



Operational Case Report

Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (1043985)

About the charity

The charity's main object is to advance the Christian religion. Its activities include running help centres which offer services including counselling, life coaching and relationship guidance, and the running of a skills and learning training centre.

Why the commission got involved

We had received a number of complaints over the years about the charity. Some of the complaints were related to fundraising. The commission does not regulate fundraising as an activity, but issues around fundraising can be of regulatory relevance to us if they indicate concerns about trustees' management of their charity. Whilst none of the complaints individually raised regulatory concerns for us to take forward as investigations, we were keen to ensure the trustees were taking steps to mitigate the risks of further complaints.

The action we took

We proactively wrote to the charity and informed them that we had received several complaints. We undertook a review visit to the charity in order to gain an understanding of how it operates on a day-to-day basis and what policies and controls are in place.

What we found

We liaised with the Fundraising Standards Board, who regulate fundraising. They confirmed that, having visited the charity themselves, they had no concerns.

We found no regulatory concerns during our visit.

Separately, in 2004 the trustees approached us to amend their Constitution to allow trustees to receive remuneration. We had agreed the amendments in principle.

However, during our visit, we found that the trustees had not provided the required documentation that would have allowed us to make the changes on the online register; namely a copy of the resolution and minutes from the meeting at which they were agreed. Further to our review visit, the charity provided us with these documents.

At this time we also reviewed the Constitution's provision to pay a trustee, which did not authorise a trustee's spouse to also receive remuneration. The trustees had not realised this was the case and had been making these payments in contravention of the charity's governing document. We therefore gave the charity advice and instructed them to take their own legal advice on the best way to resolve this issue.

Impact of our involvement

Our involvement notified the trustees of the complaints we'd had against them, and helped them mitigate the risks of further complaints. It also helped reassure the public that the trustees had been able to demonstrate that they had fulfilled their duties and responsibilities.

Lessons for other charities

When proposing any changes to a charity's governing document, trustees must send us the material we ask for to ensure changes are updated properly. If a new charity is being set up, trustees should consider conflicts of interest and trustee remuneration when drawing up governing documents.