



Parliamentary Briefing

Public trust and confidence survey July 2010

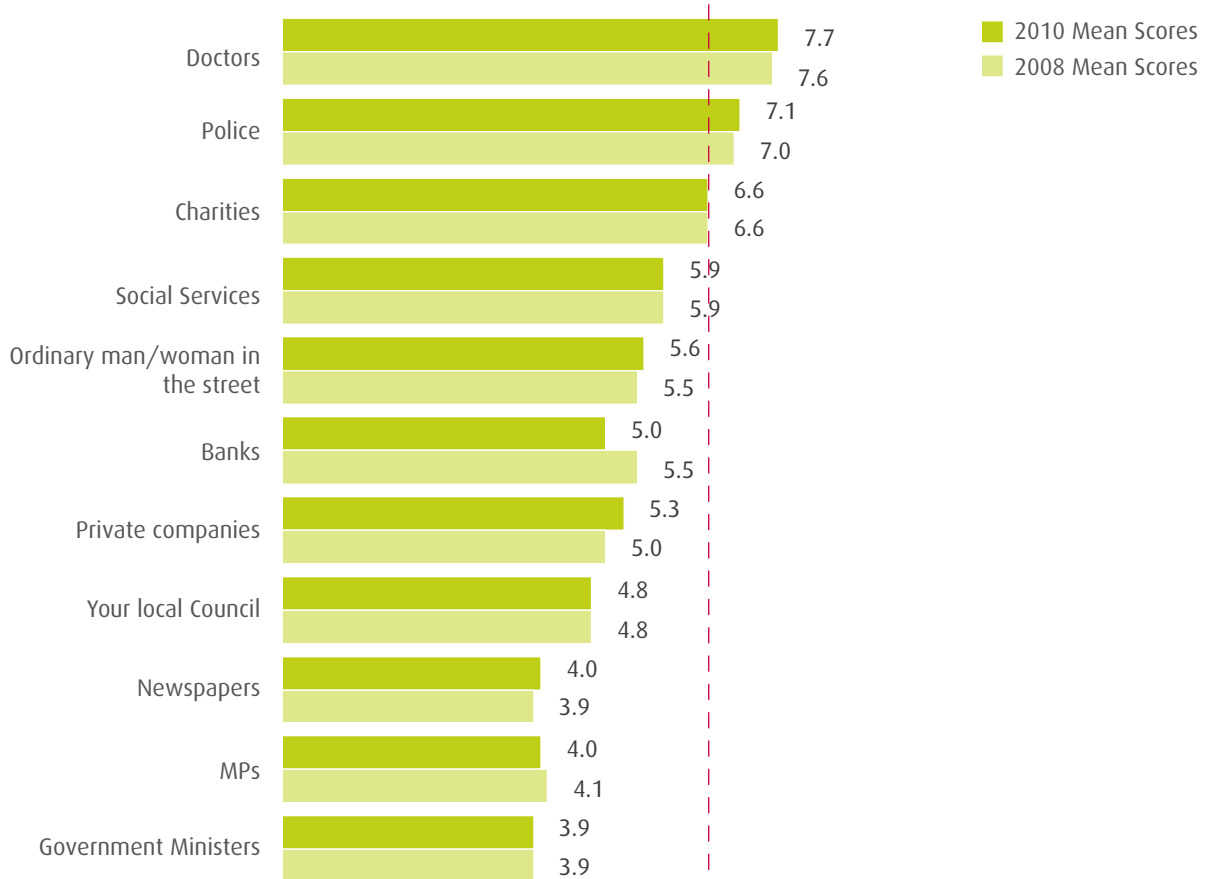
As the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales, the Charity Commission has a statutory objective to increase public trust and confidence in charity. We measure this regularly through commissioning independent research. Our 2010 survey, conducted by Ipsos MORI, shows that charities continue to enjoy high levels of public trust and confidence. It also gives some interesting insights into people’s perceptions of charities and what role they should play in society.

What do people think of charities?

Charities are the third most trusted group in society, just after doctors and the police.

Furthermore, the proportion of respondents saying their trust in charities is very high has increased (from 36% to 41%).

Public trust and confidence in Charities vs. other organisations



Base: All respondents –2010 (1,150), 2008 (1,008)

Source: Ipsos MORI



What is most important in ensuring the public's trust and confidence?

People are becoming more discriminating about financial management in charities; they place growing importance on knowing how charities spend their money. 42% of respondents say that ensuring that a reasonable proportion of donations get to the end cause is the most important factor influencing their levels of trust, making it the most important driver of trust and confidence.

This may explain why people value the role of the Charity Commission as a regulator: almost all those asked (96%) agree that it's important that charities provide the public with information about how they spend their money. This information is publicly available via the online Register of Charities. Almost all those asked (98%) believe the role of the Charity Commission is essential, very or fairly important.

Familiarity with the Charity Commission is also linked to higher overall trust and confidence in charities. Those who know the Commission very or fairly well are more likely to trust charities compared to those who have not heard of it (78% versus 67%).

What do people think about charities providing public services?

The survey provides us with some interesting information about people's perceptions of charities as service providers. It shows that people do not have an overall preference for which sector (charities, private companies or public authorities) provides public services – three quarters (73%) say it would make no difference to their level of confidence in the service.

However, when asked about some specific types of service (such as care homes, social housing or hospitals), the largest proportion of people in each case said that public authorities are best at providing these services.

Of the different types of services provided, one in six (16%) believes charities are best at providing information and advice. This was supported by the qualitative research which finds people trust charities to offer objective, non-judgmental advice. Certain qualities are also more associated with organisations in different sectors. For example, 40% of people think charities are best at providing a caring service, whereas only 6% think they are best at providing a professional service.

It is also worth noting that the survey suggests people are not aware that some services they have received were provided by charities. Only 30% of people considered themselves to be beneficiaries of charities. However, when prompted with specific examples of a wider range of activities and services that charities might provide, such as art galleries or Guide and Scout groups, 93% report having benefited in some way from organisations likely to be classed as charities.

How can I find out more about the research?

The full research report, which includes details of methodology, is available on the Charity Commission's website at www.charitycommission.gov.uk.

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.