

Press release: New charity investigation: The Alternative Animal Sanctuary

The Charity Commission, the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales, has opened a statutory inquiry into [The Alternative Animal Sanctuary, registered charity number 1111406](#). The inquiry was opened on 2 March 2017.

The Lincolnshire-based charity offers permanent care to abandoned and neglected animals across England and Wales, and facilitates adoption where possible.

The Commission initially engaged with the charity in November 2016 as part of a proactive project focusing on a sample of charities contracting with third-party fundraising agencies. After examining the charity's arrangement with a fundraising agency, the Commission has serious concerns about the charity's apparent overreliance on the agency and the rate of return to the charity. Further regulatory concerns have been established regarding the significantly high costs and fees of the agreement, the trustees' original decision to enter into the agreement and the ongoing management of the arrangements by the trustees.

The Commission took action to obtain and examine copies of the charity's mailing material which is used to solicit donations under the agency agreement. This has raised further concerns regarding the transparency of the mailing material. The Commission is concerned that the public is unaware of the proportion of donations that is consumed by the costs and fees associated with the agreement against what is used on caring for abandoned and neglected animals.

The inquiry will examine the administration, governance and financial management of the charity, in particular the extent to which the trustees have:

- acted in the charity's best interests and acted in accordance with their legal duties
- responsibly managed the charity's resources and financial affairs, including the adequacy of the charity's financial controls
- ensured that conflicts of interests have been adequately avoided or managed
- complied with their duties, including the submission of the charity's annual reports and accounts to the Commission
- prudently managed the arrangements with a third party fundraising agency
- been transparent with beneficiaries and the general public regarding the distribution of donations.

It is the Commission's policy, after it has concluded an inquiry, to publish a report detailing what issues the inquiry looked at, what actions were

undertaken as part of the inquiry and what the outcomes were. Reports of [previous inquiries](#) by the Commission are available on GOV.UK.

The charity's details can be viewed on the Commission's [online charity search tool](#).

Ends

PR 28/17

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. Section 46 of the Charities Act 2011 gives the Commission the power to institute inquiries. The opening of an inquiry gives the Commission access to a range of investigative, protective and remedial legal powers.
4. The Commission's decision to announce the opening of a statutory inquiry is based on whether it is in the public interest to do so and with consideration of our objective to increase public trust and confidence in charities.