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Institute of Fundraising asks Joe Saxton to forge a campaign coalition to reduce SMS text charges for donations

- **Current charges render text-donations “cost-ineffective”, says Amadi**
- **Potential for fundraising via SMS “substantial”, not least amongst the young, vies Saxton**

The Institute of Fundraising has invited its outgoing chair, Joe Saxton, to forge a coalition of all parties keen to reduce current prohibitive fees the telecoms industry charges charities who seek donations via SMS text messaging.

- **The coalition** - is likely to include fundraising charities and infrastructure bodies as well as fundraising agencies and other supplier stakeholders, not to mention media organisations, celebrities and any other relevant interested parties. Participants will be expected to commit to bring something of use to the coalition’s table – be it time, money, expertise or other resources.
- **The research (into SMS fundraising, as basis for a campaign)** - will involve detailed desk and original research to establish the current, relatively unknown, situation vis-à-vis text messaging, ascertaining the attitudes both of mobile phone users and of the fundraising community.
- **The campaign** - will involve opening discussions with the mobile providers and other key industry stakeholders, including regulators. This process is likely to start in earnest toward the end of 2008 or early 2009 - once the coalition is formed and the research is complete.

Paul Amadi, Group Director of Fundraising at RNIB and incoming [8 July] chair of the Institute of Fundraising, said:

“The Institute of Fundraising is delighted that Joe Saxton has accepted our challenge of working to reduce the cost of making a donation by SMS text message to the point at which it becomes cost-effective for this form of fundraising to flourish. This is a very real issue, not least as charities seek to engage with younger donors. We look forward to opening up a whole new way of giving to brand new audiences.”

Joe Saxton, nfpSynergy’s Driver of Ideas and outgoing [8 July] chair of the Institute of Fundraising, said:

“Many charities find the current charges made by phone providers - simply for collecting donations via SMS - prohibitive. HMRC has thankfully been re-examining the broader VAT issue on charity phone bills. We now invite the telecoms industry itself to address its charge structures, specifically in relation to text-donations. The fundraising potential could well be substantial, not least amongst the young. By striking the right balance, mobile phone operators, charities and donors can *all* benefit.”

Those seeking further information, or keen to explore the possibility of joining the coalition, should contact Joe Saxton on joe.saxton@nfpsynergy.net

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MEDIA INTERVIEWS: To interview nfpSynergy’s Joe Saxton about this initiative, please contact:

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Notes to editors:

- **Joe Saxton**

As well as being Driver of Ideas at nfpSynergy – the leading not for profit sector think tank and research consultancy he founded back in 2002 - Joe Saxton is also outgoing chair (2005-2008) at the Institute of Fundraising; chair at student environment and development campaign group, People & Planet; and chair of CharityComms, the new professional body for not for profit communicators. Named by *The Guardian* (2003) as one of the 100 most influential people vis-à-vis UK social policy, Joe was voted the most influential person in UK fundraising by *Professional Fundraising* magazine in 2005, 2006, 2007 & 2008. In October 2007 the *Evening Standard* named him one of the 1000 most influential people in London. In 2008 he was named as one of *PR Week's* 500 most influential people in the UK communications sector.

- **nfpSynergy**

nfpSynergy (www.nfpsynergy.net) is the UK's *only* think-tank and research consultancy dedicated to the charity sector and not for profit issues. It provides ideas, insights and information to help voluntary and community organisations thrive in an ever-changing world. Regularly harvesting the social and charity-related views of public and parliament, media and business - not to mention not for profit organisations themselves - nfpSynergy has a vast and ever-growing knowledge pool from which to extract and deliver insights.