

The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland

The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland is the regulator of charities in Northern Ireland, a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Communities.

Our vision

To deliver in partnership with other key stakeholders in the charitable sector “a dynamic and well governed charities sector in which the public has confidence, underpinned by the Commission’s effective delivery of its regulatory role.”

Further information about our aims and activities is available on our website www.charitycommissionni.org.uk

Equality

The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland is committed to equality and diversity in all that we do.

Accessibility

If you have any accessibility requirements please contact us.

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Section 1: The growing Northern Ireland register of charities

1. Introduction

The definitive register of charities in Northern Ireland continues to grow following the introduction of compulsory charity registration in December 2013. This report provides an analysis of information held on organisations that have been successfully registered since then. As the register grows, we hope to frame the vibrancy of the charity sector in Northern Ireland, painting a true picture of the scale and diversity of those organisations established to meet a charitable need for the public benefit.

In the future, as annual reporting by registered charities expands, we will continue to add to the information held. This information will enable further analysis in the context of external changes and challenges to the sector, for example, economic and social developments and the impact of new legislation.

2. Methodology

The information in this report is drawn from the first 5,211 charities registered in Northern Ireland. This represents 100% of the register as it stood on 28 October 2016, almost three years since compulsory charity registration opened. We previously published information in 2015 based on information from the first 786 charities registered. This report provides updated information on a much larger number of registered charities and extends some of the analysis.

A key feature of compulsory charity registration is that, once the register is built, it will provide a complete and accurate picture of the entire charity sector in Northern Ireland. At present, it is only possible to estimate the size of the sector, with estimates now ranging from 11,000 to up to 17,500 charities. This profile of the sector is therefore only indicative, however, it is based on a robust sample. Using the upper estimate of possible numbers of charities, this sample gives a margin of error of less than 2% such that, if the study were undertaken on a random sample with a similar number of respondents, their answers would be within 2% of the answers in this report.

There are limitations to the dataset in that it does not constitute an entirely random sample of charities in Northern Ireland. The current register of charities has been populated through the registering of organisations which are called forward in tranches. Some applicants were drawn randomly from the list of organisations previously registered with HMRC for charitable tax purposes. Others – those not on the HMRC list or brand new organisations – were called forward in date order from when they contacted the Commission with their details. Some applicants are called forward in groups because they share a common governing document and have pre-approved key elements of the registration process with the Commission. Some organisations have been called

forward due to a concern having been received about them. Finally, other organisations, for example those established outside of Northern Ireland but operating here, are not yet being called forward to apply to register. As the register continues to grow these limitations will reduce and eventually be eliminated.

It is difficult to draw comparisons or identify trends at this point. Existing data on the sector in Northern Ireland does not always allow for direct comparison due to the use of differing definitions and methodologies. For example, NICVA research on the 'State of the Sector'¹ analyses data on voluntary and community groups, some of which may be charities and some not. However, these are still valuable sources of information and we hope that the data now available on the Commission's website will assist in their development. Over time, and as the register becomes fully populated, useful comparisons may be drawn with other charity regulators and trends identified through the analysis of information reported annually by registered charities.

Throughout this report, not all percentages will add to 100% due to rounding.

3. Open data

Some of the data analysed is publicly available on the online register while other data is not. For example, this report shares the average age of charity trustees while the only information on charity trustees shown on the register is their name. The Commission is committed to openness and transparency. Where possible, we publish data sets that relate to research we have published. Much of the information from which this report is drawn is available on the download of the register of charities. Data is licensed under the [open government license for public sector information](#). This allows you to use and re-use the information that is available under this license freely and flexibly, with only a few conditions.

4. Structure of the report

Section two of the report provides an analysis of information held on registered charities in terms of key characteristics: income, structure, location, area of benefit and their purposes, activities and beneficiaries. Section three provides an insight into those involved in the governance of charities in Northern Ireland. Section four highlights work that we are doing to understand levels of awareness of the compulsory charity registration and use of the register of charities. Finally, section five provides links to other key pieces of research and information that the Commission has produced and that may be of interest to you in better understanding the charity sector in Northern Ireland.

¹ www.nicva.org/stateofthesector

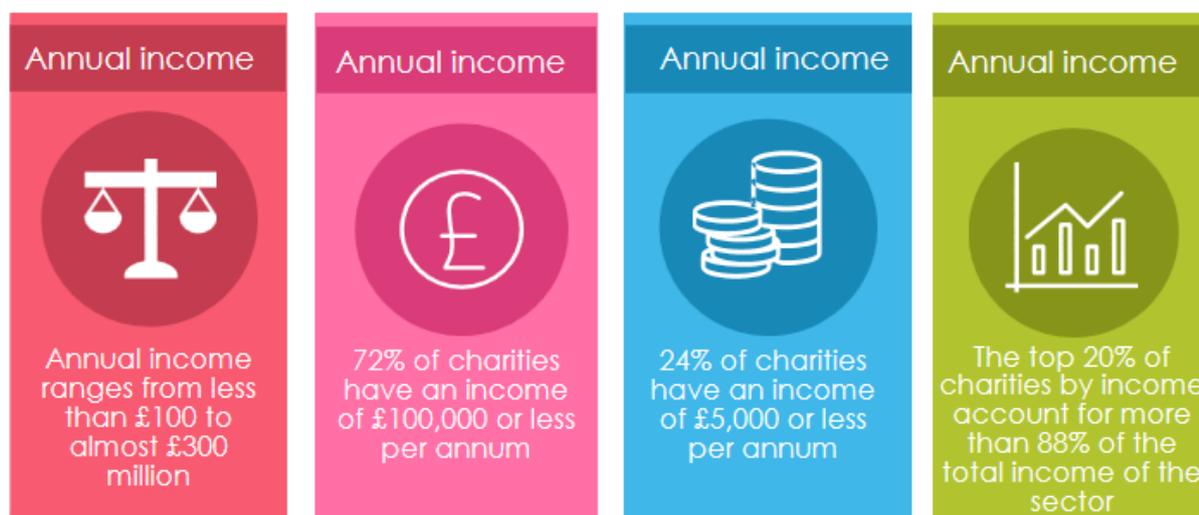
Section 2: What do charities look like in Northern Ireland?

In painting a picture of the charity sector in Northern Ireland, we can look at a number of features. While the picture is still incomplete, this information provides a valuable insight given the number of organisations that have now been registered. The following characteristics are presented:

- Income
- Structure
- Location
- Area of benefit
- Purposes, activities and beneficiaries.

Unless otherwise stated, the information is drawn from the first 5,211 charities registered in Northern Ireland.

Income



The register of charities does not publish the income levels of registered charities at the point of registration. This information will, however, be published and updated on an annual basis through the annual monitoring return which all registered charities are required to submit each year following their registration. On an annual basis, the income and expenditure of each charity will be published and this will be available to download and analyse through open data. At present, this information is available on the register for approximately 330 registered charities. The information in this report is based on figures reported at registration only.

As additional information is gathered through annual monitoring returns and accounting records, we will get a more detailed image of the sector, incorporating information such as the number of employees and volunteers, and

assets held. Additionally, we will gain further insight into sources of charitable income, for example, grant funding, government funding and earned income.

The information in this section of the report gives an insight into the income of registered charities based on information gathered at the point of registration.

The analysis shows that the income² of registered charities can range from less than £100 per annum to almost £300 million. As such, charities operating with an annual income of several million pounds may look as though they share more in common with non-charitable corporations than with smaller charities. For this reason, it is not helpful to present an average 'mean' income, however, averages have been drawn across income bands.

New organisations that have not yet been in operation for a year provide an estimate of annual income at the point of registration. For the purposes of this analysis, estimates are not included, therefore, the income figures are drawn from 4,288 charities that were able to provide a figure for gross annual income with two very large outliers³ removed giving a figure of 4,286 registered charities.

Income bands	% of sample	Average income	Total income	% of total income
£0 - £100,000	72%	£24,446	£75,806,940	8%
£100,001 - £200,000	11%	£143,485	£69,590,352	7%
£200,001 - £300,000	5%	£245,783	£55,301,197	6%
£300,001 - £400,000	3%	£341,412	£37,555,292	4%
£400,001 - £500,000	2%	£445,389	£32,068,021	3%
£500,001 +	7%	£2,507,164	£734,599,007	73%
Total	100%	£234,466	£1,004,920,809	100%

Table 1: Income bands

² Income is defined on the online register as the money the organisation has received in a financial year from all sources, including grants, gifts, sales of goods and services, fundraising, interest on investments, capital that the trustees can decide to spend as income and income from any special trusts. It excludes the receipt of a loan by the charity, loan repayments to the charity, money received from the sale of investments and fixed assets, and gains or profits on the sale of investments and fixed assets.

³ Each outlier has an income of over £200million per annum.

72% of charities in the sample have an annual income of £100,000 or less. A further 11% have an income between £100,000 and £200,000. 138 charities within the sample of 4,288 have an income of £1 million or more per annum.

This presents a clear trend, with the percentage of registered charities falling across the income bands before a small increase in the percentage of charities with an income of more than £500,000 per annum. Analysis of this trend highlights that 83% of registered charities operate annually with an income of less than £200,001 and, in total, account for 15% of the sector’s income. Conversely, charities with an income of more than £200,000 make up less than 20% of the sector, but account for 86% of the total income.

This inverse correlation is visibly striking when plotted on the chart below.

Income bands - percentage of sector plotted against percentage of income

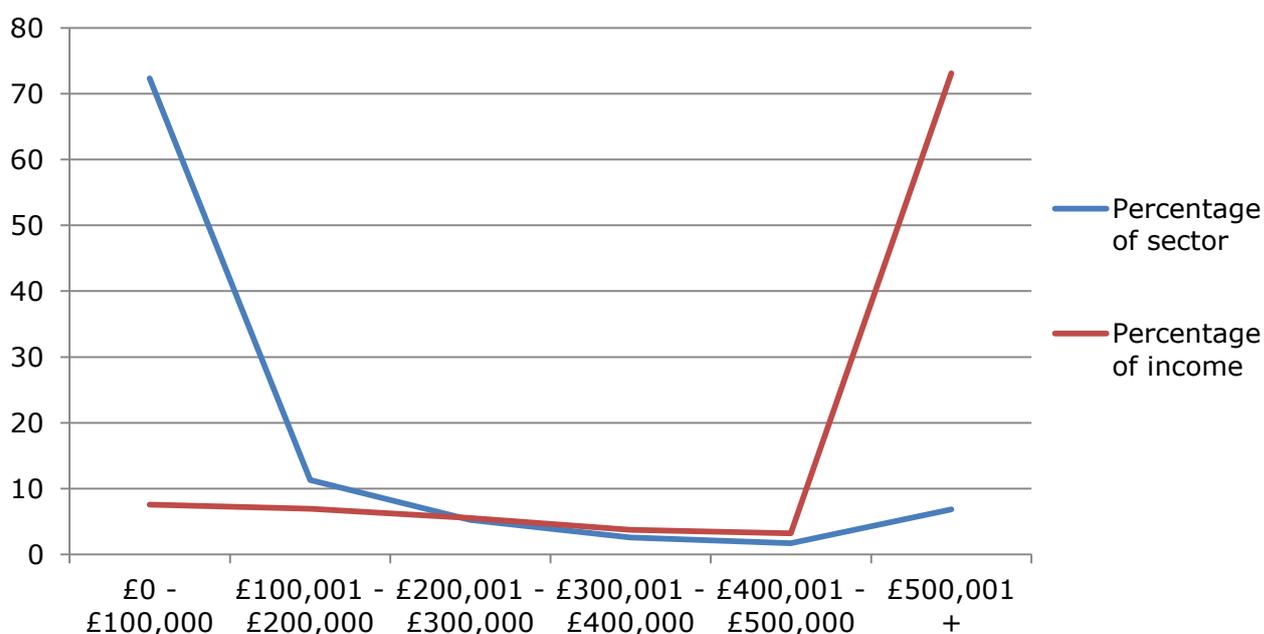


Chart 1: Income bands

33% of charities in the sample have an annual income of £10,000 or less, while 24% have an annual income of £5,000 or less. The table below presents the proportion of charities broken down into income bands based on key income thresholds, for example, the income threshold at which a charity must prepare accruals accounts (£250,000) and at which it must have its accounts audited (£500,000). Charities with an income of £10,000 and below have fewer questions to answer in their annual monitoring return to the Commission.

Income bands	% of sample	% of sample
£0 - £5,000	24%	87%
£5,001 - £10,000	9%	
£10,001 - £250,000	54%	13%
£250,001 - £500,000	6%	
£500,001+	7%	
Total	100%	100%

Table 2: Breakdown by income bands

This can also be shown visually in the graphic below.

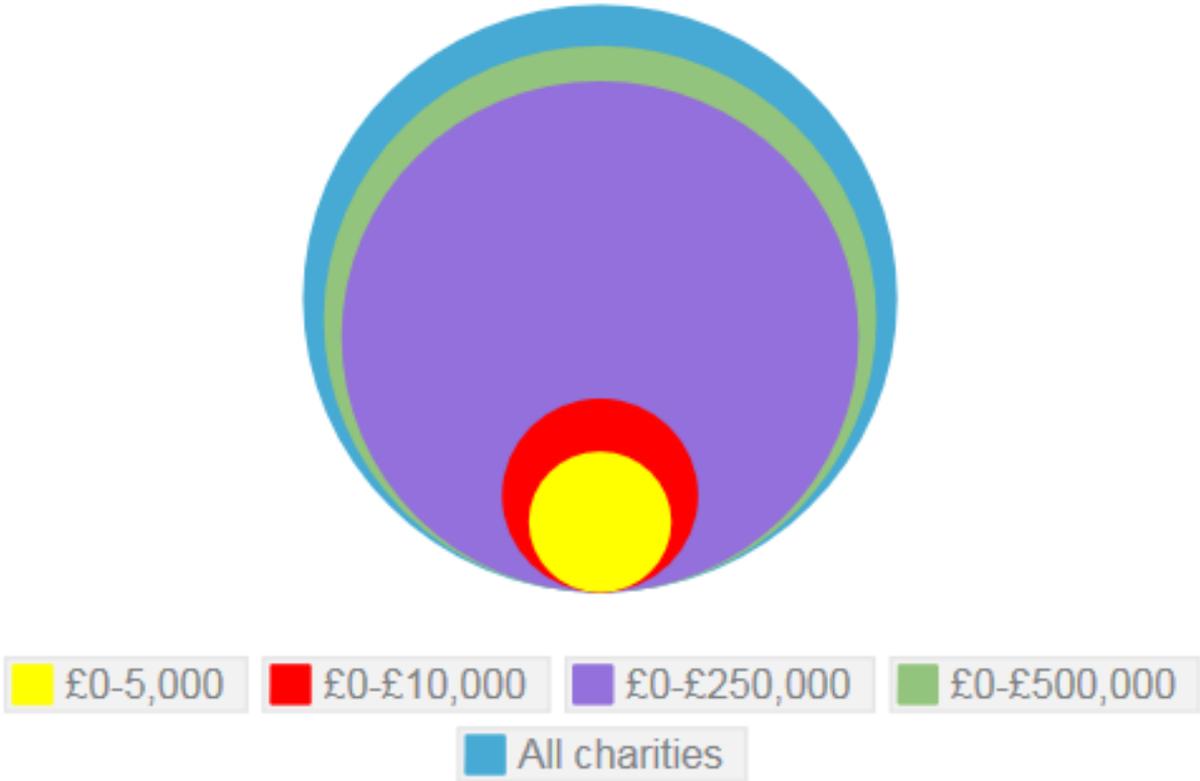


Chart 2: Income breakdown

Further analysis of the income band within which the highest proportion of charities are classified – the £0 - £100,000 band - reveals that the majority of those charities have an annual income at the lower end of the band.

