



**CHARITY COMMISSION**  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

# Trust and confidence in the Charity Commission

---

July 2017

For: the Charity Commission

Prepared by: Populus

# Table of Content

---

- Background and methodology..... 3
- Executive summary..... 4
- Main report..... 6
  - Awareness and concerns relating to charity work ..... 6
  - Public involvement with the charity sector ..... 7
  - Effectiveness of charity regulation in England and Wales ..... 8
  - Desire for regulation ..... 9
  - Comparative trust and confidence in the charity sector ..... 11
  - Challenges facing the sector..... 13
  - Awareness of the Charity Commission ..... 14
  - Comparative knowledge and perceived effectiveness of regulators ..... 15
  - Trust and confidence in the Charity Commission ..... 17
  - Expectations of the Charity Commission's role ..... 18
  - Performance of the Charity Commission..... 20
  - Clarity of the Charity Commission's role..... 23
  - Contact with the Charity Commission ..... 24
  - Ease of dealing with the Charity Commission ..... 25
  - The register of charities and the Charity Commission's website ..... 26
  - Responsibility for compliance with the law ..... 27
  - Views on Commission funding ..... 28
- Appendix: questionnaires and discussion guides ..... 28

# Background and methodology

---

## Background

The Charity Commission for England and Wales commissioned Populus to conduct independent research into trust and confidence in the Charity Commission. This project builds on a previous project in 2015 investigating trust and confidence in the Charity Commission.

This research was conducted among three audiences: the general public, charities, and stakeholders. It combines both quantitative research with all audiences and qualitative research with key stakeholders.

The primary research objectives were to:

- Establish current attitudes towards the Charity Commission and charity regulation
- Explore the effectiveness of the Charity Commission’s relationship with charities and other key stakeholders
- Explore the impact of charity regulation

## Methodology

**Public:** We conducted 1002 Computer Aided Telephone Interviews (CATI) from 23 February – 2 March 2017. Telephone leads were generated at random, using a Random Digit Dialing (RDD) sample. Results were weighted to be representative of the adult population of England and Wales.

**Charities:** We conducted 1015 online interviews from 7 – 23 March 2017 using a sample of charities selected from the charity register. E-mail invitations were sent to addresses that charities had submitted as a contact point for the Charity Commission. The survey screened respondents to ensure that they were chairs, trustees, chief executives, or senior managers.

**Stakeholders:** We conducted 26 in-depth telephone interviews with charities, Government officials, umbrella bodies and professional advisors from 22 March – 25 April 2017. As is standard practice with senior stakeholders, all interviews were conducted anonymously, and no quotes are attributed to individual participants.

In all surveys, some questions were replicated from the 2015 research project on trust and confidence, while others were new or updated for the 2017 project.

Full questionnaires and discussion guides can be found in the appendix on page 28.

## Executive summary

---

The public are more aware of and engaged with charities and with charity regulation than two years ago. There has been a substantial rise in those who say they have received support from or have close connections to a charity. Three in five have now heard of the Charity Commission and increasing numbers are aware of and using the online register and the Commission's website.

- 31% of the public are aware that they have benefitted from or used a charity's services (up from 19% in 2015)
- 88% of the public agree that the Charity Commission's role is essential or very important
- 71% of the public agree that seeing a charity is registered reassures them
- 58% of the public and 77% of charities feel that charities are regulated effectively
- Public trust and confidence in the Charity Commission remains steady at 6.0

When compared directly to other industries, the charity sector is well trusted. Current public trust in charities is broadly comparable with public trust in schooling and childcare, and the food and drink industry. In addition, the charity sector is still the most trusted sector amongst charities themselves.

Stakeholders perceive a decline in public trust and confidence to be one of the major challenges facing the sector and are concerned about the impact this may have on donations. Other concerns include uncertainty relating to Brexit, how the policies of the government elected after the 2017 General Election might affect charity funding, and the challenges of adapting to new technology. They are particularly sensitive to the lack of resources faced by both the sector and the Charity Commission.

Most (58%) of the public continue to agree that charities in England and Wales are regulated effectively, with only one in five disagreeing. This is lower level than in 2015, when 65% said that it was effective. And although 41% of the public feel that the level of regulation is about right, a significant minority say there is too little. This suggests that alongside growing awareness there is also an increasing appetite for the Commission to do more. Charities and stakeholders believe that, overall, charities are regulated effectively in England and Wales. Stakeholders think it compares favourably on an international scale, and should be held up as an example for other countries to follow.

Despite a context of increased scrutiny on the sector and rising regulatory expectations, public trust and confidence in the Charity Commission has held steady compared to 2015. Charity respondents' trust and confidence in the Charity Commission has dropped a little since 2015 but remains high. In addition, the majority of stakeholders give the Commission fairly high trust and confidence scores. All three audiences make clear that they highly value its role.

Members of the public who have heard of the Charity Commission rate it positively for all performance areas tested, including acting with authority and expertise, being transparent and accountable, and taking action to protect charities from misuse. Charity respondents, who are more knowledgeable about the Commission, rate it even more positively.

Stakeholders also tend to rate it fairly positively on all performance measures, elaborating that the Commission's staff are passionate, committed, and perform well with limited resources. However, most stakeholders (many of whom also rate the Commission positively overall and commend its work) also express concerns that the organisation has at times appeared politically-driven and subjective in its treatment of particular high profile incidents.

Charity respondents find the Charity Commission easy to deal with, the same as in 2015. They are making greater use of the Commission's digital services including updating charity details, obtaining information by email and using online guidance. Stakeholders also universally praise the staff, whose personal contact they value. A few worry that the volume of the Commission's engagement and the services it offers has declined, attributing this to a lack of resources.

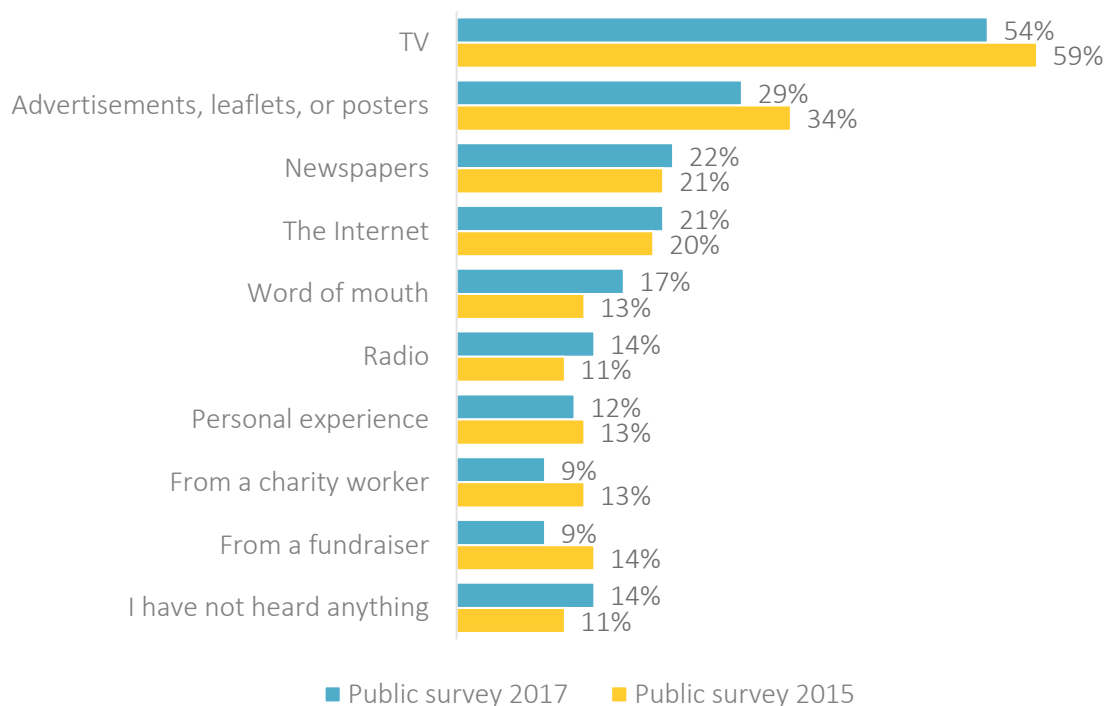
All three audiences agree that there are two sides to the Charity Commission's regulatory role: a) it must be robust in enforcing compliance with charity law, and b) it must also offer support and guidance, which for some includes highlighting the good practice of the majority of the sector.

Stakeholders generally think they have perceived a shift in how the Commission describes its role in the last year or so – from an approach focused on policing to one more focused on offering support – but there is some degree of confusion, and they think the organisation needs to be clearer about the direction in which it wants to move.

All stakeholders are aware of the proposal to seek funding from charities alongside the state. A minority are in favour, arguing that this would enable the Commission to offer greater support to the sector. The majority, however, are fairly evenly split between those who are either ambivalent or opposed. They cite concerns about independence, the ability of smaller charities to pay additional fees, and the possibility that the government would cut funds to the Commission once the new funding model had been put in place.

## Awareness and concerns relating to charity work

The public continue to be exposed to the work of charities. The vast majority (86%) report having heard about the work of charities in the past month, most commonly on television (54%), via advertisements, leaflets or posters (29%), and newspapers (22%).



17% of the public say they have had a concern about a charity in the past 12 months

Of those who had a concern, more than half (58%) did not take any action.

Of those who did take action, very few went to independent or external authorities. Instead, they preferred to express their concern to the charity directly, either by complaining to it or by refusing to donate/unsubscribing from mailing lists.

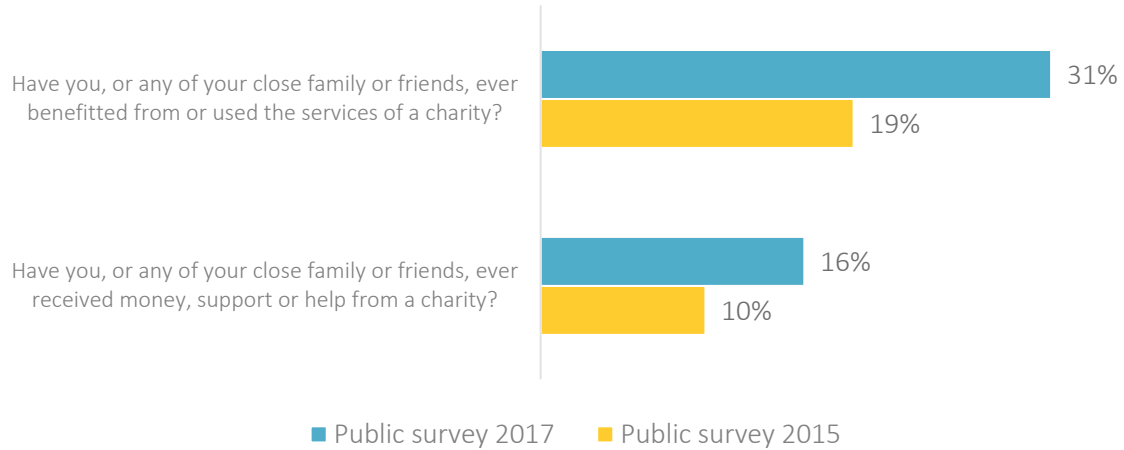
*What action did you take as a result of your most recent concern?*

	Public survey 2017 (base size = 173)
Complained directly to / wrote to the charity	14%
Contacted the Charity Commission	2%
Contacted the Advertising Standards Authority	1%
Contacted the police	0%
Contacted the Fundraising Standards Board	0%
Other - stopped donating to the charity/unsubscribed from mailing lists	14%
None	58%

Those who took action were divided over whether they were happy with the outcome, with a small majority (57%) saying they were happy, 39% saying they were not and 4% saying that neither applied.

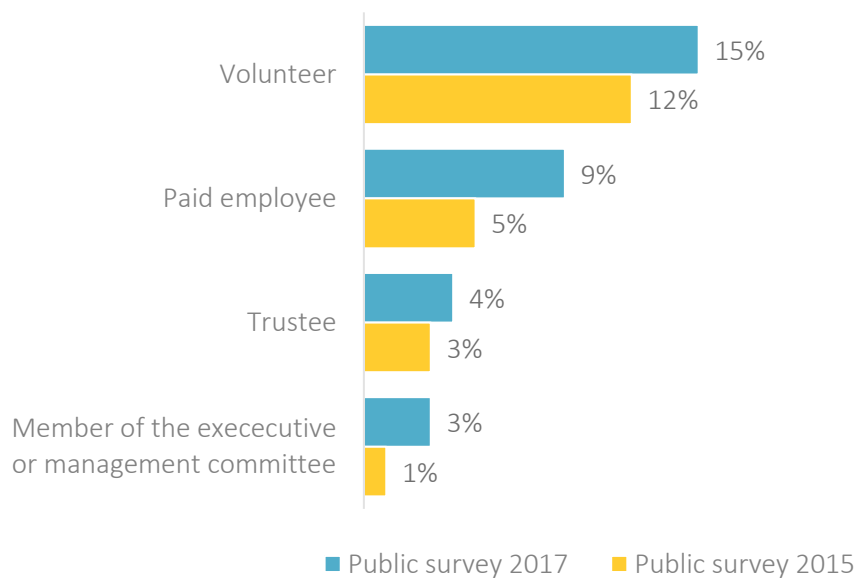
# Public involvement with the charity sector

There has been a significant increase (of around 50% in each case) in the proportions of people who say that they or a close family member or friend has received help from a charity or benefitted from a charity's services:



There have also been modest increases in the proportion who say they are directly involved in charities as compared with the 2015 survey:

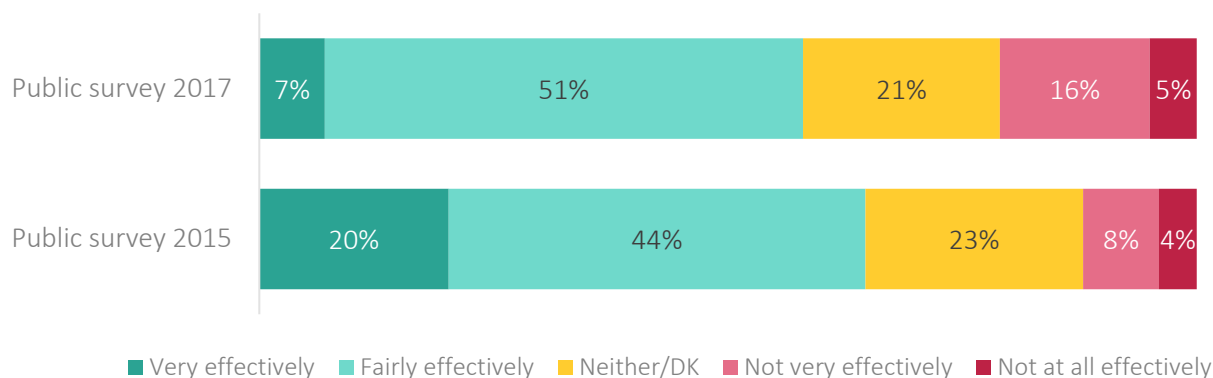
*Do you or any of your close family or friends work for a charity, either as a paid employee, a trustee, a volunteer or member of a charity's executive or management committee?*



# Effectiveness of charity regulation in England and Wales

Most (58%) of the public continue to agree that charities in England and Wales are regulated effectively, with only one in five (21%) disagreeing. However, this represents a lower level of faith in charity regulation than in 2015, when 65% said that it was effective.

*Overall, how effectively do you think charities are regulated in England and Wales?*



The biggest change is among those who think charities are regulated ‘very effectively’, down 13% from 2015. In turn, there has been an increase in those who think they are regulated ‘fairly effectively’, ‘neither effectively nor ineffectively’, and ‘not very effectively’. Nevertheless, the proportion of those who are very critical about the effectiveness of charity regulation remains similar to 2015, at only 1 in 20 members of the public.

## Stakeholder views

Stakeholders believe that, overall, charities are regulated effectively in England and Wales. They think it compares favourably on an international scale, arguing that the England and Wales system is an example for other countries to follow.

They have an awareness of and sympathy for the environment that the Charity Commission operates within, referring to a lack of resources and the large number of charities under its remit.

They are supporters of the regulatory system and value its role in upholding a strong charitable sector – and are clear about placing any criticisms they have in this context.

“Compared to most other places on the planet, **very well indeed**. And that’s something that should be used in their comms strategy.”

“Thinking as an international context a lot of times **we lose sight of how unique** the Commission and the system of regulation is in this country, because it is quite robust actually.”

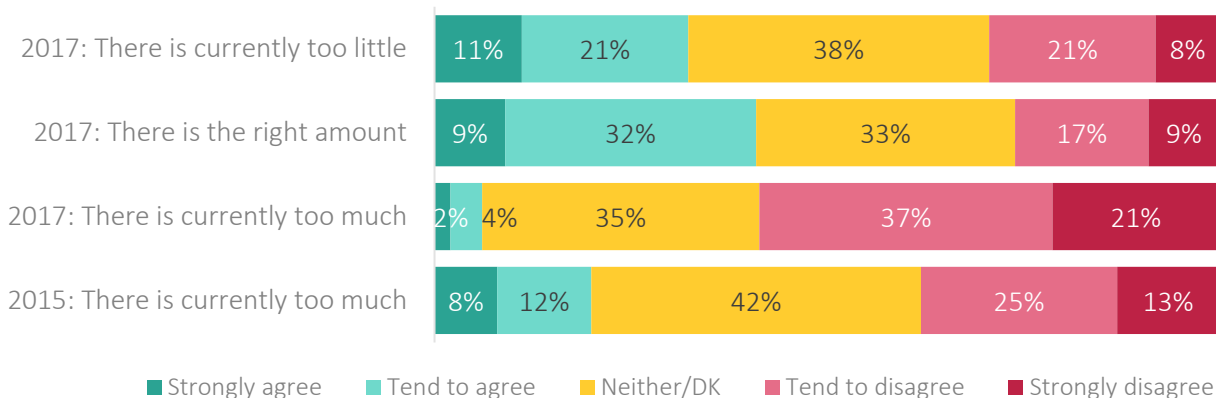
“Overall, I think well-regulated to the extent we wouldn't have gotten where we are now without it being well-regulated. Genuinely, I think the fact that the Commission exists is a good thing, and the Commission itself has, I think, a reasonably **good reputation internationally**.”



# Desire for regulation

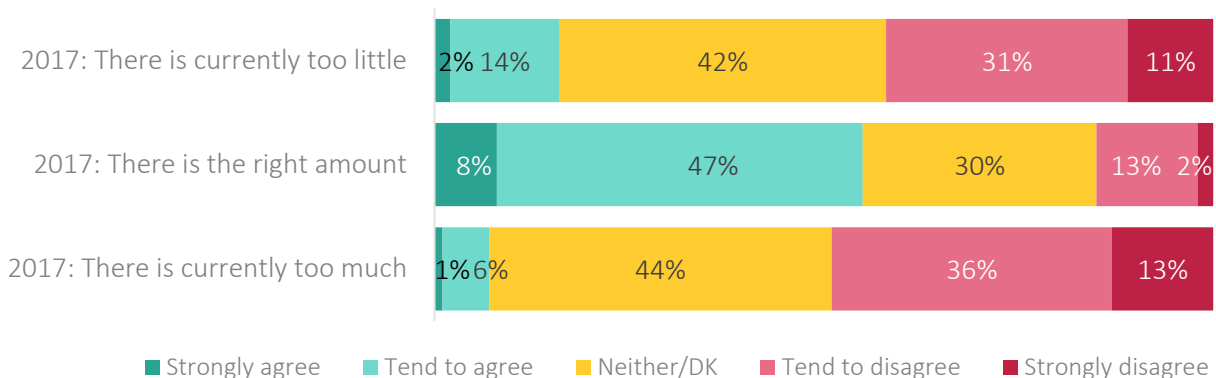
The evidence indicates that, in tandem with awareness, public appetite for more regulation is growing. Whilst 41% of the public feel that the current level of regulation of charities is about right, a significant minority think that there is too little regulation. The proportion who think that there is currently too much regulation of charities has fallen from 20% in 2015 to 7% in 2017.

*To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements (about how much regulation there is of charities)?*  
**Public surveys 2017 and 2015**



In contrast, charity respondents are much less likely to agree that there is ‘too little regulation’ of charities (32% of the public agree vs only 16% of charity respondents). They tend to think that there is the right amount of regulation: 55% agree with this sentiment vs only 15% who disagree.

*To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about how much regulation there is of charities?*  
**Charity survey 2017**



# Desire for regulation

*'I trust charities to work independently'. To what extent do you agree or disagree?*

	SUM: Agree	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	SUM: Disagree
Public survey 2017	51%	14%	37%	21%	18%	9%	27%
Public survey 2015	64%	24%	40%	18%	10%	6%	16%

In 2017, the public are significantly less likely to trust charities to work independently than they were two years ago: only half (51%) say they trust them to work independently – a drop of 13% since 2015. This includes a decrease of 1 in 4 in 2015 to 1 in 7 in 2017 who ‘strongly agree’ that they trust charities to work independently.

## Stakeholder views

Stakeholders stress that there needs to be a balanced approach to regulation.

They argue that the Charity Commission should always be looking to make sure charities are working for the public benefit – and most believe that the Charity Commission does a good job at this already.

Though some wish for the Charity Commission to enforce stricter regulation, they are sensitive to the extent to which this is reliant upon resourcing.

Very few argue that the Commission should aim to regulate less, with the important caveat that it must aim to be preventative as well as reactive, and that it should seek to highlight the fact that the vast majority of charities comply with regulation.

