Rising to the challenge

Mapping and Trends: Community and Voluntary Groups in Cambridgeshire

2019

support
cambridgeshire
your county, your voice, our support

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Foreword

Once again, we have a snapshot of the small charities and community groups out there who are doing so much for such a variety of different individuals, groups and communities. We know that some are struggling, and despite continuing to deliver we are seeing less people, doing more, with scarcer resources. We also know from experience that the distribution of charities is not equal across the county and therefore the services and opportunities available to individuals and communities are not equal. As support organisations our services are critical to help communities to find new ways to meet their needs. As long as there is a need to get new people engaged, a desire from people to find new ways to make a difference, changes in regulations, technology or practice there will be a need for support organisations.

We need to be there to train, advise, and represent groups. It is said that the answer to all questions can be found on the internet, but we know that what groups love us for is the knowledge we bring about what sources are good. They want simple and straightforward answers to questions from a trusted source, and they want to be represented by impartial and knowledgeable organisations.

Government at all levels continues to recognise the power and importance of communities; they recognise the many benefits of enabling communities to find their own solutions to their issues. This means we will see a growing need for new community organisations and small charities. These organisations need somewhere to turn to when things go wrong, when they are unsure, when they lack confidence – This is what great infrastructure is there for, and what Support Cambridgeshire partners are known for.

This research helps us understand what areas we can build on to provide an even better service and helps us understand some of the pressures on organisations. Our day to day work with groups gives us continued hope that communities can come together and that small groups of people can make a difference. Never more have the words of Margaret Mead been so true

> *"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."*

Julie Farrow

CEO Hunts Forum

Mark Freeman

CEO CCVS

Rising to the Challenge

We are living in an uncertain world, whether it is BREXIT, climate change, plastic pollution, mental health, there are some big issues that are impacting individuals and communities, and that organisations are starting to think about.

We know that charities and community groups will be key to bringing our communities together and to making them sustainable and resilient. Our public sector partners recognise this in their 'Think Communities' approach which has been endorsed by the county council, district councils in the county and a number of other statutory bodies.[1] But those small organisations who we at Support Cambridgeshire work with can not be relied on to simply be there whatever happens. They need to be nurtured and grown and that is our job.

This year we asked an introductory question about some of the barriers that groups faced with their work.

The biggest barriers were lack of funding and recruiting volunteers, and similar results were shown across all sizes of organisation by income.

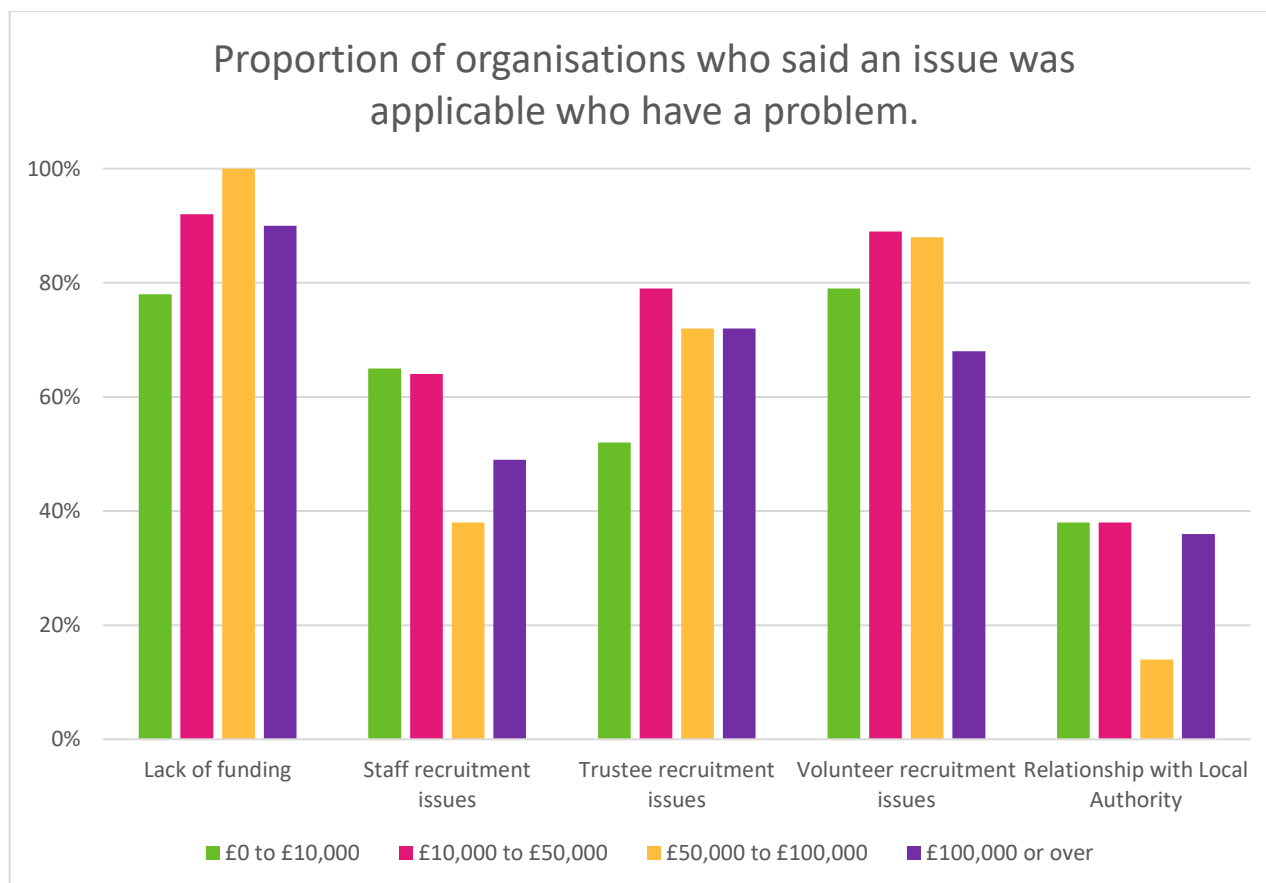Figure 1 The issues organisations indicate they face by income band

Organisations were also asked what other issues they faced, comments included:

1. lack of time,
2. the need to professionalise as regulations got more complex,
3. increased demand,
4. need for new skills especially around digital and communication

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[1] https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/communities-&-localism/community-resilience/

5. affordable premises and venues.

Interestingly despite all the media attention in both sector and mainstream press no one mentioned a lack of trust.

What we are seeing locally is a sector that is rising to the challenges of increased demand but that is struggling to find the resources they need whether this is money or people. This is backed up in national publications with the Foundation for Social Improvement (FSI) stating in its recent charity trends report[2]

> *"Between the years 2013/14 and 2016/17, the percentage of small charities reporting their closure in the next 12 months to be likely varied slightly between 11% and 14% – in 2017/18 we can see a dramatic rise in this percentage, with the proportion more than doubling to reach 30%. It is hard to attribute this jump to anything other than the recent uncertainty in the UK surrounding anticipated future political arrangements, affecting also the circumstances that will face civil society overall. Specifically when drawing respondents' attention to the medium-term prospects of their charitable endeavours, we can see a statistical disquiet emerge. The significant change in these expected prospects reported in 2017/18 should also be understood in a context of consistently increasing demand for charity services over several years, combined with a flatlining of statutory funding, which leaves these organisations more vulnerable to any further changes to the environment in which they attempt to meet the needs of their beneficiaries."*

We also see the NCVO Almanac reporting[3] that for those groups we are working with there is a decrease in income and that sector growth is in the very large charities.

> *"In 2016/17, income grew for larger organisations but decreased for micro, small and medium organisations compared to the previous year.*
>
> *In 2016/17, more than half (£26.8bn) of the sector's income was generated by major and super-major voluntary organisations – those with income over £10m. Their share of the sector's income has almost continuously grown from 38% in 2000/01 to 53% in 2016/17."*

We also know that Cambridgeshire has its own set of problems. We know that levels of funding per person are significantly below the national average not only for the amount received by the County Council[4], but also for education[5] and health[6]. We know that there are high levels of inequality across the county with Cambridge being named the most unequal city in the country,[7] and with startling differences in life expectancy and health outcomes between the north and the south of the county[8]. All these issues put pressure on the sector as we see increased demand for services, reductions in funding, but also other issues such as staff and volunteer recruitment driven by high housing prices and lack of public transport.

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[2] https://www.thefsi.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Small-Charity-Index-Trends-Report-2019.pdf
[3] https://data.ncvo.org.uk/sector-finances/
[4] https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/news/cambridgeshire-county-council-sets-its-2018/19-budget/
[5] https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/news/cambridgeshire-schools-call-for-fair-funding/
[6] https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2019-06-11/debates/ED89644A-2EF3-4021-82F3-65F97185D99A/CambridgeshireAndPeterboroughCCGFundingPressures
[7] https://www.centreforcities.org/blog/focusing-inequality-best-way-tackle-poverty-uk-cities/
[8] https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/health/localphi/aphr/

Introduction

This is the third year that the survey of local voluntary and community groups has been carried out under the Support Cambridgeshire banner. The survey has a number of complementary purposes

- It allows us to determine the needs of the sector and develop training and support to meet those needs.
- It gives us an insight into the health of the sector
- It allows us to determine the areas of our work that are important to the sector
- It gives us some valuable insights into the impact of our work and what we are doing well, or not so well.

This year's survey was undertaken between March and May 2019. Response to the survey was up from 2018, with, 221 returns from 126. This returns us to 2017 levels, and we believe that the implementation of GDPR was the reason that the 2018 results were so low. Once again, the bulk of respondents were registered charities, this is the first time we asked about Charitable Incorporated organisations (CIO) and we had 12% of respondents identifying themselves as this type of organisation.

