

# Charity Commission opens statutory inquiry into Lancashire charity for people with learning disabilities

Press release

The Charity Commission has opened a statutory inquiry into Rossendale Valley Mencap, to investigate potential misconduct and/or mismanagement in the administration of the charity.



Rossendale Valley Mencap's charitable objects are to support people with learning disabilities through help and support to them and their families, as well as the provision of meeting and leisure activities and facilities.

The Commission began engaging with the charity in December 2017 and has since issued two action plans to trustees, to address overdue and outstanding accounting records and issues around the charity's governance. The charity did not comply with either of these action plans and the regulator is concerned that the charity's assets may now be at risk.

The inquiry will examine whether the charity's trustees are complying with their legal duties, including:

- whether the charity has a sufficient number of trustees who are willing and capable of managing it in accordance with its governing document
- the extent to which the trustee(s) have responsibly managed the charity's resources and whether assets are secure or have been lost and/or misapplied
- their compliance with legal obligations for the preparation and filing of the charity's accounts and other information or returns
- the extent to which the trustee(s) of the charity have complied with previously issued regulatory guidance
- whether there are appropriate policies and procedures in place to safeguard vulnerable beneficiaries

The Commission may extend the scope of the inquiry if further issues emerge.

Mencap advised the Commission in 2019 that the Rossendale charity is no longer affiliated with it and the group had informed Royal Mencap Society they intended to operate under the name of Rossendale Open House. The charity is also known locally as the 'Rossendale Valley Gateway Club'. It was previously known as 'Rossendale Society for mentally handicapped children and adults' until it changed its name on 12 March 2011. Its registered charity number is 513296.

**ENDS**

**Notes to editors:**

1. 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 are available on GOV.UK.](#)
2. The Charity Commission is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales. Its purpose is to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and strengthen society.

Published 24 March 2022

---

## [Planning Inspectorate casework during the election period](#)

News story

Information regarding issuing appeal decisions and recommendations during the election period in England.



Image by RachelH\_ <https://www.flickr.com/photos/bagelmouse/17246052428>

On Thursday 5 May 2022, elections will be taking place:

- to the Northern Ireland Assembly;
- to a number of local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales, including a number of directly elected Mayors.

The Planning Inspectorate always aims to issue decisions and recommendations promptly after the event. However, in the run-up to the May 2022 elections we are concerned to ensure that appeal decisions or recommendations relating to proposals which have raised particular sensitivities or interest in an area cannot be seen to have influenced the election or have been used to electoral advantage by any interested body.

Accordingly, we will not be issuing decisions, reports or advisory letters in cases or examinations where known candidates have made representations until the election results have been announced.

## **Appeals casework**

In appeals we will also hold back cases that may give rise to electoral sensitivities because of their nature and / or the issues involved. This might include:

- where there has been an extensive local campaign or where the decision raises very controversial local issues like inappropriate and / or unauthorised development in the Green Belt
- major green field housing
- renewables
- where there is an emerging Neighbourhood Plan

Whether a decision should be held back until the election results have been announced is a judgement taken by the Inspector in conjunction with senior managers at the Planning Inspectorate based on the circumstances of the case. We shall, of course, ensure that any such delayed decisions are issued promptly after the election.

## **National Infrastructure Casework**

As National Infrastructure Examinations are required to comply with a statutory time limit, once the Preliminary Meeting has been notified and the Examination Timetable has been set the examination is expected to run to the published timetable.

## **Local Plans**

All scheduled local plan examinations and hearing sessions will continue during the pre-election period and new examinations will also begin. However, to avoid making announcements that could be politically sensitive, the Planning Inspectorate will not be issuing any letters regarding the soundness or legal compliance of local plans, or final reports (including for fact check), until after the elections.

## [DataConnect22 is coming!](#)

### News story

Join us for the second DataConnect conference, bringing together people and data stories from across the public sector



Last year we organised DataConnect21 with our colleagues in the Data Standards Authority. Our first week-long data event [featured 83 sessions](#), from around fifty different organisations. We had over 6000 registrations for events, with attendees coming from 325 organisations across the government, academia, the third sector and beyond.

And we are doing it again in 2022 so mark your calendars for 26 to 30 September.

DataConnect22 will feature the same great mix of sessions as last year, by and for people across the UK public sector. We know that there are fantastic data stories to share, so if you have a piece of work, a challenge, or an innovation you want the data community to know about, then bring it along to DataConnect.

If you would like to do a show and tell, share a challenge, run a workshop, take part in a panel discussion or showcase an innovation [please sign up](#) now. Or you can email us at [dataconnect@digital.cabinet-office.gov.uk](mailto:dataconnect@digital.cabinet-office.gov.uk) to talk about bringing your story to DataConnect22. Every aspect of data belongs at DataConnect, from technical stories about data design, to strategic thinking about data leadership. DataConnect21 had speakers from a data apprentice up to director generals, if you are working with government data in any way then this is the event for you.

If you just want to attend, that's fine too, you can [register to receive information](#). Get updates about the event in the run up to DataConnect22; be

one of the first to receive the schedule; and sign up for our free events across the week.

Please help us spread the word by telling your colleagues that DataConnect22 is coming!

Published 24 March 2022

---

## [Independent report on Windrush Compensation Scheme](#)

News story

Professor Martin Levermore MBE DL, Independent Person to the Windrush Compensation Scheme, releases report on the Compensation Scheme.



The report comes on the same day that the latest Compensation Scheme statistics are released showing over £45m has been paid or offered to the Windrush generation.

In his report, Professor Levermore came to a number of conclusions on the Windrush Compensation Scheme and made some recommendations for improvement.

He found that knowledge of the Windrush schemes is increasing amongst affected Commonwealth nationals. He notes the department is working diligently to refine processes to increase efficiency and productivity of the scheme. He also found that there are robust procedures, systems, and checks and balances in place, which with a few refinements could exemplify best in service delivery.

Minister for Safe and Legal Migration, Kevin Foster said:

Over £45 million has been paid or offered to members of the

Windrush generation.

I thank Professor Levermore for his work and report on the scheme. We will continue working closely together to make sure it is as efficient as possible and everyone eligible for compensation, receives it.

This is Professor Levermore's first report on the scheme's operation, policy and effectiveness. He will be making regular reports on the operation of the Compensation Scheme to track progress and improvements.

His recommendations included grouping applications with close family links and creating a clearer link between the Windrush Documentation Scheme and Windrush Compensation Scheme to reduce administration.

Professor Levermore was appointed in March 2021 and reports directly to the Home Secretary. He also regularly attends the Windrush Cross-Government Working Group. He brings a wealth of professional and personal experience to the role and provides crucial independent oversight and reassurance on the Windrush Compensation Scheme.

Published 24 March 2022

---

## **BBC gets emergency funding to fight Russian disinformation**

The government is giving the BBC World Service emergency funding to help it continue bringing independent, impartial and accurate news to people in Ukraine and Russia in the face of increased propaganda from the Russian state.

BBC World Service will receive an additional £4.1 million in emergency funding to support its Ukrainian and Russian language services in the region, and to help it increase trusted and independent content to counter disinformation about the war in Ukraine.

BBC World Service channels – including TV, radio and digital – play an increasingly valuable role in challenging the Kremlin's disinformation, but it is facing additional costs from operating within a military conflict and due to a crackdown on independent reporting in Russia.

Following a BBC request, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office will provide the extra funding to cover urgent and unexpected costs that have arisen as a result of the conflict.

This will help the BBC to relocate staff and operations to safe locations to ensure the resilience of their services and that they continue to reach people in Russia and Ukraine.

The BBC will also use the funding to continue expanding new and more widely accessible content, delivered through a range of channels, to tackle disinformation and to help local audiences circumvent the Kremlin's media restrictions and continue to access the BBC's journalism.

Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries said:

The Government is providing the BBC with an additional £4.1 million in emergency funding to help the World Service broadcast directly into Ukraine and Russia.

In scenes reminiscent of 80 years ago, the BBC will ensure that audiences in the region can continue to access independent news reporting in the face of systemic propaganda from a dictator waging war on European soil. It's vital we lift the veil on and expose the barbaric actions of Putin's forces.

Minister for Europe and North America, James Cleverly said:

Britain is calling out Putin's lies and exposing his propaganda and fake news.

This new funding will help strengthen the BBC's impartial voice in Russia and Ukraine, which is critical to counter Russian disinformation and will help ensure we win the battle for the airwaves.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

The World Service receives funding from the BBC's licence fee income, in addition to grant funding directly from the FCDO. The World Service's Spending Review settlement for the period 2022 to 2025 from the FCDO will be confirmed shortly.

The Culture Secretary made it clear to the BBC in her letter confirming the final licence fee settlement that the BBC should continue to make a substantive investment from the licence fee into the World Service to ensure that it continues to effectively reflect the United Kingdom, its culture and values to the world – in English and through its language services.