

Parliamentary committee calls for evidence on draft Protection of Charities Bill

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CATEGORY:
ARTICLE

The parliamentary committee of MPs and peers considering the new powers set out in the draft Protection of Charities Bill heard evidence from the Charity Commission on 18 November 2014 as part of their call for evidence.

The draft Protection of Charities Bill includes new powers for the Charity Commission and other rules which are designed – as the name of the Bill suggests – to protect the charities sector and enhance the ability of the Charity Commission to be an effective regulator.

The new powers include:

- power to ban individuals from acting as charity trustees, not only if they have a conviction for a dishonesty offence, but also for a **money laundering** or **terrorism** offence;
- power for the Commission to disqualify persons from acting as charity trustees where their conduct means they are unfit to act as such;
- power for the Commission to issue charity trustees with an **official warning** if they breach charity law; and
- power that will prevent charity trustees from simply resigning and moving to new charities as a way of avoiding removal by the Commission and subsequent disqualification from acting as a charity trustee.

The parliamentary joint committee, chaired by the cross bench peer Lord Hope of Craighead, is interested to hear about the effectiveness of the Charity Commission, how the new powers may be used to improve regulation of the Charity sector and what safeguards are in place to ensure the powers are used properly and proportionately.

The Charity Commission is hoping that other powers it has previously proposed might also be included in the draft bill. These include extending the roles which a disqualified charity trustee cannot take up within a charity to include other significant roles, such as treasurer or finance director. The proposals also include empowering the Commission to prevent foreseen breaches of charity law before they happen.

The closing date for written evidence is 16 December 2014 and a report is expected from the joint committee by the end of February 2015.

Written submissions may be made from the parliament website: [written evidence](#).