



# UNITED KINGDOM

OECD Global Action on Promoting Social and Solidarity Economy Ecosystems

United Kingdom does not have a national framework around the social and solidarity economy (SSE). In United Kingdom, there were **249 092 SSE entities** in 2022. The share of **women** employed in civil society in 2022 was **67.7%**, compared to **48.1%** in the broader economy.

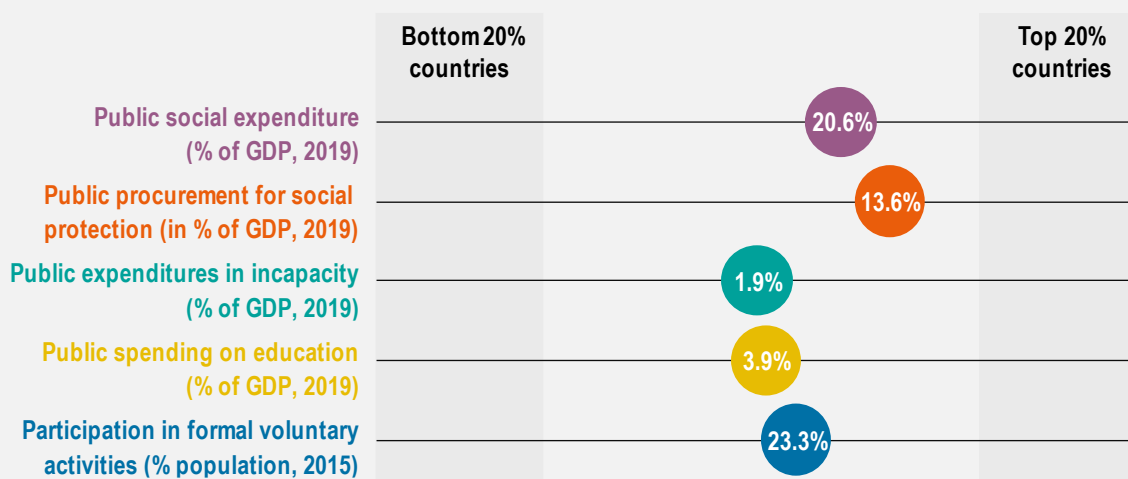
## SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS

United Kingdom is a unitary country. It is a high-income country with a very high human development level.

	GDP per capita	Labour force participation rate	Youth not in employment, education or training (NEET)	Poverty rate	Gini coefficient	Rural population	Stakeholder engagement for developing regulations
<b>United Kingdom</b>	USD 53 942	78.3%	11.8%	11.2%	0.335	4.01%	3.1%
<b>OECD</b>	USD 53 937	73.2%	14.8%	11.0%	0.313 / 1	23.1%	2.1 / 4

Note: United Kingdom's data refer to 2022, except for poverty rate (2020), Gini coefficient (2020), rural population (2021) and stakeholder engagement (2017). OECD data refer to 2022, except for poverty rate (2018), Gini coefficient (2016), rural population (2021) and stakeholder engagement (2017). Share of rural population for United Kingdom is an estimated value. See sources at the end of the document.

## Country position in selected social indicators



Note: For each indicator, the position of the bubble on the line represents the country's ranking compared to OECD and EU countries. Higher rankings are on the right. The panel of countries for the international ranking can vary from an indicator to another due to data availability. See sources at the end of the document.

## SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY ECOSYSTEM

### Definition of the social and solidarity economy in United Kingdom

No official definition of the SSE is available in the country.



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This Country Fact Sheet is prepared in the framework of the [OECD Global Action "Promoting Social and Solidarity Economy Ecosystems"](#), funded by the European Union. It is part of a series of country pages that provide information and relevant data on the social and solidarity economy ecosystems across the world.

## Institutional frameworks



### Institutions

The government, primarily through the **Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS)**, plays an important role in facilitating and steering the development of the SSE in United Kingdom.



### Legal instruments

Several legal instruments have been adopted to support SSE entities, such as the **Community Interest Company legal form**, the **Social Value Act** and the **Social Enterprise Mark**.



