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# **STATE OF THE VCSE SECTOR**

## **IN WARWICKSHIRE**

### **Summary Report**

June 2020

## Acknowledgements

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We would like to thank every organisation in Warwickshire who took the time to contribute to this survey, this year and in previous years. We would also like to thank all colleagues who helped shape the questionnaire and share this across their networks.

## Methodology

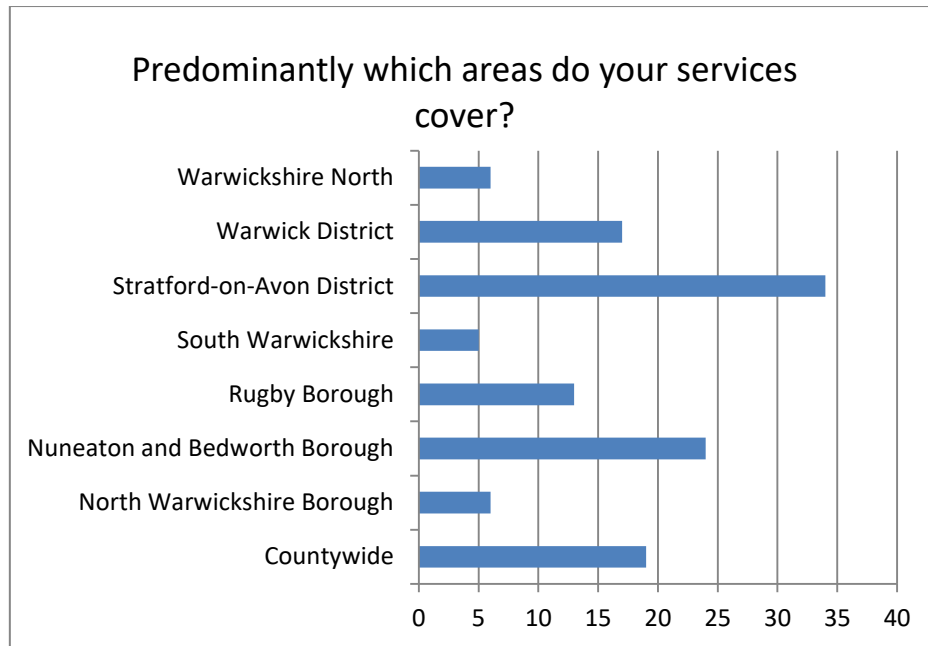
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Whilst the data collected is accurately and transparently presented below, it is based on those organisations that completed the survey during April 2020. It is worth noting that as an infrastructure organisation we are acutely aware of many voluntary and community sector organisations who are not currently in operation, due to reduced capacity, and therefore may not have received the information about the survey and this *may* affect some of the data and conclusions.

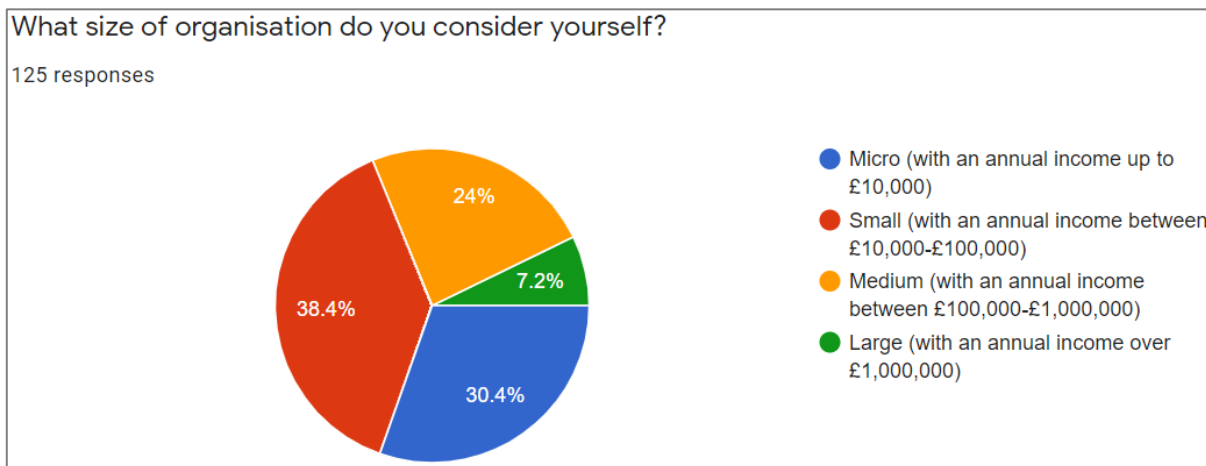
It must also be stressed that this survey is very different from previous State of the Sector surveys and reports where we can draw conclusions about the wider size and shape of the sector.

