

Key Sector Stats 2023

For the full data sets see: scvo.scot/research/facts-figures



46,500+ voluntary organisations
active in Scotland in 2023



In 2022 the voluntary sector in
Scotland had a turnover of **£9.2 billion**



In 2022 sector spending was
£8.8 billion, up nearly £1bn on 2021



Assets worth **£39 billion** managed by
Scottish voluntary organisations



Over 1 million people in Scotland
volunteer with organisations or groups



Scotland's voluntary sector employs
133,000+ paid staff - 5% of the
Scottish workforce

Key figures

- **Over 46,500** charities, community groups and social enterprises are known to be active in Scotland.
 - This includes 23,600 Scottish charities and over 1,000 UK-wide charities operating in Scotland.
 - The figure also includes over 20,000 community groups not registered as charities.
 - For every 10 registered charities there are a further 8 community groups.
 - Over 6,000 of the sector's 46,000+ organisations are also social enterprises – for more info see the [Social Enterprises in Scotland Census](#)

- **89% of voluntary organisations are local**
80% of Scottish charities and 98% of community groups are local.
- **36% of voluntary organisations are based in rural or remote areas**
Charities and community groups play a particularly important role in rural areas, with more organisations per head of population than in urban areas.

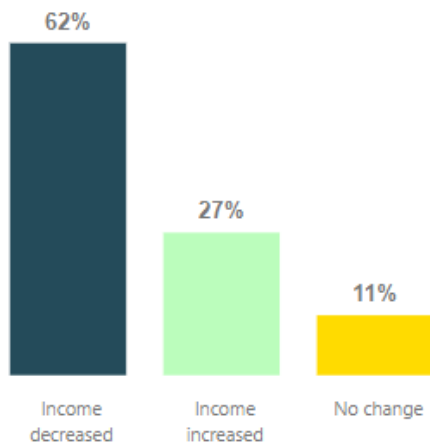
Finances and growth

- **Scottish voluntary sector income in 2021/22 was £9.2 billion**
 - Scottish charities **£7.8 billion**
 - UK-wide charities' Scottish activities **£1.4 billion**
 - Scottish Credit Unions **£49 million**
- **Scottish voluntary sector expenditure in 2021/22 was £8.8 billion**
- The Scottish charity sector saw a nominal (i.e. not adjusted for inflation) rise in overall income between 2021 and 2022 of £560m, or 7.8%.
Adjusting for inflation¹, real income growth was just over 4%.
- One **third** of the nominal rise in income was due to continued growth in the Housing sector.
- A further **third** of the rise was due to a recovery in the financial situation of Culture & Sport sector, which was hit harder by the pandemic than any other sub-sector.
- 53% of Scottish charities experienced an increase in income in 2022, with many rallying after the suppressing effects of the Covid pandemic although many saw very modest growth below the rate of inflation.
- 31% of Scottish charities saw **incomes decrease** between 2021 and 2022, down from 68% in 2020/21 during the height of Covid.
- 64% of Scottish charities **increased their spending**, rising to 70%-80% for larger charities. This is a big change from 2020/21, when 72% of Scottish charities decreased expenditure.
- Around 1/2 of small charities and 1/3 of large charities had a deficit in 2022.

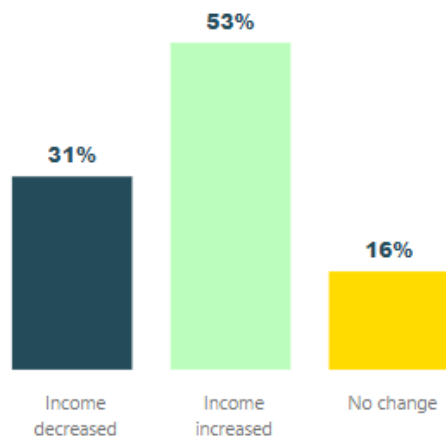
¹ CPI inflation rate for April 2021 - March 2022 = 3.66%.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/consumerpriceinflation/january2024>

Income changes 2020 to 2021 (% of orgs experi...

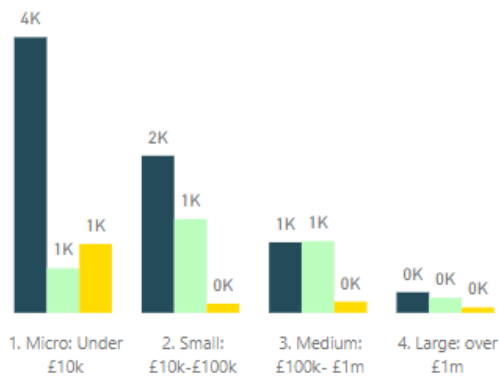


Income changes 2021 to 2022 (% of org...



