

New  
Philanthropy  
Capital

# How are you getting on?

April 2009

Gustaf Lofgren

## Charities and funders on communicating results

An interim National Performance Programme report



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A joint initiative to strengthen support services for the third sector

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## **Charities and funders on communicating results**

An interim National Performance Programme report

Charities Evaluation Services' National Performance Programme has commissioned this work from New Philanthropy Capital (NPC). The National Performance Programme is funded by Capacitybuilders' National Support Services programme and is led by Charities Evaluation Services (CES) in partnership with acevo, the New Economics Foundation, NPC, and Voice4Change England.

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# Summary

This interim report builds on new research by New Philanthropy Capital into the communication of results information by charities to funders, and funders' use of this information. It also focuses on the external support charities receive for monitoring and evaluation and funders' financial and non-financial assistance for this work.

By understanding how funders use results information and what drives their satisfaction with it, charities can improve their funding applications and their reporting. By understanding the challenges charities face in this area and what other funders ask for and use, funders can make appropriate demands for results information and improve their own use of it. A grasp of the concerns expressed by charities and funders can help support providers improve their services for both groups.

## Findings from funders

Grant-making trusts and foundations told us that results information from grant applicants and grantees is important in their decision-making. They use such information for a range of purposes, from selecting grantees to influencing other funders and informing public debates. Funders can suggest many possible improvements to the results information they receive in applications and reporting. Many wish to see greater compliance with their processes and more sophisticated data and analysis from charities. Funders are also, however, broadly satisfied with the quantity and quality of information provided.

Despite their interest in, and use for, results information, few funders consistently fund grantees' monitoring and evaluation work, and one in three never do. Nearly half of funders do not know if their grantees have received external support for monitoring and evaluation, and relatively few have funded such support. Somewhat more funders provide grantees with non-financial assistance, like signposting of resources, written guidance, and coaching.

Strikingly, trusts and foundations who say that they always fund grantees monitoring and evaluation work (or external support for this) are less satisfied with the information provided by charities than those who

sometimes or never do so. This seems to be because these funders have higher expectations.

Funders see clear benefits from external support for monitoring and evaluation from a range of providers. Such providers are seen as impartial and professional, providing an external perspective, skills, and extra resources. External support is also felt to have drawbacks, however. A number of funders described it as costly and variable in quality.

## Findings from charities

Charities told us that results information plays an important role in their communication with funders. They said their funders have many and varied uses for such information, and are broadly satisfied with funders' demands for it as part of application and reporting processes. However, like funders, they would like to see a number of improvements. In particular, charities would like funders to make information requests more proportionate to the amount of funding available, and to recognise the challenges involved in monitoring and evaluation.

Most charities tailor the results information they provide to funders both in terms of content and presentation. This is onerous for charities, and supports the case for initiatives to reduce the reporting burden on them.

Charities said they would like more funding and more non-financial assistance for monitoring and evaluation work, but there is a clear preference for truly additional support, as opposed to support at the expense of current levels of funding.

Like funders, charities see both benefits and drawbacks from external support in this area. Such support was seen as costly both in terms of time and money, and there were complaints about support providers' lack of contextual or sector-specific knowledge. Charities highlighted the independence and credibility of support providers as well as their expertise as important advantages. They also noted the importance of outside perspectives on their work, and believed they could benefit from support providers' knowledge of funders' priorities.

## Conclusions and recommendations

Funders need to be clear about the quantity of information they want from grant applicants and grantees by spelling out their expectations and giving feedback when necessary. If they want results information to be more sophisticated, they should consider supporting grantees' monitoring and evaluation, or increasing their support if they are already doing so. This support can take the form of funding or direct assistance. Showcasing excellent examples of reporting is one way to help grantees improve.

Reporting different results to different funders in different ways is a significant burden for charities. History and common sense suggest sector-wide harmonisation of application and reporting processes is unlikely. However, funders can help grantees by being open to change, which may come in the form of standard reports created by charities for their funders.

Many charities need to get both the quantity and quality of their results information right. If funders do not provide instructions, charities should ask them how much information they are able to process and benefit from. If they have not, they should also take the step from data collection to analysis of their data, not just for funders' sake but for beneficiaries'.

Like any service providers, organisations and individuals helping charities monitor and evaluate their work need to listen to what their clients want. Funders and charities expect contextual knowledge about the sectors in which they work and intelligent analysis, but often feel that they receive products off the shelf. Training providers in particular need to make sure that they are delivering improvements that are clear both to charities and grant-makers.



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# Introduction

## The purpose of this report

Charities often struggle to measure the results of their work and to communicate them to funders, though some organisations do both strikingly well. For their part, funders often struggle to use results information provided by charities. Some complain about the quality and quantity of this information. Others say that they lack the capacity to benefit from it. Some charities expend resources producing information that their funders do not use, and some funders turn down funding applications, or cancel grants, because they are dissatisfied with the results information they receive.

This picture comes from work New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) has done with charities, donors, and funders over several years, and from the research of others in this area. The present report aims to update and improve this picture, in order to inform the work of funders themselves, charities, and third sector support providers. By understanding how funders use results information and what drives their satisfaction with it, charities can improve their funding applications and their reporting. By understanding the challenges charities face in this area and what other funders ask for and use, funders can make appropriate demands for results information and improve their own use of it. By understanding charities' and funders' concerns, support providers can improve their services for both groups.

This report builds on new research by NPC into the communication of results information by charities to funders and funders' use of this information. This research also focuses on the external support charities receive for monitoring and evaluation, and on funders' financial and non-financial assistance for this work.

Our research was carried out not long after the publication of *Accountability and Learning: Developing Monitoring and Evaluation in the Third Sector*, a report from Charities Evaluation Services which is the largest study so far of monitoring and evaluation in the UK third sector.<sup>1</sup> When appropriate, our findings will be compared with those of this research. There is also a strong link between this research and NPC's two *Turning the tables* reports, which piloted standard reports as a way to reduce the reporting burden on charities.<sup>2,3</sup>

## Method and scope

Charities receive funding from a broad range of sources. The focus of this interim report is on grant-making trusts and foundations (GMTs), and any reference to 'funders' below reflects this, as will be clear from the description of the research method below. The term 'grantees' is used to refer to charities in receipt of funding from GMTs. Research within the 2009-2010 National Performance Programme will focus on the communication and use of results information in public funding agreements.

By results information we mean:

- in grants applications, information about the intended outputs, outcomes, and impacts of planned or ongoing charitable activities;
- in monitoring and evaluation, information about the realised outputs, outcomes, and impacts of completed or ongoing charitable activities.

Such information can be quantitative or qualitative. We define outputs as the products of an activity (eg, number of clients served, number of courses arranged, or number of helpline calls answered). Outcomes are defined as the short- and medium-term results of an activity (eg, raised awareness, increased confidence, fall in number of crimes). Impacts are defined as long-term outcomes.<sup>4</sup>

Field research for this report was carried out between June 2008 and February 2009. An online survey was sent to charities in receipt of grant funding. A second survey was sent to GMTs ('funders'). Paper copies were sent by post when we were unable to contact organisations by email.

The survey of funders was sent to 355 of the top 400 GMTs (by total value of grants made) in the Directory of Social Change's *Guide to the Major Trusts volume 1, 2007/08*.<sup>5</sup> The 355 recipients were selected by excluding GMTs either starting up or winding down or funding mostly outside of the United Kingdom, and by ensuring that GMTs with shared administration and decision-making processes received only one survey copy. The Big Lottery Fund, though not strictly a GMT, was included. This was therefore a survey of large funders (by total value of grants made). The response rate was good for a third sector research project: 149 of the 355 funders contacted responded (42%).

“Measuring change should be routine, not a chore to satisfy funders.”

Foundation director

For the survey of front-line charities, a random sample of 412 'operational' charities (excluding, for instance, grant-making trusts and foundations) with an income of over £100,000 in the last financial year and in receipt of grant funding was selected from the Charity Commission's register. These charities were identified, selected and analysed using the Guidestar Data Services database, which covers all registered third sector organisations in England and Wales ([www.gs-ds.co.uk](http://www.gs-ds.co.uk)).

The income threshold applied excluded three quarters of the charities on the Commission's register.<sup>6</sup> Note that this random sample approach means that there is no necessary connection between the charities and the funders surveyed. The survey of charities achieved a less impressive response rate than that of funders, and its results therefore need to be considered broadly indicative at best: 47 of the 412 charities contacted responded (11%).

The research method used is discussed in greater detail in Appendix 1.

Follow-up interviews with staff of charities and funders were conducted by telephone and in person to improve interpretation of the survey data and to provide anecdotal illustration.

## Structure

The main findings from the research are presented in the next section, followed by conclusions and recommendations. The appendices present the research method and questions and full response data tables for both of the surveys conducted. The final sections contain acknowledgements and references.



# Results from surveys

Data for this research was gathered through two surveys, one sent to grant-making trusts and foundations, the other to charities receiving grant funding. The surveys mirrored each other to allow comparisons of funders' and grantees' views. This section describes the findings from these surveys and follow-up interviews.

The surveys covered a number of related topics. Funders were asked what results information they ask charities for before and after grants are made. They were asked how satisfied they are with the information they receive, and how it could be improved. They were also asked how they use this information. Finally, they were asked what support they give for grantees' work with results information, and about the external support their grantees receive for this work.

Charities were asked what information funders request from them during application and selection processes and as part of monitoring and evaluation. They were asked how satisfied they are with these requests, and how they could be improved. This was followed by questions on the support they receive from funders for their work with results information. Finally, there were a number of questions on the external support charities receive for this work, and its benefits and drawbacks.

The surveys are reproduced in Appendices 2a and 3a, and full data tables of the responses received can be found in Appendices 2b and 3b.

## Results information is important in funding decisions

Funders and charities responding to the survey (both) said that results information from grant applicants and grantees is important in funding decisions. As Figure 1 shows, nearly four out of five funders indicated that it plays an 'Important' or 'Very important' role. Big funders place greater weight on results information. Funders whose grant-making exceeded £1m per year were more likely to describe it as 'Important' or 'Very important' in their decision-making (87% compared with 61%,  $p < 0.01$ ).

Nine out of ten charity respondents believed results information has an 'Important' or 'Very important' role in their funders' decision-making.

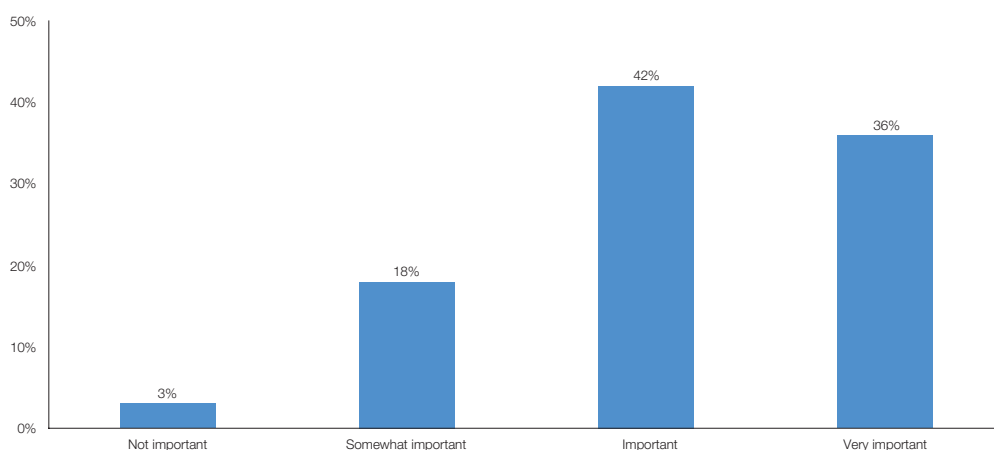
These questions were deliberately posed early on in both surveys to gauge the importance placed on results information in the abstract. They were followed by a number of questions about actual behaviour aiming to find out whether such information is also valued in practice.

No questions were asked about whether the importance of results information is changing. Interviews with charities and funders clearly suggested that results are getting greater attention over time, however. This is in line with findings from *Accountability and Learning*, where a majority of funders surveyed said they were placing greater emphasis on outcomes than they had five years previously.<sup>1</sup>

“This questionnaire is not relevant as we never require grantees to provide results information or to obtain it.”

Foundation grants officer

Figure 1: The role of results information in funders' decision-making



Question 5, funder survey: How would you describe the role of results information (ie, outputs, outcomes, and impacts) from grant applicants and/or grantees in your funding decisions? 148 funders (99% of respondents) answered this question.

More than half of funders always ask potential grantees for information on intended or past results.

As we would expect based on these answers, the charities that responded to the survey overwhelmingly said results information is important in their communication with funders: all but two stated that it is 'Important' or 'Very Important'. No question was asked to determine whether this priority to results information is driven by charity or funder preferences, though interviews suggest the latter is more likely.

### Almost all funders say they ask applicants for results information

Funders were asked whether they request results information from potential grantees during their application and/or selection processes. Just over half responded 'Always', and only slightly fewer (44%) responded 'Sometimes'. Only 5% of funders responded 'Never'. Funders whose grant-making exceeded £1m per year were almost twice as likely to say that they 'Always' make such requests as those whose grant-making was below this figure (52% compared with 28%,  $p < 0.01$ ).

No exactly equivalent question was asked of charities, but question 9 of the charity survey, discussed under the next heading, offers an indication.

### Funders ask for many types of results information

What types of information are funders requesting? Funders and charities were asked about results information requests in four categories: Intended outcomes, Intended outputs, Intended impacts, and Other.

Almost half of the respondents indicated that they ask grant applicants for all three types of results information listed: outputs, outcomes, and impacts. Information on intended impacts

appears to be less popular than outputs and outcomes. Interviews and answers to open-ended questions suggested that this is because demonstrating impact (defined here as long-term outcomes) is considered particularly difficult. Funders who do ask for information about impact also typically ask for both intended outputs and outcomes.

Funders whose average grants were larger than £30,000 were more likely to say that they ask for intended impacts than those making smaller average grants (72% compared with 52%,  $p < 0.05$ ). This seems to be in accordance with the principle of proportionality, ie, with the principle that application processes and information requirements should be proportionate to the funding available. It should be remembered that the average grant calculation here is necessarily a blunt instrument.

Examples of 'Other' types of results information sought by funders included lessons learnt from previous work, comments on the sustainability of outcomes, and unexpected outcomes (sometimes part of the definition of impact).

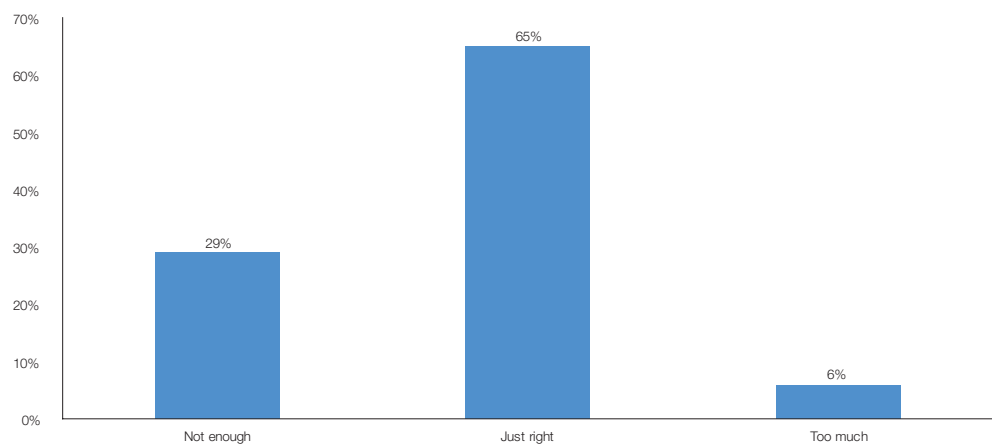
Charities gave similar answers to funders on the types of results information requested as part of application and selection processes. No charity said its funders ask for information in none of the categories listed. Again, information about intended impacts was said to be in less demand.

### Funders are mostly satisfied with the quantity of results information from applicants

A number of specific questions were asked about funders' satisfaction with results information from charities. As Figure 2 shows, most funders are satisfied with the quantity of information provided by grant applicants.

“We don't have the resources to review detailed information but we would like more than we currently receive.”  
Foundation Chair of Trustees

Figure 2: Funders on the quantity of results information they receive from grant applicants



Question 8, funder survey: How would you describe the quantity of information you receive in response to such requests? 133 funders (89% of respondents) answered this question.

Almost two thirds of the respondents stated that the quantity of information provided by potential grantees is 'Just right'. In interviews, several funders made the point that they are more concerned about raising the quality of information they receive than increasing the quantity of information. However, responses indicating an insufficient quantity of information is provided ('Not enough') were several times more common than those indicating excessive information ('Too much') is produced.

### Charities are mostly satisfied with the quantity of results information requested by prospective funders

When asked how they would describe the quantity of results information funders request as part of application and selection processes, a large majority of charity participants answered 'Just right', with most of the rest suggesting 'Too much' information is demanded—only two respondents thought funders are failing to ask for enough information.

The large share of both charities and funders answering these questions with 'Just right' looks like an indication of health for the funding relationship. It is unsurprising that there should also be a (less pronounced) desire for, respectively, more limited requests and more extensive information.

### Funders are mostly satisfied with the quality of results information from applicants

Funders were also asked how satisfied they are with the quality of the results information they receive as part of application and selection processes. As Figure 3 shows, their answers were clustered around the middle of the four-grade scale provided: almost two thirds said they were 'Quite satisfied' with this information, and three out of ten were 'Quite dissatisfied'.

Although this picture is broadly one of satisfaction, it is striking that three out of ten funders responding to this survey are dissatisfied. Since funders overwhelmingly indicated that results information is important in their decision-making, such dissatisfaction may suggest opportunities for charities that get this right.

### Charities are mostly satisfied with prospective funders' requests for results information

Nearly three out of four charity respondents are 'Quite satisfied' with funders' requests for results information as part of application and selection processes. About a fifth are 'Quite dissatisfied' with such requests, and only a single respondent is 'Very dissatisfied'.

This high level of satisfaction is interesting, especially when we consider the responses to question 10 of the survey. This question asked charities 'How would you describe the results information you provide to funders?' Over half of respondents describe this information as 'Mixed—some funders receive the same information', and four out of ten charities say that most of their funders receive different information. Fewer than one in ten respondents say that most of their funders receive the same information.

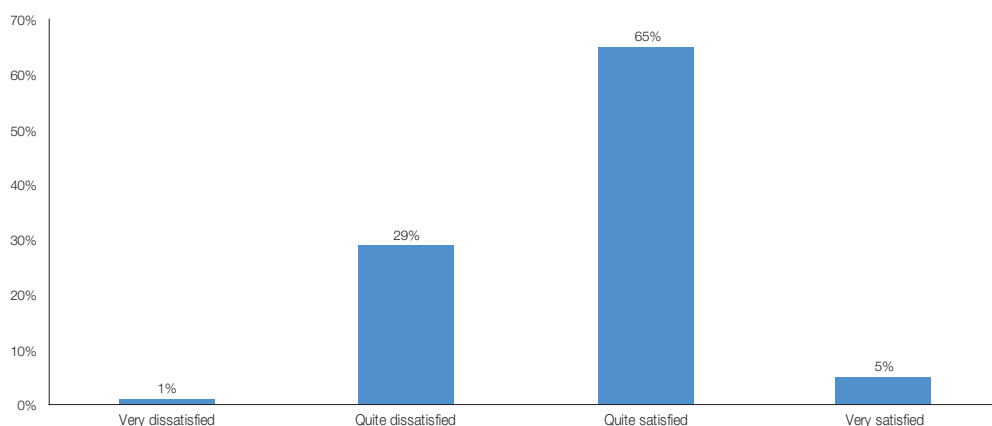
### A number of improvements are possible

More than half of funders responded to the question of what, if anything, could be improved about the results information grant applicants provide as part of application and/or selection process. A number of funders expressed understanding for the difficulty grantees face in measuring results, emphasised the importance of proportionality, and praised their grantees.

Even when grantees understand the differences between outputs, outcomes, and impact, only a minority can tell us how they will measure progress against outcomes rather than outputs.

Funder

Figure 3: Funders' satisfaction with the quality of results information from grant applicants



Question 9, funder survey: How satisfied are you with the quality of results information you receive in response to such requests?

139 funders (93% of respondents) answered this question.

It would be nice if funders all wanted the same thing.

Charity Director

We do not request monitoring reports from all grantees, only when we think it relevant.

Funder

Some would simply like charities to improve their compliance with application processes (for instance, to 'send us the information they have agreed to send'). Several said they wanted to see evidence of failures as well as successes; a few thought grant applicants were telling funders what they want to hear, a sentiment that was echoed in interviews (and in responses to questions about reporting). There was also a wish to see information of a higher quality. One funder pointed out that many applicants still struggle with the difference between outputs and outcomes. A couple thought that the information provided could be briefer and more to the point: 'Better statistics and less waffle'.

Funders also expressed, in both survey responses and interviews, disappointment over finding many charities unwilling to reflect on the results information they produce. There was a feeling that this information is gathered and presented to secure funding, but not analysed to inform service delivery or strategy.

Charities also had ideas for possible improvements. One charity suggested that funders be clearer about how information from grant applicants is used, and about what their decision-making processes look like. Another called for electronic application forms to reduce paper and postage costs. Several respondents thought funders could get better at making information requests proportionate to the amount of funding at stake. A number also felt that it would be helpful if funders allowed applicants to present information in their own formats, or if funders could join around common formats. The limited progress of the Single Application Form project pilot in London at the start of the century suggests this

is unlikely.<sup>7,8</sup> In public funding agreements some progress may result from guidance for funders and purchasers on the use of lead funders.<sup>9</sup> This will be discussed in more detail in future reports following research within the 2009-2010 National Performance Programme on the communication and use of results information in public funding agreements.

