



Chartered
Institute of
Fundraising

ethicalcall

A GOOD CALL

Using the telephone for fundraising and supporter care
Second edition, 2022



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FOREWORD

“ The ability for a fundraiser to have one-to-one conversations with a supporter is one of the most powerful and meaningful ways of developing relationships and bringing people close to a charity’s cause. During the course of the pandemic, telephone fundraising really proved its ongoing value: when people were locked down and distant from their everyday lives the telephone enabled connections and an absolutely vital means of communication for charities to inspire donations and support, as well as the opportunity for great supporter care.”



Katie Docherty
CEO, Chartered Institute of Fundraising

With grateful thanks to contributors, including the Fundraising Regulator and the following agencies:





Ethicall is proud to be the sponsor and instigator of this telephone fundraising resource. It's been three years since the publication of the first edition, which we hoped would be useful for many organisations across the fundraising sector. We wanted to share our knowledge and produce something that empowered charities to make the most of the fundraising and supporter care opportunities offered by the telephone. And we hoped to make a contribution to the fundraising strategies of many wonderful causes that we feel so passionately about.

Of course, the world has moved on considerably since the original guide. The pandemic has emphasised the importance of one-to-one conversations in developing relationships across all aspects of life. With enforced isolation, the telephone really came into its own in enabling charities to keep in touch with and engage supporters.

We felt it was timely – as we learn to live in this new fundraising landscape – to revisit and enhance this guide, increasing understanding of the options available, new strategies and tips on successful telephone fundraising and supporter care. We hope it continues to be a valuable resource for the sector in helping organisations make best use of the telephone to fundraise successfully and effectively, and to nurture vital supporter relationships.



Cristy Cunnick, Alex Weeks-Smyth and David Walwin
Founders and Directors of Ethicall

INTRODUCTION: USING THE TELEPHONE FOR FUNDRAISING

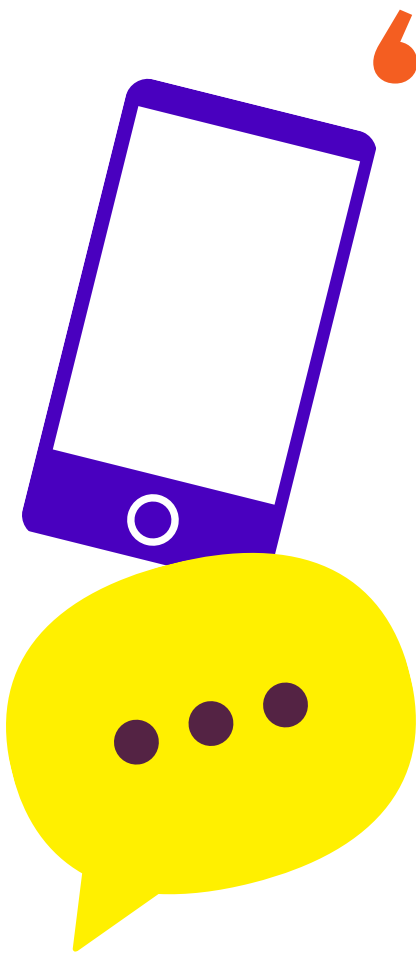
The telephone has long been a key channel for fundraising and supporter stewardship. But during the coronavirus pandemic, when the nation was homebound, the phone became even more fundamental.



The telephone gave charities the chance to connect with people on a one-to-one basis when so many were craving genuine and meaningful human interaction; an opportunity to demonstrate how valued supporters really are and to create a sense of community and belonging. In a survey of 50 fundraisers at the end of 2021, two thirds said they expect to increase their use of the phone for supporter stewardship over the coming year, and just over half anticipated growing their use of the channel for development and acquisition.¹



1 Survey by Chartered Institute of Fundraising, 2021



The pandemic triggered the start of a significant shift in how telephone is used. So many charities saw how important it was becoming for relationship building and in supporting digital acquisition, and many completely changed their approach to calling. Sensitive to the situation people might be in, they called simply to check in with supporters – not to make a financial ask. Charities asked how people were coping and shared updates about the impact on beneficiaries too. Those calls proved to be key for retaining supporters, and when charities called supporters to ask for donations further down the line, we saw a noticeable uplift. Supporters were more engaged, they felt valued and needed, and they understood the challenges charities were facing. Critically, they were far more receptive to becoming regular givers and to supporting the charity in other ways too.”



Helen MacKenzie
Founder & CEO, Purity

Fundraisers use the telephone not only to appeal for support, but to engage and ignite people’s passion for the cause, to say thank you, demonstrate impact, build understanding of the charity’s work and to develop a unique and personalised supporter journey. Perhaps most crucially, it offers an opportunity to listen and learn about what supporters (and others) feel and think, what they need and hope for from their relationship with the charity.

As we move forward in today’s increasingly digital world, calling has become an integral part of so many charities’ fundraising programmes, boosting donations, growing loyalty and inspiring passion in equal measure. In recent years, the regulatory framework for telephone fundraising has continued to evolve, with a focus on ensuring organisations always act responsibly, treating the public respectfully, being mindful of their needs and potential vulnerabilities. The most successful fundraising calls will inevitably be those that reflect supporter preferences and interests. This guide explores some of the ways charities are using telephone calling for fundraising and supporter care, highlighting the key regulatory issues for compliance and best practice.

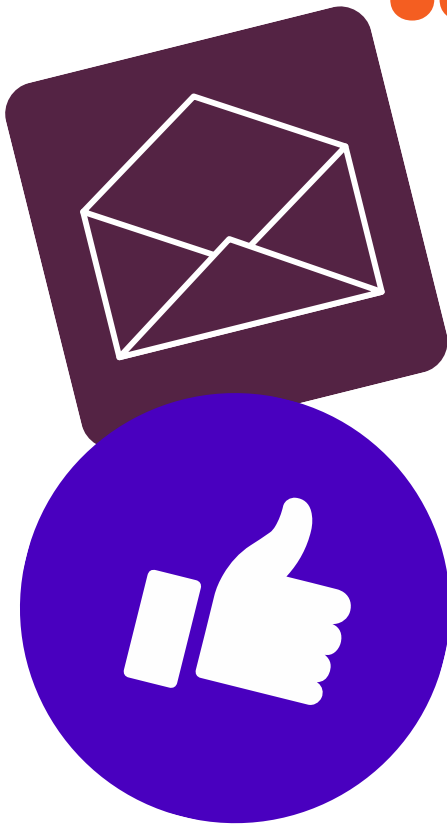
Telephone fundraising rules and best practice

The rules for telephone fundraising cover a wide expanse of issues, ranging from organisations' use of data to the specific details that need to be included in a call, and from contracts with third parties through to complaint handling processes. It's important to be aware that fundraising calls are usually categorised as marketing activity, which means that charities will need to establish a legal basis for calling (either legitimate interests or consent). Some rules are specific to charity fundraising, while others – such as TPS, UK GDPR and PECR requirements – apply more widely. As with all fundraising activity, charities and partners must follow the Fundraising Regulator's Code of Fundraising Practice.

Why make a call?

Good honest conversation is one of the most natural ways to build rapport and develop supporter relationships, maximising lifetime value. As a two-way dialogue channel, the telephone can help to raise funds, develop long-term committed supporters, gather vital feedback, and increase supporter satisfaction. Hugely versatile, the phone enables you to tailor calls around supporters' needs and interests, providing up-to-the-minute information about what's going on within the charity and its beneficiaries, offering a range of options for supporters to take action or donate.





Like most charities, we automate mass stewardship emails, but we always try to have that first contact on the phone. It might be a case of welcoming our marathon runners to the team, seeing how we can support fundraising activities or thanking people for signing up to a regular gift.

The richness and depth of those conversations helps us to build trusting and authentic relationships. I find that we'll often get further in that one conversation than in 10 or 100 emails. It's the value of being able to go off on tangents, to follow people's interests, to get a sense of who they are; their energies, their motivations. It's this that enables us to create really distinctive supporter experiences."



Lucy Squance

Director of Supporter-Led Fundraising,
Alzheimer's Research UK

How can the telephone enhance the supporter experience?

A call gives supporters the chance to find out more about your work, what a difference their donations make and to raise any questions they might have. They can steer the conversation, in line with their own interests, and supporters will often really appreciate the personal touch of a phone call. A good call will leave your supporters feeling inspired and valued, regardless of whether they choose to donate.



The telephone is one of the best ways of having truly interactive relationships with supporters and can be a fantastic way to ask for funds. But, if you only use it for financial asks, you run the risk of losing supporters altogether. Stewardship calls can be incredibly powerful – dramatically boosting longer-term ROI and retention. Never underestimate the power of a simple thank you or update call to convey just how much you value your supporters.

Good stewardship is not just a matter of income or ROIs, fundamentally it's about the relationship and that's a longer journey. Supporters want to feel part of your organisation; that they belong and that they make a difference."



Alex Weeks-Smyth
Client Relationship Director,
Ethicall



How can charities use the phone to support their fundraising?

The telephone can be used at various points along the supporter journey to strengthen supporter relationships and inspire action, whether the focus of the call is to recruit new donors or to reach out and continue to engage with your most committed givers.



The phone is the main opportunity we have for immediate two-way conversations with supporters. Conversations allow us to understand who they are, why they support us and what is going on in their lives. When this is captured and used correctly, it can really enhance all communications with supporters across different channels.”



Becki Young

Head of Individual Giving,
Care International UK





Ten fundraising calls you might make

- 1** To reach new audiences and ask for their help, recruiting supporters and raising vital funding fast.
- 2** To thank, welcome and check in with supporters, conveying how much they are valued.
- 3** To build engagement, sharing news and communicating impact.
- 4** To listen to and learn from supporter feedback.
- 5** To encourage occasional supporters to become regular givers.
- 6** To ask supporters if they could increase the value of their gifts/donation.
- 7** To offer choice, giving people a range of options to support the cause.
- 8** To open up sensitive conversations about legacy giving.
- 9** To guide and support event participants or volunteer fundraisers.
- 10** To check eligibility for Gift Aid or for other administrative purposes

GREAT CONVERSATIONS YOU CAN HAVE WITH SUPPORTERS

1

Engaging new audiences

A telephone fundraising campaign enables you to reach out to people across the country and ask for their help, tailoring your approach to appeal to their interests. While the preferred outcome of an acquisition campaign may well be a new tranche of regular givers, the phone is often used for emergency appeals, lottery campaigns and other purposes too. Fundraisers can be agile, answering questions from supporters and offering options for donating or supporting the charity in some other way.

As with any fundraising campaign, it's important to think strategically about what you want to achieve and how this will fit within your broader plan and will be supported across other fundraising channels. Who will you call? What will you ask them to do? And what will happen next?

“For us, the phone works really well for acquisition, particularly when it's paired with digital. We use digital channels to drive people who want to support our work to give us their permission for a call. The more information we can gather on those calls about why somebody wants to engage or support us, the better. Then it's about making sure that ongoing journey and stewardship is retained, using that insight to encourage them to stay with us and develop their commitment.”



Sam Butler

Head of Public Fundraising, Starlight Children's Foundation

“Speed and scale are key for emergency appeals and telephone can offer both. If you have the infrastructure already in place for inbound and or outbound, you can very quickly reach high volumes of conversations, it should be one of your most effective channels in an emergency appeal situation. Responses can be closely tracked, and results can be optimised by being flexible in the campaign delivery in real time; it’s a great mechanism with which to generate significant income fast.”



Dominic Will
Managing Director, PFS

What makes for a great acquisition campaign?

- Good quality data – Having up-to-date and accurate contact details for those you call is vital. This might include people already on your database, such as volunteers, beneficiaries, lapsed supporters or event participants, or new leads generated through digital campaigns.
- Make sure you have a clear, honest and inspiring case for support – one that shows why you need their help and what it will enable you to do. Where possible, have case studies ready to help bring your work to life.
- Options for supporters – Having a clear goal for the campaign is important, but people like to give in different ways. So, be prepared to offer alternative options for supporting the charity’s work (subject to relevant permissions or consent), and to signpost people to online or text donation services where appropriate.
- Opportunities for feedback or information gathering – Explore what information you could gather from each call to enhance the supporter journey. This might include asking for feedback, checking contact data or communication preferences.



Questions to consider when planning your acquisition campaign

- Who will you call and how will you source their names and numbers? Are you targeting a specific demographic or a cross-section of the population?
- What is your legal basis for calling – legitimate interests or consent – and how will this be documented?
- If sourcing data from a third party, how will you carry out due diligence and confirm that they are following the rules and sourcing contact data appropriately?
- How will the names and numbers be cross-checked against suppression lists and current supporter data, and what will you do if contacts ask you not to call again?
- What information do you expect fundraisers to capture during the call? Have you checked that your database can hold this information?
- How will you thank and follow up with people who donate, and those who don't?
- See **Planning your telephone campaign**

Saying thank you and more – good supporter care

Honest and open dialogue can ignite a supporter's passion for the cause and build understanding of the charity's work, while also helping charities get to know their donors and learn what they want from the relationship. Explore the many ways you might use the telephone to welcome new supporters and make them feel valued, including simple thank you, update or feedback calls.



A good supporter-focused call can strengthen loyalty, reduce attrition and increase long-term returns. Ethicall reports that lifetime return on investment (ROI) for some charities has grown five-fold with an active stewardship programme. Similarly, supporters who have been stewarded are 25% more likely to interact in other ways, such as taking part in events to volunteering or leaving a legacy.

Beyond the realm of individual giving, fundraisers working with corporate partners, trusts and major donors too are using the channel to sustain and nurture their most important relationships.

“ These campaigns are our chance to show supporters how much we appreciate them and to get to know them better. The best thing about the campaign was seeing how delighted some of our supporters were to receive the call and what it meant to them.”



Saira Rahim

Individual Giving Manager,
Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation

Welcome and thank you calls

When a supporter signs up to donate, a welcome call can help to cement the foundations of the relationship, thanking them for taking that first step, finding out more about them and establishing how best to communicate with them. Similarly, thank you calls can help charities re-engage and deepen the bond with supporters. Often, such calls are timed to coincide with donation anniversaries, to thank supporters for increasing their gift or to share news of the culmination of projects or appeals that the supporter has contributed towards.



Thank you Crisis! You just rang me... You didn't ask for anything... You didn't even hint at a donation... You simply rang me to say 'Thank You' for our continued support and to wish me a nice day... How lovely... Made my day... It's a pleasure to support such a brilliant charity.”

— Crisis supporter on Twitter



Welfare or 'check in' calls

Picking up the phone to check in with supporters, to see how they are doing and simply to convey that they care can be a powerful approach, inspiring a strong sense of community among supporters. In times of crisis, including the coronavirus pandemic, some charities called and offered payment holidays, reduced donation levels and services for donors who were clearly facing stressful situations or financial difficulty. The strength of such calls is the focus on supporters' needs.



It is the first time I have ever been contacted by an organisation that I support or am involved with where the intention was to make me feel valued. I was quite overwhelmed actually, and slightly emotional... Not only that, but the caller was interested in how I was, which at a time like this [the pandemic] is really valuable. Thank you."

— Battersea supporter

Feedback calls

Using the phone to cultivate a two-way relationship can be instrumental in developing a mutually beneficial supporter journey. After all, asking supporters for their views on relevant issues, the charity's work or fundraising activities, will not only provide you with useful feedback, but also demonstrate to them that their thought and experience is important.



Having a conversation in real time with supporters allows them to stop what they are doing for a few minutes and really consider the impact of their giving. We see time and again that simply having a conversation with supporters improves lifetime value."



Bethan Francis

Managing Director, Stratcom UK

Macmillan case study: bringing hope and comfort in times of need

20,000

MACMILLAN SPOKE WITH MORE THAN 20,000 SUPPORTERS FROM APRIL THROUGH TO AUGUST 2020

91%

THE AVERAGE NET PROMOTER SCORE (NPS) ROSE FROM 82% TO 91% AMONG THOSE WHO HAD BEEN CALLED

As the UK headed towards lockdown in mid-March 2020, the fundraising team at Macmillan decided to abandon plans for its Thanking Day in July, instead carrying out a wider-reaching 'checking in' telephone campaign, beginning that April. There were several drivers for this: spare capacity in fundraising teams due to a drop in inbound call traffic and a lack of face-to-face meetings; fundraising activity being disrupted or postponed; and the opportunity to reach out to supporters in a different way to thank them and check how they were.

The fundraising teams pulled together the campaign guidance and identified audiences very quickly, with regional fundraising and supporter care team members making calls from April through to August. Macmillan spoke with more than 20,000 supporters, ranging from event participants to lottery players and World's Biggest Coffee Morning hosts. Those they spoke with were overwhelmingly positive about the calls and Macmillan saw a corresponding increase in supporter satisfaction levels – with the average net promoter score (NPS) rising from 82% to 91% among those who had been called.



We heard some incredibly heart-warming stories from people who hadn't talked to anyone else that day, or who were going through tough times and so appreciated having someone to speak to. We also began to see the impact of delivering a stewardship campaign in supporters' increased loyalty and desire to help. Some signed up as volunteers, while others made additional donations or pulled out all the stops to help us fundraise in spite of the pandemic and social distancing measures. It felt like a really worthwhile and meaningful thing to do during an extremely challenging time, and it's a campaign I'm very proud to have been part of."



Rachel Kingston

Fundraising Stewardship & Development Lead,
Macmillan Cancer Support



Taking supporters to the next level – supporter development

A supporter development campaign typically aims to increase people's commitment to the charity, the depth of their relationship and/or the level of gift. This might mean inspiring volunteers, campaigners and sponsored event participants to become donors (or vice versa), encouraging alumni, cash or ad hoc givers to join a regular giving or lottery programme, or motivating supporters to increase the amount they give (upgrade or uplift calls).



The phone not only helps us build rapport with new supporters and keeps long term supporters updated with the impact their gifts make, it also plays the vital role of being our biggest driver of upgrades. Upgrading in turn improves donor loyalty, meaning we can do so much more to protect the planet we love.”



Tom Micklewright

Supporter Development Manager, Greenpeace

One of the biggest advantages of calling current supporters is that you're more likely to have an established relationship. Because of this, such calls can deliver a high return on investment, inspiring supporters to take their giving to the next level.

However, each supporter relationship differs. Some supporters feel a deep-rooted connection to the organisation and its work, while others will be less engaged. With the ability for fundraisers to change tack on a call in response to supporter feedback, any donor development campaign will ideally include a range of options (financial and otherwise) that will enable people to continue their own unique supporter journey. Bear in mind that people's personal circumstances change, so offering reduced donation amounts at times can be beneficial, enabling supporters to continue that journey with you.



Genuine conversation brings benefits to a supporter, and knowing what those benefits are and learning what matters to donors is invaluable. Over half of Dogs Trust donors contacted in an upgrade campaign increased their gifts, but the success of the campaign went beyond statistics. Donors had questions about the health of their own pets in the pandemic, opinions on news stories of lockdown purchased puppies, and heartfelt concern over a charity they knew had to adapt their service provision dramatically. If you engage and are prepared to listen, what you learn can mean more than numbers.”



Natalie Bailey
Managing Director, NTT Fundraising

Questions to consider when planning supporter development calls

- What is the purpose of your call? What do you want your supporters to do and what will this enable you to achieve?
- Which supporters will you call and, if it's a marketing call, what is your legal basis for doing so?
- What options will you offer different supporter groups on the call? Consider both those that give and those that 'do', (e.g. event participants and volunteers).
- How will you follow up with supporters? What is the next stage of their journey with you?



Willen hospice case study: asking valued supporters to increase their gifts

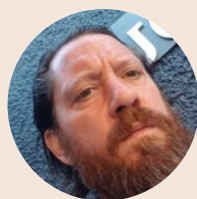
Having faced heavy income losses during the pandemic, Willen Hospice in Milton Keynes set out to grow its regular income stream in 2021, using the telephone to reach the charity's committed supporters with an upgrade campaign. This was the first telephone campaign for the hospice and so there was some trepidation internally about how such valued supporters might react to the calls. And yet, the campaign far exceeded expectations; one quarter of supporters who received calls chose to increase their gift and not a single complaint was made.

Without the capacity to deliver calls in-house and seeking guidance on best practice, the campaign was delivered through Ethicall. Both regular givers and lottery players were called and thanked, emphasising how important their donations had been in such tough times, before being asked if they would like to increase their donations.



Telephone fundraising is completely new to Willen Hospice so we weren't sure what to expect or how the campaign would go down with supporters. As a local charity with a really close supporter base, it was so important that we got that right. We put a lot of time into planning and the results far exceeded our expectations.

The fact that the calls went down so well with our supporters has really built our confidence. We now have a new fundraising channel that we can use in-house or externally and that's awesome! In fact, we're just about to start a new campaign with our lapsed donors and we'll build the channel into our future plans."



Vincent Moran

In Memory and Regular Giving Manager, Willen Hospice



£560m

CHARITIES ARE MISSING OUT ON AROUND £560 MILLION IN POTENTIAL GIFT AID INCOME EACH YEAR

25%

GIFT AID ENABLES CHARITIES TO CLAIM AN ADDITIONAL 25% ON DONATIONS FROM UK TAXPAYERS

Promoting Gift Aid

A call to explain how Gift Aid works and explore whether supporters are eligible for the scheme can boost the value of donations considerably. Although Gift Aid usage is increasing, research from Charities Aid Foundation in 2021 finds that almost one quarter of eligible donors don't use Gift Aid on their donations. In other words, charities are missing out on around £560 million in potential Gift Aid income each year, according to the Charity Finance Group.

How Gift Aid works

Enabling charities to claim an additional 25% on donations from UK taxpayers, Gift Aid increases donation values at no cost to the donor. Supporters often welcome these calls and the majority of eligible taxpayers choose to Gift Aid their donations when asked. Be aware that people's taxpaying status may change, so occasional calls can be made to ensure your records remain up to date. So long as the call is strictly focused on Gift Aid – checking eligibility or other necessary details – and it doesn't include any ask for funds, marketing consent or promotional messaging, it can be classed as administrative.

What Gift Aid supporters need to know

It's crucial to explain how Gift Aid works and to ensure that supporters are eligible. Supporters simply have to complete a declaration that meets the eligibility criteria and that declaration can apply on all donations made over the past four tax years and on future donations. Higher rate taxpayers will often be able to claim additional tax relief for themselves.

“ You can quickly increase Gift Aid take-up of your donor file with a short phone call. The phone is particularly good for reaching those who don't respond to the Gift Aid ask on donation forms, those that actively avoid thinking about 'scary and complicated' tax affairs.”



Steve Morris
General Manager, Unity4



What records you need to keep

As well as keeping your own records of Gift Aid donations, you'll need a recording of the declaration itself. HMRC will accept oral Gift Aid declarations so long as you store a recording and send a written copy of the declaration to the supporter giving them 30 days to cancel (this needs to be the same information as hand-written or online declarations). You must also keep a record of when these confirmation letters have been issued. Remember to keep records of any Gift Aid donations for six years after the end of the accounting period they relate to.



- **Gift Aid Guidance**, HMRC²
- **Gift Aid model declarations**, HMRC³
- **Claim Gift Aid**, Gov.UK⁴



2 Visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charities-detailed-guidance-notes/chapter-3-gift-aid>

3 Visit: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/gift-aid-declarations-claiming-tax-back-on-donations#declaration-formats>

4 Visit: <https://www.gov.uk/claim-gift-aid-online>



Legacies

Giving you the space to explore supporters' views and to convey the impact of gifts in Wills on your organisation, the telephone is an increasingly popular way to open up conversation about legacy giving. During a call, you might establish whether supporters have a Will already, if they have considered including a charity and how far they might be along that process. This information can then guide future communications, enabling you to target your legacy marketing at the most engaged or interested group. Consider coinciding your calls with campaigns like Remember A Charity Week, when public awareness is likely to be at its peak.

Legacies can be a particularly personal matter, so calls should always be carried out sensitively. But these conversations are also a wonderful opportunity to get to know supporters better and understand their hopes. It's a chance to address queries about the process of leaving a legacy, to reassure people that there's no minimum donation, and that charities, family and friends can all be included in one will. Similarly, the telephone can be a vital channel to engage major givers, even when it comes to potentially transformational capital programmes.



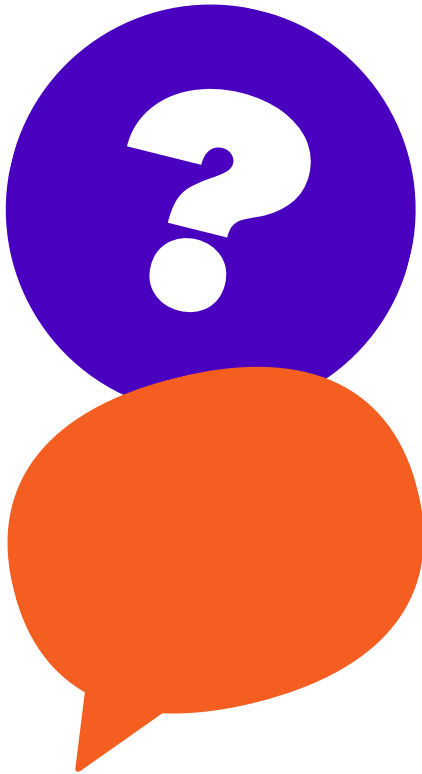
A call is one of the best ways to build narrative and explain what a difference the supporter makes. So for legacy campaigns, which require a deeper level of communication, the telephone is ideal. It enables us to create really memorable touchpoints for supporters, which are vital in building the relationship. And the insight gathered on those calls gives us continuity – other team members can pick up that conversation and take the supporter on to the next stage of their journey.”



Sam Butler

Head of Public Fundraising, Starlight Children's Foundation

**REMEMBER A CHARITY
IN YOUR WILL**
Help the work live on...



Remember A Charity is a consortium of charities working to normalise legacy giving across the UK, supporting members with promotional resources and running consumer awareness activities all year round. Remember A Charity Week takes place each September.⁵

Questions to consider for legacy calling

- What is the purpose of the call? Is it to identify potential legators, to educate and enthuse people with the opportunity of making an impact through legacy giving, or something else?
- What information are you looking to gather and what questions will you ask supporters?
- How will you track success?
- How will you follow up with supporters who are interested in making a gift in their will?
- If a supporter clearly does not wish to discuss legacies, how else can you use the call?
- What will you do if they offer to support your charity in another way?

Event fundraising

Whether you are inviting people to take part in a physical challenge or virtual event and raise funds, or to offer guidance and support to those that have already signed up, the telephone is often used to support charities' fundraising event programmes.

⁵ Find out more at: <https://www.rememberacharity.org.uk>



Event calling can include registration, stewardship, conversion and post event. For each it's a great opportunity to learn about participants' motivations, to inspire them and remind them exactly what all of their preparation, hard work and effort will mean to a cause. Each point of contact can encourage fundraising ideas, provide reassurance, and answer questions, especially while people had concerns about returning to any kind of group social activity."



Natalie Bailey
Managing Director, NTT Fundraising

Pre-event calls to participants can help charities identify the drivers for people getting involved in that event. Are they doing it because they are deeply passionate about the cause or because a friend asked them to? Their motivations will likely influence their supporter journey and understanding this can help shape the communications timeline, building engagement and improving return on investment.

Remember, that even if a call isn't a direct ask for money, data protection rules apply as to who you can call and for what purpose. If you're calling to promote an event, the call will be deemed a marketing call. But, if you're calling event participants to make sure they have the information they need or to offer support, this will likely be categorised as an administrative call



Multi-channel fundraising and digital integration

The most successful calling campaigns are often part of an integrated multi-channel approach that piques people's interest in one medium and encourages them to interact in another, building on the strength of each channel and supporter preferences.



