COUNTRY GUIDE



EUROPE

United Kingdom.

The sources checked describe a general rule in negligence of no liability for pure omissions, so there is no broad duty to help a stranger. Parliament has told courts in England and Wales to consider socially beneficial and heroic conduct when judging negligence, and government supports giving through Gift Aid, Payroll Giving and the honours system.

DUTY TO HELP A STRANGER
No general duty found

PROTECTION FOR HELPERS
Limited

GIVING AND SERVICE
4 programs and laws

Is there a legal duty to help a stranger?

NO GENERAL DUTY FOUND

A scholarly article hosted by the University of Oxford describes the general rule of no liability in negligence for pure omissions, with exceptions such as assumed responsibility. A narrow statutory duty exists for drivers: section 170 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 requires a driver involved in an accident causing injury to stop and give information. The sources checked do not address Scotland or Northern Ireland separately.

Rationalising omissions liability in negligence (Oxford University Research Archive) Road Traffic Act 1988, section 170 (legislation.gov.uk (The National Archives))

Are people who help protected?

LIMITED

The Social Action, Responsibility and Heroism Act 2015 (England and Wales) requires a court deciding a negligence or breach of statutory duty claim to have regard to whether the person was acting for the benefit of society (s. 2), demonstrated a predominantly responsible approach (s. 3), or acted heroically by intervening in an emergency to assist an individual in danger (s. 4). It is a factor for courts, not a grant of immunity.

Social Action, Responsibility and Heroism Act 2015, section 2 (legislation.gov.uk (The National Archives)) Social Action, Responsibility and Heroism Act 2015, section 3 (legislation.gov.uk (The National Archives)) Social Action, Responsibility and Heroism Act 2015, section 4 (legislation.gov.uk (The National Archives))

How the government promotes giving and service

Gift Aid

Donating through Gift Aid means charities and community amateur sports clubs can claim an extra 25p for every pound given, at no extra cost to the donor, if a Gift Aid declaration is made.

GOV.UK (HM REVENUE AND CUSTOMS)

Tax relief when you donate to a charity (overview, GOV.UK)

GOV.UK sets out tax relief for donations made through Gift Aid, straight from wages or pension through a Payroll Giving scheme, and by gifts of land, property or shares.

GOV.UK

The honours system and gallantry awards

The honours system recognizes people who have made life better for other people; anyone can nominate someone, and gallantry awards, the only honours that can be awarded after death, recognize bravery.

GOV.UK

Volunteer opportunities, rights and expenses
GOV.UK points to volunteer-finding services and sets out volunteers' rights and rules on pay and expenses.
GOV.UK

Ways to give and volunteer

The UK has a mature charity sector with public registers and a fundraising regulator, so most checks can be done online in minutes. Check a charity's registration number first.

Check a charity before you give

Search any charity in England and Wales to confirm it is registered and see its accounts; Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own regulators (OSCR and the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland).

Charity Commission register of charities (England and Wales)

Give your time

Do-it
A UK-wide charity-run site for finding local volunteering opportunities.

British Red Cross volunteering
Roles in emergency response, first aid and community support across the UK.

Volunteering Matters
A national charity that runs volunteering programs for people of all ages.

Give money, blood or a donation

NHS Blood and Transplant: give blood
Book a blood donation appointment in England.

NHS Organ Donation Register
Register your decision on organ donation and learn how it works.

Fundraising Regulator
The independent regulator for charitable fundraising, with a code of practice and a register of fundraising organizations.

The Trussell Trust food bank finder
Find a local food bank in the largest UK network, to donate food or time.

UK Community Foundations
The network of local community foundations that direct gifts to local causes.

In an emergency or a crisis

Samaritans
Free, confidential emotional support by phone on 116 123, any time.

Before you act

- **Check the charity number on the register before giving, and be careful with doorstep, street and text or social media appeals from people who cannot show one. Fundraisers should be able to show ID and follow the Fundraising Regulator's code. Visitors on tourist visas should ask whether unpaid volunteering is allowed before agreeing to any role.**

This list does not cover individual local charities or crowdfunding. Checked 2026-10-28. Listing an organization is not an endorsement, and none of them has endorsed this site. Some official sites block automatic checks, so a link may need a second try.

One thing worth knowing

The 2015 Act is unusual in directing courts to weigh social action and heroic intervention directly, rather than granting blanket immunity.

What this does not mean

The 2015 Act applies to England and Wales only and does not remove liability. The sources checked cover civil negligence and one statutory driver duty, not every criminal-law omission rule, and Scotland and Northern Ireland were not separately verified. Nothing here is legal advice. This is a plain-language summary of public sources, not legal advice, and it does not rank countries. No government named here has endorsed this site. Not reviewed by a lawyer. Statutes were read in public sources and may have changed. Last checked October 26, 2026.

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