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Stay Safe, Give Safe, be of Service to Humanity.

COVID 19 - Safe Giving During a Crisis

At a time of crisis, the public can be inundated with emotional appeals for donations. Choosing who to donate to can be a difficult decision. These appeals can be from charities or individuals. Here we provide useful tips for the public and charities to help safeguard charitable donations.

1. Check there is a charity number on any appeal including social media messaging. Charities **MUST** ensure their charity name and number is clearly displayed on all marketing materials, or messages.
2. Some appeals can be in the name of a project instead of the charity. Where charities are fundraising for a project, they should make this clear in any marketing and display their charity name and number. The project is not the charity.
3. The public can check basic details of a registered charity on the Charity Commission website by entering the charity number (such as who the trustees are, contacts, their annual reports and accounts, annual income, how much they spend on administration).
<https://apps.charitycommission.gov.uk/showcharity/registerofcharities/RegisterHomePage.aspx>
4. Check that any bank account details provided on appeals belong to the charity. **DO NOT** donate charitable funds into any private or individual bank accounts.

5. Members of the public can check if the charity is currently under a Charity Commission Statutory Investigation which would give an indication of problems at a charity. They can check here or do a google search. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statements-on-live-cases-charity-commission>
6. Where charities are using third party fundraising pages and donation/giving services, check that the page contains the charity name and number and money goes into the charity bank account. Also ensure any individual who is appealing on a page or social media has the permission of the charity to do so. Check with the charity.
7. Charities **MUST** ensure their marketing and advertising **does not mislead** the public and are accurate and factually correct.
8. Charities should make appeals and carry out work for the charitable purposes/objects they have been established, anything outside them maybe unlawful.
9. Charities should not make appeals to fund private businesses, for example equipment or funding for a private funeral business.
10. When donating in the current climate check to see if the project or appeal is really needed and if anyone else is already providing that service. In this time of hardship try to safeguard public funds for those projects and items that are really needed and not just for charity competition purposes.
11. Charities **MUST** spend donations for the purposes they have been given. Members of the public should make it clear what they wish their donation to be spent on. Where religious dues such as Zakat are being donated, please specify which permissible category you wish your Zakat to be donated to, if in doubt seek guidance. Where cash or cheque payment is made please ensure you obtain a charity receipt.
12. If you are a taxpayer, you can allow the charity to claim back the tax you paid on your donation through Gift Aid. It is part of your donation. Many charities use Gift Aid to pay for their administration. Where charities are doing this, they should make it clear. If you do not want your donation to be used in this way, state this when donating.
13. The public should ask any charity that is claiming 100% donation policy to explain what they mean by this, and make some checks.

14. Where charities are appealing for emergency funding for items, they should be used for the emergency, and not held onto for lengthy periods or future years.
15. Once you have made your donations don't just leave it there, contact the charity to check if they have used your donation for what they said they would and how.
16. Under GDPR requirements charities should not contact any donor by any means without your expressed wish. If you receive lots of mailshots or contacts from charities without your permission, please inform them to remove you from their mailing list.
17. Charities should ensure that no message or social media post by anyone, including a volunteer, supporter or Imam, is posted without proper authorisation from the charity. Any message put out by a charity without a name and contact of trustee or staff member should be considered not official.
18. Remember, even if you are not a registered charity and just an individual or company involved in raising funds for a charitable purpose you are likely to come within Charity law and the regulation of the Charity Commission, in the same way a charity would.

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