

# Press release: Charity Commission publishes report on Garden Bridge Trust

The Charity Commission, the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales, has today published [its findings](#) into the [Garden Bridge Trust](#) (registered charity number 1155246).

The regulator's case examined the charity's governance, specifically whether the trustees were meeting their legal duties and whether the charity was complying with charity law. It did not examine matters such as the merits of the project or how it is funded. These issues are outside its regulatory remit. The National Audit Office has published an investigation into the Department for Transport's £30 million grant towards the construction of the project and, separately, Dame Margaret Hodge MP is conducting a review of the project, including its value for money.

The Commission inspected the charity's books and records and met trustees and staff from the charity to examine:

- the awarding of contracts by the charity, including whether conflicts of interest had been declared and properly managed
- the due diligence carried out by the charity and the charity's ability to carry out a project of this size
- the funding, structure and governance of the charity

The Commission found that the trustees were meeting their duties and were acting in compliance with charity law.

The Commission also found that the processes for awarding of contracts appear to have been robust. However, trustees did not fully explore the opportunities to compare the critical paths of other comparable infrastructure projects and thus better enable themselves to assess project risk.

The Commission examined the management of conflict of interests within the charity and found that they were managed in line with the charity's policy. The regulator can also confirm that benefactors were not party to contracts made by the charity.

The trustees of the charity met required standards of financial management and were able to justify the high forward spend made by the charity and account for the spend to date. The Commission considers that the trustees could make improvements to their annual reporting, to provide greater insight to the progress made and challenges addressed in the last financial year.

Further, the charity holds no reserves but expects to meet any obligations from the use of its restricted funds. Given the reliance on using restricted

funds, the regulator would have expected a fuller description of how these funds could be used with greater detail on how the charity would meet its liabilities in the event of closure.

The charity cooperated fully with the Commission throughout its case.

**David Holdsworth, Chief Operating Officer at the Charity Commission said:**

We have been able to offer public assurance that the Garden Bridge Trust is meeting its obligations as a registered charity and that it has the proper financial controls in place. We are aware of the considerable public debate regarding this project. Our role is not to comment on the merits of the project but to assess concerns about its governance and ensure it is compliant with the legal framework for charities.

This case shows that high profile charities can attract considerable public scrutiny, and the public rightly expect charities to be transparent and accountable. Having trustees in place with the right skills and experience is crucial for a charity to operate effectively.

The Commission [publishes reports](#) regarding its compliance cases where it is appropriate and proportionate to publish a report, there is significant public interest in the case and its outcome and/or other charities need to be aware of the issues or lessons in the case.

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

Ends

PR 12/17

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#### 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](#).

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## [News story: Minister Wharton](#)

# reinforces UK support for refugees in Uganda

During the week that famine has been declared in some parts of South Sudan, Minister Wharton saw the life-saving impact of UK aid in Uganda when he visited a centre where refugees are registered and longer term refugee settlements near the border with South Sudan. Uganda now hosts over one million refugees, with the vast majority from South Sudan.

With five million people in neighbouring South Sudan facing the threat of going without enough food and almost 2,400 people every day being forced to flee their homes from devastating conflict and cross the border into Uganda, the UK's support is getting urgently needed food, water and medicine to those in desperate need.

Minister Wharton met with women and children at Impevi refugee centre and Rhino settlement area in Northern Uganda, who have been displaced by the horrors of war and sexual violence. He heard about the challenges of getting life-saving humanitarian aid to those who need it.

In 2016, the UK's support to refugees in Uganda has provided:

- food for 650,000 people including 45,000 children
- shelter for 56,250 people
- blankets, water containers and sanitary towels for 64,000 people and
- vaccinated 210,000 children.

International Development Minister James Wharton said:

South Sudan faces an urgent and severe humanitarian crisis with almost half the population in desperate need, which impacts on the whole region. The first famine for six years has now been declared and the threat of starvation and ongoing violence is forcing over one million people to flee their homes and seek refuge in neighbouring countries like Uganda.

"Uganda is now home to more refugees than any other country in Africa, and I was proud to see first hand that lives are being saved every day with the UK's support. Alongside this, Uganda has one of the most progressive refugee policies in the world, where refugees are given land, jobs and integrated into communities, giving people fleeing conflict hope for the future.

"The UK will continue to play a leading role in helping encourage the longer-term stability of both South Sudan, Uganda and the broader region."

Minister Wharton also met with British businesses in Uganda and the Ugandan Minister for Trade Amelia Kyambadde to discuss further trade and investment opportunities which will boost economic development and help the poorest stand on their own two feet, while also benefiting UK companies.

As set out in [DFID's Economic Development Strategy](#), UK support is helping

Uganda and other countries industrialise faster, trade more and create new and productive jobs for its growing young population.

On a trip to a local family planning clinic in Kanyogoga, a settlement in Kampala, the Minister met people who are benefiting from a UK-aid supported programme that is increasing access to quality family planning services in Uganda, where half of the population of is under 15 and women have, on average, six children. Family planning is an integral part of planning for Uganda's future.

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## **News story: Government launches major new drive on internet safety.**

Ministers have begun work on a new Internet Safety Strategy aimed at making Britain the safest country in the world for children and young people to be online.

Culture Secretary Karen Bradley is leading the new cross-Government drive on behalf of the Prime Minister – with a green paper expected in the summer.

