



Factsheet

The Charity Commission rightly points out that setting up and running a charity requires a lot of work and indeed a lot of skills so it's important for trustees know what is required. Find out more about registering as a charity and the responsibilities of trustees below.

3 Registration as a charity

Think carefully before setting up a charity.

For example, avoid setting up a charity that duplicates the work of existing charities.

Who can register?

An organisation is required to register as a charity if it:

- has charitable purposes
- exists for the public benefit
- has an annual income of £5,000 or above

Requirements for registration

The requirements for registration and links to the online charity registration process are given below.

Registration threshold

Only organisations with charitable purposes and with an annual income above £5,000 must register with the Charity Commission. This is known as "the registration threshold". Please note: there will be an exception to this from January 2014. New Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIOs) with anticipated annual incomes of under £5,000 will also be able to register as a charity.

Charitable purposes

An organisation must have charitable purposes in order to register as a charity and all of the purposes must be charitable. The 13 charitable purposes are the:

1. The prevention or relief of poverty
2. The advancement of education
3. The advancement of religion
4. The advancement of health or the saving of lives
5. The advancement of citizenship or community development
6. The advancement of the arts, culture, heritage or science
7. The advancement of amateur sport
8. The advancement of human rights, conflict resolution or reconciliation, or the promotion of religious or racial harmony or equality and diversity
9. The advancement of environmental protection or improvement
10. The relief of those in need by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage
11. The advancement of animal welfare
12. 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
13. Other purposes that are currently recognised as charitable or in the spirit of any purposes currently recognisable as charitable

The Charity Commission website gives detailed guidance on charitable purposes

Public Benefit

In England and Wales, public benefit is a crucial part of what it means to be a charity. A charity must have only charitable purposes. That is to say all the purposes of a charity must be charitable! All of these charitable purposes must be for the benefit of the public. This is known as "the public benefit requirement".

The public benefit requirement has two aspects:

1. The benefit aspect
2. The public aspect

In order to fully appreciate the meaning and significance of these aspects it is necessary to read the public benefit guidance provided by the Charity Commission.:

There are three guides:

1. Public benefit: the public benefit requirement
2. Public benefit: running a charity
3. Public benefit: reporting

The Charity Commission website gives detailed guidance on public benefit.