Community Food Strategy Stakeholder Survey

March 2022

Approach

- This work was commissioned by Welsh Government from Four Cymru

- Online survey served bilingually to people involved in community food projects/enterprises in Wales

- Participants were recruited through email and social media

- Number of completes: **87**

Survey results

Community food tended to be synonymous with 'locally grown food'

Q1. What does the term 'community food' mean to you?

87 respondents

From the answers analysed that focused on the most mentioned definitions of 'community food':

- 38% mentioned 'community food' as synonymous to 'locally grown food'

- 16% thinks it means food that is healthy, organic and fresh

- 15% mentioned that it means food is accessible to the community

- 12% thinks that community food is discounted or free of cost

- 11% mentioned that community food promotes resilient and sustainable food production

- 7% thinks that community food is for community members that are in need (i.e. the homeless)

Vegetable provision/veg box schemes were among the most mentioned types of food projects

Q2. What community food project/enterprise are you involved in?
Please provide details such as: name, location and type of activity, etc.

87 respondents

Most participants were **involved in more than one type of community food project**

From the answers analysed that focused on the most mentioned types of food projects:
- 25% mentioned vegetable provision/veg box schemes
- 24% mentioned food banks
- 24% mentioned community gardens
- 18% referred to local farming initiatives
- 9% mentioned local government/council food provision initiatives

When comparing the consumer with the B2C survey results:
- Veg boxes were not in the most mentioned project types among consumers
- Food banks and local farming initiatives were among the most mentioned for consumers, as well as for enterprise representatives

Specific locations in Wales in more than two occasions:
- 46% mentioned Swansea
- 33% mentioned Cardiff
- 21% referred to Wrexham

CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) was the most mentioned type of community food production and marketing

Respondents referred to multiple project location other than the most mentioned ones

Q2. What community food project/enterprise are you involved in?
Please provide details such as: name, location and type of activity, etc. –
additional locations

Most mentioned:
Swansea, Cardiff and Wrexham

Other locations mentioned:
Uplands , Cornelly , Pemberton, Dwfor, Llanelli, Neath, Marford, Flintshire, Caerleon, Bryncae, Ammanford, Chirk, Pembroke Dock, Merthyr Tydfil, Trowbridge, Carmarthen, Narberth, Bai Colwyn Bay, Cowbridge, Crynant, Burry, Cilgerran, st Dogmaels, Newtown, Aberfan

