

Safeguarding and looked after children

National results for third sector organisations survey 2010 (NAT '10)

This is Ofsted's first annual survey of third sector organisations representing the interests of, or providing services for children and young people in every local authority in England.

The third sector survey was conducted at the same time as a survey for children's social work practitioners. This report only shows the results from the third sector survey at a national level; a separate report is available showing the social work practitioner survey results.

The survey is based on 1,613 responses.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

No. 100126

© Crown copyright 2010



Contents

Survey background	4
How to use this report	4
Survey methodology	4
Executive summary	6
Profile of contributing third sector organisations	7
Partnership working	8
Quality of services	12
Safeguarding training	14
Child protection referrals	15
Commissioning/grant funded arrangements	17
Appendices	19

Survey background

This is Ofsted's first annual survey of third sector organisations involved with services for children and young people in every local authority in England.

The third sector survey was conducted at the same time as a survey for children's social work practitioners. This report only shows the results from the third sector survey at a national level; a separate report is available showing the social work practitioner survey results.

How to use this report

The report is divided into an executive summary and sections covering the profile of contributing organisations, and their perspectives on: partnership working; quality of local services; safeguarding training; child protection referrals; and the effectiveness of commissioning/grant funding arrangements.

The report summarises respondents' views on both strengths and areas for improvement in relation to both safeguarding and services for looked after children across local authorities.

The percentage of positive responses is featured throughout this report. These refer to the combination of strongly agree and agree answers provided by respondents. Aggregated percentage positive scores may vary by plus or minus one percentage point after rounding.

A total of 1,613 questionnaires were completed overall. Third sector organisations working within 115 local authorities responded to the survey. Results are reported where two or more third sector organisations have responded for each local authority, to preserve the anonymity of the respondents.

Percentages do not always add up to 100%. This is due to rounding and/or multiple response questions.

Survey methodology

The survey completion period ran from 1 March 2010 to 9 April 2010.

Local authorities were asked to provide contact details of all third sector organisations working with children and young people in their local authority.

Some local authorities provided Ipsos MORI with contact details in order to send out survey invitations to organisations directly. In other local authorities, an appointed contact was responsible for distributing the survey to all eligible organisations by email.

If third sector organisations worked with a number of local authorities, they were asked to complete separate questionnaires in relation to each. Results are therefore based on the total number of responses rather than the number of organisations.

The survey was administered primarily online. The survey was hosted by Ipsos MORI and all completed surveys were sent directly to Ipsos MORI. Postal surveys were sent to those who did not have internet access or where email addresses were unavailable.

Executive summary

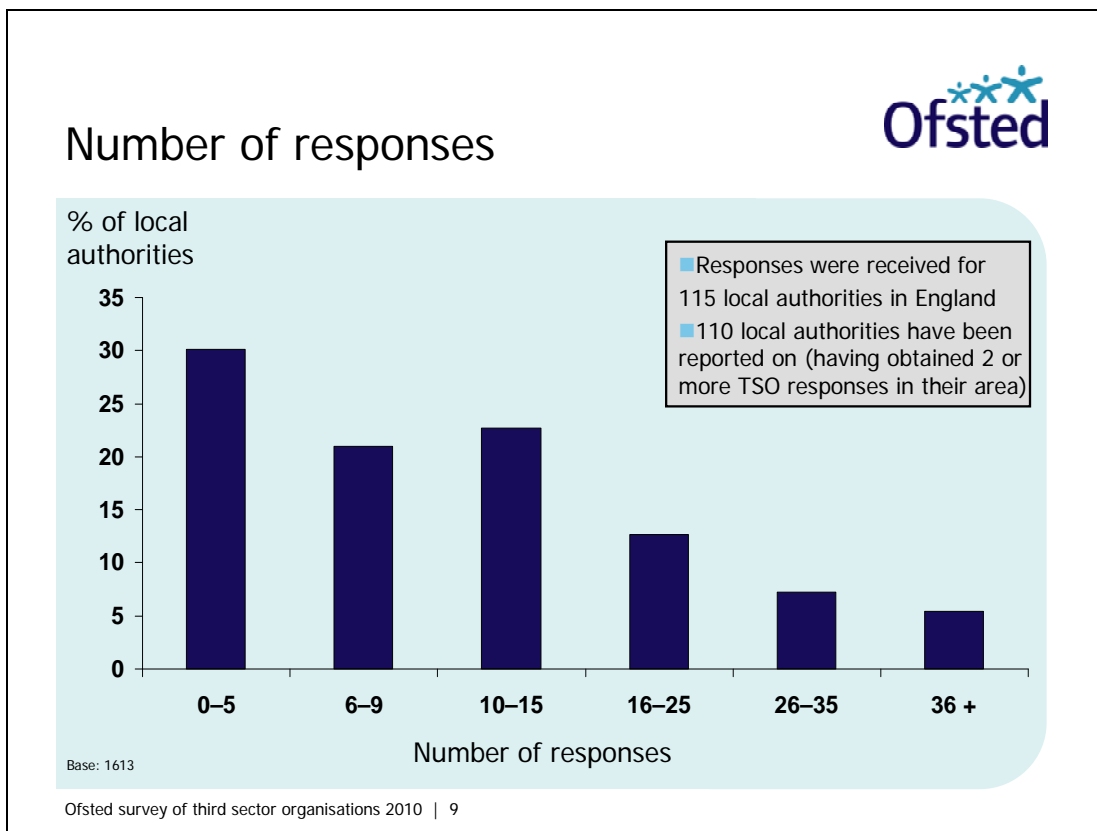
There were positive responses about the safeguarding training available to third sector organisations. Of the 57% of organisations who stated training was available over three quarters are receiving the training free of charge and approximately 7 out of 10 agreed it was of a high standard.

However, a third of third sector organisations responded they did not know if safeguarding training was available. One in five do not feel the local authority ensures that their organisation has a good understanding of local arrangements for safeguarding and services for looked after children and young people (see Appendices, Q8a). Just over a third of those who have made child protection referrals disagreed that they were kept informed of the outcome.

Just under half of the third sector organisations responding agreed partnership working was effective. Of those organisations from whom the local authority has commissioned services, half agreed that the commissioning process was clear and over a third agreed such processes were fair and efficient.

Profile of contributing third sector organisations

Responses came from a range of third sector organisations operating nationally and locally. Just under two thirds of responses were from third sector organisations who received some form of financial support from local authorities, with a third receiving no funding. More than half of responses were from third sector organisations with one to twenty employees, and a fifth from organisations with turnover below £10k.





Geographical coverage

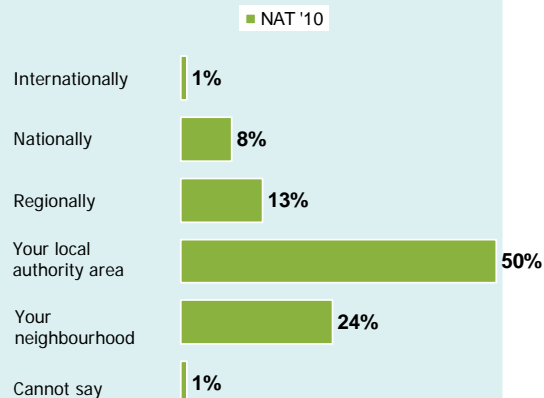
Which geographical areas does your organisation carry out its activities?

[Selecting all that apply]



Which is the main geographical area in which it carries out its activities?

[Single selection only]



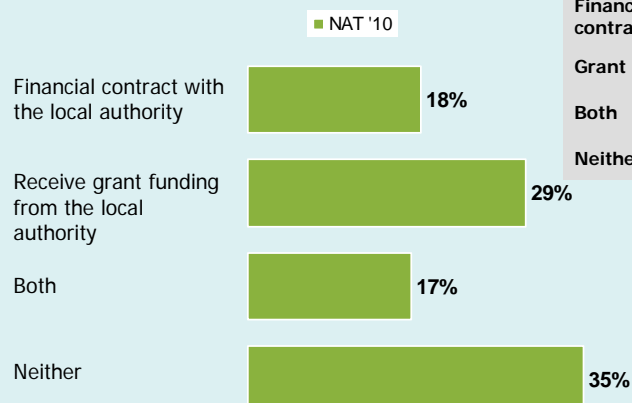
Base: 1613 : asked to all third sector organisations

Ofsted survey of third sector organisations 2010 | 10



Funding arrangements

Single selection only:

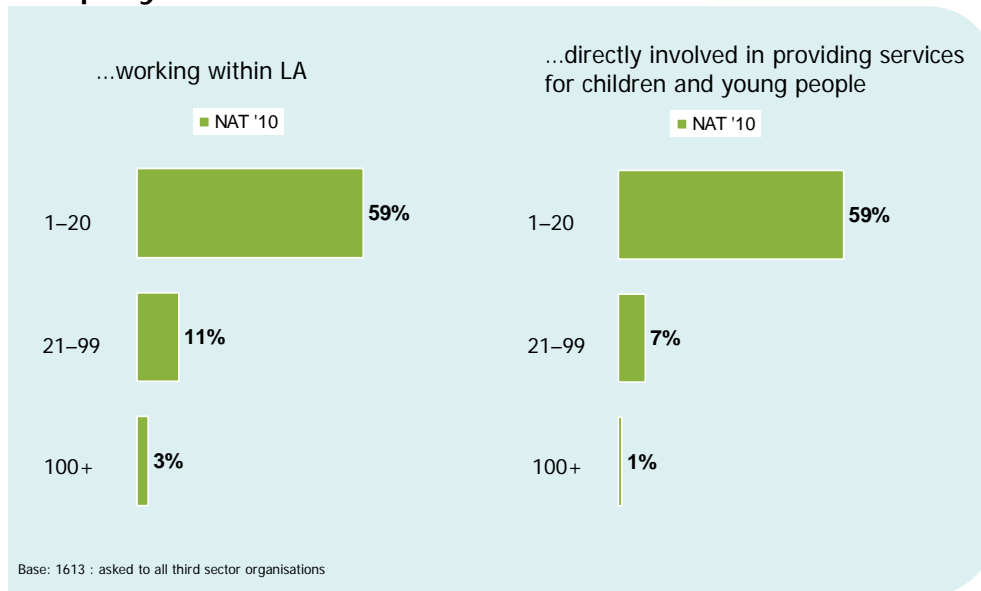


Funding arrangements	Turnover under £10k %	Turnover over £10k %
Financial contract	1	22
Grant funding	21	31
Both	2	22
Neither	76	24

Base: 1613 : asked to all third sector organisations

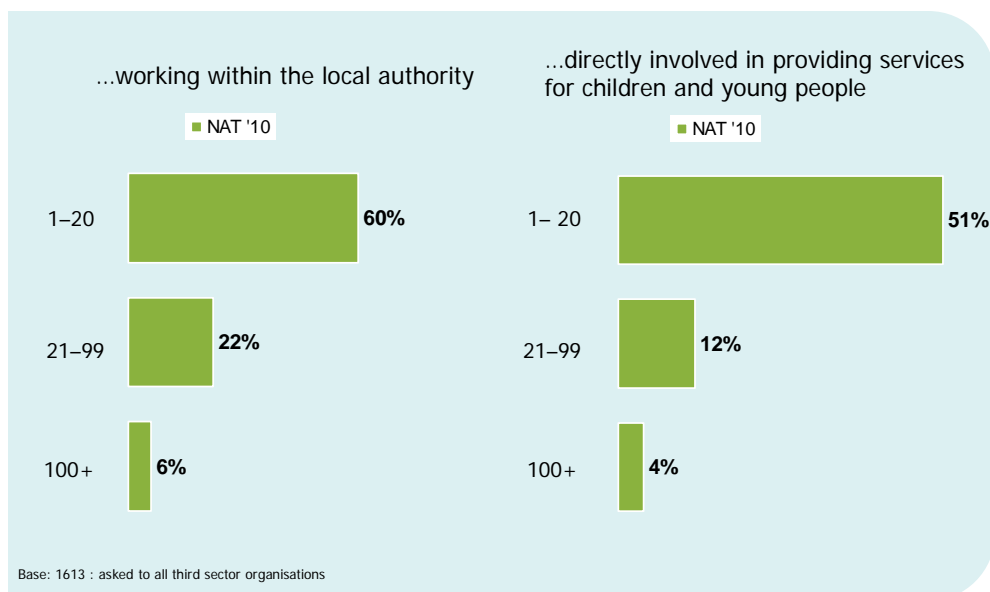
Ofsted survey of third sector organisations 2010 | 11

