Small things – big impact

Mapping and Trends: Community and Voluntary Groups in Cambridgeshire

2017

support cambridgeshire

your county, your voice, our support

Author Mark Freeman
CCVS Deputy CEO
July 2017

Contents

Figures

Foreword

It has been another ‘interesting’ year for voluntary organisations and especially for those of us who work to support groups across the County. We have seen significant changes in funding for our work as well as changes to what the funders want to achieve for their grants. Most significantly we have seen the birth of Support Cambridgeshire, this is a three-year project, funded by Cambridgeshire County Council bringing together three partner organisations who will work together to support community groups and organisations across Cambridgeshire.

Hunts Forum of Voluntary Organisations will lead the partnership, supported by Cambridge Council for Voluntary Services and Cambridgeshire ACRE. Each of the partner organisations will serve as expert sources of advice and guidance. Support Cambridgeshire will deliver better outcomes for local organisations across the county, with the expectation of a stronger and more vibrant voluntary and community sector and more empowered and resilient local communities. You can find out more about our work on the website.

www.supportcambridgeshire.org.uk

One of the constants in the changing world is this survey. It is an essential tool for us and is recognised as something that funders want to support because of the wealth of data it gives on the voluntary sector in Cambridgeshire. We will continue to use and share the findings from this report to ensure that voluntary organisations and charities in the county get the best possible deal, and that we are able to provide the advice and support that they need.

Every day we see the fantastic work done by organisations from our sector across all realms of society and community. Big organisations or small, paid staff or volunteers, the difference that you are making to our communities and those that live in them is immense. But it is getting harder, there is less money, more demand, limited volunteers and more regulation. By continuing to stay informed of what you need, what the changing environment is bringing and of good practice and innovation we hope that we can be there to help you grow and prosper. This survey and this report is one part of our work to do this.

Feedback shows that we are doing most things right. That does not mean we will sit back and continue to do the same things in the same way. We will continue to look for new ways of doing things, we will continue to develop new training opportunities and we will continue to be there for you when you need us to be.

Your support is as always most appreciated and we thank you for your continued support of all the partners that make up Support Cambridgeshire.

Julie Farrow

CEO Hunts Forum and CCVS

Small things - big impact

How do you define small in terms of charities and community groups and why does it matter?

All our experience shows us that it is small community groups and charities that are the glue that binds communities together. Big charities have their place and do a fantastic job, but at a local level it is in the small organisations where the impact lies. This belief in the importance of small charities is highlighted in the Lords Review of Charities (Stronger charities for a stronger society)[1] when they highlight the importance of small and medium sized charities.

> *"These charities are the lifeblood of the sector, with major capacity for innovation and the ability to form strong bonds with local communities and people in need"*

So what is small? If you are the Small Charities Coalition[2] it is an income below £1million, and this level is used in much of the research into how small charities work[3]. Two examples of this research are from the Lloyds bank Foundation.

- 'Too small to fail' https://www.lloydsbankfoundation.org.uk/assets/uploads/too-small-to-fail_Feb-2015.pdf
- A new piece of work on the impact of small and medium charities https://www.lloydsbankfoundation.org.uk/news/news/2017/05/10/importance-of-small-charities/

This means that there is little or no research on the truly small, local organisations[4]. As a result we have little statistical evidence of their collective impact or what they need to thrive.

[1] https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/charities-committee/news-parliament-2015/charities-committee-report-published/ .
[2] http://www.smallcharities.org.uk/ .
[3] They actually concentrated on orgs with income between £25K and £1million.
[4] The third sector research centre did some work in Below the Radar research http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tsrc/research/below-the-radar/index.aspx.

Our version of small is very different. Our research shows that 58% of those responding to our survey had incomes below £50K. For us a small organisation is one with an income below £10K and a medium sized one would have an income between £10K and £100K. An income above £100K is large and an income of £1Million is very rare.

We know the importance of the small and medium sized groups we work with. We see the impact that they have on a daily basis. Much of this is hidden, not celebrated and does not figure when policies and strategies are developed. These groups need to be nurtured and supported. There is universal agreement that they are at the heart of communities and that they are born, prosper and die in line with the real needs of the communities they work in.

A very quick analysis of the charity commission registered charities shows that 60% of all charities have an income below £25K. On top of this number you can then add all the community groups, sports clubs and societies that exist in communities across the country. These are not registered but they still have an enormous impact on the health and wellbeing of people and communities.

We know that there are many obstacles that groups face and that with the right support and advice, as well as with the right resources they can overcome them. It is important that the advice and support, and the access to resources, is equal and that all communities can benefit from a diverse and healthy voluntary and community sector.

Introduction

Every year the infrastructure organisations in Cambridgeshire conduct a survey of local voluntary and community groups. For the first time this year the survey was carried out under the Support Cambridgeshire contract. The purpose of the survey is to establish the support needs that groups have and to gain insight to the health of the sector. This allows the services provided by support organisations to be tailored to groups needs, and also ensures that we are best able to represent the sector with other partners.

This year’s survey was undertaken between February and May 2017. Response to the survey was down from 2016, with, 221 returns from 264. Once again, the bulk of respondents were registered charities, however there was a marked increase in Town and Parish Councils and this reflects the Support Cambridgeshire members.

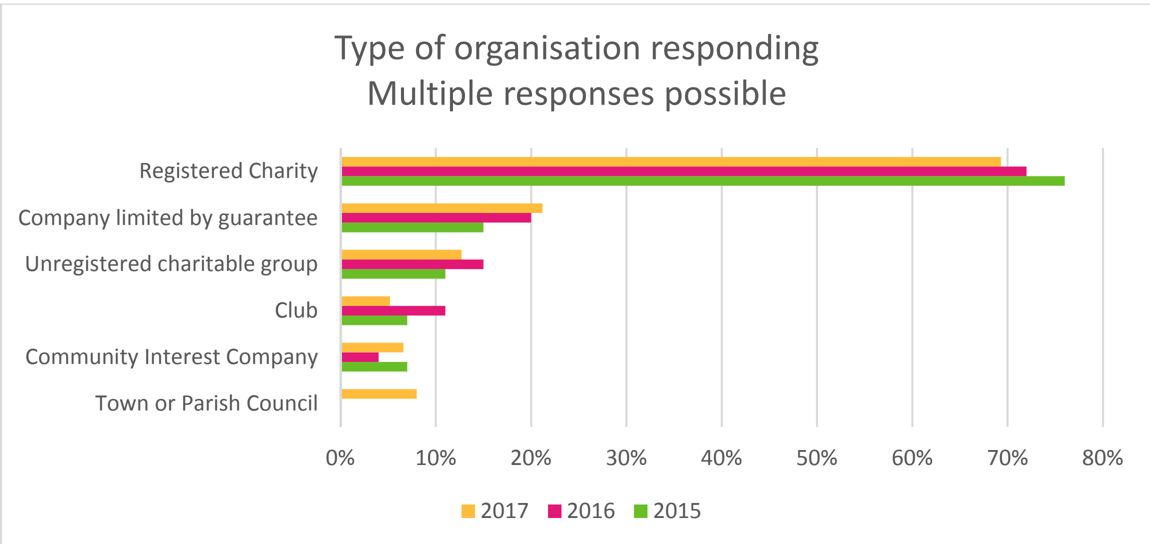

Figure 1 Types of organisation responding

Methodology

Through established networks Support Cambridgeshire contacted member groups and advertised the survey on websites and newsletters between February and the end of April 2017. 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. This year we continued to use social media to target groups but the number of surveys completed directly from there was low; however some people would have clicked through to the website links from the posts. 221 responses were received (down from 264 last year). This reduction was probably down to a less concentrated communications plan than in previous years. All surveys were completed using Survey Monkey.

We carried out some very basic tracking of where responses came from, and traditional communications, the emails we send out, newsletters and the various websites gave the highest response rates.

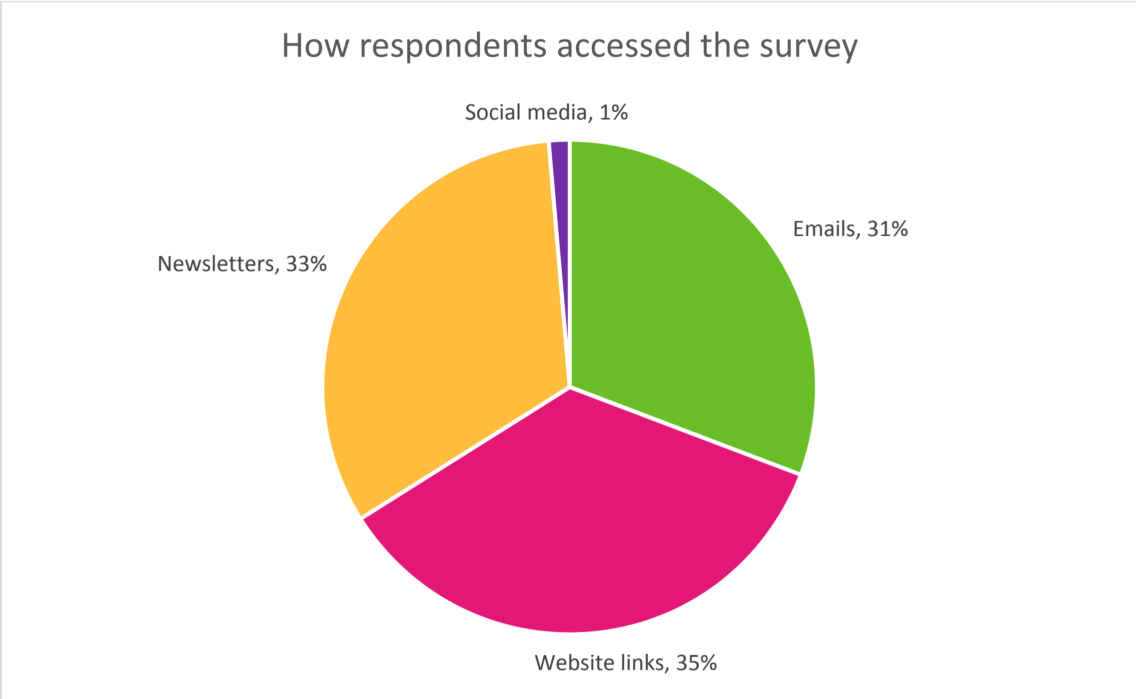

Figure 2 How respondents used to access the survey

Geographical coverage of respondents

Once again Cambridge has the highest number of respondent groups working in the district (see figure 3). This reflects the membership of the Support Cambridgeshire partnership, but anecdotal evidence also suggests that there are more voluntary organisations in Cambridge.

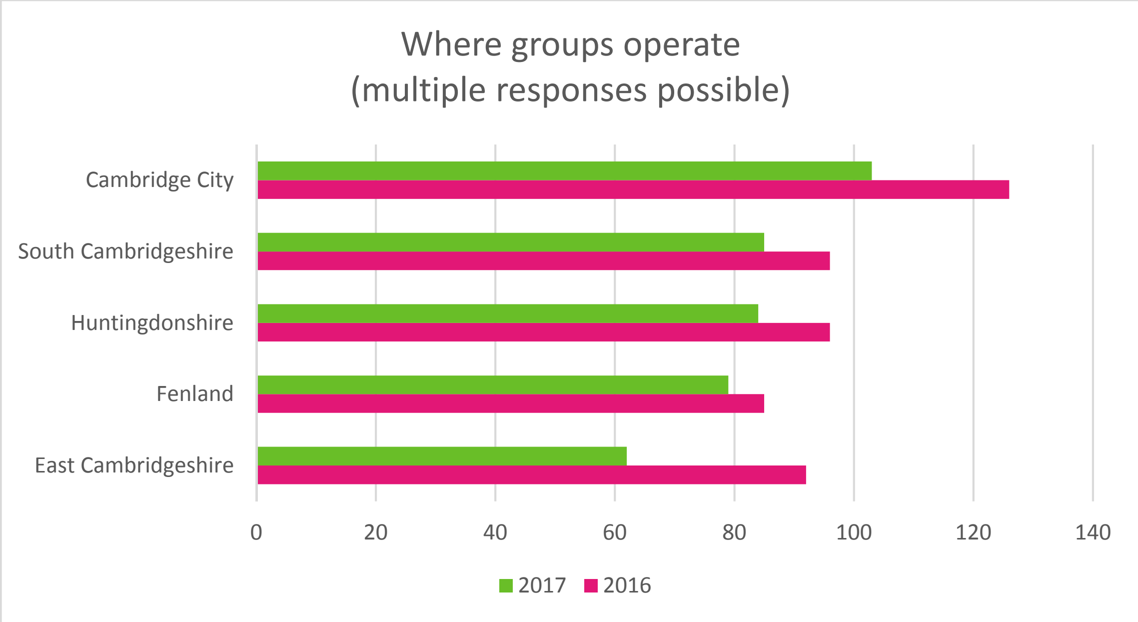

Figure 3 Districts in which respondents operate

Of the respondents 70% worked in only one district, this compares to 69% in 2016, the breakdown of these can be seen in figure 4. We can see that we are getting a more even spread of groups working in just Cambridge, Hunts and Fenland. There was a small increase in groups working across the County with 16% of the respondents, indicating that they worked across all the districts. This compares with 13% in 2016.

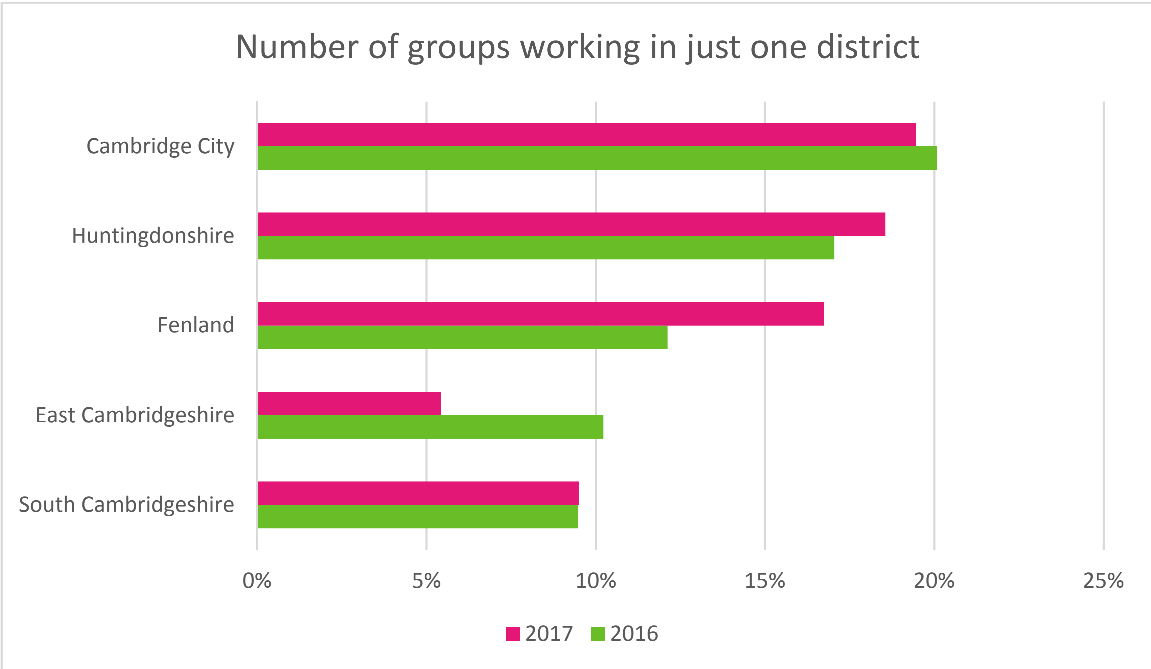

Figure 4 Groups working in just one district

The figures are influenced by the ability of the Support Cambridgeshire partners to reach different communities. It is unlikely that this reflects the true make-up of the voluntary and community sector across the county.

We know from anecdotal evidence there are more groups working in those areas where there has been the longest tradition of support (both financial and operational). You see a much richer diversity of groups in Cambridge than in other more rural areas. This is because there has historically been more support to the sector, but also down to geography and demography. This is backed up from 2010 figures from NCVO that indicated there were 2.3 charities per 1000 population in Fenland compared to 4.0 in Cambridge. (This was based on charity commission data and ignored small community organisations.) Another indicator of this is the fact that we constantly hear from funders that they are not getting the numbers of applications they would want from Fenland in comparison to Cambridge.

Mapping Cambridgeshire VCS 2015

Size of groups

Most groups (58%) responding were small with an annual turnover of less than £50,000. This compares to 60% last year. Figure 5 shows that there is a higher number of large groups responding this year than in previous years. What remains clear is that our definition of a small group is still considerably smaller than the Small Charities Coalition (www.smallcharities.org.uk) which defines a small charity as having an income of under £1 million. This definition is shared by many of the national infrastructure bodies.

The change in income of organisations reflects the responses and does not indicate a change in the make-up of the sector.

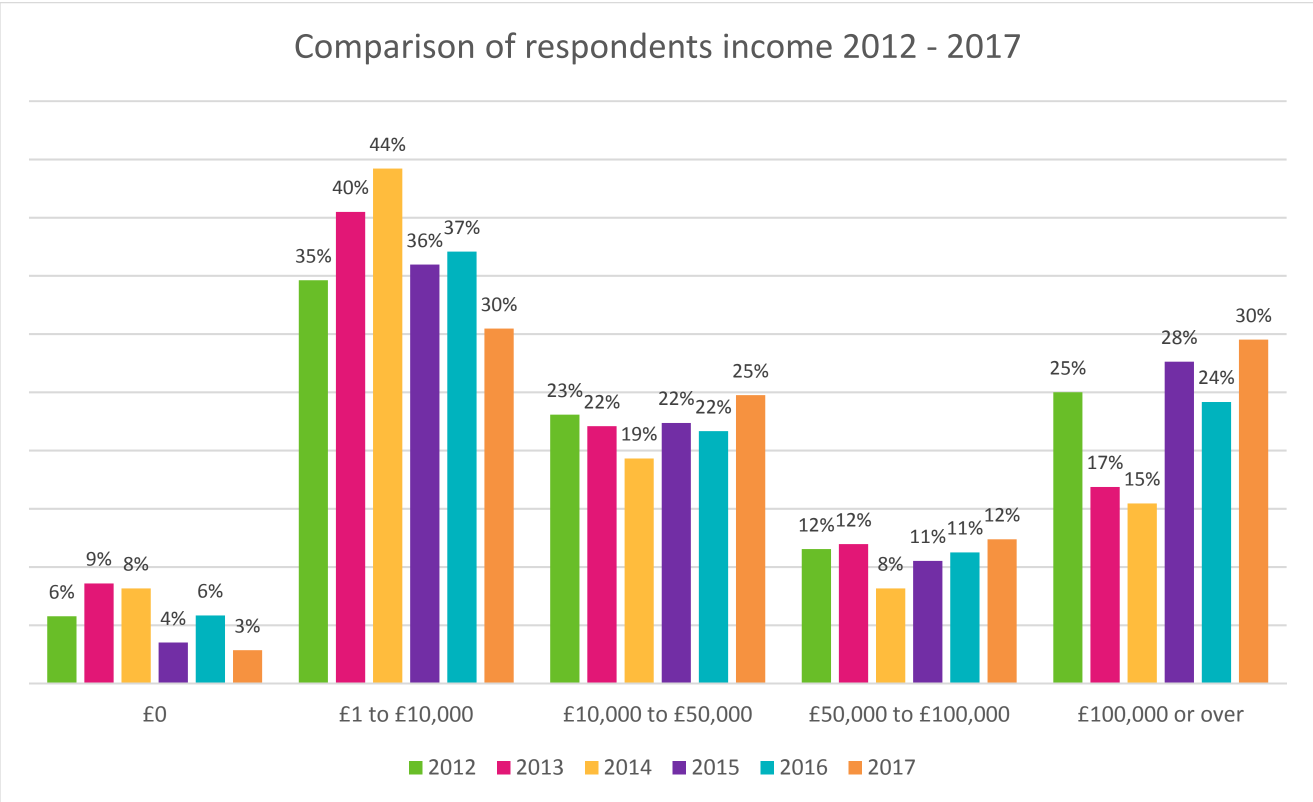

Figure 5 Respondents income 2012 - 2017

Staff

The size of groups can also be judged by looking at the numbers of paid staff. Figure 7 shows that 68% of organisations have five staff or fewer.

A great deal of the support work carried out by Support Cambridgeshire is with these very small organisations. Larger organisations often have other avenues to gain advice but small local groups need access to the type of work we do.

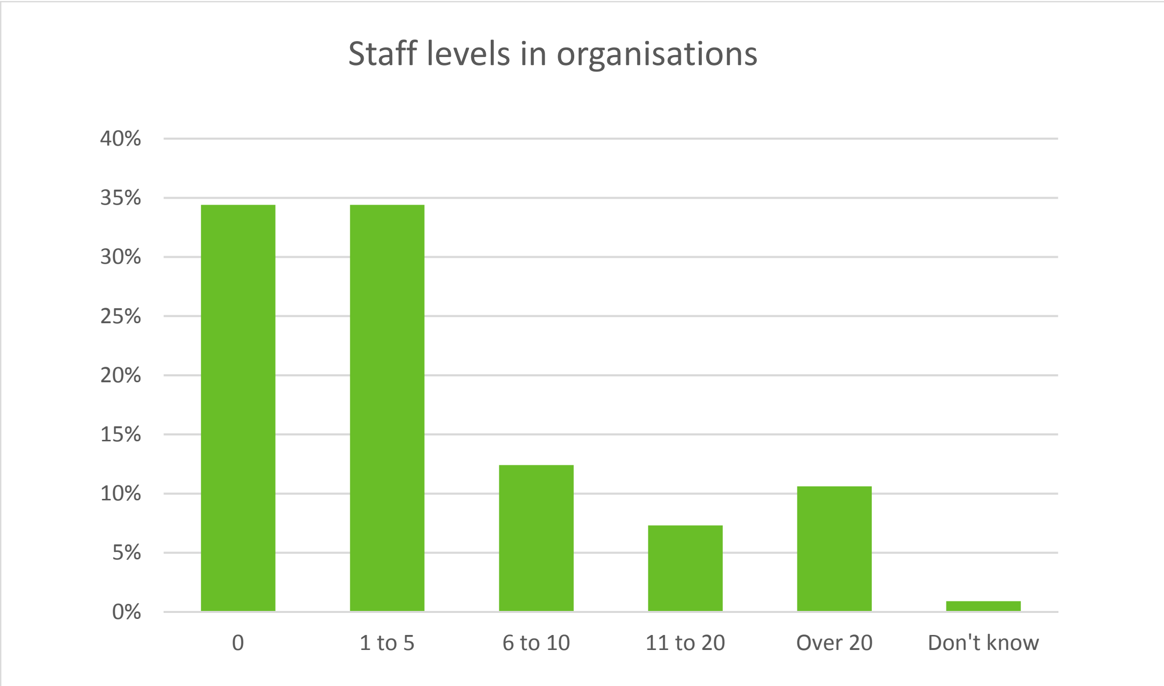

Figure 6 Staff levels

Predictably the larger the organisations income, the higher the number of staff they will have.

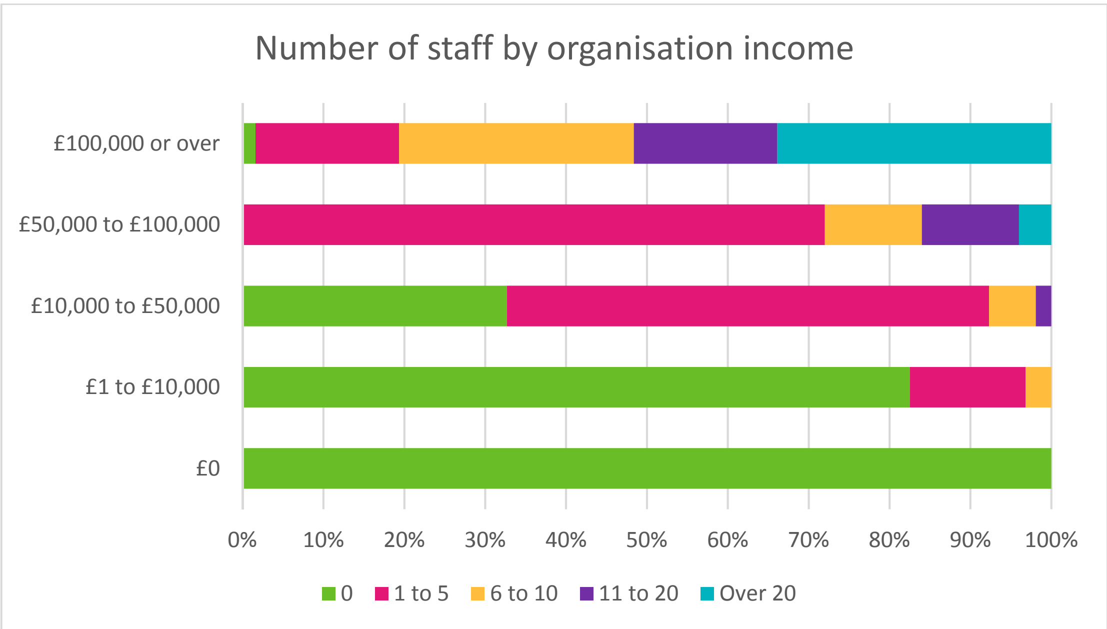

Figure 7 Number of staff by organisation income

If we make a number of assumptions,[5] we can estimate that the number of people employed by those organisations responding to this survey is around 1,370. This can be extrapolated[6] up to indicate that overall the sector employs over 13,700 people in Cambridgeshire. This would represent 4.1% of the economically active population in the county based on the 2011 census[7]. This figure is higher than national figures from the NCVO Almanac and it shows that the sector is a significant employer in Cambridgeshire.

Volunteers

82% of responding organisations indicated that they used volunteers other than those on their management committee. This is down from 91% in the previous year.

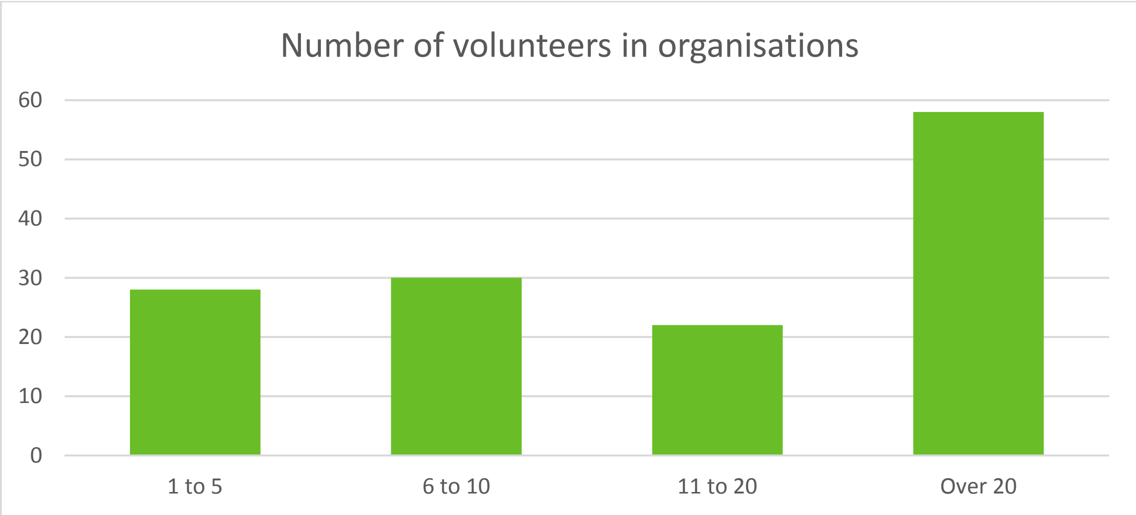

Figure 8 Number of volunteers used by respondents

Unsurprisingly, the larger groups are more likely to have more volunteers.

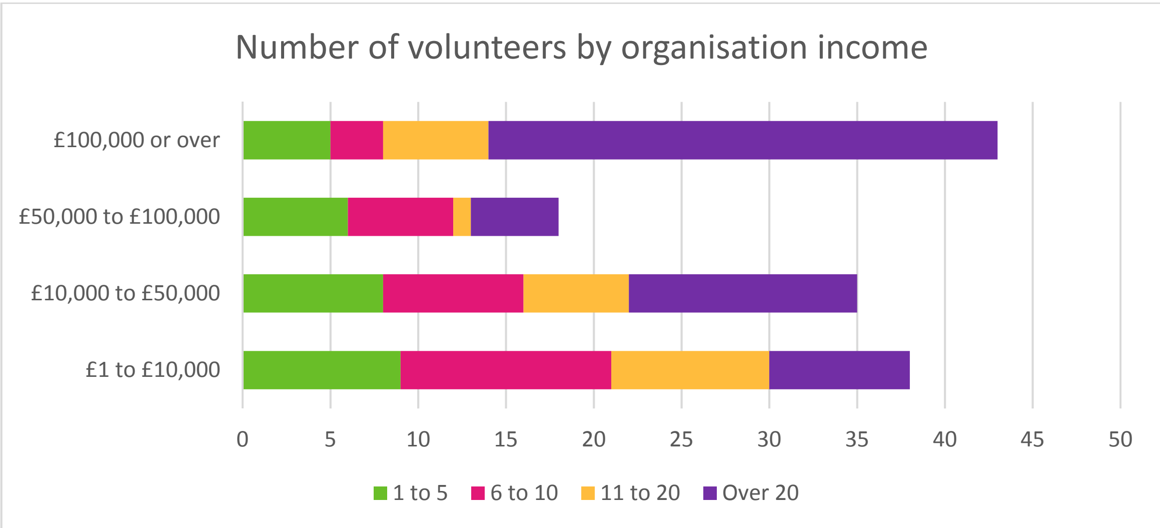

Figure 9 Number of volunteers by organisation income

---

[5] Assume that we take the median value for the number of staff in each band and that a value of 30 is assigned to the 'over 20' band.
[6] We assume that only 50% of CVS members complete this type of survey, and that on average only 20% of voluntary organisations interact with CVS structures.
[7] Cambridgeshire atlas http://atlas.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/census/2011/atlas.html.

If we look at national data then the 2011 census shows that Cambridgeshire makes up 0.98% of the UK population. The NCVO almanac states that in the UK "The ONS estimated the value of formal volunteering to be £22.6bn in 2015". This equates to a value of **£222.2 million** as the value of formal volunteering in Cambridgeshire.

This figure does not consider all the savings that voluntary organisations generate by addressing issues and problems at an early stage or the added value that volunteers bring whilst carrying out their roles.

Volunteering

How people volunteer, how organisations recruit volunteers and the motivations that make people volunteer are all changing. On top of this, the most recent data shows that volunteering numbers remain reasonably stable, but there has been a drop in the average time spent volunteering nationally[8]. On a more positive note, there has been a sharp increase in young people's volunteering[9].

