

# **VANL**

Voluntary Action *North Lanarkshire*

## **Community & Voluntary Sector Covid19 Recovery Survey Report**

**September 2020**





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# Executive Summary

## 1.0 Background

This survey was developed by colleagues in Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire (VANL), North Lanarkshire Council (NLC) Communities Team and NHS Lanarkshire (NHSL) Health Improvement Team, to assess the current and likely future situation for community and voluntary organisations providing support to people and communities in North Lanarkshire including:

- Services provided
- Funding situation
- Support needs

Findings from the survey, along with other information, will be used to develop a Strategic Recovery, Renewal and Investment Plan for the NL Community and Voluntary Sector. Implementation of the plan will be supported by VANL, NLC and NHSL colleagues, working in collaboration with the NL community and voluntary sector.

## 2.0 Method

The survey was sent electronically to around 800 community and voluntary organisations (CVOs) operating in North Lanarkshire and registered with VANL. Initial responses were submitted online but given the relatively low response, staff from VANL, North Lanarkshire Council Communities Team and NHS Lanarkshire Health Improvement, contacted groups by phone to support a response with an extended closing date. By the end of the final closing date 153 (20%) of organisations had completed the survey. Whilst we had hoped for a greater response this response still provides a good insight into the views and challenges being experienced by CVOs in North Lanarkshire. We believe that the low response rate was due to several factors including the fact that many CVOs were not operating at the time with staff on furlough and due to some out of date contact details.

The survey asked for information on the following:

- the type of organisation
- the area/locality covered
- the services offered
- the type of people supported
- staffing and volunteer numbers
- number of staff on furlough or at risk of redundancy
- financial security and sustainability in particular their funding situation moving forward.

## 3.0 Key Findings

From our analysis of the results the majority of groups who completed the survey were charities (51%) the others were mostly a mix of different community groups, i.e. forums, community councils, religious groups, and social enterprises.

Around 69% of the organisations told us they operate NL wide, with 18% operating across Lanarkshire. A very small number (8%) operate Scotland wide and an even smaller number (5%) operate UK wide.

In relation to localities, Airdrie was the most represented at 27% and Northern Corridor the least represented at 11%. In relation to which groups of people the responding organisations support 77% support individuals and 58% support groups of people. 32% of respondents said they support other community and voluntary organisations with 49% supporting local communities.

### 3.1 Impact of Covid19 on Services

The results show that there was an increase in the following types of support during the lockdown phase of the Covid19 pandemic (March-July 2020)

- food support (29%)
- wellbeing calls (40%)
- advocacy (10%)
- befriending (14%)
- emergency response/disaster relief (56%)

From the survey it appears that there was no change in support provided during the COVID19 lockdown for Carers, Veterans, Refugees/Asylum seekers, victims of crime and victims of domestic abuse. However, for other groups of people there was an average decrease in support of around 12%. The group which had the biggest decrease in support (21%) during COVID19 lockdown were Care experienced children and young people.

Responding organisations indicated that they supported a total of 32,500 people pre-Covid19 lockdown, with that number reducing by around 20% (6,500) during Covid19 lockdown. Organisations are hopeful that numbers will increase moving forward.

33% of responding organisations said they supported community groups, on average around 500 groups each month pre-Covid19 lockdown, with this number only reducing by 10% during Covid19 lockdown. Organisations indicated that their support will increase in future.

66% of organisations said they assess the needs of those they support and use the results to inform design and delivery of their services, with 60% also assessing the outcomes of those services.

### 3.2 Impact on Staff & Volunteers

Before Covid19 lockdown, responding organisations reported a total of 1250 FTE (full time equivalent) staff in post. During Covid19 lockdown, this reduced by 9%. Around 57% staff are considered secure until March 2021. At the time of the survey, 22% staff were on furlough with 8% of staff at risk of redundancy. Moving forward, responding organisations estimate the numbers of staff employed will increase again by only 0.6%. Understandably, a small number of responding organisations are uncertain about staffing issues in future.

Results show there were around 4300 volunteers pre-Covid19 lockdown and that during lockdown this reduced by around 38%. Organisations have indicated they are hoping volunteer numbers increase moving forward with 63% stating they could involve more volunteers.

The survey asked respondents about the health and wellbeing support (including mental health support) provided to staff and volunteers. Over half the respondents, 54%, said they provided this type of support with 68% saying they would welcome assistance to improve upon/implement health & wellbeing support.

### 3.3 Financial Impact

Results show that responding organisations income pre-Covid19 lockdown, was around £21.5m. Figures show an overall reduction of around £6m for the current financial year (April 2020 – March 2021) across many organisations, with 26% of organisations stating their projected income for 2020-21 will be insufficient to support core costs and service provision. This reduction in income is a result of grant and/or contract funding ending; a reduction in public donations and trading income from not being able to operate. However, 30% of organisations state they will remain stable moving forward.

Almost half of the organisations (48%) which completed the survey are reliant on funding from North Lanarkshire Council (NLC), mostly via commissioned services. Around 75% rely on funding from other sources e.g. Scottish Government, The National Lottery and The Robertson Trust. 50% of responding organisations receive public donations and 25% generate income from trading.

Almost half (48%) of responding organisations had an increase in income through COVID19 crisis funding ranging from as little as £100 to as much as £160k from the following sources:

- 33% Wellbeing Fund
- 25% Supporting Communities Fund
- 24% Resilience Fund
- 68% other sources

A total of around £1.5m in COVID19 funds was received by responding organisations. It must be noted, however, that receipt of COVID19 crisis support funding does not necessarily resolve longer term financial challenges.

### 3.4 Recovery Support

The top five areas that responding organisations would welcome further support are:

1. Income generation (50%)
2. Partnership working (42%)
3. Community Engagement (37%)
4. ICT/Digital (31%)
5. Strategy & Planning (26%)

The fact that many organisations require support around income generation and accessing funding is not surprising. This also links to strategy and planning support which underpins an organisation's ability to generate income. VANL will work with the CVOS, NL statutory partners and other funders to provide this support where-ever possible as part of our shared commitment to support CVOS COVID19 Recovery, Renewal and Investment.