Number of full time equivalent employees...



Ofsted survey of third sector organisations 2010 | 12

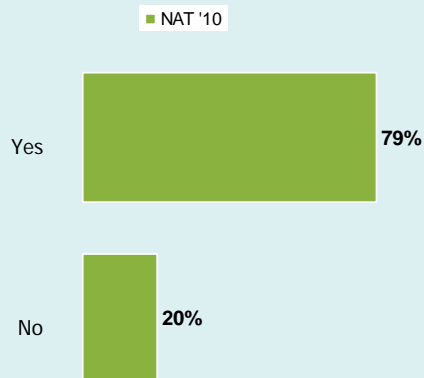
Number of volunteers...



Ofsted survey of third sector organisations 2010 | 13

Focus on children and young people

Are children and young people one of the main beneficiaries of your organisation?

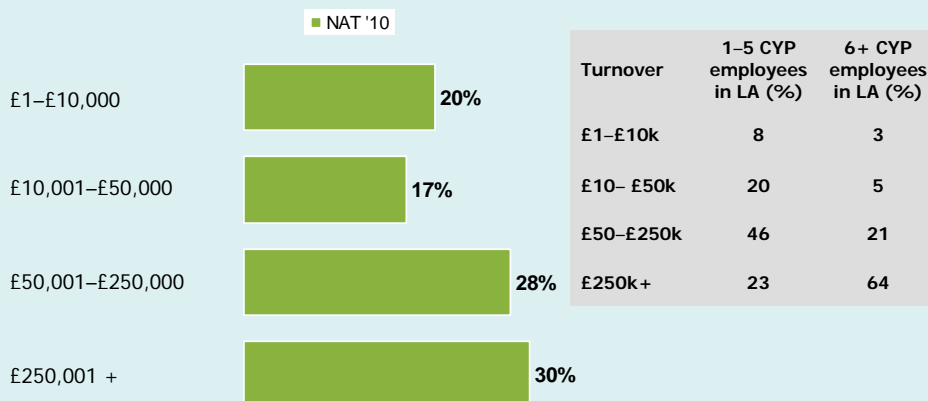


Base: 1613 : asked to all third sector organisations

Ofsted survey of third sector organisations 2010 | 14

Turnover

Approximate annual total turnover or income from all sources:



Base: 1613 : asked to all third sector organisations

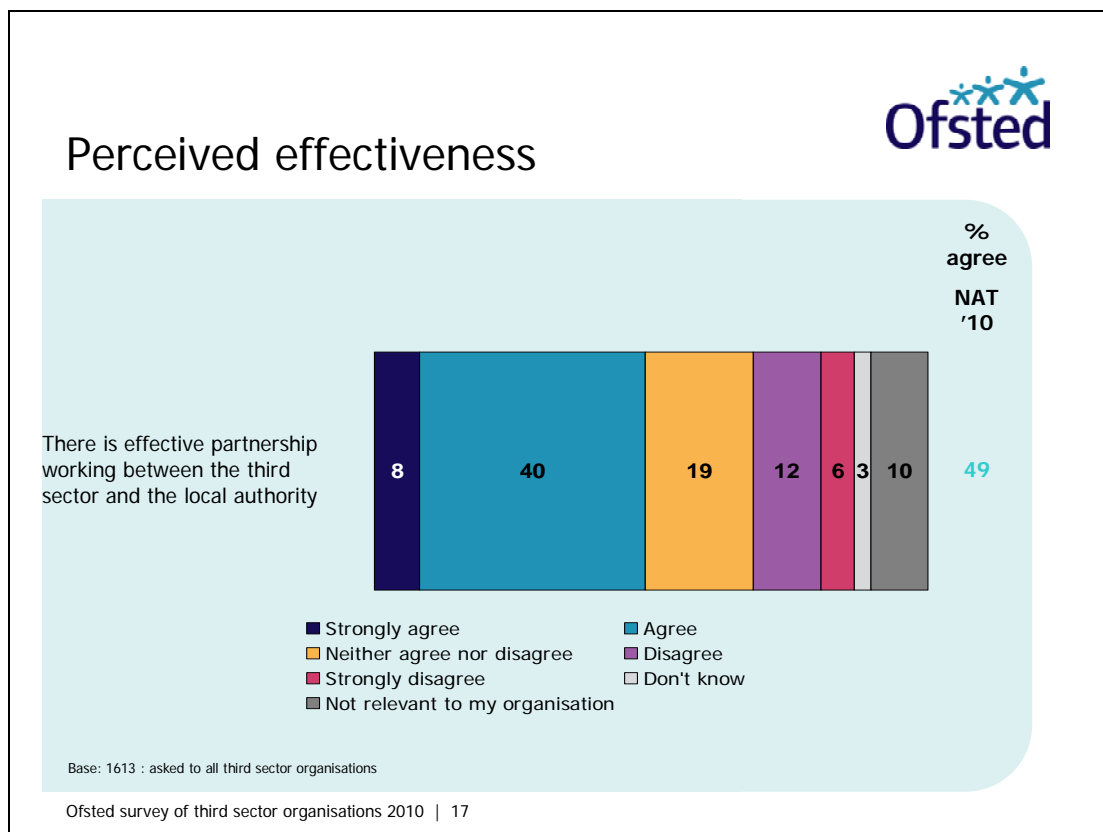
Ofsted survey of third sector organisations 2010 | 15

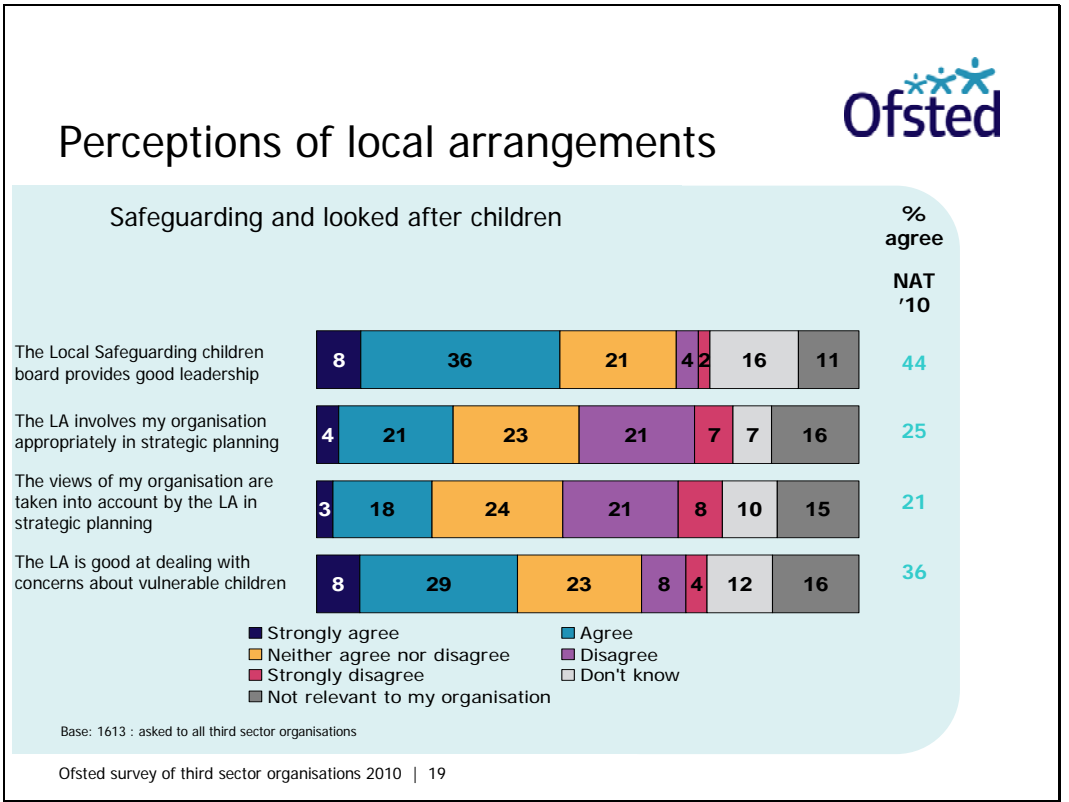
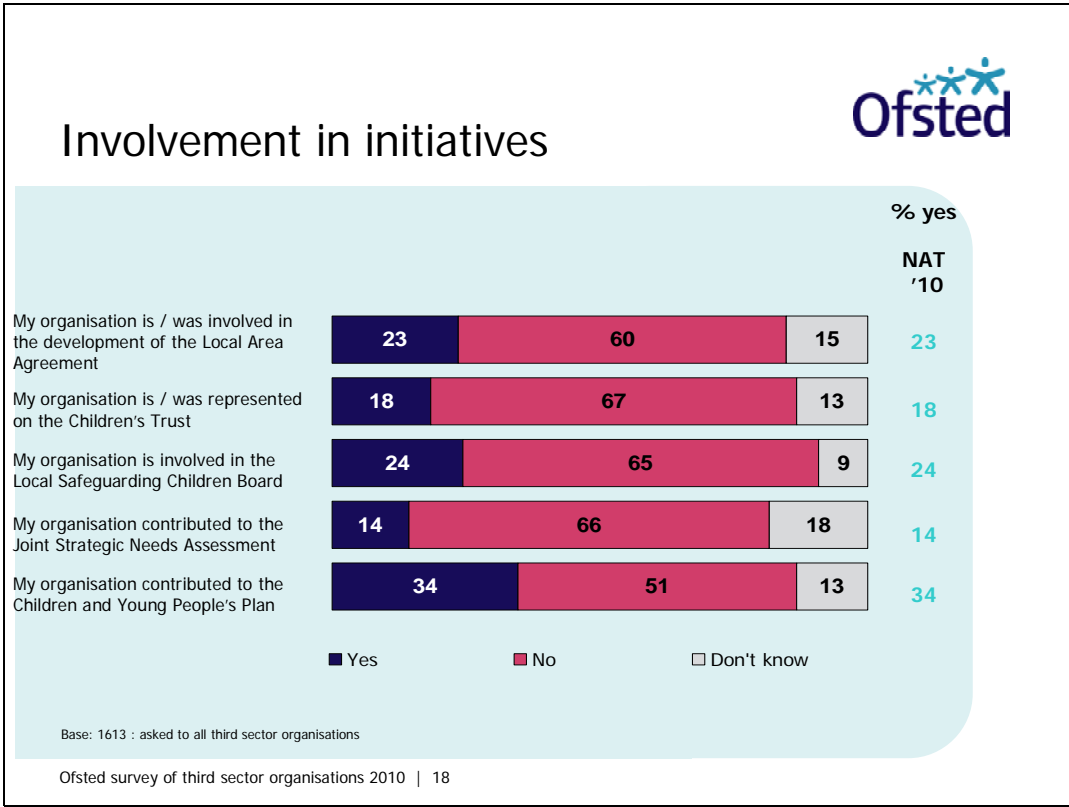
Partnership working

Just under half of the third sector organisations responding agreed that partnership working is effective. Of the respondents to the survey this group was the least likely to express a view on local arrangements, and most likely to answer 'don't know/not relevant'. Anonymous comments included:

'Our local authority work very closely with us and take due regard to any concerns reported. These are dealt with effectively and efficiently. The local authority include our organisation in the process and give appropriate feedback and officers are always keen to help us with training of our volunteers to help enable close partnership working'

'Better communication from children's services to other agencies is needed. Whilst they request information from other organisations they do not work well in partnership and do not give enough feedback to those organisations who are usually still working with the family'.



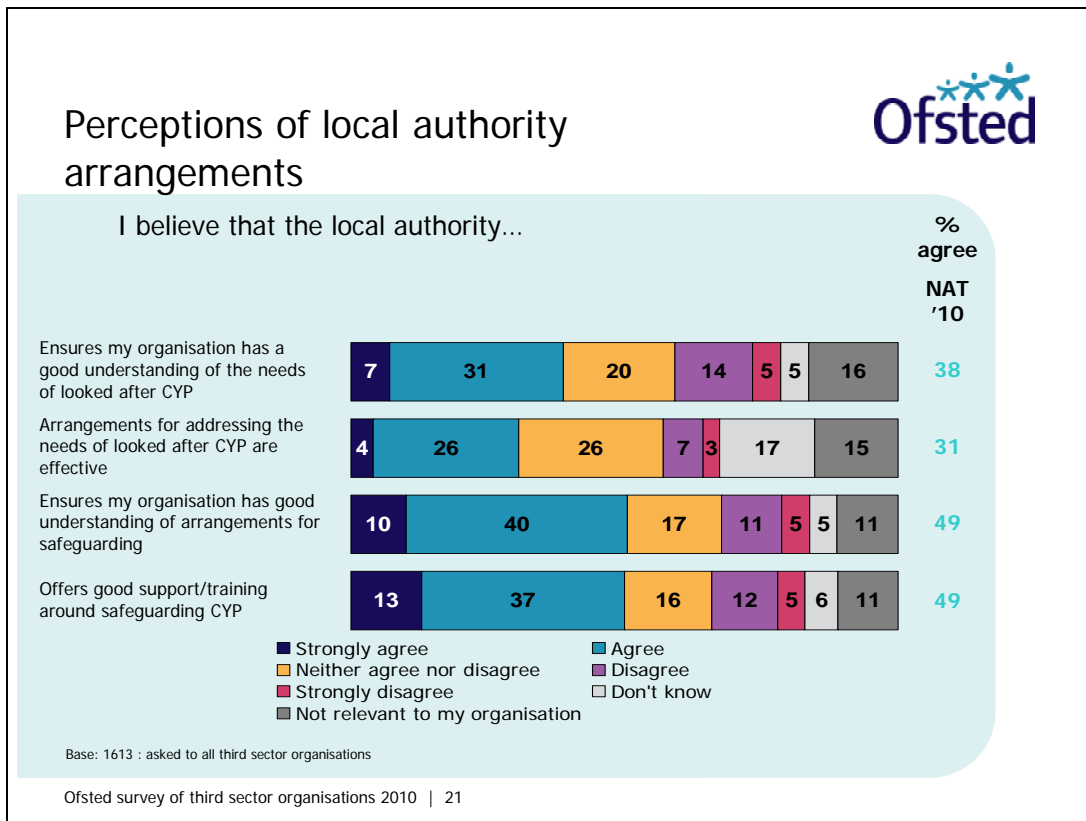


Quality of services

The degree to which respondents felt equipped with a good understanding of local needs and arrangements was variable, ranging from just under a third to a half (see Appendices, Q8a to Q9). Anonymous comments included:

‘The Local Authority has dedicated staff who are prepared to go the extra mile. Their work with this Centre shows dedication and care when dealing with the children. Strengths are DEDICATION, COMMITMENT AND CARE’

‘Our experience of our local Social Services was that no one wanted to take responsibility for our concerns and kept pushing us onto the next ‘person’. Mean while the child was still at risk. We felt totally unsupported and wondered what it would take before anyone would be interested. From our experience we can see how children ‘fall through the net’.

