



10GM

A joint venture to support the local VCSE sector in Greater Manchester

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Researched and written by:

Madeleine Spinks, Sian Basker, Hannah Khwaja and Libby Harkins

info@dataorchard.org.uk

Data and Intelligence in the VCSE Sector in Greater Manchester



Acknowledgements

Thank you to all those who took the time to participate and engage with this project. We realise how precious your time and attention are given the many existing commitments and challenges you face as movers and shakers in organisations.

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Foreword

“Knowledge is power” has become something of a cliché (as things do when they are generally accepted to be true) though it is important to understand that the observation was not about the power to control but about the power to act, to have agency. We know that data and intelligence are an essential part of being able to take action – gaps in data and a lack of capacity to gather insight leave us with blind spots. So in working toward equity and as part of Greater Manchester’s “Fairer Health for All” ambitions it becomes ever more important that we have the comprehensive and accessible data and insight which enable us to understand more about our local populations, strengths and assets to build support healthier, more prosperous communities. Data, like everything else, needs to be inclusive.

This report, a collaborative effort between 10GM, Data Orchard, and our partners in NHS Greater Manchester, provides a picture of where are today and a vision for the role data plays in delivering positive change within our communities.

In doing so, this project also gave us an opportunity for a deeper conversation about our sector's capacity, capability, and readiness around data and intelligence: a key enabler of action in building greater equity and inclusion.

Through extensive engagement with over 300 stakeholders, mapping of our data ecosystems, and conducting assessments of

the data maturity of over 55 VCSE organisations, this research offers new insights into the current picture across our diverse VCSE sector.

Unsurprisingly there is a mixed picture of some organisations using data in new and exciting ways, while other others grapple with increasing their capacity and capability to collect and utilise data effectively. Yet there is optimism and opportunity: there is a common thread, a collective desire to harness the potential of data for the benefit of local communities.

In this report, you can read about our observations and analysis, as well as a roadmap for action to realise the full potential of data within the VCSE sector.

10GM and Data Orchard would like to extend our sincere thanks to all of those who contributed to this project, through taking the data maturity assessment, attending one of our workshops, or sharing their thoughts and feedback on our recommendations.

Our goal is for this work to act as a catalyst for dialogue, collaboration, and action. We already know that the VCSE sector is a massive force for good in our communities: increasing that power to act by supporting a more data-informed sector will increase the difference we make in Greater Manchester.

Mike Wild, Director, 10GM and Chief Executive, Macc

Executive Summary

In summer 2023, 10GM commissioned Data Orchard to research data and intelligence in the VCSE sector in Greater Manchester. The purpose was to understand the current situation and engage the sector in exploring how data and intelligence could contribute to improving VCSE activity and services. Over six months we engaged with over 300 people to:

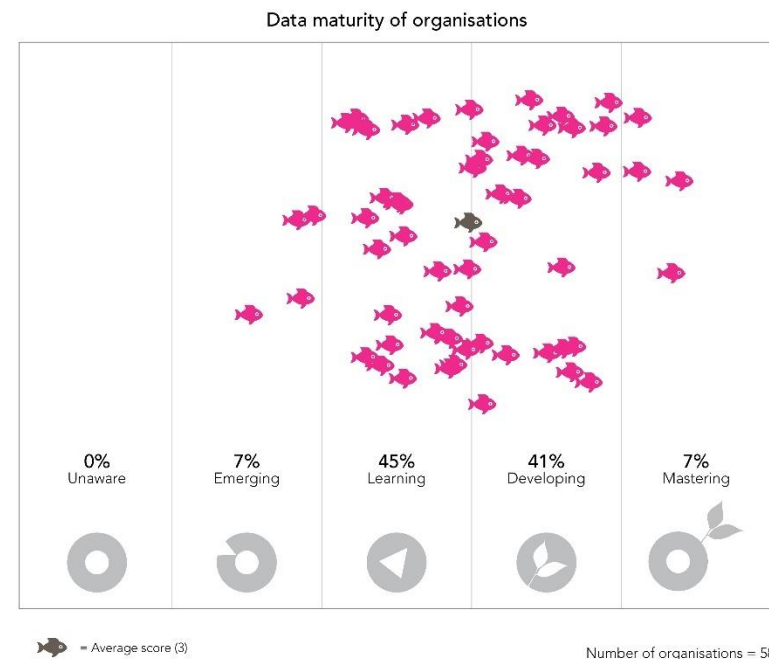
- Map the data and intelligence ecosystem
- Assess VCSE data maturity, capacity and capability
- Deep dive into data maturity with organisations supporting people experiencing severe and multiple deprivation
- Identify case studies of inspiring organisations' data journeys
- Develop recommendations for a set of potential pilot projects in response to needs and opportunities

Mapping the data and intelligence ecosystem identified 26 key data sources and platforms across VCSE, Government, Academic and Health and Care sectors. 44 different types of data relating to these sources were identified. The eco-system of data tools being used were also mapped and categorised into: CRMs (Customer Relationship Management Systems) and Databases, Data Visualisation, Artificial Intelligence, Forms and Surveys, Health and Care Record Systems, Data Storage and Processing, and Marketing and Comms.

VCSE sector data maturity in Greater Manchester varies considerably and is similar to the VCSE sector across the UK. 256

people from 58 organisations completed our Data Maturity Assessment. The results showed most organisations are at the Learning and Developing stages. Some are lagging in the Emerging stage, though none are in the lowest 'Unaware' stage. Few have reached Mastering.

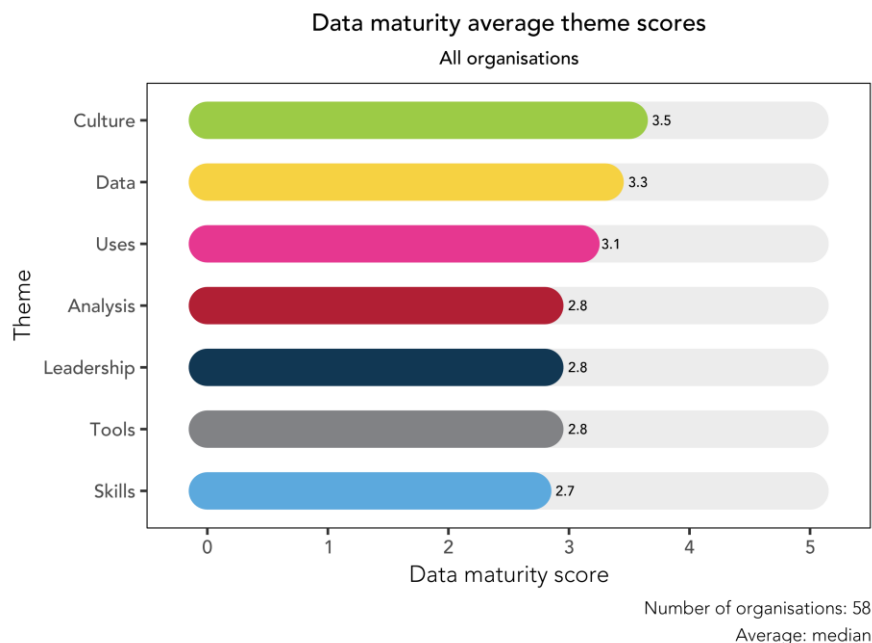
Figure 1: Scatterplot showing data maturity of 58 VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester.



The results, when compared through benchmarks, are similar to those for the UK VCSE sector and UK public sector. The GM VCSE sector scored strongest in the themes of Culture and Data. There's a good level of openness and willingness to share

internally and externally. Use of available data and intelligence is widespread, and organisations have a LOT of data.

Figure 2: Chart showing median data maturity scores for 58 VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester across seven themes: Culture, Data, Uses, Analysis, Leadership, Tools and Skills.



The weakest area is Skills and Analysis, Tools and Leadership themes scored jointly as the second weakest areas. There's a lot of variation and every organisation is different.

Staff in the VCSE sector spend a lot of time working with data (on average nearly half). This represents a considerable hidden investment though few are reaping the full rewards and benefits of all this effort.

The Deep Dive involved comprehensive whole-organisation data maturity assessments with 9 organisations working with people and communities experiencing severe and multiple disadvantage, most achieved 80-100% staff participation in the assessments. Data maturity scores ranged from 2.2 to 3.9 out of 5 with Skills, Tools, and Analysis weakest themes overall (Leadership too for the lowest scoring organisations). Data was commonly viewed as 'useful', 'important', 'informative' and 'necessary' - though also by some as 'time-consuming', 'overwhelming' and 'confusing'.

Three case studies representing different contexts/ advanced use of data were produced through this research highlighting good practice and successful organisational data journeys:

- LGBT Foundation: Developing a single source of truth
- Manchester Care & Repair: A Digital and Data Journey
- Macc: Advocating the use of open data

Learning and reflections

Engagement within the workshops and events was active and productive. There were rich discussions and deep enthusiasm for progress among many of the research participants. Overall, it had been hoped more organisations might have participated in the data maturity assessment process. It's possible that had there been more time, and the work scheduled at a less busy time (Sept/Oct) with more opportunity to promote, perhaps more organisations may have participated.

The overall aim of this project was to understand what is needed to enable the better use of data and intelligence in the VCSE sector in Greater Manchester, particularly in relation to population health. The learning and reflections are summarised here.

Opportunities - What could be changed or implemented to better enable use of data and intelligence and/or minimise barriers?

The pandemic and subsequent increase in remote working provided opportunities for organisations to move away from paper-based data collection and storage to digital and cloud-based tools which improved business efficiency and continuity.

There is a genuine willingness to improve the use of data and intelligence across the VCSE sector and Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) in Greater Manchester, as demonstrated by the engagement with this project, case studies and suggested pilot projects. There has been a rich dialogue about data built on a culture of joint working.

Many organisations would like to share data (using appropriate data sharing agreements) and develop standardised approaches to data collection. The 'proof of concept' pilot projects suggested in this report test ways to implement this which can be replicated.

There are opportunities to share expertise within and between sectors, learning from each other and implementing small, valuable changes. The digital tools and expertise held within the ICP to link, share, analyse and report on data from and to the

VCSE sector. This has the potential to aid predictive modelling and planning future interventions for patients and service users. The VCSE sector brings a deep understanding of the people and communities they work with, and an appreciation of working alongside communities in an equitable, supportive, and respectful way - including how data is collected from. Opportunities to use data to generate insight collaboratively were explored and are summarised in this report.

Challenges - What skills and effort are needed to overcome barriers?

Lack of leadership understanding and knowledge of potential ways that data can improve efficiency and effectiveness of their organisations. Keeping up with innovations and new technologies can feel overwhelming, having the headspace to think about data strategically and as an asset along with everything else.

Skills in working with data is often not a direct requirement for many roles in the VCSE sector with low data literacy for some staff, which affects data quality. There is an overall lack of analytical skills to make sense of and see the value of data in improving services. Fear of and lack of knowledge of data protection regulations prevents data gathering and sharing in some cases (even with non-personal data in some cases).

There are lots of small, independent VCSE organisations collecting data in different ways, as required by a plethora of

different funders resulting in a lack of standardisation, which makes data sharing and analysis challenging.

Enablers - *What or who helps organisations use data well?*

The people who are motivating organisations to improve with data are key to driving change. Those who have the vision of how data can be used effectively in the VCSE sector, particularly data enabled discussions with commissioners and funders. Data leaders, implementers, champions - so 'called data translators' who can explain the value of data and how it can help staff at operational and strategic level. Leadership support is crucial at Chief Exec and board level.

People change the culture, processes, and practice in organisations. Progress is made when staff can see 'what's in it for them' (and the communities they work) so they will put the effort in to ensure data quality is maintained.

Tools - paper to digital, flow of data, access to data, linking data, making data accessible, either in one place or by publishing openly. Systems that link to each other to avoid duplication of effort. CRMs can enable a consistent approach to data collection, storage and use of analysis and insights within an organisation.

Barriers - *What's preventing organisations from using data well?*

There is a lack of capacity and skills to maximise use of data across the workforce and specifically a lack of, or inconsistent data

knowledge, skills and investment by both VCSE sector leaders, and wider public sector funders and commissioners.

Data is collected in multiple systems and files, often with no coherent overview in organisations. VCSE organisations have poor tools and systems for getting analysis and insight from all the data that's collected. This is further impeded by a lack of systems interoperability which may not have been a consideration at the time of purchase. There is also a lack of support and advice from external suppliers whom organisations can afford and trust.

A real barrier for the VCSE sector is negotiating the complexity of collaborating within the GM Integrated Care Partnership, with the differential in size and resources and different requirements for operational reporting. This prevents progress being made in how data is collected and reported with many organisations having to do this in multiple and different ways, which is resource intensive. It is not conducive to more streamlined and strategic data collection, to enable data sharing and analysis at a population level. The reporting is largely operational and responsive rather than enabling insight to assess whether interventions are improving health and wellbeing.

Leaders are too busy trying to keep organisations and services going to take a step back to do things differently. The squeeze on funding is affecting everyone, so there is a lack of available resource to invest in capacity building - and to change the data processes, tools and quality of analysis required to improve outcomes for communities in Greater Manchester.

Recommendations

Recommendations were set out in three levels of priority. The top priority recommendations for 10GM and partners focus around four themes: Skills, Tools, Analysis and Leadership

Skills

- Respond to data skills and capabilities needs at a sector level
- Coordinate and build data expertise within and between organisations and sectors.
- Build data literacy across the sector.
- Strengthen knowledge and understanding of data management and governance

Tools

- Promote digitisation and automation of current paper-based data collection and storage (where possible).
- Demonstrate and increase access to tools for analysis, automated reporting, linking data from multiple sources.
- Make it easier for users to search for and find information they need.

Analysis

- Introduce learning and training in different analytic techniques.
- Explore and showcase how analysis can be used in meaningful and useful ways.
- Seek to automate or increase efficiency and presentation of data analysis.

Leadership

- Identify ways of building data and analytics knowledge and expertise amongst leadership.
- Support leaders to develop data plans for advancing data maturity aligned to their organisation strategies.
- Invest more in data related resources (people, skills, learning and tools) to implement data plans.

Proposed test and learn projects

Ten potential investable project ideas have been developed in response to the research and recommendations. These are:

- Improve equality, diversity and inclusion data for two social prescribing services
- Share and match data from one Home from Hospital provider to GM Care records
- Agree minimum dataset for NHS referrals and services provided by VCSE organisations
- Improve data capability in creative health providers, to evidence need and evaluate impact
- Share and match hospice activity data with GM Care records
- Peer learning community of practice for VCSE staff with responsibility for data
- Data literacy/fluency training for VCSE staff
- Shared data Analyst function for VCSE organisations
- Data training for VCSE Leaders
- Data management and governance training

1. Introduction

In summer 2023 10GM commissioned Data Orchard to carry out research into data and intelligence in the VCSE sector. The six-month project included 5 key elements:

- Mapping and review of data and intelligence platforms/systems and tools
- Data maturity assessment for the VCSE sector in Greater Manchester
- Deep dive data maturity assessments for a cohort of organisations supporting people experiencing severe and multiple deprivation
- Case studies of organisations at more advanced stages of data maturity
- Development and consultation on ideas for potential projects to explore innovative approaches to advancing data and intelligence in the sector

The purpose of the project was to understand the current state of data maturity, explore challenges and barriers, and identify opportunities and actions for advancing data capabilities in the Greater Manchester VCSE sector.

2. Approach, engagement, and participation

Around 300 people were involved in the project, participating in one or more of the four workshops, the data maturity assessment, and/or one to one interviews.

2.1 Mapping the data and intelligence ecosystem

In August 2023 we held an in-person workshop in Manchester with the 10GM data group. 15 people participated from 7 organisations to map and reflect on the data ecosystem. The output informed the next stages of the engagement, particularly case studies and identification of pilot projects.

