

Charitable Status

Charitable Status - what is a charity?

Charities have exclusively charitable purposes. Charitable purposes are set out in the Charities Act 2006. The purposes of a charity will be set out in its 'objects' clause in its governing document and must fall under one or more of the following:

- 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 of the efficiency of the police, fire and rescue services or ambulance services
- Other purposes currently recognised as charitable and any new charitable purposes which are similar to another charitable purpose

Charities must benefit the public

All charities must be able to demonstrate how their purposes benefit the public. For a charity to benefit the public it must be able to demonstrate:

- That it provides a clear, identifiable benefit related to its aims, the benefit being balanced against any detriment or harm
- That the benefits are to the public, or a section of the public, and that there are not unreasonable restrictions, such as high fees preventing an opportunity to benefit.
- Any private benefit must be incidental to a charity's work. This includes the restrictions over how far trustees can benefit personally from a charity



When are organisations required to register with the Charity Commission?

To register as a charity the organisation must apply to the Charity Commission. The Charity Commission exists to regulate and support charities. If your organisation's annual income is over £5,000 per year and you meet the criteria for registration, then your organisation is viewed to be a charity and must register.

The Charity Commission has published guidance on the Public Benefit Requirement which is available on the Commission website. Under the Charities Act 2006 trustees must have regard to this. Trustees must also now set out in the Trustees Annual Report how they have carried out their charitable purposes for the public benefit.

For more information on Charitable Status visit the Charity Commission website:
www.charitycommission.gov.uk.

Getting further support

Northumberland Community Voluntary Action (Northumberland CVA) can help you through the process of applying for charitable status. For more information, advice and support email enquire@northumberlandcva.org.uk or call 01670 858688.