



MP Factsheet

About the Charity Commission

What is the Charity Commission?

The Charity Commission is the regulator of charities in England and Wales. Funded directly by the Treasury, we're an independent regulator, specifically exempt from Ministerial control and constituted as a non-ministerial government department. We're responsible for the registration of charities and for ensuring they understand and comply with charity law. As well as the 180,000 registered charities, which include large national and multinational charities and household names, we also regulate many thousands of small unregistered charities, such as those responsible for running village halls, parks and community projects.

What is this toolkit for?

When members of the public have concerns and complaints about a charity they often get in touch with their MP or AM. They may want to find out if their concerns are justified, inquire as to how to make a formal complaint, or ask their MP or AM to take up an issue on their behalf. This toolkit is designed to help you to deal with your constituents' queries and to let you know what to expect when you get in touch with us.

How can I check whether an organisation is a registered charity?

We can help you easily to identify whether or not an organisation is a registered charity. Using our website, www.charitycommission.gov.uk, you can search for a charity by name, its registration number, the area where it operates, or by keywords (such as 'community centre'). If the organisation you're interested in is a registered charity, then you can access information about it, such as its objectives, its trustees (including their contact details) and its financial history.

We vary the amount of information we ask for according to the size of the charity - so you'll find more detail about larger charities and less about smaller ones. This is because we want to make sure we don't impose a disproportionate burden on smaller charities. Similarly, it's important to note that some charities are not required to register with us, including those which have an annual income below £5,000.

How can I keep up-to-date on developments in the charity sector?

If you want to be kept informed about what's going on in the charity sector, you can subscribe to the Charity Commission's news feed. This updates automatically from our website with updates on the charity sector and information on upcoming Charity Commission reports and publications. You can also consult the Parliamentary section of our website, where we post our latest news, briefings and reports, as well as further guidance and advice for MPs and AMs and their staff:

www.charitycommission.gov.uk/about-the-commission/press-office/public-affairs

How can the Charity Commission help me engage with my constituents?

From time to time, the Charity Commission launches campaigns to raise awareness of important charity issues, for example warning the public about bogus charity collectors. As an MP or AM, you can help us to publicise these issues in your local media, or by putting information on your website highlighting your concerns and offering advice to constituents. We sometimes send out example press releases as part of our campaign, which you can use to support your engagement with constituents.

You can also find charities local to you and download their contact details using the dedicated constituency search facility on our website:

www.charitycommission.gov.uk/about-the-commission/press-office/public-affairs

Who regulates charities elsewhere in the United Kingdom?

The Charity Commission only regulates charities in England and Wales. Charities in other parts of the UK are regulated by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) and the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (established in 2010). Contact details for these organisations are as follows:

Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator

9 Riverside Drive
2nd Floor
Quadrant House
Dundee DD1 4NY

www.oscr.org.uk

Charity Commission for Northern Ireland

257 Lough Road
Lurgan
Northern Ireland BT66 6NQ

www.charitycommissionni.org.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, Jack Rowley, by telephone on 020 7674 2322 or by email at jack.rowley@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk