

# Hidden Power

The New Challenge

## The Voluntary Sector in Cheshire and Warrington: scope and structure

Warren Escadale, Voluntary Sector North West, November 2010





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## Introduction

In 2002, Cheshire Community Action and partners conducted the original *Hidden Power* report which explored the nature of the voluntary, community and faith sector including social enterprises (collectively referred to as the VCS) in Cheshire.

Between May and September 2010, Cheshire Community Action conducted an online survey of the VCS in Cheshire and Warrington. This report presents the findings of that survey.

The intervening years mark a period of significant investment in the VCS. The 'Hidden Power' of the sector in 2002 has become better understood and we as a sector have (for better or for worse) developed a significantly more professional approach to delivery and partnership. And as this report shows, we are a larger creature: a significant employer in our own right; a far more methodically inter-connected network of community, faith, service delivery and infrastructure organisations, as well as a skilful strategic partner capable of capturing innovation and drawing down investment.

Since the advent of the coalition government and an accelerated cuts agenda the context of our work has radically altered - and we are yet to see the full impact of this. Over the last 13 years, our sector has grown in certain ways to suit certain techniques, modes of operating and ways of addressing social need, in order to best help those communities with which we work. Whatever way future policy develops, it's clear that we as a sector will need to adapt, make the most of our newly realised strengths and find ways of leading our organisations while remaining true to our sector's core values. It may be that the Hidden Powers we have gained over the last decade need to be complemented by a new understanding of how we can best support our beneficiaries and address social need.

It is not the place of this report to provide answers, but we do hope that it will provide a better understanding of the Cheshire and Warrington VCS's strengths and weaknesses at this crucial time for our sector and for our partners.

If we can better understand what we look like today, it may be easier to understand what we need to do tomorrow.

*Warren Escadale*  
*Voluntary Sector North West*

## Headline findings

### Response rate:

- 259 organisations from across Cheshire and Warrington took part in *Hidden Power 2: the new challenge*.

### Scale of the Cheshire & Warrington VCS network:

- There are 4008 VCS groups in Cheshire and Warrington.
- The respondents have a membership of over 36,000 groups and individuals
- Nearly one in three people benefit from the respondents' services: that's over 270,000 people

### Cheshire & Warrington VCS workforce:

- There are 12,702 paid VCS staff in Cheshire and Warrington (3.1% of the sub-region's total workforce).
- 60 per cent of the VCS workforce are women

### Cheshire & Warrington volunteering:

- There are 122,000 people volunteering through and for VCS groups in Cheshire & Warrington.
- Every week, over 95,000 volunteers within VCS groups contribute over 145,000 hours of their time. This is equivalent to over 3,800 full time jobs.
- 7.6 per cent of volunteers in Cheshire and Warrington are non-white British
- Nearly 27,000 people are volunteer trustees

### Cheshire & Warrington most outstanding skills needs:

- These are fundraising, tendering & procurement, bid writing, first aid, marketing, and business plan development and production.

### Cheshire & Warrington VCS areas of work

- The five main areas of activity are: children and young people; social activities; older people; information advice and guidance; and education and training.

### Resource levels and funding

- The VCS in Chester East appears to be significantly under-resourced in comparison with Cheshire West and Warrington.
- The total income of the VCS in Cheshire and Warrington in 2009/10 was £435,656,500.
- 52 per cent of respondents believe a reduction in their funding will mean a reduction in their services
- 20 per cent of groups do not have enough funds to cover their required level of reserves

## About respondents

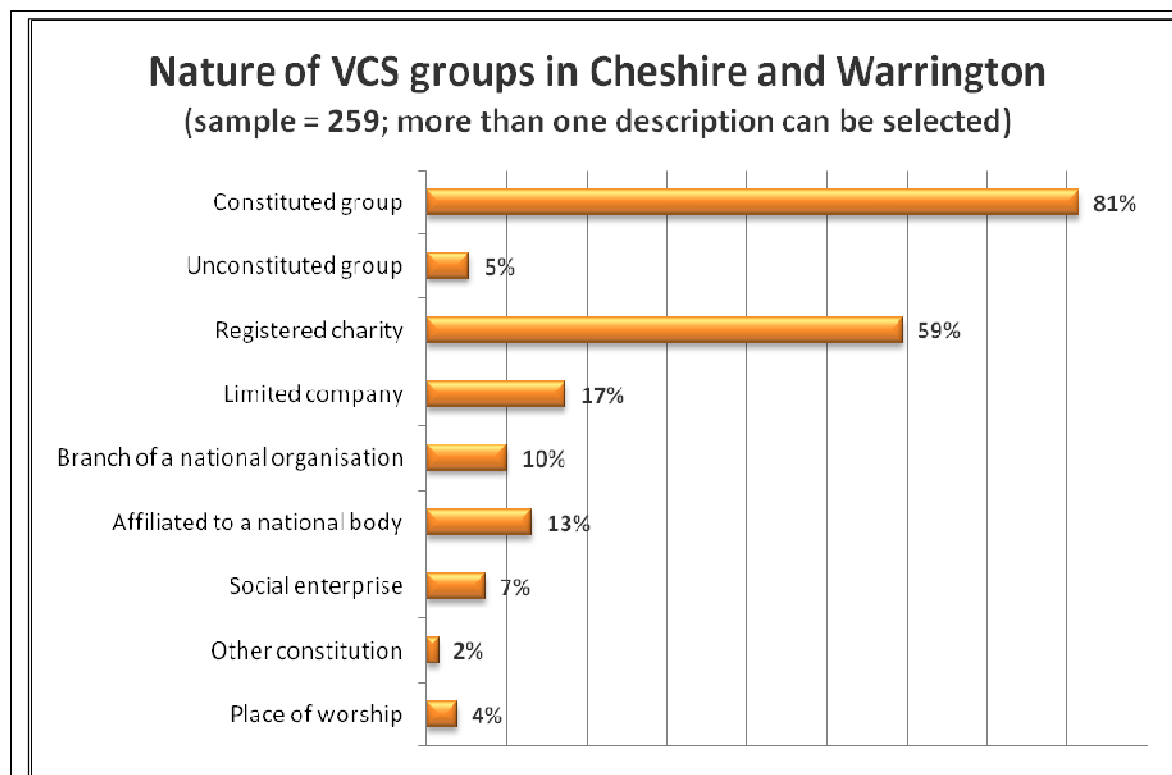
Altogether 296 responses were received, of which 37 were excluded: most of these were duplicates completed by members of staff of the same organisation, some were insufficiently complete and some were completed by non-VCS groups.

In total, 259 eligible responses were received and include 216 fully complete and 43 partly complete responses.

A significant proportion of these respondents are not registered charities (41 per cent) and this is an important aspect of the evolving nature of our sector.

The make-up of the response, we believe, is not untypical of the voluntary community and faith sector (VCS) in general and includes: unregistered but constituted VCS groups; less formally organised groups; branches and members of national VCS agencies, plus a growing number of groups that are formally constituted but not as charities. Since the first *Hidden Power* report (2002), new formal constitutional models have become more freely available: Industrial and Provident, Community Interest Companies, as well as self-defining as a social enterprise.

The increasingly diverse nature of the sector is fully reflected in the types of organisation that responded to the survey (see the figure overleaf).

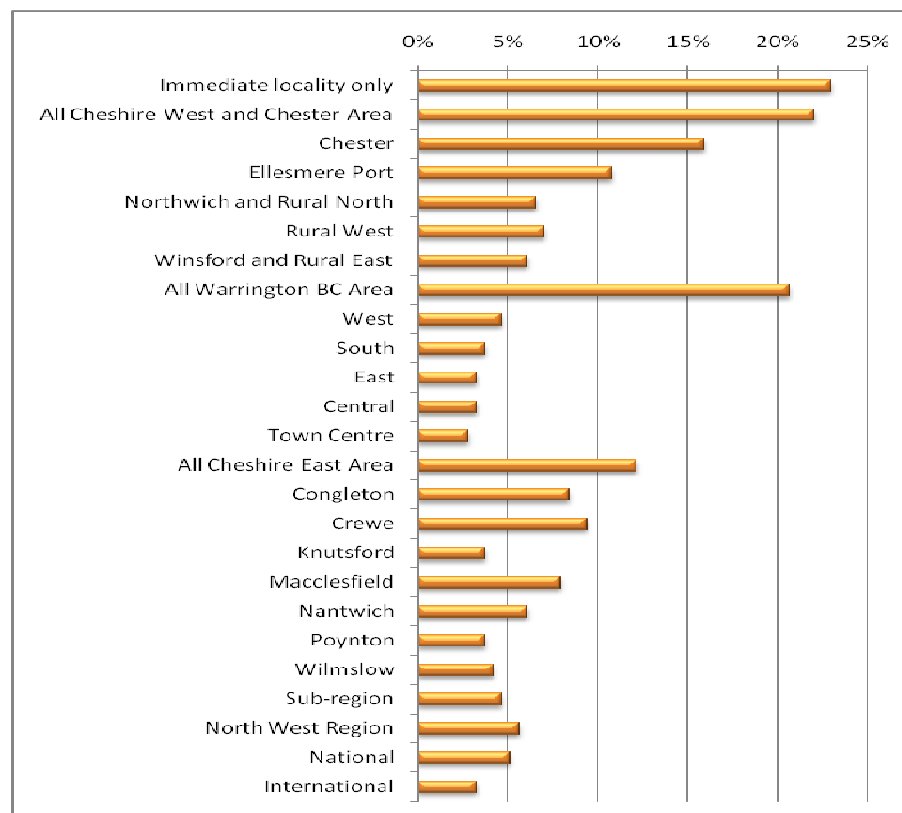


The areas that benefit from the work of VCS groups are not always clearly defined and a significant number of groups work across boundaries. The 259 respondents work in the following unitary areas of Cheshire and Warrington (see table plus figure overleaf).

**Table: Respondent's geographical area of benefit**

Area of benefit	Number of Groups	Percentage
Cheshire East only	60	23%
Cheshire West only	109	42%
Cheshire	11	4%
Warrington	54	21%
Across Cheshire and Warrington	25	10%
Total	259	100%

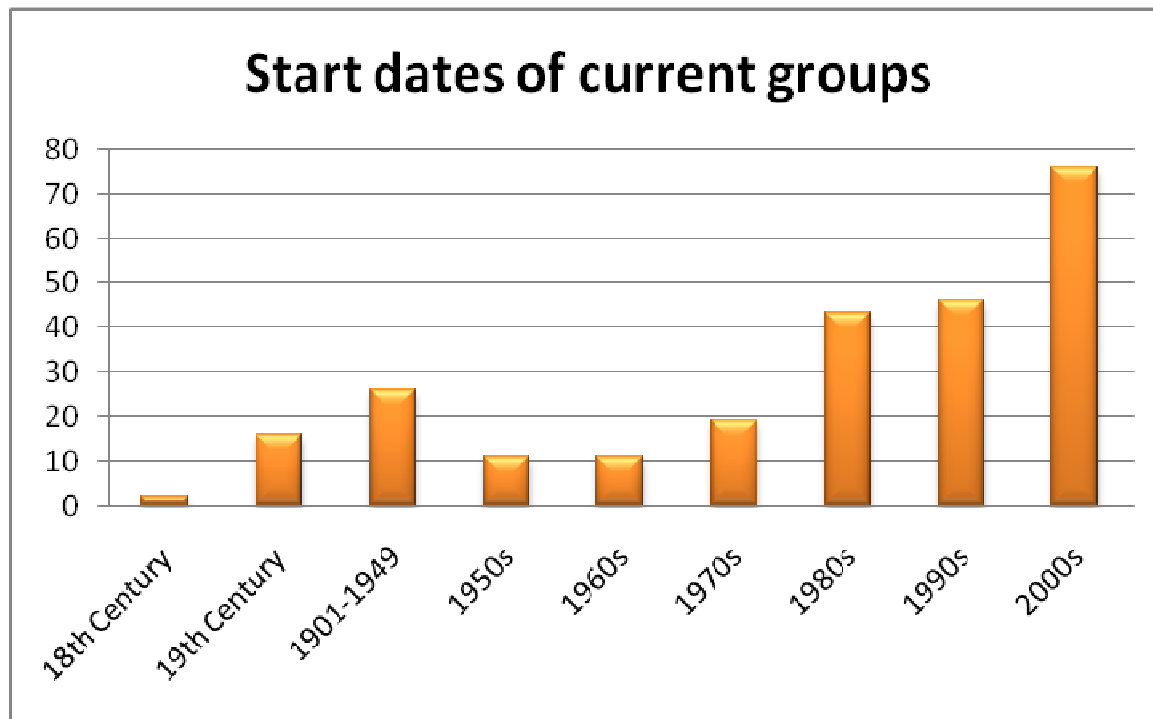
**Figure: main areas of benefit of respondents**



### Year respondent organisations established

Half the responding organisations were established before, and half after, 1988.

38 per cent of groups were established in the last 13 years under Labour Government – 30 per cent since the last *Hidden Power* report. Although these statistics focus on success rates and ignore failure rates<sup>1</sup>, it may indicate the scale of the sector's recent success as well as its vulnerability to a changing funding environment.



<sup>1</sup> The recent National Survey of Third Sector Organisations (NSTSOs) indicated that charity de-registration (failure) rates matched charity registration rates in both Cheshire (2% registration & deregistration rates) and Warrington (3%).



## Number of groups in Cheshire and Warrington

There are over 4,000 voluntary, community, and faith groups including social enterprises (VCS) actively working in Cheshire and Warrington.

This estimation is based on data drawn from: the *Hidden Power 2* survey results, the National Survey of Third Sector Organisations and GuideStar, the latest Labour Force Survey, Ipsos Mori's research into non-Charity VCS activity, and NCVO/Northern Rock research into 'under the radar' VCS groups.

**Table: Numbers of voluntary and community sector organisations in Cheshire and Warrington (registered charities and not registered charities)**

Registered charities	VCS groups not registered as charities	Total
<b>Cheshire &amp; Warrington</b>		
2,421 <sup>2</sup>	1,587	<b>4,008</b>
<b>Cheshire East</b>		
756	502	1,268
<b>Cheshire West</b>		
1,284	842	<b>2,126</b>
<b>Warrington</b>		
371	243	<b>614</b>

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<sup>2</sup>

□ Source: National Third Sector Organisations Survey (collected 2008).

All other figures in the above table are derived from the *Hidden Power 2* survey data (collected Summer 2010) based on a response of 259 (c.6.5% response rate).

## Building a membership: the scale of the VCS network in Cheshire and Warrington

155 groups responded that they have a total membership of 36,003 individuals, VCS groups, social enterprises and statutory sector representatives. See table below.

If this level of engagement is consistent then the sector in Cheshire and Warrington has a membership of over 550,000. The majority of these members will be individuals though there are significant numbers of other VCS groups. Each VCS group has an average membership of just over 230.

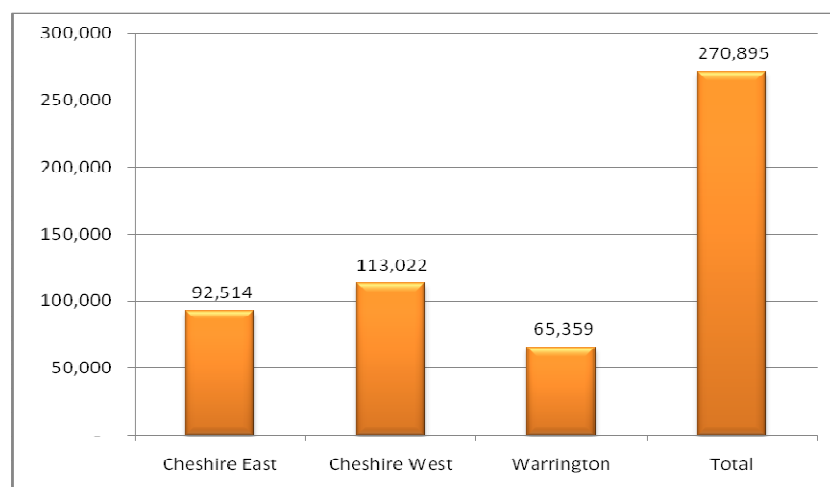
**Table: Membership per unitary area**

	No of Respondent Groups	Total Members	Average Membership
Cheshire East	41	11,495	280
Cheshire West	74	13,957	189
Warrington	40	10,551	264
Cheshire & Warrington	155	36,003	232

### Benefiting from VCS services

Besides having a membership of over 36,000 individuals and groups, the survey respondents estimate that over 270,000 people benefit from their services. This is nearly 1 in 3 people in Cheshire and Warrington.

**Figure: Beneficiaries of VCS services in Cheshire and Warrington (190 respondents)**



### What benefits do VCS groups offer their members?

Besides essential intangibles “like mutual support and fellowship,” and “emotional support,” VCS groups provide members with:

Member services	
<b>Networking opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invitations to events, meetings</li> <li>Discounted prices on others’ products</li> <li>Network facilitation</li> </ul>
<b>Information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Newsletters/magazines/news updates</li> <li>Good practice advice and support</li> <li>Access to (sub-)sector-specific journals, publications</li> <li>Internal policy templates and toolkits</li> <li>Business support information</li> </ul>
<b>Service delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to relevant, tailored services</li> <li>Influencing service delivery (campaigning/lobbying)</li> </ul>
<b>Training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informal and accredited training</li> </ul>
<b>Campaign support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to consultation papers, research updates, briefings</li> <li>Chance to influence the group’s work</li> <li>Opportunity to campaign on specific issues</li> <li>A representing voice; advocacy</li> <li>Involvement in publicity activity</li> </ul>
<b>General support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A safe, relaxing space/environment; social interaction in a fully accessible environment</li> <li>Building and upholding common values – being part of a community of interest</li> <li>Telephone helpline</li> <li>Equipment loans</li> </ul>
<b>Accountability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Right to elect at an AGM</li> </ul>
<b>Volunteering opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work-place related experience</li> <li>Health and wellbeing opportunities</li> <li>Personal development; placement opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>Other infrastructure services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduced rate access to back office services (payroll, room hire, photocopying; volunteer brokerage support; development services like funding advice)</li> <li>Access to affordable legal and insurance protection</li> <li>Promote member job opportunities (reach to a relevant network)</li> <li>Promotion of members’ services to third parties</li> </ul>

### What additional benefits do members have over non-members?

A significant minority of respondents felt that there should be very little difference in terms of what non-members and members could access. The openness of the group is uttermost.

A *limited* number of advantages for members were identified:

Member services	
<b>Networking opportunities</b>	Preferential treatment when numbers restricted Member-only social events
<b>Information</b>	Newsletters/magazines/news updates
<b>Service delivery</b>	Access to relevant, tailored services Influencing service delivery (campaigning/lobbying)
<b>Training and events</b>	Bursaries for training and learning Mentor support
<b>Campaign support</b>	Voice for members only
<b>Accountability</b>	Right to elect at an AGM Strategic involvement in decision making processes.
<b>Other infrastructure services</b>	Free equipment loans; reduced rates Partnership opportunities Access to consortium

## VCS workforce in Cheshire and Warrington

There are 12,702 paid VCS staff in Cheshire and Warrington. A breakdown of the workforce in each unitary authority area is given in the table below.

The total workforce figure is partly based on a sample group of 259 respondents which employ 1,380 staff. However, this figure includes two large employers who work in housing and employ 470 staff between them. In terms of calculating the overall and extrapolated figures, these two employers have been excluded.

The VCS workforce of Cheshire and Warrington is employed by 42 per cent of VCS groups.

**Table: Paid VCS staff per unitary authority area**

	Proportion employing paid staff	Paid staff per group	Total staff in unitary area	% of workforce
<b>Cheshire East</b>	45%	3.1	3,925	2.4%
<b>Cheshire West</b>	41%	2.5 <sup>3</sup>	5,212	3.4%
<b>Warrington</b>	40%	5.8	3,565	3.8%
<b>Total</b>	42%	3.2	12,702	3.1%

### Part-time working

The average hours worked per week by part-time members of staff is 17.3 hours.

This means that the VCS workforce of Cheshire and Warrington works the full time equivalent of 9,929 full time members of staff.

<sup>3</sup> These figures exclude the top two housing associations which collectively employ 470 staff. Though more than valid VCS employers, the scale of their staffing drastically skews the figures and inordinately affects the overall picture of activity.

## Diversity of staff

### Gender and hours worked per week

There is a clear difference in genders employed part-time as opposed to full time. In terms of full-time employment, there is little difference in the proportion of men and women employed in the VCS in Cheshire and Warrington.

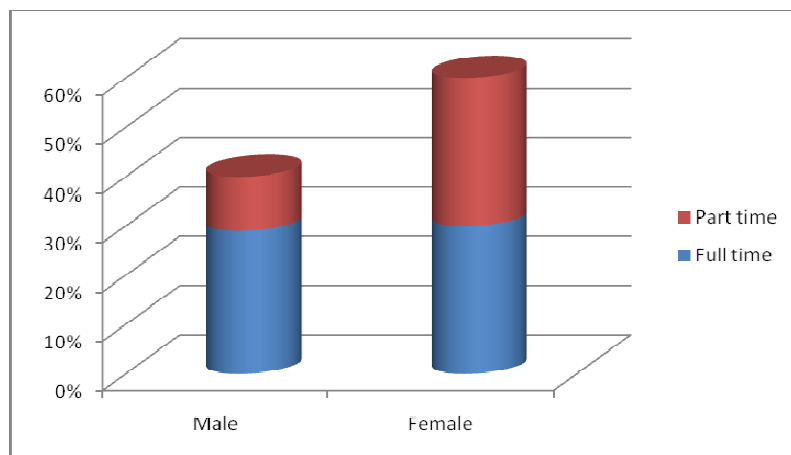
Nationally, the sector is said to provide more opportunities for women (68 per cent of all jobs) but this preference only stands out in the part time working. There is a clear split in genders employed in part time work in Cheshire and Warrington.

- The overall percentage of employed female staff (60 per cent) is lower than the national average (68 per cent). This is still significantly higher than private sector employment of women.<sup>4</sup>
- The proportion of part-time work is higher (41 per cent) than the national VCS equivalent (37 per cent).

**Table: Gender and hours worked**

(n=1361 staff)	Male	Female	Total
Full time	29%	30%	59%
Part time	11%	30%	41%
Total	40%	60%	

**Figure: Employment in Cheshire and Warrington by gender and full/part time**



<sup>4</sup> This also compares favourably to civil service employment of women where "53 per cent of all civil servants were women, with women making up 85 per cent of the part-time workforce" Office for National Statistics news release (Jan 2010):

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/csnr0110.pdf>

## Workforce and ethnicity

96.4 per cent of the workforce is described by respondents as white British. This is neither higher nor lower than the proportion of white British people in Cheshire and Warrington.

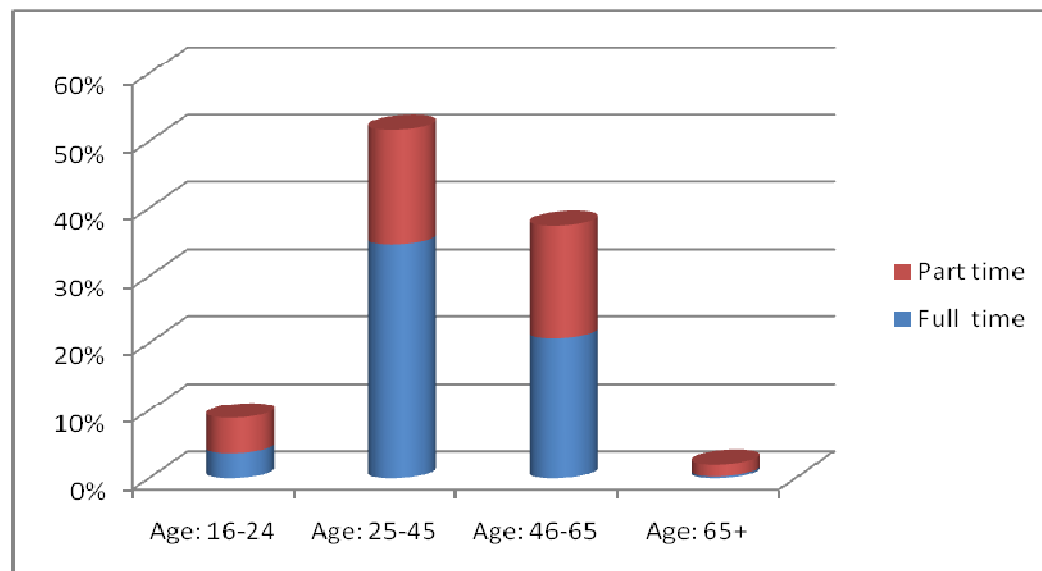
## Workforce and disability

It is difficult to determine whether respondents have abstained from answering or that they do not employ staff with a disability. As a minimum, the proportion of staff who regard themselves as having a disability is at least 4.6 per cent. This compares to 7.1 per cent within the civil service across the UK.

## Workforce and age

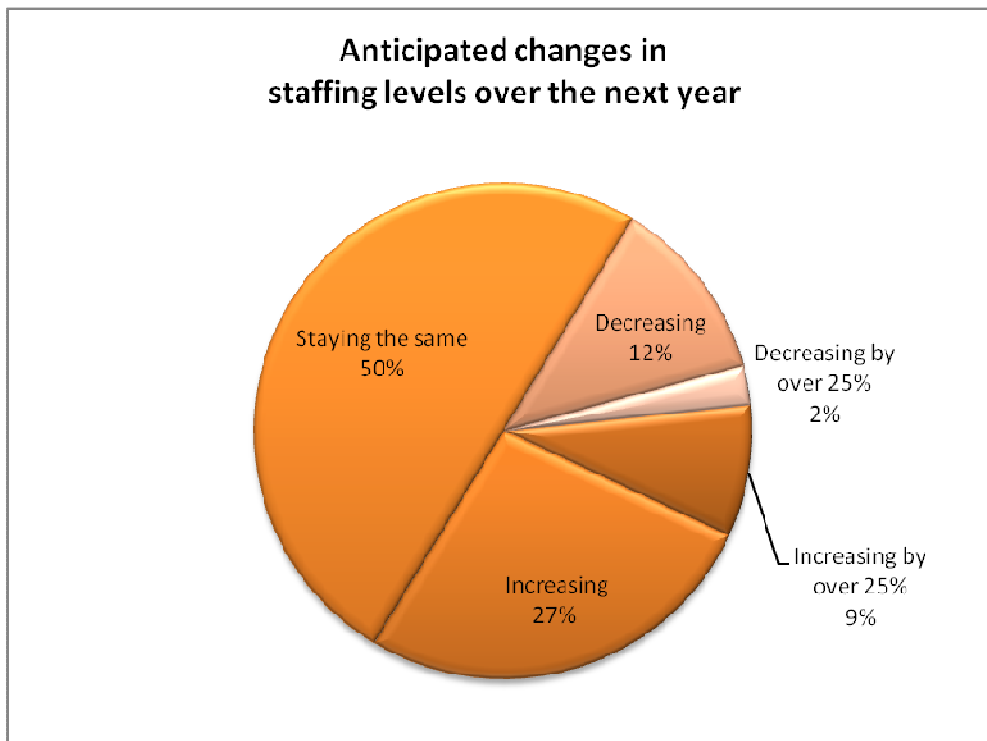
There has been a significant increase in the proportion of paid staff under the age of 24 within the VCS since the original Hidden Power report.

<b>N=645 employees</b>	<b>Full time</b>	<b>Part time</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Age: 16-24</b>	4%	5%	9%
<b>Age: 25-45</b>	35%	17%	52%
<b>Age: 46-65</b>	21%	17%	37%
<b>Age: 65+</b>	0%	2%	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>41%</b>	



Anticipated changes in staffing over the next year

Surprisingly most respondents (86%) envisage maintained levels of staffing or even increases over the next year.





## Volunteers and VCS groups in Cheshire and Warrington<sup>5</sup>

Key facts about volunteering for Cheshire and Warrington VCS groups:

- 69 per cent of respondents have at least one volunteer.
- Of those that do, groups have on average 37 volunteers but the median amount was 13.
- Cheshire and Warrington VCS groups have over 95,000 volunteers working for them.
- On average volunteers contribute 1.47 hours per week. This equates to nearly 140,000 hours volunteering per week.
- This equates to an unpaid workforce of 3,730 full-time workers.
- At minimum wage, this equates to an extra £42m per year contribution to the local economy

**Table: Volunteering through VCS Groups in Cheshire and Warrington**

	Volunteers	Hours per week	Economic contribution at minimum wage (£5.80 ph) per annum
<b>Cheshire East</b>	30,040	44,159	13,318,294
<b>Cheshire West and Chester</b>	56,427	82,948	25,017,023
<b>Warrington</b>	8,713	12,808	3,862,926
<b>Total</b>	95,180	139,915	42,198,243

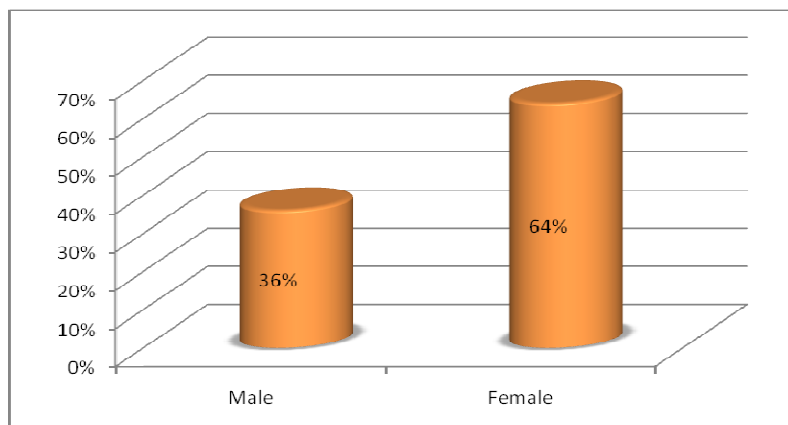
<sup>5</sup> Trustee volunteering is dealt with separately under the heading of Governance.

## Volunteering and diversity

### Volunteering and gender

64 per cent of volunteers are women.

**Figure: Volunteering and gender**

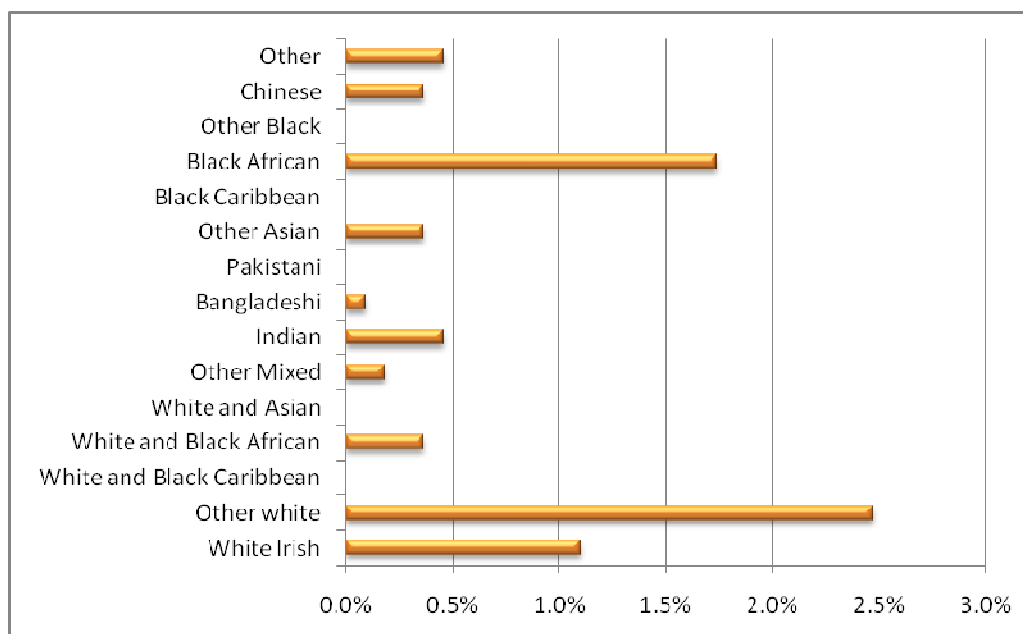


### Volunteering and Diversity

Figures supplied were low and therefore possibly not reliable (sample size = 1,092).

White British constituted 92.4 per cent of volunteers. The 7.6 per cent non-White British take up of volunteering opportunities is larger than would be expected for Cheshire and Warrington.

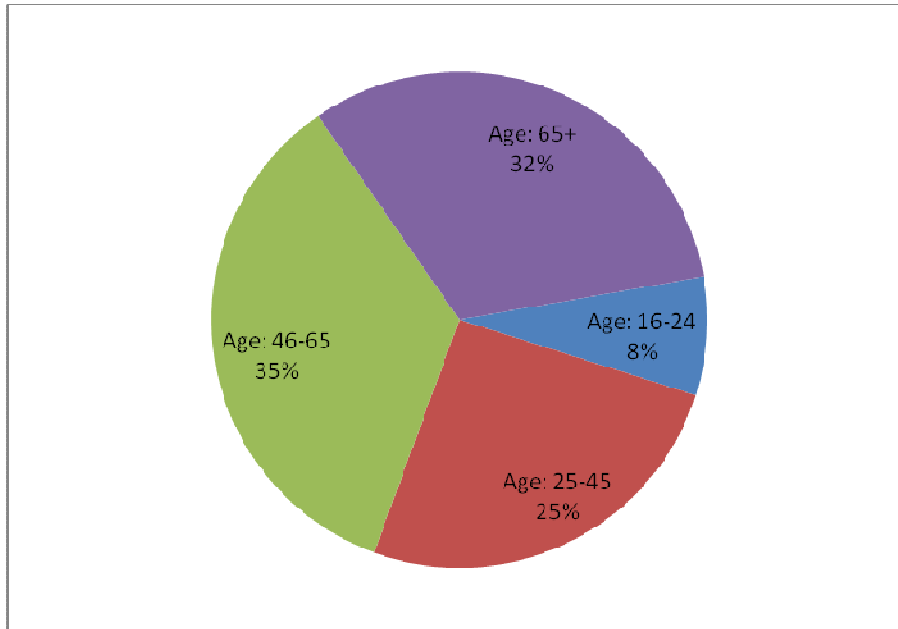
**Figure: Breakdown of 7.6% non-White British Volunteering in Cheshire and Warrington (sample = 1,092)**



## Volunteering and age

The proportion of under 25-year old volunteers has increased.

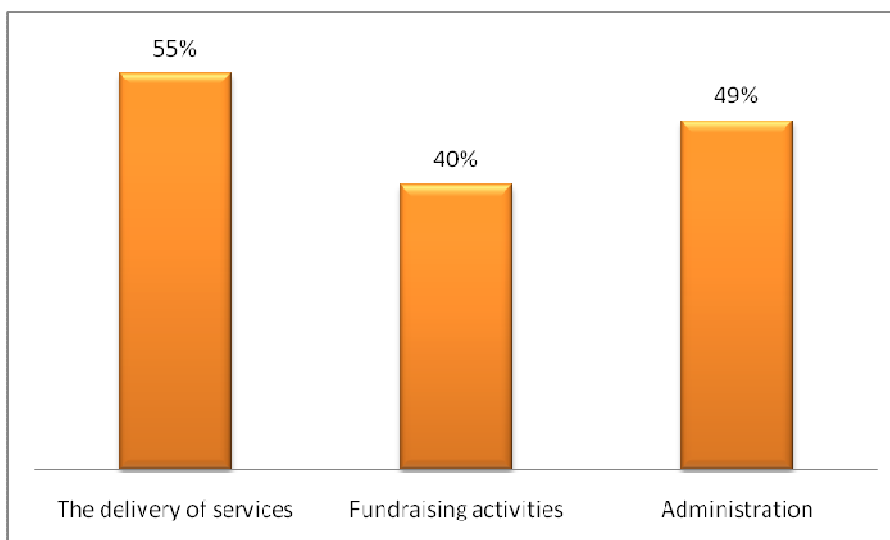
**Figure: Volunteering and age (sample = 2727)**



## **Volunteering activities**

Most volunteers working for VCS groups are directly involved in delivering services (55 per cent). However, volunteers are frequently involved in other ways: 49 per cent in back office functions and 40 per cent in fundraising, for example.

**Figure: Volunteer activities**

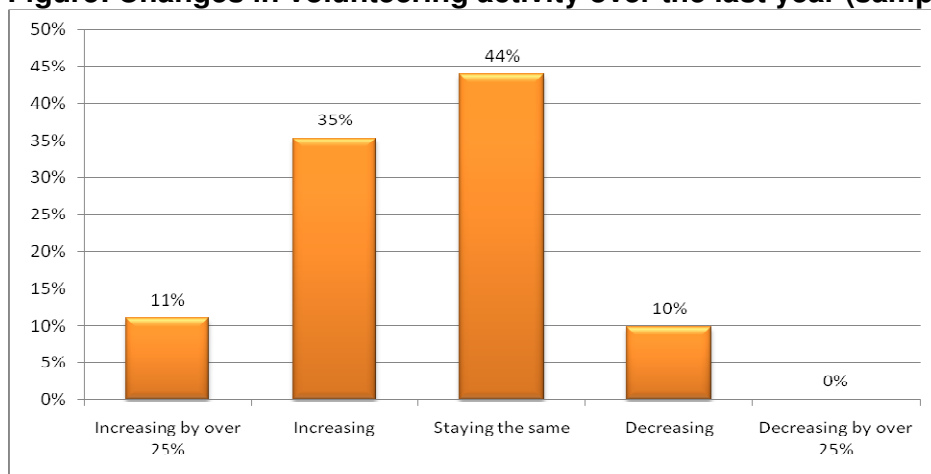


Typical volunteering activities can involve helping to run events, gardening, being a trustee, counseling and befriending bereaved people, managing or maintaining woodland, making tea and sandwiches, providing a telephone helpline service, running the practical side of toddler group, representing the organisation at meetings, driving community transport vehicles, helping with social events, or providing marketing support (eg web design, generating publicity).

### Changes in volunteering activity over the last year

Nearly half of respondents have noticed an increase in volunteering over the last year.

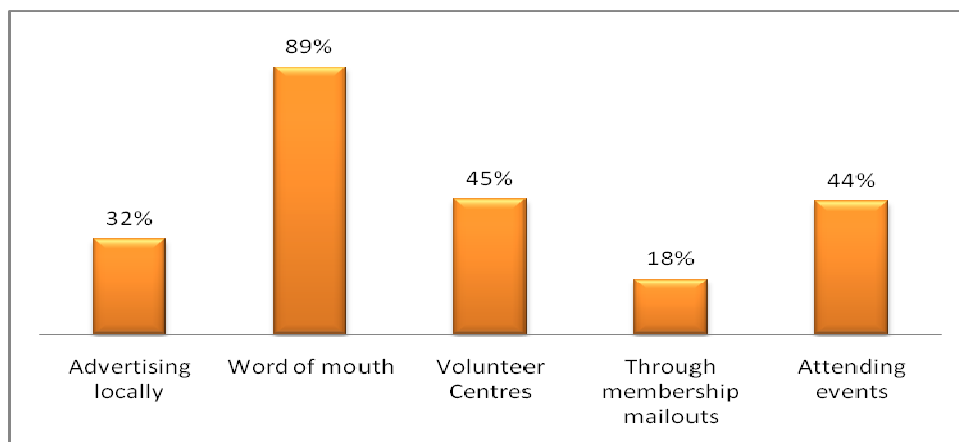
**Figure: Changes in volunteering activity over the last year (sample = 173)**



### How do groups attract volunteers?

Respondents stressed the importance of word of mouth for attracting volunteers and a number mentioned the use of websites as also important.

**Figure: Attracting volunteers**



## Governance

The average number of trustees, governors or management committee members was 6.8. This means that there are just under 27,000 people in Cheshire and Warrington volunteering their time as trustees of voluntary and community sector groups.

Altogether, there are 122,000 people taking on additional roles as volunteers or trustees throughout Cheshire and Warrington; sometimes both.

On average, trustees spend just over three-quarters of an hour (48 minutes) per month being a trustee.

When asked whether more trustees are required, 31 per cent said yes and 69 per cent said no.

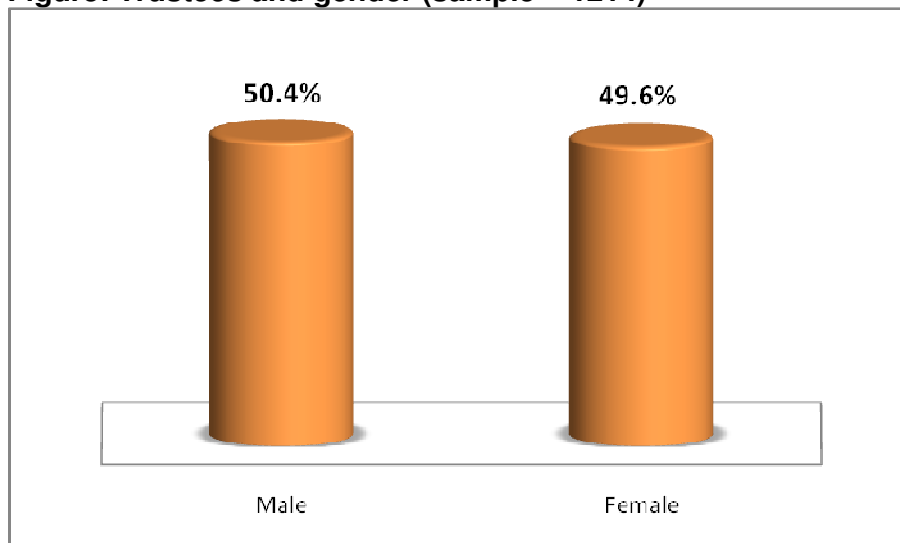
**Table: Governance of VCS Groups in Cheshire and Warrington**

	Volunteer trustees	Hours per month	Economic contribution at minimum wage (£5.80 ph) per annum
<b>Cheshire East</b>	7,716	6,173	429,627
<b>Cheshire West and Chester</b>	14,635	11,708	814,877
<b>Warrington</b>	4,310	3,448	239,981
<b>Total</b>	26,661	21,329	1,484,484

Governance and gender

Trustee Boards and Management Committees in Cheshire and Warrington are evenly matched in terms of gender.

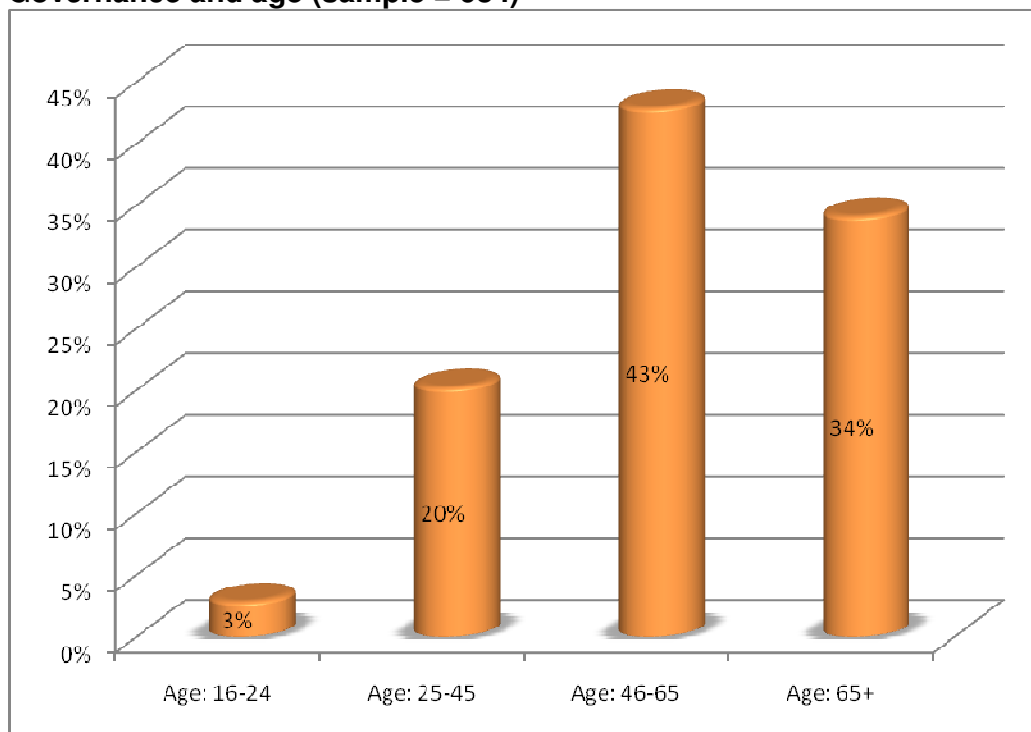
**Figure: Trustees and gender (sample = 1214)**



Governance and age

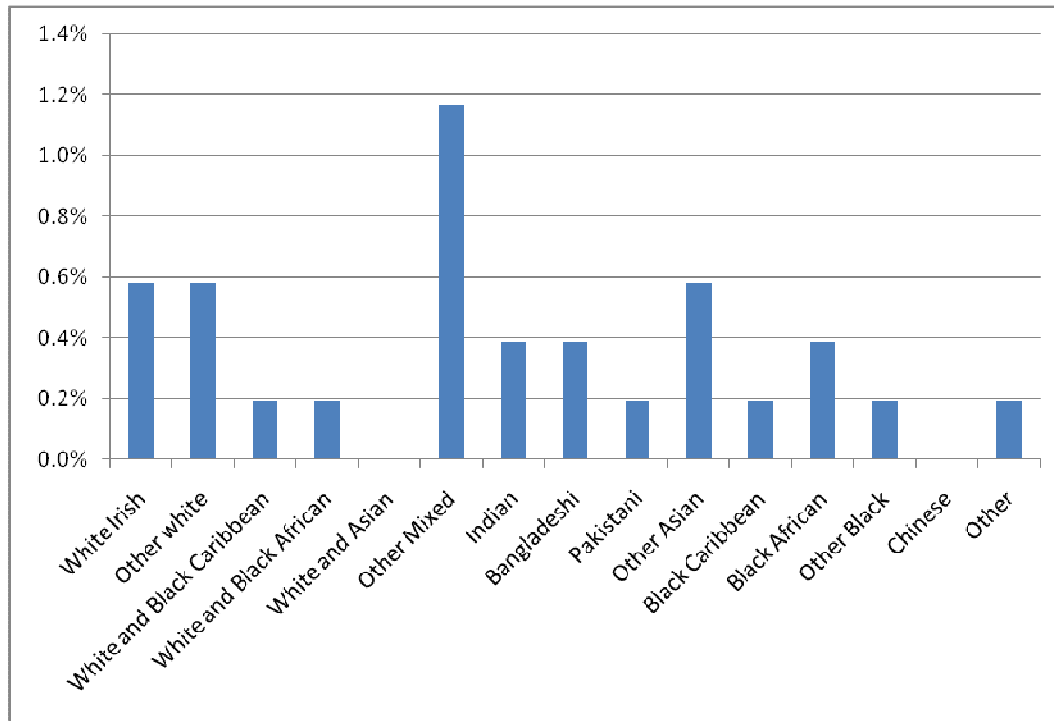
The majority of trustees are over 45.

**Governance and age (sample = 984)**



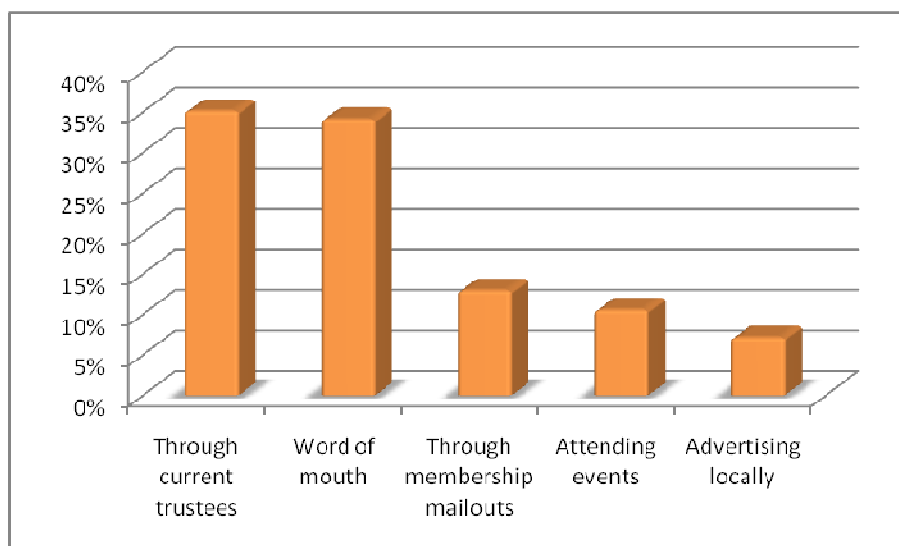
### Governance and Diversity

94.8 per cent of trustees in Cheshire and Warrington are white British. No single ethnicity dominates the remaining 5.2 per cent of trustee positions.



### Recruiting Trustees

Trustee recruitment, for the most part, is more informal: two thirds is by word of mouth or through current trustees.



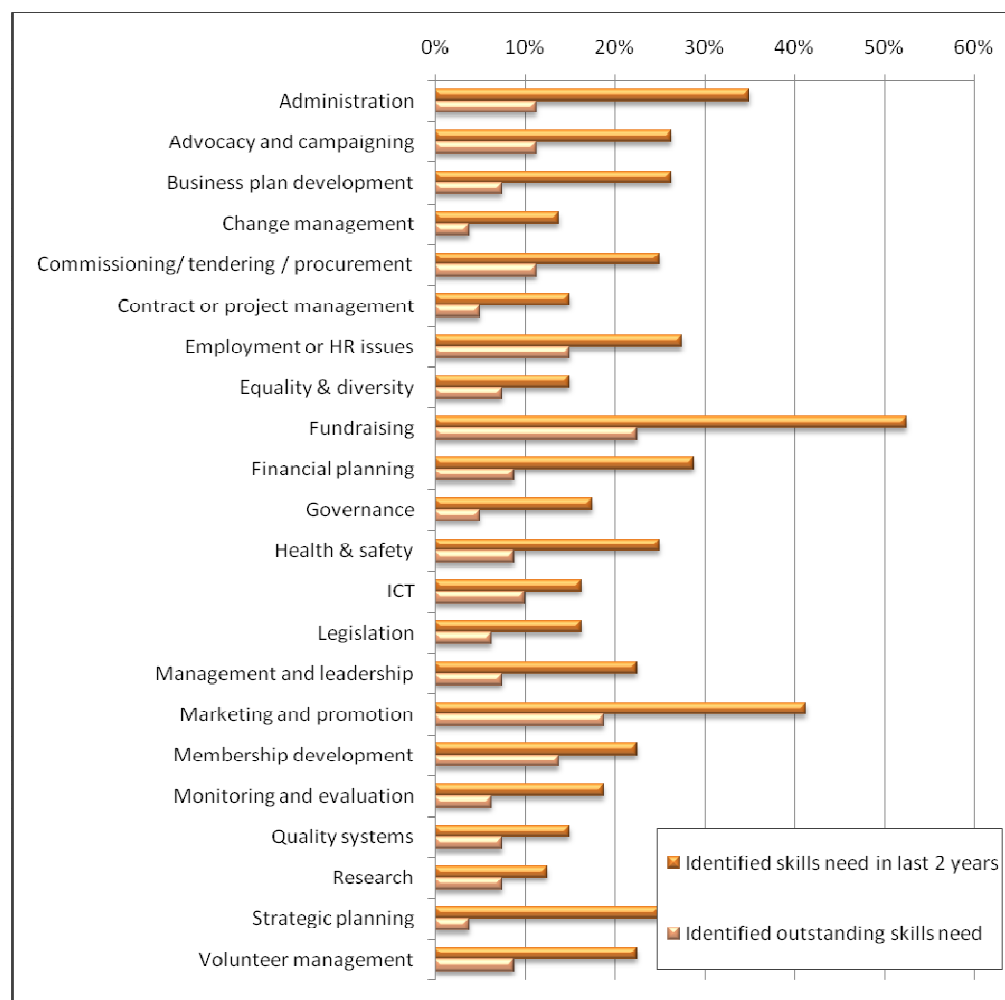
## Skills and Governance

31 per cent of organisations have conducted a skills audit of their governing body in the last two years. The top priorities are

- Fundraising
- Marketing and promotion
- Administration
- Financial planning (no longer a top need – replaced by membership development)
- Employment or HR issues
- Business plan development (no longer a top need – replaced by tendering & procurement)
- Advocacy and campaigning

The need to address shortfalls in skills relating to membership development and tendering & procurement has grown.