> *"In 2010/11, 23% of 16-24 year olds said they volunteered formally (i.e. through a group or organisation of some kind) at least once a month. By 2014/15 that figure was 35%. That's a 52% increase, and in real terms it would mean around one million more young volunteers."*

Sharp increase in young people's volunteering – NCVO blog April 2016

Whilst there is no definitive reason for these figures, we do know that how people volunteer is changing. In Cambridgeshire, there has been an increase in Timebanking and Time Credits, with successful projects funded by local authorities in an expanding number of neighbourhoods. These schemes offer volunteers an opportunity to earn rewards for the time they give and have been successful in recruiting people who have never volunteered before.

We are also seeing volunteers being able to make use of technology and volunteer from home. NESTA predict that this will only increase in the future[10].

> *"A few pioneers have already begun asking for people to give their time remotely, like British Red Cross volunteers creating maps of the Ebola crisis in remote locations from home.*
>
> *And in 2017, I expect we'll see many more volunteers giving their time from home to charities who need people to man phone lines, or answer enquiries on their websites, like The Silverline. It's a model that The Mix has recently piloted through 'Get Connected', creating a secure system for busy mums and those who only have a spare hour to answer 5,000 young people's helpline calls and web chats from home rather than at its central London HQ.*
>
> *I expect in the coming year we'll see many more charities getting skilled volunteers to give their time altruistically to tutor students in the most deprived towns up and down England for free, from home or work."*

[8] https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/satelliteaccounts/articles/changesinthevalueanddivisionofunpaidcareworkintheuk/2015.
[9] https://blogs.ncvo.org.uk/2016/04/11/sharp-increase-in-young-peoples-volunteering/.
[10] http://www.nesta.org.uk/2017-predictions/rise-armchair-volunteer.

As volunteers change then so must organisations who want to make use of them. Recruiting, managing, and retaining volunteers has to alter in order to ensure that opportunities on offer meet what volunteers want. In an article in Third Sector magazine[11] it was noted that

> *"organisations needed to embrace the fact that volunteers might have a more fluid relationship with them because people had become more focused on causes than organisations.*
>
> *It might mean we might need to change our mentality a bit from one that recruits volunteers to do a very specific role that we define, to one where we enable people to give their time and talent."*

Volunteer Support

Recruiting, managing, and supporting volunteers is not free. Groups need to invest time, knowledge, and funds to make the most of their volunteers and to ensure that they are safe, supported and fulfilled. We know that funding for volunteering has dropped, and that how people recruit and manage volunteers has changed.

This year's results reflect last year's, with 'Recruiting Volunteers' being the most desired support followed by 'legal issues around volunteering'. Whilst training was the preferred method of improving practice, there was also a desire for more networking with organisations facing similar issues.

> *"We are very lucky in that we have over 500 volunteers across the county, but more is expected by (funders) of voluntary input with less financial support to do so. We are all fishing in the same pool for potentially the same bank of voluntary effort."*
>
> Comment from survey respondent

The past year has also seen significant changes to the way that local authorities have funded volunteering support. This has resulted in the closure of Cambridge and District Volunteer Centre and seen the rise in profile of Timebanks and Time Credits.

As a result of this and previous years surveys, Support Cambridgeshire partners are able to offer a suite of training courses suitable for small volunteer using organisations as well as the development of a volunteer managers network that builds on the work of CDVC.

[11] http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/culture-change-needed-volunteer-management-attract-people-says-ncvo-manager/volunteering/article/1435418.

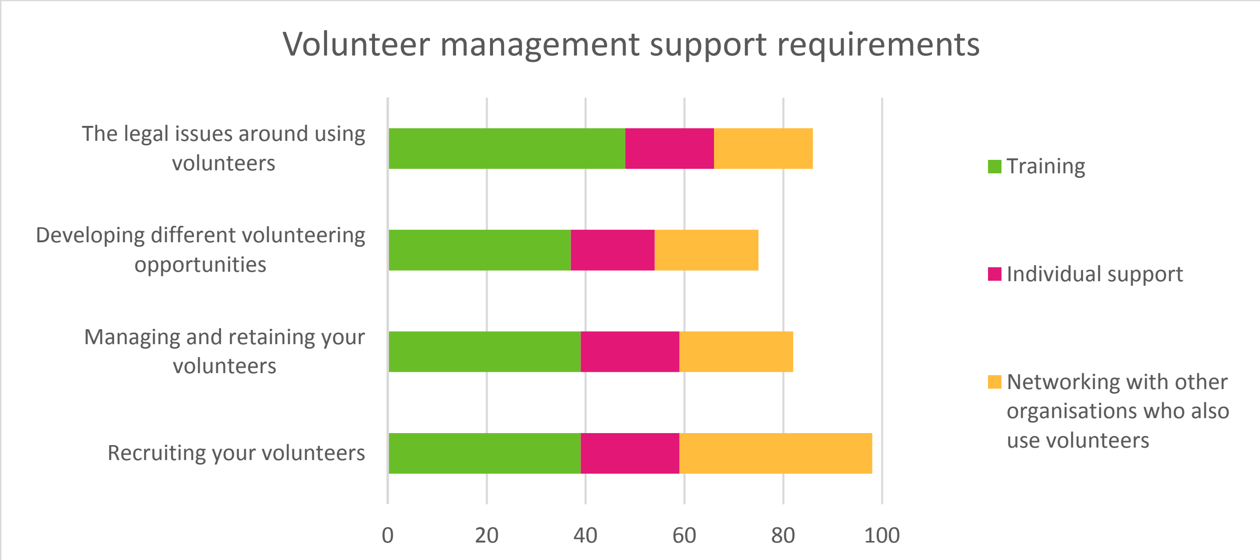

Figure 10 Volunteer management support requirements

Income trends

Groups were asked to predict their funding level for the coming year (2017-18). The majority 58%, thought that there would be no change in their expected income. This was lower than last year's predictions of 67%. This reduction corresponded with an increase in groups who thought that income would increase, from 16% to 26%. The number that felt that their income would be lower also saw a small fall from a high of 18% two years ago to 16% this year. What is shown here is a more optimistic outlook on future funding than in the previous years.

Many groups continued to highlight the reduction in funding from statutory services as a concern, with about 18% of comments reflecting reduced funding or changes to contracts. Many groups are putting more effort into fundraising and hoping this will increase income About 28% of comments were either that the group had, or hoped to attract more grant funding. About 18% of comments showed that groups were hoping to grow paid for services or increase membership and to bring in more money through 'trading' type of activity.

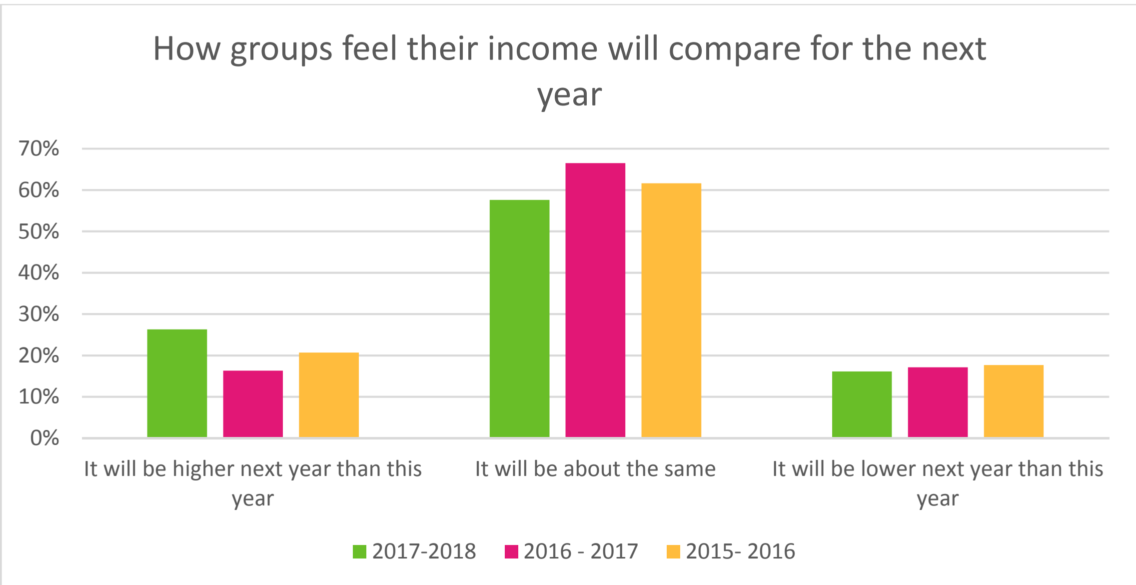

Figure 11 How groups feel their income will compare for the next year

Bigger groups indicated that there was more volatility in their income with less feeling that their income would stay the same; however some of the previous year's pessimism seemed to have been replaced with a feeling that income would increase.

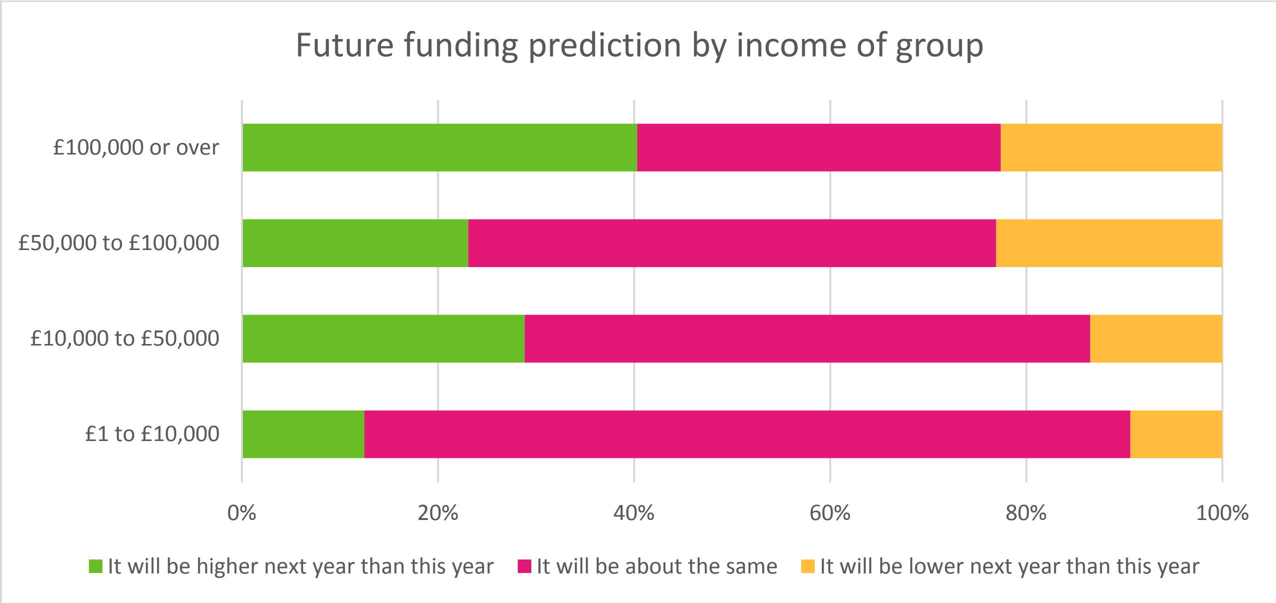

Figure 12 How groups feel their income will compare for the next year by income

Statutory funding

Many groups are still engaged and funded by local statutory bodies. We can see that in most cases the percentage of respondents engaged with the different bodies has gone up.

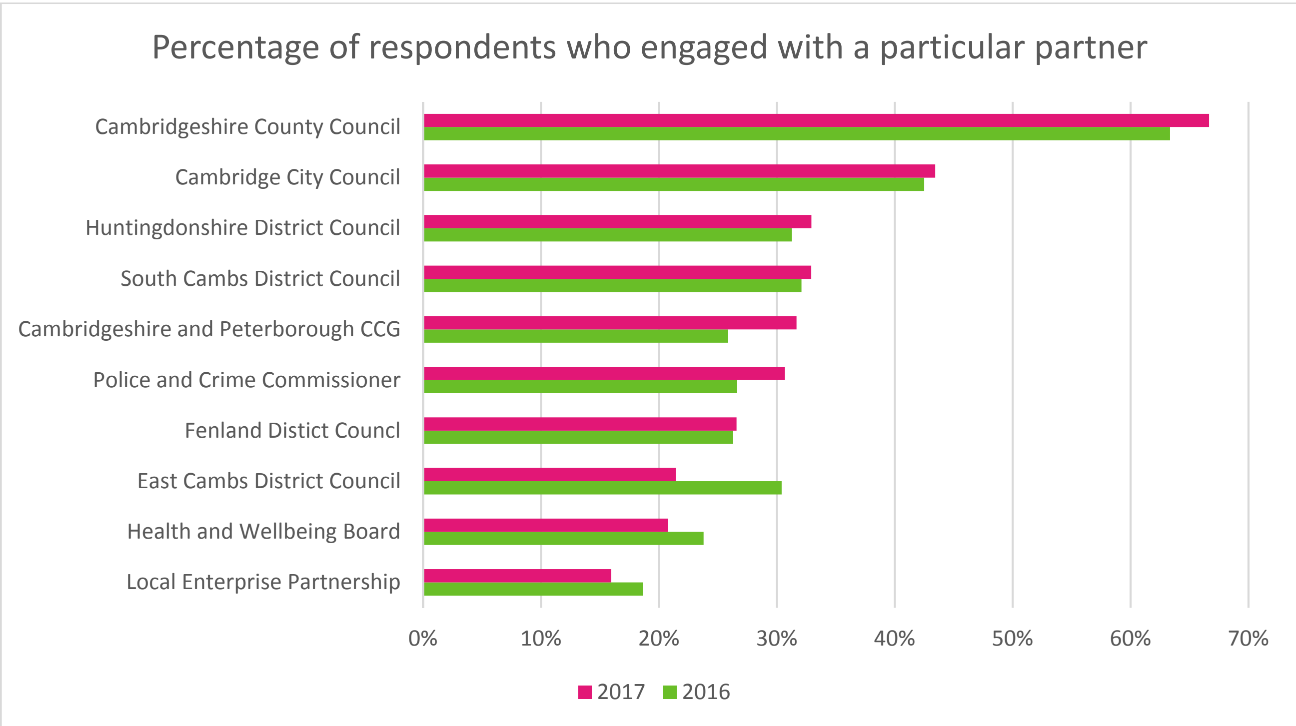

Figure 13 Percentage of respondents who engaged with a particular partner

Despite continued funding cuts to local authorities, we can also see that the percentage of respondents funded by local authorities has risen.

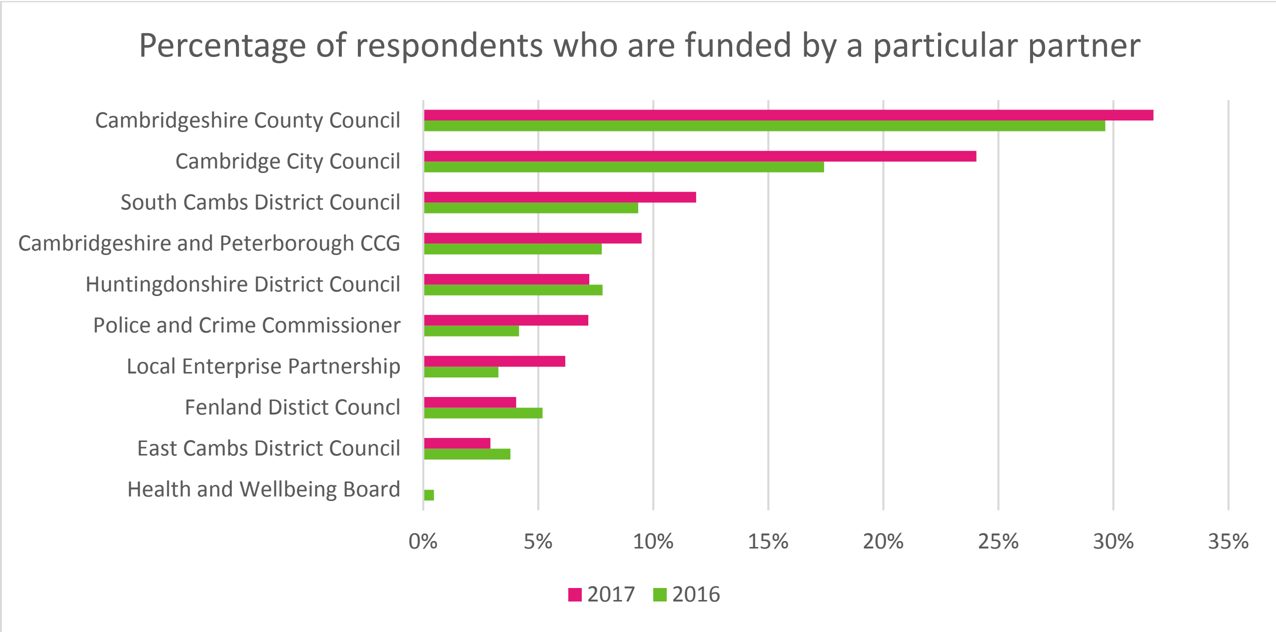

Figure 14 Percentage of respondents who are funded by a particular partner

There is a clear correlation between the engagement and funding, with those organisations with more engagement also funding more organisations.

