

Taking Stock
and
Facing the
Future

**The infrastructure and resources
of the UK migration and refugee sector**

April 2020

Migration Exchange

at  Global Dialogue



Context of this report (July 2020)

- **This report** marks a decade of shared focus on migration and public attitudes towards it among trusts and foundations in the UK.
- Originally planned to publish in July 2020, but in light of Coronavirus pandemic brought forward to April 2020 (data gathered pre-C19).
- **The aim?** To inform conversations about how we work together across boundaries of role, geography and approach – to boost our collective ability to affect social change.
- **It sets a baseline understanding** of the existing infrastructure and resources in this sector; which we can review post-COVID-19.

Research

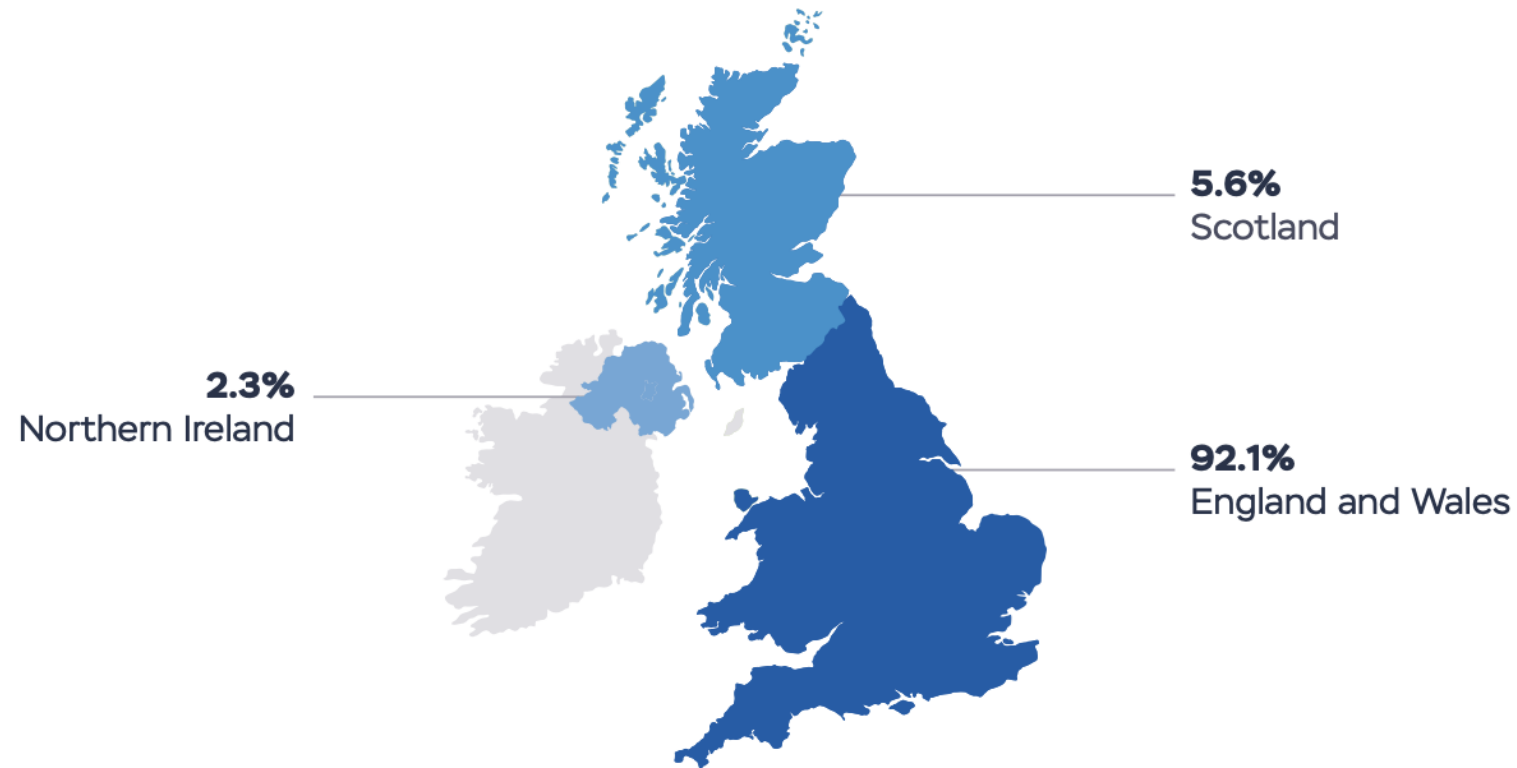
was carried out by independent consultants between November 2019 and March 2020.

