



# Acceptance and Refusal of Donations Policy

**ARD002**

## Document Control

**Department:** Fundraising and Marketing  
**Policy Number:** ARD002

**Director:** Jayne Clarke  
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<b>Author</b>	Head of Philanthropy and Partnerships
<b>Approver</b>	Director of Fundraising & Marketing

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# Acceptance and Refusal of Donations Policy (ARD002)

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Raising money is crucial, but sometimes there are other considerations that can be more important. The value of a donation may not be worth the cost in potential loss of public trust and confidence in the charity, a detrimental impact to the reputation of the organisation, or a conflict with the charity's ethics and values which could lead to a loss of support in the future. Therefore, this policy seeks to ensure that the best interests of the charity are always followed.
- 1.2 This policy sets out the guidelines for accepting and refusing donations (both monetary and otherwise) by London's Air Ambulance Charity. The charity comprises London's Air Ambulance Limited (including the Institute of Pre-Hospital Care) and London's Air Ambulance Trading Limited.
- 1.3 The Director of Fundraising and Marketing is accountable, and the respective Heads of department are responsible for gift acceptance and refusal.

## 2. Purpose & Scope

- 2.1 This policy has been developed with the Fundraising and Marketing Management Team. It details how London's Air Ambulance Charity will decide on accepting and refusing donations and is aligned with the Fundraising Regulator Code of Fundraising Practice.
- 2.2 This document seeks to ensure that all donations are properly received, recorded, and administered using appropriate internal controls, and complying with relevant external regulations. The policy is designed to ensure that all donations to London's Air Ambulance Charity serve to reinforce our mission by outlining our guiding principles for the acceptance and refusal of donations and for entering into corporate partnership agreements.
- 2.3 The policy applies to all solicited and unsolicited donations to London's Air Ambulance Charity from individuals, trusts and foundations, companies, community groups and government agencies in the UK and overseas. Donations are defined as either financial or non-financial contributions.

## 3. Specific industries or activities for consideration

These industries have been highlighted, because they are high-risk industries, which need to be considered at a high level, in terms of how it impacts the charity. Thus, each donation will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The risk matrix included in the appendices will help inform decisions on the acceptance and refusal of donations.

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## Alcohol distributors and selling

- 3.1** Road traffic collisions are one of the main mechanisms of injury that London's Air Ambulance Charity attends. Due to the potential link between alcohol and road traffic collisions, London's Air Ambulance Charity will only accept donations relating to alcohol in specific circumstances and on a case-by-case basis (for example: alcohol gifted for a fundraising Gala from distributors and suppliers). We currently do not accept gifts for aircraft sponsorship. We will consider partnerships with retailers and distributors where alcohol sales or distribution is a minimal element of their profits.

## Arms manufacturing and selling

- 3.2** Shootings and stabbings are one of the main mechanisms of injury that London's Air Ambulance Charity attend. Due to the link between arms manufacturing and selling and penetrating trauma, London Air Ambulance Charity will only accept donations in specific circumstances and on a case-by-case basis (for example the potential for a wider corporate partnership with Boeing (aviation manufacturers but also weapons.)

## Tobacco industries

- 3.3** Due to the proven link between tobacco use and heart disease we would not accept any kind of corporate donation or support from a tobacco company. This includes a 'Charity of the Year' partnership, corporate sponsorship, and matched giving for any employee fundraising. However, if an employee of a tobacco company, due to personal circumstances, wishes to support and donate to the charity from personal efforts, this is acceptable. Not accepting their donations based on the company they work for would be unacceptable discrimination.

## Personal Injury Lawyers

- 3.4** The charity's Patient Liaison Nurse provides patients with the contact details for personal injury lawyers if the need arises, in accordance with hospital procedures, if applicable. The charity defines personal injury law firms and multidisciplinary law firms as below:

**Personal injury law firms.** The firm's primary specialism is 'personal injury / medical negligence', is best known for its association with the 'personal injury / medical negligence' industry, and / or 75% or more of its turnover is from the 'personal injury / medical negligence' industry.

**Multidisciplinary law firms.** The firm specialises in a mix of corporate and private client practices and / or less than 10% of its turnover is from the 'personal injury / medical negligence' industry.