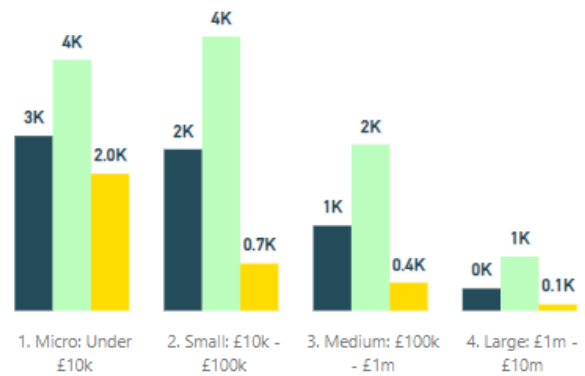
Income changes 2020 to 2021 (no. of orgs experienci...

Income Change ● Income decreased ● Income increased ● No change



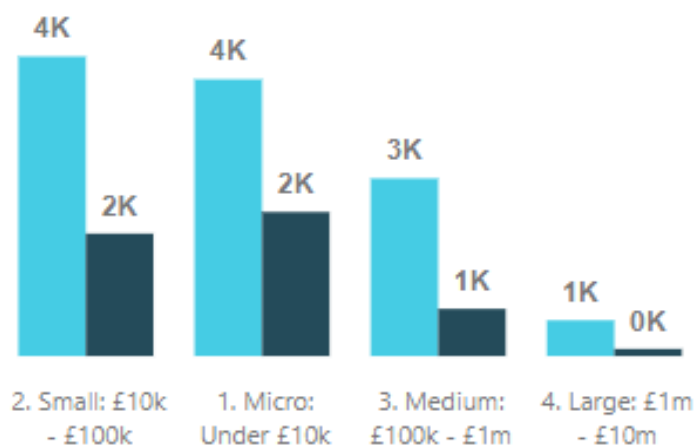
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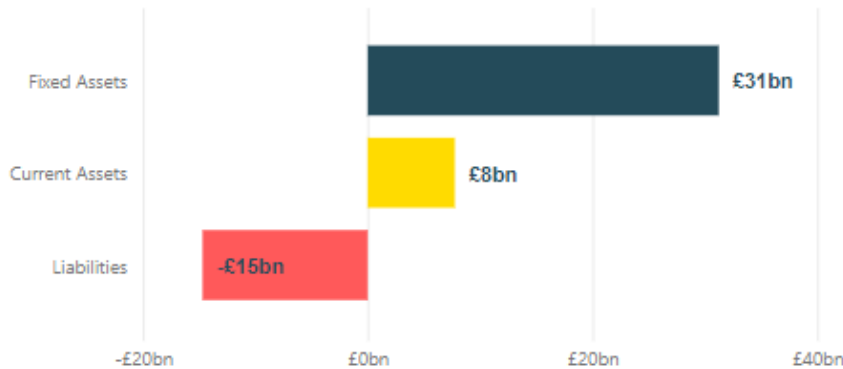
Expenditure changes 2021 to 2022