We asked all those organisations that were funded by a partner to give us some feedback on their relationship and the funding process.

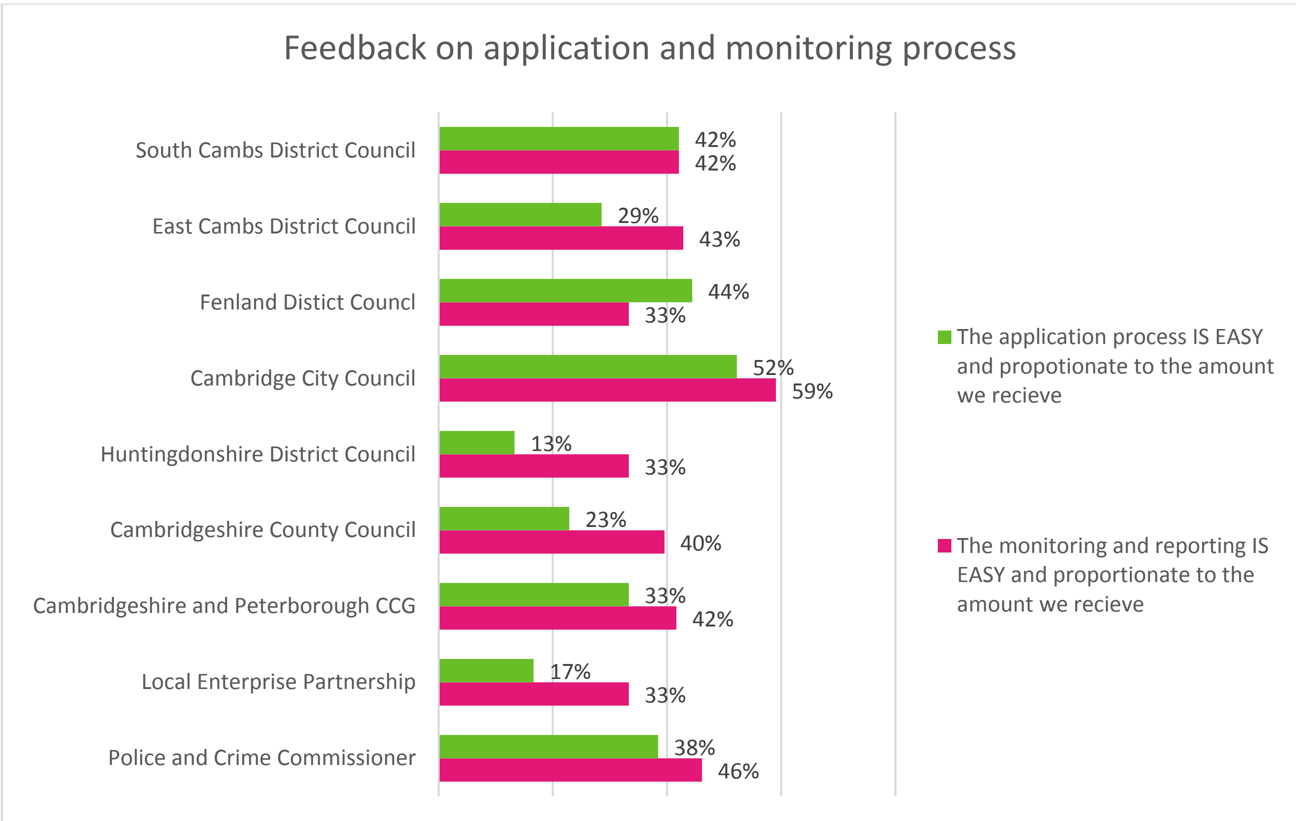

Figure 15 Feedback on statutory organisations as funders

This indicates that groups do not see application and monitoring as being easy or appropriate in most instances with only the City Council having higher than 50% of respondents saying the application and monitoring was easy and proportionate.

We also asked groups who were funded if they thought they would be funded again in the next year. In the majority of cases groups were less confident than in 2016.

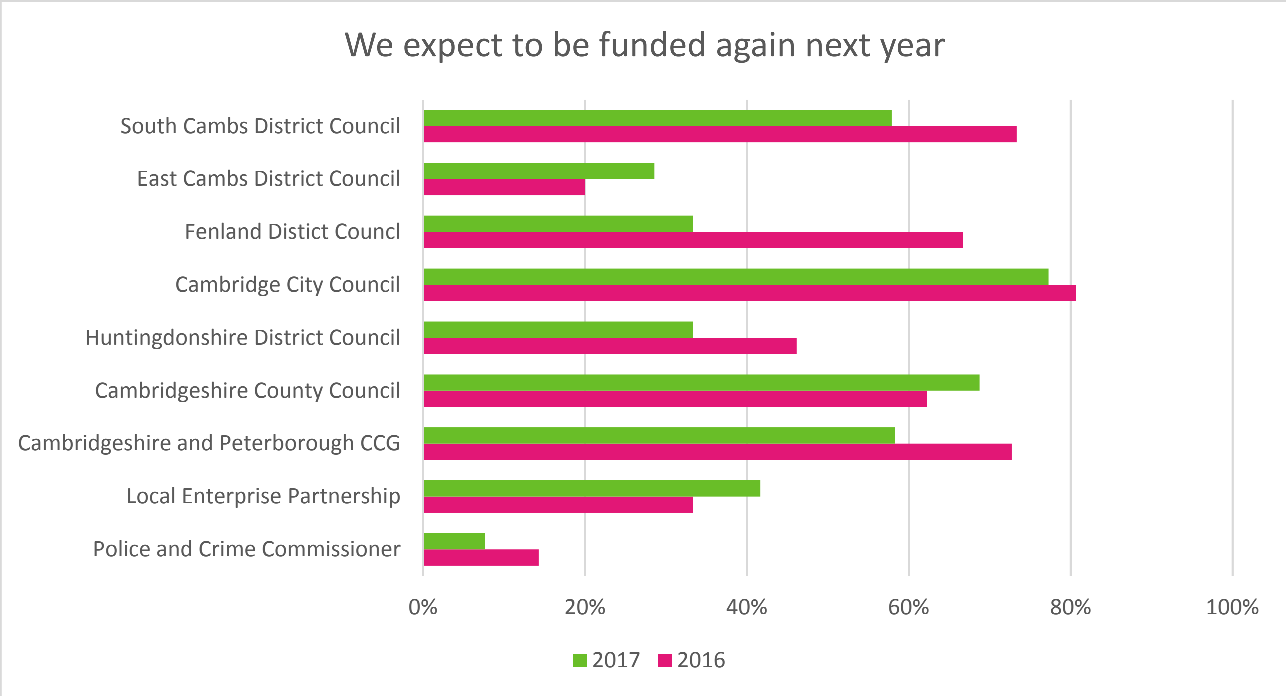

Figure 16 Groups that expect funding in the next year

It is reassuring that groups receiving funding feel that they have a good relationship with their funder.

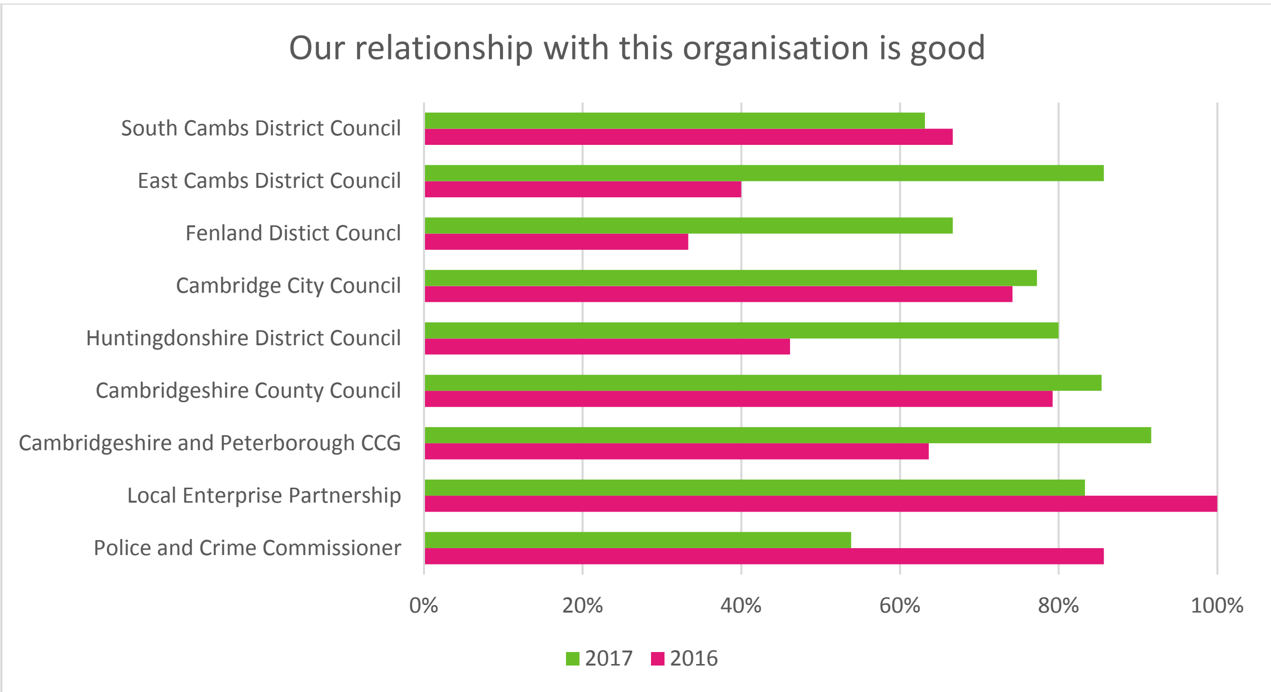

Figure 17 Groups with a good relationship with funders

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. We can see the wide variety of beneficiaries and as such the incredible reach groups have into communities. Groups were asked to indicate all the beneficiaries they worked with. Figure 16 shows the results for 2017 alongside those from 2016 and 2015.

There remains a constant similarity between the three years with the top seven categories remaining the same (but in a different order) across the period.

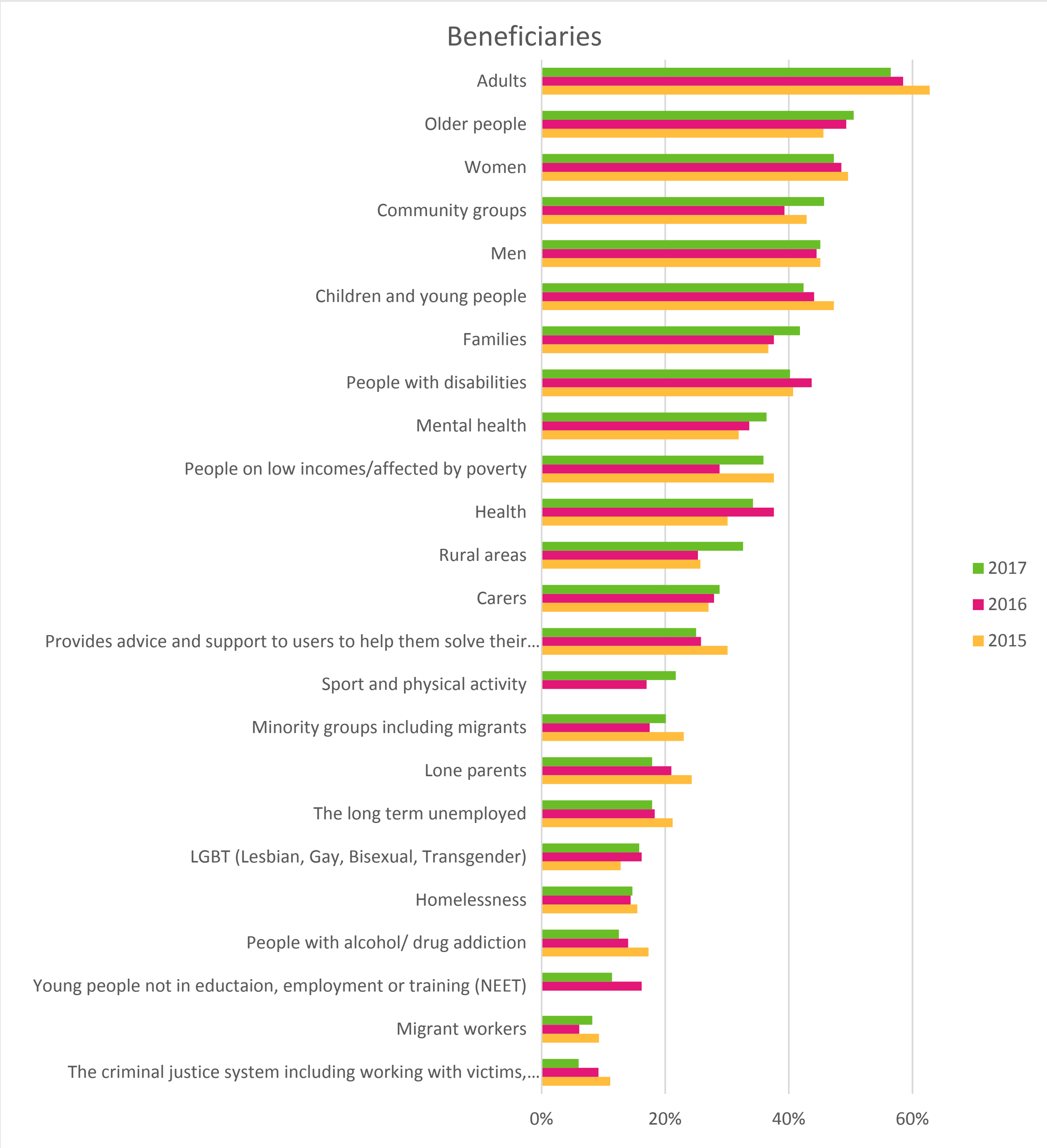

Figure 18 Beneficiaries of respondents

VCS Support Needs

A key role for all the organisations involved in Support Cambridgeshire is to provide advice, support and training for voluntary groups. Groups are asked what sort of training and support they think they may need in the coming year and this helps us to deliver our training programme. This information also helps to inform funding applications to look at putting on extra training for groups.

Financial management training

Only 14% of respondents indicated that they required some form of support with their financial management; this is down from 18% two years ago. There was a higher demand for training from the smaller groups.

There is an element of the fact that many groups do not understand that they need training. Many of the funders we work with highlight financial management, recording and reporting as an issue. There is also a tendency for trustees to leave 'the money' to the treasurer, and often there is insufficient understanding of the finance reports by all trustees.

