State of the Sector Survey 2025

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Supporting Community and Voluntary Activity

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Created by Wessex Community Action

State of the Sector Survey 2025

Foreword

Wiltshire's voluntary and community sector plays a vital role in local life. Charities, community groups, and social enterprises deliver essential services and support, tackling isolation, providing care, creating opportunities and improving wellbeing. Rooted in their communities, these organisations can respond quickly to changing needs and ensure people feel supported and connected.

Yet, as this year's State of the Sector Survey highlights, this work does not come without significant challenges. Rising demand, growing complexity of need, difficulties recruiting volunteers and trustees, and financial pressures are placing enormous strain on organisations. Core funding remains a particular concern, and many groups are stretching themselves to maintain delivery in the face of increasing costs and uncertain income.

Despite these pressures, the sector continues to show remarkable resilience and commitment. Volunteers remain its lifeblood, and the dedication of staff, trustees, and community members is central to the positive impact being achieved. But sustaining this impact will require renewed support, collaboration, and investment.

At Wessex Community Action, our vision is of a community which is strong and vibrant, enabling all residents to succeed and ensuring no one is left behind. This survey is an important part of that journey. It gives us valuable insight into the state of the sector today, celebrates the achievements of local organisations, and highlights the areas where support is most needed. We would like to thank every group that took part – your contributions ensure that the challenges, strengths, and successes of the sector are clearly understood and championed.

Together, by building on the strengths of our communities and working in partnership, we can ensure Wiltshire's voluntary sector continues to deliver the vital work on which so many rely.

David Bailey

Chief Executive Officer

About the Survey

The State of the Sector survey is an annual survey of voluntary and community sector organisations carried out by Wessex Community Action (WCA), the Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) for Wiltshire. The aims of the survey are to:

- Develop a greater understanding of the VCSE in Wiltshire
- Understand key challenges faced by the sector
- Build a picture of support needs of the sector
- Celebrate the successes of the sector

About Wessex Community Action

Wessex Community Action are a local infrastructure organisation who have proudly served the community in Wiltshire for over 50 years.

Our Mission

Empowering and connecting our community by supporting and championing local charities, groups, and organisations, enabling them to drive positive and lasting change.

Our Vision

A community which is strong and vibrant, enabling all residents to succeed and ensuring no one is left behind.

Our Values

Authenticity

We are transparent, accountable and stay true to our role as a support organisation.

Empowerment

We support charities and community groups to lead change by building on their strengths.

Collaboration

We work in partnership across the voluntary and community sectors, valuing shared learning and reducing duplication.

Inclusivity

We are committed to creating equal opportunities where every voice is valued and everyone feels welcome.

Innovation

We champion creative, adaptable ways of working that respond effectively to changing local needs.

Methodology

The State of the Sector survey was carried out using a questionnaire designed for voluntary sector organisations. This was available online using Google forms and was accessed via a link. The survey was open from May 1 until July 1.

Promotion of the survey was carried out through regular updates in the Wessex Community Action newsletter, mailing list and social media channels. A blog post was also created to increase engagement and response. The survey received 40 responses in total.

Executive Summary

In total 40 organisations responded to the survey. 65 per cent of these were either a Charitable Incorporated Association (CIO), or Charitable Company (limited by guarantee) with 20 per cent being unincorporated associations. Looking at the geographic area at which organisations operated the majority reported serving at either a Wiltshire-wide area or below. 42.5 per cent of respondents reported that their organisation had no paid staff whilst 30 per cent reported having over 41 volunteers.

When it comes to the work of the sector the most common groups identified as main beneficiaries were older people (42.5 per cent), children and young people (30.0 per cent), families (30.0 per cent), people with specific health conditions (27.5 percent), people experiencing mental health issues (27.5 per cent) and people with learning difficulties/ disabilities (27.5 per cent).

Speaking about the achievements they were most proud of, many respondents highlighted the delivery and quality of their service. This included the positive outcomes achieved, the positive feedback received and their sustainability. Key strengths identified included agility, people, values, professionalism, values and connection to the community.

Recruitment challenges were evident across both volunteers and trustees, with over half of respondents reporting difficulties in attracting volunteers over the past year, and just under half experiencing challenges in recruiting trustees. Among organisations with paid staff, a notable proportion also reported recruitment difficulties. These challenges were seen to impact operations, leading to reduced capacity for delivering services and activities, as well as placing additional strain on existing resources.

Demand for the services and activity carried out by the voluntary and community sector continues to rise, with 67.5 per cent reporting that demand had increased over the past 12 months, and over a quarter advising demand has ‘increased a lot’ over that period.

This follows our 2024 survey in which just over three quarters of respondents reported increased demand. Responses to the survey suggested that the complexity of demand has also increased, with 40 per cent of respondents reporting this as a significant, or moderate, challenge.

Overall, the survey highlights the significant financial pressures affecting the sector. Core funding emerges as a particular concern, with 37.5% of respondents identifying it as a major challenge, while project funding poses a moderate challenge for 32.5%. These pressures are compounded by an environment of high inflation and policy changes, such as the rise in employers' National Insurance contributions, with 27.5% of respondents citing increased running costs as a significant challenge.

Of particular concern is the decline in the proportion of organisations reporting their financial position as 'Very good,' which fell sharply from 10% in 2024 to just 2.5% in 2025. At the same time, those describing their financial position as 'Very poor' rose from 10% to 15% over the same period. While the majority of respondents remain optimistic about their organisation's ability to continue operating over the next year, the proportion answering 'don't know' has grown markedly, from 2% in 2024 to 12.5% in 2025, reflecting increasing uncertainty in the sector

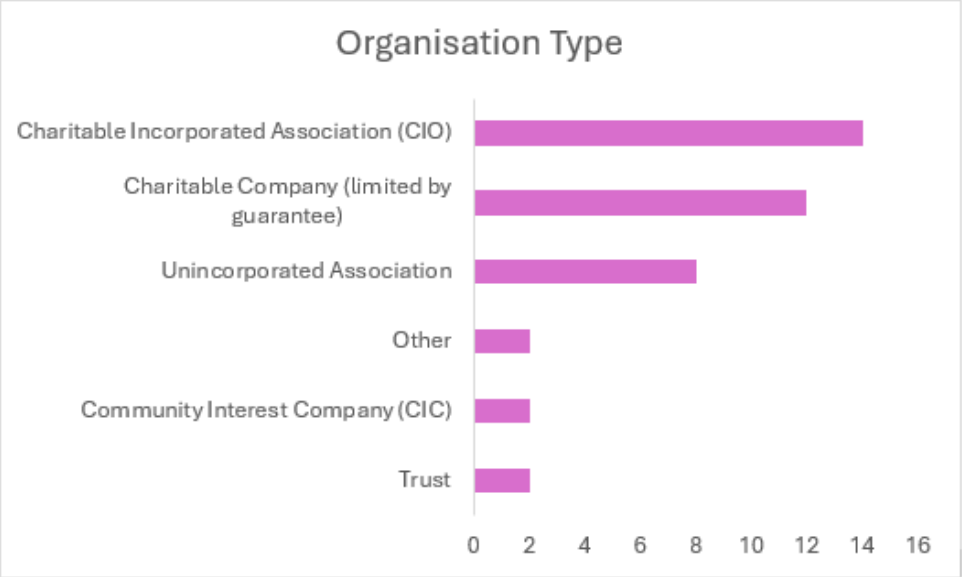
Who Responded

Organisation Type

Organisation type	Number	Per cent
Charitable Incorporated Association (CIO)	14	35
Charitable Company (limited by guarantee)	12	30
Unincorporated Association	8	20
Trust	2	5
Community Interest Company (CIC)	2	5
Other	2	5

Of the organisations who responded the most, 35% were Charitable Incorporated Associations (CIOs), with 30% Charitable Company (limited by guarantee) and 20% Unincorporated Associations, with another 5% of respondents being trusts and 5% Community Interest Companies (CIC). This is similar to figures from the Voluntary Action Swindon (VAS) 24/25 State of the Sector Survey, which reported a proportion of 31% CIO, 28% Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee. 15% unincorporated associations and 7% CICs[1]

[1] https://vas-swindon.org/sector-survey-2024-25/



Geographical Area Covered

Area covered	Number	Per cent
International	0	0.0
National	4	10.0
Regional	5	12.5
Wiltshire	12	30.0
Local area	18	45.0
No response	1	2.5

Looking at the geographical area covered by respondents, there was a similar pattern to the 2024 survey, with the largest response being from charities who cover either Wiltshire, or a local area. Overall, three-quarters worked at a geography no larger than the county of Wiltshire.

Main Beneficiaries

Group	Number	Per cent
Older people	17	42.5
Children and Young People	12	30.0
People from ethnic minority backgrounds	5	12.5
People who are from the LGBTQ+ Community	3	7.5
Carers	5	12.5
Families	12	30.0
Armed forces/ veterans	7	17.5
People with physical disabilities	7	17.5
People with specific health conditions	11	27.5
People who are unemployed	6	15.0
People experiencing mental health issues	11	27.5
People in need of housing support	4	10.0
People in need of addiction support	5	12.5
People with learning difficulties/ disabilities	11	27.5
Offenders/ ex-offenders	4	10.0
Other charities or voluntary organisations	5	12.5
Refugees/ asylum seekers	5	12.5

When asked 'Would you describe any of the following groups as your MAIN beneficiaries', the groups which were selected the most by respondents were: older people, children and young people, families, people with specific health conditions, people experiencing mental health issues and people with learning difficulties/ disabilities.

Staff and Volunteers

Number of paid-staff (FTE)	Number	Per cent
None	17	42.5
1-5	10	25.0
6-10	5	12.5
11-20	0	0.0
21-30	1	2.5
31-40	1	2.5
41+	6	15.0

Number of regular volunteers	Number	Per cent
None	5	12.5
1-5	3	7.5
6-10	5	12.5
11-20	6	15.0
21-30	5	12.5
31-40	4	10.0
41+	12	30.0

When it comes to paid staff, **42.5% of organisations reported having no paid-staff** whilst 25% reported a number of staff at 1-5 and 12.5% reported having 6-10 staff. Overall, **80% of respondents reported having 10 or fewer members of paid staff**. This is a similar figure to the 24/25 VAS survey, which found 79% of organisations had 10 or fewer members of paid staff.

At the other end of the scale, **15% of respondents reported having 41+ members of paid staff**. This profile suggests that in Wiltshire there may be two key parts of the VCSE: a majority of small and volunteer led organisations, alongside a smaller group of larger organisations with significant numbers of paid staff.

Looking at volunteers, the vast majority, **87.5% of respondents, reported having regular volunteers**. 20% reported having between 1-10 regular volunteers and just under a third, some **30%, reported having 41+ regular volunteers**.

Strengths and Acheivements

Which achievement of your organisation are your most proud of?

Respondents were asked which achievements of their organisation they were most proud of. The responses contained several themes, the most common of which was **delivery**, which was a theme present in 24 responses. This pointed to the centrality of the delivery of services to respondents and included pride in the quality of services and positive outcomes achieved.

> *Excellent outcomes for local families.*
>
> *The life enriching experiences we are able to provide our community.*
>
> *Longevity; delivery of real products to help the community; flexibility of approach*

Sustainability was a theme present in six replies. This recognised how achieving sustainability in a challenging environment can be a real achievement which takes considerable skill and determination.

> *Celebrating our 10th birthday this year - not an easy feat!*
>
> *Still being here!*

Five responses referenced the **positive feedback** received as a source of pride. This can be seen to be linked to the central importance of the delivery of services and focus on outcomes.

> *The great Feedback from commissioners and service users*
>
> *Our 100% positive feedback - seeing people leave happier than when they arrived, and reading all the lovely "thank you" messages and comments. We get to see that we make a real difference day after day.*

Other themes included:

- Resilience
- Partnerships
- Staff
- Innovation
- Advocacy
- Reputation
- Volunteers

What you describe as your organisations three biggest strengths?

When asked to describe their three biggest strengths, a range of themes consistently appeared. These were:

- Agility
- People – staff/ volunteers
- Leadership and strategic vision
- Values
- Person centred
- Reputation
- Quality
- Professionalism
- Good relationships
- Connection to the community

> *The staff team and their knowledge/expertise. Our 100% client satisfaction rating. The flexibility to offer tailored support to each client as an individual.*
>
> *Adaptive to change, meeting the needs of people with multiple and complex needs & supporting people who are socially isolated*
>
> *Totally volunteer, locally controlled, building on community strengths.*
>
> *Our adaptability, our volunteers, our ethos*
>
> *Clear vision for the work of the charity, good people involved with the delivery of the services, listening to our community and carers so we make sure we are providing a service they want.*

Overall, responses highlighted the defining attributes of the voluntary and community sector. Organisations are inherently mission-driven, guided by clear values, and demonstrate remarkable agility. A further key strength is their closeness to the communities they serve, often fostered through the active involvement of local volunteers.

Recruitment and Retaining Staff, Volunteers and Trustees

Over the past 12 months, have you noticed any difficulties?

	Recruiting Staff	Retaining staff	Recruiting volunteers	Retaining volunteers	Recruiting Trustees	Retaining Trustees
Yes, a lot	3	0	8	2	7	0
Yes, a little	8	8	15	12	11	6
No	14	18	13	19	13	24
Don't know	2	2	0	1	3	3
N/A	11	10	4	5	4	5

Proportion of total survey respondents reporting experiencing difficulty over the past 12 months?

	Recruiting Staff	Retaining staff	Recruiting volunteers	Retaining volunteers	Recruiting Trustees	Retaining Trustees
Yes, a lot	7.5	0.0	20.0	5.0	17.5	0.0
Yes, a little	20.0	20.0	37.5	30.0	27.5	15.0
No	35.0	45.0	32.5	47.5	32.5	60.0
Don't know	5.0	5.0	0.0	2.5	7.5	7.5
N/A	27.5	25.0	10.0	12.5	10.0	12.5

When asked if they had experienced any difficulties in the areas of recruitment and retention over the past 12 months, **key areas highlighted were difficulty experienced in recruiting volunteers and trustees.** 57.5% of total survey respondents reported having trouble recruiting volunteers, with 20% reporting 'a lot' of difficulty. Similarly, **trustee recruitment saw 45% of total survey respondents reporting experiencing difficulty**, with 17.5% reporting 'a lot' of difficulty.

For retention, the difficulties reported were slightly lower. Though **35% reported difficulty retaining volunteers**, only 5% reported experiencing 'a lot' of difficulty. Similarly, no organisations reported experiencing 'a lot' of difficulty retaining trustees and only 15% reported 'a little' difficulty suggesting that retention is a much less acute issue in these areas than recruitment.

In terms of recruiting and retaining paid staff, though the numbers reporting difficulty are slightly lower, some 27.5% of respondents to the survey reported having trouble recruiting staff and 20% retaining staff. This must be set against over 40% of survey respondents not having any paid staff, so represents a significant proportion of organisations who do employ staff.

Trends in recruitment and retention

Respondents were asked to comment on any trends they had noticed in recruitment and retention over the past year.

Impact of recruitment and retention

29 respondents provided additional comments about the impact of recruitment and retention challenges. A number of key themes raised in these responses. One common theme was how difficulties have had a negative impact on the provision of services, often limiting capacity, or the ability to grow.

> *Having less volunteers means that we can support less children and young people and our direct work with children and young people to improve their lives and childhoods is limited.*
>
> *We have had to cut down on services due to minimal volunteer availability. We've also not had as good a showing at public events as we should have done.*
>
> *Inability to recruit volunteers or trustees with specific skills or experience limits our ability to help more people and expand how many people we are helping at any one time.*

Other responses pointed to the strain placed on existing staff, volunteers, or trustees who must pick up more as a result:

> *Long periods with less than full staff team - impact on other members of the team carrying higher caseloads*
>
> *More pressure on the remaining volunteers to fill the gap*
>
> *We are holding on, just, but are very tired and it is causing family/relationship stress*

The gap from not having trustee input was also highlighted by a respondent who mentioned:

> *We lack the skills and guidance that Trustees can provide*

For some respondents, a response to recruitment difficulties had been to adapt changes to their ways of working. As one pointed out:

> *We've hard to start to diversify our services so we are less dependent on volunteers. We've needed to shorten our induction training so we can onboard new volunteers more quickly. Our senior staff have had to take on more work that was previously fulfilled by trustees (without any extra paid hours allocated for this, meaning staff time is more stretched).*

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[1] Not all respondents provided an answer to this question therefore proportions given is of total survey respondents n=40.

Demand

Over the last 12 months has demand for your services or activity:

	Number	Per cent	2024 per cent
Increased a lot	11	27.5	39.2
Increased a little	16	40.0	39.2
Stayed the same	9	22.5	13.7
Decreased a little	3	7.5	5.9
Decreased a lot	1	2.5	0.0
Don't know	0	0.0	0.0
Not applicable	0	0.0	2.0

Overall, the trend of rising demand for services and activities has continued, with 67.5% of respondents reporting an increase. For 27.5%, this rise was described as 'a lot.' These findings closely mirror the results of Voluntary Action Swindon's 2024/25 survey, in which 64% of respondents also reported increased demand over the past 12 months.

Trends in demand

Asked about any trends in demand over the past 12 months there were 31 responses. Some respondents highlighted the sheer increase in demand they had experienced:

Over the past 5 years we have seen an increase in demand each year, totalling a 100% increase when we compare referrals received in 2019 vs 2024. This year we are already +24% up in referrals received.

Over the last 3 years we have had to double what we do

Demand has increased by 30%

Some comments also pointed to an increase in complexity of demand:

Our clients needs are getting more and more complex and taking up more of our time per person.

Similar numbers of families are reaching out for support - but the needs of each of these families are much greater/more complex/more urgent.

Mental health was a theme raised by several groups in the context of demand they had experienced:

People diagnosed with mental health issues, particularly the young, are on the rise.. ..Charities involved with emotional and mental health support can never do enough.

referrals for people with more severe mental health difficulties who are on long waiting lists for MH services.

higher levels of need accessing our services e.g. people with higher levels of mental health needs in our.. ..programme, which is early intervention but now works with people with more complex needs.

Another theme which emerged was the impact of the wider-context in which organisations operate. This may include changes to services and provision elsewhere, the cost of living crisis, or changes in statutory provision:

Demand has increased as other services have reduced or closed.

Depends on the service, but generally as other charities have to close, we will be asked to take over some of the support. Commercial operators for Social care will grow stronger due to their pricing structures helping cushion the impact of external financial pressures.

Our original clientele were predominantly street homeless. Increasingly we are seeing more people who are not homeless but are facing food poverty..

Lack or reduction of council resources means volunteers have to take on more

Economic pressure on family budgets

Some responses, however, point to how growth in demand has been a positive outcome which may have arisen due to conscious effort on an organisations part. This may particularly be the case for new organisations, or those who are new to an area and can also represent an innovation in service delivery.

Increase in demand as we have deliberately increased both our profile and range of activities

We are growing in terms of our profile, so, we are experiencing growth in new members

To what extent do you expect to be able to meet demand for your services over the next twelve months?

	Number	Per cent	2024 per cent
We expect to meet demand with significant spare capacity	4	10.0	5.9
We expect to meet demand with limited or no spare capacity	22	55.0	49.0
We expect to almost meet demand	10	25.0	25.5
We expect to fall significantly short in our ability to meet demand	3	7.5	11.8
Don't know	0	0.0	3.9
Not applicable	1	2.5	3.9

Overall, **most respondents reported they expected to be able to meet demand over the next 12 months**. Whilst 10% expected to meet demand with significant spare capacity, just over half of respondents, some **55%, reported they expected to meet demand with limited, or no spare capacity**. Exactly a quarter, **25% indicated they expected to 'almost meet demand',** whilst 7.5% believed they would fall significantly short of meeting demand. Taken together, this means that just under a third **32.5%, expected to be unable to meet demand over the next 12 months.**

Income, funding and sustainability

What is your organisations overall annual income?