**Figure: Skills Audit – trustee board (Sample = 80)**





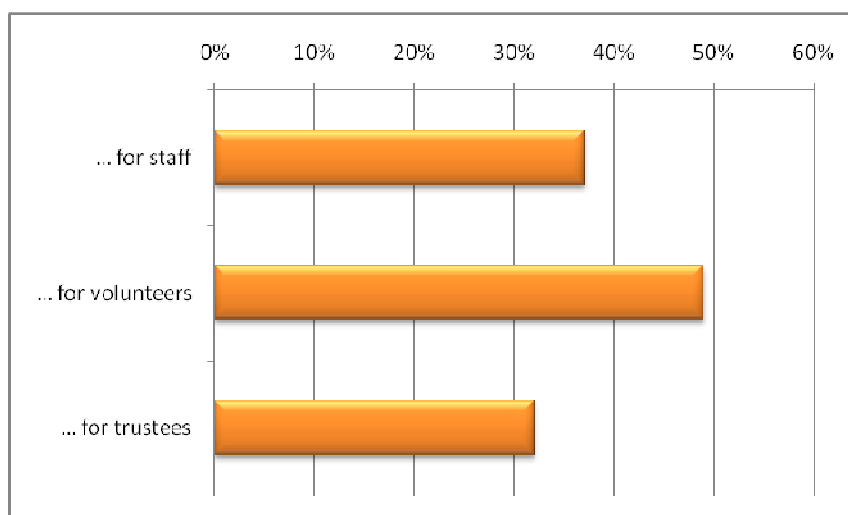
## Staff and Volunteer Training and Development

Over 38 per cent of VCS groups invest in external training for staff and volunteers.

**Table: Number of VCS groups that arrange training for staff, volunteers and trustees (Sample = 210)**

	Yes	Yes (in house)	Yes (external)	No
<b>Staff</b>	49%	37%	38%	16%
<b>Volunteers</b>	60%	49%	39%	27%
<b>Trustees</b>	39%	32%	23%	26%

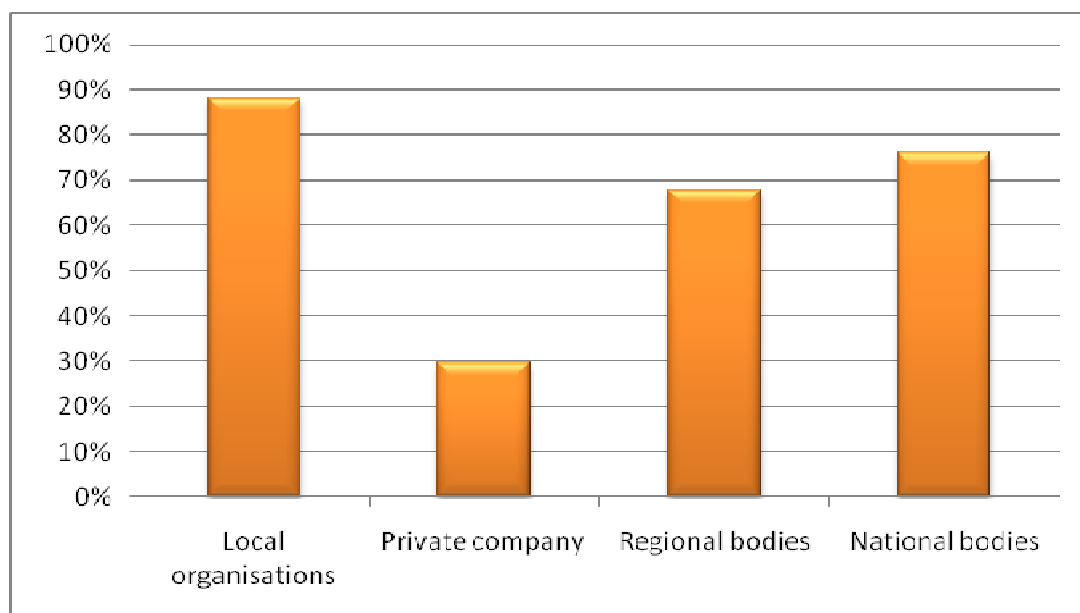
**Figure: Number of VCS Groups that provide their own in-house training**



59 per cent of groups do not provide training or other learning opportunities such as placements to people who are not part of their group or organisation. Of those that did provide such opportunities, just over a quarter are formal and might lead to qualifications.

In fact, 25 per cent of respondents had provided training that had (formally and informally) benefited participants from other groups: within the sample 3,821 individuals had benefited.

**Figure: Sources of external training for volunteers, staff and trustees**



**Other sources of external training that respondents identified include:**

Organisations within their own networks, CVS training, local arts council, local authorities, patient participation group, local VCS providers, colleges.

**Training and development funds and budgets**

32 per cent of VCS groups have a training and development fund or budget. A significant number of groups, lacking such budgets, make up for this through access to or support from free training for your staff and volunteers such that 62 per cent either have a budget or can access one in order to train staff and volunteers.

16 per cent of respondents provided figures for budgets that they could access and which collectively totalled just over £104,000. The median<sup>6</sup> budget that could still be accessed at the time of making their response was £1200. A further 2 per cent of respondents have access to free training. One respondent has access to a national office budget and training, while another relied on training delivered through Train to Gain.

One respondent commented that “*Training is ad hoc and depends entirely on what is available from organisations such as CVS*”.

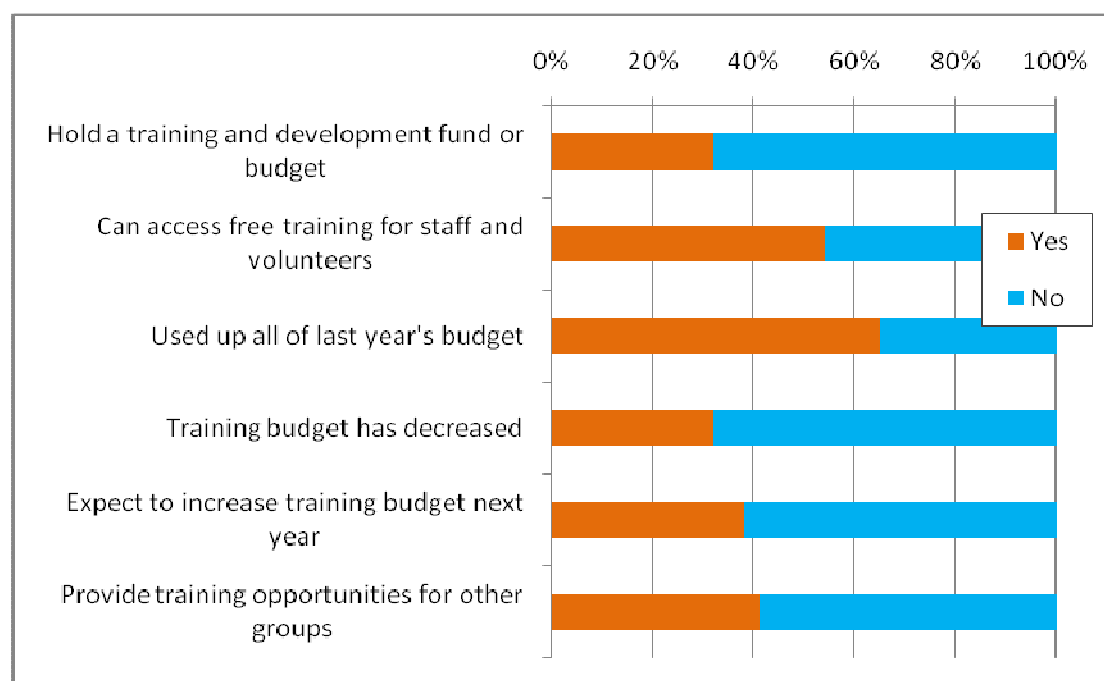
**Did you use your total budget for training last year?**

65 per cent of respondents did and 35 per cent of respondents did not use the previous year’s budget.

<sup>6</sup> The median is the value for which half the responses are higher and half the responses are lower. As such it is not so subject to the distorting affects of a few high figures in the sample.

### Has this budget increased or decreased since last year? Next year?

37 per cent have increased the budget, 31 per cent have kept it at the same level and 32 per cent have decreased it. 42 per cent expected it to increase next year.



### How are training budgets sourced

The main source is self generated funding (60per cent). After that, the three other sources are used about the same: part of the base budget (37 per cent), written into bids (34 per cent) and specific applications for training (31 per cent).

### Training Needs of VCS groups in Cheshire and Warrington

*The six most outstanding skills needs* are fundraising, commissioning/tendering/procurement, bid writing, first aid, marketing, and Business plan development and production.

#### Other areas highlighted include:

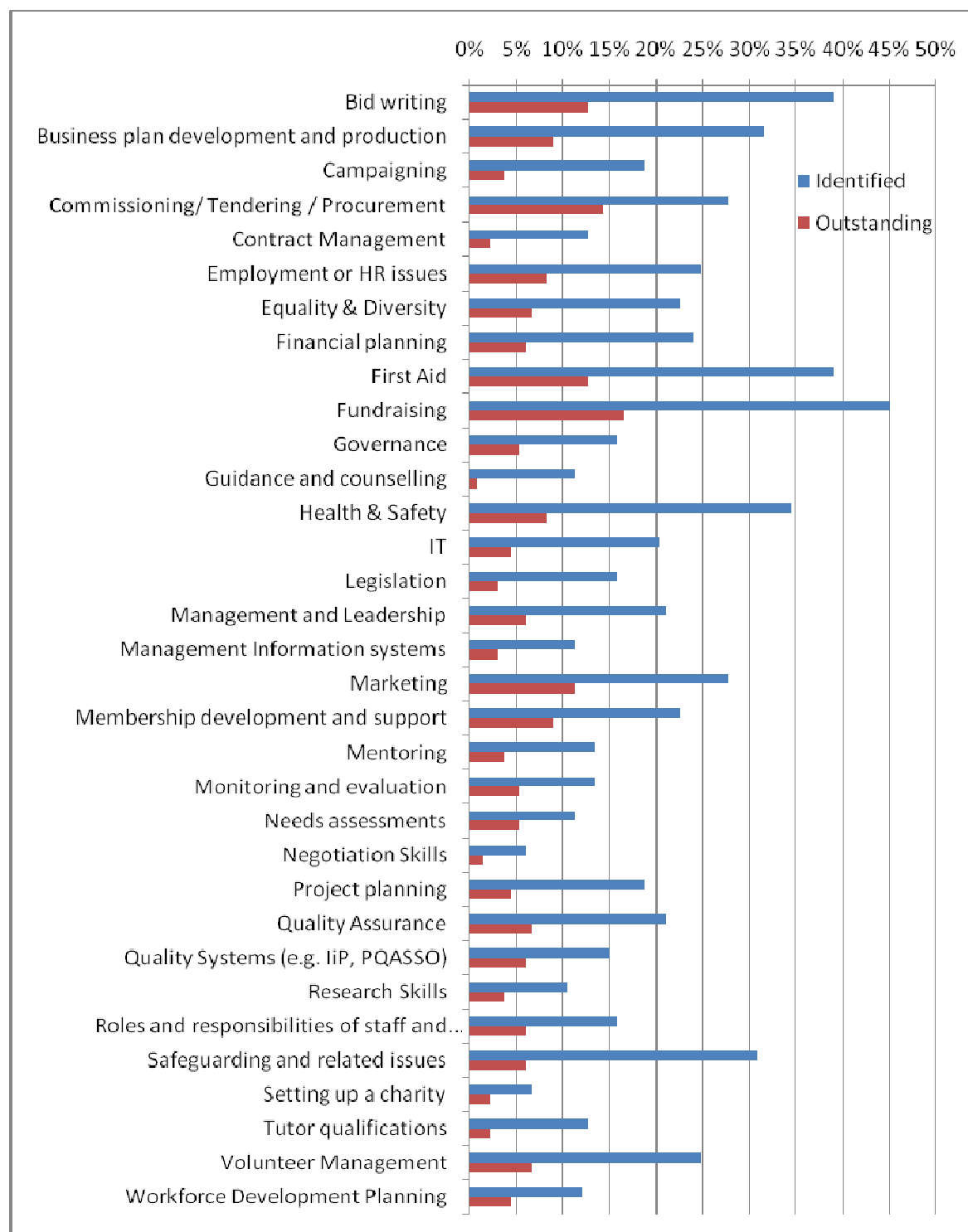
- Book-keeping and financial management
- Chairmanship skills/treasurer skills
- Child/adolescent development, working with children and young people with disabilities, family support, implications of One Children's Workforce/multi agency working, domestic abuse awareness
- Coaching in playing the sport and coaching for referees
- Food safety and catering
- Incorporation
- Public relations
- Time management

Further details of training needs are provided in the following table and figure.

