[Press release: New charity investigation: Kenya Community Support Network]

The Charity Commission, the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales, has opened a statutory inquiry into the Kenya Community Support Network (1104003). The investigation was opened on 22 January 2018.

The charity’s objects include relieving poverty, sickness and distress among Kenyans and promoting research into the conditions of life of Kenyans. The charity’s stated activities include providing advice and guidance on issues such as immigration, health, welfare benefit, housing, further education, training and basic counselling.

The Commission engaged with the charity in October 2017 after receiving a complaint. This complaint raised concerns about the charity’s expenditure and whether it was in furtherance of the charity’s objects. The Commission met with representatives from the charity to explore the charity’s internal governance, management and administration and inspected the charity’s records. The Commission is concerned that there are strong indicators that show that the charity is being used for significant private benefit, that there is mismanagement and misconduct in the administration of the charity, and that the charity is not carrying out activities in furtherance of its charitable objects for the public benefit.

In order to address these concerns, the investigation will look at:

- whether the trustees have acted in compliance with their legal duties and responsibilities under charity law in the administration of the charity
- the financial management of the charity, in particular with regard to its expenditure
- whether there has been any private benefit to the trustees of the charity
- whether the trustees have operated the charity in furtherance of its charitable objects for the public benefit
- whether there has been misconduct and/ or mismanagement by the trustees

In light of the Commission’s concerns, it has taken action to protect the charity’s assets by restricting the transactions from the charity’s bank account. As a result, the charity cannot make payments or part with any of the charity’s assets without the Commission’s prior written approval.

The Commission stresses that opening an inquiry is not in itself a finding of wrongdoing. The purpose of an inquiry is to examine issues in detail, investigate and establish the facts so that the regulator can ascertain whether there has been mismanagement and/or misconduct; establish the extent of any risk to the charity’s property, beneficiaries or work and decide what action needs to be taken to resolve the serious concerns, if necessary using its investigative, protective and remedial powers to do so.

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 by the Commission are available on GOV.UK.

The charity’s details can be viewed on the Commission’s online charity search tool.

Notes to editors

1. The Charity Commission is the regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work see the about us page on GOV.UK.
2. Search for charities on our check charity tool.
3. Section 46 of the Charities Act 2011 gives the commission the power to institute inquiries. The opening of an inquiry gives the commission access to a range of investigative, protective and remedial legal powers.
4. The Commission’s decision to announce the opening of a statutory inquiry is based on whether it is in the public interest to do so and with consideration of our objective to increase public trust and confidence in charities.

Press release: Nearly 180 employers named and shamed for underpaying thousands of minimum wage workers

- £1.1 million identified for 9,200 workers underpaid minimum wage rates
- 179 employers named and fined £1.3 million after underpayment
- 8 Northern Ireland employers among those named

As well as recovering backpay for 9,200 workers, the government also fined the employers a total of £1.3 million in penalties for breaking national minimum wage laws. The most prolific offending sectors in this round were retailers, hospitality businesses and hairdressers.

It comes ahead of the next rate rise on 1 April, when the National Living Wage will go up from £7.50 to £7.83 per hour. Apprentices under the age of 19 and those in the first year of their apprenticeship will benefit from a record 5.7% rise.

Later this month the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) will launch a campaign to raise awareness of the new rates and encourage workers to speak to their employer if they think they are being underpaid.

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP said:

> The National Living and Minimum Wage, which every worker is entitled to, is an essential part of building the higher wage, lower welfare, lower tax society that the UK needs.
>
> Thanks to government investigations almost 10 thousand of the UK's lowest paid workers are to be back paid as we continue to build a United Kingdom, that works for everyone.

Business Minister Andrew Griffiths said:

> The world of work is changing and we have set out our plans to give millions of workers enhanced rights to ensure everyone is paid and treated fairly in the workplace.
>
> There are no excuses for short-changing workers. This is an absolute red line for this government and employers who cross it will get caught – not only are they forced to pay back every penny but they are also fined up to 200% of wages owed.
>
> Today's naming round serves as a sharp reminder to employers to get their house in order ahead of minimum wage rate rises on 1 April.

This 14th naming round comes after the government published its Good Work plan last month, which announced the right to a payslip for all workers. The new law is likely to benefit around 300,000 UK workers who do not currently get a payslip.

For those paid by the hour, payslips will also have to include how many hours the worker is paid for, making pay easier to understand and challenge if it is wrong. The move is part of the government's Industrial Strategy, the long-term plan to build a Britain fit for the future by helping businesses create better, higher-paying jobs in every part of the UK.

