

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL UK

Telemarketing Training

Vulnerable Person's Policy (VPP)

At AIUK we believe in treating ALL individuals fairly and with respect.

We must take all reasonable steps to treat a donor fairly, enabling them to make an informed decision about any donation.

This must include taking into account the needs of any potential donor who may be in a vulnerable circumstance or require additional care and support to make an informed decision.

We must recognise that an individual will not always have the capacity to fully understand the nature of the donation they are asked to give or the consequences of that donation.

Never exploit the apparent need for care and support or vulnerable circumstance of any donor at any point in time.

If a fundraiser knows or has reasonable grounds for believing that an individual lacks capacity to make a decision to donate, **a donation must not be taken.**

Who might be vulnerable?

Fundraisers are not expected to diagnose an individual's condition. But fundraisers do need to develop skills in assessing a situation to decide whether an individual needs additional support to decide whether to donate, or whether making an ask is inappropriate.

In the context of fundraising, someone who is vulnerable may not be able to fully understand the nature of the transaction (donation) they are being asked to make or consider the personal consequences of doing so.

For example:

- Mental health condition, including depression.
- Learning difficulties.
- Physically disabled (where this might impact on communication between the fundraiser and donor). Examples include being hard of hearing or partially sighted.
- Suffering from extreme stress or anxiety (e.g. bereavement, redundancy).
- Experiencing financial hardship (where a gift from a donor may impact on their ability to sufficiently care for themselves or leave them in financial hardship). Examples of financial vulnerability could include living on benefits.
- Struggling to understand (may be due to lack of fluency in spoken English).

- Under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Elderly or a pensioner. Age itself is not evidence of vulnerability – to deem so would be discriminatory. However, aging increases the likelihood of certain conditions (e.g. dementia, hard of hearing) and circumstances (e.g. financial hardship if income source is limited to state pension).

Further signs that someone may be vulnerable

- 'Making a disclosure' i.e. indicating to the fundraiser that they are in vulnerable circumstances which may affect their capacity to decide whether to donate.
- Taking a long time to respond or displaying difficulty in responding to simple questions and requests for information.
- Saying 'yes' or 'no' at times that it is clear they haven't understood.
- Wandering off the subject at hand and making inappropriate statements.
- Displaying signs of forgetfulness.
- Giving a statement such as 'I don't usually do things like this, my husband/wife son/daughter takes care of it for me'.

What should my approach be?

If you have any doubt that the individual is unable to make an informed decision, **don't ask for a donation.**

If they usually have someone else to help them: offer to end the conversation and direct the person responsible for their financial affairs to the website.

Direct them to the AIUK website where they can take action, join a local group or specialist network or sign up to Pocket Protest through their mobile.

Never make the individual feel guilty or awkward.

Under no circumstances should a fundraiser exploit vulnerability and attempt to engage someone using undue pressure. Undue pressure may manifest as:

- Acting manipulatively or aggressively.
- Deliberately trying to make a potential donor feel guilty.
- Taking advantage of mistakes made by the donor to secure a donation.
- Taking a donation when a fundraiser knows or has reasonable grounds for believing that an individual lacks capacity to make that decision.
- Soliciting a donation from a minor (under 18 years of age).