



CHARITY SECTOR AND NOT-FOR-PROFIT CAREERS

Introduction

You may get the impression that your only career option after leaving university is to work in business or join one of the professions. There are, however, many employers in a range of sectors who are willing to employ graduates although they may not specifically say that it is a graduate they are looking for or advertise in the same place. The Charity or not-for-profit sector is a good example of this. This leaflet is designed to give you some starting points. It should be used in conjunction with our *Finding a graduate job guide* which you can collect from our office or download from our website: www.bath.ac.uk/students/careers/information-resources/helpsheets.

About the Sector

Let's get a bit of terminology right, first of all. The Charity Sector may also be referred to as the Voluntary Sector, the Not-for-profit Sector or even the Third Sector. There are around 850,000 people employed in 165,801 organisations so it is by no means a small sector. For some more facts and figures check out the NCVO Annual Almanac <https://data.ncvo.org.uk/category/almanac/voluntary-sector>.

The majority of the sector consists of small organisations but they could be as big as a charity like Cancer Research which not only campaigns and fundraises but also undertakes scientific research. At the other extreme there are small community organisations which provide services, often in addition to statutory services, at a very local level to particular groups in their area e.g. to the elderly or the disabled. Those two examples are likely to be UK-based but some organisations can be bi-lateral, multi-lateral and international in the reach of their activities. These latter organisations tend to be referred to as NGOs or non-government organisations. We are not dealing with these specifically in this helpsheet. You should check another Careers helpsheet: *International development, international organisations and international relations careers* available at www.bath.ac.uk/students/careers/information-resources/helpsheets. Essentially they are all organisations which are independent of government and business, non-profit-distributing, self-governing and provide a public benefit (beyond membership).

As well as the Charity Sector there are also Social Enterprise organisations and Community Interest Companies which may appeal to those who are concerned about the ethics of the organisation they work for.

Ten largest charities in England and Wales by income (£m) 2014/15

Save the Children International	699
Cancer Research UK	629
National Trust	496
Oxfam	401
The Save the Children Fund	374
Wellcome Trust	338
Barnardo's	296
British Heart Foundation	288
The British Red Cross Society	265
Marie Stopes International	245

Source:
<https://data.ncvo.org.uk/a/almanac17/size-and-scope-2/>

Numbers of voluntary organisations by activity type 2014/15

Social Services	30,265
Culture & Recreation	23,586
Religion	14,357
Grant making Foundations	12,753
Parent Teacher Associations	12,252
Development	10,286
Education	7,914
Village Halls	7,662
Playgroups and Nurseries	6,960
Health	6,710
Youth/Scout clubs	6,462
International	6,055
Environment	5,922
Law and Advocacy	4,270
Housing	3,662
Research	3,504
Employment and Training	1,985
Umbrella Bodies	1,156

Source:
<https://data.ncvo.org.uk/a/almanac17/size-and-scope-2/>

What are the roles?

The roles that exist in the Charity Sector can be as diverse as any you will find in a big commercial company. Charities will have staff in a press office, an event planning team, a HR department, Finance Officers as well as Marketing and Sales staff. In a smaller charity you may find roles less clearly defined. Some roles are unique to the sector such as Fundraiser or Volunteer Co-ordinator. Also Research and Campaigning and/or Lobbying roles which you find in this sector are not common across the commercial world. It is a good idea to think about where your skills and interests might lie across this broad spectrum of roles. This might be a useful resource to look at: www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/job-sectors/charity-and-voluntary-work.

Try to focus on an issue, cause or a group of people you are most interested in helping or campaigning for e.g. refugees, children, international development, mental health, the environment or human rights. The Charity Commission website is useful for searching for charities by issue or cause

<http://apps.charitycommission.gov.uk/showcharity/registerofcharities/RegisterHomePage.aspx>, as are the hard copy directories *Charities Digest* and *Voluntary Agencies Directory* which can be found in the Reference Collection in the University Library.

How do I get into the Sector?

You might find it helpful to read this essential information if you are thinking of working, interning, volunteering, or becoming a trustee for a voluntary organisation:

<https://knowhownonprofit.org/basics/working-for-a-non-profit-your-options>.

As with any role you apply for, you need to show your motivation. Without doubt the best way to do this is to gain experience as a volunteer. There are a number of websites that advertise volunteering opportunities. There is a good list on the **NCVO** website

<https://knowhownonprofit.org/people/volunteers/recruiting/online>.

At the very least you should be able to show you have been a member or a supporter of a charity or been involved in fundraising activities. Whilst you are at university a good place to start is to connect with the Student Union Volunteering Team. They have excellent contacts locally and this will give a chance to experience the charity sector at close hand.