Since 2013 the scheme has identified more than £9 million in back pay for around 67,000 workers, with more than 1,700 employers fined a total of £6.3 million. The government has also committed £25.3 million for minimum wage enforcement in 2017 to 2018.

Employers who pay workers less than the minimum wage not only have to pay back arrears of wages to the worker at current minimum wage rates but also face financial penalties of up to 200% of arrears, capped at £20,000 per worker.

For more information about your pay, or if you think you might be being underpaid, get advice and guidance at www.gov.uk/checkyourpay. Workers can also seek advice from workplace experts Acas.

Closed consultation: Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) safety review

Updated: Summary of responses added.

Invites those with an interest in improving safety of cyclists and pedestrians to provide evidence, drawing on experience from the UK or other countries, that can be used to shape future policy decisions.

This call for evidence forms part of the wider consultation on road safety issues related to cycling – phase 2 of the Cycle Safety Review, announced in September 2017.

A factsheet on pedal cycle casualties is available.

Notice: Environment Agency: proposal made to revoke licences 9 March 2018

The Environment Agency consult the public on certain applications for the abstraction and impoundment of water.

These notices explain:

- what the application is about
- which Environment Agency offices you can visit to see the application documents on the public register
- when you need to comment by

Press release: Regulator publishes a response to the Value for Money consultation

Following a statutory consultation by the Regulator of Social Housinga new Value for Money Standard and a supporting Code of Practice, which will apply to all private registered providers of social housing, will come into effect on 1 April 2018.

Alongside the new Standard and Code the regulator is publishing value for money metrics that providers will be expected to report against. To meet its statutory objective to be proportionate and minimise interference, the metrics are based on information collected through the providers' existing Annual Accounts regulatory return and drawn from the pilot undertaken by the Sector Scorecard Working Group.

Generally respondents welcomed the move away from a narrative approach of VfM reporting to more focused reporting, and understood and supported the metrics approach that RSH had proposed.

From 1 April 2018 private registered providers will no longer need to produce a VfM self-assessment and should meet the reporting requirements of the new Standard. While the value for money metrics which are applicable to all, are financially focused, providers will be able to also set performance targets themselves to reflect social outcomes, appropriate to their objectives.

The Standard requires providers to publish performance evidence in their annual accounts against their own metrics and those defined by the regulator, and report how that performance compares to peers. Providers will be free to report outside of the accounts in a way they see fit if they consider this increases transparency with stakeholders.

Simon Dow, Interim Chair of the Regulation Committee said:

> Thank you to everyone who contributed their views to our Value for Money (VfM) consultation and the separate Technical Note on metrics. Overall, the responses have been very positive and the strengthened Standard now sets out a clear expectation that VfM should be a key strategic consideration for boards.
>
> The new approach will assist with scrutiny and consistency over the information reported, enable a greater focus on outcomes, and help continue to drive improvements in value for money in the sector. As is already our practice, we will seek assurance through In Depth Assessments that registered providers are putting the Standard in

practice.

A decision statement, outlining the analysis of consultation responses received, has been published on the Gov.uk website. It includes the final version of the VfM Standard and Code of Practice.

The VfM Metrics Technical Note is also published on a separate page of the website.

1. There were 174 completed responses to the statutory consultation which ran from 27 September 2017 to 20 December 2017. The regulator also consulted extensively with sector representative bodies.

2. The Sector Scorecard is a voluntary approach that has been adopted by a large proportion of the sector as piloted by the Sector Scorecard Working Group. The new VfM Standard does not oblige providers to adopt the Sector Scorecard. However, the Standard expects that providers will also report on performance targets based upon their own strategic objectives, and if providers wish to draw on the sector scorecard in setting such targets they are free to do so. Where the two sets of measures overlap, we have sought to align the calculation of the metrics in order to ensure consistency and avoid any scope for confusion.

3. The regulator's purpose is to promote a viable, efficient and well-governed social housing sector able to deliver homes that meet a range of needs. It does this by undertaking robust economic regulation focusing on governance, financial viability and value for money that maintains lender confidence and protects the taxpayer. It also sets consumer standards and may take action if these standards are breached and there is a significant risk of serious detriment to tenants or potential tenants.

For more information visit the RSH website.

Our media enquiries page has contact details for journalists.

For general queries to RSH, please email enquiries@rsh.gov.uk or call 0300 124 5225.