It includes:

- A detailed analysis of registered charities in the UK working on migration and refugee issues.
- A survey of 130 NGOs working in the sector, with a combined annual income of at least £77million for UK migration and refugee-related work.
- In-depth interviews were carried out with 26 CEOs.
- A survey of 16 key trusts and foundations supporting work on migration and refugee issues in the UK, capturing around £23million of related spend in the last financial year.
- In-depth interviews were also held with eleven grant managers.

An overview: the UK migration and refugee charitable sector

Core charities: country registered

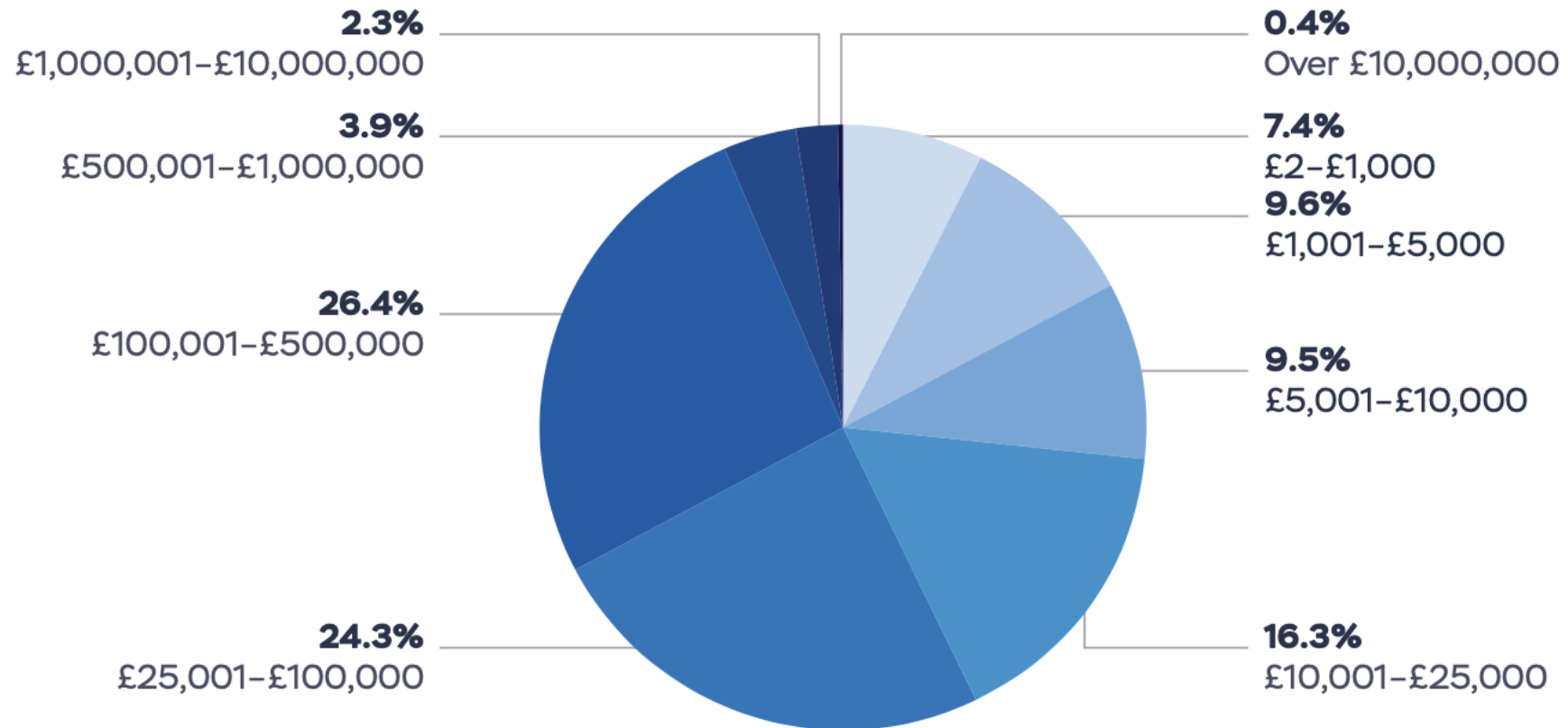


An overview: the UK migration and refugee charitable sector

- There are more than 570 charities working primarily on refugee & migration issues in the UK
- With a combined income of £117m per annum
- More than 90% are in England and Wales
- Almost half (49%) of UK charities with an income of £100,000 or more are based in London and/or operate nationally