	Number	Per cent
Under 10k	10	25.0
10-50k	4	10.0
51-100k	7	17.5
101k – 1m	8	20.0
Over 1m	6	15.0
Don't know	2	5.0
Prefer not to say	3	7.5

Just over half of respondents to the survey, some **52.5%, reported that their organisations overall annual income was £100,000 per year, or less** with a **quarter of respondents having an annual income of below £10,000.**

What are your main sources of funding (please select any which make up over 25% of your funding mix)

	Number	Per cent	2024 per cent
Grants from trusts and/ or foundations	18	45.0	49.0
Grants from government (local or national)	10	25.0	33.3
Service delivery through contracts	7	17.5	17.6
Trading activity	6	15.0	15.7
Investment income	2	5.0	3.9
Public donations (including legacies)	20	50.0	49.0

Examining organisations' primary sources of funding, **half of respondents reported that public donations account for more than 25% of their funding. Grants from trusts and/or foundations exceed 25% of the funding mix for 45% of organisations** whilst **25% of respondents indicated that government grants, whether local or national, constitute more than a quarter of their funding mix.**

The 2025 survey results are broadly consistent with those from 2024, suggesting that, overall, respondents maintain a similar funding mix year on year. One notable difference, however, is a decline in the proportion of organisations reporting that grants constitute over 25% of their funding mix for both government grants and those from trusts and/or foundations. While hard to draw any clear conclusion from this data alone, it aligns with findings from 3SG's 2025 State of the Sector survey, published in April 2025, which observed that in Bath and North East Somerset: "Whilst the proportion of income from grants, trusts and foundations remains the largest income source for responding organisations, it has declined steadily, from 34% of income in 2022/23 down to 27% in 2024/25. The proportion of income from Government grants has also decreased by nearly 50% since 2022/23."

Reserves

Does your organisation hold unrestricted financial reserves

	Number	Per cent	2024 per cent
Yes	26	65.0	56.9
No	7	17.5	33.3
Don't know	3	7.5	9.8
Not applicable	2	5.0	0.0
No response	2	5.0	0.0

Is your organisation using unrestricted reserves to meet current operating costs

	Number	Per cent	2024 per cent
Yes	11	27.5	20.0
No	20	50.0	64.0
Don't know	5	12.5	12.0
Not applicable	3	7.5	4.0
No response	1	2.5	0.0

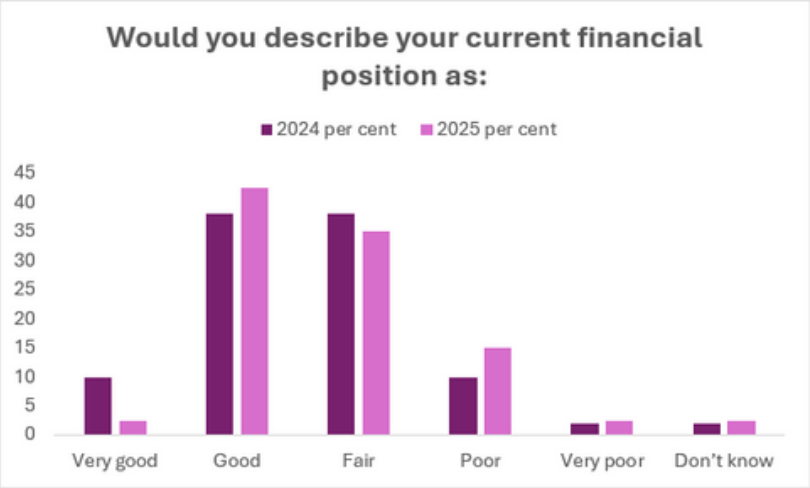
Overall, the proportion of respondents reporting holding unrestricted financial reserves increased from the 2024 survey, with **65.0% of respondents reporting they hold unrestricted financial reserves.**

The proportion of respondents reporting using unrestricted reserves to meet current operating costs has also increased from 2024 with **27.5% reporting they are using reserves to meet operating costs**, rising from a figure of 20.0%.

Would you describe your current financial position as:

	Number	Per cent	2024 per cent
Very good	1	2.5	10.0
Good	17	42.5	38.0
Fair	14	35.0	38.0
Poor	6	15.0	10.0
Very poor	1	2.5	2.0
Don't know	1	2.5	2.0

When asked to rate their current financial position **most groups reported their current financial position was either 'good', or' fair', accounting for over three quarters, or 77.5%.** This is similar to our 2024 survey in which 77.6% of respondents rated their financial position as either 'good', or 'fair'. Compared with 2024, the proportion of respondents rating their financial position as 'very good' has declined sharply, from 10% to just 2.5% in 2025, while those reporting their financial position as 'poor' have increased from 10% to 15%.



How likely is it that your organisation will be operating this time next year?

	Number	Per cent	2024 per cent
Very likely	27	67.5	72.5
Quite likely	8	20.0	25.5
Quite unlikely	0	0.0	0.0
Very unlikely	0	0.0	0.0
Don't know	5	12.5	2.0

When asked how likely it is that their organisation would be operating this time next year, most respondents, 67.5%, answered that it was 'very likely' their organisation would be operating this time next year, followed by 20% who indicated it was 'quite likely'. Both these proportions were slightly lower than in the 2024 survey. A higher proportion of respondents answered 'don't know' in 2025 compared to 2024, with this increasing from 2% to 12.5%.

Challenges

Respondents were presented with a series of areas and asked if these presented a significant challenge, moderate challenge, minor challenge or no challenge.

	Significant challenge	Moderate challenge	Minor Challenge
Core funding	15	9	6
Project funding	6	14	7
Increase in running costs	11	12	8
Increasing complexity of need	3	13	12
Recruitment of volunteers	7	9	13
Retention of volunteers	3	8	15
Recruitment of paid staff	0	9	4
Retention of paid staff	0	7	3
Premises	2	5	8
Cyber security	0	7	10

Areas which were identified as presenting respondents with a significant challenge included core funding, which 37.5% of survey respondents advised was a significant challenge, as well as increase in running costs which was a significant challenge for 27.5% of respondents and recruitment of volunteers which posed a significant challenge for 17.5% of respondents.

Key moderate challenges were project funding, which was cited as a moderate challenge by 35% of respondents. Other key moderate challenges were increasing complexity of need, impacting 32.5% of respondents, and increased running costs which were a moderate challenge for 30%

Challenges most likely to be identified as minor were retention of volunteers, recruitment of volunteers and increasing complexity of need.

Additional comments

A number of respondents took the opportunity to provide additional comments about any challenges they face. These provide further context and comments received covered funding and the adoption of new technologies.

Funding is our biggest challenge, because this affects what time we have, we are all essentially putting more hours in than we are paid for. It's exhausting

Many trusts/foundations we used to be supported by, have now closed their books. Most funding we secure is now small/medium awards, and very short-term. We now have to run multiple concurrent projects, which is much more complex to manage.

Knowing how to use AI to support charity functions - training would be great (could AI help us save money within some functions?)

Continually ensure the charity is robust , responding to the needs of the community and embracing new technologies

Training and development needs

Respondents to the survey were asked if their organisation would benefit from support in a range of areas. Identifying sources of funding was a support need highlighted by almost three quarters of respondents, with almost half of respondents indicating they would benefit 'a lot' from support in this area. Other areas which featured most prominently in terms of benefiting from 'a lot' of support were marketing and communications and IT/digital.

When identifying areas where they would benefit 'a little' from support, several areas received a mention from respondents. These were: networking with other organisations writing funding applications and marketing and communications.

	Yes, a lot	Per cent	Yes, a little	Per cent
Identifying sources of funding	19	47.5	10	25.0
Writing funding applications	4	10.0	19	47.5
Developing a business plan	4	10.0	7	17.5
Monitoring and evaluation	1	2.5	10	25.0
Networking with other organisations	3	7.5	23	57.5
Marketing and Communications	7	17.5	19	47.5
Organisational strategy	4	10.0	5	12.5
Equality, diversity and inclusion	0	0.0	13	32.5
Climate change policy	1	2.5	6	15.0
IT/Digital	7	17.5	9	22.5
Partnership working	6	15.0	13	32.5
Governance	1	2.5	6	15.0
Volunteering support	3	7.5	12	30.0
Project development/ management support	1	2.5	8	20.0
Crisis management	1	2.5	8	20.0

What two things would make the biggest difference to your organisation?

Naming the two things which would make the biggest difference to their organisation, funding was identified by 21, or 52.5%, of respondents. Nine of these specifically referred to core funding whilst several referenced longer-term funding.

