

# Regulator escalates inquiry into 'plague protection kits' church

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The Charity Commission has stepped up an inquiry into a church whose bishop sold 'plague protection kits' made of oil and string during the coronavirus outbreak.

England and Wales's charity regulator has opened a statutory inquiry into The Kingdom Church GB, almost five months after the National Secular Society [raised concerns about the kits](#).

The commission opened a regulatory compliance case into the south London-based [charity](#) when the NSS brought the issue to its attention in April.

## Justification for statutory inquiry

According to [Third Sector](#), it has now elevated this to a statutory inquiry after its initial investigations uncovered issues with the charity's finances.

The commission said it had concerns about the accuracy of information provided to it about the charity's income and expenditure.

The statutory inquiry will examine issues including the church's relationship with a group called Bishop Climate Ministries. This shares the same address as the church and is run by the church's bishop Irugu Wiseman – also known as Bishop Climate.

## Sale of 'protection kits'

In March a [post](#) on the Bishop Climate Ministries website promoted the protective power of "the Divine Plague Protection Oil" and "Scarlet Yarn".

The post originally included claims that "every coronavirus and any other deadly thing" would "pass over" those using the oil and yarn.

It was later edited to remove some specific references to coronavirus, but continued to claim people could "be saved from every pandemic" by using the oil and string.

Kingdom Church's website linked to an online shop, which carried the same post.

Local paper [Southwark News](#) reported that the kits were originally on sale for £91.

A disclaimer was later added to the posts to say they were "solely under Bishop Climate Ministries and Not the Kingdom Church" (*sic*).

## NSS response

**An NSS spokesperson said the opening of the inquiry was "an encouraging step".**

**"The Charity Commission must ensure charities are held to account when they engage in exploitative, unethical and harmful behaviour – regardless of their religious ethos.**

**"This case is also a reminder that charity law needs reform. The assumption that advancing religion is inherently beneficial is currently embedded in charity law, but in cases such as this the opposite appears to be true.**

**"Trust in the charity sector shouldn't rely on regulators firefighting when apparent examples of significant wrongdoing emerge. The law should ensure all charities have to provide a genuine public benefit, including religious charities."**

### **The NSS's campaign for charity law reform**

- The Charities Act of 2011 outlines 13 purposes which charities can pursue to ensure they provide a public benefit. One of those is 'the advancement of religion'.
- Last year the NSS published a major [report](#) making the case for 'the advancement of religion' to be removed from the list. Under the NSS's proposals religious charities which benefit the public would retain their status, but all charities would be required to pass a secular public benefit test.

### **The Kingdom Church's charitable purpose**

- The Kingdom Church is registered as a charity with the purpose of advancing the Christian faith and "other such charitable purposes as are beneficial to the community".

*Image via Bishop Climate Ministries.*

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