

Complaints Report

2017/18



**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**

Contents

Executive summary

Foreword	3
Key findings	4

Part 1: Complaints we have investigated in 2017-18

Introduction	5
Overview of our investigations process	
Where complaints come from and what is being complained about	
Complaints that are not in our remit	6
Giving organisations an opportunity to resolve complaints	
Themes from our investigations	
Misleading information when fundraising	
Managing supporters' data	7
Complaint handling	8
Monitoring third-parties	9
Unwanted charity bags	10
The Fundraising Preference Service (FPS)	
Other regulatory action	11
Who we are investigating	12
Complaints that are escalated to our Complaints and Investigations Committee	13
Investigations that we discontinued	
Requests for External Review	14
Working with other regulators	

Part 2: Complaints reported by the sector in 2017-18

Introduction	15
Overview of complaints report process	
Method	
Overview of complaints within the sector	16
Complaints reported by method	
Door-to-door fundraising	17
Addressed mail	
Clothing bag collections	18
Online fundraising	
Outdoor events	19
Email fundraising	
Private site fundraising	20
Telephone fundraising	21

Data appendix for Complaints Report

Social activities	22
Raffles	
Television advertising	23
Volunteer fundraising	
Street fundraising	
Lotteries	24
Unaddressed mail	
Cash collections	
Fundraising by text message	25

Foreword

The Fundraising Regulator was launched in July 2016. Our casework operation has now been in place for two years. In 2017/18 we have dealt with 1,504 complaints from individual members of the public, and investigated more than 70 cases.

We have continued to see a clear willingness and commitment from the organisations we regulate, to work with us and make changes where we have identified breaches of the Code of Fundraising Practice, and a need for learning and improvement. We are still a new regulator, and are particularly pleased at the willingness by charities to fully engage in the self-regulatory model, and to react positively to feedback and learning.

In this report we are able to share examples of our casework and through that, key areas of learning for the sector. This report also provides an analysis of the complaints received by 58 charities who spent the most on fundraising in 2017-18.

We want to make sure the information we publish about complaints made by the public help improve the way we, the charities we regulate and the partner organisations they work with, respond to concerns and learn from them.

By the time the 2018-19 report appears, we will have started to publish the names of charities we investigate, whether they have breached the Code of Fundraising Practice or not. We are doing this to show how complaints can be used positively, to bring about change.

We will continue to review and evaluate the process followed when compiling this report, so that future reports can be made even more meaningful for members of the public and the sector that we regulate. In doing so, we will provide a template for the future collection of data by charities regarding fundraising and the complaints it generates.

Gerald Oppenheim,
Chief Executive

This report is in three parts and for the first time brings together learning from our own investigations alongside the data on fundraising complaints handled by the sector.

- **Part 1: Complaints we have investigated between 1 April 2017 - 31 August 2018**
- **Part 2: Complaints reported by the charity sector between 1 April 2017 - 31 March 2018**
- **Appendix: Complaints data**



Executive summary

Key findings

- We received 1,504 complaints about fundraising.
- We closed 78 investigations.
- In 63 of the cases that we investigated (81%), we identified a breach of the Code of Fundraising Practice.
- We investigated charities of all sizes including 21 charities not required to pay the levy or voluntarily registered with us.
- The most common Code breaches were in relation to:
 - General principles and complaints
 - Third-party fundraisers and
 - Personal data
- The vast majority of charities agreed to comply with our recommendations.
- The 58 largest fundraising charities reported receiving 21,851 complaints in 2017/18.

The 78 cases we investigated covered a wide range of fundraising activities and included both large and small organisations, reflecting the breadth and complexity of the fundraising sector.

The most commonly identified themes and learning from the investigations were:

- Using misleading information in a fundraising communication. Charities need to check the information and data used, making sure they show the facts accurately in imagery and text.
- Managing supporter's data and complaints handling. Charities need better systems to make sure they action requests to be removed from the database.
- Monitoring third-party fundraising agencies who work on their behalf. Charities need systems to manage, monitor and make sure they are compliant.
- Charity bag collections. It is important that charities manage address lists and ensure collections take place, and observe do-not-call requests.

Part 2 of the report notes that in 2017-18, the 58 charities who spent the most on fundraising reported to us that they received 21,851 complaints from members of the public about fundraising. The most complained about areas were door-to-door and addressed mail (the same as in the previous year).

Overall, door-to-door fundraising, addressed mail and clothing collections were the causes of most of the complaints reported. Many of the issues faced by charities echo our own investigations, however there are a few notable exceptions. For example, regarding charity bags, as the report shows.

Part 1: Complaints we have investigated in 2017-18

Introduction

Between 1 April 2017 and 31 August 2018 we closed 78 investigations. Of those, we upheld 81% of the complaints, meaning that we identified one or more breaches of the Code of Fundraising Practice. When we identify a breach of the Code, we make recommendations for improvement and in some cases, ask the organisation(s) involved to apologise to the complainant.

In 11 cases, we closed the investigation without issuing a decision. For example, because of an ongoing police investigation. More information can be found on page 13 of this report.

Overview of our investigations process

We investigate complaints about fundraising where these cannot be resolved by the organisations themselves. We do this by considering whether the fundraising organisation has complied with the Code of Fundraising Practice (the Code), which outlines the legal requirements and best practice expected of all charitable fundraising organisations across the UK.

Fundraising complaints against charities that are only registered in Scotland are dealt with differently to other parts of the UK. Complaints about fundraising by a charity registered in Scotland should be put to the Scottish Fundraising Standards Panel.

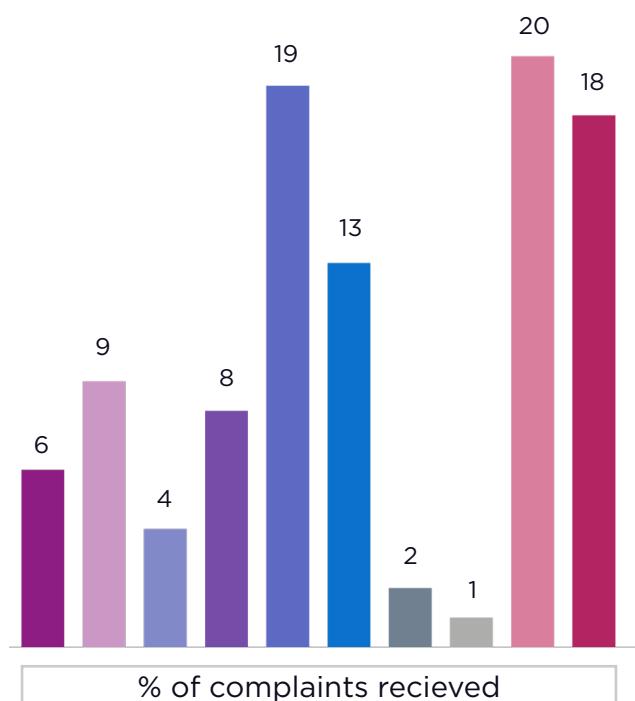
We have seen complaints about a range of charities, from very large charities to very small ones. We have also seen complaints about a range of third-party organisations including fundraising agencies, online giving platforms and organisations that run events.

Where complaints come from and what is being complained about

The vast majority of the 1,504 complaints (67%) come from people in England, with 3.4% from Wales, 0.6% from Northern Ireland and 3% from Scotland. In 12% of cases the complaints received were from outside of the UK.

When complaints are made to us using our online form, we ask members of the public to identify what method of fundraising they are complaining about.

On the street	Online
At my door	Corporate fundraising
Over the phone	Text message
Events	Other
Through letterbox	None

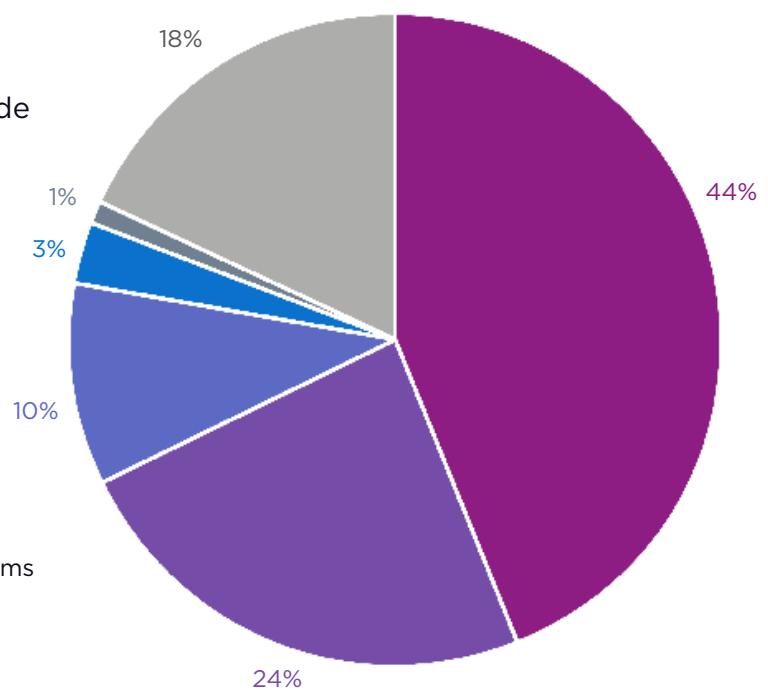


Complaints that are not in our remit

Nearly 40% of the complaints we received in this reporting period were out of our remit. In our view, this is too high and we have now made changes to our website to better guide the public in making their complaint.

