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Covid-19 (Coronavirus) information

In line with government advice on the management of the Coronavirus outbreak, it has become necessary to make changes to the way the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland delivers its services. The changes are aimed at protecting the Commission's service users and staff, while supporting charities in getting through what is a difficult and anxious time.

The Commission understands the charity sector will be facing a number of challenges during the pandemic, including looking after its staff, volunteers and trustees as well as playing a vital role in looking after beneficiaries, many of whom will be amongst the most vulnerable during this public health emergency.

We want to assure charities that our approach to regulation during this period will be as flexible and supportive as possible. Charities' primary interest, and ours, must be looking after the public and the communities that we serve.

The main changes are as follows:

Annual reporting

In the current circumstances please note that, until otherwise advised, no charity will be penalised for missing its annual reporting deadline, which includes that no charity will be marked as in default on the register of charities if they fail to meet this deadline. We would ask that if charities find themselves in this position that they contact us via email to admin@charitycommissionni.org.uk where possible, to keep us apprised of their situation.

Charity registration

Registration will continue as normal, however, there may be delays in responding to your correspondence, or making a final decision on your application.

If you are concerned that you will not meet your submission deadline you should contact the Commission as soon as possible via registration@charitycommissionni.org.uk to seek an extension. Remember to include the name of the charity and the reason for the extension request and importantly print a copy of your application if you have already started to complete it.

Where applicants require more time to submit further information to support an application which has already been submitted the Commission will also treat these requests pragmatically.

Advice regarding charity meetings

Some charities will have meetings planned, or required through the conditions of their governing document, over the coming weeks that will either have to be postponed or to be held virtually rather than in person. Where meetings are postponed, it is recommended that a note is kept documenting the reason why the meeting has been postponed, but the Commission will be pragmatic and reasonable and will not take any regulatory action where meetings are postponed as a result of these circumstances. Where a meeting is held virtually to safeguard the health of trustees, this should be recorded in the minutes and the Commission will accept this as a valid meeting, as long as it is

quorate.

Responding to queries and requests

The Commission's office is not open to the public and all events and non-essential appointments have been cancelled. Staff will still be working, either remotely or from the office, and will endeavour to respond to queries and requests received as soon as possible. However, in light of expected staff absences over coming weeks, there may be a delay in responding to your query or request. We appreciate your patience and apologise for any inconvenience this may cause.



The charity register search



Online services for charities



Concerns about charities



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