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Our first ten years



Happy Birthday to us!

After the passage of the 2005 Act, OSCR took up its full powers on 24 April 2006. So this year **we are marking ten years** of registering, monitoring and guiding the country's charities by reflecting on the key developments over that period. As Regulator, we have both witnessed and brought about

significant change in the sector during that time.

Before OSCR was set up, charity regulation in Scotland was limited. In our ten years we've worked closely with charities to drive up standards, we've supported those running charities to be more transparent about their activities and to make the right decisions, and we've taken firm action where required.

Reinforcing public confidence: Some 85% of the public feel that OSCR's role is 'essential' or 'important'.

Driving up standards: In 2007, only 20% of charities with an annual income under £25,000 met requirements in preparing accounts – in 2016 the figure is 78%.

Supporting the charity sector: In modernising and reorganising charities it has released an estimated £40 million back to the sector.

Regulation is supported by charities: Some 92% trust OSCR to treat them fairly and 94% say that reporting to OSCR is now 'part and

parcel' of what they do.

Scotland now has a comprehensive, searchable **charity Register**, with over 100,000 searches every month. We oversaw the introduction of the Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) in 2011, which now accounts for almost 50% of new applications. Over 90% of charities are making use of **OSCR Online** for submitting their annual returns, and our website is home to a growing collection of plain English guidance, case studies and checklists. Over recent years we've organised some 35 'Meet the Regulator' events around Scotland and we really value the face-to-face interaction with trustees at these events (not to mention the amazing hospitality they have shown us!).

OSCR's Chair, The Very Reverend Graham Forbes CBE, also pays tribute to OSCR staff and the charity sector for working together to reinforce public confidence, saying: 'We've undertaken a huge volume of work over the past ten years, setting up and maintaining the processes required to oversee the country's 24,000 charities as well as carrying out detailed examinations and reviews into what it means to be a charity. All of this requires enthusiasm, expertise and sound judgement, and I congratulate OSCR's staff for their performance over the past ten years. We also recognise the support of the sector we regulate, run by an estimated 180,000 charity trustees, on an almost entirely voluntary basis. We look forward confidently to the future, equipped with priorities based on our experience to date.'

As to the future, our new programme of **Targeted Regulation**, launched in April, will see us targeting our attention on where it's required and will allow us to reassure the public that their continued confidence in charities is justified.

Thanks, everyone, for your continued support – and best wishes with your work.

Clatto Community Woodland - ten years as a charity



Scotland's first 'new' charity was granted charitable status by OSCR in May 2006, ten days after the Regulator took up its full powers. Since then, says

Gordon Lochhead, trustee chairman of **Clatto Community Woodlands**, the group has established a strong local following and is now, ten years on, planning the next stage in its development.

'We've worked extremely hard over the past ten years and reached the stage where a number of possibilities are on the horizon,' he says. 'We feel that the time is right to actively plan for the next generation of trustees to come on board and carry the woodland on

into the future. We need new trustees to come on board and continue our development. So, volunteers are welcome!

[Read the full story here.](#)

Pictured left to right at The Gateway: Geoff Pearce, volunteer; Gordon Lochhead, Chairman; Mary Stewart, Treasurer; Jane Pearce, trustee; Ian Preece, Secretary.

Go digital - free event, Edinburgh, 22 June

Digital services are increasingly part and parcel of how we operate. But how can you maximise the opportunities for your charity? Join fellow trustees and sector experts to learn how



embracing digital can support your charity's culture, governance, skills development and service delivery.

Speakers will share their experiences and how their use of digital has moved their organisations forward. If you'd like to explore the opportunities of digital, but aren't sure where to start, this event is for you.

[Read the agenda and book your place here.](#)

Charity trustee duties guidance



We've updated this key publication, which sets out the role and responsibilities of those running the country's 24,000 charities.

While the basic principles remain

unchanged, *Guidance and good practice for charity trustees* has been extensively rewritten and reformatted for ease of use.

[Read more here.](#)

Campaigning in the EU referendum



Following our well-received guidance on campaigning the independence referendum, earlier this year we published our guidance on complying with charity law during the EU referendum

campaign. It's a useful reference that sets out what you must consider if you intend to campaign or make public statements in the run-up to the poll on 23 June.

[Read the guidance here.](#)

New banking guidance for charities



We've been working with the **British Bankers' Association (BBA)**, the **Charity Finance Group (CFG)** and other voluntary sector partners to produce guidance aimed at

supporting charities and other voluntary organisations with their banking arrangements.

The new guidance has a specifically Scottish focus and is aimed at charity trustees and managers, providing information on choosing and opening the right bank account, understanding banking charges and fees, and how to switch accounts. It's supported by the **Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations**, the **Scottish Government**, the **Network of International Development Organisations in Scotland (NIDOS)**, **Voluntary Action Orkney**, the **Scottish Charity Finance Group** and **Bobath Scotland**.

[Read the new guidance here.](#)

OSCR consultation – matters of material significance

We've opened a consultation with the Charity Commission for England and Wales and the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland on the reporting of matters of material significance by auditors and

independent examiners.

The Charity Commission for England and Wales and OSCR previously published a single list of matters to be reported to the regulators by Auditors and Independent Examiners which was consistent for England and Wales, and Scotland. The proposed new list follows the establishment of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland and takes account of our own experience of regulation to date.

[View the consultation document and share your views here.](#)

OSCR in the news

In support of our ten year anniversary, we saw some significant coverage in the sector press. Read the feature articles in [Third Sector](#) and [Third Force News](#), as well as [blogs by sector commentators](#).



Savings for charities - Scottish Government catalogue



Did you know that the Scottish Government's framework contracts are available for charities to use?

This means that your charity can benefit from

substantial savings when you sign up to use these services. The latest contract to be re-let is for [General Stationery and Office Buying](#), where the new contractor, Lyreco, is offering a 21% saving on the previous contract. Your registered charity can sign up for this contract by getting in touch with Lyreco's account manager [Nicola Davies](#). We'll be sending out a separate bulletin on other framework contracts shortly. **Please note that you should not contact OSCR** - these contracts are administered by the Scottish Government.

Meet the charity regulator

Our ongoing programme of outreach events continues, with our **Edinburgh event now available for bookings**. It's free of charge, and as well as discussing good governance



we'll be joined by the Pension Regulator to talk about the Workplace Pension as well as hosting a Q&A session for any issues you'd like to raise with us. This follows our events in Kirkwall and Lerwick, and we'll announce further events in Lanark and Clydebank shortly.

Free data resources for charities



The Scottish Civil Society Data Partnership, a collaboration between Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) and the Universities of Stirling and St Andrews, offers a

range of excellent research resources available to charities free of charge.

The Partnership has also been hosting workshops and webinars to help third sector organisations make the most of the data that's available to them.

Why not have a look and see if you can use any of the information to inform your planning? You can find the free to use resources on the [THINK Data Scotland website](#).

Check your charity's details!

oscr online

Are you the Principal Contact for your charity?

Please log in to OSCR online and make sure that you're listed. If you're no longer the Principal Contact, please pass the log in details to your trustees and ask them to replace your details with someone who will be the main contact for OSCR.

In any case, you should regularly check your charity's details to make sure they're up to date. **You can find your charity's entry in the Register here.**

Scotland's charity regulator: OSCR is the independent registrar and regulator of Scotland's 23,000 charities

www.oscr.org.uk | info@oscr.org.uk | General enquiries: 01382 220446 | Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) 2nd Floor, Quadrant House, 9 Riverside Drive, Dundee, DD1 4NY |

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

OSCR Online makes it easier for charities to report to OSCR, and improves transparency for the public. For more information, or to register, visit www.oscr.org.uk

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