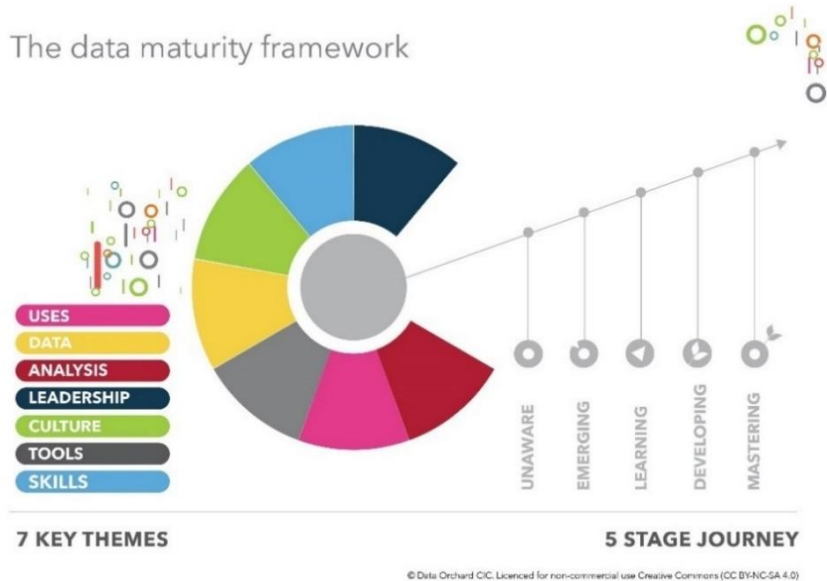


2.2. VCSE Data Maturity assessment

Using Data Orchard's data maturity framework, the VCSE assessment explored seven key themes of data maturity. Practical aspects (Data and Tools), purpose-related (Uses and Analysis) and people-related (Leadership, Culture and Skills).

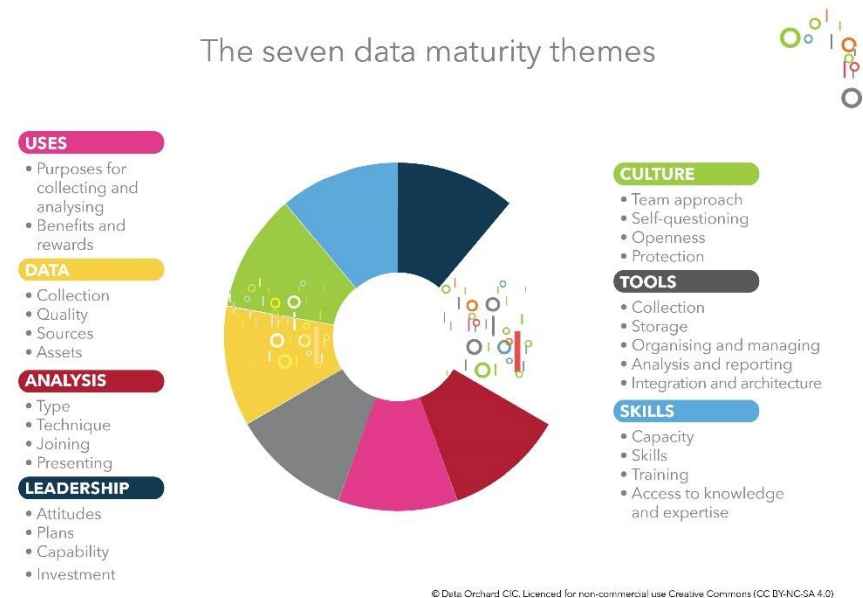
The data maturity assessment took place between September and November and October 2023. Staff from VCSE organisations were invited to complete a 20-30-minute online questionnaire around the seven key themes.

Figure 3: Diagram of Data Orchard's Data Maturity Framework, showing seven key themes (Uses, Data, Analysis, Leadership, Culture, Tools and Skills) and a 5-stage journey (Unaware, Emerging, Learning, Developing, Mastering).



The assessment results indicated which stage of maturity the organisations were at overall and for each theme. The five stages are: Unaware, Emerging, Learning, Developing and Mastering.

Figure 4: Diagram showing components of the seven data maturity themes from Data Orchard's Data Maturity Framework.



A number of events were organised to promote participation in the assessment including:

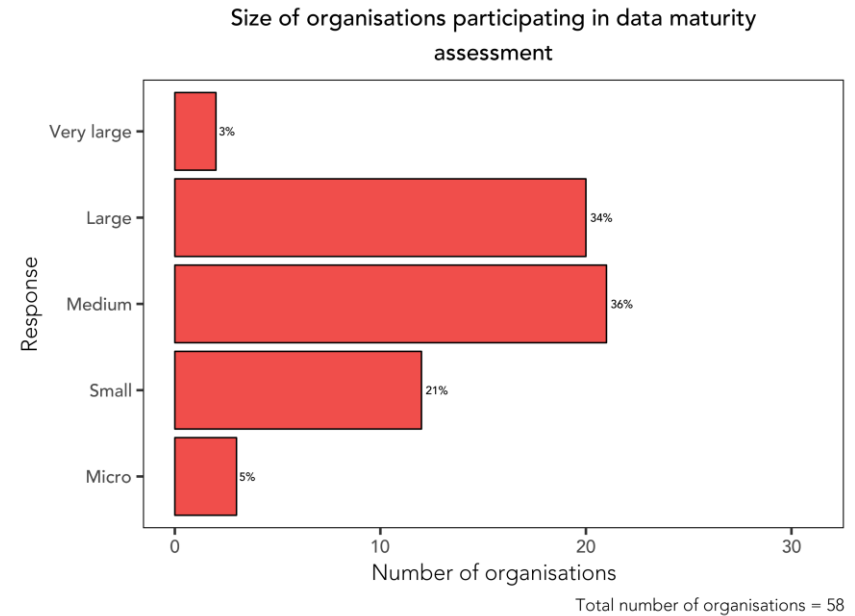
- Live launch event in September with 18 participants from VCSE organisations followed by discussion exploring challenges and opportunities around data and the levels

of use and value from the existing data intelligence ecosystem.

- Attendance at 3 x local VCSE leaders forums (Salford, Bolton and Manchester)- 2 in person and 1 online with approximately 30 attendees across the 3 sessions.
- 3 open access online 'drop in' sessions to answer any questions or offer support with completing the Data Maturity Assessment.
- Verbal and written promotion via the Greater Manchester VCSE Leadership Group and its sub-groups.
- Promotion via a variety of VCSE e-bulletins through local VCSE infrastructure organisations and VCSE thematic networks.
- Promotion via social media channels.

In total 266 unique, complete, valid responses were collected from 58 organisations. The organisations ranged in size and area of operation across Greater Manchester. Most respondents worked in medium and large sized organisations (making up 70% of participating organisations). 15 of the 58 (26%) were small or micro sized.

Figure 5: Bar chart showing the size of 58 VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester who took Data Orchard's Data Maturity Assessment.



Participant organisations came from across the 10 Greater Manchester areas. 31% worked GM-wide. The biggest response rate from a single area came from Bolton with 24% of organisations. There were no responses from organisations working only in Oldham, Trafford, or Tameside though these areas were all mentioned among the 12% of organisations serving more than one area.

Figure 6: Bar chart showing geography of operations of 58 VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester who took Data Orchard's Data Maturity Assessment.



2.3 Deep-dive cohort data maturity assessment

180 staff from 9 organisations participated in the deep dive data maturity assessment. These organisations were selected on the basis of their work with people experiencing severe and multiple disadvantage. The reason for choosing to work with this group of organisations is because the challenges faced are often complex and multi-faceted. Their service users are also likely to be frequently in contact with health, social care and other services, yet experience worse outcomes compared to the general population. Finally, the activities/interventions (and the funding of these) offered by the cohort organisations were wide-ranging and often involved working across multi-agency partnerships. It

was therefore felt these organisations might experience some rich and interesting data challenges that could be explored together.

Lead staff from the cohort organisations came together in early October to learn about the data maturity assessment process and how they could get the best out of it. Cohort participants were able to customise the set-up of their assessments to enable internal benchmarking by team/department/service. Most (6 out of 9) took up Data Orchard's offer to facilitate an online live-launch event. In these staff were introduced to data and data maturity, then took the data maturity assessment individually (at the same time) and reflected together immediately after. The small-group discussions enabled participants to reflect on the specific challenges around data in their organisation and generate ideas for improvements.

The assessments were kept open for several weeks for staff to complete. At the end, each organisation received a summary report and key findings (including internal and external benchmarking), and a synthesis of their team's discussions. The whole cohort came together for a final session in December 2023 to reflect on the cohort findings and generate ideas on:

- what would help enhance their data and intelligence capabilities?
- what (in relation to data and intelligence) would they change to make things better for people experiencing severe and multiple disadvantage?

2.4 Case Studies and identification of test and learn projects

Following discussions in the first workshop to explore the data ecosystem in Greater Manchester, several potential case studies and test and learn projects were identified. More details about these were provided in a series of meetings and interviews with the key people involved. The purpose of the case studies is to provide inspiration and the 'art of the possible', alongside describing some of the barriers and enablers faced by organisations to become more data mature.

The purpose of the test and learn projects is to trial proof of concepts to implement the learning and conclusions of this research. The criteria for selection were as follows:

- Does it enable organisations to overcome challenges in using data more effectively?
- Is there readiness for action? Are there people, organisations or groups willing to trial this approach?
- Can this approach be replicated to other areas of work and VCSE organisations?

These will of course require some resource in the form of staff time, expertise, systems and tools. Some of these already exist.

3. The VCSE data and intelligence ecosystem

We began mapping the data and intelligence ecosystem at an in-person workshop in Manchester in August 2023. Participants, members of the Greater Manchester, VCSE and cross-sector Data Group pooled their knowledge and discussed the following:

- the data organisations collect and use (their own or from other organisations)
- platforms and tools currently used by organisations
- barriers, enablers and opportunities for using data and intelligence well
- data action stories (a way of articulating what data to generate insight that would elicit action)

Some key themes explored included:

- Tackling health inequalities: understanding the profile of service users, barriers to access, the type of targeted support required
- Understanding the patient/service user journey. Identifying groups at risk. Identifying capacity to support
- Understanding the contribution that VCSE sector support has on people's wellbeing
- Knowledge of which services exist, where and when
- An understanding of the skills and capacity of using data well in the VCSE sector

Data Action Stories

We also used the Data Action Stories approach to explore areas where data insights might lead to effective action and outcomes. The technique elicits ideas by posing the story: If only we knew [this insight], we could [act], which would lead to [this outcome]



A summary of these data enabled insights are:

- if only we had a better understanding of particular communities/groups using health services (including the intersect of different aspects), we could tailor and target services, to reduce health inequalities
- if only we had insight into capacity in the VCSE sector to provide services, we could target resources more effectively and reduce pressure on acute services
- if only we knew more about individual client/patient journeys, we could target resources for more positive health outcomes.
- if only we knew what the long-term effects of support from VCSE organisations was on individual health and wellbeing, we could target resources to achieve more positive health and wellbeing outcomes.

A selection of some of the data action stories are provided in Appendix 1.

Mapping the ecosystem

The output from this first workshop was used to inform the consultation with the VCSE sector in a second workshop. The outputs from these consultation events were:

- A map of key data sources and ecosystems in the ecosystem
- A summary of the types of data being used from different sectors
- An overview of data-related software tools being used

You can [explore a more accessible version of the 3 images below on a Miro board here](#)

Figure 7: Spider diagram of data sources and platforms reported to be used by health, care and VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester, grouped into Government sources, Health and Care sources, VCSE sources and Academic and Other sources. A screenreader-friendly tabular alternative to this diagram is provided in Appendix 2.

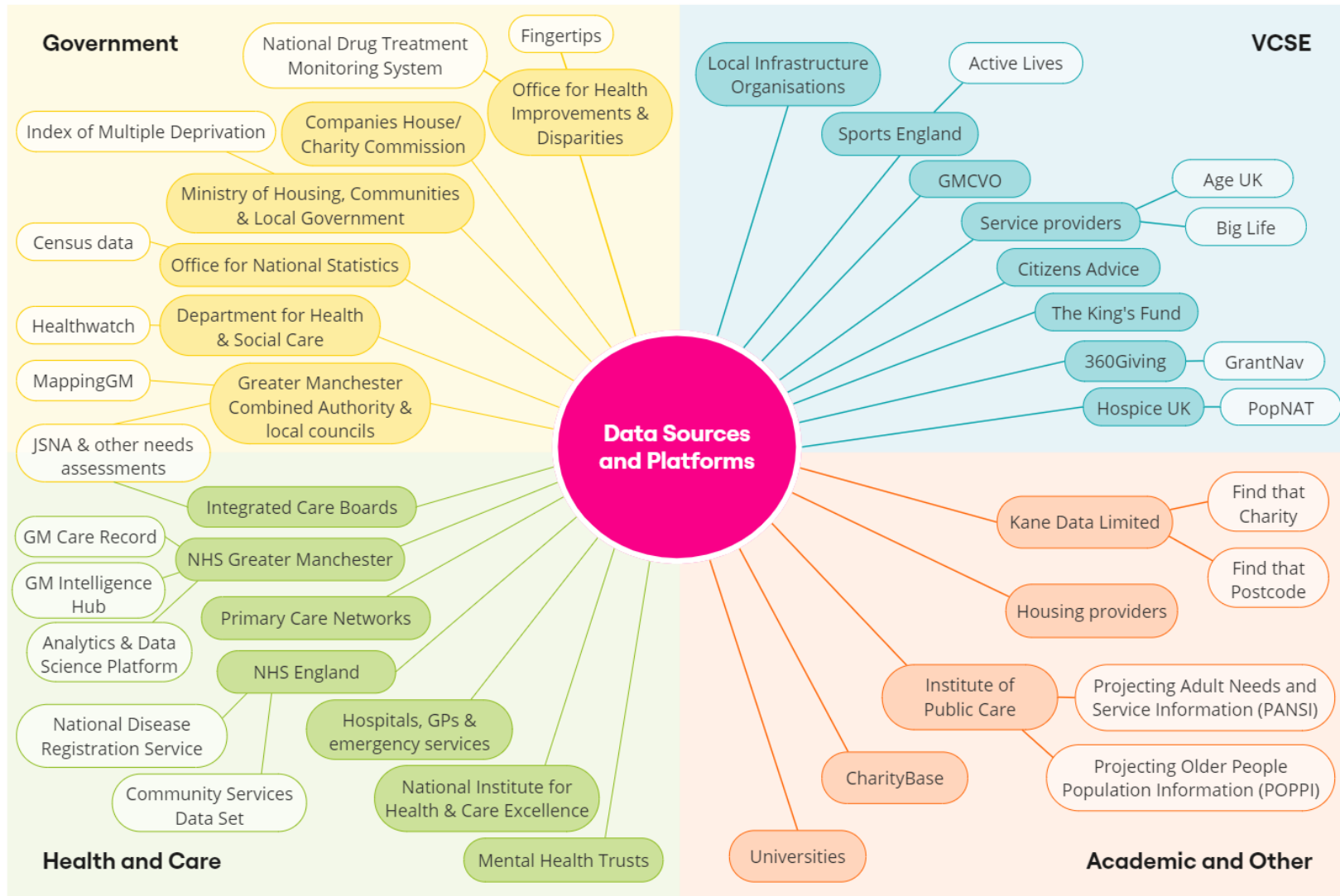


Figure 8: Tabular diagram of data types reported to be used by health, care and VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester, grouped into Government, Health and Care, VCSE and Academic and Other. A screenreader-friendly alternative to this diagram is provided in Appendix 2.

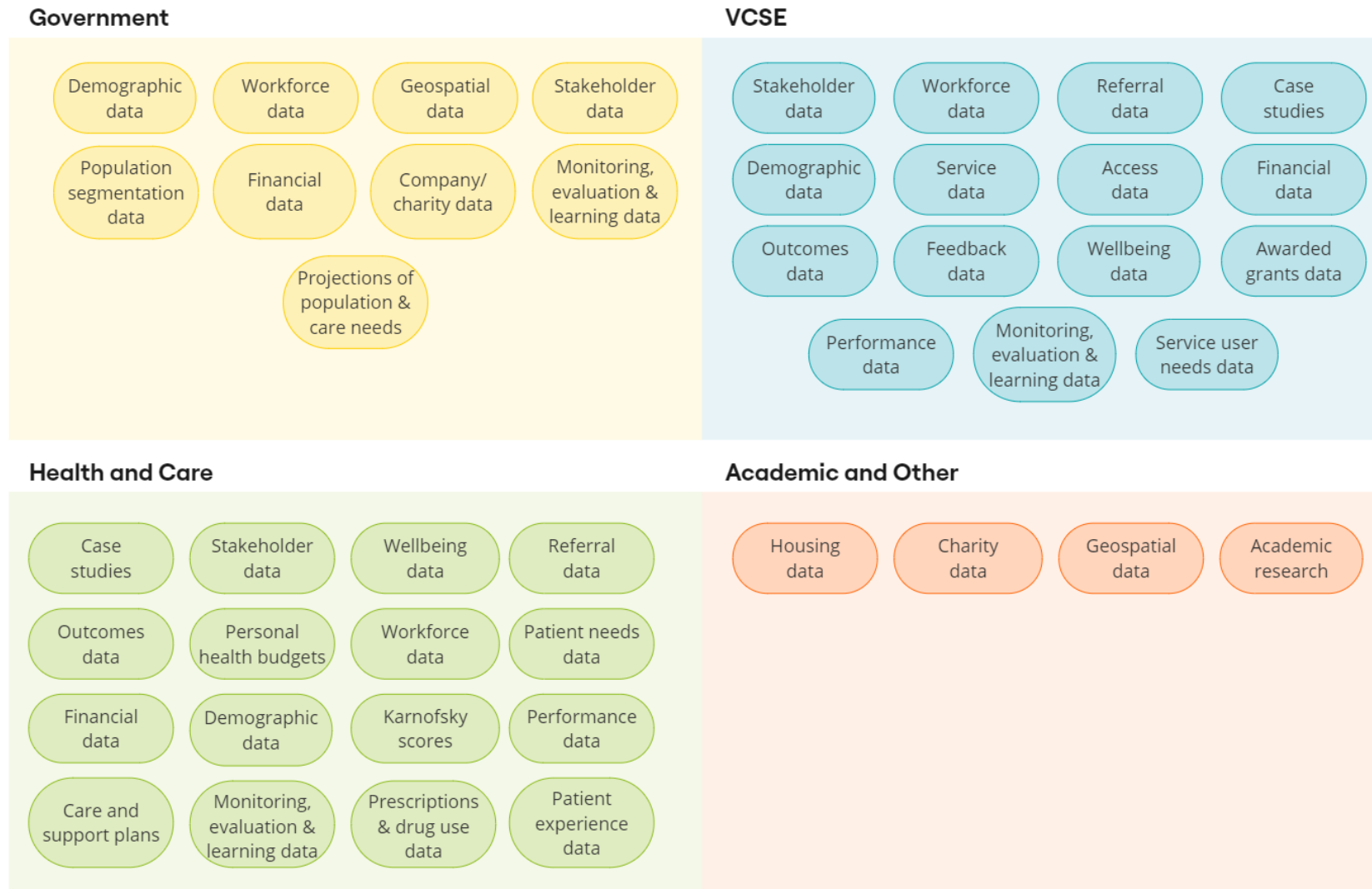


Figure 9: Spider diagram of software tools reported to be used by health, care and VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester, grouped into CRMs and Databases, Data Storage and Processing, Marketing and Communications, Health and Care Record Systems, Forms and Surveys, Artificial Intelligence and Data Visualisation. A screenreader-friendly tabular alternative to this diagram is provided in Appendix 2.

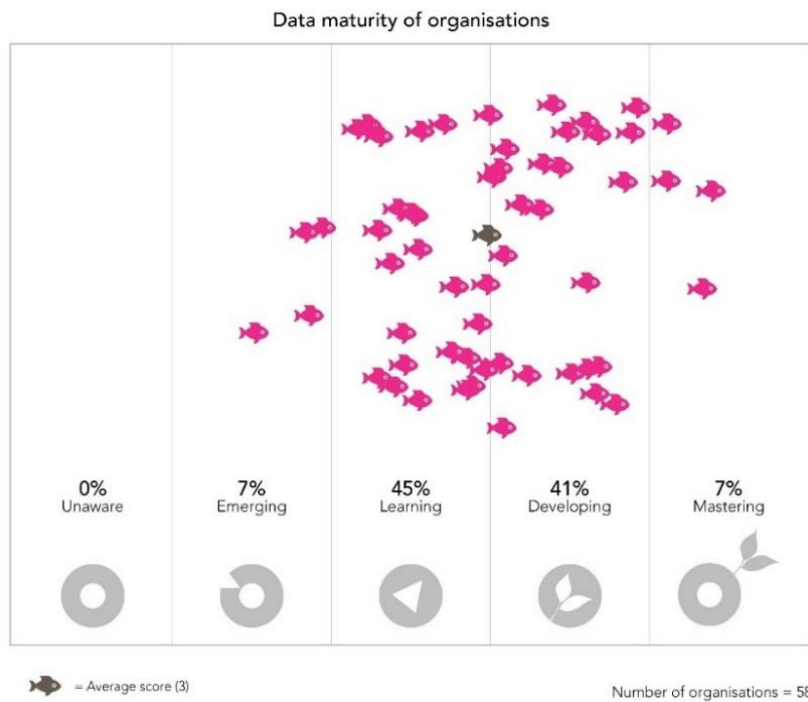


4. Results of the Data Maturity Assessment

Overall maturity

The overall average data maturity score for VCSE organisations was 3 out of 5. This places the sector between the Learning and Developing stages of data maturity (the third and fourth stages of the five-stage maturity journey). However, there was wide variation in how organisations scored for data maturity.

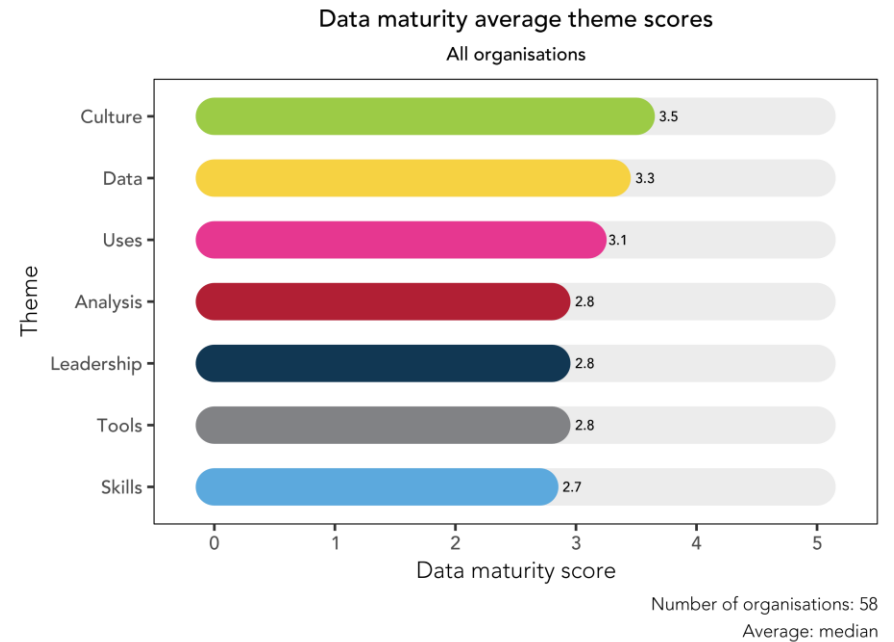
Figure 10: Scatterplot showing data maturity of 58 VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester.



Strengths and weaknesses across themes

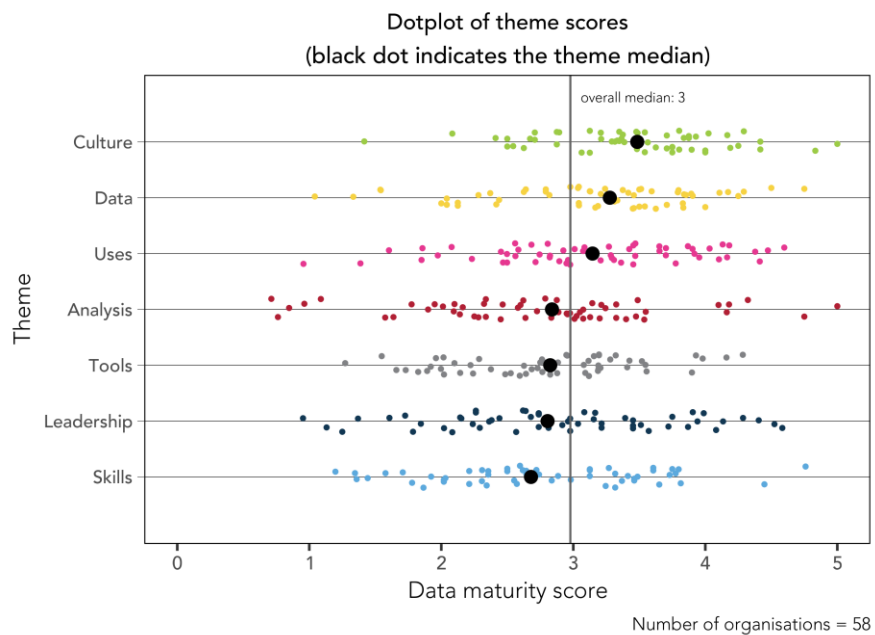
Average scores in each of the seven key themes ranged from 2.7 to 3.5 out of 5. The strongest themes were Culture and Data, the weakest was Skills. Tools, Leadership and Analysis were joint second weakest themes.

Figure 11: Chart showing median data maturity scores for 58 VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester across seven themes: Culture, Data, Uses, Analysis, Leadership, Tools and Skills.



Within each theme area there was also a lot of variation in how different organisations scored, with Analysis showing the widest range.

Figure 2: Dotplot of data maturity scores across the seven data maturity themes on a scale from 0 to 5 for 58 VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester.



The next section of the report gives the headline results per theme in order of highest to lowest scoring theme.

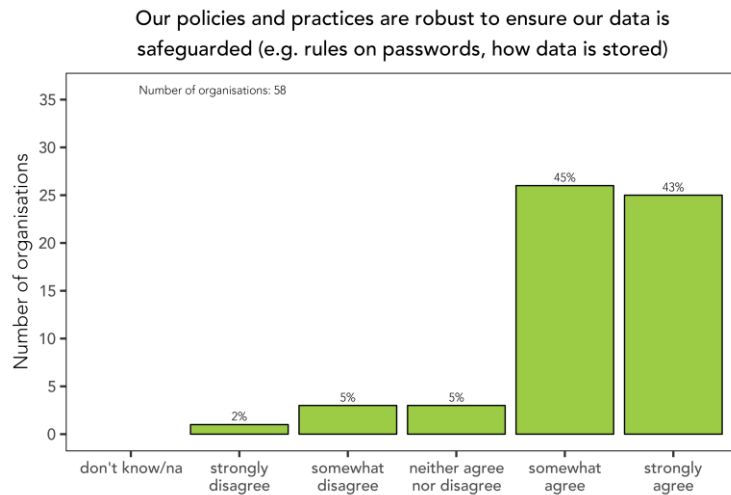
- Culture
- Data
- Uses
- Analysis
- Leadership
- Tools
- Skills

Culture: Team approach, self-questioning, openness, protection

Culture was the highest scoring theme with 3.5 out of 5. The sector scored fairly well on questions relating openness and sharing data. 84% said they share data externally with partners, networks, and stakeholders. Just under two-thirds said they share data with clients/service users/beneficiaries.

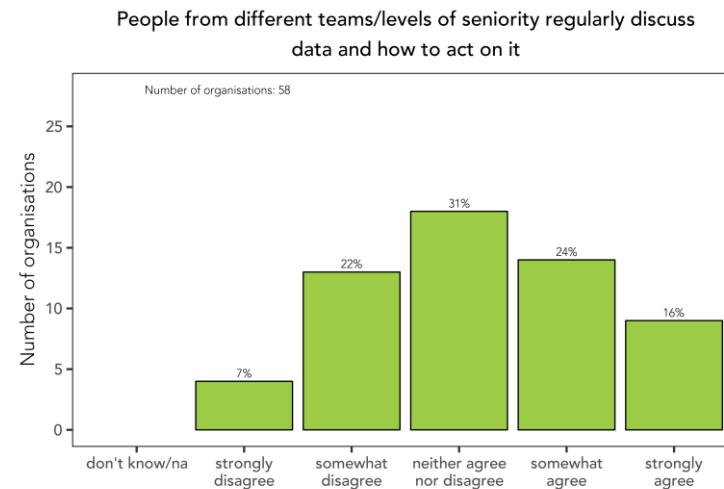
Organisations also scored fairly well on questions relating to data protection and security. 88% tended to agree they had robust policies and practices to ensure data is safeguarded and most (84%) said they specify and manage access to sensitive and personal data.

Figure 13: Column chart of agreement with the statement 'Our policies and practices are robust to ensure our data is safeguarded (e.g. rules on passwords, how data is stored)' from 58 VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester.



Aspects of Culture around team approach and self-questioning scored lower and results were more mixed. Data is seen as a team effort in just under two-thirds of organisations. In 40% of organisations, people from different teams/levels of seniority regularly discuss data and how to act on it. A third said data is easily available and accessible to staff when they need it.

Figure 14: Column chart of agreement with the statement 'People from different teams/levels of seniority regularly discuss data and how to act on it' from 58 VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester.

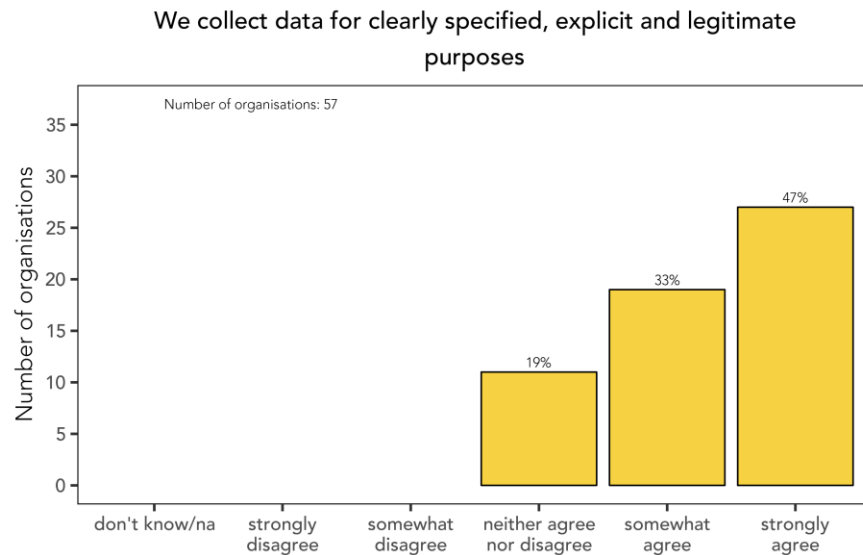


There were mixed views on whether people were comfortable using data internally to ask difficult questions and challenge practices in their organisations. 38% tended to agree, 29% tended to disagree.

Data: Collection, quality, sources, assets

Data was the second highest scoring theme, scoring 3.3 out of 5. Most agree the organisation collects the right data and does so for clearly specified purposes.

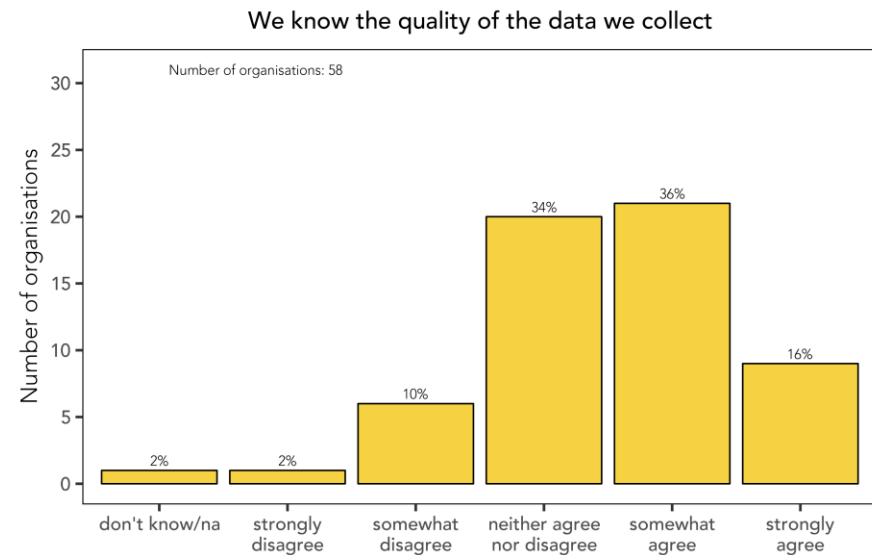
Figure 15: Column chart of agreement with the statement 'We collect data for clearly specified, explicit and legitimate purposes' from 57 VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester.



Internal data sharing is widely practised with 79% saying they share data from different teams, departments or services. 78% also use publicly available external research (e.g. government, academic). One third said they commission independent research or evaluation. 44% use shared measures and benchmarks with other organisations.

There's scope to improve the how data is understood and managed. Just under half (48%) maintain a record of data assets and who's responsible for them. Just over half (52%) say they know the quality of the data they collect and 43% tend to agree their data is complete, accurate and kept up to date.

Figure 16: Column chart of agreement with the statement 'We know the quality of the data we collect' from 58 VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester.

