

MEDIA RELEASE

COMMISSIONER OF CHARITIES ESTABLISHES CODE FOR COMMERCIAL FUND-RAISERS

New Code aims to foster a more trustworthy and safer giving environment with strong public support

21 March 2019, Singapore – The Commissioner of Charities (COC) has issued a **Code for Commercial Fund-raisers**¹ to strengthen fund-raising practices in Singapore. This Code was developed with inputs from key stakeholders of the sector, including the Singapore Police Force and commercial fund-raising companies. The Code is published on the Charity Portal (www.charities.gov.sg), and reinforces three core principles: legitimacy, accountability and transparency. SupportWorks Singapore, a major commercial fund-raiser, is the first subscriber to the Code.

2 Commissioner of Charities, Dr Ang Hak Seng said, “The Code aims to foster a more trustworthy and safer giving environment. It guides commercial fund-raisers on their responsibilities to the charities they are fund-raising for, and to members of the public who are donating. It also makes clear what is acceptable conduct of the fund-raisers, such as being respectful to members of the public that they approach, and not to exert pressure to force people to donate. When commercial fund-raisers adhere to the Code, they provide charities and the public the assurance that they are acting in the best interests of the beneficiaries.”

3 The Code incorporates the standards and practices prescribed by the Charities Act² and its subsidiary legislation, as well as the professional standards which the COC expects commercial fund-raisers to adhere to. The Code also makes reference to the House to House and Street Collections Act, and its subsidiary legislation.

4 One best practice in the Code requires commercial fund-raisers to provide training to their sub-contractors so that key information on the fund-raising appeal will be communicated to donors. Such information includes the purpose of the fund-raising appeal, what the donations will be used for, as well as how donors can be updated on the impact of their donations.

¹ In this context, the term “Commercial Fund-raiser” is governed by the definition in Regulation 13(1) of the FR, which states:

In this Part, “commercial fund-raiser” means

*(a) any person (apart from a charitable institution) who carries on a fund-raising business; or
(b) any other person (apart from a person excluded by virtue of FR. Reg 13(2)) who for reward solicits money or other property for the benefit of a charitable institution, if he does so otherwise than in the course of any fund-raising venture undertaken by a person falling within sub-paragraph (a).*

“Person” includes any company or association or body of persons, corporate or unincorporated.

² All fund-raising appeals (including those conducted online) in Singapore for charitable, benevolent, or philanthropic purposes are regulated under the Charities (Fund-raising Appeals for Local and Foreign Charitable Purposes) Regulations 2012.

5 As a subscriber to the Code, commercial fund-raisers will be subject to periodic audits by the COC to assess if their practices are in line with the Code's requirements. If a commercial fund-raiser breaches the Code, the breach(es) will be published to help charities make informed decisions on their selection of commercial fund-raisers.

6 "SupportWorks Singapore is proud to be part of the Code for Commercial Fund-raisers as introduced by COC," said Ben Oliver, Senior General Manager SalesWorks Singapore, that trades as SupportWorks. "The Code provides organisations like ours with a strong framework which safeguards charities and the Singaporean public. We believe this benefits everyone involved in fund-raising and we look forward to a sustainable fund-raising environment for many years in the future".

7 This initiative is part of the COC's on-going effort to equip fund-raising intermediaries with the resources to build a safer giving eco-system. Minister Grace Fu had announced the development of this Code at the Charity Governance and Charity Transparency Awards 2018. It follows closely after the launch of the Code of Practice for Online Charitable Fund-raising Appeals in January 2018, as well as the Safer Giving Campaign, which ran from September to December 2018. Please refer to [Annex](#) for the principles of the Code.

Enclosed:

Annex – The Code for Commercial Fund-raisers

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