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Policy&Practice Briefing Papers

Third Sector Trends in England and Wales 2022

Technical paper on research methodologies

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Policy&Practice

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Policy&Practice Third Sector Briefing Papers

This series of briefing papers draws on data from a range of sources including the Charity Commission Register, NCVO Civil Society Almanac and the Third Sector Trends study. It has been established to make further use of Third Sector Trends data prior to the 6th iteration of the major study to be undertaken in 2022.

Third Sector Trends Study

The Third Sector Trends study was conceived and originally commissioned by Northern Rock Foundation with research conducted by the Universities of Southampton, Teesside and Durham. The Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland was a co-founder of the research and is now responsible for its legacy.

The Community Foundation is now collaborating with partners including St Chad's College at the University of Durham, Power to Change, Barrow Cadbury Trust and Millfield House Foundation.

All publications from the Third Sector Trends study are available free to download at this address:

https://www.communityfoundation.org.uk/knowledge-and-leadership/third-sector-trends-research/

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Third Sector Trends

The aim of the Third Sector Trends research programme is to get a better understanding of the structure, dynamics, purpose and impact of the local voluntary, community and social enterprise sector across England and Wales.

In order to understand the local Third Sector more fully, it is necessary to undertake the study at scale so that comparative analysis is possible between places. It is not possible fully to understand what the Third Sector achieves in one locality by studying it in isolation because there is no scope to assess which aspects of its activities are typical and which are extraordinary.

The study has two elements: a long-term qualitative study of a representative sample of 50 Third Sector organisations which began in 2008; and a series of surveys, beginning in 2010, which take place every three years.

Studies which only provide a snap-shot of sector activity at a point in time cannot assess whether things are changing or not. The only way to do this is to undertake longitudinal analysis. Third Sector Trends has been doing this since 2008, initially in North East England and Cumbria, but now across England and Wales.

Third Sector Trends is an independent and authoritative study of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector. But it cannot collect data on everything. Consequently, the study is designed to complement findings from other large scale long-term studies by NCVO, the Charity Commission and 360Giving.

Purpose of this paper

Third Sector Trends is a long-running quantitative and qualitative study of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector in England and Wales. The purpose of this paper is to provide the following information:

- Section 1: an outline of the overall purpose of the study.
- Section 2: new themes for exploration in 2022.
- Section 3: research methodology and sample structure 2022.
- Section 4: publications

This paper does not explain the analytical approaches taken in the production of research findings. This can be found in a second substantive paper. ***Structure and dynamics of the Third Sector in England and Wales: Technical paper on working definitions and baseline data analysis.*** The most recent version of this working paper was produced in June 2022 but it is updated from time to time.

1 Purpose of the study

Third Sector Trends was established in 2008 by *Northern Rock Foundation* in North East England and Cumbria as a longitudinal study to explore the structure, dynamics, purpose and impact of the sector in the context of change.

The field of study has widened over the years to include Yorkshire and Humber in 2010, the remainder of North West England in 2016 and across England and Wales in 2019. The longitudinal survey work has been repeated six times so far, which produces unique opportunities for trend analysis.

The study examines how Third Sector organisations (TSOs) with a wide range of characteristics and working in different local contexts fare over time. This is the only long-running study of its kind in the UK.

The study has grown in size as it had developed beginning with surveys of 1,000 respondents in 2010 in North East England and Cumbria to over 6,000 responses across England and Wales in 2022.

It is an independent study

The study was established to look at resources, purpose, practices and impact of the Third Sector from an independent and as far as possible, an 'objective' point of view. As such, the study collects and analyses quantitative and qualitative data to explore issues of interest to government, local public sector and health organisations, the private sector, grant making foundations, Third Sector infrastructure organisations at national and local levels and, of course, individual TSOs.

The research has been funded by several organisations over the years including *Northern Rock Foundation, Community Foundation serving Tyne & Wear and Northumberland, Charity Bank, ESRC, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation, Cumbria Community Foundation, Power to Change, Barrow Cadbury Trust, Law Family Commission for Civil Society/Pro Bono Economics, Millfield House Foundation* and a number of unitary authorities, county councils, NHS health care partnerships and combined authorities across the North of England.

The study works in complementary ways with other major long-term studies

As the approach to analysis of Third Sector Trends data has evolved, it has sought to produce findings which complement rather than replicate the findings of other major long-term studies.

The most important of these is the NCVOs annual ***UK Civil Society Almanac***. Third Sector Trends mirrors some aspects of NCVOs work to ensure that data are comparable. This helps to create more accurate estimates on, for example, numbers of employees and regular volunteers and produces insights on aspects of sector impact.

A key purpose of the study is to fill gaps in knowledge that the *Almanac* cannot bridge. Third Sector Trends' longitudinal focus on attitudinal data drawn from the leaders of organisations helps to explain how the sector responds to 'unforeseen' challenges and opportunities created by social, political and economic change produces. In so doing, it strengthens understanding and deepens interpretation of NCVO data.

Analysis also draws heavily upon data from 360Giving, the Charity Commission Register, Societies Register, CIC Register and CASC Register (supplemented with data from Companies House/Orbis to confirm and scale up findings from Third Sector Trends. This has helped to produce new findings on sector interactions and the scale of sector productivity and impact.

It is a comparative study of localities and organisational types

Third Sector Trends is essentially a study of the 'local Third Sector'. It has a very strong focus on the operation of small and medium sized charities in their local context, but does not neglect the role of bigger organisations which operate across spatial boundaries. Very large (what the NCVO describe as 'major' or 'super major' organisations) with income above £25million are excluded from the study.

One-off studies can never convincingly demonstrate the situation in local areas because they do not have sufficient numbers of respondents nor can they make direct comparisons with the situation in other similar or different areas.

By contrast, as a study of the 'local Third Sector' but on a very large scale, Third Sector Trends has been able to produce ground-breaking comparative analysis of different places and different types of areas (by, for example rural and urban distinctions, or between areas of affluence or deprivation).

Third Sector Trends has tested methodologies and analytical techniques to compare the situation of organisations with different characteristics. Typologies of small informal groups through to large corporate-style organisations have been developed to compare how TSOs garner, value and employ resources to achieve social objectives.

The study is a collaborative exercise

Third Sector Trends began in 2008, funded by Northern Rock Foundation. At the outset, the project was conceived as a collaborative exercise in terms of its delivery by commissioning several universities and agencies to work on the project. As a interdisciplinary and cross-institutional research project, Third Sector Trends initially involved several universities (Durham, Teesside and Southampton) and agencies including (Guidestar and NCVO).

It was also intended that the project should serve the interests of the Third Sector together with those of government, public authorities, health authorities and charitable trusts and foundations. A study advisory group was established in 2008 to achieve of this objective. This was chaired by Professor Cathy Pharoah of City University and included members from the Economic and Social Research Council and NCVO amongst others.

To engage Third Sector infrastructure organisations with the study, its first phase involved working with all 29 agencies in North East England and Cumbria which existed at that time. And to get a direct link with sector practitioners, three 'foresight panels' were set up in Cumbria, in the north and south of North East England. As the study matured and developed a momentum of its own, these formal approaches to collaboration were ended when it was felt that they had served their initial purpose of establishing Third Sector Trends as an ongoing project.

