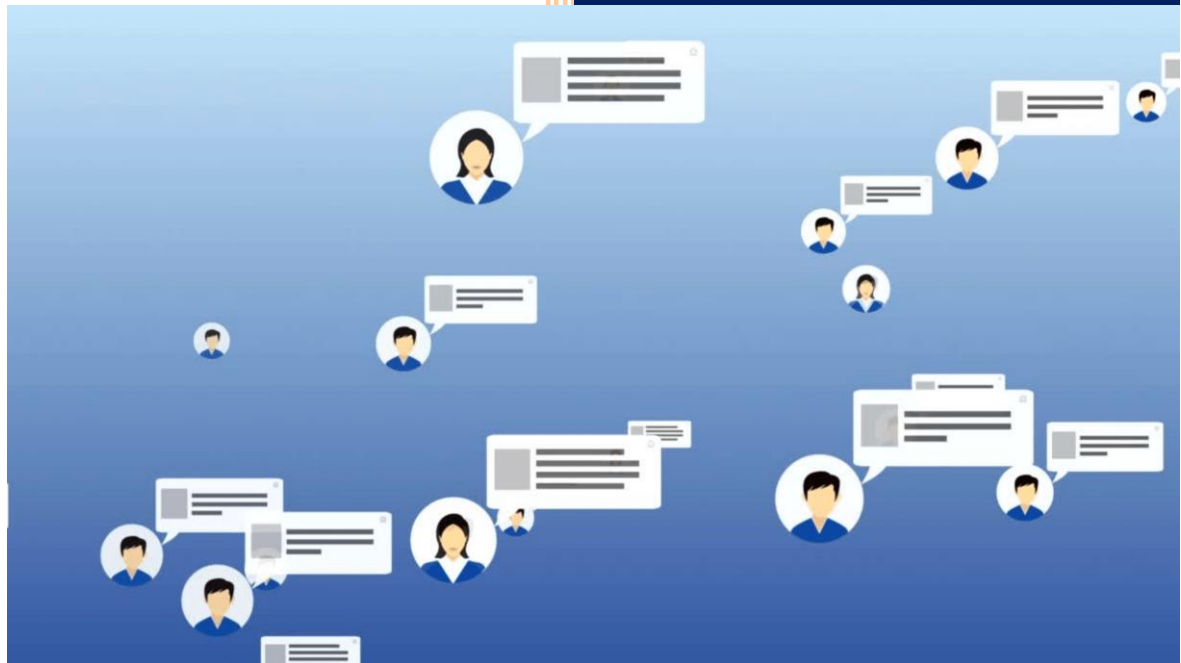




**Medway Voluntary Action**

**May/June  
2021**

**Medway Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)  
COVID-19 Impact Analysis**



**Medway Voluntary Action  
MVA**

**Medway Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)  
COVID-19 Impact Analysis – May/June 2021**

<a href="#"><u>Introduction</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Page 2</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Method statement</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Page 2</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Key findings from the VCS survey data</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Page 3</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Evidence of adaptability and agility</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Page 3</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Financial Impact</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Page 4</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Demand for Services</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Page 6</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Capacity</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Page 6</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Sharing the data</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Page 7</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Conclusion</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Page 8</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>References</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Page 9</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Appendix 1 – Survey questions and charts</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Page 10</u></a>

1 Page Cover, 9 page Report with 6 page appendix

## **Acknowledgement**

This report has been produced by Medway Voluntary Action (MVA).

MVA would like to thank Medway's Voluntary and Community Sector who gave their time to respond to our questions in the continued wake of the COVID-19 crisis when they are dealing with their own immediate priorities.

Medway Voluntary Action  
Registered Charity Number: 1042475  
May/June 2021

## Introduction

This report presents the survey responses from the May/June 2021 campaign.

We are continually reaching out to our network to aid in not only surviving, but thriving throughout the pandemic, with particular attention paid to smaller groups and organisations.

## Method Statement

- This survey was a follow up to our last survey conducted in October 2020
- c.600 organisations and groups were contacted by either email or phone and the survey was promoted through 5 Social media campaigns

*73 organisations responded to the survey, providing real time data on the impact of COVID-19 on the VCS during the period May & June 2021*

- 73 organisations responded to the survey giving real time data of the impact of COVID-19
- These organisations were varied in size and are representative of all VCS activity in Medway
- Many organisations were not available for comment – this may be because they have ceased to exist or have suspended their services

The response rate was 14.6%. This falls within the middle field of an average survey response rate (5-30%) according to smart surveys ([Reference 1](#)). There are many reasons that affect response rates, including closures or suspensions of service. Our survey this time was also much longer due to the additional questions incorporated from Nottingham Trent University, surveying the sector nationally to ascertain the damage of COVID-19.

We will be reviewing our approach with the aim to improve engagement and response rates with surveys during 2022.

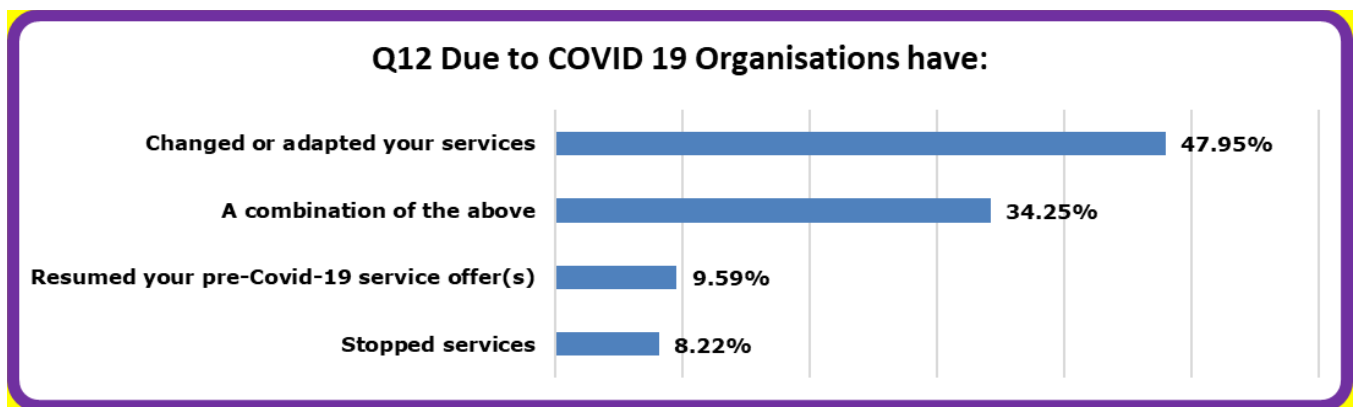
It will be interesting to see if the lifting of restrictions has had any impact on this when we conduct our next survey.

## Key findings from the VCS survey data

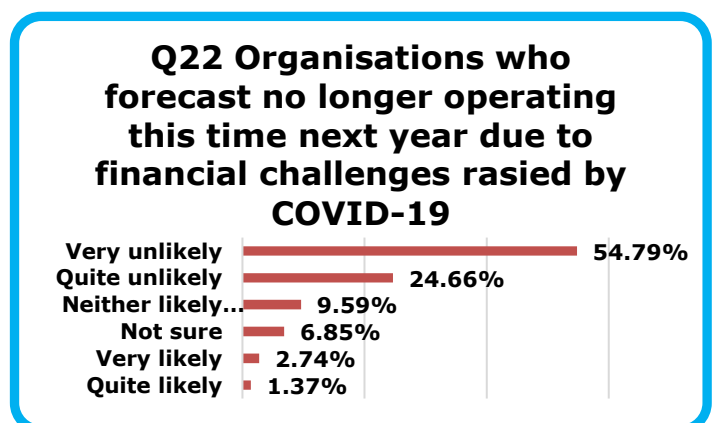
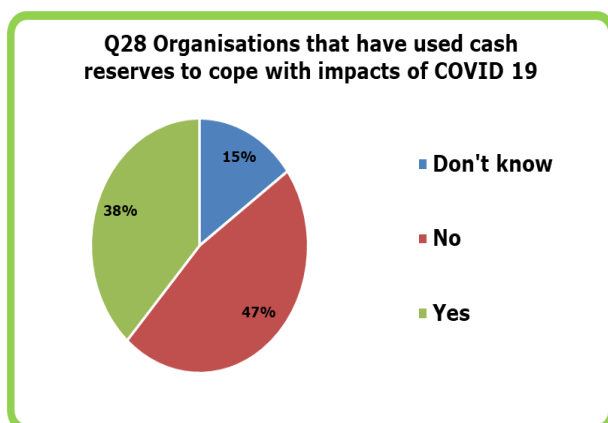
- Evidence of adaptability, agility, and flexibility of the sector
- Continued loss of income
- A significant increase in demand for services and further anticipated increases of demand going forward
- Increased costs
- Some services have stopped
- Increase in volunteer numbers

## Evidence of adaptability and agility

As is shown below, almost half of respondents have changed or adapted their services in response to the pandemic. Just over a further third have combined options.



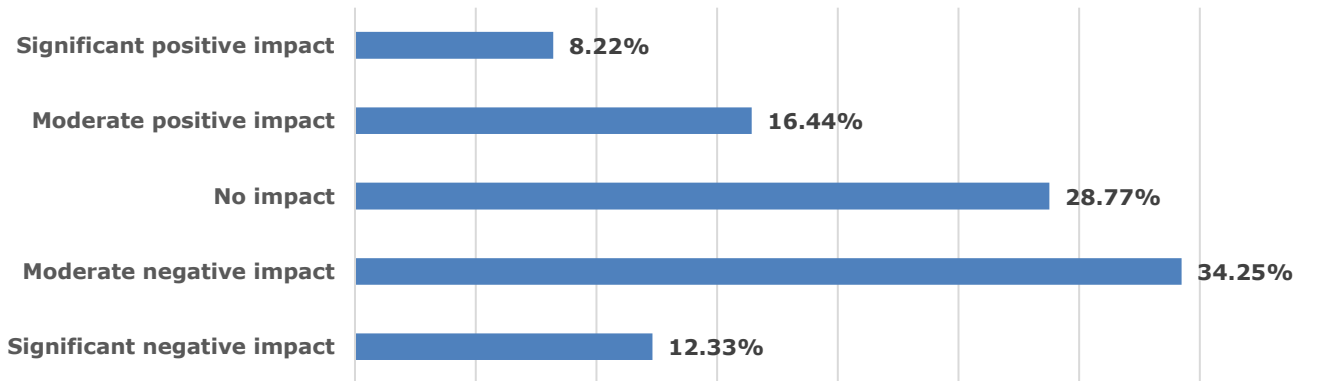
38% have dipped into cash reserves to ensure they continue to offer a service to their beneficiaries.



Despite this, when asked how likely it was that the organisation would **not** be operating this time next year due to financial challenges, organisations were overall very optimistic with 79.5% believing this was quite unlikely or very unlikely and only 2.74% believing that this was very likely.

This again reflects the agility of the sector as those who are surviving the crisis, many with the support of MVA, are now in a better position going forward: 53.4% said COVID-19 had either made no impact or had made a positive impact on services.

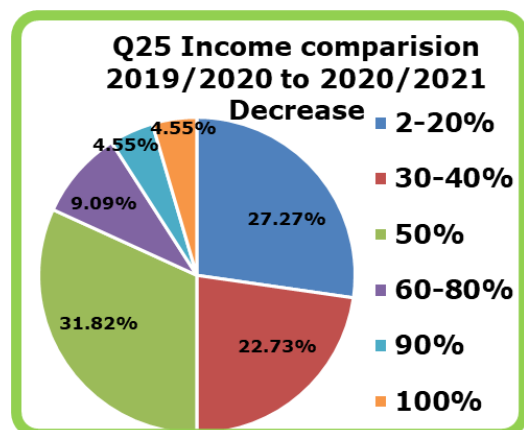
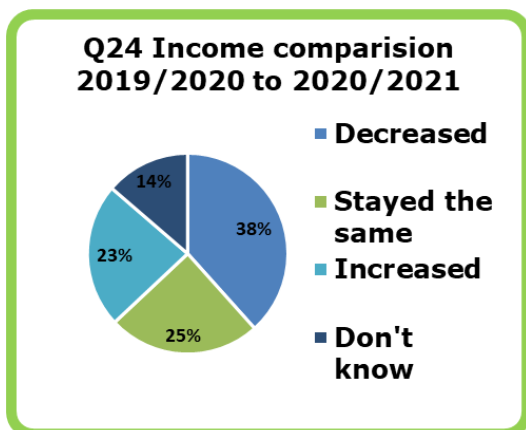
**Q23 How do you expect COVID-19 to affect your organisation's ability to deliver on its objectives this time next year?**



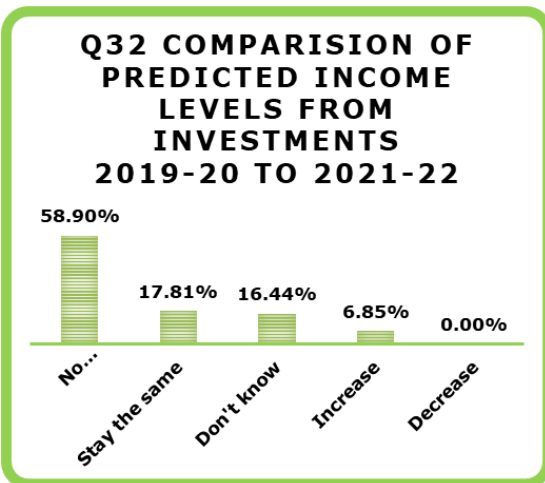
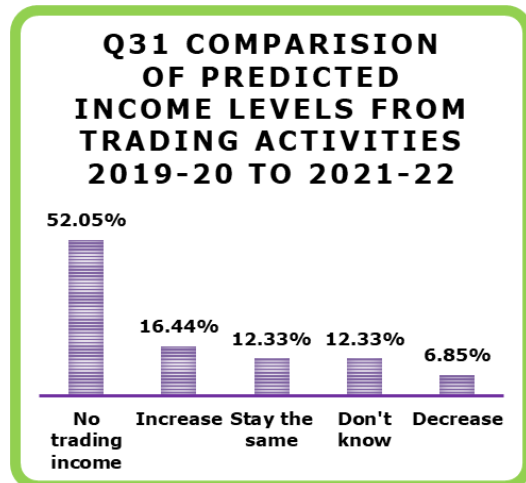
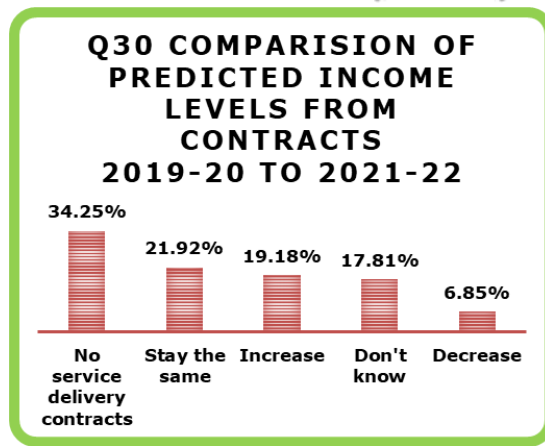
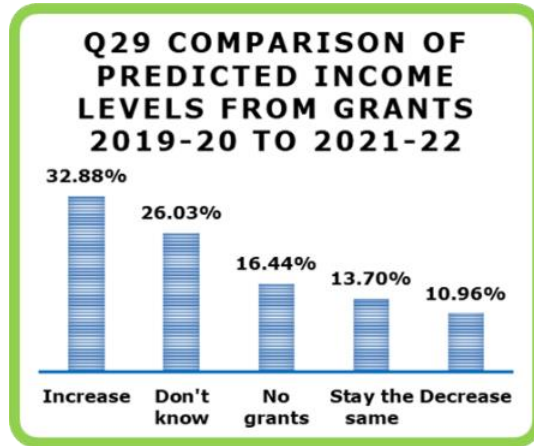
**Financial Impact**

**Continued loss of income**

The sector has taken a significant hit to the funding it receives as reflected in the largest percentage, 38% of respondents reporting a decrease in funding, with the highest loss of 100% experienced. Almost one fifth experienced a reduction of 60-100% income which few, if any organisations, could survive.



The sector continues to rely on grants and contracts over trading and investments as evidenced in the forecast charts below:



Despite the reduction in income, the respondents remain optimistic going forward with just under half predicting grant income will remain the same or increase, leaving just under one third not sure, and only just over one tenth believing there will be a decrease in 2021 -2022.

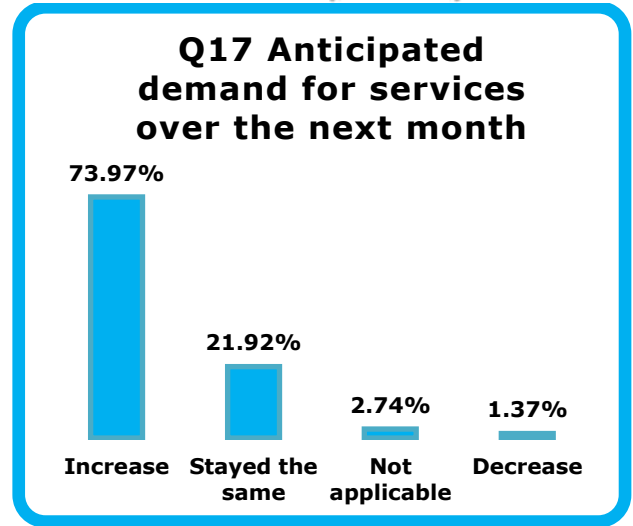
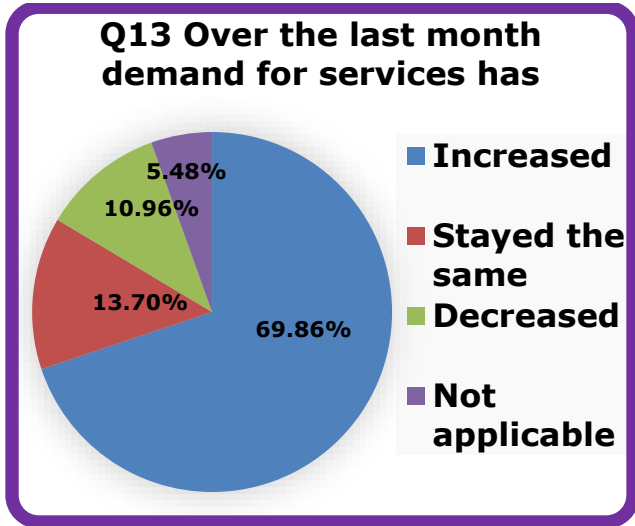
In comparison just over one third do not anticipate any income from contracts, with just over two fifths expecting contracts to either stay the same or increase, leaving just under one sixth not sure.

Whilst many organisations have been supported with additional income during COVID-19, this support will not be long term and the inability of many to fund raise is beginning to impact.

### Increased costs

When asked if costs had increased compared to the financial year before COVID-19:

- 31.5% said these had increased
- 13.7% have increased their paid workforce
- 34.2% said they had increased their volunteer base
- **Demand for Services**



Despite this loss of income experienced by 38% of respondents, there has been a 69.86% increase in demand for services and an anticipated further increase from 73.97 % of respondents over the following months.

Whilst 69.86% saw an increase in demand for services, only 13.70% had an increase in staffing and 34.25% saw an increase in volunteering within the sector sample. This highlights the immense pressure the VCS has experienced since October 2020 to do more with less.

With the majority of organisations (73.97%) anticipating this demand for services to rise further without corresponding predictions for increases in income, this does not bode well for the sector if these respondents echo the rest of the sector.

## Capacity

### Comments from respondents

- 2020/21 we received much needed emergency grant funding which will not be available to us in 2021/22. As fundraising activities will be restricted during the year it is expected that we will see a reduced income in this area*
- We have benefited from furlough, been hit by closures. The picture is not clear yet*
- We expect our previous commercial supporters to re-start supporting us now that they are trading again*
- We have to just keep working hard and explore all areas to keep the funding possible to deliver the services we provide*
- We are grateful for the grants that help us serve our community and keep the organisation running, this is an important lifeline.*

6. *We anticipate that our fundraising will steadily recover over a number of years.*
7. *Numbers attending sessions are much reduced, due to the need to limit group sizes (social distancing); Some day centres not attending (transport issues); increased anxiety/mental health issues (some performers still have not left the house); self-isolating/shielding. We have had to run more sessions for less people! More sessions = more rent; less people attending = less income – it's not a great equation!*
8. *We are currently using reserves but long-term we will definitely be running at a severe loss - especially as we rely heavily on concerts and fundraising events which have also had to be cancelled/postponed.*
9. *Following COVID-19 we have benefitted from an increased desire to support mental health provision across the area. I believe this has come about from an already understood need to support mental health where funding was previously difficult from central and local government and now there seems to have been a realisation that these needs need to be supported financially from central and local government sources.*
10. *At this moment in time we are able to meet our outgoings, If COVID-19 restrictions impacts our funding streams it may affect the number of support work session we can provide.*
11. *It is a very uncertain time and we it is hard to know what to expect.*

## **Sharing the data**

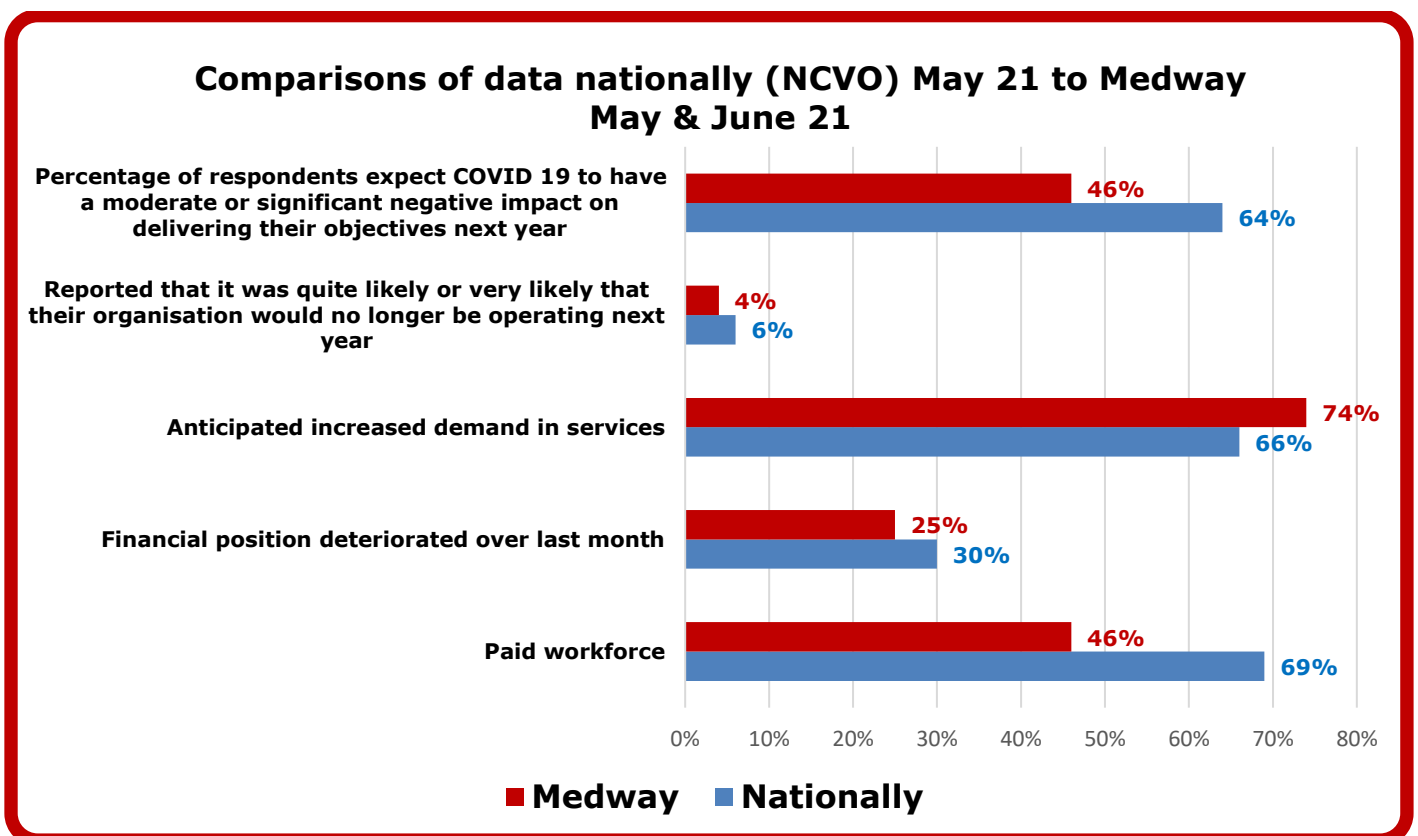
- We are working with Nottingham Trent University to share this data. They are compiling such data from a range of local authorities – reports will directly inform Government.
- We will receive a report/s from Nottingham Trent University on how Medway compares with other areas in the country.



## Conclusion

Whilst not all the respondents have experienced losses, a significant number have, and the majority have seen an increased demand in services. The insights from this selection of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) reflect what we hear from others in the sector not just locally, but also nationally.

We have the data, to specific questions, polled by NCVO, Sheffield Hallam University and Nottingham Trent University in May 2021 nationally and MVA in Medway during May and June 2021 ([Reference 2](#)), see below for a selection of comparisons.



Our figures are slightly more positive in some areas, possibly suggesting we have a more optimistic group of organisations operating within Medway, or maybe a better supported sector. It is concerning that just under half of the respondents believe they will be moderately or significantly adversely impacted by COVID-19 to the extent that it negatively affects their ability to deliver their objectives. Perhaps even more alarming is that 6% nationally and 4% locally don't anticipate existing next year in an already stretched sector.

Of note is also the widespread increased demand in services with three quarters locally seeing an increase, comparable to the slightly less increased demand of two thirds nationally. Taken with the reduction in income of one quarter locally and just shy of a third nationally, this is of concern for the sustainability of the sector. In Medway, with many of our organisations with no paid staff and relying on volunteers,

it needs to be remembered that volunteers, need to be recruited, trained, often DBS checked and then supervised – all time-consuming processes placing huge pressures on small organisations with minimal if any paid workforce to undertake these roles.

This cannot be sustained without further resources both financial and practical being invested into the sector. This is particularly important at a time when the Health & Social Care (H&SC) sector are heavily reliant on the Voluntary & Community Sector to drive forward their prevention agenda through significant investment in their social prescribers and link workers, but with a sector inadequately resourced to deliver the 'social prescription'. In addition, with the Health and Care Partnership emphasis on the Population Health management model which seeks to address health inequalities, the resources of VCS will be in demand reinforcing even more the need for proper investment in the VCS to occur to enable these national strategies to succeed.

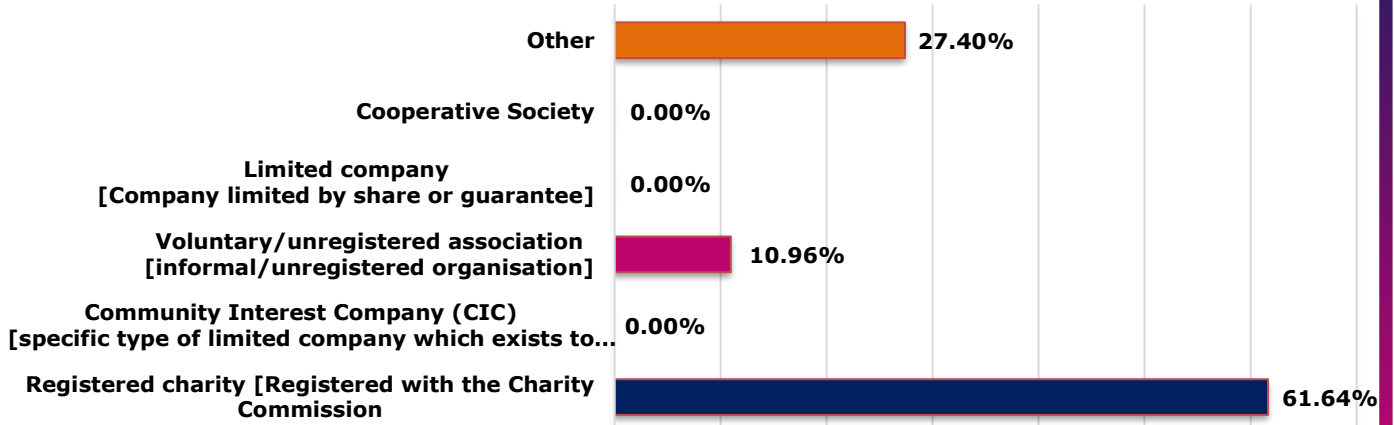
## References

1. [What Is A Good Survey Response Rate? - SmartSurvey](#)
2. [NTU-COVID-voluntary-sector-report-May-2021 DIGITAL.pdf \(cpwop.org.uk\)](#)

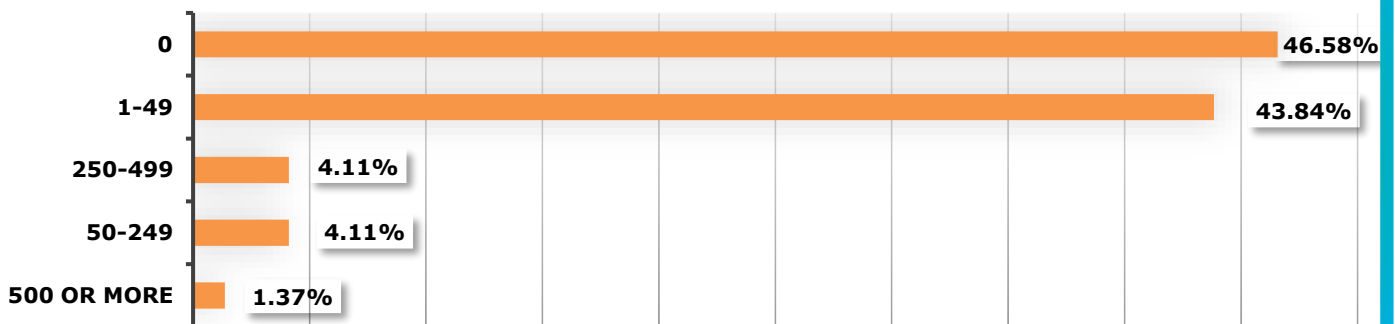
## Appendix 1 – Responses to Survey Questions

