

Community Pulse

The Cost-of-Living Crisis

September 2022

Executive Summary

517
responses

The Community Pulse is Sported's biannual survey of the groups in our network to help understand the issues and opportunities facing community sports groups across the UK. Through Pulse we aim to inform the sport for development sector and support stakeholders in their decision-making in relation to grassroots community sport in the UK.

In our September 2022 Pulse we wanted to find out more about how the cost-of-living crisis is affecting our groups and their young people. This special Cost-of-Living report explores the results of this research, building on initial insight into the crisis from our March 2022 Pulse and June 2022 Member surveys.

The report is based on 517 responses received from groups in Sported's network between **21 September – 3 October 2022**. Of these, **50% of responses were from groups in the lowest 30% areas of multiple deprivation**.

Sported and its network

Sported is the UK's largest network of community groups supporting half a million young people to overcome barriers to reach their full potential. Our role is to empower the local heroes running these groups by providing much needed professional expertise, resources and operational support, free of charge, to help their group survive and young people thrive.

Sported's groups work within complex local contexts, often tackling some of society's biggest challenges. 44% are located in the lowest 30% areas of multiple deprivation, and many are volunteer-led and operating on limited budgets – approximately a third have an annual turnover of less than £10,000.

Key Findings

- **Concern about the impact of cost-of-living pressures is extremely high among members** – 94% of respondents are concerned about the impact on their young people, with 93% worried about its effects on their group.
- **Two-thirds of respondents expect up to half their young people to drop out of activities due to cost-of-living pressures.**
- **Groups are most concerned about disengagement/reduced participation among their young people because of the cost-of-living crisis** – more than half (53%) saw this as a concern, with participants not being able to afford activities also a major concern among respondents (43%).
- **Almost three quarters of respondents (72%) said their group has made a change in response to the cost-of-living crisis** – this is up from our March Pulse, where 64% had made a change.
- **Providing free membership to their young people has remained the most common change for groups to have made in responding to cost-of-living pressures** – half our respondents said their group has removed membership costs, while nearly half (48%) have reduced membership fees.
- **The majority of respondents have seen external funding streams reduced because of cost-of-living pressures** – 41% said funding from local businesses, trusts and foundations, etc. has been reduced.
- **The key funding priority for the next six months are delivery costs (such as coaches, sessions fees, and venue hire)** – two-thirds of respondents said this was a key funding need, with core costs (59%) and equipment purchases (50%) also high on groups' funding needs.
- **The majority of groups (51%) need between £1,000 and £9,999 for these funding priorities** – 41% need more than £10,000.

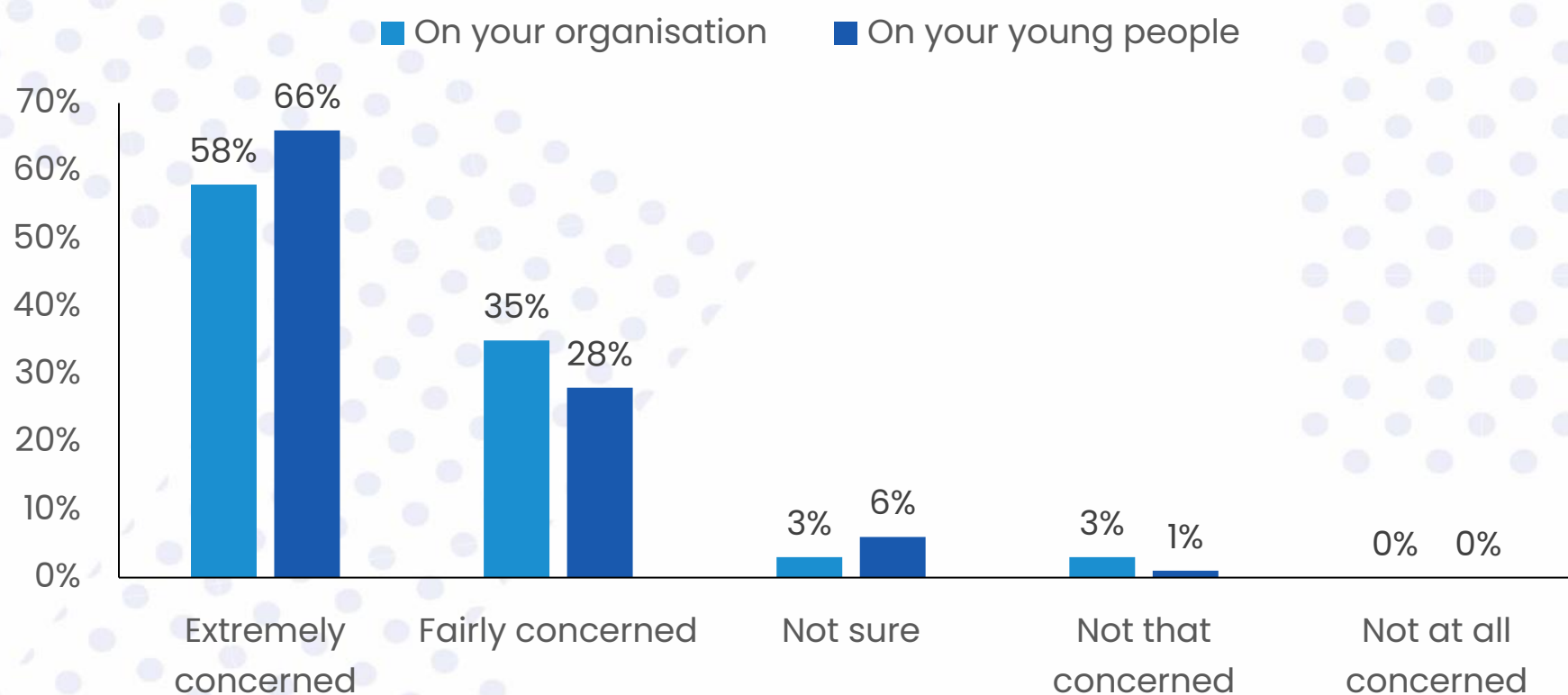
Cost of living increases

Impact on groups and their young people

More than 90% of respondents are concerned about the impact of cost-of-living increases on their organisation and on their young people. 93% are either extremely or fairly concerned about the impact on their group, with 94% concerned for their young people.

This level of concern has increased from our March Pulse, where 88% of respondents were concerned about the impact on their organisation and also on their young people.

Concern about the impact of cost of living increases

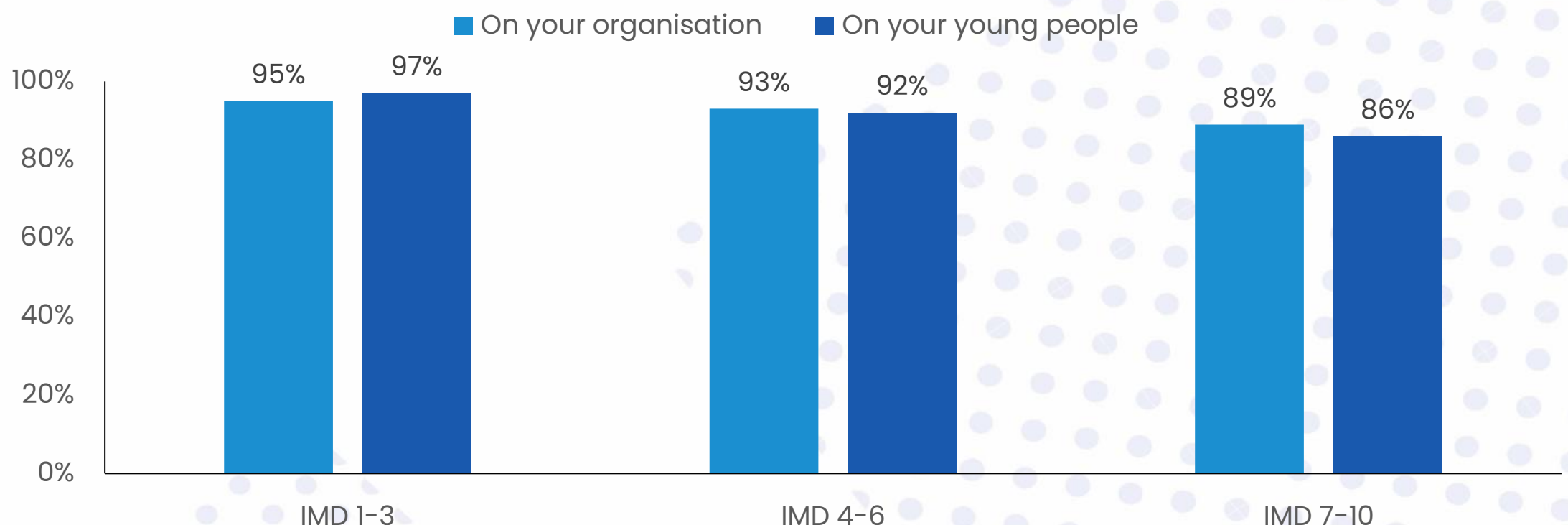


Impact on groups and their young people by IMD

High levels of concern about the impact of cost of living increases on organisations are found across all indices of multiple deprivation.

It is highest amongst those groups working in the lowest 30% and middle 30% of areas of multiple deprivation. For groups working in the highest four deciles of deprivation, concern levels are slightly reduced, though they remain very high.

Groups who are extremely/fairly concerned about the impact of cost of living increases by IMD (0-10)

