

## Health warning – the L word

### Can you lobby?

- Will depend on your governance and constitution – so check first
- Might be affected by funding body policies, e.g. some senior public sector staff may be contractually barred from making public statements on politically controversial issues

### Should you lobby?

- The Hansard Society has estimated that some MPs are approached more than one hundred times a week by lobbyists
- Lobbying “is the next big scandal waiting to happen” -David Cameron, Feb 2010
- Charity-led campaign to open up lobbying - <http://www.lobbyingtransparency.org/>
- 18 month inquiry by the Public Administration Select Committee into lobbying – published Oct 2009 (with follow-ups in 2009/10). <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmpubadm/1058/1058.pdf>

### Principles and guidance

- Ensure campaigning linked to core mission (raising awareness, educating public, promoting support, etc.) to ensure legitimacy
- Ensure that aims and activity are monitored by board/governing body
- Be open and transparent about the contact you have and demonstrate political neutrality
- Be accurate and factual at all times
- Be familiar with the issues -Charity Commission guidance on campaigning and political activities:

### Charity Commission guidance – key extracts

So long as a charity is engaging in campaigning or political activity solely in order to further or support its charitable purposes, and there is a reasonable likelihood of it being effective, it may carry out campaigning and political activity... Activities [...] must be a legitimate and reasonable way for the trustees to further those purposes, and must never be party political.

A charity can seek to influence government or other public bodies, providing it is in support of their charitable purposes...A charity can seek to influence central or local government or public opinion issues relating to the charity's purposes.

<http://www.comisiwnelusenau.gov.uk/publications/cc9.aspx>

The Charity Commission's definition of public bodies ranges from UN to government departments to PCTs to NDPBs....

### **During the election period**

- Specific Charity Commission guidance on campaigning during an election (i.e. until 6 May 2010) was published Jan 2010: <http://www.comisiwnelusenau.gov.uk/Library/guidance/elect.pdf>
- Calls for even greater scrutiny and probity by charities
- Purdah for public sector staff – national and local.
- But charities need to check what applies to them if they receive any local authority grants as the Charity Commission guidance also states that purdah

“...restrictions extend to any organisations, including charities, which receive local authority funding.”