

Mr 65 per cent: MP acts

by Peter Hounam

AN MP has asked the Charity Commission to investigate and stop charities making huge commission payments to firm who act as professional fund-raisers.

Mr Christopher Price, MP for Lewisham West, was responding to The Standard's exclusive report, published yesterday, which showed that the charity ASBAH—The Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus—pays a firm 65 per cent of any money it raises in special appeals.

The firm, Institutional Press, used ASBAH letter

headings on their stationery and misleadingly gave small businesses approached for donations the impression they were dealing direct with the charity.

Donors also thought that most of the cash they were giving was spent on charitable purposes.

Mr Price said today: "I've written to the Chief Charity Commissioner, Mr Terence Fitzgerald, enclosing a copy of the report in The Standard, pointing out to him that he has powers of inquiry under the Charities Act and asking whether he would be willing to use those powers to initiate an enquiry in this case.

"I believe the Charity Commission has the necessary

powers to investigate and put a stop to practices such as these.

Mr Price added: "There has got to be an administrative element, but this is ridiculous".

The Standard's investigation showed that Institutional Press's 32-year-old managing director Adrian Roman is currently driving a W registration Rolls (price new £52,000), although two of his previous businesses crashed and currently owe in excess of £200,000.

In the past year nearly £500,000 has been handed over to the firm by ASBAH. The charity expects to net about £70,000.

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made a one-hour stop in Bermuda. There they looked past

Mr 65pc: charity asked to explain

THE Charity Commission has told a national association aiding crippled children to explain its dealings with "Mr 65 per cent," the man whose company took nearly two thirds of the donations it obtained from newspaper advertising appeals.

The Commission has written to ASBAH—The Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus—saying the amount seemed "grossly excessive".

The charity has also been asked to supply the Commis-

sion with copies of contracts it signed with the firm Institutional Press, and a "very detailed statement" of gross and net receipts.

The move follows The Standard's disclosures last week of the business relationship between ASBAH and the company run by Adrian Roman, a 32-year-old former salesman who drives a £50,000 Rolls-Royce.

Roman's team of salesmen collected donations from hundreds of companies who believed they were dealing directly with the charity.

Correspondence from Institutional Press carried the ASBAH letter heading and made no mention of IP by name.

Supplement

The Commission has asked ASBAH to comment on this arrangement. ASBAH's chief executive officer replied to the Commission's chief investigator John Samuels that the charity was in the process of preparing a detailed response.

Appeals run by IP were published in the Financial Times and The Times. Firms were

offered an entry in a special supplement but found it was only the size of a postage stamp and brought little commercial response.

They were told by IP salesmen that the money would largely be going to the charity for helping crippled children. But out of the 35 per cent taken by ASBAH, the charity had to pay for the newspaper advertisements.

In one Christmas appeal run in the Financial Times gross receipts were about £180,000 but ASBAH will net less than £30,000.

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