



# Below the Radar 2

Exploring grants data for  
grassroots organisations

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Commissioned by

**Local Trust**



360Giving helps funders publish open data about their grants, and supports people to use this data to improve charitable giving. Our vision is for grantmaking in the UK to become more informed, effective and strategic, and our aim is that more money goes to where it is needed most to support communities and good causes through a more informed understanding of the grantmaking picture.

We provide free tools to make it easy to explore, download and visualise grants data. We also provide a range of services from workshops, 1-1s support sessions and data consultancy packages that support individual funders, collaborations, charities, researchers, and policymakers to get the most from the data. You can find out more at [360giving.org](https://360giving.org)

You can access the grants data used in this report using our search engine for grants, GrantNav: [grantnav.threesixtygiving.org](https://grantnav.threesixtygiving.org)

## Local Trust

Local Trust is a national charity set up in 2012 to deliver the Big Local, a unique programme that puts residents across England in control of decisions about their own lives and neighbourhoods. Through the Big Local programme, Local Trust has found that, when communities are given control over resources, one of their main priorities is to strengthen social infrastructure, both by creating or securing places and spaces for people to meet in, from community hubs to parks and green spaces, and animating those spaces with activities and opportunities to gather. Big Local partnerships have also sought to financially support new and existing local services like youth groups, community pantries or mutual support networks. Using the learning from Big Local, Local Trust is working to bring about a wider transformation in the way policy makers, funders and other agencies engage with communities in doubly-disadvantaged areas which are characterised by a combination of deprivation and low stocks of social infrastructure.

## About this report

This report uses data published using the 360Giving Data Standard to find and explore grassroots non-profit organisations operating at the local community or neighbourhood level. Such organisations are vital to UK civil society but often fall 'Below the Radar', and have previously been under-represented in research and statistics. This report demonstrates the value of data sharing in bringing them into the spotlight.

The data used in this report is available at [insights.threesixtygiving.org/below-the-radar/](https://insights.threesixtygiving.org/below-the-radar/)

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# Below the Radar 2:

Exploring grants data for grassroots organisations

## Contents

<b>Summary</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Our approach</b>	<b>5</b>
Base dataset	6
Step-by-step approach	7
Registered grassroots organisations	8
<b>What we found</b>	<b>9</b>
Types of organisations	9
Examples of grants	10
Grants overview	11
Funders	11
Amount awarded	15
Grant duration	15
Organisation theme	16
Grant activities	17
Geography	18
By deprivation level	20
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>22</b>

Note:

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# Below the Radar 2

## Exploring grants data for grassroots organisations

### Summary

This report investigates a vital, yet often overlooked, group of community organisations we term "Below the Radar". These are the small, informal, and grassroots groups that are essential for local communities, providing unique activities and services crucial for social cohesion and well-being. Our principal goal is to close the knowledge and evidence gap surrounding these groups and use better data to illuminate their societal role and contribution. Ultimately, this information can help funders integrate these organisations into their strategies, either through direct funding or by partnering with local or specialist grantmakers.

Small charities and local groups are the backbone of community support, from aiding vulnerable individuals to hosting social activities. However, they are frequently invisible in research. The term Below the Radar often becomes institutional shorthand for "hard to reach," highlighting the difficulty of engaging with informal groups and minoritised communities. Understanding and tracking the funding that reaches these organisations is a critical first step toward supporting them effectively.

#### Key Findings

The results show a rich and thriving sector of informal grassroots groups operating below the usual regulatory and administrative radars. It found over 20,000 groups that received grants between 2020 and 2024. For some, the grants data they appear in is likely to be the only official data source that records their existence.

Importantly, these organisations do not represent the totality of Below the Radar groups; merely those that have accessed grant funding from grantmakers publishing their data and contributing to the 360Giving dataset. This is likely a small and distinct subset of the overall Below the Radar ecosystem. Grant recipients, for instance, are groups that actively need and can use funding for expenses like equipment or hiring space. Non-funded groups are likely to be even more hyperlocal, often focusing on a single issue or a very small, defined population.

The data suggests that Below the Radar organisations are not simply smaller, more informal versions of larger registered charities. They engage in a distinct range of activities that significantly contribute to community well-being and connectedness, and they operate in ways that differ from more formal organisations.

The research also highlighted the value of the 360Giving dataset for providing richer information on registered grassroots organisations, which often only have basic public data available. These

groups appear to be distinct from both the larger registered organisations and the smaller Below the Radar groups.

### Insights from funding patterns

Analysis of the 360Giving data revealed specific funding characteristics:

- **Largest Funders:** A small number of funders provide the vast majority of grants to both Below the Radar and registered grassroots organisations. The National Lottery Community Fund, Co-Operative Group, and Sport England lead this effort. This is due to their large scale and, importantly, their dedicated small grants programmes that actively encourage applications from Below the Radar groups. Community Foundations also play an important role, showing higher proportions of funding to Below the Radar organisations than other national foundations, a testament to their local knowledge and connections.
- **Funded activities:** The three most commonly funded activities for Below the Radar organisations are green spaces, arts and culture, and young people. Furthermore, events (including social and community activities) account for a significant proportion of grants, underlining the role of these groups in social cohesion. The data consistently demonstrates that Below the Radar organisations receive funding for a wide array of activities that enhance community well-being by creating opportunities and spaces for people to gather.
- **Geographic distribution and deprivation:** Grants to Below the Radar organisations are distributed relatively evenly across England, with a slightly higher proportion in Wales, mainly reflecting differences in the National Lottery Community Fund's Welsh programmes. Below the Radar organisations are more likely to be found in more deprived areas (as per the Index of Multiple Deprivation). In contrast, registered grassroots organisations are less likely to be in the most deprived areas, suggesting potential disparities in social capital and community infrastructure and spaces.

### Recommendations

We noted recent changes to funding thresholds and maximum values in some small grants programmes. While this is often a response to inflation eroding grant value, there is a risk that larger or longer grants could unintentionally shift what and who is funded, especially given the significant increase in competition for grants. We encourage funders to monitor the impact of these changes closely.

While this study significantly enhances our understanding of Below the Radar organisations, we recommend that more effort be dedicated to improving the quality and availability of data. The research also raises important questions about the potential for funder partnerships and collaboration with local and specialist funders who are uniquely positioned to identify, fund, and support these critical grassroots organisations.

# Introduction

In 2015, Nesta commissioned a number of data-driven projects to explore how a gap in evidence and knowledge about 'Below the Radar' organisations could be addressed. This programme included research conducted by NCVO using open data released by funders<sup>1</sup>. While the approach showed promise, the project highlighted a number of limitations, largely linked to the extent and quality of the grants data available at the time.

In 2020, NCVO and 360Giving, supported by Local Trust, revisited the approach and published a report<sup>2</sup> based on the analysis of grants data then available in the 360Giving Data Standard.

Now in 2025, with over ten times the value of grants data available when the 2020 analysis was undertaken, Local Trust has invited 360Giving to once again explore the data on these Below the Radar organisations, usually missing from existing quantitative research on civil society. This report builds on the 2015 and 2020 work with additional data and more developed analysis techniques.

But what do we actually mean by Below the Radar? It is not an easy term to define. For the purpose of this project, our focus is on grassroots organisations (i.e. local organisations embedded in the community and most often volunteer-led) that don't have a formal registration as a charity, company or other legal form, but do provide a charitable or public benefit. We recognise that this definition is far from perfect and only covers one of the many features of below-the-radar activity, but, in the context of analysing the 360Giving dataset, focusing on the regulatory radar seems a valid starting point, building on this with other forms of grassroots groups operating in the space.

The overall aims of this research are to:

- improve understanding of a group of organisations currently under-represented in quantitative research and statistics
- examine the characteristics and activities of non-profit organisations within the 360Giving dataset that would normally not be found in research based on official sources
- produce analysis of who funds this type of work
- demonstrate the value of data sharing and the new insights this can provide.

It was not possible with the grants data available to identify which specific organisations have received funding through the Big Local programme. This report is intended to complement the other Big Local evaluations and explore the wider context through a funding lens.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nesta.org.uk/report/mining-the-grant-makers>

<sup>2</sup> <https://insights.threesixtygiving.org/360/below-the-radar>

# Our approach

The approach taken in this report builds on the methodology developed in the 2020 report, which was in turn based on a method developed at NCVO in 2015. Starting with the entire set of grants published by grantmakers using the 360Giving Data Standard, we apply criteria to the grants to reach a set of grants that are assumed to be Below the Radar organisations.

This method is not perfect. It only captures those Below the Radar organisations that receive grants. This is likely to only capture a small number of the total size of Below the Radar organisations; we would expect that a large proportion (likely the majority) of Below the Radar organisations do not apply for or receive grants.

Not all funders publish their grants data using the 360Giving data standard. This means there are a small number of significant funders, and a larger number of smaller funders, whose grants are not included. Smaller funders who fund in a local area are less likely to publish data, but might be expected to spend a large proportion of their funding on Below the Radar organisations. The same is true for local authorities - only a handful publish grants data, but most have small grants programmes aimed at these sorts of organisations.

The nature of Below the Radar organisations means they are difficult to definitively identify. The 360Giving Data Standard recommends that data publishers include an organisation identifier (such as a charity number or company number) as part of the grant record where the recipient organisation has one. In a perfect dataset, this would make Below the Radar organisations simple to identify – we would just take any organisation without an organisation identifier.

However, the reality is much more complicated. Publishers often do not include an organisation identifier for organisations that should, in theory, have one. There are many reasons for this, including:

- They do not store the organisation identifier in their grantmaking system
- There is no obvious organisation identifier to use
- The organisation is registered after receiving a grant (potentially as a result of receiving the grant) so there is no identifier at the time of application.

This means we need to also use further criteria to distinguish between recipients who are genuinely Below the Radar and those that could be identified in another way but aren't. Some of these methods involve directly cleaning and enhancing the data (for example, by running keyword searching to find particular types of organisations) and some involve applying heuristics to the data (for example, by removing any grants over a certain size).

The results are not perfect, and there are likely to be both false positives (recipients shown as Below the Radar that should actually be recorded as a registered organisation) and false negatives (organisations wrongly identified as registered). However, we believe that the method provides an important, if imperfect, look at organisations that are otherwise not well covered by data sources.

## Base dataset

The set of data published by grantmakers using the 360Giving Data Standard consists of over 1.28 million grants as of June 2025, with data from over 323 funders. These foundations and other grantmakers publish the data in a standard format (the 360Giving Data Standard) and with an open licence that allows others to freely reuse it. 360Giving maintains a registry of data publishers which is used to inform users how to access the data, and powers services like GrantNav. The dataset for this project was accessed via 360Giving’s Datastore, which brings together all the published data. The initial analysis was undertaken in June 2025 and shared in workshops that took place from July to September 2025, with an update in early October 2025 to include an additional large batch of data published by the National Lottery Community Fund.

In addition to the official 360Giving corpus, data published by DCMS from National Lottery Distributors was included. This data was deduplicated with any 360Giving data published by Lottery Distributors using the 360Giving Data Standard. Including this additional data allows us to understand grants made by organisations such as Arts Council England, which does not yet publish its data using the 360Giving Data Standard, so the data is not available in the 360Giving tools.

The table shows the change in available data from each iteration of the method.

Report version	Number of grants	Number of funders
2015	182,000	12
2020	359,000	120
2025 <sup>3</sup>	1,440,000	320 <sup>4</sup>

This report is based on a smaller subset of the whole dataset, using 800,000 grants made between 2020 and 2024.

## Step-by-step approach

Starting with this base dataset, we then took a series of steps to remove organisations that are likely to be registered. These steps are:

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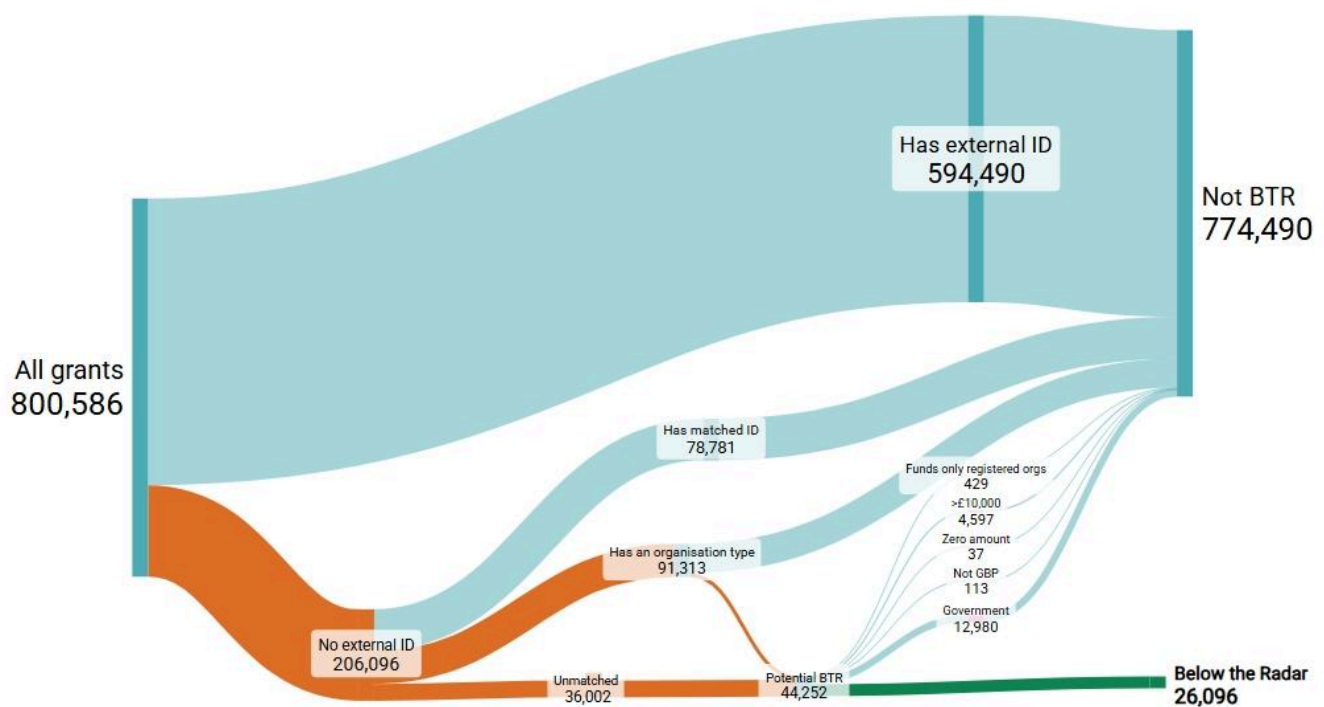
<sup>3</sup> Includes both 360Giving publishers and National Lottery Distributors that have not published 360Giving data.

<sup>4</sup> The 20 Postcode Trusts, distributing funds from the People’s Postcode Lottery are combined to one funder for the purpose of this analysis.

1. **Use external identifiers** included in the data (such as a charity registration number) to identify registered organisations.
2. **Match to organisation records**, such as Companies House or Charity Commission registers of the charities, based on the name of the recipient organisation, to identify registered organisations. This included matching using the [findthatcharity.uk](https://findthatcharity.uk) website.
3. **Find organisation type**. Some organisations must always be registered organisations, even if they can't be matched to an organisation record. Organisation type is inferred based on keyword searches.
4. **Filter government data**. A large amount of grants data is published by central government departments, with varying quality in terms of organisation identifiers. Instead of including all of this data by default, as is the case with other funders, only certain grant programmes which targeted the voluntary sector were included.
5. **Apply additional criteria**. Grants are not included in Below the Radar organisations if they meet one of a number of conditions: funding is not in British pounds, the grant was made by a funder which funds only registered organisations, or the grant amount was greater than £10,000 (this is the threshold for annual returns as a charity in England and Wales. The threshold for registration is £5,000, but some funders more strictly enforce it at £10,000).

After these exclusions were applied, around 26,000 grants remained that were plausibly received by Below the Radar organisations. This represents around 3% of the base dataset. These grants represent around 21,400 recipients, with some recipients receiving multiple grants over the time period.

## Flow chart showing number of recipients excluded at each stage



## Registered grassroots organisations

In addition to the Below the Radar groups found above, a set of registered grassroots organisations was also identified. These organisations are technically 'above the radar', as they are registered with a regulatory body and appear on official lists, often in a very basic way. But they share many characteristics with Below the Radar organisations: they are still relatively unstudied, and difficult to find reliable data on. They were found based on an additional list of categories from the organisation-type classification explained in step 4. The categories used were:

- Sports club (registered with HMRC as Community Amateur Sports Clubs)
- Scouts, guides and other uniformed groups (excepted from registration or small charities)
- Parish Council
- Church or Parochial Church Council (excepted from registration or small charities)
- Playgroups

Additionally, any small registered charities that received less than £10,000 total in grants in the dataset and had last recorded income of under £250,000 were included in this category.

For comparison purposes, three further sets of grant recipients were identified, based on the organisation identifiers and organisation-type categories. These were registered charities, education organisations (principally schools and universities) and all others in an 'other' category. This 'other' category includes registered companies such as Community Interest Companies.

# What we found

## Types of organisations

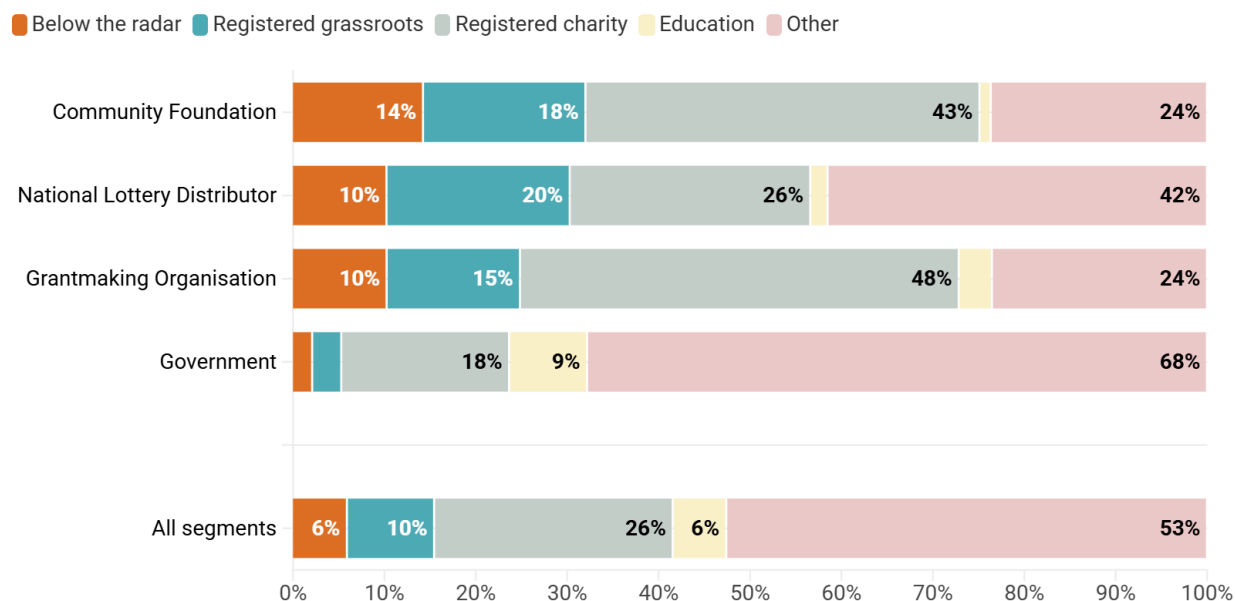
Group	Segment	Number of recipients
Below the Radar	<b>Below the Radar organisations:</b> Those organisations that are not registered with any identifiable regulator.	21,377
	<b>Registered grassroots:</b> Organisations that are registered with a regulator but there is only minimum information available. This includes small charities including uniformed groups (registered and unregistered), parish councils, and sports clubs. They tend to receive small-scale grants.	33,724
Above the radar (included for comparison)	<b>Registered charities:</b> Organisations that are registered with the Charity Commission or other regulators, but excludes those that are described as 'registered grassroots'.	54,660
	<b>Education:</b> Schools and universities.	13,731
	<b>Others:</b> Companies, community interest companies, mutuals, cooperatives, local authorities.	126,998

From 2020 to 2024, there were 21,400 Below the Radar organisations in the UK that received at least one grant, making up 9% of grant recipients. This is smaller than the 17% found in the 2020 report, but this difference is due to a change in the underlying grants dataset over time, as there are now many more funders publishing data using the 360Giving Data Standard. In particular, central government departments are now publishing data which includes a large number of companies and other registered recipients.

Grants to Below the Radar organisations make up 14% of recipients of accredited Community Foundations, 10% of recipients of grantmaking organisations (including foundations and charities), 10% of recipients of National Lottery Distributors and 1% of recipients of government grants.

## Recipient type by funder type

Proportion of recipients



Source: 360Giving analysis of data from charity regulators and data published using the 360Giving Data Standard  
Includes grants awarded between 2020 and 2024 as at 03-10-2025.

<https://public.flourish.studio/visualisation/23956581/>

## Examples of grants

Below are some example grants to illustrate the types of grants and organisations in the categories. The dataset that accompanies the report provides full details.

### Below the Radar organisations

- £2,200 from a Community Foundation to support an arts festival
- £854 from a local foundation to a community growing group
- £3,500 from a National Lottery distributor to a youth club
- £10,000 from a National Lottery distributor towards workshops for refugees and the local community
- £4,000 from a national funder to a local food bank

### Registered grassroots

- £1,500 from a national funder to a school parent teacher group for new equipment in a sensory room
- £2,000 from a government body to a small Citizens' Advice Bureau
- £5,000 match funding from a National Lottery distributor to a local football club
- £4,300 from a national charity towards a charity providing conflict resolution in schools
- £5,800 from a National Lottery distributor towards mountain bikes for young people to use in an outdoor pursuits centre.

## Grants overview

Grants to Below the Radar organisation make up 3% of the number of grants found in the dataset from 2020 to 2024, but less than 0.1% of the total amount awarded. The data indicates that around £123million in grants were awarded to Below the Radar organisations over this period. Of this, £64million was from National Lottery distributors, £35million from other grantmaking organisations and £25 million from government sources (this number from government is likely to be an underestimate as only a small number of local authorities are included).

Around a quarter of these grants are for less than £1,000, with two-thirds under £5,000.

Segment	Total Amount Awarded (£m)	Median Amount Awarded (£)	Number of grants	Number of funders	Number of recipients
Below the Radar	123	3,000	26,096	185	21,377
Registered grassroots	1,093	2,894	43,276	215	33,724
Registered charity	16,917	10,000	222,918	302	54,660
Education	15,014	46,779	66,962	172	13,731
Other	153,577	5,2640	441,334	289	126,998
<b>All segments</b>	<b>186,726</b>	<b>8,200</b>	<b>800,586</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>244,269</b>

## Funders

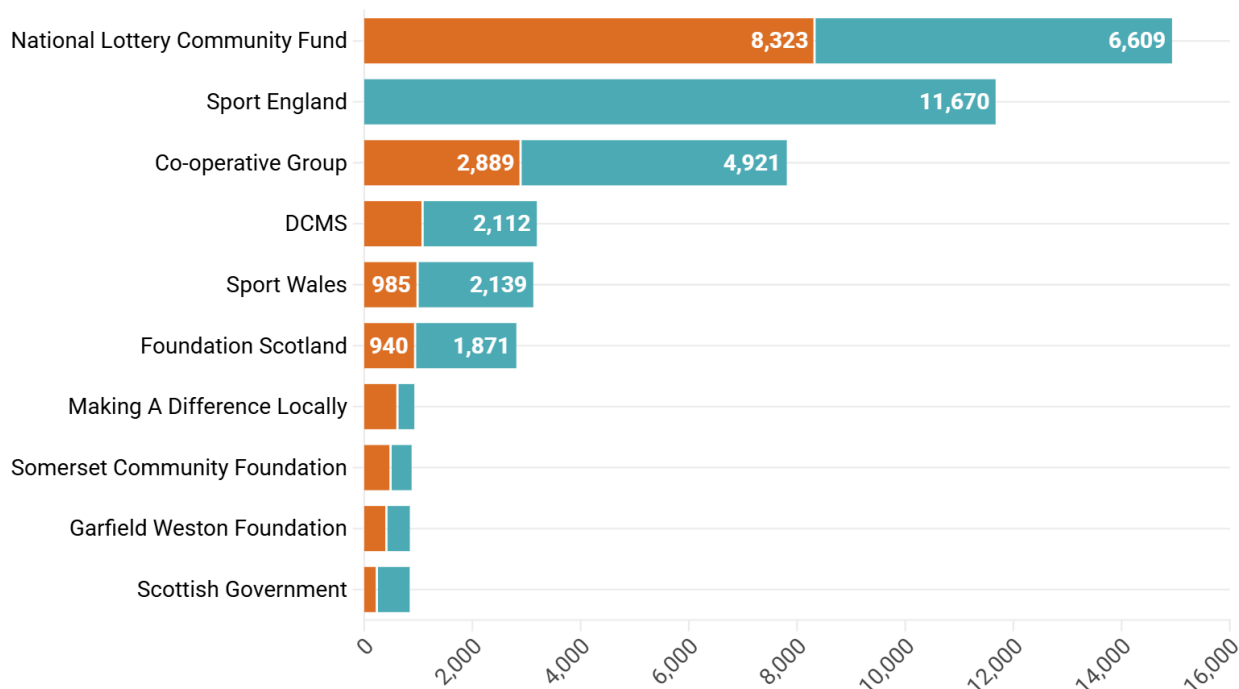
There are two key funders for Below the Radar and registered grassroots organisations by the volume of grants, and these two funders remain the same as the last report from 2020. The National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) is the largest funder, particularly through the Awards for All programme, making grants to over 8,000 Below the Radar and 6,600 registered grassroots organisations. The Co-operative Group is the second largest, making grants to nearly 3,000 Below the Radar and 5,000 registered grassroots organisations.

Around 10% of NLCF grant recipients, and 14% of the Co-operative Group's recipients are Below the Radar. Some other funders have a higher proportion of grants to Below the Radar, for example, Forever Manchester (26%), Somerset Community Foundation (18%) and Herefordshire Community Foundation (18%). 9 out of the 20 largest funders of Below the Radar organisations are community foundations.

# Number of grantees by largest 10 funders

Number of recipients

Below the radar Registered grassroots



Source: 360Giving analysis of data from charity regulators and data published using the 360Giving Data Standard

Includes grants awarded between 2020 and 2024 as at 03-10-2025.

<https://public.flourish.studio/visualisation/23956948/>

The chart above shows the 10 largest funders of Below the Radar and Registered grassroots organisations, ordered by the combined number of recipients. The majority of grants from central government departments, including from DCMS, were for Covid-19 response and recovery activities in a programme specifically targeting small and grassroots organisations.

## National Lottery Community Fund changes

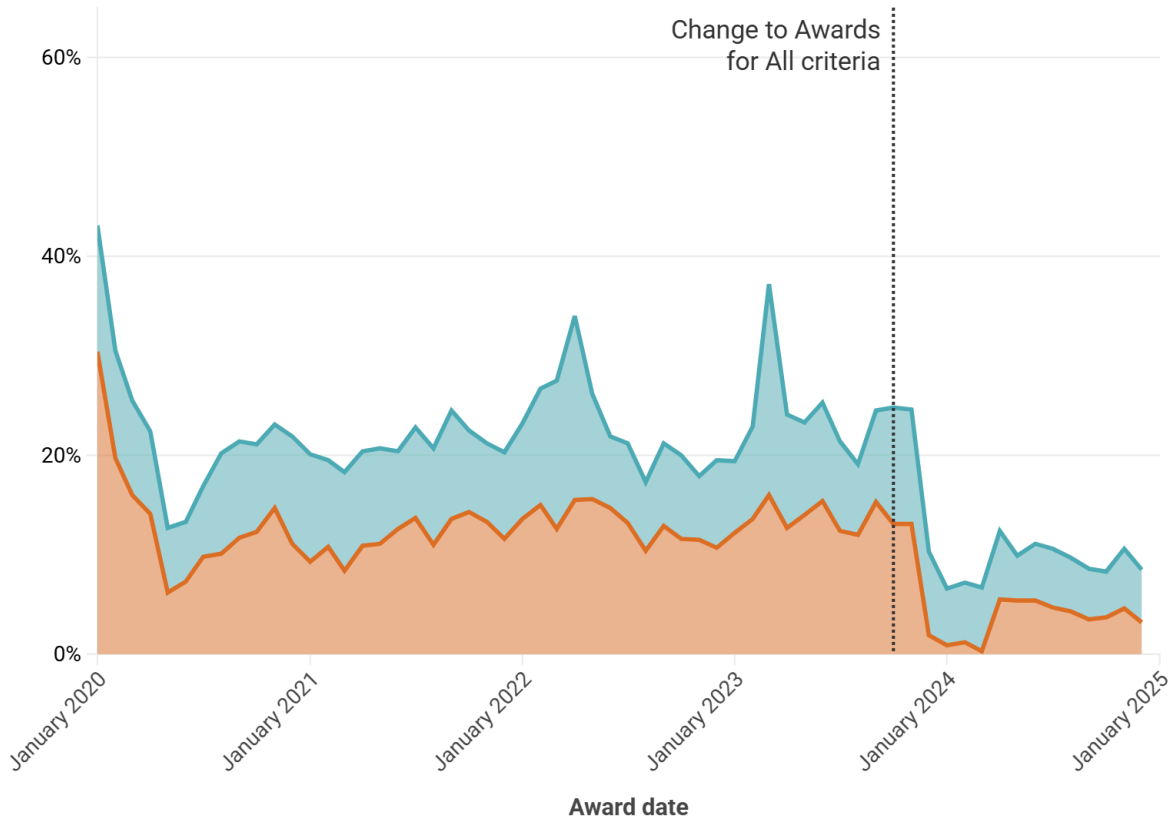
In autumn 2023, The National Lottery Community Fund Awards for All programme (main small grants programme) increased the maximum grant amount from £10,000 to £20,000, and the maximum grant duration from one year to two years. While we have not reported year-on-year figures in this report because, in general, the differences per year were not statistically reliable as the volumes of grants were not large enough, we saw a value in exploring the impact of this change. We would expect these changes to reduce the number of grants that our method labels as Below the Radar from late 2023 onwards, as more grants from Awards for All will be over the £10,000 threshold used for the categorisation. Some of these are likely to be labelled as registered grassroots instead.

# National Lottery Community Fund recipients 2020-2024

Below the Radar and Registered Grassroots as a proportion of all recipients

Below the Radar % Registered grassroots %

## Proportion of recipients



Source: 360Giving analysis of data from charity regulators and data published using the 360Giving Data Standard  
Includes grants awarded between 2020 and 2024 as at 03-10-2025.

<https://public.flourish.studio/visualisation/25484787/>

It is unclear whether these changes represent a real change in the nature of the organisations receiving grants: it could simply be considered as the raising of an arbitrary threshold, and does not reflect inflation over the period. On the other hand, a larger grant size could suggest funding may be used for different activities and could also mean that organisations receiving the income may be more likely to be required to register with regulators. The higher value of this small grants programme might also attract more competition from larger organisations that might not have previously applied.

The potential impact of this change is worth monitoring. A number of funders have changed the thresholds for the size of the organisation eligible for application or increased the maximum grant value of small grants programmes. This could impact the dynamics of who is receiving funding and whether less formal groups are more likely to be shut out through the increased competition for funds.

## Below the Radar organisations as a proportion of grants made

As well as looking at the funders with the largest number of Below the Radar recipients, we can also look at those funders who have the highest proportion of Below the Radar recipients; those where grants are more likely to go to Below the Radar organisations. The chart below shows the ten organisations with the highest proportion. Even though only a small number of Local Authorities publish, half the highest proportion funders are councils. Local Authority grants data often covers smaller discretionary funds that are directed by councillors; these grants will often go to small, local Below the Radar groups.

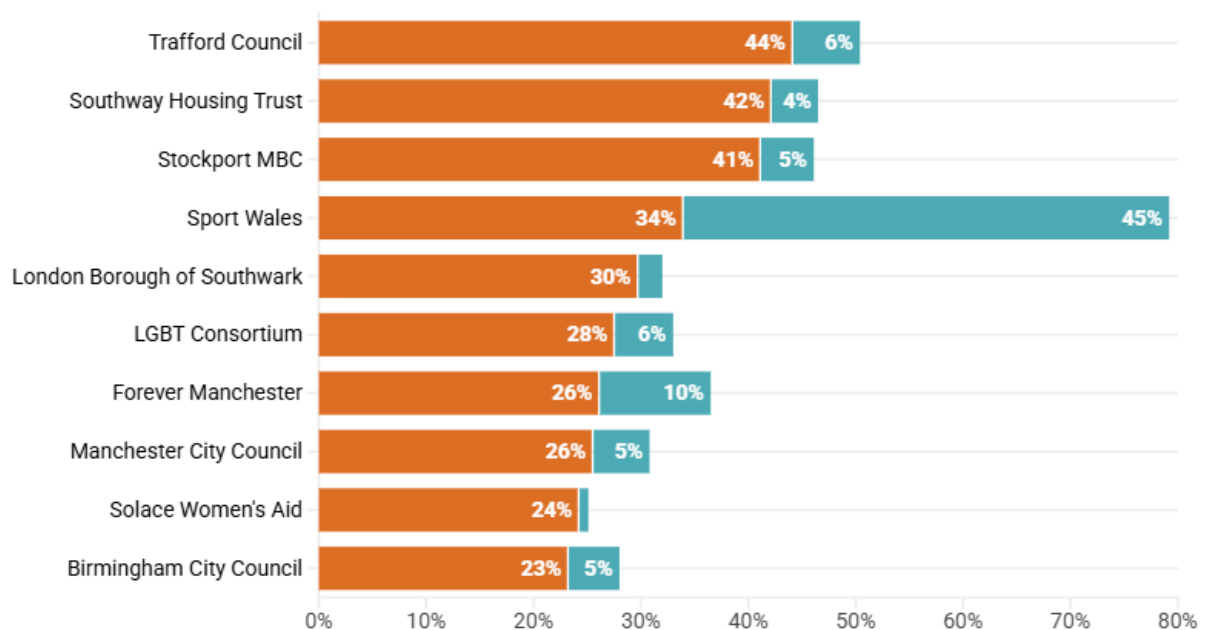
Another set of funders represented in this chart is funders working in specialist/equality areas, such as LGBT Consortium and Solace Women's Aid. Membership organisations and those working directly with specialist communities are more likely to have the specialist knowledge of unregistered organisations, and the reach to fund them.

## Proportion of grantees by funder

Funders with largest % of Below the Radar recipients

Proportion of recipients

Below the radar Registered grassroots



Source: 360Giving analysis of data from charity regulators and data published using the 360Giving Data Standard  
Includes grants awarded between 2020 and 2024 as at 03-10-2025.

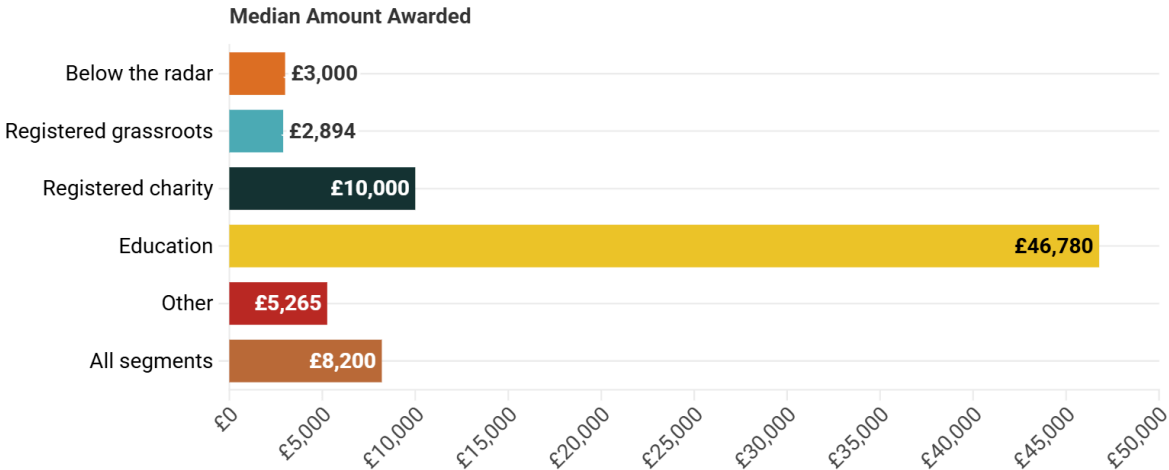
<https://public.flourish.studio/visualisation/25484322/>

Note that data quality may be a factor here - a funder with a small number of grants that has not included organisation identifiers is more likely to slip through the cracks in our data cleaning process, which would wrongly show them as having more Below the Radar organisations than is actually correct.

# Amount awarded

Grants awarded to Below the Radar organisations are smaller on average than grants to other recipients - as you might expect, since they are smaller organisations. The median amount received is roughly £3,000 for both Below the Radar and registered grassroots organisations, compared to £10,000 for registered charities.

## Median grant size



Source: 360Giving analysis of data from charity regulators and data published using the 360Giving Data Standard  
Includes grants awarded between 2020 and 2024 as at 03-10-2025.

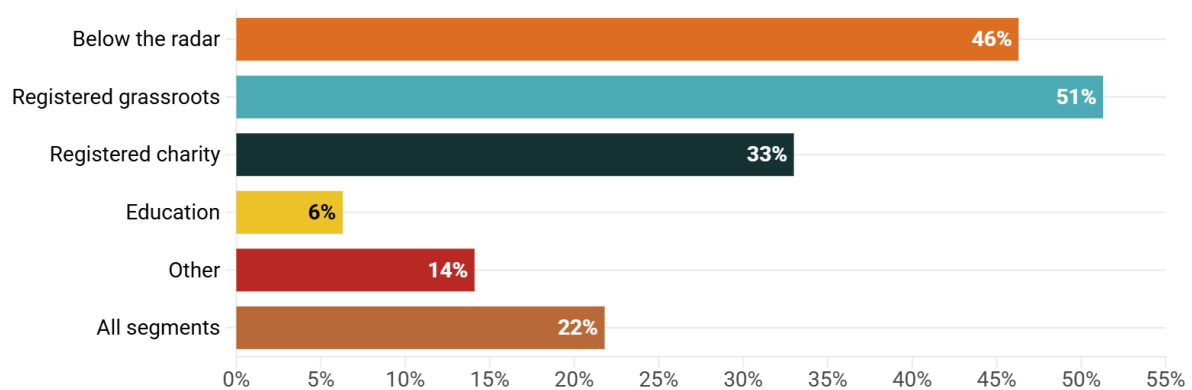
<https://public.flourish.studio/visualisation/23957194/>

## Grant duration

The duration of a grant is an optional field in the 360Giving data standard, and is available for only 30% of grants in the dataset. For those grants where duration data is available, it shows that grants to Below the Radar organisations are generally for a shorter time, with 46% of grants with a duration being for one year or less, compared to 33% of grants to registered charities and 51% of grants to registered grassroots organisations.

### Proportion of grants with 1 year or less duration

Only for grants with duration available



Source: 360Giving analysis of data from charity regulators and data published using the 360Giving Data Standard  
Includes grants awarded between 2020 and 2024 as at 03-10-2025.

<https://public.flourish.studio/visualisation/23957339/>

The changes to the Awards for All programme described above have also meant that more two-year grants are now available. Given the volume of grants made through this popular programme, we would expect this to impact the average duration results in future years.

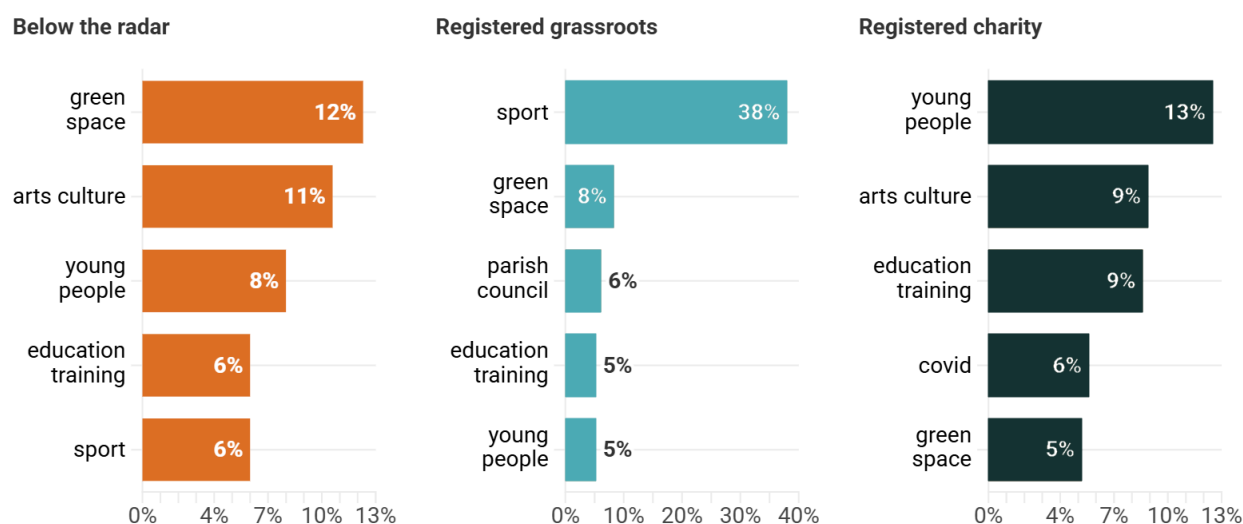
## Organisation theme

There are no universal categories or classification schemes available for the organisations or groups referenced in the grants data. Instead, they were classified based on text searching for common keywords in the data.

This keyword classification suggests that Below the Radar organisations are particularly active in green spaces, working with young people and in arts and culture. Registered grassroots has a notable set of organisations working in sport, reflecting that Community Amateur Sports Clubs will be included in this segment and Sport England, included in the data, being a big funder of this work.

## Top 5 themes by recipient type

(% of grants)



Source: 360Giving analysis of data from charity regulators and data published using the 360Giving Data Standard  
Includes grants awarded between 2020 and 2024 as at 03-10-2025.

<https://public.flourish.studio/visualisation/23957444/>

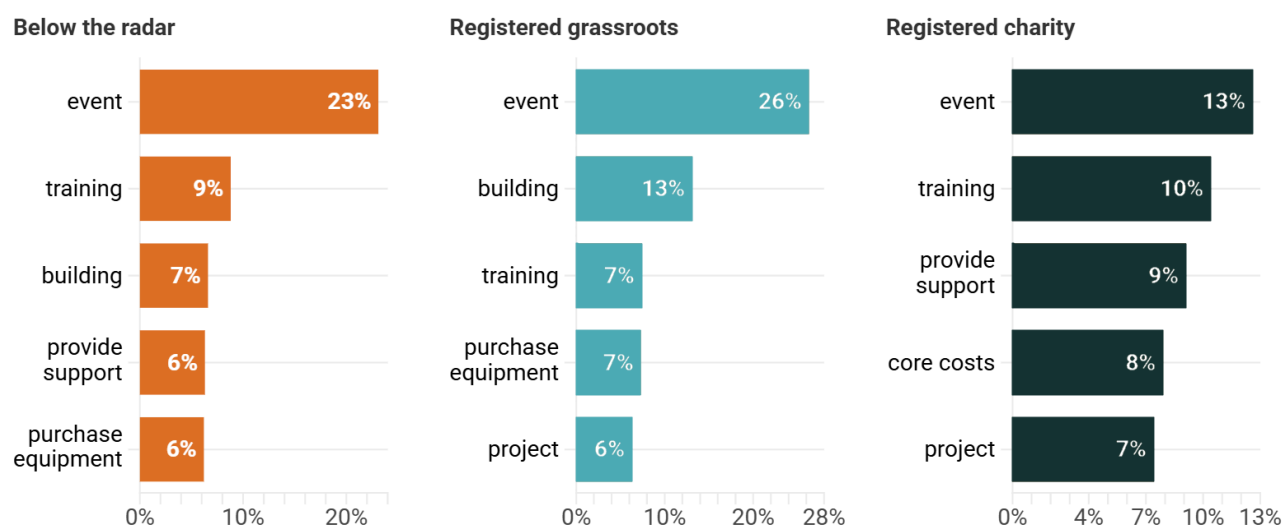
## Grant activities

Similarly, there is no classification of the activities undertaken in the course of a grant, so a keyword classification based on the grant description was used.

This classification suggests that events and training are important parts of grant activities for Below the Radar and registered grassroots organisations, while registered charities are more likely to receive grants that cover unrestricted grants or core costs or provide support to the people they work with.

## Top 5 activities by recipient type

(% of grants)



360 Giving

Source: 360Giving analysis of data from charity regulators and data published using the 360Giving Data Standard  
Includes grants awarded between 2020 and 2024 as at 03-10-2025.

<https://public.flourish.studio/visualisation/23957537/>

## Geography

The 360Giving Data Standard allows publishers to supply geographic information as part of data about their grants. This can either be "beneficiary location" – where the grant activity takes place – or "recipient location" – where the recipient organisation is based. For small, local organisations, these two locations are likely to be the same (although not in all cases), but for larger or national organisations, there can be a difference.

It is also possible to add location information to a grant using other information – for example if a charity number is used then it is possible to fetch the postcode for that charity, and then add geographic details based on that.

For this report, we have used the "best available" geographical data from the sources outlined above. This prioritises "beneficiary location" where available, then "recipient location" and the postcode from linked data. We then aim to add geographical codes, ward information, local authority, region, and country to the data. Some grants may have all of this additional data, and some may only have a small number of them.

In order to reasonably map the geographic distribution, funders that operate over a smaller geographic area (such as Community Foundations) are excluded from this part of the data analysis. These are crucial funders in local areas, but the fact that not all of them publish their data using the 360Giving Data Standard, and that there is not even coverage of them across the country in the 360Giving data, means that including them would result in an inaccurate distribution of grants in the analysis. It would reflect the availability of the data, rather than the distribution of the grants.

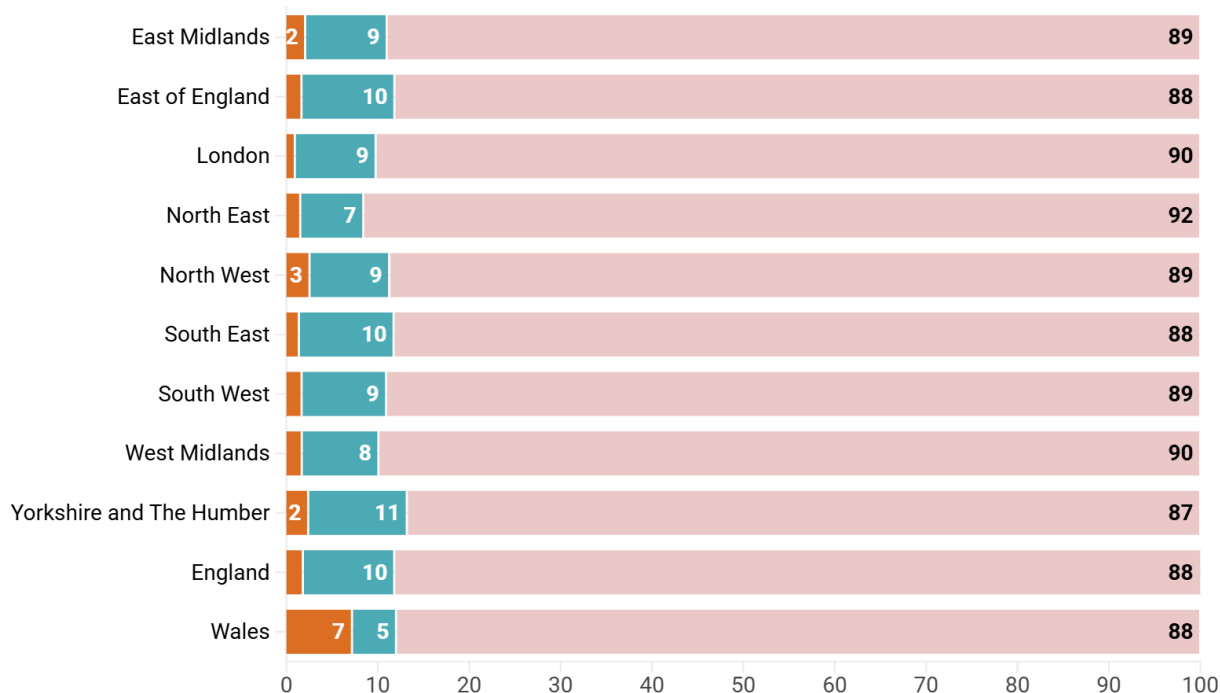
Location data for grants by these national funders in England and Wales is available for around 18,300 grants. This data suggests that grants in Wales, the North West and Yorkshire and the Humber are more likely to go to Below the Radar and registered grassroots organisations, compared to smaller proportions in the North East and London - but that also reflects the distribution of organisations, with a higher proportion of national and international charities being based in London and the North East. [UK Grantmaking 2025](#) demonstrated that a large proportion of grantmaking that is assigned to London is actually received by the national and overseas organisations that have headquarters there, so the true figure for the proportion of Below the Radar organisations working in London may be higher once these national organisations are accounted for.

The higher proportions of funding to Below the Radar organisations in Wales mainly reflects the higher proportions seen in the National Lottery Community Fund grants.

## Recipient type by region / country

Proportion of grants

Below the radar Registered grassroots Other



Source: 360Giving analysis of data from charity regulators and data published using the 360Giving Data Standard

Includes grants awarded between 2020 and 2024 as at 03-10-2025.

