

Press release: New charity investigation: Capricorn Animal Rescue and Sanctuary

The Charity Commission, the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales, has opened a statutory inquiry into [Capricorn Animal Rescue and Sanctuary \(inc Aston, Hawarden Animal Aid\), registered charity number 1048511](#). The inquiry was opened on 9 February 2017.

The charity takes animals into care that have no homes, are injured or neglected, and aims to rehouse the animals or release them back into the wild once they are fully recovered and treated.

After receiving a number of complaints from the public as well as significant media and parliamentary interest about the charity in 2016, the Commission initially provided regulatory advice and guidance to the trustees on how to improve the charity's governance.

The Commission monitored the charity's compliance with this guidance and visited the charity in October 2016 and subsequently inspected the charity's books and records. Our engagement established that there were clear and on-going serious regulatory issues relating to the administration of the charity by the trustees. These included inadequate financial controls, failure to safeguard and properly account for the charity's assets, potential unauthorised trustee benefit and the trustees' failure to act on regulatory advice.

The inquiry will examine:

- the administration, governance and management of the charity
- whether there has been any unauthorised benefit to the trustees of the charity
- whether the trustees have properly exercised their duties and responsibilities under charity law in the administration of the charity and in particular their duty to account for the charity's funds

In order to protect the assets of the charity, the Commission has taken steps to freeze the charity's bank accounts under section 76(3)(d) of the Charities Act 2011.

The Commission is aware that the charity has been the subject of concerns from members of the public relating to the welfare of animals in the charity's care; this does not fall within the Commission's remit and concerns on this matter should be directed to the RSPCA. Their 24-hour cruelty and advice line can be reached at 0300 1234 999.

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](#).

Ends

PR 10/17

Notes to editors

1. [The Charity Commission](#) is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see our [annual report](#).
2. Search for charities on our [online register](#).
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.
5. An order was made on Monday 20 February under section 76(3)(d) of the Charities Act 2011 to freeze the account(s) of the charity.