Questions 1 – 6 contact information and permissions

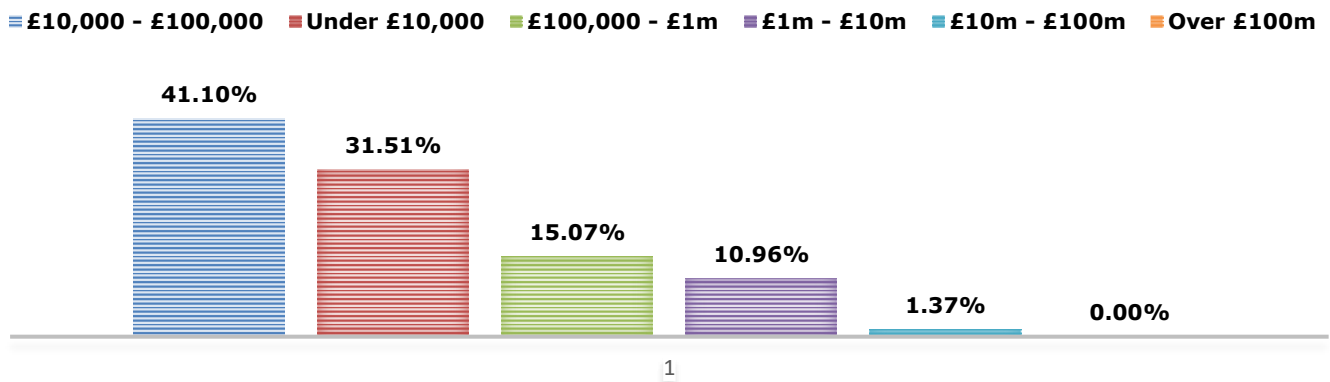
### Q7 Legal Structure



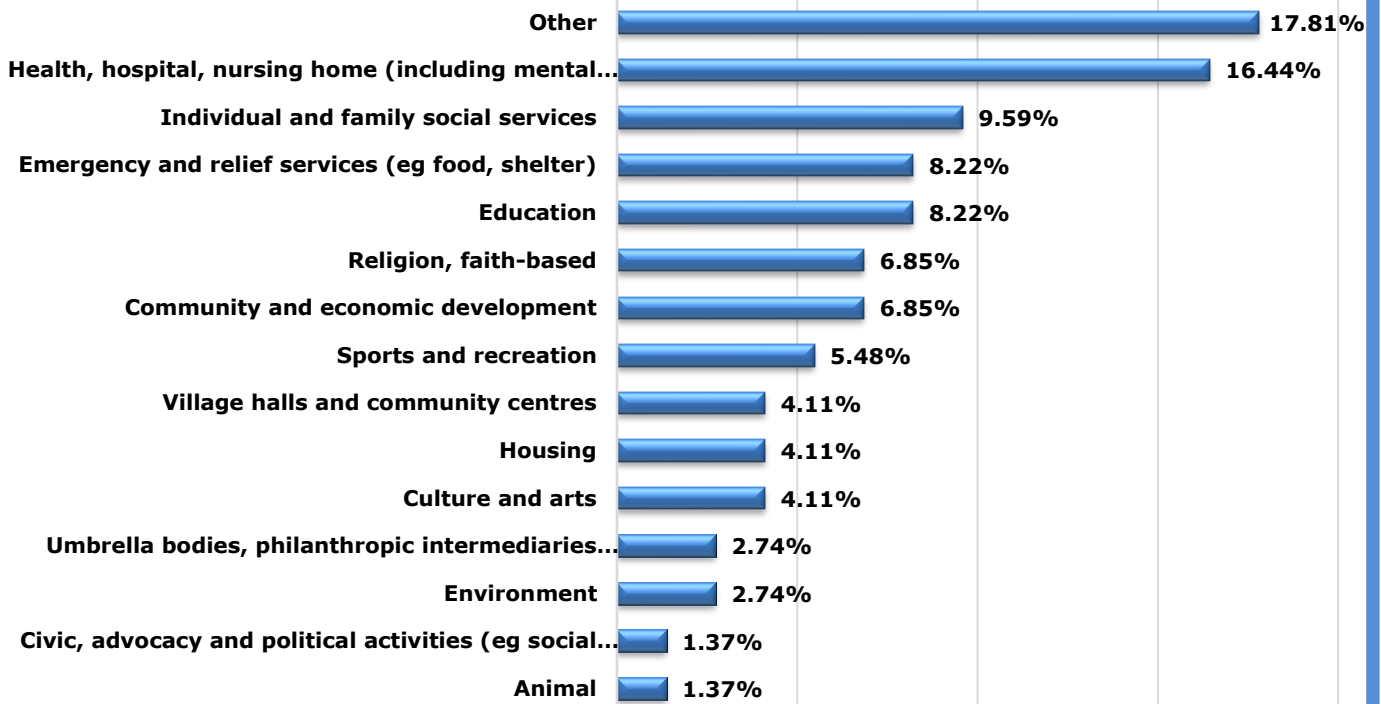
### Q8 No of employees



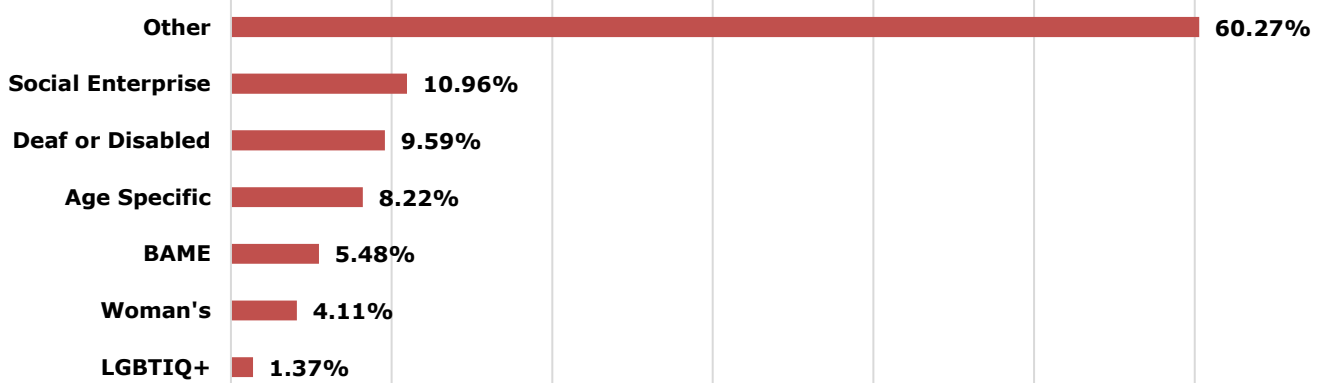
### Q9 SIZE OF ORGANISATION BASED ON INCOME FROM LAST FINANCIAL YEAR



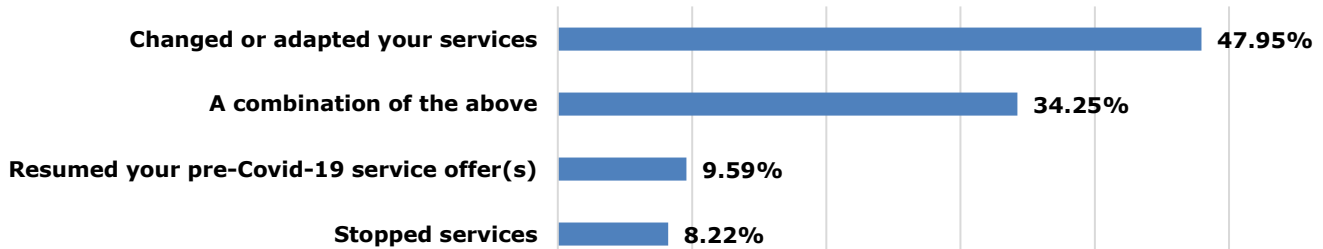
### Q10 Main focus of organisation



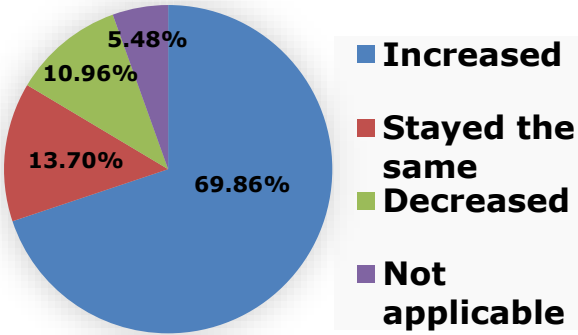
### Q11 Organisation description



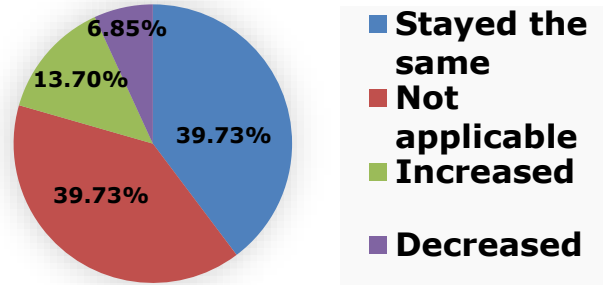
### Q12 Due to COVID-19 Organisations have:



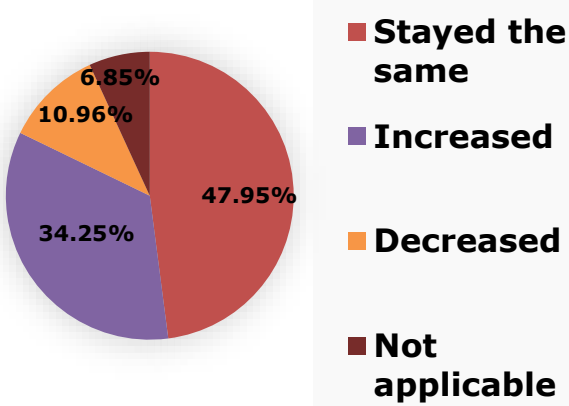
**Q13 Over the last month demand for services has**



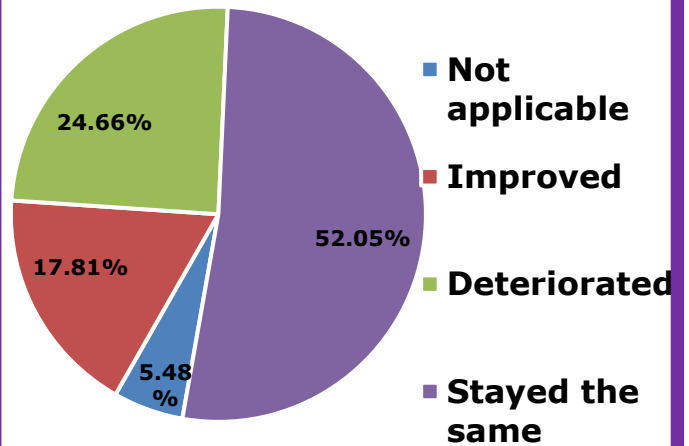
**Q14 Over the last month paid workforce has**



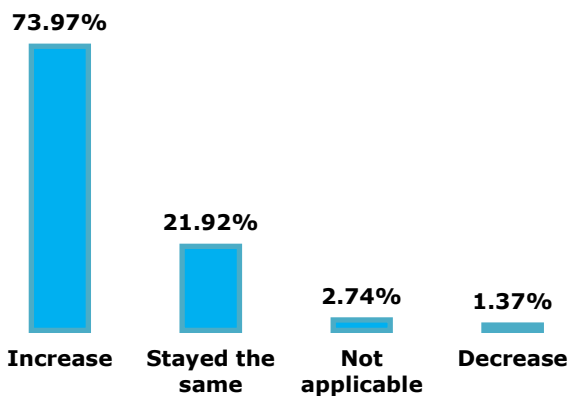
**Q15 Changes to Volunteer numbers**



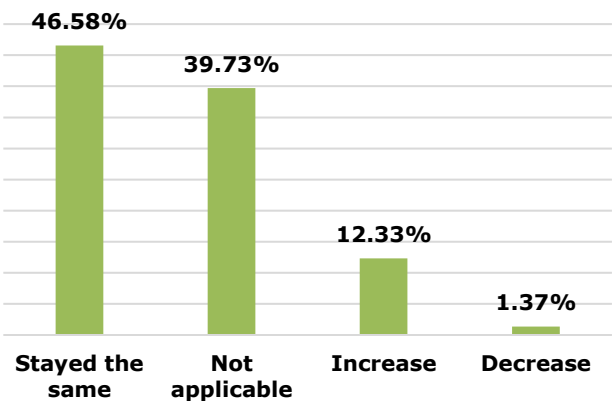
**Q16 Over the last month has your financial position:**