Income bands	% of sample £0 - £100,000
£0 - £25,000	64%
£25,001 - £50,000	17%
£50,001 - £75,000	11%
£75,001 - £100,000	8%
Total	100%

Table 3: Breakdown of £0-£100,000 income band

An interesting insight into the income make up of registered charities can be observed when income is assessed over quintiles. This method divides the sample into five equal divisions, in this case, registered charities ranked from lowest to highest income, such that 20% of the population is in each group. This analysis identifies that the first 20% of the sample, the 20% with the lowest annual income, account for less than 1% of the income of the entire sample. Conversely, the top 20% of the sample by income account for more than 88% of the income of the entire sample.

Income quintiles	Total income	Average income	% of total income
First quintile	£1,158,247	£1,352	0.1%
Second quintile	£7,404,807	£8,640	0.7%
Third quintile	£28,070,352	£32,716	2.8%
Fourth quintile	£80,649,487	£94,107	8.0%
Fifth quintile	£887,637,916	£1,035,750	88.3%
Total	£1,004,920,809	£234,466	100%

Table 4: Income quintiles

The chart below displays this information visually, highlighting the disparity between the percentage of charities within each income quintile and the percentage of the total income of the sector accounted for within each quintile. This is particularly striking in the first and last quintiles. An equal percentage of

charities, 20%, makes up each quintile however the top 20% accounts for almost 90% of the total income while the bottom 20% accounts for less than 1% of total income.

Income quintiles: percentage of charities within each quintile plotted against percentage of total income

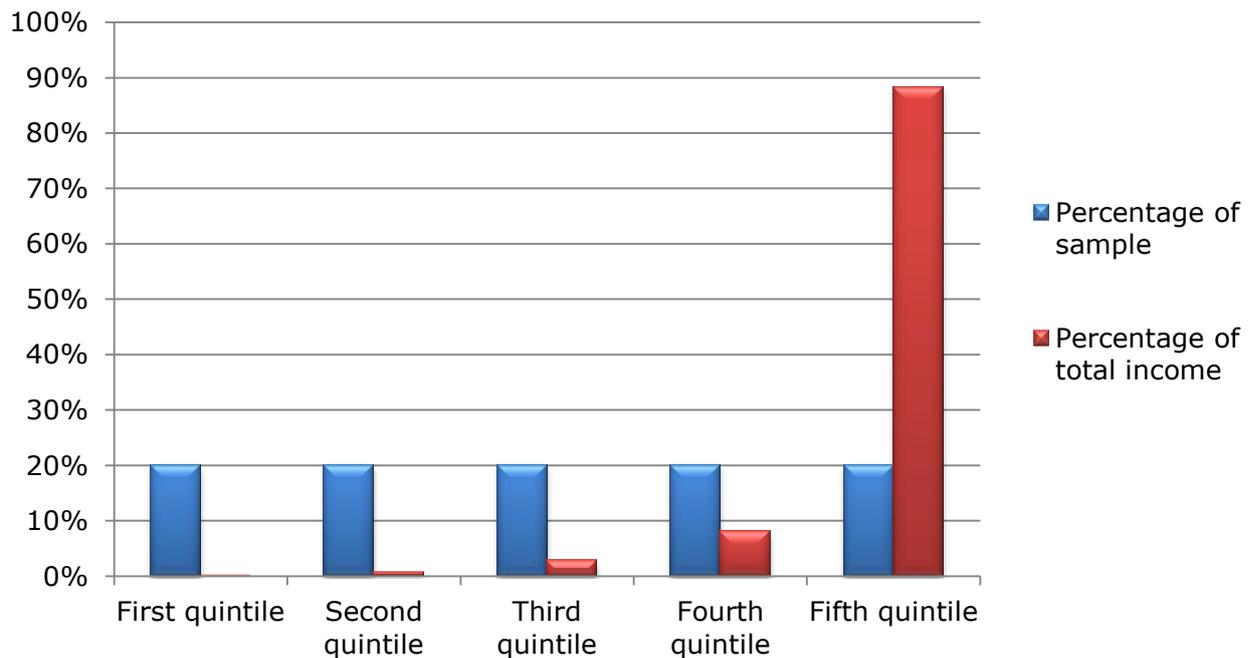
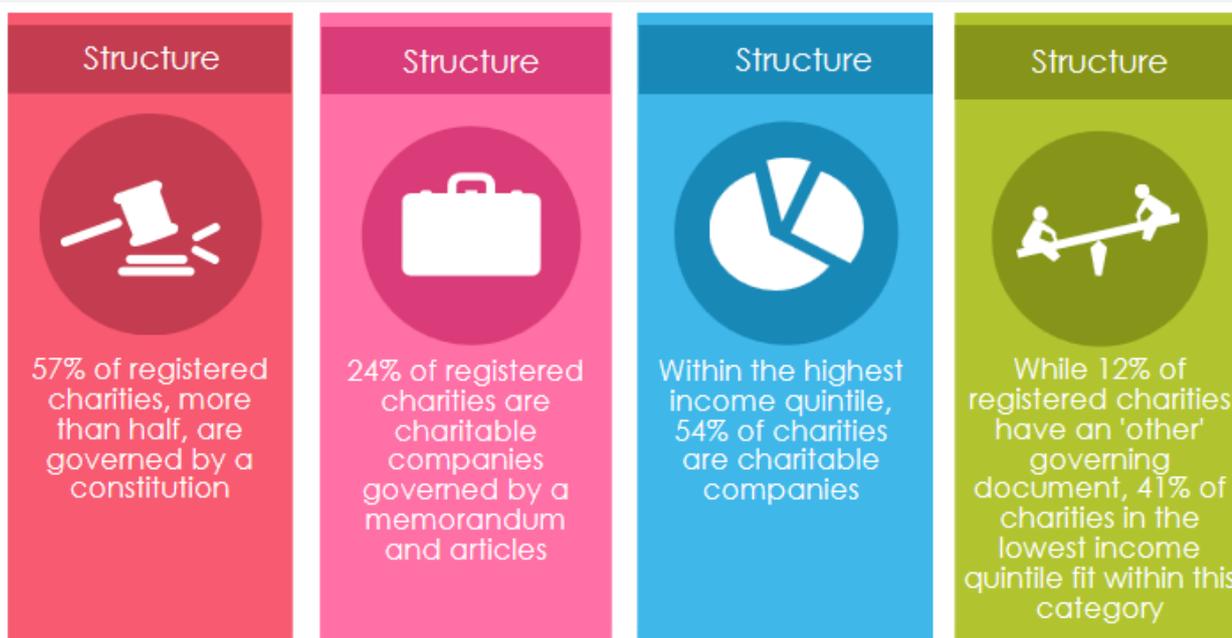


Chart 3: Income quintiles

Structure



A charity's structure is defined by its governing document. A governing document is the legal document that creates the charity and sets out its purposes and how it is to be run. There are three main types of charity structure in Northern Ireland:

- **Unincorporated associations** – governed by a constitution
- **Charitable companies** – governed by a memorandum and articles of association / memorandum of association
- **Charitable trusts** – governed by a trust deed or declaration of trust.

