

Government working group to tackle effect of counter terrorism legislation on humanitarian assistance

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A new Government- NGO Working Group (the 'Working Group') will be convened to tackle issues surrounding the implications of counter terrorism legislation on the funding and provision of humanitarian assistance by Muslim charities.

Responding to a written question in the House of Lords on 25 July 2016, Lord O'Neill of Gately spoke of the representations made by a wide range of organisations and individuals who have been affected by bank account closures. One notable example has been the withdrawal of Islamic Relief's banking services by HSBC as a result of the bank's concerns about the nature of the charity's work. This action by HSBC prevented humanitarian assistance reaching those in need following the Nepal earthquake.

Some progress has already been made on this issue, including the recent clarification to Financial Action Task Force guidance that charities are not of inherent risk of terrorism abuse.

The Working Group will comprise members of government departments, NGOs, the banking sector and charities.

Changes announced for the self-regulation of fundraising in Scotland

Rather than join the Fundraising Regulator, charities who are registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator ('OSCR') (or whose principal office is in Scotland for charities registered with multiple regulators) will have their own self-regulatory regime of fundraising.

Following consultation on proposals put together by the SCVO's Fundraising Working Group, Scotland will adopt its own system of self-regulation which builds on systems which are already in place and gives OSCR a slightly enhanced role.

Individuals will continue to make any complaints directly to the charity. Larger charities will put in place a two-tier system so that if an individual feels that a complaint has not been handled properly, it can be referred to the trustees. If an individual is still dissatisfied, the complaint can be referred to an independent panel made up of representatives from the public, donors, charities and fundraisers; OSCR and the Scottish Government will sit as observers. If the independent panel decides that a serious issue has been raised, it can pass that on to OSCR.

More information can be found on a new website, please click [here](#).

The SCVO working group's full report can be found [here](#).

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