

Charity Commission takes regulatory action against trustees who mismanaged Newark charity

Press release

The Charity Commission has secured voluntary undertakings from three trustees of Hope House School.



The Charity Commission has secured voluntary undertakings from 3 trustees of Hope House School, ensuring that they will not act as charity trustees for a period of at least 8 years. The regulator's action follows investigations into the trustees' misconduct and/or mismanagement of the Newark-based charity.

Hope House School is a charity-run independent school, catering for approximately 25 pupils with special educational needs. The charity aims to advance the education of children between the ages of 5 and 19 years old who suffer from neurological and psychological conditions such as, but not limited to, Opltz syndrome, Autistic Spectrum Disorders and Dyspraxia.

The Commission opened a statutory inquiry into Hope House School in October 2017. This inquiry followed a compliance case opened in 2016 to assess anonymous complaints that a trustee (trustee A), was receiving personal benefit from the charity. This benefit included designer handbags and holidays to New York and Belgium. Trustee A was also the school's founder and Principal.

In an assessment of the charity's banking information, the Commission also identified suspicious payments made to trustee A's husband, as well as wider concerns about how spending was in line with the charity's purposes. This prompted a statutory inquiry, which was concluded today.

[The inquiry](#) found multiple instances of misconduct and/or mismanagement, including that:

- trustee A was able to breach internal financial controls and make payments to her husband
- the payment of the rent and utility bills of a flat for a former beneficiary were not in furtherance of the charity's objects, and constituted a misapplication of charity funds
- trips to New York and Belgium, made by trustee A's family members to accompany pupils, and the purchase of personal luxury items, constituted personal benefit
- the current trustees did not act to adequately address concerns identified by Ofsted, and did not take all of the appropriate steps to improve the school's safeguarding practices and training, risk assessments, or health and safety

Amy Spiller, Head of Investigations at the Charity Commission, said:

Cases like this demonstrate the importance of good governance, robust internal financial controls and responsible trustee oversight. Trustee A abused their position and other trustees' neglect of their duties allowed this misconduct to continue unchecked, to the detriment of the charity and its beneficiaries.

The public expects trustees to deliver the charity's objects and ensure it makes a tangible and positive impact in the community. It is disappointing that these trustees did not take that duty and their responsibilities seriously.

As part of the inquiry, the regulator appointed an interim manager who improved the charity's financial position and helped ensure it could continue in its work to provide an education for children with special needs.

The Commission worked with Ofsted and the Department for Education to ensure trustees were taking seriously their responsibilities to rectify concerns raised by Ofsted on the safeguarding of beneficiaries and the effective ongoing operation of the charity.

Notes to Editors

1. The Charity Commission is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales. Its purpose is to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and strengthen society.
2. The voluntary undertaking made by the former trustees commenced in 2019.
3. The full report can be viewed [here](#).

Published 7 March 2022

The Avenue Landscaping and Remediation Project – one of the UK's most significant brownfield projects

In 1992 the Avenue Coking Works closed its doors. For nearly forty years the Coking Works had produced coal and gas and processed tar and sulphuric acid. By the end of its life, the site was a mess of leaky tanks, pipelines, waste tips, lagoons filled with tar and soil poisoned with cyanide and arsenic.

The 98-hectare site had polluted the River Rother and was so contaminated that it breached regulations in place to protect against serious damage to people and the environment.

The ambition for the site was to prevent additional environmental damage and restore the Avenue to a condition in which it would be suitable for other uses.

Picture: BEIS/Coal Authority

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Homes England took ownership of the site in 1999 and demolition work began, dismantling the conveyor gantries, coke oven chimneys, concrete cooling towers, the boiler house and powerhouse.

Numerous site investigations, surveys, assessments and trials were undertaken, and a strategy was developed to bring the site back into use, alongside an Environmental Impact Assessment of the proposed development, with full planning permission secured in 2007.

The scale of the remediation works was unprecedented in size and complexity, with remediation trials in Rotterdam and detailed scientific assessments in Manchester helping to inform the approach.

Beyond the structures themselves, over two million cubic metres of soil were processed through a £6.5m soil treatment plant, which operated 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, heating the soil to up to 1,000°C, removing the contaminants.

The discharge in the 300,000 cubic metre waste tip was processed through a sorting station which sorted the waste by particle size. Once the contaminants were separated from the soil, they were stored separately prior to being effectively treated or recycled.

Homes England worked to find unique solutions to ensure that the ecology of the area was protected during the works. Prior to the works starting, an estimated 8,000 newts, 50 grass snakes and 250 water voles were translocated or otherwise protected. The final design of the project includes provision of a newt reserve as well as a vole retreat.

