



Parliamentary Briefing

Motion relating to the Big Society

How many charities are there in England and Wales?

There are 180,000 registered charities in England and Wales. In addition, there are countless thousands of small charities below the income threshold (£5,000 per year) that are not required to register.

How much money is there in the charity sector?

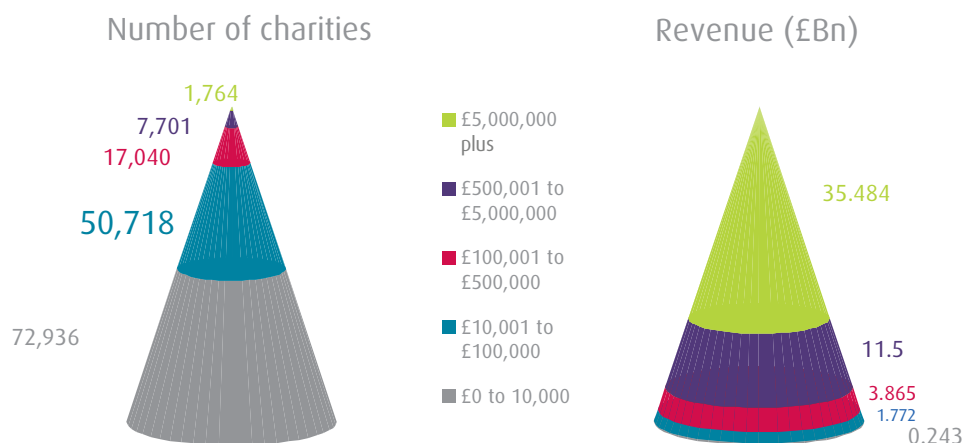
As of December 2010, the total annual income of registered charities was £53.9 billion.

What is the 'shape' of the charity sector?

Most charities are small, although larger charities tend to receive the bulk of income.

- Over four fifths (84%) of registered charities have an income of £10,000 or less
- These charities have less than 5% of the income recorded
- Around 6% of charities receive almost 90% of the total annual income recorded. The largest 500 charities (0.3% of those on the register) attract almost 50% of the total income

Charities in England and Wales



How many people work in the charity sector?

- There are 850,000 charity trustees. Trustees serve on the governing body of a charity and are responsible for the general control and management of the charity's administration. Most trustees donate their time and expertise voluntarily
- In addition, there are 780,000 paid staff
- There are 2.7 million volunteers. Many charities rely on volunteers to help them fulfil their aims, especially small and local charities

How is the charity sector regulated?

The Charity Commission is the regulator and registrar for charities in England and Wales. Its principal functions are to:

- Maintain a public Register of Charities
- Enforce charity law and protect charities from fraud and abuse
- Publish a range of guidance and give tailored advice
- Give charities legal permission to make particular changes

The regulators for other parts of the UK are the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) and the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (CCNI).

How can the Register help me find out about charities?

- The Register is a public window on the sector and individual charities
- 12 million hits online in the past year
- Data freely available for research and analysis
- Search by charity type, activity, income, registration date and location – including constituency
- 83% of charities file documents online and charities can update details online at any time

How does the Charity Commission help smaller charities?

The Commission aims to keep the regulatory burden for small charities proportionate. Among the measures adopted to achieve this are:

- Thousands of charities are not required to register with the Charity Commission
- Charities with an income of £10k and below are asked to submit an Annual Update to help keep the Register accurate. Time taken to prepare: approx 19 minutes.
- Charities with an income of £10k-£25k are required to make an Annual Return, approx 22 minutes

Charity regulation in the future

Following the announcement of a real terms funding cut of 33% by 2014/15, the Charity Commission is conducting a public consultation on its future role and focus. It is seeking to review its key priorities and develop a new strategy, which can be delivered within the resources available.

This will mean a rebalancing of the relationship between the sector and the regulator so that umbrella bodies, and charities themselves, take back responsibility for sharing and promoting good practice – building the strength and prominence of sector organisations. It will mean reinforcing the confidence and self-reliance of charities to make their own decisions within the legal boundaries wherever possible. It will also mean reducing our interventions in individual charities and, over time, our one-to-one advice to charities.

Our senior staff are always happy to meet with parliamentarians to brief them on an issue, to address specific concerns, or to discuss the work of the Charity Commission generally. If such a meeting would be useful to you, contact our Public Affairs Manager, Andrew Rudd, by telephone on 020 7674 2322 or by email at andrew.rudd@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk