

COVID-19 VCSE SECTOR

RESILIENCE FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

Summary of key findings - October 2020

COVID-19 VCSE SECTOR RESILIENCE FOLLOW-UP SURVEY



About York CVS

York CVS is an independent charity; supporting and championing York's voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector to make positive change, challenge issues and grow new ideas for the future in order to strengthen communities.

About this research

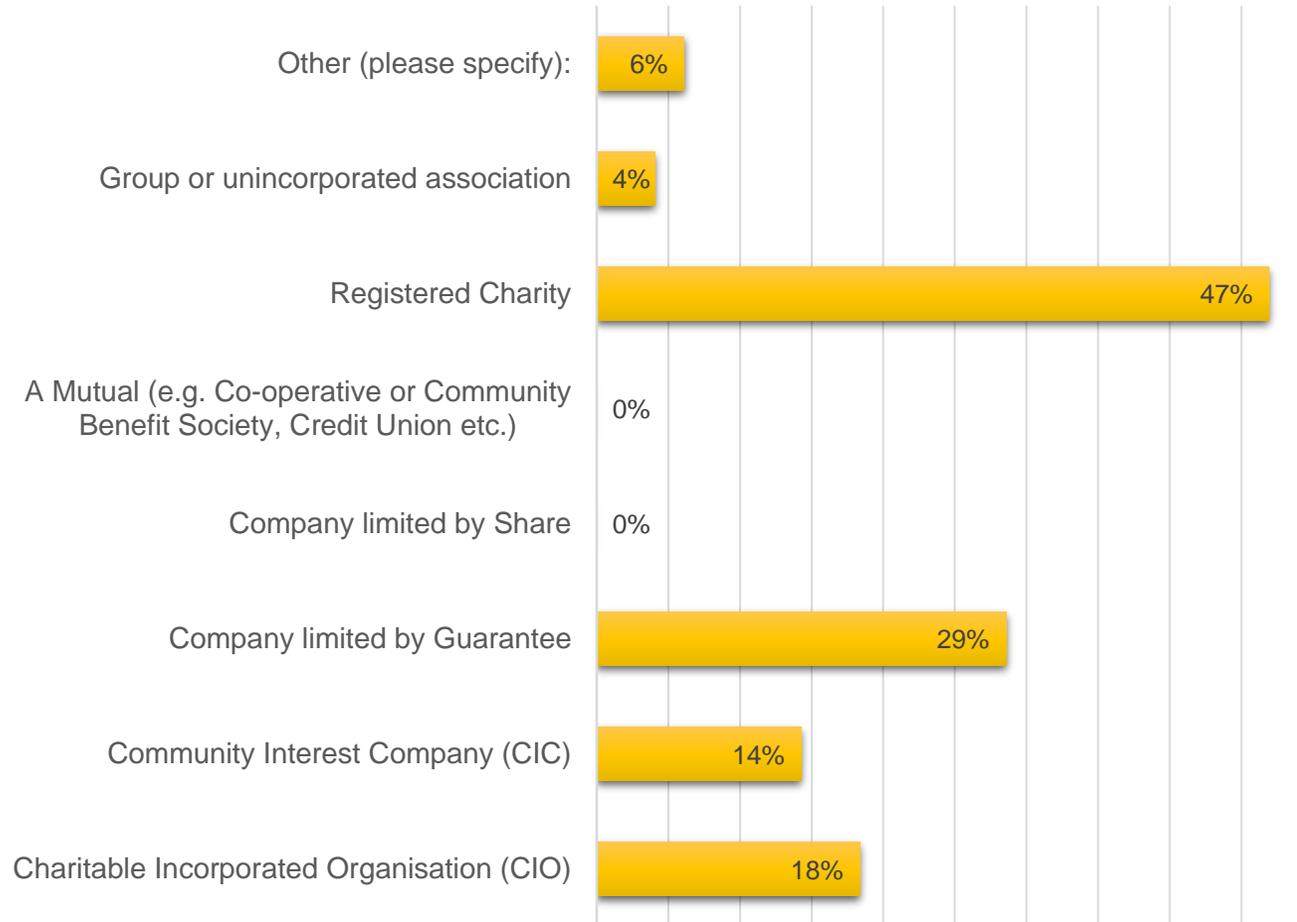
In April 2020, alongside other voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector partners across Yorkshire and Humberside, York CVS issued a survey to find out about the immediate impact of the pandemic on the local voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector. To continue to monitor the impacts of the pandemic on the sector, Voluntary Action Leeds coordinated a follow-up survey across Yorkshire and Humberside in September.

