

State of the Sector Report

2022/2023



Foreword

We would like to thank all the organisations, groups and individuals who contributed to this report. Their time, feedback and insight is so important in understanding the pressures and challenges the VCSE sector face within the city.

HIVE Portsmouth remains committed to maintaining a resilient and robust VCSE sector and the evidence in this report is crucial in us understanding the impact the cost of living crisis is having not only on the organisations but on their staff, volunteers and the people they work with.

The impacts should not be underestimated coming so closely behind the pandemic and while the sector is still trying to recover from the unprecedented challenges this brought.

The sector is fragile – particularly for smaller organisations. 30% of organisations we spoke to are concerned that they will not survive the year and the impact of this on the health and wellbeing of the people of Portsmouth should not be underestimated.

The importance and value of these small groups during the pandemic indicate how vital they are to the life of the communities across the city.

Demand for services is rising, costs are increasing, income is stagnant and people are presenting with more complex issues and needs. Recruiting staff and volunteers remains challenging and VCSE organisations cannot compete with rising wage costs in other sectors.

Despite these and other emerging challenges, the VCSE sector remains passionate, committed, innovative and adaptable.

It is clear the sector is needed more than ever and we hope that this report will encourage all partners to continue to work together in a meaningful way to overcome these challenges together in order to improve the health and wellbeing of all within our Portsmouth community.



Lorna Reavley

Lorna Reavley
Chief Officer

Bob White

Bob White
Chair of Trustees



Executive Summary

The cost of living crisis is set to be the defining issue of 2023 in the UK and will continue to be the primary challenge for the short to medium term future for communities, businesses and services. The Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector organisations in Portsmouth will need to assess the impact on all their activities and plan accordingly to ensure their services continue.

A number of crises have occurred over the last few years; not least the impact of the COVID pandemic. The challenge that we're seeing is not simply the cost of living crisis, but how that sits alongside the long-term impact of COVID on our communities.

Increased demand together with a raft of cost pressures due to inflation, falling donations and declining reserves following the pandemic are creating a perfect storm for the sector. HIVE Portsmouth believes we need to observe how community organisations are responding; particularly those that are not securely funded by central government or local authorities.

There is a real danger that if we do not understand the impact on VCSE organisations, the sector will be irreversibly damaged, affecting crucial services, creating greater need in the City and further pressure on dwindling provision.

This report will focus on how the VCSE sector in Portsmouth is coping: although the cost of living crisis is being felt, the report does highlight the robustness of the VCSE sector in Portsmouth. However, the report carries a warning of how close to the edge some of our crucial front-line organisations are.

Sector organisations are being forced to find efficiencies in their operating models as the cost of living crisis starts to impact on their income and concerns about financial viability escalate. With income from donations and fundraising dropping and prices rising, organisations are faced with several dilemmas. Firstly the demand on services is massively increasing, how do organisations that have already become so lean due to COVID cope with even more pressure? Secondly, how do they care for their staff and volunteers who are already feeling the effects of 'burn out'? Thirdly, how do they cope with the rises in inflation and the challenge of energy prices?

Despite this challenging backdrop, it's encouraging to see that the sector is cautiously optimistic about the year ahead. Around 70% of organisations that we spoke to say they feel either fairly or very optimistic that they will still be operating this time next year (Jan 2024).

In summary, many VCSE organisations have seen an increase in demand for their services, rising operating costs, and will see the value of their income decline. However, the current feeling among medium and larger Portsmouth VCSE organisations is that they are once again rising to the challenge and are hopeful that they will be able to weather this storm.

However, smaller groups are not so optimistic and wonder if the cost of living crisis may be one challenge too many for them to be able to continue.

Losing the smaller volunteer led groups that are embedded in their communities will be a massive loss for Portsmouth. These are the groups that tackle loneliness and isolation and bring diverse communities together at a grassroots level.

These smaller groups have a level of trust and visibility that larger organisations may not be able to replicate. They understand their communities and what they need and work hard to ensure they reach the most vulnerable to provide solutions that are lacking in other services.

How was the data gathered?

Information within this report was gathered during the period November 2022 to January 2023.

Two main methodologies were used – firstly, a survey sent out via email and secondly group and one-to-one interviews with members of Portsmouth VCSE sector organisation leaders. These one-to-one conversations were spread across small, medium and large organisations.

Through this work we spoke extensively with 87 health and wellbeing organisations.



Introduction

HIVE Portsmouth published a State of the Sector Report in 2022 to assess how our Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise organisations had weathered the challenge of a global pandemic and to report on how services and provision had been impacted at a local level due to Covid 19.

There were common themes challenging the sector organisations and their delivery:

- **The national lockdown meant many services had to cease or move online and delivery staff were working from home or were furloughed. The sector saw a rapid and extensive digital transformation and many organisations continued with this way of working.**
- **The volunteering landscape changed completely, traditional volunteer recruitment paused and existing volunteers found their roles were no longer available but mass recruitment of volunteer teams for the Covid response and vaccination centres was successfully delivered.**
- **Awareness of the need to manage the well-being of sector workers as well as beneficiaries became a priority, with teams working in isolation to address more challenging issues from the community.**
- **The VCSE sector benefitted from many funding streams being focused on Covid response and recovery and although this short term funding was vital to maintain services, it took a while for funding streams to return to regular programmes of core and project funding support.**

Our previous report recognised the robust and sustained response to a pandemic crisis that was unprecedented; VCSE sector organisations in Portsmouth met the needs of the community in a timely and comprehensive way, ensuring that our communities were supported throughout and services were well placed for recovery.

This report was compiled at a time when many of the VCSE sector organisations in Portsmouth were still in recovery from the previous crisis.

Many services remain online and sector workers retain regular home working positions although for much of the sector, new 'normal' working patterns have emerged. The cost of living crisis now needs to be managed by a sector, still recovering from challenging times and this report seeks to capture how organisations think they can manage this new risk to their existence.

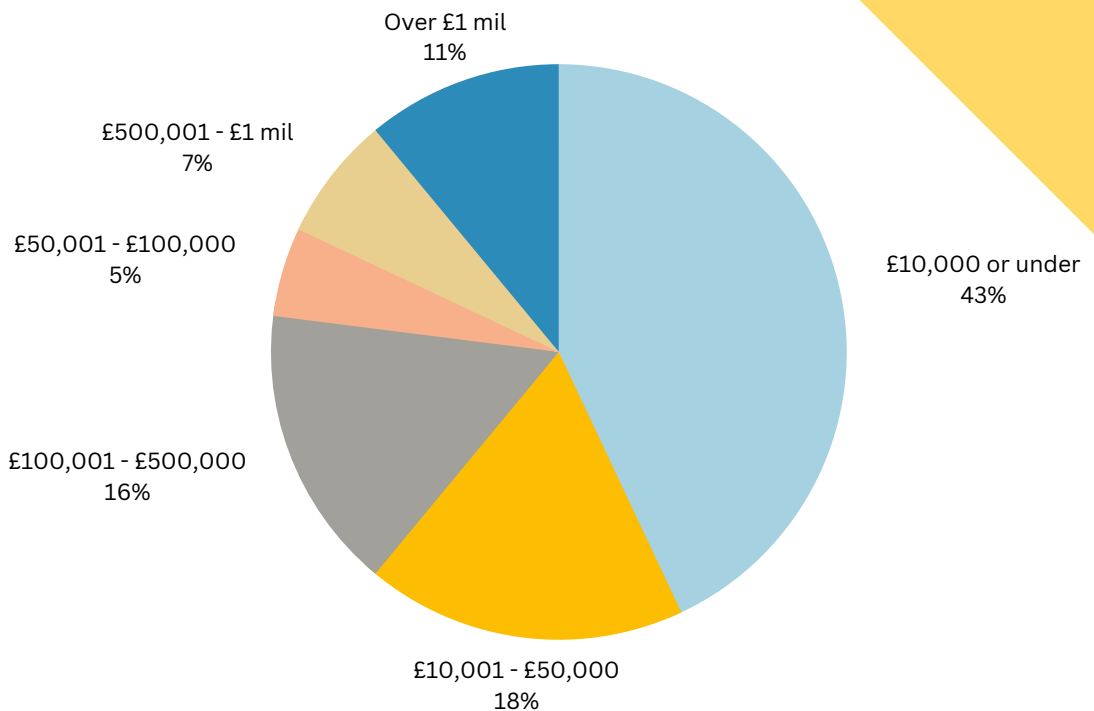
The sector at a glance

The following graphics and statistics give a snapshot of the structure of the VCSE sector in Portsmouth and clearly demonstrate the position and status of the sector organisations.

While there are concerns, particularly in smaller organisations, a high percentage state they are continuing to meet perceived need. It is clear though, that income is being affected and it is likely that in time, delivery of services will be impacted.

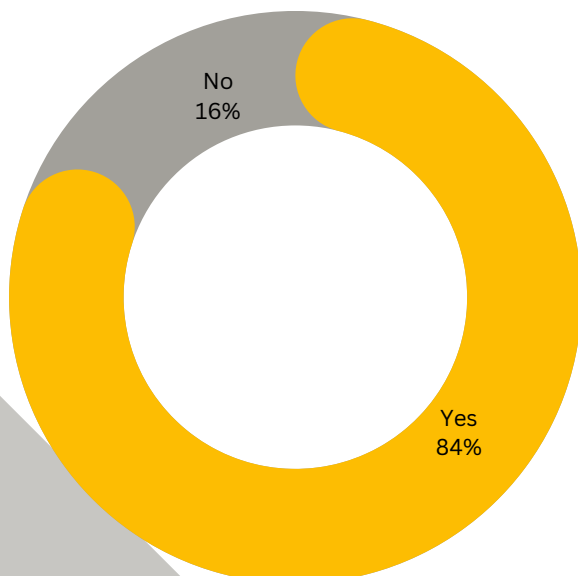
We asked organisations...

Q: What is your approximate annual income?



The most common answer, 43%, from those we spoke to was that they had an income of less than £10,000

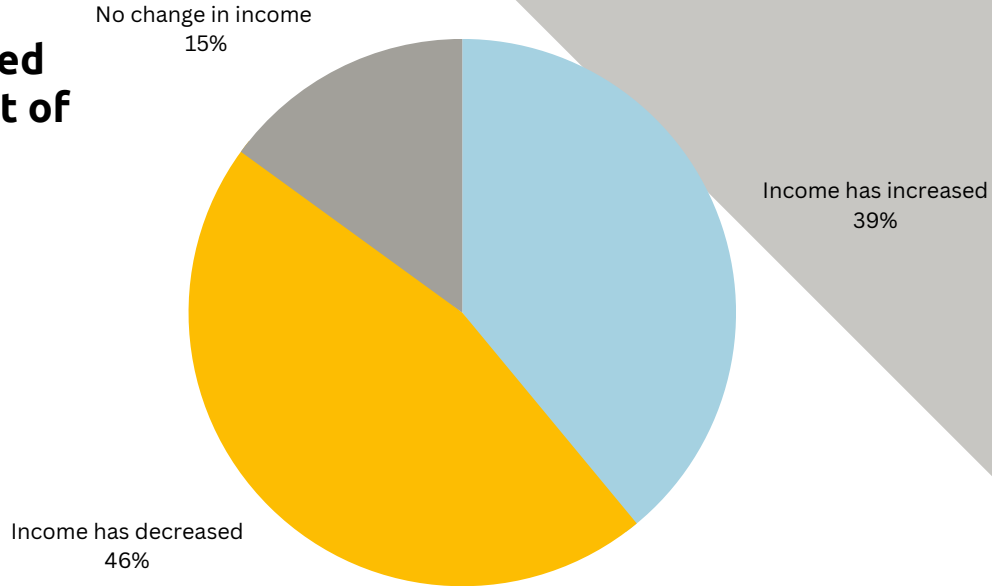
Q: Since October 2021, are there any community needs, relevant to your service, you've been unable to meet as a result of the cost of living crisis?



The majority, 84%, of those we spoke to told us there are no community needs that they have not been able to meet since the start of the cost of living crisis in October 2021

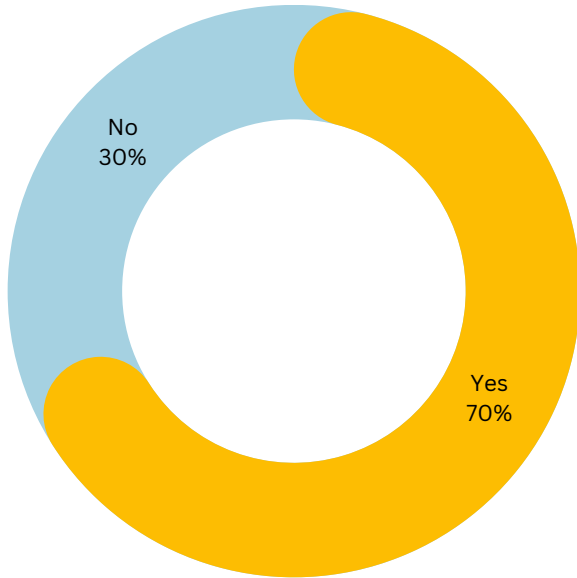
Q: Has your income increased or decreased since the start of the cost of living crisis in October 2021?

The majority of those we spoke to, 61%, told us their income had either decreased or stayed the same since the start of the cost of living crisis in October 2021.



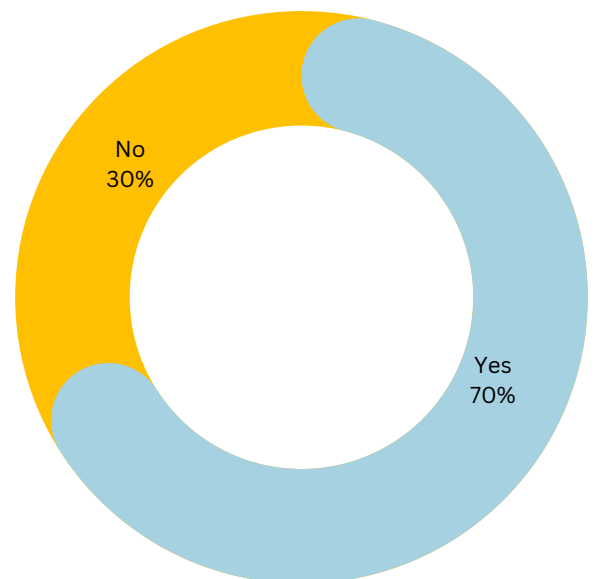
Q: Has the cost of living crisis affected your financial situation?

The majority of those we spoke to, 70%, told us that the cost of living crisis had affected their organisation's financial situation.



Q: Do you believe it is very likely your organisation will be operating this time in 2024?

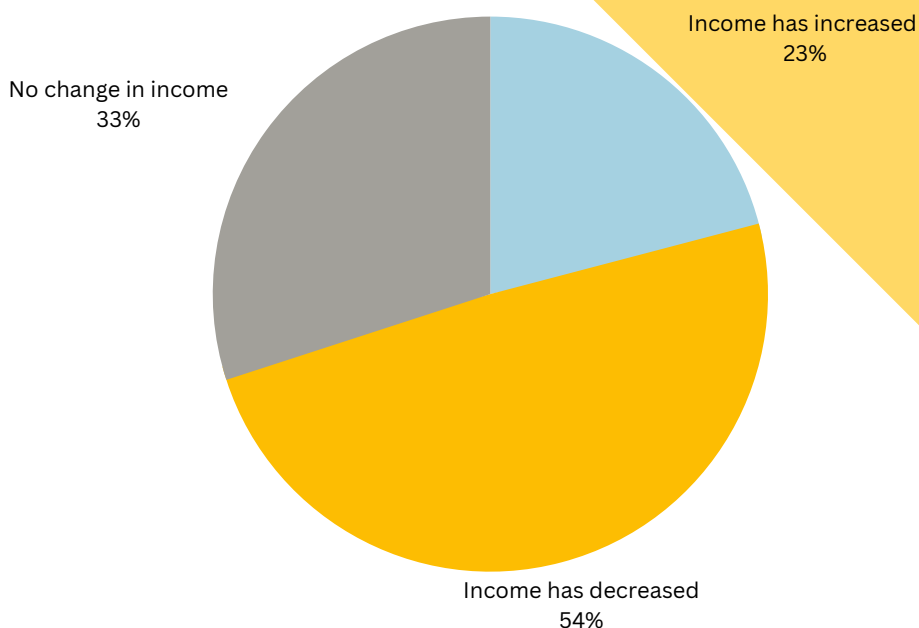
The majority of those we spoke to, 70%, told us they believed their organisations would be operating this time next year (Jan 2024)



We asked smaller organisations (those with an income of £10,000 or less)...

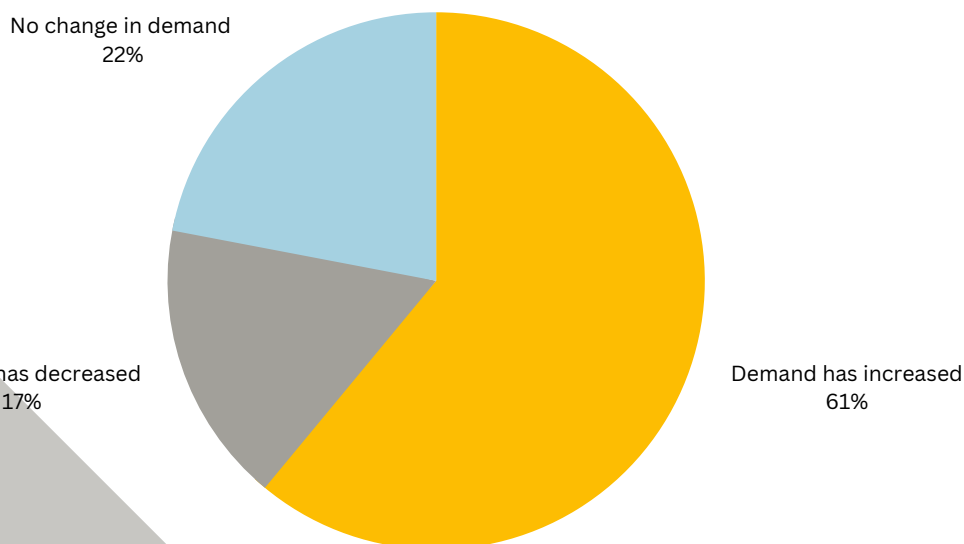
Q: Has your income increased or decreased since the start of the cost of living crisis in October 2021?

The majority of those we spoke to, 87%, told us their income had either decreased or stayed the same since the start of the cost of living crisis in October 2021.



Q: Has the level of demand for your services changed since October 2021?

The majority, 83%, of those we spoke to told us the level of demand on their services has either increased or stayed the same. Only 17% said that demand had decreased.



Challenges to organisations

Income

Income and funding financial stability continues to be the most pressing challenge to Portsmouth VCSE organisations. As inflation continues to rise the effects are going to continue to be felt by organisations and their service users.

78%

of organisations said income is a challenge for the next two years

Fundraising is more challenging, now more than ever there is a need for unrestricted funding to help with core costs and contributing to reserves but this is increasingly difficult to find and competition for grant programmes is intense, with most funders being oversubscribed.

The challenge is with wage increases and limited additional income

In the public domain, fewer people are able to afford to donate to charity, meaning fundraising programmes are not as profitable as they once were, it is unclear if this will recover or if this will be the fundraising landscape for the future.

Public funding continues to be subject to cuts meaning less grant funding is available and increasingly, funds are distributed through contracts and tendering processes that are not accessible to smaller organisations.

The coordinated response of many grant-making trusts and foundations to the pandemic has not yet shown signs of recurring in response to the current crisis, and even if there are special funding initiatives, they won't reach all the charities whose services are vital to people experiencing increasing hardship.

Organisations have reported that as demand for their services surges they have had to make tough decisions to cut back on staff hours as they simply cannot afford it – instead they need to use this money to cover operational costs, inflation and energy price rises. Organisations reported feeling frustrated that this money is being taken directly from benefitting their service users and staff.

Some organisations that were free at the point of access have now had to adjust their model to 'pay what you can afford'. Organisations have reported feeling worried that this means that their services are now not inclusive of everyone and the people most at risk of being in poverty or are already in poverty may feel that they now cannot access them.

Organisations that rely on donations have told us that their supporters simply don't have the disposable income to continue to support them to the same degree. This means there is a level uncertainty about the future and how sustainable these smaller groups will be. Organisations that are funded through grants and trusts feel frustrated that there is a lack of unrestricted funding to cover the rise in operational costs due to energy prices and inflation. Organisations have also commented that they are struggling to find the time to sit and write funding bids when there are so many other competing pressures being placed on them.

52%

of organisations said their financial reserves have decreased since October 2021

Some VCSE groups in Portsmouth raise money for their services by trading and entrepreneurial activities to bring in unrestricted income which can be more sustainable. This trading income is being exponentially affected by the cost of living crisis as people cut back on personal spending.

These groups are trying to become familiar with the grants and trusts funding landscape to try to fill the deficit in their budget.

All this is alongside demand on their services growing.

Another worrying sign is the number of organisations that have stated they have now started to eat into their reserves. Unless organisations are able to find funding to replenish these reserves the operations costs will continue to rise and reserves will diminish further.

It would be good for sector organisations that are able to access tenders to be more aware of potential smaller partners, good to work in a multi partnered way. Is there a need for some sort of platform to identify partners for tenders?

70%
of organisations
said their finances
have been affected
since October 2021

Demand

There is no doubt the cost of living crisis arrived without the fanfare of the Covid 19 pandemic. Instead its arrival has been insidious, with energy prices escalating since 2021 the VCSE sector in Portsmouth became aware that they now faced a new threat. As organisations rallied to recover from the pandemic the cost of living crisis has now become the major threat faced by organisations.

Organisations have already been cut back to the extreme from the impact of the pandemic, services were already working at maximum capacity, firefighting in a lot of cases and now with the rise in energy prices, inflation in the costs of goods and services, and increased demand in services, the sector is facing its biggest challenge yet.

Organisations have told us that their service users are struggling, with those people who are already living on the lowest income now experiencing living in poverty. However, it has been noted that organisations are identifying more in-home food poverty with wage earners and those in employment.

Portsmouth organisations have told us that hunger in Portsmouth is not about food, it's about a lack of income. They have told us that the main drivers of food bank use in Portsmouth are: problems with the benefits system (delays, inadequacy and reductions), challenging life experiences or ill-health and/or lack of informal or formal support.

The city's pantries are also experiencing a huge increase in demand and some are struggling to source food. Organisations have told us that one of the issues reported by their service users is that pantries open during the day but for employed people there is a need for them to be open in the evenings.

Another issue reported to HIVE Portsmouth is that pantry volunteers are noting a lot of distress in families. The volunteers are needing to spend more time with each person to ensure they are signposting to the correct support. Constantly hearing stories that are emotionally challenging is having an impact on the volunteers which is a concern for organisations - how do they support their volunteer team when there is already huge amounts of pressure on them to keep food stocked and their communities serviced?

Organisations feel there is a lack of affordable local training to help volunteers look after themselves but to also feel confident in their ability to help service users gently explore what is causing them distress and allowing the volunteer to feel skilled enough to have these kind of delicate conversations.

Organisations working with diverse communities have said that their communities are some of the most low income families, they are struggling and taking up second jobs, putting a strain on families. The diverse community groups involved in this report identified communicating information as an issue. Many groups do not receive updates and the ones that do may need to translate information to their community members.

Diverse community events such as Eid are at risk due to community members no longer being able to fund personal subscriptions to organisations. This will lead to people that are already isolated suffering further isolation from their direct community members. Groups feel it is not appropriate to ask families to contribute more and find that members of their community are choosing to stay home rather than engage with their wider community.

Inflation

Organisations working with vulnerable and deprived families in Portsmouth have reported that they are now seeing more working families in poverty and there is an increase in the provision of free school meals.

Organisations have said that they sometimes have difficulty trying to discern between abusive neglect and neglect due to poverty. Childcare costs are an issue for those wishing to return to work and they are aware of child delay that was a result of the pandemic is continuing and increasing as a result of family stress due to the cost of living crisis.

Advice and support services have told us as people prioritise food and heating, rent and council tax is less of a priority and they are receiving many more queries about rent and council tax arrears. This is leading to more complex time consuming cases.

From our conversations with VCSE organisations in Portsmouth it is clear the cost of living crisis is placing a huge amount of strain across multiple areas.

The severity and complexity of service users, the increasing demand placed on the service, the rising operational costs and the difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff and volunteers. Alongside this management teams are battling how best to support their teams and plan strategically for the future.

Smaller volunteer led groups are currently being the most impacted in terms of income and volunteer reduction. Smaller groups may also struggle to understand the funding landscape and may instead rely on diminishing subscription costs or supporter donations. Without investment in terms of funding, training and support smaller groups may well be the first VCSE organisational casualties of the cost of living crisis in Portsmouth.

What organisations told us..

We have secured funding to sustain ourselves for the present. We're currently completing an application to become a CIO. We hope this will open doors to further funding. While the effects on the organisation have so far been minimal, the effects on our members have been far more pronounced. We've issued significantly more food bank vouchers and have been supporting peers with financial concerns.

We have seen a huge increase in referral numbers for problems relating to cost of living crisis and often we don't have the answers.

Our caseload has increased as a result of the cost of living crisis. This is primarily manifesting itself in clients seeking support for rent and council tax arrears as they prioritise expenditure on food and energy costs.

A lot of the funding available is for the older population but we are increasingly getting referrals for families or young single people struggling.

On the flip side a lot of the funding available is for cost of living issues which means that there is limited funding available for projects to increase physical activity or to support isolation and loneliness which is also a huge problem.

We have had to increase the prices we charge for our services. We are open longer days and contribute finances towards keeping the building open so that we can hold Warm Wednesdays part of the Warm Spaces scheme. Less footfall. Larger energy bills has meant increased costs. Reserves are depleting quicker.

We have had to support our staff by offering trivial benefits as well as weekly lunches. We cannot offer salary increase and are therefore struggling to recruit. In addition our overheads have gone up and our beneficiaries are massively struggling to make ends meet. Demand for funding is higher and output is competitive.

Concerns for the future

78%

of organisations said demand for their organisations services has increased since October 2021

Having come through COVID, and with the VCSE sector having given such a massive contribution to the community over that period, it became clear in the first quarter of 2022 that we were entering into another environment where the demands on the Portsmouth VCSE sector would be increasing again.

All this means, that for the majority of people, disposable income has dwindled. For others, even the basics like rent, food and heating are now unaffordable. This exacerbates the impact of the cost of living crisis on VCSE organisations because operational costs are rising and demand for their services increase. This increase in demand with reducing income means services are stretched and sector workers under more stress than ever.

More referrals, bigger more complex caseloads. Other organisations are at crisis point so we end up getting referrals which may be too high tier for our service but we have nowhere else to refer.

With the sector being supported by huge numbers of volunteers, if the trend for difficulty in recruiting volunteers continues there is large amount of uncertainty around how organisations will be able to continue to meet service user demands. Smaller organisations that are entirely volunteer led are feeling nervous about the future and how sustainable they are if things don't change.

One positive to come out of the report is that due to the innovation and adaptability of the sector, the larger and medium sized organisations are mostly currently able to keep up with meeting their service user's needs. However, there will come a point where services cannot keep providing more for less.

The VCSE sector in Portsmouth are innovative and passionate about the work they do but there may come a point when the staff and volunteers are so depleted and feel so undervalued and overworked that they will seek to leave the sector entirely.

