

Press release: Misconduct after failure to comply with Commission

From:

First published:

31 January 2017

Regulator publishes report of its inquiry into Urban Relief.

The Charity Commission has today concluded its [inquiry](#) into [Urban Relief \(former registered charity number 1114537\)](#). The Commission opened an inquiry on 3 February 2015 after a trustee of the charity had been convicted of a number of offences, including managing a brothel, concealing criminal property and using the charity's bank account to launder funds from the proceeds of crime.

The Commission undertook scrutiny of the charity's bank accounts and conducted further enquiries, including attempting to meet all the trustees. Although the inquiry's analysis of the bank account records indicates that the charity did receive and spend funds, the inquiry saw no evidence that those funds were obtained or applied in furtherance of its objects.

Both the convicted trustee and his wife (also a trustee) failed to cooperate with the inquiry despite being ordered to do so by the Commission. The Commission found that 2 of the 4 charity trustees were unaware that their names had been declared to the Commission ([see endnote 1](#)).

The inquiry concluded that the trustees were responsible for mismanagement and misconduct in the administration of the charity due to a persistent failure to comply with the Commission's orders and directions. The Commission removed the charity from the register on 21 November 2016 ([see endnote 2](#)).

Carl Mehta, Head of Investigations, Enforcement at the Charity Commission, said:

The trustees in this case failed to abide by even the basic duties of trustees and failed to cooperate with our investigation. This charity has now been removed from the register of charities and the trustee involved was held to account by the criminal justice system.

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

Ends

PR 07/17

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. Details of how the Commission reports on its regulatory work can be found on [GOV.UK](#).

Endnotes

1. The Commission established in the inquiry that out of the 4 trustees 2 had never consented to be trustees, or acted in that capacity.
2. The charity ceased to operate as of August 2014, the last discernable date that any funds were transacted through the charity's bank account.

[Press release: Bishop of Sheffield: Philip North](#)

From:

First published:

31 January 2017

The Queen has approved the nomination of the Right Reverend Philip John North for election as Bishop of Sheffield.

The Queen has approved the nomination of the Right Reverend Philip John North, MA, Suffragan Bishop of Burnley, in the diocese of Blackburn, for election as Bishop of Sheffield in succession to the Right Reverend Steven John Lindsey Croft, MA, PhD, on his translation to the See of Oxford on 6th July 2016.

The Right Reverend Philip North (aged 50), was educated at the University of York and trained for the ministry at Saint Stephen's House, Oxford. He served his curacy at Sunderland Saint Mary and Saint Peter, in the Diocese of Durham from 1992 to 1996. Since 1997 he has been a member of the Company of Mission Priests.

From 1996 to 2002 he was Vicar of Hartlepool Holy Trinity in Durham Diocese and also served as Area Dean of Hartlepool from 2000 until 2002. From 2002 to 2008 he was Priest Administrator at the Shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham and from 2004 to 2007 he was also Priest-in-Charge of Hempton in the diocese of

Norwich. From 2008 to 2015 he was Team Rector of the Parish of Old Saint Pancras in the Diocese of London. Since 2015 he has been Suffragan Bishop of Burnley.

His interests include current affairs, cycling and walking.

[Green Party calls on all councils to welcome refugees after 'national disgrace' of asylum seekers' housing revealed](#)



Green Party

31 January 2017

The Green Party has branded the poor housing and lack of support for refugees in the UK a “national disgrace” and called on every council in the country to step up and take in refugees.

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, made the call after it was revealed some asylum seekers were living in “rat infested” conditions [1].

Bartley said:

“That we would house those fleeing conflict and persecution in rat infested conditions is nothing short of a national disgrace.

“How low can Britain go? This country has a proud history of being a safe haven where those who have been abused, traumatised and suffered violations of their basic human rights can find protection and support. That heritage is being betrayed by this Government.

“We need to see every single local authority welcoming refugees and it is unacceptable that while some councils have taken in hundreds of asylum seekers others, like in the Prime Minister’s own constituency, have taken none at all.

“We are all citizens of the world and we all have a responsibility to provide

sanctuary for those fleeing persecution. With the barbaric policies coming from Trump's America this week the UK should be showing the world how we can and must do better."

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-38799694>

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[News story: British Embassy Kabul Programme Fund 2017-18](#)

From:

First published:

31 January 2017

Part of:

British Embassy Kabul Programme Fund bidding round now open.

The British Embassy Kabul have a dedicated fund for supporting projects which further our priorities in Afghanistan. The fund will support projects implemented between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018.

How to apply to the 2017-18 bidding round:

We are looking for a range of relatively large-scale bids (£100k – £600k), which can achieve an impact in one year. We may also consider larger or smaller-scale bids in some areas, if they can still demonstrate that they can achieve an impact.