The following summary of findings looks at the impacts that the pandemic has had on York's VCSE sector. The research consists of responses from 49 organisations operating in York.

ABOUT THE ORGANISATIONS



Legal structure of organisation:



Organisations Legal Structure

- Almost half of the organisations [47%] were Registered Charities.
- Over a quarter of the organisations [29%] were companies limited by guarantee.
- One in three [39%] of respondents completed the previous Sector Resilience Survey (April-May 2020).

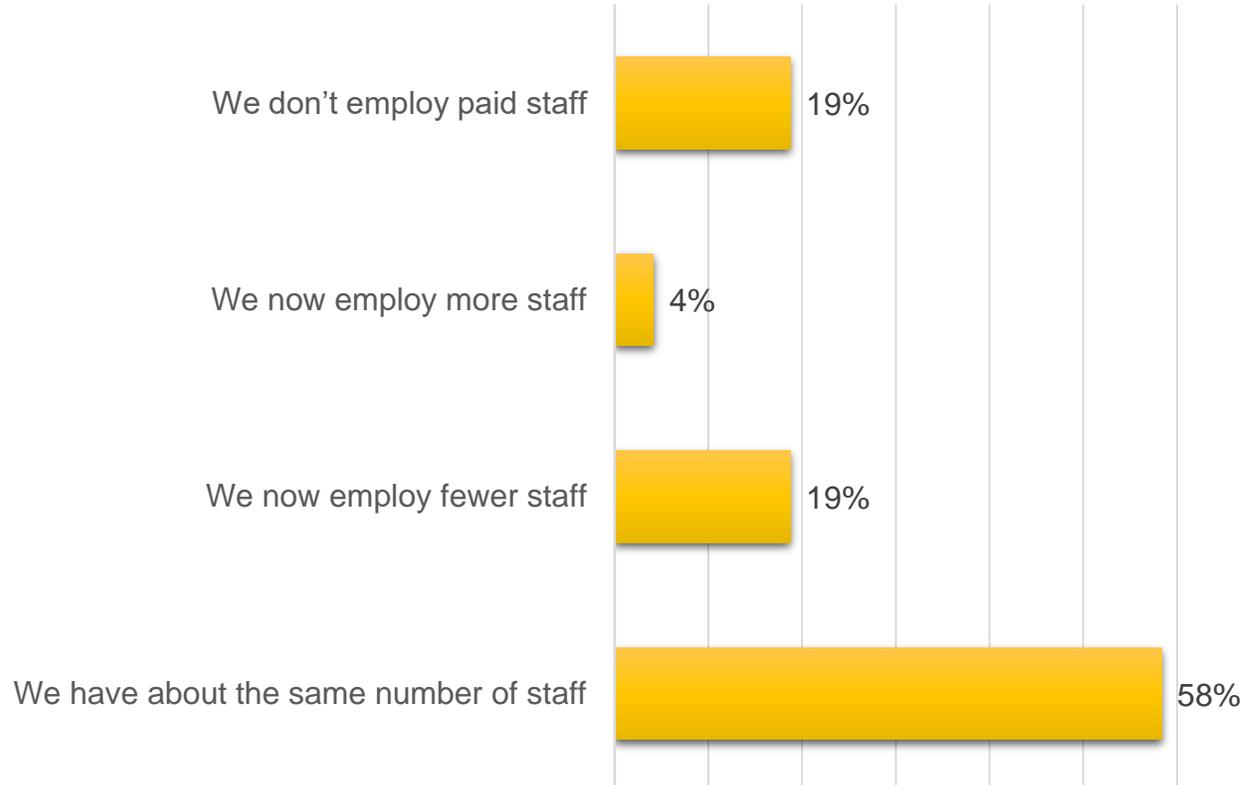
Annual Turnover

- Almost half of the organisations [46%] had an income of less than £100k.
- One in three organisations [38%] had an income of between £101k to £1m.
- 16% of organisations had an income of over £1m.

ABOUT THEIR STAFF



Comparing now to “pre-covid” how has the number of paid staff you employed changed?



Number of employees

- Half of organisations [50%] had between one and 15 employees.
- One in four organisations [25%] had more than 15 employees.
- A quarter of organisations [25%] had no employees at all.

Changes to the number of paid staff

- One in five organisations [19%] reported that they now employ less staff than pre-COVID. Of these organisations, one in five organisations [20%] reported seeing a 26% - 75% reduction in paid staff.

*Full Time Equivalent (FTE) paid staff

IMPACTS ON PAID STAFF – WHAT ORGANISATIONS SAID