This initial report is intended to be a summary only, with broad analysis of the effect the Covid-19 pandemic has had on the voluntary and community sector in Warwickshire. We aim to do greater analysis by locality and by organisation size to give a deeper understanding of the impact in different parts of our diverse sector.

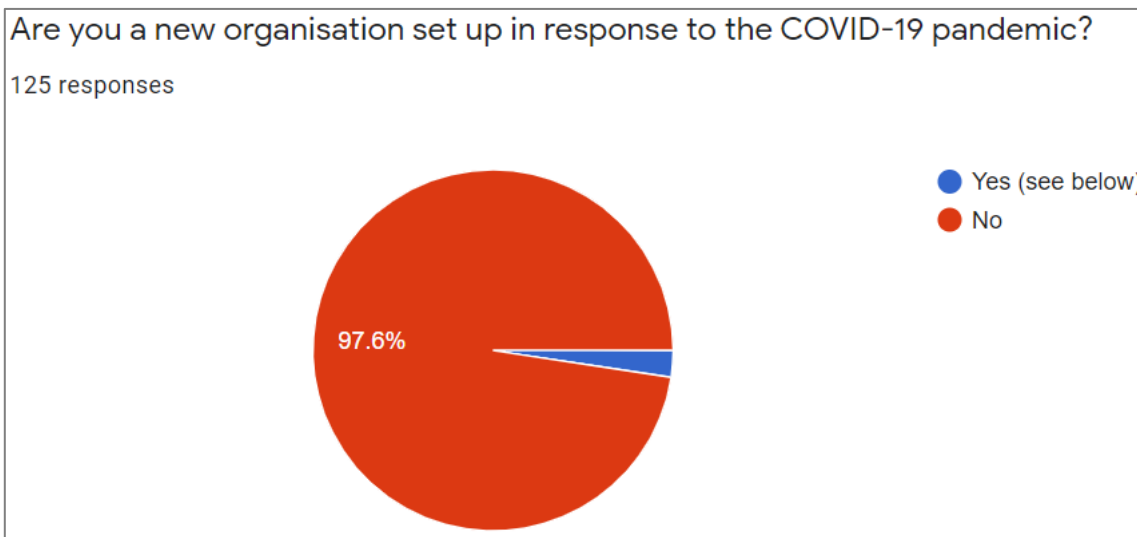
# Organisation Information



We had a fairly evenly spread response rate from organisations across the County. In the data analysis process we added in two further areas of Warwickshire North and South Warwickshire for organisations who had indicated they work across multiple areas.



The majority of organisations responding stated they were ‘small’ and ‘micro’ (as defined by NCVO <https://data.ncvo.org.uk/profile/size-and-scope>). Anecdotally, through WCAVA’s own work in the sector and previous State of the Sector reports, we know these sizes are typical of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Warwickshire; therefore we feel we have collected information from a broad and representative sample.

