



Statement regarding Project Arts Centre

23 April, 2018

The Charities Regulator has issued the following statement to outline its reason for informing the charity trustees of the Project Arts Centre that the continued displaying of a political advertisement on the wall of its premises in East Essex Street, Dublin, put the charity at risk of deregistration.

- The issue with the political advertisement on the wall of the Project Arts Centre premises arose on foot of a concern received by the Charities Regulator. The Charities Regulator wrote to the trustees of the charity on 12 April informing them that a concern had been raised in respect of the mural.
- Section 2 of the Charities Act 2009 requires a charitable organisation to promote a charitable purpose only and to apply all its property to further that purpose. Section 2 of the Charities Act 2009 also provides that certain bodies are excluded from being registered Irish charities, including bodies that promote a political cause that does not relate directly to the advancement of the body's charitable purpose.
- In its response to the Charities Regulator, the Project Arts Centre stated that it was facilitating the display of art and not engaging in political activity. However, the Charities Regulator noted that on the charity's website, the charity stated that it was relying on an exemption relating to political advertisements under the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, which enabled it to publicise the political advertisement without the requirement for planning permission (see note to the editor). By doing so, the Project Arts Centre had itself classified the mural as a political advertisement, as opposed to the Charities Regulator making that determination.

- The Charities Regulator considers that the charity trustees of the Project Arts Centre, by publicly displaying a political advertisement related to the Eighth Amendment referendum on the charity's premises using a planning exemption reserved for political advertising, are engaging in political activity that is not directly related to the advancement of the charity's charitable purpose, which is the advancement of education.
- The Charities Regulator notes that there are registered charities currently campaigning on both sides of the referendum debate, which are doing so in compliance with their obligations under the Charities Act 2009 because they are advancing a political cause which directly relates to their charitable purpose.
- In February the Charities Regulator published a [guidance document](#) on charities and the promotion of political causes. This is available at www.charitiesregulator.ie The trustees of all registered charities are advised to read it to ensure their organisations are in compliance with the Charities Act 2009.

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

ENDS

Note to the Editor:

The statement on the Project Arts Centre website referred to the exemption under the Planning & Development Regulations 2001, Schedule 2, Part 2, Exempted Developments, Class 14. This exemption relates to "advertisements relating to an election to the office of President of Ireland, an election of members of Dáil Éireann, the Parliament of the European Communities, a local authority or Údaras na Gaeltachta, or a referendum within the meaning of the Referendum Act, 1994".

The charity trustees of the Project Arts Centre confirmed on 20 April that they will remove the political advertisement in order to remain in compliance with their obligations under the Charities Act 2009.