

Nottinghamshire State of the Sector



2022

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INTRODUCTION

This report has been coordinated through members of the Nottinghamshire Together partnership and seeks to provide an insight into the state of the sector as it emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic. The partners would like to thank all the voluntary groups and organisations who took part in the survey and its wider consultation processes. It is appreciated that groups and organisations responded at a time of competing pressures and wider COVID-19 impact on service users, volunteers and staff. The contribution of the sector is clearly demonstrated throughout this report and enables us to highlight our unique strengths:

- the sector's flexibility.
- how we have adapted as a sector.
- how we recognise the challenges ahead.
- the challenge of structural changes and wider impacts on society that we need to understand and respond to.
- our ability to provide timely insight through our community voice.

The pandemic has highlighted the value of the Voluntary and Community Sector, demonstrating our ability to respond and deliver at a time of unprecedented uncertainty. The insight provided through this report shows that existing organisations 'stepped up' and newcomers 'stepped forward'; this resulted in the sector having an equal 'seat at the table', in many instances for the first time.

The challenge moving forward, at a time of severe financial pressure for many, is to continue to secure funding and capacity to support Nottinghamshire residents.

This report demonstrates the value of the **Voluntary and Community Sector** and moving forward it is hoped that wider stakeholders continue to work with and invest in it.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE TOGETHER PARTNERSHIP

Ashfield Voluntary Action
Bassetlaw CVS
Community Accounting Plus
Mansfield CVS
Newark & Sherwood CVS
Nottingham CVS
RCAN
Rushcliffe CVS
Self Help UK
+ Nottinghamshire County Council

KEY STRATEGIC AIMS

- To ensure that infrastructure in Nottinghamshire serves frontline public benefit organisations' needs effectively.
- To ensure the involvement of public benefit organisations, particularly small frontline community organisations, in the design, development and delivery of services to the people of Nottinghamshire.



METHODOLOGY

This analysis involved the distribution, via the Nottinghamshire Together partnership, of a standard survey to VCS organisations. The survey was organised into sections, including a series of questions on the organisation and structure of the sector, finances and funding and understanding the impact of change. Survey questions were a mixture of pre-set choices (e.g. Strongly Agree - Strongly Disagree) and free form questions. COVID-19 was a key line of enquiry running throughout the survey, including gathering evidence on the financial impact and the influence it has had on service delivery.

For the purpose of the report, the main sections have been organised to match the survey structure; however the impact of COVID-19 has been grouped into a standalone section. The survey data was organised to create a single dataset allowing data to be queried as a whole database.

The survey offered over 30 sector areas as options to choose from. For the purposes of reporting on this question, several sectors have been amalgamated into a group area, creating a composite result. These composite sectors are: Health & Wellbeing, Social Activities, Food Provision, Funding and Equalities.

COMPOSITE SECTOR	SURVEY SECTORS	% OF ORGANISATIONS
HEALTH & WELLBEING	HEALTH & WELLBEING GENERAL, LONG TERM, MENTAL HEALTH	16%
SOCIAL ACTIVITIES	SOCIAL ACTIVITIES, SPORTS, FITNESS, LEISURE	13%
FOOD PROVISION	FOOD PROVISION, FOOD BANKS, POVERTY, LOW INCOME	7%
FUNDING	FUNDING, GRANTS, INFRASTRUCTURE	2%
EQUALITIES	ADVOCACY, EQUALITIES, HUMAN & CIVIL RIGHTS	2%

Executive Summary Highlights

This report features an infographic executive summary, which highlights the key findings from each section of the main report and can be used separately for standalone communications.

Summary District Insights

Nottinghamshire Together partners carried out a number of additional activities in order to gather District or Issue specific feedback as part of the State of the Sector process. In a number of instances, this included focus groups, both online and face to face, which provided the opportunity to discuss issues highlighted in more detail. This also provided the chance for rural communities, including Parish Councils, to highlight their specific challenges.

See [Appendix 1](#) for the District Insight Summaries.

DEFINITIONS

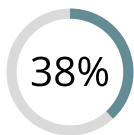
This report covers the 'state of the voluntary and community sector' (VCS) across Nottinghamshire. This definition of the sector includes social enterprises and has been used interchangeably with the 'community and voluntary sector' (CVS), the 'voluntary, community and social enterprise sector' (VCSE) and the Third Sector.

The data excludes Nottingham City, although the survey design and lines of enquiry were developed to maximise the standardisation of the evidence by the Nottinghamshire Together partnership, which includes city and county VCS lead representation. A separate report has therefore also been developed for Nottingham City.

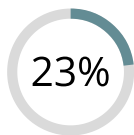
PART ONE - ABOUT THE SECTOR



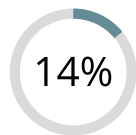
STRUCTURE OF THE SECTOR



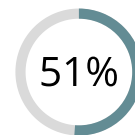
organisations are registered charities.



organisations are registered as a Community Group.

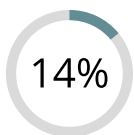


organisations have been operating for less than 4 years.

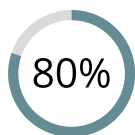


organisations have been operating for over 20 years.

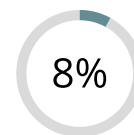
GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS



organisations are operating across all of Nottinghamshire.

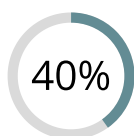


organisations deliver solely across the Nottinghamshire area.

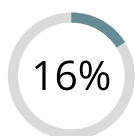


organisations operate regionally.

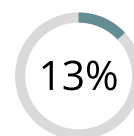
SERVICE FOCUS



organisations' service focus is non client group specific.



organisations operate in the Health & Wellbeing service sector.

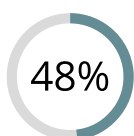


organisations operate in the Social Activities Sector.

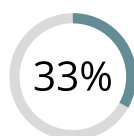
STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS



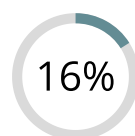
approximately 6,000 volunteers involved across Nottinghamshire.



organisations have no paid staff



organisations have less than 10 paid staff.



organisations have 10-49 paid staff



5% organisations with 50-100 volunteers involved.

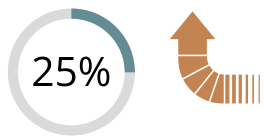


92% organisations with 0-50 volunteers involved.

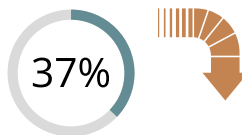
PART TWO - UNDERSTANDING CHANGE



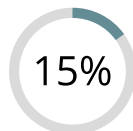
DEMAND FOR SERVICES



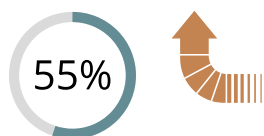
organisations have increased paid staff.



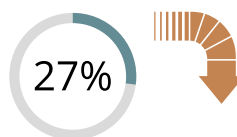
reported a decrease in volunteers.



reported no change in demand for their services and 2% unsure.



organisations confirmed that demand for their services had increased.

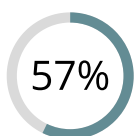


organisations confirmed that demand for their services had decreased.

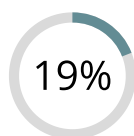


Organisations were asked a series of questions in relation to changes in demand for services. Of those organisations that reported an increase in demand, surprisingly only 57% attributed that to Covid-19, however for those that had seen a decrease in demand, 76% felt that it was directly attributable to the pandemic.

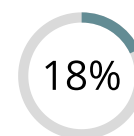
PARTNERSHIP WORKING



sphere of partnership working has not increased.



have worked with Local Authorities in the last 2 years.

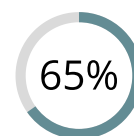


think they will be working with Local Authorities in the next 12 months.

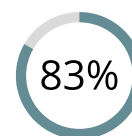
Respondents were asked if their organisation had worked in partnership with other organisations to a greater extent and the impact of COVID-19 on this. For 57% of organisations, their sphere of partnership working had not increased, for 30% it had and for 13% they were unsure. Interestingly, the view was that COVID-19 had not particularly impacted on those who had not extended their partnerships but for those who had, they felt that this was largely attributable to the pandemic.

STRUCTURAL CHANGES

Organisations were asked about the likelihood of closing services, with the positive news that 65% reported that this was not likely. In terms of closing altogether, fortunately the positive news is that a total of 83% of respondents believed that it was either Unlikely or Very Unlikely that they would close. Of the 5% of organisations that cited that they were likely to close in the next 12 months, all are community groups employing no staff or are micro organisations.



are unlikely to close any services in the next 12 months.

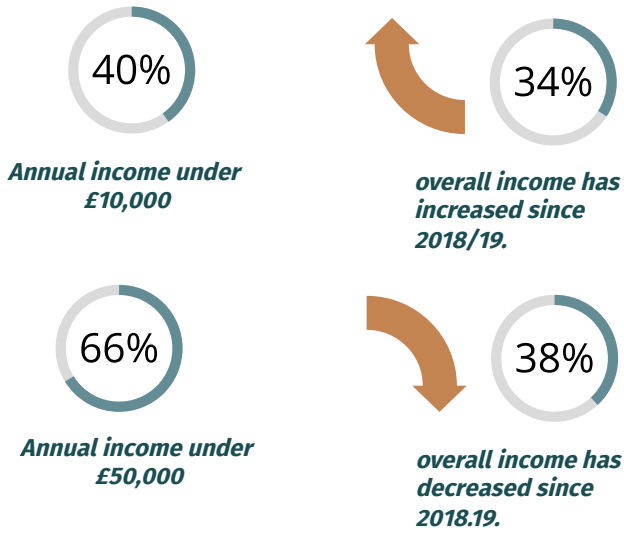


are unlikely to close in the next 12 months.

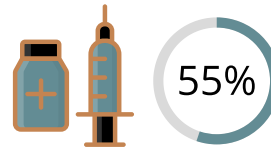
PART THREE- FINANCES & FUNDING



ANNUAL INCOME

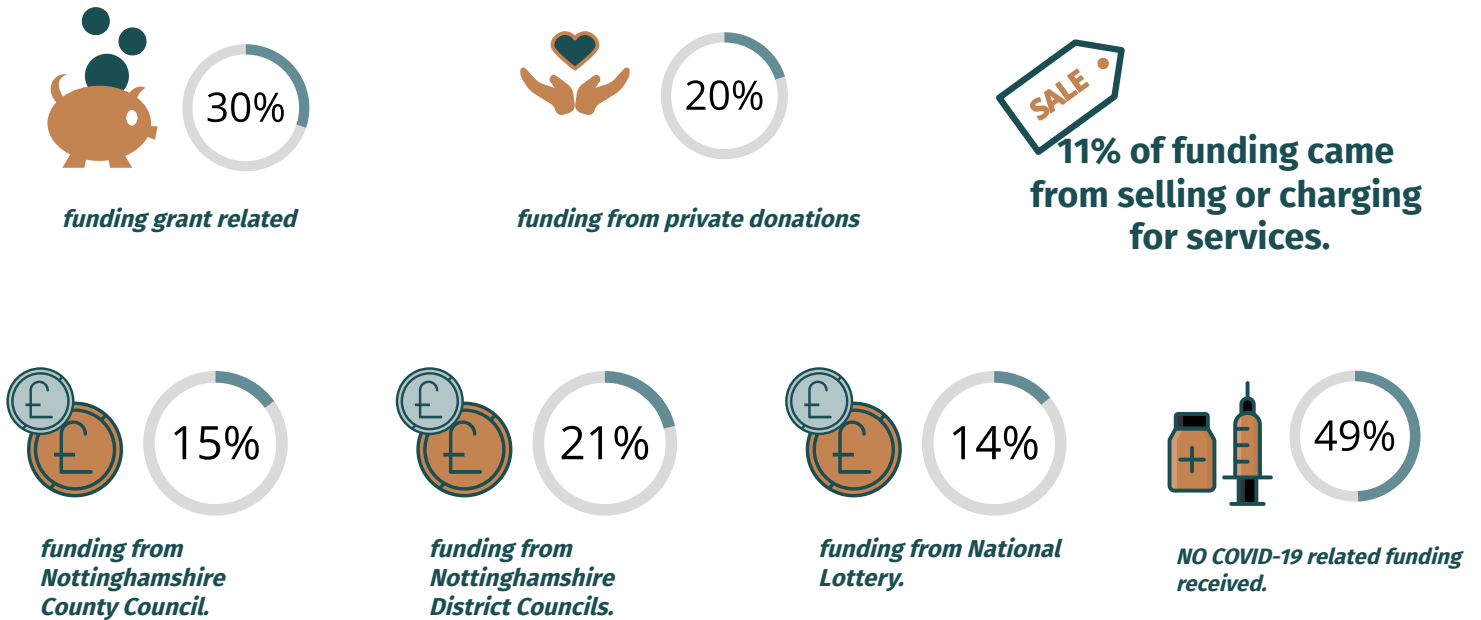


DIRECT IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON INCOME LEVELS



reported that COVID-19 has had a direct impact on income levels, with the majority reporting it has directly caused a decrease.

TYPES OF FUNDING



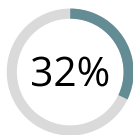
FINANCIAL RESILIENCE



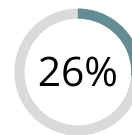
PART FOUR - CHALLENGES & SUPPORT



ABILITY TO INFLUENCE



Agree or strongly agree on the ability to influence local decisions

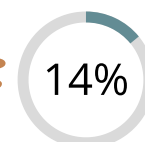
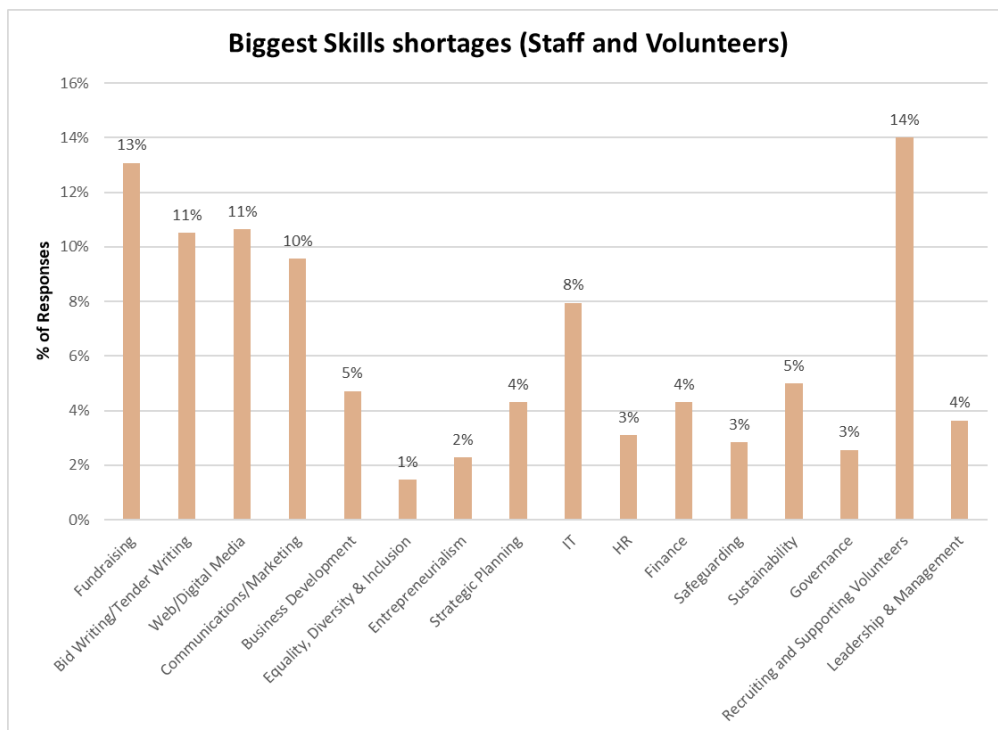


Disagree or strongly disagree on the ability to influence local decisions

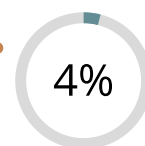
SKILLS CHALLENGES



The survey asked respondents to detail their biggest skills shortages and the issue of recruiting and supporting volunteers was the most frequently cited, with fundraising at a similar level. Interestingly leadership and management skills did not rank highly which could suggest that the sector feels that there is sufficient leadership and management capacity in place.



of all responses cited recruiting and supporting volunteers as the biggest skills shortage.



of all responses cited leadership and management as a skills shortage.

INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT

TOP 3 AREAS FOR SUPPORT

Funding Applications, Volunteer Development & Recruitment and Organisational Development.



For those organisations that highlighted training as an area that they needed support with, specific areas included:-

- First aid
- Health and Safety
- IT
- Safeguarding
- Support for Volunteers
- Business Development

PART FIVE - IMPACT OF COVID-19



The quotes below highlight the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on Nottinghamshire residents. Part Five of the report captures a detailed narrative of the impact and issues that the pandemic has caused and/or compounded.

"We are seeing people who have complex multiple issues, some as result a direct result of COVID-19 (relationship breakdown, homelessness, loss of income, employment issues) and some that might have had problems for some time (mental health issues, long term illness, financial problems, benefit problems) and COVID-19 has made the situation worse. We are also seeing people that are struggling with loneliness and acute anxiety as a result of COVID-19."

"We are facing a tsunami of desperate cases due to Universal Credit cuts, energy costs increase."

"More children with complex needs- more disadvantaged children with emotional, social or behavioural issues as a result of COVID-19."

"We are oversubscribed for our mental health services which we run across the County. We are very worried about the next wave of demand due to cost of living and think that this will be worse than COVID-19 as it is now everyone. For many people income stayed stable during COVID-19 – this won't be the case over the next 2 years."

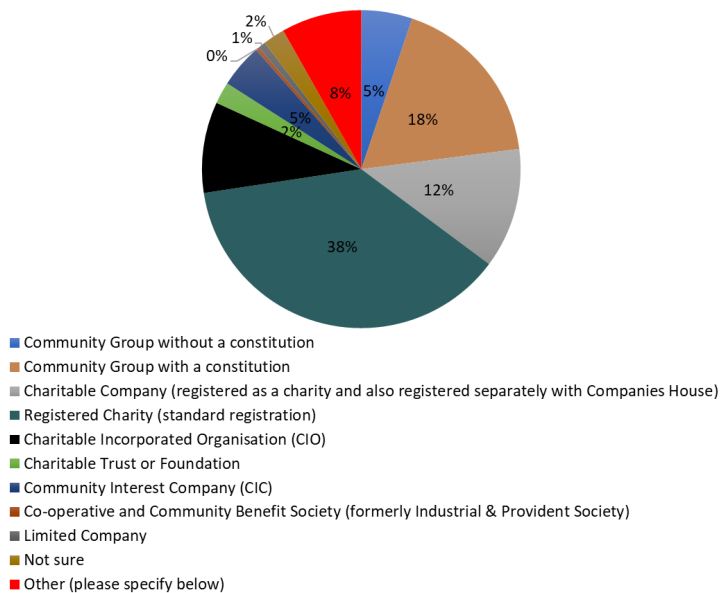
PART ONE - ABOUT THE SECTOR

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS REFLECTED THE DIVERSITY OF THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR ACROSS NOTTINGHAMSHIRE. THIS REPORT FEATURES INSIGHTS FROM GROUPS AND CHARITIES IN ALL DISTRICTS, INCLUDING COMMUNITY SOCIAL ENTERPRISES, RURAL ORGANISATIONS AND PARISH COUNCILS.

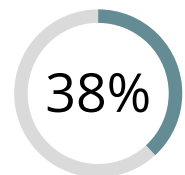
ORGANISATION TYPES

Organisations were asked to confirm their legal status. The highest response rate was for 'Registered Charity', with 38% organisations confirming they are legally registered as a charity. A further 12% are registered as a Charitable Company (with dual registration both with the Charities Commission and with Companies House). Grouped together, 23% of organisations confirmed they are constituted as either a Community Group with a constitution (18%) or without a constitution (5%). Further responses included 9% registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and 4% as a Community Interest Company (CIC).

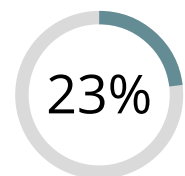
Legal Status of Organisations



Additional legal status constitutions include Charitable Trust or Foundation (2%) and just 1% registered as a Limited Company. Furthermore 8% of organisations fell within the 'Other' category and when specified, this included Sole Traders and Parish Councils/Churches.



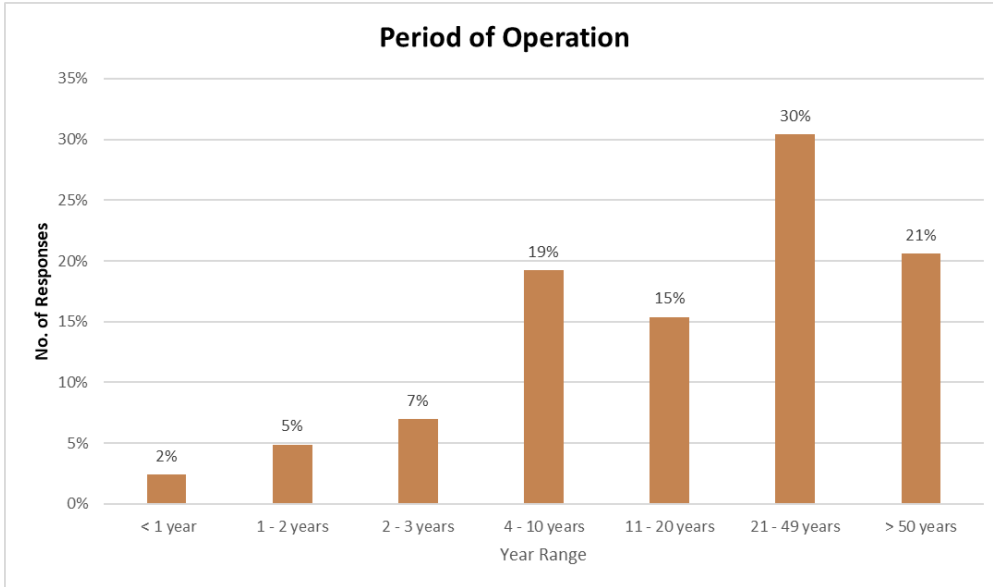
organisations are registered charities.



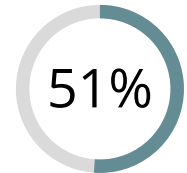
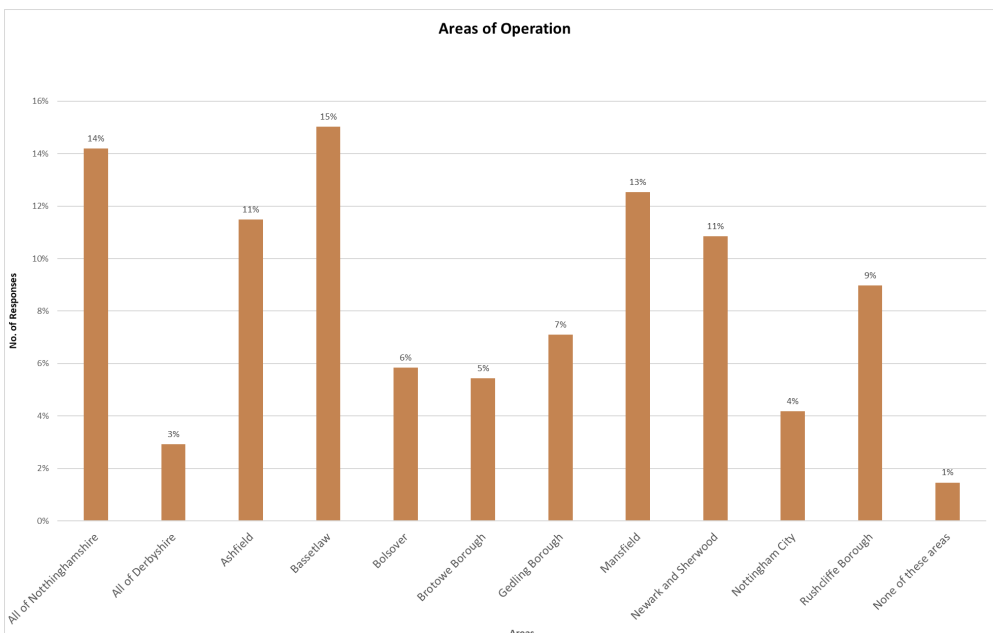
organisations are registered as a Community Group.

PERIOD AND AREA OF OPERATION

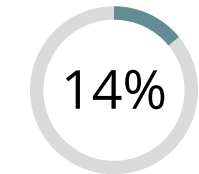
Organisations were asked to confirm their **period** of operation. The responses indicates that the majority - 51% of organisations have been operating for more than 20 years, with 21% in operation for over 50 years. In contrast, only 7% of organisations have been operating for less than 2 years and 14% for less than 4 years.



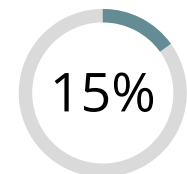
Organisations were asked to confirm their **area** of operation. This was a multi-option response, allowing organisations to select more than one area. Bassetlaw featured as the area represented with the highest response rate, with 15% of organisations confirming operation in the area. The next highest rate was for all of Nottinghamshire with 14% of responses and Mansfield at 13% and Ashfield with 12% of responses.



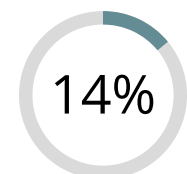
organisations have been operating for over 20 years.



organisations have been operating for less than 4 years.



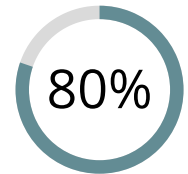
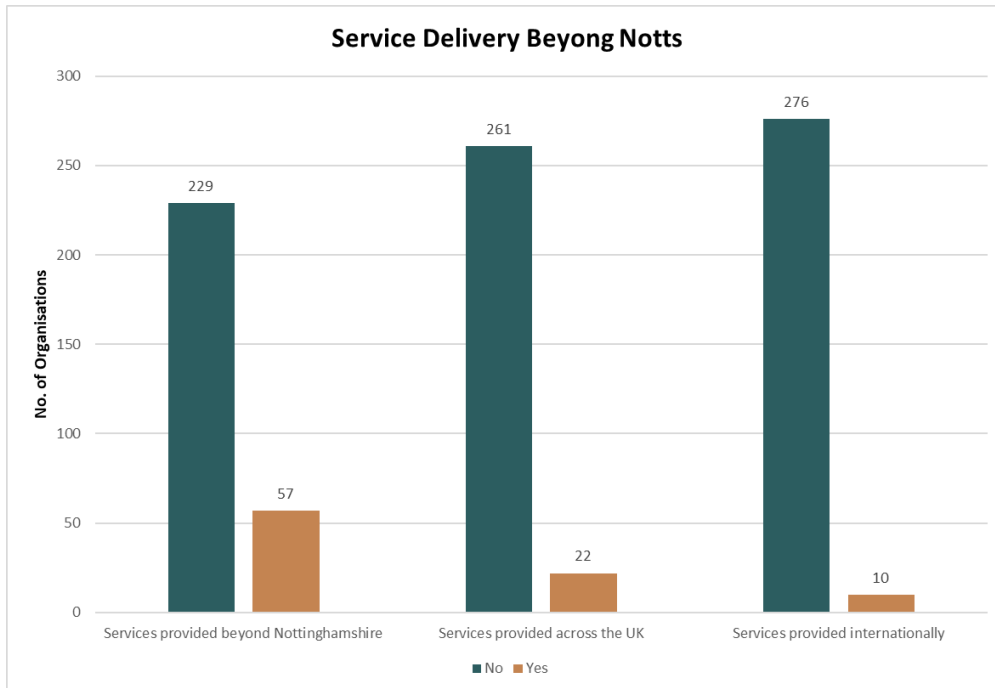
organisations report operating in the Bassetlaw area.



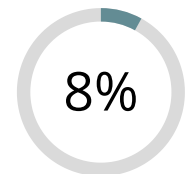
organisations are operating across all of Nottinghamshire.

OPERATING OUT OF AREA

Organisations were asked to confirm if they **operated** beyond the Nottinghamshire area. As to be expected the majority, 80% of organisations, do not deliver services outside of Nottinghamshire. In terms of service delivery outside of the county, 8% of organisations deliver across the UK and 4% of organisations operate at an international level. This therefore reflects that approximately 8% of organisations operate regionally.



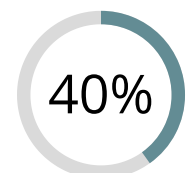
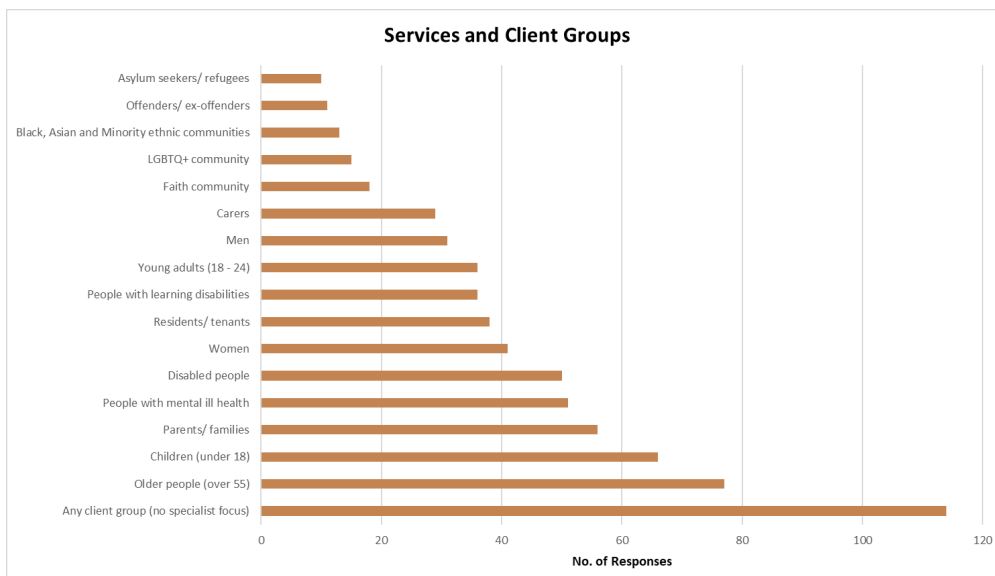
organisations deliver solely across the Nottinghamshire area.



organisations operate regionally.

CLIENT GROUP FOCUS

Organisations were asked to indicate the main **client groups they focus their service delivery for**, with a maximum of three choices available. For those that work across a range of client groups or have no specific service focus, an 'Any client group' option was available, which equated to 40% of responses. Key client groups that organisations focus their service delivery include older people (55+), children (under 18), parents/families, people with mental ill health and disabled people.



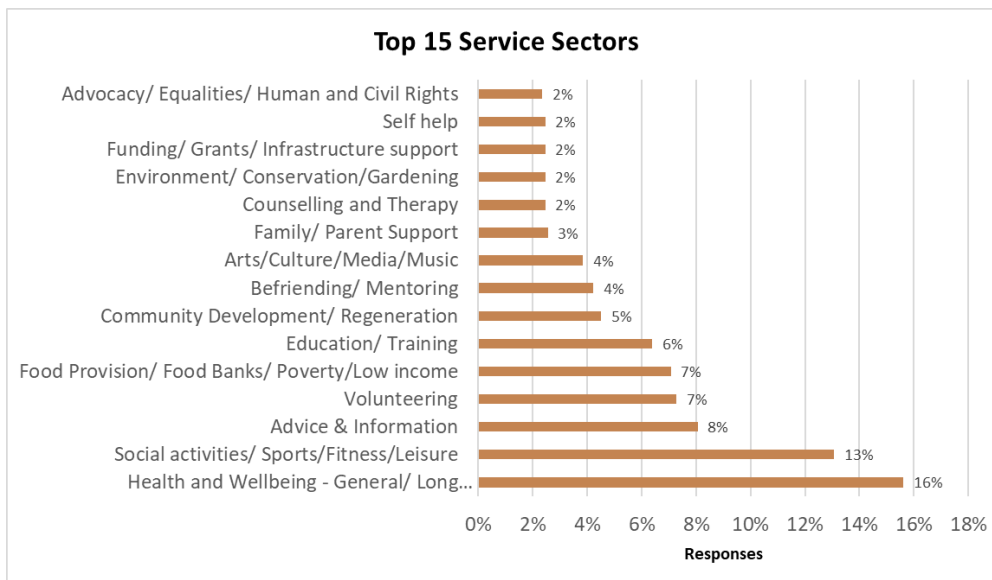
organisations' service focus is non client group specific.

SERVICE SECTORS

Organisations were asked to confirm the **service sectors they operate in**, with up to three choices being available. The survey offered over 30 sector areas as options to choose from. For the purposes of reporting on this question, several sectors have been amalgamated into a group area, creating a composite result. These sectors are:

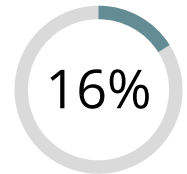
COMPOSITE SECTOR	SURVEY SECTORS	% OF ORGANISATIONS
HEALTH & WELLBEING	HEALTH & WELLBEING GENERAL, LONG TERM, MENTAL HEALTH	16%
SOCIAL ACTIVITIES	SOCIAL ACTIVITIES, SPORTS, FITNESS, LEISURE	13%
FOOD PROVISION	FOOD PROVISION, FOOD BANKS, POVERTY, LOW INCOME	7%
FUNDING	FUNDING, GRANTS, INFRASTRUCTURE	2%
EQUALITIES	ADVOCACY, EQUALITIES, HUMAN & CIVIL RIGHTS	2%

The graph below captures the top 15 service sectors that organisations operate in:

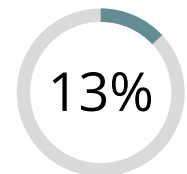


In contrast the bottom 5 service sectors based on the survey response (with no. of responses shown in brackets) are:

- Military/Veterans (9)
- Heritage/Museums/Libraries (8)
- Crime/Criminal Justice/Community Safety (5)
- Domestic Abuse/Sexual Abuse (5)
- Emergency Services (4)



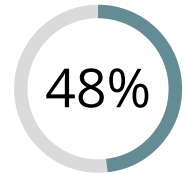
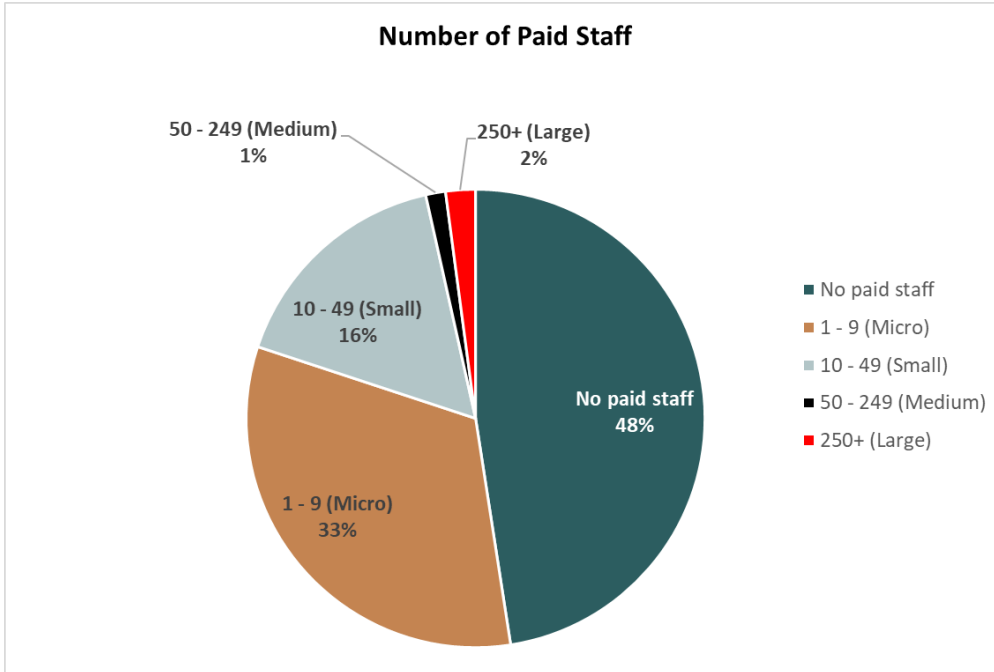
*organisations operate in the
Health & Wellbeing service
sector.*



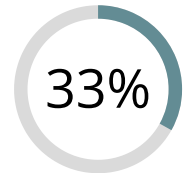
*organisations operate in the
Social Activities Sector.*

PAID STAFF

Organisations were asked to confirm **how many paid staff they currently employ**. The greatest proportion of organisations - 48%, do not have any paid staff, with the majority of those that do having between 1-9 staff, these fall into the 'Micro Business' category as defined by ONS.



organisations do not have any paid staff.



organisations are micro organisations (1-9 paid staff).

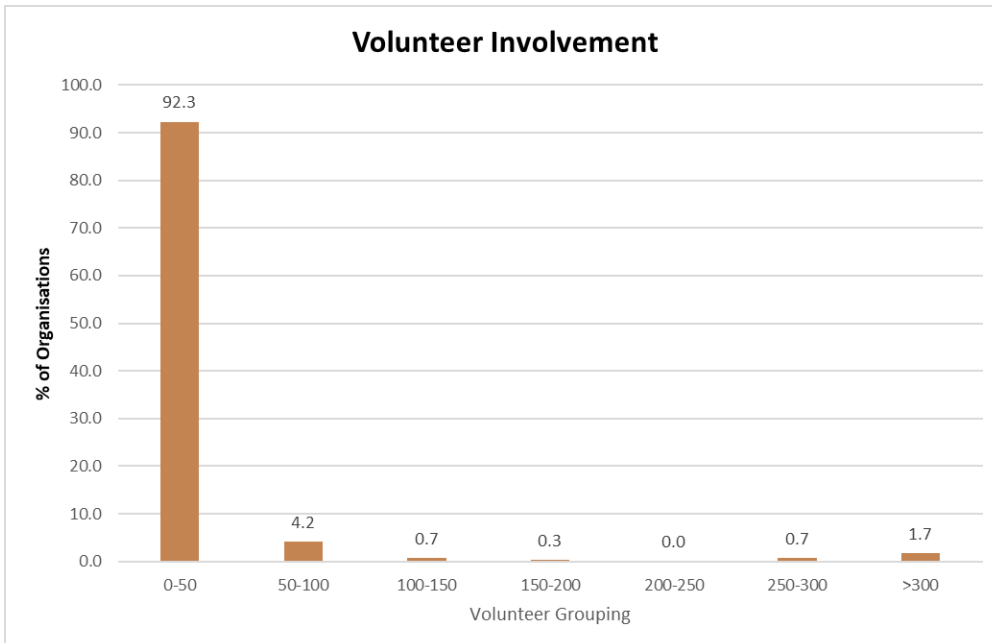
VOLUNTEERING

Organisations were asked to confirm **how many volunteers are involved** with their organisation, with the survey question requiring a numbered total response. As expected there was significant variation across the range of responses. As a headline figure the total number of volunteers involved across all responses is 77,855, however, this includes a number of large charities that have a presence in the Nottinghamshire area but are delivering services across the UK. These responses can be classified as *outliers* for the purposes of analysing volunteer involvement at a Nottinghamshire level. For example, one national organisation indicated they have 47,000 volunteers, which are clearly not all organised to support services across the Nottinghamshire area.

By identifying the 'outlier' organisations and verifying whether their operational area is beyond that of Nottinghamshire (Question 9), a revised approximate volunteer involvement figure can be reached. In order to include their volunteer involvement, an estimate can be calculated using the mean volunteer involvement level from the response return rate (less the outlier organisations). This results in an approximate volunteer involvement total of 6,000 volunteers and the mean average volunteer involvement rate per organisation is 21 volunteers.



*approximately
6,000 volunteers
involved across
Nottinghamshire.*



The graph above shows the volunteer involvement organised by groupings, with the majority of organisations having between 0-50 volunteers involved.

21 volunteers
av. per organisation



PART TWO - UNDERSTANDING CHANGE

THIS SURVEY PROVIDED THE OPPORTUNITY FOR RESPONDENTS TO REFLECT ON THE SIGNIFICANT CHANGE OF THE LAST TWO YEARS - ON DEMAND FOR SERVICES, STAFFING, VOLUNTEERING AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS.