When we receive complaints that are not in remit, where possible, we will refer members of the public to other organisations that can help them. The highest proportion of out of remit complaints were referred to the Charity Commission.

■ Charity Commission	■ Citizens Advice
■ Action Fraud	■ HM Revenue & Customs
■ Trading Standards	■ Other



Giving organisations an opportunity to resolve complaints

A further 44% of the 1,504 complaints we received in this reporting period were not ready for us to consider - what we term as 'premature'. We think it is better to give organisations an opportunity to respond to complaints before we look at a case. If someone has a complaint about fundraising, we actively encourage them to first complain to the organisation itself. This is often the quickest way to resolve a complaint and for the organisation to identify learning.

However, in some cases we will investigate immediately. Such circumstances may include where we are already investigating the same organisation and issue, or where the relationship between the complainant and the organisation has broken down.

Themes from our investigations

Of the 78 investigations:

- 18 investigations (23%) related to a fundraising organisation potentially using misleading information in a fundraising communication.
- 15 investigations (19%) related to how the fundraising organisation used the information they obtained from the supporter or how they managed that information.
- 8 investigations (10%) related to complaints about charity bag collections.

We also identified a cross-cutting theme relating to a failure to deal effectively with complaints about fundraising, and to complaints about managing and monitoring third-parties involved in a range of fundraising methods on behalf of charities.

Misleading information when fundraising

A number of investigations into complaints about fundraising communications were upheld. In particular, that those fundraising communications were potentially misleading, inaccurate or offensive.

In some instances, we did not identify a breach of the Code, but we advised on ways in which the charity could improve their fundraising communications and how information was presented.

Investigation summary

Mr U contacted us because he had concerns about statements made by the charity in one of its campaigns. Mr U said that in online “pop-up” advertisements for the campaign, the charity used “exaggerated” statements. He told us that the campaign didn’t include references for the statistics quoted. Mr U also told us that he was dissatisfied with the charity’s response to his concerns.

We found no evidence that the charity set out to mislead potential donors. However, we found that the charity should have taken greater care when interpreting the data used. This could have helped prevent any potential misunderstanding.

We recommended that the charity consider the importance of accurate fact checking, interpreting data and citing supporting evidence online. This would allow donors to make an informed decision when they donate.

However, in others we identified a breach of the Code:

Investigation summary

Mr M complained that the messaging on a charity’s mailing was disturbing. He said he was concerned the mailing could have been seen by his young child as the messaging was on the outside of the mailing. He asked the charity to remove his details from its database, but the charity continued to contact him.

We found that the mailing was not indecent or grossly offensive, nor intended to cause distress or anxiety. Despite this, the charity made significant changes to its processes as a result of Mr M’s complaint, to reduce the risk of someone else having a similar experience.

This included better processing of data so that contacts were removed from supporter databases more quickly. The charity also reviewed marketing and fundraising guidelines, to ensure images and text on the outside of packaging were appropriate for children.

In both of these cases, we found no evidence that the information provided was misleading or disturbing. However, the evidence from our complaints indicates that this is an area of concern for members of the public. The complaints we have seen demonstrate the importance of charities ensuring that the information they provide is as clear as possible, and not likely to be open to misinterpretation.

Managing supporters’ data

19% of complaints we investigated involved issues relating to the way that charities managed or used the data they gathered from their supporters. A common theme was the charities’ failure to remove individuals from supporter databases.

In some cases, we were encouraged to find the charity involved had managed the situation appropriately.

Investigation summary

Mr D complained to us as he was being “bombarded” with appeals asking for funds. Mr D had contacted the Chief Executive of the charity and explained that, while he donates regularly, he would like these appeals to stop. Mr D contacted the charity again after continuing to receive appeals. Mr D contacted us as he had received two further appeals.

Our investigation found that the charity breached the Code, as it failed to action Mr D’s initial request. Our investigation also found that due to human error, the charity failed to deal with Mr D’s correspondence in a timely manner and therefore breached the Code.

Complaint handling

While charities may not want to receive complaints, they have to deal with them effectively. We take the view that, whether justified or not, organisations should use this as feedback to consider whether their processes can be improved.

Our investigations have included how complaints made to charities about their fundraising have been handled. In some cases the fundraising organisation failed to properly investigate the matters complained about, and was therefore unable to provide a full response to the complainant. In others, they failed to respond to complaints respectfully or in a timely manner. We have also noted in some cases, a tendency on the part of the organisation to react defensively to the criticism.

Investigation summary

Mr J complained that the charity continued to contact his late father, despite telling the charity that he had died.

We found that the charity failed to remove Mr J’s late father from the supporter database on multiple occasions, thereby breaching the Code. The charity also wrongly informed Mr J repeatedly that his father’s record would be suppressed, giving the false impression that the charity had acted on this information.

We found that the charity had not taken all necessary steps to ensure their database was accurate and up-to-date, and did not make sure that anyone who they had been informed had died was not mailed again. Finally, when responding to the complaint, the charity sent a letter of apology to the wrong address. This careless error meant that Mr J did not receive a meaningful apology and reassurance that his complaint was taken seriously. The charity’s handling of the complaint overall was not timely or respectful, nor was their response sufficient.

Based on the evidence we have seen through our investigations, we published guidance on [complaint handling](#) in May 2018. This provides the sector with a definition of a complaint and outlines our expectations when organisations receive, investigate and respond to a complaint. We hope to see an improvement in complaint handling across the sector as a result of this guidance.

Monitoring third-parties

A third-party fundraiser can be an organisation or individual authorised by a charitable organisation to ask for donations on its behalf. They may be paid, professional fundraisers or commercial partners if they are fundraising.

Monitoring third-parties is an area where we have found repeated breaches of the Code by charities of varying sizes. The importance of the ability to oversee and monitor third-parties engaged in fundraising on charities' behalf should not be underestimated. Charities must be aware of the risks involved in allowing a third-party to fundraise on their behalf, particularly if that organisation is acting as a commercial participator - a company that, as a regular part of its everyday business, engages in promotional activity that a charity will benefit from.

The requirements in section 4 of the code (effective until September 2019) note the need for fundraising organisations to make 'all reasonable efforts' when monitoring third-parties.

Investigation summary

Ms A complained about a visit she had received from a door-to-door charity fundraiser. Ms A told us that she had contacted the charity on five previous occasions to request no further visits and had been repeatedly reassured that her address had been added to the charity's 'no call list'. Ms A told us that despite the charity's previous reassurance that this would "never happen again" she received a further visit. The charity had therefore breached the Code.

Our investigation found that the agency used by the charity to undertake door-to-door fundraising did not follow its own protocols and, as a result, continued to visit Ms A's address.

We also found that the charity did not undertake the necessary checks to make sure that her address had been suppressed. The fact that Ms A had cause to complain five times about the same issue provided evidence that the oversight arrangements in place were not sufficient. Finally, we found that there was a breakdown in communication between the charity and the agency.

The third-party fundraising organisation put processes in place to flag to fundraisers where homes, such as Ms A's, were on a "do not call" list in a particular area. Changes were also made to make sure team leaders were responsible for ensuring compliance with the "do not call" lists.

The charity committed to improve any door-to-door fundraising carried out on their behalf, and to look at processes for managing suppression requests with the agency.

Investigation summary

Mr H complained about the conduct of two of the charity's fundraisers. He said that the fundraisers were pressurising members of the public to donate and became aggressive when they were asked questions about the charity's work.

Mr H also complained that the fundraisers would not confirm how much of the money that was being raised went to the charity, and were telling people not to donate to other charities.

We found that the charity did not make all reasonable efforts to ensure that its third-party fundraisers were compliant with the Code. We also found that the solicitation statement used by the fundraisers was not compliant with the Code.

In some cases, we found that the efforts made by charities to monitor third-parties – in particular fundraising agencies – fell short of the requirements set out in the Code. We also found that having the ability to monitor those third-parties set out in the contractual arrangements was crucial to ensuring compliance with this section of the Code. Without the contractual ability to obtain necessary information to ensure compliance, the fundraising organisation cannot be compliant with the Code.

Unwanted charity bags

In other cases, we identified breaches of the Code that involved charity bags being delivered to households where the householder had used signs to indicate they did not want to receive charity bags. This is an issue that is particularly important to the public, and is also reflected in part 2 of this report.

Investigation summary

Mr Y complained that he had received a charity clothing collection bag from an agency of a charity. He said that he had received this charity bag despite having a ‘no charity bag’ sign on his door. He told us that he had previously complained to the agency about the same issue and it had confirmed in its response that his entire road had been removed from its delivery route.

We found that the agreement in place between the charity and the agency did not allow the charity to sufficiently monitor the agency acting on its behalf, which is a breach of the Code.

We also found that, while it appeared the distributor was delivering either counterfeit or stolen charity bags, the agency were aware of this but did not report the matter to the police when they should have done. This is also a breach of the Code.

The Fundraising Preference Service (FPS)

In July 2017 we launched the Fundraising Preference Service. It allows members of the public to control how charities communicate with them about fundraising, through direct marketing by post, telephone, text message or email. Members of the public can ask individual charities to stop communicating by any of these means. We investigated 4 complaints in the period covered by this report and upheld all of them.

Investigation summary

Ms Q complained that a charity sent her marketing mailings despite making a request using the Fundraising Preference Service that the charity stop contacting her.

We found that the charity had set up its FPS record and were receiving regular FPS notifications. However, the charity’s internal FPS process was dependent on one individual who did not update the charity’s database. This meant that Ms Q’s request was not actioned for nearly three months.

We also found that the charity did not have a process in place to check if FPS requests were being actioned, and therefore breached the Code.

