



# Classification Standard for Registered Charities

## Charity and Public Consultation

March 2022

### Introduction

In addition to its primary function of maintaining a register of charitable organisations, the Charities Regulator is required to carry on such activities or publish such information (including statistical information) concerning charitable organisations and charitable trusts as it considers appropriate.

To this end the Charities Regulator has determined that it would be appropriate and beneficial to develop a classification standard for charitable organisations registered in Ireland. Classification is the division of people or things into categories according to shared qualities or characteristics which facilitates the production of better statistics and information for study and comparison. Charity classification exists in some form or another in many other jurisdictions.

It is important to note that the classification will not put a limit on the types of activities which a charity can undertake to further its charitable purpose(s) and that the activities section of the annual report filed by charities will continue to provide an opportunity for charities to elaborate on the diversity of their operations.

### Main benefits of a classification standard

1. The functionality of the Register will be improved by extending the advanced search options to include all the classification data held on charities, thus providing a tool to members of the public, registered charities, funders, policy-makers and other stakeholders to identify individual charities and groups of charities by reference to their particular activities and beneficiaries.
2. It will provide charities with an opportunity to showcase their activities to the public and potential donors. In 2021, over 89,000 searches were carried out by the public on the Register. The addition of classification data to the Register will provide further clarity on the activities of charities to those users.
3. Classification will enable members of the public not only to check that an entity is a registered charity but also to get information about the particular activities their donations of time or money will support. This will facilitate more informed donating practices which has been one of the main objectives of the “Check the Register” campaigns for the last few years.

4. Classification will facilitate collaboration and knowledge-sharing among registered charities in Ireland. It will assist charities in identifying other registered charities carrying out similar activities, to consider alternative ways of delivering on their charitable purpose, and to see the kinds of expertise that other charities have.

## Proposed classification standard for registered charities in Ireland

As part of the development process the Charities Regulator carried out a desk- based review of a number of classification standards and systems in use around the world and we also consulted with researchers, government departments, funders and charity support and representative bodies. We are now seeking your feedback on the draft standard which has been developed following that process.

We recognise that there is no one ideal system but we are confident that the standard that will be adopted will be one that best reflects the reality of the charitable activities undertaken by registered charities in Ireland. The proposed standard is attached at [Appendix 1](#)

### How will the classification data be collected from charities?

All registered charities will be asked to self-determine their appropriate classification by completing a once-off online form which will automatically register the classification information on submission. In an effort to assist charities and to reduce the administrative burden, the form will be pre-populated where possible and will display the options available by way of drop down lists. See a worked example below based on a charity which is a theatre company advancing the arts.

#### **Step 1**

Log into MyAccount and select the relevant form<sup>1</sup>

#### **Step 2**

Select at least one, and up to two, primary classification groups from the drop-down list

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<sup>1</sup> It is yet to be decided if the classification will be added to the annual report or whether a new once off form will be developed

1. Social and Community Services
2. Health
3. Housing and Community Development
4. Environment and Animals
5. Community relations, reconciliation, advocacy and civic responsibility
6. Philanthropy, Benevolence and Volunteering
7. Education and Research
8. Religion
9. Arts and Culture
10. International

### **Step 3**

Select at least one and up to two secondary classification groups from the drop-down list which will appear based on the selection at step 2

- Arts and crafts
- History, heritage and culture
- Museum or library
- Film or media

