

## Briefing Note

Registering as a charity with HM Revenue and Customs

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As a registered charity, why should I apply for recognition as a charity from HM Revenue and Customs?

Registration as a charity in Scotland by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (“OSCR”), or in England and Wales by the Charity Commission, does not automatically entitle a charity to claim Gift Aid on donations or to reclaim tax. In order to benefit from charitable tax reliefs and exemptions, a charity must apply for recognition from HM Revenue and Customs (“HMRC”). The HMRC registration will be backdated to the date of registration as a charity, allowing Gift Aid and tax relief to be claimed (as appropriate) in respect of donations received between the date of registration as a charity and the date of recognition from HMRC.

How do I apply for recognition from HMRC for my charity?

The registration process must be completed by a Trustee, Director, or other Officer of the charity. While we are unable to complete this process on your behalf, we can assist you in gathering the information you will need.

We outline below the process to apply for recognition as a charity from HMRC. However, prior to beginning this process, you should check that your charity meets [the criteria for tax relief](#)<sup>1</sup>.

### Step 1 – Registering as an organisation with the Government Gateway

The Government Gateway is an online portal which gives access to a wide range of UK Government online services, including the Charities Online Service offered by HMRC for submitting Gift Aid and tax relief claims. The first stage is to register the charity for an organisation account for the Government Gateway.

Visit the [‘Register as an Organisation’ webpage](#)<sup>2</sup> and start the process by clicking ‘Register’. You will need to give the name, address, department and contact telephone number of the person who will operate the account (‘the Account User’), as well as details of the charity. You will also be asked to create a password for the account.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/charities-and-tax/get-recognition>

<sup>2</sup> <https://myaccount.gateway.gov.uk/RegisterOrLogon.aspx?gwcategory=org&gww=1.0&gwrealm=http://www.gateway.gov.uk/myaccount/2007/07&gwlang=en-GB&gwreply=http://www.gateway.gov.uk/Default.aspx>

You will then be asked which Government Online Services you wish to enrol for. You should select the HMRC Charities Online Service. Further details about the charity will be requested at this point. Alternatively, the enrolment can be completed using this [link](#)<sup>3</sup>.

The Government Gateway will then issue a letter containing the User ID for the Account User. The User ID and password are both needed to access the Government Gateway account. The first Account User can then add other people into the organisational group, who will then be sent their own User IDs.

The Account User will also receive a letter containing their activation code for the Charities Online Service. This code must be used to activate the Service within 28 days of the date on the accompanying letter.

### Step 2 – Applying for HMRC recognition as a charity

In order to complete this process, you will need your charity's:-

- bank account details and financial accounts;
- officials' details, including dates of birth and National Insurance numbers;
- Charity Regulator registration number;
- charitable objectives/purposes;
- governing document (ie your Constitution or Articles of Association).

Visit the '[Get recognition from HMRC for your charity' webpage](#)<sup>4</sup>, click 'Start now' and complete the required information. This will result in HMRC issuing a temporary username for the charity.

Once recognition as a charity is granted, HMRC will issue a letter to the Account User containing a charities reference number. This reference number can then be used in conjunction with the Government Gateway User ID and password to access the [Charities Online Service](#)<sup>5</sup>.

### Step 3 – Appointing Turcan Connell as an Agent to use the 'Charities Online Service' on behalf of a charity

If our tax team prepare your charity accounts and administer the charity's tax affairs, we can act as your 'authorised Agent' to submit Gift Aid claims and reclaim tax on behalf of the charity, once recognition from HMRC is received. Should you wish to appoint Turcan Connell as your Agent, please do not hesitate to get in touch and we can explain the process and how we can assist you in making this authorisation.

This briefing note is intended to provide a brief summary of registering a charity with HM Revenue and Customs. No responsibility can be accepted for any action taken in reliance on this note and specialist advice should be taken in every case. If you have any specific questions, please contact Gavin McEwan or your usual contact at Turcan Connell.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.tax.service.gov.uk/gg/sign-in?continue=https%3A%2F%2Fonline.hmrc.gov.uk%2Fhome>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/charity-recognition-hmrc>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.tax.service.gov.uk/gg/sign-in?continue=https%3A%2F%2Fonline.hmrc.gov.uk%2Fhome>

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