Report on results of infra-structure support survey

September 2019

Oxfordshire County Council is currently reviewing the Infra-structure contract and one of the main reasons for carrying out the survey was to ensure that the views of a wide range of organisations begin to feed into the process to help shape future work and the role of organisations, services and resources providing support to the voluntary sector

The infrastructure survey was available for groups to complete from 11th July – 25th August 2019.
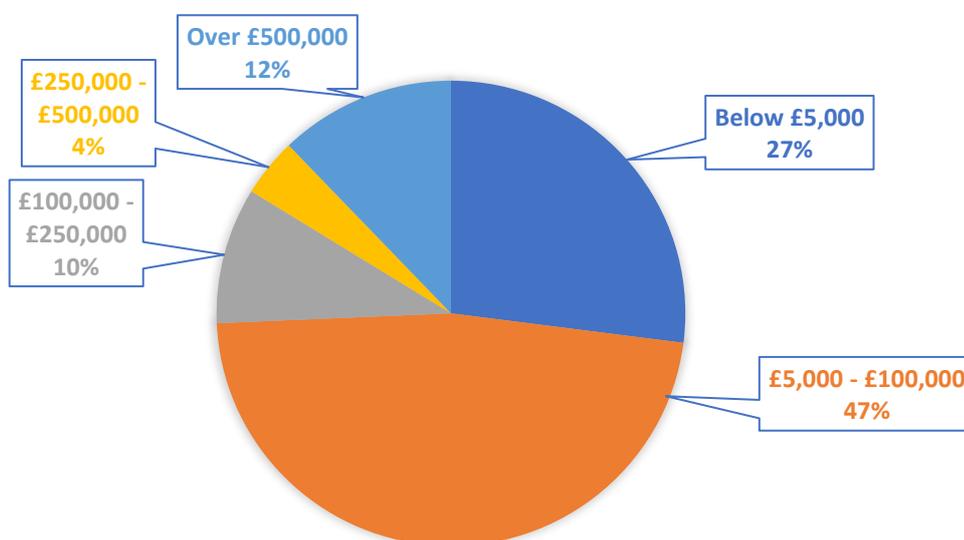
Total Responses: 74

1. **Size of organisation**

    74 % of respondents have an income below £100,000

Below £5,000	20
£5,000 - £100,000	35
£100,000 - £250,000	7
£250,000 - £500,000	3
Over £500,000	9

    The size of the organisation may have some influence on the support services they need and their ability to purchase them.

