Resolve Poverty

LOCAL — Locally Organised Communities Across Lancashire

LACVS — EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

Lancashire Anti-Poverty Network Forum

Lancashire Anti-Poverty Network: Poverty Awareness, Prioritisation and Activity survey

Findings and analysis

Respondent demographics and organisational activities
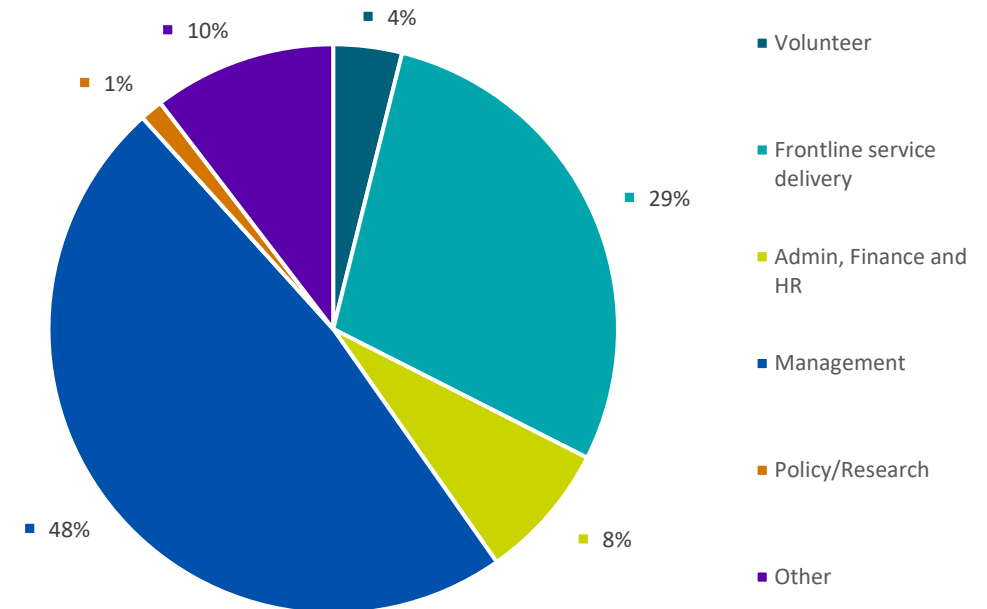
Respondent demographics: Organisation type

- 77 respondents.

- Most respondents (38%) were from voluntary sector organisations, followed by CVS' and Local Infrastructure Organisations (14%).
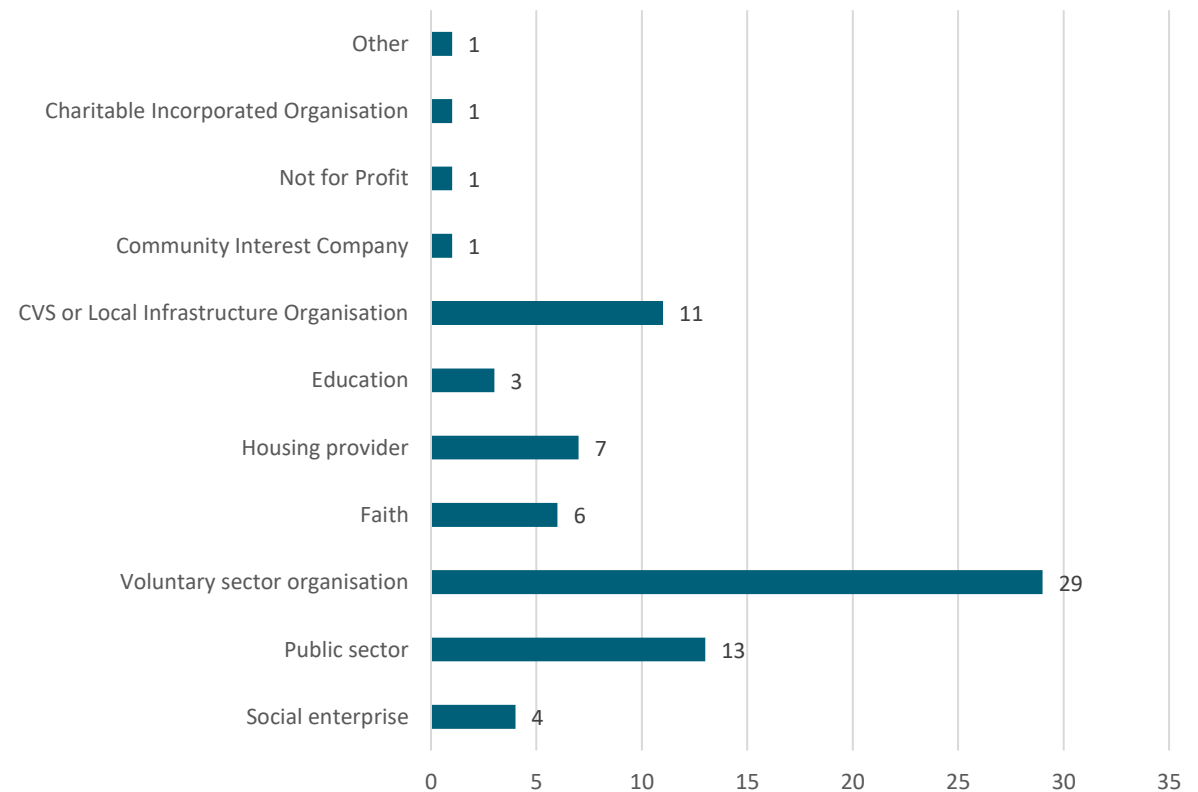
Respondent demographics: Role

- The most common category of respondent role was Management (48%), followed by Frontline Service Delivery (29%).

- The least common category of respondent role was Policy/Research (1%).

What is your role within the organisation?

- Volunteer
- Frontline service delivery
- Admin, Finance and HR
- Management
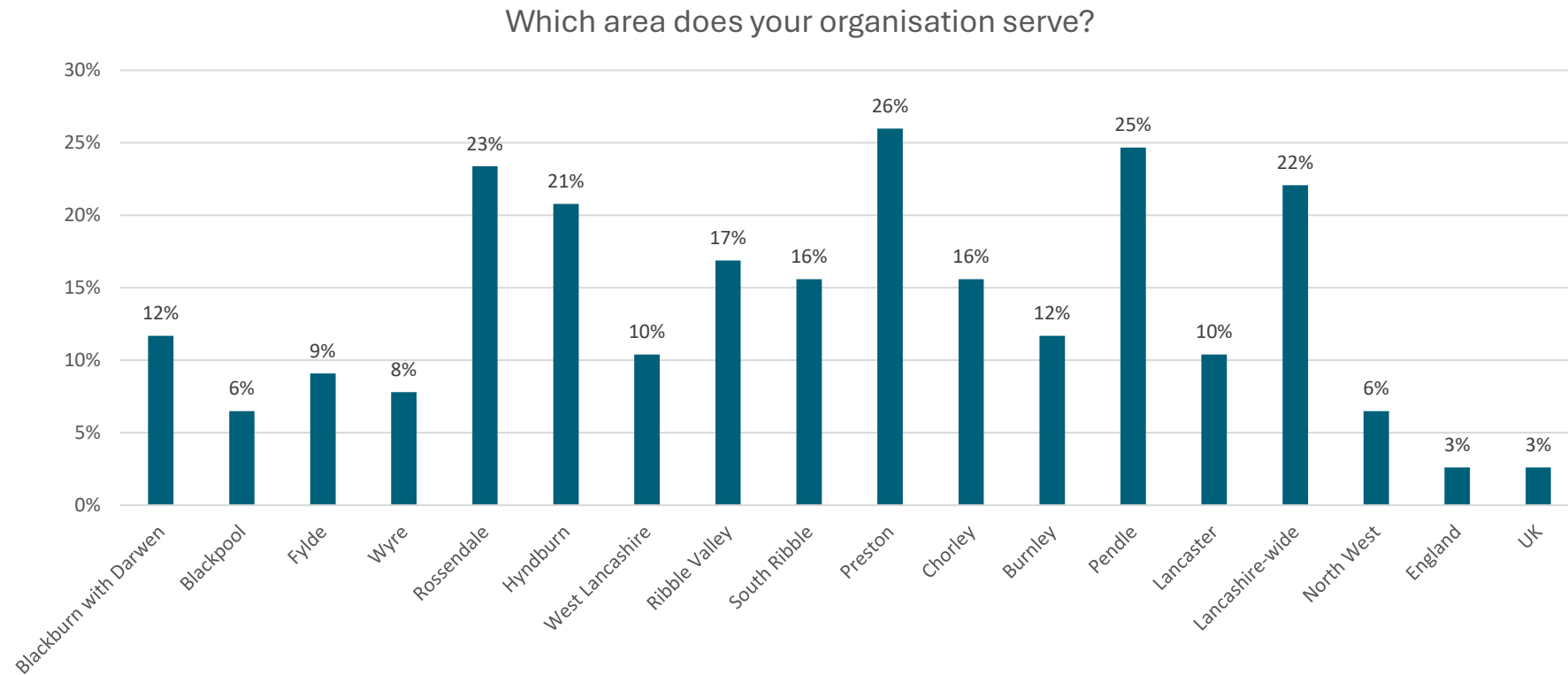- Policy/Research
- Other

