



neighbourly

Global change starts locally.



Neighbourly's Autumn 2024 Community Survey Results

1,205 responses

Fieldwork dates: 11 – 25 October 2024

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Executive Summary

We surveyed 1,205 local good causes across the UK and Ireland to understand more about their outlook, needs and challenges.

78% say that **demand has increased** over the past 3 months

50% say there are **people they can't help** due to limitations in capacity or funding

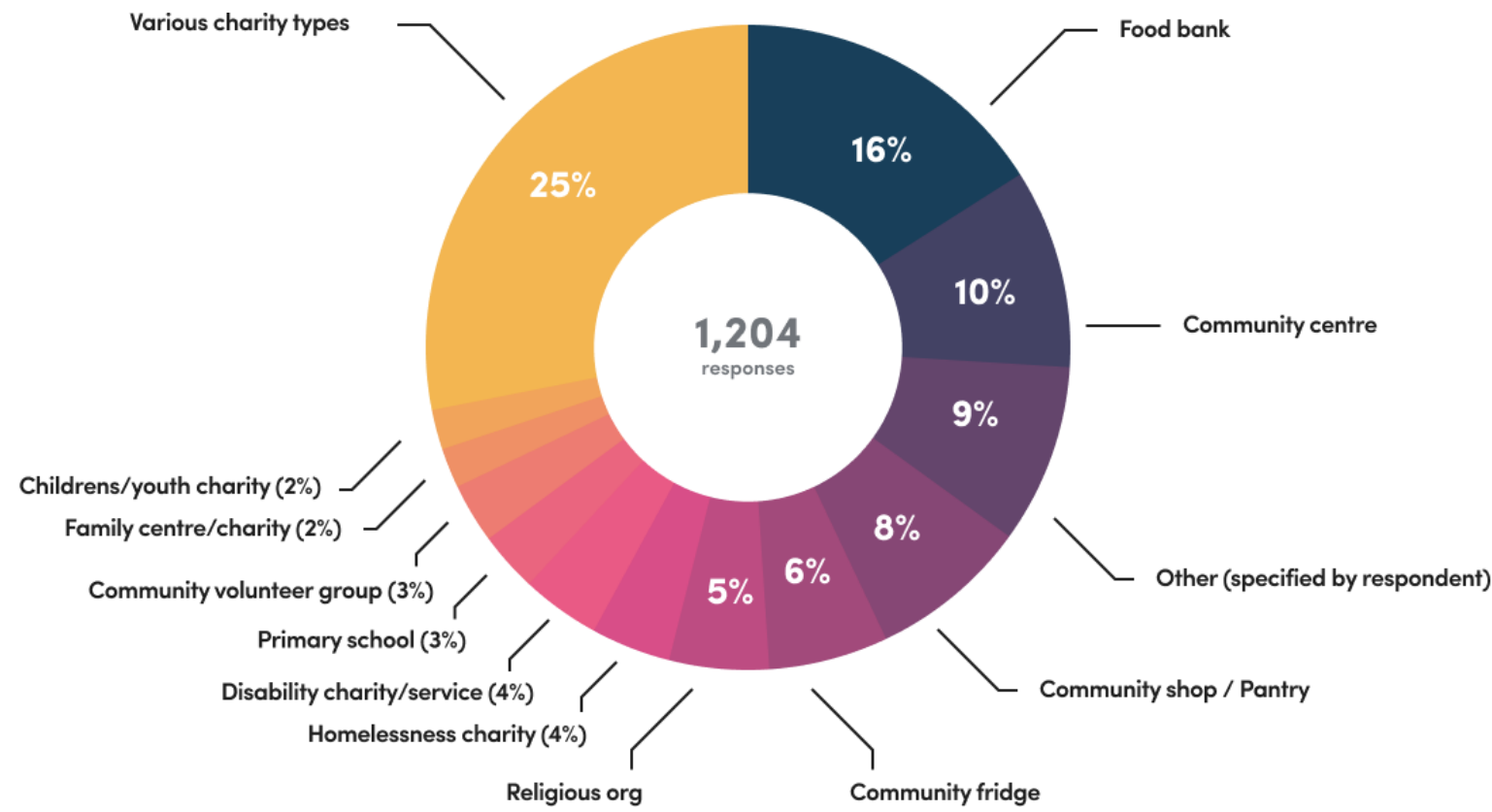
69% think meeting demand **this winter will be worse than last year**

66% are concerned about **availability of volunteers** over the winter period

53% **don't know where to start with AI** or have not yet spent any time on it



Respondents from a wide range of organisation types, across the UK & Ireland

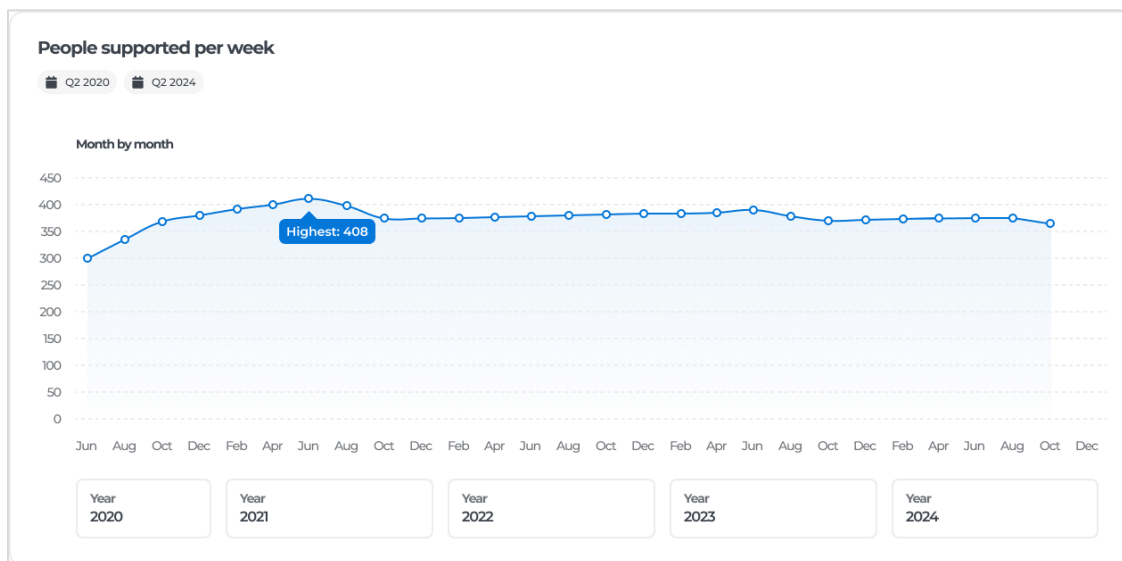


Insights

Over half of the respondents provide food aid

61% collect surplus food through Neighbourly

The need in communities remains high – an average of 366 people supported per week, per good cause

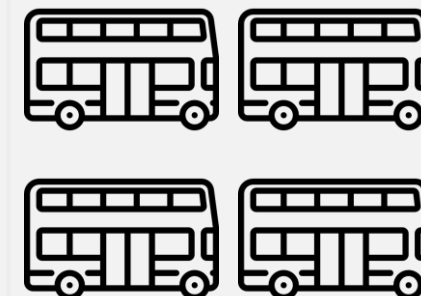


Insights

366

Avg number of people supported per week, per good cause

that's enough to fill almost four double-decker buses to capacity.