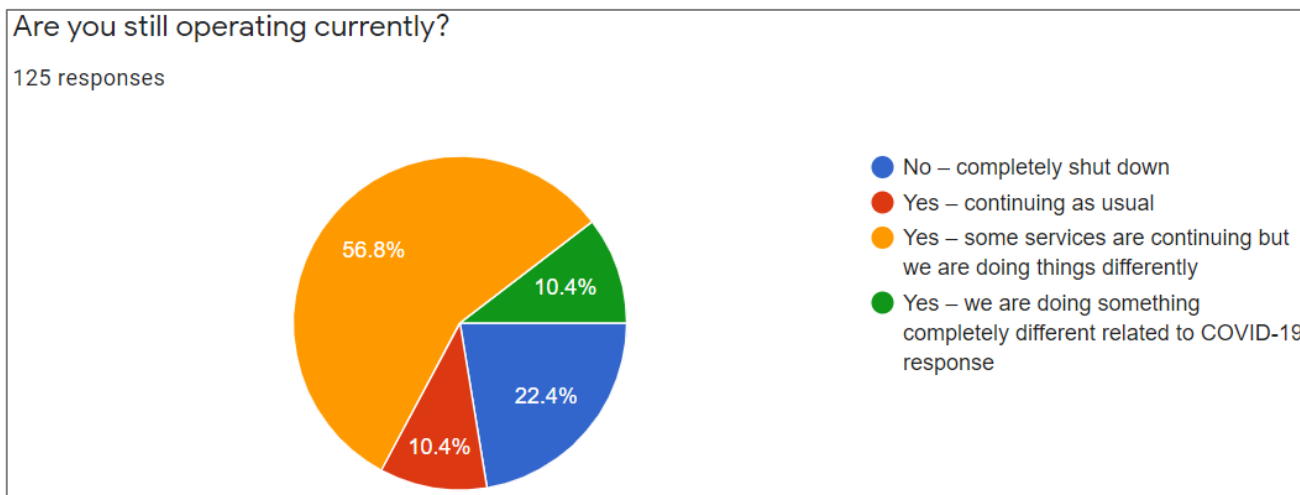


Only 3 organisations responding to the survey classified themselves as ‘new’, set up in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. Of these all indicated that they were likely to continue after the ‘crisis period’; comments included:

“Yes we are hoping to become a constituted group to able to carry on doing things for our small village...”

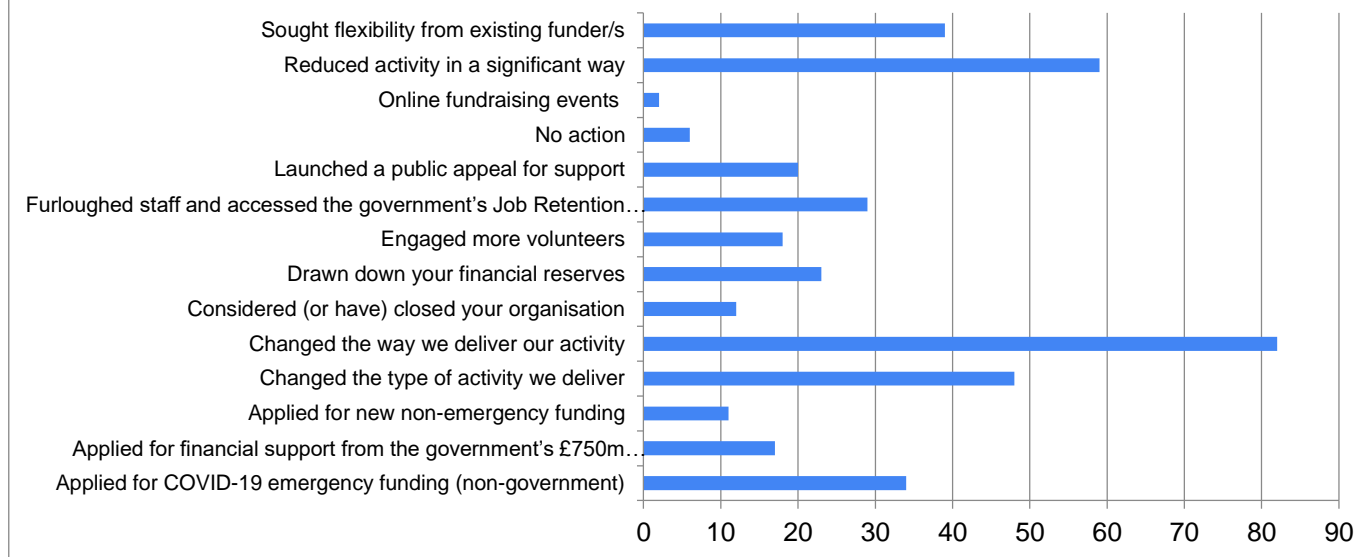
“This will depend on a number of factors, but most importantly the need and demand...”

“Support to families through our virtual learning and services”



77.6% of respondents have continued to operate throughout the crisis period.

