

Facts and Figures: Northern Ireland



Key Facts

- Before 2008 there was no dedicated public body for registering and regulating Northern Irish charities
- Almost a third of charities have an income below £5,000 per annum
- 45% of charities operate solely in their local council area
- Education and training is the most common charitable activity
- Approximately 44,703 people work in Northern Ireland's voluntary and community sector
- Trust in charities is higher in Northern Ireland than in Britain

Population Summary

Population: Approximately 1.87 million people¹

21% aged between 0 and 15 years

25% aged between 16 and 24 years

38% aged between 35 and 64 years

16% aged over 65 years²

Geography: the most populated local government district is Belfast, followed by Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon and Newry, Mourne and Down³

Employment: 16-64 year olds in employment - 70%⁴

Median weekly earnings for full-time employees - £495⁵

Introduction

It is surprising that pre 2008, Northern Ireland did not have a dedicated public body for registering and regulating the country's vast number of charitable organisations. The introduction of the 2008 Charities Act was therefore a seminal moment in the history of

the Northern Irish charity sector as (bolstered by the launch of the country's own Charity Commission the following year) it was instrumental in implementing the first compulsory register of charities in 2013. A move which is intended to "giv[e] the public of Northern Ireland the same level of protection that is offered by independent regulators in other regions of the UK and Ireland" (Tom McGrath, NICC Chief Commissioner).⁶

Today, charitable organisations are required to submit annual reports of their resources, governance and activities.⁷ It is hoped that these measures will finally reveal a comprehensive picture of the true scale of the charity sector in Northern Ireland. As it stands, this picture is constantly evolving; in 2013 it was estimated that there were between 7,000 and 12,000 charitable organisations in operation,⁸ a figure which last year was estimated to be closer to 11,000 to 17,500.⁹ Such figures are much closer to those we have on the charity sectors in Wales and Scotland, where the number of registered charities stand at around 8,671¹⁰ and 23,700¹¹ respectively (according to most recent reports at the time of writing).

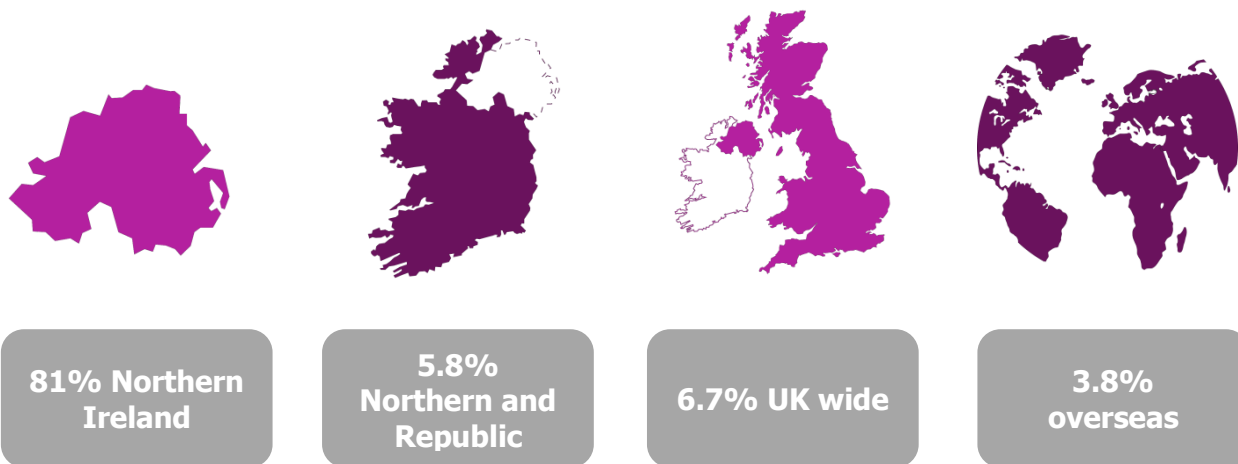
Given that numbers in Northern Ireland are constantly being revised, however, it should be noted that the figures which follow are largely based on the limited sample of 5,300 charities registered with the Northern Ireland Charity Commission (NICC).

Income

- 72% of Northern Irish charities have an income of £100,000 or less and 24% below £5,000 per annum.
- The top 20% account for 88% of the Nation's estimated £1 billion combined charity income.¹²
- Income figures in Northern Ireland thereby reflect trends which can be observed across the UK more broadly. 83% of UK charities have an income of £100,000 or under, but these account for under 5% of the sector's total income.¹³ Whereas, 80% of the sector's total income comes from the 3% of charities with an income over £1 million.¹⁴

Areas Northern Irish charities operate in

- Of the 5,300 charities registered with the NICC, 44% are based in County Antrim.¹⁵
- According to the NICC 45% of registered Northern Irish charities work solely with their local council area.¹⁶
- Of the charities registered with NICVA, 81% operate in Northern Ireland exclusively, 5.8% worked across Ireland, 6.7% were UK wide, while just 3.8% worked overseas.¹⁷
- The top five "international" countries Northern Irish charities work in are India, Kenya, Uganda, Romania and the Republic of Ireland (followed by the Philippines, South Africa, Zambia, the United States of America and Malawi).¹⁸



Causes

- The top five charitable activities reported by the NICC are: education and training (52%), community development (32%), youth development (30%), volunteer development (30%) and religious activities (26%).¹⁹
- The most common beneficiaries of these activities are the general public (50%), children aged between 5 and 13 (43%), youths aged between 14 and 25 (41%), volunteers (27%) and women (26%).²⁰

Governance and workforce

- In 2016 the size of the voluntary and community sector workforce stood at approximately 44,703, of which 56% were paid employees and over 60% were working full-time.²¹
- These numbers are much lower than those reported Wales and Scotland, where the number of volunteers is believed to stand at 938,000 in Wales²² and 1,300,000 in Scotland.²³ Whilst the number of paid posts is held to be 79,000 in Wales²⁴ and 138,000 in Scotland.²⁵
- In Northern Ireland 75% of paid charity workers are female.²⁶ However, men are more likely to hold full time positions than women (75% of men, compared to 56% of women), which mirrors the gender patterns of full and part time work across Northern Ireland more broadly.²⁷
- Out of every 100 charity trustees in Northern Ireland, approximately 63 are over the age of 50 (with 42% of the total trustees believed to be over 65). Just 1 in 100 is thought to be between the ages of 18 and 24. This is unrepresentative; those over 60 account for just 20% of Northern Ireland's total population.²⁸

Trust and Giving: a picture of the health of the sector

Our annual Celtic Charity Awareness Monitor provides a unique insight into the Northern Irish public and their views on charities. Tracking the latest market trends, including trust levels and rates of giving, CCAM presents a comprehensive picture of the health of the sector, in addition to exploring wider issues of interest to the charities we work with (such as perceptions of fundraising methods).

A few highlights from our most recent research . . .

- “Trustworthy” is the first word the public in Northern Ireland would use to describe their ideal charity, followed by “honest” and “caring/compassionate”.²⁹
- Trust in charities in Northern Ireland is higher than trust in charities in Britain; 62% of the public in Northern Ireland trust charities “a great deal” or “quite a lot”³⁰, compared to 55% of the British public³¹ at the same time. This is in spite of the steady decline in trust in charities operating in Northern Ireland, which we have documented over the last three years (down 8 percentage points).³²
- Last year 74% of the public in Northern Ireland donated money to charity, compared to 66% in the UK.³³ High levels of giving in Northern Ireland could be attributed to the region’s high levels of church attendance; 34% CCAM’s most recent respondents would describe themselves as regular worshippers or churchgoers.³⁴

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April 2017

nfpSynergy is a research consultancy that delivers the research, the insights and the expertise to help non-profits understand their audiences and make informed strategic decisions. Our Charity Awareness Monitor (CAM) enables charities to find out how they are perceived by the most vital of audiences; the general public. It also gives an insight into what the public think about volunteering, campaigning and donating to charity, whilst providing an accurate benchmark for charities to measure themselves against.

For more details, please email our team at insight@nfpSynergy.net, or call on 020 7426 8888.

¹ NISRA, *The Population in Northern Ireland*, 2016

² NISRA, *Northern Ireland Population Estimates*, 2015

³ NISRA, *Northern Ireland Population Estimates*, 2015

⁴ NISRA, *Northern Ireland Labour Market Report*, 2017

⁵ NISRA, *Northern Ireland Labour Market Report*, 2017

⁶ NICVA, *Charity Commission Announces Introduction of Charity Regulation to Northern Ireland*, August 2014

⁷ Third Sector, *Charity Commission for Northern Ireland sets out guidance on new accounting rules*, August 2016

⁸ The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, *Introduction to charity registration*, 2013

⁹ The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, *Never-seen-before analysis of NI charity sector released by Commission*, 2016

¹⁰ WCVA, *Third Sector Statistical Resource*, 2016

¹¹ SCVO, *Scottish Third Sector Statistics*, 2015

¹² The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, *Never-seen-before analysis of NI charity sector released by Commission*, 2016

¹³ NCVO, *Size and Scope*, 2016

¹⁴ NCVO, *Size and Scope*, 2016

¹⁵ The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, *Never-seen-before analysis of NI charity sector released by Commission*, 2016

¹⁶ The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, *Never-seen-before analysis of NI charity sector released by Commission*, 2016

¹⁷ NICVA, *State of the Sector*, 2014

¹⁸ The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, *Countries Worked*, 2017

¹⁹ The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, *Thematic report: the growing Northern Ireland register of Charities*, 2013

²⁰ The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, *Thematic report: the growing Northern Ireland register of Charities*, 2013

²¹ NICVA, *State of the Sector*, 2014

²² WCVA, *Third Sector Statistical Resource*, 2016

²³ SCVO, *Scottish Third Sector Statistics*, 2015

²⁴ WCVA, *Third Sector Statistical Resource*, 2016

²⁵ SCVO, *Scottish Third Sector Statistics*, 2015

²⁶ NICVA, *State of the Sector*, 2014

²⁷ NICVA, *State of the Sector*, 2014

²⁸ Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, *Thematic report: the growing Northern Ireland register of Charities*, 2013

²⁹ nfpSynergy, *Celtic Charity Awareness Monitor: Northern Ireland*, 2016

³⁰ nfpSynergy, *Celtic Charity Awareness Monitor: Northern Ireland*, 2016

³¹ nfpSynergy, *Trust in charities recovers from its low point: CAM Executive Overview*, July 2016

³² nfpSynergy, *Celtic Charity Awareness Monitor: Northern Ireland*, 2016

³³ CAM, Apr 2016

³⁴ nfpSynergy, *Celtic Charity Awareness Monitor: Northern Ireland*, 2016