



MP Factsheet

Information about charities

How many charities are there in England and Wales?

There are **180,000** registered charities in England and Wales (as of March 2010). In addition, there are countless thousands of small charities below the income threshold (£5,000 per year) that aren't required to register.

How much money is there in the charity sector?

As of June 2010, the total annual income of registered charities was **£52.5 billion**.

Although most charities are small, larger charities tend to receive the bulk of income. Our figures show that:

- Over four in ten registered charities have an income of £10,000 or less;
- These charities represent 84% of registered charities but 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.

Annual Gross Income of Charities, as at 30 June 2010



Annual income Bracket	Number of main charities	%	Annual Income £bn	%
£0 to 10,000	73,172	45.1	0.245	0.5
£10,001 to £100,000	50,588	31.2	1.771	3.4
£100,001 to £500,000	16,828	10.4	3.815	7.2
£500,001 to £5,000,000	7,725	4.7	11.555	22
£5,000,000 plus	1,759	1.1	35.128	66.9
Sub-Total	150,072	92.5	52.514	100
Not yet known	12,122	7.5	0.000	0
Total	162,194	100.0	52.514	100

What do charities do?

The range of charitable activities is enormously wide. To be a charity, an organisation must have charitable purposes and must operate for the public benefit. The Charities Act 2006 contains 13 descriptions of purposes:

- the prevention or relief of poverty;
- the advancement of education;
- the advancement of religion;
- the advancement of health or the saving of lives;
- the advancement of citizenship or community development;
- the advancement of the arts, culture, heritage or science;
- the advancement of amateur sport;
- the advancement of human rights, conflict resolution or reconciliation or the promotion of religious or racial harmony or equality and diversity;
- the advancement of environmental protection or improvement;
- the relief of those in need by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage;
- the advancement of animal welfare;
- the promotion of the efficiency of the armed forces of the Crown; or the efficiency of the police, fire and rescue services or ambulance services; and
- any other purposes charitable in law.

When an organisation applies to the Commission to be registered as a charity, we consider if their stated aims and objectives can legally be defined as charitable.

How can I find charities based in my constituency?

The Parliamentary section of our website includes a constituency search facility, which helps you find charities close to you:

www.charitycommission.gov.uk/ShowCharity/registerofcharities/mapping/Search.aspx

If you have a parliament.uk email address, you can download contact details for all the charities in your constituency.

How can I find information about a particular charity?

If you know a charity's name and want to find out where it is based, the online Register shows the correspondence address of any registered charity: www.charitycommission.gov.uk.

We vary the information we ask for according to the size of charity. This is because we want to make sure we don't impose a disproportionate burden on smaller charities. The Register shows the list of trustees and governing documents for all registered charities. Charities with annual incomes of £10,000 or more must also publish their accounts.

How many people work in the charity sector?

There are around **850,000 trustees**, most of whom donate their time and expertise voluntarily. Trustees serve on the governing body of a charity and are responsible for the general control and management of the charity's administration.

Some charities also employ staff to help carry out the functions of their organisation. The charity sector includes around **780,000 staff** who are paid for the work they do.

Many charities rely on volunteers to help them fulfil their aims, especially small and local charities. There are around **2.7 million volunteers** working in England and Wales.

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