“We restructured the staff working mainly in income generation due to the loss of trade and income in this area”

“We needed to make some staffing changes to accommodate changes to working practices. This resulted in some redundancy and some changes to job descriptions. We also created one new post. Overall we have reduced the number of staff by three”

“Due to the increase in demand for our services we need to employ many more staff as soon as we are able to raise the funding”

“We placed 3 staff on furlough who have now returned to work but we are unsure that we can maintain all of those positions going forward as we are unable to undertake face to face work which was a major part of our services”

“Increased recruitment due to local increase in business”

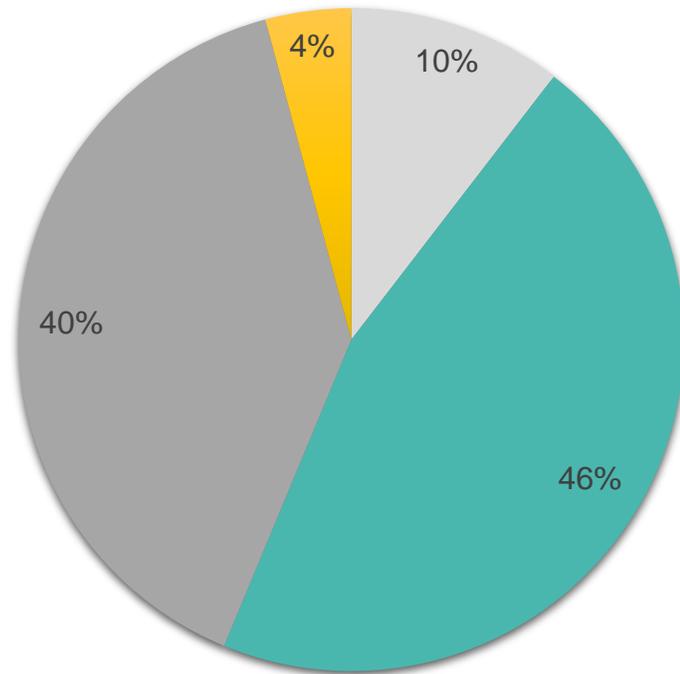
“Frustration, worry and concern. The ever changing environment has pushed staff out of comfort zones and meant different ways of working. The majority have adapted well but continually need support to ensure they are ok”

“Thanks to the furlough scheme our staffing numbers have remained the same. We should have enough funding to keep everyone in work until the end of March 2021”

“We have not replaced a few leavers and used furlough to fund other staff. We are about to embark on a redundancy process for up to six staff”

ABOUT THEIR VOLUNTEERS

During March – August 2020 did your total number of volunteers increase or decrease when compared to January 2020?



