Community Pulse

The Cost-of-Living Crisis (England)

September 2022

SPORTED

Executive Summary

361 responses

The Community Pulse is Sported's biannual survey of the groups in our network to help understand the issues and opportunities facing community sports groups across the UK. Through Pulse we aim to inform the sport for development sector and support stakeholders in their decision-making in relation to grassroots community sport in the UK.

In our September 2022 Pulse we wanted to find out more about how the cost-of-living crisis is affecting our groups and their young people. This special Cost-of-Living report explores the results of this research for our network in England, building on initial insight into the crisis from our March 2022 Pulse and June 2022 Member surveys.

The report is based on 361 responses received from groups in Sported's network in England between **21 September - 3 October 2022.** Of these, **55% of responses were from groups in the lowest 30% areas of multiple deprivation.**

Sported and its network

Sported is the UK's largest network of community groups supporting half a million young people to overcome barriers to reach their full potential. Our role is to empower the local heroes running these groups by providing much needed professional expertise, resources and operational support, free of charge, to help their group survive and young people thrive.

Sported's groups work within complex local contexts, often tackling some of society's biggest challenges. 44% are located in the lowest 30% areas of multiple deprivation, and many are volunteer-led and operating on limited budgets – approximately a third have an annual turnover of less than £10,000.

Key Findings

- **Concern about the impact of cost-of-living pressures is extremely high among members** – 93% of respondents are concerned about the impact on their organisation, with the same proportion worried about its effect on their young people.
- **Two-thirds of respondents expect up to half their young people to drop out of activities due to cost-of-living pressures.**
- **Groups are most concerned about disengagement/reduced participation among their young people because of the cost-of-living crisis** – more than half (51%) saw this as a concern, with participants not being able to afford activities also a major concern among respondents (42%).
- **Almost three quarters of respondents (73%) said their group has made a change in response to the cost-of-living crisis** – this is up from our March Pulse, where 66% had made a change**.**
- **Providing free membership to their young people has remained the most common change for groups to have made in responding to cost-of-living pressures** – more than half our respondents said their group has removed membership costs, with nearly half (47%) having offered free meals or food to their young people.
- **The majority of respondents have seen external funding streams reduced because of cost-of-living pressures** – 39% said funding from local businesses, trusts and foundations, etc. has been reduced.
- **The key funding priority for the next six months are delivery costs (such as coaches, sessions fees, and venue hire)** – 70% of respondents said this was a key funding need, with core costs (59%) and equipment purchases (51%) also high on groups' funding needs.
- **The majority of groups (48%) need between £1,000 and £9,999 for these funding priorities** – 43% need more than £10,000.

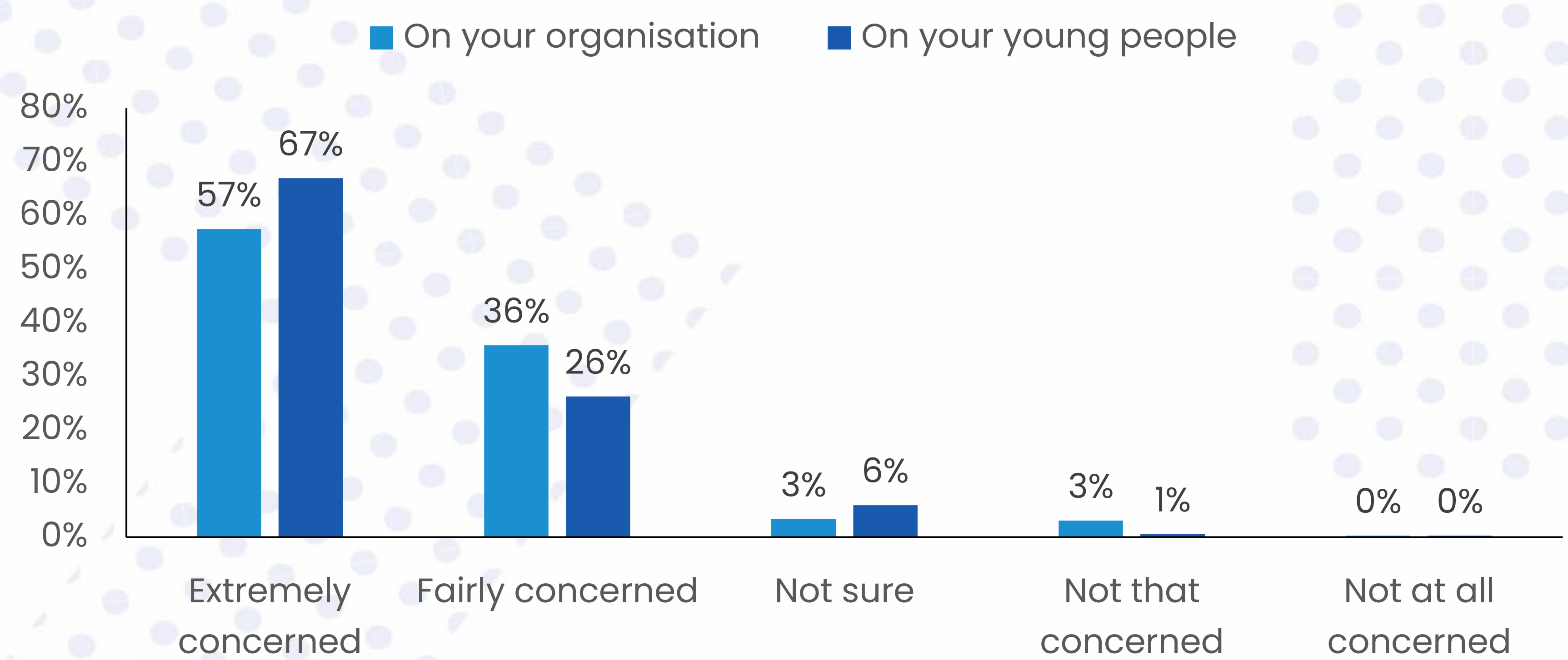
Cost of living increases

Impact on groups and their young people

More than 90% of respondents are concerned about the impact of cost-of-living increases on their organisation and on their young people. 93% are either extremely or fairly concerned about the impact on their group, with the same proportion concerned for their young people.

Concern for the impact on young people has increased from our March Pulse, when 80% of respondents were concerned about the impact on their participants.

Concern about the impact of cost of living increases

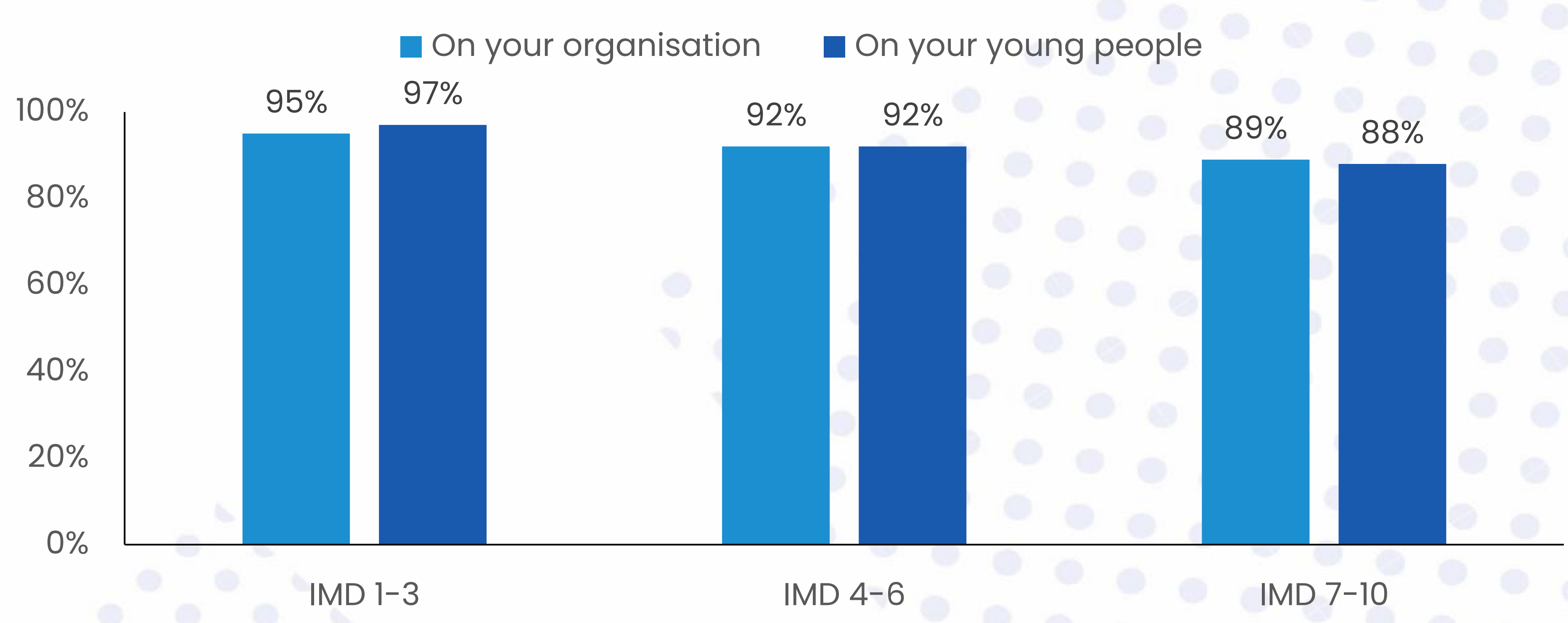


Impact on groups and their young people by IMD

High levels of concern about the impact of cost of living increases on organisations **are found across all indices of multiple deprivation**.

It is **highest amongst those groups working in the lowest 30% areas of multiple deprivation**. It falls slightly – though remains very high – toward the higher deciles of deprivation.

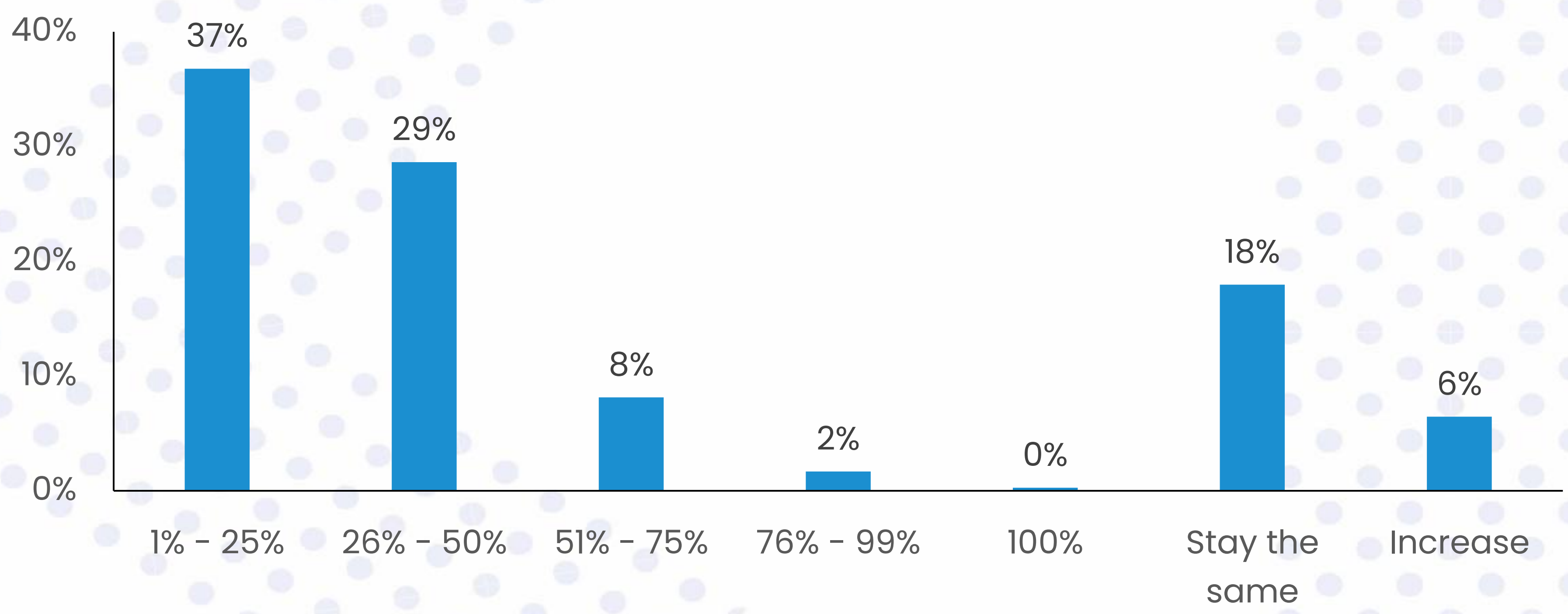
Groups who are extremely/fairly concerned about the impact of cost of living increases by IMD (0-10)



Cost of living increases

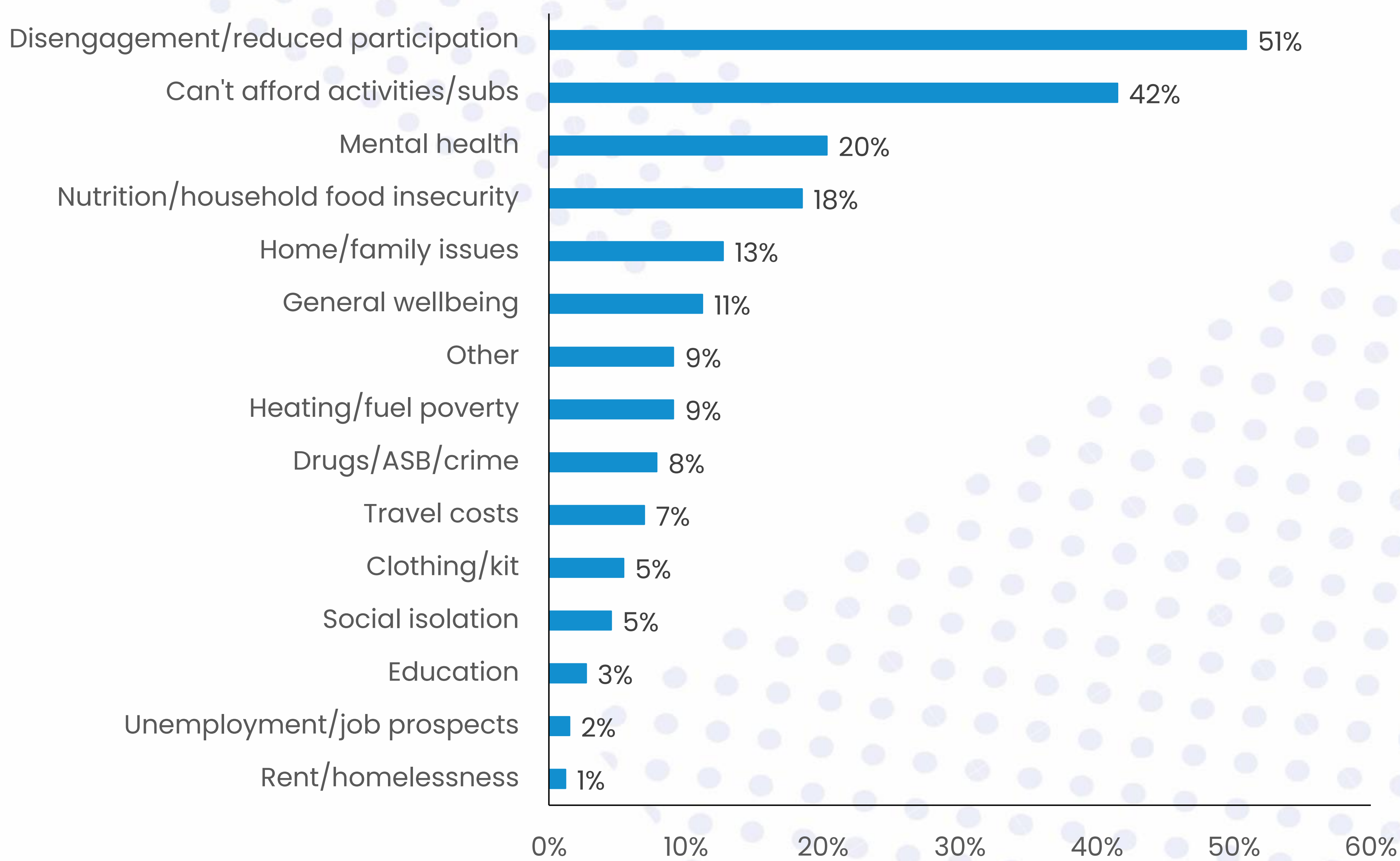
Impact on participation

Two-thirds of respondents (66%) indicated that up to half their young people would not be able to attend activities over the next six months because cost-of-living pressures.



Impact on young people

Asked to outline concerns about the cost-of-living crisis on their young people, respondents identified **disengagement/reduced participation in activities** as their most common concern (51%). Young people being **unable to afford activities/subscriptions** was also a major concern (42%), with many groups seeing a direct connection between these two issues.



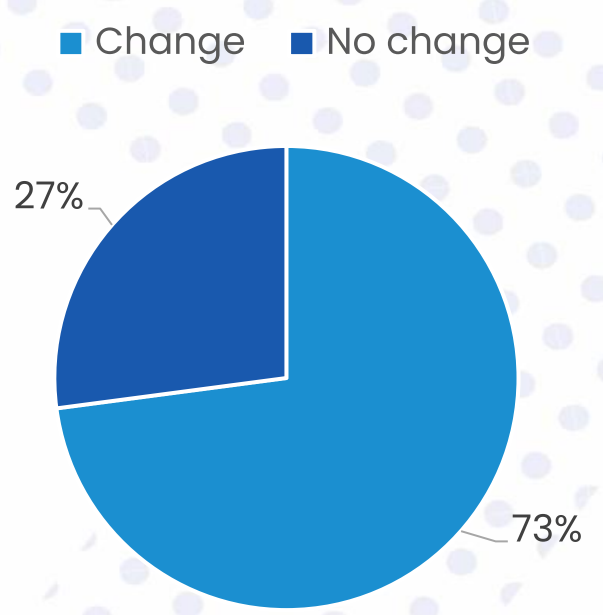
Cost of living increases

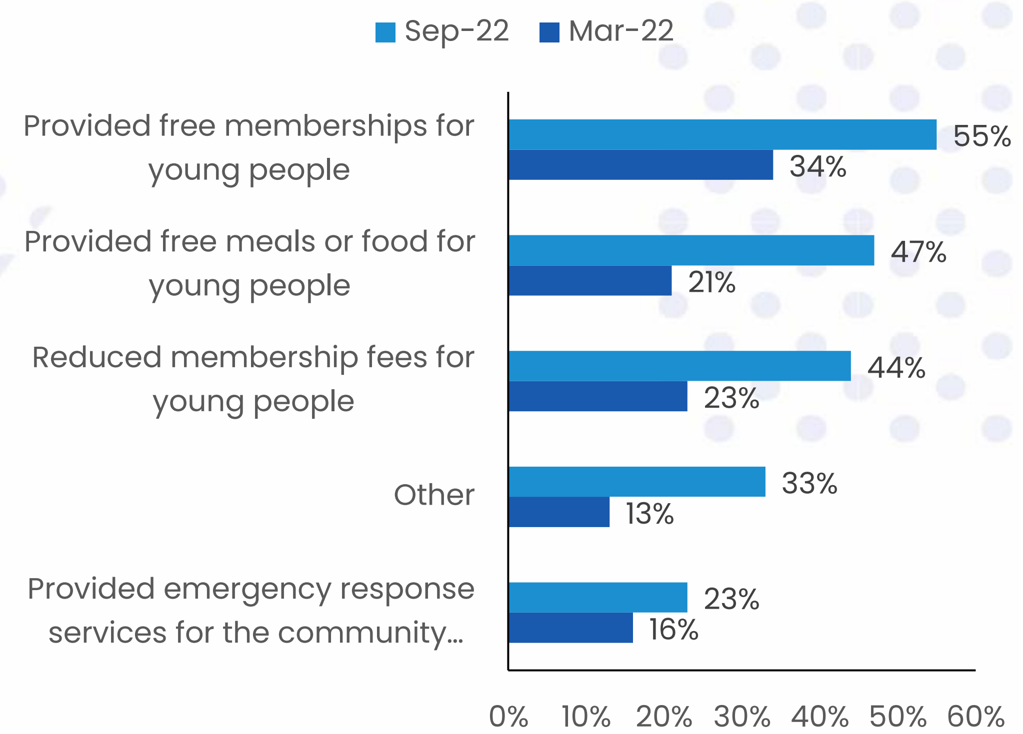
Groups' responses to the increases

Nearly three quarters (73%) have responded to the cost of living increase by making a change to their operation. This is an increase from our March Pulse, when 66% of respondents indicated they'd made a change.

The most frequently made changes have been to provide **free membership for their young people (55%)** and **free meals or food for young people (47%).** There has been a noticeable increase in the number of groups making changes across all the options provided.

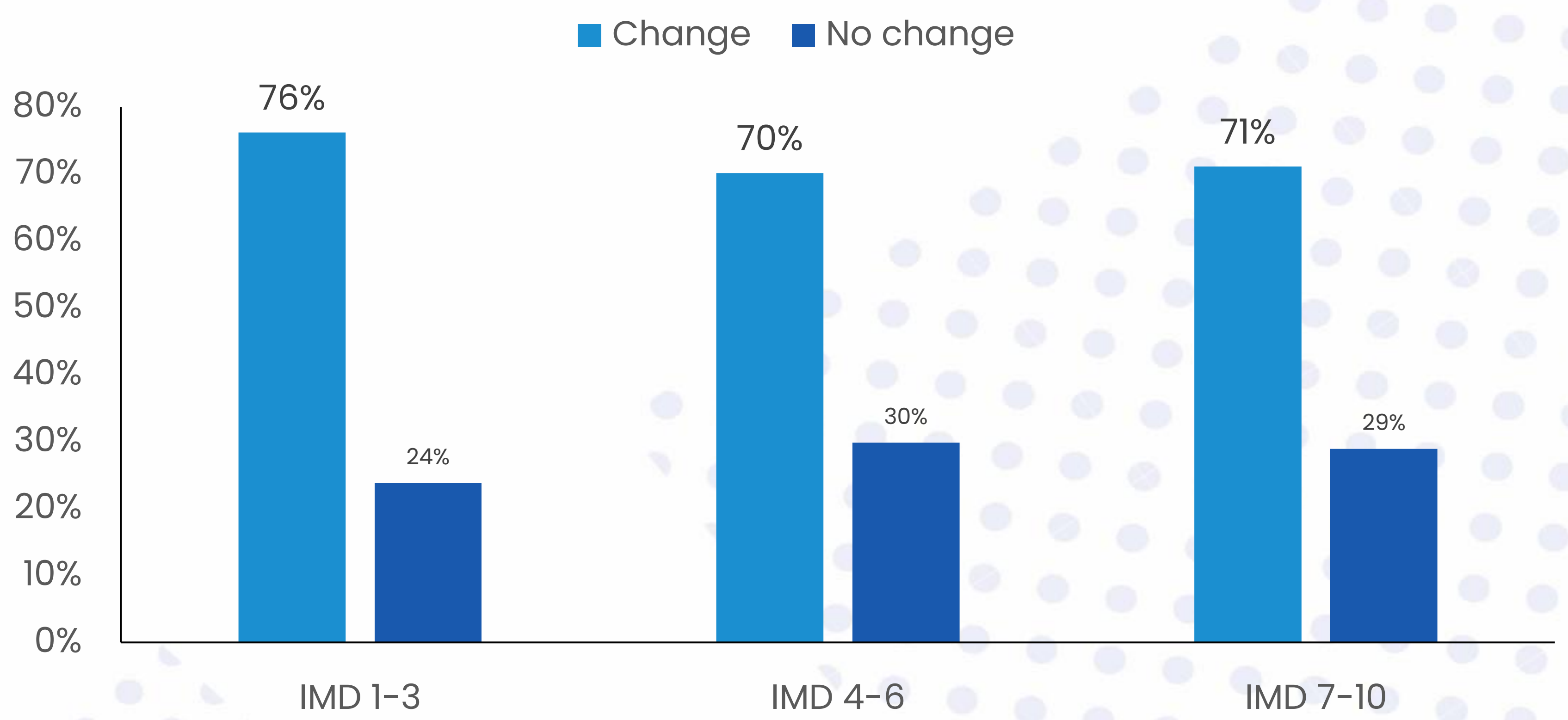
Changes made in response to cost of living increases





Groups' responses to the increases by IMD

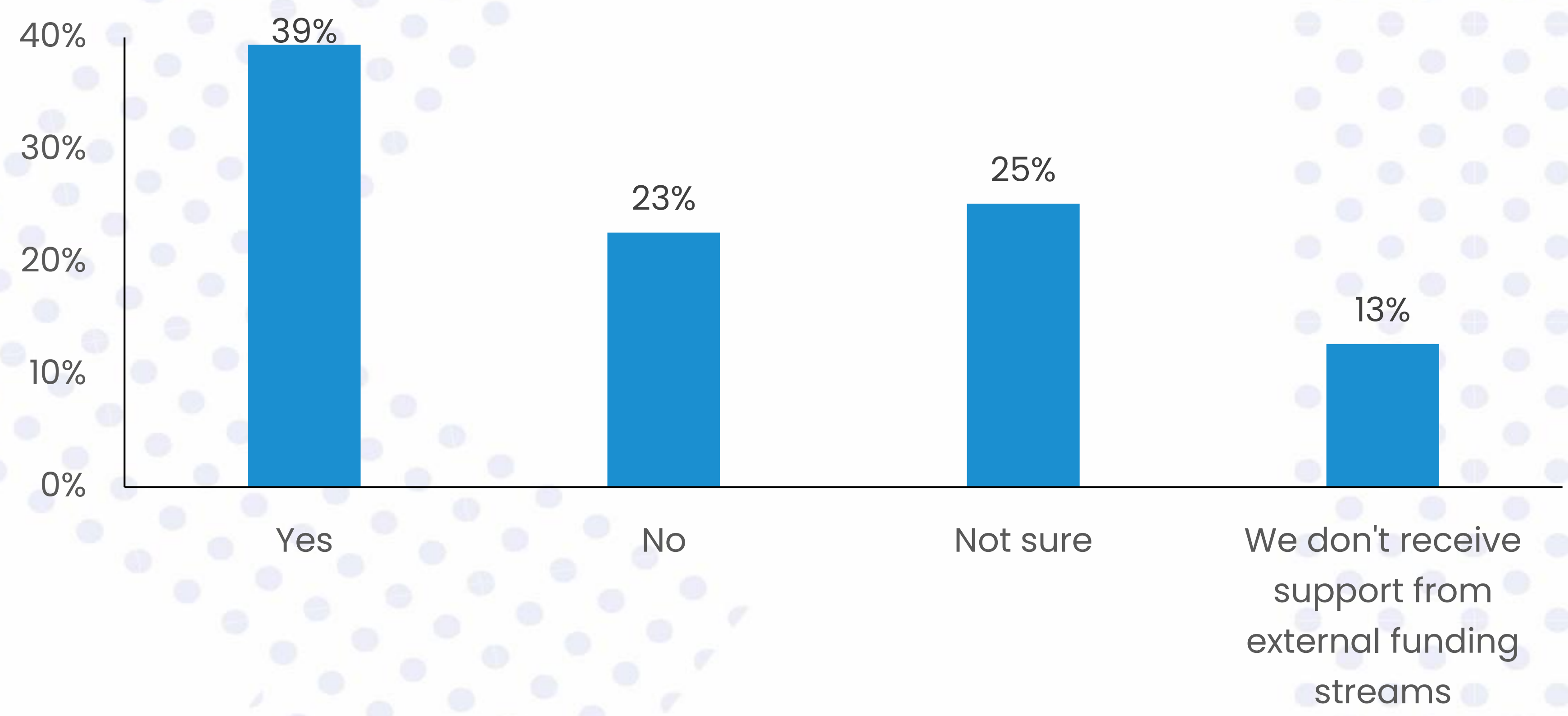
Groups were more likely to have made changes in response to cost of living increases if based the lowest three deciles of multiple deprivation, with 76% of respondents based in these areas reporting having made a change.



Cost of living increases

Reduction in external funding streams

39% of respondents told us that they have seen a reduction in financial support from external funding streams (such as local businesses, trusts and foundations, etc.) because of cost-of-living pressures**.**



Priority funding for cost-of-living pressures

Looking to the next six months, **just under half of groups (48%) need £1,000-£9,999 to cover priority funding areas in response to cost-of-living pressures.** 43% need £10,000 or more.

The most common priority funding area is to support delivery costs (70%). Core costs (59%) and equipment purchases (51%) also key areas where groups need funding.