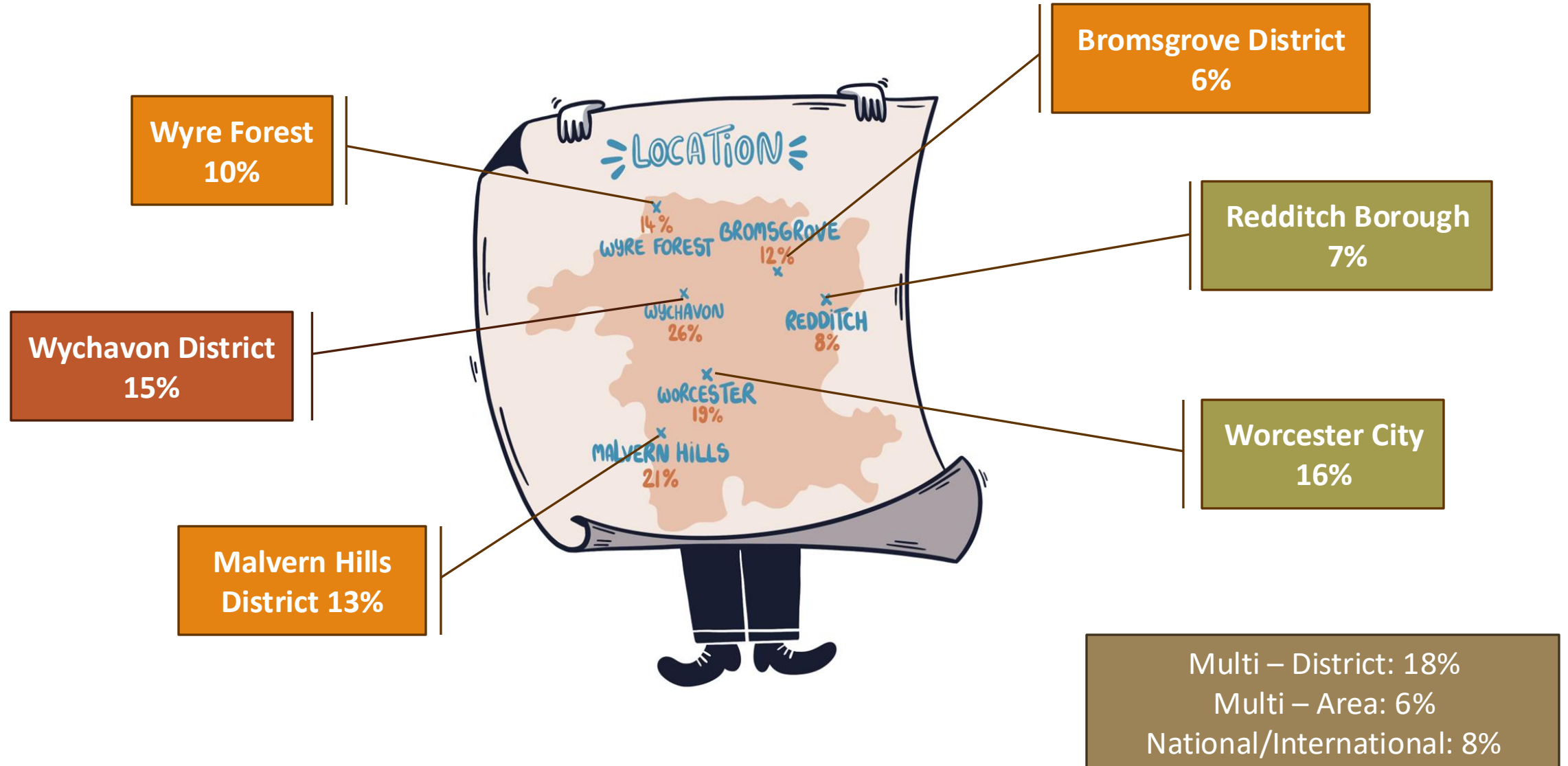


Understanding and Strengthening the VCSE Sector in Worcestershire – **Phase Two Update**

