# Controversy surrounds new Charity Commission chief amid accusations of bias



Mark Simms OBE, the newly appointed acting chief of the Charity Commission, has ignited a firestorm of controversy following sharp accusations of bias by senior Conservative MPs amidst the emergence of a new Labour government that many fear will undermine key democratic institutions. The appointment, made by Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy, raises serious questions about the impartiality of oversight in a sector crucial to the integrity of civil society.

Simms came under scrutiny shortly before his official appointment last month when he deleted his account on X, formerly known as Twitter. An analysis of archived tweets reveals a worrying pattern of politically charged posts that cast doubt on his ability to remain neutral in a role that requires absolute impartiality.

Notably, Simms previously expressed admiration for US Congresswoman Ilhan Omar, a figure infamous for her far-left views and a tumultuous history of controversial statements. In a tweet from 2020, Simms stated, "This brilliant woman... smashed it," following Omar's divisive comments on casual racism. At that time, she was embroiled in accusations of antisemitism and had been removed from her position on the US Foreign Affairs Committee, raising alarms about Simms' standards for public figures to admire.

Simms also drew fire for glorifying former Labour MP Jess Phillips, stating, "I don't care what anyone says, @jessphillips is a bloody good constituency MP. She's passionate and purposeful and puts country before self." In stark contrast, he faced backlash for deriding former Conservative Prime Minister Boris Johnson, using language that many critics deemed misogynistic. This perceived bias calls into question his objectivity, especially as the Charity Commission grapples with accusations of failing to investigate Islamic charities linked to extremism and alleged connections to Iran in a time marked by increasing public scrutiny.

As Simms prepares to take his position officially on 25th October, Conservative MPs have raised concerns over his suitability for a role that demands an unwavering commitment to unbiased oversight at a critical juncture for the charity sector. Shadow Justice Secretary Robert Jenrick articulated the necessity for the Charity Commission to maintain its reputation, stating, "When charities stand accused of connections to the Iranian regime and spreading extremism, the integrity of the Charity Commission must be unimpeachable."

Senator Chris Philp echoed this sentiment, warning, "There can be no signs of bias or activism; the task is too important. Such perceptions only erode public trust in our institutions." Former Tory Minister Liam Fox emphasised that leadership in the charity sector must prioritise national interest over personal political bias, especially as the country recovers from the recent turmoil under a Labour government.

In response to growing criticism, the Charity Commission defended Simms, asserting he had followed all protocols during his appointment and insisting he has no 'significant political activity' in the past five years. A spokesperson claimed, "The Charity Commission is fair, balanced and independent in its regulation of charities," a statement that rings increasingly hollow in light of the emerging tensions.

The scrutiny of the Charity Commission is heightened by its controversial handling of investigations related to charities accused of promoting extremism. The spotlight is notably focused on the Islamic Human Rights Commission and the Islamic Centre for England, both under investigation since allegations of links to the Iranian regime emerged.

As challenges regarding transparency and accountability in the charity sector mount, the public is left questioning the Commission's ability to maintain an unbiased stance under leadership that seems to lean towards a troubling political agenda. With the pressing need for accountability in organisations remaining intact, concerns over the integrity and effectiveness of the Charity Commission could foreshadow a turbulent road ahead.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.civilsociety.co.uk/news/commission-appoints-charity-ceo-as-interim-chair.html> - This article confirms Mark Simms' appointment as the interim chair of the Charity Commission, replacing Orlando Fraser starting from 25 April 2025. It highlights his experience and background, emphasizing his understanding of the challenges faced by charities.
* <https://www.miragenews.com/interim-chair-named-for-england-and-wales-1434066/> - Mirage News supports the appointment details, noting that Mark Simms will serve as interim chair for six months while a permanent successor is recruited, and acknowledges his role as the P3 Charity CEO.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/charity-commission-welcomes-appointment-of-mark-simms-as-interim-chair> - The official government website explains the appointment of Mark Simms as interim chair of the Charity Commission, highlighting his background in social enterprise and his role as a board member.
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilhan_Omar> - This Wikipedia page details Ilhan Omar's career and controversies, including her removal from the US Foreign Affairs Committee, providing context for the criticisms aimed at Mark Simms' past Twitter posts.
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jess_Phillips#Career> - Jess Phillips' Wikipedia page outlines her political career and profile, which was referenced in Mark Simms' tweets about her as a constituency MP.