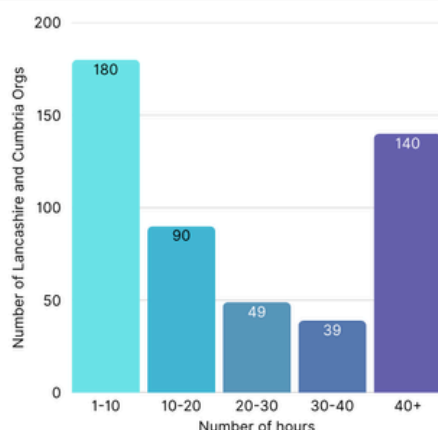


# Lancashire and Cumbria State of the Sector 2025 Headline Insights

## HEADLINE DATA



### Total number of hours worked by volunteers



### Feelings about the future



21.37%



45.36%



16.73%



5.44%



9.48%



1.61%



### Main focus of group or organisation



Arts, Culture, Heritage, Recreation, and Sport

Other Activities

Social Services or Social Welfare

Human Health Activities or Services

Religious Congregations or Associations

Community or Economic Development, and Housing Activities

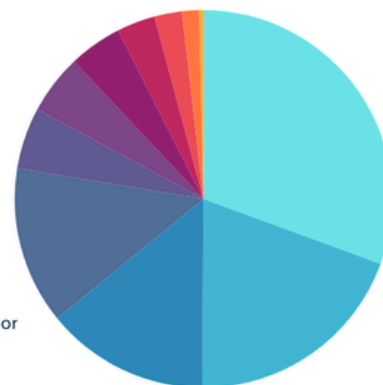
Education

Environment Protection or Animal Welfare

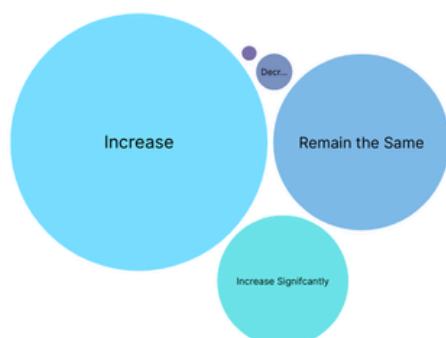
Civil or Social Activities, Political Activities or International Activities

Infrastructure Support or Other Groups or Activities

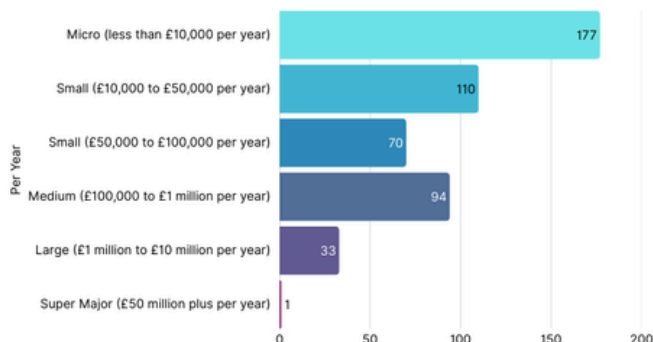
Business, Professional or Labour Organisations



### Demand in the next 12 months is expected to...



### Income 24/25



## Calculating the Regulated Civil Society in Lancashire and Cumbria

Regulated By	Lancashire	Cumbria	Lancashire and South Cumbria – Health Economy	Lancashire and Cumbria Total
Registered Charities with the Charity Commission	3209	2006	4002	5215
Community Interest Company registered with Companies House	702	233	795	935
Companies Limited by Guarantee with Companies House	1851	1052	2065	1903
Public Mutuals Register	141	108	190	249
Universities and Further Education Colleges	14	5	16	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>5917</b>	<b>3504</b>	<b>7068</b>	<b>9421</b>

### Notes

1. Charity Commission Data were extracted from the Charity Commission Register on 29th January 2025. The data were extracted for each of the constituencies within Lancashire and Cumbria and then amalgamated to remove duplicates.
2. Companies House Data were extracted from the Register on 1st March 2024. From the full dataset, all the registered companies by postcode to cover Lancashire and Cumbria were extracted. The data were further refined by extracting those that are registered as Community Interest Companies or Companies Limited By Guarantee.
3. The Public Mutuals data were extracted from the Public Mutuals Register on 29th January 2025. The Data includes Building Societies, Credit Unions, Friendly Societies, Community Benefit Societies, Co-operative Societies, Registered Societies and Working Men's Clubs.
4. Universities and Further Education Colleges are established under separate statute from the above and are classified as exempt charities and classified by the Office for National Statistics as not-for-profit institutions serving households – which means they are classified as being independent of the state and part of civil society.

