

[Press release: Trustee disqualified after charity used for visa fraud](#)

The Charity Commission has [concluded](#) that the trustee in charge of Khalsa Missionary Society has damaged the good name of charities by using a charity as a conduit for immigration fraud. The Commission has permanently removed him as a trustee barring him from becoming involved with charities again (see 'Notes to editors').

The Commission was notified in August 2013 by the Home Office Immigration and Enforcement Criminal Investigations Team ('HOIE') that it had commenced a criminal investigation into the charity as it suspected it was being abused to allow illegal entry of Indian nationals into the UK for a fee.

The Commission assisted the HOIE investigation through the sharing of information and opened a statutory inquiry in September 2014 to examine whether there had been misconduct and mismanagement in the administration of the charity. The Commission's inquiry found that there was only one active trustee in the charity. As a result of its concerns the Commission removed this individual as a trustee in January 2016.

The individual pleaded guilty at Manchester Crown Court to 3 counts of assisting unlawful immigration to between 2011 and 2013, and was sentenced to 27 months imprisonment on 16 May 2016.

The Commission's inquiry concluded that the trustee used the charity to facilitate immigration fraud. The charity had been used as a conduit for the immigration fraud, which worked by the charity sponsoring individuals as ministers for religion, while funds were circulated through the charity's bank accounts to give the appearance that the charity was receiving legitimate donations.

The inquiry concluded that there had been misconduct and mismanagement in the administration of the charity in that he had breached his legal duties to protect the charity's assets by using the charity as a conduit to commit immigration fraud. The regulator also concluded that he had potentially providing false and misleading information to the Commission.

The Commission removed the charity from the register in February 2016 as it no longer operated.

Carl Mehta, Head of Investigations and Enforcement, said:

We work closely with law enforcement agencies to prevent and disrupt abuse of charities. In this case we were able to share information with the Home Office Immigration and Enforcement Criminal Investigations Team and support the successful prosecution of an individual who was benefiting from this disgraceful abuse of charitable status.

Charity trustees must act with integrity and avoid any personal benefit or conflicts of interest. They must not misuse charity funds or assets and make decisions which are reasonable and in the best interests of the charity. Trustee duties are detailed in our guidance [‘The essential trustee’](#).

The [full report](#) is available on GOV.UK.

Ends

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Notes to editors

1. Removed under Section 79 (2)(a)(i) of the Charities Act 2011, therefore disqualified from holding a trustee position or other management role in a charity subject to a waiver from the Commission.
2. [The Charity Commission](#) is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see our [annual report](#).
3. Search for charities on our [online register](#).