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UNCLAIMED ASSETS COALITION CALLS ON CHARITIES TO HELP CAMPAIGN

Following its successful launch in June, the Unclaimed Assets Charity Coalition has revealed the first stage of its campaign to reunite charities with money that is rightfully theirs. One of the Coalition's demands is for a national Register of Unclaimed Assets, and it is now calling on charities throughout the UK to help achieve this.

A dedicated steering group has been set up to identify ways in which existing data on residuary legators can be matched to a national database. To help make the process as coherent as possible, the steering group, which includes legacy experts from six charities¹, is asking all organisations that are left legacies, including non-members, to supply two key pieces of data:

- 1) The number of comprehensive legacy records they hold
- 2) The approximate number of new notifications they receive per year²

Cancer Research UK's Legacy Fundraising Director, Paul Farthing, said: "There has been a significant increase in awareness around the issue of unclaimed assets of late, boosted by the Coalition's activity and a recent independent report on the subject. What we want to do now is maintain the momentum.

"Following discussions with the British Bankers' Association and Building Societies' Association, we feel it is important to ascertain what useful information there is that could be used to identify unclaimed assets. This is why we are asking all charities to help us.

¹ Cancer Research UK, British Heart Foundation, The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, Save the Children, World Vision UK and WWF-UK

² Both pieces of information need to relate to residuary (i.e. proportional) rather than pecuniary (i.e. a fixed amount) gifts.

“Understanding this information will be a crucial step towards creating a national Register of Unclaimed Assets, which will place an obligation on the relevant institutions to make information about unclaimed assets freely available. We know that public registers have already proved successful in other countries, such as the US and Australia, and are very keen to see a similar process adopted here.”

Charities wanting to find out more about providing the required information on residuary legacies should contact Natalie Hodgson, Legacy Manager at Cancer Research UK, at natalie.hodgson@cancer.org.uk.

Forty-three UK charities have already joined the Unclaimed Assets Charity Coalition, and there is still time for others to get involved. There is no obligation to commit time or resources and your support could make a real difference. To find out more, contact Cancer Research UK’s Public Affairs team at publicaffairs@cancer.org.uk.

ENDS

For media enquiries please contact Anna Hilton or Lisa Flanagan in the Cancer Research UK press office on 020 7061 8314 / 8308 or, out-of-hours, the duty press officer on 07050 264 059.

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Unclaimed Assets Charity Coalition includes:

Action for Blind People, Alzheimer’s Society, Amber, Animal Health Trust, Barnardo’s, BMS World Vision, British Heart Foundation, Brooke Hospital for Animals, Cancer Research UK, Civil Service Benevolent Fund, Elizabeth Finn Care, Epilepsy Action, Great Ormond Street Hospital, Henshaws Society for Blind People, Hope and Homes for Children, Institute of Legacy Management, Methodist Homes for the Aged, Musicians Benevolent Fund, National Trust, Oxfam, Parkinson’s Disease Society, PDSA, Practical Action, RNIB, RNLI, RSPCA, Save the Children UK, Shelter, Tenovus the cancer charity, The Diocese of Chichester, The Donkey Sanctuary, The Elisabeth Svendsen Trust for Children and Donkeys, The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, The Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation, The Royal British Legion, The Royal Star & Garter Home, Unicef, World Cancer Research Fund, World Vision UK, WWF-UK and YMCA England