Methodology

Following feedback about the length of the previous survey we deliberately reduced the size of the survey this year. This reduced some of the detailed areas we were able to report on whilst still allowing us to collect the important data. We have tried to word questions in a way that allows us to collect data more effectively and efficiently. The survey questions were grouped around the traditional CVS areas of working

1. Training and support
2. Representation
3. Networking

Through established networks Support Cambridgeshire contacted member groups and advertised the survey on websites and newsletters. We also carried out targeted emailing and contacted groups by phone to encourage them to complete. We continue to use social media to target groups especially the various organisational twitter feeds. 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. There is however growing traction from social media.
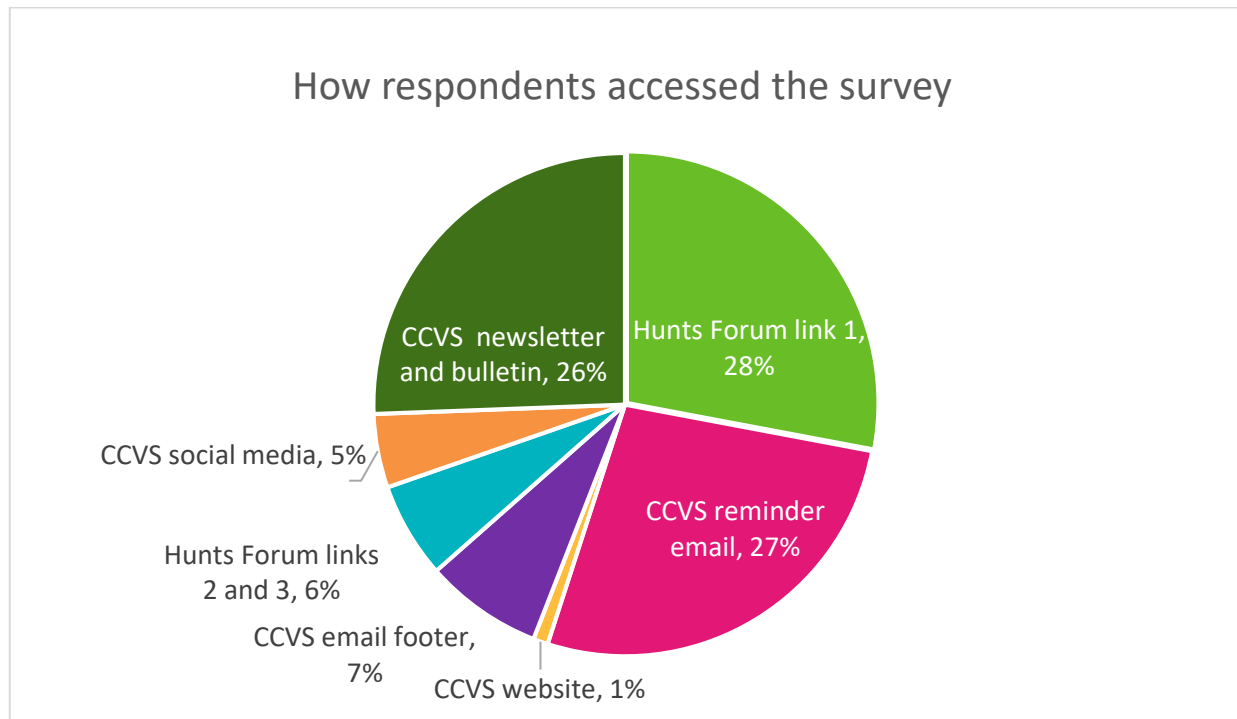
How respondents accessed the survey

CCVS newsletter and bulletin, 26%
Hunts Forum link 1, 28%
CCVS social media, 5%
Hunts Forum links 2 and 3, 6%
CCVS email footer, 7%
CCVS website, 1%
CCVS reminder email, 27%

Geographical coverage of respondents

We asked groups where they operate. We can see that this year we have grown responses from South Cambs and East Cambs, this gives us a more even response across the county. This probably reflects the growing understanding and reach of the Support Cambridgeshire brand and the growing reach that Support Cambs and the partners are getting across the county.

Areas respondents currently work in.
(Multiple responses possible)
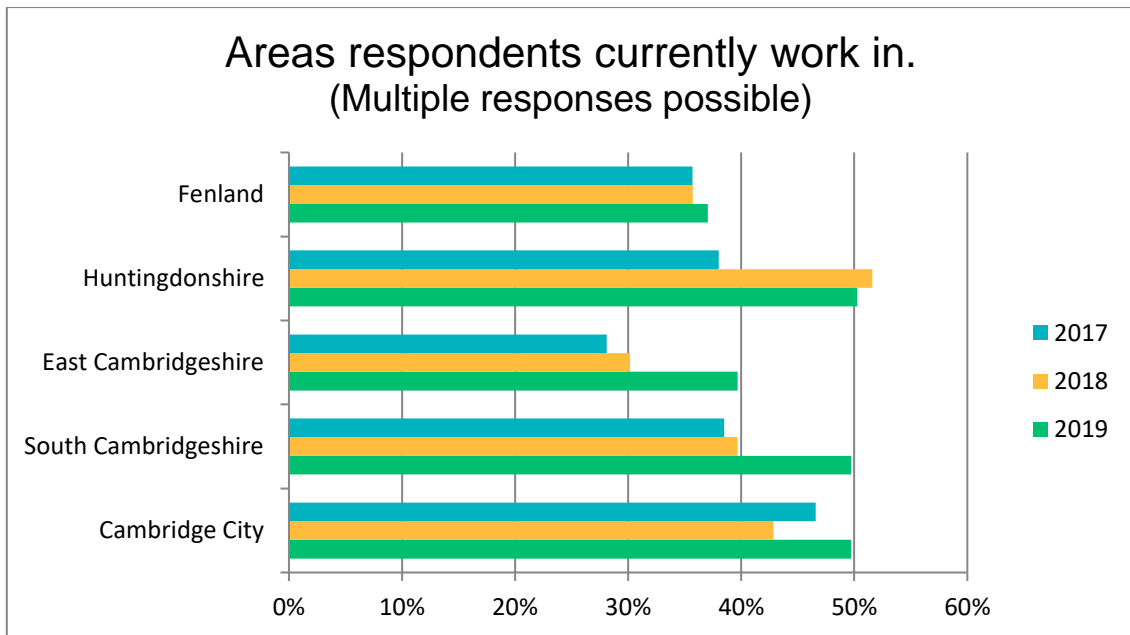
Figure 4 Areas respondents currently work in

Of the respondents 53% worked in only one district, this compares to 65% in 2018. There was a small decrease in groups working across the County with 20% of the respondents indicating that they worked across all the districts, this compares with 22% in 2018.

The figures are influenced by the ability of the Support Cambridgeshire partners to reach different communities

Mapping Cambridgeshire VCS 2019

Income

Groups we work with are getting larger, but still 50% have an income below £50,000. This is down from 55% in 2018.

Income of respondents
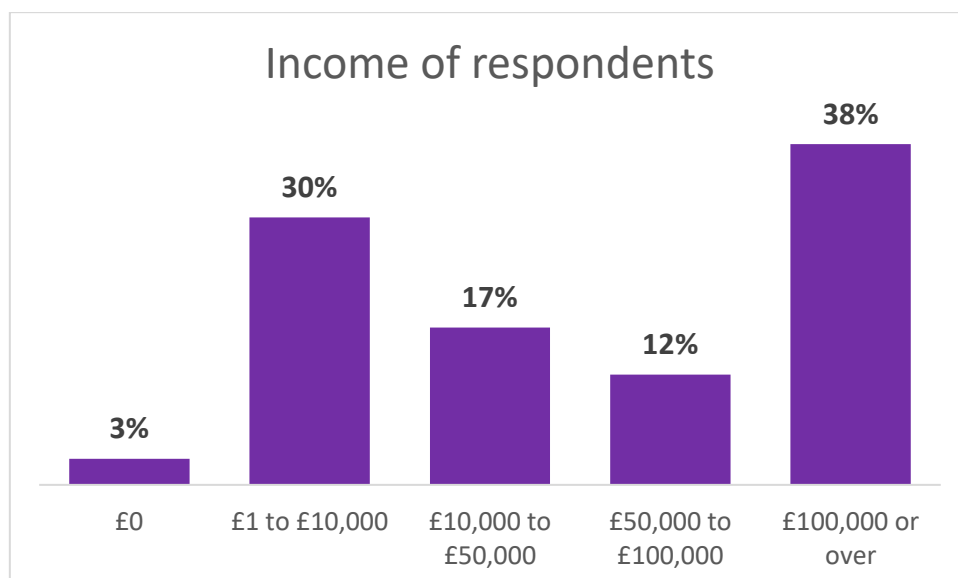
Figure 5 Income of respondents

NCVO use these definitions of the size of charities

Income	Definition
Less than £10,000	Micro
£10,000 to £100,000	Small
£100,000 to £1 million	Medium
£1 million to £10 million	Large
£10 million to £100 million	Major
More than £100 million	Super-major

By these definitions 33% of those we have engaged with are micro, and a further 29% are small.

Staff

The size of groups can also be judged by looking at the numbers of paid staff. Figure 6 shows that 66% of organisations have five staff or fewer (down from 67% in 2018).

A great deal of the support work carried out by Support Cambridgeshire is with these very small organisations. Larger organisations often have other places to access information and support
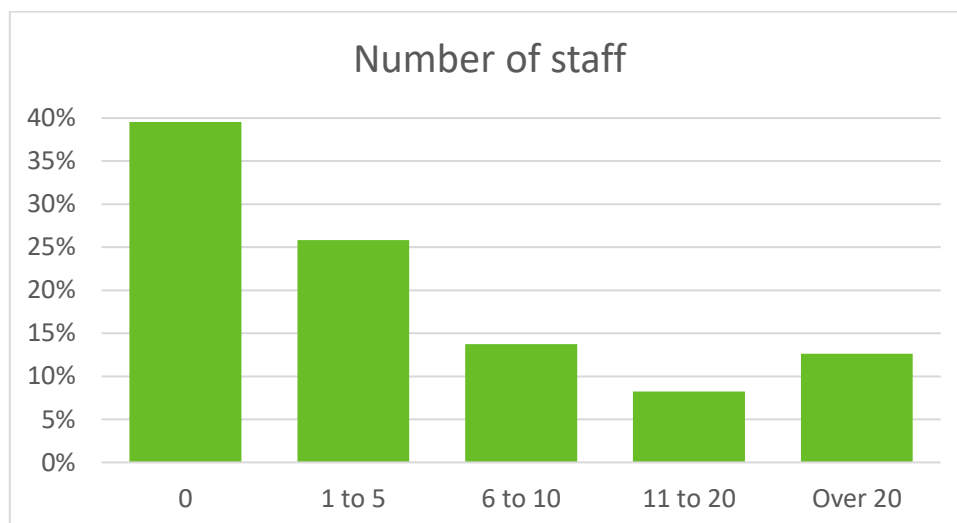
Figure 6 Number of staff

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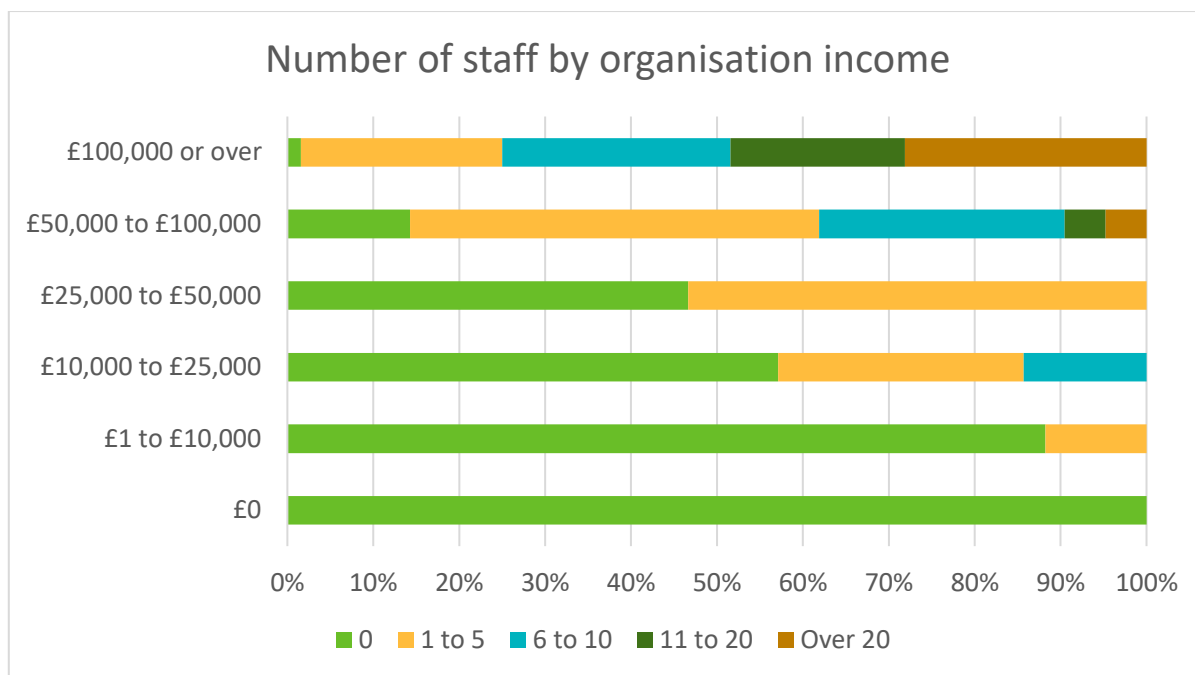
Number of staff by organisation income

Legend: 0 · 1 to 5 · 6 to 10 · 11 to 20 · Over 20

We also see the issues of recruiting staff increase as organisations staff teams grow. Whilst this is not surprising it shows that even in smaller organisations staff recruitment is an issue and in smaller organisations there is less likely to be capacity to spend extra time on recruitment.

Issues recruiting staff by numbers of current staff

Legend: Big issue · Small issue
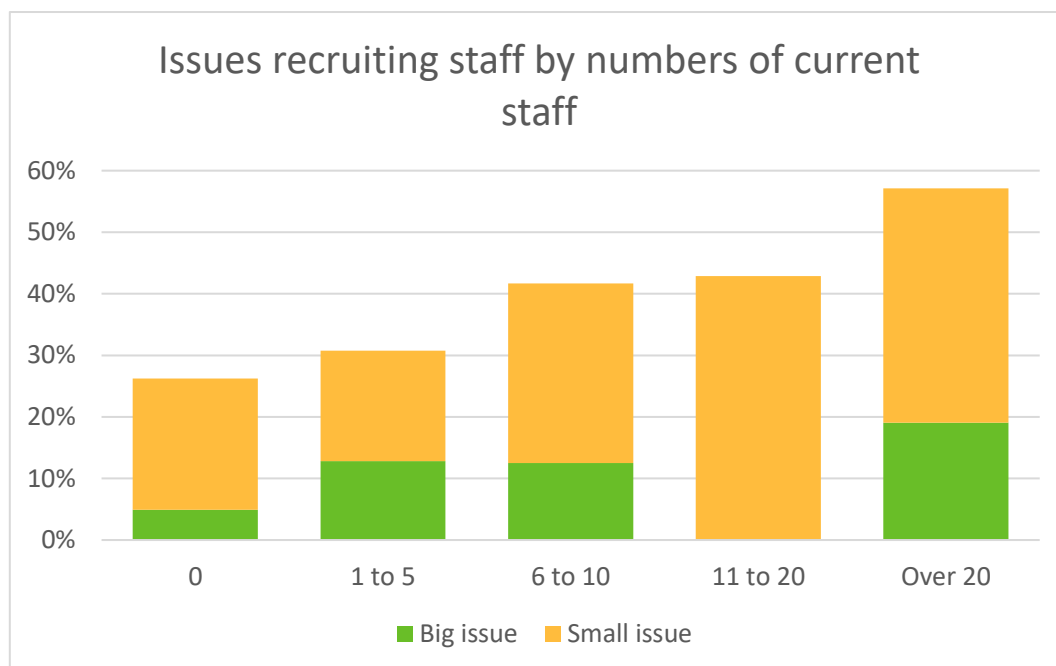
The latest NCVO almanac shows staff levels across the wider sector falling slightly from 2017, and the number of men falling whilst the number of women grows to make up 2/3 of the workforce. These figures hide some alarming diversity issues with a much higher proportion of white male senior staff than is reflected in the wider workforce. It would be interesting to see if this was an issue in smaller local charities.

Volunteers

91% of responding organisations indicated that they used volunteers other than those on their management committee. This is down from 93% in 2018.
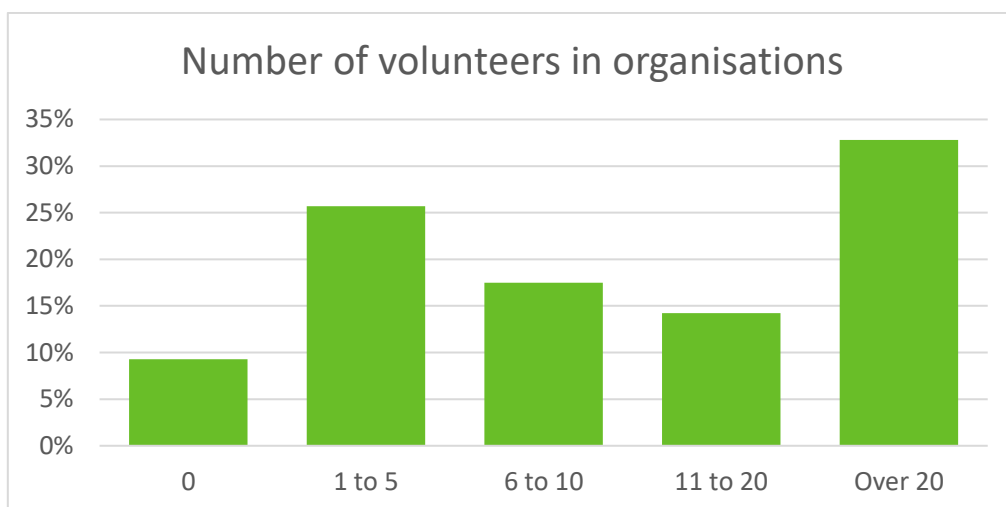
Figure 8 Number of volunteers in organisations

Unsurprisingly, the larger groups are more likely to have more volunteers.
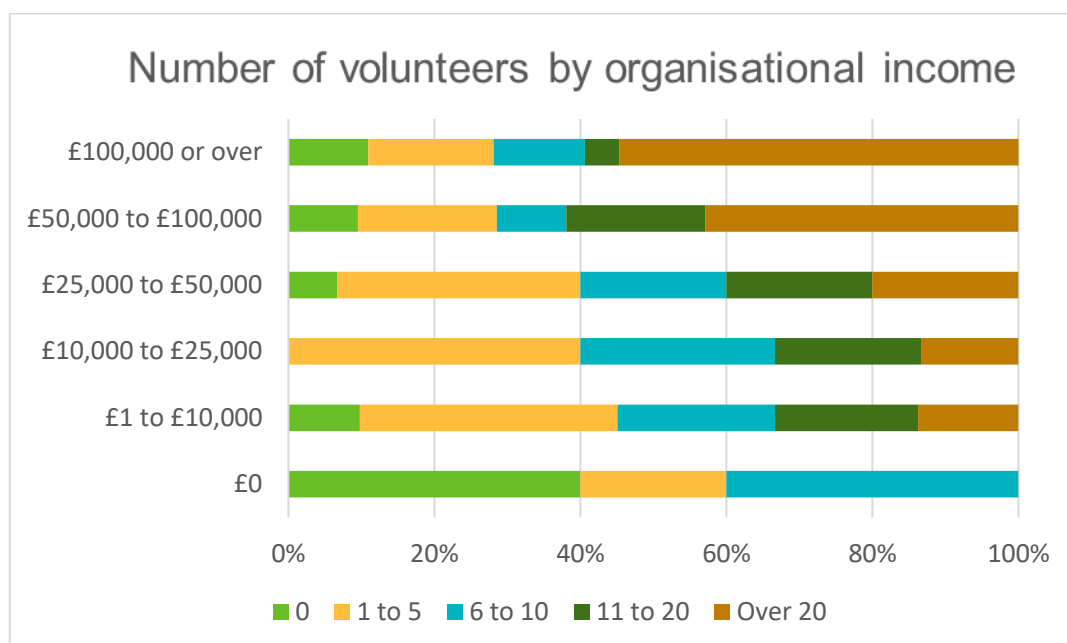
Figure 9 Number of volunteers by organisational income

We know from NCVO data[9] that volunteer levels have remained fairly static over recent years. We also know volunteering is changing (Time Well Spent research from NCVO[10]) this includes the desire to dip in and out of volunteering. This needs to be reflected in how volunteers are recruited, and the opportunities provided given the issues with recruitment highlighted by groups. This can summarised in the CCVS blog[11].

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[9] https://data.ncvo.org.uk/volunteering/
[10] https://blogs.ncvo.org.uk/2019/01/30/five-key-insights-on-volunteering-from-our-time-well-spent-report/
[11] https://ccvsblog.wordpress.com/2019/06/04/struggling-to-recruit-volunteers-it-may-be-your-fault/

Although not part of this survey specifically we know who volunteers is different across socio economic background, ethnicity and age, we also know that how we attract volunteers depends on the volunteer! (See NCVO Time Well Spent Research).

We are seeing a growth in timebanks, time credits and other innovative ways to get people involved, but these schemes have a cost to maintain over the usual volunteer management costs that may be harder to sustain. They do undoubtedly attract people who would normally not be volunteering to give it a try but without support from the statutory sector are often short lived projects rather than consistent approaches to change attitudes to volunteering.

Beneficiaries of groups

The range and diversity of the different beneficiaries that groups work with gives an indication into the reach they have into communities and the range of issues that they work across. Figure 10 shows the percentage of respondents that indicate they work with a particular category of beneficiaries; respondents can tick more than one category. There remains a constant similarity between the past three years with the top nine categories remaining the same (but in a different order) across the period.

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.

Beneficiaries groups work with
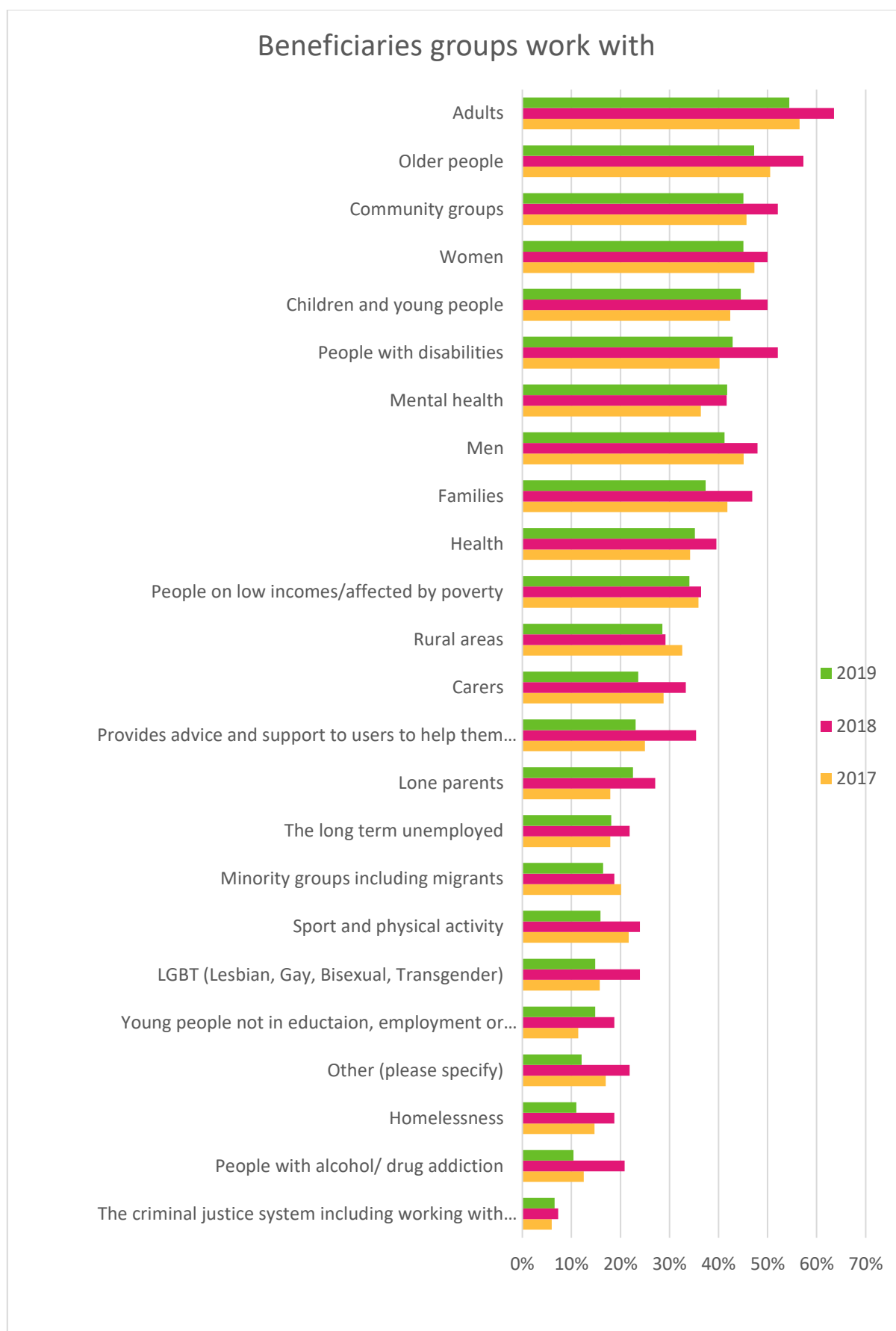
Figure 10 Beneficiaries groups work with

Training

A key role for all the partners involved in Support Cambridgeshire is to provide advice, support and training for voluntary groups and charities. 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.

We ask groups if they had provided training in the last 12 months. Of all respondents the following indicates the numbers that have provided some training to:

- Trustees   37%
- Staff   45%
- Volunteers   50%

For those that had provided some training we asked if it was free or paid for. From this we can see that organisations are more likely to invest in paid for training for staff and are more likely to look for free training, (or possibly provide their own) for volunteers and trustees.

For groups that have provided training was it free or paid for

Volunteers	Free training 85% / Paid for training 33%
Staff	Free training 62% / Paid for training 68%
Trustees	Free training 85% / Paid for training 30%

■ Free training ■ Paid for training
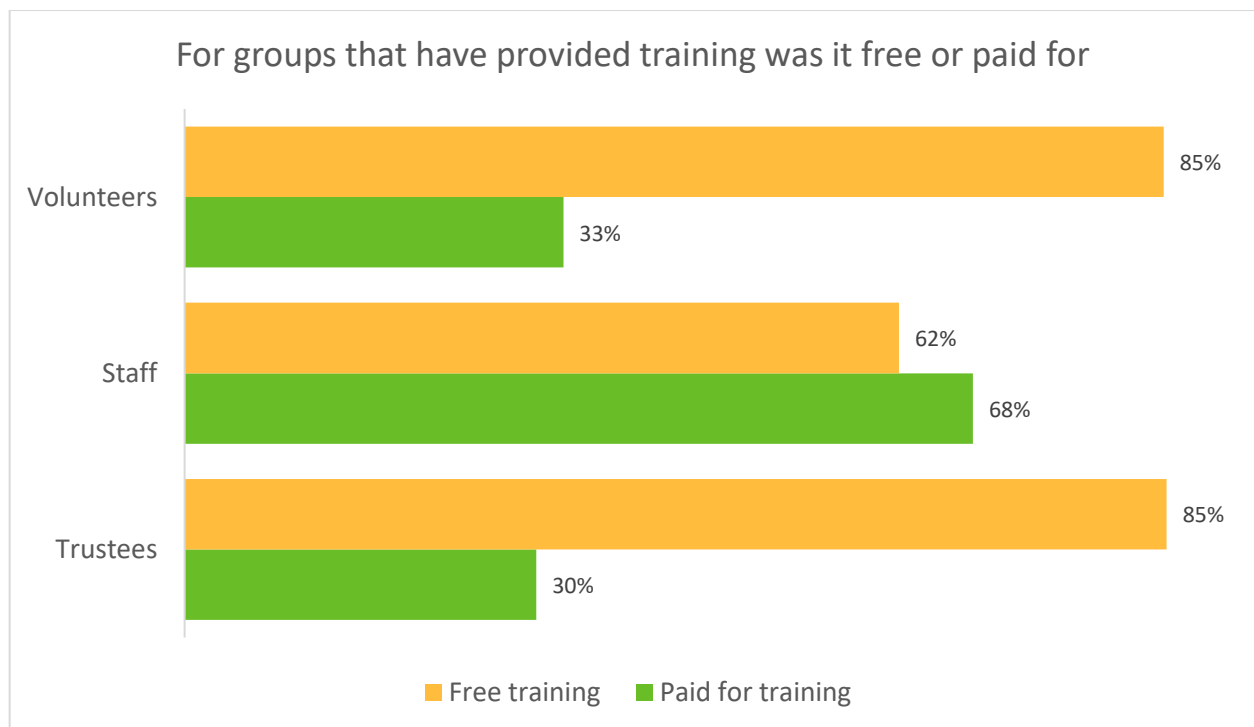
Figure 11 For groups that have provided training was it free or paid for

When we look at the data broken down by organisation income we see that the training offered to volunteers or trustees is broadly similar, but that the bigger the organisation the more likely they are to train staff and the more likely they are to pay for this.

Paid or free training by income
(possible for an organisation to choose both)
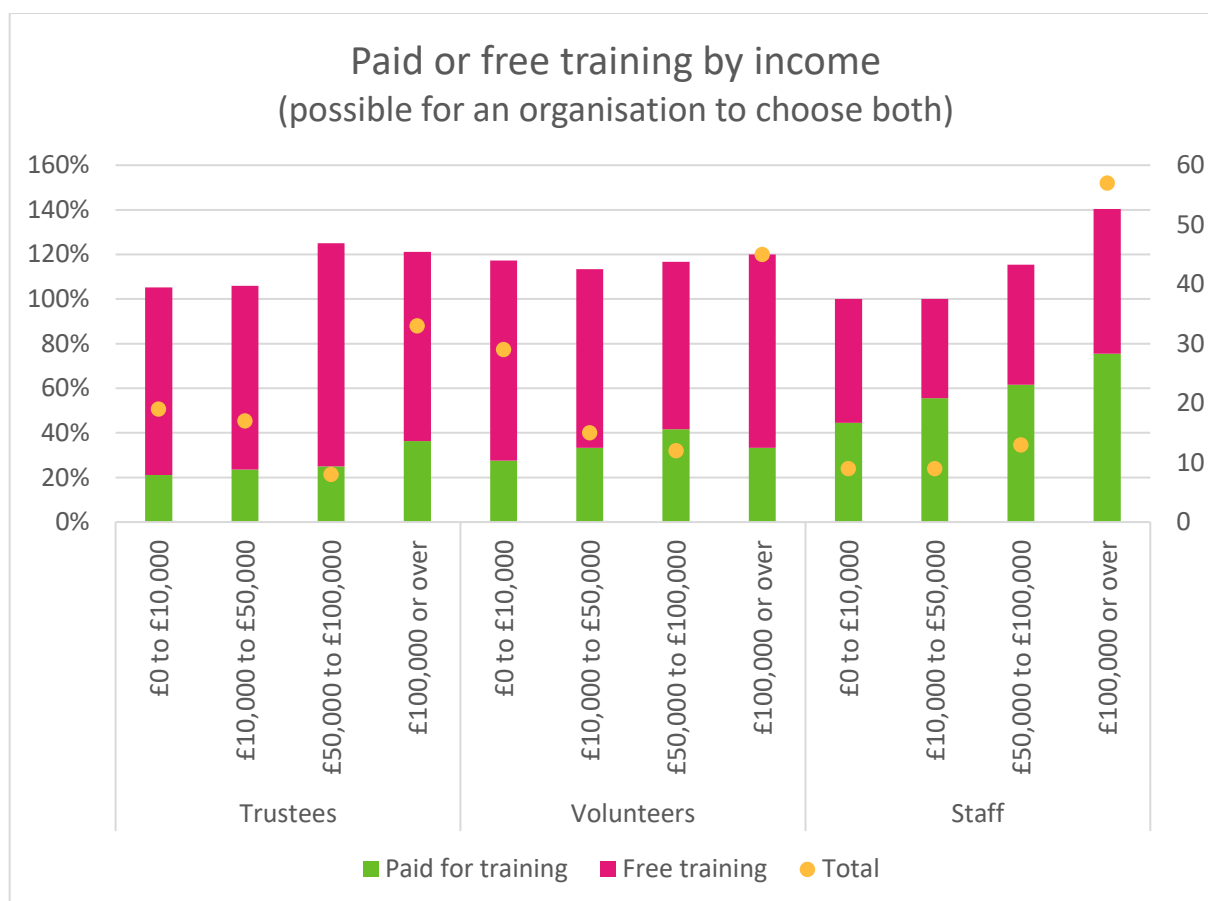
Figure 12 Paid or free training by income

We asked groups to indicate what type of training would be most useful to staff, trustees and volunteers, the ten most popular topics in total were,

Course area	Total numbers requesting training
Project development and management	91
Strategic planning	90
Writing a good funding application	86
Online fundraising	84
Developing a funding strategy	81
Running events that raise money	81
Recruiting and retaining your volunteers	81
Fundraising and campaigning with members and supporters	80
Duties of trustees	77
First aid	77

When you separate the requirements for trustees, staff and volunteers you get different training requirements. It is noticeable that there is not one course that is in the top 10 most popular of all three categories, this reflects the very different training needs of these groups.

Top ten training requirements

This table shows the top training topics for different groups.

Trustees	Staff	Volunteers
Duties of trustees	Managing challenging behaviour	Basic safeguarding for working with vulnerable adults
Strategic planning	Supervision skills for staff and volunteer managers	Basic safeguarding for working with children and young people
Running committees	Developing tools for monitoring and evaluation	First aid
Chairing meetings	Understanding impact and the difference your organisation makes	Fundraising and campaigning with members and supporters
Business (development) planning	Business (development) planning	Equality and diversity issues
Developing a funding strategy	Presentation skills and public speaking	Developing community projects
Managing basic finances for staff and trustees	Project development and management	Health and Safety
Understanding impact and the difference your organisation makes	Basic safeguarding for working with vulnerable adults	Managing challenging behaviour
Fundraising and campaigning with members and supporters	Basic safeguarding for working with children and young people	Data protection
Getting your story heard	Making volunteering inclusively	Running events that raise money

Figures 13, 14 and 15 show the full breakdown of the different training needs .

Training requirements for trustees

Training topic	Percentage
Duties of trustees	89%
Strategic planning	63%
Running committees	62%
Chairing meetings	60%
Business (development) planning	54%
Developing a funding strategy	54%
Managing basic finances for staff and trustees	53%
Understanding impact and the difference your organisation makes	48%
Fundraising and campaigning with members and supporters	48%
Getting your story heard	44%
Data protection	43%
Marketing	42%
Recruiting and retaining your volunteers	41%
Running events that raise money	41%
Writing a good funding application	41%
Equality and diversity issues	41%
Budgets and financial reporting	41%
The legal issues for people managing volunteers	39%
Online fundraising	39%
Making volunteering inclusive	38%
Developing tools for monitoring and evaluation	37%
Project development and management	37%
Health and Safety	36%
Supervision skills for staff and volunteer managers	33%
Basic safeguarding for children and young people	31%
Basic safeguarding for vulnerable adults	30%
Developing community projects	30%
Presentation skills and public speaking	27%
First aid	20%
Managing challenging behaviour	18%

Figure 13 Training requirements for trustees

Training requirements for staff

Category	
Managing challenging behaviour	
Supervision skills for staff and volunteer managers	
Developing tools for monitoring and evaluation	
Understanding impact and the difference your organisation makes	
Business (development) planning	
Presentation skills and public speaking	
Project development and management	
Basic safeguarding for working with vulnerable adults	
Basic safeguarding for working with children and young people	
Making volunteering inclusive	
The legal issues for people managing volunteers	
Equality and diversity issues	
Health and Safety	
Marketing	
Getting your story heard	
Running events that raise money	
First aid	
Developing community projects	
Developing a funding strategy	
Fundraising and campaigning with members and supporters	
Managing basic finances for staff and trustees	
Online fundraising	
Data protection	
Recruiting and retaining your volunteers	
Writing a good funding application	
Budgets and financial reporting	
Strategic planning	
Chairing meetings	
Running committees	
Duties of trustees	

