

Regulator opens statutory inquiry into Nottingham poverty relief charity after disqualifying former trustee



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This follows the regulator's disqualification of a former trustee, Mr Huzaifah Khaled, who has admitted misappropriating charity funds. The probe has been escalated after other trustees failed to ensure that he no longer had control of the charity's bank account.

The charity's purpose is to relieve poverty among homeless people, by dispensing free food through centrally located vending machines.

The Commission opened a compliance case into Action Hunger in August 2018, after another of the charity's trustees submitted a serious incident report alerting the regulator to concern that money had been taken from the charity's bank account.

The regulator probed this matter and in a statement to the Commission, the former trustee, Mr Khaled, admitted misappropriating £49,671 of the charity's funds. As a result of this serious misconduct, on 4 May 2020, the Commission disqualified him from acting as a charity trustee or senior manager for a period of 10 years.

Investigators have since found that £50,324 was transferred out of the charity's bank account to a private company connected to at least one of the charity's current trustees. The Commission established that Mr Khaled and a former trustee were the individuals who had control of the charity's bank account and the transfer was apparently made without the consent of the current trustees. The Commission has concerns about how these funds may have been used.

The Commission therefore escalated its case to a full statutory inquiry on 10 November 2020 to further examine this matter. An inquiry gives the regulator access to the full range of its legal and enforcement powers. The inquiry will also look at wider concerns around the charity's financial management and the trustees' compliance with their legal obligations.

Amy Spiller, Head of Investigations at the Charity Commission, said:

Mr Khaled's conduct and clear abuse of his position at Action Hunger goes against everything we associate with charity, and it is right that he has been disqualified from serving as a trustee.

We are concerned that there may be wider issues in the administration of this charity. We will now examine these further through a full statutory inquiry and ensure, where necessary, action is taken to uphold public trust in charity.

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

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](https://gov.uk).

Ends.

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Notes to editors:

View the charity's entry on the register of charities.

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.

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