Some organisations have told us that amongst the current difficulties they have identified opportunities to develop new services. As the needs of their services users have changed they have adapted to meet their needs and have been able to secure funding for new exciting projects.

Referrals have increased by 330% in the last 6 months, with more families than ever seeking support to feed and clothe their children.

The need is constantly growing and as such we are trying to expand with it to keep providing such vital support to families in need.

11%

of organisations said demand for their services stayed the same since October 2021

11%

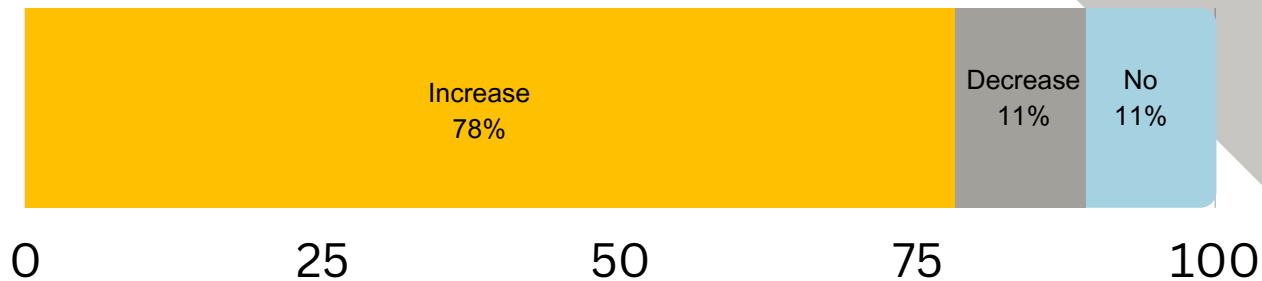
of organisations said demand for their services has decreased since October 2021

Referrals have increased with more families affected with food and fuel poverty, including many struggling who have secure employment. A larger number of people are receiving support through debt referral agencies.

We asked organisations...

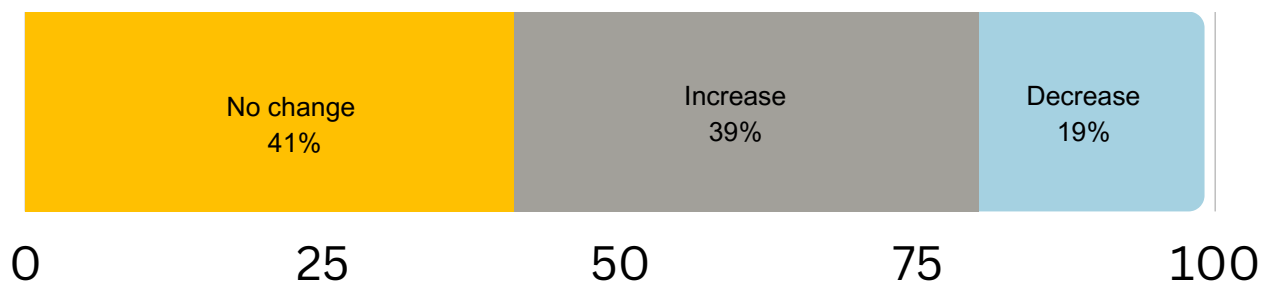
Q: Has the level of demand for your services changed since October 2021?

They told us



Q: Has your organisation's capacity to deliver services changed since October 2021?

They told us



Operational pressures

Recruiting and retaining staff

Organisations told us that recruiting appropriately qualified staff is still a challenge. They feel that wage inflation is making it even more difficult to recruit into a sector that was already struggling to compete with private sector salaries following the pandemic.

62%
of organisations said their ability to recruit/retain staff has not been affected by the cost of living crisis.

Many organisations are undertaking several actions to try and help their staff during the current cost of living crisis. These measures include awarding pay increases, providing mental health support, providing additional benefits and implementing financial wellbeing policies.

An example of operational challenges is that many staff are asking for additional hours, that are very much needed to help keep up with demand for service. However, this is unavailable as funded provision does not have the flexibility in the budget to offer more hours.

Medium and smaller organisations that employ staff have told us that they have had to make some tough decisions and reduce hours in order to meet other costs. This is a risk as the staff that occupy these positions may well decide to seek alternative employment for more hours. This means that experienced staff may well leave the sector in order to meet their personal needs. Recruiting for a job with fewer hours is tougher for organisations and places additional strain on any staff that are left.

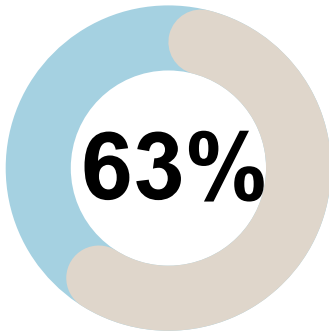
The appeal of working in the VCSE sector in Portsmouth is usually driven by wanting to help people and many staff and volunteers move around different organisations. Organisations have told us that they fear that the ongoing struggle to recruit maybe an indication that people are now choosing to leave the sector altogether, opting for positions with more competitive salaries and less pressure.

40%

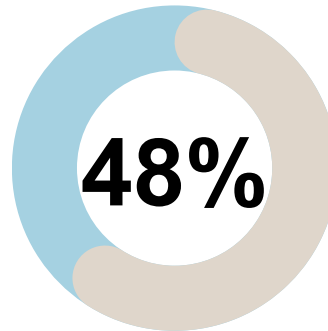
of organisations said they struggle to recruit staff

It would appear that the cost of living crisis is not having a huge impact on the ability to recruit/staff. However, the COVID pandemic was a catalyst for problematic recruitment and retention in the sector and the cost of living crisis has not helped this at all.

