



Impact Report

For the year 1 October 2023 – 30 September 2024

Welcome

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Increasing support, increasing need

Celebrating our 35th anniversary in 2023-24, the Trust has provided more support than ever before.

We started 527 new consultancy projects and mentoring assignments in the year, and had an extraordinary 919 projects active in the year in total.

In challenging times, frontline welfare charities have needed support, and our volunteers and team have responded to their needs.

We are truly concerned that many charities – and their vital services – are at risk, and we have seen a number of charities close in the last 12 months. We ask charities about their main concerns and challenges, and of our 1,665 responses in the year, 49% of respondents said that generating income/fundraising was their most pressing issue, far ahead of the next concerns which were ability to meet demand (15%) and recruitment of staff and volunteers (14%).

Cranfield Trust exists to support welfare charities, and we focus on the small to medium size organisations which provide critical services on a local or regional basis. They have limited management resources, and little opportunity to invest in organisation and personal development, but are experts in the services they provide. They inspire us every day by their commitment, expertise and resourcefulness.

Over the last year we have received excellent feedback on all our services, with mentoring and peer group support helping to build personal resilience for leaders and managers, and consultancy helping to address organisation challenges and to bring direction and focus through strategic projects. Telephone advice, webinars and information resources have all offered lighter touch support, addressing particular issues or bringing new ideas and approaches to participants.

A notable feature of the year has been the high proportion of organisations which have returned to us for further support after working with us previously. 46% of our new consultancy and mentoring activities in the last year were with returning clients. While we seek to maintain a balance between reaching new organisations and continuing support for previous clients, we have felt it necessary to step up support for existing clients at such a challenging time.

We are delighted to help these charities continue their development 'journeys' or to offer mentoring support to individual leaders and managers after providing organisation-focused consultancy.

In the year, we have continued to develop Journey to Excellence, our impact framework, and have started to use the data we draw from it in more depth, to enable individual charities to benchmark their management capabilities against our whole sample, or to explore different sectors. We launched a Journey to Excellence Recognition Badge for charities who have worked with us, using the framework, to acknowledge their commitment to organisation development. We are proud to have awarded the badge to 48 charities in the year, and report on Journey to Excellence on page 18.

We are deeply grateful to our volunteers, and to our funders and donors, all of whose generous support makes our services possible. We are committed to the small to medium size charities we support, and which we believe are a vital national asset, making an enormous contribution to our society.

It is our pleasure to present our Impact Report for Cranfield Trust's 35th anniversary year, and to share the stories of some of the great activities we have worked on, and great charities we have worked with, during the year.



C. Griffiths

Dr Charmaine Griffiths
Chair of Trustees



Amanda Tincknell

Amanda Tincknell CBE
Chief Executive

What we do

We are an independent charity, focused on welfare charities, and for the last 35 years have been supporting UK-based charities and non-profit organisations.

In turn, they support the most vulnerable people in our communities. We are extremely grateful to our donors, funders and partners who make it possible for us to support smaller charities, a valuable national asset.

Supporting organisations



Management Consultancy

Our leading and most in demand pro bono service, providing strategic advice, guidance and support to address organisational challenges, to help charities achieve their goals.



On Call Telephone Support

Free specialist telephone advice to support charities with immediate challenges, issues and questions.

Supporting leaders



Mentoring

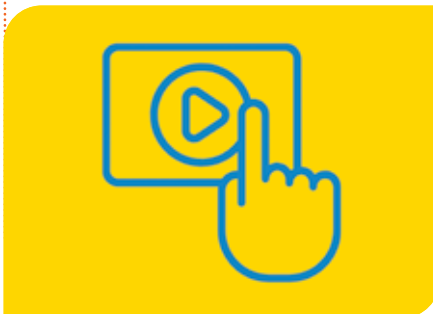
One to one support from volunteer mentors for charity leaders, helping them to discuss challenges and explore decisions through learning and supportive relationships.



Peer to Peer Exchange

Small groups of charity leaders come together online to share their challenges and provide mutual support, facilitated by a Cranfield Trust volunteer.

Supporting the sector



Online Learning and Webinars

We offer a range of free online training opportunities throughout the year, open to charity leaders across the third sector. Our webinars share fresh thinking from academics and key management skills and techniques.



Online Resources

Our website provides information resources on management topics. It hosts a range of templates, guides, tools and links.

Our services to charities

We are driven by our values; they make us unique and shape everything we do:

We care and connect

We learn and lead

We focus on impact

We meet the moment

We raise the bar

Cranfield Trust is the UK's leading provider of pro bono management support, mentoring and development to small charities. Our network of skilled and expert volunteers and our dedicated staff team help us to empower vital social welfare organisations with confidence and the capabilities they need to thrive.

Our year in numbers





The value of the care and support given to build the confidence of charity leaders and organisation resilience =

Priceless

We place a conservative financial value on the services we provide to the third sector of

£3.1 million

Our volunteers

We are proud to have excellent people volunteering with us, working alongside our charity clients.

We are extremely grateful for the time, skills and expertise our volunteers so generously give to Cranfield Trust, our charity clients and the wider voluntary sector. We simply couldn't provide our services without them.

We are pleased to report another increase in the number of volunteers who have joined us this year, with 225 new volunteer management professionals joining us to share their skills, knowledge and expertise through our range of free services. This takes the number of available volunteers to 1,453. Across all our services, Cranfield Trust volunteers provided over 20,000 hours of management support to charities.

Our staff team work closely with volunteers, maintaining contact and supporting them through our consultancy projects and mentoring assignments. For these one to one services, we try to match clients and volunteers closely in terms of location, so that people from the same geographical community are working together. Where specialist skills are needed or local volunteers are not available, we match clients and volunteers to work remotely.

During the year, we ran four online induction/refresher meetings for volunteers, and were delighted to be joined at these by new and already committed volunteers.

Our volunteer hub holds information on our processes, policies and guidance for volunteers working with Cranfield Trust and our client charities.

"Cranfield Trust is an incredibly useful and valuable resource for us; we have grown to a size where we can't quite afford technical expertise in all the areas that we would like, but have a real need for those areas of expertise - the fact that Cranfield Trust provides people with the right learning, skills and experiences to meet our needs and provide the required support is amazingly helpful and valuable to us.

"Also, having a great team at Cranfield Trust who are willing to work with us, listen to what we feel we are after and need, and are then able to find really good matches is hugely appreciated."

*BS3 Community Development, Bristol
Business Plan Facilitation*

"We were assigned a volunteer who had the background knowledge to understand our charity and the skills to guide us in the right direction to achieve our goals. Our volunteer was as dedicated to our cause as we were."

*The John McNeill Opportunity Centre, Wiltshire
Business Planning project*

"Lynn has been incredibly helpful and so, so supportive, we really appreciate everything Lynn has done to help us develop in this area. We are now much more knowledgeable and have the right skills to push forward our marketing and communications work. Lynn has given us information and the confidence so that we can move this work forward ourselves."

*Soundabout, Oxfordshire
Marketing and Communications Strategy*

Our volunteers are very special people. They are not only knowledgeable specialists and professionals in their fields, they're also very good listeners and really care about the charities they work with. Our volunteers share their skills and knowledge to support individuals and organisations, and they also benefit by working alongside inspiring charity leaders.

Volunteers build strong relationships with our charity clients: 80% stay in touch after they have completed their projects and many become trustees.

Top five reasons for volunteering with Cranfield Trust:

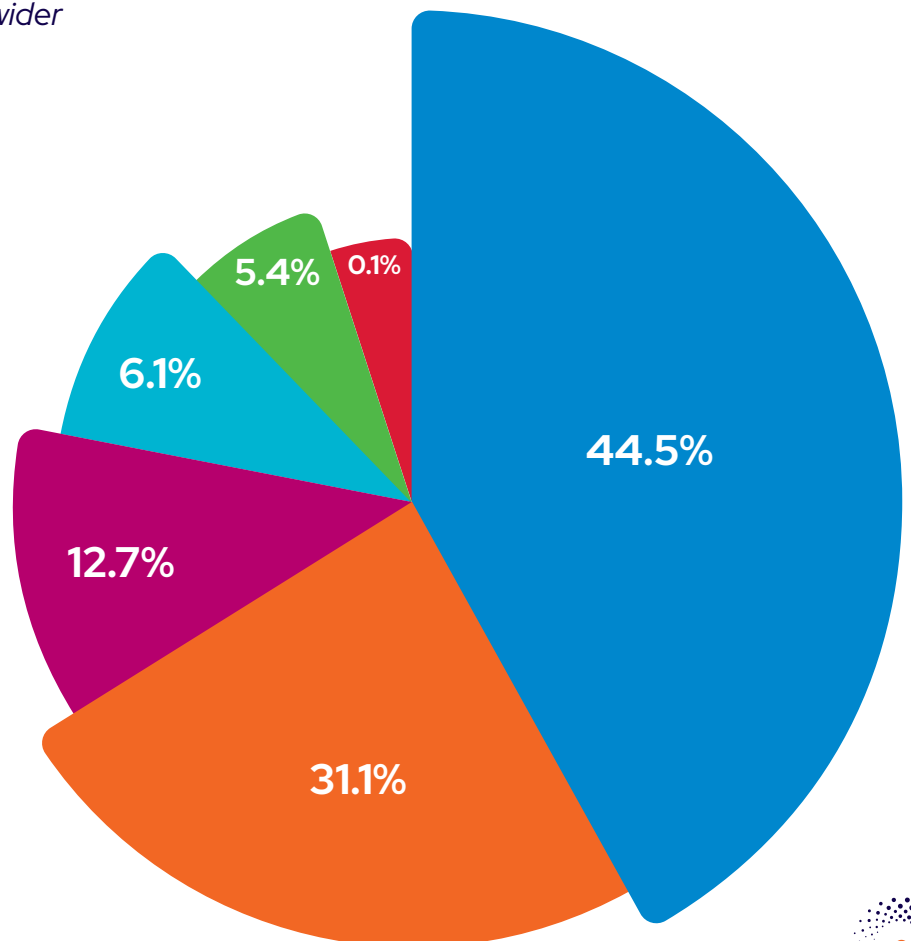
- Allows me to use my knowledge to help others
- A rewarding experience that allows me to give something back
- Supports my local and wider community
- Broadens my horizons and networks
- Helps me to develop my skills

"Working with Cranfield Trust has been an enormously rewarding experience. It has both enhanced my understanding of the charity sector and allowed me to utilise my years of experience to provide targeted assistance to charities."

Dawn Brant, Cranfield Trust volunteer

"Being a volunteer for Cranfield Trust is one of the most rewarding things I have done and brings balance to my wider professional career."

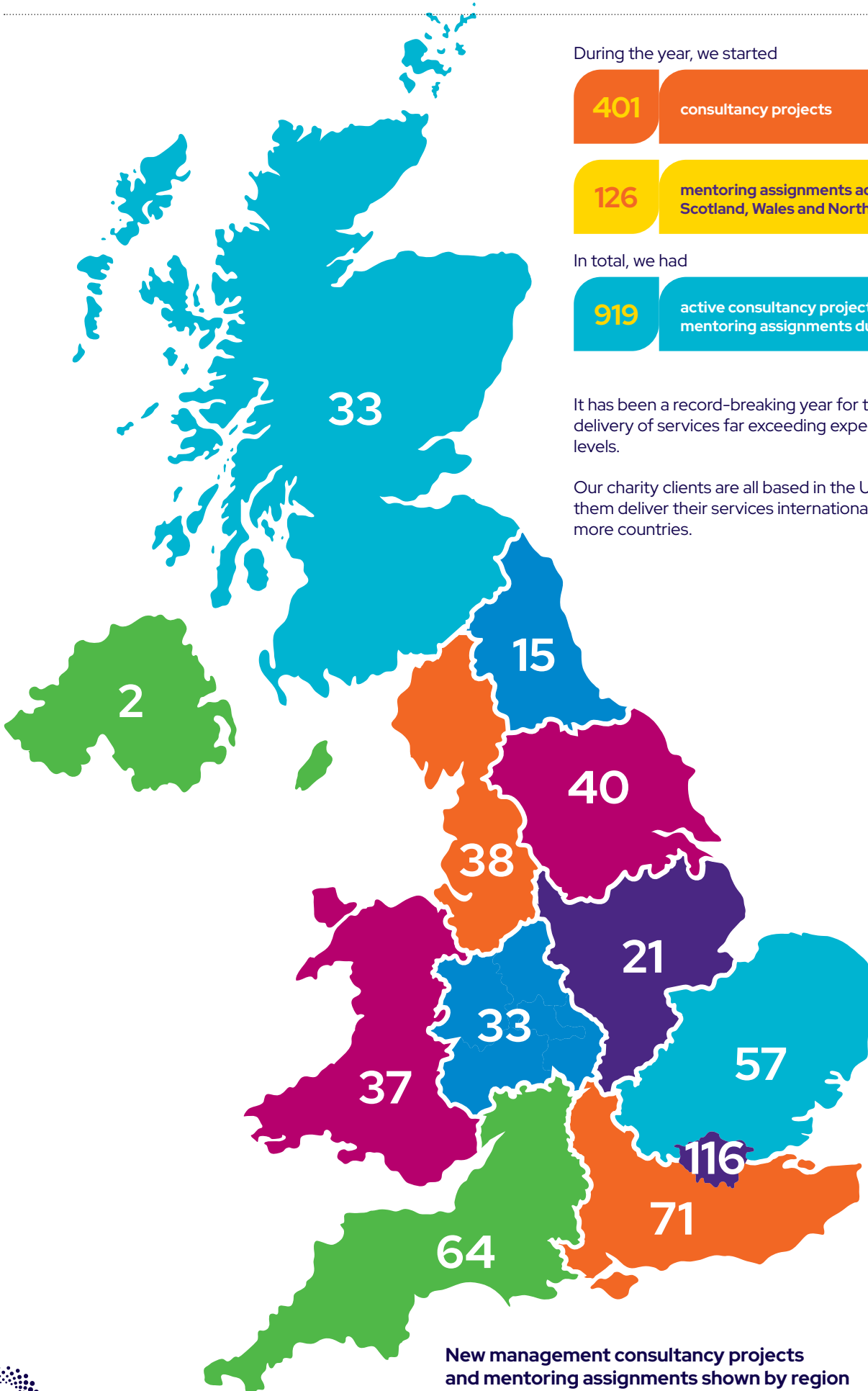
Alex Budden, Cranfield Trust volunteer



Volunteer job status

- **Employed**
- **Self-employed**
- **Not employed, not seeking paid employment**
- **Other**
- **Not employed, seeking paid employment**
- **Retired**

National impact, local presence



During the year, we started

401

consultancy projects

126

mentoring assignments across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

In total, we had

919

active consultancy projects and mentoring assignments during the year

It has been a record-breaking year for the Trust, with delivery of services far exceeding expected activity levels.

Our charity clients are all based in the UK, but 5% of them deliver their services internationally in one or more countries.

New management consultancy projects and mentoring assignments shown by region

"Working with Cranfield Trust has been invaluable. As the CEO of a busy charity, you never have or make time, due to other constant pressures and priorities, to take a step back, analyse, evaluate and look at the bigger picture of what you would like to achieve if time was not a factor. This project was one that was more of a dream. Thanks to Cranfield Trust and my volunteer consultant, this piece of work that I thought was too big, too time consuming and, quite frankly, never going to happen is now complete."

Bridges Project, East Lothian

"We are so grateful for the guidance, support and encouragement from Graham, and the gentle steering from Adam. We are a small charity with big dreams, and working with Cranfield Trust has given us the opportunity to turn the dreams into a workable plan, and the confidence that we'll carry it out."

The Never Alone Project, Northamptonshire

"We were matched with the perfect professional, who came into the process with a really clear understanding of our goals. This has really given the organisation a focus on our direction and what we really need to do to get there. This will undoubtedly lead to a greater impact on the lives of young people that we aim to serve and how best to achieve it."

YMCA, Northumberland

"Our organisation is looking to transform its business model in an effort to enhance its sustainability. Nicola [our volunteer] very quickly understood the nature of our work and the challenges we face. It has been invaluable having someone from outside the organisation, and with Nicola's experience, examine how we approach things and have honest, challenging conversations which will guide our discussions and strategic planning."

Arts Care Gofal Celf, Camarthen

"From initial contact to the final sign-off, the team at Cranfield Trust were supportive, accessible, knowledgeable and experienced. What was most valued was the way they listened and understood our specific situation and had the flexibility to help us navigate unexpected moments and turn them into learnings and positive outcomes."

Tea Leaf Trust, Dorset

"The support we have received through Cranfield Trust has been transformative. We now have a reporting mechanism in place which runs right through from staff to Board level. We now have a means of accurate and efficient reporting to the Board so they are aware of internal KPIs and monitoring progress against them."

Community Furniture Stores, North Yorkshire

"Cranfield Trust has an unbureaucratic and pragmatic approach in providing consultancy and expertise to small social impact charities. It strengthens and helps the voluntary sector in its mission to help people facing all forms of disadvantage around the UK."

The Forest of Dean Children's Opportunity Centre, Gloucestershire

"We have now worked with Cranfield Trust on two occasions and the expertise and knowledge of their volunteers have been invaluable. They have opened our eyes to strategies and opportunities which we had not previously considered. I cannot recommend them enough."

Basingstoke Counselling Service, Hampshire

"Support from Cranfield Trust has been transformative. Our consultant was incredibly helpful and ensured that we were able to think strategically about what our organisation needs for the next three years."

Oxfordshire Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Centre

"We received an unbelievable amount of much needed support, expert advice and guidance through this project, which was above and beyond what we were expecting. My organisation is currently expanding its reach and supporting more beneficiaries than ever, thanks to the support we've received from our volunteer."

Leaders in the Community, London

"Our needs were quickly understood, assessed and a plan put into action. Our Regional Manager matched us with a very suitable volunteer consultant who I found to be both excellent and most helpful. [The project] has given us confidence to embed governance and risk assessment into our thinking and the more visible aspects of good practice should be evident to our beneficiaries."

Bedford Hospital Charity & Friends, Bedfordshire

"Provided us with access to a range of skills, experience and expertise, but also the benefit of having someone that is not entrenched in the 'day-to-day' who can provide a different perspective. Having an Income Generation Strategy and growing our unrestricted income gives more certainty for service continuity for beneficiaries, along with opportunities for service development and growth."

Age UK Bromsgrove, Redditch & Wyre Forest, West Midlands

"The impact that Cranfield Trust has brought to our organisation has been invaluable and fundamental to the future growth of our organisation. I do not feel we would have got to this point so quickly if at all, without its support. It makes you look around yourself with fresh eyes and see the beauty that is there."

Konnect Communities CIC, Cornwall

Supporting across sectors

We provide our range of pro bono services to welfare charities and other non-profit organisations across the sector.

We tend to see a fluctuation in the top sub-sectors that we support the most each year, but support for community organisations always remains close to the top of the list.

During the year, the economic, social and community sector received the most support through consultancy and mentoring, particularly in the area of strategic and business planning. Community organisations deliver a range of essential services to some of the most vulnerable people in our local communities. They are working under considerable pressure, facing increasing demand as the cost of living crisis intensifies, and fundraising becomes ever more challenging.

