

## Business planning

Support to address the challenge of increases in cost-of-living



# Introduction

Rebuilding Heritage was a UK-wide support programme designed to help heritage organisations navigate the challenges presented by COVID 19. It was coordinated by **the Heritage Alliance**, funded by the **National Lottery Heritage Fund** and delivered in partnership with the **Chartered Institute of Fundraising, Clore Leadership, Creative United**, and **Media Trust**, with support from additional providers.

In October 2022, Rebuilding Heritage was awarded funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to provide an additional six months of support for heritage sector organisations, helping them to address immediate challenges arising from increases in the cost of living. The support focussed on three areas: Business Planning, Fundraising and Communications.

**This infographic summarises the Business planning support provided from November 2022 - April 2023.**

## Overview of support provided

### Webinars

Heritage Business  
Planning in  
Challenging Times

**60**

individuals

**56**

organisations

### 1-2-1 support



1-2-1 support  
sessions to

**25**

organisations

**32**

applications for  
1-2-1 support

**78%**

of applicant  
organisations  
awarded support

# Action learning set



**Action learning sets** are structured group sessions in which participants collaborate to solve problems while learning from each other's experiences and insights.

## Resources



Article: Making good business planning decisions in difficult times

Sector Snapshot: Business Planning Challenges and Opportunities for Heritage Organisations

Video interview: Top 10 tips for heritage business planning in challenging times

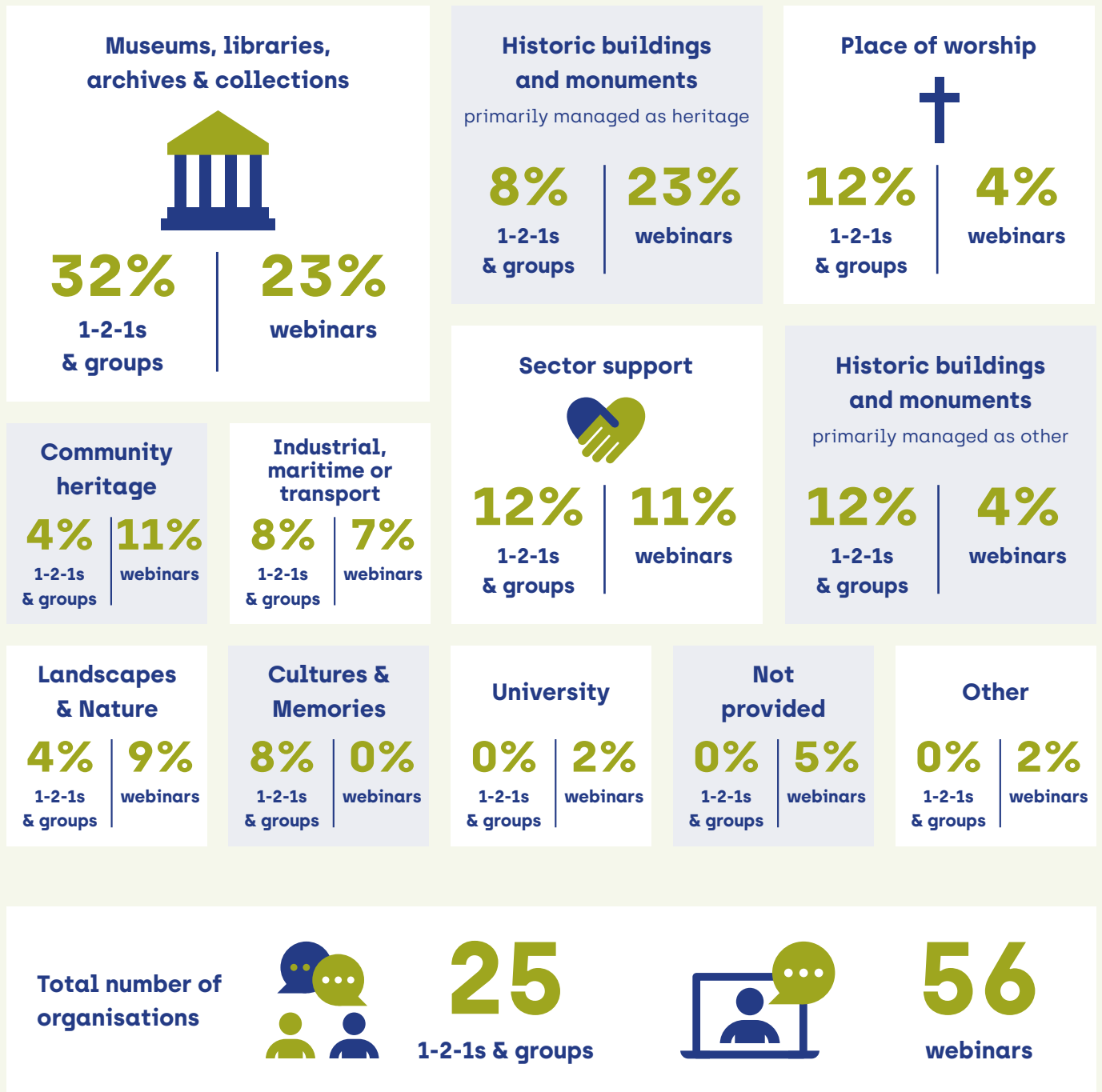
## Who the programme reached

Over the six months November 2022 to April 2023, the **Business planning** strand of **Rebuilding Heritage: Cost of Living** reached



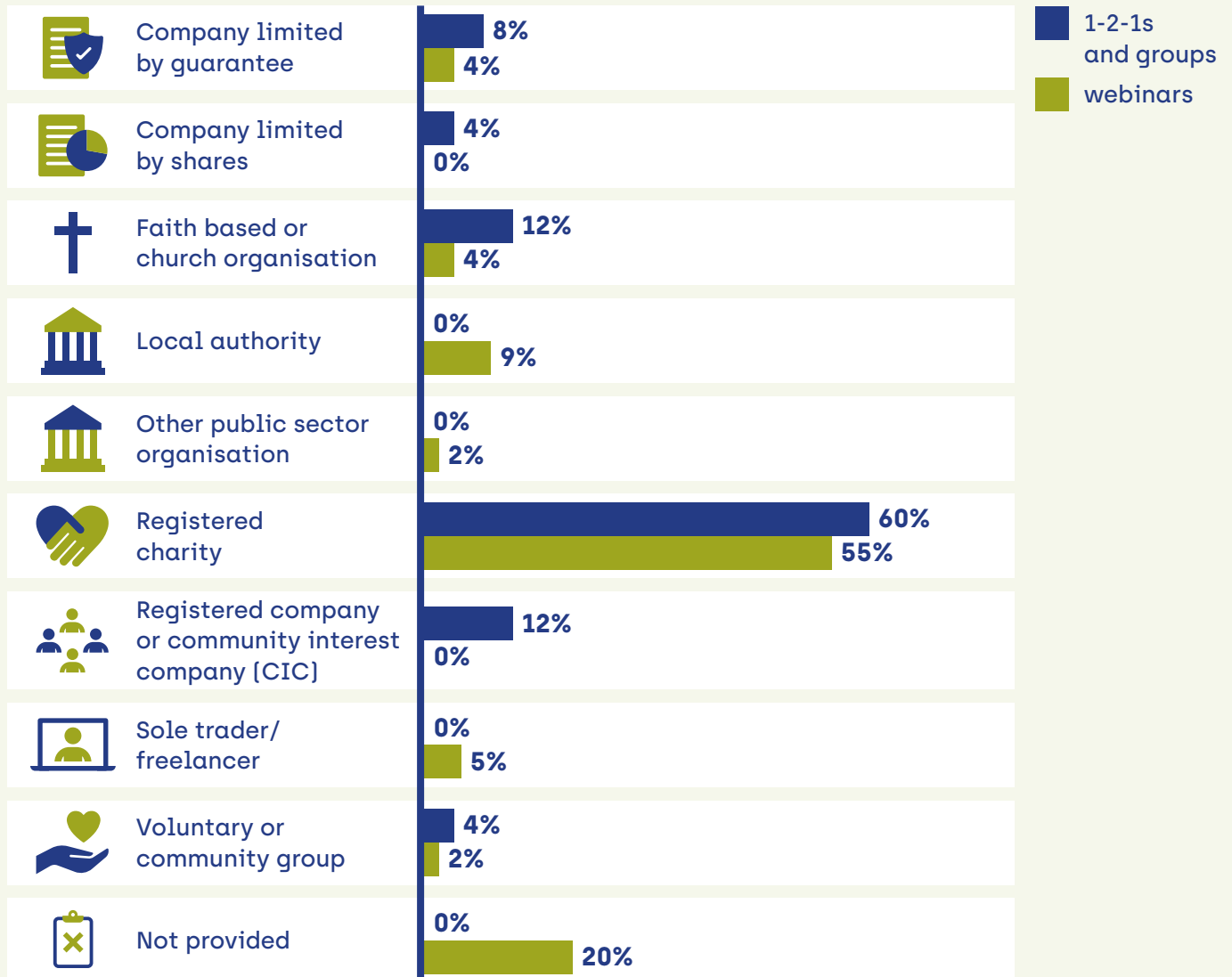
There was engagement with both webinars and 1-2-1 support from across the heritage sector. As for other strands of support, highest engagement is from the **'Museums, libraries, archives and collections'** and **'Historic buildings and monuments primarily managed as heritage'** categories of heritage organisation.

# Type of heritage



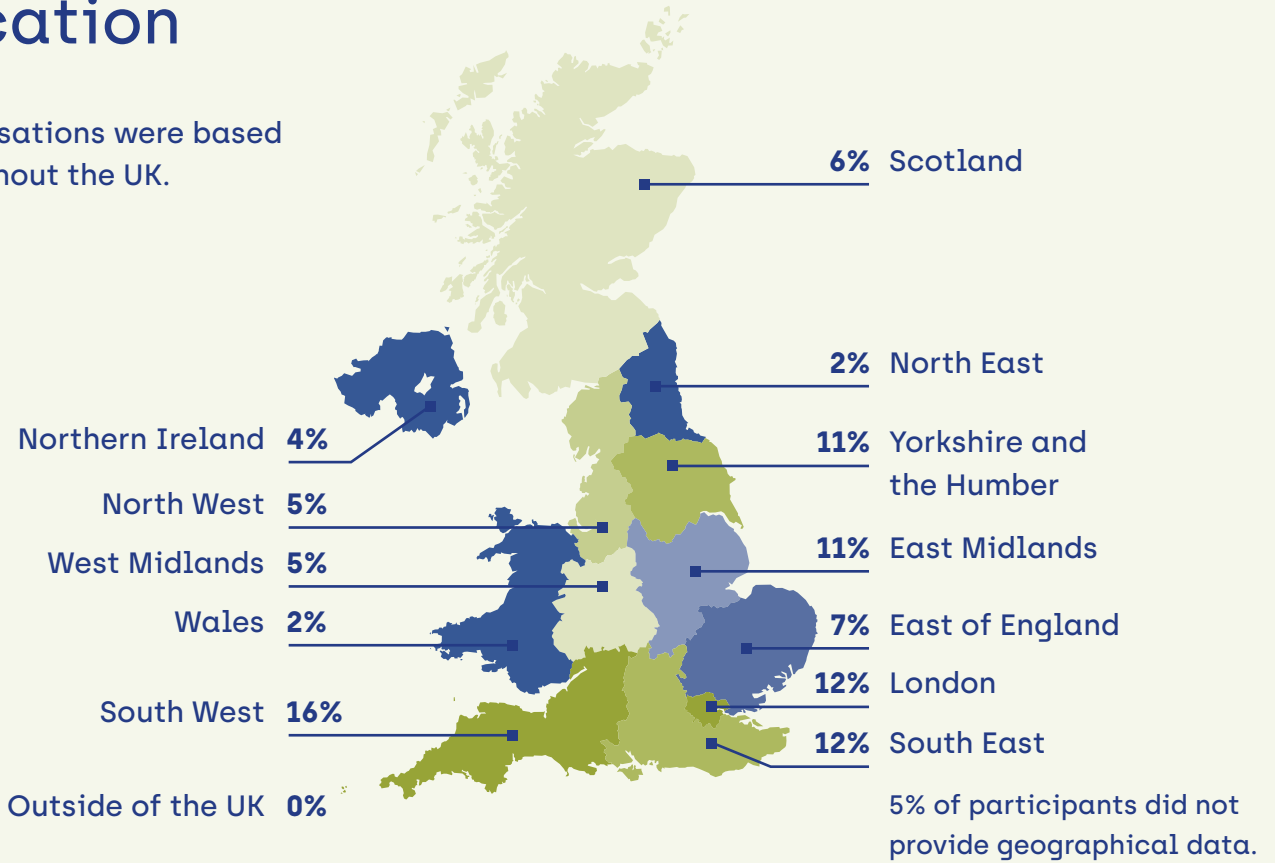
# Type of organisation or business

The majority of organisations taking part were charities; faith-based organisations was the next largest category.

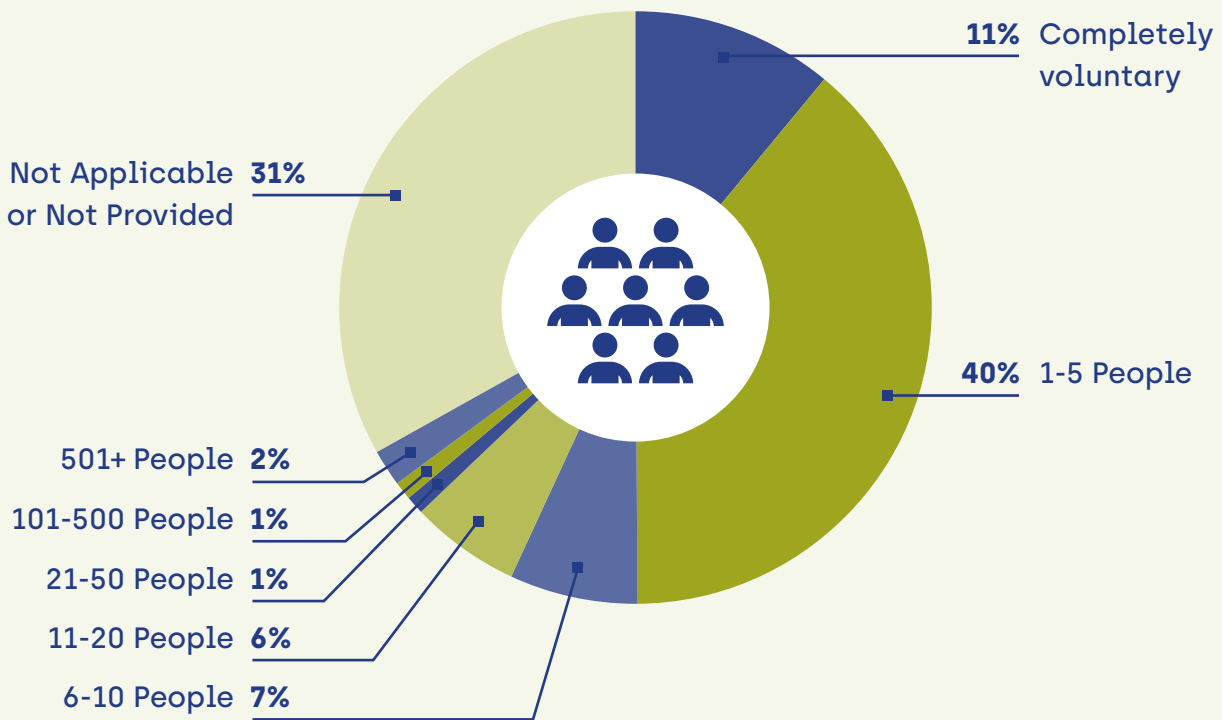


# Location

Organisations were based throughout the UK.



# Size of organisation or business



# Challenges faced by the sector

## The ongoing impact of COVID-19

'Cost-of-living' pressures of high energy costs, inflation and economic hardship have hit a sector still recovering from the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

91% of organisations that applied for Business planning support provided examples of the continuing impact of the pandemic. Common themes are:



