

State of the Sector Survey

2017



Snapshot: geographical area

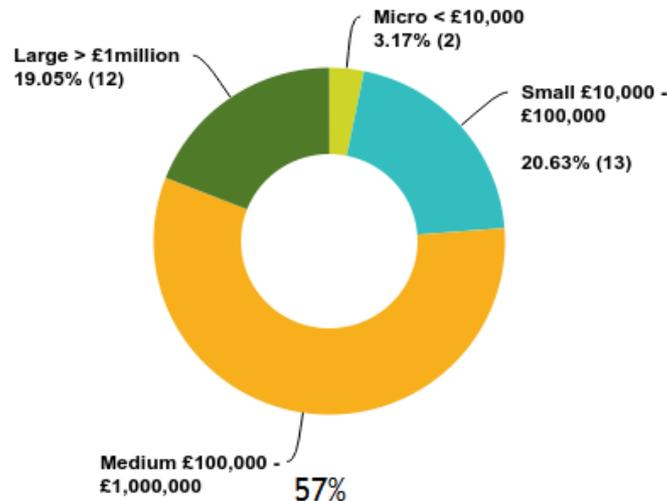
We surveyed organisations from all across Tower Hamlets, including organisations from outside who are active in the borough. We received 67 responses this year. An improvement on 51 last year.



Snapshot: Annual Turnover

Q7 What is the approximate annual financial turnover of your organisation?

Answered: 63 Skipped: 4



We used the NCVO* definitions of size by turnover.

57% of responses came from medium sized organisations

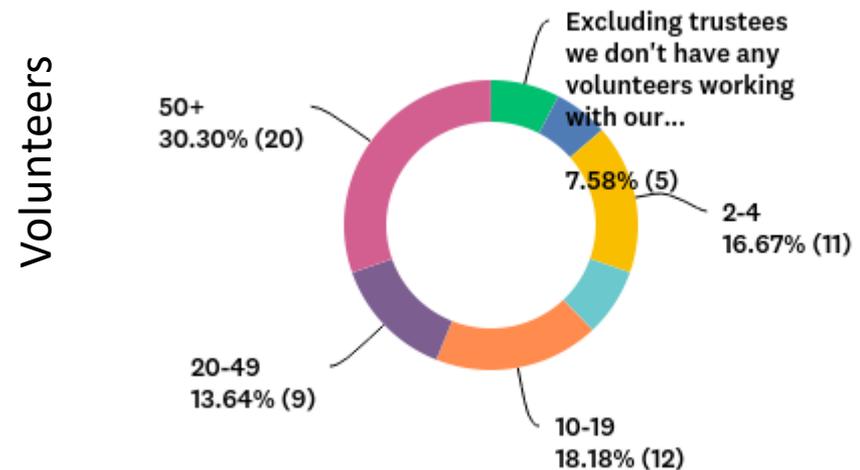
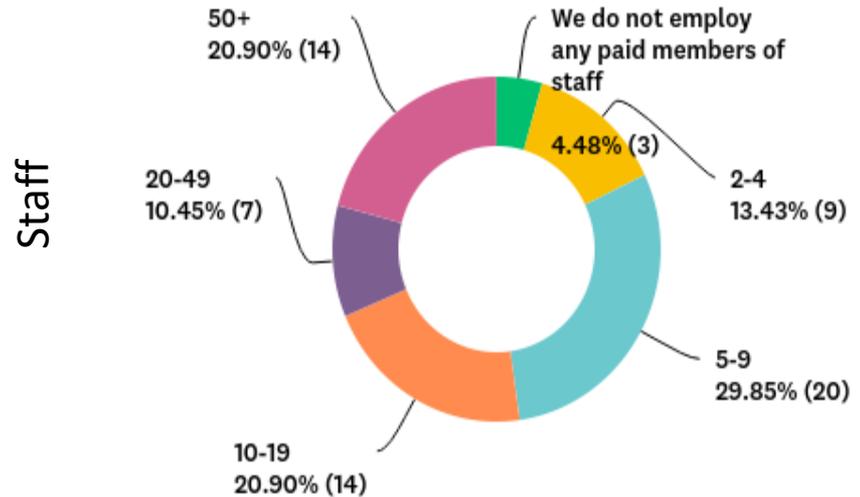
Last year we received responses from 6 Micro organisations versus 2 this year – this year the profile of charities who responded was wealthier than 2016

We received responses with organisations working across all sub-sectors (e.g. children and young people, sport, community centres) working with a diverse mix of people by age, gender and ethnic background.

* National Council for Voluntary Organisations

Snapshot: Work Force

- 21% of respondents have more than 50 employees, and 30% had 5-9 employees
- 84% of respondents pay their employees the London Living Wage
- In addition to their employees, respondents also rely on the work of volunteers. Almost one third of organisations had more than 50 volunteers

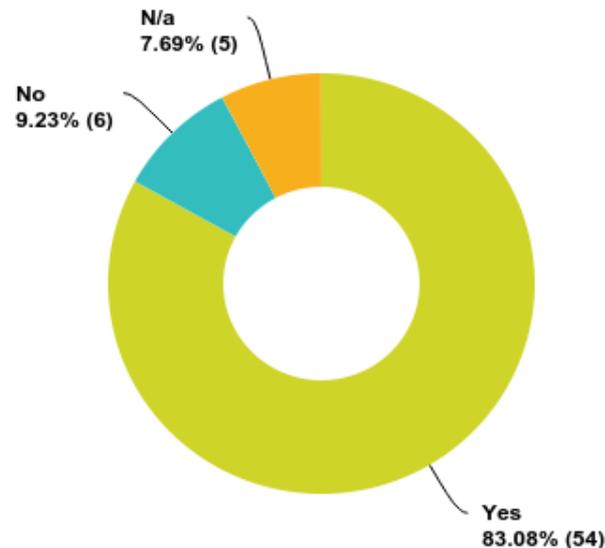


Snapshot: Work Force

- A high proportion of the respondents report paying London Living Wage.
- In April 2017 the Living Wage Foundation and Cardiff University released a report detailing benefits experienced by businesses from officially accrediting. If you are paying London Living Wage you could stand to benefit more than you already are:
<https://www.livingwage.org.uk/news/Cardiff-Report>

Q3 Do you pay all your staff employed in Tower Hamlets at the London Living Wage?

Answered: 65 Skipped: 2

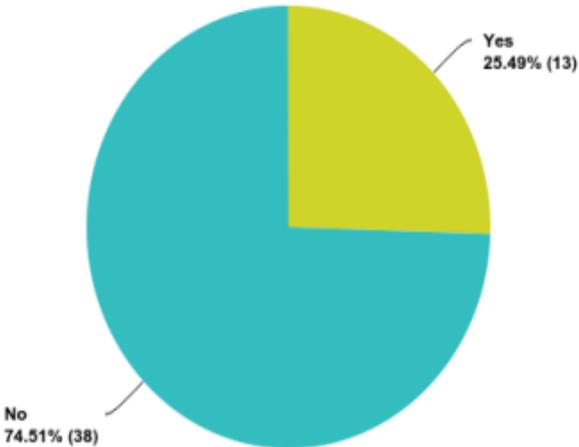


Snapshot: Premises

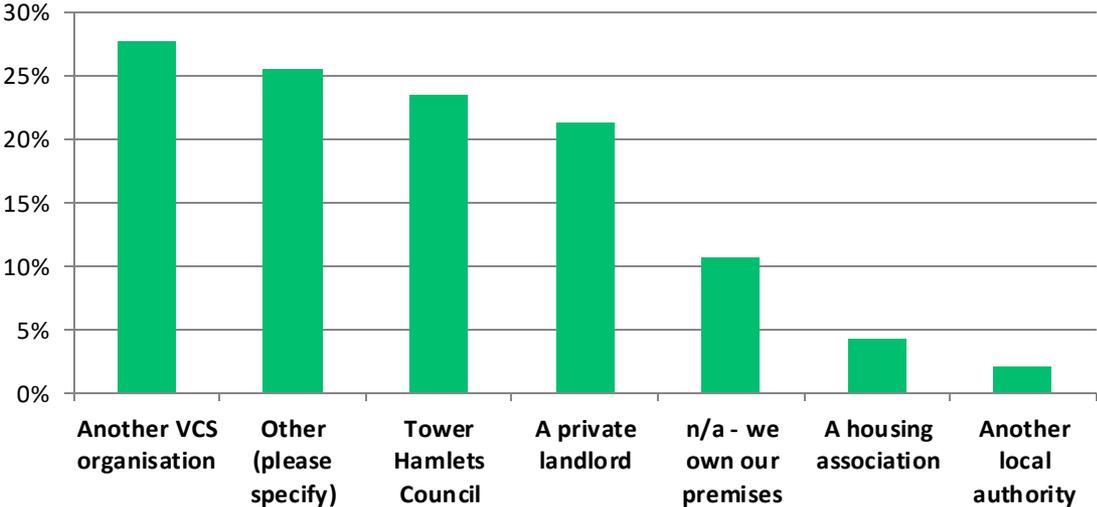
75% of respondents rent the premises they use

Q40 Do you own your own premises?

Answered: 51 Skipped: 12



Do you rent your premises from any of the following?

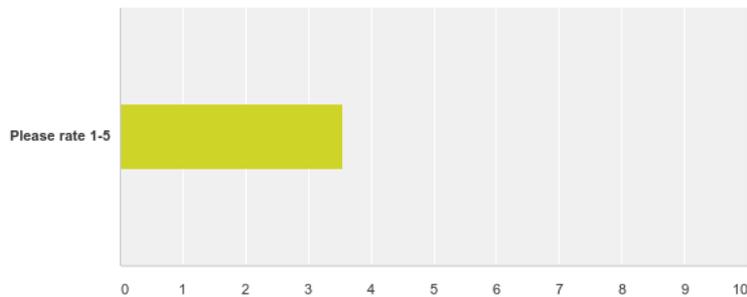


Only 45% of tenants said that they felt they have security of tenure.

Funding: sufficiency

Q8 Does your organisation have sufficient funds to run all of its projects for this financial year?

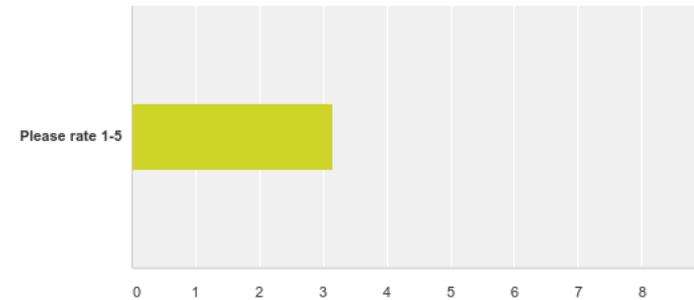
Answered: 61 Skipped: 6



2017/2016

Q7 Does your organisation have sufficient funds to run all of its projects for this financial year?

Answered: 49 Skipped: 2



- As you might expect we saw an increase in confidence around having enough funding for this financial year compared to last year, although confidence in raising funds from non-statutory sources showed no change.
- **Regardless of size and financial turnover, organisations seem to find raising funds from non-statutory sources equally hard.**

Funding: local commissioning

- 45 / 62 organisations have bid for contracts from statutory sector organisations before.
33 / 45 have a contract currently
- 35 / 45 or 83% say they would bid for a tender again.
- Key comments on the experience of bidding for the contracts include:
 - “Time consuming but necessary.”
 - “The Statutory Sector's demands and scale are too high and time consuming.”
 - “Varied. Can be very time consuming and difficult to complete all sections especially for health contracts where the tender process is generally geared for larger health trusts and national organisations.”
 - “Frustrating - nearly always, programmes are late in being offered to tender and we need to find fill-the-gap funding to cover the interim.”
 - “We provide a unique service so bidding was straight forward”
- Following the publication of this report, the Voluntary Sector Forum drew up ideas for improving local commissioning. THCVS will report back on these findings.

Q13 How did you find the experience of bidding for the contracts?

Answered: 42 Skipped: 25

Process Tender Consuming Onerous
Difficult Complex Bid Larger Organisations

Working with others

Networking with the local sector is:	Not important at all	0%
	Unimportant	8%
	Important	92%

	Do you have enough opportunities to network with :	
	Funders	Fellow Organisations
None	0%	2.5%
Not enough	77%	70%
Enough	23%	27.5%

Most organisations value networking, but don't get enough opportunities

72% of people who responded said they feel they do not personally have enough time to network with others.

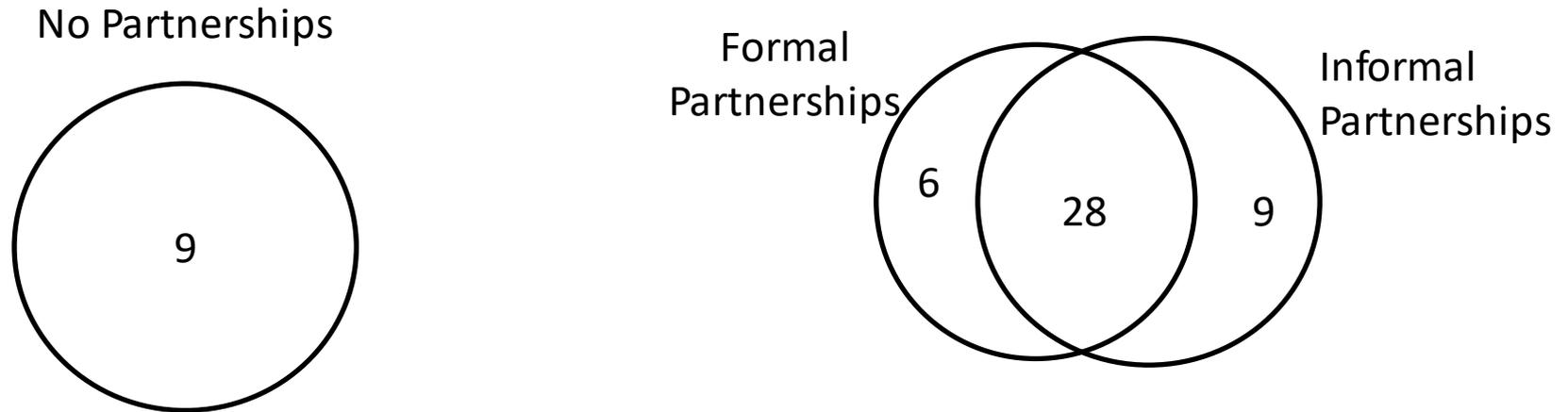
Working with others

The sector is alive to the advantages of collaborative work.

82% of organisations reported being in some kind of partnership arrangement with another organisation.

Over 55% reported being in both a formal and informal arrangement with other organisations.

Although organisations report a desire to network more they are forging beneficial relationships.



40% of people who responded did not know that THCVS is working to set up a consortium to bid for future contracts that is open to all VCSE organisations active in Tower Hamlets.

Looking to the Future

Which of these 5 is most likely to happen next year?

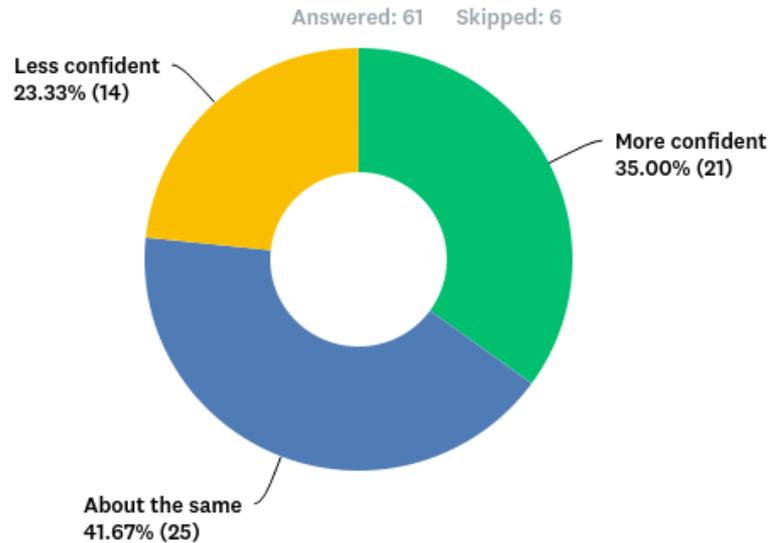


- 42% think they will grow in the coming year. This is in line with the confident predictions of having sufficient funds for the year ahead.
- 11% of organisations said they may have to consider merging with another group next year although no one is actively taking these steps at the moment

Looking to the Future 2

Despite a year full of upheaval, 75% of respondents feel the same or more confident than they did this time last year.

Q25 Do you personally feel more or less confident about the future for your organisation than you did this time last year?



Business Rates

- Before the adjustment in Business Rates, 55% of people surveyed were **not** aware of available support from the Council. THCVS was involved with promoting support and we will share this with the relevant parties at the council.

Q. 43 “How has the changes in Business Rates affected your organisation?”:

- “We have to fill out more forms to apply for the rates reduction, demonstrating community benefit, whereas before this was given if you could prove you were a charity. A more time-consuming way of getting discount.”
 - “Don't know yet. Have applied for Charity relief.[sic]”
 - “We have secured 100% exemption.”
 - “[We’ve] been asked for more money and had to apply for the 20% discretionary relieve even though the premises are technically under the rate threshold.”
 - “Not at all, we are a charity.”
- Key talking points:
 - Just under 50% of respondents reported successfully applying for relief or no change in circumstances. 18% reported dissatisfaction with the new system.
 - This is in line with expectations that their would be more strict checking of eligibility now that the council retains business rates.
 - Some people remain uncertain about the impact of the changes for their organisation.

What you think of THCVS

	2016	2017
Score (out of 3)	2.4	2.3

- We asked “To what extent does THCVS effectively challenge the statutory sector?”
- You said:

“Whilst some impact has been made in particular with the TH MSG, we do not feel it goes far enough. However in the same instance appreciate that it is a challenging role and are grateful for a voice as not all boroughs have the same support.”

“THCVS often tries hard to challenge but isn't always able to be as robust as it might be. This must, in part,

reflect the fact that THCVS is predominantly funded by LBTH/CCG, and so is effectively biting the hand that feeds it. Also some colleagues in the statutory sector are more receptive to challenge than others.”

“I totally admire the work that the THCVS has done and continues to do - Well Done”

Making Your Voice Heard

Amongst organisations surveyed, there is a feeling that there are plenty of opportunities to get involved in local policy. However, it is difficult for smaller organisations to balance this with the core work of the organisation.

	Not at all involved	Somewhat involved	Very involved
Do you feel involved in local policy development and debate around local policy?	14.6% (7)	77% (37)	8.3% (4)

“Sometimes we feel there are too many meetings and consultations for stretched organisations to possibly attend. At the moment we are very concerned about community buildings and the possible charges the council is intending to impose.”

“As a small organisation we have the choice of either running the service or networking or taking part in local policy development. As an organisation that receives no core funds from the local statutory sources, our priority is to develop the organisation, make it stronger and hence everything else comes second.”

“I could get more involved if I had time for this. it is not for want of opportunities, you provide many.”

Making Your Voice Heard

“The voluntary sector can influence the local council and NHS on crucial issues.”

Does this reflect your experience?

Quality Assurance

Q29 What, if any, quality assurance accreditation does your organisation have?

Answered: 47 Skipped: 20



- Just over half of respondents had some form of accreditation with the range of accreditations differing according to the type of work done.
- PQASSO was the most widespread accreditation with 24% of accredited organisations holding it.
- The next most frequent were Ofsted, MATRIX, Investors in People and Investors in Volunteering.

Senior Leadership

	2016	2017
Score (out of 3)	2.8	2.8

- Within local VCS organisations there is a lot of confidence in leaders. 84% of respondents rated leadership positively or very positively.
- People in senior figures feel there is adequate support and training but things could be improved.

	1. THEY ARE RECEIVING NO SUPPORT, OPPORTUNITIES OR TRAINING	2. THEY ARE RECEIVING SOME OR NOT VERY MUCH OF THE REQUIRED SUPPORT.	3. THEY ARE RECEIVING MOST OR ALL OF THE SUPPORT, TRAINING AND OPPORTUNITIES REQUIRED.	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Please rate from 1-5	1.82% 1	56.36% 31	40.00% 22	1.82% 1	55	2.45

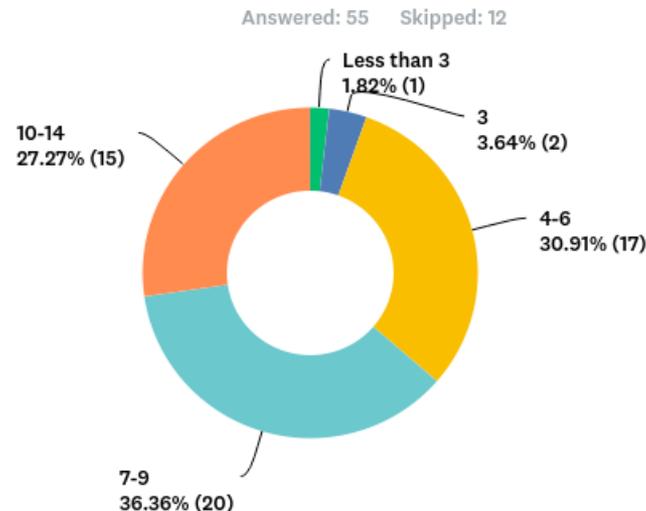
Senior Leadership & Trustees 2

- We received 33 written answers about “barriers to effective leadership”. Here is a selection:
 - “Capacity”
 - “Capacity to undertake training and development while getting on with delivering against our contract. “
 - “Time constraints. Cost of training. Relevance of training and support available.”
 - “Probably finance- leadership costs money!”
 - “We can't offer much job security or very high wages.”
 - “More training and support required”
 - “We are inexperienced and insufficiently supported by Board”
 - “Having people in leadership with different skills and expertise to support the organisation.”
 - “Time. Trustees have limited time to offer and the Chief Executive is part-time due to funding cuts.”

Trustees

- Respondents reported strong relationships with their trustees who are engaged in a range of activities supporting the organisations
 - 93% of trustees are involved with financial oversight
 - 84% are open to being asked for advice on ad hoc issues
 - 80% of trustees are involved with financial oversight
 - 78% are involved with compliance to the governing documents and the law

Q36 How many trustees do you currently have on your board?



And that's that

(phew...)

If you have any questions about the State of the Sector survey or would like to get in touch about supporting the survey in 2018 (serious brownie points), please contact ieuan@thcvs.org.uk or call 020 8980 8427

