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Charity Commission investigates Jehovah's Witness congregation in relation to indecent assault case

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By Sam Burne James, Third Sector Online, 28 May 2014



Charity Commission

Manchester New Moston Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses is at the centre of reports that a convicted offender was allowed to question his victims at a public meeting

The **Charity Commission** has opened an operational compliance case into a Manchester-based Jehovah's Witness congregation following concerns about how it protects vulnerable beneficiaries.

The commission said it was in discussions with Manchester New Moston Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses after reports in the *Manchester Evening News* that a congregation member, Jonathan Rose, who was recently released from prison after serving nine months for the indecent assault of two girls, was allowed to question his victims in front of congregation elders. The victims were required to recount the abuse at the meeting in order to have Rose barred from the church, the paper says.

A spokeswoman for the commission said: "The commission has ongoing serious concerns about the Manchester New Moston Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses in connection with its policies and procedures for the protection of vulnerable beneficiaries. We are engaging with the charity's trustees about our concerns. We cannot comment further at this stage."

The commission added that it had opened an operational compliance case into the charity.

The charity has been registered with the commission since 1997 and had income of between £5,000 and £10,000 for each of the past five years.

A spokesman for the Jehovah's Witnesses told *Third Sector* while it did allow victims and their perpetrators to meet, this would only happen with the victim's consent and the meetings would be held in private.

He added in a statement: "When any one of Jehovah's Witnesses is accused of serious wrongdoing, the matter is investigated. If a victim wishes to assist by providing details, this can be done in person or in writing. Victims are never forced to attend a meeting or confront an alleged perpetrator of child abuse, and indeed we have no power to do so. Any meetings are held in private and are not public. When child safeguarding is concerned, these procedures are in place to help protect children."

He said he was unable to comment further on the Manchester New Moston Congregation case, but said that Rose is no longer one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

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john handel · 4 hours ago

This is an interesting article. It is good to see another congregation expelling persons for this type of activity. My own little church would take the same line. No doubt the Jehovah's Witnesses will come under some fire for separating friends and all that type of thing but needs must in these cases.

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