## What actions have you taken in response to any challenges that COVID-19 have presented to your organisation?



Organisations have taken a range of practical actions to reduce the impact of the crisis on their operations. By far most respondents said they had changed the way that they delivered their services and that their service delivery had reduced significantly. A range of other examples were given, e.g. expanded social media, negotiated rent with landlords, negotiated reduced hours with staff, applied for business grants via the local authority, e.g. receiving business rates relief or the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund which would have been available for the likes of charity retail shops and community centres/village halls.

## Partnership Relationships

We asked whether respondents had linked into the local authority hubs, how had this been, and also had they seen a change in referrals. 14 respondents said they had linked in.

People cited some mixed relationships, with those who had worked with the hubs and those that had not; we cannot draw any patterns or conclusions from this, but comments included:

“We have taken referrals from both LA's to support the people they are unable to”

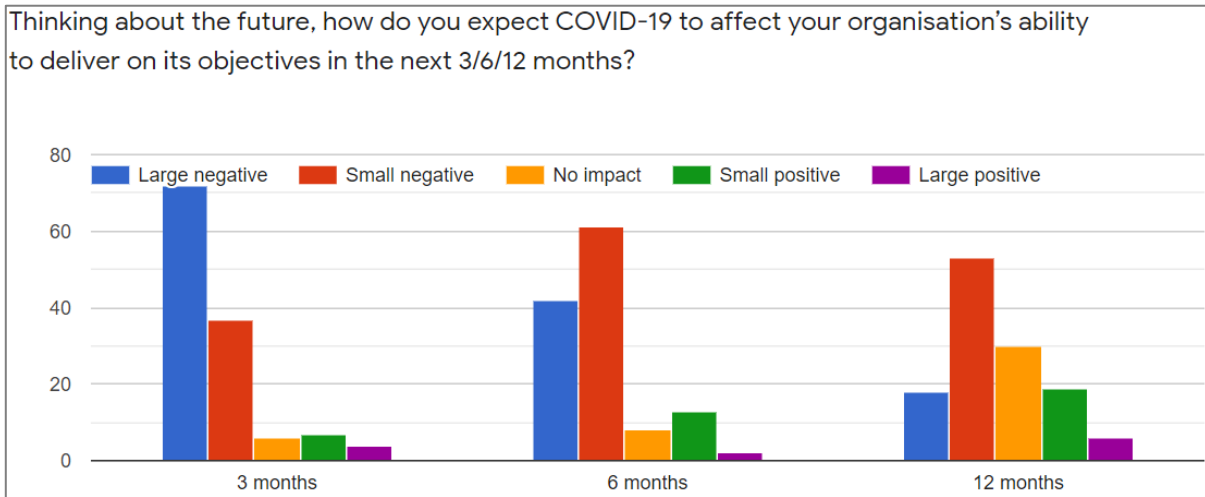
“Linked into [X agency], was first Hub opened however with small amount of interest from the community link with [X] has withered and died!”

“Good working relationship with LA, adapted services to support them.”

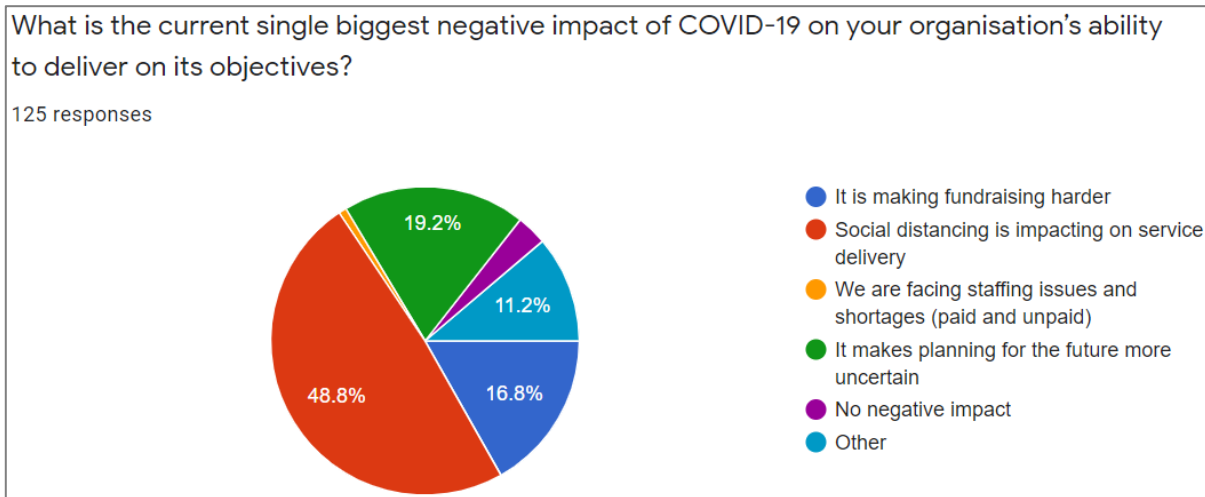
“We have linked in and seen an increase in referrals, mainly for practical help delivering or collecting things for people who can't get out.”