Since the start of the COVID19 pandemic in March 2020 partnership working between CVOS organisations, VANL, NHS Lanarkshire and NLC has strengthened and there is an ongoing commitment to support further improvements.

New arrangements for community engagement to support community planning were established during August 2020 by NLC, with the establishment of 9 Community Boards. VANL is working with the CVOS to support local engagement and contribution. Health and Social Care NL (HSCNL) is also reviewing its community engagement arrangements.

The ability to support effective remote working will continue to be essential for all types of CVOS organisations. VANL provided guidance and support to smaller CVOS organisations during the COVID19 crisis and is developing plans for a more effective ICT support service for NL CVOS.

## 4.0 Conclusion

The survey results provide vital information about the COVID19 response of the NL CVOS and future challenges.

Some organisations were able to adapt their services to remote working to support vulnerable groups during the COVID19 lockdown, for example, by changing in-person befriending to remote befriending; lunch clubs to shopping and food deliveries. Some new, volunteer-led COVID19 community support groups were also established. This response illustrates the flexibility, creativity and resilience of the CVOS – qualities which need to be recognised and protected.

Sadly, other organisations which could not adapt their services to remote provision had to reduce or close their services, reducing the support available to vulnerable groups.

Unfortunately, the survey also highlights the significant financial and other challenges facing many CVOS organisations as they transition out of lockdown to a new world where COVID19 remains a significant threat, people's support needs are increasing and funding is uncertain.

## 5.0 Detailed Survey Analysis

### 5.1 Method

The survey was sent electronically to around 800 community and voluntary organisations (CVOs) operating in North Lanarkshire and registered with VANL. Initial responses were online but given the relatively low response, staff from VANL, North Lanarkshire Council Communities Team and NHS Lanarkshire Health Improvement, contacted groups by phone to support a response with an extended closing date. By the end of the final closing date 153 (20%) of organisations had completed the survey. Whilst we had hoped for a greater response this response still provides a good insight into the views and challenges being experienced by CVOs in North Lanarkshire. (We believe that the low response rate was due to several factors including the fact that many CVOs were not operating at the time with staff on furlough and due to some out of date contact details.

The survey asked for information on the following:

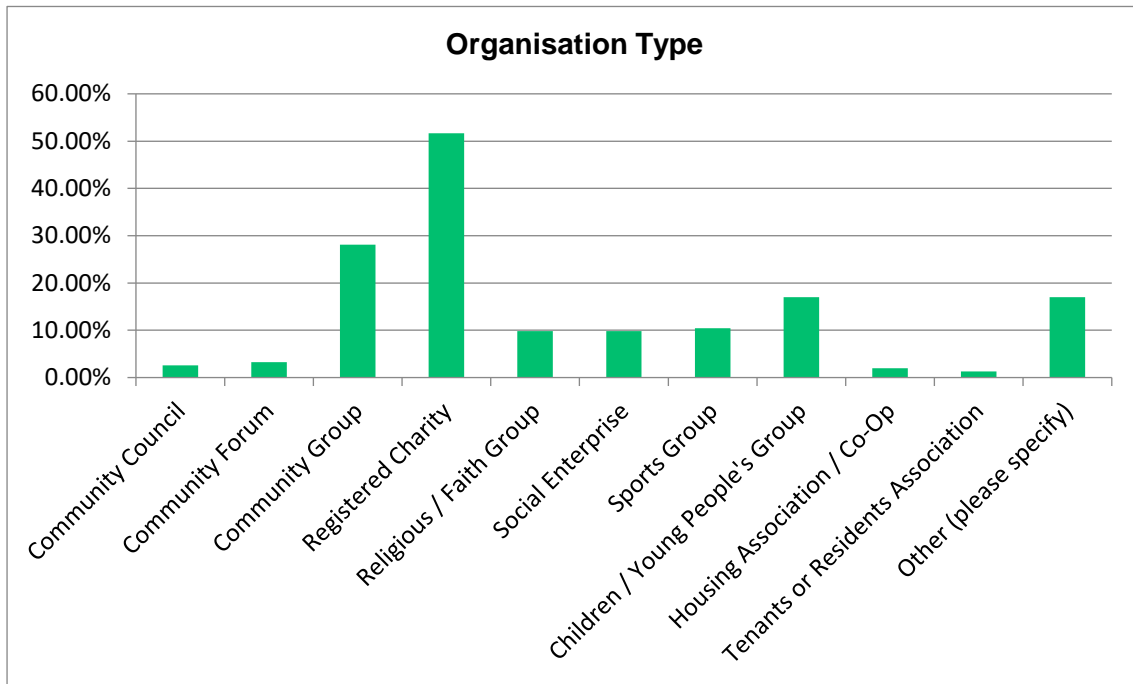
- the type of organisation
- the area/locality covered
- the services offered
- the type of people supported
- staffing and volunteer numbers
- number of staff on furlough or at risk of redundancy
- financial security and sustainability in particular their funding situation moving forward.

### 5.2 Findings

A full analysis of responses to the 27 survey questions is presented below. We received some feedback from some of the organisations who attempted to complete the survey. Some considered a few of the questions to be too complicated; some considered a number of questions not relevant to their organisation - particularly those around finances or staff. A number of people also told us they could not answer some of the questions because they were not the right person to be completing it and did not have the information to hand, in particular the financial information. As a result, some people skipped those questions or gave up at that point and didn't complete the survey. Further into the survey the number of responses reduces, starting out at 153 and ending up on average of around 80 responses. Questions 1 (145 responses) and question 5 (143 responses) asked for specific contact information i.e. the name of the organisation, the name of the most senior officer and their email address, so findings from those questions are not presented below. Charts are included only where appropriate.

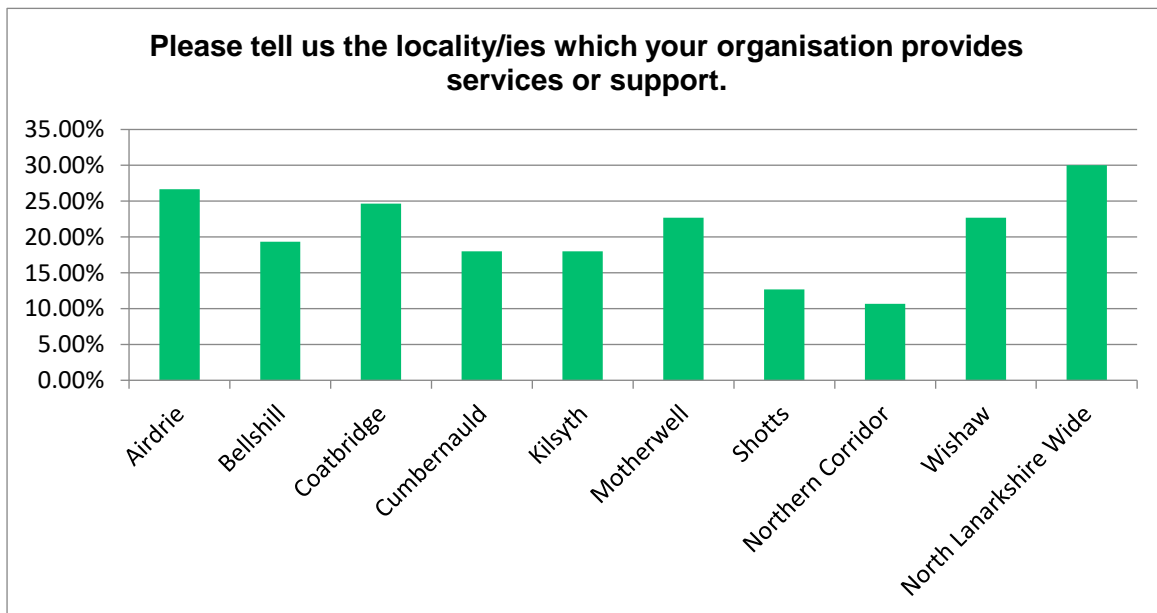


**Q2 Organisation type: - (153 responses)**



More than half (51%) of the organisations who completed the survey were charities, 28% were community groups, with a small number being community forums, community councils and tenants and residents' associations. Respondents that put themselves into the 'Other' category were mostly from sheltered housing, hospices and lunch clubs. One was specifically set up as a result of Covid19 with Government Funding.

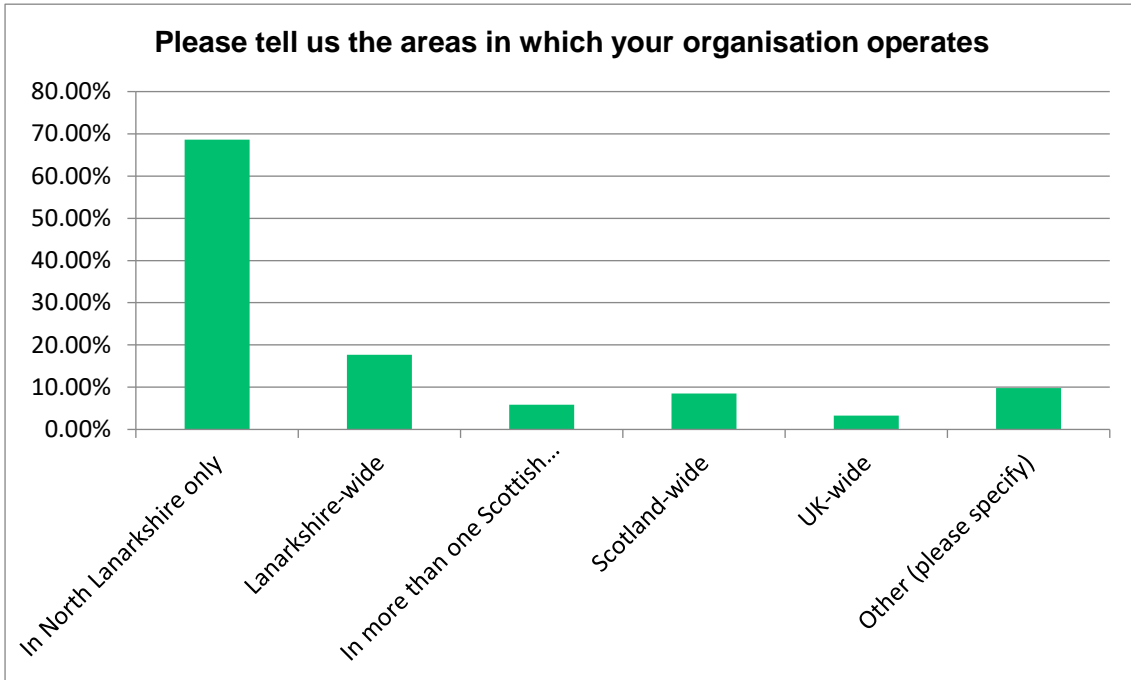
**Q3 Please tell us the locality/ies in NL in which your organisation provide services/supports: - (150 responses)**



30% of the organisations provide services NL wide, with the highest locality represented being Airdrie, the lowest being Northern Corridor.

**Q4 Please tell us the areas in which your organisation operates:**

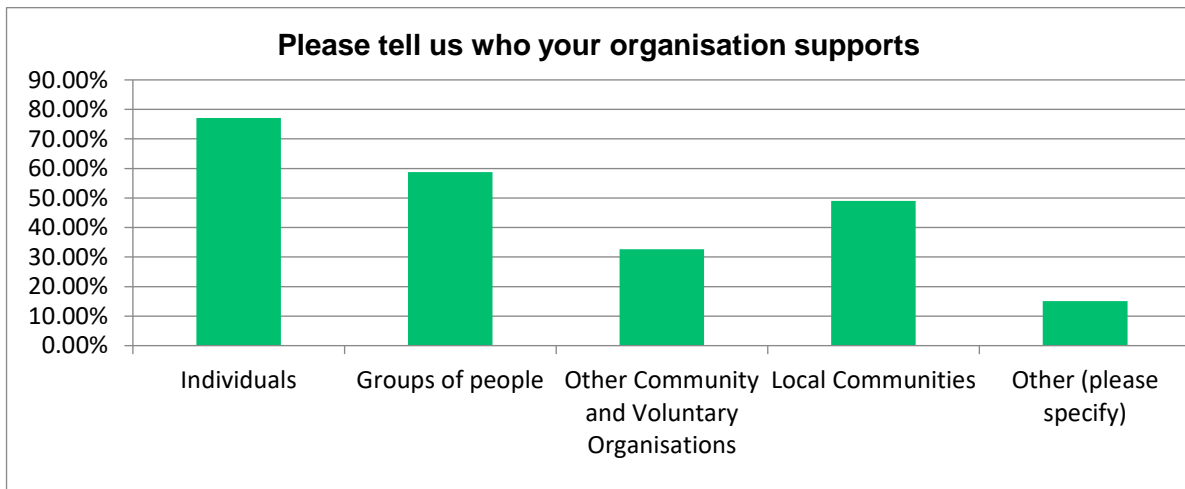
(153 responses)



The chart shows 69% of the organisations operate in NL only, with 18% operating Lanarkshire wide. 9% of organisations stated other areas, comments included e.g. Harthill, Eastfield & Greenrigg, Kilsyth Banton Croy and Queensieburn and ML2 area, parts of West Lothian, West of Scotland, Wales and overseas.

**Q6 Please tell us who your organisation supports:** (153 responses)

The chart below indicates that 77% of respondents support individuals, and 58% support groups of people. Almost 50% of respondents stated supporting local communities. Other included “families”, “Scouts & guides”, “ethnic minority”, “profoundly deaf people” and “couples”.



## Q7 Tell us which individuals/groups of people your organisation provides support to – (143 responses, for chart, see Appendix 1)

Results show that Women and children were the most supported before Covid19 at 95%, homeless people were the most supported during the lockdown phase of the pandemic at 90% and those with addictions are estimated to be the most supported moving forward at 89%.

The results also show that there was an increase in the following types of support during the lockdown phase of the Covid19 pandemic (March-July 2020)

- food support (29%)
- wellbeing calls (40%)
- advocacy (10%)
- befriending (14%)
- emergency response/disaster relief (56%)

Those responding stated that there was no change in support provided during the COVID19 lockdown for Carers, Veterans, Refugees/Asylum seekers, victims of crime and victims of domestic abuse. However, for other groups of people there was an average decrease in support of around 12%. The group which had the highest decrease in support (21%) during COVID19 lockdown were Care experienced children and young people.

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## Q8 Tell us what type of support and or services your organisation provides in NL – (134 responses, for chart, see Appendix 2)

### Pre Covid19 Lockdown

Results show that the following five types of support were provided the most at 100% during this time:

- Climate emergency activities
- Credit Unions/community banking
- Heritage
- Organisational Development

### During Covid19 Lockdown

The following were the top 5 types of support provided the most during this time:

- Self-help support (100%)
- Advocacy (96%)
- Social care (95%)
- Emergency response relief (94%)
- Wellbeing calls (92%)

Not surprisingly the following five types saw an increase in the supports provided during Covid19 lockdown:

- food support (29%)
- wellbeing calls (40%)
- advocacy (10%)
- befriending (14%)
- emergency response/disaster relief (56%)

## Future Estimate

Some of the above increases are predicted to fall in the near future, although not back to what they were pre Covid19 lockdown, for example, Emergency/disaster relief, wellbeing calls and food supports.

All other types of supports decreased by an average of 63% during COVID19 lockdown, the biggest decrease being in heritage (80%), followed by credit unions (75%). However, results show that almost all types of support are predicted to increase going forward - for example for day care centres, environmental related activities, employment support, credit unions, community cafes, community facilities and charity shops.

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## Q9 If your organisation supports individuals/groups of people please indicate how many your organisation supports on average each month

### Pre covid19 Lockdown (109 responses)

The average number of people supported each month by the responding organisations before Covid19 Lockdown was around 32,500. This varied from organisation, and ranged from as low as 8 to as high as over 3300.

### During Covid19 Lockdown (105 responses)

There was understandably a considerable drop in the number of people supported and accessing services during COVID19 lockdown with a drop of over 6,000 with only 25,727 people supported on average per month. Again, this varied among organisations and ranged from 0 – 2000. Some organisations had a huge increase in the numbers of people they supported during lockdown with numbers doubling or tripling or more. For others it reduced to zero as they had to close their doors.

### Future estimate – (93 responses)

Responding organisations estimate they will support over 30k people per month in future. For some, this will mean getting back to pre-lockdown numbers whilst, for others, they will support fewer people due to lack of funds or the other reasons. Sadly, some may close permanently.

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## Q10 If your organisation supports other community and voluntary groups please tell us how many your organisation supports on average each month? - 93 responses

In total, responding organisations supported on average around 500 community groups pre Covid19 and 450 during Covid19, lockdown.

### **Q11 Does your organisation assess the needs of the individuals/groups of people, community & voluntary groups, local communities you assist to inform design & delivery of your supports/services?** (137 responses)

Results show 66% of responding organisations said they assess the needs of those they support.

**Some examples of how they do this are provided below:** - (84 responses)

- General discussion with the organisations on requirements which we try and accommodate.
- We arrange meetings with other groups and go and meet their members before workshops etc begin.
- Holistic approach. Although people call for a food parcel/ personal shop/prescription pick up we offer a wellbeing check which can identify other areas of support that might be needed e.g. Mental health, Unpaid carer support, Befriending, DWP, Energy supply support, CAB
- Interviews
- Individual community care assessments

### **Q12 Does your organisation assess the outcomes of the supports/services it provides in NL?** - (132 responses)

Results show 60% of responding organisations said they assess the outcomes of their services.

**Some comments below on how they do this:** - (79 responses)

- Currently documenting stats of how many people access our org and what they may need help with. Stats sent to VANL fortnightly.
- Monitoring and evaluations carried out to inform reports
- Through information sharing, feedback, surveys, ICP and individual one to one with service users
- We have a formal Evaluation process in place which measures outcomes against a range of documented outcomes

### **Q13 Please state the number of paid FTE staff supporting provision of your activities/services in NL:** – (122 responses)

- Pre Covid19 1250 FTE staff
- During Covid19 lockdown 1127 staff (a decrease of 9%)

Future estimate 1120 staff.

### **Q14 Please indicate how many of your staff are on furlough, at risk of redundancy, secure until March 2021?** – (106 responses)

- 250 staff on furlough
- 90 staff at risk of redundancy
- 620 staff are secure until March 2021.

**Q15 Please state the number of volunteers:** - (123 responses)

- Pre Covid19 4300 volunteers
- During Covid19 lockdown 1660 volunteers (a 38% reduction)
- Future estimate is around 4800 volunteers

A few responding organisations are uncertain about the future.

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**Q16 Could you involve more volunteers?** - (123 responses)

Results show that 63% of respondents could involve more volunteers.

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**Q17 Does your organisation provide health & wellbeing support to staff/volunteers?** - (130 responses)

Results show that 55% of organisations provide some form of health and wellbeing support. Responding organisations provided some details of the support they provide, examples include:

- Regular staff and volunteer training.
  - We communicate closely with staff and offer occupational health staff counselling services, where required. Everyone has access to our Employee Assistance Programme through Bupa as well as a range of training available within the organisation. We also signpost staff to appropriate agencies etc, through their regular Support & Supervision Sessions with their line manager.
  - Very basic in the fact that meaningful activity and routine has been proven to be really helpful in the recovery of mental ill health and feelings of isolation, loneliness and low self-esteem. Being part of community activities especially with an environmental purpose gives people a purpose to get up in the morning
  - All leaders provide a watchful support and listening ear to our volunteers
  - We offer "In House" supervision to our counsellors. We access any help out with if necessary.
  - Provided suicide talk training to staff and volunteers. any other training needs or support have also been met.
- 

**Q18 Would your organisation welcome assistance to improve the health & wellbeing support you provide?** - (129 responses)

Results show that 68% of respondents would welcome assistance or support.

**Q19 Organisations total income:** - (109 responses)

**April 2019 – March 2020**

From the figures given the total was in the region of £21.5m

90 organisations responded to this question, 24 of which did not give a figure eg unknown, tbc, not in operation or zero.

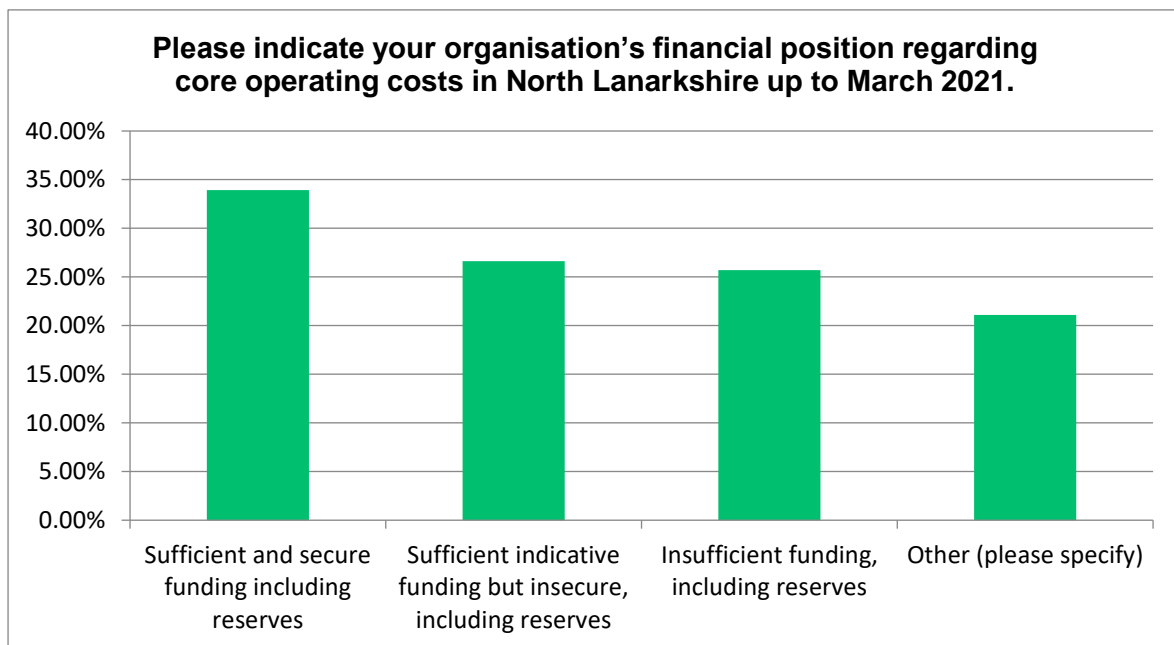
**April 2020 – March 2021 (projected)**

From the figures given the total was in the region of £15.5m.

78 organisations responded to this question, 22 of which did not give a figure, giving either – unknown, zero, minimal, tbc, unavailable, can't project what might be awarded or sufficient.

This shows the projected figures for this year's income will be around £6m less than the previous year as a direct result of the pandemic.

**Q20 Please indicate your organisation's financial income for core operating costs up to March 2021?** (109 responses)



Some comments from those who chose the Other category:

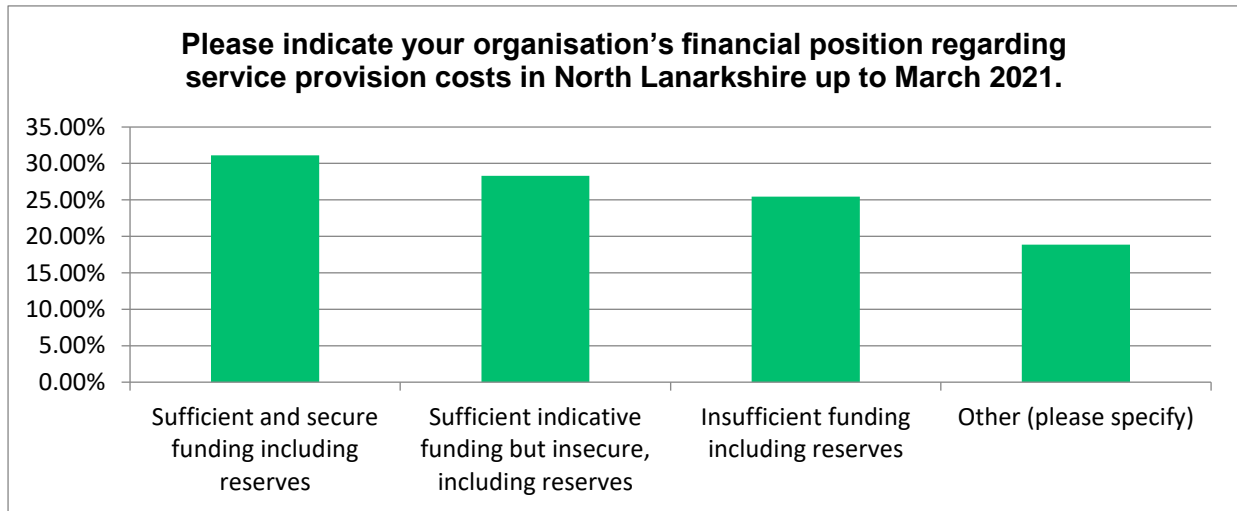
- Position unknown. We rely on weekly giving's by our members. Income is pretty much zero since lock-down
- We have the required 3 months operating costs in reserve and this is secure, however our North Lanarkshire grant from NLC is insufficient having been cut year on year from 50k to £24005 and is now less than half the original grant to operate this project. This is now impacting on operational capacity and the number of staffing hours which have been reduced at a time when service demand is increasing.
- We have extremely limited core operating costs.

**Q21 Please indicate your organisations financial position regarding service provision costs up to March 2021 – (106 responses)**

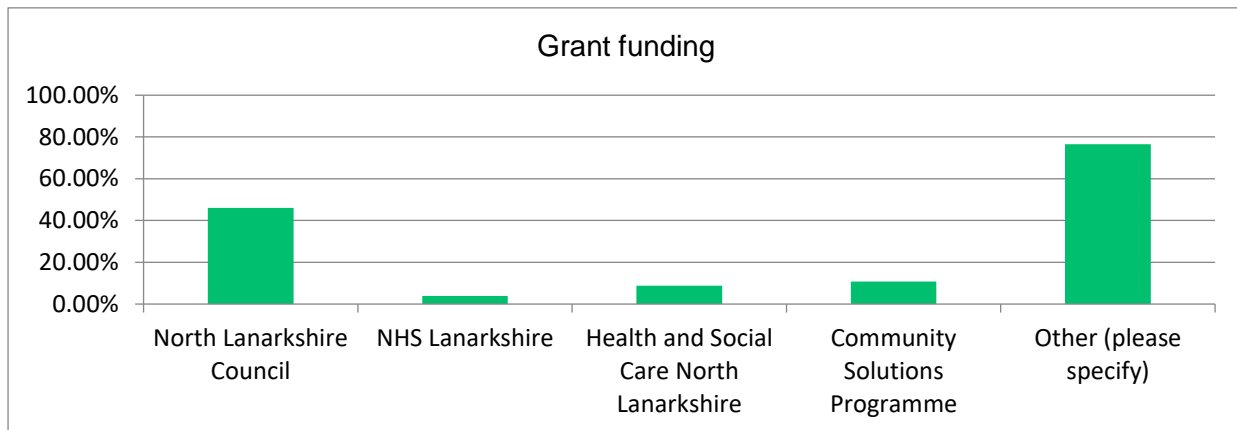
The chart below shows that just over 30% will have sufficient income moving forward, with 26% stating they will have insufficient funding.

Responses from those who chose other:

- Due to pandemic no means of raising money.
- currently funded by NLC to deliver set outcomes but not services.
- Uncertain - we need to see what income generated from sales delivers post lockdown.



**Q22 Grant funding - (102 responses)**

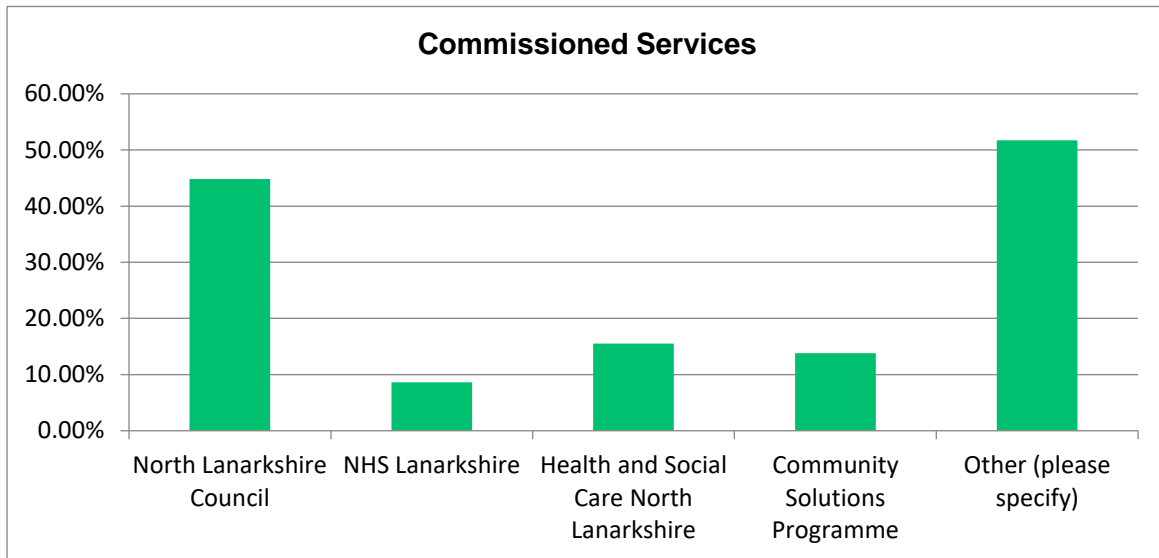


The chart above shows that almost half of respondents receive grant funding from NLC, with the highest number of organisations receiving other sources of income for example:

