

Press release: Trustee disqualified after charity used for visa fraud

The Charity Commission has [concluded](#) that the trustee in charge of Khalsa Missionary Society has damaged the good name of charities by using a charity as a conduit for immigration fraud. The Commission has permanently removed him as a trustee barring him from becoming involved with charities again (see 'Notes to editors').

The Commission was notified in August 2013 by the Home Office Immigration and Enforcement Criminal Investigations Team ('HOIE') that it had commenced a criminal investigation into the charity as it suspected it was being abused to allow illegal entry of Indian nationals into the UK for a fee.

The Commission assisted the HOIE investigation through the sharing of information and opened a statutory inquiry in September 2014 to examine whether there had been misconduct and mismanagement in the administration of the charity. The Commission's inquiry found that there was only one active trustee in the charity. As a result of its concerns the Commission removed this individual as a trustee in January 2016.

The individual pleaded guilty at Manchester Crown Court to 3 counts of assisting unlawful immigration to between 2011 and 2013, and was sentenced to 27 months imprisonment on 16 May 2016.

The Commission's inquiry concluded that the trustee used the charity to facilitate immigration fraud. The charity had been used as a conduit for the immigration fraud, which worked by the charity sponsoring individuals as ministers for religion, while funds were circulated through the charity's bank accounts to give the appearance that the charity was receiving legitimate donations.

The inquiry concluded that there had been misconduct and mismanagement in the administration of the charity in that he had breached his legal duties to protect the charity's assets by using the charity as a conduit to commit immigration fraud. The regulator also concluded that he had potentially providing false and misleading information to the Commission.

The Commission removed the charity from the register in February 2016 as it no longer operated.

Carl Mehta, Head of Investigations and Enforcement, said:

We work closely with law enforcement agencies to prevent and disrupt abuse of charities. In this case we were able to share information with the Home Office Immigration and Enforcement Criminal Investigations Team and support the successful prosecution of an individual who was benefiting from this disgraceful abuse of charitable status.

Charity trustees must act with integrity and avoid any personal benefit or conflicts of interest. They must not misuse charity funds or assets and make decisions which are reasonable and in the best interests of the charity. Trustee duties are detailed in our guidance [‘The essential trustee’](#).

The [full report](#) is available on GOV.UK.

Ends

PR 22/17

Notes to editors

1. Removed under Section 79 (2)(a)(i) of the Charities Act 2011, therefore disqualified from holding a trustee position or other management role in a charity subject to a waiver from the Commission.
2. [The Charity Commission](#) is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see our [annual report](#).
3. Search for charities on our [online register](#).

[The President of the Commission gets it right at last](#)

Mr Juncker in his recent interview at last acknowledges that granting the right to stay and to work on the continent for all those UK citizens who currently do so is “about respecting human dignity.” He now says “This is not about bargaining”.

I have been a sustained critic of the EU’s refusal to live up to decent values and reassure all UK citizens living in the EU that they are free to stay if they wish. I am therefore glad The Commission has now shifted its position. I have long been reassuring all EU citizens in the UK who ask that they will be welcome to stay and work here if they wish, as I assumed the EU would not in the end throw UK citizens out. It is just bizarre that it has taken them so long to say so, and strange that even now it is not a formal statement by the rest of the EU as a whole.

If anyone in the UK remains worried about the EU’s intentions then they should write and lobby the Commission and their MEPs. The UK government has always been clear it does not intend to threaten EU citizens living in the UK.

SRUC Elmwood gamekeeping students attend another great BASC shoot day

Gamekeeping students from the SRUC Elmwood Campus attended the recent British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) shoot day event at Scone palace.

Official Statistics: Point of first release: statistics on abundance of UK butterflies

Trends of UK butterfly species are based on results of the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (UKBMS), presented at UK level, and at country level where there are sufficient data. The UKBMS helps the UK to meet its obligations under the European Habitats Directive (for Marsh Fritillary and Large Blue), and to report on, implement or deliver country biodiversity strategies and biodiversity indicators.

The UKBMS is run by Butterfly Conservation, the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, and the British Trust for Ornithology, in partnership with a consortium of government agencies. The UKBMS is indebted to all volunteers who contribute data to the scheme.

New funding for musical instruments in schools – Kirsty Williams

The funding of £220,000 will help local authority music services to purchase instruments that can be shared across Wales and be targeted at those most in need.

Kirsty Williams said:

“A young person’s love and talent for music cannot be developed

unless they have access to the instrument of their choice, especially for those who want to progress to the next level with individual music tuition. That is why I am announcing an extra £220,000 of funding, meaning £10,000 will be available to each local authority, through the Welsh Local Government Association, to buy new musical instruments.

“We are also working with councils to establish a mechanism for sharing instruments nationally to ensure that local authorities can make better use of their existing stock of instruments and identify gaps, which this new funding can help them address”.

The Welsh Government recently announced £1 million to establish a National Endowment for Music, which will enable more young people to access musical opportunities. The aim is for the fund to eventually generate at least £1m per year, which will be used to fund additional music activities for young people across the country.