

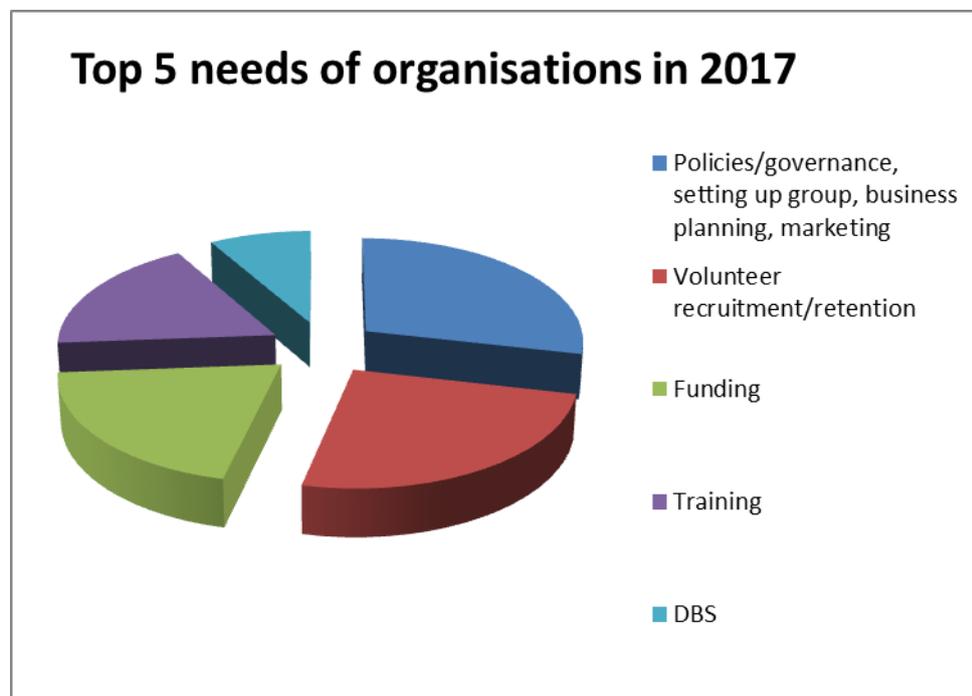
The results are in!

## 2017 Survey of Voluntary and Community Organisations in the New Forest

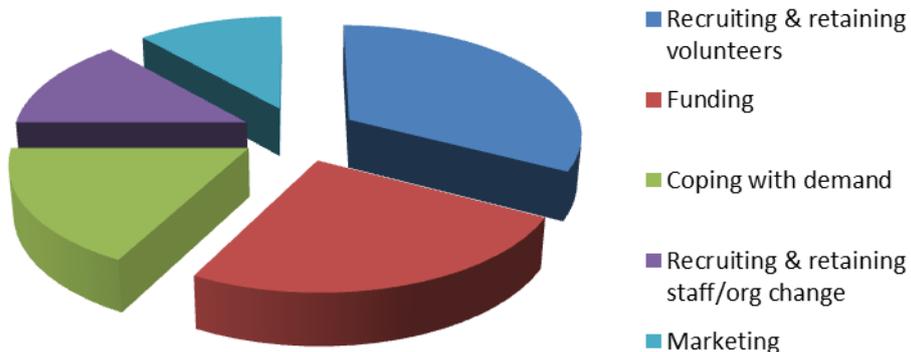
Community First New Forest (CFNF) sent out a survey in early January 2017 to 200 local voluntary and community groups to help identify needs and challenges. We received 25 responses that have been summarised below.

Between them the 25 organisations who responded **support 99,798 people** across the New Forest.

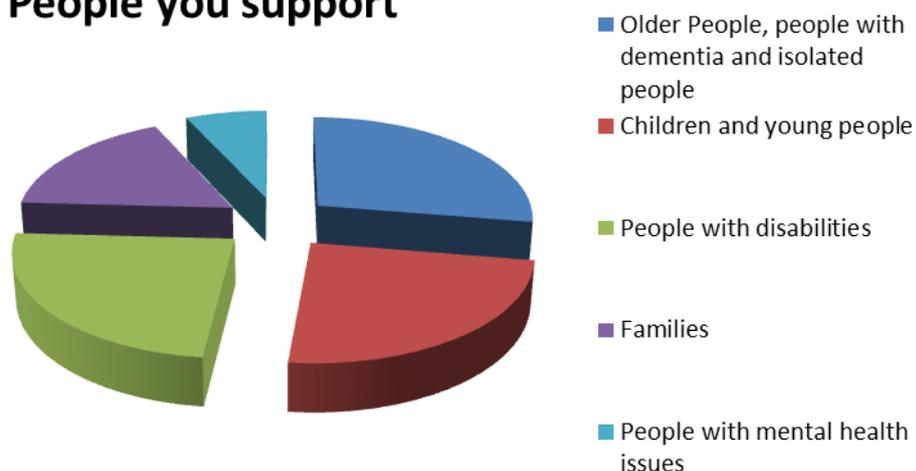
The survey is intended to support the development of the CFNF strategy and Business Plan and we appreciate the time take to complete the survey. This remains a challenging time for voluntary and community groups across the New Forest District and we remain committed to providing support that meets local needs.



## Key challenges in 2017



## People you support



**The key needs of the people that organisations supported were varied and included:**

- Support for mental health issues in people of all ages and all abilities.
- A friendly face, someone to chat to, take people shopping or to medical appointments
- Contact with other people, local transport, health and fitness
- Support for Community Halls
- Isolated people with health issues
- Children and older people activities, services and groups
- Providing an affordable venue for all these groups to be able to use

## New gaps in support that people receive



Respondents overwhelmingly stated that a reduction in support from Children's and Adult Services was the biggest gap in provision. These included the closure of Children's Centres, fewer mental health services and home care services, loneliness, isolation and lack of transport for older people.

CFNF will also note the outcomes of a wider survey carried out by Localgiving, titled 'Local Charity & Community Group Sustainability Report' 2016.

[https://localgiving.org/reports/Local\\_Charity\\_Community\\_Group\\_Sustainability\\_Report\\_2016.pdf](https://localgiving.org/reports/Local_Charity_Community_Group_Sustainability_Report_2016.pdf)

This went to 4,061 local charities and community groups with 598 survey respondents.

**The executive summary of this report comments:**

This report explores the key issues facing local charities and community groups in the UK in 2016. It finds a local voluntary sector facing an ever-increasing demand for services, stimulated largely by an escalation in referrals from other charities and the stretched public sector. At the same time, local organisations are finding it more and more difficult to access funding - particularly to cover core operational costs. A knock-on effect of this is that, without the necessary funds to pay salaries and retain employees, more than three quarters of groups are also seeing a reduction in paid staff. This is compounding existing skill gaps - particularly within fundraising and marketing - and leaving the sector ever more reliant on volunteers. The current situation means that, without significant changes, predictions for the future are bleak. Fewer than half of the local organisations we surveyed were confident they would still be operating in five years time.

In order to ease the strain on the sector, we recommend that government, grant makers, voluntary sector organisations and businesses work together to ensure the provision of more accessible unrestricted funding opportunities for local charities.

We also recommend that continued support is given to local charities to build fundraising capacity, thus helping them to diversify their sources of income. Training opportunities must be accessible and ongoing, ideally including face-to-face support. It is also important that organisations are helped to retain staff and volunteers to avoid loss of skills later down the line. In addition, we recommend that funders take responsibility for reducing inefficiencies in grant application processes in order to save local charities and community groups valuable time which would be better dedicated to service delivery.