“Yes, I think that's what it's there for. I **don't have a problem** with the Commission wielding a big stick and being seen to do it where that's appropriate, but I think it does also need to recognise **where there's good stuff going on.**”

“**There's a distinction between 'could [regulate more]' and 'should [regulate more]'**. I think they already do quite a lot and I think charities already provide quite a lot of information. I would question whether the Commission can do much more with the resources it has.”

“I think they could do more to make sure that charities are collecting the money correctly and truthfully and not paying themselves a huge proportion of the proceeds.

I would have liked the Commission people to have been **more rigorous** in their questioning.”

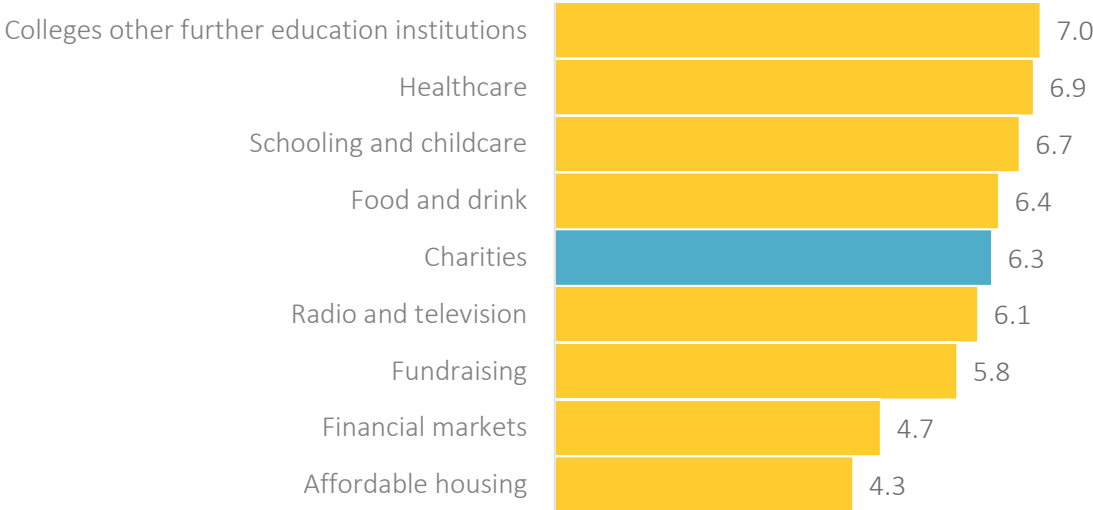
“That's a difficult one. Yes. All regulators probably should [regulate more to ensure charities are working for the public benefit], but **it really is a resourcing issue** and an outreach issue.”

# Comparative trust and confidence in the charity sector

When compared to other industries, the charity sector is well trusted by the public, who give it an average trust and confidence score of 6.3 on a scale of 0-10. This is comparable with the level of trust and confidence the public has in schooling and childcare (6.7) and the food and drink industry (6.4). However, it is not quite as high as the level of trust and confidence in educational institutions (7.0).

The charity sector is more trusted than the fundraising industry (5.8), financial markets (4.7) and affordable housing (4.5).

*For each of the following UK industries, how much trust and confidence do you have in the industry as a whole?\** (0-10 scale, mean scores)  
**Public survey 2017**

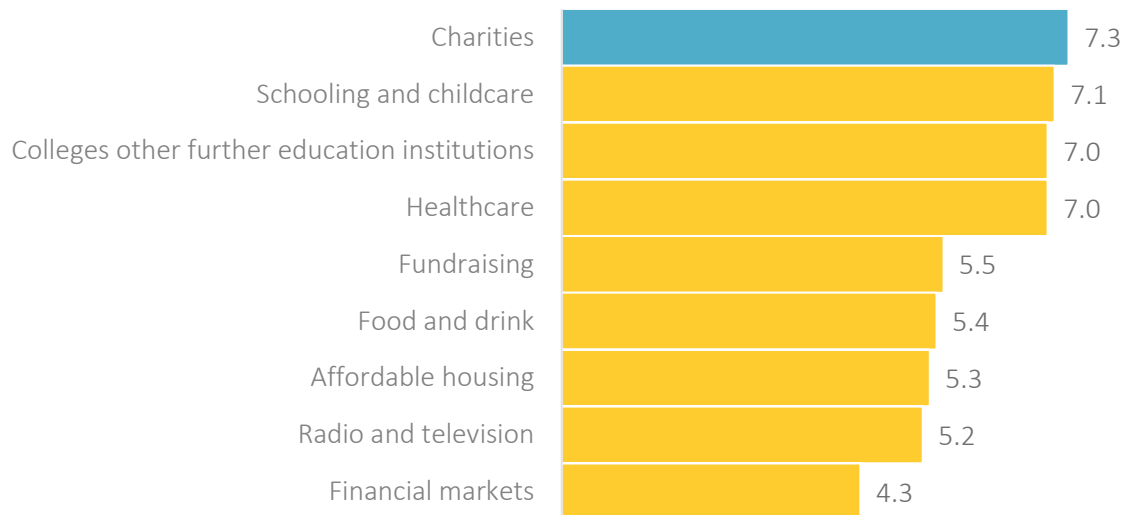


\* The public and charity respondents were asked to rate their level of trust and confidence in various industries in order to provide a direct comparison to trust and confidence in charities. Because of this, the question regarding trust and confidence in charities is framed differently from the 2016 research on trust and confidence in the charity sector and so those results are not used as a comparator here.

# Comparative trust and confidence in the charity sector

Charity respondents have a high average level of trust and confidence in the charity sector (7.3) – more so than any industry and more so than the public as a whole. Interestingly, charities have a slightly lower level of trust and confidence in the fundraising industry than the public do (5.5 vs 5.8 respectively).

*For each of the following UK industries, how much trust and confidence do you have in the industry as a whole?\** (0-10 scale, mean scores)  
**Charity survey 2017**



## Stakeholder views

Stakeholders think that trust and confidence in the charity sector is at a low point. They perceive this to be one of the most pressing issues facing the sector, and worry about how it will impact fundraising and resourcing.

They say that high profile media stories – such as Kids Company – have damaged public trust in charities. For charities to demonstrate that they can be trusted, stakeholders believe that they need not only to be open, transparent, and accountable, but also to clearly prove the impact of their work.

“The public need confidence in the way in which charities are governed. That’s a key issue. Some of the **damage that we’ve seen** over the last couple of years – the most spectacular example was Kids Company – were failures of governance.”

“The trouble is that the ‘truth’ only seems to be one-sided at the moment. Actually around 90% of the sector is **doing good work** and having great impact, but it **doesn’t feel as though there is any sense of that.**”

“The first is to be **transparent** in their dealings.  
The second is to be more effective at describing the **impact** that they have.”

# Challenges facing the sector

## Stakeholder views

The charity sector is seen to face a wide range of challenges which threaten to impact the way it operates. Stakeholders typically name at least two or three of the following major challenges: public trust and confidence, lack of resources, Brexit, the increasing competitiveness of the sector, and fundraising.

The most pressing of these are generally seen to be restoring public trust and confidence, which interviewees think could impact the long-term ability of charities to attract donations, and lack of resources.

The political environment is also seen to add uncertainty to the latter, with a new government and new relations with the EU to be determined. Stakeholders worry about how state resources and the regulatory environment will be affected.

In the long term, some point towards challenges and opportunities relating to the sector's ability to embrace data and new technologies at the same pace as businesses while struggling with a lack of funding.

"It's that whole issue about **trust and confidence**, and about mission and values. I think those are the two absolutely fundamental challenges that the sector has."

"The obvious one is **funding and resources** which is always there."

"I think the world is moving very fast and making sure it's able to keep up with a **fast-changing external environment, the digital world**, social media. How charities operate in the modern world I think is a challenge. [...] Also how technological changes drive different expectations from the public."

"For charities being able to invest enough in their organisations to maintain the use of **data**, to be able to use **new technology** and embrace all those sorts of things, these are quite expensive items up front. There is a danger that the sector becomes left behind."

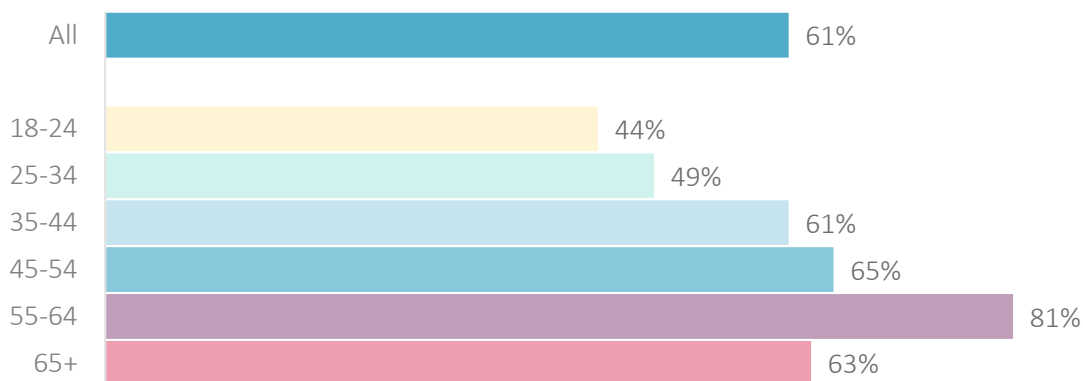
"The [decline in] **public trust and confidence** does appear to be already having an impact on donated funds. So what does that mean for the regulator? Well, the regulator needs to ensure public trust and confidence. You do that in two ways. You do it by knocking down those people whose activities are degrading public trust and confidence, but you also have to do something to reinforce it as well."

# Awareness of the Charity Commission

A higher proportion of the public this year are aware of the Charity Commission than in 2015 (61% vs 47%, although there has been a small change in the question wording\*).

Older members of the public are more likely to say they have heard of the Charity Commission. This was also the case in 2015.

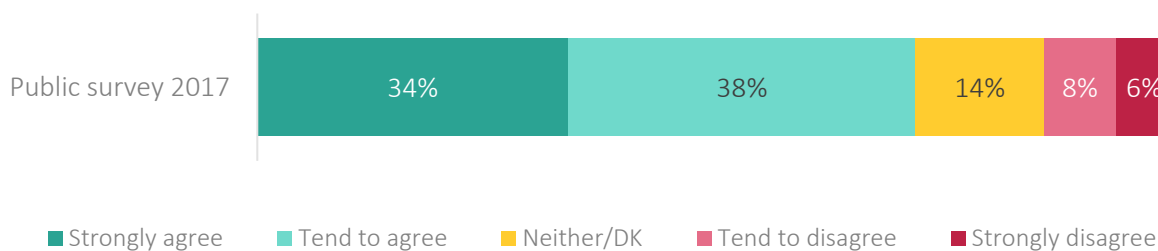
*We mentioned the Charity Commission at the start of this survey. Had you ever heard of the Charity Commission before this conversation?*  
Public survey 2017



Of the 61% who have heard of the Charity Commission, 32% claim to know about ‘the Charity Commission and what it does’ either very well or fairly well. This is an increase from 29% in 2015.

