



Charities, social action & the voluntary sector: statistics

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Author: Richard Keen

Section Social and General Statistics

There are different estimates for the size, income and activities of the voluntary sector. According to the NCVO there were around 161,000 voluntary organisations in the UK in 2011/12. In contrast the Charity Commission estimates there were 164,000 charities in England and Wales as of 30 September 2014.

The most common activity of UK voluntary organisations was the provision of social services (18%), followed by cultural and recreational services (14%) and religious activities (8%).

The estimated income of the UK voluntary sector was £39 billion in 2011/12, according to the NCVO. Earned income contributed 54% of this total, voluntary income 39% and investments 7%. Total income in 2011/12 (£39 billion) fell, in real terms, by £1 billion on the previous year. Alternatively, according to the Charity Commission the estimated income of charities in England and Wales was £64 billion as of 30 September 2014. Two fifths of charities earned less than £10,000 per annum.

Social investment is the provision of repayable finance – such as various loan types, mortgages and other secured investments – to charities and social enterprises in order to fund social as well as financial returns. Social investment was central to the government's conception of the Big Society. In 2011/12 the market was valued at £202 million. 756 investments were made by 29 existing social banks or other investor types. Of these organisations, four social banks accounted for 82% of market value.

In 2013/14 the National Lottery granted £1.6 billion to its good-causes distributors. This included £336 million to the Arts, £358 million to Sports, £298 million to the Heritage Lottery Fund and £636 million to the Big Lottery Fund. According to the NCVO, the National Lottery accounted for about 1.3% of UK voluntary sector income in 2011/12.

75% of adults in England had, in 2013/14, given to charity in the four weeks prior to survey in 2013/14. Of those who had given to charity, 21% had given less than £4. Around £8.9 billion (23% of total income) was received from donations, gifts and legacies by the UK voluntary sector in 2011/12.

In 2013/14 approximately 48% of adults in England volunteered at least once a month on either a formal or informal basis.

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1 About the sources: the *NCVO UK Civil Society Almanac* and the *Charity Commission of England & Wales*

The [National Council of Voluntary Organisation's \(NCVO\) UK Civil Society Almanac](#) and the [Charity Commission](#) are the primary sources for data on the third sector in the UK.

The NCVO is an independent charitable company limited by guarantee to which organisations may apply for membership; NCVO currently has approximately 11,000 member organisations.¹ It has published the UK wide Civil Society Almanac on an annual basis since 1996. The Charity Commission is a government watchdog the duties and responsibilities of which are laid out in the [Charities Act 2011](#); among other duties, it is responsible for the registering of eligible organisations in England and Wales and ensuring charities meet their legal requirements.

Each of these sources will be referred to alternately throughout this note. Data from each is not, however, directly comparable: NCVO and Charity Commission statistics differ in both geographic extent and the way in which they identify charitable organisations. The net result of these differences is, to quote the NCVO Almanac, that “the Almanac reports more organisations but less income”.²

Specifically, the NCVO UK Civil Society Almanac:

- Applies the “general charities” definition to the register of charities in England & Wales and similar registers covering Scotland and Northern Ireland. This definition is developed by the Office for National Statistics.
- Excludes, according to the general charities definition, organisations that are inactive or subsidiaries of other organisations.

¹ National Council Voluntary Organisations; [About Us](#) (accessed 27th November 2014)

² National Council Voluntary Organisations; [Why are our estimates lower than the Charity Commission's figures?](#) (Accessed 27 November 2014)

- Excludes organisations that “belong elsewhere in civil society” such as housing associations, independent schools or faith groups.
- Excludes organisations that hold charitable status but are not independent of government.

In contrast the Charity Commission’s [Register of Charities](#) records all organisations that:

- Are recognised as charitable in law; and
- Hold most of their assets in England and/or Wales; or
- Have all or the majority of their trustees in England and/or Wales; or
- Are companies incorporated in England and/or Wales.

Statistics from both the NCVO and the Charity Commission are referred to below so to provide readers with a range and depth of statistical information.

2 Charities and the voluntary sector

This section provides statistics on the size and scope of the third sector. It does so by examining the number and geographic range of voluntary organisations and their activities.

