



IMPROVEMENT THROUGH INVESTIGATION

Publication of our report following an independent investigation into the Green Party's actions following the allegations and charges brought against David Challenor

Verita was commissioned by The Green Party of England and Wales to carry out an independent investigation into the party's actions following the allegations and charges brought against David Challenor.

The party [published its response](#) to our report on Thursday 10 January 2019 and accepted all the recommendations included in it. They have published the executive summary on their website and made the full report available to their members. Read the executive summary [here](#).

Our report covered stage one of the investigation and revealed individual and collective failings to disclose and act on key information after David Challenor was charged with 22 serious sexual offences in November 2016. Despite being charged, David Challenor was subsequently appointed by Aimee Challenor as her election agent in 2017 and 2018.

Because the knowledge of his charges had not been widely shared, the party at national and local levels was unable to anticipate any potential safeguarding risks from his appointment to these roles or from his wider involvement in the party. The party's reputation was damaged when news of David Challenor's conviction emerged in August 2018. The party initially believed that these matters had not been reported but learned later that there had been limited disclosure of the charges against him, but that this had not been acted on.

In receiving our report, the chief executive of the party, Nick Martin, acknowledged weaknesses in the party's approach to safeguarding in the past and accepted all our recommendations. These were aimed at helping the party to clarify its code of conduct for members and to review the party's safeguarding policy and procedures. These changes will seek to improve reporting of safeguarding concerns and risks to people inside and outside the party. We understand that the chief executive has also committed to assume the role of the party's dedicated safeguarding lead.

VERITA

IMPROVEMENT THROUGH INVESTIGATION

Verita's investigation acknowledged that the party did have a safeguarding policy and that the procedures for implementing it were in place. However, in interviewing senior people in the party we found a very low level of awareness of the need to put safeguarding matters at the heart of their decision-making. For a party that works with young people and with vulnerable adults, this is a problem that needs urgent action.

The learning from our investigation will resound elsewhere. With our depth of experience, and the range of investigations we have carried out, we know that many other organisations will be outwardly confident that they have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place. But this confidence may be misplaced if the leaders of those organisations cannot be sure that everyone who works for them knows their responsibilities and is empowered to speak and act when they identify safeguarding concerns.