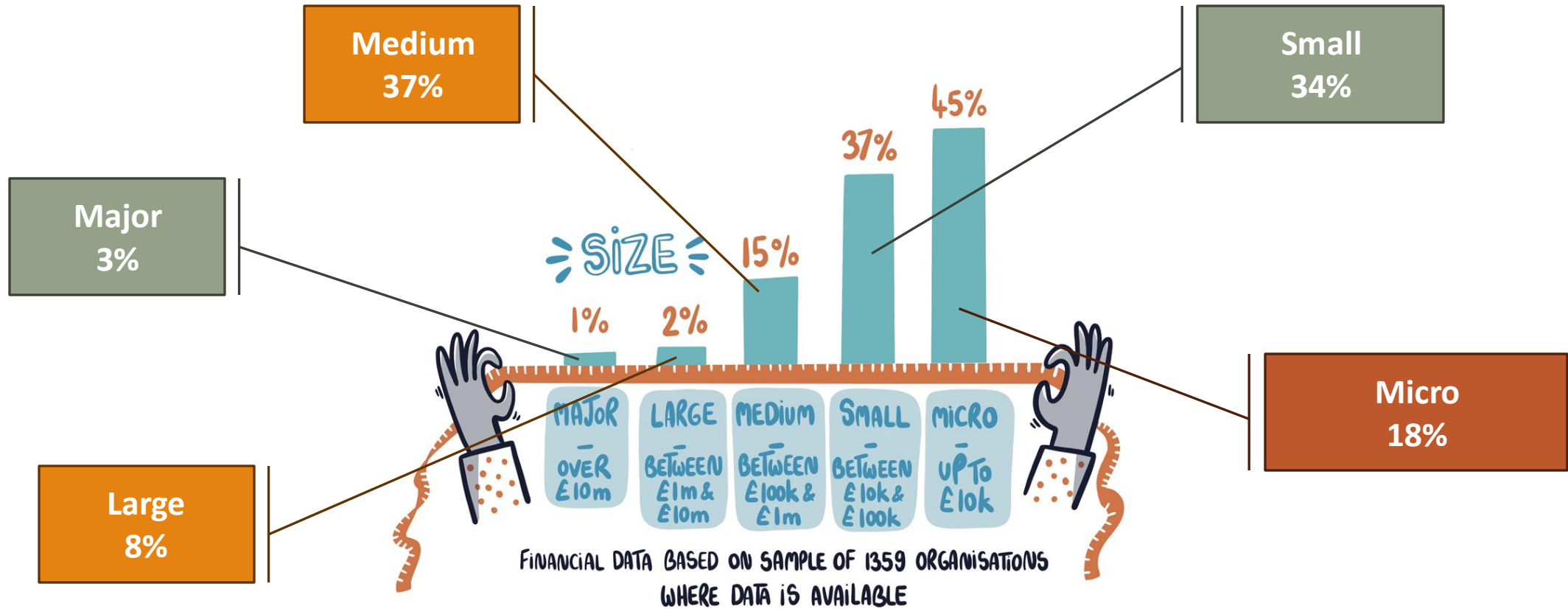
Data Collection

- Online survey, with usable data from 170 representatives of VCSE organisations working in Worcestershire
- Preliminary analysis will inform focus of supplementary data collection
- Final report will combine survey data with qualitative data collected in Phase 3

Respondent Overview



Respondent Overview



Respondent Overview

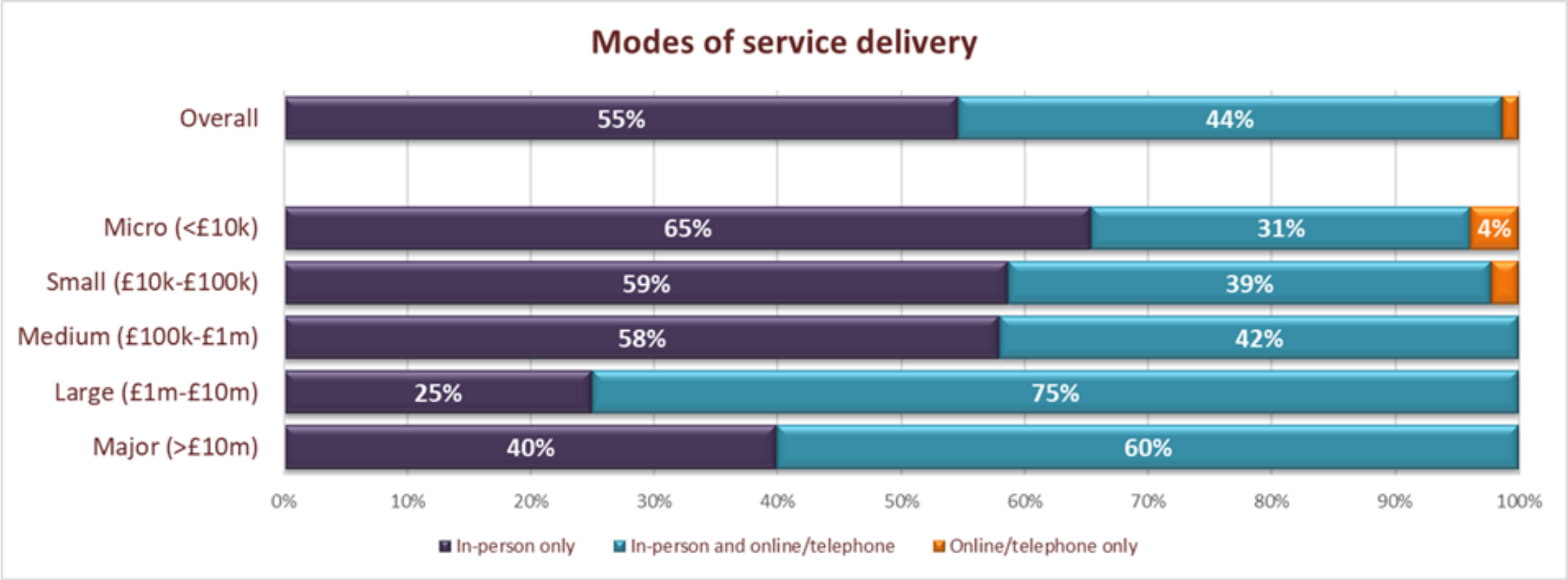
Main Area of Work	Percentage
Community Support	12%
Mental Health	12%
Disability and/or Age-Related Support	12%
Youth Work	8%
Social Support (e.g. advice and guidance, housing)	6%
Sport or Physical Activity	4%
Animal and/or Environment	4%
Arts	4%
Crisis Support	4%
Managing a Community Asset (e.g. Community Centre, Playing Field or Village Hall)	3%
Social Activity or Hobby	3%

