OSCR
Scottish Charity Regulator

Public trust in charities increases significantly but transparency is still vital

The Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) has published the results from its Scottish Charity and Public Surveys 2020.
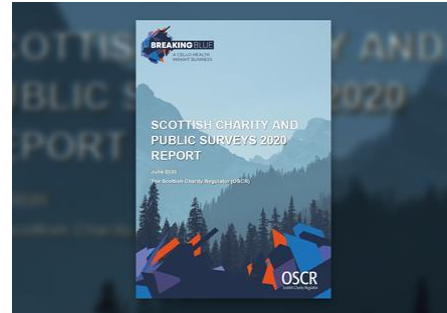
The charity survey asked questions to help identify the challenges faced by charities and examine the perception of OSCR amongst charities. The public survey measured trust in charities, attitudes towards charity regulation and explored the impact of regulation on trustworthiness.

Key findings include:

- Public trust has increased to an average score of 7.02 out of 10 in 2020 from 6.14 out of 10 in 2018. Trust was strongest for charities working in Scotland (7.2 out of 10), charities working with volunteers only (7.18 out of 10) and charities working locally (7.09 out of 10).
- 93% of Scottish adults have given money, time or goods to a charity in the last year.
- The importance of a charity's cause was the most common reason for choosing to support a charity (56% of those who donate), followed by trustworthiness (44% of those who donate).
- Feedback from charities found that OSCR is highly trusted to keep a reliable register (96%) and to regulate the charity sector fairly (94%).
- 58% of the public said knowing how much of a donation goes to the cause and 55% said seeing evidence of what the charity has achieved would make them feel a charity was trustworthy.

Read the full results here.

Survey results webinar

Join OSCR staff for a FREE webinar from 12-1pm on 29 October to hear more about OSCR's recent Charity and Public Survey 2020 findings. **Book a place here.**

New webinar videos

We've put out three new recordings from our recent webinars on our YouTube channel. Please find the details for each video below.

Meet the Charity Regulator

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we are making our Meet the Charity Regulator events 'virtual' in 2020. This recording took place on 23 June 2020.

It includes:

- an introduction from OSCR Chair, Lindsay Montgomery CBE
- an update on our priorities at OSCR from Maureen Mallon, Chief Executive
- a question and answer session
- a presentation on our survey findings.

View 'Meet the Charity Regulator' here.

Ask OSCR: Virtual Meetings and AGMs

A strong theme arising from the events we held earlier in the year was meetings and AGMs. The purpose of this event was to provide clear and practical information to charity trustees or staff and to provide any updates on the rules. The webinar includes a short presentation as well a Q&A section.

View 'Ask OSCR: Virtual Meetings and AGMs' here.

Keeping your charity safe online

OSCR staff, Alison Stone, Cyber Co-ordinator of the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) and Kirstie Steele, Cyber Resilience Community Lead at the Scottish Business Resilience Centre (SBRC) provide a review of the most common types of cyber-crime and fraud along with providing plenty of practical advice for you and your charity on how to protect against these.

View 'Keeping your charity safe online' here.

Extension for SCIOs to be able to hold member's meetings using 'virtual' methods

One of the many worries for charities during the COVID-19 pandemic has been how to hold AGMs.

OSCR has been encouraging charities to look at the best possible way for doing this; including using **remote methods such video conferencing or phone call**s. One of

the obstacles has been that some charity governing documents do not permit this kind of meeting.

The **Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 (Meetings of Scottish Charitable Incorporate Organisations) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020** made legal provision for SCIOs to be able to hold member's meetings using 'virtual' methods. Originally, these provisions ran until the end of September. However, this has now been extended until the 30 December 2020.

OSCR's understanding is that the UK Government is likely to extend the time period for companies, CIOs and other bodies where this Act also applies.

It is an important moment for SCIOs and all other charities to be thinking about future proofing their organisations. If you are going to need to alter your governing document to have remote meetings, then it is good to start making these changes now.

Even if you are not a SCIO, there is no need to wait until December. Having the 'virtual' provision there can only be a good thing in terms of the resilience of your charity going forwards.

Be prepared for furlough scheme ending

The UK Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme **will close** on 31 October 2020 following a series of changes to the level of support over the coming weeks.

The **COVID-19 survey results** published by the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) in June showed that 19% of the Scottish charities who responded said they had used the scheme to support their organisation during the COVID-19 pandemic. Two thirds (66%) of charities with 11 or more employees, and half (50%) of charities with income of £100,000 or more had furloughed staff.

The ending of the furlough scheme could have serious implications, particularly for charities of this scale and their beneficiaries. Our survey found that that 42% of charities reported disruption of services to beneficiaries due to COVID-19. This was higher for charities working in housing (63%), mental health (65%) and social care (55%). It is therefore critical that affected charities fully understand the impact on their organisation and the need to be proactive in planning what this might mean for the activities and services they deliver.

Although the scheme is ending, there may be further sources of support available to charities depending on the work they do or the size of their organisation.

- The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) has an **online coronavirus hub** that contains information on dedicated funding in response to the pandemic

- Scottish Government has COVID-19 **business support information on its website**.

OSCR continues to work closely with key partners and stakeholders across the sector and government to try to build the best advice possible for charities at this time. Our **COVID-19 guidance** has essential information specifically for charities and highlights other organisations who may be able to offer support.

Blogs

We've added a host of new blogs on a variety of subjects. The details of these blogs are below, and there are lots more available on our **website**.

- **Building on trust** - OSCR Data and Research Manager Louise Meikleham reflects on the findings from our Public and Charity Surveys 2020.
- **Where are the Trustees in the Trustees Annual Report** - Evaluation Support Scotland (ESS) Director Steven Marwick shares how their trustees got involved in shaping their Trustees' Annual Report.
- **Charities and going concern** - Christine Scott, Head of Charities and Pensions at ICAS, talks about new guidance for charities on going concern.
- **The impact of COVID-19 on Scottish Charitie**s - Louise Meikleham reflects on the full data tables from our survey on the impact of COVID-19 on Scottish charities.

Changes to OSCR structure

In August 2020, OSCR published its new **Corporate Plan**. The plan updates our strategic direction and vision to better reflect how we can meet the expectations of the public, sector organisations and charities themselves based on the knowledge we have gained as regulator.

To help us deliver our new strategic objectives in the most effective way, we have revised our staff structure. The changes give us a greater HR capacity to support our staff team, an increased focus on quality assurance and project management, and a new role to take forward our digital and communications activities. Our **Senior Management Team** is now Maureen Mallon (Chief Executive and Accountable Officer), Martin Tyson (Head of Regulation and Improvement) and Judith Hayhow (Head of Corporate).

If you have been communicating with someone within OSCR, their job role may have changed. However, they will gladly point you in the right direction if they no longer work in that area.

OSCR's updated staff structure can be found here.