

News story: Regulatory alert to charities – safeguarding

The Charity Commission ('the Commission'), the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales, is issuing this alert to charities as regulatory advice under section 15(2) of the Charities Act 2011.

It has published this alert to charities following a number of serious incidents reported to the Commission, and recent public interest about accusations of harassment in the work place, including media reporting about some safeguarding incidents which have affected charity beneficiaries, charity workers or other persons coming into contact with charities.

The [Charity Commission's recently updated 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.

Everybody has the right to be safe, no matter who they are or what their circumstances are, and the public expects charities, quite rightly, to be safe and trusted places.

We are reminding charities of the importance of:

- providing a safe and trusted environment which safeguards anyone who comes into contact with it including beneficiaries, staff and volunteers
- setting an organisational culture that prioritises safeguarding, so that it is safe for those affected to come forward and report incidents and concerns with the assurance they will be handled sensitively and properly
- having adequate safeguarding policies, procedures and measures to protect people
- providing clarity as to how incidents and allegations will be handled should they arise, including reporting to the relevant authorities, such as the Commission.

The Commission's guidance makes clear that:

- trustee duties include avoiding exposing the charity's assets, beneficiaries or reputation to undue risk – this means taking reasonable steps to protect beneficiaries, employees and volunteers from harm

- on occasion, charities may be targeted by people who abuse their position and privileges to gain access to vulnerable people or their records for inappropriate or illegal purposes – trustees must be alert to this risk and the need to manage it
- safeguarding goes beyond preventing physical abuse, and includes protecting people from harm generally, including neglect, emotional abuse, exploitation, radicalisation, and the consequences of the misuse of personal data

Trustees need to be satisfied that there are clear lines of responsibility and accountability for safeguarding, in particular when working with other organisations to deliver services to their beneficiaries. Trustees should be satisfied that any partner organisation has in place adequate safeguarding arrangements, including appropriate policies and mechanisms to provide assurance on compliance. This is particularly relevant for charities which undertake overseas humanitarian or development work with affiliates or in a confederated structure.

If something goes wrong in a charity, the trustees are accountable and the Commission expects the trustees to take responsibility for putting things right. This is why trustees should assure themselves that their safeguarding practices are robust. If there are concerns about this or about how issues may have been dealt with in past, trustees should carry out a formal review, including on the adequacy and robustness of the charity's safeguarding measures, procedures and policies.

Trustees are advised to ensure that their charities:

- undertake a thorough review of their charity's safeguarding governance and management arrangements and performance if one has not been recently conducted 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 charity regulator

Failures by trustees to manage safeguarding risks would be of serious regulatory concern to the Commission. We may consider this to be misconduct and/or mismanagement in the administration of the charity and it may also be a breach of trustee duty.

How to ensure you protect your beneficiaries and others that come into contact with your charity

Specifically, our advice is trustees need to:

- know your duties and responsibilities – under charity law but also under other specific statutory duties or guidance which apply because of the type of work your charity undertakes
- ensure adequate measures are in place to assess and address safeguarding risks
- put in place adequate safeguarding policies and procedures, including relevant HR matters, appropriate for your charity's particular circumstances and which reflect both the law and best practice
- make sure your charity's policies and procedures are effectively applied in practice
- ensure there are mechanisms in place which provide trustees with assurance about your charity's compliance with those policies and procedures
- ensure those safeguarding policies, practice, and performance are robustly and regularly reviewed to ensure they are up to date and fit for purpose
- actively promote a safe culture and strong awareness of everyone's safeguarding responsibilities in your charity
- take steps to help deter and prevent safeguarding issues from occurring
- ensure there are mechanisms in place to promptly identify and act upon emerging safeguarding trends or issues
- ensure that serious incidents are reported to the Commission in accordance with its guidance and that safeguarding allegations, complaints or incidents are reported to other agencies in accordance with the law and best practice

The measures in place should be proportionate to the size of the charity and the risks arising from the charity's activities.

For further advice and sources of guidance:

[News story: New Blue Belt stakeholder newsletter published](#)

The [Winter 2017-2018 Stakeholder Newsletter](#) provides an update on a number of recent work projects that are being undertaken as part of the [Blue Belt programme](#).

The Blue Belt programme is a four year programme (2016 to 2020), delivered by the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) and the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) with the UK Overseas Territories on behalf of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

The programme supports delivery of the UK government's manifesto commitment to provide long term protection of over four million square kilometres of marine environment across the UK Overseas Territories.

You can sign up to receive the [newsletter by e-mail](#) and get more updates about the work of the programme [on Twitter @ukgovbluebelt](#)

[Press release: The next steps towards the 5G Future](#)

The positioning of the UK as a world leader in the development and deployment of 5G technology has received another boost as the government sets out the next steps of its ambitious plans.

Government has today published an [update to its 5G strategy](#), first published at Spring Budget 2017, which outlines our progress to date in delivering against the recommendations of the strategy. It also details the next phase of work aimed at preparing the UK for a 5G future including the steps that the government will take to support investment, and the ongoing programme of 5G Testbeds and Trials.

In October, the 5G Testbeds and Trials Programme launched a £25 million competition to fund an initial series of testbeds and trials. This "Phase 1" competition is focusing on new and innovative use cases for 5G in order to help identify new revenue streams and business models for all parts of the supply chain. At Budget in November, we announced specific funding for 5G projects, and government has today announced that "Phase 2" programme activity will include funding for the first large scale projects.

As part of this, the government has launched a [call for views](#) on the

appropriate scale and scope of deployment pilots that will help to establish the conditions under which 5G can be deployed in a timely way and help foster the development of 5G in the UK. This includes the timescales over which they should be delivered, the amount of funding contribution which would be appropriate, and the method by which funding should be allocated.

Minister for Digital, Matt Hancock said:

We want the UK to be a global leader in 5G so that we can take early advantage of the benefits that this new technology offers. The steps we are taking now are all part of our commitment to realising the potential of 5G, and will help to create a world-leading digital economy that works for everyone.

And while the Phase 1 and Phase 2 projects will shortly be underway, it's important for the government to create the right environment for long-term investment in 5G and other technologies like full fibre broadband.

DCMS is therefore also launching a [call for evidence](#) to understand what makes investing in fibre and 5G attractive, and what government could do to support this. The responses will inform the [Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review](#) which was announced last month as part of the [Industrial Strategy](#), which set out the need to do more to increase our productivity and to make the most of our untapped potential right across the nation.

Our aim is to be the world's most innovative economy, and as part of this, the UK needs an integrated, long-term strategy for fixed and mobile networks and this review will determine what conditions will encourage the long term investment needed to secure world-class digital connectivity, that is seamless, reliable, long-lasting and also widely available and affordable to UK businesses and consumers.

Also announced today are the chosen partners for running the 5G innovation Network. A consortium led by CW, in partnership with the Knowledge Transfer Network and TM Forum, have been selected to provide a significant boost to the development of the UK's 5G ecosystem, whilst contributing to increased inward investment and UK leadership. The Network will:

- Facilitate the coordination and engagement of organisations working on 5G activities in the UK
- Create and maintain an accessible and up to date source of information about 5G activities for industry and
- Establish a global marketing brand as part of a strategy to encourage inward investment and participation in 5G activities in the UK.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

1. The Terms of Reference for the Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review (FTIR) are available online. The FTIR call for evidence outlines a

- number of different market and policy models, and we are particularly keen to hear how these could generate effective outcomes for consumers in the next decade and beyond, and the pros and cons of these models.
2. The government has committed over £1 billion from the National Productivity Investment Fund to support the next generation of digital infrastructure in the UK including through the delivery of two programmes: the Local Full Fibre Networks (“LFFN”) Programme and the 5G Testbeds and Trials Programme. These programmes aim to stimulate investment in next generation fibre and wireless networks.
 3. 5G has the potential to transform communications and is likely to lead to new business models and innovation in service provision. Given the potential size of the global 5G prize – a recent report estimated 5G will enable USD\$12.3 trillion of global economic output in 2035 – we need to ensure that the UK is at the forefront of 5G developments, so that we can maximise the potential benefits to our economy and citizens.
 4. The business case for 5G is not just about the technology. It’s about discovering new business models. With 4G, the primary use case is consumer mobile services. 5G will be the first network with multiple use cases, serving multiple needs. The Phase 1 competition will focus on new and innovative use cases for 5G in order to help identify new revenue streams and business models for all parts of the supply chain.
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[Press release: Government launches plan to increase participation in democracy](#)

The government has launched the first ever [Democratic Engagement Plan](#) today (19 December 2017) to tackle democratic exclusion and outline how it will increase participation among under registered groups.

