Executive Summary

What motivates people in Scotland to support charities?

The top reasons the Scottish Public gave for giving to a charity were:

- **Their cause is important**: 56%
- **They can be trusted**: 44%
- **Their values, beliefs and/or interests**: 36%
- **A personal connection with the charity**: 35%

Respondents asked to name top three reasons for donating
(Base: Scottish public who have given to charity 933)

### 35%

When given no prompting, the Scottish public viewed transparency as the quality that would most inspire trust in a charity

**Unprompted**
(Base: Scottish public 1,010)

**Direct transparency**
Seeing a positive impact made using donations

**Administrative accountability**
Being open with accounts and internal processes

And even when given a range of options to choose from, being transparent about the charity’s impact and use of funds was important for perceived trustworthiness:

- Knowing how much of a donation goes to the cause: 58%
- Seeing what the charity has achieved: 55%
- Knowing that the charity is independently regulated: 42%
- Having open access to the charity’s accounts: 33%
- Knowing the charity is well run: 29%

Respondents asked to name three options most likely to increase perceived trustworthiness
(Base: Scottish public 1,010)

The principles that a charity should embody:

- Honesty
- Motivation
- Empathy
- Transparency
- Passion
- Committed
- Volunteering
- Trustworthy people
- Local impact
How the Scottish public would communicate a charity's trustworthiness:

Branding:
- Logo
- T-shirts
- Van graphics

Registered as charity:
- Display charity number

Communicate where the money has gone

Testimonials

Safeguards and checks

Active on social media

Clearly communicate mission

Open door days

Avoid using guilt to raise funds

Easy to cancel subscription

Open accounts

Does the Scottish public trust charities?

The overall level of trust and confidence in charities in Scotland has gone up since 2018 (mean score out of 10)

- 2018: 6.08
- 2018: 6.14
- 2020: 7.02

Two thirds of the public feels that the charity sector is as trustworthy, or more trustworthy, than two years ago, up from only a half in 2018

- 53% in 2018
- 68% in 2020
- 45% no change
- 8% more trustworthy

The primary reasons for members of the Scottish public feeling that the sector was less trustworthy than two years ago revolved around scandals and other negative stories in the media

- Scandals: 34%
- Negative media reports: 30%
- Scams and misuse of donations: 25%

For those who believed that the sector was more trustworthy than two years ago, better transparency was the most common reason, followed by good news stories in the media

- Better transparency: 26%
- Positive media reports: 18%

Charities working in Scotland, as well those working in local communities were more trusted than those with a UK-wide or international reach

While smaller charities were more trusted than larger ones, the size of a charity was less influential on its assumed trustworthiness than its geographical scope

(Base: Scottish public who answered each question – variable 916-968)
Charities themselves were less likely than the Scottish public to feel there had been a drop in the sector’s perceived trustworthiness over the past two years:

- 2020: 68% no change, 17% increased, 15% more trustworthy

Two-fifths of charities who felt the perceived trustworthiness of the sector had increased reported an increase in support because of this:

- Increase in support: 41%

However, only one fifth of those who felt perceived trustworthiness of the sector had decreased felt that this had led to lower public support for them:

- Decrease in support: 21%

### Awareness of charity regulation and of the Scottish Charity Regulator

In general, there is a low level of awareness among the Scottish public of charity regulation in Scotland and of OSCR itself:

- A quarter of the Scottish public recognised the name of ‘the Scottish Charity Regulator’ or ‘OSCR’ when prompted: 24%
- Aware of OSCR (total)

- 14% Aware of OSCR and know something about what it does

However, even where members of the public had not heard of OSCR specifically, there was a widespread belief the sector is regulated:

- 53% There is some kind of regulation of charities in Scotland
- 3% There is no official regulatory body for Scottish charities
- 43% With 45% believing the regulator to be a public body of some kind

When asked where they would turn to report concerns about a charity, two-fifths of the Scottish public did not know:

- Do not know: 38%
- OSCR or ‘The Scottish Charity Regulator’: 1%
- The Charity Commission: 5%
- Unnamed regulator: 8%

The Scottish public believed maintaining a register of charities and ensuring compliance with the law to be the core roles of OSCR:

