



Charities and stakeholders

This resource is a brief view of the way in which the charitable sector and beneficiaries engage and why some service gaps exist. As well as some useful information about where to find support for your VCS organisation when those service gaps are noticed.

Did you know that only 32% of charities actively seek out beneficiaries according to the Charity Commission? A whopping 71% of charities say that beneficiaries are identified by those who seek their support.

35% of all charities say they would like to help more people, however they don't because of two main reasons.

- First there is not always the infrastructure in place to take on more beneficiaries
- Secondly because they are aware of charitable law which states that the beneficiaries supported must be supported in a way that meets their charitable objects.

On most occasions only 39% of charities make a referral for further support when an external need is identified. This indicates that there is currently a large gap in the service provision that the beneficiaries are able to access.

28% of the general public when asked said they would be embarrassed to receive a service from a charity. There is therefore a large stigma associated with the uptake of charitable services, unfortunately, this does lead to some of the people most in need in our communities slipping through the cracks and spiralling into a deeper state of crisis at which point assistance can be crucial and complex.

When a person who is reluctant to engage reaches crisis point and finally does seek assistance from a charity, it is possible that more than one issue is apparent, e.g. perhaps loss of employment leads to debt, this may lead to rent arrears, not being able to afford food and eventually eviction from their home. This crisis would need multiple support agencies to become involved within their area of purpose or charitable objects. As such there is definitely need for charities to take a more proactive approach when referring a person to those services where they are not in a position to help themselves.

Did you know that 28% of charity beneficiaries do volunteer for the charity themselves, showing that there is a deal of gratitude for service received? For those who say they are embarrassed to ask for support, it is worth mentioning volunteer opportunities to make the person feel as though there is mutual benefit to be had, thus removing some stigma for those who are perhaps too proud to ask for something for free.

Charities are obviously very concerned to support beneficiaries, there is also great respect and appreciation for the work that charities do for those beneficiaries, there is always however room to improve the support that is given. According to the FSI the demand for charity sector services has steadily increased overall, in six of seven cause types considered. With the increase being across the majority of causes it is hard to say comparatively if these cases are simply a more consistent demand for services, or if they imply an increasingly more perilous or acute social concern.

Obviously we all must comply with GDPR and so must not ask for more information than what is needed. Though we must be mindful of possible complexities in a situation in support of safeguarding, e.g. where it is apparent an adult person may have become a victim of financial abuse and thus are seeking financial aid, then there is a duty to ensure any underlying issues being addressed. Ensure any safeguarding concerns are reported to the Adult Protection Officer within the organisation who will be responsible for referring concerns to other referral agencies. If your organisation is struggling to cope with the complexity of referring, struggling with governance, infrastructure or funding then contact your local authority for more information.

Find your local authority here: <https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council> If your concern is based in Rotherham why not try the RMBC online service with these forms: <http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/forms>