In all cases we have sent copies of our decisions to the Office of the Information Commissioner. The Fundraising Preference Service is a relatively new service and we will continue to monitor complaints that we receive through it, and share learning with the sector.

Other regulatory action

The remit of the Fundraising Regulator extends to all charitable fundraising. This means that on occasion we will take action against organisations that are not charities or fundraising agencies.

In some cases we have taken other regulatory action in order to resolve the complaint, and to seek assurances from the organisation that fundraising is being undertaken in line with the standards outlined in the Code.

In these cases we have written to the organisations involved, outlining the concerns raised and the relevant sections of the Code. We also seek assurances from the organisation that they are aware of their responsibilities to ensure fundraising is undertaken appropriately, and that they properly monitor the fundraising taking place.

Investigation summary

Ms J complained about the conduct of supermarket staff during a fundraising event. Ms J said that the event involved a misleading and not transparent request for donations for “charity”; “harassment and obstruction” of members of the public; and verbal “abuse” directed at her by staff members. Ms J complained to the supermarket in question and remained dissatisfied after receiving their response. From our initial consideration of the complaint, we established that the event appeared to have been an “in aid of” event which meant it was taking place independently of the charity the event was benefiting.

From Ms J’s description, we had concerns about how the supermarket’s staff carried out their fundraising during this event. We contacted the supermarket’s head office to help them understand the standards expected of fundraisers in relation to public collections, and to seek their assurance that any future fundraising activity would be carried out in line with the Code. We asked that they confirm that they had reviewed the Code and were considering how fundraising taking place across their other stores was undertaken in line with the standards.

The Supermarket responded to us to confirm they were investigating the complaint, that they were reviewing the Code and updating policies to ensure all stores and offices follow correct practices. They advised they would put an audit process in place to track compliance with their fundraising policy.

Who we are investigating

This table shows the number of investigations we have undertaken by each of our levy bands. A significant proportion of the investigations we have completed were into complaints about organisations that are either not eligible to pay our levy or have not opted to register with us. Despite this, those organisations have cooperated with our investigations.

Levy band (amount charities spend on fundraising)	Average number of charities in each band	Investigations completed into charities	Individual charities in each band we have investigated	% charities in band we have investigated
1 (£50 million +)	2 charities	3	1	50%
2 (£20 million - £49,999,999)	11 charities	10	5	45.5%
3 (£10 million - £19,999,999)	18 charities	7	4	22.2%
4 (£5 million - £9,999,999)	31 charities	10	7	22.6%
5 (£2 million - £4,999,999)	77 charities	5	5	6.5%
6 (£1 million - £1,999,999)	140 charities	4	3	2.1%
7 (£500,000 - £999,999)	354 charities	8	7	2%
8 (£200,000 - £499,999)	677 charities	6	6	0.9%
9 (£150,000 - £199,999)	268 charities	0	0	0
10 (£100,000 - £149,999)	383 charities	0	0	0
Charities registered with the FR for £50	1,310 charities	4		
Not in levy		21		

As noted in this table, some of the levy bands contain very few charities, whereas others contain large numbers. This therefore needs to be taken into account when viewing the numbers.

By looking at the levy bands we can learn more about the size and type of the charities being complained about. Based on this we can see that a large number of investigations related to organisations not in the levy or registered with us. We would encourage these organisations to register with us, to recognise the need for better complaints handling, and to commit to good fundraising practice, as set out in the Code.

Complaints that are escalated to our Complaints and Investigations Committee

Our Complaints and Investigations Committee has oversight of the casework undertaken in the organisation. Where necessary it considers a small number of important individual cases. Cases can be referred to the Committee for a number of reasons including: multiple complaints about the same issue and/or charity; novel or contentious issues in the case; wider or systemic issues within the complaint; or where we consider there is a risk to public safety and trust in charity fundraising more generally.

The President's Club Charitable Trust

In January 2018 a fundraising event was held at a London hotel by the Presidents Club Charitable Trust (the charity). The purpose of the event was to raise funds for the charity to distribute to a range of other causes benefitting disadvantaged and under privileged children. Following the event, reports emerged in the media of allegations of inappropriate behaviour from some of the guests.

We sought to understand the nature of the event, how and by whom it was organised and delivered. We also looked at whether those responsible for organising and overseeing the event understood the relevant legal obligations and standards set out in the Code of Fundraising Practice.

We saw no evidence that the charity intentionally ignored the Code. However, we were disappointed to see that the President's Club and its trustees had little awareness of the expectations around fundraising, namely those outlined in the Code.

We concluded that the charity did not have a process in place to monitor the activities of the third-party that organised and staffed the event. This was a breach of the Code.

We worked closely with the Charity Commission and both published our reports at the same time. We think this case highlights important lessons for other charities, particularly regarding the duties of trustees. This is why we put the report into the public domain as a named report. We hope this will remind organisations, particularly registered charities, of their obligations and the guidance that is available to them when fundraising.

Whether charities are large or small, trustees have the same obligations to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities and best practice when fundraising. A key lesson from this case is that, even for a charity that holds a single annual fundraising event, there is the same necessity to comply with the requirements set out in the Code.

Investigations that we discontinued

We closed 11 investigations without issuing a decision. Cases where we make such a decision usually involve a complaint where an investigation is being undertaken by a statutory regulator or the police.

Investigation summary

Mr B complained that a charity that was holding funds for a restricted purpose and that those funds were being used for other purposes by the trustees.

We began an investigation into the complaint. Shortly afterwards, we were contacted by the police and informed that they had opened an investigation into alleged fraudulent behaviour on the part of the trustees of the charity.

Given the ongoing police investigation, we decided to tell Mr B that we would not be pursuing our enquiries, as the issues of alleged fraud were being investigated by a more appropriate authority. We told Mr B that, should the police decide not to pursue the matter, he could return to us and we would consider what action we might take.

Requests for External Review

Decisions made by the regulator are final and there is no process of appeal. However, parties to the complaint may request an external review if they can show that one or more of the following criteria are met:

- we have refused to reopen an investigation in response to new evidence
- there was a problem in the process by which our decision was made
- it is alleged that our decision is unreasonable and not one we could sensibly have made having regard to all the relevant facts.

In this reporting period we received one request for an external review. Under the external review process, the Vice Chair of the Board considered the information first to decide if an external review should take place. In this case, the Vice Chair did not consider the criteria to be met.

However, the Vice Chair found that we could have been clearer at the start about what we can and cannot do and that we took too long to investigate the complaint.

Learning from the review, we made changes to our process since investigating that complaint. This included a new triage system so we can make sure we explain our role clearly at the start, and an improvement to the time taken to investigate.

Working with other regulators

As we have developed our casework operation, we have also developed our relationships with other regulators. We have improved the process we use to share information with organisations such as the Charity Commission for England and Wales, and the Office of the Information Commissioner (ICO) as well as working more closely with other regulators on specific pieces of work.

We are regularly sharing information on completed pieces of work. This includes sharing information on the complaints we have investigated that relate to the use of the Fundraising Preference Service with the ICO. During 2018, we also worked closely with the Charity Commission while investigating the fundraising practices of the President's Club Charitable Trust.

Part 2: Complaints reported by the sector in 2017-18

Introduction

In 2016, we conducted research with fundraising organisations to understand the complaints they have received. We repeated this in 2017-18. However, we reduced the number of charities taking part in the study to 58, to cover all charities that spend £5 million or more on fundraising (our levy bands 1-4). These organisations were also responsible for the majority (54%) of complaints reported in 2016 (22,956 out of the 42,782 complaints reported by the sector).

Previously, we said that we would review the process to implement a new system and structure for the reporting of complaints about fundraising within the sector. We have considered this matter again and have decided to keep this structure for a further 2 years to allow us to draw meaningful comparisons over a three year period, before we consider changes to the system.

Overview of complaints report process

Report	Period covered	Number of organisations completing (sample size)
Complaints report 2016	January - December 2016	893 (across all levy bands)
Complaints report 2017-18	April 2017 - March 2018	58 (levy bands 1-4)
2018-19	April 2018 - March 2019	Levy bands 1-4
2019-20	April 2019 - March 2020	Levy bands 1-4

Method

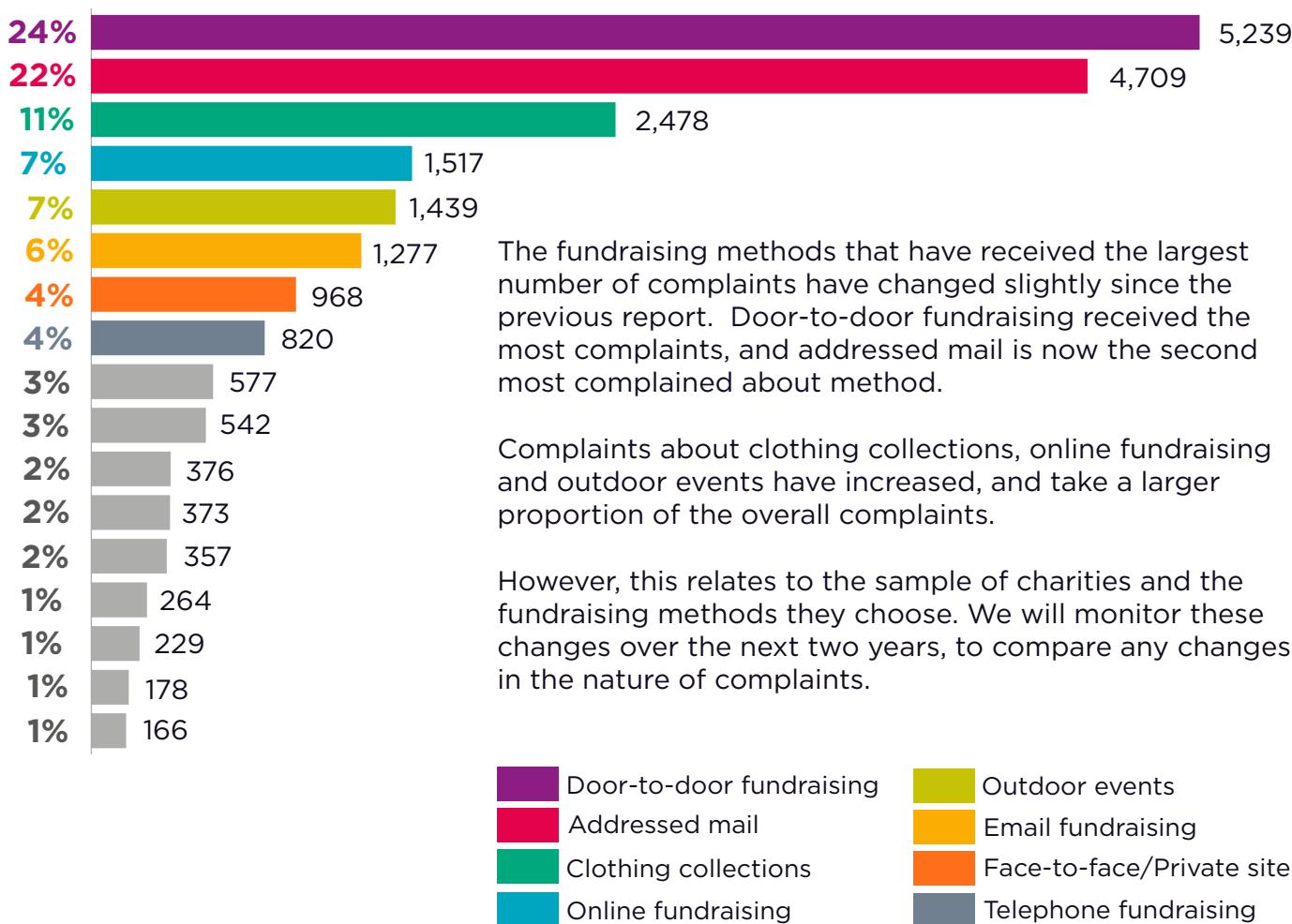
Each of the 58 organisations included in levy bands 1-4 submitted data on the complaints they had received over the course of the year. This was done through an online survey. The data is self-reported and represents either an estimate or actual number of complaints.

Overview of complaints within the sector

The total number of complaints reported by the 58 charities was **21,851**. A full breakdown of the complaints, compared to 2016, can be seen in the figure below.

In this report we have focused on the top 8 complaint types, because we have better insight and data about why the complaints were made. A full data set can be found in the appendix to this report (page 22).

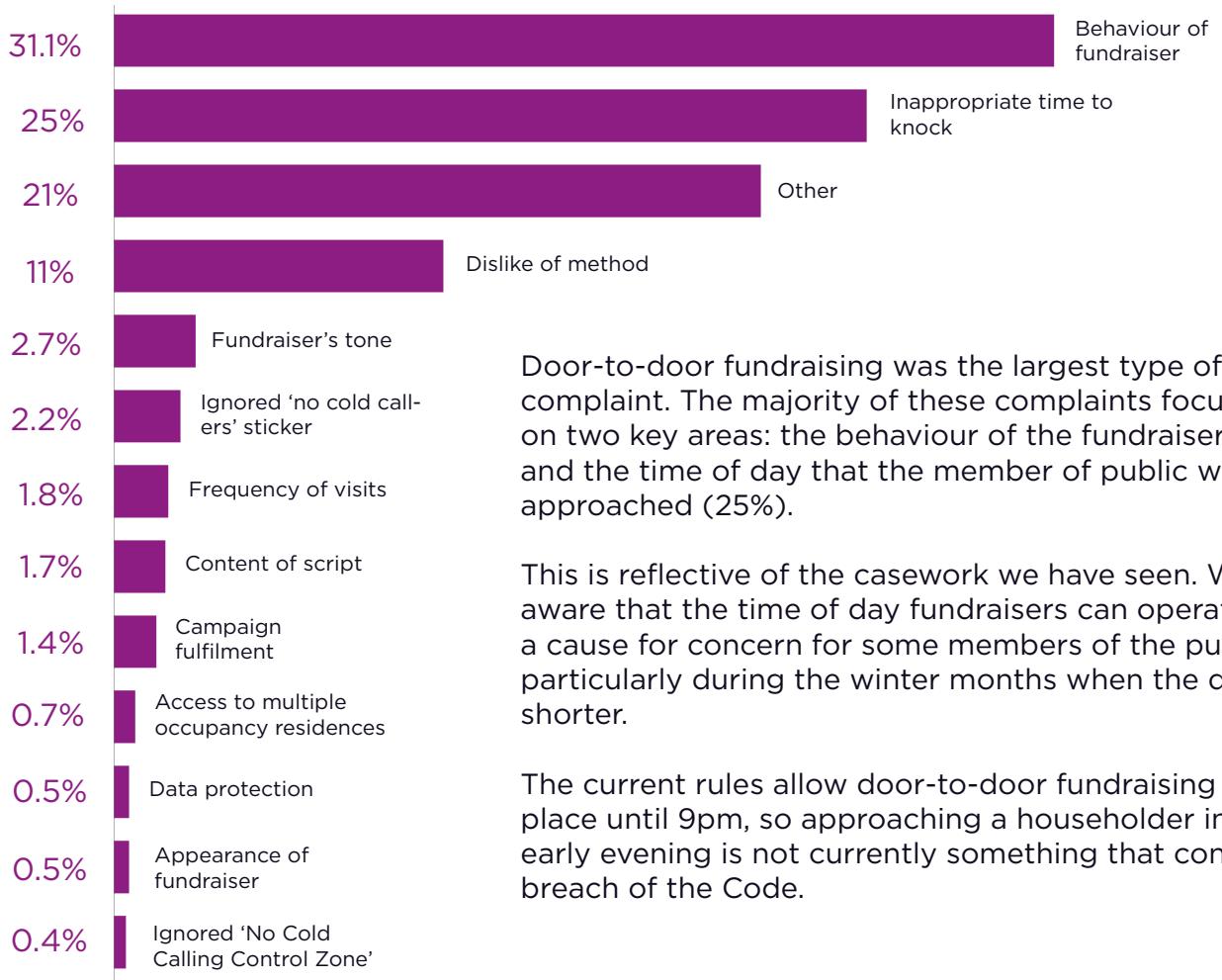
Complaints reported by method



Complaints were also received about social activities, raffles, tv advertising, volunteer fundraising, street fundraising, lotteries, unaddressed mail, cash collections and the use of text messages. These all made up less than 3% of total complaints and are not reported in detail here, but the data can be found in the appendix.

The majority of complaints across these methods are related to the behaviour of the fundraiser or a general dislike of the method.

Door-to-door fundraising

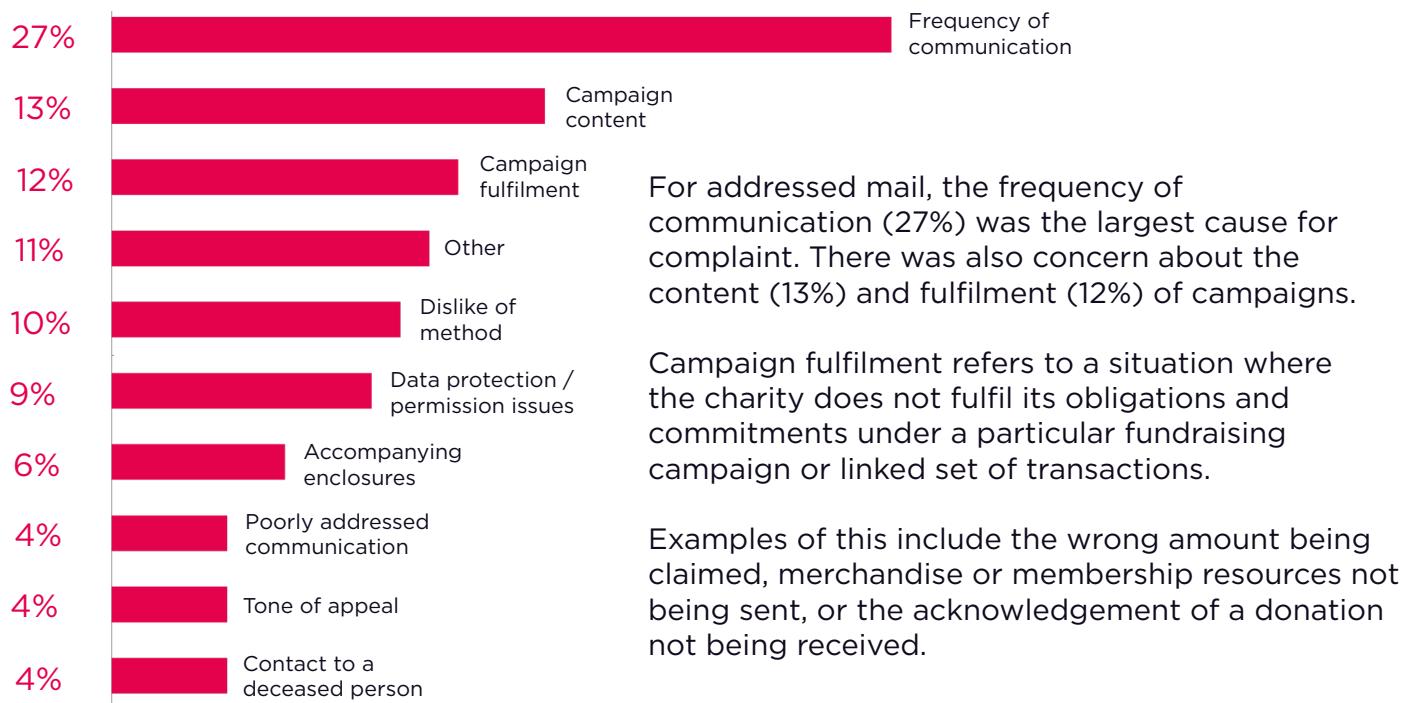


Door-to-door fundraising was the largest type of complaint. The majority of these complaints focused on two key areas: the behaviour of the fundraiser (31%) and the time of day that the member of public was approached (25%).