### Stakeholder engagement

**Social Enterprise UK** is United Kingdom's membership body for social enterprises. It works with public and private sectors to support the activities of social enterprises.

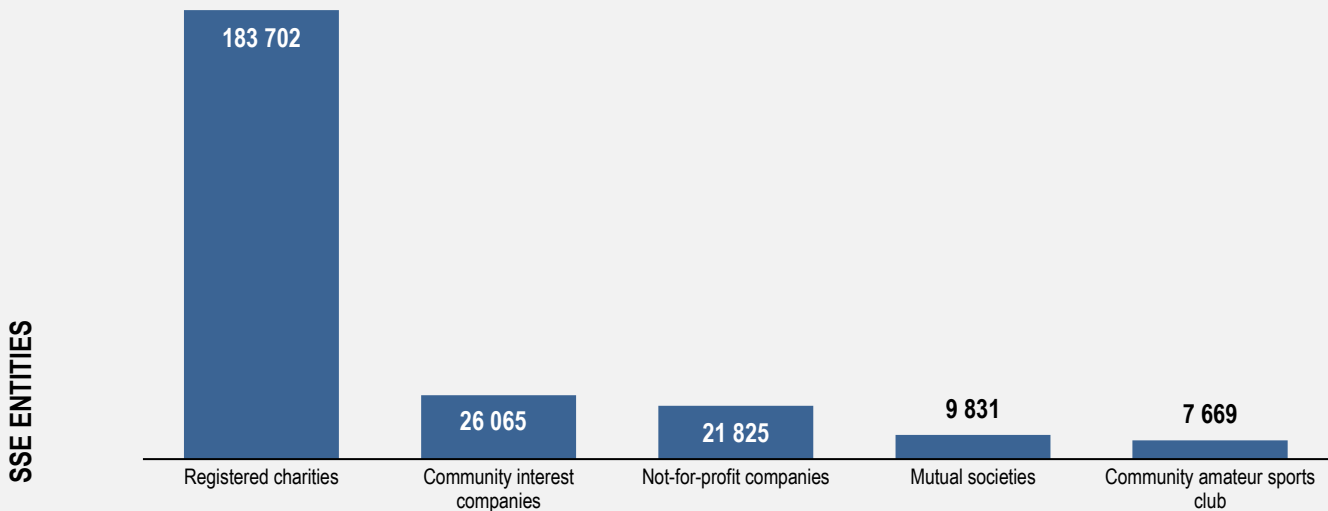
## Main figures

In United Kingdom, there were **249 092 SSE entities** in 2022. The share of **women** employed in civil society in 2022 was **67.7%**, compared to **48.1%** in the broader economy. **27%** of adults took part in formal volunteering at least once in the last year as of 2022.

### SCOPE

In the absence of an official definition of the SSE, data on the SSE are provided according to a common understanding of what entities can be seen as part of the field.

Number of SSE entities (2022)



Note: Registered charities cover England and Wales only. Mutual societies already include 426 cooperatives in the United Kingdom.



### Employment (FTE) in registered charities (2021)

**1 243 644**

Note: Registered charities cover England and Wales only.

### REACH

#### Gender equity



Women represented **67.7%** of civil society employment while their share in total economy was 48.1% in 2021.

#### Volunteering



**27%** of adults took part in formal volunteering at least once in the last year as of 2022.

#### Economic contribution



Civil society's Gross Value Added amounted to **GBP 17 billion** in 2021.

Note: Being employed in civil society entails that the employees work for an organisation that is not "a private firm or business, a limited company", and is a "charity, voluntary organisation or trust".

## Legal frameworks

Legal frameworks to support the development of the SSE can be adopted at the national and subnational levels. They can regulate the SSE as a whole, or specific legal entities of the SSE (such as associations, cooperatives, mutual societies, foundations and social enterprises).

<b>For the SSE</b>	<i>Not available</i>
<b>For specific SSE entities at national level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Charities Act (2011) – <a href="#">link</a></li> <li>Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act (2014) – <a href="#">link</a></li> </ul>

Note: The list above is not exhaustive of all existing legal frameworks around SSE in United Kingdom.




## Fiscal treatment

Different fiscal treatment can be established for the social and solidarity economy as a whole, or for specific SSE entities, at the national and subnational level.