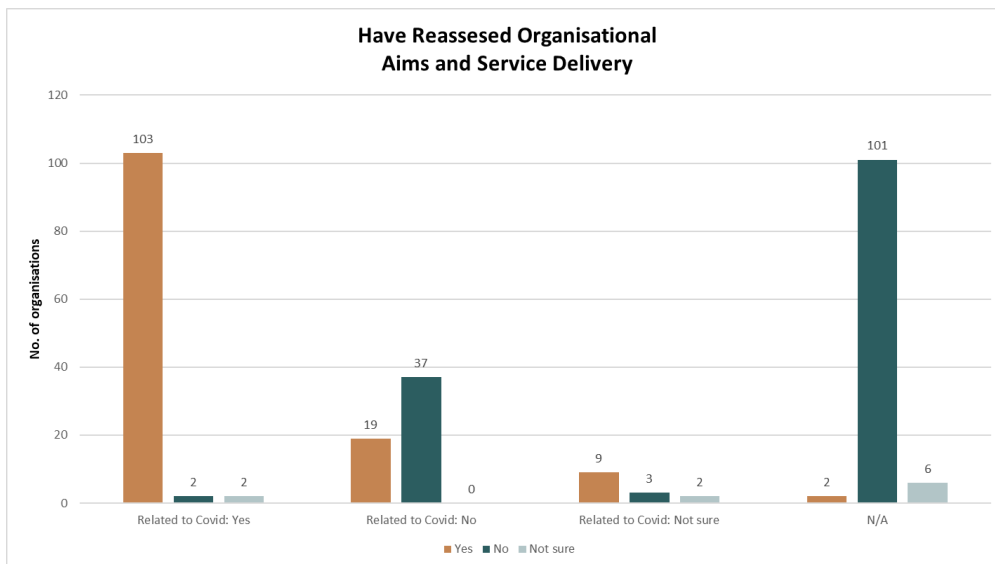
CHANGE IN DEMAND FOR SERVICES

Organisations were asked a series of questions in relation to **changes in demand** for services.

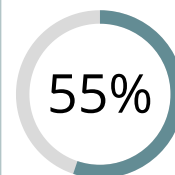
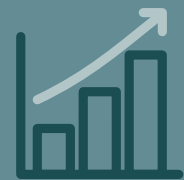
Of those organisations that reported an increase in demand, surprisingly only 57% attributed that to Covid-19, however for those that had seen a decrease in demand, 76% felt that it was directly attributable to the pandemic.

In terms of the level of service provided, 44% felt that this had increased and 21% felt that it has decreased with the balance reporting that it is about the same or unsure. In terms of direct impact of the pandemic, 56% of those who had seen their level of service increase, reported that this was due to the pandemic.

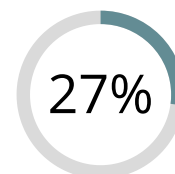
Organisations were then asked if they believed that they needed to reassess their original aims and service delivery at this point and to confirm if this was directly attributable to Covid-19. As can be seen below, whilst just over 100 organisations believed this to be the case, it is interesting to note that a very similar number did not find the question applicable to them. In the majority of these instances, this related to the fact that these respondents are micro community organisations with very specific remits such as community venues or special interest groups.



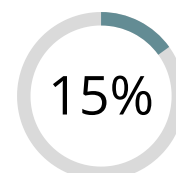
When asked if they felt that this was likely to be a permanent change, 20% felt this to be the case, 16% said not the case and 16% were unsure. The balance of 48% had not changed their aims or service delivery.



55%
organisations confirmed that demand for their services had increased.



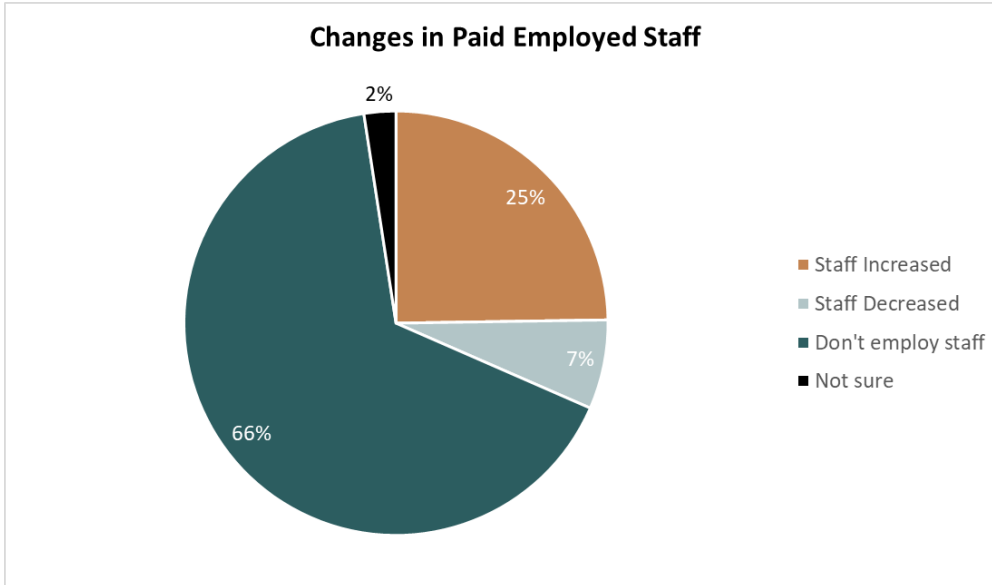
27%
organisations confirmed that demand for their services had decreased.



15%
reported no change in demand for their services and 2% unsure.

CHANGES IN STAFFING

As highlighted earlier in this report, the majority of respondents have either no paid staff or are micro organisations with less than 10 staff, hence 66% reported no change in this area.

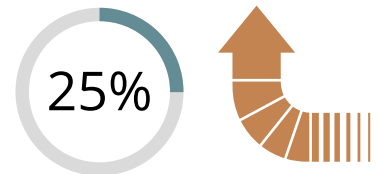


For those that do employ staff and did increase their staffing, 35% of those organisations directly attributed this to the pandemic. Organisations were asked if they needed to make redundancies due to the pandemic, with surprisingly just 5% reporting that this was the case. This most likely reflects the Government support to retain staff through the furlough scheme available during the height of the pandemic.

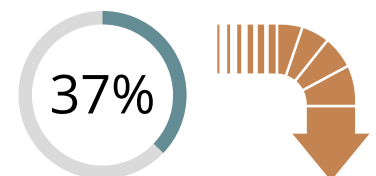
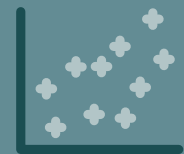
CHANGES IN VOLUNTEERING LEVELS

In relation to Volunteering levels, just 14% reported an increase in volunteers, 37% reported a decrease and 48% reported no change. Unsurprisingly, for those that reported a decrease in volunteers, over 86% cited that this was covid-19 related.

In terms of the level of support offered to those volunteers, it is encouraging to note that 66% of organisations reported that these were about the same.



organisations have increased paid staff.



reported a decrease in volunteers.

CHANGES IN VOLUNTEERING LEVELS

In terms of the detail of how and why volunteer involvement and support has changed, respondents took the opportunity to share their detailed comments which have been summarised below into the following key issues:-

- Many volunteers felt vulnerable and have not returned – consequent impact on face-to-face work/sharing transport.
- Many volunteers felt isolated when online was the only option.
- Many volunteers have struggled with their own mental health.
- Digital divide - low levels of confidence and lack of resources. Some volunteers have got tired of online engagement.
- Return to work and life pressures have increased since originally volunteering in the beginning of the pandemic.
- Volunteers are feeling the effects of the cost of living increases and many are returning to work to ensure energy, fuel, housing and food costs are covered.
- Many organisations had to move to both managing the organisation and shifting their activities online. This included being unable to induct new volunteers online.
- Less capacity from health professionals to attend health condition specific community groups.
- Unable to volunteer in health settings due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Interestingly, some organisations, predominantly those providing physical activity support or addressing environmental/conservation concerns have seen an increase in volunteers.

A number of organisations also reported that they are running more projects/adding new services and are improving their support for volunteers:-

- Have recently secured Investing in Volunteers and introduced new procedures as a result.
- Recruited a HR Manager and a Chaplain which is enabling us to offer more comprehensive support for volunteers.
- We offer support to all our volunteers and value inclusion in every aspect of our organisation. Provided additional telephone contact & updates for all throughout the pandemic to help protect the mental health and wellbeing of all our volunteers.
- We are now focussing on recruiting, training and retaining new vols as well as refresher training for existing ones. We need to change the perception that using vols to deliver services is free.
- We now have a member of staff dedicated to recruiting and looking after our volunteers.
- Since COVID-19 more well-intentioned individuals have got together to support their communities, particularly during the first lock down. Groups need support with governance, DBS checks, etc.

Changes in Volunteering Levels...



COVID-19 has meant we have had to adapt our services, doing some home visits and when clubs have been opened, making sure extra checks and policies are being followed. When volunteers get covid, even if mild symptoms they can't come in as our members are elderly and some are vulnerable too, this means we are constantly running on a back-up plan staff wise and volunteer wise!

We have a large Foodbank operating from Under One Roof and saw a large increase in need throughout the pandemic but we also saw a large increase in volunteers wanting to help.

We hoped to increase our volunteer capacity in various areas of charitable activities but due to space, social distancing, safety we have had to limit ourselves. Some of our volunteers did not return to support our Charity shop activity due to fear of catching COVID-19, even though we have maximum safety procedures in place.

Most volunteers were aged 70+ and withdrew their practical support during COVID-19. We were able to recruit temporary members who were furloughed or working from home. These temporary members were able to provide help to village residents and to check on their welfare. At the request of Notts CC social services we provided food and support to people in neighbouring villages who were experiencing difficulties. We also delivered prescriptions for the local Medical Centre.

I think a lot of people generally took stock of their lives and made changes earlier than perhaps they would of done normally. We have recruited during this time on a remote basis, whilst some volunteers have loved this we have found it difficult to retain some vols and we think this is because there is a disconnect and they miss coming into the office and socialising with other colleagues and paid staff and sharing knowledge and best practice during the pandemic. We have now returned to face to face advice but are still having to limit numbers in the office due to the new strains. We have started bringing vols back on a rota basis.

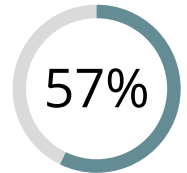
As our volunteers met with people, it became clear there were other issues for these residents. They needed a listening ear, support and advice and ways of coping when access to key agencies was absent or ad hoc, advocacy and food aid. We worked within the community and provided these resources.



CHANGES IN PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Respondents were asked if their organisation had worked in partnership with other organisations to a greater extent and the impact of COVID-19 on this. For 57% of organisations, their sphere of partnership working had not increased, for 30% it had and for 13% they were unsure. Interestingly, the view was that COVID-19 had not particularly impacted on those who had not extended their partnerships but for those who had, they felt that this was largely attributable to the pandemic.

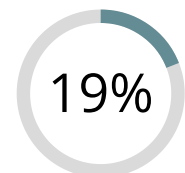
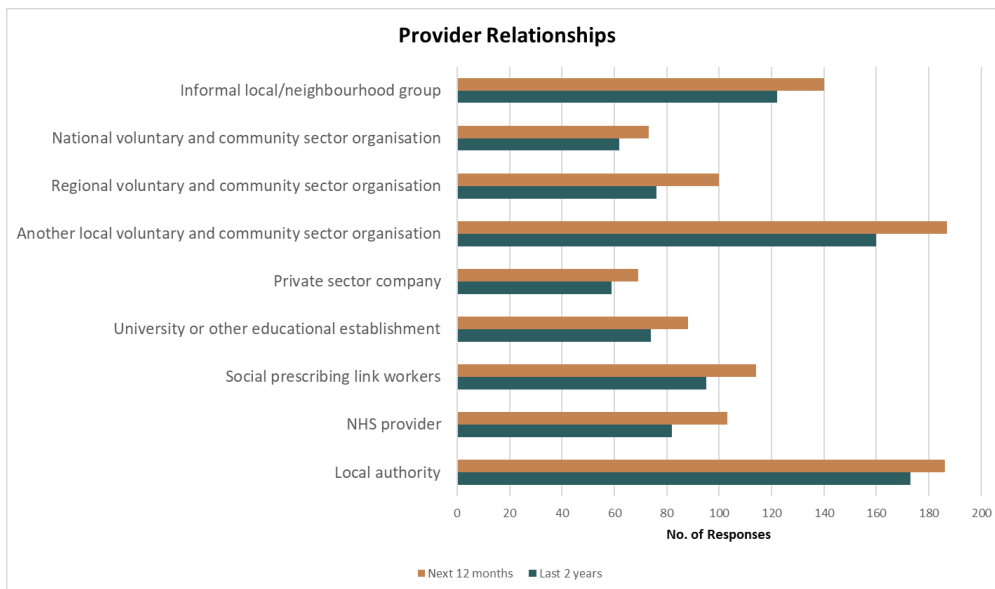
When asked about consideration of merging or having merged with another VCS organisation over the last 2 years, just 4 respondents had merged, largely attributing this to Covid-19, 8% of respondents had given the issue consideration and the balance of 91% not having merged or given it any consideration.



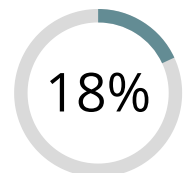
sphere of partnership working has not increased.

PROVIDER RELATIONSHIPS

The survey asked respondents to detail which types of partners they had worked with in the last 2 years and who they plan to work with in the coming 12 months. The responses are detailed in the chart below:-



have worked with Local Authorities in the last 2 years.



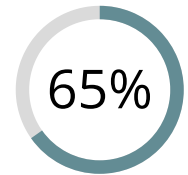
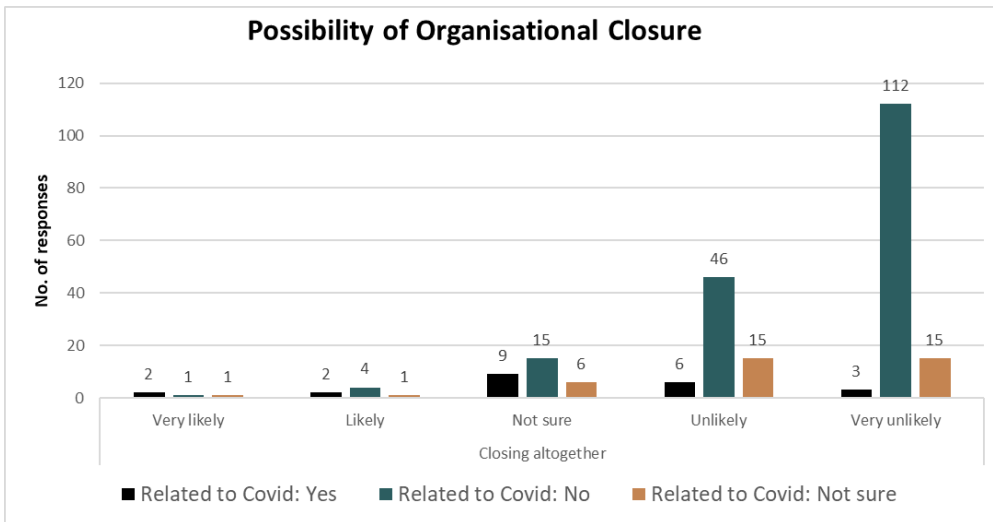
think they will be working with Local Authorities in the next 12 months.

As can be seen above, working with local authorities is the most frequent type of collaboration, followed by working with other VCS organisations, with these areas likely to increase in the coming year.

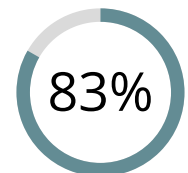
SERVICE PLANNING AND CLOSURE

Organisations were asked about the likelihood of closing services, with the positive news that 65% reported that this was not likely, 13% suggesting that this was the case and a further 22% uncertain at this point. 41% of those who were likely to close services suggested that this was covid related.

In terms of closing altogether, fortunately the positive news is that a total of 83% of respondents believed that it was either Unlikely or Very Unlikely that they would close.



are unlikely to close any services in the next 12 months.



are unlikely to close in the next 12 months.

REASONS FOR SERVICE DELIVERY CHANGE

The survey provided organisations with the opportunity to set out in their own words reasons for service delivery change over the last 2 years or indeed planned in the coming months. It also went onto ask if the respondents thought that there were other organisations that could 'plug the gap' if they did not provide existing services.

POSITIVE CHANGES

The survey provided the opportunity for organisations to reflect on any positive developments from the pandemic. Whilst this was only the case reported by a small number of respondents, these can be summarised as:-

- Increased services.
- Increased focus e.g. on young people's mental health and wellbeing.
- Increased capacity to look at additional projects, partnership working.
- Improved collaboration with partners.
- More choice for service users in how they access services i.e. phone/online or face to face support.
- Successful in applications for grant funding which has enabled new developments e.g. online access, building maintenance.
- New ways to deliver existing programmes online and new online services, particularly working with young people.

Others have used the opportunity to reflect on their own resilience and commented:-

"We have learned to be more flexible as an organisation and respond to the needs of the community as those needs change due to COVID-19 and other local factors."

"We have incorporated remote working into the delivery of services which allows people to access support if there are barriers in place such as affordable transport or if they are isolating due to COVID-19."

"We have secured far more funding as a result of having more time for funding applications and more funding being available. As we have secured funding for several of our projects and the majority of our work, we are in a good position and see our services and participation growing further."

ONGOING IMPACT OF COVID-19

The majority of organisations took the opportunity to highlight issues which are summarised in the quotes below:-

- Our funding is due to end but we have not achieved targets due to COVID-19.
- Everything has changed the way everyone works and operates.
- Our supervisors were wonderful but compassion fatigue was a big problem.
- The change has been not just from lower numbers of volunteers available but also clients in isolation and afraid of coming out into the world again.
- Older clients are still scare mongered by the media.
- We are struggling to return to the service delivery we provided before March 2020 and there is a lot of pressure on staff and volunteers to get the charity running properly again.
- We are now likely to go part time and that means that our clients won't get the same level of care. A big strain will regrettably have to be placed on other services around us, decreasing everyone's ability to help someone efficiently.

Many reflected on lower numbers of service users and the fact that it will take time to build numbers again which will have a significant impact on income.

For those organisations [delivering infrastructure support](#) to the sector, the pandemic has highlighted the need to focus on coordination with 'system partners' and building on the pivotal role played in sharing latest information and coordination of essential support during the pandemic. Key forward planning issues include community transport, tackling loneliness and isolation.

Comments from [health and disability-based charities and support groups](#) in relation to supporting people with long term health conditions were particularly poignant, with a number having lost members who have been admitted into full time care or died. These organisations report that those service users that are well enough are now attending activities to counteract loneliness and isolation.

The following issues were highlighted:-

- Unable to provide support to newly diagnosed cancer patients or support groups on site due to COVID-19 restrictions in NHS settings.
- Unable to provide CPR training in schools or provide defibrillators in the community
- Asked to receive new referrals via Social Prescribers/ GP Referral Scheme which requires increase in volunteer hours and impacts on mental health.
- Growing number of people diagnosed with Dementia, with little help and support available. This includes an increased need for Carer help for those supporting loved ones, family members or friends.
- There are so many people with lung diseases, the third cause of death in the country, that we know our work is a drop in the ocean. But we also know that those who attend our meetings, go to our exercise classes etc, not only have a better quality of life but are less likely to be hospitalised.
- For those with sight loss, moving to conference calls to support them has only worked for those with the right type of phone – using Zoom type online meetings has proved very challenging for the majority.
- COVID-19 has 'taken away' almost 2 years of fundraising away from the Branch – Parkinson's members are vulnerable and still unable to attend meetings.

For those organisations specifically supporting the elderly, there are ongoing concerns re the challenge of restarting activities for their vulnerable service users. Addressing social isolation, ensuring that the elderly get a hot meal and engage in enjoyable group activities has been key. The current inflationary pressures on food and heating costs will only make this even more critical in coming months.

"Our members love coming and they would feel isolated and miss out on a healthy cooked meal, for some this is the only proper hot meal they get all week. They would also become less mobile as some of our members only come to our club and don't venture anywhere else, we run exercise sessions for them too."

At the other end of the age spectrum, those groups supporting children and young people commented on the need to help children catch up with lost opportunities/experiences whilst at the same time finding that funding for Early Years, Children's Play support and alternative education has been cut further.

"A generation of Mansfield will grow up without some of the basic life skills that play provides them with and that enables them to become a functioning member of society."

For unique specialist services such as children's bereavement, concerns were raised re loss of funding and their ability to provide timely free interventions. For those working with families, they have again seen demand increase, in many instances due to cuts in statutory services.

The pandemic highlighted the need for wider public health interventions, including support for engagement in physical activity. Survey respondents highlighted the need for more volunteers to support walking activities so that they could continue to offer a variety of walks and engage people to become more physically active. Active Partners Trust worked with partners in communities to add capacity across the county via targeted funding and a number of respondents recognised this support in the survey.

The survey responses have highlighted the ongoing impact of the pandemic on rural community groups and facilities, with all reporting reduced income from hall bookings and other revenue sources. In the majority of instances, Parish Councils are working with their local community groups to open up facilities safely, but many commented on the challenges of getting volunteers in these small villages and the issues of access for those unable to drive.

In terms of supporting the homeless, those charities specifically working in this area reported an increase in demand for their services and the challenge that this has brought for their own staffing and volunteer capacity.