**Reduced staffing and difficulty in recruiting staff and volunteers**



**Lower-than-hoped-for visitor numbers resulting in reduced income**



**A consequent need to cut back on planned projects and slower progress towards goals**

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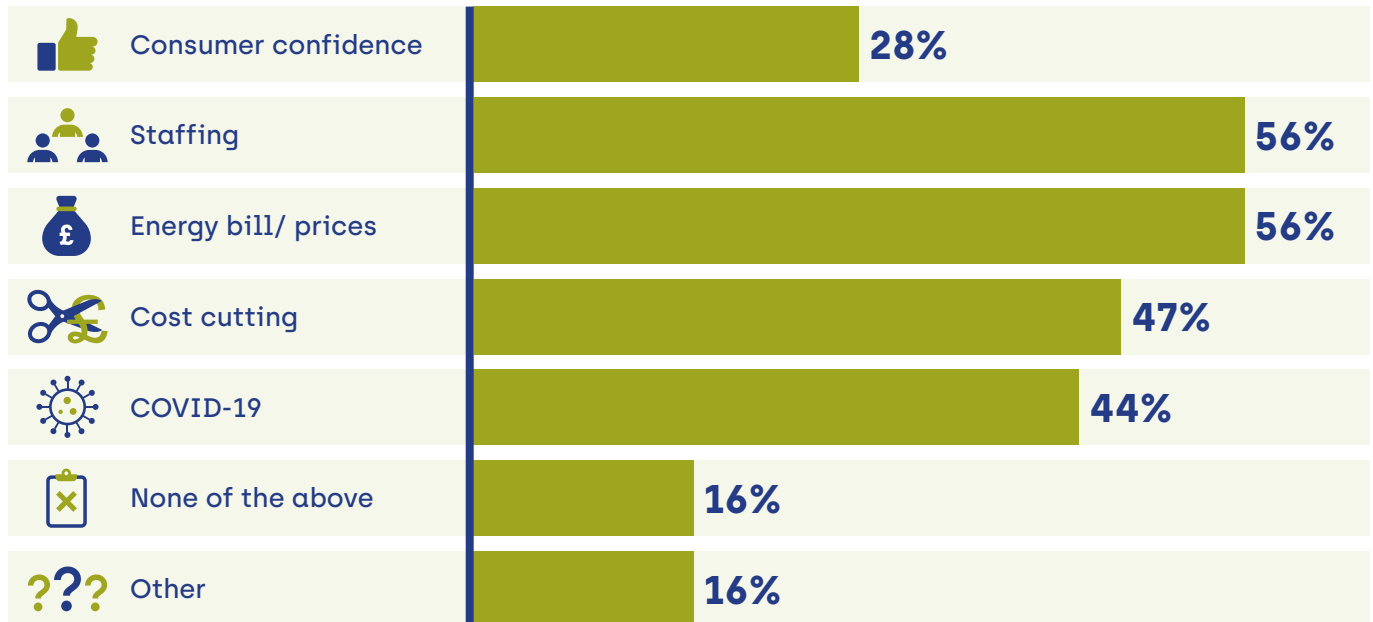
“It had a massive impact on our operational capacity as many of our key volunteers left leaving our organisation in a vulnerable situation.”

“

“It has had a permanent effect on our volunteer and staffing levels which are a fraction of what it was pre-Covid and seems unlikely to return to previous levels. As a result, we do not have the capability of offering the breadth and variety of offering to the public that we did pre-Covid, and need to find a new way to achieve sustainability.”

# Recent issues

The Rebuilding Heritage: Cost of Living Crisis support programme asked applicants for 1-2-1 consultancy support which of the following issues had impacted their organisation over the last 6 months.



**Staffing** and **energy bills/prices** were the issues of greatest concern, but **cost-cutting** and **COVID-19** are also significant concerns.

“

“We are suffering both from the unaffordability to heat our site effectively [and therefore the knock-on effect both to the fabric of the buildings and visitor-appeal], and from schools often being unable to visit because the cost of transport and of general living has risen so highly they are unable to afford off-site visits, which affects our income.”

“

“We are concerned about rising costs and our ability to conserve the building and keep our opening times the same due to the cost of materials and energy. If we need to reduce opening hours this will drastically affect our programme.”

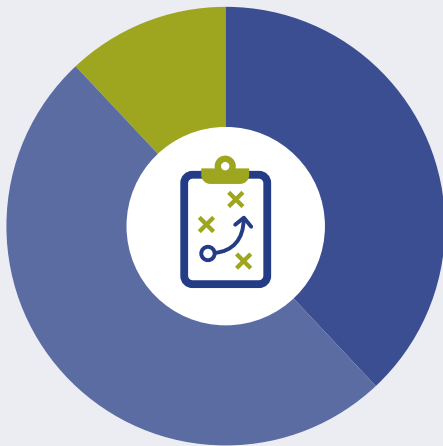
“

“Our bills have tripled with the cost of living crisis. As a not for profit established just a year before Covid-19 this has been crippling.”



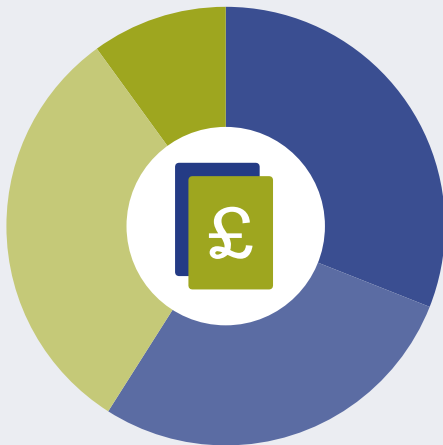
# Business planning needs

Applicants for business planning consultancy support were asked about the current state of their business plan, confidence in setting up a cash flow spreadsheet and general confidence about undertaking business planning activity.



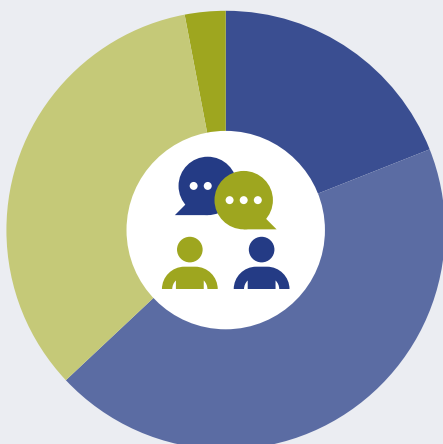
## Status of business plan

- 38%** No we do not have a business plan
- 50%** Yes we have a business plan - it needs updating
- 12%** Yes we have a business plan - it does not need to be (or has already been) updated



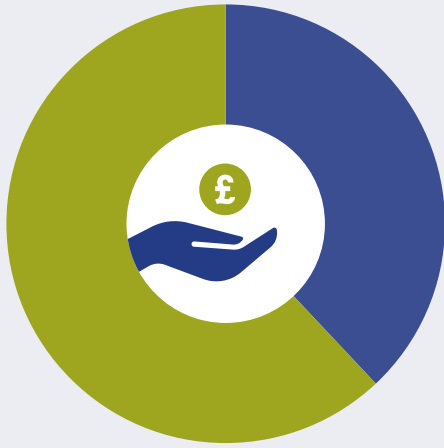
## Confidence in setting up a cash flow spreadsheet

- 31%** Not at all confident
- 28%** Not particularly confident
- 31%** Confident
- 9%** Very confident



## Confidence in undertaking business planning activity

- 19%** Not at all confident
- 44%** Not particularly confident
- 34%** Confident
- 3%** Very confident



**Organisation ever been at risk related to lack of financial literacy**

**38%** Yes

**62%** No

“

“We were not prepared for the financial downturn that has hit us with Covid”

“

“Covid and the cost-of-living crisis means our buffer has gone and our outgoings nearly doubled. We need a completely different way of working now.”

Needs for these applicants are varied but common themes include:



**Help to update plans in the light of Covid and Cost-of-Living crisis**



**Help to update plans to include income generation**



**Help to set accurate financial goals**



**Help to present financial information more clearly to trustees and stakeholders**



**Limited financial skills of staff or volunteers**

“

“Reserve funds have been depleted by Covid and the tripling cost of out goings means we now need a precise strategy for sustainability.”

“

“The income from visitors is not enough to protect the museum financially from the cost-of-living crisis, or the normal day-to-day running costs. It would greatly benefit the museum to work to a business plan that can ease the strain on finances and set out a clear route to increasing income.”

## How the support helped



**86%**

of 1-2-1 consultancy support was rated 4/5 or 5/5 in evaluation responses



**83%**

of webinars were rated 4/5 or 5/5 in evaluation responses

“

“It was amazing and just what we needed to get us back on track”

## Skills, knowledge, confidence

Skills, knowledge and confidence have been gained through engagement with the webinars and the 1-2-1 or group support. Feedback shows that both inexperienced and experienced practitioners benefit from the programme.



