

Press release: New charity investigation: Capricorn Animal Rescue and Sanctuary

The Charity Commission, the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales, has opened a statutory inquiry into [Capricorn Animal Rescue and Sanctuary \(inc Aston, Hawarden Animal Aid\), registered charity number 1048511](#). The inquiry was opened on 9 February 2017.

The charity takes animals into care that have no homes, are injured or neglected, and aims to rehouse the animals or release them back into the wild once they are fully recovered and treated.

After receiving a number of complaints from the public as well as significant media and parliamentary interest about the charity in 2016, the Commission initially provided regulatory advice and guidance to the trustees on how to improve the charity's governance.

The Commission monitored the charity's compliance with this guidance and visited the charity in October 2016 and subsequently inspected the charity's books and records. Our engagement established that there were clear and on-going serious regulatory issues relating to the administration of the charity by the trustees. These included inadequate financial controls, failure to safeguard and properly account for the charity's assets, potential unauthorised trustee benefit and the trustees' failure to act on regulatory advice.

The inquiry will examine:

- the administration, governance and management of the charity
- whether there has been any unauthorised benefit to the trustees of the charity
- whether the trustees have properly exercised their duties and responsibilities under charity law in the administration of the charity and in particular their duty to account for the charity's funds

In order to protect the assets of the charity, the Commission has taken steps to freeze the charity's bank accounts under section 76(3)(d) of the Charities Act 2011.

The Commission is aware that the charity has been the subject of concerns from members of the public relating to the welfare of animals in the charity's care; this does not fall within the Commission's remit and concerns on this matter should be directed to the RSPCA. Their 24-hour cruelty and advice line can be reached at 0300 1234 999.

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 10/17

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.
 5. An order was made on Monday 20 February under section 76(3)(d) of the Charities Act 2011 to freeze the account(s) of the charity.
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[Press release: Ofsted launches new social care common inspection framework](#)

A range of children's social care settings will be subject to the same [social care common inspection framework \(SCCIF\)](#) from 1 April 2017, Ofsted announced today.

Last year Ofsted published a [consultation on the principles for children's social care inspections](#), with a new common inspection framework and proposals for a new approach to the inspection of local authority children's services. The online consultation received more than 200 responses, the vast majority of which supported the proposals. Ofsted also piloted the SCCIF and held face-to-face meetings with many interested people and groups.

From 1 April, the following three principles will link all our inspections of

children's social care providers:

- to focus on the things that matter most to children's lives
- to be consistent in our expectations of providers
- to prioritise our work where improvement is needed most

At present there are several variations in the inspection guidance for social care providers across the range of settings, and differences in the criteria used by Ofsted to make judgements on each type of service.

The experiences and progress of children are central to the new SCCIF. The framework will support inspectors to focus on the difference the provider makes to the lives of children and other service users.

The SCCIF does not mean a one-size-fits-all approach to inspection. The framework is tailored to reflect and address each distinct type of children's social care provider. These are:

- children's homes, including secure children's homes
- independent fostering agencies
- voluntary adoption agencies
- residential family centres
- residential holiday schemes for disabled children
- boarding schools and residential special schools
- the residential provision of further education colleges

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman, said:

Ofsted and social care professionals have a shared goal: to give all children the best possible chance in life. The intention of our three principles is exactly this. I am pleased that sector leaders and providers responded so positively to our consultation on the framework, and we will continue to engage with them as we implement and evaluate it.

Eleanor Schooling, Ofsted National Director of Social Care, said:

The SCCIF is an important step forward in Ofsted setting out clearly and consistently what we think matters most to children's lives wherever they live or receive help.

For the first time, we are setting out the same expectations for all social care establishments and agencies while still recognising the unique work that they do. We think this not only makes it clearer and more consistent for providers but also sets out how our inspections will consistently focus on the difference providers are making to children's lives.

Ofsted also sets out its future plans for the inspection of local authority

children's services. These plans will be subject to piloting over the coming months, ready for implementation in January 2018. This will introduce proportionate inspections every three years, with a graded judgement, and focused visits between inspections to evaluate strengths and weaknesses and support local authorities to deliver good and better services.

The [social care common inspection framework and response to consultation document](#) are available to download. There is further information in '[The social care common inspection framework: questions and answers](#)'.

Press release: UK outlines new humanitarian support and urges international community to save lives before it's too late

The International Development Secretary Priti Patel has today announced new packages of life-saving UK aid for South Sudan and Somalia and issued a call to action to the international community to step up their support before it is too late.

Before this week there has been only one certified famine globally since 2000. Parts of South Sudan are now in famine and in 2017 there is a credible risk of another three famines in Yemen, North East Nigeria and Somalia. Drought and conflict in these countries are pushing families to the brink of starvation and there is also no end in sight to the six-year conflict which has ripped Syria apart.

As the world faces an unprecedented number of humanitarian crises, Priti Patel outlined how the UK will lead the world in supporting famine stricken areas. In response to famine warnings in Somalia and South Sudan she announced new UK support to provide lifesaving food, water and emergency healthcare which will save more than a million lives.

This is alongside continued life-saving aid to Yemen and North East Nigeria which provided food, medical supplies, water and emergency shelter to over two million people in 2016.

International Development Secretary Priti Patel said:

The world faces a series of unprecedented humanitarian crises and the real threat of famine in four countries. These crises are being driven by conflict and drought and we must respond accordingly. Our commitment to UK aid means that when people are at risk of dying

from drought and disaster, we have the tools and expertise to avoid catastrophe.

In times of crisis, the world looks to Britain not just for our work on the ground, but also for our leadership internationally. While we step up our support for emergency food, water and lifesaving care to those in need, our message to the world is clear – we must act now to help innocent people who are starving to death.

In Somalia, more than six million people have no reliable access to food and there are 360,000 acutely malnourished children. All the signs are pointing to a famine as bad, or worse, than the one in 2011 which killed 260,000 people. The UK is acting now to prevent this.

Today's announcement of new support to Somalia will provide:

- emergency food to up to one million people
- life-saving nutritional support to more than 600,000 starving children and pregnant and breastfeeding women
- safe drinking water for one million people
- emergency healthcare for 1.7 million people

In South Sudan, famine has now been declared and more than half the population is in desperate need. Almost five million face the daily threat of going without enough food and water and three million people have been forced from their homes because of ruthless violence and widespread rape. The UK is leading the way by providing:

- Food assistance for over 500,000 people
- Life-saving nutritional support to more than 27,500 children
- Safe drinking water for over 300,000 people
- Emergency health services for over 100,000 people
- Livelihood support for over 650,000 people
- Vaccinations for over 200,000 livestock

In North East Nigeria, as Boko Haram is pushed out, we are increasing our humanitarian support. The UK is providing:

- food to more than 1 million people
- treatment to 34,000 children at risk of death from hunger
- access to clean water and sanitation for more than 135,000 people

In Yemen, the UK is delivering life-saving aid to the most vulnerable people which included supplying food, medical supplies, water and emergency shelter to over one million people last year.

To stop famine spreading and help support stability in these regions the system needs urgent reform. The UK is pushing for a faster, more effective international humanitarian system fit for the 21st century, which is firmly in our interests.

- ENDS -

Notes to editors:

1. The UK is providing £100m in new support in Somalia and another £100m in South Sudan for 2017/18.
2. In addition to South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen and North East Nigeria, the UK is at the forefront of the response to the Syria crisis. UK aid is helping millions of civilians caught up in the war; supporting Syrian refugees to remain in host countries in the region; and is enabling host countries to accommodate them.
3. The UK has committed £2.3 billion to the Syria Crisis Response between 2012 and 2020. Since February 2012, across Syria and the region, we have distributed over 21 million food rations that feed a person for a month, over 6.5 million relief packages, over 6.2 million vaccines and provided over 4.8 million medical consultations
4. We are supporting the governments of Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey to better cope with a protracted refugee presence, and enable Syrian refugees to remain in the region until they can safely return to Syria. Our programmes are aimed at meeting immediate humanitarian need. In addition, we are improving people's lives by helping support children into school to avoid a lost generation, creating job opportunities and improving skills.

[News story: Westminster welcomes Welsh language at the Welsh grand committee](#)

From:

First published:

22 February 2017

MPs will be given the chance to speak Welsh in parliamentary debates in the Palace of Westminster for the first time ever this year.

The UK Government, responding to the Commons' Procedure Committee's report on the matter, today confirms it will bring forward a motion in Government time enabling MPs to speak in Welsh when the Welsh Grand Committee meets in Westminster.

MPs are currently only permitted to speak Welsh in Westminster's parliamentary proceedings when the Welsh Affairs select committee is taking evidence.

Making proceedings of the Welsh Grand Committee bilingual means that the

Welsh language will be used for short debates, legislative scrutiny and the questioning of ministers in Westminster for the first time ever.

David Lidington, Leader of the House of Commons, said:

Welsh MPs play a vital role in making their constituents' voices heard in the House of Commons.