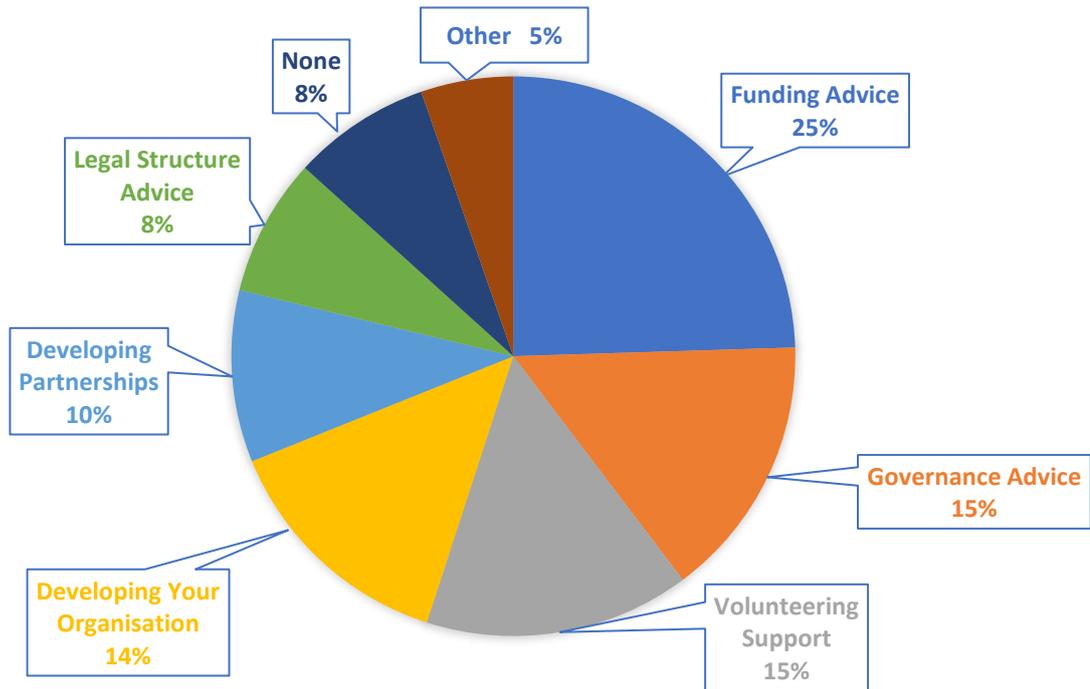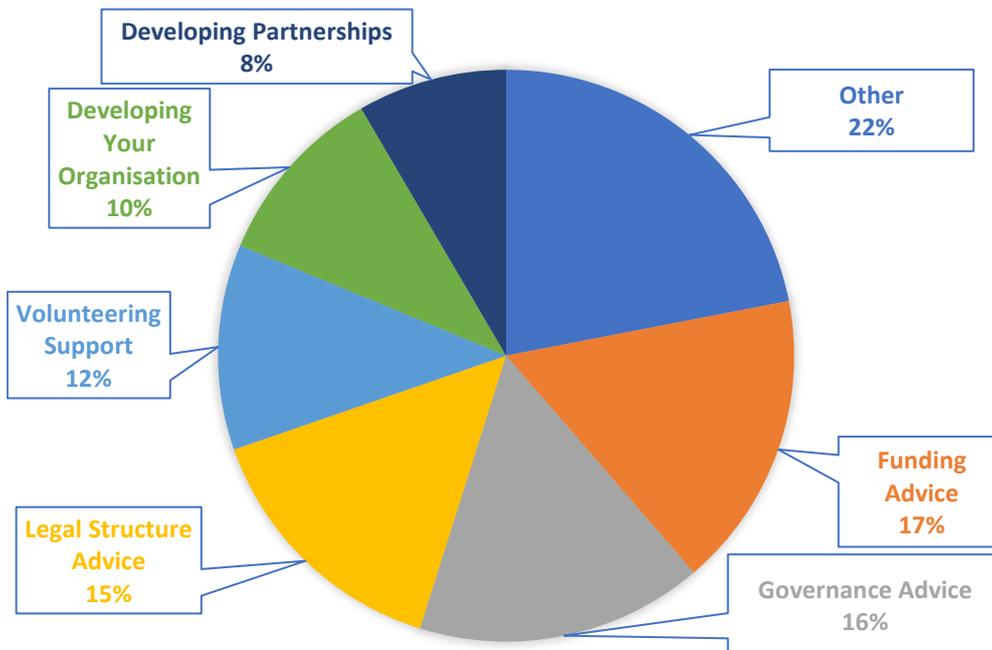## ANNUAL INCOME OF YOUR ORGANISATION

2. **Legal Status of Organisation**

Legal Status of Organisation

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3. **What information/advice has your organisation sought from outside your organisation over the past year (April 2018 – April 2019)?** *Organisations could select more than 1 choice*

Pie chart data:
- Funding Advice 25%
- Other 5%
- None 8%
- Legal Structure Advice 8%
- Developing Partnerships 10%
- Developing Your Organisation 14%
- Governance Advice 15%
- Volunteering Support 15%

4. **What information did your organisation need when it was started?** *Organisations could select more than 1 choice.*

Pie chart data:
- Developing Partnerships 8%
- Developing Your Organisation 10%
- Volunteering Support 12%
- Legal Structure Advice 15%
- Other 22%
- Funding Advice 17%
- Governance Advice 16%

5. Are there any barriers/ challenges you've experienced in getting support for your organisation's needs?

These are a summary of the responses that were mentioned by more than one organisation:

- Help with funding applications
- Fundraising
- Ongoing Funding especially core costs / Loss of Income
- Time
- Knowing who to ask
- Training for trustees and finding trustees
- Moving on and developing organisation
- Public authority instability, knowing who to go to and red tape
- Volunteer fatigue and not enough volunteers
- Established organisations get the attention/funding
- Staff recruitment
- There are a good number of sources (some pro bono) where we've managed to find legal, HR etc. advice and support. Some offers of help turn out to be community interest companies etc who charge for help & are not unbiased.
- Governance challenges

6. What 3 issues do you think your organisation will face in the next 3 years (April 2019 onwards)

The top 3 issues most commonly mentioned were

- Funding, Decreasing donations, Fundraising, Financial sustainability
- Recruitment of new trustees / trustee replacement / development of effective board
- Recruitment and retention of volunteers / ageing volunteer base / diversity of volunteers

Other issues mentioned more than once were:

