



News Release

CAB 021-10

11 February 2010

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New drive to stop bogus charity collectors costing charities millions

Today, a new drive to stop bogus charity collectors costing charities millions, was launched by Charities' Minister Angela Smith.

The Association of Charity Shops estimates that charities lose between £2.5 million and £3 million a year through theft and people mistakenly giving clothing to commercial companies in the belief they are charities. The 'Give with Care' campaign launched today, aims at helping households across the country ensure their charity donations are going to genuine causes.

'Give with Care' aims to help the generous people who want to give to charity understand what to look for in leaflets and bags that come through their letter box. It will help them to establish if a clothing collection is for charity or not.

While clothing companies may be acting legally, their leaflets may be largely indistinguishable from charities, unless people know what to look for.

The campaign includes top tips for spotting a genuine charity collection:

- Does the sack or leaflet say the collection is for a *registered* charity? If so, what's the registered charity number - call 0845 3000 218 or visit the online register of charities at www.charitycommission.gov.uk to check that it's genuine.
- Does it only give a registered company number? Check that a registered charity is also involved with the collection.
- Is the charity actually named? Be wary of wording that just says 'families in need' or 'sick kids' as this could be an indication that it is not a genuine charity.
- Does the leaflet or bag give a phone number? If not, it may mean the collectors don't want to answer questions.

The 'Give with Care' campaign includes thousands of leaflets being distributed to householders across the country with the top tips to help check clothing collection leaflets. Posters will be also displayed in charity shop windows to raise awareness amongst shoppers.

Angela Smith, Charities' Minister, said:

"Donating clothing and goods to charities is a great way to help people who are in need and as we approach the spring, many of us are thinking about clearing out our wardrobes for charity.

"However, charities are losing substantial sums of money to anonymous 'bogus' collectors who mislead donors into thinking they are charities. I want the public to be confident that their donation is going to a genuine charitable cause. This is why we have launched the 'Give with Care' campaign with four top tips to help establish if a clothing collection is for charity or not."

Hugh Forde, Managing Director of Retail, Trading & Training at Age Concern and Help the Aged said:

"Like many charities, Age Concern and Help the Aged rely on the generous donations of the public in order to continue funding our vital work. Bogus charity collectors can therefore have a real impact on charities, which is why we would advise people to remember the four top tips before giving donations."

Dame Suzi Leather, Chair of the Charity Commission said:

"While most leaflets that come through your door are from genuine registered charities, the 'Give with Care' campaign will help people if there is any doubt in their mind. Clothing collections are an important way of raising money for many charities, and they need every penny from your donations they can get. If you want to make sure your unwanted clothes are going to help a genuine charity, use our top tips."

The participating partners behind the campaign are: The Office of the Third Sector in the Cabinet Office, Charity Commission, Trading Standards Institute, Advertising Standards Authority, Office of Fair Trading, Association of Chief Police Officers, Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services, the Association of Charity Shops and the Fundraising Standards Board.

Notes to editors:

For interview bids for Angela Smith, Charities' Minister, The Charity Commission or Help the Aged please call: Cabinet Office press office – Rachel Shaw on 0207 276 0400

Colour copies of the awareness leaflet and poster are available from http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector.aspx

The Office of the Third Sector sits at the heart of government in the Cabinet Office. It is responsible for government policy towards charities, voluntary groups, social enterprises and other third sector organisations and aims to create the conditions for them to thrive. See www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/thirdsector

The Charity Commission is the independent regulator for charitable activity in England and Wales. See www.charitycommission.gov.uk for more information.

The Association for Charity Shops represents charities that run shops as part of their fundraising activities. It has 300 member charities, ranging from the largest national charities to locally based hospices that together run 6,700 shops. In 2009, they will have raised £120m for charitable causes. See www.charityshops.org.uk.

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