

HIGH SALARIED CHARITIES

I would like to congratulate Charity Commission chairman William Shawcross for pointing the finger at disproportionate salaries given to employees working within the charity sector, claiming that 30 staff at 14 leading UK foreign aid charities were paid £100,000 last year.

I have worked in this sector for more than 13 years, and have been staggered by the salary amounts some individuals in the larger charities receive; their salaries are, in effect, being maintained and sustained by thousands of volunteer fundraisers at the bottom rung of the ladder who work tirelessly raising money for "the cause"..

Once seen as unattractive employment, this sector now attracts many high-flying career-minded individuals because the generosity of the public, along with the amounts gleaned from sources like the Lottery, spells security for some. When I have been asked the question by friends and colleagues 'which charity should I donate to?'

I always refer them to the Charities Commission website, and suggest that they input the details of the charity they fancy donating to, and then study that charity's accounts ...you don't have to be Chancellor of the Exchequer to work out sums like salary costs in relation to overall income and expenditure of a charity. I consider this vital research for anyone wishing to: donate money to a cause.

Some will argue that it is necessary to pay a graduate a vast amount of money to 'manage' a division of a charity along with, say, living in London and the costs associated thereto, but there are also other options that are less costly, like utilising the skills of an older, retired member of the public who would perhaps work for less, or possibly even for nothing.

I am the CEO and founder of a small, but rapidly growing, six-year-old charity, Action For Asperger's, which counsels lives adversely affected by the experience of autism (www.actionforaspergers.org).

I have worked for 60-80 hours a week, happily and dedicated to the cause of autism and autism awareness. I have done so without a salary; instead ploughing all monies back into the charity so that 'the cause' is upheld and supported. I enjoy immensely what I do, but certainly would not feel right to receive a figure in the region of £100k plus. To me, this is charity.

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