Regulator investigates animal rescue charity over potential misuse of charitable funds

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The Charity Commission has launched a statutory inquiry into Animal Lifeline.

The charity, which is based in Stoke-on-Trent, rescues and rehomes dogs.

The regulator has opened a statutory inquiry into the charity over serious financial concerns which have come to light as part of an ongoing investigation by Staffordshire Police.

The inquiry will examine the extent to which the trustees are complying or have complied with their legal duties in respect of the administration, governance and management of the charity, with particular regard to:

- the financial management of the charity, including the extent of any loss, misapplication or misappropriation of the charity's funds
- whether there has been any unauthorised private benefit to the trustees and/or connected parties and the extent to which the trustees have managed potential conflicts of interest.

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

It is the Commission's usual policy, after it has concluded an inquiry, to publish a report detailing the issues examined, any action taken, and the inquiry's outcomes.

ENDS

Notes for Editors:

- The Charity Commission is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales. Its ambition is to be an expert regulator that is fair, balanced, and independent so that charity can thrive. The Commission has a wide range of regulatory powers which it can use to support charities and protect charitable assets. Further information about the Charity Commission and its work is available at The Charity Commission - GOV.UK.
- On 16 February 2026, the Commission opened a statutory inquiry into the charity under section 46 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act) as a result of its regulatory concerns that there is or has been misconduct and/ or mismanagement in the administration of the charity.
- A statutory inquiry is a legal power enabling the Commission to formally investigate matters of regulatory concern within a charity and to use protective powers for the benefit of the charity and its beneficiaries, assets, or reputation. The opening of an inquiry is not a finding of wrongdoing.

- The Commission does not investigate criminal allegations which are matters for the police.

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/regulator-investigates-animal-rescue-charity-over-potential-misuse-of-charitable-funds