Benefacts

Ireland's nonprofit sector 2020

No turnover data	Micro	Small	Medium	Large
	€0 — €700K	€700K— €12m	€12m — €40m	€40m+
22,484	8,937	1,275	85	60

Total sector turnover:	€1.2 bn	€3.1 bn	€1.7 bn	€8.2 bn

Benefacts Analysis 2020

- **32,841 Organisations**
- **165,075 Employees**
- **86,481 Directors/charity trustees**
- **€14.2bn Turnover**
- **€5.9bn State funding**

Ireland's nonprofit sector has many very small organisations and relatively few larger ones.

This is the fourth annual Nonprofit Sector analysis prepared by Benefacts, using currently available data derived from more than 40 sources.

Use the report to learn more about Ireland's Nonprofit Sector, its governance, people and funding.

Nonprofit sector

Ireland's nonprofit sector has 32,841 organisations. About 9,854 nonprofits are incorporated as companies, 3,948 are primary or secondary schools, 787 more are incorporated as friendly societies, cooperatives, industrial societies, political parties or charter bodies. The rest – including thousands of local, religious or sports organisations – are unincorporated associations.

Governance

86,481 people serve in the governance of Irish nonprofits and charities.

People

The Nonprofit Sector in Ireland has at least 165,075 paid employees. This number doesn't include teachers – who are paid directly by Government – or unpaid volunteers.

Funding

At €5.9bn, Government was the biggest single source of funding to the Nonprofit Sector in 2018. This was 8% of all current Government spending that year – but the profile varies a lot from sector to sector.

Since our last report

In the twelve months since we prepared the 2019 report,

- the number of registered charities grew by 845 (454 of these were schools)
- 133 charities were de-registered by the Charities Regulator under S.40 of the Charities Act. 6 of these are still to be found on the Companies Register
- the number of charities availing of tax relief increased from 7,131 to 7,184; 180 were removed from the list published by Revenue in the course of the year and 233 were added
- the number of charities permitted to receive tax-efficient gifts shrunk from 2,462 to 2,438, with 55 removed from the list published by Revenue and 31 added in the course of the year
- the number of sports bodies availing of tax relief grew from 2,548 to 2,597, with 15 removed from the list published by Revenue and 64 added in the course of the year
- the number of non-profit companies grew with 540 new incorporations and 278 wind-ups

About the data

Benefacts Database of Irish Nonprofits is the source of all of the data and analysis on this website. We compile the database from more than 10 public sources, including the Companies Registration Office and the Charities Regulator, as well as 27 Public Participation Networks. We clean and aggregate it and re-publish the public data here as a free service.

Information about individual nonprofits is updated regularly as they file fresh information with public regulators. Our 2020 analysis is a macro level snapshot of the whole sector, prepared with data that was available at the end of Q1 in that year. We will publish the next annual analysis at the end of Q1 2021.

Benefacts

Ireland's nonprofit sector

According to the latest publicly available data, Ireland's nonprofit sector has at least 32,841 organisations.

The financial data in this report is limited to 10,357 organisations whose accounts are publicly available. 64% of these are registered charities.

Missing from our financial analysis of the sector are more than 22,484 local nonprofits. These are mostly schools, parishes, associations and clubs (including underincorporated charities) which don't publish accounts or for which there is no regulatory source of publicly available financial data.
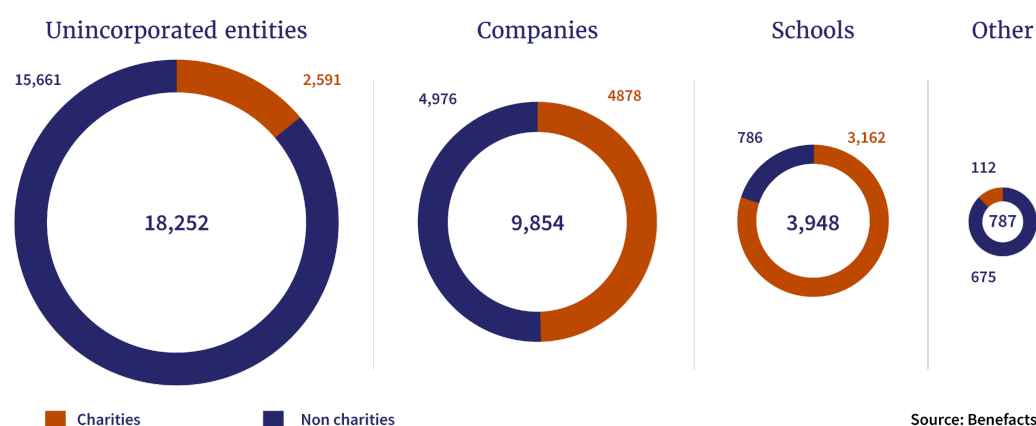
Regulation of Irish nonprofits

Some nonprofits are regulated as charities: at the end of 2019 the number was 10,470 including 2,850 schools, an increase of 845 (of which 454 were schools) over 2018. Here is the list of charities that were added to the register during 2019. During 2019, 133 nonprofits were removed from the register of charities – click here for the list.

This represents a net increase of 715 in the number of charities on the register since Q1 2019. This analysis excludes registered charities that are also State bodies, since these do not fall into Benefacts definition of the nonprofit sector.

Institutional types in the nonprofit sector

About 9,854 of Ireland's nonprofits are incorporated as companies and 3,948 are primary or secondary schools. 787 more are incorporated as cooperatives, friendly or industrial societies, political parties or charter bodies. The rest – including thousands of local, religious or sports organisations – are unincorporated trusts or associations. Most nonprofits are not incorporated in any way.