Many arts-based community groups and organisations also reported significant impacts on their ability to deliver activities – no choirs, concerts, festivals, lectures, museum opening, exhibitions. The loss of these key opportunities have all impacted on the membership and finances of these groups. In some instances, respondents highlighted that they have now broadened their programme of activities however the picture is generally one of reduced opportunity for all ages, ranging from lack of music lessons for young people through to local village-based museums struggling to reopen.

For those groups and organisations that help with employment support/training and learning, the survey provided the opportunity to highlight the breadth of support available and the resilience of those providing learning opportunities. Safe access to facilities and IT were key factors along with less opportunities to access funding to support this work.

"We have a multiplicity of deprivation in these 3 rural villageswe have been able to expose the inequalities. We have now become a Community Hub supporting a range of groups and liaising with key agencies."

IMPACT OF REDUCED FUNDING

A number of respondents highlighted the **adverse impact of reduced funding** and this is particularly the case for the Citizens Advice charities across the county who are seeing referrals soar. At a time of an acknowledged cost of living crisis, all stated that reduced core funding is resulting in increasing waiting times to help people in financial difficulties and that this will only ricochet into health and other statutory services. CAB's also reported that they are seeing a different client group seeking help – a younger demographic who have not claimed benefits before and need assistance to navigate the system. CAB's emphasised the regulated quality assurance of their work, supported by training and governance. They also used the opportunity to highlight that if services are reduced further, particularly face to face support, extra pressure will impact on local authorities, wider agencies and other voluntary organisations.

With reference to the **impact of the cost of living inflationary pressures**, a range of respondents highlighted the fact that they have seen an increased demand for food parcels and have responded by launching 'village pantries' in rural areas and introducing a Social Supermarket.

PLUGGING THE GAP

The survey also asked respondents to comment on who was likely to pick up provision, should they not be in a position to continue to provide services. In the majority of instances, respondents cited Parish Council, local authorities, NHS or other charities, however many were very sceptical that this would happen in practice.

Managing Change...



"We are now a much more agile organisation and can work in different locations as we now work on cloud based technologies. For most of our employees we offer a hybrid system of in the office and homeworking which is beneficial for them and the organisation as we can offer a better work life balance and retain staff better, the pandemic probably bought our technology knowledge and systems forward about 3 years. We have also learned to work with improved partnerships and not be frightened to share knowledge, expertise and evidence of our clients needs."

"Our Risk Management strategies have also improved and we have been able to test our various Business Continuity scenarios. The challenges have not really changed in terms of long term funding, succession planning for paid roles, making the voluntary sector an attractive career choice to attract talent, volunteer recruitment and retention, ensuring the wellbeing of our staff and volunteers when demand outstrips what we can cope with."

"We cannot meet the demand and need more resources for that but generally we have to be optimistic about the future and work in partnership and collaboration to help clients in a holistic way to deal with the complex problems that people come to us with."

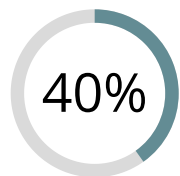
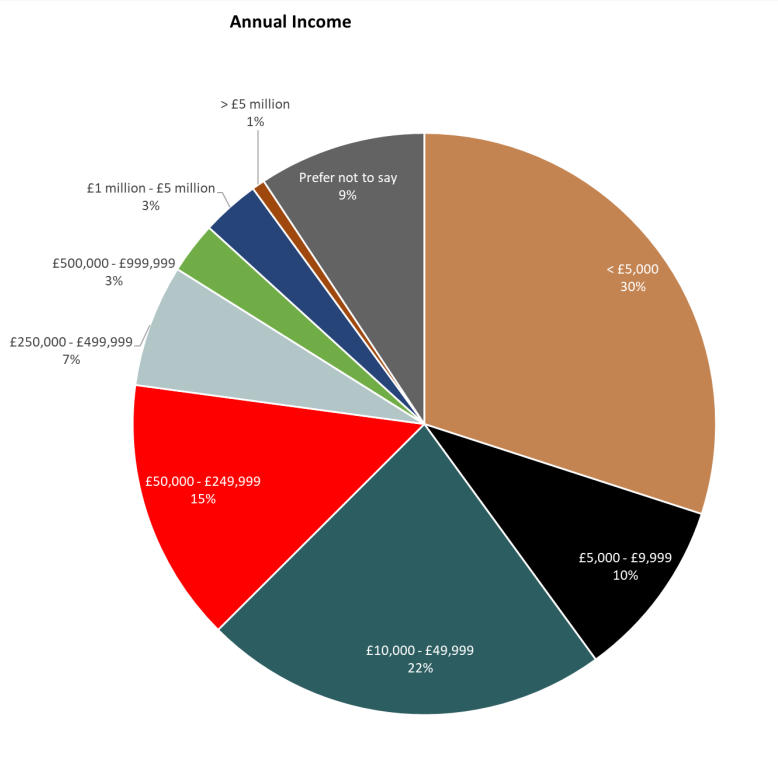


PART THREE - FINANCES & FUNDING

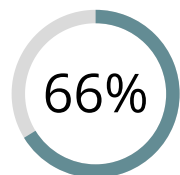
THE SURVEY CAPTURED KEY INFORMATION LINKED TO THE FINANCIAL PROFILE OF THE SECTOR, KEY SOURCES OF FUNDING, FINANCIAL RESILIENCE AND THE IMPACT OF COVID-19. THE RESPONSES HIGHLIGHT CHANGING FUNDING LEVELS FROM KEY SOURCES.

ANNUAL INCOME - 2020/21

Organisations were asked to indicate their **annual income** in the last financial year. The responses indicate that 30% of organisations had an income less than £10,000 during 2020/21 and 66% had income below £50,000.



Annual income under £10,000

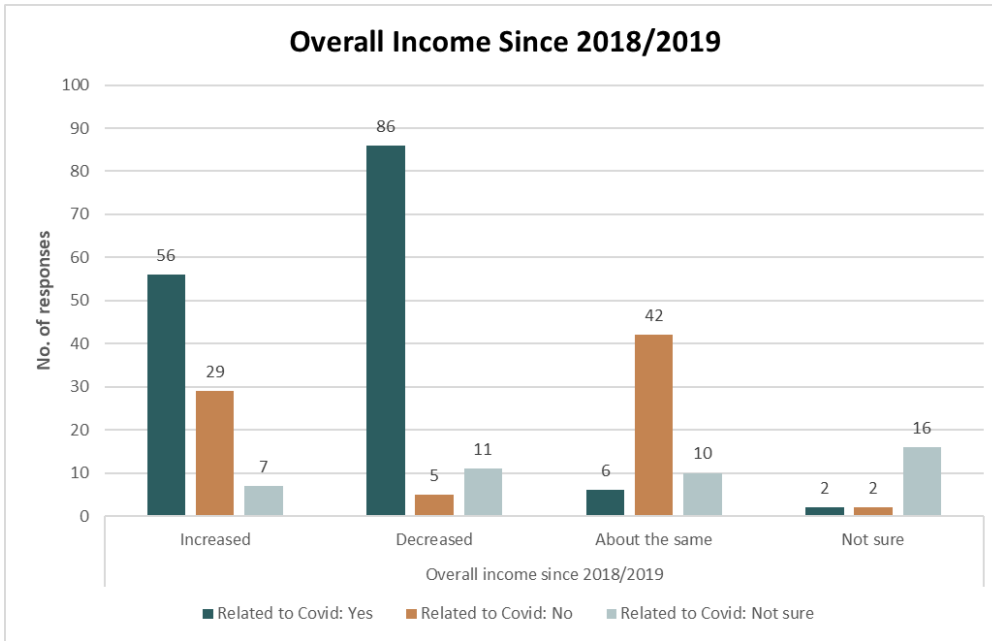


Annual income under £50,000

Information on income aligns with the previous details on organisational size and staffing numbers i.e. that the sector is made up of a significant proportion of micro organisations.

CHANGES TO INCOME SINCE 2018/19

Organisations were asked about **changes to their income since 2018/19** (or from when they started trading if more recent than this) and whether COVID-19 was a direct influence.



Overall 34% of organisations indicated that their income had increased since 2018/19 as opposed to 38% who indicated that their income decreased, with 21% responding that their income was about the same.

In terms of the direct influence of COVID-19 on income levels, overall 55% of organisations confirmed that COVID-19 has had a direct impact on income, with 29% reporting that COVID-19 has had no direct impact and 16% not sure.

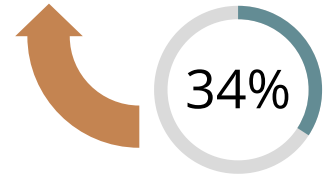
COVID-19 IMPACT ON ORGANISATIONS REPORTING AN INCREASE IN INCOME

Of those organisations who indicated an increase in income levels, 61% responded that this was from a direct impact of COVID-19 whereas 32% reported that it was not COVID-19 related.

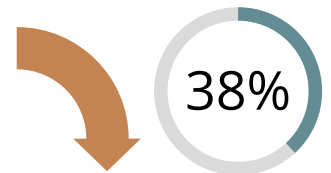
COVID IMPACT ON ORGANISATIONS REPORTING A DECREASE IN INCOME

In terms of those organisations that reported an overall decrease in income since 2018/19, the majority - **84% indicated that this was directly due to COVID-19** and 5% indicated that the decrease in income was not COVID-19 related, with 11% not sure.

This indicates that in terms of the overall responses received, unsurprisingly COVID-19 has had more of a negative impact on income levels than a positive impact.

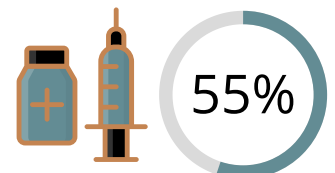


overall income has increased since 2018/19.



overall income has decreased since 2018/19.

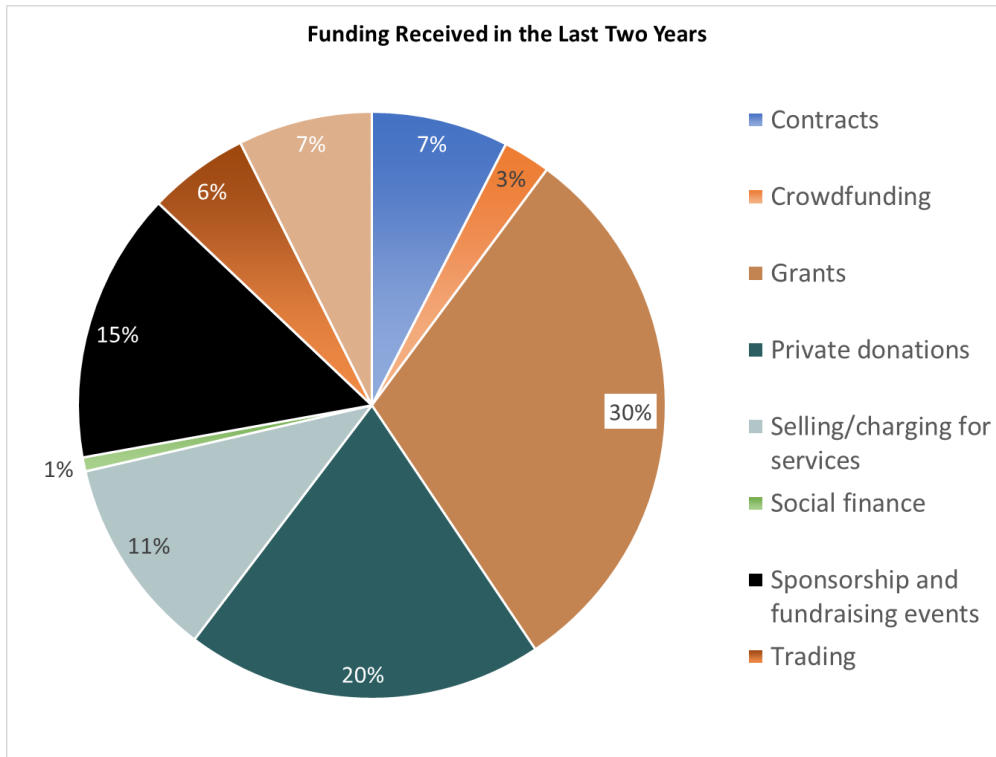
DIRECT IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON INCOME LEVELS



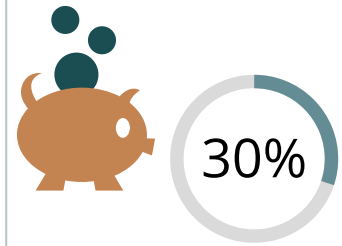
reported that COVID-19 has had a direct impact on income levels, with the majority reporting it has directly caused a decrease..

TYPES OF FUNDING RECEIVED - LAST TWO YEARS

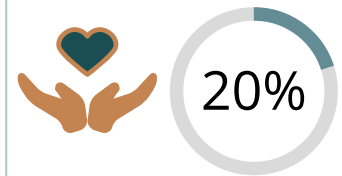
Organisations were asked to indicate the **types of funding they have received** in the last two years from a selection of funding categories, with the ability to select multiple categories.



Overall, 30% of funding came from grants, 20% from private donations and 15% from sponsorship and fundraising events. In terms of 'commercial' activity, 11% of funding came from selling or charging for services. Of the 7% that marked 'Other' as a response, details included Parish Council Precept fees, investment income and membership/registration fees (although arguably these can be grouped into the selling/charging for services category).



funding grant related



funding from private donations

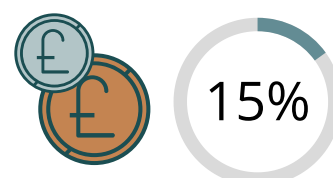
11% of funding came from selling or charging for services.

FUNDING STREAMS - SOURCE ORGANISATION

Organisations were asked to indicate the organisations that they had received funding streams from, with the ability to select multiple sources from a list. The list included a range of common funding organisations, mainly local, regional and national government, NHS commissioning, agencies distributing lottery funds and larger charitable trusts. This questions was specifically non-Covid funding related, with a subsequent question linked to Covid funding. The table below lists the Top 20 funding sources from the overall response choices.

FUNDING SOURCE	% OF ORGANISATIONS
Nottinghamshire County Council	15%
None	12%
National Lottery Communities Fund	8%
Other	8%
National Lottery Community Awards for All	6%
Nottinghamshire Community Foundation	5%
Bassetlaw DC	5%
Mansfield DC	3%
Sport England	3%
Ashfield DC	3%
Rushcliffe BC	3%
Newark and Sherwood DC	3%
Broxtowe DC	2%
Derbyshire CC	2%
Bassetlaw CCG	2%
Boots Charitable Trust	2%
Gedling BC	2%
Local CCG	2%
Bolsover DC	1%
Central Government	1%

In terms of the 8% that indicated 'other' as a funding source, analysing the survey data shows that the majority fall into a range of Trust Funds, including Co-Operative funding and private trusts.



funding from Nottinghamshire County Council.



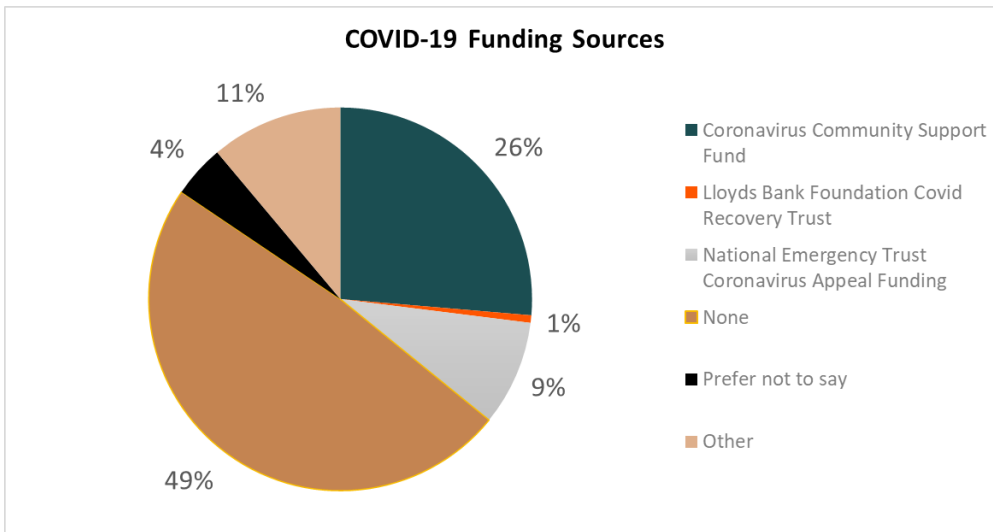
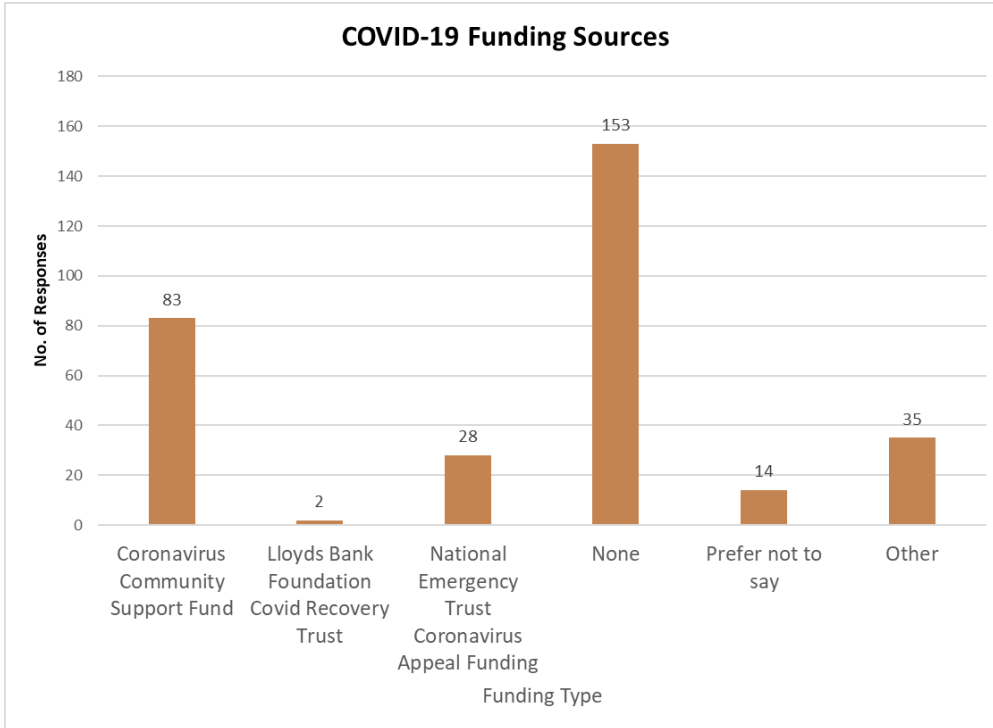
funding from Nottinghamshire District Councils.



funding from National Lottery.

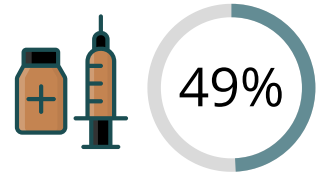
COVID-19 FUNDING

Organisations were asked to indicate the funding organisations or bodies that they have received **COVID-19 funding from**, with the ability to select multiple options.

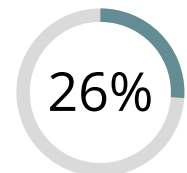


Organisations reported that 49% had not received any form of direct COVID-19 related funding, with the those that had received COVID-19 financial support indicating 26% came from **Coronavirus Community Support Funding**, a £200 million fund managed through the Lottery Community Fund focusing on the following key objectives:-

- To increase community support to vulnerable people affected by the COVID-19 crisis, through the work of civil society organisations.
- To reduce temporary closures of essential charities and social enterprises, ensuring services for vulnerable people impacted by COVID-19 have the financial resources to operate, and so reduce the burden on public services.



NO COVID-19 related funding received.



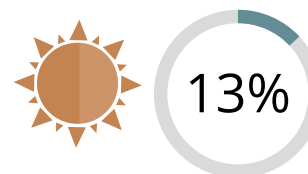
received Coronavirus Community Support Funding, managed through the Lottery Community Fund.



FUNDING STREAMS - COVID-19 - BUSINESS SUPPORT

An additional COVID-19 funding related question asked organisations to indicate if they had successfully accessed any of the specific **government COVID-19 assistance programmes** aimed at supporting businesses through the pandemic.