The majority (71%) of the public agree that seeing that a charity is registered reassures them.

*How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?*  
*‘Seeing a charity is registered reassures me’*



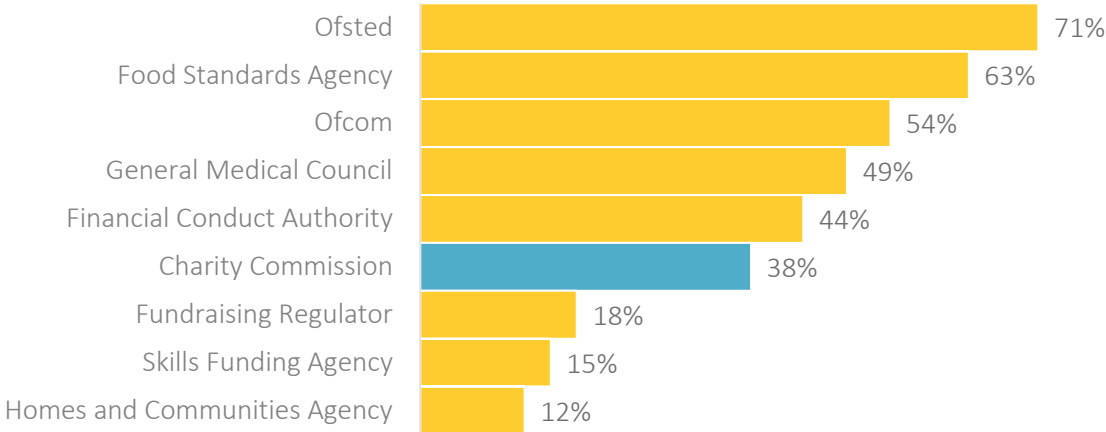
\*2015: Have you ever heard of the Charity Commission?

2017: We mentioned the Charity Commission at the start of this survey. Have you ever heard of the Charity Commission before this conversation?

# Comparative knowledge and perceived effectiveness of regulators

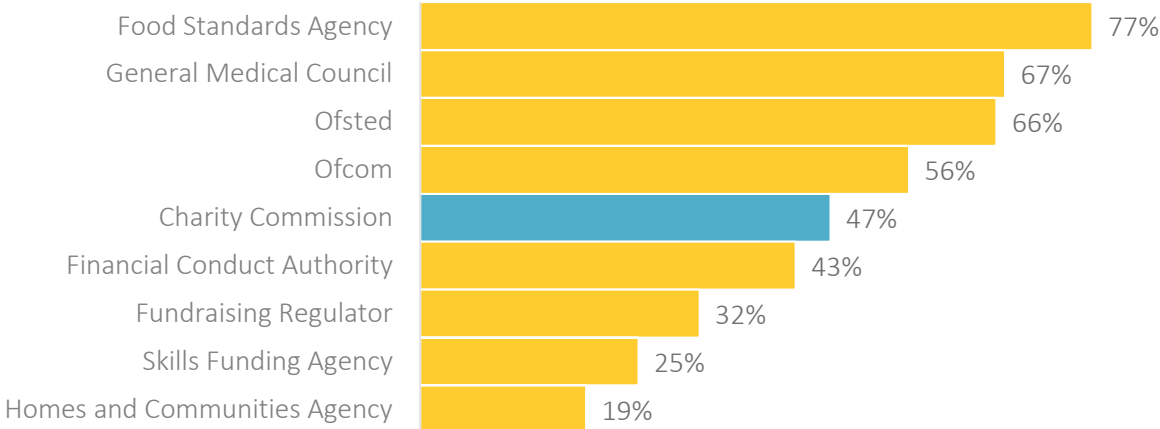
When asked alongside other regulators, almost four in ten (38%) of the public claim to know the Charity Commission either ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ well. The public think they know Ofsted, the Food Standards Agency, Ofcom, the General Medical Council, and the Financial Conduct Authority better than the Charity Commission.

*How well, if at all, do you feel you know the following regulators?  
[Showing sum: well]  
Public survey 2017*



In context, perceptions of the Commission’s effectiveness hold up well. Compared with other regulators, the Charity Commission is perceived as relatively effective – less so than Ofcom but more so than the Financial Conduct Authority.

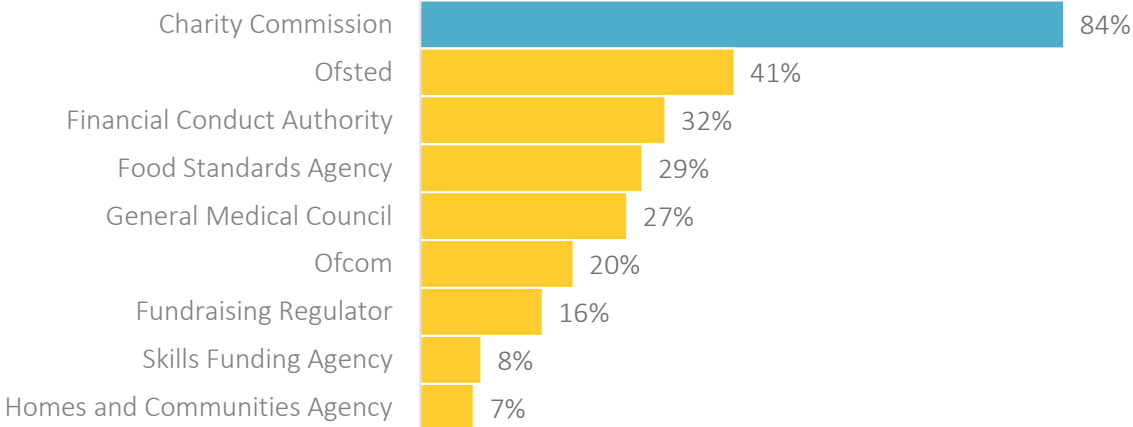
*How effective, if at all, do you feel each of the following regulators to be?  
[Showing sum: effective]  
Public survey 2017*



# Comparative knowledge and perceived effectiveness of regulators

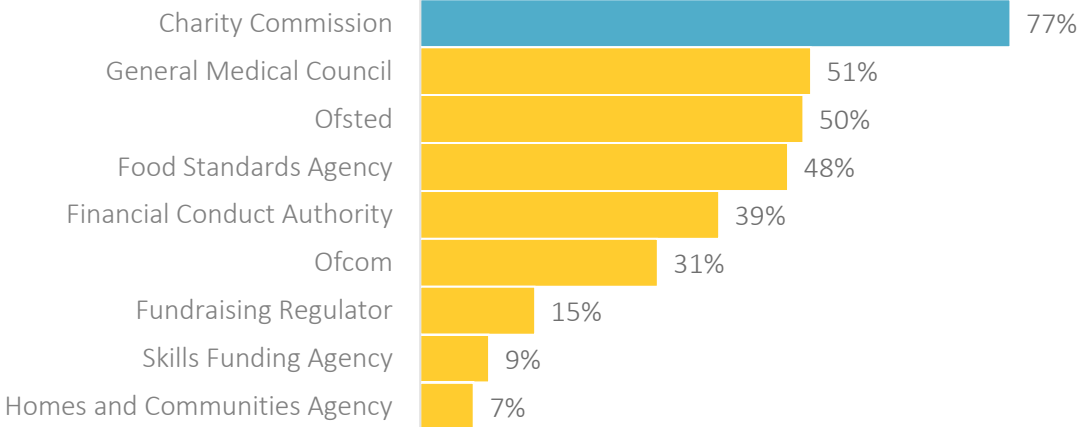
Knowledge of the Charity Commission among charity respondents is much higher than among the public. Most (63%) think they know the Charity Commission fairly well, and a further 21% say they know it very well, leaving only 15% who think they don't know the Charity Commission well.

*How well, if at all, do you feel you know the following regulators?  
[Showing sum: well]  
Charity survey 2017*



Similarly, more than 3 in 4 charity respondents think the Charity Commission is effective – a much higher proportion than for any other regulator.

*How effective, if at all, do you feel each of the following regulators to be?  
[Showing sum: effective]  
Charity survey 2017*





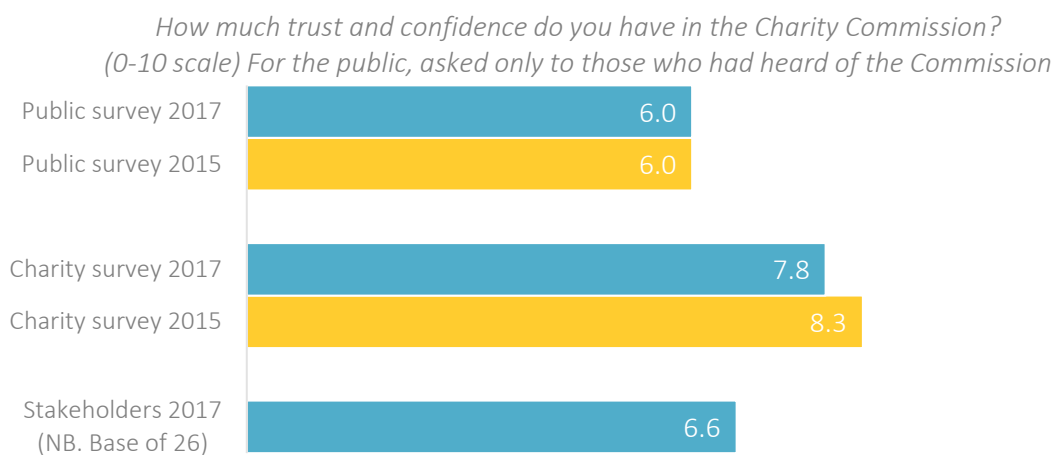
# Trust and confidence in the Charity Commission

Levels of trust and confidence in the Charity Commission among members of the public who have heard of it remain steady compared to 2015 (6.0/10). This is despite the public's lower perception of the effectiveness of charity regulation compared to 2015 (see pages 8 and 7).

