

## THE LAST FEW MONTHS SEES BAD PRESS CONTINUE TO ROCK THE SECTOR

*The Commission is forced to investigate major safeguarding and fundraising issues following reports on events concerning Oxfam, Save the Children Fund and The Presidents Club.*

### Safeguarding; The need to protect Children and Vulnerable Adults.

The last few months has seen Safeguarding become front page news on many of our newspapers as reports continue to emerge about issues involving some major charities like Oxfam and Save the Children and as a result, enquiries have been started.

Yet the issue of safeguarding for charities and their trustees and senior leadership team have always been around. The commission originally published guidance for dealing with safeguarding issues in charities in 2013.

In the light of recent events this document which is readily available on the Charity Commission website has been updated, reissued in March this year and should be read or re-read by all trustees whose charities deal with children and vulnerable adults.

The guidance covers such areas as: -

- Criminal record or “DBS” checks
- Protecting your beneficiaries and others encountering your charity
- How to respond to safeguarding incidents
- Whistleblowing
- The Commission’s strategy for dealing with safeguarding issues.

The document can be found by following this [link](#) and it in turn will provide links to the key guidance that all trustees and senior leadership teams need to be made aware of including the main guidance contained in the booklet “Safeguarding children and young people”.

This guidance includes: -

- Child protection policy
- Procedures and systems
- Working abroad.

Whilst this document concentrates on children, there is a government document specifically related to adults which can be found at this [link](#).

### Tackling Fraud



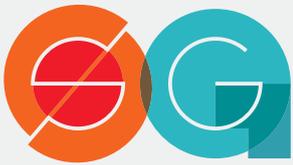
*As we have seen elsewhere the subject of Fraud continues to be a hot topic for charities and the last few months have seen two very useful pieces of advice made available to charities.*

*The first is an update of the booklet “Protect your charity from fraud” which was first published in October 2016 and updated in March this year. The booklet itself is very readable and contains various templates including sections on: -*

- Anti-fraud policies
- Fraud investigation plan
- A guide to investigative interviews
- Whistle blowing policy.

*It has also added a link to some e-learning videos which I found very helpful. The booklet can be found [here](#).*

*In addition, there is a very useful checklist published in March this year by the Fraud Advisory Panel and approved by the Charity Commission. It is only 2 pages in length and contains some useful reminders of things that would appear to be very basic and yet which many still fail to comply with. It can be found [here](#).*



## Tackling Abuse and Mismanagement The Charity Commission Report 2016-17

The Charity Commission published their latest report on their activities in February this year. Apart from the need to be transparent and open about their case work, the reason the report is published by the Commission is to share and help trustees prevent any abuse.

This year, the Commission received almost 1000 emails, phone calls and letters. As a result of these contacts over 2350 matters of concern were raised in the form of compliance, monitoring and inquiry cases.

The Commission set up three key strategic regulatory risk areas which they prioritise; these are fraud, financial crime and financial abuse; safeguarding issues and abuse of charities for terrorist related purposes. Such events can lead to significant damage not just for the individual charity but also in respect of wider public trust and confidence in the sector.

As it is, several themes were identified as follows: -

- Under-reporting of fraud
- Lack of basic record keeping
- Failure to manage cash going overseas
- Defaulting on basic filing procedures
- Struggling to deal with safeguarding failure, to include mental health issues in safeguarding
- Individuals connected to charities who have been convicted for terrorism related offences.

**The multiplicity of times that financial mismanagement and fraud occurred is horrifying to see. In previous newsletters I have highlighted these issues and yet the same problems keep occurring. It seems that some trustees are not learning the lessons of others failure. If we add to this more recent handling of safeguarding concerns about the risk to a child or a vulnerable adult, this again suggests that some trustees are not doing their job properly.**



If you are a charity trustee and you and your charity are in need of advice on a strategic or governance matter, please telephone **Elliot Harris** on **07896 894711** or email **elliott@strategyandgovernance.co.uk** for a no obligation conversation.

## Other Charity Commission News

As usual the Commission has been busy issuing new or updating old documents and since the last newsletter we have seen the following: -

- An Update of the Essential Trustee (CC3)
- Changing your charity's structure to a charitable company or CIO
- Preparing the Charity's Annual Return
- Gift Aid small donation top up payments
- An updated Receipts and Payments Accounts package (CC16)
- A consultation on changes to the Charity SORP (now closed)
- A consultation on new guidance for charities connected with non-charitable organisations (still open until 15 May 2018).

Finally, the Commission reported back on their consultation regarding Complementary and Alternative Medicines. They reported on the response to their consultations which were amongst the highest ever recorded but will now consider the responses and report further later this year.