Impact

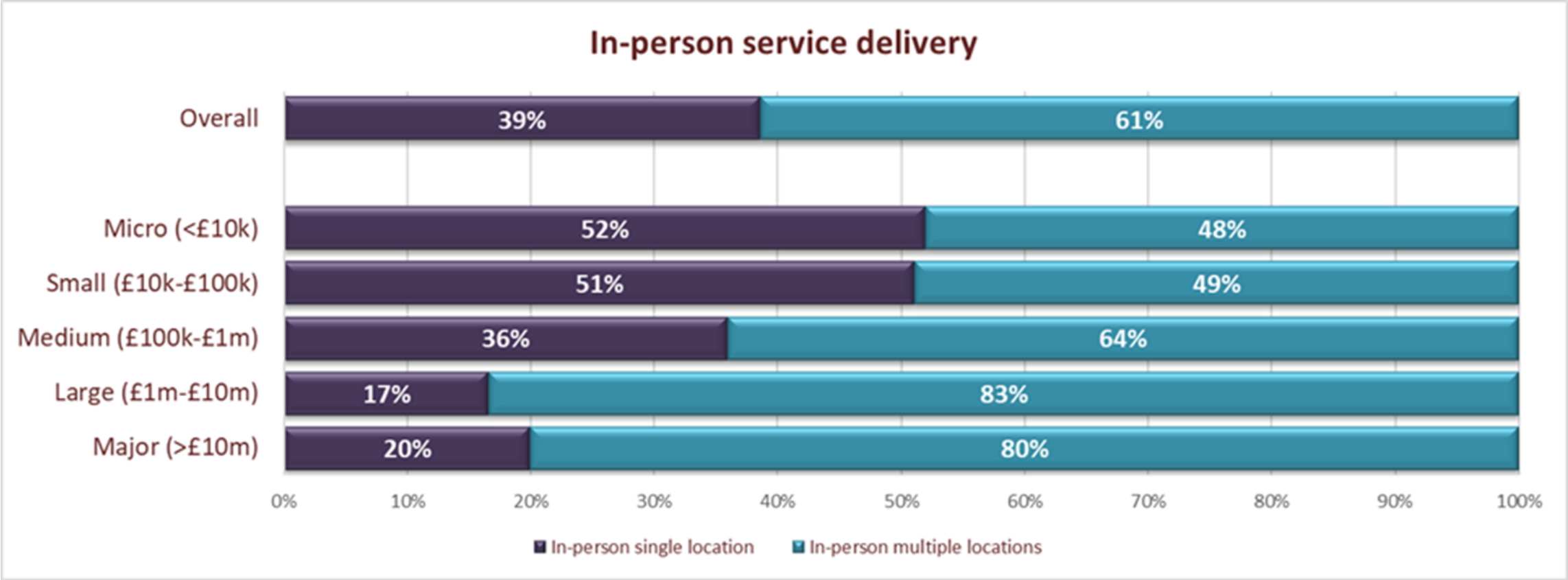
A word cloud featuring various terms related to social impact and community support. The words are arranged in a roughly circular pattern, with some larger and more prominent than others. The colors used include shades of blue, green, purple, red, and yellow. The words include:

- Empowering
- wellbeing
- Supporting
- Improving
- Supporting
- provide
- services
- social
- Isolation
- communities
- local
- new
- Community
- help
- life
- health
- food
- people
- young
- mental
- friendship
- skills
- lives

Focus on in-person delivery

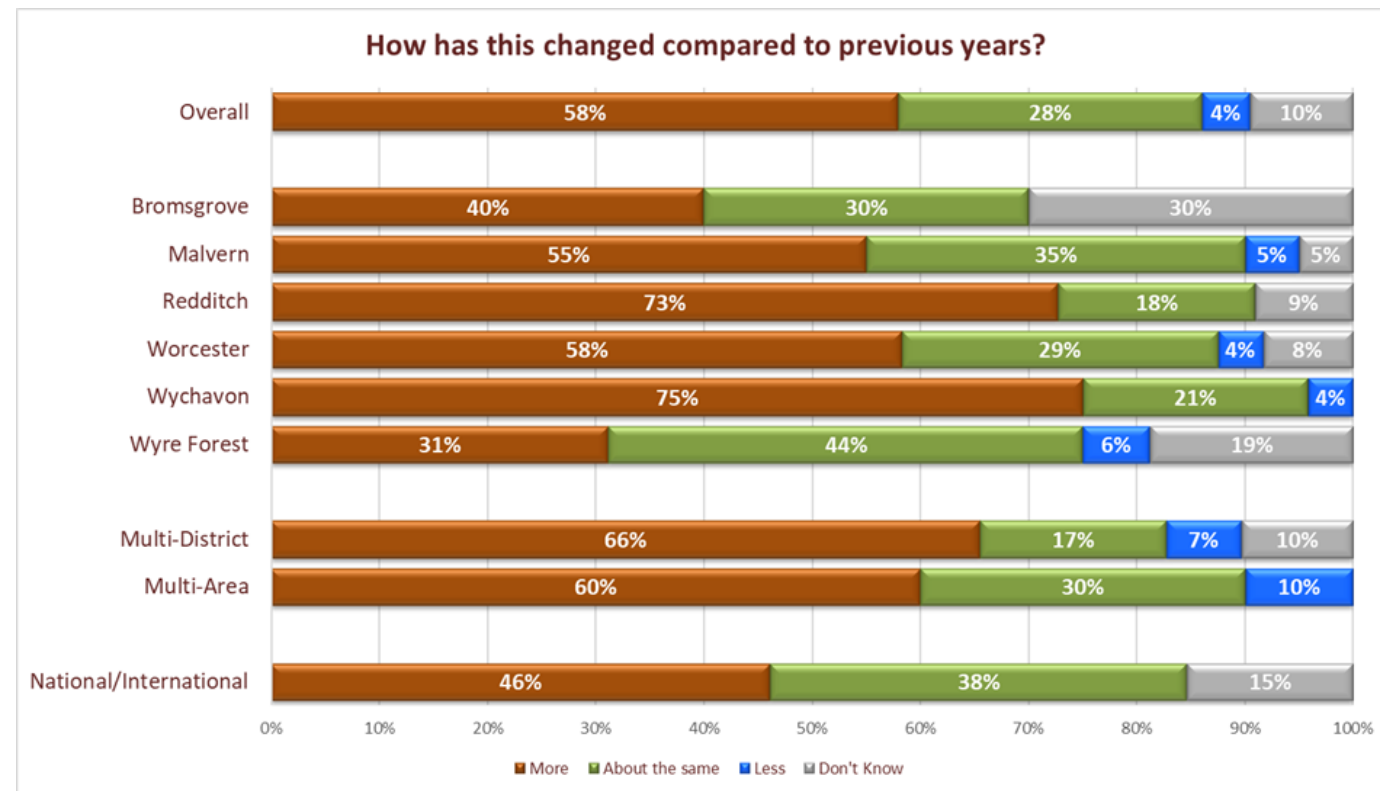


Focus on in-person delivery



Key Messages

- Over half of organisations have seen an increase in demand
 - Increased mental health needs
 - More complex needs
 - Increased loneliness
 - Cost of living
 - Stretched public services