The number of organisations we have worked with in the rape and sexual abuse sector has increased this year as a result of targeted marketing of our services through a funded programme. This sector operates under significant strain, with soaring demand for services and a particularly tough fundraising environment due to the sensitivity of their cause.

Our support for mental health organisations remains high. They continue to experience rising demand stemming from the cost of living crisis and broader economic pressures, affecting people's mental health and wellbeing.

Other primary areas supported include services for refugees and migrants, people with learning and physical disabilities, housing and homelessness, and older people.



The sectors we have worked with most this year:

- Economic, Social and Community Development
- Rape, Sexual and Domestic Abuse
- Mental Health and Crisis Intervention
- Refugees and Migrants
- Learning Disability
- Physical Disability
- Housing and Homelessness
- Older People



Supporting organisations

Cranfield Trust management consultancy offers small to medium sized charities free, tailored one-on-one support to address critical organisational development and management challenges.

Our charity clients are specialists in their fields but are often operating with limited resources that make it challenging to engage in organisation development. The consultancy we are able to offer through the skills and expertise of our volunteers and Regional Managers bridges this gap, helping them build sustainable, resilient organisations.

Through our consultancy support during the last year, we are continuing to see charity leaders under immense pressure, struggling with the triple threat of increased demand from beneficiaries, a challenging fundraising environment and rising costs. We continue to be impressed by the resilience of charity leaders who are often supporting colleagues struggling with stress or other mental health issues, while trying to maintain their services. Pressure on resources often means that Chief Executives are drawn into service delivery, leaving little time for strategic thinking. We are proud that so many charities place their trust in Cranfield Trust as we work together.

Finding charities the right person, with the right skills, at a time that is right for them.

Our Regional Managers find the right volunteer, with the right skills and experience, at a time that is right for each charity. They work closely with each charity client, spending time to really understand what the organisation needs, and work with them to define and agree project objectives. Through this in-depth scoping process, they are able to match each charity with a volunteer consultant whose skills, experience, and background are the best possible fit. This careful pairing ensures that every project is rooted in well understood needs, and shared objectives.

Regional Managers maintain an active role throughout each project, ensuring it continues to meet the charity's goals. Whether the project requires focused support within a tight timeline or a longer engagement, we work to the charity's timetable, embedding sustainable outcomes that help our clients thrive well beyond project completion.

We provide 'patient' support: our volunteers work to meet each charity client's objectives, rather than giving a particular number of days to a project. Often, our projects run over long periods, as charities have challenges arising in their day to day operations: we stay with them to help them through changing times.

Management Consultancy

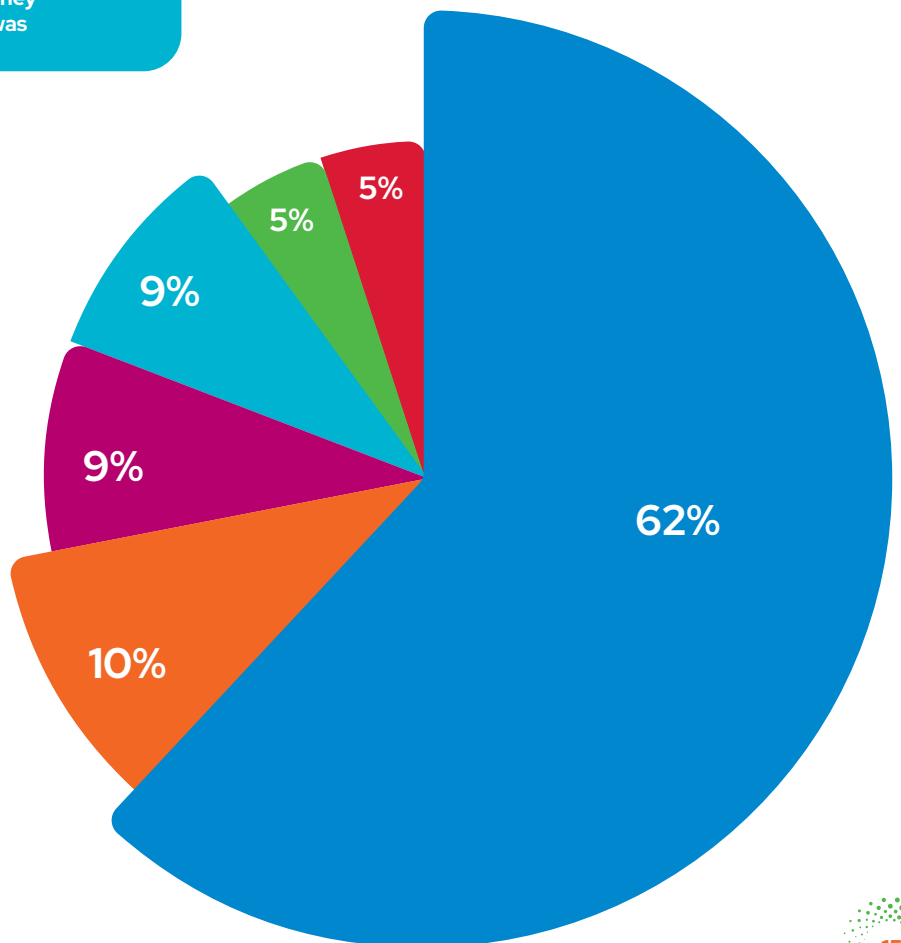


In our consultancy work, we place volunteers as locally as possible to charity clients, but where particular skills are needed or local volunteers are not available, we match clients and volunteers remotely, to reach charities across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

We use an impact framework, Journey to Excellence, to help to scope our consultancy projects, and to help us and our charity clients to measure their progress.

"Huge, transformational impact. Hard to sum up! We have a much clearer vision helping us to deliver more. We have a compelling strategy which is already helping attract funding. We have clear values which steer our work. I also wanted to share that we've been awarded a completely transformational grant - £675k over two years - and the funder said that seeing our draft strategy was a key reason for the award, as it sets out our vision and approach very clearly! So we really are incredibly grateful for all your help and wisdom."

Transport for All, Strategic Plan, London



Pro bono management consultancy by project area

- Strategy and business planning
- Marketing and communications
- Finance
- Other (IT, staff optimisation, social enterprise, retail)
- Governance
- People management

Management Consultancy in action

Families in Grief was founded to provide bereavement support to children and families in North Devon and Torridge over the phone, face to face, as bereavement champions in schools and via a range of support leaflets online. In 2023 the charity supported 123 families and 188 individual children and young people.

Families in Grief approached Cranfield Trust for assistance in developing a strategic development plan for the next two to three years, and for advice and guidance on growth and strategy. The strategic development plan was to include an income generation plan that would help to improve the charity's sustainability in the long-term by diversifying sources of income and focussing on unrestricted income to reduce reliance on grant funding.

After discussing the needs of the charity to fully understand the support it needed, it was agreed the project would be a Sustainability Review to cover all aspects of the organisation's future operations and growth, not just fundraising. It would also deliver an action plan to achieve the transition of the charity from its current position to a more sustainable model, backed up by raising funds from a diverse range of income sources. This will support the charity's future strategic growth so that it is available to its beneficiaries for many years to come. Devon based volunteer consultant Paul was identified as having the right skills and experience and was matched to the charity to work directly with the CEO Naomi Jefferies.

Naomi and Paul met regularly and tracked their progress throughout the project using an action plan with set dates to review progress.

As Naomi added,

"with the best will in the world – you are pulled from pillar to post in a small charity and don't always have this time to focus and properly reflect."

Naomi appreciated having a local volunteer, living in the area and understanding the locality, but also with a much wider management view, as it helped her to think about what is possible without being unrealistic or playing too safe.



Families in Grief

Naomi outlined the benefit of having the support and guidance of a Cranfield Trust volunteer,

"I think what has been particularly helpful is having Paul, as an objective, very experienced professional, ask sensible and curious questions – ones that made me step back and really think about why we do things in a certain way – and what we are doing things for. Paul's manner was calm and considered and I really felt he cared about what happened for our charity and beneficiaries. There is a selflessness in this process which makes you feel supported rather than judged."

"Paul took time to really understand our charity and the challenges of sustaining income in our locality. He asked clear and supportive questions that encouraged me to think about and prioritise income generation strategies, and to take some bold steps forwards!"

In reviewing the Journey to Excellence (J2E) assessment after completion of the project, it was clear to see the positive impact of consultancy support. Overall, the charity moved 9% closer to J2E Excellence over the period of the project, and 13% closer in the main focus area of the project – Leadership and Strategic Direction.

The charity now has a sustainability plan and clear steps as to where it is going and when. As a result of the project, and Paul's encouragement, the charity has increased its contact database significantly and the project has also helped the charity to focus on its finite resources.

Families in Grief now also has a robust fundraising / income strategy, and successfully bid for three grants it wasn't expecting to receive. Naomi believes that the support received from Cranfield Trust during this project directly improved the charity's fundraising success.

"We now have funding totalling approximately £60,000 per year for front-line support for the next three years and a plan to ensure this continues."

"This was an invaluable process. Thank you for the opportunity to go on this journey with professional support."



Consultancy impact

Journey to Excellence (J2E) is our unique and tailor-made assessment framework. It is designed to evaluate the progress of charities the Trust supports with pro bono management consultancy.

The J2E framework measures progress in four essential management areas: leadership and strategic direction, financial management and sustainability, people management and performance and impact and helps to identify strengths and areas for development.

Each charity starts its development journey at a different point and consultancy projects focus on a main area for development. We work with a broad range of charities, not just selecting those with high potential for growth and development, we want to support all our client charities to address their particular issues.