Unincorporated entities	Companies	Schools	Other
15,661 · 2,591 · **18,252**	4,976 · 4878 · **9,854**	786 · 3,162 · **3,948**	112 · **787** · 675

■ Charities   ■ Non charities

Source: Benefacts

Some incorporated nonprofits are long-established institutions – it's less easy to discover the date of establishment of unincorporated organisations. Many were established between 2000 and 2010, often as special purpose vehicles to provide job creation, local development, social supports and other arms' length services on behalf of the State. During 2019, 540 new nonprofits were incorporated, and 278 were wound up.
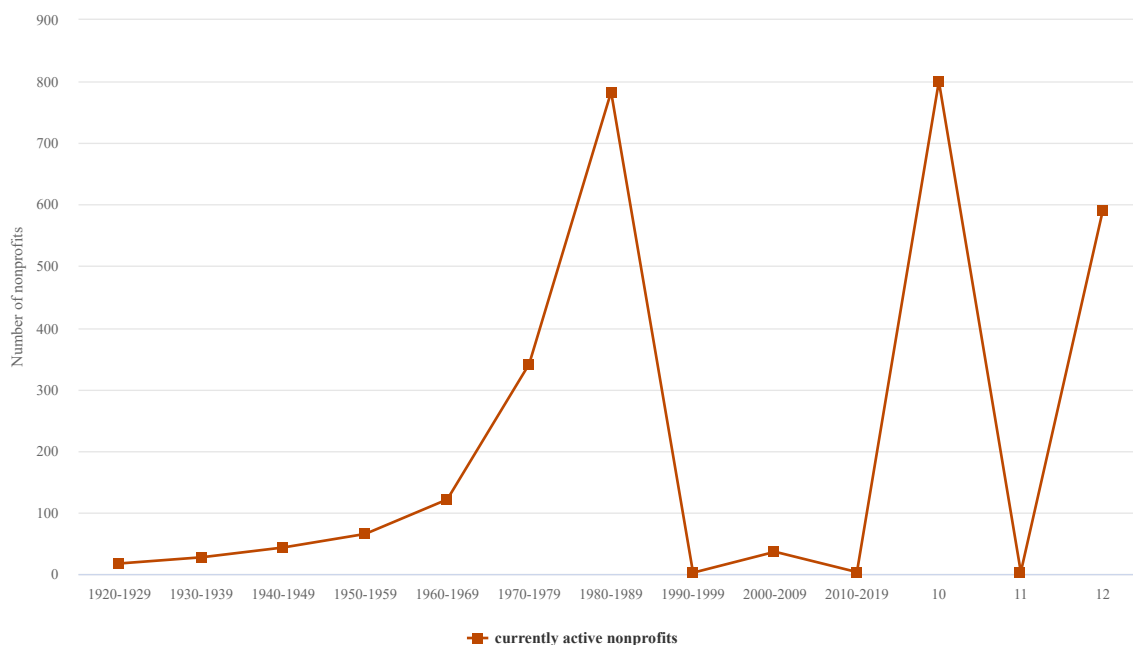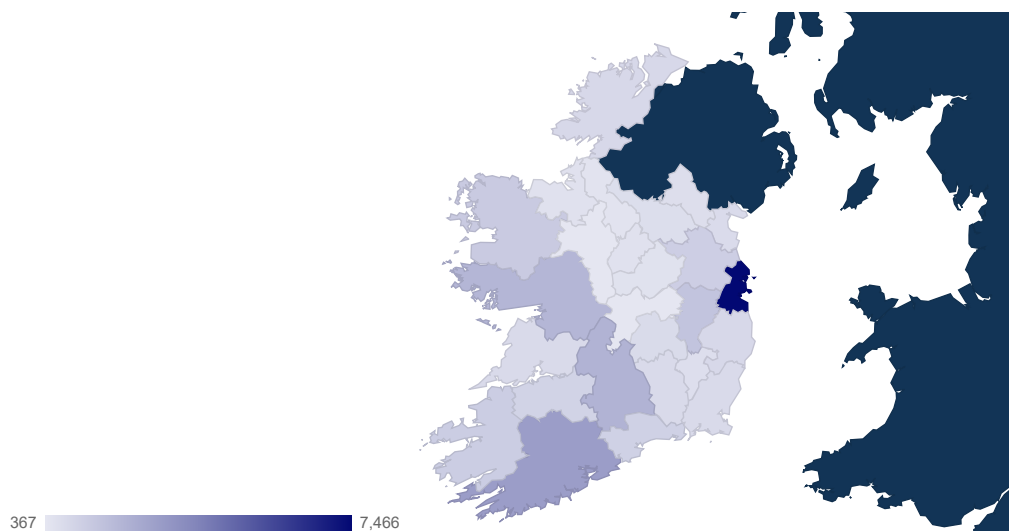
Incorporation dates of Irish nonprofit companies