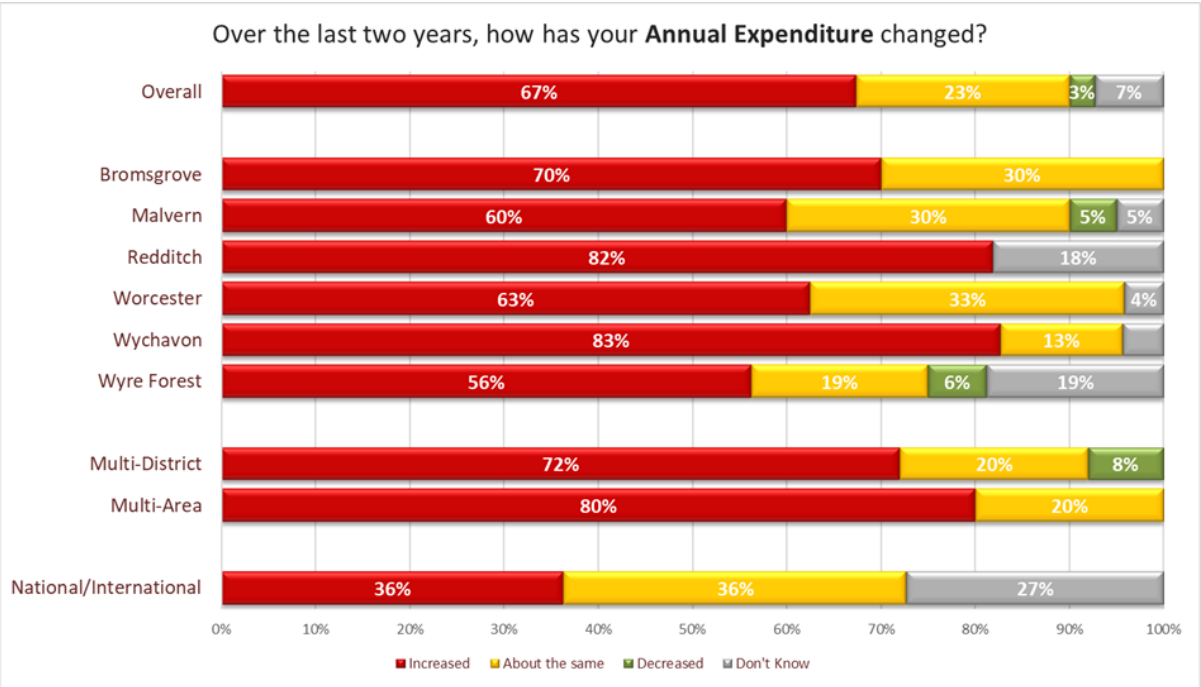
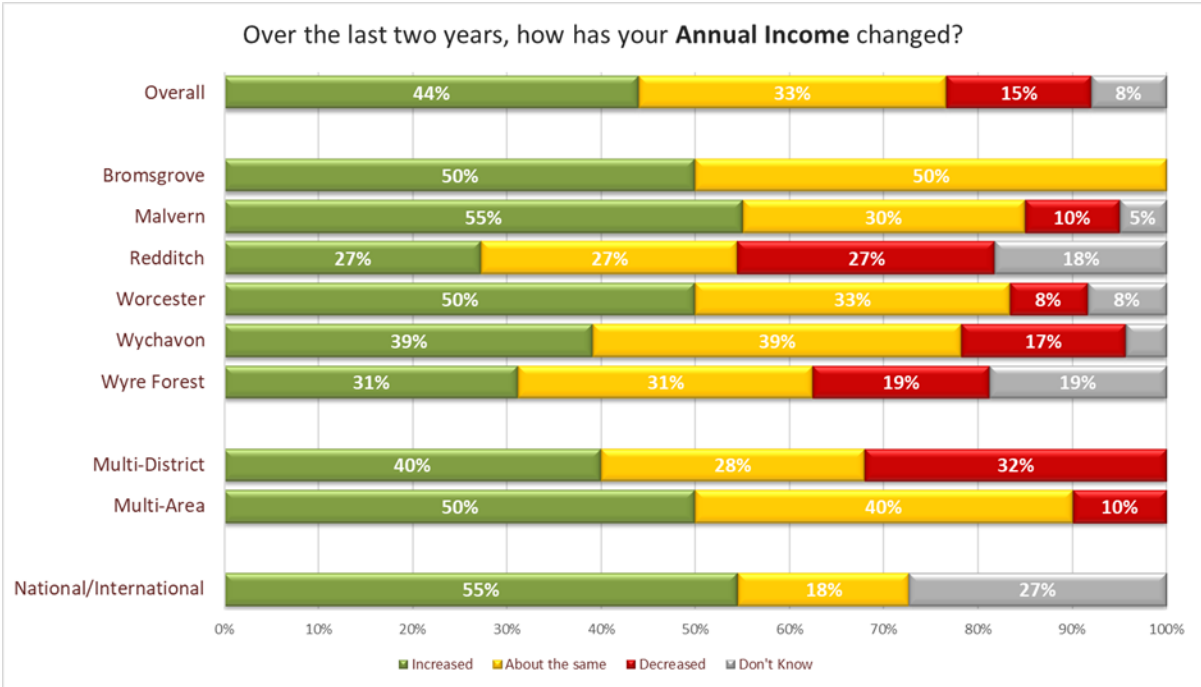


Key Messages

- Perceived gaps in provision
 - Mental health services
 - Delays in health diagnosis and treatment
 - Preventative support (e.g. for families, people on low incomes, people with learning disabilities)
 - Youth services

