

Vulnerable Persons Policy

Introduction

Fundraising activities, public support and supporter trust are all essential to Worldwide Cancer Research's (the Charity's) ability to fund research into any type of cancer anywhere in the world. To realise our vision of no life cut short by cancer the research can never stop.

As a charity we fund research that has the potential to one day save lives and enhance the quality of life for generations to come. Quality of life and the dignity and respect of cancer survivors is central to why we do what we do and this also extends beyond our charitable cause and applies to the way we approach supporters who choose to donate or raise funds for Worldwide Cancer Research

Giving to charity should be a positive experience, whether someone is an existing or a new supporter. We are committed to fundraising in an honest and responsible way, so we take care to ensure we act appropriately with people who may be in vulnerable circumstances.

Worldwide Cancer Research is a member of the Institute of Fundraising (IoF), is registered with the Fundraising Regulator and is committed to following the Fundraising Regulator Code of Practice. The standards set within this code outline the behaviour that is expected of fundraisers.

The Fundraising Regulator Code of Practice states in the General Principles that:

i) "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"

All staff and Trustees should take reasonable and appropriate steps to identify vulnerable supporters and take necessary actions to ensure they are treated appropriately and with dignity.

1. Purpose

Everyone should have the opportunity to donate if they are able to, but the Charity recognises that it is inevitable that some of the many people that we engage with through our fundraising activities will not always have the capacity, at the point of the interaction, to fully understand the nature of the donation they are being asked to give, or the consequences of making that donation.

The Charity also understands that people in vulnerable circumstances may need further support before deciding whether to donate.

This policy outlines how we protect supporters who may be in vulnerable circumstances, sets out how we can identify such potential vulnerability and what action we will take.

2. Our Supporter Promise and Guiding Principles

We have an obligation to protect vulnerable people and those in vulnerable circumstances. Whenever we suspect that someone we engage with is lacking capacity or is in vulnerable circumstances, - we will take steps to terminate the contact in a way which seeks to:

- protect that person
- protect their dignity
- note any desire they have expressed to support Worldwide Cancer Research

In doing this we will ensure that:

- We will always respect your privacy.
- We will always protect your data; we will not sell your personal details to any other organisation.

- We have a supporter services team who are dedicated to you. We always love to hear from you.

We are committed to ensuring that prize led products are not knowingly sent to vulnerable supporters.

3. What is vulnerability?

An individual who may need additional care and support, or may be in a vulnerable circumstance, can still have capacity to choose to donate to a charity.

However if one of our team reasonably believes that a supporter is unable to make a decision or is in a position which does not allow them to make a donation, then a donation is not to be taken or accepted. We have a duty to treat supporters fairly and respond to their needs.

By vulnerable, we mean an individual who may be in a vulnerable circumstance or require additional care and support or is unable to make an informed decision on their own.

It is not feasible to provide a comprehensive set of characteristics which would always identify an individual who is considered to be vulnerable. We follow best practice as laid out below to cover the main indicators and have faith in our staff and fundraisers to identify vulnerability when it lies outside these parameters.

All people may, at some stage in their life, be in a vulnerable circumstance or require additional care and support. The reason for using the wording ‘an individual who may be in a vulnerable circumstance or require additional care and support’ helps to recognise the broad range of issues which may impact upon someone’s ability to make a decision to donate. It is the context and circumstance they may be in at the time of making a decision about donating that is relevant.

4. Types of vulnerability

There are a number of factors which can contribute to vulnerability. The following can be classed as permanent vulnerability according to the British Medical Association’s ‘safeguarding vulnerable adults’ paper:

- A particularly frail person

- An individual with a mental disorder, including dementia or a personality disorder
- An individual with a significant and impairing physical or sensory disability
- An individual with a learning disability
- An individual with a severe physical illness
- An individual who is homeless

In addition 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
- An individual with a gambling disorder

Where an individual is permanently vulnerable - we will flag their record on our database as 'Do not contact' and the record will be suppressed from further communications. In the case of face to face fundraising - the fundraiser will not continue to ask the person to donate to Worldwide Cancer Research.

As noted above people may be in a vulnerable circumstance or require additional care and support. For some people this may only be temporary situation. For example:

- An individual who is experiencing a time of stress or anxiety, e.g. bereavement, unemployment, family breakup, etc.
- Where an individual finds the subject matter of the call upsetting
- An individual under the influence of drugs or alcohol

In the cases of temporary vulnerability, we politely bring the phone call to a close without processing a donation and may provide additional support. However, temporary vulnerability does not necessarily mean that the person does not want to be contacted again. Therefore, the supporter is asked if they will allow us to contact them in the future. In the case of face to face fundraising - the fundraiser will not continue to ask the individual to donate

For example, a recently bereaved person may be in a vulnerable circumstance following the death of a family member, but this may change as time progresses. At the time of bereavement they could still have the capacity to make a donation, but may need additional support to help them make their decision.

Additional support may include: delaying acceptance of the gift to give the donor further time to consider their donation; including a 'cooling off' period if the donor changes their mind; or suggesting the donor gets advice from family/friends.

5. How to identify a vulnerable supporter

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:

- 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 such as no recollection of ever signing up and/ or donating.

Indicators of **physical difficulties**:

- 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

We can at times identify vulnerable adults through **written communications**:

- A supporter who has emailed or written to us to tell us they are permanently vulnerable (see earlier definitions)
- If a supporter keeps on sending multiple gifts to an appeal
- The supporter's family member or carer has indicated that they are vulnerable
- Letters we receive from people where their thoughts and wishes are not clear or consistent

- Letters which indicate the supporter does not remember signing up and/or donating.

