

Charity regulator continues to address concerns at connected Birmingham charities

The Charity Commission has opened a new statutory inquiry and appointed an interim manager at the Al-Hijrah Trust ([charity 1154046](#)), due to serious concerns that charity properties are at risk. This will support the work of an existing inquiry into connected charity, Al-Hijrah Trust ([charity 1018850](#)). It will also examine concerns around governance and safeguarding.

The regulator opened a [statutory inquiry](#) into the Al-Hijrah Trust (1018850) in 2015 over concerns about the charity's finances and particularly how income derived from the Al-Hijrah School's occupation of one of the charity's properties, was held and expended.

In February 2014, soon after the new Al-Hijrah Trust (1154046) was registered, an agreement was drawn up to transfer property and assets of the older charity (1018850), to the new charity, with the intention that the older charity would then dissolve. However, two assets have still not been transferred.

The regulator's inquiries are seeking to address this, including issues surrounding an outstanding charge on one property caused by a loan obtained by former trustees to finance an unsecured investment in a Dubai-based company. The property remains at significant risk due to this arrangement.

In addition, the regulator is concerned by an apparent breakdown in governance at the charity (1154046) and whether individuals listed as trustees of it on the Register of Charities were and are properly appointed as trustees. There are also concerns around private benefit and allegations of safeguarding issues at the charity (1154046).

Due to its serious concerns, the regulator opened an inquiry into the charity (1154046) on 18 March 2020. This will examine:

- the governance and administration of the charity, and whether individuals recorded as trustees were properly appointed;
- the remuneration of an individual whilst a trustee of the charity and whether this was authorised;
- safeguarding at the charity and complaints made by a former employee;
- the protection of property held by or coming to the charity.

Given the complexity of the issues it has appointed Ms Edwina Turner of Anthony Collins LLP as Interim Manager of the new charity to help address the concerns. Ms Turner will act as receiver and manager in respect of the charity's property and affairs. She also takes on day-to-day management and administration of the charity to the exclusion of the trustees. Ms Turner has existing knowledge and experience of the issues as she is already acting as

interim manager of Al Hijrah Trust (1018850) where her role is to secure the removal of the charge on the property.

The inquiry into Al Hijrah Trust (charity 1018850) continues. 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](https://www.gov.uk).

Ends.

Notes to editors:

1. The Al-Hijrah School was an exempt charity regulated by the Department for Education as principal regulator. Neither charity is responsible for the running of the school or the funding it received, nor have the school and its operation been the subject of the Commission's inquiries. The Al-Hijrah School ceased to occupy the Al-Hijrah Trust's property (1018850) in August 2019 and ceased to exist on 31 August 2019.
2. Section 76 of the Charities Act gives the Commission the power to appoint an interim manager to a charity. It is a temporary and protective measure that continues until the Commission makes a further order for its variation or discharge.