

Safeguarding Vulnerable Supporters Policy

June 2021
Policy Review Date: Jun 2022

At the Mull and Iona Community Trust (MICT), we rely on voluntary donations, legacies, membership fees and income from our charity shops to fund our work. Alongside the grants we receive from government and charitable trusts, and income from our commercial activities, our supporters enable us to deliver our services across Mull, Iona and the associated islands.

Our fundraisers, retail staff and volunteers connect with our supporters through a variety of channels including mail, email, phone, SMS, face to face meetings, in shops and at events.

Fundraising should be a positive experience for all, whether an existing donor or potential new supporter. By following the high standards set by the Scottish Fundraising Standards Panel, and the UK Code of Fundraising Practice, across all our fundraising activities, we want to ensure that the relationship with our donors is strong. We also follow the guidance of the Chartered Institute of Fundraising, and its code of fundraising practice and its guidance, Treating Donors Fairly.

MICT's Commitment to Treating Donors Fairly.

Every donor is an individual with a unique background, experiences and circumstances, and every interaction between a fundraiser and donor is different.

We follow the principals that **all** donors should be treated with:

- **Respect** – Always be respectful. This means being mindful of and sensitive to any particular need that a donor may have. It also means striving to respect the wishes and preferences of the donor.
- **Fairness** – Treat your donors fairly. This includes not discriminating against any group or individual based on their appearance or health conditions.
- **Responsiveness** – Respond appropriately to the individual needs of your donors. The responsibility lies with fundraisers to adapt their approach (tone, language, communication technique) to suit the needs and requirements of the donor.
- **Accountability** – Take responsibility for your actions, ensuring that your fundraising is carried out in line with the Code of Fundraising Practice. Consider what processes and procedures your charity may need in place to ensure this happens and that the needs of people in vulnerable circumstances are met.

MICT does not identify vulnerable adults based on broad personal characteristics such as disability or age. We believe that everyone should have the opportunity to donate if they are willing and able to do so. However, we recognise there are times when donations should not be taken, or where a donor needs additional care and support to make an informed decision.

There will also be times when fundraisers and retail staff and volunteers come into contact with people who may not have the mental capacity to make a decision to donate. Contact can happen either through our own communications or through communications from the agencies who work on our behalf.

If a fundraiser or member of retail staff, or a volunteer, reasonably believes that an individual is unable to make a decision then they should not accept a donation from that person. If the donation has already been made, and at the time of donating the individual lacked capacity (and MICT receives evidence of this) the donation will be returned.

Line Managers of fundraisers, shop staff, volunteers or others representing MICT, have a responsibility for ensuring that staff and volunteers are aware of and fully understand this policy. They must assess whether staff and volunteers are able to make correct decisions on their own initiative and seek support from their line manager when appropriate.

Who May be Regarded as a Vulnerable Person?

An individual who finds it difficult to immediately make an informed decision about the choices offered to them is called a 'vulnerable person'.

We recognise that some of the people we engage with through our fundraising activities will not always have the capacity to fully understand the nature of the donation they are being asked to make to MICT, or the consequences of making that donation.

All individuals may, at some stage in their life, be in a vulnerable circumstance or require additional care and support. At MICT we recognise the broad range of issues which may impact upon someone's ability to make a decision to donate, and that those circumstances may be either permanent or temporary.

MICT does not actively seek donations from young people under 18. If a donor is under 18, permission must be sought from the appropriate responsible adult who will hold overall responsibility for the donation/s and the communication with us.

Older people – particularly those over 60 – make up a significant proportion of many charity's donors, and most are very active and fully able to make decisions. MICT will therefore not use age alone as a factor in determining whether a person is vulnerable or not. Instead, when communicating or fundraising with someone who is older, we take reasonable steps to ensure that they understand the information and donation. Staff and volunteers should be aware of signs that may indicate that the individual needs additional care and support to make an informed decision and take appropriate steps to meet that need.

Regardless of age, a vulnerable person may experience:

- a diagnosed condition such as dementia;
- a recent bereavement;
- an undiagnosed or temporary mental health condition such as severe anxiety;
- learning difficulties;
- difficulty understanding the language.

It is our desire and obligation to protect vulnerable people and those in vulnerable circumstances. Whenever we suspect that someone we engage with is lacking capacity or is in vulnerable circumstances we will take steps to terminate the contact in a way which seeks to:

- protect that person;
- protect their dignity;
- note any desire they have expressed to support MICT.

Fundraising and vulnerable supporters.

If a fundraiser, another member of MICT staff, or a volunteer fundraising for MICT suspects that a person they are talking to may be vulnerable, they must end the conversation immediately. They should do this politely, without:

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- making a request for a donation;
- asking about the individual's capacity to make a decision or the existence of vulnerable circumstances.

Our experience is that it may be difficult in some situations for fundraisers to decide whether or not someone is in a vulnerable circumstance or lacks capacity. We provide guidelines for our fundraisers, but our approach is always to err on the side of caution.

This applies to all fundraising, by our employees and volunteers or through a third party or agency.

But everyone has the right to donate if they wish to and are able to do so. So, we offer further support for people in vulnerable circumstances who want to make a decision about whether to make a donation. But MICT will not contact supporters with the aim of asking for an increase in their giving where the supporters' records indicate a declaration of vulnerability regardless of whether a formal declaration has been made or not.

MICT will not accept donations where we have reason to believe that a supporter may be experiencing vulnerable circumstances and that accepting the donation would be ethically wrong and/or harmful to the donor.

Should MICT receive information regarding a supporter's vulnerability from a third party, it will not act on any request to alter the supporters' preferences unless the third party can provide evidence that he or she has authority to act on behalf of the supporter, for example through a registered Power of Attorney.

What You should Do If You Have Reason to Complain About MICT's Fundraising Activities and How We Have Treated You.

Mull and Iona Community Trust (Scottish Charity Number SC025995 and Company Limited by Guarantee registered in Scotland, Reg No SC172897) is committed to treating all our supporters and potential supporters with respect, fairness, and dignity.

We believe that giving to your favourite causes should be a positive experience for all.

If you have any questions or complaints about the way we have treated you or someone you care for, please contact us first.

**Mull and Iona Community Trust
An Roth Community Enterprise Centre
Craignure
Isle of Mull
PA65 6AY**

Tel: 01680 812 900

E-mail: enquiries@mict.co.uk

If your complaint is unresolved to your satisfaction, you can also contact The Scottish Fundraising Standards Panel. The Panel is the body that is responsible for fundraising standards in Scotland and the handling of fundraising complaints relating to Scottish registered charities. It does this within the guidance provided by The Code of Fundraising Practice (<https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/code>), which outlines the standards expected of all charitable fundraising organisations across the UK.

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The Panel has its own complaints procedure, which you can access via <https://www.goodfundraising.scot/make-a-complaint/> or by calling 0808 164 2520.

This Safeguarding Vulnerable Supporters Policy was last reviewed and approved by the MICT Board of Directors – June 2021