2.1 Size of the sector

In 2011/12 there were approximately 161,000 voluntary organisations operating in the UK, according to the NCVO Almanac. **Figure 1** displays the number of voluntary organisations per region in 2011/12.

Figure 1: Distribution of voluntary organisations by region and UK country 2011/12

| Region | Number of organisations | Organisations per 1,000 people | Income | Spending | Assets |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| North East | 4,463 | 1.7 | 794.7 | 770.6 | 1,719.1 |
| North West | 13,209 | 1.9 | 2,489.6 | 2,347.4 | 5,003.3 |
| Yorkshire and the Humber | 10,259 | 1.9 | 1,516.6 | 1,490.6 | 4,181.5 |
| East Midlands | 10,782 | 2.4 | 1,454.2 | 1,412.5 | 2,702.9 |
| West Midlands | 11,351 | 2.0 | 1,922.0 | 1,831.0 | 3,729.6 |
| East of England | 16,534 | 2.8 | 2,312.8 | 2,208.8 | 4,810.0 |
| London | 23,633 | 2.9 | 16,087.7 | 15,794.7 | 54,407.8 |
| South East | 24,537 | 2.8 | 4,593.3 | 4,461.7 | 9,610.1 |
| South West | 17,306 | 3.3 | 2,967.6 | 2,848.1 | 6,845.0 |
| England | 132,074 | 2.5 | 34,138.5 | 33,165.4 | 93,009.3 |
| Wales | 7,272 | 2.4 | 1,088.7 | 1,024.5 | 2,250.9 |
| Scotland | 18,007 | 3.4 | 3,213.5 | 3,087.6 | 8,454.5 |
| Northern Ireland | 3,913 | 2.2 | 808.4 | 770.2 | 1,066.7 |
| UK | 161,266 | 2.6 | 39,249.1 | 38,047.7 | 104,781.4 |

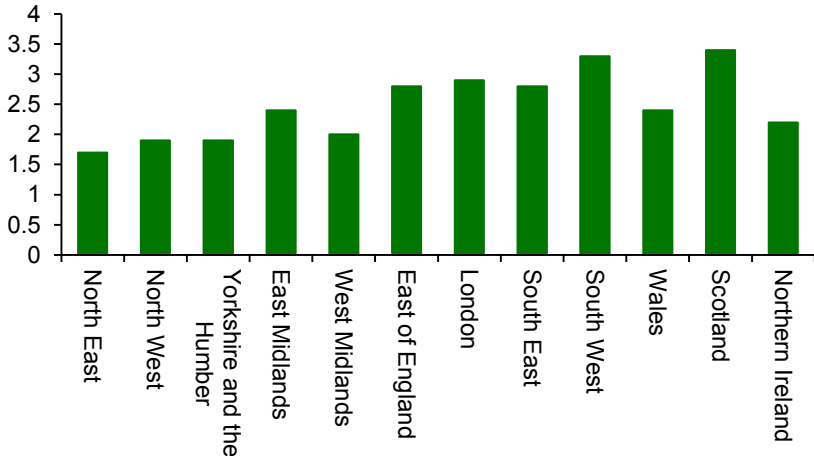
Source: [NCVO UK Civil Society Almanac 2014](#)

The South East has the highest number of any single region with approximately 24,000 organisations, 15.2% of the UK total. Northern Ireland has the lowest number of any single region with approximately 3,900 organisations (2.4%).

Figure 2 shows data on the number of voluntary organisations per 1,000 people within a given region of England and Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This data shows that, per person, voluntary organisations are most concentrated in Scotland where 3.4 organisations exist per 1,000 people. The UK average is approximately 2.6 organisations per 1,000 people.

