

Well- informed

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Charities and commissioners on results reporting

A National Performance Programme report for charities,
funders and support providers



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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.

Improving Support is an initiative led by Capacitybuilders that brings together practical resources and learning to strengthen support services for third sector organisations.

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Summary

This report draws on new research by New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) into the communication of results information by charities to local authority commissioners and commissioners' use of this information to award and monitor contracts and grants. It also focuses on the support available to charities for monitoring and evaluation from commissioners and external providers.

By understanding how commissioners 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 commissioners ask for and use, commissioners can make appropriate demands for results information and improve their own use of it. A grasp of the concerns expressed by charities and commissioners can help support providers improve their services for both groups.

In 2008/2009, NPC conducted research into the reporting relationship between charities and grant-making trusts and foundations as part of the National Performance Programme (NPP). When possible, the findings of the present research will therefore be compared to those presented in NPC's report *How are you getting on?*, which was published in April 2009.¹

Findings from charities

Charities told us that they are generally satisfied with commissioners' reporting requirements. They recognise that results information plays an important role both in their communication with commissioners and in commissioners' decision-making. In most cases, they also have some idea of the uses that commissioners make of the information they provide.

There are clear areas for improvement, however. Around half of the charities who responded to our survey consider funders' requests for results information to be disproportionate to the funding available. This supports the finding of a previous NPC report, *Turning the tables in England*, that public funding arrangements have particularly burdensome reporting requirements.² In both surveys and follow-up interviews, charities expressed

a strong preference for more reasonable reporting requirements. Many feel that such requirements are becoming more onerous over time.

The majority of charities have to tailor the information they provide to different commissioners, both when applying for funding and when reporting on funded activities. This is most often done in terms of both content and presentation, creating a great deal of work for charities. Many would therefore like commissioners to standardise reporting formats and requirements, but recognise that this is unlikely to happen.

More than half of the charities responding to our survey said that they never receive funding specifically for their monitoring and evaluation work. Nor do they in most cases receive non-financial assistance from commissioners for this work, or get funding to seek external support. In interviews, several charities pointed out that reasonable reporting requirements are always preferable to disproportionate ones accompanied by funding or other assistance for monitoring work.

Charities identified both benefits and drawbacks of external support for monitoring and evaluation. Some are concerned that providers lack sector knowledge and use generic approaches. Others noted the new perspectives they can bring, and shared examples of support providers who more than justified their cost.

Findings from commissioners

Commissioners consider results information from both funding applicants and funded charities to be important. They request several types of information and use it in a number of ways, from deciding whether to renew funding to reporting their own performance.

The majority of commissioners are satisfied with the results information they receive from charities, and in some cases noted recent improvements. They also suggested several ways in which this information could be improved further. Most frequently, they noted that charities could make greater efforts to make sure that the information that they provide is relevant.

Strikingly, a few commissioners never ask for results information from charities, either at the application stage or when monitoring funded activities. This is surprising, given the importance placed on outcomes and outcomes data in recent guidance on commissioning.

A substantial proportion of funders told us that they provide no funding or non-financial assistance for charities to help them report their results. One third of commissioners said they never fund charities to monitor the results of funded activities, although a somewhat greater proportion always do so. Non-financial assistance is more common, provided always or most of the time by more than half of commissioners responding. Only one in five provides funding for external help with this work.

Despite their reluctance to fund external support for monitoring and evaluation, commissioners recognise its value. Many commented on the importance of its objectivity and impartiality. On the other hand, where providers lack local or sector-specific knowledge, this is seen as limiting the value of their support.

Comparison with grant-making trusts and foundations

There are a number of similarities between these findings and those of last year's research, which focused on results reporting to grant-making trusts and foundations. Charity respondents in both survey rounds were broadly satisfied with the reporting requirements of both groups of funders. However, they think these are disproportionately burdensome in relation to the amounts of funding available.

Similarly, charities' views on the benefits and drawbacks of external support provision were reasonably consistent across the surveys, as were those of funders.

As groups, the commissioners and grant-makers who responded to our surveys are both broadly satisfied with charities' results reporting. Many commissioners would like charities to be more *'business-like'*, echoing grant-makers' desire for a greater degree of compliance from grant

applicants and grantees with requirements and guidance. One difference was noticeable: many commissioners told us that they would like to see more relevant data from charities, but grant-makers more commonly mentioned wishing to see their grantees move from presentation of data to analysis of it.

A significant proportion of both commissioners and grant-makers never provide funding or other support for charities' monitoring and evaluation work. However, over a third of commissioners always fund monitoring of results, compared to fewer than one in ten grant-makers. This difference may be due in part to the fact that commissioners are less willing to accept standardised reporting: they require charities to tailor their results information more often than trusts and foundations do.

Conclusions and recommendations

While it finds broad satisfaction on both sides of the funding relationship, this report should serve as a reminder to funders of the importance of proportionality in reporting requirements. Where possible, **commissioners** should aim to reduce reporting requirements or at least to avoid making them more burdensome.

If this is impossible, commissioners should consider providing more support to charities to help with results reporting, particularly if they wish to see improvements in the quality of information they receive. Such support can take the form of funding specifically for reporting or external support, or of non-financial assistance.

If proportionality is not achievable, consistency should be: commissioners should clearly communicate at the start of funding relationships what they plan to demand of charities in terms of results reporting. They should also make every effort to keep reporting requirements unchanged for the duration of funding arrangements. Any unavoidable changes should be communicated to charities well in advance.

Charities, for their part, should clearly communicate the costs involved in monitoring and evaluation to commissioners. They should also make efforts to provide relevant results information to funders. In particular, this means accepting that quantity cannot make up for a shortfall in quality or relevance.

Charities should also be proactive in seeking feedback on their results reporting. This will allow them to refine the information they provide and make sure it is relevant, and may prompt commissioners into thinking more carefully about the information they require.

Many **external support providers** need to consider taking steps to improve their sector-specific expertise and contextual knowledge, perhaps by specialising. Others may wish to make the case for external support directly to commissioners, as in many cases commissioners value an independent viewpoint, but do not take the initiative to ask the charities they fund about their support needs.

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Introduction

The purpose of this report

Reporting on the results of activities is an important part of funding relationships. Whether it contributes to or harms those relationships depends, for instance, on whether funders ask charities for reasonable types and amounts of information; whether resources are available for monitoring and evaluation; and on whether charities use these resources and their own to produce results information which is relevant to funders' requests.

These questions form the basis of our research on results reporting by charities to local authority commissioners. Through presenting the findings of this research, the present report will gauge the health of this reporting relationship; identify the factors that drive satisfaction with it; and explore the role of external support providers. When appropriate, findings will be compared with those of previous NPP research into the reporting relationship between charities and grant-making trusts and foundations.

This report also outlines steps that charities, commissioners and external support providers can take to improve the reporting relationship. Commissioners can better balance concerns about cost with a commitment to quality service provision by requesting appropriate information and making good use of it. Charities can gain from a better understanding of how commissioners make decisions when they apply for funding or report the impact of a project. By using insights into the attitudes of charities and funders towards their services, support providers can improve the way in which they engage with both parties.

Method and scope

This research focuses on the communication and use of results information in public funding arrangements. On one side of these arrangements it looks at charities. On the other, it looks at individuals or teams within county, borough and district councils who are responsible for funding charities, through contracts and grants, to provide services ('funders', 'commissioners', or 'statutory funders').

We decided to focus our research on the autism and youth offending sectors. NPC has experience and knowledge of both sectors through previous research, and their manageable sizes meant that we could attempt to survey every charity operating in each sector.

The scope of the research included the communication and use of results information at the following stages of the funding relationship:

- application/selection (grants) or procurement/tendering (contracts); and
- once funding has been awarded: ongoing monitoring of funded activities.

'Results information' can be qualitative or quantitative. Throughout this report, the term will be used to collectively refer to information on:

- outputs (the products of an activity, eg, number of clients served, number of courses arranged);
- outcomes (the short- and medium-term results of an activity, eg, raised awareness, increased self-esteem); and
- impacts (long-term outcomes).

Definitions and examples accompanied the use of these terms in the surveys.

Field research was carried out between June 2009 and February 2010. Online surveys were sent to 244 charities in the autism and youth offending sectors and 430 local authority commissioners in these fields. Paper copies were sent by post in those instances when we were unable to contact organisations by email.

The rationale behind targeting two specific charity sectors was twofold: we hoped to survey every operational charity in each sector instead of representative samples, and to be able to make comparisons between sectors. We identified target charities by querying the Guidestar Data Services database (www.gd-ds.co.uk) with relevant categories and keywords, excluding organisations below a £10,000 income threshold (see Appendices for details).

The pool of commissioners to be surveyed was generated from a database of local authority staff categorised by role, provided by Keystroke Knowledge Ltd. and manually screened for relevance.

“We work regularly with charities to ensure our information requests are manageable.”

Commissioner

“We provide them with the level of information they require and the level of mystery we require.”

Charity on results reporting

A great deal of attention has been paid to the shift from grant funding to contracts in recent years. We therefore aimed to examine the difference between the two by creating separate surveys, one asking about contract funding and one asking about grants. In order to achieve this, the four groups identified (autism charities and commissioners, youth offending charities and commissioners) were evenly and randomly split, with each half assigned either the contracts or grants survey. This resulted in eight surveys being issued. However, most of the presentation of findings below brings together all charity responses to report on public funding as a whole.

The response rate from charities was good and saw a marked rise on that achieved in the 2008/2009 research. One third of charities completed or partially completed the survey (most questions were optional).

The response rate from commissioners was less encouraging. Only one in ten of those surveyed completed or partially completed the survey. Our findings from commissioners should therefore be viewed as indicative at best. Four hypotheses to explain this response rate are discussed in Appendix 1.

In-depth interviews were conducted with eight charity and three local authority survey respondents. The interviews aided our analysis of the survey data by highlighting key issues and provided qualitative data and a number of quotations.

Structure

Section 2 describes the context of the third sector's role in public service delivery. Section 3 presents the main findings from the research and section 4 draws conclusions and makes recommendations. Section 5 presents a more detailed explanation of the research method, along with the survey questions used and data tables of the responses received. These are followed by acknowledgements and references.

Context

The third sector plays an important role in public service delivery in the UK today. This section briefly describes some of the initiatives and institutions that have made this role possible. Several are part of significant efforts by government to engage the sector and increase its capacity. This section also describes some recent research focusing particularly on charities' monitoring and evaluation and reporting of results to statutory funders.

The Compact

Established in 1998, the Compact between government and the voluntary and community sector in England provides the highest-level guidance available to public sector funders and charities on their working relationship. It is overseen by an independent commission. Whilst not legally binding, it embodies a recognition by government of the value of the third sector and a commitment to working with it.

The Compact is regularly refreshed, most recently in December 2009. The refreshed Compact contains a number of commitments for government and the third sector under the heading 'Allocating resources', reflecting good practice in commissioning as it is outlined in the guidance discussed below.³

Futurebuilders

The Futurebuilders Fund was announced in 2002, and is a programme to help front-line third sector organisations build their capacity to compete for and deliver public service contracts.⁴ It has offered loan and grant investments to over 370 third sector organisations, and is currently managed by The Social Investment Business under contract to the Cabinet Office until 2011. In 2009, Futurebuilders was reviewed by the National Audit Office (NAO), which found that it had delivered positive impacts for the sector but that it had yet to demonstrate value for money.⁵

Capacitybuilders

Capacitybuilders was set up in 2006 to improve the advice and support available to frontline third sector organisations through a number of different programmes.⁶ It is funding Charities Evaluation Services' National Performance Programme (NPP), which has commissioned this and other research projects.

The Office of the Third Sector

The Office of the Third Sector (OTS) was established in 2006. It is part of the Cabinet Office and leads work across central and local government to improve the conditions in which the third sector operates.⁷ Its National Programme for Third Sector Commissioning is delivered together with the Improvement and Development Agency for local government (IDeA), and aims to train up to 2,000 commissioners to raise their awareness of the potential of the third sector in designing, delivering and improving public services.⁸

Third sector initiatives

Organisations within the third sector and civil society more generally have also made efforts to ensure that charities can meet the demands of the public sector. Such efforts include the resourcing and training of charities as well as the provision of guidance and support networks. The NCVO, for instance, maintains a Public Service Delivery Network, and Acevo has provided training for charities and produced a toolkit (jointly with NPC) to encourage charities to recover the full costs associated with public service delivery.^{9,10}

Research and guidance on proportionality

As third sector organisations have taken on a bigger role in the delivery of public services, the quality of relationships between statutory funders and third sector organisations has received much attention. Reporting requirements in particular have been a focus for discussion. There is broad agreement that these should be proportionate to the size, duration and complexity of funding arrangements. However, a growing body of research suggests that this is too rarely the case.

Research carried out by Charities Evaluation Services between 2006 and 2008 found that whilst there has been significant growth in learning resources for monitoring and evaluation, reporting requirements are often burdensome, and dominate this work to the detriment of long-term perspectives and reflection.¹¹

A recent NPC report funded by the OTS, *Turning the tables in England*, estimated that, per funding arrangement, just over three times as much money is spent on monitoring and reporting to public funders compared with independent funders. The report 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.²

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 showed that such reports, while challenging to produce, can:

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

A great deal of guidance has been issued to help statutory funders commission services fairly and efficiently. Guidance from the Audit Commission, HM Treasury, the NAO and the OTS has emphasised the importance of proportionality and encouraged funders and charities to make financial provision for the burden of results monitoring and reporting when financial arrangements are made. This is typically regarded as the responsibility of both parties: charities are advised to include provision for results reporting when costing a bid, and funders are encouraged to recognise that they need to fund this activity when making grants or awarding contracts.^{12,13,14,15}

Results from surveys

Our eight surveys asked charities and local authority commissioners about a range of issues around results reporting. Charities were asked about the importance of results information, the types they have to provide when making funding applications and reporting on funded work, and how they think commissioners use this information. They were also asked about their satisfaction with the reporting process and what could be improved concerning funders' requests. Finally, we asked them what support funders provide to help them with their monitoring and evaluation.

Commissioners were asked questions on the same topics, so that their responses and those of charities could be compared. However, the response rate from commissioners was low, so findings from this group should be treated with caution. The survey findings are complemented by evidence from in-depth interviews with charities and commissioners.

The surveys used are reproduced in Appendices 2a and 3a, and full response data tables can be found in Appendices 2b and 3b.

Contracts are becoming more and more important

Funding from both central and local government increasingly takes the shape of contracts rather than grants. This was reflected by our charity

respondents, over half of whom indicated that they receive 'majority contract funding'. Our surveys did not ask whether this had changed over time, but evidence from in-depth interviews suggests an increasing trend towards the use of contracts.

Although the response rates for our charity surveys were significantly better than for those of commissioners, we were less able than we would like to have been to identify significant differences between grant and contract funding arrangements. In most cases, we have therefore grouped together all charity responses received.

Results information is important to commissioners and charities understand this

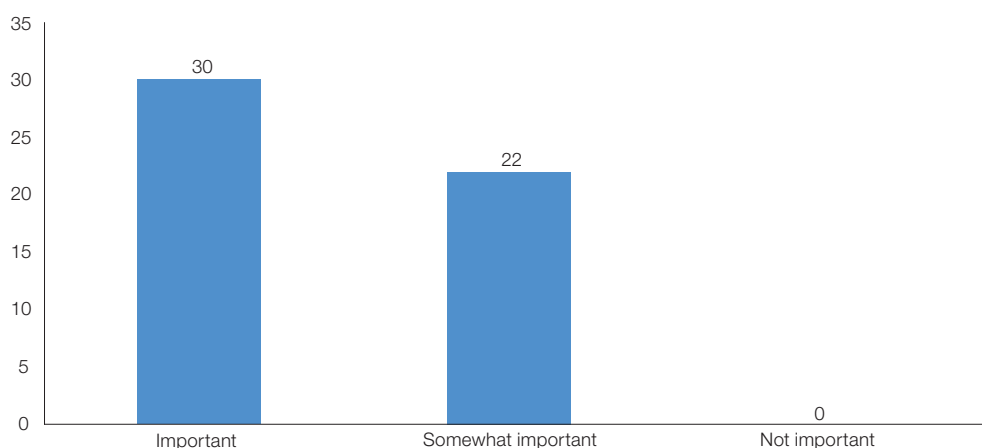
When asked about the importance of results information in their funding decisions, three in four commissioners answered 'important' and the remainder 'somewhat important'. No funders selected 'not important'. This is particularly interesting since a small number told us that they do not ask for such information.

We also asked charities how important they thought results information is to commissioners in making funding decisions. Their responses matched those of commissioners themselves, with two thirds answering 'important', one in four 'somewhat important' and a handful 'not important'. More than half also said that such information is 'important' in their communication with funders (see Figure 1).

It's understandable, since it's public money and people would be screaming if it were not properly accounted for.

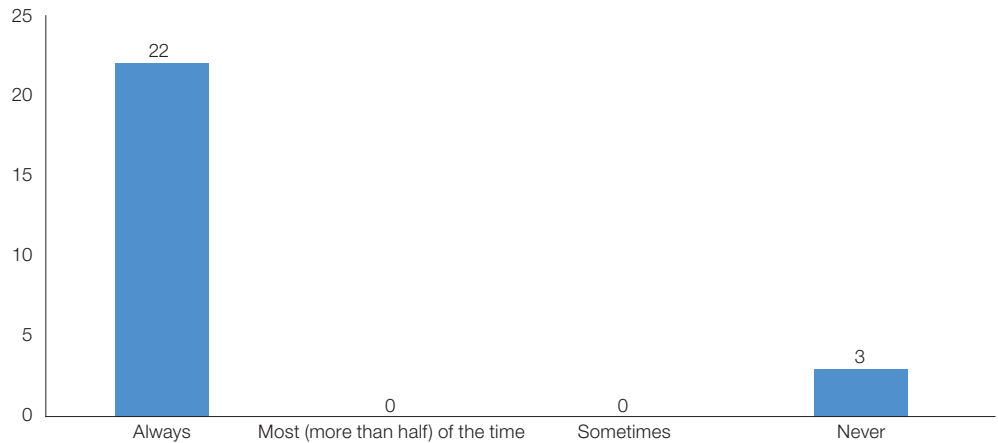
Charity on the importance of results information

Figure 1: Charities on the importance of results information



Question 26, charity survey: How would you describe the role of results information (ie, information about outputs, outcomes, and impacts) in your communication with local government funders?
52 charities (65% of respondents) answered this question

Figure 2: Commissioners’ requests for information from monitoring



Question 14, funder survey: How often do you ask charities to provide information from results monitoring after a grant has been made/contract has been awarded?
 25 funders (61% of respondents) answered this question

‘I wish local authorities would fund outcomes rather than outputs.’

Charity

Commissioners usually ask for results information both before and after providing funding

When asked whether they request information about past or intended results from charities applying for funding, four in five commissioners responded that they ‘always’ do so. This is consistent with responses to later questions, which indicate that information from charities is regularly used by these commissioners to shortlist applicants and make final choices between them.

Surprisingly, two commissioners responded that they ‘never’ ask for such information at the grant or contract application stage. It is unclear whether these responses signal misreading of the question, or whether these funders really do not use such information to inform their funding decisions, despite extensive efforts to establish outcomes-focused commissioning.

Our charity respondents most frequently said that commissioners ‘always’ ask them for this kind of results information during grant application and contract procurement processes, with a large number also answering that this happens ‘most’ of the time. Four charities told us that this ‘never’ happens.

Once a contract or grant has been awarded, nearly nine in ten commissioners proceed to ‘always’ require results information about funded activities from charities (see Figure 2). This is consistent with the response from charities: more than half said commissioners ‘always’ ask for monitoring information about the results of their activities. The funders who answered ‘never’ with regards to the application stage gave the same answer here.

These findings indicate that most commissioners require results information throughout the funding relationship. Charities should therefore continue to approach public service provision in the expectation that results reporting will be a key feature of their relationship with funders.

Many types of results information are requested, provided and used

Funders were asked about the types of results information they request from charities, both when selecting charities to fund and when monitoring services post-funding. We asked them whether they requested the following:

- outputs (intended or actual as appropriate);
- outcomes (intended or actual as appropriate);
- impacts (intended or actual as appropriate); and
- other (respondents were asked to specify).

Most commissioners responded that they ask for both outputs and outcomes, with impacts being somewhat less popular. This was true for both application and procurement processes, as well as for monitoring requests once funding had been provided.

When commissioners ask for ‘other’ types of information they tend to focus on processes or methods, for example, how a charity intends to reach the groups it targets. This could indicate that results information complements other information used by commissioners, or that the concept of ‘results’ is loosely defined and sometimes includes both results themselves and the way in which they are achieved.

These survey findings are supported by evidence from in-depth interviews, which suggests that not all commissioners think of

‘It’s embarrassing for charities if they can’t demonstrate their outcomes.’

Commissioner

outputs and outcomes as separate concepts. In fact, results information overall (defined here as outputs, outcomes and impacts) is not always seen as a separate category from 'reporting information' more broadly, which may include, for instance, information on how money has been spent.

Charities' responses echoed those of commissioners: almost equal numbers said that prospective funders ask for intended outputs and intended outcomes, with fewer saying that they get asked for intended impacts or long-term outcomes. The same was true for reporting on the results of funded activities.

Where charities responding to the survey provided examples of 'other' types of results information they are required to provide, they mostly mentioned non-results information such as financial data. In this, their responses were similar to those of commissioners. Interestingly, several charities mentioned 'case studies', indicating that they do not consider this kind of 'narrative' qualitative information part of their results reporting.

Overall, these findings suggest that some commissioners and charities struggle to apply the language of inputs, outputs, and outcomes in a consistent way.

Commissioners use results information for a variety of purposes

Funders told us that they have many uses for the results information they receive from charities. In the last year, the majority of commissioner respondents have made a final selection between applicants and decided

whether or not to renew or expand funding based on charities' results reporting. This matches the finding that such information is important in their decision-making about funding.

The majority of funders also said that they use information they receive from charities to evaluate their funding programmes and report their own performance. Given this, we might expect a greater willingness of commissioners to fund charities' monitoring efforts.

Charities were also asked how they believe funders use their results information. Their responses were similar to those of funders, which indicates that commissioners are communicating their use of results information well.

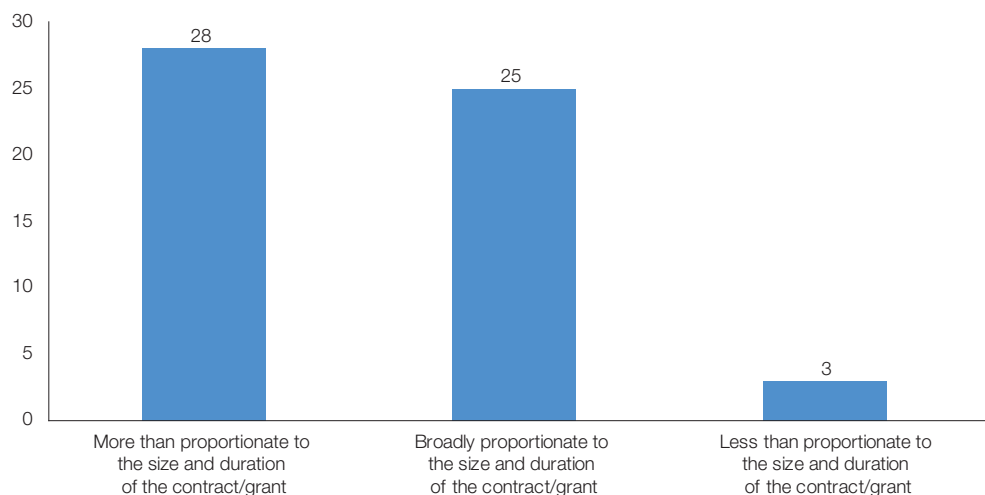
There is some difference between the ways in which commissioners have used results information from charities in the last year, and the ways in which they say that it is important to use such information. They frequently use results information to report their performance and evaluate funding programmes. As a group, however, they think that using results information to decide whether to provide non-financial assistance to charities or to make a final decision between funding applicants is more important than their current usage indicates.

This mismatch may suggest that commissioners are constrained in their ability to use information in the ways they consider to be most important. They may be *required* to report on their funding, but find that results information is of too poor a quality to be much use in selecting funding recipients.

We ensure that data is relevant to the success of the service—our requirements are constantly under review.

Commissioner

Figure 3: Charities on the proportionality of requests for results information to available funding



Question 11, charity survey: How would you describe the typical level of effort required of you to meet local government funders' requests for results information (during the procurement/grant application and selection process)? 56 charities (70% of respondents) answered this question

Commissioners think requests are proportionate to funding, but many charities disagree

As briefly mentioned in Section 2 above, the issue of proportionality in reporting requirements has attracted some attention. We therefore asked charities and commissioners whether they think that requests for results information are proportionate to the size and duration of the contracts or grants that are being provided.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the vast majority of commissioners believe their requests to be ‘broadly proportionate to the size and duration’ of their funding. This was the case both when looking at applications or procurement and reporting on funded activities. One commissioner indicated that reporting requirements are ‘more than proportionate’ to the funding on offer.

The response from charities on proportionality was more divided. Fully half of the respondents said that the typical level of effort required to meet local government funders’ requests for results information when applying for grants or competing for contracts was ‘more than proportionate to the size and duration of the contract or grant’. An almost equal number thought this effort was ‘broadly proportionate’, with three respondents suggesting ‘less than proportionate’ efforts were required (see Figure 3).

Charities were also asked about the proportionality of results monitoring requirements once work has been funded. Responses reflected those regarding the application stage, with around half of respondents finding such requirements ‘more than proportionate’ and half ‘broadly proportionate’ to the funding provided.

These results raise the question of whether proportionality should be judged by funders or charities. It is perhaps to be expected that

the organisations filling out forms and sending reports find reporting more burdensome than those who make the requests.

Last year’s research also found a mismatch between the views of charities and funders. It found that while one in four charities believed that they are required to provide ‘too much’ information, nearly all grant-makers disagreed. Interestingly, this proportion—one in four—is significantly lower than those responding ‘more than proportionate’ in this year’s survey (one in two). This corroborates the finding in NPC’s report *Turning the tables in England* that public funding arrangements are generally more burdensome than independent funding arrangements (discussed in Section 2 above).²

When interviewed, several charities suggested that reporting has become more burdensome over time when compared to the funding available, with one charity claiming that the reporting process has ‘developed into a marathon’.

Charities regularly have to tailor the information they provide

Three in four charities said that when reporting on funded activities, they ‘always’ or usually need to tailor the results information they provide to different commissioners. Only one charity ‘never’ changes either the content or presentation of what it submits to different funders. The same seems to be broadly true for funding applications, although tailoring is required slightly less often in this context.

Three in four of those having to tailor results information do so both in terms of its content and presentation (see Figure 4). This is burdensome for charities. One interviewee told us:

‘It’s the difference in format—we have to convert everything. Some of that is duplication, some is slightly different info and that takes more time.’

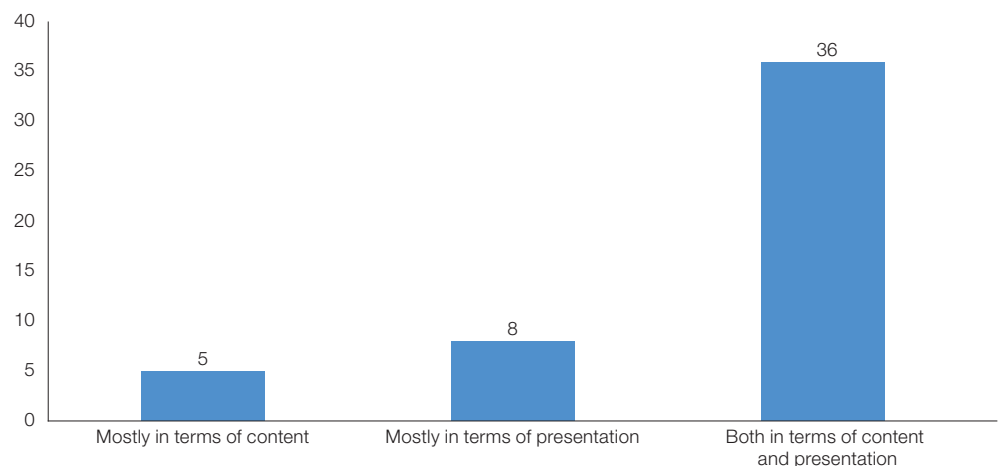
It’s not our intention that the chief executive spends 40 hours per week doing paperwork.

Commissioner

There are 45 Key Performance Indicators and each local authority focuses on different ones.

Charity

Figure 4: Tailoring of results information by charities



Question 19, charity survey: When you tailor the results information you provide to local government funders about contracted/grant funded activities, how do you tailor it? 49 charities (61% of respondents) answered this question

In comparison with last year's research, these survey findings suggest that public funding requires charities to tailor information more often than does funding from grant-making trusts and foundations. Just under half of last year's charity respondents described their results reporting as 'tailored', whereas a third of this year's charities 'always' tailor. However, the type of tailoring—in terms of content, presentation or both—in was consistent across both sets of respondents.

This corroborates the finding in the 2008 CES report *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.¹¹ It also matches the findings presented in *Turning the tables in England*.²

Commissioners are satisfied with the amount of information they receive

We asked whether commissioners think that the quantity of information they receive from charities in response to their requests is sufficient. Those who responded to our surveys overwhelmingly told us that it is, both in application or procurement processes and after funding has been provided. Only one commissioner felt that results information is 'insufficient'. Responses later in the survey about how charities could improve their reporting confirm this finding: no commissioners suggested that charities could do so by providing more information.

Commissioners are satisfied with the quality of information they receive

Satisfaction with quantity does not necessarily imply satisfaction with quality, but our funder respondents are typically satisfied with the quality of the results information they receive

from charities. Two thirds told us that they are 'quite satisfied', around a third are 'very satisfied', and only a single commissioner reported being 'very dissatisfied' (with none 'quite dissatisfied').

The finding that commissioners are satisfied with both the quantity and quality of results information they receive from charities is striking, given anecdotal evidence indicating a widespread perception in the sector that monitoring and evaluation is underfunded and often carried out on a shoestring. It perhaps helps to explain the later survey finding that commissioners are unwilling to provide funding for such work.

This unexpected satisfaction may be due to funders having lowered the standards they apply when assessing charities' results reporting. However, this is perhaps unlikely given that charities think reporting has become more burdensome and guidance is calling for more thoughtful commissioning.

Charities are also satisfied

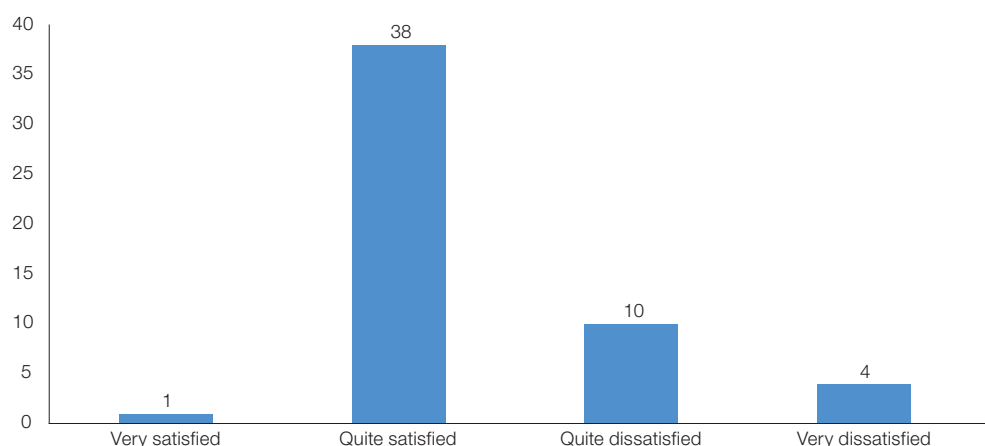
The charities who responded to the surveys were broadly satisfied with commissioners' requests for results information. This finding stands in contrast to the anecdotal evidence NPC has gathered over the last decade but echoes that of last year's research, which found general satisfaction among charities funded by grant-making trusts and foundations.

Almost three in four charities said that they are 'quite satisfied' with these requests, with one in four 'quite' or 'very' dissatisfied. This was true both for information requests during application or procurement processes and for monitoring requests once work had been funded (see Figure 5).

“The information provided is to a very high standard.”

Commissioner

Figure 5: Charities' satisfaction with reporting requirements

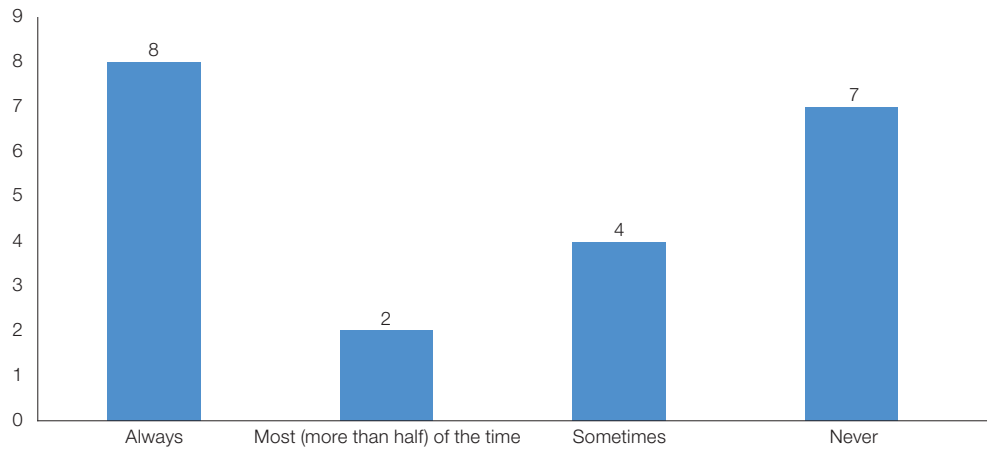


Question 23, charity survey: How satisfied are you with local government funders' requests for results information from monitoring of contracted/grant-funded activities?
53 charities (66% of respondents) answered this question

“The level of commissioning has improved significantly in the last two years.”

Charity

Figure 6: Funding for results monitoring work



Question 19, funder survey: Do you provide funding for charities to monitor the results of their contract/grant-funded activities?
 21 funders (51% of respondents) answered this question

The majority of charities also expressed satisfaction with the frequency of commissioners' requests. However, a quarter told us that funders ask either 'too often' or 'far too often'. Funders therefore need to bear in mind how often they require charities to report, as well as the quantity of information they need.

Improvements are possible

When our survey asked about possible improvements to commissioners' requests for results information, many charities commented on the need for better communication. This includes greater clarity about what kind of information will be requested and what the timelines for this are, as well as earlier notice of changes. Some charities told us that their funders make demands for information 'the day before it is required'.

Many charities also think commissioners could improve significantly by adopting standardised reporting formats, processes and timetables. Several interviewees expressed frustration over having 'to convert everything' depending on which funder they are reporting to.

We also asked commissioners about any improvements they think could be made to charities' results reporting. Despite their overall satisfaction, a number of commissioners responded to this survey question. Their responses generally addressed the quality of the results being reported, rather than their quantity or the frequency with which they are communicated.

The concerns of commissioners are therefore similar to those of grant-makers, who told us in last year's research that increasing the quality of results information was more important than increasing the quantity. In particular, a number of commissioners suggested that charities could be better at ensuring that the information they supply is directly relevant. One specifically

made reference to charities providing information on outcomes that are related to but different from those on which they have been asked to report. This differs slightly from the focus of grant-makers, who called for greater analysis of data by charities, as opposed to different, more relevant information.

Encouragingly, one funder respondent took this opportunity to explain that:

'There has been a massive improvement over the past few years due to the work of our Commissioning Team and the training provided for charities who wish to apply.'

Most commissioners do not consistently fund charities to monitor and evaluate their activities

Despite the majority of commissioners who consistently request results information on funded activities, only just over a third 'always' provide funding for charities to collect and report such information (see Figure 6). A third 'never' do. This presents a problem for charities, which may have to draw on funding for service delivery in order to meet reporting requirements. However, this picture compares favourably with that from last year's research: only one in ten grant-making trusts and foundations funds monitoring and evaluation work.

Although the question was not worded in this way, it is possible that some commissioners answered it with reference only to funding made available explicitly for monitoring and evaluation. This could mean that funding for reporting through full cost recovery, for instance, was not captured.

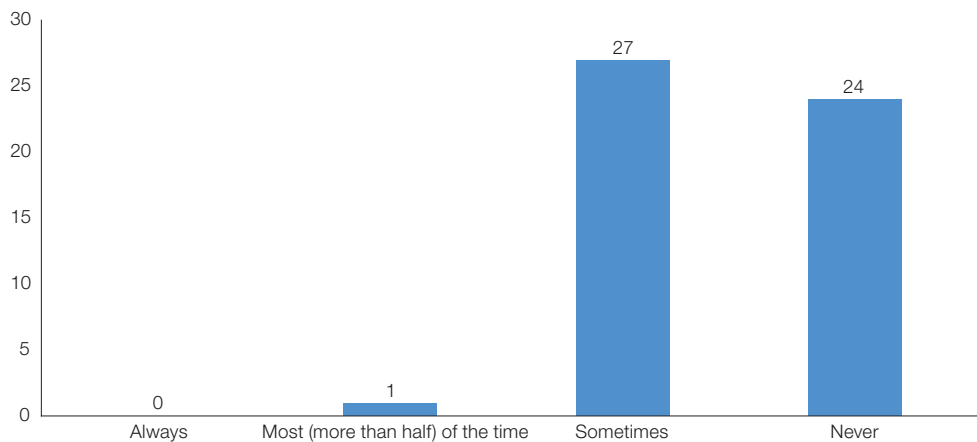
Such a lack of explicit earmarking of funding for results reporting purposes may also have influenced the charity response to this question. Over half said that they 'never' receive funding for their monitoring and evaluation work. Of

I have no money to provide to charities to monitor results... funding it is an optional extra: the bottom line wins.

Commissioner

I stand no chance at all if I seek full cost recovery.

Charity

Figure 7: Non-financial assistance for charities' results work

Question 30, charity survey: Do funders provide you with non-financial assistance to help you with your monitoring and evaluation work (eg, training courses, signposting of resources)?
52 charities (65% of respondents) answered this question

those that do get such funding, only around one in four consider it to be adequate to meeting funders' demands for information 'always' or 'most of the time'. None of the charities answering the survey with respect to contract funding said that the funding received for results work is 'always' adequate.

However, in-depth interviews provided some evidence that charities are increasingly able to secure funding for monitoring and evaluation. One interviewed charity said that local authorities are starting to pay attention to the idea of full cost recovery. In the words of another:

'In the last 12 months, we've become confident to say to funders, "if you want this, you're going to have to pay for it" – this has been helped hugely by having contract rather than grant funding.'

These findings suggest that it would be profitable for charities to be proactive in seeking full cost recovery for results reporting, rather than letting funders take the initiative and risk being under-resourced and unable to meet reporting requirements.

Our grant-funded charity respondents were neither significantly less nor more likely to receive funding for monitoring and evaluation than their contract-funded peers.

Commissioners rarely provide non-financial assistance to help charities with results reporting

Almost half of charities 'never' receive non-financial assistance from commissioners to help with their results measurement and evaluation. Only one charity receives such support 'most of the time', and none 'always' receive it (see Figure 7). The remainder, about

half, 'sometimes' get non-financial assistance. Only one in ten of the commissioners who responded said that they 'never' provide it, and more than one in four said they 'always' do.

Strikingly, however, one in five charities indicated that they would not like any more non-financial assistance, regardless of whether it affected the funding available to them. As one surveyed charity responded:

'I don't think we need help either from local government or anyone else in carrying out our monitoring. We just need less of it to do!'

Examples of non-financial assistance provided by funders include:

- access to and awareness of training courses;
- signposting to support organisations, such as a local CVS or a national umbrella organisation;
- the time and advice of a local authority officer;
- the provision of templates or examples of robust data collection methods; and
- IT support where charities are required to use a particular reporting system.

Commissioners rarely fund external support for monitoring and evaluation

External support for charities' monitoring, evaluation and reporting of results is available from a wide range of organisations (for example, training providers, consultancies and umbrella organisations). It can take a range of forms, including: training of staff; consultancy services; the development of monitoring frameworks and tools; and external evaluations, among others.

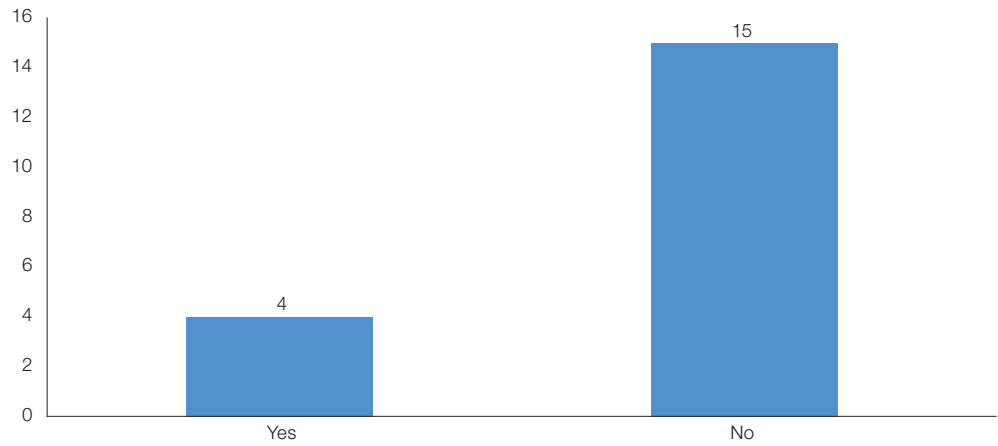
“We really don't want to be holding the hand of a large charity when measuring impact and performance.”

Commissioner on non-financial assistance

“Charities don't always know that they need support and that it's there.”

Commissioner

Figure 8: Funding of external support provision



Question 30, funder survey: Have you funded external support for charities' monitoring work once a contract has been awarded/grant has been made? (eg, external evaluations, provision of frameworks/tools, consulting services, training from consultants, third sector infrastructure organisations, umbrella organisations)?
 19 funders (46% of respondents) answered this question

It can take a long time to get an external party to understand exactly what we do, how and why.

Charity on external support

Around half of our charity respondents told us that they have received external support for results work, and one in three of these has received funding for such support. However, only one in five funders provides such funding (see Figure 8). A number of commissioners cited budget pressures as an explanation for this. Strikingly, the commissioners of youth offending services who responded to our survey were four times more likely to fund external support than the commissioners of autism services.

We also asked funders whether they believe that the charities they fund to provide services are in receipt of external support (regardless of how it is funded). Almost half of those who responded answered 'do not know'. This suggests that dialogue on this topic is rare. One commissioner commented briefly on the question of funding for external support: *'none requested'*. Charities may wish to try to engage their funders to a greater extent by proactively communicating the external support they receive or need to carry out monitoring and evaluation work.

Grant-making trusts and foundations responding to last year's survey were similarly poorly informed about charities' use of external support. However, a greater proportion of them provided funding for such support.

External support has both benefits and drawbacks

All of the surveys issued contained open questions about the benefits and drawbacks of external support for charities' monitoring and reporting of results. Responding to these,

a number of charities referred to support providers' ability to bring fresh insights and clarity to their work. However, many also had concerns, typically about the provision of generic (or *'by the book'*) support from providers who fail to demonstrate knowledge about clients' work or the context in which it is carried out.

Commissioners highlighted the value of external support providers in bringing objectivity, independence, and impartiality to monitoring and evaluation processes. Interviews suggest that commissioners feel that this adds credibility to commissioners' own reporting. Support providers' expertise and ability to improve reporting processes was also mentioned in several cases.

On the other hand, funders agreed with charities that some support providers lack local or sector knowledge, which limits their ability to help organisations.

The cost of external support featured regularly in commissioners' responses. While some charities also mentioned this, one referred to its own experience, saying that *'It was expensive, but with evaluation, if you do it, you have to do it properly'*.

Last year's responses to these questions overlap with these findings to a large extent. This is good news for support providers, in two ways. Firstly, the appeal of their support persists despite differences in the source of charities' funding. Secondly, since the drawbacks to their support are also undetermined by funding type, mitigating these drawbacks will increase their appeal to a wide range of potential charity clients.

Objective viewpoint, specialist service, useful third-party evidence to provide to other funders.

Commissioner on external support for charities

Conclusions and recommendations

This research has found that both charities and commissioners are generally satisfied with the results information they provide and receive. The importance of this information is recognised by both groups, and they both have a clear idea of what it is, and ought to be, used for. These findings suggest that reporting is a healthy component of the funding relationship.

Despite their overall satisfaction, however, many charities told us that they consider commissioners' requests for results information disproportionate to the amount of funding that is available. They can suggest a number of improvements.

Funding for monitoring results is scarce, especially given the importance attached to results information by commissioners. More than half of charities never receive explicit funding for this work, and one in three commissioners never provide such funding. Funding for external support for monitoring work is also rare, while non-financial support is more common. Examples include the provision of detailed advice and guidance or the signposting of resources.

In light of the findings presented in this report, NPC has a number of recommendations for commissioners, charities and external support providers.

Recommendations for commissioners

Consider reducing the reporting burden or funding monitoring and evaluation

A significant proportion of charities think that commissioners' reporting requirements are disproportionate to the funding they provide. Commissioners could best respond by thinking carefully about whether, and how, they will use each piece of information they request, and by scaling down their requirements. This recommendation is in line with guidance for commissioners.

If commissioners are unable to settle for less information, more funding should be provided for charities' monitoring and evaluation. This is particularly important given that many commissioners would like to see information of a higher quality from charities. However, funders should bear in mind that charities prefer reasonable reporting requirements to disproportionate ones accompanied by additional funding.

Reporting different results to different funders in different ways is also a significant burden for charities. It is no more realistic to call for sector-wide harmonisation of application and reporting processes among commissioners than among grant-making trusts and foundations. Like independent funders, however, commissioners should be open to initiatives such as standard reports created by charities with multiple funders.

Communicate requirements earlier and give feedback to charities

One problem for charities is that some funders do not clearly communicate what results information they want and when they want it. If reported information is to be accurate and relevant, commissioners must be clear about exactly what type of information will be required, and in what format. This should be decided at the application or procurement stage, and should remain consistent for the duration of a funding arrangement. If changes to requirements are unavoidable, charities should be notified as soon as possible and given sufficient time to alter their processes in response.

For a small number of commissioners, this will mean becoming more familiar with results language, particularly the distinction between outputs, outcomes and impacts.

In order to improve, charities would benefit from feedback about their results reporting. By letting charities know in what ways their results information could be more relevant, commissioners can proactively improve the quality of reporting. By highlighting examples of good reporting, funders can assure charities that their results reporting is valued.

Recommendations for charities

Keep information relevant

Although they are broadly satisfied with results reporting from charities, a number of funders want more relevant information, rather than the results that happen to be the easiest to capture. Charities should recognise that increasing the quantity of information provided is unlikely to make up for a shortfall in quality or relevance. If certain types of information are particularly difficult to capture (for example, the outcomes of early-stage interventions), then charities should communicate this problem to commissioners rather than reporting different, less relevant information.

Ask for feedback

Charities should be proactive in asking commissioners for feedback on their results reporting. This ensures that future information—as part of an application, or monitoring of funded activities—is as relevant as possible and has the greatest chance of satisfying a funder's requirements.

Fully cost results monitoring and reporting in funding applications

Part of the responsibility for ensuring that funding is provided for results work rests with charities. Commissioners may not always be proactive in advertising such funding even when it is available, so charities should include full cost estimates for results reporting in funding applications so that commissioners are aware and can respond appropriately.

Fully costed applications not only encourage commissioners to provide funding for results reporting, but ensure that results objectives can be met. In several cases, charities told us they have had to use funding earmarked for service delivery to meet reporting requirements, but in doing so jeopardise their ability to deliver services of appropriate quality.

Charities should also proactively indicate when they need further support with their results reporting: commissioners cannot be expected to second-guess their particular needs.

Recommendations for support providers

Both charities and commissioners recognise the value of external support for monitoring and communicating results. However, both groups believe that support providers can improve.

Develop sector and regional knowledge

Some commissioners and charities (as well as grant-making trusts and foundations) think that support providers are less effective than they could be due to a lack of sector expertise or contextual (for example, geography-specific) knowledge. To remedy this, support providers may wish to specialise in certain sectors or invest more in building their contextual knowledge. They may also wish to research clients' work more extensively before beginning support projects.

Tailor services and work with existing processes

Some charities and commissioners pointed to the 'generic' tools of support providers, which neglect pre-existing internal processes. Support providers should aim to tailor their recommendations to build on what a charity already has in place, rather than rolling out 'one size fits all' solutions.

Make your case to commissioners

Many commissioners do not take the initiative to ask the charities they fund about their support needs. This provides an opportunity for support providers to make their case directly to commissioners. Funding for support provision is more likely to be provided if commissioners are familiar with, and trust, the organisation supplying it. By emphasising their independence and impartiality, support providers may further improve their attractiveness to funders.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Method

Field research for this project was carried out between June 2009 and February 2010. Since the voluntary sector receives around £6bn annually from local government (around 47% of its statutory income), the decision was taken to focus on local authority funding of charities providing public services. Our method was based on previous NPP research into charity funding by grant-making trusts and foundations.

Results information

'Results information' can be qualitative or quantitative, and the term is used throughout this report to collectively refer to information about:

- outputs (the products of an activity, for example, number of clients served, number of courses arranged);
- outcomes (the short- and medium-term results of an activity, for example, raised awareness, increased self-esteem); and
- impacts (long-term outcomes).

When used in surveys, these terms were accompanied by an explanation of their meaning to ensure comparability of responses. They are widely but by no means universally (and not always correctly) used.

Grants and contracts

Local authority commissioners are encouraged to use both grant funding and contract funding and are directed to select the form most appropriate for each funding instance. Since a great deal of attention has been paid to the increasing dominance of contract funding, we wanted to see whether these differences were reflected in the views of our respondents. We therefore created parallel surveys (one asking about contract funding and one asking about grant funding), randomly split our respondents into two groups and assigned one group the contracts survey and one group the grants survey. A combination of low response rates and similar answers limited our ability to identify differences, and so the report generally brings together the views of all charity respondents, as do the data tables in Appendices 2b and 3b.

Sector choice

Given NPC's extensive experience in the autism and youth offending sectors, along with their manageable sizes, these sectors were identified as appropriate for surveying. Again, our ambition was to draw attention to similarities and differences between sectors, but in practice we struggled to do so because of low response rates.

Based on the grants/contracts split described above and coverage of both the autism and the youth offending sectors, we decided to issue eight surveys in total:

- Funders: autism (grants), autism (contracts), youth offending (grants), youth offending (contracts)
- Charities: autism (grants), autism (contracts), youth offending (grants), youth offending (contracts)

In retrospect, this introduced significant complexity into the research without generating significant value.

Charity survey

Surveys were designed to gather data from autism and youth offending charities and were entered into the online survey tool Zoomerang (<http://www.zoomerang.com>).

Respondent targeting

For both the autism and youth offending charity surveys we attempted to create an initial respondent database which included all of the charities in each sector. This involved querying the Guidestar Data Services database (which covers all registered third sector organisations, www.gs-ds.co.uk) with the following categories and keywords and a lower limit of £10,000 in annual income:

Table 1: Guidestar query categories and keywords

Autism	Youth offending
<p>Categories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical/Health/Sickness • Disability • People with disabilities <p>Keywords</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “autism” • “autistic” • “autist” • “asperger” • “mental health” • “mental illness” • “ASD” 	<p>Categories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children/Young people <p>Keywords</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “crime” • “offending” • “delinquent” • “juvenile” • “prison” • “offence” • “ASBO” • “antisocial” • “conviction” • “convicted”

The databases returned were then manually screened to ensure the relevance of each charity within them. Charities without significant activity within either sector (at least one programme or project), or which had ceased to operate or exist, were removed.

The autism and youth offending respondent lists were randomly and evenly split in half, and each half assigned to receive either the grants or contracts survey. This created four respondent pools which between them covered virtually all operational autism and youth offending charities in England and Wales.

We applied two screening criteria to the charity respondents via early survey questions: receipt of public sector funding to provide services; and receipt of the ‘correct’ type of funding (that is, contracts or grants). For those who responded unsuitably to either question, the survey ended and they were thanked for their response. This yielded the following final groups:

Table 2: Charity recipients

Survey	Number of organisations
Autism charities (grants)	58
Autism charities (contracts)	57
Youth offending charities (grants)	62
Youth offending charities (contracts)	67
Total	244

Despite issuing four charity surveys, the questions only differed in wording with respect to the relevant sector and/or funding type. This allowed data sets to be combined, for example into those answering the contracts surveys (both autism and youth offending charities), those answering the autism surveys (both contracts and grants), and those responding to all four surveys (that is, all charity respondents). Having this flexibility was intended to allow the comparison of answers based on funding type or charity sector, but in practice the response rate was not high enough for this.

Recruitment method

Emails describing the research programme and asking for the appropriate recipient for the survey were sent ahead of the survey. Following this an email containing a link to the online survey was sent, followed by three email reminders. The instructions specified that a single response from a member of staff was sought from each recipient organisation. The email survey invitation offered recipients the chance to opt out of the survey and 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 however anonymised as soon as the data was downloaded for analysis. The contact details of those who expressed an interest in being interviewed were separated from the remainder of their response in order to preserve their anonymity.

All of the charities who had not completed the survey after three email reminders were contacted by telephone in an attempt to increase the response rate.

Response rate

The charity surveys were completed or partially completed by 80 of the 244 recipients (33%). This excludes those who were screened out by the early questions containing the two criteria described above. Since we surveyed all operational charities with income over £10,000 in the selected sectors, this response rate generated a powerful data set from which to draw findings and is a significant improvement on previous research response rates.

In retrospect, the second screening criterion which was applied via the survey (that is, receipt of the 'correct' type of funding, contracts or grants) could have been improved. Rather than bringing the survey to an end if a charity had not received any of the relevant kind of funding, we could have redirected the respondent to the other survey (contracts or grants). The high number of screen-outs we received is partly due to the format of this criterion.

Response bias

We compared the income distribution of the charities we surveyed with that of those who responded and with that of the Charity Commission's register. The latter contains charities in all sectors, and was therefore of limited use in establishing our response bias. Overall, we found a response bias towards charities with income of between £100,000 and £500,000 per year and charities with an income above £5m. However, since charities between these two brackets were slightly under-represented, we hypothesise that this is a product of the low response rate overall.

Geographically, the distribution of respondents mirrored that of the NCVO UK Civil Society Almanac national data to a large extent. The greatest discrepancy was the over-representation of London charities among respondents, though encouragingly, at least two responses were received from each region (see Table 4, below).

Table 3: Charity survey response bias (income)

Income	Charity Commission register**		Surveyed group		Responses	
	N	% of total	N	% of total	N	% of responses (response rate***)
£10,001 to £100,000	50,430	66%	60	20%	10	15% (17%)
£100,001 to £500,000	16,527	22%	118	38%	30	46% (25%)
£500,001 to £5m	7,658	10%	101	33%	17	26% (17%)
Above £5m	1,710	2%	28	9%	8	12% (29%)
Total	76,325	100%	307*	100%	65	100% (21%)

* This number includes those who screened out at the beginning of the survey.

** As of 31 December 2009.

*** 15 charities answered the survey via a replacement link which was issued when they had difficulty accessing the online survey. It was impossible to track the incomes of charities that used this link, therefore they do not feature in this table and are not included when calculating the response rates per income bracket; this renders the rates artificially lower than the average charity response rate (33%).

Table 4: Charity survey response bias (geography)

Region	NCVO UK Civil Society Almanac 2009		Surveyed group		Responses	
	N	% of total	N	% of total	N	% of responses (response rate**)
South East	25,320	17%	51	17%	12	18% (24%)
London	22,840	16%	86	28%	18	28% (21%)
South West	18,386	13%	25	8%	4	6% (16%)
East of England	17,236	12%	22	7%	4	6% (18%)
North West	13,874	10%	25	8%	7	11% (28%)
West Midlands	12,544	9%	18	6%	4	6% (22%)
East Midlands	11,457	8%	22	7%	8	12% (37%)
Yorkshire and The Humber	10,918	8%	26	8%	2	3% (8%)
Wales	7,994	6%	14	5%	2	3% (14%)
North East	4,767	3%	18	6%	4	6% (22%)
Total	145,336	100%	307*	100%	65	100% (21%)

* This number includes those who screened out at the beginning of the survey.

** Again, 15 charities could not be tracked, making these rates artificially low.

Qualitative follow-up

Each survey allowed respondents to volunteer to be interviewed as a follow-up to the survey. Eight charities were interviewed either by telephone or in person for between 40 and 70 minutes. The interviews aided our analysis of the survey data by highlighting key issues and provided qualitative data and a number of quotations used throughout this report.

Funder survey

Surveys were designed to gather data from local authority commissioners (in county, borough and district councils) and entered into the online survey tool Zoomerang (<http://www.zoomerang.com>). Throughout the research, the terms 'commissioners', 'public sector funders' and 'statutory funders' were used to refer to local authority staff responsible for awarding contracts and grants to charities to provide services.

Respondent targeting

We decided to create a database of commissioners to directly survey, 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 respondent pool chosen came from a database of local authority staff categorised by role, provided by Keystroke Knowledge Ltd. Pre-survey pools of 231 (autism) and 237 (youth offending) commissioners were selected by:

- requesting details of staff with responsibility for commissioning in the autism and/or youth offending sectors;
- excluding staff representing Scottish councils;
- excluding all irrelevant staff (staff who appeared to be responsible for neither autism nor youth offending charity funding);
- selecting the most relevant person from a council for each sample frame (autism/youth offending) where our database request returned more than one individual;
- identifying councils where one person appeared to be responsible for both autism and youth offending charity funding (n=75); splitting this group randomly in half and assigning half (38) to the autism sample frame and half (37) to the youth offending sample frame.

Each of the two databases was then split randomly and evenly in half to create two autism lists and two youth offending lists. One list from each sector was assigned the contracts funding survey, and the other of each was assigned the grants funding survey.

We then applied the following criteria to the four sample frames: provision of public sector funding (from county, borough and district councils) to autism/youth offending charities to provide services; and at least some provision of the 'correct' type of funding (grants/contracts, depending on the survey). Rather than doing this before sending the survey, we decided to issue the surveys and let those who did not meet the criteria filter themselves out. This was achieved through questions early in the survey which addressed the criteria and closed the rest of the survey to the funders who did not meet them. We believed that funders would be best placed to decide whether they met the criteria or not. This gave the following final sets:

Table 5: Commissioner recipients

Survey	Group size
Autism (grants)	110
Autism (contracts)	104
Youth offending (grants)	108
Youth offending (contracts)	108
Total	430

As with the charity survey, the wording of questions differed only with respect to the funding type and charity sector addressed, in order to preserve comparability.

Recruitment method

Emails describing the research programme and asking for the appropriate recipient for the survey were sent along with a link to the online survey. The instructions specified that a single response from a member of staff was sought for each email invitation. The 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 however anonymised as soon as the data was downloaded for analysis. The contact details of those who expressed an interest in being interviewed were separated from the remainder of their response in order to preserve their anonymity.

Those commissioners who had not completed the survey after email reminders were contacted by telephone in an attempt to increase the response rate.

Response rate

The survey was completed or partially completed by 10% of commissioners (excluding those screened out by criteria included in early survey questions). Several hypotheses serve to explain the low response rate from commissioners, which persisted despite email reminders and phone calls.

Firstly, responsibility for commissioning in the relevant sector (autism, youth offending) and through the relevant means (grants, contracts) varied widely within local authorities. For example, some councils have a department dedicated to commissioning and/or grant-making. In others responsibility lies within a specific department, such as: adult social care; youth offending services; community services; children families and adults; children and young people; community engagement; health and community services; strategy and development; partnership development and others. Within each of these departments, responsibility may be subdivided further according to the contracts/grants distinction. This made it very difficult to target the correct individual in each organisation, and resulted in many of our requests being forwarded on by original contacts (and presumably, in some cases, lost or ignored).

As well as this variation of responsibility within each local authority, there is also variation of responsibility across local authority hierarchies. Autism and youth offending services are provided at district/borough/city or county council level, depending on the area. This meant that in a number of cases, surveys were sent to two councils (for example, a county and a borough within that county) in pursuit of one response: this precluded the possibility of achieving a 100% response rate. Targeting of the correct individual was complicated yet further by recent local authority restructuring, particularly the

creation of Unitary Councils as of April 2009. In several cases, councils contacted cited this transition as the cause of their inability to respond.

Secondly, some local authorities cited a survey vetting policy which prevented them from responding to surveys not vetted by a certain organisation (for example, the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services).

Thirdly, several offices we contacted quoted the 'huge' amount of email enquiries and research requests they receive as commissioners as the reason why they had not been able to complete our survey.

Fourthly, as with the charity survey, the screening criterion used which required the correct 'type' of funding to be provided precluded some commissioners from responding when they could have done so for the parallel survey.

Response bias

Our surveyed group of commissioners included 296 unique councils in England and Wales. Attempting to calculate the size of this sample as a subset of all local authorities is very difficult for several reasons. Firstly, which number to use to represent all local authorities in England and Wales is unclear, given their complicated structure (which includes metropolitan and non-metropolitan counties, unitary authorities, metropolitan and non-metropolitan districts and boroughs, London boroughs and civil parishes). Moreover, as discussed above, only around one in three councils is responsible for commissioning of youth offending and/or autism services from charities, due to their structure. As a result, any examination of regional response bias regarding commissioner respondents in comparison to the national distribution of councils would not capture this 'hierarchy' bias.

Any such hierarchy bias is best captured in Table 6, below, which details the council type of those surveyed and those who responded. District, borough (including London Borough), metropolitan borough, and city councils comprise the 'lower' level of the two-tier structure. County and county borough councils govern wider areas and have greater powers. Where the two-tier structure has been updated, a unitary authority exists. The response rate for lower and upper tier councils was similar (a difference of 3%), confirming the hypothesis that responsibility for autism and youth offending commissioning exists in differing tiers depending on region. Had responses been concentrated among upper rather than lower tier councils, for example, this would have indicated that one tier is usually responsible for the commissioning of these services. In the absence of such a concentration, the only way to ensure comprehensive coverage of commissioners was to survey all of the councils, thereby precluding a 100% response rate as discussed above.

Table 6: Funder survey response bias (council hierarchy)

Council type	Surveyed group*		Responses*	
	N	% of total	N	% of responses (response rate)
District	58	20%	5	14% (9%)
Borough (inc. London Borough)	93	31%	13	35% (14%)
Metropolitan borough	27	9%	3	8% (11%)
City	38	13%	7	19% (18%)
Lower tier subtotal	216	73%	28	76% (13%)
County	38	13%	5	14% (13%)
County borough	10	3%	0	0%
Upper tier subtotal	48	16%	5	14% (10%)
Unitary authority	32	11%	4	11% (13%)
Total	296	100%	37**	100%

* Councils which received or responded to both the youth offending and autism survey have been counted only once for the purposes of this table.

** Four funders answered the survey via a replacement link which was issued when they had encountered difficulty accessing the online survey. It was impossible to track the councils that used this link, therefore they are not included in this table.

Qualitative follow-up research

As with the charity surveys, each survey allowed respondents to volunteer to be interviewed as a follow-up. Based on the availability of these volunteers, three commissioners were interviewed by telephone for between 40 and 70 minutes. The interviews aided our analysis of the survey data by highlighting key issues and provided qualitative data and a number of quotations used throughout this report.

Appendix 2a: Charity survey (autism, contracts)

The following questions were used in all four of the charity surveys, which differed only in the terminology used to reflect charity sector (autism or youth offending) and funding type (contracts or grants). The following survey asks autism charities about their contract funding.

Question 1: Are you answering this survey on behalf of a charity which receives some or all of its funding from local government (county, borough or district councils, excluding regional and central government) to provide services?

Yes

No

Question 2: If you would like to take part in further research on this topic by participating in a focus group or interview, please provide your name and email address below and we will contact you shortly. (Please note that your answer to this question will be separated from the rest of the survey in order to preserve your anonymity.)

Question 3: What proportion of your income came from local government funders (county, borough or district councils, excluding regional and national government) in your last full financial year?

All

Most (more than half)

Some

None

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

Exclusively contract funding

Majority contract funding

About an equal mix of contract and grant funding (including grants-in-aid or unrestricted funding)

Majority grant funding (including grants-in-aid or unrestricted funding)

Exclusively grant funding (including grants-in-aid or unrestricted funding)

From now on please answer with reference only to contracts (not grants or grants-in-aid/unrestricted funding).

Question 5: How many different county, district and borough councils awarded you contracts in your last full financial year?

From now on, this survey will use the term 'local government funders' to refer to county, borough and district councils only, excluding regional and central government.

Question 6: How many contracts were awarded to you by local government funders in your last full financial year? (Please give an approximate answer if you do not have this information to hand.)

Question 7: How often do your local government funders ask you to provide results monitoring information during the procurement process?

- Always
- Most (more than half) of the time
- Sometimes
- Never

Question 8: Which of the following types of results information, if any, do local government funders request from you during the procurement 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, better standard of living)
- Intended impacts (long-term outcomes)
- Other, please specify

Question 9: How often do funders' requests for results information require you to tailor the results information you provide during the procurement process? (NB this question refers both to information content and presentation.)

- Always
- Most (more than half) of the time
- Sometimes
- Never

Question 10: When you tailor the results information you provide to local government funders during the procurement process, how do you tailor it?

- Mostly in terms of content
- Mostly in terms of presentation
- Both in terms of content and presentation

Question 11: How would you describe the typical level of effort required of you to meet local government funders' requests for results information (during the procurement process)?

- More than proportionate to the size and duration of the contract
- Broadly proportionate to the size and duration of the contract
- Less than proportionate to the size and duration of the contract

Question 12: How satisfied are you with local government funders' requests for results information as part of the procurement process?

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

Question 13: What, if anything, could be improved about requests from local government funders for results information as part of the procurement process?

Question 14: Once a contract has been awarded, how often do your local government funders ask you for monitoring information about the results of your activities?

Always

Most (more than 50%) of the time

Sometimes

Never

Question 15: Which of the following types of results information, if any, do local government funders request from you as part of your monitoring of contracted 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 16: How would you describe the typical level of effort required of you to meet local government funders' requests for results information on contracted activities?

More than proportionate to the size and duration of the contract

Broadly proportionate to the size and duration of the contract

Less than proportionate to the size and duration of the contract

Question 17: If local government funders ask you for results information from the monitoring of contracted activities, how would you describe the frequency with which they ask for it?

Far too often

Too often

With appropriate frequency

Too infrequently

Far too infrequently

Question 18: How often do local government funders' requests for results information on contracted activities require you to tailor the results information you provide for them? (NB this question refers both to information content and presentation.)

Always

Most (more than 50%) of the time

Sometimes

Never

Question 19: When you tailor the results information you provide to local government funders about contracted activities, how do you tailor it?

Mostly in terms of content

Mostly in terms of presentation

Both in terms of content and presentation

Question 20: Do your local government funders provide funding for you to monitor the results of your contracted activities?

- Always
- Most (more than 50%) of the time
- Sometimes
- Never

Question 21: How is this funding provided (eg, grants-in-aid, restricted portion of contract, full cost recovery etc)?

Question 22: Is the funding provided by your local government funders for monitoring the results of your contracted activities adequate to meet their demands for results information?

- Always
- Most (more than 50%) of the time
- Sometimes
- Never

Question 23: How satisfied are you with local government funders' requests for results information from monitoring of contracted activities?

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

Question 24: What, if anything, could be improved about requests from local government funders for results information as part of your monitoring of contracted activities?

Question 25: What proportion of the results information you provide to local government funders as part of your monitoring of contracted activities is available in your annual report or on your webpage?

- All
- Most
- Some
- None

Question 26: How would you describe the role of results information (ie, information about outputs, outcomes and impacts) in your communication with local government funders?

- Important
- Somewhat important
- Not important

Question 27: How would you describe the role of results information (ie, information about outputs, outcomes and impacts) in local government funders' decision-making?

- Important
- Somewhat important
- Not important

Question 28: In which of the following ways, if any, do you believe local government funders have used your results information in the past year? (Tick all that apply.)

- Shortlist contract proposals
- Make a final selection between contract proposals
- Decide whether to provide non-financial assistance (training, infrastructure, equipment, loans) to charities under contract
- Decide whether to renew or expand contracts
- Decide to cancel contracts
- Report their performance
- Evaluate procurement programme
- Influence other public sector funders
- Inform public debate
- None of the above (if this is the case, tick only this box)
- Other, please specify

Question 29: In which three areas below do you think it is most important that local government funders use your results information? (NB select three (3) actions only.)

- Shortlist contract proposals
- Make a final selection between contract proposals
- Decide whether to provide non-financial assistance (training, infrastructure, equipment, loans) to charities under contract
- Decide whether to renew or expand contracts
- Decide to cancel contracts
- Report their performance
- Evaluate procurement programme
- Influence other public sector funders
- Inform public debate
- None of the above (if this is the case, tick only this box)

Question 30: Do funders provide you with non-financial assistance to help you with your monitoring and evaluation work (eg, training courses, signposting of resources)?

- Always
- Most (over 50%) of the time
- Sometimes
- Never

Question 31: Would you like your local government funders to provide more non-financial assistance to help you with your monitoring 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 32: Have you received external support for your results monitoring and evaluation work? (For example: external evaluations; provision of frameworks/tools; consulting services; training from consultants; third-sector infrastructure organisations; umbrella organisations.)

Yes

No

Don't know

Question 33: Have your local government funders funded external support for your monitoring and evaluation work? (For example: external evaluations; provision of frameworks/tools; consulting services; training from consultants; third-sector infrastructure organisations; umbrella organisations.)

Yes

No

If yes, please provide examples

Question 34: What are the benefits of external support for monitoring and evaluation?

Question 35: What are the disadvantages of external support for monitoring and evaluation?

Appendix 2b: Charity survey data tables

This appendix contains data tables for the closed questions in our charity surveys. Responses from the four surveys are collapsed together by question. 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 (80) (unless otherwise stated). Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

Question 1: Are you answering this survey on behalf of a charity which receives some or all of its funding from local government (county, borough or district councils, excluding regional and central government) to provide services?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	99	77%
No	29	23%
Total	128	100%

Question 3: What proportion of your income came from local government funders (county, borough or district councils, excluding regional and national government) in your last full financial year?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
All	1	1%
Most (more than half)	31	42%
Some	42	57%
None	1	1%
Total	75	100%

* 75 respondents out of 80 (94%) answered this question.

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

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Exclusively contract funding	8	11%
Majority contract funding	40	54%
About an equal mix of contract and grant funding (including grants-in-aid or unrestricted funding)	11	15%
Majority grant funding (including grants-in-aid or unrestricted funding)	9	12%
Exclusively grant funding (including grants-in-aid or unrestricted funding)	6	8%
Total	74	100%

* 74 respondents out of 80 (93%) answered this question.

Question 7: How often do your local government funders ask you to provide results monitoring information during the procurement/grant application and selection process?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Always	32	52%
Most (more than half) of the time	18	30%
Sometimes	7	11%
Never	4	7%
Total	61	100%

* 61 respondents out of 80 (76%) answered this question.

Question 8: Which of the following types of results information, if any, do local government funders request from you during the procurement/grant application and 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)	46	58%
Intended outcomes (the results of an activity, eg, raised awareness, increased confidence, better standard of living)	49	61%
Intended impacts (long-term outcomes)	33	41%
Other, please specify	7	9%

* Percentage of N (80)

Question 9: How often do funders' requests for results information require you to tailor the results information you provide during the procurement/grant application and selection process? (NB this question refers both to information content and presentation.)

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Always	16	29%
Most (more than half) of the time	22	40%
Sometimes	15	27%
Never	2	4%
Total	55	100%

* 55 respondents out of 80 (69%) answered this question.

Question 10: When you tailor the results information you provide to local government funders during the procurement process/grant application and selection, how do you tailor it?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Mostly in terms of content	6	12%
Mostly in terms of presentation	11	22%
Both in terms of content and presentation	34	67%
Total	51	100%

* 51 respondents out of 80 (64%) answered this question.

Question 11: How would you describe the typical level of effort required of you to meet local government funders' requests for results information (during the procurement/grant application and selection process)?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
More than proportionate to the size and duration of the contract/grant	28	50%
Broadly proportionate to the size and duration of the contract/grant	25	45%
Less than proportionate to the size and duration of the contract/grant	3	5%
Total	56	100%

* 56 respondents out of 80 (70%) answered this question.

Question 12: How satisfied are you with local government funders' requests for results information as part of the procurement/grant application and selection process?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very satisfied	4	8%
Quite satisfied	38	72%
Quite dissatisfied	7	13%
Very dissatisfied	4	8%
Total	53	100%

* 53 respondents out of 80 (66%) answered this question.

Question 14: Once a contract has been awarded/grant has been made, how often do your local government funders ask you for monitoring information about the results of your activities?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Always	34	61%
Most (more than half) of the time	14	25%
Sometimes	6	11%
Never	2	4%
Total	56	100%

* 56 respondents out of 80 (70%) answered this question.

Question 15: Which of the following types of results information, if any, do local government funders request from you as part of your monitoring of contracted/grant-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)	47	59%
Outcomes (the results of an activity, eg, raised awareness, increased confidence, fall in number of crimes)	47	59%
Impacts (long-term outcomes)	32	40%
Other, please specify	10	13%

* Percentage of N (80)

Question 16: How would you describe the typical level of effort required of you to meet local government funders' requests for results information on contracted/grant-funded activities?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
More than proportionate to the size and duration of the contract/grant	25	48%
Broadly proportionate to the size and duration of the contract/grant	26	50%
Less than proportionate to the size and duration of the contract/grant	1	2%
Total	52	100%

* 52 respondents out of 80 (65%) answered this question.

Question 17: If local government funders ask you for results information from the monitoring of contracted/grant-funded activities, how would you describe the frequency with which they ask for it?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Far too often	2	4%
Too often	10	20%
With appropriate frequency	36	71%
Too infrequently	3	6%
Far too infrequently	0	0%
Total	51	100%

* 51 respondents out of 80 (64%) answered this question.

Question 18: How often do local government funders' requests for results information on contracted/grant-funded activities require you to tailor the results information you provide for them? (NB this question refers both to information content and presentation.)

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Always	18	34%
Most (more than half) of the time	22	42%
Sometimes	12	23%
Never	1	1%
Total	53	100%

* 53 respondents out of 80 (66%) answered this question.

Question 19: When you tailor the results information you provide to local government funders about contracted/grant-funded activities, how do you tailor it?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Mostly in terms of content	5	10%
Mostly in terms of presentation	8	16%
Both in terms of content and presentation	36	74%
Total	49	100%

* 49 respondents out of 80 (61%) answered this question.

Question 20: Do your local government funders provide funding for you to monitor the results of your contracted/grant-funded activities?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Always	3	6%
Most (more than half) of the time	3	6%
Sometimes	20	38%
Never	27	51%
Total	53	100%

* 53 respondents out of 80 (66%) answered this question.

Question 22: Is the funding provided by your local government funders for monitoring the results of your contracted/grant-funded activities adequate to meet their demands for results information?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Always	3	12%
Most (more than half) of the time	4	15%
Sometimes	15	58%
Never	4	15%
Total	26	100%

* 26 respondents out of 80 (33%) answered this question. This represents 100% of those answering 'Sometimes', 'Most (more than half) of the time' or 'Always' to question 20.

Question 23: How satisfied are you with local government funders' requests for results information from monitoring of contracted/grant-funded activities?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very satisfied	1	2%
Quite satisfied	38	72%
Quite dissatisfied	10	19%
Very dissatisfied	4	8%
Total	53	100%

* 53 respondents out of 80 (66%) answered this question.

Question 25: What proportion of the results information you provide to local government funders as part of your monitoring of contracted/grant-funded activities is available in your annual report or on your webpage?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
All	3	6%
Most	11	21%
Some	31	59%
None	8	15%
Total	53	100%

* 53 respondents out of 80 (66%) answered this question.

Question 26: How would you describe the role of results information (ie, information about outputs, outcomes and impacts) in your communication with local government funders?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Important	30	58%
Somewhat important	22	42%
Not important	0	0%
Total	52	100%

* 52 respondents out of 80 (65%) answered this question.

Question 27: How would you describe the role of results information (ie, information about outputs, outcomes, and impacts) in local government funders' decision-making?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Important	34	65%
Somewhat important	14	27%
Not important	4	8%
Total	52	100%

* 52 respondents out of 80 (65%) answered this question.

Question 28: In which of the following ways, if any, do you believe local government funders have used your results information in the past year? (Tick all that apply.)

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Shortlist contract proposals/grant applicants	29	36%
Make a final selection between contract proposals/grant applicants	25	31%
Decide whether to provide non-financial assistance (training, infrastructure, equipment, loans) to charities under contract/grant-funded charities	9	11%
Decide whether to renew or expand contracts/grants	41	51%
Decide to cancel contracts/grants	13	16%
Report their performance	32	40%
Evaluate procurement/grant programme	25	31%
Influence other public sector funders	7	9%
Inform public debate	7	9%
None of the above (if this is the case, tick only this box)	0	0%
Other, please specify	7	9%

* Percentage of N (80)

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 that 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.

Question 29: In which three areas below do you think it is most important that local government funders use your results information? (NB select three (3) actions only.)

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Shortlist contract proposals/grant applicants	24	30%
Make a final selection between contract proposals/grant applicants	28	35%
Decide whether to provide non-financial assistance (training, infrastructure, equipment, loans) to charities under contract/grant-funded charities	8	10%
Decide whether to renew or expand contracts/grants	36	45%
Decide to cancel contracts/grants	11	14%
Report their performance	21	26%
Evaluate procurement/grant programme	16	20%
Influence other public sector funders	17	21%
Inform public debate	17	21%
None of the above (if this is the case, tick only this box)	0	0%
Other, please specify	0	0%

* Percentage of N (80)

Question 30: Do funders provide you with non-financial assistance to help you with your monitoring and evaluation work (eg, training courses, signposting of resources)?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Always	0	0%
Most (more than half) of the time	1	2%
Sometimes	27	52%
Never	24	46%
Total	52	100%

* 52 respondents out of 80 (65%) answered this question.

Question 31: Would you like your local government funders to provide more non-financial assistance to help you with your monitoring work?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, if the total amount of financial assistance available stayed the same	34	65%
Yes, even if the total amount of financial assistance would be smaller	3	6%
No	15	20%
Total	52	100%

* 52 respondents out of 80 (65%) answered this question.

Question 32: Have you received external support for your results monitoring and evaluation work? (For example: external evaluations; provision of frameworks/tools; consulting services; training from consultants; third-sector infrastructure organisations; umbrella organisations.)

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	24	45%
No	28	53%
Don't know	1	2%
Total	53	100%

* 53 respondents out of 80 (66%) answered this question.

Question 33: Have your local government funders funded external support for your monitoring and evaluation work? (For example: external evaluations; provision of frameworks/tools; consulting services; training from consultants; third-sector infrastructure organisations; umbrella organisations.)

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	8	32%
No	17	68%
Total	25	100%

* 25 respondents out of 80 (31%) answered this question.

Appendix 3a: Commissioner survey (youth offending, grants)

The following questions were used in all four of the commissioner surveys, which differed only in the terminology used to reflect the sector (autism or youth offending) and funding type (contracts or grants). The following survey asks commissioners about their grant-funding of youth offending charities.

Question 1: Are you answering this survey on behalf of a county, borough or district council that provides some funding to charities that provide services to young offenders or young people at risk of offending?

Yes

No

Question 2: If you would like to take part in further research on this topic by participating in a focus group or interview, please provide your name and email address below and we will contact you shortly. (Please note that your answer to this question will be separated from the rest of the survey in order to preserve your anonymity.)

From this point, 'charities' and 'grantees' will refer only to charities that provide services to young offenders or young people at risk of offending.

Question 3: Which of the following best describes your charity funding?

Exclusively contract funding

Majority contract funding

About an equal mix of contract and grant funding (including grants-in-aid or unrestricted funding)

Majority grant funding (including grants-in-aid or unrestricted funding)

Exclusively grant funding (including grants-in-aid or unrestricted funding)

From now on please answer with reference only to grants (not contracts or grants-in-aid/unrestricted funding).

Question 4: How many different charities did you fund through grants in your last financial year? (Please give an approximate answer if you do not have this information to hand.)

Question 5: How many grants did you make to charities in your last full financial year? (Please give an approximate answer if you do not have this information to hand.)

Question 6: How much funding (in £) did you distribute in grants to charities in your last full financial year? (Please give an approximate answer if you do not have this information to hand.)

Question 7: How often do you ask charities to provide information about past or intended results during the grant application/selection process?

Always

Most (more than half) of the time

Sometimes

Never

Question 8: Which of the following types of results information, if any, do you request from charities during the grant application/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, better standard of living)

Intended impacts (long-term outcomes)

Other, please specify

Question 9: Do you take into account charities' compliance with any quality standards during the grant application/selection process? Please give details.

Question 10: How would you describe the typical level of effort required of charities to meet your requests for results information (during the grant application/selection process)?

More than proportionate to the size and duration of the grant

Broadly proportionate to the size and duration of the grant

Less than proportionate to the size and duration of the grant

Question 11: How would you describe the quantity of information you receive in response to such requests (during the grant application/selection process)?

More than sufficient

Sufficient

Insufficient

Question 12: How satisfied are you with the quality of information you receive in response to such requests (during the grant application/selection process)?

Very satisfied

Quite satisfied

Quite dissatisfied

Very dissatisfied

Question 13: What, if anything, could be improved about the results information charities provide you with as part of your grant application/selection process?

Question 14: How often do you ask charities to provide information from results monitoring after a grant has been made?

Always

Most (more than 50%) of the time

Sometimes

Never

Question 15: Which of the following types of results information, if any, do you request from charities after a grant has been made? (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 16: How would you describe the typical level of effort required of charities to meet your requests for results information once a grant has been made?

More than proportionate to the size and duration of the grant

Broadly proportionate to the size and duration of the grant

Less than proportionate to the size and duration of the grant

Question 17: How would you describe the quantity of information you receive in response to such requests (once a grant has been made)?

- More than sufficient
- Sufficient
- Insufficient

Question 18: How satisfied are you with the quality of information you receive in response to such requests (once a grant has been made)?

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

Question 19: Do you provide funding for charities to monitor the results of their grant-funded activities?

- Always
- Most (more than half) of the time
- Sometimes
- Never

Question 20: How is this funding for monitoring of results provided (eg, grants-in-aid, full cost recovery etc)?

Question 21: What, if anything, could be improved about the results information you receive from grant-funded charities as part of their reporting of funded activities?

Question 22: How would you describe the role of results information (ie, information about outputs, outcomes and impacts) in your funding decisions? (For examples of funding decisions, see below.)

- Important
- Somewhat important
- Not important

Question 23: In which of the following ways, if any, have you used results information from charities in the past year (during the grant application/selection process and/or once a grant has been made)? (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 grant-funded charities
- Decide whether to renew or expand grants
- Decide to cancel grants
- Report your performance
- Evaluate grant programme
- Influence other public sector funders
- Inform public debate
- None of the above (if this is the case, tick only this box)
- Other, please specify

Question 24: In which three areas below do you think it is most important that local government funders use results information from charities (during the grant application/selection process and/or once a grant has been made)? (Tick only three (3) options.)

Shortlist grant applicants

Make a final selection between grant applicants

Decide whether to provide non-financial assistance (training, infrastructure, equipment, loans) to grant-funded charities

Decide whether to renew or expand grants

Decide to cancel grants

Report your performance

Evaluate grant programme

Influence other public sector funders

Inform public debate

None of the above (if this is the case, tick only this box)

Other, please specify

Question 25: Are there any obstacles to your use of results information from charities for these or other purposes?

Question 26: Do you provide non-financial assistance to charities to help them with their monitoring work once a grant has been made (eg, training courses, signposting of resources)?

Always

Most (over 50%) of the time

Sometimes

Never

Question 27: If you do provide such non-financial assistance, please provide examples.

Question 28: As far as you know, have any of your grant-funded charities received external support for their monitoring work? (For example, external evaluations, provision of frameworks/tools, consulting services, training from consultants, third-sector infrastructure organisations, umbrella organisations.)

Yes

No

Don't know

Question 29: If yes, please provide examples.

Question 30: Have you funded external support for charities' monitoring work once a grant has been made? (For example, external evaluations, provision of frameworks/tools, consulting services, training from consultants, third-sector infrastructure organisations, umbrella organisations.)

Yes

No

Question 31: If yes, please provide examples. If no, why not?

Question 32: What are the benefits of external support for monitoring and evaluation?

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

Appendix 3b: Commissioner survey data tables

This appendix contains data tables for the closed questions in all four of the funder surveys. 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 (41) (unless otherwise stated). Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

Question 1: Are you answering this survey on behalf of a county, borough or district council that provides some funding to charities that provide services to young offenders or young people at risk of offending/people with autism?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	49	68%
No	23	32%
Total	72	100%

Question 3: Which of the following best describes your charity funding?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Exclusively contract funding	7	19%
Majority contract funding	9	24%
About an equal mix of contract and grant funding (including grants-in-aid or unrestricted funding)	7	19%
Majority grant funding (including grants-in-aid or unrestricted funding)	6	16%
Exclusively grant funding (including grants-in-aid or unrestricted funding)	8	22%
Total	37	100%

* 37 respondents out of 41 (90%) answered this question.

Question 7: How often do you ask charities to provide information about past or intended results during the grant application/selection process?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Always	20	80%
Most (more than half) of the time	1	4%
Sometimes	2	8%
Never	2	8%
Total	25	100%

* 25 respondents out of 41 (61%) answered this question.

Question 8: Which of the following types of results information, if any, do you request from charities during the procurement/grant application and 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)	19	46%
Intended outcomes (the results of an activity, eg, raised awareness, increased confidence, fall in number of crimes)	19	46%
Intended impacts (long-term outcomes)	14	34%
Other, please specify	5	21%

* Percentage of N (41)

Question 10: How would you describe the typical level of effort required of charities to meet your requests for results information (during the procurement/grant application and selection process)?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
More than proportionate to the size and duration of the contract/grant	1	5%
Broadly proportionate to the size and duration of the contract/grant	20	91%
Less than proportionate to the size and duration of the contract/grant	1	5%
Total	22	100%

* 22 respondents out of 41 (54%) answered this question.

Question 11: How would you describe the quantity of information you receive in response to such requests (during the procurement/grant application and selection process)?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
More than sufficient	2	9%
Sufficient	19	86%
Insufficient	1	5%
Total	22	100%

* 22 respondents out of 41 (54%) answered this question.

Question 12: How satisfied are you with the quality of information you receive in response to such requests (during procurement/grant application and selection process)?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very satisfied	7	32%
Quite satisfied	14	64%
Quite dissatisfied	0	0%
Very dissatisfied	1	5%
Total	22	100%

* 22 respondents out of 41 (54%) answered this question.

Question 14: How often do you ask charities to provide information from results monitoring after a grant has been made?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Always	22	88%
Most (more than half) of the time	0	0%
Sometimes	0	0%
Never	3	12%
Total	25	100%

* 25 respondents out of 41 (61%) answered this question.

Question 15: Which of the following types of results information, if any, do you request from charities after a contract has been awarded/grant has been made? (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)	18	44%
Outcomes (the results of an activity, eg, raised awareness, increased confidence, fall in number of crimes)	18	44%
Impacts (long-term outcomes)	14	34%
Other, please specify	2	5%

* Percentage of N (80)

Question 16: How would you describe the typical level of effort required of charities to meet your requests for results information (once a contract has been awarded/grant has been made)?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
More than proportionate to the size and duration of the contract/grant	1	5%
Broadly proportionate to the size and duration of the contract/grant	19	95%
Less than proportionate to the size and duration of the contract/grant	0	0%
Total	20	100%

* 20 respondents out of 41 (49%) answered this question.

Question 17: How would you describe the quantity of information you receive in response to such requests (once a contract has been awarded/grant has been made)?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
More than sufficient	0	0%
Sufficient	18	95%
Insufficient	1	5%
Total	19	100%

* 19 respondents out of 41 (46%) answered this question.

Question 18: How satisfied are you with the quality of information you receive in response to such requests (once a contract has been awarded/grant has been made)?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very satisfied	4	20%
Quite satisfied	16	80%
Quite dissatisfied	0	0%
Very dissatisfied	0	0%
Total	20	100%

* 20 respondents out of 41 (49%) answered this question.

Question 19: Do you provide funding for charities to monitor the results of their contract/grant-funded activities?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Always	8	38%
Most (more than half) of the time	2	10%
Sometimes	4	19%
Never	7	33%
Total	21	100%

* 21 respondents out of 41 (51%) answered this question.

Question 22: How would you describe the role of results information (ie, information about outputs, outcomes and impacts) in your funding decisions? (For examples of funding decisions, see below.)

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Important	13	72%
Somewhat important	5	28%
Not important	0	0%
Total	18	100%

* 18 respondents out of 41 (44%) answered this question.

Question 23: In which of the following ways, if any, have you used results information from charities in the past year (during the procurement/grant application and selection process and/or once a contract/grant has been made)? (Tick all that apply.)

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Shortlist contract proposals/grant applicants	9	22%
Make a final selection between contract proposals/grant applicants	11	27%
Decide whether to provide non-financial assistance (training, infrastructure, equipment, loans) to funded charities	5	12%
Decide whether to renew or expand contracts/grants	15	37%
Decide to cancel contracts/grants	9	22%
Report your performance	16	39%
Evaluate contract/grant programme	11	27%
Influence other public sector funders	4	10%
Inform public debate	4	10%
None of the above (if this is the case, tick only this box)	1	2%
Other, please specify	3	7%

* Percentage of N (41)

Question 24: In which three areas below do you think it is most important that local government funders use results information from charities (during the procurement/grant application and selection process and/or once a contract/grant has been made)? (Tick only three (3) options.)

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Shortlist contract proposals/grant applicants	7	17%
Make a final selection between contract proposals/grant applicants	9	22%
Decide whether to provide non-financial assistance (training, infrastructure, equipment, loans) to funded charities	8	20%
Decide whether to renew or expand contracts/grants	14	34%
Decide to cancel contracts/grants	10	24%
Report your performance	8	20%
Evaluate contract/grant programme	6	15%
Influence other public sector funders	4	10%
Inform public debate	5	12%
None of the above (if this is the case, tick only this box)	0	0%
Other, please specify	1	2%

* Percentage of N (41)

Question 26: Do you provide non-financial assistance to charities to help them with their monitoring work once a contract has been awarded/grant has been made (eg, training courses, signposting of resources)?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Always	5	26%
Most (more than half) of the time	5	26%
Sometimes	7	37%
Never	2	11%
Total	19	100%

* 19 respondents out of 41 (46%) answered this question.

Question 28: As far as you know, have any of your contract/grant-funded charities received external support for their monitoring work? (For example, external evaluations, provision of frameworks/tools, consulting services, training from consultants, third-sector infrastructure organisations, umbrella organisations.)

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	8	42%
No	2	11%
Don't know	9	47%
Total	19	100%

* 19 respondents out of 41 (46%) answered this question.

Question 30: Have you funded external support for charities' monitoring work once a contract has been awarded/grant has been made? (For example, external evaluations, provision of frameworks/tools, consulting services, training from consultants, third-sector infrastructure organisations, umbrella organisations.)

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	4	21%
No	15	79%
Total	19	100%

* 19 respondents out of 41 (46%) answered this question.

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Other NPC publications

Published research

Research reports are focused on specific areas of charitable activity in the UK unless otherwise stated.

Community

- **Trial and error:** *Children and young people in trouble with the law (2010)*
- **Breaking the cycle:** *Charities working with people in prison and on release (2009)*
- **Short changed:** *Financial exclusion (2008)*
- **Lost property:** *Tackling homelessness in the UK (2008)*
- **Hard knock life:** *Violence against women (2008)*
- **When I'm 65:** *Ageing in 21st century Britain (2008)*
- **Not seen and not heard:** *Child abuse (2007)*
- **A long way to go:** *Young refugees and asylum seekers in the UK (2007)*
- **Home truths:** *Adult refugees and asylum seekers (2006)*
- **Inside and out:** *People in prison and life after release (2005)*
- **Grey matters:** *Growing older in deprived areas (2004)*
- **Side by side:** *Young people in divided communities (2004)*
- **Local action changing lives:** *Community organisations tackling poverty and social exclusion (2004)*
- **Charity begins at home:** *Domestic violence (2003)*

Education

- **Getting back on track:** *Helping young people not in education, employment or training in England (2009)*
- **Inspiring Scotland:** *14:19 Fund (2008)*
- **After the bell:** *Out of school hours activities for children and young people (2007)*
- **Lean on me:** *Mentoring for young people at risk (2007)*
- **Misspent youth:** *The costs of truancy and exclusion (2007)*
- **Read on:** *Literacy skills of young people (2007)*
- **On your marks:** *Young people in education (2006)*
- **What next?:** *Careers education and guidance for young people (2005)*
- **School's out?:** *Truancy and exclusion (2005)*
- **Making sense of SEN:** *Special educational needs (2004)*

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- **Heads up:** *Mental health of children and young people (2008)*
- **A life less ordinary:** *People with autism (2007)*
- **What price an ordinary life?** *Financial costs and benefits of supporting disabled children and their families (2007)*
- **Don't mind me:** *Adults with mental health problems (2006)*
- **Valuing short lives:** *Children with terminal conditions (2005)*
- **Ordinary lives:** *Disabled children and their families (2005)*
- **Out of the shadows:** *HIV/AIDS in Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda (2005)*
- **The hidden assassin:** *Cancer in the UK (2004)*
- **Caring about dying:** *Palliative care and support for the terminally ill (2004)*

- **Rhetoric to action:** *HIV/AIDS in South Africa (2003)*

Environment

- **Green philanthropy:** *Funding charity solutions to environment problems (2007)*

International

- **Giving in India:** *A guide for funders and charities (2009)*
- **Starting strong:** *Early childhood development in India (2009)*
- **Philanthropists without borders:** *Supporting charities in developing countries (2008)*
- **Going global:** *A review of international development funding by UK trusts and foundations (2007)*

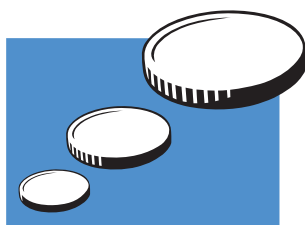
Improving the charity sector

- **The business of philanthropy:** *Building the philanthropy advice market (2010)*
- **The little blue book:** *NPC's guide to analysing charities, for charities and funders (2010)*
- **Targeting support:** *Needs of groups helped by the Bankers Benevolent Fund (2009)*
- **Achieving more together:** *Foundations and new philanthropists (2009)*
- **What place for mergers between charities?** (2009)
- **Board matters:** *A review of charity trusteeship in the UK (2009)*
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- **Feelings count:** *Measuring children's subjective well-being for charities and funders (2009)*
- **How are you getting on?** *Charities and funders on communicating results (2009)*
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- **Valuing potential:** *An SROI analysis on Columba 1400 (2008)*
- **Funding success:** *NPC's approach to analysing charities (2005)*
- **Full cost recovery:** *A guide and toolkit on cost allocation (2004, published by NPC and acevo)*
- **Surer Funding:** *Improving government funding of the voluntary sector (2004, published by acevo)*
- **Funding our future II:** *A manual to understand and allocate costs (2002, published by acevo)*

NPC's research reports and summaries are available to download free from www.philanthropycapital.org.



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We provide independent research, tools and advice for funders and charities, and shape the debate about what makes charities effective.

We have an ambitious vision: to create a world in which charities and their funders are as effective as possible in improving people's lives and creating lasting change for the better.

- For charities, this means focusing on activities that achieve a real difference, using evidence of results to improve performance, making good use of resources, and being ambitious to solve problems. This requires high-quality leadership and staff, and good financial management.
- For funders, this means understanding what makes charities effective and supporting their endeavours to become effective. It includes using evidence of charities' results to make funding decisions and to measure their own impact.

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