



## Parliamentary Briefing

# Debate on role of the voluntary sector and social enterprise, 21 June 2012

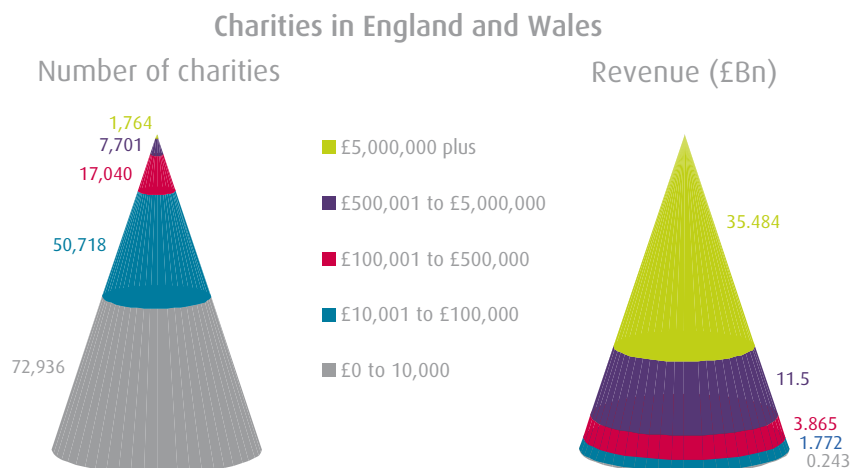
The Charity Commission is the regulator and registrar for charities in England and Wales. Our core role is to protect the public interest in the integrity of charity. We do this by maintaining the public Register of Charities, making sure charities comply with the law, offering guidance on our website and granting legal orders where our permission is required.

### Charities in England and Wales

- According to the Register of Charities, there are 162,000 registered charities in England and Wales with a combined annual income of £57 billion.
- In addition, there are thousands more charities that are not required to register (those with an income of below £5,000 per year and certain types of exempt and excepted charities).
- Some, but not all, social enterprises are charities.

### 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 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.



## How many people work in the charity sector?

- There are 900,000 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, charities employ around 700,000 paid staff.
- There are 2.7 million volunteers. Many charities rely on volunteers to help them fulfil their aims, especially small and local charities.
- Roughly a quarter of the adult population volunteers at least once a month.

## The Register of Charities – a public window on the sector and individual charities

- 97% of the total income of charities in England and Wales is accounted for through the Register, available on the Commission's website: [www.charitycommission.gov.uk](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk).
- The Register received 12 million hits online in the past year.
- Data is freely available for research and analysis.
- Search by charity type, activity, income, registration date and location – including parliamentary constituency.
- 83% of charities file documents online and charities can update details online at any time.

## Charities you can support with confidence

- A well-regulated sector helps to promote public trust and confidence in charities.
- The Commission's oversight of the sector aims to be proportionate, transparent and accountable. We are committed to the 'right touch' principle of regulation.
- We follow a risk-based approach when assessing concerns about charities. Our published [risk framework](#) provides clear information about when and how we get involved.

For further information, please contact our Public Affairs Manager, Andrew Rudd, by telephone on 020 7674 2322 or by email at [andrew.rudd@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.rudd@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk).