

# Being a Charity

Many people use the term 'charity' to describe any kind of voluntary organisation which carries out activities, targeted at improving the quality of life for people or communities, and not carried out for profit. While all charity activities attempt to do this, not all organisations working in this way can become a charity. The term 'charity' is used to describe an organisation whose aims and objects fall within the classifications defined by the law as charitable.

The headings are:

- Prevention or relief of poverty
- Advancement of Religion
- Advancement of Citizenship/Community Development
- Advancement of arts/heritage/culture
- Advancement of human rights
- Advancement of animal welfare
- Any other reasonable purposes
- Advancement of Education
- Advancement of Health
- Advancement in Sport
- Advancement of environment

If an organisation carries out one or more of these objects (and no other non-charitable object), is not replacing statutory and its Management Committee are unpaid and entirely independent of any other body, then it is likely to be accepted as a charity.

In all cases, organisations must demonstrate that its activities have a significant public benefit. An organisation that is set up to benefit a named individual or a limited group of people (for example an appeal to raise funds for one person to receive medical treatment) would not gain charitable status.

Unincorporated organisations, Companies Limited by Guarantee and Trusts may all apply to become charities.

If you think that your organisation is a charity you are legally required to apply to OSCR for acceptance onto the register of charities. OSCR will decide whether the application meets the criteria for a charitable organisation, and may suggest amendments to your objects. If you are successful then they will issue a registration number, and the organisation must state that it is a charity in all its publicity etc and comply with OSCR's regulations.

Being a charity is a legal obligation and does not bring as many benefits as are generally assumed. Please consult the CVS if you are considering applying for charitable status.

**DISCLAIMER:** While all care has been taken in the preparation of this material, no responsibility is accepted by WDCVS, its staff or volunteers, for any errors, omissions or inaccuracies. This resource has been prepared to provide general information only. No responsibility can be accepted by WDCVS for any known or unknown consequences that may result from reliance on any information provided in this publication.