

# GIVING SAFELY ON THE STREET

A guide to making sure your charitable donations really count

## Making your donation count

Charities and voluntary organisations do important work helping those in the greatest need. In turn, they rely on us to give what we can. The money raised is urgently needed. It houses the vulnerable, feeds the hungry, protects the natural world and alleviates the suffering of animals and humans alike. Without our donations many would soon struggle.

PLEASE  
DON'T STOP  
GIVING

The vast majority of collections and appeals are authentic and legitimate, but some are scams.

So what can you do to thwart the fraudsters and make sure your donations really do reach the causes that need them? Quite a lot. It's simpler than you might think to check the authenticity of a collector or charity.

But the most important message of all is still this: please don't stop giving.

## On the street

It is not uncommon to be approached in the street by charity collectors carrying buckets or clipboards. They often work in small groups, wear the branded clothing of their cause and are happy to answer your questions.

But how can you be confident that you are talking to the real thing?

- ✓ Cash collections in public places, like doorstep collections, usually need a permit or licence. A few Scottish charities are exempt from licensing: check with the regulator.
- ✓ Collections on private property (eg. a block of flats) don't require a licence, but they do need the owner's permission.
- ✓ Are the collectors wearing proper identity badges, and do they seem knowledgeable enough about their charity and its work?
- ✓ If the collectors are from a professional fundraising company, they must be able to tell you how much their company is paid and how this was calculated.
- ✓ Check that the collection bucket is sealed and carries the charity's name (and registration number, if any). It is illegal to collect in ordinary buckets and open containers.
- ✓ As before, if you agree to set up a direct debit, give only your bank account number and branch sort-code. That is all that's needed.
- ✓ Make any cheques payable only to the charity itself.
- ✓ Still in doubt? Simply contact the charity direct and ask about other ways to give.

## Reporting scams and bogus collections

If you become aware of a charity scam, or are the victim of one, you should report it to:

- Action Fraud ☎ 0300 123 2040 (textphone 0300 123 2050) [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk)
- Your local police [www.police.uk](http://www.police.uk)
- Your local authority trading standards department
- The appropriate charity regulator

If the scam affects a legitimate charity, notify the charity itself so that it can inform its supporters and prevent others from falling victim.

### Charity Commission for England and Wales

In England and Wales charities with an annual income of less than £5000 do not need to register. <http://m.charitycommission.gov.uk> (mobile phone access to register). [www.charity-commission.gov.uk](http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk)

### Charity Commission for Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland charities are not yet registered, but the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland does maintain an online list of organisations deemed to be charities because they are registered with HMRC for tax purposes. This list is not exhaustive. Registration is due to commence in 2013.

☎ 028 3832 0220 (textphone 028 3834 7639)

[www.charitycommissionni.org.uk](http://www.charitycommissionni.org.uk)

### Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator

In Scotland all charities must be registered. The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator also maintains an online list of charities exempt from holding licences for collections in public places.

☎ 01382 220 446 [www.oscr.org.uk](http://www.oscr.org.uk)