### **Step 4**

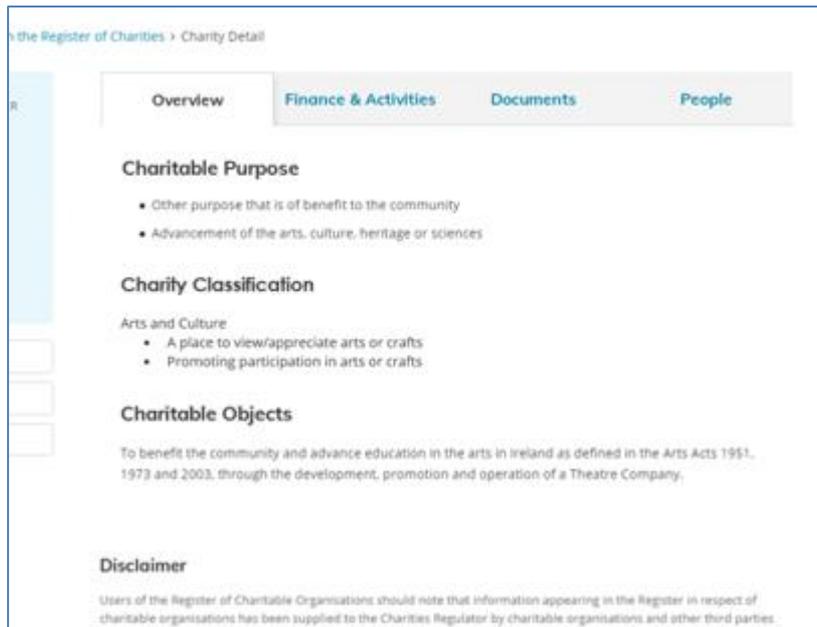
Select at least one and up to two sub groups from the drop-down list which will appear based on the selection at step 3

- A place to view/appreciate arts or crafts
- Promoting participation in arts or crafts
- Festival or event

### **Step 5**

Confirm and submit

The form will register immediately on submission and the classification will be added to the charity's entry on the Register of Charities and will look something like this



## How will a charity determine the most appropriate category or categories?

It is proposed that a charity may select up to two categories from the primary classification and up to two categories from the secondary classification options associated with their primary classification choice (if any secondary categories are available). Some categories have been further broken down into an additional sub-level of classification to provide additional clarity where the primary or secondary levels are very broad, and again charities can select up to two categories where this is the case.

It is acknowledged that some charities may have difficulty deciding which primary classification groups are the most appropriate because of their diversity. To assist charities, an explanatory guide containing definitions and examples will be developed to accompany the standard. It is proposed that once the data is collected, it will be added to the Register in a fully searchable format similar to the registers in many other jurisdictions and also made available in a downloadable format on our website and via [www.data.gov.ie](http://www.data.gov.ie) (open data).

## We want your views!

We have already engaged with government departments and agencies, public bodies, charity representative bodies, academics and researchers and we are now at the stage of the process where we are seeking your feedback on the proposed standard.

Once you have considered the [proposed standard](#), let us know what you think by completing the [short survey](#). If you would like to make a more detailed submission, please email it to [consultations@charitiesregulator.ie](mailto:consultations@charitiesregulator.ie) (only submissions received by Friday 15 April 2022 will be considered).

All survey responses and submissions will be considered and incorporated into the standard, if deemed appropriate and necessary, before the final standard is implemented.

## Data Protection and Freedom of Information

The survey is anonymous however any personal information which you volunteer in any of your responses to the survey, or in a more detailed submission, will be treated with the highest standards of security and confidentiality, strictly in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/67 and the Data Protection Act 2018.

All submissions received will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2014 (FOI) and may also be published on our website.

If submitting a detailed submission, you should clearly indicate personal information, commercially sensitive information or confidential information which you would not wish to be released under FOI or otherwise published.

Please email [consultations@charitiesregulator.ie](mailto:consultations@charitiesregulator.ie) if you have any queries.

### Appendices:

1. The Proposed Standard
2. How the classification information could be displayed on the Register of Charities
3. Steps which a charity will take to add classification to the Register of Charities

## Appendix 1: Proposed Classification Standard for Registered Charities in Ireland

It is proposed that, when providing the information, a charity must select at least one and may select up to two categories from the primary classification and at least one and up to two categories from the secondary classification options associated with each primary classification choice. Some classification groups have been further broken down into a secondary sub-level to provide additional clarity where the primary or secondary levels are very broad, where this is the case a charity must select at least one and may select up to two categories.

