

Animal charity under investigation over prosecutions against pet owners

Press release

Charity Commission opens an inquiry over concerns about the charity's private prosecutions.



The Charity Commission has announced that it has opened a statutory inquiry into Animal Protection Services (1186401) in relation to significant concerns about private prosecutions the charity brought against pet owners. The regulator is also investigating whether individuals connected to the charity have benefited inappropriately from its work.

Animal Protection Services has charitable objects that include investigating and prosecuting animal cruelty.

The regulator opened an inquiry after the charity's prosecution of several pet owners for the alleged unlawful and unlicensed sale of pets were dismissed at trial. In both instances, the judges raised concerns that the charity had a financial incentive for bringing the prosecutions. Evidence from these trials was submitted to the regulator.

The inquiry will examine the administration, governance and management of the charity and in particular:

- The trustees' decision making around its private prosecutions
- If the trustees have avoided or adequately managed potential conflicts of interest
- If there has been any unauthorised direct or indirect private benefit
- The trustees' failure to comply with legal obligations in relation to the filing of the charity's accounts and annual returns

The Commission may extend the scope of the inquiry if additional issues emerge.

It is the Commission's policy, after it has concluded an inquiry, to publish a report detailing what issues the inquiry looked at, what actions were

undertaken as part of the inquiry and what the outcomes were. [Reports of previous inquiries are available on GOV.UK.](#)

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

- The Charity Commission is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales. Its purpose is to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and strengthen society

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