



# Benefits of Open Access to Scholarly Research for Voluntary and Charitable Sector Organisations

A Research Report to JISC from the Office for Public Management and the National Council of Voluntary Organisations

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# Benefits of open access to scholarly research for voluntary and charitable sector organisations

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## Contents

Glossary of acronyms used in this report.....	4
Executive summary .....	5
1. Introduction.....	10
2. Accessing and using scholarly research .....	16
3. Barriers to access and their impacts .....	24
4. Benefits of open access to scholarly research and enablers of access .....	29
5. Conclusions and recommendations .....	36
Appendix 1: Approach to rapid evidence assessment .....	39
Appendix 2. Scoping interviews.....	41
Appendix 3: Search logs.....	42
Appendix 4: Data extraction sheet.....	44
Appendix 5: Scoping interview guides .....	47
Appendix 6. Survey findings .....	54
Appendix 7. Invitation to case studies.....	84
Appendix 8. Case study interview guide .....	85
Appendix 9. Diagram used during case study interviews .....	89
Appendix 10. Case studies .....	90
Appendix 11. Email responses to survey publicity .....	116
Bibliography .....	119

## Glossary of acronyms used in this report

BIS	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
CEP	Centre for Evidence and Policy
CHIMAT	Child and Maternal Health Observatory
CS	Case study
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
HEI	Higher Education Institute
HSJ	Health Service Journal
JISC	Joint Information Systems Committee
LSE	London School of Economics
MP	Member of Parliament
NAVCA	National Association for Voluntary and Community Action
NCB	National Children's Bureau
NCIA	National Coalition for Independent Action
NCVO	National Council of Voluntary Organisations
NFER	National Foundation for Educational Research
NPIA	National Policing Improvement Agency
OA	Open access
OAIG	Open Access Implementation Group
OPM	Office for Public Management
OU	Open University
TSRC	Third Sector Research Centre
VCO	Voluntary and charitable organisation
VCS	Voluntary and charitable sector
VSSN	Voluntary Sector Studies Network
WFRC	Work Futures Research Centre

## Executive summary

This study was carried out by The Office for Public Management (OPM) in partnership with the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO). We were commissioned in July 2011 by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) on behalf of the Open Access Implementation Group (OAIG) to conduct research into the benefits of open access (OA) to scholarly research outputs to voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations.

### Accessing and using scholarly research

Voluntary and charitable organisations use different types of research for a range of purposes and have developed a range of strategies for accessing research for which they cannot afford to pay. Research use is an ongoing and dynamic process and a single piece of research might be used for different purposes at different times and in different contexts. These uses include: building awareness of relevant current debates; developing knowledge and understanding to support policy aims, develop services or information or challenge others; changing attitudes and ideas through campaigning or critiquing policy; improving working and organisational practices and raising funds. Accountability to funders and the use of resources to support a stated purpose or objective is a further dimension of research use that is of particular importance in the VCS.

Intermediaries such as the NCVO and personal and professional contacts and networks play an important role in facilitating VCO's access to research: they alert them to new research, facilitate access to published papers and can play a translation role, mediating between academic theory and language and the more practical interests and requirements of many VCOs.

### Types of research used by voluntary and charitable organisations

Scholarly research is widely used but other types of research are used more often. The challenges of accessing scholarly research – primarily cost, but also the time required to search for and identify relevant research – tend to mean that it is used only when essential. This might be because no other research is available on a particular topic or because the context demands a robust evidence base. Nearly four out of five survey respondents (78%) use reports produced by government departments, and around three-quarters (72%) use raw data from government sources. A majority of survey respondents use scholarly research – journal articles, scholarly conference papers/proceedings or raw data sets produced in the course of scholarly research (51%). The most-often used research type is produced by non-academic researchers or research organisations; 25% of survey respondents indicated that they used this type of research most often.

### Accessing scholarly research

VCOs use a range of strategies for accessing research. Large organisations are more likely to have a research team and library, in-house searchable databases and to subscribe to journals. Smaller organisations (<£1million annual income) are more likely to start their searches using generic search engines (e.g., Google, Google Scholar) to help them identify relevant material that is available at no cost. Survey respondents and case study

interviewees use student volunteers and staff doing part-time academic study to help them access research which would otherwise not be available to them.

Accessing research requires a range of skills and knowledge, including developing and implementing effective search strategies; knowing which databases are likely to be productive; familiarity with academic language and jargon; an understanding of how a single paper sits within a wider argumentative framework; and the ability to assess the quality of a piece of research. Academic databases are structured according to disciplines, so a broad understanding of what type of research falls within a particular discipline will be important too. On top of this – and of particular relevance to VCS organisations – is the cost. Asked how they currently access research, 27% of survey respondents identified paid-for journal subscriptions and 24% said they paid for single papers. Survey findings give a median annual spend on research of £150 and an average of £1,387.

### **Intermediaries and networks**

Intermediaries such as the NCVO, networks, and personal contacts including volunteers and academics play a crucial role in providing VCOs with access to research about the sector as a whole and about the specific sectors in which they work. “Umbrella” intermediaries help to provide the sector with a sense of itself, evidencing its value, critiquing government policy and providing it with a collective voice. Several of the case study organisations were both users and producers of research, either original or synthesised from other sources, providing support to other VCOs. This dual role points to the need to consider both the benefits that would accrue from more research being available through open access and the costs to those organisations whose research outputs are currently income generating.

Intermediaries play a translational role too, using academic studies in more practical contexts and helping VCOs to gain intellectual access to research findings that they might otherwise find difficult to use. They help organisations to keep up to date with the debates relevant to their interests and alert them to new research. In the scoping stage of the study, research intermediaries identified the language and format of scholarly research outputs as barriers to access, suggesting that research digests and bulletins that distilled and synthesised findings could help to overcome these. Both mainstream newspapers and sector-specific journals function as intermediaries, helping VCOs to identify potentially useful new research.

### **Open access**

One in three respondents cited open access journals as a route through which they currently access research and most of the respondents involved in the case studies were aware of open access routes to scholarly research. Most understood this as any research that is available online and without cost.

### **Barriers to access**

Cost is a fundamental constraint on the ability of VCOs to access scholarly research: 80% of survey respondents selected ‘it’s too expensive’ when asked what the main barriers were to using scholarly research and 95% said that having more research available for free on the internet (e.g., via Google Scholar) would help them to use more scholarly research. The time needed to identify and access research can also be costly to small organisations. For those who use research infrequently, it does not make sense for them to invest in significant fixed costs such as additional staff or journal subscriptions. All but the largest organisations tend to

consider very carefully the potential impact of using or not using research in any particular circumstance and some have become resigned to information for service users being the best they can afford rather than best that they are capable of producing.

Other barriers identified include:

- Uncertainty about the value of research: this highlights the complexity of research use and the importance of reliable intermediaries who can translate research findings into usable formats.
- Repositories and journals structured according to academic disciplines. VCOs tend to have multi-disciplinary interests: an organisation providing (for example) services for people with a particular impairment might be interested in research across a very wide range of disciplines, from health to sociology to engineering. This can make journal subscriptions of limited use, even to those who can afford them.
- Academic culture: academics and researchers being seen as 'insular' in their approach to research, tending not to think about the needs of non-academic who might benefit from access to their research.
- Increasing commodification of research: an increasing number of organisations, including the media, are seen as turning the products of an ever-growing research and knowledge sector into tradable commodities. This was felt to be placing previously available information beyond reach and blocking one of the ways in which VCOs use to keep up to date with recent research.
- Research online can be seen as limiting access and making it '*less democratic*' because it limits the opportunity for browsing through paper-based journals in the library. However, others lament the time needed to go to the library to access research.

## Impacts of limited access

Amongst case study sites, the most often mentioned disadvantage of limited access to research is not being able to keep up to date with the latest developments in their areas of interest. For VCOs working in the health sector in particular, timely access to current research can be particularly important and for all organisations, access to recent research can help them to provide effective services and information, campaign well and use available resources efficiently.

Other impacts identified include:

- Concerns about the quality of information or services provided to beneficiaries as a result of not having access to the latest research
- Projects not being progressed: organisations preferring to not to undertake a project requiring access to sound research, rather than doing the project poorly
- Reduced credibility and strength of voice
- Ethical dilemmas: a tension between their ethical responsibility to do the best for the people using their services and their legal responsibilities. VCOs might be exposing themselves to reputational and legal hazards by doing their utmost for their beneficiaries.

## Benefits of open access to scholarly research

The main benefits of access to free scholarly research outputs identified by voluntary sector organisations are:

- Direct benefits: cost and time savings from not having to search for free resource or pay for journal subscriptions or single use
- Indirect benefits including:
  - Authority and credibility of voice that comes with being able to cite sound evidence for policy positions or campaigns
  - Being able to evidence impact, which can be crucial in funding bids
  - Being able to develop new ideas or expand areas of work by having opportunities to browse research and come across interesting new research by chance
  - Having a broad awareness of current debates in their field and of recent research that might impact on their work
  - Accountability to beneficiaries, funders and Trustees enhanced by being able to provide references to research used to develop a particular service or policy, or to justify the way in which money has been spent
  - Not having to repeat mistakes that others have already made

## Enabling access to research

Asked what would enable them to access research, the great majority of survey respondents said having more of it freely available on the internet (95%) or through open access journals (60%). More information freely available through Google or Google Scholar – the most frequently mentioned generic search engines – would encourage organisations not currently using scholarly research to do so and free up time spent on finding alternative access routes for other activities.

Intermediaries play a crucial role in enabling access to research and are perhaps even more important if more research becomes available through open access routes. Intermediaries would themselves benefit from increased open access, saving some time and cost of access and perhaps freeing up resources to expand existing services or provide additional support to individual organisations. These might include:

- helping VCOs keep up to date with recent research
- helping VCOs negotiate the wide range of disciplines in which they have interests
- providing research digests and summaries, so reducing the time individual VCOs spend on identify and read research that might be relevant
- building relationships between scholars working in universities and the voluntary and community sector.

Other enablers included:

- A repository for voluntary sector research
- Improved interaction and information sharing between academic researchers and the VCS.

## Recommendations

We have learned in this study that the voluntary and charitable sector has an appetite and need for scholarly research that it cannot currently satisfy and that VCOs are creative and resourceful at overcoming the barriers they face to access. The following recommendations are made:

- **Recommendation 1.** Existing OA routes should be publicised widely to the VCS
- **Recommendation 2.** OA repositories should be accessible to the voluntary and charitable sector
- **Recommendation 3.** All publicly funded organisations should make their research easily accessible to the VCS
- **Recommendation 4.** Advice, support and training resources should be developed and made widely available to the sector to help it access (in the widest sense) research
- **Recommendation 5.** Intermediaries should be engaged in a broad discussion about how they might provide additional support to the sector
- **Recommendation 6.** Research should be done into the characteristics of effective relationships between the VCS and academic researchers/institutions.

## 1. Introduction

The most recent figure for the annual income of the voluntary and charitable sector in the UK (VCS) was £36.7 billion (2009/10) and its expenditure was £36.3 billion. There were 163,800 general charities employing 765,000 people and 19,800,000 formal volunteers contributed their time to these organisations. NCVO estimates that the sector's contribution to UK gross domestic production (GDP) is £11.7 billion.<sup>1</sup>

The profile and value of the work done by the voluntary and charitable sector was highlighted in David Cameron's [Big Society](#) initiative and by the [Localism Act 2011](#), which places a duty on local authorities to consider expressions of interest in running public services from 'relevant bodies' which include community, voluntary and charitable organisations. [Building a stronger civil society: a strategy for voluntary and community groups, charities and social enterprises](#) (2010) describes the Government's commitment:

*'The Government is committed to ensuring that charities, social enterprises and co-operatives have a much greater role in the running of public services. By promoting contestability to open up more contracts to third sector providers and giving them more information about the costs of existing suppliers, our reforms are aimed at giving the sector a bigger role in delivering more innovative, diverse and responsive public services.'*<sup>2</sup>

While the VCS has always played a role in delivering public services, its ability to respond to potential new opportunities will depend in part on its ability to access and use research which will enable it to evidence its effectiveness and develop efficient or new services that will meet changing demand.

The relationship between research outputs, evidence and practice and what is meant by 'using research' and 'evidence-based' are complex and much-debated topics<sup>3</sup>. However, the ability to use research well and to provide references to evidence that supports a particular approach to service design or delivery or adds weight to a policy direction has been a reference point in public policy making since the election of the Blair government in 1997.

## Background to the study

The Office for Public Management (OPM) in partnership with the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) was commissioned by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) on behalf of the Open Access Implementation Group (OAIG) to conduct research into the benefits of open access (OA) to scholarly research outputs to voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations. The research comprised the following stages:

- A **rapid evidence assessment** of published and grey literature relating to the use and benefits of scholarly research outputs, particularly OA scholarly research outputs, to VCS organisations (11<sup>th</sup> August 2011 – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2011)

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<sup>1</sup> NCVO (2012) The UK Civil Society Almanac 2012. See [NCVO website](#).

<sup>2</sup> Cabinet Office, [Building a stronger civil society: a strategy for voluntary and community groups, charities and social enterprises](#), 2010, p7

<sup>3</sup> See for example, Nutley, S.M., Walter, I. and Davies, H.T.O., *Using Evidence: How Research Can Inform Public Services*, Policy Press, 2007

- **Scoping interviews** with representatives from VCS organisations and research intermediaries exploring how these organisations use, access and distribute scholarly research outputs, including through OA routes (26<sup>th</sup> August – 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2011)
- **Online survey** targeted at VCS organisations, to provide wider evidence of how they access and use academic research and awareness and use of OA routes (28<sup>th</sup> September – 28<sup>th</sup> October)<sup>4</sup>
- **Case studies** with selected VCS organisations to develop richer and more detailed understanding of the issues, including the barriers and enablers to research use in the sector (10<sup>th</sup> November 2011 – 12<sup>th</sup> January 2012).

This study is one of three looking at the benefits of open access to scholarly research outputs. The companion studies look at OA use amongst the private sector and amongst the public sector (excluding higher education institutions).

### Rapid evidence assessment and scoping interviews

At the start of the study, we conducted a rapid evidence assessment and carried out nine scoping interviews with the following organisations:

Table 1. Organisations involved in scoping interviews

Name	Organisation type
Age UK	VCS organisation
Macmillan	VCS organisation
Mind	VCS organisation
Essex Coalition of Disabled People (ECDP)	VCS organisation
Catch 22	VCS organisation
Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)	Research intermediary
Third Sector Research Centre	Research intermediary
Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC)	Research intermediary
The Science Council	Research intermediary

The rapid evidence assessment was done in partnership with search specialist Alan Gomersall, Deputy Director of the Centre for Evidence and Policy (CEP). This stage of the work showed that there is very little published on the use made by the VCO of research, scholarly or otherwise and it became apparent that this study would, therefore, need to be exploratory.

Scoping interviews highlighted the important role played by intermediaries such as umbrella bodies (e.g., the NCVO, Third Sector Research Centre) and the value of personal contacts

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<sup>4</sup> We received some emails in response to publicity about the survey. These are appended to this report (Appendix 10).

with academics and sector-specific networks as routes for learning about and accessing research. The role of student volunteers who carry out research - particularly literature reviews – on behalf of VCOs was also emphasised. This final report draws on the scoping stage report, which provides additional information and should be read alongside this document.

## Survey

### Sampling strategy

Our initial sampling strategy aimed to produce a representative sample of charities within England and Wales. The population from which the sample was drawn was based on charities currently registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales ('registered charities'). The 'general charities' definition was applied to this base, which excluded particular types of charities, such as evangelical faith organisations, independent schools, government-owned organisations and others. The aim of the general charities definition is to produce a set of organisations that correspond to the general public's perception of a charity.<sup>5</sup>

The sample was stratified into five bands, based on the organisation's income/turnover and we aimed to be representative across all five bands. The sample was not further stratified across different classes of organisation (such as the International Classification of Non-profit Organisations (ICNPO) or by region).

In each band, 400 organisations were selected to form the sample, except in the largest income band, where all organisations were included. This sample would have produced a confidence interval of around 5% at the 95% confidence level for the smallest four bands. Emails containing the link and an explanatory overview of the research were sent to all organisations in our sample.

After an extremely low response rate over the first week of the survey (4 responses), we decided to amend our approach. We used OPM and NCVO's own contacts and distribution networks, and publicised the survey on our blogs and Twitter feeds, eventually receiving 101 responses. This means that the findings from the survey cannot be seen as representative of the sector. The table below shows the distribution of charities within the general definition, our initial sample and the final distribution of survey respondents.

Table 2 Distribution of charities within general definition, initial sample and achieved sample

	<b>General Charities</b>	<b>With email address</b>	<b>% with email</b>	<b>Initial Sample</b>	<b>Sample % (of those with email address)</b>	<b>Achieved sample</b>
Under £10k	65,553	22,806	35%	400	1.8%	9
£10k - £100k	45,705	23,282	51%	400	1.7%	22

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<sup>5</sup> More info on the general charities definition can be found in footnote 2, page 2 and in the NCVO Civil Society Almanac <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/almanac>

£100k - £1m	17,703	13,489	76%	400	3.0%	35
£1m - £10m	3,558	3,063	86%	400	13.1%	29
Over £10m	443	383	86%	383	100.0%	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>132,962</b>	<b>63,023</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>1,983</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>101</b>

Most of those completing the survey on behalf of their organisation had a policy or research role, though submissions from smaller organisations were often completed by a chief executive or director. The most frequently used channels for searching and accessing research were Google or Google Scholar and personal log-ins to academic databases. Cost and lack of knowledge about how to access and use scholarly research were given as the main factors prohibiting its use. Having outputs available for free on the internet was overwhelmingly seen as the main way of helping organisations to access and use academic research.

We received emails from six people who had seen publicity about the survey: these are included in full in Appendix 10.

## Case studies

Case study interviews were conducted with ten VCO organisations, selected from those survey respondents who agreed to be contacted as potential case studies. We approached organisations with a range of annual incomes, from less than £10,000 up to £1million - £10million. Larger organisations found it easier to find the resources to participate within the timeframe of this study. The organisations interviewed during the case study stage of the research were:

Table 3. Case study organisations

Name	Annual income
Changing Faces	£1m - £10million
Drugtrain	£10,000 - £100,000
Foyer Federation	£1m - £10million
Missing People	£100,000 - £1million
National Children's Bureau (NCB)	£1m - £10million
National Coalition for Independent Action	£10,000 - £100,000
Skills-Third Sector	£100,000 - £1million
Talking Matters	£100,000 - £1million
Unlock Democracy	£10,000 - £100,000
World Vision	£1m - £10million

Detailed case studies have been provided for eight of these organisations (see Appendix 10. Case studies). Information from the two others is included in this report.

Several of the case study organisations function as intermediaries, as well as users of research. For example, the NCB has a library of over 200 journals, as well as books and grey literature, which is open to visitors and NCB members. It maintains its own database – ChildData – charging a subscription for access which generates a substantial income (approximately £35,000). On a smaller scale, the NCIA produces evidence-based policy position papers which are in turn used by other VCOs.

Case study organisations are also research commissioners: for example, Talking Matters, a small organisation in North London, has commissioned its own research because it has been unable to find the evidence it needed through other channels.<sup>6</sup>

Case study organisations were not able to provide any solid information on which to base rigorous economic modelling. Some were able to provide costs for journal subscriptions and, (as noted above) some were able to provide information on income accrued from providing research to others. However, information on costs of time used to access research or on the value arising from research use was not available. We have therefore highlighted the qualitative benefits that case study sites felt would follow from free access to a wider range of scholarly research outputs.

## What is open access?

JISC defines open access as ‘free online access to the outputs of publicly funded research. It is typically focused on peer-reviewed journal articles and conference papers.’ Working alone and in alliance with others, through the OAIG<sup>7</sup> and JISC Collections,<sup>8</sup> JISC conducts research on open access and works with researchers, institutions and policy-makers to support the wider availability of and access to free online scholarly research. At heart, its work rests on the principle that publicly-funded research should be available to the public. This principle is supported by the argument that there are substantial economic benefits associated with research being available through OA channels, ‘by enabling innovation, policy and practice better to draw from rigorous academic research.’<sup>9</sup> It argues too that research and researchers will benefit from OA, ‘by increasing its impact and enabling researchers to use any such outputs they might need for their work’.

There are two primary models of OA publishing; open access journals (‘Gold OA’) and open access repositories (‘Green OA’). For extensive and detailed information on open access, see JISC’s website (footnote 9).

## How this report is organised

The remainder of this report contains the following chapters:

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<sup>6</sup> See the individual case studies for more detail.

<sup>7</sup> Information about the OAIG is available at <http://open-access.org.uk/membership>

<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.jisc-collections.ac.uk/About-JISC-Collections/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/topics/opentechnologies/openaccess.aspx>

**Chapter 2** presents the findings on how VCS organisations currently access and use scholarly research outputs.

**Chapter 3** looks at the barriers to access and their impacts.

**Chapter 4** discusses the benefits of open access to scholarly research and identifies some opportunities to enable VCOs to access and use scholarly research outputs.

The final chapter makes some recommendations, based on the evidence gathered during this study.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the organisations who took the time to take part in this study. We hope you find the report interesting and useful.

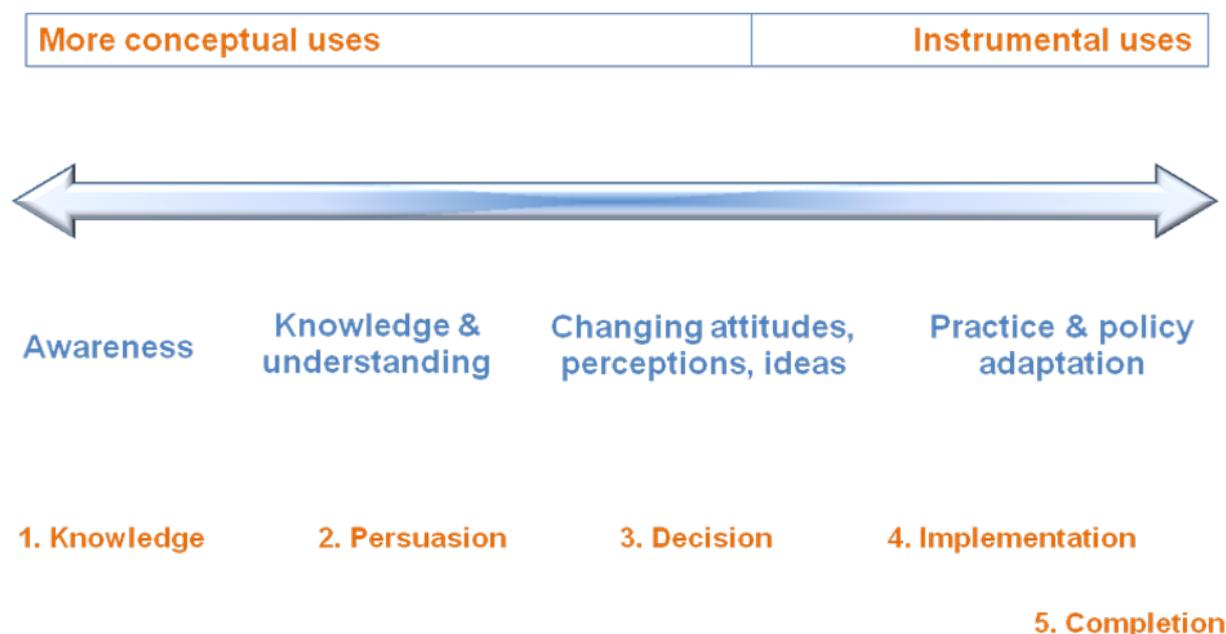
## 2. Accessing and using scholarly research

The voluntary and charitable organisations involved in this study use different types of research for a range of purposes and have developed a range of strategies for accessing research for which they cannot afford to pay. Intermediaries such as the NCVO and personal and professional contacts and networks play an important role: they alert VCOs to new research, facilitate access to published papers and can play a translational role, mediating between academic theory and language and the more practical interests and requirements of most VCOs.

### What does the sector use research for?

Using research is not straightforward. While broad categories can be identified, research use is best understood on a continuum, as shown in the diagram below.

Figure 1 Research use continuum<sup>10</sup>



This diagram provides a way of conceptualising the purposes for which VCOs use research. In practice though, a single piece of research might be used for different purposes at different times and in different contexts. Those using research might be using it without being aware of its provenance, having picked up ideas through networks or in the media. Research use is an ongoing and dynamic process, rather than a single event. This has meant that many of those interviewed for the case studies found it difficult to identify specific instances in which they had used a particular piece of research for a given purpose. Instead, most tended to speak in broad terms about the contexts in which they turned to research – for example,

<sup>10</sup> Adapted from Nutley, S.M., Walter, I. and Davies, H.T.O., *Using Evidence: How Research Can Inform Public Services*, Policy Press, 2007 p51.

when developing new information for a leaflet or website or simply keeping up to date. This in turn has meant that economic modelling of the potential benefits of more research being available through open access routes has not been possible and this study should be treated as exploratory and as the basis for further research.

When mapped against Nutley’s continuum, the uses for research identified in the case study visits have the following profile:

Table 4 Profile of case study organisations’ research use

Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping up to date with relevant current debates</li> </ul>
Knowledge and understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building body of knowledge to support broad policy aims or critique / challenge others’ policy outputs</li> </ul>
Changing attitudes, perceptions and ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campaigning, advocacy, communications</li> <li>• Policy critiques and policy development</li> </ul>
Practice and policy adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving internal working practices / organisational structure</li> <li>• Fund-raising</li> <li>• To inform funding bids</li> <li>• Developing client-facing products and services, including counselling, support for self-help, information leaflets</li> </ul>

A further dimension to research use that emerged from the case study interviews is not described in Nutley’s continuum but is of particular importance in the VCS. Accountability to funders and use of resources in support of a stated purpose or object is central to VCOs. Some case study organisations felt that being able to provide Trustees, beneficiaries and funders with references to research that they might access themselves for free allowed them to be more transparent in their activities. So ‘accountability’ might be added to Nutley’s continuum, as an additional use for research in the VCS.

Drugtrain<sup>11</sup> emphasised the importance to them of using research, positioning it as the basis for all their work;

*‘I can’t imagine doing our job without it or our job having as much meaning without scholarly research. It is the backbone...it’s not a very academic world, the drug and alcohol world and a lot of people don’t like evidence but you have got to know where you are coming from yourself and for us the evidence base is the rock we can build on.’*

Survey findings suggest that respondents use research primarily for conceptual purposes. Asked to identify the purposes of scholarly research used by their organisation, the most common options selected by respondents were:

- ‘To keep up to date with current thinking in my field.’ (84%)
- ‘To help me define issues that are relevant in my work.’ (72%)
- ‘To inform my organisation’s policy/strategy.’ (70%)

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<sup>11</sup> Drugtrain is one of the two organisations for which full case studies have not been developed.

## Types of research used by voluntary and charitable organisations

Survey respondents use a range of different types of research. Nearly four out of five respondents (78%) use reports produced by government departments, and around three-quarters (72%) use raw data from government sources. A majority of survey respondents use scholarly research: almost three-quarters (73%) use journal articles and just over half use scholarly conference papers/proceedings (54%) or raw data sets produced in the course of scholarly research (51%).

The type of research used most frequently by VCOs is that produced by non-academic researchers or research organisations (e.g., NCVO): 25% of survey respondents indicated that they use this type of research most often. Government reports are the second most often used type of research, selected by 21% of respondents. Scholarly research is used less often than government reports: only 14% of respondents identified it as their most often used type of research.

The importance of research produced by intermediaries is highlighted by the findings on the use by VCOs of research produced by non-academic bodies such as the NCVO. This was the third most widely used type of research (60%) and the largest proportion of respondents identified it as the most often used type of research (25%). This suggests that in addition to cost, VCO research users value the role that intermediaries play in unpacking or synthesising research to render it more accessible and pertinent to their needs.

Although the survey findings are not representative of the sector as a whole, the story they suggest is supported by both the scoping and case study interviews. Scholarly research is widely used but other types of research are used more often. The challenges of accessing scholarly research – primarily cost, but also the time required to search for and identify relevant research – tends to mean that it is used only when essential. This might be because no other research is available on a particular topic or because the context demands a robust evidence base or because new approaches to services delivery are emerging about which clear and reliable information is required. One case study interviewee emphasised the importance of a sound research base for evidence presented to government committees in order to prevent arguments being unpicked by MPs: this illustrates the wider point that the type of research used by VCOs is related to the purpose to which it is to be put.

## Accessing scholarly research

Case study interviews show clearly that access to scholarly research is not straightforward for many VCOs. Effective searching requires skills and knowledge. One must know where to look – which databases are likely to be productive – and be able to construct search strategies that will discover relevant documents. Intellectual access to academic papers might require familiarity with academic language and jargon. The value of a single paper is hard to realise unless one understands its position within a wider argumentative framework. Assessments of quality might need to be made, though for some organisations quality might mean little more than relevance: VCOs unfamiliar with scholarly research might have no other means by which to assess the quality of research outputs. Academic databases are structured according to disciplines, so a broad understanding of what type of research falls within a particular discipline will be important. On top of this – and of particular relevance to VCS organisations – is the cost.

Access to scholarly research comprises a number of stages:

- knowing how to search effectively (e.g., understanding key words, search logics)
- knowing where to search
- getting hold of a paper (e.g., downloading / visiting library / using personal contacts or other intermediaries)
- understanding the paper (e.g., familiarity with academic language)
- using the research effectively (e.g., understanding how to use research evidence to support a particular project or funding bid, being able to translate theoretical knowledge into practical tools, products or services, campaigns or policy platforms).

### Access (direct<sup>12</sup>)

VCOs use a range of strategies for accessing research. Large organisations are more likely to have a research team and library, in-house searchable databases and to subscribe to journals. Smaller organisations (<£1million annual income) are more likely to start their searches using generic search engines (e.g., Google, Google Scholar) to help them identify relevant material that is available at no cost. Four out of five survey respondents (80%) cited these as a route to accessing research. However, when asked which types of research they used most, the most cited work was that produced by non-academic researchers (25%) and government departments (21%). Fourteen percent of respondents cited '*scholarly research outputs such as journal articles, conference proceedings and raw data sets*' as their most frequently used source of research.

In several of the case study organisations, staff members are contracted to work in higher education institutions (HEI) on a part-time basis and this gives them access to databases. In other cases, staff members are studying part-time and used their student log-ins (e.g., to Athens) to access material relevant to their work for the VCO. Some organisations use student volunteers to carry out literature reviews or search for relevant documents. In some of these cases access is facilitated through formal requests to the relevant HEI, but on most occasions it is not. During the scoping interviews, VCOs identified student volunteers as a route through which they access research, but commented too that the quality of their outputs could sometimes be poor, perhaps because of insufficient time, but that volunteers could not be asked to re-do work that they had done in their spare time. This point was raised by a large VCO, so does not appear to be a strategy used only by small organisations with extremely limited resources.

Several of the VCOs involved in case studies employ people with post-graduate degrees or engaged in ongoing academic research and emphasise the value they bring to research activities. Knowing of academic databases and which might be most fruitful for any given topic, understanding how to construct search strategies and being familiar with academic research discourses and conventions are all cited as benefits that help to improve an organisation's ability to access and use scholarly research. People with a professional librarian background are also seen as very valuable and, from the few scoping interviews done, seemed more likely to know about open access.

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<sup>12</sup> We look at the role played by intermediaries in helping VCOs to access research in a later section.

*'We will use all sorts of routes to [access research] including occasionally in the past sending people on university courses so they could get access to university journals while they were doing it. We always try to have at least one person doing some kind of academic qualification with that in mind....We also have quite a lot of volunteers...we will encourage them to get on academic courses.'* (Drugtrain)

Government research is also used by several of the case study organisations: the [Department for Business, Innovation and Skills](#) (BIS) and the [Department for Work and Pensions](#) (DWP) were said to be particularly good at making research available.

VCOs do pay to access research. Asked about how they currently access research, 27% of survey respondents identified paid-for journal subscriptions and 24% said they paid for single papers. We asked survey respondents to say approximately how much they spend annually to access scholarly research outputs: 78 out of the 101 respondents provided an amount. Of these, 39 said that they spent nothing. Of the 39 who did spend something on accessing research, the average was £1,387 and the median £150. The majority of those spending on accessing research spent between £1 and £500 inclusive (31 respondents). The highest amount spent was £24,000 and the next highest was £15,000. Five of the six respondents who spent above £1,001 were from organisations in the higher income bracket of over £1 million.

Table 5 Survey respondents' estimated annual expenditure on accessing scholarly research

	Income of org	
	<£1 million	>£1 million
£0	29	10
£1 - £100	12	6
£101 - £500	8	5
£501 - £1000	2	0
£1,001 - £10,000	1	3
>£10,000	0	2

## Intermediaries and networks

There is a broad difference in the types of intermediary mentioned by case study organisations. Umbrella organisations such as the NCVO or the TSRC provide information on the sector itself, supporting it as a whole. Their research helps individual organisations to develop an understanding of the context in which they are working and of the strategies and skills that will help them to survive and thrive. Umbrella organisations help to provide the sector with a sense of itself, evidencing its value, critiquing government policy and providing it with a collective voice. The valuable role played by intermediaries is highlighted by the free text responses to the question of which strategies VCOs use to overcome some of the barriers they face to accessing research. Of the 68 respondents to this question, the largest

proportion by far (29) mentioned intermediaries, including networks, personal contact or partnerships.<sup>13</sup>

Several of the case study organisations were both users and producers of research, either original or synthesised from other sources. This dual role points to the need to consider both the benefits that would accrue from more research being available through open access and the costs to those organisations whose research outputs are currently income generating.<sup>14</sup>

### **Networks and organisations**

Case study VCOs rely on a wide range of networks and organisational intermediaries to facilitate their access to research. Sector specific umbrella organisations such as the [NCVO](#) and [NAVCA](#), sector specific research groups such as the [Third Sector Research Centre](#) (TSRC), [History and Policy](#) and the Galileo Group at the LSE, the Open University (OU) [Open Learn](#) website and private sector organisations such as [OPM](#) were all cited as valuable sources of research. Others mentioned include the [Voluntary Sector Studies Network](#) (VSSN) and the [Work Futures Research Centre](#) at the University of Southampton.

### **Sector specific research**

For research that addresses their particular interests – child health, adult impairment, animal wellbeing or environmental sustainability, for example – VCOs tend to develop or join bespoke networks and communities of interest. For example, Missing People, one of our case study organisations, jointly administers a JISC list<sup>15</sup>, through which they share intelligence with others about recent relevant research, though not the research itself. The list is seen by the research manager as a useful way of building networks, particularly with academics, who are the group most likely to use the list. The research manager commented that the JISC list is ‘*alien to NGOs*’. The same charity had also been given access to the [National Policing Improvement Agency](#) (NPIA) library.

### **Translational role**

Some intermediaries appear to play a translational role, using academic studies in more practical contexts and helping VCOs to gain intellectual access to research findings that they might otherwise find difficult to use. The NCB's database, ChildData provides an example of both the translational and sector-specific roles played by intermediaries. The NCB interviewee contrasted the assurance of quality that users of ChildData have with Google searches. Whilst these might generate a wide range of results they provide no indication of their quality or relevance. Intermediaries are helping other VCOs to reduce the time needed to access and identify relevant and good research. One fifth of survey respondents felt that more intermediary organisations tasked with helping their organisation to access and use scholarly research would be helpful.

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<sup>13</sup> See Appendix 6, Table 12 Respondents' comments on strategies for overcoming difficulties in accessing or using research

<sup>14</sup> For example, NCB, Skills-Third Sector, Talking Matters, World Vision.

<sup>15</sup> Information from the interview carried out with Missing People is included within the body of this report rather than as a stand-alone case study.

## Keeping up to date

Intermediaries, networks and communities of interest provide VCOs with access to research. They are also very useful in helping organisations to keep up to date with the debates relevant to their interests. When asked how they learned about research that might be relevant, '*personal contacts*' was the most frequently selected option (74%).

Research digests and email alerts providing updates on recent research and policy are also used by the case study organisations. Those cited included [Info4local](#), [Children England](#), [CHIMAT](#) and the [National Foundation for Educational Research](#) (NFER). In the scoping stage of the study, research intermediaries identified the language and format of scholarly research outputs as barriers to their access, suggesting that research digests and bulletins that distilled and synthesised findings could help to overcome these.

*'I think great big long reports and applications just aren't overly useful to most people in their day to day work. They need short summaries and you need recommendations and they need to know why it's useful.'* Research intermediary

This last comment reinforces the point that whilst no-cost routes are fundamental to widening VCOs access to research, knowing *why* something might be useful is also crucial, particularly to organisations with no research capacity in-house. Case study findings suggest that abstracts alone are not sufficient to determine the usefulness or otherwise of any particular research output and VCOs with limited budgets are unlikely to purchase research if its value is uncertain.

Content alerts for journals can point organisations to useful articles which are then obtained through inter-library loans. However, there is some concern about this access route, as inter-library loans are intended for personal use only: one organisation which uses these felt obliged to make this clear on the loan application and hence was charged £10.00 for articles obtained this way.

The media plays an important intermediary role and a number of the case study sites monitored both mainstream newspapers (e.g., Guardian Society) and sector-specific journals such as the [Health Service Journal](#) (HSJ) and New Scientist to help them identify potentially useful new research. On occasion, research referred to in the press is available at no cost, though this is often for a limited time only. For example, Changing Faces referred to a report on the BBC website which included a link to some relevant research which had been, but was no longer available through open access.

## Personal contacts

Case study interviews suggest that '*personal contacts*' include volunteers and others working within the organisation, as well as contacts made through networks and in umbrella organisations. Some of the case study interviewees said that they will sometimes email research authors directly to request a copy of a paper, highlighting the value of conferences as a way of making these contacts: respondents approached people giving papers to ask for copies or to exchange contact details for future use.

Almost two-thirds (60%) of survey respondents cited '*personal contacts*' as a channel for accessing research.

## Open access

One in three of the survey respondents (33%) cited open access journals as a route through which they currently access research and many of the respondents involved in the case studies were aware of open access routes to scholarly research. Most understand this very broadly, as any research that is available online and without cost, though some have more knowledge and use open access journals such as BioMed Central and PubMed. However, these were seen as having limited value, primarily because of the multi-disciplinary research interests of VCOs.<sup>16</sup> The two case study sites working in international development were most familiar with OA, saying it was used a lot in their sector and arguing that this was because of a strong tradition in this world of linking policy and practice. One of these organisations used [Source](#) to access relevant research.

One of the larger CS organisations referred to offers which allow open access to research for a time-limited period which was seen as useful but frustrating, as unless one learned about the offer quickly, the research quickly became unavailable without payment.

Eleven percent of survey respondents said they used open access institutional repositories. Eighty per cent (80%) of survey respondents said they used generic search engines such as Google, Google Scholar or Yahoo to search for research that was available at no cost.

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<sup>16</sup> The multi-disciplinary interests of VCOs and the barriers these can place on effective use of scholarly research are discussed later in this report.

### 3. Barriers to access and their impacts

The main barriers that VCOs face in accessing scholarly research are cost and time. These present a direct obstacle even to those with the skills to search effectively and gain intellectual access to what they discover. Other barriers exist too, including uncertainty about how and where to look for research and the way in which repositories are structured. However, the cost of accessing research and the time currently spent by VCOs on searching for free research are the first hurdles faced by all but the well-resourced organisations.

The impacts of the barriers to access are wide-ranging and include being forced to compromise on services and products because access to the latest research is limited and a diluted lobbying and campaigning voice, because backing up positions with evidence is too costly. In this chapter, we focus on these barriers to access and how they impact on the sector

#### Barriers to access

The survey findings show that, amongst those organisations not using scholarly research (18%), the main barriers are uncertainty about where and how to access it, the cost and lack of awareness of relevant research. Case studies show too that, whilst most organisations will access academic research at some stage, they do so intermittently and not systematically.

#### Time and cost

Cost is a fundamental constraint on the ability of VCOs to access scholarly research: 80% of survey respondents selected 'it's too expensive' when asked what the main barriers were to using scholarly research and 95% said that having more research available for free on the internet (e.g., via Google Scholar) would help them to use more scholarly research. The Drugtrain interviewee (one of the case studies) said that she and her staff had at times paid for research themselves because the organisation lacked the necessary resource. This point was also made in free text responses to a survey question about barriers to access. Of the 20 respondents who provided comments the largest proportion (12) referred to cost and/or time as a barrier.

*'Time is a big factor - this relates to both time searching for the relevant research and then the time it takes to dissect and digest the academically focused outputs. These two factors mean that it would never be cost effective for us to pay for subscriptions to journals.'* Survey respondent

*'It's very frustrating to use Google Scholar and get a sense that a particular article MIGHT be relevant, but you're not certain enough to spend the money to download it in case it's not.'* Survey respondent

The time needed to identify and access research can be exorbitant for small organisations. For those who use research infrequently, it does not make sense for them to invest in significant fixed costs. In the absence of journal subscriptions or the money for pay per use, VCOs may spend time searching for free copies on the internet or looking for other potential sources, including wider networks or the researchers themselves. As noted earlier in the report, they might decide to ask volunteers to do work for them. This will take time in recruitment, coordination and support, and perhaps the cost of volunteers' out-of-pocket

expenses. It can also, as noted earlier, mean that outputs are of variable quality. This means that all but the largest organisations tend to consider very carefully the potential impact of using or not using research in any given circumstance and some seem to have become resigned to information for service users being the best they can afford rather than best that they are capable of producing.

## Understanding the value of research

For research to be useful to VCOs they need to understand what benefits it might bring to their work. One quarter (25%) of all survey respondents and 11 of the 18 not using any scholarly research said that knowing more about how research might benefit their organisation would help them to use it more. Case study organisations were less likely to make this point, understanding that research was beneficial but encountered other barriers to its use.

This uncertainty about the value of research helps to highlight the complexity of research use and also the importance of reliable intermediaries who can translate research findings into usable formats, provide digests of recently published research and of networks through which those working in VCOs can build relationships with academics. So whilst free access to scholarly research is clearly vital, in the absence of a wider supporting infrastructure, the VCS – and smaller organisations in particular – will find it hard to respond effectively to the potential opportunities offered to them.

## Academic disciplinary boundaries

The multi-disciplinary interests of VCOs present an immediate barrier to accessing research.<sup>17</sup> This can make journal subscriptions of limited use, even to those who can afford them. Scholarly research publications tend to be structured according to academic discipline while an organisation providing (for example) services for people with a particular impairment might be interested in research across a very wide range of disciplines, from health to sociology to engineering.

*'The disciplines often don't make much sense to people outside of academia.'*

The classification of published academic research according to discipline was identified as a barrier during the scoping stage. Once again, this highlights the valuable role of intermediaries in unpacking academic research and synthesising or translating it for use by specific audiences. The height of this barrier to access is likely to differ, depending on the focus of the organisation. A VCO working in the area of child health (for example) might find research is collected on a single database or in a few specialist journals. However, those with broader remits might find it more difficult. For example, the interests of Age UK, interviewed in the scoping stage of the work, range from pension and welfare reform to mental health to engineering and onto education, employment and leisure activities. For VCOs with such a broad remit, journal subscriptions are not value for money – even when they are affordable – as their interests cut across disciplinary boundaries. The interviewee from Talking Matters noted that it was rare for her to use more than one paper in any journal and often only one point made in a paper was of relevance.

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<sup>17</sup> For example, see Foyer Federation case study.

## Cultural barriers

We have noted above the range of interests many VCOs have and that these interests are multi-disciplinary, cutting across academic disciplines. In addition to the way in which scholarly research is classified in journals or databases, some respondents felt that academic culture itself could present a barrier. This issue was not raised during the case study interviews but was highlighted by research intermediaries during the scoping stage. Academics and researchers were seen as being 'insular' in their approach to research, tending not to think about the needs of non-academic who might benefit from access to their research.

*'Actually the whole purpose of doing research is for a wider social benefit, either to increase productivity in the economy to foster innovation, to improve social wellbeing etc., so the actual end user of the research is a completely different group of people, and they are not thinking with that market in mind.'* Research intermediary

*'I think it's about reminding researchers as to why information is being made available – researchers tend to publish for themselves or for a community of researchers, this is a culture change – researchers understanding why it's important to tell people about their research.'* Research intermediary

'Cultural barriers' were also identified in the literature reviewed at the scoping stage. Stevens outlines the intellectual and cultural barriers that often hinder collaboration between NGOs and the research community. He argues that academic approach learning and knowledge production as 'theory building' whereas NGOs are most often looking for '*particular solutions in specific situations*'.<sup>18</sup>

## Research as a tradable commodity

One scoping stage interviewee argued that an increasing number of organisations were trying to turn the products of an ever-growing research and knowledge sector into tradable commodities, giving as examples the decision by the Times newspaper to begin charging for articles and organisations like PwC charging for their research. This was making life more and more difficult, placing previously available information beyond reach and blocking one of the ways in which VCOs use to keep up to date with recent research. This interviewee argued that it made more sense for a charity to subscribe to something like the Financial Times than to a journal, as the former is more likely to have something of value to that charity on regular basis.

## Research on-line

Finally, the increasing quantity of research published on-line only is seen by some interviewees as limiting access and making it '*less democratic*' because it restricts the material available for browsing through paper-based journals in the library. However, others lamented the time needed to go to the library to access research.

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<sup>18</sup> Stevens, D. (2011) *The response of international NGOs: case study of World Vision UK's journey from results to impact analysis and implications for academic-practitioner partnerships*. WorldVision, p8.

## Impacts of limited access

### Being out of date with the latest thinking

Amongst case study sites, the most often mentioned disadvantage of limited access to research was not being able to keep up to date with the latest developments in their areas of interest. Even when research is published through open access routes, this can be some while after its formal publication. A case study interviewee noted that it can also be hard to determine the usefulness or take advantage of new research reported in the media. Checking the veracity of media coverage by going back to original sources *'to find out what's really happening'* was something done by larger organisations with research capacity and access to journals. One interviewee described *'feeling excluded from a sphere of knowledge'* and *'feeling frustrated when you can't go back to the original source'* or check references. Another said they had given up looking for journal articles in frustration about the cost and time needed to pursue alternative channels of access for materials for which they cannot afford to pay. Skills-Third Sector pointed out the rapid speed at which policy moves and saw access to recent academic studies on new policy developments crucial to their role as the Sector Skills Council for the VCS. Survey respondents asked about the impact of limited access to research refer to having to *'reuse information that is out of date', and of 'get[ting] behind on current debates'*.

### Impact on quality and range of services

Case study interviewees argued that limited or no access to the most recent scholarly research could impact on the quality and range of information or services provided to beneficiaries. For VCOs working in the health sector in particular, timely access to current research can be a core and essential part of all their activities and for all organisations, access to recent research can help them to provide effective services and information, campaign well and use available resources efficiently.

This point echoes similar comments made during the scoping interviews. For example, one organisation reported that a lack of access to scholarly outputs led to inefficiency in the design of new services:

*'In the first place, for example, around a support planning service we were developing, there was one particular article about barriers people face in employing personal assistants. There was some really useful stuff in that article that we eventually got but about three months too late, having already done a fair bit of work. That sort of, you know, was a bit pointless.'*

This is more likely to be a concern for smaller organisations with limited budgets. They are less likely to be able to afford journal subscriptions or single articles, more likely to have fewer staff and thus less time to spend searching for research. They can also have less time to develop wide networks. In contrast, larger organisations are more able to have research teams, to commission their own research and to pay for journal subscriptions.

Survey respondents raised similar issues. Some expressed concern about their work becoming *'static'* or *'stuck'* because they were forced to reuse out-of-date information or familiar ways of working or developing new policies and services which were not informed by current debates or the latest evidence on good practice.

One of the case study sites raised the possibility that they might not undertake a project if they felt it required access to sound research, rather than doing the project poorly, which might detract from their reputation. Others raised concerns about the quality of outputs that they had not been able to research as fully as they wished.

This suggests that VCOs are disadvantaged not just because they cannot access research directly for their own uses, but also that they can find it difficult to assess the use made or interpretation of research by others, which might be particularly important when lobbying for policy change or challenging existing policy. It keeps them on the periphery of debates which can impact on them directly or could provide valuable resources to help them improve their own activities and impact.

### Reduced credibility and strength of voice

In their free text comments, some survey respondents argued that limited access to research could affect their credibility as an organisation and the power of their voice, making them less effective campaigners or lobbyists for their beneficiaries or the sector as a whole. One respondent summed up these comments nicely:

*'Knowledge is power. Less knowledge means less power.'* Survey respondent

This point is discussed further in the following chapter on the benefits of open access.

### Ethical dilemmas

One case study interviewee raised a very different issue, referring to a distinction between legal and ethical imperatives. This interviewee felt that they had no option but to provide research to people using their services if this would benefit them even if it to do so was to infringe copyright restrictions. They expressed concern too about the legality of using staff's student log-ins to access research for the organisation rather than for the student's research purposes. The interviewee argued that there was a tension between their moral responsibility to do the best for the people using their services and their legal responsibilities, and felt that that many VCOs were likely to be exposing themselves to the reputational and legal hazards associated with doing the former. This issue was also mentioned in free text comments made in the survey.

## 4. Benefits of open access to scholarly research and enablers of access

*'OA would be Christmas and Hanukah rolled into one!'* (Talking Matters)

The direct and indirect benefits identified in this chapter section are inferred from case study findings on the benefits of research use as such, regardless of channel of access. Open access to scholarly research outputs is likely to increase the direct benefits, by reducing the cost and time associated with access. It is also likely to add to the indirect benefits. Having free and easy access to a wide range of research could enable VCOs to develop their thinking on their own areas of interest and to encounter new themes and topics: the cost of accessing research is currently too great for them to warrant undirected browsing. For some of them, it would strengthen their policy outputs or help them to improve their practice. However, the issues associated with making good use of research and being able to search effectively would not be solved just by more research being available through open access channels. The enablers of access to scholarly research go beyond straightforward free access routes.

Two of the case study organisations did not think that open access would provide significant benefits. For example, Skills-Third Sector felt that open access would have some advantages but that not having was an *'occasional frustration'* and a way round limited access could usually be found. The World Vision interviewee felt that having open access to research would *'not revolutionise the organisation'*. It is interesting to note here that one of the few sources we found during the evidence review was published by World Vision<sup>19</sup> and to reinforce the point made at the end of chapter two, about organisations working in international development being most familiar with OA and having a strong tradition of linking policy and practice.

### Benefits of open access

#### Direct benefits

The primary direct benefits of open access routes to scholarly research would be cost and time savings. The survey found that the two most frequently mentioned barriers to accessing research were cost (80%) and lack of time (46%), which can serve as a proxy for cost.

#### Producing a training manual

A training manual produced at the end of a year-long project includes approximately 50 references in the 'further reading' sections. Two students working on the project contributed approximately 100 hours between them. Authors of some of the papers worked at the charity and provided access. The charity would not have paid for articles, for two primary reasons. First, the raw cost of obtaining a copy, which they estimated as a minimum £10 per

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<sup>19</sup> Stevens, D. (2011) *The response of international NGOs: case study of World Vision UK's journey from results to impact analysis and implications for academic-practitioner partnerships*. WorldVision, p8.

document, was felt to be prohibitive. Second, the cost of the time required to make a case for paying for each article would have been prohibitive.

If the students had not been available to the project team, the research would have to have been done by a staff member on a salary of approximately £24,000pa.

Case study organisations referred to the time needed to search for and access research. However, none kept records or felt able to approximate the value of this time.

## Indirect benefits of open access to scholarly research

We mapped the indirect benefits of research use onto an expanded version of the research use continuum described earlier in the report (figure 1). The 'conceptual' end of the continuum was extended to include 'enlighten': by this, we mean benefits that arise from non-directed general reading – browsing - which may spark new ideas or ways of approaching a particular issue.<sup>20</sup>

Figure 2 Extended research use continuum



Case study organisations identified a wide range of indirect benefits from using scholarly research. For many the authority of voice that comes with being able to cite sound evidence for policy positions or campaigns is crucial. Using research well is seen as a way of enhancing the credibility of an organisation's outputs and thereby raising its reputation. This in turn helps with fund-raising and successful outcomes in tenders to provide services. Asked to comment in free text on the benefits of scholarly research to their organisation, the greatest proportion of survey respondents identified the fundamental role of evidence in proving the value of and need for their services.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> This draws again on Nutley et al's work: see <http://www.ruru.ac.uk/PDFs/Using%20evidence%20Nutley%20et%20al.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Appendix 6, Table 9 Respondents' comments on the benefits of using scholarly research outputs

*'It is essential for the VCS to make fact based cases rather than emotional pleas for the needs of their clients. This must go hand in hand with the collection and assessment of the impact of delivery of services.'* Survey respondent

## **Enlighten**

A number of case study sites felt that their ability to develop new ideas or expand their areas of work suffered because they were unable to browse research, though they were not able to provide any evidence of this. One case study interviewee spoke of the '*randomness*' of what they found when they had access to academic databases, placing value on this because it opened up new thoughts and ideas about how to develop their services or products. This point echoes findings from the scoping phase, which identified difficulties in exploring new topics as a problem, as the networks and communities of interest which facilitate access to research are often focused on a particular area of research.

*'When I have had access to academic databases you have a kind of random thing – you find things you weren't looking for.'* (NCIA)

## **Conceptual**

A broad awareness of current debates in their field(s) and of recent research that might impact on their work was seen as essential by all case study organisations. Larger case study organisations with a research or information team kept up to date with Parliamentary debates and national policy by reading Hansard daily or through in-house research or information teams.

One VCO worked regularly with clinicians and spoke of needing to use research evidence in conjunction with anecdotal evidence from patients: the organisation gave the example of looking for research evidence that supported patients' views that, when they were happier they were more likely to respond well to clinical interventions.<sup>22</sup> As noted earlier, accountability to beneficiaries, funders and Trustees is also seen as an important aspect of research use by VCOs: being able to provide references to research used to develop a particular service or policy, or to justify the way in which money has been used enables others to check that research themselves and, if necessary, to argue with its interpretation.

Open access to research might also help to prevent organisations from making mistakes unnecessarily. If they were able to carry out more thorough research at the start of a new project or initiative, they would learn from others, including from the mistakes they had made, and hence begin new work from a more solid foundation.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Changing Faces

<sup>23</sup> See Foyer Federation case study.

### Empowering service users:

Rather than speaking on behalf of their service users, VCOs are increasingly supporting people to enable them to speak on their own behalf. One charity has supported some of its service users by providing media training and other skills-based training. The research manager argues that access to research is a vital element in building capacity amongst service users, as it enables them to shape their own campaigns and to ensure they are evidence-based. The lack of free access to much academic research is thus an impediment to the charity's aim of supporting its service users to develop their own voice.

The research manager gave an example of this. Some families needing the organisation's services and support were campaigning for the use of an alert system which would help the work of the organisation and have positive benefits for them and others in their situation. While the system had not been formally evaluated, some research into its effectiveness had been done. However, the families were not able to access this research. The research manager felt that access to evidence was a crucial tool in enabling and empowering people to speak on their own behalf. Moreover, she saw it as a moral imperative for the charity to pass the research on to the campaigning families, as it suggested that their assumptions and claims about the value of the alert system were not well-founded.

*'If people are going to have a public voice, especially with very important people, it's really important that they have access to evidence. All families should have access.'*

The research team will also distil research so that it is easily accessible to helpline staff and volunteers, providing them with a wider perspective on the problems they might discuss with service users.

*'It enriches staff, helping to make them more aware of the issues. They might probe more or ask different questions. It helps to make us more knowledgeable as an organisation.'*

### Instrumental

When asked about the benefits of research, survey respondents prioritised instrumental benefits as the table below illustrates:

Table 6 Benefits of research identified by survey respondents

Benefits	Respondents
Influence government/policy	60%
Provide more accurate information to service users	59%
Achieve charitable objectives more effectively	59%
Provide more effective services	59%
Respond to commissioning tenders/fundraising	55%

VCO organisations seeking to influence policy or practice, particularly at the higher levels, feel that their arguments are both stronger and more readily accepted if they are supported by research evidence. For example, Unlock Democracy made a 20 page submission to the committee on reform of the House of Lords. Whilst they felt that more research would have

been valuable, they did think they had done sufficient to claim that their submission was evidence-based rather than assertion.

The Foyer Federation uses less research than many of the other case study organisations but did see it as important in funding bids. However, when they lack the necessary research evidence they might bid for less than the full amount of the grant, suggesting a direct relationship between access to and use of research and organisational income. The interviewee did think that some of its grant applications could have been stronger if they had been supported by a better research base, but had no evidence to support his suspicion.

Two case study sites argued that their organisation as a whole would benefit from open access. If more staff were able to access research freely they were seen as more likely to start looking for and using research independently, so developing their own skills and areas of expertise.<sup>24</sup>

One indirect benefit of open access to research sits on the border of conceptual and instrumental benefits. VCOs that are able to access research in their particular area of interest may be more able to change public attitudes and perceptions and raise the profile of their agenda. This in turn can help to generate policy debates and change practice. Changing Faces felt that the profile of research on facial difference was lower than it might be, because much research stays hidden in journals away from public knowledge.

## Enabling access to research

We have seen that VCOs have a range of strategies for accessing research for free or for making best use of research that is available for free. Some staff have two jobs, one of which brings with it access to academic databases, some staff are doing post-graduate degrees, some organisations have networks of contacts who can facilitate access to research and others rely on research digests and some use volunteers who themselves have access to paid for journals. Some people working in the VCS pay for research out of their own pockets. Scoping interviews, case studies and free text responses to the survey were consistent in highlighting the ingenuity and commitment of VCOs to overcoming some of the barriers they face in accessing research.

## More open access research

Asked what would enable them to access research, the great majority of survey respondents said having more of it freely available on the internet (95%) or through open access journals (60%). More information freely available through Google or Google Scholar – the most frequently mentioned generic search engines – would encourage organisations not currently using scholarly research to do so and free up time spent on finding alternative access routes for other activities. One interviewee who works part-time in a university argued that a greater range of OA journals would help encourage academic buy-in, as it would widen researcher's choice of where to publish. However, as one of the research intermediaries spoken to in the scoping stage noted,

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<sup>24</sup> Missing People (see box above) and Changing Faces.

*'If the voluntary and community sector did have free access to scholarly research outputs I think we would suddenly become completely and utterly overwhelmed with what was available and we would worry about volume versus quality.'* Research intermediary

## Networks and intermediaries

If more scholarly research were made available through open access channels it would be of immense value to the sector. However, this would not address some of the other barriers mentioned, including keeping up to date with recent research: almost two-thirds (60%) of survey respondents identified having more information on the latest current research as an enabler. Nor would it resolve the problem of VCOs having interests that range across a number of different disciplines or reduce the time needed to identify and read all the research that might be relevant: as the quote above notes, this could be overwhelming. Nor would more open access routes to scholarly research help to build relationships between scholars working in universities and the voluntary and community sector. It is in these areas that the role of intermediaries and networks is crucial.

*'If you allow self publication and you encourage open access, you need a sort of half way house of people who will filter and publish some sort of round up analysis of current research to pick up the best, so part of the role of the publishing.'* Research intermediary

*'I think coming through third parties would be really useful, like research...rather than navigating for days yourself.'* VCS organisation

Asked to identify the strategies they used to overcome some of the difficulties they faced in accessing research, the largest proportion of survey respondents (29 of 68) described using networks, personal contacts and partnerships.<sup>25</sup>

If more scholarly research were available through open access routes, this would benefit the intermediary organisations too, saving them time and the cost of access and perhaps freeing up more time for them to provide some of these additional services to individual organisations.

## Buy-in from academics

One case study interviewee suggested that academic buy-in might help the case for OA as would having a range of OA journals available, allowing academics a choice over where to publish. She suggested that some of the larger journals like the BMJ could allow the author to specify that they wanted their article OA.

## Focused VCS repositories

The value of the intermediaries used by VCOs derives not just from their provision of research digests in general. For many, their understanding of the sector adds value. One case study interviewee suggested that a *'central point for voluntary sector research that had a discussion facility as well would be good'*, suggesting that this was something the London School of Economics (LSE) is considering. A research intermediary interviewed at the scoping stage reported too that they are developing a knowledge portal that *'aims to bridge*

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<sup>25</sup> Appendix 6, Table 12 Respondents' comments on strategies for overcoming difficulties in accessing or using research

*the gap between the third sector and academics*'. The portal will have a detailed indexing system that allows users to access articles on similar articles easily. It will also provide links to open access download sites as well as links to the British Library catalogue. They hope that the portal will lead to a better exchange and flow of knowledge and to knowledge being *'less hidden'*. If more research were at the same time available through open access, this could start to address some of the challenges to accessing and using research identified during this study.

### Improved information sharing

The main channels through which survey respondents currently learn about potentially relevant research are personal contacts (74%), trade magazines and press (71%) and government communications such as websites and mailing lists (69%). One quarter (25%) use university communications, including websites and mailing lists. However, there does seem to be some need for more effective and more widely known interaction between academic researchers and the VCS, not least because the latter has a wealth of knowledge and experience that could be of value to researchers.

## 5. Conclusions and recommendations

We have learned in this study that the voluntary and charitable sector has an appetite and need for scholarly research that it cannot currently satisfy. The organisations contributing to the study have described the importance of research to the voluntary and charitable sector's commitment to playing its very distinctive role in the most effective way it can. In scoping interviews, case studies and survey responses, VCOs have identified a consistent set of barriers to accessing research. They have shown too that they are creative and resourceful, finding ways to overcome these barriers some of which might place them on or over the border of copyright infringement. We do not think that VCOs should be put in the position of having to choose between what is legally permitted and what they feel is ethically required of them in order to fulfil their charitable objectives. We think too that if the VCS is being asked to expand its role and play an increasing part in delivering public services, then access to research is essential. In this final chapter, we provide some recommendations which, we hope, will go some way to widening the voluntary and charitable sector's access to scholarly research outputs.

We have not directed these recommendations at any particular audience: we leave JISC and the OAIG to determine who is best placed to take them forward. However, we have distinguished recommendations that imply advice, support or training for the VCS from those which can be addressed independently (though of course we assume that any improvements of benefit would be communicated to the sector).

### **Recommendation 1. Existing OA routes and sources of support should be publicised widely to the VCS**

At the moment, VCOs' awareness of open access repositories seems to arise largely by chance. This study might be seen as the start of a wider campaign to promote open access across the VCS. This could be done via existing widely-used intermediaries such as the NCVO, NAVCA and the VSSN. One case study organisation was already using a JISCmail list, but described its use as '*alien to NGOs*'. JISC and its partners in the OAIG might target some of its communications directly at VCOs to introduce them to the benefits of this and help to seed wider use of JISC-lists across the VCS.

Other useful resources that might be made widely known across the sector include:

- Telephone advice on effective searching, available from the [CEP](#). The Centre's Working Paper 19, [A difficult business: finding the evidence for social science reviews](#) includes a useful discussion on terminological difficulties associated with the social sciences and some suggestions on searching.
- [The Knowledge Portal](#) is an online database created by the Third Sector Research Centre and the British Library that brings together research information on the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors.
- Social Welfare at the British Library will be launched later this year. This will provide a single point of access to research information on social welfare issues and serve as a gateway to the British Library's own resources and to other document supplies. Information currently available through [Welfare Reform on the Web](#) will be rolled into the new Social Welfare at the British Library portal.

## **Recommendation 2. OA repositories should be accessible to the voluntary and charitable sector**

This study has shown that the way in which academic repositories and search facilities are structured is inimical to the VCS. Many VCOs have interests which traverse the boundaries of academic disciplines and need to draw on research from a wide range of different areas. Making OA (and other) repositories more 'VCS-friendly' would help VCOs to make more and better use of existing research. Further research is needed to determine what specific features would achieve this. Suggestions emerging from this research include providing a 'front page' to repositories with links to guidance on how to use repositories effectively – for example how to develop search strategies; how to assess the quality and/or relevance of research and, where to go for further support or advice.

## **Recommendation 3. All publicly funded organisations should make their research available easily and at no cost to the VCS**

Voluntary and charitable organisations have always worked with the public sector. As we noted at the start of this report, recent policy initiatives are carving out a space in which opportunities exist for it to play a greater role (though not all VCOs welcome the state's new enthusiasm for the sector, or the sector's enthusiasm for this new role). However, for all VCOs, access to evidence is not a nice-to-have but essential. Developing effective and high quality services, using what are currently extremely limited resources as efficiently as possible and being able to provide evidence of impact all demand access to research. Publicly-funded organisations should make their research available to the VCS and find opportunities to partner with local VCOs in conducting research. Central government departments might learn from DWP and BIS, both of which are seen as particularly good at making research available.

## **Recommendation 4. Advice, support and training resources should be developed and made widely available to the sector to help it access (in the widest sense) research**

We have noted throughout that whilst the direct barrier of cost needs to be removed, the VCS faces additional barriers to accessing research. These include knowing where and how to search, how to evaluate the quality of a piece of research or to determine its usefulness. Easy-to-use and widely available resources that will help the sector to overcome some of these additional barriers would help more VCOs to access and use better the research that is currently available. These might include, for example, 'top tips' on effective searching (and where to search) or what to look for in order to assess the quality of a piece of research (e.g., drawing on EPPI-Centre standards.<sup>26</sup> Simple toolkits might be developed or participative training sessions offered. This recommendation does not depend on the widening of open access channels, but will help to remove a barrier to research use as such.

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<sup>26</sup> <http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms/>

### **Recommendation 5. Intermediaries should be engaged in a broad discussion about how they might provide additional support to the sector**

This study suggests that the role of VCS intermediaries might be expanded. However, the resources of these organisations are already stretched and, for the foreseeable future at least, this situation does not look likely to change. Understanding what impact OA might have on intermediaries and whether it would release additional resources is one area for further study. However, a more immediate action would be to engage with intermediaries to gain their insight into ways into which they might provide additional support or tailor existing support to help VCOs overcome some of the barriers identified in this study.

### **Recommendation 6. Research should be done into the characteristics of effective relationships between the VCS and academic researchers/institutions.**

Personal contact with academics is one of the main routes through which many of the case study organisations accessed research. However, some interviewees suggested that academic culture could be anathema to effective relationships with the VCS. Some suggested too that academic researchers could benefit from closer relationships with the VCS. Understanding the mutual perceptions each sector has of the other and the characteristics of currently effective working relationships will provide insight into how new relationships and networks might be encouraged to develop.

## Appendix 1: Approach to rapid evidence assessment

Our approach to the literature search, review and synthesis has been informed by good practice guidelines issued by government agencies and universities relating to rapid evidence review.<sup>27</sup> These have been developed with the specific aim of synthesising diverse material to inform the evidence-based policy and practice movement within the UK.

In recognition of the importance of qualified search specialists in enhancing the quality of reviews<sup>28</sup>, we worked with search specialist Alan Gomersall, Deputy Director of the Centre for Evidence and Policy (CEP).

OPM worked in partnership with NCVO and JISC to develop the approach towards database searches. We agreed that it needed to be underpinned by an iterative process of progressive and informed filtering. Initial searches were broad and allowed us to ascertain the broad contours of the terrain and identify the extent and type of relevant literature available on the different databases. Each subsequent search was based on decisions informed by the findings of preceding searches and guided by the overall objectives of the review. Three pilot searches were conducted using two broad groups of search terms: 'open access' and 'voluntary sector'. These searches yielded virtually no relevant items for the review. This was not surprising as OPM, NCVO and JISC had anticipated that there was likely to be a lack of published literature on this topic. Based on these results, we decided to search more broadly for literature relating to how VCS organisations use, access and benefit from **any** scholarly research. There were three research questions that the review sought to address:

- How do VCS organisations use open access research / research?
- What are the benefits to VCS organisations of open access research / research?
- What are the factors that enable VCS organisations to use open access research / research?

Our search expert conducted a total of 12 searches across 8 databases using combinations of a number of groups of search terms, for example:

- Terms relating to the voluntary sector: voluntary sector, charity, third sector
- Terms relating to research: evidence, research, open access
- Terms relating to use: application, use
- Terms relating to benefits: value, impact, benefit

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<sup>27</sup> Government Social Research, Rapid Evidence Assessment Toolkit

[http://www.gsr.gov.uk/professional\\_guidance/rea\\_toolkit/index.asp](http://www.gsr.gov.uk/professional_guidance/rea_toolkit/index.asp) ; EPPI-Centre, Systematic Research Synthesis, <http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms/Default.aspx?tabid=67> ; Hartley, J. (2004). Long-term Evaluation of the Beacon Council Scheme. Outline for the Systematic Review of Innovation and Improvement. Draft report to the ODPM and IDeA. Coventry: University of Warwick

<sup>28</sup> Wade, C.A., Turner, H.M., Rothstein, H.R. and Lavenberg, J.G. (2006) Information retrieval and the role of information specialist in producing high quality systematic reviews in the social, behavioural and education sciences, Evidence and Policy, volume 2, issue 1.

These searches returned approximately 250 abstracts that OPM sifted through and which resulted in the identification of only 12 potentially relevant documents. The full texts of these items were secured and on further sifting only 3 were identified for inclusion in this review.

We did not feel it was appropriate to set inclusion and exclusion standards prior to carrying out the initial searches. In searching and reviewing less well-researched areas, imposing objective inclusion or exclusion standards prior to any search being carried out can mean that potentially useful material is excluded. It can also mean that too little or too much literature is included in the review.<sup>29</sup> The eventual inclusion/exclusion agreed were:

- Focus on project aims
- Published after 2000

The search and reviewing process was designed to be robust, and every effort has been made to ensure that no relevant item has been omitted. Appendix 1 shows the databases that were searched, the specific search terms and strategies that were used and the results obtained.

In light of the dearth of material returned by the database searches, OPM and NCVO also put out a call for evidence on four academic discussion lists:

- Voluntary Sector Studies Network (VSSN)
- Association for Research on Nonprofit Voluntary Organisations and Voluntary action (ARNOVA)
- International Society of Third Sector Research (ISTR)
- JISC Social Policy mailing list

This resulted in approximately 25 responses and another 6 documents that were included in the review, although these were often on the periphery of our topic of interest. For example, many of these made only passing references to examples of where and how VCS organisations had used scholarly research to achieve their aims and deliver services. Nonetheless, all these documents were read and analysed in full, using a Data Extraction Sheet (DES) designed specifically for this review (see Appendix 2).

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<sup>29</sup> Government Social Research, Rapid Evidence Assessment Toolkit ([http://www.gsr.gov.uk/professional\\_guidance/rea\\_toolkit/index.asp](http://www.gsr.gov.uk/professional_guidance/rea_toolkit/index.asp))

## Appendix 2. Scoping interviews

In addition to the review we also conducted scoping interviews with a sample of 5 VCS organisations that ranged in size, focus and remit. These interviews explored:

- VCS organisations familiarity with and use of OA scholarly research
- How and why these organisations use and access scholarly research
- The impact and benefits of scholarly research on these organisations

We also conducted 4 interviews with research intermediaries that are involved in distilling, synthesizing and distributing research, including scholarly research, to different sectors including VCS organisations. These interviews focused on:

- The nature of these organisations involvement in research
- Their strategies for dissemination to different audiences
- Their relationship with VCS organisations
- Perceptions around the use of scholarly research by VCS organisations and the challenges they face in accessing this research

The interview guides used in these interviews can be found in Appendix 3. The sample of organisations interviewed is included in the table below:

Table 7 Organisations involved in scoping interviews

Name	Organisation type
Age UK	VCS organisation
Macmillan	VCS organisation
Mind	VCS organisation
Essex Coalition of Disabled People (ECDP)	VCS organisation
Catch 22	VCS organisation
Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)	Research intermediary
Third Sector Research Centre	Research intermediary
Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC)	Research intermediary
The Science Council	Research intermediary

## Appendix 3: Search logs

	Databases searched	Search date	Search terms	Search date range	Items identified	Items exported by searcher	Comments
1	LISA (Library and Information Science Abstracts)	31.08.11	((voluntary sector) or (voluntary group* or third sector) or (voluntary bod* or charit*)) and ((open access or research) or (evidence or scholar* or document*)) and ((free or cost* or payment*) or (subscript* or network*) or (use or applic* or complementar*)) and not (donation* or giving or gift*)	2000-2011	40	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No relevant documents</li> <li>Includes articles focusing on libraries.</li> <li>Includes articles on archiving exercises.</li> </ul>
2	British Library Direct	31.08.11	Open access	2005-2011	12	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No relevant documents</li> <li>Includes articles focusing of the debate over open access</li> </ul>
3	LISTA (Library, Information Science and Technology Abstracts)	31.08.11	((voluntary sector) or (voluntary group* or third sector) or (voluntary bod* or charit*)) and ((open access or research) or (evidence or scholar* or document*)) or (use or applic* or complementar*))	2000-2011	47	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 potentially relevant document</li> </ul>
4	LISTA (Library, Information Science and Technology Abstracts)	31.08.11	Open access	2000-2011	11	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No relevant documents</li> <li>General articles on open access</li> </ul>
5	Scopus	31.08.11	((voluntary sector) or (voluntary group* or third sector) or (voluntary bod* or charit*)) and ((open access or research) or (evidence or scholar* or document*))	2000-2011	34	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No relevant documents</li> </ul>

Benefits of open access to scholarly research for voluntary and charitable sector organisations

			or (use or applic* or complementar*))				
6	LISA (Library and Information Science Abstracts)	31.08.11	((voluntary sector) or (voluntary group* or third sector) or (voluntary bod* or charit*)) and (open access)	2000-2011	5	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 potentially relevant documents</li> </ul>
7	SPP (Social Policy and Practice)	01.09.11	(voluntary sector or voluntary group* or voluntary bod* or third sector or charit*)+ (evidence or research or academic)+ (benefit* or value* or impact* or support*)	2000-2011	616	First 100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 potentially relevant article</li> <li>• Lots of irrelevant documents on voluntary organisations that focus on children and young people</li> </ul>
8	Embase	01.09.11	(voluntary sector or voluntary group* or voluntary bod* or third sector or charit*)+ (evidence or research or academic)+ (benefit* or value* or impact* or support*)	2000-2011	388	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 potentially relevant articles</li> <li>• Some irrelevant articles on participation in research.</li> </ul>
9	Community Abstracts	02.09.11	(voluntary sector or voluntary group* or voluntary bod* or third sector or charit*)+ (evidence or research or academic)+ (benefit* or value* or impact* or support*)	1995-2011	17	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Irrelevant documents focusing on research about the history, performance and impact of the voluntary sector.</li> </ul>
10	Scirus	02.09.11	Open access + voluntary sector	2000-2011	9	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Irrelevant articles about policy development relating to open access to public sector information</li> </ul>
11	Scopus	02.09.11	(voluntary sector or voluntary group* or voluntary bod* or third sector or charit*)+ (evidence or research or academic)+ (benefit* or value* or impact* or support*)	2000-2011	106	36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 potentially relevant documents</li> </ul>

## Appendix 4: Data extraction sheet

Note page numbers in brackets when referencing

<b>Title</b>	
<b>Author(s)</b>	
<b>Date published</b>	
<b>ID Number</b> (from spreadsheet)	
<b>Date document analysed by OPM, Initials of researcher.</b>	
<b>Content Overview</b> (from abstract)	
<b>Publication type</b> Think piece, primary research, secondary research, guidance	
<b>Sector background of published document</b> – (e.g. academic discipline, public body, government department, policy guidance, think tank, research centre, charity etc)	
<b>Methodology</b> – consider <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the research questions/hypotheses posed;</li> <li>• the research design;</li> <li>• the sampling strategy (including sample size and response rates in quantitative research);</li> <li>• the nature and quality of the fieldwork;</li> <li>• the process of analysis; and</li> <li>• the nature and robustness of findings.</li> </ul>	
<b>Country information</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence and examples of how the voluntary sector uses ANY research outputs (including government published data, survey findings etc)</li> <li>• Evidence and examples of how the voluntary sector uses <b>scholarly research outputs</b> (i.e., academic</li> </ul>	

<p>papers/conference proceedings etc)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence and examples of how the voluntary sector uses <b>open access</b> scholarly research outputs</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on routes used by VCS to access research (of any kind) (e.g., paid-for; personal contacts; intermediary organisations [e.g., umbrella groups; private sector; etc] general search engines)</li> <li>• Information on routes used by VCS to access <b>scholarly research outputs</b> (e.g., journal subscriptions, personal contacts, partnerships etc)</li> <li>• Information on routes used by VCS to access <b>OA</b> research outputs (e.g., OA databases/OA journals/general search engines (Google, Yahoo etc)</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use made of research by the VCS (e.g., conceptual – widening knowledge of debates etc; instrumental – e.g., inform particular decisions)</li> <li>• Purposes for which research is used (e.g., campaigning, policy, information for beneficiaries, strategy etc)</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefits of research use to the voluntary sector</li> <li>• Benefits of scholarly research outputs to the voluntary sector</li> <li>• Benefits of <b>open access</b> scholarly research outputs to the voluntary sector</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Factors that enable the voluntary sector to use scholarly research outputs</li> <li>• Factors that enable the voluntary sector to use open access scholarly research outputs</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barriers to using scholarly research outputs for the voluntary sector</li> <li>• Barriers to using <b>open access</b> scholarly research outputs for the voluntary sector</li> </ul>	

<b>Research gaps identified</b>	
<b>Key conclusions of study</b>	
<b>Additional references to obtain (<i>add to spreadsheet</i>)</b>	

## Appendix 5: Scoping interview guides

### Scoping interview discussion guide (VCS organisations)

#### Introduction and background

Is it still convenient to talk etc?

JISC (The Joint Information Systems Committee) has commissioned OPM to carry out a study that will help us to understand the benefits of open access to scholarly research outputs amongst the voluntary and community sector, and the benefits and impacts of that use. Our partner on this study is the NCVO.

JISC is the UK's expert on information and digital technologies for education and research. This study sits alongside two companion studies they have commissioned. One of these is looking at the benefits of OA to the business sector and the other is looking at the benefits of OA to the public sector (excluding HE). Their website is [www.jisc.ac.uk](http://www.jisc.ac.uk), if you would like to learn more about them.

Our study has three main stages: a scoping phase – of which this interview is a part; a survey amongst voluntary and community sector organisations; and a series of case studies, through which we hope to dig down into some of the specifics around research use, benefits and impact and, where possible, provide quantitative data on the financial benefits of open access.

Before we go further, could I just ask whether you are aware of open access in this context? That is, open access meaning full-text journal articles and other research information such as data, conference proceedings and theses are freely available on line (rather than users needing to pay per use or take out journal subscriptions).

There are two OA publishing routes: The 'Gold Route' involves publishing in Open Access journals. Open Access journals are free to the reader. The 'Green Route' involves researchers or academic institutions depositing their research articles/papers or data in a repository in parallel with publishing in a conventional or Open Access journal.

**IF NO:** say that you will send additional information – we'll compile a set of links that will a) help people understand the concept and b) help them locate OA journals. **Reassure** people that they don't need either to have heard of OA or make use of OA to be helpful to the study.

**IF YES:** find out if they have only *heard* of OA or if they have *used* OA outputs as well – and say you'll return to that later in the interview.

#### Continue (both yes and no)

#### Overview of issues covered in interview

The interview will take approximately 45 minutes and cover the following issues:

- Why you use research – and we're talking here, as throughout, about scholarly research outputs – e.g., peer reviewed papers, conference proceedings etc
- How you use research
- How you access research

- The impact/benefits/costs of research
- Any other issues we haven't discussed but you feel are important for us to understand/take into account.

**(INTERVIEWER: CONTINUE TO CHECK THROUGHOUT THAT THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT SCHOLARLY RESEARCH OUTPUTS, RATHER THAN JUST MARKET RESEARCH ETC)**

### Using research

- What are the main purposes for which you use scholarly research outputs in your organisation?
  - PROBE IF NECESSARY: to write campaigning materials, lobby policy makers, produce development etc.
  - Other?
- How would you describe the ways in which you use research?
  - Can you give me some examples of these?

**INTERVIEWER: if appropriate, be useful to get a sense of whether the primary research use is primarily:**

- A) instrumental – e.g., to inform campaigns, challenge national policy/practice or develop your own policy/practice; make informed decisions or justify decisions taken; help solve particular problems; or
- B) conceptual e.g., more indirectly for things such as building awareness and understanding of an issue; providing with new perspectives; promote informed discussions; or
- C) something else

- How do you access research?
  - PROBE IF NECESSARY: pay for individual papers; journal subscriptions; partner with academics who have access; commission your own research; use student volunteers; don't access directly – use research digests (e.g., TSRC) ...ask friends.....?
  - (If not covered already): Do you do projects requiring use of research internally or do you commission from outside suppliers? What size is your research team? Do you have a research library?
- What challenges do you face in trying to access research?
  - What is the consequence of these difficulties?
  - PROBES IF NECESSARY: on costs to the organisation? On the quality of what you are able to produce? On the speed with which you are able to conduct research? On your ability to access the latest research; on ability to access the range of research that's needed ....OTHER
  - How do you overcome these difficulties? (If they don't – what prevents them from doing so?)

## Open access

### A – For those who have heard of OA

- You mentioned at the start of our conversation that you had heard of OA. Do you recall how/in what context you learned about it?
  - And what are your impressions of OA?
- You said you had heard of but not *used* OA to scholarly research outputs: could you tell me why you haven't used them?
  - PROBES IF NECESSARY: tried to but couldn't find anything; locating OA journals/papers; might have used OA published materials inadvertently – not sure how you tell the difference; range of available research wrong for my interests/needs; concerns about the quality of OA published research; don't think it would have the latest research in my area; just not part of our research 'habits'; have already paid for journal subscriptions so didn't seem worth it ....OTHER
- What measures would enable you to access OA research?
  - PROBES IF NECESSARY: more information available about latest research published through OA routes; wider range of research available; bibliographies identifying OA research outputs; quality assurance (for any expressing concerns about quality); OTHER
- What would be the impact on your organisation if you did have free access scholarly research outputs?

### B For those who have *used* OA research outputs

- You mentioned at the start of our conversation that you had used OA research outputs. Could you tell me how you accessed these?
  - PROBES IF NECESSARY: using regular search engine (eg: google/google scholar) until came across free research publications; provided by academic/other partners; OTHER
- (If not mentioned): Have you heard of DOAR (Directory of Open Access Repositories)?
  - (If yes) and have you used DOAR?
  - How useful did you find it for your research purposes? (Compared with paid-for outputs)?
  - PROBES IF NECESSARY: ease of discovery; range of available research; quality of outputs; OTHER

## Improving access / benefits of OA

### (For all)

I've just got a couple more questions:

- What would enable you to access OA research more easily?
  - PROBES IF NECESSARY: more information available about latest research published through OA routes; wider range of research available through OA routes;

bibliographies identified OA research outputs; quality assurance (for any expressing concerns about quality); OTHER

- What would be the impact on your organisation if you did have free access scholarly research outputs?
  - What specific benefits do you think would follow if research were more widely available through OA routes? (explore financial, quality, general understanding, campaigning ability etc etc)
- Is there anything that you think is relevant to this study that we haven't discussed?
- I mentioned at the start that we are going to be doing some case studies as part of this project: we want to include a range of different types of voluntary and community sector organisations amongst our case studies. Would you be happy for us to re-contact you if necessary, and to act as a case study (emphasise no guarantee of this)? This would be in early – mid October. **(if yes: let Jon know and he'll record it on contact database)**
- Thank and close

## Scoping interview discussion guide (Research intermediaries)

### Introduction and background

Is it still convenient to talk etc?

JISC (The Joint Information Systems Committee) has commissioned OPM to carry out a study that will help us to understand the benefits of open access to scholarly research outputs amongst the voluntary and community sector, and the benefits and impacts of that use. Our partner on this study is the NCVO.

JISC is the UK's expert on information and digital technologies for education and research. This study sits alongside two companion studies they have commissioned. One of these is looking at the benefits of OA to the business sector and the other is looking at the benefits of OA to the public sector (excluding HE). Their website is [www.jisc.ac.uk](http://www.jisc.ac.uk), if you would like to learn more about them.

Our study has three main stages: a scoping phase – of which this interview is a part; a survey amongst voluntary and community sector organisations; and a series of case studies, through which we hope to dig down into some of the specifics around research use, benefits and impact and, where possible, provide quantitative data on the financial benefits of open access.

Before we go further, could I just ask whether you are aware of open access in this context? That is, open access meaning full-text journal articles and other research information such as data, conference proceedings and theses are freely available on line (rather than users needing to pay per use or take out journal subscriptions).

There are two OA publishing routes: The 'Gold Route' involves publishing in Open Access journals. Open Access journals are free to the reader. The 'Green Route' involves researchers or academic institutions depositing their research articles/papers or data in a repository in parallel with publishing in a conventional or Open Access journal.

**IF NO:** say that you will send additional information – we'll compile a set of links that will a) help people understand the concept and b) help them locate OA journals. **Reassure** people that they don't need either to have heard of OA or make use of OA to be helpful to the study.

**IF YES:** find out if they have only *heard* of OA or if they *use* OA outputs (e.g., to distribute research that they produce/distribute syntheses/digests of others' research etc) – and say you'll return to that later in the interview.

### **Continue (both yes and no)**

#### **Overview of issues covered in interview**

The interview will take approximately 45 minutes and cover the following issues:

- The nature of your involvement in research (e.g., conduct own research/fund others' research/produce digests of others' research/ other....)
- Who you see as the main audiences for your research outputs (e.g., sectors; strategists/practitioners?)
- How do you currently disseminate research outputs? (journals? Websites? Open Access?) and do you target particular audiences / sectors?
- What relationships do you have with voluntary and community sector? Do you have any particular strategy for disseminating research amongst this sector?
- Do you gather any information on whether and how the VCS uses research outputs from your organisation/that you fund?
- Any other issues we haven't discussed but you feel are important for us to understand/take into account.

#### **(INTERVIEWER: CONTINUE TO CHECK THROUGHOUT THAT THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT SCHOLARLY RESEARCH OUTPUTS, RATHER THAN JUST MARKET RESEARCH ETC)**

#### **Research outputs**

- Could you describe to me the nature of your research process (e.g., fund researchers in academia to carry out specific pieces of research; fund researchers to carry out research within particular themes/areas; work with partners to define research questions and then fund/commission researchers to carry this out: carry out our own research; other?)
- What, if anything, defines the parameters of your research activities (e.g., government requirements; internal strategic priorities; researchers' interests; needs of a particular sector?)
- Who do you see as the principal audiences for the research that you fund / carry out?
  - How do you target these audiences to ensure that they are receptive to / can access this research?

#### **Research dissemination**

- How can non-academic audiences access the research that you fund/carry out? (e.g., journals, websites etc?)

- Is there a cost associated with accessing the research that you fund/carry out or is it published through open access routes?
- Do you target particular sectors /audiences (e.g., policy-makers; practitioners; academics; others)?

### **Relationships with the voluntary and community sector**

- What relationship do you currently have with the voluntary and community sector (general relationships: e.g., partnerships; help them to access research; help them to use research; work with them to produce research; other)
- In your experience, what are the principal ways in which the voluntary and community sector uses your research outputs/the research you fund?
  - Conceptual (e.g., helps them to understand particular areas, issues, frame their thinking, problems, keep up to date etc)
  - Instrumental (e.g., to help them address particular challenges, respond to particular policy agenda; develop services; other)
- Do you gather any information on how the VCS accesses / uses the research that you produce/fund?
- How would you describe your role in helping to ensure that the voluntary and community sector can access and/or use the research that you fund/carry out?
  - What steps do you take to help the voluntary and community sector access and/or use the research for which you are responsible?
- In your experience, what are the main barriers to the voluntary and community sector accessing / using scholarly research outputs?
  - Are there any ways in which the VCS works around these barriers? (e.g., by building personal relationships with researchers; partnering with academics; using ‘brokers’ to help them gain access to / use research that would otherwise be costly or unavailable?)

**INTERVIEWER: if appropriate, be useful to get a sense of whether the primary research use is primarily:**

- A) instrumental – e.g., to inform campaigns, challenge national policy/practice or develop your own policy/practice; make informed decisions or justify decisions taken; help solve particular problems; or
- B) conceptual e.g., more indirectly for things such as building awareness and understanding of an issue; providing with new perspectives; promote informed discussions; or
- C) something else

### **Open access**

#### **A – For those who have heard of OA**

- You mentioned at the start of our conversation that you had heard of OA. Do you recall how/in what context you learned about it?
  - And what are your impressions of OA?

- You said you had heard of but do not *use* OA to publish scholarly research outputs: could you tell me why you don't use OA publishing routes?
- Do you think that OA publishing would help VCS organisations to access the research that you fund/ produce? (Explore responses)
- What would be the impact on your organisation if you were to provide open access scholarly research outputs?

### **B For those who have *used* OA research outputs**

- You mentioned at the start of our conversation that you had used OA publishing routes for the research you fund/ produce. Could you tell me which model you use (Green/Gold)?
  - How do you promote awareness amongst non-academic routes of these routes to accessing the research that you fund / produce?
- (If not mentioned): Are you aware of the DOAR (Directory of Open Access Repositories)?
  - (IF yes) and do you use DOAR?
  - (IF yes: do you have any information on whether using DOAR widens the use of your research outputs amongst non-academic audiences? The VCS?)
  - (IF no) why not?

### **Improving access / benefits of OA**

#### **(For all)**

I've just got a couple more questions:

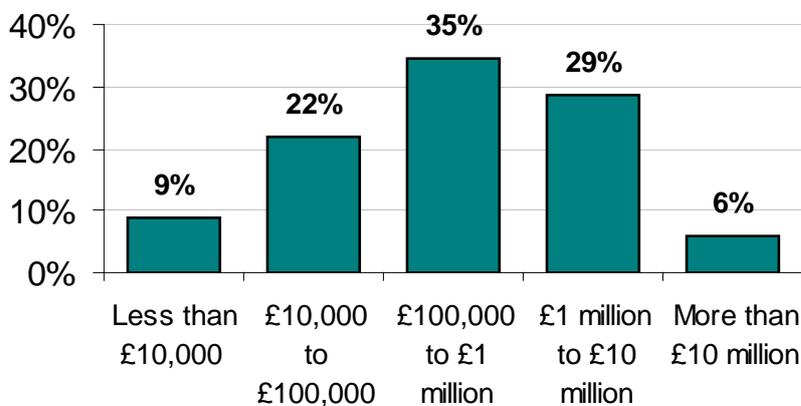
- What do you think would enable VCS organisations to access OA scholarly research outputs more easily?
  - PROBES IF NECESSARY: making more information available about latest research published through OA routes; making a wider range of research available through OA routes; bibliographies identified OA research outputs; quality assurance (for any expressing concerns about quality); OTHER
- What would be the impact on the voluntary and community sector if it did have free access scholarly research outputs?
  - What specific benefits do you think would follow if research were more widely available through OA routes? (explore financial, quality, general understanding, campaigning ability etc etc)
- Is there anything that you think is relevant to this study that we haven't discussed?
- Thank and close

## Appendix 6. Survey findings

### Profile of responding organisations

One hundred and one organisations responded to the survey. The highest proportion of respondents (35%) came from organisations with an annual income of between £100,000 and £1 million and the smallest proportion (9%) from small organisations with an annual income of less than £10,000. Twenty-nine per cent (29%) responded from large organisations, with an annual income between £1 million and £10 million and 22% from organisations with annual income between £10,000 and £100,000.

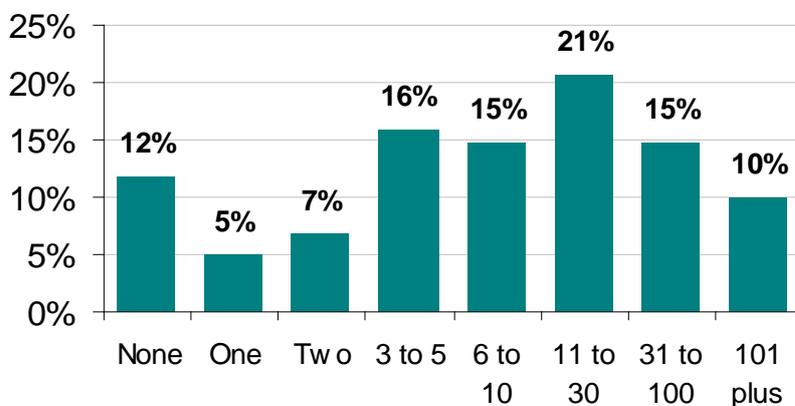
Figure 1. What is the annual income of your organisation?



Base: All (101)

Just over one-fifth (21%) of organisations responding to the survey had between 11 – 30 full-time-equivalent (FTE) employees. Twelve per cent (12%) of organisations had no FTEs and 10% had more than 101 FTEs.

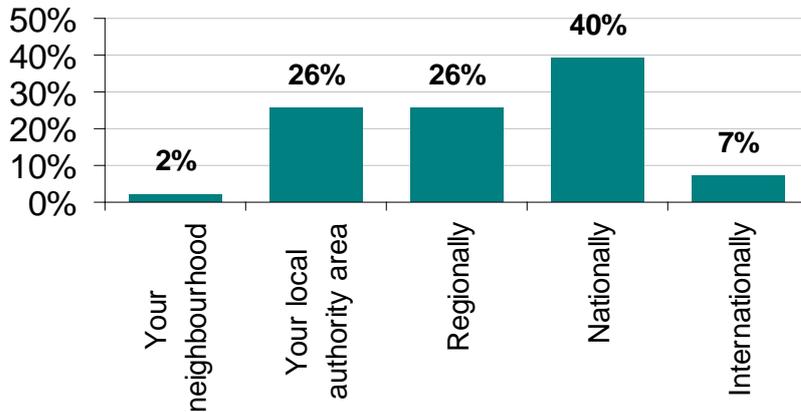
Figure 2. How many full-time equivalent employees does your organisation have?



Base: All (101)

The majority of survey responses came from national organisations. Just over one quarter were working within a local authority area (26%) and the same proportion worked regionally. Two per cent (2%) were neighbourhood organisations and 7% international.

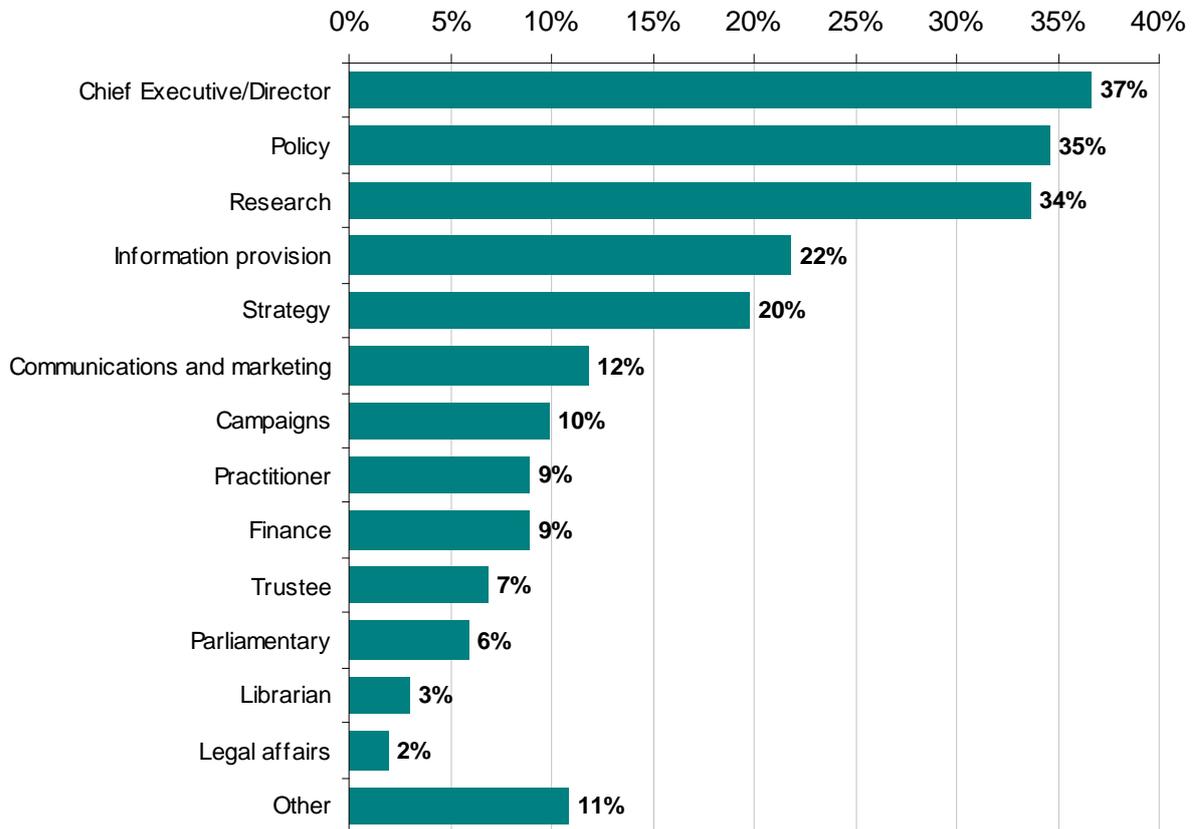
Figure 3. In which of the geographic areas listed below does your organisation carry out its core activities?



Base: All (101)

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their role or roles within the organisation on whose behalf they were responding. Thirty-seven per cent (37%) were Chief Executives or Directors (37%)<sup>30</sup>. Those with policy (35%) and research (34%) were also well-represented. Seven per cent of respondents had a Trustee role.

Figure 4. Which of the following best describes your own role? (Please tick all that apply)

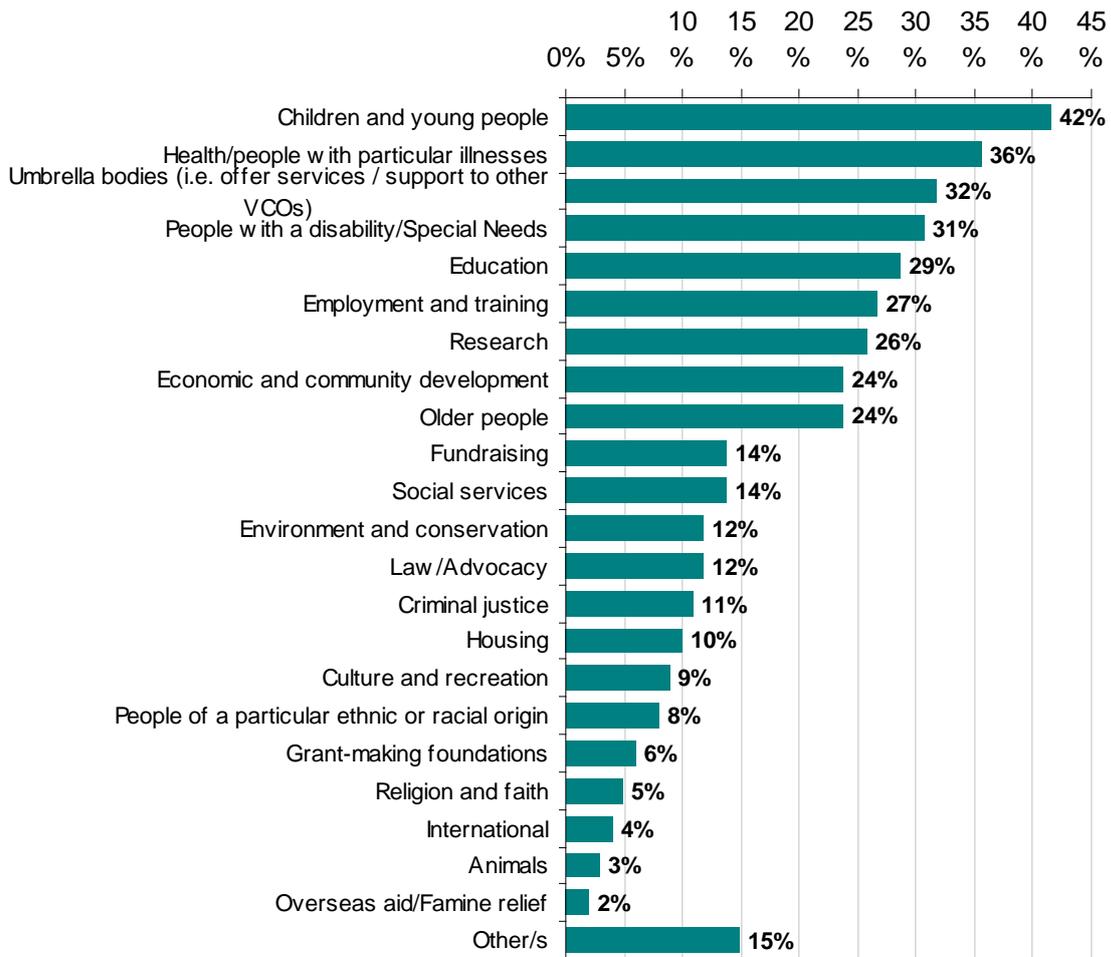


Base: All (101)

<sup>30</sup> And may have had another role alongside this too.

Organisations working partly or exclusively on behalf of children and young people accounted for 42% of respondents. Other areas of activity prevalent across the sample included organisations working in health (36%), umbrella organisations offering services or support to other VCOs (32%) and organisations working for disabled people or people with special needs (31%). Sectors represented least were internationally focused VCOs (4%), animals (3%) and overseas aid/famine relief (2%).

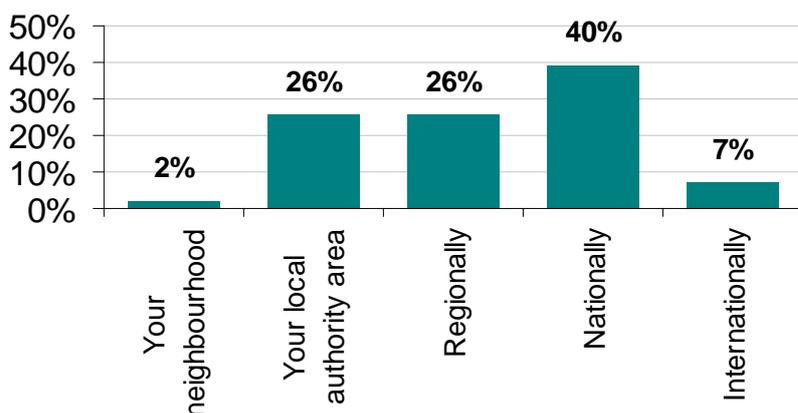
Figure 5. Please indicate which of the following describe your organisation's area of activity and beneficiaries (Please tick as many as apply).



Base: All (101)

Organisations working nationally comprised the largest proportion of respondents (40%). Just over one-quarter (26%) worked regionally and the same proportion focused on their local authority area. Seven percent (7%) worked internationally and two percent (2%) at neighbourhood level.

Figure 6. In which of the geographic areas listed below does your organisation carry out its core activities?



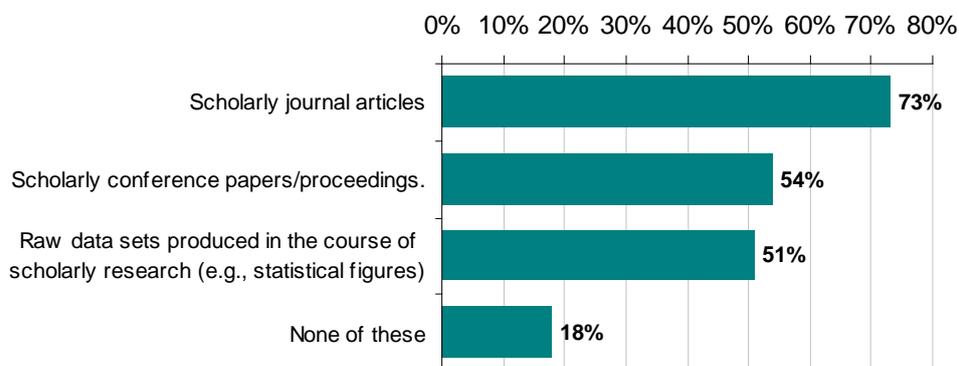
Base: All (101)

### Scholarly research used

Survey respondents were asked to indicate which types of scholarly research outputs they use, if any. Close to three out of four respondents (73%) reported that their organisation uses scholarly journal articles while just over half said that their organisations use both scholarly conference papers/proceedings and raw data sets that are produced in the course of scholarly research.

Nearly one-fifth of respondents (18% or 18 respondents) indicated that their organisation does not use any type of scholarly research. It is worth noting there is a fairly even spread of organisations in terms of income and number of FTEs who responded in this way.

Figure 7. Which of the following scholarly research outputs does your organisation use? (Please tick all that apply).



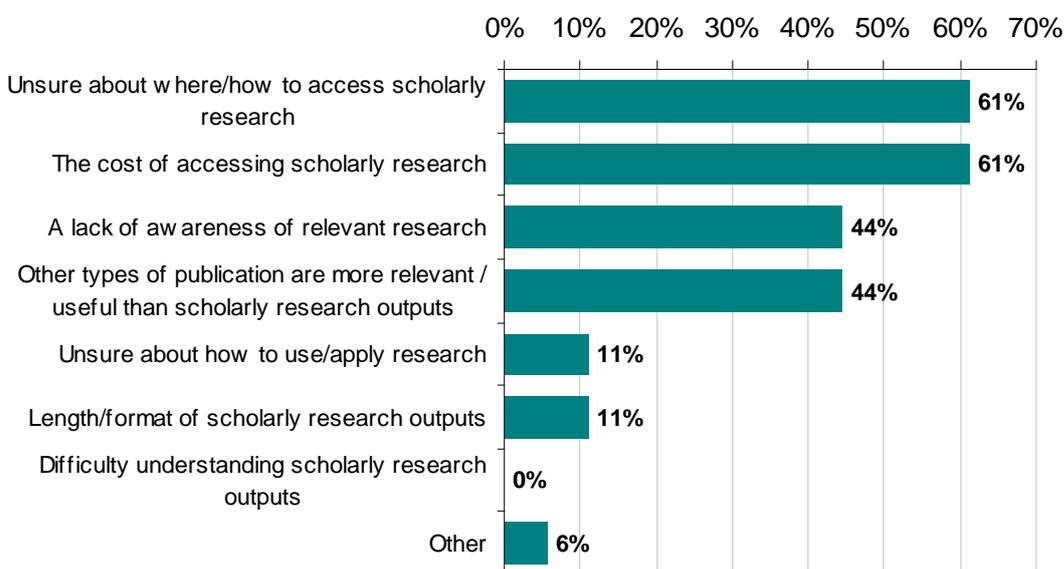
Base: All (101)

## Organisations not using scholarly research outputs

Respondents who said that they did not use any types of scholarly research (18% of the total) were asked to identify why this is the case. More than half (61%) said that they were unsure about where and how to access scholarly research and the same amount identified the cost of access as a key barrier. Just under a half selected a lack of awareness of relevant research or indicated that other types of publication were more relevant or useful.

One in ten (11%) respondents said that uncertainty about how to use or apply the research and the length and format were key barriers, while no respondents felt that difficulty understanding scholarly research outputs was a barrier.

Figure 8. Which of the following best describe your reasons for not using these research outputs? (Please tick up to 3 options).

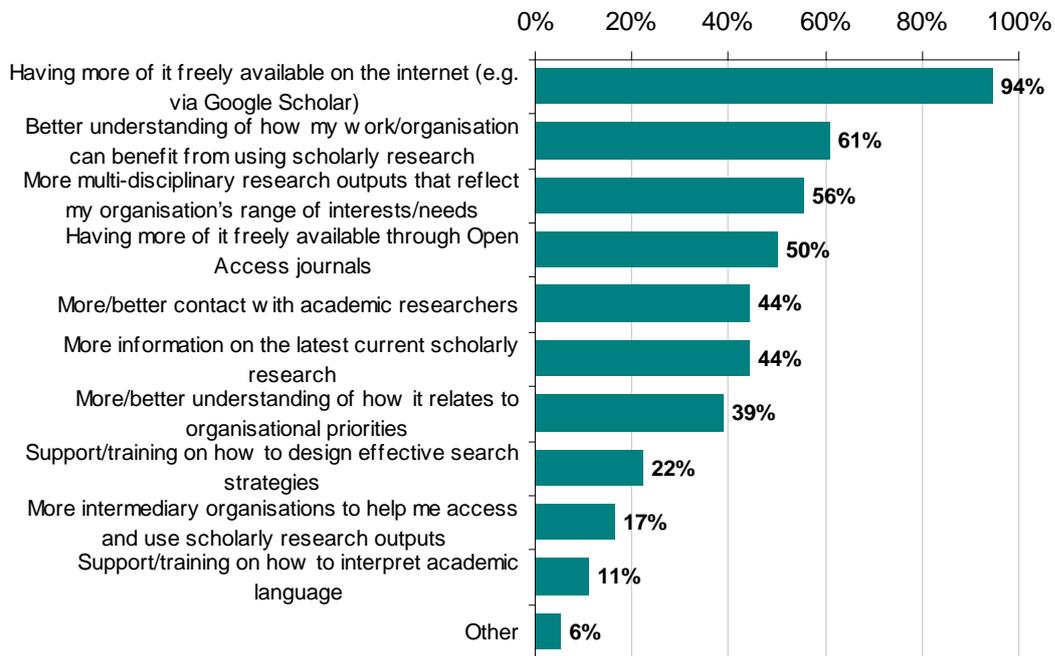


Base: 18 (those not using research outputs identified in figure 7).

Respondents not using scholarly research were asked to say what would help them or their organisations to do so. Almost all (94%) said that having more of it freely available on the internet would help, while half (50%) felt that having more of it freely available through Open Access journals would help.

A half or of respondent focussed on the issue of relevance and application: with 61% saying that a better understanding of the organisational benefits would help them to use more scholarly research as would the publication of more multi-disciplinary research outputs that reflect their organisations range interests and needs (56%).

Figure 9. What would help you/your organisation to use scholarly research? (Please tick all that apply.)



Base: 18 (those not using research outputs identified in figure 7).

One respondent commented that '*more relevant outputs - i.e. summary papers, thinkpieces, key findings*' would help them to use scholarly research.

## Use of commissioned or secondary research

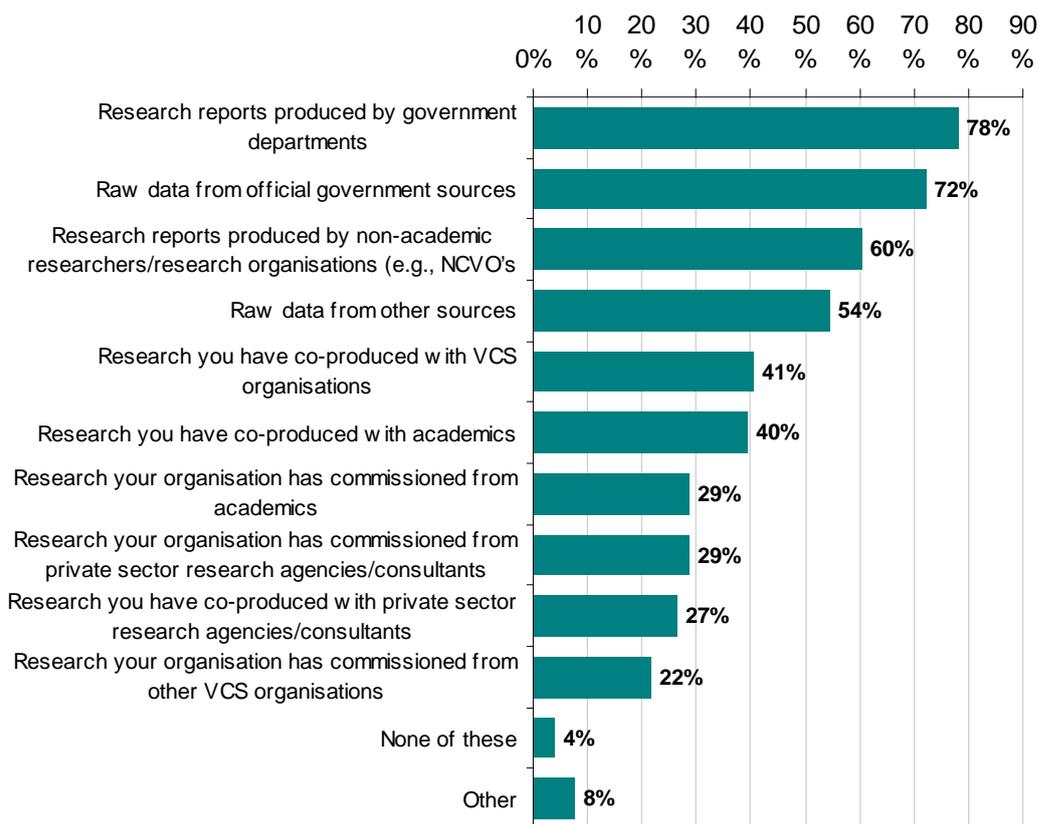
### Types of research used

As well as scholarly research outputs, respondents were asked to say what types of commissioned or secondary research outputs their organisations used, if any. The use of reports produced by government departments is the most common type selected by four out of five (78%) respondents and a similar amount (72%) reported using raw data from government sources.

About two fifths of respondents reported that they use research that had been co-produced with VCS or academics, while just less than one in three (29%) use research that their organisation has commissioned from academics or from private sector research organisations.

Just four percent of respondent indicated that their organisation uses no commissioned or secondary research.

Figure 10. What types of commissioned or secondary research or evidence does your organisation use? (Please tick all that apply)



Base: All (101)

Seven respondents selecting 'other' identified the following types of research:

*'Media research.'*

*'Research by similar 3<sup>rd</sup> sector projects.'*

*'Own data'*

*'Law reports'*

*'Research our employees carried out with training from an academic organisation.'*

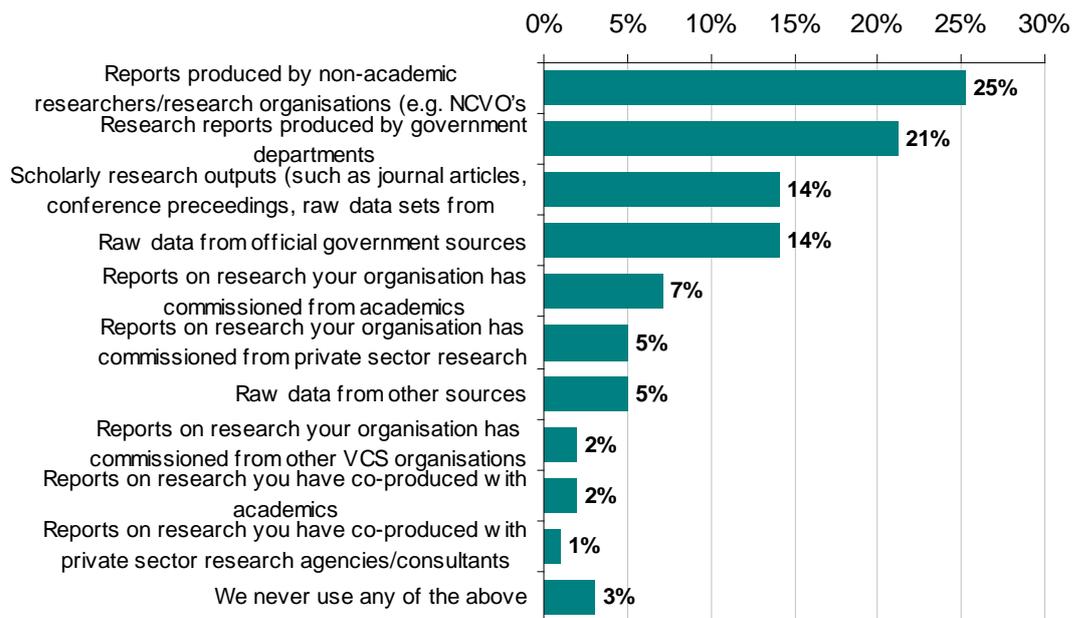
*'Research produced by academic organisations; Government equality impact assessments; local survey research by local authorities and partnerships, e.g., Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.'*

*'Research from published academic journals.'*

### Types of research used most often

When asked to identify the one type of research they use *most often*, reports produced by non-academic researchers or research organisations was the most common option selected by a quarter of respondents, while a fifth (21%) selected research reports produced by government departments. More than one in ten (14%) selected scholarly research outputs raw data from other sources.

Figure 11. Out of the types of research listed below, which ONE does your organisation use MOST often?



Base: All (101)

## Purpose of research use

Asked to identify the purposes of scholarly research used by their organisation, the most common options selected by respondents were:

*'To keep up to date with current thinking in my field'* (84%)

*To help me define issues that are relevant in my work* (72%)

*To inform my organisation's policy/strategy* (70%)

Figure 12. For what purposes does your organisation currently use scholarly research? (Please tick all that apply)

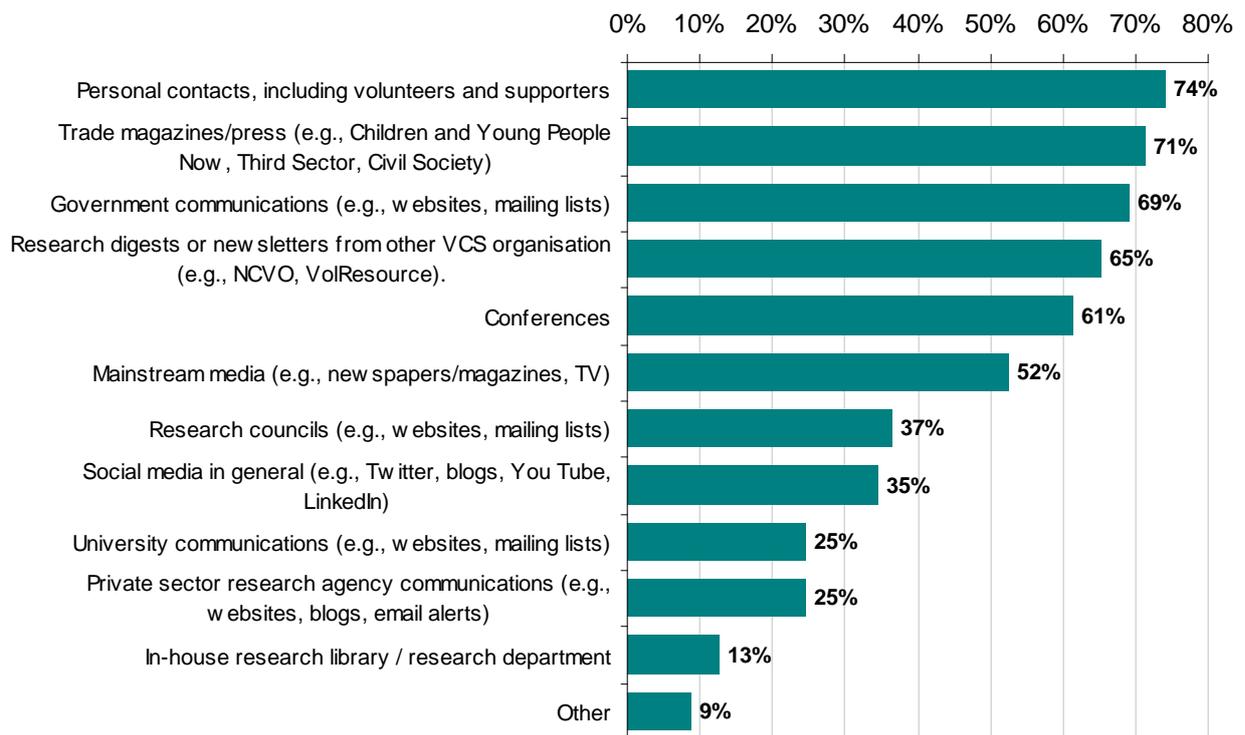


Base: All (101)

## Finding out about research

When asked to say how they most often learn about research that might be relevant to their organisation, three out of four draw on their personal contacts, including volunteers and supports, while about two thirds draw on trade magazines and press (71%); government communications (69%) or research digests and newsletters produced by other VCS organisations (75%).

Figure 13. How do you learn about research that might be relevant to your organisation? (Please tick all that apply)

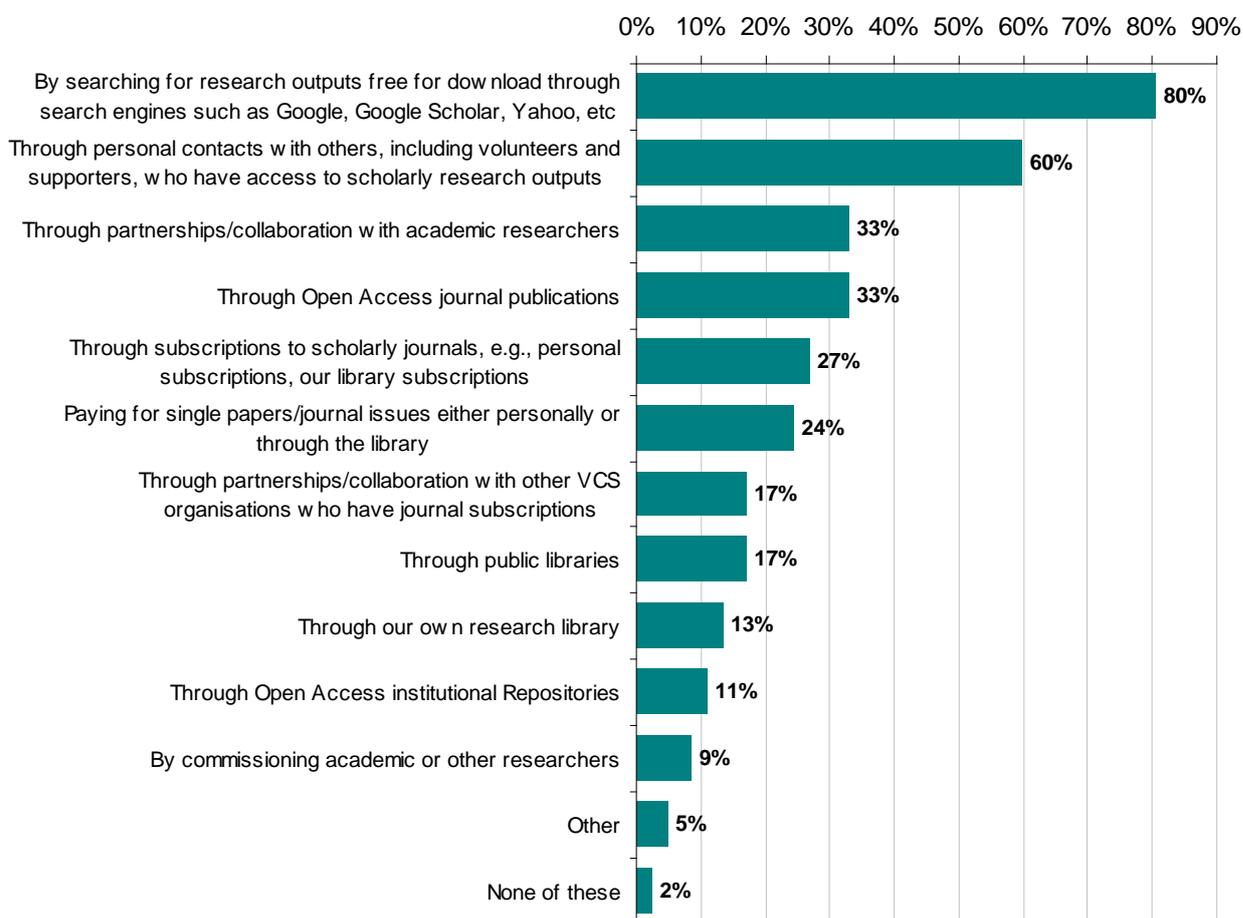


Base: All (101)

## Accessing scholarly research

In terms of how scholarly research is accessed, the use of search engines is the most common method, an option selected by four out of five (80%) respondents while accessing scholarly research through personal contacts, such as volunteers and supporters is also common (60%). One in three respondents access scholarly research directly through Open Access Journal publications and through partnerships and collaboration with academic researchers while slightly fewer reported accessing scholarly research through subscriptions to journals (27%) or by paying for single papers or journal issues either personally or through a library.

Figure 14. How does your organisation currently access scholarly research (Please tick all that apply)



Base: All (101)

## Cost of accessing research

Survey respondents were asked approximately how much they spent annually to access scholarly research outputs and 78 out of the 101 respondents provided an answer. Of these, 39 said that they spent nothing. Of the 39 who did spend something on accessing research, the average was £1,387 and the median £150. The majority of those spending on accessing

research spent between £1 and £500 inclusive (31 respondents). The highest amount spent was £24,000 and the next highest was £15,000.

Five of the six respondents who spent above £1,001 were from organisations in the higher income bracket of over £1 million.

Five respondents said they didn't know how much they spent. Eighteen respondents didn't answer this question.

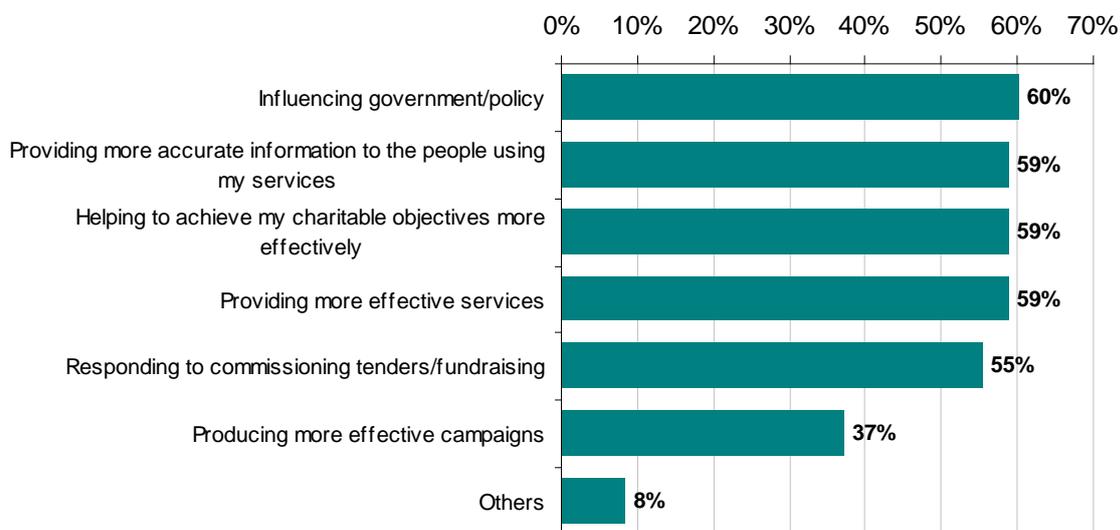
Table 8 Approximate annual expenditure on accessing scholarly research

	Income of org	
	<£1 million	>£1 million
£0	29	10
£1 - £100	12	6
£101 - £500	8	5
£501 - £1000	2	0
£1,001 - £10,000	1	3
>£10,000	0	2
Unsure	0	5
No answer	14	4

## Valuing research

When asked to identify the key benefits of using scholarly research outputs there appears to be no clear leading option, with about three out of five respondents identifying that it helps them to: influence government/policy; provide more accurate information to their service users; achieve their charitable objectives more effectively; provide more effective services and to respond to commissioning tenders and fundraising opportunities more effectively. Fewer respondents (37%) indicated that producing more effective campaigns was a key benefit.

Figure 15. What are the benefits of your organisation's use of scholarly research outputs? (Please tick all that apply)



Base: All (101)

Those who selected 'other' specified the following benefits:

*'Help inform our strategy and us target our support most effectively.'*

*'Keeping on top of current thinking and helping to shape debates among the general public not just academics/specialists.'*

*'Ensuring all our actions are evidence based.'*

*'Developing best and next practice.'*

*'To prove the worth of what we do.'*

*'Helps to think about and produce reports for funders.'*

A free text box was provided for respondents to add any further comments they had about the benefits of using scholarly research outputs. Twenty-five people responded and their comments can be grouped under the following broad themes.

Table 9 Respondents' comments on the benefits of using scholarly research outputs

Theme	No. of mentions <sup>31</sup>	Examples
Provides evidence to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform decisions</li> <li>• Add strength to work</li> </ul>	7	<i>'It is important that decision making is based on a combination of evidence and experience.'</i> <i>'Ensures all we say and do is evidence based - which adds strength to our work and calls to action.'</i>

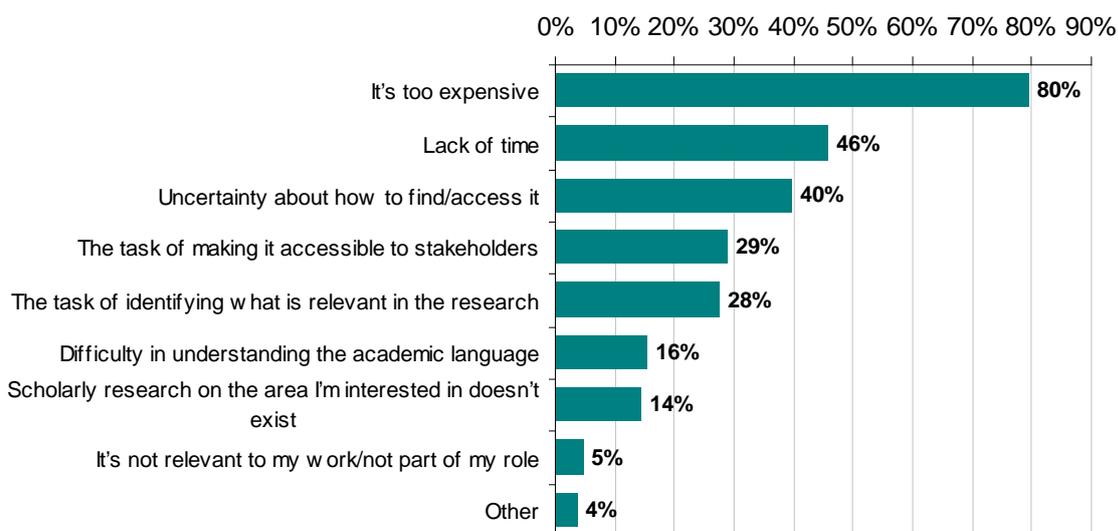
<sup>31</sup> Does not sum to 25 (number responding to this question): some comments addressed more than one theme.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'make the case' to funders/clients</li> <li>• Persuade/convince/challenge views</li> </ul>		<p><i>'For us the key factors are having a solid evidence base we can use when talking to funders and clients...'</i></p> <p><i>'It is essential for the VCS to make fact based cases rather than emotional pleas for the needs of their clients...'</i></p>
<p>Informs practice/service design/delivery</p>	7	<p><i>'Devise programmes of intervention'</i></p> <p><i>'We, and the organisations we support, need up to date information and evidence to provide the most effective support and services possible.'</i></p>
<p>Enhancing credibility</p>	3	<p><i>'The credibility that scholarly research holds is vital for providing evidence to back up our claims, be that for policy, campaigning, fundraising or any other aspect of our work.'</i></p> <p><i>'It adds credibility and authority to any work.'</i></p> <p><i>'It adds to the professionalism and effectiveness of the charity'</i></p>
<p>Keeping up to date/ Informing thinking</p>	1	<p><i>'to further our thinking and developing new ideas and approaches'</i></p> <p><i>'Access to scholarly research helps the organisation to keep up to date with changing policies/priorities.'</i></p>
<p>Informs policy/strategy</p>	1	<p><i>'It helps us to scope and define our strategy.'</i></p>
<p>Other (no specific benefits identified: 6 of these comments related to cost as a barrier to access )</p>	9	<p><i>'Limited capacity and severe funding reductions mean we can no longer pay for subscriptions.'</i></p> <p><i>'The cost of obtaining scholarly research outputs is enormous, especially due to the high cost of journal subscriptions. This is the main reason for one's inability to access scholarly research in a timely manner.'</i></p> <p><i>'One of our roles is to link academia with practitioners to help them share ideas and intelligence: currently the two worlds are far too separate.'</i></p>

## Barriers to accessing and using scholarly research

Organisations identified a number of barriers to accessing or using scholarly research. The barriers identified most often were cost (80%) and lack of time (46%). Uncertainty about how to access research (40%) or how identify what is relevant (28%) were also seen as barriers, as was the task of making research accessible to stakeholders (29%).

Figure 16. What are the barriers you/your organisation faces when accessing or using scholarly research (e.g., journal articles and conference proceedings) (Please tick all that apply)



Base: 83

Those responding 'other' made the following comments:

*'Scholarly research on the area I am interested in is very limited and much of this from overseas.'*

*'Online publication ahead of print can be hard to access.'*

A free text box was provided for respondents to add any further comments they had about the barriers to accessing or using scholarly research outputs. Twenty people responded and their comments can be grouped under the following broad themes (Table 3, overleaf). The largest proportion of responses (12) refers to cost as a barrier. Other barriers mentioned include copyright restrictions and academic language.

Table 10 Respondents' comments on the barriers to accessing or using scholarly research outputs

Theme	No. of mentions 32	Examples
Costs (including time)	12	<p><i>'Time is a big factor - this relates to both time searching for the relevant research and then the time it takes to dissect and digest the academically focused outputs. These two factors mean that it would never be cost effective for us to pay for subscriptions to journals.'</i></p> <p><i>'The cost of direct journal access is too high. Access via academic libraries is more affordable, but not convenient - direct online access would be better.'</i></p> <p><i>'It is frustrating to be linked to individual article from expensive academic journals that we wouldn't use often enough to make it worthwhile subscribing to. It would be helpful if charities could access some articles free of charge.'</i></p> <p><i>'It's very frustrating to use google scholar and get a sense that a particular article MIGHT be relevant, but you're not certain enough to spend the money to download it in case it's not.'</i></p> <p><i>'I have personal subscriptions as a postgraduate researcher, therefore I am able to keep up to date with current research...if it weren't for this, my organisation would not have any access because organisational subscription are unaffordable for us.'</i></p>
Copyright restrictions	3	<p><i>'As noted above, copyright restrictions, e.g. the British Library refused to photocopy an article of 1978 because it had no copyright agreement with the (now defunct) publisher, in a magazine no longer published. It is harder for individuals without institutional backing to access certain journals - retired individuals such as myself find particular problems.'</i></p> <p><i>'We encounter huge barriers of copyright...to accessing research that would benefit our work.'</i></p> <p><i>'Universities are unable to give access to 3rd parties because of publishers' rights.'</i></p>
Need to translate / operationalise academic research	3	<p><i>'Academic language and statistical analysis is inappropriate for our audience, so we have to do a lot of work to 'translate' it.'</i></p> <p><i>'Operationalising research and adapting it to local circumstances.'</i></p>
Need to rely on personal contacts	1	<p><i>'Access to peer reviewed scholarly research is intermittent and dependent upon personal contacts. It would greatly strengthen our research capability if we were able to have access to a full range of</i></p>

<sup>32</sup> Does not sum to 20 (number responding to this question): some comments addressed more than one theme.

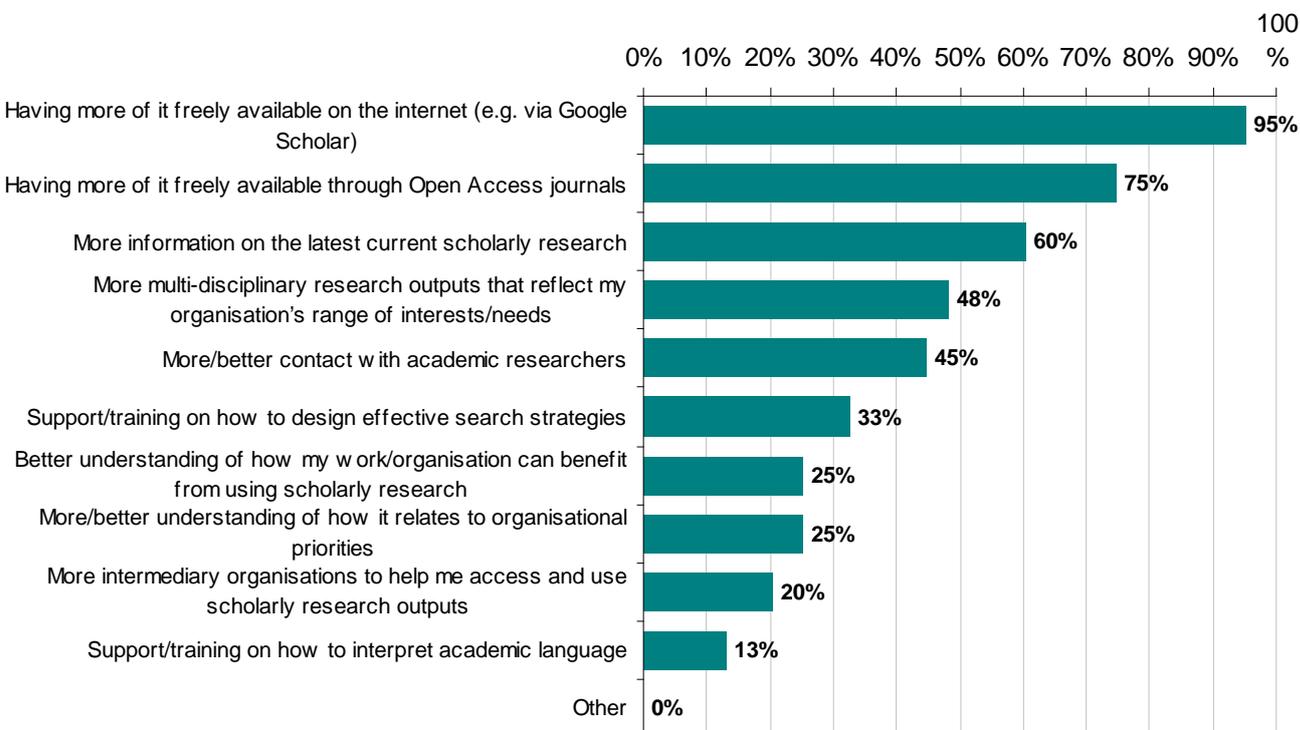
		<i>academic journals relevant to our work.'</i>
Other	4	<i>'Cannot understand statistics from NHS sources to see costs.'</i> <i>'Not knowing it is there in the first place'</i> <i>'Difficulty in getting access - no obvious way for charities to get access to [Athens].'</i>

## Making more use of scholarly research

Current users of scholarly research were asked to identify what would make them use it more often. Having outputs available for free on the internet is overwhelmingly seen as the main way to help organisations use it more – an option identified by 95% of respondents. Making research more freely available through Open Access journals was identified by three out of four (75%) respondents.

A quarter or more of respondents also called for more support and training around designing effective search strategies (33%); and in help with understanding how their work or organisation can benefit from using scholarly research and in them to better understand how scholarly research relates to their organisational priorities. A further fifth of respondents felt that more intermediary organisations tasked with helping their organisation to access and use scholarly research would also be helpful.

Figure 17. What would help you/your organisation to use scholarly research more? (Please tick all that apply)



Base: 83

Three respondents provided comments in the 'other' option to this question (though no respondent selected 'other'):

*'having accessible information such as easy read versions.'*

*'I value research but don't want to put too much emphasis on it. Practitioners have an equally, if not more important role to play in developing policy etc they just lack capacity to report.'*

*'Re: 'More information', specifically, something like Info4Local but co-ordinated by researchers would be helpful. The quality of academic research outputs is often disappointing too once you have pierced the language.'*

## Impact of difficulties in accessing or using scholarly research outputs

Respondents were asked about the impact on their organisation of any difficulties in access or using scholarly research outputs. Eighty-one people provided a free text response to this question. Just over one quarter (27%) focused on the impact on funding bids and/or on their ability to measure or provide evidence of the impact of their work (which can be very important to securing funding). Reduced strength of voice or influence (e.g., in campaigning or lobbying) and an difficulty in keeping up to date with the latest thinking were identified as negative impacts by an equal number of respondents (12). Ten respondents mentioned cost.

Table 11 Respondents' comments on impact of difficulties in accessing or using scholarly research outputs

Theme	No of mentions <sup>33</sup>	Examples
Impacts funding bids / ability to measure and/or evidence impact	22	<p><i>'If the information is difficult to access, it means we do not use it for funding applications etc.'</i></p> <p><i>'Less informed bids.'</i></p> <p><i>'Sometimes it is difficult to evidence impact or outcomes which restricts our success in raising funds.'</i></p> <p><i>'We have difficulty in including up to date research and data in our applications for funding or to evaluate the impact of the work we do and use the research to back up our assertions of the difference we make.'</i></p> <p><i>'The difficulties we face in accessing or using scholarly research is that we end up using data that are not very accurate and which can be accepted by funders.'</i></p> <p><i>'May be limiting funding applications having the most up to date research as supporting evidence for bid writing.'</i></p> <p><i>'Our evidence for need of service is not very strong which weakens any applications, tenders, bids or other documents we produce.'</i></p> <p><i>'The lack of statistical data to give to sponsors so that they understand that there is a need for our</i></p>

<sup>33</sup> Does not sum to 81 (number responding to this question): some comments addressed more than one theme.

		<p>resources.'</p> <p><i>'Not being able to write the most persuasive grant applications that I might otherwise do; not being able to fully support tenders with data.'</i></p> <p><i>'We don't know about research, so can't use it as evidence of the benefit our work provides.'</i></p> <p><i>'Difficulties in accessing official data hinders our efforts to effectively evaluate long-term outcomes for our programme participants. It forces us to rely heavily on surveys which in turn place an administrative burden on our teaching staff.'</i></p>
Affects strength/ impact of voice (e.g., campaigning/awareness raising / lobbying)	12	<p><i>'Weakens our position in campaigning etc.'</i></p> <p><i>'Lessened effectiveness in lobbying/campaigning.'</i></p> <p><i>'Less effective in our influencing / campaigning work. Lack of evidence to make the case.'</i></p> <p><i>'Lost opportunities, lack of clear information to lobby and influence.'</i></p> <p><i>'Knowledge is power. Less knowledge means less power.'</i></p> <p><i>'Not having evidence wider than our own data sets to lobby for lone parents' issues.'</i></p> <p><i>'Not being able to influence (always reacting).'</i></p>
Difficulty in keeping up to date / developing comprehensive knowledge of field	12	<p><i>'Lack of knowledge of current strategies.'</i></p> <p><i>'We reuse information that is out of date, our work can become static.'</i></p> <p><i>'Miss new emerging thinking.'</i></p> <p><i>'Keeping up to date with changes and their potential longer term impact.'</i></p> <p><i>'Concern that we are missing out on the latest evidence/best practice when developing policies and service delivery models.'</i></p> <p><i>'Without easy access to the up to date thinking and evidence of what works we are often stuck in delivering what we think works well enough.'</i></p> <p><i>'We get behind on current debates and our commissioned research is not always connecting with these debates.'</i></p> <p><i>'We make do with what we can get free of charge, so we're never benefiting from a comprehensive-as-possible understanding of a topic.'</i></p>
Cost (including cost of time)	10	<p><i>'Cost of accessing evidence for our work.'</i></p> <p><i>'Where articles have to be paid for, we are not able to access scholarly articles because we do not have any budget for subscriptions to academic journals or purchasing one-off articles.'</i></p> <p><i>'We work in a 'hard to reach' insular minority community about which there is hardly any research. if there is its often prohibitive for our budget or due to</i></p>

		<p><i>the fact we aren't members of an institution'</i></p> <p><i>'In the current economic climate, the time involved v other priorities eg maintaining contracts.'</i></p> <p><i>'I believe the impact on the organisation in terms of difficulties in accessing or using scholarly research outputs are the time it takes to search the internet/library for relevant, up to date literature. Another impact is the cost of having to buy articles based on abstract extracts, which when arrive in full, can sometimes actually be irrelevant to the research topic.'</i></p>
Difficult to find out about new / relevant research	6	<p><i>'We are often not aware of the most up to date evidence base for the policy work that we do and are reliant on others who can pay for access to share this information with us.'</i></p> <p><i>'Not knowing what research is out there and how to access this research is impacting the organisation.'</i></p> <p><i>'Looking for relevant information that is free on top of it can feel like looking for a needle in a haystack, and this is exacerbated by the fact that VCS research in general has been buried and difficult to identify.'</i></p>
<p>Lack of evidence base:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can lead to 'wheel reinvention'</li> <li>• risks wasting resources</li> </ul>	5	<p><i>'Can lead us to reinvent the wheel.'</i></p> <p><i>'Potentially a big waste of hard-won resources if we put our energy and funds into schemes that we could have reasonably predicted with access to prior Research would be ineffective or uneconomic.'</i></p> <p><i>'Our lack of awareness re relevant research has lead to us commissioning our own, which was a costly and time-consuming exercise.'</i></p>
Lack of evidence for policy/strategy development	4	<p><i>'Lack of evidence on which to take decisions or influence strategies.'</i></p> <p><i>'Lack of evidence meeting academic standards to support policy responses...'</i></p>
Relationships between VCS and others	4	<p><i>'Limited acceptance by colleagues in the public sector of the relevance of research.'</i></p> <p><i>'More difficult to put forward arguments to public sector bodies.'</i></p> <p><i>'It keeps practitioners and academics apart and encourages the divide and potential distrust of 'purely' academic work and relevance. When funding is tight many workers resent/misunderstand the value of an objective appraisal of their work.'</i></p> <p><i>'Disconnect between VCS especially frontline and academic research when they could be mutually supportive.'</i></p>
Threat to reputation/credibility of organisation	3	<p><i>'At times our access has been very limited, which presents a number of difficulties. When we have not had free access, it is a threat to our reputation for expertise in the field. There is also the risk that we</i></p>

		<p><i>are basing decisions on out of date knowledge, where more accurate or relevant research has taken place.'</i></p> <p><i>'It is possible our work could be better informed and more credibly referenced if we had cheaper, easier access to relevant research articles.'</i></p> <p><i>'It makes us look amateurish, in the pejorative sense of the word.'</i></p>
No impact (at present)	3	<p><i>'In the present, the impact of difficulties in purchasing scholarly research outputs is not so great, as we have access to the online database of a public library. However, this is a temporary arrangement.'</i></p> <p><i>'Minimal because we have access to our own in-house library.'</i></p>
Inaccessibility of scholarly research / academic language	2	<p><i>'In any articles I choose to use, I often find that a lot of our clients would not understand the language used in them.'</i></p> <p><i>'As a conservation practitioner Buglife is keen to put current knowledge into practice when undertaking conservation projects and advocacy activities. The inaccessible nature of scholarly research outputs means that it is difficult for us to translate the scientific evidence into conservation action, and for us to talk authoritatively with decisions makers about potential changes to policy.'</i></p>
Impact of service design / quality/ reach	2	<p><i>'Possibly we fall behind in being able to deliver the most proactive and relevant services to our client base.'</i></p> <p><i>'It makes it harder to target services in the right areas, for the right needs, and in the most effective manner.'</i></p>
Concern about potential bias	2	<p><i>'Also, I think a lot of the articles that are now available free of charge are biased in a way, because they may reflect government priorities and/or the agendas of the organisations that publish the research.'</i></p> <p><i>'Access restricted to open sources that might be biased, eg government sources.'</i></p>
Other	11	<p><i>'We just don't get to see or use it'</i></p> <p><i>'Unsure.'</i></p> <p><i>'I always know there is research missing.'</i></p> <p><i>'As a small org we do not have the time to research information and just use the information which is at hand, including council strategies that are in line with our work.'</i></p> <p><i>'We often have to work within very short deadlines, so we don't have the time or capacity to spend too long on searching for relevant journal articles.'</i></p> <p><i>'Our main problem is the lack of academic interest in our author specifically in the field of English. We have members from a variety of disciplines in our membership of about 120 including three professors'</i></p>

		<p><i>of Arabic! - and barely two or three Eng. Lit. academics. Another problem is that the few University English academics who are interested in George Borrow are too busy to make an adequate contribution. Another again is that university libraries are cutting back on subscriptions. We have lost the only two American libraries which subscribed to our journal and in England have lost the Brotherton Library at Leeds which can't apparently afford our very modest £15 annual subscription. This of course reduces awareness of what we ourselves are contributing to Borrow research.'</i></p>
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### Strategies for overcoming difficulties encountered in accessing or using scholarly research outputs

Respondents were asked about any strategies they used to overcome the access difficulties they experienced. Sixty eight people provided a free text response to this question. By far the largest group of respondents (29) referred to relationships of different types – which might be networks, partnerships or personal contacts. Partnerships were of value both by helping to provide access to research and by enabling the production of original research. Other strategies included an opportunistic approach involving using whatever was available or possible (including purchasing documents) given the task at hand (10) or gaining access through staff, volunteers or Trustees who had access to databases because of other roles they played (e.g., as a student or academic).

Table 12 Respondents' comments on strategies for overcoming difficulties in accessing or using research

Theme	No. of mentions <sup>34</sup>	Examples
Networking / personal contacts / relationships	29	<p><i>'Link with other charities that have similar objects but larger research teams.'</i></p> <p><i>'We rely on friendly academics and students obtaining the material for us.'</i></p> <p><i>'We are building up a network of academics and researchers who can be our advisors on specific new projects, however, their remit is not to keep us advised on all aspects of the field. We also work with MSc students who do discrete pieces of work, but their scope is limited.'</i></p> <p><i>'Developing relationships with individual academics who will share their work with us but this inevitable means that we still miss things.'</i></p> <p><i>'Direct liaison with practitioners.'</i></p>

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<sup>34</sup> Does not sum to 68 (number responding to this question): some comments addressed more than one theme.

		<p><i>Regular contact with consultants at a number of hospitals.</i></p> <p><i>'At present we have to rely on individual relationships with researchers and academics to allow us to source research outputs. This use of a 'middle man' is time consuming and relies on the significant 'goodwill' of these contacts.'</i></p> <p><i>'Where a specific publication has been identified that would be of interest, we tend to contact the author directly and explain the fact that we are a charity and do not have government funding etc and request a copy of the publication free of charge.'</i></p> <p><i>'Links with the local authority and NHS and using their raw data and strategy documents to inform the development of services.'</i></p> <p><i>Building strong working relationships with government agencies, specifically MoJ and DfE. Sharing best practices and advice with other VCS organisations on how best to navigate these issues.</i></p> <p><i>'Negotiating Athens access via the local NHS Trust (technically I should be NHS staff to utilise this).'</i></p> <p><i>'Sharing research outputs with other organisations, attending events organised by VSSN/TSRC/NCVO to get a sense of what academic research currently exists and its relevance.'</i></p> <p><i>'Partnership with statutory organisations.'</i></p> <p><i>'Attending partnership meetings to keep up to date with current policies.'</i></p> <p><i>'Developing local partnerships for funding local research.'</i></p> <p><i>'Working in partnership with academic institutions to jointly produce research.'</i></p> <p><i>'Working with bodies such as the third sector research centre.'</i></p>
Opportunistic: use whatever is available	10	<p><i>'We use whatever access to research is open to us at any given time.'</i></p> <p><i>'Begging and cadging.'</i></p> <p><i>'We use what we can find within a limited amount of time.'</i></p> <p><i>'Work imaginatively.'</i></p> <p><i>'Sourcing them from other places, doing without, or buying them as a last resort.'</i></p> <p><i>'Making use of any free or very low cost publications, particularly from the NCVO but others including the NCB (National Children's Board) and SCIE (Social Care Institute for Excellence).'</i></p>
Staff / volunteers / Trustees provide access	7	<p><i>'A number of our staff and volunteers are part time students and have access to University resources.'</i></p> <p><i>'If I wasn't a postgraduate researcher, my organisation</i></p>

		<p>wouldn't be able to access research except through government or umbrella bodies.'</p> <p>'We have decided to put all our staff through an academic training course which will train staff in how to research and interpret reports, and thus have a greater knowledge of what's available. It has also provided free access at least for limited periods of time, to sources which would otherwise not be available.'</p> <p>'We are aware that we need access to up to date research and have used volunteer time to do this research but the volunteer needs to have the skills to know where to look and what to look for. Allocating paid staff time to research and access scholarly research outputs is extremely difficult in the current economic climate when we are losing core funding and most of our funding is now linked to project delivery.'</p> <p>'Very much depends on individuals volunteering their time and willing to spend their own money. I funded my own research trips to America in the 1980s. I'm not sure that in retirement I could afford to now.'</p> <p>'Highly experienced academics as Trustees.'</p>
No strategy developed / opportunistic approach	4	<p>'None but we would like to learn more.'</p> <p>'We have not devised a strategy to overcome this difficulty.'</p>
Training/capacity building staff	3	<p>'We have undertaken a small amount of training / capacity building with member organisations in understanding policy and research data.'</p> <p>'Some training given on searching/accessing/interpretation of data.'</p> <p>'Positioning of computers changed to make more accessible.'</p>
Tracking bulletins/ media / journals	3	<p>'The best way to keep on top of current trends is through the journals - Third Sector (daily bulletins, NCVO etc).'</p>
Commissioning own research	3	<p>'When funds are available we try to commission new research that meets our needs, but this is rare and means that these funds cannot be spent on other things.'</p> <p>'We have commissioned academics we know are strongly disposed to/have a track record themselves of being practitioners.'</p>
Pay for research	3	<p>'We spend some money on purchasing articles and for particular big projects will set time aside to go to an academic library.'</p> <p>'Buying some articles.'</p>
Maintain own database	2	<p>'We have tried to build a database of sources of research.'</p> <p>'We maintain a good database which we can use to</p>

		<i>analyse some characteristics.'</i>
Other	12	<p><i>We find alternative strategies such as pursuing different themes which do not present such difficulties.</i></p> <p><i>'This is a rather timely survey as I am currently in the process of discussing how to access scholarly articles with both my local authority's research and consultation group, and the university in the city.'</i></p> <p><i>'If I want to use something specific information wise, I have to re word it so the people I am working with can understand it better.'</i></p> <p><i>'We try to build into Work Programmes where possible sufficient scope for individual research into relevant topic areas, but this is increasingly difficult.</i></p> <p><i>'We can find the research, for us the problem is the prohibitive cost of accessing research.'</i></p> <p><i>'Very little other than spend more time researching. Speaking from a personal point of view, I hadn't considered using scholarly research as it's been out of my mind since completing my degree! It's on the list now though!'</i></p> <p><i>'Where access is critical we would seek access via an academic library, as that would be cheaper than going direct to journal publishers.'</i></p> <p><i>'Using data and then extrapolating it ourselves. Involvement in national projects through NCVO such as 20:20 Leadership Commission.'</i></p> <p><i>'Publishing own articles via blogs and social media channels to elicit responses and identify further suggested sources of research.'</i></p> <p><i>'We have launched our own open access peer reviewed electronic scientific journal.'</i></p> <p><i>'We maintain good contact with our beneficiaries who we can draw on to conduct our own surveys, research, focus groups etc.'</i></p> <p><i>'Membership of national association (NCVO CTA UK)'</i></p>

## Further comments on use of scholarly research

Forty-one organisations made final additional comments about the use of scholarly research.

Table 13 Comments on use of scholarly research

Theme	No. of mentions	Examples
Appetite for /importance of research	16	<i>'Our organization requires timely access to scholarly research outputs, as we are a social development research organization. We have recently started operations, and access to scholarly research papers is a serious requirement for our work.'</i>

		<p><i>'We would like online access to sources that are subscription based but cannot justify the cost for occasional use.'</i></p> <p><i>'Buglife believes that increased access to scholarly research outputs will improve the ability of the nature conservation sector to influence policy and decision makers. It will also enable us to ensure that our practical conservation efforts are based on the most up to date scientific evidence.'</i></p> <p><i>'Research that can support our work is fantastic, however even in these financial times good arguments will still not be funded.'</i></p> <p><i>'We would use academic journals and make their findings known to a wide group of people if we had free access to them.'</i></p> <p><i>'I would like to use more scholarly research and have a way to search for what is relevant in one sitting. This does not exist now and the knowledge has been built up over years in a piecemeal and rather random fashion.'</i></p> <p><i>'I feel that the use of scholarly research outputs would add weight to the work undertaken at Community Action Derby.'</i></p> <p><i>'Access to scholarly research on need and developments in policy and practice are vital to help ourselves and the sector provide the best support and services to the people who need it most. We try to keep up to date as best we can and access the latest thinking in the fields we work in and in evaluation and impact for the sector. Evidence is valuable and access to a wider range of scholarly evidence would have immense value for ourselves and the sector.'</i></p> <p><i>'Its vital for us- supports our collaboration and keeps us innovative and credible.'</i></p>
<p>Academics / academic institutions</p>	<p>4</p>	<p><i>'It would be helpful to have more and of course fully funded or affordable capacity for practitioner based research support - people need help to turn their knowledge and experience into good research and are not necessarily interested in or can afford to take a full academic course - so lets have more support from academia to support practitioner led research.'</i></p> <p><i>'At a recent UKERC conference there was strong consensus that if academics want their outputs to be used they need to be in a digestible format, something that charities etc.. can quickly access and read. Scholarly journals are just too dense to be useful. This might also come in the form of knowledge sharing events.'</i></p> <p><i>'As mentioned above, it is mainly a coincidence if we end up using scholarly research outputs: we have to be able to locate them and on top of that they should</i></p>

		<p><i>be free/inexpensive and easy to access without having passwords/licenses. I think the local universities could be much more helpful in granting access (perhaps for a small fee) to their collections and being much more transparent as to who can access them and how.'</i></p> <p><i>'VSSN, TSRC, History and Policy are all great. We would like to see more practitioner involvement in them. We would like to see academics speaking out in favour of plain language (some of them are good at it - they are the best writers).'</i></p>
<p>Accessing research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowing what exists</li> <li>• Cost</li> <li>• Language</li> <li>• How to use research in practice</li> </ul>	4	<p><i>'We are able to make use of published biomedical research data but often cannot obtain the data required due to the costs imposed by private sector journals. These organisations should recognise that voluntary sector organisation cannot afford to pay their prices and should provide information free, or heavily discounted, to the voluntary sector.'</i></p> <p><i>'We really don't use them as we're not aware of what is around.'</i></p> <p><i>'Majority of our staff do not have an academic research background and therefore are unaware the information exists and therefore how it can be of use.'</i></p> <p><i>'We are aware of some scholarly research but knowing how to use it to its best capacity would be helpful. We are at a time in our company planning that we need to be thinking of new priorities for action. Using this sort of research will help immensely being able to access some form of bulletin about the research would help our future development, training in using the research to our best advantage to maximise funding applications etc would be a massive help.'</i></p>
<p>Limited available academic research on topic / Finding relevant research</p>	3	<p><i>'I just wish that more academic researchers were engaged with the issue - there just isn't that much work out there yet - I long to inspire people from across the disciplines to take on research about missing people.'</i></p> <p><i>'There is limited research we have been able to identify that directly relates to our core activities and service delivery; however we do try to identify complementary research reports and findings relating to public health, reports by bodies such as Joseph Rowntree Foundation, National Audit Office, National Charities, Centres of Excellence.'</i></p> <p><i>'Perhaps the largest issue we have to overcome is finding relevant research. We commissioned academic research to produce a literature review of all the work that had been done in relation to charities, skills, and workforce development. This would have been very difficult to do internally, with</i></p>

		<i>many articles being taken from international or very specialist journals.'</i>
Support for the study	2	<p><i>'Simply, that I think your proposal is a worthwhile one.'</i></p> <p><i>'I am very pleased to have had the opportunity to take part in this survey. Gaining adequate robust research is a real challenge for us as a relatively small organisation. Subscriptions are prohibitive as is commissioning our own research of any significant size.'</i></p>
Other	11	<p><i>'Because Borrow's sphere of activity was in Russia and Spain as well as Britain the range of scholarly research to be made use of is potentially wide. We have contributions from Spain especially including scholarship in Spanish Romani. One of our major contributors teaches in a Japanese university. The internet has made a vast difference to the availability of research but there is still some way to go to make some kinds of research more readily available.'</i></p> <p><i>'We also have our own research and would like to access funding to develop it further as we work in a unique field.'</i></p> <p><i>'Generally speaking we are well informed. But other scientists are not.'</i></p> <p><i>We would be as keen to participate in research commissioned into homelessness etc as we are to learn of scholarly outputs.'</i></p> <p><i>'Although the ms society does produce / sponsor scholarly research, my particular organisation [mutual support - armed forces ms support group] does not. a study about the incidence of ms amongst serving and ex-service personnel would undoubtedly be beneficial (both from a 'natural' scientific and a social scientific perspective). however, as with everything else - funding makes this highly unlikely.'</i></p> <p><i>'There has been recent debate in the higher education press about the uncompetitive nature of the journal publishing business. This survey uncovers another aspect of that - it is not only impacting on universities and research bodies, but also on potential users of research such as voluntary sector organisations like ourselves.'</i></p> <p><i>'In the past we have been consulted on the design of research - please use our knowledge and expertise in this way!'</i></p> <p><i>'One general comment - the distinction between scholarly and 'non-scholarly' might not be obvious (it isn't to me). A day-to-day example of this is the distinction between official statistics and national statistics. A label of scholarly doesn't guarantee quality to my mind. Some of the most effective</i></p>

	<p><i>contributions of research to my effectiveness at work have been from outside the field most obviously associated with the task. It would be helpful to try to make more of these connections in making research available to VCOs. Clear, well-written summaries at the front of research are always extremely important in helping to decide whether to read on or not, in the huge welter of information.'</i></p> <p><i>'It's like the door is locked firmly to the voluntary sector!'</i></p> <p><i>'NCVO needs to keep on informing the sector which highlights research relevant to specific areas of work.'</i></p> <p><i>'would just like to emphasise that while scholarly research has an important role to play, it is ground level experience that really needs to be shared. We need to take care to not spend too much time on research at the cost of delivering positive outcomes.'</i></p>
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## Appendix 7. Invitation to case studies

You have recently completed a survey as part of a study that OPM and NCVO are conducting on behalf of [JISC](#). The study is looking at the benefits to voluntary and community organisations (VCO) of open access to scholarly research outputs. At the close of this survey, you indicated that you were willing for us to contact you about case studies we are carrying out as part of the study. This document outlines what this would involve.

### Case study design

The principal aims of the case studies are to identify the direct and indirect benefits to VCO arising from open access (OA) to scholarly research outputs.

The case studies will build on what we have learned from the survey, exploring in more detail the benefits to your organisation that might follow from fOA and some of the disbenefits associated with not having free of charge access to scholarly research. We would also want to look in more detail at the existing barriers to accessing or using scholarly research and what might enable access for organisations like yours.

### What's involved in being a case study?

We would collect data in two main ways:

- Through interviews with relevant people – for example Trustees, senior management, partners or volunteers
- Through reviewing relevant documents, for example, things that prompt you to search for research, such as invitations to tender for funding or grants and the tenders/applications you submitted in response; invoices for paid-for research papers; information on time spent accessing research.

We know that VCOs have limited time and resource to spare. In setting up the case studies we will have an initial discussion about how we can best help you to participate. We would discuss at this time the documents you would be able to provide us with access to and the most appropriate people for us to interview.

Following the interviews and document reviews, OPM would do some economic modelling based on the information we have gathered, so that where possible, we can quantify the benefits (or disbenefits) and assign them with a monetary value. We would provide you with a draft copy of the case study to approve before final publication.

### What's the timing for all this?

This work has a very tight timetable. We would like to conduct as many interviews as possible over the next three weeks.

### What happens next?

We will call you within the next few days to answer any questions you have about the study as a whole and to give you more information about being a case study site. If you would like to contact us, please call Diane Beddoes on [dbeddoes@opm.co.uk](mailto:dbeddoes@opm.co.uk) or 020 7239 7841.

## Appendix 8. Case study interview guide

### Introduction

**Interviewer: use this as a note and talk through rather than reading directly – the principal aim is to provide the interviewee with some broad parameters to help them respond to questions. Use the power point diagram as a tool to focus attention on the different elements of access, use and benefits.**

**PLEASE TAKE THE SURVEY RESPONSE FORM WITH YOU TO THE INTERVIEW.**

### Aims of study and description of benefit types

The principal aims of the case studies are to identify the direct and indirect benefits arising from open access (OA) to scholarly research outputs and, where possible, to quantify and monetise these.

Working with JISC, we have identified **direct benefits** as those benefits experienced by the organisation accessing or using research. These benefits will be things such as::

- **Cost savings from payments to publishers:** OA results in cost savings in terms of subscription, PPV and document delivery charges.
- **Efficiency savings:** OA improves efficiency of public sector employees through
  - Reduced time searching for scholarly material
  - Reduced time accessing scholarly material
  - Reduced time managing subscription contracts

Time saved can be valued through labour cost.

By **indirect benefits** we mean the benefits of *using* scholarly research: broadly, these are defined as:

- Instrumental –research has been used to achieve a specified and defined objective e.g., a particular decision, an information leaflet, a report to Trustees or a funding bid.
- Conceptual – research has been used to heighten awareness of debates in relevant field – e.g., understanding responses to a particular policy initiative
- Enlightening – research has prompted or contributed to new ideas or initiatives

We anticipate the case studies providing us with information on the *negative* impact(s) of not having access to OA: for example, having insufficient evidence to support successful funding bids or to provide up-to-date and robust information to beneficiaries.

We are also interested in whether using research has benefits such as:

- increased transparency - e.g., if research is available through OA, VCOs can direct their beneficiaries / partners to research they have used in developing campaigns/services/policies etc.
- achievement of charitable purpose – e.g.,
- accountability to funders – demonstrating to funders the evidence behind particular actions/initiatives etc.

## Recording/Anonymity/confidentiality

Ask if happy for interview to be recorded for purposes of accuracy and audit trail?

Ask if happy for organisation to be named in the case study. If not, check if happy to be described.

Any questions before I begin?

**INTERVIEWER: As questioning progresses probe for the names of other staff (key informants) who may hold important data and for any documentary evidence of costs / cost savings that will help us to quantify & monetise the benefits/disbenefits.**

## 1. Summary description of organisation

Could you give me a brief overview of your organisation:

- How long in existence
- Number of staff
- Number of Trustees
- Income (most recent data) & primary sources
- Primary purpose(s)

Could you give me one or two brief examples of how your activities benefit your local community/wider society?

## 2. Process: accessing research

2.1 Prior to taking part in this study, were you aware of open access as a route to finding scholarly research outputs?

- How did you learn about open access?

2.2 How do you currently access research? (Use diagram to prompt.)

2.3 Do you have an annual budget for purchasing / accessing research?

2.4 What role do intermediaries play in helping you to access research? (Use diagram to prompt.)

2.5 Are there any costs associated with these intermediaries (e.g., time costs of building/maintaining relationships)?

## 3. Uses of research

3.1 For what purposes does your organisation use scholarly research? (Use diagram to prompt.)

3.2 Can you talk me through a specific example of how you have used research recently, thinking about what prompted you to look for it initially, how you identified it and accessed it and what you used it for?

## 4. Benefits of open access / disadvantages of lacking access

### 4.1 Direct benefits to organisations AWARE OF & USING OA

4.1.1 What are the direct benefits to your organisation of research being available through open access routes? (Use diagram to prompt.)

4.1.2 What are the cost savings associated with this?

- Prompt for documents evidencing cost savings.

### 4.1 Direct benefits to organisations UNAWARE OF BUT USING OA

4.1.1 What are the direct consequences to your organisation of NOT having free access to scholarly research outputs? (Use diagram to prompt.)

4.1.2 What are the costs associated with this?

- Prompt for documents evidencing costs

### 4.2 Indirect benefits to organisations AWARE OF & USING OA

4.2.1 What are the indirect benefits to your organisation of open access to research?

4.2.2 Can you give me a specific example of a case when using open access research has contributed to any of these benefits? Why do you think that research was an important factor in achieving this benefit? Do you have any documents relating to this that we might review as part of the case study?

### 4.2 Direct benefits to organisations UNAWARE OF BUT USING OA

4.2.1 What are the indirect *dis*benefits (disadvantages) to the organisation of not being able to access and use scholarly research outputs?

4.2.2 Can you give me a specific example of a case when lack of access to free research has had the type of impact you've mentioned?

4.2.3 Why do you think that not having used scholarly research was an important factor in you failing / poor quality (or whatever the impact is)?

4.2.4 Do you have any documents relating to this that we might review as part of the case study?

## 5. Barriers and enablers

5.1 What barriers to accessing scholarly research outputs do you encounter?

5.2 What is the impact on your organisation of these difficulties?

- Do you have any strategies for overcoming these barriers?

5.3 Can you give me a specific example of a barrier to accessing research that has had these consequences?

5.4 What enables you to access scholarly research?

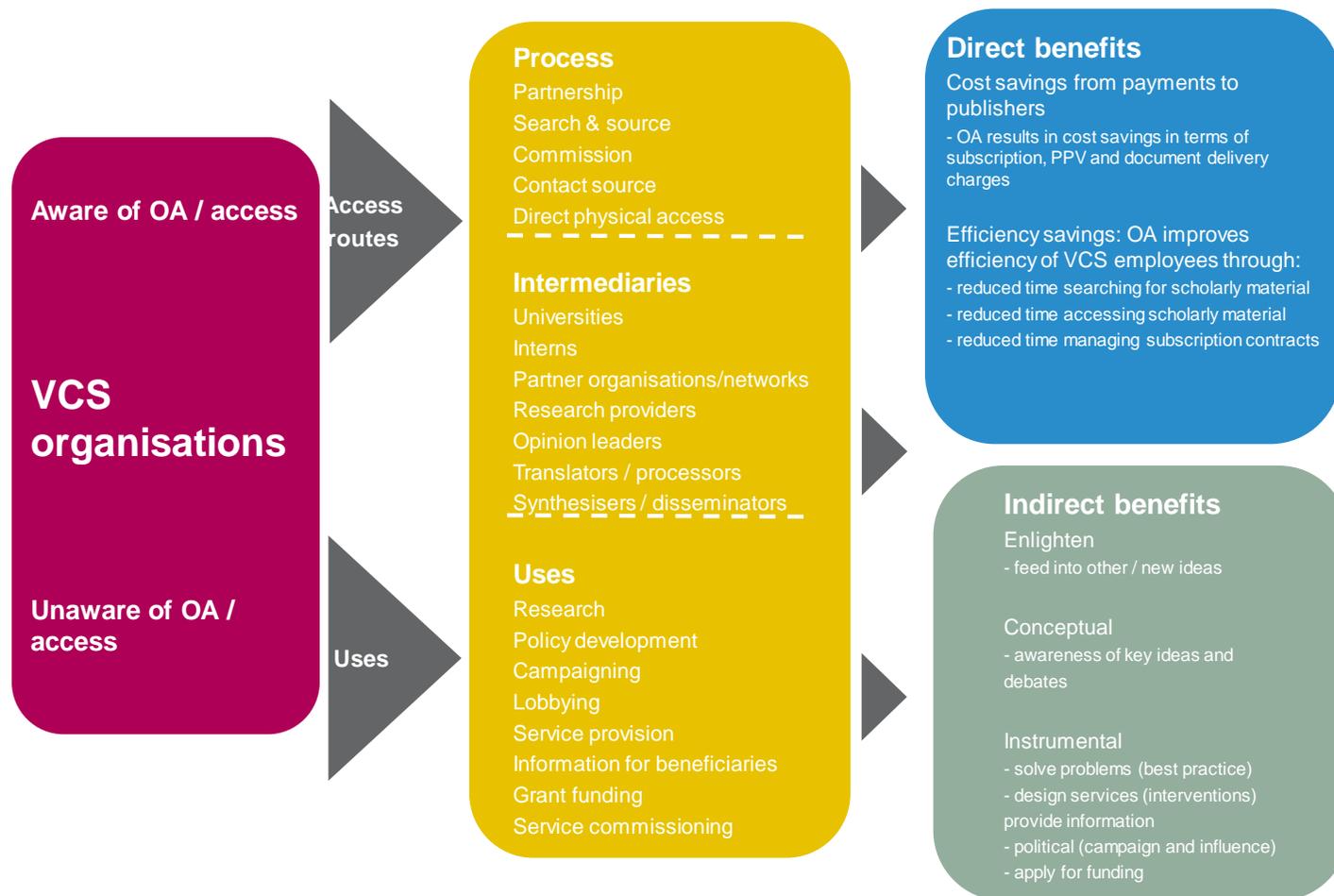
5.5 Can you give me an example of an enabler that you think should be more widespread across the sector?

Those are all my questions. Is there anything you think is relevant to the study that we haven't discussed? Do you have any questions about the study?

Once the case study has been drafted we will send you a copy for final approval before it is published. We have your name on our list of those who are interested in the final report and will let you know when that has been published.

Many thanks.

## Appendix 9. Diagram used during case study interviews



## Appendix 10. Case studies

### Changing Faces

#### Summary of organisation

Changing Faces is a UK-based charity that gives support and information to people with disfigurements to the face, hands or body, and their families. Changing Faces structures its work in the UK around two Programmes – Changing Lives and Changing Minds – at both national and regional levels.

Changing Lives aims to improve the confidence and independence of people of all ages with conditions that affect their appearance (and their families) by:

- offering practical and emotional support and advice through a comprehensive range of Changing Faces services at national and local level
- offering support, advice and learning opportunities for professionals who encounter people with disfiguring conditions (in health care, education or work)
- training professionals as Changing Faces Practitioners to be employed by the NHS (and other agencies) to deliver their package of help.

The services provided by Changing Faces include:

- a national Helpline providing advice and information, and signposting people to Changing Faces Practitioners, the Skin Camouflage Service or other agencies
- support from a Changing Faces Practitioner (face-to-face, phone, online and in groups) using the FACES package
- the Skin Camouflage Service delivered by volunteers in Changing Faces premises and other locations including NHS hospitals and in local communities
- a range of self-help resources and information for individuals, parents and teachers.

The charity was founded in 1992 by James Partridge OBE, who sustained severe burns injuries in a car fire when he was 18 years old. Changing Faces is a large charity supported by 35 members of staff, a board of 12 trustees, nine patrons and three councils. In 2010-2011, Changing Faces' incoming resources totalled over £1.3 million, whilst their resources expended totalled over £1.5 million. A break down of the organisation's income and expenditure is given in Figure 2 below:

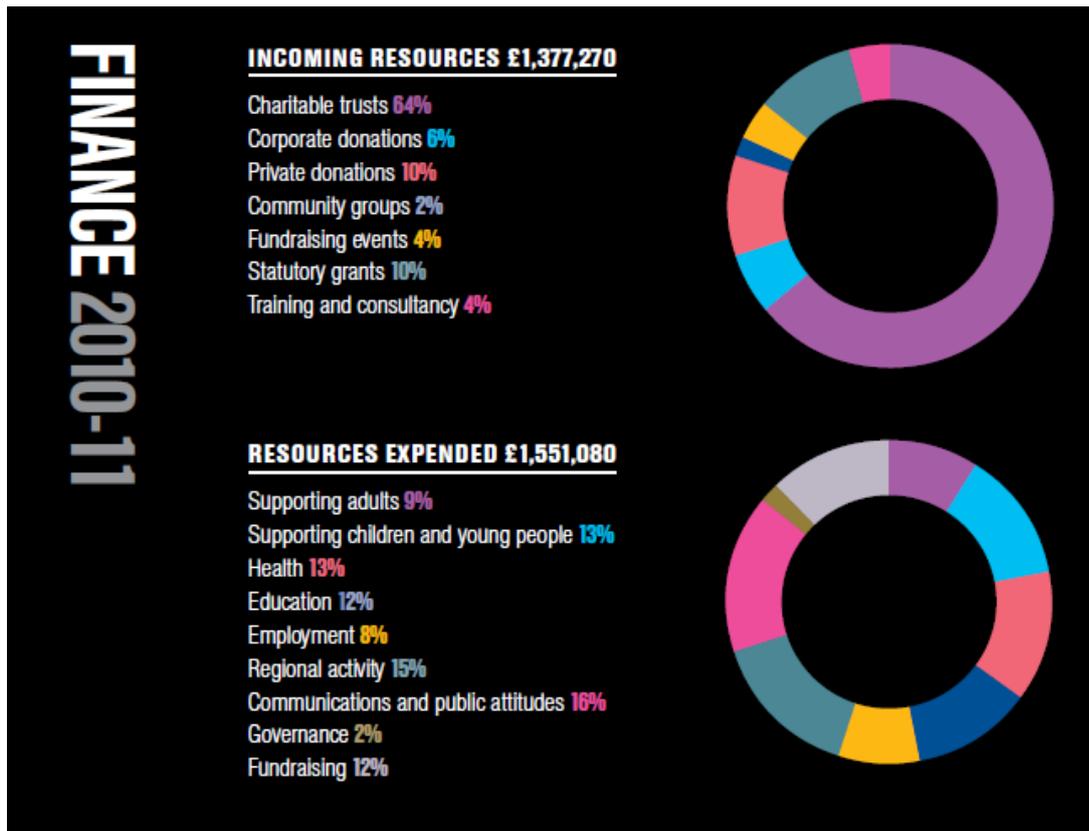


Figure 2: Changing Faces Finance 2010-11<sup>35</sup>

## Use of research

Changing Faces uses research across the organisation for policy development, campaigning, lobbying, grant funding, to provide information for beneficiaries and for service provision (e.g. to inform their direct therapeutic work). It uses journal articles or case studies in peer-reviewed journals most frequently, using journals that have a psychological or social-psychological basis such as the *Journal of Psychology* and the *Journal of Applied Psychology*.

The three divisions of the Policy and Practice team (health, education and employment) use research extensively in their work. The team has been in existence for three years. Staff typically have Masters-level qualifications and using academic research is part of their culture. This is particularly the case for the health division which uses research to inform the design and delivery of training and guidance for health professionals to support them to provide a more patient-centred, holistic care.

<sup>35</sup> Taken from *Changing Faces Impact Review 2011*, p. 7, <http://www.changingfaces.org.uk/downloads/Impact%20Review%202011.pdf> Accessed on 13/12/11

**Example of costing research in the production of a training manual in psycho-social rehabilitation in burn care**

Changing Faces recently completed a training manual for the NHS about psycho-social rehabilitation in burn care which culminated in the production of a training manual. There are 32 references in the 'further reading' sections of the manual, although the Learning and Development Manager estimated that the team had read closer to double this number to find the articles that were appropriate. She also noted that not all abstracts are a clear indication as to what the bulk of the research contains. Given individual articles cost £10.00 (minimum) to purchase individually, this could potentially have cost £320.00. However, some of the papers that were cited were written by people at Changing Faces, and therefore would have been free to access. Also, the interviewee's view was that the organisation would not have paid for the articles, they would instead have gone without and not have had such a good resource. She felt that the length of time it would have taken to try to justify and make the case for paying for each article would have also been a prohibitive factor. They had two students working on the project so could access articles via their university accounts. The students contributed roughly 100 hours between them. If they hadn't have been available, the interviewee would have had to have done the literature searches.

The Learning and Development Manager, who is based in the health division of the Policy and Practice team, delivers bespoke face-to-face training. She highlighted that because there is such a drive for evidence-based work in the health field, and because the people who are being trained are usually health professionals with either a psychological or clinical background (and who therefore value evidence), working with people who have physical differences, it is essential to inform their training with high quality evidence:

*“ . . . there is such a drive for evidence-based work that I 'almost have to say "this is where it comes from" before saying "this is what it is." ”*

The Learning and Development Manager also contributes to university courses about facial difference: she delivered a module on a course at King's College and works part time at University College London (UCL) for one morning a week to deliver part of a module. She also writes articles and publications. All this work needs to be well-researched – whether it is references for a reading list for students or citing evidence in articles. Her roles outside Changing Faces allow her to gain access to this research.

Changing Faces uses research to help build the case for funding support in grant applications. In September 2011, it applied for funding from the City Bridge Trust under their 'Improving Londoners' Mental Health' award category for a project to inform and provide the basis for establishing Changing Faces Practitioners in regional community settings or located within clinical teams in the NHS around the country.

They were awarded £130,000 over three years towards the cost of establishing the training programme for Changing Faces Practitioners in year one and the salary and related costs of the London-based Practitioner in years two and three.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> <http://www.citybridgetrust.org.uk/CBT/Grants/RecentGrants/2011/September.htm>

A section of the application set out the 'Evidence of need for this project' which included three academic journal article references<sup>37</sup>, evidence from a national survey carried out by Changing Faces and reference to their knowledge gained from working directly with their beneficiaries:

*'Changing Faces' extensive experience and the views of our Young People's Council also demonstrate that children and young people with facial disfigurements can:*

- *struggle to make relationships with children and adults*
- *be very anxious and withdrawn*
- *be very aggressive and difficult to control*
- *be unable to function effectively in school.*<sup>38</sup>

The Learning and Development Manager felt that one of the reasons they were successful in receiving funding was because the funding application was evidenced and researched.

## Access and routes to research

Changing Faces access scholarly research in a number of ways:

- Direct access to university databases: Some members of staff at CF are students and teachers at academic institutions and have access through their websites.
- Indirect access to university databases: Changing Faces sometimes has volunteer students who are tasked specifically with doing literature searches and critiquing literature, so they access research via their university accounts.
- Individual journal subscriptions: Changing Faces subscribes to the British medical Journal (BMJ) The education division of the Policy and Practice Team used to subscribe to the journal/trade magazine Special Educational Needs (<http://www.senmagazine.co.uk/>) but it didn't have enough relevant content to justify the cost of a subscription (£32 a year for 6 issues). The Policy and Practice Team subscribe to the HSJ ([Health Service Journal](#)) – a paid for service (£189.00 annual subscription).

## Use of Open Access research

The Learning and Development Manager was aware of OA because her Masters supervisor was 'very pro OA' and supported her to try get her work published in an OA journal. The interviewee's view was that if you have an academic supervisor who is a strong supporter of OA, they can influence others – she herself is now also a real advocate.

Before having access to university databases, she did look for some OA health journals (for example [BioMed Central](#)) but didn't find them very useful because the area of research that Changing Faces is interested in is highly specific, but it can also 'crop up anywhere', so it is necessary to have access to the full and wide-ranging university databases.

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<sup>37</sup> Murray L et al, Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry 51:1 (2010) 94-103; Rumsey N and Harcourt D. *Visible difference amongst children and adolescents: issues and interventions*. Developmental Neurohabilitation, April-June 2007, 10(2) 113-123; Maddern LH, Cadogan JC, Emerson MP. *Outlook: A psychological service for children with a different appearance*. Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry 2006 Vol 11(3): 431 – 443.

<sup>38</sup> Excerpt taken from the funding application for the City Bridge Trust.

Changing Faces accesses OA research in several ways. Google Scholar is the main one, and the Learning and Development Manager felt that in the last 24 months it has become much better in that it provides links, where possible, to PDF articles.

Occasionally relevant open access research appears in the press. For example in 2010 an article appeared on the BBC website<sup>39</sup> about how children are affected by having a squint that referenced an article the British Journal of Ophthalmology. At the time, the article was available OA but it is now paid for. Whilst the interviewee's view was that *'the time has passed'* for paying for individual articles, on the day of the case study visit an article appeared in the Journal of Applied Psychology on facially stigmatised people and how it affects their chances in job interviews that was so relevant to her colleague's work that the organisation *'probably would have paid for it'* (\$11.99), but because of the interviewee's access to the UCL database, she could access it for free.

Several academics based at a leading academic centre at the University of the West of England called the [Centre for Appearance Research](#) publish their articles on the Centre's website. The Learning and Development Manager regularly checks the site for updates.

Because of the specificity of the research that Changing Faces want, and because it needs to be academic research, they don't use research intermediaries to pull together and synthesise vast volumes of work because the searching and use of research is quite specific and targeted.

## Benefits of open access and disadvantages of lacking open access

The interviewee thought that the direct benefit of having open access to academic articles was that time is saved if articles can be downloaded. Using databases, locating contacts with access or visiting the library to search are all very time-consuming. The indirect benefits of having open access are that it raises the profile and credibility of the author and their team of researchers. Connected to this, the interviewee thought that having OA to scholarly material might encourage colleagues who are less familiar with academic processes and databases to search for and use academic material independently.

The disadvantages of lacking open access to scholarly research are that some pieces of research remain hidden away in journals and away from public knowledge so the profile of research on particular subjects such as facial difference is lower than it could otherwise be and certain potentially valuable pieces of work go unnoticed. Linked to this, there are several hospitals doing work that is best practice in the field in which Changing Faces works, but because of the lack of OA, it isn't possible *'to shout about the work they are doing or to share it'*. This links in turn to creating a strong argument for why certain types of treatment and intervention are worthwhile, for example, *'evidencing that happy patients are more likely to respond well to the clinical interventions'*.

On a more personal level, the Learning and Development Manager wants to be able to link directly to OA articles for the university modules she teaches and attach the PDF or articles to make it easier for her students, but this is usually not possible due to copyright restrictions. She also spoke about feeling happier if she knows that what she says is well-evidenced. Changing Faces gather lots of anecdotal evidence from patients and service users, but having this combined with rigorous, peer-reviewed research creates a good argument – the

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<sup>39</sup> See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-11016933>

peer-reviewed article being the gold standard. Being able to use journal articles easily and having organisation-wide access to databases would be ideal, not least because she has ended up being the person everyone goes to if they want an article.

The interviewee suggested that academic buy-in might help the case for OA, combined with having enough OA journals for academics to choose to publish in one. She suggested that some of the larger journals like the BMJ could allow the author to specify that they wanted their article OA. She also suggested that charity partnerships, for example with PsychoINFO or ScienceDirect, would be very helpful.

## Foyer Federation

### Summary of organisation

The Foyer Federation came into existence in 1992. It is based on a French initiative which provided young people with help as they move from rural areas into urban areas. In the early 1990s the economic downturn in the UK left many young people with no home: with no home they were unable to find a job. There are now about 140 foyers across the UK. Foyers are accommodation projects for 16 to 25 year olds. To access Foyer accommodation young people have to commit to engage with the foyer programme by taking active steps towards learning and work.

The Foyer Federation was set up to promote foyer growth and development. It is a membership network, but the foyers themselves are independently owned and managed by housing associations. The Foyer federation raises money to deliver projects in foyers, and carries out lobbying and campaigning activities. Of its trustees, three are elected by the membership whilst others are there because of their particular skill set. Its money comes from several different sources. Between 10% and 15% comes from its membership, housing association donate about a further 15% with the rest coming from grant giving bodies, corporate partners and some statutory grants, for example, government departments and the Big Lottery. This gives it an annual turnover of £1.1 to 1.6 million. Currently it has 16 full time equivalent staff.

It describes its business model as *“a social innovation cycle.”* They try something out and then cascade it across the foyer network as needed. Its mission is around service reform: *“we think that young people get a raw deal particularly those who do not go through higher education.”*

An example of its work would be when its membership organisations contract with local authorities to provide housing support services for young people. Rather than just providing housing support, foyers focus on the transition to adulthood. Using £2.6 million from the Big Lottery it designed a three year programme to help this transition focusing on health and wellbeing. In year one the emphasis was on healthy eating, highlighting the importance of nutritional awareness and growing food and even developing social enterprises around healthy food; Year two focused on physical activity. The aim was to help reduce obesity, and give people structure to their lives thereby making them more employable. And Year three focused on emotional wellbeing, developing initiatives to address low to medium level mental health issues such as esteem and depression. The grant was distributed amongst members. The Foyer Federation's role was to provide training, for example, coaching skills for staff.

## Using and accessing scholarly research

Prior to taking part in this project they had limited awareness of Open Access. They have tended to focus on what is already available in the public domain rather than think about how best to access scholarly research.

The interviewee knew what Open Access meant: *“but it was not top of my radar...we always went with what was in the public domain as a matter of course...also relied on relationships with friendly graduates who can get us access to articles, but that is ad hoc and intermittent.”* On the issue of using university student’s Athens log-ins the interviewee also said: *“where we have had friendly relationships with graduates who can get things for us we have - that does not last forever...it isn’t a reliable thing.”*

The Foyer Federation has not sought to plug gaps to accessing scholarly research by building partnerships with academics and academic institutions. For the first time this year they commissioned some external research from Demos which looked at the youth labour market *“but we have never before had the resources to do that because it is quite costly.”*

One area of their work where they do use scholarly research is in putting together grant applications: *“This is somewhere where we have got better over the years. The funders have also got better over the years. Funding applications are a good deal better when they have research they can point to do that says we are going to do it this way because of this.”* The Big Lottery bid was an example of where they had to do this. However, they feel they play the odds a bit with grant applications. Because some of their ideas are ‘left field’ and/or because they may lack the research evidence they sometimes bid for less than the full amount *“let’s ask for less because it mitigates the risk for the funder.”*

He felt there were also examples of failed grant applications which would have been better if there had been more of a research evidence base. However, he felt it was hard to say whether and to what extent lack of good research was the main contributory factor to the failure.

## Barriers to and challenges of accessing free scholarly research

The Foyer Federation feel that the main barrier they face to accessing scholarly research is not knowing how best to obtain it and see open access as potentially of enormous benefit to their organisation: *“we don’t spend a great time on this at the moment, but the potential is enormous if we had better access we could do so much more. That’s the key message for you to take away...our strategies to get over are contacts, friendly interns...but frankly it is ad hoc.”* Describing the potential of having Open Access the interviewee went on to say: *“if there was better access for us it could potentially have a transformative effect, getting us to be much more research focus and justifying our existence more.”*

To realise these benefits, however, he emphasised that open access would need to be easily and intuitively searchable by non-academics.

## Benefits and disbenefits of having or not having open access to scholarly research

The first benefit of Open Access identified by the Foyer Federation was that it would help to ensure that they get things right first time around. Research can prevent an organisation

having to learn from mistakes it has made: *“If we had learnt from the research we wouldn’t have done something that way.”*

The interviewee also commented that their research needs are multi-disciplinary, requiring staff to spend a lot of time searching for what is relevant: *“keeping on top of the research in all these areas is a very hard task for a very small team.”* They have to be aware not only of different subject areas but also of the range of discourses within these, otherwise *“we can come across as being opportunistic and ad hoc.”* He described this as thinking about *“how do you position your thinking and get yourself an evidence base (to support that thinking).”*

Having an Open Access system would be extremely beneficial, helping to save time searching across these different disciplines.

The Foyer Federation’s ‘Give us a Chance’ campaign provides an example of where access to scholarly research would have been useful. This campaign targeted the 16 hour rule attached to Job Seeker Allowance benefits. The Federation included user experience as evidence in their campaign, which convinced the then minister that change was needed. However, civil servants wanted to know what the cost of a change in the system would be.

*“[W]e found ourselves being asked all sorts of different questions about exactly how many 16 year olds this affected, how many 17 year olds, what benefits they were on. There were all sorts of questions being thrown at us they we couldn’t answer. Potentially it could have been the officials were being obstructive, or they might have needed it to put a robust case together. If there was some research we could point to that could have done all of that then it would have made the questions easier to address.”*

An example of where they feel they used research effectively was the youth unemployment labour market project they undertook by commissioning Demos to undertake some research. This involved conducting some focus groups with young people in foyers. They found that they do not fit the NEET stereotype, they are motivated to work but don’t have the opportunities to do so. They see this as a whole new research finding.

When it comes to more indirect benefits from Open Access the interviewee felt that having access to scholarly research could help them to build the evidence base behind an idea. It would help to think *“where are we going in terms of academic discourse? It would help us put a line in the sand...(this) is about how you influence policy.”* They see this as helping them to build evidence to back up their arguments *“in order to get things officials you need to know the data and be tighter, more coherent and robust.”*

Being able to use evidence to support their work also has the benefit of giving the organisation’s staff more confidence when they go out and try to maintain a position on something: *“I feel I can hold a position better if I have an evidence base.”*

## National Children’s Bureau (NCB)

### Summary of organisation

The National Children’s Bureau (NCB) is a research and development charity working to improve the experiences and life chances of children and young people across England and Northern Ireland, especially the most vulnerable. Their vision is a society in which children and young people contribute, are valued and their rights respected. Their mission is to improve children and young people’s experiences and life chances and reduce the impact of inequalities.

NCB plays a strategic support and leadership role across the voluntary and community sector by:

- initiating partnerships and projects that aim to improve the lives of children and young people
- supporting over 30 key specialist networks, including the Council for Disabled Children, the Early Childhood Forum, the Anti-Bullying Alliance, Play England and the Childhood Bereavement Network
- championing the use of evidence, and the involvement of children and young people, to shape and improve national policy and local services
- building the skills, knowledge and networks of front-line practitioners and voluntary groups working with children and young people.

NCB was founded in 1963 and was registered as a charity in 1969. NCB currently has 1089 members (775 corporate; 314 individual). The board of trustees comprises three honorary officers (chair, vice chair and treasurer) each elected by the full membership, two young representatives appointed by Young NCB, and eight to nine further trustees. NCB's total income was £21.4 million in 2011, with total expenditure of £20.4 million, with a net surplus on unrestricted funds of £94,00040.

The organisation's work is divided into three internal directorates: policy, research and information; practice improvement and organisational support. Research and evidence are integral to the organisation:

*We work from an evidence-informed perspective which is why our research work is so important, especially when influencing policy or promoting the voices of children and young people<sup>41</sup>.*

## Access to and uses of research

NCB has a Research Centre and their principle areas of research are: early years; social care; education; health and well-being; disability and special educational needs; play and positive activities, and youth justice. The Research Centre carries out evaluations, studies and reviews of NCB programmes and external projects, such as a project for the Prison Reform Trust on young people's views on how being in public care might impact on a child's chances of offending or being imprisoned. NCB also has an Information Centre that collects, creates and disseminates information to inform policy, practice and research across all aspects of children, young people and families' lives.

## NCB's Information Centre

The Information Centre includes a library which is open to visitors and NCB members. Over 200 journals are housed within the library, as well as books and grey literature. The Information Centre provides intelligence for both NCB's internal and external audiences and comprises 4.2 members of staff.

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<sup>40</sup> National Children's Bureau Report and Financial Statements Year ended 31 March 2010.

<sup>41</sup> NCB website: <http://www.ncb.org.uk/about-us/our-structure/policy-research-and-information-directorate>

**NCB's in-house database: ChildData**

NCB owns an online database called ChildData. This database is kept updated by the NCB Information Team through reviewing grey literature, books and journal articles. One member of staff scans Hansard every day and includes statistics from Hansard in ChildData to prevent statistics about children and young people from 'getting lost'. Organisations subscribe to ChildData in the same way that they subscribe to other specialist academic databases: annual subscription costs £600.00 (+ VAT) and NCB members get a discount of 25 per cent. There are 35 subscribers, and the Information Manager said that as a whole service, the database brings in around £35,000 for NCB. This figure includes royalties from Social Policy and Practice, the database NCB contribute their data to and also, some ChildData subscribers pay for multi-user licences which cost more.

NCB does its own indexing. The two members of the Information Team staff add 150-200 items a month to ChildData (all information officers are trained in indexing and the Information Manager is a trained librarian). This database feeds into the work of the rest of the Information and Research Teams, and through this into the work of the whole of the organisation.

The Information Manager believes that the value of ChildData, both internally and for external clients, is that it provides a focussed searching environment that contains only good quality evidence which is multidisciplinary:

*'...searching Google is too big – you could put in your search terms and a load of tosh would come back. With ChildData you know it's good stuff.'*

ChildData enables those who have limited resources – in terms of skills, money or time – to access information which might otherwise be unavailable. Together, the NCB library and ChildData make NCB a crucial resource for evidence on children and young people. This was seen as particularly important for local authorities who do not have their own libraries but still need evidence on good practice. The London Borough of Enfield, for example, currently has a student on placement who goes to the NCB library to do research on children in care.

The Information Team often provides support for NCB funding bids, compiling background evidence or context sections for proposals, using ChildData as a resource. For example, the Council for Disabled Children recently asked the Information Team to do two quick literature reviews for a funding bid. The Information Team will also conduct literature searches as part of projects. The Children's Bereavement Network recently asked them to conduct a substantial literature review and were able to provide funding for this. The search started on ChildData then expanded out to the British Library. The review was 11 pages and contained 44 references to literature, taken from a range of journals including International Journal of Palliative Nursing, Death Studies, the British Journal of Community Health Nursing and the American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, each with a short summary.

The Information Team provides intelligence for colleagues within the NCB too. For example the Chief Executive of NCB recently met with the Minister for Children and Families, Sarah Teather, and wanted to present a paper on childhood. The Information Manager provided some references from ChildData. The Information Team also produce information and data

for internal NCB clients in the form of briefings, e-bulletins, newsletters and digests: they have a large number of subscribers to their various newsletters which are informed by literature often accessed through ChildData, for example, Policy and Parliamentary Digest (6,500 subscribers), Children's Play Update (3,500 subscribers), Early Years Bulletin (2,000 subscribers) and various other bulletins.

A significant amount of the Information Centre's outputs is an NCB member benefit. This has helped the Centre to make the case for its continued existence as an integral and well-resourced part of the organisation. The weekly Policy and Parliamentary Information Digest, for example, gives members information on government consultations, key news and initiatives that relate to children and young people, relevant legislation summaries and notes about reports and documents. Another publication, Highlights, gives summaries of research findings on topical subjects, is produced four times a year and mailed quarterly to NCB members free of charge. Non-members can obtain individual copies at a cost of £3.00 each or a complete set (which goes back to the 1970s) for £85.00. The Information Manager noted that people are 'bombarded' and that 'people love Highlights' because they are good quality and provide one place to find out about subject-relevant research.

Finally, the Information Team produces an '*epic 70 page digest of statistics*', ChildStats, which they update three times a year. This contains information about children and young people, for example how many children have been excluded and how many children are in public care. The Information Manager is also joint book review editor for the journal, Children and Society, which NCB publishes with Wiley-Blackwell.

The Information Team has an overall budget of £40,000 for purchasing research, which includes journals (£27,000 allocated), books (£3,500 allocated), newspapers (£2,000 allocated, including a daily alert system), software maintenance contract (£6,000 allocated) and inter-library loans (£1,500 allocated).

## Open access

Whenever possible the Information Team provides web links on ChildData to PDFs and free articles. Most subscribers to the database are university libraries and have access to a full range of journals themselves: they use ChildData as a portal rather than as a means by which to gain full text articles. It would cost NCB 'a fortune' in copyright and digitising to provide access to articles so is not something they would consider. However, the Information Manager thought that open access would be 'good for smaller organisations' and good for NCB because subscribers could go to one place only for references and articles.

## Role of intermediaries

NCB is a research intermediary, publishing various digests, newsletters and research summaries. In addition to playing this role and producing its own research, it uses other intermediaries to access research, including a daily scanning service, Info4local, which scans government policy documents and alert bulletins from organisations such as Children England and NFER (the National Foundation for Educational Research). CHIMAT, a public health observatory based in Yorkshire produce a bulletin covering child health research which NCB subscribe to. The Information Team also scans the press on a daily basis, producing a daily internal news bulletin based on the information gathered. For all these information services, NCB goes direct to source, i.e. the newsletter, bulletin or digest may

highlight a piece of research or information that is of interest that the Information Team will then go direct to source to read and use.

## Barriers to accessing and using research

The Information Manager highlighted her feelings of frustration when journals have periods of being open access that then cease, meaning that that it is no longer possible to return to research already reviewed or placing time pressures on the use of research. She pointed as well to the frustration of articles appearing in paid-for journals such as The Lancet which look interesting from the abstract but whose full value is impossible to judge without reading the full text: this means that there is no basis on which to know whether or not it is worth paying for the article. However, the Information Team does subscribe to content alerts for journals to which they do not subscribe because of costs (for example, Social Policy and Administration). These sometimes highlight a journal article that the Information Manager may access through an inter-library loan.

## National Coalition for Independent Action (NCIA)

### Summary of organisation

National Coalition for Independent Action (NCIA) was set up five years ago by two people who were both consultants in the VCS and community activists. A campaigning network, NCIA is '*an alliance of individuals and organisations who believe that now, more than ever, we need to unite in independent voluntary and community action*'.

(<http://www.independentaction.net/>). It is a small community interest company (CIC), governed by a board of directors. After starting out with no funding, then receiving small amounts from the Network for Social Change and Tudor Trust, it now has one full time equivalent member of staff (job shared) and one part time member (one of the founders), funded by a two year grant from the Tudor Trust for £50,000.

NCIA has an anarchist slant, and is critical of what it views as the encroachment on the VCS by national government. It is also concerned about managerialist practices in the VCS, non-unionisation and the formalisation of the VCS (e.g. through career-managers in the sector). It feels there are risks to the VCS in being "pressured" into competing with the private sector for government contracts for services, and is critical of national VCS infrastructure organisations for '*failing to speak up for independence*' and for going '*along with privatisation and commissioning without complaint*' (<http://www.independentaction.net/about-ncia/>).

NCIA is a support network for individual voluntary and community sector workers, activists, academics, researchers and journalists who want to link up to discuss issues about the independence of the VCS and who want to receive information and evidence about the campaign areas to help them make informed arguments to their funders, commissioners and beneficiaries. It has three interlinked campaigns that aim to raise awareness of the above issues:

1. **Public services and privatisation:** We are speaking out on the effects of privatisation, cuts, 'big society' and localism. We are analysing the evidence and gathering people's stories of local campaigning, negotiating with commissioners and ways of funding independent action.
2. **Managing independence:** We are promoting appropriate management styles for voluntary organisations – being well managed in the voluntary and community sector is

more than just being efficient in providing services, it is about changing society for the better.

3. **Supporting activism:** We want to support people and groups who are working for social change and find people who will speak out against practices that threaten independent action. ([www.independentaction.net/about-ncia/](http://www.independentaction.net/about-ncia/))

In these three campaign areas, NCIA convenes discussion groups which link up local activists and academics, and produces written material including a newsletter, policy position papers, research on local activism and case studies and a toolkit called the Independence Audit which helps VCOs investigate their level of independence (see <http://www.independentaction.net/ncia-leaflets-and-research/> for NCIA's material).

NCIA has links with the Trade Union Congress (TUC) and feeds in views about the VCS to its policy positions on the sector. It also has close links with other networks such as NATCAN (National Community Activist Network) and In Defence of Youth Work, who share similar aims and ideals but have a slightly different/more specific audience.

## Use of research

Much of NCIA's work comprises producing well-evidenced written material for use by VCOs (in the main) and they make extensive use of research to do this, using academic outputs and grey literature. However, evidence of the impact of its research use on the front line limited because most of NCIA's direct influencing work is on second tier/infrastructure VCOs and national policy organisations.

The interviewees highlighted the importance of having academic references in their policy position papers. They felt this gives more weight (or perceived weight) to the arguments they are making because *'it shows that other people have contributed ideas'*. Well-evidenced outputs allow VCOs to back up their concerns or arguments with their local authority with confidence - for example, on ensuring commissioning processes are fair. A small Council for Voluntary Service, Adur Voluntary Action in West Sussex, has made use of NCIA's policy materials and independence audit to help inform and influence their board. As a result of those discussions, the board spoke publicly in opposition to the Transforming Infrastructure fund and has gained the respect of its local authority funders for its independent voice<sup>42</sup>.

## Access to research

NCIA uses a number of channels to access research, including personal and professional contacts, websites, online databases, discussion groups, journals, the press and mailing lists.

Intermediaries are important to the NCIA and it accesses academic and non-academic research via organisations such as the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), NAVCA (National Association for Voluntary and Community Action), OPM and the Third Sector Research Centre (TSRC). The interviewees felt that they probably use *'more stuff that comes out of the sector than academic peer-reviewed journal articles'* but that they do use both:

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<sup>42</sup> Email correspondence following interview with R.McGill, 25/11/11. See Adur VA newsletter on this: <http://www.adurva.org/Downloads/october11.pdf> and story on NCIA website: <http://www.independentaction.net/2011/09/01/mad-world-tfi-view/#more-8736>

*'I suppose [the Third Sector Research Centre], creates a bit of a link with academic research because some of the academics . . . we've come into contact with through Third Sector Research Centre and now we read their more academic stuff.'*

The press (e.g. the Guardian and Third Sector) are also used as channels for accessing research, usually through following links included in news articles. They also access a lot of grey literature from trade unions.

NCIA has links with several academic institutions and individual academics. One of its directors, also involved in its founding, is an academic at Roehampton University and has written extensively on the voluntary sector and on issues closely aligned with the concerns of NCIA. It has also formed relationships with some academics from the LSE-led Galileo Group, an informal community of academics and practitioners with a shared interest in the voluntary and community sector, specifically the organisation and management of the VCS. The Group includes academics working in history and international development. It is also involved with academics at the LSE who are producing a book on the Big Society and is itself contributing to this, which will be a mixture of academic and practitioner articles about the Big Society.

NCIA is a member of the Voluntary Sector Studies Network (VSSN), which costs £180 per annum, and receives the VSSN journal as a benefit of membership. This is seen as a useful and interesting journal and NCIA has used articles on the Big Society by Rob Macmillan, an academic based at Birmingham University and part of the TSRC, to inform their policy position papers on the topic. They also subscribe to Red Pepper (£3.95 every two months or £20 offer on their website - <http://www.redpepper.org.uk/>) – a publication of left politics and culture.

## Open access

One of the interviewees was aware of open access from a previous job in an international development organisation in which she believes there is a strong tradition of linking policy and practice and of sharing research material. She used to use (and still does to a lesser extent) a database called *Source*, an international information support centre and online collection of:

*'health, disability and development information resources that include books, journals, manuals, toolkits, reports, posters, audiovisual materials, websites and organisations. Many materials are from developing countries and include both published and unpublished literature not readily available elsewhere.'*  
(<http://www.asksource.info/about.htm>).

The interviewee identified a number of benefits to using *Source* in her previous job, some of which translate over to her current UK-focused work. These include being able to check references or ideas quickly via the web; having access to new ideas and being able to do literature reviews more easily.

NCIA uses other open access channels too, including the Open Learn website at the Open University (<http://www.open.edu/openlearn/>), which they used to inform their thinking on the Big Society:

*'At the very early stages of research on the big society and privatisation, I had a look at what was freely available in terms of academic papers and the most useful stuff I found was through the Open University through things like Open Learn, but it's obviously up to*

*individual academics whether they make their stuff freely available as PDFs to download. . . and I did get a bit frustrated because there were some really intriguing titles. . .'*

They also use *History and Policy* (<http://www.historyandpolicy.org/>), a collaboration between the Universities of Cambridge and London, a community of interest and a network of academics who link history with public policy. All content is free and they do a monthly roundup which NCIA find useful.

## Disadvantages of not having open access

NCIA identified three main disadvantages associated with not having open access to scholarly material:

- Being/feeling excluded from a sphere of knowledge which limits access to new ideas and helps broaden thinking. This links to what they described as the 'randomness' of searching in academic databases which can open up ideas and new lines of thinking:
  - *'It broadens all the ideas out more. Sometimes the voluntary sector policy world feels quite small and quite restricted and there aren't many sources of information, people just copy each other's ideas and say all the same things. We'd be doing that too if we couldn't find other sources.'*
  - *'When I have had access to academic databases you have a kind of random thing – you find things you weren't looking for.'*
- Not being able to check references that are cited in press articles or via newsletters or other material from intermediaries (and therefore not being able to use references – NCIA would not use sources that it came across via the press without checking it first):
  - *'If something's been referenced, you want to go back to the original source. . . It's always very summarised and very edited and it's hard to know. . . you can't really just quote out of context from a newspaper article, you have to go back to where they got it from.'*
- Feeling frustrated at not being able to access interesting academic material:
  - *'When you do a Google search you get abstracts of things and you go "Arrr, I want to read that"!''*

## Enablers

NCIA made several suggestions for enabling their access to scholarly research, including being about to do a Google search, click on an abstract and get the paper and having someone or organisation that gathered all the relevant articles and information together about the voluntary sector. The interviewees also thought that a central point for voluntary sector research that had a discussion facility as well would be good, and noted that LSE academics are thinking about this.

## Skills - Third Sector

### Summary of organisation

Skills - Third Sector has been in existence for two years. It exists to *'make sure that charities and social enterprises have the right people with the right skills to make a difference to their*

*communities*<sup>43</sup>. Skills – Third Sector exists to ensure that the needs and interests of VCOs are taken into account in the funding and delivery of learning and skills. It has a role in designing and commissioning research on this and in influencing other sectors of the economy (e.g. health, justice) to make sure they take account of the volunteering and different organisational models that exist in the VCS. In sum, Skills – Third Sector works with national, regional and local organisations to provide information and services, develop national skills standards and qualifications, and carry out research to prove that why skills matter to the VCS.

Skills – Third Sector acts as a central skills body for the VCS. They see this as an important role, matching the VCS with other sectors which have organisations that lead their strategic direction and carry out activities such as labour force mapping, producing publications about skills and HR and which represent their sector in the national occupational standards (the criteria and remit of occupational roles which form the basis on which qualifications and apprenticeships are based). Skills – Third Sector is responsible for fulfilling the role of the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for the voluntary sector (the 25 SSCs cover most sectors of the UK economy, for example, health, transport and IT). For the eighteen months, a major part of their work has been designing apprenticeships for the VCS and they have recently put out three apprenticeship frameworks: (level 3) in campaigning and in fundraising, plus one in volunteer management<sup>44</sup>.

