow up.

The recent media scrutiny regarding other fundraising channels (not door-to-door fundraising) has led to charities asking for clarification from HOME on the following issues.

Data sharing

HOME Fundraising collects contact details from donors with their consent at the door step. We do not share this data with 3rd parties and retain this information in order for HOME to call new donors, and thank them for signing up to provide a 'gift' to the charity. We then pass this donor data directly to the charity client, and our process is in line with the Data Protection Act and our Information Security policies.

Frequency of approaches

There are sometimes negative-biased perceptions that the door-to-door channel causes members of the public to experience multiple approaches on the door step. The reality is that of the 85% of the UK population who are reachable via door-to-door, these householders will have their door knocked only twice a year on average.

HOME's policy on Cold Calling Control Zones (CCCZs) and No Cold Calling Stickers is in line with the changes to the code recently announced by the IoF. Areas that are clearly designated as Cold Calling

Control Zones and are set up according to Trading Standards Institute guidelines, with the required signs displayed, should be avoided by Fundraisers.

HOME also trains all Fundraisers to avoid NO COLD CALLING stickers when they see a house with such a sticker.

Vulnerability

HOME trains all Fundraisers to be aware of the signs of vulnerability that may be evident when speaking to members of the public and to politely end the conversation if they feel a person may be vulnerable. Guided by the IoF code on this matter, we train Fundraisers on what the signs may be, and that vulnerability can be present in people of all ages. This is trained in our Initial Assessment training, at Breakfast Clubs and in Team Leader training sessions.

Fundraising dialogue and dealing with questions

HOME Fundraising trains Fundraisers to be sensitive when engaging potential donors at the door step. HOME Fundraisers enter into a dialogue with donors, in order to successfully inspire a donor to support, the fundraiser needs to understand the donor's concerns and answer questions, and to expertly inform the donor, giving them confidence in their decision. Paramount to these engagements is the need for fundraisers to be respectful at all times. In instances when it is not appropriate to continue the conversation HOME Fundraisers are trained to follow "the three R's" process: "Recognise, Respect and Retreat".

Quality Management System Accreditation

The British Standards Institute (BSI) is the business standards company that helps organisations make excellence a habit, they are committed to embedding excellence into the way people and products work. In December 2014 HOME Fundraising was awarded the ISO 9001:2008 Quality Management System accreditation by BSI for the recruitment of new regular donors on the doorstep.

Once achieved, accreditation lasts for three years and HOME has committed to being audited regularly by the accreditation body (BSI – external audit) during that time. All aspects of company activity are open to audit, and all offices will be audited at least once in the three year cycle. Between July and December 2014, HOME Fundraising's head office, three regional fundraising offices and the Validations and GPS office were audited by BSI. In April 2015 audits were completed at three more regional fundraising offices, with another set of audits at HOME's head office and three additional regional fundraising offices scheduled to take place between August and September 2015.

HOME has a commitment to review our processes to ensure best practice is followed in all circumstances.

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About HOME

HOME is more than a fundraising company. As part of an international group that includes HOME India, we have a unique leadership model and unparalleled operational infrastructure that has employed, developed and trained over 20,000 fundraisers.



HOME has recruited over 1 million regular donors and raised nearly half a billion over the last 13 years, working with a range of over 40 different charities.

HOME's output is essentially an inspiring conversation between two individuals, a HOME Fundraiser and a potential donor. Sitting behind this is a unique business model and fundraising operation geared towards understanding group dynamics and how individuals influence the teams and departments they lead.

HOME's extensive network of 17 regional offices across the UK, offers national reach providing clients with a unique offering in door to door acquisition.

HOME does not employ subcontractors or operate commission-only payment structures.

The HOME approach is successful and award-winning – our campaigns have won the Institute of Fundraising 'Best Use of Face to Face' award three times, and in 2014 HOME were awarded a Silver for Innovation by the Institute of Fundraising's Insight in Fundraising Awards.

'You Can't Plant A Tree in Space' the book written by Neil Hope and Dominic Will, the joint Managing Directors of HOME Fundraising, related to leadership principles and setting the conditions for sustainable business was published in 2014.

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For more information please contact:

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