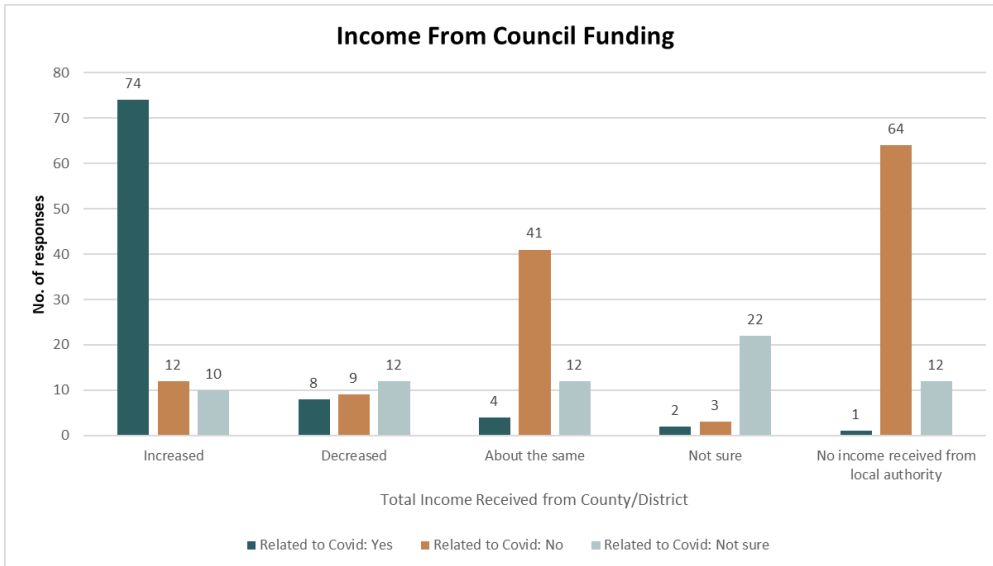
FUNDING SOURCE	% OF ORGANISATIONS
Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (Furloughing)	13%
Business Rates Relief	10%
Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund	7%
Small Business Grant Fund	5%
Other	5%
Prefer not to say	4%
Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme	2%
Bounce Bank Loan Scheme	1%
Coronavirus Statutory Sick Pay	1%
Deferral of VAT Payments due to Covid-19	1%
Covid-19 Corporate Financing Facility	0%



benefitted from Furlough Support.

INCOME FROM LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Organisations were asked to indicate whether the **total income received from county or district council's** had changed in the last two years.



Overall 34% of organisations indicated that their income from councils had increased over the last two years as opposed to 10% who indicated that their income has decreased, with 27% responding that they had not received any income from councils.

In terms of the direct influence of COVID-19 on council funding levels, overall 31% of organisations confirmed that COVID-19 has had a direct impact, with 45% reporting that COVID-19 has had no direct impact and 24% not sure.

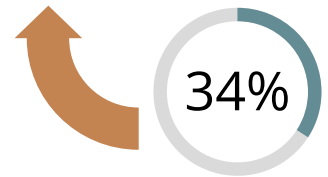
COVID IMPACT ON ORGANISATIONS REPORTING AN INCREASE IN COUNCIL INCOME

Of those organisations who indicated an increase in income levels from council funding, 77% responded that this was from a direct impact of COVID-19 whereas 13% reported that it was not COVID-19 related.

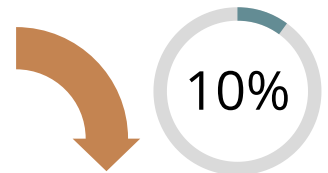
COVID IMPACT ON ORGANISATIONS REPORTING A DECREASE IN COUNCIL INCOME

In terms of those organisations that reported an overall decrease in income levels from council funding, **10% indicated that this was directly due to COVID-19** and 28% indicated that the decrease in income was not COVID-19 related, with 41% not sure.

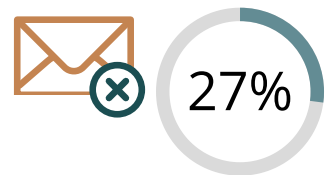
This indicates that in terms of the overall responses received, COVID-19 has had more of a positive impact on income levels from council funding than negative.



overall income from council funding has increased over the last 2 years.



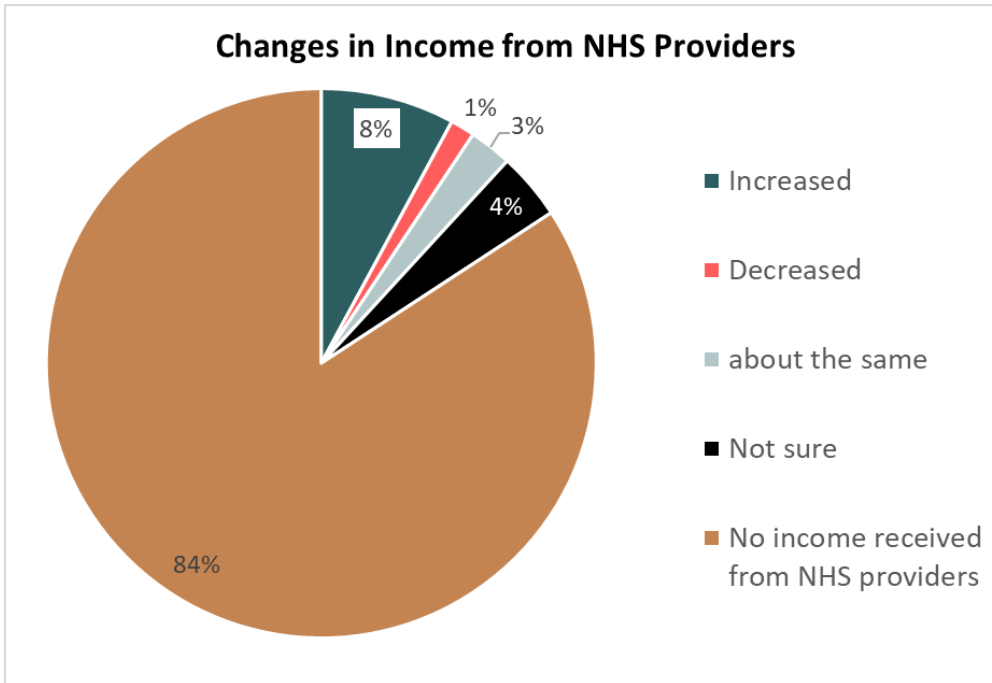
overall income from council funding has decreased over the last 2 years.



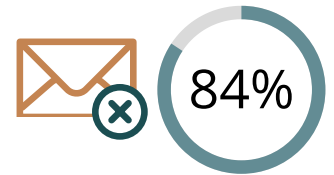
no income from councils over the last 2 years.

INCOME FROM NHS PROVIDERS

Organisations were asked to indicate whether the **total income received from NHS Providers** had changed in the last two years.



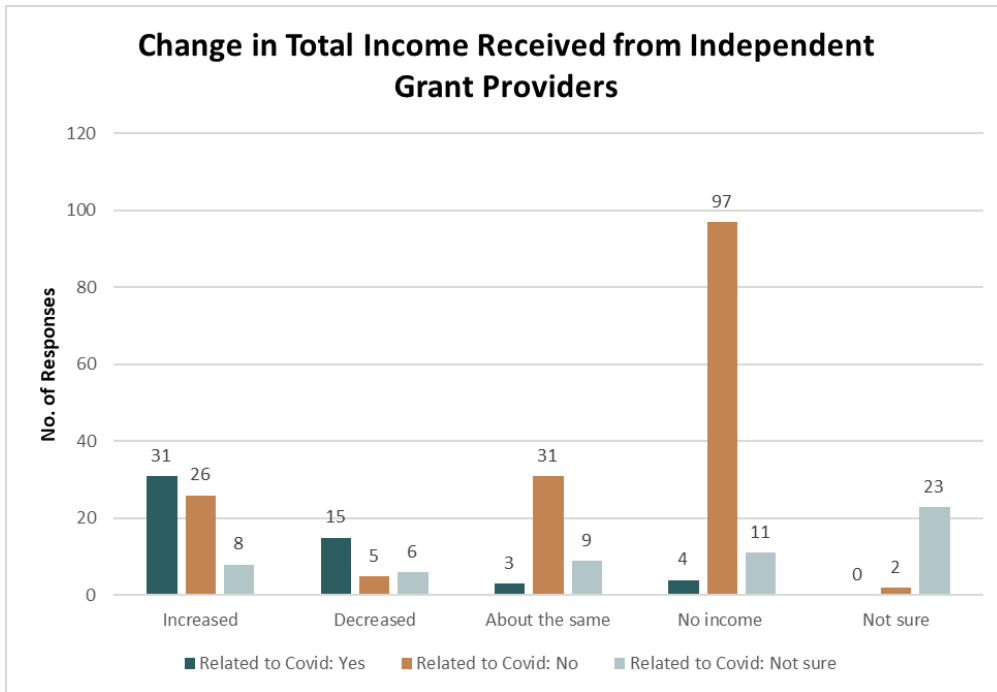
The majority of organisations indicated that they did not receive any income from NHS providers over the last two years. For those that did receive funding, 8% indicated that this had increased and 1% decreased.



no funding from NHS Providers in the last 2 years.

INCOME FROM INDEPENDENT GRANT PROVIDERS

Organisations were asked to indicate whether the **total income received from independent grant providers (Lottery Community Fund etc)** had changed in the last two years.



Overall 24% of organisations indicated that their income from independent grant providers had increased over the last two years as opposed to 10% who indicated that their income has decreased, with 41% responding that they had not received any income from independent grant providers and 9% not sure.

In terms of the direct influence of COVID-19 on grant provider funding levels, overall 20% of organisations confirmed that COVID-19 has had a direct impact, with 59% reporting that COVID-19 has had no direct impact and 21% not sure.

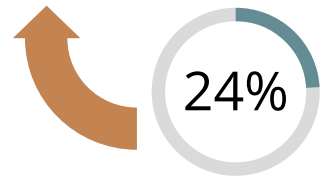
COVID IMPACT ON ORGANISATIONS REPORTING AN INCREASE IN GRANT PROVIDER INCOME

Of those organisations who indicated an increase in income levels from grant provider funding, 48% responded that this was from a direct impact of COVID-19 whereas 40% reported that it was not COVID-19 related.

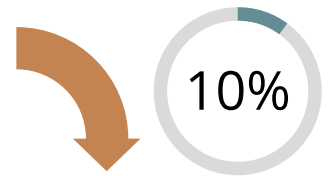
COVID IMPACT ON ORGANISATIONS REPORTING A DECREASE IN GRANT PROVIDER INCOME

In terms of those organisations that reported an overall decrease in income levels from grant provider funding, **58% indicated that this was directly due to COVID-19** and 19% indicated that the decrease in income was not COVID-19 related, with 23% not sure.

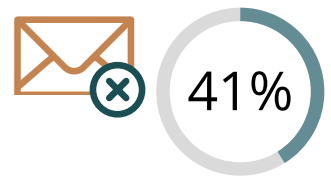
Given that 50% of responses indicated that either no funding from independent grant providers had been received or they were not sure, the overall impact of COVID-19 on grant funding levels cannot be directly determined. However it is likely to have had a positive impact in increasing income for organisations that have reported receiving independent grant funding over the last two years.



overall income from grant provider funding has increased over the last 2 years.



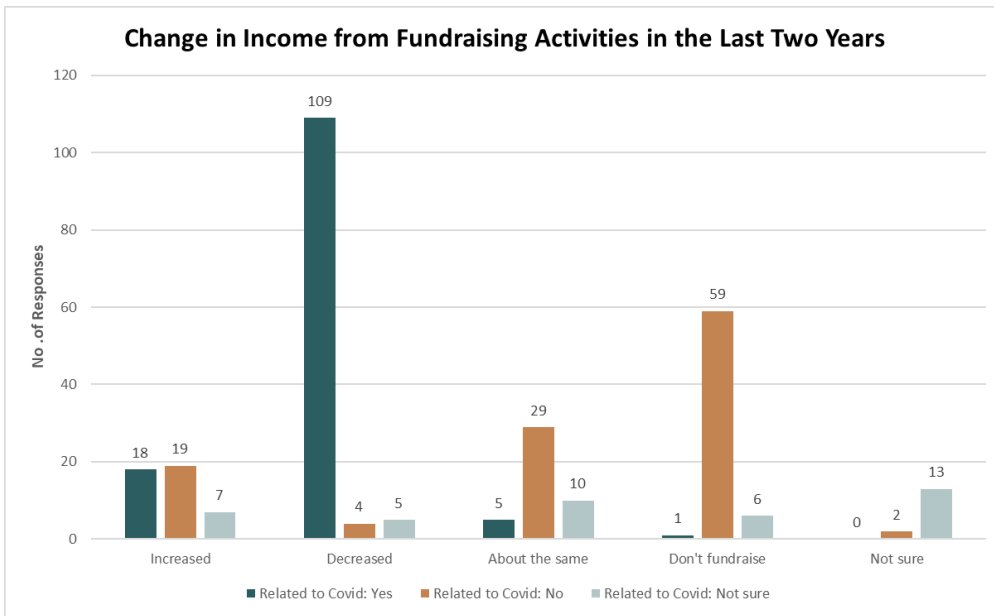
overall income from grant provider funding has decreased over the last 2 years.



no income from independent grant providers over the last 2 years.

INCOME FROM DONATIONS AND FUNDRAISING

Organisations were asked to indicate whether the **total income received from donations and fundraising** activities had changed in the last two years.



Overall 15% of organisations indicated that their income from donations and fundraising had increased over the last two years as opposed to 41% who indicated that their income has decreased, with 23% responding that they had do not engage in fundraising activity and 5% not sure.

In terms of the direct influence of COVID-19 on donation and fundraising income, overall 46% of organisations confirmed that COVID-19 has had a direct impact, with 39% reporting that COVID-19 has had no direct impact and 14% not sure.

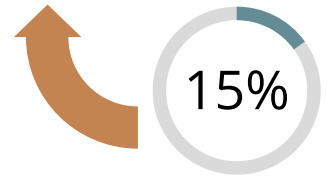
COVID IMPACT ON ORGANISATIONS REPORTING AN INCREASE IN DONATIONS AND FUNDRAISING INCOME

Of those organisations who indicated an increase in income levels from donations and fundraising, 41% responded that this was from a direct impact of COVID-19 whereas 43% reported that it was not COVID-19 related.

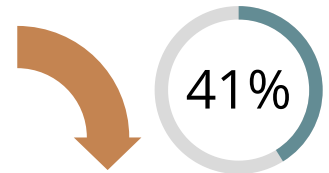
COVID IMPACT ON ORGANISATIONS REPORTING A DECREASE IN DONATIONS AND FUNDRAISING INCOME

In terms of those organisations that reported an overall decrease in income levels from donations and fundraising, **92% indicated that this was directly due to COVID-19** and only 3% indicated that the decrease in income was not COVID-19 related, with 4% not sure.

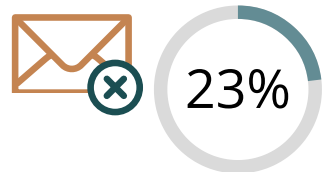
The majority of the responses indicated that income levels from donations and fundraising had decreased over the last two years - and that this was primarily due to the impact of COVID-19.



overall income from donations and fundraising has increased over the last 2 years.

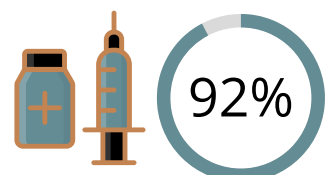


overall income from donations and fundraising has decreased over the last 2 years.



do not fundraise.

DIRECT IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON INCOME LEVELS

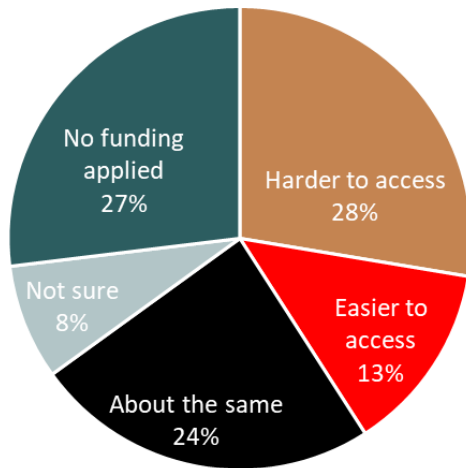


who reported a decrease in income from donations and fundraising said it was directly linked to COVID-19.

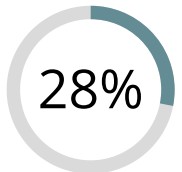
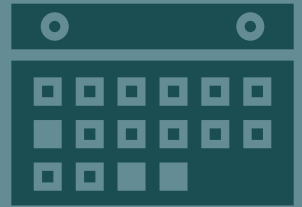
EXPERIENCE OF APPLYING FOR FUNDING

Organisations were asked to indicate their **experience of applying for funding** in the last two years.

Experience of Applying for Funding in the Last Two Years



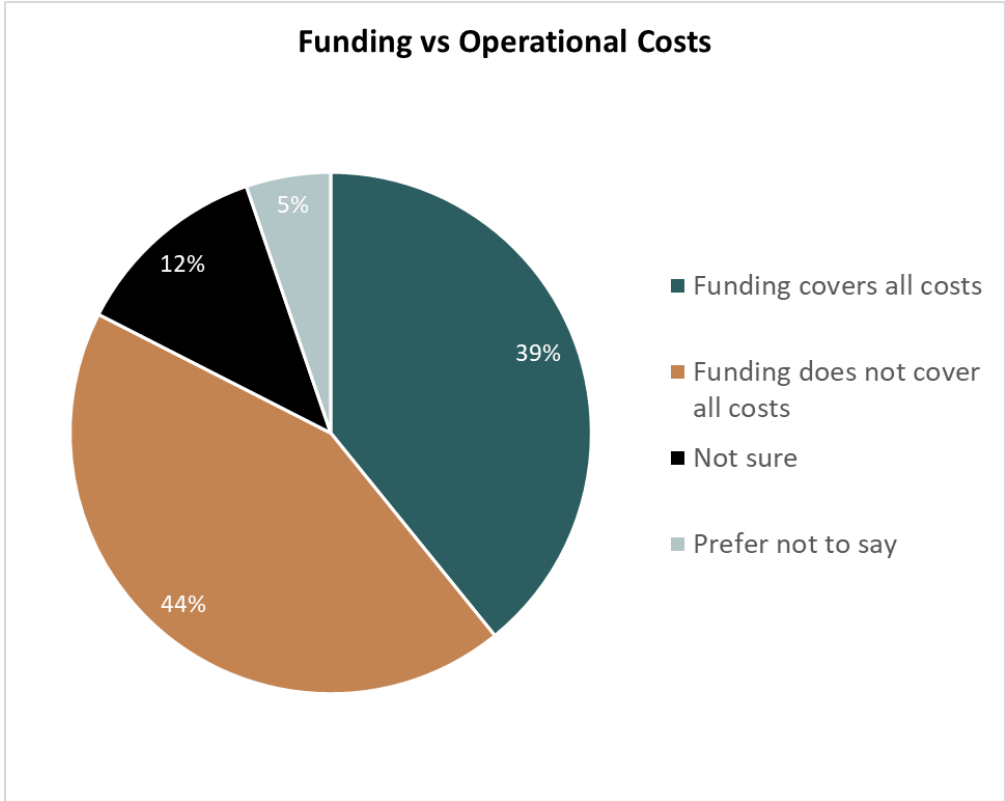
A significant proportion, 27% had not applied for funding in the last two years. This may be a combination of eligibility conditions, funding not needed or not part of the operational framework or that the impact of COVID-19 had made it unviable for applications to be made. Given that in a previous question, survey responses had indicated that overall income levels had decreased by 38%, it can be determined that COVID-19 has influenced this to an extent. In addition, 28% of responses indicated that funding was harder to access, in contrast to 13% who indicated funding was easier to access.



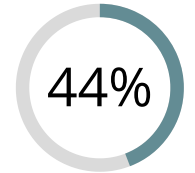
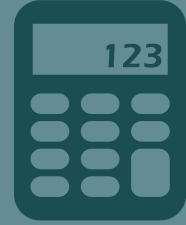
experienced it harder to access funds over the last 2 years.

FUNDING AND COSTS

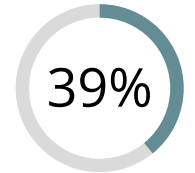
Organisations were asked to indicate whether the **funding received covers all of their costs**.



Overall 44% of responses indicated that current funding levels do not cover all costs, whereas 39% responded that funding does meet costs. A further 17% were not sure or preferred not to say.



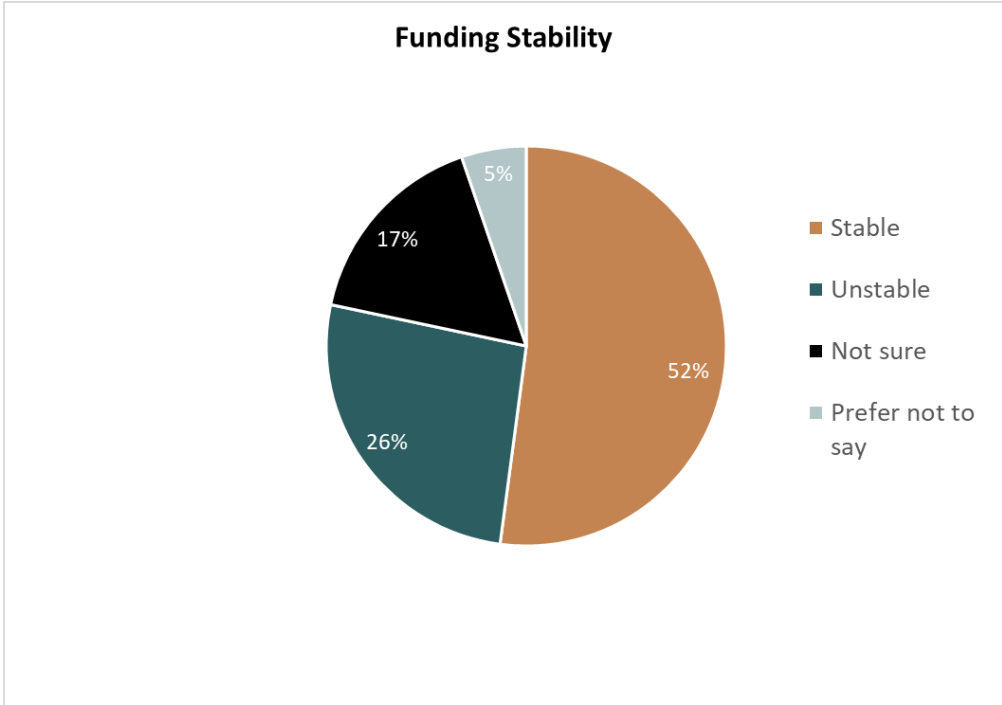
funding does not cover all costs.



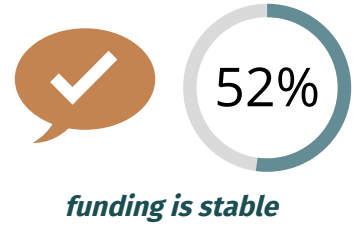
funding does cover all costs.

FUNDING STABILITY

Organisations were asked to indicate whether their **funding situation was stable**.

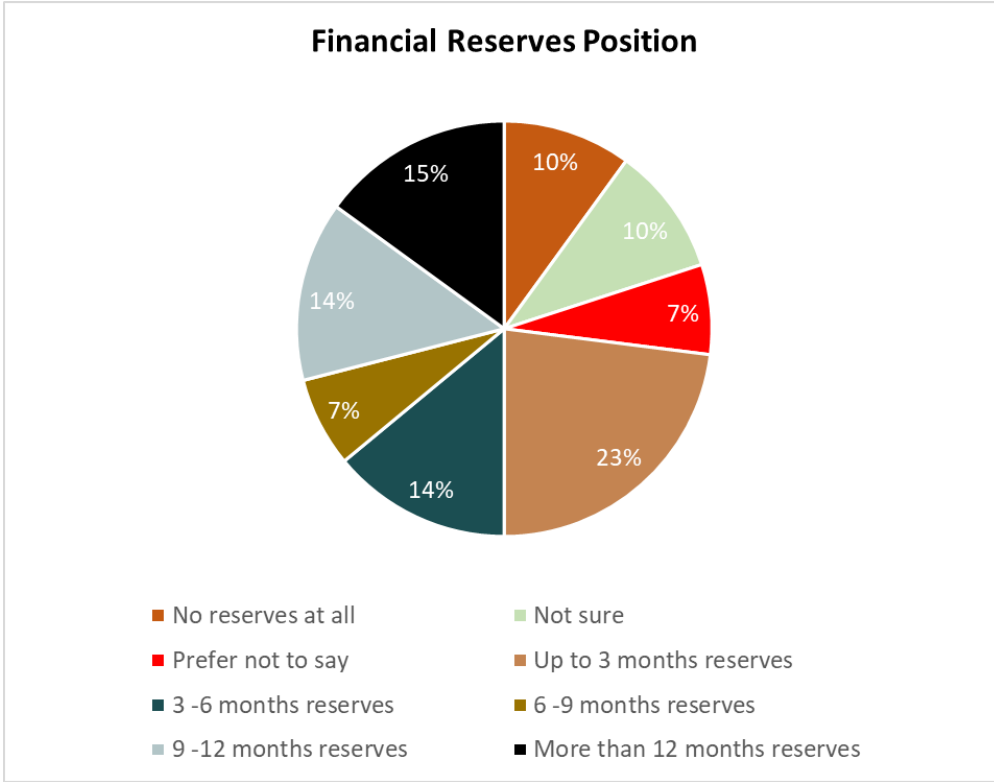


Overall 52% of responses indicate that their funding was stable, which is somewhat surprising given the previous response highlighting the scale of reduction in income levels of the past two years and the difficulty of accessing funds. In contrast, 26% of organisations describe their funding situation as stable and 22% are unsure or prefer not to say.

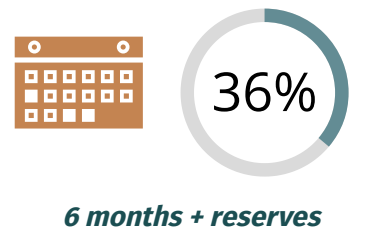
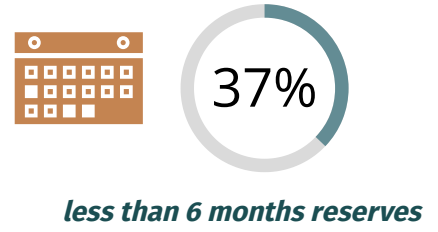
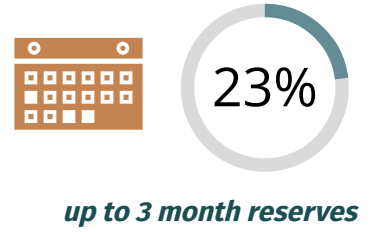


FINANCIAL RESERVES

Organisations were asked to indicate their **financial reserves position**.



Overall 37% of organisations indicated they had reserves of 6 months or less and in contrast 36% stated that their reserves were 6 months+.



FUNDING CHANGES EXPLAINED

Organisations were asked to provide further details as to how and why their funding levels had changed in the last two years. Their responses have been analysed and organised into key groupings, with a summary highlighted below:-



NEW ORGANISATION



Developing experience of the funding landscape and building up to compete/apply.



VOLUNTEERS



Focusing on applying for grants to support volunteer capacity.



COVID-19 IMPACT



Grants predominantly became about responding to the impact of COVID-19, which in turn became the most common type of grant to apply for.



COMPETITION



Less funding available for specific service areas and increasingly hard to access due to changing eligibility (i.e. required turnover).



RESILIENCE



COVID-19 funding in turn enabled a greater focus and financial investment in building up infrastructure and operational resilience.



"We have been raising funding to purchase our building and site; raised funds to restore the EDGE building; raised funds to create the OPERATION OASIS COVID-19 response Project and for COVID-19 recovery Cafe projects; raised £50,000 for our new playground area. We have fought and applied hard to keep going and to be able to deliver all we do for the community."

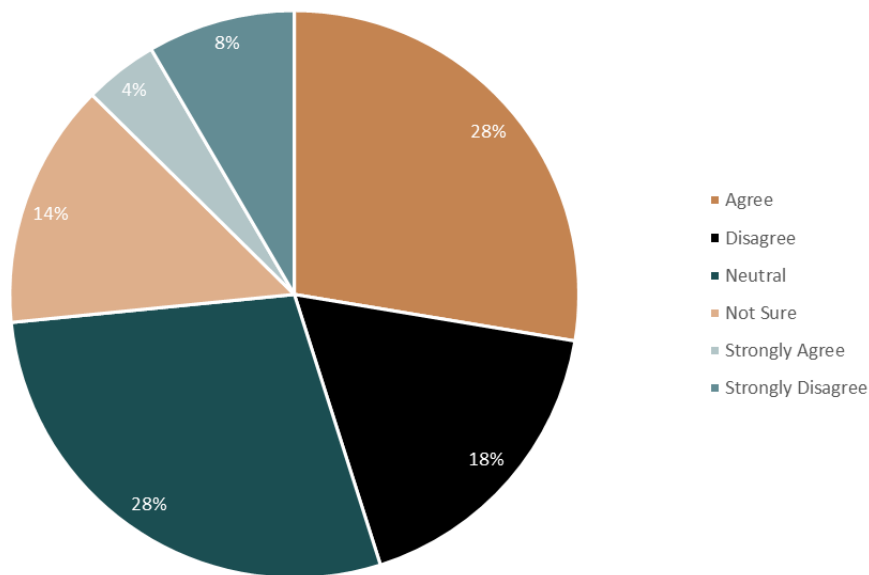
PART FOUR - CHALLENGES & SUPPORT

THE SURVEY HIGHLIGHTED THE CHALLENGES FACING THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR ACROSS NOTTINGHAMSHIRE, BOTH CURRENT AND ANTICIPATED. THE RESPONSES ALSO PROVIDE A CLEAR INDICATION OF THE SUPPORT REQUIRED BY THE SECTOR TO OVERCOME THESE CHALLENGES.

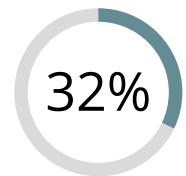
INFLUENCING LOCAL DECISIONS

The survey asked respondents to give an indication of their ability to influence local decisions and speak out about concerns. As can be seen below, 32% felt that they strongly agreed or agreed with this statement, 26% disagreed and the largest proportion were neutral or unsure.

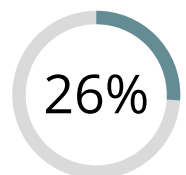
My Organisation is Able to Influence Local Decisions



In terms of speaking out on issues that concern them, the majority of organisations felt empowered to speak out - with 65% agreeing that they are able to speak out about the issues that concern them. In contrast 16% of organisations felt that they were not able to speak out, with a further 25% remaining neutral or unsure.



Agree or strongly agree on the ability to influence local decisions



Disagree or strongly disagree on the ability to influence local decisions

Respondents were invited to provide more detail on influencing local decisions and ability to 'speak out'. These have been clustered as below:-

Ability to influence local authorities – Parish, District and County Council

- We have great networks to voice concerns of those we serve and work with decision makers in Local Authorities.
- We have been invited to speak at local council meetings and Notts CC have asked our advice.
- Our organisation has good direct links to Parish, District and County Councillors.
- We have a duty to our parishioners to speak out and lobby Gedling BC and Nottinghamshire County Council about issues which affect them.
- Local council seen more interested in working with larger national organisations and tend to avoid new or smaller youth organisations.

Ability to influence other statutory agencies/wider partnerships

- We have established strong links with our statutory partners and are firmly embedded in our local community regarding decision making. On the Place board, Levelling Up Fund, our local Place Based Partnership.
- Excellent communication infrastructure set up by health organisations, councils and BCVS - provides many opportunities to raise awareness and jointly solve problems within community.
- We have good partnerships and good relationships with our funders and as a result are well respected and our views sought. If we wanted to raise any issues, there are people who would listen and take them/us seriously.
- We spend a lot time on partnership working locally and feel like our partners and stakeholders know us well and we can speak out if something is concerning us. We put time into this activity to support and help our partners to achieve their aims and objectives so the residents of Nottinghamshire benefit from this. We do not believe in duplication of services and work hard to complement and support other activities locally.
- We can, as a church, speak out on any spiritual and moral issue and support those with inequalities and who suffer.

Ability to influence regarding specific Health issues

- By being part of the Dementia Pathway Review group, we can input our thoughts.
- I have ticked agree but it is a struggle, particularly since reorganisation of the health services and fewer PPE opportunities. But we do our best by membership of organisations such as our PPGs and PCRS and attending workshops etc.

Ability to influence support for the Elderly

- It does not feel as though anyone is listening to us about the alienation of older people who cannot do things on line and want to pay in cash. Many do not have mobile phones, Broadband or computers.

Ability to influence on Environmental and Conservation Issues

- We have issues with landowners and agreements which means we are not 'secure' on the land. We find it difficult to discuss these in order not to 'rock the boat'.
- We are involved in a number of local statutory and community-based networks to influence around conservation, the environment and sustainability.

Perceived Lack of Influence/'Not Being Heard'

For those respondents who felt that they lacked influence or that there was little opportunity to be heard, a number cited that they felt that 'no-one is listening' or that no action resulted from raising concerns.

"I don't believe we can influence but people are willing to listen but how much action comes from that is debatable."

"The group campaigns for services to be available locally for the public to access in the community but not always convinced that anyone is listening."

With regard to funding support, organisations highlighted that they were wary of raising issues and getting their message across:-

"We have to be careful to protect our reputation with local funders. If we speak out about decisions and alert funders to our lack of funding it may result in them not having enough confidence in us."

"Difficult to get access to the right decisions makes/influencers and be heard, particularly where funding is concerned."

In terms of improving ways of working, the issue of co-design was raised, with the following comment summarising an issue raised by many respondents:-

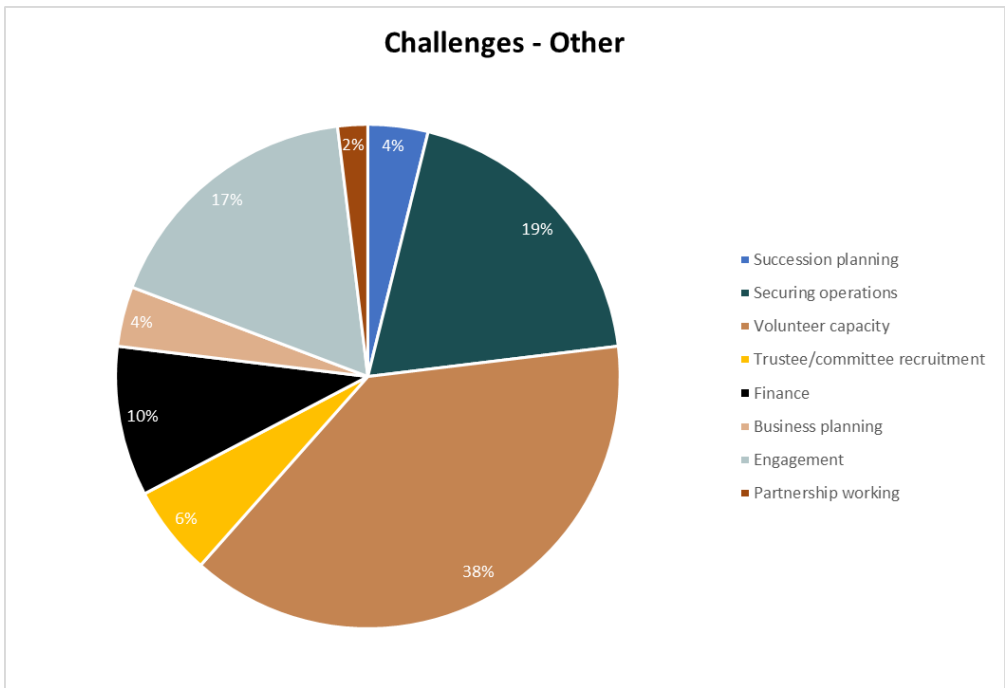
"We feel able to speak out and the network and inclusion of the sector has improved. However, opportunities to influence and shape can be piecemeal and after decisions are made. We find that when speaking out, this is often seen as negative and 'rocking the boat'. We do recognise that this improved during the pandemic and we hope that this continues further. Better understanding of the sector and how it operates in practice would be beneficial and of course this goes both ways. Again this will improve over time. We would welcome more involvement in design of service rather than consultation on what has been planned."

FUTURE CHALLENGES

In terms of **recognising future challenges**, the survey asked respondents to highlight these from the prescribed list below and then detail any others facing their organisation. As can be seen below, unsurprisingly **sustainable funding and income generation** are the most frequently cited challenges, followed by **meeting demand for services**. Interestingly, maintaining independence, mission drift and reputation management were much lower down the list of challenges.



The list of 'Other' challenges is summarised in the chart below, with volunteer capacity being the most frequently cited:-



of all responses cited income generation as a challenge.



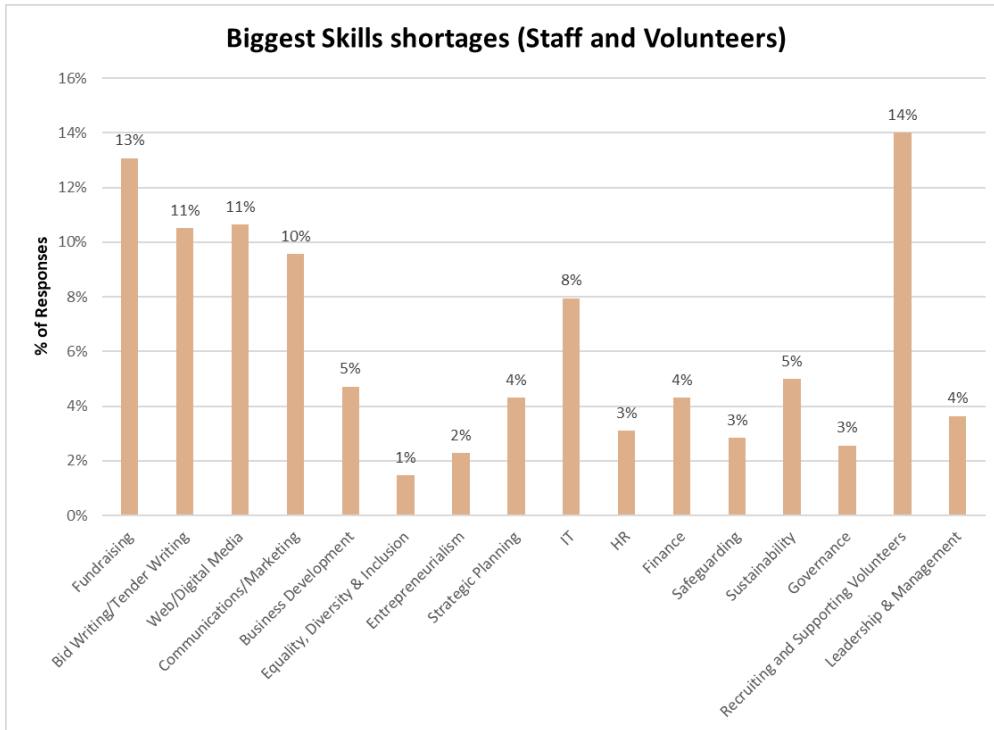
of all responses cited creating a sustainable funding base as a challenge.



of all responses cited meeting demand as a challenge.

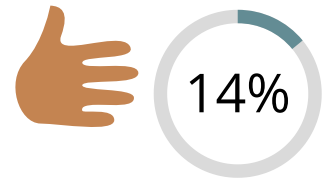
SKILLS CHALLENGES

As has already been highlighted, paid staff and volunteer capacity in voluntary and community-based organisations is key to supporting Nottinghamshire residents. The survey asked respondents to detail their **biggest skills shortages** and the issue of **recruiting and supporting volunteers** was the most frequently cited, with **fundraising** at a similar level. Interestingly leadership and management skills did not rank highly which could suggest that the sector feels that there is sufficient leadership and management capacity in place.