Figure 2: UK organisations per 1,000 people per English regions and Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland 2011/12

%



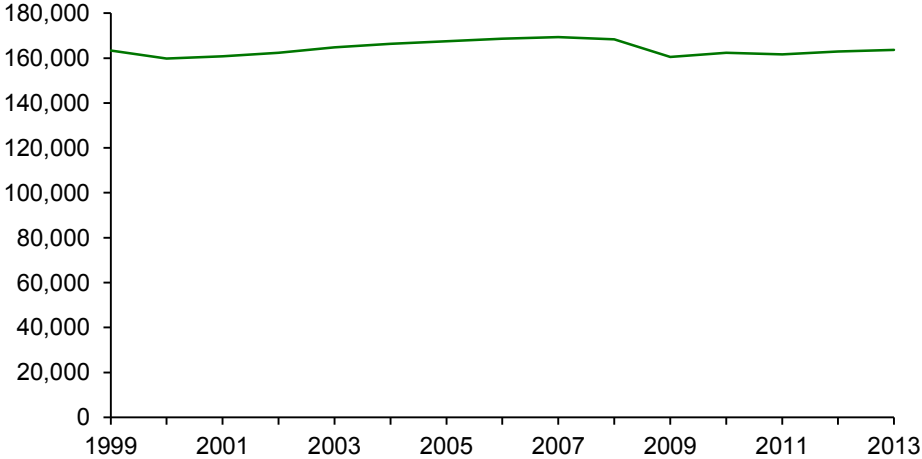
Source: [NCVO UK Civil Society Almanac 2014](#)

The Charity Commission provides alternative data on the number of charitable organisations in England and Wales. While the NCVO recorded around 139,000 organisations in England and Wales in 2011/12, as the year’s end of 2012 the Charity Commission’s Register of Charities recorded 163,000 organisations. This was an increase of approximately 1% (by roughly 1000 organisations) on the total recorded the previous year by the Register of Charities.³

Figure 3 displays data from the Charity Commission for the total number of charities in England & Wales 1999 – 2013. The total number of organisations in the Register of Charities fell by 4.7% (7,800) between 2008 and 2009. Despite this the number of charities in England and Wales has remained relatively constant since the new millennium. In 2013 there were around 164,000 charities, 1% fewer than a decade earlier. As of 30 September 2014 the Charity Commission recognised 164,000 charities.⁴

Figure 3: Total number of charities in England & Wales 1999 – 2013

As of 31 December of each year



Source: Charity Commission; [Charity Register Statistics](#)

³ Please refer to Section 1 for explanation of this disparity.

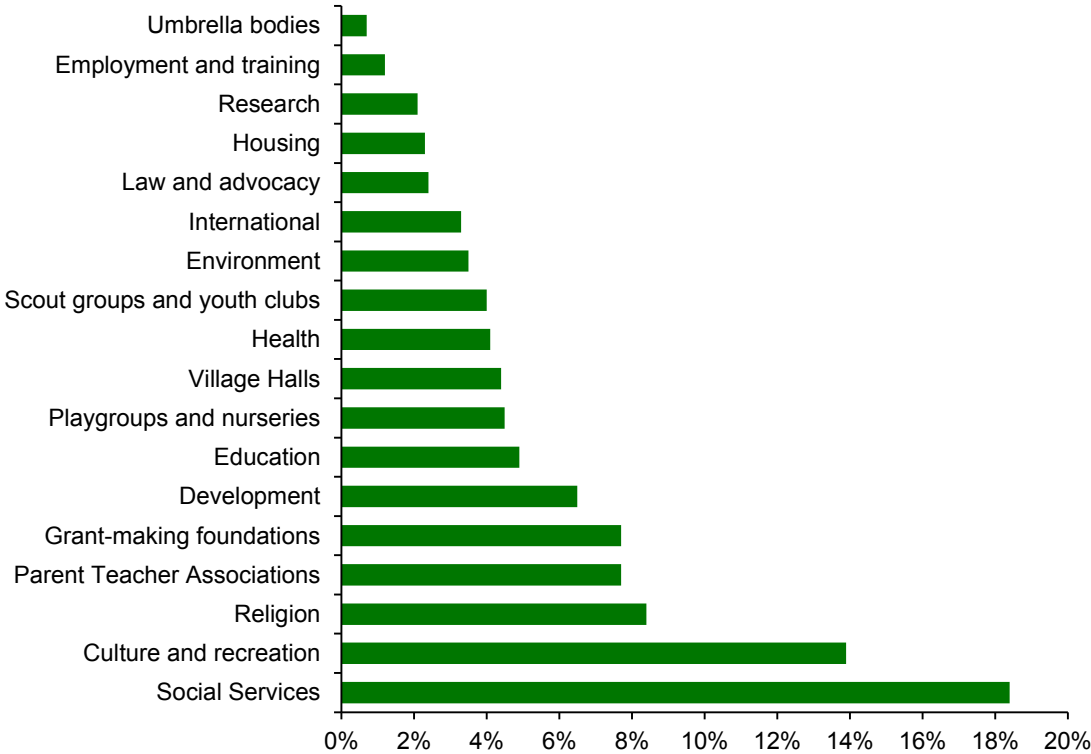
⁴ Charity Commission; [Recent charity register statistics: Charity Commission](#) (accessed 28 November 2014)