“We are getting referrals from [X agencies], and a couple of the large pharmacies in town. We have details on the Warwickshire CAVA database and we have also leafleted local ... area and so have picked up some referrals from there. The one crucial thing we have noticed is that a lot of elderly people who are not online do not know of the amount of support available and are still going out and about. The information needs to be more readily available in paper form via leaflets or more publicity needs to be made via local radio papers etc.”

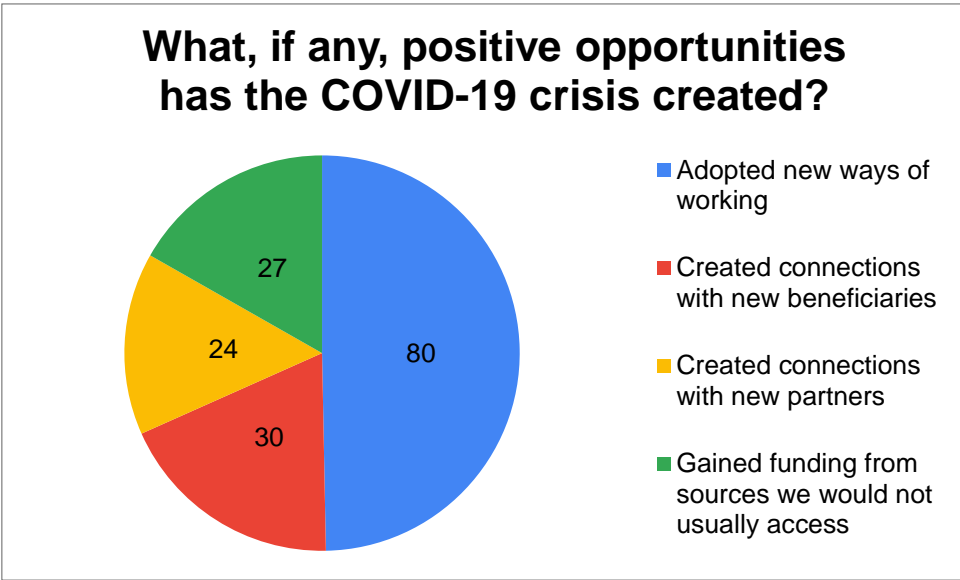
## The Future



We can see a positive decrease in concern from organisations about their ability to deliver their objectives over the next 3-12 months.



By far we can see that the guidance around social distancing is the biggest concern for organisations about their ability to deliver their objectives, followed by the difficulty in planning for the future.



A very encouraging message is that 80% of respondents said they felt there were some positives that had come out of the crisis, predominantly the opportunity to adopt new ways of working. Some comments include:

“Working to get homeless people off the streets has allowed the public to see that this is a long-term possibility.”