Primary Classification Groups:

1. [Social and Community Services](#)
2. [Health](#)
3. [Housing and Community Development](#)
4. [Environment and Animals](#)
5. [Community relations, reconciliation, advocacy and civic responsibility](#)
6. [Philanthropy, Benevolence and Volunteering](#)
7. [Education and Research](#)
8. [Religion](#)
9. [Arts and Culture](#)
10. [International](#)

Primary classification	Secondary classification	Secondary classification sub level	Explanatory note/examples
<p><b>1. Social and Community Services</b></p> <p>This primary classification is most compatible with operations which further the charitable purpose(s) of:</p> <p>The prevention or relief of poverty or economic hardship</p> <p>Any other purpose that is of benefit to the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The advancement of community welfare including the relief of those in need by reason of youth, age, ill-health or disability</li> <li>- The integration of those who are disadvantaged, and their full participation, in society</li> </ul>	Homeless services	Accommodation	e.g. hostel
		Food and/or clothing	e.g. soup kitchen
		Medical / health	e.g. dental services
		Other services (not elsewhere classified)	e.g. access to showers and toilets, haircuts, drop-in centres
	Provision of community centre/resource centre		
	Provision of recreation ground/open space		e.g. community playground
	Provision of food or other vital goods or services		e.g. foodbanks
	Local/community based services and supports	disability or ill-health, including mental health services	e.g. provision of equipment
		services for refugees or immigrants	e.g. translation services, assistance with housing or benefits
		child day care services	e.g. community creches
		childrens services	e.g. provision of Christmas gifts
		family services	e.g. lone parents network
		youth services	e.g. youth centre
		child or youth organisation	e.g. scouts, guides
		services for older people	e.g. meals on wheels
		services for a defined group	not elsewhere classified e.g. Travellers, LGBT community
		member serving organisation	e.g. veteran's association, professional or sectoral associations
Emergency / disaster relief or rescue services (in Ireland)		e.g. flooding relief, mountain rescue services	
Social inclusion resources and supports	vocational rehabilitation	e.g. job training for the unemployed	
	working to remove barriers to inclusion	e.g. provision of wheelchair accessible transport, ex-offender programmes	

Primary classification	Secondary classification	Secondary classification sub level	Explanatory note/examples
<p><b>2. Health</b></p> <p>This primary classification is most compatible with operations which further the charitable purpose(s) of:</p> <p>Any other purpose that is of benefit to the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The promotion of health, including the prevention or relief of sickness, disease or human suffering</li> </ul>	Medical treatment	Hospital – general	primarily inpatient
		Hospital – speciality	primarily inpatient e.g. maternity
		Hospice / terminal care	primarily inpatient
		Outpatient (non-residential)	e.g. medical centre
		Rehabilitation or aftercare	inpatient or outpatient
	Residential care or nursing home		including convalescence and respite care
	Mental health	Residential mental health services	inpatient care e.g. addiction treatment
		Non-residential mental health services	e.g. suicide prevention, counselling services
	Other health services	Complementary or alternative therapy	e.g. yoga
		Health education or sickness prevention	e.g. first aid training, promotion of healthy eating
		Emergency response	e.g. first responders, community defibrillator, ambulance service
		Patient or survivor comforts or support	e.g. hospital radio, hospital appointment transport services, stroke support groups
		Carer or health staff support	e.g. nurses association
Healthcare services (not elsewhere classified)			

Primary classification	Secondary classification	Secondary classification sub level	Explanatory note/examples
<p data-bbox="255 240 645 312"><b>3. Housing and Community Development</b></p> <p data-bbox="203 352 645 456">This primary classification is most compatible with operations which further the charitable purpose(s) of:</p> <p data-bbox="203 496 651 568">The prevention or relief of poverty or economic hardship</p> <p data-bbox="203 608 645 679">Any other purpose that is of benefit to the community</p> <ul data-bbox="255 679 651 1142" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The advancement of community welfare including the relief of those in need by reason of youth, age, ill-health or disability;</li> <li>- The advancement of community development, including rural or urban regeneration;</li> <li>- The integration of those who are disadvantaged, and the promotion of their full participation, in society</li> </ul>	Accommodation or housing	Approved Housing Body	Charity is included on the Register of Housing Bodies with Approved Status Under Section 6 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1992
		Emergency housing	e.g. domestic violence refuge (does not include the provision of accommodation to the homeless such as a hostel)
		Independent or assisted living	
		Provision of accommodation or housing	not elsewhere classified
		Housing advocacy and/or homelessness prevention	
	Urban or rural regeneration		e.g. providing rural transport, upgrading cityscapes, improving digital connectivity
	Community or local development and improvement		e.g. community radio, Tidy towns