2.2 Areas of activity

The NCVO allocates voluntary organisations to discrete categories according to their principle area of economic activity using definitions created by the [International Classification of Non-profit Organisations \(ICNPO\)](#). **Figure 4** shows the distribution of voluntary organisations by area of activity in 2011/12.

In 2011/12 the primary economic activity of 18.4% (30,000) of voluntary organisations was the provision of social services; 13.9% (22,000) were engaged in culture and recreation; 8.4% (approximately 13,000) were categorised as religious. Excluding umbrella bodies, the category to make up the lowest proportion of total UK voluntary organisations by activity was employment and training (1.2% - 2,000 organisations).

Figure 4: Distribution of voluntary organisations by area of activity 2011/12



Source: [NCVO UK Civil Society Almanac 2014](#)

3 Funding & finance

This section examines the income of the voluntary sector together with the sector’s key income sources, including social investment, the National Lottery and charitable donations.

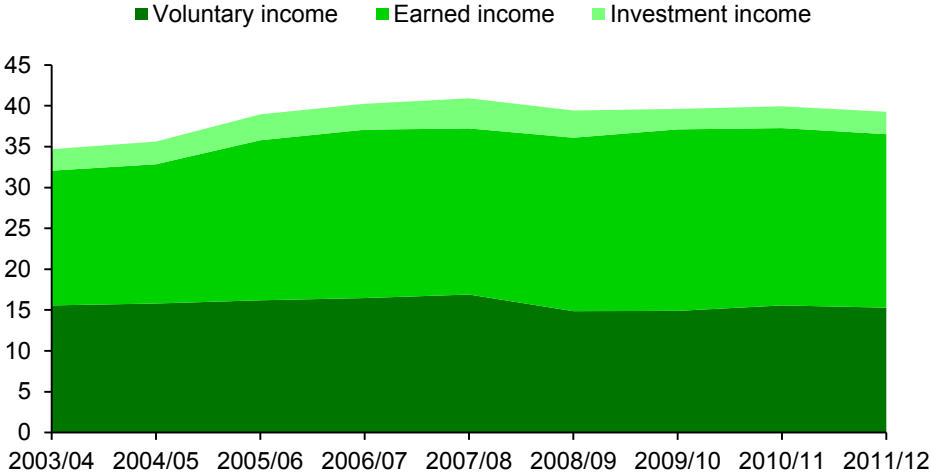
3.1 Income

Alternative measures of voluntary sector income are provided by the NCVO Almanac and the Charity Commission.

Figure 5 displays the earned, voluntary and investment income of the UK’s voluntary sector 2003/04 – 2011/12. The NCVO estimated total income of the voluntary sector in 2011/12 as approximately £39 billion. This comprised of £21 billion (54%) from earned income, £15 billion (39%) from voluntary income and £2.7 billion (7%) from investment. Total income peaked in real terms over the 2003/04 – 2011/12 period at approximately £41 billion in 2007/08.

Figure 5 UK wide voluntary sector annual voluntary, earned and investment income 2003/04 – 2011/12

£ Billions, April 2012 prices



Source: [NCVO UK Civil Society Almanac](#)

The Charity Commission provides an alternative measure of the income of the charity sector; see Section 1 for explanation as to how and why estimates from the Charity Commission and the NCVO differ.

Figure 6 provides statistics on the number of charities per income bracket in England and Wales as of 30 September 2014 according to the Charity Register.

