

Community Voluntary Service
social action

Stats for the Sector - 2023

Bedfordshire



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



www.cvsbeds.org.uk

Summary

In April 2023, CVS Bedfordshire staff undertook a desk-based assessment of the number of Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations operating in Bedfordshire.

Five different sources of data 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.

The numbers 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.

A large number of VCSE organisations are small, unincorporated, and can quickly form and fold depending on the need and the resources available. There are also a number of national and regional organisations operating in Bedfordshire, which tend not to appear in some of the Bedfordshire data due to their main offices being based elsewhere. However, many of them have interacted with CVS over the years, and therefore we have included them in this assessment via the CVS list.

Headlines

- At least 2,925 VCSE organisations with 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.
- In some parts of the county, almost 40% of Charities have an income of less than £10,000, and almost 50% have an income of less than £50,000. We believe that the majority of the unincorporated organisations on the CVS list also have a very small income.

The Numbers:

Registered Charities	1,475	<p>1,846 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>371 do not appear to operate in Bedfordshire.</p> <p>The 1,475 organisations include at least 170 organisations related to the promotion of religion.</p>
CICs	177	<p>182 Community Interest Companies with a registered address in Bedfordshire.</p> <p>5 do not appear to operate in Bedfordshire.</p>
CASCs	64	<p>70 Community Amateur Sports Clubs with a registered address in Bedfordshire</p> <p>6 do not appear to operate in Bedfordshire.</p>
Mutuals	28	<p>31 Benevolent Societies, Community Benefit Societies, Co-operatives, Credit Unions, Friendly Societies and Registered Societies (excluding 7 Working Mens Clubs) with a registered address in Bedfordshire.</p> <p>3 do not appear to operate in Bedfordshire.</p>
CVS list	1,181	<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	2,925	

Details at a Local Authority Level:

Only Charity Commission data is sufficiently detailed to provide a breakdown at a local authority level:

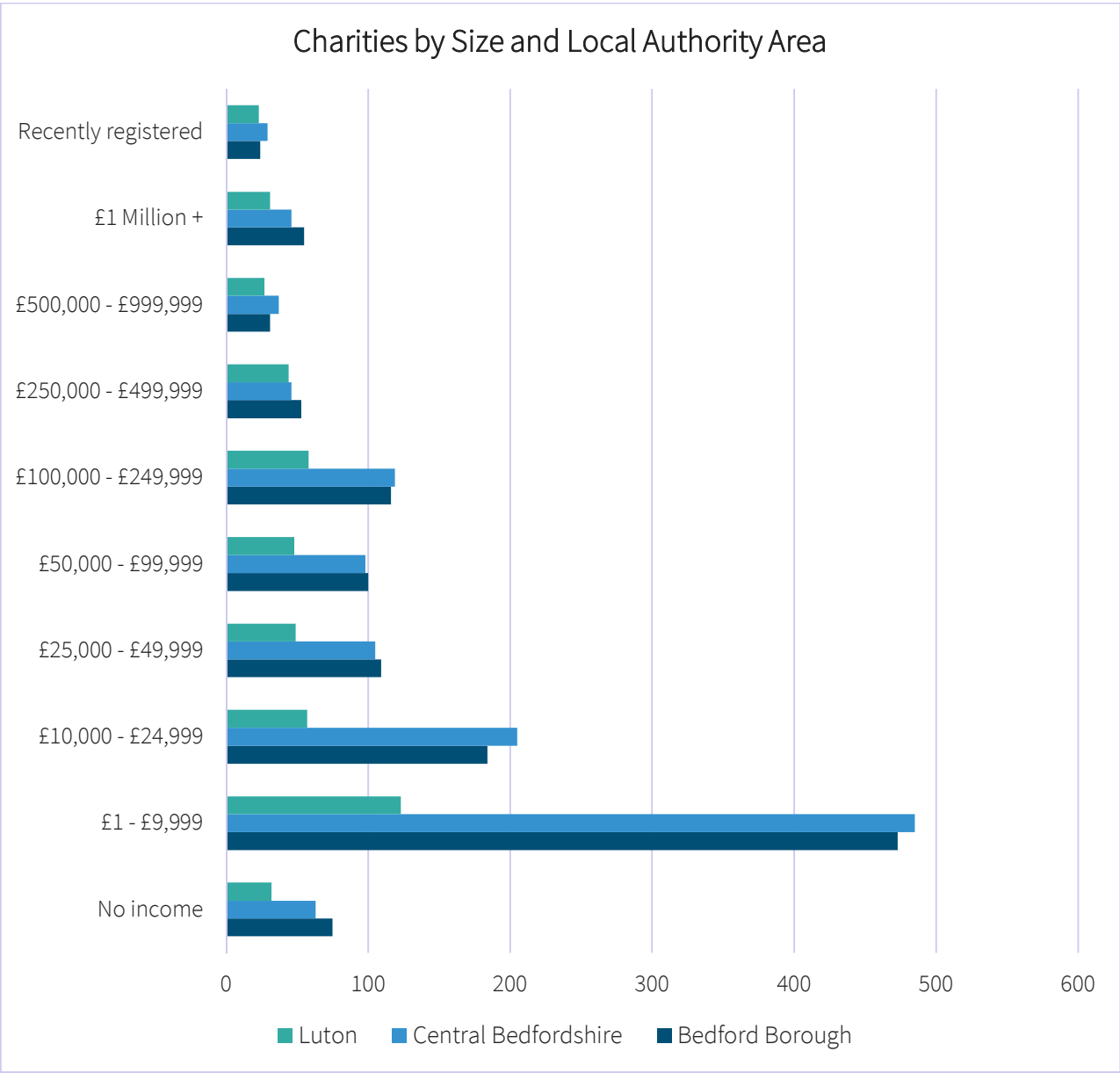
Number of Charities operating in:	
Bedford Borough	1,220*
Central Bedfordshire	1,233*
Luton	492

*There are a significant number of Charities that operate in more than one of the three local authority area. As a result the exact figure is difficult to establish. When Bedfordshire County Council was superseded by the two unitary authorities in 2009, the Charity Commission updated their categories. Charities classified as operating in 'Bedfordshire' were adjusted to show they operate in 'Bedford Borough' and 'Central Bedfordshire'. The data therefore shows far more Charities operating in both areas than we believe to be the case.

Charity Commission data can also be used to provide a breakdown by both income and local authority area. It would appear that over 50% of Charities have an income of less than £50,000.

	Bedford Borough	%		Central Beds	%		Luton	%
No income	75	6%		63	5%		32	7%
£1 - £9,999	473	39%		485	39%		123	25%
£10,000 - £24,999	184	15%		205	17%		57	12%
£25,000 - £49,999	109	9%		105	9%		49	10%
£50,000 - £99,999	100	8%		98	8%		48	10%
£100,000 - £249,999	116	10%		119	10%		58	12%
£250,000 - £499,999	53	4%		46	4%		44	9%
£500,000 - £999,999	31	3%		37	3%		27	5%
£1 Million +	55	5%		46	4%		31	6%
Recently registered	24	2%		29	2%		23	5%
	1,220			1,233			492	

The chart below provides a quick comparison of each area, but please remember that some organisations will be double counted for both Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire following Local Government Reorganisation. The data shows far more Charities operating in both Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire areas than we would expect.



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

A copy of this report can be found on our website - www.cvsbeds.org.uk

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