

Press release: Charities 'missing vital opportunity' to show how they benefit the public

The Charity Commission has today (21 April 2017) published the [findings of its work to scrutinise charity accounts](#), finding that 54% of those reviewed did not meet the public benefit reporting requirement. The regulator says these charities are missing a vital opportunity to tell their story and explain their impact.

As part of its regular programme of charity accounts scrutiny, the regulator analysed a random sample of 107 charity accounts against 2 criteria:

- how charities are reporting on the public benefit requirement
- whether the accounts meet readers' needs

Separately, the Commission scrutinised a random sample of 109 accounts of charities with incomes of under £25k to examine their overall quality.

Public benefit

The Commission found that 54% of charities (58) did not meet the public benefit reporting requirement. Out of these charities, 13 failed the requirement as they did not describe the difference that their charity had made; 21 charities did not include the statement that they had complied with the public benefit requirements and read our guidance and 24 charities did not do either.

The report includes an example case study from the sample, demonstrating that it can be easy for trustees to get this right and explain succinctly and clearly how their work benefits the public and the difference that they make.

Nigel Davies, Head of Accountancy Services at the Charity Commission of England and Wales, said:

Many charities do a great job of explaining how their work benefits the public. But this review indicates that too many charities are missing out on an important opportunity to tell the public why their work matters, and what difference they are making. We know from wider research how important it is for donors and supporters to know how charities are spending their money. Your report and accounts say a lot about your charity's attitude to accountability and transparency and so don't miss out on this opportunity. The easiest way to improve the quality of your accounts and report is to use our templates; we know the charities that do use our templates produce accounts of much better quality.

Do charity annual reports and accounts meet the reader's needs?

The Commission also examined whether the charities' accounts meet basic user needs, based on a range of criteria, including whether the annual report explains the activities the charity had carried out during the year to meet its purposes and whether the accounts had been appropriately scrutinised in an audit or independent examination.

This work found that 75% of the accounts were of acceptable quality in meeting the basic needs of readers. There were some areas of particular strength; for example, all of the charities that required an audit had filed an audit report.

However, 25% (27 charities) did not meet the basic standard, for example because the accounts were inconsistent or not transparent.

Small charity accounts

The Commission found that of the 109 small charity accounts scrutinised, 55% were of acceptable quality ([see 'Notes to editors'](#)), indicating a possible slight improvement in the quality of reporting (47% was achieved in the previous 2 years).

The regulator found a range of reasons for some charities falling short of requirements; for example, 5 charities provided incomplete accounts that did not include information on their assets and liabilities.

The report finds that those charities that use the accounts templates often present accounts of a much higher quality, and is encouraging smaller charities to make use of the available templates.

The Commission says it has provided guidance to the trustees of the charities that did not submit accounts of acceptable quality and will be using opportunities, such as its quarterly newsletter CC News, to share the key lessons arising from its account scrutiny work with other charities.

The [full reports](#) are available on GOV.UK.

Ends

PR 33/17

Notes to editors

1. The report sets out the criteria used to determine acceptable quality.
2. [The Charity Commission](#) is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see our [annual report](#).
3. Search for charities on our [online register](#).

News story: Government publishes £1.2 billion plan to increase cycling and walking

The government has published its [£1.2 billion long-term plan to make cycling and walking the natural choice for shorter journeys](#).

The government wants cycling and walking to become the norm by 2040 and will target funding at innovative ways to encourage people onto a bike or to use their own 2 feet for shorter journeys.

Plans include specific objectives to double cycling, reduce cycling accidents and increase the proportion of 5 to 10 year-olds walking to school to 55% by 2025.

The £1.2 billion is allocated as follows:

- £50 million to provide cycling proficiency training for further 1.3 million children
- £101 million to improve cycling infrastructure and expand cycle routes between the city centres, local communities, and key employment and retail sites
- £85 million to make improvements to 200 sections of roads for cyclists
- £80 million for safety and awareness training for cyclists, extra secure cycle storage, bike repair, maintenance courses and road safety measures
- £389.5 million for councils to invest in walking and cycling schemes
- £476.4 million from local growth funding to support walking and cycling

In addition, the government is investing an extra:

- £5 million on improving cycle facilities at railway stations
- £1 million on Living Streets' outreach programmes to encourage children to walk to school
- £1 million on [Cycling UK's 'Big Bike Revival' scheme](#) which provides free bike maintenance and cycling classes

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

We are making cycling and walking more accessible to everyone because of the substantial health and environmental benefits – it will also be a boost for businesses because a fitter and healthier workforce is more productive.

