



## Accountability and Transparency in Fundraising

### Fundraising activities need to be undertaken with clarity and openness to maintain public trust and confidence

Fundraisers have an important part to play in the overall accountability and transparency of charities. They are often the main contact between charities and the public, and key to their work is communicating about causes, donations and outcomes, and how the three interrelate.

This Code aims to provide guidance for fundraising organisations on what being accountable and transparent means, how to communicate with donors and potential donors, and to provide principles and best practice on how to fundraise in a transparent and accountable manner.

The requirements of this Code are not intended to be onerous but to give practical guidance on how to implement the principles of transparency and accountability. The Code sets standards for charities to aspire to uphold, whilst recognising that charities come in a range of sizes.

However, the principles of accountability and transparency go beyond the remit of fundraisers alone, to the heart of what a charity does and how it is run.

This Code should therefore be viewed by chief executives, senior staff and trustees as a useful, robust code when looking at principles of charity accountability and transparency, the role of fundraising, and the need for charities to protect their assets including the charity's brand and name.

This Code sets out best practice standards for conducting fundraising in an accountable and transparent manner. It complements other tools and reporting requirements such as the Governance Code, reporting requirements of Companies House, the Charity Commission for England and Wales and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) and the self-regulatory scheme for fundraising run by the Fundraising Standards Board.

Fundraising is inseparable from the rest of the work of a charity. Accountability and transparency in fundraising activities is essential to maintain the public's trust in the voluntary sector.

For the purposes of this Code the following definitions will apply:

**Accountability** is about being responsible to someone for actions taken; about being able to explain, clarify and justify actions. It implies that someone has a right to know and hold an organisation to account; and that the organisation has a duty to explain and account for its actions. Charities have this duty as they have a privileged status because their purposes must be for the benefit of the public.

**Transparency** is about being easy to understand, and being open, frank and honest in all communications, transactions and operations.

It is possible to be accountable by providing a lengthy and technical explanation of every detail, but if this information is not easily understood by the audience, and if key facts are hidden by the sheer volume of information, then the information is not presented in a transparent form.

Accountability and transparency go hand-in-hand, and involve being aware of who charities are accountable to, what the important pieces of information are, and how they can be communicated most effectively.

### Related Links:

- [Read all of the Accountability and Transparency in Fundraising Code \(432kb\)](#)
- [Contact the Policy Team](#)