

# Taking Account 4 Methodology

## Introduction

The Taking Account audit is based on data obtained through an online survey designed by the Taking Account Steering Group and distributed by Community Works in December 2018 with support from steering group member organisations, Third Sector Infrastructure Programme partners and wider audiences via members of Brighton and Hove Connected. The survey was designed for completion by the very smallest, 'micro' third sector organisations and the very largest, 'super major' organisations. Recognising that small and micro charities with no paid staff may have limited capacity to complete the survey, one-to-one assistance was offered to them.

The survey received 205 responses compared with 224 in 2013 which is an estimated return rate of 9%.

As well as survey responses the audit also draws on:

- Case Studies
- Relevant reports (including the National Council for Voluntary Organisations) and background literature
- Award and contract information from the Brighton and Hove City Council and Funding 360 Communities team
- The expertise of the sector and those on the working group
- Findings from 'The Money Trail Project', a companion project that will identify a multiplier indicator to help calculate the economic impact of local voluntary and community sector organisations.

There are a number of challenges associated with providing an economic and social audit of the sector. These include the challenge of:

- counting the number of third sector organisations in the city
- achieving representativeness given the diversity of the sector
- providing reliable sector estimates and maintaining historical comparison
- ensuring organisations report information relating to their activity in the city only
- managing differences in how people understand the terms 'beneficiary' and 'volunteer'
- offering quantifiable, commensurable evidence of social value

These challenges are discussed in a series of papers designed to support understanding of how we know and provide evidence of the contribution made by the third sector in Brighton and Hove.