This is reflective of the casework we have seen. We are aware that the time of day fundraisers can operate is a cause for concern for some members of the public, particularly during the winter months when the days are shorter.

The current rules allow door-to-door fundraising to take place until 9pm, so approaching a householder in the early evening is not currently something that constitutes a breach of the Code.

Addressed mail

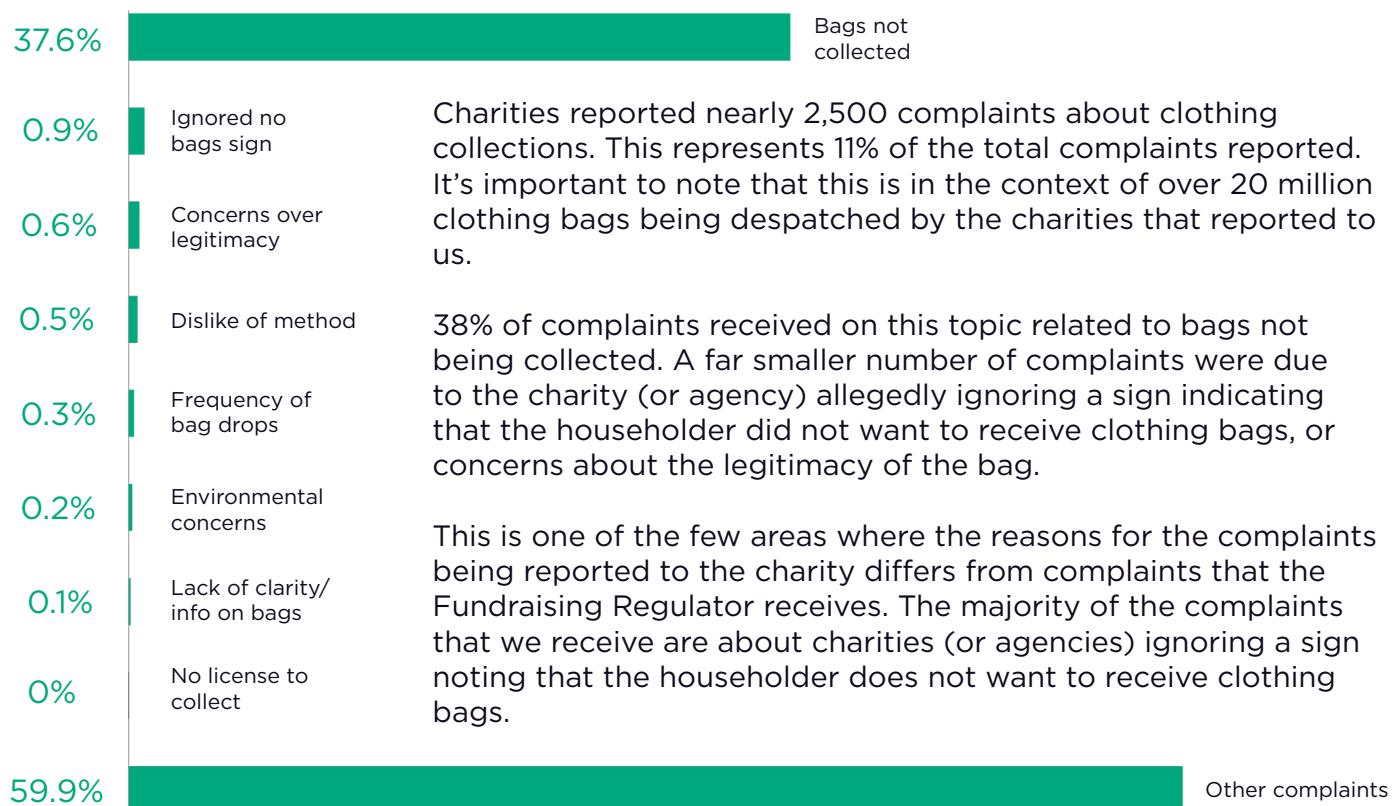


For addressed mail, the frequency of communication (27%) was the largest cause for complaint. There was also concern about the content (13%) and fulfilment (12%) of campaigns.

Campaign fulfilment refers to a situation where the charity does not fulfil its obligations and commitments under a particular fundraising campaign or linked set of transactions.

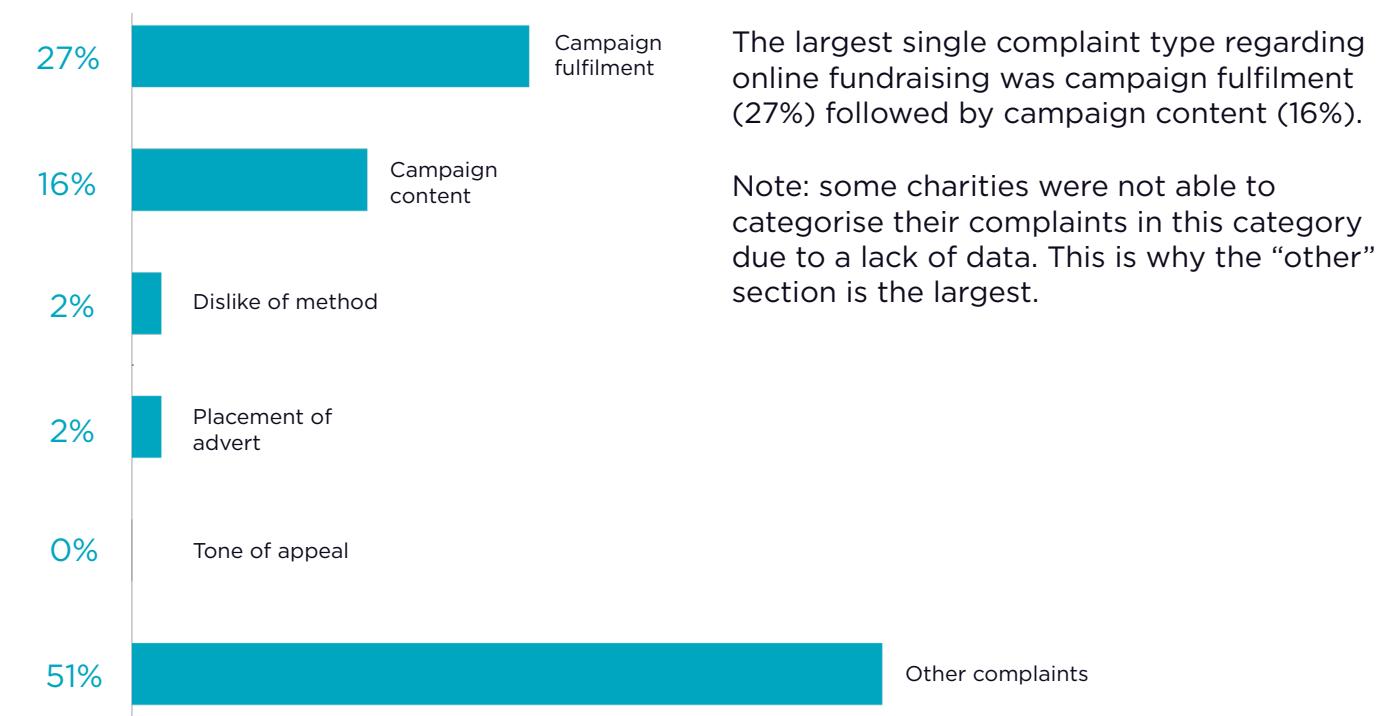
Examples of this include the wrong amount being claimed, merchandise or membership resources not being sent, or the acknowledgement of a donation not being received.

