

Mapping and Trends:
Community and
Voluntary Groups in
Cambridgeshire

April
2015

More for Less



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Researched and compiled by CCVS for CVS5

Jez Reeve April 2015

Forward

Welcome to our Mapping and Trends VCS report for Cambridgeshire

This report on our sector sets out what voluntary, community and social enterprise groups need in order to prosper in the future. It highlights the investment that groups need in order to keep going forward. From this we can see where the voluntary sector feels investment in its future needs to be directed.

The future is uncertain, and there is no obvious indication of things getting significantly better in the next few years. But there will continue to be a need for voluntary organisations, people will continue to ‘band together’ to help improve their own lives and the lives of others and as NAVCA reported in their Commission on the future of local infrastructure – they need support.

The purpose of organisations like ours is to provide local charities, community groups and social enterprises with the services, support, and advice they need; and to promote them and the work that they do. We have a duty to use our voice and our position of leadership to create the type of society we aspire to through our vision, mission and values.

There are challenges ahead for the sector and for us, and this survey does give us two things. We get a clear message about what the needs of the sector are, and we get a clear indication that we must be doing something right. Satisfaction for all areas of CVS work remains high with a significant majority being extremely or very satisfied with the different services that they have received.

Whilst the environment that the sector is working in may be difficult there is no doubt that organisations will continue to offer services to everyone. The sector will continue to have a significant and positive impact on the lives of individuals, and will continue to innovate in order to meet the challenges of the future.



Julie Farrow
CEO Hunts Forum



Granville Hawks
CEO VCAEC



Mark Freeman
Interim CEO CCVS

Cambridgeshire VCS – 2015

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“The economic downturn, austerity, the welfare reform agenda and reductions to central government and local authority budgets are all impacting on social action adversely, with a heady cocktail of rising needs, reduced resources, and a climate of anger and fear.”

Sara Llewelin, CEO Barrow Cadbury Trust in *Change for Good* 2015

In Cambridgeshire most voluntary and community groups would recognise Sara Llewelin’s assessment of the situation in the England as the same for Cambridgeshire, but maybe within a climate of worry and anxiety rather than “anger and fear”. She was writing in the recently completed report of the Independent Commission on the future of local infrastructure (NAVCA 2015)

The evidence from the responses to the annual Cambridgeshire survey of community and voluntary groups shows that more is being delivered for less, in that most groups appear to have fewer resources than in previous years and do not have any prospects of increased income in the future, despite continued and increasing demand. These groups are looking for support to help them continue their charitable work through the vital mainstay of volunteer time and expertise and through maintaining standards and skills by getting training in practical necessities such as financial management training, first aid, health and safety, safeguarding and marketing. 60% of these groups turn over less than £50k per year and deliver their services in just one local area. However there are a few charitable groups in Cambridgeshire that are bucking this trend. About a third of the sample was made up of larger organisations, which turn over more than £100,000 per year and work across all the districts in Cambridgeshire. Of these, about a third are registered companies, with the majority being registered charities - their income is increasing, they have the most staff and, like all the rest of the Cambridgeshire groups, rely on volunteers to deliver their services..

Cambridge City Council is developing an anti-poverty strategy in order to address what they are calling a “two-tiered Cambridge”. This approach, of tackling inequalities is certainly how the Cambridgeshire voluntary and community groups have chosen deliver their services across the county. Older people, children and young people, people with disabilities and people on low incomes and with mental health issues are amongst the greatest number of beneficiaries accounted for in the 2015 survey.

NCVO in the *Civil Society Almanac 2014* suggest that around 29% of people formally volunteer at least once a month in the UK. This would suggest that around 98,000 people over the age of 16 could be volunteering in Cambridgeshire. Support to assist the organisations that they volunteer for is vital to supporting civil society in Cambridgeshire. Whilst CLINKS, the organisation that supports, represents and campaigns for the voluntary sector working with offenders, posed the question *What if...there was no voluntary sector* in their 2014 annual review this is not something that we could dare to think in Cambridgeshire. The impact on beneficiaries who are on the bottom tier of Cambridgeshire society would be devastating.

Introduction

Most of the groups represented in this survey of Cambridgeshire voluntary and community groups are constituted as registered charities, unregistered charities or clubs. There are a small number of companies limited by guarantee and community interest companies. These are at the opposite ends of the risk spectrum, financially-speaking. Incorporated companies limited by guarantee and community interest companies can minimise risk to members in their constitutions to just one pound, whereas the members of charities and clubs are liable for everything. (Figure 1)

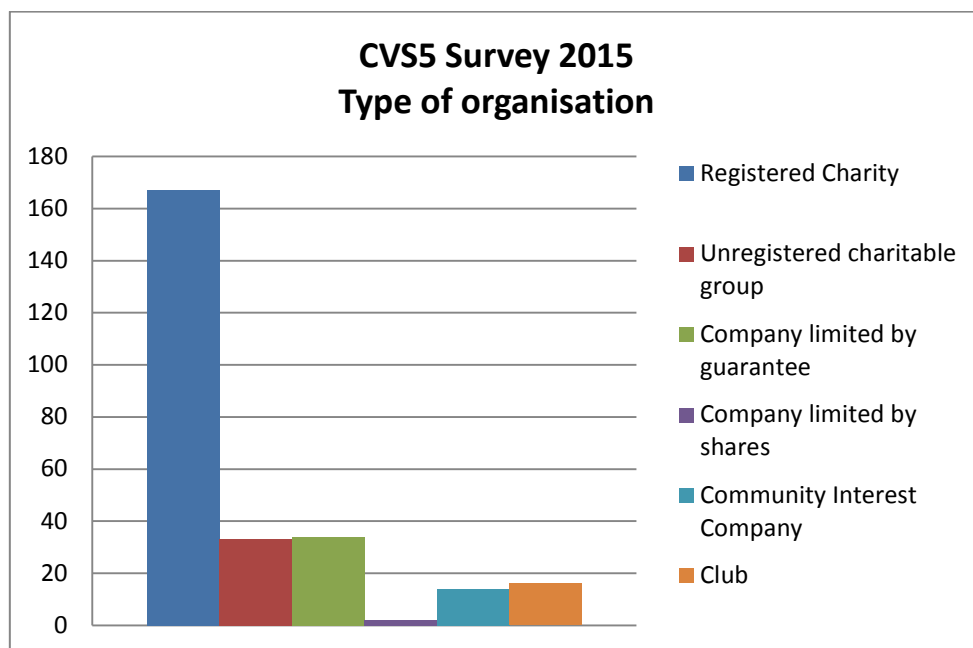


Figure 1 2015 VCS types of organisation

Every year the three Cambridgeshire CVS organisations, (collectively called CVS5), survey groups that are members and collect responses from non-members on a series of questions that indicate what type of support the groups might need in the following year. This year's survey was undertaken between January and March 2015. Response to the survey was up slightly, by 3%, collecting 243 returns from Cambridgeshire organisations.

The purpose of the survey is to map the sector, look at trends and establish what the main support needs are for Cambridgeshire groups in the forthcoming year.

Methodology

Through established networks CVS5 contacted member groups and advertised the survey on websites and newsletters in January and February 2015. Follow-up emails were made to encourage as many groups as possible to take part in this important annual review of voluntary services in Cambridgeshire. Twenty groups that were not members of any of the CVS organisations took part alongside 223 member organisations. These groups were divided between those that just worked in one local area and those that worked in one or more areas. (Figure 2)

| District | Cambridgeshire groups serving different Districts (Matrix) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Cambridge City | 117 | | x | x | | | x | | x | x | | x | | | | x | | x |
| South Cambridgeshire | 95 | | | x | | x | x | | x | x | x | x | | | | | x | x |
| East Cambridgeshire | 82 | | | x | | | | x | x | x | x | x | | x | x | | | |
| Huntingdonshire | 107 | x | | x | | | | | x | | x | | x | x | | x | x | x |
| Fenland | 97 | | | x | x | | | | | | x | x | x | x | x | x | | |
| totals | 243 | 45 | 44 | 41 | 38 | 17 | 13 | 12 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 |

Figure 2 Matrix of areas served by Cambridgeshire groups

Mapping Cambridgeshire VCS 2015

Size of groups

Just over half of the groups that responded had an annual turnover of less than £50,000, 58%. (Figure 3) However more of the larger groups, those with a turnover of £50k or more, were represented (Figure 4) this year compared to previous years. It might be suggested that this reflects that some groups, at the larger end, have been growing in size, rather than an influx of larger new groups into the county, which has not been observed.