From a methodological point of view, the early stages of the survey fieldwork were relatively simple to effect. This was done using a postal-questionnaire to lists of organisations which had been collated by Guidestar, NCVO and Southampton University. As time went on, and the use of the internet and email became more commonplace, the use of online survey platforms became more feasible. The first attempt at complete reliance on this approach was undertaken in Yorkshire and Humber in 2013 in collaboration with Involve Yorkshire and Humber, the regional Third Sector representative agency.

This exercise involved intensive collaboration with local CVSs across the region and resulted in the collection of over 1,000 responses. In 2016 and 2019 this approach was also used in North East England and Cumbria in addition to a postal questionnaire. Only in 2022 did the survey operate entirely online.

Working with local and regional Third Sector infrastructure bodies to encourage organisations on their lists to engage with the survey is dependent upon strong commitment in all areas. Working right across the North of England from 2016, this was not always possible because some infrastructure organisations decided not to support the study.[1] However, our experience demonstrates that commitment tends to grow over time once it becomes an expectation that Third Sector Trends will be repeated every three years.

This explains why the number of responses to the 'open survey' which is promoted by local infrastructure organisations are much higher in the North than is currently the case in other English regions where we have approached them or in Wales. By the time the study is repeated in 2025 it is therefore expected that commitment will be stronger.

The strategic importance of holding good local data on Third Sector energy and impact has grown in recent years. Many public bodies such as local authorities and health authorities have expressed strong interest in understanding sector capacity and strengths. This has meant that Third Sector Trends is working much more closely with such bodies in some areas and indeed, we have been commissioned to do a number of studies to do so.

Understanding relationships between public bodies and the Third Sector is not straight forward because each sector's structures, processes, narratives and ambitions differ. With this in mind, a three year study was funded by the ESRC to examine the strength of relationships between the Third Sector and public bodies in North East England. This work has underpinned the approach taken by Third Sector Trends to working with public bodies since then.

Continuation beyond the original seven year commission with Northern Rock Foundation involved engaging with other funding bodies. In North East England, the Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland assumed responsibility for the study in 2016 and have continued to fund the project in the region.

In other regions previous rounds of the study in the North of England have been funded by Garfield Weston Foundation, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Charity Bank and Power to Change. And in 2022, funding was provided again by Power to Change in addition to Barrow Cadbury Trust and Millfield House Foundation.

While most major charitable trusts and foundations say that they value the findings from Third Sector Trends, relatively few would consider supporting the study

[1] There are many reasons why local infrastructure organisations choose not to lend support to Third Sector Trends research. In some cases it is because the research has never been sufficiently well funded to pay CVSs to provide assistance. Often, CVSs have argued that they do not have the staffing resources to support the study or that the purpose of the study was not a priority to them because they felt they already held good sector intelligence. The priorities of local Third Sector infrastructure bodies change over time. Consequently, in one iteration of the study we receive intensive support in a local area, but in the next phase support is limited or withdrawn completely. In other cases, local infrastructure organisations valued survey data but intended to, or already were collecting that data themselves in their locality or had appointed another university or research organisation to do so for them. As the Third Sector Trends study has been extended across England and Wales, the chances of clashing with other organisations' research studies increased although we have always done our best to communicate our intentions as early as possible to avoid clashes in the North of England, this has not yet been possible across other regions.

financially due to its northern focus or if it was felt that its purpose did not align closely with strategic priorities. By running the study at a national level in 2022, it is hoped that the relevance of the study will be more apparent and investment in the study will continue in 2025.

The most important aspect of collaboration, of course, is with the leaders of Third Sector Organisations who actually take part in the study. Thousands of TSOs have engaged with the study since it began, including over 6,000 in 2022 (see Section 3.6 for full details). In the early years of the study, levels of engagement tended to be high because this was the only large-scale survey running in the North of England. Progressively, however, more academic institutions and think tanks have become interested in the structure and dynamics of the Third Sector which has resulted in more pressure on TSOs to fill in surveys.

As anticipated, in 2022, response rates have been lower in the regions of the North of England where we have worked for many years. This is because there was a glut of surveys undertaken during the coronavirus pandemic by academic institutions and think tanks. Inevitably, this results in leaders of TSOs feeling overwhelmed by such demands and increases the chances that they will not wish to participate.

And so, while the number of responses gained has risen substantially from over 4,000 in 2019 to over 6,000 in 2022, this is because it has been running intensively across the whole of England and Wales. When the focus of the applied research community moves on to other issues in the coming years, the likelihood is that response rates for Third Sector Trends will return to more 'normal' levels.

It is a long-term study with analytical momentum

One-off studies of the Third Sector have a tendency to produce negative findings on sector viability in the face of challenges. This is not the case with Third Sector Trends. Having been running for nearly 15 years there is an enormous body of data available to explain patterns of continuity in the context of change. This has helped to account for sector sustainability and show how flexibility in practice helps organisations to navigate their way through challenging times.

Since 2008, qualitative work with a representative sample of 50 organisations has been undertaken every three years to develop in-depth understanding of how TSOs navigate and accommodate to change. The fourth round of in-depth case study work with these organisations has recently been completed – culminating in a new report: ***Going the distance: how Third Sector Organisations work through turbulent times.***

The synergy between the qualitative and quantitative survey work is highly productive. Insights from qualitative work feed new questions into future rounds of surveys, while discoveries from the survey work can be explored in more depth subsequently via the qualitative work.

Shifts in focus can also be led by the interests of funding bodies – here are some examples.

- In 2022 ***Kernow NHS Clinical Commissioning Group*** via VSF Cornwall commissioned a study on the structure and dynamics of the sector in Cornwall and Isles of Scilly, this has now led to further evaluation of sector activity via Third Sector Trends in 2022. Download here
- In 2021 ***West Yorkshire Combined Authority*** (together with two regional health and care partnerships) invested in a study to explore the extent of sector capacity and capability to contribute to social and economic wellbeing and estimate the added value produced. Download here

- In 2021 ***Pro Bono Economics/Law Family Commission on Civil Society*** invested in new analysis at a national level from Third Sector Trends to explore the relationship between the private sector and Third Sector. Download here
- In 2019, ***Power to Change*** invested in the development of new questions to examine TSOs perceptions of social and economic impact in localities and also added questions on the types of trading activities of local organisations in a community context. Download here
- In 2019, ***Community Foundation serving Tyne & Wear and Northumberland*** invested in new questions on diversity in organisational leadership which led to the production of the first national study at scale on this issue. Download here
- In 2019, ***Garfield Weston Foundation/IPPR North*** invested in new analysis on the social and economic impact of the Third Sector across the North of England, with a special emphasis on the energy produced by regular volunteers. Download here
- In 2018, ***Community Foundation serving Tyne & Wear and Northumberland*** invested in new qualitative and quantitative work on the interactions between grant makers and Third Sector organisations involving interviews with 25 national and regional foundations. Download here
- In 2018, ***Power to Change*** invested in a new qualitative study on trading interactions between community businesses and social enterprises in their local context in Bradford and Teesside which led to the development of new survey questions in 2019. Download here
- In 2016, ***Joseph Rowntree Foundation*** invested in the development of new questions to explore the extent to which the Third Sector addresses issues surrounding poverty in local community context. Download here
- In 2016 ***Lloyds Bank Foundation England and Wales*** invited us, on the strength of TSTS work, to evaluate a new capacity building programme. This resulted in the development of new insights on the 'social process of supporting small charities'. Download here
- In 2016, ***Garfield Weston Foundation/IPPR North*** invested in new questions and analysis on the relationship between private sector business and the Third Sector – this was the first large scale study of its kind. Download here
- In 2013 ***Charity Bank*** invested in new questions on the relationship between organisational practice, capability and assets and their propensity to borrow money or engage in social investment programmes. Download here

Full listings of reports from the Third Sector Trends research programme can be found in Section 4.2.

