



Weston Charity
AWARDS

SMALL CHARITY LEADERS SURVEY 2018

Conducted by Pilotlight
and the Garfield Weston Foundation



Introduction

The Weston Charity Awards Small Charity Leaders survey provides a barometer of the confidence and concerns of small charities told by the people at their helm. Now, in its second year, we hear the sound of cautious optimism emerging from the sector as we enter 2019. Against a backdrop of economic challenges and uncertainties, small charity leaders reveal their resilience and creative determination to help their organisations not only survive, but to thrive and do more.

Small charity leaders tell us about the range of skills they require and the need to adapt as they lead their organisations into next year. They also share the challenges they have faced over the past year and the worries that have kept them awake at night. They give a verdict of “could do better” to central and local government on whose support they rely and don’t rate highly their own sector’s ability to work effectively with larger organisations, particularly in the private sector.

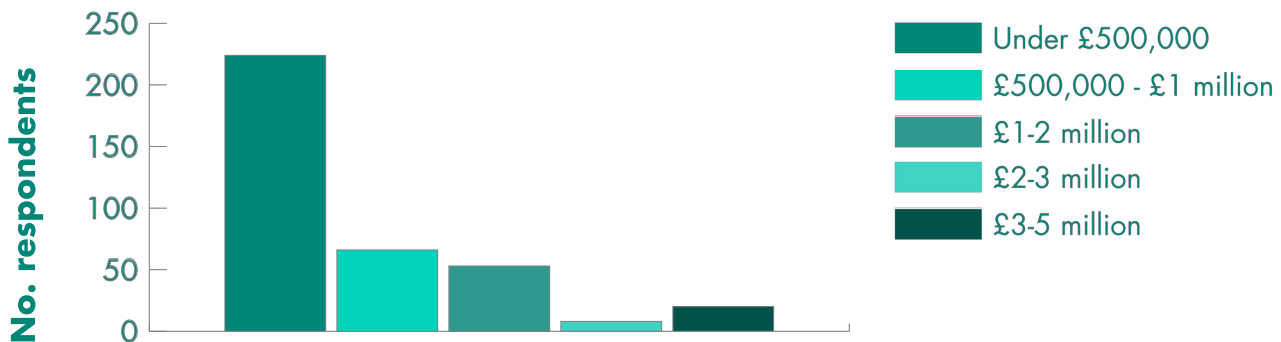
Through increasingly uncertain times, small charities toil on the frontline, supporting communities up and down the country by delivering essential services to people in need. That is why the Weston Charity Awards were created, now in its sixth year, to celebrate and support great small charities. Winning charities receive a core grant of £6,500 and benefit from a year’s strategic planning support with a team of business mentors from Pilotlight.

These findings show us charity leaders are facing the future with ambition, determination and a passion for what they do. It is in all of our interests to support our small charities going forward and the people who lead them.