■ Increased ■ Decreased ■ Stayed about the same ■ Not applicable

Reduction in volunteers

- 46% reported a decrease in the number of volunteers compared to pre-COVID.
- 40% of organisations reported that their numbers had stayed the same.
- Of those organisations that had experienced a reduction in volunteers 70% reported that their volunteers stopped volunteering due to shielding.
- Over half [52%] reported that the reduction in volunteers was due to their services stopping so there was no longer a need for volunteers.
- One in three organisations [30%] said that they had been unable to engage their volunteers since COVID-19.

IMPACT ON VOLUNTEERS – WHAT ORGANISATIONS SAID



“We lost some volunteers mainly due to technology and gained some amazing new volunteers to help with our COVID response”

“Most volunteers are retired and therefore more vulnerable and the others who work have had to juggle childcare, working from home and family pressures of elderly parents etc.”

“Volunteer numbers have slowly increased and we believe this is related to the local authority having over 4,000 volunteers registered with them. We have been able to increase and have more regular contact with carers although not as in-depth or advice work as we would with paid staff”

“Due to the increase in demand for our services we have needed to recruit more volunteers with more specialist skills and substantial experience in our area. However, these are only short term volunteers that will soon need to return to paid employment”

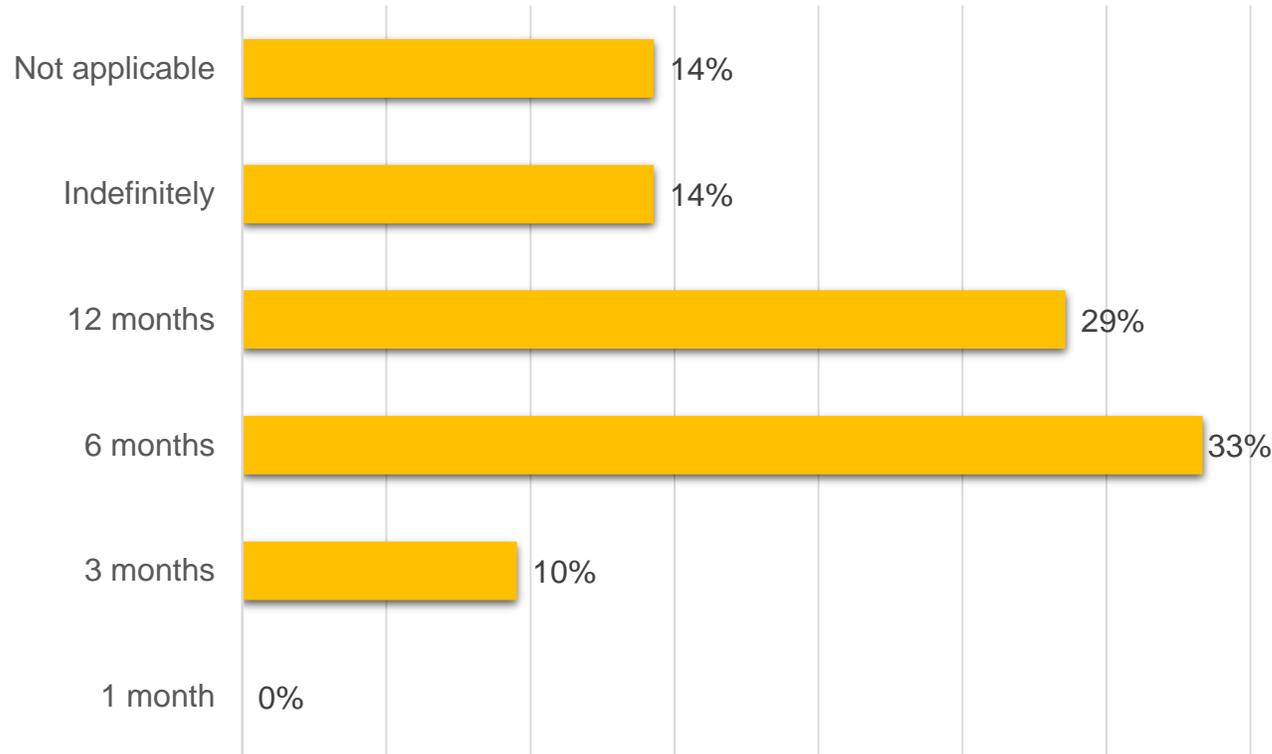
“We had to stop all volunteering during lockdown. Since reopening we have brought back a number of former volunteers but others have been unable or unwilling to restart, mainly due to health conditions that increase their vulnerability to COVID. We have also reduced the number of volunteers at any time to ensure appropriate physical distancing. We have tried to find some new volunteers although this hasn't been as easy as we might have expected given the increase in people being furloughed or made redundant”

