

What are charitable purposes?

Definition

A charitable purpose can be defined as "the reason a charity has been set up, and what its activities are that work towards achieving it". All registered charities must have a charitable purpose. This purpose is usually set out in the charity's **governing document**. A charity may have one charitable purpose or multiple charitable purposes.

Charitable purposes

A charitable purpose is something that helps the public and contributes towards things such as:

- Relieving poverty
- Education
- Religion
- Health
- Saving lives
- Citizenship or community development
- The arts
- Amateur sport
- Human rights
- Religious or racial harmony
- The protection of the environment
- Animal welfare
- The efficiency of the armed forces, police, fire or ambulance services

The Charities Act 2011

The Charities Act 2011 defines a charitable purpose, explicitly, as one that falls within 13 descriptions of purposes and is for the public benefit.

These are the purposes of:

- Advancing health, education, religion, culture or social or public welfare.
- Promoting or protecting human rights.
- Other purposes beneficial to the public.



What is a governing document?

A governing document is a legal document that is a rule book for your charity. A governing document allows trustees and other interested parties to find out:

- Your charity's purpose
- Who runs it and how they run it
- How trustees will be appointed
- Rules about trustees' expenses
- Rules about payments to trustees
- How to close the charity

All trustees must meet to sign the governing document. Once this is completed, trustees must ensure they keep a copy of the governing document for reference as it will support them to run their charity.

How to write a governing document

In order to write your governing document, you should first decide the type of charity you would like, as this will determine the type of governing document you require.

Governing document templates

Templates are available to support you to write a governing document. These can be found at www.gov.uk/government/publications/setting-up-a-charity-model-governing-documents

Use one of [the Charity Commission's model governing documents](#), either:

- As a template (recommended) – this makes it easier to register your charity.
- As a reference – to see what a governing document looks like and what it must contain.

Governing documents for different charity legal structures

The name of your governing document and the titles of the trustees are different depending on the legal structure of your charity. You must ascertain the legal structure of your charity before completing your governing document.

Charity legal structures

What is a legal structure?

How a charity is set up is known as the legal structure. A legal structure will affect how your charity works in terms of:

- Who will run it
- Whether it can enter into contracts or employ staff in its own name
- Who will be liable for what the organisation does

Legal Structures

Legal Structure

Unincorporated association
or society

Governing document

Constitution or rules

Usual title of the charities trustee

Management
committee members

Legal Structure

Charitable trust

Governing document

Trust deed

Usual title of the charities trustee

Trustees/governors

Legal Structure

Charitable company
limited by guarantee (an
incorporated charity)

Governing document

Memorandum and
Articles of Association

Usual title of the charities trustee

Directors/trustees

Legal Structure

Charitable incorporated
organisation (CIO)

Governing document

Association model
Foundation model
constitution

Usual title of the charities trustee

Trustees

Charity status is not a legal structure, but whether you have charity status will affect the legal structure you can choose. This is because some legal structures cannot have charity status.



How to register your charity

You can register your charity at www.charitycommission.gov.uk

Introduction

This is an introduction to your application and will list the uploads that you will need to make.

About your charity

Include your governing document and provide your charity name and structure

Classification

- What area you work in
- How you deliver your service
- Who you do this for
- Where you do this

Public benefits

How you do what you do, the benefits this creates and how you decide what to do.

Property

Do you own, or have use of property and what it's used for. If you have a lease, or other agreement, you will be required to upload a copy.

Contact information

This include the contact information of the person submitting the registration, the contact at the charity and the charity organisation to include role, address, email, phone number and website as applicable.

Regulators

Select any applicable, plus HMRC Gift Aid number, if you have one.

Finance

Accounts (optional), estimated gross annual income and income year to date, bank account details (if you have one), financial year-end date, sources of income, tax issues.

Connections

Links to a trustee, or the founder, or any organisation connected to them - employment, goods/services, benefits, links to non-charitable organisations.

Trustee details

Safeguarding, trustee numbers and details of individual trustees - names, previous names, addresses, emails, phone numbers, dates of birth.

Declaration

Attach any additional information, advise Commission of any additional information you wish them to take into account. Your certification regards accuracy and approval by all trustees. It's a criminal offence under section 60 of the Charities Act 2011 for anyone to knowingly or recklessly provide false or misleading information to the Commission; this includes suppressing, concealing or destroying documents.

Check your application prior to submitting as you will not be allowed to make changes once this has been submitted.