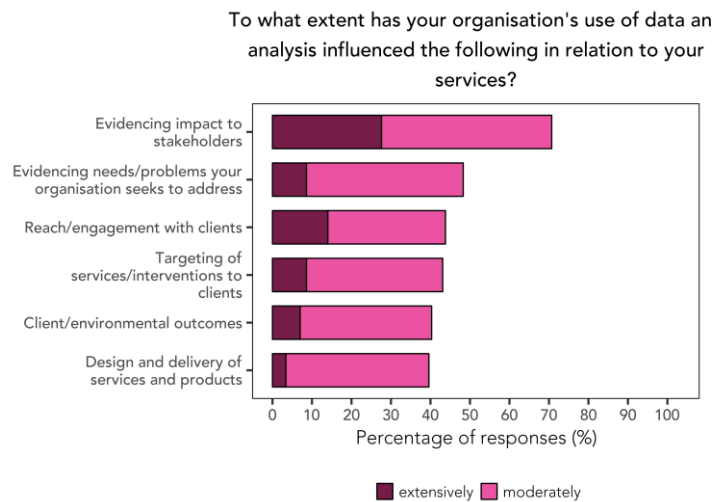


Uses: Purposes, benefits, and rewards

Uses was the third highest scoring theme, scoring 3.1 out of 5. Data is used for a wide range of service-related and core purposes. Most commonly for recording activity/work (90%) and regulator/funder/contract reporting (79%).

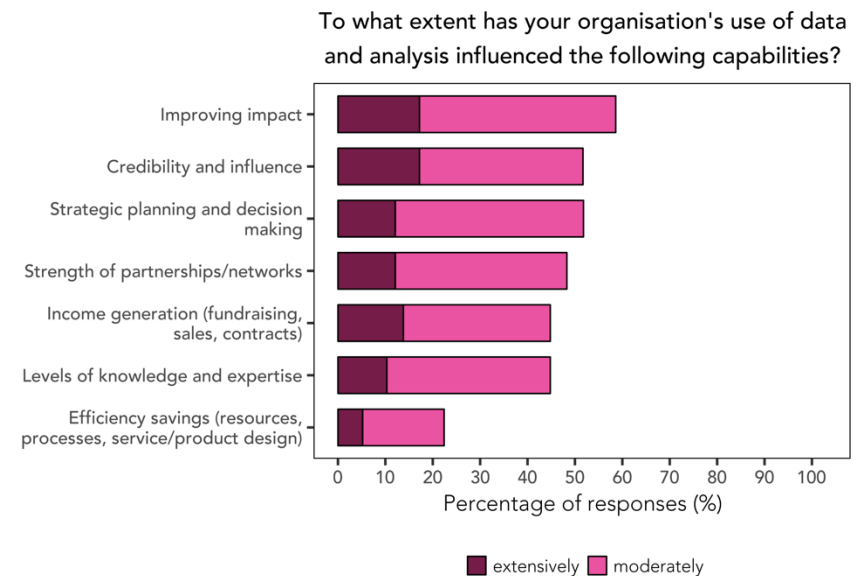
71% say data and analysis influences their ability to evidence impact to stakeholders. However less than half report data having an influence (moderate or extensive) on the design and delivery of services and products, client/environmental outcomes, targeting of services/interventions or reach/engagement with clients.

Figure 173: Stacked bar chart of responses to the question 'To what extent has your organisation's use of data and analysis influenced the following in relation to your services?' from 58 VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester.



In relation to core capabilities, most common uses are for improving impact, credibility and influence, and strategic planning and decision making. There is potential for increased influence of data to benefit income generation, levels of knowledge and expertise, and efficiency savings (resources, processes, service/product design).

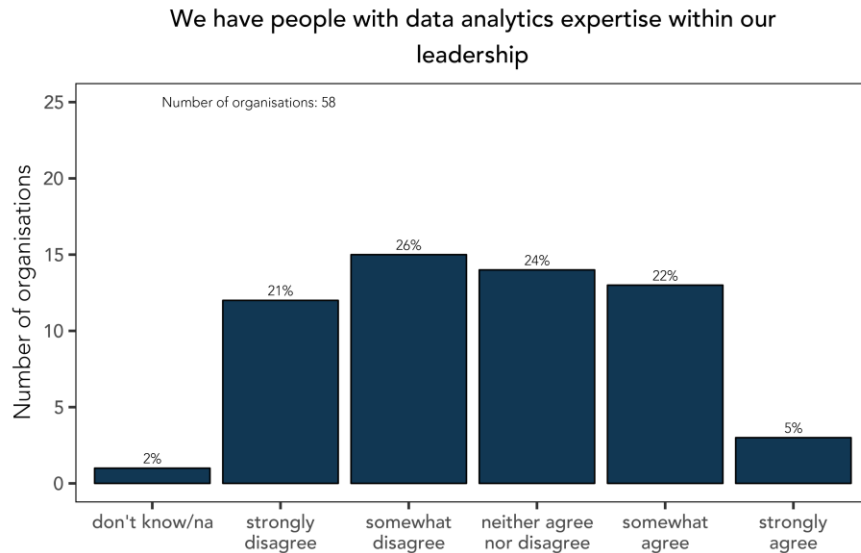
Figure 18: Stacked bar chart of responses to the question 'To what extent has your organisation's use of data and analysis influenced the following capabilities?' from 58 VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester.



Leadership: Attitudes, plans, capability, investment

The GM VCSE leadership theme score was: 2.8 out of 5 (same as Analysis and Tools). Data and analytics is seen as a major priority in just over half of respondent organisations. 27% say their organisation has people with data analytics expertise within their leadership.

Figure 19: Column chart of agreement with the statement 'We have people with data analytics expertise within our leadership' from 58 VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester.

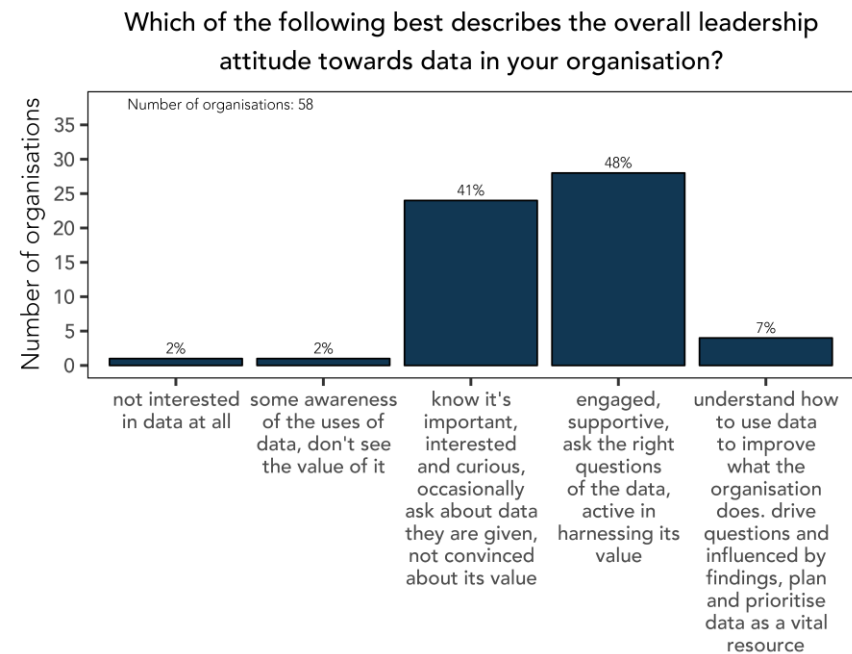


Data for decision making tends to look at what happened in the recent past and, for some, longer term historical trends. Just under a quarter (23%) say they are able to monitor what's

happening in real-time, and few (9%) say they use past, present and forward looking data.

Views on leadership attitudes to data are mixed. 7% feel leaders understand how to use data to improve what the organisation does, drive questions and are influenced by findings. Whilst almost half feel leadership is engaged, supportive, and ask the right questions of the data. In 43% of organisations staff say leaders aren't convinced/don't see the value of data.

Figure 20: Column chart of agreement with the question 'Which of the following best describes the overall leadership attitude towards data in your organisation?' from 58 VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester.

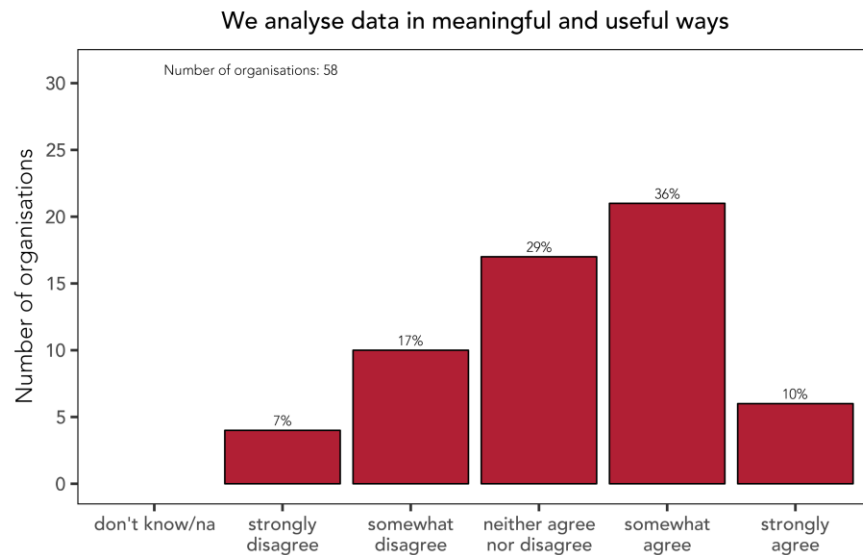


A quarter say leaders invest enough in data related resources (people, skills, learning, tools). 24% say they have a plan for improvement in data which is being implemented. 38% say there's no plan but they think they should have one.

Analysis: Type, technique, joining, presenting

The Analysis theme score was 2.8 out of 5 (same as Leadership and Tools). Just under half (46%) tend to agree their organisation analyses data in meaningful and useful ways.

Figure 21: Column chart of agreement with the statement 'We analyse data in meaningful and useful ways' from 58 VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester.

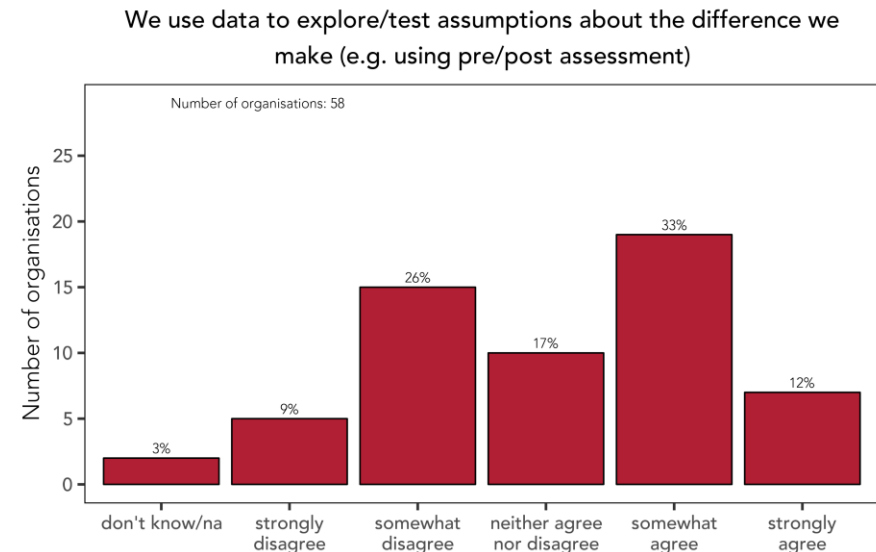


Manual approaches to bringing data together for reporting are widespread. Just 12% say data is brought together and analysed in an automated way e.g. via dashboard/business intelligence system/data platforms pulling data from different tools and systems.

Much of the analysis being conducted is basic and/or descriptive (counts, averages, variation, past trends). Less than half conduct any kind of 'diagnostic analytics' to explore causes, patterns, anomalies, differences, and correlations. Predictive and prescriptive analyses are relatively rare.

The picture is quite mixed around experimentation. 45% say they use data to explore/test assumptions about the difference they make, and just under a third say they run pilots and/or trials to explore how best to act in the future.

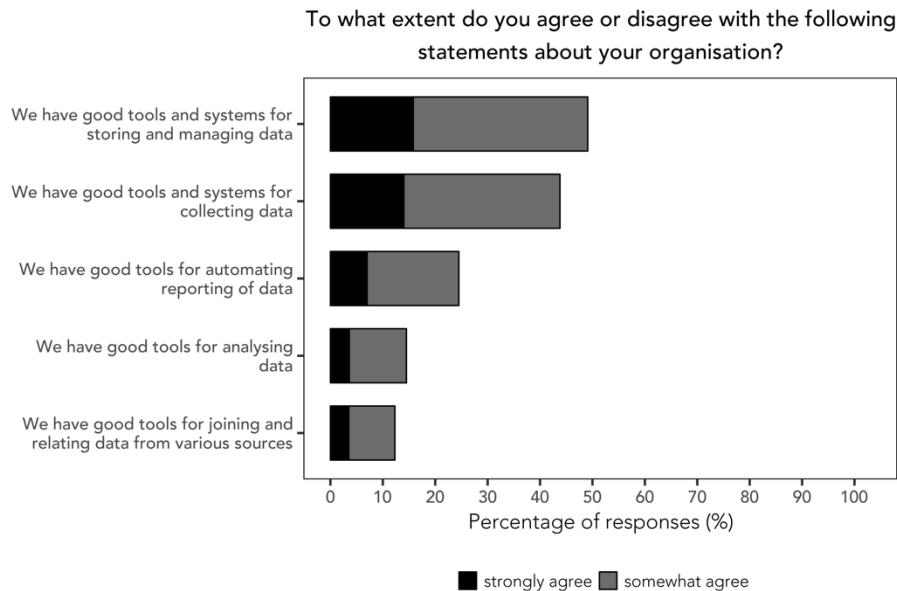
Figure 224: Column chart of agreement with the statement 'We use data to explore/test assumptions about the difference we make (e.g. using pre/post assessment)' from 58 VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester.



Tools: Collection, storage, managing, analysis, reporting, integration, architecture

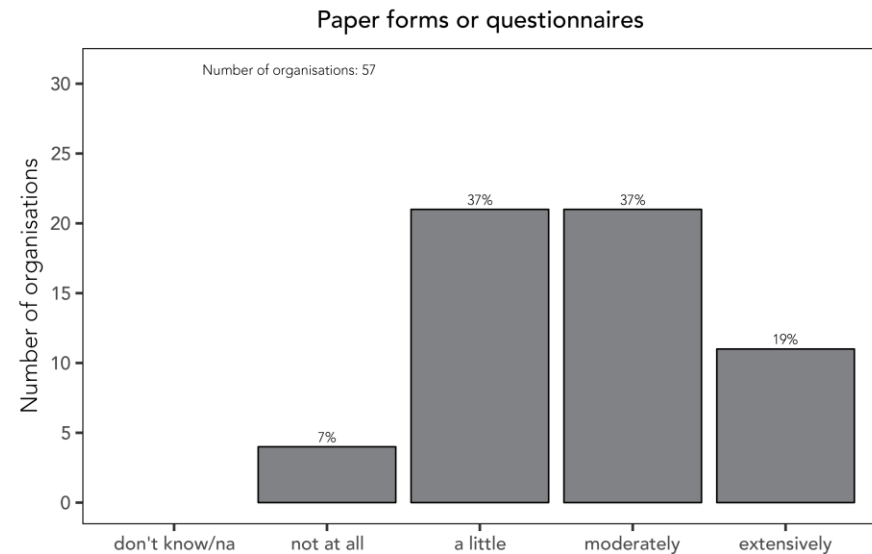
The Tools theme score was 2.8 out of 5 (same as Leadership and Analysis). Less than half of organisations rated their tools and systems as good (for any purpose). Those for storing and managing data were most highly rated (49% rated these as good). For data collection, 44% rated them as good. For automating reporting of data, 25% rated them as good. For analysing data 15% and for joining data from different sources 13%.

Figure 53: Stacked bar chart of responses to the question 'To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your organisation?' from 58 VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester.