There are others, for example, Royal Charter charities and industrial and provident societies that are governed by rules. Some trusts or unincorporated associations will be created by a Will. These other structures are less common than the three main types set out above.

Governing document	% of sample
Constitution	57%
Memorandum and articles	24%
Trust deed or declaration of trust	7%
Other	12%
Total	100%

Table 5: Registered charity structure

There are different reasons for setting up a charity with a particular structure. For example, it may be appropriate to establish an unincorporated association where the organisation won't hold significant assets, does not require limited liability for trustees or has a membership.

Alternatively, a charitable company may be more appropriate where the organisation is to be quite large, will have employees, deliver services under contractual agreements or control substantial assets. There is further information in the range of model governing documents published on the Commission's [website](#).

Income quintiles	Constitution	Memorandum and articles	Trust deed	Other	Total
Overall	57%	24%	7%	12%	100%
First quintile	49%	7%	3%	41%	100%
Second quintile	68%	11%	7%	14%	100%
Third quintile	66%	21%	10%	3%	100%
Fourth quintile	66%	26%	6%	1%	100%
Fifth quintile	38%	54%	5%	3%	100%

Table 6: Charity structure broken down by income quintiles

Analysis of these figures suggests certain associations between the income of an organisation and its structure. Compared with figures for the overall sample, registered charities with lower incomes, in the first four quintiles, are statistically more likely to be unincorporated associations.

Registered charities with a higher income are more likely to be charitable companies; 54% of charities within the highest income quintile are charitable companies, significantly higher than the 24% for the whole sample. Of note also is the more even distribution of charitable trusts across the income quintiles.

While 12% of registered charities have a governing document that fits within the category of 'other', 41% of charities in the lowest income quintile fit within this category. This is likely because of the registration of a large number of guiding organisations and scout groups that are governed by Royal Charter. Additionally, we have seen a number of housing associations governed by rules for industrial and provident societies added to the register.

This is displayed in the chart below which shows that the percentage of unincorporated associations (shown in blue) decreases in the fifth quintile. The percentage of charitable companies (shown in red) increases across the quintiles. The percentage of charities using a governing document classified as 'other' (shown in purple) has a clear spike in the first quintile with smaller percentages across the other quintiles.

Charitable structure within income quintiles

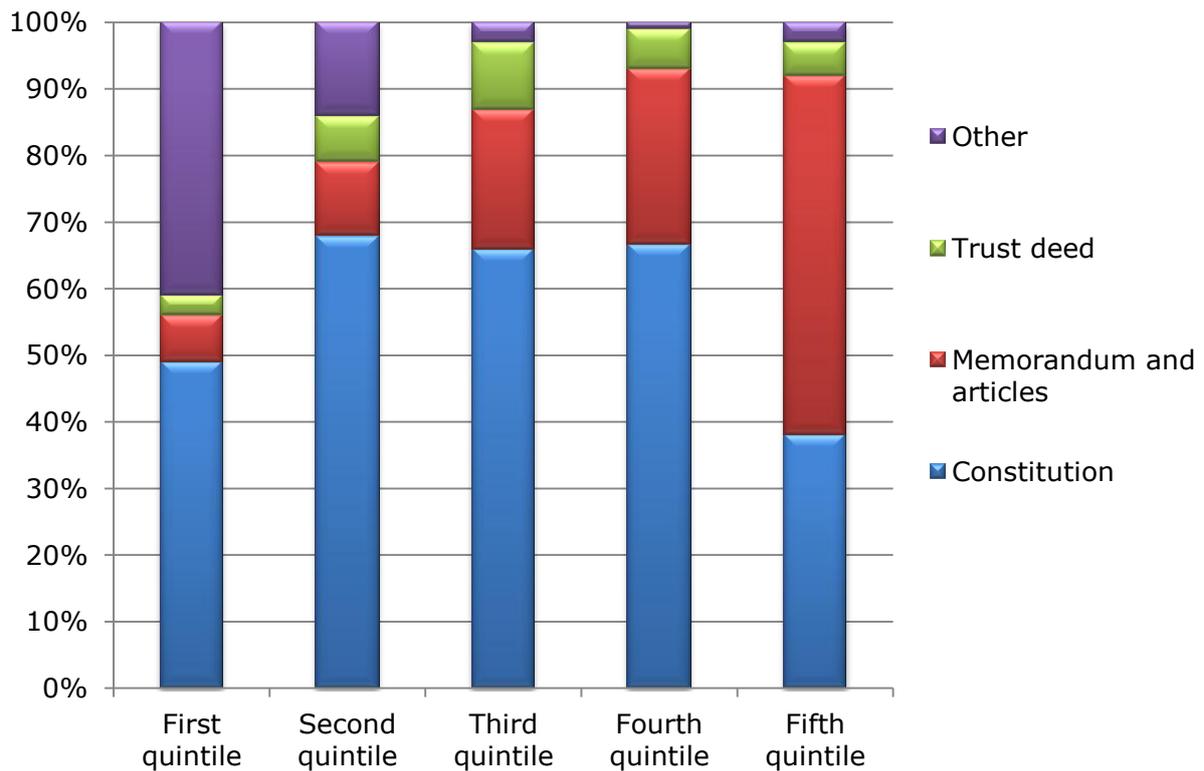
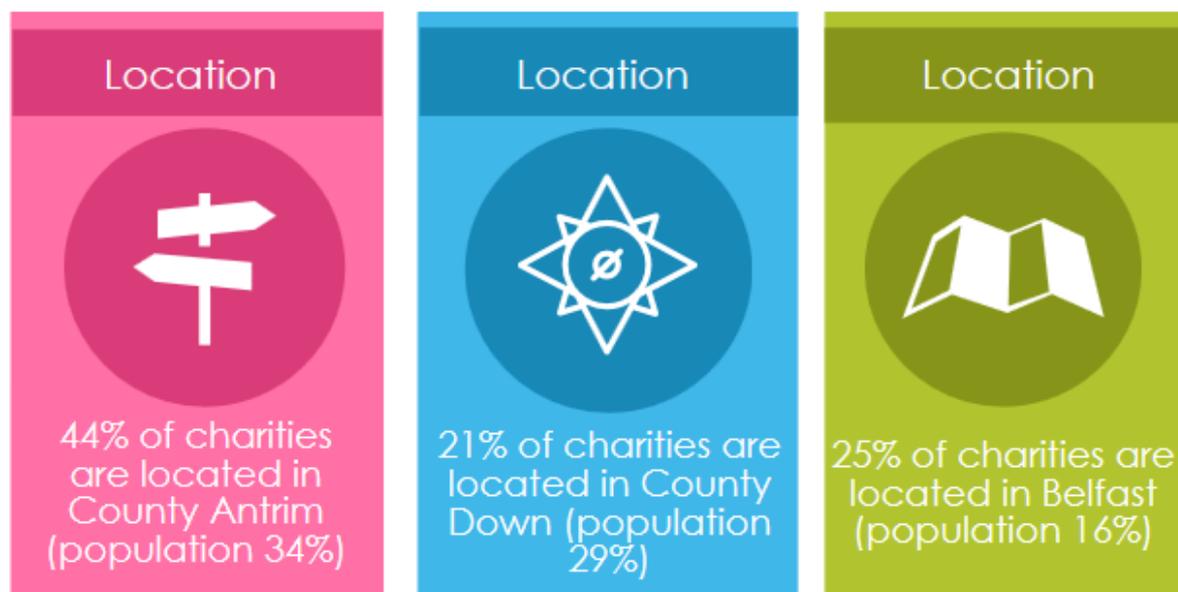


Chart 4: Charitable structure within income quintiles

In the future, it will be interesting to plot charity structure against other variables such as the number of volunteers or employees, the nature of the charity’s purposes or beneficiaries, and its funding arrangements or sources of income.

