

Trustee of Aylesbury poverty relief charity disqualified after stealing over £200,000

Buckinghamshire based charity, GTC ([charity 1160421](#)), has been removed from the register of charities, and its sole trustee has been disqualified from charity trusteeship. The Charity Commission [reports today](#) on its statutory inquiry into GTC, which found that around £240,000 was stolen by the trustee.

The regulator [launched its probe](#) into GTC in December 2018 over concerns about the charity's governance and financial management. The charity's purpose was to relieve poverty in the UK, mainly in the area around Aylesbury.

Investigators used legal powers to obtain bank records and established that around £240,000 (the majority of which had been mistakenly paid to the charity by a third party) was transferred from the charity's bank account to the trustee's private bank account. The funds had then been used to purchase a property which was held in the name of a private company of which the same individual was the sole director and the sole shareholder. The funds have now been repaid to the third party.

The inquiry also found poor governance at the charity which was operating in breach of its governing document. It had just one trustee in the years leading up to the inquiry meaning there were no other trustees to oversee and assist in decision-making processes or to appropriately manage conflicts of interest.

The Commission was also concerned by delays, gaps and a lack of clarity in the charity's annual accounts submitted to the regulator, some of which were not compliant with the charity accounting framework. The individual also failed to comply with a direction under the Charities Act which required him to attend a meeting and provide information to the Commission.

The inquiry concluded that these failings amounted to misconduct and/or mismanagement in the administration of the charity.

The regulator used its powers to share information with other agencies, and on 31 October 2019, the trustee, Mr Ahtiq Raja, was found guilty of theft at Northampton Crown Court and was later sentenced to a 24-month community order. As a result of his conviction, he is now automatically disqualified from acting as a trustee or from holding a senior management role in any charity in England and Wales.

The charity no longer operates and was removed from the register of charities on 9 April 2020.

Amy Spiller, Head of Investigation Teams at the Charity Commission said:

Charity represents the best of human characteristics – that’s why the behaviour of charities matter. This charity was set up to improve the lives of people suffering financial hardship, but sadly this individual betrayed those good intentions.

Our investigation uncovered appalling behaviour by someone who was in a position of trust, and it is right that they have been held to account for their actions. This case also exposed what can go wrong when there is a lack of oversight and poor governance within a charity.

The full report is available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Ends.

Note to editors:

The Charity Commission’s purpose is to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and strengthen society. It is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales.