HaysMac

14 September 2026

Social Purpose eNews

Sector update

This month's Social Purpose eNews brings together some of the developments currently shaping the charity and wider not-for-profit sector. From imminent changes to charity accounting thresholds and the future of Gift Aid, to new safeguarding requirements and continued pressure on funding and costs, there is plenty for trustees, finance teams and senior leaders to keep on their radar.

Have your say on charity audit services

Charities are invited to take part in an important benchmarking survey exploring the strengths and weaknesses of audit services across the sector. The survey takes just a short time to complete, and all charities that complete it in full will be entered into a prize draw for a seasonal hamper and receive a copy of the results. The findings will be published in the December edition of Charity Finance and online at Civil Society. **Complete the survey** by Friday, 9 October.

New charity accounting and audit thresholds take effect this month

Charities should be preparing for **changes to accounting and reporting requirements** taking effect from 30 September 2026. The new thresholds will increase the income level at which accounts must be independently examined from £25,000 to £40,000, raise the threshold for when a professionally qualified Independent Examiner is required from £250,000 to £500,000, and increase the audit threshold from £1m to £1.5m. The changes also increase the asset threshold for audit and the income threshold for group accounts. The changes are intended to reduce administrative and compliance costs for smaller charities, while the new Charities SORP 2026 is already applying to reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2026.

New safeguarding rules change DBS requirements for some charity roles

From 1 September 2026, **the definition of 'regulated activity' with children has been changed**. This means that some people working or volunteering with children who were previously classed as out of regulated activity may now fall within the definition. For relevant roles, organisations may therefore be able to request an Enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred List information. Charities working with children should review role descriptions, volunteer arrangements and DBS processes to make sure their safeguarding framework reflects the new position.

Gift Aid campaign calls for a system fit for the digital age

The Charity Finance Group (CFG) has launched its **"Back the Future of Gift Aid" campaign**, calling on the government to modernise the Gift Aid system ahead of Gift Aid awareness day on Thursday 1 October. Gift Aid enables charities to claim an additional 25p from HMRC for every £1 donated by an eligible UK taxpayer, but the CFG argues that the current system remains reliant on processes designed for an earlier fundraising environment. The campaign calls for a simpler and more secure digital system involving charities, payment providers and fundraising platforms, with the aim of reducing unclaimed Gift Aid and freeing up staff time.

Legacies remain a major focus for charity income

Civil Society's **September issue of Charity Finance** highlights the growing importance of legacy income to the sector and answers questions about how the new Charities SORP provides clarity on recognising legacies (note: see below as we have a webinar on this). The issue also reports on charities' concerns about investment portfolio performance and the ongoing responsibilities surrounding pensions. For organisations with a significant legacy pipeline, the combination of fundraising strategy, income recognition and financial forecasting makes this an area worth keeping under regular review.

£47m funding package targets homelessness and rough sleeping

The Government has announced £47m of funding through the **Ending Homelessness in Communities Fund** for 2026 to 2029. The programme is aimed at small and medium-sized voluntary, community and faith sector charities and will support community-based services, day services and recovery support for people experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping. The funding is intended to put communities at the heart of efforts to prevent homelessness and strengthen local support networks, providing an important opportunity for organisations working directly with people at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

Banking continues to be a resilience issue for charities

The **Charity Finance Group's latest banking research** continues to highlight the practical challenges charities face when accessing banking services. CFG's 2026 survey involved more than 2,400 charity staff, trustees and volunteers and identifies issues including rising fees, reduced in-person services and difficulties accessing appropriate banking support. For finance teams and trustees, the findings are a useful reminder to consider banking as part of wider organisational resilience including mandates, segregation of duties, contingency arrangements and the ability to respond if a banking relationship becomes difficult to maintain.