London's Air Ambulance Charity will accept unsolicited donations from personal injury law firms that fall into the above definition, but this excludes funding for the Patient Liaison Nurse

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Programme which will not be accepted. The charity will consider corporate partnership opportunities with personal injury law firms on a case-by-case basis in line with the charity's risk matrix procedure, but this excludes funding for the Patient Liaison Nurse Programme which will not be accepted.

London's Air Ambulance Charity will accept unsolicited donations and will seek donations from multidisciplinary law firms that fall into the above definition, but this excludes funding for the Patient Liaison Nurse Programme which will not be accepted. The charity will seek corporate partnership opportunities with multidisciplinary law firms in line with the charity's risk matrix procedure, but this excludes funding for the Patient Liaison Nurse Programme which will not be accepted.

Any partnerships with a personal injury law firm or multidisciplinary law firm does not constitute promotion of their services to our patients and any publicity of partnerships should make this clear.

If a personal injury law firm approaches us for a funding opportunity, London's Air Ambulance Charity will only accept donations for funding in specific circumstances and on a case-by-case basis. Due to the conflict of interest, it will not accept funding of the Patient Liaison Nurse role from personal injury lawyers.

### **Polluting Industries: Fossil Fuel**

- 3.5** London's Air Ambulance Charity will accept unsolicited donations and will seek donations, partnerships and sponsorship from fossil fuel companies or corporate foundations, where the partnership and company's operations align with the charity's strategy, values and sustainability goals. All donations, partnerships and sponsorship will be considered in line with the charity's risk matrix procedure.

The charity will not accept sponsorship (that requires branding) for any of our fleet, both helicopters or cars, or any equipment from fossil fuel companies.

## 4. Donations considered high risk

- 4.1** Solicited and unsolicited donations totalling **£25,000 or over** within a one-year period. The Charity Commission recommends identifying donors for substantial donations from an unknown source. (Please see [10. Appendix 1](#)).
- 4.2** Multi-year pledges including corporate partnerships totalling **£25,000 or over**.
- 4.3 Donations made anonymously:** Donations made anonymously or via third parties on behalf of a donor who wishes to remain anonymous, where the giving vehicle also cannot be verified.
- 4.4 Unusual circumstances:** Any unusual donation conditions, payment methods or currency, unsolicited large gifts or other suspicious activity should be investigated. Unverified or suspicious donations totalling **£25,000** need to be reported to the Charity Commission as a serious incident. These should be flagged on the day of receipt, so it can be decided if the donation requires reviewing. (Please refer to Section [5. Due Diligence](#)).

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- 4.5 Court action:** If Court action has recently been taken against a donor in the Civil or Criminal Courts, and this action has resulted in the donor having a criminal record or being found negligent in the Civil Courts. These instances will be managed on a case-by-case basis.
- 4.6 Donations made at Special Events (i.e. Gala)** Donations made by new supporters because of a pledge call to action of **£25,000 and above**.
- 4.7** Where a donation made at a special event is thought to be of high risk, due diligence checks should be carried out post-event. (Please refer to section [6. Refusal of Donations](#) and Section [7. Returning Donations.](#))
- 4.8** Any donation, partnership or sponsorship that the charity considers having a significant link to any of the listed high risk industries.

