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## Clothing partnerships 'are harming public confidence'

By Kaye Wiggins, Third Sector, 1 September 2009

### Association of Charity Shops warns of 'potentially fatal' loss of support

Public confidence in door-to-door clothing collections is being "potentially fatally undermined" by partnerships involving charities that do not run stores, according to a report by the [Association of Charity Shops](#).

In a survey of the public carried out in June for the report, 44 per cent of the 1,000 respondents said they had received more clothes collection sacks in the past year than in the previous 12 months, and a third of these said they were "annoyed" as a result.

The rise was due largely to an increase in the number of commercial partnerships between charities that do not have shops and private collection companies, the report claims.

Under such deals, commercial firms distribute clothing collection sacks with the charity's logo and give the charity a proportion of the profit made from the sale of the clothes.

"Public trust and confidence in house-to-house collections are being undermined, potentially fatally, by commercial partnerships," the report says. "Consumers want their donations to benefit charities only."

The report also says the rise in commercial collections has led to a 27 per cent fall in the revenue raised by some charity shops from clothing donations during the past 12 months.

Fifty-three per cent of the respondents who had received more collection sacks had donated either the same number of items or fewer, so there was no increase in income to make up for sharing donations between more organisations, the report concludes.

It also says charities in commercial partnerships do not receive a fair amount of the money raised by the sale of donated clothes.

"Charities in these partnerships will receive between £50 and £100 per tonne," it says. "Sales of that same tonne of textiles in a charity shop will raise between £2,500 and £4,000."

Lekha Klouda, director of the ACS, said commercial organisations and charities that did not run shops should be more transparent about how much of the money raised from the clothes would go to the charities.

Elliot Cohen, director of commercial collection firm [I & G Cohen](#), said the clothes were sold for £500-700 a tonne. "We donate £50 per tonne to the charity and that is clearly stated on the collection sacks," he said. "This is half our profit."

"I agree the proliferation of sacks is damaging public confidence, but the real problem here is the bogus collectors and thieves."

"The Government needs to legislate against these so that charities can benefit from clothes collections."

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