- Corra and National Lottery
- All funding through fundraising and hall lets
- Congregational voluntary contributions
- Only source is investment income and reserves from past trading operations.
- Donations from members, adherents and visitors to the Church
- Robertson Trust and Lottery
- Public donations



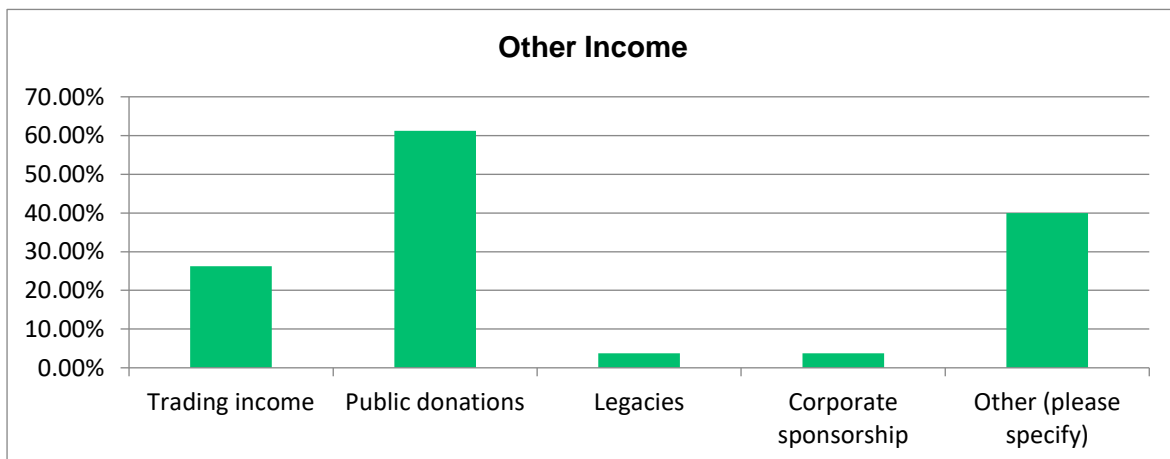
**Q23 Commissioned services** – (58 responses)



Most of the organisations are commissioned by NLC. Those who chose other stated the following:

- Home Energy Scotland, DWP and Routes 2 Work
- Church of Scotland
- We have secured part of a tender to supply sign language interpreting services to NHS Lanarkshire and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde
- Corra Foundation - Covid19 Response
- We were previously commissioned for Club365 and would like to see this be released to community groups again as this is where the programme was most successful. We also have agreed outcomes to meet with NLC discretionary fund.

**Q24 Other income** – (80 responses)



Most organisations appear to get most of their other income from donations. Those that chose other gave the following comments:

- Hall hire lets
- Member subscriptions
- Internal fundraising activities



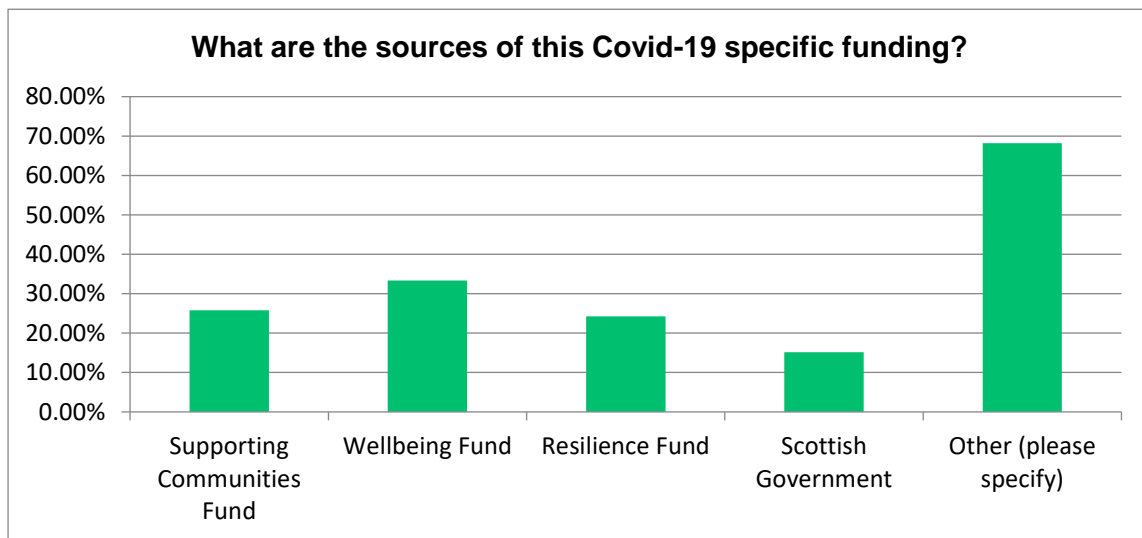
**Q25 Please indicate any Covid19 specific funding you received to date?**

There were 74 responses to this question stating various amounts ranging from £100 to as much as £160k with a total of £1.5m received.