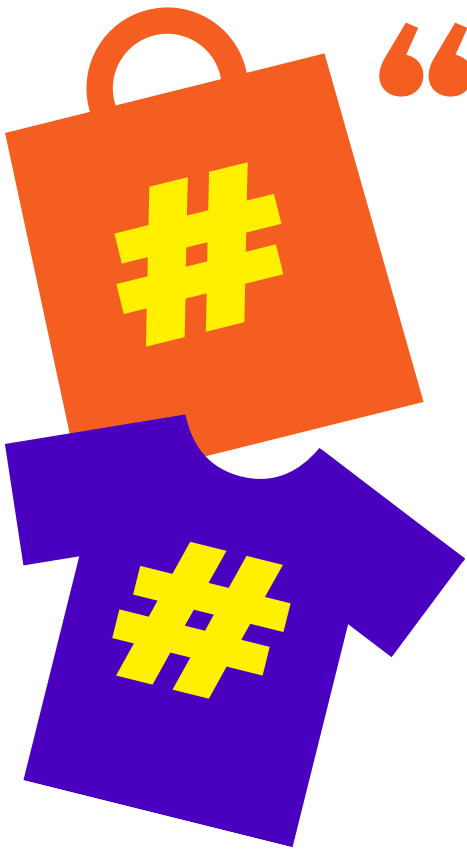
Increasingly, charities are using social media to find and connect with like-minded communities and potential supporters. Digital channels allow for sophisticated targeting and storytelling, with engaging imagery and video content. Mail too can give charities the space to convey their work and the needs of the cause, while TV or radio can offer substantial reach, encouraging supporters to pick up the phone. In each case, the telephone can be an ideal channel for building on that initial outreach, developing the relationship and encouraging supporters to take action. Calling those who are warm to the organisation and have engaged in some way in recent weeks can dramatically enhance the campaign, but it's important that there is a smooth transition across channels and that any messaging is consistent.



Telephone really excels in combination with digital. The dramatic acceleration in digital lead generation during the pandemic shows that where digital can act as an excellent hand-raiser, telephone, as the next touch point, can be invaluable in providing the human touch that begins building a meaningful relationship between the charity and supporter. This may be bringing in a one-off donation, encouraging a regular giving commitment or offering a different type of interaction; all setting firm foundations for a supporter journey that can be built on into the future.”



Helen MacKenzie
Founder & CEO, Purity



We're using social media to grow our call list, SMS and emails to build engagement and deepen the relationship prior to calling, and we are using SMS to speak with those that choose not to answer phone calls on a campaign. The key is to plan coherent and logical journeys and content across all the channels. Working in this way with clients allows them to significantly grow supporter numbers, engagement levels, supporter satisfaction and their fundraising income."



Bethan Francis
Managing Director, Stratcom UK

Value Exchange campaigns

More charities are experimenting with value exchange campaigns, which invite the public to provide their details to receive something of value. This might involve promoting a charity-branded item on social media channels, such as a tote bag, t-shirt, face mask or pack of seeds. Equally, it could be something informative linked to the charity's work, such as a support booklet for carers or people with a medical condition or an information pack for activists. This strategy can be hugely successful in drawing supporters in, enabling you to start a conversation and build relationships.



The key is the perceived value that the potential donor sees in the product. A brochure on a medical condition or a checklist of symptoms not only gives value to the recipient, but it spreads awareness and information about that cause, helping to meet the charity's objectives. Similarly, a charity that is campaigns-focussed may feel their supporters would get value from a really powerful activist slogan printed on a bag or t-shirt."



Liam McEntergart
REAL Fundraising

Tips for identifying a good value exchange strategy:

- Define your objectives – what do you want supporters to do or sign up for, and how will this help you raise funds or achieve your mission?
- Look at your most committed supporters and consider what added value you could offer them, what item or proposition will inspire them to take action?
- Weigh up the cost of developing any products against the likely benefit for the organisation, thinking about how to minimise wastage, testing the concept with supporter groups.
- Consider how you will promote the offering and what you will ask them to do next.
- Make it clear to the public how their details will be used, ensuring they are not required to consent to future marketing activity – marketing consent must be freely given and not a condition of any goods or services.

Inbound calls – responding to supporters and others

Inbound campaigns encourage supporters to get in touch at their own convenience with their own queries about the charity's work and to explore what they can do to help. A popular response mechanism, a quick phone call can be a simple way to respond to an appeal, to ask for more information, to pass on feedback or change their communication preferences. Offering a specific supporter helpline gives them an easy and convenient way to get in touch.



Direct response appeals

Often, an inbound campaign will start with a fundraising appeal publicised across another channel, whether that's digital, newspaper or broadcast (TV or radio channels), email, SMS or direct mail. The appeal encourages the public to call in and donate, request information or to help in some other way. Some campaigns will drive a much higher level of response than others, so one of the biggest challenges for inbound calls is anticipating capacity. For this reason, many organisations outsource their inbound activity to specialist agencies who can adjust to the scale of each campaign.

Skilled call handling will ensure the call is more than a simple transaction, taking the opportunity to build rapport and provide an inspiring interaction, strengthening the building blocks for a long-standing relationship.



The main benefit of inbound calling is that it puts supporters in control of when the conversation takes place. The interaction is immediate, while the original call-to-action is still fresh in their mind. And we find that having an inbound option usually widens the response, especially for the older demographic. Inbound calling can be a really successful fundraising approach on its own or as part of a multi-channel strategy. If working with an agency or call centre, it's crucial to work closely together to ensure a wide range of queries can be answered and to ensure a high call answer rate is achieved."



Richard Hill

Managing Director, DTV Optimise

WHAT MAKES A GOOD CALL?

2

There are many rules in place for using the phone and it's crucial that all fundraisers have a clear understanding of what they can and can't do. However, a great telephone call is not only a case of legal compliance or meeting best practice guidelines; it's about creating an engaging and inspiring experience. Every call has the ability to be a transformative moment within the supporter journey and that's what makes the channel so important for fundraising, as well as the potential for considerable income generation. So, brush up on ten of the key rules in the **Code of Fundraising Practice** using our compliance checklist below and then take a look at our top tips for taking your call to the next level.⁶



⁶ See: <https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/code>



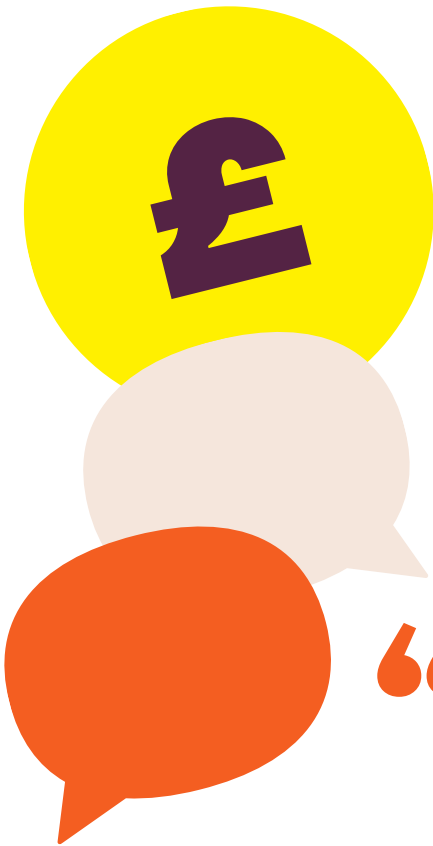
Top 10 checklist for fundraising call compliance

- 1** Ensure you have the appropriate legal basis for making a call (whether that's consent or legitimate interest), that this basis is documented and conforms with Telephone Preference Service (TPS) rules.
- 2** Avoid calling after 9pm (unless requested by the recipient) or ever calling anyone under the age of 16.
- 3** Always check that you are speaking with the correct person, that it's a convenient time to speak and that they are happy to receive your call.
- 4** Make it clear who you are calling from or on behalf of and why, speaking honestly and openly with recipients.
- 5** If the call is being recorded, declare this at the outset and check that recipients are happy to continue.
- 6** When a financial ask is made, avoid making the request more than three times on one call and remember that a solicitation statement will be required.
- 7** If you make an administrative call, make sure it does not include any marketing or promotion of the charity without securing the necessary consent or permissions.
- 8** At the end of the call, be sure to check whether the recipient is happy to be called again or wishes to receive communications by other means (where relevant).
- 9** Monitor the calls and any third parties working on your behalf to check that your campaign meets the standards you are committed to.
- 10** Make sure you have a thorough and accessible published complaints process in place.



Top 10 tips for taking your call to the next level

- 1** Put the relationship first – don't just call to ask for money, use the telephone to thank supporters and nurture relationships at key points throughout their journey with you.
- 2** Tailor every conversation to the individual – give fundraisers and supporter care teams as much background information as possible, enabling them to tailor calls around each supporter and their needs or potential vulnerabilities.
- 3** Aim to inspire and re-ignite supporters' passions whenever you call – remind supporters about what a difference they make, encouraging them to feel empowered by what they can do to help.
- 4** Listen to what people say – carefully consider any feedback from those you call (and that of your fundraisers), ensuring it is channelled into future campaigns.
- 5** Time it right – tailor the supporter journey so that the timeline of calls fits that journey and that nobody receives a repeat call.
- 6** Don't shy away from using the telephone for acquisition – it's one of the most effective ways to reach new people and build the foundations for committed relationships.
- 7** Make your agency part of your fundraising team – if you're working with an agency, draw them in close, introducing them to beneficiaries or inviting them to see your services in action.
- 8** Be clear around your approach to people's privacy – don't hide behind jargon, make sure your supporters understand how you will use their contact details and how you hope to improve their experience on the back of it, always using clear, accessible privacy notices.



Taking your call to the next level (continued)

- 9 Monitor campaigns with long-term measures, not only the quick wins – immediate feedback can help you improve campaigns, but longer-term results are vital for monitoring progress in relationship-building and supporter retention.
- 10 Test and explore what calls work best to meet your goals – don't expect to get everything 100% right straight away. Take time to plan, test and trial, strengthening the campaign as you go.



When your focus isn't just on ROI, it allows you to do far more; to offer choice, and the telephone is an ideal medium for that. There are massive benefits to having the ability to offer someone who rejects the proposition of being a regular donor the chance to take part in a fundraising event where they might raise £1,000 in a relatively short space of time. People want to engage in different ways. Bringing choice to the table enables supporters to get involved in a way that really works for them and they are far more likely to stay with you."



Alex Weeks-Smyth

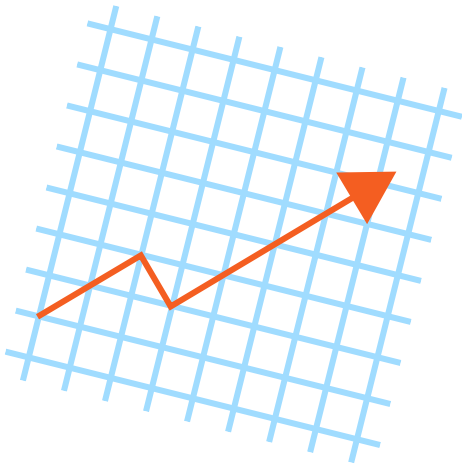
Client Services Director, Ethicall

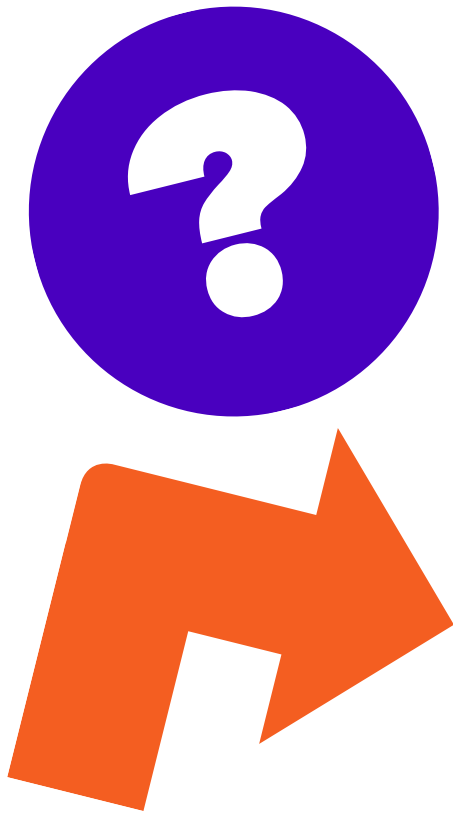
Planning your telephone campaign

No matter what the purpose of the call is or how it integrates with other channels, good planning is vital for a telephone campaign. Spending time on planning at the front end and involving any agency partners can make a huge difference to its success.

Whether you use the telephone to reach a select group or to engage thousands of supporters, you'll need to plan for the campaign as part of your wider fundraising strategy.

This means being clear about what you aim to achieve from the campaign and where you hope the call will take supporters on their journey with you. It also means exploring how best to carry out, monitor and assess your activity, knowing what your short and longer-term success criteria will be, and what support might be required for staff and supporters throughout the duration of the campaign. As with any fundraising activity, your telephone campaigns should reflect your organisational values and you'll need to ensure that both the risks and opportunities have been carefully considered.





Here are some questions for you to consider when planning the **strategy** for your campaign:

- What are the objectives of the call/campaign and what other channels will be used?
- Who do you need to reach and how will you source that data lawfully?
- Is there enough quality data to make the campaign viable?
- What are the targets for the campaign and how will success be measured? Consider not only short-term gain, but compliance, complaints, retention, supporter satisfaction and lifetime value.
- What are the risks and how will you mitigate these? How will any risks be reviewed as the campaign progresses?
- What needs to be done before, during and after the calls? A process mapping exercise can help you anticipate likely issues.
- What queries will need to be referred to others (internally or externally), and what partnerships might you need to set up before the campaign begins to support this?
- How will your calls be assessed? Will they be recorded and how will you capture and respond to feedback from your calls?
- What data will be collected from the call and in what format?
- What policies are in place – or should be put in place – defining the charity’s approach to vulnerable people, data protection, charity branding, complaint handling etc?
- What are your reporting requirements under the Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Act 2016?



Here are some questions for you to consider when planning the **delivery** of your campaign:

- Who will make or receive the calls (staff, volunteers, a third party or temporary staff) and how can you support them?
- If you are working with a third party, have you carried out due diligence, given them a clear brief and put in place a written agreement? Have you prepared a data processing agreement and, for campaigns that include a financial ask, a fundraising agreement and solicitation statement?
- How will your partner help to guide and shape your campaign? What are their recommendations to improve the quality of your campaign?
- How will your telephone fundraisers be trained, reviewed and monitored?
- Where and when should you signpost people if their needs go beyond their role or the scope of the campaign?
- What processes should you put in place to help fundraisers act appropriately if they think someone they call is confused about the nature of the call or may be vulnerable?
- Are the payment facilities and processes in place to obtain donations and personal information securely over the telephone?
- What other opportunities can you offer beyond the main objective of your campaign? Doing this will offer a better donor experience and helps you take a more integrated approach, supporting a range of organisational goals.
- How can you ensure that you make it just as easy for those you call to access support as it is for them to give?
- How should your fundraisers handle rejections or any complaints? How will you make sure those who prefer not to receive phone calls are not called again?

“ One of the most critical issues to think about is scope management, particularly when you’re talking with people who might be vulnerable. As fundraisers, you need to be cognisant of your role; and what resources and support your organisation provide and empowers you with. On a call, a supporter could be facing a housing crisis, struggling because of a new diagnosis, preparing for a funeral, having trouble making ends meet or struggling with the pandemic. We need to think beforehand who the best and right person to be providing that support in these situations is, and if it isn’t us, what our role and relationship is to that person organisationally to look after both ourselves and those we are speaking to.”



Matthew Radford

Deputy Chair, DMA's Vulnerable Group

Preparing key messages for your call

Although the conversation will vary from call to call, having a clear set of key messages is vital. Consider what messaging will best achieve your campaign goal. Does this include a clear case for support, facts and figures or emotive storytelling that will convey impact?

- How will the messaging come across over the phone? Is it written with the intention of being spoken and heard?
- What are the expectations on fundraisers? How rigid must they be in sticking to the messaging?
- Can you imagine the call from the recipient’s perspective? How will they feel when they listen to you and what can you do to ensure they feel respected and valued? Do you need to include any trigger warnings?
- What is your call to action? What other options can you offer for those who may wish to engage in other ways?
- What is the scope and what are the boundaries of your call? Where will you direct recipients if their needs go beyond those limits? Can you signpost them to supporter services or partner organisations?



Call scripts or guidelines

Telephone scripts or guidelines help fundraisers know what they should or shouldn't cover in the call and can be a vital prompt. Involve others in writing your messaging, trialling what works best and how different approaches are received. Be sure to discuss with your fundraisers what are the most important elements of the call and to re-assess the script and guidelines throughout the campaign, making adjustments in line with supporter and fundraiser feedback.

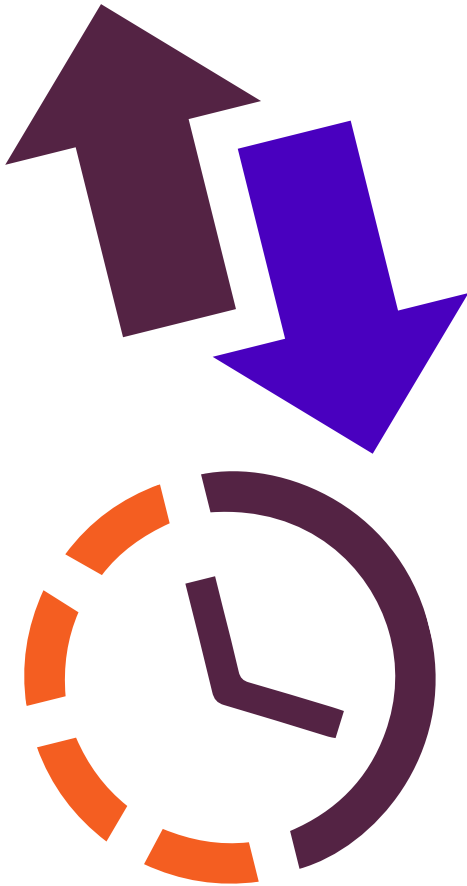
But remember to allow space for the conversation to develop naturally. The strength of the telephone is its versatility, enabling authentic dialogue. Scripts are rarely read verbatim, excluding the legal statements required for areas such as data protection, Gift Aid or donation processing (solicitations) – these statements must be read out clearly and in full.



Humans give to humans. It's important to allow the fundraiser's personality to shine through, to be personal but not over-bearing, and not to sound like a canned script. But make no mistake, having a script is crucial as it gives a fundraiser a pathway through the conversation. It's impossible to foresee and be able to script every conversation but a good script uses unfussy and transparent language and enables a fundraiser to move seamlessly between supporter interaction and meeting the call objective."



Steve Morris
General Manager, Unity4



Inbound calls

While many of the same principles apply for inbound campaigns, you may need to anticipate a wide range of potential reasons for an individual's call. They might want to ask questions about an appeal, to donate or help in some other way, or they may want to complain or even cancel a donation. Ahead of any inbound campaign, do some scenario planning, exploring why someone might call and what your likely responses will be in each case and for different supporter groups.

- How will the calls be monitored, against what measures and will there be an external assessor?
- What is the management and sign-off process for the messaging and the campaign as a whole?
- What information will you capture during the campaign, how will that data be processed and used in the future?

