



# Enabling the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector Grant Consultation

**Final report**

**October 2019**

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## 2 Summary of consultation findings

### We Asked:

- for comment, feedback and amendments on the following:
  - our assessment of the current landscape and strategic drivers impacting the VCSE in the city
  - Proposed Principles underpinning commissioning of Enabling the VCSE sector grant
  - Proposed Priorities for this grant
  - VCSE organisations to tell us their own top support priorities over the coming period and the top support priorities for other VCSE organisations doing similar work
  - comments on our proposed grant funding approach
- We ran an online survey from 18<sup>th</sup> July to 15<sup>th</sup> September 2019. We had 77 partial and 60 complete responses.
- We held 7 engagement events for VCSE organisations; attended an event organised by Black South West Network; held an event for internal BCC stakeholders and for councillors: 63 people attended in total.

### You Said:

- **current landscape and strategic drivers:** in addition to our assessment, that public sector changes have created more distance between VCSE and public sector services
- **Proposed principles:** 91% strongly agreed or agreed with our proposed principles; comments included: that Equity should be included as a principle as well as Inclusive; that an emphasis on Place-Based community building shouldn't detract from non-place-based work with communities of interest and of practice; that Asset-based should be clear this grant is about VCSE organisations, not work with individual citizens
- **Proposed priorities:** 88% strongly agreed or agreed with our proposed priorities; comments included: that collaboration between VCSEs is time-consuming and takes a lot of capacity and has risks for organisations; that grants are needed as lots of VCSE can't earn income from their activities; BME-led groups want to get best use of their current assets; that a focus on more hard-pressed, disadvantaged VCSE groups could exclude the wider VCSE sector from getting support; that BME-led groups need bespoke support to redress impacts of disadvantage and to achieve equity of outcome; that grant-recipients need to be accountable to the sector; need to bring in good practice and resources from national sources; that public sector needs to change how they work with VCSE to build successful relationships of trust
- **VCSE support needs:**
  - Groups with less than £250k a year turnover prioritise:
    - making the most of your assets;
    - looking to the future
    - governance, policies and systems
  - Groups with more than £250k a year turnover prioritise:
    - support around money and funding;
    - voice and influence;
    - looking to the future
    - sharing skills and working together
- VCSEs working with disabled people, BME people; with new migrants, refugees or asylum seekers and in specific neighbourhoods prioritised support as follows:

	working with disabled people	working with BME people	working with new migrants, refugees or asylum seekers	Working in specific neighbourhoods
money and funding	1	1	1	1
making the most of your assets	3	2	2	
governance, policies and systems			2	
Looking to the future		2	1	
Voice and influence	2			2
Equalities			2	
sharing skills and working together				3

- **Our funding approach:** comments included more issues on collaboration and risks it could be bureaucratic or reduce resources for delivery of support; that 3 months period offered to build collaborative proposals wasn't enough time; risk of 'collaboration in name-only' if we require a collaboration; support for co-design with neighbourhood-based and community anchor organisations to create a collaborative delivery model; suggestions made about what support should be city-wide and centralised; what should/could be a more local offer;

### 3 Introduction: Enabling the Voluntary, community & social enterprise sector grant consultation

Bristol's voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector plays a vital role in the city. They are key partners in meeting the challenges and realising the opportunities set out in the BCC Corporate Strategy and One City Plan. The sector in all its diversity is a reflection of Bristol citizens' drive and determination to improve their own communities. The VCSE sector in Bristol plays a key role in:

- Addressing disadvantage and inequality
- Finding new ways to address the priorities and concerns of communities
- Strengthening the voice and influence of communities and citizens
- Promoting inclusion
- Enabling citizens to take action
- Growing social, economic and democratic wellbeing

The council funds the VCSE Infrastructure Support Grant, which is designed to provide support to the VCSE sector to enable it to thrive and to fulfil its role in the city. The current recipient of the VCSE Infrastructure Support Grant is Voscur, the Bristol-based charity.

Voscur use this grant to support the VCSE sector in Bristol. This funding is coming to an end in March 2020.

## **2.1 The proposed approach to the Enabling the Voluntary, community & social enterprise sector grant**

The council's investment in the Enabling the VCSE sector grant will contribute to:

- Powerful, thriving communities
- Strong, long term vision and leadership of the sector
- A city plan and approach that reflects the diversity and creativity of the city

### **Ways of Working**

The council is proposing five community-building principles that would inform its approach to re-commissioning the VCSE Infrastructure Support Grant:

- Place based
- Asset based
- Inclusive
- Citizen-led
- Relational

#### **Place based**

Place based means working in a 'bottom-up approach' to meet the unique needs of people in one given location by working together to use the best available resources, local knowledge and insight.

The Enabling the VCSE Grant would:

- Strengthen neighbourhood organisations, prioritising places where there is greatest inequality
- Encourage connections and collaboration between VCSE organisations
- Contribute to a one city approach, working collaboratively with the council to find long term sustainable solutions

#### **Asset based**

Asset-based community development means making the best use of the strengths that already exist in the local community. These strengths may include skills, 5 experience and resources. The Enabling the VCSE Grant would:

- Tap into and build on the existing skills, knowledge, expertise and energy of the VCSE sector
- Enable the VCSE sector to make best use of the city's diverse resources
- Encourage the exchange of skills and knowledge within the sector
- Grow capacity, skills and collective leadership within the VCSE sector

### **Inclusive**

Inclusive means working to create communities which are open, tolerant and welcoming to all, particular to people from sections of society who are disadvantaged and at risk of isolation.

The Enabling the VCSE Grant would:

- Welcome in the people who tend to be excluded
- Take positive action to nurture the self-organisation and self-determination of communities who experience systemic disadvantage and exclusion
- Foster attitudes and actions that deepen inclusive behaviours and ways of working

### **Citizen-led**

Citizen-led means that the people of Bristol have the ability, and desire, to improve the lives of the people of the city, and we are supporting their lead.

The Enabling the VCSE Grant would:

- Strengthen the confidence and capacities to support citizens to take action on the things that are important to them
- Provide easily accessible support to community groups, particularly those with no paid workers

### **Relational**

Relational means facilitating the creation of strong working relationships between members of the VCSE sector, their wider communities, the council, public sector and business sector

The Enabling the VCSE Grant would:

- Build strong and collaborative relationships
- Foster a culture of collaboration with the council, other public sector organisations and business to address the challenges of the city
- Build cohesion and understanding between communities

## **2.2 The council’s proposed priorities for the Enabling the VCSE Sector Support Grant**

The council has taken note of the Bristol VCSE Strategy: Into a New Era 2019-2029 and the ‘Change for Good Report of the Independent Commission on the future of local infrastructure (January 2015)’ (at <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/vcseconsultation>) in developing our priorities.

Change for Good, a report commissioned by the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) was published in 2015. The report focused on how infrastructure support is funded and delivered in a landscape of recession and reduced local authority funding. The report recognises that

“The infrastructure of the future is likely to be a much leaner enabler, broker and catalyst rather than necessarily a deliverer.” What this means is that VCSE support organisations need to shift from straightforward service delivery to more activities which help VCSE groups help themselves and each other and to pull in support from different sources.

The Report recommends that ‘future investment needs to deliver capacity by unlocking social capital and leverage’; and that ‘Infrastructure bodies must be relationship builders and brokers capable of leveraging resources’. We understand this to mean that our grant funding should be used to unlock resources of many kinds and deepen the supportive co-operation between the VCSE and other sectors within and outside the city.

The council therefore proposes that the priorities of the Enabling the VCSE Sector Grant would be:

1. Maximise strong relationships between VCSE organisations so that VCSEs may share each other’s assets (time, skills, knowledge, experience, money, buildings etc.) and produce collective solutions to shared problems
2. Strengthen the VCSE’s capacity to be enterprising and business-like. This would include supporting VCSEs to find new sources of funding and earned income.
3. Strengthen the capacity of the VCSE sector to respond to change, with a clear focus on



- organisations that are led by equalities groups
- neighbourhoods and places experiencing greatest inequality
- smaller and emerging community groups

4. Facilitate confident leadership and influence so that the VCSE sector, in all its diversity, can:

- play a full part in shaping and achieving the ambition of the city set out in the One City Plan
- influence and shape the council's future Enabling the VCSE Grant so that it has maximum impact

5. Support the VCSE sector by accessing local, regional and national wealth, such as funding and investment opportunities, and other assets, such as skills and knowledge.

The Change for Good report sets out a case for investment in VCSE infrastructure support that requires that "Infrastructure must prove capable of 'redesigning' itself to meet changing demand".

In order to deliver support within the council's proposed principles and priorities, Enabling the VCSE Sector grant recipients would be required to adopt an approach that considers:

- What support is best delivered city wide, to enable maximum impact across the city and with minimal duplication.
- What support is best delivered at a more local level to enable support for organisations and communities of specific place and interest.
- How resources can be used to enable flexible, innovative and bespoke support that can adapt quickly to changing priorities.

### **2.3 Our Funding approach**

We will require a collaborative approach to delivery of infrastructure support to the sector. Collaboration between VCSEs is a key element in sustaining the city's VCSE sector in the coming years. To enable this we propose to build in a 12-week period to allow collaboration and partnership working to be explored by potential delivery organisations.

## 3 Methodology

### 3.1 Online survey

An online survey was published on the council's consultation hub (<https://bristol.citizenspace.com/>). The survey included links to:

- The Bristol Council Corporate Strategy
- The One City Plan
- The Bristol VCSE Strategy: Into a New Era 2019-2029 (<https://www.voscur.org/services/influence/strategy-and-relationships>)
- A background document that included further information on the background to the proposals such as the current landscape and strategic drivers

The survey questions included four sections:

- The proposed priorities of the Enabling the VCSE Support Grant
- The proposed principles of the Enabling the VCSE Support Grant
- VCSE organisations' top three priorities and a free textbox for respondents to make suggestions for additional priorities
- Questions that asked for information about the responding organisation
- VCSE organisations' top support priorities, both for their own organisation and their wider VCSE community
- Standard 'about you' questions, however the majority of respondents completed the survey on behalf of an organisation

Respondents could choose to answer some or all of the questions in any order and save and return to the survey later.

### 3.2 Engagement events

- 7 consultation events for VCSE organisations were held; 5 generic, open to any VCSE organisation; 1 for equalities organisations; 1 for community anchor organisations.
- We also attended a consultation event for BME-led organisations organised by the Black South West Network
- We held 1 consultation for internal, BCC stakeholders and 1 for councillors
- 50 people attended the external consultation events; 7 attended the BCC stakeholder event and 6 attended the councillor event: 63 in total

## 4 Survey results

### 4.1 Characteristics of respondents

Respondents were asked whether they were responding as an individual, on behalf of a VCSE organisation, as a councillor or in any other capacity. 58 respondents answered the question, of which:

- 44 (76%) responded on behalf of a VCSE organisation
- 11 (19%) responded as an individual
- 1 (2%) responded as a trustee/ VCSE consultant
- 1 (2%) responded as an individual on behalf of a VCSE organisation and
- 1 (2%) responded as a commissioner

See figure 5.1.1 below.

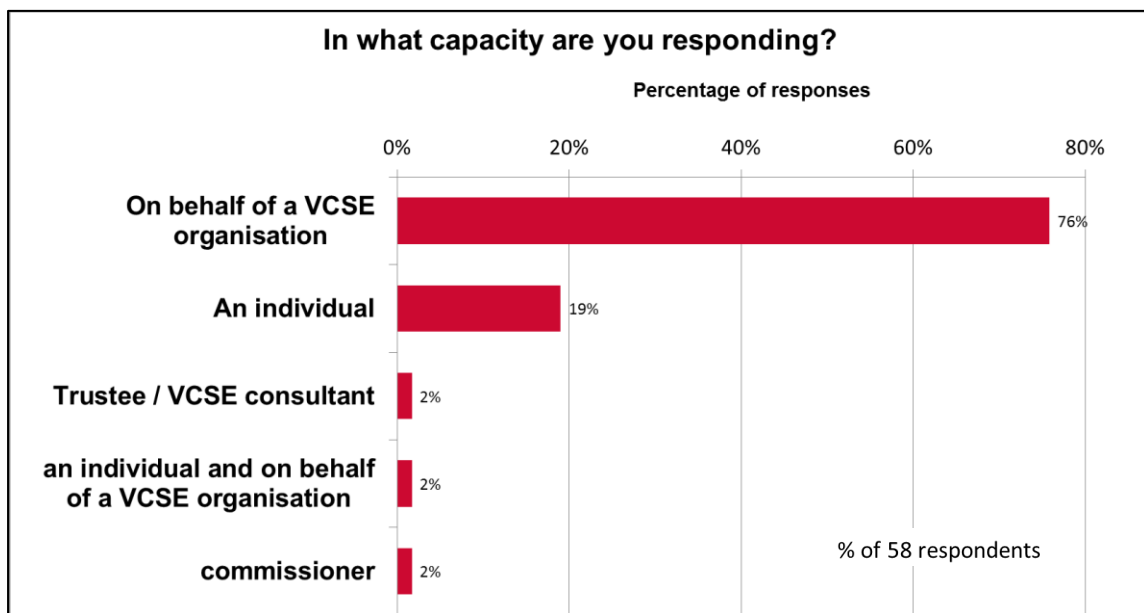


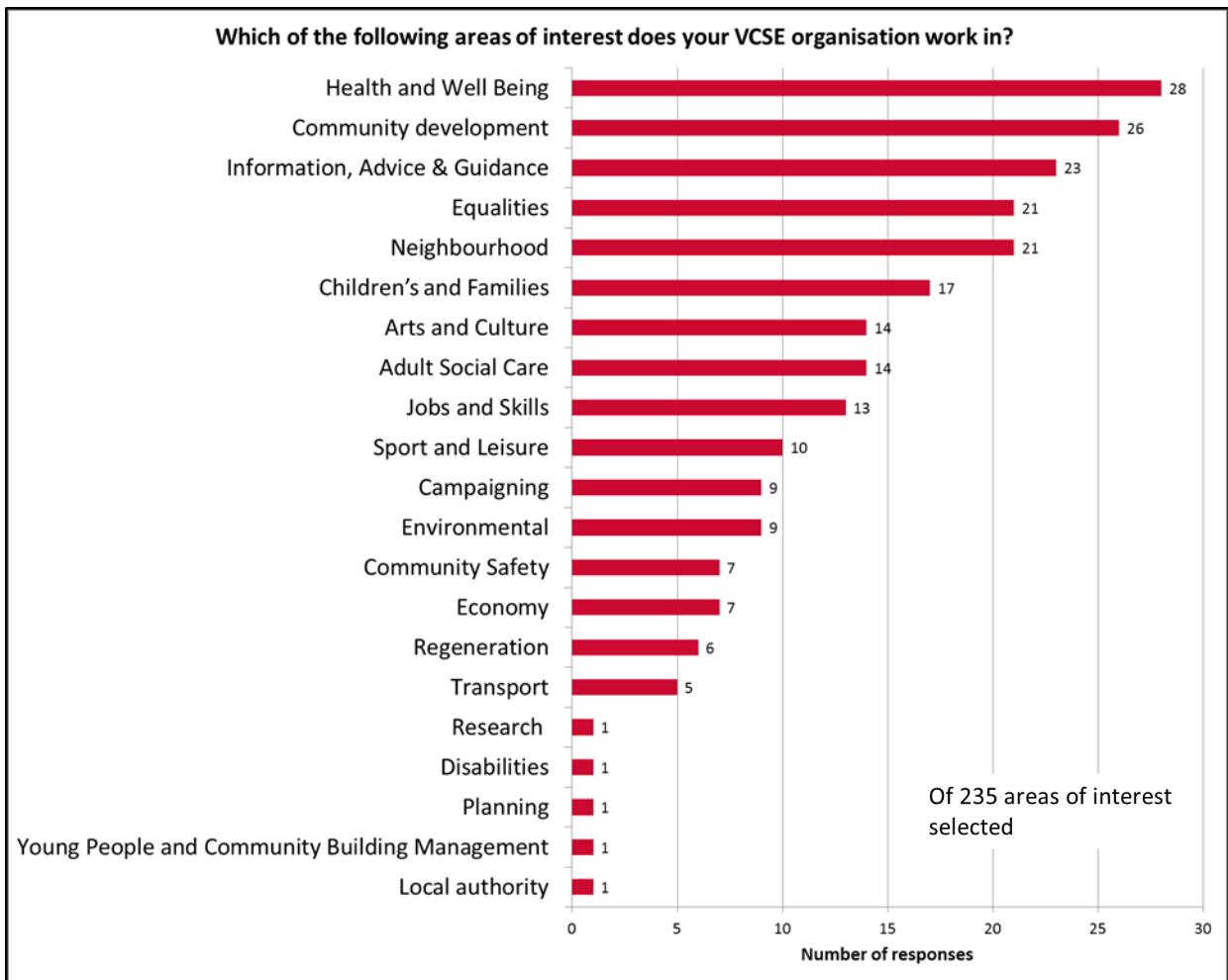
Figure 4.1.1

Respondents were asked which areas of interest their VCSE organisations work in.