Figure 6: Annual income of charities in England & Wales as of 30 September 2014

| Annual income bracket | Number of charities | % | Annual income £bn | % |
|------------------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------|
| £0 to £10,000 | 67,972 | 41.4 | 0.2 | 0.4 |
| £10,001 to £100,000 | 55,207 | 33.6 | 1.9 | 3.0 |
| £100,001 to £500,000 | 20,940 | 12.8 | 4.6 | 7.2 |
| £500,001 to £5,000,000 | 8,358 | 5.1 | 12.6 | 19.6 |
| £5,000,000 plus | 1,990 | 1.2 | 44.7 | 69.8 |
| Sub-total | 154,467 | 94.1 | 64.1 | 100 |
| Not yet known | 9,630 | 5.9 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 164,097 | 100 | 64.1 | 100 |

Source: [Recent charity register statistics](#); Charity Commission

3.2 National Lottery funding

The NCVO Almanac estimates that the voluntary sector received £492 million in funding from the lottery in 2011/12, 1.3% of the sector’s total income. This section focuses on grants made by the National Lottery to its Arts, Sport and Heritage distributors and the Big Lottery Fund. For detail on individual grants made by the National Lottery (and its distributors) or a breakdown of grants made over time per constituency, region or country see the Department of Culture, Media and Sport’s (DCMS) [Lottery Grants Search](#) tool.

The National Lottery Distribution Fund (NLDF) accounts detail the money raised by the National Lottery and passed on to its distributors.⁵ There are several ways in which the amount passed on to distributors may be measured reflecting the steps via which Lottery proceeds are accounted for and distributed. Data presented here is the *amount authorised for payment to distributing bodies*, as explained below.

As of 2013/14, proceeds from the National Lottery are divided between investment funds for the Arts, Sports, Heritage Lottery Fund and Big Lottery Fund on an annual basis according to the ratio 1:1:1:2 respectively. Operational costs of running the NLDF and the Gambling Commission are deducted from these proceeds via the same ratio; investment income is also divided in this manner. DCMS then authorises an amount payable to each of the NLDF distributors, resulting in a net increase/decrease to the balance available per distributor. Data presented below is the *amount authorised for payment to distributing bodies* having taken into account the division of Lottery proceeds, operational costs, investment income and the resulting increase/decrease in funds available to each distributor.

Figure 8 shows, in cash terms, the amount authorised for payment from the National Lottery Distribution Fund to the Arts, Sports, Heritage Lottery Fund and Big Lottery Fund. In 2013/14 approximately £336 million was granted to the Arts by the NLDF, £358 million to Sports, £298 million to the Heritage Lottery Fund and £636 million to the Big Lottery Fund.

In years 2008/09 – 2012/13 money was transferred from the NLDF to the Olympic Lottery Distribution Fund (OLDF) created to finance the London 2012 Olympic Games. Data displayed in **figure 8** are amounts authorised for payment by the NLDF to individual distributors having taken into account transfers to the OLDF.

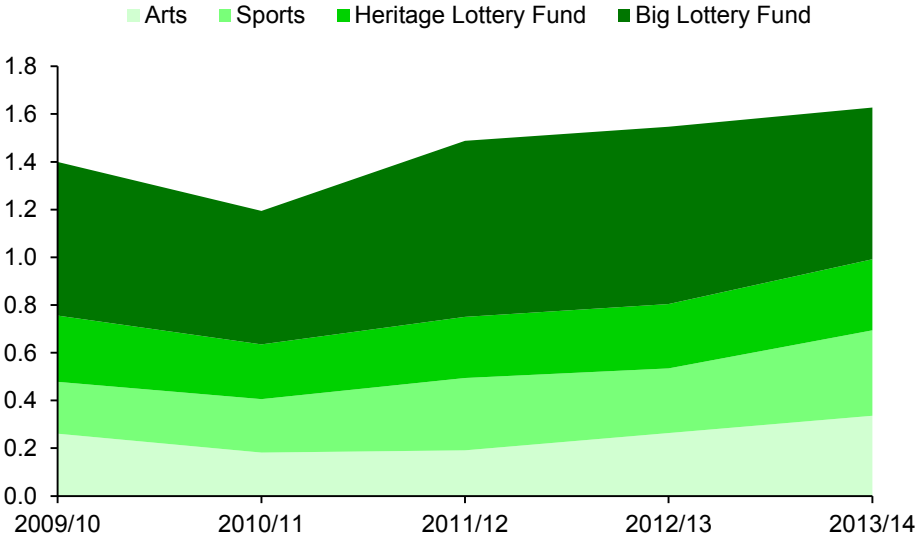
In total the NLDF committed to pay around £1.1 billion to the OLDF; approximately £638 million was transferred from funds otherwise allocated for the Big Lottery Fund, £161 million from funds allocated for the Heritage Lottery Fund, £124 million from funds allocated to Sports and £161 million from funds allocated to Arts.

