GaN Canny 2018

The views of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector in Gateshead and Newcastle

March 2018

Acknowledgements

Contents

GaN Canny – so why the title? GaN is an abbreviation for Gateshead and Newcastle. 'Canny' reflects some of the current conversations around the Canny City – connectivity and community in particular. There are various local interpretations which include "any experience which is generally pleasant and enjoyable", "take care", "take it easy" and "be careful".

Executive Summary

Since 2010, there have been major changes in public sector policy which have impacted on the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector. As well as major government policy changes, commissioning and procurement requirements, the impact of the reduction in funding for local councils, the effect of welfare reforms and other factors have made local not for profit organisations completely rethink what they do. Many voluntary and community organisations and social enterprises have experienced changes to their income, and clearly some have not been able to manage this and have closed or become very different organisations. However, the greater emphasis on income generation has enabled new structures such as Community Interest Companies (CICs) to develop and become established, and encouraged other organisations to focus more on trading.

Voluntary and community organisations have had to rely more on unpaid volunteers, the use of social media and different ways of delivering services and attracting funding. At the same time there has been an ever-growing demand for support from local people and communities. The third element of this 'perfect storm' of reduction in funding and increase in demand is the complexity and problems of many of the people who are now approaching us for support. The reduction in statutory services means many people who would have been previously supported by local authorities and the NHS are now supported by the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector.

Yet there is greater expectation than ever before that charitable organisations and volunteers will 'step up to the mark'. In the last year there have been several inquiries launched into civil society and clearly the assumption is that people will respond when asked. The growth of foodbanks, with the largest foodbank in the UK in Newcastle, is an example of this. However, the conflict with the UK being the seventh richest nation in the world is obvious, and there is now more marked increases in inequalities within the UK.

Local authorities are significant for many voluntary and community organisations and social enterprises. This is not just as a commissioner or funder of services, but as an advocate for the area, the relationships with local councillors, the potential of partnerships and the joint interest in making local communities thrive. Gateshead Council has suffered a real term cut in government funding from 2010-2011 to 2017-18 of 50.5%, and the comparative figure for Newcastle Council is 48.8%. Both councils talk about doing things differently and new partnerships. Clearly one of the potential solutions is the more appropriate use of local voluntary and community organisations and social enterprises.

As the NHS addresses its own budget problems and the complexities of the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP), it has discovered 'social prescribing' and the potential support from voluntary and community organisations, but isn't yet substantially investing in them. However, this study reflects increased concern about access to mental health services and the overall impact on communities' health and wellbeing.

This study is from the perspective of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector and tries to illustrate our views. There is still an optimism and willingness to engage in addressing major challenges, but we need to be involved from the start of the process, not invited in at the end as an afterthought.

Many of the comments reflect the frustration that people are trying to do their best in difficult times, and clearly this reflects the mood within the public sector as well. Funding and future sustainability clearly remains a key issue as many organisations worry about what would happen to the people and communities they support, if they no longer existed.

Background and Methodology

As part of its policy and research role, Newcastle CVS (Council for Voluntary Service) carried out a study of voluntary and community organisations and social enterprises, in Gateshead and Newcastle. This was the first time a joint study had been carried out. In 2017, Newcastle CVS carried out a study, Doing Good in Gateshead 2017. In 2016, and in previous years, Newcastle CVS had carried out a study, Taking the Temperature, focusing on the voluntary and community sector in Newcastle. The figures produced over the years can indicate trends. The Third Sector Trends Study 2016 in North East England is the successor to regular studies carried out since 2008 and received response from 1,012 organisations in North East England; but the figures are not broken down into local authority areas.

The information in this report was generated from a survey carried out in January 2018, visits and discussions with voluntary and community organisations, discussions at the Gateshead Voluntary Sector Leaders Group, the Wellbeing and Health Open Forum and the Children and Young People's Forum in Newcastle and Gateshead, and the experiences of the Newcastle CVS staff. The survey was promoted through e-inform the

Newcastle CVS fortnightly e-bulletin, Twitter, Facebook, other organisations' newsletters and direct email to Newcastle CVS members. The survey asked about questions about organisations' status, their achievements and challenges, and what pressures they had identified for the future.

One hundred and sixty eight responses were received from directly contacting around seven hundred and fifty organisations. The breakdown of the type of the respondent group illustrates that, as usual, smaller, community organisations are under-represented in the respondents. However the profile of the respondents is similar enough to that of registered charities in Gateshead and Newcastle to be able to draw reasonable assumptions.

This response is typical of very small local organisations that aren't charities.

"We are a group I run voluntarily. We have no funding. We operate from the village hall as a social enterprise paying weekly rent by charging a £3 fee for the weekly two hour session. I do most of the facilitating talks, but we also pay people to speak. I have no further spare time to apply for grants. So we operate on a shoestring. Its main priority is to motivate health, which has been seen to happen over the six years I've been running it."

Key Findings

Funding and sustainability is the most pressing issue for voluntary and community organisations in Gateshead and Newcastle. This is regardless of whether they are small, medium or large organisations.

Around seven out of ten organisations noted an **increase in demand** for their services in the last year; this has been a consistent figure for a number of years. Many organisations reported year on year growth in demand for several years.

The **recruitment and retention of volunteers** is the second largest area of organisational challenge. This concern was shared across small community organisations, which were totally run by volunteers, as well as medium sized and larger voluntary organisations.

Despite the challenges, the majority of respondents remain **optimistic** about the future of their organisations. Over a third want to increase the number of beneficiaries, nearly half want to increase services, more than a half anticipate more volunteers and a quarter want to increase staff in the next year.

Two thirds of organisations had developed **new areas** of service, projects, initiatives and events during the last year. Innovation was still happening, despite restructures, funding cuts and other challenges.

The key challenge for the people using the services and facilities was the impact of **welfare reform, Universal Credit and personal debt.** There was a noticeable growth of **poverty and austerity** within a growing number of communities.

Growing levels of **mental illness** and the failure of statutory services to support people was having a noticeable impact within and across communities.

The **rate of change** and short term grants and contracts was having a destabilising effect on medium and larger sized organisations in relation to staffing, accommodation and strategic planning and engagement. This presented greater challenges to **governance.**

Certain groups of people were identified as having additional needs that weren't being met; in particular **refugees and asylum seekers, young people and older people.**

The themes of **loneliness and isolation,** not just around older people, were raised. Sometimes these were referenced to facilities and activities that no longer exist.

The **withdrawal of the public sector** was becoming more noticeable and a number of services were harder to access due to changing criteria, different locations and charges.

Grants from charitable foundations and trusts were the most common form of income for small and medium-sized voluntary organisations, while contracts are the most important source of income for larger organisations.

Just over one in three organisations noted an **increase in income** since the previous year. Income stayed the same for just over one in three organisations and just under a third saw a decrease in income since last year.

There were more comments on general **health and wellbeing** than previous years.

The big challenge remains of greater demand, fewer resources and more clients having more complex needs. The issue of the number of clients with a much higher level of needs, and more problems needing resolution is a major challenge.

The state of the Sector in Gateshead and Newcastle

One of the problems of defining the sector is it doesn't have an agreed self-definition. The term 'charity sector' doesn't take into account the many organisations that are not registered charities; the term 'third sector' is thought to be confusing and hierarchical; and the term 'civil society' is so encompassing it is hard to know who isn't included.

The National Audit Office (NAO 2005) provides a useful definition:

"The third sector is the term used to describe the range of organisations which are neither state nor the private sector. Third sector organisations (TSOs) include small local community organisations, and large, established, national and international voluntary or charitable organisations. Some rely solely on the efforts of volunteers; others employ paid professional staff and have management structures and processes similar to those of businesses, large or small; many are registered charities whilst others operate as co-operatives, "social enterprises" or companies limited by guarantee. All share some common characteristics in the social, environmental or cultural objectives they pursue; their independence from government; and the reinvestment of surpluses for those same objectives."

The sector can be divided into three different groups. The first group is the large number of smaller and community organisations, mainly with an income of under £25,000; the second is the middle group with an income of usually £25,000 - £500,000; the third is the small number of larger registered charities, with an income of over £500,000. Clearly this is a generalisation and some organisations will have characteristics pertaining to more than one group. The Third Sector Trends Study divides organisations into small

(under £50,000 income), medium (£50,001-£250,000) and larger (£250,000 or more).

All registered charities and Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIOs) are listed on the Charity Commission website. We explored the website in January 2018, and we have presented the figures in relation to the two local authorities. Charities are defined according to the address of the registered office. Clearly there are many other charities which support people and communities which are not registered in Gateshead and Newcastle. The figures on the register usually relate to the incomes for 2016/2017. The Charity register is dynamic and changes on a daily basis. The Charity Commission has become much robust and has removed many dormant charities in the last three years.

Table 1: Local charities (by size) on the Charity Commission Register

Charity details	Gateshead	Newcastle
Below £1	36	45
£2 - £1,000	16	35
£1,001 - £5,000	37	58
£5,001 - £10,000	30	63
£10,001 - £25,000	50	88
£25,001 - £100,000	66	126
£100,001 - £500,000	61	149
£500,001 - £1,000,000	11	28
£1,000,001 - £10,000,000	13	27
£10,000,000 and over	1	8
TOTAL	321	627

Each year NCVO (the National Council for Voluntary Organisations) produces an Almanac which provides facts, figures and trends about the voluntary and community sector's contribution to the national economy and society. Looking at these local figures

Table 2: Charities by size - national, local and respondents

Charity details	National by size (%)	Gateshead by size (%)	Newcastle by size (%)	Sample by size (%)
Micro: less than £10,000	48	37	32	24
Small: £10,001 to £10,000	34	36	34	30
Medium: £100,001 to £1,000,000	14	22	28	32
Large: £1,000,001 to £10,000,000	3	4	4	9 (£1m - £5m) 5 (over £5m*)
Major: £10,000,001 to £100,000,000	0.4	0.3	1	
Super major: more than £100,000,000	0.003	0	0	

*Figures for large charities were collected differently, with 14% of the sample respondents having an income of over £1million.

and plotting them against the NCVO figures, Gateshead and Newcastle have a similar charity profile, with a higher percentage of slightly more micro and fewer large charities in Gateshead than Newcastle. However both Gateshead and Newcastle have significantly fewer registered micro charities and more medium-sized charities than the national profile.

The suite of publications about small community organisations published by the Third Sector Research Centre (TSRC) came up with the observation that for every registered charity there were three or four small local organisations, which may or may not be formally constituted and offer more informal and semi-formal activities. So it is estimated there are around 1,000 of these types of (micro) groups and activities in Gateshead and over 2,000 in Newcastle.

There are also a number of Community Interest Companies (CICs) that are registered at Companies House. Unfortunately it is

now very difficult to interrogate the CIC register. In March 2018 there were 30 CICs registered in Gateshead. There were 121 CICs registered in Newcastle in 2015. There are 24 organisations based in Gateshead, and 61 organisations based in Newcastle listed on the Mutuals Public Register. These are mainly defined as 'working-men's clubs'. Although the term 'social enterprise' can describe some organisations, it has no legal definition, and so is not included in these figures.

So, in Gateshead, there are around:

- 321 registered charities based in Gateshead

- 24 mutuals

- 30 CICs

- Between 960 – 1,300 small, local groups, activities and organisations

- 516 local charities that are not based in Gateshead, but cover Gateshead in their activities

So, in Newcastle there are around:

- 627 registered charities based in Newcastle

- 61 mutuals

- 121 CICs

- Between 1,900 – 2,500 small, local groups, activities and organisations

- 586 local charities that are not based in Newcastle, but cover Newcastle in their activities

There are 5,015 charities that operate in England that claim to have a national presence. It is impossible to say how and whether these national organisations provide support to Gateshead and Newcastle residents, even when there is no local base e.g. through advice and information and support through helplines and digital access, publications, lobbying and advocacy. However some might have a local base or charity shops.

Although income has been used as an organisational descriptor in this report, it is probably more useful to consider organisations in relation to their functions - how they work, who is involved, how they are managed, and what they do.

Community organisations and small voluntary organisations

There are many hundreds of these organisations in Gateshead and Newcastle. Some are loose associations with very little income, not properly constituted (and maybe don't need to be) – and consist of local people volunteering and doing good. Our experience is these many local organisations and activities often have minimal funding and just get by; they don't employ staff but

can be seen as essential to the structure and well-being of local communities. Other organisations might be a bit bigger (and need to register as a charity or Charitable Incorporated Organisation if their income is over a certain level). Being incorporated means they can get a bank account and have the power to employ staff and take on a lease and are regarded as a 'legal entity'.

Medium-sized, mainly local organisations

The second group is of those organisations, all based in Gateshead and Newcastle, many of which work only in Gateshead or / and Newcastle, but some have changed their boundaries and scope in order to increase their income. Most of these organisations are charities, but some are CICs (Community Interest Communities) that generate their income through trading. Some of these organisations were initially set up and run by local Councils. These organisations can be 'squeezed' as the bigger organisations (see below), often employ bid-writers, and swoop in to pick up contracts that they have otherwise delivered. Several of these organisations lost significant funding in 2010 and 2011, due to changes of Government policy and funding streams, and the loss of regeneration funding. Some organisations have lost funding from the Councils. Nearly all of these organisations have experienced significant changes in their funding mix.

Large Organisations

There are a small number of large charities that are based in and work in Gateshead and Newcastle and other areas. These organisations get their income through contracts (local and national), through the NHS, manage and lead large Big Lottery bids,

maybe some grant aid, trading and direct fund-raising. They employ staff, provide social care, improve health and well-being and often manage complex projects and funding. Most of these organisations have grown over the last five years. Many of these organisations engage in local strategic activities. From the CVS regular forums, networks and groups, it is clear the vast majority of these larger organisations were keen to work with the public sector and improve the health, wealth, well-being and environment of the local communities. The key focus for some wasn't necessarily just their immediate geographic area, but they have capacity and resources and want to extend their services; however, they don't necessarily know who to talk to / where to go given the churn in the public sector.

The NCVO Almanac 2017 notes that 3% of all charities by number receive 80% of the sector's total income. So there is a very uneven distribution of resources with those charities with an income of more than £1million getting nearly 80% of the overall funding. The Charity Commission register notes only 49 Gateshead and Newcastle -based charities have an income of more than £1million.

