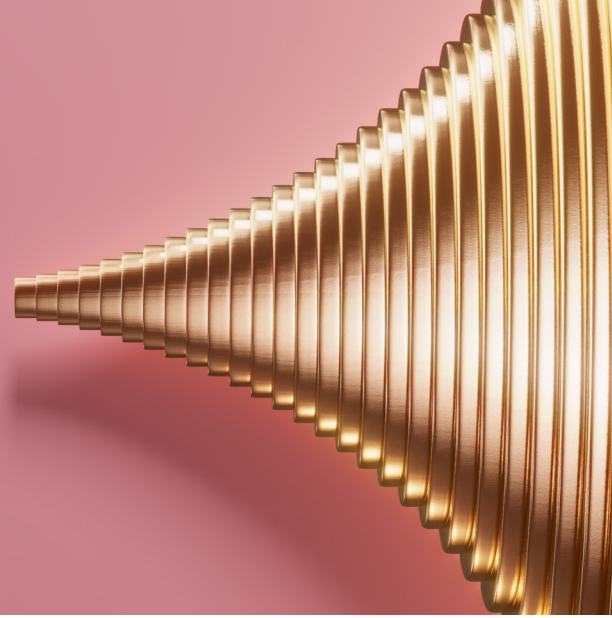


10 April 2026

## Social Purpose eNews



### Charity Commission publishes 2024 annual return analysis report

Charity sector compliance is on the rise, according to the **latest annual return analysis**. For financial years ending in 2024, a total of 110,756 charities were required to submit an annual return by 1 December 2025, and an impressive 96.58% met the deadline, up from 93.32% the previous year. The sector itself is also growing, with more than 171,000 charities now registered. Other key information highlighted included total gross income of £101.87b and total gross expenditure of £100.86b being reported, which shows the total sector margin of £1b compared to £701m in 2023.

It's noted that just over half of charities brought in more than they spent, though this trend was driven largely by organisations with incomes above £500,000.

### Smarter costing for charities: HaysMac and CFG launch a Know Your Cost Base guide

We're delighted to announce that we have just launched a new publication for the Social Purpose sector, developed alongside CFG, we've published a comprehensive guide to help charity finance professionals understand, calculate and apply an accurate cost base across organisations.

**Richard Weaver**, Partner at HaysMac, who co-authored **the publication** added: "A well-defined cost base underpins everything from pricing and budgeting to performance evaluation and reserves planning. Poorly defined approaches can distort decisions, especially in today's volatile economic environment.

Drawing on practical experience, industry feedback and established financial principles, this updated publication brings together conceptual clarity and hands on tools for day-to-day application. We're pleased to work with CFG to provide clear, practical guidance that bridges technical financial principles and day-to-day operational needs."



### The art of strategic collabs and mergers

Charities are being encouraged to take a more strategic approach to collaboration and mergers, according to new guidance from the Charity Finance Group.

In his recent article, [Steve Harper](#), Head of Social Purpose at HaysMac, highlights a range of partnership options, noting that while collaboration can boost impact and efficiency, success relies on clear goals, strong governance and cultural fit. Mergers, in particular, require careful planning and due diligence but can strengthen long-term resilience.

The key takeaway: done right, collaboration can be a powerful tool, but it's no quick fix. Read the full article [here](#).

### The Department for Education sets out plans to improve procurement

The Department for Education has published a new action plan aimed at strengthening partnerships with voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations. [The plan](#) sets out steps to widen access to procurement and grant opportunities, reduce barriers for smaller organisations, and increase VCSE involvement in delivering public services. It also highlights a focus on embedding social value and improving engagement with the sector. Positioned as an evolving strategy, the DfE says the plan will be refined over time to build a more inclusive and accessible commercial system.



### Arts Council England to streamline funding applications following critical review

Arts Council England has announced it will simplify its funding application processes following a critical review that flagged “unacceptably high” bureaucracy in its systems.

[The reforms](#), supported by up to £8 million from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, aim to reduce red tape and make funding and reporting easier for organisations across the sector.

Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy welcomed the move, saying changes will help broaden access and support a more inclusive arts landscape.

As part of the reforms, the government has stated they will work with ACE to develop a new fund for future artists and creatives with longer funding cycles of up to five years.

### MPs reject amendment for smaller charities exemption from pension salary sacrifice changes

Small charities won't get a break on pension reforms after MPs [rejected amendments](#) seeking an exemption. The vote means the new £2,000 cap on salary sacrifice pension contributions, coming in April 2029, will apply to smaller organisations just as it does to larger ones.

Critics warned the cap could add costs and extra admin for small charities already under pressure, but the government insists the changes create a fairer system and that most small employers won't be significantly affected.



## Red Nose Day 2026 smashes £30 Million target for Comic Relief

Red Nose Day 2026 has hit incredible highs with its fundraising records, **raising £30 million for Comic Relief**, marking the first time the event was livestreamed on YouTube. The total was revealed during a telethon on 21 March. Fundraisers across the UK, from schools to celebrity stunts, helped hit the total.

Although this is £4 million lower than last year's on-the-night total and over £8 million below the figure from two years ago, the charity has now raised an impressive £1.6 billion since its launch in 1985. The funds will continue to support people facing hardship both in the UK and around the world.



# Upcoming events programme

## Quarterly Charities Update

22 April 2026

10:00 – 11:30

Online

## Catholic Charity Conference 2026

07 May 2026

10:15 – 16:15

Church House Westminster

## SORP in Practice: Recap for Charities

21 May 2026

10:00 – 11:00

Online

## SORP in Practice: Recap for Further and Higher Education

03 June 2026

15:00 – 16:00

Online

## Quarterly Charities Update

02 July 2026

10:00 – 11:30

Online

Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Steve Harper at [sharper@haysmac.com](mailto:sharper@haysmac.com)

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