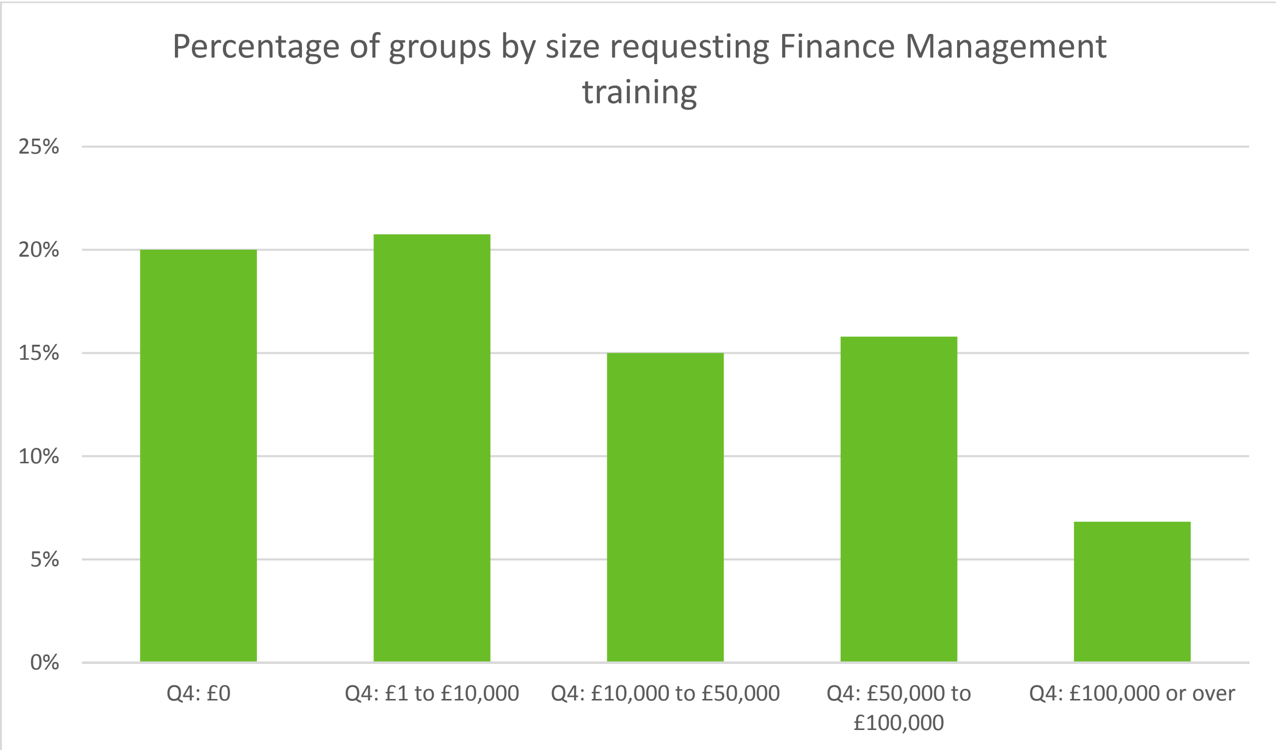

Figure 19 Percentage of groups by size requesting Finance Management training

Fundraising support needs

Fundraising continues to be an area of concern for organisations. This year 55% of organisations indicated that they required help, support or training around identifying or raising funds. This was up from 40% in 2015 and slightly up from last year. The numbers saying yes across different sizes of organisation was consistent, indicating that this is an area of concern across the sector.

Figure 20 Raising funds - support required

Help around identifying funding and writing funding applications remain the two areas of highest need. More groups want 1-2-1 support to help identify funding. There is a growing demand for online fundraising training and support. The continued importance of fundraising planning, and in how to monitor your work can be seen by the fact that Developing a Fundraising Strategy and Measuring Outcomes and Impact are both still popular areas for support.

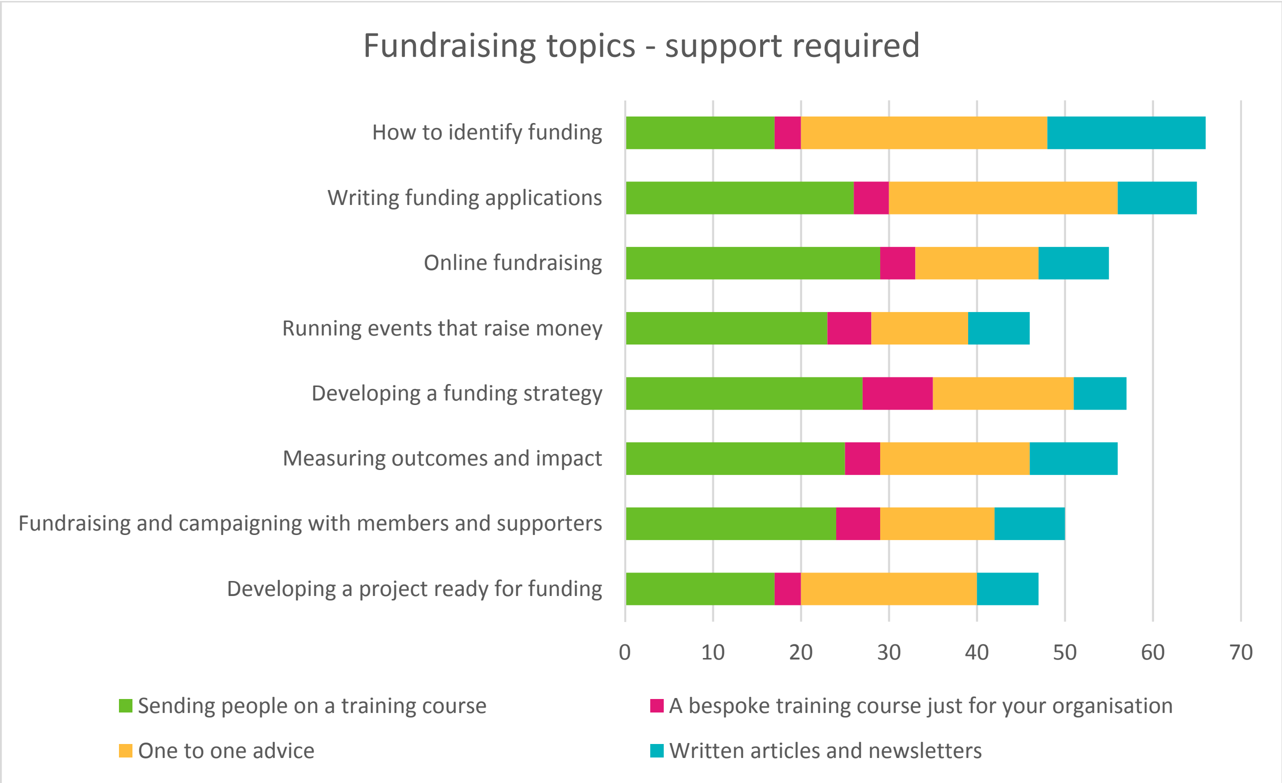

Figure 21 Fundraising topics - support required

Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding is growing in both popularity and in the amount of money it raises. Nesta[12] estimate that £3.2 billion was raised across all sectors in 2015, but that Crowdfunding represented only 0.5% of charitable income. The Nesta report also indicated that 43% of organisations were considering a crowdfunding campaign in the next year. Our results show that 57% of respondents are either considering a campaign or would like to find out more, but that only 7% had tried it (up from 4% last year).

We asked groups what type of training and support they would like in order to develop a crowdfunding campaign. 83% felt that a short introductory session would be useful and 67% felt that a more comprehensive series of courses would also be needed.

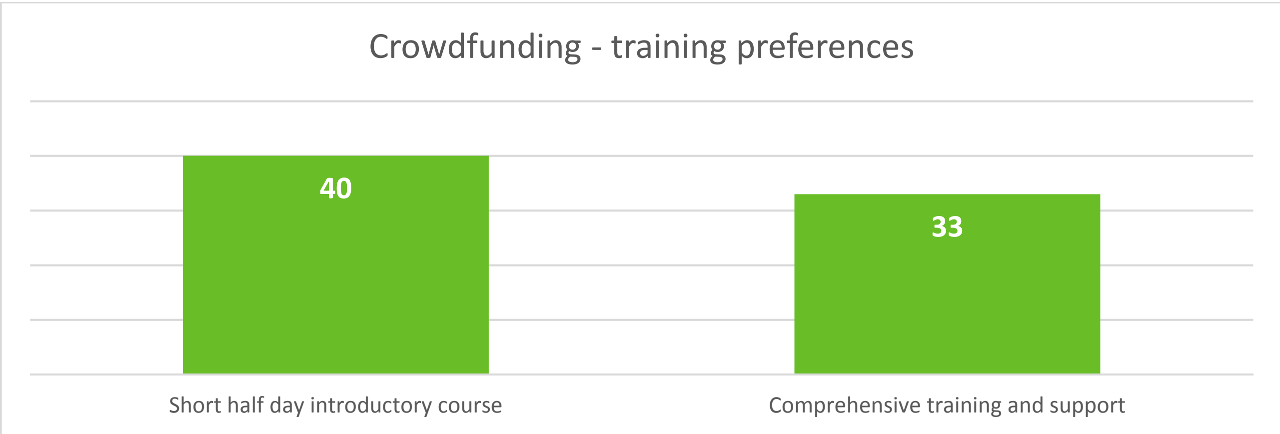

Figure 22 Crowdfunding - training preferences

Project management support needs

Once again, project management was an area in which 30% of respondents felt that training was needed. There was a clear growth in the perceived importance of this training by organisation size.

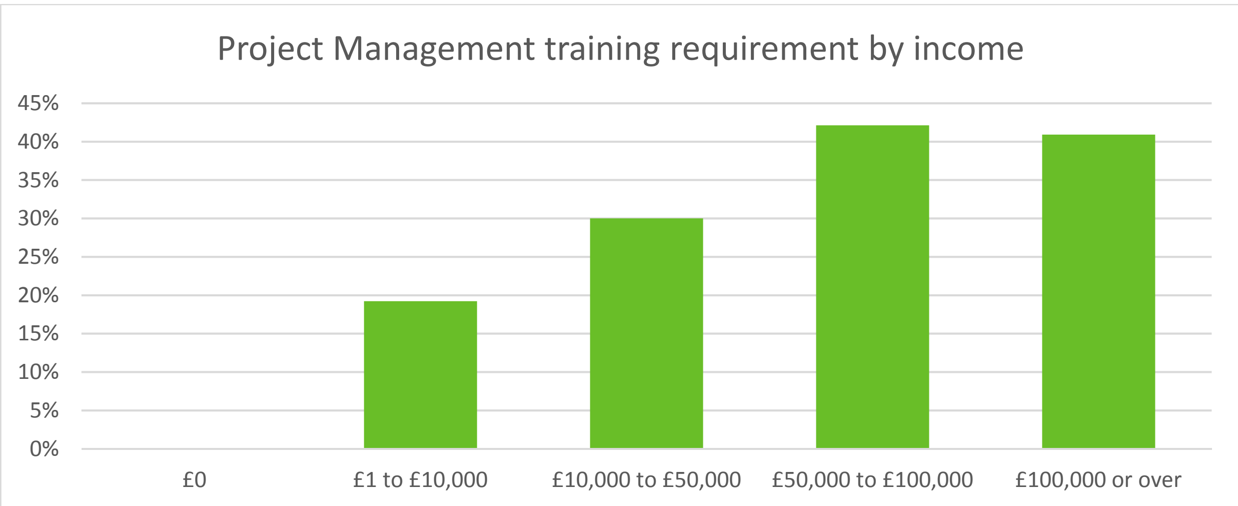

Figure 23 Project Management training requirement by income

[12] Crowdfunding Good Causes http://www.nesta.org.uk/sites/default/files/crowdfunding_good_causes-2016.pdf

Of those organisations who wanted project management training, there was a strong desire to see some form of accreditation. Respondents also indicated that any courses should include an element of face-to-face learning.

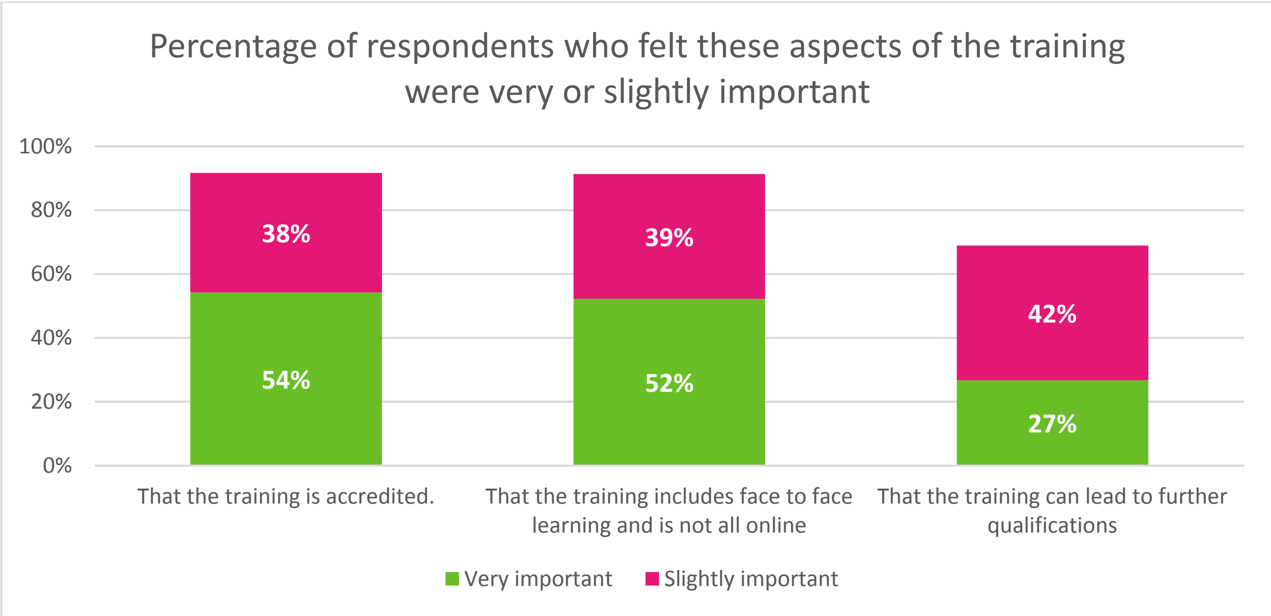

Figure 24 Project Management - what attributes are important

For those groups not interested in Project Management training, the smaller ones felt it was not relevant to them, or it was not something they had even considered; whilst larger organisations were more likely to state that they had skills inhouse already.

Trustee Training

The role of trustees continues to be upmost importance to groups, despite this only 34% of respondents said that their board had received training in the previous year. This is down from 45% in 2016. Trustees from larger groups were more likely to have received training and for very small groups there had been no training. Although this sample was small, it is worrying that small groups are not able, or have not thought to, train their trustees.