Majority of mentioned projects/enterprises involve more than 41 members

Q3. Apart from yourself, how many other people are involved in this project/enterprise?
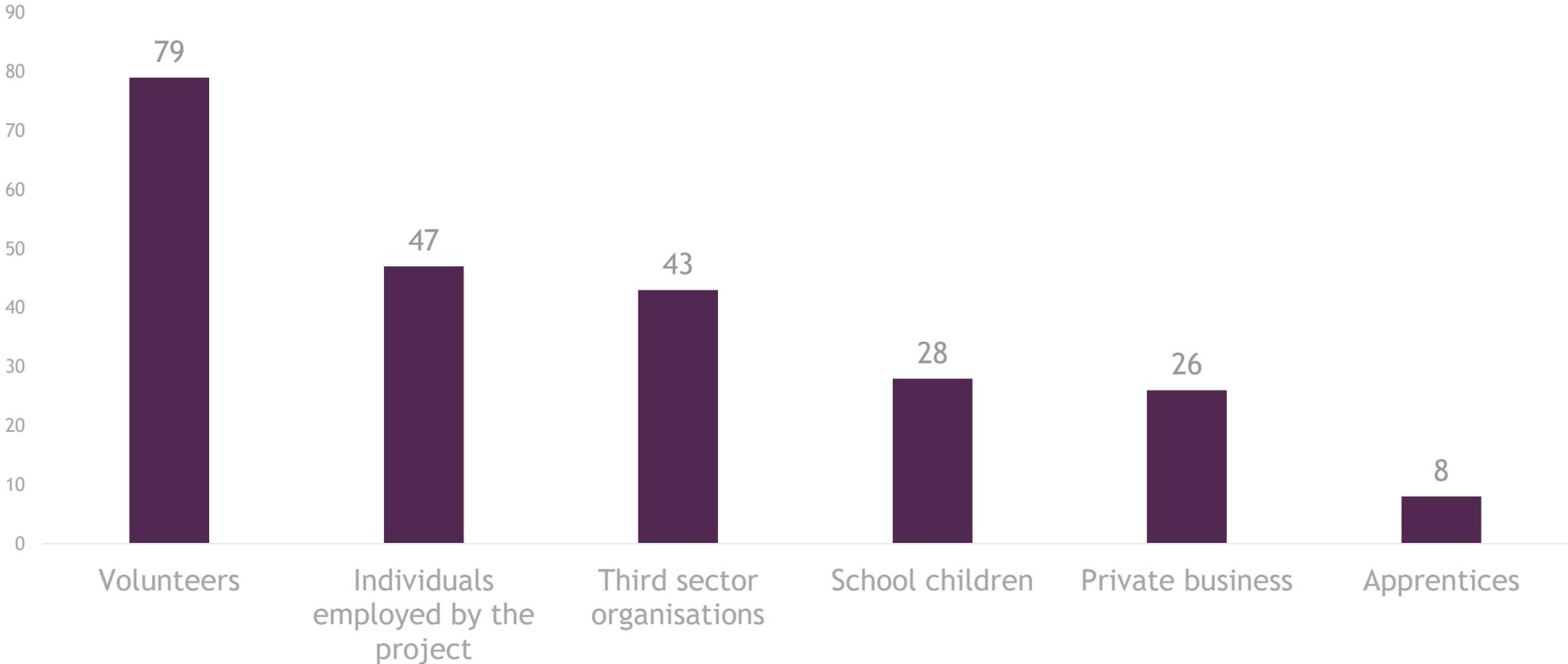
87 respondents
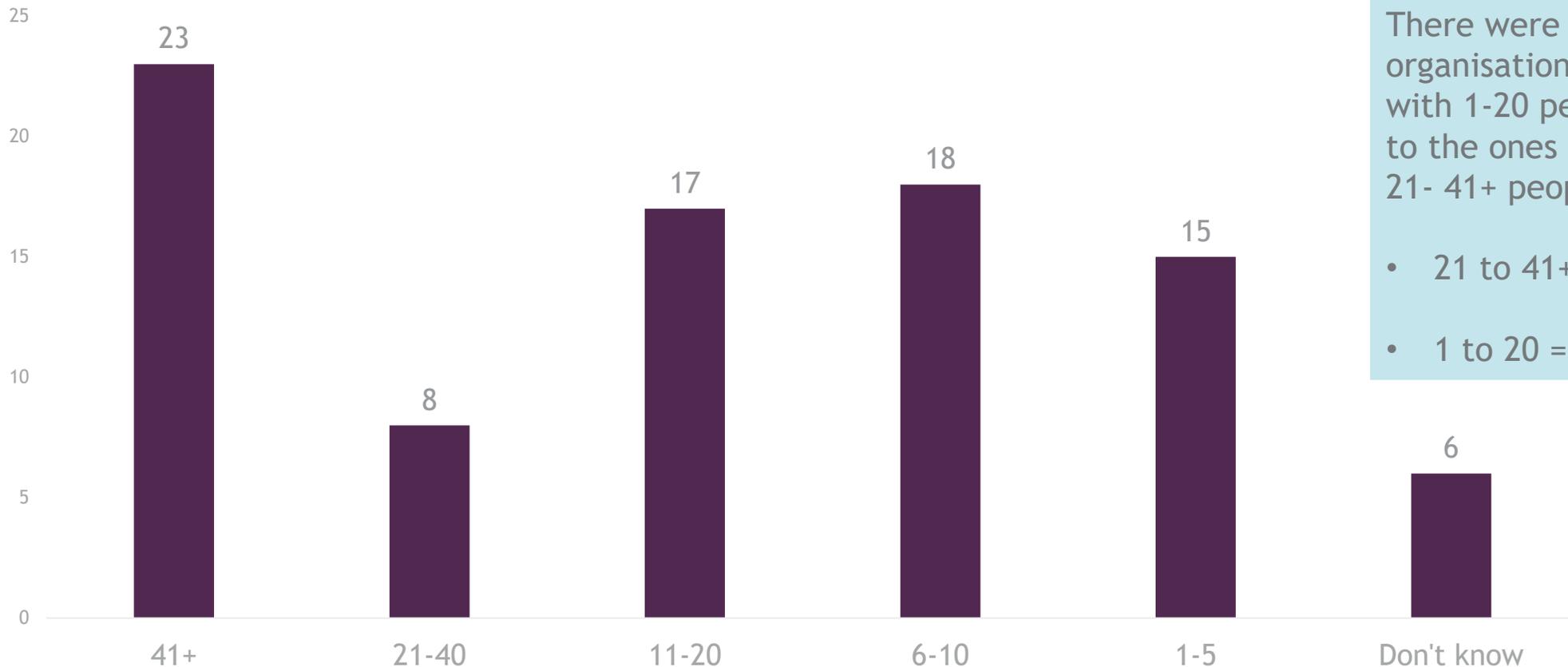
There were more organisations who work with 1-20 people compared to the ones that work with 21- 41+ people:

- 21 to 41+ = 31

- 1 to 20 = 50

Volunteers were the most involved type of participant in 'community food' projects

Q4. Who is involved in the project/enterprise? Please select all that apply.

85 respondents

A small quantity of individuals suggested alternative types of project/enterprise participants
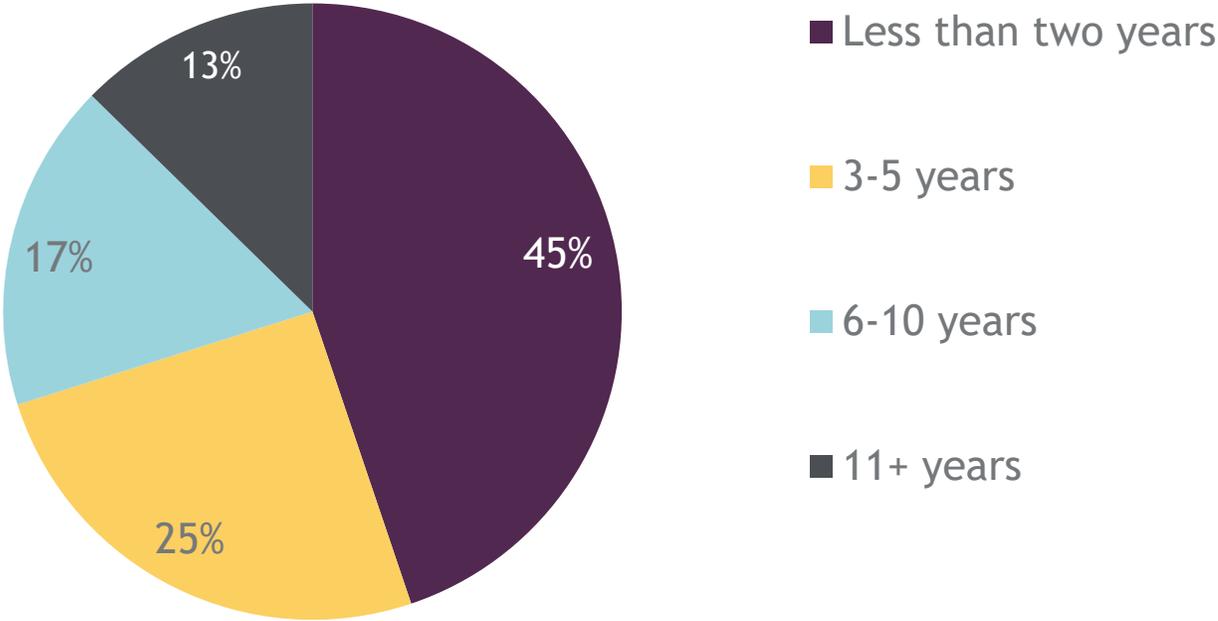
Q4. Other please specify

22 respondents

Local
churches People
Volunteer
Council
Town individuals
Swansea
Other community

41% mentioned members of local authorities:

- 67% local councils
- 33% churches

Most projects are recent, however a minority have been running for more than 11 years
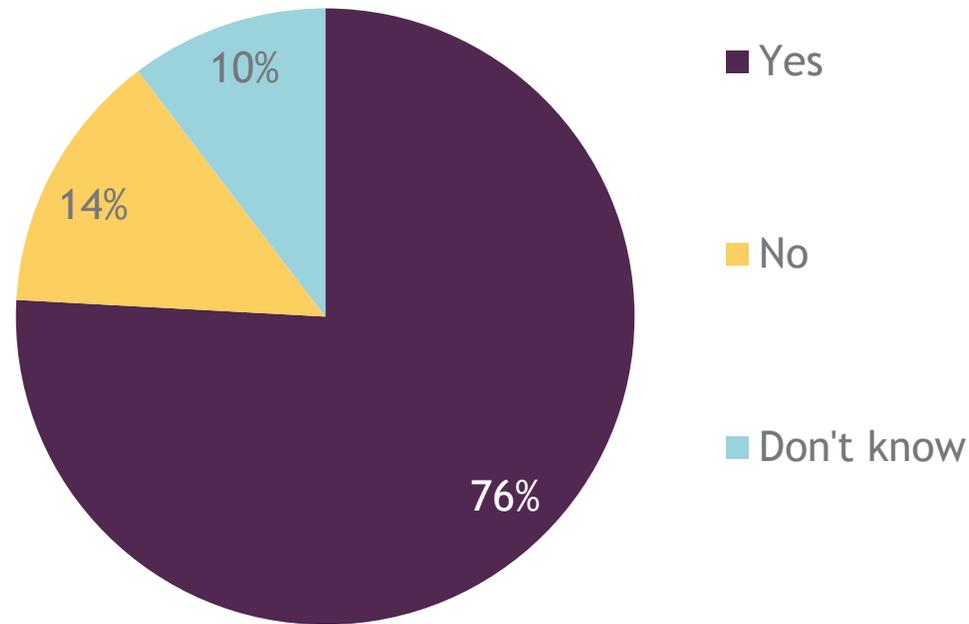
87 respondents

Q5. How long has your project/enterprise been running?

Pie chart legend:
- **Less than two years** — 45%
- **3-5 years** — 25%
- **6-10 years** — 17%
- **11+ years** — 13%

The vast majority of projects have received third party funding

Q6. Has your project/enterprise received third party funding?

87 respondents

- Yes — 76%
- No — 14%
- Don't know — 10%

69% of participants specified their source of funding

Q6. If you clicked Yes for Q6, please specify

From the answers analysed that focused on the most mentioned sources of funding:

- 27% mentioned the Welsh Government

- 24% mentioned local councils

- 15% referred to Lottery funding

- 12% mentioned funding given by Trusts

- 12% referred to the private sector (i.e. individuals and businesses)

- 5% mentioned WCVA (Wales Council for Voluntary Action)

- 5% mentioned RDP (Rural Development Programme)

Participants mentioned a few Trusts as part of their funding sources

Q6. If you clicked Yes for Q6, please specify – mentioned Trusts

The Trussell Trust

ASDA Foundation Trust

Conservation Farming Trust

People's Health Trust

Woodland Trust

Building Communities Trust

Majority are in some way financially self-sustainable although with some third party funding

Q7. Would you consider your project/enterprise to be currently financially self-sustainable or does it rely on third party funding or support to operate?

78 respondents
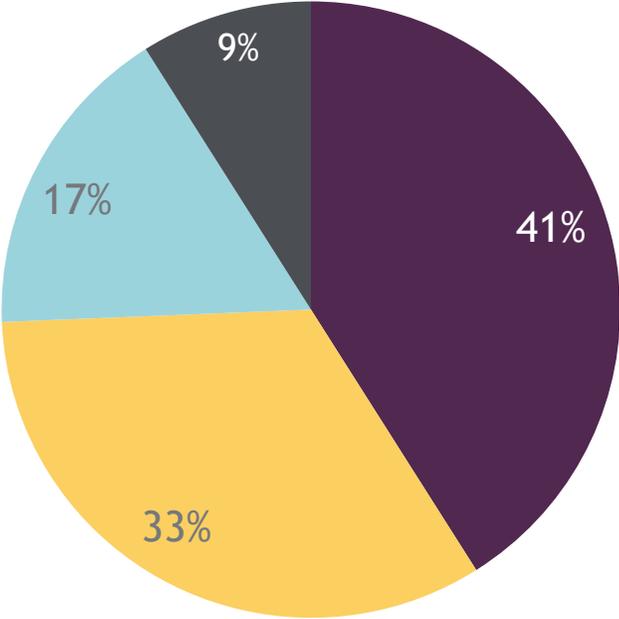
- Partially financially self-sustainable
- Totally reliant on third party funding/support
- Totally financially self-sustainable
- Don't know

41%
33%
17%
9%

Most respondents further emphasised their project's reliance on third party funding

Q7. If you selected any option for Q7 please provide more detail here (or N/A if no comment)

51 respondents

'Membership fees and donations'

'Members pay a membership fee which covers our costs'

'We charge a nominal fee for the pantry bags'

'We charge just £2 for seated exercise and 50p for coffee this generates enough to pay the Tutor for Exercise and sundries'

'We are able to sustain our main functions without funding as we have a great group of willing volunteers'

'We rely on a lot of volunteers'

'We are independent of funding because we are volunteers'

Apart from the funding sources mentioned on slide 12, responses to this question also included:

- Membership fees

- Relying on volunteering work

Multiple answers emphasised the difficulty in receiving or sustaining funding

A significant portion of enterprises received third party non-financial support

87 respondents

Q8. At any point, has your project/enterprise received any non-financial support, e.g. business advice?

