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# Jehovah's Witnesses appeal to charity tribunal against regulator's statutory inquiry

08 January 2015 by Sam Burne James, 38 comments

The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Britain made the appeal last month; the Charity Commission's statutory inquiry was announced in June last year



*Jehovah's Witnesses registered office*

The governing body of Jehovah's Witnesses in the UK has lodged an appeal at the charity tribunal against the Charity Commission's decision to open a statutory inquiry into various matters, including child safeguarding.

The commission announced its inquiry into the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Britain in June 2014. It said it was looking into a number of issues, including the administration, governance and management of the charity, and its safeguarding policies. It had been alerted to concerns about how a congregation in Manchester dealt with a former trustee who served nine months in prison for the indecent of assault of two girls.

The Watch Tower said at the time that it intended to register an appeal, but did not do so until 22 December. A spokesman for the society said: "We can confirm that the appeal lodged with the charity tribunal is against the June 2014 statutory inquiry into Watch Tower."

A directions document issued to the commission by the tribunal on 23 December, and published online the following week, says the appeal might have been made outside the time limit. It gives the commission until later this month to tell the tribunal what information it gave the society about its rights of appeal after it decided to open the statutory inquiry.

In June, the commission also opened a statutory inquiry into the Manchester-based congregation in question, and its trustees lodged an appeal against this the following month. A telephone directions hearing on this matter is scheduled for 20 January.

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