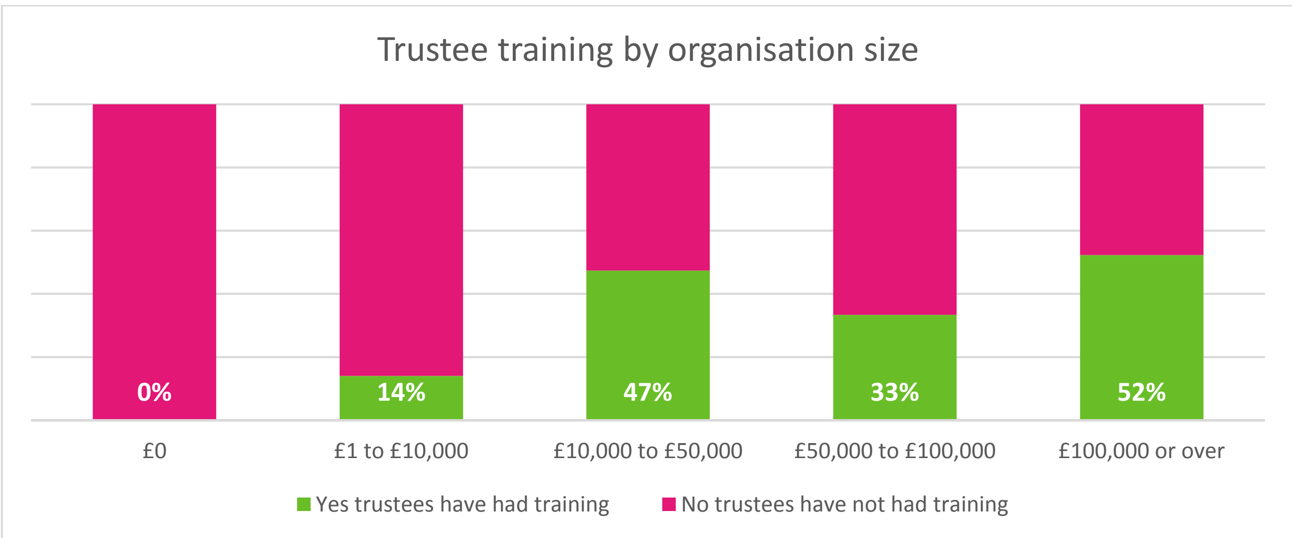

Figure 25 Trustee training by organisation size

Despite organisations not training trustees, there is still a demand for training. Once again, Duties of Trustees and Trustees Roles and Responsibilities around Fundraising are the two most requested courses.

It is slightly concerning that very small groups do not feel that ‘Duties of Trustees’ or ‘Understanding the Finances’ are areas they think trustees need training. Experience has shown that smaller organisations are often the ones most in need, and that they are more likely to have issues in these areas. There is an element of groups only understanding ‘what it is that they don’t know’ and trustees across all organisation size need to be informed, trained and have an understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

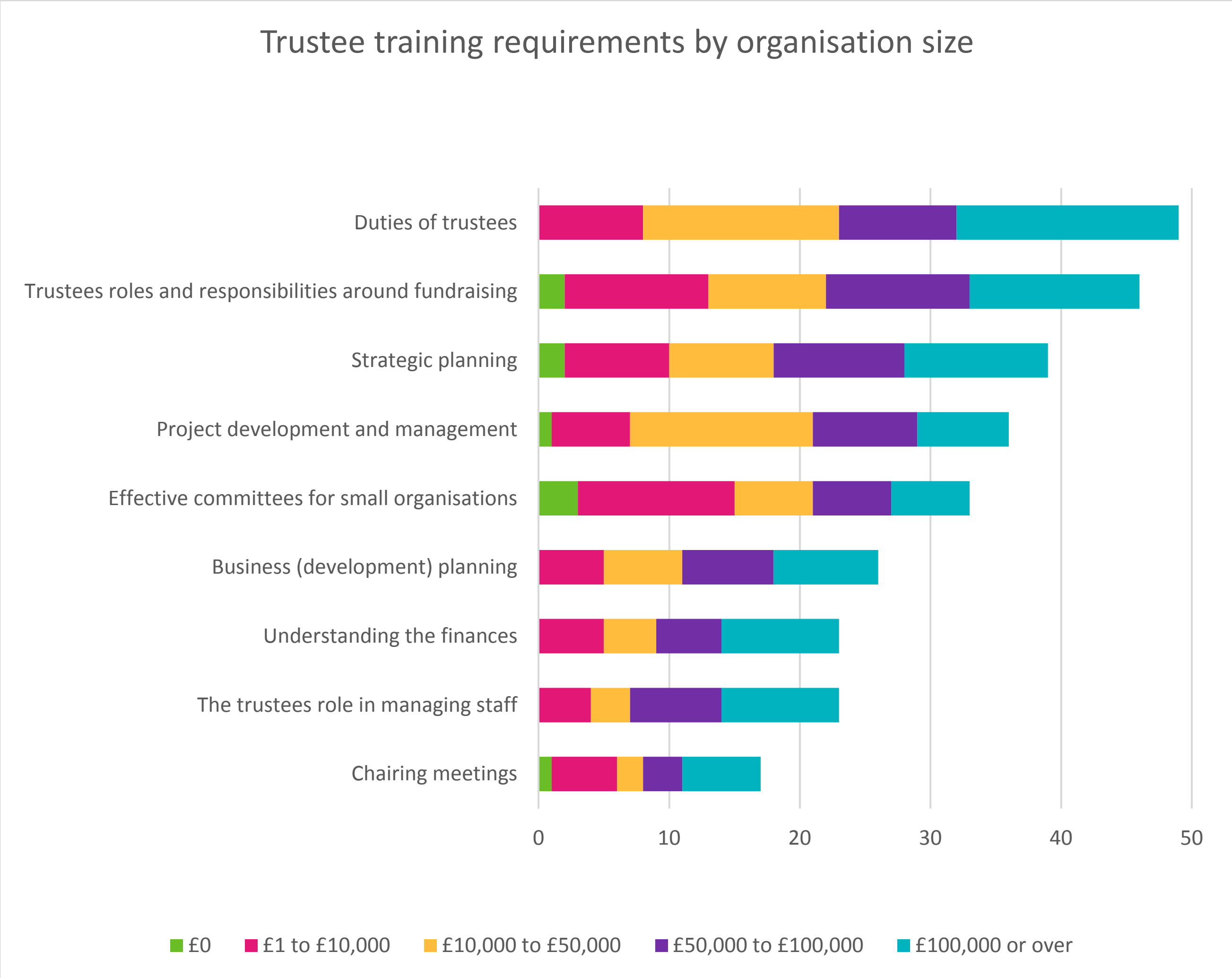

Figure 26 Trustee training requirements by organisation size

Whether a group has trained trustees in the last year is not something that particularly influences their recognition about their need for training. More groups that had not trained their trustees indicated that they needed training across all areas.

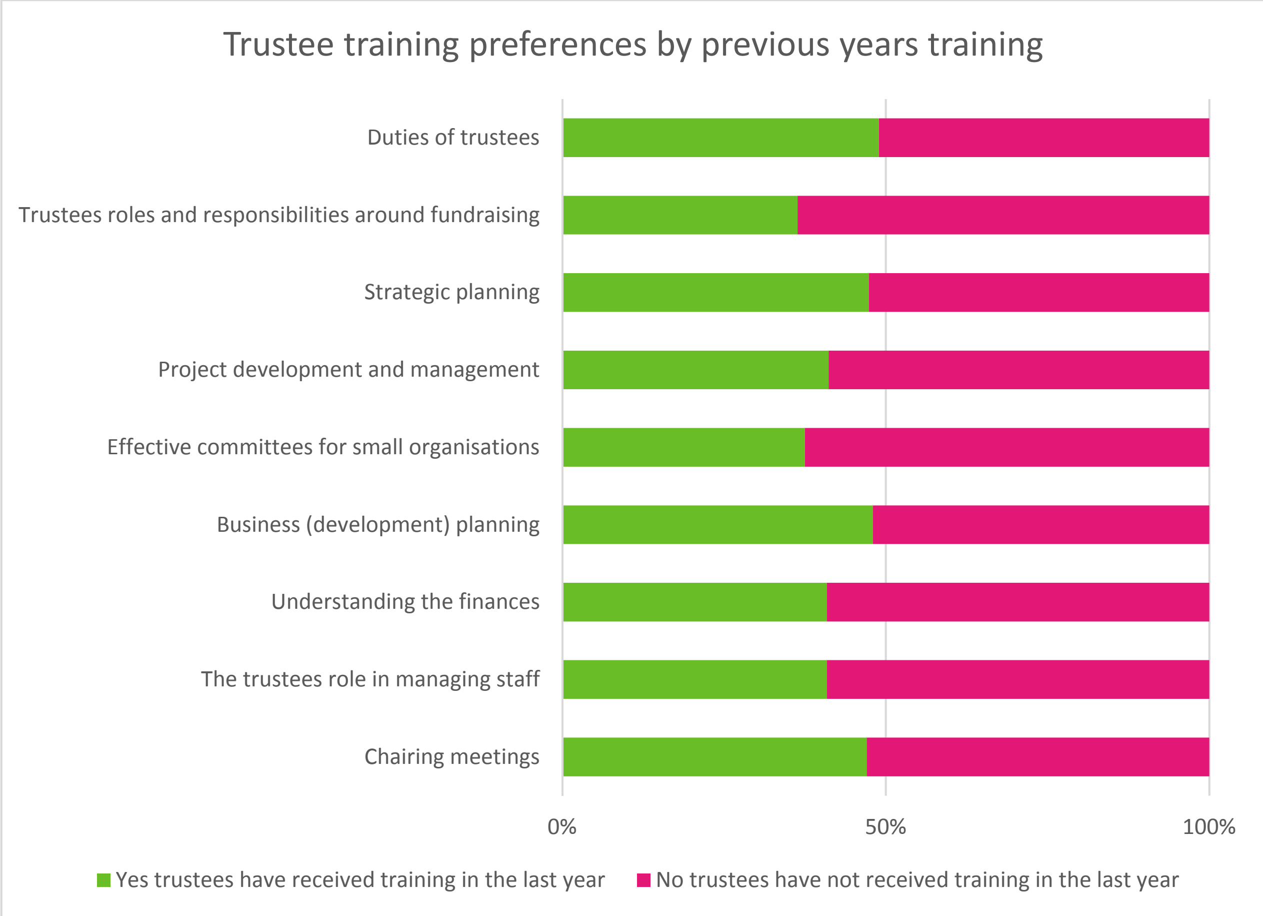

Figure 27 Trustee training preferences by previous year's training

There is very little demand for either weekend or bespoke training from groups of any size. However, there is a slight overall preference for daytime courses (48%) over evening courses (45%). When you look at this preference by organisation size, you see evidence that larger groups prefer evening courses and smaller groups prefer daytime courses for trustees. (The £0 income group has been left out from the figure below as sample size was small.)

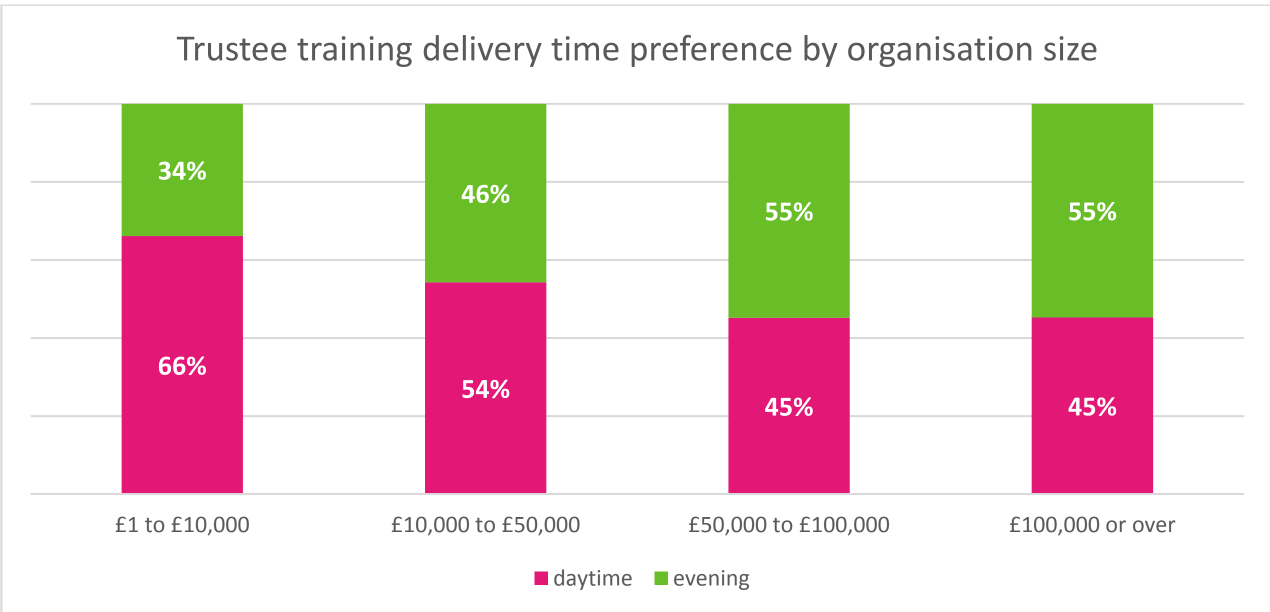

Figure 28 Trustee training delivery time preference by organisation size

Compliance and general training

There is still a significant demand for training across other aspects of running a voluntary organisation. First Aid and Health and Safety remain in high demand; however, both storytelling and engaging new audiences /participants have shown an increase in demand.

Figure 29 Compliance and general training 2017

Employee supported volunteering

For the first year, we asked organisations about the support they have had from businesses and what they might like in the future. 36% of organisations had received some free support from business. When you look at this by size of income, you can see that, overall, larger organisations are more likely to benefit.

Figure 30 Free support from business by organisation size

We asked all of those who had support how useful they had found it. On a scale of 0 to 10 with 10 being most useful the average of the responses was 8. This indicates that overall groups found the help from business to be useful. However, only 42% said they required further help.

When asked about the type of support received most was face-to-face. Of those that said 'other', most indicated that the support had been financial or donations.

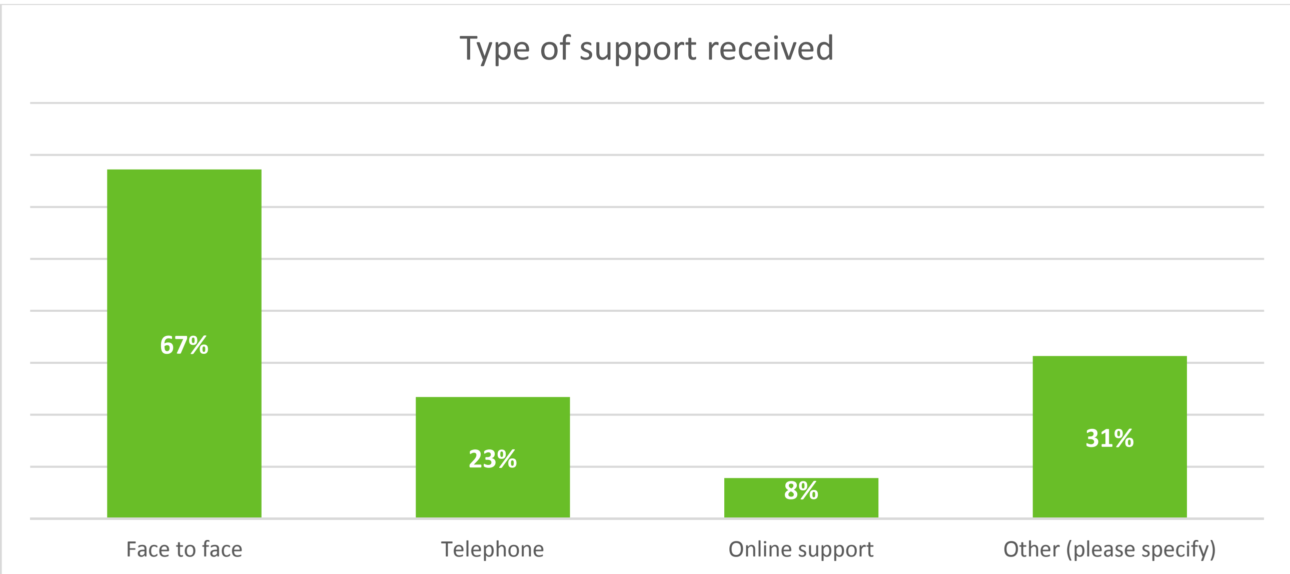

Figure 31 type of support received from business

We also asked in what area support was received. Many of those in the other category were helped with fundraising indirectly by being given donations of equipment, and a number had help with IT projects, especially websites.

