



# Mapping the UK Women and Girls Sector and its Funding:

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## Where Does the Money Go?

CENTRE FOR REGIONAL,  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL  
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# Foreword from Rosa

**Women's and girls' organisations across the UK deliver essential services to support women and girls throughout their lives.**

They bear witness to the inequality and discrimination that so many women and girls face and they gather and share the evidence needed to build campaigns, influence public policy and change laws and culture to ensure women and girls can be safe, healthy and equal. These organisations are critical to the lives of individual women and girls, to communities and to the fabric of our society and yet much of what they do is undervalued, under resourced and ultimately unsustainable.

**All three partners which commissioned this research have a strong track record in funding the women and girls sector. We know that the current cost of living crisis in the UK is deeply affecting women's and girls' organisations. It is increasing demand on organisations where staff and volunteers are recovering from the burn-out caused by the additional demands of Covid. This in turn had arrived at a time when many organisations had experienced years of falling income due to local and national statutory funding cuts.**

When thinking about the funding of the sector, we were clear about the 'why' – we know just how vital these organisations are. We have less evidence on the 'where' and the 'how much': when funding is invested in the women and girls sector, where exactly is it going and how much is being awarded? This research helps to answer these questions, and frankly the findings are shocking. Even we had not expected to find that less than 2 per cent of the total value of all grants recorded on 360Giving in 2021 went to women's and girls' organisations; or that 51 per cent of all grants awarded are for £10,000 or less.

Our decades of investing in this sector means we know that funders believe they fund women's and girls' organisations. Yet, we also know from our grant-making experience that many women's and girls' organisations struggle to access consistent funding at anywhere near the level they need it to be, and this can have devastating consequences, threatening the survival of organisations whose work is essential. The research reveals that in 2021, one third of grant funding for women's and girls' focused activity was awarded to organisations which were not women's and girls' organisations – this adds up to £24.7 million.

The lack of substantial and sustainable funding into the sector has profound consequences on the workforce with many organisations highly dependent on volunteers and very low paid employees. This concerns us for a number of reasons, not least because it mirrors the lived experience of so many women across their lifetimes – undertaking work that is underpaid, unpaid and undervalued. Women's and girls' organisations are at the forefront of addressing inequality and, as funders, we need to champion and invest in them in a way that reflects the enormous value of their work.



The research reveals that in 2021, **one third of grant funding for women's and girls' focused activity was awarded to organisations which were not women's and girls' organisations** – this adds up to **£24.7 million**.

We were delighted to build this partnership via the Association of Charitable Foundations as it is such a vital organisation for connecting funders to each other to collaborate and share knowledge.

It has been a great pleasure to work with the report's authors at the Centre for Regional, Economic and Social Research, who have brought so much expertise to bear on this project.

We hope women's and girls' organisations are able to use this information to support and fund their work, particularly to keep making the case to funders to invest in them.

We hope also that our fellow funders across the UK and internationally are able to use this research to consider how they support and invest in the women and girls sector over the coming years.

Of course, like so much research, what has been uncovered exposes a number of limitations in data collection, data harmonisation and definitions. In this respect, it generates twice as many questions as it answers! We hope now to work with other funders to look more closely at the pay and conditions of the women and girls sector. We plan to conduct research from the other end of the funding telescope: asking the leaders of women's and girls' organisations about the income they receive, the funding they need to sustain their work and their hopes and fears for the future.

We also intend to develop a much clearer picture on the funding that goes into the Black and minoritised women and girls sector to ascertain what the needs of the sector are and the extent to which those needs are met.

If there is to be serious and positive change in women's and girls' lives, we need to see more consistent and substantial investment in the range of organisations which support them and which underpin so much of our society.

**Rebecca Gill**, Chief Executive, Rosa



# Glossary:

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**ACF** - Association of Charitable Foundations

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**EVAWG** - Ending Violence Against Women and Girls

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**IMD** - Index of Multiple Deprivation

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**PCC** - Police and Crime Commissioner

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**VCSE** - Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise

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**WGC** - Women's and Girls' Charities (includes registered women's and girls' charities only)

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**WGO** - Women's and Girls' Organisations (includes both WGCs and other organisational forms such as CICs and registered societies)

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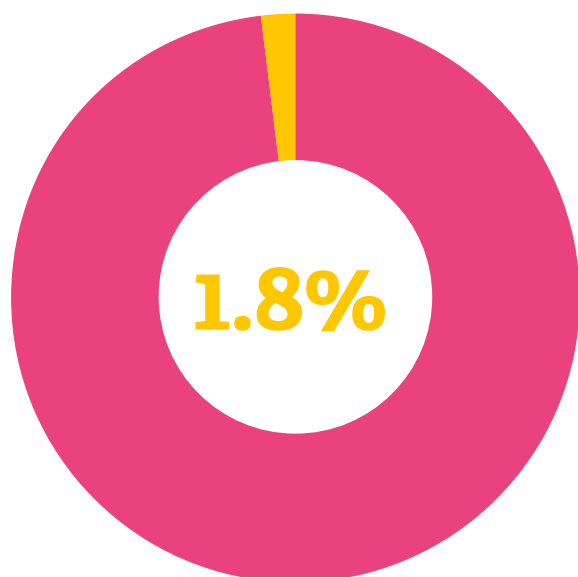
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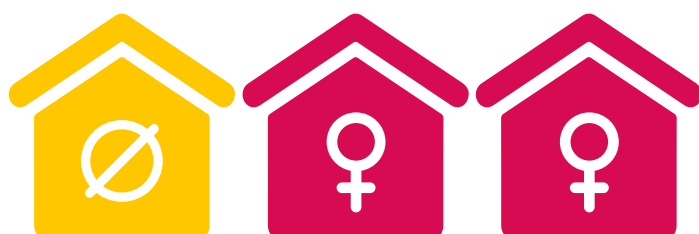
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## Total grants awarded in 2021

A tiny per cent of grants recorded on 360Giving in 2021 are going to women's and girls' organisations – just 1.8% of the total value awarded.



# 1/3rd

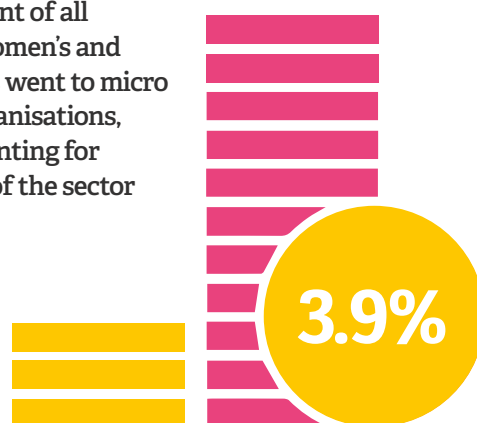
One third of all 360Giving grants recorded in 2021 for women's and girls' work, went to non-women's and girls' organisations.

**Majority of grants to women's and girls' organisations are small in value.** Over half of grants to women's and girls' organisations were less than £10,000.

# £10k

**There is an imbalanced spread of income within the women and girls charity sector.**

Just 3.9 per cent of all income for women's and girls' charities went to micro and small organisations, despite accounting for 86.5 per cent of the sector by number.



# 3.5% versus 6.6%

**Women's and girls' charities have a greater reliance on volunteers.**

Women's and girls' charities make up 3.5% of charities and their total volunteers make up 6.6% of total volunteers recorded by all charities.





# Executive Summary

## Introduction

Organisations that specialise in supporting women and girls are a vital part of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector in the UK. They often operate in a challenging environment, however, and can feel relatively invisible within the VCSE sector. They are not explicitly identified in many of the public datasets, which may in turn lead to less resources and support, and less activity benefiting the welfare of women and girls. Important examples of previous research are provided by Adisa et al. (2020), who used quantitative and qualitative methods to map a sample of organisations tackling Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) and their funding, as well as work by the Women's Resource Centre (2020) that looked at grants to WGOs in London<sup>[1]</sup>. Further research and data is needed, however, to understand the women and girls sector across the UK and how it might best be supported by funders and policy makers. A better understanding of their scale, location, and activities, might help funders to determine where the gaps are and decide where best to target their resources.

Three members of ACF's Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) network (the National Lottery Community Fund, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, and Rosa) funded this research to provide a better understanding of VCSE women's and girls' organisations (WGOs) in the UK, and to map where funding is going within this sector. It is hoped that the results will help to improve funders' understanding of the sector and help them to target their support effectively.

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## METHODS

This report aims to provide a snapshot of the sector and its funding for the year 2021, either the calendar or financial year end, depending on each dataset. Due to data availability, the analysis is focused on organisations that are formally registered with regulators, especially charities. This does, unfortunately, exclude more informal, 'below the radar' groups and activity, where much activity to support women and girls also takes place.

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[1] Amended 26/4/2023



Data from a range of sources, including Charity Commission, 360Giving, Contracts Finder and Companies House data, amongst others, were analysed to map the funding of women's and girls' VCSE organisations in the UK in 2021. The coverage and amount of data available varies significantly between different types and sizes of organisation, different funders and funding types, and the different UK nations. The largest amount of organisational data is available on charities, especially larger charities, in England and Wales.

At different points in this report, therefore, depending on the data source under analysis, we refer to both WGOs, and women's and girls' charities (WGCs), a subset of all WGOs that does not include CICs or registered societies. Wherever possible, we have also presented results on the UK as a whole, though some results are limited to England and Wales.

Although there are many challenges and gaps relating to voluntary sector data, to our knowledge, this provides the most comprehensive attempt yet to explore the overall size and shape of the women and girls sector and its funding. We have also made several recommendations relating to VCSE data at the end of this report.

## Findings

### TOTAL NUMBER OF WGOs

We found 7,396 WGOs active in the UK in 2021. Of these, 7,079 were registered charities, accounting for approximately 3.5 per cent of all registered charities across the UK.

### WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' CHARITIES (WGCs)

**Income data for women's and girls' charities (WGCs, a subset of WGOs) across the UK indicated £1.3 billion of income in the financial year ending 2021, which is just over two per cent of total UK charity income.**

WGCs in England and Wales recorded 345,000 volunteers, which is 6.6 per cent of all those recorded by English and Welsh charities. WGCs appear, therefore, to have a relatively high number of volunteers compared to other charities.

#### KEY FINDING 1: VOLUNTARISM IS RELATIVELY HIGH IN THE WOMEN AND GIRLS SECTOR

Micro-sized organisations, which we know primarily operate on volunteer input, are relatively common in the women and girls sector. Perhaps relatedly, therefore, WGCs also account for a higher proportion of the volunteers listed on the English and Welsh charity register (6.6 per cent) than their numbers would suggest (3.5 per cent of charities). This indicates that there is a relatively high amount of volunteer labour taking place amongst WGOs.

This level of volunteer activity may be positive, if it means more activity taking place to benefit the welfare of women and girls, though not, of course, if voluntary activity is substituting for paid staff, due to insufficient funding. The role of volunteering in women's lives is complex, and there are some obvious potential downsides to relying upon ever more unpaid work from women and girls as volunteers (Overgaard, 2019).

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## WGC'S MAIN AREAS OF FOCUS

All WGCs were classified into 15 different sub-groups. The most common type of WGCs are 'Social' organisations, such as Women's Institutes and Girlguiding groups, followed by 'Ending Violence Against Women and Girls' (EVAWG) and 'Health' focused organisations.

### KEY FINDING 2: WGOS ARE DIVERSE

Despite the common thread of working to further the welfare and wellbeing of women and girls, the sector is marked by considerable diversity. Small, associational, socially focused organisations are by far the most numerous type of WGC. Though they account for relatively little of the sector's aggregate income, they do have an impressive collective reach across the UK.

At the other end of the income spectrum, areas such as EVAWG, health, and international development, have a higher aggregate level of income, accounting for most of the sector's total income, but fewer organisations. This does not of course, necessarily mean that these organisations are adequately funded. We know from other research, for example, that the amount received by these EVAWG organisations remains far below what is needed to provide help to all those who need it (Domestic Abuse Commissioner, 2022).

Although there were a large number of 'Social' organisations, their income is relatively low. Conversely, 'EVAWG', 'Health' and 'General welfare' and 'Women facing additional disadvantage' organisations account for more income than their frequency would suggest, indicating a larger average size of organisation.

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## SIZE AND INCOME

WGCs are smaller on average than charities overall and there are a large number of micro sized organisations. 68 per cent of WGCs are micro in size (annual income of less than £10,000) compared to only 39 per cent of all charities.

Only 0.2 per cent of WGCs are major or super major (annual income over £10m) compared to 0.9 per cent of all charities.

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## INCOME CONCENTRATION

Although the women and girls sector has fewer very large charities than amongst all UK charities generally, eight major and one super major WGC (0.1 per cent) still account for 39 per cent of all WGCs income.

At the other end of the spectrum, micro and small WGCs are relatively common amongst WGCs (87 per cent). But they still only account for 3.9 per cent of all WGC income.



## LOCATION

As with all charities, WGCs in England are more likely to be registered in less deprived postcodes and urban areas. WGCs are also more common in some English regions (such as London and the South East) than others (such as Yorkshire and the Humber). Again, this reflects the picture of English charities generally.

The number of WGCs in Northern Ireland and Scotland are also higher than for England, though this may be related to differences in charity registration requirements across the UK nations rather than substantive differences.

### KEY FINDING 3: WGOS AND THEIR FUNDING ARE SPREAD UNEVENLY

The distribution of WGCs geographically also reflects disparities seen in the wider VCSE sector (Corry, 2020). They are less prevalent in the most deprived areas and regions of the country, which may ultimately result in fewer opportunities for some women to benefit as a member, service user, volunteer, or trustee. It is likely, however, that this is skewed by the large number of small associations, as we know that government funded organisations working with the most disadvantaged, in contrast, tend to be based in more deprived areas (Clifford, 2012).

Despite limitations on the availability of geographic data on 360Giving (Galley, 2022), it is positive that grants to WGOs appear to be more targeted at organisations registered in higher deprivation areas. This may be because these grants are focused more directly on social welfare issues, such as EVAWG and health services.

## BIGGEST FUNDING SOURCES

Data on income sources is available for WGCs in England and Wales with an annual income of over £500,000. Of these, the majority of funding (71 per cent) comes from fees and contracts for charitable activities. 23 per cent of income comes from donations, grants, and legacies, whilst only three per cent comes from trading income and one per cent comes from investment income.

However, the reliance upon fee and contract funding, as opposed to donations, grants and legacies, reduces amongst the smaller of these (still large) charities as the average income falls closer to £500,000. Unfortunately, the data is not available to explore whether this trend continues beneath the £500,000 income mark.



#### KEY FINDING 4: FEES AND CONTRACTS ACCOUNT FOR A LARGE AMOUNT OF GROSS WGO INCOME

Income to WGCs from contracts and fees outweighs income from donations, grants, and legacies in gross terms. This is likely to reflect the large size of some service contracts for staffed services to women with additional disadvantages. Due to a lack of data, it is unclear whether this is also true for smaller sized charities. Reliance upon contracts versus grants is also likely to differ significantly depending on the type of WGC and its area of work.

## GRANT FUNDING TO WGOS

### Total numbers

55,500 grants awarded in 2021 were recorded on 360Giving as of October 2022, worth a total of £4.1 billion.

The majority of central government data for 2021 has still not been published, so these totals are likely to increase when this data becomes available.

Of the data available, 1,799 grants worth £73.4 million were made to 1,305 WGOs in 2021. This is 3.2 per cent of the total number of grants recorded on 360Giving as awarded in 2021 and 1.8 per cent of the total value of grants awarded.

A further 911 grants focused on women and girls, worth £24.7 million, were made to non-WGOs, meaning that a third of grant funding for women's and girls' focused activity was awarded to non-WGOs in 2021.

### Value

The majority of grants recorded on 360Giving awarded in 2021 were smaller in scale. Just over half of grants awarded were worth less than £10,000, both for WGOs (51 per cent) and for all organisations generally (57 per cent).

Whilst, the median grant size was similar for WGOs and all organisations (just under £10,000), the mean grant size for all organisations was higher (£73,217) than for WGOs (£40,804) indicating a higher number of very large grants for non-WGOs.

# 55,500

grants awarded in 2021 were recorded on 360Giving

# 1,799

grants made to WGOs in 2021, according to data available

#### KEY FINDING 5: WGOs RECEIVE A SMALL PROPORTION OF ALL GRANT FUNDING

Data from 360Giving, which includes more detail on grants from the VCSE sector and some public bodies, shows that 3.2 per cent of the total number of grants awarded in 2021, and 1.8 per cent of the total value of grants awarded, were to WGOs.

The mean size of grant to WGOs (£40,804) is lower than it is for all grants (£73,217), despite the medians being roughly equal, which may indicate that WGOs are receiving relatively few very large grants.

Of the grants listed on 360Giving for 2021 so far, that are focused on women and girls, 76.4 per cent were to WGOs, while 33.6 per cent were made to non-WGOs.

#### Grants to different main areas of focus

Organisations focused on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) received the most grants in terms of number and value, followed by grants to organisations focused on 'Black and minoritised women and girls' and 'Health' organisations.

It is important, however, to note that the 'Black and minoritised women and girls' category was given priority over others during classification, so a health provider for black women would be included here, rather than in 'Health'. This is likely to increase the values for this category compared to others, despite known issues with underfunding in this area (Domestic Abuse Commissioner, 2021; Banga, 2021).

EVAWG organisations received a relatively high value of grants, likely reflecting the cost of the services they provide. In contrast, social organisations received a higher number of smaller grants.

#### Geography of grants

Grant funding is disproportionately focused on recipients registered in London which may reflect funding to large organisations with centrally located headquarters, as well as a concentration of EVAWG organisations in this area.

In contrast to the charity register data on all WGOs, 360Giving data on WGO grant recipients suggests they are focused on organisations in more deprived areas. This is likely to be because funders are more likely to target grants towards social issues and disadvantage, rather than more social or member focused activities.

# £40,804

mean size of grants to WGOs



### Largest grant funders

**Funding is concentrated in a relatively small group of funders. Collectively, the top 10 funders, based on amounts awarded on 360Giving, account for 81 per cent of grants to WGOs in 2021.**

This is despite most of the central government's grant data for 2021 remaining unpublished. When this data is released, the dominance of large funders may increase further still. At the time of analysis, however, the National Lottery Community Fund was by far the biggest funder of WGOs, awarding £24 million to WGOs.

### Organisation types

**Compared to other types of WGO, EVAWG organisations received a relatively high number and value of grants.**

This is likely a reflection of the costs involved in providing staffed, specialist services, as well as a recognition of the importance of this area by grant makers.

### Government funding

**Charity register data indicates that a total of £357 million of government funding was received by WGCs in 2021.**

WGCs recorded a much higher number of grants (155,474) than contracts (909) in their annual returns, meaning that the average grant value was low (£1,289), whilst contracts were much less common but high value (a mean of £178,090). It is worth noting, however, that the distinction between these types of funding can be blurred, and it is unclear exactly what charities are including as 'grant' income from government<sup>1</sup>.

Organisations focused on EVAWG were most reliant on government funding, as well as receiving the largest amount. 'Health' and 'International' focused organisations received large amounts of government funding but are less reliant upon it, whereas other organisations receive comparatively little government funding, but it accounts for a substantial portion of their income (e.g. 'General welfare', 'Sport' and 'Education, employment and training').

Exploratory analysis of the government 'Contract Finder' service found 81 contracts awarded in 2021 for women and girls focused work (44 to WGOs and 37 to non-WGOs). The Ministry of Justice was the most frequently named funder of women and girls focused contracts in 2021, listing 40 contracts for resettlement and rehabilitation work with women. Councils were the next most prominent funder, awarding 26 contracts mostly for EVAWG or health-related services.

<sup>1</sup> For example, it is unclear how income from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme would be recorded by different charities

### KEY FINDING 6: GOVERNMENT FUNDING IS CONCENTRATED

Data from WGCs' annual returns suggests that the total value of grants and contracts to charities, from government sources, is relatively equal. Contracts are on average larger and more concentrated, however, whereas grants are smaller and more numerous. This means that government funding to WGOs is made up of a high number of relatively small grants, and a comparatively low number of larger contracts.

The areas of focus with the most government funding match those with the greatest income overall, perhaps because it is hard to reach a similar scale without government income. We know that organisations working with more disadvantaged groups, such as vulnerable women, find it harder to attract donations from the public (Salamon, 1987).

Reliance upon government income as a proportion of total income, however, is more even between the different areas of focus. Areas such as Gender Identity, Sport, or General Welfare have less government funding in aggregate, but rely on it for over 30 per cent of their aggregate income.



## Recommendations

We provide two main sets of recommendations. First, those relating to the data available on VCSEs and WGOs in particular. Second, those to grant makers based on our findings.

### DATA RECOMMENDATIONS

Each of the data sources used in this study provides part of the picture on WGOs and their funding sources. Nevertheless, the task of mapping the women and girls sector has been made more challenging by widely recognised gaps in the VCSE sector data infrastructure (Kenley and Wilding, 2021).

Substantively, the less data we have available, the less understanding we have of the issues facing women and girls, and who is tackling them and how. It also makes it harder to make the case for more support to the sector, and to know how to prioritise existing resources.

### TO REGULATORS

#### Data coverage:

There is a continuing lack of data on the financial and human resources of smaller charities, as well as for CICs and other types of VCSE organisation. Data availability also differs substantially between the devolved nations.



Although there is a risk of increasing the administrative burden on charities and VCSE organisations, we believe that basic information on total income, main income sources, and a description of activities, should be available for all VCSE organisations from their main regulators.

### **Women and girls identifiers:**

**An explicit identifier for WGOs should be incorporated into the classification systems used by the various charity regulators. This should sit alongside an identifier for organisations working primarily with Black and minoritised individuals, and other groups of additionally disadvantaged women, to allow greater intersectional analysis.**

Where possible there should also be limits on how many categories charities can select when describing their organisation's focus and activities, to avoid including cases where women and girls are not central to the organisation's primary purpose.

### **Data on organisational leadership:**

**Whilst this research has made significant progress in identifying organisations that are 'for' women and girls, more information on the leadership of voluntary organisations would assist in identifying organisations that are 'by' women and girls.**

This would be particularly helpful to identify organisations run by and for women and girls, to allow greater intersectional analysis.

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## **TO 360GIVING AND VCSE GRANT MAKERS**

### **Diversity data:**

**We support the initial work being undertaken by 360Giving (Cohen, 2021) and the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) group of funders to incorporate diversity data into the 360Giving standard.**

### **Coverage:**

**360Giving data is providing valuable data on grant funding into VCSE organisations, but is limited by remaining gaps in coverage.**

We would encourage all major funders to submit (or continue to submit) their data to 360Giving within an agreed and specified timeframe, and as fully as possible, to ensure that major data gaps are avoided. As a first step, we would recommend that all funders submit their data within one-year of grants being awarded.

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## TO GOVERNMENT

### **360Giving participation:**

We would encourage more local authorities and government bodies to provide data to the 360Giving standard, across the devolved administrations, and for central government departments to ensure they submit their data within a shorter timeframe.

### **Contract Finder:**

The current thresholds for contracts to be published on Contract Finder is relatively high at £10,000.

We would recommend lowering this, and more importantly, investing in ensuring that departments and public sector bodies submit their data in full and at a suitably fine-grained level of detail.

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## FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS:

### **Funding levels:**

We note that 2.4 per cent of the total grants listed on 360Giving (by value) are focused on women and girls, despite WGCs accounting for 3.5 per cent of all charities.

There were also fewer very large grants to WGOs than for organisations generally, meaning that grants to WGOs had a lower mean. We would, therefore, welcome more funding focused directly on supporting women and girls.

### **Staff costs:**

The women and girls sector has a relatively high number of volunteers.

Whilst voluntarism is often a positive force, it does not replace adequate staffing when required. We would encourage funders to ensure that sufficient funds are available to ensure adequate staffing and other core costs are covered.

### **Specialist WGOs**

Of the grants listed on 360Giving that are focused on women and girls, 33.6 per cent were made to non-WGOs.

Whilst all work that benefits the welfare of women and girls is to be welcomed, we would stress that there are specific benefits for individuals from engaging with organisations that are 'by and for' women (Women's Resource Centre, 2007). These organisations may need additional, focused support.



### **Diversity of activities:**

**The women and girls sector works across a wide range of different areas, through different types of organisations.**

It is to be welcomed that VCSE grant makers are making grants across the sector. Where appropriate and in line with their mission, we would encourage that funders continue to support this diversity of activities and focus.

### **Commissioning:**

**Government funding to WGOs is made up of a high number of relatively small grants and a comparatively low number of large contracts.**

We would recommend further steps are taken to ensure that contracts and commissioning processes are accessible to all forms of WGO who wish to participate in public service delivery.

### **Further research:**

**The findings of this study have provided a broad overview of the different types of activity being undertaken in the sector, and as far as possible, how much grant and contract funding those different areas receive.**

Inevitably, however, there are areas that would benefit from further research. This includes the potential for longitudinal analysis to track changes over time. In addition, there may be merit in exploring in more depth various sub-sections of the women and girls sector, perhaps focussing specifically on smaller service providers or organisations working with Black and minoritised women and girls. Finally, building on the mapping conducted here, there may be scope to survey WGOs, to gather their own views on the funding landscape.



# 1. Introduction

**Organisations that specialise in supporting the welfare and wellbeing of women and girls are a vital part of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector in the UK. They operate, however, in a challenging environment.**

Research points to the gendered impact of events such as austerity and Covid-19 (The Fawcett Society 2012; The Women's Budget Group, 2019; Davidge, 2020; IMKAAN, 2020; Sisters of Frida, 2012) and the impact on women's organisations (Women's Resource Centre 2020, IMKAAN 2016). A recent mapping exercise by the Domestic Abuse Commissioner (2022) described a patchwork of provision, from which many victims of Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) were unable to access the support that they needed.

Organisations that specialise in supporting women and girls are a vital part of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector in the UK. They often operate in a challenging environment, however, and can feel relatively invisible within the VCSE sector. They are not explicitly identified in many of the public datasets, which may in turn lead to less resources and support, and less activity benefiting the welfare of women and girls. Important examples of previous research are provided by Adisa et al. (2020), who used quantitative and qualitative methods to map a sample of organisations tackling Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) and their funding, as well as work by the Women's Resource Centre (2020) that looked at grants to WGOs in London<sup>[1]</sup>. Further research and data is needed, however, to understand the women and girls sector across the UK and how it might best be supported by funders and policy makers. A better understanding of their scale, location, and activities, might help funders to determine where the gaps are and decide where best to target their resources.

Three members of ACF's VAWG network, the National Lottery Community Fund, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, and Rosa, commissioned this research to understand the extent of these gaps. The group partnered with the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR) to map WGOs in the UK and the funding given to these organisations from VCSE and public sector sources. To our knowledge, this provides the most comprehensive attempt yet to explore the overall size and shape of the women and girls sector and its funding.

[1] Amended 26/4/2023

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## FOCUS OF THE STUDY

**For the purposes of this report, we have focused on registered VCSE organisations that exist primarily to support women and girls. The boundary between WGOs and non-WGOs can be blurred, however, given that organisations have multiple purposes and identities.**

For example, we identified a number of what we call ‘women-plus organisations.’ These work in areas that predominantly affect women and girls (such as domestic or sexual violence) but may also do some limited work with men or use gender neutral language when describing their work.

We included women-plus organisations in our findings but acknowledge that others might have chosen to draw the line differently. For example, a women-plus organisation would not necessarily meet the criteria to apply for all specialist women’s and girls’ focused grant funding. As such, we have clearly flagged the number of these organisations in the headline figures so that readers can take this into account.

On the other hand, we have excluded private schools from our analysis. Some of these organisations have very high incomes, and we felt that including them would have skewed the results away from more welfare and wellbeing orientated WGOs. Private schools’ funding is also somewhat distinct from the rest of the sector, given their reliance primarily on school fees.

This report aims to provide a snapshot of the sector and its funding for the year 2021, either the calendar or financial year end, depending on each dataset. At the time of writing, this was the most recent year of information available for most of the key datasets, given lags in reporting. It also avoided the financial year ending 2020, which was significantly disrupted by COVID-19 and is potentially less reliable as a result.

We focused our analysis on organisations formally registered with regulators such as Companies House or the various charity regulators, largely due to data availability issues. These formal organisations account for most of the VCSE sector’s income, employees, and contracts. Unregistered organisations may be much higher in terms of their number, but unfortunately there is very little public data available on these entities. This is potentially a significant problem for understanding the scale of the women and girls sector because, although a lack of data makes it hard to tell, much of the sector could be made up of unregistered organisations often staffed entirely by volunteers.

Finally, where possible, this report has provided figures for the entire UK. However, the availability of public data on VCSE organisations differs considerably in each country. For registered charities, significantly more data is available for England and Wales than for Northern Ireland or Scotland, though differing registration requirements may mean that more WGOs are registered in the latter two cases. Where findings apply only to England and Wales, we have made this clear.

## METHODS AND DATA SOURCES

The largest sources of data on VCSE organisations in the UK are the registers of charities and annual returns compiled by the Charity Commission for England and Wales, the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, and the Office of Scottish Charity Regulator.

The English and Welsh data is the most comprehensive but is made more complicated by different reporting requirements for different sizes of charities. Charities are required to:

- formally register if their income exceeds £5,000
- fill out 'Part A' of the annual return if their income exceeds £10,000
- complete 'Part B' of the annual return, with more detailed funding questions, if their income exceeds £500,000.

In practice, however, a minority of organisations sometimes submit documents despite not meeting the relevant income threshold.

In addition, some types of charities, called 'exempted charities' are not required to register, so long as their income is less than £100,000. Notably, this includes Girlguiding organisations, though again, in practice, many local groups do choose to formally register. These categories only apply to England and Wales. In Scotland and Northern Ireland, currently all organisations representing themselves as charities must register with the regulator.

Other forms of VCSE organisation, such as registered societies or CICs, are not regulated by the various charity commissions. Basic data on these organisations is available from Companies House and the Financial Conduct Authority, but generally this includes only their name and does not describe their activities, which limits our ability to distinguish WGOs.

Data on grant and contract funding to the VCSE sector is also found across a range of datasets. Some information on income sources is available from Parts A and B of charities' annual returns in England and Wales, again depending on the size of the organisation.

Information on grants from major VCSE sector is also available via the 360Giving database<sup>2</sup>. Trusts, foundations, and public bodies are asked to submit their grants data to 360Giving in a standardised format, which is then compiled and made available. Submitting is not compulsory, however, which means that coverage is not entirely comprehensive. 360Giving estimates that its database includes 79 per cent of grant fundig by value.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.threesixtygiving.org/about/>

UK central government departments have committed to publishing their grants data using the 360Giving standard, but unfortunately much of their data for 2021 was still to be published at the time of publication. In addition, few local authorities currently publish their grants data in this way. This poses challenges for the analysis of WGO funding, given the likely importance of both of these sources of income. Nevertheless, the data still provides an excellent starting point for exploring grant income into the sector, especially from VCSE grant makers, which can be expanded on as more data becomes available.

In addition, public bodies are required to publish contracts worth over £10,000 to Contracts Finder<sup>3</sup>. Despite limitations with this data, we have also explored this for any major contracts to WGOs in 2021.

None of these datasets systematically and reliably identify WGOs<sup>4,5</sup>, or WGO relevant funding. This meant that we had to conduct extensive manual classification work based on the names, and where possible textual descriptions, of the organisations.

This classification work built on the approach taken by Lorna Dowrick for her postdoctoral research on women's and girls' charities in England and Wales (Dowrick, 2023). As a first stage, we used key words to create a long list of possible WGOs within various datasets. We then conducted a lengthy manual sift of the results to confirm those working explicitly for the benefit of women and girls, and to sub-classify them based on their main area of focus.

Again, it is worth noting the subjectivity involved in this process, and the limitations that are often posed by ambiguous or incomplete data. There will inevitably be organisations that have not been included who might nevertheless describe themselves as a WGO. Equally, some that we have included might not identify with this label. The individual classification of each individual organisation, however, is less important than what all these classifications add up to at the sector-wide level. Our aim is to provide the most comprehensive picture to date of WGOs and their funding.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/contracts-finder>

<sup>4</sup> The Northern Irish register allows charities to self-select 'women' as a beneficiary group, but because they can tick as many relevant categories as they choose, this still contained many organisations that did not meet our definition of being primarily targeted towards helping women and girls.

<sup>5</sup> The English and Welsh Charity Commission are currently reviewing the categories that charities can select to indicate who they work with. One of the proposed new categories is 'people of a specified sex / gender'. Although this still does not identify women's organisations, it may help to identify them in future work.



## 2. Women's and girls' organisations

How many WGOs are there in the UK?

**We identified 7,396 WGOs active in 2021, including:**

**5,081**

charities currently registered with the Charity Commission in England and Wales (includes 159 women-plus organisations)

**1,427**

charities currently registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) (includes 34 women-plus organisations)<sup>6</sup>.

**571**

charities currently registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (includes two women-plus organisations).

**304**

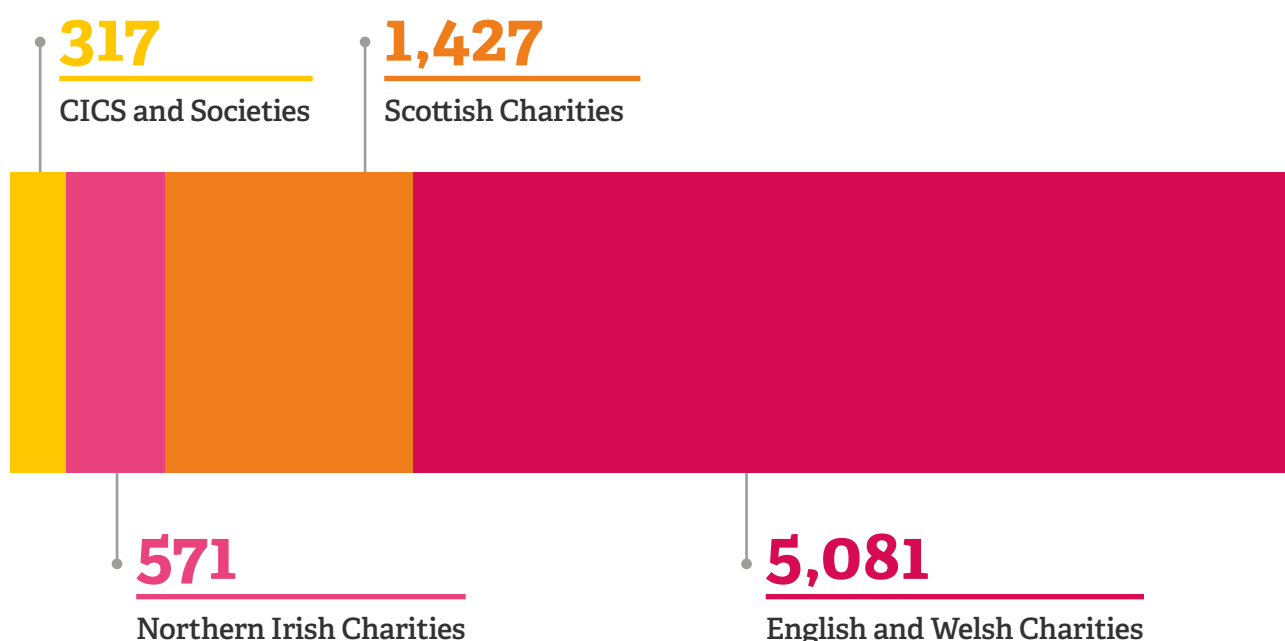
CICs registered with Companies House (includes seven women-plus organisations).

**13**

registered societies (includes two women-plus organisations respectively).

**FIGURE 2.1: NUMBER OF WGOS BY SOURCE**

Source: The charity registers of England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, Companies House, and the Register of Societies



<sup>6</sup> 20 charities were removed which are also registered in England and Wales, to avoid double counting

For context, at the time of download we identified over 200,000 charities from across the UK, registered in 2021, and with valid data. This suggests that women's and girls' charities account for approximately 3.5 per cent of all registered charities.

## FIGURE 2.2: NUMBER OF REGISTERED CHARITIES

Source: The charity registers of England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland



### BOX 2.1: DEFINITIONS: WGOS VERSUS WCOS

As discussed in our methods, most of the data on WGOs is only available for registered charities, and in some cases only charities registered in England and Wales. For the remainder of this report, therefore, most figures are reporting information on women's and girls' charities (WGCs), a subset of all WGOs that does not include CICs or registered societies.

## HEADLINE TOTALS

### Income

**Income data is available for all women's and girls' charities (WGCs) across the UK (7,079 charities).**

Across the UK, WGCs collectively recorded £1.3 billion<sup>7</sup> income for their financial year ending 2021. Whilst this may seem like a large figure, it is approximately 2.2 per cent<sup>8</sup> of total UK charity income overall, despite WGCs accounting for 3.5 per cent of all UK charities. As discussed later in the report, it is also accounted for by a relatively small number of large WGCs.

### Volunteers

**Data on volunteer numbers is currently only available for WGCs in England and Wales that submit 'Part A' of the charity commission annual return, mandatory for those with an annual income over £10,000.**

This data can be somewhat unreliable due to ambiguity over what counts as a volunteer. For example, there are some risks of double counting people that volunteer more than once, or if volunteers are recorded by both the head office charity as well as local members.

Nevertheless, organisations with valid data (1,822 WGCs), recorded a combined number of 345,200 volunteers - 6.6 per cent of total volunteers recorded by all charities with valid Part A data. This suggests that the total number of volunteers in the women and girls sector is relatively high.

### Trustees

**All trustees are individually logged with the Charity Commission for England and Wales, leaving less room for ambiguity than for volunteers.**

Active WGCs in England and Wales with valid data (4,700) reported 26,300 trustees (approximately 3.15 per cent of individual trustees recorded by 143,900 charities with valid data). In theory, these trustees are additional to the volunteers already identified, though again, in practice, some double counting may occur.

<sup>7</sup> Note that private schools for girls are not included in our data. If they were, this total would be much higher at £2.4 billion.

<sup>8</sup> Total voluntary sector income differs considerably depending on what types of organisations are included. For this calculation we used the most recent figure available from the NCVO Almanac, £58.7 for 2019-2020, which uses a 'general charity' definition.

## Employees

Data on employee numbers is currently only available for charities that submit ‘Part B’ of the charity commission annual return in England and Wales, which is mandatory for those with an annual income over £500,000.

Given that so many WGCs operate on far smaller incomes than this, it is hard to get an accurate picture of paid staffing numbers from this data.

However, the WGCs with valid Part B data (328 – 2.8 per cent of all charities with valid Part B data) recorded a combined number of 20,900 employees (2.06 per cent of all 11,516 charities with valid data).

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## MAIN AREAS OF FOCUS

We classified all of the WGCs from across the UK into 15 different sub-groups, based on their main area of work, and using their activities description from the relevant register of charities.

The number of organisations classified into each category, their combined income, and their median income are listed in Table 2.1.



The most common type of WGC we have termed ‘Social’, which includes large numbers of Women’s Institutes and Girlguiding organisations, as well as Inner Wheel groups, Townswomen’s Guilds, and Women’s Clubs.



WGCs working towards ‘Ending Violence Against Women and Girls’ (EVAWG) are also relatively common. This includes refuges, rape crisis centres, Women’s Aid, and a range of other services working with survivors.



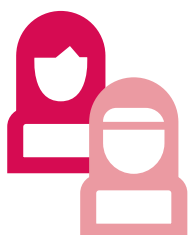
‘Health’ focused WGCs include organisations providing services relating to predominantly female health conditions such as breast cancer, maternity and pregnancy services, abortion providers, and women specific mental health services.



**‘Funding and resources’ focused organisations are largely small grant makers, providing gifts and endowments to women in need or organisations working with women.**



**Education, training and employment’ WGCs include many charities set up to support either female pupils or female-only schools, either via fundraising, governance, or by providing bursaries and scholarships. There are also a smaller number of adult training organisations specifically for women.**



**We wanted to be able to identify separately organisations that explicitly work with ‘Black and minoritised women and girls’, given that we know many of the disadvantages faced by women intersect with, and are compounded by, characteristics such as race and ethnicity. As such, where this category overlaps with others, such as women’s centres, support groups and health services, we have prioritised applying this category instead.**



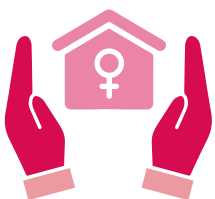
**‘International’ WGCs include a mixture of small funds set up by diaspora and religious groups to support connected communities abroad, as well as large international development charities and service providers such as Camfed International.**



**‘Homeless and housing’ focused WGCs range from organisations providing accommodation directly to women, to small funds which support housing costs for small numbers of women.**



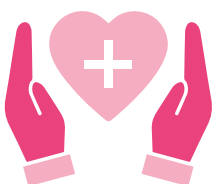
**‘Faith or moral welfare’** is a very diverse category of mainly religiously inspired educational groups, ‘Mothers’ Unions’, and groups providing support to a particular place of worship.



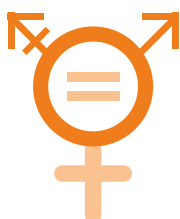
**‘General welfare’** groups include women’s centres and support groups, often locally based within a particular community. There is some overlap with EAWG category, but these organisations generally offer a relatively wide range of services and activities for women within a physical setting, such as advice services, health and wellbeing activities, and social events.



**‘Arts’** refers to general cultural and creative activities, most commonly choirs and other forms of musical performance, but also theatre or crafting groups. These organisations are relatively low in number, but this may be because many such groups operate without formally registering as charities.



**‘Women facing additional disadvantage’** is a diverse category that encompasses a variety of social welfare-oriented activities. It includes groups set up to support women with their sexuality or gender identity, as well as those working in the sex industry, women affected by the criminal justice system, including offenders and ex-offenders, lone parents, and women with disabilities.



**‘Gender equality’** focused WGCs includes campaigning and advocacy groups, women’s professional networks, and representative bodies. Although relatively small in number, this group of organisations works to directly target underlying inequalities and discrimination against women.



We found relatively few WGCs based around women's sport or physical exercise, though this again may be because they choose not to register as charities<sup>9</sup>.



Finally, there is a small group of organisations that feature groups of women fundraising or allocating funds for other causes, which we have called 'Giving to others'.

#### **BOX 2.2: OUTLIERS**

For the purposes of comparing these categories, we temporarily removed nine organisations with an income over £10 million from this section.

These organisations had a disproportionate impact and risked making the results misleading. This was particularly pronounced for the 'International' category, which contains some extremely large international organisations registered as WGCs in the UK. They are discussed instead in the in the following section on WGC size.

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<sup>9</sup> It is difficult to identify women specific sports clubs, however, in alternative lists such as Community Amateur Sports Clubs, due to a lack of detailed data.



**TABLE 2.1: TYPES OF WGC BY NUMBER, TOTAL INCOME, AND MEDIAN INCOME**

Source: The charity registers of England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland

Type of WGC	Number of WGCs	Total income (£m)	Median income (£)
Social	4,460	46	1,385
EVAWG	532	368	407,117
Health	385	88	24,824
Funding and resources	282	16	1,027
Education, training and employment	258	27	11,712
Black and minoritised women and girls	231	46	32,000
International	219	49	18,678
Housing and homelessness	194	29	27,395
Faith or moral welfare	152	34	32,283
General welfare	112	45	106,830
Arts	64	3	6,357
Women facing additional disadvantage	64	33	183,297
Gender equality	60	14	55,125
Sport	37	2	17,016
Giving to others	20	1	10,559
<b>All</b>	<b>7,070</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>2,391</b>

## SHARE OF INCOME AND NUMBER OF WGCs

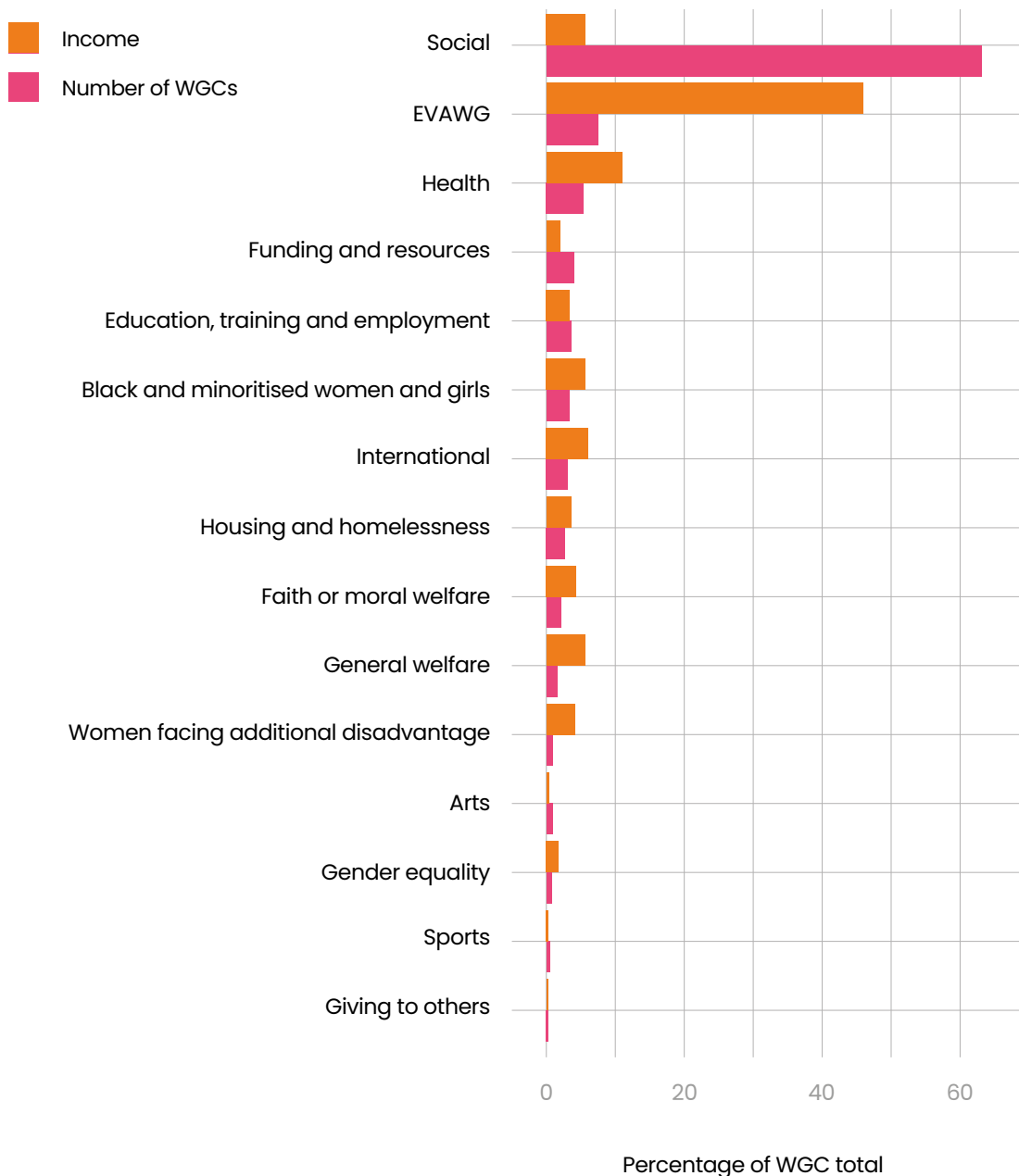
Figure 2.3 shows a breakdown of WGC numbers and total income between each category.

The first series shows the combined income of all WGCs within each category, as a percentage of the total combined income recorded by WGCs in 2021. This shows us which areas of focus account for the largest amount of total WGC income.

The second is the number of WGCs within each category, as a percentage of the total number of WGCs. This shows us which areas of focus account for the largest number of WGCs.

### FIGURE 2.3: TYPES OF WGC BY NUMBER AND TOTAL INCOME

Source: The charity registers of England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.  
Base: 7,079 WGCs, £1,3bn total income.



In many cases, the amount of income accounted for by WGCs in each category is broadly proportionate to the number of organisations. For example, categories with a low number of organisations, such as sport or gender equality, generally also account for a low amount of total WGC income.

There are some exceptions, however, where a large number of organisations account for only a small amount of income, indicating a low average size. This is particularly the case for ‘Social’ organisations, which contains many small associations and groups of volunteers.

In the opposite direction, some organisations account for notably more income than their frequency would suggest. This suggests a relatively high average size of organisations. Prominent examples include WGCs working in the areas of ‘EVAWG’, ‘Health’, ‘General Welfare’, and ‘Women facing additional disadvantage’. These are generally the areas in which we are more likely to find charities with staff, providing services, and where physical buildings are usually necessary. The women and girls that these organisations work with may have complex needs, requiring specialist staff such as therapists and legal experts.

## AVERAGE INCOME

To explore differences in average size more directly, Figure 2.4 shows the average income for WGCs within each category, which varies substantially. The mean and median (see Box 2.3) generally show a similar trend between the categories.

As expected from Figure 2.3 in the previous section, EVAWG, ‘Additionally disadvantaged groups of women’ and ‘General Welfare’ are the categories with the highest average income. Again, this reflects that they are areas often delivering professional, staffed services to women and girls facing additional disadvantage.

In categories such as Art and Social, in contrast, the average income is relatively low, reflecting their associational nature and reliance upon volunteers or members.

Where the mean is relatively high compared to the median, such as ‘International’ or ‘Health’, this may mean that there are a relatively small number of organisations with higher incomes drawing up the average.

### BOX 2.3: AVERAGES

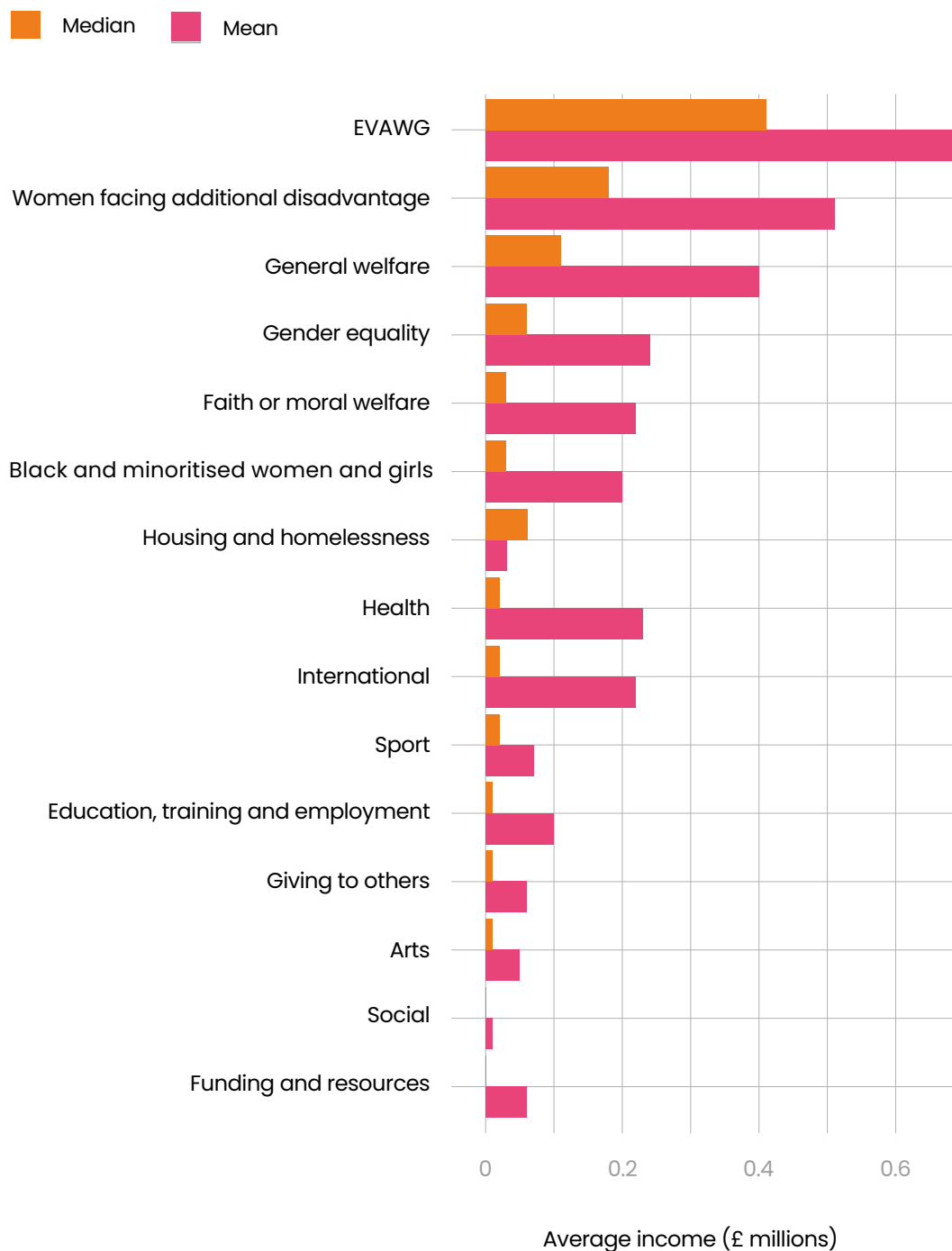
We use two measures of the average income in this report, the median and the mean.

The **mean** is the classic average and is calculated by dividing the total income by the number of organisations. The mean is widely understood, but a few large outliers can drag up the value for the entire group.

The **median** is calculated by ordering all the organisations according to their income and taking value for the middle organisation(s). The median is less influenced by outliers in the data.

## FIGURE 2.4: TYPES OF WGC BY MEAN AND MEDIAN INCOME

Source: The charity registers of England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.  
Base: 7,079 WGCs



## WGC SIZE AND INCOME

We classified WGCs using the income-based size categories that NCVO created for their Civil Society Almanac publication. The thresholds for these categories increase by multiples of ten each time.

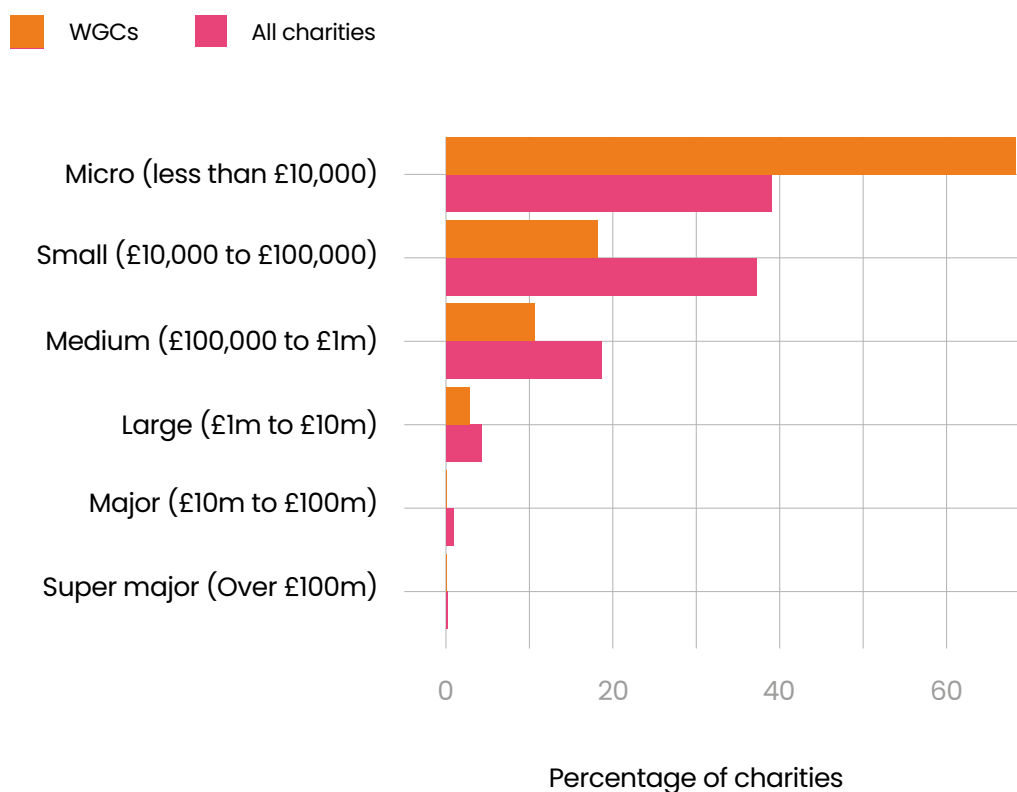
**TABLE 2.2: WGC AND CHARITY COUNTS, BY CHARITY SIZE**

Source: The charity registers of England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland

Size category (income brackets)	Number of WGCs	Percentage of WGCs	Number of charities (all)	Percentage of charities (all)
Micro (less than £10,000)	4,838	68.3	70,153	39.0
Small (£10,000 to £100,000)	1,285	18.2	66,900	37.2
Medium (£100,000 to £1m)	752	10.6	33,473	18.6
Large (£1m to £10m)	195	2.8	7,775	4.3
Major (£10m to £100m)	8	0.1	1,607	0.9
Super major (Over £100m)	1	0.0	145	0.1
<b>All</b>	<b>7,079</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>180,053</b>	<b>100</b>

**FIGURE 2.5: WGCs AND ALL CHARITY NUMBERS, BY SIZE**

Source: The charity registers of England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.  
Base: 7,079 WGCs and 180,053 UK charities



**The results suggest that WGCs are smaller, in terms of average income, compared to other charities. The median income of a WGC is £2,400, compared to a median income for all charities of £18,600.**

This is in large part because the women and girls sector appears to have more micro-organisations and fewer organisations at higher size levels, compared to charities as a whole (see Figure 2.5). 68 per cent of WGCs are micro in size, which means they have an annual income of less than £10,000. This is significantly higher than an equivalent figure of 39 per cent for all charities. At the other end of the spectrum, only 0.2 per cent of WGCs are major or super major sized, with an income over £10m.

Put another way, it appears that WGCs are particularly prevalent amongst the associational and volunteer-dependent part of the VCSE sector (6.9 per cent of all micro charities are WGCs), but less so at the very large end of the income spectrum (0.5 per cent of all Major and Super Major charities are WGCs).

We also explored in Table 2.3 how the focus of WGCs differed at the different size levels of charity.

**TABLE 2.3: WGC TYPE BY CHARITY SIZE – TOP THREE PER SIZE CATEGORY**

Source: The charity registers of England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

Base: 4,838 micro-WGCs, 1,285 small-WGCs, 752 medium WGCs, 195 WGCs.

Size category (income brackets)	WGC type	Percent
Micro (less than £10,000)	Social	81
	Funding and resources	4
	Health	3
Small (£10,000 to £100,000)	Social	36
	Health	10
	Housing and homelessness	9
Medium (£100,000 to £1m)	EVAWG	35
	Health	13
	Black and minoritised women and girls	10
Large (£1m to £10m)	EVAWG	54
	Health	9
	Faith or moral welfare	6





Many of the micro-sized WGCs (less than £10,000 annual income) have a ‘Social’ focus, such as Girlguiding organisations, Women’s Institutes, and Inner Wheels (a type of local charitable service and fundraising club).

Small funds, grant makers and foundations for women in poverty or other women’s organisations are also relatively common. Although especially prevalent for WGCs, this skew is not unique to the women and girls sector. Micro-organisations are the most common amongst all charities and tend to be either small associations or grant makers. Small WGCs (£10,000 to £100,000) are also most likely to be ‘Social’ organisations, but we also begin to see a higher proportion of ‘Health’ related support and fundraising groups, as well as organisations with a focus on ‘Housing and homelessness’. These organisations may begin to start hiring small numbers of part time staff with which to support activities or provide services.

The pattern shifts, however, amongst medium sized WGCs (£100,000 to £1m), where EAWG accounts for the largest group of activities. Health also remains relatively high, along with ‘Black and minoritised women and girls’. This suggests that once charities reach this income level, there tends to be a shift away from member-based associations towards more service providing charities, which are likely to employ staff.

The same pattern is seen amongst large WGCs, though with even more emphasis on EAWG and health charities. ‘Black and minoritised women and girls’ is one of the top three categories for medium organisations (10.2 per cent), perhaps because this category itself includes some health and EAWG organisations due to being given priority during classification. This category is less common, however, amongst larger WGCs (5.1 per cent).

The very largest charities, which were excluded from Figures 2.3 and 2.4 in the previous section, are termed either major (£10m to £100m) or super-major (over £100m). Only a small handful of WGCs match this category, as shown in Table 2.4. ‘MSI Reproductive Choices’, which provides contraception and abortion services globally, has the largest income of any WGC, at £294 million in 2021 and is the only ‘super-major’ WGC. The WGC with the next highest income is ‘Camfed International’, a global education charity.

The remainder of the major charities are UK based, mainly focussing on health, especially reproductive and sexual health, and EAWG. Some of these organisations are likely to be providing large scale service contracts across the UK.

**TABLE 2.4: 10 LARGEST WGCs BY LATEST INCOME<sup>10</sup>**

Source: The charity registers of England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

Charity name	Latest income (£)	WGC type
MSI REPRODUCTIVE CHOICES	294,440,000	International
CAMFED INTERNATIONAL	61,655,929	International
BREAST CANCER NOW	43,022,000	Health
BRITISH PREGNANCY ADVISORY SERVICE	37,889,491	Health
REFUGE	33,983,581	EVAWG
THE GUIDE ASSOCIATION	19,486,000	Social
SOLACE WOMEN'S AID	16,265,804	EVAWG
THE NATIONAL CHILDBIRTH TRUST	10,413,000	Health
WOMEN'S AID FEDERATION OF ENGLAND	10,091,885	EVAWG

## INCOME CONCENTRATION

Given that the women and girls sector has relatively few very large charities, major and super-major WGCs account for less total income than they do amongst all UK charities. Nevertheless, eight major and one super major WGC (0.1 per cent of WGCs) still account for 39 per cent of all WGC income (compared to one per cent of UK charities accounting for 64.0 per cent of all charity income).

At the other end of the spectrum micro and small WGCs are more common amongst WGCs (87 per cent) than they are for UK charities generally (76 per cent). As such they account for 3.9 per cent of all WGC income, as opposed to 2.7 per cent amongst charities generally.

<sup>10</sup> Note that several of these organisations represent large federations or networks, so may distribute some of their income amongst their local counterparts.

**TABLE 2.5: INCOME CONCENTRATION AMONGST WGCs AND CHARITIES, BY CHARITY SIZE**

Source: The charity registers of England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

Size category (income brackets)	WGC group income (£ million)	Percentage of WGC income	All charities group income (£ million)	Percentage of all charities' income
Micro (less than £10,000)	9	0.7	190	0.2
Small (£10,000 to £100,000)	43	3.2	2,074	2.5
Medium (£100,000 to £1m)	284	21.4	8,521	10.2
Large (£1m to £10m)	464	35.0	19,380	23.1
Major (£10m to £100m)	233	17.5	30,499	36.4
Super major (Over £100m)	294	22.2	23,095	27.6
<b>All</b>	<b>1,327</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>83,759</b>	<b>100</b>

It is worth stressing, however, that this disparity does not necessarily mean that larger WGCs are claiming 'too large' a share of WGC income. Both large and small organisations may be underfunded if the amount of income flowing into the sector as a whole is too low.

Large and small organisations have different strengths, and they often fish within very different pools for their funding. Very small social organisations might not need particularly large levels of income to meet their goals, whereas providing services to others, particularly in a professional setting, can involve high costs.

The picture is perhaps more complicated when considering small, local organisations with a low number of (often part-time) staff, versus larger professional agencies operating at scale regionally or nationally. We know that being small is what gives many smaller organisations their flexibility, agility, and community knowledge, while larger organisations offer visibility, capacity, and scale (Dayson et al. 2018). While the interests of large and small organisations can sometimes come into conflict, when relations work well they can be part of a mutually supportive arrangement.

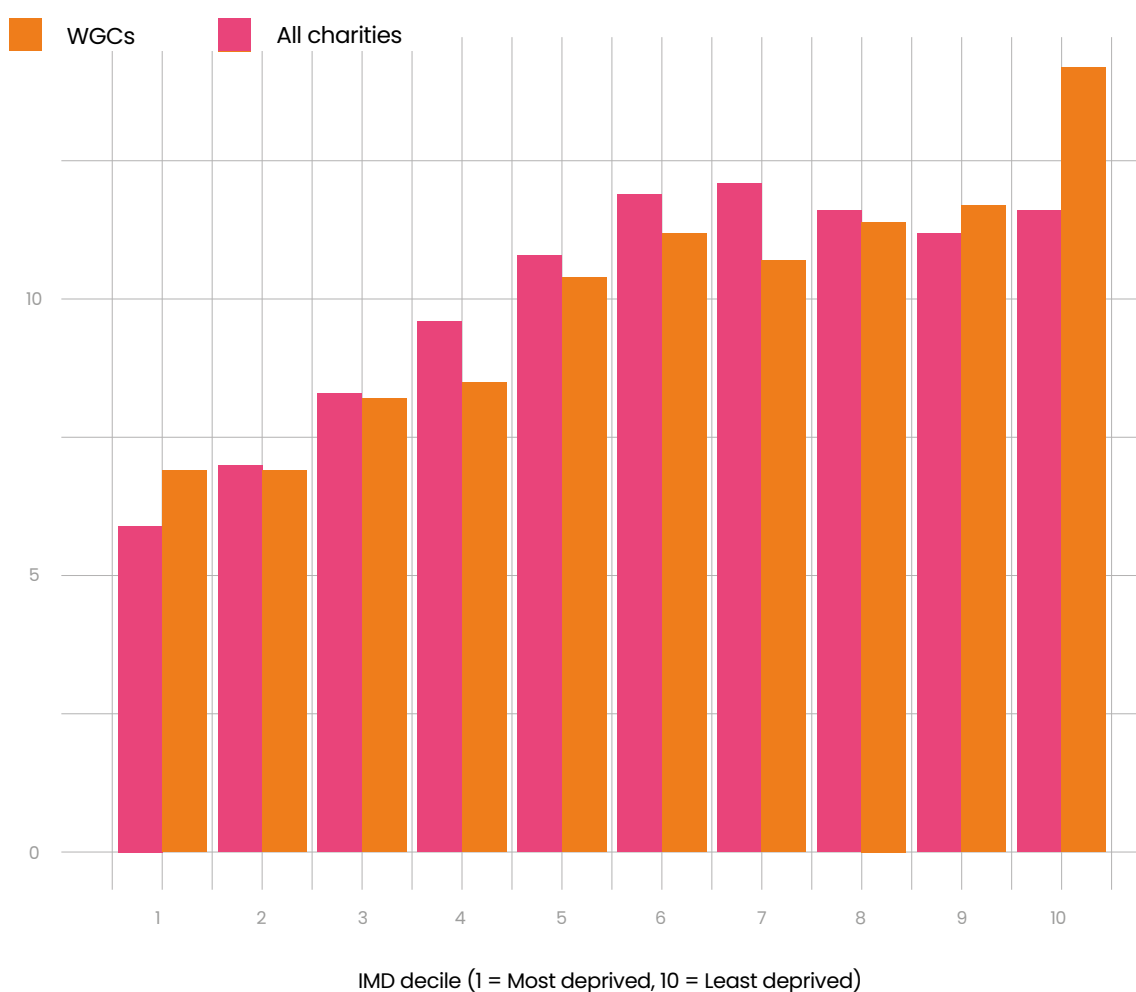
## WHERE ARE WGCs LOCATED?

IMD stands for the Index of Multiple Deprivation and takes a range of statistical measures to rank all local neighbourhood areas according to their overall levels of deprivation. As with all charities, WGCs in England are more likely to be registered in less deprived postcodes according to the IMD (see Figure 2.6). Note, however, the ‘headquarters’ effect means that their postcode may not always reflect where they do their work, or where their beneficiaries live.

It is worth noting that there are different indices of multiple deprivation for England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. Because the different nations have different overall levels of deprivation, these indices are not directly comparable. The ten per cent most deprived areas in England may be more or less deprived in absolute terms, when compared to the ten per cent most deprived in the other nations. We have shown the results for WGCs and charities registered in England in Figure 2.6, as this accounts for the largest number of charities, but the general trend is the same across the four nations.

**FIGURE 2.6: IMD OF REGISTERED ADDRESS, FOR WGCs AND ALL CHARITIES IN ENGLAND AND WALES**

Source: Charity register for England and Wales and Index of Multiple Deprivation for England, 2019. Base: 4,563 WGOs, 139,051 (all charities in England with valid data)





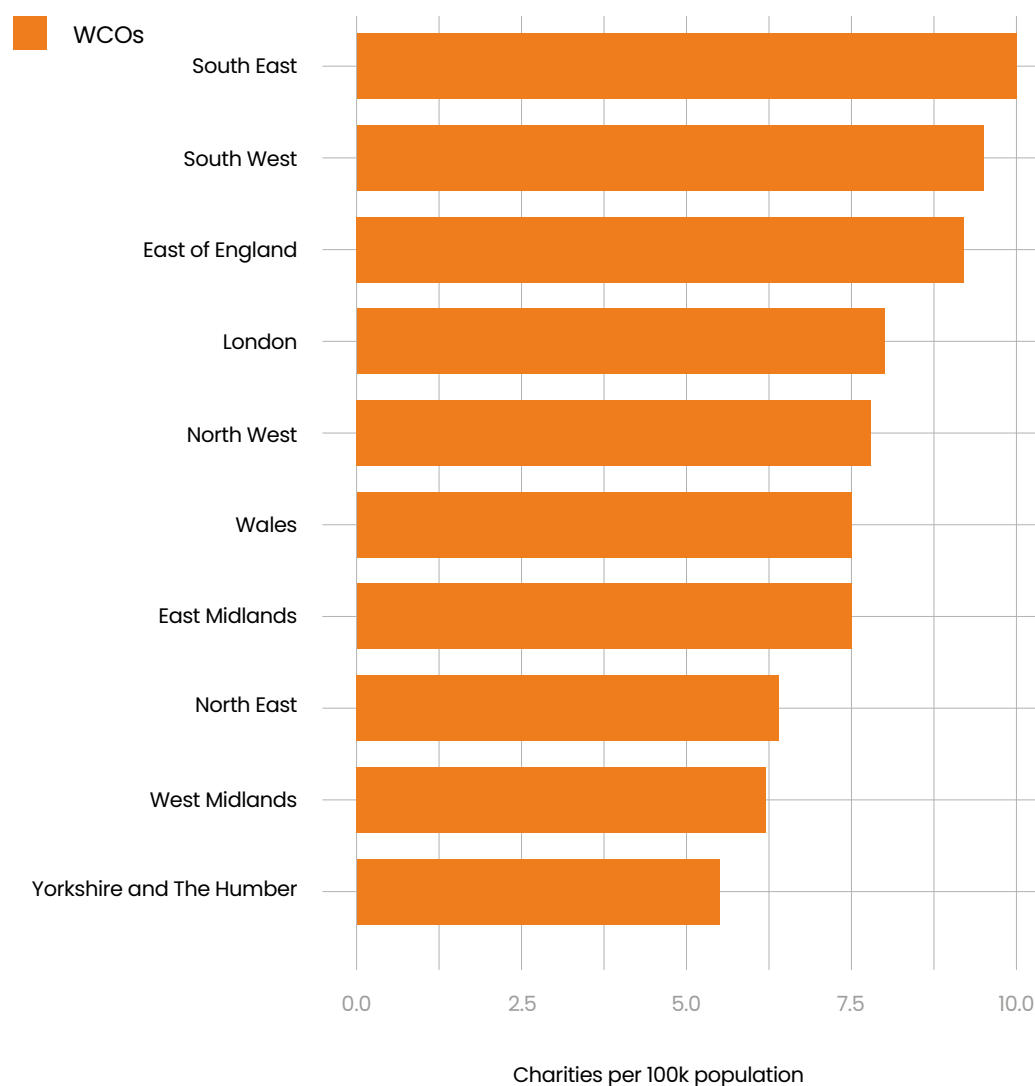
WGCs are also more likely to be registered in urban areas, again in line with charities generally. 27.5 per cent of WGCs are registered in rural areas, compared to 29.9 per cent of all English and Welsh charities.

We found a higher ratio of WGCs per head of population in Northern Ireland (29.8 per 100,000) and Scotland (25.8 per 100,000), compared to England (8.1 per 100,000) and Wales (7.8 per 100,000). This may, however, be due to the different registration requirements within each regulatory area, as discussed in the methodology.

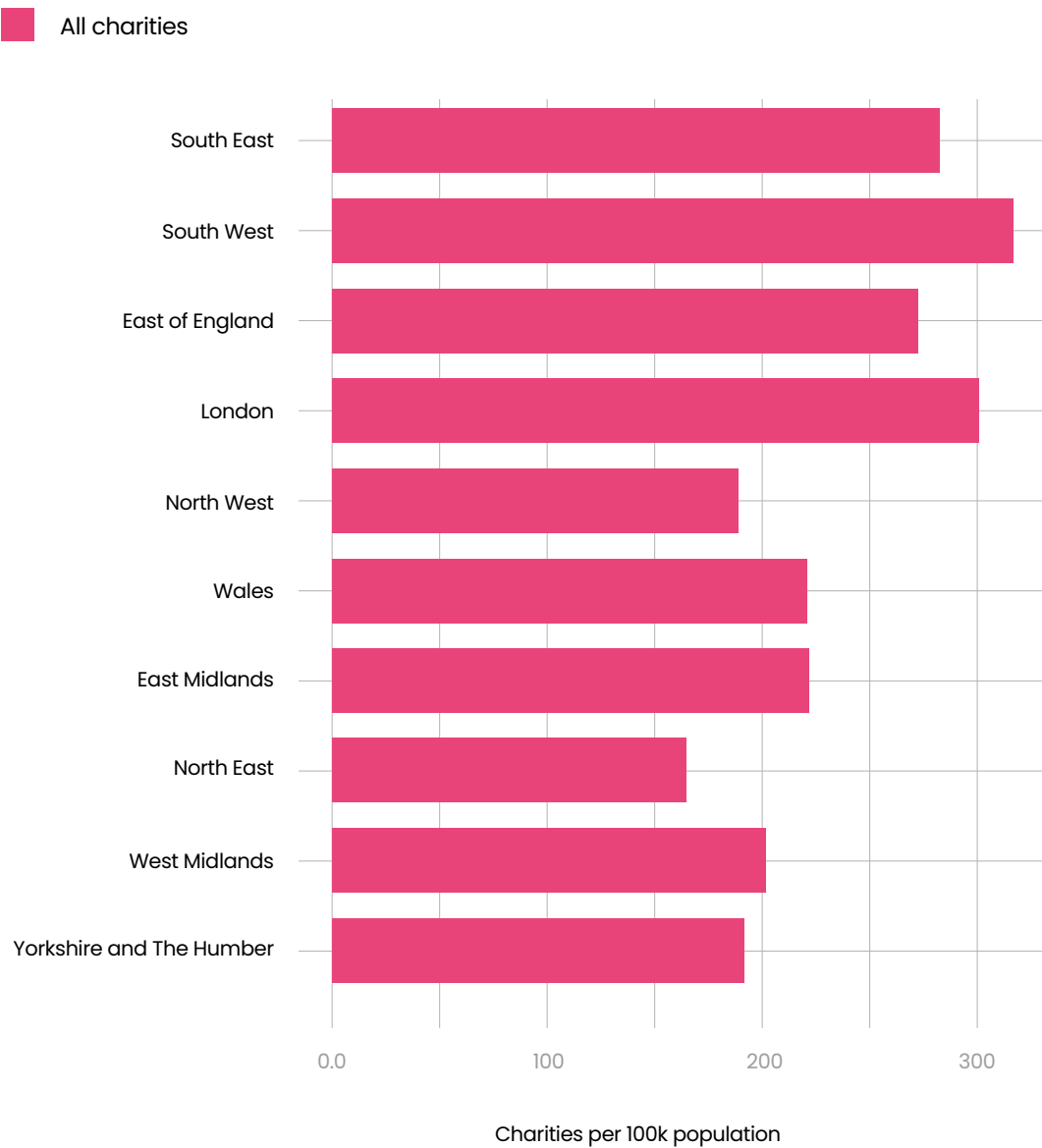
Within England and Wales, WGCs are more common in some regions, such as the South East and London, and less common in Yorkshire and the Humber, the West Midlands and the North East. Again, this approximately reflects the picture of charities generally.

## FIGURE 2.7: REGION / COUNTRY OF WGCs BASED ON REGISTERED POSTCODE

Source: Charity register for England and Wales, ONS Estimates of the population for the UK, England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland in 2021. Base: 4,802 (WGCs), 147,294 (all charities in England and Wales with valid data).



**FIGURE 2.7: REGION / COUNTRY OF WGCS BASED ON REGISTERED POSTCODE**  
**CONTINUED**



# 3. How are WGOs funded?

## CHARITY COMMISSION DATA

For charities that complete ‘Part B’ of the annual return in England and Wales, generally those with an annual income of over £500,000, we have more detail on their income sources than for smaller charities or charities from Scotland and Northern Ireland.

As already discussed, charity income is concentrated within the largest organisations. A large majority, 86 per cent, of total WGC income is accounted for by organisations over the ‘Part B’ size threshold (£500,000). This means that there is still value in exploring the income sources of these larger charities, even though they only account for only six per cent of WGCs in terms of number of organisations.

**TABLE 3.1: AMOUNT RECEIVED FROM DIFFERENT INCOME SOURCES**

Source: Part B of annual returns in England and Wales, 409 charities

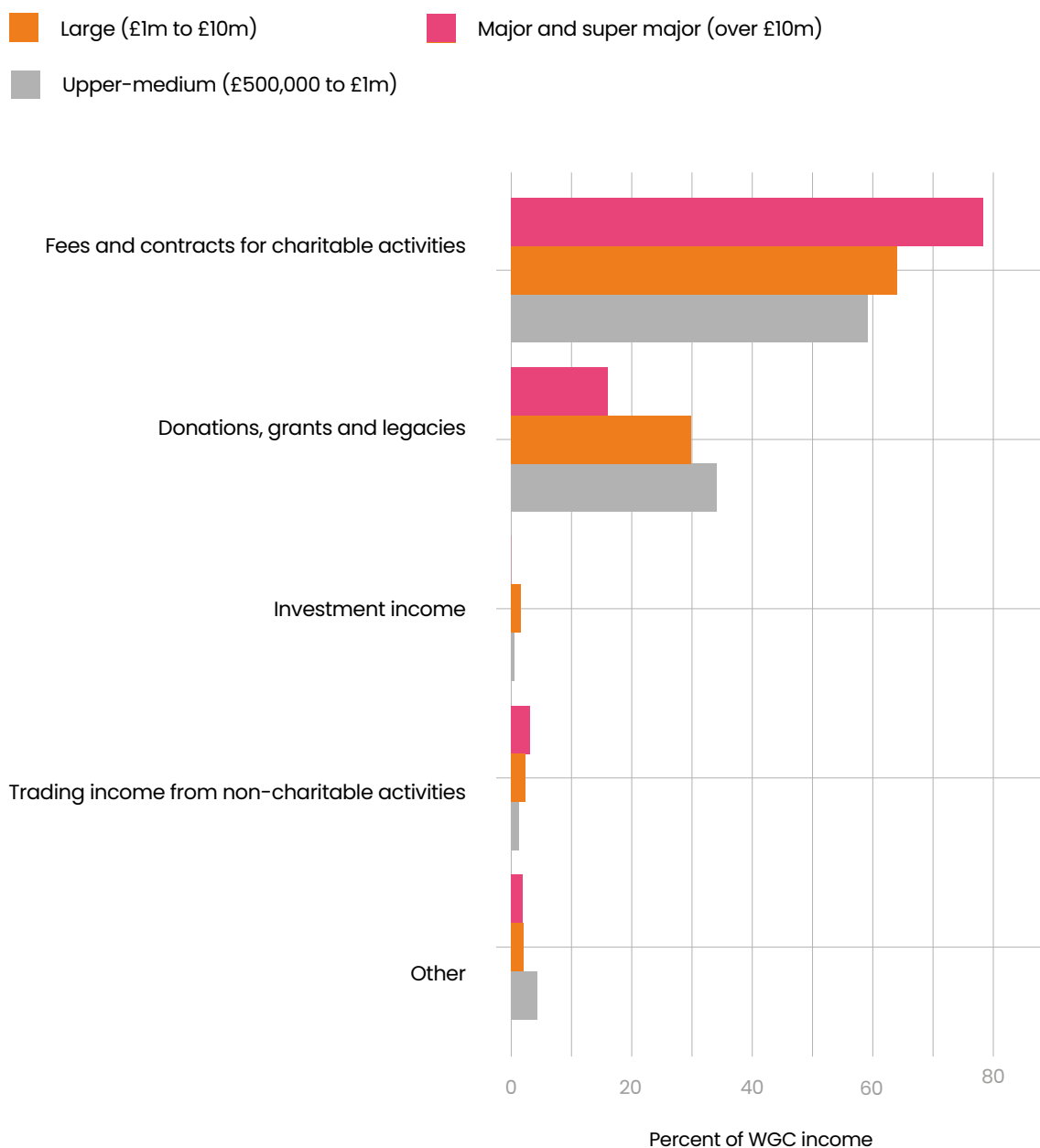
Income source	Amount (£ million)	Percent of WGC funding
Fees and contracts for charitable activities	726	71
Donations, grants and legacies	240	23
Trading income from non-charitable activities (such as charity shops)	28	3
Investment income	10	1
<b>All sources</b>	<b>1,027</b>	<b>100</b>

Fees and contracts for conducting charitable activities accounts for a far larger percentage of WGC funding than the next highest category, ‘donations, grants and legacies’. The former category includes activities such as contracts to provide EAWG services, or fees from individuals to attend a training event.

We also know, however, that these figures are likely to be disproportionately affected by a small number of the largest organisations, especially those working in the fields of health, EAWG and international provision. The number of larger WGCs in each sub-group are too low for analysis by area of focus, but it is possible to disaggregate somewhat by WGC size.

**FIGURE 3.1: AMOUNT RECEIVED FROM DIFFERENT INCOME SOURCES, BY SIZE**

Source: Part B annual returns, register of charities for England and Wales. Bases: £112m, £393m, £518m





Breaking the results down between medium<sup>11</sup>, large, and major charities (including super-major), we can see that fees and contracts make up most of the income for all size groups. For many organisations it is perhaps difficult to reach the £500,000 income level without receiving a moderate amount from fees and contracts, given the difficulty of generating income from grants and donations for some causes (Salamon, 1987).

As shown in Figure 3.1, however, the proportional reliance upon donations grants and legacies, however, is notably larger for the upper-medium sized charities than it is for the large or major categories. It is possible, therefore, that if we were able to go even further down the income scale, reliance upon ‘donations, grants and legacies’ would continue to increase, perhaps even overtaking reliance on ‘fees and contracts’. Unfortunately, this data is not currently collected for smaller organisations, so we have no way of knowing for sure. If true, however, it would be consistent with existing research which highlights the value of grant funding for smaller organisations (Dayson et al. 2018).

## 360GIVING GRANT DATA

### How much grant funding goes to WGOs?

Information on grants from major VCSE sector and some public sector funders is available via the 360Giving database.

Trusts, foundations, and some public bodies submit their grants data to 360Giving in a standardised format, which is then compiled and made available for download. In this section, we have focused on grants awarded in 2021, though drawdown may occur over multiple years.

#### BOX 3.1: 360GIVING COVERAGE

360Giving data is a relatively new resource, founded in 2015, which has provided a way of exploring aggregate grant funding within the VCSE for the first time. Submitting data is not compulsory, however, which means that coverage is not entirely comprehensive. Funders take different amounts of time to submit their data, and not all funders complete all fields.

Central government departments have committed to publishing their grants data, but at the time of downloading the 360Giving data (October 2022) the majority of grant data from central government departments for 2021 had not yet been published. Only grants from the first quarter of the year, belonging to the previous government financial year, were available. When grants from the remainder of the year are published, we can expect the gross amounts of funding recorded in the 360Giving data to increase substantially.

Despite this health warning, the data still provides informative new findings on the women and girls sector’s funding and provides a good starting point for exploring grant income into the sector, which can be expanded on as more data becomes available.

<sup>11</sup> Note that due to part B of the annual return only being compulsory for charities with an income over £500,000, we only capturing the upper half of the medium income bracket, as defined by the NCVO.

# 55,000

grants awarded in 2021 were recorded on 360Giving, as of October 2022, worth a total of £4.1 billion.

# 2,710

**(4.8 per cent of all grants)** of these grants were focused on women and girls, collectively worth £98.1 million (2.4 percent of all grants by value)<sup>12</sup>.

Note that this includes multi-year grants, so not all the money would necessarily have been spent in 2021. Equally, some grants awarded prior to 2021 will still have been providing ongoing funds to organisations.

# 1,799

grants were made directly to 1,305 WGOs (66.4 per cent of those focused on women and girls), worth £73.4 million (74.8 per cent by value). Out of all 360Giving grants awarded in 2021 and published so far, this means that 3.2 per cent were made to WGOs, or 1.8 per cent of the total amount awarded.

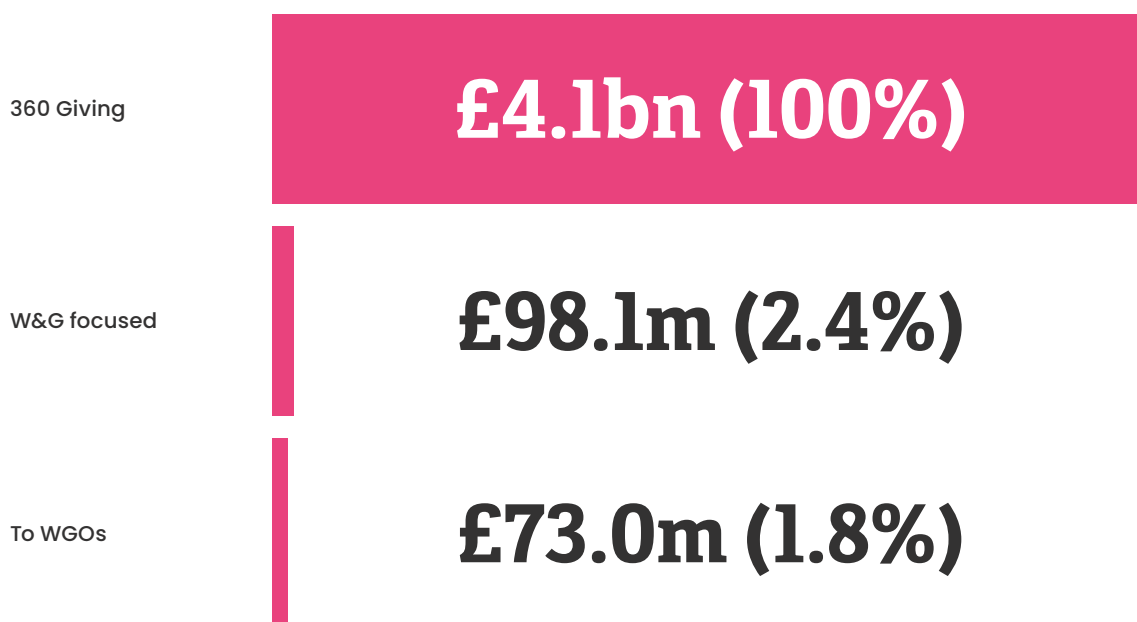
However, 911 women's and girls' focused grants (33.6 per cent of those focused on women and girls), worth £24.7 million (25.2 per cent by value), were also made to non-WGOs.

This equates to 1.6 per cent of all 360Giving grants, or 0.6 per cent by value. One third of grants for work with women and girls, therefore, is going to more general organisations who are not WGOs.

<sup>12</sup> As part of the research, some additional funders who were not yet on 360Giving kindly provided details of their giving to women's and girls' focused causes. These grants totalled to a further £2.7 million, in addition to the 360Giving figure provided here.

### FIGURE 3.2: AMOUNT OF 360 GRANT FUNDING TO WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' FOCUSED ISSUES AND WGOs

Source: 360Giving data, grants awarded in 2021. Base: £4.1bn



Based on the data submitted to 360Giving so far, around 35 per cent of grants to WGOs were awarded by lottery distributors (the National Lottery Community Fund and Sport England), or 36 per cent by grant value.

55 per cent of the grants to WGOs came from VCSE grant making organisations, trusts and foundations (besides the lottery distributors), making up 44 per cent of the total value of grants awarded. Although most of the central government data is yet to be published, central government departments (namely the Ministry of Justice and Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport) already accounted for nine per cent of the grants awarded to WGOs in 2021 and for 19 per cent of the total value of grants awarded, suggesting a relatively large average size of grant.

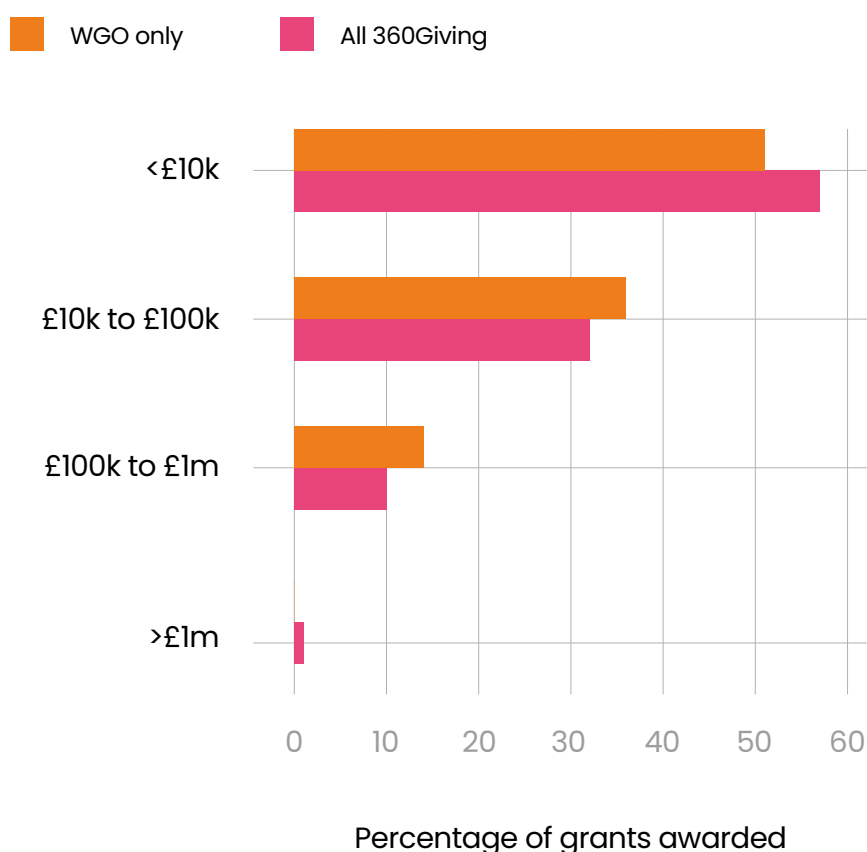
## SIZE OF GRANTS

The majority of grants to WGOs, as for all organisations, were at the smaller end of the size spectrum. 51 per cent of grants to WGOs and 57 per cent of all 360Giving grants were less than £10,000 (see Figure 3.3).

At the other end of the scale, there were no grants above £1 million to WGOs, whereas one per cent of all 360Giving grants were over £1 million.

**FIGURE 3.3: GRANTS TO WGOs VS ALL 360GIVING GRANTS, BY SIZE OF GRANT**

Source: 360Giving data, Base: £73.0m (WGO), £4.1bn (all 360Giving)



For both grants to WGOs, and 360Giving grants generally, the median grant size was just under £10,000 (see Table 3.2). The mean grant value is higher for all grants (£73,217) compared to grants to WGOs (£40,804) indicating a higher number of very large grants for non-WGOs.

**TABLE 3.2: AVERAGE SIZE OF GRANTS TO WGOs AND FOR ALL 360GIVING DATA**

Source: 360Giving data, Base: £73.0m (WGO), £4.1bn (all 360Giving)

	Mean	Median
Grants to WGOs	£40,804	£9,994
All 360Giving grants	£73,217	£9,500

## MAIN AREA OF FOCUS FOR GRANTS

We explored the distribution of the grants awarded in 2021 to different types of WGO, using the fifteen ‘area of focus’ categories outlined earlier in the report. Note, however, that these figures could change significantly when the remainder of the central government grants become available. For example, the number of grants relating to the ‘International’ category, is likely to increase once more Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office grant data is submitted.

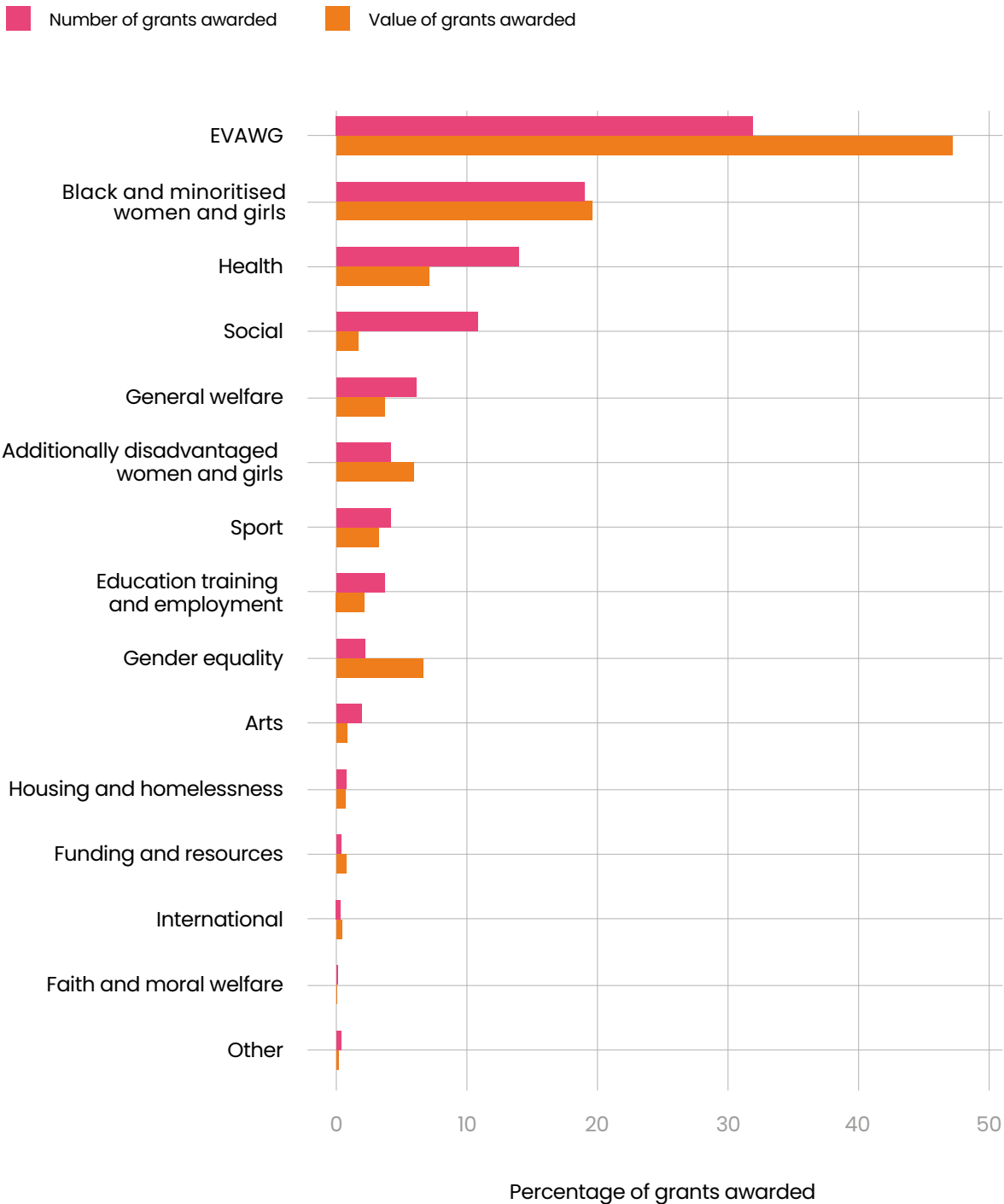
From the data currently available, we found that WGOs focused primarily on EVAWG received the most grants, in terms of number and value, followed by grants to organisations focused on projects for Black and minoritised women and girls (see Figure 3.4). It is again worth noting that this category has been prioritised over others during classification, so a grant to a health provider for black women would be categorised as ‘Black and minoritised women and girls’, not ‘Health’. This is likely to increase the values for this category compared to others, despite known issues with underfunding in this area (Domestic Abuse Commissioner, 2021; Banga, 2021).

EVAWG organisations received a relatively high value of grants, in comparison to the number of grants they received, likely a reflection of the costs involved in providing staffed services, often requiring specialist skills and support, and the costs involved in securing and maintaining buildings for these services.

In contrast, social organisations received higher numbers of grants but with a lower aggregate value. This reflects the results seen earlier in terms of organisational income.

**FIGURE 3.4: GRANTS TO WGOS BY ORGANISATION CATEGORY**

Source: 360Giving data, Base: 1,799 grants to WGOs



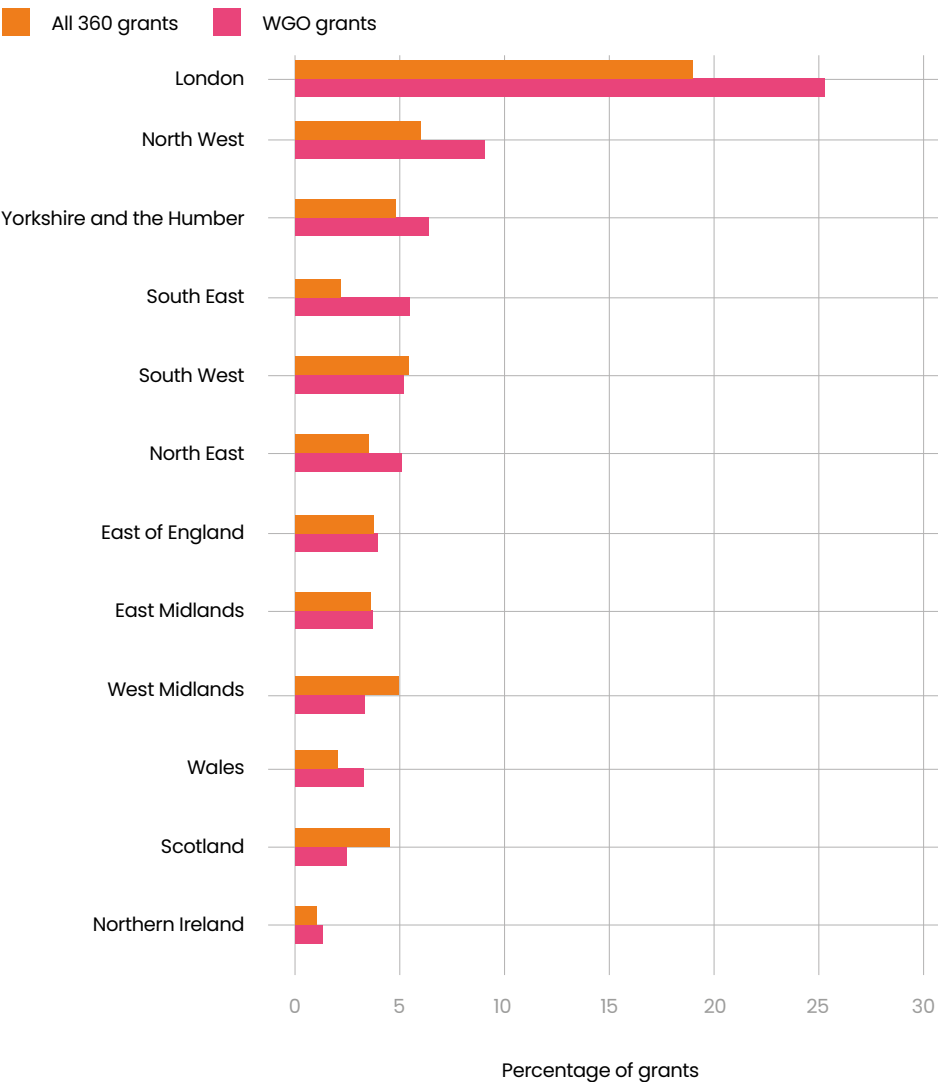
GRANT GEOGRAPHY

Compared to the distribution of WGOs, grant funding recorded on 360Giving is disproportionately focused on recipients registered in London, which may reflect funding to large national organisations with centrally located headquarters, as well as a higher number of EVAWG providers in London (Domestic Abuse Commissioner, 2022). Relatively small amounts of grant funding for the devolved administrations are recorded, though this may partly be because fewer public bodies have so far submitted data, especially outside of England.

It is worth noting, however, that many funders do not include a postcode (or any other small area identifier), meaning that there is a considerable amount of geographical data missing. 360Giving are aware of the challenges relating to geography data, including coverage and the headquarters effect, and are working to improve coverage (Galley, 2022).

FIGURE 3.5: GRANTS BY REGION

Base: 1,241 (grants to WGOs with valid geo-data), 38,857 (all 360Giving grants with valid geo-data)

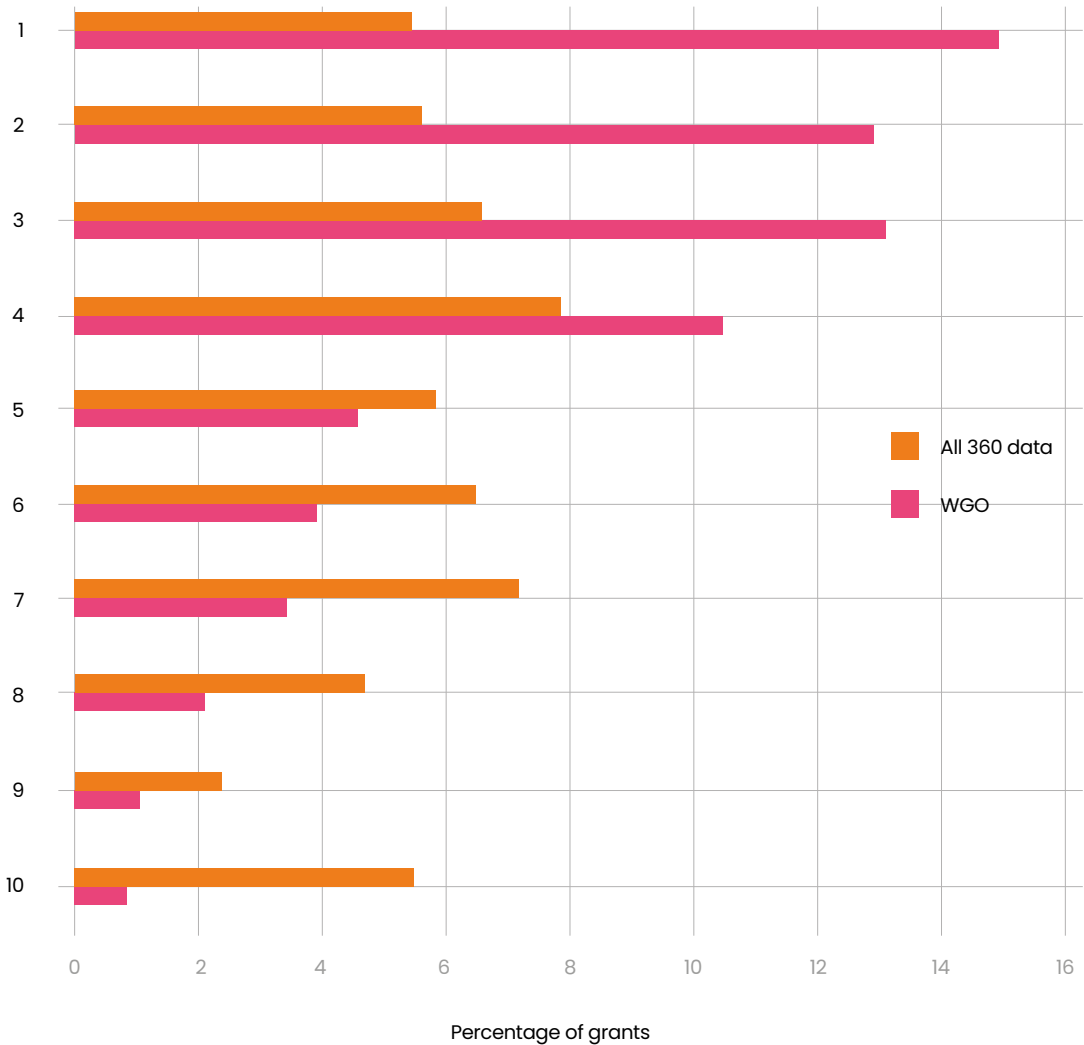


The distribution of WGCs shown in Figure 2.6 in the previous section, based on their registered postcodes, suggests that more were based in the least deprived areas. As a reminder, IMD stands for the Index of Multiple Deprivation and takes a range of statistical measures to rank all local neighbourhood areas according to their overall levels of deprivation.

The 360Giving data (Figure 3.6 below), in contrast, shows that more grants to WGOs are going to those in the more deprived areas (with the lowest IMD). The explanation for this apparent contradiction may be partly because larger organisations with headquarters in relatively deprived cities are more likely to receive grants, or because social organisations based in more rural, well-off areas are less likely to receive grant income. Grants recorded on 360Giving are also generally focused on policy areas associated more with disadvantage, such as EVAWG, which again fits with a tendency towards making grants in more deprived areas.

**FIGURE 3.6: GRANTS BY IMD DECILE (1 – MOST DEPRIVED, 10 – LEAST DEPRIVED)**

Base: 1,211 (grants to WGOs with valid geo-data), 38,857 (all 360Giving grants with valid geo-data)





## LARGEST GRANT FUNDERS

The National Lottery Community Fund is currently by far the biggest funder of WGOs within the existing 360Giving data, for grants awarded in 2021.

Despite having so far submitted data only up to the end of March 2021, the second highest funder is the Ministry of Justice. When further central government data is released, it is likely that it's total will increase further still, alongside other departments potentially entering the top ten.

Collectively, the top ten funders account for 78.6 per cent of all the grants made to WGOs in 2021, indicating the considerable influence these funders have over WGO funding in gross terms.

**TABLE 3.3: TOP TEN FUNDERS**

Source: 360Giving and Rosa grant data, grants awarded in 2021

Funder	Total 2021 grants (£m)
The National Lottery Community Fund	24.27
Ministry of Justice	13.32
Comic Relief	5.16
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation	3.92
The Henry Smith Charity	3.34
Rosa Fund <sup>13</sup>	2.34
The Tudor Trust	2.23
Sport England	1.84
Paul Hamlyn Foundation	1.83
Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales	1.55

<sup>13</sup> Rosa is currently working towards implementation of the 360Giving standard but provided data separately.

## 4. Government funding

### HOW MUCH GOVERNMENT FUNDING DO WGCS RECEIVE?

In addition to the government grants included in the 360Giving data, it is possible to draw some additional findings on government funding to English and Welsh WGCs by returning to the data from the Charity Commission.

All charities in England and Wales with an income over £10,000 are required to complete Part A of the annual return. This asks charities to record the number and total value of all government grants and contracts that they receive, from both local and central government. As such, we, have more direct information on this income source than we do for others outlined in the Section 3.

### TOTAL AMOUNTS

A total of £357 million of government funding was recorded by WGCs in their annual returns.

This includes £159 million (44.5 per cent) recorded as grant funding and £198 million (55.5 per cent) recorded as contract funding.

The distinction between these two types of income should be treated with caution, however, as charities have considerable latitude in whether they classify funding as a contract or grant in their accounts. In some cases, charities do not even appear to be consistent in how they record their income.

Nevertheless, it is clear that WGCs recorded many more individual grants than they did contracts. 155,474 grants were recorded, which would suggest a mean value per grant of £1,289.

In contrast, only 909 contracts were recorded, suggesting a mean value per contract of £178,090.

This suggests that government funding to the WGCs is made up of a high number of relatively small grants, and a comparatively low number of larger contracts.

Breaking the government funding down by the main area of focus for WGCs shows that the areas with the most government funding match those with the most funding over all (see Figure 2.3).

## £357m

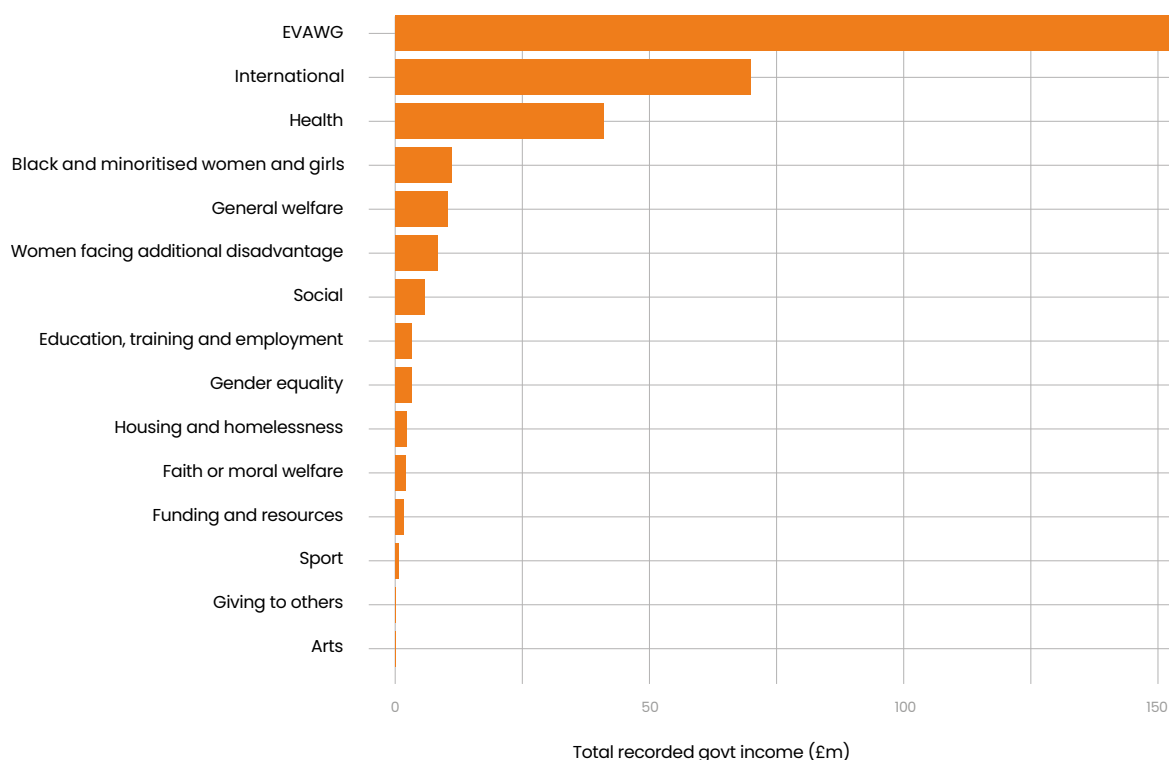
of government funding was recorded by WGCs in their annual returns

## 155,474

individual WGC grants were recorded with a mean value per grant of £1,289

**FIGURE 4.1: TOTAL GOVERNMENT INCOME, BY WGC TYPE**

Source: Part A annual returns, register of charities for England and Wales.

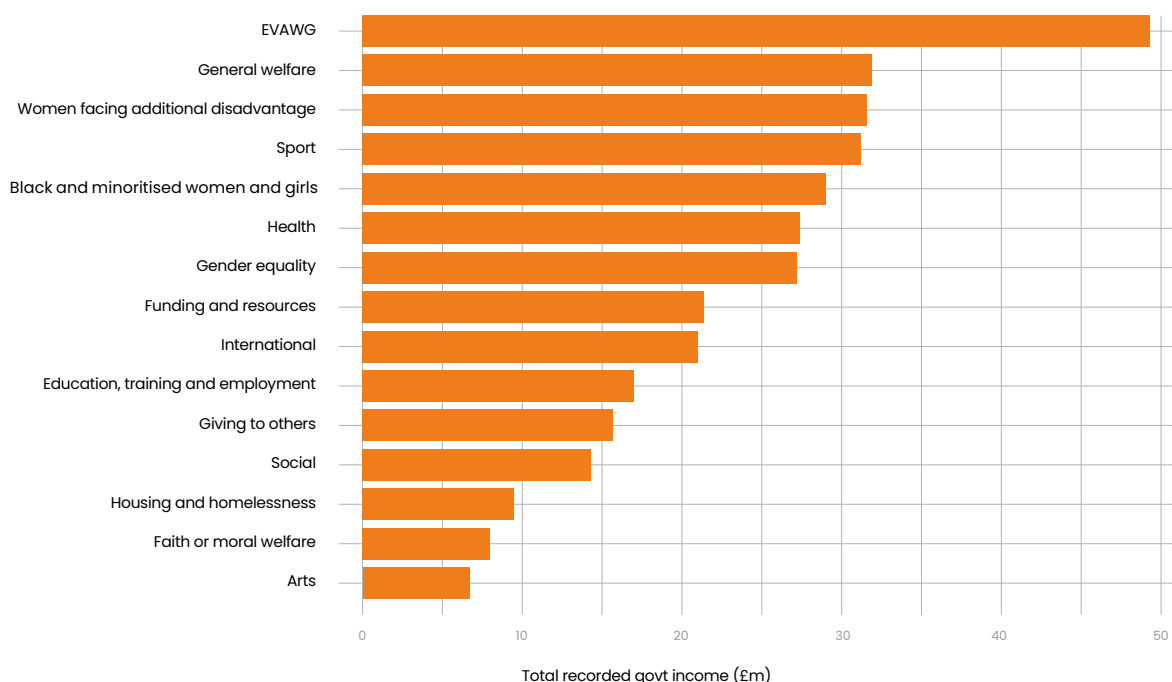


The percentage of total income accounted for by government funding, however, shows a more even picture. EVAWG is still the most reliant, as well as receiving the largest amount. ‘Health’ and ‘International’, however, receive large amounts of government funding, but are less reliant upon it.

Conversely, other areas receive comparatively little government income, but rely on it for a substantial portion of their income. This includes ‘General Welfare’, ‘Sport’ and ‘Education, employment and training’ WGCs.

**FIGURE 4.2: PROPORTION OF INCOME FROM GOVERNMENT, BY WGC TYPE**

Source: Part A annual returns, register of charities for England and Wales.



## GOVERNMENT CONTRACT FUNDING

**In addition to 360Giving and data from the English and Welsh charity commission, more exploratory data is available on government contracts.**

Government bodies are required to publish on ‘Contract Finder’ any contracts worth over £10,000. Clearly, given that we have established that most WGOs are relatively small, or even micro sized, contracts of this size may either be out of reach of, or not relevant to, most of the sector. It is also not clear how well all funders comply with their obligations to publish contract data or complete all the relevant fields. As such, these findings should be taken as exploratory, supplementing the charity data on government funding already discussed.

To take a snapshot of government funding to WGOs, we used the Contract Finder service to search for tenders awarded in 2021, using the keywords ‘women,’ ‘woman,’ and ‘girl.’



From the initial results, we conducted a manual sift, removing any entries which were not directly targeted at women and girls. In addition, we:

- only included activities that could reasonably be deemed ‘charitable,’ removing cases such as cleaning contracts, building work, or IT support
- removed any multi-bid lots, which included some women and girl related activities bundled amongst a much wider range of other services
- only included contracts directed towards third sector organisations, which mean removing three relevant contracts made to quasi-public and private sector organisations.

We found 81 contracts awarded in 2021 which met our criteria. Given the totals seen in the section on charity data, this is likely to be a small minority of the true total for government contract funding to the sector. Nevertheless, it is worth exploring briefly who these funders were and who they were funding.

Of these 81 contracts, 44 were awarded to WGOs, while 37 were awarded to third sector organisations that were non-WGOs.

The Ministry of Justice was the most frequently named funder of women’s and girls’ focused contracts in 2021. It issued 40 contracts for resettlement and rehabilitation work with women either at risk of, or having had, involvement in the criminal justice system. WGOs, mainly women’s centres and other organisations working in EAWG, received 16 of these contracts.

24 of these contracts, however, were also awarded to non-W&G specific third sector organisations, including 22 to national charities. Whilst these results are very exploratory, it is worth noting in this context that there is some concern over local, specialist providers ability to compete with larger, more generalist charities (TUC, 2015; Vacchelli, 2015).

Councils were the next most prominent group of funders, accounting for a further 26 W&G focused contracts in 2021. Most of these (17) were to run services in the area of EAWG or to provide health related services (five). 19 of the contracts were awarded to WGOs.

Seven further contracts in the area of health were awarded by various parts of the NHS, including CCGs. These were all related to women’s health care, including four contracts to WGOs.



Three contracts were awarded by Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) for activities relating to EVAWG, all to WGOs. This is likely to underestimate funding from this source, however, given that the recent report from the Domestic Abuse Commissioner (2022) repeatedly listed PCCs as an important funding source for services.

The remaining five contracts were awarded by the Bank of England, the Intellectual Property Office, GMCA, the Department of Education and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. Three of these were awarded to WGOs.

Although 2021 is not necessarily representative of all years, this suggests that the Ministry of Justice is a very important funder of WGOs, especially those working to tackle VAWG and working with women involved in the criminal justice system. Councils and the NHS, though more localised, also appear to be important sources of government contracts.

**TABLE 4.1: WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' FOCUSED CONTRACTS, BY FUNDER**

Source: Contract finder data.

	Number of W&G focused contracts in 2021	Number of W&G focused contracts awarded to WGOs
Ministry of Justice	40	16
Councils	26	19
NHS	7	4
PCC	3	3
Other	5	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>44</b>

## 5. Key findings

**This study has identified a substantial women and girls VCSE Sector using publicly available data sources and outlined its size, areas of activity and key funding sources. In this section, we draw out some of the key findings.**

### **Diversity**

Despite the common thread of working to further the welfare and wellbeing of women and girls, the sector is marked by considerable diversity. Small, associational, socially focused organisations are by far the most numerous type of WGC. Though they account for relatively little of the sector's aggregate income, they do have an impressive collective reach across the UK.

At the other end of the income spectrum, areas such as EVAWG, health, and international development, have a higher aggregate level of income, accounting for most of the sector's total income, but fewer organisations. This does not of course, necessarily mean that these organisations are adequately funded. We know from other research, for example, that the amount received by these EVAWG organisations remains far below what is needed to provide help to all those who need it (Domestic Abuse Commissioner, 2022).

### **Voluntarism**

Micro-sized organisations, which we know primarily operate on volunteer input, are relatively common in the women and girls sector. Perhaps relatedly, therefore, WGCs also account for a higher proportion of the volunteers listed on the English and Welsh charity register (6.6 per cent) than their numbers would suggest (3.5 per cent of charities). This indicates that there is a relatively high amount of volunteer labour taking place amongst WGCs.

This level of volunteer activity may be positive, if it means more activity taking place to benefit the welfare of women and girls, though not, of course, if voluntary activity is substituting for paid staff, due to insufficient funding. The role of volunteering in women's lives is complex, and there are some obvious potential downsides to relying upon ever more unpaid work from women and girls as volunteers (Overgaard, 2019).

## Geography

The distribution of WGCs geographically also reflects disparities seen in the wider VCSE sector (Corry, 2020). They are less prevalent in the most deprived areas and regions of the country, which may ultimately result in fewer opportunities for some women to benefit as a member, service user, volunteer, or trustee. It is likely, however, that this is skewed by the large number of small associations, as we know that government funded organisations working with the most disadvantaged tend to be based in more deprived areas (Clifford, 2012).

Despite limitations on the availability of geographic data on 360Giving (Galley, 2022), it is positive that grants to WGOs appear to be more targeted at organisations registered in higher deprivation areas. This may be because these grants are focused more directly on social welfare issues, such as EAWG and health services.

## Funding sources

In terms of funding, it appears from the charity commission data for England and Wales that funding from contracts and fees outweighs grants and donations for larger organisations. This pattern, however, becomes weaker as organisations get smaller.

Equivalent data on smaller WGOs is not available, but amongst the larger organisations, the trend suggests that organisations become more dependent on grant funding and donations as their size decreases.

## Government funding

The areas of focus with the most government funding match those with the greatest income overall, perhaps because it is hard to reach a similar scale without government income. We know that organisations working with more disadvantaged groups, such as vulnerable women, find it harder to attract donations from the public (Salamon, 1987). And whilst not all small charities seek government contract funding, we also know that those that do face relatively severe obstacles within the commissioning process (Lloyds Bank Foundation, 2016).

Data from WGCs' annual returns suggests that the total value of grants and contracts to charities, from government sources, is relatively equal. Contracts are on average larger and more concentrated, however, whereas grants are smaller and more numerous. This means that government funding to WGOs is made up of a high number of relatively small grants, and a comparatively low number of larger contracts.

Reliance upon government income as a proportion of total income, however, is more even between the different areas of focus. Areas such as Gender Identity, Sport, or General Welfare have less government funding in aggregate, but rely on it for over 30 per cent of their aggregate income.



Finally, we explored the information available on individual government contracts from Contract Finder in 2021. Although there are limitations to this data, it showed that of the contracts for work with women and girls, around half were being awarded to WGOs, as opposed to more generalist VCSE organisations. It also highlighted the Ministry of Justice as a major funder, reflecting the findings from the 360Giving data.

### Grant funding

Data from 360Giving, which includes more detail on grants from the VCSE sector and some public bodies, shows that 3.2 per cent of the total number of grants awarded in 2021, and 1.8 per cent of the total value of grants awarded, were to WGOs. The mean size of grant to WGOs (£40,804) is lower than it is for all grants (£73,217), despite the medians being roughly equal, which may indicate that WGOs are receiving relatively few very large grants.

In 2021, the National Lottery Community Fund and Ministry of Justice were by far the largest funders of women's and girls' focused work, especially for EAWG and women affected by the criminal justice system. This is despite the Ministry of Justice having only so far only submitted grants up to the end of March (from it's 2020-2021 financial year).

Of the grants listed on 360Giving that are focused on women and girls, 76.4 per cent were to WGOs, while 33.6 per cent were made to non-WGOs.

In general, it appears that grant makers are supporting a wide range of causes benefiting women and girls, but with a particular emphasis on EAWG focused grants.



of the grants listed on 360Giving that are focused on women and girls, were made to non-WGOs

## 6. Recommendations

**We provide two main sets of recommendations. First, those relating to the data available on VCSEs and WGOs in particular. Second, those to grant makers based on our findings.**

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### DATA RECOMMENDATIONS

Each of the data sources used in this study provides part of the picture on WGOs and their funding sources. Nevertheless, the task of mapping the women and girls sector has been made more challenging by widely recognised gaps in the VCSE sector data infrastructure (Kenley and Wilding, 2021).

Substantively, the less data we have available, the less understanding we have of the issues facing women and girls, and who is tackling them and how. It also makes it harder to make the case for more support to the sector, and to know how to prioritise existing resources.

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### TO REGULATORS

#### Data coverage

**There is a continuing lack of data on the financial and human resources of smaller charities, as well as for CICs and other types of VCSE organisation. Data availability also differs substantially between the devolved nations.**

Although there is a risk of increasing the administrative burden on charities and VCSE organisations, we believe that basic information on total income, main income sources, and a description of activities, should be available for all VCSE organisations from their main regulators.

#### Women and girls identifiers

**An explicit identifier for WGOs should be incorporated into the classification systems used by the various charity regulators. This should sit alongside an identifier for organisations working primarily with Black and minoritised individuals, and other groups of additionally disadvantaged women, to allow greater intersectional analysis.**

Where possible there should also be limits on how many categories charities can select when describing their organisation's focus and activities, to avoid including cases where women and girls are not central to the organisation's primary purpose.

### **Data on organisational leadership**

Whilst this research has made significant progress in identifying organisations that are ‘for’ women and girls, more information on the leadership of voluntary organisations would assist in identifying organisations that are ‘by’ women and girls.

This would be particularly helpful to identify organisations run by and for Black and minoritised women and girls, to allow greater intersectional analysis.

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## **TO 360GIVING AND VCSE GRANT MAKERS**

### **Diversity data**

We support the initial work being undertaken by 360Giving (Cohen, 2021) and the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) group of funders to incorporate diversity data into the 360Giving standard.

### **Coverage**

360Giving data is providing valuable data on grant funding into VCSE organisations, but is limited by remaining gaps in coverage.

We would encourage all major funders to submit (or continue to submit) their data to 360Giving within an agreed and specified timeframe, and as fully as possible, to ensure that major data gaps are avoided. As a first step, we would recommend that all funders submit their data within one-year of grants being awarded.

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## **TO GOVERNMENT**

### **360Giving participation**

We would encourage more local authorities and government bodies to provide data to the 360Giving standard, across the devolved administrations, and for central government departments to ensure they submit their data within a shorter timeframe.

### **Contract Finder**

The current thresholds for contracts to be published on Contract Finder is relatively high at £10,000.

We would recommend lowering this, and more importantly, investing in ensuring that departments and public sector bodies submit their data in full and at a suitably fine-grained level of detail.

## FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

### Funding levels

**We note that 2.4 per cent of the total grants listed on 360Giving (by value) are focused on women and girls, despite WGCs accounting for 3.5 per cent of all charities.**

There were also fewer very large grants to WGOs than for organisations generally, meaning that grants to WGOs had a lower mean. We would, therefore, welcome more funding focused directly on supporting women and girls.

### Staff costs

**The women and girls sector has a relatively high number of volunteers.**

Whilst voluntarism is often a positive force, it does not replace adequate staffing when required. We would encourage funders to ensure that sufficient funds are available to ensure adequate staffing and other core costs are covered.

### Specialist WGOs

**Of the grants listed on 360Giving that are focused on women and girls, 33.6 per cent were made to non-WGOs.**

Whilst all work that benefits the welfare of women and girls is to be welcomed, we would stress that there are specific benefits for individuals from engaging with organisations that are ‘by and for’ women (Women’s Resource Centre, 2007). These organisations may need additional, focused support.

### Diversity of activities

**The women and girls sector works across a wide range of different areas, through different types of organisations.**

It is to be welcomed that VCSE grant makers are making grants across the sector. Where appropriate and in line with their mission, we would encourage that funders continue to support this diversity of activities and focus.

### Commissioning

**Government funding to WGOs is made up of a high number of relatively small grants and a comparatively low number of large contracts.**

We would recommend further steps are taken to ensure that contracts and commissioning processes are accessible to all forms of WGO who wish to participate in public service delivery.

### Further research

**The findings of this study have provided a broad overview of the different types of activity being undertaken in the sector, and as far as possible, how much grant and contract funding those different areas receive.**

Inevitably, however, there are areas that would benefit from further research. This includes the potential for longitudinal analysis to track changes over time. In addition, there may be merit in exploring in more depth various sub-sections of the women and girls sector, perhaps focussing specifically on smaller service providers or organisations working with Black and minoritised women and girls. Finally, building on the mapping conducted here, there may be scope to survey WGOs, to gather their own views on the funding landscape.

# Data sources

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## **360Giving (2022), GrantNav data, CC-BY 4.0.**

Available at: <https://grantnav.threesixtygiving.org/> [Downloaded 25-10-2022]

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## **Charity Commission for England and Wales (2022), Data extract, Open Government Licence v2.0.**

Available at: <https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/register/full-register-download> [Downloaded 08-04-2022]

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## **Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (2022), Charity search, Open Government**

**Licence v3.0.** Available at: <https://www.charitycommissionni.org.uk/charity-search/?pageNumber=1> [Downloaded 04-10-2022]

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## **Companies House (2022), Free Company Data Product, Open Government Licence v3.0.**

Available at: [http://download.companieshouse.gov.uk/en\\_output.html](http://download.companieshouse.gov.uk/en_output.html) [Downloaded 01-04-2022]

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## **Contracts Finder (2022), Data download, Open Government Licence v3.0.**

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**THE UK FUND FOR  
WOMEN AND GIRLS**

*Mapping the UK Women and girls sector and its funding: where does the money go?*

DAMM, Christopher <<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7355-3496>>, DOWRICK, Lorna and HARRIS, Catherine

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