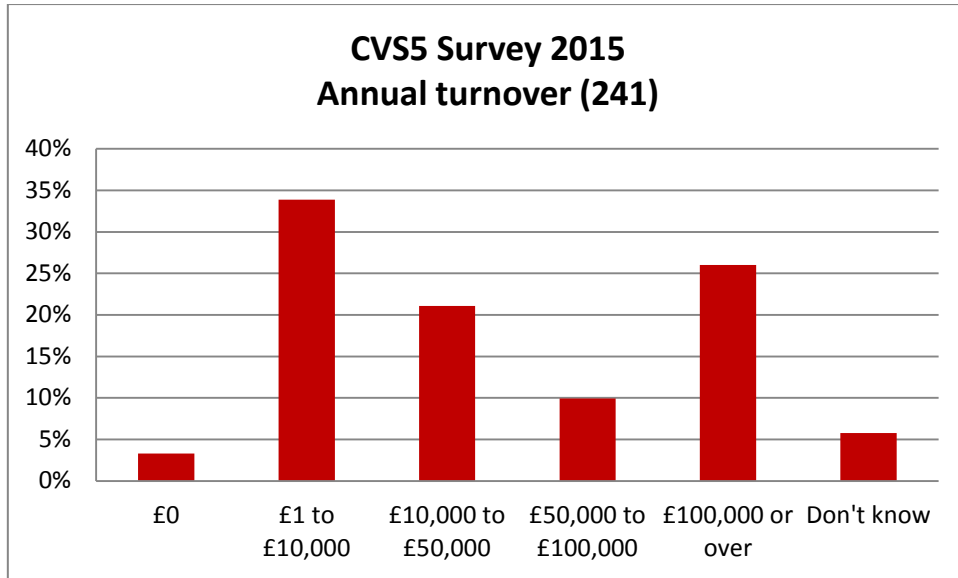


Figure 3 2015 annual turnover

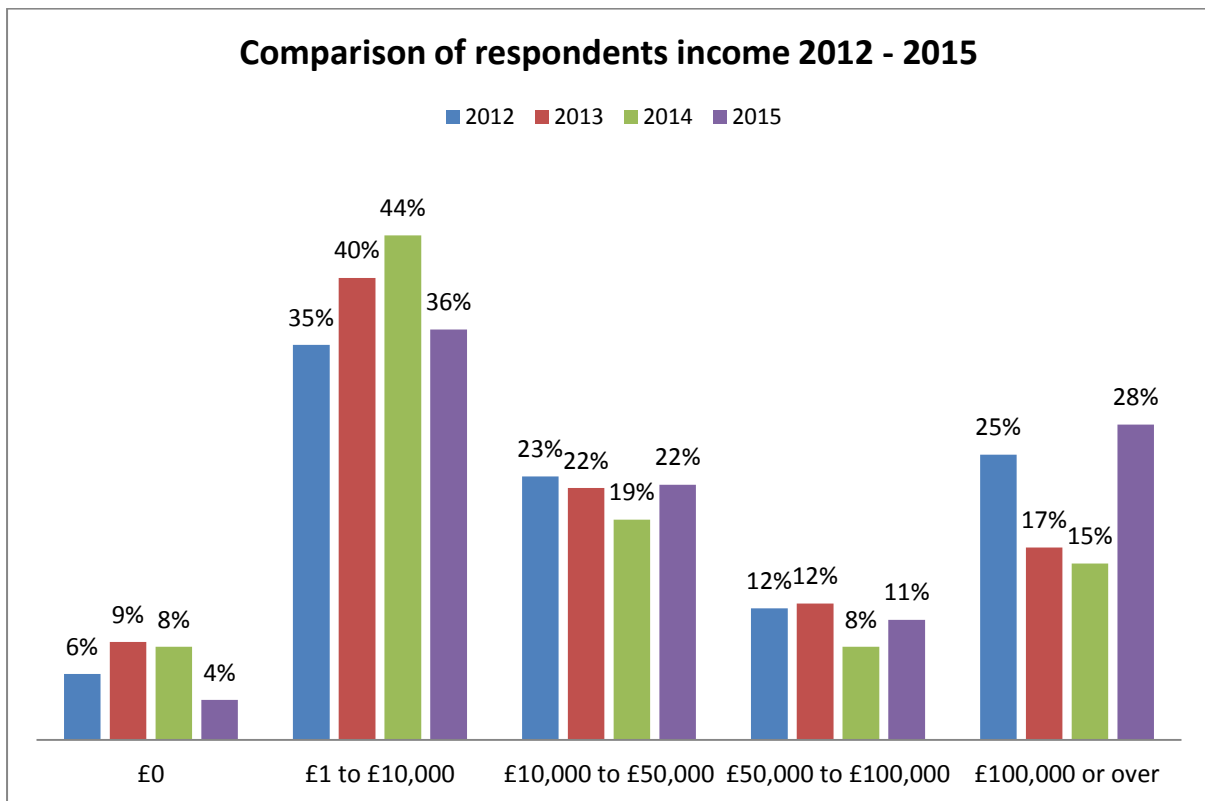


Figure 4 Comparison of income 2012-2015

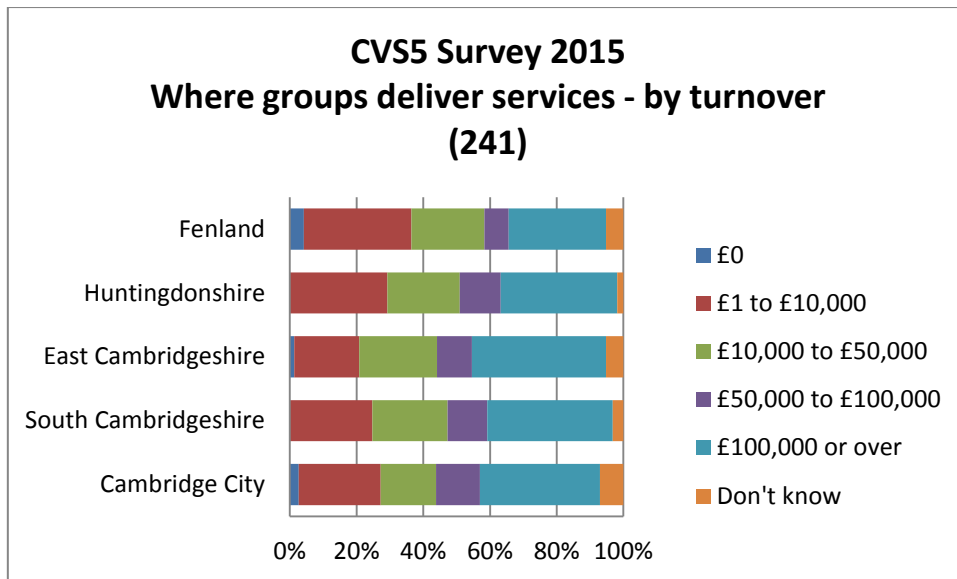


Figure 5 2015 Where groups deliver services, by turnover

It is clear from Figure 5 that there are groups of all sizes that deliver services across the county, with more of the smallest groups being in evidence in Fenland and Cambridge City. There were 16% fewer groups in the two lowest income category and 15% more in the highest income categories when compared to last year.

The size of groups can also be judged by looking at numbers of staff and volunteers. There is a spread of groups who do not employ staff, but who have 1-5 volunteers, even up to those with an income of £100,000 as seen by comparing Figure 6 with Figure 7 results.

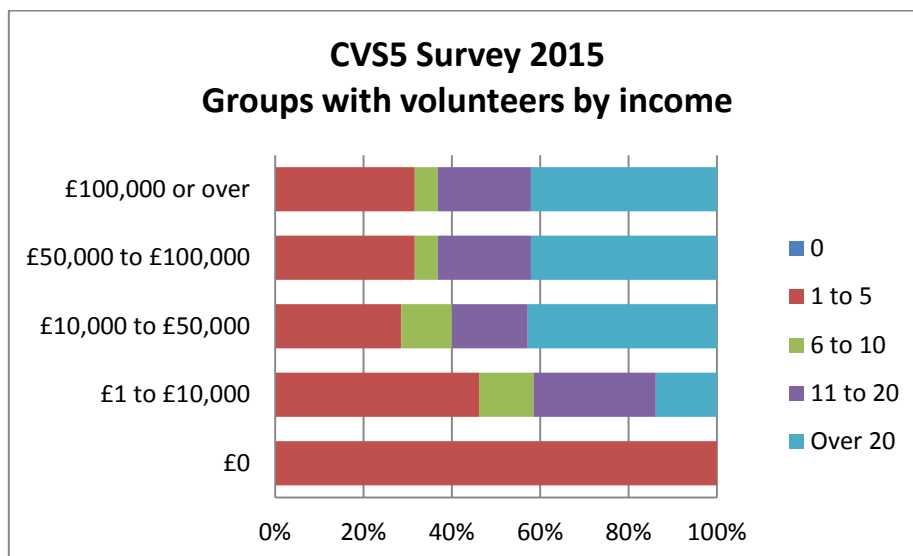


Figure 6 2015 Volunteers by income

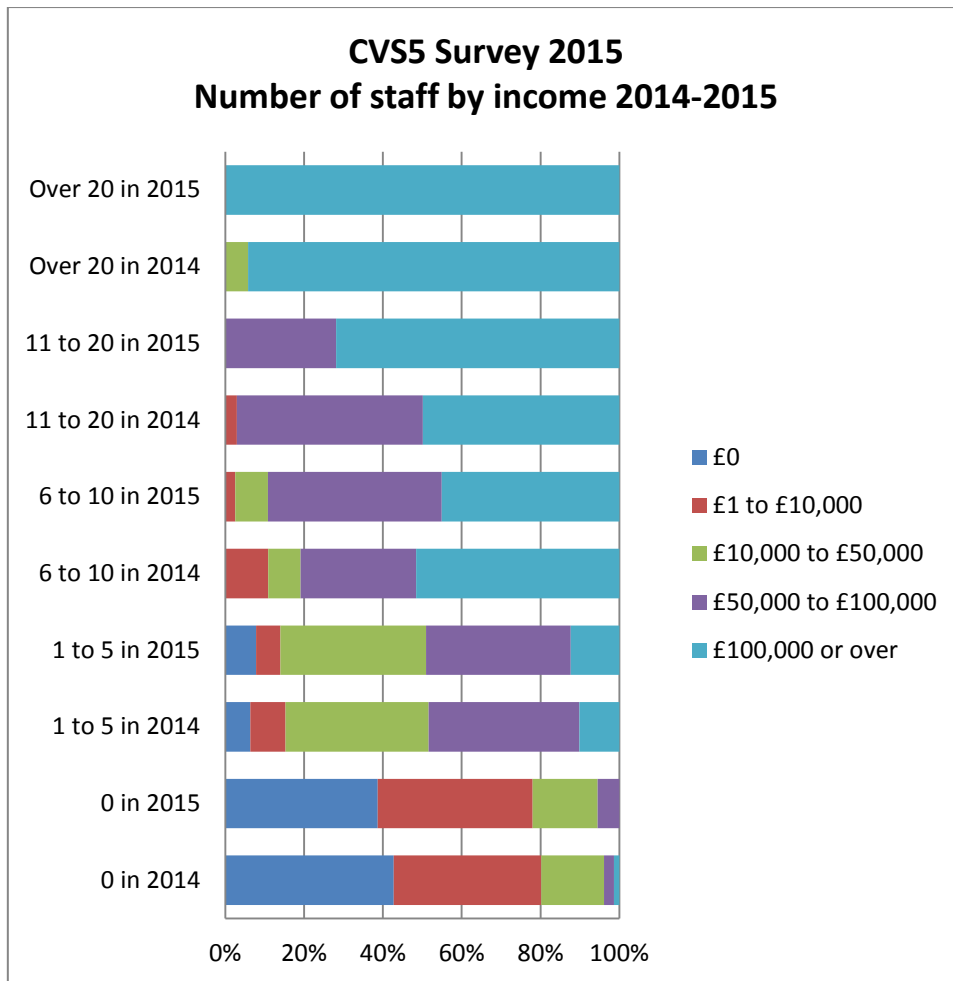


Figure 7 2014 - 2015 Staff by income

By comparing the staff levels from 2014 with 2015 (Figure 7) it is possible to see that more of the largest groups are employing more staff members and possibly imply that some of the next largest groups have increased their income but not their staffing levels.

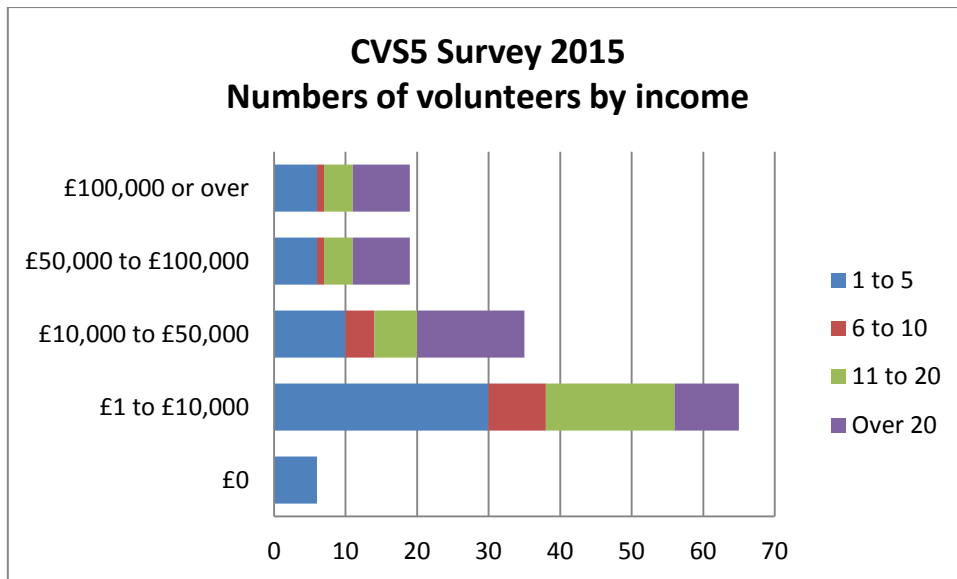


Figure 8 2015 Volunteers by income

An estimate of the actual numbers of volunteers, from the data collected, would be between 2,000 and 3,000, not counting the “don’t know” category. Volunteers contribute through structured programmes of help and support as required to make sure that they are contributing to best effect. Most groups wanted help with recruiting volunteers as well as retaining them. (Figure 9) It is reported that one in four of the adult population in England regularly volunteer, but that the social and economic impact of this contribution is not reflected in political decision-making. According to a recent publication by the Department of Work and Pensions and the cabinet office this contribution is rarely assessed in monetary terms, meaning that there is a national undervaluing of volunteering and under-investment in policies which promote volunteering. (Fujiwara et al 2013)

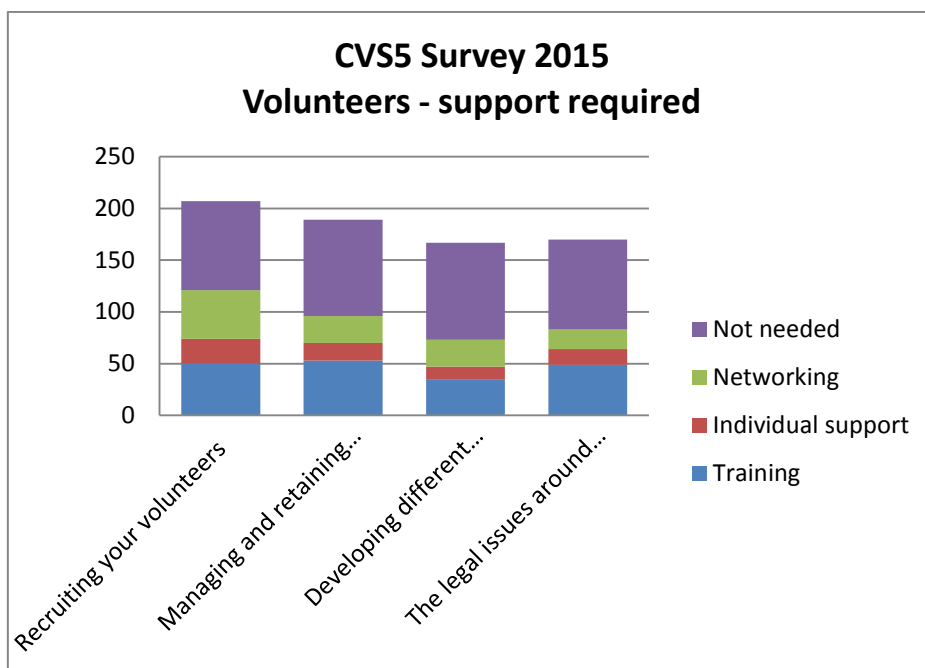


Figure 9 2015 Volunteers support

Geographical coverage of respondents

As can be seen from the matrix in Figure 2 some groups deliver services in just one of the districts of Cambridgeshire, the rest, generally larger groups, deliver services in two or more districts and county-wide. Most of the groups in the survey were groups delivering services in Cambridge City itself, followed by Huntingdonshire, (Figure 10), and most of these were single area only groups. (Figure 11)

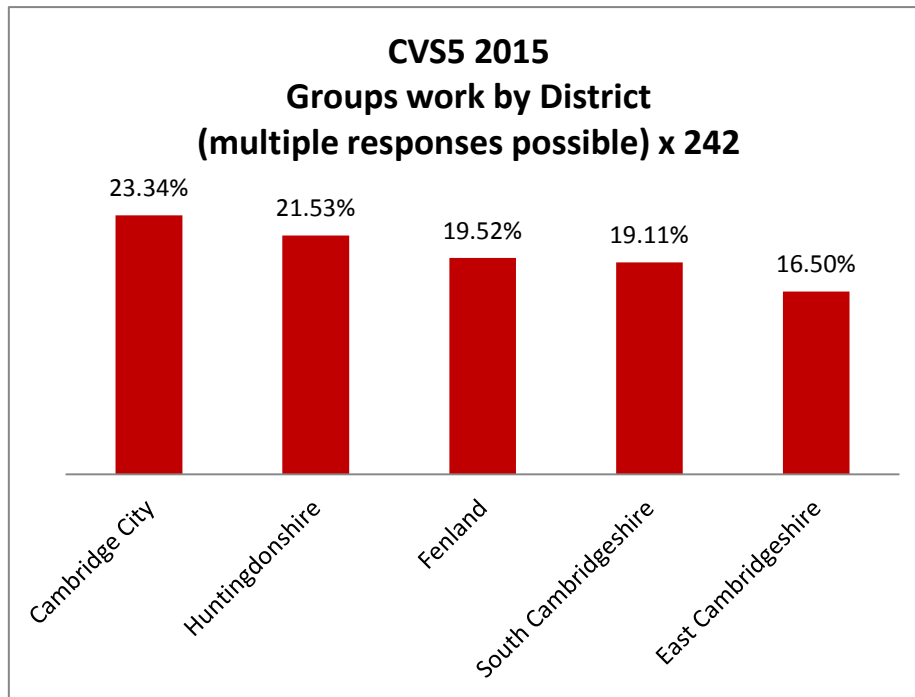


Figure 10 2015 Where groups work

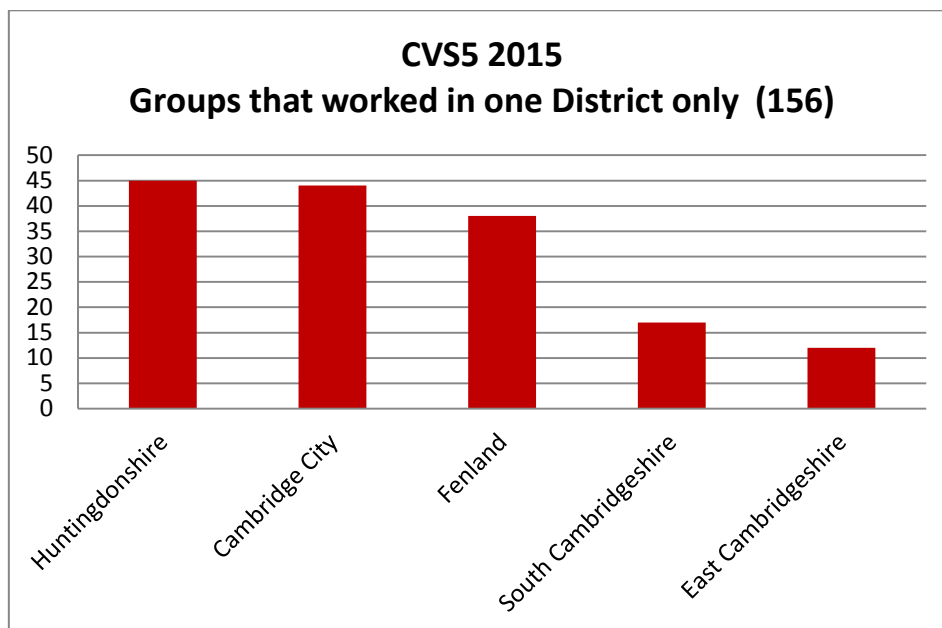


Figure 11 2015 Groups that work in just one district

This shows that most areas benefit from the services of community and voluntary groups that have multiple areas of benefit, normally county-wide, especially South Cambridgeshire and East Cambridgeshire, which has very few groups that just serve their own area.

Income trends

Groups were asked to indicate how they would describe the fortunes of their charities in 2015. Most, 62%, thought that there would be no change in their expected income, but 21% thought theirs would be higher. Those that thought their income would be higher often said this was because their income needed to be higher and that they had given themselves a higher fundraising target, not that they had assured a higher income. Those that thought that their income would be lower gave reasons such as “lack of volunteers to do fundraising”, “members dying”, “end of projects” and “unsure how we can apply for more grants”, but most of them referred directly to cuts in grants from local authorities. (Figure 12) Fewer groups reported that their income would remain the same, compared to last year, with more saying that they thought it would increase. Given that there are a large number of groups which rely on grants and funding from local authorities (Figure 13) the cuts are bound to have a negative impact on the local groups, which in turn can have a negative impact on their relationship with their local authority.

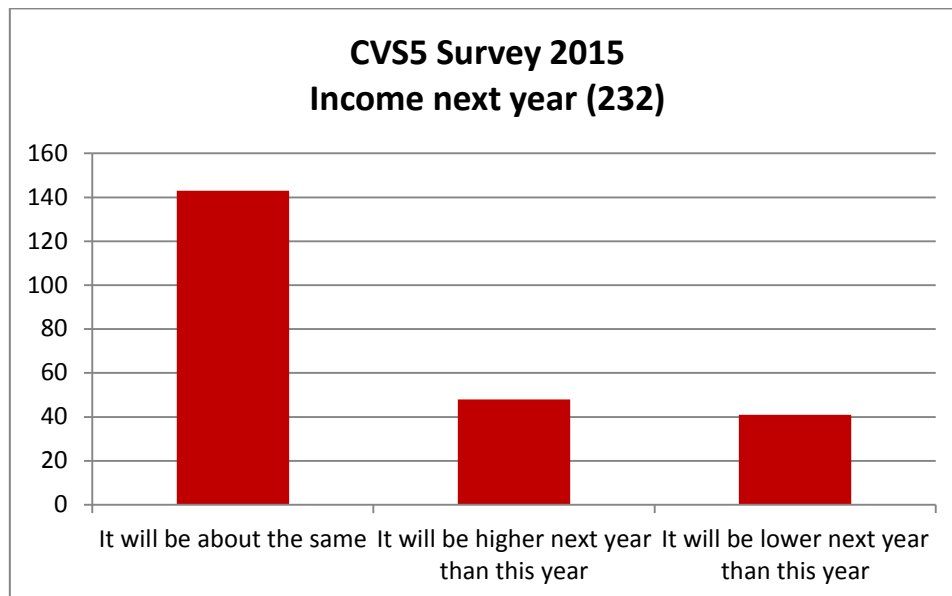


Figure 12 2015 Income next year

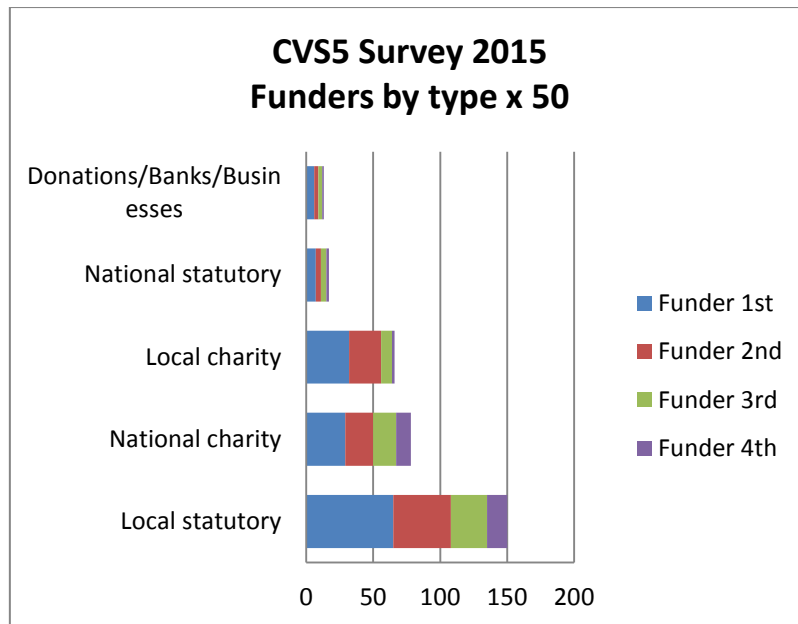


Figure 13 2015 Funders by type

Beneficiaries of groups

The issue of who benefits from the work of voluntary and community groups is key to understanding the drive and determination of the sector in Cambridgeshire. It must be said that the groups that are most likely to complete the annual survey are those that are actively engaged in networks and alive to the needs of their beneficiaries because they have been working with them for some time and know what it is they will benefit from. Last year we asked groups who their main beneficiaries were, whilst this year they were able to indicate multiple answers. The result is a bar chart that shows how many of the groups help more than one group of beneficiaries and those most covered by the groups were adults, women, children and young people, older people, men, community groups, families, and people with disabilities, on low incomes and with mental health issues. (Figure 14)

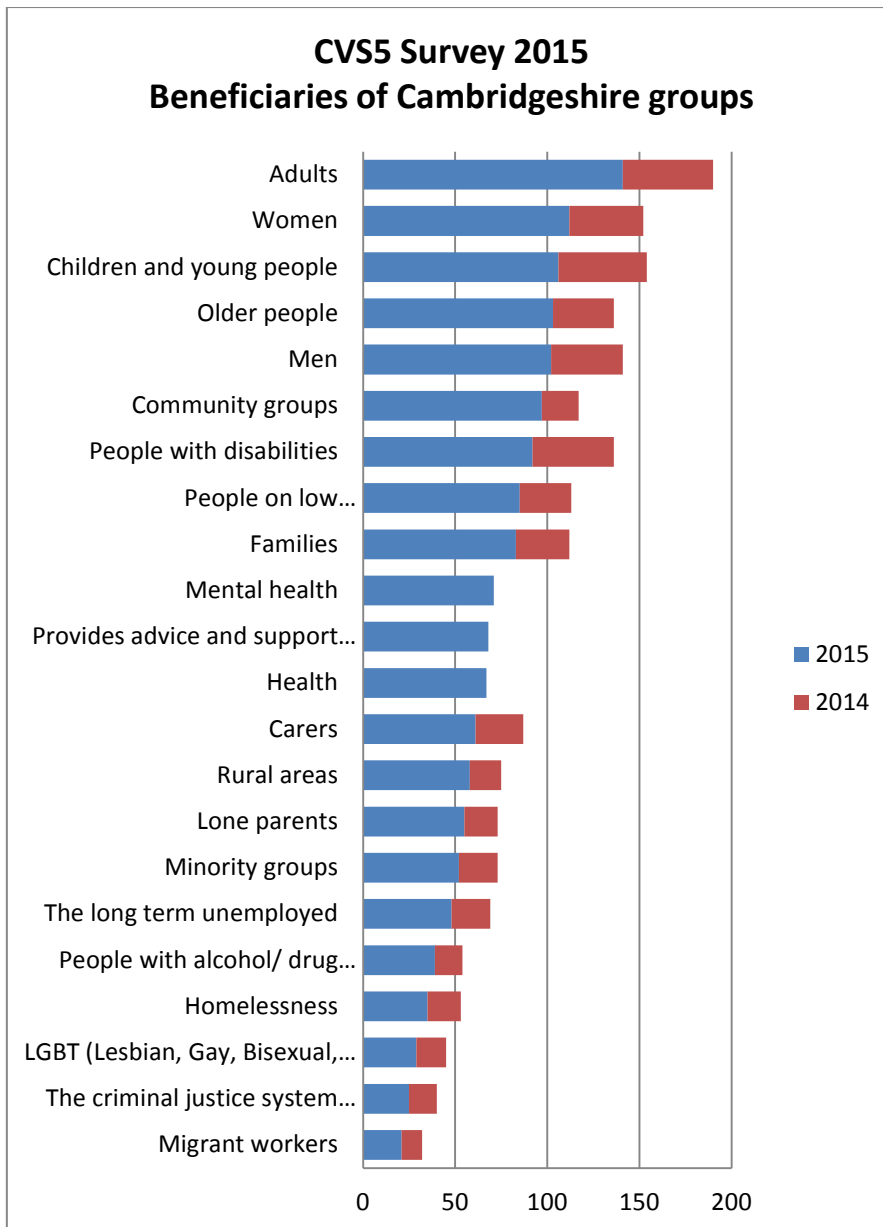


Figure 14 2015 Beneficiaries by category

VCS Support Needs

Groups were asked to identify which areas of support they might need in 2015 and how they preferred to access it. CVS5 is tasked to identify need when designing training and support programmes as part of service level agreements with the various Cambridgeshire local statutory organisations. The questions were divided up into the four main areas of support: fundraising, finance management, trustee-training, and general or compliance training.

Fundraising support needs

40% all the organisations that completed the survey wanted help with fundraising. This has increased year on year. The figure below (Figure 15) shows the areas that groups wanted training and how they would like it delivered.

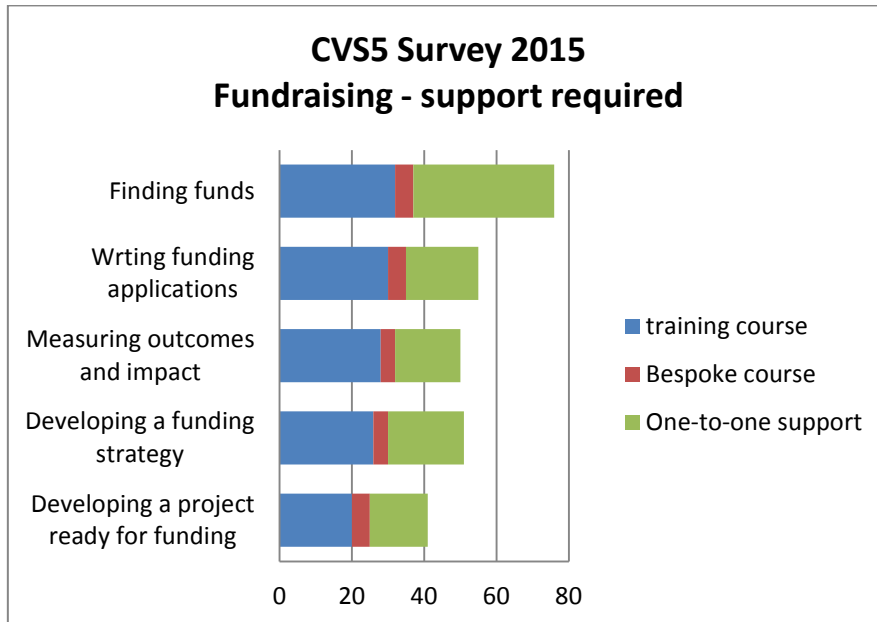


Figure 15 2015 Fundraising - support needed

Given the climate of fewer grants and cuts to existing ones, fundraising support is one of the main services that CVS5 can provide. About a third of groups said they would also be interested in accessing an online grants database, presumably so that they could just search for suitable funds to apply for themselves.

Financial management training

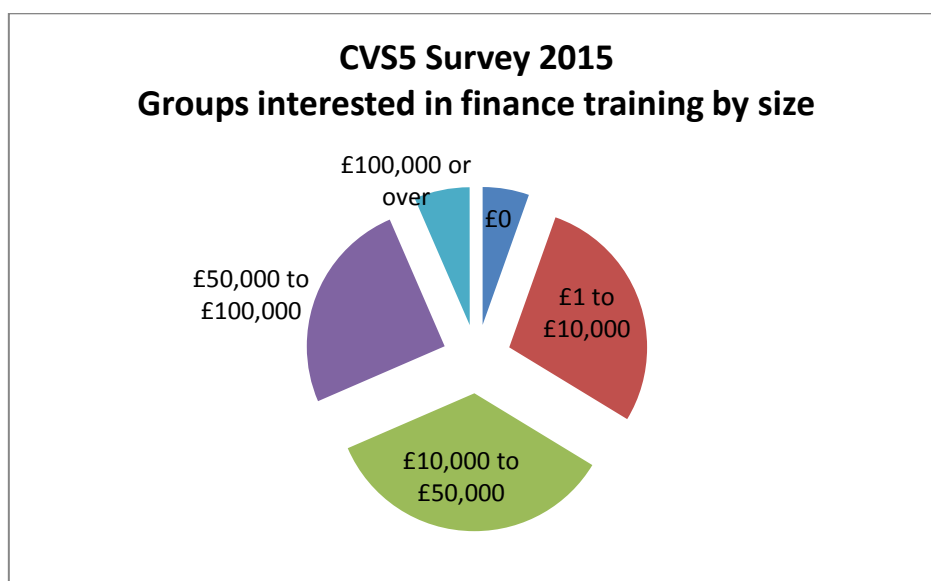


Figure 16 2015 Groups interested in finance training

Since last year's survey there has been a **fourfold** increase in groups of all sizes that have indicated they need some sort of finance management training. (Figure 16) Also, like last year, those that requested help included some groups that did not currently have any annual turnover. Groups have clearly become increasingly aware that strong management of charitable finances is a tool of sustainability. Most support was needed in developing budgets and managing accounts. (Figure 17)

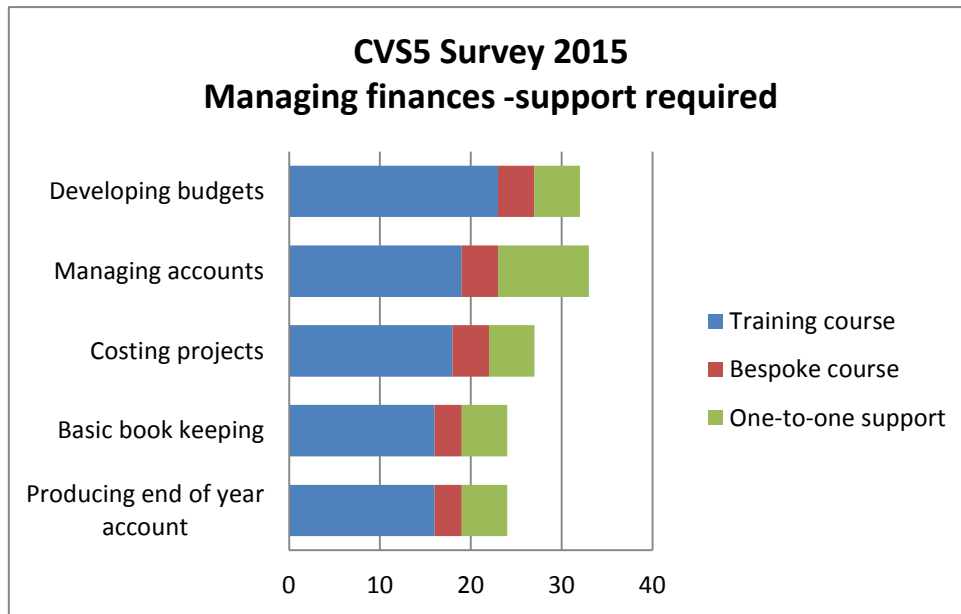


Figure 17 2015 Managing finances - support needed

Trustee Training

Without volunteers acting as trustees there would be no voluntary or community groups. The sample of groups represented by this survey could account for at least 1,500 trustees, however, the real number is probably very much higher. Most, 83%, of the respondents requested support or training under this heading, despite the fact that nearly all of them recorded that they had sent their trustees on fewer training courses last year than in previous years, also showing a significant dip in training since 2013. All trustee-training was considerably less than two years ago, in 2013, when the same question was asked. (Figure 18)

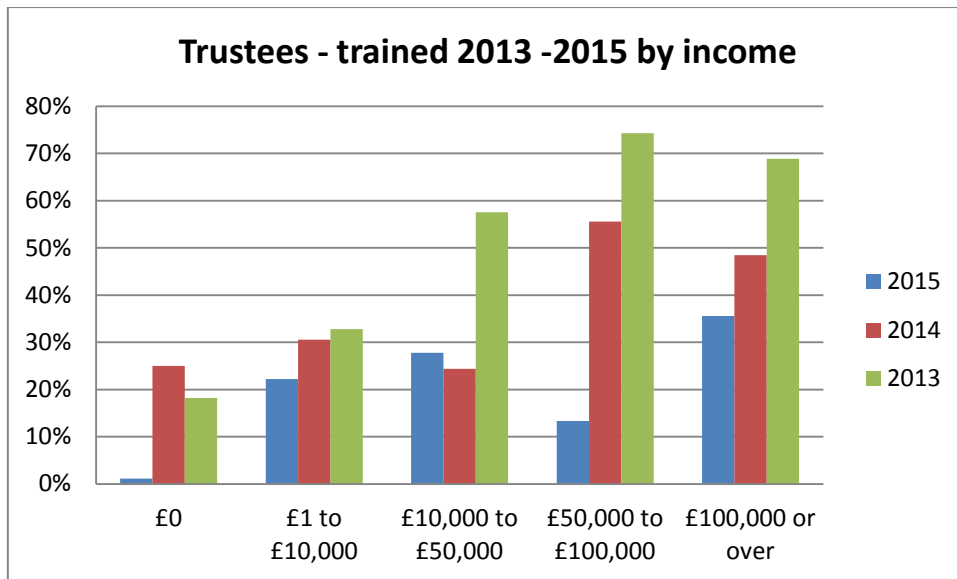


Figure 18 2013 – 2015 Trustees trained – by income

Most requests for training and support were concerned with the duties of trustees, running effective committees and strategic planning. (Figure 19)

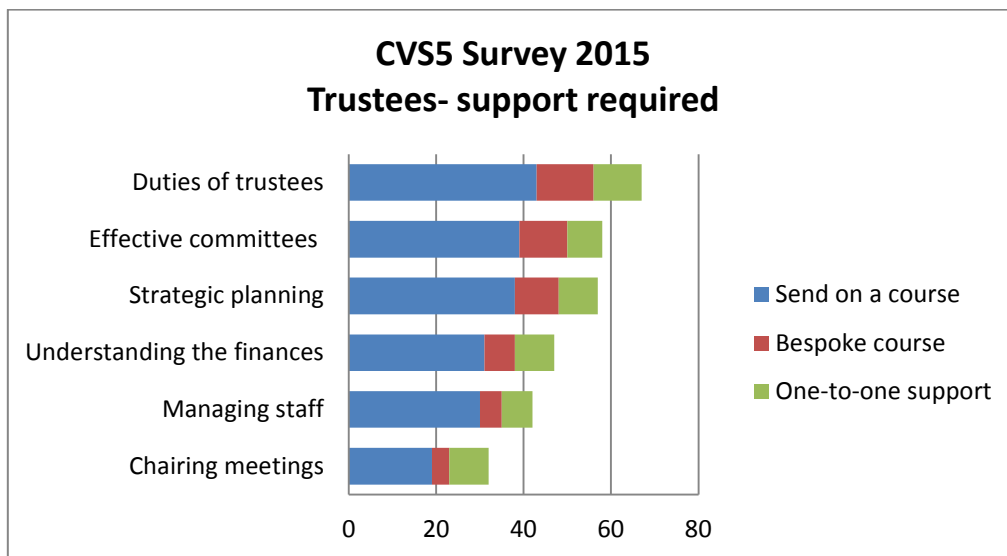


Figure 19 2014 Trustee training priorities

Compliance and general training

In order to continue to function as a local charity all groups recognised the need to maintain compliance with legislation through their requests for training in first aid and health and safety. Training in developing projects, equality and diversity and marketing were the next most important areas for groups' development as defined by the survey. The priorities that have been highlighted by the survey will guide the CVS5 organisations in designing and delivering services in 2015 -2016. (Figure 20)

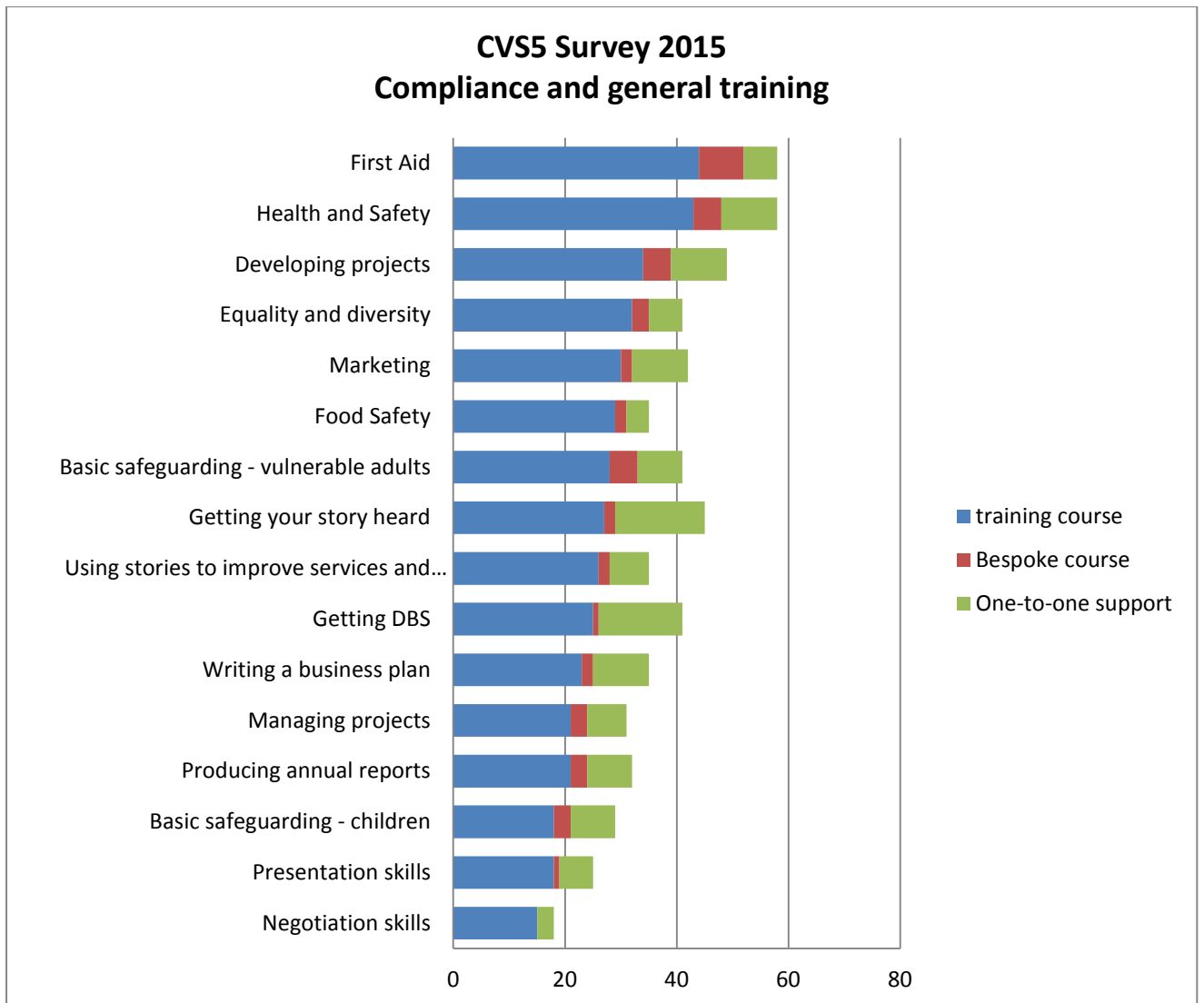


Figure 20 2015 Compliance and general training

Networks & Communications

Communication methods and habits are changing all the time. This is as true for those who run charities as for anyone else. The key to getting the style and method of communications right is to understand what the recipients want and need, given that they will generally be pressed for time. In the recent report on local infrastructure (NAVCA 2015) it was found that social media, on-line tools and technology are generally under-used. In a largely rural county such as Cambridgeshire it is vital to sustaining successful networks that the means of communications suits those intended to receive them.

We asked groups their preference for communication methods. The outstanding choice of communication was by email, as last year, with a significant drop in value from 11% to 2% for paper communications. (Figure 21)

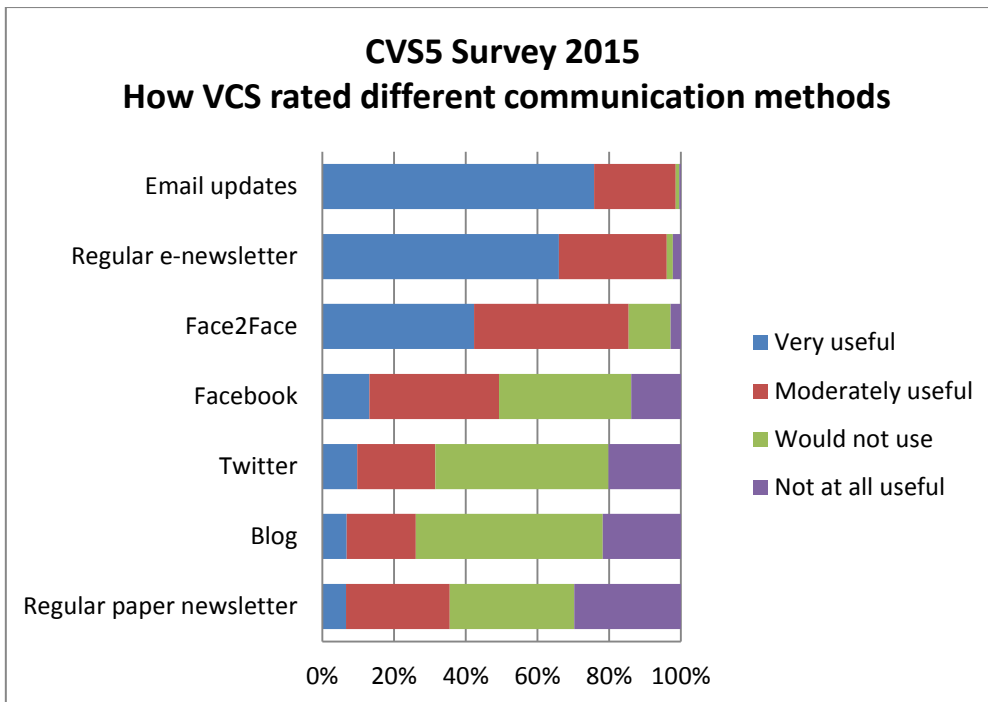


Figure 21 2015 VCS communication methods

To maintain the communication networks the three CVS groups organise meetings and online forums, but it is clear from the response to the survey that more people were interested in engaging in locally-based meetings than in online forums. However, given the selection of email as a preferred means of communication, the use of online forums on specific subjects could be successful. (Figures 22 & 23)

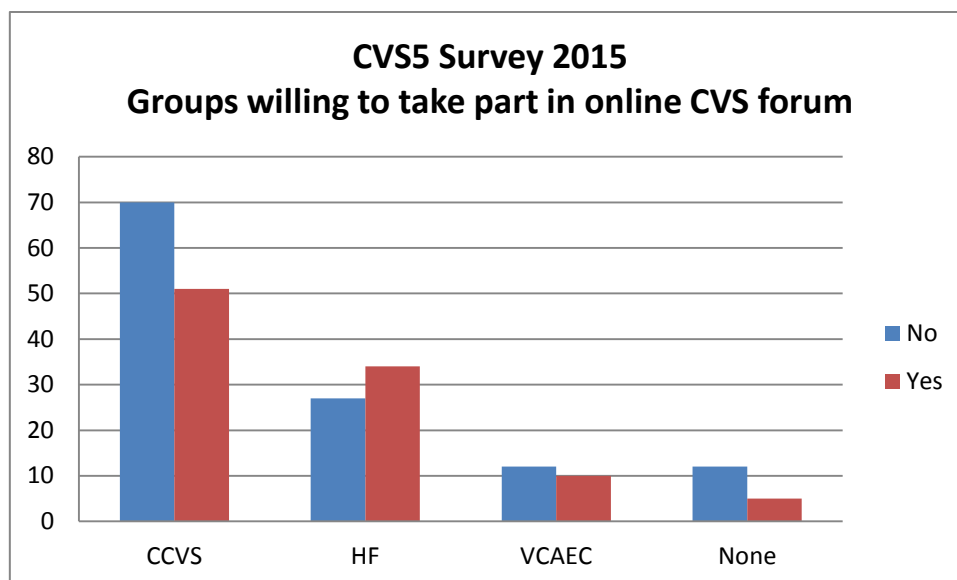


Figure 22 2015 Willing to join online forum

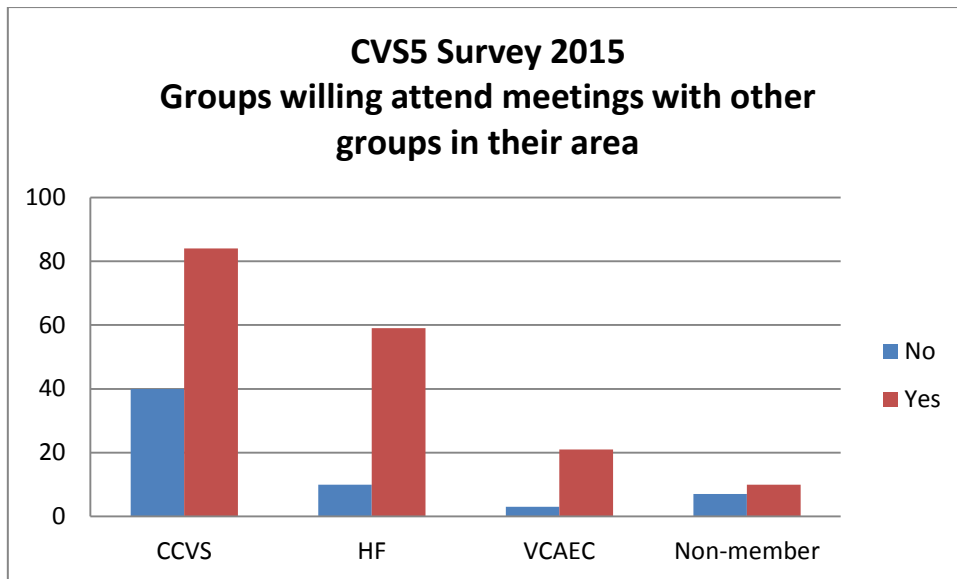


Figure 23 2015 Willing to meet up with others

Social media and internet use

Most groups, 89%, said that they used the internet to help the organisation or the people they worked with; this is about the same percentage as reported in last year's survey.

When it came to social media sites *Facebook* and *Twitter* were the main ones used and two thirds of respondents said that they did not need help with learning about these social media sites. (Figure 24)

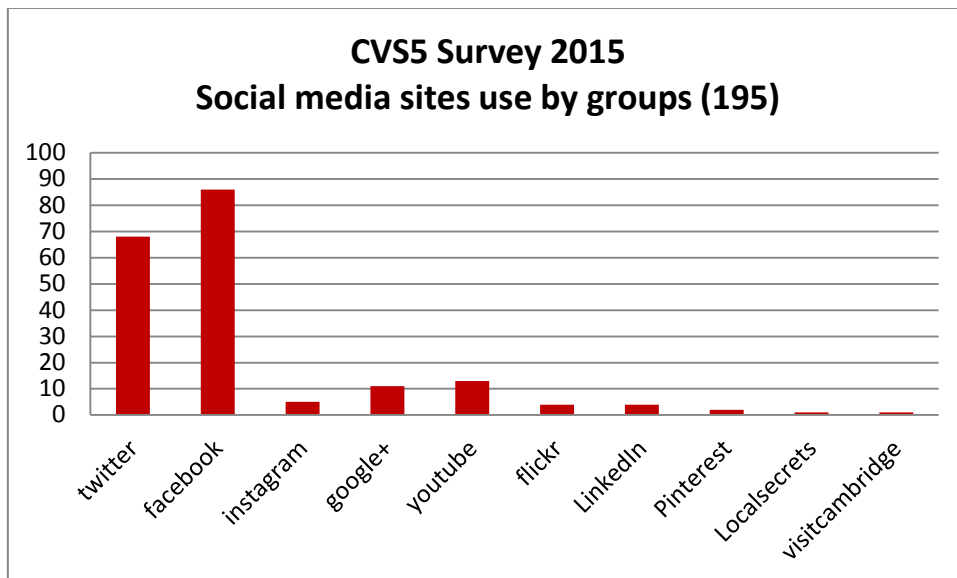


Figure 24 2015 Social media sites

The use of Facebook and Twitter was greatest in the largest organisations with a tendency for Facebook usage in the smaller groups. (Figure 25)

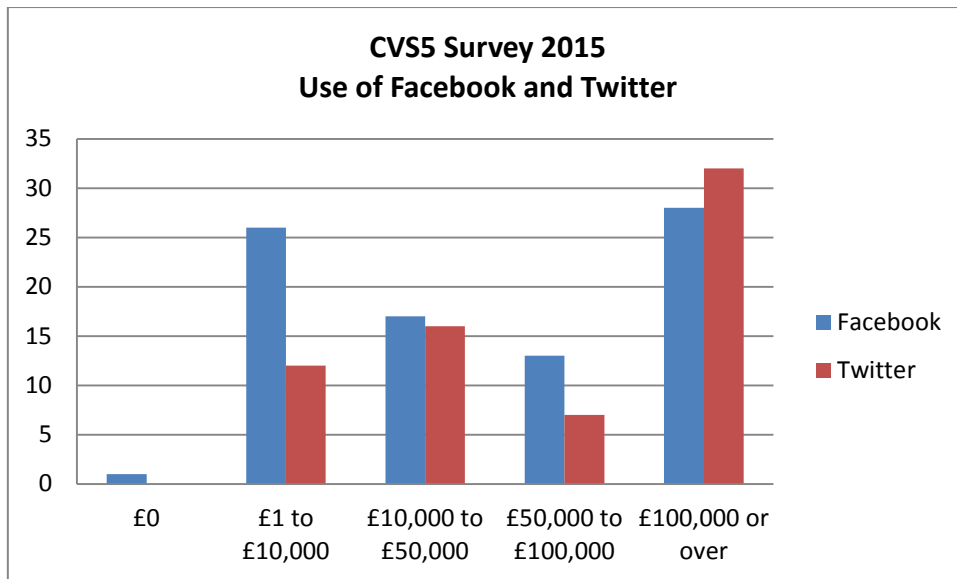


Figure 25 2015 Use of Facebook and Twitter by size

More groups, 40%, were interested in getting some training or support with using online tools as about only 24% were in the habit of using them. (Figure 26)

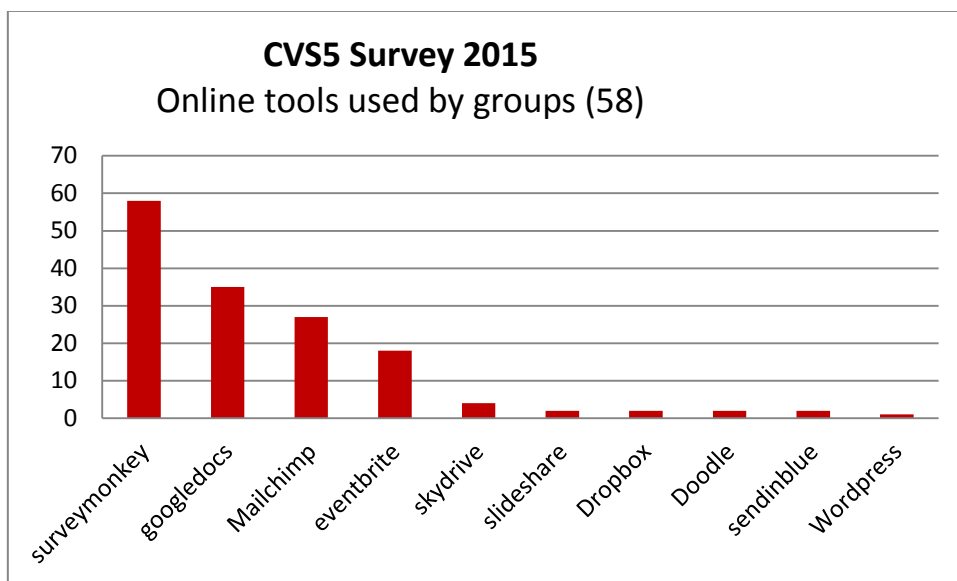


Figure 26 2015 Online tools

They were also asked about how well they knew five websites that were particularly relevant to voluntary groups, and it was noticeable that very few groups regularly referred to them, despite the fact that they have been specifically targeted at voluntary groups. (Figure 27)

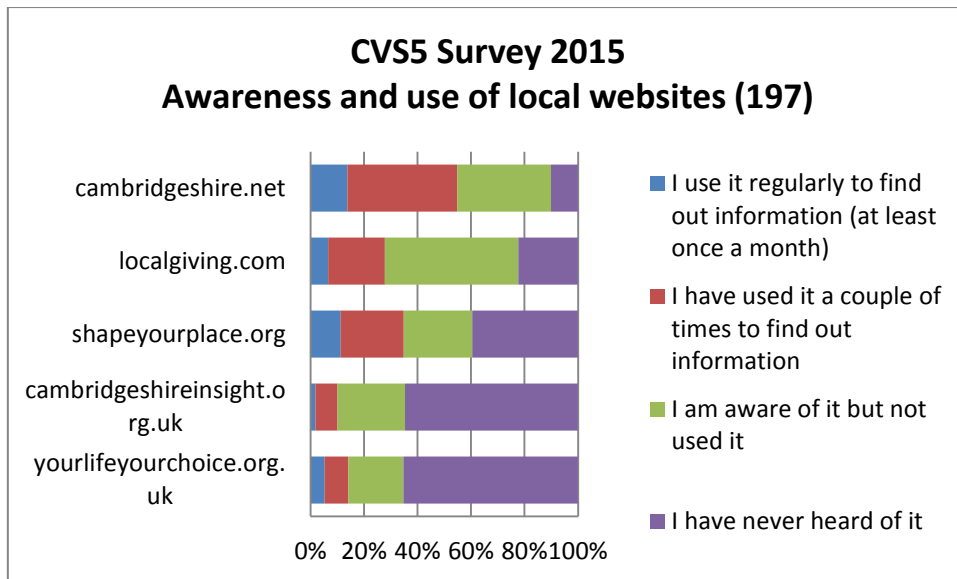


Figure 27 2015 Awareness of websites

The lack of interest in these websites may be due to the fact that 74% of the groups surveyed had their own websites to manage and communicate by. Most of these did not want help with managing or improving their website and only a handful of others, 14 groups, asked for help to set up their own website.

Representation

There have been fewer and fewer opportunities for the voluntary sector to take part in partnerships with the statutory sectors and others due to reduction in local authority budgets and removal of regular consultation and steering group meetings. However the CVS members of staff have continued to maintain contact and good relationships with their statutory colleagues, a fact that is largely valued by the respondents to the 2015 annual survey. (Figure 28)

CVS staff realise that it is not always possible for individual groups to spare the time to attend meetings when they do occur, which is why they provide representation as part of their charitable objectives. 76% of respondents felt that it was extremely or very important that their CVS represent the sector at meetings with the councils and others; this is an increase of 10% since last year..

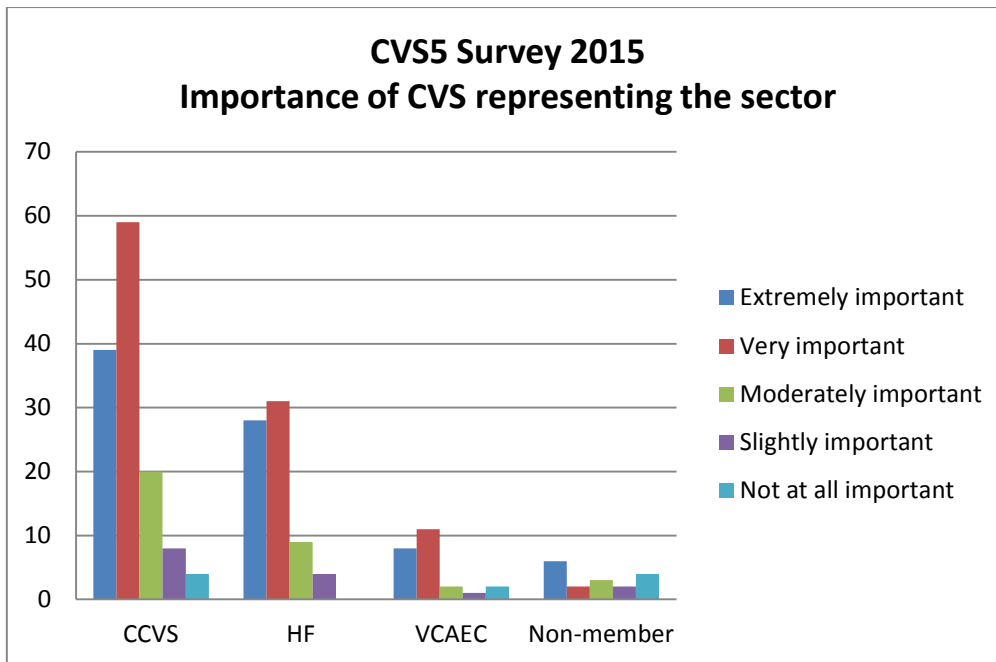


Figure 28 2015 Importance of CVS representation

Each of the CVS organisations provides regular news bulletins which, for the most part were found to be extremely or very important to the groups. These are delivered by email, the preferred communication method and, if the category “moderately important” is added to the first two categories accounts for 92% of the responses and suggests that the CVSs are getting their content and communication methods right. (Figure 29) Appendix 2 shows that, as far as the respondents to this survey are concerned there is a very high satisfaction rate with the services that they provide.

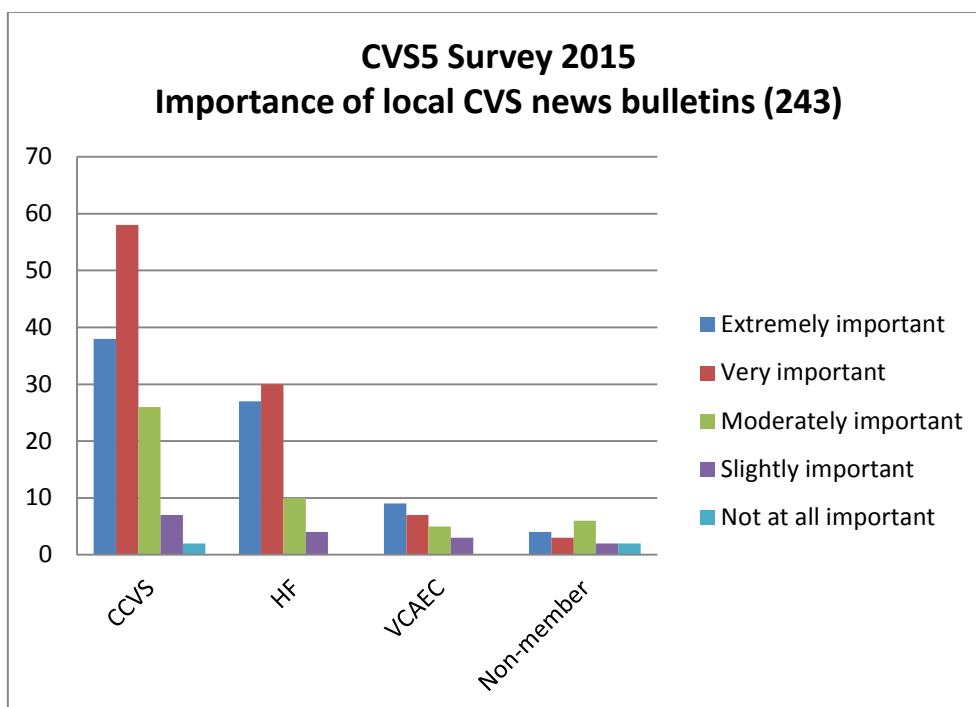


Figure 29 2015 Importance of CVS bulletins

Conclusions and Commitments

For Cambridgeshire the squeeze on voluntary and community groups is similar to that happening in the rest of the country. More is being delivered for less in most cases, and where groups are expanding they are expanding into delivery areas that were previously the reserve of local authorities.

Our sector faces a rapidly changing environment with demand increasing and funding in decline. CVS5 believes that good leadership that enables, empowers and develops our local communities is vital if we are to maintain and develop the effectiveness of our sector.

In light of this for the first time we have decided that we will include a list of commitments that CVS5 aspire to. Each CVS will respond in a different way, and look at the key areas of improvement to their services based on their capacity, resources and the needs of their members.

Training and Support

1. We will continue to build on our existing training offer to ensure we are offering the training groups want, and ensure smaller groups have the skills, systems and confidence they need.
2. We will look at ways to help groups increase their income and give them the skills and tools to help them demonstrate the impact of their work.
3. We recognise the importance of trustees and the role they play in organisations. We will ensure that training is available at the most appropriate times and locations.
4. We will look to increase the level of training and support we give to smaller groups to ensure they have the skills, systems and confidence to manage their money and complete financial reports.

Networking and Communications

1. We will provide a range of networking opportunities where organisations can, share ideas and discuss common issues. These will ideally be face to face but we will also explore online networking opportunities.
2. We will improve our communications in order to ensure that organisations get the information they want in a timely manner and in a format that suits their needs.
3. We will look at providing themed networking and communications in areas such as health, community safety, mental health etc.

Representation and Understanding

1. We will continue to provide strong leadership that enables, empowers and develops our communities

2. We will improve our two way dialogue to ensure that we are best able to meet the sectors needs and make the sectors case where ever we attend meetings.
3. We will work to better understand the differences in the sector based on geography, theme of work and size of organisation

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