Respondents selected 235 areas of interest, the most common of which were:

- Health and wellbeing, 28 respondents selected this area
- Community development, 26 respondents selected this area
- Information advice and guidance, 23 respondents selected this area
- Equalities, 21 respondents selected this area
- Neighbourhood, 21 respondents selected this area

See figure 5.1.2 below.



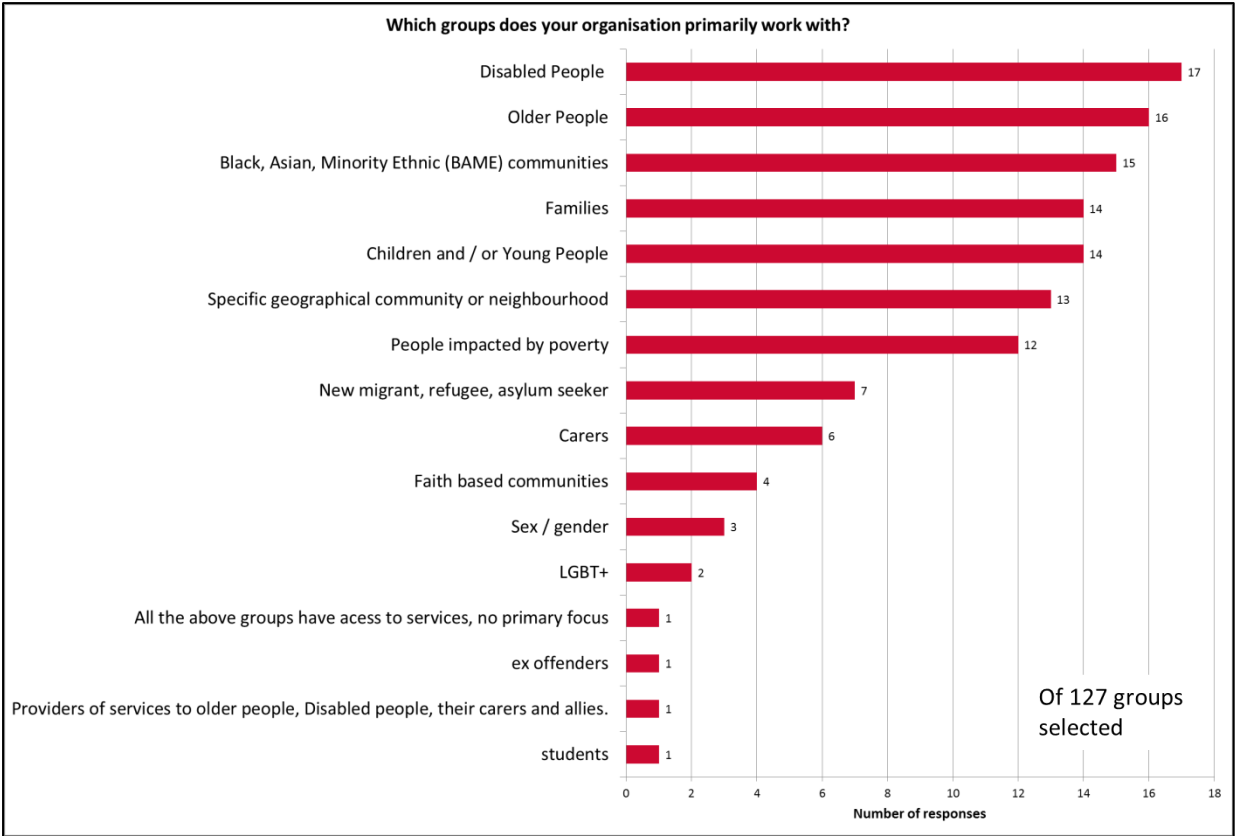
**Figure 4.1.2**

Respondents were asked which groups their VCSE organisations primarily work with.

Respondents selected 127 groups that their organisations work with, the most common of which were:

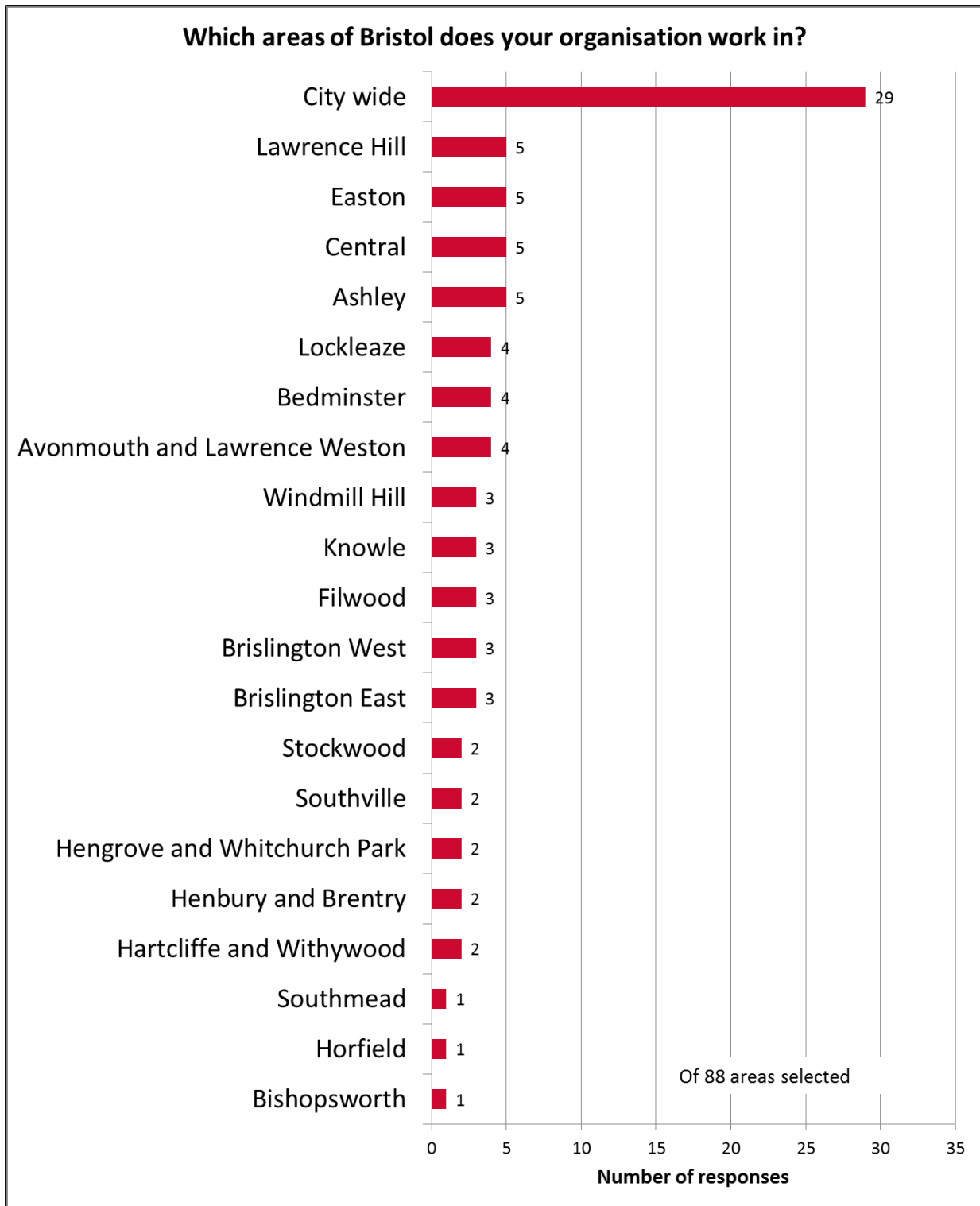
- Disabled people, 17 respondents selected this group
- Older people, 16 respondents selected this group
- Black Minority Ethnic (BME), 15 organisations selected this group

See figure 5.1.3 below.



**Figure 4.1.3**

Respondents were asked which areas of Bristol their VCSE organisations works in. 88 areas were selected by respondents, the most common of which was city wide, this area was selected by 29 respondents. See figure 5.1.4 below.



**Figure 4.1.4**

Respondents were asked what their VCSE organisation's annual turnover is. 41 respondents selected their organisation's annual turnover, of which:

- 8 (20%) respondents selected below £20k
- 5 (12%) respondents selected £20k to £50k

- 15 (37%) respondents selected £50k to £250k
- 8 (20%) respondents selected £250k to £1m
- 5 (12%) respondents selected over £1m

See figure 5.1.5 below.

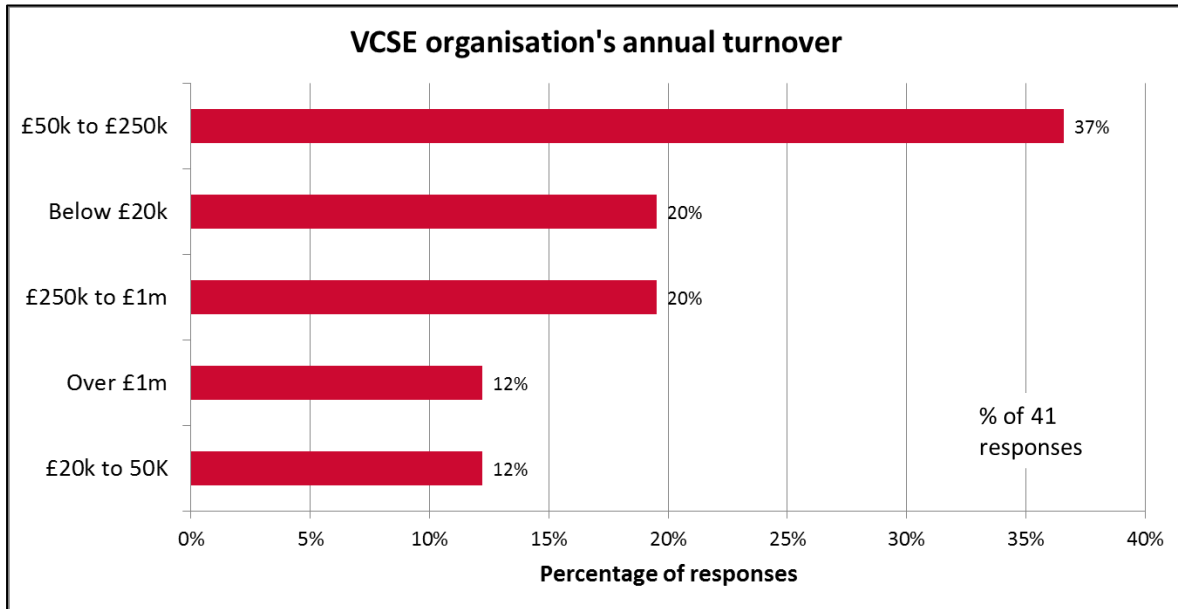


Figure 4.1.5

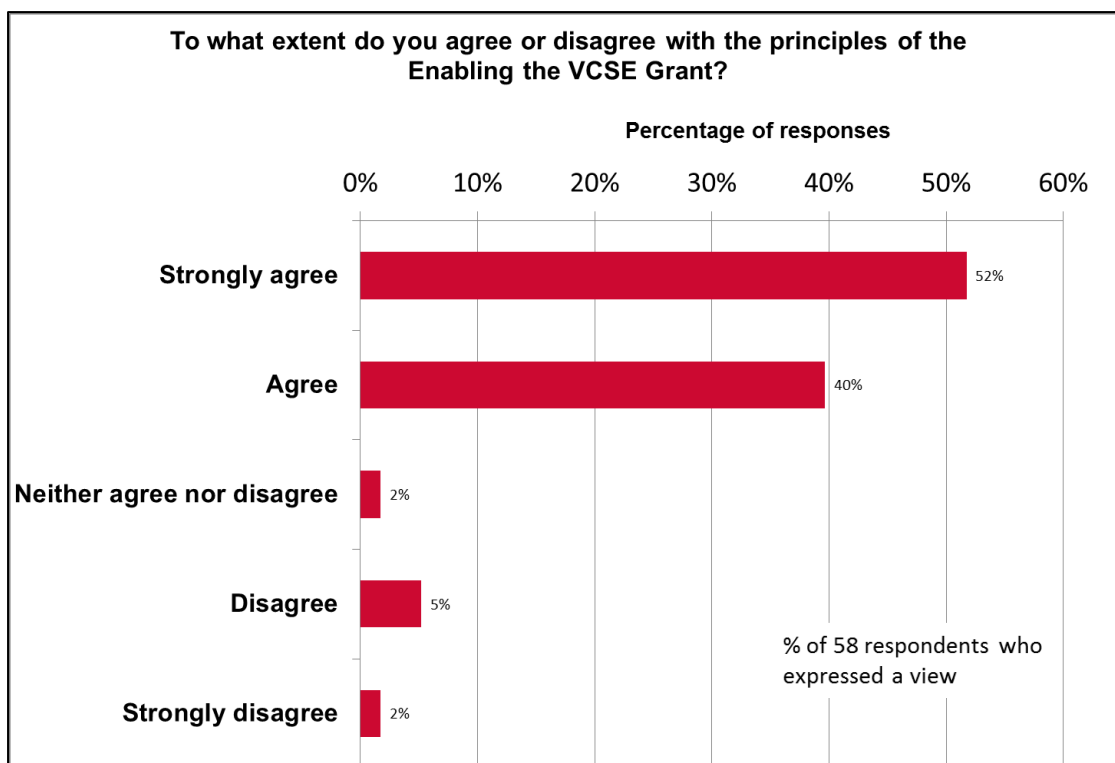
## 4.2 Principles of the Enabling the VCSE support grant

Respondent were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the proposed principles of the Enabling the VCSE Infrastructure Grant.

58 respondents expressed a view, of which:

- 53 (91%) agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed principles
- 1 (2%) neither agreed or disagreed and
- 4 (7%) agreed or strongly disagreed

See figure 5.2.1 below.



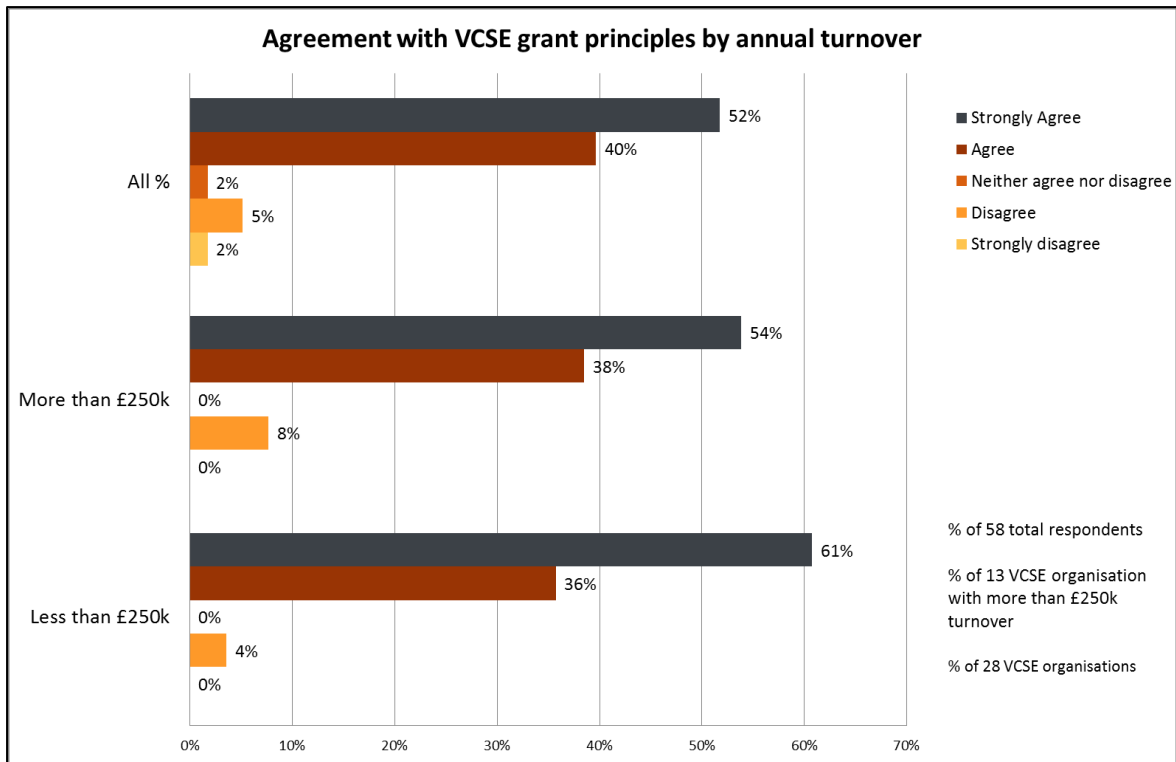
**Figure 4.2.1**

41 respondents expressed a view of this proposal and stated the annual turnover of their VCSE organisation. The following graph shows the extent to which these organisations agreed or disagreed with the proposed principles, broken down by organisations with less than £250k annual turnover (n=28) and more than £250k annual turnover (n=13).

- Of the VCSEs with less than £250k annual turnover, 27 (96%) agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed principles, none neither agreed nor disagreed and 1 (4%) disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- Of the VCSEs with more than £250k annual turnover, 12 (92%) agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed principles, none neither agreed nor disagreed and 1 (8%) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

See figure 5.2.2 below.





**Figure 4.2.2**

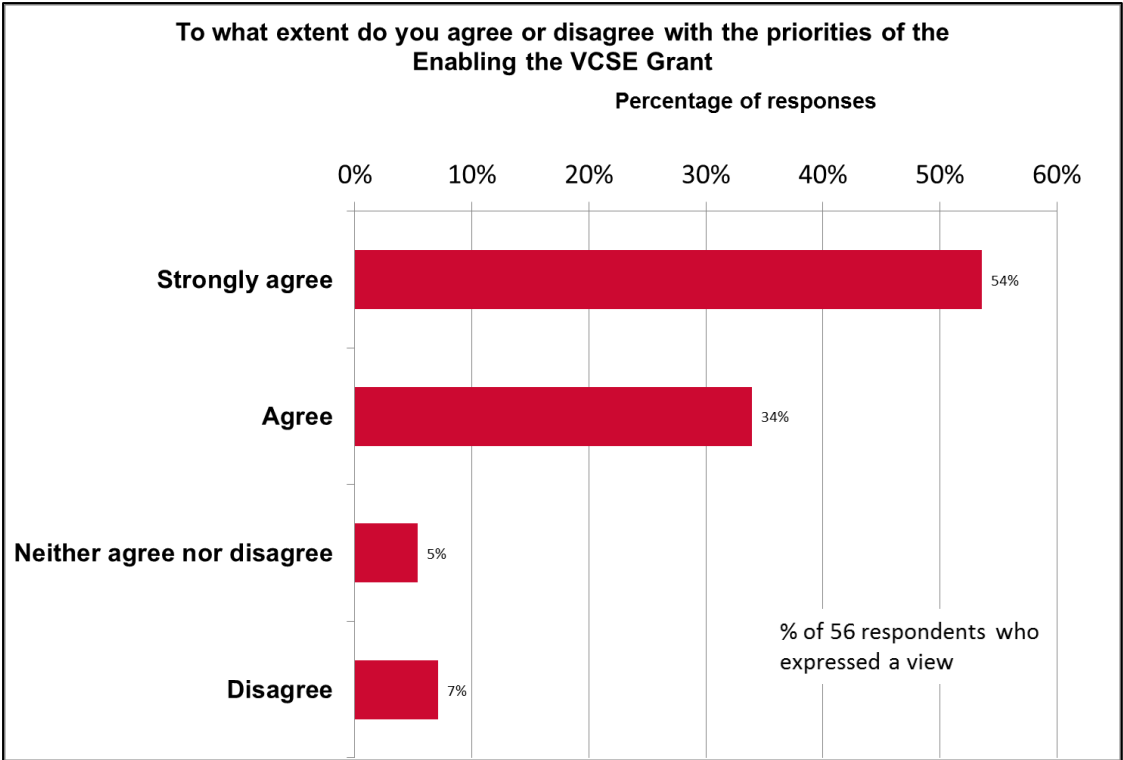
### 4.3 Priorities of the Enabling the VCSE support grant

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agree or disagree with the proposed priorities of Enabling the VCSE Infrastructure Grant.

56 respondents expressed a view of which:

- 49 (88%) respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed priorities
- 3 (5%) respondents neither agreed nor disagreed and
- 4 (7%) respondents disagreed with the proposed priorities

See figure 5.3.1 below.

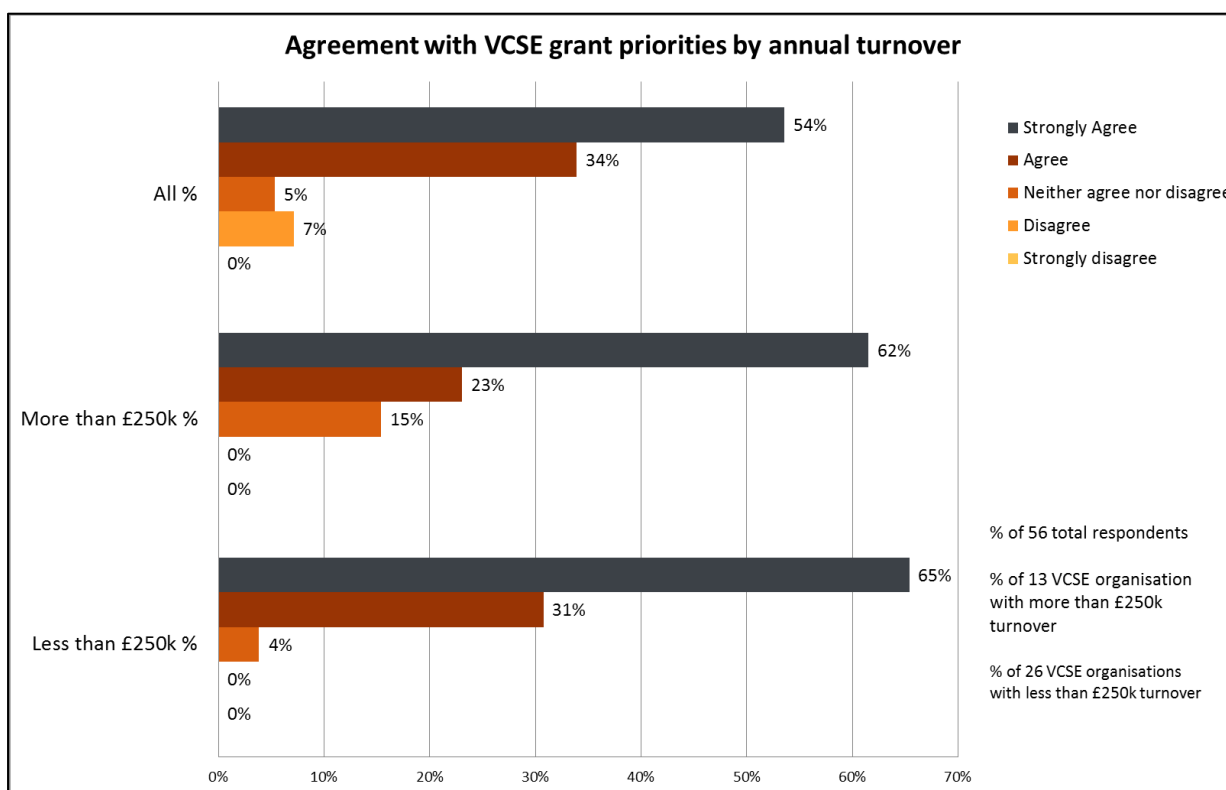


**Figure 4.3.1**

39 respondents expressed a view of this proposal and stated the annual turnover of their VCSE organisation. The following graph shows the extent to which these organisations agreed or disagreed with the proposed priorities, broken down by organisations with less than £250k annual turnover (n=26) and more than £250k annual turnover (n=13).

- Of the VCSEs with less than £250k annual turnover, 25 (96%) agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed priorities, 1 (4%) neither agreed nor disagreed and none disagreed nor strongly disagreed.
- Of the VCSEs with more than £250k annual turnover, 25 (96%) agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed priorities, 1 (4%) neither agreed nor disagreed and none disagreed nor strongly disagreed.

See figure 5.3.2 below



.Figure 4.3.2

#### 4.4 Top three priorities most important to VCSE organisations

Respondents were asked to rank in order of importance five priorities that are most important to their VCSE organisation. 50 respondents ranked the following priorities:

- Priority 1: Support the VCSE sector by accessing local, regional and national wealth (n=39)
- Priority 2: Facilitate confident leadership and influence (n=29)
- Priority 3: Strengthen the capacity of the VCSE sector to respond to change. (n=39)
- Priority 4: To support the financial sustainability of the VCSE sector by strengthening the VCSE's capacity to be enterprising and business-like (n=33).
- Priority 5: Maximise strong relationships between VCSE organisations so that VCSEs may share each other's assets and produce collective solutions to shared problems (n=36).

The following graph shows the number of respondents that selected each priority as most important, of medium importance and as least important. Respondents most commonly ranked:

- As most important - Priority 5: Maximise strong relationships between VCSE organisations so that VCSEs may share each other’s assets and produce collective solutions to shared problems (n=18)
- As of medium importance - Priority 1: Support the VCSE sector by accessing local, regional and national wealth (n=10)
- As least important – Priority 3: Strengthen the capacity of the VCSE sector to respond to change (n=13)

See figure 5.4.1 below.

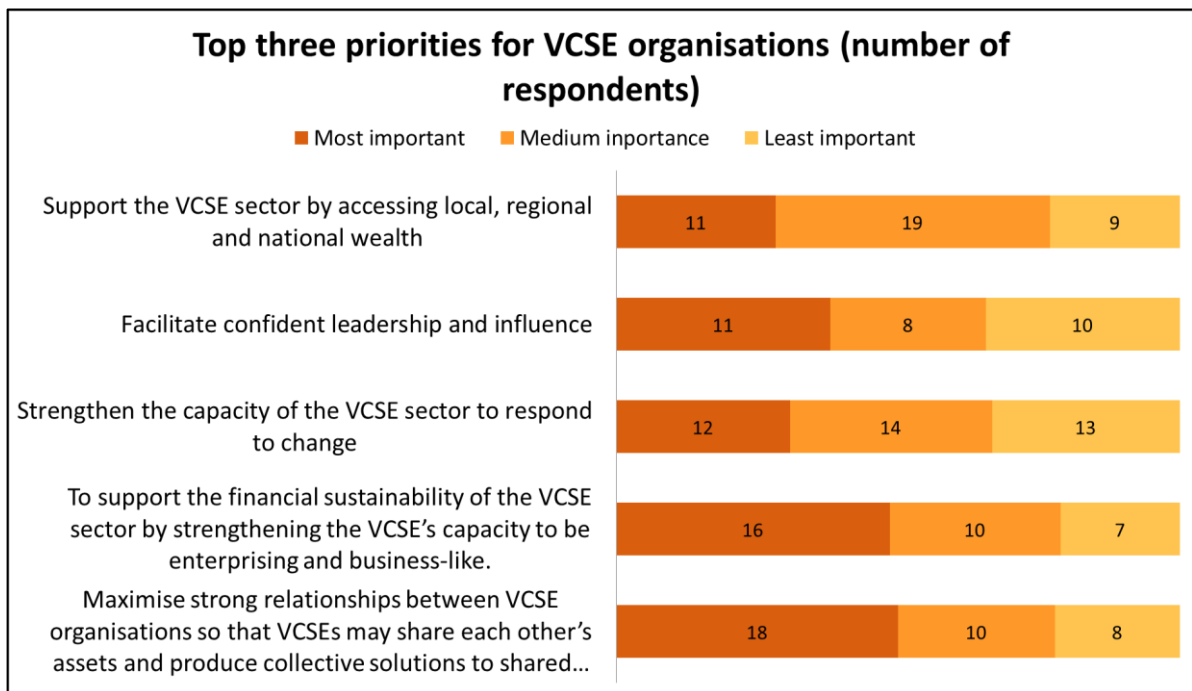


Figure 4.4.1

#### 4.5 Top three priorities most important to VCSE organisations by annual turnover

Of the 50 respondents who ranked the top three priorities for their VCSE organisations, 43 also stated their organisation’s annual turnover. The following graph shows number of respondents that selected each priority as most important, of medium importance and as least important from VCSE organisations with an annual turnover of less than £250k and with an annual turnover of more than £250k.

Organisations with an annual turnover of less than £250k most commonly ranked:

- As most important - Priority 4: To support the financial sustainability of the VCSE sector by strengthening the VCSE's capacity to be enterprising and business-like (n=8)
- As of medium importance - Priority 1: Support the VCSE sector by accessing local, regional and national wealth (n=10)
- As least important – Priority 3: Strengthen the capacity of the VCSE sector to respond to change (n=8)

Organisations with an annual turnover of more than £250k most commonly ranked:

- As most important - Priority 1: Support the VCSE sector by accessing local, regional and national wealth (n=5)
- As of medium importance - Priority 3: Strengthen the capacity of the VCSE sector to respond to change.
- As least important - Priority 2: Facilitate confident leadership and influence

See figure 5.5.1 below.

### Top three priorities for VCSE organisations by annual turnover (number of respondents)

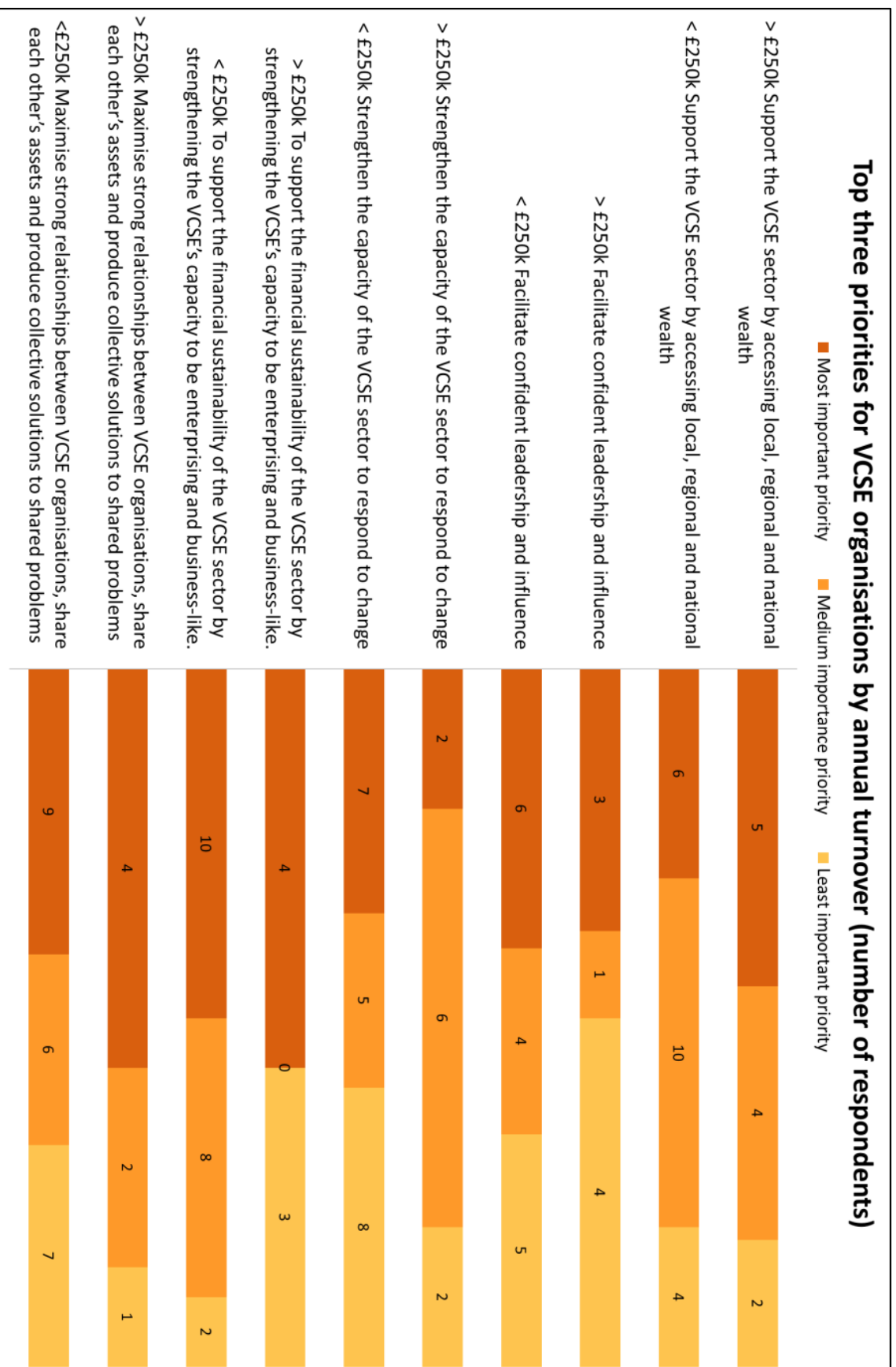


Figure 4.5.1

#### 4.6 Organisational support needs for VCSEs

Respondents were asked to select three support needs that were most important to their VCSE organisation. 126 support needs were selected, the most common of which were:

- Money, 28 (22%) organisations selected this as one of their top three support needs
- Understanding and making the most of your organisation's assets, 19 (15%) organisations selected this as one of their top three support needs
- Voice and influence, 18 (14%) organisations selected this as one of their top three support needs

The least commonly selected support need was accessing information sharing as this was selected by 1 (1%) respondent. See figure 5.6.1 below.