The J2E assessment is carried out with the charity by the Cranfield Trust Regional Manager ahead of the consultancy project, and many charities use the pre-project assessment as the basis for development discussions with their Boards and teams, as well as using it to frame their work with Cranfield Trust. Completing the J2E after the project has concluded allows each charity to celebrate its successes and consider the next steps in its development. Charities give us very positive feedback on J2E, they find it valuable in assessing their development needs over time, and in action-oriented discussions with Cranfield Trust Regional Managers.

J2E is particularly useful for individual charities, but we also aggregate information across all our consultancy projects, either in particular sectors, or covering all areas of support. This provides useful insight for the Trust which can also be shared with partners to see the impact of programmes they have funded in a specific sub-sector, benchmarked against the wider sector. Aggregated results provide interesting discussion points, but J2E ratings are subjective and individual to each charity, so grouped results are indicative, rather than statistically robust.

In the 2023-24 year, we completed 153 J2Es. Overall, our clients improved their performance by an average of 17% as a result of the support they received through our consultancy services, up from 15% last year.

82% of the completed J2Es related to consultancy projects in the leadership and strategic direction area.

Average project duration is 11 months.

The top five benefits of Journey to Excellence for our charity clients

The pre and post project review process made me pause and think holistically about our organisation

Useful to think about the organisation in this structured way

Helped to consider next steps towards continued improvement

Interesting and rewarding to quantify how far we have travelled

I plan to use my final report with others, such as the Board and funders

"This was essentially an MOT for our charity. We were asked to assess where we were and where we got to. Through the process, areas for continued and further improvement were highlighted, but we also got the opportunity to sit back and appreciate the distance travelled and that we were doing a lot of things well."

Tim Pare, Tea Leaf Trust

153

J2Es completed

17%

On average, the charities moved 17% closer to excellence in their main project area

11

Average project duration (months)

35

Longest project duration (months)

82%

Percentage of our J2E projects in Leadership and Strategic Direction

48

Number of charities awarded our new J2E recognition badge

Journey to Excellence

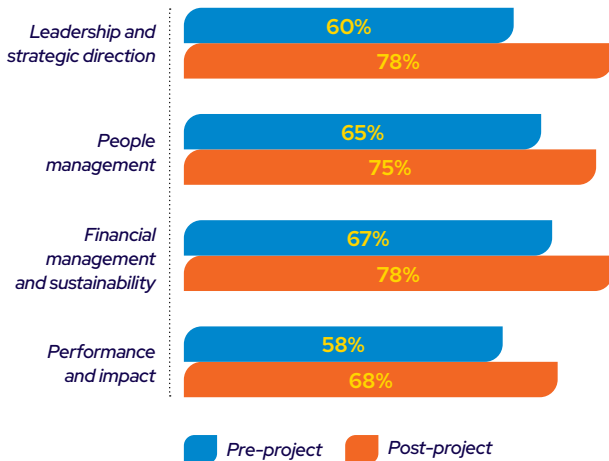
Journey to Excellence main project area and capability ratings

J2E main project area	Number of charities with main project in area	Average PRE-PROJECT capability rating	Average POST-PROJECT capability rating	% change
Leadership and strategic direction	126	60%	78%	18%
People management	11	65%	75%	10%
Financial management and sustainability	14	67%	78%	11%
Performance and impact	2	58%	68%	10%

Journey to Excellence results by main consultancy project area only.

The following graph shows the results of all 153 completed J2Es for the main area and focus of the consultancy project only. Projects tend to affect all areas of a charity's management, but this shows the impact on the main focus area of each project. The blue shows the project ratings before our pro bono consultancy support, the orange lines show the post-consultancy project ratings.

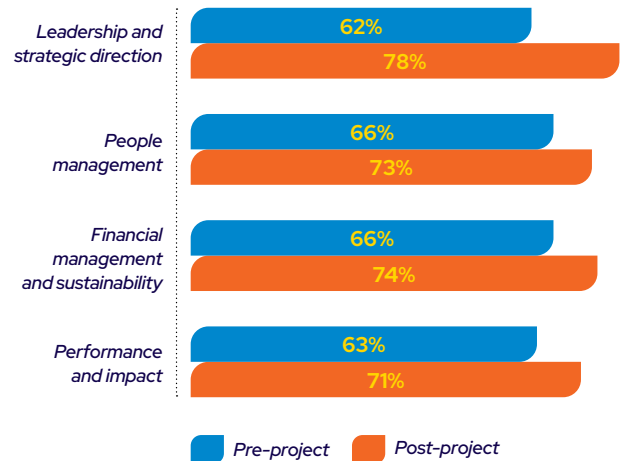
Average scores for main project area



Journey to Excellence results across all four management areas measured.

The following graph shows the results of all 153 completed J2Es, showing the change achieved as a result of our support across all four management areas, regardless of the main area of the project focus. The blue shows the project ratings before our pro bono consultancy support, the orange line shows the post-consultancy project ratings.

All projects: Pre and post average scores by project area



Journey to Excellence Recognition Badge

During this year, to mark our 35th anniversary, we introduced a new Journey to Excellence Recognition Badge for charities that have worked through our Journey to Excellence assessment framework. This celebrates their hard work and commitment to improving in the four essential management areas. Since introducing this in May 2024, we have awarded the Journey to Excellence Recognition Badge to 48 charity clients.

Journey to Excellence in action

Building Circles aims to reduce social isolation and loneliness in adults with learning disabilities and on the autistic spectrum in Gloucestershire.

The pandemic further exacerbated the social detachment of these communities, and the charity's work is now more in demand than ever before.

Building Circles contacted Cranfield Trust for assistance with an impact and evaluation exercise. They wanted to measure the impact of their abuse prevention training packages for adults with learning disabilities, which helps their clients go out in the community safely. They were keen to be able to demonstrate the difference the training makes, understand where change is needed in order to improve the existing training package and to share their learning with other organisations.

Cranfield Trust Regional Manager Marie Langan matched volunteer consultant Tanwen to work with Building Circles CEO Helen Kay to help the charity understand how to evidence longer term impact, what data to collect, how to measure what difference has been made, and how to measure wider savings with regards to other services in the community.

The overall impact

The project helped Building Circles to measure the impact of what they are delivering under a specific programme, so that they can improve it and roll it out more widely to have a positive impact on the lives of more people living with disabilities.

On working with Cranfield Trust volunteer Tanwen, Helen said:

"We are so grateful that through Cranfield Trust we had the opportunity to work closely with a Social Researcher to better understand the real and lasting impact of our training. Tanwen was extremely knowledgeable and helpful.

"Our Abuse Prevention Training for Adults with Learning Disabilities centres around vital life skills, which help to keep individuals free from abuse and able to live well in their community. As an organisation, we recognised that a greater understanding of how to effectively measure and demonstrate our impact would result in a stronger product and better outcomes for learners.

"With Tanwen's expert guidance, we are now far more confident and considerably further forward with this process."

With hard work and perseverance, the project was a huge success for Building Circles, delivering

"guidance on measuring our impact moving forward, with new skills and tools to hand to facilitate this process, enabling us to provide a better, more focused service to our end users."

Building Circles

Building Circles improved in all four J2E project areas. The journey travelled within the main project area of Performance and Impact saw the charity move forward by 19%.

Within the other three areas the charity also saw an impact which they attributed to the project: in Leadership and Strategic Direction, People Management and Financial Management the charity moved forward positively on its journey.



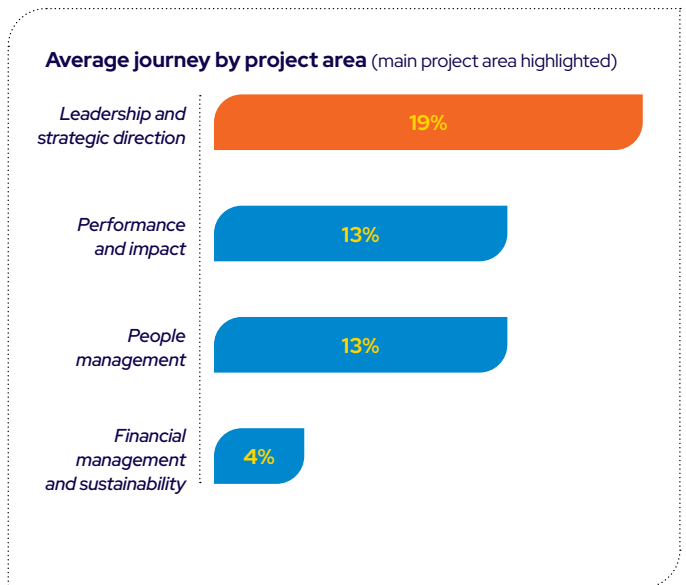
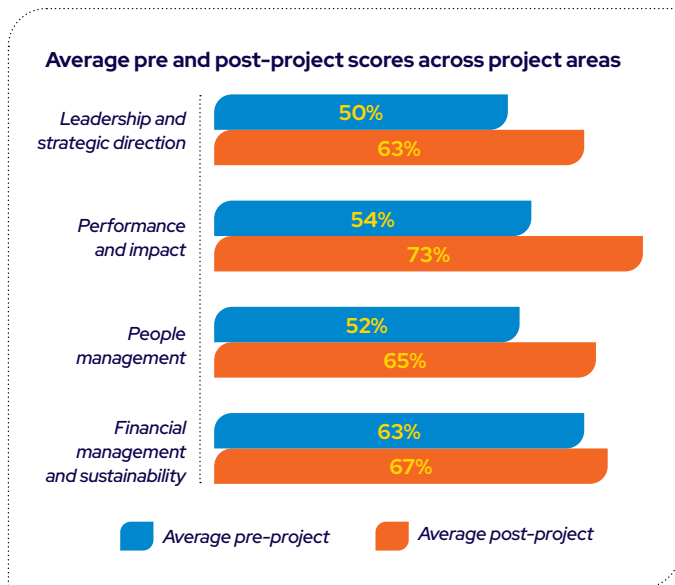
Building Circles

The charity is now building on the support provided by the project to develop a plan to commercialise the abuse prevention training programme. By commercialising the programme, they can share their knowledge in a way which will also help them to generate unrestricted funds and secure their own future as a charity.



