



Hertfordshire  
Community  
Foundation

Survey of the Hertfordshire  
Voluntary Sector Workforce  
Training & Development | 2022



# Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Foreword  | 2  |
| Survey highlights                                 | 3  |
| What do Hertfordshire’s VCSE organisations do?    | 4  |
| Are these turbulent times for VCSE organisations? | 5  |
| How are VCSE organisations staffed?               | 6  |
| Our working lives                                 | 9  |
| Our trustees                                      | 13 |
| Our volunteers                                    | 14 |
| Survey methodology                                | 16 |

# Foreword

Much has happened in the wider world since the last Hertfordshire Workforce Development Survey was conducted in 2018, and these changing times have had a significant effect on our working lives.

In this follow up survey, four years later, we have captured a snapshot of the sector as it is now. This information will help us shape the workforce of the future, as we reflect on where we are now, and the direction we want the sector to take going forward.



Mudlarks support adults with learning disabilities and mental health issues through supported learning and meaningful work in the community

The results of this survey demonstrate a sector which has risen to the challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic, but other challenges lie ahead, and it will be the strength and skill of our workforce that carries us through. Our purpose at HCF Training & Development is to facilitate the ongoing enhancement of the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) workforce through our training programmes, development grants and bespoke advice and guidance. By investing in the VCSE workforce we are building the capacity and resilience of the organisations and individuals who perform such vital roles in our communities.

Thank you to all those who took the time to complete this survey. Your contributions have allowed us to gain insight on a range of current themes and issues and we hope the synthesis of this information will be useful to you and your organisation.

**Willow Humphreys**  
Project Manager, Hertfordshire Community Foundation  
Training & Development

Hertfordshire County Council Adult Care Services has worked with Hertfordshire Community Foundation for over a decade now and has remained focussed on supporting the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) providing services for adults with ongoing social care needs, through a range of innovative programmes and grants.

The aim of this has been to recognise the importance of the sector and its workforce in being at the forefront of preventative services. Together, these services keep people safe, healthier and living at home for longer, which in turn, reduces the strain on social care and health provision along the chain of support.

During the height of the Covid-19 pandemic a light has been shone on the VCSE and the immense value of what it can bring to our communities at times of emergency and beyond, something that has long been known and appreciated within the sector itself. In order to continue to help meet the needs of Hertfordshire citizens, information about the sector’s make up is essential in building a picture of the VCSE workforce in Hertfordshire and so we have commissioned HCF Training and Development to undertake a second survey of voluntary and community organisations to build on our understanding of its scope and scale. The aim is that this work will support the sector’s own drive for change and continued improvement of strategic planning.

**Mark Gwynne**  
Head of Workforce Development, Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) Adult Care Services

# Survey highlights

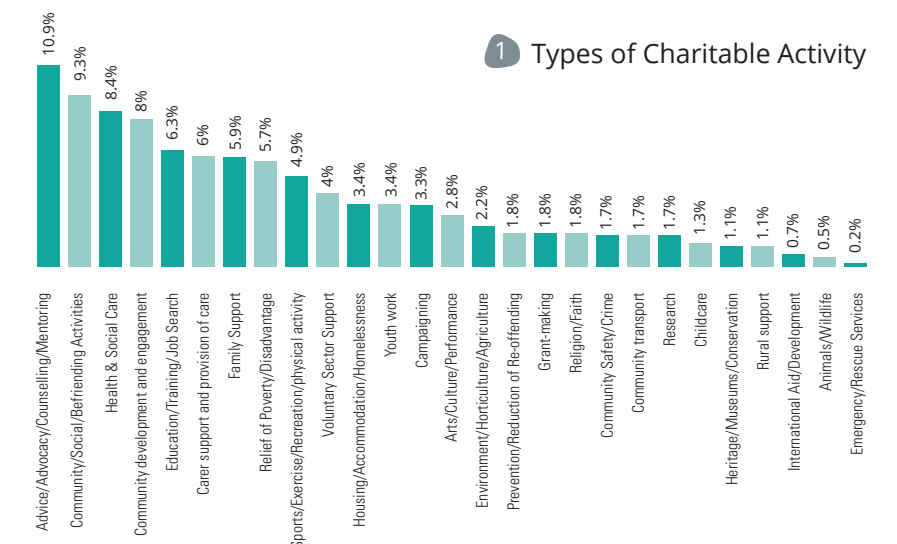
Of the VCSE organisations which responded to the survey:



## What do Hertfordshire's VCSE organisations do?

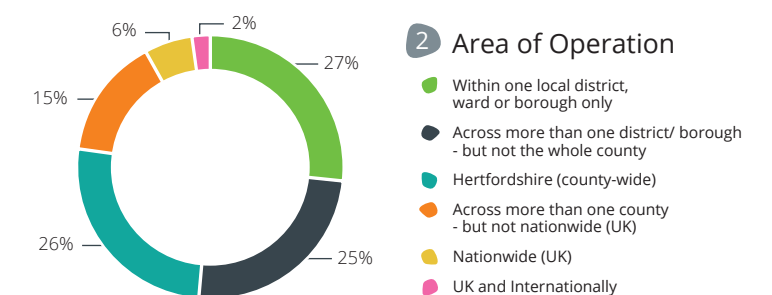
### What are we doing?

- The top activities offered were of Advice/Advocacy/Counselling/Mentoring reflecting the importance of this type of support for service users. The range of responses across all types of community focused activity again shows the important role played at a local level by VCSE organisations.
- Interestingly, over **80%** of respondents undertook multiple charitable activities. This suggests that many of our organisations in Hertfordshire are extending their core activities to either benefit their service users in different ways, or establishing 'add on' activities to reach beyond their normal service user base.