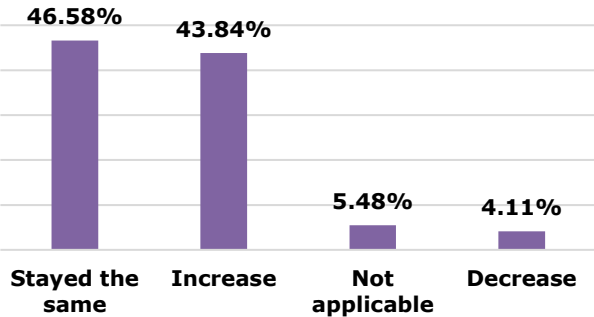
**Q17 Anticipated demand for services over the next month**



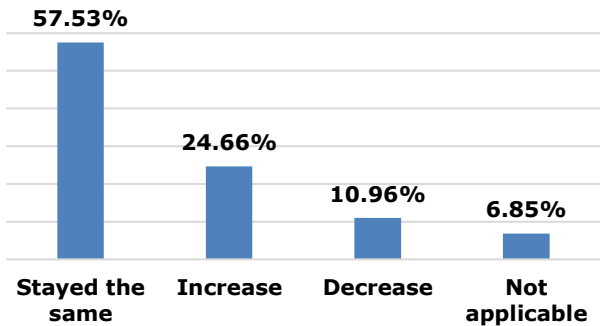
**Q18 Anticipated changes to paid workforce over the next month**



**Q19 Anticipated changes to number of volunteers in organisation over the next month**

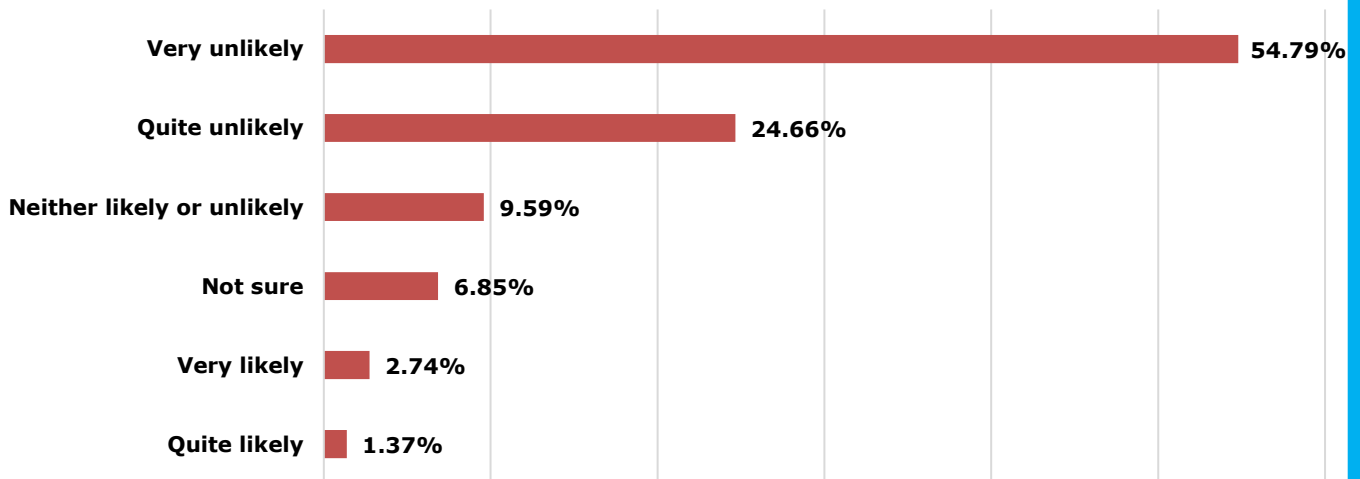


**Q20/21 Anticipated changes to financial position in the next month**

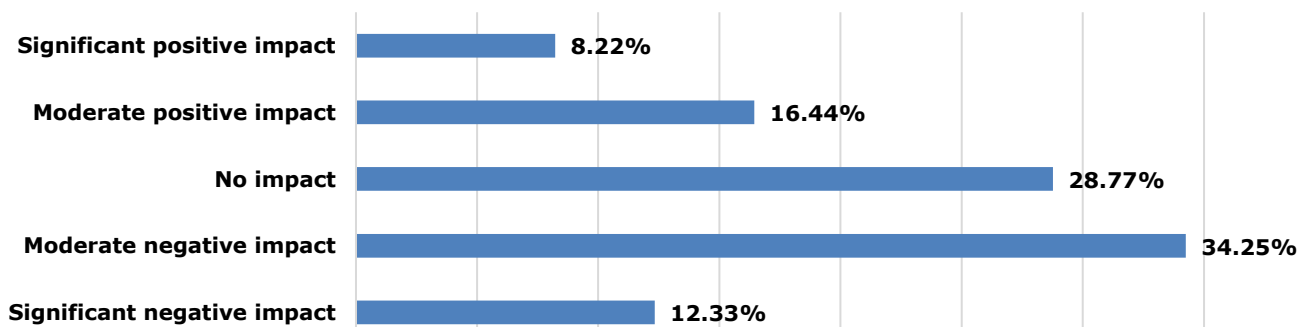


Please note Q20 & 21 asked the same question

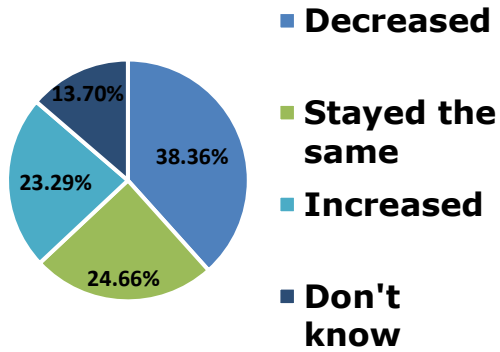
**Q22 Organisations who forecast no longer operating this time next year due to financial challenges raised by COVID-19**



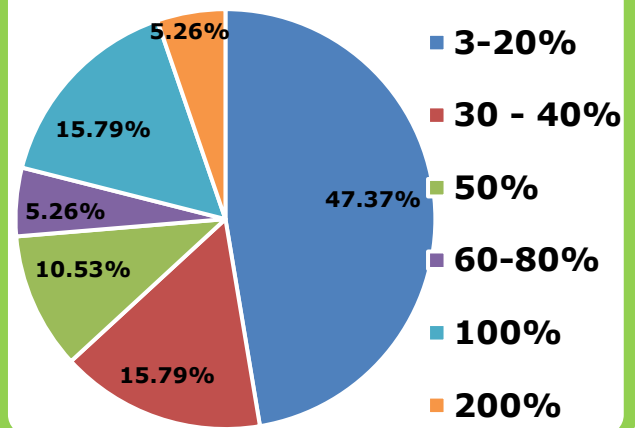
**Q23 How do you expect COVID-19 to affect your organisation's ability to deliver on its objectives this time next year?**