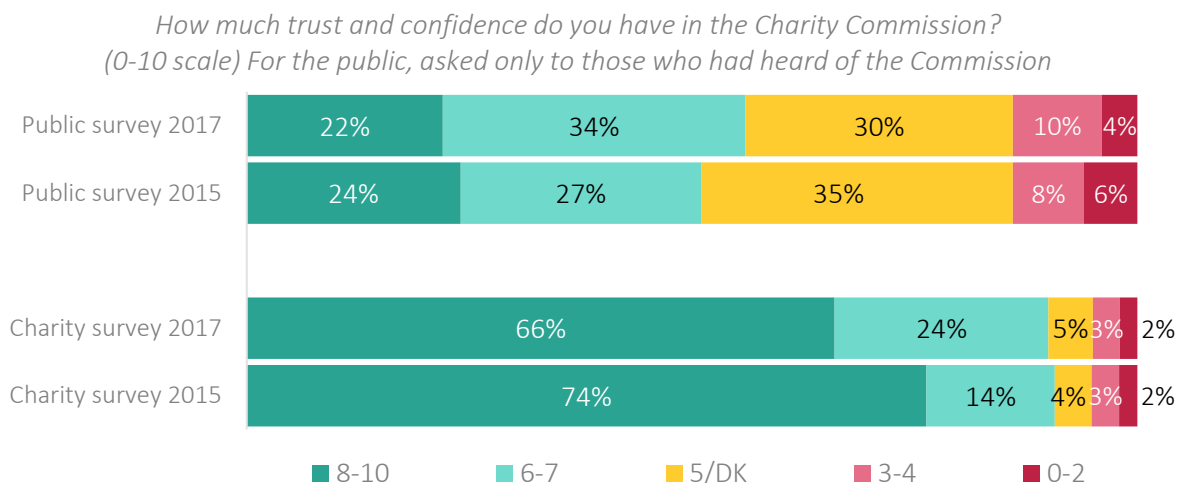
A majority of charity respondents still give the Charity Commission a positive trust and confidence rating of 8-10 (66%, vs 74% in 2015), although charities' average trust and confidence score in the Commission has slightly declined since 2015 (7.8/10 vs 8.3).

Stakeholders were asked to give an indicative score of their level of trust and confidence in the Charity Commission. They tend to give fairly positive scores (typically between 5-7) for overall trust and confidence in the Charity Commission.

## Trust and confidence mean scores



## Trust and confidence breakdown



The vast majority of both public and charity respondents think that their level of trust and confidence in the Charity Commission has not changed. However, the proportion of the public who say that their trust and confidence has decreased in the past two years has risen from 7% to 14%.

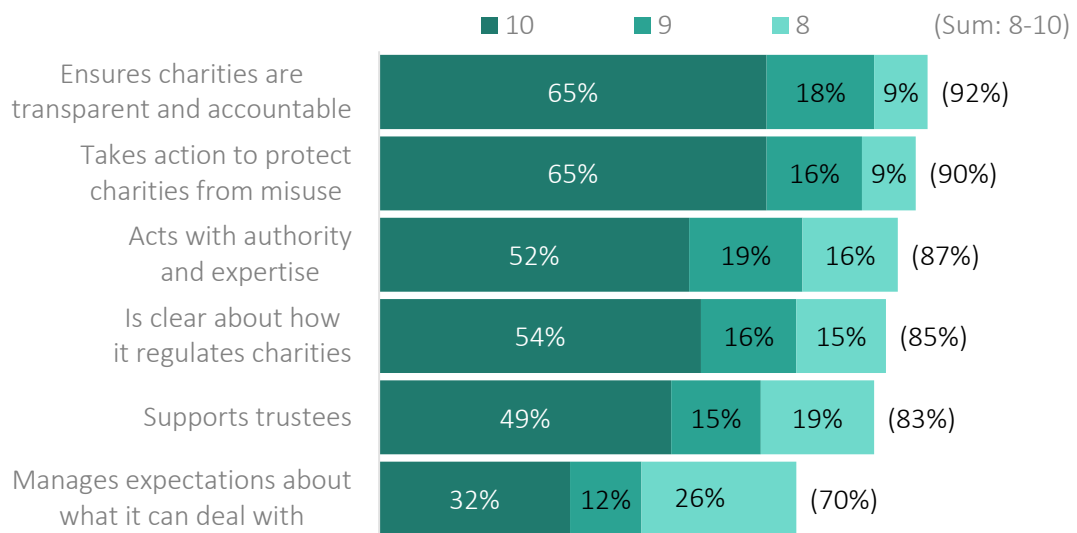
# Expectations of the Charity Commission's role

The public and charity respondents alike think that the Charity Commission plays a very important role. 59% of the public agree that the Charity Commission's role is 'essential' and a further 29% identify it as 'very important' (88% overall). This is very similar to 2015, when 57% described it as 'essential' and 32% as 'very important'.

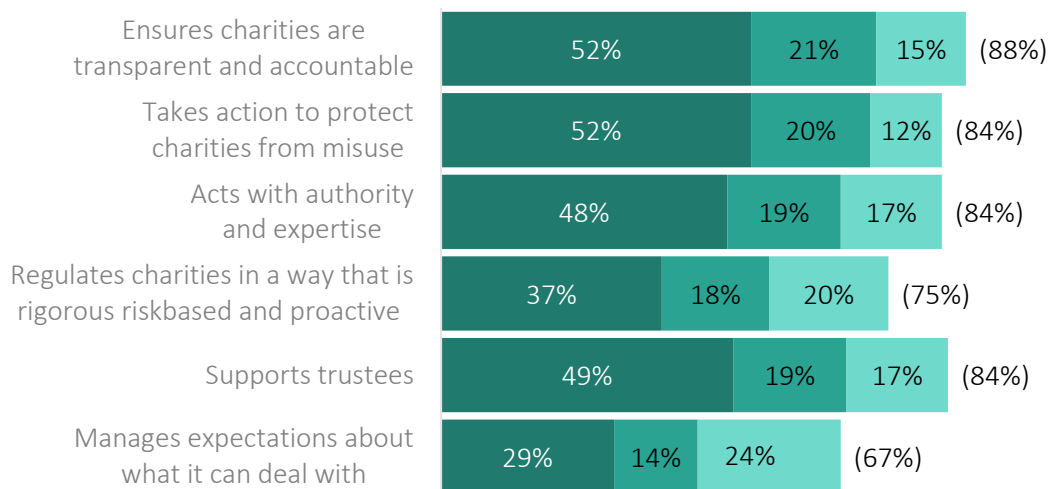
The public and charity respondents are closely aligned in their perceptions of which areas are most important for the Charity Commission. The vast majority of both audiences agree that it is important for the Commission to: a) ensure charities are transparent and accountable; b) take action to protect charities; c) act with authority and expertise, and d) support trustees. While still important to a majority, the need to manage expectations about the Commission's remit is rated as less important.

*How important or unimportant do you think it is that the Charity Commission does the following? (0-10 scale, showing the % who gave scores of 8-10)*

**Public survey 2017**



**Charity survey 2017**



# Expectations of the Charity Commission's role

---

## Stakeholder views

Most stakeholders believe that there are two sides to the Charity Commission's regulatory role: a) it must be robust in enforcing compliance with charity law, and b) it must also offer support and guidance, which for some includes highlighting the good practice of the majority of the sector.

"I always used to hold up the Charity Commission as a model of excellence globally, and 'why doesn't the rest of the world have a similar sort of charity commission that is **both a friend and a regulator**'? And other nations would come to the UK and look at the Charity Commission model and try to learn from it.

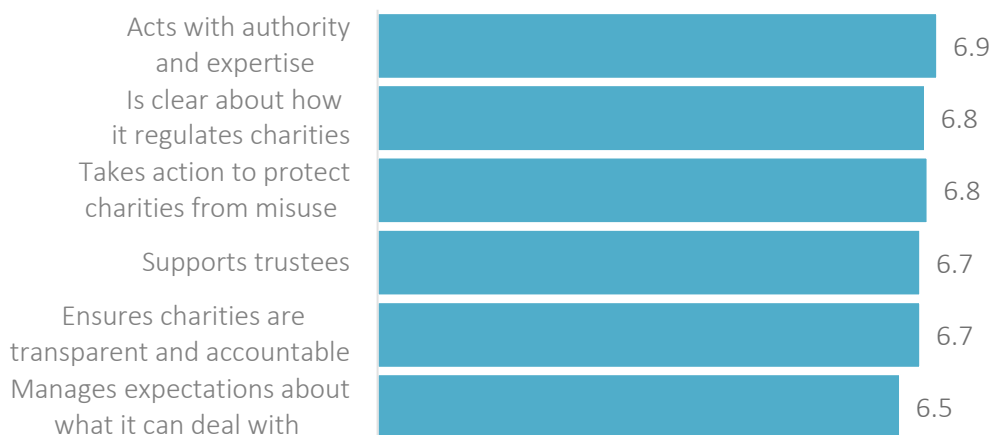
But since then, I think it's also moved too far to being just a regulator and not being a friend of the sector."

"I think the sector needs to be more open than it is now. I think also the regulatory bodies, which includes the Commission, need to be much clearer with public about **where the sector gets it right** and **where the sector gets it wrong.**"

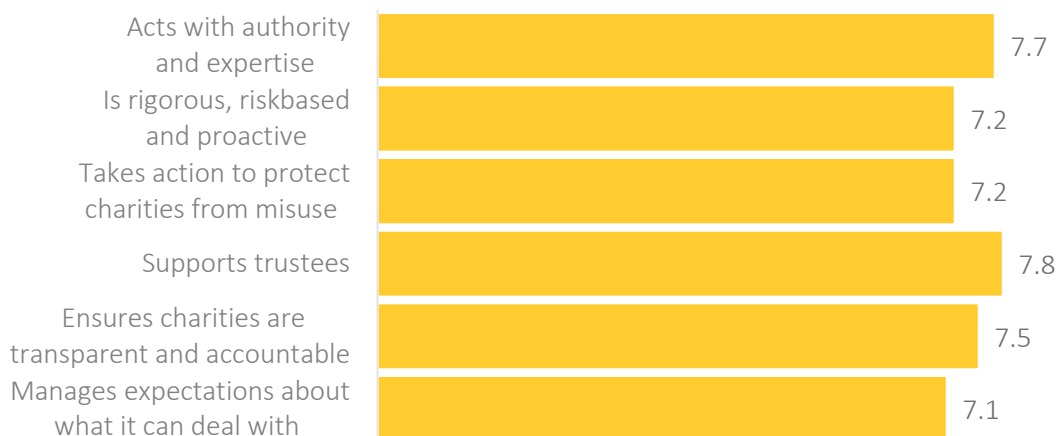
# Performance of the Charity Commission

How well would you say the Charity Commission is performing in each of these areas? (0-10 scale). Only asked to those who have heard of the Commission.

*Public survey 2017 (mean scores)*



*Charity survey 2017 (mean scores)*



Both the public and charity respondents are more positive than negative about the Charity Commission’s performance across all areas tested.

The public, knowing less about the Charity Commission, do not differentiate much between the Commission’s performance across different areas, with a narrow range of 29-38% agreeing that the Charity Commission performs well in each area.

Charity respondents, who know more about the Charity Commission, tend to give higher scores and with greater variation between measures (with a wider range of 35-59% agreeing that the Commission performs well in each area), although the range of mean scores is only 7.1-7.8.

Charity respondents believe that the Commission is performing best on supporting trustees (7.8/10) and acting with authority and expertise (7.7/10). They give their lowest score (7.1/10) for managing expectations about what issues the Charity Commission deals with, but this is also the area to which they assign the least importance.

