



Department for Culture, Media & Sport

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Bob Blackman MP
House of Commons
London
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Dear Bob,

I write further to your question at Business Questions on 24th October, regarding the recent report published by the Charity Commission on the charity Mermaids. While the government does not intend to make a statement about the findings of the report, I am responding to your questions as the Minister for Civil Society.

It is right that we have an independent regulator, the Charity Commission for England and Wales, that can impartially investigate where concerns are raised about charities.

In this case, the Charity Commission found that there had been failings in the charity's governance and culture as the charity, its services, and profile grew quickly. However, the inquiry did not uphold all concerns raised about the charity. The Charity Commission found that Mermaids had not provided medical advice nor made medical referrals, and that the charity had appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place.

As part of the inquiry, the Charity Commission issued regulatory guidance to Mermaids which included:

- ensuring, in furthering its objects, the charity are clear where they are expressing a view on how best to support their beneficiaries and/or where they are providing information in furtherance of their educational object
- ensuring the charity has effective processes/mechanisms in place to promptly update its website to reflect significant developments and changes in the law
- where the charity provides information relating to medical interventions (including puberty blockers) they make clear whether this information is based on factual evidence or alternatively is the charity's view/standpoint.
- ensuring ongoing changes made as a result of the EDI review are fully embedded at all levels across the organisation
- ensuring that the charity has effective mechanisms in place to keep the charity's governance under review in order that its governance keeps up with the pace of any future growth of the charity



At the time the inquiry report was published, Mermaids had already begun to take action to address the recommendations, and the Commission will monitor the trustees' progress to ensure that they are implemented. As well as findings that Mermaids will need to address, the inquiry report provides useful lessons for other charities, including those providing services to children and young people affected by gender identity issues. This includes referring charities to the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Cass Review, and any further guidance that may follow.

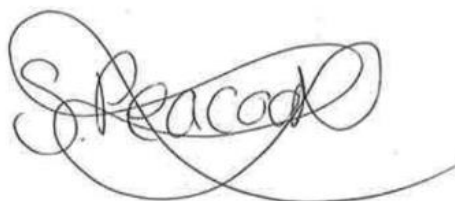
Safeguarding is a non-negotiable priority for charities. Protecting people from harm must always take precedence over protecting a charity's brand or reputation. Both the government and the Charity Commission are committed to supporting charities to have the highest safeguarding standards and procedures in place to protect people from harm and maintain the trust of the public - that applies to all charities, whether or not they work with people traditionally considered at risk or vulnerable.

The Charity Commission has published [detailed guidance](#) for charities on their safeguarding responsibilities, and DCMS has worked with the Charity Commission and the charity sector on [a digital decision-making tool](#) that supports charities in appropriately dealing with safeguarding allegations.

Where there are concerns about mismanagement or misconduct, these should be [referred to the Charity Commission](#). In many cases, the Charity Commission can help charities get back on track, by providing guidance. But in more serious cases, the Charity Commission has wide ranging powers to tackle mismanagement or misconduct and protect charitable assets or beneficiaries from harm.

I hope this information is helpful. I am copying this letter to the Leader of the House of Commons, and I will place a copy in the House Libraries.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Peacock', with a large, sweeping flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Stephanie Peacock MP
Minister for Sport, Media, Civil Society and Youth