Figure 32 Type of help received from business

We asked groups what sort of barriers they had encountered in getting support from business. 43% of those that said they had support indicated that there were barriers to getting that support. The most significant barrier was the difficulty of making contact with the right business at the start of the project.

For those groups that had not received support, 79% indicated that they would be interested future support from local businesses. Fundraising was the most requested area of help.

Figure 33 Help wanted from local business from groups not having received it in the past

Of those who indicated ‘other’, the main areas highlighted were funds or donated goods and help with IT or IT equipment.

We asked what the barriers to stopping organisations from asking for help were. Of those who replied ‘other’, the most common barrier was lack of time.

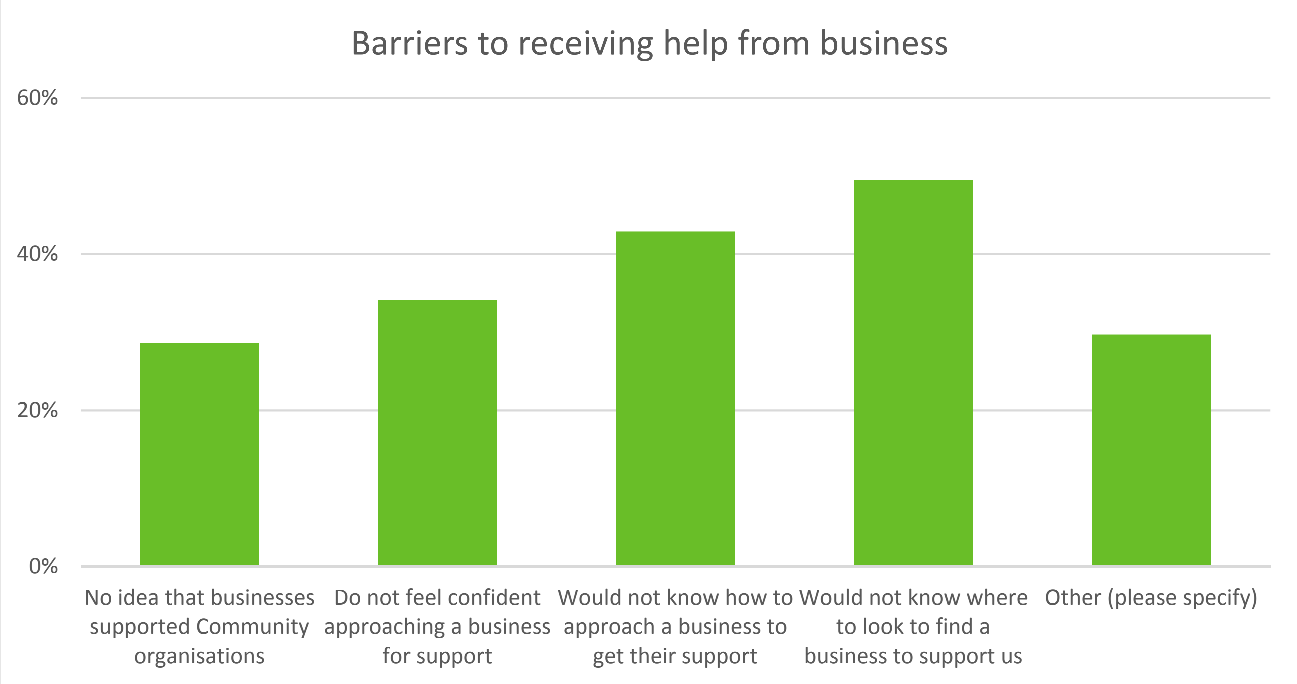

Figure 34 Barriers to receiving help from business

Networks & Communications

A large part of the work of Support Cambridgeshire is ensuring that information is provided to members and the wider sector. 72% of respondents said was extremely or very important that Support Cambridgeshire kept them up to date with news. Surprisingly, it was the larger organisations that found this most important, and reassuringly no respondents felt this was not important.

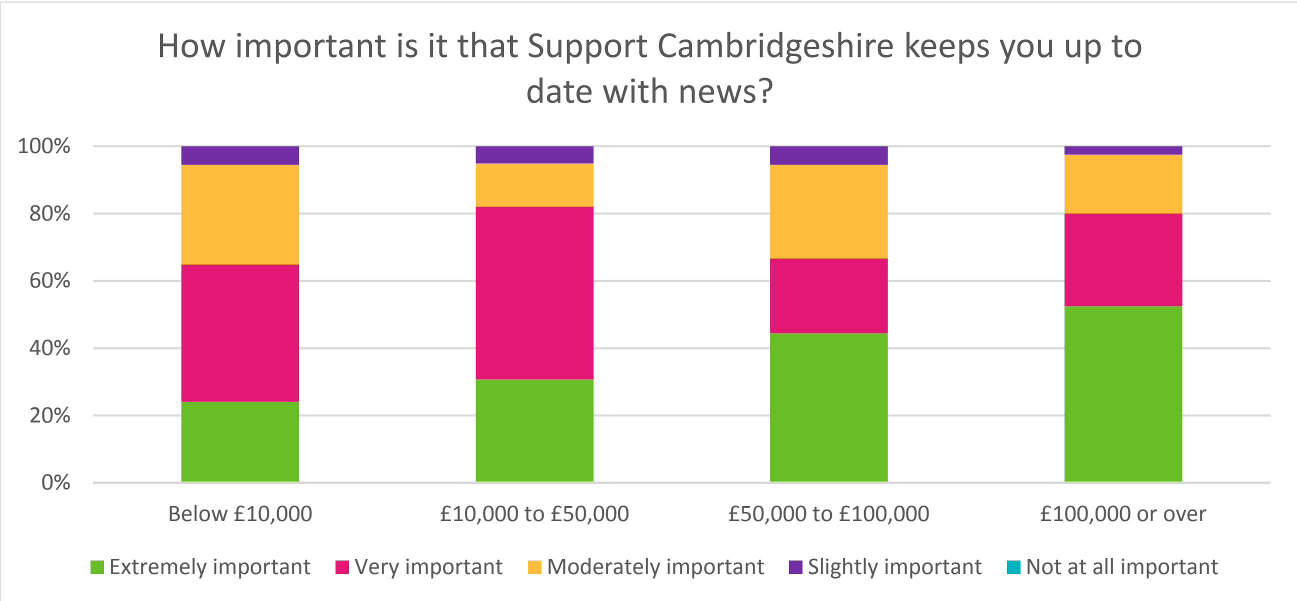

Figure 35 The importance of Support Cambridgeshire providing news updates

We asked organisations about what type of communication method they preferred. By far the most preferred were regular electronic newsletters and email updates (with 99% finding these very or moderately useful). There continued to be a lot less appetite for social media updates with only 44% saying Facebook was very or moderately important and only 33% saying the same about Twitter.

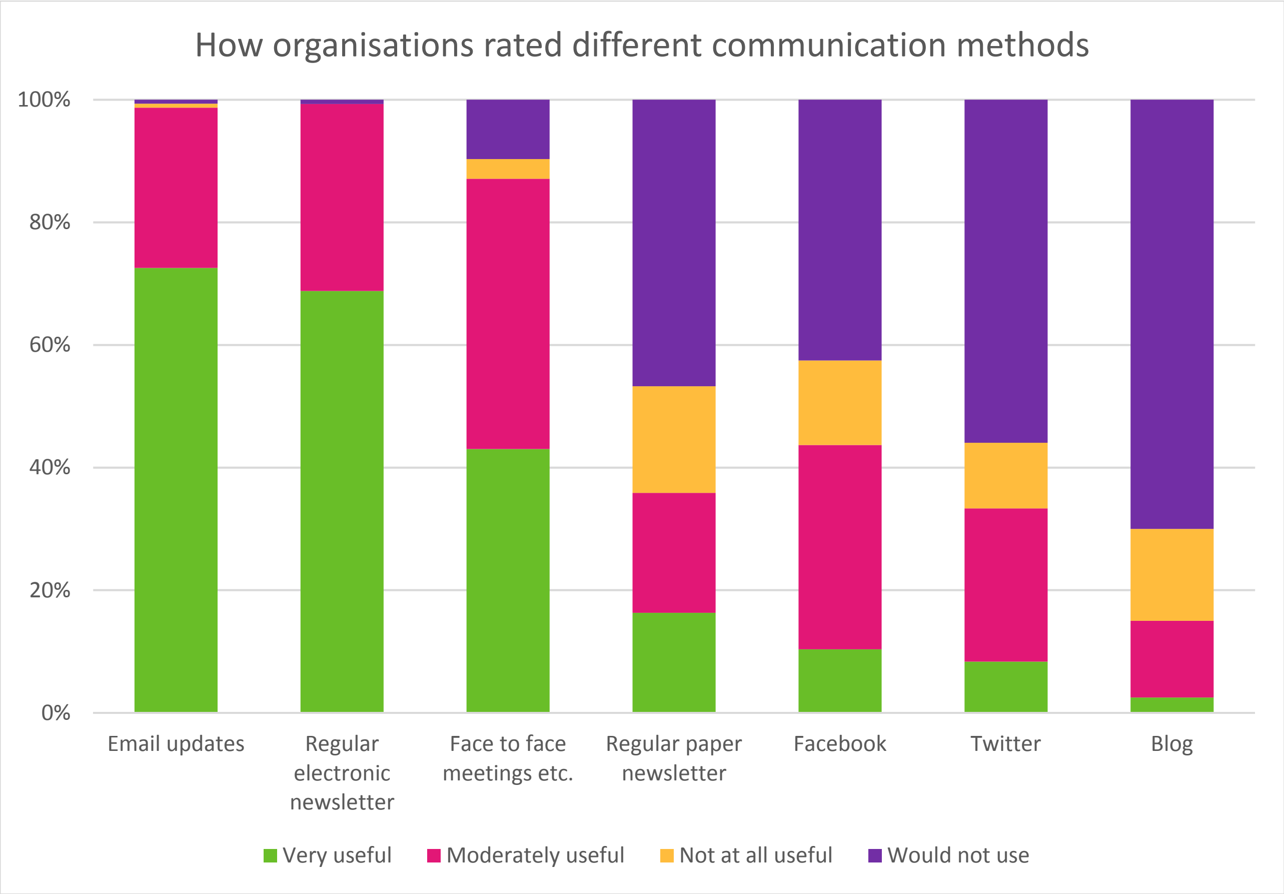

Figure 36 How organisations rated different communication methods

There continues to be an appetite for networking meetings, with 88% interested in this, whilst only 37% are interested in web based forums.

Webinars

A webinar is a seminar conducted over the Internet. They have become increasingly popular to enable dispersed organisations to share learning without having to take time away from the office. They are generally recorded and as such they enable people to access training at a time that suits them. Given that both time and cost are key barriers to VCS engagement with training, there are possibilities that webinars could help to deliver a different type of service. 52% of respondents said they were very likely or quite likely to take part in this type of event if the subject interested them. There was little difference in responses between organisations based on size or on area of operation.

Social media and internet use

The Lloyds Bank UK Business Digital Index analyses actual online behaviour and survey research of small businesses and charities to understand their attitudes towards and usage of digital technology. For charities, there is a rise in the Index score, showing an increase in overall digital maturity. The charities' Index score has increased by six points to 42 since 2015 and just over half of charities

(102,000, 51%) have all five Basic Digital Skills. (This falls to 48% for charities with 10 or fewer staff.) The index also states that attitudes towards social media usage are changing, with 36% agreeing or completely agreeing that a social media presence can help them generate revenues, compared with 23% in 2015.

Our survey shows that most groups, 94%, said that they used the internet to help the organisation or the people they worked with. This is similar to last year (96%). It is mainly small organisations working with elderly people that are not using the internet, these often have a more volunteer focus to their work (70% had no staff).

87% of groups have a website. Of those that didn't only 45% expressed an interest in finding out more about setting one up, this represented only 9 responses. Of those who had a website, there was also some desire for support. This can be seen to be slightly higher for groups with a lower income.

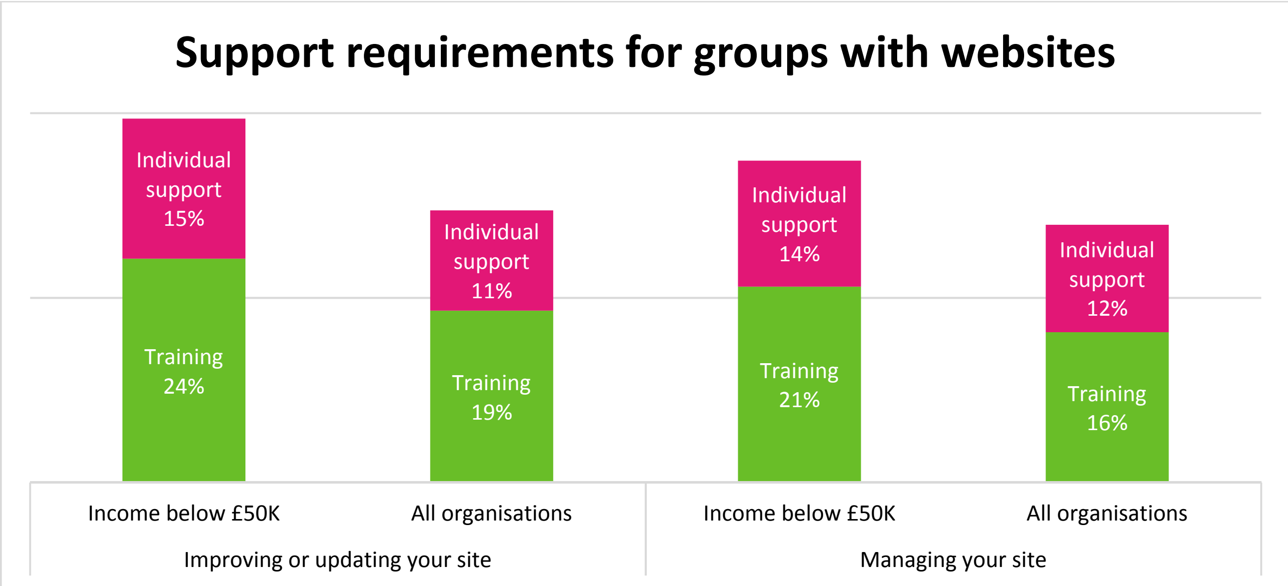

Figure 37 Support requirements of groups with websites

72% of respondents were using social media; this is up from 61% in 2015. There is a big difference in social media use when looking at organisations of different size; Smaller organisations are less likely to be using social media than larger organisations.