We may also be alerted to a supporter being vulnerable by a **family member or carer**. Where we have been given this information we act upon this, asking what kind of communication, if any, is acceptable. Our database is then updated to reflect their wishes. We cannot disclose any information to the family or carer in regards to the supporter unless they have power of attorney or other authorisation from the supporter.

We will monitor supporter donation history to highlight any unusual levels of donation activity out with a supporters usual giving pattern. We will politely refuse to accept any new or subsequent donations from supporters who through this process have been discovered to be vulnerable or are suspected of being vulnerable, typically by recommending that the supporter speak with a carer or family member, before proceeding with making a donation.

6. Do we use Age as 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 will not make a judgement based on age. Equally a much younger supporter could be in a vulnerable position. Vulnerability needs to be assessed on the individual's circumstances.

If a supporter is identified as being under the age of 16, then we must remove them from fundraising appeals and calls.

7. How we will respond to a supporter who needs additional care and support or who is in a vulnerable situation

- Be patient and don't rush the conversation - it's better to have a longer conversation than cut this short and leave the person 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 the person if they need to speak with anyone else before making a decision.

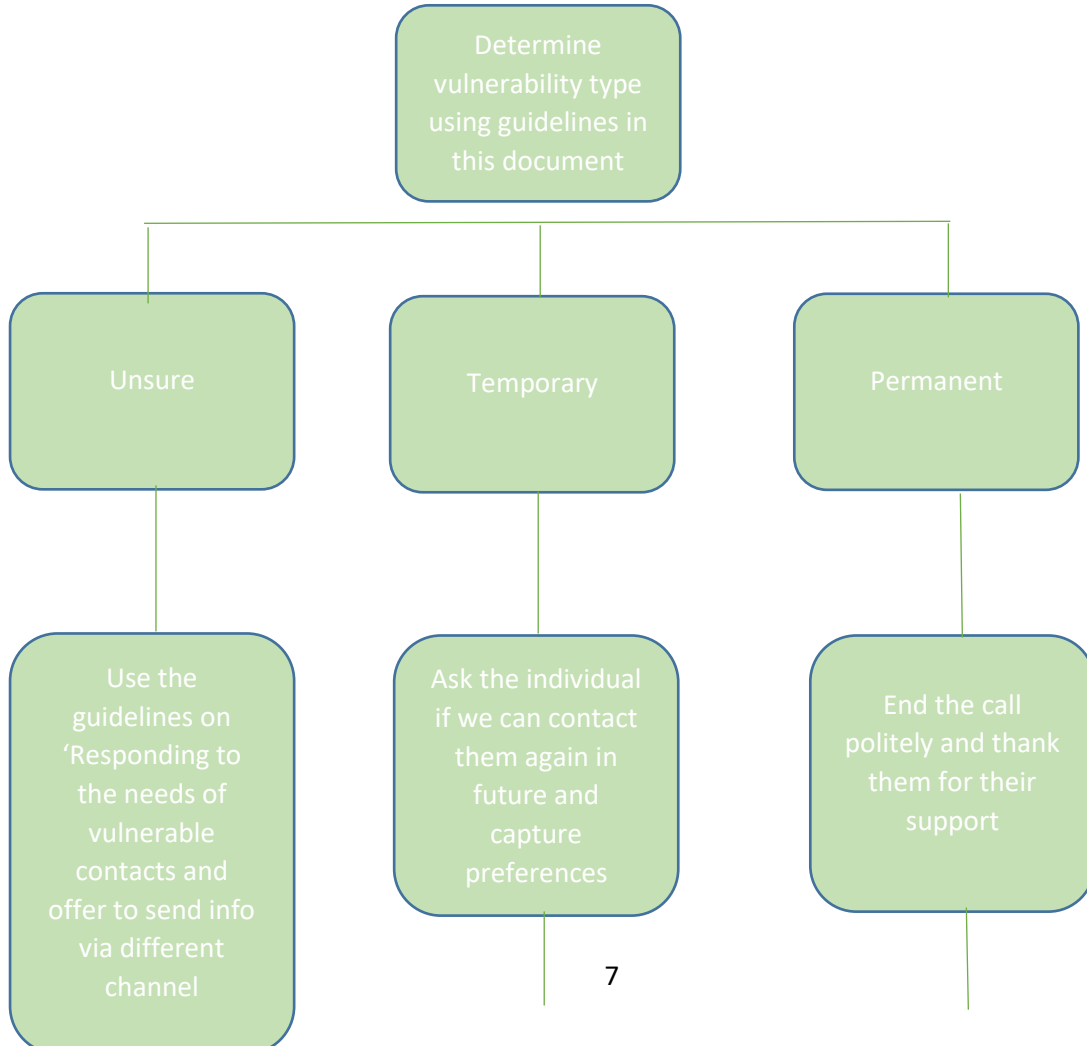
- Check their understanding of what they have agreed to - for example, ask them to repeat this information back to us.

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.

Training is provided for all fundraising staff to detect vulnerability in supporters/potential supporters and politely decline offers of support from such individuals. Call monitoring and training along with mystery shopping takes place regularly to ensure guidelines are being adhered to.

If you would like to speak to us about this policy or if you have any feedback please contact the Supporter Services team. You can do this via telephone (0300 777 7910), by email (enquiries@worldwidecancerresearch.org), or in writing (Worldwide Cancer Research, 1st floor, Canning Exchange, 10 Canning Street, Edinburgh EH3 8EG

Appendix A - Fundraisers Checklist



Record
communication
preferences on
database

**Mark the
individual as 'do
not contact' on
the database**