Journey to Excellence in action

Journey to Excellence Diagnostic: Pre and post project



The J2E experience

CEO Helen Kay found the J2E process particularly helpful:

“The J2E review process pre and post project made me pause and think holistically about our organisation. The trustees now have a clearer picture of the areas where we are taking steps to improve, the importance of robust eligibility criteria and as a team, we are having more useful and focused Senior Leadership meetings.”

Helen continued:

“The initial assessment with Marie was extremely thought provoking, giving us a much clearer sense of areas requiring attention. 12 months on, it’s been tremendous for everyone involved to see how far we have travelled, and progress made as a result of this process. We still have areas to work on, but for the first time have an accessible tool to help us prioritise our efforts. Marie is a supportive, encouraging and compassionate coach, with a great understanding of the challenges facing small not for profit teams.”



Building Circles was the first of Cranfield Trust’s charity clients to be awarded the newly introduced Journey to Excellence Recognition Badge to demonstrate their commitment to improvement.



Supporting organisations



Cranfield Trust On Call



Cranfield Trust On Call supports charity leaders with critical and challenging issues that do not require a full consultancy project.

Through a call and conversation with a subject-matter expert volunteer, charity leaders share particular challenges that need immediate attention. On the call, they explore possible solutions to problems, which help to provide clarity and confidence, enabling charity leaders to address the challenges.

We offered the opportunity to book an On Call conversation at key times of the year, including in May, Cranfield Trust's Charity Management Month, and in Small Charity Week in June.

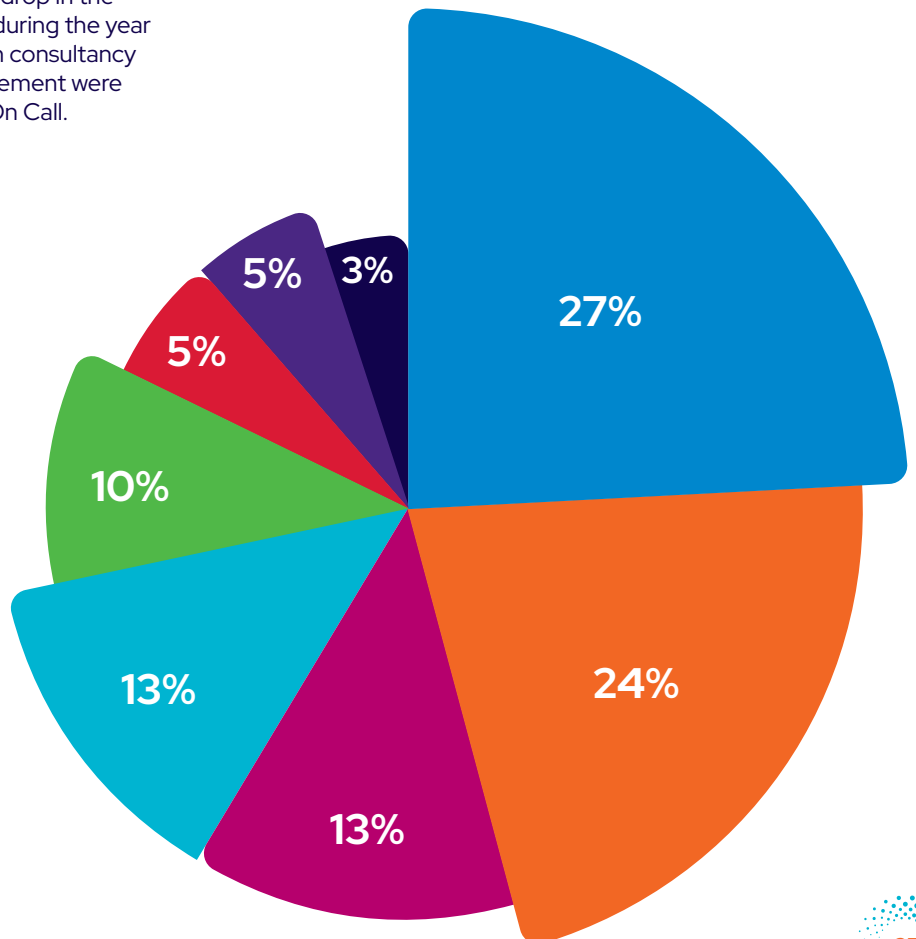
For the first time this year, we also offered charities a diagnostic conversation through the On Call service. Regional Managers talked through our Journey to Excellence questions with each charity client. The answers the charity leaders gave to the questions helped them to identify a baseline position for the charity, identifying strengths, and clarifying future development priorities. These diagnostic On Calls accounted for 24% of the overall number during the year.

Most calls this year were on finance topics (27%), closely followed by the diagnostic calls. We saw a drop in the number of calls on strategy and planning during the year as this area was mostly addressed through consultancy projects. Governance and people management were also important areas addressed through On Call.



On Calls by topic area

- Finance
- Organisational diagnostic
- Governance
- Strategy and planning
- People management
- IT
- Other
- Marketing and communications



On Call in action

Leeds based charity, the Zimbabwe Educational Trust (ZET) is focused on supporting communities to keep children in school and out of poverty. It supports a wide range of educational projects in Zimbabwe.

The charity relies heavily on the support of volunteers and its one employee, the part-time Operations Manager, made contact with Cranfield Trust through our On Call service.

The Operations Manager had read one of the Trust's online articles, 'Top 10 financial ratios for charities' and called for further advice on the programme expense ratio. The Operations Manager specifically called about the demarcation of UK staff costs between project delivery and support.

Cranfield Trust identified one of its financial expert volunteers, Frank Learner, to explore this issue with the charity. The On Call conversation focused on assurance that the inclusion of a portion of a 'core' person's time into direct service delivery cost is common practice and that the accounting ledger structure was a reasonable approach balancing the charity's own reporting needs and the expectations of current funders.

Frank was also able to provide two charity examples of how 'core' costs were allocated/apportioned between direct and support costs to deliver activity programme expense ratios to help illustrate his advice.



The Zimbabwe Educational Trust

During the 40 minute video call with the Operations Manager, the Board Chair and the finance trustee, ZET was comfortable that it had the capacity to evolve a reliable and flexible programme expense ratio methodology that will be a simple addition to the current accounting ledger. Frank was also able to reassure the charity on concerns it had about its programme expenses ratio and offered advice on how to explain it in the charity's trustees' annual report and accounts, as well as wider advice on other issues for the charity to be aware of as a UK based charity operating overseas.

Following the video On Call, Frank also emailed further information, including several introductory guides to charity financial management.

"It was heartening to discover that this call was prompted by the Cranfield Trust top ten financial ratios article co-authored by Marie Langan (Regional Manager) and myself. The query was delving below the overview given in the article."

Cranfield Trust Volunteer Frank Learner

"With support from a Cranfield Trust volunteer we were able to calculate ratios on programme spend and the methods and options for doing so. We are now able to base a decision on the information we gained and can use the resulting calculation as part of our marketing and fundraising. We are very grateful to Frank our Cranfield Trust volunteer for all his help – his knowledge has had such an impact!"

Andrew Jackson, Operations Manager



Supporting leaders

At the current time, when charity leaders are facing demands and challenges like never before, mentoring can provide the supportive space they need to discuss their problems, explore options and feel like they are not alone at the top. Many charity leaders tell us that mentoring has been transformative for them.

We started 126 new mentoring assignments with Chief Executives, emerging leaders and Board Chairs who benefitted from one to one guidance and learning from volunteer mentors in the year. Mentoring continues to be in high demand and accounted for 24% of our intensive support (consultancy and mentoring combined).

We arrange regular reflective sessions for our volunteer mentors to share their reflections confidentially, and to learn from one another. This year the number of reflective sessions increased to 20 (from 14 in the previous year), supporting our volunteer mentors to continuously improve their mentoring practice.

We are proud to report that 100% of charity leaders would recommend our mentoring to others, and 100% also reported excellent, very good or good learning from their mentor/mentee partnership, an increase from 97% last year.

“Cranfield Trust’s Mentoring Programme has provided me with the time and space to have important conversations with someone who knows and understands the not-for-profit sector. I would highly recommend this to any other charity leaders and would like to thank Cranfield Trust for this brilliant opportunity.”

Children and young people’s charity, South East

126

mentoring assignments were started in the year

24%

of one to one support (consultancy and mentoring) was mentoring

20

mentor reflective sessions held in the year

100%

of charity mentees would recommend Cranfield Trust mentoring

100%

of mentees reported excellent, very good or good learning from their mentor/mentee partnership

99%

were very satisfied or satisfied with the mentoring relationship

96%

reported that mentoring exceeded or met their expectations

96%

rated their increase in confidence as excellent, very good or good

96%

reported their improvement in capabilities as excellent, very good or good

“Running any organisation, especially a small charity, can be a lonely and tough role. Having an independent supportive person with whom to talk things through can help enormously. It is also can be an enjoyable and worthwhile experience for the mentor as it is a very effective way of making a big difference.”