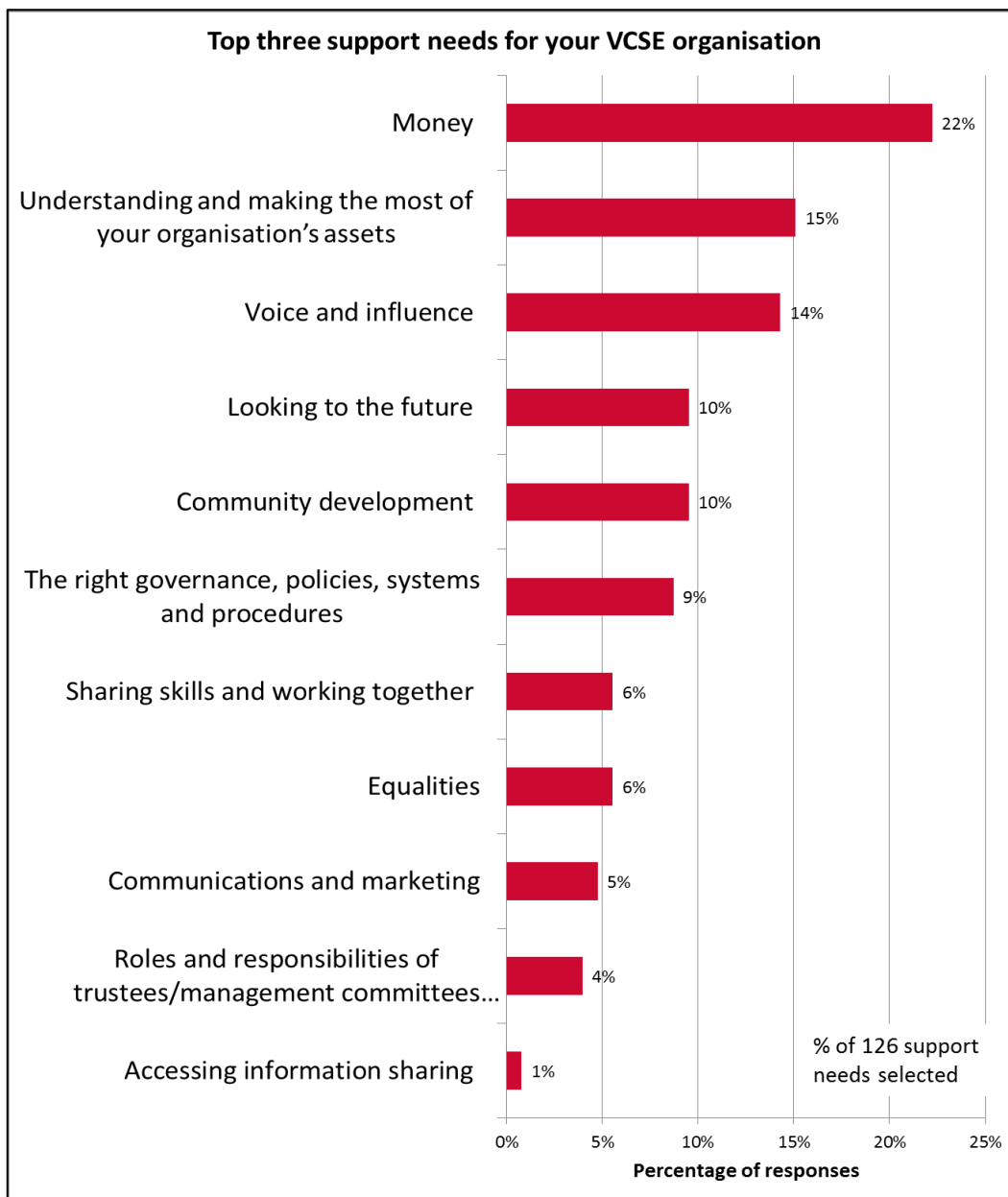


Figure 4.6.1

## 4.7 Organisational support needs by annual turnover

Of the 126 top three organisation support needs selected by VCSEs, 81 support needs were selected by organisations with an annual turnover of less than £250k and 37 support needs were selected by organisations with an annual turnover of more than £250k.

The support needs most commonly selected by VCSE organisations with an annual turnover of less than £250k were:

- Money, which was selected by 17 (21%) respondents
- Understanding and making the most of your organisation's assets, which was selected by 14 (17%) respondents
- Looking to the future, which was selected by 8 (10%) respondents and
- The right governance, policies, systems and procedures, which was selected by 8 (10%) respondents

The support needs most commonly selected by VCSE organisations with an annual turnover of more than £250k were:

- Money, which was selected by 10 (27%) respondents
- Voice and influence, which was selected by 10 (27%) respondents
- Looking to the future, which was selected by 4 (11%) respondents and
- Sharing skills and working together, which was selected by 4 (11%) respondents

See figure 5.7.1 below.



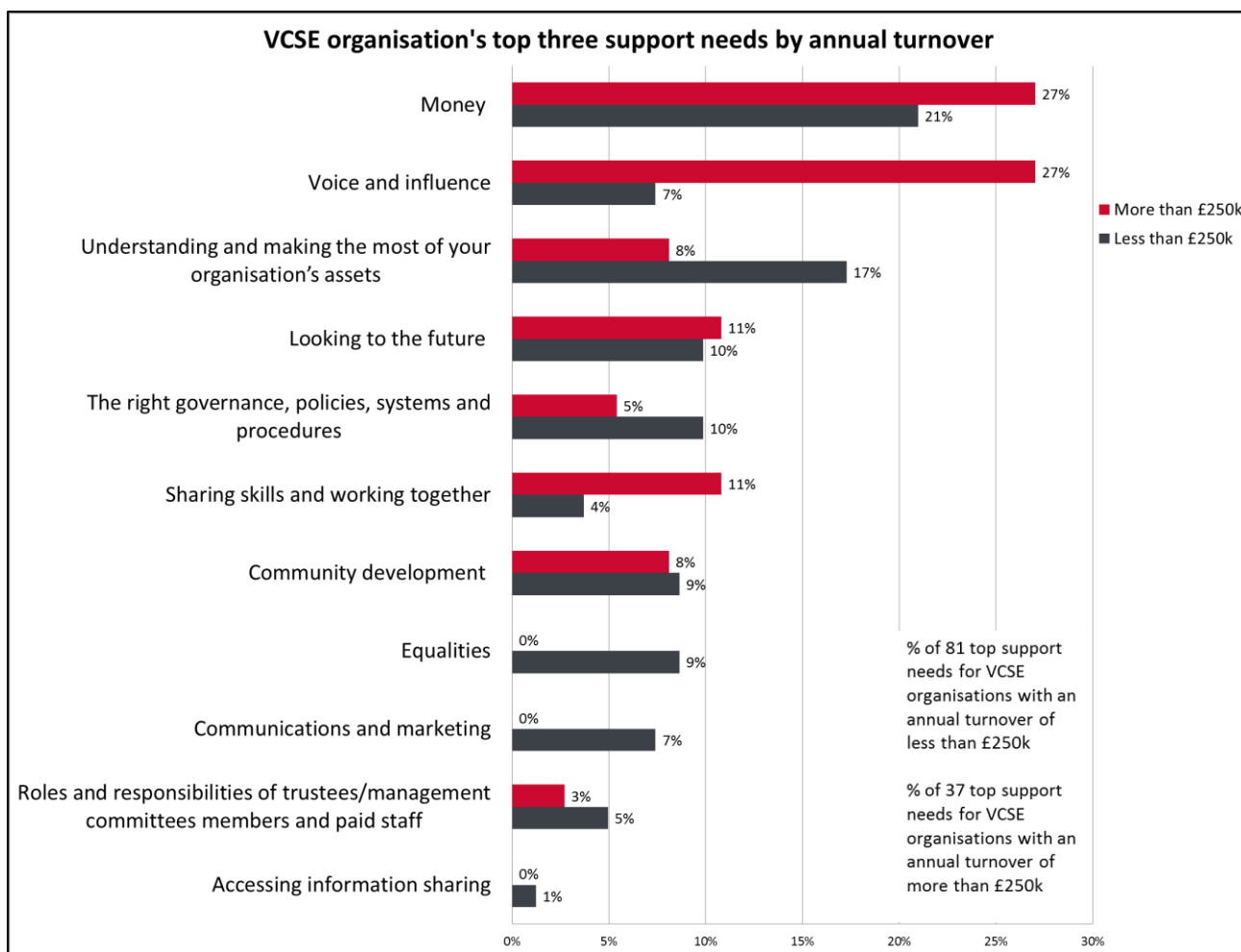


Figure 4.7.1

#### 4.8 Organisational support needs for VCSEs that work with certain groups

Of the 126 top three organisational support needs selected by VCSEs;

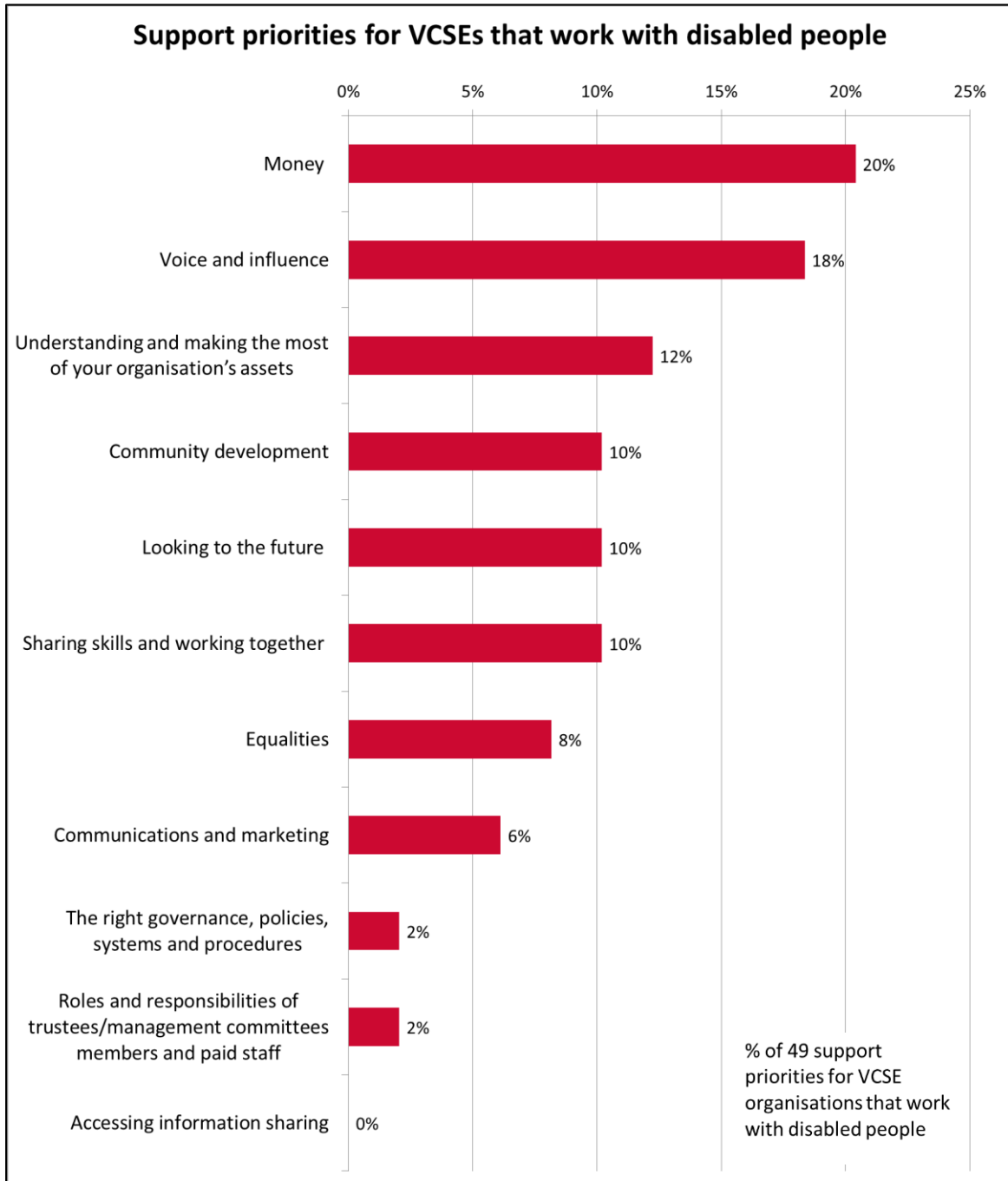
- 49 support needs were selected by organisations that work with disabled people,
- 42 support needs were selected by organisations that work with BME communities,
- 21 support needs were selected by organisations that work with new migrants, refugees or asylum seekers and
- 37 support needs were selected by organisations that work with a specific geographical community or neighbourhood

The top three organisational support needs selected by VCSEs that work with disabled people were:

- Money, selected by 10 (20%) respondents

- Voice and influence, selected by 9 (18%) respondents
- Understanding and making the most of your organisation’s assets, selected by 6 (12%) respondents

See figure 5.8.1 below.

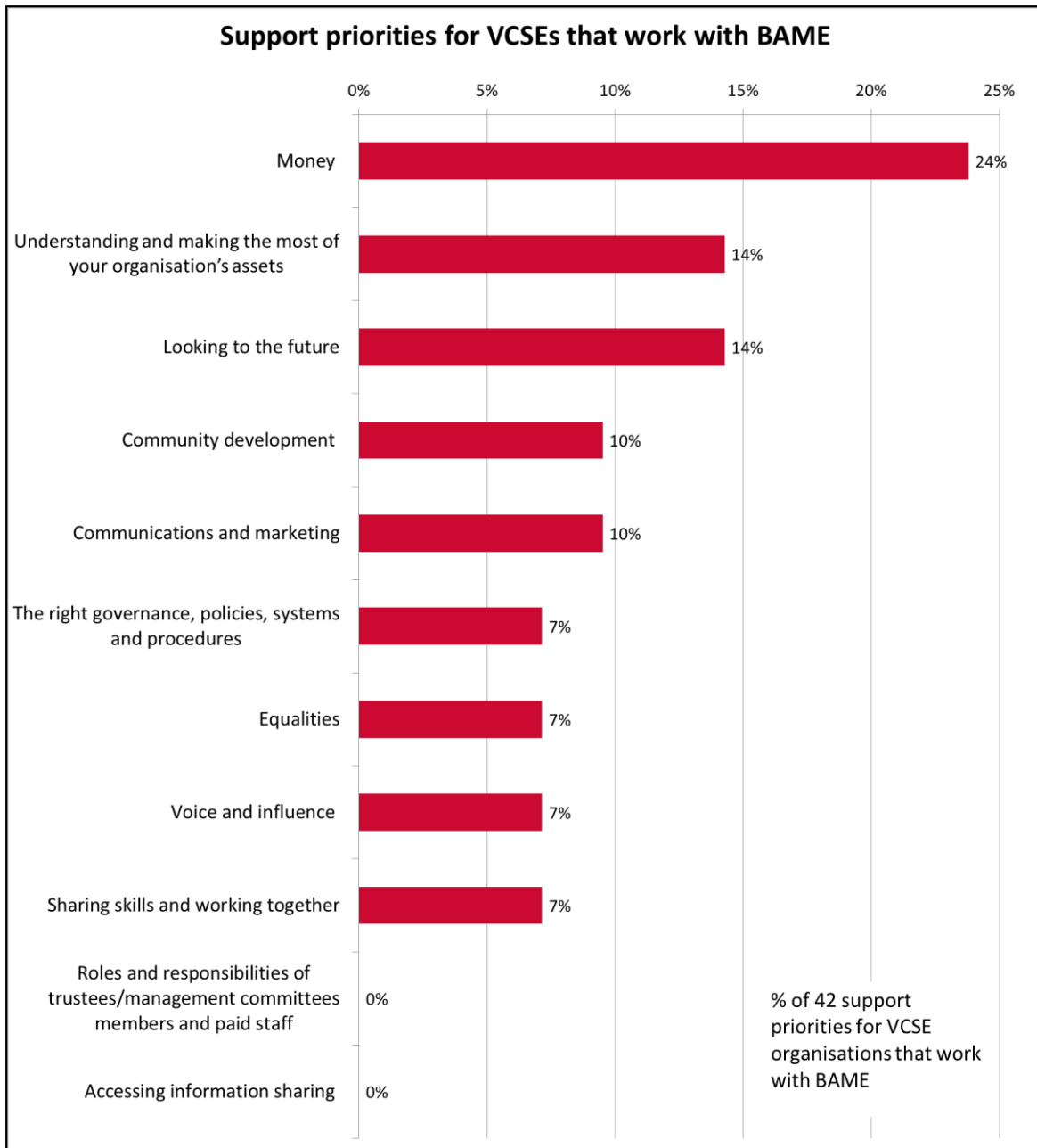


**Figure 4.8.1**

The top three organisational support needs selected by VCSEs that work with BME communities were:

- Money, selected by 10 (24%) respondents
- Understanding and making the most of your organisation’s assets, selected by 6 (14%) respondents
- Looking to the future, selected by 6 (14%) respondents

See figure 5.8.2 below.



**Figure 4.8.2**

The top organisational support needs selected by VCSEs that work with new migrants, refugees or asylum seekers were:

- Money, selected by 4 (19%) respondents
- Looking to the future, selected by 4 (19%) respondents
- Understanding and making the most of your organisation’s assets, selected by 3 (14%) respondents
- The right governance, policies, systems and procedures, selected by 3 (14%) respondents

See figure 5.8.3 below.

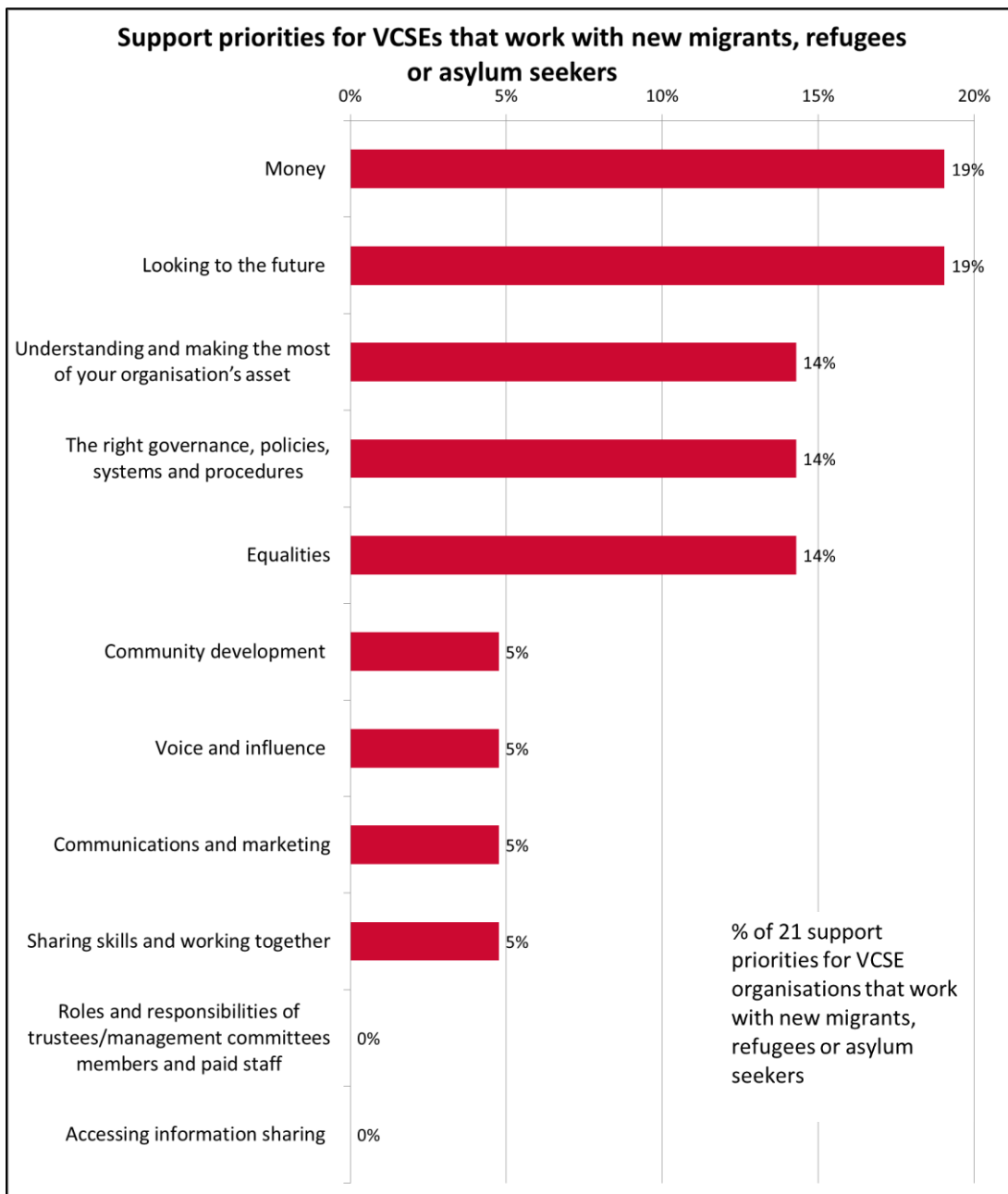


Figure 4.8.3

The top three organisational support needs selected by VCSEs that work with a specific geographical community or neighbourhood were:

- Money, selected by 7 (19%) respondents
- Voice and influence, selected by 6 (16%) respondents
- Sharing skills and working together, selected by 5 (14%) respondents

See figure 5.8.4 below.

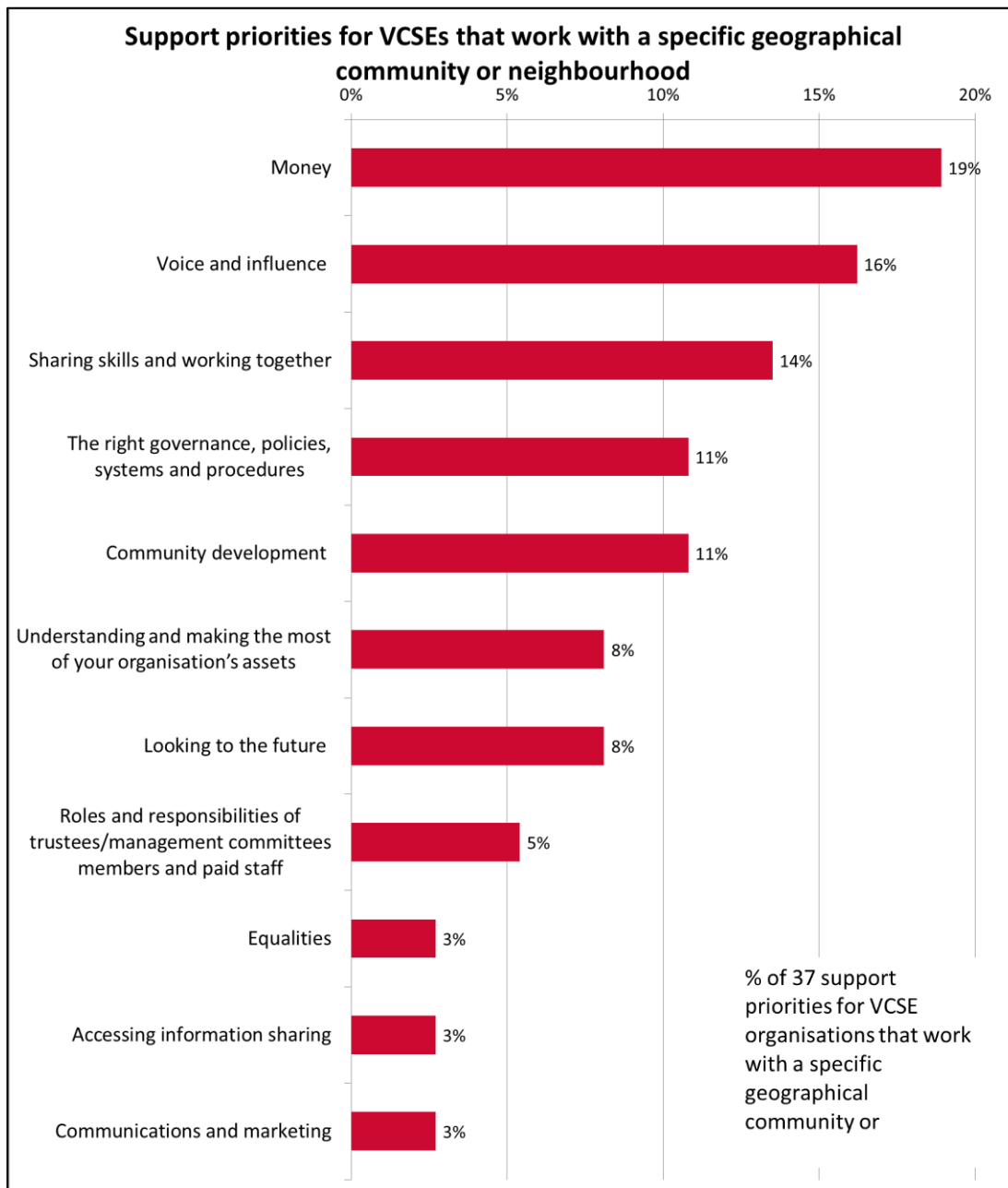


Figure 4.8.4

#### 4.9 Top organisational priorities for VCSEs within the understanding and making the most of your organisation’s assets area of support

The respondents who selected “understanding and making the most of your organisation’s assets” were asked to select their top two support priorities within this area of support. 36 respondents expressed a view. The support priorities in this area that were most commonly selected were:

- Understanding how to use assets to generate funds (where appropriate), selected by 13 (36%) respondents
- Understanding how to get the best out of our assets and their practical use, selected by 12 (33%) respondents

See figure 5.9.1 below.



Figure 4.9.1

#### 4.10 Top organisational priorities for VCSEs within the right governance, policies, systems and practices area of support

The respondents who selected “right governance, policies, systems and practices” were asked to select their top two support priorities within this area of support. 20 respondents expressed a view. The support priorities in this area that were most commonly selected were:

- Updating our policies and practices, selected by 5 (20%) respondents
- Help and guidance to make the right decisions for our organisation, selected by 5 (20%) respondents

See figure 5.10.1 below.



Figure 4.10.1

#### 4.11 Top organisational priorities for VCSEs within the roles and responsibilities of trustees/management, committees, members and paid staff area of support

The respondents who selected “roles and responsibilities of trustees/management, committees, members and paid staff” were asked to select their top two support priorities within this area of support. 10 respondents expressed a view. The support priorities in this area that were most commonly selected were:

- Improving how we manage staff and/or volunteers, selected by 4 (40%) respondents
- Recruiting people with the right skills, selected by 3 (30%) respondents

See figure 5.11.1 below.



**Figure 4.11.1**

#### **4.12 Top organisational priorities for VCSEs within money area of support**

The respondents who selected “money e.g. generating income, managing money, contracting” were asked to select their top two support priorities within this area of support. 56 respondents expressed a view. The support priorities in this area that were most commonly selected were:

- Getting better at fundraising, selected by 12 (21%) respondents
- Diversifying income, selected by 11 (20%) respondents

See figure 5.12.1 below.



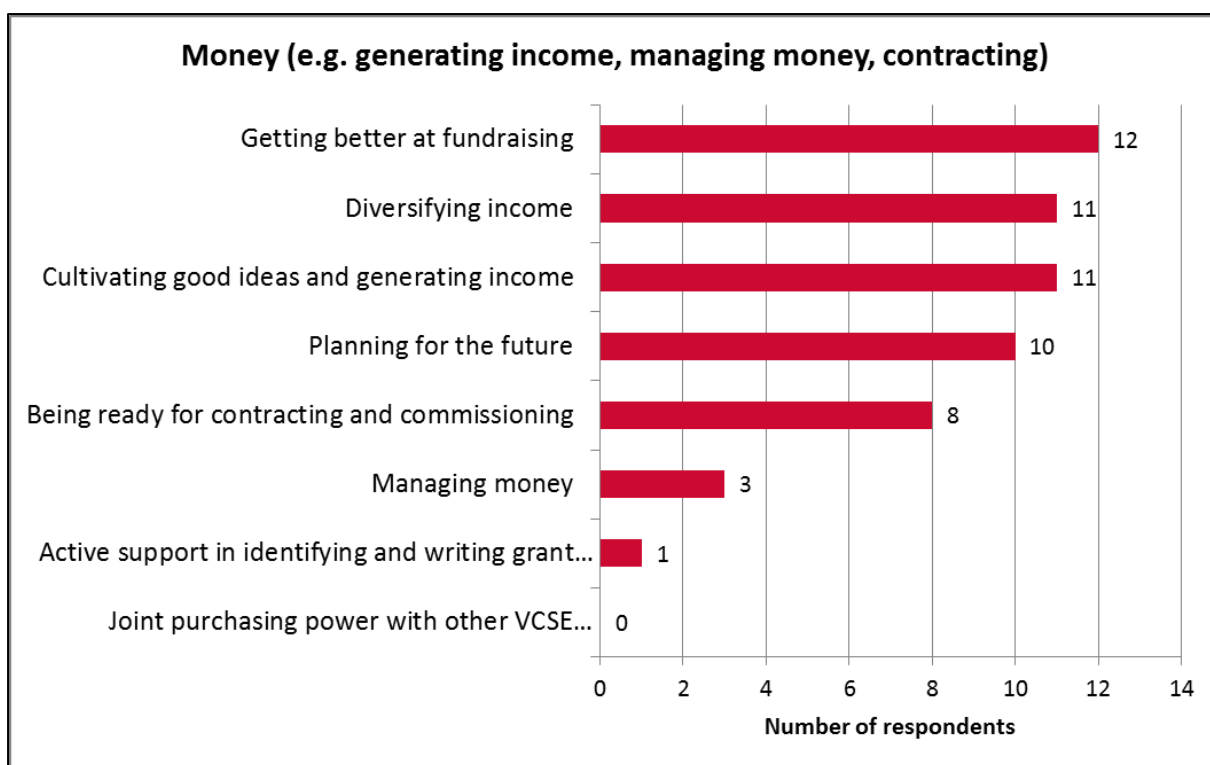


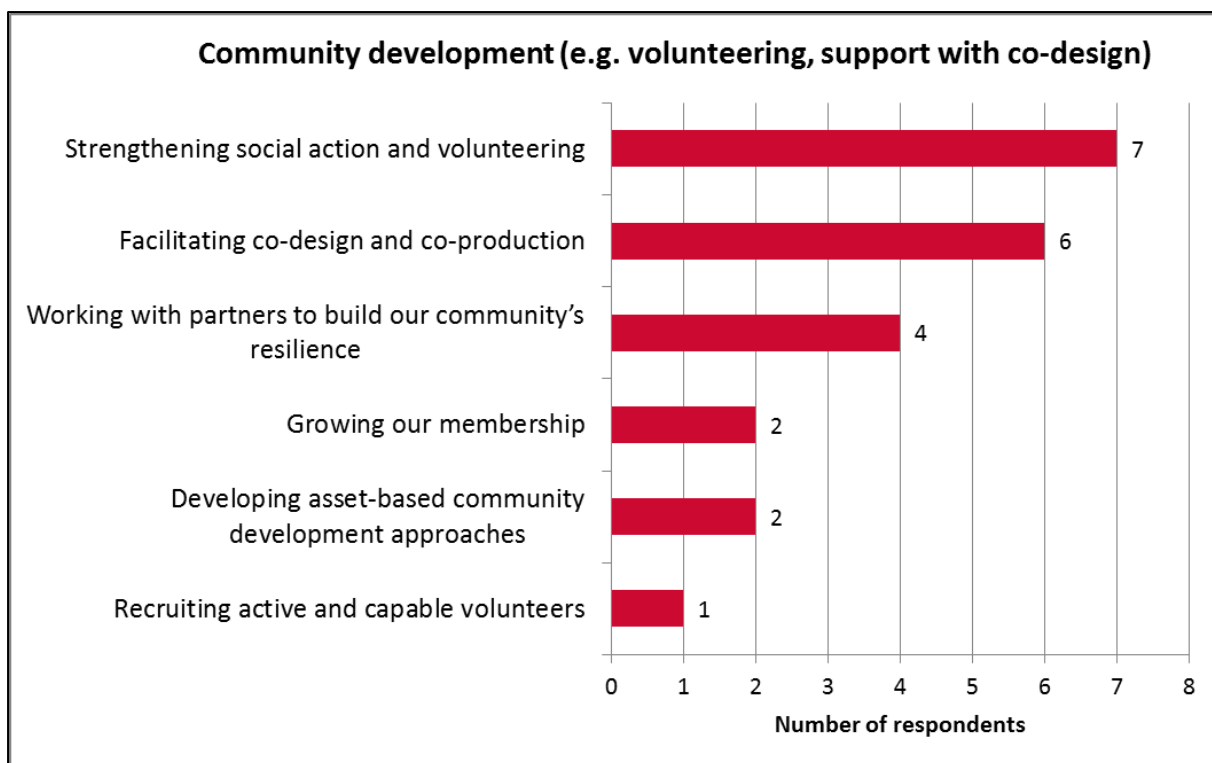
Figure 4.12.1

#### 4.13 Top organisational priorities for VCSEs within community development area of support

The respondents who selected “community development e.g. volunteering, support with co-design” were asked to select their top two support priorities within this area of support. 22 respondents expressed a view. The support priorities in this area that were most commonly selected were:

- Strengthening social action and volunteering, selected by 7 (32%) respondents
- Facilitating co-design and co-production, selected by 6 (27%) respondents

See figure 5.13.1 below.



