

Charitable Status

Do we need to be a Charity?

It is not necessary for your community group or voluntary organisation to register as a charity. You may not be eligible if you are not doing good works for those outside your membership or you are involved in political or controversial activity.

If your organisation is eligible, is based in England or Wales and has an income over £5,000 a year, you are obliged in law to register with the Charity Commission.

Some charities are exempted from registering. Please consult Website:

www.charity-commission.gov.uk/publications/cc21.asp#34

for full guidance on applying for Charitable Status.

Registered Charities do not have to pay some taxes.

Some Funders only give to Registered Charities.

Some people who might want to give you money will be reassured that you are a 'bona fide' organisation if you are a Registered Charity.

It can be a long, time consuming process to become a Registered Charity. It will involve extra work and rigour to maintain this status and you will need to submit annual accounts that meet the Charity Commission's standards of auditing.

Some funders will make payments to non charities through a Registered Charity that is willing to oversee monies and meet the accounting needs of a small group that may not be equipped to deal with this themselves.

You can get help with this from your Local Infrastructure Organisation (LIO) (ie Community Action Voluntary Action, Council for Voluntary Service). To contact your local LIO go to the NAVCA website <http://www.navca.org.uk/liodir/> to find their details.

Further help can be gained from the Charity Commission Website:

www.charity-commission.gov.uk

You can also refer to "Charitable Status A Practical Handbook" by 'Legal Eagle', Andrew Phillips published by Directory of Social Change and available from their online bookshop.

In Scotland refer to Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)

Website: www.oscr.org.uk

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