2 Survey themes for 2022

During and following the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been intense regional and national debate about the Third Sector's contribution to the social and economic wellbeing of localities. Third Sector Trends analysis will connect with these debates by exploring four integrated themes.

2.1 *Area impact*: the role the local Third Sector can play in generating community assets

Third Sector Trends has always been a study of the 'local Third Sector' even if, over the years, it has covered a wider geographical area. By extending its spatial range, the study has been able to explore area assets using robust comparative and longitudinal analysis.

The analysis will examine 'community assets' in a broad sense, to include the resource assets of the local Third Sector (its employees, volunteers and its capital assets) in the context of local area assets (as measured by, for example, the English Indices of Deprivation which collate evidence on household wealth, education and skills, employment, housing and many other aspects of the local environment).

The study of area assets must not, though, be limited to the study of poorer places. Instead it will look critically at richer places too to discern differences in the way the Third Sector operates and prioritises issues in such areas. Analysis could make a substantive contribution to current debates about 'levelling up', 'community wealth building' and indeed may be able to challenge arguments that may deepen negative perceptions about 'left behind places'.

2.2 *After the pandemic*: organisational resource, practice and priorities.

Little is yet known about the longer-term impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Third Sector. There have been many small-scale studies undertaken since the early summer of 2020 to assess impact. As time has gone on, however, anecdotal evidence suggests that sector resilience has been much greater than expected; and indeed, that the pandemic has injected new energy into the way the sector works and how it is funded which may have spurred innovative practice.

Examples of change in sector practices include remote working by employees and volunteers, sometimes using digital tools to facilitate such activity. This in turn may have affected the way trustees, chief officers, volunteers, employees and indeed beneficiaries think about practice – some of which may be sustained beyond the social distancing restrictions imposed during the pandemic.

In some circumstances, it could be that the pandemic has accelerated change while in others entirely new practices have emerged. It cannot, though, be anticipated that all change has been beneficial. So it will be necessary to look critically at discrete aspects of activity, such as self-generated trading, to find out if a return to pre-pandemic turnover levels has been attempted or achieved.

Organisations have not yet been able to make a clear judgement about the impact of the pandemic on policies and practices because the situation is still fluid. However, by June 2022, it was anticipated that the situation would have settled sufficiently for respondents to look back on their experiences in a relatively objective manner and also be able to make firmer judgements on strategic priorities and planning.

2.3 *Adding value*: the accumulation of benefit in a sector serving many purposes.

Third Sector Trends has always presented analysis on the actual and proxy-financial contribution of the sector to the regional economy. These assessments have been limited to tangible factors such as the number of employees and volunteers and the hours of work they provide.

In 2022, the analysis will apply analytical models to make proxy-financial assessments of other forms of ‘added value’ and determine where such value is distributed socially. The purpose is to understand the dynamics surrounding the production of value. The analysis will consider positive aspects of value accumulation, but will not neglect factors that might undermine complementary working such as unnecessary duplication of activity, competition over resources or beneficiaries, or conflicting approaches to practice.

The intellectual range of current debates on added value are limited, to some extent, by their preoccupation with ‘currency’ in political terms. Third Sector Trends is in a unique position to explore how notions of what added value *is* and how it can be *measured* change over time; and further how ‘fashions’ in funding purposes and practices have shifted since 2008. It may be the case that in post-pandemic Britain, other priorities become more prominent, such as questions surrounding equality and diversity in the Third Sector and its response to environmental and climate change.

During the Covid-19 crisis, many more funders set aside their normal expectations about defining, monitoring and reporting of impact. Indeed, some funding bodies such as charitable trusts and community foundations have been more willing to express doubts about the imperative to ‘attribute value’ to the money they give using ‘metrics’ or ‘theories of change’ at the organisational level.

This may, in turn, shift narratives on grant funding towards the benefits of unrestricted funding awards – and, potentially, a shift in the public sector from ‘contracts’ back to ‘service level agreements’. Third Sector Trends data will be used to examine the pros and cons of competing narratives on impact.

2.4 *Triggers of change:* the interplay between internal and external drivers

Given government’s current interest in and enthusiasm for investing in local areas together with the strengthening of local policy infrastructure and governance, this is a good time to explore the scope government departments, combined authorities, local authorities and health authorities have to frame, shape or even direct aspect of the local Third Sector’s contribution to economy and society.

Third Sector Trends has always been firm in its position that TSOs are not malleable and docile entities. They exist in the realm of civil society where they can choose priorities and act upon them their own way. Furthermore, because most of the sector is ‘rooted’ in place it tends to be responsive to local priorities and can be dismissive of external pressures to follow policy leads. The sector is not, in sum, a ‘manageable’ terrain.

The study has also shown, however, that TSOs are adept at responding to new opportunities or tackling threats. Often, TSOs are innovative in the way they shift practices to accommodate to new routes to access finance but without, necessarily, fundamentally changing their social objectives. Using longitudinal evidence to bolster understanding of what is happening in 2022, it is hoped that a better understanding of the triggers of change will be reached.

3 Research methodology

Third Sector Trends has since its establishment in 2008 sustained two elements of work. A large-scale quantitative survey which is now repeated every three years, and an in-depth qualitative representative study of 50 organisations which has been undertaken in four phases up to 2022.

3.1 Third Sector Trends Survey

Following baseline population analysis in 2010 by NCVO and Southampton University in 2008 which was repeated by Durham University in 2022,[2] a North East England and Cumbria survey has taken place in 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2019 and 2022.

Initially the survey was distributed by post. Progressively the survey has been undertaken online and after a successful survey campaign in 2019 the 2022 survey was undertaken entirely online.

An extended fieldwork period to garner a large sample has been developed, based on the experience of previous successful surveys. As a long-term study, it is feasible to undertake field work over a four month period because, unlike many agencies which engage in one-off surveys that address 'immediate' and 'newsworthy' issues, we do not focus on opinion at a specific moment in time. Instead, the survey works in a wider time scale where questions generally ask about the 'last two years' or the 'next two years'.

The preferred approach is to begin the study in early-June and run to the middle of July, pause for the summer holidays and return in September for four to six weeks depending upon participation of partnership organisations who help build the survey response.

The strategy is to encourage completion of online responses following methods:

- Direct appeals via Online Surveys using email listings searched on the Charity Commission and Community Interest Companies (CICs), Companies Limited by Guarantees (CLGs) and Cooperatives and Community Benefit Societies (CCBSs) from Companies House / Orbis searches. Separate listings are available for other types of TSOs such as Community Amateur Sport Clubs (CASCs).
- Direct and indirect appeals from local CVS and regional infrastructure bodies. A minority of infrastructure organisations send direct emails to their lists of members, producing good response rates. But the majority use social media place stories in newsletters which produces few responses but does help to raise the profile of the study so that when direct invitations are received from our listings the study is more likely to be recognised and understood.
- Direct appeals from high volume grant makers such as Community Foundations and The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF) to their directories of grantees can produce strong responses. When possible, this happens later in the fieldwork process and can uplift responses considerably.

[2] The baseline study was based on 2016-17 data and needed to be fully refreshed in 2022. For full details on how this was done, see the companion methodology paper: *Structure and dynamics of the Third Sector in England and Wales: Technical paper on working definitions and baseline data analysis*: Newcastle upon Tyne: Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland.

In 2022, a number of Community Foundations promoted the study using direct email requests to their grantees which produced many responses.

- Social media appeals (via Twitter) produce very few responses, but they maintain the profile of the study and encourage partner organisations to continue to lend support by contacting their lists of TSOs directly.

3.2 Survey questionnaire

In each iteration of the survey a core set of questions is maintained for comparative analysis. New questions can be introduced providing that others are dropped or suspended.

Core questions from previous rounds of the study are used to sustain longitudinal analysis (see Appendix 2 for further detail).[3] Permanent questions include those collecting data on organisational age, size, legal form, geographical location and spatial range of work; purpose, beneficiaries and impact of TSO activity; sources and uses of income and assets; changes in the number of employees and volunteers; and, inter-organisational relationships.

In each round of the survey, it is necessary to remove some questions to make space for new ones. Questions are dropped if their purpose no longer seems to be relevant, or are amended and reintroduced to explore new issues. In some cases, questions produce findings which are insufficiently important to sustain. While all questions are piloted, new and experimental questions do not always work as well as we might have hoped and are dropped.

As a longitudinal study, it is possible to suspend questions when it is known that responses are consistent from wave to wave of the study. In such circumstances, standardised multipliers can be adopted to produce estimates in surveys where these questions are not included. Questions can be reintroduced from time to time to ensure that multipliers remain valid.

New questions usually constitute between a fifth and quarter the survey. They are carefully designed to work in a complementary way with existing questions to minimise length and complexity. Often they address current issues and remain in the survey only once. Some are maintained in future rounds of the survey if it is anticipated that they will provide useful indicators of change in sector structure, dynamics, purpose and impact.

3.3 The respondent survey experience

In a large-scale long-running survey of this kind, it is crucial to ensure that respondents see the point in doing the study and can, as far as possible, enjoy the experience of participating. This has involved a lot of learning over the years which has been bolstered by careful evaluation of respondent comments on the study.

We did not start from scratch. We had already run studies undertaken in North East England and North Yorkshire under different commissions which gave us an

[3] It is vital that these questions are identical to ensure that respondents have no room to interpret the question differently. Early experience between 2020 and 2012 surveys demonstrated that even very minor changes in text or format could affect responses. For example, in one question from 2010, the positioning of the category ‘not applicable’ was moved which had a significant impact on responses. None of the questions we use are perfect and sometimes we wish that we had asked things differently at the outset – but once question wording and format is established we must stick it them exactly.

opportunity to try out questions.[4] Many of these questions were subsequently adopted in the survey.

Some questions were replicated or adapted from the National Survey of Third Sector Organisations which was undertaken by Ipsos Mori,[5] or gleaned from, what was then known as the ESRC 'question bank'.[6] The adoption of pre-piloted survey questions is not a straight-forward process as they will have been designed to work in the context of several other questions and therefore cannot 'stand alone'. It is also important to ensure that such questions have been effective by looking at the configuration of results produced and, where possible, assessing the level of response rates to such questions within their own survey context.

In Third Sector Trends, in-survey response rates are checked every time the study is undertaken. We do not ask questions unless we are fairly certain that at least 95 per cent of in-survey respondents will answer.

There is one exception to this rule – which arose in 2019 when questions were asked about the ethnicity of CEOs and Chairs. Response rates to ethnicity questions fell to about 70%, while questions about age, class, gender and disability were above 95%. This troubling discovery provided an insight into how the sector feels about ethnicity in the context within which they were working. The question was, nevertheless, used again in 2022 – partly to see if recent campaigns, such as *Charity So White* had awakened people to its importance and chose to answer rather than avoiding the issue.[7]

It is possible to get some understanding of the respondent's experience of the survey by tracking progress using Online Surveys tools. For example, it can be determined at what point people drop out of the study. This is vital information because if we are losing respondents from the survey we must remedy the situation in future waves.

For example, in 2019, the survey used drop-down boxes to collect data on the local authority where TSOs were based. We lost significant numbers of in-survey respondents at that point. In 2022 no drop down boxes are used. Instead, a calculated risk was taken to rely wholly upon postcode data and allocated respondents to local authorities retrospectively using ONS Look-ups.

Such a decision would have been a disaster in the earlier stages of the study. In 2010, for example, fewer than one third of respondents provided full postcode details

[4] In North East England, a study was undertaken in 2006 (Chapman, T., Crow, R. Brown, J. and Ward, J. (2006) *Facing the Future: A Study of the Impact of a Changing Funding Environment on the Voluntary and Community Sector in the North East of England*, Middlesbrough: Social Futures Institute). Questions were developed from this study in a second study in York and North Yorkshire in 2008 (Chapman, T. and Crow, R. (2008) *A Thriving Third Sector: a study of North Yorkshire and City of York*, Middlesbrough: Social Futures Institute). Additionally, qualitative studies of sector dynamics in Tees Valley were undertaken in 2007 which helped inform the development of the Third Sector Trends survey instrument (see Chapman, T., Crow, R. and Brown, J. (2008) 'Entering a Brave New World? An assessment of Third Sector readiness to tender for the delivery of public services', *Policy Studies*, Vol. 28, No 1, pp. 1-17; Chapman, T., Forbes, D. and Brown, J. (2007) 'They think they have God on their side': the impact of public sector attitudes on the development of social enterprise', *Social Enterprise Journal,* Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 78-89).

[5] The NSTSO survey was renamed by the Office for Civil Society, as the *National Survey of Charities and Social Enterprises* but the original name has been retained in this paper because available documentation is searchable by its original name in the National Archives. A technical report on the methodology of the study is still available online. Access to the raw data and its detailed findings appears to be no longer possible (unless previously archived by research units, as is the case with Policy&Practice). http://doc.ukdataservice.ac.uk/doc/6381/mrdoc/pdf/6381userguide.pdf.

[6] For links to currently available question banks provided by UK Data Services, see this website: https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/help/other-data-providers/question-banks/

[7] For full explanation of these problems of no response in relation to ethnicity, see: Chapman, T. (2020) Diversity and Inclusion in organisational leadership: evidence from Third Sector Trends 2020, Newcastle upon Tyne: Community Foundation serving Tyne & Wear and Northumberland. https://www.communityfoundation.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/THIRD-SECTOR-TRENDS-BRIEFING-DIVERSITY-AND-INCLUSION-IN-ORGANISATIONAL-LEADERSHIP-OCTOBER-2020.pdf

but we were able to recover these from postal survey return codes.[8] In 2013, the Yorkshire and Humber survey was undertaken entirely online, so it was vital to get hold of postcode data.[9] To ensure that this was achieved, the question was asked twice, at the start and end of the survey. This worked well, because the second question tended to mop up most of those respondents who were reluctant to respond initially.