“Our volunteer numbers have remained steady as we have evolved our services to maintain these roles. Our home visiting service is being conducted by telephone and some activities are carried out by Zoom. We also developed a new role for volunteers to deliver equipment to clients homes utilising some of our existing volunteers. Recruitment of volunteers has stopped and we have very limited opportunity for fundraising volunteers so some of these roles may decrease going forward”

ABOUT THEIR FINANCES



How many months do you expect you can continue to be financially sustainable?



Financial sustainability

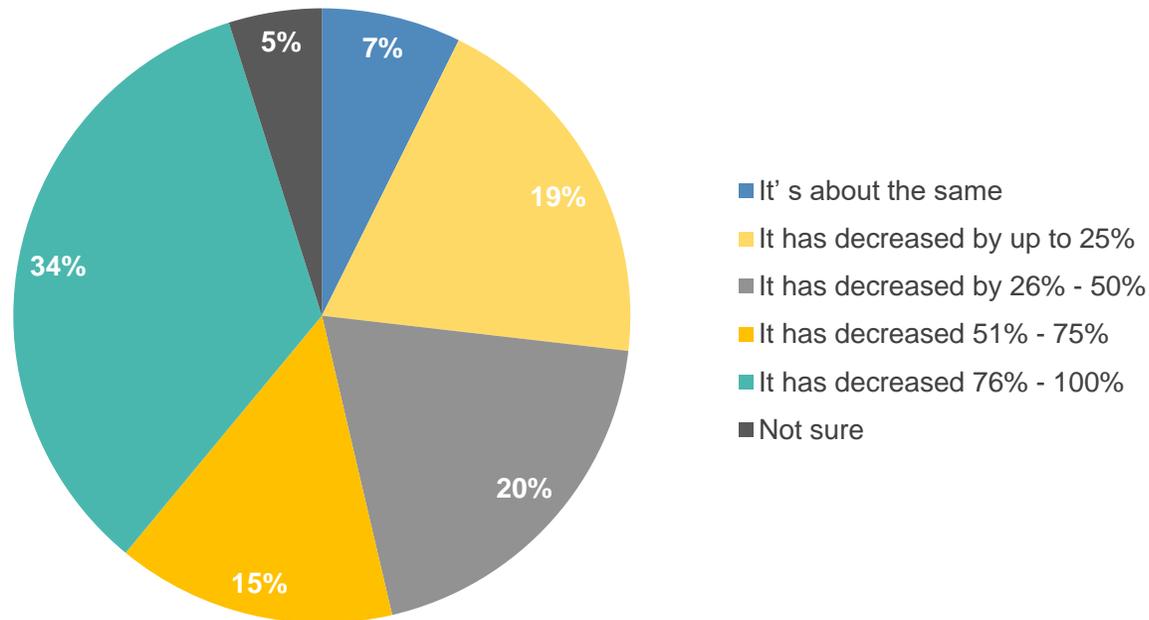
- 43% are not sustainable beyond 6 months.
- 72% do not expect to be financially sustainable beyond 12 months.

