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# Using and updating the register of charities

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## Guide 1: Overview



If you need any help to access this guide please email [admin@charitycommissionni.org.uk](mailto:admin@charitycommissionni.org.uk) and tell us what format you need so we can consider how to help you.

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## About this guide

One of the key functions for the Charity Commission of Northern Ireland (the Commission) is to keep a public *register of charities*. To ensure that the greatest number of people have access to the register it is published online on the Commission's website. In this way the register can be accessed by anyone, anywhere in the world.

The primary purpose of the register is to increase transparency and provide a range of information to the public and other stakeholders. This transparency is designed to encourage public confidence and trust in the charities they support and in the charitable sector. The public can get this assurance by checking that charity trustees have complied with their legal obligations to register their charity and have submitted annual accounts and reports on time and in compliance with the Regulations.

The aim of this guidance is to inform the public, charities and other stakeholders what information is held on the *register of charities* and how they can access it and use it. The guidance aims to encourage further use of the register by explaining how to search or download information to develop an overview of individual charities or the charity sector.

### How to use the guide

This guidance is divided into four parts.

**Guide 1:** explains what the *register of charities* is, how to access it and what information about a charity can be found on the register.

**Guide 2: Changing charity details:** sets out how charity trustees can ensure that their charity's entry is up to date on the register.

**Guide 3: Charity accounts and reports:** sets out information on the accounts and reports which charities submit to the Commission each year.

**Guide 4: Searching the register:** explains what kinds of searches can be carried out on the register and how to do them. Including looking at an individual charity, downloading the entire register or part of the register.

## What is the register of charities?

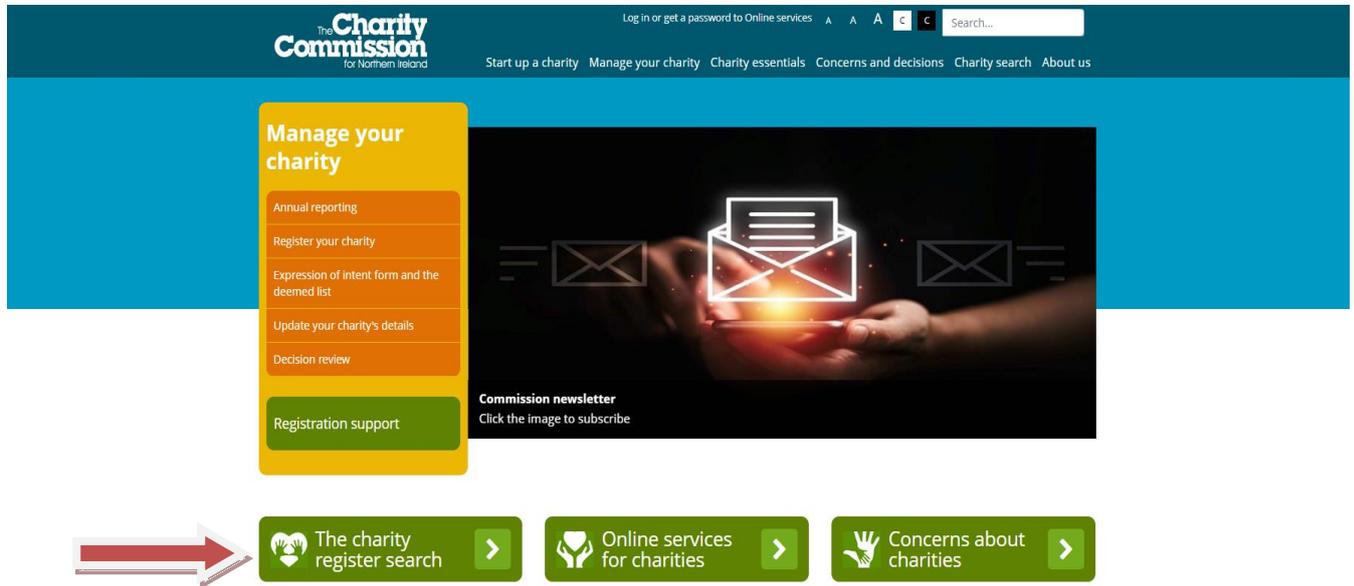
The register of charities is a public resource which anyone, anywhere in the world, may use to find out key information about registered charities in Northern Ireland. All the information published on the register is provided to the Commission by or on behalf of a charity in compliance with their legal obligations, which are set out in the Charities Act. The information is primarily gathered when a charity registers and reports annually.

A list of the information on the register, including what can be updated by charity trustees, and how to update your entry on the register can be found in [Guide 2: Changing your charity's details](#).

