

Government plans new powers to close down charities peddling extremism

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Powers are in addition to an imminent consultation that will road-test plans to ban leaders who use their positions to promote violence or hatred.

The Government has announced plans to strengthen the Charity Commission's powers to close down charities that promote extremism and protect the vast majority of the sector delivering positive work.

Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy has asked officials to work with the regulator to speed up the process for investigating charities suspected of engaging in extremist behaviour, including strengthening its powers to close them down if needed. This includes processing decisions more quickly and reviewing the appeals process.

Further measures under consideration include mandatory trustee ID verification, the digitisation of charity accounts, and a strengthening of local authority powers to issue fines and take other enforcement action to tackle unlicensed street fundraising.

The measures are in addition to a new consultation launching shortly, which will road-test plans to automatically ban individuals with a criminal conviction for hate crime from serving as charity trustees or senior managers. It will also consult on plans to strengthen the Commission's powers to disqualify individuals where there is evidence they have promoted violence or hatred.

This work forms part of wider government plans - which will be announced later today - to actively renew the UK's social contract by promoting national pride, establishing clearer expectations around integration, and taking action to bring communities together.

Since October 2023, the Charity Commission has opened over 400 regulatory cases for hate speech, and made around 70 referrals to police where criminal offences may have been committed.

The government recognises that robust action is necessary to ensure that those with extremist agendas cannot exploit charitable status and undermine public trust in the sector.

Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy said:

Charities are the lifeblood of our communities, and we will not allow extremists to hijack their good name.

By giving the Charity Commission the teeth it needs to act fast and decisively, we will close the door on those who exploit charitable status to spread hate, and open a new chapter that gives the sector the protection it deserves.

This is a vital step in our ongoing work of national renewal and a Britain built for all.

These measures build on the Civil Society Covenant launched last summer, which is harnessing the collective power that charities play in bringing communities together and supporting Britain's most

vulnerable people.

ENDS

- The Charity Commission regulate charities in England and Wales, to ensure that the public can support charities with confidence.
- Today, the Government will set out an initial plan to improve social cohesion, recognising how social cohesion in the UK has come under strain from widespread challenges like economic insecurity, foreign interference, migration pressures and extremism. It will set out plans to actively renew the UK's social contract by promoting national pride, establishing clearer expectations around integration, and taking action to bring communities together.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-plans-new-powers-to-close-down-charities-peddling-extremism>