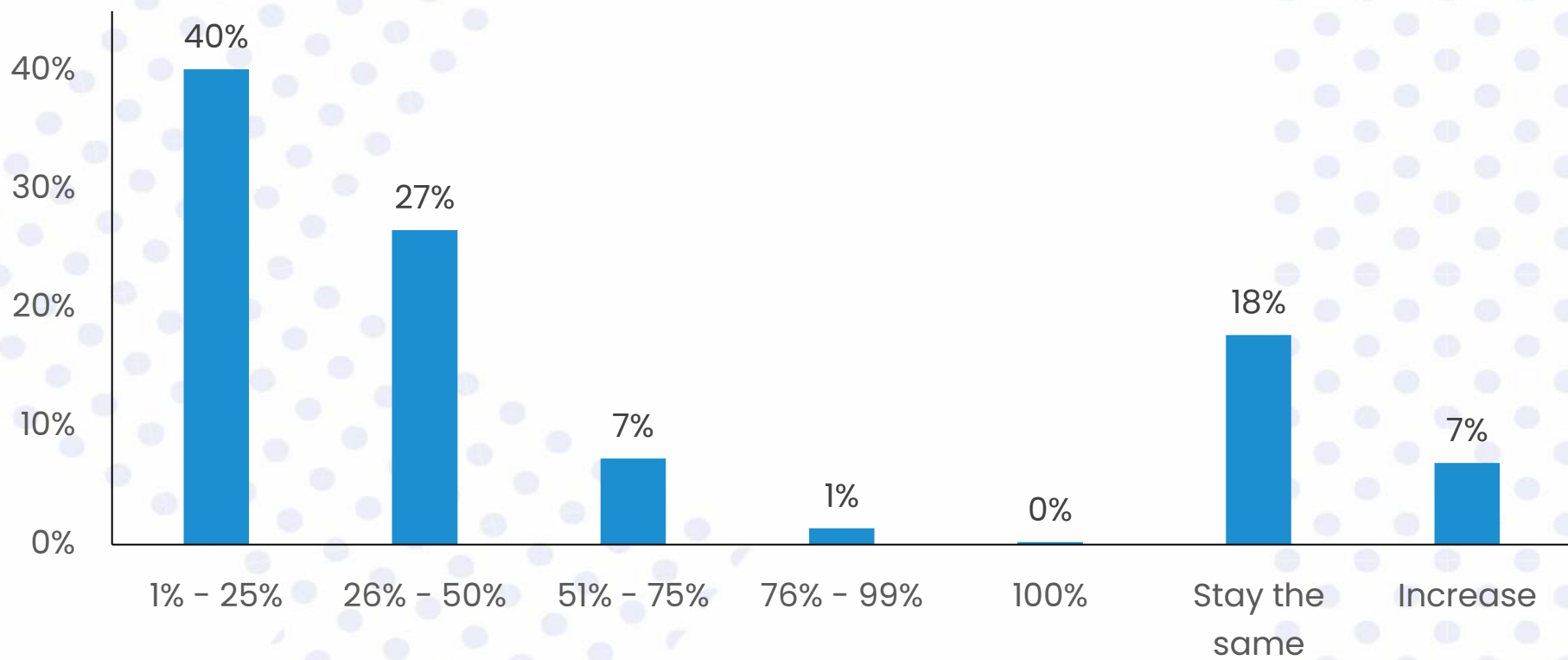


Cost of living increases

Impact on participation

Two-thirds of respondents (67%) indicated that up to half their young people would not be able to attend activities over the next six months because cost-of-living pressures.

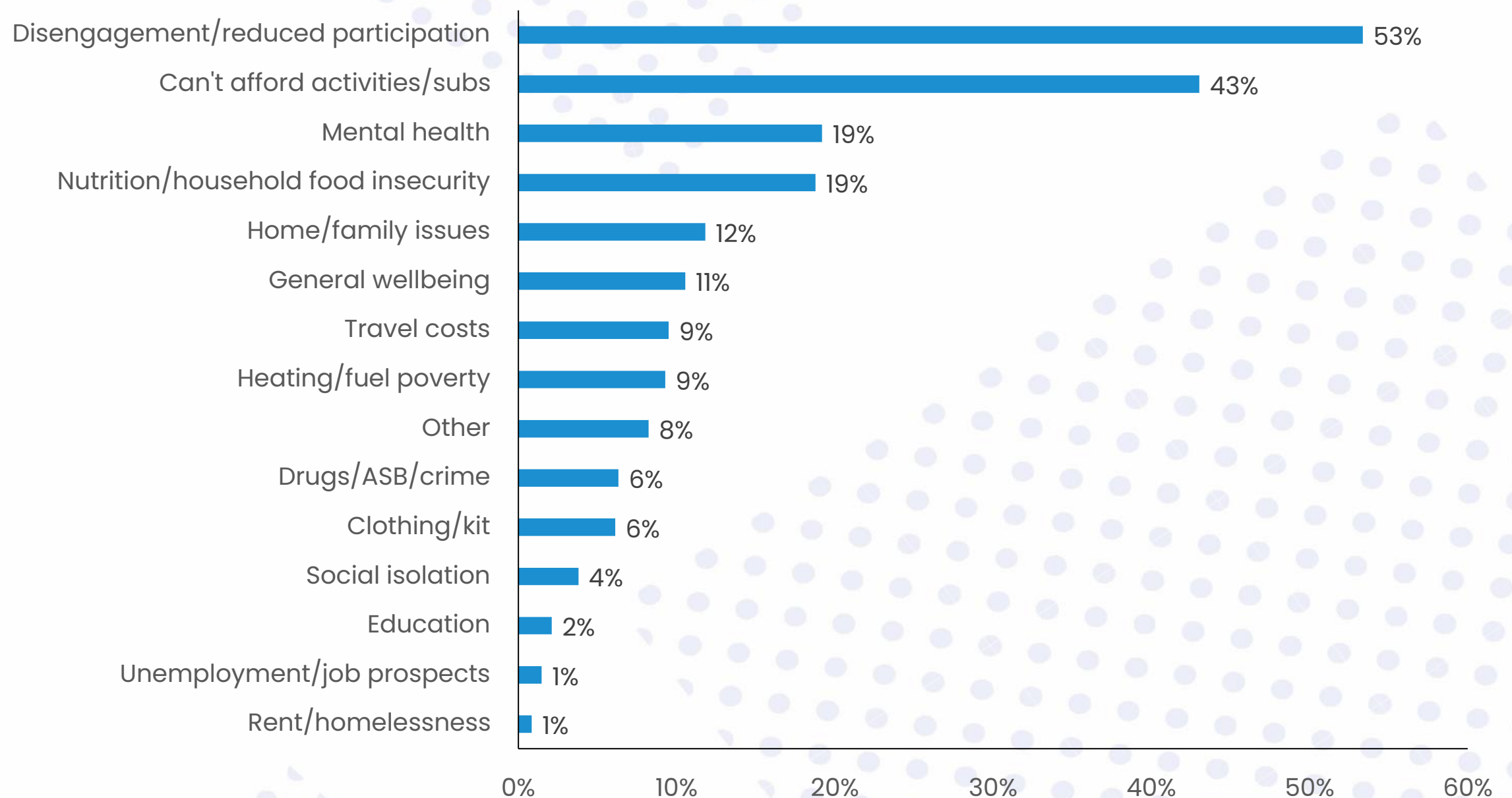
Impact on participation rates in the next six months