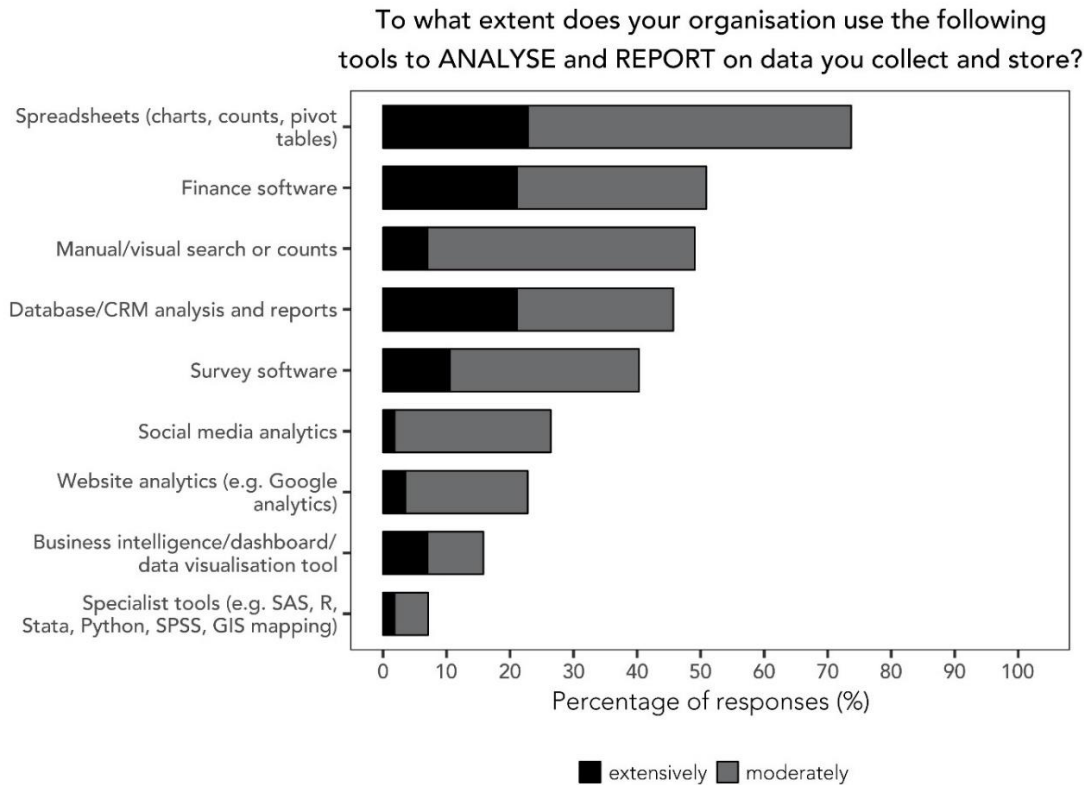
There were a wide range of digital approaches to data collection, most commonly via database/CRM systems (65%) and websites (49%). However, in over half of organisations (57%) respondents say data is collected moderately or extensively on paper forms and questionnaires. Just 7% appear to be completely paperless.

Figure 24: Column chart of responses to the question 'Paper forms or questionnaires' from 57 VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester.



Spreadsheets are by far the most common tool for analysing and reporting data. 74% of organisations use these extensively or moderately. Finance software is next (51%). Manual/visual searches or counts feature as the third top approach to analysis and reporting (49%) which may align with the widespread use of paper data collection. Less than half are using databases/CRM's (46%) or survey software (40%). Business intelligence tools are being used by 16% of organisations, and specialist data science and/or mapping tools by 7%.

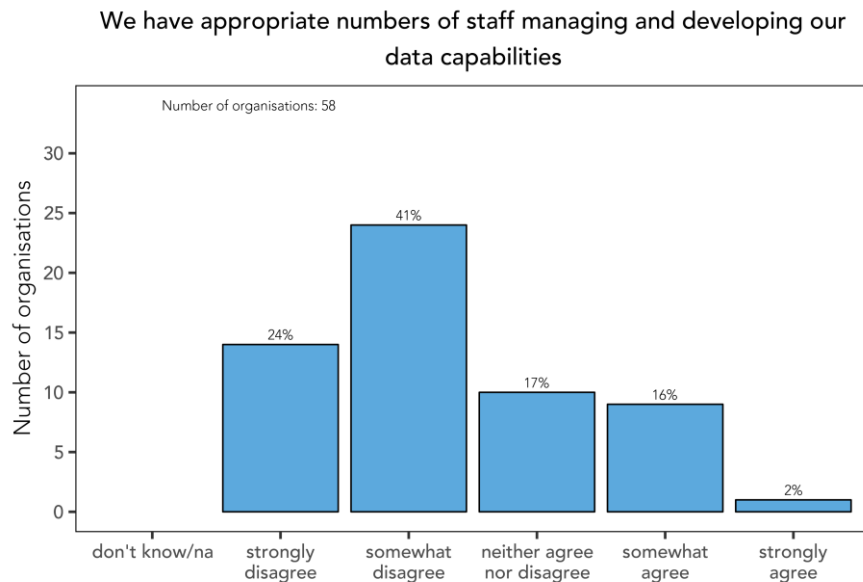
Figure 25: Stacked bar chart of responses to the question 'To what extent does your organisation use the following tools to analyse and report on data you collect and store?' from 58 VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester.



Skills: Capacity, skills, training, access to expertise

The skills theme was the lowest scoring of all themes, scoring: 2.7 out of 5. Capacity was clearly an issue, with just 18% agreeing they had appropriate numbers of staff managing and developing their organisations' data capabilities.

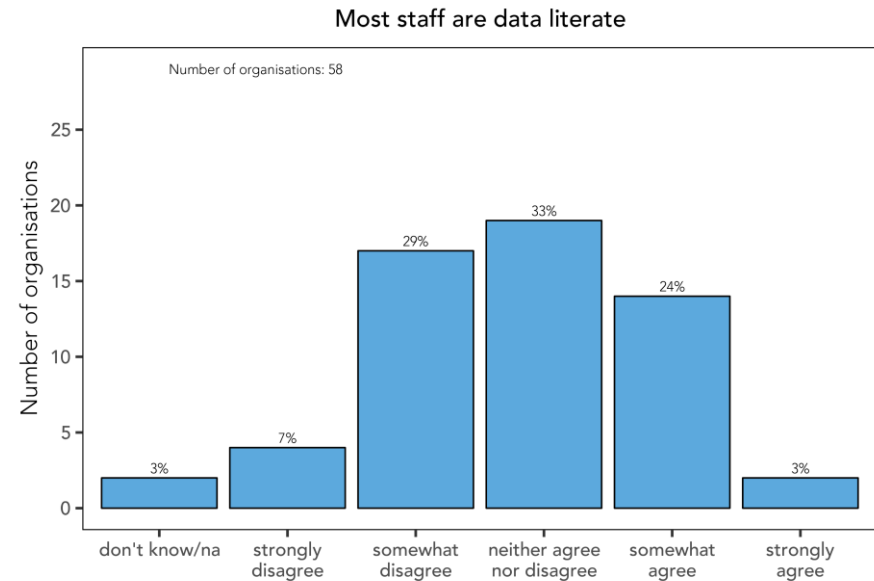
Figure 26: Column chart of agreement with the statement 'We have appropriate numbers of staff managing and developing our data capabilities' from 58 VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester.



Meanwhile 20% of organisations said they had the right skills and capability to maximise the use of their data.

There's a mixed picture around data literacy. 27% of organisations tended to agree most staff are data literate meanwhile 36% tended to disagree.

Figure 67: Column chart of agreement with the statement 'Most staff are data literate' from 58 VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester.



Under a third agreed their organisation supported staff to develop their analytics knowledge and skills. In addition, access to external support was also an issue for many. 29% tended to agree they have access to external data and analytics support and advice they can trust.

Data Governance

As mentioned in the earlier in the report, in 88% of organisations staff rated their policies and practices as robust to ensure data is safeguarded. However scores for other questions relating to data governance were quite mixed. Positively:

- 84% tend to agree that the organisation specifies and manages access to sensitive and personal data (e.g. by job role)
- 78% are confident about the security of data held on paper, computers and other devices
- 72% tend to agree their organisations' files and documents are centrally and securely stored

However, some aspects that were weaker with lower/more mixed scores were:

- 62% tended to agree staff receive induction and regular training on data protection and security
- 62% tend to agree they delete data about identifiable individuals that is no longer necessary (28% strongly agree, 34% somewhat agree)
- 60% tended to agree staff know how to respond to a data breach, potential breach or near miss

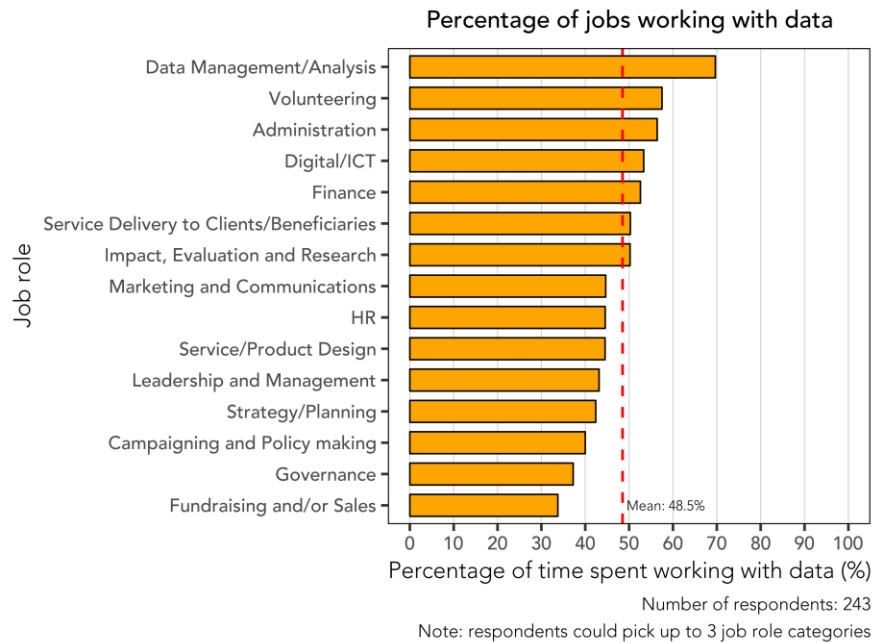
- 52% tend to agree the organisation knows the quality of the data it collects (16% strongly agree, 36% somewhat agree)
- 48% said they maintain a record of data assets and who's responsible for them
- 46% tend to agree digital files and documents are well organised and managed (9% strongly agree, 37% somewhat agree)
- 45% tend to agree potential risks are monitored and tested to improve data security and protection (26% strongly agree, 19% somewhat agree)
- 39% tend to agree staff find it easy to search for and find the information they need (2% strongly agree, 37% somewhat agree)
- 36% tend to agree old unnecessary files and documents are archived and deleted (10% strongly agree, 26% somewhat agree)

Some of these findings are quite concerning (particularly the lack of regular training and the lack of knowledge about the data assets and their quality/responsibility. This suggest some of the confidence in security and protection may overstate the reality of those organisations' vulnerability.

Staff time spent working with data

Findings show that people spend a lot of time working with data. For the 243 staff who participated in the assessment the proportion of time spent ranged from 34% to 70% of their jobs. On average staff spend 49% of their time working with data.

Figure 78: Bar chart showing the percentage of time spent working with data by job role, based on 243 respondents from VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester.



Those in Data Management/Analysis, Volunteering, and Administration roles were slightly above this average. Those in Fundraising/Sales, Governance, Campaigning and Policy making were slightly below the average.

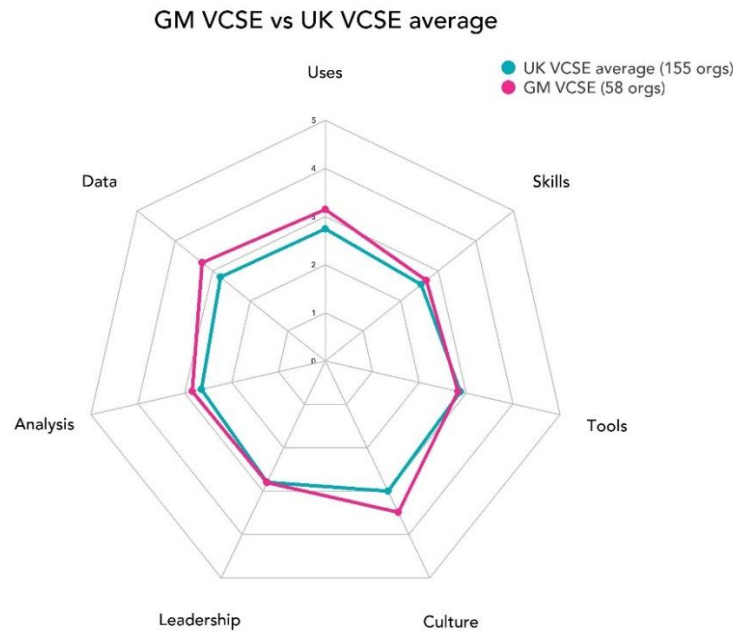
Given salaries often represent the highest area of budget expenditure, this represents a considerable and well-hidden cost for most VCSE organisations.

Benchmarking GM VCSE v UK VCSE and Public Sectors

Using benchmarking data from validated UK VCSE and public sector organisations completing a data maturity assessment over the last two years (Dec 2021 to Dec 2023), results show broadly similar patterns.

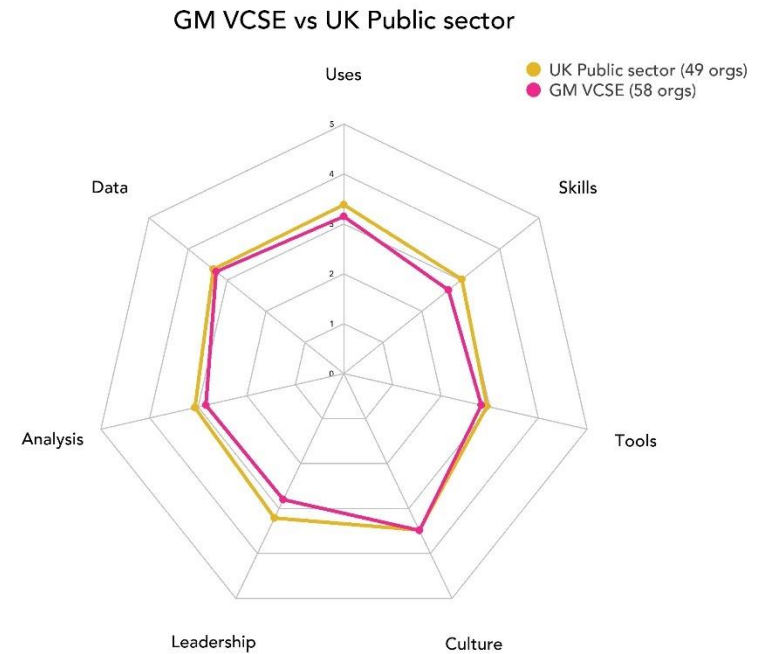
The average data maturity score for GM VCSE was 3 out of 5.
The average data maturity score for UK VCSE was 2.8 out of 5.

Figure 89: Radar chart comparing average data maturity scores in each of seven themes (Uses, Skills, Tools, Culture, Leadership, Analysis and Data) for the UK VCSE sector as a whole (155 organisations) and the Greater Manchester VCSE sector (58 organisations).



The UK public sector scores slightly higher in some theme areas, notably in Skills and Leadership and perhaps reflects the relative difference in Government resourcing and investment.

Figure 309: Radar chart comparing average data maturity scores in each of seven themes (Uses, Skills, Tools, Culture, Leadership, Analysis and Data) for the UK public sector (49 organisations) and the Greater Manchester VCSE sector (58 organisations).



The average data maturity score for GM VCSE was 3 out of 5.
The average data maturity score for UK Public Sector was 3.2 out of 5.

5. Deep-dive Cohort Data Maturity Assessment

For the Cohort Data Maturity Assessment, nine organisations were selected, based on their service-reach to people experiencing severe and multiple deprivation. They represented a range of organisation in terms of size, type and geographic operation.



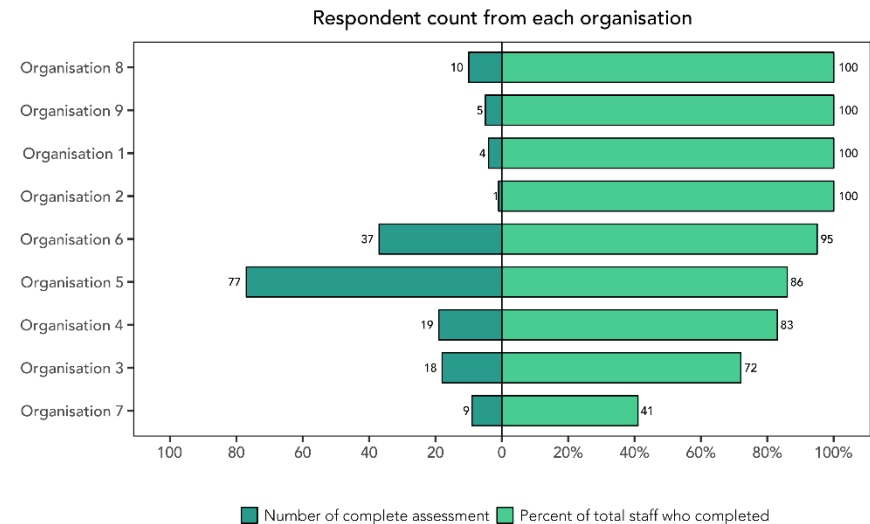
The nine organisations were:

- 10GM
- Back on Track
- Cracking Good Food
- EGG Charity
- Infinity Initiatives
- Manchester Care and Repair
- Our Sale West
- Stepping Stone

- The Bond Board

Levels of staff engagement from within the cohort organisations were very high with most gaining 80-100% staff participation in the assessments, which took place during November 2023.