<https://public.flourish.studio/visualisation/23960003/>

## By deprivation level

The ward and LSOA (Lower Super Output Areas used by the Office of National Statistics) geographic data allows us to explore the grants using the level of deprivation in an area, based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation. The index ranks areas in England relatively, from the most deprived to the least deprived.

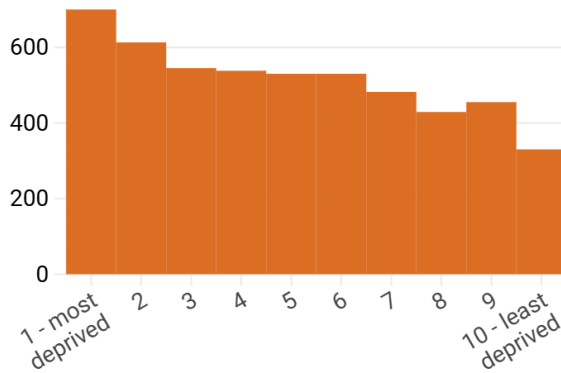
Each type of recipient displays a different pattern of deprivation. Below the Radar and registered charities have a gradient from most to least deprived, with more grants in areas of high deprivation and fewer proportionally in lower deprivation areas. For registered grassroots, there is less of a pattern, but there is an indication that these grants are less likely to be found in more deprived areas. This is informed by the types of organisations found in that category: organisations like churches, sports clubs, etc, which are distributed throughout the country and whose primary aim is providing social infrastructure for local communities. Registered grassroots organisations may be less likely to exist in more deprived areas with less social capital and capacity for formal volunteering, or there may be less space/land for some of the

sporting activities funded by Sport England, which is a major funder of organisations in this segment.

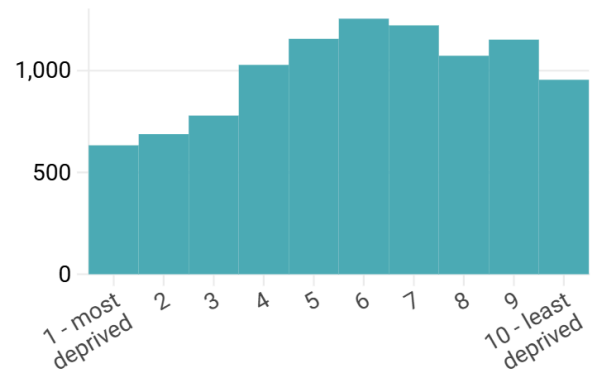
## Index of multiple deprivation by recipient type

Number of grants

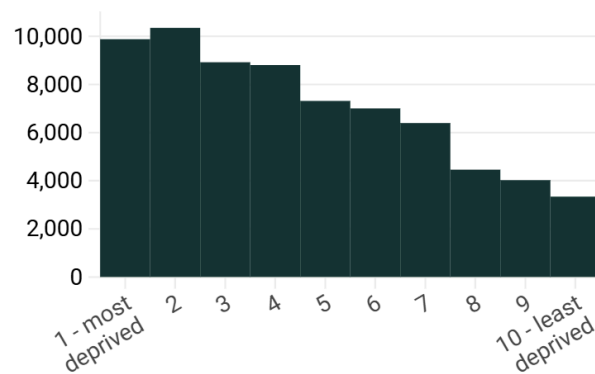
Below the radar



Registered grassroots



Registered charity



Source: 360Giving analysis of data from charity regulators and data published using the 360Giving Data Standard  
Includes grants awarded between 2020 and 2024 as at 03-10-2025.

<https://public.flourish.studio/visualisation/23960081/>

# Conclusion

This research has highlighted that grants data can provide valuable insights into Below the Radar organisations, and add to our understanding of their role and contribution to local communities across the UK.

With more data available than when the analysis was undertaken in 2020, we have been able to build a richer picture to reinforce the previous findings.

Analysis of the 360Giving data revealed specific funding characteristics:

- **Largest Funders:** A small number of funders provide the vast majority of grants to both Below the Radar and registered grassroots organisations. The National Lottery Community Fund, Co-Operative Group, and Sport England lead this effort. This is due to their large scale and, importantly, their dedicated small grants programmes that actively encourage applications from Below the Radar groups. Community Foundations also play an important role, showing higher proportions of funding to Below the Radar organisations than other national foundations, a testament to their local knowledge and connections.
- **Funded activities:** The three most commonly funded activities for Below the Radar groups are green spaces, arts and culture, and young people. Furthermore, events (including social and community activities) account for a significant proportion of grants, underlining the role of these groups in social cohesion. The data consistently demonstrates that Below the Radar organisations receive funding for a wide array of activities that enhance community well-being by creating opportunities and spaces for people to gather.
- **Geographic distribution and deprivation:** Grants to Below the Radar organisations are distributed relatively evenly across England, with a slightly higher proportion in Wales, mainly reflecting differences in the National Lottery Community Fund's Welsh programmes. Below the Radar organisations are more likely to be found in more deprived areas (as per the Index of Multiple Deprivation). In contrast, registered grassroots organisations are less likely to be in the most deprived areas, suggesting potential disparities in social capital and community infrastructure and space.

The data suggests that Below The Radar organisations receive funding for a wide range of activities that contribute to community wellbeing by providing opportunities and spaces for people to come together.

The research also suggests that the 360Giving dataset is a rich source of information for registered grassroots organisations, for which only basic data is usually available – showing that these organisations look different to both larger registered organisations and small Below the Radar organisations.

We noted the changes to the thresholds and maximum values for some small grants programmes, and encourage funders to monitor the impact of changes to ensure there aren't unintended consequences. Whilst it is true that inflation has eroded the value of grants and increased the number of organisations required to register with a regulator as they exceeded the thresholds, there is a risk that the larger/longer grants may change the nature of what, and who, is funded in unintended ways, especially with competition for grants increasing significantly over the last two years.

The research has also raised questions about the potential for funder partnerships and collaboration with local and specialist funders who might be well-positioned to fund and support Below the Radar and grassroots organisations.

While this research has added to the existing evidence and knowledge base on Below the Radar organisations, we believe that more could be done. We encourage:

1. More funders to publish data about their grants (particularly those funders that support Below the Radar organisations and groups).
2. Data can now be published for grants to very small or informal groups receiving social action funding using the new grants to individuals and families mechanisms, which includes a social action category. This allows richer information to be provided in the description of the activities and the location while retaining the anonymity of the individual organisers. This could be used more widely by funders.
3. Funders who already publish their data should continue to improve its quality and comprehensiveness. This includes improving the frequency of publishing and recency of the data available, and information on organisational identifiers, locations, duration of grants and grant descriptions. The qualities of the data are available at <https://qualitydashboard.threesixtygiving.org/>

The data used in this report is available at [insights.threesixtygiving.org/below-the-radar/](https://insights.threesixtygiving.org/below-the-radar/)

We encourage you to explore the data and reflect on what this means for your own funding and your local area.



### About 360Giving

360Giving helps funders publish open data about their grants, and supports people to use this data to improve charitable giving. Our vision is for grantmaking in the UK to become more informed, effective and strategic.

You can access the grants data used in this report using our grants awarded search engine, GrantNav: [grantnav.threesixtygiving.org](http://grantnav.threesixtygiving.org)

Website: [360giving.org](http://360giving.org)

For help publishing your grants data, please visit [360giving.org/publish](http://360giving.org/publish)

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