Charity supporting children, Gloucestershire

Top five reported benefits of mentoring for charity leaders:

Learning how to approach different scenarios

Developing personal confidence and self-belief

Positive influence on personal wellbeing

Improving skills and competence within their role

Greater clarity about role and career development

“Cranfield Trust’s mentoring programme was transformative for me as a charity leader. My mentor was brilliant and helped me to better understand myself and unlock my potential as a leader. I now feel much more confident in my own abilities and better able to process my own thoughts and feelings, supporting better decision making. I also have a range of tools and approaches to draw on as I navigate the constant change that leadership throws at us. I would thoroughly recommend this programme.”

Sports funding trust, London

“I have accessed support from multiple sources over the lifetime of my career and Cranfield Trust mentoring was definitely one of the best resources I have tapped into. I feel so lucky to have accessed this support. I have learnt so much about myself and gained so much insight. I have become a stronger leader and feel the mentoring has not only benefitted me but the organisation and people around me. I would fully recommend it to others. Thanks so much for this opportunity.”

Charity supporting communities to reduce inequality and improve lives, London

Mentee

“My Cranfield Trust mentor was experienced, kind, thoughtful, and knowledgeable. He helped me to understand my own needs, so I could work efficiently and effectively, and serve our clients and staff team better. I felt supported all the way and am hugely grateful for this help.”

CEO, London

Mentor

“Mentoring through the Cranfield Trust enables me to draw on my business experience and my coaching expertise while fulfilling a personal ambition to make a difference and be relevant.”

Cranfield Trust volunteer mentor

Mentee

“Surpassed my expectations and goals! Great mentor, ready with all the right questions to get me thinking and moving forward.”

Office and HR manager, London

Mentor

“Mentoring has been a learning opportunity for both myself as well as my mentee, bringing home that at times it is just as valuable to support the mentee to make small incremental changes which lead to significant shifts for the mentee.”

Cranfield Trust volunteer mentor

Mentoring in action

The mission of Duke of Edinburgh's Award Perth & Kinross Association SCIO is to improve the lives of young people.

The association's unique programme of close-support work with young people, their families and wider support networks in safe, tranquil spaces provides therapeutic and naturally nurturing learning environments in which the young people can work towards certificated Awards, whilst giving them the skills and confidence they need to succeed in life.

Over the course of the next five years, the organisation has ambitious aspirations, building on its successes in supporting young people since it began 30 years ago. The organisation has a vision to support young people, particularly those with additional support needs, to feel happy, be safe, experience achievement, and believe in themselves.

The Association was introduced to Cranfield Trust by The Gannochy Trust, as part of our partnership supporting organisations in Perth and Kinross. In March 2024, the Communications Manager was facing some difficulties and hoped that mentoring would support an improvement in her time management and leadership skills.

Cranfield Trust's Mentoring and Learning Manager spent some time speaking with the Manager to fully understand what she hoped to address and achieve through being mentored. She was matched with Martyn, a volunteer mentor who was able to provide the right support and guidance.



Mentoring is a two-way relationship and both mentee and mentor benefit from the learning process. It also had a positive impact on Martyn who developed as a mentor and became more aware of the challenges faced by the charity sector:

"It was a genuine pleasure to mentor my mentee. We both gained a lot from the experience, which was rewarding and enriching. As a mentor, it was refreshing for me to work with someone like this manager who showed exemplary dedication, commitment and a thirst for learning."

Martyn Roper, Cranfield Trust volunteer mentor.

"During the six sessions, the mentor and I covered many topics that have been incredibly helpful in my current situation and future career progression. The mentoring challenged me in different ways, and I was surprised at how much my confidence in my skills and abilities grew. It provided valuable guidance and support for navigating challenges, increased confidence and skill development as well as expanded my knowledge of professional networks and access to new opportunities. The mentor's skilful guidance and supportive approach encouraged personal growth by identifying my strengths and motivated me to take on new challenges."

"Due to the mentor's kindness in sharing his vast knowledge and useful tools, I now have applicable tools going forward, such as different models like GROW. I am embedding my learning by using a learning journal to reflect weekly and to remind myself to use any of the tools I have learned."

Communications Manager, Duke of Edinburgh's Award Perth & Kinross Association SCIO

Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Perth & Kinross Association SCIO

"The mentoring has exceeded my expectations. It has been very valuable and met all my objectives and more. The mentor's knowledge has been very helpful and vast. The sessions developed into a safe and confident space where I was able to better understand my own skill set, knowledge, and challenges and confidently grow with them."



Supporting leaders

We know that charity leaders are under immense pressure and are working in a constantly changing and challenging operating environment.

They often feel isolated and need to be and feel supported. Peer to Peer Exchange provides charity leaders with a place of mutual support where challenges and development needs can be shared in confidence. Peer to Peer participants learn from the experience and knowledge of others in a safe environment, helping to enhance and develop their leadership confidence and skills. The groups are facilitated by trained Cranfield Trust volunteers who support each group over six meetings.

Our volunteer facilitators have generously supported 12 Peer to Peer Exchange groups during the year, comprised of 65 CEO and senior leader participants. We have received very positive feedback with 100% of participants saying they would recommend this service to others as well as giving high ratings for their learning and satisfaction with our Peer to Peer Exchange.

"Involvement in the Cranfield Trust Peer to Peer programme has significantly enriched Opportunity Sports Foundation by enhancing our professional capacity and introducing innovative concepts to further our mission. Through this programme, the Foundation has been able to leverage expert guidance and support to refine our operations and strategic direction.

"The infusion of fresh ideas, such as incentivising young beneficiaries, has not only added value to our existing programmes but will also help in engaging and motivating our target audience effectively.

"The Peer to Peer programme has played a pivotal role in contributing to the growth of Opportunity Sports Foundation, enabling us to better serve our community and achieve our goals with greater impact".

CEO Andrew Bell, Opportunity Sports Foundation.

12

Peer to Peer Exchanges

65

participants in Peer to Peer Exchanges

100%

would recommend our Peer to Peer Exchange to others

100%

of participants rated their learning through participating as excellent, very good or good

100%

were very satisfied or satisfied with their experience of Peer to Peer Exchange

"The Peer to Peer support provided was incredible, the relationship that we managed to develop as a group which was facilitated by Nadine wasn't expected but became central to my development. Significantly, I was able to be more honest and know that I wasn't going to be judged and my peers would support as best they could."

Rape and Sexual Abuse Charity Leader

Top five reported benefits of Peer to Peer Exchange:

