

## How many charities are there in England and Wales?

At the end of December 2007, there were 190,541 charities on the Register of Charities. Of these, 21,244 were subsidiaries or constituents of other charities. This means that there were 169,299 "main" charities on the Register that are required to prepare accounts. This figure includes 2,498 "group" charities. Group charities are separate charities but share the same registered number because they have been grouped together for ease of administration.

## How much money is there in the charity sector?

The Register showed that at the end of the 4th quarter, the total annual income of "main" registered charities was £44.552 billion.

When this income is broken down by individual charities we find that many are very small organisations indeed, and that the financial wealth of registered charities, measured by their annual income, is concentrated in just a few very large charities.

## What is the shape of the charitable sector?

Most charities are small and larger charities tend to receive the bulk of income, as demonstrated in the following figures:

- The majority of registered charities have an income of £10,000 or less.
- They represent nearly 60% of registered charities but have less than 1% of the income recorded.
- Around 8% of charities receive over 90% of the total annual income recorded. The largest 679 charities (0.40% of those on the register) attract over 50% of the total income.

## What do charities do?

There are a wide range of purposes which are regarded as being charitable under charity law in England and Wales. Broadly, these include:

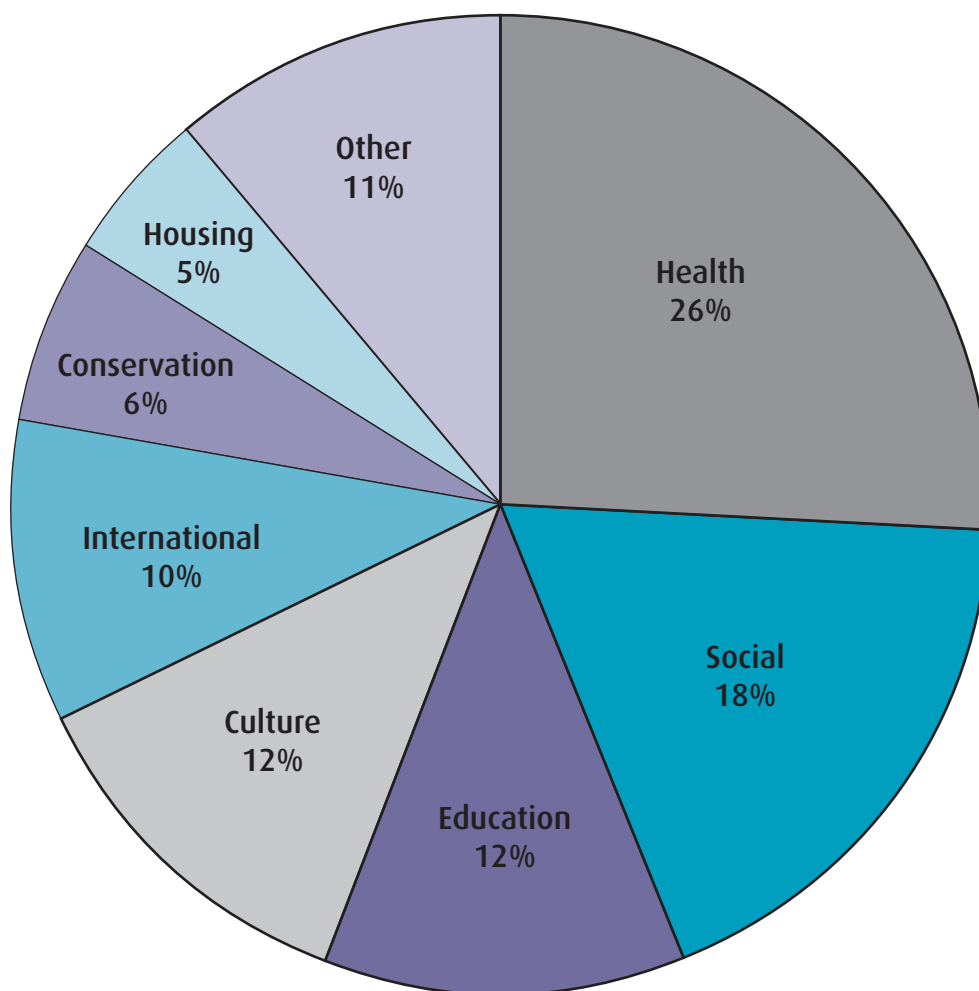
- the prevention or relief of poverty;
- the advancement of education;
- the advancement of religion;
- the advancement of health or the saving of lives;
- the advancement of citizenship or community development;
- the advancement of the arts, culture, heritage or science;
- the advancement of amateur 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 be registered as a charity with the Charity Commission we will consider whether their stated aims and objectives can be legally defined as charitable.

### How is the charity sector broken up?

Charities work in a wide variety of ways in order to provide public benefit and improve society and people's quality of life. Below is a graph outlining what charities do and how the sector is divided.



## What charities are there in my constituency?

There are charities based all over England and Wales, many providing localised services in a specific area. You can find out what charities are based in your constituency by emailing us at:

[max.wind-cowie@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:max.wind-cowie@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk)

## How can I find out about a charity?

If you know a charity's name and want to find out where it is based, you can check online at [www.charitycommission.gov.uk](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk). Here you can search our register and find the correspondence address of any registered charity. You can also ring our contact centre on 0845 300 0218 for help. We hold varying amounts of information about charities and the level of detail depends on the size of the charity concerned. You can see the register of trustees and the governing documents of all charities registered with the Charity Commission. For a charity with an income of £5000 a year or more we publish accounts which allow you to see their income and their outgoings.

## How many people work in the charity sector?

There are around 900,000 trustees, most of whom donate their time and expertise voluntarily. Trustees are the people who serve on the governing body of a charity; they are responsible for the general control and management of the administration of a charity.

Some charities also employ staff to help carry out the functions of their organisation. There are around 600,000 paid staff in the charity sector.

Many charities rely on volunteers to help them fulfil their aims, especially small and local charities. Volunteers donate their time and their experience to carry out the work of charities, around 27% of the population of England and Wales volunteer once a month.

## What about charities elsewhere in the United Kingdom?

The Charity Commission only regulates charities in England and Wales. In Scotland the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) regulates the charity sector. They can be reached by writing to:

Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)  
2nd Floor  
Quadrant House  
9 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

<http://www.oscr.org.uk>

Charity law is also a devolved matter for Northern Ireland. Legislation to create a Northern Irish regulator is currently progressing through the Northern Irish Assembly.