



2012 One East Midland VCS Annual Survey Report

December 2012

7 Mansfield Road Nottingham NG1 3FB

T: 0115 934 8471 F: 0115 934 8498 E: office@one-em.org.uk www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk

Charity no: 1094733 Limited company no: 4342574

Introduction

In November 2012, One East Midlands carried out its first holistic annual survey of voluntary and community sector organisations in the East Midlands. The survey took just five minutes to complete, but gave organisations an opportunity to input their views on what is happening to the sector in the region.

The survey was completed by 55 voluntary and community sector organisations in the East Midlands and the results can be found in this report. All responses are anonymous.

Key Survey Findings

The findings from the survey identify some very clear trends in the East Midlands, which support evidence from elsewhere in the country. High levels of respondents reported an increase in their workload, which is expected to continue, but a reduction in available finance and other resources to meet the increased demand.

The majority of groups reported scepticism over the promise of sector contracting opportunities with many voicing concern about the direction of both national and local government policy in reducing rather than increasing opportunity.

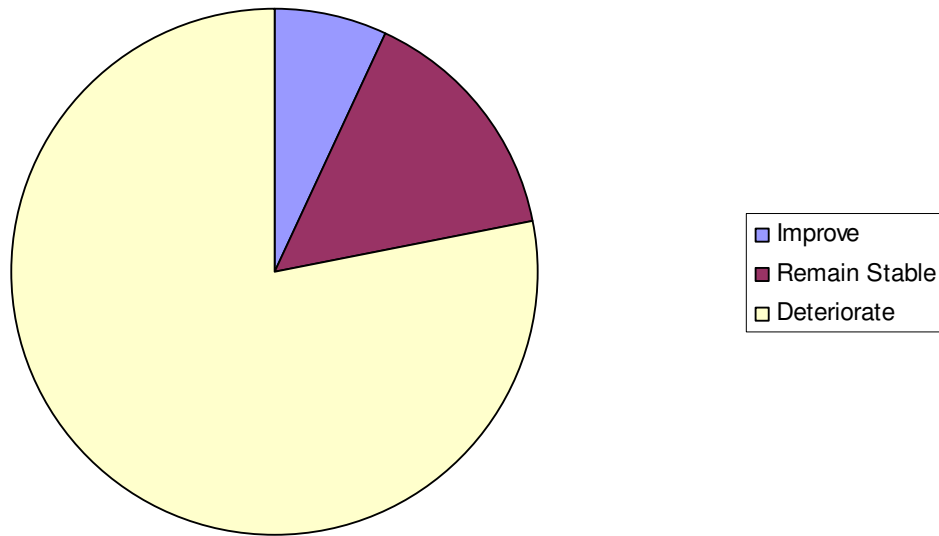
Some groups reported plans for growth with a similar number still achieving their mission and objectives. However, these numbers were overshadowed by the 78% who believe that the economic conditions for the VCS are likely to decline further over the coming 12 months.

Specific headlines and key findings from the report of voluntary and community sector organisations in the East Midlands include:

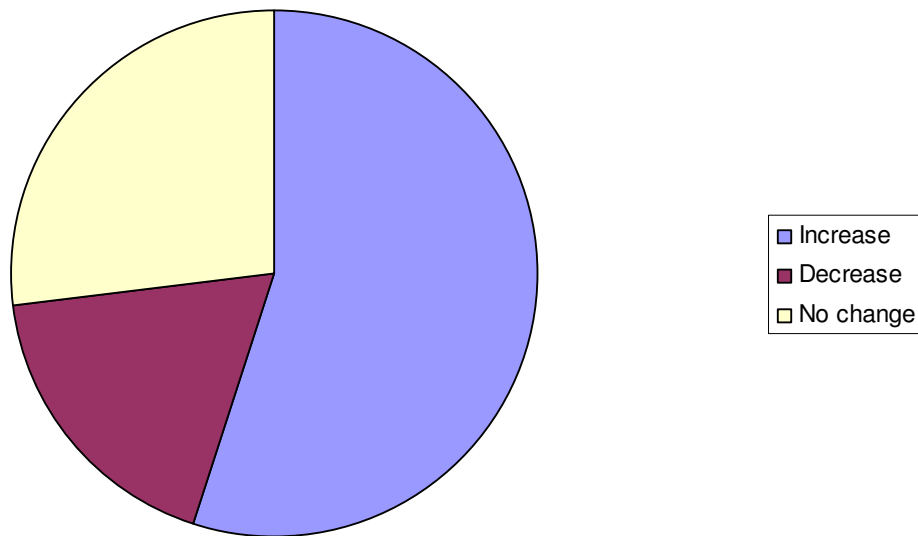
- 88% of respondents strongly agree or agree that demand for VCS services has increased during the last 12 months.
- 78% of respondents believe economic conditions within the VCS will deteriorate over the next 12 months.
- 79% of respondents expect their organisation to collaborate more with other VCS organisations during the next 12 months.
- 71% of respondents expect their organisation to collaborate more with public sector organisations during the next 12 months.
- 54% of respondents expect their organisation to collaborate less with private sector organisations during the next 12 months.
- 65% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that the climate and opportunities for the VCS have improved during the last 12 months.
- 35% of respondents strongly agree or agree that their organisation has been better able to fulfil its mission over the last 12 months and 22% strongly disagree or disagree.
- If their organisation is involved in local, sub-regional or regional decision making, 62% of respondents received no funding to do this and 29% were inadequately funded to do this.
- 35% of respondents felt central government departments would have a positive influence on their organisation's success over the next 12 months and 35% thought they would have a negative influence.
- 11% of respondents thought their organisation would have more access to public service contracts over the next 12 months and 19% thought they would have less access.

Detailed Survey Results

When asked if over the next 12 months they thought economic conditions within the voluntary and community sector will improve, remain stable or deteriorate, 7% of respondents thought it would improve, 15% thought it would remain stable and 78% thought it would deteriorate.



When asked if during the next 12 months if their organisation had any actual plans to increase or decrease the services it offers, 55% of respondents said their organisation had actual plans to increase its services, 18% had to plans to decrease and 27% had no plans to change the level of services offered.

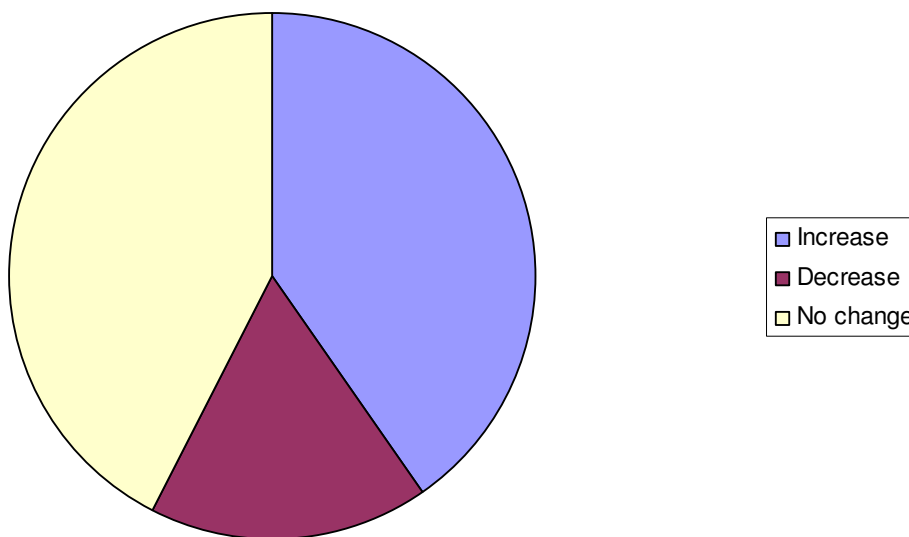


The explanations received for the planned increase or decrease of services included:

- We are in a newly refurbished centre and are still in the position where we need to build up attendance and also the services we offer to try and get us to a position of not being totally grant reliant!
- We are using our reserves to meet the needs of the community in light of Central Government changes, which will affect most people we see and those who will need our help.
- Loss of current contract and exclusion from bidding for new larger contract due to overheads not fulfilling the required criteria.
- We are developing new projects and working with new partners. We are also carrying out extensive service user research to ensure that our services meet their requirements and we are looking at new funding streams both locally and nationally.
- Increasing diversity of provision to support VCS organisations with business development and strategic planning activities.
- At the moment we are trying to keep services in current format but improve the processes we use to try and see more people
- We will develop our existing services and seek to take them to new markets. We will be doing this to strengthen our financial position
- We hope to increase our services, by tendering for contracts, applying for funding, extending geographically, and developing two new projects. However, we also may lose two contracts, as they are being tendered out and we may not be successful in our bid to continue to run one of them
- Because of our concerns about our organisation remaining sustainable (as we have no core funding, our overheads are constantly rising and we have to raise our own income) we set up a year ago a Trustee working party to look at further ways to raise income and to urgently consider how we can make efficiencies.
- As a member organisation we must adapt to meet our memberships needs and with costs being cut in many departments it is important to prove our worth and value for money.
- We are moving to charitable status, as unsure of any statutory funding and other funding drying up fast.
- We are currently relying heavily on reserves and are unlikely to maintain our current service levels into the future. An initial move may be to reduce the staff hours, while retaining staff numbers.
- We have limited financial resources and are unable to maintain the current level of services. There is no new funding that is currently approved.
- One of our main services is funded through the Supporting People programme, and this funding is due to end at the end of March 2013. The services were being reconfigured with a tender due to be released in August 2012. The tender has been put on hold but no information from our local authority can be sought, so we therefore have to assume that the funding will just end.
- Through various project funding awarded to enable project delivery.
- Offer more services as economic conditions seems to be getting worse for minority communities, particularly the health and also the increasing negative propaganda in press, media and politicians of the minority communities
- We have plans to diversify and expand our services in order to survive. However this is dependent on successful tender bids for our key contracts so we may well end decreasing services.
- We plan to add more long term services to our project.
- Insufficient funding for the type of work delivered therefore have to decrease amount of work and even consider closing project.
- There are clear needs for our organisation to increase support.