Spend change ● Spend increased ● Spend decreased



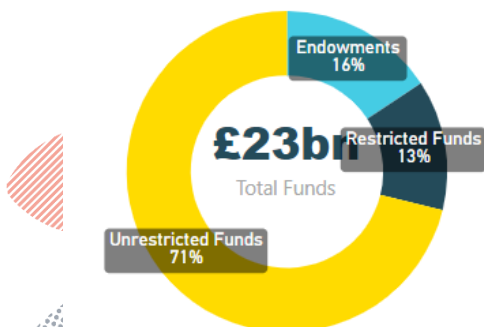
Assets and reserves

Total Assets by Asset type



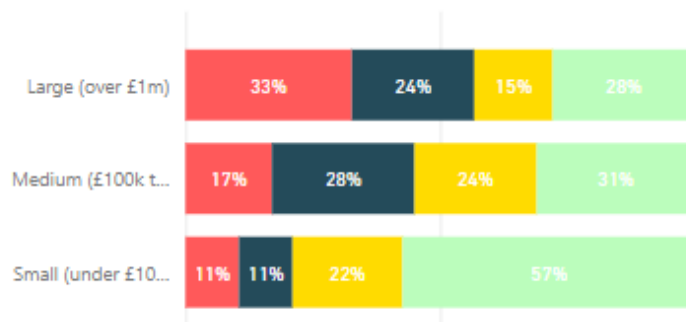
- The majority of the sector's funds and assets are held by a small number of large charities, eg housing associations and grant-making trusts.
- The sector now manages Total Assets of £39 billion, up from £30bn in 2018.
- Net Assets held by the sector are now worth £24 billion, having more than doubled over the last decade, up from £9bn in 2011 .
- Around £31billion of the sector's assets are made up of fixed assets such as buildings, up from £25billion in 2018.
- Almost half of the sector's fixed assets are managed by just 140 housing associations.
- The rest of the voluntary manages around £15bn worth of fixed assets, of which around 2/3rd is in the form of investments mainly held by grant-giving trusts, and 1/3rd is made up of tangible fixed assets such as office buildings, village halls, theatres, land, and leisure facilities etc.
- 71% of the sectors funds are Unrestricted, meaning there is flexibility in how they can be used.
- 29% of funds are Restricted Funds or Endowment Funds, which means that there are conditions attached to how the charity can use them. These funds include bequests to be spent on a specific issue or funds given for a specific purpose eg building a hospice, or land and heritage properties which cannot be sold on.
- In 2021, 11% of organisations – including many large charities - held less than 3 months expenditure in unrestricted reserves, but most organisations still seem to have healthy reserves.

Funds 2021



Months of expenditure in unrestricted reserves 2021

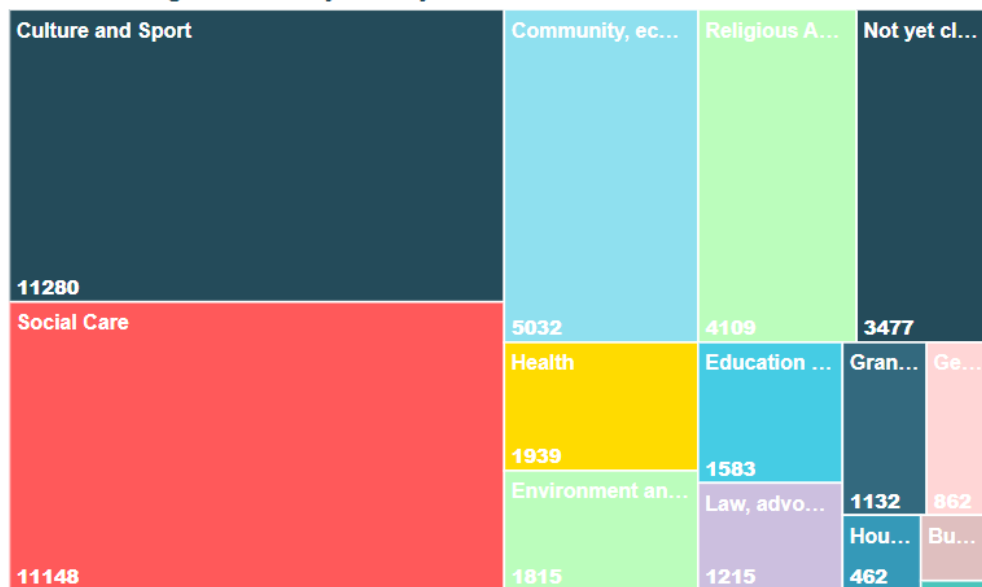
● Less than 3 months ● 3-6 months ● 6-12 months ● More than 12 months