Profiling the UK migration and refugee sector – age and income

Core charities: income per annum

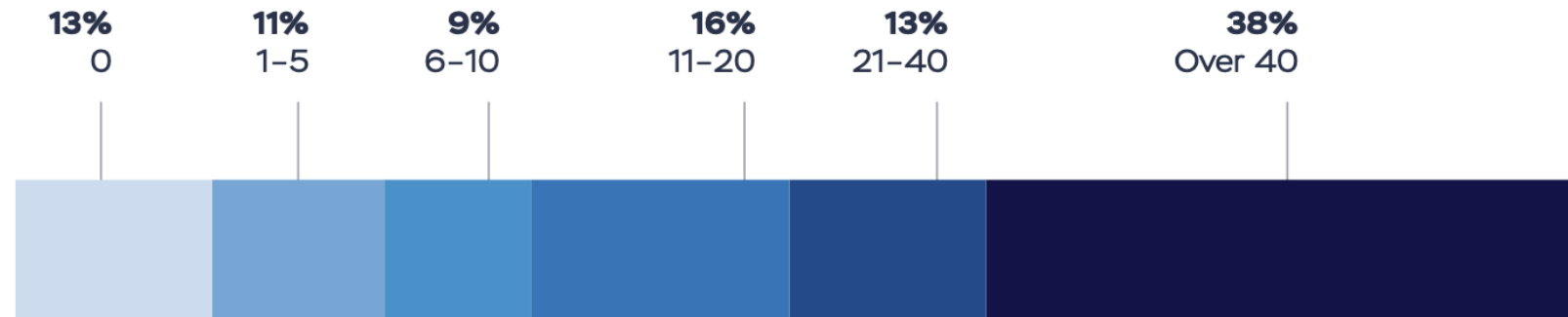


Profiling the UK migration and refugee sector – age and income

- **Age** - 90% of organisations are 6+ years old.
- **Income** - Just 9% of sample have an income of over £1 million per annum.
- A further 40% of NGO respondents have an income of between £250,000 and £1million per annum and the remainder (51%) have under £250,000.

Profiling the UK migration and refugee sector – staff, volunteers & focus

Number of volunteers



Number of full-time staff equivalent²²

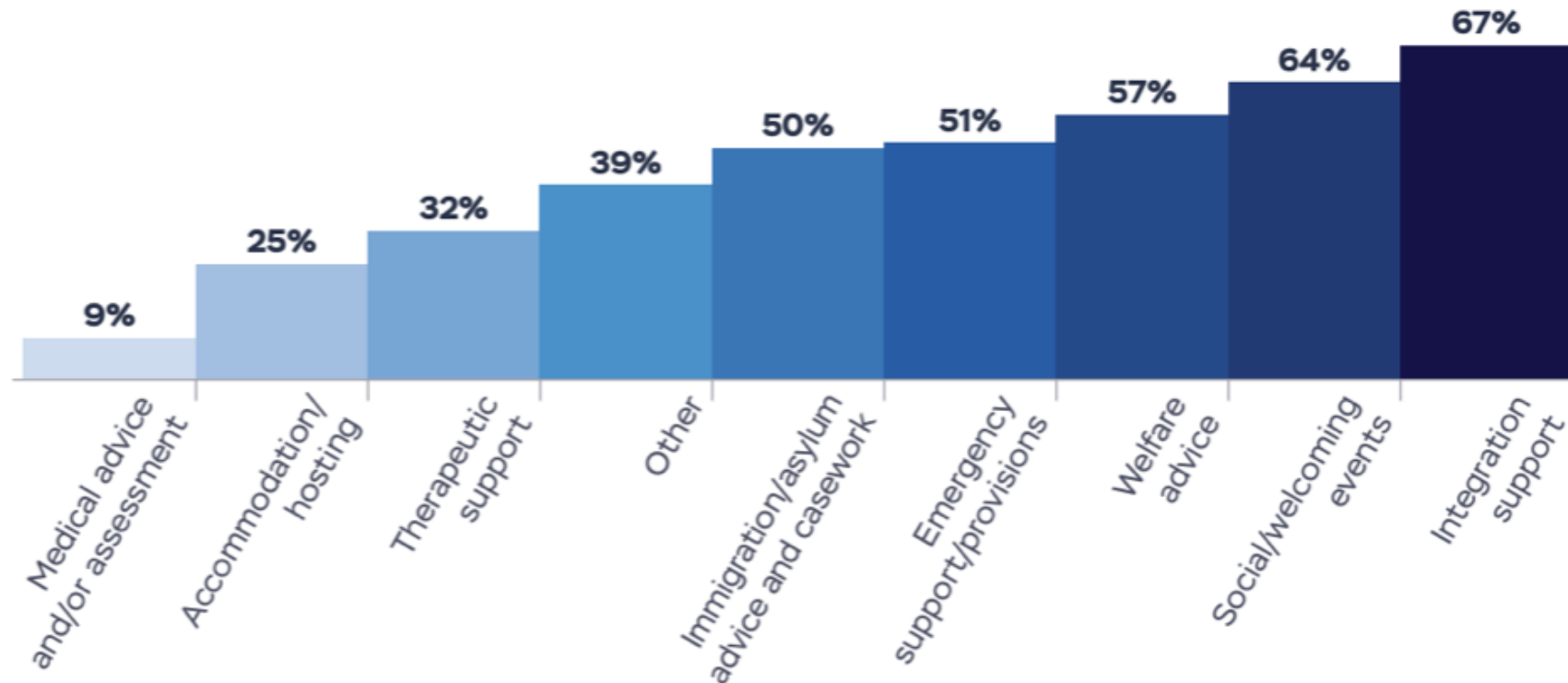


Profiling the UK migration and refugee sector – staff, volunteers & focus

- **Staffing** More than half of those surveyed have fewer than 5 full time dedicated staff
- **Volunteers** are key, with an average ratio of 3:1 vols to staff
- **Key Stakeholders** Some NGOs that don't work exclusively on migration and refugee work are key stakeholders in the sector, but dedicate limited time; this is a risk if they move away from this area of work.

Activities and resource allocation

Types of services provided by NGO survey respondents

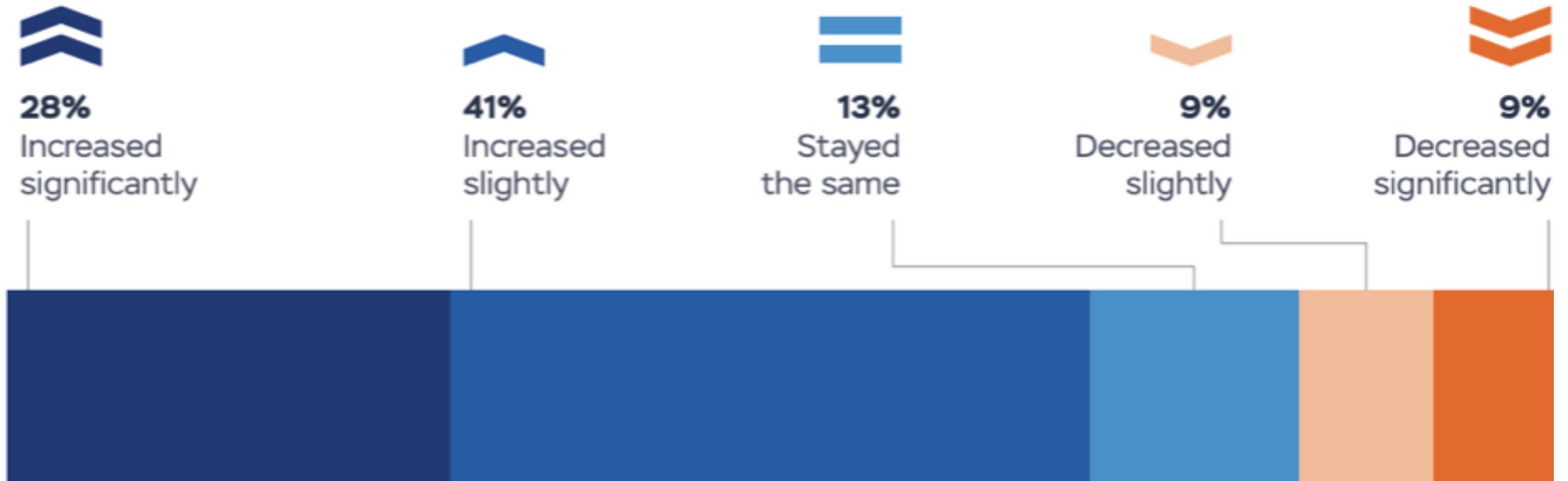


Activities and resource allocation

- **Focus of work** – significantly more work with people seeking asylum and refugees, than with people in the wider immigration system.
- **Service provision** - 85% provide direct service, across multiple areas shown in graphic.
- **Advocacy work** – 80% engage in influencing work, but it is very poorly resourced, with 47% having less than one specified staff member.
- **Wider sectoral support** – is not a priority for most (62%) organisations, who spend 10% or less of their time on providing this.

Financial resilience

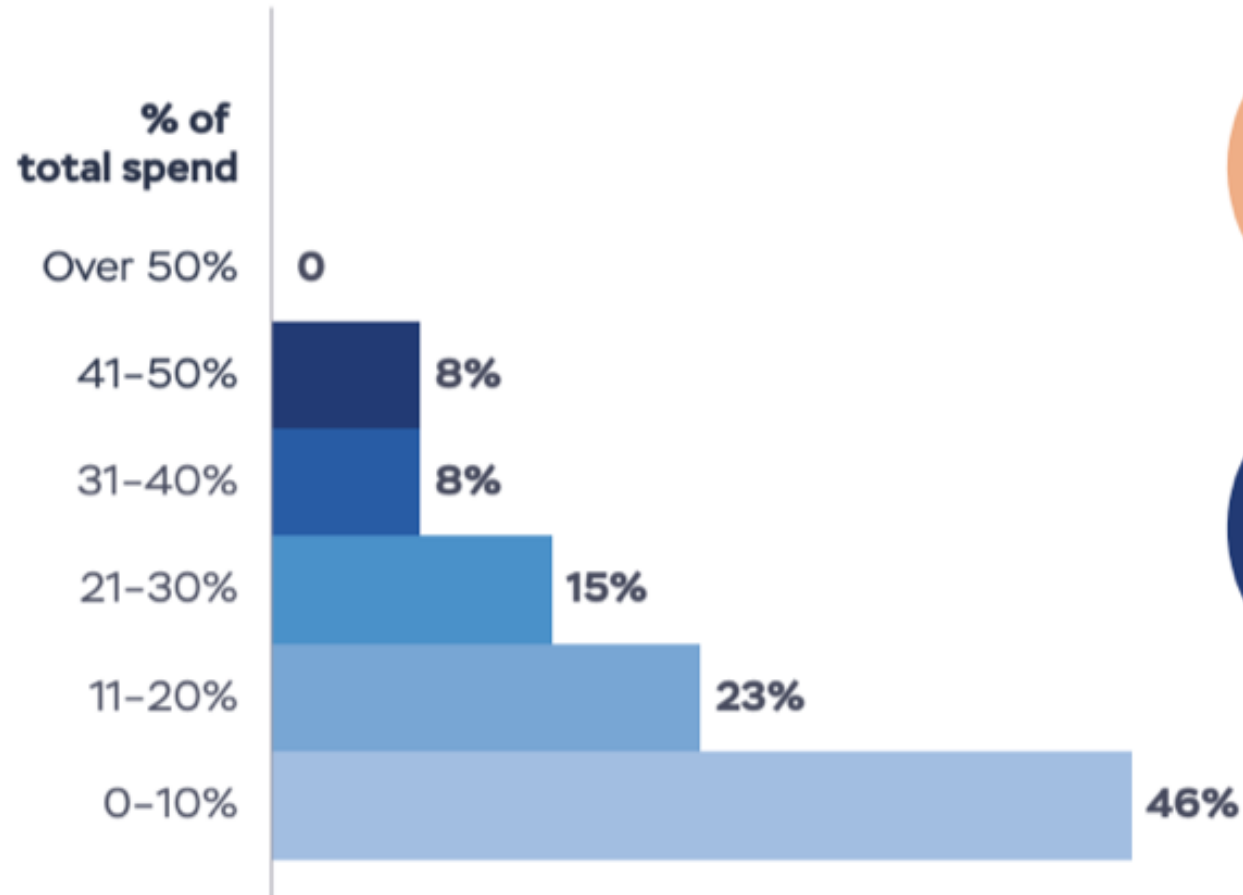
Changes in funding over the last three years



Financial resilience

- **Income has risen** for 2/3 since 2015/16, thanks to successful diversification of income sources and an increase in individual giving.
- **Financial reserves** – are low; with less than four months' income saved for 2/3 surveyed.
- **Dependency on trusts and foundations** – is strong. Nearly half surveyed rely on them for 70% of income
- **Restricted vs unrestricted funding** – Unrestricted income is very low, limiting the ability to respond to changing needs or sudden shocks, such as COVID-19
- **Budget deficits** are common – 23% of those who responded ran one last financial year.