Location



Registered charities are located across Northern Ireland. The percentage distribution of charities across Northern Ireland is roughly equivalent to the population breakdown according to the 2011 census, with the exception of counties Antrim and Down. 44% of charities are located in County Antrim, which includes most of Belfast. This is higher than the percentage of the Northern Ireland population resident there (34%). Conversely, 29% of the population live in County Down, while 21% of charities are located there.

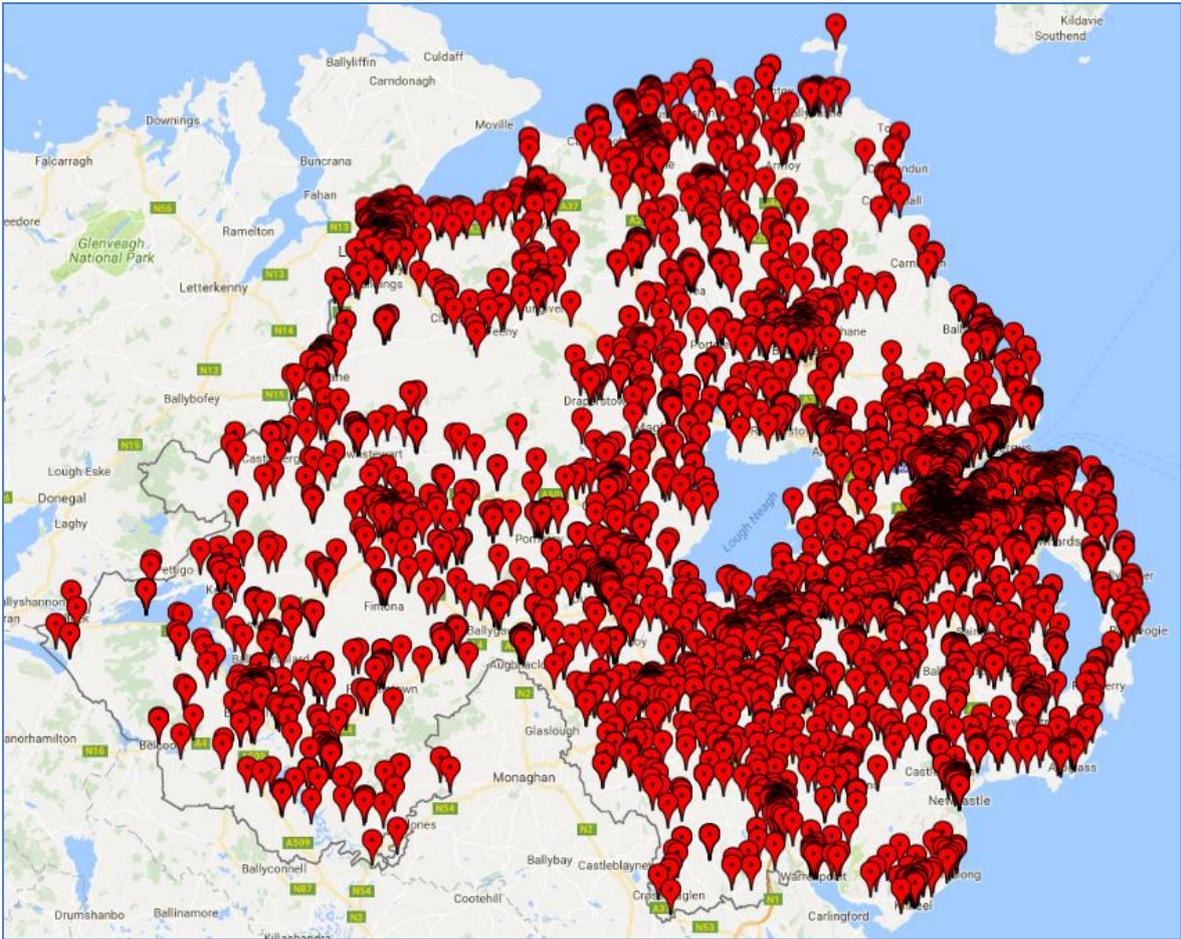
24% of registered charities are located in Belfast. This means that 76% of charities in Northern Ireland are located outside of Belfast.

It is important to note that the location of a charity does not necessarily equate with where the charity's beneficiaries are resident or where the charity applies its funds. For example, a charity that is located in Belfast may work across Northern Ireland, or a charity with its office in Dungannon may benefit children in Romania. The information in the table on the following page highlights the spread of charities across the different counties in Northern Ireland. The information is based on data from 5,196 registered charities, with 15 registered charities having a public address listed as outside Northern Ireland.

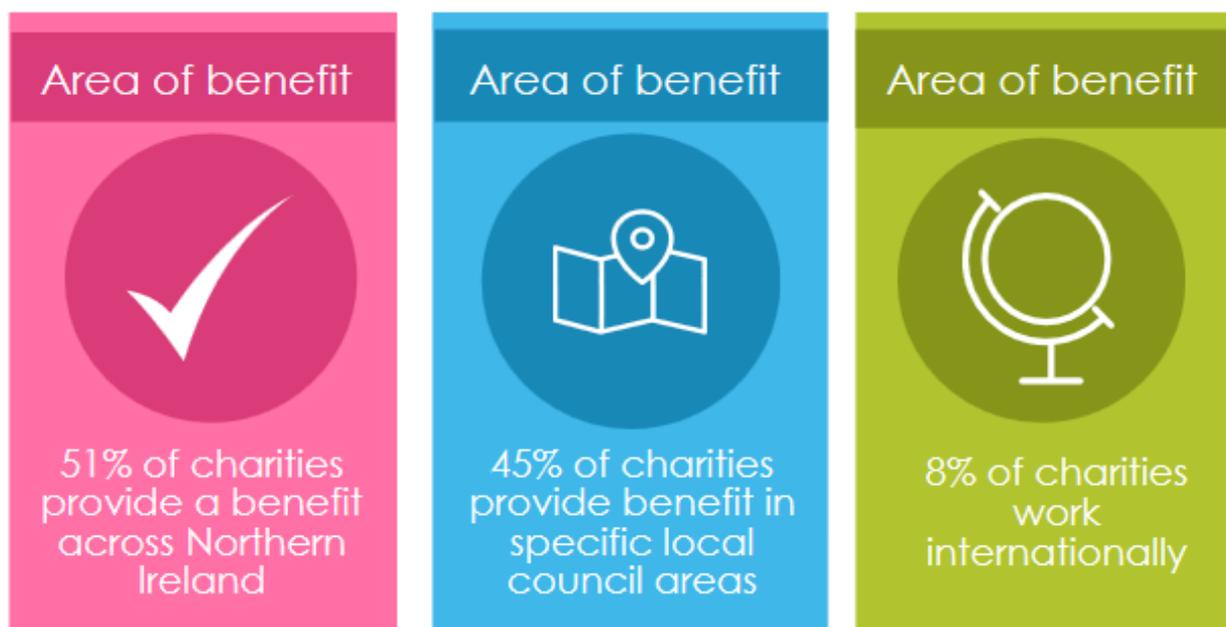
County	% of sample	% population (2011 census)
Antrim	44%	34%
Armagh	8%	10%
Down	21%	29%
Fermanagh	5%	3%
Londonderry	12%	14%
Tyrone	10%	10%
Total	100%	100%

Table 7: Location of registered charities by county

The distribution of registered charities (by public address) is displayed on the map below.



Area of benefit



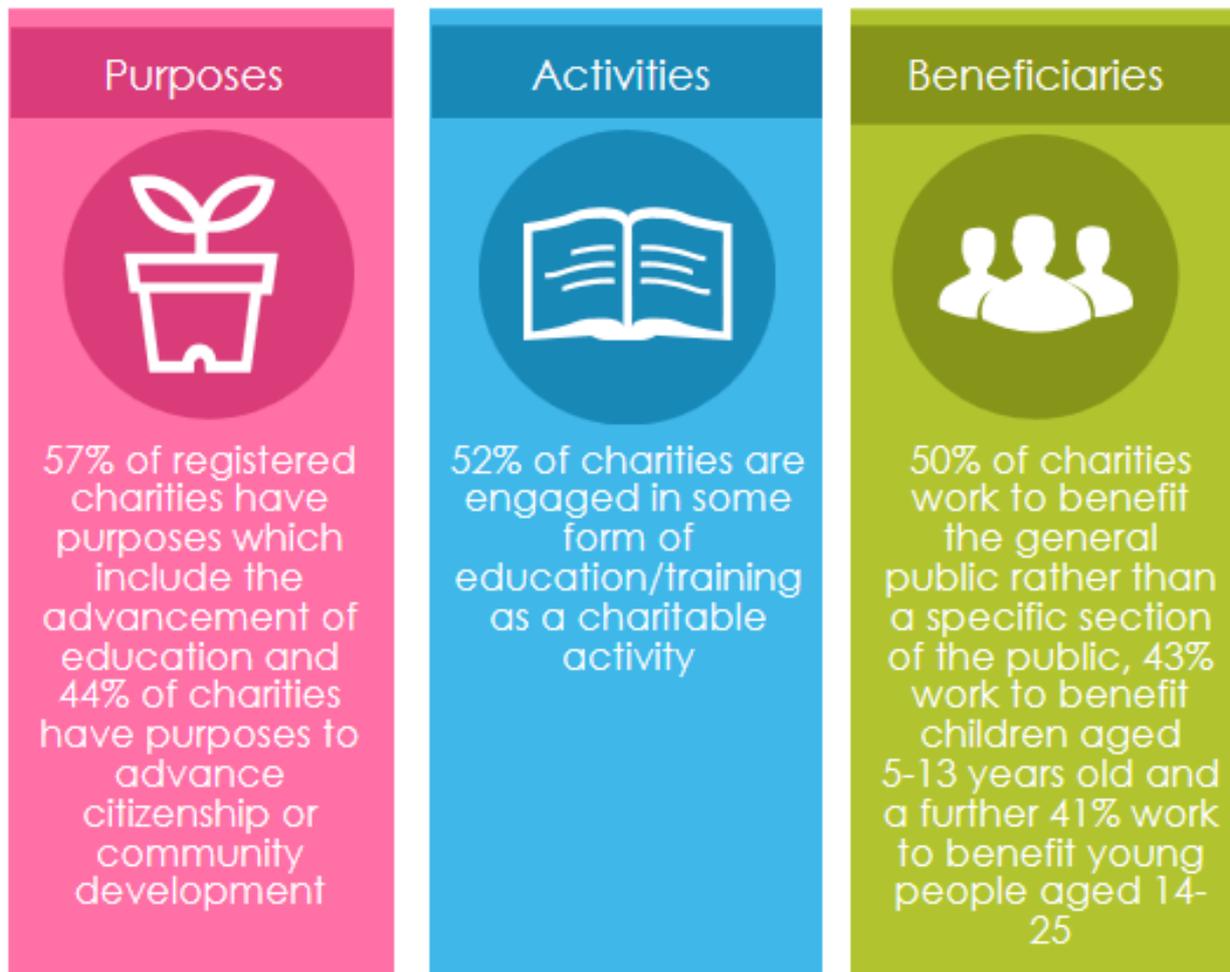
Registered charities in Northern Ireland provide benefits right across the world. While many charities provide their benefits within specific council areas, there are others that provide a benefit across a wider area. 8% of charities registered in Northern Ireland provide a benefit internationally, in countries ranging from Afghanistan to Colombia and Thailand to Zimbabwe. 4% work across the UK while 8% work across Ireland. More than half of charities, 51%, work across Northern Ireland while 45% work in specific local council areas. It is important to note that the percentages in the table below do not add up to 100% as some charities provide their benefits in a number of areas.

Area of benefit	% of sample
In Northern Ireland	51%
In specific local council areas	45%
In Ireland	8%
Internationally	8%
In the UK	4%

Table 8: Area of benefit

Earlier in 2016 the Commission updated the online registration system to capture information on what specific local council areas charities provide a benefit in. This information will be analysed and presented in future reports.

What, how and who: purposes, activities and beneficiaries



To be a charity an organisation must have exclusively charitable purposes. This means that each purpose must fit within one or more of twelve descriptions of purpose set out in the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and be for the public benefit.

Many charities have more than one purpose, and will classify their purposes under a number of different descriptions. This information is captured on the online register of charities. The table on the following page sets out the twelve broad descriptions of purpose and the percentage of charities that have a purpose which can be classified under each one.

Charitable purpose	% of charities
The advancement of education	57%
The advancement of citizenship or community development	44%
The relief of those in need by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage	29%
The advancement of religion	28%
The advancement of health or the saving of lives	22%
The prevention or relief of poverty	21%
The advancement of the arts, culture, heritage or science	18%
The advancement of human rights, conflict resolution or reconciliation or the promotion of religious or racial harmony or equality and diversity	13%
Any other charitable purpose	9%
The advancement of environmental protection or improvement	7%
The advancement of amateur sport	7%
The advancement of animal welfare	2%

Table 9: Charitable purposes

57% of all registered charities have the advancement of education as a purpose. This is the most prevalent purpose amongst registered charities in Northern Ireland. Other popular purposes include the advancement of citizenship or community development (44%), the relief of those in need (29%) and the advancement of religion (28%). The proportion of organisations established to advance religion has increased significantly since we first undertook a similar analysis of the register of charities at a year old. At that time, 9% of registered charities were established to advance religion. The proportion is now 28%. This is likely due to the fact that the registration of many churches is managed in groups and this is now well advanced having been at an early stage when the analysis was first undertaken and is not unexpected.

It might be expected that the number of organisations with a purpose that includes the advancement of citizenship or community development would be proportionately higher in Northern Ireland than across other parts of the UK given the social history and recent conflict.

