

Press Release



2nd April 2009

“Dear Gordon Brown ...” Campaign: A Clarification on Funding

We were delighted to see that many parts of the media have picked up on our current campaign following our charity’s Founder, Polly Tommey, pursuing a meeting with Gordon Brown to share her direct experience of the condition on behalf of the thousands of mothers of children with autism in the UK.

On Wednesday 1st April 2009, The Daily Mail Online and The Evening Standard both ran stories about the campaign which contained a factual inaccuracy which has led to adverse reactions by some towards our charity and which we would like to ensure is clarified.

We have secured extensive support from the advertising world and have our campaign currently featured across a large number of premium billboard sites and posters throughout the UK with the specific objective of persuading Mr Brown to get in touch (which he has now done) and arrange the sought after meeting.

The value of the advertising platform being used is c.£500,000 – a significant amount - hence the news-worthy nature of the story. However the stories in both The Daily Mail Online and The Evening Standard stated that Polly had spent this sum of money and to some readers this has suggested that charity funds of this amount has been used.

The result has been a series of messages and a growing range of blogs commenting that such funds should have been used in a much better way than simply on advertising billboards. We are very concerned that some potential donors and supporters may be put off as a result.

The Autism Trust Trustees would certainly not have decided to invest hard won donations of this scale in this way, given the objectives we currently have. Our campaign was made possible due to the generosity we found from good contacts we have in the advertising and outdoor media world and as a result we were given over 98% of the £500,000 value without cost to our charity – a massive gesture in these tough economic times which we value immensely.

Our actual campaign cost including all resources is expected to be under £10,000.

We believe this to be very good value and feel the need to correct the inaccurate impression given in the two articles mentioned.

Oliver J Jones
Chairman
The Autism Trust