

NEW LONDON METROPOLITAN POLICE REQUIREMENT FOR DOORSTEP FACE TO FACE FUNDRAISERS TO UNDERGO BASIC DBS CHECKS

HOME Fundraising Policy Statement

In January of this year the London Met published new requirements for all fundraisers to undergo basic DBS checks in order to secure authorisation to conduct door to door fundraising in the Greater London area. We wanted to highlight this emerging issue to you, as there are significant risks inherent with such a fundamental change to current practices, which will impact on many charity's ability to recruit new donors through the door-to-door (D2D) fundraising channel.

Background

At an initial meeting that I attended on the 2nd February, coordinated by the PFRA, the Met outlined the rationale for fundraiser DBS checks as a means to address issues of crime relating to fraudulent or poorly managed collections. While the examples given are concerning, they remain exclusively issues with *cash* collections, with no account of the same problems pertaining to doorstep face-to-face *direct debit* collections.

The provision of DBS checks for fundraisers appears to have been taken directly from an initiative implemented by Transport for London (TFL) in conjunction with the FRSB, again to address issues with cash collections on TFL private land. It's worth noting that TFL do not allow any direct debit collections in their stations and both their scheme and the subsequent London Met scheme took place without any consultation with the PFRA or its membership.

Risks

We wish to highlight the following clear and significant risks to the D2D fundraising channel through DBS checks being a requirement for fundraisers –

- Negative perception of D2D

While we understand the concerns raised by the Met, no consideration has been given to the D2D and wider Face-to-Face (F2F) fundraising community and the quality checks that already exist in the sector. There is also no evidence to suggest that the reported issues involve D2D fundraisers. The PFRA is a legitimate self-regulatory organisation which governs the activity and which operates within the current self-regulatory environment. Their membership consists of respected and well known charitable organisations and their provider membership are all Professional Fundraising Organisations (PFOs). All PFOs have systems in place to check on the suitability of new and existing employees through reference checking and professional contracts.

- Increase in the cost of fundraising

Depending on the service, DBS checks can cost between £20 and £40 per individual fundraiser. This is a significant additional cost which will impact of the viability of the channel as these costs will likely be passed on to charities.

- Impact on recruitment and scheduling

In addition to the prohibitive costs, DBS checks can also take up to 6 weeks to issue. The resulting delay could mean that new fundraisers' contract start dates would be delayed, impacting on the viability of D2D as a legitimate means of employment, and all fundraising organisations' ability to manage campaigns appropriately. We have already been informed by the CBS service that full checks cannot be applied to D2D fundraisers as they are not deemed to be at risk from routinely coming into contact with children or vulnerable people. The basic DBS check would only act to flag unspent convictions.

- Disparity for fundraising activity

Given that these new requirements affect only those charitable organisations who do not currently hold an NEO, the scheme clearly creates a 2-tier system which is inherently unfair, greatly penalising some charities and not others. As the requirements are effectively live as of now, it has become extremely difficult to accommodate fundraising in London on behalf of those charities who do not hold NEOs; an issue that has immediate consequences. There is also the very real risk that such a scheme could be adopted in other areas of the country. In addition to the disparity created within the fundraising community, no such requirements are to be implemented for commercial doorstep activity. Again this amounts to an inappropriate and unfair penalty on a sector that already is committed to improving standards in so many other ways and already has effective systems in existence.

Current environment

Since the initial meeting the PFRA have coordinated feedback from the membership to inform all subsequent correspondence with HOME also making direct contributions. As well as highlighting the inherent problems the sector would experience should the requirement remain, the PFRA have also questioned the purpose behind the changes given the lack of evidence of people with relevant convictions currently working as D2D or F2F fundraisers and the absence of reported incidents involving D2D & F2F fundraisers. HOME wholeheartedly support efforts currently being made to highlight the very real impact of this issue and to instigate a meaningful and informed consultation.

The next steps

Given the urgency, the PFRA are to escalate their concerns to the Greater London Assembly, appealing to them directly for a more proportionate solution. We expect that this correspondence will be sent as early as W/C 21st March. It is likely that you are already aware of this issue and that you have received direct correspondence from the PFRA. We feel it is essential that those charities affected coordinate with the PFRA and provide further evidence in the form of projected loss of income to help inform the next stages of the debate.

HOME will continue to work with the PFRA and are happy to respond to any questions you may have.

ENDS

About HOME

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

HOME is now the largest professional fundraising company of its type in Europe growing from 1% of the UK market share in 2002 to 35% today in 2015.

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 16 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, joint managing directors of HOME Fundraising, relates to leadership principles and setting the conditions for sustainable business (published by Pighog Press in May 2014).

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.

HOME Fundraising has an active voice on regulatory matters and are members of the Public Fundraising Regulatory Association (PFRA), the Institute of Fundraising (IoF) and Fundraising Standards Board (FRSB), and are bound by the IoF Code of Fundraising Practice.

For more information please contact:

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