After the call

Preparing for what will happen next and how to continue the supporter journey is important.

- How will you communicate next with those who donated and those who didn't?
- What went well/what didn't? What can you learn from that?
- How will you deal with any feedback; positive or negative?
- What will you do if a supporter wants to cancel their donation or complain?



Tips for delivering a good call

- **Ensure the purpose of your call is clear** – Whatever the reason for your call, don't bury it or overwhelm people with too much information. If you're making an ask for support, explain what you're asking for, why people's support is important and what you hope to achieve.
- **Be real** – Your calls should reflect your charity's tone of voice. Be honest and respectful, avoiding clichés and taking the opportunity to tell your own tale.
- **Consider the call from your supporters' perspective** – The way a call is constructed and the language used is a key factor in building supporter engagement. Put yourselves in their shoes and review how the narrative makes you feel.
- **Be aware of potential vulnerabilities and issues of capacity** – If you have concerns that the conversation is confusing (for either the recipient or caller), consider communicating through other channels, asking how a supporter wants to be contacted and what might help them. If in doubt, seek to clarify the discussion and follow up in writing, both in plain English. (See Responding to the needs of people in vulnerable circumstances.)
- **Engage with supporters' interests** – No singular approach or message is right for everybody, so steer the call around supporters' interests to build rapport and ignite their passion for the cause.



It's crucial for all fundraisers to have a clear understanding of the rules that apply before making any calls. The **Code of Fundraising Practice** provides the regulatory rules and standards for fundraising across the UK.⁷ Telephone fundraising is addressed specifically within section 9.4, however many other clauses will be relevant for calling campaigns.

More information and useful links can be found below:



Code of Fundraising Practice, Fundraising Regulator.⁸

Communication with Individual Donors, Commission on the Donor Experience, SOFII.⁹

Persistent Misuse, Ofcom.¹⁰

Guide to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), ICO.¹¹

Guide to Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations (PECR), ICO.¹²

Direct Marketing Guidance, ICO.¹³

The Charities Act 2016: Fundraising reporting requirements guidance, Fundraising Regulator.¹⁴

7 Visit: <https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/code>

8 Visit: <https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/code>

9 Visit: <https://sofii.org/cde/project-11-communication-with-individual-donors>

10 Visit: https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0024/96135/Persistent-Misuse-Policy-Statement.pdf

11 Visit: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/>

12 Visit: <https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/guide-to-pecr-2-4.pdf>

13 Visit: <https://ico.org.uk/media/1555/direct-marketing-guidance.pdf>

14 Visit: <https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/more-from-us/resources/charities-act-2016-fundraising-reporting-requirements-guidance>

Supporting and protecting your fundraisers

Charities use the telephone for a wide range of fundraising or supporter care purposes. Whether you're making calls in-house or via an agency, it's important to ensure that your fundraisers have a high level of training, that they are supported within their role, that safeguarding measures are in place and that their wellbeing is protected.

Training telephone fundraisers

Any fundraisers making calls will need training and support. If you are using a specialist agency, their fundraisers will have a good understanding of general telephone fundraising and compliance, however you will need to ensure they understand the key messages of the campaign and know how to respond to other queries that may crop up. This will mean providing fundraisers with updates throughout the campaign on the charity's work and on any potentially controversial issues that may arise.

Engage with the training process wherever possible, ideally attending or participating in relevant sessions. You will need to consider:

- How will fundraisers be trained to deliver your messaging?
- Who will deliver that training? Is there a campaigner, beneficiary or someone involved in the charity's service delivery that could help to inspire the team?
- What opportunities are there to demonstrate your work in action – can you offer a site visit or helpline call perhaps?
- How will fundraisers be briefed of any changes to the campaign?
- What can you do to keep the team motivated and engaged?
- What specialist training do you need to consider, such as data protection, responding to people in vulnerable circumstances and more?



Responding to the needs of people in vulnerable circumstances

It's important to be mindful of any indicators that anyone you call may be in a vulnerable circumstance, has additional needs or could be confused by the call. Always treat the public fairly and with respect, and remember that if you have good reason to believe that the individual lacks capacity to make an informed decision, then no donation should be asked for or accepted.

If the fundraiser is speaking clearly and slowly, but the recipient regularly asks for information to be repeated or cannot follow the conversation, it should be remembered that this could be for a range of reasons; it may indicate hearing or memory loss, challenges with language, mental health or a broad spectrum of other issues.

Remember too that other issues such as heavy background noise can impede the call, preventing recipients from hearing you clearly. Be careful not to assume vulnerability or that someone who does have additional needs does not wish to donate without sufficient knowledge. Asking questions can help to check understanding and comfort with the call, with their responses guiding your next steps. Consider if another communication channel could better meet their needs – a letter, email or video call perhaps? Is there a better time to talk?





People can be quick to flag those who might be vulnerable, but the fact is that we're all vulnerable at some time or another. We still care about the causes close to our heart and often don't want the challenges in our life to hold us back from engaging with the things we truly care about. This includes helping others directly or by helping to fund lifechanging work, often for the very same causes that we may have turned to for support in the past.

Fundraisers just need to be mindful, with the focus being on the individual, their needs and preferences; helping them feel respected and empowered. Whether that's as simple as calling at a different time or communicating in a different way; by letter or email for instance. Once you give people the chance to make even a small choice, they can identify what works best for them and they can feel part of a genuine conversation about their needs. I can't overstate just how key a multichannel approach is in helping meet supporters 'where they are', instead of asking them go the extra mile because of your own organisation's internal processes."



Matthew Radford

Deputy Chair of the DMA's Vulnerable Group



Treating Donors Fairly, CIOF.¹⁵

Multi-channel guidance for consumers in vulnerable circumstances, DMA.¹⁶

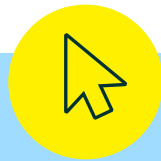
15 Visit: <https://ciof.org.uk/treating-donors-fairly-update>

16 Visit: <https://dma.org.uk/article/multi-channel-guidance-for-consumers-in-vulnerable-circumstances>



Protecting fundraisers' wellbeing

Be aware that some calls – or the cumulative impact of making several calls about a sensitive, pressured or emotional issue – can be challenging for anyone making those calls. Encourage fundraisers to manage their time carefully, allowing enough time to prepare for and deliver the call, while also giving themselves time to decompress afterwards. Ensure regular breaks are taken to help break up the calls. Consider whether managers will need additional training in how best to support their fundraisers and to provide the right level of pastoral care.



Workplace guidance, Mind.¹⁷

Wellbeing and fundraising, CIOF.¹⁸

17 Visit: <https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/>

18 Visit: <https://ciof.org.uk/about-us/what-we-re-doing/wellbeing-and-fundraising>

WORKING WITH FUNDRAISING PARTNERS AND THIRD PARTIES

3

Some charities are well equipped to manage and deliver telephone campaigns in-house, but many will rely on external specialists to meet their needs, providing expertise, equipment, resource and capacity.

Third parties might include telephone fundraising agencies, call monitoring specialists, data suppliers and more. These specialists play a fundamental role in UK fundraising, inspiring millions of people to donate or support charities in different ways. The insight, innovation, and extra capacity they provide can enable you to increase and engage your supporter base, bringing the charity closer to achieving its long-term objectives.

There are many questions to consider before you're ready to work with a partner, including:

- Do you have a policy in place for working with third parties?
- Have you discussed this with your trustees and are they happy for you to approach supporters in this way?
- Have you completed a risk assessment?
- How will the campaign fit with your central fundraising strategy?
- What brief will you ask them to fulfil?
- What will their contractual requirements be and what tasks will sit with you?
- What process and checks will you go through to select a partner?





The most successful relationships are those where we've developed true partnerships with our charities, engaging with staff at all levels from senior management to the fundraisers themselves, and with complete transparency across every aspect of a campaign, including complaints. Alongside this, regular in-person training sessions with the charity and, if possible, their beneficiaries, enhances the call quality and builds fundraiser engagement for truly authentic conversations."



Helen MacKenzie
Founder & CEO, Purity

Identifying the right partner

If you're looking for a suitable partner to help with your telephone campaign, make sure you have a clear concept of how and why you need their support. The clearer you are about what you want to achieve, the more likely you will be able to identify the right partner and rely on them to guide you on how to best achieve your campaign goals.

You'll want to ensure that any partner has the expertise you're looking for, shares the same ethical values as your organisation, and is committed to best practice. This includes how they pay their staff and other fundraisers. As with any service agreement, the focus will need to be on ensuring quality of service, reflecting your own standards, policies and protecting your brand. And while a tender process can be an effective way of selecting suitable partners, any such process will need to be proportionate to the scale of the project.¹⁹

19 For more information: <https://ciof.org.uk/events-and-training/resources/what-makes-a-good-fair-tender-process>



Questions to ask when selecting your partner

- Does each potential partner have the expertise and capacity to deliver your campaign?
- What experience and track record do they have, and what industry standards do they adhere to?
- When will they be able to do it and how long will it take?
- How much will it cost? It needs to be affordable, but quality is key. Consider how much time fundraisers will need to develop rapport, communicate sensitively and well.
- What are the likely returns or results (both short and long term)?
- How do they motivate and pay their fundraisers?
- What policies are in place to protect the public, particularly those who may be vulnerable?
- What sort of data do they work with, how is it procured and screened against relevant suppression lists?
- How often will they update you about the campaign's progress?
- How will the campaign be monitored? (See Monitoring and compliance).

