



Serious Incident Reporting Policy

This document outlines the **Serious Incident Reporting Policy** adopted by The Knowle Society, a registered charity, providing a structured approach aligned with the Charity Commission's guidance. The policy ensures that serious incidents affecting the charity's operations, reputation, or stakeholders are reported promptly and managed appropriately.

1. Introduction

- The policy governs **serious incident reporting obligations** to the Charity Commission, the UK Charity Regulator.
 - It provides an **effective, straightforward process** for reporting incidents in compliance with Charity Commission requirements.
 - The policy complements statutory reporting duties to other authorities (e.g., police, Health and Safety Executive), but does **not replace** them.
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2. Scope

- Applies to **all activities and operations** of The Knowle Society.
 - Does not cover statutory reporting obligations to other authorities, but **interactions with statutory investigations** may become relevant under this policy if reputational damage or fault is identified.
 - Incidents requiring statutory authority notification may also become reportable under this policy if linked to serious issues affecting the charity.
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3. Background and Regulatory Context

- The Charity Commission emphasises the importance of reporting serious incidents to:
 - **Understand sector risks.**
 - **Take protective or corrective action.**
 - Support trustees in fulfilling **legal responsibilities.**
- The Commission recognises the challenging environment charities operate in and expects trustees to:

- Manage incidents responsibly.
- Take steps to **limit harm or loss**.
- **Prevent recurrence** where possible.
- The Commission can exercise powers if trustees fail to act adequately.
- Reporting also helps identify broader sector risks and informs preventative advice to other charities.
- The Knowle Society must certify annually that a serious incident policy is in place.

4. Definition of a Serious Incident

- A **serious incident** is an adverse event, actual or alleged, that causes or risks significant:
 - Harm to people interacting with the charity or its subsidiaries.
 - Loss of the charity's money or assets.
 - Damage to the charity's property.
 - Harm to the charity's work or reputation.
- Acts of **discrimination against protected characteristics** under the Equality Act 2010 are also classified as serious incidents.

5. Categories of Reportable Serious Incidents

The Charity Commission identifies the following main categories:

Category	Description
Protecting people and safeguarding incidents	Significant harm or risk to beneficiaries or others involved with the charity's work
Financial crimes	Fraud, theft, cybercrime, money laundering
Suspicious financial activity	Large donations from unknown/unverifiable sources or suspicious use of charity funds
Other significant financial loss	Losses impacting the charity's financial health
Links to terrorism or extremism	Connections to banned organisations, asset freezes, or kidnapping of staff
Other significant incidents	Insolvency, banking service withdrawal without alternatives, significant data breaches, partner incidents materially affecting the charity

- The policy provides guidance but is **not an exhaustive list** of reportable incidents.
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6. Policy on Reporting Serious Incidents

- All serious incidents must be reported to the Charity Commission **within 48 hours** of the Chair's decision or Trustee Board decision.
 - The report should include an **appropriate level of detail**.
 - Any further requests for information from the Charity Commission must be responded to **within five working days**.
 - The Knowle Society may deal with serious incidents infrequently due to the nature of its activities.
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7. Responsibility for Reporting

- The **Trustees hold ultimate responsibility** for ensuring serious incidents are reported timely.
 - All incidents, serious or not, must be reported immediately to the **Chair** in writing or verbally with written confirmation.
 - If the Chair is unavailable, the incident must be reported to the **full Trustee Board**.
 - The formal report to the Charity Commission must be submitted **within 48 hours** of the decision to report.
 - All decisions and discussions are to be **formally recorded and minuted** at the next Trustee meeting, including outcomes and follow-up actions.
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8. Actions Following a Serious Incident

Upon identification of a serious incident, Trustees will:

- Take reasonable steps to **prevent or minimise further harm, loss, or damage**.
 - Report the incident to the **Charity Commission** as a serious incident.
 - Report suspected crimes to the **police** and other relevant agencies (e.g., Local Authority Designated Officer for safeguarding).
 - Implement a **communication plan** for volunteers, members, and stakeholders as appropriate.
 - Conduct a review to understand the cause and prevent recurrence, possibly involving:
 - Internal or external investigations.
 - Reviewing internal controls and procedures.
 - Seeking professional advice as necessary.
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9. Reporting Process

- The Trustee Board delegates the Chair the formal responsibility to submit reports to the Charity Commission using the **online reporting form**.
- If information is **sensitive or confidential**, The Knowle Society will notify the Commission and explain the reasons for any redactions or exemptions.
- The charity must declare annually in its **Annual Return** whether any serious incidents occurred and were reported.
- Any unreported incidents must be submitted before filing the Annual Return to comply with legal requirements.

10. Further Guidance

- Additional guidance on serious incidents involving partners is available via the UK government website:
[Reporting a serious incident involving a partner](#)

Summary Table: Reporting Timelines and Responsibilities

Action	Responsible Party	Timeline
Immediate notification of incident	Any member/Trustee	Immediately to Chair or Trustees
Decision to report a serious incident	Chair or Trustee Board	<i>As soon as practicable</i>
Formal report submission to Charity Commission	Chair	Within 48 hours of decision
Response to follow-up information requests	Chair/Trustees	Within 5 working days
Documentation and minuting of incident	Trustee Board	At next Trustee meeting
Annual declaration of serious incidents	Trustees	Annually via Annual Return