Currently we are inviting bids in the area(s) of:

Social Cohesion and Countering Extremism [closing date: 12th February 2017]

Bidders should submit bids that focus on:

- Strengthening Afghan Civil Society organisations who focus on Countering Extremism to develop their capacity to research, design and implement

local programmes to counter violent extremism.

- Research activities to support the ongoing Peace and Reconciliation process.
- Programmes designed to improve social cohesion, encourage plurality of voices and build resilience in communities.

Project bids for further priority themes will be invited throughout February 2017. Please check this site for details and closing dates.

In all thematic areas, successful bidders will be expected to demonstrate:

- That the project proposal provides good value for money;
- That the project proposal has a clear, achievable impact, and responds to a local demand or need;
- That their organisation has the capacity to deliver the project to a high standard;
- How the project helps build Afghan capacity (International NGOs/companies should aim to partner with a local Afghan counterpart where feasible);
- That the impact of the project will be sustainable beyond the end of the funding period (i.e. 31 March 2018);
- That they have carefully considered all risks and have proposed suitable mitigation methods.

N.B. Bids for projects in Afghanistan's provinces will be given a higher priority.

To apply, you should:

- Read all the documents and requirements
- Complete the project concept note form and submit your proposal to BEKProgrammeFund@hotmail.com by the date given above in the theme header. Please ensure the theme area of the bid is included in the subject line.

Implementers who have been successful at the initial concept note stage will be contacted by the British Embassy and invited to submit a full proposal by late March 2017.

Implementers whose proposals are awarded funding will be notified by April 2017, with an expectation that activity could begin shortly afterwards, and end by 31 March 2018.

Before bidding please familiarise yourself with the following key documents:

PDF, 326KB, 11 pages

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PDF, 151KB, 2 pages

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[Press release: Late payment reporting guidance launched for large businesses](#)

- guidance published ahead of measures coming into force in April 2017 to boost transparency of payment practices to help small and medium sized businesses (SMEs)
- regulations laid in parliament today will make large businesses publish details on the time taken to pay their suppliers to shine a light on bad practice
- latest figures show SMEs are owed £26.3 billion in overdue payments

Guidance to help large businesses report on how quickly they pay their

suppliers will be published today (31 January 2017), as regulations are laid in parliament by Small Business Minister Margot James.

The regulations confirm that from April 2017, large companies and limited liability partnerships (LLPs) will have to publically report twice a year on their payment practices and performance, including the average time taken to pay supplier invoices.

Failure to report will be a criminal offence and the guidance published today will help large businesses and limited liability partnerships prepare for these measures coming into force.

Small Business Minister Margot James said:

The UK is home to a record 5.5 million small businesses and the industrial strategy will help address many of the challenges they face getting finance and scaling up. It's completely unacceptable that small and medium-sized businesses are owed £26.3 billion in late payments, which hampers their ability to grow and has no place in an economy that works for all.

Large businesses have an important role to play and the guidance published today will help them fulfil their responsibilities and improve payment practices across the board.

The changes are part of a package to shine a spotlight on bad payment practice and lead to improved standards. This includes the appointment of the Small Business Commissioner to support small businesses in resolving payment disputes, with the Commissioner's office expected to be up and running later in the year.

Recent findings from the payment processor Bacs report that nearly half of the UK's small-to-medium sized businesses experience late payment, with £26.3 billion owed to them in total. The regulations laid in Parliament today aim to tackle this by increasing transparency and helping small businesses make informed decisions about who they do business with.

The [modern industrial strategy green paper](#) sets out a plan to improve living standards and economic growth by increasing productivity and driving growth across the whole country. We encourage businesses of all sizes and anyone with an interest to respond.

Mike Cherry, National Chairman at the Federation of Small Businesses, said:

The new duty to report is the centrepiece of the government's transparency agenda to combat poor payment practice. We welcome this as an important tool to change a UK business culture where it is deemed acceptable to pay small firms late. We estimate that if payments were made promptly, 50,000 business deaths could be avoided every year, adding £2.5 billion to the UK economy. It's now

crucial that these regulations are introduced and robustly enforced with proper sanctions put in place for any large business that tries to hide its payment practices.

There is now a clear will to tackle poor payments. Together with the new Small Business Commissioner and the developing corporate governance agenda to improve supply chain respect at board level, we must see a reduction in the £26 billion owed in late payments.

Jacqueline de Rojas, Managing Director of UK, Ireland and Northern Europe at Sage, said:

Our small business customers across the country tell us that late payment is still one of their biggest barriers to competing with larger suppliers. We know it impacts their ability to invest and innovate. And when you consider that people building these businesses create two-thirds of all new jobs, it's easy to see what a detrimental effect this could have on the financial health of the nation.

Through partnerships, advice and digital tools, we work hard to help small businesses manage cash flow challenges, and this new light-touch regulation is good news for them. This is a welcome move in the right direction to creating a stronger, fairer economy and making the UK the best place to start and run a business.