# Performance of the Charity Commission

Stakeholders were asked to rate the Commission on a more detailed set of measures:

*How well would you say the Charity Commission is performing in each of these areas? (0-10 scale, mean scores)*

	Stakeholder research 2017 (NB. small base size of 26)
Taking action against charities which break the rules	6.7
Making trustees aware of their duties and responsibilities	6.7
Acting with authority and expertise	6.6
Investigating concerns about charities	6.6
Encouraging greater transparency and accountability by charities	6.5
Protecting charities from abuse or mismanagement	6.3
Being fair and impartial when regulating charities	6.3
Enabling trustees to run their charities effectively	6.2
Being accountable for what it does	6.2
Being efficient	6.2
Contributing to debate on charity regulation	6.2
Being consistent in how it regulates charities	5.9

# Performance of the Charity Commission

## Stakeholder views

Stakeholders give the Charity Commission net positive ratings for each of the performance areas tested, and an overall trust and confidence score of 6.6/10. They are positive about the Charity Commission's commitment to the role and also generally have trust and confidence in it to regulate despite what they see as insufficient resources from government. They rate the Commission fairly highly on all measures tested, including taking action against charities which break the rules (6.7), making trustees aware of their duties and responsibilities (6.7), and acting with authority and expertise (6.6).

Stakeholders also identify some concerns. Some believe that the Charity Commission has occasionally overreacted to media narratives, inadvertently damaging public perception of the charity sector. Some argue that its reactions have sometimes taken a "political" angle at odds with its independence and objectivity. They commonly cite its guidance on the EU referendum and its reaction to incidents involving Islamic charities as examples (and give the Commission its lowest score – though still net positive – for 'being consistent in how it regulates charities'). Some stakeholders feel that, to help address this, the Commission board should include more members with substantial third sector experience. Over half of the stakeholders interviewed raised one or more of these concerns.

Nevertheless, these same stakeholders also commend the work that the Charity Commission does overall and value its role. While stakeholders rate the Commission lowest for 'being consistent in how it regulates charities', they still give an above average indicative score (5.9), underlining that while they identify areas where they think improvements can be made, they think that the Commission is broadly doing a good job.

In coming to conclusions about how the Charity Commission is run, some stakeholders draw a distinction between the Commission's day-to-day operations, which they highly praise, and some of its public communications.

"The team that are running the Charity Commission are **doing a good job.**"

"On occasion there has been, not just perceptions, but I think warranted, evidence based perceptions that they have been a **subjective robust regulator, rather than an objective robust regulator.**"

"They've been **overly driven** by what people in politics or the media are prioritising for them."

"**Overall they do a good job** as regulator. I think their database of information is good and I think they're investing in it so I think that will continue to improve and enable them to pick up anomalies and so on. There's always more to be done."

"The other most explicit example is the way they handled the advice on the **EU referendum**. [...] Certainly the tone of it was wrong, and some people would argue that legally it was wrong."

"I think it's the occasions when individual Commission board members have made **public comments that aren't necessarily evidence based.**"

# Clarity of the Charity Commission's role

Charity survey respondents and stakeholders were asked about the clarity of the Charity Commission's role and how it has changed in the past 12 months.

Among charity respondents, most (60%) thought that the clarity of the Commission's role was no different to last year. Of the remaining respondents, 16% said that it had become clearer, and 5% said that it had become less clear, while 19% said that they did not know.

## Stakeholder views

Stakeholders suggest that – while progress has been made – the Charity Commission needs to be clearer about the direction in which it wants to move. Many have detected what they see as signs of a shift from an approach centred on policing to one that is more supportive – and many are in favour of such a shift – though they want this to be more explicitly defined.

“I think it has become clearer. There has definitely been **a subtle, but welcome, shift in the rhetoric**, which has been matched by reality of behaviours. I think it's starting to grapple effectively with the tension that is always going to be there for a regulator, which is that it is also a source of impartial advice and guidance.

I think it was definitely **too skewed towards policing two or three years ago**. I think it is moving back into what I would consider to be an appropriate balance.”

“Where it is at the moment, I'm not quite sure, because there are **different messages put out at different times**.”

“**I'm not entirely clear** about where it's going. Three, four, five years ago they were quite adamant about being more of a kind of policeman [...]

I'm sort of hearing signs that they're moving a little bit back from the hardline compliance stance, but I don't know if that's officially expressed.”

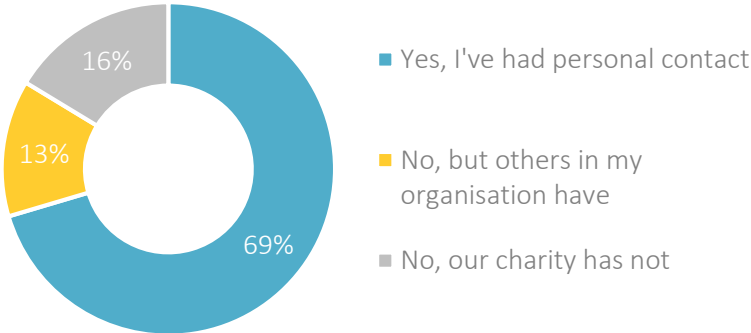
“It's become **slightly less clear**. They're beginning to talk again about 'compliance but also we need to be able to give advice' etc. For about the last four or five years, they've been much clearer about their role being about compliance and policing [...]. Now they're drifting back. People are not really knowing whether they're there to ensure compliance or whether they're there to be champions of the sector.”

# Contact with the Charity Commission

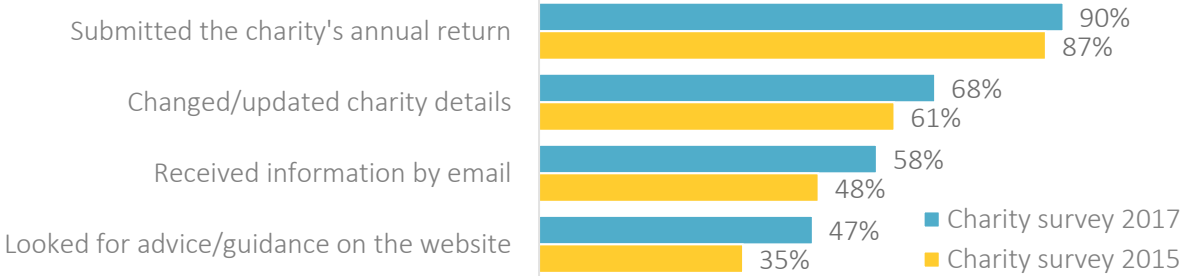
Seven in ten (69%) charity respondents have had personal contact with the Charity Commission in the past 12 months (the same as in 2015), and a further 13% say that others within their organisation had contact. The most common reasons for contact are routine ones – to submit an annual return or to update details.

Almost six in ten (58%) of those who had contact recall receiving information by email from the Commission, while 47% say they actively looked for advice or guidance on the website.

Charity survey 2017



There have been significant increases in the proportions updating charity details, receiving information by email, and looking for guidance online compared with 2015, showing increased use of the Charity Commission’s digital and online services.



Asked only to those who had personal or organisational contact with the Charity Commission.

### Stakeholder views

The stakeholders we interviewed were in regular contact with the Charity Commission, through both formal and informal channels.

Some received email communications, others found out about the work it did through sector press and word of mouth, but the most valued form of communication was in person with Charity Commission staff.

They value these interactions as ways to keep abreast of issues relating to the Charity Commission and as channels of consultation between the Commission and their organization.

“The importance of having a good relationship, both a formal relationship and an informal relationship with the Charity Commission is the ability to pick up intelligence.”



# Ease of dealing with the Charity Commission

Charity respondents give the Charity Commission a high average rating (7.1/10) when thinking about how easy it is to deal with. This is similar to the finding in 2015. All respondent types give similarly positive scores.

*How easy or difficult do you find dealing with the Charity Commission? (0-10 scale, mean scores)*

	Respondent type				
	All	Chairs	Trustees	Chief Execs	Senior management
Charity survey 2017	7.1	7.2	7.2	7.0	6.8
Charity survey 2015	7.0	6.9	7.1	6.3	7.5

## Stakeholder views

The Charity Commission staff are universally praised by stakeholders, who highly value direct communication channels with the Charity Commission. They share experiences of open dialogue between the Charity Commission and their organisations (and want to have as much sector consultation as possible). They think that Charity Commission staff are highly competent and understand the challenges the Commission faces.

Some stakeholders say that – while the engagement with staff is excellent – the volume of engagement and services offered by the Commission is not as high as it has been in the past, and they generally attribute this to lack of resources.

“I would rate [the Charity Commission’s engagement] highly. I’m a fan of the executive of the Charity Commission. I think Paula and her team have done a **fantastic job over the last few years** at actually bringing the Commission into the 21<sup>st</sup> century in term of its internal infrastructure. I think she and team of colleagues have been accessible. They’ve been very frank and honest in private about the challenges that they face.”

“The staff team are good and committed and want to do the right thing. [They are] very **good at engaging with the sector** and listening.”

“When we have had them, the engagement’s been excellent. It’s just that they’re not resourced enough.”

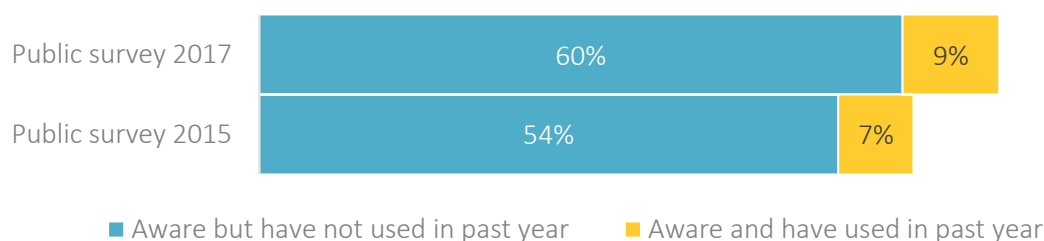
“Five years ago, I’d say good, now I’d say fair. [...] Some of the services that were particularly useful for charities, particularly small charities, have disappeared. I think their reputation has been damaged because they’re less seen as an advocate and a support for the charity sector and more - how would I describe it? - more top-down.”

# The register of charities and the Charity Commission's website

In keeping with findings that the public's awareness of the Charity Commission has increased since 2015, higher proportions also claim to be aware of the register of charities and to have used the Commission's website. This year, 69% say they are aware of the register vs 62% in 2015, and 12% say they have used the website in the last year vs 8% in 2015.

The vast majority of charity stakeholders (nine in ten) had used the website in the past year.

*Before this survey, were you aware of the register of charities?*



*Have you used the Charity Commission's website in the past year?*

	Yes
Public survey 2017	12%
Public survey 2015	8%
Charity survey 2017	89%

The public most commonly expect the register to contain key facts and figures about charity's finances (62%). Just over a third (37%) expect the register to contain details of what charities are spending their money on and a similar proportion (36%) expect the register to contain details of trustees. Only 8% think it should contain details of misconduct or mismanagement.