**Table: Training needs of VCS Groups in Cheshire and Warrington**

<b>Sample = 133</b>	<b>Identified need</b>	<b>Still outstanding need</b>
<b>Bid writing</b>	39%	13%
<b>Business plan development and production</b>	32%	9%
<b>Campaigning</b>	19%	4%
<b>Commissioning/ Tendering / Procurement</b>	28%	14%
<b>Contract Management</b>	13%	2%
<b>Employment or HR issues</b>	25%	8%
<b>Equality &amp; Diversity</b>	23%	7%
<b>Financial planning</b>	24%	6%
<b>First Aid</b>	39%	13%
<b>Fundraising</b>	45%	17%
<b>Governance</b>	16%	5%
<b>Guidance and counselling</b>	11%	1%
<b>Health &amp; Safety</b>	35%	8%
<b>IT</b>	20%	5%
<b>Legislation</b>	16%	3%
<b>Management and Leadership</b>	21%	6%
<b>Management Information systems</b>	11%	3%
<b>Marketing</b>	28%	11%
<b>Membership development and support</b>	23%	9%
<b>Mentoring</b>	14%	4%
<b>Monitoring and evaluation</b>	14%	5%
<b>Needs assessments</b>	11%	5%
<b>Negotiation Skills</b>	6%	2%
<b>Project planning</b>	19%	5%
<b>Quality Assurance</b>	21%	7%
<b>Quality Systems (e.g. liP, PQASSO)</b>	15%	6%
<b>Research Skills</b>	11%	4%
<b>Roles and responsibilities of staff + volunteers</b>	16%	6%
<b>Safeguarding and related issues</b>	31%	6%
<b>Setting up a charity</b>	7%	2%
<b>Tutor qualifications</b>	13%	2%
<b>Volunteer Management</b>	25%	7%
<b>Workforce Development Planning</b>	12%	5%

**Figure: Training needs of VCS Groups in Cheshire and Warrington**

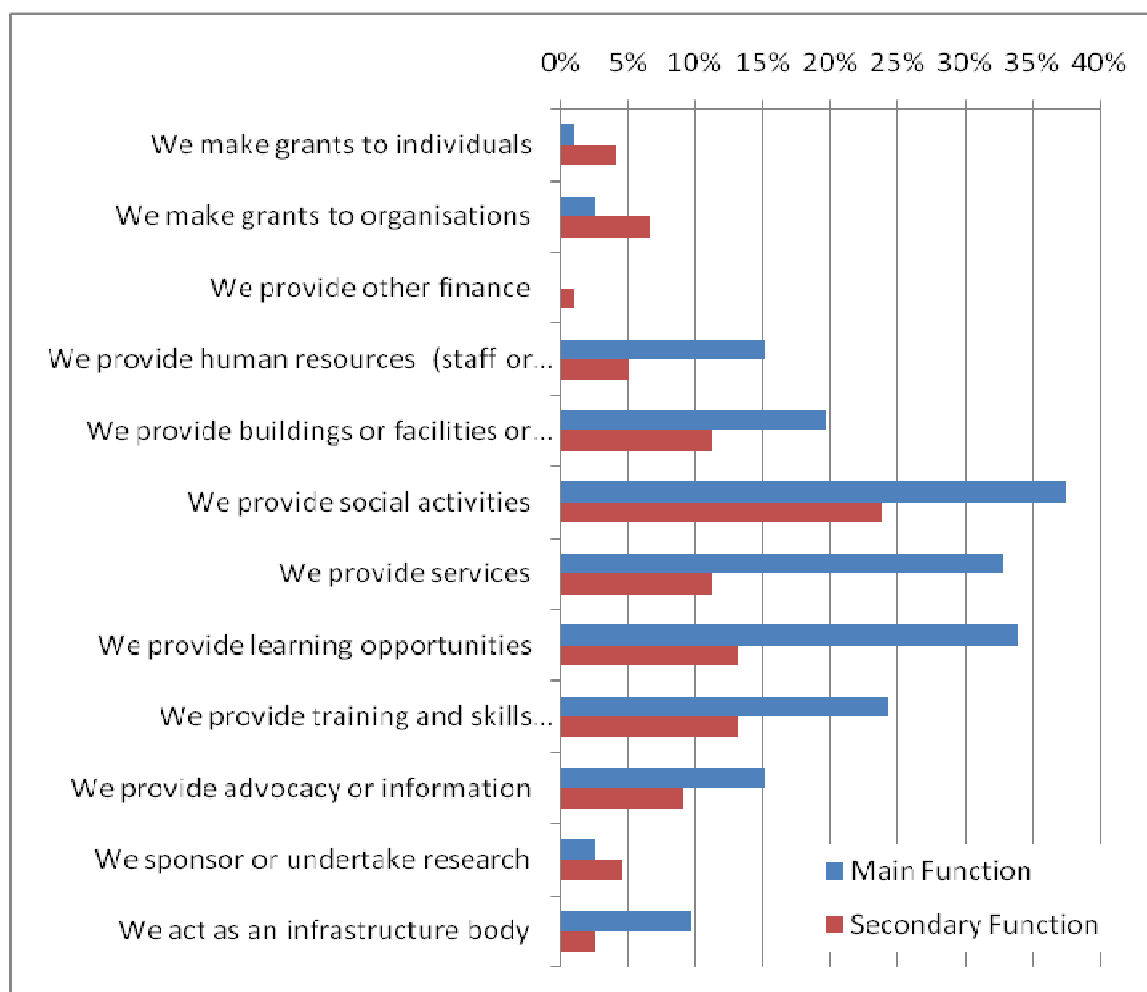


## Main areas of work of Cheshire and Warrington's VCS organisations

31 per cent of VCS groups provide open spaces for groups and people, while over half provide social activities.

The VCS groups also make a significant contribution to training and skills, reaching the hardest to reach.<sup>7</sup>

**Figure: Work of VCS groups in Cheshire and Warrington**



<sup>7</sup> The Learning and Skills Council research demonstrates the ability of VCS learning and skills providers, beyond all other providers, to reach people who are unemployed or who live in areas of deprivation, with achievement rates far better than non-VCS providers (in terms of FE learning aims this was 88% vs 75%). In 2007/08, the VCS delivered over a quarter of all entry to employment (E2E) aims.  
[http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/Understanding\\_the\\_Contribution\\_of\\_the\\_Third\\_Sector\\_in\\_LSC.pdf](http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/Understanding_the_Contribution_of_the_Third_Sector_in_LSC.pdf)

The five main areas of activity that can be seen from the table and figure are: children and young people; social activities; older people; information, advice & guidance; and education & training.

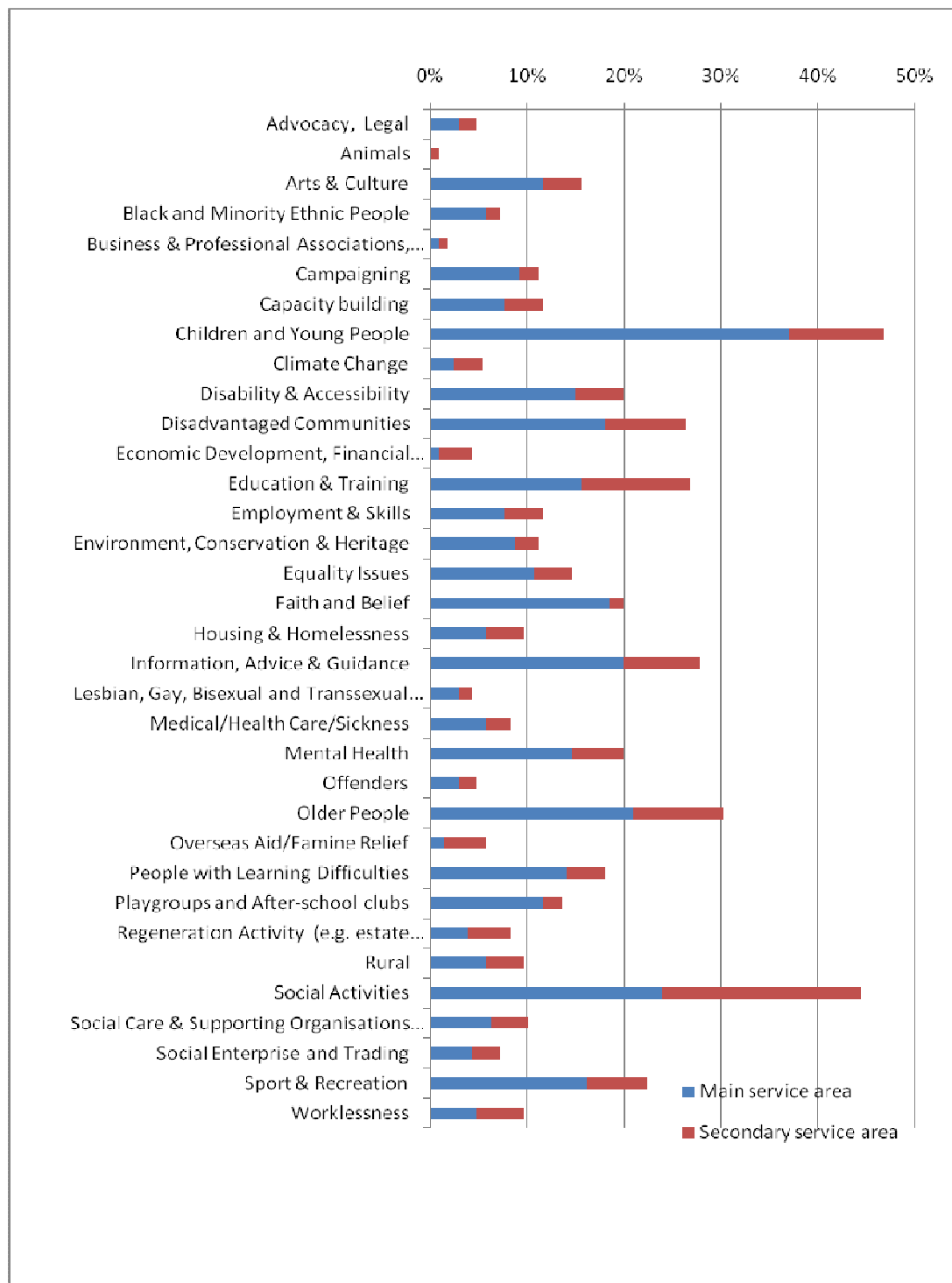
**Table: Cheshire and Warrington VCS Groups' main fields of interest**

<b>n=205</b>	<b>Main service area</b>	<b>Secondary service area</b>
<b>Advocacy, Legal</b>	3%	2%
<b>Animals</b>	0%	1%
<b>Arts &amp; Culture</b>	12%	4%
<b>Black and Minority Ethnic People</b>	6%	1%
<b>Business &amp; Professional Associations, Unions</b>	1%	1%
<b>Campaigning</b>	9%	2%
<b>Capacity building</b>	8%	4%
<b>Children and Young People</b>	37%	10%
<b>Climate Change</b>	2%	3%
<b>Disability &amp; Accessibility</b>	15%	5%
<b>Disadvantaged Communities</b>	18%	8%
<b>Economic Development, Financial Exclusion</b>	1%	3%
<b>Education &amp; Training</b>	16%	11%
<b>Employment &amp; Skills</b>	8%	4%
<b>Environment, Conservation &amp; Heritage</b>	9%	2%
<b>Equality Issues</b>	11%	4%
<b>Faith and Belief</b>	19%	1%
<b>Housing &amp; Homelessness</b>	6%	4%
<b>Information, Advice &amp; Guidance</b>	20%	8%
<b>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual People and Groups</b>	3%	1%
<b>Medical/Health Care/Sickness</b>	6%	2%
<b>Mental Health</b>	15%	5%
<b>Offenders</b>	3%	2%
<b>Older People</b>	21%	9%
<b>Overseas Aid/Famine Relief</b>	1%	4%
<b>People with Learning Difficulties</b>	14%	4%

<b>Playgroups and After-school clubs</b>	12%	2%
<b>Regeneration Activity (e.g. estate improvement)</b>	4%	4%
<b>Rural</b>	6%	4%
<b>Social Activities</b>	24%	20%
<b>Social Care &amp; Supporting Organisations e.g. carers</b>	6%	4%
<b>Social Enterprise and Trading</b>	4%	3%
<b>Sport &amp; Recreation</b>	16%	6%
<b>Worklessness</b>	5%	5%

**Figure: Cheshire and Warrington VCS Groups' main fields of interest**





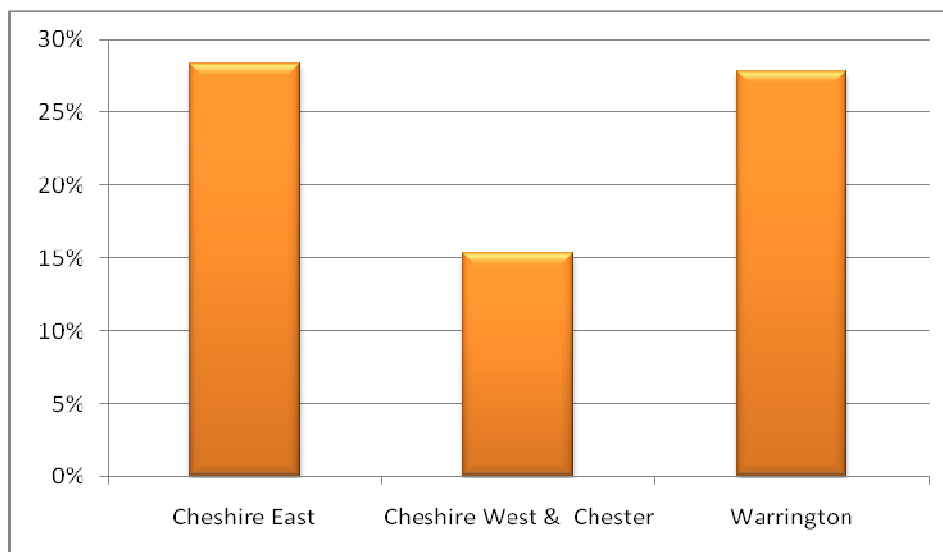
## Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Connections

Respondents were asked to identify how they connect into their local strategic partnership structures. Unsurprisingly, Warrington groups felt more connected into their structures (which have been around far longer). The questions did not suit a methodical exploration of engagement with the sector but does give a good idea of where groups feel they can influence.