- Employment / Staff retention / Recruitment of key staff
- Recruitment of new members
- Change of premises / appropriate working space / finding affordable premises
- Sustaining all services or activities / diversifying range of services
- Public Authority instability / Council rules and regulations / Renewing Council funding
- Developing good practice in management committee /parents
- Reducing bureaucracy
- Marketing and social media
- Resistance against progress from trustees
- Creating a business plan
- Commissioning
- Time

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7. What are the 3 most important areas for your organisation to have support with

8. What are the 3 most important areas for a NEW organisation to have support with


9. Are there any other areas you feel your organisation will need support with in the future?

Main areas mentioned:

- Funding
- 3 year Business Plan
- HR support
- Marketing
- Newsletter / Publicity
- Communication with similar groups / joining with partners across the county
- GDPR / Changes in law
- Collective representation with Local Authorities etc.
- Unpredictable time so hard to know / Keeping going!
- Social enterprises / funding for CIC's

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10. What methods do you feel are most useful for providing advice and support for your organisation?
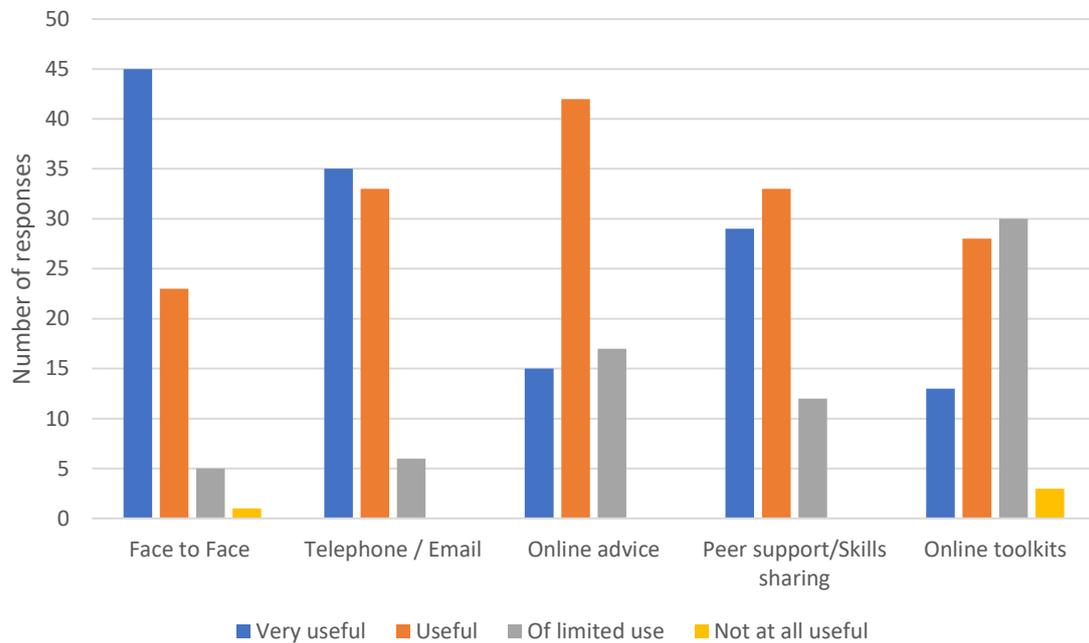
11. Any other comments about any issues/challenges that your organisation may be facing in the future?

Summary of comments not covered elsewhere in report:

- Income vs employment /Growth
- Inspiring others to take on the roles
- Changes in government policy
- Re-building relationships across Oxfordshire
- Oversubscription of the service - not able to meet demand for places
- We are a very new charity and so need advice on lot of things
- It's good to feel part of a professional structure
- All your training is too costly with no budget
- We have appreciated advice from OCVA re becoming a CIO and costs of employing a 1/2 time manager
- Attracting new and slightly younger members
- Extinction.! Lack of support/advice on how to survive
- Government changes to community transport
- What will a post-Brexit voluntary sector look like?
- IT
- Benefits System
- Developing appropriate governance and management structures

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- I think we will need to be more effective in developing partnerships with other organisations, businesses etc. that are truly valuable and productive
- Trustee training should be mandatory.
- Legislative requirements and bureaucratic demands that are inappropriate or incompatible with the day to day reality of small organisations.
- Funder requests to prove long term sustainability and high number of funders wanting to fund new developments when it is desperately hard to find core cost funding to continue existing work.
- Need alternative funding streams and investment advice
- Finding funding is ongoing with more organisations chasing the same pot!
- The questions above relate to new organisations. I see the role of OCVA as being to support established organisations to be stable and grow. It does not feel like much of a climate for incubating new charities in this climate, as it may have been 15 years ago. I think the level your training is pitched at should reflect this.
- Pleased to have OCVA there for us and everyone else

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