Figure 14 Training requirements for staff

19

Training requirements for volunteers

Basic safeguarding for working with vulnerable adults
Basic safeguarding for working with children and young people
First aid
Fundraising and campaigning with members and supporters
Equality and diversity issues
Developing community projects
Health and Safety
Managing challenging behaviour
Data protection
Running events that raise money
Presentation skills and public speaking
Running committees
Writing a good funding application
Getting your story heard
Online fundraising
Developing a funding strategy
Marketing
Recruiting and retaining your volunteers
Chairing meetings
Understanding impact and the difference your organisation makes
Budgets and financial reporting
Supervision skills for staff and volunteer managers
Developing tools for monitoring and evaluation
Managing basic finances for staff and trustees
Making volunteering inclusive
Project development and management
The legal issues for people managing volunteers
Business (development) planning
Strategic planning
Duties of trustees
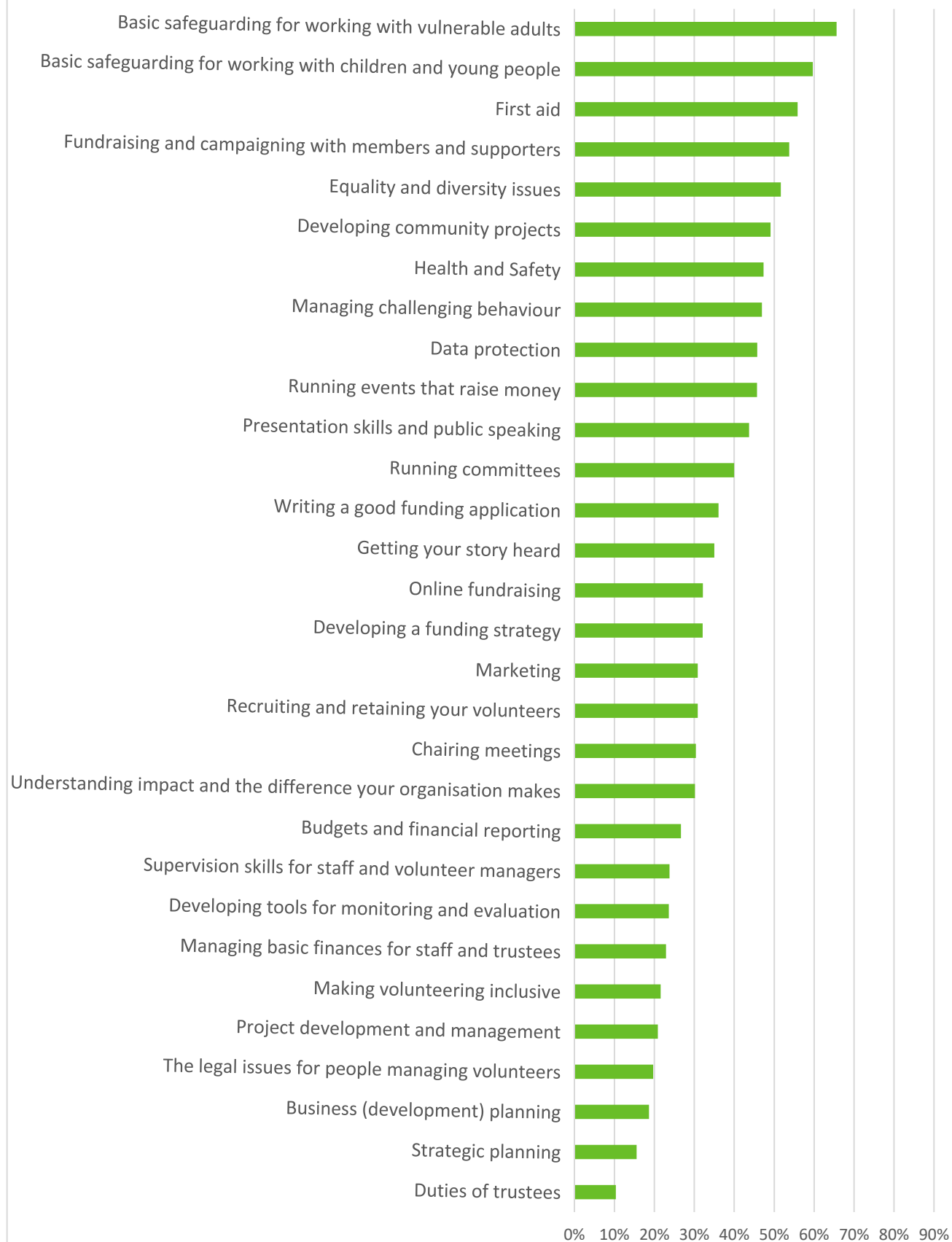
0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90%

Figure 15 Training requirements for volunteers

The only results in the 'others' comments that received more than one vote were succession planning (two responses) and social media/IT skills (four responses).

What these results show is that Support Cambridgeshire partners offers, or has offered, the bulk of the most popular courses reasonably recently. These are however often funded by district contracts or other funding sources and are therefore not normally available uniformly across all districts. There is a need to look at how more training can be brought into those areas where it is less well supported. It also shows that we have to think about differentiating who is likely to be coming to different sessions and as such thinking about timing, marketing and how the course is pitched.

Networks

People learn from one another, and we know that groups and individuals enjoy and appreciate opportunities to network with others working in areas that are similar. We get feedback that face to face training is important as it allows people to talk to one another, we regularly get feedback from events that says things like

"Fantastic event, great to network, brilliant people all in a room!!"

We asked groups about the different types of networks they would like to see available. Whilst all the options got positive results it was clear that bringing people together with organisations working in a similar field was popular with 54% feeling it was very important to do this.
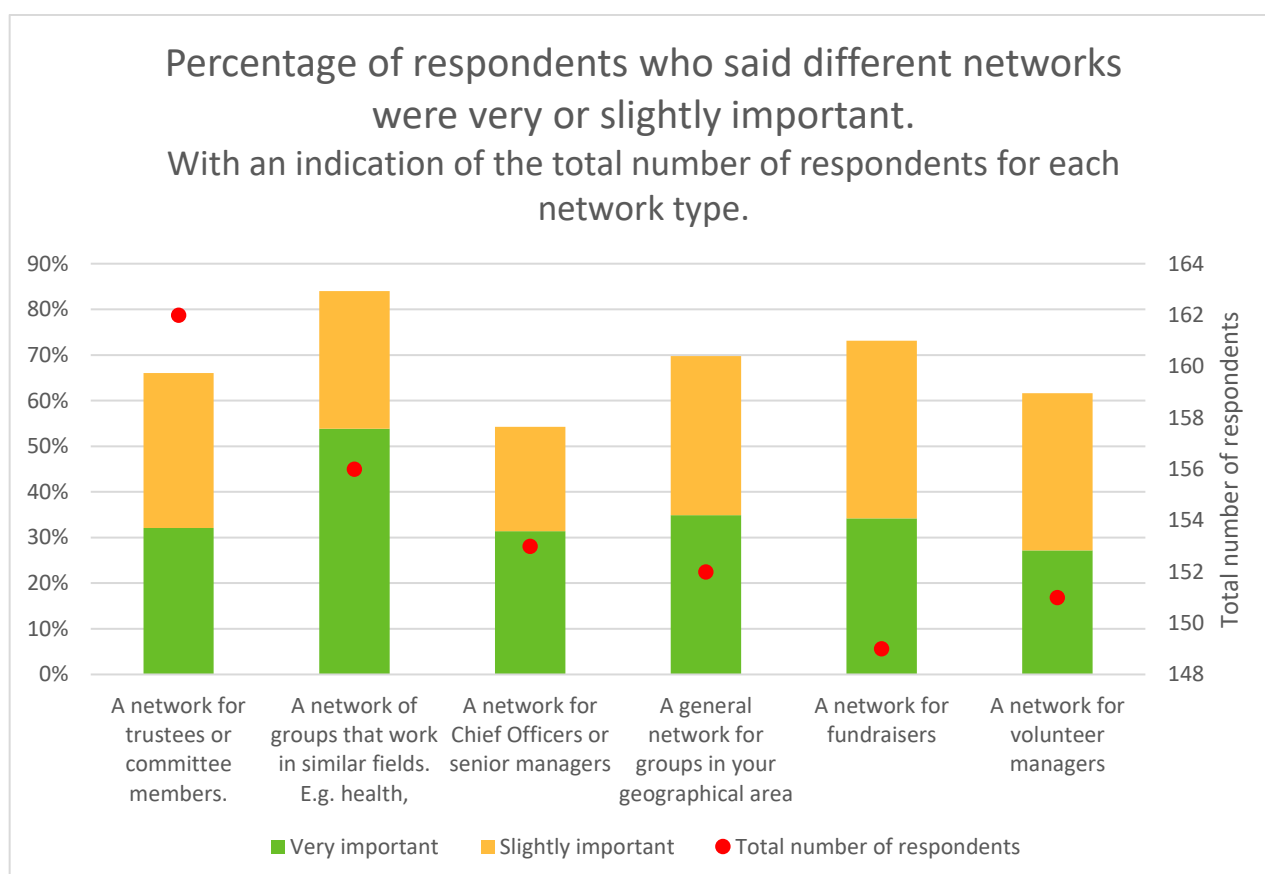
Figure 16 Network preferences

There was some difference in response for different sizes of groups. This reflects that smaller organisations may struggle to find people to attend networks. It also suggests that different types of networks may be more or less desirable to those involved in different size organisations. We often find that when people find the time