Take advantage whilst you are volunteering to talk with paid employees and find out how they have got into their job. There are other ways to get involved such as becoming a trustee of a charity which is a volunteer role that puts you at the heart of governance. The Government has some useful information about this on its website: www.gov.uk/government/get-involved/take-part/help-run-a-charity . We would strongly encourage you to start building up your volunteering experience while you are a student.

There are a few graduate schemes:

- **Charity Works** www.charity-works.co.uk (For 2017 it opened early October 2016 with closing date 28 February 2017).
- **Cancer Research Graduate Scheme** opens mid-October to the end of November. www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-us/graduates-and-interns/our-streams.
- **Wellcome Trust** runs two different streams in their graduate programme: a specific investments programme and a broader general programme. The scheme opens in October <https://wellcome.ac.uk/jobs/graduate-development-programme>.
- **Worthwhile** www.worthwhile.org.uk (various closing dates over the year).
- **graduniqu**e is a joint British Heart Foundation and Macmillan Cancer Trust Graduate Scheme www.graduniqu.e.org.uk. Closing date for September start was 12 March 2017.
- **CASE Europe's Graduate Trainee Scheme** opens in February and is for those seeking a career in fundraising and philanthropy within schools, higher education and not-for-profit sectors www.case.org.
- **Sanctuary Group Graduate Scheme** involves rotations in Affordable Housing, Sanctuary Care, Commercial, Development, or Central Services www.sanctuary-group.co.uk/careers/graduates.

Some charities advertise structured volunteer internship schemes which are unpaid although some may offer travel and lunch expenses to help you. A list of some of the main schemes can be found here: <http://targetjobs.co.uk/career-sectors/public-service-charity-and-social-work/288141-graduate-schemes-and-internships-in-the-charity-not-for-profit-s>.

There is also an opportunity to intern unpaid (lunch and travel expenses only) with <http://yearhere.org/>. They do have some means tested bursaries

It may be possible to work some of these jobs round some other paid work as charities do recognise working for nothing full time is not a possibility for everyone. Any kind of volunteering will definitely give you networking contacts and access to paid work opportunities particularly where vacancies may be advertised internally first. It can also give you confidence that you have the capability to do a job because you have learned what is involved by talking to key people. Big charities like Barnardo's and smaller local charities who deliver projects direct to clients like the elderly, children or those with learning difficulties may also advertise on their websites for paid sessional workers. This can be useful experience for those who cannot afford to work for nothing because you can get a frontline view of their work.

The majority of paid openings in the Charity Sector will be immediate start positions, and you may only be able to apply in the months leading up to your graduation and beyond. However it's never too early to start browsing for positions to get an idea of what is out there and what the employers are looking for. Many charities will advertise for short term positions which may or may not be renewed. Don't expect to find your perfect job straight away. You may have to make a few job moves before you find your dream job. You'll need to focus on developing the right skills that will help you get to where you want to be. Do your research and find out about charities that interest you and whether they advertise jobs on their websites. Sign up for email job alerts and newsletters if they offer them.

There are also a few specialist recruitment agencies that you can use to find entry-level positions suitable for a new graduate. Links to these can be found at the end of this helpsheet. Honing your office skills would not be a bad idea. Make sure you are competent at Microsoft packages like Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Access. This means that you might be able to get paid office work in a charity if working as a volunteer isn't an option for you. Hopefully you will prove yourself and find you can apply for more responsible roles once you are established.

Another route is to train and gain experience in the commercial world before joining a charity as an experienced employee. For example learning about logistics in a graduate training scheme could enable you to transfer these skills to disaster relief or developing your career in an accountancy professional services firm by working with public sector clients and then joining a not for profit organisation to work in Finance exclusively for them.

Networking

Networking is a key skill required for finding voluntary and paid work within this sector. Most people in the sector will have had a previous connection with the first organisation they get paid to work for, usually as volunteer or via another contact in the sector. Read about networking and creative job hunting in our *Finding a graduate job guide* which you can collect from the Careers Service or download from our website: www.bath.ac.uk/students/careers/information-resources/helpsheets. In this you will find out about how you can develop your own contacts directly or through social media like LinkedIn. For instance, following charities on Twitter and Facebook can be a really useful way of engaging in dialogue with the organisation and can prove useful if you want to find out more about working for particular organisations direct from the people who work there.

It's also worth checking Bath Connection for Bath Alumni working in the Charity Sector www.bath.ac.uk/alumni/help/engage/bath-connection.