Source: Benefacts

Geographic distribution of Irish nonprofits

Nonprofit organisations – NGOs, religious bodies including churches, social enterprises, clubs, societies, associations – are to be found in every part of Ireland.
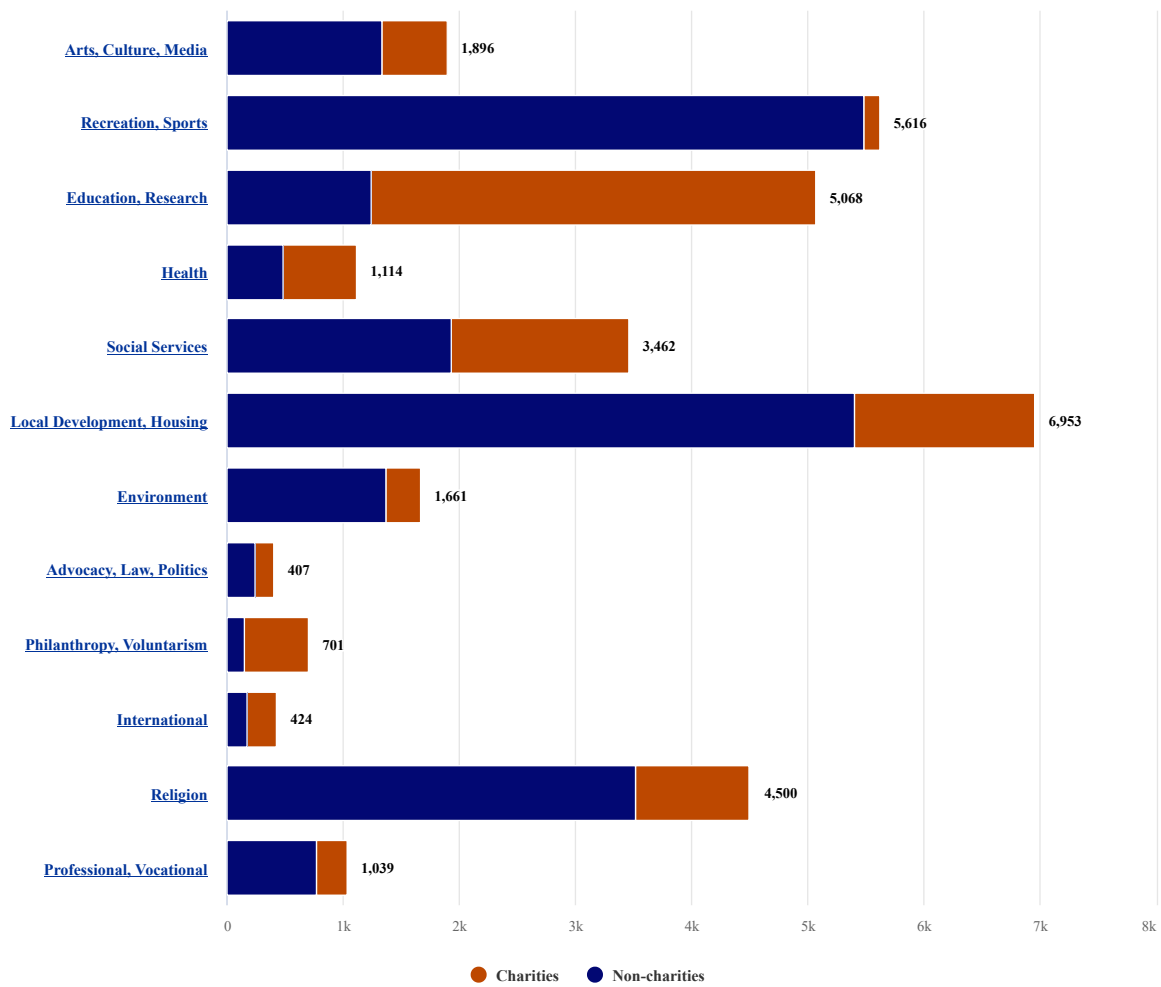

367   7,466

Geographic distribution of Irish nonprofits

Source: Benefacts

Nonprofits – breakdown by sector

The greatest number of nonprofits are in the local development, recreation/sports, and education/research sectors. The smallest sectors are international and advocacy. These numbers have changed since the 2019 report thanks to the addition of more religious organisations and locally-registered entities.

Sector	Value
Arts, Culture, Media	1,896
Recreation, Sports	5,616
Education, Research	5,068
Health	1,114
Social Services	3,462
Local Development, Housing	6,953
Environment	1,661
Advocacy, Law, Politics	407
Philanthropy, Voluntarism	701
International	424
Religion	4,500
Professional, Vocational	1,039

● Charities ● Non-charities

Irish nonprofits – breakdown by sector

Source: Benefacts

Benefacts

Governance

Nonprofit company directors and charity trustees are accountable to stakeholders rather than to owners or investors. They are responsible for governance standards - including compliance with mandatory regulation and voluntary codes - and disclosure standards. Read more about where Benefacts gets data on nonprofit directors and charity trustees.

- 86,481 people currently serve in the governance of Ireland's 15,200 regulated nonprofits (up by 6% on the number reported in 2019). At least 4,800 of them serve on multiple boards, more than 2,000 of whom serve on the board of a company and a charity.
- 49,860 directors serve on 9,800 nonprofit company Boards, 4,880 of which are registered charities. This means there are 28,687 people who are director/trustees of incorporated charities.
- 36,619 people serve on the boards of 5,400 charities that are not incorporated.

23,316   **28,687**   **36,619**

■ Company directors

☐ Directors trustees of incorporated charities
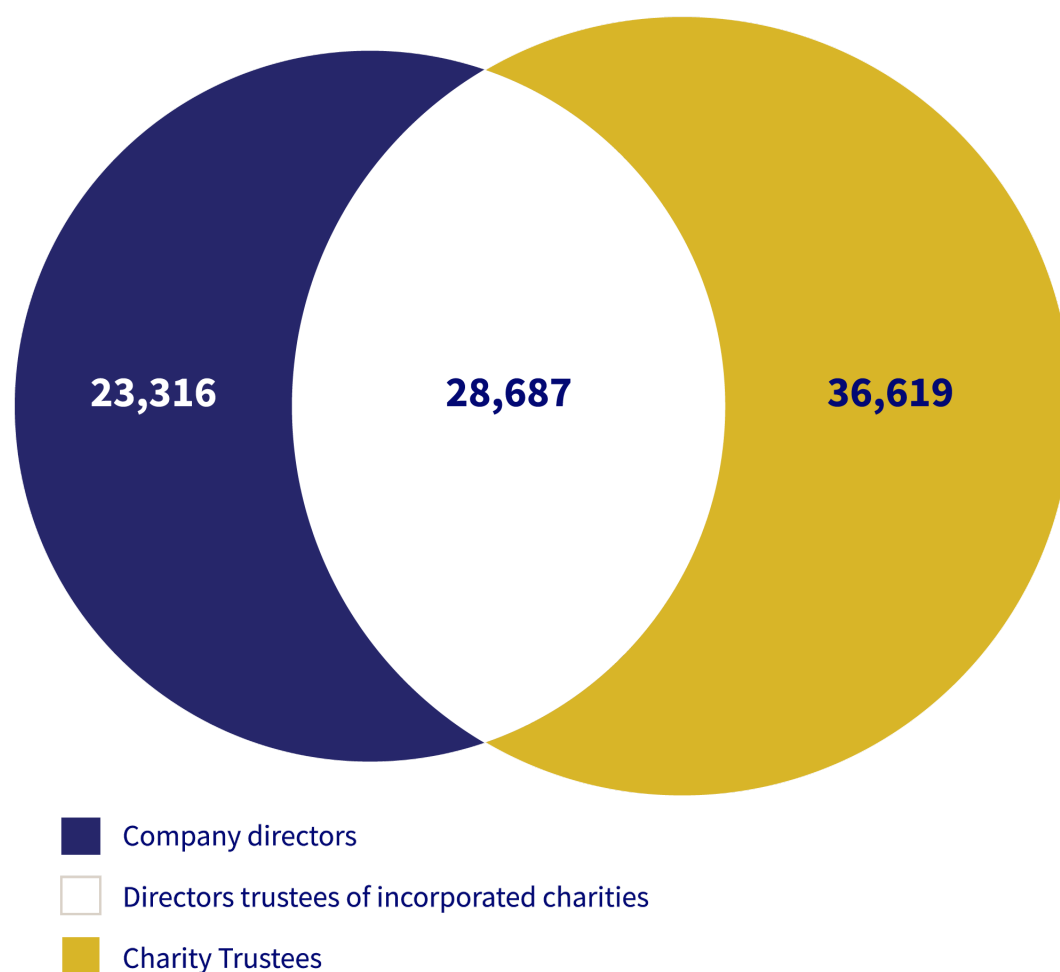
■ Charity Trustees

Number of directors and trustees on nonprofit boards   **Source: Benefacts**

Governance profile of Irish nonprofits

While a nonprofit board typically has six members, it is slightly higher for charities (seven) than non-charities (four). These averages are unchanged since our 2019 report. The largest boards are in education and research and the smallest in philanthropy and voluntarism, environment and international. Limited governance data is available for sports and religious organisations.

6 All

7 Charity

4 Non charity

Average number of nonprofit board members
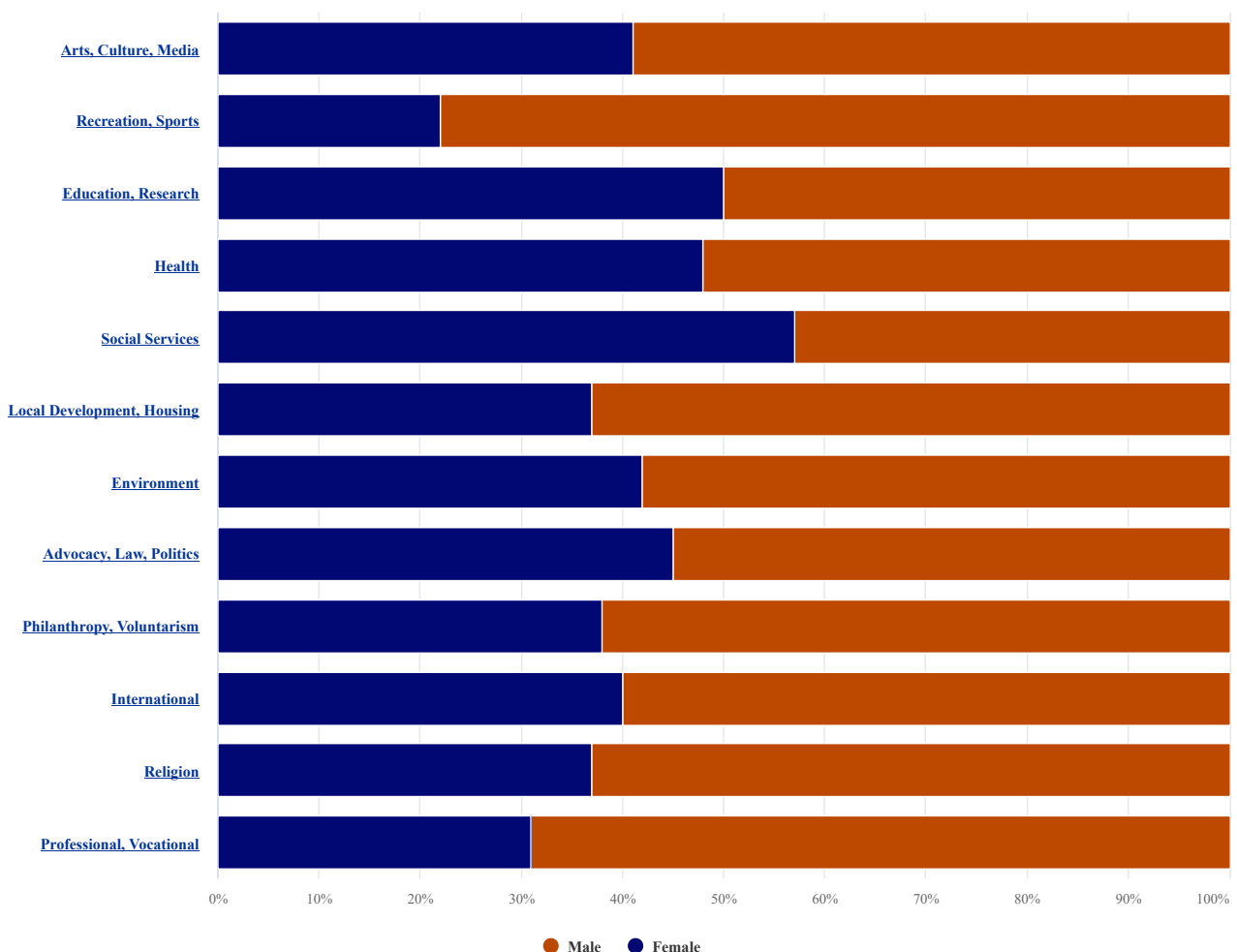
Profile of nonprofit board service

On average, nonprofit directors/trustees serve for 5 consecutive years. The longest average term of service is in local development (average 7 years) and the shortest is in education, research (average 4 years). These numbers have changed marginally since our 2019 report.

23% of the directors/charity trustees of Irish nonprofits have served for more than 9 years – considered the maximum appropriate term for good governance. This is down on the profile we reported in 2019.

The sectors with the greatest number of long-serving directors/charity trustees are Local Development & Housing, Recreation & Sports each 37%; the sector with the lowest is Education, Research at 9%

Gender balance on the boards of Irish nonprofits

**Drill down menu click on a sector for a further breakdown.**

Gender balance of nonprofit boards by sector

Our analysis of the gender profile of nonprofit boards indicates men outnumber women, with men making up 57% of nonprofit board seats. This profile is changed marginally from data published in 2019.

Age Profile

The average age of all nonprofit directors/charity trustees is 57.
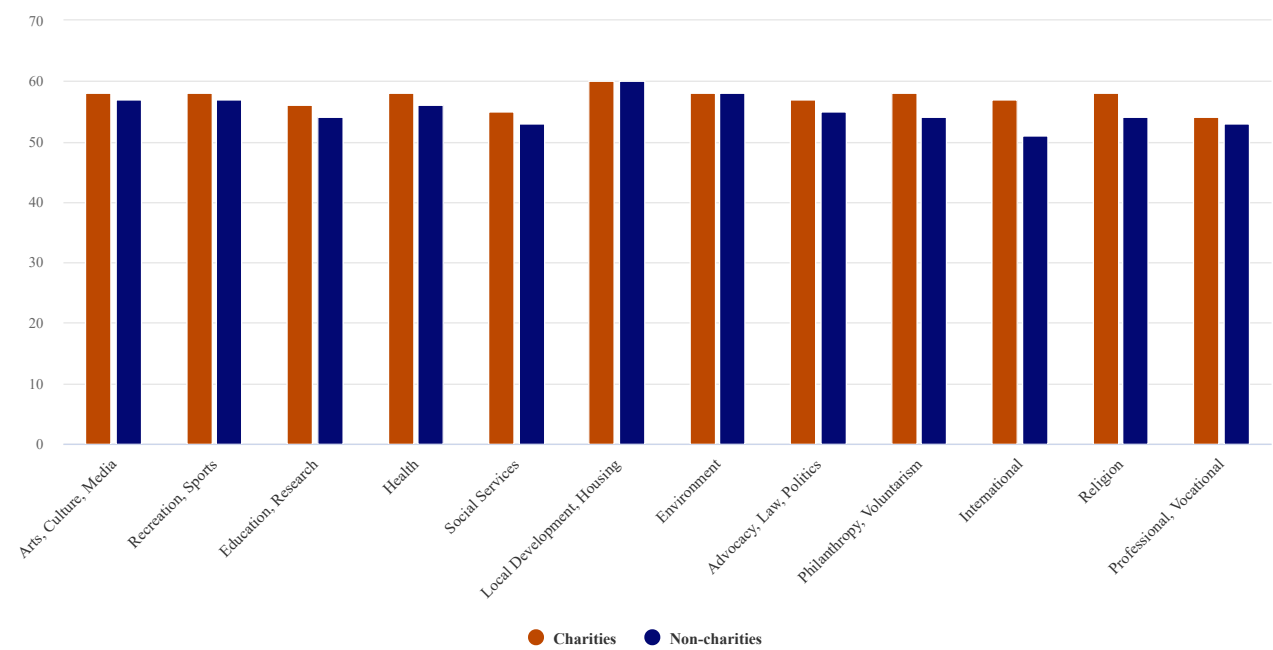
Average age of nonprofit directors/charity trustees by sector   **Source: Benefacts**

Benefacts

People

Irish nonprofits employ 165,075 people, up 6.5% on the number we reported in 2019. Most of the increased employment is in large or medium-sized nonprofits.

In 57 higher education and major health and social care ("Section 38") organisations, 63,316 employees are paid as though they were public servants.

48,329 people work in 1,697 nonprofits where the State is the principal source of income.
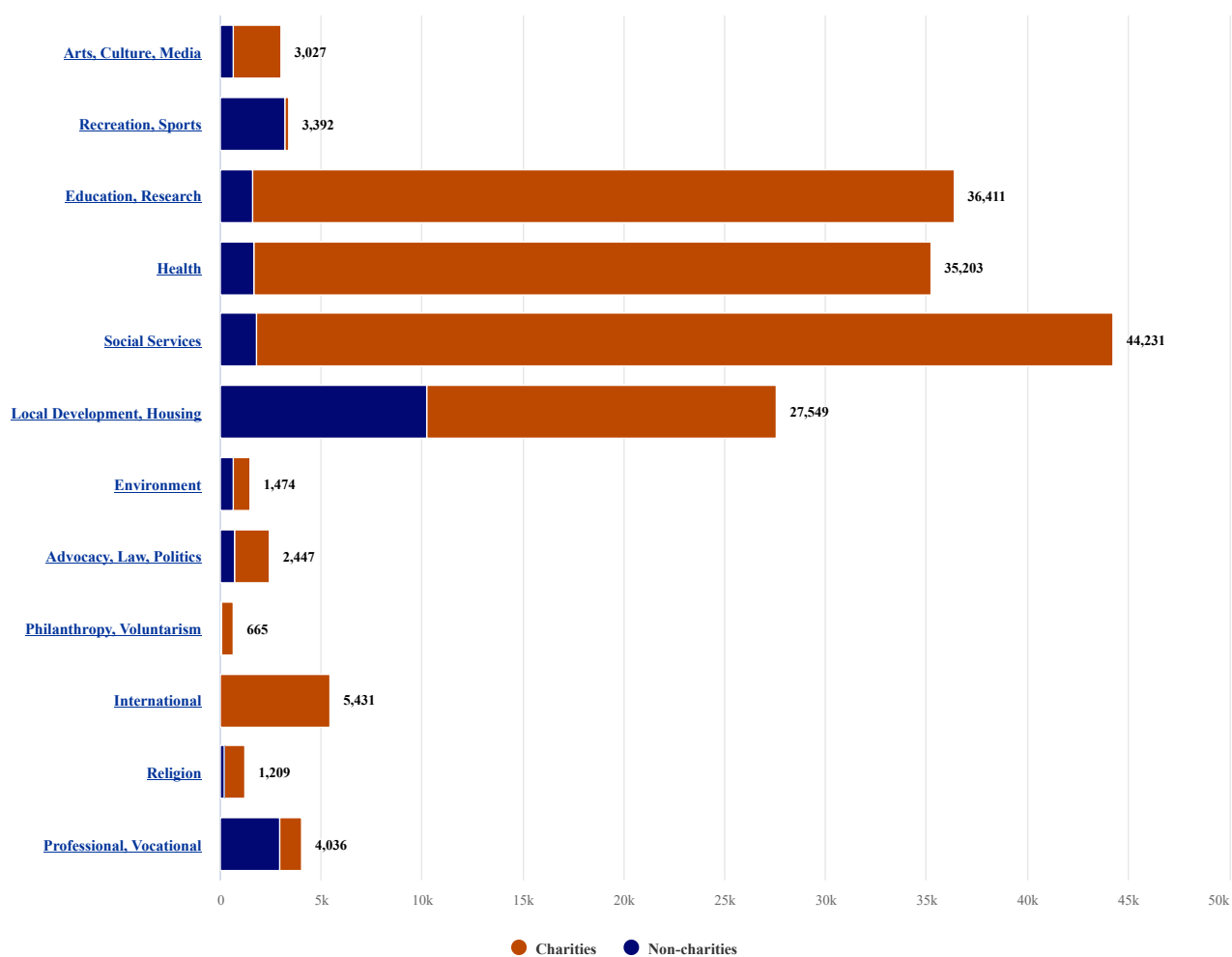
The remaining 53,429 work in nonprofits where the State is the minority funder or where there is no State funding at all.

Read more about where Benefacts gets data on nonprofit sector employment.

Employment profiles by sector

Most people working in the nonprofit sector are employed in healthcare, social care including disability services, higher education and local development including social enterprise.
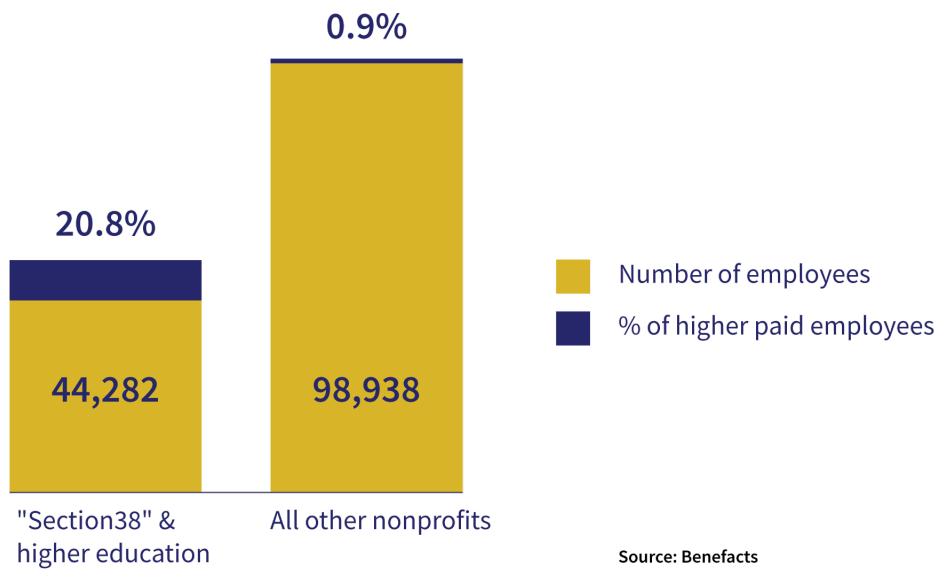
Click on a segment below to drill-down

Sector	Value
Arts, Culture, Media	3,027
Recreation, Sports	3,392
Education, Research	36,411
Health	35,203
Social Services	44,231
Local Development, Housing	27,549
Environment	1,474
Advocacy, Law, Politics	2,447
Philanthropy, Voluntarism	665
International	5,431
Religion	1,209
Professional, Vocational	4,036

● Charities   ● Non-charities

Employee numbers in nonprofits by sector   **Source: Benefacts**

Higher pay in Irish nonprofits

"Higher pay" means total remuneration of €70,000 or more. Most higher paid people in Irish nonprofits work in third level education and in "Section 38"-funded health and social care charities.

0.9%

20.8%

44,282

98,938

"Section38" &
higher education

All other nonprofits

■ Number of employees

■ % of higher paid employees

### Higher pay for nonprofit workers in context

Outside of quasi-State bodies (where pay and conditions are set by the State) only 0.9% of people working in Irish nonprofits are paid more than €70,000. In the economy at large, 13.6% of people are higher paid.

Within the same group of nonprofits, pension payments are recorded in the financial statements of only 10% of nonprofit companies .

Within the economy at large 13.6% of people are highly paid.
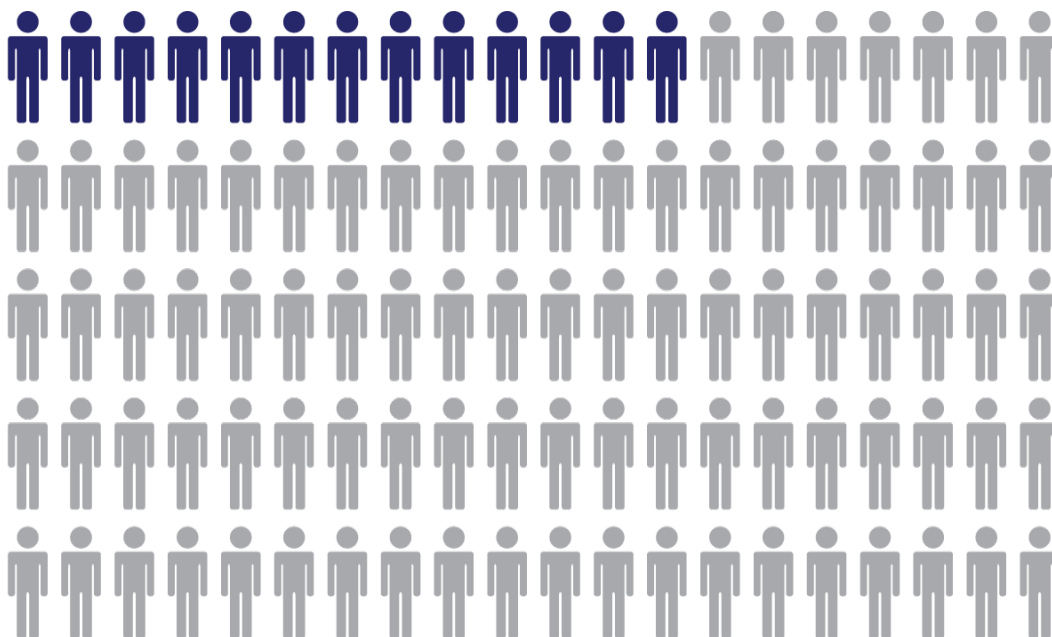
Within the nonprofit sector 0.9% of people are highly paid.
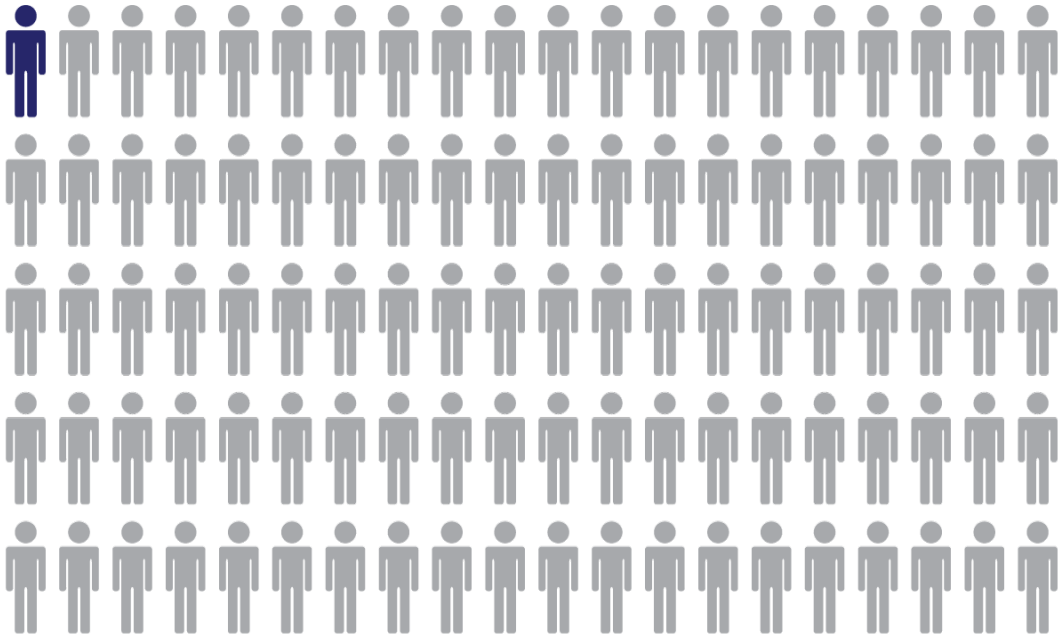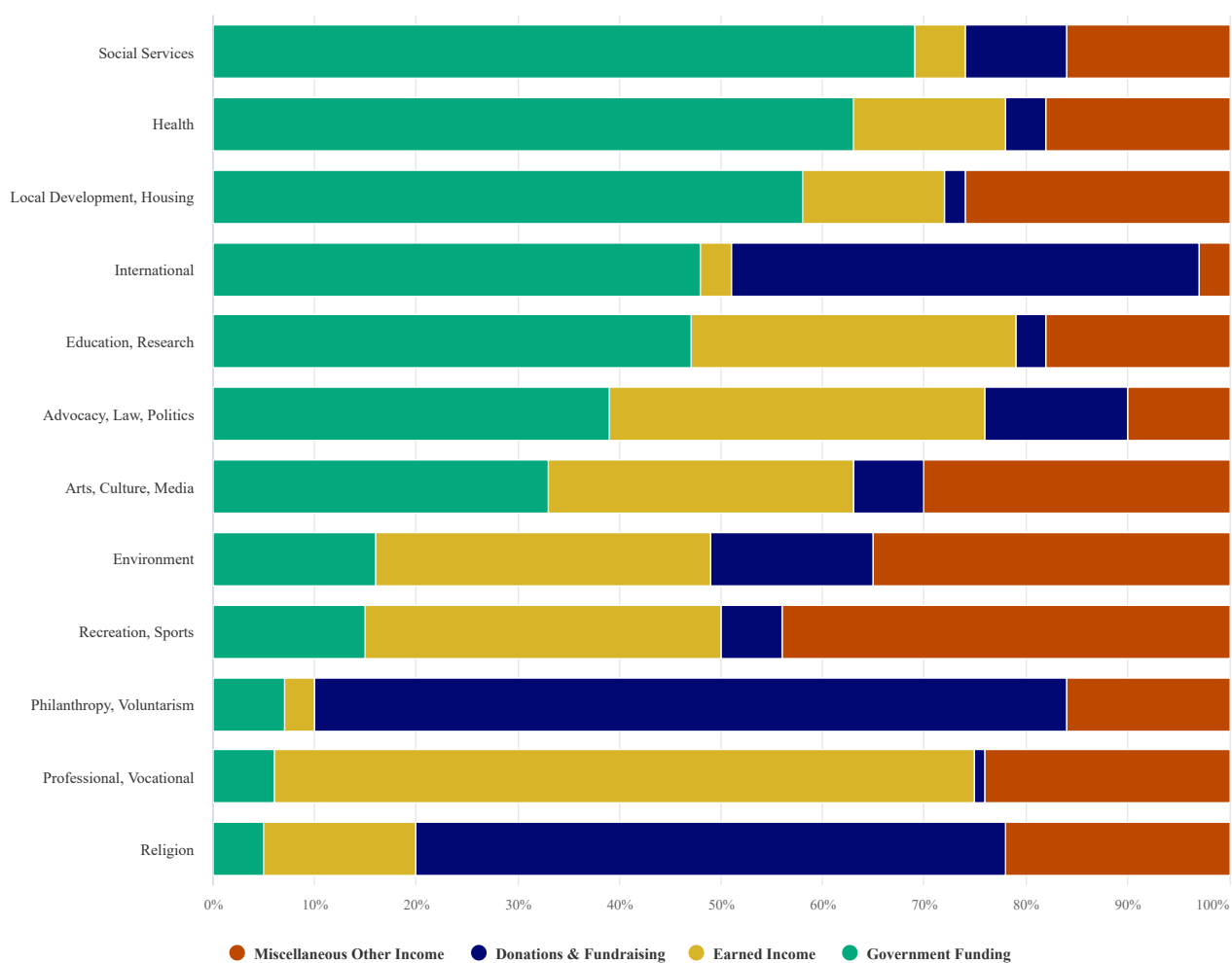
Source: Benefacts

Benefacts

Funding

The State is the biggest individual source of funding to the nonprofit sector, but nearly 80% of State funding is directed at 119 medium and large nonprofits, mostly in service fees to health and social care, higher education and local development.