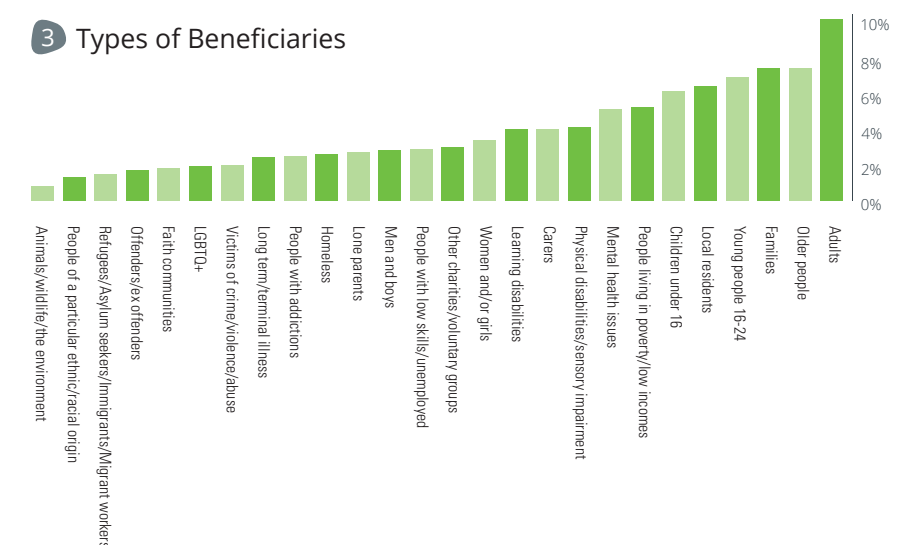


### Who are we reaching?

- According to our data, **three quarters** of VCSE organisations based in Hertfordshire deliver entirely within the county. More than **50%** operate only within one ward or one part of the county.
- Our data suggests that Hertfordshire's VCSE organisations reach a huge range of individuals, with no beneficiary group unrepresented in the responses.



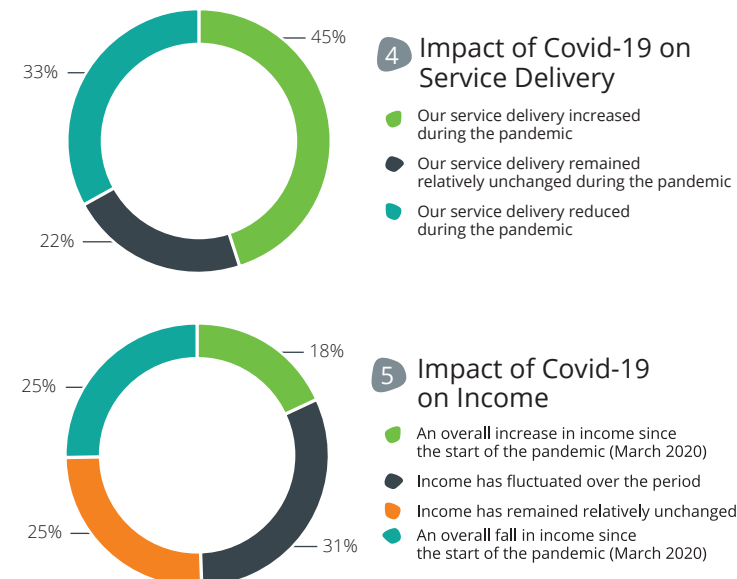
### 3 Types of Beneficiaries



# Are these turbulent times for our VCSE organisations?

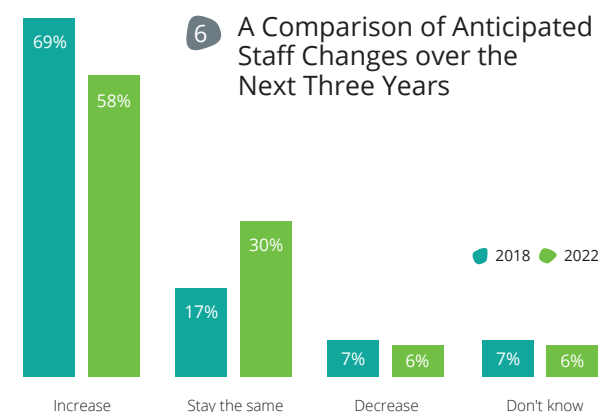
Our data shows that Hertfordshire's VCSE organisations have been profoundly affected by the pandemic.

- Nearly half of respondents told us that their delivery and the need for their work had increased during the pandemic, with only 22% saying delivery remained relatively unchanged during this period.
- More organisations reported a fall in their income (25%) than a rise (18%), but the highest number of organisations (32%) experienced income fluctuations.
- This paints a picture of the challenges when planning expenditure on services over the longer term, trying to balance an increased service demand with the uncertainty of income fluctuations.

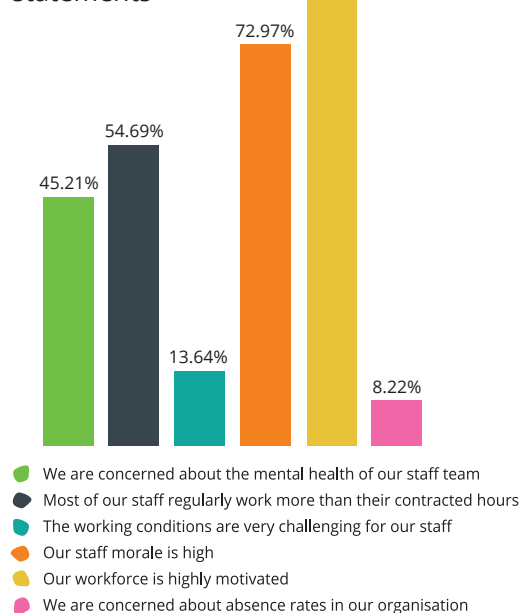


## What has this meant for staff and volunteers?

Against this backdrop of difficulty predicting future income, the majority (58%) of respondents reported that they would need to increase the number of their paid staff over the next 3 years, while 6% expected a decrease. This is slightly less growth than was anticipated in our 2018 survey, when 69% of organisations expected their workforce to stay the same or grow in the next 3 years, and 7% expecting their workforce to decrease.



## 7 % of organisations agreeing with these statements



Almost half of organisations were concerned about the mental health of their staff team (45%) and a majority (55%) agreed that most of their staff worked longer than their contracted hours, as opposed to 33% disagreeing. Despite this, it was reported that working conditions were, on balance, not felt to be "very challenging for our staff" (53% disagreeing was the highest answer) and there was not a high concern about absence rates (only 8% agreed that there was a concern).

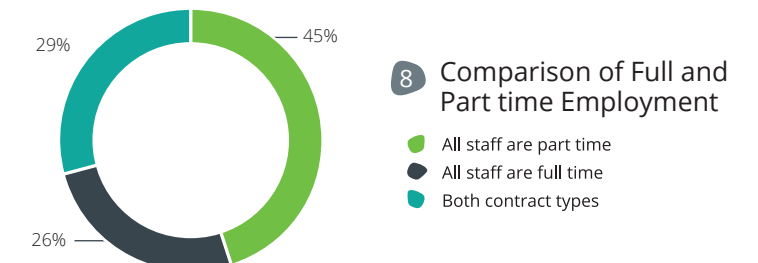
It was thought that the Hertfordshire VCSE workforce remains highly motivated (90% agree), and 73% agreed that staff morale was high, with nobody disagreeing. The results suggest that, although the workforce is generally happy, with so many staff working more than their contracted hours, there is a danger of long term staff disenchantment with their roles and even burnout.

For more information on the effect of the pandemic on Hertfordshire VCSE organisations visit [www.hertscf.org.uk/publications](http://www.hertscf.org.uk/publications) to find more HCF published research.

# How are our VCSE Organisations staffed?

## Employment contracts

Nearly half of all VCSE organisations (45%) with paid roles do not have any full time members of staff. In contrast, only 26% of respondents had no part time members of staff. This clearly demonstrates the importance of part time staff to the VCSE workforce in Hertfordshire.



## Working full time (35hrs per week+)

|   |  |
|---|--|
| % of organisations employing at least one paid full time staff  | 55%  |
| % on permanent contracts  | 90%  |
| Top five roles filled by full time staff on permanent contracts (% of organisations with these roles full time) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Chief Executive/Managing Director or equivalent (85%)</li> <li>2. Frontline workers (staff directly delivering charitable services to beneficiaries/clients) (68%)</li> <li>3. Supervisors (43%)</li> <li>4. Finance/HR staff (38%)</li> <li>5. Other managers not included above (37%)</li> </ol> |

## Working part time (less than 35hrs per week)

|   |   |
|---|---|
| % of organisations employing at least one paid part time staff  | 74%   |
| % on permanent contracts  | 85%   |
| Top five roles filled by part time staff on permanent contracts (% of organisations with these roles full time) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Frontline workers (69%)</li> <li>2. Administrative/Clerical (60%)</li> <li>3. Finance/HR staff (44%)</li> <li>4. Supervisors (38%)</li> <li>5. Fundraising/Marketing (37%)</li> </ol> |



Watford Workshop offers supportive employment, work experience and training for those who may face barriers to mainstream employment

- The relatively high proportion of full and part time frontline workers, Finance/HR staff and Supervisors indicates that employers are being flexible with contract types when filling these essential roles. This contrasts with Chief Executive/Managing Director roles, which are most likely to be filled by full time workers.
- The distribution and types of full and part time roles is roughly in line with the data collected in the 2018 survey, and suggests the way people are employed by VCSE organisations has not been altered much by the pandemic.
- Few organisations reported employing self-employed, casual or sessional workers, and very few reported taking on apprentices. The figures were very similar to those reported in 2018, indicating that this is still a very small part of the sector in Hertfordshire.



# How are our VCSE Organisations staffed? (continued)

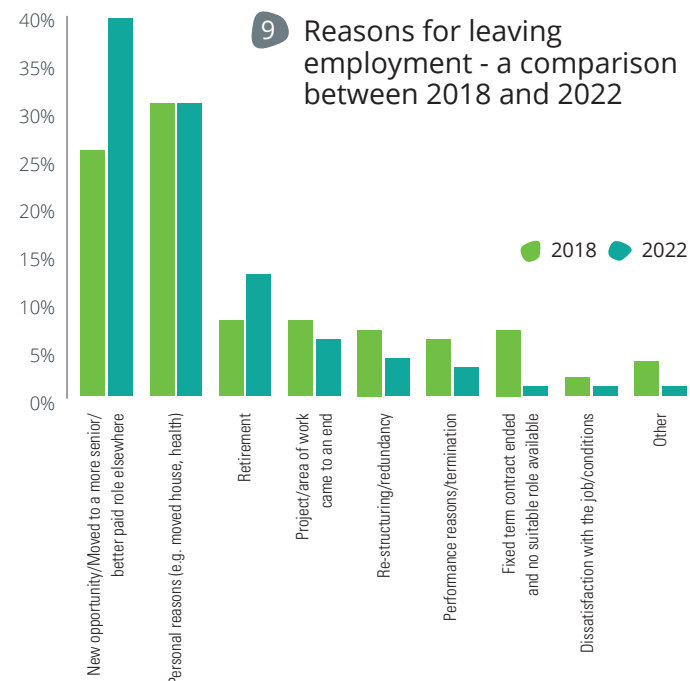
## Staff Retention

### Why are staff leaving?

The most popular reasons for people moving posts were new opportunities, personal reasons and retirement. In comparison to 2018, a higher proportion of people retired or moved on to new opportunities, which broadly reflects national trends.