Applying for Jobs

It seems pretty obvious to say this but apply only for roles that really interest you. Applications done well are quite time consuming so you don't want to waste your energy on jobs you don't really want. You might be feeling desperate to find something, anything, but it is pretty hard to be convincing in an application for a job when you have only half an interest in it. Tailor your CV to the role you are applying for and bear in mind that many charities require you to complete application forms rather than sending a CV and covering letter.

With application forms read carefully the person specification or job description and address all the points with concrete examples from your experience. However make sure you edit it so it does not become too lengthy. The employer will use the job specification to short list so if you fail to address what they are looking for they cannot shortlist you. Our *Application, CV and cover letter guide* and *Interviews and assessment centres guide*, provide more comprehensive help www.bath.ac.uk/students/careers/information-resources/helpsheets. Read these, have a go yourself and then ask for advice from a Careers Adviser.

Demonstrating your motivation for both the role and the organisation is vital when making applications and during interviews. An organisation's mission statement, purpose and values are really worth connecting to and relating to your own values and drivers. Team spirit is very important in small organisations especially. Think about how you can demonstrate your contribution to a team especially when facing a difficult situation or when you have all had to pull together regardless of your actual responsibilities.

Further Help from the Careers Service

- Our catalogue contains lots of useful links and can be found at www.bath.ac.uk/students/careers/information-resources/catalogue/occupational/index.html#charities. There are links to websites and books which can help you explore more about this area.
- *Directory of Charities, Volunteering and Gap Year Opportunities* - A directory produced by the Careers Service of charities and voluntary organisations which offer vacation and gap year opportunities in the UK and abroad. This includes volunteer, internship and TEFL programmes, as well as other work and travel schemes (summer camps, expeditions, cultural exchanges etc.) www.bath.ac.uk/students/careers/docs/cvgy.pdf.
- Prospects Charity and Voluntary Work Guide www.prospects.ac.uk/charities_voluntary_sector.htm.
- Check our events programme in the Autumn for an event on working in a Charity. You will find this listed as an event in *MyFuture*, <https://myfuture.bath.ac.uk>.
- Careers helpsheet - *International development, international organisations and international relations* www.bath.ac.uk/students/careers/docs/internationaldevelopment.pdf.
- The Sunday Times 100 Best Not-for-Profit Organisations to Work For – <http://features.thesundaytimes.co.uk/public/best100companies>.
- Association of Fundraising Consultants list of members <http://afc.org.uk/our-members>.

Job Hunting Sources

Look for jobs on recruitment websites and agencies like:

- www.jobsincharities.co.uk
- www.charityjob.co.uk
- www.jobs.guardian.co.uk
- www.charitypeople.co.uk
- prospect-us.co.uk
- www.tpp.co.uk
- www.flowcaritas.co.uk

or in Charity Trade Press: Third Sector, Professional Fundraising, Engage Magazine
or in relevant Professional Press for example Marketing Week, TES, Health Service Journal
or websites of individual charities.

Keeping up to date

You can sign up for the **Guardian Voluntary Sector Network** www.theguardian.com/voluntary-sector-network which will send you regular updates of the latest news about the sector, invaluable for keeping up to date with the sector and especially for applications and interviews.

Blogs are a good way to become aware of the debates going on within a profession. For example the **National Council for Voluntary Services (NCVO)** posts regular blogs on its website <http://blogs.ncvo.org.uk/>. Also check out this list of top non-profit blogs <http://topnonprofits.com/lists/nonprofit-blogs/>.

LinkedIn is a place where you can join groups. One of particular interest is “Careers in the charity/nonprofit sector”. If you don’t have a LinkedIn profile you’ll need to set one up to join. Here are a couple of links to help you: www.slideshare.net/linkedin/the-students-guide-to-linkedin and www.lboro.ac.uk/media/www/lboroacuk/external/content/services/careersandemployabilitycentre/downloads/advice/linkedin%20checklist.pdf .

From time to time we also offer training sessions on our events programme advertised on MyFuture <https://myfuture.bath.ac.uk>.

Twitter is another place to pick up the latest news and comment. This articles tells you who the top charity CEOs are on social media www.theguardian.com/voluntary-sector-network/2016/nov/18/30-charity-ceos-chief-executives-social-media-awards.

The professional press is a good place to keep an eye out for all the latest issues facing the sector. Good News Shared is a positive charitable news website <http://goodnewsshared.com/>. Charity Times will tell you all the latest issues in the sector www.charitytimes.com while this website specialises in communications www.charitycomms.org.uk and this one www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk on fundraising.

Careers Service

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If you need this information in another format, please contact us.

www.bath.ac.uk/careers.