# Accessing the register

The following screenshots show how to access the *register of charities* from the Commission's website:

Step 1: go to the home page of the website



Step 2: Read the disclaimer - this is important as it explains why the Commission cannot guarantee the accuracy of this information. Then click through to search the register.

## Disclaimer

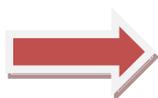


The information contained on the *register of charities* is provided to the Commission by or on behalf of a charity in compliance with their legal obligations set out in the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

This information is gathered when a charity applies to be registered and via updates made by or on behalf of a charity, for example, on the retirement and appointment of charity trustees, changes in the charity's governing document and the annual reporting programme. The Commission cannot and does not guarantee the accuracy of information which has been supplied by third parties, and the Commission is not responsible for the consequences of any error or omissions in the information held on the register.

It is a criminal offence to knowingly or recklessly provide the Commission with information which is false or misleading. The charity trustees of registered charities have a legal obligation to ensure their charity's register entry is accurate.

As information is filed electronically by or on behalf of a charity errors may occur when information is being entered. The Commission does not edit this information. Where errors are discovered or reported to the Commission they will be brought to the attention of the charity. If you notice any apparent errors in the register data please let us know by email to [admin@charitycommissionni.org.uk](mailto:admin@charitycommissionni.org.uk)



Step 3a: If you want to download the whole register, click on Export to CSV. This will download the information in an Excel spreadsheet which you can search. The download contains 38 categories of information including:

- Charity name and contact details
- What the charity does and who it helps
- Type of governing document
- Income and spending
- Number of employees and volunteers

### Search results for

Search bar with magnifying glass icon

Filter by: [Remove all filters](#) **7176 charities found**

Status	▼	<b>Export to CSV</b>
Income	▼	<b>Cancer Lifeline</b> 100002   Received: on time
Regions Worked	▼	<b>Strabane Ethnic Community Association</b> 100003   Registered
Countries Worked	▼	<b>Disability Action (NI)</b> 100004   Registered
What the charity does	▼	
Who the charity helps	▼	



Step 3b: You can use the filters at the side of the screen to refine your search and then click on Export to CSV to download the results. The example below shows a search by regions in which charities work, but you can use more than one filter for your search.

Filter by: [Remove all filters](#)

**Status** ▼

**Income** ▼

**Regions Worked** ▲

- In Northern Ireland (4052)
- In Ireland (516)
- Internationally (420)
- In The Uk (345)

420 charities found

[Export to CSV](#)

### Friends of Nigeria-RVH save a heart foundation

100026 | Registered

### SERVE In Solidarity Ireland

100037 | Registered

### ACTIONS NOT WORDS

100040 | Registered

**Please note:** the information on the register is taken from the application for charity registration and the annual monitoring return (AMR), accounts and reports. As some charities must provide more information than others in their AMR, the information available for all charities on the register can vary.

For more information on how to download information and search the register see [Guide 4: Searching the register](#).

# Understanding a charity's entry on the register

This section sets out how a charity's entry appears after it is registered and how it appears after the charity begins to submit annual accounts and reports (called an Annual Monitoring Return - AMR).

## At registration

When a charity has been registered but is not yet required to submit an AMR, its entry will appear as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1

### Charity A



### Registered

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The four tabs, *Overview*, *Documents*, *People* and *Operations* lead to pages that contain further information. The tabs also indicate which page of the charity's entry on the register you are reading. In the example above, the visitor to the register is on the *Overview* page and the other tabs appear on a grey background.

## The Overview page

On the *Overview* page you will find the charity's Northern Ireland Charity number, the date the charity was registered and information on:

- the public benefit the charity aims to provide
- what the charity does
- which of the descriptions contained in the Charities Act the charity falls under - its classifications
- who the charity helps – its beneficiaries
- how the charity works – its activities.

See Figure 2, below, for an example of an *Overview* page from the register.

Figure 2

## Charity A

Overview Documents People Operations

### Registered

Charity no. 123456  
Date registered. 17/05/2023

#### Public benefits

To support those in need or suffering financial or other hardship and animal welfare charities by providing financial support. Feedback from beneficiaries. No. The disadvantaged in society and animal welfare charities. No.

#### What your organisation does

Provides financial support by making grants or other finance to individuals and organisations.

#### The charity's classifications

The prevention or relief of poverty  
The relief of those in need by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage  
The advancement of animal welfare  
Other charitable purposes

#### Who the charity helps

General public  
General public  
General public

#### How the charity works

Community development  
Grant making

## The Documents page

The *Documents* page of a charity's entry on the register contains information on the charity's purposes and the type of governing document it is using. See Figure 3 below.

Figure 3

## Charity A

Overview Documents People Operations

#### Charitable purposes

3.1. The Charity's Objects are to promote the following purposes for the public benefit in Northern Ireland and elsewhere whether directly or indirectly by any lawful and charitable means: 3.1.1. the relief of poverty and support of those in need by reason of age, ill health, financial hardship or other disadvantage; 3.1.2. the advancement of animal welfare; and 3.1.3. such other charitable purposes as the Trustees see fit from time to time. Nothing in this Declaration of Trust shall authorise an application of the property of the Charity for purposes which are not charitable in accordance with s.2 of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

#### Governing document

Trust Deed or Declaration of Trust

#### Other name

When a charity begins to submit an annual report to the Commission its accounts, trustees' annual report and Annual Monitoring Return (AMR) will be published in the *Documents* page.

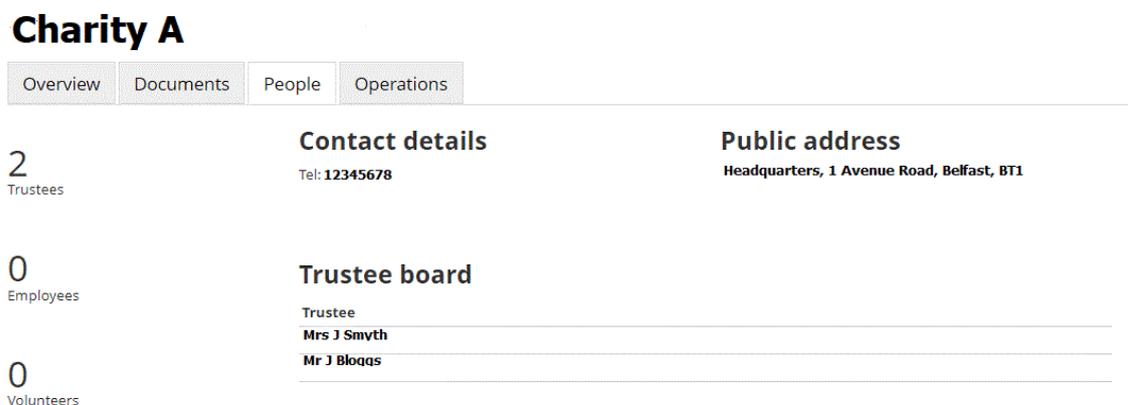
Some charities have an official name and a better-known working name. For example, Oxfam is the working and well-known name of the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief.

The 'Other name' section of the *Documents* page allows a charity with a working name to record it here.

## The People page

The *People* page of a charity's entry on the register lists the number of trustees a charity has, as well as the number of employees and volunteers. The names of the charity trustees are also published on this page alongside contact details for the charity. See Figure 4 below.

Figure 4



The only charity trustee details published on the *register of charities* are the first name and surname of each charity trustee. Publication of this information enables the public, funders and other stakeholders to see who is responsible for the administration of a charity. The names of most charity trustees are already in the public domain, for example, on the charity's website, on Companies House website or through social media and local press coverage of the charity.

On rare occasions the charity's entry will show a higher number of trustees than names listed within the same section. This occurs in exceptional circumstances where the Commission has agreed a trustee

can be anonymous. The Commission considers requests for anonymity on a case-by-case basis and will seek verifiable evidence in support of this request.

Figure 5 below illustrates, for a fictional charity, how this type of entry may appear on the register.

Figure 5

The screenshot shows a web interface for a charity's register entry. At the top, there are navigation tabs: Overview, Financials, Documents, People, and Operations. The main content is divided into three columns. The left column contains statistics: 8 Trustees, 7 Employees, and 200 Volunteers. The middle column has three sections: 'Contact details' with website, email, and phone information; 'Linked charities' with one entry; and 'Trustee board' with a list of five trustees. The right column has a 'Public address' section with one entry.

Overview	Financials	Documents	People	Operations
<b>8</b> Trustees			<b>Contact details</b> Website: <a href="http://www.charitywebaddress">http://www.charitywebaddress</a> Email: <a href="mailto:info@charityemailaddress">info@charityemailaddress</a> Tel: 028 90111222	<b>Public address</b> Charity example, 221 Lisburn Avenue, Belfast
<b>7</b> Employees			<b>Linked charities</b> 1001111 Charity example	
<b>200</b> Volunteers			<b>Trustee board</b> <b>Trustee</b> Mrs Ava Bell Mr John Campbell Mr Stephen Graham Miss Emma Ellis Mr Kenneth Ross	

## The Operations page

The *Operations* page of a charity's entry records the areas in which a charity works. For example, local council areas, other countries or a mixture of local areas and regions further afield. See Figure 6 below.

