



Registering with the Charity Commission

Did you know that if a charitable organisation has an income of over £5,000 a year or is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO), they must apply to register their charity with the Charity Commission?

At DCA, we get many enquiries from organisations who are looking to register as a charity. Sometimes from new groups just setting up and other times long established groups are growing and have hit the £5,000 per year income meaning they legally have to register with the Commission.

The application process can be quite daunting for groups that have not dealt with the Charity Commission before, and the terminology can be quite confusing.

More recently we have been getting questions from charitable organisations who have applied to register with the Charity Commission but have been turned down. In particular, we have seen many applications rejected because the charity's purposes are not clear enough or because they don't seem to be for the public benefit. While there is always the option to reapply, knowing the language and what the Charity Commission are asking for in these cases can really help make the process go a little more smoothly.

One of the things that people find difficult is expressing their aims; the charitable reasons why they were set up. Often when completing this section of the online registration form, trustees will describe their activities rather than the overarching purpose which can lead to an application being rejected.

The Charity Act 2011 have defined in law 13 descriptions of purposes [here](#) and the Charity Commission do offer guidance around how to write your purposes (also known as objects) and even have [example objects](#) that you could use. The Commission have also provided a five-minute guide which trustees should read around [charity purposes and rules](#).

Our Community Development Team here at DCA can support organisations to navigate the online application process if you are looking to register as a charity. We can talk you through the process and offer information, advice and guidance around writing your charitable purposes.

For organisations that need additional support, as part of our paid for services we can complete the online charity registration form and support you to answer any subsequent registration questions from the Charity Commission.

If you would like to find out more, please don't hesitate to get in touch. If you have been working directly with one of our Community Support Team, you can contact them in the usual ways or email info@durhamcommunityaction.org.uk and your enquiry will be directed to a member of the team.