



# Scottish Charities 2021

An Overview of the Scottish Charity Sector

# Contents

---

	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
	Foreword	4
	About OSCR	5
	An overview of the Scottish Charity sector – methodology	6
	Key Findings	7

---

	<b>Scottish charities profile: facts and figures</b>	<b>8</b>
	Number of charities	10
	Income	11
	Social Enterprises	17
	Volunteers in Scotland	17
	Charity trustees	18
	Paid Staff	19
	Activities undertaken by Scottish charities	21
	Detailed activities undertaken to achieve purposes	22
	Beneficiary groups	23
	Charitable purposes	24
	Legal form	26
	Operations	29
	Geography – distribution of charities by local authority	30

---

	<b>A picture of trust</b>	<b>35</b>
	Public trust in charities	36
	Increasing trustworthiness	37

---

# Introduction





## Foreword

The Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) has a vision to maintain and support a trusted and respected Scottish charity sector which positively contributes to our society. People in Scotland should have faith that our 25,000 charities are properly regulated and well-run, which will build public confidence and allow these vital organisations to thrive and cement their place at the heart of our day to day life.

This new report sets out the current state of the charity sector in Scotland. Our key findings include:



Public trust in Scottish charities is at the highest level since OSCR began to measure this in 2009



With an annual income of £13.17bn and over 208,977 staff, the Scottish charity sector is a similar size to the Scottish NHS



There is a wide diversity of charities in Scotland, with 68% of organisations reporting that they are run entirely by volunteers and around 50% reporting an income of less than £25,000

We hope that this research will help inform you about the scale and scope of the charity sector in Scotland, and provide valuable insight to inform decision making and policy development over the coming twelve months.

**Maureen Mallon, Chief Executive**

# About OSCR

## Scotland's Charity Regulator

The Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) is the independent regulator and registrar for Scotland's 25,000 charities, including community groups, religious charities, schools, universities, grant-giving charities and care providers.

We are a non-ministerial office and part of the Scottish Administration. We are independent of the Scottish Government and report directly to the Scottish Parliament every year. OSCR was set up by the **Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005**.

## What we do

We grant charitable status, monitor registered charities, and identify and take action where we believe misconduct including mismanagement has occurred. All charities in Scotland must be registered with us and must meet annual reporting requirements to keep their status. We are an enabling regulator and offer a wide range of services to support and encourage improvement in the sector. We use our knowledge and intelligence to positively influence and inform the development of national policy, legislation and practice.

## Our work

Our work with charities ultimately supports public confidence in the sector. We support and champion the charity sector through a collaborative working approach, working with other organisations, government and the charity sector to build strong and effective internal governance, share good practice and encourage improvement, in order to drive up standards within charities.

## Our vision

Is for a trusted and respected Scottish charity sector which positively contributes to society.

## Our purpose

Is to hold charities in Scotland to account and help the charity sector to improve so that the public have trust and confidence in charities.

## How we achieve this

Our strategic outcomes for 2020-23 are:

- **The public have confidence in charities**  
We will help the public to have a clear understanding of the Scottish charity sector and its regulation so that they can engage with confidence.
- **Charities are well run and thriving**  
We will actively improve standards and practice in the Scottish charity sector through an effective balance of support and challenge.
- **Charities are at the heart of a vibrant and sustainable Scotland**  
We will influence and inform the development of national policy, positively influencing and shaping the Scottish charity sector.
- **The Scottish Charity Regulator is a highly effective organisation**  
We will be a strong non-ministerial office and an employer of choice, delivering quality services for the Scottish charity sector.

## How we work

We carry out our work in a way that reflects our values. We aim to always be independent, proportionate, accountable, transparent, consistent, fair, targeted and informed.

## An overview of the Scottish Charity sector – methodology

The Scottish Charities 2021 Sector Overview report is one of the ways we use the information from the **Scottish Charity Register**.<sup>1</sup> To be a charity in Scotland a body must be listed on the Scottish Charity Register. This means that OSCR has a comprehensive register of all charities and a complete picture of the charity sector in Scotland. The Register is publicly accessible and searchable. This information is collected by OSCR when charities register for charitable status or when they complete their **annual return**. The overview presents a profile of charities in terms of their income, expenditure, purposes, beneficiaries, activities and operations. The data contained in this report was taken from a snapshot of the register on the 26th February 2021. There may be some variations in the data as a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on charities and the way charities have been regulated during the pandemic. The data used in this profile relates to the most recent annual return filed with OSCR at that time. The information provided in annual returns is self-declared by charities and is not validated by OSCR. In some cases percentages may not appear to total 100% due to rounding.

Data gathered from our Scottish Charity and Public Surveys 2020 is also included in this report to form a picture of trust in the sector, what the public think about Scottish Charities, and what might increase trustworthiness. The full findings are published on the **OSCR survey webpage**.<sup>2</sup>

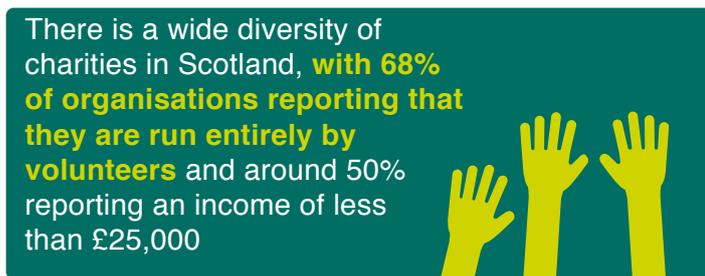
1 Scottish Charity Register <https://www.oscr.org.uk/about-charities/search-the-register/register-search/>

2 OSCR survey webpage <https://www.oscr.org.uk/about-charities/surveys/>

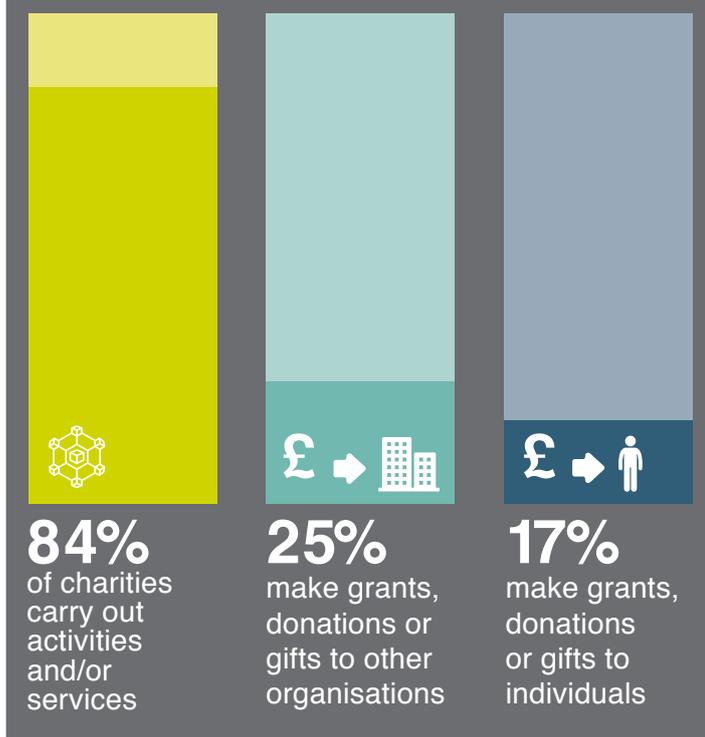
# Key Findings



With an annual income of £13.17 billion and over 208,977 staff, the Scottish charity sector is a similar size to the Scottish NHS

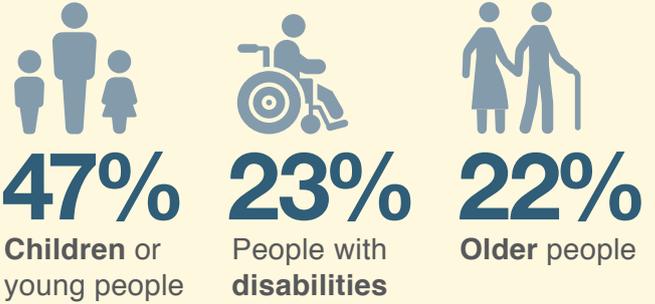


## The report also shows that:



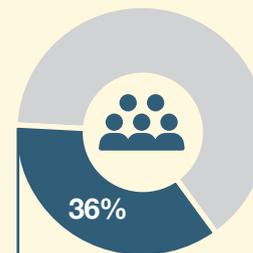
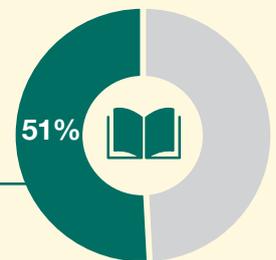
## Other findings include:

While the majority of charities (52%) are not set up to benefit a particular group, Scottish charities are most likely to report that they are set up to benefit:

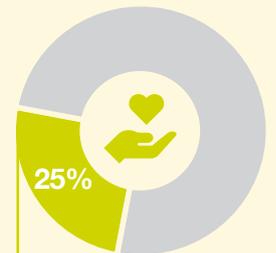


The **most common** charitable purposes are:

The advancement of **education**



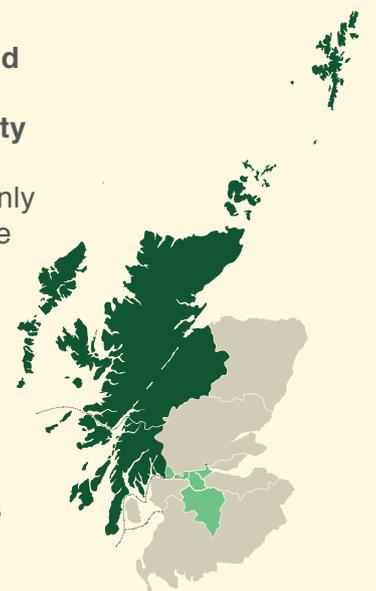
The advancement of **citizenship or community development**



The relief of **those in need**

The majority of charities in Scotland operate within a **single local authority area (63%)**, but charities are not evenly distributed across the country.

**Scotland's island communities and rural areas** report a higher level of registered charities than local authorities in west central Scotland.



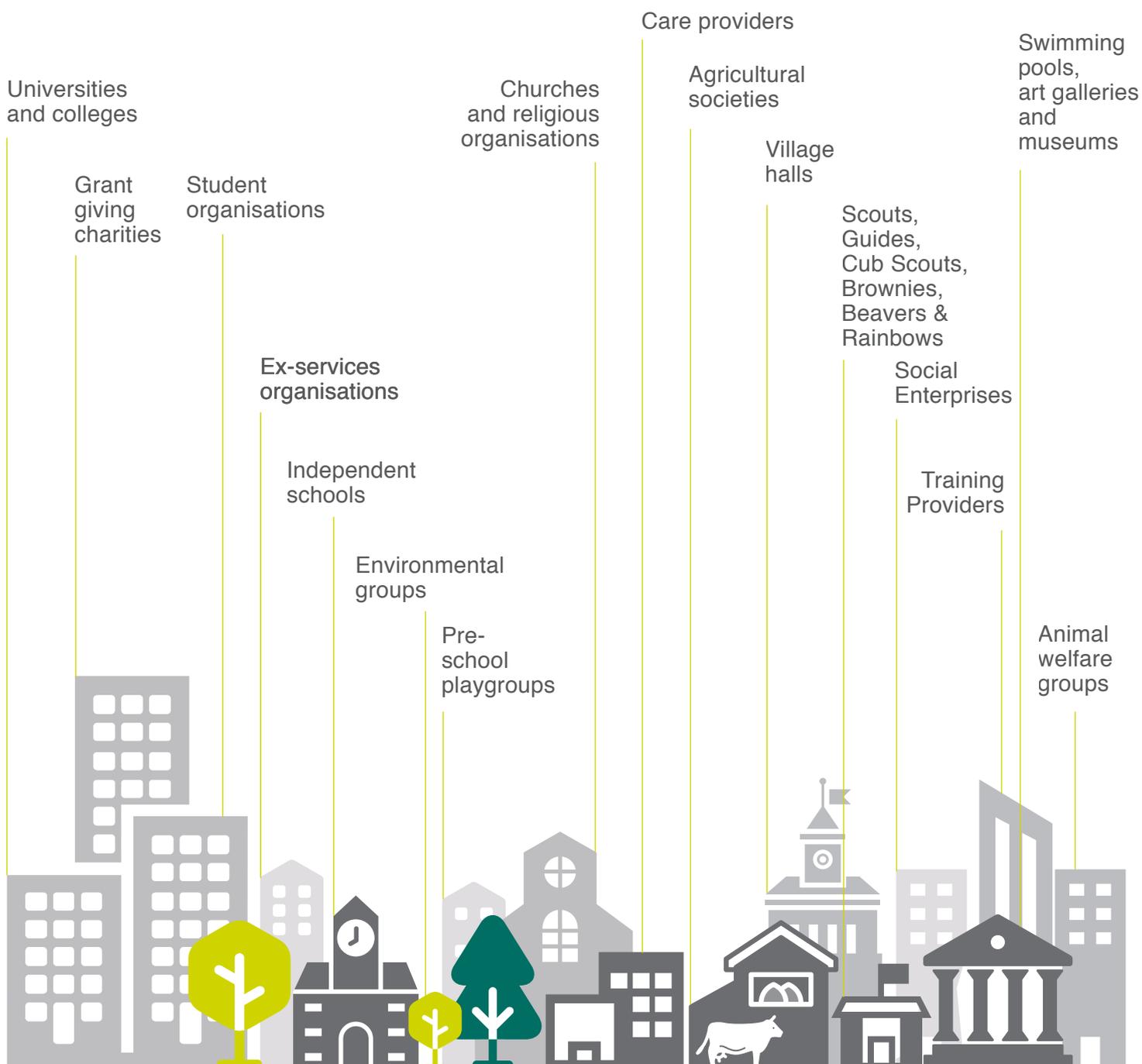
■ Areas with the highest number of charities per 10,000 population  
■ Areas with the fewest charities per 10,000 population

# Scottish charities profile: facts and figures



While each charity in Scotland has its own individual story to tell, the purpose of this overview report is to provide an insight into the scale, scope and purpose of all Scotland's charities and the wider charity sector.

- **By presenting** a detailed contemporary snapshot of the sector we hope to be able to help you understand the nature and makeup of our exceptionally diverse range of charities, the work that they do and the significant contribution they make to our society and economy.
- **By publishing** the latest research findings on a regular basis we aim to track and show the strategic challenges that charities face over time and allow for policy makers, legislators and charities themselves to celebrate success and consider how best to address the issues they face today and tomorrow.



## Number of charities



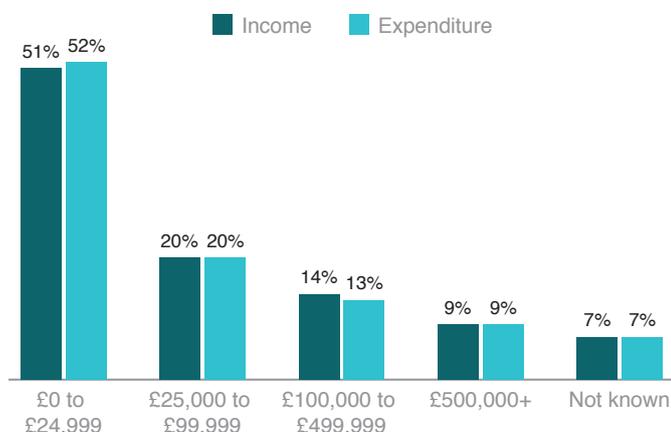
There are over 25,000 charities on the Scottish Charity Register, this figure includes 1,179 cross border charities (charities also registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales).

The income and expenditure profile of charities on the Scottish Charity Register shows a larger proportion of smaller organisations:

- Around 51% of charities on the Scottish Charity Register have reported incomes of £0 to £25,000.
- Larger charities with incomes of £500,000 or more make up 9% of charities registered in Scotland.
- The profile of Scottish charities is similar to that of the overall Scottish Charity Register profile, with 53% of charities reporting an annual income of £0 to £25,000 and 6% income of £500,000 or more.

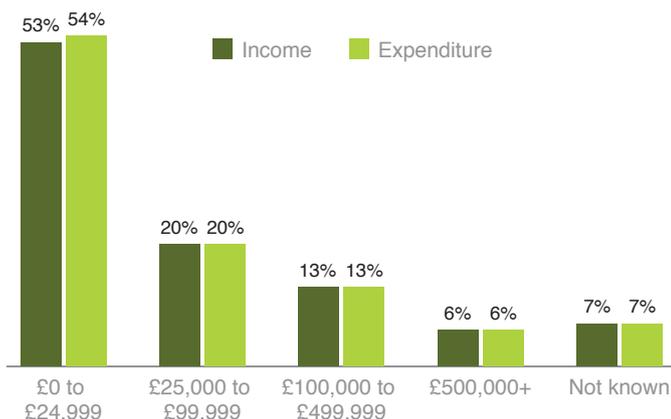
### Proportion of all charities on the Scottish Charity Register

by income and expenditure



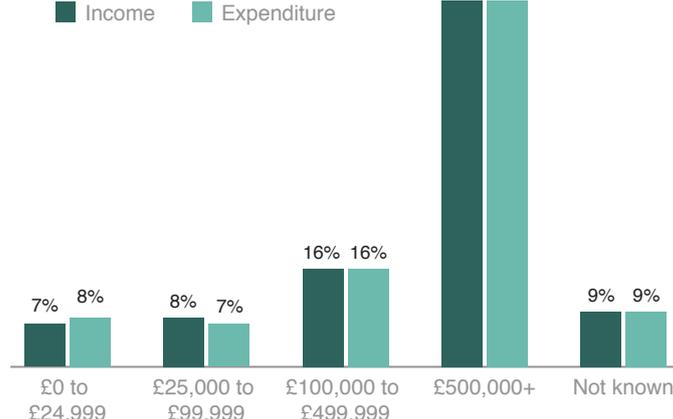
### Proportion of Scottish charities

by income and expenditure



### Proportion of Cross Border charities

by income and expenditure

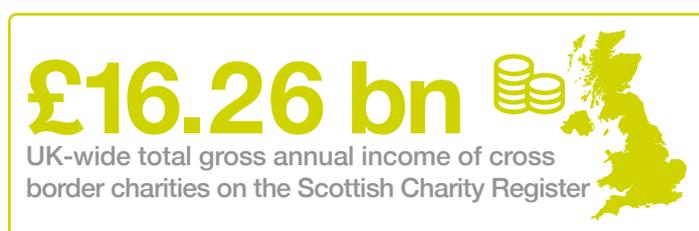


Cross border charities report their overall UK-wide income and expenditure to OSCR. These are mainly large household name charities with activities and operations across the whole of the UK and the profile is very different to Scottish charities. For this group 60% have reported annual incomes of £500,000 or more.

### Number of charities on the Scottish Charity Register by income band

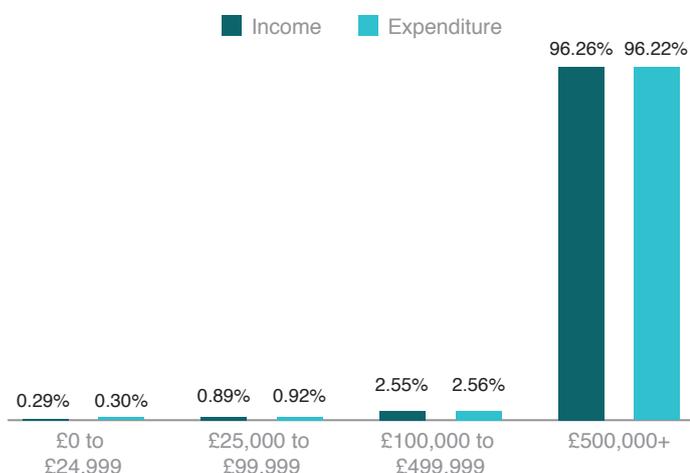
	£0 to £24,999		£25,000 to £99,999		£100,000 to £499,999		£500,000 and above		Not known		Total	
All charities on the Scottish Charity register	12,909	51%	4,942	20%	3,412	14%	2,213	9%	1,723	7%	25,199	100%
Scottish charities	12,827	53%	4,848	20%	3,219	13%	1,504	6%	1,622	7%	24,020	100%
Cross border charities	82	7%	94	8%	193	16%	709	60%	101	9%	1,179	100%

## Income

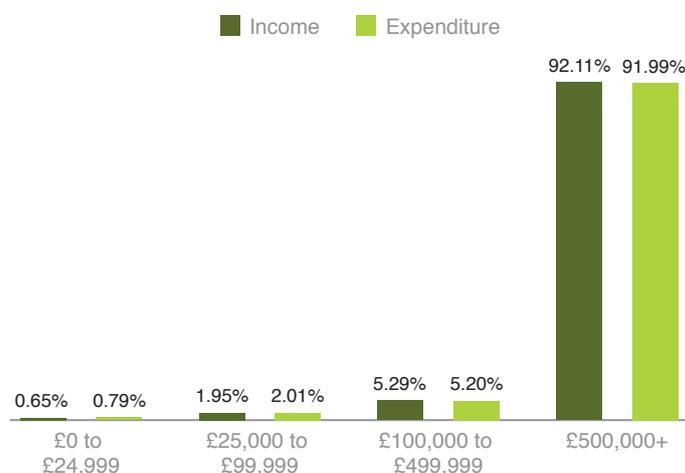


**Large charities with income of £500,000 or more make up 9% of those included on the Scottish Charity Register, but account for around 96% of the total gross annual income of all charities registered in Scotland.** For charities based only in Scotland the picture is similar, but a lower proportion of larger charities means that charities with incomes of £500,000 or more make up around 92% of the total gross annual income. For cross border charities almost all of the income is accounted for by those in the £500,000 or more income group.

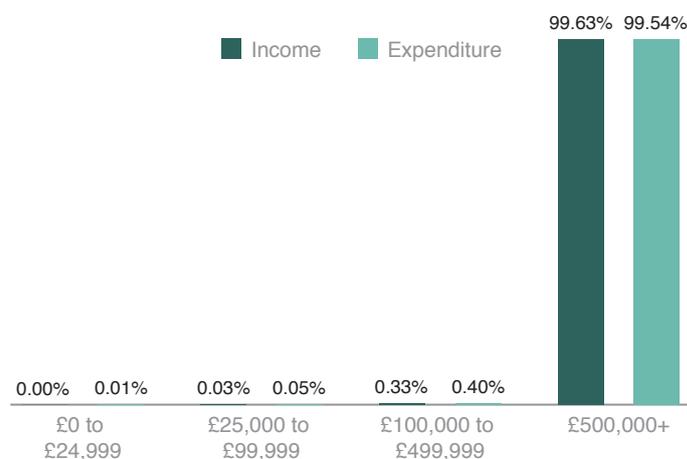
### Proportion of income and expenditure of **all charities on the Scottish Charity Register**



### Proportion of income and expenditure of **Scottish charities**



### Proportion of income and expenditure of **Cross Border charities**



### Total gross annual income of charities on the Scottish Charity Register by income band<sup>\*3</sup>

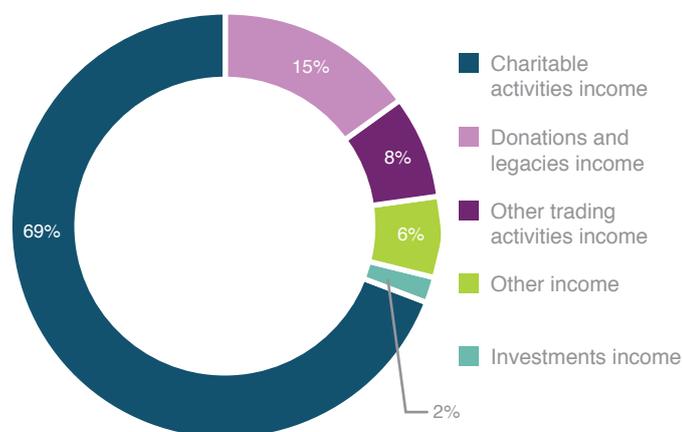
	£0 to £24,999		£25,000 to £99,999		£100,000 to £499,999		£500,000 and above		Total	
Scottish charities	£85.67m	0.65%	£257.09m	1.95%	£696.56m	5.29%	£12,133.99m	92.11%	£13,173.32m	100%
Cross border charities (UK-wide income)	£0.73m	< 0.01%	£5.26m	0.03%	£54.07m	0.33%	£16,198.70m	99.63%	£16,258.75m	100%

<sup>3</sup> The total gross annual income figures for charities on the Scottish Charity Register may include double-counting in terms of gross income reported, which is largely related to the number of charities with parent or subsidiary organisations and grants being provided to other charities.

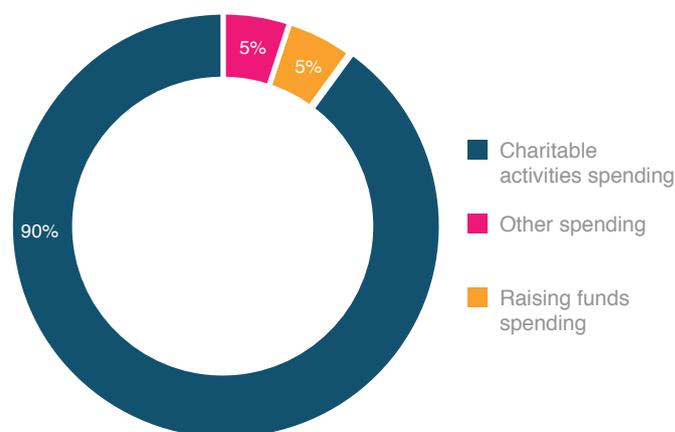
## Income and expenditure of larger Scottish Charities

Charities with an income of £250,000 or more are required under our annual monitoring regime to provide additional information in relation to their income and expenditure. This detailed breakdown is available for 2,315 Scottish charities. Registered social landlords and cross border charities complete a different annual return and do not provide this information. The [Charity Commission for England and Wales](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission)<sup>4</sup> and the [Scottish Housing Regulator](https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/)<sup>5</sup> provide additional information for these charities.

**Income breakdown of charities with income of £250,000 or more**  
(excludes cross border charities and registered social landlords)



**Expenditure breakdown of charities with income of £250,000 or more**  
(excludes cross border charities and registered social landlords)



### Detailed breakdown of income and expenditure gathered for Scottish charities with income of £250,000 or more

	Income		Expenditure	
Charitable activities income	£7,336.97m	69%	Charitable activities spending	£9,625.97m 90%
Donations and legacies income	£1,554.65m	15%	Raising funds spending	£563.73m 5%
Other trading activities income	£858.85m	8%	Other spending	£549.34m 5%
Investments income	£249.63m	2%		
Other income	£591.76m	6%		
<b>Total for Scottish charities with income of £250,000 or more</b>	<b>£10,591.85m</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total for Scottish charities with income of £250,000 or more</b>	<b>£10,739.04m 100%</b>

4 [Charity Commission for England and Wales](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission) <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission>

5 [Scottish Housing Regulator](https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/) <https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/>

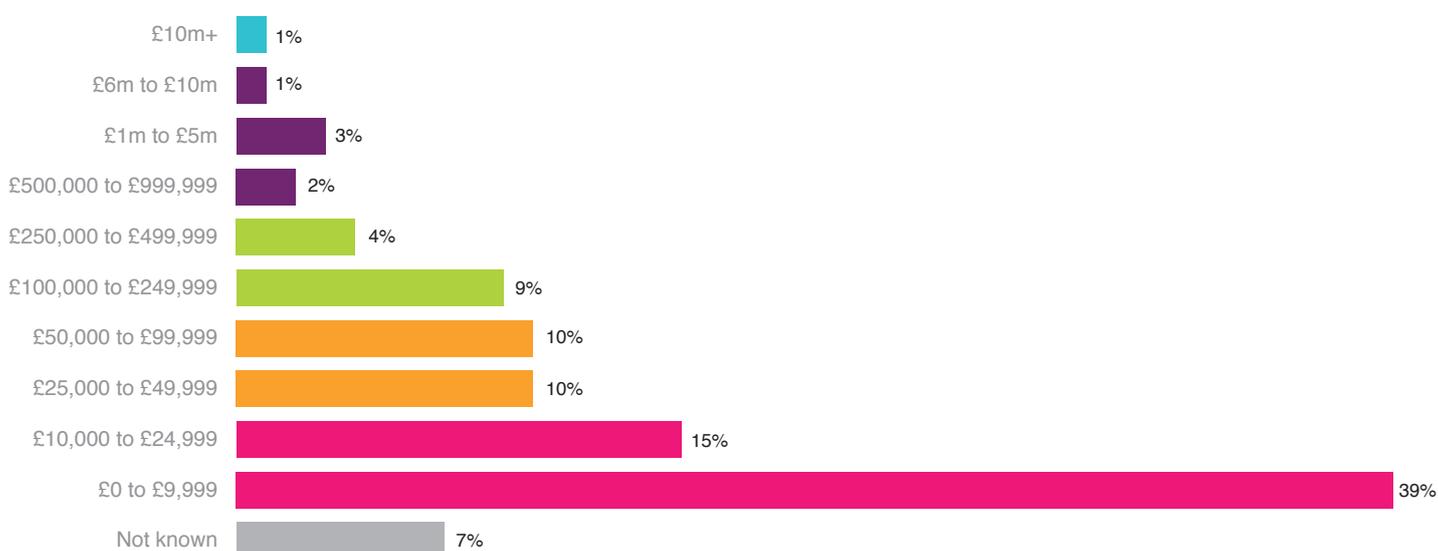
## Detailed income of Scottish charities

The Scottish Charity Register is publicly accessible and searchable so anyone can see a charity's recent annual income and expenditure. The basic profile of Scottish charities shows that **around half of Scottish charities have income of less than £25,000**, the more detailed breakdown shows that **two fifths (39%) have income of less than £9,999**. Many of these charities are run by volunteers and operating in our local communities.

## Scottish Charity Income Band Breakdown

	Number of charities	%
£0 to £9,999	9,290	39%
£10,000 to £24,999	3,537	15%
£25,000 to £49,999	2,515	10%
£50,000 to £99,999	2,333	10%
£100,000 to £249,999	2,265	9%
£250,000 to £499,999	954	4%
£500,000 to £999,999	533	2%
£1m to £5m	634	3%
£6m to £10m	129	1%
£10m+	208	1%
Not known	1,622	7%
Scottish charities	24,020	100%

## Detailed profile of Scottish charities by income group



## Influence of different groups on overall income figures

There are certain types of charity that have a large influence on the overall income figures for Scottish charities. These include higher education charities, further education charities, registered social landlords and arms-length external organisations (ALEOs).

The figures below shows the number of charities in each of these groups and the proportion of the total gross annual income of Scottish charities that they account for.

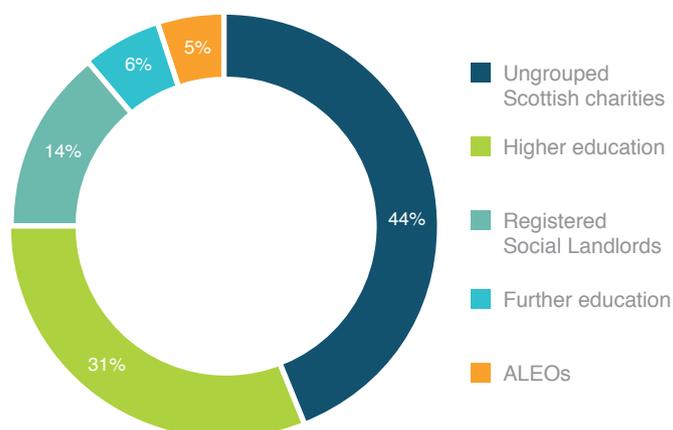
**There are 18 Scottish universities included in the higher education group.** These account for 31.2% of the total income of Scottish charities regulated by OSCR.

**Twenty four of Scotland’s further education colleges are also registered charities and these account for 5.9% of all Scottish charity income.**

**Many registered social landlords or housing associations are charities.** These bodies are also regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator. There are 149 registered social landlords on the Scottish Charity Register. The combined latest gross annual income of charitable registered social landlords accounts for 14.3% of the total income of Scottish charities on the Scottish Charity Register.

**Arm’s-Length External Organisation (ALEOs) can be described as separate organisations used by councils to deliver services.** There is no official definition of an ALEO and no definitive list. On the basis of limited desk-based research we estimate there are around 53 charitable ALEOs on the Scottish Charity Register. These are often the largest charity in particular local authority areas and have a combined income of around £581m or 4.4% of the total gross annual income of Scottish charities

**Proportion of income of Scottish charities regulated by OSCR** (excludes cross border charities)



	Number of charities		Total gross annual income (millions)	
Higher education	18	0.1%	£4,107m	31.2%
Registered social landlords	149	0.6%	£1,878m	14.3%
Further education	24	0.1%	£783m	5.9%
ALEOs	53	0.2%	£581m	4.4%
Ungrouped Scottish charities	23,776	99.0%	£5,824m	44.2%
<b>All Scottish charities</b>	<b>24,020</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>£13,173m</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Scottish income of cross border charities

In their latest annual return, 86% of cross border charities told us they had undertaken activities in Scotland. It is not possible to accurately determine the proportion of income and expenditure accounted for by their Scottish activities using OSCR's data. However, in our **2012 review of cross border monitoring** we found that the estimated proportion of Scottish activities varied widely, but with an average of 13.5% of the UK total. We cautiously estimate that around 10% of cross border income and expenditure are associated with Scottish activities. **When added to the total gross annual income of Scottish charities, this gives an estimated total income of the Scottish charity sector of £14.80 billion.**



## Highest income charities on the register

The University of Edinburgh is the highest income Scottish charity while the British Council is the highest income cross border charity.

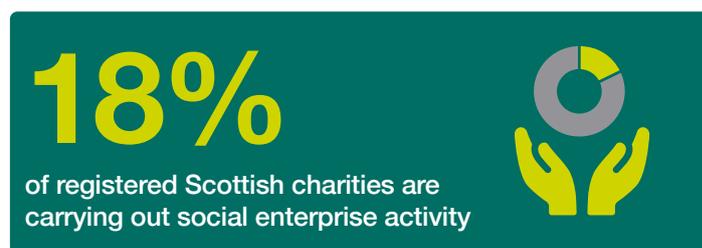
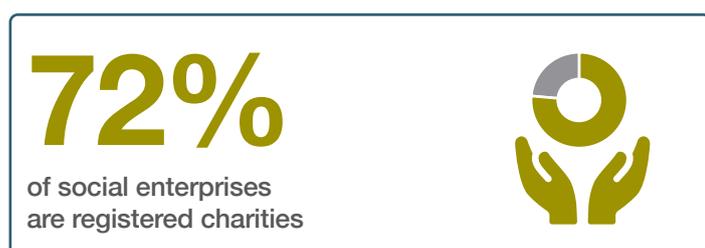
Ten highest income Scottish charities	Most recent income (£m)	Ten highest income cross border charities	Most recent income (£m)
University Of Edinburgh	£1,137m	British Council	£1,250m
University Of Glasgow Court	£691m	Nuffield Health	£993m
University Of Strathclyde	£355m	LifeArc	£992m
University Of St Andrews	£263m	Cancer Research UK	£656m
University Of Dundee	£257m	The Open University	£474m
Heriot-Watt University	£237m	Oxfam	£367m
University Of Aberdeen	£230m	Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind	£341m
The Glasgow Housing Association Limited	£209m	British Heart Foundation	£337m
University of the Highlands and Islands	£135m	The Save the Children Fund	£307m
Edinburgh Napier University	£128m	Barnardo's	£296m

This table shows the highest income Scottish charities when higher education charities, further education charities, registered social landlords and ALEOs are excluded. Mercy Corps Europe is the largest Scottish charity in this group with a latest gross annual income of £124 million.

Ten highest income Scottish charities (excluding higher education, further education, registered social landlords and ALEOs)	Most recent income (£m)
Mercy Corps Europe	£124m
The Church of Scotland	£114m
Historic Environment Scotland	£103m
Richmond Fellowship Scotland Ltd	£83m
The National Trust for Scotland	£60m
The Hunter Foundation	£54m
Emms Nazareth	£53m
Quarriers	£43m
Cornerstone Community Care	£42m
Beatson Institute For Cancer Research	£39m

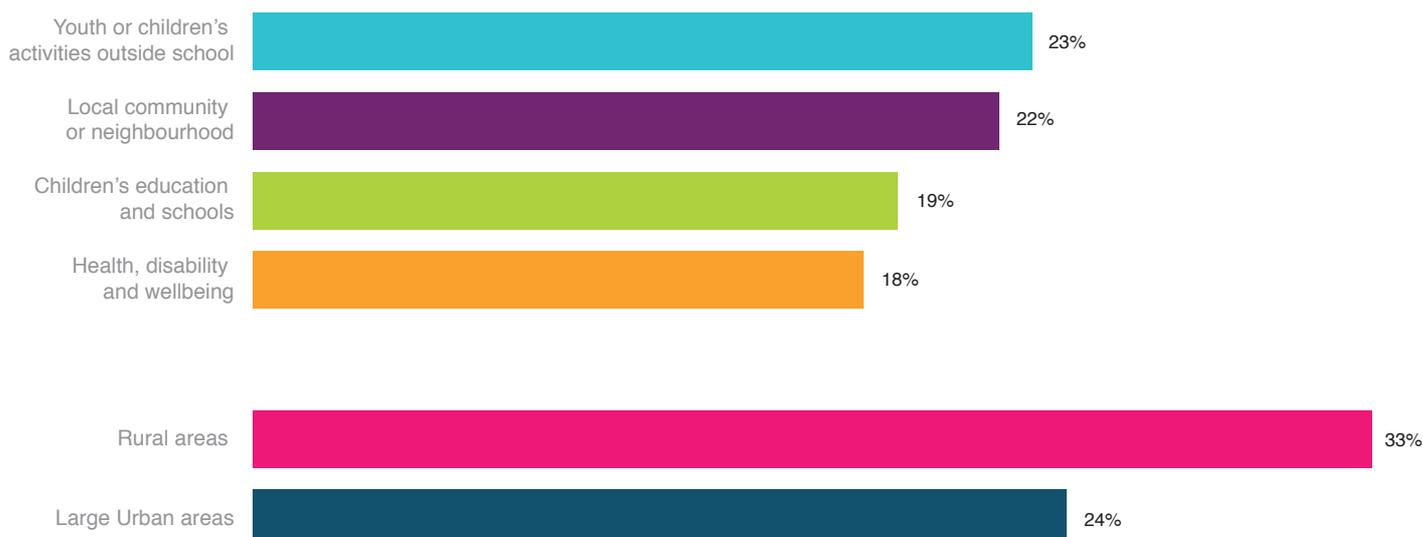
## Social Enterprises

There is no legal definition of a social enterprise in Scotland and there are different views about what the characteristics of a social enterprise are. It is generally recognised that a social enterprise is a business that operates on a profit-making basis putting those profits back into the social mission or purpose of the organisation. Many charities carry out social enterprise activities. **The Social Enterprise in Scotland Census 2019<sup>6</sup>** estimates that **72% of Scotland's 6,025 social enterprises are regulated Scottish charities and that 18% of registered Scottish charities are carrying out social enterprise activity.**



## Volunteers in Scotland

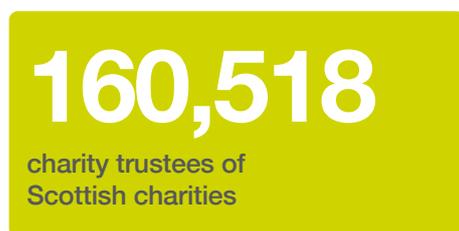
OSCR does not currently gather data on the number of volunteers engaged by charities in the annual return. The **Scotland's People Annual Report 2019<sup>7</sup>** based on the Scottish Household Survey results found that **just over one quarter (26%) of Scottish adults had volunteered for a group or organisation in the previous 12 months.** The most common forms of volunteering were youth or children's activities outside school (23%); local community or neighbourhood (22%); children's education and schools (19%) and health, disability and wellbeing (18%). Volunteering is more common among those living in rural areas with 33% of those living in remote areas having volunteered, compared with 24% of those living in large urban areas.



6 **Social Enterprise in Scotland Census 2019** <https://socialenterprisecensus.org.uk/>

7 **Scotland's People Annual Report 2019** <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-household-survey-2019-annual-report/>

## Charity trustees



Charity trustees are the people in overall control and management of the charity. They may be called directors, management committee members or committee members and they are all volunteers. They are responsible for running the charity well.

Our data from charity annual returns which all charities must submit to us shows there are 160,518 charity trustees of Scottish charities, and 170,163 charity trustees in the overall control and management of charities on the Scottish Charity Register. Taking into account charities that have not completed an annual return, **the total number of charity trustees is estimated to be over 180,000.**

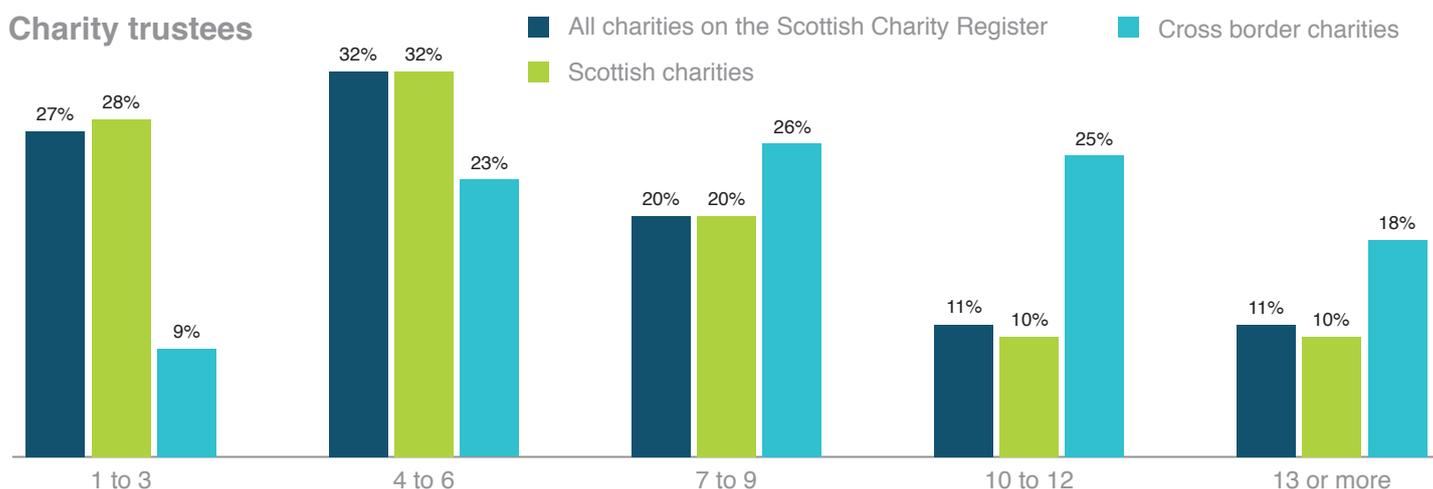
**The average (mean) number of charity trustees for Scottish charities is 7 with the most common (median) of 5.** Figures for all charities on the Scottish Charity Register are slightly higher with a mean of 8 and a median of 6. Cross border charities have a mean and median number of trustees of 9. OSCR does not keep a register or database of individual charity trustees. We cannot tell from our annual return data the extent to which individuals may be charity trustees for more than one charity.



Based on annual return records for 22,630 charities on the Scottish Charity Register or 21,565 Scottish charities on the Scottish Charity Register on 26 February 2021. Excluding charities that have completed a paper return that does not ask for number of charity trustees and those that have not yet completed a return.

The chart below shows that **32% of charities on the Scottish Charity Register have 4 to 6 charity trustees while 27% have 1 to 3.** One in ten charities (11%) have 13 or more charity trustees.

### Charity trustees

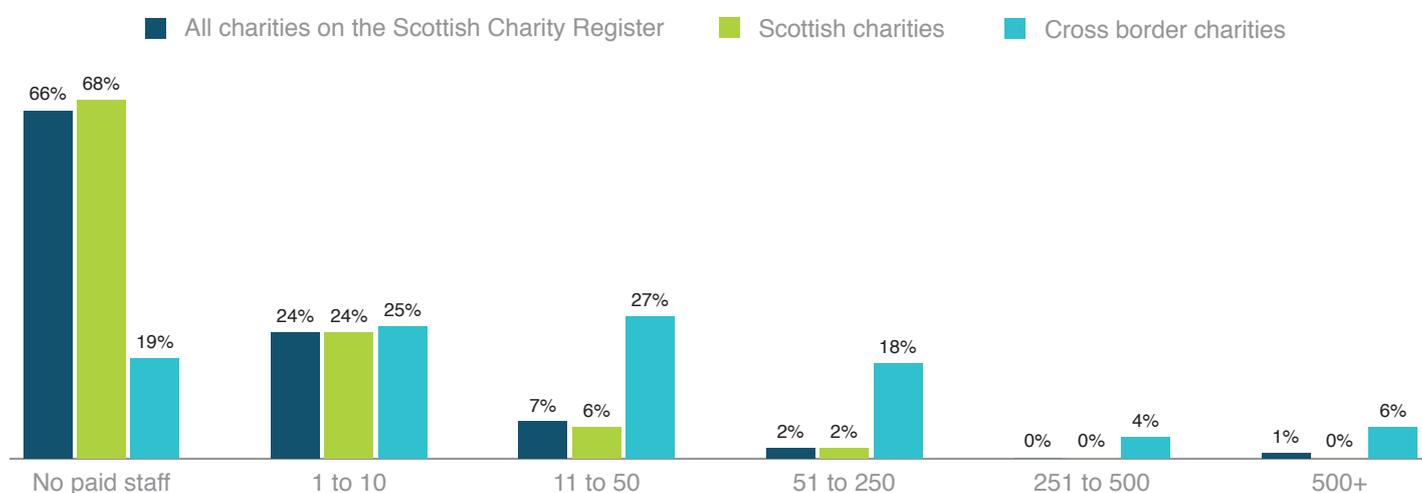


## Paid Staff

Two thirds (66%) of charities on the Scottish Charity Register employ no paid staff and are run entirely by volunteers, including the charity trustees. For Scottish charities this percentage is slightly higher (68%). Cross border charities tend to be larger and only 19% report no paid staff in their most recent annual return.

The total number of paid staff employed by Scottish charities (excluding cross border charities) is 208,977 (based on headcount figures from 21,565 Scottish charities). The total UK-wide figure for charity staff employed by cross-border charities is 209,606. With a conservative estimate of 10% of these employed in Scottish-based roles, the estimated total number of staff in the Scottish sector could be closer to 230,000.

### Paid staff



**208,977**  
paid staff employed by Scottish charities\*

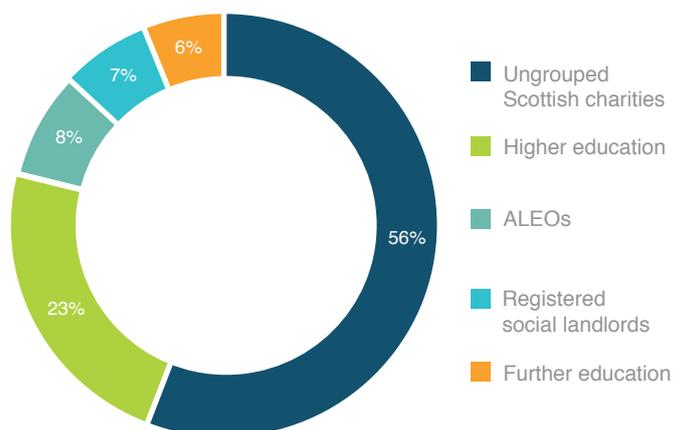
**68%**  
of Scottish charities report no paid staff\*

\*Based on annual return records for 21,565 Scottish charities on the Scottish Charity Register on 26 February 2021. Excluding cross border charities, charities that have completed a paper return that does not ask for number of paid staff and charities that have not completed a return.

## Influence of different groups on staff numbers

As with the Scottish charity income profile, certain types of Scottish charity account for a larger proportion of staff employed. The chart below shows the proportion of paid staff accounted for by some of these charities.

**Proportion of paid staff of Scottish charities**  
(excluding cross border charities)



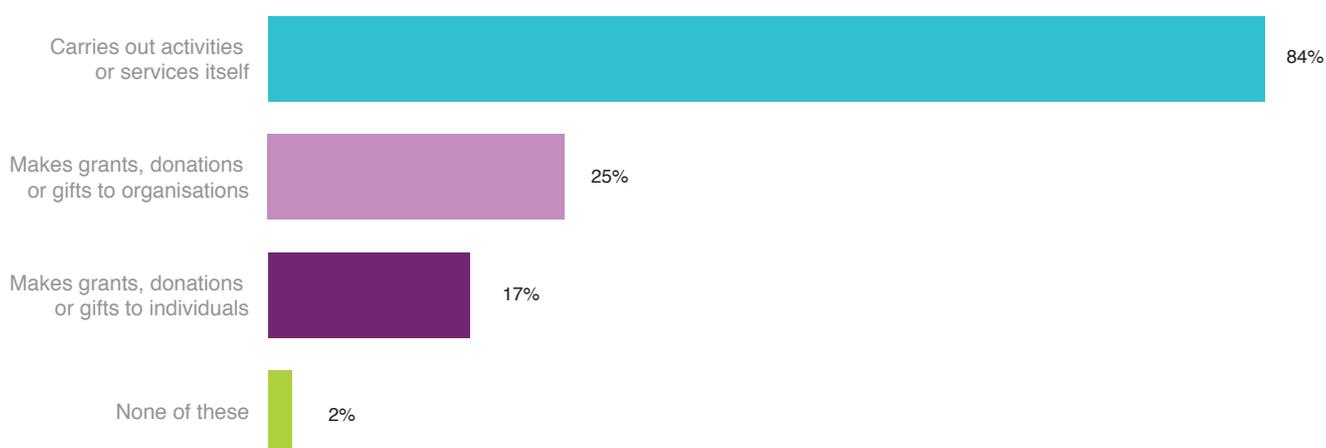
	Number of charities		Number of paid staff (headcount)	
Higher education	18	0.1%	47,592	23%
ALEOs	53	0.2%	17,243	8%
Registered social landlords	149	0.6%	14,671	7%
Further education	24	0.1%	13,405	6%
Ungrouped Scottish charities	23,776	99.0%	116,066	56%
<b>All Scottish charities</b>	<b>24,020</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>208,977</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Activities undertaken by Scottish charities

The Scottish Charity Register lists the types of activities undertaken by charities. Charities can deliver activities themselves or fund others to do so. A charity can also report that it undertakes more than one type of activity. Activities include the delivery of services.

Charities most commonly carry out activities or services themselves with 84% of charities falling into this category. **A quarter of charities (25%) make grants, donations or gifts to organisations, while 17% make grants, donations or gifts to individuals.**

### Types of activities undertaken by charities on the Scottish Charity Register



Types of activity	Number of charities	Percentage of charities
It carries out activities or services itself	21,259	84%
Grants, donations or gifts to organisations	6,319	25%
Grants, donations or gifts to individuals	4,247	17%
It does none of these	477	2%

\*Charities may have more than one type of activity.

## Detailed activities undertaken to achieve purposes

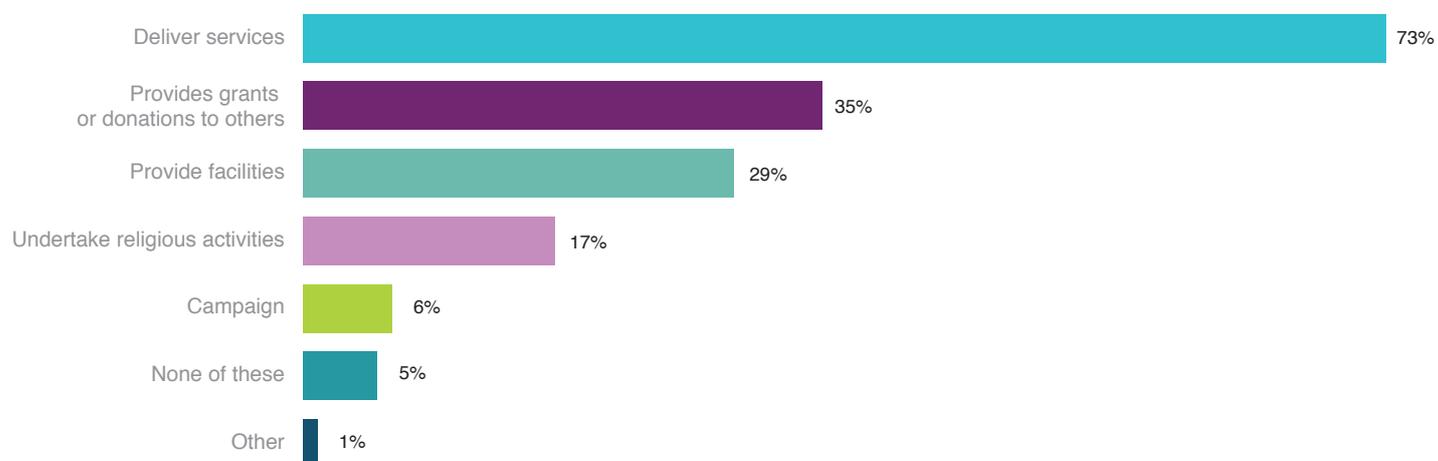
Since 2016, OSCR's standard annual return has asked charities whether they undertake any of the following activities in order to achieve their purpose as set out on the Scottish Charity Register:

- Provides grants of donation to others
- Undertake religious activities
- Provide facilities
- Deliver services
- Campaign
- Other
- None of these

Delivering services is the most common way for a charity to achieve their purposes (73%). One in three charities provide facilities (29%).

This data is not gathered for cross border charities and registered social landlords.

### Activities undertaken to achieve purposes



Activities undertaken to achieve purposes*	Number of charities	Percentage of charities
Deliver services	15,933	73%
Provides grants or donations to others	7,659	35%
Provide facilities	6,374	29%
Undertake religious activities	3,647	17%
Campaign	1,284	6%
None of these	1,157	5%
Other	263	1%

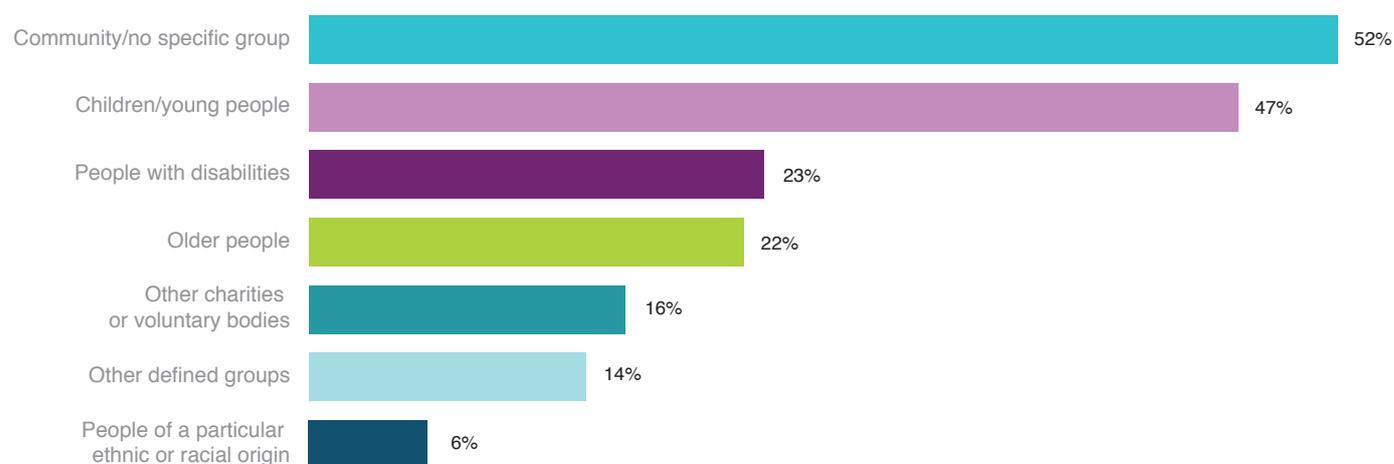
\*Charities may report more than one type of activity. Figures based on returns from 21,804 charities where this information has been provided.

## Beneficiary groups

Over half of charities (52%) say they are not established for a specific group of beneficiaries or are for the benefit of the community. Just under half benefit children and young people. Among the smallest number of beneficiary groups on the register are people of a particular ethnic or racial origin, with 6% of charities identifying them as the main focus of their activities.

Charities can be established to support multiple beneficiary groups, with the average being 1.8 beneficiary groups.

### Beneficiary groups of charities on the Scottish Charity Register



Beneficiary groups*	Number of charities	Percentage of charities
No specific group or for the benefit of the community	13,110	52%
Children/young people	11,951	47%
People with disabilities or health problems	5,878	23%
Older people	5,565	22%
Other charities or voluntary bodies	4,020	16%
Other defined groups	3,459	14%
People of a particular ethnic or racial origin	1,420	6%

\*Charities may have more than one beneficiary group.

## Charitable purposes

There are 15 distinct charitable purposes set out in the Charities and Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and one analogous purpose. Just over a third of all charities on the register have one charitable purpose (34%) and a further third (33%) have two. Charities can have multiple purposes and there is no main purpose ranking or order among purposes. **The average number of purposes per charity is 2.5.**

The most common charitable purposes are:

- The advancement of education (51% of charities have this purpose)
- The advancement of citizenship or community development (35% of charities have this purpose)
- The relief of those in need (25% of charities have this purpose)

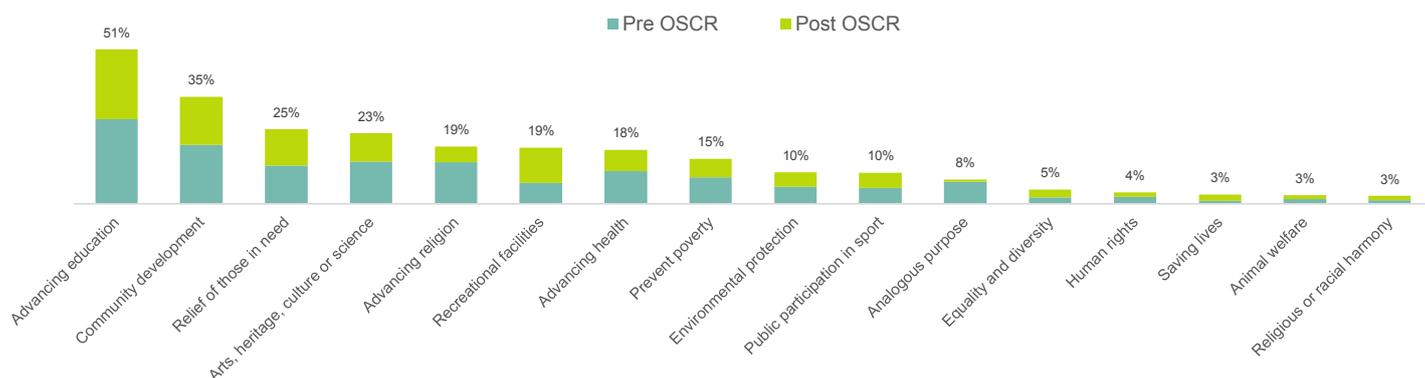
The least common charitable purposes are:

- Saving of lives (3% of charities have this purpose)
- Advancement of animal welfare (3% of charities have this purpose)
- Promotion of religious or racial harmony (3% of charities have this purpose)



Around 55% of charities on the Scottish Charity Register were charities before OSCR took up powers in 2006 and 45% have been granted charitable status by OSCR. A greater number of newer charities which were granted status by OSCR have the purpose of saving lives, providing recreational facilities and promoting religious or racial harmony. Fewer newer charities have the purposes advancing religion or an analogous purpose.

### Charitable purposes of charities on the Scottish Charity Register\*



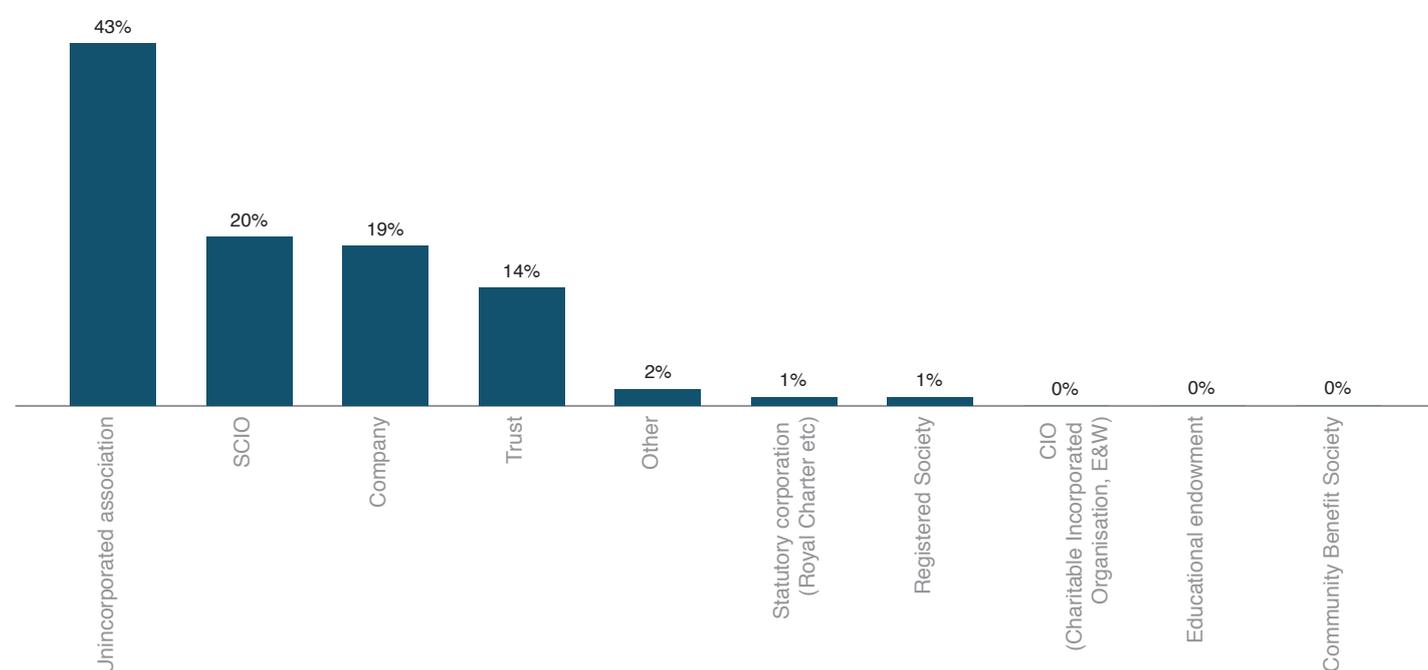
Charitable purposes	Number of charities	Percentage of charities
The advancement of education	12,897	51%
The advancement of citizenship or community development	8,917	35%
The relief of those in need by reason of age, ill health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage	6,223	25%
The advancement of the arts, heritage, culture or science	5,902	23%
The advancement of religion	4,792	19%
The provision of recreational facilities, or the organisation of recreational activities*	4,688	19%
The advancement of health	4,501	18%
The prevention or relief of poverty	3,762	15%
The advancement of environmental protection or improvement	2,615	10%
The advancement of public participation in sport	2,591	10%
Any other purpose that may reasonably be regarded as analogous to any of the preceding purposes	2,021	8%
The promotion of equality and diversity	1,197	5%
The advancement of human rights, conflict resolution or reconciliation	942	4%
The saving of lives	762	3%
The advancement of animal welfare	744	3%
The promotion of religious or racial harmony	670	3%

\*Full text: The provision of recreational facilities, or the organisation of recreational activities, with the object of improving the conditions of life for the persons for whom the facilities or activities are primarily intended.

## Legal form

**Unincorporated associations are the most common legal form for charities on the Scottish Charity Register with 43% of charities taking this form.** Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) is the second most common legal form for charities on the Scottish Charity Register. The SCIO is a legal form specific to Scottish charities that was introduced in 2011, and which provides a degree of protection against personal liability for its charity trustees and reassurance for those entering into contracts with it. SCIOs account for one in five charities (20%) on the Scottish Charity Register. Unlike charities that are limited companies, SCIOs have OSCR as a single regulator.

### Legal form



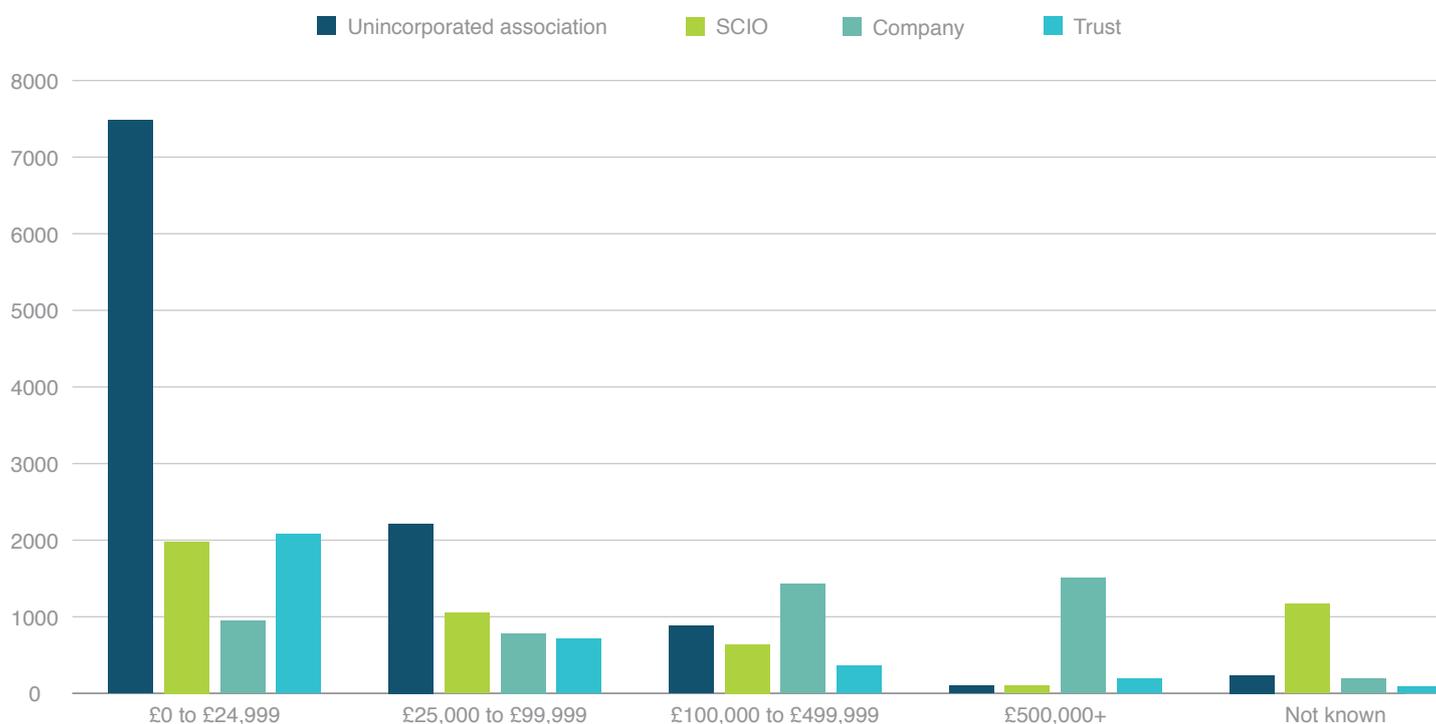
Legal forms	Number of charities	Percentage of charities
Unincorporated association	10,903	43%
SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation)	4,935	20%
Company (the charity is registered with Companies House)	4,848	19%
Trust (founding document is a deed of trust) (other than educational endowment)	3,431	14%
Other	527	2%
Statutory corporation (Royal Charter etc.)	186	1%
Registered Society	169	1%
CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation, E&W)	94	0%
Educational endowment	91	0%
Community Benefit Society	15	0%
Total	25,199	100%

## Legal form by income band

The number of charities within each income group for each of the four most common legal forms is shown below. The majority of unincorporated associations are small charities with income of £0 to £24,999 while the largest number of companies is in the £500,000+ income group.

	Unincorporated association	SCIO	Company	Trust
£0 to £24,999	7,479	1,982	950	2,077
£25,000 to £99,999	2,215	1,046	782	711
£100,000 to £499,999	877	640	1,424	364
£500,000+	96	100	1,505	194
Not known	236	1,167	187	85
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,903</b>	<b>4,935</b>	<b>4,848</b>	<b>3,431</b>

## Number of charities in each income group for unincorporated associations, SCIOs, Companies and Trusts



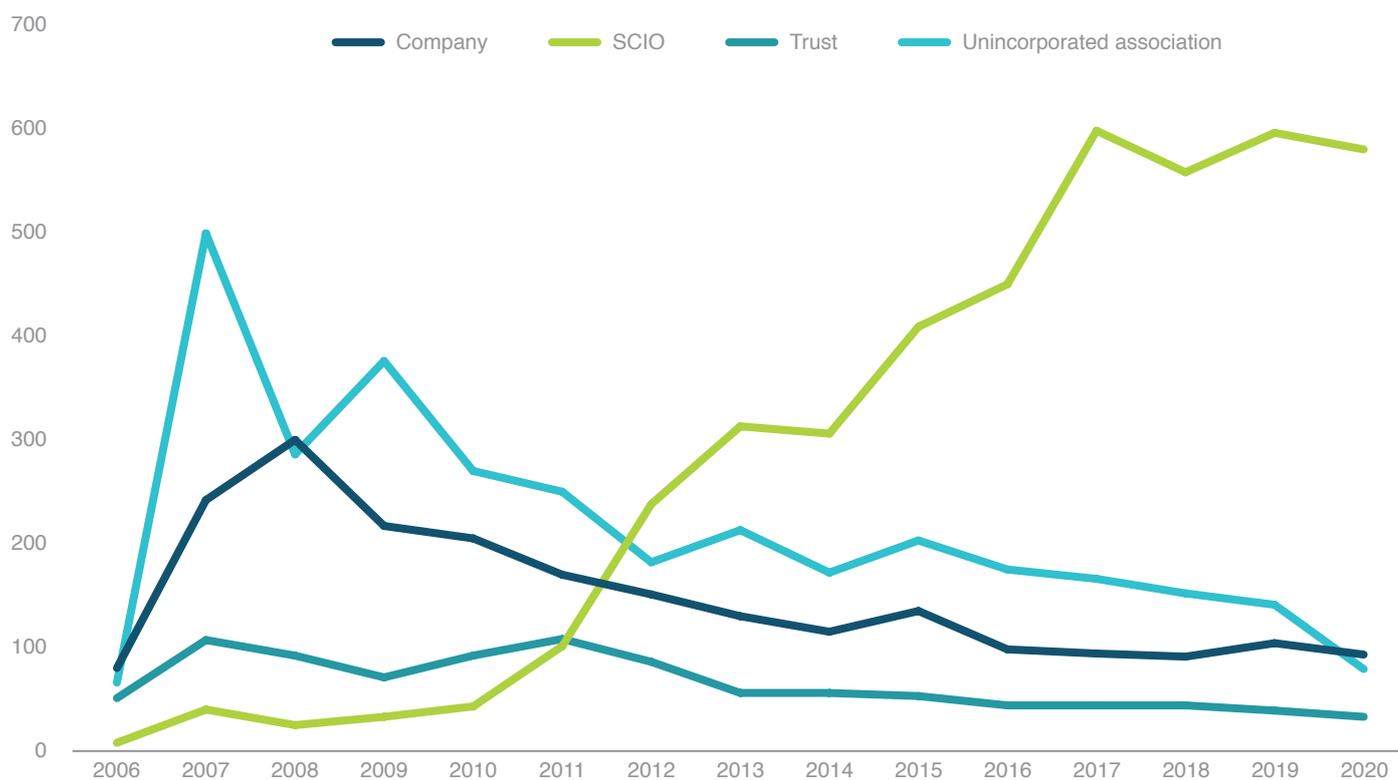
## Legal forms over time

Since their introduction in 2011 there has been a gradual increase in the popularity of the SCIO legal form.

In 2020 72% of new charities added to the Scottish Charity Register were SCIOs, 12% were companies, 10% unincorporated associations and 4% trusts.

## Legal form registered over time

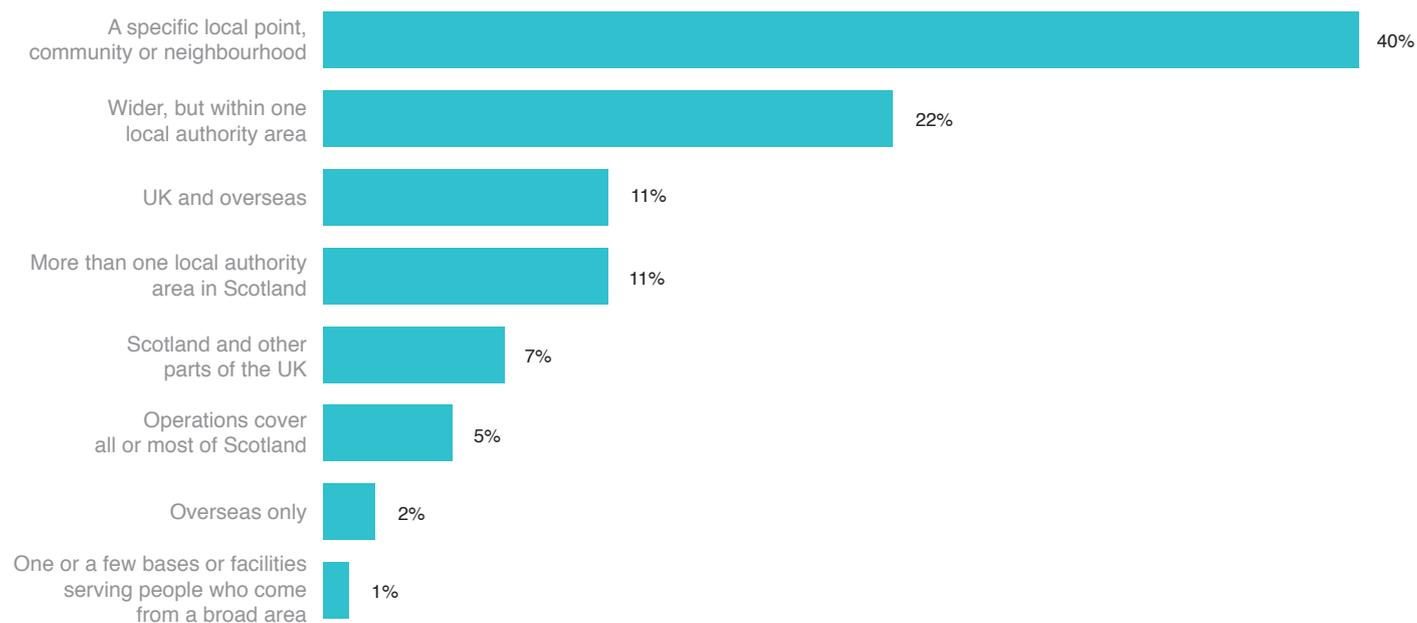
(SCIOs showing as registered before 2011 have changed to that legal form but have kept their original charity number and registered date)



## Operations

Two fifths (40%) of charities on the Scottish Charity Register operate locally at a specific local point, community or neighbourhood, with a further 22% operating within one local authority area. Charities with an international focus to their work who operate either in the UK and overseas, or overseas only make up 13% of charities registered in Scotland.

### Geographical spread



	Number of charities	Percentage of charities
A specific local point, community or neighbourhood	10,180	40%
Wider, but within one local authority area	5,666	22%
UK and overseas	2,785	11%
More than one local authority area in Scotland	2,702	11%
Scotland and other parts of the UK	1,875	7%
Operations cover all or most of Scotland	1,355	5%
Overseas only	409	2%
One or a few bases or facilities serving people who come from a broad area	227	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,199</b>	<b>100%</b>

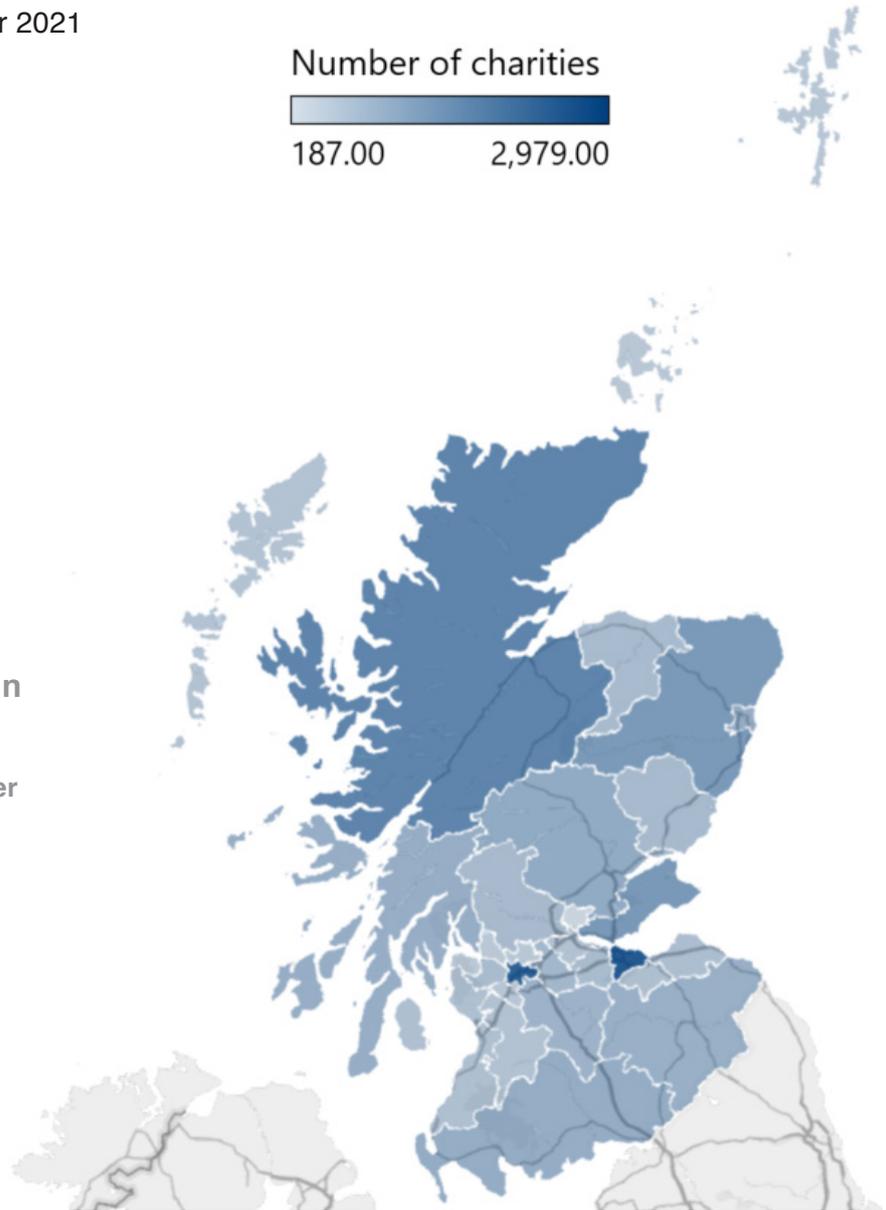
Number of charities



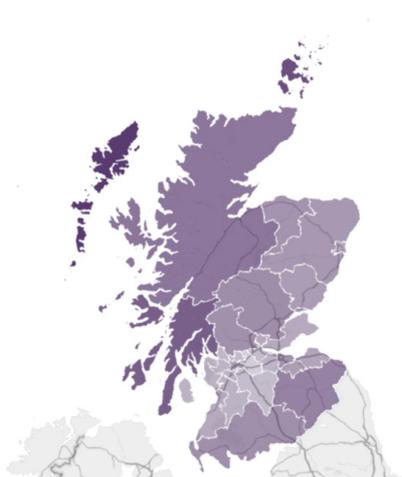
## Geography – distribution of charities by local authority

Number of charities in each local authority area, by head office or main operating location

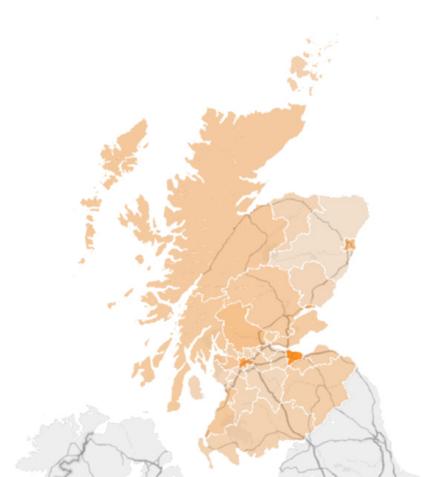
All charities on the Scottish Charity Register excluding those with a head office or main operating location outwith Scotland



Scottish charities per 10,000 population



Scottish charity income (£m) per 10,000 population



Number of Scottish charities per 10,000 population

Excluding cross border charities and those with a head office or main operating location outwith Scotland

Scottish charity income per 10,000 population

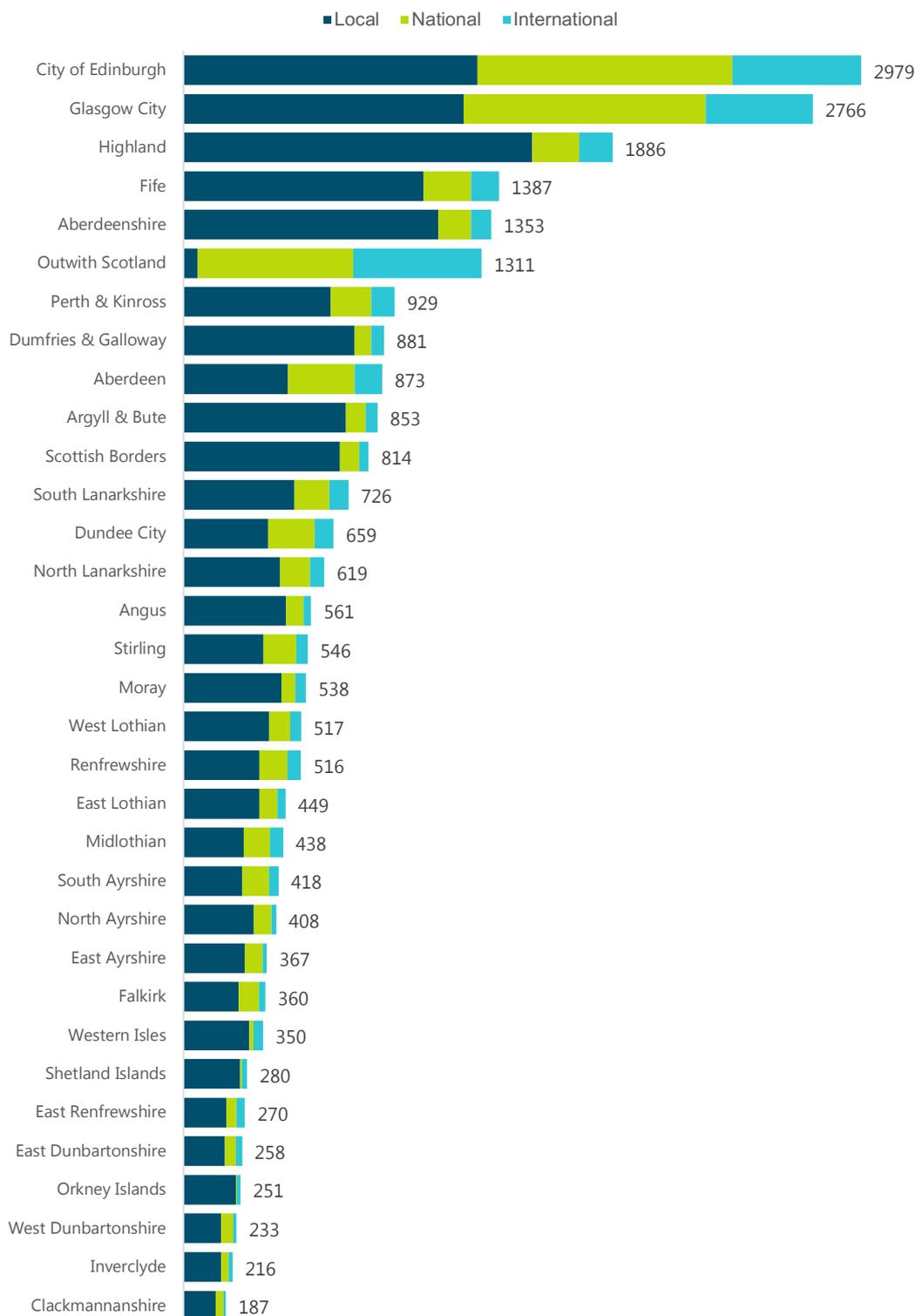
Excluding cross border charities and those with a head office or main operating location outwith Scotland

## Local authority areas

Charities are asked where their head office or main operations are located. The largest number of charities can be found in Scotland's major cities Edinburgh and Glasgow, followed by Highland. Highland contains the largest number of local charities (grouped as those where the geographical spread of their activities is a specific neighbourhood, within one local authority area or those with one or a few bases).

### Charities on the Scottish Charity Register by local authority area

(including those with a head office of main operating location outwith Scotland)

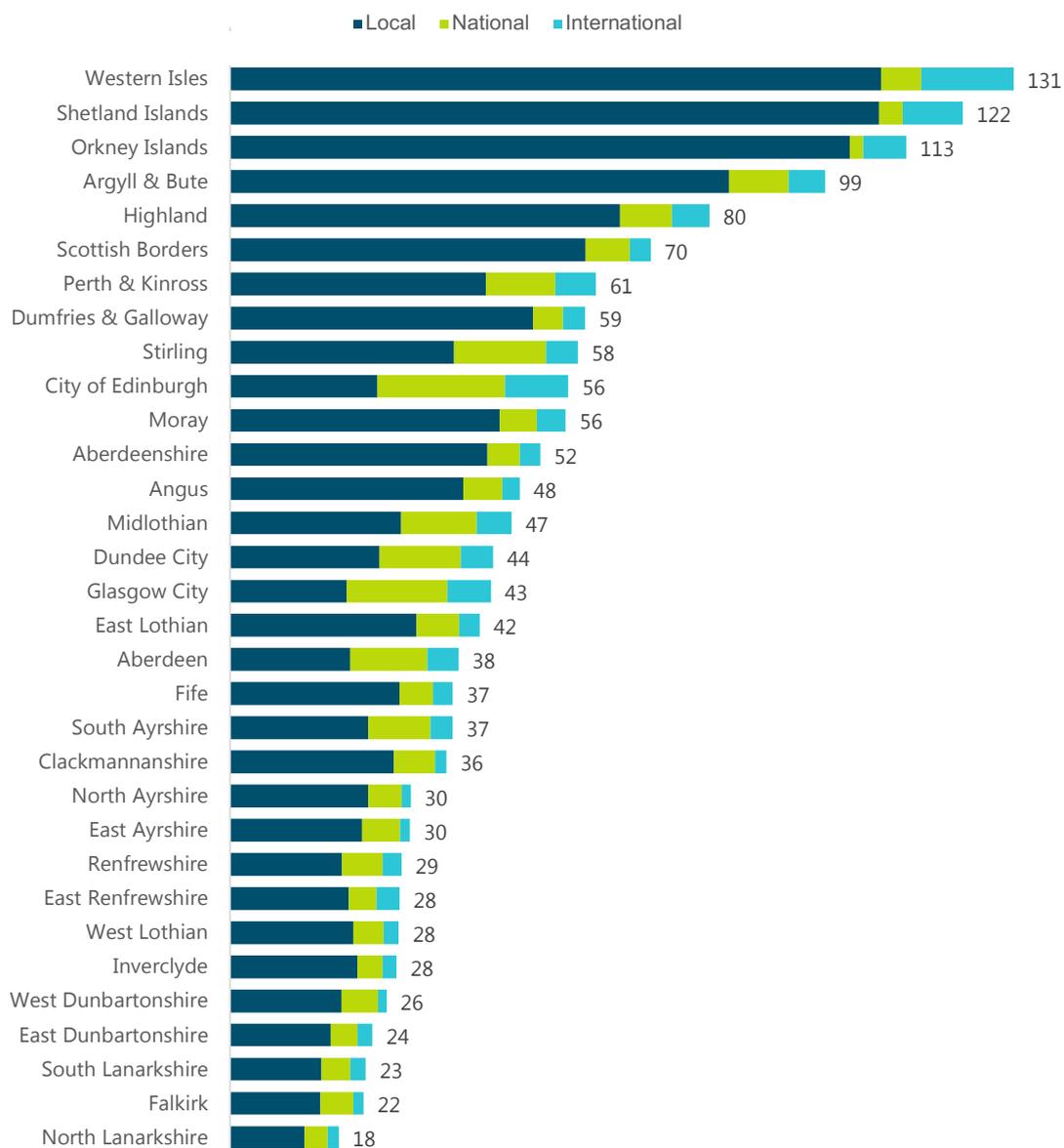


## Scottish charities per 10,000 of population

Western Isles, Shetland Islands and Orkney Islands have the greatest number of charities per 10,000 population. South Lanarkshire, Falkirk and North Lanarkshire have fewest charities per 10,000 population.

### Scottish charities per 10,000 population

(excluding those with a main operating location outwith Scotland) Using 2019 mid-year population estimates from NRS.

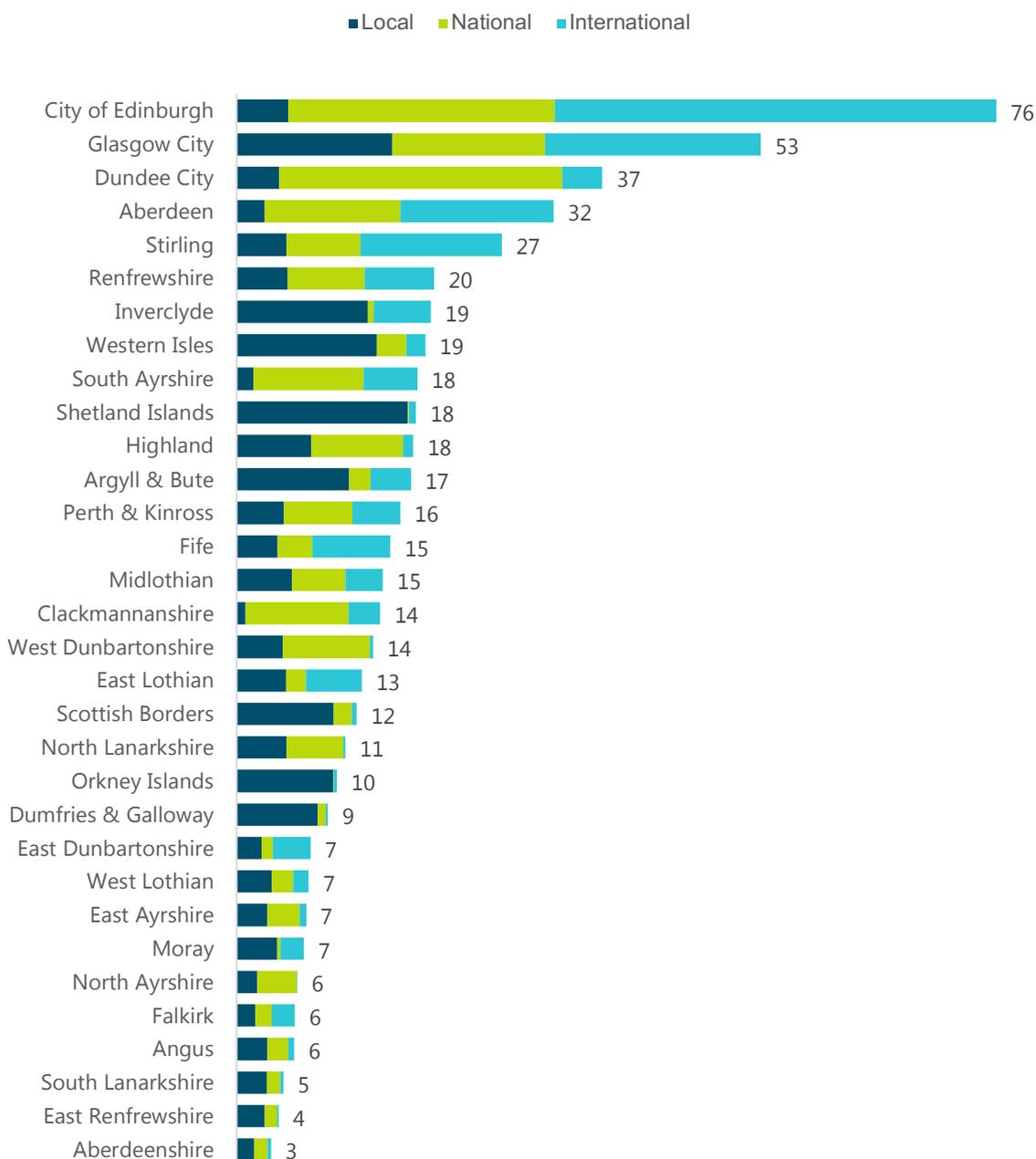


## Scottish charity income per 10,000 population

The total income for Scottish charities per 10,000 people resident in each local authority area is shown below. Scotland's largest cities have the largest proportion of charity income per 10,000 population. The total income reported by charities with a local focus per 10,000 population shows a different picture. Shetland Islands, Glasgow City, Western Isles and Inverclyde report the highest local charity income per 10,000 population.