Working in partnership with the Environment Agency, a flood alleviation scheme was built to reduce the risk of flooding to properties in Chesterfield. This included construction of a flood storage reservoir at the site, capable of storing up to 245,000 cubic meters of flood water and controlling its flow down the river.

The project received several awards, notably the CEEQUAL Outstanding Achievement Award.

CEEQUAL is the world's leading sustainability rating scheme for infrastructure, engineering and public realm projects. The site was praised for its extensive ecological design and management, sustainability of the remediation works and effective stakeholder consultation.

The works took almost ten years to complete, finishing in 2018.

Picture: BEIS/Coal Authority

Picture: Commission Air Aerial Photography

New beginnings

Having completed the ambitious remediation works, the site was ready to be put to a new use. A masterplan was developed to provide nearly 500 homes supported by a sustainable drainage scheme, significant recreational space, a primary school and hectares of employment land.

The 70 hectares of open space contains some of the highest standard public sports pitches in the county, as well as fishing facilities, a remarkable fact given the former state of the site. The site connects to the local cycle network and provides an off-road link from the south of Chesterfield to the town centre, railway station and beyond via the Trans Pennine Trail.

The work to bring the former Avenue Coking Works site back into use spanned over two decades and required the experience, ingenuity and collaboration of a range of partners including Turner & Townsend, Jacobs UK Ltd, VSD Avenue, CA Blackwell, The Land Trust and a broad range of public bodies including the Environment Agency and North East Derbyshire District Council, Derbyshire County Council and Kier Living (now Tilia Homes).

The results of the project are clear to see. One of the most ambitious regeneration projects in UK history, the regeneration of Avenue Coking Works has taken an environmental and social hazard and transformed it into a safe place where people can live, work and play, and take pride in their community.

[The Avenue – transformed](#)

Video credit: Killingley, matthew.killingley@killingley.co.uk

[SLC celebrates Scottish Apprenticeship Week](#)

News story

SLC has planned a week of activity to celebrate Scottish Apprenticeship Week



Apprenticeships Work, that's the message from SLC as it celebrates Scottish Apprenticeship Week.

The organisation has activities planned throughout this week (7-11 March) to showcase the achievements of its apprentices and inspire the apprentices of the future.

On Monday, the Leadership Team will meet virtually with some of the current cohort of modern and graduate apprentices, to discuss their experience at SLC and hear their ideas about developing the apprenticeship programme.

On Wednesday, Paula Sussex, CEO, will go back to school and talk to S4 pupils at Springburn Academy in the outskirts of Glasgow, about apprenticeship opportunities within SLC. She will be joined by graduate apprentices who will share their experiences and answer any questions the students have about exploring an apprenticeship.

And to end the week, Kaukab Stewart, MSP for Glasgow Kelvin will visit the Glasgow Office, on Friday, to meet with CIO, Stephen Campbell, and apprentices Hazel Fulton, Aidan McCrae, Cairn Foster and Jamie Law. This will be an opportunity for her to find out more about SLC's approach to apprenticeships, and how they benefit people at different stages of their careers.

In addition, the organisation has also been nominated for a Scottish Apprenticeship Week Award in the Large Employer, Promoting Diversity category. The award recognises the commitment of large organisations to supporting diversity through apprenticeships and the winner will be announced at a virtual award ceremony on Wednesday night.

Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) for more information and updates throughout the week.

Published 7 March 2022

[The Student Loans Company urges people to apply for 150 new roles in the North East](#)

The organisation, which is based at Lingfield Point, has Customer Service roles available, supporting customers at various stages of their student finance journeys.

Based within SLC's Operations team, the jobs are central to processing maintenance loan applications for two million students each year and paying tuition fees to more than 600 higher education institutions.

Successful candidates will receive a reward package including flexible working, access to the civil service pension scheme and a generous holiday entitlement. They will also benefit from SLC's routes for progression, with opportunities to learn, develop and upskill.

SLC has a blended approach to work, with colleagues spending time in the office and at home, so applications are being encouraged from across the North East.

Chris Larmer, SLC Executive Director, Operations said: "As we strive to transform the customer experience and work with the Government on enabling higher education reform, there really has never been a more exciting time to join us. We have 150 frontline operational roles available in Darlington and we believe it's an excellent opportunity for local talent to find meaningful, secure and rewarding employment.

"We are committed to unlocking the potential of our workforce – we want people to develop a successful career with SLC so it's vital that we invest in them and their futures."