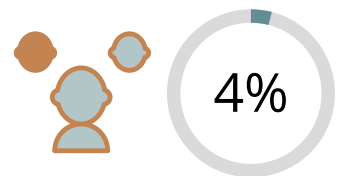


When asked how the identified skills shortages impacted on day to day work and support for service users, the following issues were most frequently cited:-

- Difficulties recruiting staff – competition in terms of salary, short term contracts and wider terms and conditions
- Difficulties recruiting trustees
- Difficulties recruiting volunteers
- Lack of IT skills impacting across Communications/Marketing, Finance, Service Delivery
- Lack of expertise in social media and marketing which impacts on wider engagement with service users and volunteers
- Lack of expertise in writing funding applications
- Difficulties in working remotely
- Lack of funds for training staff and volunteers
- Need safeguarding training for volunteers



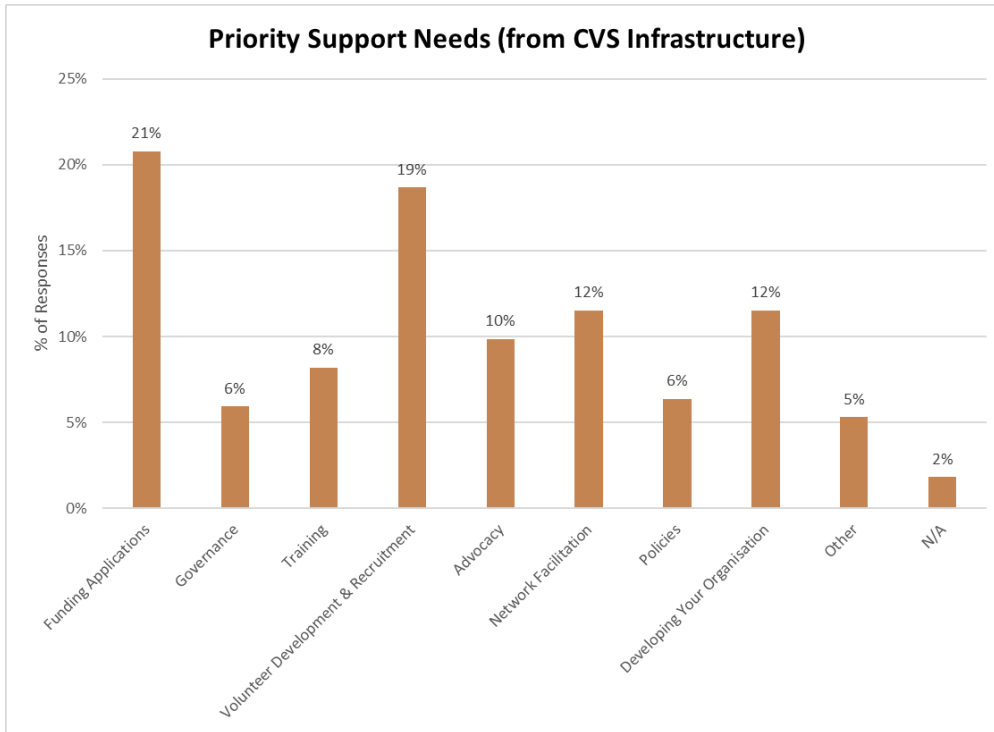
of all responses cited recruiting and supporting volunteers as the biggest skills shortage.



of all responses cited leadership and management as a skills shortage.

INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT

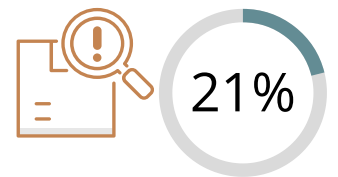
The survey asked organisations to identify **what kind of support**, that might be available from an infrastructure organisation such as a local CVS, **is a priority**. Responses are as detailed below.



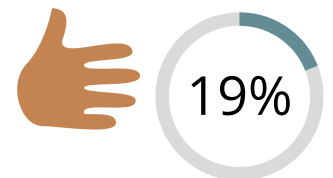
As can be seen above, support with funding applications and volunteer development and recruitment are highlighted as being of the greatest priority consistently across the county. Network facilitation and support with developing organisations also ranked highly, with governance and policies both raking at the lowest end of the scale. The 'Other' category included aspects such as:-

- Support with communications
- Help with referral management
- Policy templates
- Act as a lead organisation when bidding for large tenders
- HR support

For those organisations that had highlighted **training** as one of the areas that they would welcome support with, a further question was asked in terms of which specific areas were a priority. Responses show that the statutory basics i.e. first aid, health and safety, IT and safeguarding are required along with training support for volunteering and business development.



of all responses cited 'Funding Applications' as the area of support most needed.



of all responses cited 'Volunteer Development & Recruitment' as the second most needed area of support.

PART FIVE - IMPACT OF COVID-19

THE SURVEY PROVIDED THE OPPORTUNITY FOR ORGANISATIONS TO REFLECT ON THE IMPACT OF COVID-19. THIS INCLUDED BOTH DEMAND FROM SERVICE USERS AFTER THE PANDEMIC AND SPECIFIC ISSUES THAT ALL SIZES OF ORGANISATION HAVE HAD TO CONSIDER AND RESPOND TO.

DEMAND FROM SERVICE USERS POST COVID-19

Respondents were asked to provide insight into how the mental and physical health and wellbeing of service users has changed since the start of the pandemic. Many took the opportunity to detail the overwhelmingly negative changes that have occurred, with just a handful of positives being cited. Overwhelmingly, respondents felt that physical and mental health had deteriorated and that many service users were struggling to 'return to normal', with the impact of the pandemic now compounded by financial concerns.

Within the confines of this report, it is not possible to detail all the insight shared however many responses have been included in full, both out of respect for those that have invested the time in sharing these insights and vitally for funding stakeholders to reflect on and consider.

The survey provided organisations with the opportunity to detail what they believed service users/communities most needed as part of post-COVID-19 recovery and if they felt that they could fulfil these needs. As this was a free text response, it is summarised in the points below:-

- Individualised holistic support - mental health, confidence-building, skills and knowledge development, preparation for work, long-term support.
- Different channels to access services.
- Increased safe opportunities to socially interact in order to tackle isolation.

"Many of the older people were of the opinion that their life was limited by age and frailty and they didn't want to waste it, sat alone at home. I would say we have all learnt to live in the moment a bit better."

- Consistency and continuity of support.

"I learned from the pandemic that the elderly, infirm and those people living with dementia in all areas were the 'forgotten' communities. Our members need regular, reliable, consistent and affordable support from our organisation. They need to feel safe and confident whilst having fun. They need to feel valued and not forgotten. Peer support is valuable to the carers and loved ones."

- Support with how to cope safely with the new 'digital only' world post COVID-19.
- Capacity to help with wider IT skills development.
- More volunteers.
- Service users need help to address food and fuel poverty, warm clothes, mental health support.
- Financial resilience advice is key.

"They need a place to belong, a place to find information and support, more finance and poverty aid than ever, and more services to bring them together and improve life opportunities and to give some quality to people's lives."

- Help to tackle COVID-19 anxieties for children and their families through roles such as play therapists.
- Physical activity & social contact for children and young people.
- Women only sessions.

"Most service users require ongoing support with key issues affecting their finances, health, ability to heat and eat and live safely to remain independent in their homes and provide for their families."

- Access to community transport.
- Ownership of community assets such as green spaces.

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON SERVICE USERS

OVERARCHING VIEWS

- Most of the service users have developed an increase in stress, anxiety and social isolation during the pandemic period.
- All issues prior to the pandemic have been magnified. Mental health and coping and managing life has become more difficult. People are less physically fit and many have seen a decline in health. Isolation has decreased confidence and the difficulties accessing services when needed is creating much distress, with many feeling helpless.
- We are seeing people who have complex multiple issues, some as result a direct result of COVID-19 (relationship breakdown, homelessness, loss of income, employment issues) and some that might have had problems for some time (mental health issues, long term illness, financial problems, benefit problems) and COVID-19 has made the situation worse. We are also seeing people that are struggling with loneliness and acute anxiety as a result of COVID-19.
- Service users, volunteers and staff have all suffered mentally and emotionally as a result of isolation enforced by lockdown. Coming out of lockdowns has also been anxious as some people have been reluctant to return to community meeting places. Conversely some new volunteers have used volunteering as a way of avoiding lockdown. Some that have effectively gone into hibernation have deteriorated in all aspects of health. Obviously various people have suffered physical ill health due to COVID-19, ranging from minor short-term illness to death.
- Our core group of volunteers have found solace in the garden during the pandemic- they will attest it has given them a lifeline over the last two years. Our coffee morning has brought people together, got them outside and sharing their stories and conversations. The coffee morning has a different demographic to the working sessions and I think it's been a really important part of people's week.
- Huge impact which we have seen by delivering food and toiletries parcels all across Bassetlaw and further afield. We have found people in the worst situations, with inadequate housing, living in squalor, in food, fuel and financial poverty. The problems got worse through COVID-19. Then we have seen the impact of COVID-19 on the mental health of so many people, children, young people, elderly and people on low incomes. We have also had over 12 suicides in the area that we know of in 2 years and this has given me a lot of pastoral work. As a Pastor as well as Community centre and project manager I have had more funerals than ever, have had bereavement crisis like never before, people who couldn't be with a loved one as they passed, people who could not go to a funeral, and the isolation of so many people has been terrible.

- Clients issues are more complex, they are more upset and frustrated. The time needed to support them is longer. They are overwhelmed by technology and form filling.
- We are facing a tsunami of desperate cases due to Universal Credit cuts, energy costs increase.
- There is definitely improved community spirit but many residents are suffering greater degrees of mental health due to financial worries, loss of loved ones, etc.
- On the whole our members have coped surprisingly well. They're all retired and used to managing their routines. Some have been more lonely than usual, particularly those widowed during the pandemic. It has been good to see how much those who HAVE felt able to return to meetings have been excited to do so. Continuing exercise has been vital but a drop in the ocean. NHS services have suffered and this has affected members negatively.
- Those who have got through COVID-19 unscathed are keen to live life to the full, trips out are in great demand. We may not have heard from the clients who are still afraid to come out, we know that some have suffered bereavements and some have had deteriorating mental health some of which has gone unnoticed. It appears to be harder for people to get the support they need in terms of carers and many have missed medical check-ups which may have helped.

ISSUES HIGHLIGHTED SPECIFICALLY BY THOSE SUPPORT SERVICE USERS WITH HEALTH CONDITIONS

- We are oversubscribed for our mental health services which we run across the County. We are very worried about the next wave of demand due to cost of living and think that this will be worse than COVID-19 as it is now everyone. For many people income stayed stable during COVID-19 – this won't be the case over the next 2 years.
- Our client base have struggled with the lack/clarity of other services available e.g. NHS. The client's state of anxiety is heightened due to late diagnosis of cancer and their frustrations with this. People have become lonely and isolated due to lockdown and lack confidence and want greater support and interaction with others.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- Our district already had issues with physical activity and the pandemic has seen a large increase in inactivity. We have been proactive and seen people engage in walk and talk and walking buddies programmes. However, there is work to be done with 27% of our population being disabled we need better access to services to enable people to be more physical active. We have seen a steady increase in Mental health crisis and signposted to several talking therapies and support groups.
- Some of our regular walkers no longer walk with us because they are afraid of catching COVID-19, others who have not walked for two years have become isolated and feel they can no longer walk either the distance of the speed. On a positive side, we have more members than we have ever had and new members are keen to participate in leading walks, become committee members and help with social events.

ISSUES HIGHLIGHTED SPECIFICALLY BY THOSE WORKING SPECIFICALLY WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

- More children with complex needs- more disadvantaged children with emotional, social or behavioural issues as a result of COVID-19.
- There are now 5.5 million people in the UK affected by a loved one's substance misuse or gambling. This has escalated tenfold during the pandemic. Most families affected by these issues are in services between 4 and 10 years and client cases have become more complex.
- Dramatically changed!! Some members are still too frightened to come to our clubs. For some it's the threat of being ill, some it's the simple fact they have got used to being in doors, some it's their parents/carers who won't let members return financially or otherwise.
- Families Children and Young People with SEND have increased levels of anxiety, mental health, depression, financial difficulties, loss of routine and more challenging behaviour within the family home.
- Massive increase in emotional/mental health issues in young children. Now 1 in 6 children are reported to have emotional/emerging mental health issues. "In an average classroom, ten children will have witnessed their parents separate, eight will have experienced severe physical violence, sexual abuse or neglect, one will have experienced the death of a parent and seven will have been bullied (MHFA England 15.10.20).
- Children and young people accessing our service are much more anxious, they struggle in our youth groups to build peer relationships due to being in isolation for so long. young people also struggle going to new environments, for example if we go on a group trip their anxiety can prevent some young people from going.
- Many of our children and young people have been negatively affected, although most seem to be better now. Some of our teens are experiencing mental health crisis, and some now receive support from mental health support agencies. Boys tend to talk more about lockdown preventing them from developing, worrying they are missing out on learning, etc. Girls tend to talk more about lack of confidence, being worried about not being good enough.
- Families affected by the death or terminal-illness of someone they love have been adversely affected as this has happened at a time of increased fear and anxiety and also when they have not been able to grieve in the "normal" way with friends and family. We have seen an increase in the complexity of support required to help families with their grief and mental health, a huge increase in anxiety and an increase in deaths, either directly or indirectly due to the pandemic as well as suicide.
- For a large number of our families the pandemic has been horrific, most have gone without any form of respite or education, most of our families have had to support their child with special needs without any help or access to resources, many of our families have lost their jobs as they are unable to care for their children and work as their child requires full one to one support. The support from family and friends reduced massively, we also saw a huge reduction in medical interventions and a reduction in support services across the board. Overall, it has been a very difficult time. On a positive note, it was nice for the first few weeks to not have to rush in the mornings for the school run, but after such a long period without any help even that lost any benefit.
- Children have spent a lot of time at home, doing online learning. We have noticed along with online learning, children have created a depth of knowledge for the internet and sometimes social media (i.e. TIKTOK, Instagram etc.) In the classroom the younger children have found it difficult to adapt to classroom behaviours (i.e. sitting still, concentration).

ISSUES HIGHLIGHTED BY THOSE WORKING WITH THE ELDERLY

- Many older people have found that their physical health has deteriorated and they are now unable to go out. This in turn is causing a knock-on effect with their mental health and has led to them being more lonely and isolated.
- Some of our volunteer drivers decided not to return to us and no longer volunteer. We have found an increase in our client base by 25% as many people are finding it difficult to return into the outside world on their own and rely on us to take them to important appointments.
- Our users have loved being back at the hall and they have said it gives them something to look forward to now they are allowed to meet again. Their physical and mental health has improved. When groups first came back, we saw a real decline in their health. On the other side of this, we have those that are still very concerned and will often cancel if the numbers of cases go up. They're very conscious of the pandemic and although they are happy to be socialising, they're deeply worried about becoming ill and this is very testing for their mental health.

ISSUES HIGHLIGHTED BY LGBTQ+ RESPONDENTS

- The pandemic added to the existing social isolation of being LGBTQ+

ISSUES HIGHLIGHTED BY THOSE WORKING WITH THE HOMELESS

- We have noticed an increase in the number of men coming to the Foodshare who are living in hostels & other shared living accommodation. Amongst this group we have noticed a marked deterioration in their mental health & wellbeing & some of them have obviously become drug users during this time. Other service users such as families have lost jobs after being furloughed initially.

IMPACTS ON SERVICE USERS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

- Generally our users coped all right with lockdown once they got over the initial panic. The village responded heroically to provide the practical support that was required. The impact of COVID-19 on physical health was significant - patients were reluctant to seek help for what they considered to be minor problems. Problems are ongoing with access to health services although the situation seems to be improving. Mental health is a major concern particularly amongst those who have been bereaved, who have suffered poor physical health and those whose families have been unable to visit.
- The pandemic has had a negative impact on almost all of our service users mental & physical health, and in some cases continues to do so. Firstly as they are not able to access to healthcare services they need in a reasonable time. Many are also fearing interaction with others as they feel the threat has not gone away. Peoples physical health has been impacted by lack of access to their GP or long waiting lists for elective surgeries, Cancer services have been restricted at times as well, there was limited access to PICs team, physiotherapy etc. Our rural locations had caused further anguish as people don't have access to these resources due to lack of transport as well as financial hardship. Nothing is easily accessible in our area.

COMMENTS ON DEVELOPING RESILIENCE

Whilst comments shared overwhelmingly highlighted the ongoing negative impact of the pandemic on Nottinghamshire residents, asking the question did bring forward some positive reflections:-

- For some it has been a positive experience as they have been fully involved with their local community; for others, especially those without or living far from family members, it has been a lonely time; for others, it has been fulfilling as they have volunteered beyond their usual activities. From the outset, our group stressed building resilience, which has held many of us in good stead.
- We have seen some users more willing to be involved in social events - to make the most of the moment, while others have become withdrawn and nervous of any social interaction.
- People are more willing to try something new as they don't want to be stuck doing the same thing all the time.
- Positively, many of our members have developed better IT skills.

APPENDIX 1 - SUMMARY DISTRICT INSIGHTS

ASHFIELD

1. How has the pandemic affected your organisation?

- Services are gradually opening up however in the case of income generation from tenants and individual groups using facilities, this is proving slow to recover.
- Volunteers have lost confidence or are exhausted/taking a break.
- Less volunteers are now coming forward and services experiencing increased demand.
- More social isolation and longer waiting lists for services. NHS services are stretched. Support needed for mental health, confidence, and motivation.
- Older people have been hit hard by the pandemic.
- More volunteers needed for one-to-one support with walking.
- Some services adapting to reach people without digital skills as people want face-to-face support otherwise they don't engage.

2. How confident are you regarding the future?

- Need to develop a wider pool of volunteers/have a recruitment drive and develop a localised system of matching volunteers to organisations.
- The pandemic proved that the VCS respond and this should be recognised on a national level - need consistent investment.
- Many services are working on short, fixed term contracts
- Churches are working well together - don't reinvent the wheel.
- Dementia support has increased but more work is needed.
- Be aware of changing demographics and communities e.g. Syrian community now in Hucknall.

3. What are the top 3 priorities in your local community?

- Communication, not duplication of services
- Removal of the stigma to disabilities, hidden or not - key workers need to be trained.
- Carers of people with severe mental health need more support.
- Support with mental health, loneliness and isolation - there are few local resources for link workers to refer their patients to.
- More training and signposting support for link workers.
- Provide face to face interaction rather than telephone - will there ever be enough money to make mental health support 'fit for purpose'?
- Connect / Communicate / Resource services.
- Need help to cut running costs – e.g. support with renewable energy options such as solar panels.

1. How has the pandemic affected your organisation?

Gypsy Roma Traveller (GRT) Community Insight

- Impact from social isolation for families and elders as families were not able to visit other families on different sites.
- Some site specific community support schemes were set up, but informally and didn't reach everyone. Some cultural issues meant some families wouldn't engage.
- Children not at school couldn't all gain access to IT at home mainly due to WIFI in rural areas – this negatively impacted on access to learning.
- Couldn't always get help from other agencies as still prejudice around sites/encampments in some places.
- Unable to access grant aid/medicine deliveries.
- Agencies working with GRT communities were unable to provide face to face support.
- Unable to help those who do not read and write.
- Concerns re safeguarding.

Food Insecurity Insight

- Government guidance kept changing.
- Fear from service users not wanting to mix/meet even when restrictions were lifted.
- Changed the way we did things, delivered food and made collections. We started offering delivery slots which is something that we have kept going as we come out of the pandemic.
- Changed the eligibility criteria for support to mean that assessment was far faster and no longer needed to come from other agencies - achieved a greater reach.
- Added more practical help in supplies such as nappies, pet food, toiletries as vulnerable people couldn't come to us directly. We worked with local providers to source more fresh products to get these to those most in need.
- COVID-19 funding was positive for us, we received approx. 3 grants of £10k which helped support our work.
- Mixed and extended demographic increased as the food shortages hit as well as the restrictions on movements.
- The pandemic has shown us how able we are to respond and change delivery quickly. We are in a strong position to be resilient for future changes, but it will be challenging as things become more expensive and funding priorities change.

Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer (LGBTQ) Community Insight

- Real danger that our membership community would become disengaged, so we tried to retain people's involvement by substituting online events to keep members engaged.
- Allowed social connections to be maintained, but also allowed new ones to be formed – some people have found new friends that they met in real life only after the pandemic!
- The furlough grant was a huge help in us retaining committed staff.
- During lockdown we encouraged our volunteer event leaders to plan for the time when we could run events again.

Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Community Insight

- Lockdown impact – lost stock due to closures and consequent revenue.
- Made us look at more online provision, which had pro's and con's not as big an uptake online but something that is being developed further
- Provided shopping and medicine collections for the community.
- Could not open our usual workshops - hoping to reopen these in the summer.
- Increased from 4 volunteers to 10 and started a befriending type service as the nature of support needs changed.
- Got funding from Notts CC but the need was so high we found at times we were having to buy food for people which was getting expensive.

2. How confident are you regarding the future?

GRT Community Insight

- Unfortunately I am never very confident that services will be put in place for our community. They come and go but there is still a need. We are a resourceful and strong culture, we know what is right and what we need to support ourselves, sometimes communities let us and sometimes we are not wanted.
- Unsure what support services will be available for GRT families, the schemes that ran before the pandemic don't seem to be happening yet.

Food Insecurity Insight

- Quite confident in the short term as lottery funding has helped us massively however new funding is becoming more difficult as the world opens up, with other funding priorities.
- Have a good strong, solid base of volunteers supporting us.
- Levels of practical donations can fluctuate as things are changing, rising prices and the Ukrainian crisis has diverted away some support. Rising prices affect people wanting to donate but also puts more people in a vulnerable situation - 40% of calls we receive are now new users and there is a stigma around that for them.
- Volunteer saturation may impact on capacity, i.e. people returning to work ... we need a certain level of volunteers to be able to function both mornings, afternoons and some evenings which is a challenge if people are back working.