Figure 31: Bar chart showing the number of Data Maturity Assessment respondents and percentage of staff represented for each of nine VCSE organisations who work with service users experiencing severe and multiple deprivation in Greater Manchester.

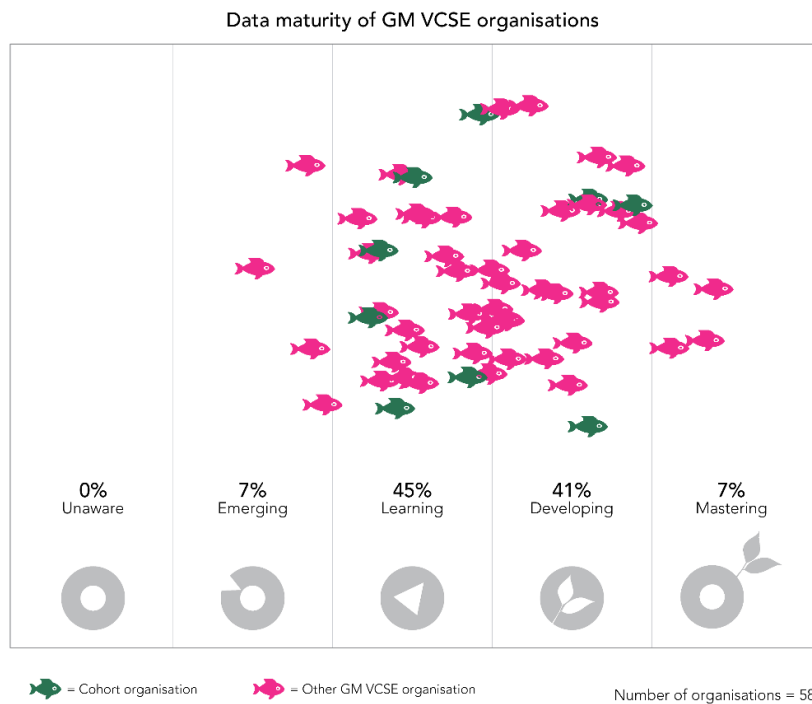


Six of the nine organisation began their assessments in a live workshop enabling staff to discuss the initial results, their data challenges and ideas immediately after completion. Other staff were then invited to complete the assessment over the following weeks. The other three organisations conducted their assessments as a staff-survey over a few weeks.

Cohort data maturity scores

The data maturity scores for the cohort ranged from 2.2 out of 5 to 3.9 out of 5. Two thirds of the group scored in the Learning stage and one third scored in the Developing stage. Given most of the organisations in the wider VCSE data maturity assessment were also found to be at these two stages, we can consider the cohort to be fairly reflective of the sector overall.

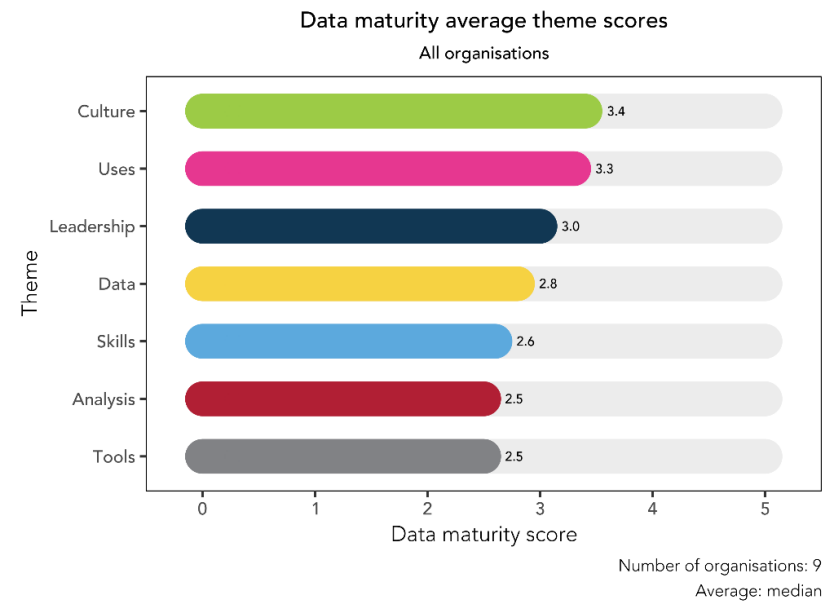
Figure 102: Scatterplot showing data maturity of nine VCSE organisations who work with service users experiencing severe and multiple deprivation compared with 49 organisations in the wider VCSE sector in Greater Manchester.



Theme scores were different for each organisation as can be seen by the radar charts on the next page. Looking at the three weakest themes for the cohort organisations:

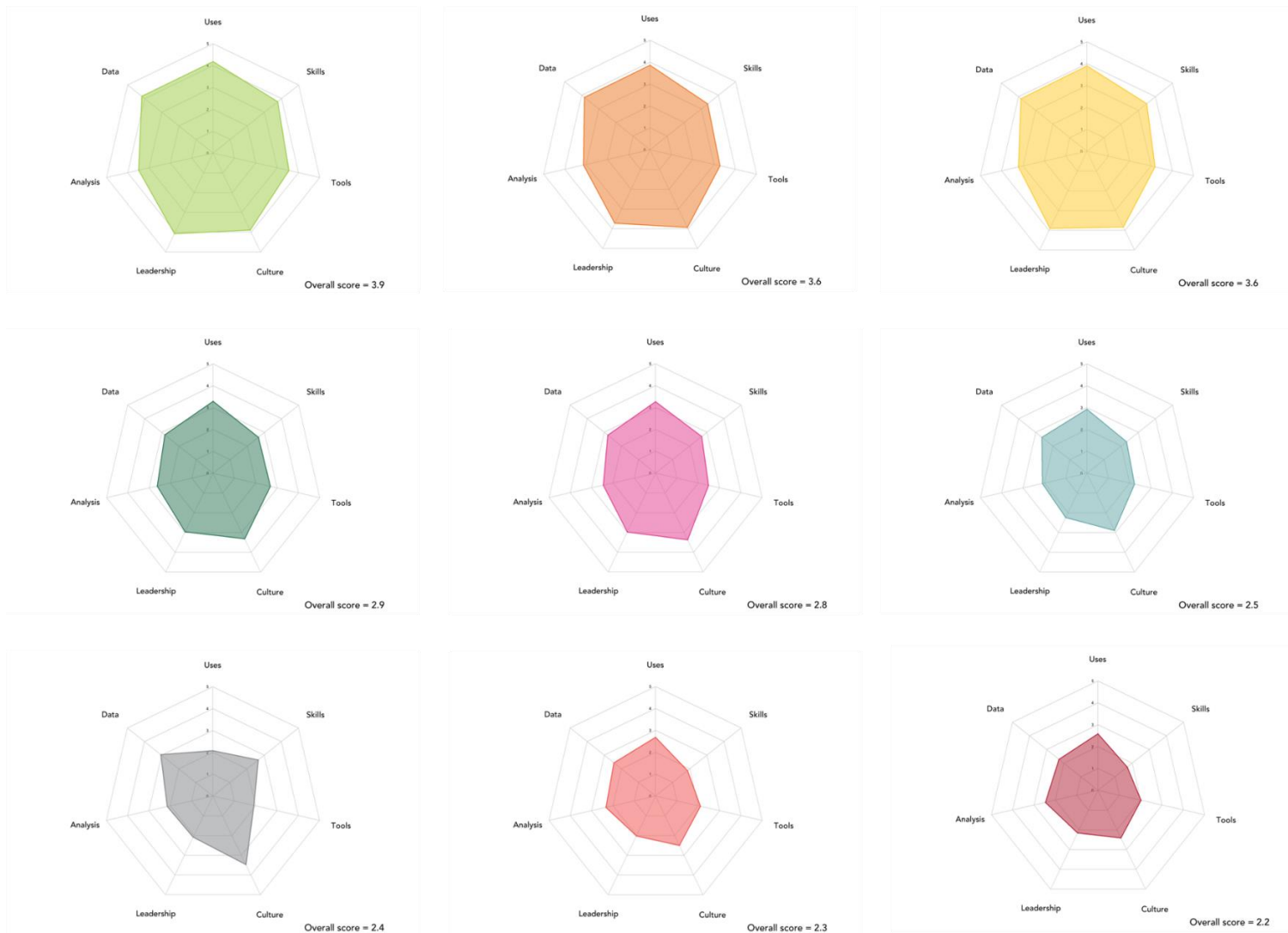
- Tools was one of weakest themes for all organisations
- Skills was a weakness for 8 out of 9 and
- Analysis for 7 out of 9.

Figure 113: Chart showing median data maturity scores for nine VCSE organisations who work with service users experiencing severe and multiple deprivation in Greater Manchester across seven themes: Culture, Data, Uses, Analysis, Leadership, Tools and Skills.



Notably, Leadership scored as a key weakness among the four lowest scoring organisations.

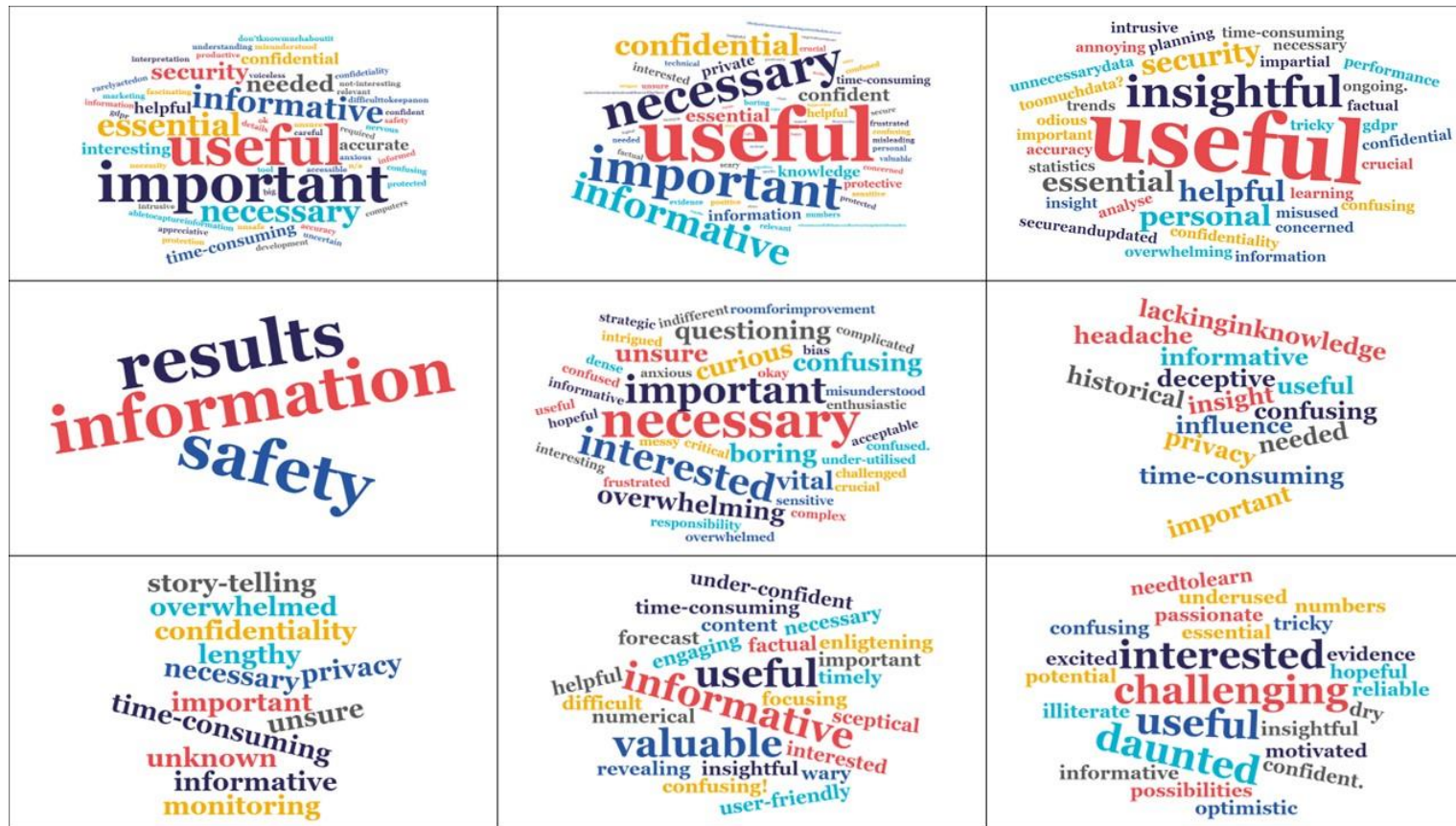
Figure 12: Radar charts showing data maturity scores for nine VCSE organisations who work with service users experiencing severe and multiple deprivation in Greater Manchester across seven themes: Culture, Data, Uses, Analysis, Leadership, Tools and Skills. They are arranged from highest scoring in the top left to lowest scoring bottom right.



Staff views about data

We asked staff across all the cohort organisations what three words best described how they felt about data. The results showed data is mostly commonly viewed as 'useful', 'important', 'informative' and 'necessary'. However it should be noted that words like 'time-consuming', 'overwhelming' and 'confusing' also feature in the mix of responses.

Figure 135: Word clouds showing prevalence of words chosen to describe how people felt about data in nine VCSE organisations who work with service users experiencing severe and multiple deprivation in Greater Manchester. They are arranged from the organisation that scored highest for data maturity in the top left to the lowest scoring at bottom right.

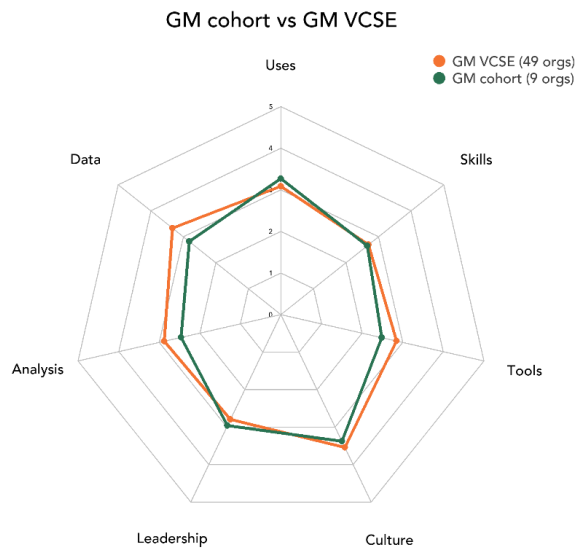


Benchmarking cohort v GM VCSE

The average data maturity score for the 9 cohort organisations was 2.8 out of 5 which is the same as for the UK VCSE for the last two years. This is slightly below the average for the other 49 organisations in the GM VCSE group, which was 3 out of 5.

Comparing the overall scores for the cohort with those for the GM VCSE shows some slight differences. Notably the cohort organisations scored lower for Data, Analysis and Tools, though scores were similar for the other themes.

Figure 36: Radar chart comparing average data maturity scores in each of seven themes (Uses, Skills, Tools, Culture, Leadership, Analysis and Data) for the Greater Manchester VCSE sector (49 organisations) and the cohort VCSE organisations who work with service users experiencing severe and multiple deprivation (9 organisations).



The cohort results are likely to be accurate for the participating organisations as most had almost complete staff participation offering the fullest possible range of perspectives. Feedback from participating organisations suggest this is the case.

Given the open call for responses to the data maturity assessment from the wider GM VCSE sector, it's possible that the results may have been had some bias to more 'data positive' respondents. In many cases these were based on a single respondent's view on behalf of the organisation.

Either way the findings for the cohort and the wider sector, align on overall weaknesses to be addressed.