4%
29%
8%
48%
1%
10%

Respondent demographics: Role

- **87%** of respondents felt their role played a part in reducing/eliminating poverty.

Do you see your role as playing a part in reducing or eliminating poverty?
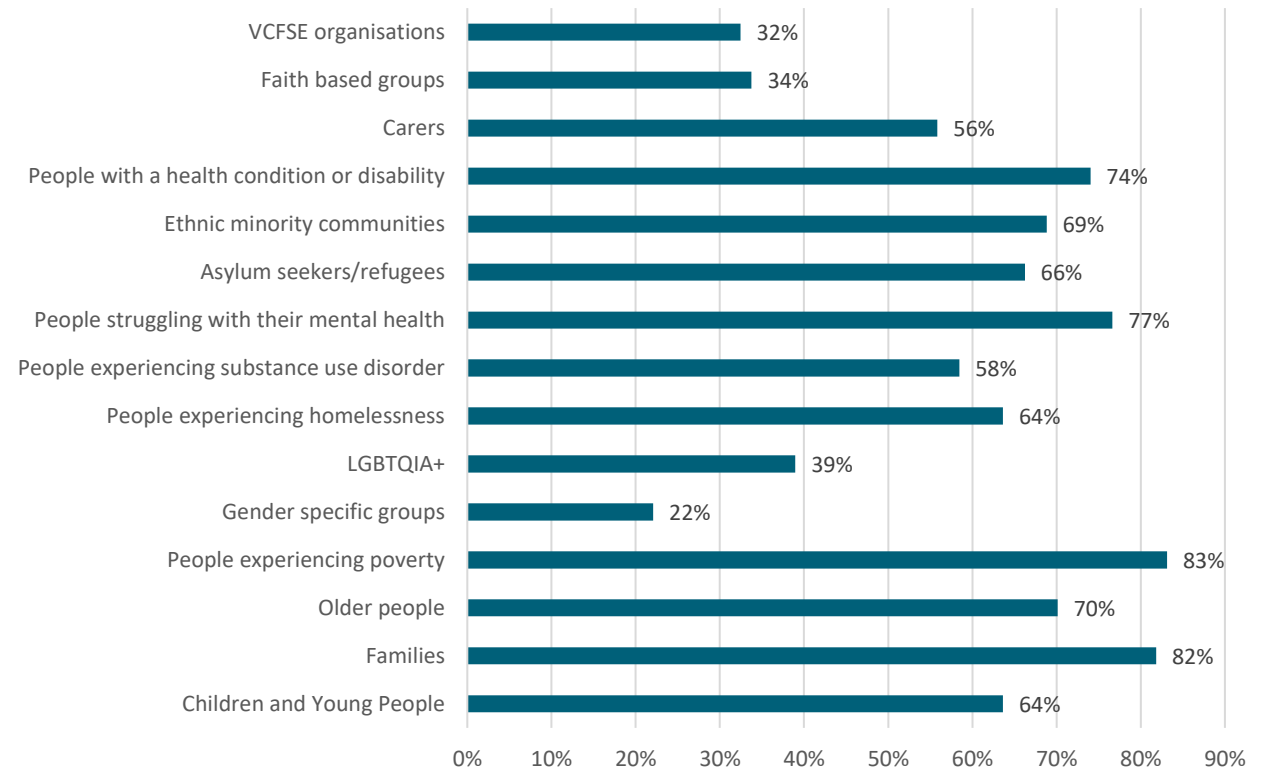

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

12%

1%

87%
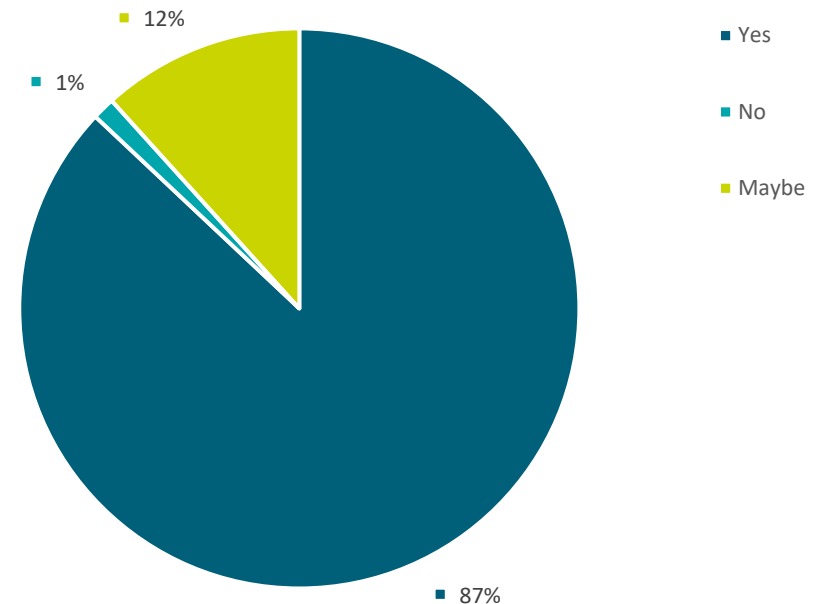
Organisational activities: Groups supported

- The majority of organisations support people experiencing poverty (83%).

- The next most common groups that organisations support were families (82%) and people struggling with their mental health (77%).

Does this reflect the groups that are most in need of support in your area?

Which groups of people does your organisation support?

Group	Percentage
VCFSE organisations	32%
Faith based groups	34%
Carers	56%
People with a health condition or disability	74%
Ethnic minority communities	69%
Asylum seekers/refugees	66%
People struggling with their mental health	77%
People experiencing substance use disorder	58%
People experiencing homelessness	64%
LGBTQIA+	39%
Gender specific groups	22%
People experiencing poverty	83%
Older people	70%
Families	82%
Children and Young People	64%

Organisational activities: Support offered

- 83% of organisations who responded are providing information, advice and guidance.

- The next most common form of support was mental health support (45%).

What services does your organisation provide?

| Service	Percentage
Education	1%
Children and baby items	19%
Furniture and/or white goods	34%
Health related support	39%
Housing	34%
Training	38%
Counselling	21%
Mental Health support	45%
Advocacy	31%
Energy support	22%
Digital inclusion	18%
Fuel vouchers	25%
Food parcels/pantry	42%
Debt support	40%
Information, Advice and Guidance	83%
Social prescribing	27%
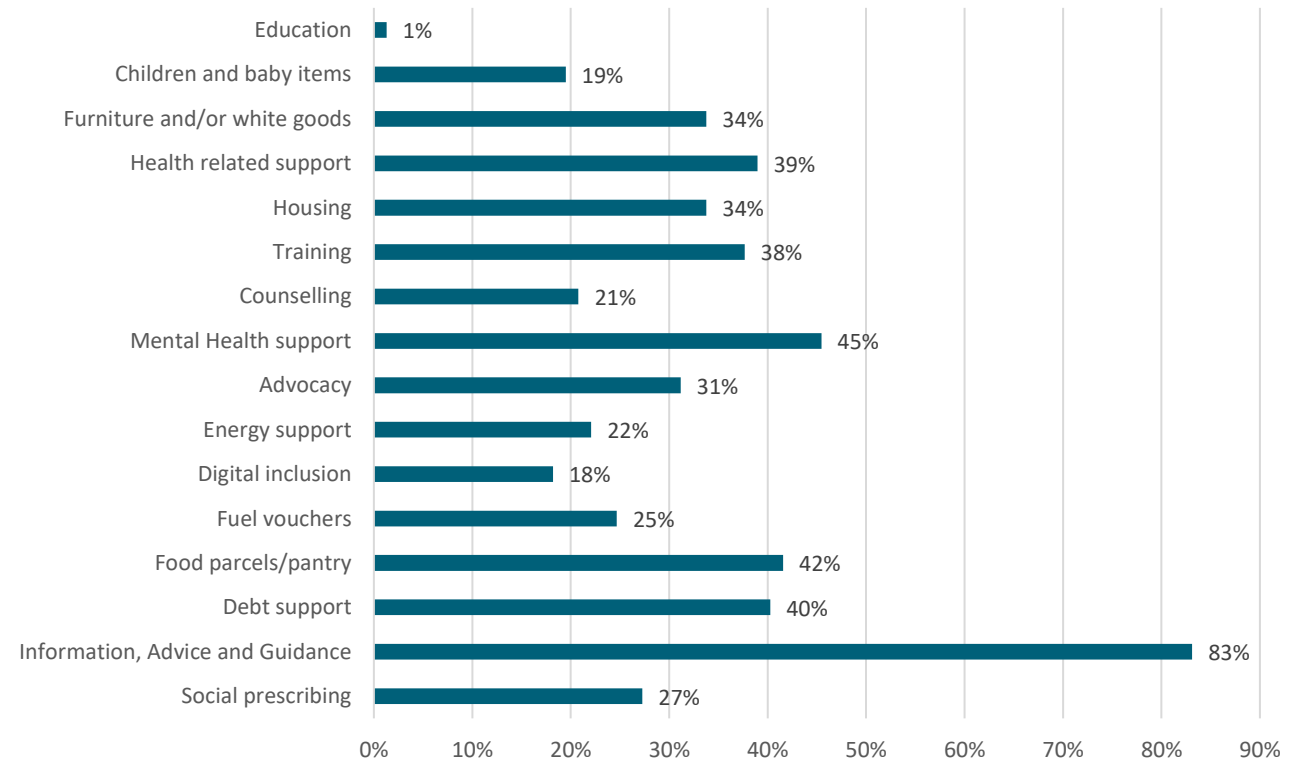
Organisational activities: Lived experience

- The majority of organisations services' were informed by people with lived experience of poverty.

How does your organisation engage with people with lived experience of poverty? How does this engagement inform the services you provide?

To what extent are services provided by your organisation informed by people with lived experience of poverty?

- 4%
- 4%
- 30%
- 22%
- 40%

■ Always ■ Often ■ Sometimes ■ Rarely ■ Never
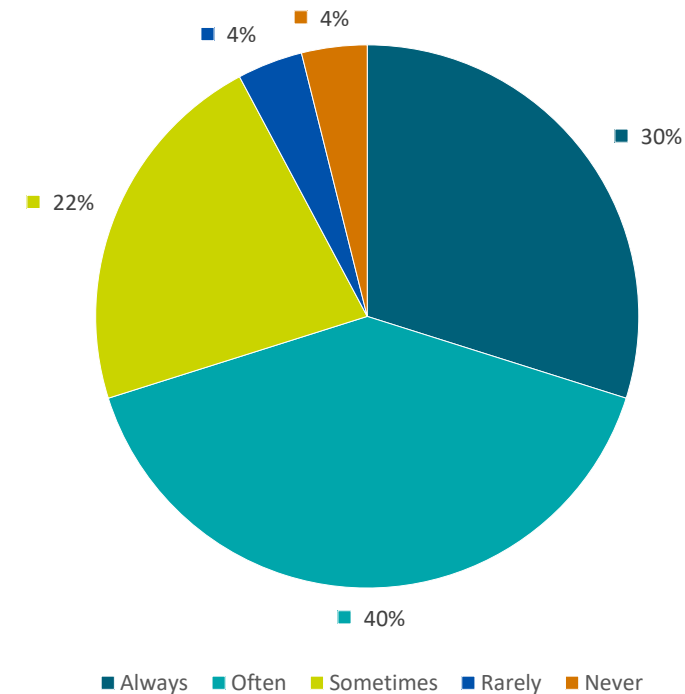
Organisational activities: Lived experience

- **51%** of organisations who responded to the survey had members of their work or volunteer force that were currently living in poverty, or had been in the past.
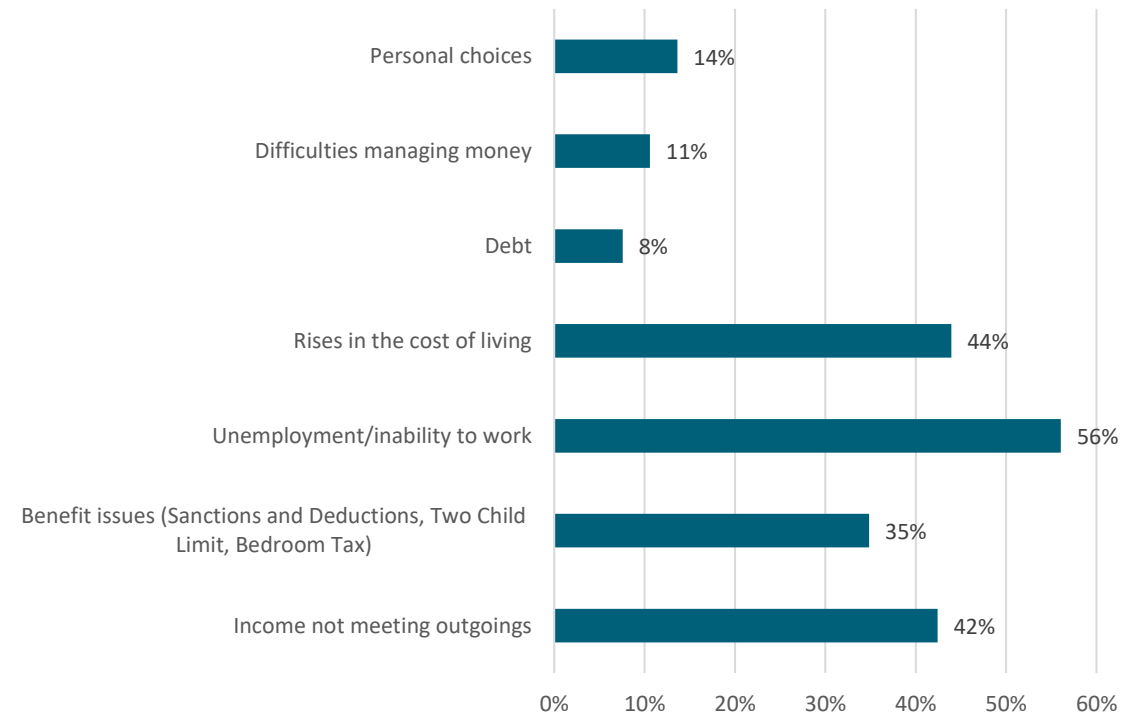
Are members of your workforce or volunteer team currently living in poverty or have they in the past?

- 36%
- 51%
- 13%

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know
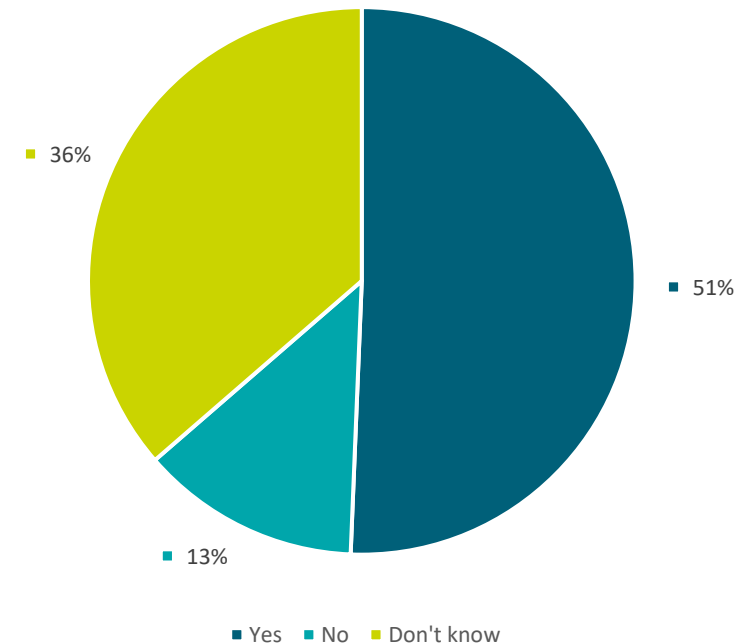
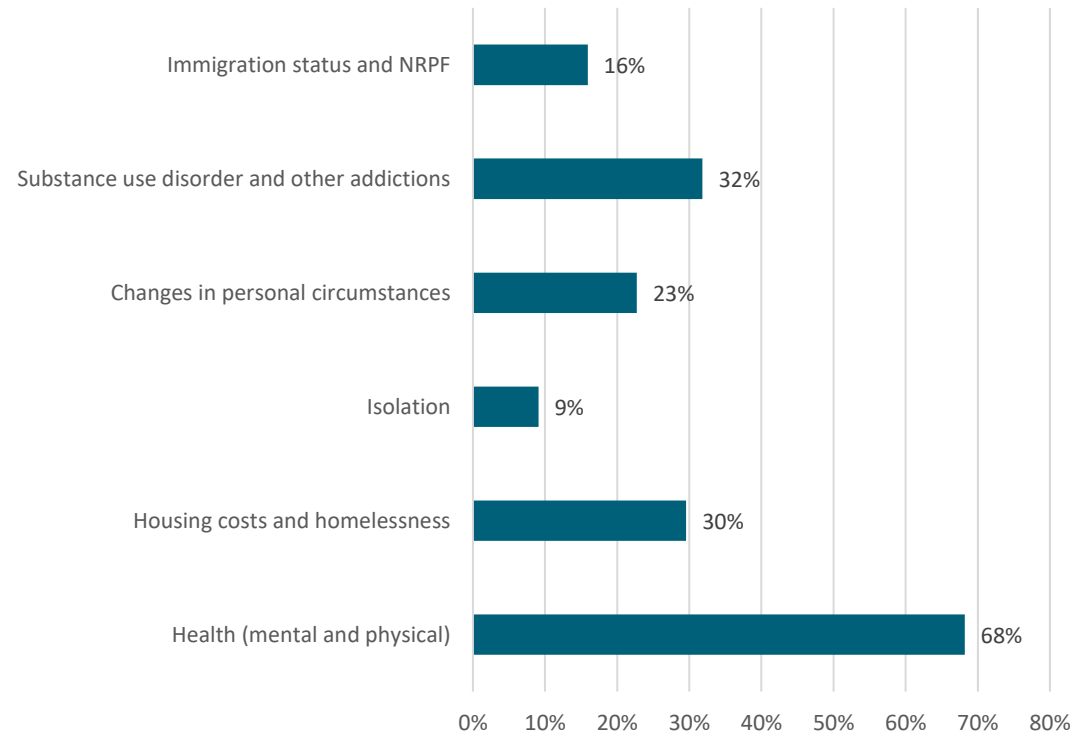# Poverty awareness and understanding

What are the main causes of poverty for people that your organisation works with?

- **86%** of responses spoke about money and access to financial resources, and 57% of responses also explored some of the precipitating factors that may have triggered financial hardship.

- Of responses which discussed a lack of money, common causes of poverty were an inability to earn a wage **(56%)**, the cost-of-living crisis **(44%)**, incomes that don't meet outgoings **(42%)** and benefit issues **(35%)**.

Personal choices — 14%
Difficulties managing money — 11%
Debt — 8%
Rises in the cost of living — 44%
Unemployment/inability to work — 56%
Benefit issues (Sanctions and Deductions, Two Child Limit, Bedroom Tax) — 35%
Income not meeting outgoings — 42%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60%

What are the main causes of poverty for people that your organisation works with?

- Of the responses that discussed factors leading to a lack of financial resources, the most common factor was health (68%), followed by substance use disorder/other addictions (32%), and then housing costs and homelessness (30%).

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Mainly through not having enough income to pay for everyday expenses. Work with a lot of food organisations who report increasing numbers of people accessing their services who are in employment.
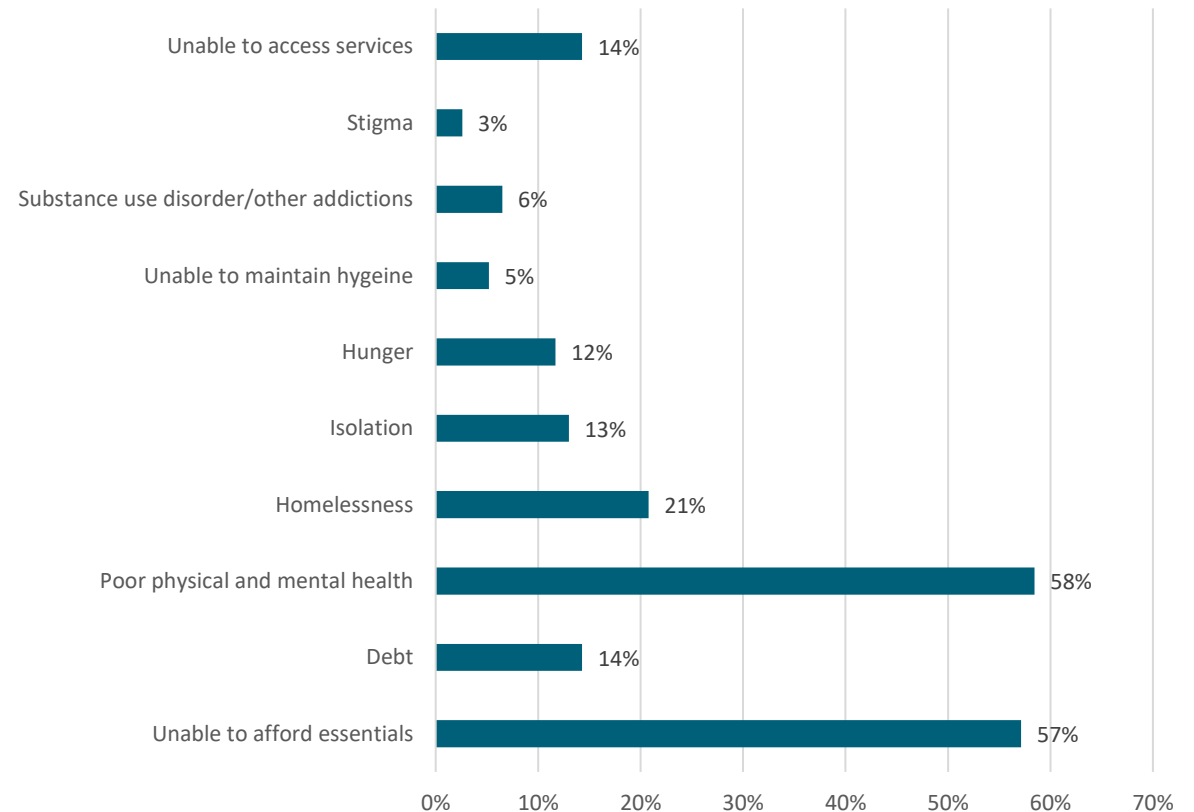
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Long term health conditions, high cost of living, not in receipt of all qualifying benefits, lack of advice and information at appropriate times, substance abuse, debt, career breakdown, government tightening benefits on Older People and recent Winter Fuel cuts.

How does poverty affect people your organisation works with?

- Some of the most common consequences of poverty respondents saw was poor physical and mental health (58%) followed very closely by people being unable to afford essentials (57%).

Bar chart:
- Unable to access services: 14%
- Stigma: 3%
- Substance use disorder/other addictions: 6%
- Unable to maintain hygeine: 5%
- Hunger: 12%
- Isolation: 13%
- Homelessness: 21%
- Poor physical and mental health: 58%
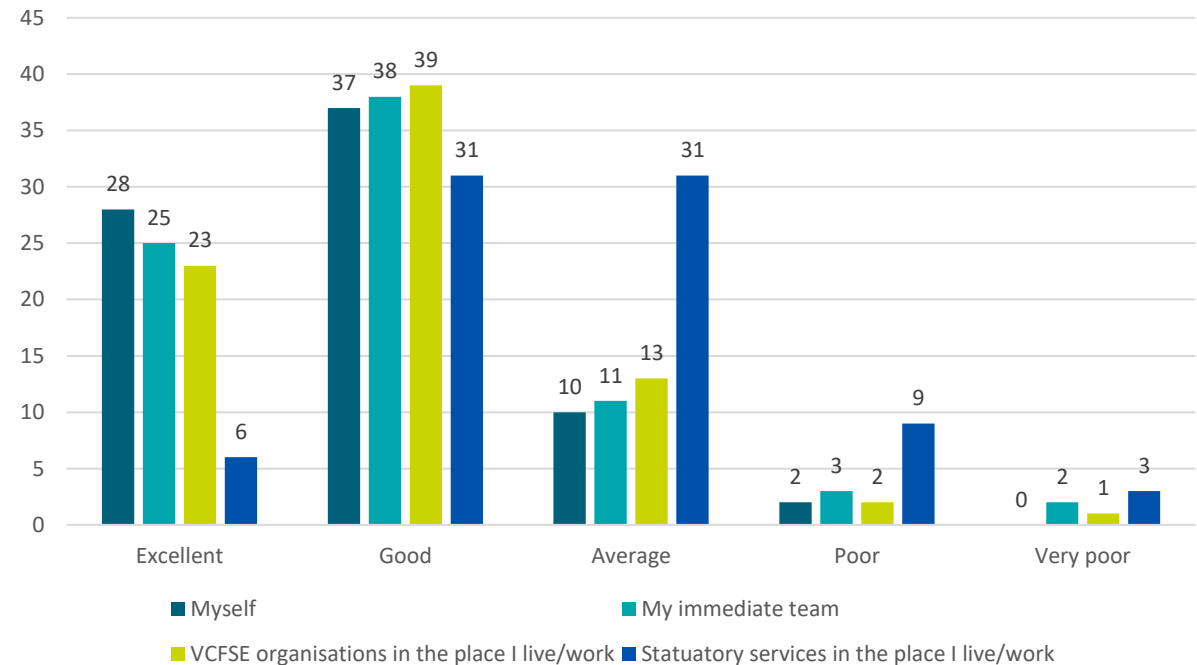- Debt: 14%
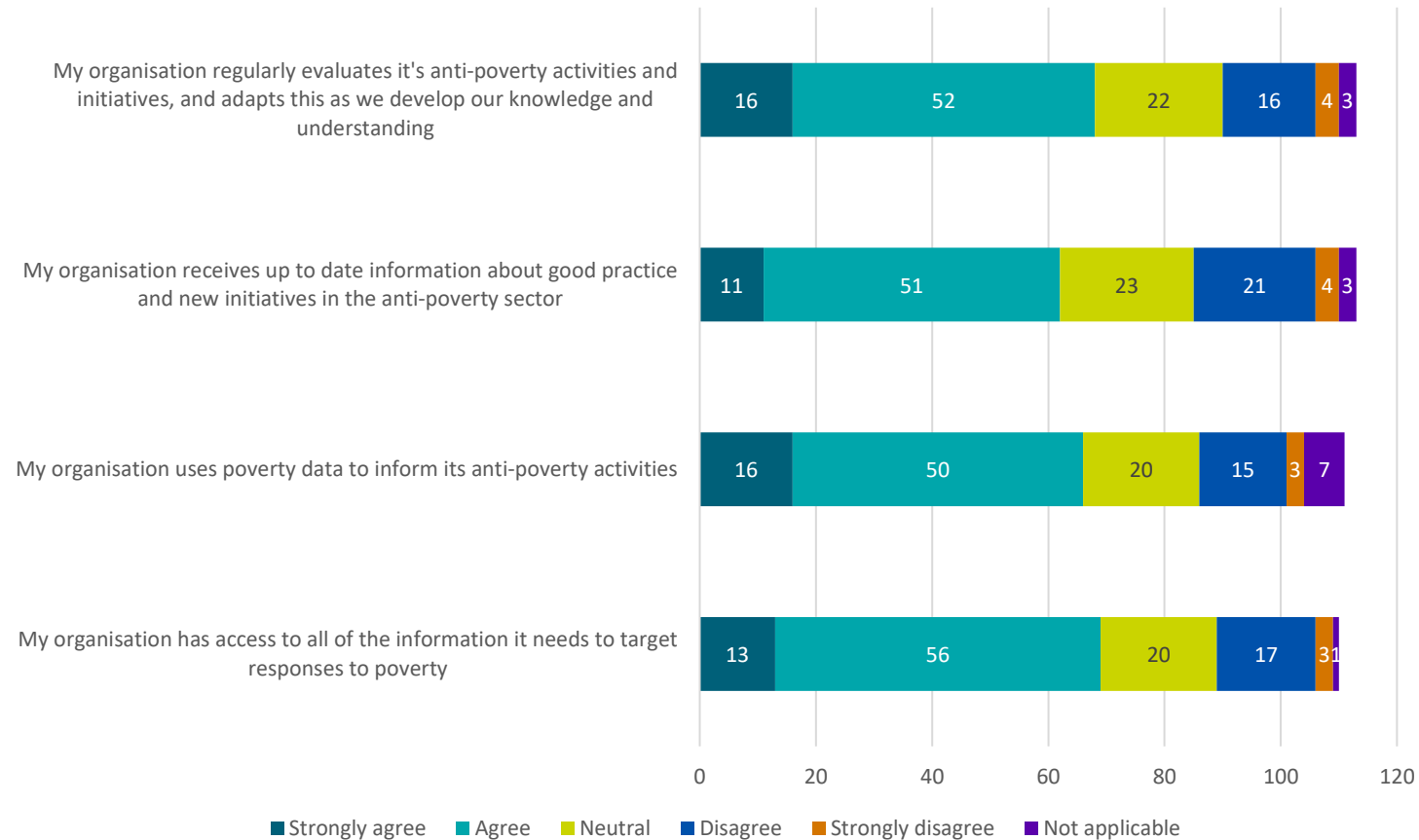- Unable to afford essentials: 57%

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The people we support are often living in fear—worried about losing benefits, feeding their families, or covering essentials like heating. Many are making daily sacrifices, and their mental health is suffering. Some want to move forward but don't know how, while others have given up trying due to fear, confusion, or poor treatment by DWP. Words like "sanctioned" and "investigated" come up often, and misinformation adds to the anxiety. Even those in work are struggling—wages no longer cover basic living costs, leading to burnout and sick leave.

How would you rate the following people and groups on their understanding and awareness of poverty?

- Respondents generally rated themselves, their teams and VCFSE organisations they work with rather highly when asked about their understanding and awareness of poverty, whereas statutory services were generally ranked lower (but still primarily good or average).

Legend:
- Myself
- My immediate team
- VCFSE organisations in the place I live/work
- Statuatory services in the place I live/work

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor
Myself	28	37	10	2	0
My immediate team	25	38	11	3	2
VCFSE organisations in the place I live/work	23	39	13	2	1
Statuatory services in the place I live/work	6	31	31	9	3

Access to information about poverty

|	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not applicable
My organisation regularly evaluates it's anti-poverty activities and initiatives, and adapts this as we develop our knowledge and understanding	16	52	22	16	4	3
My organisation receives up to date information about good practice and new initiatives in the anti-poverty sector	11	51	23	21	4	3
My organisation uses poverty data to inform its anti-poverty activities	16	50	20	15	3	7
My organisation has access to all of the information it needs to target responses to poverty	13	56	20	17	3	1

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Not applicable

What information or resources do you think people in the area you live and/or work need to develop their understanding and awareness of poverty?

- 55% of respondents answered this questions focussing on increasing knowledge of poverty, and 43% answered in relation to developing an understanding of anti-poverty support initiatives.

- The most common responses in the first group were accessibility of poverty data (36%) and lived experience engagement (33%).

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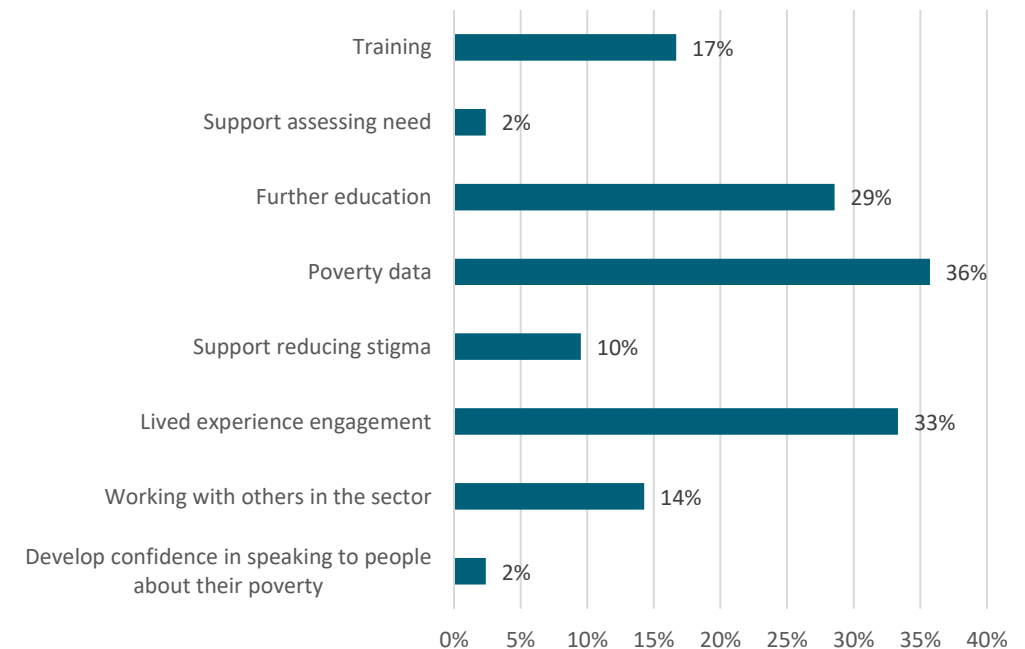
I think that there are many people in my area who don't know anyone living in poverty and can't imagine the multifaceted reasons that anyone might be trapped in a cycle of poverty. And in contrast many of my clients have circles of contacts who are all in relative poverty and often stuck there without knowing ways to access getting out. In some senses, I think it's only when you meet real people and hear their stories of things spiralling out of control from one event that you can understand how those in poverty have got there.

"

I think there's a lack of understanding in some statutory organisations about the multi-layered complexity of some people who are experiencing poverty. This includes a lack of understanding about fear and suspicion of authorities.

What information or resources do you think people in the area you live and/or work need to develop their understanding and awareness of poverty?

- In the second group, overwhelmingly, respondents felt they needed more information on anti-poverty support programmes and initiatives that were available in the region (76%) to be better able to support people they work with.
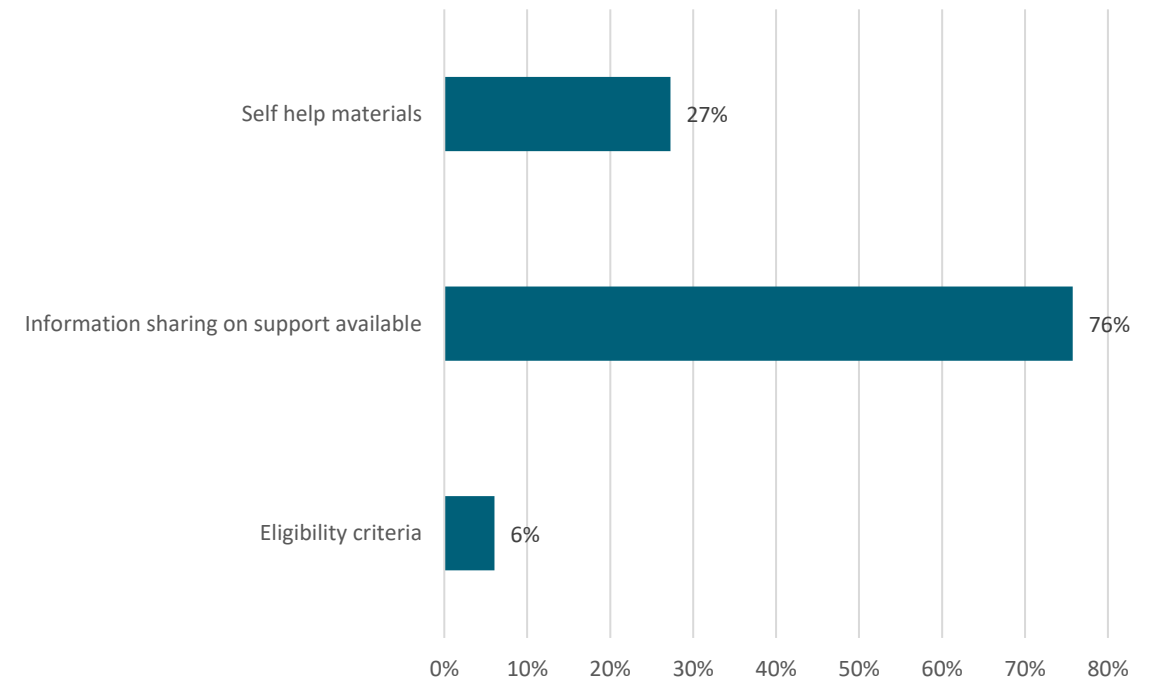
Anti-poverty activity and initiatives

