



Parliamentary Briefing

Lord Singh of Wimbledon to ask Her Majesty's government what assessment they have made of the role of religion in society in the United Kingdom

The Charity Commission is the independent regulator and registrar of charities in England and Wales. Our role is to register charities, to ensure charity trustees understand their duties under charity law, and to help the public hold charities accountable.

Religious charities – facts and figures

- Nearly 20% of charities currently on the register are for the advancement of religion (as at November 2012)
- Many more charities have their roots in a faith ethos
- The beneficiaries of faith charities can be counted in their millions
- The Commission conducted an analysis of religious charities on the register in 2008. This found a breakdown by faith as follows:

Faith denomination	Number of charities
Christian	24,529
Jewish	2,387
Muslim	1,398
Hindu	352
Buddhist	249
Sikh	237
Inter faith	200
Baha'i	79
Jain	32
Ravidassi	20
Zoroastrian	12
Total	29,495 (18% of total registered charities as at 2008)

- The Charity Commission registers many hundreds of charities for the advancement of religion every year
- These include formerly excepted charities required to register for the first time as a result of the 2006 Charities Act. Since the programme began in 2009, the Commission has registered:
 - 2165 Anglican PCCs
 - 613 Methodist charities
 - 121 United Reformed Church charities
 - 571 Baptist Union charities
 - 70 Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches
 - 65 Church of Wales PCCs
- The average registration time for these organisations is 48 hours

Charity Commission engagement with faith charities

- The Commission has close relations with all major faith groups and individual contacts at denominational level for the formerly excepted charities
- The **consultation process** for our guidance on the advancement of religion included three multi-faith discussion groups held in Sept 2006, October 2007 (as we were preparing the guidance for consultation) and in March 2010 as a follow-up from the publication of the guidance in December 2008 to see how charities advancing religion were getting on with the guidance and with reporting on public benefit
- The Commission also ran a **Faith and Social Cohesion Unit**, producing guidance and running outreach events for many charities
- As part of this work, the Commission established a **faith advisory group** representing the Roman Catholic Church of England and Wales, the Church of England and Independent Churches, as well as Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism

Resources for faith charities

- The Charity Commission has **guidance for faith charities** on our website here: www.charity-commission.gov.uk/Charity_requirements_guidance/Specialist_guidance/Faith/default.aspx. This includes:
 - guidance on aspects of law and good practice relevant to faith-based charities
 - guidance (in various languages) on registering as a charity
 - accounting and reporting guidance
 - research and consultation findings
 - specialist guidance for PCCs
- The Commission's **public benefit guidance** illustrates a great deal of ways in which charities can advance religion for public benefit: www.charity-commission.gov.uk/Charity_requirements_guidance/Charity_essentials/Public_benefit/pbreligion.aspx.

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