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Cheap, chic, unique – how charity shopping can help you beat the credit crunch this Christmas

Shoppers looking for quality gifts at bargain-basement prices could strike gold by checking out their local charity shops, and buying from charity catalogues and websites this Christmas, according to a campaign launched by the Charity Commission and the Association for Charity Shops today.

Britain's 6,800-plus shops can prove a treasure trove for hard-pressed shoppers offering everything from this season's fashion to records, books, DVD's, toys and jewellery. Charity shops only choose the best of donations to sell, keeping the quality high and the prices low.

Charity websites and catalogues offer everything from rare stamps to coffee, chocolate and candles and generate funds for a wide range of good causes both at home and in the poorest parts of the world.

Andrew Hind, Chief Executive of the Charity Commission, said,

"The range and quality of goods available through charity outlets including online shopping, catalogues and charity shops is incredibly diverse and those looking to 'buy charity' may find them a timely resource this Christmas. And, with 90% of goods sold in charity shops given by the public, we're reminding people to think about donating their unwanted Christmas gifts when the festive season is over."

Sue Azzopardi, Chair of the Association of Charity Shops, said,

"Charity shops offer a fantastic range of quality second hand goods at great prices, from retro clothing to party wear and from books to designer handbags. They're a great place to find bargains and to donate unwanted goods. Supporting charities by donating directly is the best way to make the most money from your unwanted goods – shops rely on the public for these donations."

UK households receiving flyers and bags asking for unwanted clothes, who want to make sure their donations are going to a registered charity, are reminded to look for a registered charity number and telephone landline on leaflets. Information about all registered charities in England and Wales can be found at www.charitycommission.gov.uk. If in doubt, householders are encouraged to take their donations directly to clothing banks or charity shops. Checking if an organisation is a registered charity is easy – just go to www.charitycommission.gov.uk and look them up on the online register of charities.

End.

Notes to Editors

1. The Charity Commission is the independent regulator for charitable activity in England and Wales. See www.charitycommission.gov.uk for further information or call our contact centre on 0845 300 0218.
2. The Association for Charity Shops supports registered charities that run shops, or are interested in running shops, as part of their fundraising activities. See www.charityshops.org.uk for more information.

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