We have already tripled spending on cycling since 2010 and we are now publishing a long-term investment plan because we are

absolutely committed to increasing levels of cycling and walking.

Transport Minister Andrew Jones said:

As the days are becoming longer and warmer we want to encourage people to make cycling and walking the natural choice for shorter journeys – improving people's health, reducing travel costs, cutting congestion and cleaning up the environment in the process.

Today we have set out our long-term approach to encourage more people to cycle or walk and overcome the barriers which stop them from doing so.

Joe Irvin, Chief Executive Living Streets said:

Publication of government's first ever statutory 'Cycling and walking investment strategy' is a historic moment. Making it easier for people to walk their everyday journeys will improve our health, economy and social welfare. We now need to turn good intentions into practical progress and help government step up to the new ambitions.

Paul Tuohy, Chief Executive of Cycling UK:

Cycling is a fantastic transport choice, helping you to stay active and healthy as part of your daily routine, and saving you money on travel costs. Cycling UK's Big Bike Revival will help tens of thousands of people back into cycling by getting your bikes checked over, fixed up and back into use. We are grateful to the Department for Transport for supporting this initiative for this, our third year of national activities to help get more of the UK cycling more often.

Xavier Brice, Chief Executive Sustrans, said:

The first ever 'Cycling and walking investment strategy' is a significant step forward by the government. There is an overwhelming body of evidence that demonstrates that investment in cycling and walking has many health, social and economic benefits and must be prioritised. The challenge now is to deliver the change needed locally and nationally.

Under the [Infrastructure Act 2015](#) , the government is required to set a 'Cycling and walking investment strategy' for England. This is the first of a series of shorter term, 5 year strategies to support the long-term ambition

to make walking and cycling the natural choice for shorter journeys by 2040.

News story: Defence Secretary announces £539 million investment in new missiles systems

The deal ensures our Armed Forces have the best equipment available to protect the new Queen Elizabeth Class Carriers and the extended fleet from current and future threats.

The half a billion-pound contracts will sustain over 130 jobs with MBDA in the UK, with missile modification and service support being carried out in Stevenage, Henlow, Bristol and Bolton.

Secretary of State, Sir Michael Fallon, said:

This substantial investment in missile systems is vital in protecting our ships and planes from the most complex global threats as our Armed Forces keep the UK safe.

Backed by our rising Defence budget, these contracts will sustain high skilled jobs across the UK and demonstrate that strong defence and a strong economy go hand in hand.

As part of a £41 million contract, the Meteor air-to-air missiles will arm the UK's F-35B Lightning II squadrons. It will provide the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy with a world beating missile that can engage with targets moving at huge speed and at a very long range. The weapon will enter service on Typhoon with the RAF in 2018 and the F-35B from 2024, and will be used on a range of missions including protecting the Queen Elizabeth Class Carriers.

Meteor missile fired from a fighter jet. Image courtesy of MBDA Systems.

Meanwhile, a £175 million in-service support contract for the anti-air Sea Viper weapon system will ensure that the Royal Navy's Type 45 Destroyers can continue to provide unparalleled protection from air attack to the extended fleet. Under the contract, the missiles will be maintained, repaired and overhauled as and when required to ensure continued capability. The Sea Viper missile defends ships against multiple threats, including missiles and fighter aircraft.

The final contract is a £323 million deal to purchase the next batch of cutting-edge air defence missiles for the British Army and Royal Navy,

offering increased capability at a lower cost. Designed and manufactured by MBDA UK at sites in Bolton, Stevenage and Henlow, the next-generation CAMM missile will provide the Armed Forces with missiles for use on sea and on land. CAMM has the capability to defend against anti-ship cruise missiles, aircraft and other highly sophisticated threats. Signalling our continued investment in Type 26 programme, CAMM will provide the anti-air defence capability on the new Type 26 Frigates for the Royal Navy and will also form part of the Sea Ceptor weapon system on the Type 23 Frigate and will also enhance the British Army's Ground Based Air Defence capability by replacing the in-service Rapier system.

Tony Douglas, Chief Executive Officer of Defence Equipment and Support, the MOD's procurement organisation, said:

Work on these cutting-edge missiles, which will help to protect the UK at home and abroad and secure jobs across the country, demonstrates the importance of Defence investment. That is why, working closely with our industry partners, we continue to drive innovation and value into everything we do; securing next generation equipment for our Armed Forces at the best possible value for the taxpayer.

Dave Armstrong, Managing Director of MBDA UK, added:

MBDA is delighted by the continued trust placed in us by the Ministry of Defence and the British military. The contracts announced today for Meteor, CAMM and Sea Viper will help protect all three UK Armed Services, providing them with new cutting-edge capabilities and ensuring their current systems remain relevant for the future. They will also help to secure hundreds of high-skilled people at MBDA UK and in the UK supply chain, maintaining the UK's manufacturing base and providing us with a platform for exports.