Impact on young people

Asked to outline concerns about the cost-of-living crisis on their young people, respondents identified **disengagement/reduced participation in activities** as their most common concern (53%). Young people being **unable to afford activities/subscriptions** was also a major concern (43%), with many groups seeing a direct connection between these two issues.

Impact on young people



Cost of living increases

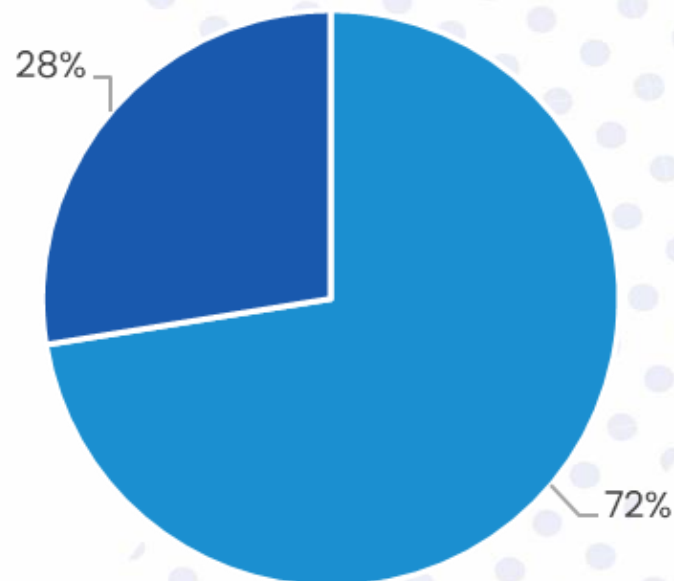
Groups' responses to the increases

Nearly three quarters (72%) have responded to the cost of living increase by making a change to their operation. This is an increase from our March Pulse, when 64% of respondents indicated they'd made a change.