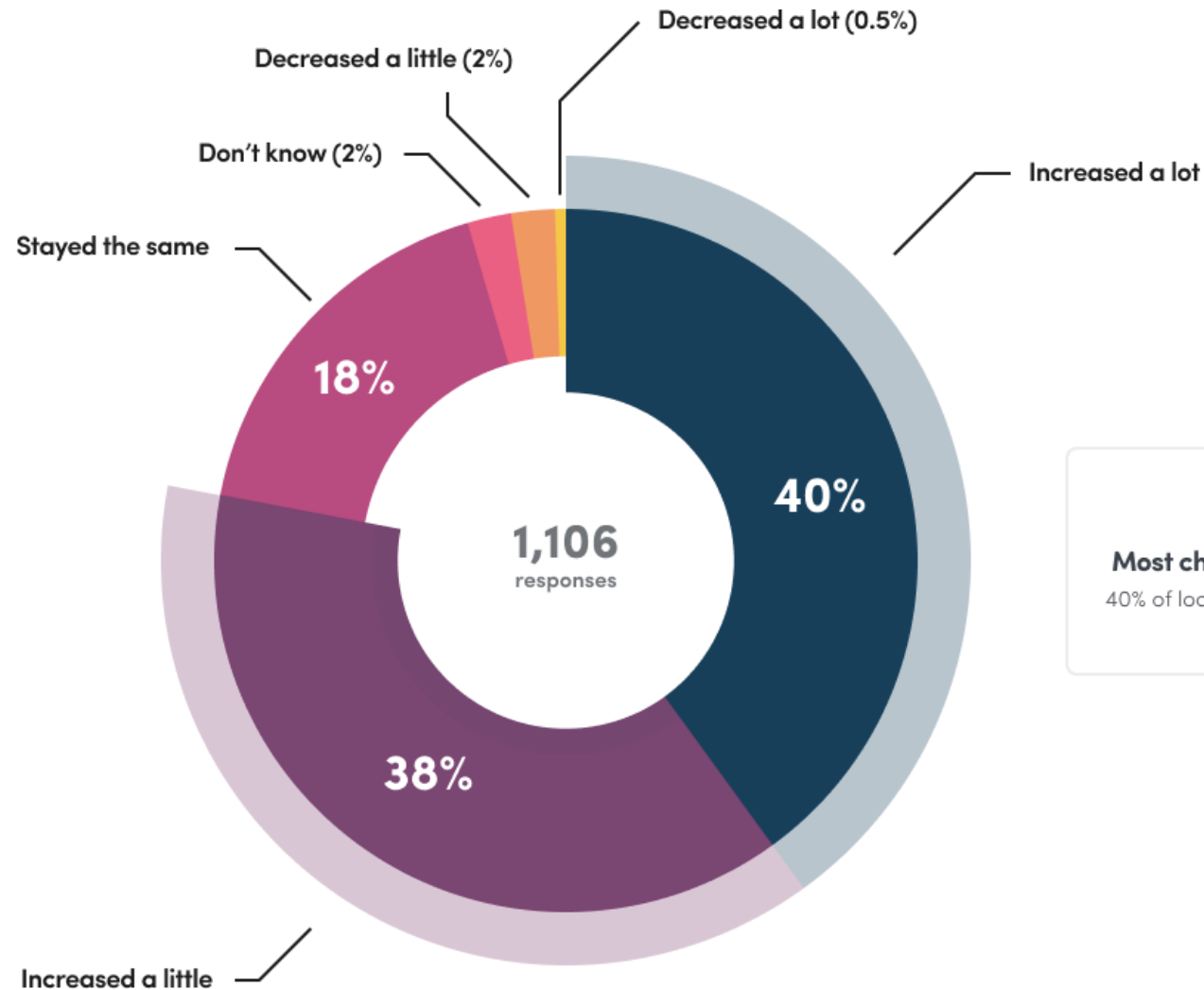


02

Demand for local support



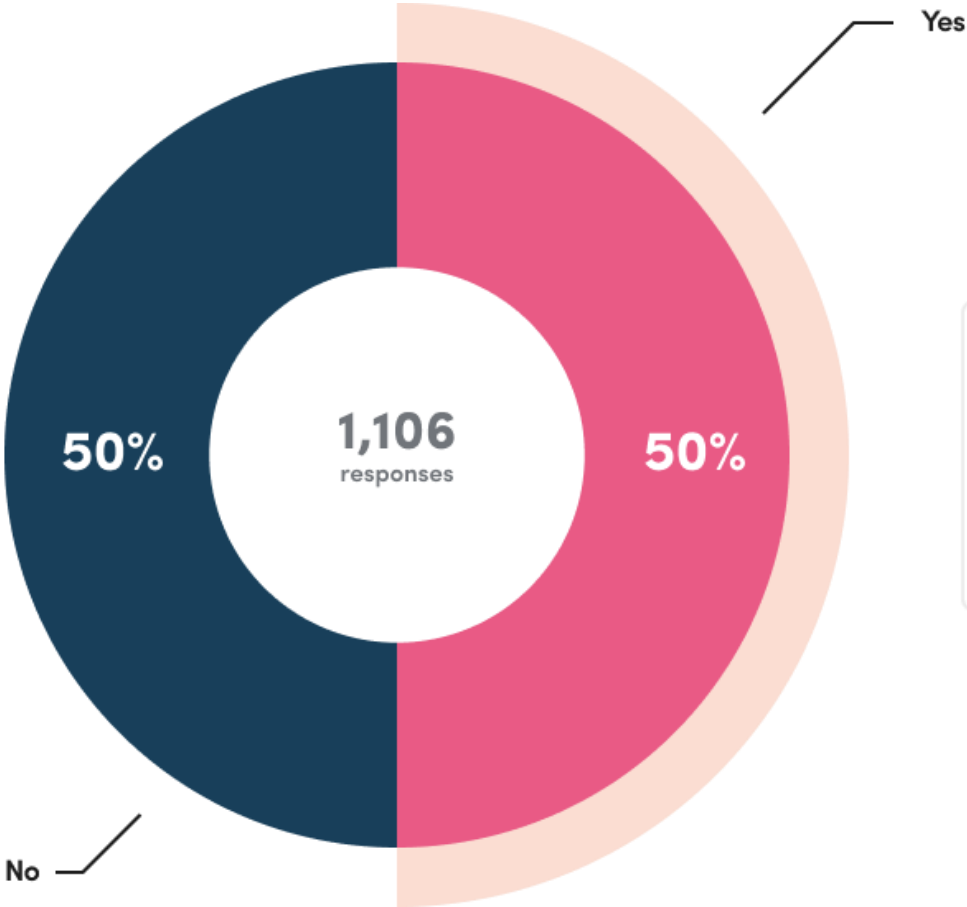
Rising demand is creating pressure - 78% say demand has increased over the past 3 months



 Insights

Most charities are seeing increased demand
40% of local causes have seen a large rise in demand in recent months

50% say there are people they can't help due to limitations in capacity or funding

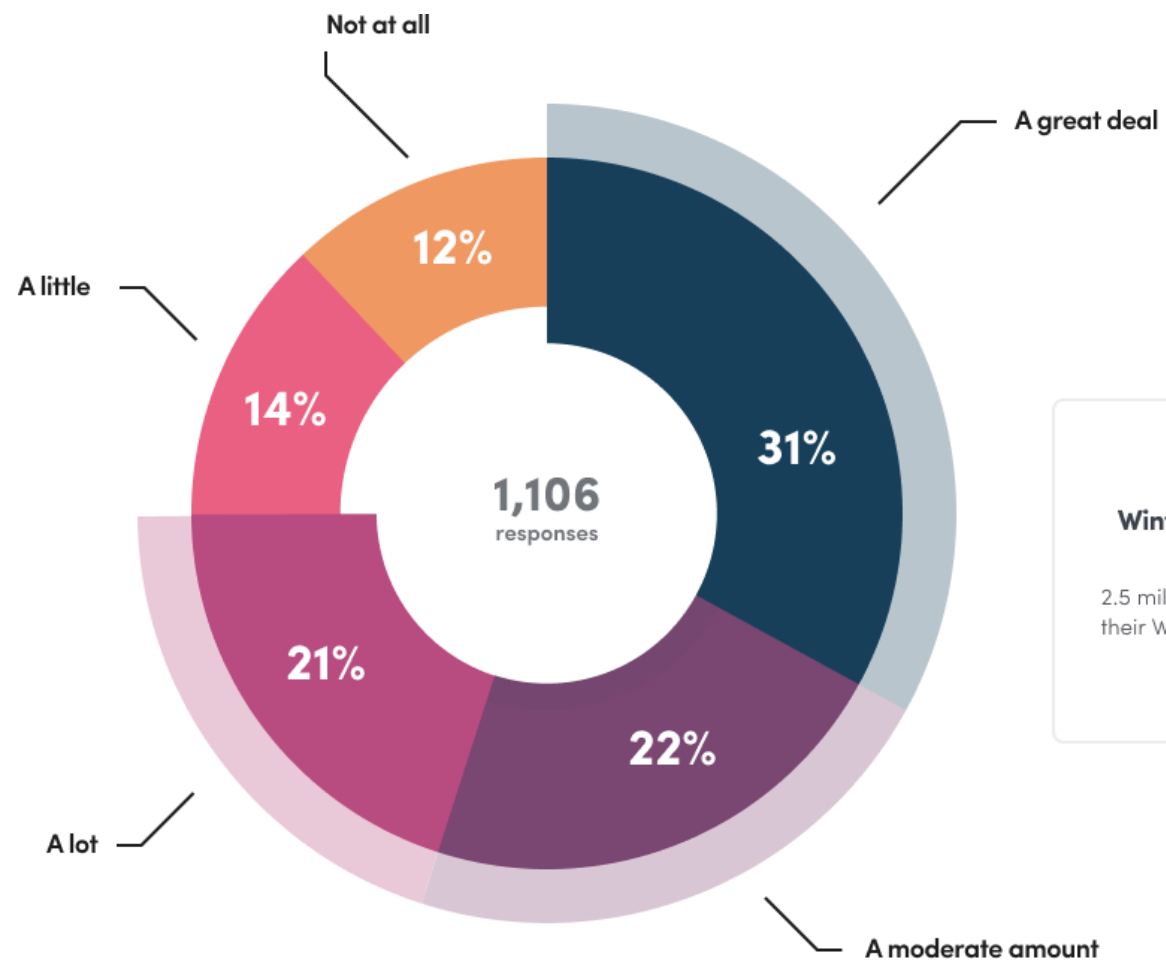


 Insights

Half of the good causes are having to turn people away

For this 50%, 67 people per week on average request support but can't be helped

88% are worried to some extent about the upcoming cuts to winter fuel payments creating more demand on their organisation

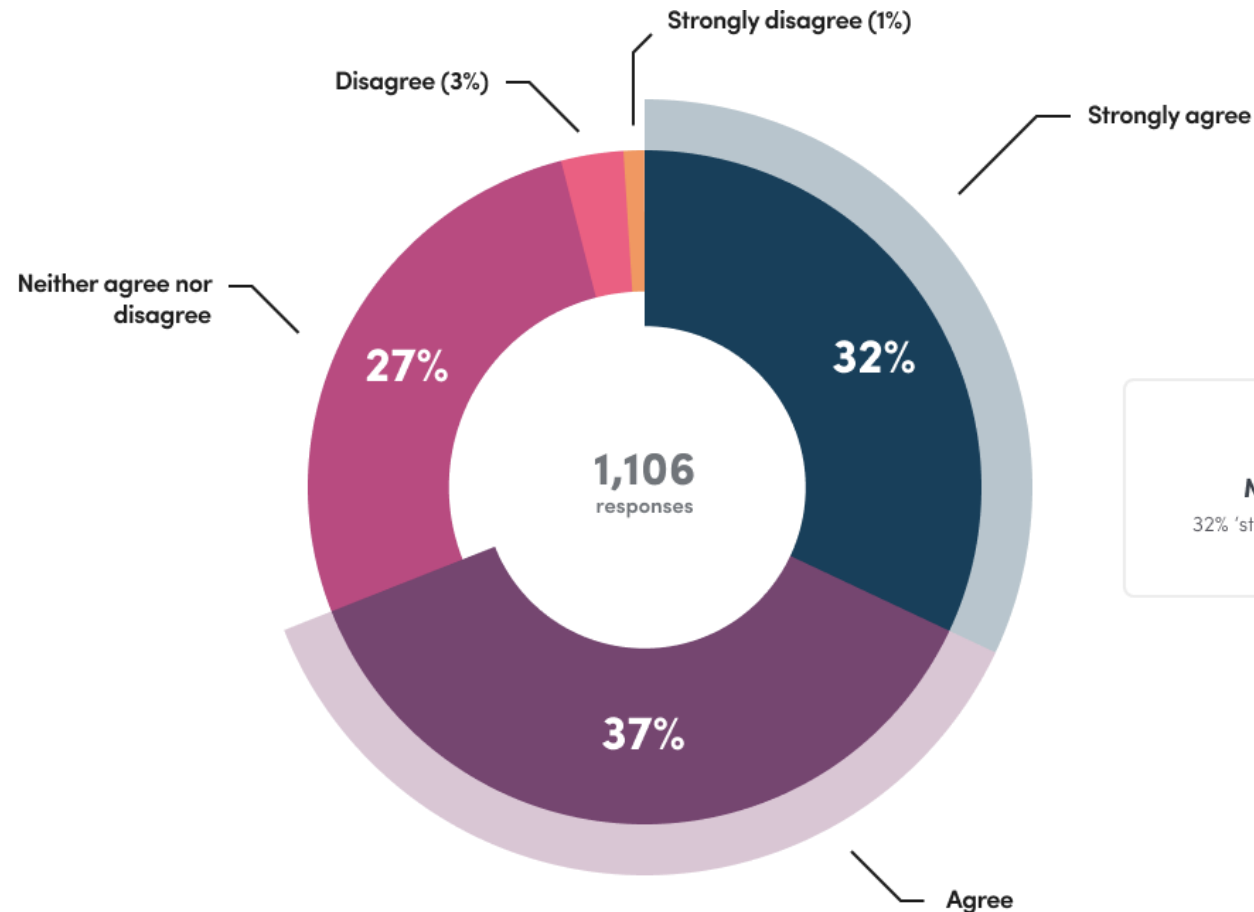


Winter fuel payment cuts will create more demand

2.5 million older people on low incomes are set to lose their Winter Fuel Payment, and will struggle without it*

[View Age UK Data](#)