Charitable activities	Number of charities	% of charities
Education/training	2711	52%
Community development	1691	32%
Youth development	1586	30%
Volunteer development	1529	29%
Religious activities	1367	26%
Sport/recreation	1148	22%
Advice/advocacy/information	1058	20%
Cross-border/cross-community	883	17%
Cultural	851	16%
Relief of poverty	772	15%
General charitable purposes	666	13%
Counselling/support	588	11%
Arts	528	10%
Disability	528	10%
Gender	547	10%
Playgroup/after schools	511	10%
Heritage/historical	448	9%
Medical/health/sickness	484	9%
Grant making	408	8%
Human rights/equality	378	7%
Rural development	369	7%
Environment/sustainable development/conservation	310	6%
Research/evaluation	329	6%
Welfare/benevolent	289	6%
Community enterprise	255	5%
Accommodation/housing	225	4%
Economic development	226	4%
Overseas aid/famine relief	200	4%
Urban development	137	3%
Community transport	87	2%
Animal welfare	60	1%
Criminal justice	58	1%
Search and rescue	2	0%

Table 10: Charitable activities

The most common activity that charities are engaged in is education / training (52%). This is followed by community development (32%), youth development (30%), volunteer development (29%) and religious activities (26%).

Beneficiaries	Number of charities	% of charities
General public	2619	50%
Children (5-13 year olds)	2233	43%
Youth (14-25 year olds)	2121	41%
Volunteers	1399	27%
Women	1364	26%
Older people	1272	24%
Men	1112	21%
Parents	995	19%
Preschool (0-5 year olds)	997	19%
Voluntary and community sector	996	19%
Adult training	899	17%
Unemployed/low income	778	15%
Mental health	595	11%
Physical disabilities	559	11%
Learning disabilities	521	10%
Specific areas of deprivation	507	10%
Ethnic minorities	440	8%
Carers	386	7%
Community safety/crime prevention	374	7%
Interface communities	345	7%
Addictions (drug/solvent/alcohol abuse)	312	6%
Overseas/developing countries	306	6%
Sensory disabilities	300	6%
Ex-offenders and prisoners	213	4%
Homelessness	208	4%
Tenants	166	3%
Victim support	160	3%
Language community	137	3%
Travellers	127	2%
Asylum seekers/refugees	89	2%
Sexual orientation	92	2%
HIV/Aids	73	1%

Table 11: Beneficiaries

Half of all registered charities work with the general public (50%). A large percentage work with children between the ages of 5 and 13 (43%) and young people aged 14 to 25 years (41%).

Section 3: Charity trustees

Charity trustees are the people who have the general control and management of the administration of a charity, regardless of what they are called. For example, in the case of a charitable company, it is the directors who are the charity trustees. They may also be referred to as a board or management committee.

This section of the report analyses information on charity trustees of charities registered to 22 November 2016, reflecting 5,259 charities on the register of charities. These charities represent a total of 34,147 charity trustee positions, held by 30,280 individuals, 15,123 of whom are female (49.9%) and 15,157 of whom are male (50.1%). This reflects an almost balanced gender make up across charity trustee boards.

NISRA mid-year population estimates put the percentage of males aged 18 and over at 48% of the population and females aged 18 and over accounting for 52% of the Northern Ireland population. The gender gap is considerably smaller than in other sectors however, for example, a report published by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, *Public Bodies and Public Appointment Annual Report 2013/14*, revealed that 36% of public appointments in Northern Ireland are held by women.⁴

	Percentage of trustees	Percentage of Northern Ireland population aged 18+ ⁵
Female trustees	49.9%	52%
Male trustees	50.1%	48%
All trustees	100%	100%

Table 12: Trustees - gender



⁴ <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/public-bodies-and-public-appointments-annual-report-2013-14-v2.pdf>

⁵ NISRA Mid-year population estimates <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/demography/default.asp17.htm>

The average age of a charity trustee is 55 years. This varies slightly by gender, with female charity trustees having an average age of 53 years and male charity trustees an average age of 57 years. The oldest charity trustee is aged 100 and the youngest trustees are 16 years of age.

2% of trustees fall within the 18-24 years age bracket. This is not representative of the Northern Ireland population as a whole where, according to 2013 NISRA statistics, 9% of individuals are aged 18-24. Over two fifths (42%) of charity trustees are aged 65 years and over. Individuals in this age bracket make up 20% of the Northern Ireland population.⁶

Age band	Percentage of trustees	NISRA population estimates 2013
18-24 ⁷	2%	9%
25-29	3%	7%
30-39	12%	13%
40-49	20%	14%
50-59	22%	13%
60+	42%	20%
Total	100%	76%

Table 13: Trustees – age

The image below highlights that two in every one hundred charity trustees are likely to be aged between 18 and 24, while 63⁸ out of every one hundred trustees are likely to be aged 50 or more.



⁶ NISRA Mid-year population estimates <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/demography/default.asp17.htm>

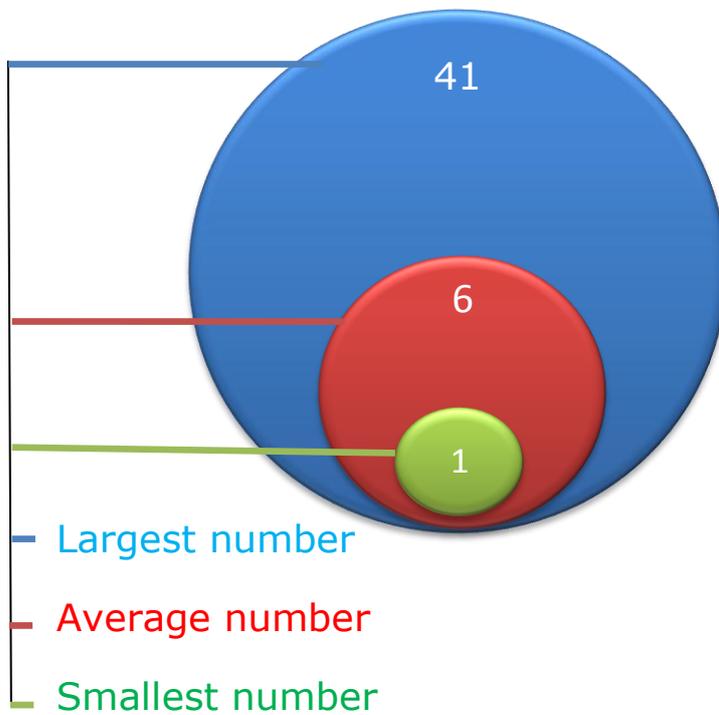
⁷ Individuals aged 16 and 17 removed for purposes of comparison against NISRA stats

⁸ Figure accurate due to rounding of percentages

Within this sample, the highest number of trustees in a charity was 35 and 1 was the lowest number. The average number of charity trustees per charity is 6. Based on estimates of the number of charities in Northern Ireland, this means that there could be between 65,000 and 104,000 trustee places occupied by between 57,000 and 92,000 individuals.

	Average	Largest number	Smallest number
Number of trustees	6	41	1

Table 14: Trustees – per charity



Section 4: Raising awareness of the register of charities and investigating how people use it

This report highlights some of the information that is available on the register of charities. Much of this information is what members of the public seek in order to hold charities to account and helps to increase trust and confidence in charities.⁹ It is essential, therefore, that members of the public and other stakeholders know about the register and how to access it, and that we ensure it holds the information that stakeholders need. We have put a number of measures in place to start to understand levels of awareness, views on what the register should contain, and gather baseline information.

