



ONE NATION PRESS STATEMENT

CHARITY COMMISSION STATUTORY ENQUIRY REPORT

One Nation became a registered charity in March 2014. A young charity that grew quickly, from a turnover of £496,269 in 2014 to £3,999,559 in 2017 with the first year of this being run on a completely voluntary basis. One Nation's humanitarian work and achievements speak for themselves. Since 2014, we have helped 5 million beneficiaries in 21 countries. We've constructed a Widows and Orphan village in Syria housing 80 families and educated over 300 children in Syria every single year. With your help, we've constructed over 530 water pumps and provided medical aid to over 30 hospitals deep inside Syria. We've constructed 100 homes in Indonesia and provided monthly deliveries of life saving water inside Yemen. In the UK, our support has ranged from supporting at the Grenfell Tower tragedy to providing food and winter aid to the homeless in cities across the country. Only with your help and the help of our volunteers have we been able to make such differences around the globe.

When the Charity Commission opened its inquiry into One Nation in 2016, the three issues below were highlighted as the reason for the investigation.

Issues under investigation:

- *The administration, governance and management of the charity by the trustees with specific regard to decision making and managing conflicts of interest*
- *Due diligence by the trustees in respect of the charity's agents and partners*
- *Financial controls and managements of the charity by the trustees*

Since the inquiry started, we have overcome a decisive learning period and accept a few oversights were made in the processes and management in the process. The charity has been under strict scrutiny by the Commission since we registered, which by the admission of the Commission is primarily because of our work in Syria; which is regarded as a high-risk area to operate in.

We highly appreciate the support given by the Commission in encouraging One Nation to improve its management, systems and procedure protocols. We have humbly taken on board the sincere advice given and significantly improved in the highlighted areas by having robust policies and procedures in place. One Nation is in a stronger and healthier position as a result of these recommendations by the Charity Commission.

We would like to categorically assure all our donors that no aid or funds have been mismanaged or misused. We feel several points on the Commission's report can easily be misconstrued by only taking the information on face value, thus taken the steps in clarifying these points and adding the correct context.

1. *'The inquiry found that the trustees had failed to account for all of the Charity's income as they are required'.*

We did not fail to account for of all the charity's income, however, admittedly mistakes were made in not recording the value of donated items for container aid e.g. second



hand clothing. This was an oversight in container aid recording procedures. We were not aware that donated good values had to be recorded in the annual accounts. All donations of funds were recorded in the accounts. This issue has now been resolved with new procedures in place in that when donors trust us with goods to deliver via our containers, they are given a goods receipt which is recorded in our end of year accounts.

2. *'Payments made to the trustee, of around £13,000 were unauthorised'.*

We have never given financial benefit to any of our trustees. Whilst we accept that we did not seek permission to employ a former trustee from the Commission, it is incorrect to say that a trustee financially benefited in any way.

Regarding the incident in question, the trustee resigned on the 9th December 2015, started his new employment at One Nation on the 1st February 2016 and did not receive his first wage until 29th February 2016; nearly three months after he resigned as a trustee. Admittedly, there were administrative errors in correctly minuting the meeting in which decisions were made to employ this person. However, the procedure was in line with regulations as the decision was made without the person in question being present in the meeting. Due to this the Commission instructed us to retake the decision to employ and therefore they see any payments before this period as a "trustee benefit". To help clarify this "trustee benefit" to you further, we have taken the decision to provide full discretion in the following paragraph.

The individual was employed at a rate of £8.50 an hour at a contract of 30 hours per week, from Feb 2016 to Feb 2017 (approx. £13k a year). We believe this to be an incredibly modest amount to pay an employee with key responsibilities in running a charity of £2.7 million income (2016). The reason an ex trustee was offered this post was because of value for money and that we would not be able to recruit someone with this high level of experience at that rate in the open market.

3. *'Failed to account correctly for restricted funds.'*

All funds were accounted for, but they were not recorded correctly in the prescribed format in the accounts under the headings of restricted and unrestricted funds. Funds were nevertheless spent in accordance with their purposes, and we are now reporting our finances within the Commission's guidelines.

4. *'Gift aid which should, in line with the recommendations of the SoRP be applied to the project or purpose for which the original donation was given – this is against a context of the charity stating that it operates a 100% donation policy'.*

There are differing versions of what 100% donation policy means in the charity sector. One Nation's donation policy is that if you donate £10, the full £10 should go to the beneficiary/cause you have donated to. If you have gift aided the donation the 25% claimable tax will be used as deemed necessary by the charity. Since inception, One Nation has used gift aided funds to cover administrative costs and any surplus gift aid funds are put back in to charitable projects.



5. *‘(‘Individual B’) posted a comment on their personal social media account’, ‘An individual (‘Individual C’) who volunteered for the charity; the Commission has seen evidence of him expressing views the Commission considers it is not appropriate for the charity to be associated with’.*

We do not condone extremism in any form, on any format in its entirety. Individuals who make public statements in their own personal capacity on their personal social media platforms does not reflect in any way the expressed views of One Nation, we have an Extremism Policy and Social Media policies and procedures in place for our partners and volunteers. We do however feel it is not practical for a small charity to be expected to police the opinions and social media posts of all those who support it and be held responsible for those comments. However, if comments of an individual associated with the charity are brought to our attention, we would deal with this in line with our Policies and Procedures.

6. We have addressed the concerns raised by the charity commission and have significantly improved the way the charity operates in many ways. This position will help the charity to operate more effectively over the coming years. We have listed some of these improvements below;

- Introduced new and reviewed/updated all policies and procedures
- We have employed an experienced Operations Manager to focus on how we can improve and move the charity forward
- All our accounts are up to date in accordance with SORP
- Introduced stricter financial controls and management
- Introduced a robust volunteer policy and procedure
- Improved partner/staff/volunteer due diligence
- Introduced a Conflict of Interest register
- All donated goods are accounted for and recorded
- All our staff are trained on regulatory policies including GDPR

Before, during, and after the Inquiry, we have proactively co-operated with the Commission. We have also engaged an independent professional adviser to assist and support us with our development throughout this crucial period of growth, and we believe we have come a long way, as recognised by the Commission itself.

We would like to thank all our donors and volunteers for their continued support. We would like to reassure everyone that we are constantly striving to ensure that the charity always operates professionally, transparently and ultimately to assist those most in need around the world.

Thank you for taking the time to read through our statement and we look forward to your continued support in 2019 and beyond.