

## Charity backed by Prince Harry and Angelina Jolie pays boarding school fees for its chief executive

By Robert Mendick , and Christopher Hope 7:45AM GMT 19 Jan 2014

One of Britain's biggest charities, whose patron is Prince Harry, has used hundreds of thousands of pounds of donors' money to pay the boarding school fees of its chief executive's children.

[The Halo Trust](#), whose trustees include the actress Angelina Jolie, has sanctioned the payment of tens of thousands of pounds a year for more than a decade to fund the private education of Guy Willoughby's four children.

[Mr Willoughby, who founded the mine clearance charity](#), receives a financial package worth between £210,000 and £220,000 a year, according to the most recent accounts. The package includes the cost of sending his children to two of Britain's most expensive private schools – Oundle School in Northamptonshire, attended by Mr Willoughby's son, and Queen Margaret's School in York, where two of his daughters study.

Oundle currently charges £30,705 a year for boarders while Queen Margaret's charges £27,825 although there is an additional discount for siblings. Mr Willoughby admitted to *The Telegraph* that the cost of boarding school was "staggering".

Eritrea Willoughby, Mr Willoughby's eldest child, is now at university but also had her boarding school fees paid for by the charity.

Tom McMullen, the charity's chairman of trustees, said the schools invoiced Halo, which then paid the fees direct. He was unable to say precisely how much was paid to the schools by the charity.

The practice has been in place at Halo for more than a decade although no mention is made of the arrangement in the charity's accounts or on its website.

Last night MPs, already investigating salaries at Britain's biggest charities following a series of reports in *The Telegraph* last year, questioned why donors' money was being used to fund Mr Willoughby's children's education.

Robert Halfon MP, a member of the Commons public administration committee which is investigating charity pay, said: "This is a shocking revelation. Either the Government or the Charity Commission needs to bring through urgent regulations to ensure transparency among the charity lobby.

"It should be a requirement for charity chief executive salaries and perks to go on their website in an easy form, so people can make a decision if the charity is using the money carefully before they donate."

Priti Patel MP, another member of the committee, who carried out a lot of the research on pay scales last year, said that charities should publish full pay packages on their websites.

"This is exactly why we need greater openness and transparency, when it comes to the financial arrangements of charities and chief executive pay and associated packages. That is in the public interest and the interest of donors as well," she said.

Charlie Elphicke, another Tory MP, added: "Clearly, this is an outrageous abuse of charitable money. It highlights the need for better control of charities and greater respect for volunteer fund-raisers."

Mr Willoughby, 53, a former soldier and jockey, co-founded Halo in 1988 and has seen it grow into one of the UK's biggest charities. Last year the charity, whose headquarters are in Scotland, had income of more than £26 million, including £4 million of taxpayers' money from the Department for International Development.

It employs about 7,000 mine clearers from the countries in which it operates as well as 30 expatriate managers.

Staff who have worked for the organisation for more than seven years are eligible for its school fees scheme. Only Mr Willoughby and two to three other members of staff currently qualify.

The charity rose to prominence in 1997 when Diana, Princess of Wales, visited a minefield in Angola being cleared by Halo shortly before her death. The photograph of the princess in the minefield remains one of the most famous images of her. Prince Harry has become closely associated with the charity and was named as patron of Halo's 25th anniversary appeal.

Mr Willoughby defended the charity's decision to pay his children's school fees, pointing out that the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence paid for the private education of children whose parents had been posted overseas. Mr Willoughby said that, although he and his wife, Fiona, were based in Scotland, he travelled overseas for work, often to dangerous locations.

On Saturday, the details on Mrs Willoughby's personal photography website were altered following inquiries by The Telegraph. Her entry previously read: "We started a family, so during the next 15 years I rarely travelled while bringing up our four children."

That was changed to: "We started a family, so when our children were very young I rarely travelled abroad." Mr Willoughby told The Telegraph: "I am abroad two or three weeks every month and my wife is also abroad a lot of the time, so when we are abroad who is going to look after the children?"

Mr Willoughby said it was time the charitable sector began paying salaries that would attract the best talent, but added he had "no control" over his package. His remuneration has risen from about £135,000 in 2008 to about £215,000 last year, as more of his children became eligible to have their school fees paid. The fees are paid for children between 10 and 18.

Mr Willoughby said the amount would drop next year when one of them finished school. "The advantage to the Halo Trust of the remuneration package and the school fees allowance is actually that as employees [and their children] get older, it costs the charity less."