- Keeping a register of charities: 68%
- Ensuring charities fundraise within the law: 60%
- Handling complaints about charities: 58%
- Checking/monitoring charities’ accounts: 58%
- Granting charity status: 55%
- Fining charities who break the law: 43%
- Advising Government on charity matters: 34%
- Amending/establishing charity law: 29%
- Training charities: 14%
- Promoting the work of charities: 14%
### Locus of responsibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Responsibility of Individual Charities</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Responsibility of OSCR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making the public aware of the full list of charities' trustees</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring that the public has access to charities' annual reports and accounts</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring that the charities are well-run</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting public trust in the charity sector</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensures that charities are transparent and accountable</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring charities operate within the law</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring charities operate in an ethical way</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The role the Scottish Charity Regulator plays in supporting public trust and confidence in charities

While the Scottish public did not have a very high awareness of OSCR and the nature of charity regulation in Scotland more widely, there was a common assumption that a regulator probably does exist.

When promoted, overwhelmingly, the Scottish public thought that OSCR plays an important role in the charity sector.

(Base: Scottish public 1,010)

#### When it comes to maintaining high levels of trustworthiness in the charity sector, the public most values OSCR for its ability to ensure good conduct in accordance with the law

- Ensuring charities stay within the law: 57%
- Checking & monitoring charities' accounts: 49%
- Keeping a register of charities: 40%

(Base: Scottish public 1,010)

#### For the charities themselves, OSCR’s most important role for maintaining the trustworthiness of the Scottish charity sector was the ongoing monitoring of charities

- Monitoring charities: 52%
- Maintaining a register of charities: 43%
- Ensuring charities stay within the law: 42%
- Making sure charities are run for the public benefit: 41%

(Base: Scottish Charities 1,102)
Challenges faced by charities in Scotland

Financial pressure was the most common issue faced by charities in 2020

- Running costs: 45%
- Need for more fundraising: 33%
- Need to find new ways of fundraising: 31%
- Lack of Government funding: 16%
- Lack of non-Government funding: 16%
- Lower public donation revenue: 13%

Of volunteers: 35%
Of trustees: 29%
Of staff: 4%

Just over two-thirds of charities had sought third party support in the last 12 months

- Sought any third party support: 68%
- Local authority: 27%
- Professional legal / accountancy advice: 24%
- Local TSI: 23%
- Parent or umbrella body: 22%
- SCVO: 15%
- Volunteer Scotland: 13%
- Disclosure Services: 13%
- Business support adviser: 10%
- Volunteer Scotland: 6%

Happy with third-party service

(Base: All charities 1,102)
How do charities find dealing with the Scottish Charity Regulator?

Charities in Scotland felt that OSCR’s communications, taken as a whole, were good:

- 23% ‘Excellent’
- 49% ‘Very good’
- 21% ‘Good’

(“Good” or better: 93%)

The most common reason for charities to contact OSCR in the last 12 months was to complete the annual return. Under a third had needed to contact OSCR with a general question in the same timeframe:

- 89% “Good or excellent” experience

(Base: Charities communicating with OSCR in these ways – variable 238-977)

Nearly all charities had cause to use OSCR’s website in the last 12 months:

- 86% used OSCR Online
- 80% To fill in the annual return
- 73% To upload annual reports and accounts
- 56% To check their own charity’s details
- 92% Of OSCR Online users found it easy to find what they needed

(Base: All charities 1,102)

- 55% searched for information
- 42% To look for charity guidance
- 22% To search for more information about OSCR or Scottish charity legislation
- 17% To download the Charity Trustee Information and Guidance Pack
- 97% Of those searching the charity register found it easy to find what they needed

(Base: Charities using the OSCR website 949)
### Charities’ perceptions of the effectiveness of the Scottish Charity Regulator

OSCR is trusted by charities in Scotland to deliver fair and effective regulation and support to the Scottish charity sector. Percentage of charities who trust OSCR to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...keep a reliable charity register</td>
<td>96%</td>
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<tr>
<td>...regulate the Scottish charity sector fairly</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...provide support to charities in order to run themselves well</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...make effective decisions regarding which organisations should or should not feature on that register</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...improve the Scottish public’s perception of how trustworthy charities are</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...investigate charities where there may be wrongdoing</td>
<td>78%</td>
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