Proportion of total spend on UK migration and refugee work in the last financial year



Just under half dedicated ten percent or less of their total spend to UK migration and refugee issues



84% allocated less than a third of their expenditure towards UK migration and refugee issues

Funders of UK migration and refugee work

16 trusts and foundations surveyed, investing £23 million in work on migration and refugee issues in the last financial year.

- **Total grant portfolio** 25% were between £50,000 and £250,000, 19% were between £250,000 and £750,000, and 26% were between £750,000 and £2million. Remaining 32% of funders made a total of over £2million in grants.
- **Size and number of grants** Six respondents gave grants less than £25,000, and the same percentage made ten or fewer grants in the last financial year. All but two funders made fewer than 31 grants in a year.
- **Grant length** – averaged between two and three years for 10 funders.
- **Focus of grants** – often does not include the two areas organisations find difficult -unrestricted income, or funds for specific casework.

Strengths of the UK migration and refugee sector in 2020

- **Service delivery**
 - 48% agreed that the high quality of frontline service meets vital needs
 - But some services (legal advice/mental health) are limited in some geographic areas.
- **Staff knowledge and skills**
 - Numerous NGOs highlighted their professional, high quality staff.
 - But burn out and overwork is a concern across the sector.
- **Influencing work and organisations that inspire**
 - There are lots of successes in the sector, despite a natural reluctance to celebrate own successes
 - e.g. campaigns on Windrush, the right to work for people seeking asylum & immigration detention all influenced policy, practice or public opinion.
 - And other examples that don't get enough publicity, e.g. the relocation of Afghan interpreters to the UK & the quality of decision on asylum applications

Weaknesses & gaps in the UK migration and refugee sector in 2020

“We are too often motivated by organisational priorities, brand and profile, which can preclude us from pooling our time, resources and skills to go after bigger change.”

- **Coordination and collaboration** – Could be much better; over 90% of CEOs agreed that “the sector must pool its collective resources more if it is going to achieve significant policy changes.”
- **Strategic planning** – can too often be left behind in the need to deliver short-term, reactive work
- **Inclusion of those with lived experience** – is not yet high enough, compared to other sectors. But progress is just beginning to be made here.

Funder engagement

- **Is flexible, proactive and strategic**
 - Platforms such as IMiX, British Future, Asylum Matters and the Migration Observatory are very welcome, for addressing gaps in the sector and facilitating joint working.
- **Could be even stronger if more focused on long-term & innovation**
 - This would help NGOs move away from their often 'short-term' focus
- **Is sometimes too London focused**
 - Both in terms of physical location, and networks of contacts
- **Can sometimes miss NGO constraints to deliver social change**
 - And sometimes change priorities too frequently to be useful

How could the sector strengthen its impact?

- **Leadership** is crucial; both for individual NGOs, and the wider sector
 - This will enable the sector to solve problems together; focusing on the needs of people living in the immigration system more than individual organisations
- **Coordination and collaboration** would increase the sector's impact
 - Sharing both resources and learning would increase advocacy successes
 - Making common causes across sectors would change public attitudes faster
- **Influencing work** can be strengthened across the sector
 - By working 'upstream' with governments more directly
 - Through strategic communications using human stories and shared values
 - And building grass roots support to change attitudes at local level

How could grant making be strengthened?

- **Unrestricted income** would be very much welcomed across the board
- **Increasing funder collaboration** – pooling resources
- **Closer working** with NGOs to develop a shared vision and strategy
- **Increasing** opportunities to tailor funding to recipients' specific needs
- **Simplifying grant application procedures**
- **Diversifying their range of contacts** to better represent the UK
- **Unlocking the grass roots potential**
- **Continue supporting essential service delivery**

Future hope

“This reports suggest that leaders of charities and funders within this small but resilient sector share an appetite to work together, to build on strengths and address gaps and weaknesses.

By focusing on how we face the future together, we can build trust and collaborate, be agile in our responses and connect to common values for the benefit of all.”

Sarah Cutler & Dylan Fotoohi

Migration Exchange, April 2020