

[Press release: Regulator provides update on work of its interim safeguarding taskforce](#)

Reporting of serious safeguarding incidents by charities continues to increase, according to the Charity Commission. The regulator has published an update on the work of its interim safeguarding taskforce, and has confirmed that it received 620 safeguarding related reports in April and May 2018, compared to 196 during the same period in 2017.

In total, since February, the Commission has received and been responding to 1,152 reports of serious incidents (RSIs) about safeguarding (to end May 2018).

The Commission established a temporary safeguarding taskforce in February, which has been managing and handling increased serious incident reports, and undertaking a review of historic serious incident and whistleblowing reports on safeguarding issues.

New reports of serious safeguarding incidents

- 1,152 reports of serious safeguarding incidents received between February 2018 and May 2018, compared to 1,210 during the whole of 2016-17, and 1,580 during 2017-18
- 734 new cases have been opened relating to safeguarding concerns

As set out in [previous updates](#), the reports cover a wide spectrum; some relate to risks of harm that a charity has identified, rather than to incidents of harm – for example internal audits showing that safeguarding procedures were not followed in certain situations.

The Commission has previously [raised concerns about under-reporting of serious incidents by charities](#).

Among the reports are those from some of the 179 charities to which the Secretary of State for International Development wrote in February to seek reassurances that all appropriate incidents had been reported to the Commission. Of the 179 charities DFID issued the assurance request letter to, 34 charities have submitted incident reports to the Commission. In total, these 34 charities have reported 298 incidents. Of these, 218 related to historic incidents.

The Commission has also opened 734 cases relating to safeguarding concerns raised in serious incident reports from charities, or complaints and whistleblowing reports. These have been prioritised according to risk.

Review of historic reports of serious safeguarding incidents

- 5,501 incidents received between 1 April 2014 and 20 February 2018 were selected for review
- 5,238 incidents (95%) have now been analysed

The taskforce has been undertaking a 'deep dive' of its records of serious incident reports on safeguarding matters to identify any gaps in full and frank disclosure by charities, and to establish whether appropriate follow-up actions were taken by charities, including whether incidents were reported to other primary regulators or agencies. This has required the team to analyse a total of 5,501 serious incidents reported to the Commission between 1 April 2014 and 20 February 2018. 5,238 or 95% of the relevant records reports have now been analysed. Analysis so far has not identified any cases where the Commission has serious and urgent concerns that require it to take immediate action, or where it has had to engage with the authorities about any ongoing risk or unreported criminality.

Of these incidents, 3,000 involved allegations of potential criminal behaviour; the Commission's analysis has identified that in only one of those incidents was it unclear from its records whether it was reported to the authorities at the time. The Commission has now followed this up and verified that this incident was reported appropriately.

Once the work of the taskforce has concluded, the Commission will publish a report setting out the key findings and lessons for charities.

Ends

Notes to editors

1. Of the 179 charities to which the Secretary of State for International Development wrote in February, 158 are registered with the Commission, the remainder are registered with Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator ([OSCR](#)) or are exempt charities