Figure 9 displays the amount transferred to the OLDF 2008/09 – 2012/13.⁶

⁵ Distribution Fund accounts are available from separate webpages for each year since 2008/09, including: [2008/09](#), [2009/10](#), [2010/11](#), [2011/12](#), [2012/13](#) and [2013/14](#).

⁶ Further detail on the Olympic Lottery Distribution Fund is available from the Library Standard Note [Financing the London 2012 Olympic Games](#) (27 July 2010).

Figure 8: Amount authorised for payment to distributing bodies from the NLDF 2008/09 – 2013/14
 £ Billion cash terms



Source: National Lottery Distribution Fund accounts 2009/10 – 2013/14

Figure 9: Amount transferred to the Olympic Lottery Distribution Fund per NLDF Distributor 2009/09 – 2012/13
 £ 000s

| Distributor | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | 2012/13 |
|-----------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Arts | 10,847 | 43,387 | 43,388 | 43,388 | 20,208 |
| Sports | 8,374 | 33,495 | 33,495 | 33,495 | 15,601 |
| Heritage Lottery Fund | 10,847 | 43,389 | 43,388 | 43,388 | 20,208 |
| Big Lottery Fund | 42,932 | 171,729 | 171,729 | 171,729 | 79,983 |
| Total | 73,000 | 292,000 | 292,000 | 292,000 | 136,000 |

Source: National Lottery Distribution Fund accounts 2009/10 – 2013/14

3.3 Social investment

Social investment is the provision and use of repayable finance to generate social as well as financial returns, central to Prime Minister David Cameron’s conception of the [Big Society](#). Launched in 2011, the Government paper [Growing the Social Investment Market: A vision and strategy](#) detailed that:

We want to make it easier for social ventures to access the capital and advice they need to grow, unlocking the potential to improve more lives. So at the heart of our vision is nothing less than a new ‘third pillar’ of finance for social ventures, to sit alongside traditional giving and funds from the state.... Our vision calls for the creation of a new ‘asset class’ of social investment to connect social ventures with mainstream capital.⁷

⁷ HM Government; [Growing the Social Investment Market: A vision and strategy](#) (February 2011); page 17

Big Society Capital, the 'Big Society Bank', was subsequently founded in order to grow the social investment market and the number of investors operating within it.⁸

Figure 7 shows data on the value and volume of the social investment market as reported by the July 2013 paper *Growing the Social Investment Market: The Landscape and Economic Impact*.

Figure 7: Value and volume of the UK social investments by SIFI type 2011/12

| Type of SIFI | Value £m | % | Average investment £000s | Number | % |
|--------------|------------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|------------|
| Social Bank | 166 | 82 | 723 | 229 | 30 |
| Large SIFI | 30 | 15 | 71 | 427 | 56 |
| Small SIFI | 5 | 3 | 56 | 109 | 14 |
| Total | 202 | 100 | 264 | 765 | 100 |

Source:
City of London Economic Department; *Growing the Social Investment Market: the Landscape and Economic Impact* (July 2013)

Notes:
1 – SIFI: Social Investment Finance Intermediary
2 – 'Large' SIFIs are those investing a total greater than £1 million.

In 2011/12 the social investment market was valued at £202million. 756 investments were made by Social Investment Finance Intermediaries. 29 UK SIFIs were active over this period. The market remains highly concentrated: Four social banks account for 82% of the social investment market by value in 2011/12 but 30% of the total number of investments only. 9 large SIFIs account for 15% of the market by value and 56% of the total number of investments. 90.2% of all social investments by value made in 2011/12 were secured loans or mortgages.