95%

increased confidence to take action

98%

developed leadership capacity

93%

benefitted the organisation

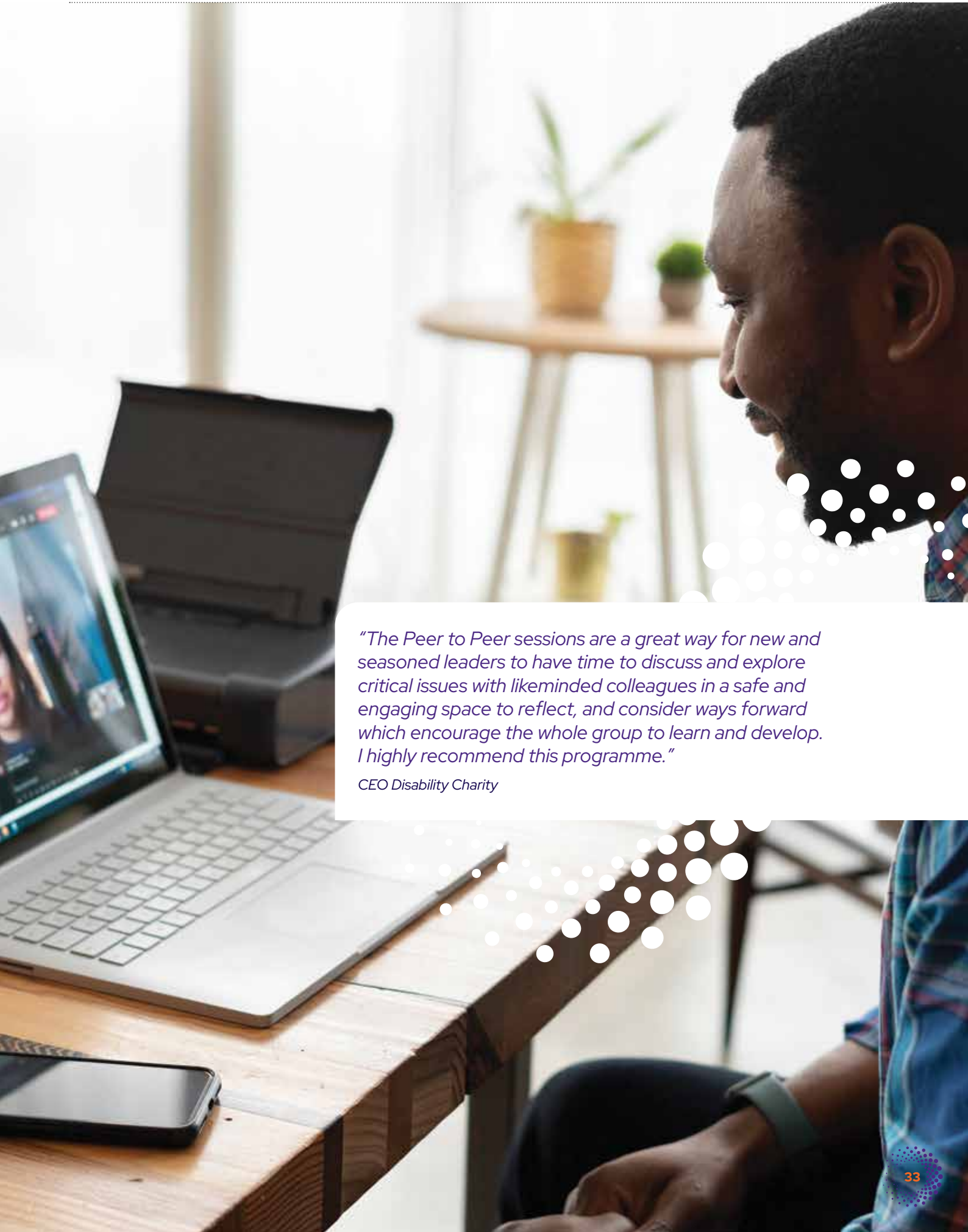
88%

offered a safe environment to discuss challenges

83%

expanded my professional network

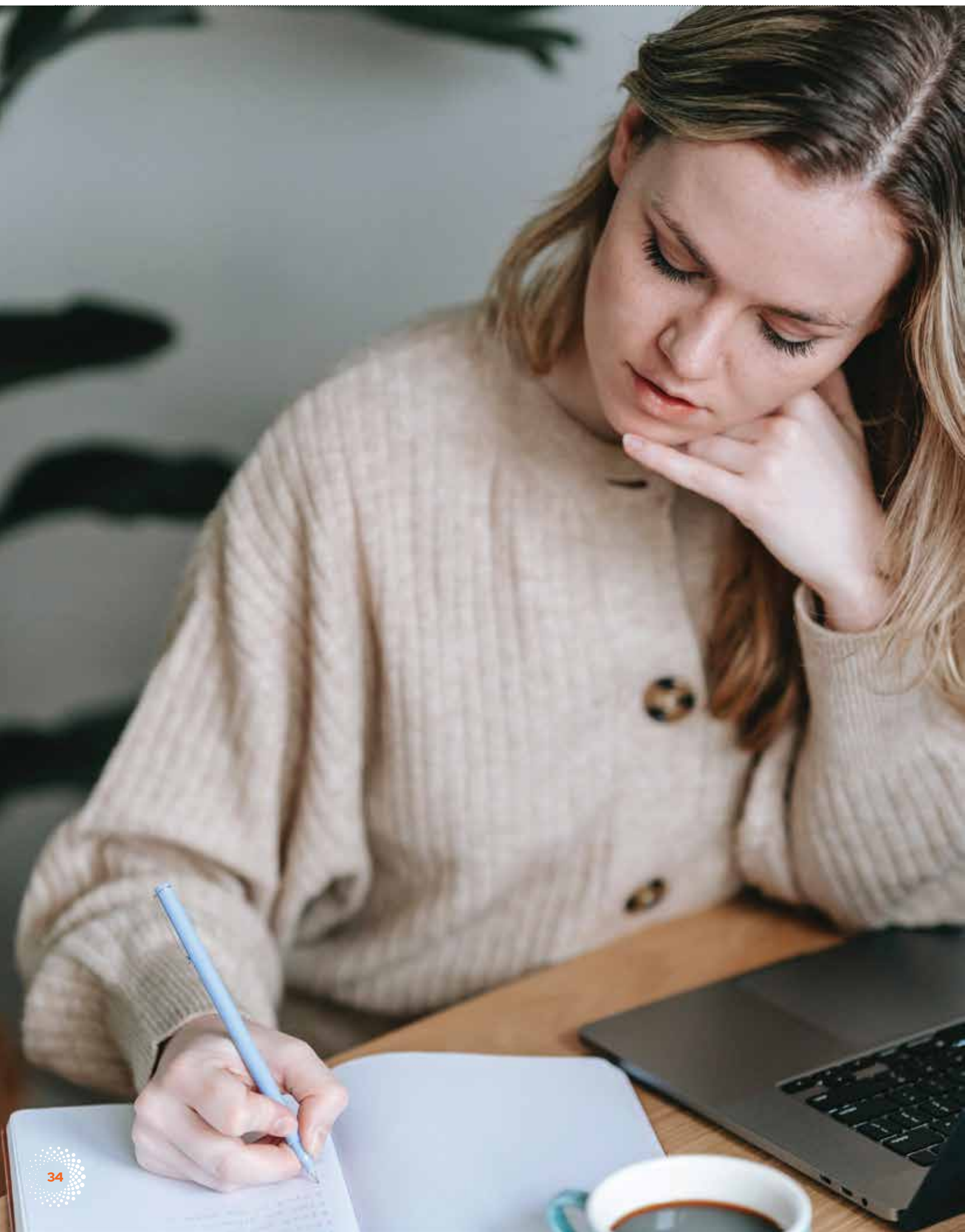
Peer to Peer Exchange



"The Peer to Peer sessions are a great way for new and seasoned leaders to have time to discuss and explore critical issues with likeminded colleagues in a safe and engaging space to reflect, and consider ways forward which encourage the whole group to learn and develop. I highly recommend this programme."

CEO Disability Charity

Supporting across the sector





Our free webinars provide topical learning and development opportunities for charity leaders, teams and volunteers.

We have two webinar strands: 'Learning with Leaders', which provides fresh thinking and original insight from academics and leading practitioners, and 'Essentials to Excellence' which focuses on practical skills development and knowledge sharing on key charity management topics.

During the year, we had a total of 2,239 delegates at our 19 live webinar sessions, with some individuals attending one or more sessions. This is a 55% increase on attendance figures last year. 98% of attendees at the live webinars said they would recommend our webinars to others. In total, we had 3,895 registrations for webinars, all of whom received a link to the webinar recording, the slide deck and signposting to wider reading related to the webinar topic.

Our most popular webinar, with 20% of the total attendees, was on the topic of sustainable fundraising, with a focus on how to reduce reliance on grants, and increase income sources. The next most popular was another funding related topic, 'Unrestricted revenue without tears.' This reflects what we know to be the most challenging area for charity leaders at this time: 49% of our webinar attendees in the year told us that raising funds and generating income is their most difficult task.

Our two webinars on Artificial Intelligence (AI) were our next most popular, the first gave charities practical advice on where to start with AI, and the follow up webinar was delivered by the same volunteer, who answered delegates' questions from the first webinar.

Top five webinars by attendee numbers:

Sustainable fundraising: reducing grant reliance and growing diverse income sources

Unrestricted revenue without tears

Rethinking AI and its impact on businesses, charities and humanity

Charitable AI: practically where do I start and what do I do after that?

Five key building blocks for managing organisational change

2,239

attendances at live webinars

774

views of recorded webinars in the year

98%

of delegates would recommend our webinars to others

93%

of delegates rated the webinars as excellent, very good or good

92%

said that the webinar they attended met or exceeded their expectations



Supporting across the sector

The resource area of our website hosts a range of valuable materials, information and guidance on essential management areas: leadership and strategic direction, financial management and sustainability, performance and impact and people management.

The ready to use templates, tools and guides are free to download for all charity leaders and managers from across the sector. We have seen a 54% increase in downloads from our website this year.

Cranfield Trust volunteers and colleagues contribute articles, thought pieces and blogs to our website throughout the year to share views and guidance on topical issues. Our selection of case studies helps charity leaders to see the impact our consultancy, mentoring and wider services can have on similar charities to their own, and encourages them to think about how support could be of benefit to their charity.

"Cranfield Trust is an invaluable resource for charities, providing expert support and guidance that helps organisations like ours navigate challenges and build resilience."

33,165

user interactions with pro bono support page on our website

11,867

user interactions with our website resources page

3,431

resource downloads from the website

1,032

website video views

Top five document downloads

Three year business plan template

'Charity management matters' report

Business planning implementation: Key questions

Unlocking the power of AI for charities

Voluntary sector training 'market map' spreadsheet

Top five blogs and articles read

Top 10 financial ratios for charities

Founder syndrome undermines the legacy of strong leaders

Payroll for charities: What you need to know

How to access free and pro bono advice for charities

Seven finance questions every charity trustee should ask

Information resources

Most watched videos

An interview with Professor David Clutterbuck

An interview with Cranfield Trust mentor, Karen Plum

Cash flow forecasting during the cost of living crisis

Charity management matters:
research findings revealed

In total we responded to 1,122 enquiries during the year of which 48% became consultancy projects or mentoring assignments. We signposted 177 enquiries from charities outside our welfare remit to other sources of support. Charities which contact Cranfield Trust never leave without some form of advice or signposting to other services or information resources (our own or others).

For the first time this year, we introduced a Charity Management Month in May.

We created this month to raise awareness of the services we offer and to encourage leaders and managers to prioritise organisation and management development. During the month we shared and signposted to learning resources to help build confidence and capability amongst leaders and managers in the sector.

The top pages visited during the month were those proactively shared during the campaign.

These included [Top 10 financial ratios \(449 page views\)](#), [Fighting the Finance Crisis Guide \(323 views\)](#), and the refreshed [on-demand webinar library \(213 views\)](#).

The Three Year Business Plan template was the overall top download on the website during the campaign period.

"Cranfield Trust always provides excellent support and information, guiding our charity as we navigate the current challenges. Their support is always relevant and appropriate to the changing tides of the charity sector."

Thank you

As an independent charity, Cranfield Trust is very grateful for the generous support we receive from individuals, funders, partners and businesses.

Through their financial contributions and 'in kind' goods and services, our supporters enable us to deliver our work, run our organisation, support specific activities, and address needs within particular communities of charities.

Individual donors

Gifts from individuals are a vital source of support for Cranfield Trust's work. Some of our supporters make very significant major gifts towards Cranfield Trust's work, while others make regular and one-off donations. We are deeply grateful to all our supporters and for every gift we receive.

Our 35th anniversary celebrations in 2023-24 (see page 44) included two special fundraising initiatives.