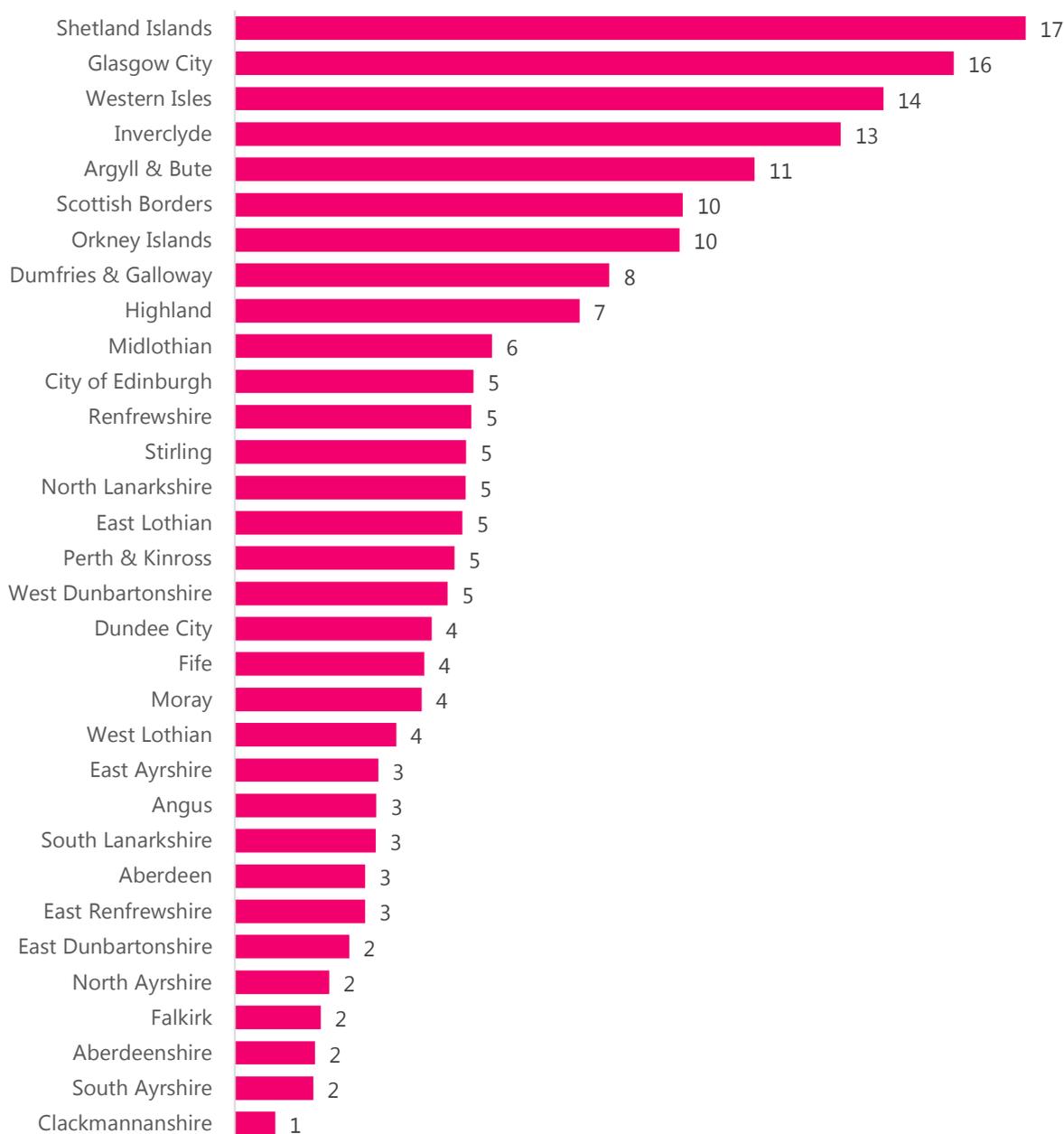
### Scottish charity income (£ millions) per 10,000 population

(excluding those with a main operating location outwith Scotland) Using 2019 mid-year population estimates from NRS.



### Local Scottish charity income (£ millions) per 10,000 population

(excluding those with a main operating location outwith Scotland) Using 2019 mid-year population estimates from NRS.

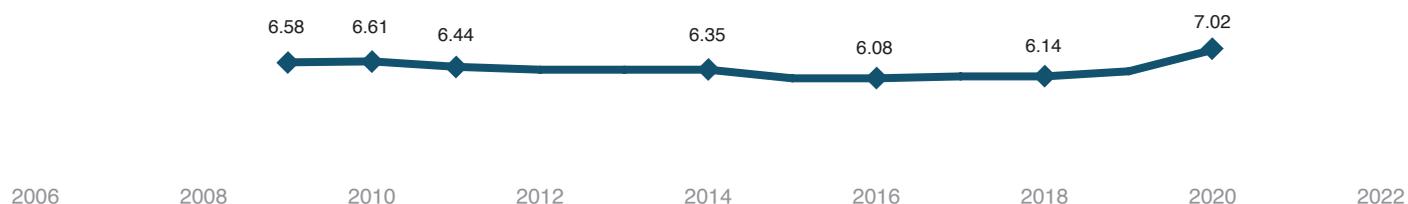


# A picture of trust

## Public trust in charities

OSCR regularly measures public trust and confidence in Scottish charities, with the most recent survey carried out between February and March 2020.<sup>8</sup> The mean figure for public trust and confidence in Scottish charities is at its highest level since we started measuring this in 2009.

**Scottish Charity and Public Surveys 2020** also presented findings of trust across a number of different types of charity. It found that charities working in Scotland, as well as 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 reach.



Thinking about how much trust and confidence you have in charities overall, on a scale of 0 to 10 where 10 means you trust them completely and 0 means you don't trust them at all, how much trust and confidence do you have in charities? Mean scores.

## Mean trust scores for different types of charity



When asking about the reasons for supporting a charity, trust was identified as the second most common reason (44% of those who donate) after the importance of the cause (56% of those donating).

## The top reasons the Scottish public gave for giving to charity

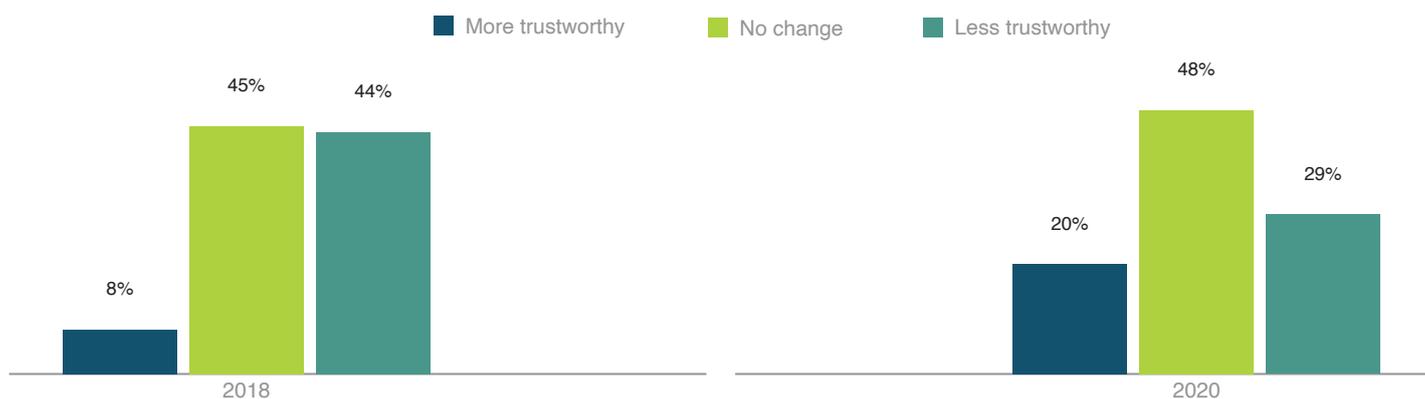


<sup>8</sup> More information on our survey is available here: <https://www.oscr.org.uk/about-charities/surveys/> and the latest Scottish Charity and Public Survey 2020 report is available here: <https://www.oscr.org.uk/media/3990/2020-07-27-scottish-charity-and-public-surveys-2020-report-june-2020-v2.pdf>

## Increasing trustworthiness

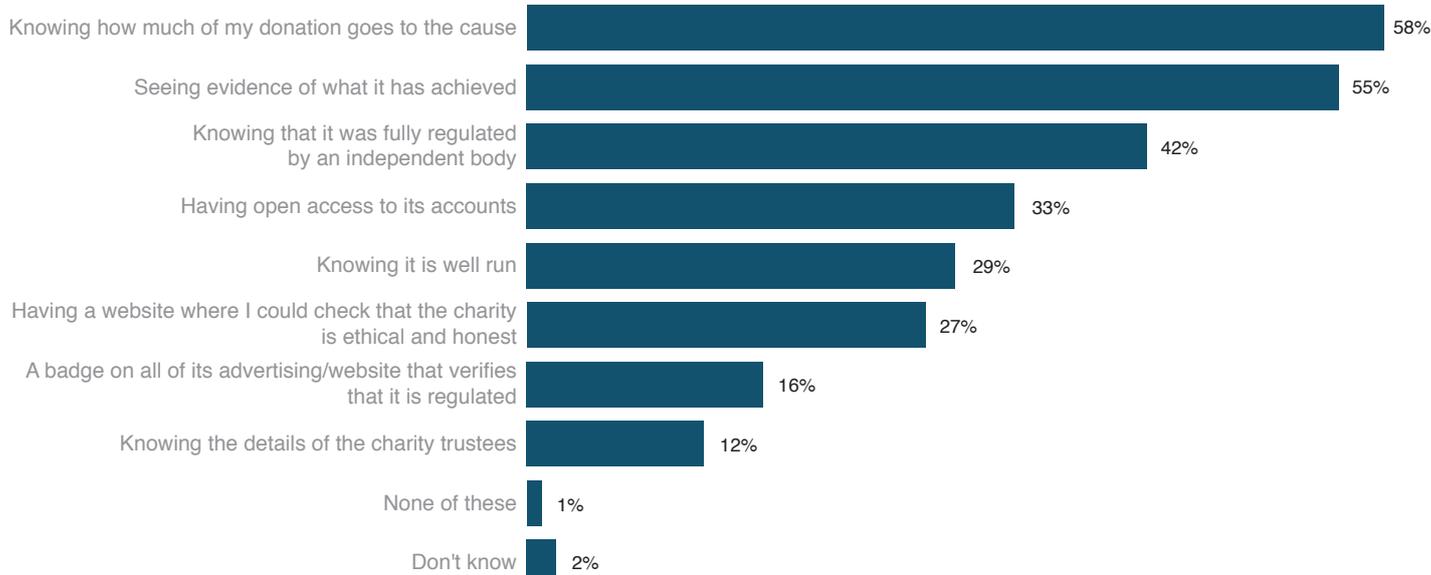
Two thirds of the public feels that the charity sector is as trustworthy, or more trustworthy, than two years ago, up from only half in 2018. 29% of the public felt that the charity sector in Scotland had become less trustworthy than two years ago when measured in 2020.

### Perception of trustworthiness



When members of the public were asked to name three options most likely to increase perceived trustworthiness, 42% feel knowing that the charity is independently regulated is important for trustworthiness. Being transparent about the charity's impact and use of funds were seen as most likely to increase perceived trustworthiness.

### Most likely to increase trustworthiness



The Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)  
2nd Floor  
Quadrant House  
9 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD14NY

T 01382 220446

E [info@oscr.org.uk](mailto:info@oscr.org.uk)

 [@ScotCharityReg](https://twitter.com/ScotCharityReg)

 [ScottishCharityRegulator](https://www.facebook.com/ScottishCharityRegulator)

[www.oscr.org.uk](http://www.oscr.org.uk)