Primary classification	Secondary classification	Secondary classification sub level	Explanatory note/examples
<p data-bbox="248 240 539 309"><b>4. Environment and Animals</b></p> <p data-bbox="203 352 640 453">This primary classification is most compatible with operations which further the charitable purpose(s) of:</p> <p data-bbox="203 496 640 564">Any other purpose that is of benefit to the community</p> <ul data-bbox="248 568 651 778" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The protection of the natural environment;</li> <li>- The advancement of environmental sustainability;</li> <li>- The prevention or relief of suffering of animals</li> </ul>	Protection and conservation of the natural environment	conservation of flora, fauna or natural environment generally	e.g. native trees and plants, national parks
		conservation of particular geographical area or habitat	e.g. the Burren, wetlands
		conservation of a particular species	e.g. bats
		zoo, wildlife park, nature reserve	
	Environmental sustainability	Sustainable development / biodiversity	e.g. green or renewable energy / energy saving measures, promoting eco-farming
		Conservation of natural resources	e.g. promoting water conservation
		Pollution control or waste reduction	e.g. recycling initiatives, beach cleaning
	Animal Welfare	Rescue, rehabilitation or re-homing	
		Animal sanctuary / shelter	
		Veterinary services	

Primary classification	Secondary classification	Secondary classification sub level	Explanatory note/examples	
<p>5. Community relations, reconciliation, advocacy and civic responsibility</p> <p>This primary classification is most compatible with operations which further the charitable purpose(s) of:</p> <p>Any other purpose that is of benefit to the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The advancement of conflict resolution or reconciliation;</li> <li>- The promotion of religious or racial harmony and harmonious community relations;</li> <li>- The promotion of civic responsibility or voluntary work</li> </ul>	Promotion of civic responsibility		e.g. projects promoting equality, organisations working to reduce anti-social behaviour	
	Promotion of public safety		e.g. farm safety, water safety	
	Victim support			
	Provision of information or advice or working to raise awareness of an issue			e.g. budgeting and financial management
	Social advocacy			e.g. advocating for better access to public buildings for people with disabilities, organisations assisting ethnic minorities or other defined groups
	Conflict resolution or reconciliation			e.g. family mediation services, facilitating cross community dialogue, restorative justice
	Religious or racial harmony or harmonious community relations	Racial harmony		e.g. integration between refugees and local residents
		Religious harmony		e.g. facilitating dialogue between Muslims and Christians
Harmonious community relations			e.g. community festival which encourages appreciation and respect for different cultures	

Primary classification	Secondary classification	Secondary classification sub level	Explanatory note/examples
<p><b>6. Philanthropy, Benevolence and Volunteering</b></p> <p>This primary classification is most compatible with operations which further the charitable purpose(s) of:</p> <p>Any other purpose that is of benefit to the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The promotion of civic responsibility or voluntary work;</li> <li>- The advancement of the efficient and effective use of the property of charitable organisations</li> </ul> <p>With regard to fundraising, grant giving and benevolence this primary classification is compatible with any charitable purpose</p>	Volunteering / voluntary sector services and promotion		e.g. linking volunteers with volunteering opportunities, volunteer representative groups
	Providing services which improve the efficiency and effectiveness of charities		e.g. charity representative organisations, charity trustee training
	Fundraising		e.g. a charity which is set up to collect and distribute salary based deductions or online donations to other charities or organisations, 'Friends of...'
	Grant giving		Private grant-making foundations, corporate or community foundations
	Benevolent association or fund		