Understanding your responsibilities

When working with a partner, you have the responsibility to ensure that their work is compliant – that involves carrying out due diligence when selecting partners as well as ongoing monitoring of their work. You will need to put in place a clear contract or agreement which defines the parameters of the campaign, how it will be delivered, the pricing and remuneration structure, data protection arrangements, solicitation statements and policies for supporting vulnerable people and complaint handling. As the data controller, you will also have responsibility for ensuring any data is compliant.

Think carefully about the key performance indicators for the campaign, exploring how it will be monitored, responsibilities for complaints handling and more. Be sure to draw your partners into campaign planning at an early stage, enabling you to benefit from their knowledge and experience.

When is a solicitation statement needed?

Professional fundraisers are required to make a solicitation statement when asking for money on behalf of a charity, stating which charity they are raising funds for and how much the agency is being paid. Also, when a fundraiser asks for funds over the telephone (and in other circumstances where the fundraiser is not present), a written confirmation must be given to donors giving £100 or more within 7 days of the call, containing the solicitation statement and details of their right to a refund or to cancel the payment.

See more in section 7.4 of the Code of Fundraising Practice.

Ensuring a successful partnership

A successful partnership is a two-way street. Once you have selected an agency partner to work with, it's important to trust and support them to enable them to deliver a quality calling campaign on your behalf. You'll need to establish not only the terms of the agreement and goals for the campaign, but how you will help them achieve the best results. This might include running training or briefing sessions to inspire and inform those who will be calling your supporters, inviting them to see the charity's work in action or to meet beneficiaries, sending relevant updates and congratulating them on their successes.



Code of Fundraising Practice – Section 7, Professional fundraisers, commercial participators and partners’, Fundraising Regulator.²⁰

Successful Partnerships for Sustainable Fundraising, CIOF.²¹

What makes a good and fair tender process?, CIOF.²²



20 Visit: <https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/code/working-with-others/professional-fundraisers-commercial-participators-and-partners>

21 Visit: <https://ciof.org.uk/loF/media/IOF/Policy/iof-successful-partnerships-for-sustainable-fundraising-guide.pdf>

22 Visit: <https://ciof.org.uk/events-and-training/resources/what-makes-a-good-fair-tender-process>

BEING RESPONSIBLE WITH PERSONAL DATA

4



Data protection is a key issue for fundraising. Although the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and ICO regulations set out clear guidance for what organisations can and can't do, many charities will tailor their data protection policies and protocols further to reflect their ethos and values, giving supporters and others greater control over how they are communicated with.

The Fundraising Regulator's guidance on Processing Personal Data is a useful summary of the key issues to consider. You will need to ensure that all staff handling any contact data understand those policies and how to manage that data responsibly. Additional safeguards or processes may need to be put in place for staff who will be handling contact data from their homes or on mobile devices.



Fundraising is all about supporter relationships; supporters are the most valuable and important asset that any charity has. If an individual doesn't want to be contacted by telephone, it's in no-one's interest to approach them in this way. So, when we talk about 'data' in this context, it's important to remember that we're talking about people and how they wish to interact with their chosen charity. Respecting each supporter's individual wishes will ensure you foster long term relationships, leading to fulfilling supporter journeys."



Alex Weeks-Smyth
Client Relationship Director, Ethicall



Using good, clean data

The success of any telephone fundraising campaign is often heavily dependent on the quality of data available. Whether you're calling your closest supporters or those who are new to the organisation, it's important to ensure that your data is accurate, that you have a legal basis for calling (legitimate interests or consent), that any permissions have been sought and that you only use the data for the purposes you state. Remember that each call is an opportunity to update those details, and in the case of marketing calls, to refresh contact preferences.

Identifying existing contacts

Look internally at your own database and identify what data you already hold and how you can use it. You may be able to reach out to existing supporters, volunteers or beneficiaries who may have legitimate interests in hearing from you. Consider who you have on your books who may already have given their consent for fundraising calls.

“ The power of letting a supporter speak and just listening to what they have to say can be the biggest gift you can give a donor. To hear a voice that cares, to listen and to thank them, can leave a donor feeling noticed, feeling respected and proud to support your cause.

While some people relish the opportunity to discuss the charity's work in this way, others may prefer not to discuss it over the telephone. So, it's particularly important that you know who you can call for fundraising and administrative purposes and that you handle every interaction respectfully and sensitively.”



Ben Suffell

Managing Director, QTS Fundraising



Sourcing new leads for calling

Sourcing new contacts to call isn't as difficult as it may sound. Increasingly, charities are generating new leads for calling through social media or email campaigns, or by offering a product or service (see Value Exchange Campaigns). If you are working with an agency partner, ask their advice or consult a specialist data provider. Remember to look for verification that any data provider is reliable and signed up to relevant industry bodies, such as the Direct Marketing Association. When sourcing contact data, make sure you are clear about how you wish to use that data, whether it's for single or multiple use and that it will meet your needs.

Data protection policies and statements

A clear data protection policy will be an important reference point. Such policies should clarify your approach to legitimate interests and whether you will use this as the basis to contact specific groups of supporters. For marketing calls, be aware that legitimate interests will only apply to telephone numbers not registered on the Telephone Preference Service, Corporate Telephone Preference Service, Fundraising Preference Service or your own suppression lists. You'll also need to check your data against the relevant TPS list(s) at the beginning of the campaign and every 28 days thereafter. Remember that if you have previously asked for consent and this was not given or has been withdrawn, you cannot then rely on legitimate interests to make that call.

When it comes to collecting data, avoid processing data 'just in case'. Consider how you intend to use that data now and what you hope to be able to do in the future, and make sure that both the data you collect and your privacy notice, reflect this. You will also need to make sure that privacy notices are clear so that those you call fully understand how you intend to use their data, enabling you to reach supporters both now and in the future. Crucially, in every call you must offer the opportunity to opt out of future calls.



Data protection checklist

- Do you have a comprehensive privacy policy that is easily accessible to all those you call?
- Is your call classed as an administrative or marketing call?
- What is your legal basis for processing and contacting people by telephone and how is this documented?
- Have you checked your contact lists against relevant suppression lists?
- Do you have a written agreement in place with any third parties/suppliers, covering data protection and other legal requirements?



FAQs

Who can you call and for what purpose?

Generally, the most successful communication channels will be those that your supporters are most comfortable using. If someone asks not to be called or that they prefer communicating in writing, you must respect their preferences. The rules around making administrative calls are relatively relaxed, but there are more stringent requirements for marketing calls. When making marketing calls, you should avoid calling anyone who has asked you not to – directly or via the FPS, and you must have consent to call numbers listed on TPS and/or CTPS. Numbers not listed on these suppression lists can be called for marketing purposes so long as you comply with the legitimate interests rules and have not previously asked for consent to call those individuals. (See Can I make this call?).



What is an administrative call?

A call can only be classed as administrative so long as it includes no ask for funds and no marketing of the charity or its services, and such calls must be documented.

This might include welcome calling, information for event participants or volunteers, verification of personal data, and Gift Aid eligibility. Fundraisers must take care to ensure that administrative calls do not include any promotional activity or marketing. Any discussion about the work of the charity or how donations may be used, for example, would shift the call into marketing territory. Also, if you ask supporters for consent to call them in future for marketing purposes, this would be deemed a marketing call and relevant PECR (Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations) restrictions apply.

When can you use ‘legitimate interests’ to make a marketing call?

You can rely on legitimate interests as the lawful basis to make marketing calls so long as you have carried out and documented a legitimate interests assessment (LIA) and the number you are calling is not registered on either the TPS, CTPS, FPS or your own suppression lists. You must also ensure that you do not make calls to individuals who have withheld or withdrawn permission for you to call.

How should you handle requests not to be called again?

People like to communicate in different ways and the phone isn't right for everybody. It's not only good supporter care but a legal duty to respect donor preferences, handling any request to be removed from future call lists promptly. Ensure you and any third parties have an effective way of processing this information and updating your database to ensure that no further calls are made to those who prefer to be reached in other ways.



Processing Personal Data, Fundraising Regulator.²³

Fundraising Preference Service, Fundraising Regulator.²⁴

Telephone Preference Service, DMA.²⁵

Direct Marketing Guidance, ICO.²⁶

Direct Marketing Checklist, ICO.²⁷

Guide to data protection, ICO.²⁸

Guide to UK GDPR, ICO.²⁹

Guide to legitimate interests, ICO.³⁰

What is the legitimate interests basis? ICO.³¹

PECR Guidance, ICO.³²

Treating Donors Fairly Guidance, CIOF.³³

GDPR: The essentials, CIOF.³⁴

23 Visit: <https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/code/all-fundraising/processing-personal-data>

24 Visit: <https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/fundraising-preference-service>

25 Visit: <https://www.tpsonline.org.uk>

26 Visit: <https://ico.org.uk/media/1555/direct-marketing-guidance.pdf>

27 Visit: <https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1551/direct-marketing-checklist.pdf>

28 Visit: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/>

29 Visit: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/>

30 Visit: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/legitimate-interests/what-is-the-legitimate-interests-basis/>

31 Visit: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/legitimate-interests/what-is-the-legitimate-interests-basis/>

32 Visit: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-pecr/what-are-pecr/>

33 Visit: <https://ciof.org.uk/treating-donors-fairly-update>

34 Visit: <https://ciof.org.uk/events-and-training/resources/gdpr-the-essentials>

Can you make this call?

To be able to make a marketing call, you need to have a legal basis for doing so – the two most relevant for fundraising are legitimate interests and consent. If you have specific, clear, and unambiguous consent from an individual then you can use that basis to call.