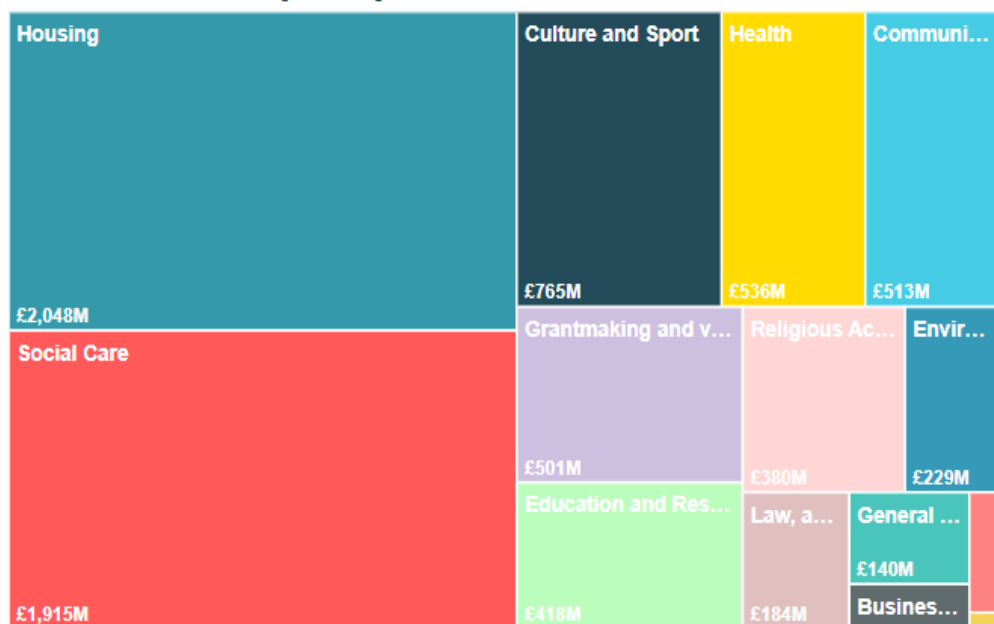
Size and shape

- Small charities (Under £100k and new charities) make up 80% of the charity sector, but account for only 4% of its annual turnover – they have a large social impact but only a small financial footprint.
- Large charities with incomes over £1m make up only 3.5% of the sector but these 843 charities account for 80% of the sector's annual income.
- Over half of all voluntary organisations are involved in Social Care, Culture and Sport, or Community Development activities.
- Social Care and Housing account for half the Scottish charity sector's income (£4bn of £7.8bn) despite the housing sector being made up of less than 500 organisations.

Number of Organisations by Activity



Distribution of Income by Activity



People

- 1,000,000+ formal volunteers² supported activities in 2020.
- 22% of adults in Scotland took part in formal volunteering in 2022³. This is down from 26% in 2018.
- Volunteer Scotland estimate that in 2018 volunteering contributed £5.5 billion to the local economy - £2.3bn from formal volunteering and £3.2bn from informal volunteering⁴.
- 28% of Scottish charities employ paid staff while the remainder rely on unpaid volunteers.
- The total number of people employed by charities and the wider voluntary sector in Scotland is estimated to be over **133,000 paid staff**.
- Scottish charities employed **115,600 paid staff** in 2022
- 5% of Scotland's 2.65m workers are employed in the voluntary sector.
- Women made up 64.5% of the sector's workforce in 2021 – similar to the public sector, but far higher than the private sector.
- 37% of the sector's employees work part-time – this is higher than both the public (28%) and private sector (25%).
- 23% of sector employees have a disability based on the Equality Act definition - this is significantly higher than the public (14%) and private sector (13%).
- 6.3% of sector workers were paid below the real Living Wage in 2022⁵, down from 14.7% in 2021.

Appendices

² Based on 22% of the Scottish adult population (16 years+) around 1,005,000 people formally volunteered in 2022.

³ See [The Scottish Household Survey 2022](#) and [Volunteer Scotland's analysis of the Household Survey](#).

⁴ <https://www.volunteerscotland.net/research-evaluation/national-volunteering-profile>

⁵ <https://www.livingwage.org.uk/all-work-and-low-pay%3F-third-sector-and-real-living-wage> and <https://www.gov.scot/publications/annual-survey-of-hours-and-earnings-2022/>

Number of organisations

Voluntary Sector in Scotland in 2023	Number of Organisations
Scottish charities ⁶	23,604
UK-wide voluntary sector charities operating in Scotland	1,263
Community groups without charitable status ⁷	19,489
Community Amateur Sports Clubs ⁸ (CASCs)	553
Community Interest Companies limited by guarantee without shares ⁹	1,109
Credit Unions ¹⁰	83
Social Enterprises not covered by the categories above ¹¹	400
Total charities, voluntary groups and social enterprises	46,519

ICNPO field of work	Charities	Income	Staff
Social Care	6,411	£1,915 m	49,881
Culture and Sport	4,592	£765 m	11,128
Religious Activities	3,305	£380 m	5,543
Community, economic and social development	3,062	£513 m	8,746
Education and Research	1,156	£418 m	4,831
Health	1,061	£536 m	11,811
Environment and Animals	894	£229 m	2,834
Grantmaking and volunteering	859	£501 m	939
General charitable purpose	620	£140 m	472
Not yet classified	680	£7 m	355
Law, advocacy and civic organisations	553	£184 m	3,284
Housing	198	£2,048 m	14,234
Business and professional associations	158	£68 m	739
Umbrella bodies	55	£51 m	808
Total	23,604	£7,756 m	115,605

⁶ The figure of 23,604 Scottish charities and the following income and staffing data excludes public bodies (NDPBs) and formal education providers such as universities and colleges, with 133 charities excluded.