Press release: Northern Ireland (Ministerial Appointments and Regional Rates) Bill

Bill published to set a Regional Rate for Northern Ireland and allow a new Executive to be formed.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, has introduced legislation which would set a Regional Rate for Northern Ireland in 2017-18 as well as providing an extension to the period in which a new Executive could be formed.

Published this morning, the Bill will provide for the setting of a Northern Ireland Regional Rate, enabling household bills to be issued in their usual cycle of ten monthly payments. The rate for 2017-2018 will be increased in line with inflation. It would also remove the present legal barrier to the formation of an Executive, enabling any deal reached between the parties in the coming weeks to be implemented.

Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

Since the Northern Ireland Assembly election on 2 March our focus has been on re-establishing inclusive, devolved government.

The forthcoming UK General Election does not change that. This Bill will therefore enable an Executive to be formed in the coming days should an agreement be reached. However, if an agreement is not possible before the General Election, it is right that we provide flexibility for an incoming Government to act in the best interests of Northern Ireland and the space for the parties to conclude a deal.

This Bill gives the parties the legal authority to convene the assembly, appoint ministers and get on with the resumption of devolved government at any point up to 29 June. This is what the people of Northern Ireland voted for on 2 March, and should remain the focus in the weeks ahead.

[News story: Institute for Apprenticeships announces new appointments](#)

The Institute for Apprenticeships has appointed chairs for 15 route panels, and a panel of apprentices to advise the board.

The route panels are made up of industry experts and are responsible for

setting the standards of knowledge, skills and behaviours needed by employers for every occupation in England. The chairs will lead their groups in reviewing and recommending apprenticeship standards and assessment plans and advising on funding levels on behalf of the institute.

The panel of apprentices is made up of current or recent apprentices from a wide range of occupations and experiences from up and down the country. The panel will decide what issues to focus on and ensure the apprentice voice is heard within the decision making structure of the institute.

Chair of the Institute for Apprenticeships Antony Jenkins said:

"I'm delighted to be able to formally announce these appointments. For our panel chairs we've got individuals of superb calibre – a dynamic mix of experts in their field from a broad range of occupations. Their expertise will ensure the panels are run smoothly and that quality will be maintained across the system.

"Our panel of apprentices is something I am particularly proud of – a deeply impressive group of individuals who will ensure the needs of apprentices are truly reflected in the development of the apprenticeship programme."

The panel chairs are:

- agriculture, environment and animal care – Richard Self, Project Manager, Edge Careers and Agricultural Manager, Co-operatives UK
- business and administrative – Andrew Ground, CEO and co-founder of Tutorfair
- catering and hospitality – Alison Gilbert, Human Resources and Board Director, CH&Co
- childcare and education – Sir Nick Weller, Executive Principal, Dixons City Academy, Bradford
- construction – Tanja Smith, Technical Director, Gradon Architecture
- creative and design – Iain Smith OBE, Film Producer, Applecross Productions
- digital – Mark Sherwin, Managing Director, Global Digital Customer Services Lead, Accenture
- engineering and manufacturing – Dr Graham Honeyman CBE, Chief Executive at Sheffield Forgemasters
- hair and beauty – Suki Kalirai, Director, GKC Infocus Ltd and Qi Spa (Spa WMC Ltd)
- health and science – Kirk Lower, National Lead for Apprenticeships, Talent for Care, Widening Participation and Volunteering, Health Education England
- legal, finance and accounting – Mike Thompson, Director, Early Careers, Barclays
- protective services – Sir Jonathan Murphy, former Chief Constable Merseyside Police, Professor of Advanced Policing Studies, Liverpool John Moores University
- sales, marketing and procurement – Godfrey Moger, Station Director for Free Radio, Bauer Media
- social care – Sir Roger Singleton, Chair of the Independent Safeguarding

Authority and previously Chief Executive of Barnados

- transport and logistics – Michelle Nolan-McSweeney, Head of Training Strategy, Network Rail

The 11 members of the panel of apprentices are:

- Heeran Basi – SevernTrent
- Holly Broadhurst – JCB
- Lucille Gallaway – Barclays
- Adam Gymer – Pfizer UK
- Kara Halford – Dawn's Flower Box
- Becky King – National Physical Laboratory
- Kam Penglin – CT Skills
- Sanna Shabir – Atkins Global
- Adam Sharp – Sellafield
- Daniel Skinner – BAE Systems
- Poppy Wolfarth – Asset Training