



# POLICY ON SUPPORTERS IN VULNERABLE CIRCUMSTANCES

## Aims and Application of this Policy

Partnering with Compassion UK to release children from poverty in Jesus' name should be a positive and fulfilling experience for all.

At Compassion UK, we aspire for our supporters to feel **known, loved, protected**, and **ignited to action** in a movement of compassion for children in poverty, engaging with our global ministry and with our beneficiaries through correspondence, prayer, and advocacy as well as through financial giving.

We recognise that we will engage with supporters and potential supporters who may be in a vulnerable circumstance, either permanently or temporarily, or may need additional support to make informed decisions. This policy sets out how we care for vulnerable supporters, how we can identify such persons, and what action we take if we suspect a person is vulnerable.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, trustees, ambassadors, and representatives of Compassion UK, and to third party organisations and suppliers working on our behalf.

## Underlying Principles

### Respect

We will **always be respectful**, being mindful of and sensitive to any particular need that a supporter may have and strive to respect their wishes and preferences.

'Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves.' (Romans 12:10)

### Fairness

We will **treat people fairly**. This includes, but isn't limited to, not discriminating against any group or individual based on their appearance or health conditions.

'There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.' (Galatians 3:28)



### Responsiveness

We will **respond appropriately to the individual needs of our supporters**, adapting our marketing approach in tone, language, and communication technique to suit the needs and requirements of supporters.

'In humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.' (Philippians 2:3-4)

### Accountability

We will take responsibility for our actions, ensuring our work is carried out in line with the Fundraising Regulator's Code of Fundraising Practice and we have effective procedures and policies in place to ensure this happens.

'Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble.' (2 Peter 1:10)

### Policy Statement

Any and all individuals may, at some stage in their life, be considered vulnerable. Vulnerability may reflect a wide range of situations, some permanent, some temporary. At Compassion UK we believe **everyone should have the opportunity to partner in our work**. This may include people who are potentially in a vulnerable circumstance.

In some situations, it may be difficult for our fundraisers to make a clear-cut decision as to whether or not someone is in a vulnerable circumstance or lacks capacity. **Our approach is always to err on the side of caution**, recognising in particular that we are often asking new supporters to commit to a long-term relationship of regular giving.

**Compassion UK does not identify people as vulnerable solely based on disability, age, or any other social indicators.** We recognise that each supporter is an individual with a unique background, experience, and circumstance, and treat every interaction on a case-by-case basis.

Accordingly, it is not possible to provide a comprehensive set of factors or characteristics which would allow identification of individuals who may be vulnerable. So that all our fundraisers are alert to potential indicators of vulnerability, we follow:

- the definition of vulnerability given by the Direct Marketing Association (DMA) in their document ["Framework: Developing a Vulnerable Customers Policy for Internal Use"](#);
- the guidelines on indicators of vulnerability given by the Institute of Fundraising in their document ["Treating Donors Fairly: Fundraising with People in Vulnerable Circumstances"](#).

Where we have reason to believe that a supporter or potential supporter may be in a vulnerable circumstance, we will seek to identify whether the individual has capacity to make an informed decision about sponsorship



or other financial giving. 'Making an informed decision' means that, at the point of making the decision, the individual is able to understand the information relevant to the decision, retain that information, use or weigh up that information as part of the decision-making process, and communicate the decision.

**In cases where we reasonably believe that someone we engage with is unable to make an informed decision, we will not accept donations or applications to sponsor.**

Where appropriate, we will encourage individuals to support our work in other ways, through prayer, correspondence, and advocacy.

In some cases, an individual in a potentially vulnerable circumstance may need additional support in order to help them make their decision. Additional support might include:

- providing alternative formats of fundraising materials and information;
- providing different contact options (telephone, email, letter);
- checking understanding at appropriate points during the conversation and asking if there is anything that needs further explanation;
- delaying acceptance of the sponsorship or donation to give the supporter time to consider it;
- suggesting the supporter gets advice from family/friends.

In cases where we have confidence that an individual in a potentially vulnerable circumstance has capacity to make an informed decision, **we will accept donations or applications to sponsor**. In these cases, we will document our decision internally, so it can be reviewed or re-assessed as appropriate to each case.

If we become aware that we have unknowingly accepted donations from an individual during a time in which he or she did not have the capacity to make an informed decision, **we will return all donations accepted during this period** in line with our Refunds Policy.

Where we are declining a donation or an application to sponsor, we will always take care not to cause offence or upset to the individual concerned. If there is an appropriate opportunity to do so, we will check the individual's preferences as to whether they would like to be contacted again in the future.

We provide extensive training and guidance to staff and volunteers whose roles may bring them into contact with people who may be in a vulnerable circumstance, so that they are able to identify potentially vulnerable situations, recognise conversational and other indicators of vulnerability, and take appropriate action either to provide individuals with additional support or to sensitively end a fundraising interaction.

In some cases, it may be necessary to take the details of the donation or application, and then re-assess the case within the Supporter Experience team to decide any further action, such as confirming the donation again with the supporter. In these cases, the Head of Supporter Engagement will be responsible for our final decision on whether to accept the donation, in consultation with colleagues and/or the board of trustees if required.



## Policy on Supporters in Vulnerable Circumstances

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We recognise that, from time to time, we may receive information regarding a supporter's vulnerability from a third party. For some requests, such as changes to communications preferences, we will act on requests where we are satisfied that the third party is acting in the best interests of the supporter. To ensure we are acting in accordance with our supporters' wishes, and in accordance with the Code of Fundraising Practice, to action requests concerning financial matters we will ask for evidence that the third party has authority to act on the supporter's behalf. The Head of Supporter Engagement will be responsible for our final decision on whether to act on a third-party request.

### More Information

If you would like more information about this policy, please contact Compassion UK via email [info@compassionuk.org](mailto:info@compassionuk.org), or call 01932 836490, or write to Supporter Experience Department, Compassion House, Barley Way, Fleet, Hampshire, GU51 2UT.

#### COMPASSION UK CHRISTIAN CHILD DEVELOPMENT

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