

Charity Commission takes action against married trustees that profited from sports charity

Press release

Regulator secures settlement for misapplied charitable funds



The Commission has found two former trustees of Dream It, Believe It, Achieve It responsible for serious misconduct and/or mismanagement after they paid charitable funds to their own companies.

Matthew Dimbylow has been permanently removed as a trustee and Emma Dimbylow has signed an undertaking not to act as a trustee again. The regulator took legal action to secure the return of misapplied charitable funds. The charity has objects to promote and support the physical education of children and young people including those with disabilities. It is in the process of being wound up.

The trustees employed a commercial lottery company to run a scratch card lottery for the charity between 2011 and 2014, raising a considerable amount of money. The Commission opened an investigation in 2017, following concerns about the proportion of funds that it had spent on fundraising.

This inquiry has found that the lottery raised over £6 million yet the costs of generating this return, including via payments to the lottery organiser, amounted to £4.2 million. Of the remainder, £1 million was passed to three different companies run by the couple and from which they profited personally. Only £300k went to charitable purposes that were unconnected with the Dimbylows.

The inquiry has concluded that the two former trustees mismanaged and misapplied the charity's funds and are responsible for serious mismanagement and/or misconduct.

The Commission issued a claim in the High Court to recover the funds

misapplied by the Dimbylows to their own companies, which they settled on 12 September 2019.

The charity's remaining trustee, who was appointed after the serious misconduct and mismanagement took place, is in the process of winding up the charity.

Amy Spiller, Head of Investigations at the Charity Commission, said:

The public expects trustees to ensure charitable funds are always carefully managed in the best interests of their charity and the cause they serve, in this case supporting children and disabled people with sport. Instead, the Dimbylows abused the trust that was placed in them as trustees.

It is right that we took action to recover misapplied charitable funds that went to the former trustees' own companies and acted to ensure those responsible cannot become trustees again. We hope this sends a powerful message to others who may be tempted to use charity in this way.

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Notes to Editors:

1. 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.
2. The inquiry report can be seen [here](#)
3. Matthew Dimbylow was removed as a trustee of this charity on 7 March 2019. As a result, he is disqualified from acting as a charity trustee or trustee for a charity, holding an office or employment with senior management functions in any charity in England or Wales. His name has been entered upon the Commission's register of removed trustees. Emma Dimbylow signed a voluntary undertaking to not act as a charity trustee or senior manager of any charity in England or Wales.
4. There were three other trustees at the charity. The inquiry found trustee A and B failed in their oversight of the charity. Trustee A resigned in 2013 and Trustee B in 2016. Trustee C was appointed after the serious mismanagement and/or misconduct took place and is winding up the charity.
5. The Charity Commission's fundraising guidance for trustees can be seen here: [Charity fundraising: a guide to trustee duties](#)

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