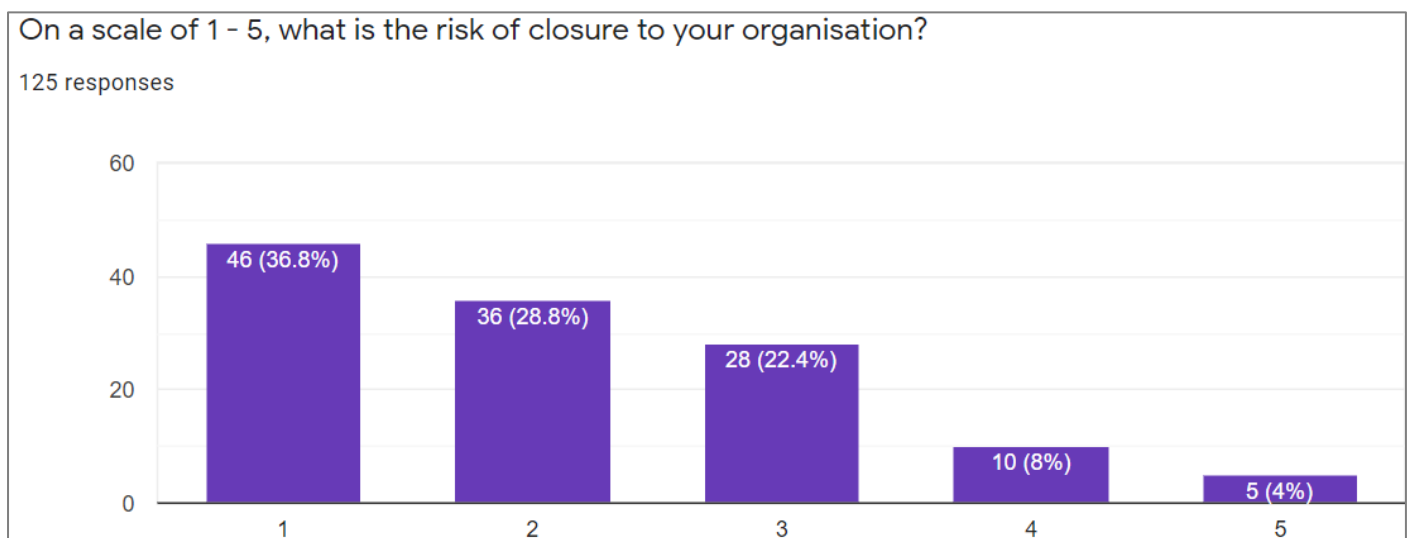
“Have had a large result in people wanting allotments”

“Discovery of Zoom offers us interesting future possibilities”

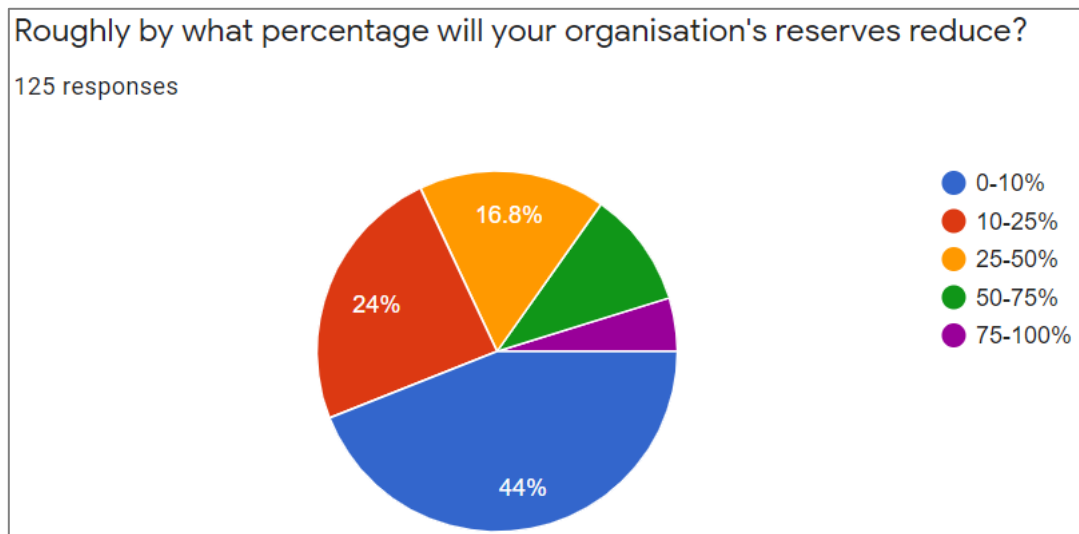
“More 1- 1 contact through phone calls as meetings unable to take place. Members often open up more describing how situation is affecting. This gives us a better insight into their needs and allows us to think more constructively about how we can support them.”

“Set up an online shop which has worked really well!”