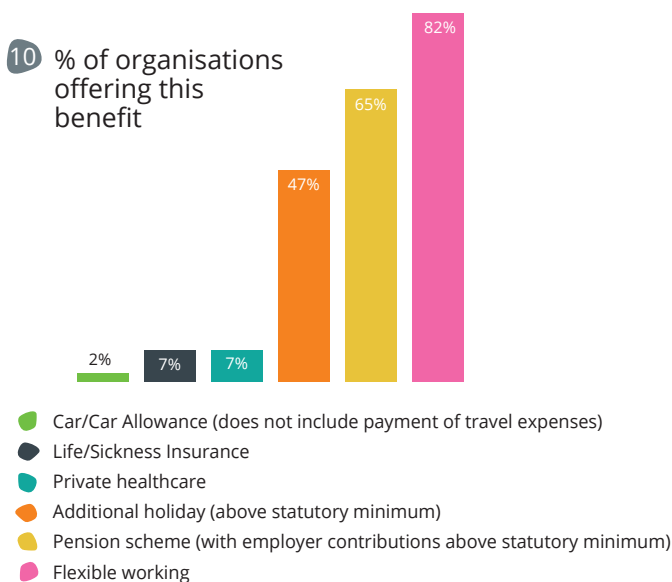
"Your workforce: your future" is the annual HCF Training & Development conference for the VCSE sector in Hertfordshire



### What staff benefits are organisations offering?

- In terms of benefits offered to all paid staff (both full and part time), the top answers by far of those were flexible working, pension scheme (with employer contributions above statutory minimum) and additional holiday (above statutory minimum).

#### 10 % of organisations offering this benefit



Jedidiah provide food to struggling families via discreetly packaged food parcels delivered to schools

- Very few Hertfordshire VCSE organisations offer life or sickness insurance, private healthcare or a car or car allowance (this does not include payment of travel expenses) to all their paid staff.
- It is more likely that an organisation offers benefits to all staff (63%) rather than only the more senior staff (37%), and the most popular offered benefits for selected staff was again flexible working, pension scheme and additional holiday.

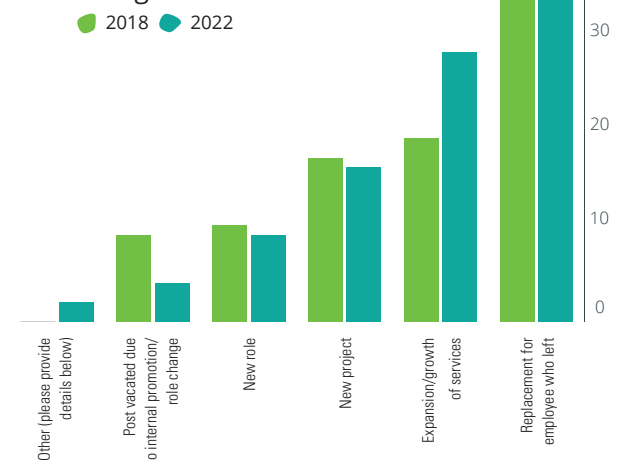
# How are our VCSE Organisations staffed? (continued)

## Staff Recruitment

### Why are organisations hiring?

The top two reasons for recruitment were to replace an employee who left the organisation or due to an expansion or growth in services, which were also the top two answers in 2018. However, in comparison to before the pandemic, VCSE organisations are hiring more staff to accommodate expansion and growth in services, possibly to cope with increased demands on their services.

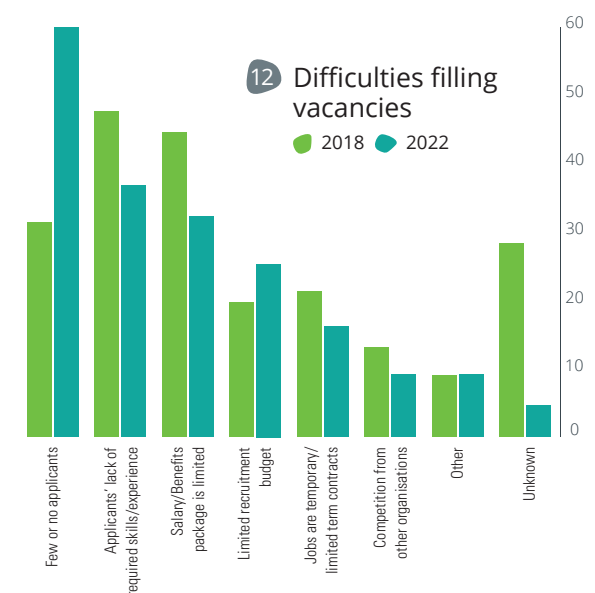
#### 11 Main reasons for hiring new staff



### Why do organisations struggle to hire?

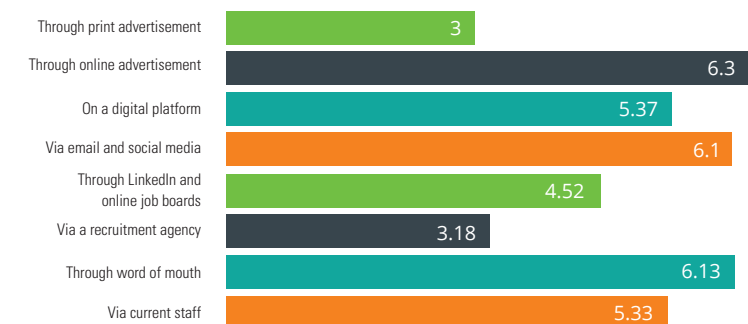
Lack of suitable applicants is a key problem for organisations trying to hire, being cited by nearly 60% of respondents. In our 2018 survey, by contrast, the most common reasons for vacancies being hard to fill were due to the salary/benefits package and the lack of skills and experience of applicants. This would correlate with the general national picture of labour shortages coming out of the pandemic.