By 2019, 98 per cent of respondents provided a full postcode in the first or second question, so it was a risk worth taking to drop the complicated question of local authority location – and especially so given that the study was now taking place right across England and Wales. Over 99% of respondents provided post-code data in 2022.

3.4 Open text questions

Early in the research process it was decided that open text boxes should not be used. This was the right decision for several reasons.

- Open text boxes slow progress through the survey and can result in respondents leaving the survey when it takes too much time to complete.
- The completion of open text boxes requires careful thought which can distract respondents from the purposeful 'conversational' flow of the survey which relies on fast 'intuitive' responses to attitudinal questions.[10]
- Open text boxes assume that an opinion is held or that detail is to hand which can feel intrusive or insulting to respondents who do not want to, or cannot answer the question.[11]

At the end of the Third Sector Trends questionnaire, we do offer respondents an opportunity to tell us anything they choose. About 40-45 per cent of respondents take this option. These responses provide us with valuable insights into what they do, what their worries are and what they think of the survey itself.

Quite often, these statements comment on the survey itself. Some are less than polite and can be unfair, others offer constructive criticism on those parts of the survey which did not work for them and why they found that they could not adequately answer the questions. Where possible, we try to address these questions if sufficient numbers of respondents share the same opinion.

The most common observation or complaint is that the survey is not tailored more precisely to what *they* do as an organisation. As a generalised survey, this is inevitable. Often, for example, respondents complain that organisational beneficiary categories and aspects of impact are far too broad. In 2022 an attempt was made to offset this criticism by adding line to the survey *'We know that these questions don't cover all the things that organisations and groups do, but there's space at the end of the survey to tell us if you'd like to.'* It is much better, we feel, to put the issue off until

[8] In 2010, 2012 and 2014, the survey relied primarily on postal surveys. If respondents did not provide a postcode, we could glean this from the individual survey number (unless the it was cut off by the respondent – which did happen on occasion).

[9] It would have been possible to take the option of asking people to type in the name of their local authority (which was tried in the England and Wales pilot in 2019). But this did not work well – partly because of the time taken recoding answers. The main reason, however, was non-response.

[10] Purposefully devising techniques to improve flow through the study was first developed in 2013 in Yorkshire and Humber. The study is indebted to Judy Robinson, then CEO of Involve Yorkshire and Humber (now Chair of NAVCA), who thought up the idea of adding encouraging lines in the study to reassure respondents about how much longer it would take, and when things would get more interesting if they were engaging with one of the more 'boring' sections on organisational structure.

[11] Use of data from open text questions is common in reports. But we have misgivings about doing so. If fewer than half of respondents answer then we cannot judge whether comments are typical or extraordinary. There is also a temptation to 'cherry pick' quotations which match the interpretation of the researcher rather than reflect a general view.

later to ensure that it does not slow people down – but also to reassure them that we are interested in what they have to say – which we are.

Comments provide background understanding of what people think but must not be and is not used as 'qualitative evidence'. These are just statements that respondents have chosen to make. Only on one occasion have these statements been used to add colour to the statistical findings of the report – in the interim study between 2019 and 2022 to look at the immediate impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on sector optimism. These statements were fascinating and illuminating – but could not be analysed as qualitative data because too little was known about context.[12]

Getting people through the survey quickly is vital to ensure a good response rate. Additionally, by improving the user experience and building their trust and confidence in the survey as they go through it, gives us an opportunity to ask more intrusive or sensitive questions towards the end of the study. Only one question currently meets that criteria – on the ethnicity, class, disability, gender and age of CEOs and Chairs – but by leaving it to the end we hope that we have warmed people up enough to accept the intrusion.

3.5 Expansion to the national level in England and Wales

In previous rounds of the survey it has been possible to secure funding from a range of agencies to undertake the work in North East England, Yorkshire and Humber and North West England. In 2022 Barrow Cadbury invested in the study so that it can extend to the West Midlands. Other funders have indicated an interest in funding area reports at a later date – providing a stronger incentive to collect data right across England and Wales.

To test the water, in 2019 an experimental pilot study was extended across the remainder of England and Wales using a slightly shorter survey questionnaire (which was otherwise composed of identical questions). Its purpose to was to find out likely response rates from a survey which was administered entirely by direct email requests rather than including prompts from other organisations.

In 2019 the process produced 925 additional valid responses from a much shorter survey fieldwork period of just 5 weeks. In 2022 it was decided that the survey should be extended fully across England and Wales. Responses were sought by direct emails sent via Online Surveys. And to bolster response rates in areas with fewer potential respondents, approaches were made to all local CVSs in target regions in the first instance, and then major (by volume of grants) local funders including the National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) and local Community Foundations.

Working with many CVSs has been especially successful in areas where we have been working for a long time (North East England, North West England and Yorkshire and Humber) because they know about the survey, expect it to be repeated and know that the data are well used.

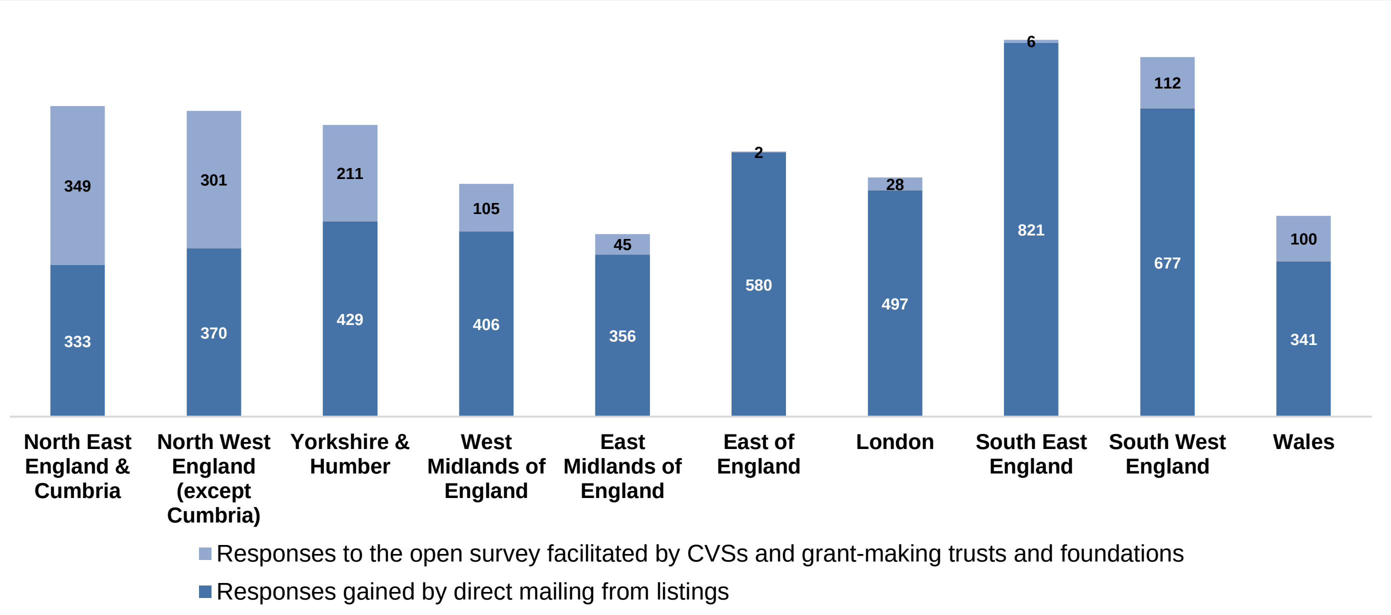
In 2022, we engaged with CVSs in the West Midlands, South West England and Wales – with considerable success. We anticipate that in 2025, commitment and support will widen as is the case in our 'home regions' in the North of England. Support in Wales has been particularly strong from local CVSs, WCVA, Wales Government, TNLCF and Community Foundation Wales producing a good response rate (see Section 3.6 for details of response rates).