Clothing bag collections

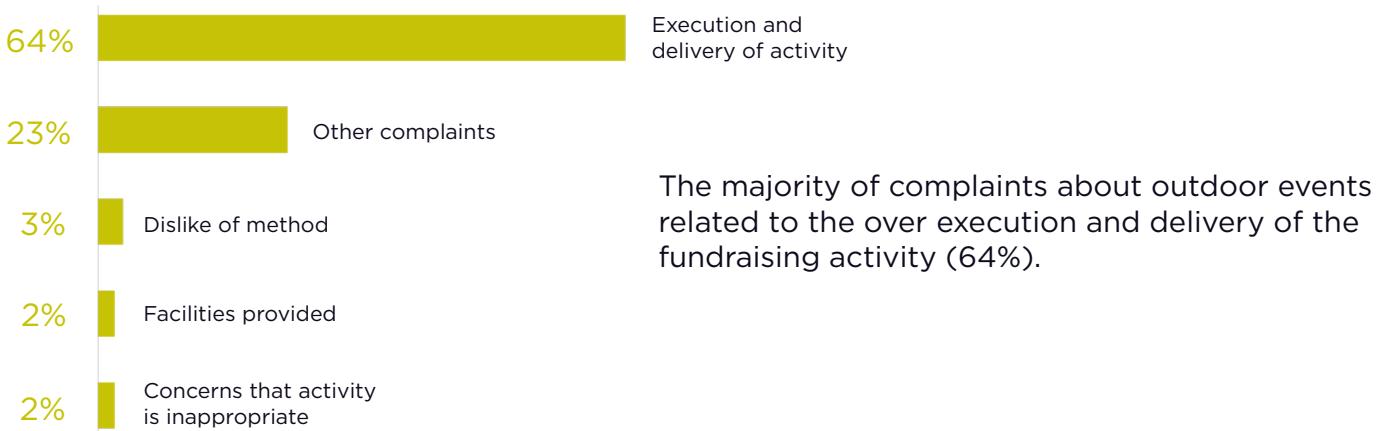


Note: some charities were not able to categorise their complaints in this category due to a lack of data. This is why the “other” section is the largest.

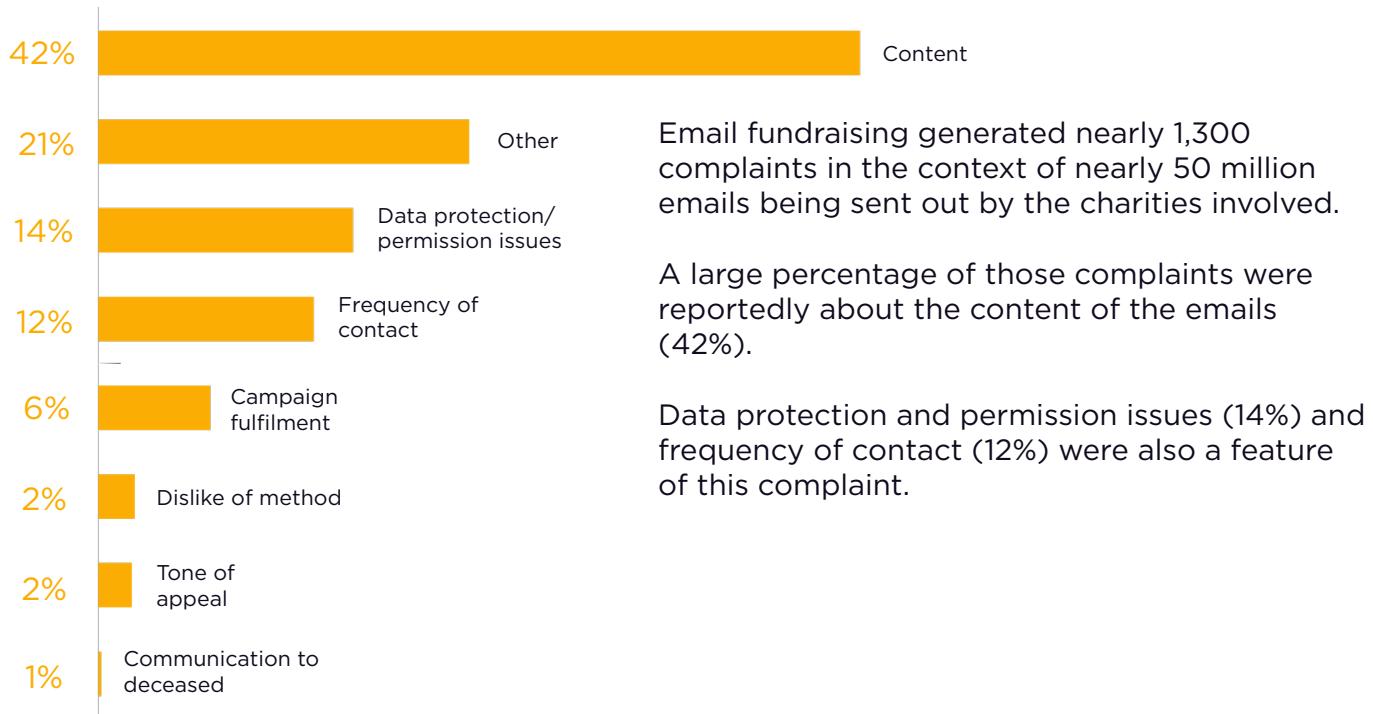
Online fundraising



Outdoor events



Email fundraising



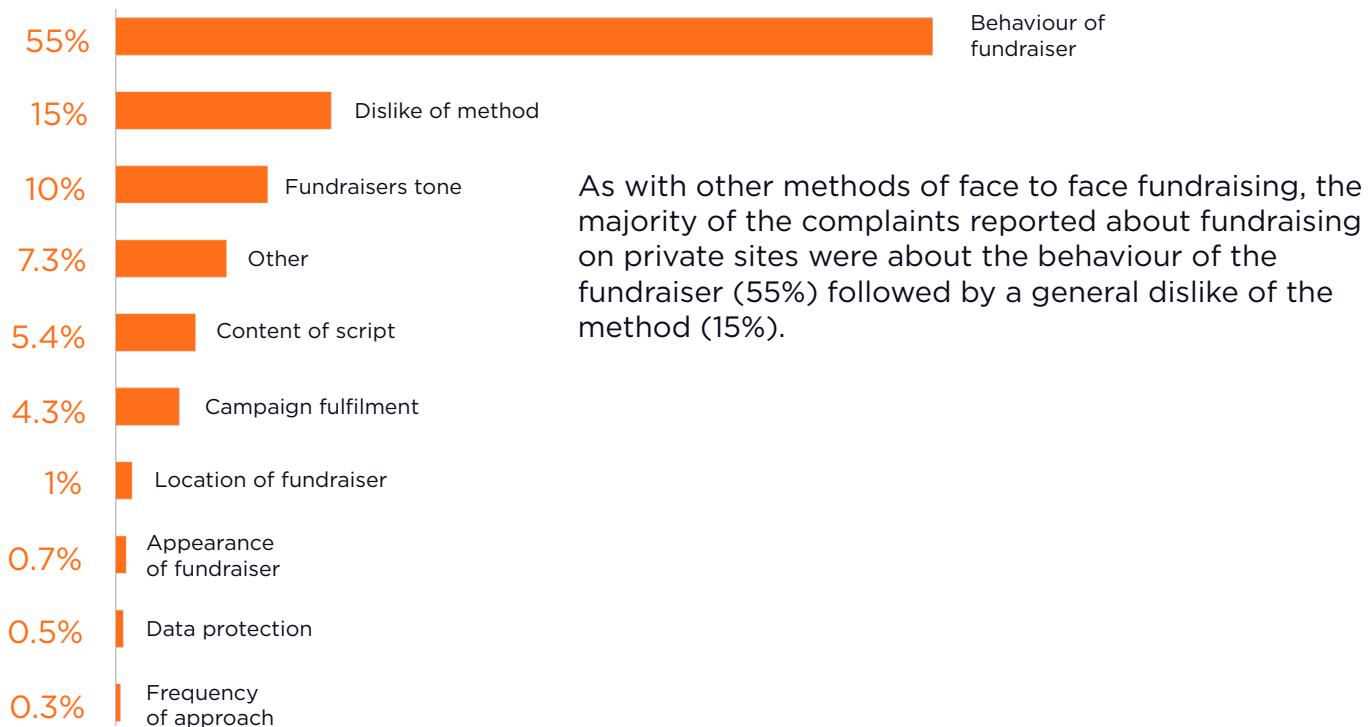
Investigation summary on email fundraising

Mr F complained that despite making a number of requests to be removed from the charity's database and "false promises" that he would be, he continued to receive emails from it. At the time of making his complaint to us, Mr F said that he had received eleven emails in the past twenty-four hours.

Mr F said that he has had no involvement with the charity for over seven years, and that it was clearly not abiding by data protection guidelines and was "woefully inadequate" at dealing with its database. Mr F told us that he thought the charity's behaviour constituted "harassment" and said that he was not the only person affected.

We found that the charity's handling of Mr F's complaint was not consistently open or respectful and that it did not sufficiently act upon the learning identified from his complaints. We also found that the charity failed to ensure that the data it held for Mr F accurately reflected his communication preferences.