In advocacy, law, politics, professional, and vocational organisations, the balance of income is mainly derived from earned revenues whereas philanthropy, voluntarism and international organisations are most heavily reliant on fund-raised income and philanthropic donations.

More than 260 Government departments or agencies provided at least €5.9bn in fees or grants to nonprofits in Ireland during 2018.

Income by sector in 2018

Income by sector in 2018   Source: Benefacts

Nonprofit sector fundraising costs

Many nonprofits solicit donations from individuals, corporations and philanthropies, but only 64 are solely dedicated to fundraising year-round. Using these indicators, professional fundraising costs are about 15% of the value of income raised.

Year	Number of dedicated fundraising charities	Total number of employees	Number of employees whose remuneration greater than €70,000	Total payroll €000	Total Income €000
2015	60	153	8	7,827	60,724
2016	61	132	9	7,114	58,027
2017	62	145	12	7,739	78,112
2018	64	146	10	8,060	52,947

Source: Benefacts

Philanthropic giving in Ireland

At €97m, philanthropic gifts, whether by Irish or non-Irish philanthropies are a marginal and declining source of revenue for most Irish nonprofits. By far the biggest sources of philanthropic giving are Irish-based independent foundations.
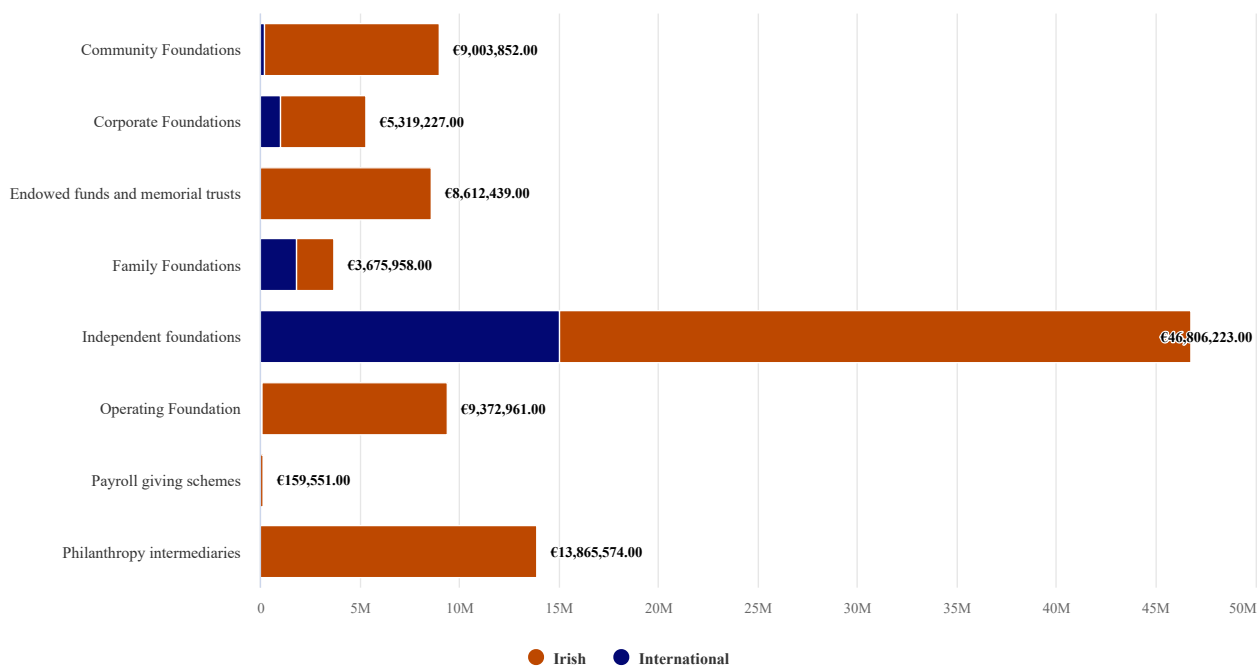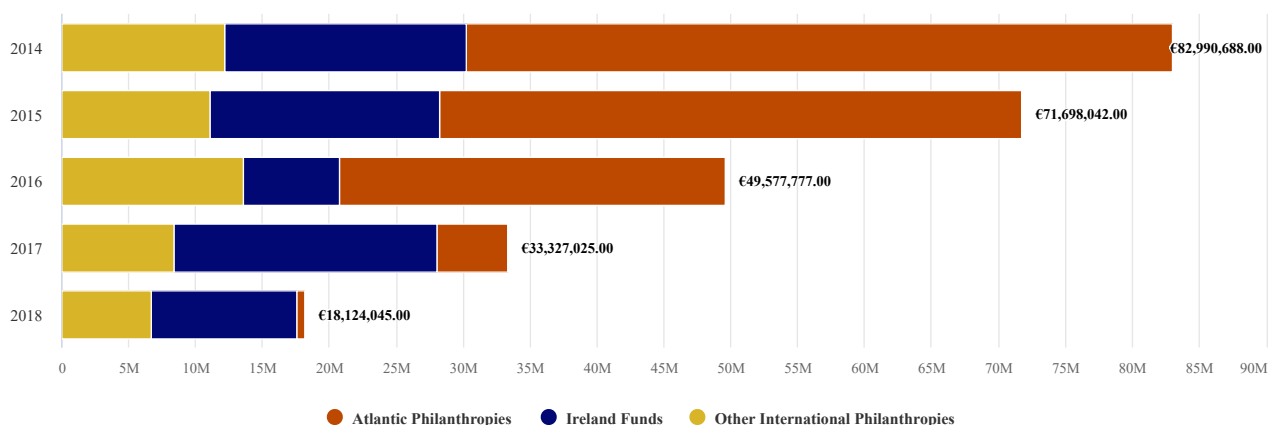

Giving by Irish and International philanthropies in 2018

Source: Benefacts

Giving in Ireland by international philanthropies

Gifts from overseas foundations continue to decline as a proportion of all philanthropic donations to the nonprofit sector in Ireland.

Giving in Ireland by International philanthropies in 2018

Source: Benefacts