## Stakeholder views

Stakeholders regularly use both the Charity Commission website and the register of charities. Both generally suit their needs and contain relevant information, though some say that navigation can be difficult for those who are not familiar with the system. A couple of stakeholders also continue to say that the transition to a 'gov.uk' website has made navigation more difficult.

"I can generally find what I need, but I suppose that will have a caveat to it, which is that, of course, I probably know what I'm looking for [...]"

If you were an uninitiated consumer or somebody from a small charity, not necessarily experienced in trusteeship, you'd probably find it **quite difficult to navigate around.**"

"It was much better before it was on 'gov.uk'. [...] It means that you can't tailor the configuration and the navigation to the requirements of the particular organization."

"It was certainly **better prior to the launch of 'gov'**. It was easier to find things."

## Responsibility for compliance with the law

*Which person or organisation do you think bears the most responsibility for ensuring that charities comply with the law? (Select one)*

Public survey 2017	
Other - the government	25%
Charity Commission	23%
The charity's trustees	11%
Other - the charity's senior management	6%
Fundraising Regulator	3%
HMRC	2%
The charity's advisers	2%
The police	1%
Don't know	22%

It is clear that the public are uncertain about where responsibility for compliance with the law lies. Only 11% correctly say the charity's trustees bear the most responsibility; twice as many (23%) think it is the Charity Commission. A quarter of the public (25%) say that the government has most responsibility, and 22% say they don't know.

Charity respondents, because of their more detailed knowledge of the sector, were asked to rank the three most responsible people/organisations.

*Which person or organisation do you think bears the most responsibility for ensuring that charities comply with the law? (Rank)*

Charity survey 2017			
	Most responsible	2 <sup>nd</sup> most responsible	3 <sup>rd</sup> most responsible
The charity's trustees	72%	18%	4%
Charity Commission	21%	39%	30%
The charity's advisers	2%	33%	26%
HMRC	0%	2%	11%
Fundraising Regulator	0%	1%	7%
The police	0%	0%	0%

Almost three quarters (72%) of charity respondents correctly think that the charity's trustees are most responsible. This is consistent regardless of the respondents' role in their charity (between 71-74% of chairs, trustees, chief executives and senior managers say trustees are the most responsible).

The Charity Commission is widely seen to have at least some responsibility: 21% say it has the most, 39% say it has the second most, and 30% say it has the third most.

Charities' advisers are also seen as having a significant level of responsibility, but generally seen as second or third most responsible (33% and 26% respectively) rather than most responsible (2%).

# Views on Commission funding

## Stakeholder views

Whilst not a key focus of the research, stakeholders were asked their views on proposals for charities to partially fund the Commission. All stakeholders were aware of the proposals.

A minority of stakeholders (around a quarter) were in favour on the grounds that it would increase the Commission's ability to support charities and trustees as well as enforce compliance with charity law. A couple suggested that, if such a model was brought in, the charities should have either a formal role in the Commission's governance or a clear indication of the services they would be provided in return for their contribution.

Other stakeholders were fairly evenly split between those who were ambivalent and those who were opposed to the proposals. They gave a number of similar reasons.

Some worried that smaller charities would not be able to afford the additional costs. Many who mentioned this assumed – but did not know for certain – that the proposals would include a progressive levy with large charities paying substantially more. Even so, they worried that even small amounts could adversely affect small to medium sized charities who already struggled for income.

Others were strongly concerned that the Commission's independence would be compromised, and its ability to regulate fairly and impartially would be diminished.

A few argued that they also could not support the proposals because there was no guarantee that the government would not simply reduce state funding as charities paid more.

**“I would rather have it well-resourced** and charities pay for it than have it under resourced and it not being able to fulfil its role.”

“We’re adamantly opposed to it for lots of different reasons. Before I get into that, we’re very, very much supportive of an enhanced budget for the Charity Commission. But we think that moving to a system where the regulator charges the people it’s regulating is **really risky** and not in the public interest.”

**“100% against it.** I think there has to be another solution. There is no way that [some small to medium sized charities] have any spare cash to put aside for running the Charity Commission.”

**“I can see some opportunities** for improving regulation overall, and trust and confidence in charities overall by an initiative such as that, however unpopular that might be with some people.

For me, if the Charity Commission were to be enabled to charge charities, then the payees i.e. charities should have a formal role in the governance of the Charity Commission as its regulator.”

“I think it’s a terrible idea because charities basically paying for the regulator seems a bit of a **conflict of interest**. And ultimately it’s not the charities that are paying for it. It will be the donors who are paying for that.”

# Appendix: questionnaires and discussion guides

---

## Public survey (CATI)

### SECTION 1: Attitudes towards a range of regulators

1. For each of the following UK industries, on a scale of 0-10 where 10 means you trust it completely and 0 means you don't trust it at all, how much trust and confidence do you have in the industry as a whole? [RANDOMISE] [0 – 10 SCALE, DK]
  - Charities
  - Schooling and childcare
  - Colleges and other further education institutions
  - Affordable housing
  - Financial markets
  - Healthcare
  - Food and drink
  - Radio and television
  - Fundraising
  
2. How well, if at all, do you feel you know the following regulators? [RANDOMISE] [VERY WELL / FAIRLY WELL / NOT VERY WELL / NOT AT ALL / DON'T KNOW]
  - Charity Commission
  - Ofsted
  - Skills Funding Agency
  - Homes and Communities Agency
  - Financial Conduct Authority
  - General Medical Council
  - Food Standards Agency
  - Ofcom
  - Fundraising Regulator
  
3. How effective, if at all, do you feel each of the following regulators to be? [RANDOMISE] [Very effective, Fairly effective, Neither effective or ineffective, Not very effective, Not at all effective, Don't know]
  - Charity Commission
  - Ofsted
  - Skills Funding Agency
  - Homes and Communities Agency
  - Financial Conduct Authority
  - General Medical Council
  - Food Standards Agency
  - Ofcom
  - Fundraising Regulator

## SECTION 2: Involvement with charity

4. Do you or any of your close family or friends work for a charity, either as a paid employee, a trustee, a volunteer or member of a charity's executive or management committee? (PROMPT IF NECESSARY. MULTICODE OK) [Yes – Paid employee / Yes – Trustee / Yes – Volunteer / Yes – Member of a charity's executive or management committee / Yes – other / No]
5. Have you, or any of your close family or friends, ever received money, support or help from a charity? / Have you, or any of your close family or friends, ever benefitted from or used the services of a charity? (SINGLE CODE ONLY) [YES / NO]
6. Thinking back to the last month, in what ways have you heard about the work of charities? [PROMPT IF NECESSARY. MULTICODE OK]
  - Have not heard anything about charities
  - Personal experience
  - Word of mouth from friends/ family/ colleagues
  - Internet website
  - Newspapers
  - TV
  - Radio
  - Advertisements/ leaflets/ posters in public
  - From a charity worker
  - From a fundraiser
  - Other (SPECIFY)
7. Have you had a concern about a charity in the past 12 months? [YES / NO]
8. [If YES to 7] What action did you take as a result of your most recent concern? [Do not prompt]
  - Complained directly to charity / wrote to charity
  - Contacted the police
  - Contacted the Fundraising Standards Board
  - Contacted the Advertising Standards Authority
  - Contacted the Charity Commission
  - Other [SPECIFY]
  - None
9. [If YES to 7] Were you happy with the outcome? [Do not prompt]
  - Yes
  - No
  - Other [SPECIFY]
10. Overall, how effectively do you think charities are regulated in England and Wales? [Very effectively / Fairly effectively / Neither effectively or ineffectively / Not very effectively / Not at all effectively / Don't know]
11. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? [Strongly agree / Tend to agree / Neither agree or disagree / Tend to disagree / Strongly disagree / Don't know] [RANDOMISE]

- a) I trust charities to work independently
  - b) I don't know much about charity regulation
  - c) Seeing a charity is registered reassures me
  - d) There is the right amount of regulation to ensure that charities are being run properly
  - e) There is currently too little regulation of charities
  - f) There is currently too much regulation of charities
12. [ASK IF STRONGLY OR TEND TO AGREE TO Q11 E OR F]: You agreed that there was [INSERT AS APPROPRIATE] currently too little regulation of charities / currently too much regulation of charities. [INSERT AS APPROPRIATE] What additional regulation would you like to see? / What regulation would you like to see removed? [Open-Ended]
13. Which person or organisation do you think bears the most responsibility for ensuring that charities comply with the law? [UNPROMPTED]
- The charity's trustees
  - The police
  - The Charity Commission
  - The Fundraising Regulator
  - HMRC
  - The charity's professional advisers (eg lawyers, accountants, auditors)
  - Other [SPECIFY]

### SECTION 3: Knowledge of the Charity Commission

14. We mentioned the Charity Commission at the start of this survey. Had you ever heard of the Charity Commission before this conversation? [YES / NO / DON'T KNOW]
15. [Only ask those who have heard of Charity Commission] How well, if at all, do you feel you know the Charity Commission and what it does? [VERY WELL / FAIRLY WELL / NOT VERY WELL / NOT AT ALL / DON'T KNOW]
16. [Only ask those who have heard of Charity Commission] On a scale of 0-10 where 10 means you trust it completely and 0 means you don't trust it at all, how much trust and confidence do you have in the Charity Commission? [0 – 10 SCALE, DK]
17. [Only ask those who have heard of Charity Commission] Over the past two years, has your trust and confidence in the Charity Commission increased, decreased or stayed the same? {SINGLE CODE} [Increased / Decreased / Stayed the same / Don't know]
18. The Charity Commission is an independent body responsible for registering and regulating charities in England and Wales. They consider applications from organisations wishing to register as a charity after examining their purposes, accounts and structure and maintain the public register of charities, which provides the public with information about registered charities. They regulate charities by ensuring they comply with charity law, by enabling trustees to run their charity well for the public benefit, and by investigating allegations of wrong-doing by charities.