LGBTQ Community Insight

- We've shown that people are committed to the organisation and will make efforts to see us survive.
- Financially we have come out of this better than we had thought so whilst finances aren't strong, they're reasonable considering the situation.

BAME Community Insight

- There seem to be a lot more Afro Caribbean, Indian and other minority groups moving in to Worksop, so hopeful that this will support the business and help us support the community.
- There is not as much footfall still on the High Street which impacts on the support we can offer, advertising is important as is looking to develop online sales which helps both the shop and the charity.
- Funding is important for us to develop the online/ website offer and we need to continue to look at how we can be diverse and attract more business / community members.
- I am confident that social aspects, meetings and helping support projects will continue to be needing by the community.
- Through a volunteer I have heard about social prescribing, so that is something that I think will help us to grow and support people with loneliness.
- We have grown through COVID and there is now more need that there has been for 3 years since I started this as a support thing for our community.
- I am working with BCVS which is good as it gives me support and looking at funding for the future.

3. What are the top 3 priorities in your local community?

GRT Community Insight

- Better understanding of our community.
- Continue to support the community and those in most need.
- Encourage effective advocacy and inform people of the needs across all sectors of the community.
- To reach as many families as possible to provide support whether it be health, education, planning.

Food Insecurity Insight

- Increasing staffing to meet capacity and retaining a solid volunteer base.
- Funding and ensuring consistent income and donations.
- Continuing to deliver a good service, so important for well-being our volunteers and the wider community.

LGBTQ Community Insight

- Get back to a full events programme for the benefit of members and for our financial sustainability.
- Grow our membership base to increase the impact our activities have, including by raising our profile through partnerships and sponsorship.
- Develop existing volunteers' skills and abilities to offer more events, and more types of events, and recruit new volunteers.

BAME Community Insight

- Better digital and online offer.
- Staffing and consistent income /funding to support staff and help grow.
- Reaching out to the community and engagement - supporting isolation.
- Better IT, online presence and supporting those who have no access to IT with access /workshops / equipment.

4. Identified gaps to better support these organisations and/or communities.

GRT Community Insight

- Funding for specific services that understand communities and the differences in culture.
- Consistent access to services and information
- Education, school places without waiting 20 days if there are places within schools then get the child in ASAP - more specialist support services.
- Return to liaising with key workers for awareness raising of the different needs across the County and district.
- Work still needs to be done in education, health, prisons, government departments and local councils around equality and the GRT community.

Food Insecurity Insight

- Due to the rural nature of Bassetlaw, some of the more rural areas are harder to access and people don't have transport or if they do, they won't be filling up their cars due to cost.
- Concerns regarding volunteer numbers and as the world opens up people going back to work / offices etc... need to succession plan for ensuring volunteer base is retained.
- Consistent, longer-term funding.
- Rural transport is an issue/more community transport would be great.

LGBTQ Community Insight

- There is still a need to address attitudes in local communities towards LGBT+ people.

BAME Community Insight

- More financial support for growth and to meet demand.
- Support and information on social enterprise and sustainability for all - information on local business grants to support infrastructure, funding to help charities grow and the best models to use i.e. social enterprise etc... support with IT.
- Issues with increasing costs i.e. fuel.

1. How has the pandemic affected your organisation?

- Reporting of domestic violence rose dramatically during the pandemic and still feeling the effects / demand for services.
- Used financial reserves to enable the opening of services more regularly but this is not sustainable.
- Impact of facility closures – in a number of instances, staff worked from home, with telephone support services set up.
- Impact on volunteers – ‘Pre-COVID-19 we had 80 volunteers - now have about 30-40.’
- Recognition of the impact on mental health and the lack of/difficulty in accessing mental health services and support.
- Post pandemic, things are taking longer to set up such as new groups.
- Communication:-
 - Recognised the need for ongoing support and held meetings every two months to keep people engaged / involved and interested.
 - Online meetings not ideal for many people – they prefer face to face.
 - Impact of digital exclusion - information therefore sent via hard copy to keep members engaged.
 - Set up Whatsapp groups for carers and volunteers – tried to make it fun
 - Delivered Activity Packs to users and their carers
 - Delivered dementia information to users on a regular basis
 - Continue with regular calls to those still lacking confidence to attend face to face activities

2. How confident are you regarding the future?

- Restarting services/activities and in many cases, facing increased demand for services – advice, money, debt, social activities, domestic violence support, fuel and food poverty.
- Trying to do less online as older people are often digitally excluded – they don't engage and this leaves them without a voice and isolated.
- Change in demands for services – older service users wanting to get out and about and access recreational / social activities – take a lot of organising and resources.
- Challenges of getting hold of statutory services as in many instances, there is still little face to face access.
- Challenge of no bank in Stapleford which makes running the service difficult.
- Funding challenges:- fairly confident for the next 12 months but beyond that dependent on funding from NCC. A Lack of resources to meet increasing demand “Will struggle to meet demand if we can't offer 24 / 7 service”
- Developed specific course – ‘Moving Forward From COVID-19’ - a 4 week course for those with low level mental health problems caused by anxiety from the pandemic.

3. What are the top 3 priorities in your local community?

- To be on a more sustainable financial footing – ongoing issue of short-term funding – need to have access to longer term funding.
- To reopen services to pre pandemic level and in some instances, increase services to meet increased demand.
- Recruit and train more volunteers.
- Fill staff roles as there are difficulties with staff recruitment.
- Be aware of the impact on mental health of staff, volunteers and users.

GEDLING

1. How has the pandemic affected your organisation?

- As had to close centres, play packs were put together and distributed to families via other organisations such as foodbanks. As these were very popular, these new links will remain in place.
- Some volunteers were lost during the lockdowns which has had a longer-term impact.
- Loss of face-to-face meetings has been difficult for a lot of older members who do not access Zoom. Have tried to keep in touch by telephone and letter - befriending has been successful.
- Although services and café had to completely close in the 2020 lockdown, have taken the opportunity to revamp the café and allow local artists to display their work. These new initiatives will continue and have been positive but there is much work to do to encourage the local community back.

2. How confident are you regarding the future?

- In a number of instances, the organisations were confident - services are very much in demand with increased memberships and new/revamped services that were implemented during the pandemic will continue.
- Some ongoing concerns re digital exclusion.
- Also looking to recruit new members who can sustain the organisation.
- Participation in the Kick Start Programme means that younger people will now be involved in service delivery.
- Rental of parts of centres will hopefully continue as part of an income generation strategy.
- Funding is an issue.

3. What would be your top three priorities for partners at 'Place' level across health, care, local authority, and voluntary sectors to collaborate on more? Please state which 'Place Partnership' you are thinking about.

- Health partnerships - consider face to face health promotion in local communities around services which are no longer provided by GPs. look to voluntary sector services to a greater extent to enhance services by building up better partnerships with community organisations.
- Transforming Care – encourage other people from diverse backgrounds to get involved and tackle health and social care inequalities in order to help those who need to be heard.
- For the VCS and statutory partners - don't be competitive or work in silos - work together.

4. What are your top 3 priorities for the next 12 months?

- Increase volunteers.
- Transfer of the building to the VCS.
- Increase funding.
- Increase membership.
- Assist members to be more self-sufficient digitally but also recognise that not all people are engaging digitally.
- Make the centre more accessible.
- Increase face to face interaction so that self-help groups can make a difference.

MANSFIELD

1. How has the pandemic affected your organisation?

- Relied on emergency funding to keep services running.
- Whole process had to be completely rethought – how to get food parcels/ who needed the parcels and who needed prescriptions, etc.
- Challenge of finishing projects that started before pandemic - feeling under pressure from funders to get these completed. Unable to meet targets due to some places still being shut and people to not be working as usual.
- Lost a lot of connections with other organisations due to not being able to hold events.
- Existing tutors found full time work elsewhere.
- Policing issues as muddled messages created a misunderstanding of what could and could not be done throughout pandemic.
- Some individuals are still worried about being face to face, creating hybrid working. Creates issues linking to risk assessments etc.
- Volunteer numbers deflated.
- Lack of income due to lost room hire bookings.
- Exhaustion/mental fatigue due to nothing in place and not knowing what is happening.
- Lack of co-ordination across districts.
- Safeguarding issues increased from one per week to 3+ per day during the pandemic –(child protection, vulnerable adults, suicide risks, firearms etc.)
- Referral rates up to capacity – 20 people on waiting list for a couple of weeks instead of a couple of days.
- Most clients (c.70%) are alcohol-related, not drug-related – not only people who were struggling pre-pandemic, but also family members now struggling with their own emotions and stresses.
- Younger people have come into the VCS as volunteers and staff.
- Moved to a new centre with better facilities after lockdown.
- Are becoming a place to access wider services (District Council, mental health, etc.)
- Received COVID-specific grants which helped the organisation to sustain for the past two years.
- Now have a food supply network built up during the pandemic.
- Positive note - more credence felt in the VCS that it is understood that they are the backbone of most things happening.
- Emergency funding coming through faster.
- Chance to review services and cut things where necessary.
- More engagement from partners.

2. How confident are you regarding the future?

- Mixed picture re funding – some have more money in the bank (reserves) than have had in the last 12 years, however not as confident as the pandemic may result in shortened contracts and increased competition for grants. Constant need to secure funding which takes up a lot of staff time.
- Challenge to fundraise via public donations due to general financial insecurity.
- Confident due to restrictions easing which hopefully then creates everything to go forward. Citizens are understood to be really keen to get back and be involved.
- If any annual boosters are to be carried out, these can be encouraged.
- Have survived the worst of the pandemic.
- Good position for staffing - have 50% of salary covered. However in some instances, comment that staff constantly donate overtime.
- Some concerns re older staff and volunteers and conversely lack of younger people willing to take over.
- Hoping to proceed with an estate Youth Council.
- Seeing an increase in event organisation and attendance.

3. What are your top 3 priorities for the next 12 months?

- Secure sustainability of current projects long term.
- Influence and shape wider agenda.
- Build on strong partnerships – more strategic, outreach services to be widened, delivery services in more places to make more accessible for others.
- Get new base open and running.
- Apply for development funding for heating costs.
- Keep networks working.
- Focus on sustainability due to low occupancy within the building.
- Involve wider range of community and network work with other areas such as Mansfield Woodhouse, enhancing working together and use to advantage.
- Use what has been learnt in the past 2 years to an advantage.
- Community champions work together to keep going.
- Funding to keep staff on.
- Working with organisations to understand how can help one another and create a feel-good factor for the community.
- Embed the organisation within local community.
- Secure adequate funding.
- Ensure that younger people are recruited to ensure the future of the organisation.

NEWARK & SHERWOOD

1. How has the pandemic affected your organisation?

- Interestingly two of the organisations in this focus group had been created in response to the pandemic and were very pleased to be continuing.
- All organisations felt that the pandemic had encouraged community spirit and new members/volunteers had come forward.
- Increased need in terms of social isolation and food poverty have been underlined by the pandemic.
- Have developed a community hub as a direct response to tackle these issues – networking/community linkages and trust are critical.
- Public/community transport in rural areas is critical – people are unable to get to essential health appointments such as cancer/stroke appointments.
- Accessed emergency funding and in some instances, used grants to make some capital equipment purchases.
- Have seen new service users post pandemic – lot of fear initially but generally people now want to get out and access services again.

2. How confident are you regarding the future?

- All organisations felt confident that there would be a need for their work to continue as the pandemic recedes. However, there was less confidence overall about funding and have the resources to continue. It was acknowledged that some financial support/grants that were specific to COVID-19 would soon be withdrawn but the needs would continue long into the future and that is a worry for groups who are delivering key services within their community. In many instances, dependent on volunteers. The reluctance of funders to give grants for core costs was also a worry. There was also an anxiety around having the right links to getting access to funding, some felt that they don't always have enough support when looking and applying for funding. Concerns re impact on accessing mental health services.
- Competition to be chosen charity/community groups to be 'adopted' by supermarkets.
- Have tried to address digital exclusion.
- Looking for admin volunteers.
- Funding and volunteers.
- Moving in the right direction.

3. What would be your top three priorities for partners at 'Place' level across health, care, local authority and voluntary sectors to collaborate on more? Please state which 'Place Partnership' you are thinking about.

- 'Involve us/move with us' – the opportunity to be able to be involved in key decisions that affect the areas they serve.
- important to have a voice – do recognise that priorities change for funders.
- Need resources - more help to access the right funds and support with funding bids.
- Need the right links/networks with funders.
- Profile raising and network support/signposting through organisations like CVS is very valuable.
- In some instances, want to work with more local service users and get more local referrals.
- Need community transport solutions for those that have access issues.

1. How has the pandemic affected your organisation?

Community Venues Insight

- Struggled to engage young people
- Closure of facilities has impacted on income and reduced financial reserves.
- Closure provided the opportunity to refurbish and do maintenance work. In a number of instances, professional cleaning companies have been engaged.
- Confusion around what could or couldn't be done re facilities such as village halls – service users couldn't understand why facilities were not open. RCAN advice was invaluable.
- Grants for covid support were acknowledged and generally felt to be well administered by the District councils.
- Additional costs of COVID-19 health and safety
- Hall bookings now starting to pick up.
- User younger age groups to trial reopening.
- People wary of coming back.
- Have had more volunteers as they now recognise the value of community and want to give something back.
- Committee member/ Trustee turnover – new younger members have made positive impact bringing social media skills but in some instances, have dropped out due to work pressures.

Parish Council Insight

- Government guidance kept changing/contradictory information was a challenge - some guidance was not practical to put implement like sanitising outdoor play and gym equipment.
- Our parish council has 16 councillors, half of which were co-opted during the pandemic, none of these councillors have received councillor training/ there was a lack of cohesion due to councillors not having been trained.
- The process of getting things done slowed down, we were working efficiently but decisions took longer, it was circumstantial.
- Our chairman was unable to attend as he was not digitally capable with no PC or digital knowledge/ Zoom meetings were an issue as a number of our councillors were not digitally capable/ virtual meetings led to less cohesion.
- Our council bucked the trend, we have never had so many councillors attend meetings
- Main impact was social interaction; councillor to councillor and councillor to parishioner.
- We opened a large field for dog walkers when parishioners were not allowed to travel further afield
- We have face to face meetings now as we cannot legislate on Zoom but we do use Zoom for working group meetings.

2. How confident are you regarding the future?

Community Venues Insight

- We have had to review what a community is and what it means to us. We have found that older people identify community in a physical sense where younger people see their community online.
- Carrying out surveys to identify local need.
- Venue is attracting users from further away because of housing developments in other villages is putting pressure on local infrastructure so people are having to look further afield.
- Keen to regenerate the committee - encouraging members of user groups of the hall to be represented.
- Village demographic has changed.
- Village hall provides a platform / hub.
- Jubilee event planning taking place - hoping will be an opportunity to attract more volunteers
- Revisiting event planning.

Parish Council Insight

- New trend from parishioners is to use social media to communicate. Councillors have been criticized and faced defamatory comments as parishioners want instant answers.
- In some cases, the village social media page has improved communications with residents.
- The pandemic created a new community spirit and different groups became involved with their neighbours either just casual conversations, or helping with shopping, prescriptions, etc.
- We are likely to see the demise of District Councils over the next few years. This will leave a gap for more very local delivery of services, and PC's are best placed to fill this gap. Large PC's already have extensive responsibilities e.g. playing fields, pavilions, swimming pools, open spaces, allotments, village halls, play parks, skate parks, and other provision. Because of the added responsibilities, it may be necessary to create an executive group, paid to have a more hands on function. Small PC's could buy into the function of the large council by paying for services to be carried out on its behalf, within its own parish. Funding would need to be devolved from the unitary council, as well as each PC raising its own parish rate, as happens now. By paying some Councillors to sit on the Executive Group, this would generate renewed interest in becoming a Councillor.

3. What are the top 3 priorities in your local community?

Community Venues Insight

- Increase regular daytime usage.
- Use social media and develop website.
- Improve booking and financial systems.
- Building maintenance.
- Investigate solar energy.
- Retain new committee members/Trustees.

Parish Council Insight

- Obtain a permanent Clerk
- Reach agreement with residents and GBC how the S106 money can be used. Would like some support and guidance from the borough council
- Develop and Deliver a Village Heritage Trail
- Getting new Councillors trained - available through NALC.
- Getting the Council and Staff back on track, including bringing in staff appraisals.
- Continue to build the community, get back focus and continue working with local partners to stop fragmentation.
- Worked in partnership with other voluntary services - we want to continue these partnerships to support and represent different age groups in the area.
- We want to support wellbeing through updating and improving the parks and play areas to make them destinations, continue running markets in the precinct and returning to face to face meetings.
- Getting the community more engaged, particularly with projects such as Neighbourhood Plans.
- Encourage parishioners to be more proactive and to come to meetings. Frustration that young people are keen to criticise but won't get involved. Retired people have more time than working people. We are a small Parish Council with only 7 councillors.

4. How has your community responded to the health and wellbeing of your parishioners?

- Money directed towards adult and children's outdoor equipment
- We have handed over allotments and small pieces of land to NCC to manage
- We offer free facilities to community groups like Incredible Edibles and a luncheon club
- We support social prescribers
- By updating play parks but making them multi-generational, so that the parks become welcoming destinations
- We support the youth club 'Positive Futures'.
- We allocate £5000 of the annual precept for health and wellbeing grants which local groups can apply for.

1. How has the pandemic affected your organisation?

- Reinvention of organisations – altered services and support- set up new services to meet needs of people in local communities:
 - Provided a street by street network of support – contacting those who were older and vulnerable on a regular basis.
 - Social eating projects became food distribution (food bags) services.
 - Demand reduced as restrictions eased, but now getting busier and busier – impact of cost of living, fuel and energy. Despite being an area of perceived affluence, many people need food bags – one group delivered 120 a week in February.
 - Social supermarkets remain busy and very active
- Local delivery of local services seen as really important to all:-
 - reach into the community, identification of those most affected.
 - know the local area - can signpost to other services and develop services with the help of others: e.g. Local allotment holders/establishing a Community Fridge.
- Volunteers:-
 - Loss of volunteers- many over 70 and haven't returned.
 - Some new and younger volunteers recruited - needed to consider how to involve them once some started going back to work.
 - Loss of committee members – needed to reform and refocus.
 - Being local helped volunteers to feel part of the community.
 - For volunteers with additional needs, mental health was an issue and still is – put in additional support, set up exercise / walking sessions to alleviate feelings of isolation and improve mental health.
- For homeless drop in services:-
 - Whilst pandemic meant that unable to provide some services, did recognise that services can be adapted to meet need.
 - It was also a positive to pause and reset strategic thinking.
 - Established an advice centre.
- For services working with young people, affected events and had to deliver activities differently. E.g. Duke of Edinburgh identifying different virtual activities to meet requirements, and adapt the expedition work. Commented that it was noticeable that attitudes of the young people changed during this period.
- For community bus service, this stopped running through the pandemic due to a lack of volunteers, with 50% aged over 70.

- For specific health condition charities such as Breathe Easy, all members are clinically vulnerable and were told to shield. The committee contacted all members on a regular basis. Conducted meetings via Zoom but this presented added difficulties for some members due to digital access issues. Provided monthly email notices and hard copies too. Provided exercise classes via Zoom, which helped keep people engaged.

2. How confident are you regarding the future?

- Small pots of funding are available however the need for services will increase and there needs to be political will regarding the recognition of food poverty.
- Greater need identified within local communities - more food banks opening.
- Venue costs/loss of venues to operate from/ lack of a permanent venue.
- Difficult to move people forward beyond immediate help.
- Issue of short term funding - never sure if the same level of funding will be available from trusts that regularly fund.
- Community transport needs investment.
- Succession planning - many volunteers and committee members/trustees are older and vulnerable - need support themselves.

3. What are the top 3 priorities for your local community?

- Continue to build service provision/re-open services/consolidate new services and in some instances, add new services.
- Need to review service offer as have increased understanding of those in the local community
- Reach out to the community and engage more people, particularly young people and the challenges they may have in regard to mental health.
- Recognition of the need to offer social and physical activities to aid mental health in all ages and abilities.
- Provision of services in local communities is a lifeline for volunteers – feel part of the community, aids confidence and self-esteem.
- Find and recruit more volunteers.
- Priority is to become financially sustainable.
- Collaborate with others.
- Review of policies and procedures to support older and vulnerable people.
- To educate members regarding their health condition.
- Get back to normality working with young people.
- Priority is to replace the community bus.

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