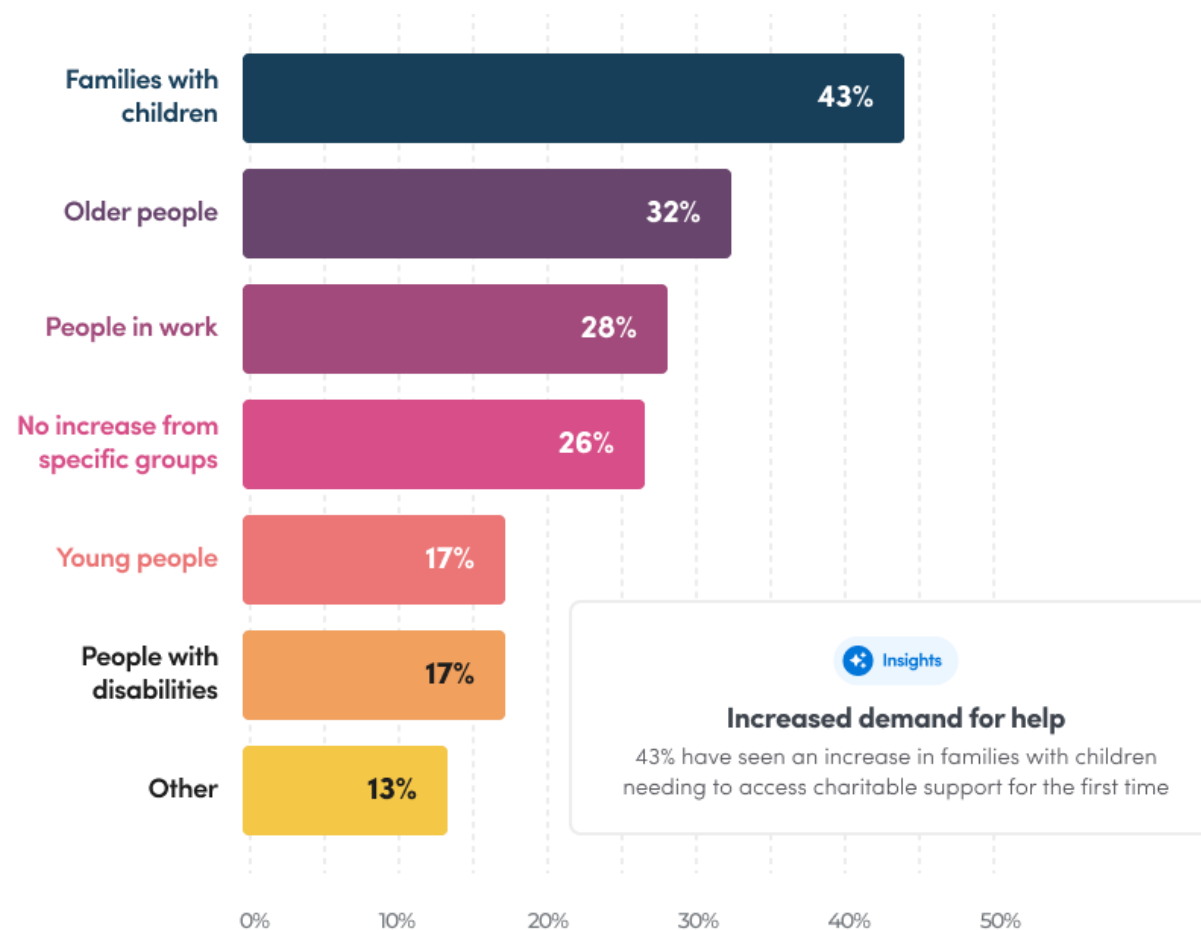
69% feel their ability to meet demand over this Christmas/winter period will be more challenging compared to last year.



More challenging winter period

32% 'strongly agree' that meeting demand will be harder this winter than the last one

Small charities are seeing an increase in families with children, older people and in-work people accessing support for the first time



“As we enter the colder months we really are concerned about the number of new calls for help coming in. We are also receiving an increasing number of referrals from Adult Social Services and we are in an area where 30% of our population is aged 65 and over - it's a real worry.”

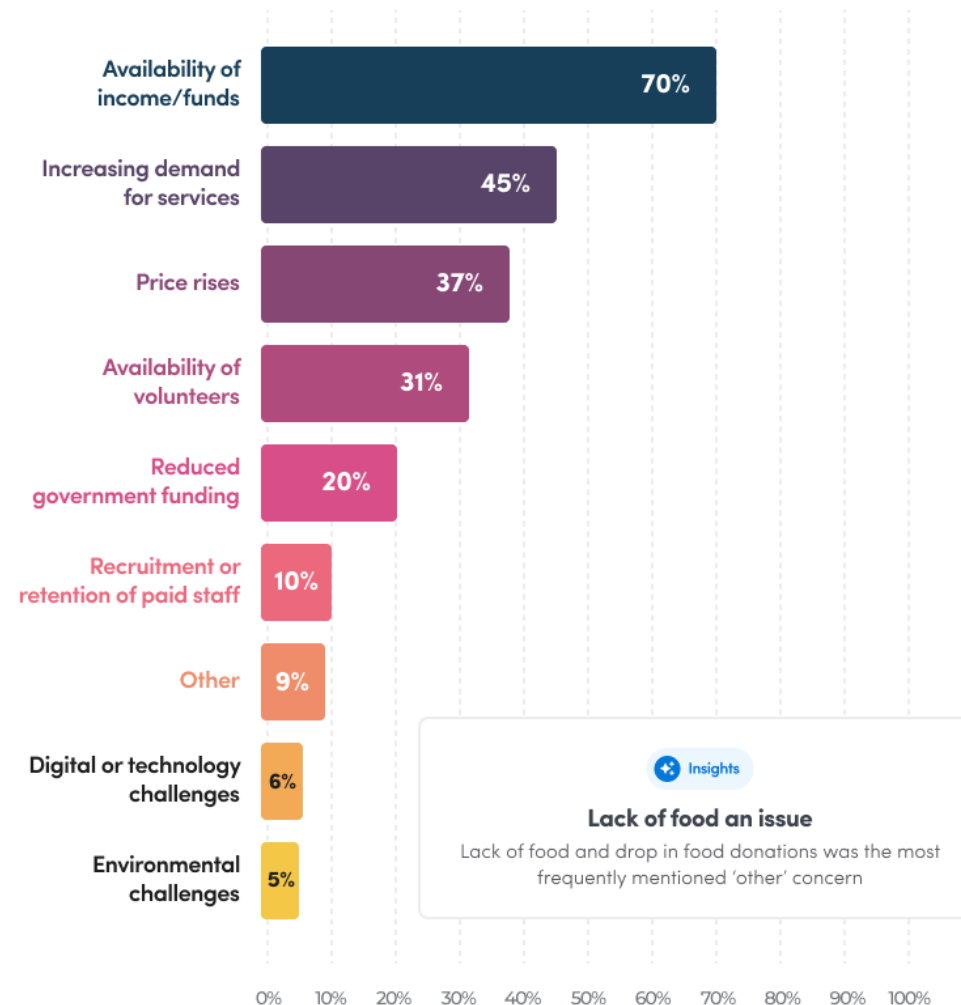
The Vale Pantry, Community Shop/Pantry, Dorset