Good practice and successful anti-poverty initiatives

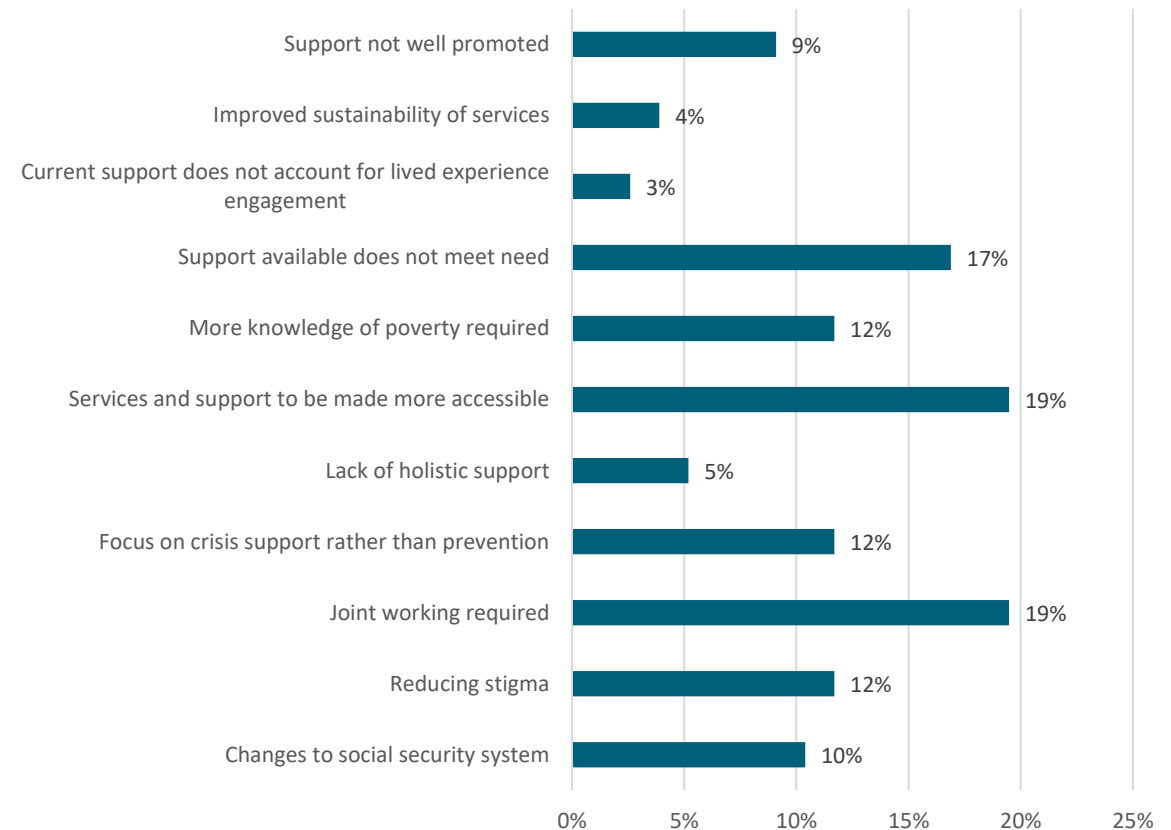**Principles of anti-poverty activity good practice:**

- Holistic support provision and partnership/multi-disciplinary team working
- Straightforward to access, without strict eligibility criteria and long term
- Preventative including income maximisation initiatives
- Cash first
- Non-judgemental
- Culturally and physically accessible

Successful initiatives (local and national):

- Under One Roof Furniture scheme
- Poverty Truth Commission
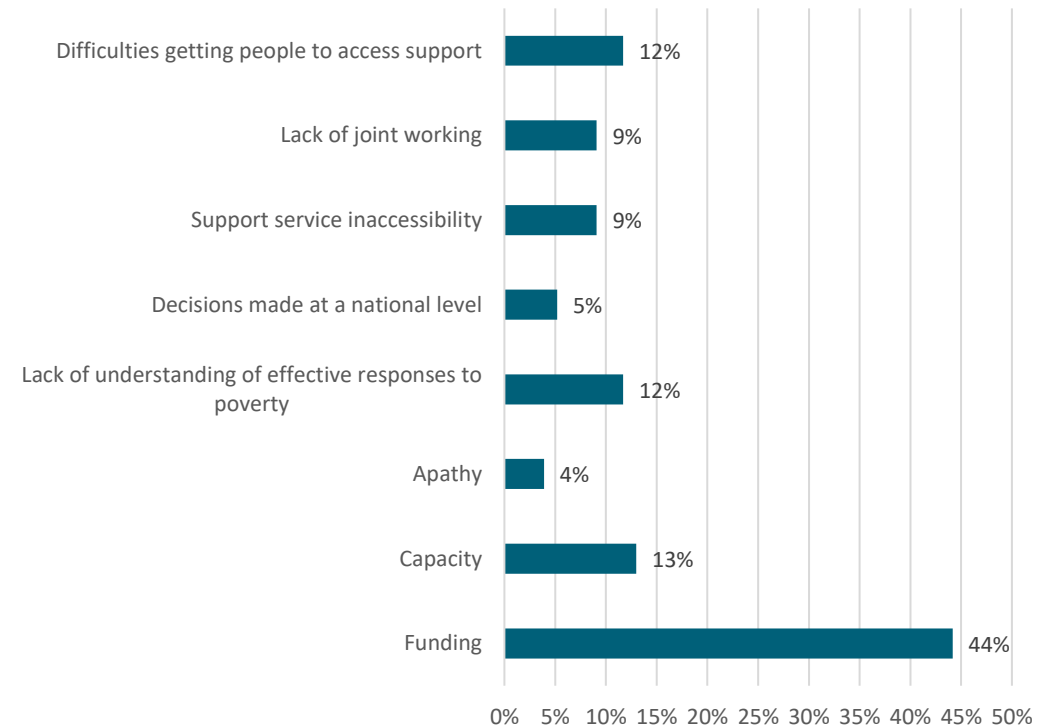- Discretionary Housing Payment
- Social prescribing

Anti-poverty activity: Areas of improvement

- Respondents felt that the two main areas of improvement were to around partnership working (19%) and services to be made more accessible (19%).