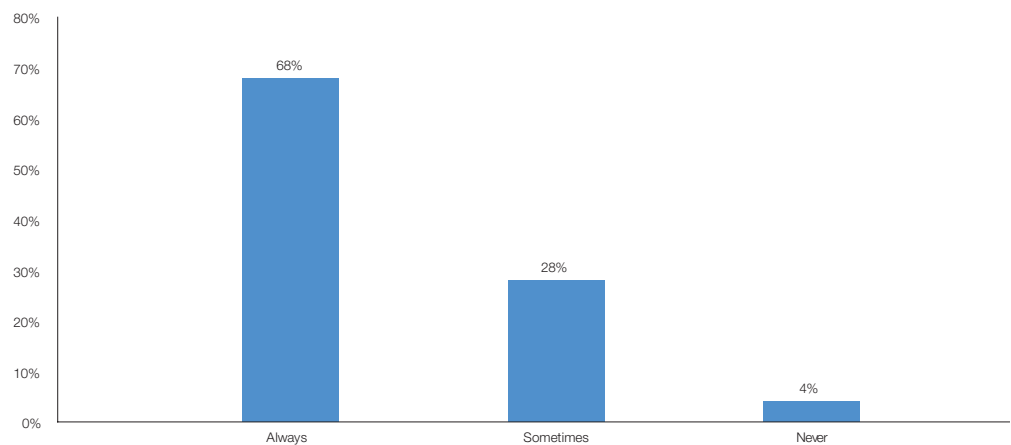
**Almost all funders request results information from grantees, but most believe that only some of their grantees monitor and evaluate**

So far the survey results described have mainly concerned results information communicated before grants are made, as part of application and/or selection processes. We now move on to what happens once funded work has begun. As shown in Figure 4, more than two thirds of funder respondents to our survey say they 'Always' ask grantees for monitoring and evaluation information on funded activities, and over a quarter of them 'Sometimes' ask. Very few 'Never' ask for results information.

Funders do not think this demand for results information is matched by monitoring and evaluation activity by grantees. Over half of the funders who said they 'Always' ask grantees for monitoring and evaluation information on funded activities said only 'Some' of their grantees monitor and evaluate. One in three funders said 'All' of their grantees monitor and/or evaluate their work (see Figure 5).

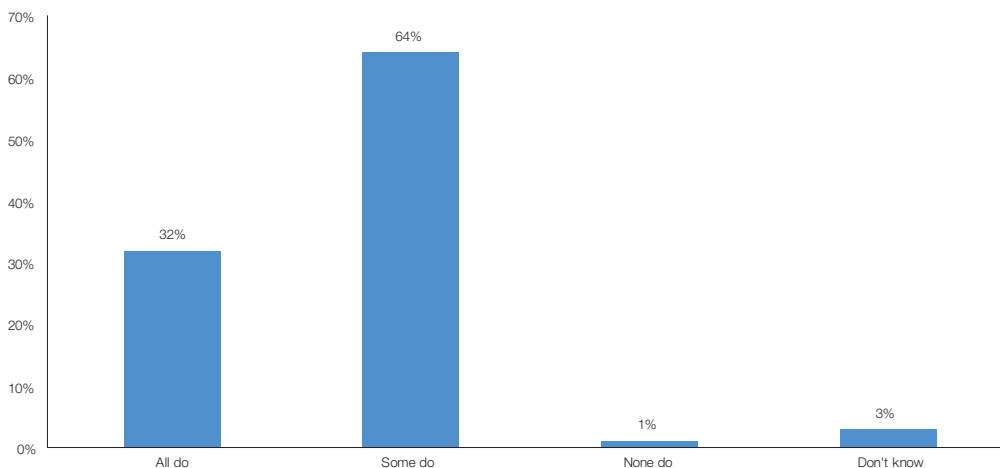
About a third of charity respondents said all of their funders ask them to monitor and/or evaluate the results of their activities. About

**Figure 4: Funder requests for results information from monitoring and evaluation**



Question 13, funder survey: Once you have made a grant, do you ask grantees for monitoring and evaluation information on funded activities?  
144 funders (97% of respondents) answered this question.

**Figure 5: Funder perceptions of grantees' monitoring and evaluation**



Question 11, funder survey: Do your grantees monitor and/or evaluate the results of their activities? 145 funders (97% of respondents) answered this question.

two thirds say some funders do. This is similar to the findings of the third sector survey for *Accountability and Learning*, where 94% of charities said funders required monitoring information or reports (and 73% said funders require evaluation reports).<sup>1</sup>

Interviews with funders suggested that for smaller grants they often ask only for activity and spending reports, in keeping with the principle of proportionality.

The responses from funders and charities indicate that the types of monitoring and evaluation information requested are on the whole similar to those requested for application and selection processes: outputs and outcomes are more popular than impact information.

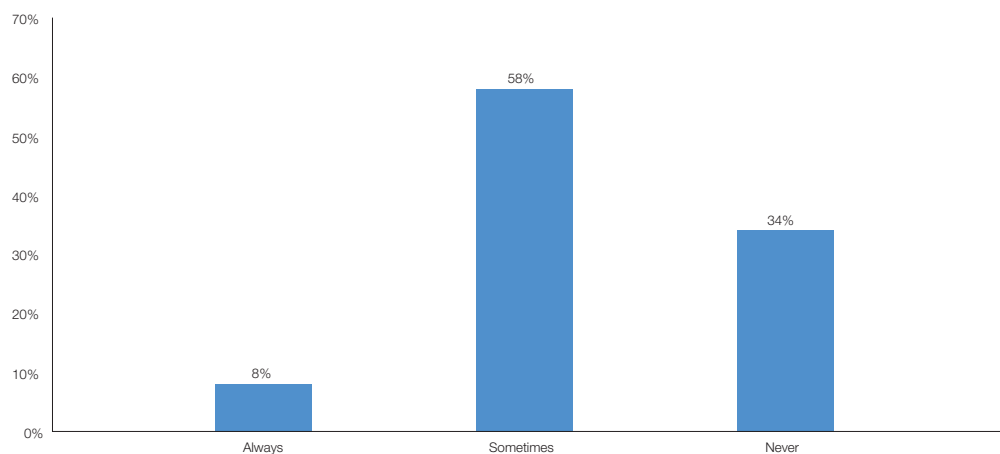
Examples of 'Other' types of results information requested included contextual descriptions, organisational capacity development, financial reporting, costs (including unit costs), unexpected outcomes/events, anecdotal evidence, and lessons learnt.

**Most funders do not consistently fund monitoring and evaluation**

Funders were also asked whether they fund grantees to do monitoring and evaluation. As Figure 6 shows, fewer than one in ten of respondents said they always do this. Over a third said they never do. Our findings seem consistent with those of the survey for *Accountability and Learning*, where nearly two thirds of funders 'reported specific funding for monitoring and evaluation'.<sup>1</sup>

Fewer than one in ten funders always fund grantees' monitoring and evaluation. Over a third of funders never do.

**Figure 6: Funding for monitoring and evaluation**



Question 12, funder survey: Do you fund grantees to monitor and/or evaluate the results of their activities? 145 funders (97% of respondents) answered this question.

Grantees should stop producing long narrative reports without much substance.

Trustee

That one in three funders responding to this survey say they never fund monitoring and evaluation suggests a problem for charities, since almost all funders say that they ‘Sometimes’ or ‘Always’ ask for the information such work produces. In fact, almost a quarter of the funders who said they ‘Always’ ask for such information said they ‘Never’ fund monitoring and evaluation. However, funders may have indicated that they never fund monitoring and/or evaluation because they do not give grants with restricted or earmarked components for such efforts. If they make unrestricted grants or fund on a full cost recovery basis, they may in fact be supporting charities’ work to gather results information without formal agreements to do so. In the words of one funder,

*‘Most of our grants are contributions to projects or towards core costs and we expect to see a budget line for monitoring and evaluation as well as overheads etc.’*

Funders whose average grants were larger than £30,000 were over four times more likely to ‘Always’ fund monitoring and evaluation than those making smaller average grants (17% compared with 4%,  $p < 0.01$ ).

The survey did not ask charities whether they think that they are being adequately funded to monitor and evaluate their work. It did ask, however, whether they would like their funders to increase funding for these activities. They overwhelmingly answered with a qualified ‘Yes’, preferring more funding for monitoring and evaluation, but only if this meant more funding would be available overall.

## Funders are mostly satisfied with grantees’ results information from monitoring and evaluation

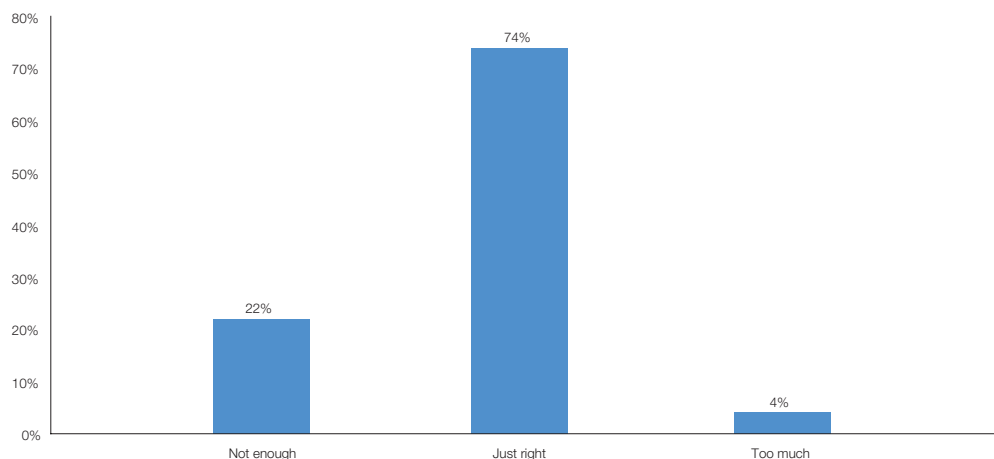
Funders are more satisfied with results information from grantees than with that provided by applicants: nearly three out of four said the quantity they receive is ‘Just right’.

Funders are similarly broadly satisfied with the quality of results information provided by grantees, as shown in Figure 8. Again, answers were clustered around the middle of the four-grade scale provided: two thirds of funders said they are ‘Quite satisfied’ and just over a quarter answered ‘Quite dissatisfied’.

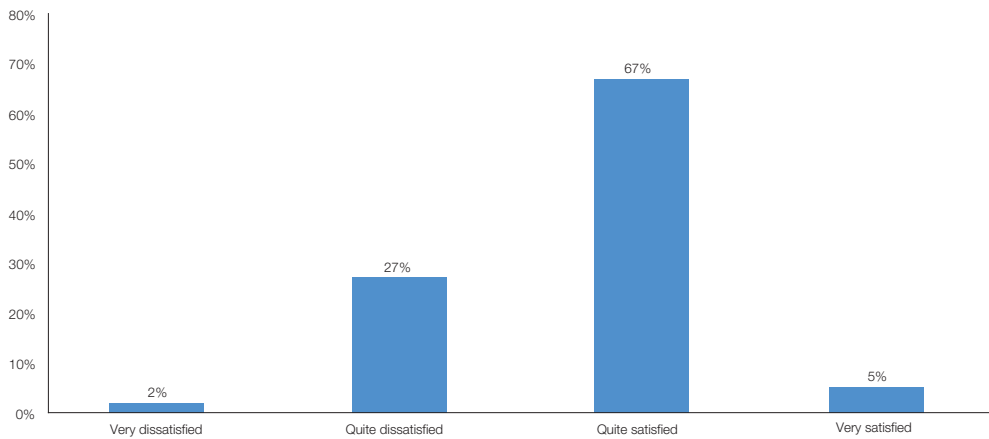
Interestingly, funders who said that they ‘Always’ fund grantees’ monitoring and evaluation work were much more likely to be ‘Quite’ or ‘Very dissatisfied’ with the information provided by charities than those who ‘Sometimes’ or ‘Never’ do so (58% compared with 32% and 15% respectively,  $p < 0.01$ ). Interviews with funders suggest that this may be due to higher expectations: in other words, it seems that these funders are disappointed with results information because they feel they have invested in it, not that they invest in it because of dissatisfaction with what they receive.

For what seems to be the same reason—higher expectations—funders who said that they have funded external support for grantees’ monitoring and evaluation were also more than twice as likely to be ‘Quite’ or ‘Very dissatisfied’ with the information provided by charities than those who had not (42% compared with 18%,  $p < 0.01$ ).

Figure 7: Funders on of the quantity of results information provided by grantees



Question 15, funder survey: How would you describe the quantity of information you receive in response to such requests? 126 funders (85% of respondents) answered this question.

**Figure 8: Funders' satisfaction with the quality of results information from grantees**

Question 16, funder survey: How satisfied are you with the quality of the results information you receive from your grantees in response to such requests?

132 funders (89% of respondents) answered this question.

### Charities are mostly satisfied with the results reporting required by funders

Nearly three quarters of charities thought the quantity of results information requested by funders is 'Just right'. Just over a fifth thought too much information is requested.

As with application and selection processes, few of the charities responding to the survey said that the results reporting they provide to funders after grants have been made is standardised in terms of content. Just over half stated that their results information is mixed, with some, but not all, of their funders receiving the same information. More than four out of ten described the information they provide as tailored, with most funders receiving different information. This corroborates the finding in *Accountability and Learning* that a very large majority of charities are asked for different information from different funders, and that three out of ten are asked for different information by all of their funders.<sup>1</sup> As discussed below, NPC's two *Turning the tables* reports piloted a way for charities and funders to reduce the resulting reporting burden.<sup>2, 3</sup>

As a follow-up question, we asked charities how results information for funders is tailored. Close to two thirds responded that they tailor it both in terms of content and presentation.

Perhaps in spite of these significant amounts of tailoring of information, seven out of ten charities said that they are 'Quite satisfied' with funders' requests for results information from monitoring and evaluation of funded activities. Responses were therefore moderate overall: not a single respondent is 'Very dissatisfied' and few are 'Very satisfied'. This is a surprising

finding in the context of what appears to be increasing demand for results information: two thirds of respondents to the third sector survey for *Accountability and Learning* said funders' demands for results information had become more demanding over the last five years.<sup>1</sup> Their satisfaction with these demands suggests that these charities, at least, are adapting well.

### A number of improvements are possible

The satisfaction of a majority of funders with results information from grantees did not preclude a range of suggestions for improvements, as quality was described as variable. *Accountability and Learning* observed that 'funders frequently found the reporting of outcomes inadequate, and often over-simplistic and subjective.'<sup>1</sup> The same was true of the funders we interviewed, though several also praised their grantees ('Most of the information we receive is now the right amount and we are usually quite satisfied').

As might be expected given the responses illustrated in Figure 7, some thought grantees could improve by providing more information, others that less is needed. A frequent complaint which also arose in interviews is that many grantees do not spend enough time analysing or learning from the data they collect, supporting the suggestion in *Accountability and Learning* that 'there is still a predominant belief that monitoring and evaluation is done mainly for the benefit of funders and regulators' rather than seen as an opportunity for improving strategy and services.<sup>1</sup> Linked to this is the idea that grantees are telling funders what they think they want to hear, rather than honestly describing mistakes made and lessons learnt.

Two points. Grantees should be more modest. Grantees should also be more truthful.

Funder

Reporting needs to be streamlined—there is far too much data. Clearer and simpler analysis focusing on the key issues rather than pages and pages of text focused on activities.

Foundation director

This isn't our role. CVSs and other infrastructure organisations (national, regional and local) should be supporting groups, using ChangeUp funding and other sources.

Funder on non-financial monitoring and evaluation assistance

Funders want grantees to become better at meeting deadlines, and suspect that they begin monitoring and evaluation work late, rather than at the beginning of a grant. One asked for better baselines, another for more clarity at the beginning of grants about what metrics will be used to track results.

Charities were similarly asked to suggest ways in which funders could improve the way they ask for information and the information they request. Several called for understanding from funders of the challenges involved in monitoring and evaluation and for proportionality of reporting requirements. There were a small number of points about processes: it was suggested, for instance, that it would be helpful if funders listed all the information they would be requesting in reporting from the outset of a grant. One charity respondent thought that funders need to focus more on outcomes and less on outputs.

NPC has written two reports, *Turning the tables* and *Turning the tables in England*, on charities' reporting costs.<sup>2,3</sup> These reports noted that attempts to encourage funders to cooperate on reporting have had little success, and therefore piloted a new approach to reducing the reporting burden on charities. This approach involved both charities and funders, and started from an estimate of the average reporting burden for participating charities. This estimate was used to indicate potential gains

from the development of a standard report for each charity. NPC's research shows that such reports, while challenging to produce, can:

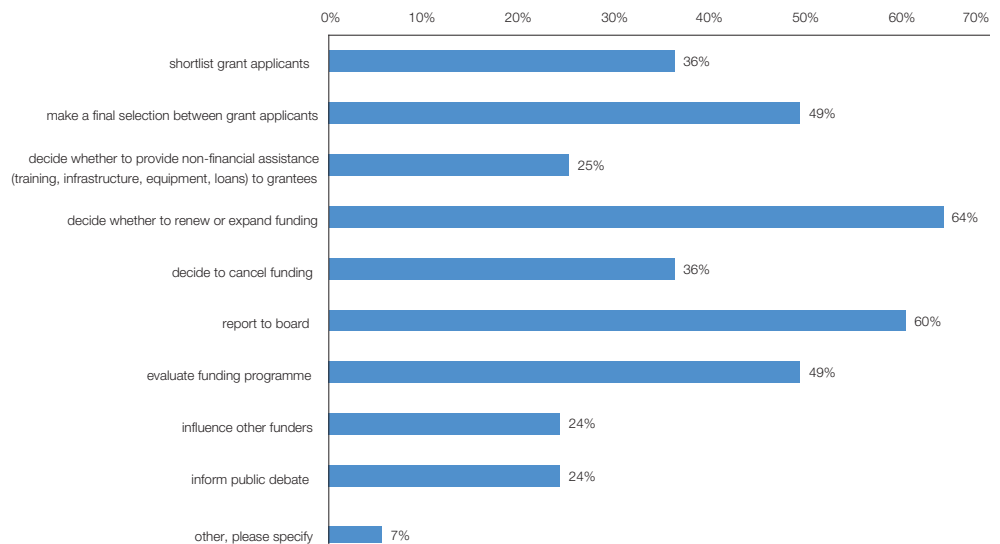
- reduce the time spend monitoring and reporting;
- increase the quality of reports; and
- increase communication between funders and charities.

### Funders have many uses for results information

The funder survey asked in which ways, if any, funders had used results information from grant applicants and/or grantees in the past year. As Figure 9 shows, the most common responses indicated the use of results information to decide whether to renew or expand funding; to report to the funders' board; to make a final selection between grant applicants; and to evaluate funding programmes.

Least common was the use of results information to influence other funders or to inform public debate. Both were almost twice as likely to be undertaken by funders giving average grants of above £30,000 (34% compared with 18% and 36% compared with 20% respectively, p<0.05).

Figure 9: Funders' use of results information†



Question 18, funder survey: In which of the following ways, if any, have you used results information from grant applicants and/or grantees in the past year? (tick all that apply) Used to:

† Percentage of N (149).



Charities were also asked how they believe funders use their results information. Their responses were similar to those of funders, with the biggest difference being over the use of results information from grantees to decide to cancel funding. Charities believed this happens more rarely than funders said it does.

### Many funders give grantees non-financial assistance for monitoring and evaluation

As Figure 10 shows, close to four out of ten funders answering our survey stated that they provide non-financial assistance to grantees for monitoring and evaluation. The examples given in the question were training courses or signposting of resources. Examples provided by respondents included:

- Signposting to support providers (local Voluntary Action centres, Evaluation Support Scotland, Charities Evaluation Services) and infrastructure organisations.
- Providing advice/expertise through one-to-one coaching, training courses, workshops and surgeries, visits, and email or phone calls.
- Signposting to training opportunities (often with support providers or infrastructure organisations).
- Signposting to specific tools (eg, Outcomes Star).
- Providing written guidance/basic resource packs.
- Providing funder-specific tools for data collection and analysis.
- Arranging events linking grantees ('knowledge-sharing events') to spread good practices.

One funder complained that after an example of first-rate reporting was provided to grant applicants, a number of those applicants ended up producing reports with unsatisfactory content that merely copied the style of this sample.

Fewer than one in five of the charities responding to the survey said that their funders provide non-financial assistance to help with monitoring and evaluation work. Those who had received such assistance gave training courses and toolkits as examples (the third sector survey for *Accountability and Learning* indicated that training courses were the most common sources of information on monitoring and evaluation practices).<sup>1</sup> One said '*The absence of support is a real problem given the amount of information funders require us to feed back*'.

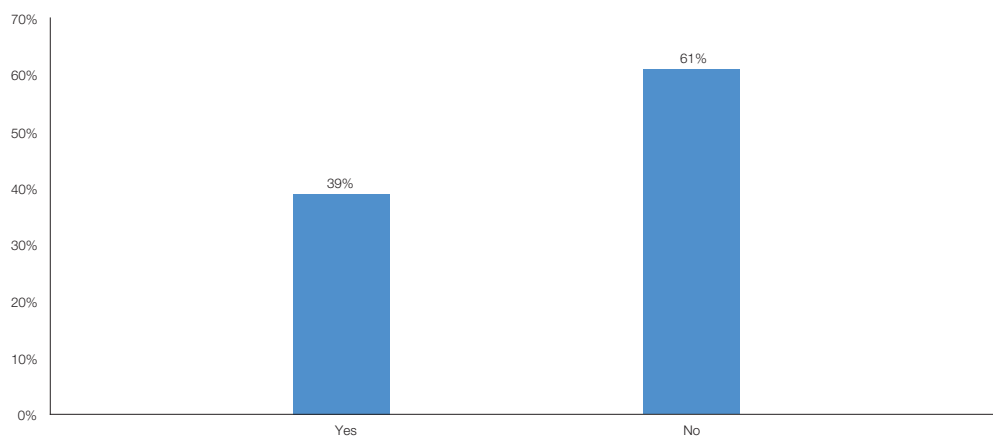
This response from charities superficially looks like a contradiction of the claim of four in ten funders that they provide assistance, but it is difficult to draw such conclusions from this data. Leaving the poor response rate to the charity survey aside, each of these charities may have one or many funders, and while most of the funders surveyed fund multiple grantees, they may provide the assistance in question only to a subset. Another possibility is that funders are better at designing non-financial assistance for monitoring and evaluation than they are at informing charities about it or encouraging its uptake.

Nearly four fifths of those charities who responded to the question of whether they would like more non-financial monitoring and evaluation assistance from funders said that they would, but only if the total amount of financial assistance stayed the same. Strikingly, more than one in six respondents do not want any more such assistance regardless. One funders' comment on this was '*I suppose they think we are meddling*'.

“We have funded external evaluations for work which needs to make a strong case for future statutory funding.”

Grants manager

Figure 10: Non-financial assistance for monitoring and evaluation



Question 21, funder survey: Do you provide non-financial assistance to grantees to help them with their monitoring and evaluation work (eg, training courses, signposting of resources)? 130 funders (87% of respondents) answered this question.

It can sometimes be an expensive way to learn unnecessary jargon.

Funder

Funders whose grants were larger on average (above £30,000) were more likely to say that they provide this type of non-financial assistance (51% compared with 31%,  $p < 0.05$ ). Non-financial assistance also goes hand in hand with funding for monitoring and evaluation: those who said that they 'Always' provide the latter were more than three times as likely also to give the former than those who 'Never' do (64% compared with 18%,  $p < 0.01$ ).

### Many types of external support for monitoring and evaluation exist

The charity survey asked whether respondents have received external support for their monitoring and evaluation work. The examples given were external evaluations, the provision of frameworks or tools, consulting services, or training from consultants, third-sector infrastructure organisations, or umbrella organisations. Just over four in ten of those who responded to this question have received such support. One in five charities said they have received funding from grant-making trusts and foundations for this support.

Nearly half of funders who responded did not know whether their grantees have received this kind of external support. Close to four out of ten said their grantees have done so. Over a third of funders said they had funded external support for monitoring and evaluation.

Examples of external support included:

- Training courses (delivered by umbrella organisations, Councils for Voluntary Service, Charities Evaluation Services).
- Tailored training delivered by consultants.
- The provision of frameworks and tools (including costs for the development of bespoke tools).
- Consulting services (including those provided pro bono).
- Evaluations (by universities, Charities Evaluation Services, independent individual consultants).

A small number of funders said that they rarely funded external support for grantees (especially in the context of small grants), or that grantees did not seem interested in such support when it was offered. A few funders awarded additional funds to grantees to allow them to commission evaluations of their own work, while others did so themselves.

External evaluators can free charities to do their day job properly.

Funder

### There are both benefits and disadvantages to external monitoring and evaluation support

Both the charity and funder survey posed open questions about the benefits and disadvantages of external monitoring and evaluation support. Charity respondents most frequently highlighted a cluster of benefits described variously as independence, objectivity, or impartiality. Several referred to the skills and expertise of support providers and to the importance of a fresh view from the outside on an organisation's work. The idea that support providers can have a better understanding of 'what funders are after' was also mentioned.

Funders similarly referred to independence, objectivity, and credibility. They also highlighted the professionalism of support providers and the importance of increasing grantees' capacity by adding resources: *'External evaluators can free charities to do their day job properly.'*

Funders' and charities' thoughts on the disadvantages of external monitoring and evaluation support were broadly similar. Both groups of respondents referred first of all to its cost in terms of both money and time (with funders frequently describing it as a distraction). One charity respondent said *'We effectively have to do most of the work ourselves by the time the project has been explained to the support provider and all the relevant data has been provided.'* Concerns over support providers' contextual knowledge were also mentioned, echoing the views of funders and others commissioning evaluations in *Accountability and Learning* that evaluators do not spend enough time or resources familiarising themselves with programmes and projects they evaluate.<sup>1</sup>

A number of funders raised the issue of perceived variable quality of external monitoring and evaluation support and of the difficulty of creating 'ownership' of monitoring and evaluation work within grantee organisations, though these disadvantages were not mentioned by charity respondents. One funder said *'Generally the quality of support provided is quite poor. We have received evaluation reports that have not addressed the questions asked. Evaluators seem to have an off-the-shelf attitude to evaluation reports to funders which is high on description but does not begin to analyse the data.'* Some of the funders we interviewed expressed similar thoughts.

# Conclusions and recommendations

**Our research finds that grant-making trusts and foundations are broadly satisfied with the results information their grantees provide. Charities, for their part, are broadly satisfied with funders' demands for such information. Both groups agree that funders can, and do, find many and varied uses for results information from grantees, and that it plays an important part in funding decisions.**

As has been shown above, this is not the whole picture. Funders can suggest a range of improvements to their grantees' reporting, and grantees can provide numerous opportunities for funders to improve. Funders would like to see greater compliance and more sophisticated reporting. Charities would like funders to be more understanding of the challenges involved in monitoring and evaluation and more supportive of their efforts to measure and communicate results.

**Funder support for monitoring and evaluation can take the shape of funding for grantees' own work or for external support from infrastructure organisations or consultants. It can also take the shape of non-financial assistance—the provision of training by funder staff, signposting of resources, or help filling out forms, to give a few examples. Funders who provide one of these types of assistance are more likely to also provide the other. One of the more striking findings of this research is that grant-makers who consistently fund grantees' monitoring and evaluation work are less satisfied with the results information they receive, as their expectations are higher.**

**Based on these findings and our experience of working with charities and grant-makers, NPC has a number of recommendations for funders, charities, and support providers.**

## Recommendations for funders

Whether they are satisfied with results information from grantees or not, funders should consider the recommendations from NPC's *Turning the tables* reports, which are reproduced below. Standard reports can make funding more effective by reducing the reporting burden on charities and freeing them to focus on beneficiaries. They also have the potential to increase the quality of reporting, something many funders clearly desire.

Funders should also consider the following recommendations:

### Be clear about what you want

The finding that grant-makers are on the whole satisfied with the information charities provide on the results of funded and planned activities is encouraging. Clearly, however, many funders believe that things could be even better. Those funders who want more or less information from grant applicants and grantees need to make sure that they communicate this clearly. This means spelling out the number of pages expected for an application or grant report, and giving feedback to applicants or grantees who do not live up to expectations.

### Fund monitoring and evaluation and help your grantees to improve

The quantity of information is not everything. Many of the grant-makers who responded to our survey want more sophisticated monitoring and evaluation by grantees. Sometimes 'more sophisticated' actually means getting the basics—sometimes the jargon—right. At other times it truly means sophisticated: funders are hoping for more analysis and improvement from data, and many feel they are justified in expecting this after providing both financial assistance and other support for grantees.

Better results information can help both charities and funders. This does not mean that funders can wait for charities to improve on their own. Their support for monitoring and evaluation needs to continue, and probably in many cases needs to increase. It is a problem for charities that many funders never fund monitoring and evaluation or give non-financial assistance to this work, especially when some of these funders consistently ask for results information from grantees.

In survey answers and interviews, many funders mention individual grantees providing excellent results information. If such examples are showcased, grantees will be able to learn from them. A number of funders arrange sessions where this can happen, and many more could provide examples as part of application or reporting guidelines.

## Recommendations for charities

Although funders are broadly satisfied with the results information they receive, there are opportunities for charities to improve both as applicants and grantees. Making changes can benefit both funders and charities, as the example of standard reports discussed in NPC's *Turning the tables* reports shows (see Box 1 below for recommendations).

### Get the quantity right

Many grant-makers are happy with the amount of information they receive from grantees. For grantees, the key is to know which funders are not. While funders need to provide both guidance and feedback, charities also need to make an effort. They can do this by proactively asking funders how much information they are able both to process and to benefit from. Finding out that less is more will not necessarily make reporting less burdensome for grantees, however—selecting the key pieces of data can be challenging work in itself.

### Communicate analysis, not just data

Funders often want more than the consistent delivery of services. They want to see grantees learn from their mistakes and their successes and improve and innovate based on careful analysis of monitoring data and evaluations. Charities should in any case want to do this for the sake of their beneficiaries. When they do, they will hopefully also improve their funding opportunities.

## Recommendations for support providers

### Listen to your clients

A number of grant-makers complained that external evaluators in particular provide services of varying quality. Making sure that they know what their clients are after can help evaluators avoid disappointing them, for examples by producing standardised outputs when funders and charities are expecting tailored analysis.

### Show contextual knowledge

Both charities and funders suggested that a key determinant of their satisfaction with support providers is whether those providers show an understanding for the specific sector in which clients work. Charities expressed a desire to work with organisations (and individuals) who understand 'what they are about': their aims and objectives and the particular problems they and their peers face in terms of data gathering and analysis. Support providers may wish to develop specific areas of expertise, or to get better at researching the context in which clients operate before beginning a project.

### Improve the quality of training

Survey responses, interviews, and funders' willingness to fund it are all indicators of the importance of monitoring and evaluation training. Several funders suggested that their grantees need training on basic concepts and techniques. However, some also questioned the quality of the training that is being provided, pointing out that many of their grantees do not seem to be doing much better after undergoing it. Improving the quality of training would be good for providers, charities, funders, and beneficiaries.

### Box 1: Recommendations from *Turning the Tables in England*

#### *Recommendations for charities*

- Charities should, for each funding agreement, estimate the time spent reporting.
- Charities should understand their own reporting burdens.
- Charities should know what information is most useful to them.
- Charities should question funders' requirements.
- Charities should identify groups of funders that would accept a standard report.
- Charities should consider producing a standard report.

#### *Recommendations for funders*

- Funders should give guidance on reporting time before the beginning of the funding agreement.
- Funders should know how much reporting is costing the charities they fund.
- Funders should track how they use information from reports.
- Funders should be able to justify each piece of information they ask for.
- Funders should share more of the information they receive.
- Funders should try to identify other sources for the information they require.
- Funders should encourage standard reports.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Method

Field research for this research project was carried out between June 2008 and February 2009.

### Funder survey

A survey was designed to gather data from grant-making trusts and foundations (GMTs, here also referred to as 'funders') and entered onto the online survey tool Zoomerang (<http://www.zoomerang.com>).

### Sampling

We decided to select a sample frame of funders from which to recruit respondents, rather than distributing the survey through electronic newsletters and websites. This firstly allowed us to analyse responses for systematic response bias. It secondly enabled us to send reminders to improve the response rate.

The sample frame chosen came from the 400 grant-making trusts and foundations in the Directory of Social Change's *Guide to the Major Trusts volume 1, 2007/08*.<sup>5</sup> A sub-sample of 355 (including the Big Lottery Fund, not strictly a GMT) was selected by:

- excluding GMTs in the process of being, or recently, set up;
- excluding GMTs in the process of winding down their grant-making;
- excluding GMTs funding mostly outside of the United Kingdom; and
- ensuring that GMTs with shared administration and decision-making processes received only one survey copy.

### Recruitment method

Emails describing the research programme and asking for the appropriate recipient for the survey were sent ahead of the survey when possible, and following this an email containing a link to the online survey was sent, followed by up to three reminders. The instructions specified that a single response from a trustee or member of staff was sought for each funder. Funders who could not be contacted by email were sent a paper survey, as were those funders who had not responded to the online survey after three reminders. The email survey invitation offered recipients the chance to opt out of the survey and avoid further reminders, and a small number did so.

By sending unique survey links, Zoomerang keeps track of whether individual recipients have responded to a survey in order to avoid sending unnecessary reminders. Survey responses were treated as anonymous throughout the research, with the exception of funders who expressed interest in taking part in interviews.

### Response rate

The result of this thorough approach—advance notice of the survey, multiple reminders, and paper surveys when required—was a response rate of 42% (149 responses). Although this leaves ample room for improvement, the absolute number of responses and our ability to express a response rate compare favourably with much market research in the sector. We are of course very grateful to all respondents.

### Response bias

The distribution of respondents in terms of total grant-making (for 2006/2007) was similar to that of the full sample frame of recipients (see Table 1 below, total grant-making known for 347 funders, 141 respondents), with two exceptions. Funders distributing less than £1m in grants in 2006/2007 were under-represented among respondents, and funders distributing between £5m and £10m were over-represented. The under-representation of funders distributing under £1m could be caused by their having fewer paid full-time staff members, and in many cases none.

**Table 1: Funder survey response bias<sup>5</sup>**

Grant-making 2006/2007	Sample frame		Respondents	
	N	% of total	N	% of sample (response rate)
£0 to £500k	65	19%	20	31%
£500k to £1m	105	30%	35	33%
£1m to £2m	65	19%	30	46%
£2m to £3m	41	12%	19	46%
£3m to £4m	17	5%	6	35%
£4m to £5m	14	4%	6	43%
£5m to £10m	18	5%	14	78%
£10m to £50m	16	5%	8	50%
More than £50m	6	2%	3	50%
Total	347	100%	141	41%

### Qualitative follow-up research

Respondents were invited to volunteer to take part in qualitative follow-up research. Of the non-random (volunteer) sub-sample of 24 staff members of GMTs, 14 were interviewed based on availability. Interviews of between 30 and 90 minutes were conducted with these individuals in person when practical, and over the phone in a number of cases. These interviews were conducted to improve interpretation of the survey data and to provide anecdotal illustration of it, not to compile a statistical evidence base.

### Analysis of funder survey responses

All analysis was conducted in SPSS. When responses for groups of funders were compared, a Chi-squared test was used to see whether there were any significant differences.

Chi-squared is a statistical test used to measure how well a given set of observations fit a particular discrete distribution. It is used on categorical data to test whether the observed frequency is significantly different from the expected frequency in each category. The differences were tested at confidence levels of 95% and 99%. A confidence level of 95% means that for any differences reported we can be 95% confident that they actually exist in the sampled population.

There was no statistical analysis of the charity survey responses as the response rate was too poor to make this meaningful.

### Charity survey

#### Sampling

For the survey of front-line charities, we decided on the use of a random sample population, as a comprehensive survey of tens of thousands of charities was infeasible. A random sample of 412 'operational' charities (excluding, for instance, grant-making trusts and foundations) with an income of over £100,000 in the last financial year and in receipt of grant funding was selected from the Charity Commission's register by an interval sampling method. These charities were identified, selected and analysed using the Guidestar Data Services database, which covers all registered third sector organisations in England and Wales ([www.gs-ds.co.uk](http://www.gs-ds.co.uk)).

The income threshold applied excluded three quarters of the charities on the Commission's register.<sup>6</sup> Note that the random sample approach means that there is no necessary connection between the charities and the funders surveyed.

## Recruitment method

As with the funder survey, emails describing the research programme and asking for the appropriate recipient for the survey were sent ahead of the survey when possible, and following this an email containing a link to the online survey was sent, followed by up to three reminders. The instructions specified that a single response from a trustee or member of staff was sought from each recipient. Again, the email survey invitation offered recipients the chance to opt out of the survey and further reminders, and a small number did so.

## Response rate

The timing of the research meant that it was not possible to send a follow-up paper survey to recipients who had not responded to the online survey after three reminders. We hypothesise that this is one reason for the low response rate (11%, 47 responses), significantly below that obtained in the funder survey. The results of this survey therefore need to be considered as broadly indicative at best.

This experience suggests a number of possible improvements for future research on this topic. The early deployment of paper surveys and use of telephone reminders, while resource-intensive (survey responses to paper surveys would need to be manually entered by researchers), might improve these figures.

## Response bias

Despite the limited statistical value of the charity survey, we decided to perform a brief inspection of its response bias. Following the Charity Commission, we grouped survey recipients and respondents by income. As Table 2 below shows, the income distribution of charities in the random sample and of respondents were similar to that of the Charity Commission's register, though there was a bias towards charities with income above £5m.

**Table 2: Charity survey response bias (income)<sup>6, 10</sup>**

Income	Charity Commission register		Sample		Responses	
	N	% of total	N	% of total	N	% of sample (response rate)
£100,000 to £500,000	16,069	64%	293	71%	33	11%
£500,000 to £5m	7,518	30%	101	25%	11	11%
Above £5m	1,586	6%	18	4%	3	17%
Total	25,173	100%	412	100%	47	11%

The Guidestar Data Services database and NCVO UK Civil Society Almanac 2009 further allowed a superficial analysis of the geographical response bias by region (see Table 3 below). Both the random sample and responses were biased towards London and the North East, and there were no responses at all from Yorkshire. Note that the NCVO figures used here include charities with income below £100,000.

**Table 3: Charity survey response bias (geography)<sup>10,11</sup>**

Income	NCVO UK Civil Society Almanac		Sample		Responses	
	N	% of total	N	% of total	N	% of sample (response rate)
South East	25,320	17%	65	16%	8	12%
London	22,840	16%	109	26%	18	17%
South West	18,386	13%	28	7%	5	18%
East of England	17,236	12%	36	9%	2	6%
North West	13,874	10%	44	11%	2	5%
West Midlands	12,544	9%	34	8%	3	9%
East Midlands	11,457	8%	19	5%	4	21%
Yorkshire and The Humber	10,918	8%	38	9%	0	0%
Wales	7,994	6%	14	3%	1	7%
North East	4,767	3%	25	6%	4	16%
Total	145,336	100%	412	100%	47	11%

**Qualitative follow-up**

As with the funder survey, responses were treated as anonymous throughout the research, with the exception of respondents who expressed interest in taking part in interviews. Of the non-random (volunteer) sub-sample of 14 staff from frontline charities, 10 were interviewed based on availability. Interviews of between 45 and 120 minutes were conducted. These were intended to improve interpretation of the survey data and to provide anecdotal illustration of it, not to generate a statistical evidence base.

**Appendix 2a: Funder survey**

Question 1: Are you answering this survey on behalf of a grant-making trust or foundation?

Yes

No

Question 2: Approximately how many grants did you distribute in your last full funding year?

Question 3: Approximately how much funding (in £) did you distribute in your last full funding year?

Question 4: Which of the following best describes your funding?

Mostly funding for specific projects or programmes

Mostly funding for organisations

Mostly contract funding

A mix of the above

Don't know

Other, please specify

Question 5: How would you describe the role of results information (ie, outputs, outcomes, and impacts) from grant applicants and/or grantees in your funding decisions?

Not important

Somewhat important

Important

Very important



Question 6: Do you request results information from potential grantees during your application and/or selection process?

Always

Sometimes

Never

Question 7: Which of the following types of results information, if any, do you request from potential grantees during your application and/or selection process? (tick all that apply)

Intended outputs (the products of an activity, eg, number of clients served, number of courses arranged, number of helpline calls answered)

Intended outcomes (the results of an activity, eg, raised awareness, increased confidence, fall in number of crimes)

Intended impacts (long-term outcomes)

Other, please specify

Question 8: How would you describe the quantity of information you receive in response to such requests?

Not enough

Just right

Too much

Question 9: How satisfied are you with the quality of results information you receive in response to such requests?

Very dissatisfied

Quite dissatisfied

Quite satisfied

Very satisfied

Question 10: What, if anything, could be improved about the results information grant applicants provide you with as part of your application and/or selection process?

Question 11: Do your grantees monitor and/or evaluate the results of their activities?

All do

Some do

None do

Don't know

Question 12: Do you fund grantees to monitor and/or evaluate the results of their activities?

Always

Sometimes

Never

Question 13: Once you have made a grant, do you ask grantees for monitoring and evaluation information on funded activities?

Always

Sometimes

Never

Question 14: Which of the following types of results information, if any, do you request from grantees as part of their monitoring and evaluation of funded activities? (tick all that apply)

Outputs (the products of an activity, eg, number of clients served, number of courses arranged, number of helpline calls answered)

Outcomes (the results of an activity, eg, raised awareness, increased confidence, fall in number of crimes)

Impacts (long-term outcomes)

Other, please specify

Question 15: How would you describe the quantity of information you receive in response to such requests?

Not enough

Just right

Too much

Question 16: How satisfied are you with the quality of the results information you receive from your grantees in response to such requests?

Very dissatisfied

Quite dissatisfied

Quite satisfied

Very satisfied

Question 17: What, if anything, could be improved about the results information you receive from grantees as part of their monitoring and evaluation work?

Question 18: In which of the following ways, if any, have you used results information from grant applicants and/or grantees in the past year? (tick all that apply)

Used to:

shortlist grant applicants

make a final selection between grant applicants

decide whether to provide non-financial assistance (training, infrastructure, equipment, loans) to grantees

decide whether to renew or expand funding

decide to cancel funding

report to board

evaluate funding programme

influence other funders

inform public debate

other, please specify

Question 19: Please select the three actions below for which results information from grant applicants and/or grantees has the greatest importance for you

NB Select three (3) actions only

shortlist grant applicants

make a final selection between grant applicants

decide whether to provide non-financial assistance (training, infrastructure, equipment, loans) to grantees

decide whether to renew or expand funding

decide to cancel funding

report to board

evaluate funding programme

influence other funders

inform public debate

other, please specify

Question 20: Are there any obstacles to your use of results information from grantee applicants and/or grantees for these or other purposes?

Question 21: Do you provide non-financial assistance to grantees to help them with their monitoring and evaluation work (eg, training courses, signposting of resources)?

Please give examples:

Yes

No

Question 22: Have your grantees received external support for their monitoring and evaluation work? (eg, external evaluations, provision of frameworks/tools, consulting services, training from consultants, third-sector infrastructure organisations, umbrella organisations)

Yes

No

Don't know

Question 23: If yes, please provide examples

Question 24: Have you funded external support for grantees' monitoring and evaluation work (eg, external evaluations, provision of frameworks/tools, consulting services, training from consultants, third-sector infrastructure organisations, umbrella organisations)?

If yes, please provide examples; if no, why not?

Yes

No

Question 25: What are the benefits of external monitoring and evaluation support?

Question 26: What are the disadvantages, if any, of external monitoring and evaluation support?

Question 27: What do you think is a reasonable percentage of a grant or project budget for grantees to spend on monitoring and evaluation?

Question 28: Do you plan to change your demands on grantees in terms of results information or the way in which you use such information in the next year? Please give details, including the reasons for these changes.

Question 29: Would you like to take part in further research on this topic by participating in a focus group or interview? Please provide your email address and job title below and we will contact you shortly.