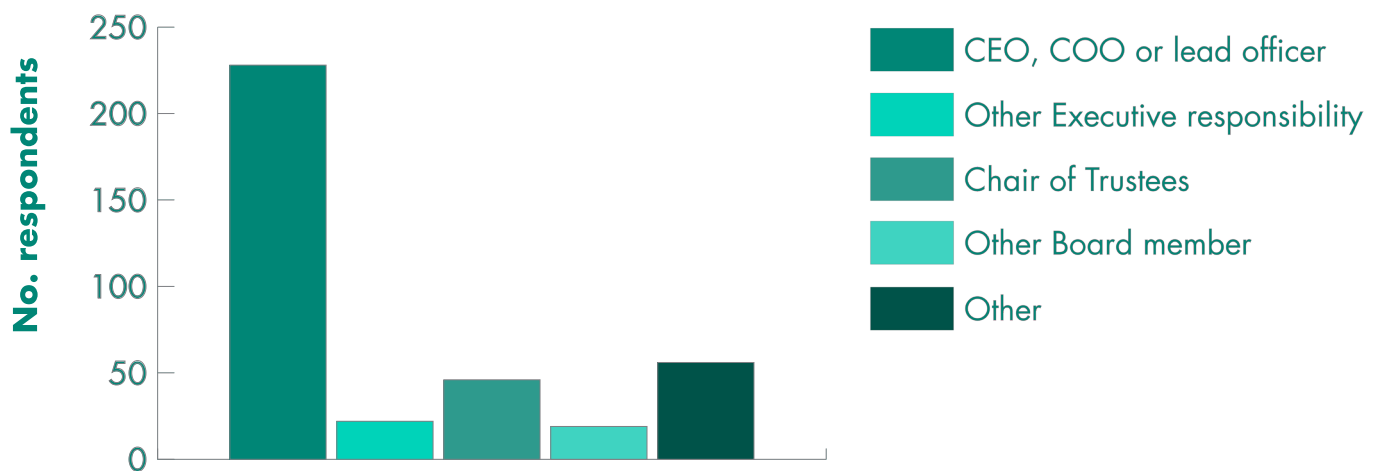
Methodology

In October 2018, Garfield Weston Foundation and Pilotlight conducted an online survey, to which 371 charity leaders in England, Wales and Scotland responded. All respondents were working for organisations with incomes under £5 million. This compares to a total number of responses of 234 in October 2017.

What is your charity's annual income?



What is your leadership role at your charity?





PART I: FACING THE FUTURE

Small charities feeling more optimistic about 2019

Nearly two out of five (38%) small charities expect their income to rise over the next 12 months and around half (46%) expect to maintain current income levels. Optimism is on the rise, with only one in eight (16%) small charity leaders forecasting a drop in income in 2019 compared to a third (34%) expecting a fall at this point last year.

Growing confidence for the future is also reflected in small charities' impressive ambitions to expand their services next year. There is a significant increase in the number of charities saying they plan to help more people in the next 12 months – nearly four in five (78%) in 2019 compared to nearly three in five (58%) at the end of 2017.

Challenges and uncertainty

As we head into 2019, over two thirds (69%) of leaders say there is more uncertainty in their operating environment than in previous years. A quarter (26%) had to deal with the impact of the withdrawal of a major funding source and more than one in 10 (12%) closed services.

It's little surprise, with increased regulation, and the advent of GDPR, that well over two thirds (71%) of leaders said they had faced the challenge of ensuring they comply with new regulation and best practice this year. Over a third of charity leaders had struggled to recruit for a key role (37%) and a similar number (34%) reported that setting up a new partnership was a challenge.

Challenges faced in the past 12 months	Percentage
Compliance with new regulations and best practice	71%
Recruiting for key role	37%
Setting up a new partnership	34%
Major IT upgrades and failures	33%
Restructuring the organisation	33%
Withdrawal of a major funding source	26%
Rationalising and reorganising property and sites	18%
Making staff redundancies	17%
High staff turnover	15%
Closing services	12%
Exploring or completing a merger	10%
Criticism in the media, including social media	6%

A mixed picture of support

Most small charity leaders say local people provide good or excellent support (81%), and a third (37%) of charities have seen this support increase in 2018. Interestingly, a quarter of small charities have also received more support from local businesses in the past 12 months than previously.

However, a large majority say they don't get the support they need from central government (82%) or local government (45%). Over a quarter (28%) of the small charities surveyed have seen support from local government decrease and one in five (20%) suffered cuts from central government.

PART II: LOOKING OUTWARDS

Partnership building and fundraising skills sought

Last year's Weston Charity Awards Small Charity Leaders survey revealed that building partnerships with the commercial sector was the skill most charities lacked. This year, over half (51%) of small charities are seeking this skill, only second in priority to fundraising (57%). Around two out of five (38%) said both IT & digital skills and branding and communication expertise were top priorities for their charities.

Top five skills sought by charity leaders	Percentage
Fundraising	57%
Building partnerships with the commercial sector	51%
IT & digital	38%
Branding and communications	38%
Strategy development	24%