Use of reserves

- One in three organisations [33%] have used their financial reserves over the past six months.
- Of those who have used their reserves, 25% have used between 51%-100% of their reserves.
- One in four organisations [25%] said they have not used their reserves yet but may need to before the end of 2020.

ABOUT THEIR FINANCES

If you generated earned income in "pre-COVID" times, approximately how much has your earned income dropped since Covid-19?



Changes in earned income due to COVID-19

- Only 7% of organisations saw their income remain the same with 88% of organisations seeing a decrease in their earned income.
- One in three organisations [34%] reported that their earned income had dropped by 76% - 100% due to the pandemic.

Main risks to income until the end of the financial year (March 2021) – what organisations said:

“Loss of trading income”

“Our inability to charge our service users for traditional services that we cannot currently offer them”

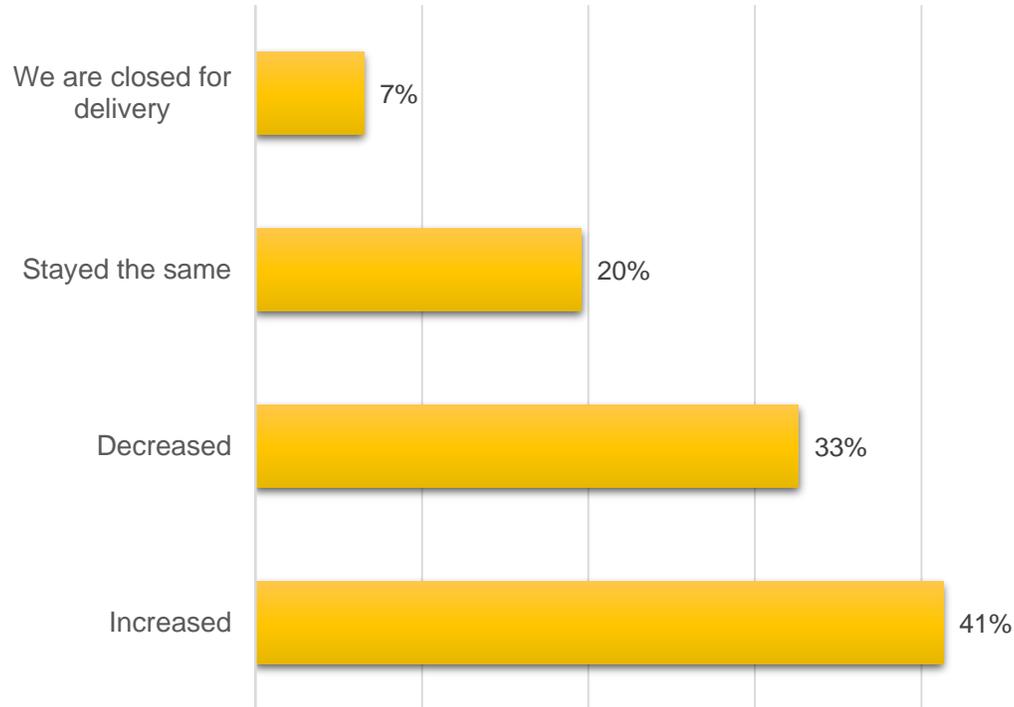
“Reduced income due to lower levels of paying service users, due to the need to keep numbers low for COVID-19 safety”

“That the service and fund raising will not be sustainable going forward - we are not able to be flexible on the service we offer”

ABOUT THEIR SERVICE DELIVERY



How has demand for your service changed?



Demand for services

- Two in five organisations [41%] have seen an increase in demand for their services since the beginning of the pandemic, while one in three [30%] have seen a decrease in demand for their services.

Delivery of services

- Four out of five organisations [82%] had to close or put on hold services due to the pandemic.
- Two in five organisations [42%] said they plan to restart stopped services before the end of 2020. A quarter [26%] of organisations said that they don't plan to restart the delivery of stopped/on hold services until next year (2021).