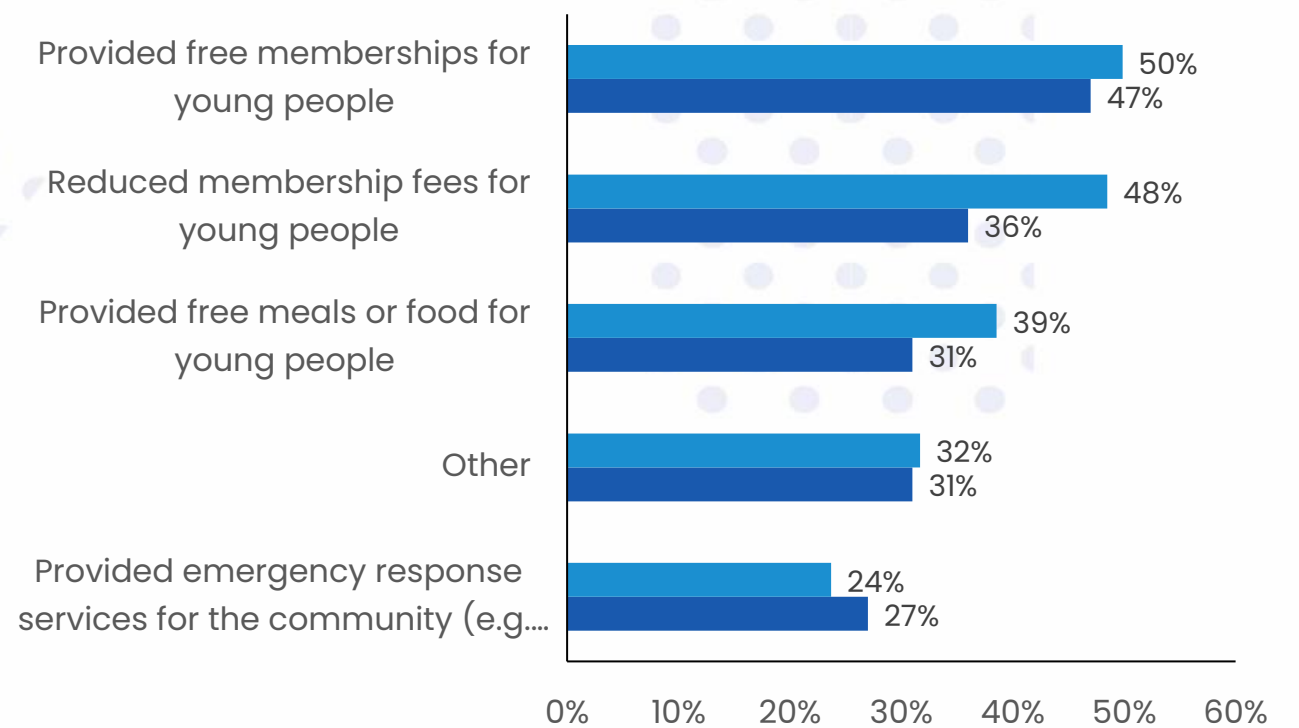
The most frequently made changes have been to **provide free membership for their young people (50%)** and to **reduce fees for their young people (48%)**. More groups are providing free membership, reducing their fees, or offering free meals/food for their young people than in March.

