

CoP Name	Vulnerable Person Code of Practice
Category	Governance
Owner	Director of Fundraising, Marketing and Communications
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Code of Practice

Vulnerable Person

This Code of Practice applies to everyone acting on behalf of Plantlife, including employees, volunteers, trustees, partners, contractors, and any third-party fundraising agencies.

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1. Introduction

We believe that supporting the causes you care about should be a positive and rewarding experience.

The purpose of this Code of Practice is to ensure that all Plantlife International's fundraising and other activities are conducted ethically and responsibly.

2. About this code of practice

This policy is guided by the Fundraising Regulator's Code of Fundraising Practice and the principles set out in the Institute of Fundraising's [Treating Donors Fairly](#) guidance. When we are in contact with our supporters, we abide by these four key principles:

- **Respectful:** treating all members of the public respectfully. This means being mindful of and sensitive to any particular need that a supporter may have. It also means striving to respect the wishes and preferences of the supporter.
- **Fair:** treating all supporters fairly and responding to people as individuals. Fundraisers should not make decisions based solely on a particular characteristic such as a person's appearance, the way they talk, any medical condition, or disability.
- **Responsive:** responding appropriately to the individual needs of our supporters. Our fundraisers will be flexible and adapt their approach to suit the needs and requirements of the supporter.
- **Accountable:** Plantlife carries out fundraising in line with the [Code of Fundraising Practice](#). We have considered the processes and procedures needed to fundraise to a high standard.

It also ensures our compliance with the Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Act 2016 which requires charities to protect the vulnerable and to ensure that any third parties fundraising on their behalf maintain the same high standards.

3. What is a vulnerable person?

We recognise that, on occasion, some of the people that we engage through fundraising activities may lack the capacity to make a fully informed decision about the nature and consequences of making a donation.

An individual who, temporarily or permanently, lacks the capacity to make a fully informed decision is called a 'vulnerable person'.

4. Vulnerable circumstances

The context and circumstance that an individual may be in at the time of making their donation is relevant and important – there is no absolute definition of vulnerability. Anyone covered by this policy is expected to assess each situation on a case-by-case basis, listening carefully, recognising individual needs, and adapting their approach as appropriate.

Examples of indicators which could mean that an individual may be in a vulnerable circumstance could include, but are not limited to:

- Any physical or mental health condition the person may have;
- Any disability the person may have;
- Those under duress (bereavement, recent trauma);
- People under the influence of substances or alcohol;
- How well the person can communicate and understand what they are being told;
- Anyone experiencing financial hardship or other pressures.

5. Our obligation to protect vulnerable people

We are committed to protecting people who may be in vulnerable circumstances. If we believe that someone we are engaging with lacks capacity or may be vulnerable, we will end the interaction in a way that:

- prioritises their wellbeing and protection
- respects their dignity at all times
- acknowledges any genuine interest they have expressed in supporting Plantlife

6. Fundraising and Vulnerable Supporters

If a fundraiser suspects that an individual they are engaging with may be in a vulnerable circumstance, they must end the conversation immediately and respectfully. In doing so, they must:

- refrain from making any request for a donation
- avoid questioning the individual's capacity to make decisions or the existence of vulnerable circumstances

We recognise that it may not always be clear whether a person is in a vulnerable situation or lacks capacity. Therefore, we provide clear guidance to support fundraisers in making these judgements.

This standard applies to all fundraising activities conducted on behalf of Plantlife, whether by staff, volunteers, third parties, or agencies.

We also believe that everyone has the right to support the causes they care about, provided they have the capacity and freedom to make that choice. For this reason, we offer appropriate support to individuals in vulnerable circumstances who wish to make an informed decision about donating.

7. Returning Donations

In the rare circumstance that Plantlife receives a donation from an individual who lacked the capacity to understand the nature and implications of their gift at the time it was made, we will make every reasonable effort to return the donation. In such cases, Plantlife must be satisfied that the donor did not have the capacity to make an informed decision at the time of giving.

If you would like to request a refund based on the above, please contact our friendly Supporter Care Team:

- By calling 01722 342 730
- By emailing enquiries@plantlife.org.uk
- Or by post to: Plantlife Supporter Care, Brewery House, 36 Milford Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP1 2AP