Financial support is still the largest amount of support given to projects/enterprises

- No — 42%
- Yes — 36%
- Don't know — 22%
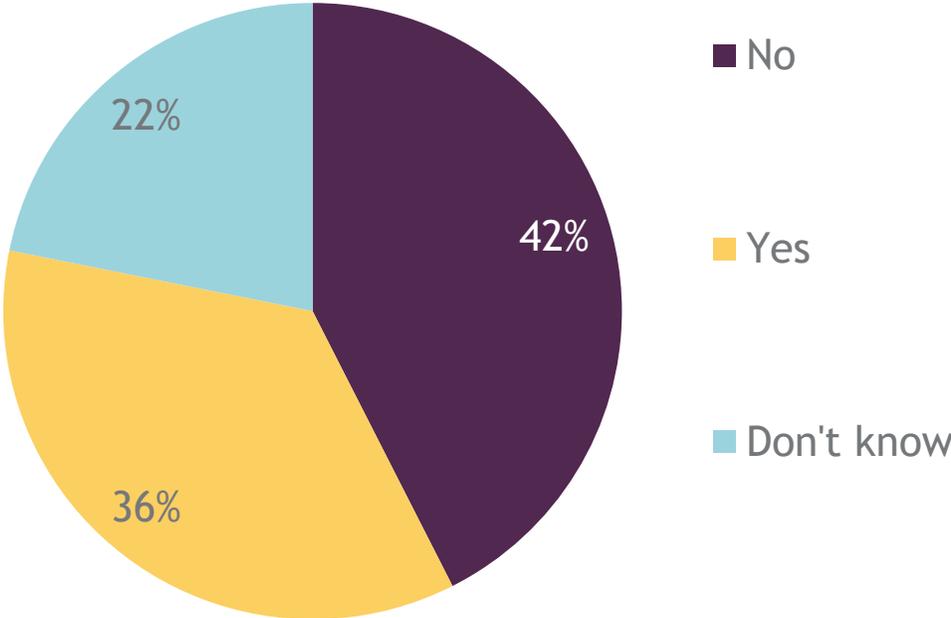
Business advice was the dominant form of non-financial third party support

Q8. If you clicked Yes for Q8, please specify (or N/A if no comment)

26 respondents

business
work
Cooperative
Social training
members
Tyfu some
food advice
become enterprise
project received
details community
Wales

From the answers analysed that focused on the most mentioned types of non-financial third party help:

- 73% mentioned business advice as the key form of non-financial support received

- 14% mentioned food partnerships

- 14% referred to training provision for members of staff

Tyfu Cymru was the most mentioned provider of non-financial support

Well-being and health were the most mentioned types of benefits provided by community food enterprises

Q9. What do you think are the main benefits of your projects/enterprise? Tick all that apply.
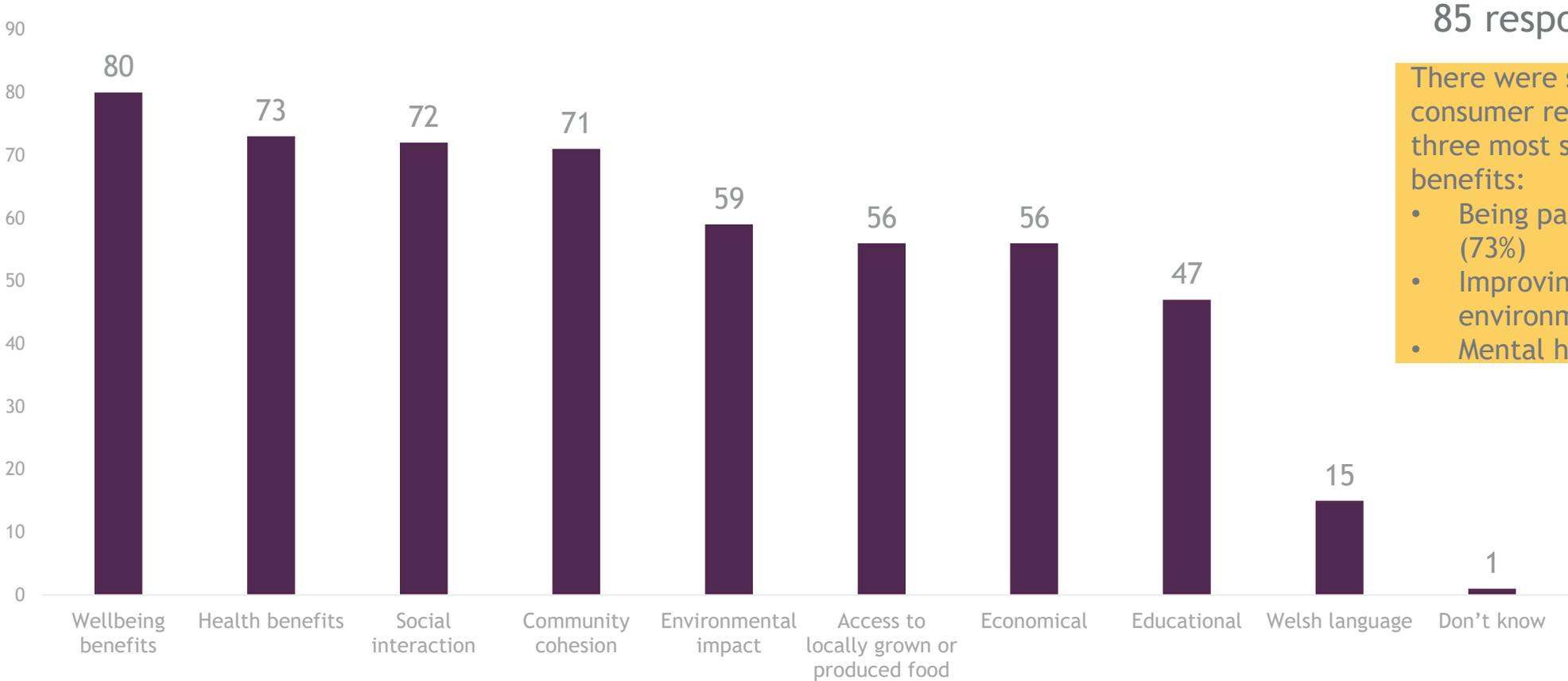
85 respondents

There were similarities to the consumer responses, with the three most selected project benefits:
- Being part of the community (73%)
- Improving the local environment (57%)
- Mental health benefits (54%)

Although social benefits such as social interaction and community cohesion were also among the most highly mentioned

Only a limited number of respondents provided alternative benefits of community food projects

Q9. Other (please specify)

'Help for struggling young families and elderly single people'

'Helping alleviate hunger poverty in the region'

'Providing access to fresh fruit for people who might otherwise not be able to afford it'

'Food security'

'With the CRF funding we have 50 part time funded employability placements in Green skills and renewable energy'

'Our business Purpose is to support our local Community and the tourist footfall in Caerleon'

'Use of land adjacent to the police HQ will be a particular sort of community strengthening. Also, we intend having a strong globalising influence by using as broad a species base as we can grow in our climate'

9 respondents

The majority mentioned the fight against local food poverty

Increase of local employability rates, tourist footfalls and species availability were also mentioned

Financial difficulties were the challenge for establishing and maintaining projects

Q10. What have been the key challenges in establishing and/or maintaining your projects/enterprise? Please provide details (or N/A if no comment)

71 respondents

The most mentioned types of challenges around establishing and/or maintaining food projects:

- 47% mentioned general financial difficulties and the difficulty in securing funding
- 22% mentioned the lack of availability or accessibility to land and spaces where the projects could develop
- 16% mentioned the lack of volunteers or difficulty in acquiring them
- 14% mentioned difficulties in acquiring food supplies and/or donations

Covid-19 was mentioned as a key cause of challenges in 15% of the overall responses – including the inability to run certain business operations as a result of the lockdown (i.e. events, community gatherings), difficulty in adapting to new ways of working and securing financial resources

The government and the public sector were mentioned as a key cause of challenges in 9% of the overall responses – most mentioned difficulties were imposed by the government and the public sector, including slow and stubborn bureaucracy as well as difficulty in providing funds

Majority of enterprises would benefit from financial support and more people involved

Q11. What support would you have benefited from when establishing your projects/enterprise? Tick all that apply.

82 respondents

Best practice guidance and business advice were the least selected options

Financial	59
More people involved	33
Access to growing space	28
Best practice guidance	20
Business advice	19
Don't know	11

16% of respondents mentioned alternative types of support

Q11. Other (please specify)

14 respondents

'More constructive approaches by local authority regulatory departments'

'Access to policy makers'

'Council planning to be amenable to new ideas'

'Decent planning policy that supports small scale food production'

'Collaborative working with other foodbanks'

'A third sector organisation willing and able to host the project'

'More advice from Sustainable Food Places network; advice on social media'

'Better outreach to publicize the project and longer term funding'

'We had excellent support from Wrexham to establish the club and still continue to get the support needed'

The majority mentioned the need for more constructive co-operation with public sector authorities, as well as other third party organisations

Although best practice and business advice scored least on the closed questions, many people ask for this sort of support in the open questions

Reaching more members of the community was the most mentioned ambition among enterprises

Q12. How would you like to develop/grow your project/enterprise in the future (or N/A if no comment)?

67 respondents

From the answers analysed that focused on the most mentioned ways of developing a given project/enterprise:

- 42% mentioned that they would like to increase the outreach of their project's positive impact to more members of the community

- 26% said that they would like to develop their project by attracting more funding

- 23% mentioned the need for acquiring more land

- 9% said that they would like to collaborate with more third party organisations, such as local businesses and farms

Increasing land accessibility was the most mentioned strategic objective

Q13. Based on your experience, what would you like to see included in a Wales Community Food Strategy? (or N/A if no comment)

74 respondents

The desired outcomes of Wales Community Food Strategy:

- 33% mentioned the increase of land accessibility

- 27% mentioned the increase of funding

- 14% referred to raising better awareness amongst both the general public and governmental authorities around the importance of the projects and key causes

- 13% had a desire for the promotion of opportunities and stronger collaboration between different local food organisations

- 8% mentioned more availability of and accessibility to foodbanks

- 6% mentioned more community gardens
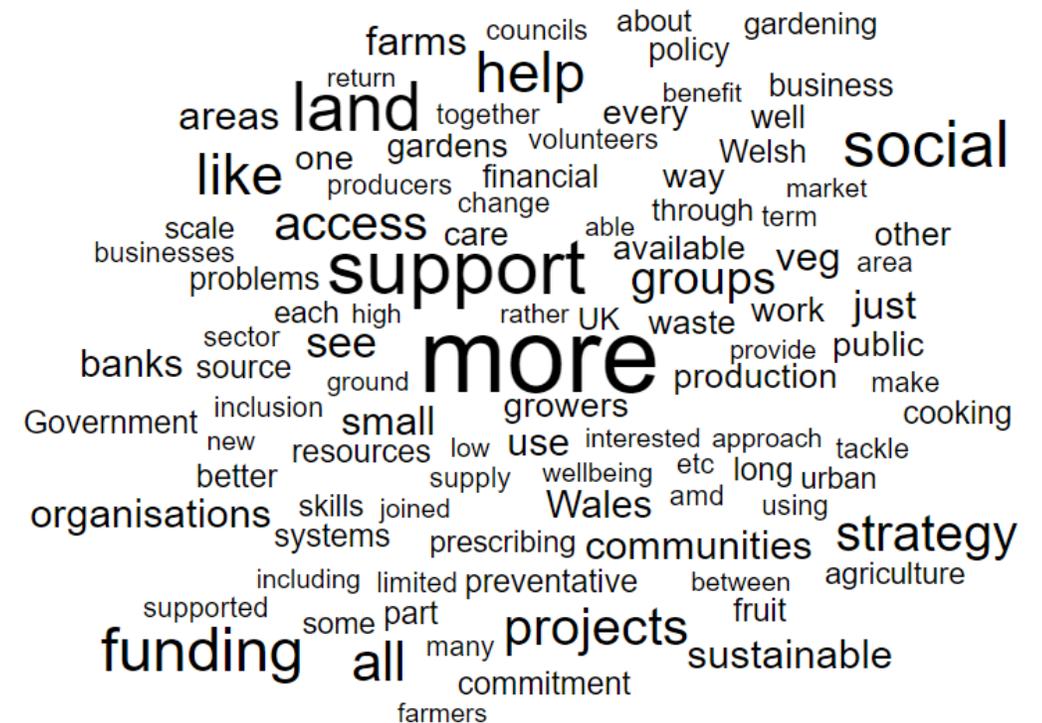
Most mentions around the need for land accessibility came from organisations with 41+ people

Q13. Based on your experience, what would you like to see included in a Wales Community Food Strategy? (or N/A if no comment) – Land accessibility split by organisations' size
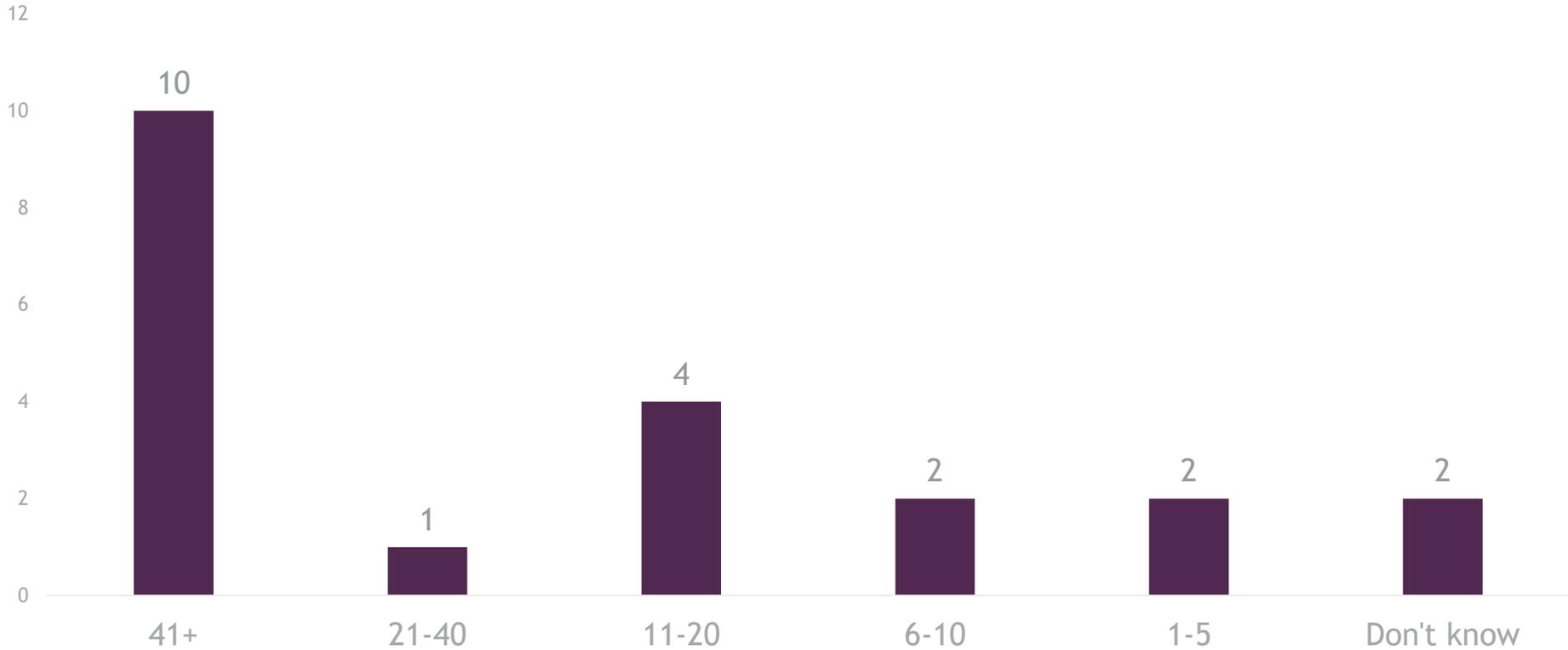
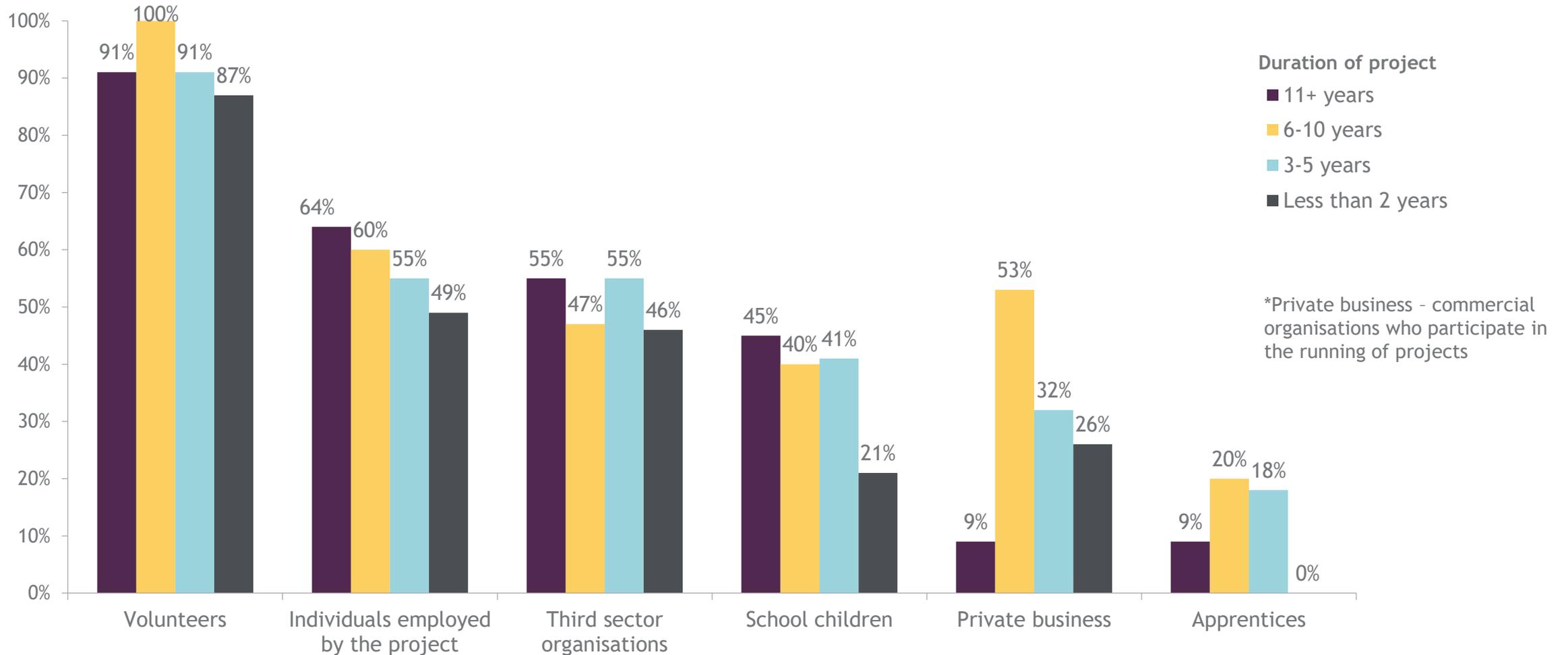# Among the enterprises that run for more than 11 years, 8 provided their email addresses