“Wonderful Volunteers and bringing community together”



We of course had to consider that some organisations are finding the situation more stressful than others, and there is a risk of closure. Encouragingly *only* 12% stated that this was a 'likely' risk, with 65.6% stating it was less likely. We cannot however ignore the fact that there is a chance that some organisations will find continuing impossible and we have to prioritise our support to those (with restoration or closure as necessary).



Again, encouragingly 44% of respondents stated that their reduction in reserves was less than 10%, implying a good level of resilience within organisations and their finances, however 15.2% of respondents stated these would reduce by over 50%.

With both the risk of closure and reserves reduction we will do further analysis of this by type/size of organisation in the detailed report.

## Assistance

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We asked organisations what other forms of assistance they would need from WCAVA, local authorities and others. We had a range of comments, a vast majority asking for support to identify core funding, volunteer recruitment and clarification of central government guidance for measures needed to reduce lockdown, also:

“A return to normal working as quickly as is safe to do so”

“clarity on what measures will be required to ensure safe practical use of the centre”

“Funding information, establishing new groups, group development, training courses, help with promotion, help with networking, help with volunteers and their training, retention and supervision”

“Peer support from WCAVA. Sharing learning.”

“interpreting givt [sic] advice, sources of PPE”



“More online engagement (more cost/time effective), engagement in Crisis planning (we are the small ships that sailed to Dunkirk) - increased use of grants for smaller community groups and more collaborative commissioning.”

“No increase in rent for a period of 12 months”

“To get youth work up and running again and ongoing support for young people”

“1. Training, Recruitment and Retention of Volunteers. 2. Capital Investment to invest in new ways of working. 3. Commissioning and Procurement to be streamlined that enables a focus on delivery rather than process with longer cycles.”

“Continued support from Local Authority funders even if they are themselves facing COVID Funding Difficulties.”

“Our users are all elderly & vulnerable. Health & Safety guidance about how to restart safely & make users feel confident to come to access our services”

“Continued help with PPE, access to funding, help to recover, support to grow organisation back to what it was, waiving of some grant conditions as it is impossible to deliver as planned. Understanding of diminished market.”

## Other Comments

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“We are all following the 5 ways to wellbeing at home, which has been a great framework for our weekly activities. Thanks for all your support.”

“No one would have wished Covid-19 on the world and its population but there is a positive aspect to almost anything and in our case it is the discovery and use of online platforms such as Zoom. Although we reach out to older people, in today's world most are now computer literate and are able to participate and in our online activity group sessions - and find great enjoyment in doing so! Wonderful for those in lockdown which covers the vast majority of our users.”

“As a Community Group set up in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic having regular support/newsletters from WCAVA is invaluable, to ensure we are operating in an open and transparent manner and in line with any requirements and guidance.”

“WCAVA & [X member of staff] in particular were really helpful since the outbreak. They helped us secure severn trent funding and connect with what was going on and keep informed.”

“I want to get more involved with Carva [sic] been to hit and miss before now hope it gets better so we can help even more help the local community and wildlife”

“Not being able to carry out face to face work is difficult but the team are now starting to see young people at external venues such as car parks or gardens. It's still very much an unknown quantity at the moment, but we have also done a lot of work by video conferencing which young people have enjoyed.”

“We will be reviewing the support we provide to LA's post the crisis. This is because it has been unappreciated and unrecognised during the crisis. This support is undertaken as an act of goodwill to date. During the crisis we feel our 2 local authorities have had an unreasonable expectation of the level of support we should be providing to them, and have placed us under pressure with very little respect for a 'partnership' approach other than what we can give. Going forward we will be looking at partnerships with fresh eyes and the experience of Covid19.”

“I just hope the Social Care and NHS actually learn from this experience and with the 3rd. Sector start to work together in delivering an appropriate care and support service to those living with a Dementia illness, including their family members.”

“been very disappointed with wcc cllr response to our grant application - only recieved 30% of what we asked for despite the fact the the [X agency] is plugging holes in their service”

“WCAVA have been a great asset to the Football Club”

“The finances of our organisation as a result of the government decision to stop funding youth and community work means we have operated without reserves for the last 8 years.”

“Very impressed with efforts of WCC, SDC and WCAVA during the crisis - much better than in other parts of the country judging by comments received from elsewhere”