- In addition, respondents also felt that the amount of support was inadequate (17%), that it focussed on crisis provision rather than prevention (12%) and work was required to reduce stigma associated with poverty (12%).

Category	Percentage
Support not well promoted	9%
Improved sustainability of services	4%
Current support does not account for lived experience engagement	3%
Support available does not meet need	17%
More knowledge of poverty required	12%
Services and support to be made more accessible	19%
Lack of holistic support	5%
Focus on crisis support rather than prevention	12%
Joint working required	19%
Reducing stigma	12%
Changes to social security system	10%

Are there any barriers to implementing effective and sustainable anti-poverty activities?
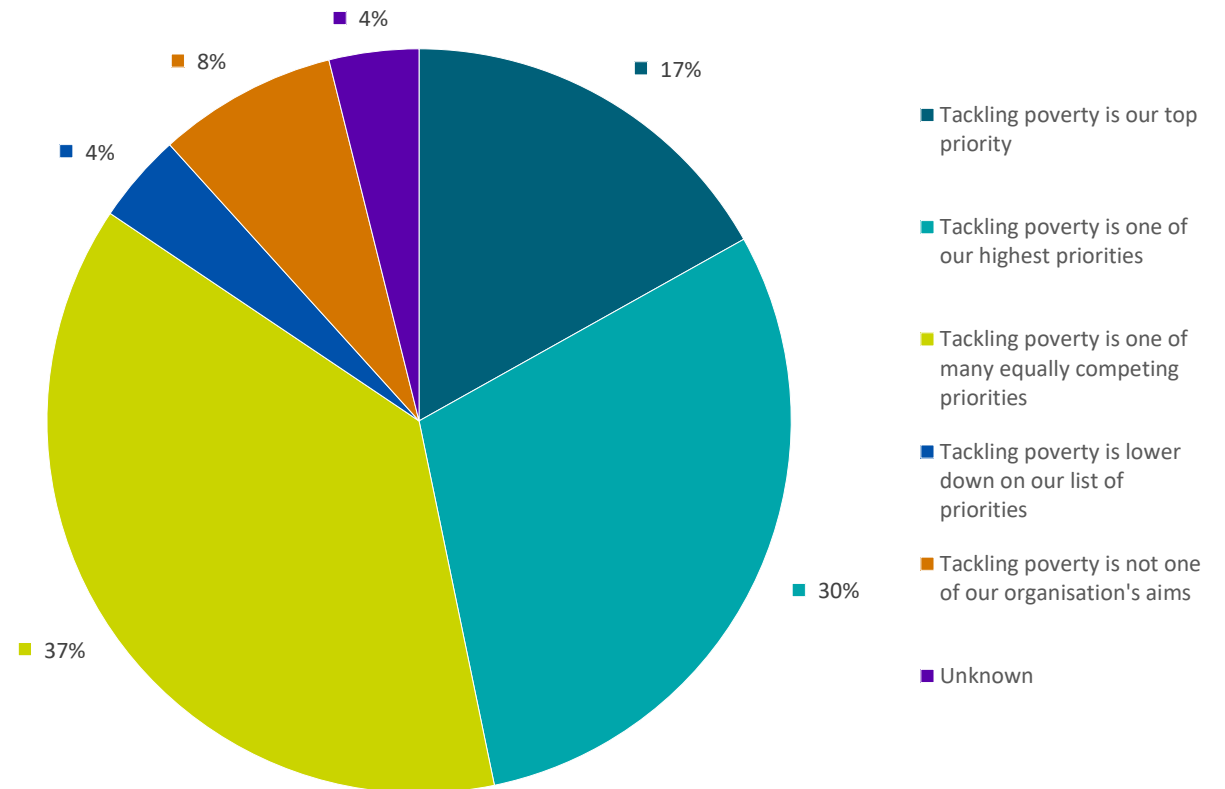
- Funding (44%) and capacity (13%) were the two main barriers identified to implementing anti-poverty activities.

- After this, barriers identified included a lack of poverty awareness and understanding of effective responses to poverty (12%) followed by difficulties getting people to access service (12%).

| Barrier	Percentage
Difficulties getting people to access support	12%
Lack of joint working	9%
Support service inaccessibility	9%
Decisions made at a national level	5%
Lack of understanding of effective responses to poverty	12%
Apathy	4%
Capacity	13%
Funding	44%

Anti-poverty prioritisation

To what extent is tackling poverty a priority for your organisation?

- Cumulatively, 84% of respondents said that tackling poverty was at least one of many competing priorities.

Pie chart legend:
- Tackling poverty is our top priority
- Tackling poverty is one of our highest priorities
- Tackling poverty is one of many equally competing priorities
- Tackling poverty is lower down on our list of priorities
- Tackling poverty is not one of our organisation's aims
- Unknown

Pie chart values: 17%, 30%, 37%, 4%, 8%, 4%

To what extent is tackling poverty a priority amongst other organisations and sectors?

- Comparably, only 69% of respondents felt that poverty was a shared priority amongst other organisations and sectors in Lancashire.

- Additionally, 75% of respondents felt that funding did not match the prioritisation of tackling poverty either.

30%

1%

69%

■ Yes ■ No ■ Unknown
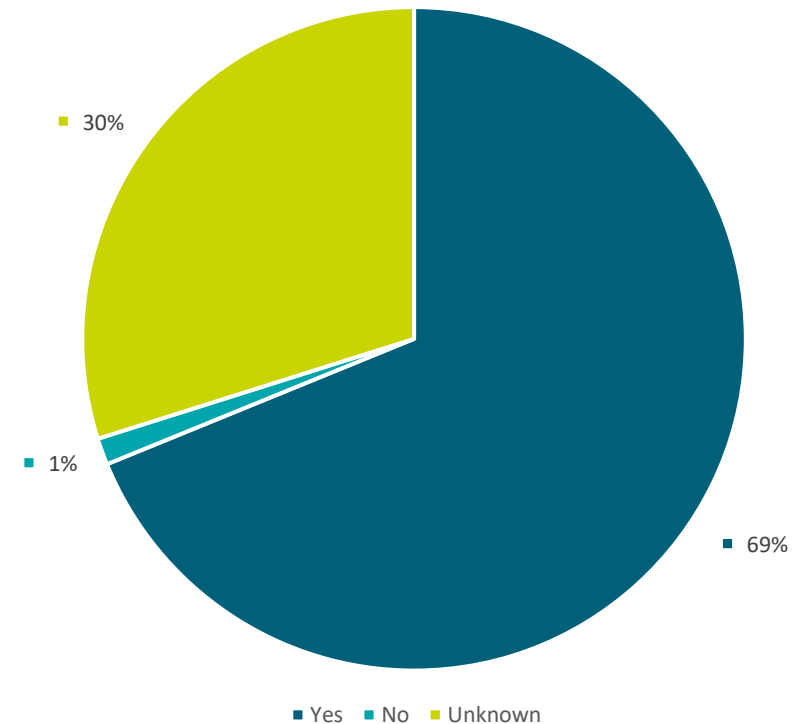
In our experience, the prioritisation of tackling poverty is often not matched by the funding, resources, or service provision available across Lancashire, although some local areas prioritise and fund it much better than others.

There is a noticeable disparity between the scale of need, especially in areas with some of the highest levels of deprivation, and the support available to address it. Services that offer early intervention, emotional and practical support, or long-term solutions are often overlooked or underfunded, despite the proven social and financial return they deliver.

Get in touch

If you have any questions about the data shared, please get in touch with Patsy Davies – Network Development Coordinator (Lancashire).

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