to attend they really appreciate the opportunity, and as such we need to find ways to encourage them take that first step.
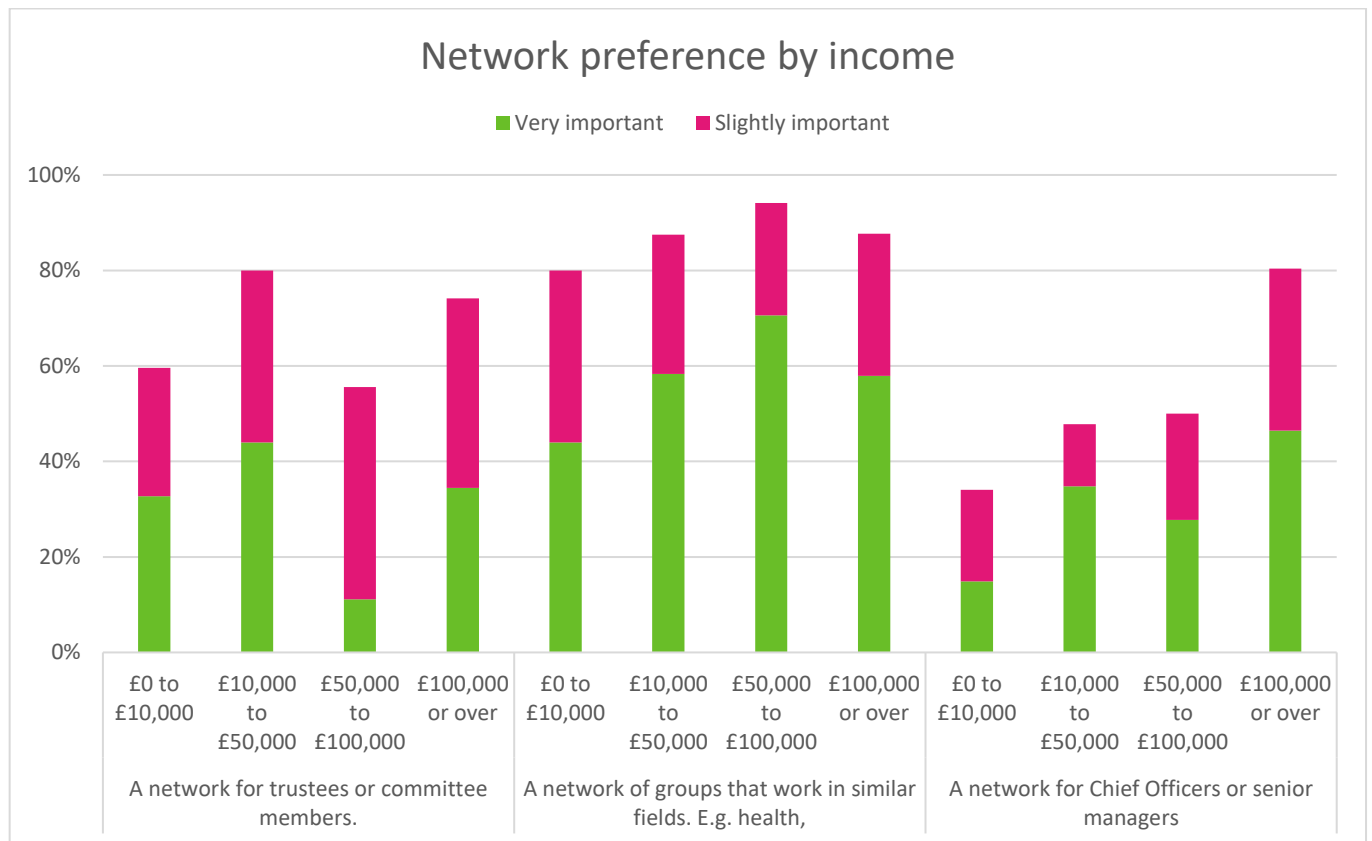

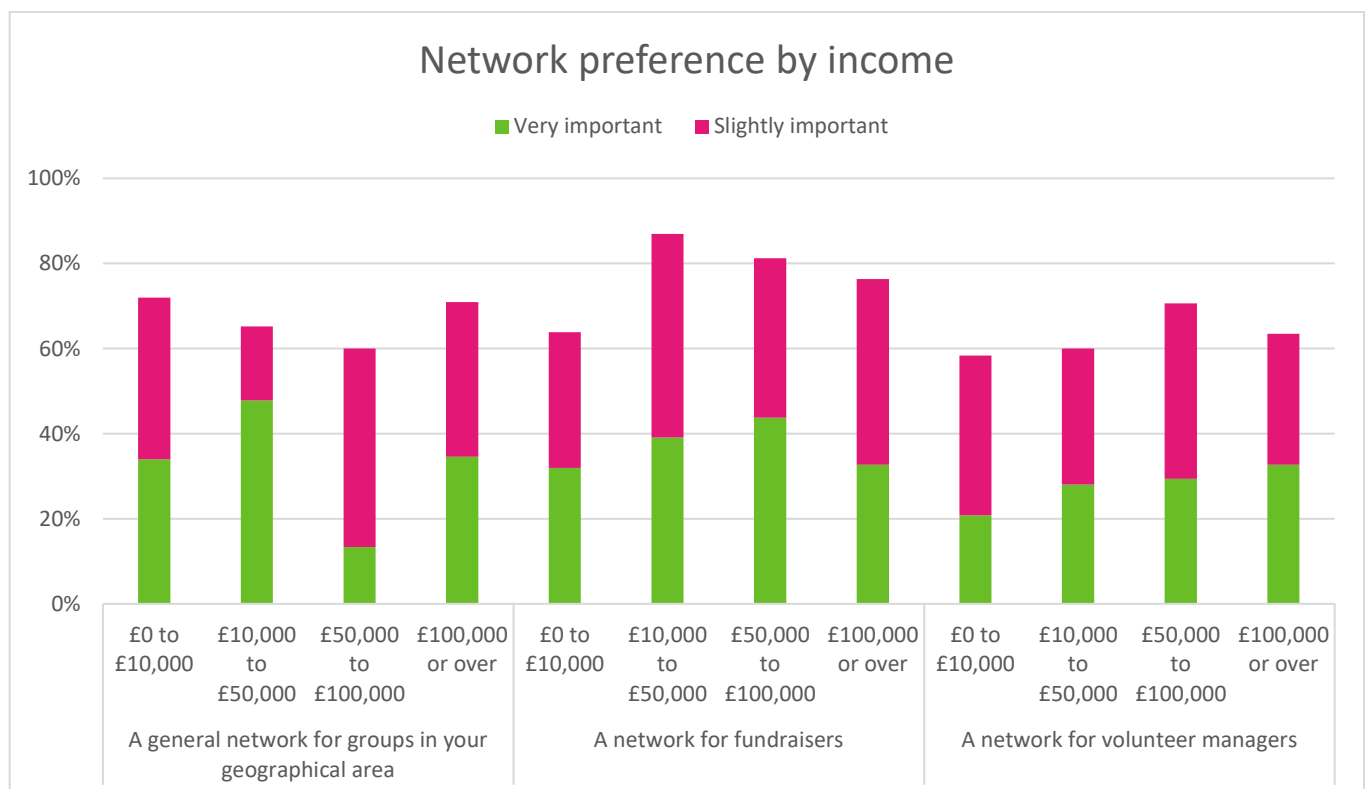
Figure 17 Network preference by income (A)

Figure 18 Network preference by income (B)

Representation

A key part of what Support Cambridgeshire does is to represent and champion the sector. By attending meetings we are able to ensure, as much as possible, that the sectors role is recognised in decision and policy making. It is important that we remain impartial, that we have an understanding of the wider sector and issues, and that we can call in experts when needed.

89% of respondents felt it was extremely or very important that Support Cambridgeshire were able to represent the sector, this is up from 82% in 2018. There was some discrepancy based on the organisation size with the very small feeling this was less important, this could be because their work is influenced less by councils and therefore there is less need to influence them.

How important is it that Support Cambridgeshire represents the sector at council and other meetings

Legend:
- Extremely important
- Very important
- Moderately important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

Categories: £0 to £10,000, £10,000 to £50,000, £50,000 to £100,000, £100,000 or over
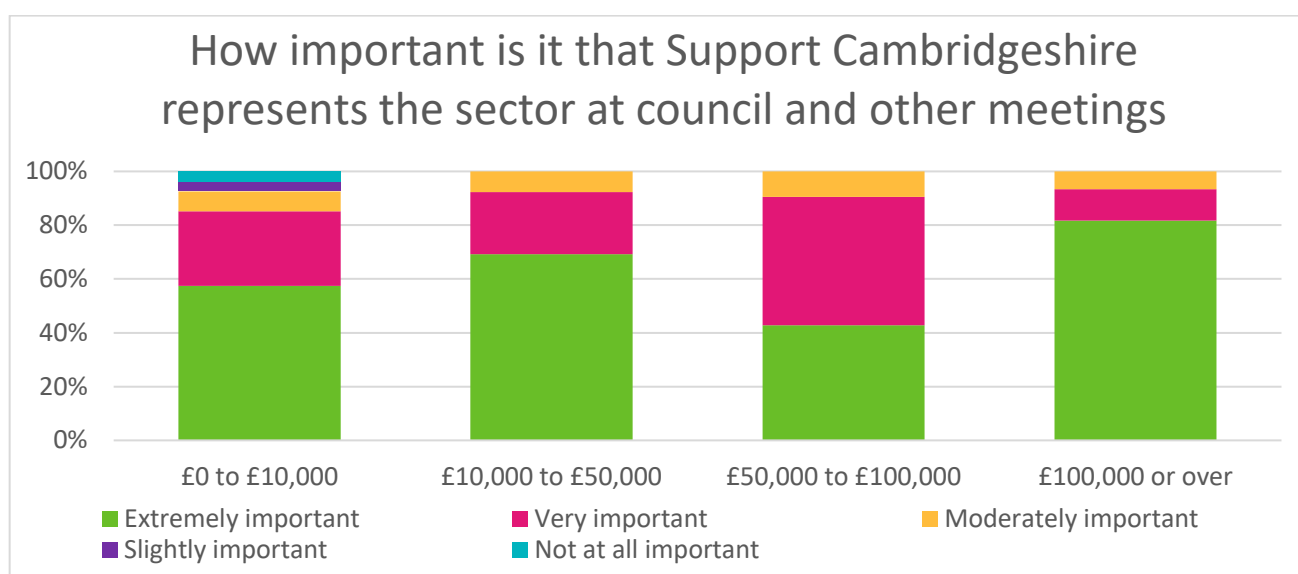
Figure 19 The importance of representation

Part of the work of Support Cambridgeshire is also to champion the sector and help to celebrate the work that it does. When people think of charities, and when the national press report on charities, it is the large mega charities like Oxfam, the RSPCA or Cancer Research that people generally think of. Yet 82% of all registered charities have an income below £100K.

