



# Headline analysis of the voluntary & community sector in Kent

December 2023

# Executive Summary

The Civil Society strategy for Kent was agreed in 2021 and recognises the role of civil society in Kent and charities as a core part of that. It sets out our commitments to supporting a strong and vibrant civil society in Kent and to recognising the contribution of charities and voluntary organisations to our local communities.

We have been developing for a number of years, our local data to help us have a greater understanding of all registered charities in Kent, their size, scope and the health of the sector, which will enable us to benchmark against the national picture and understand the significant role charitable organisations play in Kent.

This data was collated into our first report launched in 2016 showing headline analysis of the sector in Kent and has now been refreshed with some additional trend analysis as a result of the work we have undertaken. This data is helping us to understand how charities in Kent are changing over time and the health and diversity of the sector. Our findings provide facts and figures to support the anecdotal evidence that a diverse and vibrant sector exists in Kent.

It is worth noting that the data over recent years will likely be impacted by the effects of Covid 19; the reduction in voluntary income through fundraising during that time alongside the increase in government grant funding, which was awarded to the sector via national funders and local authorities. Therefore, we suggest some caution is applied when analysing this data.

## ***Size and Scope***

There are 3,041 registered charities in Kent with a total income of over £455.4m, up from £424.2m in the previous year (2020/21). There is a slight reduction in the number of active charities in 2021/22. 34 registered as new in 2021/22 however 66 were removed from the register. The majority of active organisations are micro and small although the highest proportion of income comes from large organisations. Most charities in Kent are providing services, with the most common beneficiaries the general public, followed by children and young people. Charities are distributed unevenly with concentrations in major urban areas, within individual districts.

## ***Income and growth***

A small number of large charities are still responsible for almost half of the sectors income in Kent; this is similar to the national picture although there are very few major and no super major charities in Kent, which nationally hold much of the sectors income.

The last few years have been economically difficult for all sectors, however registered charities in Kent have seen a real term increase in their income of 8.9% since 2017/18, equating to a £33.7m cash increase. Major and large organisations have seen a cash growth of £39.1m, however medium, small and micro organisations saw an overall cash reduction of £5.4m. We will continue to monitor this picture as we recognise the financial challenges organisations are facing and are yet to fully understand the impact of both Covid 19 and inflationary pressures on the sector.

## ***KCC Funding***

KCC spent £146.4m with registered charities in 2021/22, with £9.2m of this in grants. The majority of grants go to support the general public and are given to large and medium sized charities. £8.2m of the grant spend made by KCC in 2020/21 went to charities based mainly in Kent. Both grant funding and total spend increased from 2020/21.

## ***A significant employer***

The charitable sectors contribution to the local economy is significant and charitable organisations over 500K alone employ 8,303 employees, making them one of the largest employers in the County with around 14,317 volunteers across major, large and medium organisations.

## ***Next steps....***

The data within this report is a welcome reminder of the significance of the charitable sector in Kent and therefore it is intended that this data will continue to be refreshed annually to support our future commissioning and relationship with the sector in Kent.

**Produced by:**

Kent Analytics &

Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance

Kent County Council

[www.kent.gov.uk/research](http://www.kent.gov.uk/research)

# Contents

## Table of Contents

1. [Size & Scope](#)
2. [Beneficiaries](#)
3. [Geography](#)
4. [Income](#)
5. [Income Growth](#)
6. [Income Growth contd.](#)
7. [KCC Funding](#)
8. [KCC grants](#)
9. [Funds](#)
10. [Workforce](#)
11. [Methodology](#)

## Introduction

Kent figures are based on data from the Charity Commission's Register of Charities in England and Wales from 2021/22. The register recorded 3,041 registered charities active in Kent.

The following analysis based on the Charity Commission data uses the "general charities" definition. This definition takes all registered charities as a base, but excludes certain categories of charity such as independent schools, faith charities, and those controlled by government and others.

This analysis does not include those regional or national charities that are based outside of Kent area but operate services within it. As accurate information on the exact locations of charitable spending is not available, the figures presented here are likely to underestimate total charitable activity in the area. Similarly large national and international charities that are based in the area have been excluded from the definition, as their activities mainly take place outside the area.

Also note that charities may continue to be registered even if there is no current activity. The analysis below looks at those with current activity in any given year.

# Size & Scope

*This analysis uses the definition "general charities" (see methodology section).*