Peter Gibson, Member of Parliament for Darlington, said: "SLC is a major

employer in Darlington, providing exciting careers with huge prospects for development advancement and progression. I'm pleased to support SLC in its continuing expansion in Darlington and I am keen to help highlight the opportunities to our community to ensure that many more here can stay local AND go far"

For more information and to apply please visit [Customer Service Opportunities – Civil Service Jobs – GOV.UK](#)

Ministry of Defence Police ACC Dave Long retires

Dave joined the MDP in March 1984, following an early career in metallurgy engineering. His first MDP posting was as a beat patrol officer at RAF Caerwent, followed in 1985 with a move to USAS Menwith Hill.

In 1987, Dave was promoted to Sergeant and transferred to Royal Ordnance Radway Green, later transferring to HQ Hereford Garrison in 1990, where he specialised as a Quik-Kuf Instructor, a Rifle Officer, and a member of the Augmentation Force (supporting nuclear convoy operations). He completed secondments to the then Criminal Investigations Department (CID) and undertook periods of Acting Inspector duties.

Dave completed a national Inspectors promotion course with Devon and Cornwall Constabulary, and in 1997 he was promoted to Inspector as a Training Manager at the HQ Police Training Centre. Upon qualifying as a Fitness Leader, Dave delivered fitness testing and training sessions for potential recruits and probationary officers. He also completed a National Police Training (NPT) qualification as a Trainer Development Officer, to provide coaching and mentoring support to new MDP Trainers.

Dave was appointed to set up the first MDP Driver Training Department in 2001, coordinating the delivery of an in-house training programme through a network of newly appointed driver trainers. He received a Commendation for drafting and implementing a new Driver Training policy and achieved an MA in Training Management from Middlesex University.

By October 2002, Dave was promoted to Chief Inspector at HM Naval Base Clyde where he worked as an Operational Shift Commander. In 2003, following Force restructuring, Dave was appointed to lead the Scotland Division Operational Support team. He was promoted to Superintendent in 2004 and was initially appointed as Senior Police Officer (SPO) at Clyde, for a 6-month period, pending transfer to RAF Menwith Hill.

In 2007, Dave took up the role of North East Division Ops Superintendent and shortly after was appointed as the Divisional Commander on Temporary

Promotion to Chief Superintendent.

Dave returned to MDP HQ in 2010, as Head of Agency Business Services, to coordinate the review and restructure of HQ staffing, providing the interface between the Review Team and the (then) Agency Management Board. Upon implementation of the new structure, Dave was substantively promoted to Chief Superintendent and took up the role of Head of MDP Standards – for which he received a Chief Constable's commendation for his work to deliver a programme of reviews across MDP stations, required for restructuring as part of efficiency savings.

At the beginning of 2014, Dave was appointed Temporary Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) for HQ Central Operations and, following successful completion of the National Chief Police Officer Strategic Command Course (SCC), he was substantively promoted to ACC in 2016, covering the Organisational Development and Crime portfolio.

Since August 2018, Dave has led the Operations Portfolio, with oversight of all aspects of uniformed operational delivery, including MOD planned events, mutual aid support for national contingencies (including G7 and COP26) and enduring Gold Command oversight of the MDP response during the COVID pandemic.

During his time as ACC, Dave has overseen a range of change and improvement projects, including the Organisational Development strategy, the firearms relicensing process with the College of Policing, internal governance reviews with the Police Committee, Force complement reviews (working closely with stakeholders across Defence), and the recent HQ Operations restructure.

Reflecting on his MDP career, Dave said:

During my (almost) 38 years of public service in the MDP, I've had great opportunities, some of which haven't always been expected, but I've always embraced them as a challenge, with a personal commitment to do the right thing for the Force and to lead with compassion and integrity to gain the support of all those colleagues in my teams at the time.

I've been fortunate to have experienced some enjoyable command positions, as well as leading on some key change programmes, and have been able to oversee the delivery of our various capabilities, across the Force, for the benefit of Defence, our customers and those in the communities we serve. The opportunity and ability to influence and help shape the future of the MDP has resonated strongly with me, as a career MDP officer, and has been a key motivator for my contributions as a Chief Officer.

I have worked with some great colleagues over the years in the MDP,

MOD and other stakeholder teams – all of whom have helped shape me as a leader. However, I must place on record the support I have received from my family, which has been very significant and has enabled me to pursue various roles in different parts of the UK and to have a rewarding and enjoyable career with the MDP.

I look forward to my retirement but will miss the camaraderie of being part of a big organisation. The time is now ripe though for me to watch from the side-lines, reflect on very fond memories and focus on the things I want to achieve in the future, thank you.

Chief Constable Andy Adams commented:

Dave leaves us with an exemplary career record as a Ministry of Defence Police officer: he will be a sad loss to the Force and his profession. I would like to take the opportunity, on behalf of all his colleagues, to wish him and the family all the best for the future.