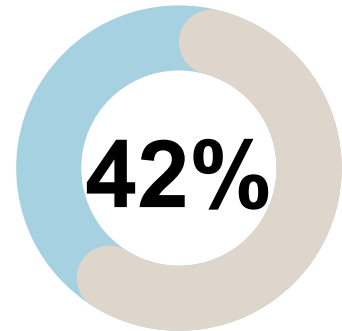
The sector appears to think that the damage had already been done and they now operate in a sector that struggles to recruit and retain staff. They are aware that they cannot offer the same level of salary and on top of that the role is likely to be highly pressured as service level demand increases.



of organisations told us they have paid staff



of organisations told us they have not taken action to support paid staff since Oct 2021



of organisations told us they have awarded pay increases since Oct 2021

Recruiting and retaining volunteers

Respondents reported that volunteer numbers are a cause for concern. Alongside this organisations have reported an awareness that volunteers are supporting extremely complex and distressed service users.

Diverse community groups have reported that without volunteers they cannot run their community group events. Another issue reported by the diverse sector is a lack of community transport for volunteer groups to access. This is increasingly becoming a barrier for people to access cultural and community events.

Organisations feel there has been a real reduction in groups and activities for the elderly and believe this is down to lack of volunteers. This started during COVID and has sadly not recovered and is unlikely to recover as our smaller volunteer led community groups grapple to make themselves sustainable and meet the challenges of the cost of living crisis.

The cost of living crisis has reduced our volunteer base as some have had to either look for additional work or return to work leaving them unable to support families.

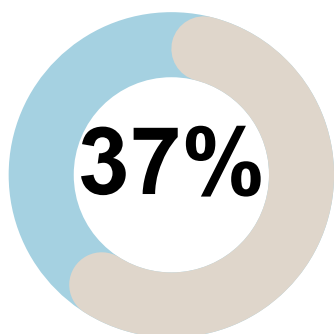
87%

of organisations said they have volunteers working for them

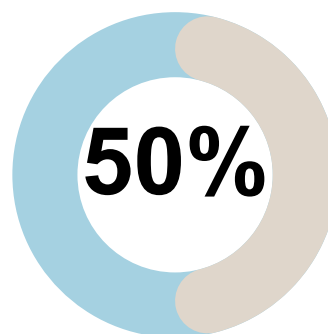
Our volunteers need to work and so there is a drop in volunteering. This puts more pressure on us as we rely heavily on goodwill to keep our organisation going

There is a concern about the number of volunteers within their own organisations who are struggling with the cost of living crisis personally and are in or are on the verge of being in poverty.

This is adding additional pressures to organisations who care for their volunteer team and report a sense of feeling useless – they try to support and signpost but sadly people need money. Sector leaders feel hopeless in these situations.



of organisations told us they have no paid staff and are reliant on volunteers



of organisations told us the cost of living crisis has affected their ability to recruit/ retain volunteers

Strategic challenges

Sector leaders report further indirect challenges to the effective running of their organisations in the near future. There are obvious needs for comprehensive and core cost funding streams; staffing and volunteer levels are operational issues and key decisions about premises and working practices are at the forefront of delivery plans.

But there is a recognition that to ensure a stable future, there are other challenges that must not be forgotten.

Measuring impact

More than ever, organisations need to demonstrate the impact of their services. It is not enough to meet need and deliver support to the most vulnerable.

If organisations are to attract funding and remain sustainable they need to demonstrate quality and effectiveness of their activities. Organisations tell us that they will need support to measure impact in a way that proves there is a need for their services and then clearly shows the difference they make.

A further challenge is the need to show the savings to the 'public purse' that their activities make – how much do they save statutory services spending by their interventions.

One example is the need to reduce hospital admissions and anything that organisations deliver to enable people to remain living in their homes in a supportive community can be demonstrated to contribute to saving money on providing a hospital bed.

This type of impact reporting and calculating savings is not simple and requires support to measure, many smaller organisations do not have the 'in-house' skills to measure this.

Communications

When organisations have found effective ways to demonstrate impact, they then need to be able to communicate this widely to show their work is necessary and beneficial.

The audience for this is growing – partners, funders, commissioners, recipients of personal budgets– and the need to tailor communications to different sectors is growing.

When an organisation is struggling with time to deliver services, then the time needed to communicate and promote services becomes less. Sector leaders point out that many do not have communications personnel, that this is part of other roles and often is squeezed into the background.

If the VCSE sector is to grow and thrive, then there is a need to clearly communicate the place of sector organisations in the wider delivery of services in Portsmouth and the value and crucial impact they make. Organisations need to demonstrate and communicate their impact well to ensure they continue to be funded, commissioned and taken seriously as a quality partner in service delivery.

Sector leaders recognise the value of partnerships within the sector to help with a wider demonstration of impact but in challenging times, the instinct is to focus on the survival of your own organisation and your workers and beneficiaries

In summary

VCSE organisations in Portsmouth have reported to us that their biggest challenge is income. This has historically always been an issue. The need for unrestricted longer term funding is not new.

However, there does seem to be a sense of urgency within the current crisis – with demand surging as it is, VCSE organisations have told us they need the freedom to make quick decisions about how they spend their money, they need flexibility within their budgets to be able to quickly adapt to the changing environment they are operating in.

Instead they spend time seeking unrestricted funding, or filling out what they say are complicated applications for very small amounts of money.

