

## **Charities Regulator: Donors to local charities on the rise as 1 in 2 support local charities (<https://www.activelink.ie/node/116383>)**

Half of respondents who donated in the past year supported a local charity, according to new research from the Charities Regulator (<https://www.charitiesregulator.ie/media/slpghsvz/public-survey-report-2024-2025.pdf>).

The research on the public's attitude to charities in Ireland also found that a willingness to help people who are worse off than them and the feeling that something should be given to worthy causes are the most mentioned reasons for supporting charities though people are mentioning them less compared to previous years.

Seven in ten respondents (71%) believe that having trust and confidence in a charity is very important when deciding to donate in 2024, although this represents a decrease from 80% in 2022. A lack of transparency in where the money goes was the main reason given for a decline in trust, while being more informed about charities, and higher awareness of the role of the Charities Regulator were the most common reasons cited by those whose confidence in charities had increased.

The survey, carried out for the Charities Regulator by Ipsos B&A, shows continued strong public support for the Regulator's role, with widespread support for increased oversight and tougher action against wrongdoing in the charity sector.

Commenting on the results, Madeleine Delaney, Chief Executive, Charities Regulator said: "This research shows continued solid support for Ireland's charity sector but with an important caveat that charities need to be more transparent about their income and how they are spending it to increase public trust and confidence."

"The Register of Charities has a record of every charity in Ireland, with an overview of their finances and the activities they undertake to pursue their charitable purpose. Whether

people are looking to donate for the first time, or donate regularly, I would encourage them to find out more about the charity on the Register. They can view the Register on our website and by visiting [checkacharity.ie](https://checkacharity.ie)."

### **Donations and support:**

Two in five respondents are looking to increase the amount they give to charity, while a quarter intend to leave money or property to charity in their will.

One in five (18%) respondents report donating their time to a charity, reflecting consistent levels of volunteer involvement in recent years.

Perceptions of donations are often framed within a narrow view of the charity sector, meaning some individuals may be donating to charities without being fully aware of it.

The survey also shows that the charity shop sector is continuing to benefit from donations and strong customer numbers, with 57% of people purchasing goods. Additionally, more people are engaging in other charitable and community activities such as attending religious services and visiting community centres.

The types of charities most supported over the previous 12 months include medical or health-related causes (39%), homeless or refuge services (34%), and local community organisations (31%).

Personal interest or a connection to a charity or issue remains the most significant factor influencing decisions to support a charity, with 51% stating this as their primary reason. Media coverage and news reports about charities follow as the second largest influence, mentioned by 12% of respondents.

### **Trust and confidence:**

Most respondents (78%) believe that charities are important to Irish society. Older adults are more likely to see the importance of charities.

The survey found that a potential donor checking the bona fides of a charity before deciding to donate would look at the charity's website (37%), online media reports relating to the charity (27%) and check whether the organisation is on the Register of Charities on the Charities Regulator website (22%). The percentage of donors who do not check out a charity before supporting it has increased from 17% in 2022 to 22% in 2024.

Almost two-thirds of respondents (64%) report that their trust and confidence in charities has remained unchanged over the

past two years, while nearly a quarter (23%) say it has decreased— compared to 37% in 2022. Meanwhile, 14% of respondents indicate their trust has increased, with 20% attributing this rise to feeling better informed about charities and their governance, and another 20% to greater awareness of the Charities Regulator's role.

Additionally, the survey found a hierarchy of trust within the charity sector among the Irish public, with small local charities generating the highest level of trust (41%), while larger national and international charities receive more neutral or mixed attitudes. Trust in international charities has declined the most since 2022.

## Attitudes towards Charity Regulation:

There are currently almost 11,500 registered charities in Ireland, ranging from small local volunteer-only groups to large national and international organisations employing thousands of people.

While most respondents believe responsibility for overseeing charities is shared between the charities themselves and the Regulator, there is a growing expectation that the Charities Regulator should take on greater responsibility. The survey found strong support for tougher regulatory action when there is wrongdoing, with three-quarters of respondents in favour; however, this represents a slight decline from 84% in 2022.

## Research:

The survey was conducted online in December 2024 among a nationally representative sample of 1,000 adults aged 18 and over. A combination of quotas and weighting was used to ensure the final sample reflected the national population in terms of gender, age, social class, and region.

The questionnaire for the 2024 study was broadly based on previous surveys carried out in 2020 and 2022, with references to the Covid-19 pandemic now largely removed. As in previous years, new questions were added to explore emerging topics of interest to the Charities Regulator.

### Region

Nationwide

New research from the Charities Regulator (<https://www.charitiesregulator.ie/media/slpghsvz/public-survey-report-2024-2025.pdf>)

### Date Entered/Updated

24th Jun, 2025

### Expiry Date

21st Sep, 2025

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**Source URL:** <https://www.activelink.ie/community-exchange/news/116383-charities-regulator-donors-to-local-charities-on-the-rise-as-1-in-2-support-local-charities>