When using legitimate interests, the decision-making process is likely to look like this:



MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

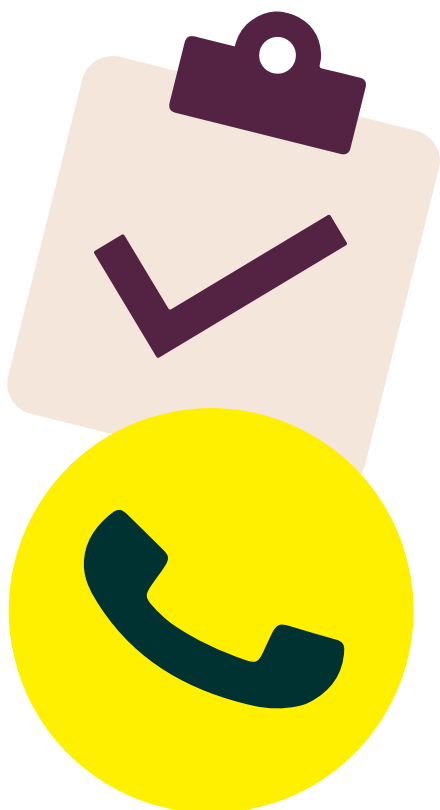
5

Whether you make or receive telephone fundraising calls in-house or through a partner, the responsibility for protecting the public, sticking to the rules and maintaining your charity's brand and reputation sits with you. This means that you'll need to monitor campaigns to ensure they comply with your organisational policies, industry and ethical standards, as well as tracking progress against campaign goals.

If you're working with an agency, ask for their input and support. Explore with them what information they can provide and the best ways of ensuring a successful and compliant campaign. Establish if the calls will be recorded and listen in regularly to calls (live or recorded) to check that you're happy with the tone, messaging and general dialogue. Document your findings and use this information to improve current and future campaigns.



All campaigns have many and various moving parts from the calling strategy to the script, recipients to fundraisers, not to mention external influences like Covid and the economy. These will evolve throughout the campaign, offering numerous learning points that can strengthen the campaign. The script everyone thought was a world-beater might need tweaking, potential supporters might raise objections no-one imagined they would, or perhaps the campaign is going so well more data is needed. This means that a continuous period of calling, monitoring and learning is needed."



Steve Morris
General Manager, Unity4

Tips for monitoring campaigns:

- Listen in to calls from the start so that you can get a sense of how well it's going and what can be improved.
- Commit to monitoring calls throughout the campaign. Determine how many calls you will listen to depending on your risk analysis and ongoing monitoring outcomes.
- Make sure that it's not only one individual who listens in. Including different people will bring a range of perspectives to the process and help ensure best practice is being met.
- Ask for regular updates about how the campaign is performing against success measures and review what changes could be made.
- Track both the measurables (e.g. confirming that the fundraiser checked it was a convenient time to talk and delivered a disclosure statement) and less tangible aspects (e.g. whether the conversation was a positive interaction and built rapport).
- Put your own telephone number on the call list so that you can experience a live call from the public's perspective.
- Make sure that all your calls are recorded in case you need to refer back to them.
- Give constructive feedback; positive and negative insights can be equally as important to improve and inform future calls.

Ensuring compliance

Complying with legislation, best practice and your charity's individual ethical and organisational policies is vital to strengthen public trust. This means following the Code of Fundraising Practice (the Code), having clarity over the policies and values you commit to as an organisation, training and supporting your fundraisers and third parties in meeting those standards, and monitoring campaigns. It may also be beneficial to seek quality assurance from an independent external assessor to ensure that everything is working as it should.

What are my responsibilities for monitoring third parties?

- You must make sure that any paid third-party fundraisers or commercial partners you work with comply with the Code.
- You must make all reasonable efforts to monitor whether the paid third-party fundraisers or commercial partners are keeping to the agreement you have with them (including the conditions of the contract which relate to keeping to the Code).

See section 7.3 of the Code of Fundraising Practice: Monitoring that fundraisers are meeting the Code.





Our telephone fundraisers are our ambassadors, as much as our supporters are stakeholders, for our organisation! The compliance elements of each call are critical, and we also want to make sure that they feel confident representing us, by having rounded knowledge about all areas of our work, what campaigns we're working on and how to communicate those in an inspirational way. We run regular training sessions and monitor our campaigns, using a risk-based approach, to do this and continue building our relationships with our ambassadors too.

We're in the fortunate position of having our own in-house training & quality assurance team and a board sub-committee dedicated to ethical fundraising and quality assurance. This means that just as much focus is given to our reporting on quality of calls as it is to performance. So, no matter why we're calling, our fundraisers know that the goal is also to enhance those relationships and create positive supporter experiences."



Camille St-Omer Donaldson

Interim Head of Fundraising Quality Assurance & Standards,
British Red Cross

ADDRESSING COMPLAINTS AND OTHER FEEDBACK

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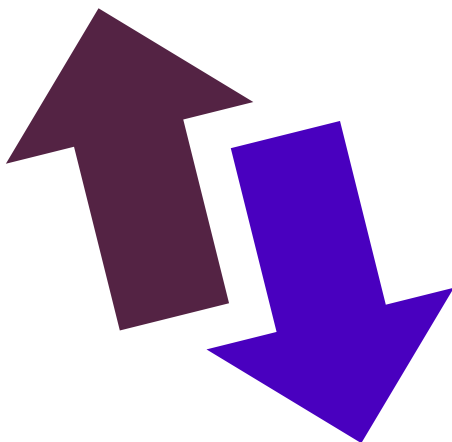
As with all areas of fundraising, public feedback can be incredibly valuable. All charities need to have a robust complaints policy and process in place, setting out how you will deal with any issues, how they will be recorded and how that feedback might improve future fundraising activity. If a complaint is raised, it's important to investigate, listening to a recording of the call wherever possible to determine whether the objection relates to the channel, the campaign messaging or something else. If you're working with any third party, you need to ensure that they will follow the same process, clarifying who does what and where responsibilities lie in your partnership agreement.



While nobody wants to receive a complaint, it can often be a valuable learning opportunity and a chance to improve your supporter relationships. What is key for calling campaigns is not only that calls meet best practice guidelines, but that charities and any partners have a clear complaints procedure in place, ensuring that supporters can share any concerns and that this feedback is reviewed and considered to inform future campaigns.”



Daniel Fluskey
Head of Policy and External Affairs,
Chartered Institute of Fundraising





Positive feedback also provides great opportunities for learning and strengthening future fundraising activity and developing supporter relationships. Talk to your fundraisers about any feedback received and discuss the call from their perspective. What do they think went well and what could be done better? How could future calls be enhanced? Similarly, when working with third parties, be sure to provide opportunities to celebrate success and to continue to inspire fundraisers by sharing news of how this will impact your cause.

Questions to ensure a compliant complaints process:

- Do you have a clear and publicly available complaints procedure?
- How do you ensure that any third party fundraisers comply with that process?
- Can your fundraisers explain to the public how to make a complaint?
- What processes are in place to ensure complaints are investigated thoroughly and fairly, and responded to, avoiding unnecessary delay?
- How will you review any learnings from complaints to help improve future fundraising activity?
- Do you have a clear and published procedure for staff and volunteers to report any concerns they have about your fundraising practice?



Code of Fundraising Practice: Complaints and concerns about fundraising, Section 2.4, Fundraising Regulator.³⁵

Fundraising Regulator's Complaints handling guidance, Fundraising Regulator.³⁶

35 Visit: <https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/code/all-fundraising/responsibilities-charitable-institutions>

36 Visit: <https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/more-from-us/resources/complaints-handling-guidance>

KNOWING THE RULES

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It's crucial for all fundraisers to have a clear understanding of the rules that apply before making any calls. The **Code of Fundraising Practice** provides the regulatory rules and standards for fundraising across the UK. Telephone fundraising is addressed specifically within section 9.4, however many other clauses will be relevant for calling campaigns. Key sections include:

Section 1: Behaviour when fundraising – this emphasises the need to be honest and open with the public, enabling donors to make informed decisions and treating people fairly.

Section 2: Responsibilities of charitable institutions and those who govern them – this covers the procedures and policies required for effective complaints-handling and to ensure donations are used for the purposes for which they are given.

Section 3: Processing personal data – drawing on GDPR legislation and the Data Protection Act, this covers the requirements for processing personal data for fundraising and marketing.

Section 7: Professional fundraisers, commercial participators and partners – this summarises your responsibilities when working with third parties, including contractual requirements, monitoring responsibilities and more.

Section 9: Fundraising Communications and Advertisements – this covers the standards required for marketing your campaign, with a specific section (9.4) on using the telephone for fundraising.

About the Chartered Institute of Fundraising

The Chartered Institute of Fundraising is the professional membership body for UK fundraising.

We champion our members' excellence in fundraising. We support fundraisers through professional development and education. We connect fundraisers across all sectors and skill sets to share and learn with each other. So that together we can best serve our causes and communities both now and in the future.

ciof.org.uk

[@CIOFtweets](https://twitter.com/CIOFtweets)

About Ethicall

From our home in Bristol, we deliver ethical telephone fundraising, empowering donors to support charitable organisations and enabling them to make a positive impact on the world. We believe that it's the balance between delivering the ultimate inspiring supporter-focused telephone calls together with our drive to achieve the best possible long-term return on investment for our charity partners that makes our approach to fundraising ethical.

We are passionate about making the world a better place. We treat everyone with respect and care. We are open and honest with what our experience tells us is achievable and we ensure we never overpromise or underdeliver.

To date, we have helped our charity partners raise more than £140m (year 1 income) and donated almost £1.4m to a range of UK registered charities.

ethicall.org.uk