[12] A fuller discussion of the methodological shortcomings surrounding the use of random statements is provided in the report from the interim study: Chapman, T. (2020) *Third Sector Trends Covid Impact Study*, Newcastle, Community Foundation serving Tyne & Wear and Newcastle. https://www.communityfoundation.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Third-Sector-Trends-Covid-19-Impact-Survey-August-2020.pdf

Encouraging high volume grant makers such as Community Foundations and TNLCF is a priority because TSOs are more likely to respond to their requests than they are to those of CVSs or from us as researchers. Where support has been provided in 2022, responses have been boosted considerably. Whereas general enthusiasm for the study has been high amongst funders, actual engagement in direct emailing recent or current grantees has remained patchy – often for procedural reasons rather than principled objection.

As can be seen in Figure 3.1, in areas where we have been working with stakeholders more intensively (North East England, North West England, Yorkshire and Humber, West Midlands of England, South West England and Wales more responses come in via these routes. The stronger performance in the Northern regions of England is due to the longevity of the research in those areas running back to 2010.

Figure 3.1 **Responses received via the open survey and direct email invitations**



3.6 Survey response rates 2022

Achieving a good response rate for Third Sector Trends involves two processes. First, direct email invitations to respondents whose email addresses were obtained from the Charity Commission Register. Second, via responses to an open survey.

Charity Commission Register sample

In 2022 Charity Commission Register data were downloaded for all charities in England and Wales. Once excluded organisations were removed from the data set a sample frame was established for 110,930 organisations where both a postcode and contact email address were available.

Table 3.1 presents the original sample frame, number of responses and percentage response rates for each English region and Wales. Table 3.2 lists direct and indirect responses to the survey in 2022.

To test comparability with previous rounds of the study, Table 3.3 presents data on the distribution of the sample in twelve income categories. These are closely matched.

Table 3.1 **Third Sector Trends direct invitation response rates in Wales and English Regions**			
Region / nation	**Charity Commission Register sample frame**	**Number of completed surveys**	**Percentage response rate**
North East England and Cumbria[13]	4,796	333	6.9
North West England (excluding Cumbria)	9,882	370	3.7
Yorkshire and Humber	8,039	429	5.3
West Midlands of England	8,940	405	4.5
East Midlands of England	8,138	356	4.4
East of England	12,754	580	4.5
London	19,994	497	2.5
South East England	19,865	821	4.1
South West England	12,933	677	5.2
Wales	5,588	341	6.1
England and Wales	**110,930**	**4,809**	**4.3**

Table 3.2 **Third Sector Trends direct and indirect invitation response rates in Wales and English Regions 2022**			
Region / nation	**Responses gained from CVSs and Community Foundations**	**Responses from use of Charity Commission Register emails**	**Total respondents**
North East England and Cumbria	349	333	682
North West England (excluding Cumbria)	300	370	670
Yorkshire and Humber	211	429	640
West Midlands of England	104	405	509
East Midlands of England	45	356	401
East of England	2	580	582
London	28	497	525
South East England	6	821	827
South West England	112	677	789
Wales	100	341	441
No location provided	*6*	*0*	*6*
England and Wales	**1,263**	**4,809**	**6,072**

[13] Third Sector Trends began as a study of North East England and Cumbria, so this has remained the case when the survey campaign is underway. When the dataset is collated, Cumbria responses are returned to the North West England region.

Table 3.3	Comparisons of sample structure by income 2016, 2019 and 2022					
	Number of respondents			*Percentage distribution of respondents*		
	2016	**2019**	**2022**	**2016**	**2019**	**2022**
No income	117	72	136	3.2	1.8	2.2
£1 - £2,000	377	312	560	10.4	7.6	9.2
£2,001 - £5,000	299	283	493	8.3	6.9	8.1
£5,001 - £10,000	324	433	626	9.0	10.6	10.3
£10,001 - £25,000	487	625	961	13.5	15.3	15.8
£25,001 - £50,000	344	423	684	9.5	10.4	11.3
£50,001 - £100,000	360	492	752	10.0	12.0	12.4
£100,001 - £250,000	424	517	733	11.7	12.7	12.1
£250,001 - £500,000	296	331	445	8.2	8.1	7.3
£500,001 - £1m	199	188	251	5.5	4.6	4.1
£1,000,001 -£5m	211	242	290	5.8	5.9	4.8
£5m - £25m	87	90	84	2.4	2.2	1.4
Missing data	88	75	55	2.4	1.9	**0.9**
Total sample	**3,163**	**4,083**	**6,070**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Table 3.4 shows that samples have similar structures from 2013/14 onwards. When the survey was based only in North East England and Cumbria, the proportion of larger TSOs was comparatively lower due to the use of postal questionnaires which produced more responses from very small organisations and groups.

Table 3.4	Third Sector Trends sample structures by size of organisations 2010-2022						
	2010 North East England and Cumbria	**2012 North East England and Cumbria**	**2013/14 North East England and Cumbria, Yorkshire & Humber**	**2016 North of England**	**2019 England and Wales**	**2022 England and Wales**	**All years' average**
Micro (income £0-£9,999)	30.1	29.7	27.9	31.7	26.9	30.2	**29.6**
Small (income £10,000-£49,999)	34.9	35.0	23.1	23.6	25.7	27.4	**27.0**
Medium (income £50,000-£249,999)	18.5	18.4	20.7	22.2	24.7	24.7	**22.9**
Large (income £250,000-£999,999)	11.0	12.0	17.5	14.0	12.7	11.6	**13.1**
Big (income above £1million - £25million)	5.6	4.8	10.8	8.5	8.1	6.2	**7.5**
N=	1,027	1,595	2,288	3,525	4,011	6,070	**18,516**

Comparing survey structure with register data

The representativeness of the survey sample can be tested by comparing it with the registers data collected in 2022. By size of organisations it is clear from Table 3.5 that micro organisations are under-represented, but these variations are very small.

By types of urban location a similar pattern emerges. Micro organisations are the least well represented in 'town and country' areas (-7%). While medium, large and big organisations are slightly over-represented in all types of locations, there is no obvious relationship between this and the type of urban area.