03

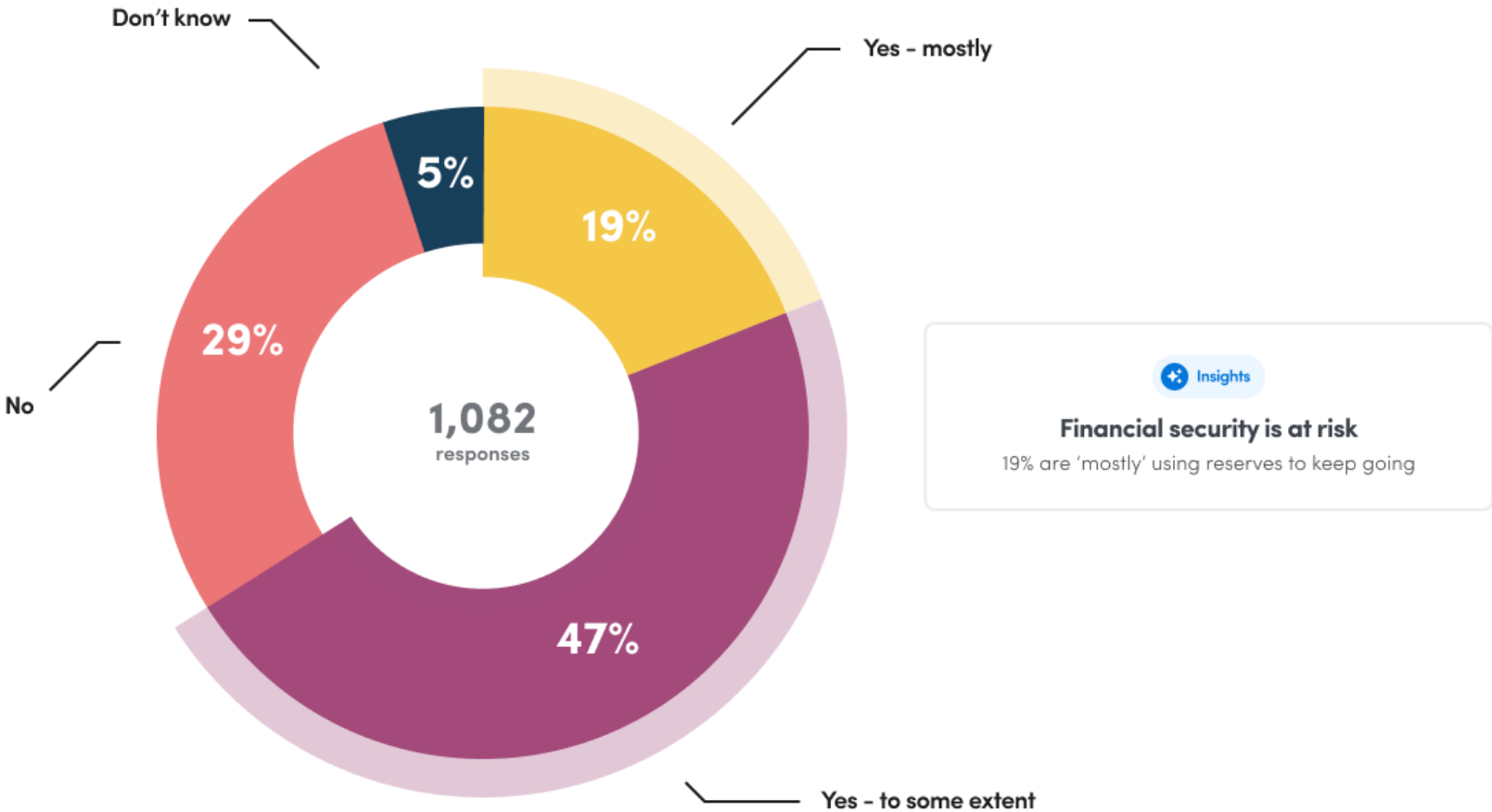
Future outlook & concerns



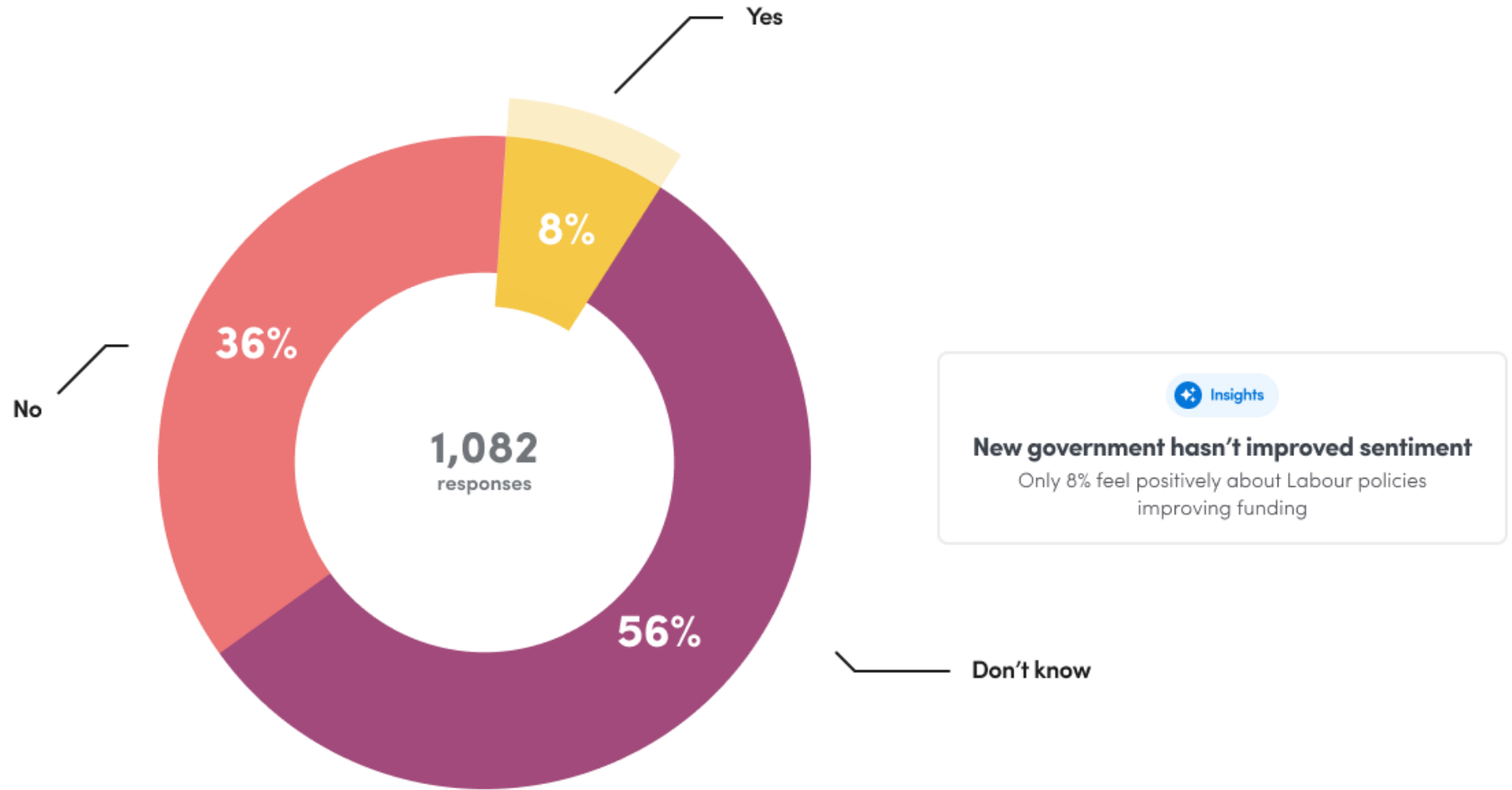
Greatest concerns facing these organisations are the availability of income, increasing demand for services, price rises and the availability of volunteers



66% are having to rely on financial reserves to keep supporting people



Over half (56%) of small charities are uncertain about whether Labour government policies will improve access to funding



Pan Together, Community Centre, Isle of Wight

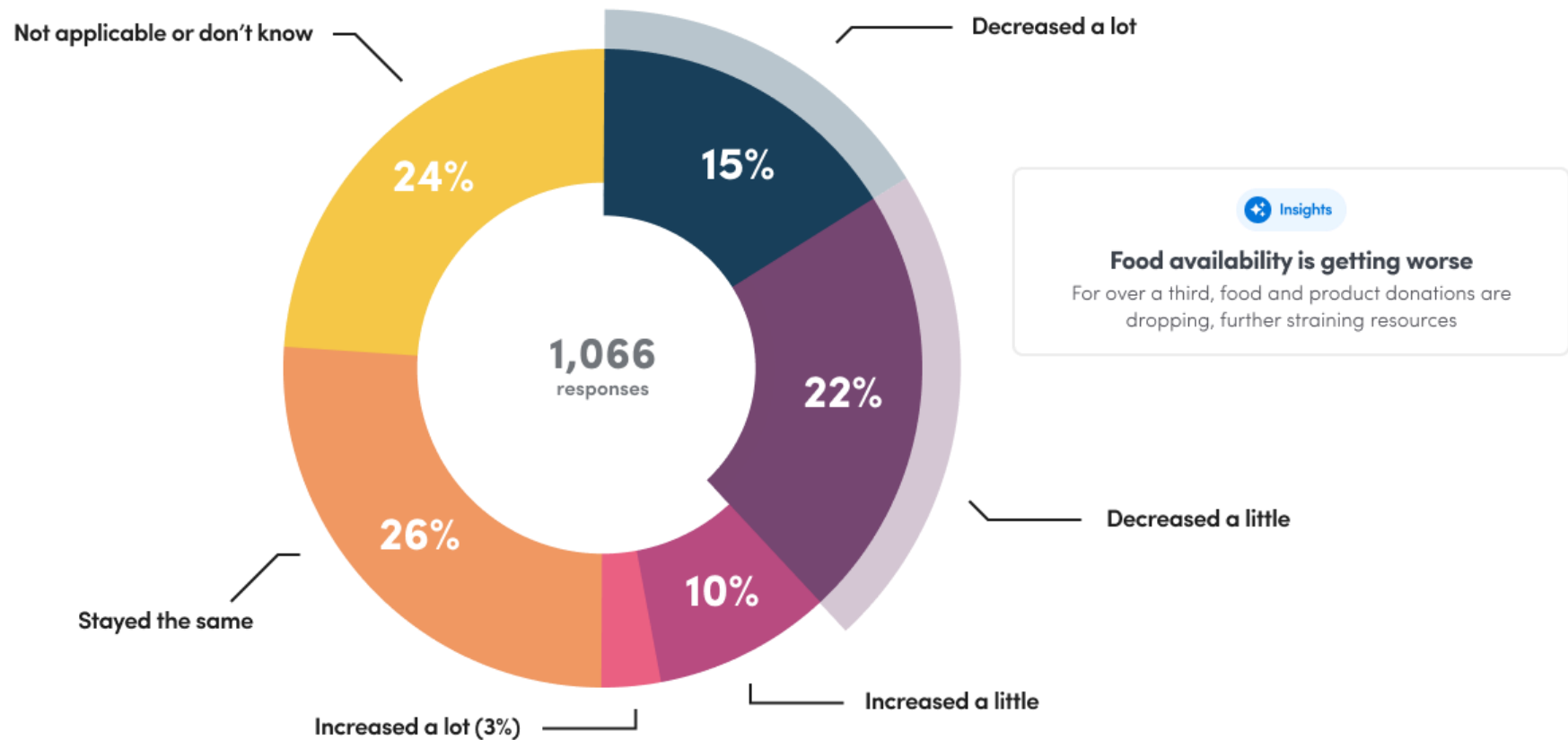
“Demand is growing and is only going to increase further. No one should have to choose between food, fuel and children's clothes. We know we can't change the world, but we do make a direct and tangible difference to people's lives in these tough times.”

04

Product donations and volunteering



37% say donations of food or products to their organisation have decreased



Food and toiletries are the most needed product types

Most requested products



Non-perishable food items

- Tinned goods (especially meat, fish, vegetables, and fruit)
- Pasta and rice
- Cereal
- Long-life milk (UHT)



Fresh produce

- Fruits and vegetables
- Meat and poultry (fresh or frozen)
- Dairy products (milk, cheese, eggs)
- Bread



Toiletries and hygiene products

- Soap, shampoo, deodorant
- Toothbrushes and toothpaste
- Feminine hygiene products
- Toilet paper



Household essentials

- Cleaning products
- Laundry detergent
- Nappies



Other specific food items

- Tea and coffee
- Sugar
- Cooking oil



Non-food items

- Clothing (especially warm clothing and winter coats)
- Bedding (sleeping bags, blankets)
- Furniture



Monetary donations

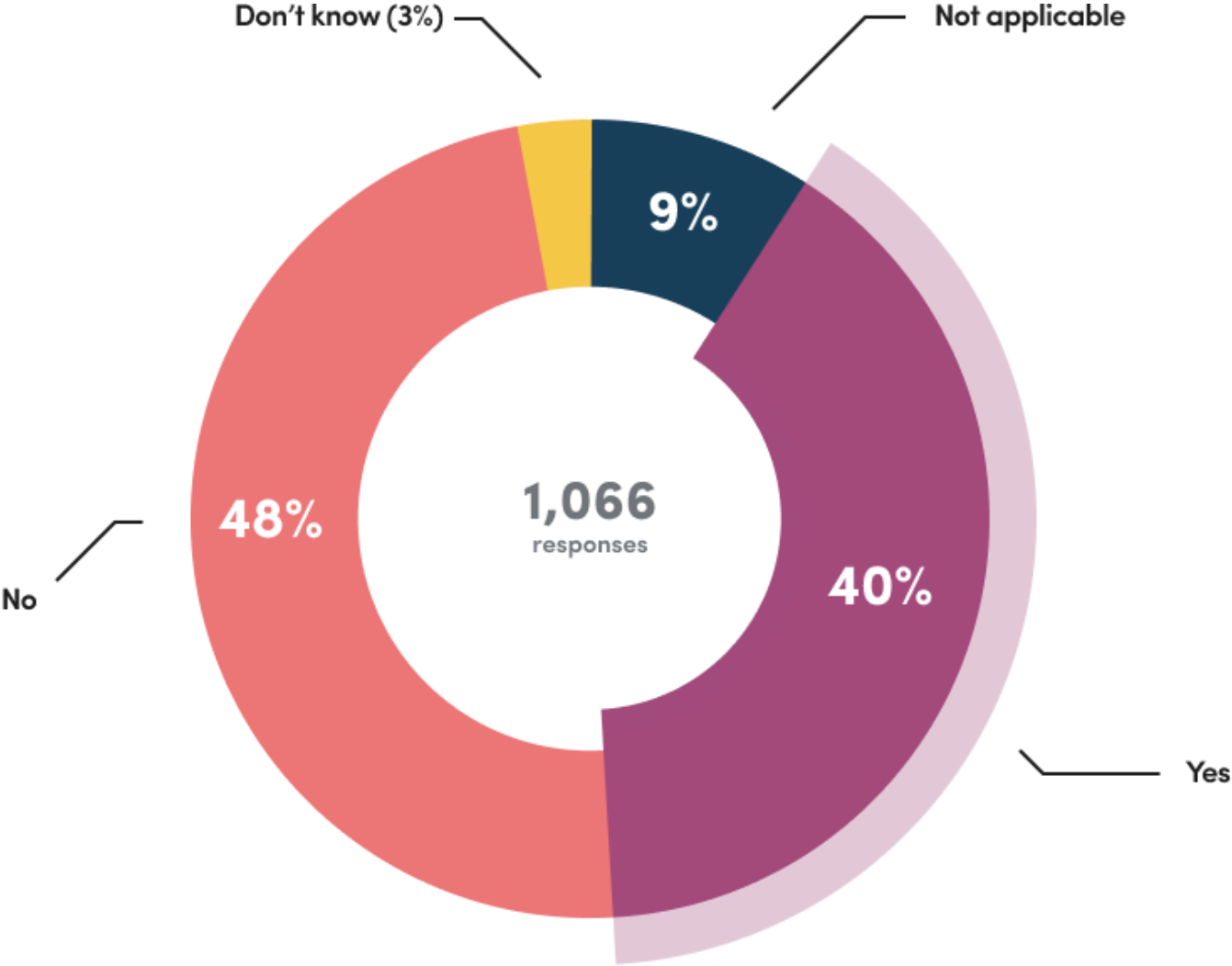
- Cash for operating costs
- Fuel and energy vouchers



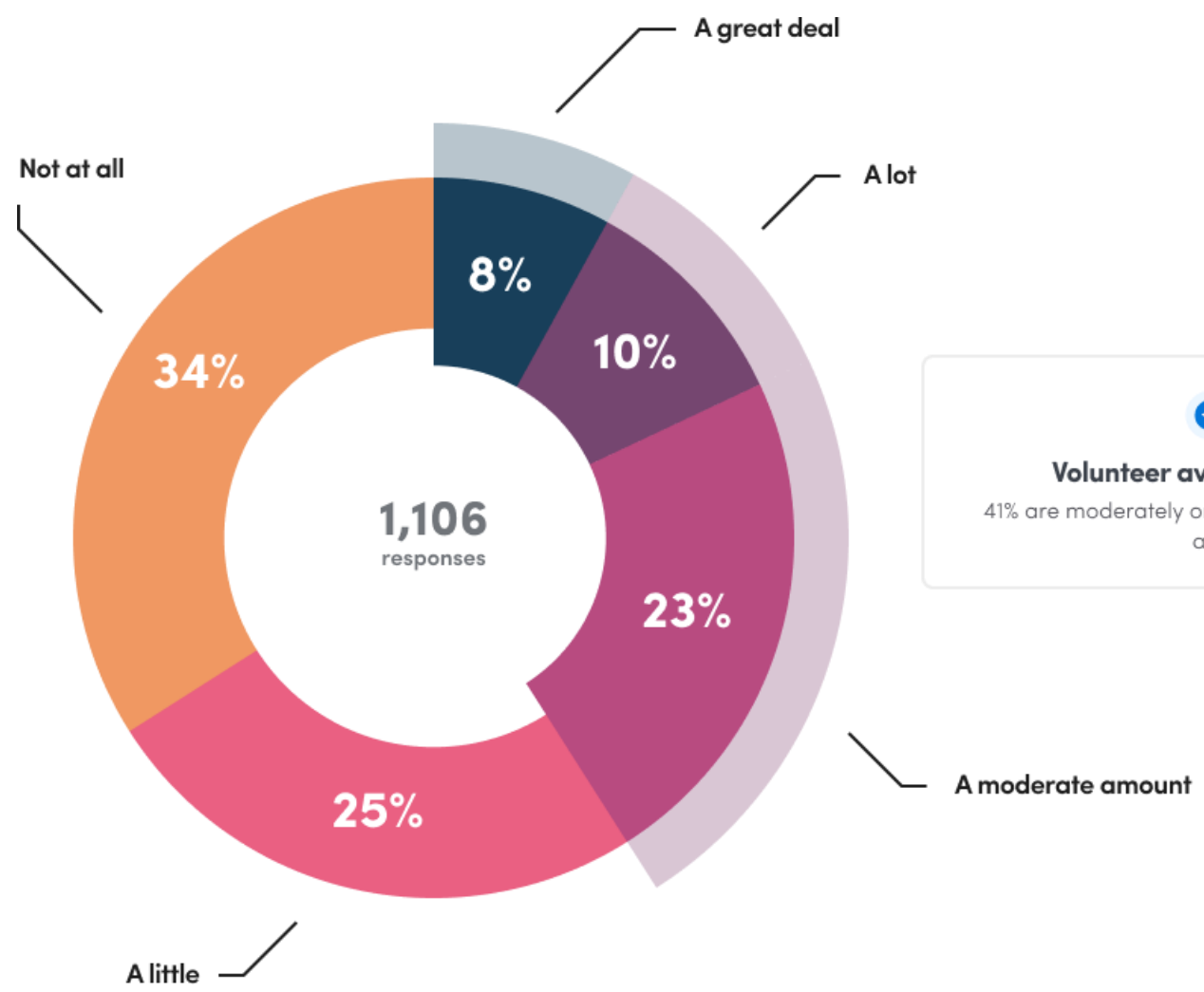
Miscellaneous


- Pet food
- Garden supplies and tools
- Craft materials
- Technology items (computers, tablets)

40% have faced volunteer recruitment difficulties over the past few months



66% are concerned to some extent about upcoming availability of volunteers over winter



 Insights

Volunteer availability is a worry
41% are moderately or very worried about volunteer availability

“People are so happy to be given some day-old bread - that's how desperate they are. We have 25 regular volunteers and we spend our time trying to help people survive who feel they have no hope. We're expecting the next 2 years to continue to be brutal before the Labour government policies start to improve lives. ”