#### 12 Difficulties filling vacancies



### How are organisations finding applicants?

The top three ways for finding new applicants were word of mouth, via email and social media or through online advertisement. However, our data shows that organisations engage a range of different approaches in order to attract new staff.

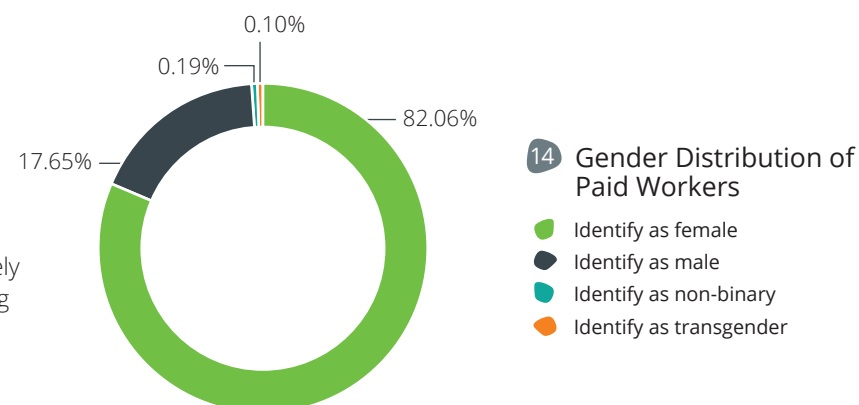


#### 13 Most successful ways to recruit staff (ranked score, 1-8 where higher is more popular)

## Our working lives

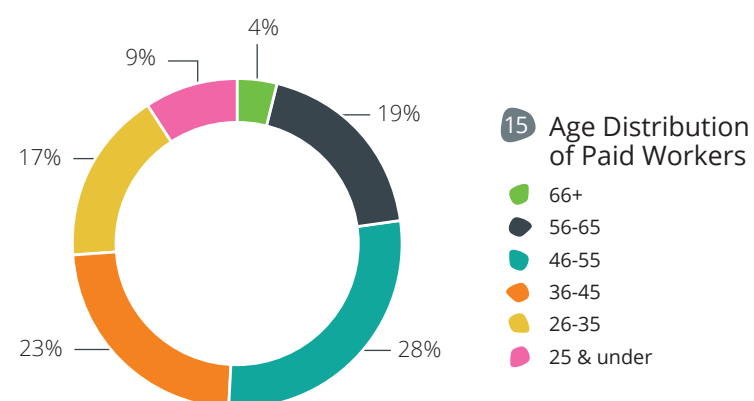
### Gender Distribution

Hertfordshire's VCSE organisations are overwhelmingly staffed by females, with our reported figures showing approximately **four and a half** times more staff identifying as female than male.



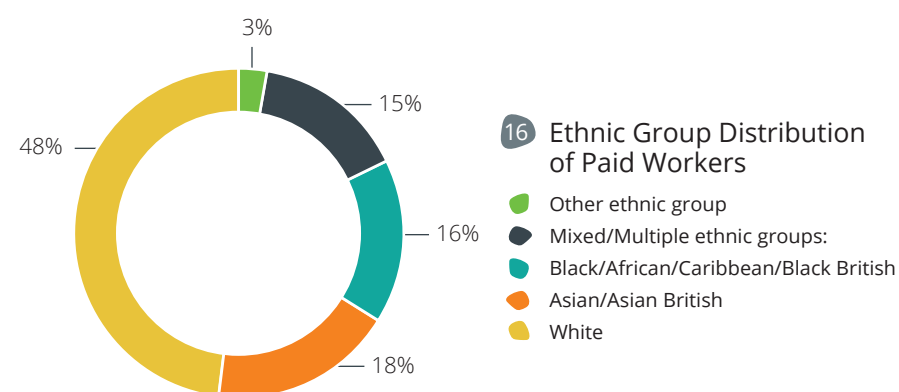
### Age Distribution

Looking at age, **50%** of Hertfordshire VCSE organisations' staff are between 36 and 55, and **25%** are over 56, with only **25%** under 35. These figures are roughly in line with numbers reported in 2018, however there are now roughly **2%** fewer people under 25. This slight drop in the input of young people working in the sector could be due to a number of factors, for example younger people beginning their careers in other sectors before moving into the VCS.



### Ethnic Group Distribution

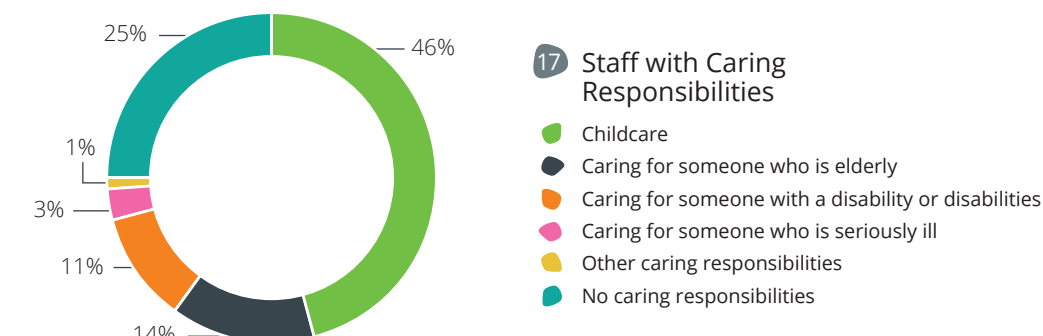
Respondents were asked to report on the ethnic groups of staff, if they monitored these statistics. Our survey data suggests that the staffing of Hertfordshire's VCSE organisations is relatively diverse, with over half of reported staff coming from an ethnic minority. However, it is noted that less than half of responding organisations completed this question.