Sample distribution by areas of relative affluence or deprivation can be compared directly with register data as shown in Table 3.6. Organisations were more likely to respond in the least affluent areas (+4%) and less likely to respond in the most affluent areas (-3%). And so, while the sample has a very large number of responses from affluent areas, this is due to the density of the population of organisations in those areas, not a skewed research sample.

When comparing the sample survey with registers by income bands, it is clear from Table 3.7 that the data are representative. In only two income categories does the survey sample approach a 5 per cent variation.

Table 3.5 Comparing survey sample with register data

	Micro - income below £10,000	Small - income £10,000-£49,000	Medium - income £50,000 - £249,999	Large - income £250,000-£999,999	Big - income £1million - £25mllion	
Register data						
Metropolitan areas	27.1	25.7	26.2	13.0	8.1	45,082
Major urban areas	31.2	29.6	24.5	9.4	5.4	33,585
Town and country areas	43.0	29.9	18.7	5.5	2.8	55,795
All organisations	34.7	28.4	22.7	9.0	5.2	134,833
Survey data						
Metropolitan areas	24.4	22.8	27.9	15.7	9.2	1,747
Major urban areas	26.1	27.7	25.5	13.5	7.2	1,505
Town and country areas	36.1	30.1	22.2	7.9	3.8	2,735
All organisations	30.1	27.4	24.7	11.6	6.2	5,987

Table 3.6 Comparing survey sample with register data

	Least affluent – IMD 1-2	IMD 3-4	Intermediate IMD 5-6	IMD 7-8	Most affluent IMD 9-10	
Register data						
Metropolitan areas	26.9	27.0	19.8	15.9	10.4	66,997
Major urban areas	17.2	16.4	16.9	21.2	28.4	46,634
Town and country areas	4.6	13.8	27.8	29.3	24.5	72,837
All organisations	15.8	19.2	22.2	22.4	20.4	186,521
Survey data						
Metropolitan areas	36.1	23.3	16.6	14.1	9.9	1,722
Major urban areas	23.9	18.4	16.4	19.4	21.9	1,493
Town and country areas	7.3	16.2	27.9	27.9	20.7	2,726
All organisations	19.8	18.8	21.7	21.8	17.9	5,941

Table 3.7 **Distribution of TSTS survey sample compared with register data 2022**					
	Register data 2022	TSTS Survey 2022	Register data 2022	Survey data 2022	*Percent over or under representation in survey*
£1 - £2,000	19,139	560	14.2	9.5	*-4.7*
£2,001 - £5,000	14,823	493	11.0	8.4	*-2.7*
£5,001 - £10,000	12,435	626	9.3	10.6	*1.4*
£10,001 - £25,000	28,278	961	21.1	16.3	*-4.7*
£25,001 - £50,000	9,942	684	7.4	11.6	*4.2*
£50,001 - £100,000	14,680	752	10.9	12.8	*1.9*
£100,001 - £250,000	15,886	733	11.8	12.5	*0.6*
£250,001 - £500,000	7,521	445	5.6	7.6	*2.0*
£500,001 - £1m	4,559	251	3.4	4.3	*0.9*
£1,000,0001 - £5m	5,115	290	3.8	4.9	*1.1*
£5,000,001 - £25m	1,939	84	1.4	1.4	*0.0*
All organisations	134,317	5,879	100.0	100.0	

5 Reporting schedule and previous publications

5.1 Planned reporting schedule 2022-23

The findings from the study will be published in phases beginning in October with publication of this methodology report, the latest version of the analytical techniques working paper, and the latest report from the TSO50 project.

Reports and briefings will be published about every six weeks, in sequence on the following topics.

- Structure, scale, energy and impact of the Third Sector in England and Wales
- People in the Third Sector in England and Wales
- Sector income, reserves and assets in England and Wales
- Sector inter-relationships in England and Wales
- Place-based analysis of Third Sector impact in England and Wales
- Social enterprise and community business activity in England and Wales
- Third Sector participation and influence in shaping local public and social policy

Other papers will relate to more specific area studied funded independently from the initial study.

5.1 Previous publications 2008-2022

Phase 5, 2019-21

Chapman, T. (2022) *The contribution of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector to health and wellbeing in Humber, Coast and Vale*, Durham: Policy&Practice. https://www.stchads.ac.uk/research/research-news/the-contribution-of-the-vcse-sector-to-health-and-wellbeing-in-humber-coast-and-vale/

Chapman. T. (2022) *The structure, dynamics and impact of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector in Cornwall and Isles of Scilly,* Durham: Policy&Practice. https://www.stchads.ac.uk/uncategorised/voluntary-sector-dynamics-in-cornwall-and-isles-of-scilly/

Chapman, T. (2021) *The structure, dynamics and impact of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector: a study of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, West Yorkshire & Harrogate Health and Care Partnership, and Humber, Coast and Vale*, Durham: Policy&Practice (September 2021) https://www.researchgate.net/publication/354544242_The_structure_dynamics_and_impact_of_the_voluntary_community_and_social_enterprise_sector_a_study_of_West_Yorkshire_Combined_Authority_West_Yorkshire_Harrogate_Health_and_Care_Partnership_and_Humber_C

Chapman, T. (2021) *Going the extra mile: how business work with the Third Sector*, London: Pro-Bono Economics / Law Family Commission for Civil Society (July 2021). https://www.researchgate.net/publication/353379534_Going_the_extra_mile_how_businesses_support_the_third_sector_in_England_and_Wales

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Chapman, T. (2020) *Third Sector Trends in North West England 2020: a digest of findings*, Newcastle, Community Foundation serving Tyne and Wear and Northumberland. https://www.communityfoundation.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/THIRD-SECTOR-TRENDS-IN-NoRTH-WEST-ENGLAND-2020.pdf

Chapman, T. (2020) *Third Sector Trends in North East England 2020: a digest of findings*, Newcastle, Community Foundation serving Tyne and Wear and Northumberland. https://www.communityfoundation.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/THIRD-SECTOR-TRENDS-IN-NoRTH-EAST-ENGLAND-2020-1-1.pdf

Chapman, T. (2020) *Third Sector Trends in Yorkshire and Humber 2020: a digest of findings*, Newcastle, Community Foundation serving Tyne and Wear and Northumberland. https://www.communityfoundation.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/THIRD-SECTOR-TRENDS-YORKSHRIE-AND-HUMBER-2020.pdf

Chapman, T. (2020) *The Strength of Weak Ties: How charitable trusts and foundations collectively contribute to civil society in North East England,* Newcastle upon Tyne: Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland. https://www.communityfoundation.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/CFTWN-Strength-of-Weak-Ties-Full-Report-February-2020.pdf

Phase 4, 2015-18

All publications can be located **here**

Chapman, T. and Gray, T. (2019) *Trading interactions amongst community businesses in Bradford, Hartlepool and Middlesbrough,* Bristol, Power to Change.

Chapman, T. (2019) *The social process of supporting small charities: evaluation of the Grow project, London: Lloyds Bank Foundation.*

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Chapman, T. and Hunter, J. *(2018) The value of volunteering in the North,* Manchester: IPPR North.

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Chapman, T., Mawson, J., Robinson, F. and Wistow, J. (2018) *How to work effectively with the Third Sector: a discussion paper for public sector organisations*, Durham: Institute for Local Governance.