Key Messages

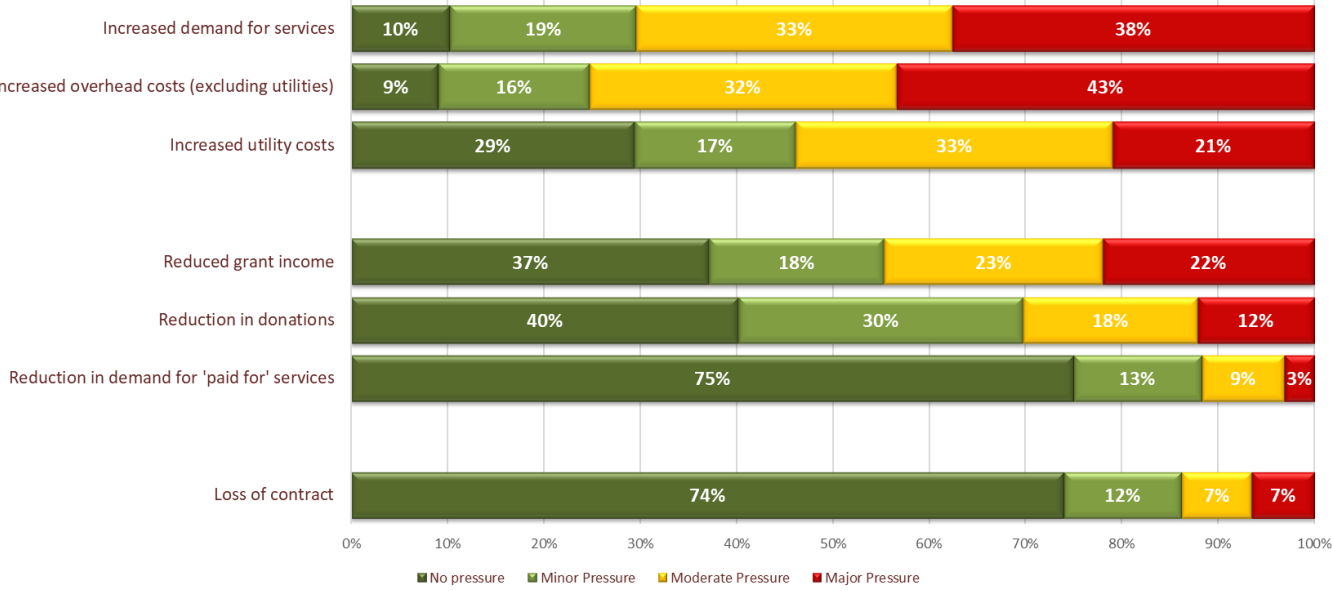
- Financial Pressures
 - Typically, income has increased, but expenditure has increased more...



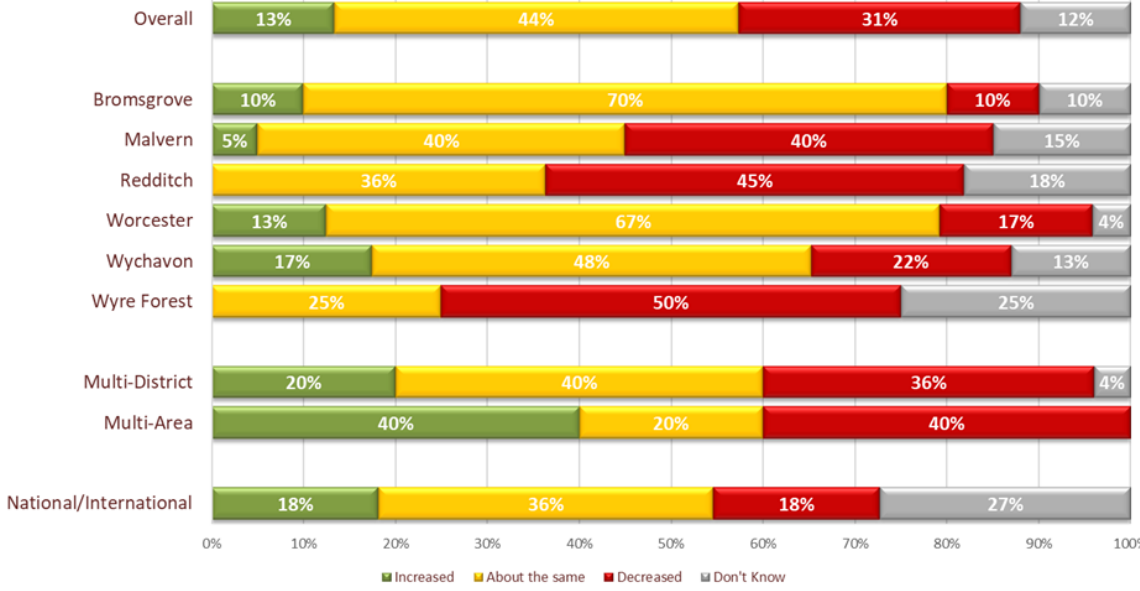
Key Messages

- Financial Pressures
 - ...putting pressure on reserves

To what extent have the following been a financial pressure for your organisation?