## Our working lives (continued)

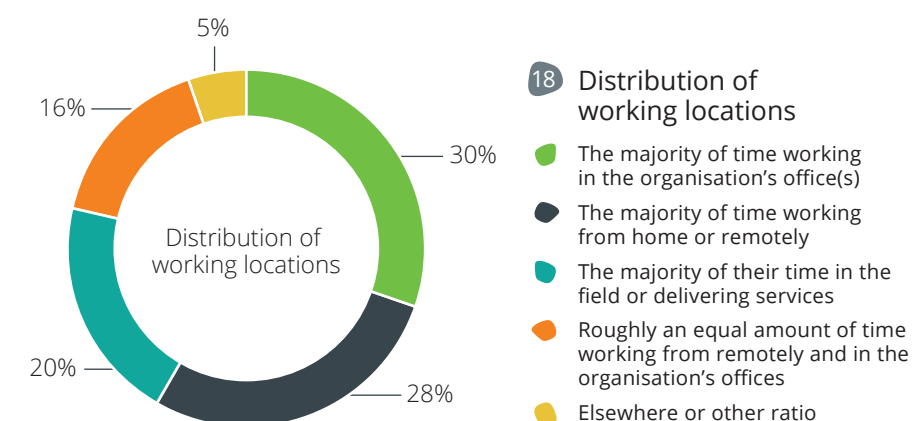
### Caring Responsibilities

Three quarters of paid staff were reported as having caring responsibilities, which would support the idea that flexible working is an important staff benefit.



### Working Locations

The pandemic appears to have changed the working locations of paid staff, with very similar numbers working in the organisation's office compared to working from home or remotely. It will be interesting to see if this is a permanent change in future years. It is worth noting however that **71%** felt that their office was fit for purpose and good for their staff to work in, if applicable, with **14%** disagreeing and **15%** undecided.







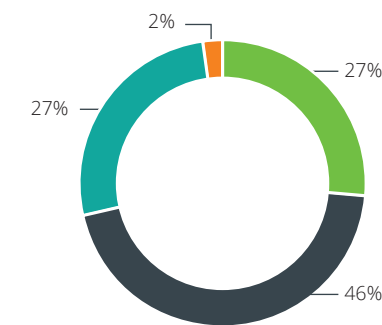
Mudlarks Café provides training, work experience and employment for adults with learning difficulties to improve their skills and confidence

## Our working lives (continued)

### Staff Development

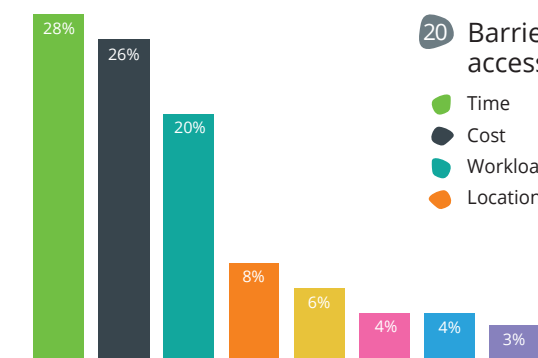
We identified concern about a lack of development opportunities, with only 23% of organisations agreeing that staff had good opportunities for career development.

The common barriers limiting access to training identified were time, cost and workload, all of which resonate with the pressures facing the VCSE sector at the moment. Lack of motivation was a very small reported reason, suggesting that the desire for continued professional development training is there, but people find it difficult to access.



19 "We are able to provide good career development opportunities"

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know



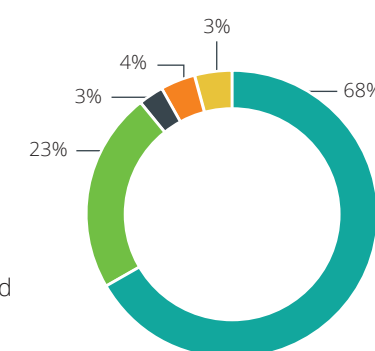
20 Barriers limiting access to training

- Time
- Cost
- Workload
- Location
- None
- Other
- Training required not easily available
- Motivation

### Representing lived experience of service users

**How representative of service users lived experience are the staff and volunteers of Hertfordshire's VCSE organisations?**

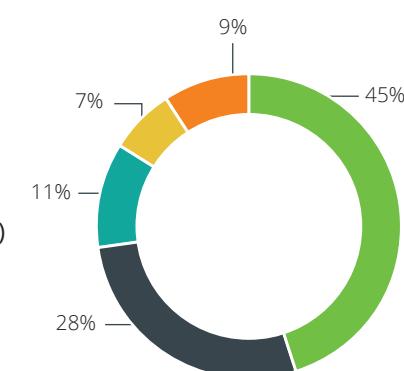
Encouragingly, the vast majority (91%) agree that lived experience is well represented within staff and volunteers (not including the board).



21 "The lived experience of our service users is well represented within our staff and volunteers"

- Agree
- Partly agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Partly disagree
- Disagree

Trustee representation of lived experience is a little lower but still positive (73%). There were however significant numbers who either partly (7%) or fully disagreed (9%) with the statement, which suggests there is still work to do here.



22 "The lived experience of our service users is well represented by our board of trustees"

- Agree
- Partly agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Partly disagree
- Disagree

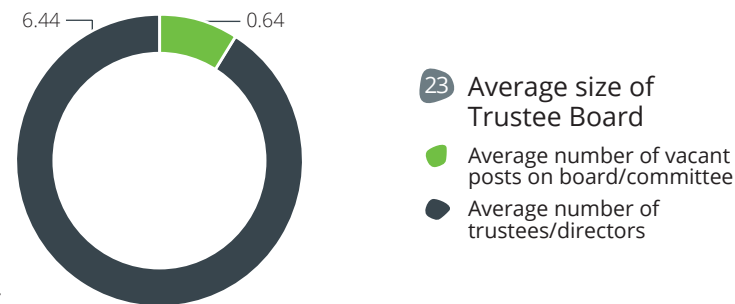


## Our trustees

### Size of trustee board

The average current number of trustees on a board was 6.44 individuals.