## Appendix 2b: Funder survey data tables

This appendix contains data tables for the closed questions in the funder survey. Below each data table the number of survey respondents answering the question is provided. Percentages for each response alternative are given as a percentage of total responses to the question, not as a percentage of N (149). Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

**Question 5: How would you describe the role of results information (ie, outputs, outcomes, and impacts) from grant applicants and/or grantees in your funding decisions?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Not important	5	3%
Somewhat important	27	18%
Important	62	42%
Very important	54	36%
Total	148	100%

\* 148 respondents out of 149 (99%) answered this question.

**Question 6: Do you request results information from potential grantees during your application and/or selection process?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Always	66	44%
Sometimes	76	51%
Never	7	5%
Total	149	100%

\*149 respondents out of 149 (100%) answered this question.

**Question 7: Which of the following types of results information, if any, do you request from potential grantees during your application and/or selection process? (tick all that apply)**

Response*	Frequency	Percentage†
Intended outputs (the products of an activity, eg, number of clients served, number of courses arranged, number of helpline calls answered)	113	76%
Intended outcomes (the results of an activity, eg, raised awareness, increased confidence, fall in number of crimes)	121	81%
Intended impacts (long-term outcomes)	87	58%
Other, please specify	19	13%

\* A 'None of the above' option should have been included. Its absence makes it impossible to distinguish between respondents choosing not to answer the question and respondents who do not request any of these types of information.

† Percentage of N (149).

**Question 8: How would you describe the quantity of information you receive in response to such requests?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Not enough	38	29%
Just right	87	65%
Too much	8	6%
Total	133	100%

\*133 respondents out of 149 (89%) answered this question.

### Question 9: How satisfied are you with the quality of results information you receive in response to such requests?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very dissatisfied	2	1%
Quite dissatisfied	40	29%
Quite satisfied	90	65%
Very satisfied	7	5%
Total	139	100%

\*139 respondents out of 149 (93%) answered this question.

### Question 11: Do your grantees monitor and/or evaluate the results of their activities?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
All do	46	32%
Some do	93	64%
None do	1	1%
Don't know	5	3%
Total	145	100%

\*145 respondents out of 149 (97%) answered this question.

The wording of this question could have been improved; collapsing monitoring and evaluation into a single category was not helpful. It is of course significantly more difficult to evaluate an activity if no monitoring has gone on while it has been undertaken.

### Question 12: Do you fund grantees to monitor and/or evaluate the results of their activities?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Always	12	8%
Sometimes	84	58%
Never	49	34%
Total	145	100%

\*145 respondents out of 149 (97%) answered this question.

### Question 13: Once you have made a grant, do you ask grantees for monitoring and evaluation information on funded activities?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Always	98	68%
Sometimes	40	28%
Never	6	4%
Total	144	100%

\*144 respondents out of 149 (97%) answered this question.

**Question 14: Which of the following types of results information, if any, do you request from grantees as part of their monitoring and evaluation of funded activities? (tick all that apply)**

Response*	Frequency	Percentage†
Outputs (the products of an activity, eg, number of clients served, number of courses arranged, number of helpline calls answered)	111	74%
Outcomes (the results of an activity, eg, raised awareness, increased confidence, fall in number of crimes)	122	82%
Impacts (long-term outcomes)	75	50%
Other, please specify	25	17%

\* A 'None of the above' option should have been included. Its absence makes it impossible to distinguish between respondents choosing not to answer the question and respondents who do not request any of these types of information.

† Percentage of N (149).

**Question 15: How would you describe the quantity of information you receive in response to such requests?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Not enough	28	22%
Just right	93	74%
Too much	5	4%
Total	126	100%

\*126 respondents out of 149 (85%) answered this question.

**Question 16: How satisfied are you with the quality of the results information you receive from your grantees in response to such requests?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very dissatisfied	3	2%
Quite dissatisfied	35	27%
Quite satisfied	88	67%
Very satisfied	6	5%
Total	132	100%

\*132 respondents out of 149 (89%) answered this question.

**Question 18: In which of the following ways, if any, have you used results information from grant applicants and/or grantees in the past year? (tick all that apply) Used to:**

Response*	Frequency	Percentage†
shortlist grant applicants	53	36%
make a final selection between grant applicants	73	49%
decide whether to provide non-financial assistance (training, infrastructure, equipment, loans) to grantees	37	25%
decide whether to renew or expand funding	95	64%
decide to cancel funding	53	36%
report to board	89	60%
evaluate funding programme	73	49%
influence other funders	36	24%
inform public debate	36	24%
other, please specify	11	7%

\* A 'None of the above' option should have been included. Its absence makes it impossible to distinguish between respondents choosing not to answer the question and respondents who do not use results information for any of these purposes.

† Percentage of N (149).

The list-and-tick-boxes-format of this question has advantages and disadvantages. An open question would have required laborious re-coding and might have been ignored by some respondents. Providing a list of options may help to remind respondents of ways they use results information they might otherwise not have remembered. The disadvantage is that a list could tempt respondents to declare more varied use of results information than actually occurs: using results information extensively might be perceived as the 'appropriate' response.

We can gain some indication of whether this has occurred by looking at how many options respondents selected. Fewer than one in seven ticked seven or more options from the total of nine. About as many said they did not use results information for any of these purposes. Close to three quarters of respondents indicated between one and six uses of results information. This seems to suggest that respondents did not simply 'tick their way through' the question but considered what uses they actually make of their grantees' or grant applicants' results information.

**Question 19: Please select the three actions below for which results information from grant applicants and/or grantees has the greatest importance for you**

**NB Select three (3) actions only**

Response*	Frequency	Percentage†
shortlist grant applicants	35	23%
make a final selection between grant applicants	60	40%
decide whether to provide non-financial assistance (training, infrastructure, equipment, loans) to grantees	19	13%
decide whether to renew or expand funding	85	57%
decide to cancel funding	25	17%
report to board	59	40%
evaluate funding programme	53	36%
influence other funders	14	9%
inform public debate	19	13%
other, please specify	5	3%

\* A 'None of the above' option should have been included. Its absence makes it impossible to distinguish between respondents choosing not to answer the question and respondents who do not use results information for any of these purposes.

† Percentage of N (149).

**Question 21: Do you provide non-financial assistance to grantees to help them with their monitoring and evaluation work (eg, training courses, signposting of resources)?**

Please give examples:

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	51	39%
No	79	61%
Total	130	100%

\*130 respondents out of 149 (87%) answered this question.

**Question 22: Have your grantees received external support for their monitoring and evaluation work? (eg, external evaluations, provision of frameworks/tools, consulting services, training from consultants, third-sector infrastructure organisations, umbrella organisations)**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	47	39%
No	14	12%
Don't know	59	49%
Total	120	100%

\*120 respondents out of 149 (81%) answered this question.

**Question 24: Have you funded external support for grantees' monitoring and evaluation work (eg, external evaluations, provision of frameworks/tools, consulting services, training from consultants, third-sector infrastructure organisations, umbrella organisations)?**

If yes, please provide examples; if no, why not?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	48	38%
No	77	62%
Total	125	100%

\*125 respondents out of 149 (84%) answered this question.

**Appendix 3a: Charity survey**

Question 1: Are you answering this question on behalf of a charity which receives some funding from grant-making trusts or foundations?

Yes

No

Question 2: Would you like to take part in further research on this topic by participating in a focus group or interview? Please provide your email address and job title below and we will contact you shortly.

Question 3: Approximately how much income did you receive in grants from grant-making trusts and foundations in your last full financial year?

Question 4: Approximately how many grants did you receive from grant-making trusts and foundations in your last full financial year?

Question 5: How many grant-making trusts or foundations provided you with funding in your last full financial year?



Question 6: Which of the following best describes your funding?

Mostly funding for specific projects or programmes

Mostly funding for organisations

Mostly contract funding

A mix of the above

Don't know

Other, please specify

Question 7 (from this point, this survey will use the term 'funders' to refer to grant-making trusts and foundations): How would you describe the role of results information (ie, information about outputs, outcomes, and impacts) in your communication with your funders?

Not important

Somewhat important

Important

Very important

Question 8: How would you describe the role of results information (ie, information about outputs, outcomes, and impacts) in your funders' decision-making?

Not important

Somewhat important

Important

Very important

Question 9: Which of the following types of results information, if any, do funders (ie, grant-making trusts and foundations) request from you during grant application and/or selection processes? (tick all that apply)

Intended outputs (the products of an activity, eg, number of clients served, number of courses arranged, number of helpline calls answered)

Intended outcomes (the results of an activity, eg, raised awareness, increased confidence, fall in number of crimes)

Intended impacts (long-term outcomes)

Other, please specify

Question 10: How would you describe the results information you provide to funders? (NB this question refers only to the actual information provided, not how the information is presented)

Standardised—most funders receive the same information

Mixed—some funders receive the same information

Tailored—most funders receive different information

Question 11: If you tailor the results information you provide to individual funders, how do you tailor it?

Both in terms of content and information

Mostly in terms of presentation

Mostly in terms of content

Information not tailored

Question 12: How would you describe the quantity of results information funders request?

- Not enough
- Just right
- Too much

Question 13: How satisfied are you with funders' requests for results information as part of application and/or selection processes?

- Very dissatisfied
- Quite dissatisfied
- Quite satisfied
- Very satisfied

Question 14: What, if anything, could be improved about funders' requests for results information as part of application and/or selection processes?

Question 15: Do your funders (grant-making trusts and foundations) ask you to monitor and/or evaluate the results of your activities?

- All do
- Some do
- None do

Question 16: Would you like your funders to provide more funding for you to monitor and/or evaluate the results of your activities?

- Yes, if this meant that there was more funding available in total
- Yes, even if the total amount of funding available stayed the same
- No

Question 17: Once they have made you a grant, do funders ask you for monitoring and evaluation information on funded activities?

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

Question 18: If funders ask you for monitoring and evaluation information on funded activities, how often do they do so?

Question 19: Which of the following types of results information, if any, do funders request from you as part of your monitoring and evaluation of funded activities? (tick all that apply)

- Outputs (the products of an activity, eg, number of clients served, number of courses arranged, number of helpline calls answered)
- Outcomes (the results of an activity, eg, raised awareness, increased confidence, fall in number of crimes)
- Impacts (long-term outcomes)
- Other, please specify

Question 20: How would you describe the quantity of results information funders request?

- Not enough
- Just right
- Too much

Question 21: How would you describe the results information you provide to funders? (NB this question refers only to the actual information provided, not how the information is presented)

Standardised—most funders receive the same information

Mixed—some funders receive the same information

Tailored—most funders receive different information

Question 22: If you tailor the results information you provide to individual funders, how do you tailor it?

Both in terms of content and information

Mostly in terms of presentation

Mostly in terms of content

Information not tailored

Question 23: How satisfied are you with funders' requests for results information from monitoring and evaluations of funded activities?

Very dissatisfied

Quite dissatisfied

Quite satisfied

Very satisfied

Question 24: What, if anything, could be improved about funders' requests for results information as part of your monitoring and evaluation work?

Question 25: Is the results information you provide to funders also available in your annual report or on your webpage?

If yes, please give details. If no, why not?

Yes

No

Question 26: In which of the following ways, if any, do you believe funders (grant-making trusts and foundations) have used your results information in the past year? (tick all that apply)

shortlist grant applicants

make a final selection between grant applicants

decide whether to provide non-financial assistance (training, infrastructure, equipment, loans) to grantees

decide whether to renew or expand funding

decide to cancel funding

report to board

evaluate funding programme

influence other funders

inform public debate

other, please specify

Question 27: Please select the three actions below where you think it is most important that funders use your results information.