Primary classification	Secondary classification	Secondary classification sub level	Explanatory note/examples	
<p data-bbox="255 240 633 272">7. Education and Research</p> <p data-bbox="203 316 640 416">This primary classification is most compatible with operations which further the charitable purpose(s) of:</p> <p data-bbox="203 459 528 491">Advancement of education</p>	Pre-Primary		pre-school organisations other than childcare	
	Primary level			
	Secondary level			
	Third level			institutions offering courses to academic degree level including medical schools
	Vocational or technical			e.g. skills training, acting, secretarial
	Adult and continuing education			e.g. language courses, literacy programmes, promotion of science
	Education support and student services			e.g. homework clubs, services for disabled students
	Research (including dissemination of results)		health and medical	
			science and technology	
		other research	not elsewhere classified	

Primary classification	Secondary classification	Secondary classification sub level	Explanatory note/examples	
<p><b>8. Religion<sup>2</sup></b></p> <p>This primary classification is most compatible with operations which further the charitable purpose(s) of: Advancement of religion</p> <p>Religion</p> <p>Christian</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Baptist</li> <li>- Church of Ireland</li> <li>- Methodist</li> <li>- Presbyterian</li> <li>- Roman Catholic</li> <li>- Evangelical</li> <li>- Non-denominational</li> <li>- Orthodox</li> <li>- Other Christian – please specify<sup>3</sup></li> </ul> <p>Judaism</p> <p>Islam</p> <p>Buddhism</p> <p>Hinduism</p> <p>Sikhism</p> <p>Multi-faith or interfaith</p> <p>Other Religion – please specify<sup>4</sup></p>	Religious order or community			
	Place of Worship		e.g. church, mosque, synagogue, shrine or other place where religious services or rituals are held	
	Religious association or organisation	Pastoral care / outreach		
		Missionary/evangelical		
		Maintaining churchyards / other burial places		
		Raising awareness of religious beliefs and practices		
		Interfaith activities		
	Pilgrimages or retreats			
		Diocesan or parish organisation		

<sup>2</sup> This section of the standard will have 3 levels of classification – charity will be required to indicate the religion as well as two levels of classification

<sup>3</sup> Suggest allowing a free text entry here – alternative is to just have ‘other Christian’ as the option

<sup>4</sup> Suggest allowing a free text entry here – alternative is to just have ‘other religion’ as the option

Primary classification	Secondary classification	Secondary classification sub level	Explanatory note/examples
<p><b>9. Arts and Culture</b></p> <p>This primary classification is most compatible with operations which further the charitable purpose(s) of:</p> <p>Any other purpose that is of benefit to the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The advancement of the arts, culture, heritage or sciences</li> </ul>	Arts and crafts	A place to view/appreciate arts or crafts	e.g. art gallery, theatre, exhibition space, concert hall
		Promoting participation in arts or crafts	e.g. amateur dramatics, choir, orchestra, pipe band
		Festival or event	e.g. opera festival, literary festival
	History, heritage and culture	Historical events, culture and traditions	including commemoration of historical events or people, or the heritage or traditions of a locality e.g. famine memorials, county show, storytelling and folklore, Irish language events
		Historic buildings or ancient sites	e.g. castle, ring fort, battle ground
		Providing a place to hold cultural events	
		Learned society or institution	includes scientific bodies
	Museum or library		includes archives and artefacts
	Film or media		

Primary classification	Secondary classification	Secondary classification sub level	Explanatory note/examples
<p data-bbox="255 240 483 268"><b>10. International</b></p> <p data-bbox="203 316 636 521">A charity which has operations in any country outside of the island of Ireland should select this primary classification as one of their options – this includes charities which fund organisations based outside Ireland</p>	Emergency / disaster relief		e.g. famine relief, emergency shelter
	Infrastructure sustainability and development		e.g. well boring and sanitation, building or equipping health centres or schools, improving farming methods
	Humanitarian or environmental		e.g. facilitating cross cultural dialogue, preventing people trafficking, animal conservation

## Appendix 2: How classification information will be displayed on the Register of Charities

Information for the Public > Search the Register of Charities > Charity Detail

REGISTRATION OFFICE NUMBER

CHARITY NUMBER

ORGANISATION  
**Limited by Guarantee**

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**Overview** | Finance & Activities | Documents | People

### Charitable Purpose

- Other purpose that is of benefit to the community
- Advancement of community welfare including the relief of those in need by reason of youth, age, ill-health, or disability

### Charity Classification

Social and Community Services

- Local / community based services and supports
  - Disability or ill-health, including mental health services
  - Services for older people

### Charitable Objects

The main object for which the Company is established is the purpose of providing a Home Care Service for both the elderly and people in need in the Blanchardstown & Inner City area of Dublin.