⁷ Data from Third Sector Interfaces through shared MILO database: [Community Groups in Scotland 2022](#)

⁸ CASC data from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-amateur-sports-clubs-casc-registered-with-hmrc-2>. The list of registered CASCs shows 564 CASCs based in Scotland.

⁹ Data from CIC Regulator [Annual Report 2020](#) and Companies House [register](#)

¹⁰ <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/statistics/credit-union/2022/2022>

¹¹ Estimate based on data from [Social Enterprise Census 2019](#)

Paid staff

Voluntary Sector in Scotland in 2022	Paid staff headcount
Scottish voluntary sector charities	115,600
UK-wide voluntary sector charities operating in Scotland ¹²	Estimate c. 14,600*
Scottish voluntary groups without charitable status	No data
Scottish Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs)	No data
Scottish Community Interest Companies (CICs)	Estimate c. 2,500 *data to follow
Credit Unions	420
Total	133,120*

- Scottish charities employed 115,600 paid staff in 2022 (headcount).
- A further 14,600 staff are estimated to be employed in Scotland by UK-wide charities, taking the total number of charity employees in Scotland to 130,200.
- No data currently available on paid staff of community groups without charitable status or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs). However, they are mostly assumed to be small with no or few staff.
- Credit unions employ 420 staff.
- An estimated 2,500+ are employed by Community Interest Companies (CICs) taking the total number of employees up to 133,120 paid employees (headcount).¹³

SME staffing bands	Number of Scottish charities per band	Number of staff within each band
LARGE 250+ staff	60	41,271
MEDIUM 51 to 249 staff	298	30,894
SMALL 10 to 49 staff	1,363	27,686
MICRO 1 to 9 staff	4,928	15,754
MICRO no staff	16,955	-
TOTAL	23,604	115,605

¹² Conservative estimate of 8% of the 170,500 staff employed by UK-wide voluntary sector charities, based on a sample of annual reports carried out in 2015 which suggested between 8 to 12% of staff of cross-border charities are employed in Scotland. 63% of Cross-border charities report had staff in Scotland in 2012 – see [OSCR report](#).

¹³ Data on CIC employees is published in individual annual accounts on Companies House but no overall figure for Scotland currently available. Based on a random sample of 80+ CIC accounts, 60% employed staff with an average headcount of 3.5 employees in 2020/21.

Volunteers

	Formal Volunteers Participation rate	Estimated number of formal volunteers in 2020
2018	26%	1,182,796
2022	22%	c. 1,005,000

Volunteering data from Volunteer Scotland¹⁴ and Scottish Household Survey 2018 and 2022¹⁵

Income and Expenditure

Voluntary Sector in Scotland in 2021/22	£ Income	£ Expenditure
Scottish voluntary sector charities	£7,755,501,000	£7,440,942,000
UK-wide charities operating in Scotland (estimate based on 10% of UK turnover and spend ¹⁶)	£1,419,680,000	£1,378,460,000
Credit Unions in Scotland	£43,444,000	£37,262,000
Scottish voluntary groups without charitable status	No data	No data
Scottish Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs)	No data	No data
Scottish Community Interest Companies (CICs)	*data still to be analysed	*data still to be analysed
TOTAL KNOWN INCOME	£9,218,625,000	£8,856,664,000

Assets

Assets	Voluntary Sector	Housing Associations	Credit Unions	Total Assets
Intangible Assets	£4.9 m	£4.9 m	£0.0 m	£9.8 m
Tangible Fixed Assets	£5,198.3 m	£14,296.8 m	£12.7 m	£19,507.8 m
Investments	£11,090.6 m	£164.5 m	£464.1 m	£11,719.2 m
Stock	£26.3 m	£36.4 m	£0.0 m	£62.6 m
Debtors	£1,019.9 m	£274.5 m	£342.1 m	£1,636.4 m
Cash	£4,884.0 m	£1,159.6 m	£12.9 m	£6,056.5 m
Fixed and Current total	£22,223.9 m	£15,936.6 m	£831.8 m	£38,992.4 m
Liabilities	-£2,693.6 m	-£11,886.2 m	-£111.0 m	-£14,690.8 m
Net Assets	£19,530.3 m	£4,050.4 m	£720.8 m	£24,301.6 m

¹⁴ See [Volunteer Scotland's analysis of the Household Survey](#).

¹⁵ See [The Scottish Household Survey 2022](#)

¹⁶ Conservative estimate of 10% based on [OSCR data on cross-border charities](#) average of 13.5%.