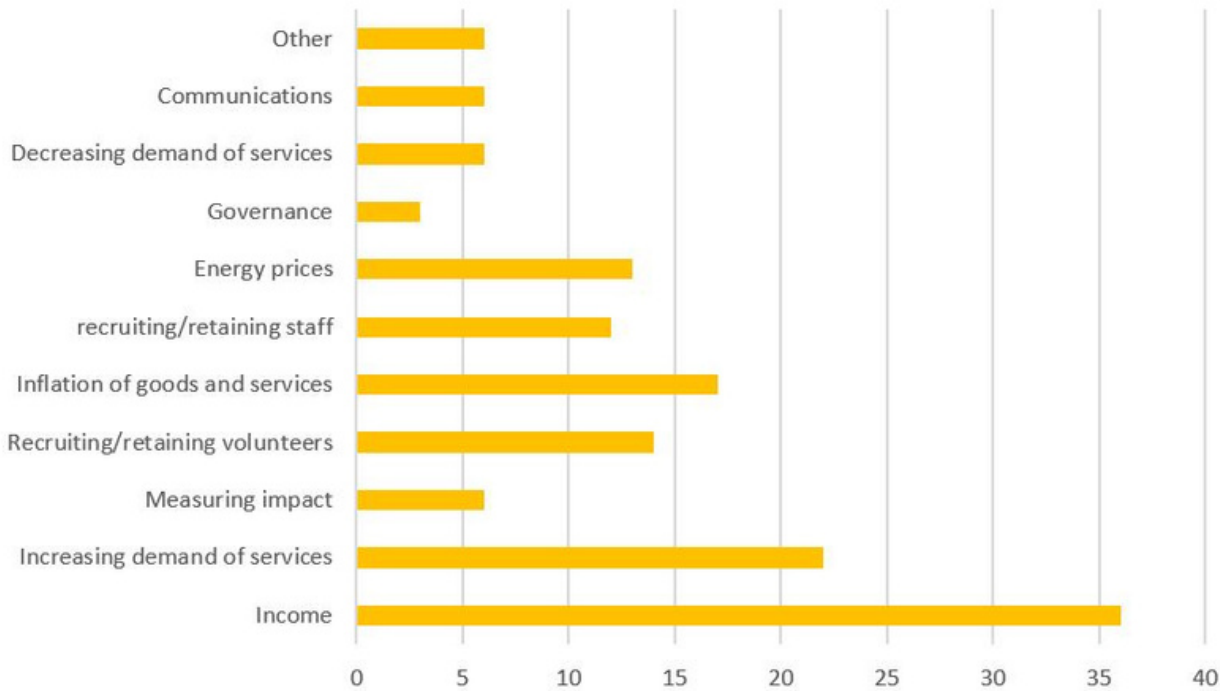
Inflation of goods and services is another worry especially for smaller groups, as prices rise organisations are trying to cut costs to be able to keep up with operational costs.

They wonder how long is this sustainable. New emerging challenges have also come of out this report, measuring impact and communications. This could be a sign that organisations are aware of the need to demonstrate the difference they make to stakeholders and funders and could be seen as positive sign that groups see the benefit of having these skills.

Improving organisations communications and communications strategy could be a positive sign that the sector in Portsmouth is becoming more comfortable with extending their reach through digital services and recognise the benefits in being able to access their service users in a way that suits them.

It may also be indicative of the growing understanding of the need to be knowledgeable about how a communications strategy effectively promotes the integrity and reputation of organisations. How communications is their front face and promotes the organisations vision, values, ethics and brand to a wider audience.

Which of the following areas will present the most significant challenges to your organisation over the next two years?



Promising signs for the sector

What is clearly demonstrated through all the evidence presented is the resilience and determination of the VCSE sector leaders, workers, volunteers and partners to continue to identify and meet the needs of the people of Portsmouth.

There are concerns clearly voiced and there is an evident threat to the future of some organisations; at the same time, there is a resounding commitment to continuing to meet the challenge of the cost of living crisis, and any future external challenges head on and continue to deliver quality services that are obviously needed.

“ At the centre of the city’s humanitarian action, Portsmouth City of Sanctuary (PCoS) will always do all it can to welcome, support, and add dignity to the lives of around 1500 refugees, asylum seekers and at-risk migrants in the local area, every year. ”

The statutory partners in Portsmouth and surrounding areas have a vested interest in seeing the VCSE sector continue to deliver services to ease the pressure on primary and acute services, and we are seeing an increase in desire to engage with VCSE sector organisations from our statutory partners in the council, in health and in social care.

About HIVE Portsmouth

HIVE Portsmouth was established to help maintain a resilient and robust VCSE sector, delivering services alongside statutory provision to meet the needs of the people in Portsmouth.

We do this by:

- Advocating for the sector in the city
- Collaborating with the sector to deliver the support and action people need
- Listening to and understanding the challenges of the sector
- Design solutions together
- Create and contribute to partnerships that make key decisions in the city

This is especially relevant in these challenging times, when we have a role to play in ensuring the sector is represented and rewarded for the part they play in the support services for the City. HIVE Portsmouth is an effective voice for the sector – communicating the views of sector leaders to partners and decision makers.

Effective partnerships are vital to the survival of sector organisations and HIVE Portsmouth is that conduit between organisations and partners to ensure information and opportunities are clearly communicated. We encourage opportunities for partnership between sector organisations to amplify the impact of their work.

In a changing landscape, HIVE Portsmouth is that central point of contact for people in Portsmouth, to ensure they can access the services they need and to help sector organisations evidence need for funding and contract applications.

Importantly HIVE Portsmouth is a listening ear for leaders and workers in the sector; an impartial safe place where views can be expressed and shared without fear.

HIVE Portsmouth aims to support the VCSE sector groups, clubs, projects and organisations in the challenging times ahead and support organisations to grow again in the future.



**HIVE Portsmouth is a registered charity in England and Wales (1189067)
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(12064936)**