

Commission welcomes sentencing of children's cancer charity founder for fraud and theft

Press release

The Charity Commission today welcomed the 20-month custodial sentence handed down to Colin Nesbitt for fraud and theft from a children's cancer charity.



The regulator first identified and reported concerns about the charity's finances in 2015, which led to his arrest.

Mr Nesbitt, the founder and director of a former children's cancer charity, Little Heroes Cancer Trust, was sentenced to 20 months' imprisonment after he was found guilty in March 2021. He stole £87,000 from the charity and transferred £181,000 into a bank account in his name between July 2014 and May 2015.

Judge Gibson, when sentencing today, said the defendant "betrayed the public and the public confidence in this charity and the charity sector."

Little Heroes Cancer Trust was set up to help children suffering with cancer and to provide support to their families. It made activity books for children in hospitals and donated toys to children's cancer hospitals.

The charity received funding from the public and once featured on Channel 4's programme Secret Millionaire, receiving a £100,000 donation.

Little Heroes Cancer Trust was removed from the charity register in 2018. Some of the funds were recovered by the police. A separate proceeds of crime hearing, to determine what should happen to these funds, is scheduled for December.

Tim Hopkins, Assistant Director for Investigations and Inquiries at the Charity Commission, said:

The very serious criminal actions of Mr Nesbitt had devastating consequences, damaging the charity, its good work and name, as well as impacting significantly on the lives of those connected to it – including its former staff, volunteers and of course the children and their families who once benefitted from its services. The money the public generously donated to Little Heroes Cancer Trust was intended to make a crucial difference to children and their families and we understand why those who supported this charity will also feel let down by his actions. Through our work the Commission was able to help expose his criminal actions and I'm glad that some of the funds were recovered, which should go back to the causes they were intended for.

ENDS

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