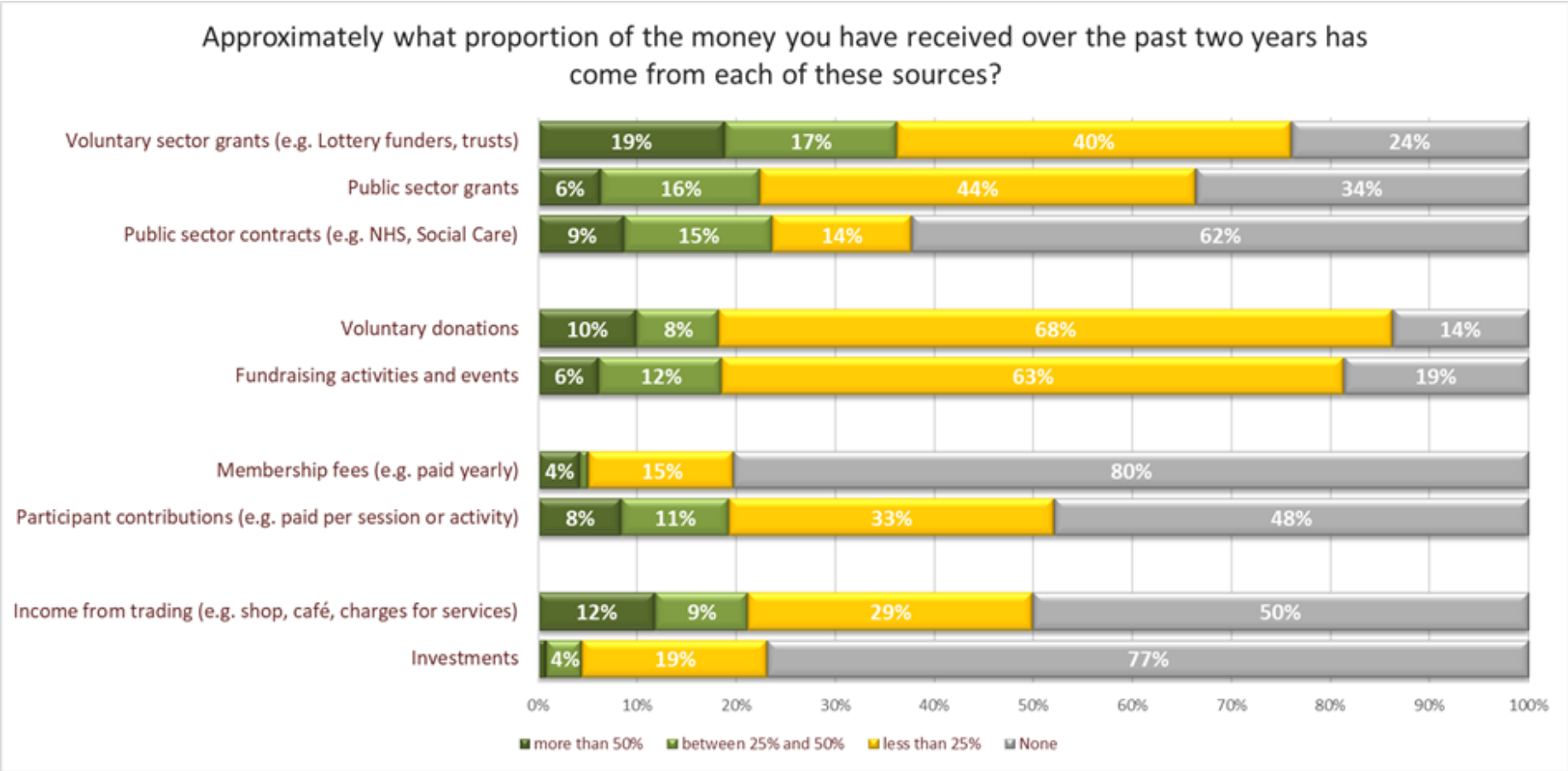


Over the last two years, how has your Level of Free Reserves changed?



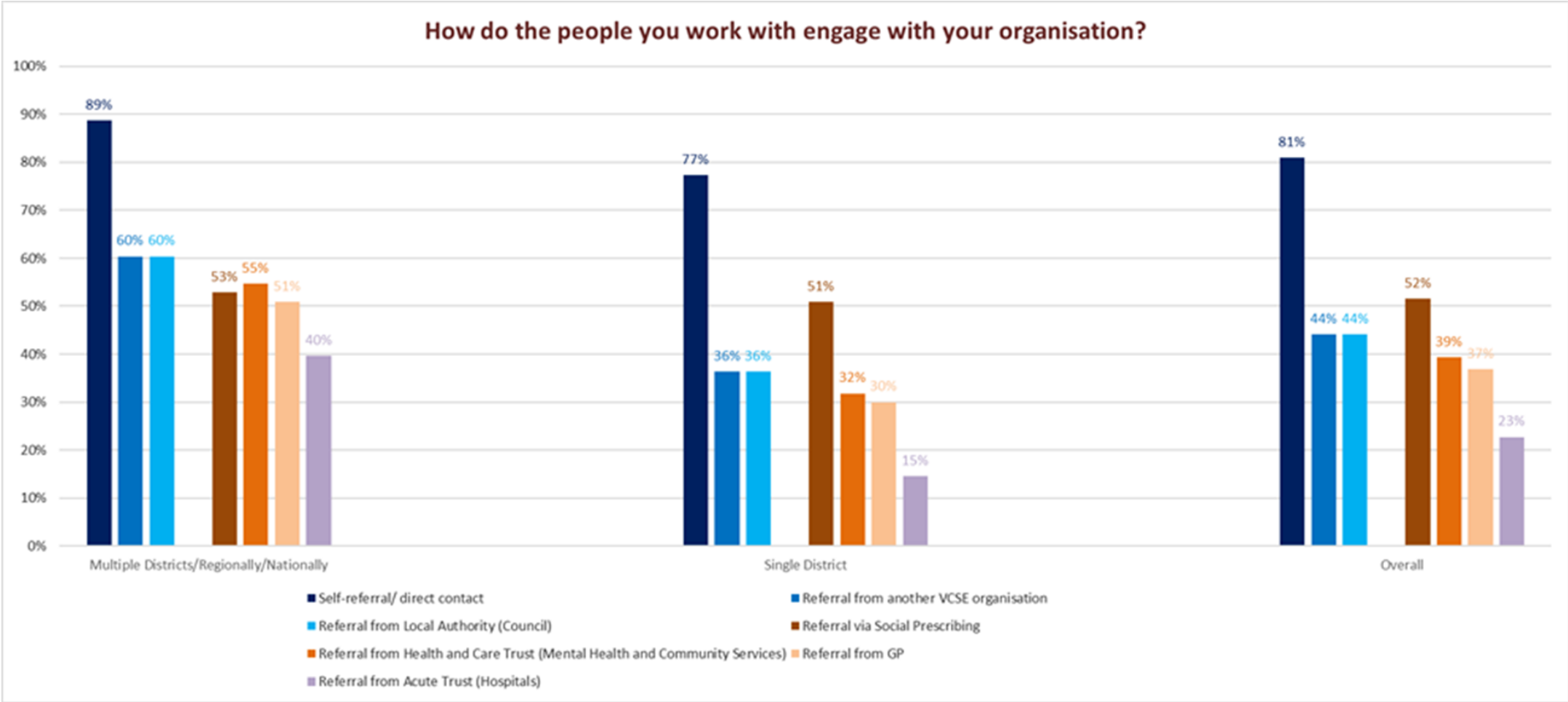
Key Messages

- Public sector contracts and grants make up a small proportion of income for the majority of organisations...