Earlier this year we added some questions to the nfpSynergy Celtic Charity Awareness Monitor¹⁰. We wanted to find out more about whether people in Northern Ireland are aware of developments in charity regulation, including the register of charities. This revealed a number of findings.

Firstly, there is a relatively low awareness of both compulsory charity registration and accounting and reporting requirements for charities. 8% of respondents were aware of compulsory charity registration and 12% of respondents had heard about charity accounting and reporting in Northern Ireland. However, respondents reported higher levels of concern about these issues, that is, they think of them as issues that are important to them: ensuring that charities comply with compulsory charity registration and fulfilling accounting and reporting requirements. We hope to undertake future research to probe these issues further.



⁹ Findings from the [Public trust and confidence in charities research report 2016](#)

¹⁰ nfpSynergy Celtic Charity Awareness Monitor data 2016. For more information go to www.nfpsynergy.net

We also asked people where they would go to find out information about a charity in Northern Ireland. This revealed that the majority of people use the internet to find out information. 46% of people simply do an online search, with 29% going directly to a charity's website. 7% of people use the Northern Ireland register of charities to find out information.



Chart 5: Where do people find information about charities?

Alongside this research, we have been hosting a questionnaire on our website to get a better understanding of how people are using the register of charities and what information they would like to see hosted on the register.¹¹ To date, we have received 86 responses.

The information we have received is presented on the following pages. It is important to note that percentages may not add up to 100% as some people selected more than one option.

Responses to the questionnaire highlight that the register of charities is being used by a range of stakeholders, principally members of the public and those who are involved in a charity whether as a charity trustee, other volunteer or an employee. The register is also being used by funders, researchers and academics, and charity beneficiaries.

¹¹ www.charitycommissionni.org.uk/about-us/public-consultations/survey-on-register-of-charities/

Who is using the register of charities?	% of respondents
Member of the public	42%
Charity trustee or other volunteer	33%
Charity employee	14%
Funder	6%
Researcher or academic	6%
Other	5%
Charity beneficiary	2%

Table 15: Who is using the register of charities?

There is a range of reasons why people view the online register. The primary reason is to check if an organisation is a charity. Additionally, it is a source of information on specific charities and a tool for research purposes.

Why are you viewing the online register?	% of respondents
To check if an organisation is a charity	49%
To find out information about a specific registered charity	35%
For research purposes	33%
To search for a charity based on its geographical area, purposes, activities or beneficiaries	12%
For business purposes	6%
Other	5%

Table 16: Why are you viewing the online register?

Some additional comments were provided in response to this question with one highlighting a key benefit of the register to charities. One individual commented that they were using the register as they were "Interested in leaving property in [a] will to [an] org[anisation] wishing to rent it out." Another individual left a comment that they were "Searching for a small charity to support financially."

We also seek information from those who have previously used the register as to how helpful or unhelpful they have found it in providing the information they were looking for. 45% of those who answered this question had not used the

online register of charities. The figures in the table below are the responses of those individuals who had used the register.

If you have viewed the online register of charities already, how helpful or unhelpful was it in providing the information you were looking for?	% of those who had used the register
Very helpful	32%
Fairly helpful	34%
Neither helpful nor unhelpful	14%
Fairly unhelpful	9%
Very unhelpful	11%

Table 17: How helpful or unhelpful is the register of charities in sourcing information?

66% of respondents found the register very or fairly helpful in providing the information they were looking for. By comparison, 20% found it to be fairly or very unhelpful. We also sought additional comments as to what information would be helpfully hosted on the register. Some of the responses reveal that additional information requested is information that will be added over time as organisations complete their annual monitoring returns each year and provide their accounts and reports. We hope, therefore, that people will find the register more and more helpful over time.

Much of the information that respondents commented they would like to see is already on the register including:

- Organisation name
- Charity number
- Contact details and website
- Area of operation
- What the charity does
- Names of charity trustees.

Some of the information will be added as registered charities submit their annual monitoring return, accounts and reports, and information is gathered over time including:

- Published accounts
- Financial information including income and expenditure
- Details of key individuals and examples of work undertaken (within the trustees' annual report)
- Financial history.

One individual commented that they would like to see the governing documents of registered charities. This is something that we hope to add to the register in

coming years. Another commented that it would be useful to see the sector size broken down into parts. We hope that that has been achieved through the publication of this research report.



Finally, one individual commented that they found it difficult to locate the register of charities from the Commission's homepage as the tab at the top of the page is titled "Charity search" rather than "Register of charities". This comment will be taken into consideration in the ongoing development of the website.

Section 5: Other information available on charities in Northern Ireland

The Commission has produced a thematic report highlighting information from the first annual returns received by the Commission. It is available on the Commission's website on the [Thematic reports and case studies](#) page. Following the submission of a charity's annual return, its accounts and reports are published to the register and information on its income and expenditure is made available. Some examples of the information available online are shown below:

Cancer Lifeline

Overview Financials Documents People Operations

Income: **£442.2K** Spending: **£379.3K** Status: **Up-to-date**

Charity no. 100002
Company no. 55010
Date registered. 13/12/2013

Public benefits
Cancer Lifeline feels it meets the public benefit requirement because its purposes satisfies both elements of the public benefit requirement. In practice, Cancer Lifelines' purposes provide a range of benefits to a section of the public (ie. those diagnosed with cancer and their family members / carers). The actual benefits in terms of (i) the relief of sickness through the provision of support ... [\[more\]](#)

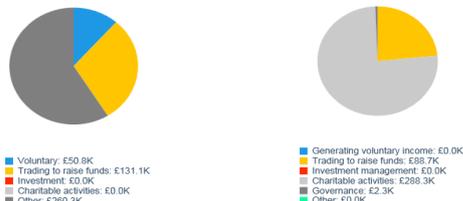
What your organisation does
At our 'home from home' community base Cancer Lifeline provides a varied programme of support and

Cancer Lifeline

Overview Financials Documents People Operations

Income: **£442.2K** Spending: **£379.3K**

Assets and liabilities
Total fixed assets: **£226.2K**
Other assets: **£273.2K**
Total liabilities: **£7.3K**



■ Voluntary: £50.8K
 ■ Trading to raise funds: £131.1K
 ■ Investment: £0.0K
 ■ Charitable activities: £0.0K
 ■ Other: £260.3K

■ Generating voluntary income: £0.0K
 ■ Trading to raise funds: £88.7K
 ■ Investment management: £0.0K
 ■ Charitable activities: £288.3K
 ■ Governance: £2.3K
 ■ Other: £0.0K

Cancer Lifeline

Overview Financials Documents People Operations

Charity accounts & reports for financial year end 31 March 2015

[PDF](#) Independent examiners report (48KB)
 [PDF](#) Charity accounts (250KB)
 [PDF](#) Trustee annual report (406KB)

Charitable purposes
Cancer Lifeline is established for the relief of sickness and to advance education about cancer among people

Governing document
Memorandum

Earlier this year we also published new research on levels of public trust and confidence in charities in Northern Ireland. The full research report as well as snapshot reports, focusing on specific areas, are available on the Commission's [research page](#).

Conclusion

The findings within this study provide a useful indicator of how information gathered from charities at the point of registration can be analysed and presented. We hope that this information will be of use to charities and other stakeholders with an interest in the sector.

It is our intention that, as the register of charities continues to grow, further reports will be produced on a regular basis analysing information held and presenting key facts and figures on charities operating in Northern Ireland.

Please do contact the Commission to discuss this report and share your views on what information could usefully be analysed and presented in the future.