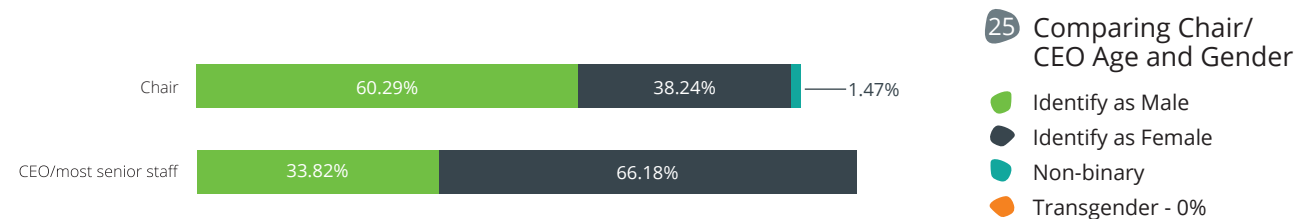
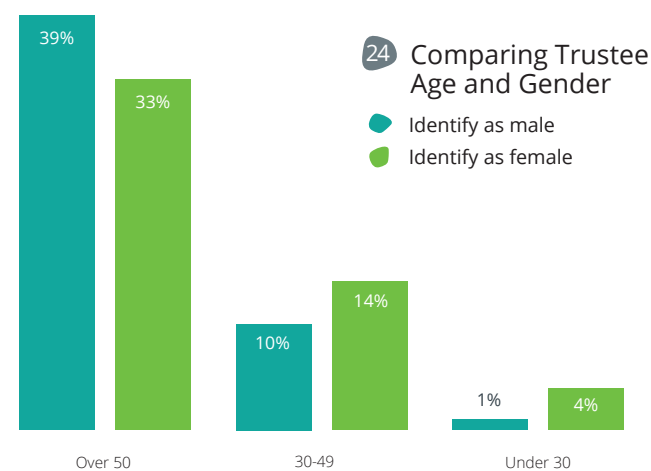
- The average number of vacancies on a board was 0.64 individuals.
- This indicates that the average board or management committee is around 7 people.



### Comparing Age and Gender

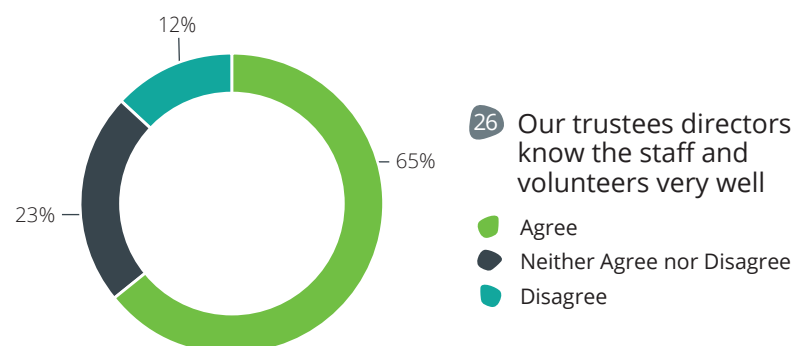
Only **4%** of Hertfordshire trustees are under 30, with the overwhelming majority of Hertfordshire trustees (**72%**) over 50.

- The ratio of male (**50.2%**) to female (**49.8%**) trustees is relatively evenly split.
- However, while the CEO of a Hertfordshire VCSE organisation is almost twice as likely to be female, the Chair is much more likely to be male (**60%**).



### Staff Relationships

A relatively healthy **65%** of trustee boards knew their organisation's staff and volunteers well. However, with **23%** of respondents neither agreed nor disagreeing, and **12%** disagreeing, it would suggest that Boards of Trustees still have work to do improving their links with their organisations.



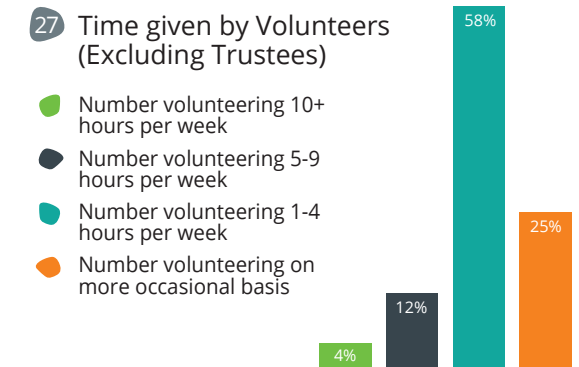
## Our volunteers

Our results emphasise the vital role volunteers clearly play in Hertfordshire VCSE organisations, devoting lots of time to local causes, and operating at all levels from front line work to governance and oversight.

### Volunteers' working hours

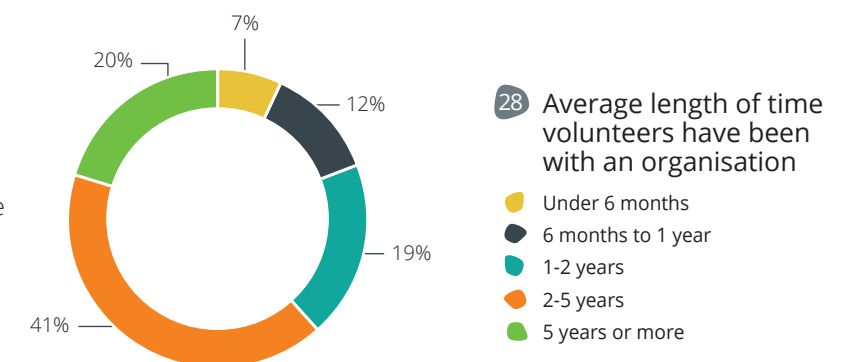
Most volunteers give between 1-4 hours per week (**58%**), or less (**25%**)

- An impressive **12%** were volunteering between a half and a whole day each week.