A report by leading academic Professor Sonia Livingstone has been commissioned to provide up to date evidence of how young people are using the internet, the dangers they face, and the gaps that exist in keeping them safe.

Ministers will also hold a series of round tables in the coming weeks with social media companies, technology firms, young people, charities and mental health experts to examine online risks and how to tackle them.

The work is expected to centre on four main priorities: how to help young people help themselves; helping parents face up the dangers and discuss them with children; industry's responsibilities to society; and how technology can help provide solutions.

The focus will be on preventing children and young people from harm online and making the internet a safer place.

The round tables are also expected to examine concerns around issues like trolling and other aggressive behaviour including rape threats against women.

They will involve ministers and officials from departments across Government including the Home Office, Department for Education, Department of Health and Ministry of Justice as part of a co-ordinated effort to make the internet safer.

It comes amid growing fears that the threat from online dangers has grown far

more quickly than society's response to them, and worries that tech-savvy young people are being exposed to risks that their parents never were and might not know how to confront – like sexting, cyber bullying, and content which promotes self-harm, suicide and eating disorders.

[A recent poll](#) found more parents were concerned about sexting than about their children drinking or smoking. The YouGov survey for the PSHE association showed 78% were either fairly or very concerned about sexting, compared to 69% who concerned about alcohol misuse and 67% who were concerned about smoking.

[A study last year](#) for the NSPCC and Children's Commissioner found 13% of 11 to 16 year-olds reported that they had taken topless pictures of themselves and 3% had taken fully naked pictures of themselves. □ More than one in 10 young people say they have been the victim of cyber bullying, and self-harm among children is on the rise amid evidence of a link between internet use and an increased risk of self harm.

Karen Bradley, Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport, said:

The internet has provided young people with amazing opportunities but has also introduced a host of new dangers which children and parents have never faced before.□

It is increasingly clear that some behaviours which are unacceptable offline are being tolerated or even encouraged online – sometimes with devastating consequences.□□“We are determined to make Britain the safest place in the world to be online, and to help people protect themselves from the risks they might face.□□

To do that we want to understand the full scale of the problem and explore how everyone – including Government, social media companies, technology firms, parents and others – can play their part in tackling it.

This new work builds on a range of Government initiatives around internet safety, including the Home Office's world-leading efforts to combat to combat child sexual exploitation and abuse.

In December, Home Office minister Baroness Shields was appointed the PM's Special Representative on Internet Crime and Harms, with an international focus on internet safety and security working with global technology companies and other governments to protect UK citizens. As part of the move, Department for Culture Media and Sport Minister Tracey Crouch took on responsibility for domestic online safety.□□

It also comes as the Department of Health is developing a green paper on children and young persons' mental health, expected in the Autumn and measures in the Digital Economy Bill currently going through Parliament will introduce age checks for pornographic websites so under-18s cannot view harmful content – with powers to block sites which refuse to comply.

Sonia Livingstone is a professor of Social Psychology at the London School of Economics. Her empirical work examines the risks and opportunities from digital technologies, including for children and young people. She serves on the Executive Board of the UK's Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) and has advised various Government departments and public bodies

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## **Press release: Planned roadworks in Devon and Cornwall: weekly summary for Monday 20 February to Sunday 26 February**

Planned new and ongoing road improvements over the coming week.

The following summary of planned new and ongoing road improvements over the coming week is correct as of 17 February but could be subject to change due to weather conditions or unforeseen circumstances. All our improvement work is carried out with the aim of causing as little disruption as possible.

### **Devon**

#### **A38 Belvedere Cross, Haldon to Splatford junction, Kennford, south of Exeter: bridge inspection**

Eastbound carriageway will be closed overnight from 8pm on 27 February until 6am on 28 February. Diversion will be in place via old Haldon Hill.

#### **A38 Smithaleigh, east of Plymouth: drainage work**

Westbound carriageway will be closed overnight between the exit and entry slip roads from 8pm on 3 March to 6am on 4 March. Diversion via the exit and entry slip roads.

### **Cornwall**

#### **A38 between Dobwalls and Turfdown, east of Bodmin: stabilisation work**

24-hour one-way system will be in operation between the Halfway House and Trago Mills until 14 April. A 30mph speed limit will be in place between Two Waters Foot and St Neot junction with a 24-hour westbound diversion via the A390 and North Lane to rejoin the A38 west of Two Waters Foot. Trago Mills can be accessed via the A38 as per normal.

## **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

## **Media enquiries**

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

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## **News story: Technology Products 2 flash sale**

CCS have been working with a number of suppliers on our Technology Products 2 agreement (RM3733) to offer you huge savings on a range of products including desktops and laptops.

The sale begins on 1 March and runs throughout the month, or until stock is sold out. Stock availability is limited and will be sold on a first come, first served basis.

These short-term deals with manufacturers, including HPE, HPI, Dell and Lenovo, Samsung, Apple, XMA and Toshiba could help you save up to 35% for your organisation – whether you are a school, college, local council, NHS trust, charity, police force or government department.

To view the deals, simply log in to the Purchasing Platform (TP2) and some of the Flash sale products will appear on the landing page. Clicking through will take you to the full listing.

These Flash Sale deals are only available through Technology Products 2 (RM3733 Lot 6) via the catalogue content on the Purchasing Platform.

If you do not have a log on, you can find out more about the Purchasing Platform and how to register here :-

<https://purchasingplatform.crowncommercial.gov.uk>