

Charitable Status and Sport

The Charity Commission has recognised 'the promotion of community participation in healthy recreation by providing facilities for playing particular sports' as charitable.

The Commission has also recognised 'the advancement of the physical education of young people not undergoing formal education' as charitable.

The law does not regard the promotion of any particular sport, for its own sake, as charitable. However, charities are able to encourage participation in sporting activity as a means to a variety of charitable ends.

In practical terms a community amateur sports club (CASC) can be a charity provided two criteria are satisfied:

1. the sport in question must be capable of improving physical health and fitness and
2. the club must have an open membership, that is, access to the club's facilities must be genuinely available to anyone who wishes to take advantage of them

The guidance means that overall in a charitable CASC:

- the sport in question can be shown to promote physical health and fitness
- the club is open to anyone who wants to join, regardless of ability
- any special clothing or equipment is, where possible, provided free or at reduced rates by the club or is affordable
- more and less skillful or competitive players are, as far as reasonably practicable, treated even-handedly for access to facilities and other purposes
- no payments or private benefits are given to players
- no separate and distinct benefits (for example social facilities) are provided for non-playing members
- refreshment and social facilities are provided only where they are ancillary to participation in healthy recreation

To be charitable, a CASC will need to be able to show that it exists for the benefit of the general public rather than for its members.

There are some sports which do not meet the criteria for 'healthy recreation' including: angling, ballooning, motor sports, parachuting, billiards, snooker, pool, rifle and pistol shooting and flying.

For more information contact the Charity Commission:
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission

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