

# [Press release: Review your charity's safeguarding and governance arrangements, Charity Commission advises](#)

The Charity Commission is alerting all charities to the importance of providing a safe and trusted environment for anyone who comes into contact with them, including staff and volunteers.

[The new alert](#) follows a number of recent reports to the Commission of serious incidents involving concerns about the welfare of charity volunteers and beneficiaries, and media reports of safeguarding incidents in charities.

The alert reminds charities that, if something goes wrong in a charity, trustees are accountable and responsible for putting things right. The Commission says trustees should therefore assure themselves that their safeguarding practices are robust.

It is specifically advising trustees to:

- review their charity's safeguarding governance and management arrangements and performance if they have not done so within the last 12 months.
- contact the Commission about safeguarding issues, or serious safeguarding incidents, complaints or allegations which have not previously been disclosed to the regulator or the appropriate authorities.

The Commission's recently revised [safeguarding strategy](#) makes clear that safeguarding should be a key governance priority for all charities, not just those working with groups traditionally considered at risk.

**Harvey Grenville, Head of Investigations and Enforcement at the Charity Commission, says:**

The public rightly expects charities to be safe and trusted environments where people are protected from harm, including the charity's own staff and volunteers. So all charities need to be alert to the importance of safeguarding those who come into contact with them. What that means in practice will of course depend on the nature and circumstances of a charity's work. Trustees of charities in which, for whatever reason, individuals may potentially hold significant authority or power or over others, including their colleagues, must take account of that in setting and implementing safeguarding policies. This includes environments in which individuals, by virtue of their formal position or their experience

or personality, are held in high regard and respect by those around them.

The regulator has also published a [report of a case involving Oxfam](#); the Commission engaged with the charity over its handling of a number of concerning allegations about recent and non-recent safeguarding incidents involving senior staff, including allegations of sexual harassment.

The report concludes that the charity demonstrates elements of good practice in its safeguarding management and how it responds to allegations, but that there is further work for the charity to do around HR culture, and the overall governance and management of safeguarding in the charity. As result of the Commission's involvement, the charity has committed to a number of significant steps, including an externally led review of its HR culture. The full report is published on gov.uk.

## Ends

## 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. The Commission takes a risk-based approach to safeguarding matters and its role is to ensure that trustees of charities work with or provide services to vulnerable beneficiaries comply with their legal duties, and take reasonable steps to protect them and other persons that come into contact with the charity from harm and minimise the risk of abuse.
3. The Commission is not responsible for dealing with incidents of actual abuse and does not administer safeguarding legislation. It cannot prosecute or bring criminal proceedings, although it can and does refer any concerns to the police, local authorities and the [Disclosure and Barring Service \('DBS'\)](#) each of which has particular statutory functions.