Across Whitehall, UK Government ministers are listening and responding – as we are today by promoting the Welsh language in Parliament and its contribution to the cultural diversity of the United Kingdom.

Alun Cairns, Secretary of State for Wales, said:

I am delighted that MPs will be able to participate in the Welsh Grand Committee through the medium of Welsh for the first time in Westminster.

It is vitally important that the people of Wales are able to hear debates in both languages. I hope that MPs who can speak Welsh will choose to use this service in order to help promote the Welsh language across Parliament.

The cost of the translation services – both interpreters and headsets – will be absorbed within Parliament's existing budgets, meaning this change takes place at no extra cost to the taxpayer.

Speech: "This Council has a responsibility to sustain the peace won in Europe seven decades ago."

Thank you Mr President, Mr Minister, and thank you to our three Secretary-Generals for their briefings today.

The three organisations – the United Nations, the OSCE, and the European Union – are all playing a crucial role to preserve peace and security in Europe, and we are grateful for all of the work that you do.

Everything that we do in this Council has come about as a direct result of conflict in Europe. Over seven decades on from the Second World War, we should be proud that Europeans now enjoy a level of stability and prosperity

that would have been unthinkable to our grandparents' generation.

And as we heard so clearly in the session on Ukraine earlier this month, instability and insecurity persists in Europe. The borders of Europe are threatened today in a way not seen since the Cold War. The territorial integrity of your country, Mr President, has been flagrantly violated leaving up to 10,000 dead, with millions displaced.

At the heart of this disregard for sovereignty lies the Russian Federation and its world view that thinks Moscow's interests can and should prevail over the sovereign and democratic choices of independent countries. It's a world view illustrated by Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and continued support for separatists in Eastern Ukraine.

Only a few days ago Russia recognised passports from the so-called "People's Republics" in Donbas under the guise of humanitarian assistance for a conflict which Russia itself instigated. A more appropriate response would be for Russia to honour its commitments under the Minsk agreements, including by withdrawing its troops and equipment from Ukraine; and using its influence over the separatists to implement the ceasefire and heavy weapons withdrawal agreement. Until all such commitments are met in full, Russia will remain under sanctions from the EU and G7 states.

Put simply, we can't stand idly by in the face of such aggression. This Council has a responsibility to sustain the peace won in Europe seven decades ago, to ensure that the rules based international order, most notably the UN Charter, is respected and upheld by all countries. We have a responsibility to ensure that wars waged across battlefields are ended through dialogue pursued across tables.

The three organisations we've heard from today are playing a vital role in those efforts.

In the face of great odds and escalating violence, the OSCE is bravely monitoring the line of contact in Ukraine. The UN is bringing vital aid and much needed relief to those suffering. And through sanctions, the EU is bringing pressure to bear on Russia to meet its commitments under the Minsk agreement.

But these organisations can't do it alone. All sides must step up and make a ceasefire a reality, implementing their Minsk agreements in full.

Sadly, the need for a peaceful, political settlement extends far beyond the borders of Ukraine. In the interests of time I won't mention every single conflict in Europe – the flashing light, after all, is meant to be a sign to stop, not an encouragement to keep going. So let me just mention a few of the other conflicts. In Georgia, the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia remain unresolved, with Russian pressure showing no signs of dissipating. In Moldova, it is long past time for a comprehensive, peaceful settlement of the Transnistria conflict; based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova with a special status for the Transnistria Region.

In Nagorno-Karabakh, a peaceful settlement also remains elusive owing to a high level of mistrust and a lack of any political will to compromise. And we support the efforts of the Co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group.

Across the continent, the United Kingdom will continue to be a force for peace in Europe, through our membership of NATO, the OSCE and, of course, this Council. Our own security has long depended on the strong partnerships of the Euro-Atlantic area, and so we are committed to strengthening those partnerships further, including by maintaining the NATO target of spending 2% of our economy on defence, and I strongly encourage all NATO allies to meet that target.

NATO has responded in a coherent, comprehensive and measured fashion to Russia's destabilisation and provocation. It has modernised its deterrence and defence posture, as a balanced response to the instability and insecurity Russia has attempted to sow, while also being open to dialogue with Russia.

Mr President,

Three years on from the Maidan protests, we speak clearly in this Chamber today to reaffirm our total support for the principles of territorial integrity and sovereignty as outlined in the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act. We speak clearly to say that we do not, we will not recognise the illegal annexation of Crimea. I am proud to do so again today on behalf of the United Kingdom.

Thank you.