Without assuming prior legal knowledge, books in the Directions series introduce and guide readers through key points of law and legal debate. Questions, diagrams and exercises help readers to engage fully with each subject and check their understanding as they progress. Charitable trusts are not subject to the objections against private purpose trusts and enjoy certain privileges. Charities are not public institutions, but are nevertheless subject to judicial control, to the constitutional protection of the Crown as parens patriae (acting through the Attorney-General) and to the supervision of the Charity Commission. Moreover, they are not subject to the beneficiary principle and to the rule against inalienability of capital. This chapter deals with charitable trusts and discusses the distinction between legal and ‘everyday’ notions of charity. It also examines a charitable purpose, the advantages and disadvantages of charitable status, limits on the recognition of charitable trusts, what happens when a charitable purpose fails, whether the purpose of a charitable status is sufficiently beneficial to the public and the administration of charitable trusts. The chapter furthermore considers trust law and tax law privileges; the roles of charities, such as the
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prevention or relief of poverty and the advancement of education and religion; the public benefit requirement in educational trusts; recreational charities; the exclusivity requirement; the doctrine of *cy près*; and the disposal of surplus donations.

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