**75%**

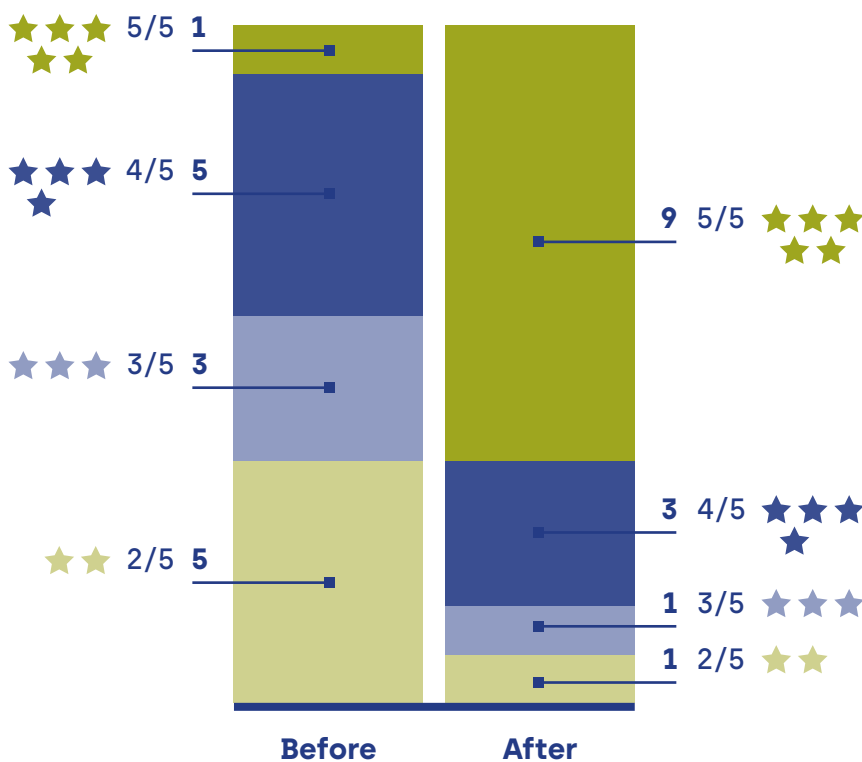
of 1-2-1 consultancy recipients agreed or strongly agreed that they had developed new skills/knowledge relating to business planning and adaptation.



**83%**

of 1-2-1 consultancy recipients agreed or strongly agreed that their organisation's resilience will have been improved as a result of the opportunity to review and adjust plans.

How would you characterise your overall confidence before and after your 1-2-1 consultancy support? (1 low, 5 high)



“

“I write a lot of business plans so this was very helpful to look at a few things differently”  
(webinar participant)

“

“Rebuilding Heritage is an invaluable resource and their support offers confidence, advice and endless hope.”

The Rebuilding Heritage partnership has meant that tailored support can be sourced by partners and offered to those in need.



**82%**

of 1-2-1 recipients now rate their confidence in undertaking business or financial planning activity at 4/5 or 5/5

# Immediate actions

The most popular actions immediately following the consultancy sessions are:



**Sharing information  
with colleagues  
and trustees**



**Starting to re-write  
business plans**



**Organising events  
to get other people  
aware of activities**  
e.g. staff focus day,  
reception for funders  
and supporters

Other actions are more specific to the particular needs of the organisations taking part:

“

“We have already created a refreshed aim and expectations for the options appraisal stage - something we did not have in place prior to our meeting”

“

“We will review our services, asking our participants, staff and Board members for opinions and comments”

# Longer term benefits

The most common goal of participants is a revised business plan, to bring longer-term benefits of organisational development and financial sustainability. Several participants intend to link the business plan development or review to the organisation's fundraising strategy.

“

“We will have a new business plan that will differ from the existing one. This will guide the board of trustees and enable us to consider our sustainability in the face of crises if they arise.”

# Conclusion

**Rebuilding Heritage:  
Cost of Living (business planning) reached**

**78**

individuals from

**72**

organisations

Of the three strands of support provided in this phase of Rebuilding Heritage, business planning is the area in which most participants feel they would benefit from on-going support [93% of evaluation responses].

In common with other strands of the programme, and experience from earlier delivery phases, people would like further 1-2-1 or small-group sessions 2-3 months after the original session to support continued progress.

Although the live programme closed in March 2023, a wide range of resources is available on the Rebuilding Heritage website to help heritage organisations with business planning.

## Resources



### Webinars

[Heritage Business Planning in Challenging Times](#)

### Articles

[Making Good Business Planning Decisions in Difficult Times](#)

### Snapshot

[Sector Snapshot: Business Planning Challenges and Opportunities for Heritage Organisations](#)

### Interviews

[Interviews with Experts: Top 10 Tips for Heritage Business Planning in Challenging Times](#)

To find all Rebuilding Heritage resources, please visit: [www.rebuildingheritage.org.uk/resources](http://www.rebuildingheritage.org.uk/resources)

Sign up to our mailing list to keep informed about the project's developments: <https://bit.ly/3NaykFi>