3.4 Charitable donations

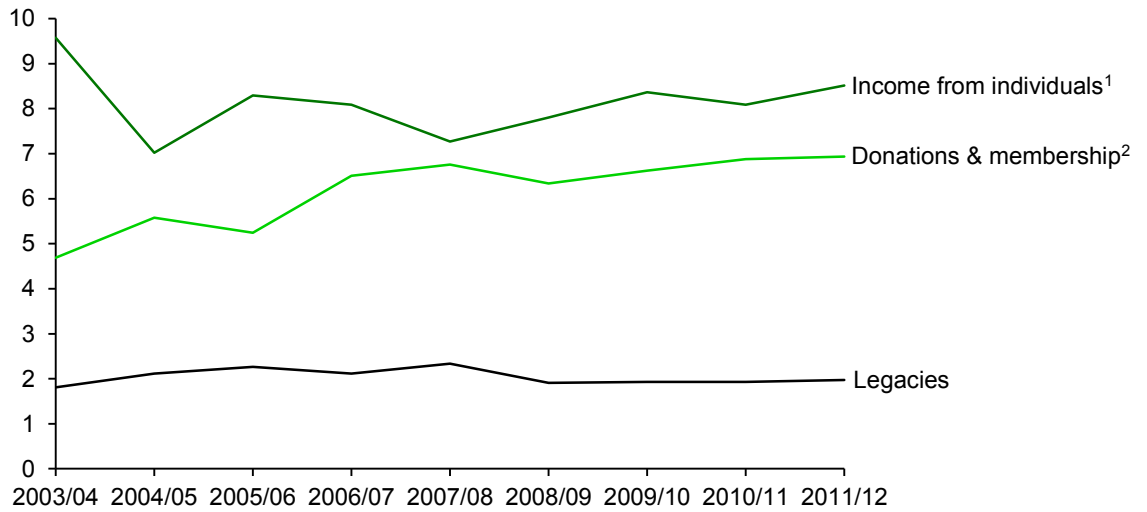
Individuals are the voluntary sector's single biggest source of income, according to the NCVO. In 2011/12 individuals – including money raised via donations, memberships, legacies, fundraising and charitable trading - accounted for £17.4 billion (44%) of the sector's total income. Approximately £8.9 billion (23%) of total income was from donations, gifts and legacies.

Figure 10 displays annual voluntary sector income from individuals for the years 2003/04 – 2011/12. Data is broken down by earned income, donated income and legacies.

⁸ See the House of Commons Library Standard Note SN05876 *Big Society Bank* (13 June 2014)

Figure 10: Voluntary sector income from individuals 2003/04 - 2011/12

£ Billions, April 2012 prices



Source: [NCVO UK Civil Society Almanac 2014](#)

Notes

1 – Including fundraising by charities where benefit is received in return, charity shop turnover, sales of merchandise, raffles and lotteries, fees for fundraising events, fees for services provided & rent from property

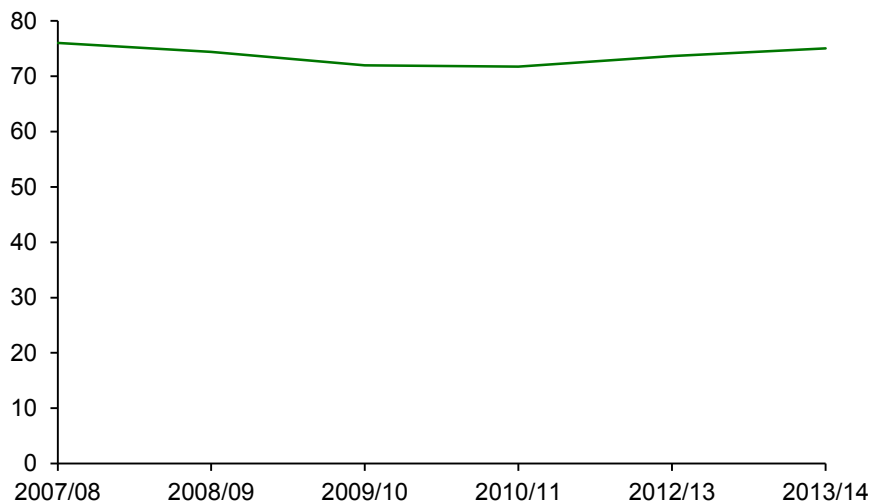
2 – Individual donations (gross, including Gift Aid reclaimed) and membership subscriptions without significant benefits

The Cabinet Office [Community Life Survey](#), first undertaken in 2012, provides further information on individual charitable giving; data for the years 2001 – 2011 is available from the [Citizenship Survey](#) (now amalgamated in to the Community Life Survey).