How important do you personally regard this role? (Single code only) [Essential / Very important / Fairly important / Not very important / Not at all important / Don't know]

19. Before this survey, were you aware of the Register of Charities? If yes, have you used it in the past year?

- I am aware and have used the register of charities
  - I am aware and have not used the register of charities
  - I am unaware of the register of charities
20. The Register of Charities holds details of organisations that have been recognised as charitable in law. What information would you expect to see on the Register of Charities? [DO NOT PROMPT]
- Key facts and figures about their work and finances
  - The details of a charity's trustees
  - Where charities are getting their money from
  - What charities are spending their money on
  - Information about misconduct or mismanagement of a charity
  - Charity ratings
  - Don't know
  - Anything else [SPECIFY]
21. [Only ask those who have heard of Charity Commission] Have you used the Charity Commission's website in the past year? [YES / NO / DON'T KNOW]

#### SECTION 4: Attitudes towards the Charity Commission

22. [Only ask those who have heard of Charity Commission] What news stories or key developments, if any, involving the Charity Commission can you recall having heard about in the last 12 months? [Open Question]
23. (Only ask those who have heard of Charity Commission) How important or unimportant do you think it is that the Charity Commission does the following, on a scale of 0-10, where 10 means very important and 0 means very unimportant? [0-10 SCALE] [RANDOMISE]
- Takes action to protect charities from misuse
  - Supports trustees by giving them the information and tools they need to run their charities effectively
  - Ensures charities are transparent and accountable
  - Acts with authority and expertise
  - Is clear about how it regulates charities
  - Manages expectations about what issues concerning charities it can deal with and in what ways
24. (Only ask those who have heard of Charity Commission) And on a scale of 0-10, where 10 means very well and 0 means very poorly, how well would you say the Charity Commission is performing in each of these areas? [0-10 SCALE] [RANDOMISE]
- Takes action to protect charities from misuse
  - Supports trustees by giving them the information and tools they need to run their charities effectively
  - Ensures charities are transparent and accountable
  - Acts with authority and expertise
  - Is clear about how it regulates charities
  - Manages expectations about what issues concerning charities it can deal with and in what ways



25. (Only ask those who have heard of Charity Commission) And finally, what do you see as the biggest challenge for the Charity Commission in the next 5 years? [OPEN QUESTION]

# Charities survey (online)

## SECTION 1: Demographics

1. What is your role in the charity? [SINGLE CODE ONLY]
  - Chair
  - Trustee
  - Chief Executive/Director
  - Senior manager
  - Other [If selected, end survey]
  
2. What is the annual income of your charity? [SINGLE CODE ONLY]
  - £0 - £10,000
  - £10,001 - £25,000
  - £25,001 - £100,000
  - £100,001 - £500,000
  - £500,001 - £1,000,000
  - £1,000,001 - £5,000,000
  - £5,000,000 plus
  - Not yet known
  
3. For how many years has your charity been operating, approximately? [NUMBERS ONLY BOX]
  
4. Where does your charity operate? Please select all that apply. [MULTICODE OK]
  - North East
  - North West
  - Yorkshire and the Humber
  - East Midlands
  - West Midlands
  - East of England
  - London
  - South East
  - South West
  - Wales
  - Scotland
  - Northern Ireland
  - Overseas
  
5. What does your charity do? Please select all that apply. [Multicode OK]
  - General charitable purposes
  - Education/training
  - The advancement of health or saving of lives
  - Disability
  - The prevention or relief of poverty
  - Overseas aid/famine relief
  - Accommodation/housing
  - Religious activities
  - Arts/culture/heritage/science

- Amateur sport
  - Animals
  - Environment/conservation/heritage
  - Economic/community development/employment
  - Armed forces/emergency service efficiency
  - Human rights/religious or racial harmony/equality or diversity
  - Recreation
  - Other charitable purposes (DO NOT SPECIFY)
6. Who does your charity help? Please select all that apply. [Multicode OK]
- Children/young people
  - Elderly/old people
  - People with disabilities
  - People of a particular ethnic or racial origin
  - Other charities/voluntary bodies
  - Other defined groups
  - The general public/mankind
7. Approximately, how many full time-equivalent employees, if any, does your charity have? [SINGLE NUMBER BOX]

## SECTION 2: Awareness and attitude towards the Commission and other regulators

8. Which person or organisation do you think bears the most responsibility for ensuring that charities comply with the law? [Drag and drop boxes – Most important, 2<sup>nd</sup> most important, 3<sup>rd</sup> most important]
- The charity's trustees
  - The police
  - The Charity Commission
  - The Fundraising Regulator
  - HMRC
  - The charity's professional advisers (eg lawyers, accountants, auditors)
  - Other
9. For each of the following UK industries, how much trust and confidence do you have in the industry as a whole? [RANDOMISE]
- Charities
  - Schooling and childcare
  - Colleges and other further education institutions
  - Affordable housing
  - Financial markets
  - Healthcare
  - Food and drink
  - Radio and television
  - Fundraising

10. How much do you know about each of the following regulators? [RANDOMISE]

- Charity Commission
- Ofsted
- Skills Funding Agency
- Homes and Communities Agency
- Financial Conduct Authority
- General Medical Council
- Food Standards Agency
- Ofcom
- Fundraising Regulator

11. Before today, have you ever heard of the Charity Commission? [YES / NO / DON'T KNOW]

IF NO OR DON'T KNOW, END SURVEY

12. How effective is each of the following regulators? [Very effective, Somewhat effective, Neutral, Somewhat ineffective, Very ineffective]

- Charity Commission
- Ofsted
- Skills Funding Agency
- Homes and Communities Agency
- Financial Conduct Authority
- General Medical Council
- Food Standards Agency
- Ofcom
- Fundraising Regulator

13. How well, if at all, do you feel you know the Charity Commission and what it does? [VERY WELL / FAIRLY WELL / NOT VERY WELL / NOT AT ALL / DON'T KNOW]

14. On a scale of 0-10 where 10 means you trust it completely and 0 means you don't trust it at all, how much trust and confidence do you have in the Charity Commission? [0 – 10 SCALE, DK]

15. Have you had any contact with the Charity Commission in the past 12 months? [SINGLE CODE]

- Yes, I have personally had contact with the Charity Commission
- No, I have not had any contact with the Charity Commission, but others in my charity have
- No, our charity has not had any contact with the Charity Commission
- Don't know

16. [If personal or organisational contact with the Charity Commission (first two answer options of Q15)] You mentioned you or your charity have had contact with the Charity

Commission. What contact did you or your charity have in the past 12 months?  
[MULTICODE OK]

- Registered my charity
  - Changed or updated charity details
  - Looked for advice or guidance on the website
  - Submitted the charity's annual return
  - Because an operational case/ investigation has involved my charity
  - Applied for legal consent for a change that our trustees do not have the power to make themselves
  - Received information by email
  - Been to an event or seminar with a representative from the Charity Commission
  - Other [SPECIFY]
17. Thinking back over the past 12 months, has your trust and confidence in the Charity Commission increased, decreased or stayed the same? {SINGLE CODE} [Increased / Decreased / Stayed the same / Don't know]
18. On a scale of 0 – 10, where 10 is very easy and 0 is very difficult, how easy or difficult do you find dealing with the Charity Commission? [0-10 SCALE]
19. Have you used the Charity Commission's website in the past year? [YES / NO / DON'T KNOW]

### SECTION 3: Relationship between the Commission and charities

20. Thinking about how the Charity Commission says it regulates charities, is it clearer, less clear, or no different from a year ago? [CLEARER / LESS CLEAR / NO DIFFERENT]
21. (Only ask those who have heard of Charity Commission) How important or unimportant do you think it is that the Charity Commission does the following, on a scale of 0-10, where 10 means very important and 0 means very unimportant? [0-10 SCALE] [RANDOMISE]
- Takes action to protect charities from misuse
  - Supports trustees by giving them the information and tools they need to run their charities effectively
  - Ensures charities are transparent and accountable
  - Acts with authority and expertise
  - Regulates charities in a way that is rigorous risk-based and proactive
  - Manages expectations about what issues concerning charities it can deal with and in what ways
22. (Only ask those who have heard of Charity Commission) And on a scale of 0-10, where 10 means very well and 0 means very poorly, how well would you say the Charity Commission is performing in each of these areas? [0-10 SCALE] [RANDOMISE]
- Takes action to protect charities from misuse
  - Supports trustees by giving them the information and tools they need to run their charities effectively
  - Ensures charities are transparent and accountable
  - Acts with authority and expertise
  - Regulates charities in a way that is rigorous risk-based and proactive

- Manages expectations about what issues concerning charities it can deal with and in what ways
- 23. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? [Strongly agree / Tend to agree / Neither agree or disagree / Tend to disagree / Strongly disagree / Don't know] [RANDOMISE]
  - a) There is the right amount of regulation to ensure that charities are being run properly
  - b) There is currently too little regulation of charities
  - c) There is currently too much regulation of charities
- 24. [ASK IF STRONGLY OR TEND TO AGREE TO Q23 B OR C]: You agreed that there was [INSERT AS APPROPRIATE] currently too little regulation of charities / currently too much regulation of charities. [INSERT AS APPROPRIATE] What additional regulation would you like to see? / What regulation would you like to see removed? [Open-Ended]
- 25. What do you see as the biggest challenge for the Charity Commission in the next 5 years? [OPEN QUESTION]
- 26. And finally, are there any other comments you would like to add for the Charity Commission to consider? [OPEN TEXT BOX]

## Stakeholder interviews (telephone)

1. What are the challenges facing the charity sector?
1. What are the most important qualities needed for trust and confidence in charities overall?
2. What do you see as the main role of a charity regulator?
3. How well, if at all, do you feel you know the Charity Commission and what it does?
4. How do you find out about the Charity Commission and what it does? Which is the most important?
5. The Charity Commission is the independent register and regulator of charities in England and Wales. Thinking about the Commission's role, is it clearer, less clear, or no different from a year ago? Why?
6. Which 3 words or phrases would you use to describe the Charity Commission?
7. On a scale of 0-10 where 10 means you trust it completely and 0 means you don't trust it at all, how much trust and confidence do you have in the Charity Commission? Why?
8. Thinking back over the past 12 months, has your trust and confidence in the Charity Commission increased, decreased or stayed the same? Why?
9. How well or poorly would you say the Commission is performing in each of these areas, on a scale of 0-10 where 10 means very well and 0 means very poorly?:
  - Taking action against charities which break the rules?
  - Being fair and impartial when regulating charities?
  - Making trustees aware of their duties and responsibilities?
  - Enabling trustees to run their charities effectively?
  - Protecting charities from abuse or mismanagement?
  - Encouraging greater transparency and accountability by charities?
  - Being consistent in how it regulates charities?
  - Being accountable for what it does?
  - Acting with authority and expertise?
  - Being efficient?
  - Investigating concerns about charities
  - Contributing to debate on charity regulation
10. Do you think the Charity Commission should do more to regulate and control charities to ensure they are working for the public benefit?
11. What news stories or key developments, if any, involving the Charity Commission can you recall having heard about in the last 12 months?
12. What contact have you had with the Charity Commission in the last 12 months?
13. In what ways would you like the Charity Commission to engage with you?

14. Have you used the Charity Commission website in the last 12 months? How useful did you find it?
15. Have you used the Register of Charities in the past 12 months? Did it suit your needs?
16. How would you rate the Charity Commission's engagement with you? Can you give an example of good/bad engagement?
17. Which individual's or organisation's views on the Charity Commission and its issues do you respect most?
18. How much of a burden do you think the Charity Commission's regulatory requirements are? Why? Can you give an example?
19. The Commission has proposed seeking a contribution from charities AS WELL AS its government funding, how would you respond to this? What would you think needs to change if this were to be introduced? What would be the impact?
20. Overall, how effectively do you think charities are regulated in England and Wales? Why?
21. What do you see as the biggest challenge for the charity sector in the next 5 years?
22. What do you see as the biggest challenge for the Charity Commission in the next 5 years?
23. And before we finish, are there any other thoughts or comments you would like to add for the Commission to consider?