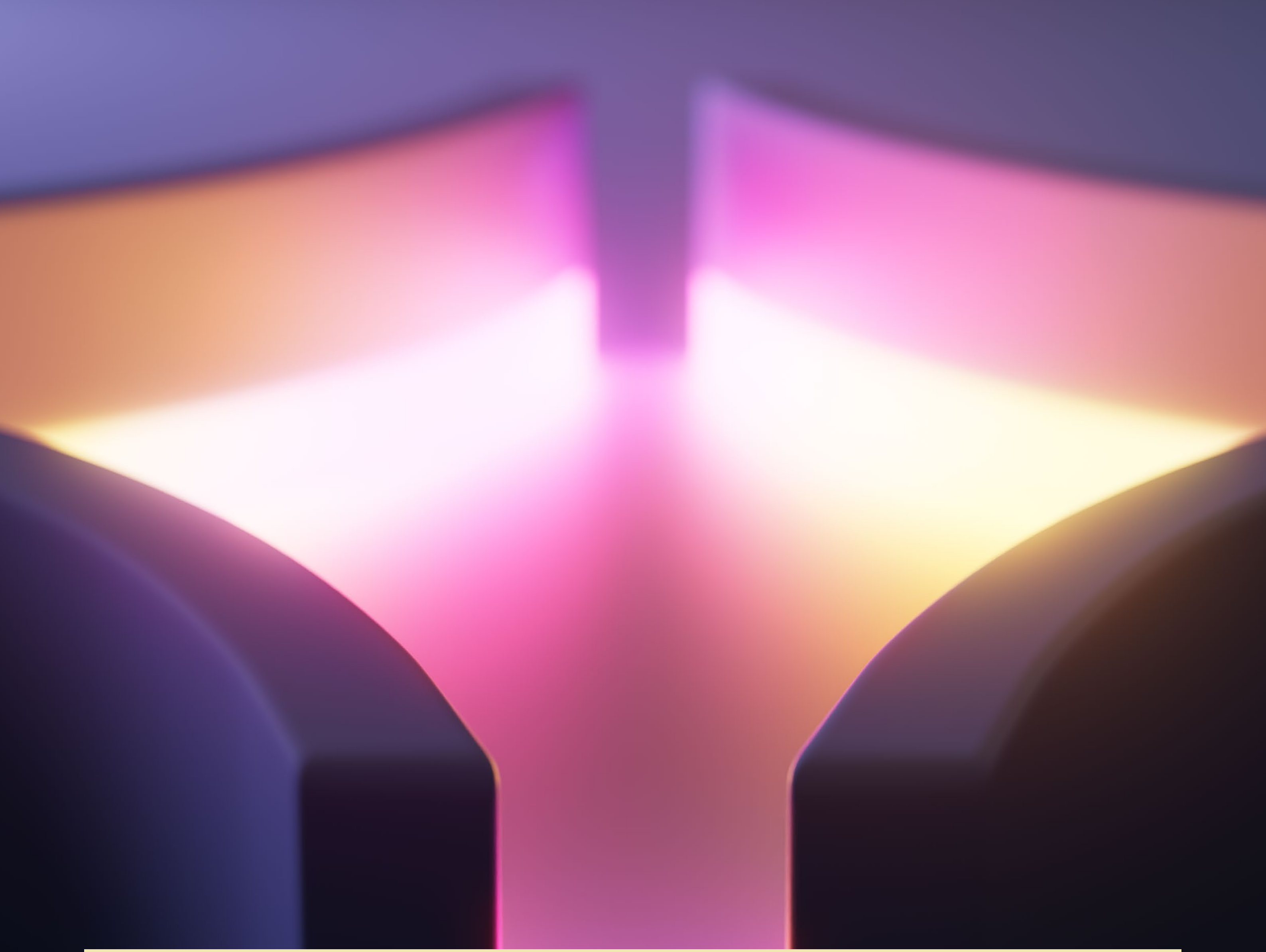
SORP: Trustees Report – HaysMac webinar

With SORP 2026 now in effect for relevant reporting periods, **HaysMac's next SORP webinar** takes place on 16 September 2026 and will focus on the new Trustees Report, the latest SORP developments and the practical implications for financial reporting and governance. Head to our **events page** to view all webinars within our SORP series.

And finally... check out the latest edition of our Arts and Culture Briefing!

Our autumn 2026 **Arts and Culture Briefing** serves as a practical guide for arts and culture organisations looking ahead: how to respond to technical change, protect income, manage people and suppliers, and explain financial and operational decisions clearly to trustees, funders, regulators and stakeholders. Read the full briefing **here**.

We are also running a series of webinars dedicated to the Arts and Culture sector focussing on Theatre Tax Relief, the latest SORP and Vat and Employment Tax changes. Sign up **here** to secure your place!



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