Discussion

"Although surveys show the overall headlines, my impression is that most voluntary and community organisations are working harder than ever to support people who are having hard times. More people than ever before in our working memory are being refused public services (health and social care), have less money and fewer resources, and there is a visible impact on loneliness and isolation and a growth in general mental distress. At the same time we are getting fewer resources than before to deal with this."

There is an active voluntary, community and social enterprise sector in Gateshead and Newcastle. The vast majority of organisations get by without any state support whatsoever. It is the goodwill of the volunteer members who organise and run events and activities. In a number of cases the members themselves might be the only ones that benefit, the local group that gets together every week to meet up, chat and carry out the activity (which could be knitting, playing bingo, flower arranging or fishing). It doesn't really matter what they do, but it is the coming together, friendship and contacts that count. However, in some cases, the joint activity might have a positive impact on physical health; an example of this is parkrun. This began in the UK in 2004 (with 13 runners and four volunteers) and still operates as a volunteer-led, free-for-all 5km run on Saturdays and a junior 2km run on Sundays. It now operates in seventeen countries with over four million parkrunners registered globally. Each event is supported by volunteers.

However, many people are involved with community and voluntary organisations not just about themselves but to help others, care for the environment, demonstrate support for a cause, promote culture and art, and other philanthropic reasons.

This is one of a number of publications about the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector; but the only one that focuses on Gateshead and Newcastle. There are particular features around voluntary and community organisations in areas of deprivation, and where there is a strong public sector and a historical reliance on the public sector. Whilst for most of this study, there are minimal differences in the responses from Gateshead and Newcastle organisations, there is a marked difference in the investment in the voluntary and community sector between the two areas.

Both councils manage ward funds with small amounts of grant aid going to local community and voluntary organisations; this is decided by local councillors. Both councils also run larger grant aid funds, which are linked directly with the respective councils' priorities. The biggest difference in investment is between the amount of charitable services contracted (mainly in social care). In Newcastle this was around £48million in 2016/2017; it has not proved possible to get accurate figures for Gateshead, but discussions have implied this is substantially less and in the region of £15millon.

The Gateshead Fund has a value of £400,000, and is managed by the Community Foundation (Northumberland, Tyne and Wear) and gives grants to small and medium sized smaller organisations to a maximum of £10,000. It includes £66,000 for the Local Community Fund; this funds £3,000 of community activities in each of the 22 wards in Gateshead. The sum also includes funding for Gateshead Volunteers Month and sporting grants to individuals. Organisations, with priority given to those based in Gateshead, with an income up to £250,000, can apply for the Gateshead Fund. There are three callouts a year for the Gateshead Fund.

The Newcastle Fund has a value of around £700,000 and there is an annual call out to all organisations working in Newcastle. The Newcastle Fund is launched in June with a Funders Fair and is open to not for profit organisations of all sizes who will deliver work in Newcastle. Some applications are funded for more than one year. In Newcastle, ward funding was around £262,000 across the 26 wards, with decisions being taken by local councillors. The amount for each ward is linked to socio-economic status.

From the call from David Cameron in 2010 around the Big Society, to the expectation that local people will step when the state can no longer provide (whether through resources, capacity or political dogma), there is an assumption that people and communities will rally around and plug the gaps. There is the rise of social prescribing within the NHS, as it discovers the local voluntary and community sector, and encouraging, and in some cases funding, local initiatives to deter people from using or using more NHS services.

The Big Society initiative assumed that volunteers and voluntary and community organisations would take over the running of many community facilities and functions. Big Society became confused with austerity and the brand has been quietly dropped. The reality has been different to the rhetoric with mainly medium-sized and larger voluntary organisations being more able to successfully take over the risks and liabilities that come with asset transfer. However, there are examples of smaller, volunteer-led organisations taking over assets. In some instances these appear to have been successfully transferred, mainly because of the amount of support offered by council staff formerly. However, as local councils no longer have the capacity to do this and

external costs, such as utilities increase, some organisations (nationally) are handing back assets.

Within local authorities, there has been a push for asset transfers, with the assumption that local people, mainly volunteers, will take on the running and management of previously directly managed council facilities. These include libraries, community centres, sports facilities and parks. Jesmond Pool, has been successfully managed by the Jesmond Community Trust, for over 25 years, but this was initially not supported by Newcastle City Council. In 2018, Newcastle City Council is currently setting up a Parks Trust for a number of parks, green spaces and allotments as a completely different approach to managing and running their assets. In some asset transfer schemes, some of which are very successful, there is a conflict between an asset which is owned by the respective council and a (relatively) short-term lease, which makes it difficult for Charitable Trusts and Foundations to invest for a long term future.

As the discussion on the nature and breadth of the sector implies, there are many different elements and it should be thought of as continuum. There are clearly a number of medium-sized and large voluntary organisations in Gateshead and Newcastle that are more than able to develop and run services, sometimes supported through grant aid, sometimes through contract, and sometimes a mixture of both.

Some organisations will use their social value, which might be as a community anchor or as a sector leader, and will try to encourage and support other smaller organisations to develop and thrive. There is already quite a lot of connectivity between organisations and the Blue Stone Consortium and Newcastle CVS try to encourage partnerships, both

formal and informal, sharing resources and support as necessary. There are several instances where local organisations in a particular geographical area get together to focus around place and their community; but often this has to be initially supported by a lead partner or an outside facilitator; sometimes this happens through a small external pot of money.

There can sometimes be a criticism from some public sector organisations and commentators that there are "too many organisations competing for scarce resources". However, all organisations are independent and are set up by an individual or group of people who see a failure, again, something not working, and want to do something about it. It is precisely this creativity and ability to respond quickly that makes the voluntary sector so fascinating.

Over the last few years, as the public sector has moved away from grants towards contracts, and the belief that commissioning is a way to reduce costs, the issue of competition is prevalent in the voluntary sector. On one hand organisations are asked to work together and collaborate, on the other, they are often put into situations where they have to compete with each other. Some of the major failures in contracting (public, private and voluntary), appear to happen with large providers claiming to be able to deliver services at unrealistic prices (Carillion and Lifeline). As a result of loss of these contracts, smaller, more local organisations have been forced out of the market. Clearly the emphasis has to be on quality, but it often appears to be about who writes the best bid, rather than the knowledge, experience, added value and commitment of an existing provider. The financial pressures that local councils face, means sometimes they are offering services

at a price that is too low for a local charity to compete; whereas a national or large organisation can afford to do a loss leader for strategic reasons or can minimise costs within a larger resource.

"Sustainability - will we be able to generate sufficient income to remain viable and providing a good service (it's pointless stripping things to the bone to remain viable if the service quality cannot be maintained). 2. Public sector trend to move towards single, bigger contracts squeezes all organisations particularly smaller ones and can lead to a loss in expertise. 3. Continuing austerity across all sectors, everyone is under pressure to do more with less and this is a trend that has been ongoing for so long that we are close to or at the limit of: efficiency, leanness, innovation."

"Local authorities continue to assume they run things, when the world of public services is critically changing. Voluntary sector will tear itself apart, due to the creation of a wholly competitive sector. Big voluntary organisations swallow up the sector."

"Commissioners wanting more for less. More outcomes with competition on price on contracts (in some cases 60% of a contract evaluation is assessed on price). Therefore margins are decreasing, reserves are decreasing, and investing in the development of the business and staff is more difficult."

There are many sophisticated, well-developed and professional voluntary organisations in Gateshead and Newcastle that offer high quality, professional and safe services. The virtue of their sense of place and their charitable status means they are able to offer additional resources through access to charitable funding, volunteers, and engagement in strategic initiatives. They feel strongly about their offer and want to offer more services and have the capacity to deliver these.

In line with previous studies, the number one issue for organisations was funding and sustainability. A number of examples were given of how organisations were trying to do more with less. As the external funding environment gets harsher, as the share of contracts are won by large and very large organisations (both private and charitable), and public sector investment decreases, there is much greater competition for resources. This is happening at time when organisations are reporting a year on year increase in demand on their services.

The second biggest issue from an organisational perspective was that of volunteering. National studies show that the overall rates of volunteering have remained stable, despite multiple initiatives in trying to improve this and the introduction of digital platforms. The rate of formal volunteering (giving unpaid help through a club or organisation) once month was 27% in 2001 and 27% in 2017. The rate of formal volunteering among young people (aged 16-25 years) has seen a steady increase (from 23% to 32%) in recent years. This might be the impact of a number of youth-focused volunteering programmes e.g. National Citizen Service, the 2012 Olympic Games and a tough employment market. However the national research also shows the level and types of involvement varies according to demographics; with the greatest disparities in socio-economic status and educational level. The people most likely to volunteer are from higher social classes with a higher level of education. However differences in participation rates are smaller for informal volunteering (giving help to someone who is not a relative).

"Finding volunteers who want to take on management/co-ordinator roles, fundraising and training roles. Keeping volunteers at a time when so much more legislation affects their volunteering

role, eg GDPR. Keeping volunteers when working practices change, eg IT software and more secure email systems."

The Newcastle Residents' Survey 2017 demonstrated that 19% of residents volunteer once a month for a group, club or organisation; 32% of residents do this for an individual who is not a relative. In comparison to 2015, the proportion of Newcastle residents volunteering at least once a month for a group, club or organisation was 23% (i.e. a drop of 4%); the proportion of residents volunteering to support an individual who is not a relative 34% (i.e. a drop of 2%). The Volunteer Centre Newcastle supported 621 people looking for volunteer opportunities and their database indicated that 655 people made additional searches in the period August 2017 to January 2018. Gateshead Council (who manage the volunteering opportunities in Gateshead), noted they had 1,840 registered volunteers in 2018 with a formal volunteering target of an increase to 25% with an achievement of 51.9% by 2017; and an informal volunteering target of an increase to 40%, achieved 67% by 2017. In Gateshead, throughout Volunteers Month in June 2017, 106,189 hours were recorded on the volunteer totalizer, which equated to £1,380,457 economic value; this was a rise of 5% since 2016. There are also Student Volunteering Centres at both local universities and many people will volunteer directly with an organisation, without going through an intermediary.

Another very strong theme coming through the comments was the amount of change that organisations have to experience on a more regular basis. This presents problems in terms of the recruitment and retention of staff and volunteers, accommodation issues, and governance. Short term contracts might be seen as a way of keeping providers

on their toes, but the levels and amount of churn can be destabilising. Several respondents noted short term contracts and the difficulties this caused in staffing, planning and commitment to future activity. Organisations couldn't take on additional users as they couldn't give a commitment to them being seen/ supported/ treated if the contract deadline was close.

"1. Reduced public funding 2. Increased competition for grants and public donations/ spending 3. Increased demand on sector to fill in the gaps but no or limited resource to enable this. These three remain the same. Staff morale and well-being (increased pressure, workload, uncertainty about the future - however real or not this is, people are definitely concerned about future employment security). This is starting to happen and whilst not overtly so within the organisation, it is apparent in wider circles across all sectors and is likely to become a major risk for all businesses."

There were noticeably more comments on accommodation; as organisations gained and lost funding on a more regular basis, they had to be big enough to accommodate new services, but small enough to reduce costs. Every move means additional costs, particularly around IT and the time planning and delivering the move.

A number of the medium sized and larger organisations still wanted to be involved in policy discussions. This wasn't just self-interest, organisations genuinely wanted to be involved in conversations on strategy, place, their cause, their users, but in many instances no longer had the internal capacity to engage at this level. They could only attend external discussions where there was a genuine commitment to change and things happening. However, there was always the fear of missing the 'crucial meeting'. There were also comments and confusion about

the number of NHS-led groups, particularly around mental health, even though access to services was felt to be worsening for users. It wasn't always clear to voluntary organisations who they should talk to in public sector organisations, when changes were happening.

There were a number of comments about governance issues, particularly from small and medium-sized organisations. This is not surprising as trustees and Management Group members are being asked to take on more responsibilities and there is a greater awareness around safeguarding, health and safety and GDPR requirements. This is on top of increasingly difficult decisions about charges, costs, staffing and buildings.

The key issue that large and small organisations across Gateshead and Newcastle identified as being the biggest challenge to their users and communities was the impact of welfare reforms, Universal Credit and personal debt. It was hard to separate out particular benefits; but the issue of increasing poverty and austerity and the impact on communities, neighbourhoods and particular groups of people was the key challenge by far. Associated with this was uncertainty and the lack of hope. Some of the responses were the bleakest received in the seven years of doing studies.

Associated with actual poverty and lack of personal finance and resources were the difficulties in accessing public services. As some services were removed or the bar to accessing them became higher, this became another way that people no longer were able to achieve support. Of particular concern were mental health services. This was mentioned by a number of respondents, not just those organisations who focused mental health. This was problematic both in access to services (through waiting lists)

and (apparent) refusal by mental health services to see and treat people. One response described "mass mental misery, with the depression of people taking over the community- everything becomes gray".

The reductions in public services generally and increases in charges to access other facilities was also raised. Both Gateshead and Newcastle are highly civic places with historic significant investment in green spaces, public realm, sports and swimming facilities, arts and cultural venues and libraries. The reduction of around 50% of Government funding since 2010 is having its toll, with an obvious reduction in many of these areas, despite imaginative and lateral efforts to keep them as healthy as possible in a much reduced financial context. The reduction in cleaning and environmental improvements is noticeable. Ironically it seems worse in areas like Gateshead and Newcastle where there were greater levels of investments in all these areas before 2010. For the first time in these studies there were several mentions of visible homelessness and rough sleeping.

Some participants responded in terms of their client groups in particular refugees and asylum seekers (probably the saddest comments), young people (a new benefit regime has been introduced over the last year) and older people. The themes of loneliness and isolation, not just around older people, were noted. Sometimes these were referenced to facilities and activities that no longer exist.

"The 'hostile environment' policies mean that refused asylum seekers are increasingly pushed away from accessing mainstream services and underground making them increasingly vulnerable. Destitution is a huge issue which is complex and looks set to continue if not get worse. The third sector pick up pieces around this, but refugees are eligible for benefits so

shouldn't be facing destitution in the first place. The third area of concern I have is that the ability of organisation or MPs to influence seems difficult in the context of Brexit where, even if an issue can get cut-through and is in the media and in parliament and MPs care about the issue, they have so much going on that they are physically unable to participate in all the debates happening on a given day in Parliament."

Respondents referred to the general loss of overall wellbeing as part of the cumulative impact of all these sudden, and often strange, changes. The people, facilities and certainties that were once around are no longer there. The pace of change is often faster than people's ability to respond to it. Although the current economic recession and downturn started in 2008, and the austerity programme from 2010, there was a still a belief / hope this was temporary rather than adapting to this new world. This can be a method of self-protection and as the new realism is too unpleasant to contemplate.

However even within these challenges and difficulties, there are still many positive responses when organisations were able to demonstrate how they had made a difference to local people and communities. As well as tangible examples of improvements, there were many examples of what could be described as increased resilience – the ability to change and adapt to the environment.

The responses range from almost biblical; *"We gave them hope when they were feeling desperate. We helped them to find friendship and to integrate into the local community. We provided Rights advice so that they could receive the assistance they were entitled to according to their circumstances."* ; to the uplifting *"young people are empowered; they realise they can achieve much more than they thought and have fun whilst doing it. They meet other young*

people and learn to work in teams. Local issues were raised to national level discussions and through political channels." ; and the tangible *"in 2016-2017 we helped 12,735 clients with 25,388 different problems. Our advice resulted in financial gains of £2,631,895 for local people."*

The optimism and creativity of voluntary and community organisations and social enterprises continues to impress with 69% of all respondents having developed a new service, project, initiative or different event in the last year. The size and nature of the sector makes it more flexible and responsive. Clearly good ideas have to go through governance and a sense check but there has been a shift of thinking in last few years from a "here is the budget, how can we fit in what we want to do?" towards more of a "here's the plan, how do we fund it?" approach. Even the smallest community organisation is more likely to work in this way nowadays – planning on what they want to do first and then getting the funding to deliver this.

Findings

Profile of Respondents

This section describes the structure, size and activity of the organisations that responded to the survey.

Question One: What is your organisational structure?

Registered charity	70%
Community Interest Company (CIC)	10%
Charitable Incorporated Organisation	10%
Company limited by guarantee	30%
Charitable trust	1%
Unincorporated association	7%
Social enterprise	6%

Table 3: Bar chart of organisational structure of respondents

Q1 What is your organisational structure, please tick ones that apply? (you can tick more than one box)
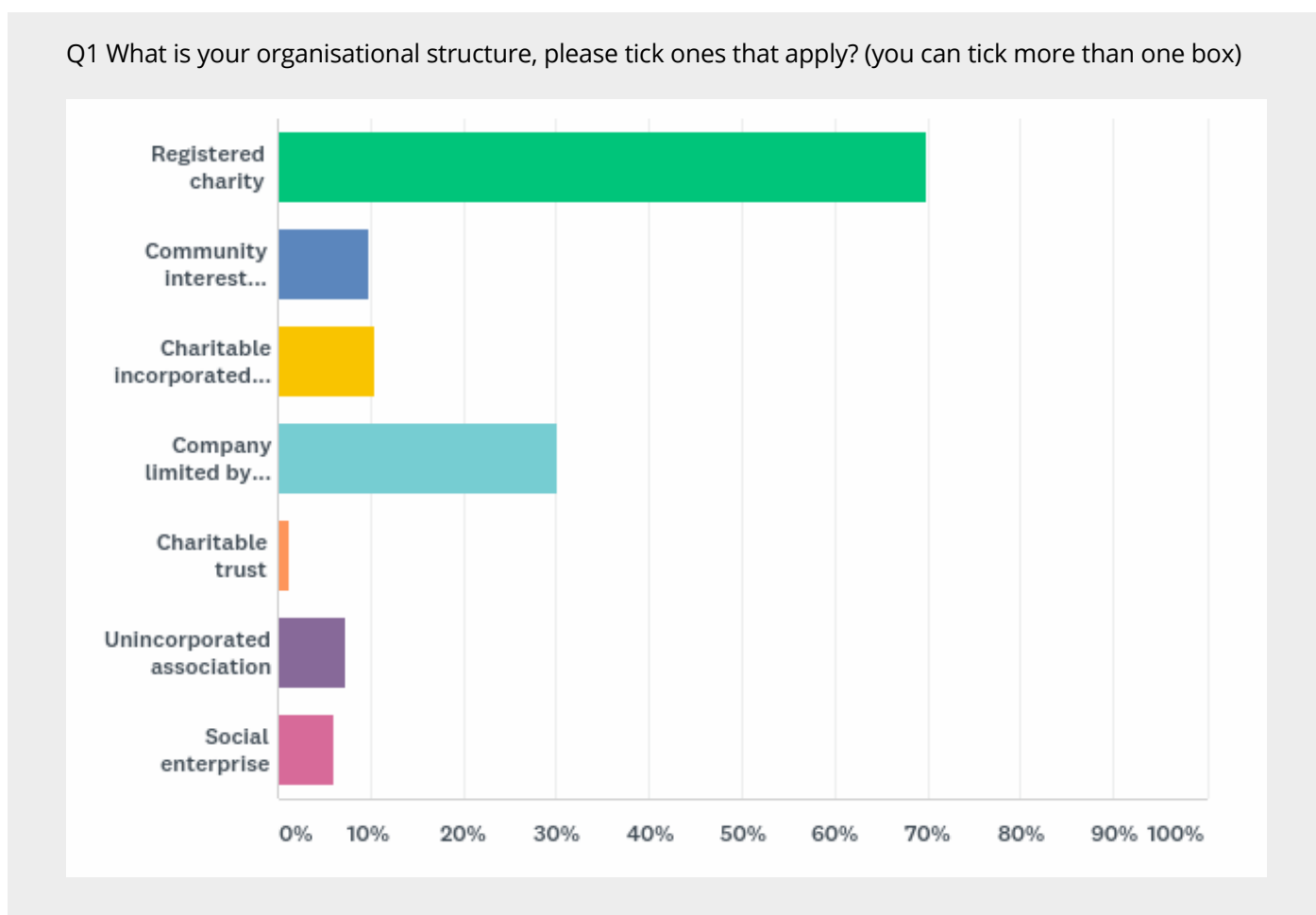
An organisation can have more than one form of structure, for instance Newcastle CVS is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee.

Question Two: Where do you deliver your services?

Part of Gateshead	12%
All of Gateshead	6%
Part of Newcastle	15%
All of Newcastle	12%
Just Newcastle and Gateshead	5%
All or part of Tyne and Wear	13%
All or part of the North East	27%
All or part of England or the UK	10%

Table 4: Geographic delivery of respondents

Q2 Where do you deliver your services?
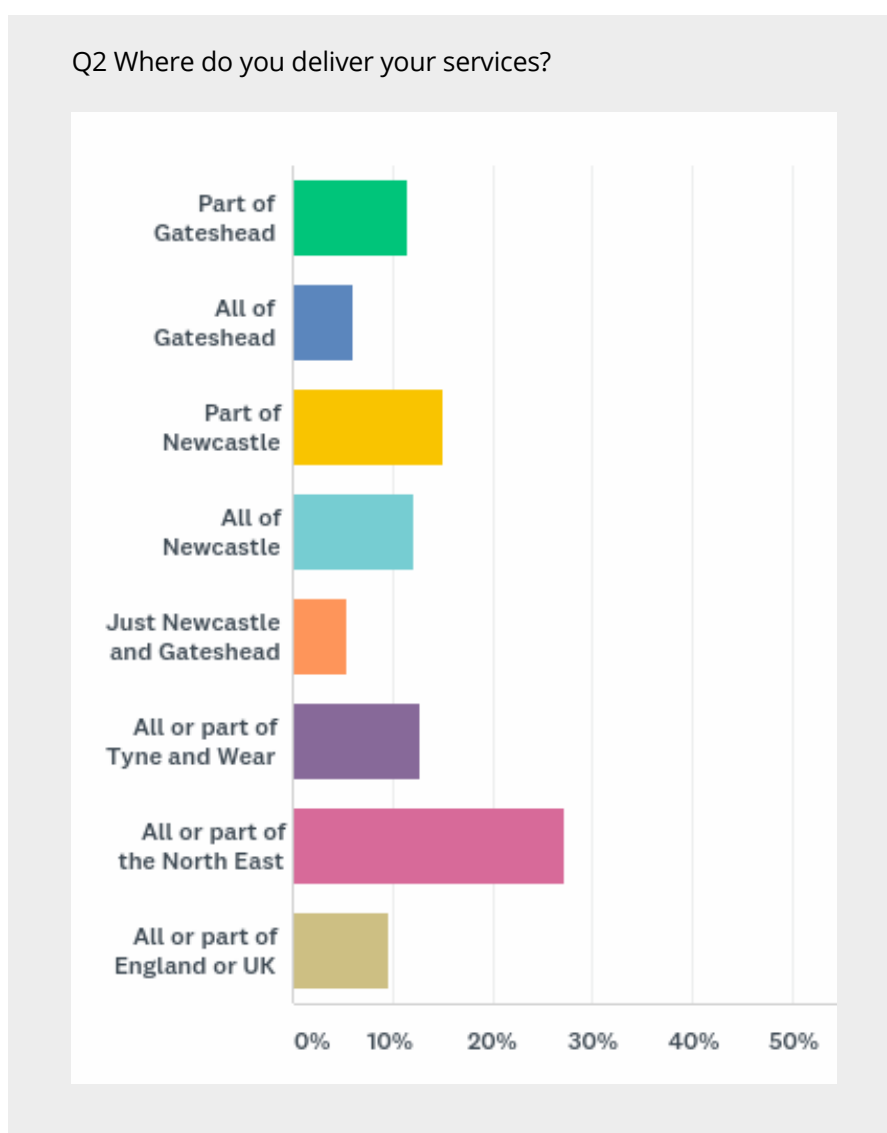
Question Three: Do you work with all client groups?

Yes   43%
No   57%

Question Four: If no, who do you work with?

Table 5: Groups of people that respondents worked with

Q4 If you answered no to question 3 (the previous question) and you work with particular groups of people, please tick up to four groups and only tick those client groups that you mainly work with. For example, if your organisation provides mental health services open to everyone; only tick 'mental health conditions'. If you deliver a mental health service specifically for women who use drugs, you would tick mental health conditions, substance misusers and women.
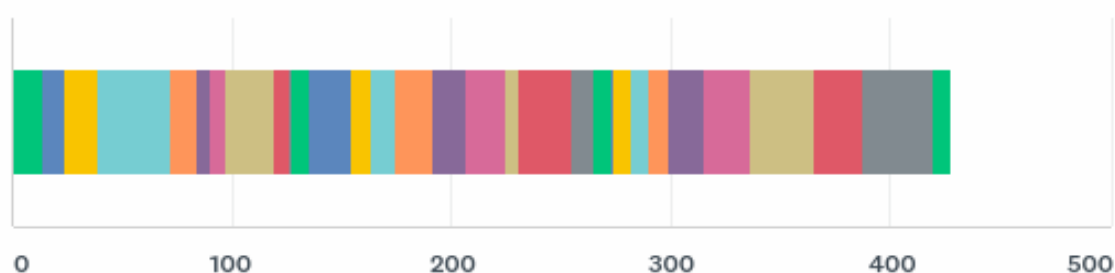
Legend:
- Asylum seekers and/or refugees
- Black and ethnic minority communities (all) Carers Children (0 -14)
- Disabled people (all) Employed people Faith groups
- Families and/or parents Gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender
- Gypsy or Traveller communities Homeless people
- Learning disabilities (people with) Lone parents
- Long-term/chronic illness (people with) Low income (people with)
- Men Mental health conditions (people with)
- Offenders and/or ex-offenders Older people
- Physical disabilities (people with) Sensory impairment (people with)
- Social entrepreneurs Substance misusers (drugs/alcohol)
- Survivors of abuse/victims of crime Tenants and residents
- Unemployed people Voluntary and community groups Volunteers
- Women Young people (14-25) Other

Question Five: How many people are employed in your organisation?

a) Number of full time employees

0	41%
1	13%
2 – 4	15%
5 – 10	12%
11 – 20	6%
21 – 50	5%
51 – 99	2%
100 or more	6%

b) Number of part time employees

0	30%
1	13%
2 – 4	22%
5 – 10	14%
11 – 20	8%
21 – 50	7%
51 – 99	3%
100 or more	3%

Question Six: How many people are involved in your organisation?

c) Number of volunteers

0	10%
1	4%
2 – 4	7%
5 – 10	17%
11 – 20	26%
21 – 50	15%
51 – 99	10%
100 or more	10%

d) Number of trustees / management group members

1	1%
2 – 4	21%
5 – 10	55%
11 – 20	23%
21 – 50	1%
51 – 99	1%
100 or more	0%

There should a minimum of four 'responsible persons' involved with any organisation. Experience has demonstrated that some trustees / management committee members are involved with more than one organisation, so adding the totals isn't helpful. However, this does illustrate several hundred people are directly involved with the management of voluntary and community organisations in Gateshead and Newcastle.

e) Approximate number of people who benefit from your organisation

1	0%
2 – 4	0%
5 – 10	1%
11 – 20	2%
21 – 50	4%
51 – 99	9%
100 or more	84%

It would be wrong to conflate these figures as there will be inevitable double-counting, but clearly local voluntary and community groups in Gateshead and Newcastle support many thousands of local residents, as well as making local environments a better place to live and visit.

Table 6: How many people are involved in your organisation?

How many	Full time staff (%)	Part time staff (%)	Volunteers (%)	Trustees/ Management Group (%)	People benefitting (%)
0-1	41	30	10	0	0
1-2	13	13	4	1	0
2-4	15	22	7	21	0
5-10	12	14	17	55	1
11-20	6	8	26	23	2
21-50	5	7	15	1	4
51-99	2	3	10	1	9
100 or more	6	3	10	0	84

Question Seven: What was your turnover in the last financial year?

Under £1,000   9%
£1,001 - £10,000   15%
£10,001 - £50,000   19%
£50,001 - £100,000   11%
£100,001 - £250,000   15%
£250,001 - £500,000   12%
£500,001 - £1,000,000   6%
Over £1 million   9%

Table 7: Turnover of respondent charities

Q7 What was your turnover in the last financial year?
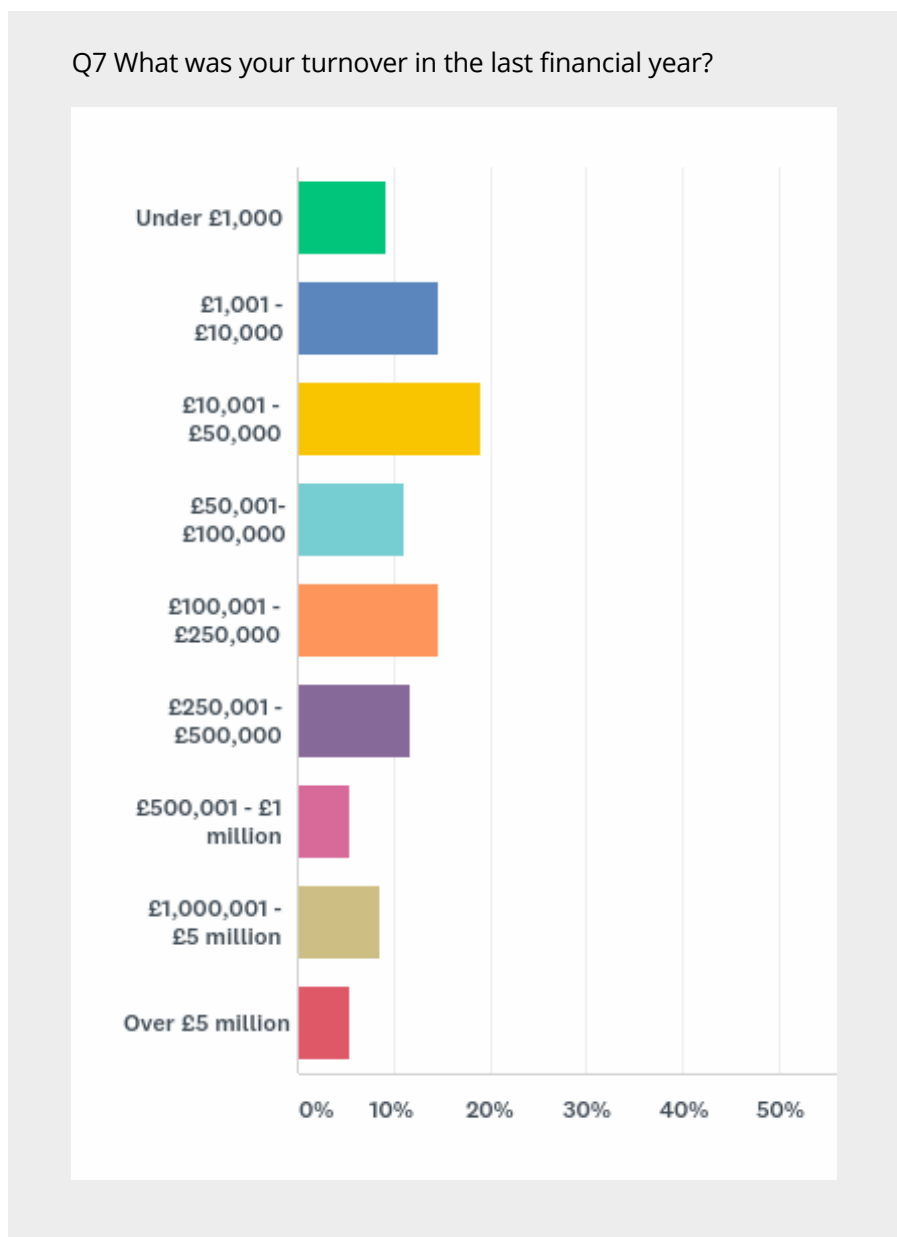
Question Eight : If your organisation has reserves do you anticipate you will be using some of them in the next financial year?

Yes	44%
Likely	15%
Not sure	15%
Unlikely	11%
No	15%

Table 8: The use of reserves in 2018-2019

Q8 If your organisation has reserves do you anticipate you will be using some of them in the next financial year
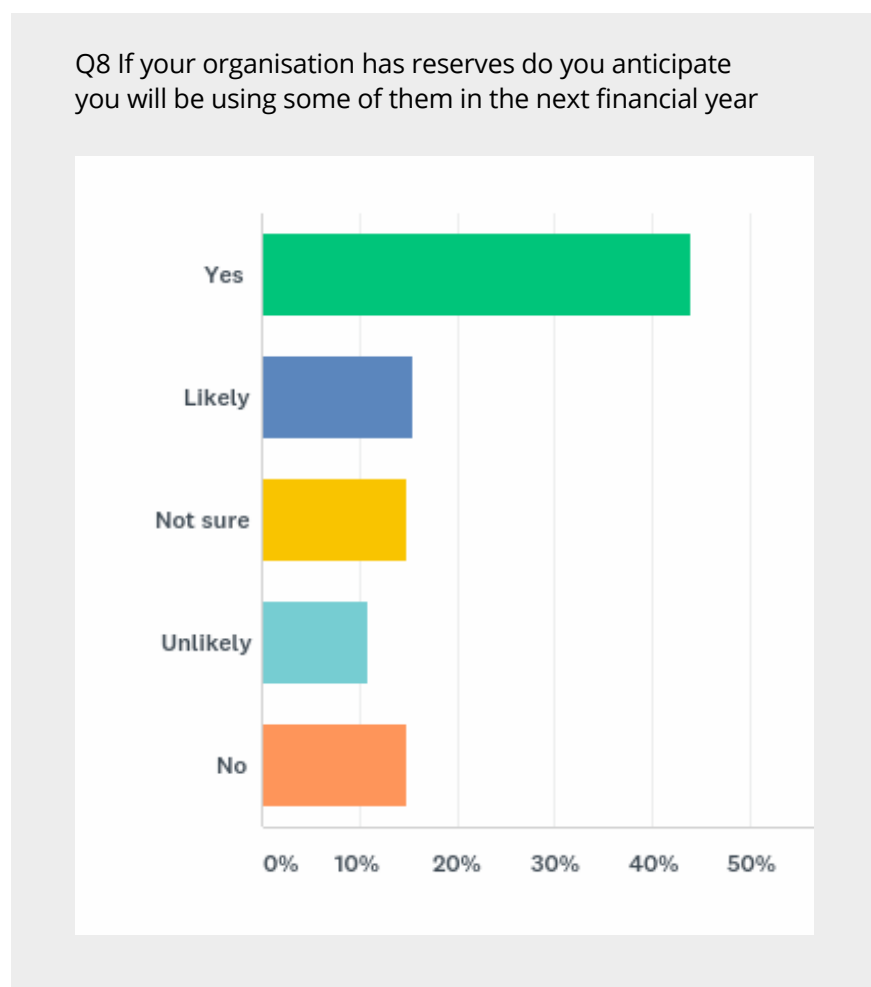
This question does not reflect liabilities and some organisations might have to keep reserves to cover loans, pension debt, potential redundancy cists etc.

Trustees have to discuss their attitude and agreement about reserves and produce a basic policy and have to demonstrate in their annual report that they have considered this. There is no single level or even a range of reserves is right for all charities. Any target set by trustees for the level of reserves to be held, or decision that there is no need for reserves, should reflect the particular circumstances of the individual charity and be explained in the policy.

Question Nine : If you had no funding or income from tomorrow how long could your organisation keep running on its reserves?

We have no reserves	16%
0-3 months	23%
3-6 months	22%
6-12 months	21%
Over a year	18%

Table 9: Reserves profile of respondents

Q9 If you had no funding or income from tomorrow how long could your organisation keep running on its reserves?

Question Ten: Please estimate what percentage of your annual funding (based on the last financial year for which you had figures) comes from?

Table 10 : Income streams by percentage

	None	1-10%	11-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-99%	100%
Public sector contracts (local and national)	52	13	6	11	7	10	1
Public sector grant aid (local and national)	56	20	13	4	1	6	1
Grants from charitable trusts and foundations	30	26	19	13	8	2	2
Grants from the Big Lottery Fund	58	13	14	8	3	4	0
Social Investment finance	97	2	1	0	0	0	0
Individual giving / donations	18	54	9	3	5	4	7
Endowments and investments	80	15	1	1	1	1	1
Selling goods / services (trading)	35	37	6	9	4	7	3
Reserves	55	32	6	2	1	2	2
Other	62	11	4	8	4	9	2

This was probably the most complex question asked and organisations had to break down what percentage of their income they received from different sources. One hundred and forty organisations responded (83% of the total in 2018, and 82% of the total in 2017). It might have been that a number of organisations might not have understood the question, or the breakdown of sources was too difficult. There appeared to be a correlation between the size of organisations and the sources of funding; for example, larger organisations appeared more likely to get a greater percentage of their income from public sector contracts. The numbers in the sample were too small to demonstrate statistical significance; however the analysis from the Third Sector Trends Study 2016 demonstrated that grants remained the most important of income for small and medium sized organisations; while contracts are the most important source of income for organisations with an income of more than £250,000, while grant income has become more important.

Sixty-five (of the hundred and thirty-five) organisations held public sector contracts. These contracts were with local authorities, NHS / Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), the Police

and Crime Commissioner, or central government. Of those sixty-five organisations that held public sector contracts, twenty-five organisations got more than half their funding from that source. Of the sixty-five organisations that held public sector contracts, twenty-five organisations got less than 25% of their income from public sector contracts.

Fifty-six organisations had public sector grants. For forty-two of these organisations, public sector grant aid formed less than 25% of their income.

Grants from charitable trusts and foundations constituted the most common form of income. For the ninety-eight organisations that received income from charitable grant aid, charitable grant aid formed less than 25% of the income for sixty-three organisations.

Fifty-three organisations had received grants from the Big Lottery Fund. For thirty-four of these organisations, this formed less than 25% of their income; but for nine organisations, it formed more than 50% of their funding.

Only three organisations had received social investment finance; for two organisations this accounted for between 1-10% of the organisation's income. For one organisation, social finance accounted for between 11-25% of the organisation's income.

For twenty-six organisations, individual giving, personal donations and fund-raising formed more than 25% of their income.

Twenty out of a hundred and one organisations received income from endowments and investments; five of these organisations got more than 10% of their income from these sources.

Eighty-two out of one hundred and twenty six organisations had generated income from selling goods and services. Twenty-nine of these had raised more than 25% of their income this way. As sixteen CICs participated in this survey, this is not surprising.

These figures generated locally were checked against recent national reports.

The Third Sector Trends Study, a longitudinal study involving 1,012 organisations in the North East of England, looked at income sources over time. Evidence from 2008 to 2016 demonstrated that the balance of dependence on different sources of income in relative terms had been shifting over time. It noted that grants and earned income had become much more important for smaller organisations (defined as having an income of below £50,000). Contracts were irrelevant for these organisations.

Meanwhile medium sized organisations (with an income between £50,001 and £250,000) had become more reliant on grants and earned income and contracts have become progressively less important, as is the case with investment income, subscriptions and in-kind support. Contracts were of greater importance to this group. However in the comments made, there was an amount of wariness around contracts and the procurement and commissioning process. Inevitably larger organisations (with an income of more than £250,000) remained much more reliant, on relative terms, on contracts. Grant income and earned income had stabilised over the last five years.

The study noted that the importance of investment income remained relatively flat, but given

the general economic environment, this is hardly surprising.

The NCVO Almanac 2016 (which is based on information taken from charity returns for 2015) noted that income from government (national, local and the NHS) formed a significant part (33% of the voluntary sector's total income, but this only accounts for around 2% of total government spend. Growth in government income was predominantly seen in the largest organisations, particularly those with an income of over £100 million (the super-major charities). For the first time in a decade, income from central government (£7.3bn) was higher than income from local government (£7.1bn).

Another national reference point was the Small Charity Index produced by the Foundation for Social Improvement (FSI). This is a quarterly tracker and the most recent outturn (September to November 2017) indicates one in ten small charities reporting a decrease in statutory income, and 5% an increase from this source. Nineteen percent of small charities reported an increase in earned income/ trading in the last quarter. In relation to voluntary income, 13% reported increases above 10%, 48% reported no change and 21% reported a decrease. Less than 1% have used Social Impact Bonds in the last year. A small charity is defined by having an income of less than £1million by the FSI and covers nearly all the organisations based in Gateshead and Newcastle.

Question 11: In relation to your overall income, in the last year have you experienced changes in income?

	2018	2017	2016
An increase in overall income	35%	40%	29%
Income staying the same	34%	37%	35%
A loss in overall income	31%	23%	36%

This might be a surprising response given the comments on funding and the sustainability of voluntary and community organisations; but these respondents are the ones who have survived. There have been some notable closures of organisations that have had to close for a variety of reasons. Again these responses are similar in other areas – usually around a third / a third / a third.

The 2017 figures were from Gateshead organisations, and the 2016 figures were from Newcastle organisations. It is impossible to know whether the organisations move between the different bands.

Question 12 : Over the last year have you experienced changes in staffing numbers?

	2018	2017	2016
An increase in staff	25%	27%	30%
No change in staff levels	59%	59%	48%
A decrease in staff	15%	12%	21%
Some paid staff becoming (unpaid) volunteers	4%	5%	3%

Clearly staffing changes often relate to income. The comments reflect some of the churn and changes within organisations. Organisations try to avoid redundancies where possible and will sometimes use reserves to retain staff. The comments made by voluntary and community organisations indicate that in some instances whilst the number of staff overall remains the same, there are shifts in the number of hours they work; often because of short term contracts. There are more comments than in previous years about the impact of short term contracts and the stress on and wellbeing of staff. The 2017 figures were from Gateshead organisations, and the 2016 figures were from Newcastle organisations.

Question 13: Over the last year have you experienced changes in volunteer numbers?

	2018	2017	2016
An increase in the numbers of volunteers	27%	34%	31%
Volunteer levels staying the same	55%	48%	57%
A loss in overall volunteer numbers	18%	18%	12%

It is interesting to note that one in four respondents reports an increase in the numbers of volunteers, yet the second biggest challenge (after funding) was the recruitment and retention of volunteers. As organisations become more reliant on volunteers, this is clearly a crucial area of work. In discussion, several organisations noted their volunteers were getting older.

The 2017 figures were from Gateshead organisations, and the 2016 figures were from Newcastle organisations.

Question 14: Over the last year have you experienced changes in demands for your services?

	2018	2017	2016
An increase in demands for your services?	68%	72%	70%
No change in demands for your services?	26%	21%	27%
Decrease in demands for your services?	6%	7%	3%

Our voluntary sector studies have consistently noted a 65-75% year on year increase in demand for services; this is in line with all the studies we have carried out since 2011. However, this needs to be regarded at the same time that organisations are going through their own changes and reorganisations. In the comments and in discussions, organisations frequently report that not only are they seeing more people, but the complexities and needs are changing. As the public sector is tightening its criteria for access into services, this means many people who would have previously received statutory services, both commissioned and / or delivered by the NHS, local authorities and probation services etc. five years ago, are now excluded. So they go to the only place available – the voluntary and community sector. Or they don't go anywhere at all.

Organisations have had to consistently reorganise, restructure and reshape to accommodate

these demands for services. In the comments there was a noticeable number of references to complexity and mental health issues. A Changing Wind, our in-depth study into organisations supporting people with disabilities, highlighted the shift to digital and doing things differently. Services offered might not be as intensive as previously; one to one sessions might be replaced by group work; sessions might be shorter; more services are offered by volunteers, and there is greater staff differentiation and grades.

The 2017 figures were from Gateshead organisations, and the 2016 figures were from Newcastle organisations.

Question 15 : In the next financial year (from April 2018) do you anticipate?

Increasing staff levels	24%
Reducing staff levels	18%
Engaging additional volunteers	59%
Reducing the number of your volunteers	1%
Expanding the number of services you provide	46%
Closing services you provide	12%
Closing the organisation	4%
Merging with another organisation	6%
Increasing the number and type of beneficiaries	35%
Reducing the number and type of beneficiaries	4%
An increase in partnership working	65%
A decrease in partnership working	1%

So despite the problems noted previously, there are ambitions that the organisations will grow, engage more volunteers, offer more services and help and support more people. Also nearly two thirds of organisations want to work in partnership; which is optimistic given the pressure to focus internally on the organisation, and instead to work with others for mutual benefit and for beneficiaries.

The work of Newcastle CVS brings us into contact with many voluntary and community organisations and we are regularly presented with organisations that have gone through major changes in order to focus on supporting people and communities.

"The beneficiaries of our sports activities face increased demands on their time - for work, for family commitments, for study, for travel for all of those. That has a knock-on for availability for competitive sport and also for volunteering and fundraising. Nevertheless, there is an increased need for green spaces and opportunities for exercise. Young people in particular are now less fit than previous generations, and also suffer greater mental health challenges. It is vital that we are even more effective and available to do all we can to attract them into involvement. The third challenge is that the area in which we are based has very limited opportunities for community activities, with census information showing high levels of isolation and very few gathering spots. Older people particularly suffer from loneliness. Our community services will therefore be evermore valuable as demographic change continues."

Views of Respondents

This section describes how organisations felt about what was happening, their opinions, views, hopes and fears.

Question 16: What do you think will be the three top challenges that your organisation will face in the next two years and have these changed in the last year?

"Securing medium to long term funding, increasing demand for services, volunteer fatigue!"

One hundred and fifty three organisations responded to this open question, with (unsurprisingly) more than half noting funding. This is in line with other surveys, both locally and nationally, but funding was clearly problematic, regardless of the size of the organisation. Funding was linked to sustainability and lack of stability. There were a number of comments about short term contracts and the impact this had on stability, staffing and accommodation. There was no significant difference across Gateshead and Newcastle or large and small organisations about funding. However, the comments about contracting and commissioning came from large and medium-sized organisations. There appeared to be a smaller percentage of comments than in previous years, about local authority funding; this might be because organisations have a better understanding of the predicaments that local councils are in or it could be lower expectations, or a mixture of both.

The second most common issue was volunteering; the problems of recruiting and retaining volunteers; in particular younger volunteers, whose lives were often more complex. For those groups that were membership organisations, several mentioned the need to recruit more members. Clearly there can be different demands for activities and facilities by different groups. One organisation noted they might be closing because they couldn't recruit new members. In some instances organisations find it hard to come to terms that they are 'time-expired' as members feel so strongly and fondly about what the organisation meant to them. For some organisations there was a sense of just trying to find ways of 'keeping things going' rather than addressing the sustainability of the model. However for smaller, community-led organisations, this is a perfectly understandable position.

For those organisations that had taken over running services that were previously delivered by the public sector, many had become less dependent on their respective council. In some cases the organisation had become much less reliant on the local council, and for some this was a comfortable and natural progression; whilst for others, this was still a worrying time as they still relied on council support (from officers and for finance).

The triple whammy of fewer resources, greater demands in a hostile environment made it very difficult for a number of organisations. The terms 'complexity' and 'complex' came up several times as many organisations noted supporting people and communities with much more and deeper problems.

There were noticeably more comments in this survey, than previous ones, about the difficulties of recruiting and retaining trustees and management committee members. These volunteers have to make harder and difficult decisions – about funding, redundancies, closing services, and developing new and different services and facilities. Newcastle CVS support and development staff have experienced and

supported a number of management committee members and trustees who were not fully aware of their obligations and liabilities.

The issues around organisational instability were more prevalent than in previous studies – not just the retention of trustees but also staff and accommodation. There were comments about the problems of recruitment and retention of high level and senior staff; particularly in relation to short term contracts. Many voluntary organisations employ staff on the (minimum) statutory terms – annual leave, sick leave, pension, redundancy etc and can't compete on staff benefits. The levels of pay tend to be lower than similar positions in the statutory sector (yet with more responsibilities). There were also comments about the increase in stress levels of staff as they were dealing with more complex people and situations.

"VCS salary levels are insufficient to enable good quality recruitment and/or staff retention. We'd like to pay our staff more and to give them a career development pathway so they have something to aspire too. Often our best people leave to go to bigger VCS organisations, housing associations or private businesses. 2. Funders and commissioners are increasingly unwilling to contribute to core costs and will only fund direct project delivery. Good governance, contract compliance, volunteering, digital services, quality assurance - all these things cost money. Organisations cannot run well without investment in infrastructure or management. 3. We know we could make a bigger impact on society if we could get the right people in the right roles at the right time. Our beneficiaries are forced in to a costly and stressful welfare benefit appeal system because we can't resource preventative work, early intervention or system change at the right point in the client journey."

There appeared to be more comments on

accommodation. A number were about premises no longer being suitable for the organisation - both too big and too small; as short term contracts mean more rapid changes. Some of these comments were from organisations that had been in Broadacre House in Newcastle, and they had been given (relatively) short notice of their termination of lease; which was legal as it was a 'meanwhile' building, but a number of the organisations had expected more tenant security. Some comments were in relation to a better use of their building to bring in more income; they had expected more rental on both short term and long term use and this meant their business plan was not working. In some cases a change in their income stream meant their accommodation costs were too high within their budget.

A few responses noted the lack of capital for improvements, but there were minimal comments about the consideration of social finance.

Another issue was managing step change and decline. For some organisations, particularly those who had lost contracts to larger organisations, there emerged a sense of loss and they couldn't always let go of this. There were also comments about delivering services whilst going through changes. Organisations noted the difficulty in sometimes needing to step back to create space to build more internal capacity.

There were comments about procurement and commissioning – there was a view that the contracts were larger, for a much lower value and resentment that organisations were forced to compete with each other. There were several references to the contradiction that the public sector promoted partnership and collaboration yet often the tenders did not allow or encourage this.

The issue of cost pressures affects all organisations. Rents, utilities and salary costs (including auto-enrolment and the National Living Wage) meant greater pressures on delivering services within a given budget, and some organisations noted they were subsiding public sector contracts.

There were more references than previously to the level of increased legislative requirements. This might be because of the publicity around the introduction of GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) and also greater publicity about Health and Safety and legal compliance.

There were comments about the need to increase income whilst sticking to core purposes, aims and values. This is often a dilemma for registered charities that have to demonstrate how they deliver their charitable aims. Some respondents were concerned about moving from focusing on clients to 'bringing in money'. A number of organisations mentioned increasing problems in trading and running out of ideas for generating income streams. There were concerns about the quality of delivery against effectiveness and price and sometimes a tension between frontline staff and managers and trustees.

There were several mentions of Brexit; not necessarily about specific funding streams, but the uncertainty this was causing and the potential of greater community tensions.

A selection of these comments is quoted below, but it is significant that the majority noted funding / sustainability, which was then followed by 'people issues' – volunteering, staffing and governance:

"Major funding cuts forcing either significant reduction in services and staff or even closure of organisation. Difficulty in recruiting and retaining trustees, especially trustees with essential skills."

"To attract more funds/ grants/ donations. To retain volunteers and to recruit new volunteers. These challenges will remain the same from last year."

"We need to look at the staffing structure in our organisation to ensure we are sustainable. In the past we believed we could continue to increase delivery of our paid for services which would cover all our costs, but it now looks as if the longer term financial crisis effects are dripping down and organisations that would have paid for our services are looking to cut their spending. Top 3 challenges; bringing in enough paid for work; bringing in charitable funding for our targeted work; getting the right staffing structure to ensure sustainability."

"Raising Funds - no change from the last few years. Getting appropriate people as Trustees – no change from last few years."

"Getting more money to keep going. Finding a new building/meeting space in Gateshead as current premises being sold by the council. Getting charitable status."

"Balancing the needs to bring in income with opportunities to engage with the community (which generally doesn't bring in much income. Finding ways to use our building better. Getting grants to repair and develop the building."

"Doing more with less."

"Reduction in funding. Managing a large number of small grants. Pressure on core functions."

"Reduced income for core services, leading to increase in risks across safeguarding, health and safety and quality. Culture change within services to become more efficient and commercially aware. Fabric of buildings/assets deteriorating further. All getting more important and taking away from focus on clients."

"Recruiting the appropriate volunteers. Getting funding for Regional Projects as we are Regional

Infrastructure Org and our members are issue based community. Being able to deliver all the activities members request. These haven't changed in the last year."

"Funding. Provision of appropriate venues. Levels of unemployment."

"1. Continuing to grow (in social impact not necessarily income or market share) 2. developing a new project 3. sticking to our values of collaboration despite the behaviour of other organisations. No change in the last year... although other organisations' poor ability and willingness to collaborate is getting wearing."

"Finding funds to cover basic running costs previously provided by Newcastle City Council. The demise of community support by local and national government. The sheer number of people and groups needing support with no finance to support them."

"Maintaining numbers of regular volunteers. Keeping up our regular activities. Continuing to put on one-off events - no change in these challenges."

"Finding more volunteers to drive our minibus and people to act as escorts."

"To continue with the programme of refurbishment. To attract new users to make use of the facilities. To hold costs down in order that hire charges are kept at a reasonable level. There has been no change."

"The two key challenges are funding to pay the bills and volunteer numbers to deliver the services. The third challenge is to maintain the technology resources (computers etc) to a workable level. These are on-going issues to ensure that we are able to help as many people as possible."

"Securing funding both short and long term remains top priority. Meeting the increasing demand for services to vulnerable people e.g. people with learning disabilities, mental health and lifestyle issues as statutory services diminish

the pressure on our provision has increased significantly. Pressure on staff as services increase and capacity decreases. As things stand we cannot invest in more staff."

"1. Getting our building sold - we have had one offer fall through already. 2. Continuing to attract new members and keeping up volunteering levels."

"Rising costs continue to be a challenge - energy costs; cost of employment (eg new pension rules); rent rises. Our income is reducing due to the broader social trend of people spending less time and money in bars - while we support the health benefits of reduced alcohol consumption, some of this is simply a shift to lower-priced supermarket alcohol drunk at home and so it is a pity to lose localised community activity as well as lose the revenue that helps to pay for our community and sports services. Like other community groups, we have also been affected for quite a while by the reduced amount of time that people of working age have for volunteering. In particular, we have found it difficult to recruit a volunteer Treasurer with accountancy experience, which hampers the organisation's ability to manage the business. Advice and effective contacts to achieve this would make a big difference."

"Our main challenge is government funding cuts. One charity only experienced funding cuts of 5% last year but received excellent support during this transition. We have an ongoing annual uncertainty about funding and we are usually informed about decisions in February/ March. We are lucky to have received no major cuts since 2012 but are conscious that if we did experience a large cut, and were informed of it in February/March, this leaves us no time to address the impact or find alternative funding. Whilst the funding cuts alone would have a great impact on our organisations, the time between being informed about the cuts and the cuts being enforced is what would dictate survival. With only 1 or 2 months' notice, charities are left with no time to address funding shortfalls in time to preserve resources,

pay staff and running costs whilst ensuring vulnerable people are still looked after."

"In 2017/18 we saw a struggle in applications to Trusts and Foundations, however, with successful increase in our public body grants, we are now investing more in staff time and resources to focus on bid-writing, individual donors and earning income through tools and assets we currently have. We still believe applying to Trusts and Foundations will be a challenge, however. Many of the charities we would partner with who deliver front-line services are struggling with funding. This causes a problem when trying to access beneficiaries and those most in need of our work. Ensuring arts, health and well-being does not drop off the national agenda."

"Our location and pricing model are barriers for many families. Urgent need to align our model with national expectations, especially through a capital project that provides accessible and suitable accommodation for our collection."

"Finding funds. Finding appropriate volunteers. Time to get everything sorted."

"Securing funding to continue delivering services at current level - responding to requirements of funders (there seems to be an increase in reporting requirements, particularly statutory) – working with statutory bodies with changing staff."

"Core funding. Loss of member organisations as they have closed or have had to reduce their own offer. Lack of government policy or direction, difficult to deliver or plan in a policy vacuum."

"Succession planning as volunteers get older. Finding a new Rights Adviser in the autumn. Destitution among asylum seekers who are not eligible for destitution or homeless support."

"Developing new partnerships and creative new project ideas. Finding new ways to fund projects and programmes. Improving systems and processes to make us as effective as possible.

Funding and partnerships has been on ongoing challenge for many years although they are taking an even greater importance now"

"The service we offer is to organisations in order to build capacity related to promoting and addressing mental health and emotional wellbeing. Our top challenges: 1) competing with the number of organisations (who are more established) to become the 'go to' organisation for this work 2) for organisations to have the funds to invest in training and course development (this also relates to having the time to invest and staff to sustain the work in the future- increasingly under pressure because of the increasing demands for third sector services and squeeze on funding) 3) for organisations to have the space to think about building capacity (when they are under huge competing pressures)."

"Funding and long term contracts. Staff turnover. Culture of local councils becoming too controlling."

"Demand. Money. Complexity. All worsened over last year."

"Acquiring money from grants. Finding clients who are interested and can afford our services. Seeking schools who would like for students to participate in outdoor learning. Yes they have changed in that we now need individuals to purchase our services other than groups and schools."

"Achieving income after having had access to grants. Maintaining volunteers' motivation. Avoiding 'burn out' among key volunteers."

"As usual the top priority is raising sufficient money to maintain the building ensuring necessary standards of health and safety hoping that the many volunteers will continue to provide their willing service."

"Volunteer recruitment and retention. Fundraising managing increased service provision without increasing staff numbers/time."

"Volunteers. Legislative changes. Health and Safety regulations."

"The main challenge will be to upgrade our facility to enable us to provide a better service to our customers and to overcome some known barriers. We must try to recruit a team of volunteers. We must continue to expand the range of activities on offer and encourage new groups to join."

"Being expected (as a result of cutting services) to support people with their need to access statutory services, benefits, housing, getting back into school after being taken off register without pupil/parent knowledge."

"There is a sense of being left behind for communities. A feeling that there is no one or group that are there to help. This results in increased lack of faith in politicians generally and local ones particularly. Further increases a lack of trust in statutory services like police, social services, schools, health etc. This leaves people open to exploitation by divisive ideologies and easy money from drugs etc, a cycle of desperation for all."

"1. Improving our property in X. Overcoming major physical constraints on our building 2. Attracting more committed volunteers and providing them with a better experience. 3. Maintaining the supply of second hand bikes. These are longstanding issues for us."

"Lack of funding. Competition for funding from VCS and public and private companies Commissioning. Lack of leadership for voluntary sector. Apathy and hopelessness in Local Authority."

"There is little funding for refugee and asylum support groups - our model is to support them to advocate and campaign, and to advocate for them. Their extremely limited capacity makes our role in advocating for the sector and inputting case studies and evidence into policy discussions more difficult."

"Coping with the impact of the sleep-in payments and minimum wage increases and balancing this with keeping the organisation financially sound. Retaining existing staff. Meeting the ever increasing needs and demands placed on us by local authorities for less money."

"A difficult question as GMBC have started a consultation process for a regeneration plan for the surrounding area which includes our community centre, this means our future is in doubt and as yet no alternative location has been identified and may not even exist."

"Continuing to provide new homes (same challenge as last year). Continuing to provide housing to people who require care and support (we provide general needs housing and supported housing; the funding for supported housing is being changed); and having adequate staff resources but still getting the efficiencies from outsourcing services."

"Funding our reach - how we get out there with only a few staff members. Collecting evidence and data, time consuming but essential work."

"1. Attracting more volunteers 2. Increasing funding 3. Keeping [the] Library open when Council funding ends."

"1. Funding (we are currently operating with our reserves, we now need to be securing funding from charitable trusts, grant making bodies and possibly exploring how our new service could be commissioned. 2. Sustainability 3. Being a small organisation, BUT specialist, we will be exploring more partnership working."

"Funding for core costs. Repairs and maintenance. Continuing development for staff and volunteers. The maintenance and repairs haven't been as much of a priority in the past which we are now finding to our cost."

"Securing funding 2. Securing the right staff 3. Dealing with the increased complexity and need of those we serve through our work."

"The main challenge is keeping focused on our 5 year plan. There are many other variables that are likely to take us off course. However, we are trying to meet regularly to discuss progress and keep on track. We are all volunteers but are experiencing difficulties getting volunteers to take a leading role. This is currently putting pressure on those of us who are currently leading on tasks. We need more co-ordinators. We are in a good position to go forward in a bigger way, financially and task wise. We have some people equipped to go ahead in this way, others who are not too keen. We may have to deal with conflicting views. This could mean the wrong decisions are taken without support."

"Ageing membership leading to difficulties in finding new leaders."

"Ongoing and very necessary increases in NLW [National Living Wage] and awaiting commissioners financial response. Recruitment and retention of staff due to low level of funding provided by public sector commissioners for this area of work extremely short length of notice for cancelled services within the public sector contracts threatens sustainability."

"Managing growth and transition into becoming an Arts Council England National Portfolio

Organisation - i.e. recruiting staff, increased reporting and data capture, achieving audience targets. 2) Recruitment - ensuring our staff and trustee team grows in its diversity (particularly ethnic and disabled, currently under-represented) 3) Capacity to deliver ambitious plans."

"Funding, more large charities squeezing smaller charities out of typical funding streams. Commissioning continuing to damage neighbourhood charities."

"We are planning to partner with other voluntary sector organisations in another city to develop collaborative services. This will be a key challenge. We are looking to redevelop part of our

community building to engage a wider range of service users. This development will be another big challenge"

"Governance - moving to have an independent chair. The influence/control that local authorities exert on the operations of our grants programme Sustaining the organisation such that it has more diverse sources of income than at present."

"Funding short term - Staff paid less in comparison to similar level jobs, could be tempted to leave. We need to make sure we provide a better [offer] to students who are being asked to pay more fees."

"Our core (NHS/LA) contract will be published for competitive tendering. If we lose it theorganisation will be unsustainable. 2. Managing demand and expectations from beneficiaries and commissioners and contract managers. 3. Sufficient income to deliver quality, safe and suitable services."

"Maintaining pay differentials between support staff and management roles. Being able to sustain the organisation in the longer term if rates for contract work do not increase. Starting a new social enterprise to offer employment opportunities to people with a learning disability that is a sustainable enterprise in the longer term."

"The challenges remain: 1. no uplift in existing contract (despite labour costs rising, and utility bills increasing) 2. winning new public sector contracts in a time of austerity 3. the level of risk involved when investing significant staff time in major bids with very little surety of a positive outcome – we tend not to go with the risk."

"Securing medium to long term funding. Increasing demand for services. Volunteer fatigue!"

"Meeting increased demand for our services. Rationing our services to those who need them most. Sustaining our funding, especially our battle for year-on-year funding from Newcastle City Council. This continued uncertainty (we have

as yet no guarantee whatsoever of any Council funding beyond 31 March 2018) causes us huge financial insecurity, and hinders our bids to other potential funders."

"Recruiting sufficient volunteers to ensure the organisation operates effectively. 2. Prioritising work so as to respond effectively to increasing demand for support. 3. Keeping up to date with the changing requirements for legal compliance."

"Getting harder to access funding (it'll be worse with the boundary changes as demographics change on paper but not in reality). Governance weakness (not enough professionals with the right level of expertise) is leaving us at risk. Premises change (our rented NCC building is being knocked down. Without the right advice and legal support we may struggle to get a sensible replacement building which could affect our service offer and the sustainability of the organisation beyond 2020)."

"Our income is based on membership, and what volunteers are willing to put into the organisation. 1) Engaging and retaining volunteers 2) Engaging partner organisations and working with them 3) Retaining committee members."

"1. Increasing the number of supporters and turning some of them into donors. 2. Very unlikely to obtain public sector contracts in areas where we do not already deliver services. 3. Putting money back into reserves."

"Securing long term sustainable income. Developing staff effectively. Ensuring our Impact Management is accurate, up to date and being effectively evaluated to find improvements."

"Funding is the main challenge, without statutory funding competition for grants and Big Lottery funding is so fierce at the moment, so innovative ways of raising money is going to always be a challenge. Also recruitment of suitable volunteers is a challenge and we don't always keep them long."

"Ability to persuade bigger agencies to support the delivery of our service for the greater good.

Increased demand and volunteer numbers. Raising enough money to cover the increased staff needed to cover the increase in demand and volunteer numbers."

"Funding competition from aggressive mergers with other large national charities, who start to offer similar services to receive local funding. Recruiting Volunteers."

"Developing our grants programme in a way which meets the needs and vicissitudes of all stakeholders including the local authorities. Identifying opportunities with our members where we can really make a difference for the lives of people in Newcastle and Gateshead. Developing strong relationships with funders and commissioners so they see the benefit of engaging with us."

Question 17: What do you think will be the three main issues that your beneficiaries / the people you work with will face in the next two years?

"Poverty. Lack of statutory support. Fewer services all round."

One hundred and forty six organisations responded to this question about the top challenges for their beneficiaries (whether individuals, communities of interest, geographic communities, animals or environmental issues) in the next two years. This was probably the saddest set of responses analysed, having done regular studies with the voluntary and community sector in the last seven years. The responses were more and bleak and stark than before; inevitably asking about key issues is more likely to produce negative response but the level and depth of responses were profoundly depressing.

The words 'poverty' and 'poor' were cited in thirty separate responses. These were mainly in relation to financial poverty; the lack of personal finance and increase in debt; but also around poor communities and the poverty of experience. The 'full service' Universal Credit roll out had been introduced to all areas covered by the three Newcastle Jobcentre Plus offices in March 2017. It had started in some of the Gateshead areas in October 2017, so its full impact hadn't yet been applied to all Gateshead residents.

This loss of personal finance was set against the growing impact of the cuts in the public sector. This wasn't just local councils but the NHS, criminal justice and other services. There were a number of comments about reductions in access to services as a result of the cuts. There was a definite increase in the number of references to mental health. These were not just from mental

health organisations but particularly from organisations working with children and young people, older people and refugees and asylum seekers.

There were references to decrease in the general health and wellbeing, or increased sickness. Both Directors of Public Health in Gateshead and Newcastle have noted the increases in inequalities and the impact on health and sickness in their Annual Reports.

The loss of public funding had also resulted in a decrease of facilities; although there hadn't necessarily been more closures. Both Gateshead and Newcastle Councils have a managed process of asset transfer. However, a number of places and spaces had reduced opening times, brought in higher charges. There were particular responses from groups in communities in the more rural areas of Gateshead and the outlying areas of Newcastle about reduced access to reduced services.

There were references to complexity and that some people and communities were particularly affected by several different aspects.

There were references to loneliness and isolation, not just in relation to older people.

This is a selection of the comments:

"Even further reduction in MH services. Lack of access to services, including longer waiting times. Increasing severity of symptoms / development of co-morbidities due to longer waits without intervention(s.)"

"An increase in the issues, eg debt, poverty, welfare benefits, loneliness that negatively impact on people's mental health. An increase in the stigma felt by people with mental health problems. An increase in the number of people being discriminated against because of their mental health problems."

"Hardship/poverty as a result of benefit reforms. Negative impact on health and wellbeing resulting from the above reduction in statutory services especially social care."

"Money. Money. Money. This will come at them from all angles with lack of support services from local authorities and the third sector who are struggling. Schools and youth organisations struggling with funding."

"Changes in benefits/loss of money/tribunals. Gateshead community services being cut/ isolation. Loss of individual support/ mental health issues/lack of confidence/physical health issues/loss of independence."

"Poverty and access to resources. Social isolation. Navigating the asylum process."

"Getting no help from central government. Having to ask others for same. Help being refused."

"Social isolation, poverty, access to welfare benefits."

"Cuts to their funding packages. Reduction in some support areas - e.g. 2:1 to 1:1 care. Less respite for carers/families. Higher stress levels for families and carers with no change for future and impending worsening situations from austerity policies."

"Loss of income 2. challenging circumstances resulting from uncertainties around the UK leaving the EU e.g. economic downturns, public sector organisations seeming to be stuck 3. Insufficient voluntary, charity and social enterprise collaboration and sharing."

"Dealing with benefits changes and the complexities of the rules and regulation. Dealing with mental health problems when services are restricted or removed. These are particularly difficult at the 'out-of-hours' times, weekends and bank holidays. Dealing with the impact of abuse (physical, mental and sexual). Increased media coverage brings memories to the forefront leading to many causes of major concern."

"Poverty. Employment. Accessing statutory services."

"Universal credit and money management will affect our part time staff, volunteers and vulnerable beneficiaries. Social isolation and its associated impacts on health and wellbeing for older people. Poverty and debt for vulnerable households."

"Economic inequality. Reduction in front-line services with regards to leaving prison, homelessness, drug and alcohol rehabilitation. Domestic abuse."

"Public sector cuts - especially affecting education. Increased inequality and poverty for children in NE."

"Increased poverty, exclusion from society, reduced self-esteem."

"BREXIT and uncertainty particularly for EU migrants - poverty - less support available from statutory agencies."

"Young people - poverty / unemployment. Young people - mental health. Accessing 'leisure' activities."

"Toughening of asylum rules. Accessing legal assistance. Problems arising from change to social welfare provision e.g. Universal Credit, PIP."

"Death, starvation, watching their kids die."

"Young people face massive challenges with self-esteem and mental health (particularly impacted by social media). Fitness and sports opportunities. Poverty and the ways this limits opportunities."

"Increasing complexity of mental health needs of their users; increasing demand on staff time; reduction of resources."

"Universal Credit/ welfare reforms/ disability benefits changes. Reduction in access to once free public services (health and social care). This often has an impact on isolation and loneliness. Organisations we support becoming more inward

looking and less willing to focus on partnership working."

"Poverty. Lack of statutory support. Fewer services all round."

"If volunteers give up many children and young people will be without their leisure time activities and training. The over 65 group is run by volunteers. .A local group has already closed so the members from there are attending our group. If the building can't be maintained the many groups who hire the premises will have to go elsewhere and there are fewer places available."

"Changes in government legislation which will have a negative impact, particularly on families whose asylum claims are refused. Integration into local communities will remain a challenge, not helped by the 'Trump effect' and Brexit. The longer term impact of the yet to be decided new asylum accommodation contracts are unknown."

"Increase in number of people affected by long term health condition. Difficulty accessing NHS services. In rural areas, difficulty with transport."

"Further reduction in local services. Lack of local accessible support finance. These will result in ever growing frustration and anxiety for especially women and children. Plus the furtherance of the above."

"Poverty. Hopelessness - because of abandonment by statutory services. Racism."

"Cuts to and pressures within health services 2. Vulnerable / marginalised groups of patients / potential patients will not have their voice heard in the design and delivery of services. 3.Community voluntary sector organisations have reduced capacity to provide services, many are only now able to deliver precisely what they are funded to do. The 'add-ons' that have been so important to the sector have diminished considerably."

"Long-term unemployment lack of opportunity to develop the skills needed to find the right job. Aspirations for change get destroyed by the harsh

reality of life in a poor region."

"Continued housing issues due to welfare reform and lack of appropriate supported accommodation. Being able to access the services needed when the Homelessness Reduction Act comes into force. The continued squeeze on NHS services, especially mental health services."

"There will be fewer alternative services available to them, reducing their choice of who to access. They will have to wait longer to access services. They will be given time-limited support from services and will have to re-refer each time they wish to address an additional problem."

"Being able to live safely and have a good quality of life. Support packages are being brutally cut leaving people very vulnerable Introduction of local authority-led institutionalization of services for people with learning disability. Providers delivering less on quality and more on price."

"Austerity measures will further tighten disposable income in an already identified poor area. They too will be uncertain as to the future of our centre."

"There is a continued polarisation. The poor get poorer and struggle to survive. As budgets are cut, customers get less support from the public sector."

"Financial, due to cuts and austerity measures. This may impact on what services they can access; this includes both women who are in receipt of benefits and women who are in employment, both will face financial barriers. This can impact on safety and receiving specific support. 2. Staying in relationships/situations where they are at risk from abuse. 3. Homelessness, mental and physical wellbeing, safeguarding."

"Problems with benefits. Lack of a C.A.B nearby. People have to travel and generally can't afford the bus fare. Avoiding sanctions."

"Lack of support from public services 2. Universal credit rollout 3. Insecure housing."

"Reducing income (unemployment, low incomes/

insecure work, reduced benefits, increased costs of living). Poor quality housing and environment. Worsening health, especially older people."

"Increasing poverty and lack of opportunity. Increasing old age. Community resources closing."

"Increasing thresholds for the provision of care. Affordability of care Impact on health needs, general well-being and increase in social isolation."

"Austerity. Increase in Domestic Violence. Increase in hate crime."

"Economic challenges 2) Social challenges - in terms of identity / tolerance / community

cohesion 3) Difficulty environment to support social mobility / ambition and aspiration (i.e. going to university, accessing training / job opportunities."

"Welfare reform, unemployment, youth disorder."

"Mental health problems, ageing, mobility."

"Health and social care - rationing of services. Limited housing choices for older people. Accessing information in an increasingly technological era."

"Closure of community and voluntary sector support organisations. Poor quality employment or lack of employment. Low levels of attainment in education."

"The distrust of evidence and expertise means policy change is harder than ever to achieve. Other funders may not be able to contribute to our grant holders and we cannot find 100%. Staying motivated in the face of prevailing hostility to liberal values."

"Isolation - as our service users are visually impaired and older they struggle to get out and about on their own. If we do not receive funding we cannot offer the same services we currently offer. Not kept up to date with technology and what is available to assist them."

"The impact of continued austerity on the funding of our beneficiaries such that they have to reduce their services or, in extreme cases, close. The increase in the demand on their services from people and communities needing their support. Increased competition for funding such that the conditions for collaboration between them are eroded."

"Reduced support from local authority. More and more people with sight loss (alongside increasing number of older people). Nonexistence of transition support for visually impaired young people."

"1. Continued reduction and access to statutory support. 2. The expectation they can provide the care and support required without sufficient understanding or acknowledgments of their own rights (linked to point 1). 3. The continued impact of welfare reform."

"Reducing income levels through benefit changes. Having opportunities to do the basic things that make life good due to reducing amounts of paid support potentially leading to social isolation. Potential for disruption to staff teams/support services that people rely on."

"Increased isolation. Lack of access to benefits. Decreasing health outcomes."

"Financial Poverty including Fuel Poverty. Living longer in poorer health. Reduction of services available to support them that are free at the point of delivery."

"More financial pressure on families due to static incomes when inflation is rising and

wages/benefits are capped 2. This leads to more pressure on the mental health of both adults and children, with NHS services already unable to cope with the demand for help for chronic conditions 3. Local communities becoming more fractured as the 'them and us' culture grows stronger."

"Less income. Cut in benefits/universal credit. As people become older they will have more difficulty accessing our centre. Mental health issues."

"Making ends meet – financially. Fuel and food insecurity. Reduction in life choices."

"Worsening poverty. Increasing discrimination. Reduced support services, especially for people with mental health problems."

"1. Reduction/change in availability of bereavement support to Tyneside adults 2. Possible closure of CYP bereavement service if funding not found 3. Consequence will be almost no bereavement support on Tyneside as statutory services not provided or not available within reasonable timeframe."

"1. The charities we support will face major changes in organisation. 2. There will be increasing demands on a diminishing pool of volunteers. 3. There will be increased costs against diminishing income."

"Reduction or closure of local projects/services. Welfare reform - particularly Universal Credit. Increase in larger organisations (including voluntary sector) delivering services without local knowledge of needs of communities."

"Increasing food insecurity. 2. Increasing mental ill-health. 3. Probably an increase in homelessness."

"Impact of Universal Credit. Further squeezing of income and increased costs of basics such as fuel, food and rent costs. Lack of good quality jobs, i.e. insecure/low paid/low skilled work and the lack of skills to secure better jobs."

"Loss of partner and friends. Families short of time. Loneliness."

"Government funding changes. Recession still hitting the North east hard, so jobs and pay still vulnerable."

Question 18: What difference did it make to your beneficiaries when they took part in your organisation's activities or used your services?

Whereas the previous two questions solicited negative responses, this question highlighted the breadth and diversity of the very positive impact of local voluntary and community organisations.

Voluntary and community organisations regularly have to demonstrate their impact – for monitoring reports, for funding applications, within tender documents and are more comfortable in doing this. There can still be a tendency to focus on inputs and outputs but many organisations are more sophisticated in reporting outcomes.

The variety of the responses inevitably raise the question, what would happen if the organisation didn't exist. In some circumstances there might be other options, but as many organisations are already trying to cope with the increase in demand, less provision isn't just an issue of choice.

One hundred and fifty three organisations responded to this question.

"Feel listened to, valued and supported. Feedback from beneficiaries relates to the positive impact our services have had for them and their wider families."

"Helped them to turn their lives around, some returned to school / college / work. Increased health and wellbeing. Stabilised condition, preventing deterioration of health Increased ability to manage their health condition / symptoms / circumstances that exacerbate or trigger their self-harming behaviours Increased understanding and knowledge of Eating Disorders, symptoms, causes, underlying reasons. People being able to recognise and identify ED in others and support to find help to find and use early interventions / help

/ treatment."

"Learning new skills in how to manage personal problems. Reduction in social isolation. Structured day, somewhere to go. Instillation of hope and sense of community. Help with benefits."

"Better social life and communication skills. Better mental health."

"Our services help keep individuals fit and healthy both physically and in a mental/well-being way. Our services encourage people to take the next steps to employment or on the road to recovery from mental health issues. Our services improved people's self-esteem and confidence as well as improving their team work and communication skills. Our services gave our beneficiaries higher aspirations for the rest of their lives."

"Beneficiaries are supported through the asylum process. We help them to show that they are LGB or T and fleeing from countries where they have been tortured and could be imprisoned or even killed for their sexual or gender identity. We work with their Lawyers to provide evidence. We also provide a safe place where they can learn about services they can access, such as GPs, and how to access them and make friends via a monthly lunch club. We also provide outings and trips that are funded for them."

"Confidence, learning new skills, independence, relationships and friendships, new opportunities, giving a voice to peers and shaping services. Learning about health wellbeing, meeting other groups, trying new things and being aware more of what is on offer. Campaigning and learning about hate and mate crime and how to report etc."

"Support - material and spiritual. A sense of community and belonging."

"Increased social inclusion. Increased income. Improved mental health. Improvement in knowledge/information and being heard."

"Life changing in some circumstances as we

offer support for those with highly complex and multiple needs for all ages."

"Gained self-confidence. Had access to LGBT Hate Crime Support. Got chance to voice opinions about NHS changes."

"Increased friendship, assistance finding employment, increased transferable skills, sense of job satisfaction."

"We help older people with limited mobility to get out of their homes to meet and chat and to go shopping"

"Our buildings have been used by the community for nearly 100 years and with our continued aim of refurbishment of the rooms and facilities we hope to provide the groups and organisations who use the buildings with a comfortable, clean and safe environment which is fit for purpose."

"We offer a 24/7 service, offering emotional support via phone, email and SMS. Whilst we

often do not find out what happens, people do say that our volunteers have helped. At outreach events, people do approach us to say thanks for being there when they needed us."

"We offer Employment support, education and training as well as wellbeing activities and community café. Benefits have included people gaining employment or becoming more job ready. Gaining experience or improving wellbeing and increasing interaction in society through our volunteering opportunities."

"Involvement in community and sport activities is very positive, giving the opportunity for personal development, improved fitness, improved self-esteem and enjoyable interaction with others."

"Gained strength. Enhanced wellbeing. Stronger community support."

"As an example from one project, the following response from the women revealed: 91% of women felt empowered 96% of women felt hopeful and

motivated 100% of women felt included."

"Our outcomes framework shows positive indicators for: - school readiness - building family bonds and positive interactions - improved literary confidence, supported by speaking and listening skills - Opportunities for self-expression and agency."

"Massive increase in life skills and self-confidence and self-esteem."

"Improvement in confidence, knowledge and general wellbeing. Links to other services that can help them."

"Skills development Increased wellbeing. Access to opportunities for social action."

"Personal development; team building; comradeship."

"A better outlook on life, keeping active and alert."

"They increased their health levels 2. They made new friends 3. They improved their sense of wellbeing."

"We are providing a range of cost-free health and social activities. £3 for a 4 course lunch in Chinese style and tea is available all day. £8 for membership. Services :haircuts , social support, useful information, support from Northumbria Police, monthly birthday celebrations at Chinese Restaurant (low cost), Summer outings, networking, informal training etc. The differences made to the users - learning and sharing together in a safe environment with access support."

"2000 people took part in health sessions and 80% reported health improvement. 5000

adults were actively engaged in projects and 90% enjoyed the experience. We created 100 apprenticeships for local young people. We supported 400 community groups to deliver their projects 500 of our participants achieved qualifications. We got 300 people into jobs. We found 400 people work placements. We improved or looked after 160 open spaces."

"They develop better self-esteem and tools for improving their mental wellbeing. Opportunities to participate in sports and develop sporting, team or social skills. Opportunities to explore questions around faith and develop moral and ethical foundations for life. Allows them to reach their potential."

"Improved skills and knowledge - feeling more confident about their work providing high quality resources - e.g. course materials co-producing our projects leaving a legacy of work."

"Groups - increased their funding, improved their sustainability and governance and ability to cope within the future environment. Individuals - increased their income through benefit maximisation (writing letters, supporting appeals, form filling. general advice Individuals - improved mental health, wellbeing and resilience through advocacy support.

"Physical and emotional personal development raised confidence, self-esteem learnt new skills communication skills problem solving skills group work skills fun educational inspiring improved social networks further progression opportunities."

"Improved functioning, independence and wellbeing."

"Getting fitter, gained in confidence and boosting self-esteem, learned new things, faced challenges and came out of their comfort zone. Made new friends."

"Some reported improvements in their physical and mental health, others took pride in seeing that their work made an impact and was acknowledged, and a rise in sociability/ neighbourliness."

"It is not always easy to measure the success of providing such services but the fact that all the voluntary groups are so well attended and the children and young people rarely miss shows there is a need. The over 65s really look forward to their "afternoon out"."

"The evidence gathered in all our evaluation and monitoring processes clearly shows that our services have a positive impact on our clients' lives in a number of ways including reduced isolation, improved mental health and well-being and relief of poverty."

"Improved mental health, re-engagement with education and learning education of social isolation improvement with other services have kept their children, reduction of children on the child protection register or being put into care. gained accreditation been able to access counselling service rapidly been able to offer food vouchers / toiletries etc."

"Care service received, isolation and loneliness reduced, access to other services, safe, well fed, medication supervised, happy."

"Social interaction, volunteer opportunities, support, advice (benefits/employment/health)."

"Maintained the number of groups available across the city - Provided advice and information which helps run the group -Provided stability."

"They have fun, are learning, access work and training, confidence and self-esteem, understand services and how to access them, understand they have rights but can be hard to assert them, relief from the pressures of completing forms and fulfilling condition for aid."

"They achieve a freedom to travel round the city. Their opportunities improve for social and

economic engagement. Our volunteers gain new skills and confidence."

"Integration and cohesion of communities pitted against each other by state sponsored racism - post Brexit. Hope and Empowerment. Female leadership from ground up."

"Improved health Broke down barriers with hard to reach communities and the police. Provided training and employment opportunities for young people."

"Young people have somewhere to go and something to do that is active, productive, educative and fun!"

"We have delivered range of projects since 2011. Central to our activities is the wish to bring different groups and communities together and to raise awareness of minority communities."

"Greater community cohesion. Increased wellbeing."

"Helped them to feel empowered, gain some control and turn their lives around."

"We are becoming a recovery and social hub for our beneficiaries. The potential is huge."

"Taking part in our involvement activities enables people to influence the way in which health services are designed and delivered. Three cohorts of patient leaders have started or completed their training and are involved in local health services across the region."

"Better connected to services and each other – happier. Improved access to benefits and entitlements - reduced financial hardship. More involved in local community – valued."

"Gaining confidence and self-esteem. Being valued as a person, rather than a cash cow. Taking ownership and gaining responsibility. Working with others, in similar situations. Being challenged."

"Ability to advocate and prevent homelessness / provide advice to sustain current accommodation or source alternative accommodation for over 2000 people in the NE, predominately in Newcastle."

"They benefited from finding out a lot on how to help manage their diabetes better."

"They were aware of changes that they wouldn't have otherwise known about and as a result were able to campaign and advocate against the changes. Local issues were raised to national level

discussions and through political channels."

"Gives them more confidence. Stops them feeling isolated. Enables them to have safe

accommodation. Gets them off the street. Improves their lives."

"With specialist support and advocacy women were able to safely plan and explore their options and rights, this in turn allowed them to plan and progress their chosen outcomes and ensured they are receiving the correct support."