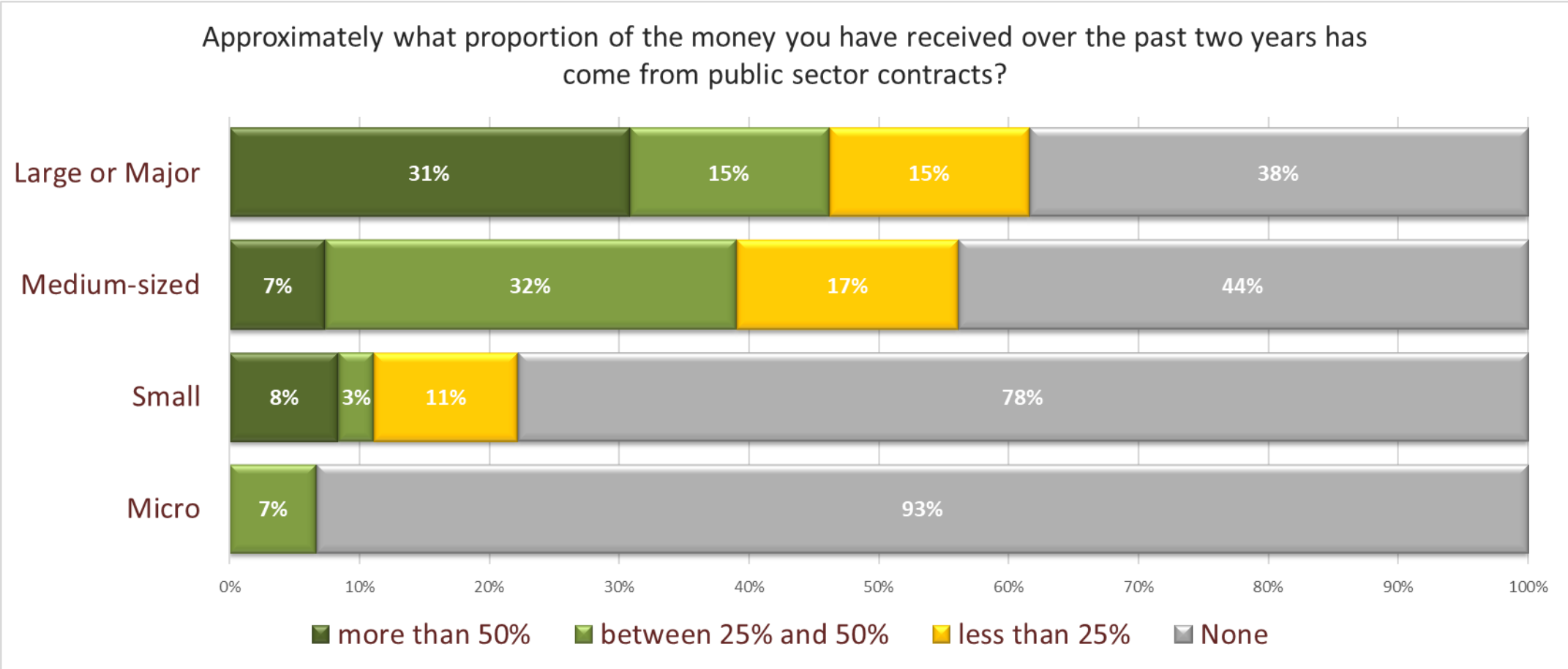
Key Messages

- ...despite public sector referrals being high



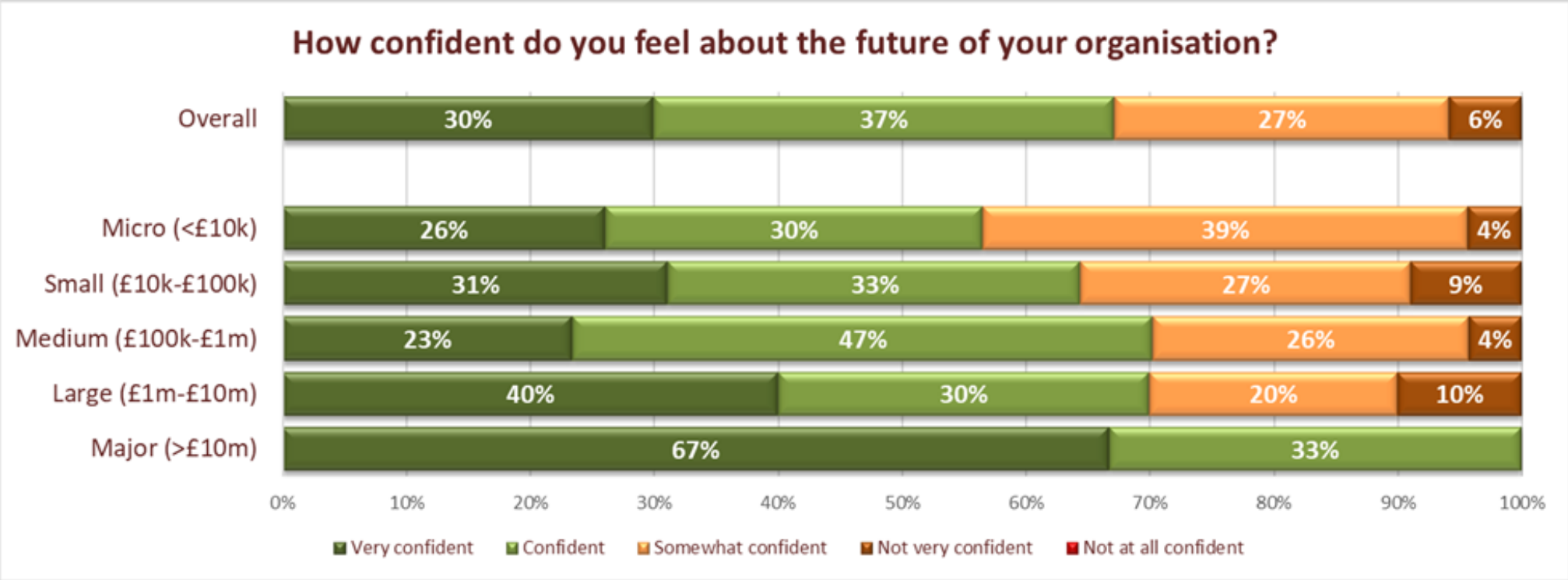
Key Messages

- Public sector contracts focussed on larger organisations



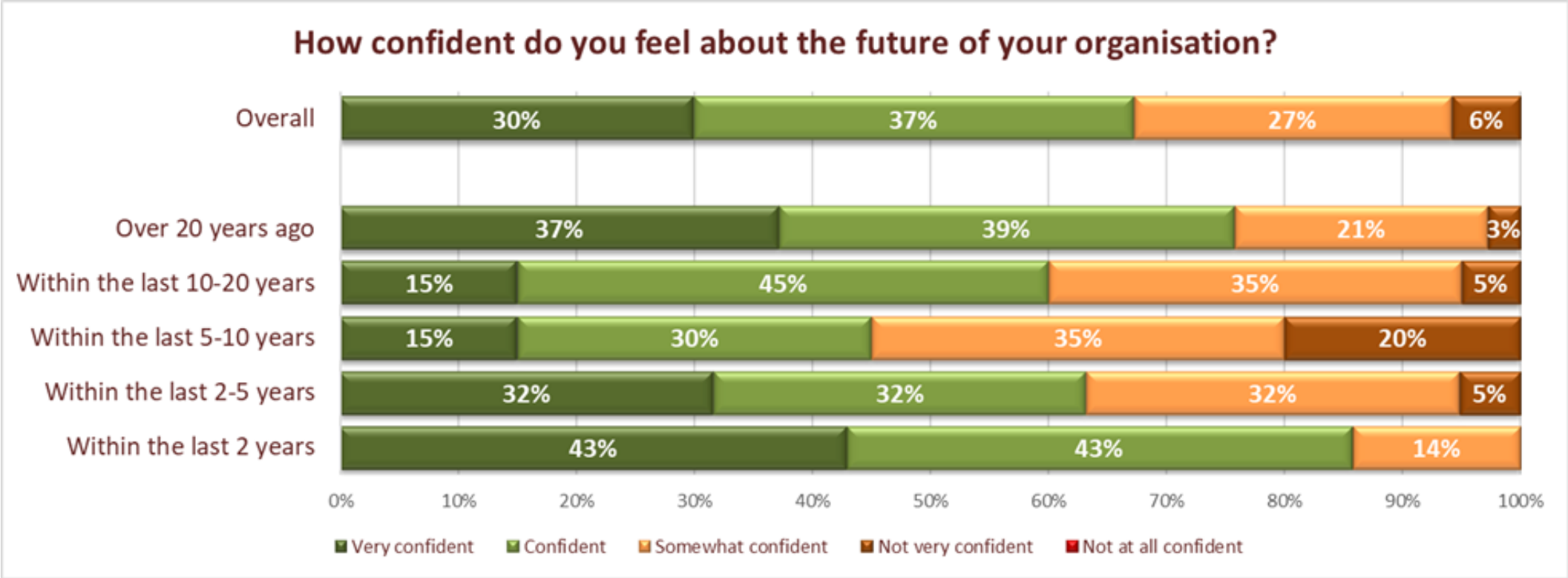
Key Messages

- Confidence about the future is reasonably strong, but a significant minority with low confidence...



Key Messages

- ...with confidence lower among organisations 5-10 years old



Relationships with public sector organisations

- Much that's positive
 - Around a third of medium-sized and larger organisations reported positive working relationships with one or more public sector organisations
 - Very dependent on individuals, so subject to disruption
 - Public-sector information sharing highlighted as helpful
- Feeling of disconnect between contacts and decision makers
 - A significant minority suggested a lack of understanding within the public sector in relation to the value of the VCSE and its capacity to deliver
 - Some feel that senior decision makers are ignorant of the sector and its potential contribution to meeting shared strategic priorities, or worse- treat with tokenistic disregard

Challenges

- Funding
 - Instability created by short-term funding
- Increasing demand
 - Volume and complexity of need
- Volunteer recruitment
 - Smaller organisations more likely to identify volunteer recruitment and retention as a major challenge
- Shifting public sector context
 - Medium-sized organisations most likely to find ever-changing public sector priorities as a challenge

Strengths and Opportunities

- Experience, skills and commitment of staff & volunteers
- Relationships with and support of local communities
 - Particular strength of smaller and medium-sized organisations
- Agility to respond to emerging needs and/or opportunities
- Stable funding
 - Typically micro or larger organisations

