



24 September 2017

Charities Regulator's work on concerns received about unregistered "charity" shops

One shop owner has been prosecuted, three shops have ceased trading and seven shops no longer market themselves as "charity shops", following interventions by the Charities Regulator since 2016.

A public update notice published today by the Charities Regulator notes that one shop, the Twist charity shop, closed down following the successful prosecution of the owner, Mr Oliver Williams, in February 2017 at Sligo District Court.

Three shops, the Second Chance Boutique, Belmullet, the Charity Boutique, Naas, and the Carrick-on-Suir River Rescue have closed following the receipt of "cease and desist" letters from the Charities Regulator.

Seven shops subsequently amended their shop fronts or other notices to make it clear to the public that they were not a charity, which made them compliant with the Charities Act 2009 (see notes to editor for details of these shops and the changes made).

"All charity shops must operate as part of a registered charity and all proceeds must go towards that charity's charitable purpose," Charities Regulator Chief Executive John Farrelly said. "If the public see a shop that they think, or any reasonable person would think, is a charity shop, but is not part of a registered charity let us know and we will step in."

Mr Farrelly urged the public to check the Charities register to be sure that any “charity shop” they are going to support is a registered charity shop. “Check the register and support registered Irish charities,” he said.

Part of the role of the Charities Regulator is to monitor and ensure compliance with the provisions of the Charities Act 2009. Under Section 41 of the Charities Act 2009 it is an offence for any person to advertise on behalf of, to invite members of the public to give money or property to, or to accept such money or property on behalf of, a charitable organisation that is not registered, or for an unregistered charitable organisation to carry on such activities.

It is also an offence under Section 46 of the Act for a body (other than a registered charitable organisation), to describe itself or its activities in a manner that would cause a member of the public to reasonably believe that the body was a charitable organisation.

Since 2016, the Regulator has received concerns from members of the public relating to 28 shops that they believed were charity shops but which were not registered charities. Concerns relating to 14 shops remain open while concerns relating to three shops were closed after it was established there was no breach of the Act.

The public have played a key role to date in reporting shops which were operating as “charity shops”, in breach of the Act. The public are reminded that if they have a concern that individuals or shops are in breach of the Act, they should complete and submit an online concerns form [here](#) or report their concerns by phone to Charities Regulator’s dedicated concerns phone line at 01-633 1550.

To read the public update document on unregistered charity shops click [here](#)

For more information: email press@charitiesregulator.ie or contact Eamon Timmins, Head of Communications and Stakeholder Engagement, at 01-6331517 or 087-7520978.

Notes to the Editor:

LIST of Seven Shops who changed their shop signage in order to comply with the Charities Act 2009

Original Name	New name following intervention by Charities Regulator
Munster Charity Warehouse, Waterford	Munster Furniture shop/Variety shop
SANA Trust Charity shop, Galway	SANA
Laois Hospice charity shop, Portarlinton	Christina's Creations, clothes and curiosities *
Good Cause Way in aid of the intellectually disabled, Dun Laoghaire	Good Cause Way *
Charity Shop, Virginia	(Removed all signage)
Share 2 Care, Addiction and Suicide Awareness, Drop in Centre, Castlebar	Share 2 Care Second Hand shop
Bandon Ataxia Charity Shop	(Removed all signage)

* These shops also displayed notices clearly stating they were a commercial business and not a charitable organisation