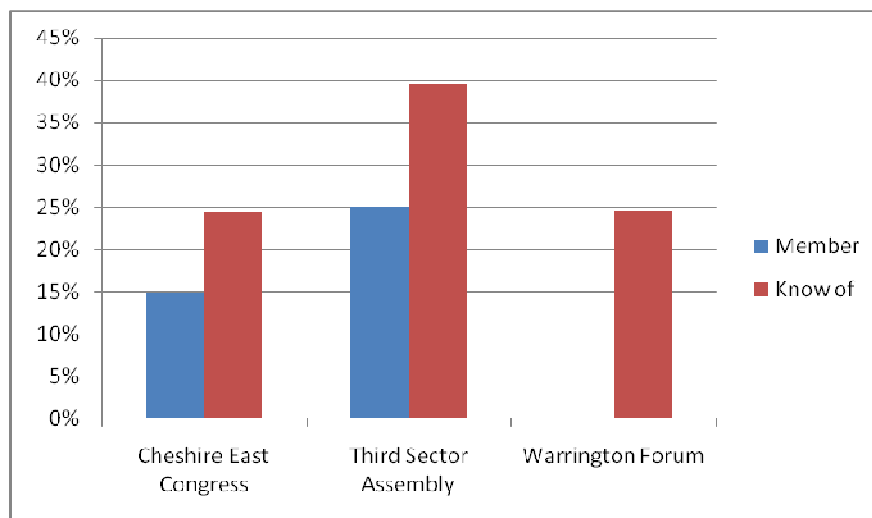
**Table: Depth of engagement with LSPs**

	Cheshire East	Cheshire West & Chester	Warrington	Total
<b>LSP Board</b>	4%	1%	3%	8%
<b>Thematic group</b>	5%	5%	11%	22%
<b>Area Committee</b>	9%	6%	7%	22%
<b>Local Neighbourhood Committee</b>	9%	3%	7%	19%
<b>Total</b>	28%	15%	28%	

Engagement in LSP structures (at any point)



**Figure: VCS links through local voluntary, community and faith sector networks**



Despite the level of engagement with the Warrington LSP, the Warrington Forum is known but not connected into.

**Table: Marketing tools used by VCS groups in Cheshire & Warrington**

Marketing tool	Percentage using
Websites	62%
Events open to the public	57%
Flyers	52%
Posters	50%
Member Newsletters	47%
Events for members only	25%
Social networking	25%
Publications	18%
Facebook	17%
Radio	15%
Direct mail campaigns	10%
Twitter	4%
TV	3%
LinkedIn	1%
Bebo	0%
My Space	0%
MSN	0%

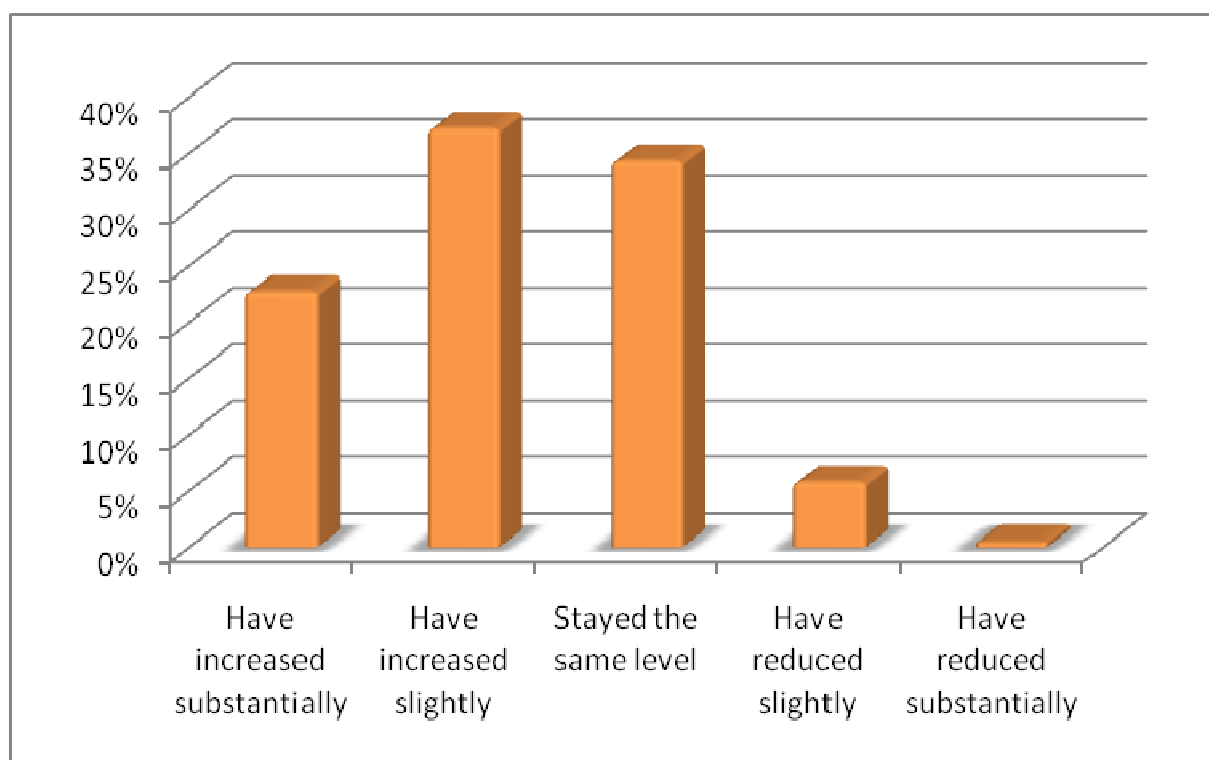
Websites, events and flyers are the most popular marketing tools although some, but not all, social media tools are gaining prominence. Other means include word of mouth, emails, advertising and the local press.

### **Demand for VCS services**

60 per cent of groups' services are in greater demand now than they were a year ago.

The demand on 34 per cent of groups' services has stayed the same.

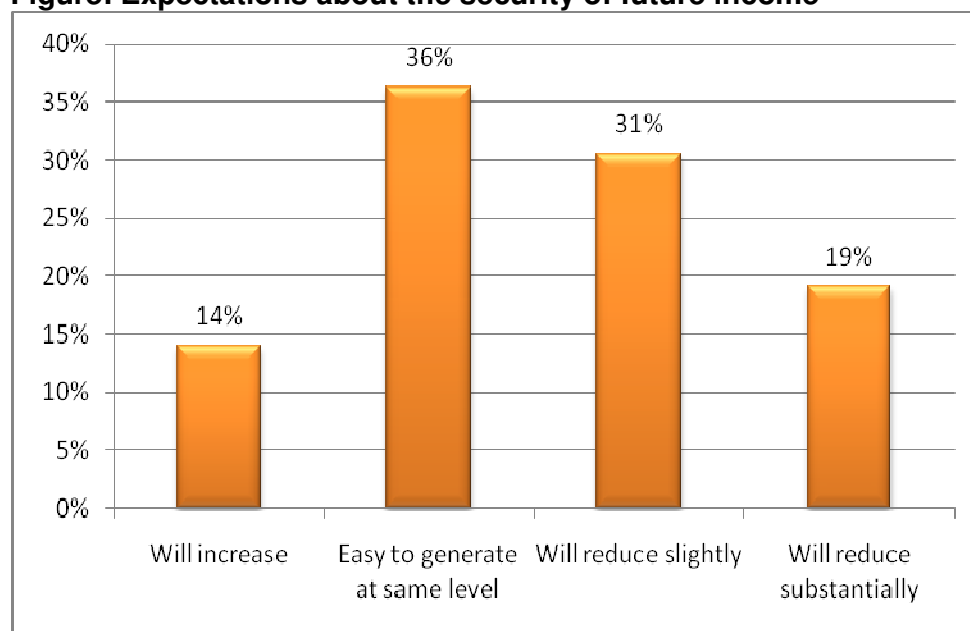
**Figure: Demand on VCS services in comparison to 12 months ago (sample = 207)**



## Resource Levels and Funding

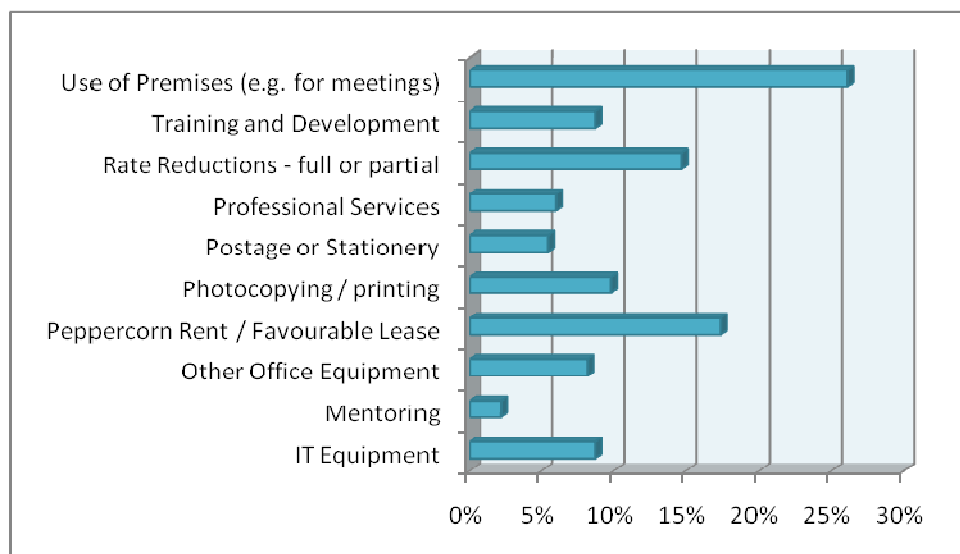
Despite the proximity of the so-called 'funding cliff' of April 2011, respondents were on the whole positive about future income. 50 per cent expect to maintain or increase their income.

**Figure: Expectations about the security of future income**



However, alongside funding streams, 10 per cent of respondents also rely on premises supplied as in kind benefits, while others rely on favourable leases and rate reductions.

**Figure: Extent of in kind benefits funding VCS groups (39 per cent of groups receive in kind benefits that include; sample = 184)**



## Key Financial Summary

The VCS in Chester East appear to be significantly under-resourced in comparison with Cheshire West and Warrington.

