SALFORD CVS

SECTOR PULSE REPORT OCT 21

Salford CVS
Making a difference in Salford

HEADLINES

HEADLINE FINDINGS BASED ON VCSE RESPONDENTS IN SALFORD

90% OF VCSE ORGANISATIONS ARE PHYSICALLY OPEN OR PROVIDING A HYBRID MODEL

75% ARE STILL PROVIDING SOME ELEMENT OF COVID SPECIFIC DELIVERY OR SUPPORT

72% ARE EXPERIENCING AN INCREASED DEMAND ON SERVICES

64% HAVE HAD SIGNIFICANT OR MAJOR CONCERNS ABOUT THE LEVEL OF UNMET NEED IN THEIR AREA

KEY FINDINGS

The Salford CVS Pulse Check is an online survey circulated in October 2021. This edition was also featured at our annual Salford VCSE Conference. The pulse is designed to gather a real-time snapshot of some of the issues affecting the city. So, first of all, a huge thank you to every single group and organisation who completed it!

WE ARE OPEN AND DEMAND IS RISING

As mentioned in the headline findings **90%** of the organisations that responded are physically open or provide a hybrid offer. The remaining respondents are open virtually and often this is linked to participant requests. However, demand is rising with **72%** of respondents experiencing an increased demand for their services. This has happened for a number of reasons including Covid, the political landscape as well as seasonality.

"Demand has doubled in Salford from April 2021" *(Mental health support organisation)*

"An outpour of EUSS *(immigration support requests)"*

"We have noticed increasing referrals to services following return to schools in September"

COVID ISNT OVER

75% of organisations report that they are still delivering Covid-specific response activities.

When examined responses could be broken down into three main areas of work:

- **Supporting Covid interventions** - Ongoing mutual aid support, stay in touch services as well as programmes such as test kit distribution and supporting vaccination.
- **Services as a result of the impact of Covid** - These include increased demand for services particularly surrounding mental health and wellbeing, impacting groups providing support and counselling etc.
- **An increase linked to challenges magnified by Covid** - Such as helping with food and food banks as well as other essentials such as baby and family packages.

KEY FINDINGS

A COMPLEX PICTURE OF NEED

As we mentioned in the headline findings **62%** of organisations have significant or major concerns about the level of unmet need in their communities.

The overwhelming theme raised was the **impact of poverty** on residents. Comments included the impact of fuel prices (including heating) and the end of the universal credit uplift, alongside rising food poverty. Also the impacts of redundancies/loss of work for those with low paid (and often low skilled) jobs. Housing and the lack of quality, affordable/social housing was also raised.

Community cohesion concerns were raised including worries surrounding the lack of a clear cut strategy and plan to deal with post-Brexit post-Covid support for EU nationals. But also broader concerns covering national and global crises and issues such as equality, diversity, freedom, tackling social instability and ensuring individuals' voices are heard.

Mental health services were mentioned repeatedly and specifically in terms of young people and the impact of the pandemic on mental and physical wellbeing. The lack of capacity within public services was raised - whether that is waiting lists for services, the ability to access mental health support in schools and the lack of investment in preventative support e.g. decline in early help funding.

Similar to the comments surrounding mental health services a lot of responses raised **systems concerns**. Organisations reported increased support needs due to the lack of statutory support, the inability to wait for service (but also the inability to pay for private equivalents). In addition to the rising complexity of cases and individuals attending with various and multiple issues. Comments were also made about concerns surrounding the GM Integrated Care System both in terms of future partnership funding but also commissioning approaches and broader reorganisation/transition impacts.

KEY FINDINGS

THE STATE OF THE VCSE SECTOR IN SALFORD

We asked respondents specific questions surrounding their workforce, volunteers and finances to gauge the ongoing state of the Salford VCSE sector

Workforce

For the majority of organisations, over the past three months, their paid workforce has either stayed stable (40%) or is growing (45%). When the responses were analysed the growth was linked to meeting increased demand. It should not necessarily be seen as positive growth. Of those respondents that declared an increase in staffing only 10% of respondents had also experienced an increase in income. The remainder had stayed the same or decreased.

Volunteers

Nearly half of organisations have experienced an increase in volunteering but similar numbers have stayed static or experienced a decrease. Further examination showed that those experiencing decreases tended to be larger organisations, whilst increases were seen in the small/medium organisations. The end of furlough was stated as a key reason for the decreasing numbers with increases being linked to the nature of the group (volunteer-led) and the impact of re-opening and reduced restrictions as well as rising demand. There is a need for further research in this area including exploring the nature and type of roles on offer.

Financial Position

The past three months have been relatively stable, with 61% reporting their income has stayed the same, however, 22% have experienced a drop in income. The potential stabilisation of income should not necessarily be celebrated. Of those respondents reporting stable income, 79% are also experiencing increasing demand and potential growth in expenditure as a result of this, which mirrors the State of the Sector 2021 findings. In terms of decreases, those providing details stated a decline in trading income as well as an inability to explore external funding due to staffing pressures.

KEY FINDINGS

OUR WEEKLY E-BULLETIN COMMUNICATIONS

The final part of the pulse focuses on Salford CVS services. This edition focused on our weekly e-bulletin.

86%
RECEIVE OUR E-BULLETIN

72%
FIND IT USEFUL OR VERY USEFUL

77%
READ AT LEAST 50% OF ARTICLES

AREAS OF INTEREST

Based on responses to this question the top three areas of interest in the e-bulletin are:

- Funding opportunities (85%)
- Sector news (77%)
- Training and events (77%)

Our own analytics differs slightly from this, as they indicate that the job section receives the highest numbers of 'clicks', however, this can be explained by the differences in areas of interest between individuals and VCSE organisations.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS RESEARCH PLEASE CONTACT

SALFORD COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY SERVICES
THE OLD TOWN HALL, 5 IRWELL PLACE, SALFORD, M30 0FN

TEL: 0161 787 7795
EMAIL: OFFICE@SALFORDCVS.CO.UK