## 5. Due Diligence

- 5.1** The Fundraising and Marketing Team will take all reasonable measures to ensure it is aware of the source of funding for gifts and will undertake due diligence to ensure that gifts are for purposes consistent with London's Air Ambulance Charity's mission and values, namely that:
- No legal or reputational issues are raised by the acceptance of a gift;
  - The activity to be funded does not create unacceptable conflicts of interest;
  - The nature or level of the gift does not result in unacceptable current or future financial liabilities.
- 5.2** For gifts totalling **£25,000** or over, due diligence research **must** be conducted if it has not already been completed for the gift giver **within the last 12 months**.
- 5.3** At special events such as the Gala, the action referred to in section [5.2](#) is not practically possible before receipt of the gift. Instead, upon signing up for the special event, attendees consent to adhere to our Gift Acceptance and Refusal of Donations Policy. This is designed to ensure that gifts are not associated with illegal activity, which could have a negative impact on our beneficiaries, or have a potentially negative impact on the reputation of the charity.
- 5.4** In instances where the gift is deemed as unacceptable, it will be subject to our refunding donations process. (Please also refer to section [6. Refusing Donations](#) and [7. Returning Donations.](#))
- 5.5** Due diligence must also be carried out where the charity is considering entering a longer-term partnership with an individual or organisation i.e., establishing a corporate partnership or inviting an individual to join a committee (such as the Gala Committee or Development Board). Please see Fundraising Corporate Partnership Policy (which is currently pending).
- 5.6** Due diligence will be carried out by the Fundraising and Marketing Team in line with GDPR regulations and London's Air Ambulance Charity's privacy policies.
- 5.7** To manage the balance between the need to know and the right to privacy in its due diligence investigations, the Fundraising and Marketing Team will only process data that is relevant to the funds or donor and that is in the public domain or on the charity's CRM database. All searches will be undertaken and documented in compliance with relevant privacy laws and with the recognition that individual donors and prospective donors have the right to request personal data held about them by London's Air Ambulance Charity, including reasons for declining gifts.

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## 6. Refusal of Donations

- 6.1** The Trustees and Fundraising and Marketing Management Team are committed to acting in the best interest of the charity in pursuing its purposes, when deciding whether to refuse a donation. London's Air Ambulance Charity will only do so if accepting it would be more detrimental to the charity being able to achieve its objectives than rejecting it.
- 6.2** When making this decision London's Air Ambulance Charity will undertake a system of balance and checks to provide careful analysis of the risks of accepting a donation.
- 6.3** This will be decided on a case-by-case basis and in line with Charity Commission and Chartered Institute of Fundraising guidance, which states that donations may only be rejected in exceptional circumstances.
- 6.4** Ultimate responsibility for all decisions relating to the acceptance and refusal of gifts rests with the Trustees. If there is a suggestion that a donation should be refused, or if there is any doubt or question over the acceptance of a donation, this should be referred to the Director of Fundraising and Marketing, who will then consult with the CEO and/or other relevant Directors and Trustees. All high-risk donations ([as defined in section 4](#)) will be initially referred to the charity's Directors' Group for a decision. The Director of Fundraising will also share with the Audit and Risk Committee Chair or Chair of the Board (whoever is available) all high-risk donations referred to the Director's Group. All recommendations to refuse a donation will automatically be referred to the charity's Audit and Risk Committee for decision. All donations given in unusual circumstances ([4.4](#)) and reported as a Serious Incident to the Charity Commission, will also be reported to the Audit and Risk Committee.
- 6.5** The following principles guide the refusal of all donations to London's Air Ambulance Charity:
- 6.6** There is a strong possibility that acceptance of the donation or support might:
- Damage the reputation of London's Air Ambulance Charity;
  - Create unacceptable conflicts of interest with other funders or stakeholders;
  - Harm London's Air Ambulance Charity's relationship with partners, beneficiaries, or supporters.
  - Undermine delivery of London's Air Ambulance Charity's vital work. (Please see section [3. Specific industries or activities for consideration](#)).
  - There are reasonable grounds to believe that the supporter is a vulnerable individual. Please refer to the **Treating Supporters Fairly Policy**.
- 6.7** We will not accept a donation where there are reasonable grounds to believe:
- The individual or organisation holds views, or is involved in activities incompatible with our values as a charity;
  - The donation may be an attempted scam, or to launder money or evade tax, or is in some other way illegal; (Please see section [8. Money Laundering](#))
  - There may be private benefit linked to the donation, such as an obligation to purchase goods or services from a specified company;
  - Conditions attached to the donation are so inflexible that they undermine our independence; for example, where an offer of support is itself dependent upon London's Air Ambulance Charity first spending its own money or resources in order to facilitate the execution of the original offer of support, as this might be placing the charity's assets under undue and inappropriate risk;
  - Or are so onerous as to compromise our effectiveness;

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- Or restrict who may benefit to the extent of undermining our public benefit obligation;
- The cost of accepting the donation would exceed its value.

