

Summary of main context and terminology for most common legal structures adopted by social businesses

What's my legal structure?	What's my Board called?	Who regulates my business?	The legislation governing my business is?	My governing document is called?	What is the liability of my Board members?	Can my business have charitable status?
Unincorporated body: Non-charity status	Management committee	None	N/A	Constitution	Personal liability	Can apply to the Charity Commission for charitable registration
Unincorporated body: Charity status	Management committee and Trustees	Charity Commission	Charities Act 2011	Constitution	Personal liability	Yes
Incorporated: Registered Society	Board of Directors	Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)	Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014	Society Rules	Limited liability	Can apply to HMRC for exempt charity status but cannot register with the Charity Commission
Incorporated: Community Interest Company (CIC)	Board of Directors	CIC Regulator and Companies House	Companies Act 2006	Articles of Association	Limited liability	No

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Incorporated: Company Limited by Guarantee (not a charity)	Board of Directors	Companies House	Companies Act 2006	Articles of Association	Limited liability	Can apply to the Charity Commission for charitable registration
Incorporated: Company Limited by Guarantee and registered charity (Charitable Company)	Board of Directors and Charitable Trustees	Companies House and Charity Commission	Companies Act 2006 and Charities Act 2011	Articles of association	Limited liability	Yes
Incorporated: Charitable Incorporated Organisation	Charitable Trustees	Charity Commission	Charities Act 2011	Constitution	Limited liability	Yes