Chapman, T. (2017*) Tackling Poverty in the North: evidence from Third Sector Trends,* Briefing Paper, Durham, Policy&Practice.

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Phase 3, 2013-14

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Appendices

1 Review of stages of the Study

Each stage of the project has included a core set of questions to track changes in sector structure and dynamics.

Core elements cannot be changed to ensure comparability and take up about half of the questionnaire and include the following issues *(applies to all phases of study unless otherwise stated)*:

- ***Organisational characteristics***: date established, legal form, spatial range of operation, organisational location.
- ***Organisational purpose and impact***: beneficiaries served, areas of social impact, practice preferences *(introduced in 2019)*.
- ***Organisational resources***: number of employees and volunteers, capabilities of volunteers, types of income, percentage earned income, income change in last two years, contractual working, property, investment and cash assets, use of reserves *(assets questions introduced in 2014)*,
- ***Inter-organisational relationships***: with other TSOs, the public sector and private sector.
- ***Future expectations***: about income, financial support from foundations, private and public sector organisations, volunteers, need for services.

Thematic exploration

At each stage of the survey, space has been made available to explore specific themes.

- Evidence on ***organisational foresight and capability***: including possession of a training budget, training provision, training priorities, strategic priorities and action planning – was undertaken in 2010 and 2012, reintroduced in 2022 on training, staff development and flexible working. New questions on employee retention and recruitment added in lieu of potential changes brought about by the pandemic,
- ***Assets, reserves and propensity to borrow money*** was introduced in 2014. Assets questions have been retained since 2014, in 2022 a new question on the use of property (owned, rented, asset transfer and peppercorn/free use) was introduced.
- ***The role of volunteers*** in the Third Sector, identify routes to volunteering and explore how TSOs benefit from taking on volunteers was introduced in 2014. This was extended further in 2016 on the composition of the volunteer workforce and then developed in 2022 on the impact of the pandemic on the composition of the volunteer workforce.
- ***The role of private sector business*** in supporting the work of the Third Sector by investing resources of money, skills, people and facility was introduced in 2014 and explored in more depth in 2019. In 2022 extended to find out whether relationships are primarily with local or national businesses.
- ***Routes to grant funding and relationships with foundations***: routes to grant funding was explored in 2016 and developed further in 2019 on the quality of relationships with foundations. New sub-questions on relationships with funders during the pandemic.

- ***Sector impact at the local level*** includes exploration of TSO's perceptions of their principal areas of impact to individuals and communities introduced in 2019 and will be tracked in 2022.
- ***Enterprising activity*** exploration of types of business activity organisations engage with was developed further in 2019 which was not repeated in 2022 to examine the impact of Covid-19 on practices.
- ***Extent of usage of digital applications*** including six new questions to explore which TSOs were making the most use of digital was introduced in 2019 but has not yet been published. This has been developed and repeated in 2022 to assess the impact of Covid-19.
- ***Leadership and diversity***: biographical profiles of chairs and chief officers of organisations was introduced in 2019 and has been maintained to track change.
- ***Campaigning and influencing***: introduced in 2022 to enhance understanding of active engagement with local stakeholders, behind the scenes influencing and direct campaigning.

2 Longitudinal survey question matrices

Core questions 2010 - 2022	2010	2012	2012	2013/14	2016	2019	2022
Postcode for geo-mapping	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Age of organisation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legal form of organisation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Additional categories	Yes
Spatial range of activity	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Local authority where TSO is based	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Geo mapping
Primary, secondary or tertiary service orientation of TSOs	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Income in previous year (11 bands)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Income change in last two years	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of full-time, part-time staff, trustees and volunteers (bands)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Multipliers
Change in numbers of full and part-time employees, volunteers and trustees (bands)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Does the TSO have a training budget	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Priorities for staff training	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Perceptions about the importance of / reliance upon funding sources	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Percentage of income earned from trading or contracts	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Attitudes toward partnership bidding	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Attitudes about and orientation toward public sector contract delivery	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Quality of relationships with the local public sector	Yes	Yes	Yes	Fewer categories	Yes	Yes	Additional category

New questions 2012 (North East and Cumbria)	2010	2012	2013/14	2016	2019	2022
Approaches to the collection of evidence on impact	**Failed Question**	No	**New Question**	No	No	No
Anticipation of change in the next two years (several categories)	**New**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Additional category	Additional category
Organisational ethos in practice, policy and cultural terms	**New**	Yes	Yes	Fewer categories	Fewer categories	No

New questions 2013 (Yorkshire and Humber)	2013	2014	2016	2019	2022
Beneficiaries served	**New**	Yes	Additional category	Additional category	Yes
Operation in urban and rural areas	**New**	Yes	Yes	Geo mapping	Geo mapping
Extent of assets (property, investment and free reserves)	**New**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Revised
Use of assets and reserves (for investment or emergency use)	**New**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Purposes for borrowing	**New**	Yes	No	No	No

New questions 2014 (North East and Cumbria)	2014	2016	2019	2022
Quality of relationships with private sector	**New**	Yes	Yes	Yes
Quality of relationships with other TSOs	**New**	Yes	Yes	Yes
Planning for the future (multiple statements)	**New**	Yes	No	No

New questions 2016 (North of England)	2016	2019	2022
Approaches to practice	**New**	Yes	No
Grant applications in the last two years	**New**	No	No
Where TSOs seek advice and support to improve capability	**New**	Yes	No
Attitudes about grant funders	**New**	Yes	Additional category
Characteristics of volunteers (age, gender, BAME, education)	**New**	Condensed into one question	Reduce existing and introduce new statements
Experience of working with volunteers and extent of reliance upon them	**New**		

New questions 2019 (England and Wales)	**2019**	**2022**
Equality and diversity in relation to chairs and CEOs	**New**	Yes
Quality and productivity of relationships with business	**New**	No
Quality of relationships with charitable foundations	**New**	Yes
Uses of online digital technologies	**New**	Additional category
Perceptions of impact for beneficiaries and the wider community	**New**	Additional category
Nature of trading activities	**New**	No

New questions 2022 (England and Wales)	**2022**
Attitudes on retaining and recruiting volunteers.	**New**
Experiences of recruiting and retaining employees.	**New**
Extent to which organisations work with local or national businesses.	**New**
Practices surrounding influencing local public and social policy.	**New**

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Policy&Practice

St Chad's College, Durham University

Policy&Practice is a multidisciplinary research group based at St Chad's College, Durham University. Our staff, research associates and fellows are committed to the promotion of social justice in the United Kingdom and beyond.

Policy&Practice is the banner under which this work is communicated to a wider community of interest. The College is committed to undertaking research, policy analysis and evaluation that makes a difference to the way policy makers and practitioners carry out their work, aimed ultimately at increasing the benefit gained by the people for whom they work. We do this through applied research and evaluation for a wide range of private sector organisations, independent charitable foundations, national and local government, charities and other non-profit organisations.

Our work is heavily embedded in the North of England, but we do not confine our work to this area. Several national and international studies have been undertaken over the years in continental Europe, the United States, South Africa and Japan. What we hope to do is to use our learning to help increase our scope for understanding complex social, economic and political issues and our ability to help people tackle challenges in a positive, pragmatic and effective way in new contexts.

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