What organisations said

“We are all working harder - additional hours to cope with the demand”

“Fewer group social activities face to face; groups meeting on Zoom”

“Telephone delivery rather than face to face”

Main issues that people are encountering when accessing digital technology



Digital exclusion

- Two out of three organisations [68%] said they are finding digital exclusion an issue for people they work with.
- Two out of three [66%] of organisations said that people they work with don't have access to digital technology, with one in two organisations [49%] reporting that the people they work with do not have access to WIFI connectivity.

What organisations said:

“Financial poverty impacts on digital inclusion”

“Some don't feel confident using new technologies, dementia impacts on confidence/reliance on technology”

“Members are not interested”

“As we deal with the elderly in our society digital technology is difficult - the staff and volunteers are adapting to this new way of working”

POSITIVE OUTCOMES FROM COVID-19 – WHAT ORGANISATIONS SAID



“The teams are working much more collaboratively and are jointly proud of our response - it's united the team”

“We have been forced into using remote technology for meetings (Teams) this will continue and save money in terms of mileage/time etc. New links with local community organisations/community drivers”

“Our virtual offer, whilst a pale shadow of our normal services, does offer some positives for the future. Working from home clearly has a place moving forwards but it is also good for staff wellbeing for them to work together in an office environment”

“We can work remotely successfully. Our clients have been able to access the service and have positive outcomes”

“We stayed open and delivering same level of service to clients albeit differently. We have accessed funding. Trustees and volunteers have been really enacted and positive”

“Recognition that our service is of value to our service users and their families. Recognition that working outdoors has numerous benefits, including flexibility during a pandemic, i.e. being able to reopen with safety measures, unlike most indoor settings”

“Our ability to grow and develop to satisfy the increase in demand for our services and the ability of some of our beneficiaries to advance into volunteering and help others in the way they themselves have been helped”

“Stronger partnerships. Our service users tell us they have continued to feel valued and important”

“We have developed services such as telephone support and home delivery that we would like to continue after the pandemic. Staff have really pulled together to support each other and our clients”

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS



The Impact of COVID-19 on York's VCSE Sector survey is showing that the sector in York is facing a potential crisis. Concerted action is required to reduce risks for the sector and the wider implications this will have on York and its citizens.

The following recommendations summarise a range of responses that York CVS and York partners could take. In the coming weeks York CVS will work with partners to shape these recommendations and identify short and medium-term priorities to take forward.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS



Partners should work together to:

- Direct any available resources, including funding and other capacity, towards the third sector to ensure that it can remain resilient in the short and medium term (including COVID-19 related resources);
- Identify strategically important charities in York and discuss their current situation, future sustainability challenges and what support they need to survive;
- Support organisations to work to full cost recovery; this may involve co-designing services with charities recognising that service delivery has been modified and some of the changes need to be reflected in new service specifications;
- Promote business advice for VCSE sector organisations to enable them to diversify/manage reduced traded income;
- Grant funders and public sector funders to join up investment frameworks and have some common fields and phrasing for funding applications.
- Seek to influence national government to provide support for a wider range of VCSE sector organisation's core costs until post COVID-19 arrangements are established;
- Advocate for partners to engage with the VCSE sector as a distinctive sector when developing business resilience approaches.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS



York CVS will:

- Share the learning from this survey and continue to co-ordinate the collation of intelligence about sector resilience;
- Encourage and support collaboration and partnership working across VCSE sector organisations (and other sectors) for the ultimate benefit of vulnerable citizens;
- Provide practical support to organisations facing challenges to give them the capacity they need to plan for sustainability with an emphasis on reaching out to groups farthest from accessing help;
- Continue to provide training, workshops and information on issues raised by the VCSE sector in York;
- Support the re-establishment of face-to-face services - a critical part of the VCSE sector offer;
- Continue to support the VCSE sector in York by expanding online resources and services;
- Support VCSE organisations with the recruitment and management of volunteers both during and post COVID-19;
- Further engage with existing lobbying efforts at national level and make this work visible to VCSE sector organisations.