Nottingham Community and Voluntary Service

NCVS State of the Sector Survey 2021

Interim findings 24 November 2021

Jules Sebelin

Chief Executive Officer

Type of organisation

Community Group without a constitution	5%
Community Group with a constitution	5%
Charitable company	27%
Registered charity	23%
Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)	16%
Community Interest Company (CIC)	11%
Company limited by guarantee	5%
Co-operative and Community Benefit Society	1%
Other (all classed as churches)	4%

How long been operating

Less than a year	3%
1 to 2 years	3%
2 to 3 years	7%
4 to 10 years	29%
11 to 20 years	12%
21 to 49 years	33%
Over 50 years	14%

Number of paid staff

Don't employ any paid staff	22%
1 to 9 (micro)	42%
10 to 49 (small)	25%
50 to 249 (medium)	7%
250+ (large)	4%

All City Council ward areas are represented in the responding organisations. 66% operate across all city ward areas

Of those who work in only certain named ward areas, this is the percentage split:

	As % of total respondents	As percentage who aren't city wide
Aspley	11%	32%
Basford	14%	40%
Berridge	11%	32%
Bestwood	10%	28%
Bilborough	10%	28%
Bulwell	12%	36%
Bulwell Forest	7%	20%
Castle	3%	8%
Clifton East	4%	12%
Clifton West	8%	24%
Dales	7%	20%
Hyson Green and Arboretum	11%	32%
Leen Valley	3%	8%
Lenton and Wollaton East	11%	32%
Mapperley	3%	8%
Meadows	15%	44%
Radford	11%	32%
Sherwood	12%	36%
St Ann's	12%	36%
Wollaton West	7%	20%

Adaptable and Resilient

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- Two-thirds have needed to reassess their organisation's original aims and service delivery.
- Two-thirds have increased their service provision.
- Organisations pivoted quickly to respond to crisis
- Attempting to meet demand leaves no time to plan ahead.
- Organisations are working together more. This was a trend anyway over the last two years – only half thought this was directly due to Covid.

Partnership / collaboration

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- The highest percentage had worked in some way with the local authority, e.g. Nottingham City Council (and/or another borough council for those working also in the county). This was 78%.

- This was higher than those who had collaborated with another local voluntary organisation – the second highest category – at 67%.

- **Working in partnership is seem to be even more important in the next 12 months. 84% believe they will be collaborating with a public sector partner in the next 12 months.**

Income

- In general, from all income sources, two-thirds say their income overall is about the same or has increased since the end of the 2018/2019 financial year.

- Increased a lot 16%
- Increased a bit 33%
- About the same 18%
- Decreased a bit 14%
- Decreased a lot 18%
- Not sure 1%

- **47% say the funding they receive now doesn't cover all of their costs.**
- **Only 48% consider their funding situation to be 'stable'.**

Reserves

- Only 11% reported they have no reserves at all.
- A further 10% were either not sure or preferred not to say.
- **This means almost 80% reported some reserves. The majority have reserves of up to 3 months or between 3 to 6 months.**
- 30% of respondents have reserves in excess of 6 months.
- Reserves, on average, are lower than the last state of the sector report

Sustainability

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- 89% of organisations who had seen an increase in income and said this was due to Covid are reliant on grants.
- Some of these also fundraise through private donations and charging for services. Only 22% have contracts of some kind.
- Almost all of these organisations accessed emergency grant funding either through the Coronavirus Community Support Fund (National Lottery Community Fund & Government) or the National Emergency Trust Coronavirus Appeal funding.

Challenges

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- Creating a sustainable funding base is seen as the biggest challenge facing organisations in the next 12 months.
- The highest support need is support to write tenders and funding applications.
- Skills shortages around web / digital and communications / marketing also score highly.
- Recruiting skilled staff is an ongoing challenge which is seen across all sectors.

Volunteers are essential

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- 64% of our respondents either don't employ staff or are of micro size (1-9 paid workers).
- Of those who don’t employ staff, none have an income above the £10,000 to £49,999 bracket. 37.5% have an income under £5,000.
- In the 1-9 (micro) category, 83% have an income between £10,000 and £250,000. 50% have an income below £50,000.

Change in number of volunteers

Increased a lot	17%
Increased a bit	21%
About the same	21%
Decreased a bit	26%
Decreased a lot	12%
Not sure	3%

- It's a mixed picture. Some have been hit hard by Covid, with 38% seeing a decrease in volunteer numbers in the last two years, and 82% of these believing it’s a direct result of the pandemic.
- To balance this out, 38% also experienced an increase in volunteers, with just over half putting the increase down to Covid.

What do we know about the organisations who saw an increase?

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- Primarily, they provide direct support to vulnerable people, particularly around mental ill health. Counselling-related activities could increase if this could be supported online.
- People looking for something to do during the pandemic meant that some organisations received more enquiries, e.g. those in the open air – allotments, green space and water-related.
- Others added to the type of support and projects on offer, e.g. food preparation, food packers, delivery drivers.
- The increase doesn’t appear to be volunteers replacing previously paid workers. 43% of organisations with increased volunteer numbers also saw an increase in paid staff during the last two years.

What do we know about the organisations who saw a decrease?

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- These organisations tend to rely on in-person events. Some activity can only thrive on in-person contact and relies on events happening at scale.
- For community groups where getting together was the point, the social side of volunteering became redundant for some people.
- Remote volunteering not for everyone – not all have digital access or skills, or want to deliver in that way. Advice and information services may have suffered.

What challenges are there for Leaders of Volunteers?

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- 77% of respondents experienced an increase in demand for services. How are Leaders of Volunteers holding up?
- There is an acknowledgement that more support for volunteers leads to better retention of volunteers.
- However, an increase in volunteers can also mean an increase in volunteers who have higher personal support needs. Can these be met? Crossover of service users and volunteers.
- What different skills and infrastructure are needed to provide support to volunteers in an online space? How does this change the relationship and the volunteer experience?

Case study highlights Bulwell Forest Garden

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- Developed in 2012 by a group of local residents, its aim is to strengthen its community and social connections providing opportunities for people to learn more about growing food, protecting our environment and greater access to affordable healthy food.
- Received 5 years Lottery funding, now with a 2 year extension
- Told they must become less grant dependent
- Have seen a big increase in referrals from SP Link Worker and Social Care staff
- Many services users become volunteers but need higher levels of support