

International Statement of Ethical Principles in Fundraising

All over the globe, fundraisers work to make the world a better place. Our causes are diverse and distinct, but our passion and commitment are universal. The way that we go about raising money is different according to the culture, society, and laws of where we fundraise, but we share a commitment that wherever we fundraise, we do so to a high standard and follow an ethical approach.

This Statement of Ethical Principles in Fundraising sets out the values, beliefs, and principles that govern professional fundraisers across the world. It sets out what unites us in the way that we fundraise, and joins us together as a global fundraising community dedicated to achieving fundraising excellence for our causes, donors, and supporters.

The Statement does not replicate, replace, or supersede any laws or codes of conduct that are in place in any individual country, as it is expected that fundraisers will fully observe the law wherever they work. Instead, the Statement outlines the ethical approach and articulates the values that drive fundraising professionals and provides a framework of how we will work globally. Organisations who voluntarily endorse and support this Statement do so as a demonstration of their commitment to fundraising excellence and as a declaration of their shared interest in a global understanding of these principles.

Where fundraisers are working in areas with a developed code of conduct, this Statement should complement the standards that are set, and for others can form a basis for the development of fundraising practice or regulation. By following these principles, we believe that we will deliver the best experience for our donors and supporters, grow public trust and confidence in fundraising, and be best placed to achieve our mission.

Our shared principles for fundraising

As fundraisers, these principles set out how we work and define our ethical approach:

Honesty: Fundraisers will always be honest and truthful, upholding public trust and never misleading supporters or the public.

Respect: Fundraisers will always be respectful of our beneficiaries and donors, following their choices and wishes, wherever possible.

Integrity: Fundraisers will always act with integrity, following legislative and regulatory requirements, and will always work for the best interests of our causes and supporters.

Transparency: Fundraisers will always be transparent, clear and accurate about the work of our causes, how donations will be managed and spent, and report on costs and impact accurately.

Responsibility: Fundraisers will always act responsibly, understanding that we share a common objective to promote fundraising excellence for the benefit of the common good. We value and encourage diversity in our practice and our fundraisers, and continually seek to develop our professional standards.

Standards of fundraising practice

Our standards are presented as being the benchmark for fundraising excellence and set out our shared framework for working to the highest level and in the best interests of our causes, while respecting our donors and being accountable in our work.

1. Responsibility to fully comply with relevant legislation and regulatory standards

- Fundraisers will work according to the national and international legal obligations that apply to their organisation's location, legal form, and activities.
- Fundraisers will follow any agreed upon regulatory systems for fundraising and specific codes of practice for fundraising that are set in their location.
- Fundraisers will not take action that could constitute professional misconduct or create a conflict of interest.

2. Responsibility to supporters

- Fundraisers will always respect the free choice of all individuals to give donations or not.
- Fundraisers will respect the rights of donors and follow their preferences on communications and privacy.
- Fundraisers will be open and transparent with donors on the use of their funds, providing clear information on how donations are spent and the impact of their work.
- Fundraisers will be truthful and honest in all of their fundraising communications, in any medium and by any means, using accurate information about their cause in their materials, communications and activities.
- Where a donor has expressed a view on the specific service or project that they would like their money to be applied, the donor's wishes will be followed wherever possible. In the event that the money cannot be used in line with the donor's wishes, the fundraiser will seek further agreement from the individual or organisation on the use of their donation.

3. Responsibility to their cause and beneficiaries

- Fundraisers will work together with their trustees or relevant governance structure to best achieve the overall goals and objectives of their cause, making decisions and working in accordance with the values of the organisation.
- Fundraisers will always be respectful of their beneficiaries and uphold their dignity and self-respect in the fundraising communications or materials that they use.
- Fundraisers will not accept donations where the acceptance of those gifts would not be in the best interests of the organisation or create a conflict of interest that would be detrimental to the organisation's reputation, mission, and relationship with existing supporters and beneficiaries.

4. Management reporting, finance and fundraising costs

- Fundraisers will be transparent and accurate in presenting fundraising costs, fees and expenses, without expressing or suggesting in communications and materials that fundraising lacks administration and fundraising costs.
- Fundraisers will ensure that all fundraising transactions, accounting, and reporting for which they are responsible are transparent and accurate.
- Fundraisers will work with their organisation to provide accurate reports on their organisation's income and expenditure according to their national regulatory framework and publish clear information on their activities for stakeholders, beneficiaries, donors and the public.

5. Pay and compensation

- Fundraisers will expect fair remuneration for their work and will not use their position to make any unauthorised or disproportionate personal gain.
- Fundraisers will not seek any personal benefits or gratuities in the course of their work. Any benefits or gratuities that are offered to a fundraiser will be declared to their organisation and/or any relevant authority and only accepted if in line with the set policy and with any necessary approval.
- When fundraisers work with suppliers, partners, or third-party agencies, they will take all reasonable steps to ensure that those external parties work to the same standards that they are held to, and that they do not receive unreasonable and disproportionate payment for their work.
- All payment and remuneration for fundraisers will be arranged before work is carried out, with any performance-related payments agreed in advance and set to ensure that payments will not be disproportionate or unreasonable.

Agreed by representatives of National Fundraising Associations and adopted at the International Fundraising Summit in London on 5 July 2018