

Renewable World: Vulnerable Supporter Policy

Our generous supporters make our work possible and are central to us achieving our mission of developing and deploying effective ways of bringing off-grid renewable energy solutions to the most remote and underserved communities, empowering them to achieve sustainable and resilient lives.

This policy relates to all the relationships between Renewable World and our supporters, regardless of the financial benefits, and extends to include any third parties we may work with who interact with supporters.

Renewable World's commitment

All fundraisers are reminded that they should be alert to indicators of potential vulnerabilities in every interaction they have with supporters. We should always abide by our values of respect, integrity and accountability, and be open, honest and transparent with all our supporters to ensure they fully understand what their support involves. We will always strive to provide them with the best possible experience in their relationship with Renewable World, and recognise that our supporters are key to us being able to carry out our vital work in Nepal and Kenya.

Our commitment to our supporters and as a member of the Fundraising Regulator, means we will adhere to the Code of Fundraising Practice Requirements (1.2 e):

- i. Fundraisers **MUST** take all reasonable steps to treat a donor fairly, enabling them to make an informed decision about any donation. This **MUST** include taking into account the needs of any potential donor who may be in a vulnerable circumstance or require additional care and support to make an informed decision.
- ii. Fundraisers **MUST NOT** exploit the credulity, lack of knowledge, apparent need for care and support or vulnerable circumstance of any donor at any point in time.
- iii. If a fundraiser knows or has reasonable grounds for believing that an individual lacks capacity to make a decision to donate, a donation **MUST NOT** be taken.
- iv. A donation given by someone who lacked capacity at the time of donating **MUST*** be returned (** this is a legal requirement defined by law*).

What is vulnerability?

Renewable World recognises that vulnerability is complex and changeable and may, at some stage in life, affect any individual.

If an individual lacks the mental capacity to make an informed decision, then they are potentially vulnerable. The Mental Capacity Act 2005 states that this can be defined as an impairment of the functioning of the brain leaving that person unable to make a decision, for example dementia.

As the Fundraising Regulator Guidance [Treating Donors Fairly](#) states: *"an individual does not have to have any medical, physical, or mental condition to be in a 'vulnerable circumstance'. Instead, something could have happened in someone's life that makes things difficult for them, means that it is harder for them to make decisions, or is a time of particular stress or anxiety."*

Renewable World therefore understands that vulnerability can be a temporary situation defined by significant life events, such as times of extreme stress and/or anxiety.

It is important for all staff and representatives of Renewable World to remember that there is a wide range of potential vulnerabilities, which can affect different people in different ways. It is important to consider each supporter's circumstance individually and refrain from making judgements.

Renewable World also recognises that there are times where an individual may have capacity to make a decision, but circumstances mean they may require extra support in making that decision e.g. if someone is bereaved.

Identifying someone in a potentially vulnerable situation

Examples of indicators which could lead Renewable World to believe that an individual does not have the mental capacity to make an informed decision, is in a vulnerable circumstance or needs additional support could include:

- Physical and mental medical conditions
- Disability
- Learning difficulties
- Times of stress or anxiety (e.g. bereavement, redundancy)
- Financial vulnerability (where a gift from a donor may impact on their ability to sufficiently care for themselves or leave them in financial hardship)
- English not being the donor's first language
- Influence of alcohol or drugs

Due to its nature, it is not possible to provide a comprehensive set of indicators, so these serve as guidance and fundraisers are advised to always remain alert to the potential for vulnerability. Fundraisers are also advised to flag and escalate any vulnerability concerns to a member of Renewable World's senior management team.

If a fundraiser is speaking with a supporter who they feel may be potentially vulnerable (as they have identified red flags to indicate this), then the fundraiser will be expected to be considerate, respectful and to adapt their manner to the appropriate response.

When would Renewable World not accept a donation

This policy **only** refers to situations where the supporter may be in a vulnerable circumstance, and no other situations where refusing or refunding a donation may need to be considered, for example, if a supporter has changed their mind.

When Renewable World has reasonable grounds to believe that a supporter lacks the mental capacity to make an informed decision, including temporary circumstances, about their giving, **Renewable World should not accept the donation.**

When Renewable World has reasonable grounds to believe an individual has the capacity to make a decision, but might need additional support in doing so, Renewable World will not accept the

donation at that moment. It may be considered appropriate to send the supporter a form and advise them to discuss their donation with friends and family before returning it.

When Renewable World should return a donation

If a donation has been made, and it is found that at the time of donating, the supporter lacked the capacity to make an informed decision about their giving, including temporary circumstances, then the donation is deemed invalid and should be returned.

Safeguarding our supporters

Protecting people and safeguarding responsibilities are a key priority for Renewable World, as laid out in our global suite of policies.

As a fundraising organisation we also have a duty or care to ensure we safeguard our supporters. If, in their interaction with us, a supporter indicates that they are a risk to their own, or someone else's safety, we will notify the relevant authorities as we feel necessary for their protection.

We're here to help

If we can be of any assistance, or if you would like more information about this policy, please contact us on 01273 234801, or email getintouch@renewable-world.org, or write to: Renewable World, Community Base, 113 Queens Road, Brighton, BN1 3XG.