

Plymouth VCSE survey – April 2020 - Summary

Analysis and comment (survey findings below)

Community groups, charities and social enterprises in Plymouth are showing an extraordinary level of resilience, adaption, and innovation despite being severely affected by the conditions put in place to tackle the coronavirus pandemic.

A survey of 125 organisations in Plymouth shows, 70% have either maintained or adapted existing services and/or created new services (62% of organisations).

However, we are seeing vulnerability in organisations under £10k turnover. For those impacted, their dependency on traded income, including spot purchasing and small contracts with public sector means they are particularly vulnerable.

For larger organisations with turnovers up to £500k per year, the concern is more about what happens as we proceed through the crisis and start to focus on the future. By re-orientating funding solely around Covid-19, grant funders could be potentially exacerbating problems of future cash flow and viability.

Learning from previous emergencies¹ suggests funder collaboration and simplifying process is important. We therefore see an opportunity to work collaboratively with funders to ensure that funds are well targeted locally. A place based, relational approach to funding could increasing accountability, learning and impact through local collaborative structures.

It is therefore suggested that, wherever possible, funders:

- **collaborate with Devon Community Foundation (supported by all key stakeholders) to consider delegation of funds and/or invitations to influence any funding decision impacting on Devon.**
- **work together with organisations like POP+ and Devon Community Foundation to ensure immediate and enough aid is available to organisations under £10k.**
- **offer a 1-year extension to all existing grantees.**
- **keep existing grant programmes open.**

At the same time funders could be exploring how best to support the incredible innovation currently underway – ala <https://whatsthepont.blog/2020/03/18/is-anyone-deploying-innovation-and-learning-people-alongside-covid-19-response-teams/>

¹ https://www.ivar.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/IVAR022-Learning-from-Emergency-responses-report_Low-Res-1.pdf

Shared local messages for lobbying national government

- Recognise that £750m should just be the start of the support for the social economy.
- Recognise that observation that whilst all other bail out packages are for 'resting' or reducing burdens this funding is for doing more creating an unfair additional burden.
- Preference smaller local organisations in future funding announcements.

Main survey findings

- 125 responses: 21% under £500k, 35% under £100k, 34% under £10k turnover
- 70% of organisations are either adapting and creating new services (62% of organisations) and/or maintaining existing services (25%) and of these 74% are in collaboration with others.
- Donations and traded income appear to be most impacted.
 - Organisations under £10k would appear to experience 2 extremes: either safe and well or are the most vulnerable due to low reserves and high dependency on traded income, this includes spot purchasing and small contracts with public sector.
- For organisations under £500k, under £100k and under £10k turnover support most requested:
 - Supporting funding - 40%
 - Moving online – 26%
- Services identifying with Over 50's, Information & advice, Social isolation, Refugees & asylum seekers, Employment, Health & wellbeing, Older people, Substance abuse, Mental health & emotional wellbeing worst affected by services stopping (over 75%)

Contact

Please contact Matt Bell, CEO on matt@plymouthoctopus.org to discuss anything raised by this report.

Plymouth VCSE survey – April 2020 - details

Who responded?

125 organisations

21% under £500k

113 Under £500k

35% under £100k

turnover

34% under £10k

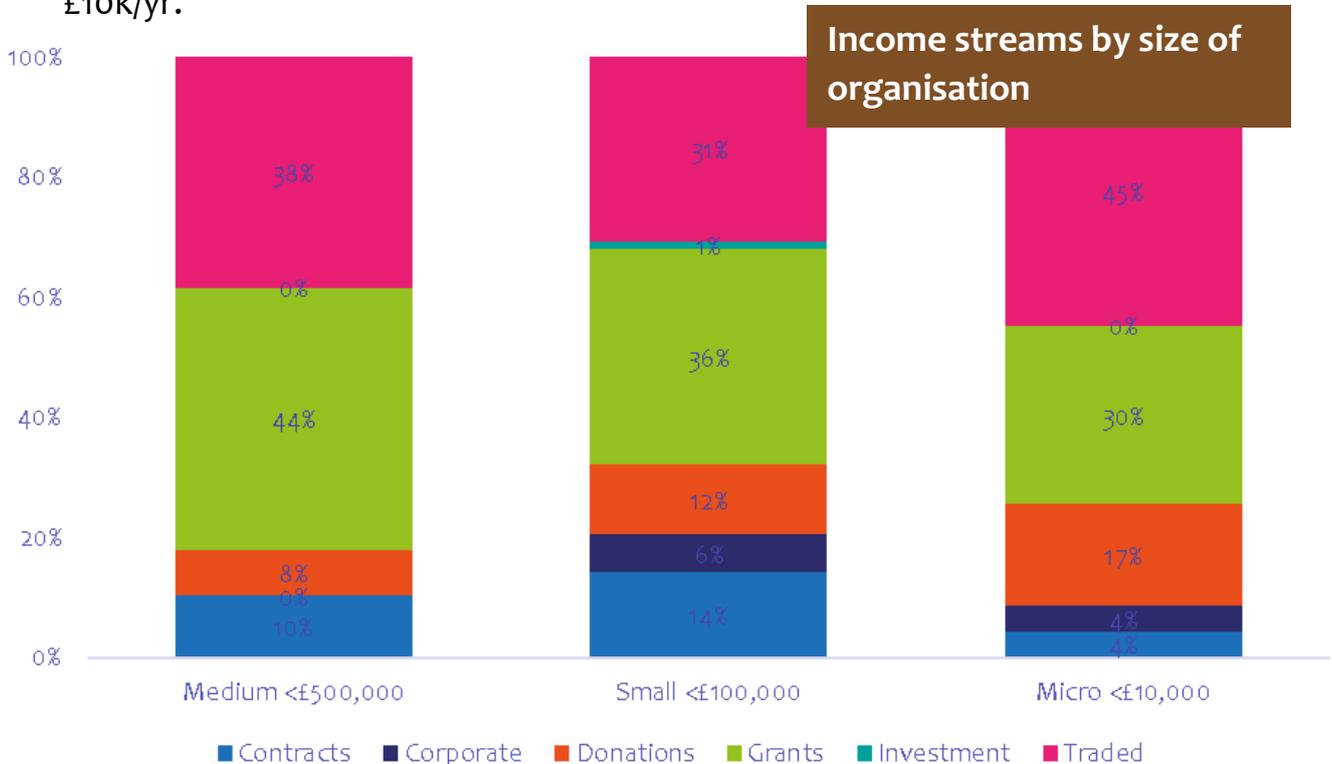
79% city wide groups

Keywords describing groups and type of support

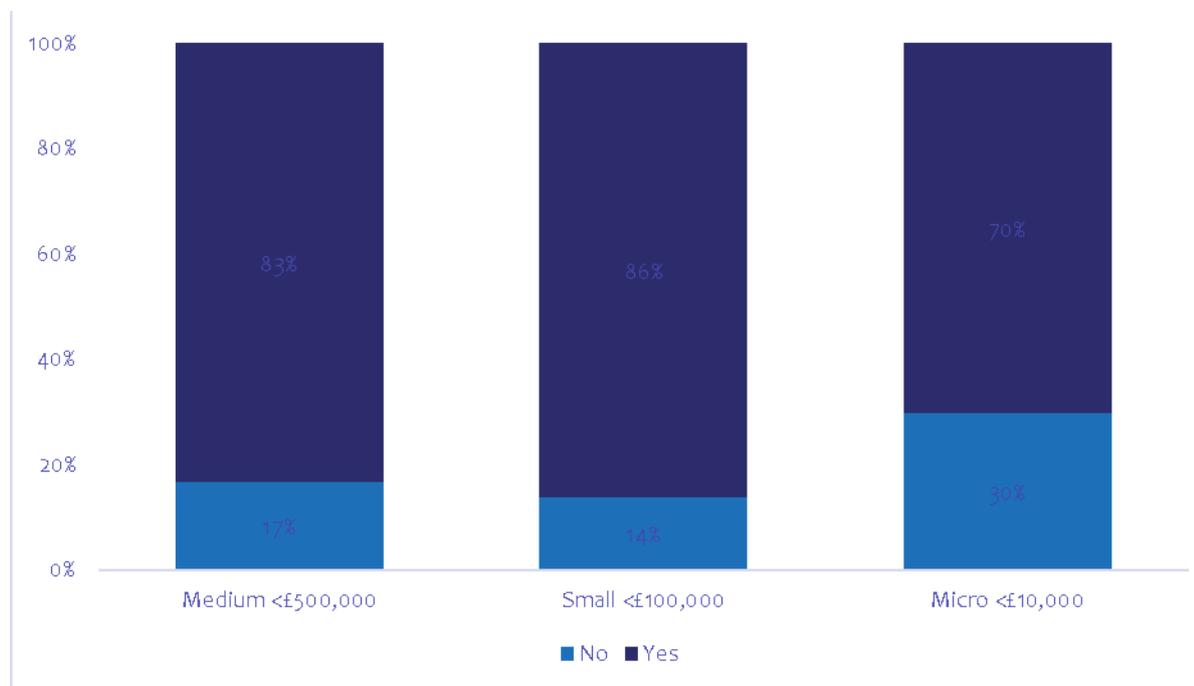
Adults	44	Finance	8
Health & wellbeing	36	Environmental protection	8
Community development	31	Food	8
Children and Young People	31	Substance abuse	8
Education & training	30	Homelessness	8
Social isolation	27	Housing	8
Mental health & emotional wellbeing	24	Organisational capacity building	7
Older people	22	Bereavement	7
Information & advice	19	Learning disability	7
Family	19	Race	7
Community resource	18	Outdoors Groups	6
Employment	18	Transport	6
Physical activity	17	Faith, religion & spirituality	6
Arts and culture	17	LGBT	5
Poverty	16	Gender	4
Over 50's	15	Heritage	4
Place based	13	Criminal justice	2
Sport and leisure	13		
Physical disability	11		
Refugees & asylum seekers	9		
Carers	9		

Financial impact?

Note high percentage of traded income & donations for organisations under £10k/yr.



Covid-19 impacted income streams by size of org?



Note that organisations under £10k/yr show largest percentage of organisations unaffected.

How much has COVID-19 impacted on each income by size of organisation?

There are 2 main observations to make:

- Under £10k organisations are least impacted as a whole, but as can be seen by the comments below those that are impacted can be most vulnerable.
- Donations, traded income and contracts have been most impacted

Comments

We are losing rental income, courses fees. We are paying our tutors a retainer.

Totally we have no idea whether the local authority will pay a retainer to keep places open. It will also depend on when we can open again.

Yes, we had to close our doors to the public when the Government announced people should not visit theatres.

Our trading capability has dried up. We still have some consultancy income but it is harder to deliver virtually.

Yes - income generation and outstanding bids

Yes - Personally I'll lose around 35% of my income (assuming I get 80% as self employed). The business is set to lose (directly) thousands.

We had £600k worth of grants at stage 2 decision and have been advised that out are likely to be diverted to new covid-specific funding streams. contract work, which involves face to face work with children, has been postponed and may no longer happen as the clients in question are themselves now in severe difficulties.

Yes. We have needed to shut down so no income coming in, think this is likely to more than half our income for the year.

Yes, until we are able to re-open we will not be able to trade.

Yes, as unable to run any tennis based sessions, especially as go into residential setting, ie for those with profound disabilities, or for elderly adults with dementia

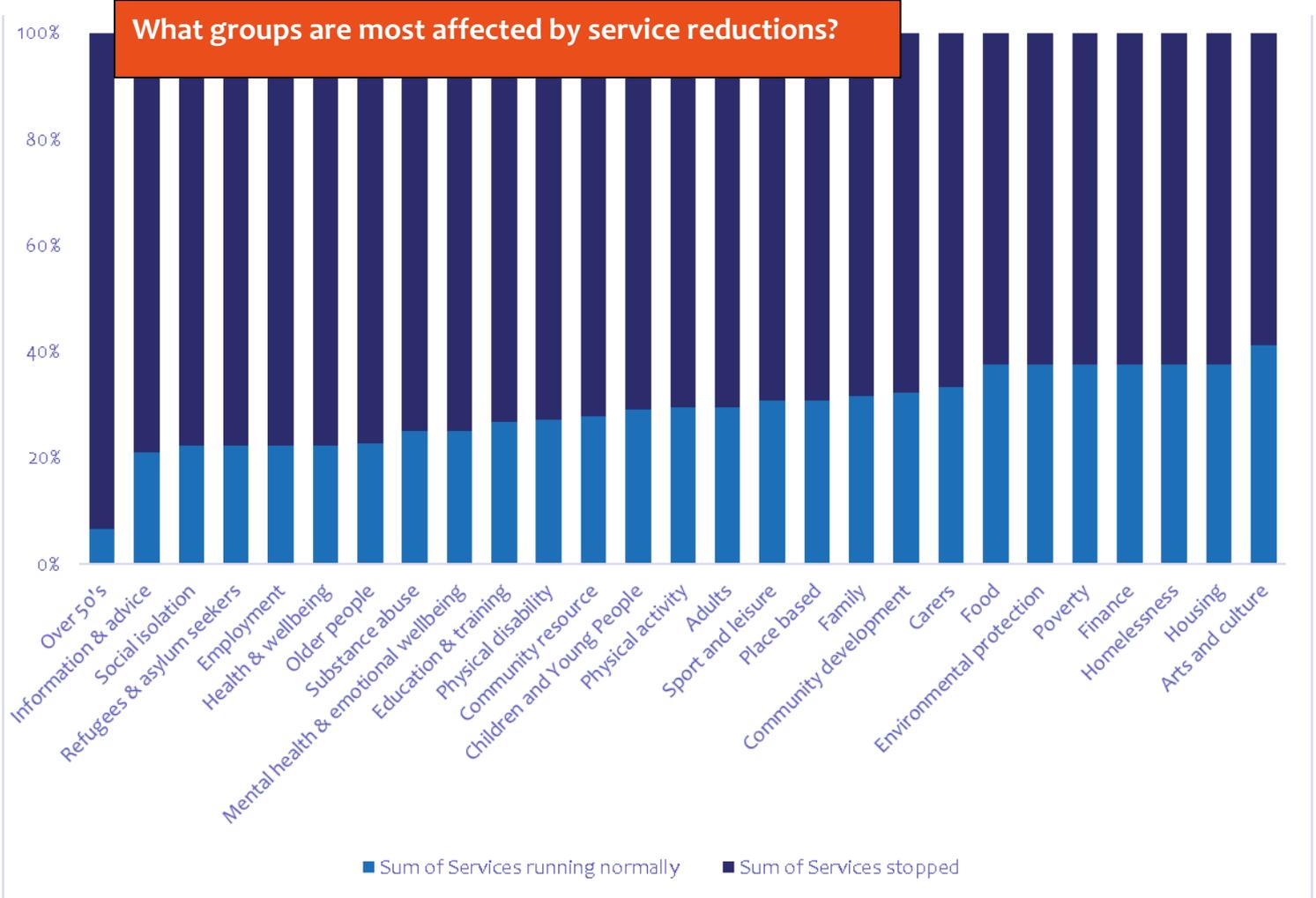
Yes, we have lost funding of projects as grant bodies take their reserves into COVID funds. We have had to reduce our staffing team accordingly. We cannot sustain income without project grants. Our consultancy from other orgs has dropped away as they are also struggling to move forward.