Desired Support or Change

- Increased access to and stability of funding
- Stronger relationships
 - Increased networking and genuine collaboration with other VCSE orgs
 - Increased respect and recognition from public sector, in particular those expecting to be able to make referrals
- Reformed public sector commissioning
 - Closer attention to the evidence of need
 - Closer attention to evidence of delivery rather than promises made
- (For smaller organisations) Governance support and training

Any Questions?

Possible Areas of Focus for Phase 3

- Phase 1 identified that the idea of a unified 'VCSE sector' feels inappropriate
 - Phase 2 supports the idea that opportunities, challenges and needs are related to the size and focus of organisations
 - Is there value in seeking to develop an understanding of the 'sub-sectors' of the VCSE within Worcestershire?
- There are some gaps in the sample of responses
 - Is there value in trying to address under-representation (e.g. focus on reaching micro organisations or sports clubs)?
 - Or is it better to focus on the strengths and challenges of those who are more naturally engaged?

Possible Areas of Focus for Phase 3

- There appear to be some specific areas of challenge
 - Small (but not very small) and young (but not very young) organisations appeared to experience greater overall challenges
 - Would focussing on these areas enable the Alliance to identify where it may be able to make most positive impact?
- How could relationships be improved?
 - Collaboration between VCSE organisations is seen as desirable. What needs to be in place to enable meaningful collaborations to develop?
 - Perceived disregard for the sector among public sector decision makers is a key barrier to the sector fulfilling its potential. Would additional research help to provide evidence capable of effecting change?