



Stats for the Sector - 2024

Bedfordshire



www.cvsbeds.org.uk

A snapshot of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector operating in the three unitary authority areas of Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton.

A copy of this report can be found at
www.cvsbeds.org.uk

Summary

In April 2024, CVS Bedfordshire staff undertook a desk-based assessment of the number of Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations operating in Bedfordshire. This is the second year that this assessment was undertaken.

Five different sources of data (list on page 5) provided our baseline. The considerable knowledge and judgement of CVS staff was then used to remove those organisations that we believe do not operate in Bedfordshire.

- At least 2,895 VCSE organisations have a connection to Bedfordshire.
- This is made up of a range of organisation types, including Registered Charities, Community Interest Companies (CICs), Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASC's), Benevolent Societies, Community Benefit Societies, Co-operatives, Credit Unions, Friendly Societies, Registered Societies and a significant number of unincorporated associations.
- There has been a significant increase in the number of Community Interest Companies (CICs) to 282 (177 in 2023).
- The total number of Registered Charities remains steady (1,845), but 450 do not appear to be active in Bedfordshire.
- A large number of organisations are either too small to register as any specific legal form, or are part of a national/ regional organisations operating in Bedfordshire, which tend not to appear in some of the Bedfordshire data due to their main offices being based elsewhere.

The data in this document should be used only as a guide to the approximate size of the VCSE sector in Bedfordshire. That said, we believe it is the most accurate report currently available.

The Numbers:

Registered Charities	1,305	<p>1,845 organisations registered with the Charity Commission, that are classified as having an area of benefit of Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and/or Luton.</p> <p>448 do not appear to operate in Bedfordshire.</p> <p>92 do not appear to be operating (based on income/expenditure)</p> <p>The 1,305 organisations include at least 164 organisations related to the promotion of religion.</p>
CICs	282	<p>288 Community Interest Companies with a registered address in Bedfordshire.</p> <p>6 do not appear to operate in Bedfordshire.</p>
CASCs	62	<p>67 Community Amateur Sports Clubs with a registered address in Bedfordshire</p> <p>5 do not appear to operate in Bedfordshire.</p>
Mutuals	55	<p>59 Benevolent Societies, Community Benefit Societies, Co-operatives, Credit Unions, Friendly Societies and Registered Societies and Working Mens Clubs) with a registered address in Bedfordshire.</p> <p>4 do not appear to operate in Bedfordshire.</p>
CVS list	1,191	<p>Organisations on a database held by CVS, that do not appear on any of the four lists above.</p> <p>The majority of these organisations are small, unincorporated organisations, with an income of less than £10,000. Their size or objects mean they are not formally registered as a Charity or other legal form.</p>
Total	2,895	

Income:

Only the Charity Commission data has sufficient information to provide a breakdown by size.

- Over 55% of charities have an income of less than £25,000.
- Only 15% of charities have an income of more than £250,000

		%
£0 - £9,999	489	37%
£10,000 - £24,999	254	19%
£25,000 - £49,999	118	9%
£50,000 - £99,999	109	8%
£100,000 - £249,999	152	12%
£250,000 - £499,999	65	5%
£500,000 - £999,999	33	3%
£1 Million +	35	3%
Recently registered	50	4%
	1,305	

There are a further 92 charities that do not appear to be operating (based on income/expenditure).

Geography:

It is difficult to provide accurate numbers for charities each local authority area, (see below for an explanation) but we can provide a breakdown based on postcode.

LU1		84		MK40	103		SG15	8
LU2		67		MK41	88		SG16	11
LU3		64		MK42	72		SG17	28
LU4		48		MK43	93		SG18	59
LU5		54		MK44	91		SG19	37
LU6		68		MK45	117		Other	131
LU7		85						

Why is a breakdown of charities by local authority area difficult?

A large number of charities are classified as operating in both ‘Bedford Borough’ and ‘Central Bedfordshire’, despite many of them only working in a specific area. This is due to adjustments on the Charity Commission directory following local authority re-organisation in 2009. Any breakdown of the data at a local authority level suggests far more charities are operating in each area than we believe is actually the case.

The raw Charity Commission data (as of April 2024) is provided below to highlight the issue:

Number of charities operating in:	
any of the three Unitary Authorities	1,857
Bedford Borough	1,222
Central Bedfordshire	1,225
Luton	505
Bedford Borough AND Central Bedfordshire	839
Bedford Borough AND Luton	197
Central Bedfordshire AND Luton	222

Source data:

- Charity Commission – Registered Charities
<https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search>
- Companies House – Community Interest Companies
<https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/advanced-search>
- HMRC - List of community amateur sports clubs (CASC)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-amateur-sports-clubs-casc-registered-with-hmrc--2>
- Financial Conduct Authority - Mutuels Public Register
<https://mutuals.fca.org.uk>
- Community Voluntary Service Bedfordshire – In-house database

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