

CHESHIRE AND MERSEYSIDE

State of the Sector report

CHESHIRE WEST

Summary Review 2023

 Cheshire West
Voluntary Action
Championing the community sector



Cheshire West

Context

Cheshire West has a population of approximately 357,699 people, and although life expectancy for both men and women is slightly higher than the England average, there are significant inequalities between local communities: between the most and least deprived areas there is a variance in life expectancy for women of 8 years, and 9 years for men.



Size and scope of the VCFSE sector in Cheshire West

Number to registered charities	977	31%
Community Interest Companies (CICs)	105	3%
Companies Limited by Guarantee (CLGs)	665	21%
Registered Societies	40	1%
Community Sports Clubs	36	1%
Below the radar groups (BTR)	1,309	42%
Total	3,132	

Size of workforce

Number of paid staff	5,317
Number of volunteers (once a month minimum)	50,211
Number of regular volunteers	20,675
Volunteer hours per week	66,987

Value of workforce

Value of paid staff	£127 million per year
Value of volunteering	£37.9 million per year
Total	£164.9 million per year

Economic contribution of the VCFSE sector in Cheshire West

£143.7 million GVA per year

Summary profile of the VCFSE sector in Cheshire West

- **54** Groups in Cheshire West responded to the survey (**14%** of all C&M boroughs).
- The majority of groups are registered charities (**62%**) with **8%** of groups reporting as unincorporated associations (below the radar).
- **57%** of groups in Cheshire West are over **10 years** old, with **11%** of groups reporting that their organisation was formed in the **last 12 months**.
- Groups are more likely to be working at local neighbourhood (**31%**), or a whole local authority / across all of Cheshire (**19%** each), level.
- The majority of surveyed groups in Cheshire West are micro (**29%**) and small (**29%**) organisations.
- **30%** of groups main activities fall under wellbeing, health and social care as the most common area of work.
- **23%** of groups report supporting “everyone” followed by **10%** targeting people with mental health needs, and children and young people (**9%**) specifically.
- The most common source of funding for organisations is through charging for goods and services (**22%**) follow by local authority grants (**20%**) and fundraising and donations (**18%**).
- There are approximately **272 full-time** and **267 part-time** staff employed by surveyed organisations.
- **87%** of organisations in Cheshire West with paid staff pay the Real Living Wage or above.
- **98%** of organisations utilise volunteers, with a reported total of approximately **5,176 volunteers** and an average of **115 volunteers** per organisation (however this is skewed by a small number of groups, as the most common number of volunteers is 20). These volunteers provide approximately **12,056 hours** of volunteering per week.
- The most popular priority for Cheshire West groups over the next **12 months** was sourcing funding opportunities (**15%**) followed by recruiting and retaining volunteers (**11%**). **72% of groups** reported feeling confident in being able to achieve these goals, with **28% unsure**.



Key Findings

Income and expenditure

The majority of groups in Cheshire West have seen their income and reserves fall or stay the same over the preceding 12 months, however their spending has increased (66%), which is attributed chiefly to the impact of the pandemic and subsequent cost of living crisis. However, despite this, 70% of groups plan to increase the scale of their activity over the next 12 months.

Workforce and volunteers

There are approximately 272 full-time and 267 part-time staff employed by surveyed organisations in Cheshire West. In comparison to the rest of C&M, Cheshire West organisations are slightly less likely to employ staff on a full-time basis and are typically likely to employ fewer numbers of people as the regional as whole.

Cheshire West VCFSE staff and volunteers are not particularly diverse, with only 3% of staff reported to be from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background (lower than the regional trend of 9%). Similar to regional trends, the workforce is predominantly female (68%).

Cheshire West groups expect their staffing position to remain static with over 42% expecting staffing levels to remain the same. Cheshire West organisations have a higher reliance on volunteers than C&M, with 98% of organisations report that volunteers are crucial to the running of their organisation and 54% expecting to increase their use of volunteers. Groups in Cheshire West are more likely to have higher numbers of volunteers than the region as a whole.

Community assets and skills

Almost two thirds (65%) of organisations report utilising a community asset, with the most common types being community centres (19%), and offices (15%). Where premises are rented, the most common landlord situation is for the premises to be rented privately (30%), or rented from another VCFSE group (23%).

For groups that report barriers to having a community asset, this is usually related to having insufficient access to funding needed to purchase a building, and the ongoing costs of running and maintaining a building.

In terms of education and skills, the majority of groups report being digitally enabled organisations however there is a high demand from those who require digital support for funding for equipment (37%) over staff training and development (33%).

Surveyed organisations in Cheshire West are less likely to be measuring and evidencing the impact of their work in comparison to C&M, with 12% stating they do not measure their impact and 40% only partly.

Priorities and partnership working

19% of groups reported having a positive working relationship with the local authority, and their local CVS infrastructure organisation (18%). Percentages were low for relationships with NHS organisations, with 9% having a positive relationship with their local NHS place-based partnership, 4% with their NHS trusts and 9% with Primary Care Networks.

The most common priority area for Cheshire West groups over the next 12 months is sourcing funding opportunities (15%) followed recruiting and retaining volunteers (11%). Cheshire West groups are more likely to be focused on developing funder relationships moving forward, however are less likely or able to be focussing on organisational planning or strategy. 72% of groups reported feeling confident in being able to achieve these goals, with 28% unsure.

This executive summary report should be read in tandem with the wider Cheshire and Merseyside State of the Sector report to help the reader relate findings to wider regional and national trends where it may be of interest to do so. Additionally, important data caveats are contained within the regional report to be aware of when interpreting these findings.

CHESHIRE AND MERSEYSIDE STATE OF THE SECTOR

2023 Review

For more information about the VCFSE
sector in the North West visit

www.vsnw.org.uk

For more information about the VCFSE
sector in the Liverpool City Region visit

www.vs6partnership.org.uk

For more information about the VCFSE
sector in Cheshire and Merseyside visit

www.cwip.org.uk

Contact

info@vsnw.org.uk