We asked how important it was for Support Cambridgeshire to

- Promote the work that the sector does to the public and other stakeholders,
- Celebrate the work of the sector and the difference organisations make.

The results were that 91% and 90% respectively felt this was extremely or very important.

Again smaller organisations were less enthusiastic, and this may be because they are already embedded in their communities and feel that they have already ensured that the work they do is recognised.
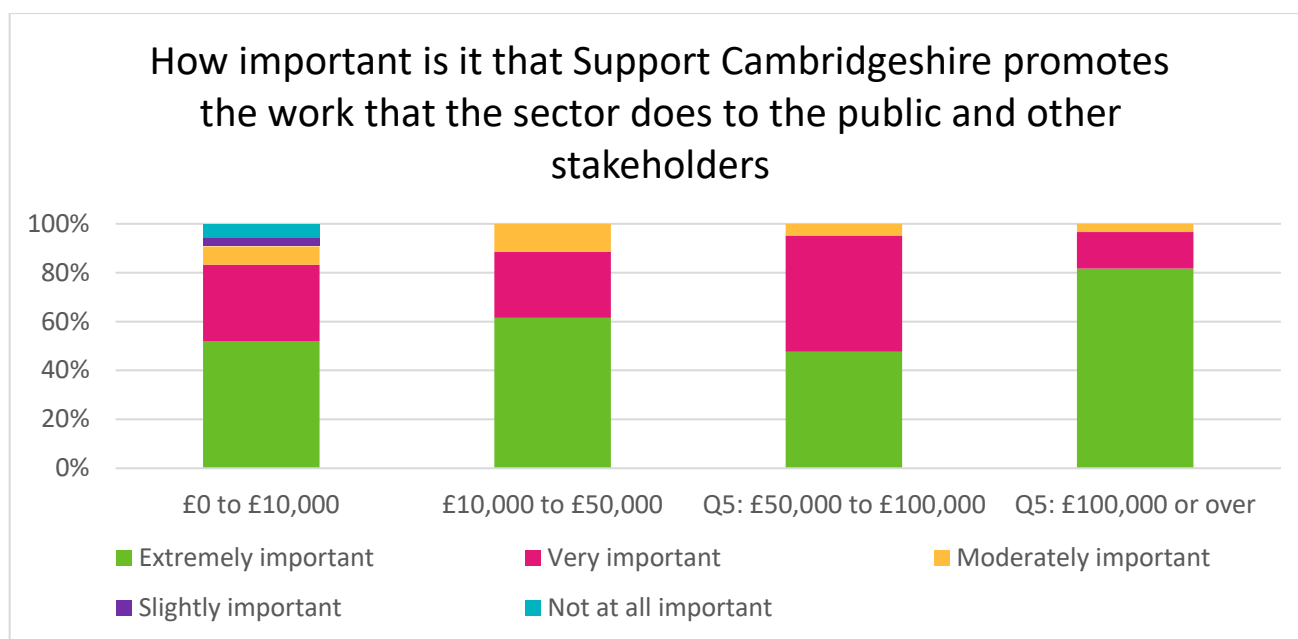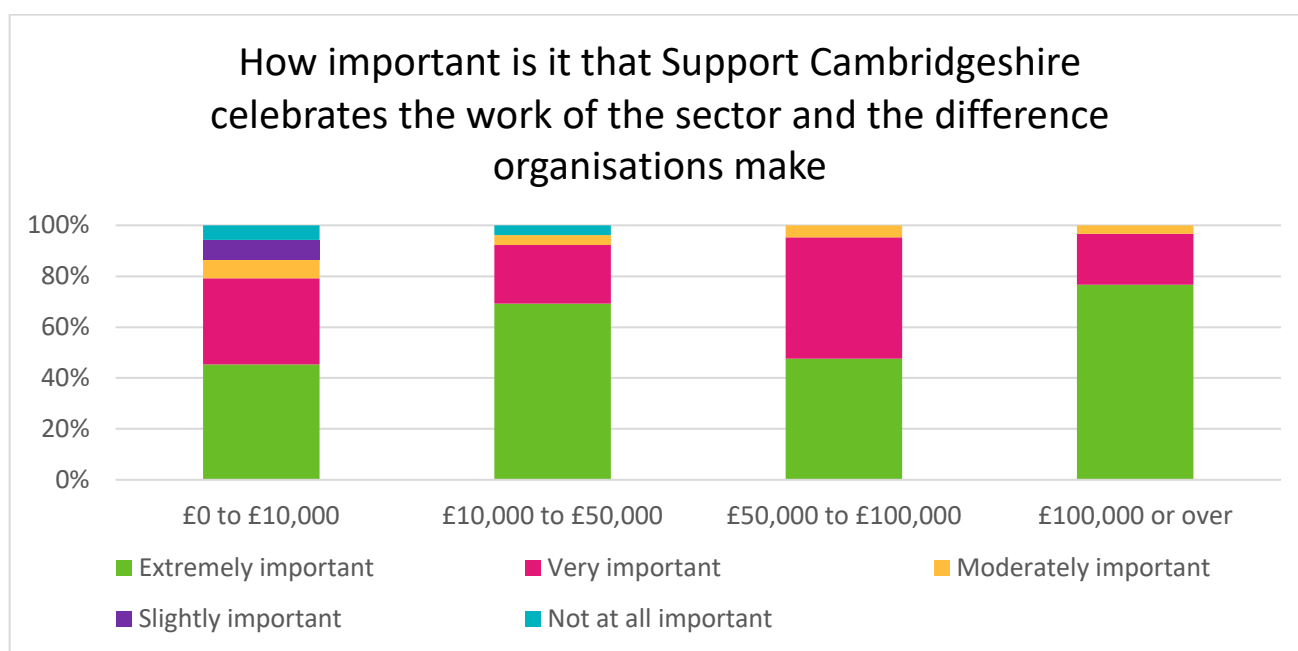
How important is it that Support Cambridgeshire promotes the work that the sector does to the public and other stakeholders

Legend:
- Extremely important
- Very important
- Moderately important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

Categories: £0 to £10,000 | £10,000 to £50,000 | Q5: £50,000 to £100,000 | Q5: £100,000 or over

How important is it that Support Cambridgeshire celebrates the work of the sector and the difference organisations make

Legend:
- Extremely important
- Very important
- Moderately important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

Categories: £0 to £10,000 | £10,000 to £50,000 | £50,000 to £100,000 | £100,000 or over

Conclusions

Once again this report gives a snapshot of the Cambridgeshire charity and community sector. What we see are small organisations that are striving to provide services despite experiencing problems with funding.

We see organisations that recognise the importance of training but are on the whole looking to providers to offer free training, especially to trustees and volunteers. We are also seeing differing training needs for volunteers, trustees and staff. We also know that the training offer across the county is not equal, with groups being able to access far more training locally where the district council supports the Support Cambs partners.

We can see a clear desire for organisations to share their experience and to connect with, and network with other organisations that may have had similar experiences or similar problems. Peer support for different functions (that are often quite isolated in small groups) is also recognised as being important. Having a variety of different ways that organisations can come together is important as staff, volunteers and trustees are often available at different times.

Organisations recognise the importance of having Support Cambridgeshire representing them at meetings and promoting and celebrating the sector. As organisation size grows the importance of having a trusted, impartial and knowledgeable voice at the table increases, that said across all income sizes the bulk of organisations recognise that the sector needs to be championed.

Recommendations

These recommendations are based on what we see in the survey as well as on our understanding of issues impacting the sector that are picked up in the day to day work of Support Cambridgeshire partners.

Future training

1. We need to look at developing and delivering new courses on project management and strategic planning. Some work will be needed to look at the level and content that is required.
2. We need to look at all the income generation training we offer to fill any gaps and to make the offer more coherent. This can include adding in new training around social investment and working with businesses.
3. We need to explore how we deliver more training in areas of need. This will involve looking at new funding sources but also at how and when we deliver training.
4. There are clear differences in training priorities for staff, trustees and volunteers. We need to look at how we market and design our training to meet this need.

Future networking

1. Networking is important. We need to look at different networking options to bring those in the sector together who have similar issues or interests. This needs to reflect the make up and operating environment of organisations of different sizes or working in different communities.
2. We need to look at alternative ways of networking and how we can grow interest in these.

Future Representation and Voice

1. We have to work with statutory partners to ensure we remain at the table. There are significant changes in the way different partnerships and organisations work and it is important that voluntary sector representation is not lost in this.
2. We need to find new ways to reach those who are less engaged with the sector, this has to be focused to enable groups to improve funding and also volunteer and trustee recruitment. This will include:
    a. Promoting the work of the sector and highlighting the difference it makes and the opportunities it offers;
    b. Celebrating the work of the sector and those working and volunteering in it.

Future research

This survey was shorter and more generalised than previous surveys. Whilst we are able to get a good overview of the needs around the core work of Support Cambridgeshire further information that is more focused would add to this. This would include:

1. A digital survey of how groups are using digital and new technology and the barriers to them doing more. This would reflect the prominence this is being given nationally and the impact it can have, but also it would reflect on the increasing complexity of products, technologies and platforms.
2. Expansion of the work on the health of charities and community groups – this could look in more detail at issues and barriers but also at how groups were grappling with funding and maintaining the ability to meet demand.
3. An investigation into fundraising sources and success rates, given the strong demand for new types of fundraising training it would expand our knowledge of what the sector was doing well/not so well this could investigate different ways groups currently fund their work, but also what their attitude is to other emerging funding options like Crowdfunding and social Investment.

There are opportunities with all this work to look at how we build on national surveys, but also how we work in partnership with others in the local sector.