

Strategic Plan

2012-15



Introduction

This strategic plan has been developed following a wide ranging consultation with external stakeholders including the charity sector, the Government, Parliament and the public, as well as an internal consultation with our people. A key message that emerged was that the Commission, taking into account its reduced resources, needs to focus on what only the regulator can do:

- Registration of charities;
- Generic guidance;
- Statutory advice or permissions;
- Transparency through charity annual returns; and
- Investigation of alleged wrongdoing.

Focus on these areas of activity has led us to identify two clear priorities for 2012-15:

- **Developing the compliance and accountability of the sector**
- **Developing the self-reliance of the sector**

This plan sets out how we will deliver against these and fulfil our statutory objectives. These are set out by Parliament in the Charities Act 2006:

- “1. The public confidence objective.
2. The public benefit objective.
3. The compliance objective.
4. The charitable resources objective.
5. The accountability objective.”

Over the three years of this plan most of our attention will be concentrated on our objectives relating to accountability and compliance. The public benefit objective will be addressed with rigour at registration and through public benefit reporting. Our charity resources objective will be met by the provision of web based advice to promote good governance. It is our achievement of the whole that will determine our success in meeting the public confidence objective.

We also welcome the review of the Charities Act 2006 as this presents an opportunity to re-examine the Charity Commission’s role, our powers and the scale and breadth of our current statutory objectives, functions and duties.



Vision, Mission and Values

VISION

What came through clearly from the strategic review is that the Charity Commission exists to serve the public. We will therefore work towards our vision of:

Charities you can support with confidence

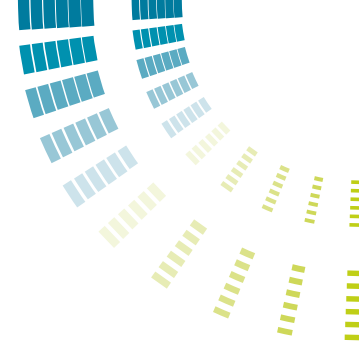
MISSION

The Charity Commission's core role is to protect the public's interest in the integrity of charity: to ensure that charities focus on those purposes which gave them charitable status and that they carry them out for the public benefit serving neither private nor governmental or political interests.

Our mission is:

to be the independent registrar and regulator of charities in England and Wales, acting in the public's interest, to ensure that:

- charities know what they have to do
- the public know what charities do
- charities are held to account



VALUES

Our values underpin all that we do and govern our external and internal behaviour. Our five values have the following meaning:

- **Expertise**

Our unique perspective and expertise are core to the effective delivery of our role. The public and charities alike rightly expect us to be experts.

- **Fairness**

We must always act in an independent way with integrity and free from bias. We value diversity and treat each other and our external stakeholders fairly.

- **Openness**

We are committed to act in an open and transparent way, promoting and sharing good practice.

- **Clarity**

We need to ensure that all those who interact with us are clear about what they need to do. We need to be clear and timely in our decisions and excellent in explaining the reasons for those decisions.

- **Accountability**

We are committed to account for the decisions we make, the way in which we regulate and how we use public funds. Internally we trust each other to make decisions, are accountable for our work and provide each other with support.

Strategic Priorities

We have identified the two strategic priorities that we believe will lead to a stronger and more effective charitable sector that the Commission will work to achieve over the three years of this plan:

Developing the compliance and accountability of the sector

- We will sustain a rigorous approach to registering charities to ensure that the integrity of charity is maintained.
- We will hold charities to account through transparency requirements. We will review the information that we require from charities to ensure its relevance. We will continue to promote the need for charities to file their annual returns and accounts on time and online.
- We will take timely action when there is malpractice or misconduct, to protect charitable funds and the people that the charity serves. We will ensure decisive interventions and ensure that these are publicised in such a way as to share learning, deter others and promote public confidence in charity. We will be more proactive and less reactive in the way that we ensure that charities comply with their legal obligations.
- Through our liaison with other regulators and law enforcement agencies we will ensure a more co-ordinated approach to dealing with serious issues of malpractice and misconduct whilst having greater clarity about both the scope and boundaries of our particular role.

Developing the self-reliance of the sector

- We will improve the accessibility and format of our guidance, clearly spelling out what charities must do to be compliant and we will promote self-service of information and transactions through the internet.
- We will develop a partnership strategy that enables early signposting to sector bodies and move to a position where the Commission is not seen as the first or only point of call for those who need tailored advice. We will work with sector bodies to improve advice or support to charities across the range of media.
- We will promote the early identification and management of sector risk, through a variety of means including the development of a review programme.
- Through the review of the Charities Act 2006 we will look to reduce the requirements on trustees to seek the Charity Commission's legal consent.



Delivering on the Priorities

In dealing with these priorities over the period of this plan the Commission will focus in particular on:

RISK

- Through the implementation of our new risk framework we will ensure that the Commission concentrates on matters where we have a clear regulatory interest and where our intervention will have real impact.
- We will ensure that the resources going into a case or regulatory intervention are proportionate to the seriousness of the matter or the risk it poses to public confidence.
- We will focus more on the early identification of risk, promoting prevention rather than cure.

TECHNOLOGY

- We will use our website and digital communications to set out the responsibilities and requirements for charities. We will also use online information to promote the accountability of charities to the public.
- We will move to a position where all transactions that charities and the public need to carry out with the Commission are fully digitised and this is the established, quickest and easiest way of doing business with us.
- We will improve and develop our website and digital communications so that they meet the highest standards of accessibility and usability for all our stakeholders.
- We will enable the public to access online information about individual charities and the charity sector more easily through our own website and through data we share with others.

ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

- We will continue to deliver year on year improvement and financial efficiency savings in all our office operations.
- We will build an open and effective organisational culture where diversity is fully embraced and promoted and where there is equality of opportunity.
- We will model exemplary performance management and will deal fairly but robustly with under performance.
- We will trust our staff to make decisions and be accountable for them. We will accept that mistakes sometimes happen and avoid a blame culture. We will increase staff confidence and the skills of our people to develop and improve our performance.