Difficulties with collaboration

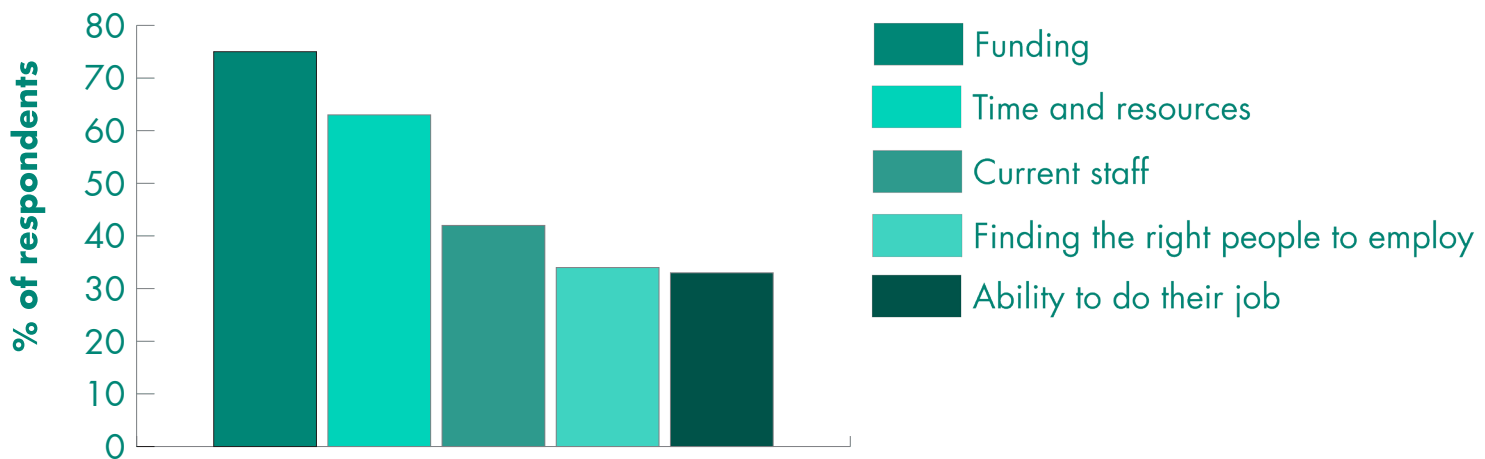
The findings show small charities are fairly adept at collaborating with other small charities (65% thought as much) but far less so when working with larger charities or private sector organisations. Four in five (80%) believe small charities are not very good at working with larger charities and just under three quarters (74%) did not rate the sector's collaborative abilities with private sector organisations. Fixing this collaboration gap is reflected in the strong desire of leaders to find people who can build partnerships with the commercial sector - their second most sought after skillset.

PART III: SPOTLIGHT ON SMALL CHARITY LEADERS

Charity leaders worry about their work at night

Nearly all (96%) small charity leaders admit that their work sometimes keeps them up at night. The top sleep disrupting thought for three quarters (75%) of charity leaders is funding concerns. Other worries include time and resource issues (63%) and concerns about current staff (42%). Interestingly, self-doubt features high up, with a third (33%) admitting they worried about their own ability to do the job.

Top worries that keep charity leaders up at night



Small charity leaders love what they do

Despite pressures and diversions, four out of five (83%) charity leaders surveyed said they would recommend working for a small charity to a friend. Given the widely understood correlation between employee satisfaction and organisational motivation, this bodes well for charity performance.

MORE INFORMATION

About the Weston Charity Awards: The Awards celebrate and support great frontline charities working in the fields of community, welfare and youth. Run by the Garfield Weston Foundation with Pilotlight, charities with incomes under £5 million in the North of England, the Midlands and in Wales can apply. Applications open 3rd December 2018 and close 11th January 2019. To apply visit www.westoncharityawards.org

About the Garfield Weston Foundation: Celebrating its 60th anniversary in 2018, the Garfield Weston Foundation is a family-founded charitable grant-making foundation which supports causes across the UK with grants totaling over £60 million each year. 2018 also marks its £1 billionth donation since it was established. One of the largest and most respected charitable institutions in the UK, the Weston Family Trustees are descendants of the founder and they take a highly active and hands-on approach. The Foundation's funding comes from an endowment of shares in the family business which includes Twinings, Primark, Kingsmill (all part of Associated British Foods Plc) and Fortnum & Mason amongst others - a successful model that still endures today; as the businesses have grown so too have the charitable donations. From small community organisations to large national institutions, the Foundation supports a broad range of charities and activities that make a positive impact in the communities in which they work. Over 1,500 charities across the UK benefit each year from the Foundation's grants. For more information please visit www.garfieldweston.org

About Pilotlight: Pilotlight is an award-winning charity that connects Pilotlighters (its business members) with charitable organisations, to unlock solutions that help charities become more effective and sustainable. Since 2003 Pilotlight has supported over 700 charities and social enterprises tackling social disadvantage in the UK. Pilotlight's impact report 2018 shows that two years after completing the Programme, on average, charities have increased their turnover by 36% and are reaching 52% more people. For more information please visit: www.pilotlight.org.uk

Contact: For further questions relating to the Weston Charity Awards or the Weston Charity Awards Small Charity Leader Insight Report 2018-19 including comparative data from 2017-18, please contact Vicky Hatchett on 07877 984367 or Julie Kangisser on 07711 818496.