Changes made in response to cost of living increases

■ Change ■ No change



■ Sep-22 ■ Mar-22

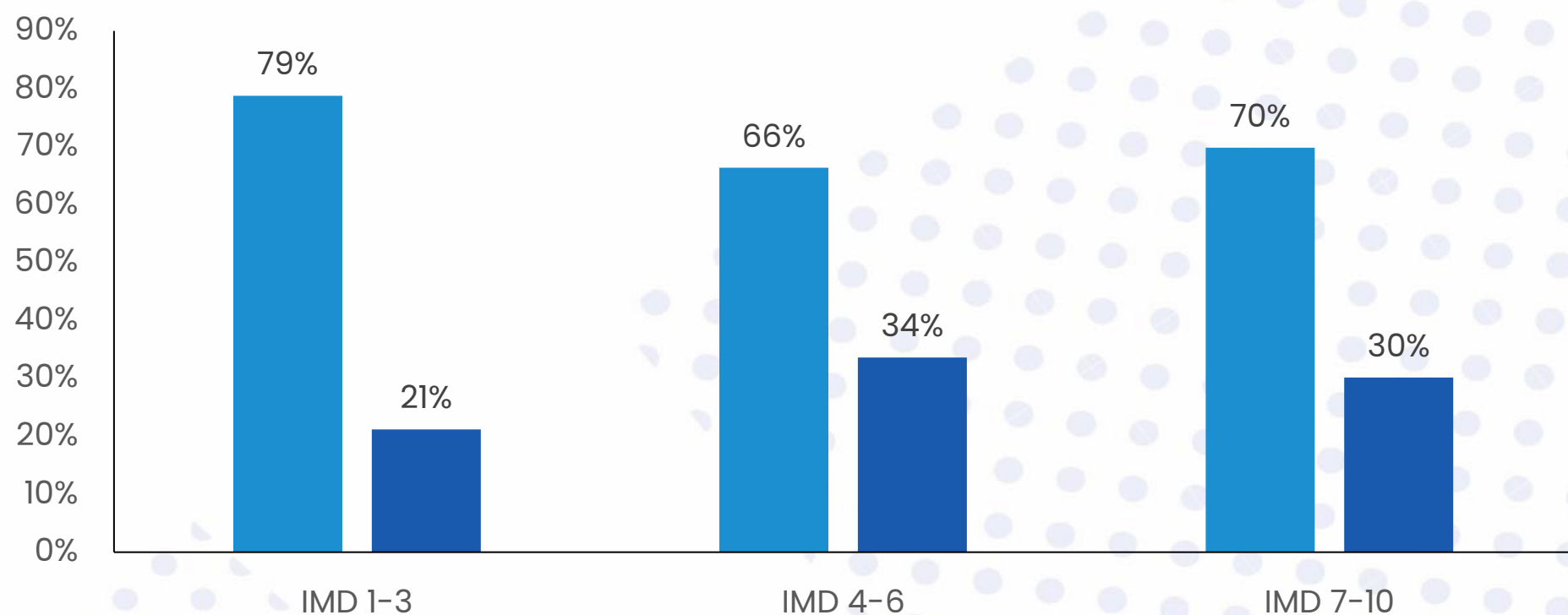


Groups' responses to the increases by IMD

Groups were more likely to have made changes in response to cost of living increases if based the lowest three deciles of multiple deprivation, with 79% of respondents based in these areas reporting having made a change.