## Calculating the size of the VCFSE microbiome in Lancashire and Cumbria

	Lancashire	Cumbria	Lancashire and South Cumbria – Health Economy	Lancashire and Cumbria Total
2024 Mid Population Estimates	1,601,645	510,680	1,790,318	2,112,325
Microbiome Groups (using the 3.66 per 1000 population)	5862	1869	6553	7731

### Notes

Based on 3.66 organisations per 1000 population. This figure is based on an analysis of local registers within 46 local authority districts and calculating an average for those 46 local authority districts. John Mohan, Karl Wilding, David Kane, Julia Branson & Fiona Owles (2010) Beyond 'Flat Earth' maps of the third sector (Northern Rock Foundation, Third Sector Trends Study).



## Demand

- 70% of VCFSEs support over 100 people - over half of these support over 500 people
- Demand has increased for 69% of VCFSEs
- People have more complex needs
- VCFSEs are helping more people than ever
- Over 50% of VCFSEs have increased the range of activities they offer in order to meet demand



## Who is Powering the Sector?

- 38% of VCFSEs operate with between 1 and 9 regular volunteers
- 46% of VCFSEs operate with between 10 and 49 regular volunteers
- 36% of VCFSEs report that volunteers give between 1 and 10 hours of their time per week
- 28% of VCFSEs report that volunteers are giving over 40 hours a week
- 62% of volunteers are service users and/or beneficiaries
- 38.76% of VCFSEs are entirely volunteer run



## Finances

- Income has decreased or remained the same for 61% of VCFSEs
- All running costs have increased for the majority of VCFSEs
- In the next twelve months, VCFSEs anticipate that income will remain the same but that all other costs will increase
- 27% of VCFSEs have no reserves to cover running costs
- The top sources of income are i) grants; ii) subscription, membership, or pay per session; and iii) donations or fundraising
- The larger organisations are more dependent on public sector funding



# The Future

- 66% of VCFSEs are optimistic about the future
- Reasons for optimism include strong volunteer commitment and community support, proven demand for their services, and successful track records
- Reasons for pessimism include finances, the difficulty recruiting younger volunteers, and burnout among key volunteers



## Recommendations for Sector Development

1. Support VCFSEs to develop reserve-building strategies.
2. Develop targeted support for medium-sized organisations (£100k-£1m income), which deliver high volumes of services but are vulnerable to funding cuts.
3. Address volunteer sustainability through recruitment campaigns targeting younger volunteers, and burnout prevention strategies for the 28.11% giving 40+ hours weekly.
4. Provide specialist support for premises given widespread concerns about rent increases, facility access, and space management, potentially through shared facility schemes.
5. Ensure that integration with ICS and neighbourhood health centres is attentive to sector heterogeneity, particularly how micro and small organisations participate differently from larger VCSFEs.
6. Advocate for inflation-linked funding increases.
7. Develop tailored, place-based approaches that both support and energise the microbiome.
8. Create funding application support services to help smaller organisations compete more effectively for grants, given constraints on staff time and expertise.
9. Establish a monitoring system for organisations where expenditure exceeds income (predicted 19.03% for next year) to provide early intervention.
10. Develop collaborative income diversification strategies to reduce over-reliance on single funding streams, particularly for organisations dependent on public sector contracts.
11. Strengthen the Lancashire and South Cumbria VCFSE Alliance to facilitate partnership working, with 63.41% already listing 5+ partners demonstrating an appetite for collaboration.
12. Plan strategically for upcoming structural changes to local government and ICSs, to ensure VCFSE sector engagement in new governance arrangements.

## Notes

