

## WRITING YOUR ORGANISATION'S PURPOSES

As part of your organisation's governing document, its main purposes (also referred to as objects or objectives) must be clearly stated. The purposes are important as they define why the organisation exists and provide direction to the management committee in terms of the activities that should be delivered in order to achieve each. The purposes also portray to the public, potential members and funders what exactly your organisation aims to achieve and will inform their decision whether or not to support you. When writing your organisation's purposes, think of the key reasons for which the organisation is being established and form a short, concise statement for each reason. For example:

*To relieve poverty through the provision of free and recycled goods to those in West Lothian who are in need.*

This statement makes it clear what difference will be made (*to relieve*) and provides a general summary of the activities that will be delivered in order to make this difference, without being too specific - it would be far too restrictive to list precise activities and delivery days/times etc. The below phrases are particularly useful in describing the difference you aim to make.

- To advance
- To relieve
- To improve
- To reduce
- To promote

Although there's no specific requirement for the number of purposes a voluntary organisation should have, between one and five will usually be more than sufficient to portray the key objectives. If your intention is to apply for charitable status ([please see section 1.9](#)), your organisation must demonstrate to the *Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)* that it has **solely** charitable purposes. This is that each purpose relates clearly to one or more of the below charitable purposes as defined by the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005.

Charitable purposes as set out in the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005			
<b>a</b>	the prevention or relief of poverty	<b>i</b>	the provision of recreational facilities, or the organisation of recreational activities
<b>b</b>	the advancement of education	<b>j</b>	the advancement of human rights, conflict resolution or reconciliation
<b>c</b>	the advancement of religion	<b>k</b>	the promotion of religious or racial harmony
<b>d</b>	the advancement of health	<b>l</b>	the promotion of equality and diversity
<b>e</b>	the saving of lives	<b>m</b>	the advancement of environmental protection or improvement
<b>f</b>	the advancement of citizenship or community development	<b>n</b>	the relief of those in need by reason of age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship etc.
<b>g</b>	the advancement of the arts, heritage, culture or science	<b>o</b>	the advancement of animal welfare
<b>h</b>	the advancement of public participation in sport	<b>p</b>	any other purpose that may be regarded as analogous to any of the preceding purposes

Although OSCR would accept the above wording on the governing document, it's best to customise the chosen purposes to suit, while still retaining a clear reference to the original purpose. For example, a foodbank will most likely work to meet **a) the prevention or relief of poverty**. This could be adapted to read:

*To prevent and provide relief of poverty in West Lothian through the provision of emergency food supplies to individuals in need and/or other charities working to prevent or relieve poverty.*

For inspiration when drafting your purposes, it's worthwhile browsing the [Charity Register](#) to see how existing charities with the same intended purposes have worded theirs.