Changes made by IMD

■ Change ■ No change

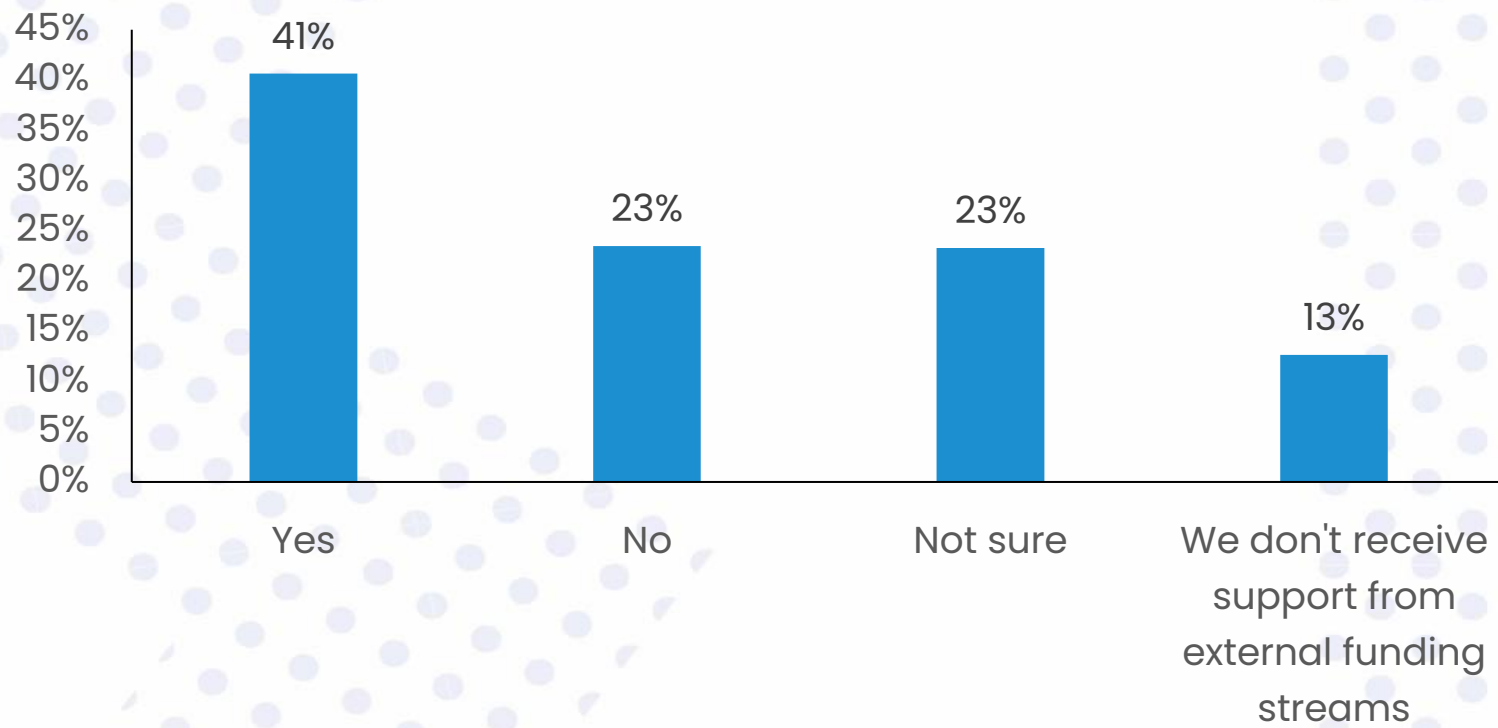


Cost of living increases

Reduction in external funding streams

41% of respondents told us that they have seen a reduction in financial support from external funding streams (such as local businesses, trusts and foundations, etc.) because of cost-of-living pressures.

Impact on external funding streams

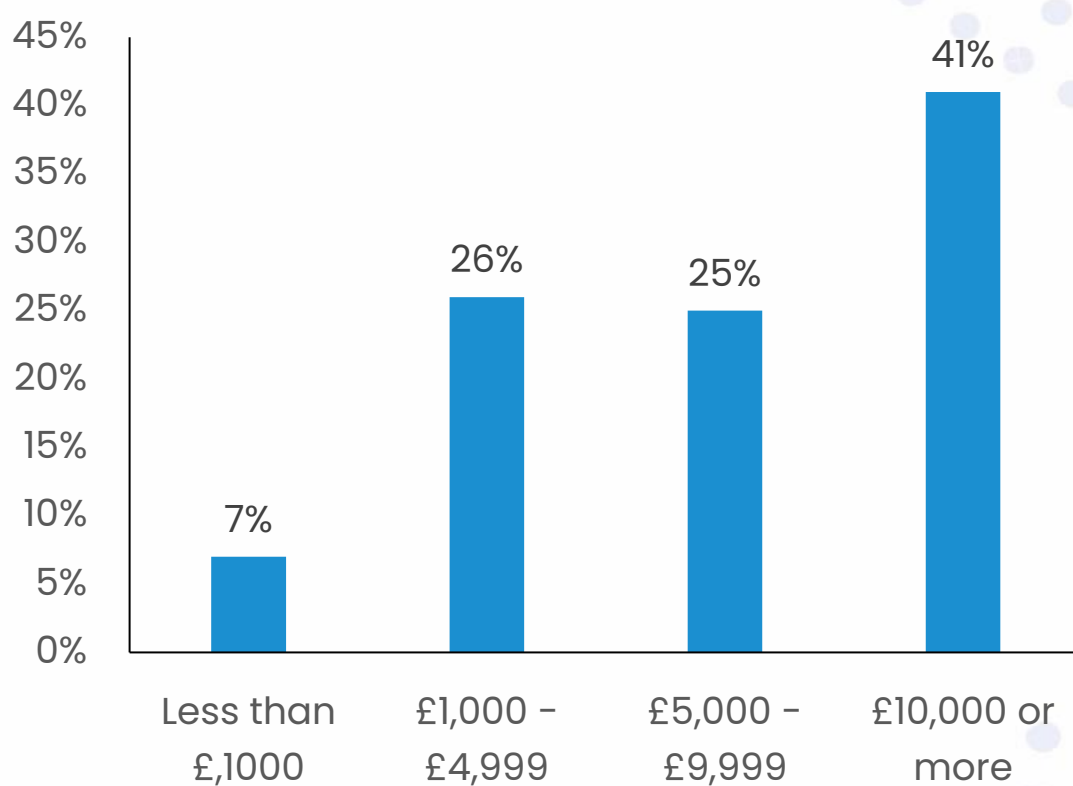


Priority funding for cost-of-living pressures

Looking to the next six months, **just over half of groups (51%) need £1,000–£9,999 to cover priority funding areas in response to cost-of-living pressures.** 41% need £10,000 or more.

The most common priority funding area is to support delivery costs (68%). Core costs (59%) and equipment purchases (50%) are also key areas where groups need funding.

Funding needed to support priority areas



Priority funding areas

