



# हिंदू स्वयंसेवक संघ युके Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh UK

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f hssuk ▪ www.hssuk.org ▪ Registered Charity No.: 267309

2<sup>nd</sup> September 2016

## PRESS RELEASE

### Charity Commission inquiry concludes HSS UK “NOT behaving badly” as alleged by Hardcash

#### The Investigation

The Trustees of the HSS UK would like to thank the Charity Commission for their detailed and considered report following allegations by Hardcash Productions against HSS UK. The allegations broadcast on TV were primarily based by an undercover reporter's coverage of certain sessions at the HSS UK youth leadership camp in 2014. In our view, the Charity Commission's report makes clear that most of the allegations are unsubstantiated. The main findings of failings are based on an incident involving one speaker addressing some students using language that was deemed inappropriate.

HSS UK takes the findings of the Charity Commission seriously and agrees that in relation to one incident we were found to be wanting in the implementation of some of our own policies. HSS UK sets itself the highest standards that we endeavor at all times to strive for but on this occasion our efforts fell short. Nevertheless, we are grateful to the Charity Commission for confirming that HSS UK subsequently acted properly in investigating and implementing appropriate measures. For some of the highlights of the Charity Commissions findings please refer to notes below.

Most importantly the Commission concluded after substantial investigation that there was no systemic or endemic views in the organisation as Hardcash Productions had attempted to portray by broadcasting only a few isolated statements of the speaker.

#### The Trustees Statement

HSS UK is a leading Hindu organisation, striving to promote Hindu Values, Ethos and Culture. The organisation has and will learn from experience and continues to evolve following best practice and guidelines set by the Charity Commission. As concluded by the Commission, HSS UK took prompt proactive and appropriate steps to review, improve and implement policies/procedures to prevent and mitigate fallout from such an incident (the first of it's kind in 50 years)..

HSS UK reiterates that Hardcash, who produced the TV documentary that made the allegations against HSS UK had an agenda against HSS and conducted themselves through secret filming and contrived efforts to obtain footage that suited their purpose. Hardcash have refused to engage with HSS or even attend any of our events. Their portrayal intentionally ignored all the good work HSS UK has been praised and recognised for. Hardcash also failed to respond adequately to the questions posed by many of HSS UK volunteers who raised questions through the OFCOM procedures. It raises the question of why the media is not required to maintain the same high standards, through their regulator, which we rightly expect of HSS UK, as a charity.

END

For further information contact pr@hssuk.org

Our Family



Balagokulam





FIFTY YEARS OF CONTRIBUTION

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\*\*\*Notes to Editor\*\*\*\*

HSS UK was founded in 1966 and became a registered charity in 1974. Celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary (Golden Jubilee) this year, HSS UK has a reach to over 10,000 Hindus in UK. It has 110 activity centres across the country where thousands of members, mainly youths (6-30 years) meet weekly to participate in health & fitness (yoga), cultural and character development activities,. HSS UK objectives and activities are based on the principles of Sanskaar (Values of life), Sewa (Selfless Service) and Sangathan (Community Spirit).

### The commission's report highlights the following:

1. Based on a review of all of the footage provided to the commission by Hardcash the inquiry found that there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the views expressed by the speaker were endemic or systematic in the charity and its activities.
2. The inquiry found that generally the SSV event was well managed and saw in the footage that there appeared to be sufficient volunteers and trustees present, day to day, to ensure safety at the event.
3. The inquiry found that there was little in the unaired footage that on the face of them, raised further regulatory issues, in addition to the footage broadcast in the programme, in respect of the charity.
4. In proactively notifying the commission through the RSI regime, the commission accepts that the trustees carried out their obligations in this respect and acted properly in the circumstances.
5. The commission acknowledges that the trustees co-operated fully with the inquiry throughout, as they are expected to. They responded responsibly to the commission's regulatory concerns, its criticism of them and the impact of the programme on the charity by reviewing and improving the charity's management and policies. This action has included providing the commission with a number of updated and/or new formal written policies; for example the charity's Safeguarding Children, Complaints, and Events Risk assessment policies. The trustees also arranged for key staff and volunteers to take part in on-line safeguarding training provided by the NSPCC.
6. The trustees cooperated with the Inquiry and have responded appropriately in respect of actions taken in response to the programme and the commission's concerns reporting the matter to the commission as a serious incident. After they were notified by Hardcash of the intention to air the documentary, the trustees acted promptly to review policies and procedures and set in motion their own review of events. The commission considers that implementation by the trustees of the reviewed policies will reduce the risk of a similar instances occurring.
7. The inquiry found no other evidence [other than one comment elicited by the undercover reporter from the speaker who is not a Trustee or formal representative of HSS UK] of any formal links and no financial, governance or influence with RSS.

### Our Family



**Balagokulam**



Charity Partner