Q14. Thank you for completing the survey. If you are happy for Welsh Government to contact you further regarding a Community Food Strategy please enter your contact details below – 11+ year old enterprises

Mentioned enterprises running for 11+ years (for GDPR reasons we have only provided the companies – a couple provided personal email addresses):

Farm Garden
Gerddi Bro Ddyfi Gardens
Swansea Community Farm
Flintshire CSA
Friends & Neighbours Community Alliance

Volunteers are most common group of people involved in projects irrespective of how long the project has existed

Q4. 'Who is involved in the project/enterprise?' (split by how long projects have existed)

Duration of project
- 11+ years
- 6-10 years
- 3-5 years
- Less than 2 years

*Private business – commercial organisations who participate in the running of projects

	Volunteers	Individuals employed by the project	Third sector organisations	School children	Private business	Apprentices
11+ years	91%	64%	55%	45%	9%	9%
6-10 years	100%	60%	47%	40%	53%	20%
3-5 years	91%	55%	55%	41%	32%	18%
Less than 2 years	87%	49%	46%	21%	26%	0%

Organisations that run for more than 6 years tend to work with more people
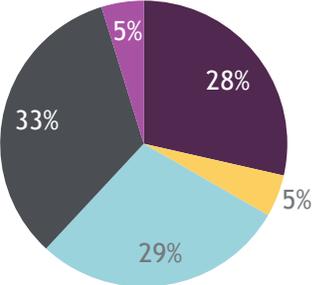
Q5. How long has your project/enterprise been running? (split by the number of people working by project duration)

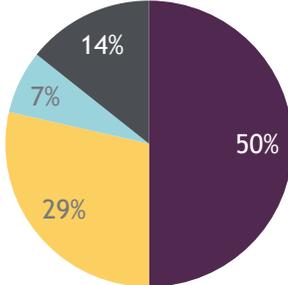## Enterprises running for less than 2 years split by the number of people they work with

- 41+: 14%
- 21-40: 8%
- 11-20: 20%
- 6-10: 22%
- 1-5: 36%
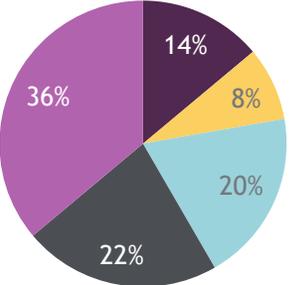
Enterprises running for 3-5 years split by the number of people they work with

