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Statement: Charity Regulator's Investigation into Ataxia Ireland

Submitted by [gackermann](#) [1] on 27 July 2017 - 1:32pm

The Wheel, Ireland's national association of community, voluntary and charitable organisations, welcomes a report by the Charities Regulator into poor governance and financial controls at Ataxia Ireland.

Ivan Cooper Director of Public Policy at The Wheel said, "It is good to see that the Regulator has, following a thorough investigation, published very clear recommendations on the unacceptable governance failures and poor financial controls uncovered at Ataxia Ireland.

"It's very important that people don't generalise from this particular case to practice in other charities. In fact, the success of this investigation shows that charities regulation is working. Problems are being discovered and addressed. This is good news for both charities and the public who can have confidence in the new regulatory framework," said Mr Cooper.

Commenting on the Regulator's findings Mr Cooper added: "The trustees of a charity should not be paid for their work as trustees - it is a voluntary role. Trustees should also be aware that conflicts of interest might arise where relatives serve on boards that control significant funds, and that they should adhere to robust transparency processes and procedures in such circumstances. The funds under the control of any charity are public - not private - and these funds must be treated with complete openness and transparency.

"There is no room in the Irish charity sector for the kind of poor governance practices uncovered at Ataxia Ireland. If trustees in other charities have any doubts about their governance arrangements they should come to The Wheel for advice.

"The good news is we now have a robust Charities Regulator with investigative powers. The Regulator recently issued new guidelines for financial controls and guidance for the trustees of charities, and it is currently developing new guidelines for fundraising, governance and financial reporting - and those resources will support the ongoing work to achieve highest governance standards in Ireland's charities, said Mr Cooper.

Members of the public, who are considering supporting a charity, can visit www.GoodCharity.ie [2] where they will find a set of questions that they can put to that charity to find out about their impact and governance arrangements.

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