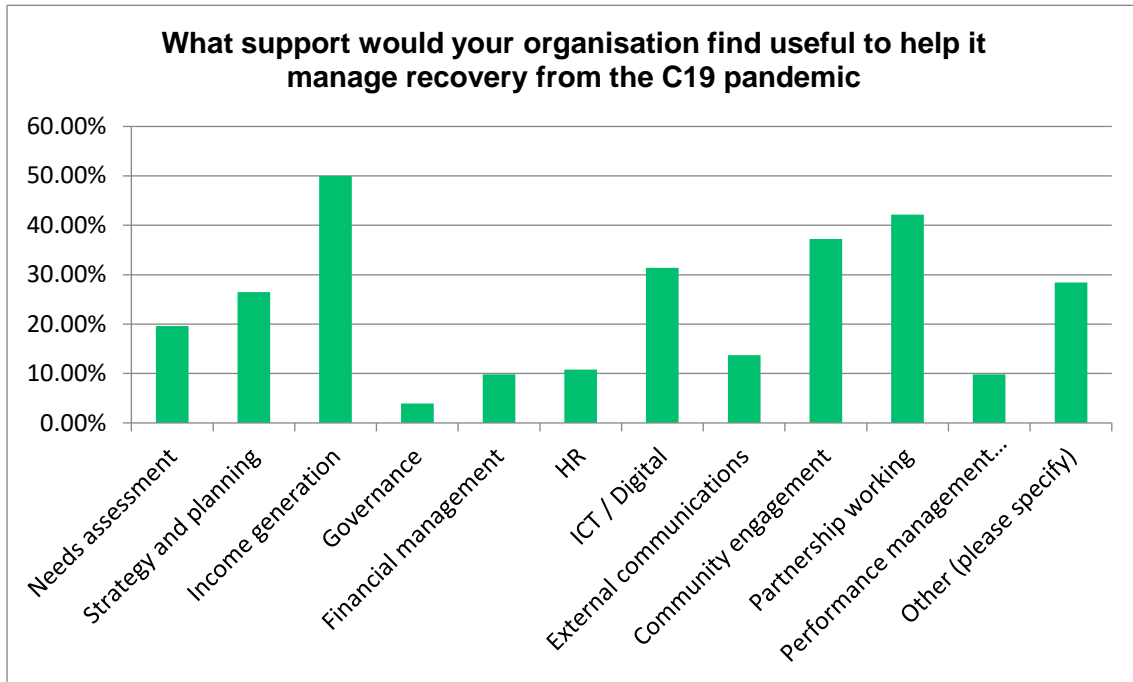
**Q26 What are the sources of the Covid19 funding?** (66 responses)

As you can see from the chart below most of the money received was from the Scottish Government’s Wellbeing Fund: just over 30%. 31% of those who commented said this funding was not applicable to them. Sources from those who chose Other included: (45 responses)

- STV
- Lottery
- Church grant
- National Emergency Trust
- Job retention scheme
- Scottish Rugby Union
- NLCF, CAF, Scotmid, Foundation Scotland, National Emergency Trust



**Q27 What support would your organisation find useful to help you manage recovery from the pandemic.** (102 responses)



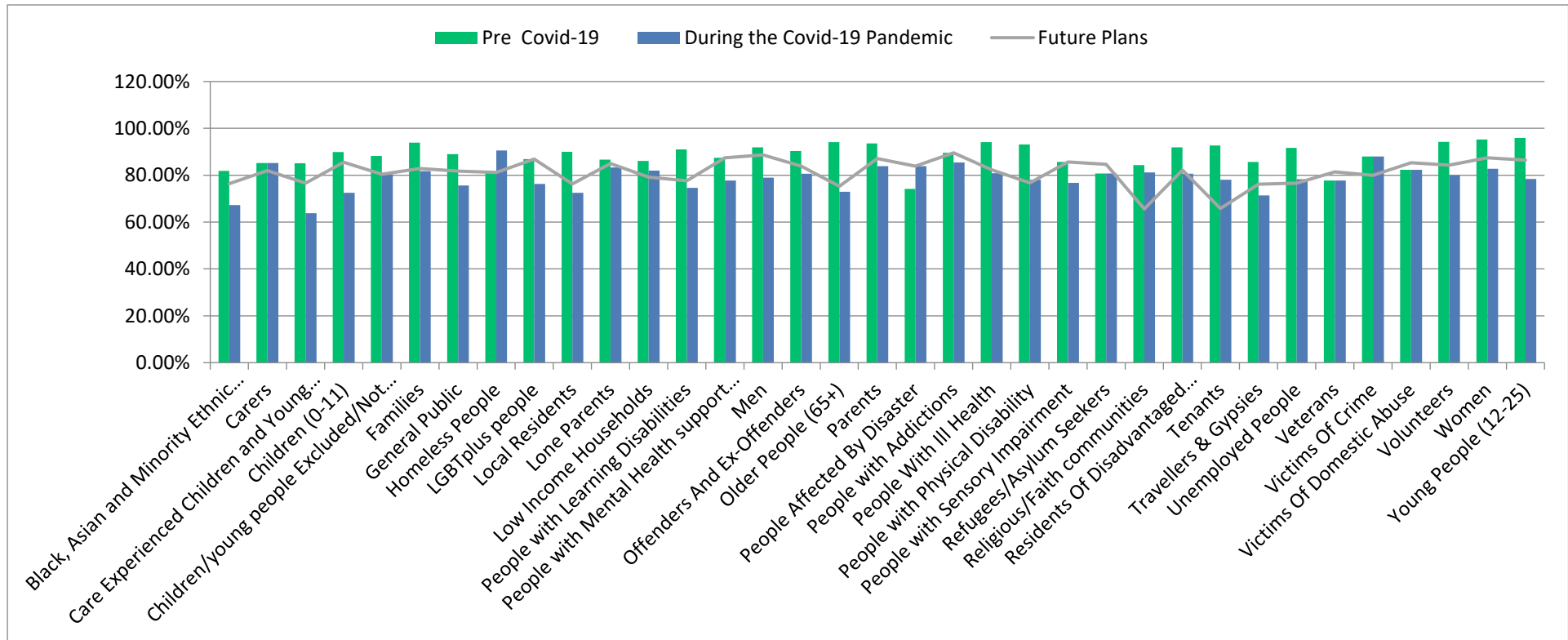
The chart shows that Income generation is the most needed support, followed by partnership working and community engagement.

From those who selected other, comments included:

- volunteer recruitment
- how to work with social distancing
- Advocacy
- We are looking for practical support and guidance on the recovery of our service/guidance on re-opening of building and re-commencement of services/activities and influence to gain support for our Small Business Grant application.



## Appendix 1 – Q7 Please tell us which individuals/groups of people you provide support to





## Appendix 2 – Q8 Please tell us what type of support/services your organisation provides in NL