Fiscal treatment of SSE entities	Fiscal treatment for contributors to the SSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registered charities can claim Gift Aid and receive GBP 0.25 from HM Treasury for every GBP 1 donated by UK tax payers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social Investment Tax Relief Scheme for individual investments into SSE organisations</li> </ul>

## Social impact measurement initiatives

Driven by a mission of social purpose, SSE entities are increasingly requested to demonstrate the positive value that they generate through their activities. Social impact measurement enables them to assess their positive contribution to society. A diverse range of possible initiatives are available to governments and practitioners to foster a social impact measurement culture.

 Evidence-based initiatives	 Guidance-based initiatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Justice Data Lab</a> (2014) △ Ministry of Justice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Standards of evidence</a> (2013) △ National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA)</li> <li><a href="#">Outcomes Star</a> (2013) △ Triangle with Big Lottery Fund support</li> <li><a href="#">Charities Statement of Recommended Practice</a> (2013) △ Chartered Institute of Public Finance &amp; Accountancy</li> </ul>
 Policy framework	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">The Social Value Act</a> (2013) △ Government of United Kingdom</li> <li><a href="#">Procurement Reform Act</a> (2014) △ Scottish Government, United Kingdom</li> </ul>	

Note: Evidence-based initiatives help produce and disseminate impact evidence to raise awareness on the social and solidarity economy as a whole, and to reduce the cost of accessing data for single and particularly small-sized entities. Guidance-based initiatives deliver guidance on social impact measurement approaches, which are tailored to the specific needs of the social and solidarity economy. Policy frameworks create enabling conditions and set targeted incentives to conduct social impact measurement.

## FURTHER READING ON THE SSE IN UNITED KINGDOM

[Roger Spear: The Social Economy in the UK](#) | [iSE Research Team for West Midlands Combined Authority: Growing the Social Economy in the WMCA area](#) | [Social Enterprise UK: Social Enterprise Advisory Panel \(SEAP\)](#) | [European Commission: Social Enterprises and their Ecosystems United Kingdom Country Report](#)

## DATA SOURCES

- Socio-economic data refer to 2022 unless stated otherwise, and relate to data downloaded as of 17 July 2023. Datasets used: GDP per capita, current PPP: OECD national accounts statistics, <https://doi.org/10.1787/na-data-en>; Labour force participation rate (15-64 year old): OECD Employment and Labour Market Statistics, <https://doi.org/10.1787/data-00310-en>; NEET (15-29 year olds, all levels of education): OECD Education at a Glance 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1787/19991487>; Poverty rate (after taxes and transfers, poverty line 50%): OECD Social and Welfare Statistics (database), <https://doi.org/10.1787/data-00654-en>; Gini coefficient (disposable income, post taxes and transfers): OECD Income Distribution Database, <https://www.oecd.org/social/income-distribution-database.htm>; Rural population (OECD): OECD, CFE Regions and Cities databases, <http://oe.cd/geostats>; Stakeholder engagement for developing regulations: OECD Better Life Index, <https://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/#/111111111111>; Public social expenditures: OECD Social Expenditure Database (SOCX), <http://dotstat.oecd.org/Index.aspx?QueryId=26920>; Share of public procurement for social protection (in % of total general government procurements): OECD (2022), "Government at a Glance - 2021 edition", <http://dotstat.oecd.org/Index.aspx?QueryId=107598>; Public spending on incapacity: OECD (2022); Public spending on incapacity (indicator), <https://doi.org/10.1787/f35b71ed-en> (Public spending on incapacity refers to spending due to sickness, disability and occupational injury); Spending on education (primary to tertiary level, in % of GDP): OECD Education Statistics (database), <https://doi.org/10.1787/c4e1b551-en>; Participation in formal voluntary activities (% of people): Eurostat table [ilc\_scp19], based on the 2015 EU-SILC ad-hoc module.
- SSE data were collected through OECD questionnaire circulated in May 2022. The data for United Kingdom were provided by the Civil Society and Youth Directorate of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.
- Further information on the methodology followed in the country fact sheets can be found [here](#).

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