6. Case Studies of leading organisations

Developing a single source of truth

Context

LGBT Foundation are a national charity with LGBTQ+ health and wellbeing at the heart of everything they do. Based in Manchester, they have 77 employees, 288 volunteers, and £4M income in 2022-23.



The problem

LGBT Foundation has valued data collection for a long time, but when Tom Montrose-Moss joined as Head of Insight and Performance 6 years ago, most of their data was collected on paper and any digital information was stored in an array of separate spreadsheets. It was very difficult to answer simple questions like 'how many referrals did we get last month?' as it meant extracting the information from a range of sources. This siloing of data also meant staff were often unaware of what people were working on in other parts of the organisation.

"Our CEO said we were 'data rich and knowledge poor'. We were sitting on a lot of information but unable to process it into something that was useable. Sometimes we were collecting information that didn't tell you anything (which we've since stopped collecting)."

The data journey

LGBT Foundation was already using a Salesforce CRM, but in a very basic way. Tom's first task was to set up Salesforce so all service activity could be captured into it. Data collection was made more consistent and digitally enabled across the organisation. Forms, previously on paper then scanned and uploaded, were now web-based with drop-down lists to make input easier for staff. At the same time, referral pathways were reviewed, and the user journey was digitised to track which services people accessed, and what their outcome was.

Tom negotiated these changes in data processes by selling the benefits to staff: ability to see what was happening across the organisation; ability to monitor the changing demand for services (and why when things felt hectic, the data affirmed people's gut feelings); monitoring of service performance indicators such as waiting times. The pandemic also helped accelerate adoption of a digital approach. The organisation now captures all its service data into Salesforce, from referral through initial assessment, service provision and discharge, with feedback forms submitting directly into the CRM.

Tom created dashboards to give colleagues an overview of what's going on in services - for example, showing service needs by demographic. LGBT Foundation are in a strong position to demonstrate community need for their services. They use data to tell compelling stories to different audiences: to funders, to influence public awareness, and to educate staff in other

organisations. For example: the TV programme 'Crimewatch' featured their data on high rates of domestic abuse in the LGBTQ+ community.

Enablers: a champion, leadership support, and the pandemic

Tom has been an excellent champion for data and feels leadership support and the pandemic have also been key drivers.

"Leadership has valued data and intelligence from day one and their constant drive to be an evidence-based organisation has given me the freedom to develop everything that's needed. As information has been liberated from the paper space - it's empowered colleagues to have informed discussions and reaffirmed people at the top that their instinct to value data was right."

Until 6 months ago, Tom was a one-person-band but with the growth of the organisation and the value and volume of data, he now has another member of staff on his team. This has increased their capacity to deal with data requests, reporting, and enabled them to provide more internal training.

Challenges: skills development, digital literacy and change

Completing the Data Maturity Assessment made Tom reflect on skills across LGBT Foundation and the sector as a whole. He felt people in charities aren't usually recruited based on their digital skills. Many are more comfortable with the old familiar ways and tools (like spreadsheets).

"There's a degree of patience and understanding you've got to have with staff in terms of expectations...some colleagues take to [digital tools] like a duck to water but you've got to bring everyone along with you. It's that cultural stuff. Some people still scared by numbers, or not seeing the value of all the information they input."

Advice for others in the VCSE sector

Tom's top three suggestions for others in the VCSE sector are:

1. Design your data collection with the goal of story-telling

Data by itself doesn't really tell you anything. It's how you use it to communicate stories that matters. Create simple tools to tell a three-act story: What was the person's situation? What was their experience of the service? and What was the outcome? Having the end goal in mind helps inform data collection design.

2. Get as much information as possible into one place

This helps to avoid unnecessary duplication and helps people to understand the whole history of a service user or client.

3. Upskill people so they can see the value of data for themselves

People can't always see the potential of data. By upskilling staff and enabling them to see the data for themselves there are immediate rewards e.g. enabling staff to see service user feedback to demonstrate the difference they've made to someone's life.

A Digital and Data Journey



Context Manchester Care and Repair are a charity that helps people to stay independent in their own homes. They have 39 employees and had an income of £2M in 2022-23.

The problem

When Alice Mason became CEO of Manchester Care and Repair in 2020, she discovered a number of problems: the organisation was very paper based, many of its digital systems and databases were outdated and they were relying on an overloaded fixed server in the office. There was also a lot of information that was no longer used or needed, and concerns about GDPR compliance. The data quality was poor, reporting was cumbersome, and there was lots of duplication of activity (and data).

The data journey

Alice spent her first 6 months prioritising data 'housekeeping' and establishing new data infrastructure. Assisted by digitally savvy Business Development Manager, Mike Burgess, they were able to sort through the organisation's data and migrate all their cleaned files to a cloud-based SharePoint system in 2021.

With help from a board member they secured investment for a new CRM system (CiviCRM). They were initially supported to adopt and develop the system by a local trusted provider.

However, when their provider was bought out, they found the new supplier less responsive to their needs. And, after spending all their funding, were left with a CRM that didn't fully meet their requirements. Thankfully over the next 6 months, Mike was able to teach himself how to configure CiviCRM to refine and tailor it to their needs. The new database was launched in March 2022 and it took most of 2022-23 to implement. It has now been setup to enable them to extract data and run reports effectively for different staff members.

Alice used NCVO's digital maturity self-assessments to track how the organisation was doing along the way. The following diagrams show the progress made over just 18 months.

Figure 147: Radar chart showing Manchester Care and Repair's NCVO Digital Maturity Matrix scores in 8 categories in December 2020.

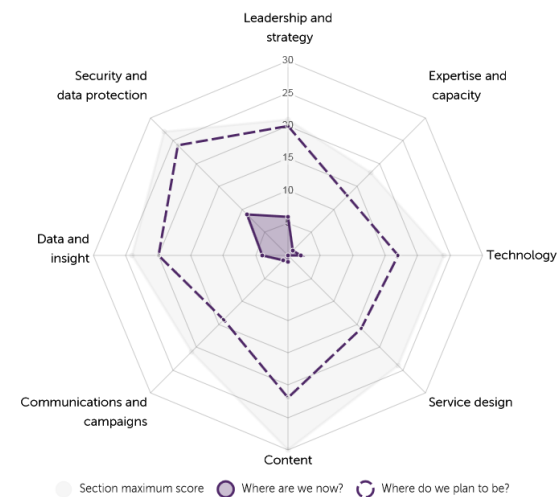
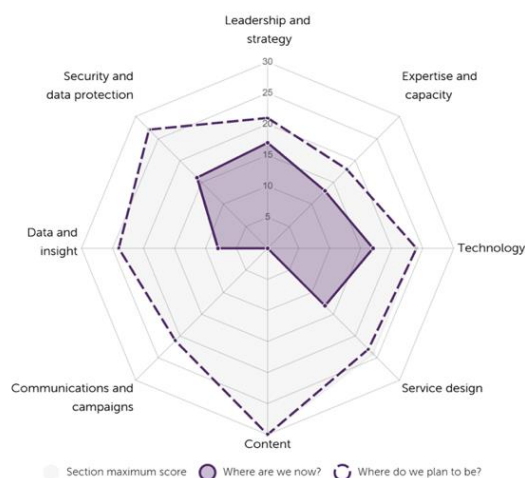


Figure 38: Radar chart showing Manchester Care and Repair's NCVO Digital Maturity Matrix scores in 8 categories in May 2022.



Enablers: Leadership vision and 'people' people

Alice was the driving force for Manchester Care and Repair to become more data savvy. She has a research background and brings a vision about how data could help with strategic and operational planning. She was ably supported by Mike or "Mr IT guru" who brought the technical know-how to implement the changes required to the tools and systems. Mike had worked with the organisation for a long time, in different roles (marketing, communication, website) – a jack of all trades and had well-established good working relationships with his colleagues. This helped staff who were very change averse and nervous about IT to shift to different ways of working.

Challenges: impact measurement and tools

Manchester Care and Repair have mapped population health and housing conditions to focus on areas of need for their work. They can already demonstrate that their services are provided equally across the area and they hope to develop more data visualisation tools using their CRM. They don't have the resources to invest in additional software like Tableau at the moment. Alice would like to work on ensuring that outcome data is captured consistently by all frontline staff so that they can demonstrate their wider impact on the wellbeing of clients to commissioners.

"Most of our work is maintaining peoples' independence in the community - the NHS only commission one part of our work, the Home from Hospital service. It would be fantastic if we could get commissioners to understand the breadth of what we do and the impact on individuals by linking it with health and social care records. There just seem to be endless barriers with data sharing with the NHS."

Manchester Care and Repair took part in the cohort Data Maturity Assessments and scored in the upper Developing stage of data maturity. They hope to use the tool again in the to track the organisation's data journey over time. Their goal is to continue to use data to develop and improve services, improve outcomes for clients, and help commissioners and partners to better understand both the needs of their clients and the value of their work.

Advocating the use of open data

Context

Macc is a charity that supports the VCSE sector and local people in Manchester to have more influence over the places and communities where they live. In 2022-23 the charity had an income of £1.6M and 25 employees.



The data journey

The idea of citizen empowerment through open data has appealed to Macc's Chief Executive Mike Wild for about a decade (see his [YouTube video](#)). Macc were becoming inundated with requests for information from their unique dataset about organisations, community groups and volunteers in Manchester City (including from their State of the Sector report), but didn't have the capacity to service such demand.

Mike saw the potential of publishing the data from their CiviCRM database so others could access it and link it to other datasets. Macc worked with the Open Data Collective to structure their data in the right way - for example, using the unique reference codes for each ward from the Office for National Statistics to allow matching with other data. Guidance was produced about how they did this and they openly published [their data and approach](#). The result was a reduction in the number of requests for

information as people could now search and explore the data themselves.

Macc also committed to using the standard adopted by 360Giving to allow open publishing and sharing of the grants and funds they administer and were one of the first grant awarding bodies in the country to publish their data. In so doing, they were able to influence other local and national grant giving organisations to share their data openly "if we can do it, why can't you?". This has resulted in more data being published on grants awarded (such as local housing associations) which has helped evidence and influence where funding should be targeted in future.

Enablers: data standards, leadership and tools

Mike understands the potential for open data and other forms of data sharing to help the VCSE sector and has led by example. Macc were supported to publish their data openly by trusted and skilled experts in this space. They also had the tools to help them do so in the form of their CRM, which they are now developing to improve the quality of the data they hold and their metrics. Macc used the [Grantnav](#) tool to search, explore and download grants data published by UK funders using the 360Giving standard. Agreeing and adopting data standards for a particular purpose facilitates the sharing of data between organisations.

Challenges: resources, strategic approach and skills

Mike has found that the lack of funding for data work in the VCSE sector is a major barrier to progress. There is much demand from the statutory sector for engagement with the VCSE sector, but this isn't usually funded e.g. being asked for directories of different services by the local NHS, local authority's children's support and police. We have the means to use data to connect things up as never before using Open Referral Standards and with investment in the VCSE data and intelligence ecosystem.

"Investment in a data architecture so we can share public information in a planned way. If we all collected data to one standard, it could be shared and unlock community insight and the development of tools and systems. Then we can invest in the capability of our own workforce - but unless there's a commitment to work with it and allow it to mature, we end up in the same conversation again and again."

Macc also struggles with a lack of capacity to analyse and make use of their data as much as they would like. Analytical skills are hard to resource and retain for small VCSE organisations and leadership is key in investing in them. To improve the awareness of leaders about the opportunities data can provide and therefore invest in capacity to make the most of these.

"We need to provide a bite-sized guide on data analysis for leaders. Many of the current generation of VCSE leaders are probably the last who didn't grow up with data as a 'tool', but as a 'task' - it's a generational blind spot. Especially when people are vastly overloaded and struggle to get the bandwidth to take much more on."

7. Learning and Reflections

The overall aim of this project was to understand what is needed to enable the better use of data and intelligence in the VCSE sector in Greater Manchester, particularly in relation to population health. The learning and reflections are summarised here.

Opportunities

What could be changed or implemented to better enable use of data and intelligence and/or minimise barriers?

The pandemic and subsequent increase in remote working provided opportunities for organisations to move away from paper-based data collection and storage to digital and cloud-based tools which improved business efficiency and continuity.

There is a genuine willingness to improve the use of data and intelligence across the VCSE sector and Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) in Greater Manchester, as demonstrated by the engagement with this project, case studies and suggested pilot projects. There has been a rich dialogue about data built on a culture of joint working.

Many organisations would like to share more data (using appropriate data sharing agreements) and develop standardised approaches to data collection. The 'proof of concept' test and

learn projects suggested in this report test ways to implement this which can be replicated.

There are opportunities to share expertise within and between sectors, learning from each other and implementing small, valuable changes. The digital tools and expertise held within the ICP to link, share, analyse and report on data from and to the VCSE sector. This has the potential to aid predictive modelling and planning future interventions for patients and service users. The VCSE sector brings a deep understanding of the people and communities they work with, and an appreciation of working alongside communities in an equitable, supportive, and respectful way - including how data is collected from.

Opportunities to use data to generate insight collaboratively were explored and fell into these broad areas:

- Tackling health inequalities: understanding the profile of service users, barriers to access, the type of targeted support required.
- Understanding the patient/service user journey. Identifying groups at risk. Identifying capacity to support.
- Understanding the contribution that VCSE sector support has on people's wellbeing.

- Knowledge of which services exist, where and when.
- An understanding of the skills and capacity of using data well in the VCSE sector.

Challenges

What skills and effort are needed to overcome barriers?

Lack of leadership understanding and knowledge of potential ways that data can improve efficiency and effectiveness of their organisations. Keeping up with innovations and new technologies can feel overwhelming, having the headspace to think about data strategically and as an asset along with everything else.

Skills in working with data is often not a direct requirement for many roles in the VCSE sector with low data literacy for some staff, which affects data quality. There is an overall lack of analytical skills to make sense of and see the value of data in improving services. Fear of and lack of knowledge of data protection regulations prevents data gathering and sharing in some cases (even with non-personal data in some cases).

There are lots of small, independent VCSE organisations collecting data in different ways, as required by a plethora of different funders resulting in a lack of standardisation, which makes data sharing and analysis challenging.

Enablers

What or who helps organisations use data well?

The people who are motivating organisations to improve with data are key to driving change. Those who have the vision of how data can be used effectively in the VCSE sector, particularly data enabled discussions with commissioners and funders. Data leaders, implementers, champions - so 'called data translators' who can explain the value of data and how it can help staff at operational and strategic level. Leadership support is crucial at Chief Exec and board level.

People change the culture, processes, and practice in organisations. Progress is made when staff can see 'what's in it for them' (and their service users) so they will put the effort in to ensure data quality is maintained.

Tools - paper to digital, flow of data, access to data, linking data, making data accessible, either in one place or by publishing openly. Systems that link to each other to avoid duplication of effort. CRMs can enable a consistent approach to data collection, storage and use of analysis and insights within an organisation.

Barriers

What's preventing organisations from using data well?

There is a lack of capacity and skills to maximise use of data across the workforce and specifically a lack of data knowledge, skills and investment by leaders, funders and commissioners.

Data is collected in multiple systems and files, with no coherent overview in organisations. VCSE organisations have poor tools and systems for getting analysis and insight from all the data that's collected. This is further impeded by a lack of interoperability of systems in some cases. There is also a lack of support and advice from external suppliers whom organisations can afford and trust.

A real barrier for the VCSE sector is negotiating the complexity of collaborating within the GM Integrated Care Partnership, with the differential in size and resources and different requirements for operational reporting. This prevents progress being made in how data is collected and reported with many organisations having to

do this in multiple and different ways, which is resource intensive. It is not conducive to more streamlined and strategic data collection, to enable data sharing and analysis at a population level. The reporting is operational and responsive rather than enabling insight to assess whether interventions are improving health and wellbeing.

Leaders are too busy trying to keep organisations and services going to take a step back to do things differently. The squeeze on funding is affecting everyone, so there is a lack of available resource to invest in capacity building - and to change the data processes, tools and quality of analysis required to improve outcomes for communities in Greater Manchester.

8. Recommendations

The recommendations from this research are presented in three priority groups aligned to the seven key themes of data maturity. Draft recommendations were discussed at a consultation event with VCSE staff in January and some amendments made in response to feedback. We propose 10GM and partners focus initially on four primary areas: Skills, Tools, Analysis and Leadership.

Skills

- Respond to data skills and capabilities needs at a sector level
- Coordinate and build data expertise within and between organisations and sectors.
- Build data literacy across the sector.
- Strengthen knowledge and understanding of data management and governance

Tools

- Promote digitisation and automation of current paper-based data collection and storage (where possible).