There are

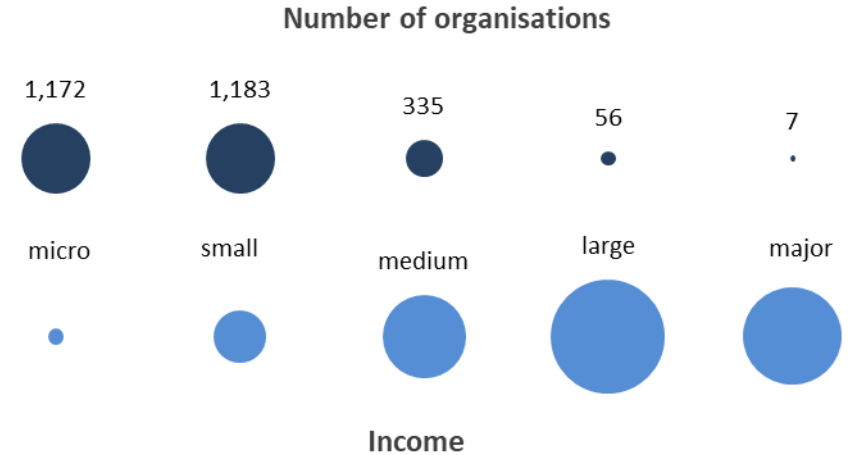
# 3,041

active voluntary organisations in Kent

with a total income of over

# £455.4m

**The majority of the sector consists of small organisations**



**however the majority of income comes from large organisations**

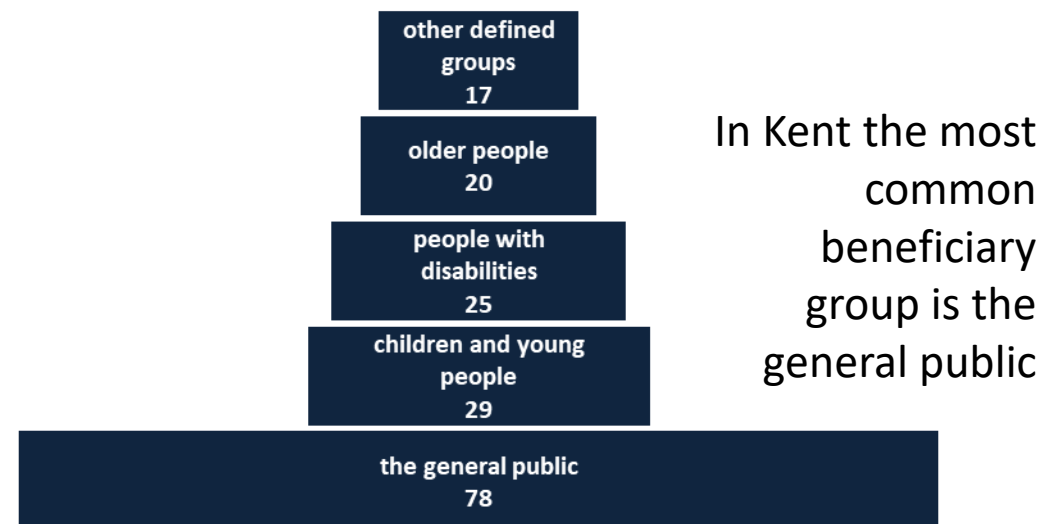
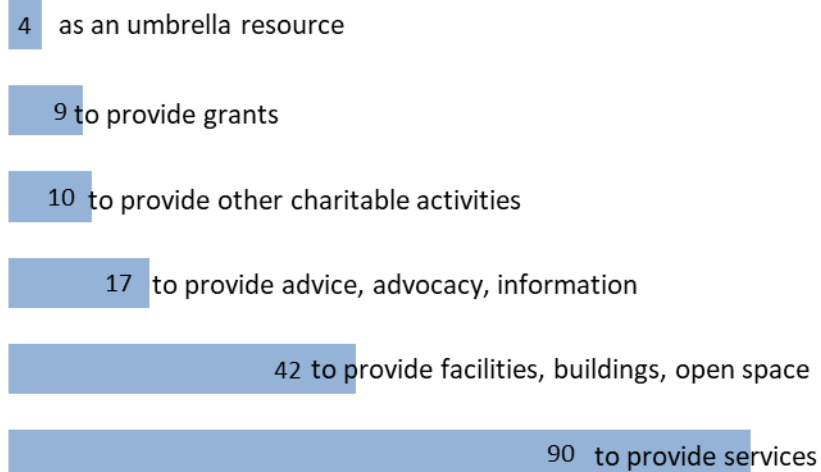
# 34

new charities registered as new organisations in Kent in 2021/22

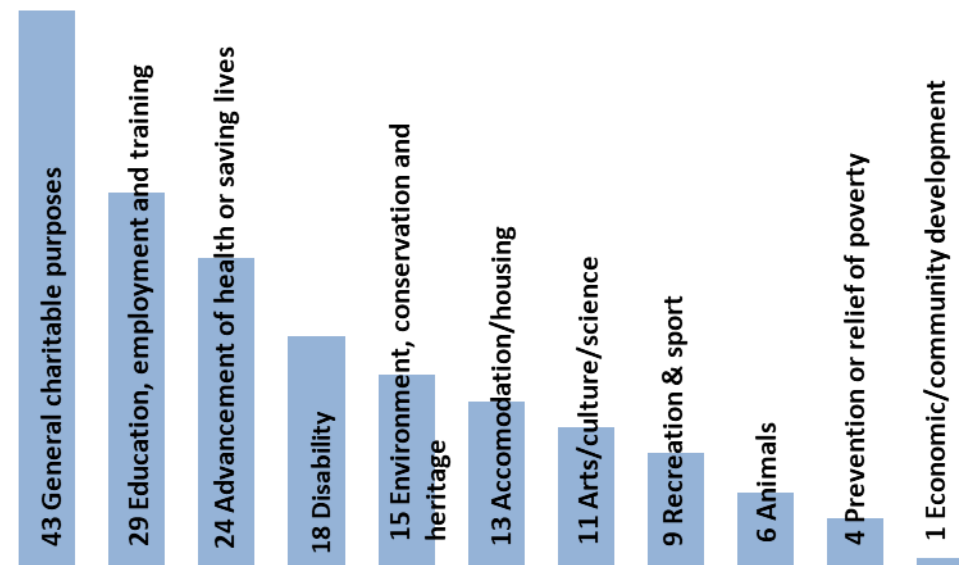
# Beneficiaries

*The 193 charities in Kent with income over £250k in 2021/22 help a range of clients with a variety of support for a variety of reasons*

In Kent the most common activity of voluntary organisations is to provide services

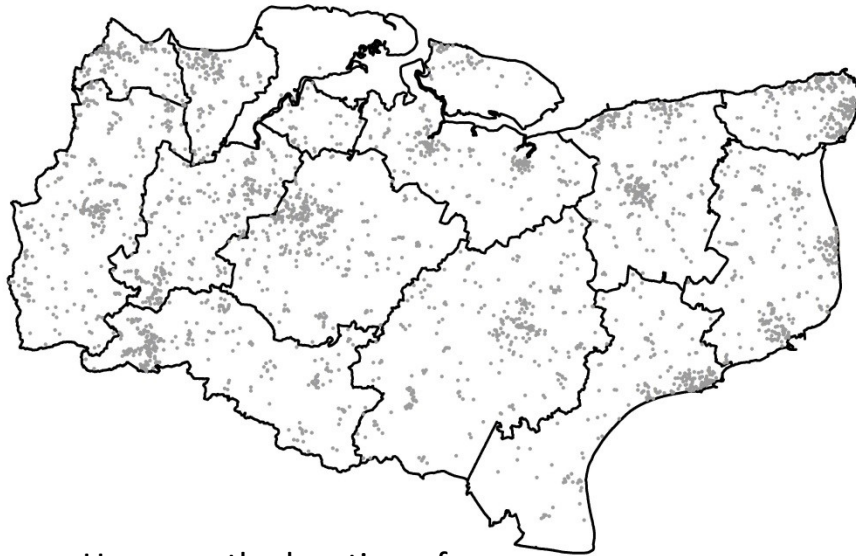


The most common purpose of voluntary organisations is General charitable purposes



# Geography

Charities are distributed unevenly across Kent with concentrations in the major urban areas of each district

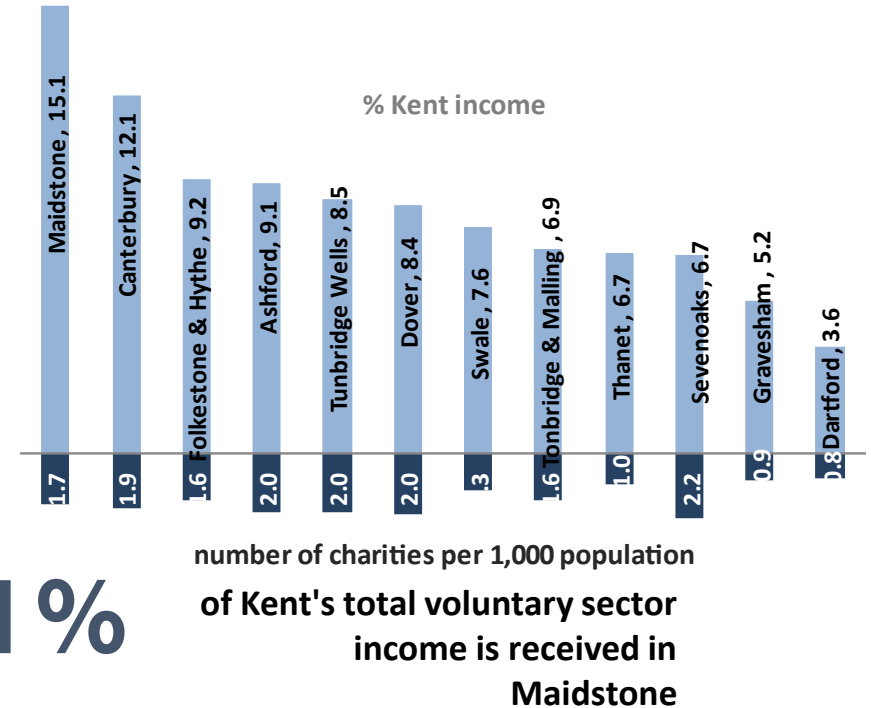


However the location of the charities reflects where they are registered and not necessarily where their main activity is

Sevenoaks has the highest number of registered charities with

**2.2**  
for every 1,000 residents

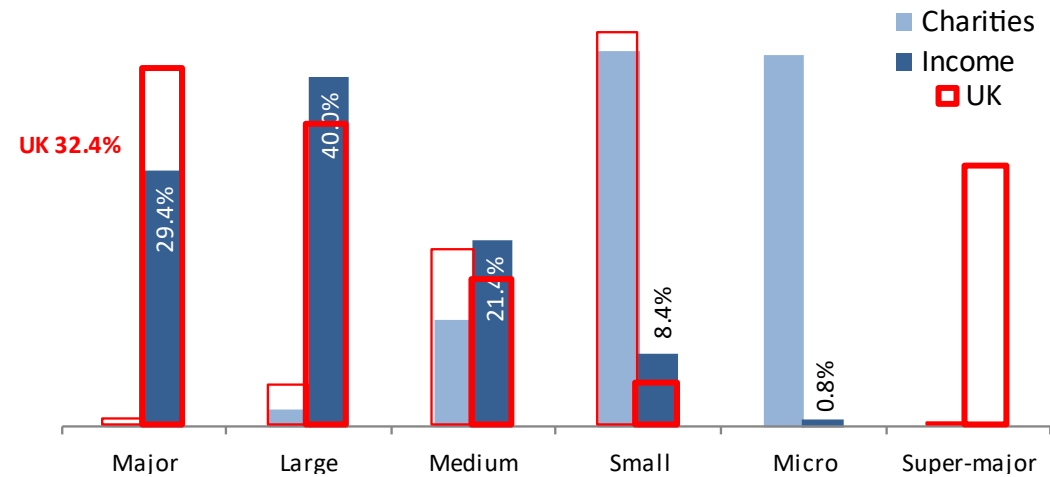
Excluding those organisations with income of £2m+ Maidstone accounts for the highest % of Kent's voluntary sector income



**15.1%**

# Income

**A small number of large charities are responsible for almost half the voluntary sector income in Kent**



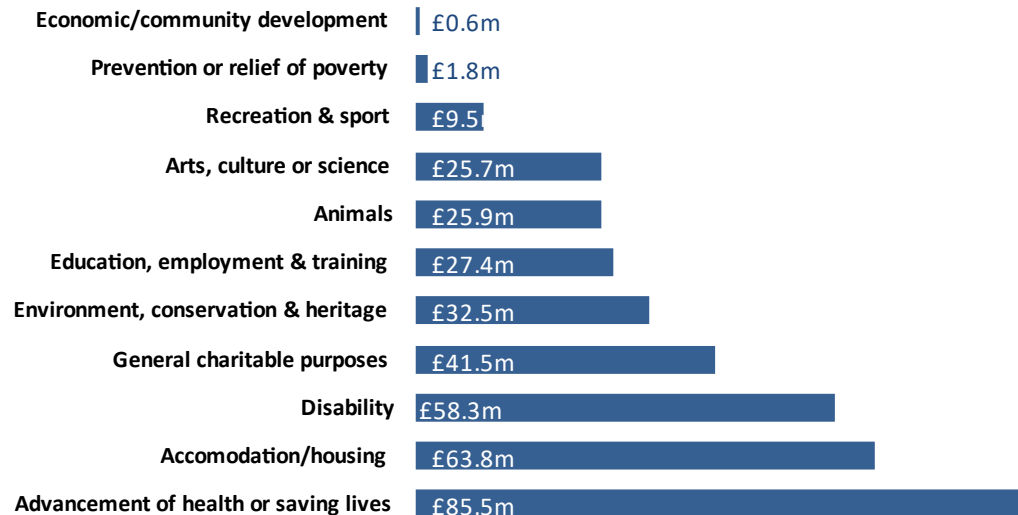
*The top 3 organisations in Kent with highest income in 2021/22:*

**Avante Care and Support Limited**

**PILGRIMS HOSPICES IN EAST KENT**

**The Howletts Wild Animal Trust**

*These are categorised as major sized organisations*



**Those organisations with income of £250k and above whose purpose is the advancement of health or saving lives account for 22.9% of the sector income in Kent**

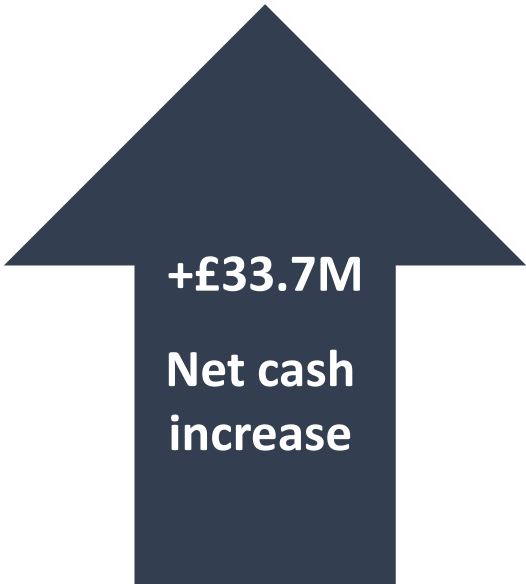
# Income Growth

This section shows the **nominal** and the **real** income growth within the sector. The percentage growth shows the **real** growth once an adjustment has been made to reflect inflation. The cash growth reflects the **nominal** cash growth with no adjustment made. This measure only counts those organisations which have been registered for the full 5 years and have submitted financial records for the full 5 years.

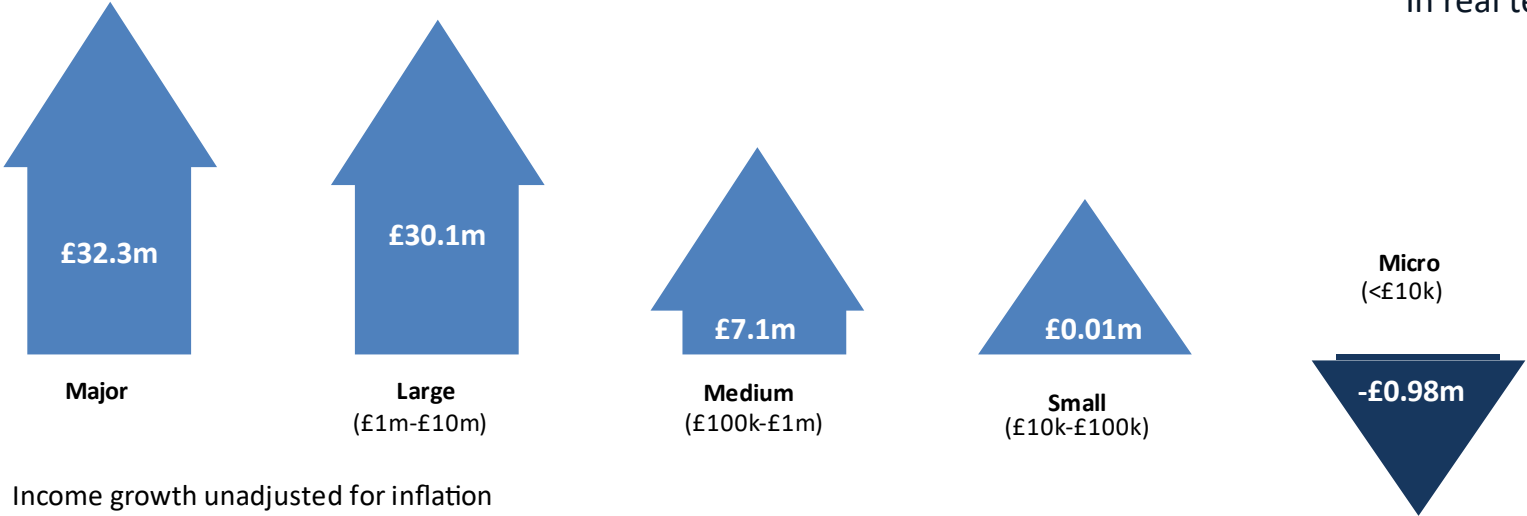
**In real terms the Kent voluntary sector saw an income decrease of 8.9% since 2017/18**

Major organisations saw the biggest cash increase since 2017/18, in real terms this results in an overall 21.5% increase in income

*When adjusted for inflation micro, small and medium organisations saw a combined cash decrease of £5.4m while large and major organisations saw a combined increase of £39.1m*



Micro organisations saw an overall cash decrease of £0.98m over the last 5 years. In real terms this represents a reduction of 31.8%





# Income Growth contd.

Of the 335 medium and large organisations that have been registered & submitted accounts for the full 5 years

18

Organisations saw an increase in income every year.  
This equates to £45.7m increase in income overall.

4

Organisations saw a reduction in income every year.  
This equates to -£0.5m in total income overall.

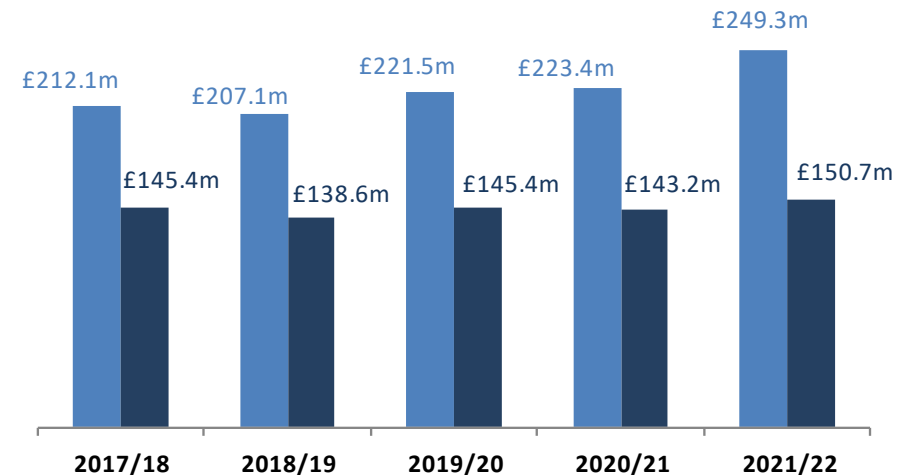
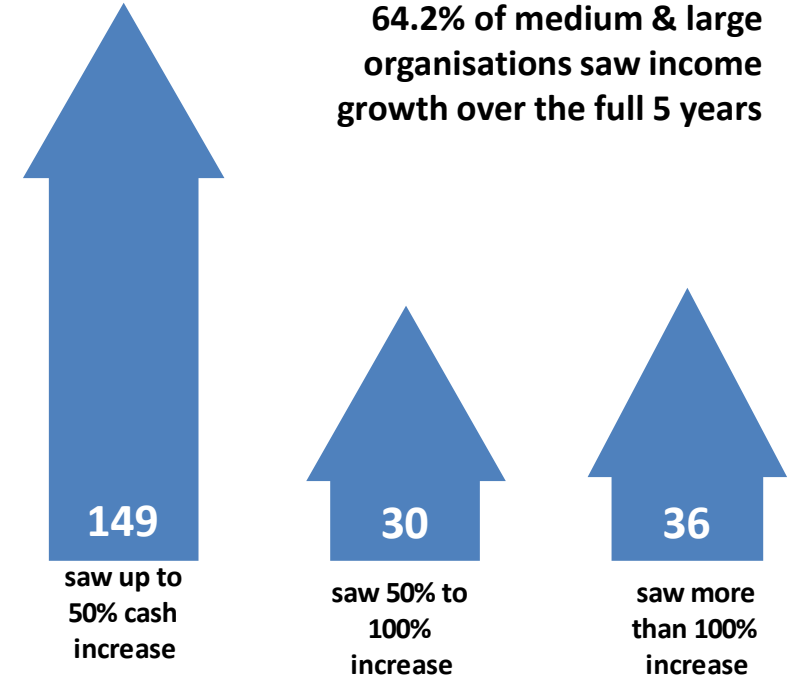
The total income of medium and large organisations registered for the full 5 years

increased to £249.3m  
increased by 17.6% over 5 years

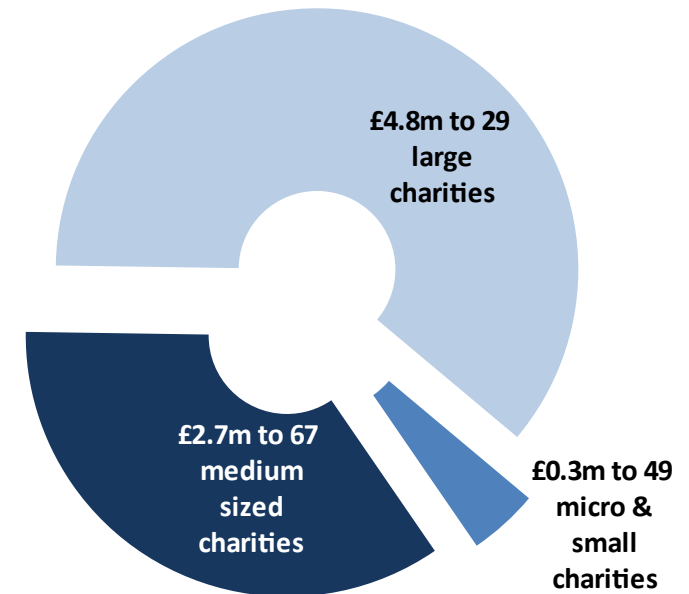
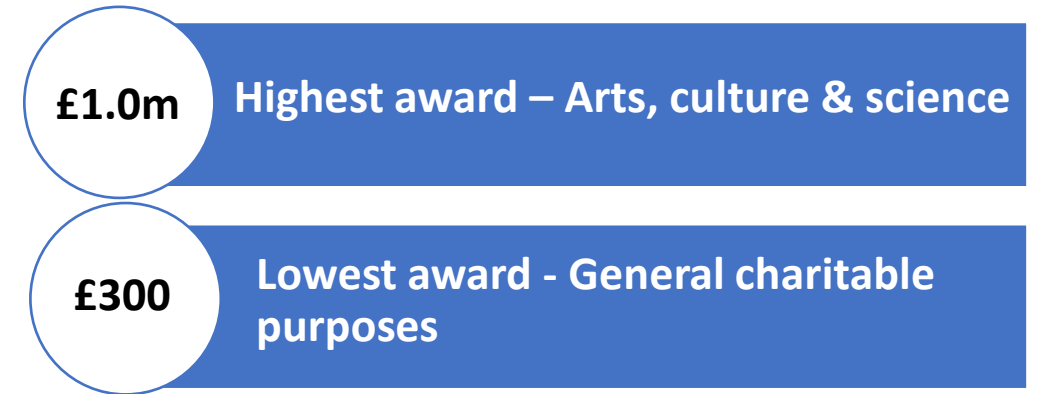
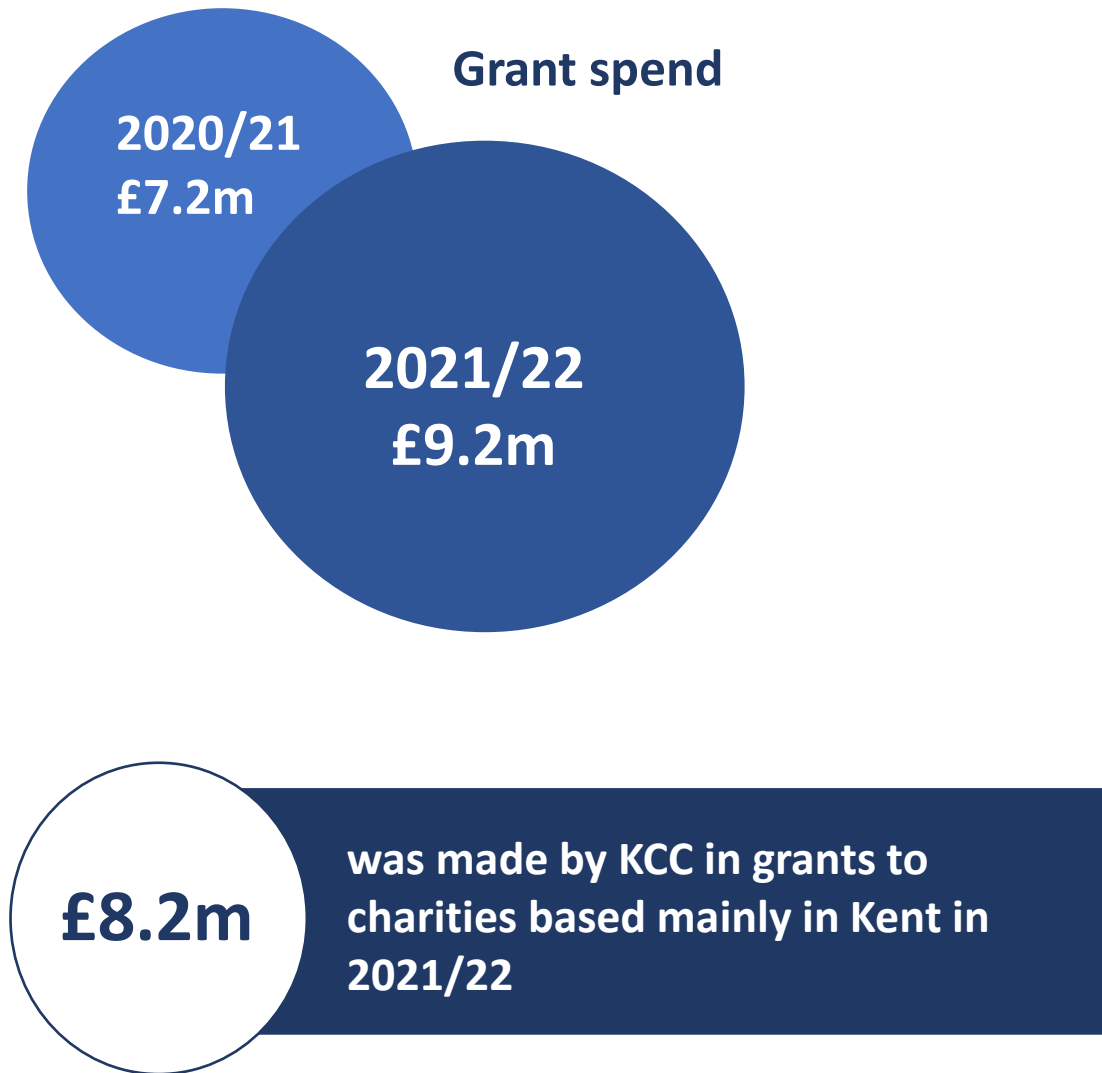
The income of the organisations that have received KCC funding in 2021/22