- We are planning to move to a new building which will enable us to diversify the services we offer and have more space to do so.
- Aiming to partner with more organisations in the range of outreach services we offer or host
- We will be delivering more programmes and introduce charges.

When asked if their organisation had actual plans to increase or decrease their number of paid staff members and/or volunteers during the next 12 months, 40% of responders said their organisations had plans to increase numbers, 17% had plans to decrease numbers and 42% had no plans to change numbers.

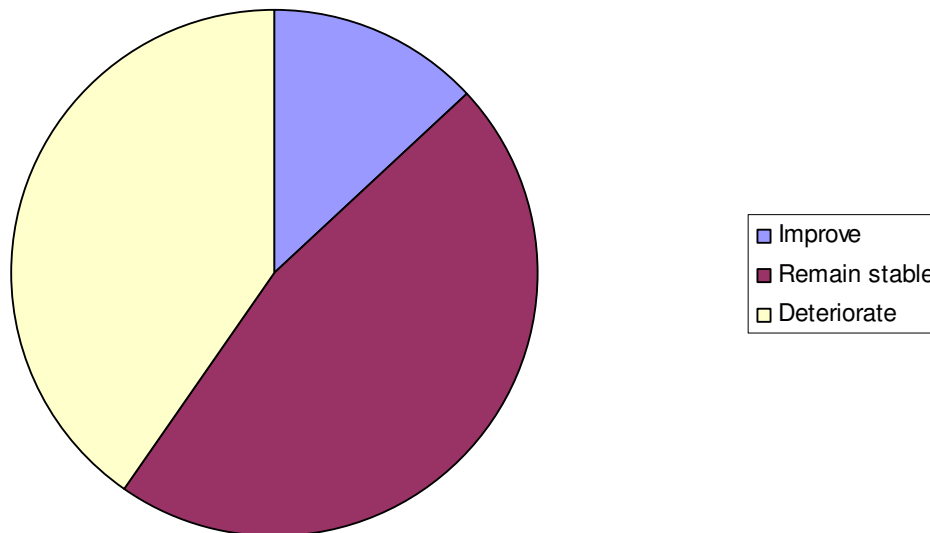


The explanations received for the planned increase or decrease of numbers included:

- By increasing the services we offer we need more staff to cover the extra hours - the staff increase will hopefully covered by the increased turnover.
- We will need to increase our volunteers in order to meet the increased demand for our services.
- Staff - We believe collaboration is the key to the future and that we can get more from less by sharing and collaborating especially in administration and use of technology. Volunteers - We have scope to increase numbers of volunteers.
- Likely to be subject to people leaving for new opportunities/TUPE/redundancy.
- We are recruiting more volunteers to help both with our organisational requirements and with our project delivery using our own communication methods and using the local CVS service. We are also looking for funding from non-recurrent posts to enable us to both increase staff hours and recruit new staff. We are doing this because we can see a demand for our services and there are opportunities available to us. All new work will remain within our strategic objectives and the expansion is not motivated by the availability of finance alone.
- Funding restrictions.
- We urgently need a part time paid employee to manage our volunteers and oversee the reception and undertake other general office duties. The recruitment will depend on obtaining funding for at least a year and we realise this will not be easy to achieve.

- Plans to increase the number of volunteers to support the service and expand the roles volunteers undertake within the organisation
- We will be expanding our volunteer base to deliver greater capacity. The need for our services will escalate whilst the funding for our services will not.
- This will depend on the outcome of tenders and funding bids. We would hope to increase staff and volunteers, but this will be dependent on income.
- Always working to engage more volunteers
- We are losing funding for two services. This will mean the loss of 3-4 WTE of paid staff.
- Significant reduction in the funding available for the services we provide and the need to review how we fund our services in future.
- We have no paid staff, but our volunteer levels are slowly rising.
- Although the number of services will decrease, one of our services is growing allowing us the opportunity to take more workers on.
- To make budget savings, staff numbers are likely to be reduced wherever possible.
- Dependent upon tendering opportunities and the take-up or otherwise of our services but the outlook is uncertain
- Insufficient funding
- Our number of paid staff is already at a bare minimum level.
- One member of staff will be retiring and initially we will not be replacing them.
- Staff will be recruited in line with our planned growth agenda.
- We will be taking on at least one apprentice and several short-term paid mentors (we have funded support for this). We are also planning to expand the formal volunteer scheme we set up this year.
- We need to create more capacity to manage what we do. We hope to increase capacity by up to one FTE post.
- Already have the minimum number of staff required to ensure cover.
- We are increasing the numbers of volunteers to cope with increasing demand for services. We are recruiting volunteers through our existing service users.

When asked if over the next 12 months if they expected the financial situation of their organisation to improve, remain stable or deteriorate, 13% of respondents expected it to improve, 46% expected it to remain stable and 40% expected it to deteriorate.



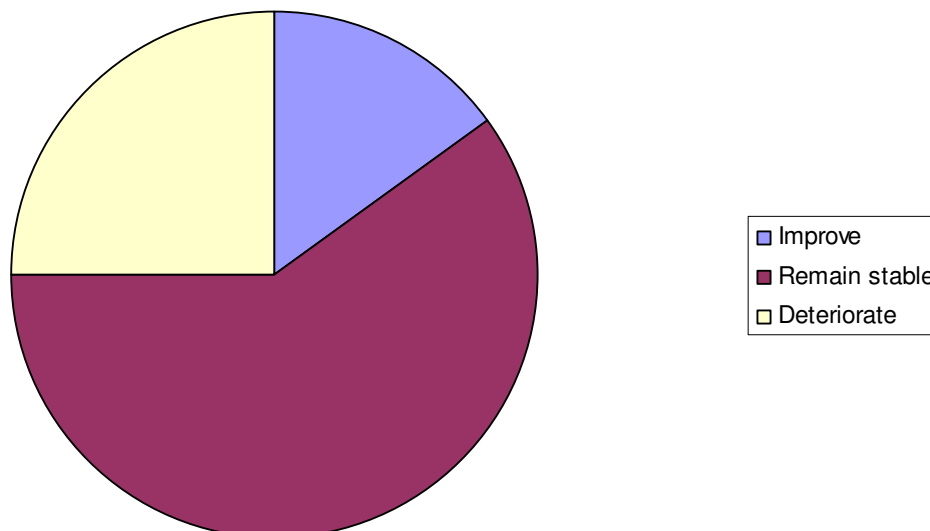
When asked to provide further comments on their organisation's financial situation, responses included:

- As usual we are expected to plan for next year and the following two years as part of our three year strategic plan. This is impossible to do when we have no idea what funding we will received.
- We could do more with increased resources but have to be realistic in these hard times. The case for receiving preferential allocation of resources is however good. Conversely, without some public funding to leverage the contributions of volunteers and promote our service, we may fragment and go under.
- Unstable due to funding constraints.
- We are likely to receive less funding from some of our contracts but we are hoping to offset this through the development of extra trading opportunities and the expansion of other project areas.
- The current climate is forcing both VCS and statutory organisations to think about their financial sustainability and consider new and innovative ways of delivering services. Specialist services are increasingly needed to help VCS and statutory sector organisations respond to current difficulties.
- We are Lottery funded until 31/3/14 but after that we will not be able to sustain our services unless we can find another funding provider.
- After years of wanting the sector to look ahead and plan long term we are back to a hand to mouth position - many funders did not confirm funding until march 2012 and we anticipate a similar situation as we move in to the next financial year. Such high levels of uncertainty caused difficulties for paid staff, and we face losing experienced/skilled staff as we cannot provide any clarification on future jobs positions and it places enormous pressure of the Trustees. Fortunately the Board has agreed to plan for Q1 13/14 as if funding will be confirmed - if this is not the case then the bureau has time to take the necessary action.
- We have relied for years on funding from local authorities and this is now coming under threat.

- We have major uncertainty hanging over us at present. We would hope that it will improve but really have no idea whether it will improve or deteriorate.
- Our financial situation has been hit hard because our Apprenticeship funder has gone bankrupt and has not reimbursed the pay we have made to our Apprentices. We are currently involved in a claim to their insolvency administrator but have concerns we will not recover this debt. This situation is of great concern because if our services are not paid for by organisations receiving them, because of their hardship, I'm afraid for 3rd sector bodies such as us will be like the standing dominoeswhich all fall because one falls
- Challenge of securing further funding in a challenging economic climate
- Monies drying up, people stressed out, people getting ill all affects financial situation, as being worn down.
- We are self-funding through holding stalls at events, but are struggling to get people to part with small amounts of money now, ie purse strings have been tightened.
- Success rates of bids is very poor currently
- Our unrestricted reserves have been under pressure for the last two years. However we see signs of improvement in the funding environment.
- Although funding is expected to end from one source, another service is growing which will hopefully keep the overall funding at a similar amount.
- It is harder to fund raise in traditional ways therefore we are having to think more creatively about ways to raise funds through things like social enterprises, and service provision.
- Secondary spend is an issue and we are striving to improve the quality and quantity of our services to drive this onwards.
- We hope to increase income through providing services purchased by personal budgets but feel reductions in grant income likely, further cuts to existing statutory contracts and that if current contracted services are tendered we may lose entire contracts to other providers even if we bid at a lower cost. We have made considered efforts to reduce our costs including a new tier of staff with less responsibility than more experienced workers and have joined a local consortium to strengthen our position in the tendering marketplace. Who wins in local competitive tenders seems random and often surprising!
- We were doing ok and just about on target for meeting the required budget savings, but this is likely to change within the next 12 months as there are further Government funding reductions due.
- Our key Local Authority contracts are to be tendered for the first time in early 2013. There is a great deal of pressure to reduce costs still further despite a reduction of 20% in contact funding over the past 18 months. Evidence locally suggests there will be a tendency to go for the lowest bidder irrespective of quality and track record which puts us at great risk despite feeling able to put in a competitive value for money bid. Larger VCS and private sector organisations are often able to put in loss leader bids in order to win contracts whereas our bids have to be sustainable.
- We have investments and some land to sell (subject to a Compulsory Purchase Order) but do not get many donations.
- We are expecting at least a 10 - 15% cut in our funding.
- Lack of funding for the type of work undertaken.
- We are waiting for the outcome for a few applications. If we are not successful, this would have a drastic effect on our organisation.
- The cutbacks are now stabilising and our ability to generate new finances should begin to kick in over the next year.

- We have deliberately created a rainbow effect to our income streams, to avoid all streams ending in the same time period (which was the position in March 2011). What we now have to do is grow those streams by adding new ones and increasing our own trading activities, to at least counter the reduction in Local Authority support. Happily we have line of sight through to 2017 on some revenue streams.
- We anticipate that grants from the public sector will decrease, but we are hoping to make up the shortfall and fund our expansion through commissioning and private sector support.
- Our funding ended in March and as yet we have been unable to secure funding for 2013
- We have funding for two years and three years from last April. We are currently planning and working towards further income to remain sustainable.

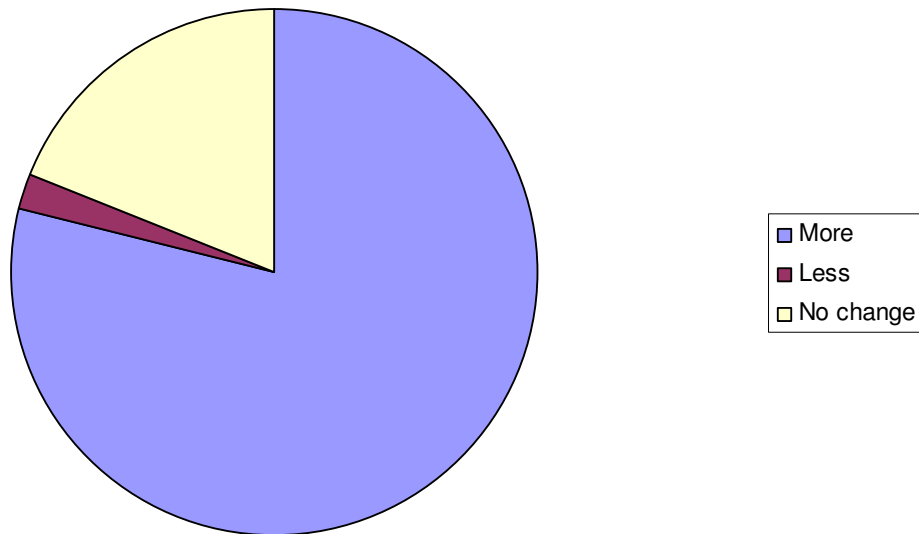
When asked if over the next 12 months they expected the general situation of their organisation to improve, remain stable or deteriorate, 15% of respondents expected the general situation of their organisation to improve, 60% expected it to remain stable and 25% expected the situation to deteriorate.



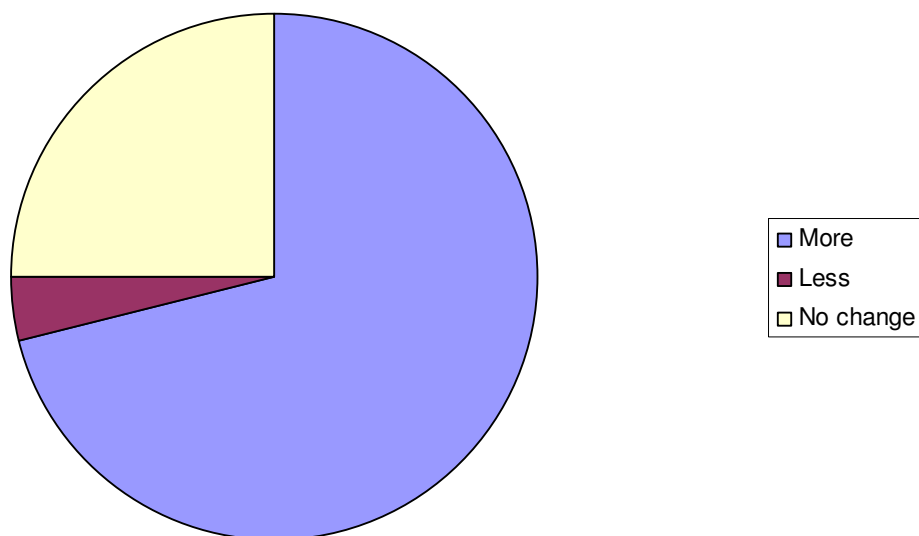
- It could deteriorate if the assumption we make about our value is not borne out and we do not receive some public-sector funds in the second half of the 2013-14 financial year.
- We strive to increase our services as resources permit
- Maintaining services and keeping things stable is pretty much the goal - we are currently going through a merger, which we hope will help sustain services in the longer term.
- We have major uncertainty hanging over us at present. We would hope that it will improve but really have no idea whether it will improve or deteriorate.
- Much effort is given in normal circumstances by our Trustees, Staff and Volunteers who dedicate their time to work for our Community and this effort and dedication continues as our general situation holds but if there is a further downturn in the economy, with more difficulties to obtain funding for essential training etc, then we do have concerns about the future of our organisation.

- Just keep on trying, put our heads down and plough on as best we can, but for how long do not know, as situation is sapping.
- We are expecting to merge with a neighboring organisation, and the change process itself will pose challenges and a temporary deterioration in a number of areas, as change is always disruptive.
- The organisation may struggle to move and change fast enough to survive.
- At all levels structures are being tightened to be more efficient. We now make more use of emails and web sites.
- Because other local providers are sadly having to close.
- It is very difficult to answer these questions as everything is so up in the air.
- We have a strong volunteer and governance operation the organisation; which allows superb flexibility in our business developments.
- We are still at an embryonic stage of setting up a group
- Membership and non-member visits are expected to increase slightly. Cost control will remain strict to ensure we operate within our anticipated budgets.
- We feel we are fairly safe for the next year-but very unsure about our financial sustainability from 2014-again largely due to the threat of competitive tendering-also the slow pace of health and social care personalisation and much increased competition for charitable grants
- We have almost remained stable over the recent months so with further budget reductions likely to be put upon us, I can't see that we will be able to maintain this.
- It is becoming harder and harder as a small local vcs organisation providing quality services to survive despite operating as part of a consortium. There is a real danger that contracts will become concentrated on a few very large regional/national organisations which often leads to a deterioration in the quality of services to service users and the loss of vital local support networks developed over many years. In addition the financial cutbacks are impacting on early intervention and preventative services such as housing related support services which can demonstrate the financial savings to statutory services. There is a real danger that service users will end up back in hospital or making costly demands upon local authority services.
- Hopefully, fingers crossed...
- It is difficult to secure funding for core costs. Reliance on volunteers to achieve core aims is not realistic, so a minimum number of paid permanent staff is desirable to enable us to plan for the future.
- Lack of funding for the type of work undertaken
- Depending on the success rate of our funding applications.
- We hope that by moving to a new building (which we own) we will improve the long-term sustainability of our organisation, including having a higher profile within the voluntary and community sector in our area.
- Without funding the centre may face closure leaving the locality without a community hub and services.
- Workload is increasing as the need for support is increasing.

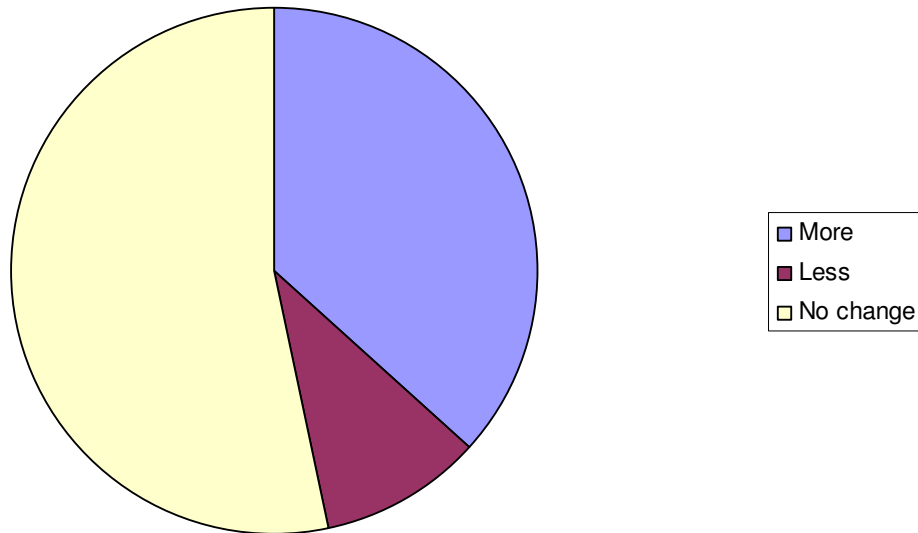
When asked if they expected their organisation to collaborate more or less with other voluntary and community sector organisations during the next 12 months, 79% of respondents expected their organisation to collaborate more, 2% expected to collaborate less and 19% expected no change in their amount of collaboration.



When asked if they expected their organisation to collaborate more or less with other public sector organisations during the next 12 months, 71% of respondents expected their organisation to collaborate more, 4% expected to collaborate less and 25% expected no change in their amount of collaboration.



When asked if they expected their organisation to collaborate more or less with other private sector organisations during the next 12 months, 37% of respondents expected their organisation to collaborate more, 10% expected to collaborate less and 54% expected no change in their amount of collaboration.

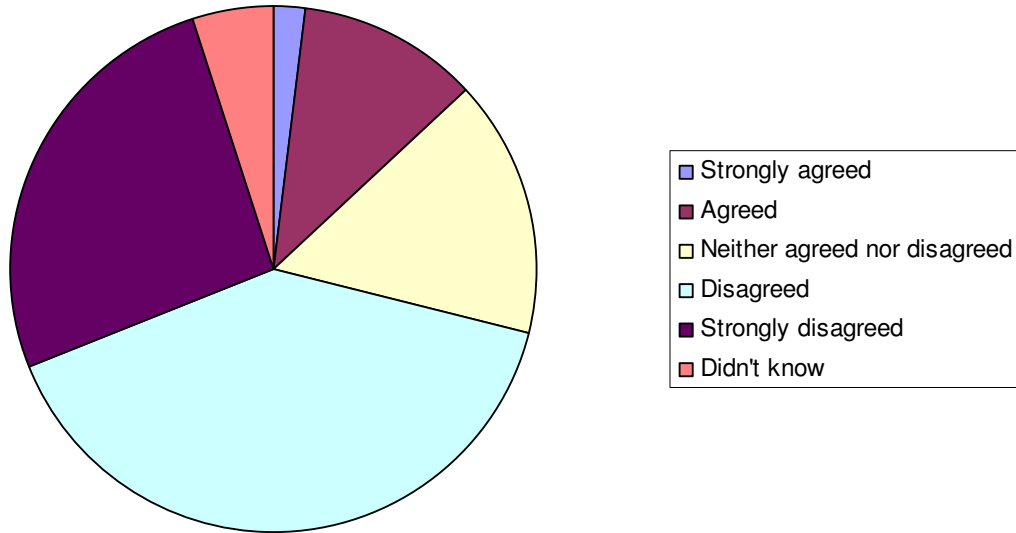


When asked about their organisation’s collaboration plans, the comments received included:

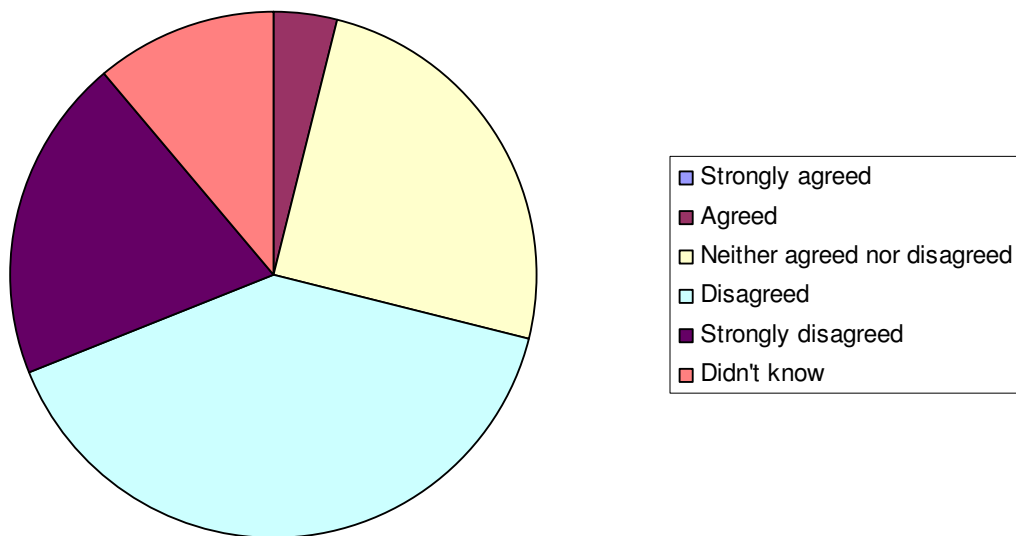
- We are exploring opportunities of working in partnership with both statutory and VCS organisations.
- We need to be building more relationships to raise awareness of the charity, both locally and nationally.
- We are enacting plans which take into account the wider economic and structural changes going on around us and believe these plans are relevant, even ahead of the game because they include collaboration with the police and local government. However, uncertainty surrounds us at this time.
- We take every opportunity to work with partners from all sectors. We generally form a few new collaborations each year.
- Approaching our second merger and will continue to look at ways we can improve whether through merger or closer collaboration.
- Collaborative working takes huge amounts of time building relationships for very little financial return. Contracts are set up in such a way now that only large organisations or huge collaborations can cover all the services that are required.
- We will collaborate with all organisations for the benefit of our community. No private sector organisation has made any effort for such collaboration. I would like to see more collaboration with the larger 3rd Sector organisations who could be more supportive and use and pay for the services of the smaller 3rd sector organisations
- TLI outcomes. New CCG.
- All voluntary groups are effectively chasing the same limited resources. We liaise as much as we can with our existing contacts in both public, voluntary and private sectors.
- If we have the strength will work with anyone with similar aims and ethos to get the voice heard.
- We have already collaborated more with our local council over recent months. Not all of it has been an entirely comfortable experience despite our generally good relationship with both staff and elected members
- We are planning on holding more joint events.
- We are always keen to develop further opportunities wherever possible.

- We shall continue to look for collaboration and merger opportunities.
- If tenders do come out for the type of work which we do, the only option we will have will be to work collaboratively.
- We have a strategic plan that will support growth over through to 2018.
- We intend to focus more on developing and utilising partnerships for mutual success. I believe that specialisation of our offering and therefore closer partnership working, combined with high quality service delivery that delivers measurable results and a clear return on investment will become ever more important to ensure that we deliver the best value for money in the most lean and efficient way.
- We want to work with public and voluntary sector organisations to learn, promote and help offer services to them
- We are willing to collaborate more all partners and see this as a good model and way forward to meeting mutual objectives.
- If we are still here in 2014 we plan to share office building with other VCS org/s and may go for other grants in partnership with VCS - already done some small projects on this basis, but reluctant to get too many partners involved - too many cooks scenario can make management difficult!
- Partnership working is more important than ever for helping each other deliver services and it makes sense to do this if we are delivery the same or similar services to the same residents.
- Public Sector consultations about service/policy reviews at an all time high, placing increasing demand on our resources as we try to influence decisions / ensure our client group's voice heard. Concerned such involvement never seems to result in positive outcomes.
- We are already working in partnership with statutory and VCS organisations in order to provide effective services and work as members of a small specialist local VCS consortium and a newer larger generic local consortium.
- We are always looking out for more opportunities to collaborate with other organisations.
- I would expect partnerships and coalition bids and delivery to become more commonplace as funders and commissioners look for increased innovation and for their projects and programme to have a greater degree of success. I think the challenge for the voluntary sector is for us to be seen as a strong provider to organisations such as corporates/SMEs to give them confidence in approaching us to deliver a service.
- We already collaborate with different organisations on different projects and we do not expect that to change; however we would like to do more collaboration with public sector organisations.
- We have been quite good at partnership and collaborative working with others so we are not worried about this as we also understand others would want to work with us.
- We already collaborate very well with other organisations in the county, running projects jointly in some cases. We are in talks with our local Council about providing services on their behalf. The area where we need to see movement is with the private sector and we are drawing up action plans for that strategy.
- We are involved in developing delivery consortia, e.g. to bid for public sector contracts, and we are working with a consultant over the next nine months to build relationships with the private sector, e.g. for sponsorship, philanthropy and donations.

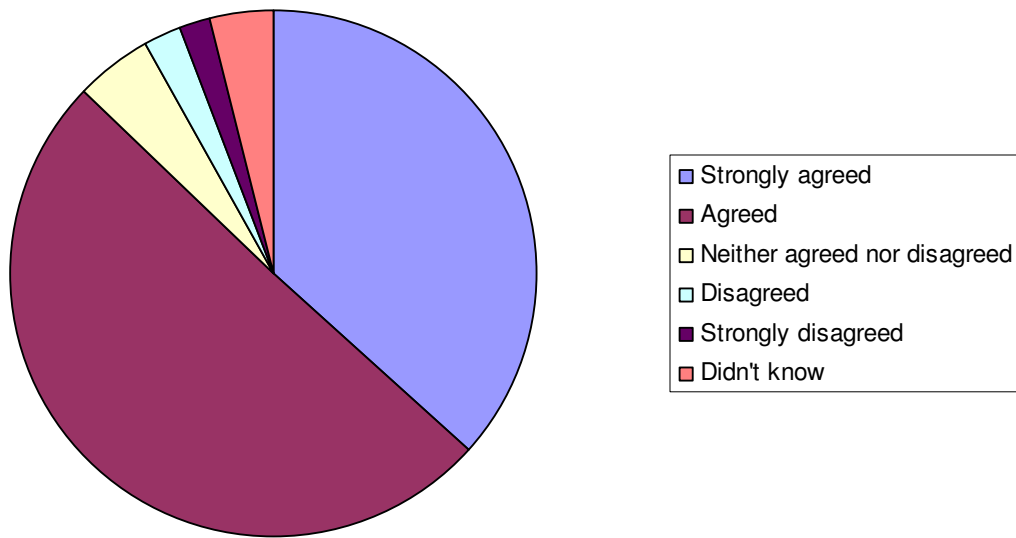
When asked if during the last 12 months they thought the climate and opportunities for the VCS had improved, 2% of respondents strongly agreed, 11% agreed, 16% neither agreed nor disagreed, 40% disagreed, 26% strongly disagreed and 5% of respondents did not know.



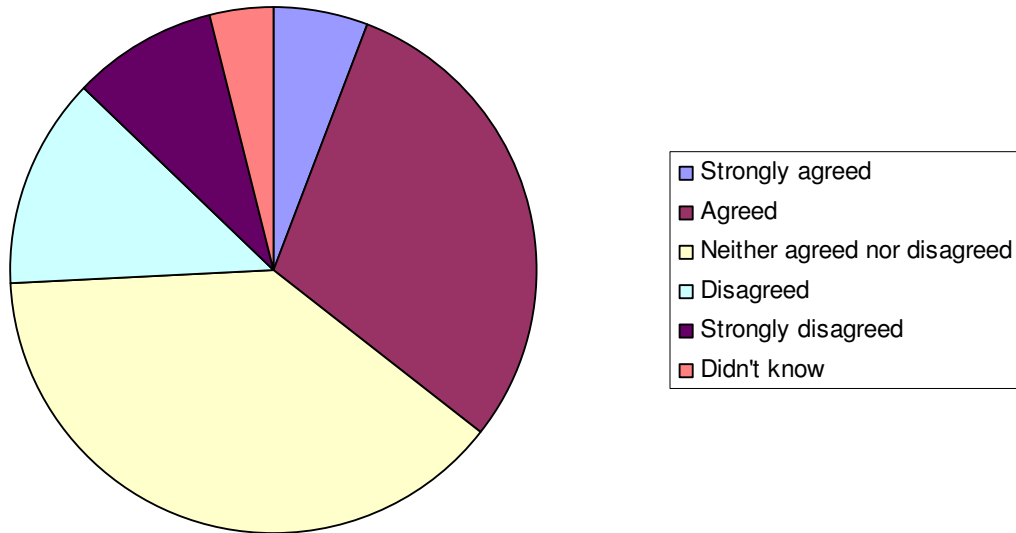
When asked if during the last 12 months they thought VCS organisations had become stronger, 0% of respondents strongly agreed, 4% agreed, 25% neither agreed nor disagreed, 40% disagreed, 20% strongly disagreed and 11% of respondents did not know.



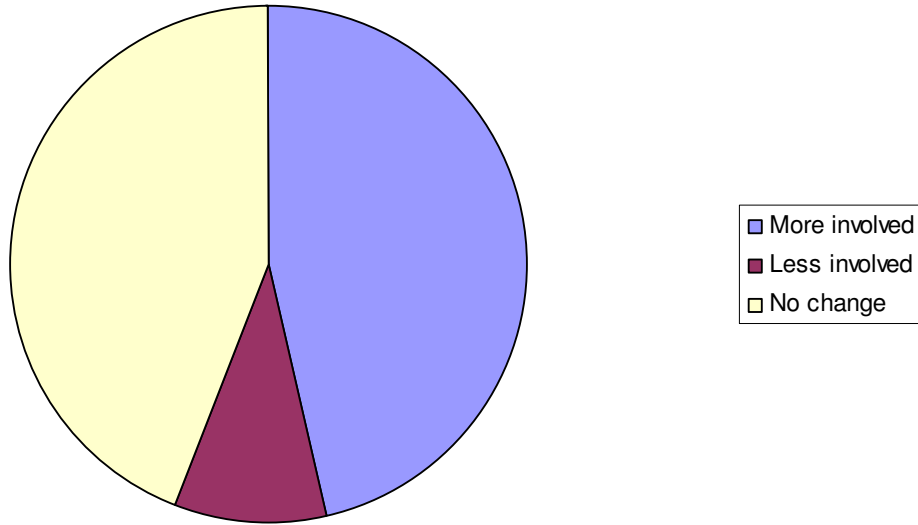
When asked if during the last 12 months they thought demand for VCS services has increased, 37% of respondents strongly agreed, 51% agreed, 5% neither agreed nor disagreed, 2% disagreed, 2% strongly disagreed and 4% of respondents did not know.



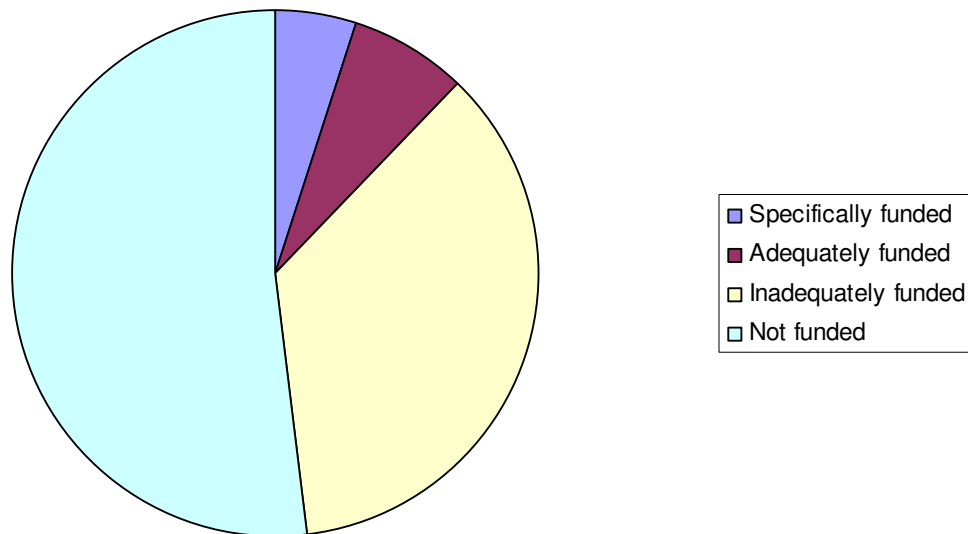
When asked if during the last 12 months they thought their organisation had been better able to fulfill its mission, 6% of respondents strongly agreed, 30% agreed, 39% neither agreed nor disagreed, 13% disagreed, 9% strongly disagreed and 4% of respondents did not know.



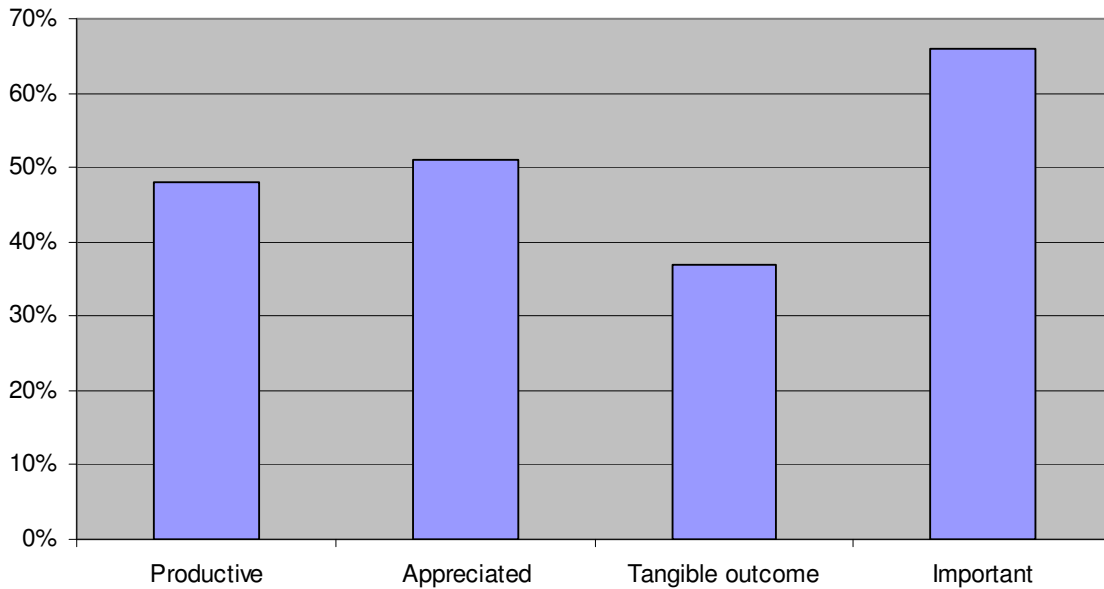
When asked whether they expected their organisation to become more or less involved with local, sub-regional and regional decision making over the next 12 months, 44% expected their organisation to become more involved, 9% less involved and 42% expected their organisation's level of involvement not to change. For 5% of respondents this question was not applicable.



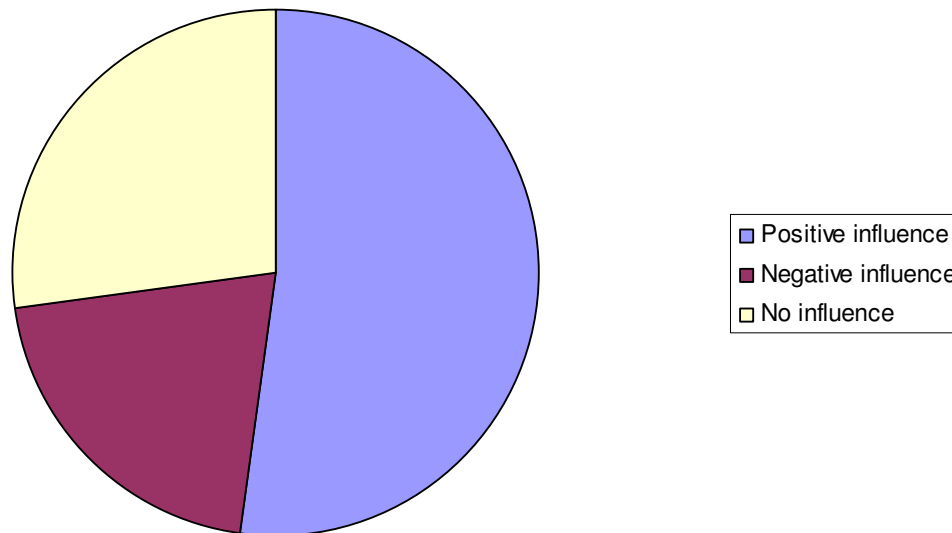
When asked about whether their organisation's funding to be involved in local, sub-regional and regional decision making, 4% of respondents' organisations were specifically funded to do this work, 6% were adequately funded to do this, 29% were inadequately funded to do this, and 62% received no funding to do this.



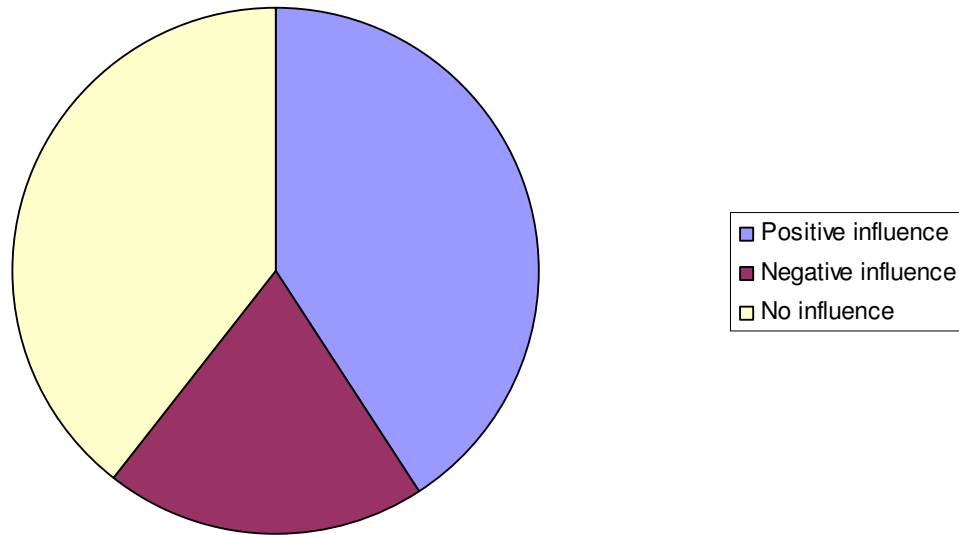
If their organisation is involved in local, sub-regional and regional decision making, 48% of respondents felt their involvement was productive, 51% felt it was appreciated, 37% felt it produced tangible outcomes and 56% felt their involvement was important.



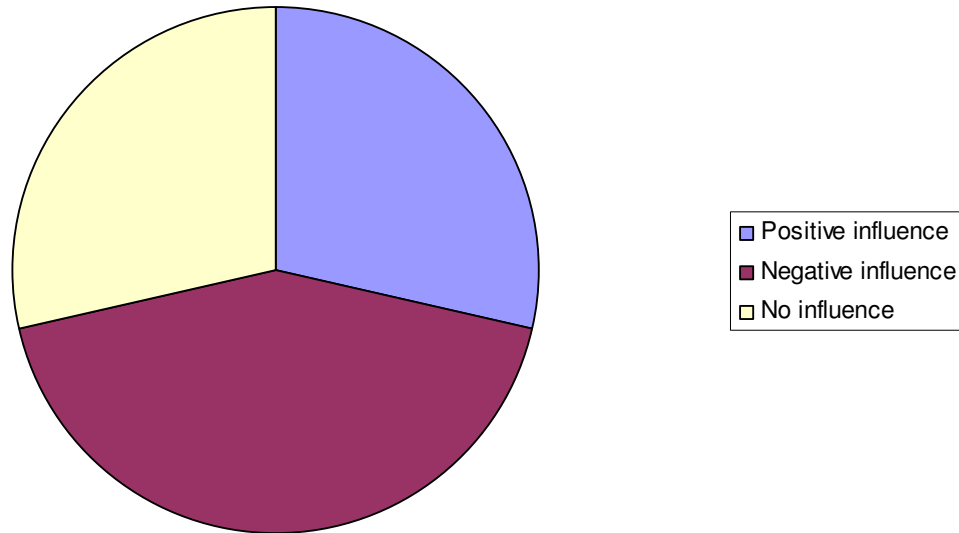
When asked how they expected their local authority to influence their organisation's success during the next 12 months, 48% of respondents thought their local authority would have a positive influence on their organisation's success, 19% thought it would have a negative influence and 25% thought their local authority would have no influence. For 8% of respondents this question was not applicable.



When asked how they expected their local PCT cluster or clinical commissioning group to influence their organisation's success during the next 12 months, 31% of respondents thought their local authority would have a positive influence on their organisation's success, 15% thought it would have a negative influence and 30% thought their local authority would have no influence. For 24% of respondents this question was not applicable.



When asked how they expected their central government departments to influence their organisation's success during the next 12 months, 22% of respondents thought their local authority would have a positive influence on their organisation's success, 33% thought it would have a negative influence and 22% thought their local authority would have no influence. For 22% of respondents this question was not applicable.



When asked about their organisation's involvement in decision making and the influence on public sector agencies on their organisation, the comments received included:

- As government and PCTs evolve they are seeking cheaper or free services delivered by the voluntary sector. We have overheads too. When services are tendered local authorities say they cannot afford to deliver them so want cheaper bids - this becomes very complicated when TUPE rules apply.

- We are experienced and relevant, have the ability to solicit community views and are thus able to provide valuable comments and information to support decisions.
- Our core county council contract is under review and may be joined up with the CVS contracts for a co-production activity. This could be positive or negative but will certainly be time consuming. Our DEFRA contract value will decrease but it is still a significant positive contribution to our core costs and we appreciate it. The TLI programme could have far reaching consequences and our role as project lead puts right at the heart of local decision making.
- At the time of writing there is limited evidence to suggest that any meaningful innovation is taking place with local authorities across the region. For whatever reason existing structures and systems seem to be unable or unwilling to effectively adapt. Hopefully this may slowly start to change in the New Year. By comparison there is evidence to confirm that some CCG's are willing to innovate new ways to deliver services with the VCS. As the authorisation process proceeds it can only be hoped that this innovation continues.
- We are part of a local forum, which has no formal role but the County Council, Parish Council, Schools and Police amongst others send representatives so we can give feedback and request action on issues. We have a good relationship with councillors who have visited our premises and have listened to our views. The local MP is currently on our Board of Trustees.
- We as a poor charity are not in a position to attend every meeting, complete every consultation document we simply do not have enough people who can do it.
- We make sure we keep in touch with, and help to influence, key decision-making in the local authority and other statutory sectors, where we can. However, a lot of decisions are taken where we feel we are not able to influence them effectively. We are connected to national umbrella organisations and value this in the national arena. The LA is likely to influence us through their decisions, though as yet, we cannot say if these will be broadly positive or negative. There is still a lot of uncertainty. Health structures are not yet sufficiently aware of the benefits of our services, although we are trying to engage with their structures eg Health and Wellbeing Boards, and JSNA.
- Representatives from our organisation do attend some public sector agency meetings, complete surveys etc and I'm sure 3rd sector organisations are listened to but as the public sector has massive issues due to cuts in their organisations the impression is that there is little that can be done by them to influence the situation of our organisation.
- Too many changes such as health services when obviously it is difficult for them to cope with what they perceive are minor matters. There will be local authority elections in May 2013 which may well influence the authority's priorities re funding.
- It will be an up hill battle but we will not go without a fight.
- In a 3-tier county administration system our local district council would like to think it would provide some positive influence on our organisation's success, but this can't be said with any confidence of our county council.
- There is little money spare to be allowed to take part in any such involvement.
- I think it is really important to involve the voluntary sector in decision making as we are often front line and know what is happening on the ground, meaning we can have a unique influencing voice backed with real life stories and data. This should be valued with money from the public sector but if not the knowledge that we can change our societies for the good of all can be part of our voluntary work and make a case for funding from other sources.
- We are totally independent of the state and receive no public sector funding for our core costs (we do apply for project grants where appropriate). The influence of public sector agencies is minimal.

- We would hope that there are increased opportunities for small local providers to become far more involved and be able to influence local decision making
- Since we are very seldom consulted by any public sector organisations, our situation is unlikely to change.
- The influence will be negative to the extent that our funding from them will undoubtedly be reduced
- We now have positive relationships at all levels of government and with the PCTs. However, lack of funding means that whilst there is support there is not generally additional funding available.
- Generally, I think it's been hard for the voluntary sector to influence decision-making in the local authority.

When asked if their organisation had any key messages it wanted to make to public sector organisations at a local, regional or national level, the messages received included:

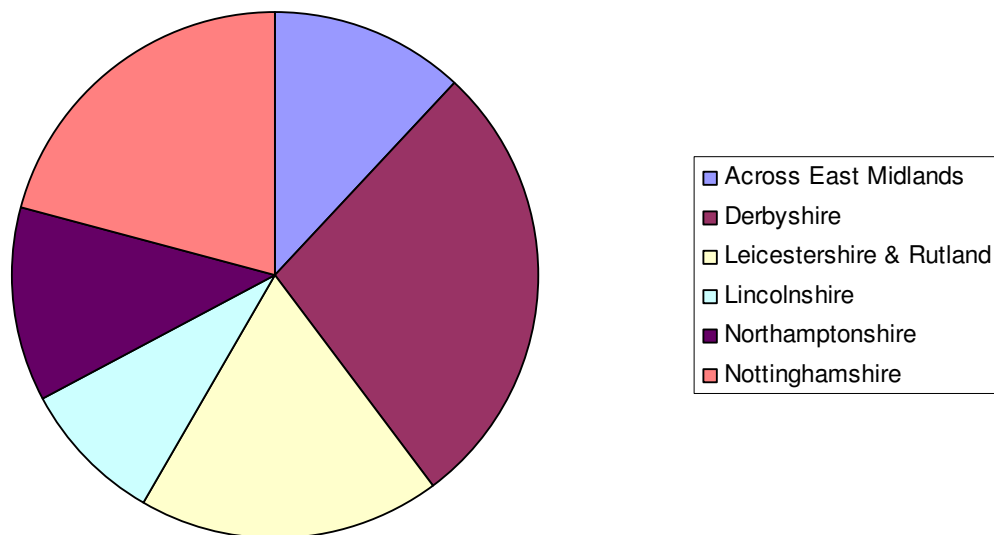
- If services are required they need to be appropriately funded. By squeezing the voluntary sector, many organisations are closing which results in service users suffering. Many years of hard work and knowledge will be lost - how can we ensure sustainability in order to meet community needs?
- There is little doubt that the inefficiencies in the private and public sector due to so-called bureaucracy and poor management are also relevant when the voluntary-sector (v-s) is taken as a whole. The costs of IT equipment, printing, publicity, communications, employment overheads and administration are inevitably huge. There is clearly scope to collaborate in sharing the resources needed to cover these matters. There is also much commonality of purpose across some v-s organisations and a measure of rationalisation could release some of the volunteers to do value-adding rather than bureaucratic tasks.
- Don't forget Compact and FCR
- In the current climate partnership working is required more than ever. The traditional public sector business model is unfortunately bankrupt and we need to innovate and work in partnership to move forward to deliver the services local communities need and deserve.
- Our organisation provides a wide range of invaluable community services and amenities at non for profit costs. Volunteer time is freely given and we are very conscious of being cost effective, running on a shoe string of 1 and a1/2 paid staff. Some of our achievements are easy to measure. However some outputs are harder to quantify and prove although we know they are very important to our clientele. These outputs all contribute to the health, economic prospects and general well being of the local community and, without financial support to continue, organisations like ours will have to close and long term health and social problems within small rural communities will increase.
- Volunteering is not free and we cannot run good quality services without adequate funding.
- Voluntary Sector is picking up the slack made by the statutory sector cuts.
- What has happened to the funding for the Big Society..... defunct bank account income was to be made available to support the Big Society organisations. Our organisation is already doing the Big Society work and has been doing so for 11 years. All the Public Sector organisations should be lobbying and making sure the message is getting across at all levels especially at National level for action to be taken before more essential 3rd sector organisations go to the wall.
- There remains a significant lack of joined up working. Lack of understanding of the impact of change.

- More effective communication particularly with the changing health services and also a better system of communication with organisations such as the CQC
- Stop seeing us as an add on to statutory services, the voluntary sector does not compliment, it delivers flexible, value added services steered by those that use them. Hear us, Have faith in our abilities, fund us. There is nothing more to be said.
- Remember that withdrawal of even a small amount of funding may destabilise voluntary organisations. Bear in mind that voluntary providers are unlikely to be able to take the risks posed by payment by results approaches.
- As an organisation supporting and encouraging local people to take an active part in community life and to empower them to address local issues, we'd like the public sector to know how much community involvement contributes to the social, mental and physical health and well-being of those involved. As a retired health employee said at a Plunkett Foundation a few years ago, community involvement is far better and much cheaper than any pills a doctor can give.
- All services should be concentrating on making each street a local community, and fostering community spirit. Once this is in place most other issues can be resolved or helped.
- The right volunteers in the right place.
- Re the voluntary sector: 1. The voluntary sector has a lot of wisdom to share regards policy making, We can give you real life stories, data and information you may not be able to get else where. 2. The voluntary sector can give volunteers access to skills that can make them more employable 3. The voluntary sector is good for activating and supporting central and local government initiatives and creative ways that get direct to the people.
- Urgent action needs to be taken to safeguard the future of local VCS organisations by looking at more creative ways of continuing to fund them outside of competitive tendering e.g. grants, as specialist providers, offering more managed budgets within personalisation and investing to save costs to the public purse in the early intervention, prevention and community -based services the VCS deliver best and most cost effectively. Health and social care services are likely to be of increasingly poor quality and put people at risk -staff on minimum wages, poorly trained and supervised in many private sector businesses - also larger charities in danger of losing quality and values as they empire-build.
- Listen and act, stop simply hearing.
- 1) Early intervention and preventative services save significant amounts of money for the statutory sector. If given the opportunity we can save you more money and continue to prevent service users reaching crisis point. 2) The personalisation agenda is leading to less not more choice and control for service users. 3) The rich and diverse local VCS, which provides excellent, cost effective and well integrated services based on knowing our locality, our services users and employing well trained, well motivated on good terms and conditions is at risk through the financial cutbacks and the award of contracts to the cheapest bidder. 4) Normal tendering is expensive, bureaucratic and disruptive, and does not provide a level playing field for smaller VCS organisations. There are other means of reducing costs but maintaining high quality services through collaboration with the local VCS, which have been utilised in some local authorities to good effect. 5) Joint commissioning between health and local authorities in collaboration with the VCS is the way forward. 6) PLEASE TALK TO US WE CAN HELP!!
- In my opinion, one thing that the sector could benefit from is to show the impact our programmes make on statutory services. This in return would help commissioners to really understand the savings that are made to their services thanks to the efforts put in by the third sector - both through those services that

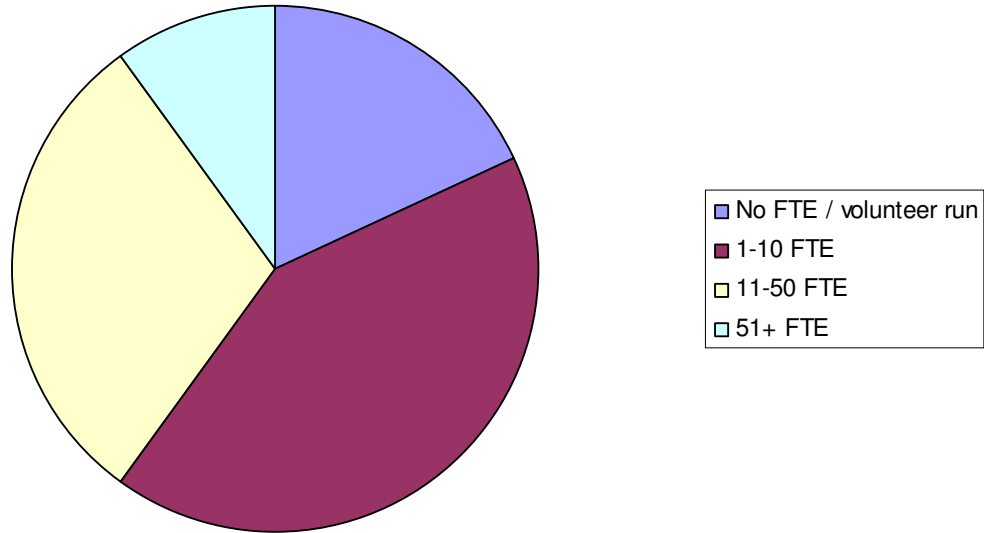
are commissioned out and also by those who volunteer to make a difference, such as carers or churches providing a range of services to the community.

- Use the wealth of experience and skills of the voluntary sector by action not words.
- We can help you deliver your agenda and are competent to do so.
- Please continue to invest in local infrastructure- for every £1 of local authority funding we spent £3.26 in fiscal 2011, £2.59 in 2012, plan £3.58 in 2013 and £4.50 in fiscal 2014 - where can you obtain a better return. We act as an economic multiplier in our community, and need to be supported.
- Imaginative, open commissioning processes, which genuinely provide opportunities for small, locally rooted organisations to bid for and deliver public services - this should include mechanisms and support to create strong delivery consortia. At a national level, what's there to say...? No more cuts, it's counter-productive and no amount of special initiatives for 'troubled families' or whatever will stop the personal suffering and the consequent damage to society of cutting social safety nets.

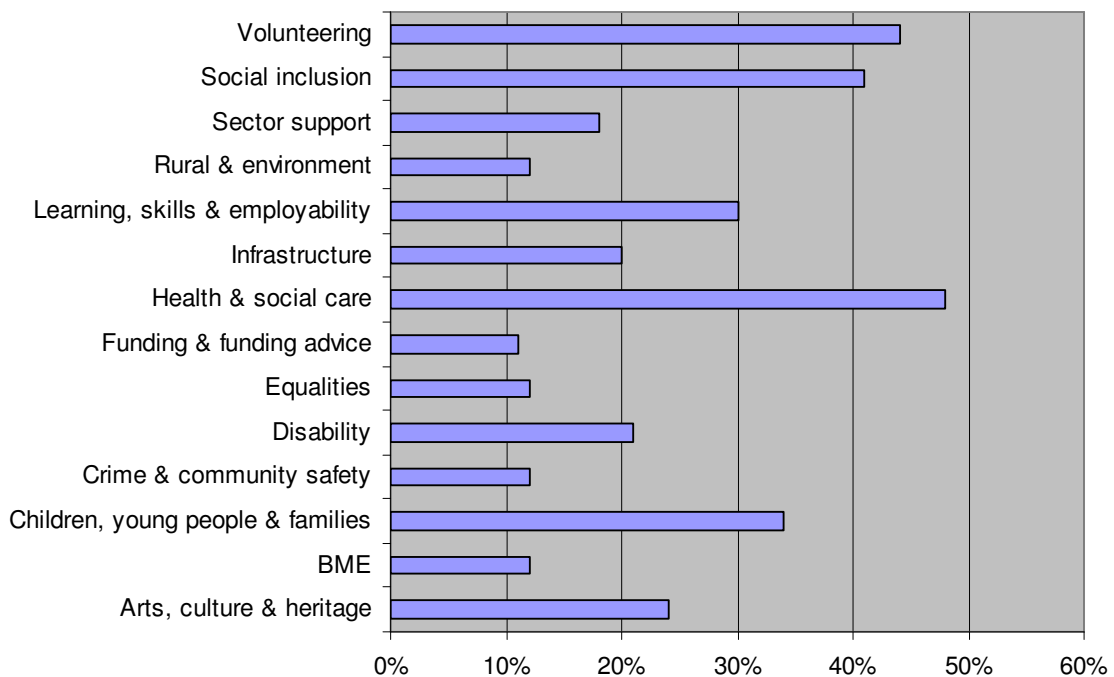
The next set of questions aimed to find out more about the type of organisations who responded to the survey. When asked which area of the East Midlands their organisation worked within, 12% of respondents reported that their organisation worked across the East Midlands, 28% worked in Derbyshire only, 19% in Leicestershire and Rutland, 9% in Lincolnshire, 12% in Northamptonshire and 21% in Nottinghamshire only.



When asked about the size of their organisation in terms of full time equivalent staff, 20% of respondent's organisations had no full time equivalent staff or were volunteer run, 46% had one to 10 full time equivalent staff, 33% had 11 to 50 full time equivalent staff and 11% had 51 plus equivalent staff.

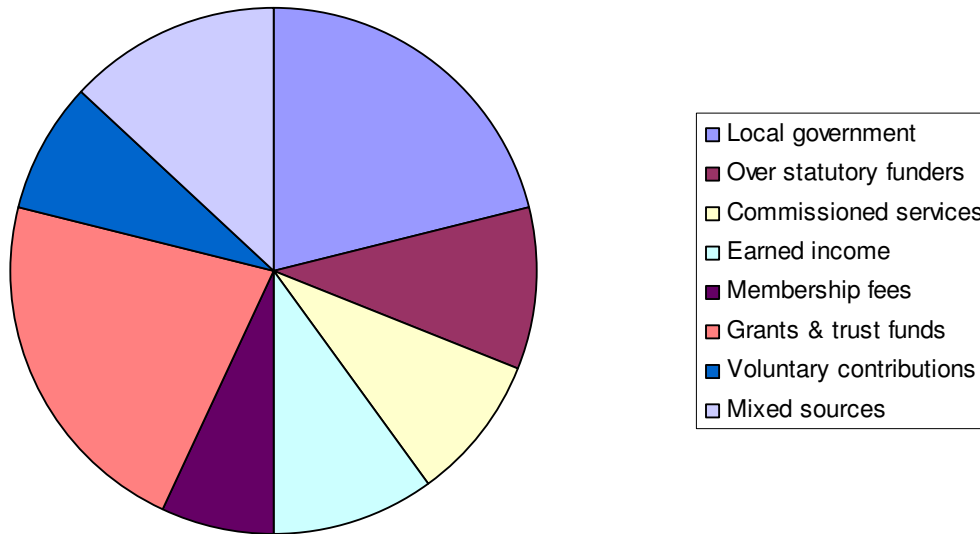


When asked about the primary area of work their organisation does, with respondents able to select up to three options, 24% of respondents' organisations worked in the area of arts, culture and heritage; 12% BME; 34% children, young people and families; 12% crime and community safety; 21% disability; 12% equalities; 11% funding and funding advice; 48% health and social care; 20% infrastructure; 30% learning, skills and employability; 12% rural and environment; 18% sector support; 41% social inclusion; and 44% worked in the area of volunteering.

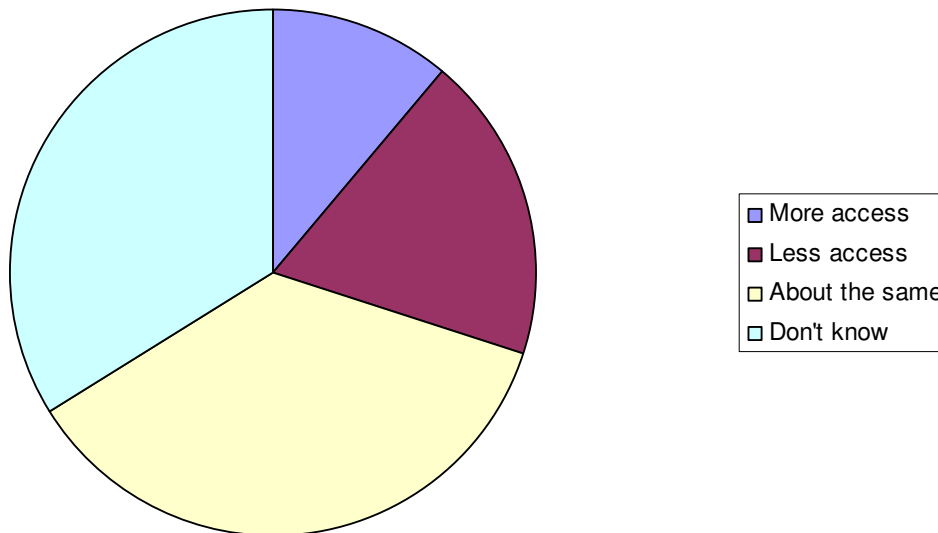


When asked what was their organisation's primary source of funding, 21% of respondents reported that their organisation's primary source of funding was local

government; 10% other statutory funders; 9% commissioned services; 10% earned income; 7% membership fees; 22% grants and trust funds; 8% voluntary contributions; and 13% were funded by mixed sources.



When asked if over the next 12 months they thought their organisation would have more or less access to public service contracts, 11% of respondents thought their organisation would have more access to public service contracts, 19% less access, 36% about the same level of access and 34% of respondents did not know.



When asked about their organisation's ability to access public service contracts, the comments received included:

- We are open to commissioned work.

- There generally seems to be a lot of frustration across the sector about procurement process. There is general a significant 'chasm' between procurement officers and VCS organisations - not good for either side when greater partnership working is required in this climate. Central government public sector contract initiatives to support the VCS are generally pitched at level which is not helpful for large parts of the VCS i.e. million pound plus contracts. If a VCS organisation is big enough to go after that size of contract it can reasonably be expected they already have a skilled business development manager in post who understands procurement and contracting. More support is required on the £100 - £200k contract values for the smaller VCS organisations, who can add a lot of value but perhaps cannot afford to pay a skilled business development manager.
- Contracts are structured in such a way as to exclude our group for funding or make it so small that even through partnership work we get very little return on the time invested in doing a consortium bid.
- LA tenders are out now, and we will be bidding, but the outcomes are not yet known.
- We are very active in promoting and marketing our services and attend networking meetings, often where the majority of attendees are not Community or Voluntary workers and include public service workers. I have no knowledge of any public service contracts we could access although I imagine that unless these were accessed by a partnership body, which we joined we would have little chance in succeeding in obtaining such a contract
- Most have a degree of risk unacceptable to directors.
- Public contractors not listening and do not know actual how to do it. It is all about profit and not people.
- We are merging partly to strengthen our managerial capacity to bid for contractual advice work. We will be extremely reluctant to work with commercial organisations and payment by results approaches present an unbearable risk.
- They are often difficult to find out about and not publicised widely.
- Can't compete with bigger players and sizes /conditions of contracts often untenable - hope to hang on to existing statutory funding with a small loss
- We are always looking for opportunities to work with other local authorities (public sector bodies) to help deliver services.
- Health need to open up opportunities for collaboration with their local VCS.
- Whilst we are 'commission ready' it is a difficult balancing act to both apply for public funding and also to submit bids to other grant making trusts and foundations. Many trusts have now decided not to give feedback, which turns grant funding into a bit of a lottery (please pardon the pun), and it will often taken a number of days to write and submit a tender. Therefore this time has to be weighed with applying for trust funding, which may take less time but where there will be a reduced chance of success due to competition for funding. We are a comparatively large organisation that can afford two full-time fundwriters, but this is still not enough - for many small VCS organisations, this level of funding support is simply not there, meaning that should grant funding continue to evaporate, the VCS will lose out on specialised services that these smaller groups provide, which will have a knock-on effect on statutory services (and therefore their budgets!)
- More access, but many local authorities need to improve their commissioning processes to allow participation by the voluntary and community sector, e.g. no more multiple PPQs for the same authority, enough time to develop bids, enough time and mechanisms in place to develop delivery consortia.
- Systems to find out about and apply for contracts are too varied and complex.

Finally, the survey asked respondents for any further comments they would like to make on the current state of the voluntary and community sector in the East Midlands. Responses received included:

- At a recent meeting in our county it transpired that six infrastructure organisations have received more than £300,000 to examine how best infrastructure organisations might serve the voluntary sector. As a mere VCS organisation I am surprised (shocked even) that there are so many organisations just dealing with the VCS and wonder whether some rationalisation might not be in order? I understand that these six are not the entire set of relevant bodies.
- Whilst some policy changes have impacted negatively on the sector and some councils have acted very harshly, there are still many opportunities to bid for contracts and gain public sector and Trust fund money. However, this takes time and skill and not all organisations have enough of both.
- We are somewhat concerned that any pots of funding that are still available from statutory bodies are being allocated to larger umbrella organisations that have the resources to put in professional bids for money and that, consequently, the small, individual charities, such as ours, will not be able to compete in such as field and miss out. Having said that, we do belong to groups such as ENABLE, One East Midlands and RCAN to take advantage of their services and have benefitted from small funding in the past and advice generally.
- I have great concern about the future sustainability of the VCS as it is now, and expect it to become radically reduced, despite the great need for the sector to fill in the gaps in services, which are forever widening because of the cuts in public services also because of the declining economic situation
- Sector continues to demonstrate a lack of professionalism and business acumen.
- Clearly the VCS is providing vital and important support to community / society well-being but voluntary does not mean free - all voluntary groups have core costs.
- It is dire straight whole process is inequitable.
- Over all, the sector seems very fragile. The very smallest organisations depending on volunteers and very little cash funding are probably in a better position to survive than staffed organisations. The introduction of tendering has led to some surprise commissions and the demise or near demise of some high quality services.
- Its' a challenge, but there are many opportunities, if you are prepared to think and act differently.
- In my county many local VCS organisations have disappeared or been taken over by larger providers through tenders. Also there are huge problems with a lot of TUPE arrangements. Tender panels I feel often do not understand fully the nature of the services being tendered so poor judges of quality and too focused on costs. City has been more understanding of VCS position overall but has made some severe cuts and withdrawn funding altogether in some surprising cases.
- I appreciate they have very stretched resources but are providing a very important and vital role. I would say, don't give up and keep looking for funding opportunities as they are out there (in small pots).
- It seems to be very disjointed. I am particularly concerned that older organisations are repeatedly passed over for attention in favour of new ones. This applies to both voluntary sector activities and things such as festivals run by local government.
- I can't comment on the state of the VCS regionally; however in my county it feels as if the sector is collectively holding its breath, waiting to see what happens next in relation to cuts and the prevailing economic climate.
- The current state of the VCS in our city is not very bright. The cuts by the local authority, as well as nationally has already had a devastating effect. Unfortunately the so called umbrella organisations, claim to provide help and support to the

sector, are busy to develop their own little castles and have become our competitors.

- The VCS is currently in decline within the East Midlands as many organisations have been left unfunded and are facing closure or reduction in much needed services. This decline will have a negative impact on the communities health, skills and group activities. The communities we serve will see increased isolation.

Next Steps

One East Midlands will share the results of this survey with voluntary and community sector organisations, local and national government and other strategic partners at a local, regional and national level.

The survey will then be carried out by One East Midlands on an annual basis with the results reported on and tracked from this 2012 baseline survey.

If you would like to comment on the findings of this survey or suggest amendments or additions to our methodology please get in touch at information@one-em.org.uk.