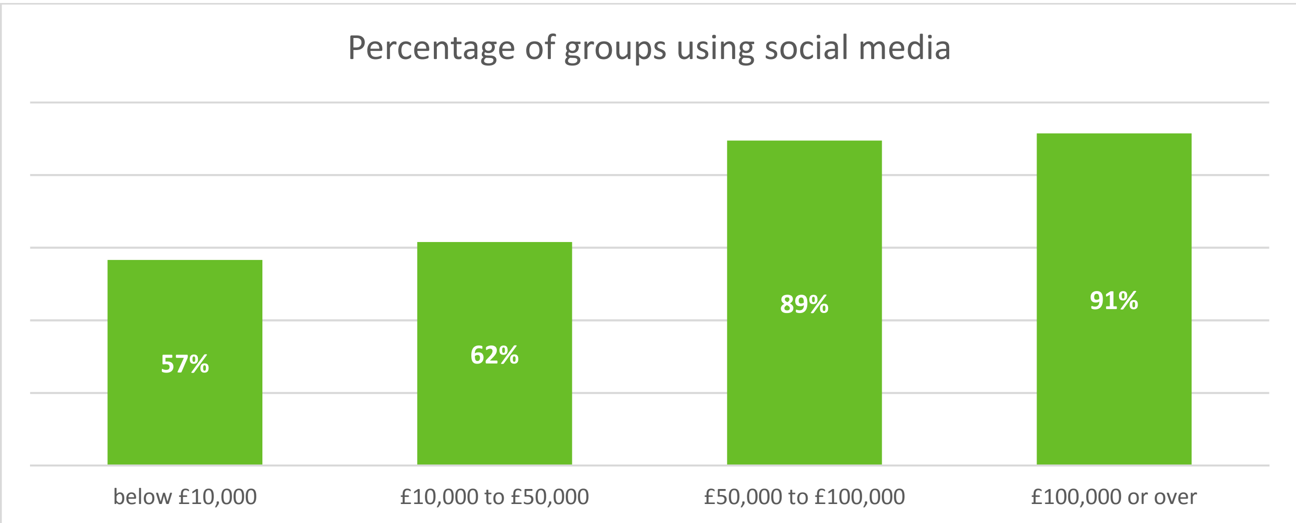

Figure 38 Use of social media by income

Facebook and Twitter continue to be the main social media channels used by groups; this has changed very little from last year. This indicates where Support Cambridgeshire need to concentrate both the support they offer and the medium they use to communicate.

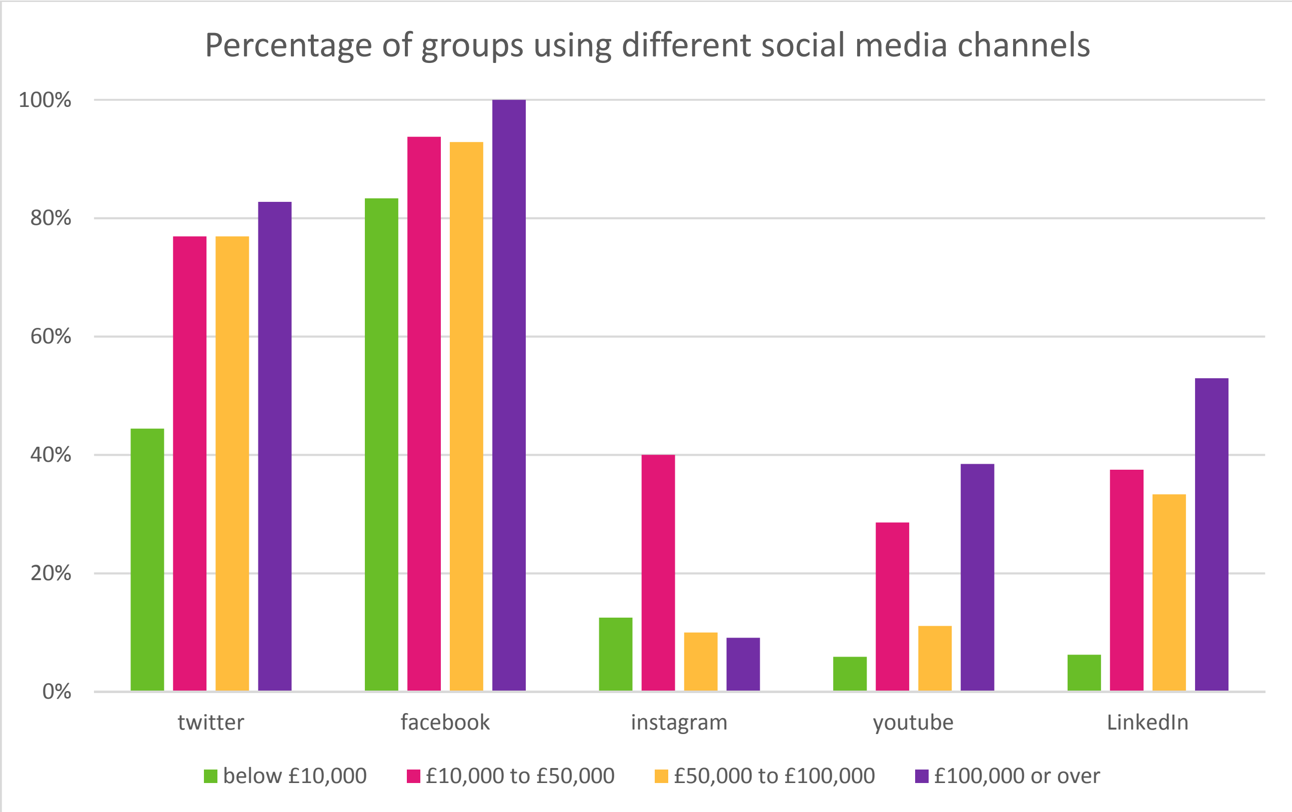

Figure 39 Social media sites used by income

It appears that most groups are happy with their knowledge of the sites they used. Only 42% indicated they were looking for any training in this area. Of those interested in training, there was a preference for daytime courses.

We asked if groups were using any of the many online tools that are available. 51% of groups indicated that they were using some form of online software, this is up from 24% in 2015. 42% of groups said they could do with training in how to make the most of these types of tools. Both groups who were, and who were not, using the tools wanted help with how to use them.

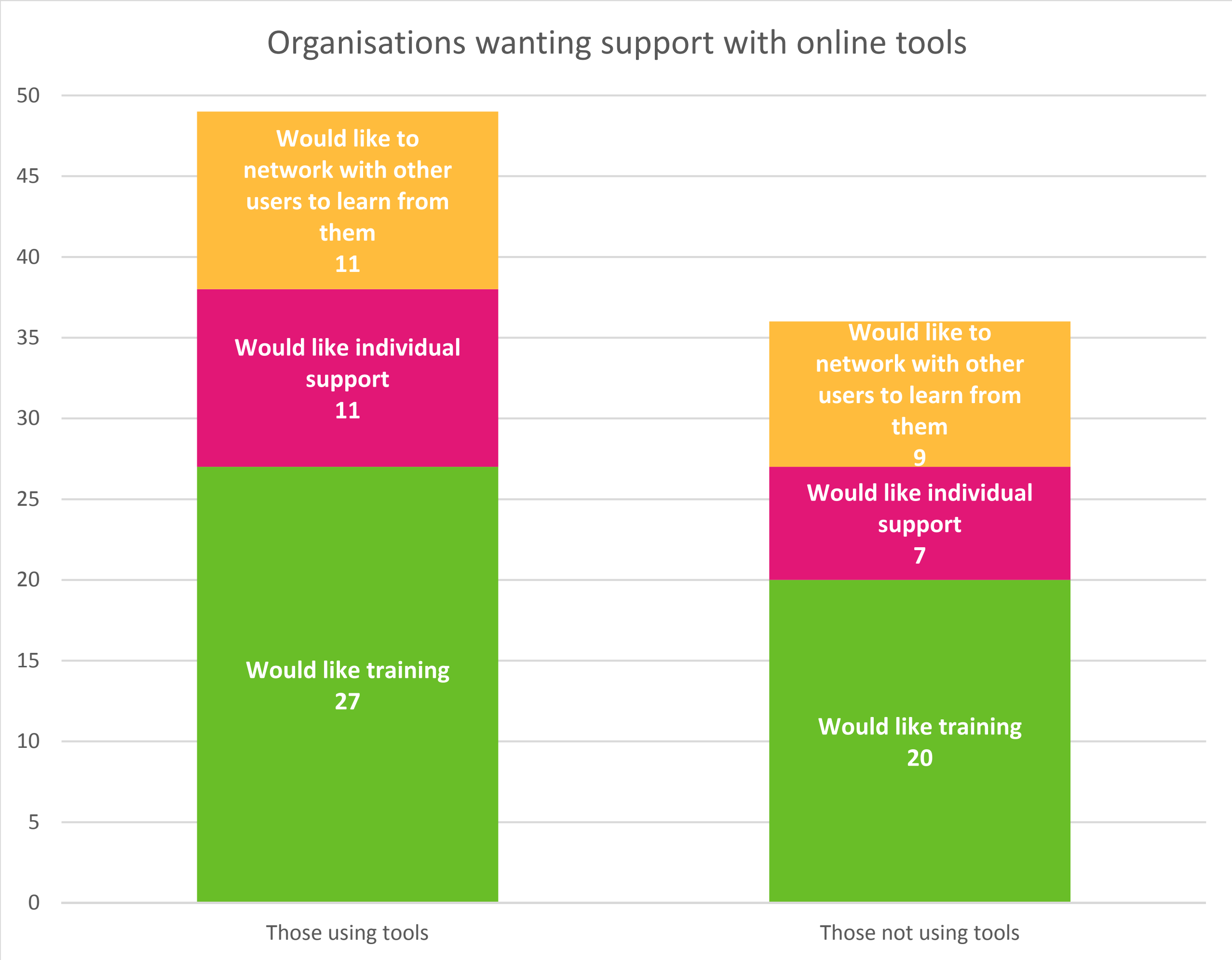

Figure 40 Organisations wanting support with online tools

Only 7% of groups said they used a blog to promote their work or to keep people up to date with their news, this is down from 11% last year. At least two groups pointed out that, despite the fact a blog existed, it was not used and four groups asked for help to set up a blog.

The Lloyds report found that the largest barrier to charities doing more online is not yet understanding the full benefits digital can offer and believing it is not relevant to their organisation. This mirrors our anecdotal evidence from working with groups. Part of the reason that engagement is low and that there is not a real demand for support and training is that groups do not know what it is they can gain from increased digital engagement.

The report also found that four out of five charities (78%) are investing no money in digital skills in 2016. Smaller charities, with 0-9 employees, are less likely to invest budget in digital skills, with 82% investing nothing. This reflects our understanding of the local groups and reflects the fact that many charities have cut back on funding for all training, this has an impact for any training in digital skills developed by Support Cambridgeshire.

Representation

Change continues to be the norm for all statutory bodies, often driven by the need to reduce spending as the government cuts continue to impact on the services they deliver. This has a knock-on effect on the sector, both around the amount of funding that is available and in the work that the sector is expected to pick up as statutory services are cut. As such, representation continues to be a vital role played by the CVSs. 72% 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 a slight increase from last year. It can be seen that groups of all sizes recognise the importance of CVS representation.

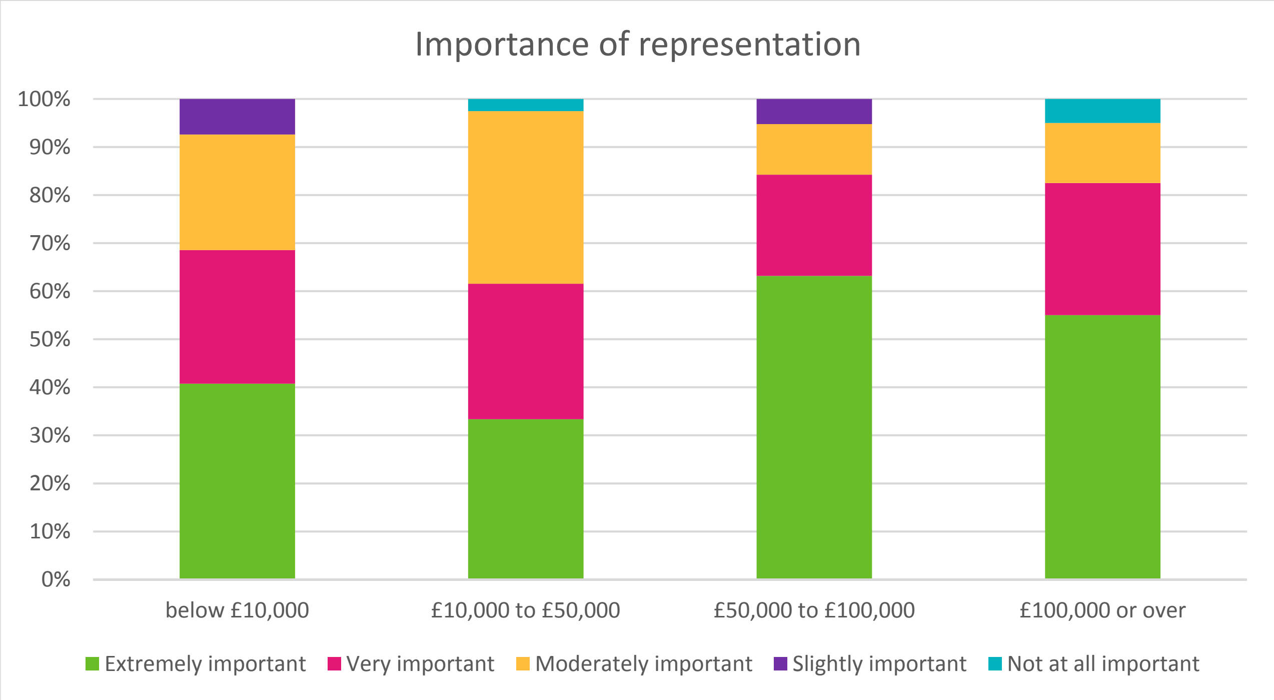

Figure 41 Importance of representation by income

Conclusions

Charities play a fundamental role in our civic life. They are often in the front line of support for the most vulnerable and are therefore in the best place to assess their needs. They not only provide. They inspire and innovate and through their advocacy help shape our laws, government policies and society as a whole.

Stronger charities for a stronger society

Day in and day out Support Cambridgeshire see the impact that small charities are having on people and communities across the county. We see the difference that volunteers make and the difference that volunteering makes. We see the dedication of the staff, volunteers and trustees who struggle in an ever more hostile environment to deliver with passion, commitment and imagination.

We want to see more done to help small organisations, as we believe this will lead to more equal communities. We want to see the good practice we witness on a regular basis shared and built on.

To achieve this, we want to see three changes.

1. **More grant funding for small organisations.**

There is ample research that has shown that austerity measures have significantly impacted on funding for small voluntary groups. Locally we have seen this across all statutory funders and yet there is widespread acknowledgement of the importance of the work of local groups and charities.

"Grants mean that local charities and community groups can make things happen for local people. A small grant can help an organisation to lever in additional resource, bring

additional volunteer capacity and respond flexibly to the needs of their communities and build on the strengths."

A bite sized guide to Grants for the Voluntary Sector[13]

We urge all local statutory bodies to look at how they can maximise grant funding to small organisations to deliver local services.

2. More local support for groups

We believe that groups continue to need local, expert, responsive support. This is what Support Cambridgeshire and its partners provide, and yet funding for infrastructure continues to go down in real terms as demand rises. We know from the survey that groups appreciate the support we offer.

"Without them we would not be where we are today as we are now very strong"

"The help and on going advice from [them] is vital to our organisation and we would not have been as successful without their help and the one to one meetings"

"We find them invaluable - I can pick up the phone and ask them about any aspect of running a not-for-profit organisation and they usually know the answer or can point me in the right direction. Training is excellent. Every local voluntary group should belong!"

"[They] have provided information and introduced us to other organisations. They are a safety net - need an answer - ask them"

We urge funders of all types to recognise the importance of core funding the type of support services that Support Cambridgeshire and other infrastructure organisations provide. This support is not just the safety net for when groups need help. It also allows groups to grow, to become more sustainable and ultimately to increase the impact they have.

3. More equality across the county

We recognise that the services that individuals and organisations are able to access across the county are not equal. We want to see ways in which support is given to communities and organisations to develop the services that are missing and needed. This means looking at where organisations need help to develop and grow, and also where a lack of organisations is leading to communities with less opportunity to engage or become involved.

[13] https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/nhs-bitesize-grants.rb-170215.pdf.