The Charity Commission regulates and registers charities in England and Wales. It produces guidance for trustees on how they should meet their legal duties and responsibilities.

The Commission is part of the civil service and is a non-ministerial government department.

The Commission runs an online register of charities, which provides full information – including financial – about all registered charities.

Charities with an income of more than £5,000 need to register. Charities with less income still need to abide by charity law (under the Charities Act 2011) and in almost all cases, the Commission still acts as regulator.

The Commission investigates accusations of wrongdoing. The vast majority of errors are simple mistakes, and help and advice from the Commission to trustees is enough to rectify things. However, in some rare cases, a statutory inquiry is necessary to find out what has gone wrong and how it can be fixed.

If a serious problem is uncovered, the Commission has powers to:

- restrict transactions a charity may enter into
- appoint additional trustees
- ‘freeze’ a charity’s bank account
- suspend or remove a trustee
- appoint an interim manager
- make a referral for investigation to the police and other law enforcement agencies.

**Co-regulation**

While the Charity Commission is the sector’s main regulator, other bodies exist to regulate specific types of charity, or charitable activity.

For example, universities in England are charities. But their main regulator is the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).
For fundraising activity, a newly formed Fundraising Regulator is responsible for ensuring charities fundraise efficiently and ethically. For more information on the regulator’s role, responsibility and powers, read our factsheet – Why do charities fundraise?

The Charity Commission is a good place to start if you are unsure which regulator you need to speak to.

Scotland and Northern Ireland

The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) and The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland carry out the same roles and responsibilities in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Useful press contacts

Charity Commission (England and Wales)
pressenquiries@
charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk
Telephone 0300 065 2123
Out of hours 07785 748 787
@ChtyCommission

Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator
info@oscr.org.uk
@ScotCharityReg
Telephone 01382 220 446

The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland
communications@
charitycommissionni.org.uk
Telephone 028 3832 0169
Out of hours 07827 338 978
@CharityCommissionNI

Fundraising Regulator
fr@pagefield.co.uk
Telephone 0203 327 4050
Out of hours 07971 784 224
@FundrRegulator