

NEW FROST HALL POLICY DOCUMENT

REPORTING A SERIOUS INCIDENT

Why this policy exists

The New Frost Hall (“the hall”) is a charity, and its’ activities fall under the regulation of the charity regulator, the Charity Commission (“the commission”). This policy covers serious incident reporting to the commission as it relates to the hall. This policy provides the hall with an effective and easy to follow process that closely follows the commission’s guidance.

Scope

This policy covers all activities of the charity and its operations. It does not cover or replace the charity's obligations to report incidents to statutory authorities such as the police, health and safety executive or licensing authority that the hall may need to do from time to time in the ordinary operation of its business.

However, incidents that are reported to the statutory authorities can become relevant to this policy, if, for example, the charity is subjected to an investigation by a statutory authority or if it deems itself to be at fault and there is potential reputational damage to the charity as a result.

Background

The commission states that it is vital that charities, whether they work domestically or around the world, report serious incidents to the regulator. The commission also states that data on serious incident reporting allows it to better understand risks facing the sector and take appropriate action.

However, the commission recognises the challenging nature of the work undertaken and the difficult context faced by many charities. It understands that serious incidents will happen, but it is the commission's role to ensure that trustees comply with their legal duties and that the charity manages the incident responsibly. The commission will be looking for assurance that the charity has taken steps to limit the immediate impact of any serious incidents that may occur and, where possible, prevent it from happening again.

The commission acknowledges that many problems can be resolved by trustees themselves. However, sometimes it needs to use its powers to protect a charity. 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.

What is a serious incident?

The commission defines significant as ‘significant in the context of your charity, taking account of its staff, operations, finances and / or reputation’; and defines a serious incident as an adverse event, whether actual or alleged, which results in or risks significant:

- Harm to the hall’s beneficiaries, staff, volunteers or others who come into contact with the hall through our work
- Loss of the hall’s money or assets.

NEW FROST HALL POLICY DOCUMENT

REPORTING A SERIOUS INCIDENT

- Damage to the hall's property.
- Harm to the hall's work or reputation

The main categories of reportable incidents set out by the commission 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 the charity 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 the charity's funds.
- Other significant financial loss.
- 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 the charity.

Policy

It is the hall's policy to report all 'serious incidents' to the commission within 48 hours of the chair's decision. If the matter has been referred more widely to some or all the charity's trustees then the hall's policy is that the decision of those trustees to report a serious incident, providing an appropriate level of information and to respond to any resulting requests for information be undertaken within five working days.

What we will report

The commission makes it clear that it is the responsibility of the trustees to decide whether an incident is significant and should be reported. The nature of the hall's assets and activities mean that it does not deal with incidents on a frequent basis as part of its operations it is expected that help will be required in regard to this. To help, the commission provides guidance in an Examples Table.

The Examples Table is included as an Appendix to this policy document.

The Examples Table is not a definitive list of reportable incidents but indicates the type of incidents that should and should not be reported.

Who is responsible for reporting?

The responsibility for reporting serious incidents rests with the New Frost Hall trustees. All trustees bear ultimate responsibility for ensuring our charity makes a report and does so in a timely manner.

All incidents, whether deemed 'serious' or not should be reported to the Chair of the hall committee **immediately**, either in writing or if verbally reported, confirmed in writing immediately after notification.

NEW FROST HALL POLICY DOCUMENT

REPORTING A SERIOUS INCIDENT

The New Frost Hall committee will be consulted within 48 hours as to whether the incident constitutes a serious incident and requires reporting to the Charity Commission.

The report will then be made to the commission within 48 hours of the decision to report a serious incident.

All discussions and decisions taken will be formally recorded and then minuted at the next available committee meeting along with any outcomes and further action taken.

Actions we will take in response to a serious incident.

If there is a serious incident the trustees will:

- As soon as reasonably practicable prevent or minimise any further harm, loss or damage.
- Report it to the commission as a serious incident.
- Report it to the police (and / or other relevant agencies) if we suspect a crime has been committed, and to any other regulators the charity is accountable to.
- Put in place a communication plan for staff, volunteers, the public, the media, and other stakeholders.
- Review what happened and prevent it from happening again – this may include reviewing internal controls and procedures, internal or external investigation and / or seeking appropriate help from professional advisers.

How we will report

The trustees delegate formal responsibility for reporting those incidents deemed to be serious incidents to the Chair of the hall committee who will report them to the Charity Commission using its [online reporting form](#).

If the information provided is particularly sensitive or confidential or if a particular exemption applies, we will inform the commission and explain our reasoning.

The hall is required, as part of its annual return to the commission, to sign a declaration confirming there were no serious incidents during the financial year that should have been reported to the commission. If incidents did occur, but were not reported at the time, we will submit these before we file our charity's annual return, so that we can make the declaration and meet our legal reporting requirements.

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed annually

Revision	Approved by	Approval Date	Main Changes	Next Review
1.0	Policy sub committee	27 Nov 2023	First issue	Nov 2024