£150.7m  
increased by 3.7% over 5 years

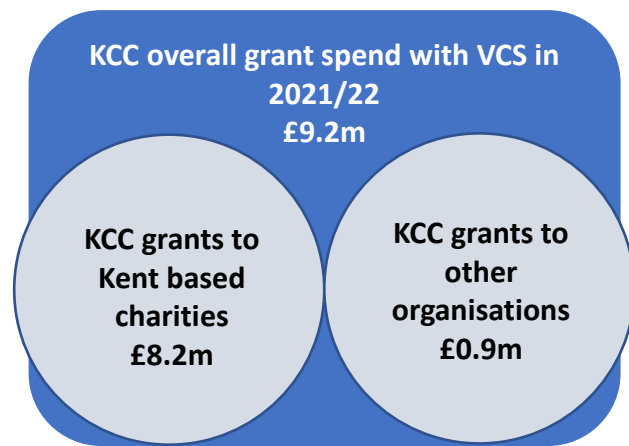
64.2% of medium & large organisations saw income growth over the full 5 years



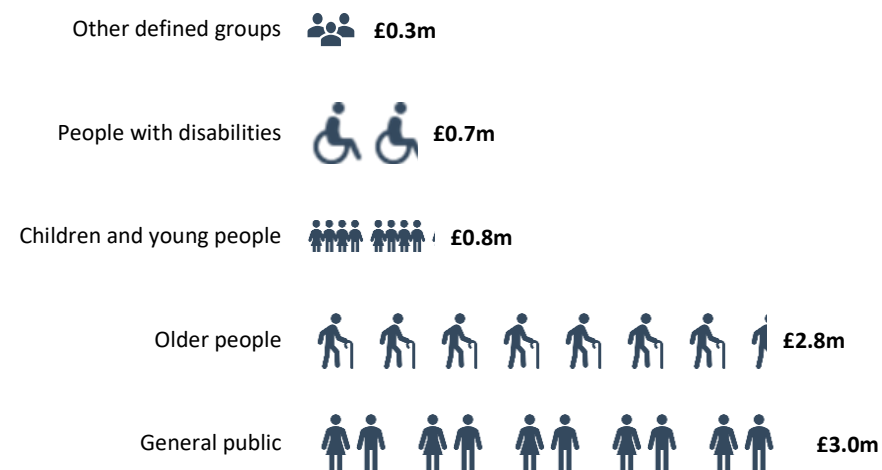
# KCC Funding



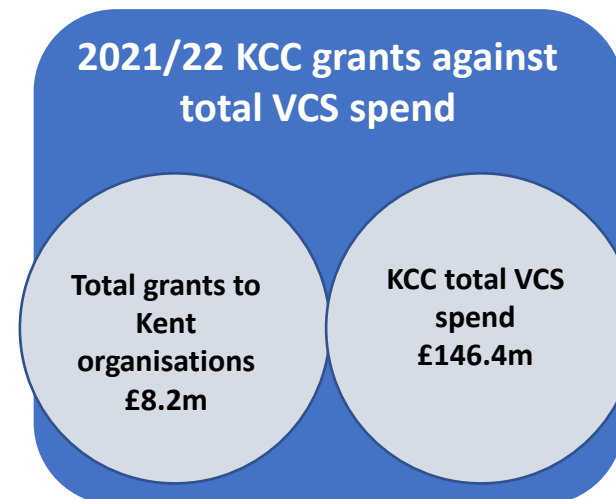
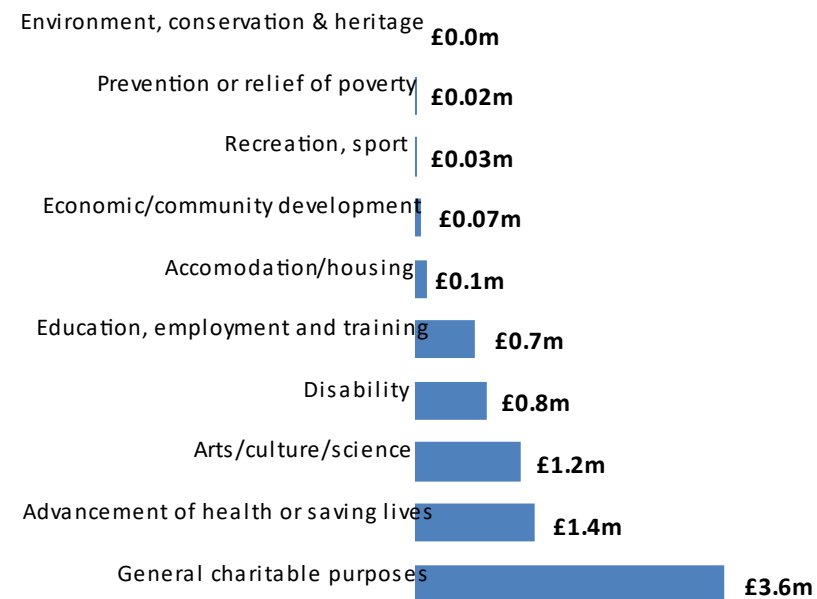
# KCC grants