**Table: Sector income by unitary area**

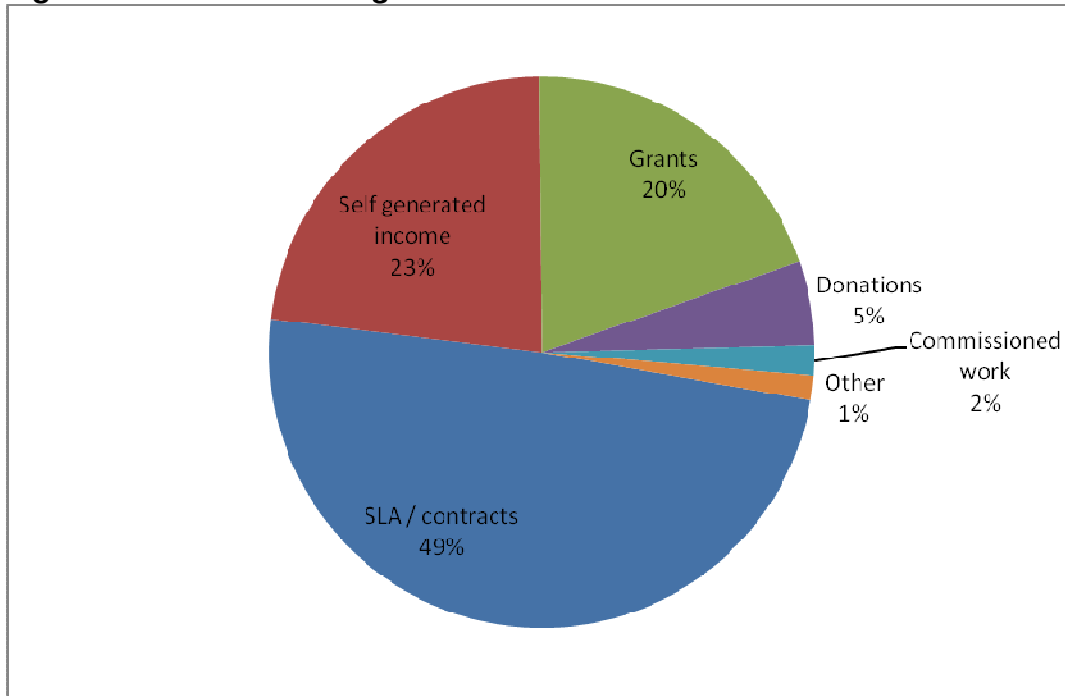
	Income 2009/10 (£s)	%
<b>Chester East</b>	125,938,496	29%
<b>Cheshire West and Chester</b>	203,048,378	47%
<b>Warrington</b>	106,669,625	24%
<b>Total</b>	435,656,500	

### Key statements

- 52 per cent of respondents believe a reduction in their funding will mean a reduction in their services
- 49 per cent of groups calculate the reserves needed to cover dissolution on a regular basis; 51 per cent of groups do not.
- 20 per cent of groups do not have enough funds to cover their required level or reserves
- 4.5 per cent of groups have undergone a merger, or are considering one.
- 1.5 per cent of groups are considering splitting as a result of Local Government Reorganisation in Cheshire.

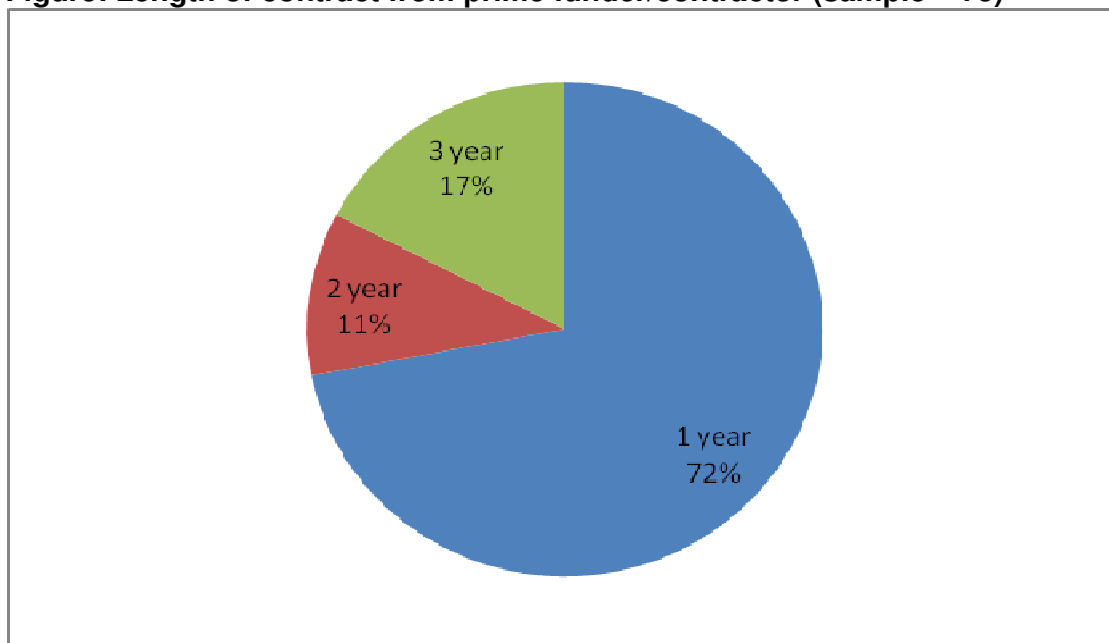
The sector is reliant on Service Level Agreements, grants and contracts, most of which come out of the public sector.

**Figure: Sources of funding**



Unfortunately, these are rarely secured beyond the current financial year.

**Figure: Length of contract from prime funder/contractor (sample = 75)**



## Appendix 1: responding organisations

Our thanks to the following organisations which submitted eligible responses:

1st Congleton Scout Group	Chester Asian Council
Abbeyfield Ellesmere Port Society Ltd	Chester Croquet Club
Ace Club	Chester Go-Ride Cycling Club
Activity in Retirement, Macclesfield	Chester Humanists
Acton, Eccleston and Henhull Parish Plan Implementation Group and Parish Council	Chester Mencap
Age Concern Cheshire	Chester Music Society
Age Concern East Cheshire	Chester Samaritans
All Saints Church Centre	Chester Sexual Violence Support Service
All Saints, Thelwall	Chester U3A
Alsager Swan Swimming Club for the Disabled	Chester Voluntary Action
Alvanley Village Hall	Choulton and Cuddington WI (of Cheshire Federation of WI's)
Alzheimer's Society Cheshire East	Christ Church Wheelock
Arclid Parish Council	Churches Together in Cheshire
Astbury Mere Trust	Churches Together in Chester
Barnabas Associates	Churches Together in Frodsham
Barnston Memorial Hall	City Centre and Newtown Neighbourhood Partnership
Barnton Silver Band	City of Chester Training Band
Battery Lane Allotment Association	Claire House Children's Hospice
Birchwood Community Church	Community Activities in Nesto CAN Group
Birchwood Lions Club	Community Car Scheme
Blackbrook Community Association	Congleton Community Project
Blacon Disability Group	Congleton Learning Partnership Ltd
Body Positive Cheshire and North Wales	CPRE Cheshire Branch
Bollington Town Council	Crewe and Nantwich Open minds
Caldy Valley Neighbourhood Church and Centre	Crewe District Blind Welfare
Cat Rescue	Crewe Sea Cadets
Catch22	Crewe, Nantwich and Congleton Dial-a-ride
Central Cheshire Mental Health Open Forum	Crossroads Care Cheshire West & Wirral
Chapeltots	Crowton Village Hall
Chapter (West Cheshire) Ltd	Culcheth Methodist Church Youth Club
Cheshire and Warrington Social Enterprise Partnership	Culcheth Mums and Tots
Cheshire Children, Young People and Families Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector HUB	Curzon Park Residents' Association
Cheshire Communicators	CVCCE
Cheshire Community Action	CVS Cheshire East
Cheshire Dyslexia Association	Deva Flamenco
Cheshire East CAB North	DIAL House Chester
Cheshire Halton & Warrington Race & Equality Centre	Disability Information Bureau
Chester & District Housing Trust	Dodleston Youth Players
Chester Adult-PHAB	Dorchester Residents Association
Chester Aid To The Homeless	Ellesmere Port & Neston Community Transport Limited
Chester and District Scout Council	Ellesmere Port & Neston Live at Home
	Ellesmere Port Gymnastics Club
	Ellesmere Port Original Pantomime Company



Embrace Project  
 Enterprise & Education Alliance  
 EPNAVCO  
 Fermain Youth Centre  
 Flatt Lane Cyber Centre  
 Forum Housing Association  
 Friends of Edgar's Field Park  
 Furniture Finders of Winsford Ltd  
 Garden Quarter Residents & Traders  
 Community Association  
 Girlguiding Cheshire border  
 Goostrey Parish Council  
 Halina Kelly  
 Holmes Chapel and area Christian  
 Communicare  
 Holmes Chapel and District Community First  
 Responders  
 Holmes Chapel Youth Centre  
 Holy Trinity Church  
 Home Start  
 Hoole Baptist Church  
 Hope Alive  
 Huntington Seniors  
 Huntington Village Hall Committee  
 Japanese Mums & Tots Group  
 Kelsborrow Choir  
 Kettleshulme School PTA  
 King's Church Warrington  
 Knutsford Grow  
 Knutsford Heritage Centre  
 L + M Holistics  
 Latchford Baptist Church  
 Learning Together Cheshire and Warrington  
 Lesbian and Gay Foundation  
 Lifeline Debt Advice  
 Little Actors Theatre Company  
 Little Budsworth Village Hall  
 Little Neston WI  
 Little Sutton Community Centre  
 Live!  
 Long Lane Garden Centre  
 Lymm Jubilee WI  
 Macclesfield and Congleton branch of Arthritis  
 Research UK  
 Macclesfield and District Young Stroke Society  
 (M.A.D.Y.S.S.)  
 Macclesfield Bereavement Support Service  
 Macclesfield Community Garden Centre

Macclesfield Cradle Concern  
 Macclesfield United Reformed Church  
 Macclesfield Youth Brass Band  
 Malpas Recreational Trust  
 Manley Parish Council  
 Marriage Care South and Mid Cheshire Centre  
 Matthew Henry Evangelical Church  
 Mbulon Music  
 Middlewich Community and Youth Project  
 Museum of Policing in Cheshire  
 NAS Cheshire West and Chester  
 NCT - Chester Branch  
 Neston Community & Youth Centre Ltd  
 New Life Church, Congleton  
 NHS retirement fellowship  
 Northern Pensioners Association  
 NSPCC  
 O.C.E.A.N. Cheshire Ltd  
 Oakhanger Project  
 Oldfield Pre-school  
 Options Pregnancy Crisis and Post Abortion  
 Service  
 Orford War Memorial Bowling Club  
 Oughtrington Pre-school  
 Overpool Community Association  
 Padgate Youth and Community Association  
 (PYCA)  
 Pathways to Recovery (CRI)  
 Pennysmart Community Interest Company  
 Polonia  
 Port Reach  
 Queen Street Christian Centre  
 Radio General  
 Radio Warrington  
 Rainbow Institute  
 RECORD, The Biodiversity Information system  
 for Cheshire, Halton, Warrington and Wirral.  
 Reflections of You Counselling Service for  
 Vulnerable Young People  
 Risley Independent Methodist Church,  
 Fearnhead  
 Rotary Club of Macclesfield Castle  
 Sadlers Wells Community Woodland  
 Samaritans of Chester & District  
 Samaritans- Warrington, Halton and St Helens  
 Sandbach Art Club  
 Sandbach Heath (St. John's playgroup)  
 Sandbach Old Hall Action Group

Sandbach United FC	Vision Support Trading Ltd
Sankey Canel and Restoration Society (SCARS)	visyon Ltd
Savana	Volunteer Centre Warrington
Service User's Resource Centre	Walton Lea Project
Siddington Village Hall	Warmingham Village Action Group
SJA Cheshire Young Carers	Warrington and District Ladies' Afternoon Bowling League
Society of St Vincent De Paul (SVP) St Benedicts Parish	Warrington and District Senior Bowling Association
St Andrew's Handbridge United Reformed Church	Warrington Breast Care Support Group
St Ann's Luncheon Club	Warrington Carers Centre
St Benedicts Church	Warrington Community Care
St Cross and St Matthew's Parishes	Warrington CVS
St John Ambulance Cheshire Young Carers	Warrington Cycle Campaign
St Luke's Church, Huntington	Warrington Disability Partnership
St Michael's Church, Plas Newton	Warrington District Amateur Rugby League Association
St Pauls Church Hall, Hooton	Warrington Ethnic Welfare
St Pauls Youth Club	Warrington Football Sunday League
St Paul's, Penketh	Warrington Free Churches' Reference Group
St Peter's Ecumenical Centre	Warrington Methodist Circuit
St. Joseph's Family Centre	Warrington Phoenix Drum and Trumpet Corps
St. Saviours Pre-school	Warrington Quiz League
Strategic Training and Recruitment Limited	Warrington registered childminders association
Sue Ryder Care	Warrington Sea Cadets
Tarvin Community Centre	Warrington Town Centre Residents Association
Tarvin Youth Club	Warrington Widnes District Society for the Blind
Tattenhall Community Association	Warrington Youth Club
The Bren Project	Warrinton Mencap
The Chester Ladies' Choir	Waverton Handbell Ringers
The Childrens Society	Wesley Methodist Church
The Fred Pendlebury Trust	West Cheshire Fibromyalgia Support Group
The Gateway (Warrington) Ltd	West Warrington Methodist Partnership - Penketh
The Marionette Theatre Co.	Westwood House Child Contact Centre
The Petty Pool Trust	Whitby Club Photographic Society
The Richmond Fellowship	Widow's and Widower's Association
The Salvation Army (Crewe)	Willaston Community Day Centre
The Storehouse Church	Willaston Memorial Hall
Thursday Tots (Whitby Methodist)	Winsford Community Action Project
Time out group	Winsford Youth Forum
Tools4Change	Wishing Well Project
Vale Royal Environment Network	Workingmen's Mission
Vale Royal Juniors	World Evangelical Gospel Mission
Vale Royal Women's Aid	Wrenbury Village Hall Trust
Vernon Institute	Your Life
Victim Support	Youth Matter!
Victoria Park Residents Association	

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