Figure 11 shows the percentage of adults in England to have given to charity in the 4 weeks prior to survey for years 2007/08 – 2013/14. In 2013/14 75% of individuals had given to charity in the four weeks prior to survey, a slight fall from 76% in 2007/08. Frequency of individual charitable giving was at its lowest (72%) in 2009/10 and 2010/11.

Figure 11: Percentage of adults in England to have given to charity in 4 weeks prior to survey, selected years 2007/08 – 2013/14

%



Source: Cabinet Office; [Community Life Survey](#) & [Citizenship Survey](#)

In each year 2008/09 – 2013/14 men were on average 7% less likely to have given to charity in the four weeks prior to interview than women. Of those individuals to have given to charity in the four weeks prior to interview, in 2013/14 21% had given less than £4 and 12% over £50.

4 Volunteering

In 2013/14 48% of adults in England volunteered at least once a month on either a formal or informal basis, according to the Cabinet Office *Community Life Survey*. This was a rise from 41% in 2010/11, taking volunteering rates back to those of 2007/08 (48%).

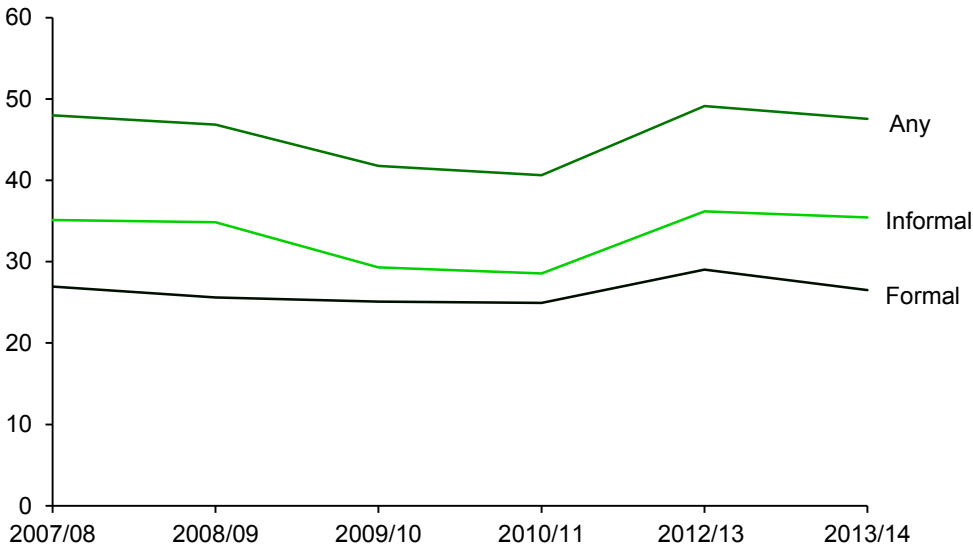
Rates of informal volunteering in 2013/14 (35%) fell slightly from a high in 2012/13 but remain unchanged from 2007/08. Rates of formal volunteering in 2013/14 (27%) likewise fell slightly from 2012/13 but remain unchanged from 2007/08.

Figure 12 provides data on estimated volunteering rates in England 2007/08 – 2013/14.

Informal volunteering at least once a month is highest among 16 to 25 year olds (42%). Formal volunteering at least once a month is highest among 65 to 74 years olds (32%).

Figure 12: Informal and formal participation of adults aged 16 & over in England in voluntary activities at least once a month 2007/08 – 2013/14

%



Sources:
 For years 2007/08 – 2010/11: *Citizenship Survey*
 For years 2012/13 – 2013/14: *Community Life Survey*

Notes:
 1 – ‘Formal volunteering’ includes, among other examples, activities such as sports coaching, running of social clubs, trade union activity and education for adults.
 2 – ‘Informal volunteering’ includes, among other examples, baby-sitting, household chores on an informal basis and befriending elderly or vulnerable persons.