Yes, we meet weekly, pay subs monthly, had performances planned in April & June.

I will probably get no coaching days from any of the mental health organisations for at least 6 months

Yes we had to suspend the members payment while we can't provide the service they usually pay for

Rental income has dried up directly because of lockdown considerations



Note that some of the absolute figures are relatively so small changes could result in significantly different results. Keywords with 7 or less were removed to make the graph easier to view. The impact on services identifying as supporting over 50s has been impacted most by services stopping.

Innovation and responsiveness

62% organisations have a new or adapted services

75% of this is in organisations of under £500k/yr

65% of this is in organisations of under £100k/yr

55% of this is in organisations of under £10k/yr

This suggests that the capacity to respond for the smallest organisations is the most limited. A 'flavour' of what has been done is below. Most has been focussed on moving activities to online and phone. Some lovely stuff!

More delivery work online. Also focus on local C-19 responses.
Hosting food delivery to those in need
Offered online 'lockdown packs' education and wellbeing and activity packs to help people during lockdown. Video calls to young people who normally attend job club
Adapting to online studies and skills development.
giving food parcels to people in short term financial crisis
Dementia Therapy Provision (Workshops)
Provide resources for engaging educational and fun activities to do at home
Provide food and support to homeless people on a takeaway basis only applying social distancing in accordance with Government guidelines
We have increased Union Soup activity from 3 to 5 days per week. This is now a take-away service. .
Free wi-fi to residents on and around Union Street. This was sorted on 5th April. We can now decide what else we can do to help parents home schooling and people isolated and alone.
Telephone support and information
Staff working remotely through client data base and referrals from CJ partners. All contact by phone. Volunteers released from duties.
We do the same but weekly socials are now held online and people volunteer to help those who are self-isolating such as doing food shopping, picking up medicine etc
Daily welfare checks, shopping and medical collection, drop off activities, on-line ordering for clients
We have stopped face to face advice and are helping people digitally and by phone
Provide virtual home visits to those with energy issues.
Walks with History Online
We have gone from face to face and 92 social inclusion activities a week to remote working and telephone and food and pharmacy collections.

Storytelling on line

Offering remote support support to people who are anxious or need help with food/cooking.

The casework, advocacy and support service is no longer providing face to face appointments. We are now providing the service via telephone, email and social media platforms such as zoom and WhatsApp

Provide video counselling and more telephone counselling than before

How long will you last with a 30% reduction in staff or volunteers?

For both services running normally and those new or adapted services there is a good level of resilience to shortages in people giving enough time to respond to fill gaps as they appear. Another testament to the flexibility of the social sector.

New or adapted services however would appear to be more vulnerable.