- 41+: 28%
- 21-40: 5%
- 11-20: 29%
- 6-10: 33%
- 1-5: 5%

Enterprises running for 6-10 years split by the number of people they work with

- 41+: 50%
- 21-40: 29%
- 11-20: 7%
- 6-10: 14%

Enterprises running for 11+ years split by the number of people they work with

- 41+: 50%
- 21-40: 0%
- 11-20: 30%
- 6-10: 10%
- 1-5: 10%
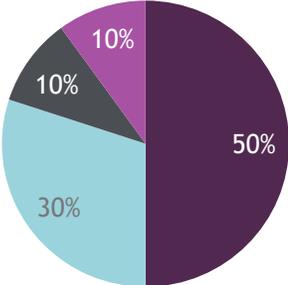
Overall, older organisations tend to receive third party funding more often

Q6. Has your project/enterprise received third party funding? (split by the projects' length of service)

Length of service	Number of enterprises	Number of enterprises that have received funding	%of organisations that received funding
11+ years	11	9	82%
6-10 years	15	13	87%
3-5 years	22	19	86%
Less than 2 years	39	25	64%

Third party financial support is important for projects of all ages

Q7. Would you consider your project/enterprise to be currently financially self-sustainable or does it rely on third part funding or support to operate? (split by the projects' length of service)

Length of service	Number of enterprises	Totally financially self-sustainable	% of totally financially self-sustainable	Partially financially self-sustainable	% of partially financially self-sustainable	Totally reliant on third party funding/support	% of totally reliant on third party funding/support
11+ years	11	3	27%	3	27%	5	45%
6-10 years	15	4	27%	5	33%	3	20%
3-5 years	22	2	9%	11	50%	7	32%
Less than 2 years	39	4	10%	13	33%	11	28%

Therefore, enterprises that operate for less than 5 years should capitalise on opportunities such as receiving best practice business advice by enterprises that operate for more than 6 years. Newer enterprises could achieve this by co-operating with older ones on common projects. Increase of their community reach, improvement of their public image as industry leaders, potential financial boosting of their activity and expansion of their working network are only some of the key benefits that could convince older enterprises to partner with newer ones

Organisations that are active for 6+ years receive the highest rates of third party non-financial help

Q8. At any point, has your project/enterprise received any non-financial support, e.g. business advice? (split by the projects' length of service)

Length of service	Number of enterprises	Number of enterprises that have received third party non-financial help	%of organisations that have received third party non-financial help
11+ years	11	5	45%
6-10 years	15	7	47%
3-5 years	22	8	36%
Less than 2 years	39	11	28%

Older organisations tend to be known by more members of the consumer public and to be more financially stable and trustworthy, which in return attracts more partnerships with third parties. In this case, newer organisations could benefit from initiating win-win partnerships with older ones

When compared to older ones, younger projects tend to be in more need of financial support

Q11. 'What support would you have benefited from when establishing your projects/enterprise?' (split by the projects' length of service)

They are also in more need for more people involved in their initiatives
Enterprises that run for less than two years tend to have a higher demand for best practice guidance and business advice

Duration of project
- 11+ years
- 6-10 years
- 3-5 years
- Less than 2 years

	Financial	More people involved	Access to growing space	Best practice guidance	Business advice
11+ years	45%	27%	36%	18%	18%
6-10 years	60%	27%	33%	13%	7%
3-5 years	77%	45%	27%	14%	23%
Less than 2 years	72%	41%	33%	33%	28%

Summary and recommendations

Summary of findings

For most participants community food was synonymous with 'locally grown food' as well as with 'food that is healthy and accessible by the community'

Vegetable provision/veg box schemes, food banks and community gardens were among the most mentioned types of projects in which respondents take part, while Swansea was the most mentioned area for community food projects

Majority of enterprises involve 41+ members, while majority of members involved in community food projects are volunteers and the minority are apprentices; local councils were the most mentioned alternative type of project participants

Most enterprises have been running for less than two years, while the minority have been running for more than 11 years

76% of projects have received third party funding; the key source of funding for most projects is the Welsh government and local councils

Majority of enterprises are either partially or totally dependent on third party funding, while the minority were totally financially self-sustainable

42% have not received third party non-financial support – business advice was the most mentioned type of non-financial support (36%)

Summary of findings

Well-being and health were among the most mentioned benefits of community food projects, while Welsh language was the least mentioned

The most mentioned challenge for establishing and/or maintaining an enterprise were financial difficulties and securing funding, followed by lack of availability and accessibility to land and space where the projects could develop

Majority of enterprises said that they would benefit from financial support, followed by more volunteers and available space - only the minority mentioned best practice guidance and business advice

Reaching more members of the community was the most mentioned future ambition among enterprises, followed by attracting more funding and acquiring more land

Increased land accessibility was the most mentioned desired outcome of Wales Community Food Strategy, followed by increased funding

Overall older enterprises tend to receive more third-party funding and non-financial support than younger organisations who tend to be more often in need of financial support, best practice guidance and business advice

Key findings and recommendations

1. Mutual support	Raise awareness and create partnership opportunities to help new enterprises learn best business practice, as well as finding and applying for funding, from more established ones
2. Funding and land accessibility	Raise awareness and make clear through your communication the 'where' and 'how' of accessing funding and additional land/space
3. Financial self-sufficiency	Research what can be learned from enterprises that are financially self-sufficient, and share the learnings to help enterprises that struggle with achieving financial independence
4. Volunteers	Help enterprises increase awareness around their volunteering schemes
5. Community awareness and involvement	Provide advice and best practice to help enterprises raise awareness of their initiatives among the public and local communities
6. Administration	Assist projects in streamlining the administrative/regulatory burdens they come up against

Thank you