In 2024, we launched our Smart Circle as a pathway through which philanthropists and individual supporters can make a substantial contribution and commitment to supporting Cranfield Trust.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank those people who have supported our work in a personal capacity or through their own trust, foundation or charity. Your generous support and insight have never been more vital to our work.

We also launched **#CharityChallenge35** as a celebration of the people who make Cranfield Trust's work possible, inviting supporters, volunteers and staff to undertake an activity they enjoy to help raise awareness and generate vital funds for our work. We would like to thank all those who initiated or completed sponsored activities for the Trust during our anniversary year and all the people who have supported their efforts with generous donations. In particular, we would like to thank volunteers Rob Everett, Paul Kiernan, Cedric McMillan, Paul Santacreu and Heidi Simpson, and Cranfield Trust team members Ros Egeland, Susan Elan Jones, Chris Gatman and Vanessa Longman.

Unrestricted funding

We are deeply grateful to have the support of a number of individuals and organisations who share our vision of a strong, capable and confident voluntary sector. These supporters provide us with unrestricted funding that enables us to plan our work and develop as an organisation.

This year, the following people and organisations provided us with significant financial support:

- **The Princess Anne's Charities**
- **Beatrice Laing Trust**
- **John Bothamley**
- **Britford Bridge Trust**
- **The Dulverton Trust**
- **EQ Foundation**
- **Gaynor and Edward Humphreys**
- **Antony and Amanda Jenkins**
- **Pears Foundation**
- **The Robert and Rosie Wright Charity**
- **Simon Rowlands**
- **The Tuixen Foundation**

Focused funding

We are very grateful to those generous funders and donors who have provided financial support for specific activities at the Trust, or towards our services for charities in specific regions or sub-sectors. In the year, we benefitted from the following support:

- **The Albert Hunt Trust**
(supporting mental health services and counselling for children and young people)
- **The Colyer-Fergusson Charitable Trust** (Kent)
- **Garfield Weston Foundation**
(Midlands, North West and South West)
- **Islamic Relief UK**
(supporting services for charities supporting Refugees and Asylum Seekers)
- **The Lawson Trust** (Kent and Sussex)
- **Masonic Charitable Foundation**
(supporting our webinars, peer to peer groups and the 'Charity Management Matters' research project and report)
- **The Moondance Foundation** (Wales)
- **Pen y Cymoedd Wind Farm Community Fund**
(in the Fund's area of benefit)
- **The Shears Foundation**
(Tyne & Wear / Northumberland)
- **The Society of the Holy Child Jesus**
(towards services for charities supporting Refugees and Asylum Seekers)
- **The Steel Charitable Trust** (Bedfordshire)
- **The Waterloo Foundation** (Wales)
- **The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust**
(West Midlands)

To all our supporters and partners

We were also grateful for contributions from **Aberlour Child Care Trust** and **The Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation** for donations towards the costs of specific activities during the year.

Partnerships and programmes

Cranfield Trust is proud to work in partnership with a range of grant-making organisations to deliver capacity building and development support for communities of charities and grantees. Through our varied programmes, we deliver enhanced support, addressing clients' needs and funders' strategic objectives. In 2023-24, our new and ongoing partners were:

- **City Bridge Foundation**
- **Essex Community Foundation**
- **The Gannochy Trust**
- **Gloucestershire Community Foundation**
- **Jack Petchey Foundation**
- **Lloyds Bank Foundation**
- **Masonic Charitable Foundation**
- **Mercers' Charitable Foundation**
- **Ministry of Justice**
- **Porticus**
- **The Triangle Trust 1949 Fund**

During the year, we were also very grateful for the in-kind support and pro bono services we received from **CAPCO**, **Cranfield University**, **MSW Thames Valley Ltd**, **NfP Research** and **Salesforce UK Limited**.



Cranfield Trust's anniversary

Celebrating 35 years of impact, insight and influence in the sector

For the last 35 years, our dedicated staff team and network of skilled and knowledgeable volunteers have empowered vital social welfare charities with the confidence and capabilities to thrive.

We would like to thank all our volunteers, trustees, staff, partners, donors and funders who have supported us to get to where we are today. It is thanks to them that over the last 35 years we have been able to support 3,000 social welfare charities with over 5,000 projects. Since we first became a registered charity, the Trust has changed considerably and we have grown to meet the needs of human welfare charities across the sector.

Demand for our services continues to grow year on year. We are marking this anniversary at a time when the sector is under immense pressure, with charity leaders facing challenges in generating income, meeting increasing demands and difficulties in supporting and maintaining a stable workforce. This makes us more determined than ever to continue supporting small charities – our most valuable national asset, so that they can continue to provide their vital services.

"I am proud that as we have developed and adapted over the years, the ethos and vision of the Trust has always remained the same: to support and empower charities with the confidence and capabilities they need, whatever challenges they face. It's an honour and privilege for us to work alongside so many inspiring charity leaders every year and we look forward to being there for them for many more years to come."

Amanda Tincknell CBE, Cranfield Trust CEO



In 1988 HRH The Princess Royal challenged staff, students and alumni of Cranfield University to use their skills to benefit the voluntary sector. As a result, Cranfield Trust was founded.

In May 1989, Cranfield Trust became a registered charity with the vision to build successful charities. As Patron of the Trust, HRH The Princess Royal continues to be an active supporter and advocate of the Trust's work.

"On the 35th Anniversary of Cranfield Trust I would like to congratulate the charity for the significant impact it has had in the sector and the difference it makes to charity leaders and small charities across the United Kingdom.

"The mission of Cranfield Trust to harness the skills and knowledge of volunteers to help charities, adapt, succeed and deliver social change remains as strong as it did when it was first founded.

"As Patron of the Trust, I would like to thank the dedicated staff team at Cranfield Trust as well as the skilled volunteers who give their time and share their knowledge free of charge. They benefit thousands of charities every year, which in turn support some of the most vulnerable people in our communities."

Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal, Patron, Cranfield Trust



Cranfield Trust's anniversary

Celebrating 35 years of impact, insight and influence in the sector

During our anniversary year, we launched new fundraising activities that helped us to celebrate all the people who make our work possible and raise awareness and vital funds for our work.

Through our Smart Circle, we have invited philanthropists and donors to make a significant contribution and commitment to supporting the UK voluntary sector by supporting and investing in our work and vision. We have been deeply grateful to the people who have joined us and committed their support to helping charities and frontline services to become stronger and more effective for their beneficiaries.

The support we have gained through their gifts and commitments is absolutely critical to sustaining and developing our services for frontline organisations.

In addition, we launched our #CharityChallenge35, inviting our volunteers, staff and supporters to undertake sponsored activities to help us generate awareness and more vital funds for our work.



Volunteer Paul Kiernan completed a 125-mile trek of the South West Coast path, which runs from Minehead, Somerset to Poole, Dorset.

"I really enjoy being a Cranfield Trust volunteer and I'm also a keen walker so I was really pleased to receive a volunteers' email last spring about Cranfield Trust's #CharityChallenge35. I'd already planned to walk 125 miles around the South West Coastal Path (The Salt Path) in May, so I decided to combine my personal passion for walking with raising some vital funds for Cranfield Trust.

"This was the first time I had done anything like this and taking the first step was both inspiring and daunting! The walk has been a long-time ambition of mine.

"I clocked up the miles over nine days and completed my walking challenge supported by my very patient wife who drove a motorhome that we'd rented for the trip – it really was a team endeavour.

"I'm really inspired by how Cranfield Trust works to bring together people with professional skills with charities needing advice. I'm thrilled to be part of it and enjoying my first volunteer engagement. And I'm incredibly pleased to have already raised almost £700, whilst also helping to boost the Trust's profile."

Paul Kiernan, Cranfield Trust Volunteer

Cranfield Trust's staff and volunteers completed other challenges. This included a 35+ mile walk in the Test Valley in Hampshire over four weekends during the summer, raising over £2,000 for the Trust, and further activities – sponsored poetry readings and a sewing challenge – have been organised for 2024-25.

Our future plans

We developed our current business plan in 2023, it runs to 2026. We have reviewed it in summer 2024, to ensure that it is relevant for the coming months, as we are working in a fast-changing environment.

Our main objectives are to:

Continue to develop our core services

Our core services are well established, and receive excellent feedback. Demand has risen over the last twelve months, and is likely to continue to be strong, as charities respond to rising demand for their services, falling income and workforce challenges.

We will be managing demand for our most intensive services – consultancy and mentoring – carefully, in line with our resources. We will encourage engagement with our webinars and information resources, to provide more self-directed support, and work collaboratively with other service providers to make referrals, when we are unable to offer support ourselves.

We believe that our current portfolio of services will continue to be highly relevant to frontline charities, and it is possible that further types of support may be helpful. We will consider developing further services if needed.

Use our insight effectively

We have a strong position in supporting and advocating for excellent management in the voluntary sector. Through our services, we have good insight which we are starting to share more widely with others in the sector, to help to inform and influence our own and their activities. We hope to share more of our data and insight, with other service providers like ourselves, as well as with funders and government, over the next 12 months.

Explore and develop a management training programme

We undertook some valuable research into management training and development in 2023. We aim to work towards the development of a management training programme, to build the skills of sector leaders and managers, improving capability and confidence on a larger scale than our current services enable. Our long term aim is to develop a bespoke programme, but in the next 12 months we will be seeking to engage and collaborate with other training providers, to provide a more navigable 'virtual' programme of existing training offers.

Across these objectives, we will be working to ensure that the Trust is diverse, inclusive and equitable in all its activities, that we work to minimize our environmental impact, and that we make the most of opportunities offered by technology developments.





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