**Disclaimer**

REGISTRATION OFFICE NUMBER

CHARITY NUMBER

ORGANISATION  
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**Overview** | Finance & Activities | Documents | People

### Charitable Purpose

- Relief of poverty or economic hardship
- Advancement of education
- Other purpose that is of benefit to the community
- Advancement of community welfare including the relief of those in need by reason of youth, age, ill-health, or disability
- Integration of those who are disadvantaged, and the promotion of their full participation, in society

### Charity Classification

International

- Sustainability and development

Education

- Primary; Secondary

### Charitable Objects

The main object for which the body is established is the promotion of education at primary, secondary and college level for the children from poor families in defined areas in Uganda and in the State of Tripura in North East India. The Trustees will decide on the families and children to be helped as a result of meeting the family and the children and assessing their level of poverty and need. This will be achieved through the payment of education fees for the children as well as providing other supports in terms of food, clothing and bedding, for the families of these children where needed so as to enable them to benefit to the maximum amount from their schooling. This will be further advanced through the provision of scholastic materials to the children as well as education resources and facilities to the schools (not funded by the local authorities) that these children will attend. The provision of resources and community facilities that will enhance the lives of children and their families in their surrounding community will also be provided for the public benefit where resources are

## What the advanced search options could feature:

Search the Register of Charities

 [?](#)

[Advanced search options](#)

<p>Governing Form</p> <input type="text" value="All Governing Forms"/> ▼	<p>Charity Purpose</p> <input type="text" value="All Charitable Purposes"/> ▼
<p>Charity Classification</p> <input type="text" value="All Charity Classification Groups"/> ▼	<p>Charity Sub-Classification</p> <input type="text" value="All Charity Sub-Classification Groups"/> ▼
<p>Location</p> <input type="text" value="All Locations"/> ▼	

[Search the Register](#)

## Appendix 3: Steps to add classification to the Register of Charities

**Step 1** – charity will log into MyAccount and open the relevant charity update form

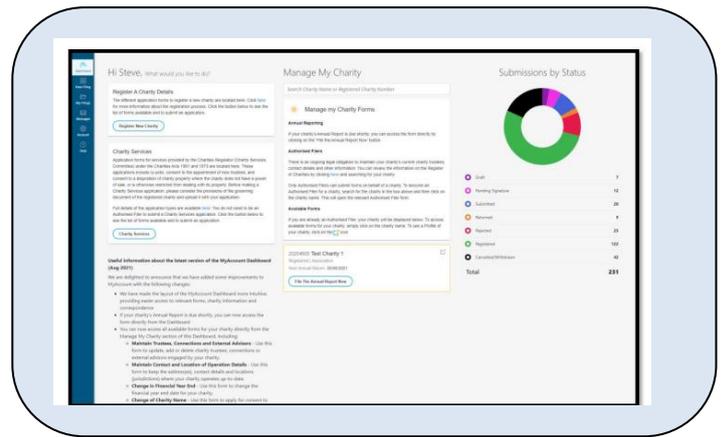
In this example the charity is a theatre company staging productions of new plays in its own theatre and nationwide

**Step 2** - select up to two primary classification groups from the drop-down list

**Step 3** - select up to two secondary classification groups from the next drop-down list

**Step 4** – select up to two sub-groups from the next drop down list

**Step 5** – Confirm and submit – once submitted, the Register of Charities will automatically update



1. Social and Community Services
2. Health
3. Housing and Community Development
4. Environment and Animals
5. Community relations, reconciliation, advocacy and civic responsibility
6. Philanthropy, Benevolence and Volunteering
7. Education and Research
8. Religion
9. Arts and Culture
10. International

- Arts and crafts
- History, heritage and culture
- Museum or library
- Film or media

- A place to view/appreciate arts or crafts
- Promoting participation in arts or crafts
- Festival or event