NB Select three (3) actions only

shortlist grant applicants

make a final selection between grant applicants

decide whether to provide non-financial assistance (training, infrastructure, equipment, loans) to grantees

decide whether to renew or expand funding

decide to cancel funding

report to board

evaluate funding programme

influence other funders

inform public debate

other, please specify

Question 28: Do funders provide you with non-financial assistance to help you with your monitoring and evaluation work (eg, training courses, signposting of resources)?

Please give examples:

Yes

No

Question 29: Would you like your funders to provide more non-financial assistance to help you with your monitoring and/or evaluation work?

Yes, if the total amount of financial assistance available stayed the same

Yes, even if the total amount of financial assistance would be smaller

No

Question 30: Have you received external support for your monitoring and evaluation work? (eg, external evaluations, provision of frameworks/tools, consulting services, training from consultants, third-sector infrastructure organisations, umbrella organisations)

If yes, please provide examples

Yes

No

Don't know

Question 32: Have your funders funded external support for your monitoring and evaluation work? (eg, external evaluations, provision of frameworks/tools, consulting services, training from consultants, third-sector infrastructure organisations, umbrella organisations)

If yes, please provide examples

Yes

No

Question 33: What are the benefits of external monitoring and evaluation support?

Question 34: What are the disadvantages, if any, of external monitoring and evaluation support?

Question 35: What do you think is a reasonable percentage of a grant or project budget to spend on monitoring and evaluation?

Question 36: Do you plan to change the results information you provide to funders in the next year?

Please give details, including the reasons for these changes.

### Appendix 3b: Charity survey data tables

This appendix contains data tables for the closed questions in the charity survey. Below each data table the number of survey respondents answering the question is provided. Percentages for each response alternative are given as a percentage of total responses to the question, not as a percentage of N (47). Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

**Question 7: How would you describe the role of results information (ie, information about outputs, outcomes, and impacts) in your communication with your funders?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Not important	0	0%
Somewhat important	2	4%
Important	26	55%
Very important	19	40%
Total	47	100%

\*47 respondents out of 47 (100%) answered this question.

Question 8: How would you describe the role of results information (ie, information about outputs, outcomes, and impacts) in your funders' decision-making?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Not important	0	0%
Somewhat important	4	9%
Important	23	49%
Very important	20	43%
Total	47	100%

\*47 respondents out of 47 (100%) answered this question.

**Question 9: Which of the following types of results information, if any, do funders (ie, grant-making trusts and foundations) request from you during grant application and/or selection processes? (tick all that apply)**

Response*	Frequency	Percentage†
Intended outputs (the products of an activity, eg, number of clients served, number of courses arranged, number of helpline calls answered)	41	87%
Intended outcomes (the results of an activity, eg, raised awareness, increased confidence, fall in number of crimes)	42	89%
Intended impacts (long-term outcomes)	32	68%
Other, please specify	5	11%

\* A 'None of the above' option should have been included. Its absence makes it impossible to distinguish between respondents choosing not to answer the question and respondents whose funders do not request any of these types of information.

† Percentage of N (47).

**Question 10: How would you describe the results information you provide to funders? (NB this question refers only to the actual information provided, not how the information is presented)**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Standardised—most funders receive the same information	4	9%
Mixed—some funders receive the same information	24	51%
Tailored—most funders receive different information	19	40%
Total	47	100%

\*47 respondents out of 47 (100%) answered this question.

**Question 11: If you tailor the results information you provide to individual funders, how do you tailor it?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Both in terms of content and information	31	70%
Mostly in terms of presentation	3	7%
Mostly in terms of content	9	20%
Information not tailored	1	2%
Total	44	100%

\*44 respondents out of 47 (94%) answered this question.

**Question 12: How would you describe the quantity of results information funders request?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Not enough	2	4%
Just right	30	64%
Too much	15	32%
Total	47	100%

\*47 respondents out of 47 (100%) answered this question.

**Question 13: How satisfied are you with funders' requests for results information as part of application and/or selection processes?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very dissatisfied	1	2%
Quite dissatisfied	9	19%
Quite satisfied	35	74%
Very satisfied	2	4%
Total	47	100%

\*47 respondents out of 47 (100%) answered this question.

**Question 15: Do your funders (grant-making trusts and foundations) ask you to monitor and/or evaluate the results of your activities?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
All do	15	32%
Some do	31	66%
None do	1	2%
Total	47	100%

\*47 respondents out of 47 (100%) answered this question.

**Question 16: Would you like your funders to provide more funding for you to monitor and/or evaluate the results of your activities?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, if this meant that there was more funding available in total	45	96%
Yes, even if the total amount of funding available stayed the same	2	4%
No	0	0%
Total	47	100%

\*47 respondents out of 47 (100%) answered this question.

This question may have been leading and the possibility of posing it differently in future research will be considered.

**Question 17: Once they have made you a grant, do funders ask you for monitoring and evaluation information on funded activities?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Always	17	36%
Sometimes	30	64%
Never	0%	0%
Total	47	100%

\*47 respondents out of 47 (100%) answered this question.

**Question 19: Which of the following types of results information, if any, do funders request from you as part of your monitoring and evaluation of funded activities? (tick all that apply)**

Response*	Frequency	Percentage†
Outputs (the products of an activity, eg, number of clients served, number of courses arranged, number of helpline calls answered)	44	94%
Outcomes (the results of an activity, eg, raised awareness, increased confidence, fall in number of crimes)	41	87%
Impacts (long-term outcomes)	29	62%
Other, please specify	5	11%

\* A 'None of the above' option should have been included. Its absence makes it impossible to distinguish between respondents choosing not to answer the question and respondents whose funders do not request any of these types of information.

† Percentage of N (47).

### Question 20: How would you describe the quantity of results information funders request?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Not enough	2	4%
Just right	34	74%
Too much	10	22%
Total	46	100%

\*46 respondents out of 47 (98%) answered this question.

### Question 21: How would you describe the results information you provide to funders? (NB this question refers only to the actual information provided, not how the information is presented)

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Standardised—most funders receive the same information	3	7%
Mixed—some funders receive the same information	24	52%
Tailored—most funders receive different information	20	43%
Total	47	100%

\*47 respondents out of 47 (100%) answered this question.

### Question 22: If you tailor the results information you provide to individual funders, how do you tailor it?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Both in terms of content and information	27	63%
Mostly in terms of presentation	3	7%
Mostly in terms of content	12	28%
Information not tailored	1	2%
Total	43	100%

\*43 respondents out of 47 (91%) answered this question.

### Question 23: How satisfied are you with funders' requests for results information from monitoring and evaluations of funded activities?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very dissatisfied	0	0%
Quite dissatisfied	11	23%
Quite satisfied	33	70%
Very satisfied	3	6%
Total	47	100%

\*47 respondents out of 47 (100%) answered this question.



**Question 25: Is the results information you provide to funders also available in your annual report or on your webpage?**

If yes, please give details. If no, why not?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	23	51%
No	22	49%
Total	45	100%

\*45 respondents out of 47 (96%) answered this question.

**Question 26: In which of the following ways, if any, do you believe funders (grant-making trusts and foundations) have used your results information in the past year? (tick all that apply)**

Response*	Frequency	Percentage†
shortlist grant applicants	23	49%
make a final selection between grant applicants	30	64%
decide whether to provide non-financial assistance (training, infrastructure, equipment, loans) to grantees	6	13%
decide whether to renew or expand funding	23	49%
decide to cancel funding	2	4%
report to board	21	45%
evaluate funding programme	27	57%
influence other funders	5	11%
inform public debate	7	15%
other, please specify	3	6%

\* A 'None of the above' option should have been included. Its absence makes it impossible to distinguish between respondents choosing not to answer the question and respondents who do not believe their funders use results information for any of these purposes.

† Percentage of N (47).

**Question 27: Please select the three actions below where you think it is most important that funders use your results information.**

**NB Select three (3) actions only**

Response*	Frequency	Percentage†
shortlist grant applicants	20	43%
make a final selection between grant applicants	25	53%
decide whether to provide non-financial assistance (training, infrastructure, equipment, loans) to grantees	6	13%
decide whether to renew or expand funding	31	66%
decide to cancel funding	1	2%
report to board	7	15%
evaluate funding programme	25	53%
influence other funders	5	11%
inform public debate	12	26%
other, please specify	0	0%

\* A 'None of the above' option should have been included. Its absence makes it impossible to distinguish between respondents choosing not to answer the question and respondents who do not believe their funders use results information for any of these purposes.

† Percentage of N (47).

**Question 28: Do funders provide you with non-financial assistance to help you with your monitoring and evaluation work (eg, training courses, signposting of resources)?**

Please give examples:

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	8	18%
No	36	82%
Total	44	100%

\*44 respondents out of 47 (94%) answered this question.

**Question 29: Would you like your funders to provide more non-financial assistance to help you with your monitoring and/or evaluation work?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, if the total amount of financial assistance available stayed the same	35	78%
Yes, even if the total amount of financial assistance would be smaller	2	4%
No	8	18%
Total	45	100%

\*45 respondents out of 47 (96%) answered this question.

This question may have been leading and the possibility of posing it differently in future research will be considered.

**Question 30: Have you received external support for your monitoring and evaluation work? (eg, external evaluations, provision of frameworks/tools, consulting services, training from consultants, third-sector infrastructure organisations, umbrella organisations)**

If yes, please provide examples

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	18	42%
No	24	56%
Don't know	1	2%
Total	43	100%

\*43 respondents out of 47 (91%) answered this question.

**Question 32: Have your funders funded external support for your monitoring and evaluation work? (eg, external evaluations, provision of frameworks/tools, consulting services, training from consultants, third-sector infrastructure organisations, umbrella organisations)**

If yes, please provide examples

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	9	20%
No	36	80%
Total	45	100%

\*45 respondents out of 47 (96%) answered this question.

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# Other publications

## Community

- **Breaking the cycle:** *Charities working with people in prison and on release (2009)*
- **Short changed:** *Financial exclusion (2008)*
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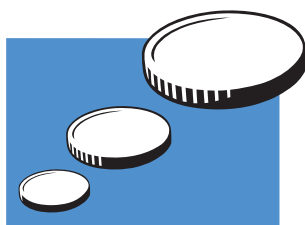
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# New Philanthropy Capital

New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) is a charity that maximises the impact of donors and charities—it does this through independent research, tools for charities and advice for donors. Its research guides donors on how best to support causes such as cancer, education and mental health. As well as highlighting the areas of greatest need, NPC identifies charities that could use donations to best effect.

Using this research it advises clients and their trusted advisors, and helps them think through issues such as:

- Where is my support most needed, and what results could it achieve?
- Which organisation could make the best use of my money?
- What is the best way to support these organisations?

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## **New Philanthropy Capital**

3 Downstream 1 London Bridge London SE1 9BG

t: +44 (0)20 7785 6300 f: +44 (0)20 7785 6301

w: [www.philanthropycapital.org](http://www.philanthropycapital.org) e: [info@philanthropycapital.org](mailto:info@philanthropycapital.org)

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