Skills – Third Sector is a registered charity with seven trustees and is entirely publicly funded, currently by the Office for Civil Society (OCS) and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). They have six staff, one of whom is part time, and they work virtually so do not have a central office.

## Using and accessing scholarly research

Research is central to the aims of Skills – Third Sector, and a core part of the work the organisation does. They use research to identify best practice in VCOs and more generally to identify best practice in organisational development, and therefore use any scholarly research that evidences the successes or detriments of certain learning or skills programmes or HR practices. Each member of staff can subscribe to two journals / points of information. The Knowledge Manager subscribes to Third Sector (£85.00 per year, plus VAT for registered charities) which he feels is of limited value, but does act as a prompt to go direct to source *'find out what's really happening'*.

In terms of accessing scholarly research, the Knowledge Manager makes use of intermediaries (rather than directly through subscription to academic databases) including research bodies such as the Third Sector Research Centre (TSRC), the Voluntary Sector Studies Network (VSSN) or the Work Futures Research Centre – he felt that these bodies are:

*'a very good way of extracting academic research out and trying to place it in a practical context.'*

He also gathers evidence and ideas informally at events and conferences.

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<sup>43</sup> [http://www.skills-thirdsector.org.uk/about\\_the\\_sector/about\\_skills\\_-\\_third\\_sector/](http://www.skills-thirdsector.org.uk/about_the_sector/about_skills_-_third_sector/)

<sup>44</sup> UK qualifications are on a scale of 1-8 (level 3 is equivalent to 5 GCSEs, level 4 to two A-levels and level 5 to undergraduate).

Skills – Third Sector uses research that it has commissioned as an organisation, for example a piece on volunteer management piece by the Institute of Volunteering Research<sup>45</sup>. The University of Leicester was commissioned by Skills – Third Sector to do a literature review on the value of skills to the VCS.<sup>46</sup> This was a comprehensive piece which drew widely on research that the Knowledge Manager wouldn't have been able to access itself.

Skills – Third Sector has an ongoing stream of work with the Third Sector Research Centre and NCVO on the size and scope of the workforce including an annual publication called the Workforce Almanac which the Knowledge Manager uses regularly in his work<sup>47</sup>. He also uses academic research that has been commissioned by government departments and freely available on their website. He picked out BIS and the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) as particularly good at making its research available publicly. He uses research for funding bids and to inform responses to Government consultations.

Skills – Third Sector recently submitted a bid to a competitive central Government fund for helping to stimulate economic growth and employment. The bid was about skills networks, and proposed the rationalisation of opportunities for training provision and resources to support people's professional development into a central website. It proposed that the online function would be linked to offline groupings according to region (e.g. East Midlands) or particular profession (e.g. social care workers). The purpose of the proposal was to evidence the demand for and the potential impact of this project. A requirement of the bid was that it included a section setting out the evidence base for the proposed activities and their linked outputs. This depended on being able to source evidence on, for example, the likely economic benefits of creating opportunities in the VCS.

The Knowledge Manager's role in pulling together the bid was to gather evidence on the contribution of volunteers to the economy, which was challenging because there is little evidence on this. However, because the wellbeing agenda has central Government buy-in and commitment, he highlighted the more intangible areas of benefit from the VCS and volunteering whilst acknowledging that some of these benefits, such as feelings of confidence gained through volunteering, are very difficult to measure.

Skills – Third Sector has been successful in their bid to the fund, subject to the project undergoing a feasibility study (which will be tendered to an independent audit/evaluation outfit) to ensure it is doable. The project is anticipated to be implemented in 2012. Much of the bid depended on providing robust evidence and informal feedback Skills –Third Sector have received from the funders confirmed that the bid was very strong in evidencing outcomes. The Knowledge Manager was very pleased about their success and feedback, particularly because it was a competitive pot of funding because:

*' . . . you'd expect other sectors of the economy such as retail to have clearer and more tangible evidence of their impact in terms of creating jobs and creating economic growth. I think a lot of this is testament to the work of existing researchers in the VCS.'*

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<sup>45</sup> IVR, *Valuing Volunteer Management Skills*, 2010. Available at [http://www.skills-thirdsector.org.uk/research\\_policy/library/valuing\\_volunteer\\_management\\_skills/](http://www.skills-thirdsector.org.uk/research_policy/library/valuing_volunteer_management_skills/)

<sup>46</sup> K. Venter and Sung Skills, J. (2010), *Do Skills Matter? A Literature Review on Skills and Workforce Development in the Third Sector*, Centre for Labour Market Studies, University of Leicester for Skills – Third Sector.

<sup>47</sup> [http://www.skills-thirdsector.org.uk/research\\_policy/labour\\_market\\_intelligence/](http://www.skills-thirdsector.org.uk/research_policy/labour_market_intelligence/)

The Knowledge Manager was aware of open access before learning about this project.

## Barriers to and challenges of accessing free scholarly research

The Knowledge Manager is currently working on gathering evidence on the links between volunteering and employment. This piece of work was prompted by discussions between civil servants at the DWP and OCS and senior staff at Skills – Third Sector because the government is looking for evidence on volunteering as an entry to paid employment. The briefing will be used to inform future discussions with Ministers. The Knowledge Manager is searching for particular topics (via generic search engines such as Google), finding academic evidence and then hitting barriers such as articles being available in subscription-only journals. The time and cost involved in pursuing trying to acquire this article were too great to continue. He discovered too that the article was short and not recent (2004) and that he was already familiar with the work of the researchers in question (from the *Helping Out Survey*), it was dated (2004) and found the evidence he needed elsewhere instead.

Another barrier to accessing paid-for scholarly research was the difficulty in telling from the abstract alone how useful an article will be: paying for an article from which you use just one reference is not seen as value for money.

The Knowledge Manager felt too that the caveats surrounding the findings in much academic research make it difficult to use more broadly: for example, authors might say that their results are applicable *'for this particular study with these methods'* and *'it's only applicable in this context'*. He felt that other sources of research such as think tanks *'often say things with more authority, if not integrity'*. In addition, the policy environment moves at such a pace that it makes some research findings obsolete or dated very quickly, for example research about a particular welfare programme. Finally, he finds it frustrating is when academic articles are referenced in White Papers (for example) and he follows it up and finds that articles aren't OA.

## Benefits of open access to scholarly research

The Knowledge Manager thought that if he had open access to scholarly research he (and therefore the organisation) would contribute to *'better informed policy and practice and have more authority to say what we do.'* He believes it would improve how the VCS operates and the environment in which the sector operates.

A central source of research on the voluntary sector workforce and related issues, which can be drawn on publicly, is a requirement of a project for which Skills – Third Sector has recently been awarded funding. The Knowledge Manager will be responsible for compiling the existing base. OA would make life easier: without OA he can compile *'a bunch of references and then each individual organisation will have to go and pay for it'*. His view was that if it is not cost efficient for Skills – Third Sector to pay for an article, it's unlikely to be feasible for a small service provider to pay for scholarly articles.

The Knowledge Manager emphasised that whilst having OA would make his life easier, not having it is more an *'occasional frustration'* than anything more serious. He usually *'finds a way around it'* by looking around the subject or simply leaving things out.

## Talking Matters

### Summary of organisation

*'Counselling constitutes a luxury that almost everybody needs from time to time. Since none of us, even the most sophisticated and street-wise can see ourselves and our life-events or situations totally objectively, we can all benefit from a trained, sensitive, understanding, non-judgemental and empathetic ear'<sup>48</sup>.*

Talking Matters is a small, regional charity that was established ten years ago for three main reasons:

4. To promote stress prevention in the Orthodox Jewish Communities (OJC).
5. To train OJC members in counselling in order to provide culturally appropriate services to the OJC.
6. To educate service providers about the cultural norms and needs of the OJC

The charity grew out of a need for service provision that was accessible, local, non-stigmatised and culturally specific. The founder, Ms José Martin, worked previously for social services in a local authority. Part of her role there was to identify gaps in service provision, which is what enabled her to identify the lack of mental health services for the OJC. Talking Matters has three part-time office staff, two volunteer office staff and 15-30 therapists on their books – they offer both in-house and outreach therapy. They are governed by a board of seven trustees.

Talking Matters' mission is to inspire self-expression and improve health & wellbeing, by offering therapeutic health solutions through providing a range of therapies, including: talking, complementary, art & play, drama, exercise & dance and music therapy. It is the only organisation in the London Borough of Hackney (City & Hackney NHS) providing such a wide range of creative arts therapies (which include art, creative writing, dance movement, and music therapy), and the only Orthodox Jewish centre in Britain with an open door policy. Talking Matters also works with five- year olds (usually referred via schools and nurseries) and provides health awareness workshops and training to adults in the community. It works predominantly but not exclusively with the OJC, mostly in the Stamford Hill area of North London.

The organisation is funded primarily through an NHS Service Level Agreement of £100,000 per year. It used to receive a London Council's grant (via the Lord Chancellor's Department, Home Office), Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) funding and has received a lot of small grants over the years. In the first three years of existence, Talking Matters' income grew from £5,000 to £150,000. Recent cuts to public expenditure and competitiveness of grant funding have affected the organisation: the last three small grants they have applied for have been turned down and public funding has stopped completely or been reduced.

### Use of research

Talking Matters provides frontline therapeutic services to the OJC in North London and sees its use of research as important though peripheral to its core work. The CEO has great

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<sup>48</sup> Dr Anne Ruth Cohn, member of Academic Board for Talking Matters' 'CHOICES programme'. Quote taken from CHOICES programme booklet.

passion and enthusiasm for demonstrating gaps in provision for the community. She felt that the National Census failed to include categories appropriate for her beneficiaries and that there was severe under-counting of the OJC population by the London Borough of Hackney. These factors together with the specificity of the mental health needs of the OJC are seen as primary drivers of Talking Matters' need for and use of research.

*Mental Health, Religion and Culture*<sup>49</sup> is a peer-reviewed academic journal that has been of particular relevance and interest to Talking Matters as it directly relates to the work of the organisation. The CEO enjoyed this journal because *'it isn't an academic tomb – it's doable – you can put it in your handbag and take it home'* and it has articles of interest and relevance. The organisation subscribed to the journal for around five years, from 2001 – 2006, and the CEO cited articles from it funding bids, and for providing content for the organisation's newsletter (which is no longer produced). The journal articles provided evidence to support what she knew from her own experience:

*'From a personal perspective, because I'm not an academic, I see things, I hear things, I've been a client. . . so you get to understand experientially and intuitively rather than from an academic point what's going on sometimes and to read research, you're like "Wow! That's what I thought!" But I didn't have the evidence. So it evidences what you can see in a really practical way. . .'*

The journal was also useful because it provided easy access to information that she did not have time to read and search for in other journals. However, the cost of subscriptions increased to £75.00 per edition and moved from being monthly to quarterly and a time when the organisation's income was falling, and so the subscription was stopped.<sup>50</sup>

Given the specificity of the beneficiary group of Talking Matters, and the relative dearth of evidence on the OJC's mental health needs, the CEO felt as if she was *'going around in circles'* and not finding anything new, written by anybody except academics with whom she was already familiar, in journals, newspapers or through internet searchers. It was this gap in evidence and having funding available via the Lord Chancellor's Department that drove the CEO to commission a piece of research. This research was conducted by an academic associated with the journal, *Mental Health, Religion and Culture*, and investigated the views of members of the OJC on marriage and marriage<sup>51</sup>.

The CEO did not feel that the research report covered all of the relevant issues – particularly those that were more contentious - so commissioned a further piece of research from the University of Central Lancashire, reported in 2007. This was resourced through Community Engagement Programme funding and investigated the emotional and behavioural experiences of Orthodox Jews in the Stamford Hill area of North London. It was a needs assessment of mental health services. This community research project trained eight local people from the OJC (some of whom were Talking Matters therapists and service users) to carry out research in their own community.

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<sup>49</sup> For more information about this journal, see <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/carfax/13674676.html> and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mental\\_Health,\\_Religion\\_%26\\_Culture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mental_Health,_Religion_%26_Culture)

<sup>50</sup> This journal currently releases 10 issues a year, and costs £874.00 p/a for online and print institutional subscription. See <http://www.tandfonline.com/action/pricing?journalCode=cmhr&>

<sup>51</sup> *A report on interviews on marriage and marriage preparation in the strictly Orthodox Jewish Community. Couples counselling project.* MARS Grant 2002-03. Psychology Department, Royal Holloway, University of London. For Talking Matters Association

The research project had a number of impacts, including softer outcomes such as developing skills in active questioning and research ethics amongst the therapists who conducted the research. It also resulted in several tangible outputs, including a final report<sup>52</sup> and – importantly – it provided Talking Matters with first-hand evidence, bringing confidence and credibility to its work which they could use to support funding bids. The CEO believes that citing this research in their funding application supported their case to be on the SLA, through which they have received over £750,000 in the last five to six years:

JM: *'The biggest help it was, at the time, we were still on annual grants...we were invited to be on an SLA with the NHS which was for three years initially; we've been on it for five or six years now*

Interviewer: *And do you think you could attribute that largely to this [research]*

JM: *Yes – it added to our... credibility.'*

Talking Matters is still using this research, despite it now being nearly five years old.

## Access and routes to research

The CEO was not aware of open access before she received the invitation to take part in the survey for the first phase of this research project. She wasn't aware of Google Scholar, and accessed research online via generic search engines such as Google by typing in key words - for example '*Orthodox Jewish mental health*' - and seeing what came up.

She also accesses research directly via American or Israeli university websites, though cited none specifically. She tends not to look at UK university websites as the only person doing research specifically on the OJC and mental health is the person who did the first research for Talking Matters which she described as '*bland – there's no salt and pepper to it*'.

She does not use any intermediaries to access research, though noted that when Talking Matters received SRB funding, they were part of a practice-based research community. However since the UCLAN research they have not looked specifically for pots of money with which to do research, and the time and money associated with this searching prohibits them from doing so.

Talking Matters would not pay for individual academic articles because their funding is ring-fenced and does not include a budget for research.

## Costs and consequences associated with having limited access to research

Currently, Talking Matters has no money to access or purchase research, and limited time available to search for research. Lack of knowledge of some OA routes, such as Google Scholar (which the interviewer demonstrated to the CEO in the research visit), has also limited access to OA research.

The interviewee highlighted her feelings of frustration when carrying out internet searches for journal articles, which she stopped doing seven or eight years ago because the time and effort of searching outweighed any benefits, as most of the articles were only available on a paid-for basis. The CEO said that this '*limits your ability to keep up with new thoughts, new*

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<sup>52</sup> This can be downloaded from: <http://www.csip.org.uk/silo/files/talking-matters--stamford-hill.pdf>

research considerably'. Even if there was a 'golden nugget' piece of research, the CEO wouldn't pay for individual articles because she has no budget available for this. However, she would very much like to have more open access to scholarly research:

*' . . . if there was an open access place that said. . . this is where to find [specific research], this is who said what about it, this is who participated in the research, here's further evidence, it would be Christmas and Hanukah rolled into one!'*

## Unlock Democracy

### Summary of organisation

Unlock Democracy was established in 2007 as the result of a merger between the New Politics Network and Charter 88. Its purpose is to campaign for democratic rights and freedoms. It does this by trying to make specific legislative changes and by promoting greater public participation in politics. It describes itself as the UK's leading campaigning organisation in this area.

An example of its campaigning work is House of Lords reform. This started as the Elect the Lords campaign. Most recently Unlock Democracy has appeared in front of a Joint Committee on Lords Reform committee to present its opinions about the Government's reform proposals.

Unlock Democracy is a membership organisation and is owned, funded and run by its members. Currently it has somewhere in the region of 6000 to 7000 members. These members directly elect a governing council of 16 people every two years. The council is responsible for the strategic direction of the organisation. The council appoints a management board which meets approximately every eight week and deals with the day to day administrative and staffing functions of the organisation. The management board currently consists of eight people, while the organisation has nine members of staff, three of whom work part time.

### Using and accessing scholarly research

Scholarly research is important to some of Unlock Democracy's work, particularly its legislative campaigning work: *"for our Parliamentary work we will make sure there is an evidence base, but we might not do this for a campaigning sheet."* They pick and choose when they think they should spend time and/or money on accessing scholarly research: *"our main use for it is for policy development, lobbying and some campaigning...and partly for grant funding."*

The example of using research to inform their work on House of Lords reform involved providing a 20 page submission to the committee. They felt that because Parliament is serious about House of Lords reform they needed to be sure that their views were well researched, would stand up to scrutiny and not be dismissed as assertion rather than robust evidence: *"I think our submission was thorough enough, but it could have been better...but we did say we had enough of an evidence base for what we are saying."*

However, they were not aware of Open Access before this project, but did know about Google Scholar. They do not have a set annual budget for accessing and/or purchasing scholarly research.

Unlock Democracy's approach to accessing research is fairly ad hoc: *"we do different things for different scenarios"*. Often it is the case that academics will send them relevant research papers they have written, for example, they have a close relationship with an academic from University College London who focuses on the subject areas in which they are interested. Occasionally they will commission research but they have not done much of this recently. Most of the time they will search for the information they need by using a search engine like Google: *"we would probably start with Google and see what is out there already and then maybe follow up if it looks like there are sufficient interesting things."* Other occasional approaches they use are to look at the footnotes in relevant scholarly articles they have found then see if they can access the sources for these. Sometimes this will involve directly contacting the author.

Unlock Democracy do not tend to have university student interns or volunteers: most of their volunteers are post university and no longer have an Athens log in.

Recently they considered producing a book on the case for a written constitution. As part of deciding whether or not to go ahead with this project they undertook a scoping exercise which involved buying several books. One member of staff spent several days indentifying books and papers and how to get hold of them. They also identified relevant academics and other leading thinkers. In the end they decided not to go ahead with the project.

They do not know how much staff spent looking for and accessing research but are conscious that their limited time and money resources need to be targeted efficiently and effectively: *"a lot of the time we do a quick search and if nothing is going to be available to us for free we will go a different route, by not citing academic sources."* In terms of the House of Lords reform paper they that *"our submission was thorough enough, it could have been better...but we did say we have enough of an evidence base for what we are saying. I put at least a week into it, and I had some volunteers helping."*

Ideally they would like to have staff spend more time networking by attending events such as conferences and events so that they can widen their network of academic contacts and make it easier to get access to more scholarly research, but they do not have enough staff or money to be able to do this.

## Barriers to and challenges of accessing free scholarly research

The main barrier that Unlock Democracy face is money: *"it is basically money...some we could buy but we don't know if we would get any benefit from it...and once you buy one it becomes a sweetshop."* The other associate barrier is time.

One thing they have done before to address this barrier and its negative effects is to set up an academic advisory board: *"One of things we have done about how you get access to academic information we set up an academic advisory board. We would email them and say 'people are saying this. Is it true? What work do we need to be looking at?'"* They feel that this is a speedy way of getting information if they can maintain those relationships.

When discussing how things would be different if they did have Open Access: the interviewee said:

*"I don't think we would be that different as an organisation because our focus is always going to be campaigning. But it would be a direct benefit to me because I do our policy work and Parliamentary work. It would make me more confident in terms of what we are*

*doing. It would help us identify new areas to look at. As a campaign organisation you can become very responsive. The Government does x so you do y and that works for a certain period, but you need your own agenda otherwise you lose funding, membership and legitimacy. The reason MPs talk to us is because we have grassroots support, you need a clear policy agenda and sense of where you are going otherwise you damage the organisation. You need to identify the issues that will become significant.”*

Having access to scholarly research would also “*help us to identify what issues are coming up which may not yet be politically topical now but things we ought to keep an eye on.*”

## Benefits and disbenefits of having or not having access to research

A major disbenefit of not having open access to scholarly research is that if the organisation wants to carry out a project but do not have the evidence base or an easy way of accessing it they might not decide against taking it further. They feel they could cover much more if they did have easy and free access to the relevant research evidence.

They also worry that “*we could be missing out on things...there might be things that we are missing out on that we therefore do not add to our case studies.*” They feel that they might not always be as up to date on all subject areas as they would like to be, which affects not only what they can do but also potentially their position on some issues:

*“The impact would definitely be policy development, thinking and the evidence base for what we do and not necessarily being up to date with current thinking and developments. Particularly for us as a campaigning organisation. You might have to shift your focus because the political situation has changed, for example, how you involve the public in constitutional reform...the citizens’ assemblies that were held in British Columbia and the Netherlands...I still have the general knowledge base but several years on people may have re-assessed the model and I don’t know about that”*

While the interviewee could not point to specific examples where better evidence would have made, for example, for a better publication she did say “*there are publications which could have been stronger if we had a better evidence base.*” Not having Open Access was less of an issue when it comes to grant applications “*because what we do is political very few people would fund it.*” However, they have just put in a bid to Nuffield around petitioning and democracy – for which they feel an evidence base would have been very useful.

## World Vision UK

### Summary of organisation

World Vision is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. It aims to make a serious and sustainable impact on poverty, and its causes, especially as they affect children. It does this in three ways: advocacy, disaster management and humanitarian response, and long term development programmes.

World Vision UK is an independent body that employs about 220 staff, and is part of a wider global partnership (World Vision started in the United States in the 1950s and has nearly 100 offices across the world employing about 42,000 staff). The World Vision Partnership is a network of national entities constituted in a federal partnership governed by local Boards of Trustees or Advisory Councils. This means that overall control of the organisation is not held

by a central body, but shared with its global partners. There are 24 Board Members from 19 countries, including the UK, reflecting the approach that Board Members are drawn from all the continents in which the partnership operates.

World Vision UK was incorporated in 1982 as a company limited by guarantee and is a registered charity. The members of the charity are the Trustees, who are the current Directors, with liability limited to £1 each. It receives financial support from the UK Government, the European Union, charitable trusts, corporate supporters and more than 100,000 individuals, who sponsor children in poor communities overseas, and had an income of £63 million in 2010-2011<sup>53</sup>.

## Uses of and access to research

World Vision UK uses research for three main purposes: to better understand issues and thereby improve their development and humanitarian programme models, to inform their advocacy positions, and internally to inform the way that they are structured to improve their effectiveness as an organisation. The learning and advice that comes from the research function of the organisation is at an operational level (for example, models of programming and how to most effectively partner with communities) rather than at a very technical level (for example, advising what medicines are required for particular diseases or conditions).

World Vision UK does carry out some research in-house, but often commissions research by research institutions or consultants, and so draw on research sources via a commissioned researcher.

Whilst research is fundamental to the way in which World Vision UK operates, the interviewee noted that they are a practice-based organisation in which learning comes from workshops and from *'interacting with partnership colleagues and UK inter-agency networks'*. This makes the role of mediating organisations and networks important.

Prior to this study, the interviewee was not aware of open access – interpreted as *'some kind of portal where we can gain access to restrictive journals'* – as a route to finding scholarly research outputs. However, he and his colleagues use 'open searches' on Google, and several of them use Google Scholar.

The interviewee also explained how World Vision UK concentrates on a number of specific themes in international development, and uses relevant thematic UK and international NGO networks to access information and the associated email and bulletin lists. For example, child health is one of the themes and some illustrations of the newsletters used by one member of the child health unit include:

- newsletter from the UK Collaborative on Development Sciences (UKCDS) which provides information on opportunities, ideas and collaborations for the development sciences research community
- newsletter for alumni of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

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<sup>53</sup> WorldVision UK Annual Report 2010. Available at:  
[http://www.worldvision.org.uk/upload/pdf/WV\\_annual\\_report\\_2010\\_v2.pdf](http://www.worldvision.org.uk/upload/pdf/WV_annual_report_2010_v2.pdf)

- newsletter from the Humanitarian Practice Network, which includes information on good practice

The wider World Vision partnership has Communities of Practice (CoP) which include dedicated websites and email updates that highlight new research, and World Vision UK accesses research through these CoPs. A CoP exists for the topic area of health, sanitation and nutrition and the person responsible for coordinating this CoP lists all the major new research pieces in updates and organises conference calls inviting researchers to talk about the latest research.

A fourth way in which research is accessed by the World Vision UK policy and programming innovation team is via a paid for subscription to The Lancet (a medical journal that costs £160.00 per year) and also through the Chatham House journal, International Affairs, email updates (it costs £318.00 per year for institutions to subscribe to International Affairs).

Several staff engaged in research have academic affiliations either as research associate, alumni or postgraduate student and can therefore access their university databases for research. Finally, those engaged in research attend conferences and learn about new research at these.

While there is a small budget for research related to organisational development, in the case of the themes World Vision UK works on it is at the discretion of each individual unit or team to decide whether paid for research should come out of their budget.

## Benefits of open access / disadvantages of lacking access

The interviewee thought that a direct benefit of being able to access scholarly research via open access routes would be cost savings: savings in cash terms (e.g. the cost of subscription to journals such as The Lancet), and savings in staff time spent on trying access articles that they may have come across via Google Scholar and then found the article was hidden or 'locked down' in a portal that is accessible only with a password. However, the interviewee highlighted that in the international development field, *'so much research is consciously shared outside of journals that it's almost the exception to come across something you have to pay for'*.

Given the practice-based nature of the organisation, the breadth of the field of study (international development), and that much research is already shared in practice communities, the interviewee felt that having open access to research would *'not revolutionise the organisation'*. He also noted that there is so much research out there that they would need to have *'a mediating body that could point you to the key things published in a particular field rather than wading through journals'*.

## Appendix 11. Email responses to survey publicity

### Email 1

I am responding to your call for evidence for the voluntary and community groups use of scholarly research. I am part of a multi-disciplinary group of academics and representatives from community organisations who have established a regular forum to share scholarly research findings where research has been carried out in the voluntary sector and encourage skill development in research within the voluntary sector in Dunedin, New Zealand. I have attached an overview of the forums held to date.

You may also want to look at the New Zealand based 'open access' project [www.communityresearch.org.nz](http://www.communityresearch.org.nz) which aims to make research findings more accessible to community and voluntary groups.

### Email 2

Following on from the email sent to you by [NAME] I am pleased to introduce you to Community Research

Please have a look at our website <http://www.communityresearch.org.nz/> and our strategic plan <http://www.communityresearch.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Our-Strategy-in-Action-v1.01.pdf>

I also attach a more current document which tells more about us, including why we are needed, how we work etc.

I hope this helps you with your project

### Email 3

Through ANGOA - the nearest NZ has to NCVO, but with much less resource I've organised Research Forums in four NZ centres over the past 6 years. They are all similar to what Jenny describes, the main difference being that the Dunedin locals have taken the initiative and are now organising their own agendas, an example that I wish the other cities would follow!

Reports are on the ANGOA site at [www.angoa.org.nz](http://www.angoa.org.nz), although they are patchy simply because of resource issues - I do them if I have time. I'd love to get all these reports onto the [CommunityResearch.org.nz](http://CommunityResearch.org.nz) site that Jenny referred you to, so they would be searchable, but neither I nor CommunityResearch have time to work through contacting the past presenters to arrange that.

### Email 4

I saw your email below on the VSSN list and thought I would drop you an email just to let you know (if you are not already aware) about the resources that the ESRC offers for access to scholarly social science research.

All the research that we fund is publicised on our website and any related outputs and reports for these awards are uploaded to our Research Catalogue – this is an obligation for any ESRC grant-holder. The reports and outputs contained within the Research Catalogue

are freely available for anyone to access and download. Please see the link below for information on this resource:

<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/impacts-and-findings/research-catalogue/index.aspx>

In addition, if any new data is collected from our funded grants then it must be deposited in the secure Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS). This resource is not open access in the sense that the general public can access the data, but it does allow for researchers to access certain data sets – including those from non-academic organisations. A number of civil society organisations do already utilise this resource by signing up to the website and creating an account. Further information on this service can be found on the link below:

<http://www.esds.ac.uk/about/about.asp>

### **Email 5**

Please feel free to check out our website: [www.brighton.ac.uk/cupp](http://www.brighton.ac.uk/cupp) and our network [www.cuppcop.ning.com](http://www.cuppcop.ning.com) for multiple examples of ‘community’ use of scholarly research. Our book:

Hart, Maddison & Wolff (Eds) (2007) ‘*Community University Partnerships in Practice*’  
Leicester | Niace,

may also provide some more instantly accessible examples of enabling factors and uses and benefits of scholarly and co-produced research.

### **Email 6**

Shopfront <http://www.shopfront.uts.edu.au/> at the University of Technology, Sydney. We might be able to provide an example for your research from our monograph series. <http://utsescholarship.lib.uts.edu.au/iresearch/scholarly-works/handle/2100/799>

Though the UTSePress we publish an open source monograph series. It presents original scholarly research which is of interest and relevance to community workers and organisations, policymakers and non-government organisations, service providers, advocates and activists. The style combines academic rigour and accessible communication. The Series is open to contributions across all disciplines and encourages contributions from Early Career Researchers and those producing interdisciplinary and/or collaborative research.

An example of how the voluntary sector use scholarly research and the benefits I would cite the work of Dr Catherine Robinson who has been working in the field of homelessness and social justice for over ten years. Dr Robinson’s work in this field has been nationally and internationally recognised. Her book on homelessness has been recently published by Syracuse University Press.

Dr Robinson’s first work on homelessness with UTS Shopfront was a partnership project with Parramatta Mission that resulted in the publication of a high impact monograph entitled *Accommodation in Crisis Year: Forgotten Women in Western Sydney* (2006). The monograph was launched in the Parramatta community where it was based, cited in the NSW Parliament and directly resulted in funding for 10 beds over three years.

This original work led to a further collaboration with the Homeless People’s Legal Centre (HPLC) on homeless people’s experience of violence. The project commenced in 2008 and culminated in the publication of the research monograph *Rough Living: Surviving Violence*

*and Homelessness* (2010). Dr Robinson brought to the research table the HPLC, UTS Shopfront and homeless people who participated in the research. This resulted in a truly collaborative partnership between the university and HPLC. HPLC were able to use the document to lobby change in how service was delivered to homeless people who had experienced violence and the development of a training package for people who are providing support to the homeless.

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