**39.5% of KCC grants to organisations in Kent in 2021/22 went to help the general public.**



**44.9% of KCC grants to organisations in Kent in 2021/22 went to general charitable purposes**



# Funds

In 2021/22 114 charities in Kent with income of £500k and above had 4.4 months income held in cash. This means they could be considered prudent and better able to meet current obligations using liquid assets

**114 charities in Kent that had an annual income of £500k and above, held a combined cash amount of £131.3m**

56.1% of charities in Kent with income of £500k and above in 2021/22 had at least 4 months income held in cash

20 charities	28 charities	64 charities
Less than 2 months cash	2 to 4 months cash	More than 4 months cash



**Average cash funds for 4.4 months**

**31.6% had more than 6 months income held in cash**

These organisations held:

Fixed Assets (incl investments)	£469.5m
Current Assets	£287.2m of which £131.3m is cash
Creditors	-£64.9m short term -£25.9m long term
Pension liability	-£8.7m
Total Net Assets	£552.1m

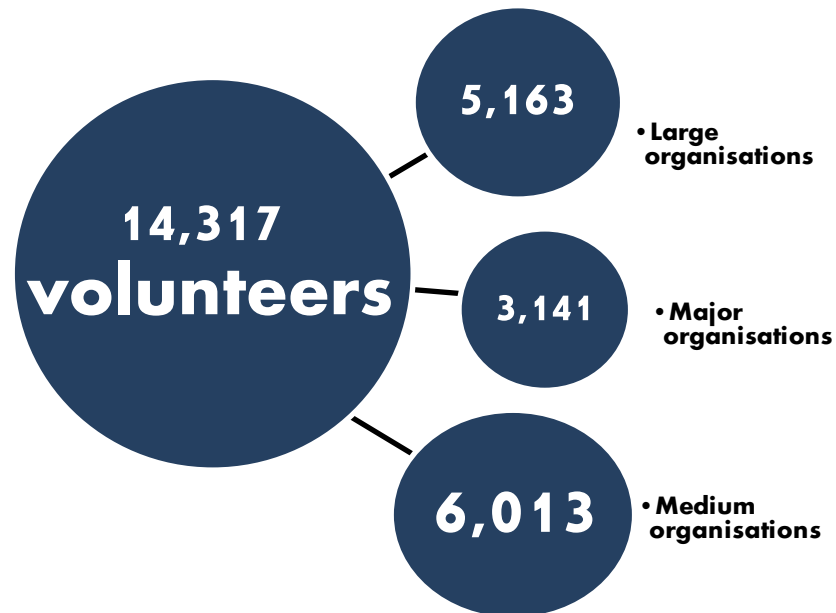
# Workforce

Community Life Survey - National Figures;  
UK Civil Society Almanac 20223  
Kent Figures - Charity Commission data



**Nationally 57.6%  
of females took  
part in  
volunteering  
compared to  
51.5% of males**

**42% of  
volunteers in  
Kent are  
within  
medium sized  
charitable  
organisations**



**2.9% of the UK workforce were employed in the  
voluntary sector.**

**Kent organisations with income  
£500m+ employ**



**Nationally 67.4%  
of voluntary  
sector employees  
are females**

# Methodology

## Voluntary sector definition

This analysis uses the Charity Commission "general charities" definition. This definition takes all registered charities as a base, but excludes certain categories of charity such as independent schools, faith charities, and those controlled by government and others.

Charity income sizebands are defined as:

Micro - Less than £10,000

Small - £10,000 to £100,000

Medium - £100,000 to £1m

Large - £1m to £10m

Major - £10m to £100m

Super major - more than £100m

## Voluntary sector methodology

All data has been through a rigorous cleansing process to exclude records where the area of operation of the charity falls outside the Kent County Council area. Charities based outside Kent may still be included within the count of organisations if their area of operation is mainly within Kent.

## Workforce

Employment figures are based on Labourforce Survey/Annual population Survey data from the Office for National Statistics.  
Civil Society Almanac 2023 - National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)

## KCC Funding

The definition of the VCS supported by Kent County Council is much broader than that used elsewhere in this summary.  
This definition may include faith charities and charities linked to schools. It may also include social enterprises.

## Income Growth

The percentage income growth is calculated using a GDP deflator. The GDP deflator can be viewed as a measure of general inflation in the domestic economy. Therefore **real** growth shows the income growth once an adjustment has been made to reflect inflation.

## Data sources

Register of Charities, Charities Commission  
Community Life Survey, The Cabinet Office  
Annual Population Survey, Office for National Statistics  
Civil Society Almanac 2023 - National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)  
Kent County Council

For further information about this report please contact the Kent County Council Policy Team by email at: [PSRpolicy@kent.gov.uk](mailto:PSRpolicy@kent.gov.uk)

## This report has been produced on behalf of the Policy Team by:

Kent Analytics,  
Chief Executive's Department  
Kent County Council

Telephone: 03000 417444  
Email: [research@kent.gov.uk](mailto:research@kent.gov.uk)  
Web: [www.kent.gov.uk/research](http://www.kent.gov.uk/research)