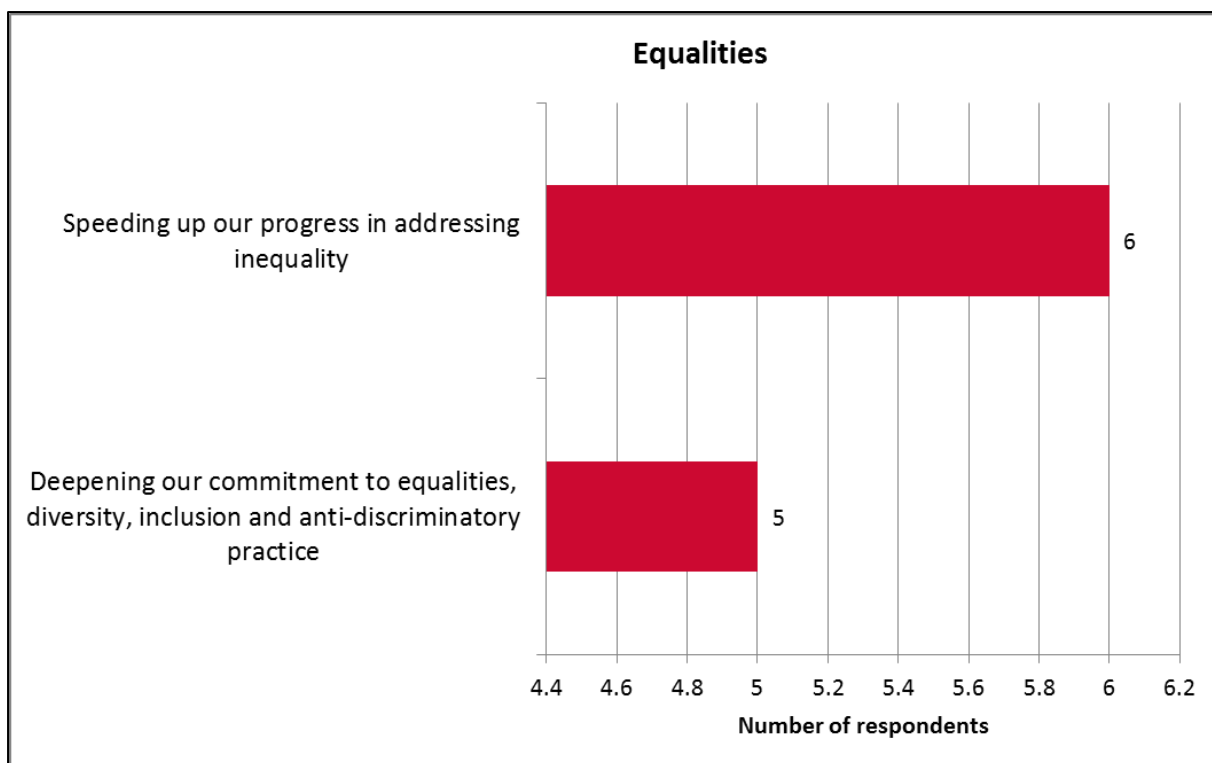
**Figure 4.13.1**

#### **4.14 Top organisational priorities for VCSEs within equalities area of support**

The respondents who selected “equalities” were asked to select their top two support priorities within this area of support. 11 respondents expressed a view. The support priorities in this area that were most commonly selected were:

- Speeding up our progress in addressing inequality, selected by 5 (45%) respondents
- Deepening our understanding to equalities, diversity, inclusion and anti-discriminatory practice, selected by 6 (55%) respondents

See figure 5.14.1 below.



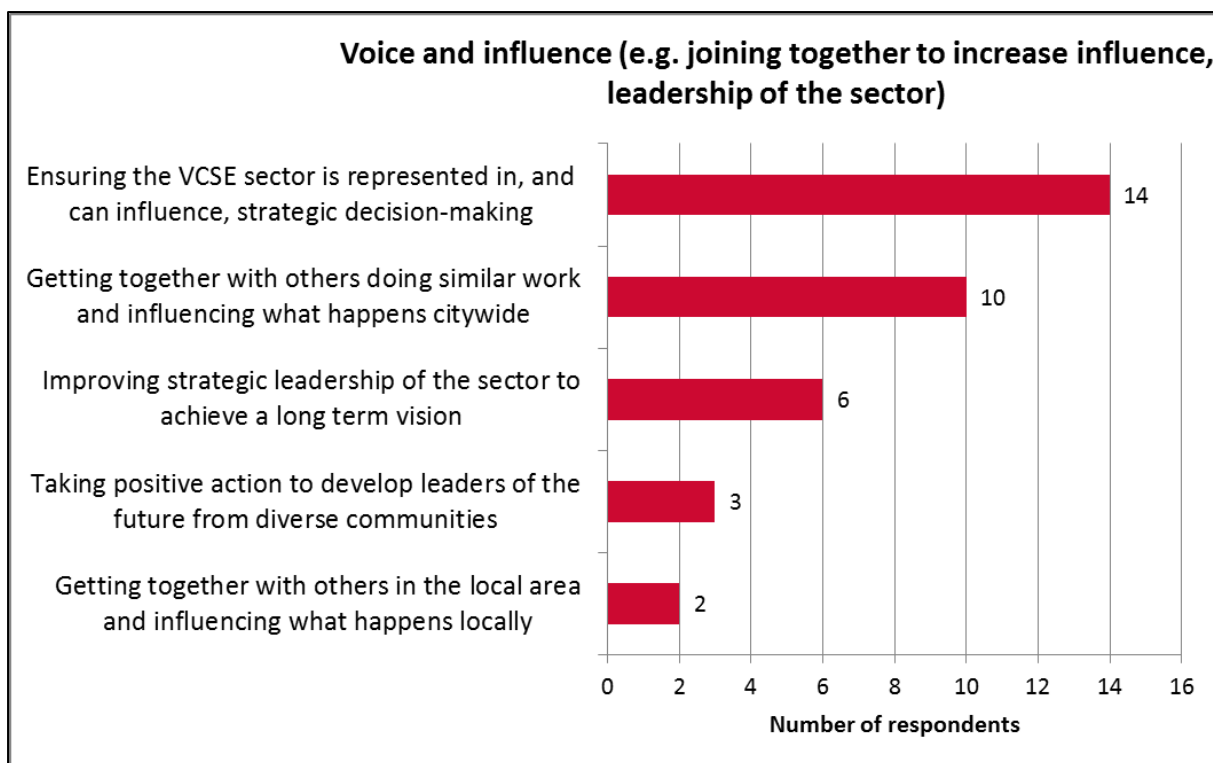
**Figure 4.14.1**

#### **4.15 Top organisational priorities for VCSEs within the voice and influence area of support**

The respondents who selected “voice and influence” were asked to select their top two support priorities within this area of support. 35 respondents expressed a view. The support priorities in this area that were most commonly selected were:

- Ensuring the VCSE sector is represented in, and can influence, strategic decision-making, selected by 14 (40%) respondents
- Getting together with others doing similar work and influencing what happens citywide, selected by 10 (29%) respondents

See figure 5.15.1 below.



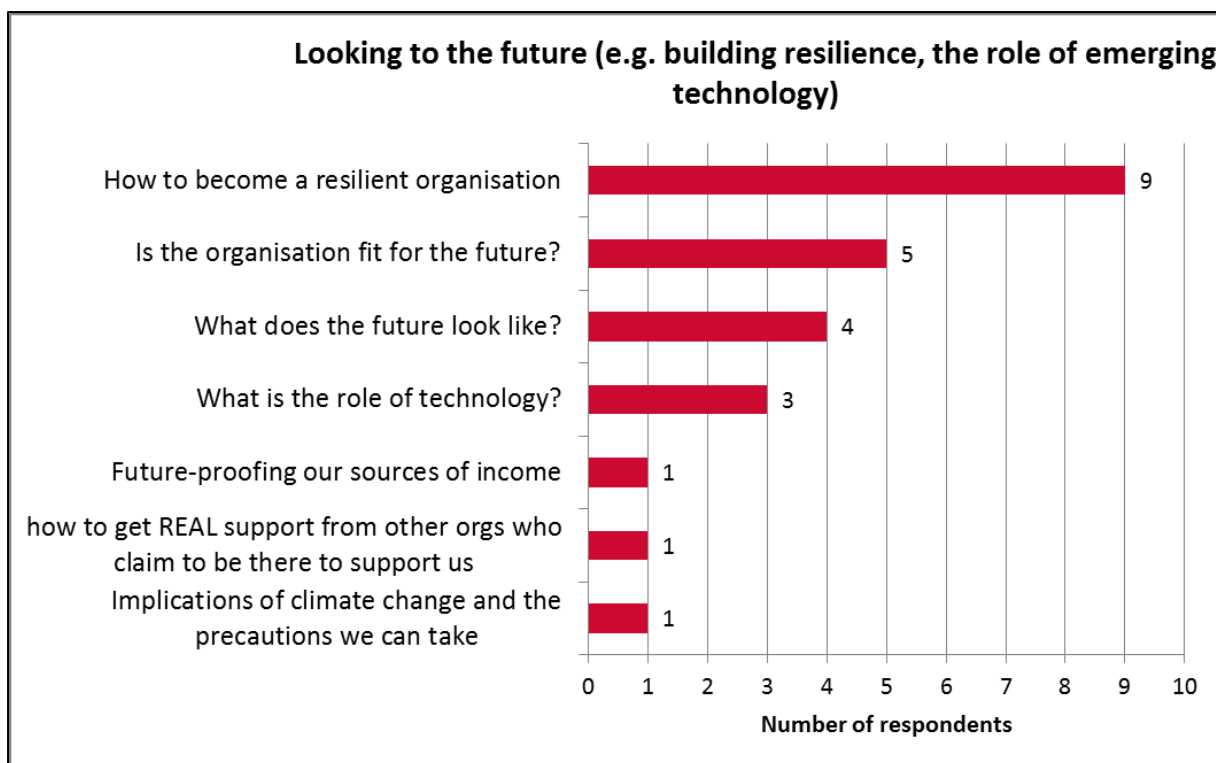
**Figure 4.15.1**

#### **4.16 Top organisational priorities for VCSEs within the looking to the future area of support**

The respondents who selected “looking to the future e.g. building resilience, the role of emerging technology” were asked to select their top two support priorities within this area of support. 24 respondents expressed a view. The support priorities in this area that were most commonly selected were:

- How to become a resilient organisation, selected by 9 (38%) respondents
- Is the organisation fit for the future? Selected by 5 (21%) respondents

See figure 5.16.1 below.



**Figure 4.16.1**

#### **4.17 Top organisational priorities for VCSEs within the communications and marketing area of support**

The respondents who selected “communications and marketing” were asked to select their top two support priorities within this area of support. 12 respondents expressed a view. The support priorities in this area that were most commonly selected were:

- Improving how we use different communications and marketing tools, selected by 5 (42%) respondents
- Communicating the impact of our work: telling our story, selected by 3 (25%) respondents

See figure 5.17.1 below.

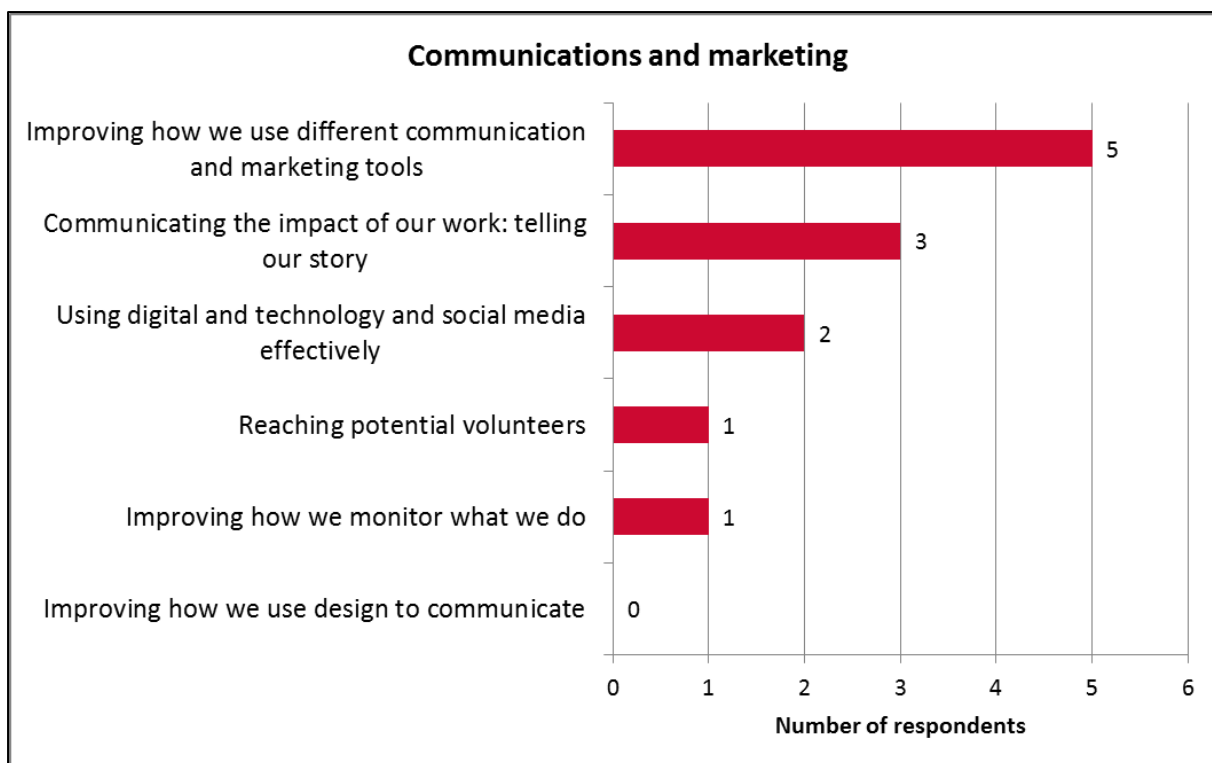


Figure 4.17.1

#### 4.18 Top organisational priorities for VCSEs within the sharing skills and working together area of support

The respondents who selected “sharing skills and working together e.g. sharing practice, peer support” were asked to select their top two support priorities within this area of support. 14 respondents expressed a view. The support priorities in this area that were most commonly selected were:

- Building collaboration, partnerships and shared working, selected by 4 (29%) respondents
- Networking/ practice sharing, selected by 4 (29%) respondents

See figure 5.18.1 below.



**Figure 4.18.1**

#### **4.19 VCSE community support needs**

Respondents were asked to select three support needs that were most important to their organisation’s VCSE community. “VCSE community” means the neighbourhood area, interest area or client group that an organisation works in. 161 VCSE community support needs were selected, the most common of which were:

- Money, 35 (22%) organisations selected this as one of their top three VCSE community support needs
- Voice and influence, 20 (12%) organisations selected this as one of their top three VCSE community support needs
- Looking to the future, 19 (12%) organisations selected this as one of their top three VCSE community support needs

The least commonly selected support need was accessing information sharing as this was selected by 3 (2%) respondents.

See figure 5.19.1 below.

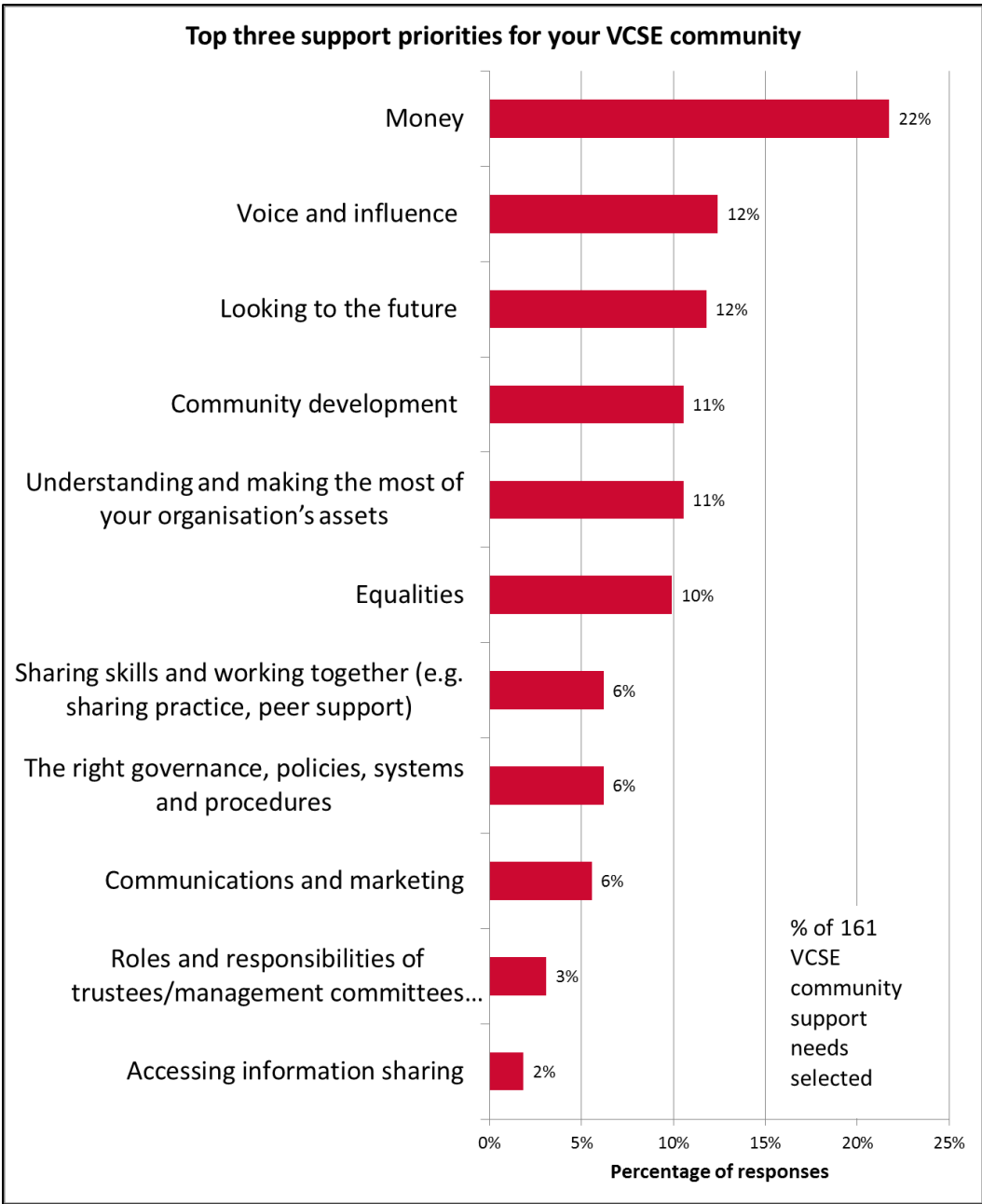


Figure 4.19.1

**4.20 VCSE community support needs by annual turnover**

Of the 161 top three VCSE community support needs selected, 80 support needs were selected by organisations with an annual turnover of less than £250k and 37 support needs were selected by organisations with an annual turnover of more than £250k.