### 7. Returning Donations

**7.1** In line with charity regulations and guidance, once London's Air Ambulance Charity has accepted a donation it can only return it:

- If the terms and conditions of the gift provide for it to be returned in particular circumstances, or;
- Where the law specifically provides for the gift to be returned in particular circumstances; or by way of an 'ex-gratia payment' (a payment made as a result of a compelling moral, but not legal, obligation). The charity will refer to the Refund Policy in these circumstances.

### 8. Money Laundering

**8.1** When considering our approach to money laundering London's Air Ambulance Charity will work within the regulatory and statutory guidance as detailed by the:

- [Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/29)
- [Terrorism Act 2000 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/11)
- [The Money Laundering Regulations 2007 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2007/2983)
- [The Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and Transfer of Funds \(Information on the Payer\) Regulations 2017 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1213)

**8.2** A written risk assessment will be undertaken to identify and assess the risk of money laundering and terrorist financing to mitigate against the risk of fiscal and reputational damage.

**8.3** The charity will apply a risk-based approach to detecting and preventing money laundering and terrorist fundraising. For example, when approached by a new donor wishing to make a large donation, London's Air Ambulance Charity will carry out a risk assessment to satisfy themselves as to the donor's identity in line with our due diligence procedures.

**8.4** London's Air Ambulance Charity will consider the following factors when assessing if there is a potential risk of money laundering activity:

- if we have supporters based in jurisdictions where there is a higher risk of money laundering or terrorist financing;
- whether we have supporters who operate in sectors that, by their nature, pose a higher risk of money laundering;
- whether and how often we accept donations from supporters without meeting them.

### 9. Data Security

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9.1 The charity will retain secure reports of all due diligence research completed.. These will be recorded and stored in accordance with data protection, privacy and records retention legislation and policies. Acceptance and refusal of gifts will be recorded on the **Due Diligence Register** and securely stored on London's Air Ambulance Charity's shared drive.

## 10. Appendix 1 – Things to Consider Prior to the Acceptance of Gift

- Does the purpose and source of the donation align with London's Air Ambulance Charity's strategic mission and values?
- Is there any reason to suspect illegal activity?
- Is there reason to suspect it is a 'tainted donation' in accordance with HMRC guidance? Any donations received where we can recover gift aid, will need to be subject to an internal 'tainted donation' review to ensure there is no conflict in recovering gift aid. The minimum level for this is currently £25,000.
- Is there strong possibility that acceptance of the donation might:
  - Damage the reputation of London's Air Ambulance Charity?
  - Create unacceptable conflicts of interest with other funders or stakeholders?
  - Harm London's Air Ambulance Charity's relationship with partners, beneficiaries or supporters?
- Will the donation cost London's Air Ambulance Charity more than the benefit it derives from it, or require an unacceptable expenditure of resources?
- Will acceptance of the donation undermine delivery of London's Air Ambulance Charity's vital work?

## 11. Appendix 2- Guiding Principles

- 11.1** London's Air Ambulance Charity solicits and accepts gifts that are consistent with its mission.
- 11.2** Donations will generally be accepted from individuals, partnerships, corporations, foundations, government agencies, or other entities, without limitations.
- 11.3** In the course of its regular fundraising activities, London's Air Ambulance Charity will accept donations of money, real property, personal property, stock, and in-kind services.
- 11.4** Certain types of gifts must be reviewed prior to acceptance due to the special liabilities they may pose for London's Air Ambulance Charity. Examples of gifts which will be subject to review include gifts of real property, gifts of personal property, and gifts of securities.
- 11.5** Due diligence will be conducted on a case-by-case basis, according to the level and nature of gift pledged or received. In all instances where an unsolicited donation of £25,000 is received from an individual or organisation without prior relationship to the charity there are certain considerations that need to be taken. (Please see [10. Appendix 1](#)).
- 11.6** For known Gala committee members inviting guests for the annual Gala or other special events, they are required to consent to London's Air Ambulance Charity's Terms of Reference document, which includes the following: "London's Air Ambulance Charity" has

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an Acceptance and Refusal of Donations Policy which is designed to ensure that gifts are not associated with illegal activity, could have a negative impact on our beneficiaries, or have a potentially negative impact on the reputation of charity.

**11.7** Due diligence checks should be carried out prior to inviting guests to special events. (E.g. Annual Gala.)

Where it is not possible to carry checks prior to the Gala and other special events these should be carried out as soon as possible following the Gala. (Please refer to Due Diligence Procedure and Committee Terms of Reference).

### 12. Appendix 3 - Risk management matrix

Descriptor	Score	Impact on activity and reputation
Negligible	1	Unsubstantiated rumours with light to moderate impact on reputation, minimal impact to customers.
Minor	2	Loss of regional reputation, word of mouth / social media leading to localised impact on customers.
Major	3	National and Regional loss of reputation impacting on TV/ press / social media coverage having a major impact on customers. Litigation possible.
Significant	4	National and regional loss of reputation. Significant but recoverable damage through TV / press / social coverage having significant impact on customers. Litigation expected.
Catastrophic	5	Adverse publicity not avoidable. International, National and local loss of reputation. Critical damaging TV / press / social coverage. Major litigation expected.
Likelihood		
Descriptor	Score	Example
Extremely Improbable	1	Almost inconceivable it will occur.
Remote	2	Very unlikely to occur.
Possible	3	The risk has a noticeable likelihood of occurring.
Probable	4	The risk is likely to occur.
Highly probable	5	The risk is highly likely to occur.

### 13. Appendix 4 - Definitions

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- 13.1** “London’s Air Ambulance Limited (LAAC)” - London’s Air Ambulance Limited is the legally registered name for London’s Air Ambulance Charity. The charity comprises London’s Air Ambulance Limited and London’s Air Ambulance Trading Limited.
- 13.2** “Donation” – we define this as either financial or non-financial. Financial donations include restricted or unrestricted monetary gifts including cash, grants, sponsorship, and securities. Non-financial gifts include pro-bono legal and financial advice, gifts-in-kind of raffle and auction prizes, equipment, software, real estate, or other non-monetary contributions such as involvement in event committees.
- 13.3** “Sponsor” – any corporate organisation that provides financial support through sponsorship (e.g. of an event, of a helicopter or of rapid response vehicles). Any use of the company’s logo in return for payment to London’s Air Ambulance Charity via London’s Air Ambulance must have in place a full sponsorship agreement. Please see Fundraising Corporate Partnerships Policy.

### 14. Appendix 5 - Responsibilities

- 14.1** The Trustees have delegated the ability to make decisions on acceptance and refusal of donations. This will be recorded as part of the policy documentation and provide clarity on who has overall responsibility for managing the process as detailed below.

Responsible	Head of Philanthropy and Partnerships; Head of Community Engagement; Head of Communications and Marketing; Deputy Director of Fundraising and Marketing
Accountable	Director of Fundraising and Marketing
Consulted	Directors’ Group Audit and Risk Committee Board of Trustees

### 15. Appendix 6 - Approval & Review

- 15.1** London’s Air Ambulance Charity acceptance and refusal of donations policy will be approved by the Director of Fundraising and Marketing and Directors Group with the formal approval of the Trustees who will determine the delegated authority.
- 15.2** An ad-hoc review may be carried out in the event of change of circumstance or legislation.

### 16. Appendix 7 - Review

Name	Role	Date sent	Date returned
Kas Narayanswami	Head of Philanthropy and Partnerships	26/09/2023	26/09/2023

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Tanya Moss	Deputy Head of Philanthropy		
Jennifer Woolford Shekha Amin	Fundraising Compliance Manager Fundraising Compliance Officer	03/10/2023	17/10/2023
Directors Group		08/12/2023	11/12/2023
Kas Narayanswami	Head of Philanthropy and Partnerships	27/08/2025	28/08/2025
Jennifer Woolford Anna Paine	Fundraising Compliance Manager Fundraising Compliance Officer	03/09/2025	22/09/2025
Directors Group		10/09/2025	10/10/2025

### 17. Appendix 8 - Relevant Documents, Policies & Procedures

Please see [Policy Index](#) for polices and procedures mentioned below.

- 17.1** Due Diligence Risk Matrix
- 17.2** Due Diligence Register
- 17.3** Fundraising Corporate Partnerships Policy (pending)
- 17.4** Committee Terms of Reference Subject
- 17.5** Data Protection Policy
- 17.6** Treating Supporters Fairly Policy
- 17.7** Refund Policy