### **SAMPLE Complaint to the Charity Commission**

**To:** Charity Commission for England and Wales
**Address:** PO Box 211, Bootle, L20 7YX, United Kingdom
**Email:** compliance@charitycommission.gov.uk

**Subject:** Formal Complaint Against The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Britain (Jehovah’s Witnesses) for Coercive Practices and Violation of Charitable Purposes

### **Complainant Information**

* **Name:**
* **Contact Number:**
* **Address:**

### **Description of the Issue**

I am submitting this complaint to raise concerns about the practices of the Jehovah’s Witnesses organisation operating in the UK under the registered charity name **The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Britain**. Specifically, I believe that their practices are inconsistent with their obligations as a registered charity and may violate UK laws, including the Charities Act 2011.

### **Key Issues Identified**

1. **Prohibition of Political Participation by Members:**Members of the Jehovah’s Witnesses are strictly prohibited from voting, standing for public office, or participating in any political activities. Breach of this rule results in severe sanctions, including expulsion (disfellowshipping) or disassociation. These sanctions are accompanied by social ostracism, including the complete severance of contact with other members, even family.
**Evidence:**
	* The *Shepherd the Flock of God* elder manual states (Chapter 18, Section 3, Paragraph 4):
	*“A person who affiliates with a non-neutral organisation disassociates themselves.”*
	* The document *Keep Yourselves in God’s Love*, page 244, reinforces this prohibition by teaching that Christians must remain neutral and abstain from political participation.
2. **Sanctioning Members for Political Engagement:**
	* The Jehovah’s Witnesses’ doctrine requires elders to convene judicial committees to enforce these rules. Those who vote or engage in politics are disfellowshipped or labeled as disassociated, resulting in complete social isolation.
3. **Evidence:**
	* Chapter 12, Section 17, Paragraph 1 of the *Shepherd the Flock of God* manual explains that unnecessary association with disfellowshipped or disassociated individuals leads to judicial action.
	* Members are prohibited from maintaining relationships with disfellowshipped individuals, even close family, unless strictly necessary.
4. **Human Rights Concerns:**These practices directly infringe on members' fundamental rights under UK law, including the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion (Article 9, Human Rights Act 1998) and the right to freedom of expression (Article 10).

### **Legal Basis for Concern**

The practices outlined appear inconsistent with the charitable purposes required under the **Charities Act 2011**, specifically:

* Public Benefit: Registered charities must operate for the public benefit. Enforcing coercive sanctions on members who exercise their civic rights undermines this principle.
* Prevention of Political Neutrality: The law allows charities to be politically neutral but does not permit them to compel neutrality among their members through punitive measures.

### **Request**

I urge the **Charity Commission for England and Wales** to:

1. Investigate the practices of The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Britain, particularly their enforcement of political neutrality through coercive sanctions.
2. Determine whether these practices are compatible with the charity’s legal obligations under the Charities Act 2011.
3. Take appropriate regulatory action, including, if necessary, revoking their charitable status for failing to meet the public benefit requirement.

Please keep me informed of the progress and outcome of this investigation.

**Sincerely,**

### **Attachments**

1. Excerpts from the *Shepherd the Flock of God* manual detailing judicial action against political participation.
2. Excerpt from *Keep Yourselves in God’s Love* discussing political neutrality.
3. Testimonies of disfellowshipped members regarding sanctions.