"They felt supported. We were able to assist them with C.V's, filling online forms and jobs searches etc when they hadn't much knowledge of computers. We provide a meeting place for refugee families to meet with the housing company, police and interpreters. We are also in the process of arranging English tuition with volunteers. This is helping them settle into our community. Those with drug/alcohol issues are able to access the services of counsellors from here otherwise they would have to travel to Gateshead, which would be a barrier to them seeking help. Those isolated in the community have joined in with social events and activities which has improved their wellbeing"

"Helped them to pursue an interest in local history and gave the opportunity to meet people with similar interests. Increased their knowledge of aspects of local history through attendance at talks by experts in the field and visits to local places of interest. Allowed those who are interested to engage in research into aspects of local history and publish their results online. Also to engage with local primary school pupils in themed research."

"Increased employment / gained skills. Improved health and wellbeing. Increased community activism. Improved local environment."

"Frequently life-transforming personally and significant societal impact in terms of family cohesion. Major knock-on effect to key social

policy goals and demands on other services - the connection is understood at local and central governmental levels but virtually no resources forthcoming."

"All our activities are very well appreciated and used. Most specifically our health walks are well attended and weekly. Our monthly events are well attended too. It probably helps with loneliness and social isolation in a small way."

"Reduction in social isolation. Increase in community involvement. Reduction in loneliness. Improved mood and well-being."

"Quality and affordable after-school and holiday care in our Learning Hubs, Clubs and Summer Schools. Children do better at school. Parents are more informed and supportive of their children's education. More quality time at home. More time looking for and applying for jobs. More respite time. information, advice and guidance re: changes education system, special education needs. Help with accessing crucial services."

"Ability to continue to live as independently as possible within their own community in dignity and with the necessary safeguards."

"Increased confidence/self-esteem. Improved communication skills. Leadership."

"Reduced isolation. Increased confidence/self-esteem. Enabling change for themselves and their communities."

"Greater social inclusion through creative group activity. Happier, stronger mental health Advanced skills in music making."

"Increased confidence and well-being. Forged new friendships. Developed skills (drama and music). Inspired ongoing independent creative activities (i.e. forming bands, taking part in other arts / community activities)."

"Relief of loneliness, friendships, growing self-confidence."

"Improved practical and social skill. Increased self-confidence. Increased motivation and problem solving skills."

"Made new friends. Helped them out of isolation. Made them aware of the services available – not just via us, but from other organisations. They are empowered to deal with everyday living. Making them more IT aware and confident - using the internet to keep up to date with news etc."

"Capacity building - we increased the awareness and understanding of eight of our beneficiaries on how a human rights approach could benefit the people they support. Honest broker and project manager - we acted as an honest broker between those of our beneficiaries that collaborated in joint projects, elements of which we managed. Support on business opportunities - we brought together some of our beneficiaries to co-ordinate and develop joint bids and also provided information to all our beneficiaries on business development opportunities."

"Self-esteem safe and secure housing for up to two years and move-on secure benefits stabilize issues such as mental health and addictions."

"82% said we had helped them to cope better in their caring role. 86% said we had supported them to feel better emotionally. 100% said they would recommend our service to other carers"

"Increased their confidence and improved their mental health and reduced social isolation."

"Our job is to ensure that people we support can enjoy a "good life" as defined by them. Reducing amounts of support are affecting what people can do, when they can do it and with whom. Public services - libraries, leisure facilities, college courses are all affected by cuts and this impacts on the quality of life of those who need access to these facilities."

"We believe it made them happier, fitter and more able to interact with society as a whole. This reduced the impact on the NHS (reduced

intervention and reduced use of translation services) and improved society."

"We provide a range of services and opportunities for all older people from the most active to the most frail. We offer people the chance to learn new skills, stay active, and develop new social connections and to volunteer, with the aim of reducing social isolation and improving wellbeing in later life. Our "wrap around" offer aims to reduce social isolation, harnessing the added value our staff and volunteers can contribute to the wellbeing of older people. We are passionate about older people, and we can offer people an integrated range of services and support, many of which are free at the point of delivery. Our services make a real difference to the quality of life of older people, their health and wellbeing and address the many causes of social isolation and loneliness: – we put more money in older people's pockets – help them stay warm and well in winter –support them to make positive lifestyle changes and manage their long term condition better – stay

connected and included with people, activities and their local communities – move people from being passive recipients of service to making a positive contribution as volunteers."

"Our outcome capture shows that our beneficiaries felt listened to, supported, and enabled. This in turn helped them achieve the goals they has set for themselves when they engaged with our services. These goals may have been small scale at first but each positive achievement helps restore confidence and re-build resilience. (We worked with 13,375 individuals in 2016-17)."

"Reduced stress and anxiety. Increased confidence. Increased income through benefit entitlement, debts written off and charitable assistance. Reduced indebtedness. Reduced risk of homelessness."

"Helping to feed local people through Tesco Fare Share. Keeping local people healthy through

exercise, learning to cook healthy on a restricted budget. Making local people aware of our services."

"Increased confidence. Sense of belonging some light relief from daily worries. Rediscovering sense of self - finding an interest making connections with other people. Feeling they have value worth and sense of belonging."

*"Evaluations of service by users report great benefits to the following: *Improved mental health *Coping with immediate and long term challenges of a major bereavement, both practical and emotional *Engaging positively with the life that's left by getting back to work, hobbies and interests, friendships and family life."*

"We have been able to help charities to be more effective in their work, giving advice and financial support where needed. Many of these activities have benefited local communities, in particular working with young and older people and those with dementia. We have also supported individuals in their personal development."

"We now have a community panel which is attended by approx 25 local residents each month. They raise issues, bring new project ideas to us and support in the development of the Centre. This has stopped the complaint culture that seemed to have developed. We now have a much happier and engaged membership who are instrumental in every aspect of the charity. Attendance in Centre activities have improved people's physical and mental wellbeing and reduced social isolation in over 55s. Other specific skills and confidence improvement have been noted."

"Reduced possibility of loss of income (benefits) through sanctions by having local access to ICT facilities and support Increased community cohesion as local people met together in local venues and shared issues and solutions with each other. Improved mental health through a reduction in isolation as individuals participated in local activities."

"Financial capability skills improved and increased homelessness prevention."

"Big improvements to confidence and well-being, resulting in improved resilience. 2. Life

changing experiences for young people. 3. Felt included in school life."

"Increased confidence and sense of wellbeing. Feeling able to increase their skills and that there is a place where they can be supported. Improvement to feeling socially connected/ reduced social isolation."

"Rise in confidence and happiness. Learning new skills. Being in a good environment with other people. Good for mental health."

"They report an increase in wellbeing, and say they just couldn't cope without our services. This would mean that caring situations would break down and more people would be at the mercy of the statutory services."

"New friends, reducing loneliness and enjoying the company of a dog again."

"Increased confidence, by meeting new friends and trying new activities. Attending activities which they would not have been able to afford or had the confidence to try with a disabled child, leading to reduced isolation. Informal advice from staff on the day on various subjects."

Question 19: During the last year, has your organisation developed any new areas of service, projects, initiatives or events?

Sixty nine percent of organisations had developed a new initiative in the last year. Given the difficult environment in which many were operating, this was an incredible opportunity.

Question 20 : Are there any other comments you would like to add?

Fifty organisations took the opportunity to make a response. These comments illustrate the breadth and richness of the voluntary and community sector in Gateshead and Newcastle . All comments made have been included with identifying names removed.

"It is a constant struggle to provide services to those who are very much in need, whilst working really hard to ensure services are funded and adequately funded to guarantee quality and effectiveness. The effects of LA cuts, NHS cuts, reduction in grant and trust funding disproportionately affect smaller charities. Statutory funders are increasingly looking to fund larger organisations, VCS organisations are finding themselves in competition with 'partners' and fellow organisations, which works in opposition to 'learning together' and partnership working."

"It is a constant struggle to simply stay afloat and it feels over the last 12 months as if it is getting harder. The next 12 months will be very telling for our organisation."

"Through all our activities members have developed their skills and deliver awareness and training. We get exceptionally good feedback with many requests to seek and deliver workshops at events, often without money to fund this. Without core funding it will be impossible to continue this area of work."

"It is with a heavy heart that our dance club is closing this year due to lack of interest."

"We would like to see more pressure on government to recognise the value of community and local government to promote the importance of retaining community centres."

"The main challenges for all voluntary organisations is in maintaining the financial and volunteer base to be able to run the service. These challenges become more difficult year-on-year."

"It's difficult to complete this form when you are a religious / spiritual organisation, but there's not much that can be done about that!"

"Our response includes the views of all organisations with the Trust, including [names four organisations]"

"Please help us with : 1. To receive service from a fundraiser at no win no fees 2. To recruit someone to provide health-check service on voluntary basis."

"We are hearing lots of warm words from Gateshead Council officers, but very little change in reality as they are still holding on to old ways of working and their internal culture."

"We are very much starting to feel the effects of the national economic downturn within the

voluntary sector. We also feeling negative consequences of reduced budgets within public sector organisations as they reduce or cease purchasing our services."

"It would be helpful if funders recognised that achieving real change in relation to some inner city problems requires persistence over longer periods of time than the shortish periods normally attached to funding agreements."

"We may be an unusual example of a charity which is doing well despite the wider economic position of the region."

"We are a small charity linked to a sports

governing body that are likely to see a significant

increase in resources in 2020 following a TV deal. We have developed networks with both other charities, disabled groups and the police to partner in different projects."

"Greatly valued NCVS support during our 7 years in existence."

"As our organisation is new and we do not have any expertise in funding it would be great to get help by Newcastle CVS in training on marketing, advertising and fundraising."

"We deliver around the area but are based in NE1."

"It's a tough situation for the Third Sector. If we are to succeed in our charitable aims, we must generate additional revenue."

"The survey has been harder to answer this year as I have joined this organisation relatively recently. However my experience as a leader of a VCS organisation, as a volunteer and as a beneficiary of VCS services confirm the following observations: - The sector is under huge strain. Yes we have been talking about this for many years and perhaps at the outset there was a degree of overstating the impact of austerity. No longer, the sector cannot continue without adequate funding. Sometimes the nirvana of developing services to sell is nothing more than a pipe dream and simply won't fill the gap. - Small, specialist organisations are at risk and as the song says – we won't know what we have lost until it's gone. - Poverty; whilst proud that Newcastle has the largest food bank and has responded to need in this way it is shameful that such an organisation is needed. This is one visible indicator of the impact poverty is having there are many more and the wider societal impacts of this are often addressed by a strong, vibrant VCS. This is harder to achieve."

"The sector is at a critical point of development. It can go one of two ways - enter a world of greater competition and lack of trust, or embrace real

partnership and create confidence in others. The jury is out in which way we will go."

"No survey seems to list Military / ex-military as a group of beneficiaries. We only assist serving military personnel, ex-Service personnel and their dependant families."

"My apologies, I don't know our financial status - but we are small with 7 staff in total. We are fully funded until end of 2019 and part funded beyond that and have interest from other funders. I hope that helps. I have found CVS an extremely valuable organisation to work with given the strategic interest/overview it provides, and willingness to be responsive and nimble - I was really struck by the lengths CVS went to in being involved in campaigning around changes to healthcare charging for vulnerable groups. I consider CVS a valuable partner and resource for the area and the sector."

"I fear that we are heading back to re-institutional models of service delivery. Local authorities are demanding more and more from providers and passing a lot of responsibility and blame to providers when things go wrong. The system is at breaking point."

"The majority of our existing 7 trustees are in full-time or multiple part-time employment and hence we are just being able to keep the centre operating."

"We have really had to tighten our budget this past year. We couldn't have survived without the help and advice from CVS."

"There is too much bureaucracy around fundraising."

"Only that we need help from the council and help to get funding to help get a larger building for our members."

"I think there is great scope for organisations to work together from different sectors to deliver work in the North East."

"Most of our services are self-financing. We try to keep costs as low as possible and the largest expenditure is the use of coaches in the Summer; each member paying for their own seat, or the holidays - if you can't afford, then unfortunately you can't go!"

"We strongly believe that Newcastle Fund should be reformed and turned into a neighbourhood fund. We would suggest preventing VCOs with income over £500k from applying and this would result in more smaller charities being able to be supported. We would also recommend Community Foundation Tyne and Wear to run this fund as we have no confidence in the present management team from Newcastle city council. Newcastle fund is worth £12m and is completely unaccountable. This money could make a huge difference to our city."

"We are a very small community charity but we know how valued we are by our users and know we make a difference. This gives us confidence to continue despite the difficulties."

"This organisation is an outlier so our experience is not comparable to that of front line, service charities."

"Funding is now balanced on a knife edge. The system does not consider the position of the applicant, i.e. small charities with small staff. We wish to continue our services to those who have mental health problems and severe learning difficulties."

"The asset transfer was the only way to continue to have a community building functioning within the area and very confident that the organisation now involved with the building and its management will go from strength to strength."

"The community and voluntary sector are taking on an increasing workload due to the current government's austerity measures on the people they support and on the cutting back of funding for the community and voluntary sector

themselves."

"Sad to see the organisation merging and losing its identity but happy that the service will at least continue. I believe we are one of the "squeezed" middle sized charities not big enough to stand on our own but not small enough to exist on a wing and a prayer. Thanks to CVS for their support over the years!"

"Over the last 2 years X has supported over 900 bereaved people on Tyneside. This year alone, we predict the figure will be 600-700."

"As an allotment association, we function principally on behalf of our 100+ members and their friends/ families who garden. On occasions we have benefited from grant finance to assist with individual projects but in general we fix our members' rents to cover anticipated outgoings and hopefully to add a little to our balances. We do not carry out work outside our site, although we try to participate in community actions within Y".

"We are keen to attend any training on GDPR ASAP. All training programmes have been over budget so any advice sessions would be really appreciated."

"The services we provide are needed however the lack of funding makes it difficult to continue delivering them with limited resources."

"I'd like to say a huge thank you to K from VM and G from CVS for their informative workshops and their common sense support."

"We have tried to increase membership as A should have a good catchment area in

Gateshead Felling Washington Chester le street etc but without much success."

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About Newcastle CVS

Newcastle CVS gives people who struggle to be heard a voice, supports voluntary and community organisations to be resilient and sustainable and promotes a fairer society by influencing and challenging the debate.

Our established reputation, extensive networks and integrity and strength of approach makes us the go to source in supporting voluntary and community action.

We improve the quality of life in Newcastle and Gateshead by supporting the voluntary sector.

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