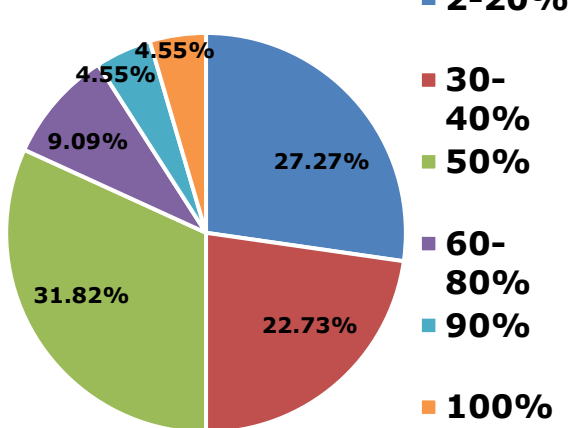
### Q24 Income comparison 2019/2020 to 2020/2021



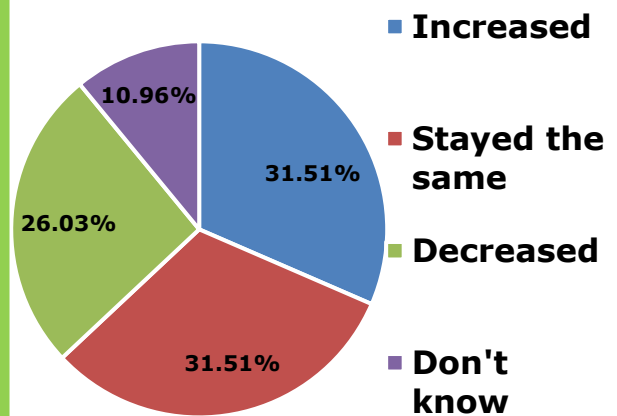
### Q25 Income comparison 2019/2020 to 2020/2021 Increase



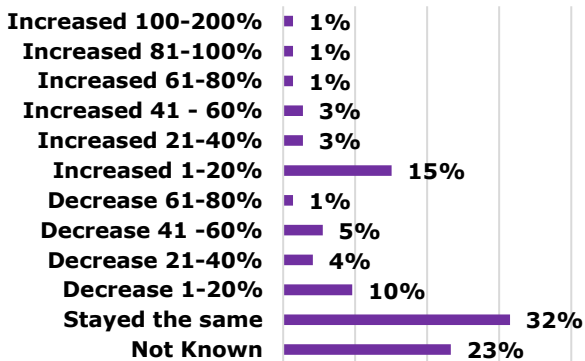
### Q25 Income comparison 2019/2020 to 2020/2021 Decrease



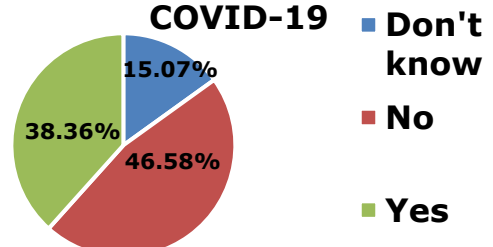
### Q26 Costs comparison 2019/2020 to 2020/2021



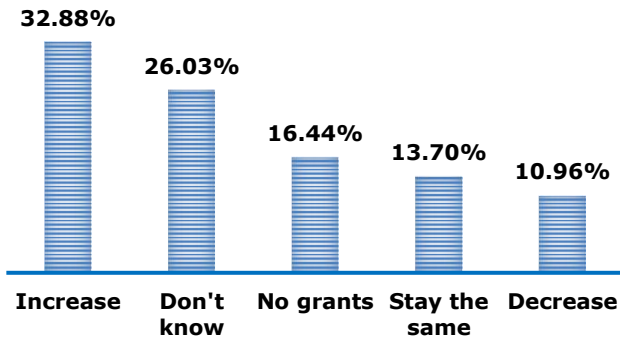
### Q27 Percentage increase or decrease to total costs



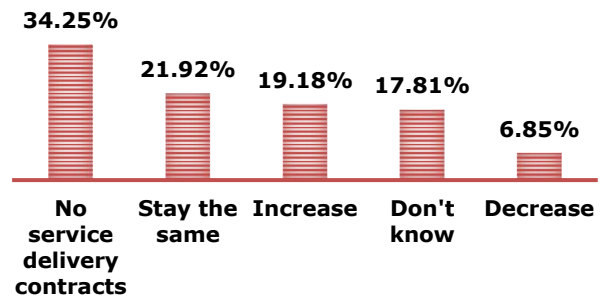
### Q28 Organisations that have used cash reserves to cope with impacts of COVID-19



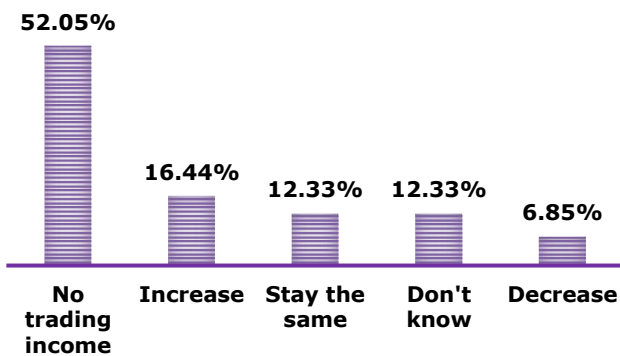
### Q29 COMPARISON OF PREDICTED INCOME LEVELS FROM GRANTS 2019-20 TO 2021-22



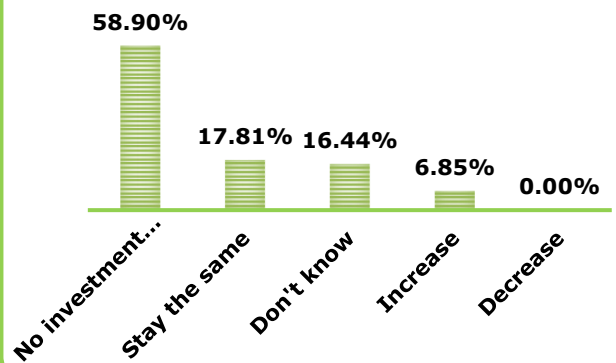
### Q30 COMPARISON OF PREDICTED INCOME LEVELS FROM CONTRACTS 2019-20 TO 2021-22



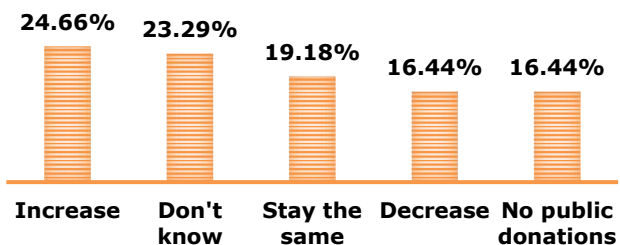
### Q31 COMPARISON OF PREDICTED INCOME LEVELS FROM TRADING ACTIVITIES 2019-20 TO 2021-22



### Q32 COMPARISON OF PREDICTED INCOME LEVELS FROM INVESTMENTS 2019-20 TO 2021-22



### Q33 COMPARISON OF PREDICTED INCOME LEVELS FROM PUBLIC DONATIONS 2019-20 TO 2021-22



### Q34 COMPARISON OF PREDICTED INCOME LEVELS FROM OTHER SOURCES 2019-20 TO 2021-22