Private site fundraising



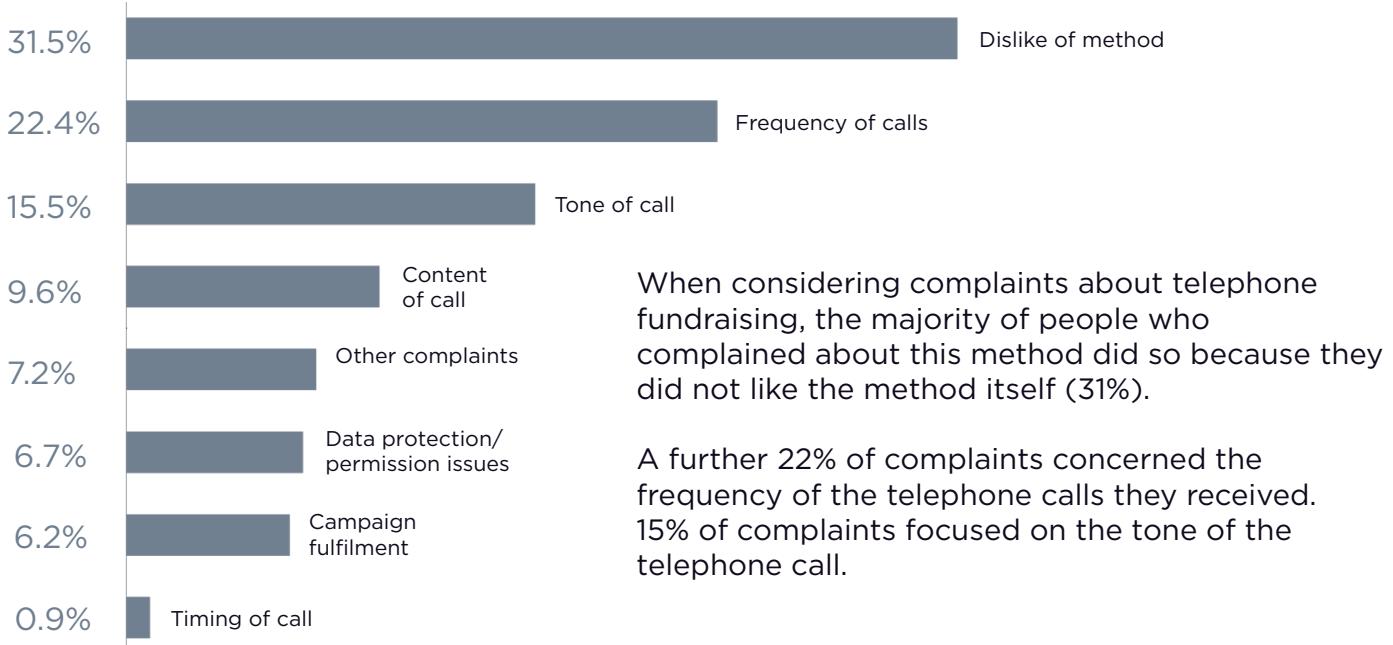
Investigation summary about private site fundraising

Mr N contacted us to complain that the charity were operating in a shopping centre. He stated that its fundraisers aggressively shouted and intimidated the public into giving donations. He said that when he asked the fundraisers for identification, the registered charity number or the percentage of money going to charity, the fundraisers became aggressive, angry and rude.

Our investigation found that the charity's website did not make clear to members of the public viewing it that it receives only a proportion of the money raised by its agency. We found that the charity's communications with Mr N were not consistently appropriate or in line with the Code's requirement to be respectful.

We also found that the agreements in place were not sufficient for the charity to meet the requirements of the Code, and the monitoring undertaken by the charity was not sufficient to monitor the actions of its third-party.

Telephone fundraising



Investigation summary about telephone fundraising

Mr T told us that his father was contacted by a telephone fundraiser on behalf of the charity. He told us that his father has dementia and was “persuaded” to sign up to a direct debit for a monthly lottery subscription. Mr T said that he does not believe that charities should be allowed to make cold calls to people they do not know. Mr T said that his complaint is about the charity and the fundraising agency for using this method, not the behaviour of the fundraiser.

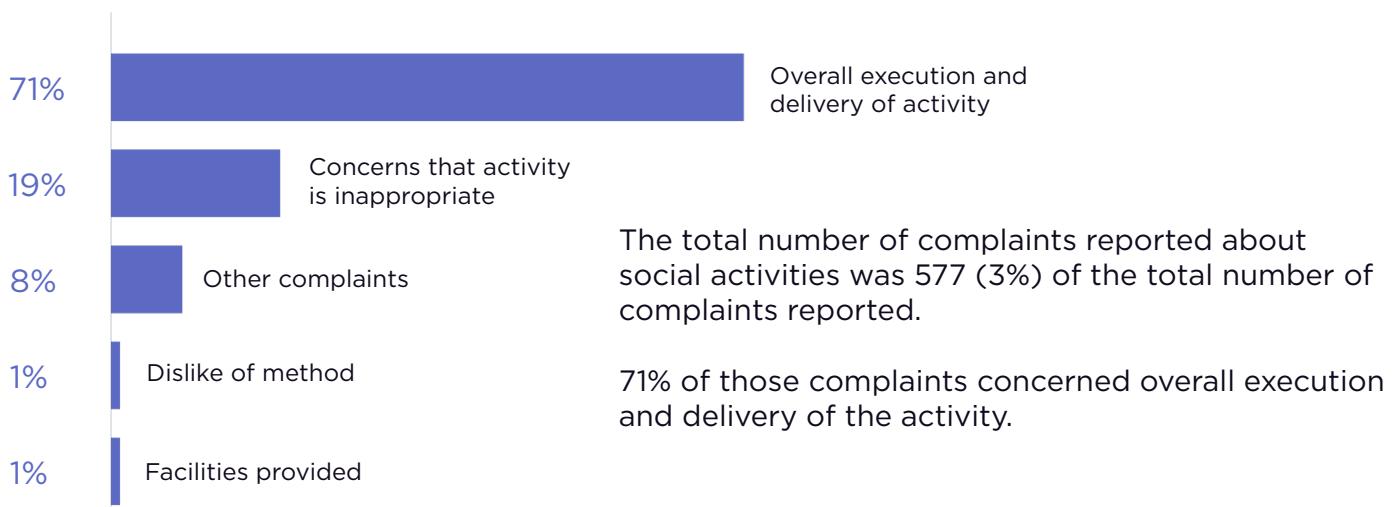
After listening to the telephone call recording, we found that Mr T’s father showed no obvious signs of vulnerability which would have alerted the fundraiser to any potential vulnerability, or a need to end the call.

We also found that the charity legitimately obtained consent to contact Mr T’s father about their lottery, and that there was no evidence that they or their agency had breached the Code.

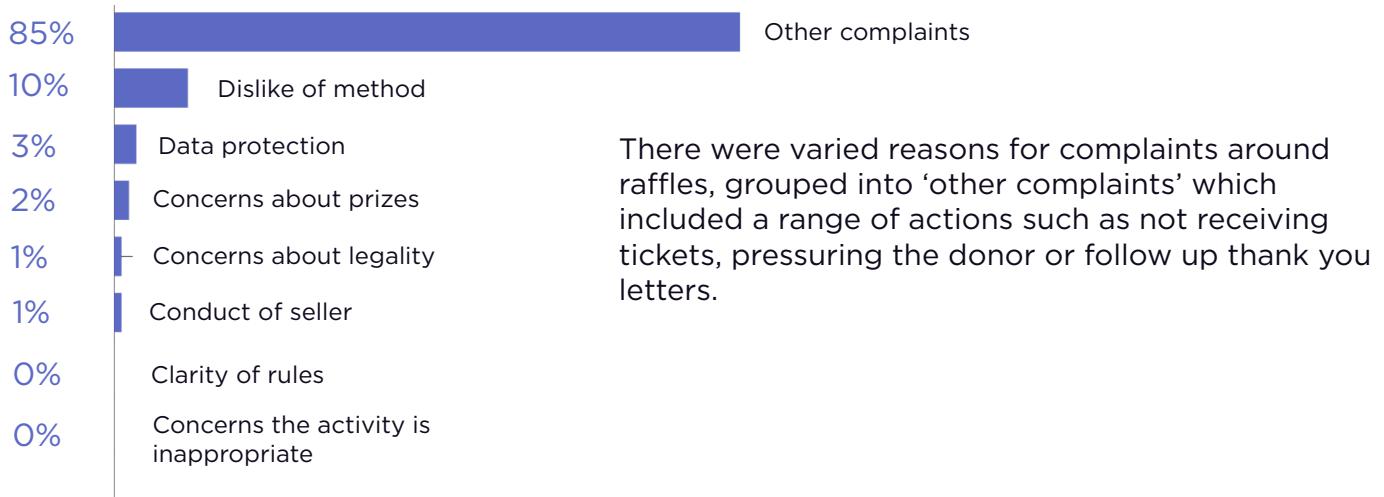
Data appendix for Complaints Report

This appendix includes data on the fundraising methods that caused more than 0.5% of the total complaints received by charities. Fundraising methods that are below this level have not been included, as they are less significant in terms of volume and are hard to analyse with confidence.