### Volunteers' Service

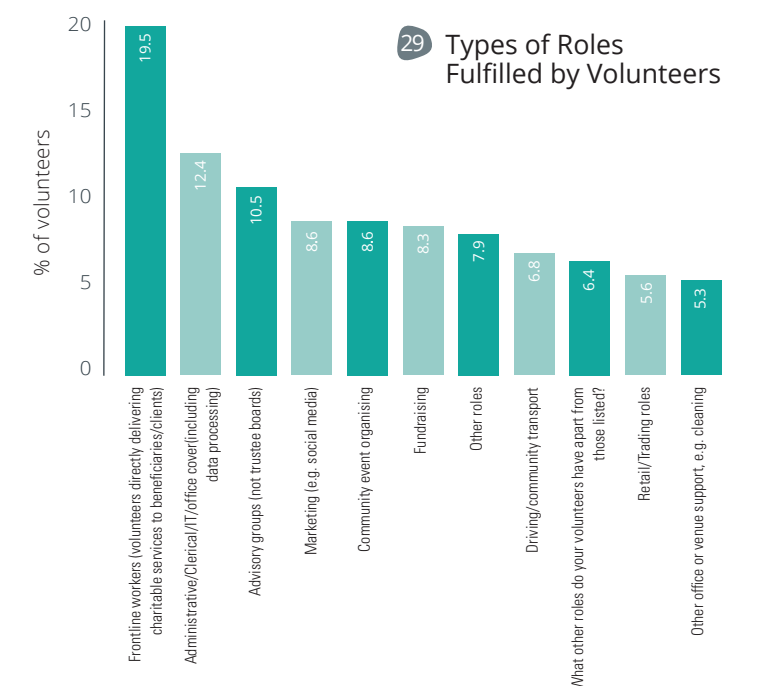
**41%** of volunteers on average have been volunteering with Hertfordshire organisations for between two and five years, which suggests a strong retention rate.



### Volunteer Roles

As in 2018, the most common volunteer roles were as frontline workers, that is volunteers directly delivering charitable services to beneficiaries or clients.

- All the volunteer roles listed in the survey had a good response rate, demonstrating the range of tasks volunteers fulfil within different organisations.
- The number of volunteers reported within each organisation ranged from 1 to 500, which reflects the range of organisations surveyed. The median number of volunteers (not including the Trustee Board) was found to be 23.5.





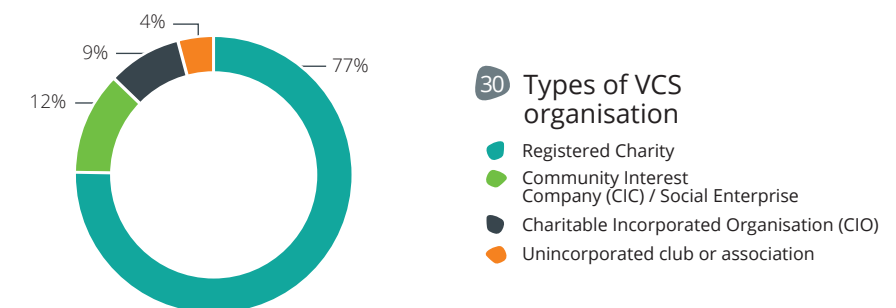
# Survey methodology

The survey was developed by HCF Training and Development and 3rd Sector Mission Control, in consultation with a small working group of local VCSE organisation representatives and Robin Clifford and Mark Gwynne from Herts County Council.

The final questionnaire was completed once per organisation by the CEO or Senior Leader. The survey was conducted using Survey Monkey, distributed by email to the HCF contact database, marketed via social media platforms and also shared by Community Voluntary Service (CVS) organisations. We received a total of 108 usable responses in May and June 2022.

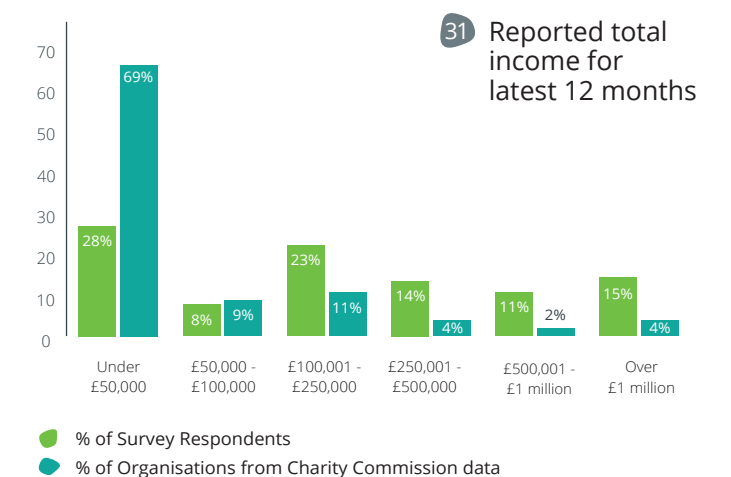
## VCS Organisations

Over three quarters of respondents answered on behalf of registered charities, with the majority of the remaining respondents answering on behalf of Community Interest Companies, social enterprises or Charitable Incorporated Organisations.



## Total Income

Responses reflected a broad range of financial income. However, when compared to Charity Commission data for the county, smaller organisations were under-represented and larger organisations over-represented.



A full list of questions included in the survey is available on the Hertfordshire Community Foundation website.

For further information visit [hertscf.org.uk](https://hertscf.org.uk)

The number and breadth of organisations responding to this survey was deemed to be representative of the charitable organisations operating in Hertfordshire and the information presented here is drawn from survey responses.





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