- Demonstrate and increase access to tools for analysis, automated reporting, linking data from multiple sources.
- Make it easier for users to search for and find information they need.

Analysis

- Introduce learning and training in different analytic techniques.
- Explore and showcase how analysis can be used in meaningful and useful ways.
- Seek to automate or increase efficiency and presentation of data analysis.

Leadership

- Support leaders to develop data plans for advancing data maturity aligned to their organisation strategies.
- Identify ways of building data and analytics knowledge and expertise amongst leadership.
- Invest more in data related resources (people, skills, learning and tools) to implement data plans.

9. Potential test and learn projects

A key output from this research was the identification of potential projects that would respond to the needs and opportunities identified.

The purpose of the test and learn is to trial proof of concepts to implement the learning and conclusions of the research. The criteria for selection were as follows:

- Does it enable organisations to overcome challenges in using data more effectively?
- Is there readiness for action? Are there people, organisations or groups willing to trial this approach?
- Can this approach be replicated to other areas of work and VCSE organisations?

This list of possible test and learn projects has been evolved throughout the project with nine selected for wider consultation with the VCSE sector at a workshop in January 2024. A tenth project on data management and governance knowledge and skills was proposed later on following reflection and analysis of the results.

Five of the projects will involve specific sub-sectors of the VCSE or and focus on a particular context (with wider replicability). These offer the opportunity to demonstrate advanced and positive uses

of data. Five of the projects are more general and aimed at supporting organisations across the whole sector.

There should be a strongly embedded learning and evaluation element in all of them to maximise the value to the wider sector.

A more detailed outline of each project can be found in Appendix 3 - of who might be involved, the challenges it addresses, the approach and the expected outcomes.

The summary table includes the designation of 'readiness' which is a combination of willingness to take this forward, where some development work has already occurred, and support from engagement during this project. It also outlines time periods and some ideas of cost in terms of capacity/expertise (where a £ symbol means between £5,000-10,000).

Overview of ten potential test and learn projects

Improve equality, diversity and inclusion data collection for two social prescribing services

Themes: Data, Skills

Readiness: HIGH
£

Timeline: 6-12 mths

Share and match data from one Home from Hospital provider to GM Care records

Themes: Analysis, Tools

Readiness: MEDIUM
££

Timeline: 12 mths

Agree minimum dataset for NHS referrals and services provided by VCSE organisations

Themes: Data, Tools

Readiness: LOW
££

Timeline: 18-24 mths

Improve data capability among creative health providers, to evidence need and evaluate impact

Themes: Skills, Data

Readiness: HIGH
££

Timeline: 12-18 mths

Share and match hospice activity data with GM Care records.

Themes: Analysis, Tools, Skills

Readiness: HIGH
£££

Timeline: 12-18 mths

Peer learning community of practice for VCSE staff about data

Themes: Skills
Readiness: HIGH
£

Timeline: 12 mths

Train a group of VCSE staff to deliver data literacy/fluency training to the sector

(Group of 16)

Themes: Skills
Readiness: HIGH
£

Timeline: 6-12mths

Shared Data Analyst function for VCSE organisations

Themes: Skills
Readiness: MEDIUM
£££

Timeline: 24-36 mths

Data training for VCSE Leaders (Group of 12)

Theme: Skills
Readiness: MEDIUM
£

Timeline: 6-12 mths

Data management and governance training

Theme: Skills,
Readiness: MEDIUM
£

Timeline: 6-12 mths

Appendix 1 Data Action Stories

If only we knew...	we could...	which would lead to...
What services exist and where and when	Promote and increase access	Strengthened communities
Individual patient pathways	Work out which patients achieve optimal outcomes	Better targeted services to reduce unwarranted variation
A holistic view of a person's support needs	Collaborate on the support offer and delivery	Improve outcomes and enable healthy lives
The barriers preventing communities from accessing social prescribing services	Remove barriers and increase access	Reduced health inequalities and fairly distributed resources
The reason why COVID-19 affected Black people more than other ethnic groups	Address, tackle and gain insights from it and take necessary actions	Improved health and social facility, reduced health inequalities and more efficient preparation in case of another outbreak
How many GM patients with severe mental illness don't speak English	Contact them in their own language to invite them to their annual health check	Increased uptake, improve stats for NHS organisations (GMMH) and improved health and increased life expectancy of patients with severe mental illness

If only we knew...	we could...	which would lead to...
Which communities have the lowest engagement with early detection strategies	Target the resources to better engagement and more accessible services	Earlier diagnosis of cancers - better chance of positive outcomes
Which patients are more likely to present to A&E 4+ times this year	Plan an early intervention programme to support them	Fewer 'revolving door' cases and lower demand at A&E
Where hospice capacity is (IPU/community) in real time	More easily refer patients to these community settings, if that is where they can/ choose to be cared for	Maximised occupancy/capacity, more choice/better experience for patients and reduced acute burden
The level of data awareness within the VCSE sector (community workforce level)	Design and implement targeted workforce training and development	Increased likelihood of improved use of data across the sector
What skills people have around data	Buddy up the 'haves' with the 'have nots'	Maximised access to data capacity and capability

If only we knew...	we could...	which would lead to...
The long term (5 yrs +) positive effect on someone's life as a result of engaging with a VCSE organisation (health economics)	Better evidence the true impact and value of the voluntary and community sector offer	Shift resource and commit sustainable funding so everyone has access to community support and activities that improve their health and wellbeing
Economic contribution of the VCSE sector	Commission differently	Better investment in the VCSE sector

Appendix 2 Data Ecosystem Tables

Data Sources and Platforms

Government	VCSE	Health and Care	Academic and Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office for Health Improvements and Disparities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fingertips ○ National Drug Treatment Monitoring System • Companies House/Charity Commission • Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Index of Multiple Deprivation • Office for National Statistics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Census data • Department for Health and Social Care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Healthwatch • Greater Manchester Combined Authority and local councils <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ MappingGM ○ JSNA and other needs assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Infrastructure Organisations • Sports England <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Active Lives • GMCVO • Service providers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Age UK ○ Big Life • Citizens Advice • The King's Fund • 360Giving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ GrantNav • Hospice UK <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PopNAT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated Care Boards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ JSNA and other needs assessments • NHS Greater Manchester <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Greater Manchester Care Record ○ Greater Manchester Intelligence Hub ○ Analytics and Data Science Platform • Primary Care Networks • NHS England <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ National Disease Registration Service ○ Community Services Data Set • Hospitals, GPs and emergency services • National Institute for Health and Care Excellence • Mental Health Trusts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kane Data Limited <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Find that Charity ○ Find that Postcode • Housing providers • Institute of Public Care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Projecting Adult Needs and Service Information (PANSI) ○ Projecting Older People Population Information (POPPI) • CharityBase • Universities

Data Types

Government	VCSE	Health and Care	Academic and Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demographic data• Workforce data• Geospatial data• Stakeholder data• Population segmentation data• Financial data• Company/charity data• Monitoring, evaluation and learning data• Projects of population and care needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stakeholder data• Workforce data• Referral data• Case studies• Demographic data• Service data• Access data• Financial data• Outcomes data• Feedback data• Wellbeing data• Awarded grants data• Performance data• Monitoring, evaluation and learning data• Service user needs data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Case studies• Stakeholder data• Wellbeing data• Referral data• Outcomes data• Personal health budgets• Workforce data• Patient needs data• Financial data• Demographic data• Karnofsky scores• Performance data• Care and support plans• Monitoring, evaluation and learning data• Prescriptions and drug use data• Patient experience data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Housing data• Charity data• Geospatial data• Academic research

Software Tools

CRMs and Databases	Data Storage and Processing	Marketing and Communications	Health and Care Record Systems	Forms and Surveys	Artificial Intelligence	Data Visualisation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breathe HR• CiviCRM• Simply Connect• Salesforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Snowflake• Matillion• NHS England Federated Data Platform• Atlan• SharePoint	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Google Analytics• Twitter Analytics• Meta Analytics• MailChimp	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allscripts• TPP• EMIS• Civica Care Records (formerly Paris)• Liquidlogic• Graphnet• Epic• HARRIS• Dedalus• Elemental	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• AireLogic Forms• Microsoft Forms• Esurvey Pro• SurveyMonkey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DataRobot• Bard• ChatGPT• Claude	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Canva• Tableau• Piktochart• Power BI

Appendix 3 Potential Test and Learn Projects

The 10 proof of concept pilot projects are outlined in the following table:

- Project name: an outline of what it's about
- Resources: who it might involve, an outline of costs and if any resources have been identified yet, and an estimate of the time it will take
- Challenge: an outline of the challenges/problems faced.
- Approach: how each will work in practice
- Outcomes: anticipated change that will be achieved

Project name	Resources	The Challenge	Approach	Outcomes
Improve Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) data collection for two social prescribing services	<p>Suggested: Social prescribing operational group</p> <p>Key person: Charlotte Leonhardsen (GMCA)</p> <p>Resources: £5-10K</p> <p>Timeline: 6-12 months</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor quality and quantity of EDI data collected about people referred to social prescribing (by commissioners and providers) • Lack of understanding about different groups' access/lack of access to services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researching processes, attitudes and motivations for EDI data collection to understand practice with two different providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved EDI data quality in social prescribing • Better understanding of good practice in EDI data collection • Recommendations for EDI data standards • Improved understanding of client needs before providing service • Improved client experience (not having to give the same information many times) • Potential to better understand and act on inequalities in provision

Project name	Resources	The Challenge	Approach	Outcomes
Share and match data from one Home from Hospital provider to GM Care records	Suggested provider: Manchester Care & Repair (MCR) Key person: Alice Mason (MCR) Deborah Ward (NHS GM) Resource: £10-20K Timeline: 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCSE hospital discharge support organisations don't have access to data on what happens after people receive their services • Lack of understanding around effectiveness and impact of VCSE services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share service provider data using secure data platform, match with GM shared care record, to understand hospital readmission rates • Test data sharing processes including consent from service users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed ways of linking and sharing data between NHS and VCSE organisations • Ability to analyse effectiveness of services • Potential to evidence (through control groups) whether services reduce hospital readmissions
Agree minimum dataset for NHS referrals and services provided by VCSE organisations	Suggested: GM Strategic Intelligence Team Key person: Mike Wild (Macc) Resources: £10-20K Timeline: 18-24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of standardised data collection prevents matching of service users to care records across the range of VCSE services • Can't track what happens to service users after they receive support, or what other organisations are involved in their care • Multiple requests from funders and commissioners to report activity data in different formats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree a minimum dataset that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - all providers receive on referral about the people they will support - all providers collect to enable matching to care record - use Open Referral Standards - involve service users • Create template Data Sharing Agreements • Create template Data Protection Impact Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to match care records to service activity • Improved data sharing between the VCSE sector providers and commissioners • More efficient data collection processes • Improved intelligence across the health and care system of services provided by VCSE sector • Reduction in requests from different funders wanting similar information from providers

Project name	Resources	The Challenge	Approach	Outcomes
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced administrative burden on VCSE organisations
<p>Improve data capability in creative health providers to evidence need and evaluate impact</p>	<p>Suggested: Organisations of Hope programme Key person: Julie McCarthy (GM ICP), Luke Munford (University of Manchester) Resource: £10-20K Funding sought Timeline: 12-18 mths</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variable data capability in creative health providers, esp. smaller organisations • Lack of data about creative health providers or the data they collect • Providers have to report to many funders with different requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analyst to support organisations to refine their data needs, articulate what's required to collect it, then make sense of it • Determine systematic, coherent impact measures across the sector aligned to national best practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved capability to monitor the contribution of creative health approaches • Improved identification of need to target service delivery • Improved analytical capacity • Improved data collection skills • Agreed measures to use for measuring impact
<p>Share and match hospice activity data with NHS care records</p>	<p>Suggested: Hospices Collaborative, GM Strategic Intelligence Team Key person: Martin Foster (Hospices Collaborative) Resources: £30K identified</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low data maturity in hospices - lack of skills and tools to make the most of data • Not sharing meaningful, consistent data or evidencing impact of hospice work 	<p>Building on the test case:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standardise minimum data set for hospices to populate • implement data sharing agreements • share to secure data platform in GM Intelligence Hub • assess data quality • match with patient records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance on processes required to submit data • Improved data collection (consistent and meaningful) and storage • Population level dashboards on End of Life Care available across GM

Project name	Resources	The Challenge	Approach	Outcomes
	Timeline: 12-18 months		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create population level Palliative and End of Life Care (PEoLC) dashboard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved insight of PEoLC across GM (for commissioners and hospices) • Data rich, evidence-based discussions with commissioners
Peer learning community of practice for VCSE staff with responsibility for data	<p>Suggested: Infrastructure organisations</p> <p>Resources: £5-10K for facilitator</p> <p>Timeline: 12 months</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People in data roles experience professional isolation • Many organisations don't have dedicated data staff or it's only one person or part of one person's job • Lack of awareness about what's possible (analysis, skills, tools) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly events (online and face to face) for learning and connection, with focus/theme led by participants • Share best practice, tools and tips • Peer support • Facilitator required to link networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspiration and motivation for organisations to improve • Peer connection • Skills development • Sharing of good/best practice • Increased sense of community and support
Train a group of VCSE staff to deliver data literacy/fluency training to the sector	<p>Suggested: group of 16 staff, one for each of the 10 geographic areas + 6 others with a remit across GM</p> <p>Resources: £4-8K</p>	Lack of data literacy among VCSE staff (only 27% of organisations said most staff are data literate)	<p>Run data literacy/fluency training courses</p> <p>8 x 1 hr sessions, 2 cohorts of 20 staff each</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased knowledge and understanding about data • Increased confidence in working with data • Increased skills to challenge and improve existing practice People are better able to interpret data that is presented to them

Project name	Resources	The Challenge	Approach	Outcomes
	Timeline: 6-12 months			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People can initiate better conversations about data within their organisation
Shared Data Analyst function for VCSE organisations	<p>Suggested: Infrastructure organisations</p> <p>Resources: £30K</p> <p>Timeline: 24-36 months</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of staff capacity and skills to undertake data analysis (20% of organisations have the right skills and capabilities to maximise data use) • Lack of resources to hire a full/part time analyst • Inexperience in recruiting analysts 	Pilot a shared data analyst function where one data analyst serves a group of 4-5 organisations working in similar contexts/activity areas) for a year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved analysis and reporting on the data organisations already have • Improvements (or recommendations for improvements) in data quality and collection • Leaders and staff have better access to insights from their data • Improved analysis influences better decision making and planning
Data training for VCSE leaders	<p>Suggested: 12 leaders, possibly from infrastructure organisations</p> <p>Resources: £5-10K</p> <p>Timeline: 6-12 months</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low data maturity in many organisations • Lack of data and analytics skills among senior leadership teams • Lack of data strategies and plans in VCSE organisations 	Delivery of short online courses (5 weeks x 2 hrs) for 2 cohorts 6 -12 senior leaders and/or one-off event(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased understanding of opportunities and responsibilities around data in organisations Increased motivation and planning around advancing data maturity in VCSE organisations • Increased ability to prioritise where resources need to go and

Project name	Resources	The Challenge	Approach	Outcomes
		<p>(24% of organisations have a plan for improvement in data)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of bandwidth to cope with more training 		<p>equip leaders to make better investment decisions around data infrastructure, skills, and staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased peer connection with other VCSE senior leaders grappling with data
Data management and governance training	<p>Suggested: Infrastructure organisations</p> <p>Resources: £3-6K</p> <p>Timeline: 6-12 months</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A third of staff said data is easily available and accessible to staff when they need it. • 36% agree that old unnecessary files are archived and deleted • 48% said they maintain a record of data assets and who's responsible for them • 60% agree that they know how to respond to a data breach, potential or near miss 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 x 1 hr sessions, 2 cohorts of 20 staff each • Practical suggestions of how to organise files well across an organisation • Tips on data housekeeping • How to create and maintain a data asset register • Overview of data protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easier to access files required • Data assets registers are maintained • Regular data housekeeping occurs • Improved knowledge of data protection procedures

About Data Orchard

Data Orchard combines specialist skills in research, statistics, and data with a passion for making the world a better place socially, economically, and environmentally. We are an award-winning social enterprise with a mission to enable every nonprofit organisation to use data effectively to achieve their goals.

Our services include research and analysis, data maturity assessment, data strategy, impact measurement, training, and capacity building. Since 2013, we've worked on hundreds of projects to help nonprofit organisations get better with data.

Each year we reach thousands more through our learning events, tools, and resources to promote the importance and value of data for good.



Data Orchard CIC, Lower House Business Park, Staunton-on-Wye, Herefordshire. HR4 7LR.

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