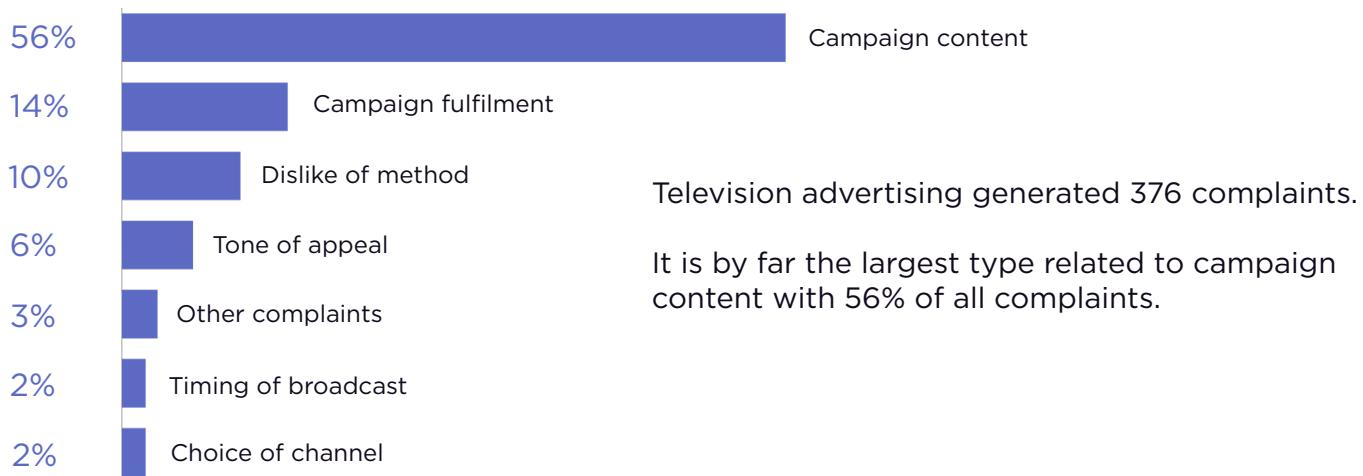
Social activities



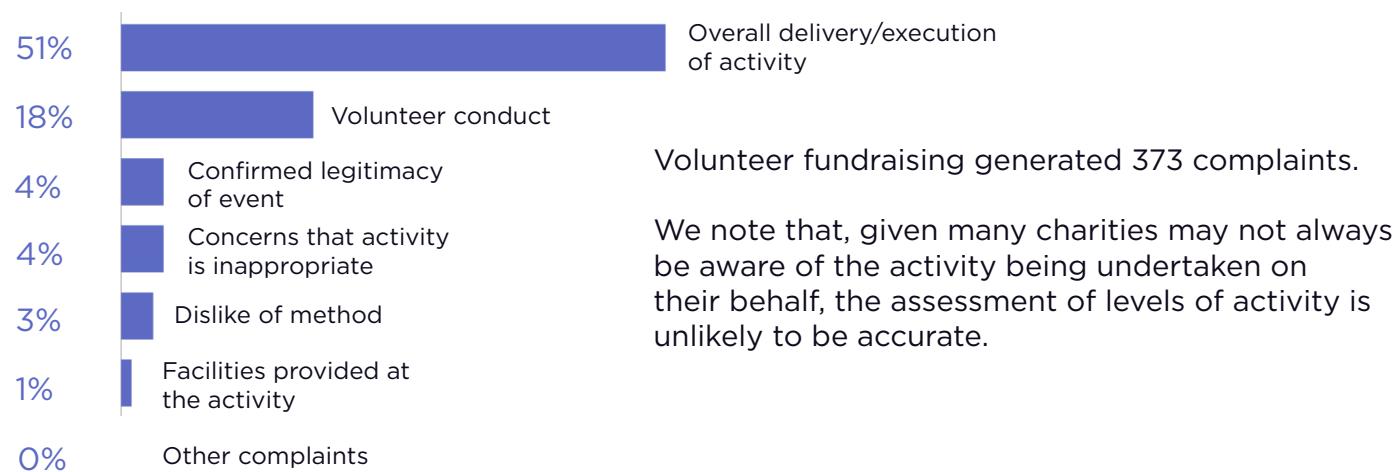
Raffles



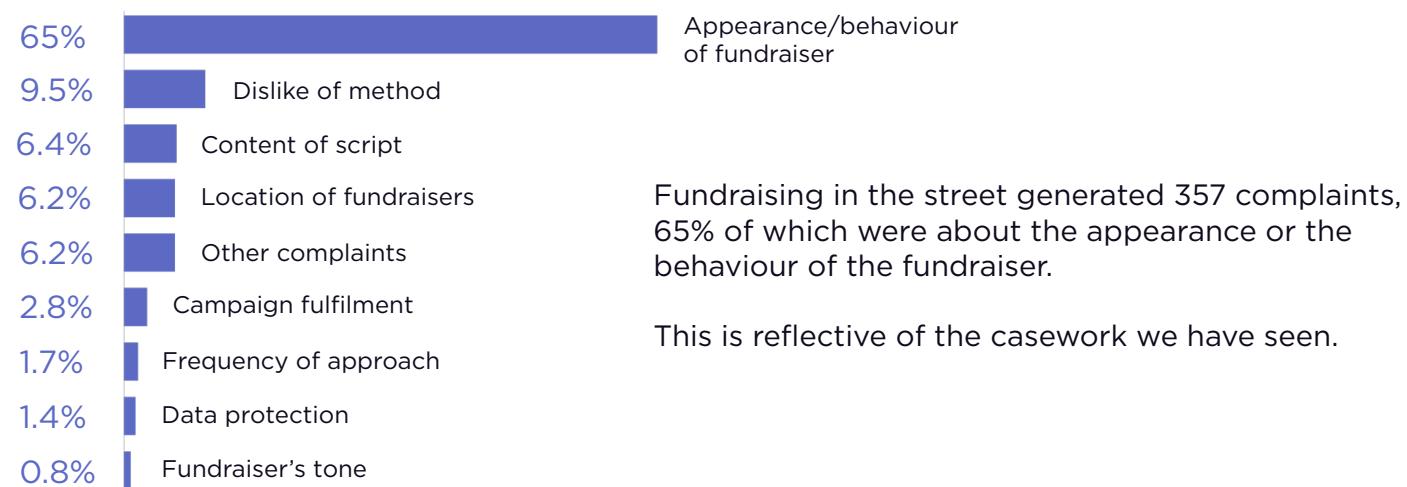
Television advertising



Volunteer fundraising



Street fundraising

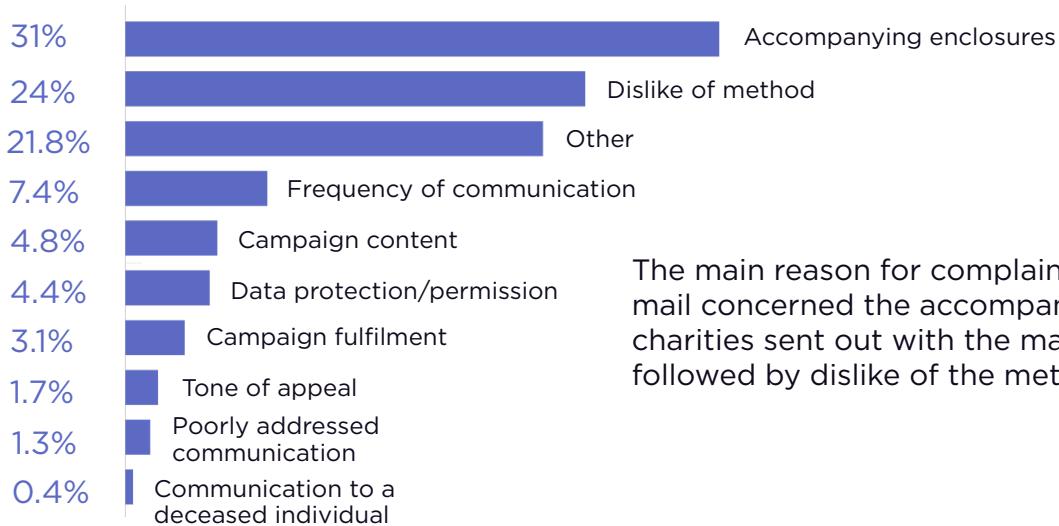


Lotteries



Similarly to raffles, lotteries had large group of other complaints which included those about the content of the fundraising, the fulfilment and the technology involved in the draw.

Unaddressed mail



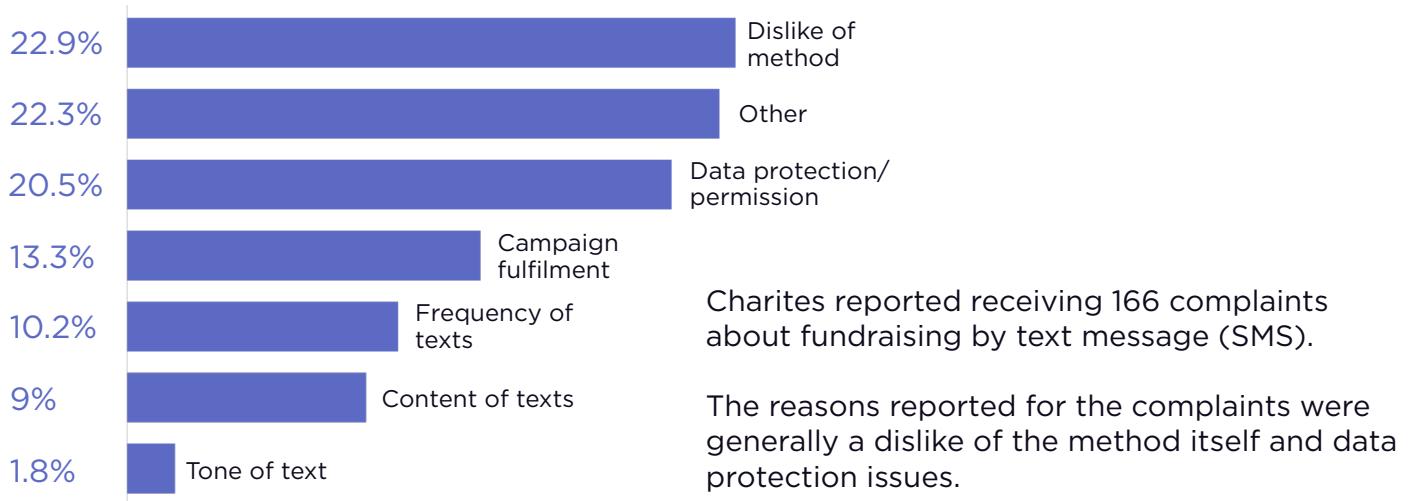
The main reason for complaints about unaddressed mail concerned the accompanying enclosures that charities sent out with the mailing (31%). This was followed by dislike of the method in general (24%).

Cash collections



In 27% of the complaints reported by charities about cash collections the reason for the complaint was the behaviour of the collector. The same percentage of complaints were about the materials used by the collector.

Fundraising by text message



FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR