



Hampshire & Sussex residents encouraged to clear-out their wardrobes for charity

Clothes Aid is calling for Hampshire and Sussex residents to clear out their wardrobes and donate their unloved clothes to support national charities such as the NSPCC and Make-A-Wish® UK, whilst calling for a crack-down by local authorities on bogus collections.

Clothes Aid, the UK's leading organisation for charity clothing collection, makes it easy for the Great British public to recycle unloved clothes and support fantastic UK charities at the same time. Residents in Hampshire and Sussex can help charities by looking out for a Clothes Aid bag through their door, filling it with good quality clothes and leaving it outside on the collection day to be picked up.

Clothes Aid has concerns that the residents of Hampshire and Sussex are being bombarded by bogus charity bags, and that the majority of local authorities are not doing enough to tackle criminal gangs from stealing from charities. As an industry leader, Clothes Aid's teams are fully licensed to collect clothing donations from households in the South East of England and across the UK, raising vital funds for legitimate charities such as Make-A-Wish® UK and the NSPCC who do not have high street branches. Over £10million has been raised from the donation of unloved clothing from the Great British public.

Clothes Aid has recently been made aware of an increase in criminal gangs attempting to deceive residents in Hampshire and Sussex into handing over their clothing, under the false premise of giving to good causes. These donations should be supporting charities, but are instead kept by shady organisations for their own personal gain.

Martynas Riauba, Clothes Aid's warehouse manager for Hampshire and Sussex spoke about bogus collections and asked Hampshire residents to be vigilant when donating clothes:

"I've been working with Clothes Aid to raise money for worthwhile UK charities since 2009 and in 2016 the donations we collected in Hampshire and Sussex were worth £750,000. These charities need our support, but raising funds is an uphill struggle when bogus collection firms are operating unlicensed and unchallenged."

"Everyone at Clothes Aid is extremely proud to have raised over £10million, but we could raise so much more if these bogus operators were stopped. It's so important that people aren't put off donating their clothes, and should research about whether they are giving to truly honest causes."

Because they want to see an end to bogus clothing collections, Clothes Aid commits valuable time and resources on the battle against unlicensed operators, to ensure that donations end up being passed onto charity. Research from Clothes Aid has found that nearly two-thirds (64 per cent) of collection agencies working in Hampshire and Sussex do so without a licence.

Andy Payne, Collection Protection Officer at Clothes Aid explained about the bogus collectors conning Hampshire residents and called for more support from local authorities:

"Every time we receive a tip off about a suspicious clothing collection, we make contact with the local council to see if they have issued a licence for companies to raise funds in this way. Some authorities are incredibly helpful, but sadly there are councils who do not even respond to our enquiries."

"We understand that local councils and the police are under resourced because of government cuts, but we know of organisations run by dishonest people that are stealing from legitimate charities or paying fractional percentages of their profits. We would like to see the police and councils place more scrutiny on this criminal activity and stop it once and for all."



Christine Allingham, Corporate Partnerships Manager at Make-A-Wish® UK praised the work of Clothes Aid:

“Make-A-Wish UK really values its partnership with Clothes Aid. It’s great that our supporters know they can trust Clothes Aid collections, and recycle their clothes safe in the knowledge that it’s making a difference to causes such as ours.”

“Clothes Aid has raised over £1million for Make-A-Wish UK, which has helped grant hundreds of magical wishes to enrich the lives of children and young people fighting life-threatening conditions.”

Clothes Aid are calling for a crackdown on bogus collections and are taking a three-pronged approach – letters have been sent to the Chief Constables of Hampshire Constabulary (Olivia Pinkney) and Sussex Police (Giles York), asking for support in tackling bogus operators through increased police patrols and searches of vehicles and property.

Letters will be sent to every local authority in Hampshire and Sussex, requesting that more scrutiny is placed on clothing collections and asking the licencing department to deny licences to firms who do not adequately share their profits with charities. Serving MPs in Hampshire and Sussex are due to be informed about breaches in licencing and fundraising law where it has been traced.

Clothes Aid will always investigate feedback from concerned members of the public about bogus clothing collections in your area. To report any bogus operators or make a clothing donation to charity, call the Clothes Aid helpline on 020 7288 8545 (9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday) or visit www.clothesaid.co.uk.

****ENDS****

For further information about the issue of bogus clothing collections in Hampshire and Sussex, or for any other information about Clothes Aid, please contact Paul Taylor of Clothes Aid’s PR & marketing team via email (ptaylor@clothesaid.co.uk) or call 020 7288 8538 / 07985 331085.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Research Methodology

Since 2015 Clothes Aid’s Collection Protection department has made 158 requests for information to local authorities about other clothing collection firms in Hampshire and Sussex. Our research suggests that 102 (64 per cent) of these requests have found that neither a national exemption order (NEO) or licence to collect clothing had been attained.

About Clothes Aid

Clothes Aid (registered company 6381220 in England & Wales) is the UK’s largest clothing collection company. We pride ourselves on being fully transparent and follow industry guidance. Being members of the Institute of Fundraising, we follow the Code of Fundraising Practice without exception. We are awaiting for registrations at the new Fundraising Regulator to open and remain committed to their code of conduct in the meantime.

As a fully licensed fundraiser, we are governed by UK fundraising regulations concerning licencing and Charity Acts and adhere to guidance from the UK Charity Commission concerning the collection and sale of used clothing. On all our bags we inform the public of what we promise to each charity and also state the amount per tonne of clothing collected that the charity will receive. Our collection teams are always fully uniformed, carrying ID cards and drive fully branded vehicles.

Clothes Aid is the only collection company in the UK to have a Collection Protection department, dedicated to the prevention of theft of donations. Clothes Aid has worked tirelessly to combat the theft of clothing from legitimate charities and our work has led to over 550 arrests, resulting in convictions that total 28-years imprisonment for offenders.

We work with the following registered charities in the UK:

Children’s Hospice Association Scotland (CHAS) (SC019724)

Macmillan Cancer Support (registered charity number England and Wales, 261017, Scotland SC039907)

Make-A-Wish Foundation® UK (registered charity number England and Wales 295672, Scotland SC037479)

NSPCC (registered charity number England and Wales 216401, Scotland SC037717)

Zoë’s Place Baby Hospice Liverpool (registered charity number 1092545)

Our aim is to give as much of the profits as possible to charity after the costs of fundraising have been met. This amount varies for each charity. We contractually agree a percentage (between 84 and 95 percent) of the gross profit made per tonne the charities will receive from us.