The Minister for the Constitution Chris Skidmore launched the Plan today at the first meeting of the National Democracy Week Council, made up of organisations from across the civil society sector, working in partnership with government.

The Council has been established to plan activities for a week of unified national action that will take place between 2 to 6 July next year in celebration of two significant anniversaries – 100 years since women won the right to vote and 90 years since women won equal voting rights to men.

The Democratic Engagement Plan, launched today, follows the ‘Every Voice Matters’ tour, which over the last year has visited every region and nation in Great Britain. The Minister met over 100 organisations that represent people who are underrepresented on the electoral register, gathering insight on the barriers these groups face engaging with the democratic process.

The Plan sets out our approach to creating an inclusive democracy by:

- building on record levels of voter registration and identifying where there is more to do
- further encouraging participation to make our democracy more inclusive than ever
- launching National Democracy Week to promote democratic engagement
- identifying the barriers faced by specific groups that are currently under-represented on the electoral register

Also, today is the next stage of the government's plans to make changes to anonymous registration, making it more accessible for those who need it most. The draft legislation will be laid in Parliament, if it is approved we anticipate the changes will come into force in time for the May local elections in England.

Minister for the Constitution, Chris Skidmore said:

I am pleased to publish the first Democratic Engagement Plan which sets out our longer-term approach to encouraging democratic participation.

We now have a better understanding of how participation differs between different groups and areas and this plan sets out how best we can engage with those who are under-registered so ours is a democracy that works for everyone.

We want to ensure that everyone eligible who wishes to register to vote and participate in our democracy is given the opportunity to do so. There are still millions of people who are not enrolled on the electoral register or choose not to vote. But as this Plan shows, in our democracy, every voice matters.

[News story: Home Secretary's open letter to EU citizens in the UK](#)

I'm proud that so many EU citizens like yourself have built your lives in the UK and made it your home. We value your contribution which is why the government put safeguarding your rights as the first priority in the Brexit negotiations.

I am absolutely delighted that we have now reached an agreement with the EU that does this. I know that at times you've had an anxious wait while the fine details were ironed out, but we wanted to get it right and we have

always had you at the forefront of our thoughts.

We have always said that we will continue to recognise the value you bring to our society, and that we will remain an open and diverse country. Hopefully this deal provides reassurance that we will do just that.

The agreement we have reached ensures the rights you and your family currently have remain broadly the same with access to healthcare, benefits and pensions protected. And your existing close family members living outside the UK retain the right to join you in future. These rights will be cemented in UK law meaning you can live your life as you do now with the security of knowing they won't change. Irish citizens also have their existing rights, associated with the Common Travel Area arrangements, protected.

Away from the negotiations, my team at the Home Office has been working hard to build the digital system that you'll use to get your new status. It's being designed from scratch to be quick and simple to use. There won't be bureaucratic hurdles – those processing applications will work in your favour.

What's more, it will cost no more than the fee a British person pays for a passport and if you already have valid permanent residence documentation it will be free. There will be support for the vulnerable and those without access to a computer, and we're working with EU citizens' representatives and embassies to ensure the system works for everyone.

You do not need to do anything just yet. You will see more detail about the settled status scheme from us in the new year and we expect applications will open during the second half of 2018. In the meantime, please do share this message with your friends and family so that they too can stay up to date through [our mailing list](#).

I hope that the agreement we have reached provides certainty to you and your family ahead of Christmas. EU citizens, like yourself, who have made the UK their home are our family, our neighbours and our colleagues and we want you to stay.

[Further guidance for EU citizens in the UK is available on GOV.UK.](#)