The support needs most commonly selected by VCSE organisations with an annual turnover of less than £250k were:



- Money, which was selected by 15 (19%) respondents
- Equalities, which was selected by 12 (15%) respondents and
- Understanding and making the most of your organisation’s assets, which was selected by 11 (14%) respondents

The support needs most commonly selected by VCSE organisations with an annual turnover of more than £250k were:

- Money, which was selected by 12 (32%) respondents
- Voice and influence, which was selected by 7 (19%) respondents and
- Looking to the future, which was selected by 6 (16%) respondents

See figure 5.20.1 below.

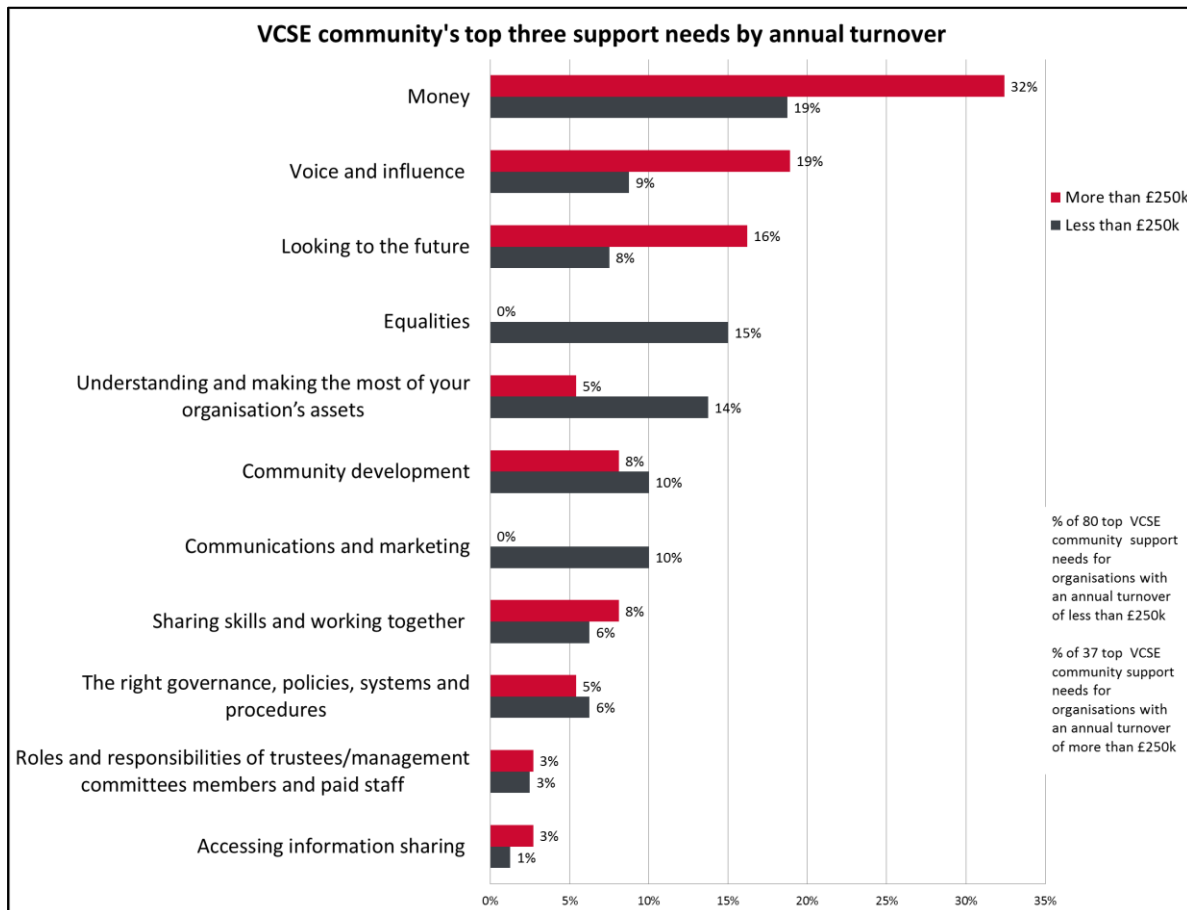


Figure 4.20.1

#### 4.21 Community support needs for VCSEs that work with certain groups

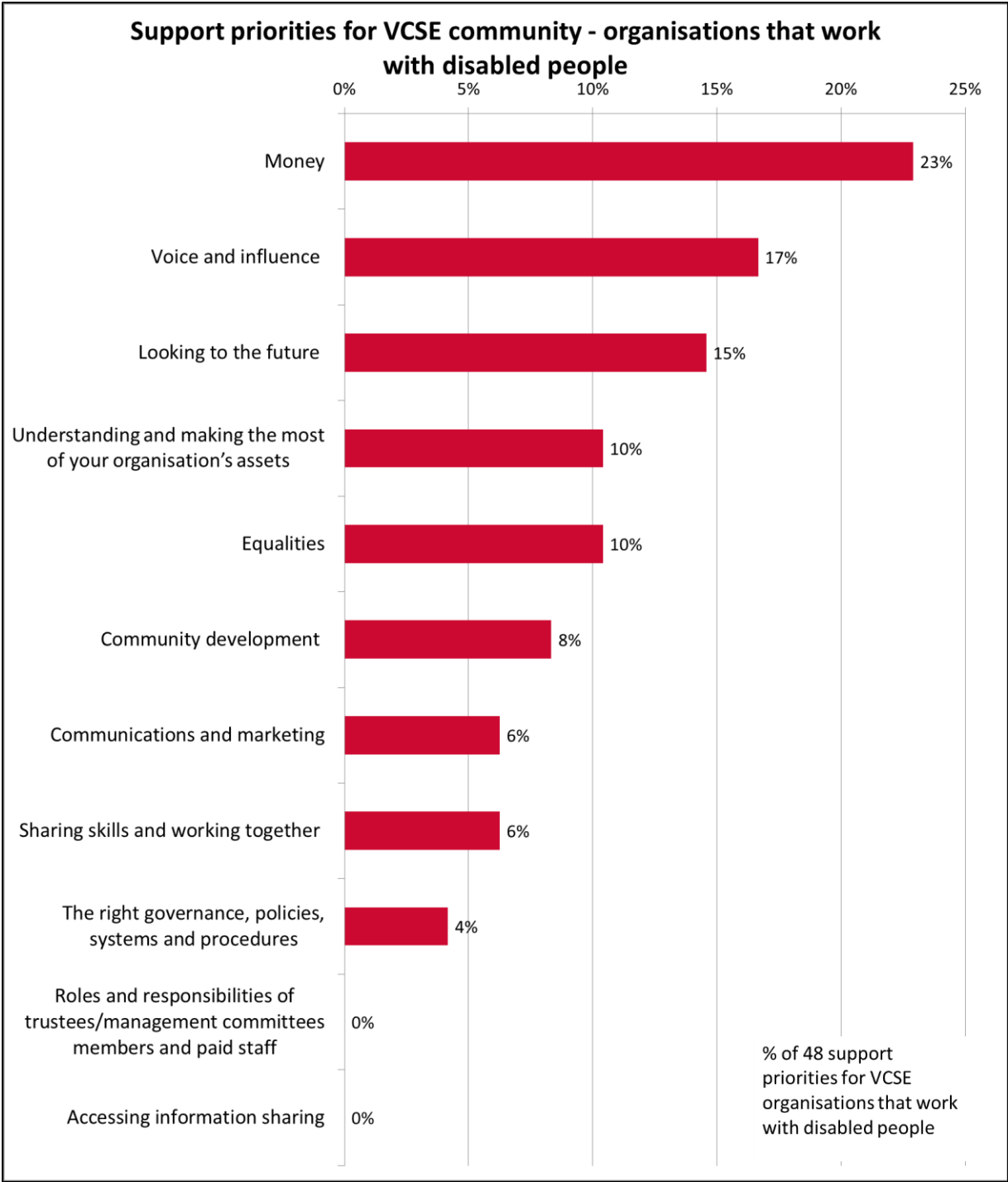
Of the 161 top three VCSE community support needs selected;

- 48 support needs were selected by organisations that work with disabled people,
- 41 support needs were selected by organisations that work with BME communities,
- 21 support needs were selected by organisations that work with new migrants, refugees or asylum seekers and
- 38 support needs were selected by organisations that work with a specific geographical community or neighbourhood

The top three VCSE community support needs selected by organisations that work with disabled people were:

- Money, selected by 11 (23%) respondents
- Voice and influence, selected by 8 (17%) respondents
- Looking to the future, selected by 7 (15%) respondents

See figure 5.21.1 below.



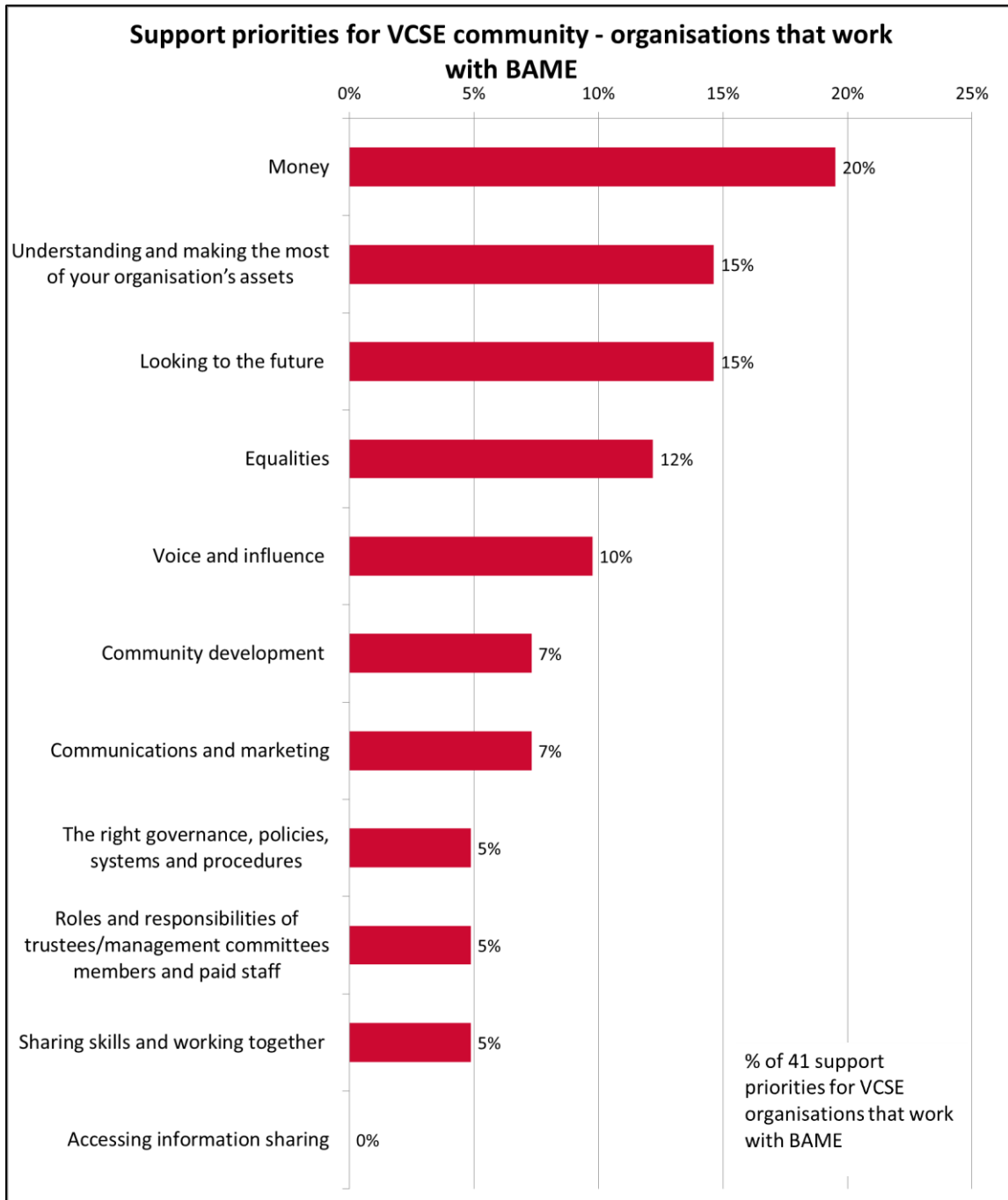
**Figure 4.21.1**

The top three VCSE community support needs selected by organisations that work with BME communities were:

- Money, selected by 8 (20%) respondents
- Understanding and making the most of your organisation's assets, selected by 6 (15%) respondents

- Looking to the future, selected by 6 (15%) respondents

See figure 5.21.2 below.

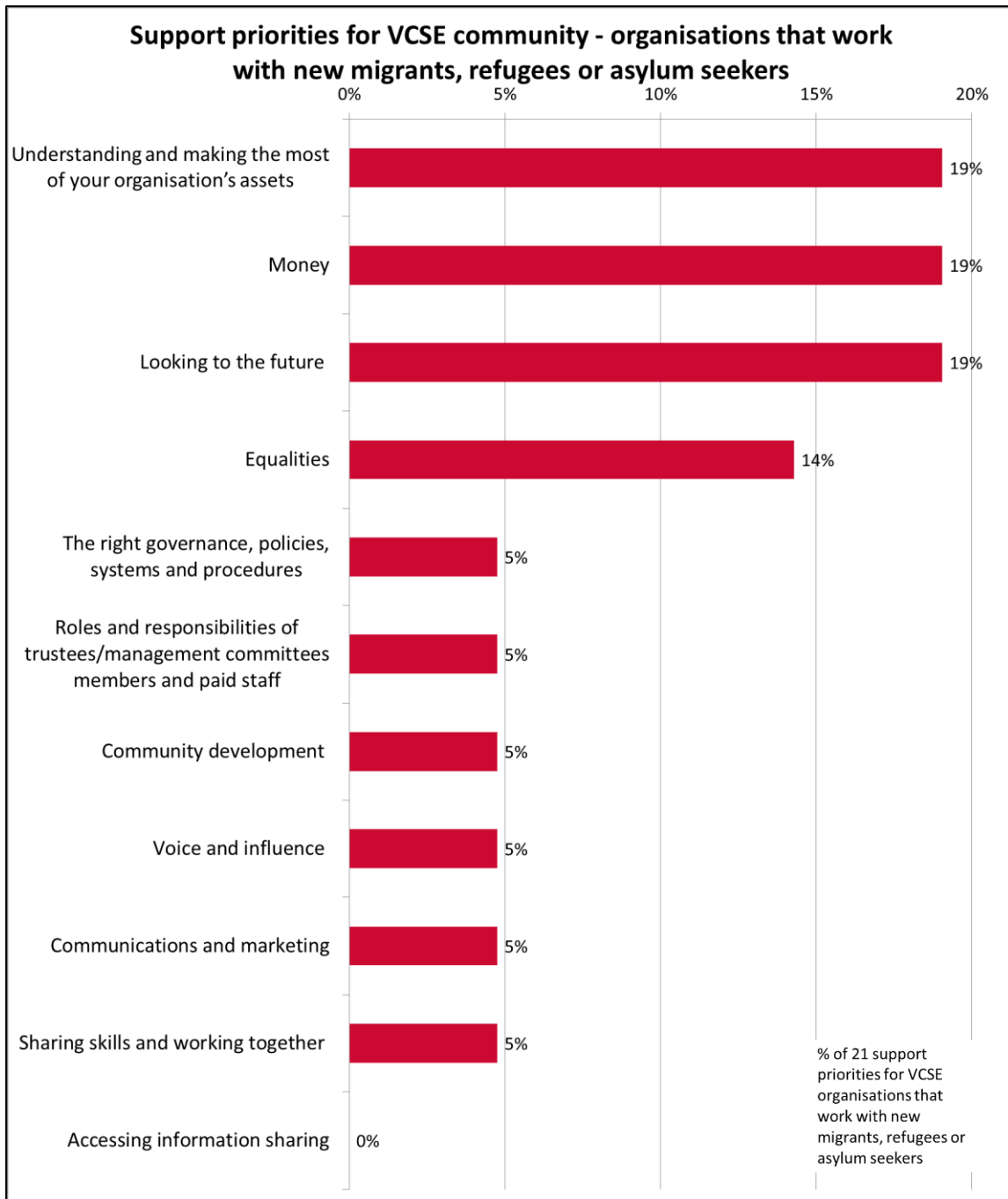


**Figure 4.21.2**

The top three VCSE community support needs selected by organisations that work with new migrants, refugees or asylum seekers were:

- Understanding and making the most of your organisation’s assets, selected by 4 (19%) respondents
- Money, selected by 4 (19%) respondents
- Looking to the future, selected by 4 (19%) respondents

See figure 5.21.3 below.