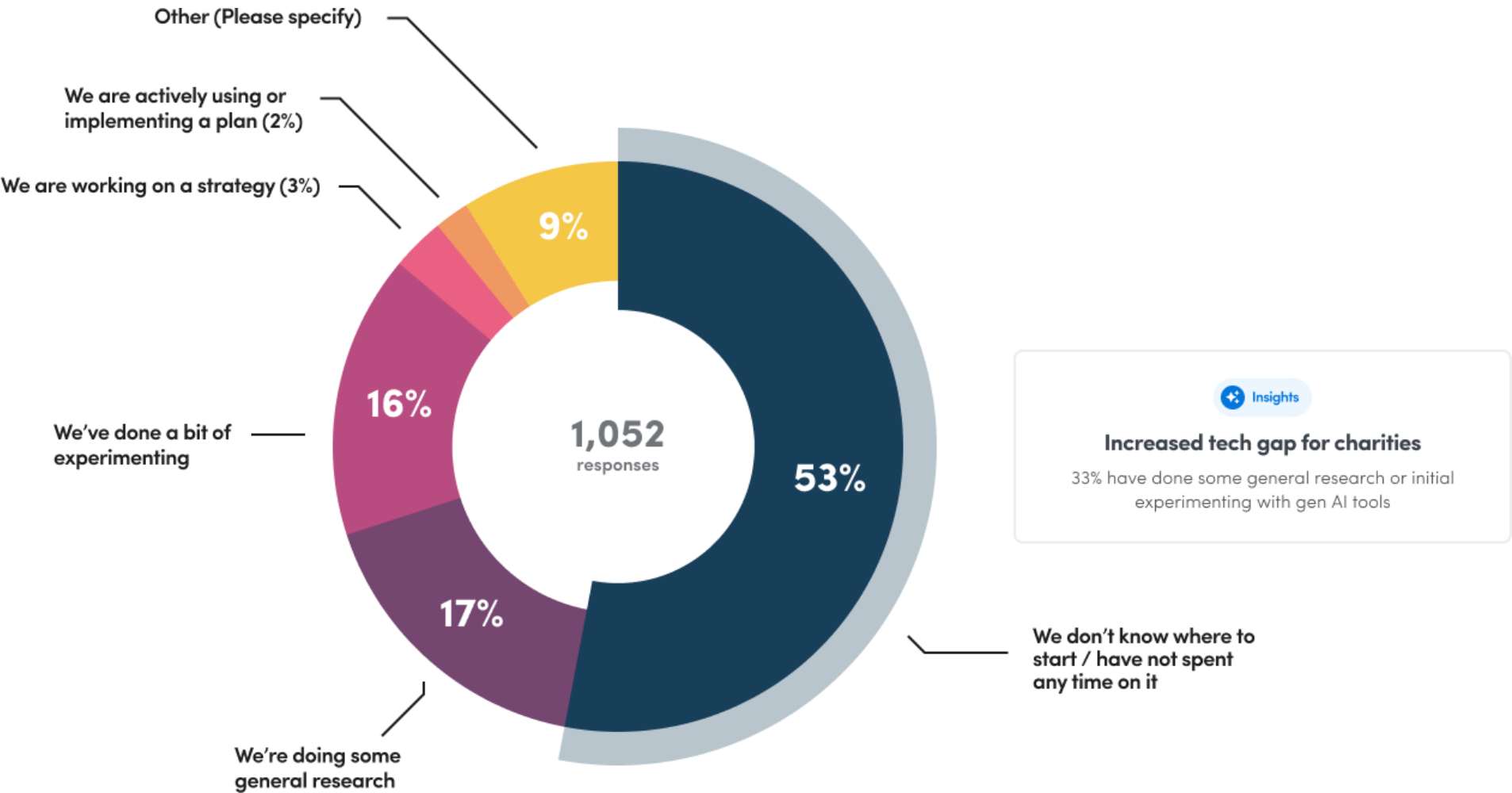
Gilesgate and Belmont Wellbeing Project, Community Volunteer Group, Durham

05

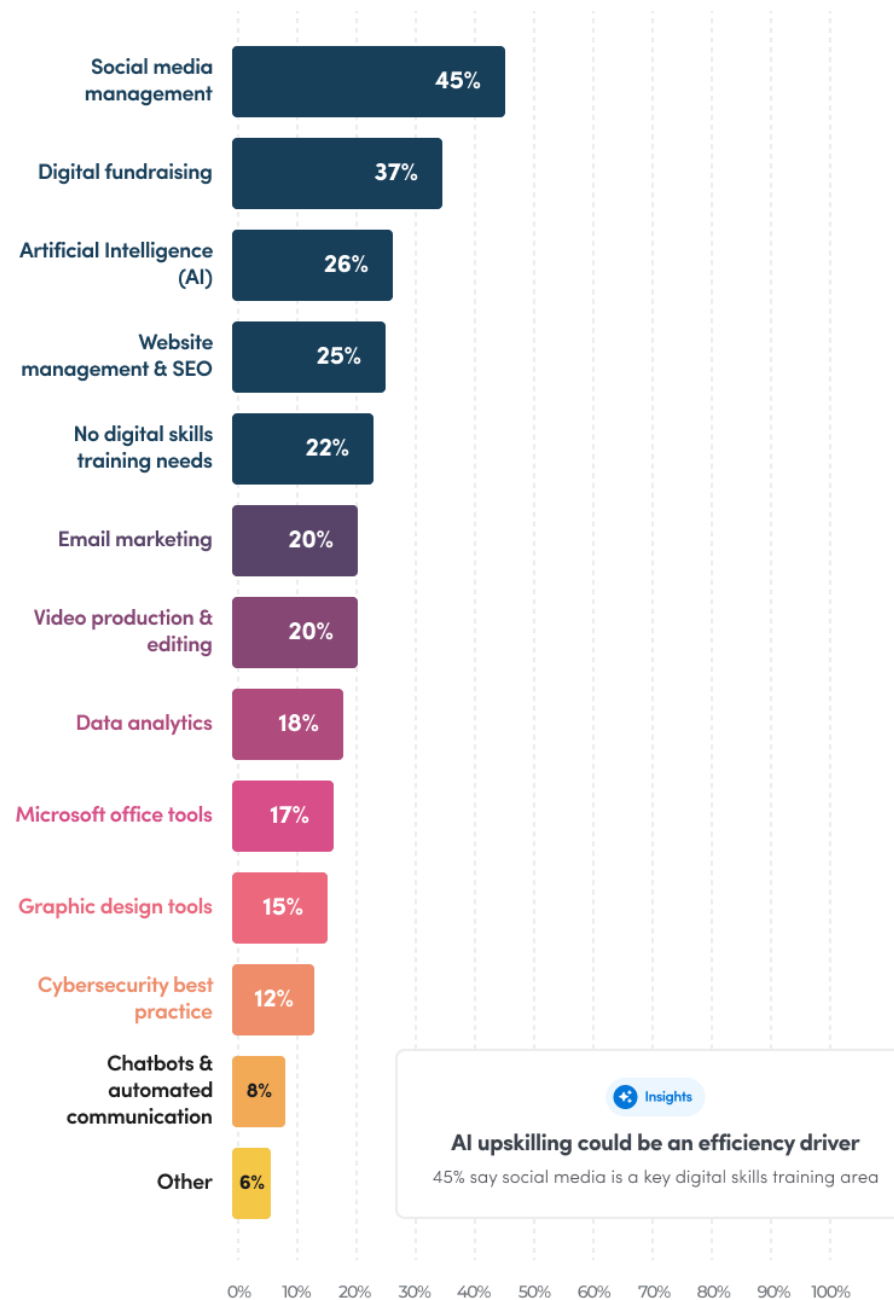
AI and digital skills



Over half (53%) of good causes don't know where to start with AI or have not yet spent any time on it



Top digital skills training needs are social media management, digital fundraising and AI



“To all the Neighbourly community.. You guys don’t realise how much love and kindness you gift to people in need! The tears and laughter we witness every day is so indescribably special and precious. Together we are making a big difference every day.”

Maya Amangeldiyeva, Maya’s Community Support Centre, Herne Bay



Thank you

This report offers valuable insights into the health and wellbeing of the small charity sector – our thanks to everyone who has contributed.





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