

Respond, recover, reset: the voluntary sector and COVID-19

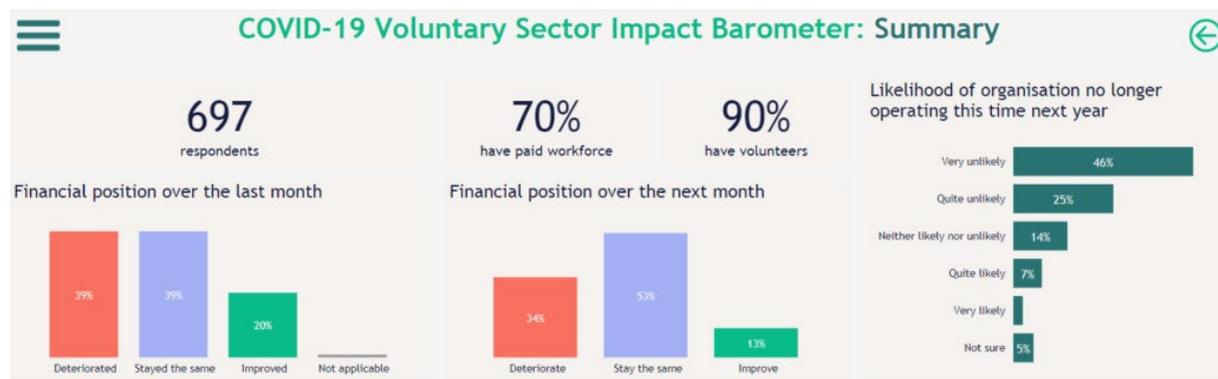
[Take part in our survey](#)

What is the barometer about and how can my organisation help?

COVID-19 is having a major impact on the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sector. Understandably much of the focus has been on the loss of funding within the sector, and the loss of services that has resulted from these funding cuts. Less attention has been placed on the impact COVID-19 is having on employees and volunteers, and the practices that organisations are adopting to respond to the pandemic. We need more information about the ways in which the pandemic is impacting different types of organisations, and go beyond headlines to gain a deeper understanding, in real time as the impact of COVID-19 unfolds.

By taking part in [this short survey](#), you will help to capture key indicators about the impact that COVID-19 is having throughout the sector. Each round the survey will have standard questions, together with a few on specific situations occurring at that time. We are extremely keen to hear from all kinds of organisations across the whole sector (from charities and community groups to social enterprises and sports organisations) throughout the entirety of the UK including Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland, as well as those throughout England.

How can the barometer help our organisation and others?



One of the unique aspects of this barometer is that the results are updated monthly via [the barometer dashboard](#). This allows organisations to further understanding of what is happening

within the sector; including learning from those of similar type and size across the UK. The dashboard presents users with an overview of how their experiences compare and are shared throughout the sector.

As part of the **Respond, Recover, Reset: the voluntary sector and COVID-19** research project, we have also been publishing a monthly COVID-19 voluntary sector impact barometer reports, you can check out all of our reports so far [here](#).

Introduction: Volunteering during the pandemic

Volunteers are at the heart of many voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations. With the vaccine rollout, mutual aid and informal groups through to foodbanks, volunteers have been core to many communities' responses to the pandemic. This month's report looks at the impact of COVID-19 on voluntary organisations and how they are responding.

There are some interesting findings. Whilst there has been concern that the NHS Volunteer Responders 750,000 scheme would draw volunteers away from voluntary organisations, our results show 88% of the organisations say they were unaffected by the scheme. The wider impact on volunteering is also mixed, with 20% reporting an increase but 35% decrease in number of volunteers and 27% reporting an increase and 40% a decrease in the time given by volunteers.

More work though has to be done to maintain contact with volunteers. Our interviews and survey show some shifts in who is volunteering, particularly with age and underlying health conditions preventing some from volunteering whereas furloughing and for some greater availability of time, has meant that some have more opportunities to volunteer. Good communication, engagement and support are vital to keeping volunteers going.

The picture of the wider impacts on the pandemic continues to show a difficult landscape. Over the last month our respondents say demand is up with 44% saying they have had an increase and concerning a significant deterioration of finances, with 40% reporting a worsening financial position over the last month. As we approach year end, many organisations are uncertain over their future. The Wave 5 barometer will explore the impact of COVID-19 on voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations finances.

In this report we continue to look at how organisations are faring and also what lessons have been learnt from the first lockdown. If you want to get involved, or just find out more please email us at CPWOP@ntu.ac.uk or visit the website bit.ly/3pwF44L.

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The more organisations which participate in this project, the more we can understand, share and learn lessons on a national scale; as well as help inform policy and other decision makers throughout the sector.

As a small thank you, each month organisations that complete the survey will also have the opportunity to be entered into a **prize draw** with the potential to win £200. At the end of the project all participating organisations will also have the chance to win £2,000.

Who is responsible for the study and where to find out more -

This project is being conducted by researchers from Nottingham Trent University, NCVO (National Council for Voluntary Organisations) and Sheffield Hallam University and is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. It is located in the Centre for People, Work and Organisational Practice at Nottingham Trent University. For further details please check out our project page [here](#) or email the team – CPWOP@ntu.ac.uk.