> *Access to specific funding not only for capital projects but help with ever increasing running costs.*
>
> *Core funding and core funding!*
>
> *Long-term funding. Larger grants = fewer projects to manage concurrently!*
>
> *Multi-year core funding (because of the nature of our service we are very business as usual, rather than having a series of individual projects to apply for funding for)*

Nine responses focused on the theme of 'people'. This includes staff and their skills, as well as volunteers with both groups being key to organisations success.

> *Experienced team leaders and project leader*
>
> *More people to volunteer*
>
> *Plentiful supply of volunteers*

Other areas which were referred to included:

- Greater organisational profile
- Developed digital infrastructure
- Enhanced supporter networks
- Better engagement with local government
- Cost-recovery commissioning
- Longer-term contracts
- Training
- Change in national insurance increase
- Partnership working
- Time

Commissioning

We asked if organisations carry out any services or activities which have been commissioned. Overall, just under a third of respondents reported carrying out services or activities commissioned by Wiltshire Council. 12.5 per cent also reported carrying out services or activities commissioned by local authorities outside of Wiltshire. The proportion reporting carrying out services and activities for the BSW Integrated Care Board is much lower at just 7.5 per cent, and no organisations reported carrying out commissioned work for any integrated care boards outside of Wiltshire.

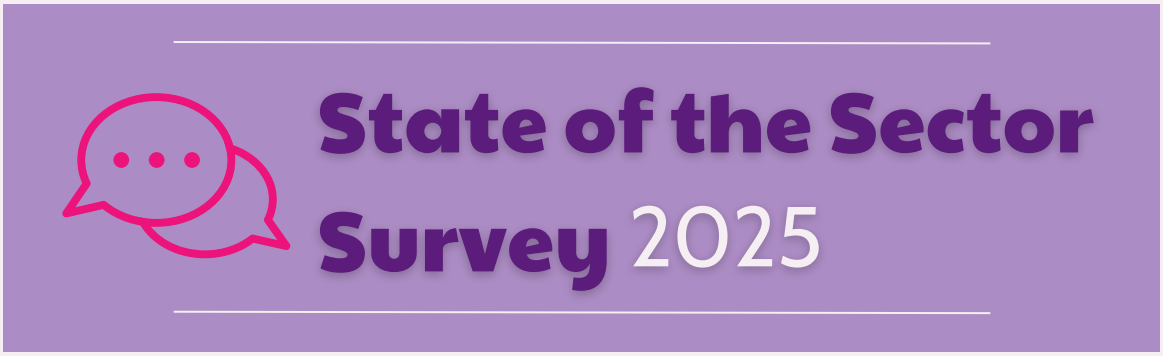
	Number	Per cent
Wiltshire Council	12	30
Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board	3	7.5
Local authorities outside of Wiltshire	5	12.5
Integrated Care Boards outside of Wiltshire	0	0.0

When asked 'Could you describe any ways in which you feel local commissioning could be improved'; a range of suggestions were received. These included:

- Higher percentage to meet costs
- Extend the length of the commissions - it takes a huge amount of time, effort and money to complete and win a tender, only for it to last for 2 years. This is not giving sustainable financial security. There is little or no uplift built in - providers are expected to carry the burden of increasing operational costs.
- Improved outcome measures
- More clarity about requirements
- Not going for a MAT, looking at what the interest of the organisation is that is tendering
- More user-friendly commissioning portal
- Extend the length of the commissions - it takes a huge amount of time, effort and money to complete and win a tender, only for it to last for two years. This is not giving sustainable financial security. There is little or no uplift built in - providers are expected to carry the burden of increasing operational costs.
- The people in charge of making the decisions about renewing contracts should take the time to visit the services - meet the people and see first hand the impact the work makes.
- Provide opportunities for charities that are not county-wide. Recognise the added value brought by existing organisations (local knowledge, trusted service, established volunteer cohort etc).
- Involving us in talks to shape services to take advantage of our local knowledge and skills

About this survey

This survey was administered by Wessex Community Action as part of our ongoing commitment to support and strengthen the VSCE sector in Wiltshire. We are grateful to all who contributed their time and perspectives.



For more information please visit our website **www.wessexcommunityaction.org.uk**, or contact Neil Cotton - **partnerships@wessexcommunityaction.org.uk**

Wessex Community Action
Supporting Community and Voluntary Activity

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