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Serious Incidents Reporting Policy

The Charity Commission requires charities to report serious incidents. If a serious incident takes place within BIPS, it is important that there is prompt, full and frank disclosure to the Commission. BIPS need to report what happened and, importantly, let the Commission know how BIPS are dealing with it, even if BIPS have also reported it to the BA, police, donors or another regulator.

The responsibility for reporting serious incidents rests with the BIPS trustees. In practice, BIPS may delegate to a BIPS member of staff employee or BIPS' professional advisers.

However, all BIPS trustees bear ultimate responsibility for ensuring BIPS makes a report and does so in a timely manner.

If trustees decide not to make a report about something serious that has happened in BIPS and the Charity Commission later becomes involved, trustees will need to be able to explain why they decided not to report it at the time.

What is a serious incident?

A serious incident is an adverse event, whether actual or alleged, which results in or risks significant:

- harm to BIPS beneficiaries, staff or others who come into contact with BIPS through its work
- loss of BIPS money or assets
- damage to BIPS property
- harm to BIPS work or reputation.

NB "significant" means significant in the context of BIPS, taking account of its staff, operations, finances and/or reputation.

Why must you tell the Charity Commission?

Given the challenging nature of the work undertaken and the difficult context faced by many charities, the Commission understands that serious incidents will happen. When something serious happens, it is the Commission's role to ensure that trustees comply with their legal duties and that the charity manages the incident responsibly.

This means the Commission will be looking for assurance that BIPS has taken steps to limit the immediate impact of the incident and, where possible, prevent it from happening again.

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Most problems can be resolved by trustees themselves, in some cases with timely advice from professional advisers. Sometimes the Commission needs to use its powers to protect a charity. Acting quickly will help protect BIPS from further harm. Reporting also means the Commission can identify whether other charities might be affected, and can give better advice to all charities to help them protect themselves.

BIPS policy

BIPS policy is to promptly report incidents that the trustees consider to be serious to the Charity Commission and other relevant agencies. Serious incidents are reportable irrespective of the geographic location, including any such incidents in Iran.

When to report

BIPS trustees should report an actual or alleged incident promptly. This means as soon as is reasonably possible after it happens, or immediately after BIPS becomes aware of it.

BIPS trustees should report any actual or alleged incident to the President of BIPS.

What to report

BIPS should report an incident if it results in, or risks, significant:

- harm to people who come into contact with the charity through its work
- loss of BIPS' money or assets
- damage to BIPS property
- harm to BIPS' work or reputation.

The main categories of reportable incident are:

- protecting people and safeguarding incidents – incidents that have resulted in or risk significant harm to beneficiaries and other people who come into contact with BIPS through its work
- financial crimes – fraud, theft, cyber-crime and money laundering
- large donations from an unknown or unverifiable source, or suspicious financial activity using BIPS' funds
- other significant financial loss

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- links to terrorism or extremism, including 'proscribed' (or banned) organisations, individuals subject to an asset freeze, or kidnapping of staff
- other significant incidents, such as – insolvency, forced withdrawal of banking services without an alternative, significant data breaches/losses or incidents involving partners that materially affect BIPS

It is the responsibility of the BIPS trustees to decide whether an incident is significant and should be reported.

If a reportable incident involves actual or alleged criminal activity then BIPS must also report it to the relevant agencies.