**Figure 4.21.3**

The top three VCSE community support needs selected by organisations that work with a specific geographical community or neighbourhood were:

- Voice and influence, selected by 8 (21%) respondents
- Money, selected by 7 (18%) respondents
- Looking to the future, selected by 5 (13%) respondents

See figure 5.21.4 below.

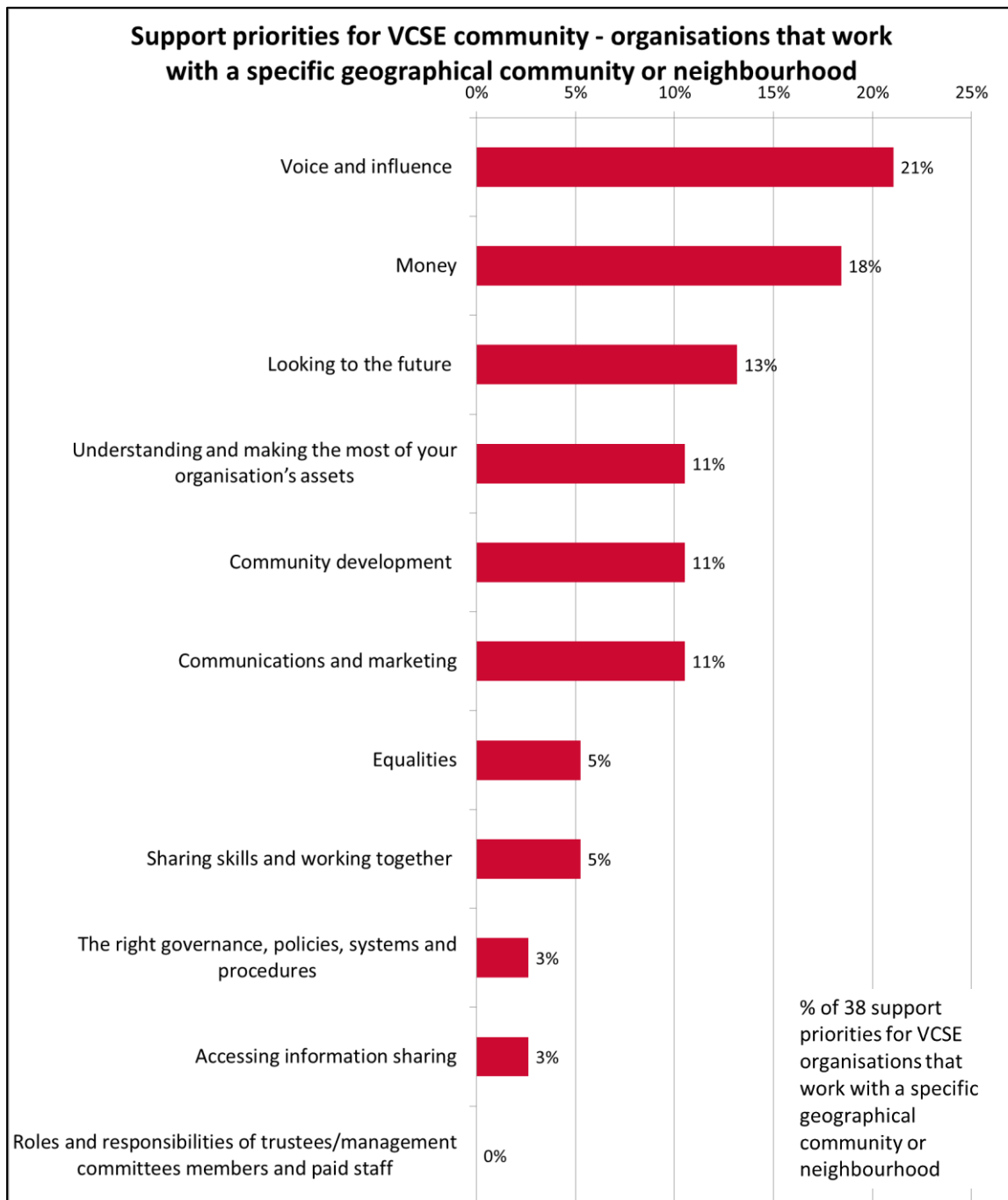


Figure 4.21.4

## 5 Qualitative survey feedback and engagement

Qualitative feedback was gathered through 10 engagement events and two free text boxes in the survey. See paragraph 3.2 for attendance at the engagement events. See section 6 to see how the feedback has been used to amend and revise the proposal.

The following areas of interest were represented by VCSE organisations at these events (some work in more than one):

<b>VCSE areas of interest/operation</b>	<b>Numbers</b>
Neighbourhood	8
Community Development	4
Environmental	1
Health & Well Being	6
Adult Social Care	6
Children and Families	4
Regeneration	1
Jobs and Skills	3
Arts and Culture	2
Sport and Leisure	0
Equalities	20
Campaigning	3
Economy	0
Community Safety	0
Information, Advice and Guidance	1
Transport	1

Other (VCSE Infrastructure)	1
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Internal BCC consultation was undertaken with:

- Children’s Services
- Adult Social Care
- Public Health

During the engagement events, respondents were asked the following questions:

- Current landscape and strategic drivers: does this ring true? Anything we’ve missed?
- The Principles: do they sound right? Will they drive the right sort of support?
- The Priorities: do they cover the range of support? Is there anything you’d want to see?
- A collaborative approach to delivery?: comments
- What support is best delivered city wide?
- What support is best delivered at a more local level
- How resources can be used to enable flexible support
- Anything else?

In the survey, respondents were asked if they would like to comment further on the principles of the VCSE infrastructure grant and whether respondents had any suggestions for other priorities that the grant should focus on.

The themes from the engagement events and free text from the survey have been analysed together as both qualitative data gathering activities have generated many of the same themes. These themes are based on 244 comments across both the survey and engagement events.

### 5.1 General comments

Some of the general feedback from the engagement events and survey included

- Proposals have an air of BCC walking away from VCSE and merely being a facilitator/enabler.
- Behind this strategy there seems an entrenched view of VCSE as unenterprising; resistant to change; lacking the will to work together; reliant on local authority support. Want a more positive model that acknowledges sector’s diversity and has a more asset-based approach to support sector



- BSWN (Black South West Network): maximum flexibility and clarity about performance is needed
- Current outcomes are flexible but vague: future funding proposals should request tangible outcomes which are known to be needed, measurable and will make a transformative difference
- Need to connect strategy and delivery in each priority:
- Take this opportunity to review to not repeat the past
- Enable infrastructure bodies to work strategically and become vehicles that can facilitate the investment into dynamic and capable delivery organisations
- Clarity
- What do we mean by equalities led groups?
- What do we mean by collaboration?
- Jargon a big barrier – could VCSE be replaced by something like ‘3rd sector’

## 5.2 Current landscape and strategic drivers

Respondents fed back on the topic of the general VCSE landscape and strategic drivers, the themes within this topic included:

- 3 (1%) comments pointed to the difference between commissioning and grants; that council contracts are much larger than grants, which can lead to smaller VCSEs missing out
- 2 (1%) comments stated that the distance between the VCSE sector and public sector services has increased
- 2 (1%) comments discussed the language and terminology that the council uses, particularly that “co-creating change” is less hierarchical than social engagement and participation
- 1 (0%) respondent questioned the definition of a community anchor organisation because some key organisations aren’t defined as that
- 1 (0%) respondent stated that BCC needs to change the way it takes responsibility for involving VCSEs in decision making
- 1 (0%) respondent described the pressure on VCSEs and raised concerns about the chronic lack of funding and increase costs for the VCSE sector
- 1 (0%) respondent pointed to political change and local political issues that affect the VCSE sector

### 5.3 Principles of the Enabling the VCSE support grant

68 (26%) comments discussed the five proposed principles these included 12 (5%) general comments on:

- Suggestion that there should be a principle around providing an evidence base
- Suggestion that more focus is needed on the purpose of the infrastructure grant
- Question as to how “citizen led” is interpreted
- The principles are poorly presented, includes jargon, is too long and not in plain English
- Principles are well considered and concisely communicated
- Principles are more words than substance, BCC is unsupportive
- New grant must be different to the current model, current grant does not work to these principles
- More time and effort needed to engage certain communities
- Learning and development is needed across the VCSE sector to implement these principles

56 (22%) comments centred on the specific proposed principles, such as:

- 18 (7%) comments on the place-based principle including how the strategic view of needs across the cities is seen, the need for a city-wide approach, suggestion to replace the term with “community based”, cultural/experiential rather than place based communities, the value of networks and the need for communities to be community-led
- 6 (2%) comments on the asset based principle including the need for better use of non-local assets and for a better definition of “collective leadership”, the need for VCSEs to increased profitability of assets, the need to work with organisations and not just individuals, the limiting factors of some areas and communities and under used of assets
- 9 (3%) comments on the inclusive principle including improving inclusivity, the eligibility for support and the suggestion to replace the term “inclusion” with “equity”
- 13 (5%) comments on the citizen-led principle, including the need for specific support for VCSEs to be citizen-led, the important role of the VCSE sector in supporting people’s voices and the suggestion that VCSE support is not about individual citizens
- 10 (4%) comments on the relational principle including the need for access to public boards for VCSE representatives, the need for a strong VCSE voice at the top table,

the need for a change in the culture of collaboration at the council and clarification on the meaning of this principle

#### **5.4 Priorities of the Enabling the VCSE support grant**

120 (46%) comments discussed the specific priorities of the VCSE Infrastructure Grant.

**Priority 1: Maximise strong relationships between VCSE organisations so that VCSEs may share each other's assets (time, skills, knowledge, experience , money, buildings etc.) and produce collective solutions to shared problems**

- 11 (4%) comments on this priority centred on collaboration issues, such as the cost of collaboration that needs to be resources and the length of time collaboration can take
- 10 (4%) comments centred on resource sharing, such as VCSEs not having resources to share and building strong relationships that go beyond tokenistic networks
- 2 (1%) comments centred on collaboration to build Enabling VCSE support
- 2 (1%) comments centred on support networking
- 2 (1%) comments centred on funding and sustainability of VCSEs
- 1 (0%) comments centred on community accountability

**Priority 2. Strengthen the VCSE's capacity to be enterprising and business-like. This would include supporting VCSEs to find new sources of funding and earned income**

- 9 (3%) comments centred on funding as sustainability
- 12 (5%) comments centred on increasing effectiveness
- 1 (0%) respondent viewed the wording of this priority as patronising to VCSEs that are business like
- 2 (1%) comments centred on BME needs
- 1 (0%) comment centred on the current infrastructure service
- 1 (0%) comment centred on the VCSE ethos
- 1 (0%) comment centred on language and terminology

**Priority 3: Strengthen the capacity of the VCSE sector to respond to change, with a clear focus on, organisations that are led by equalities groups, neighbourhoods and places experiencing greatest inequality and smaller and emerging community groups**

- 15 (6%) comments centred on BME needs - to deliver equity of outcome; more bespoke support which acknowledges the unequal starting point for many equalities-led and, specifically, BME-led organisations
- 8 (3%) comments centred on priorities for the grant
- 6 (2%) comments centred on supporting equality
- 2 (1%) comments centred on free support vs charges
- 2 (1%) comments centred on smaller organisations' needs
- 4 (2%) comments centred on language and terminology
- 5 (2%) comments centred on the nature of support available
- 1 (0%) comment said the wording of this priority was also seen as patronising as the VCSE sector is good at innovation and problem-solving.
- 1 (0%) comment cited the need to specify mental health as not always identified as a disability
- 1 (0%) comment pointed out that different faith communities experience different levels of disadvantage
- 1 (0%) comment cited the need for further clarification on the terms 'neighbourhoods and places' and 'greatest inequality'

**Priority 4. Facilitate confident leadership and influence so that the VCSE sector, in all its diversity, can: play a full part in shaping and achieving the ambition of the city set out in the One City Plan, influence and shape the council's future Enabling the VCSE Grant so that it has maximum impact**

- 1 (0%) comment centred on BME needs to influence decision makers
- 1 (0%) comment said BCC needs to change
- 5 (2%) comments centred on engaging the sector at grassroots level and need to evidence impact
- 9 (3%) comments centred on influence, shaping policy and practice
- 1 (0%) comment centred on leadership

**Priority 5: Support the VCSE sector by accessing local, regional and national wealth, such as funding and investment opportunities, and other assets, such as skills and knowledge.**

- 3 (1%) comments centred on influence, shaping policy and practice

Other priorities were also suggested by 2 (1%) of respondents:

- The concept of challenge and managing challenge as part of the role of infrastructure
- Focus on capacity building, leadership and collaboration within the sector

### **Funding approach:**

48 (19%) comments discussed the Enabling the VCSE support grant's funding approach.

The comments within this theme included:

- Recommendation that the final commissioning plan includes the standard consideration of TUPE and for commissioners to make available existing workforce information to bidders.
- Recommendation that the final commissioning plan includes more details on the assessment method for grant applications and that the process includes an interview as part of the assessment.
- Recommendation that if the chosen grant process results in contracts through procurement, it would include a post-notification standstill (Alcatel) minimum period of 10 days and that a similar appeal period be incorporated into the grant process
- IVAR research report - 'The Value of Small' (June 2018), locality reports and briefings under the 'Keep It Local' campaign such as 'Powerful Communities, Strong Economies' (Nov 2017) provides to date insight, knowledge and information relevant to supporting asset based development and locality based infrastructure support.
- A more co-design approach to working with community anchor organisation will embed support for a new, collaborative delivery model and enable a more strategic approach through which the VCSE sector can more effectively contribute to citywide challenges.
- The shift to an enabling model is one which necessitates new thinking which we support given our work locally and regionally to update the old/existing CVS delivery model for infrastructure support and development.
- Need to ensure that any partnership agreements are not tokenistic and we need to ensure that any partner organisations are sharing resources fairly.
- Always advocate getting people out into community anchor organisations – support often central and actually having it based in the community so that the approach is more collaborative in the beginning then its more empowering to communities.
- Not all groups want to be constituted formally, but some do. Need a locally based hub that will take the groups that do want to constitute through that process.
- Using the relationships that already exist in the community to build citizens confidence to accessing funds and become stronger voices in community.

- A local offer plugged into a central view.
- Funding info best delivered at a local level. As the resources in terms of knowledge and experience (staff) and need will be different at a local level. However more corporate offer would be best done more centrally and co-ordinated.
- Push for orgs to be ready to deliver BCC contracts v push for orgs to be bottom up and driven by communities
- Push to make orgs more business-like v push for orgs to collaborate and share assets
- Need to be clear on what the focus is – the current ask is not sustainable with the level of resource. This will lead to reduced quality. Better to be upfront about lack of resource
- Leadership – anchor orgs do this ‘in their spare time’ – not something they expect to be paid for
- Quality of provision needs to be measured.
- Shared view that word infrastructure adds recognition of what VCSE do (rather than a rather ‘fluffy’ word like enabling)

## 5.5 Needs of the sector

65 (25%) comments were on the topic of the needs of the VCSE sector. The themes within this topic include:

**Collaboration issues:** 26 (11%) comments were on the theme of collaboration issues. The comments within this theme included:

- Building enough time into processes to enable collaboration,
- The cost of larger VCSEs collaborating with smaller VCSEs,
- The bureaucracy involved in collaboration,
- Focus and capacity on collaboration detracting from service delivery,
- Survival of smaller VCSEs as a barrier to collaboration,
- Lack of awareness of other organisation to collaborate with
- Transparency, openness and trust being key to collaboration
- Commitment of time and resources for collaboration
- The needs for partnerships to exist before contracts go out to tender
- Not forcing VCSEs to collaborate if they don’t want to
- Providing money to enable collaboration
- Uneven commitments from partners

- The difference between collaboration and partnership not always being clear
- The council being clear on the benefits of collaboration e.g. more points being awarded at tender
- More evidence of the benefits of collaboration is needed