Figure 6

### Charity A

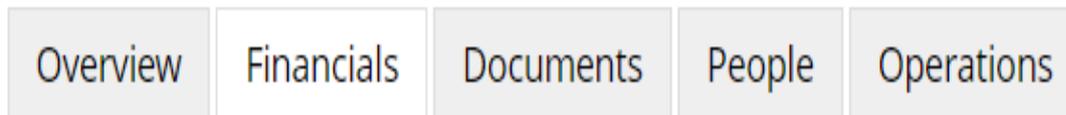
The screenshot shows the 'Operations' page for 'Charity A'. It features navigation tabs: Overview, Documents, People, and Operations. Below the tabs is the section 'List of regions' with the text 'In Northern Ireland'.

Overview	Documents	People	Operations
			<b>List of regions</b> In Northern Ireland

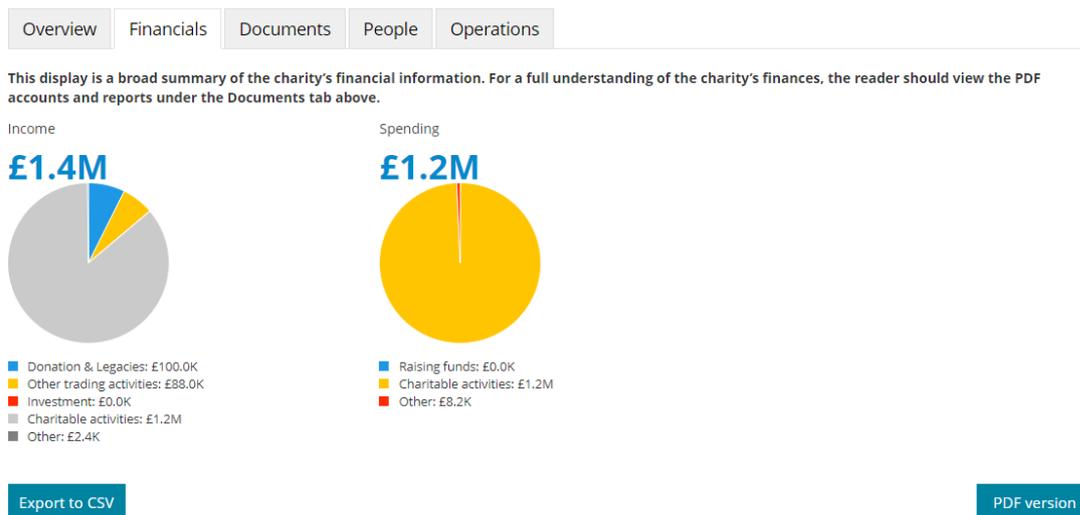
## When annual reporting begins

When annual reporting begins a new tab *Financials* will appear if the charity has an annual income of more than £250,000. See figure 7 below:

Figure 7



This page provides a broad summary of the financial information submitted in the AMR and therefore is only available after a charity has submitted an AMR. For more information on this please see [Guide 3: Charity Accounts and reports](#).



The *Financials* page displays a broad summary of the charity's financial information for larger charities with annual income of more than £250,000. For a full understanding of the charity's finances, the reader should view the PDF accounts and reports under the Documents tab.

The *Status* of a charity will also be shown giving information on whether a charity has submitted its annual AMR on time. In Figure 8 below you can see the charity's AMR has been 'Received: on time'. You will also see details about a charity's income and expenditure.

Figure 8



## Freedom of information and data protection

The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland is responsible for registering, regulating and reporting on the charity sector in Northern Ireland. As part of its work the Commission is lawfully required to collect and process personal data. Your personal details will be treated as private and confidential, and will only be retained for as long as is necessary in line with our [retention policy and in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018](#). You may want to read the Commission's [Privacy notice](#) which explains what we do with personal data and your rights in relation to that processing.

*The Freedom of Information Act 2000* gives members of the public the right to know about and request information that we hold. This includes information received from third parties. If information is requested under the Freedom of Information Act, we will release it unless there are relevant exemptions. We may choose to consult with you first. If you think that information you are providing may be exempt from release if requested, please let us know.

## More information

**Website:** [www.charitycommissionni.org.uk](http://www.charitycommissionni.org.uk)

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