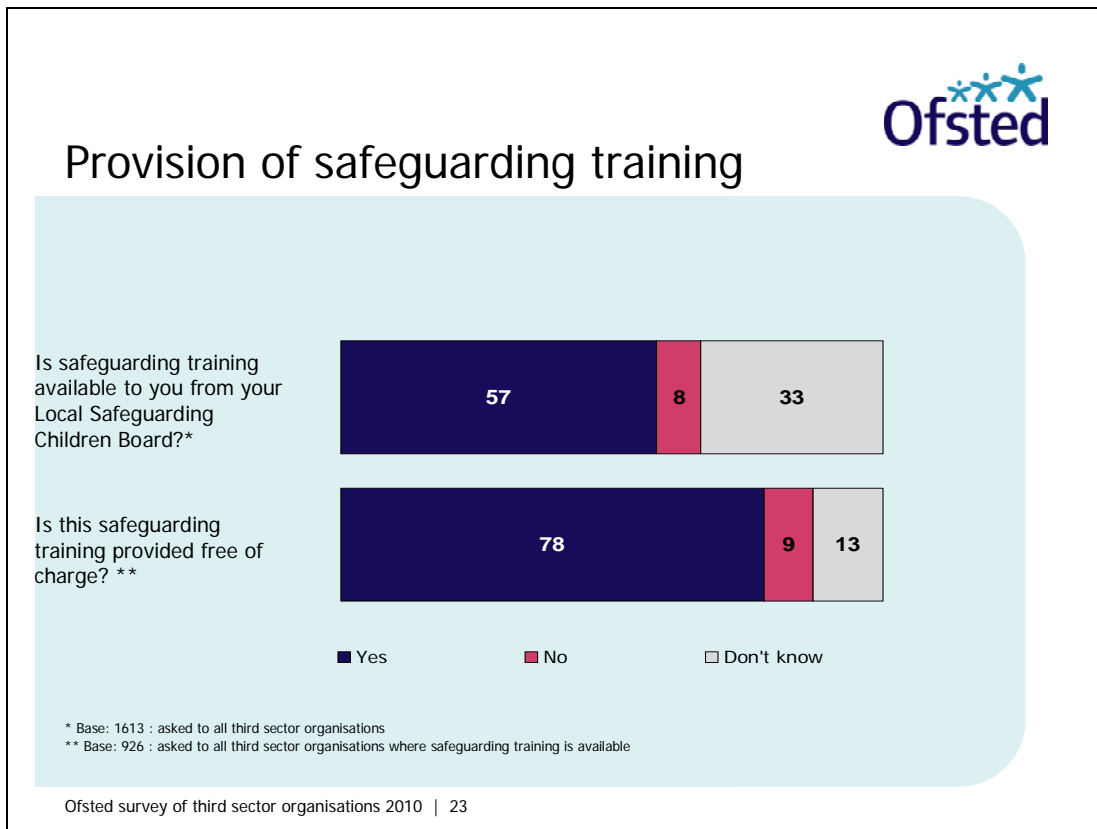


Safeguarding training

A third of respondents did not know if safeguarding training was available or not from the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board. Of the 57% who stated training was provided, it was generally free of charge and seen as being of a high standard. Anonymous comments included:

‘Offering free training to all staff and ensuring that sessions are running at different times to allow us to send staff at different times. Training that is accredited is now provided. Information is sent out to service providers on a regular basis which is informative and useful’

‘Safeguarding Training to be provided on outreach (at third sector organisation premises) where there are numbers of staff to merit. More Module 1 training should be available’.





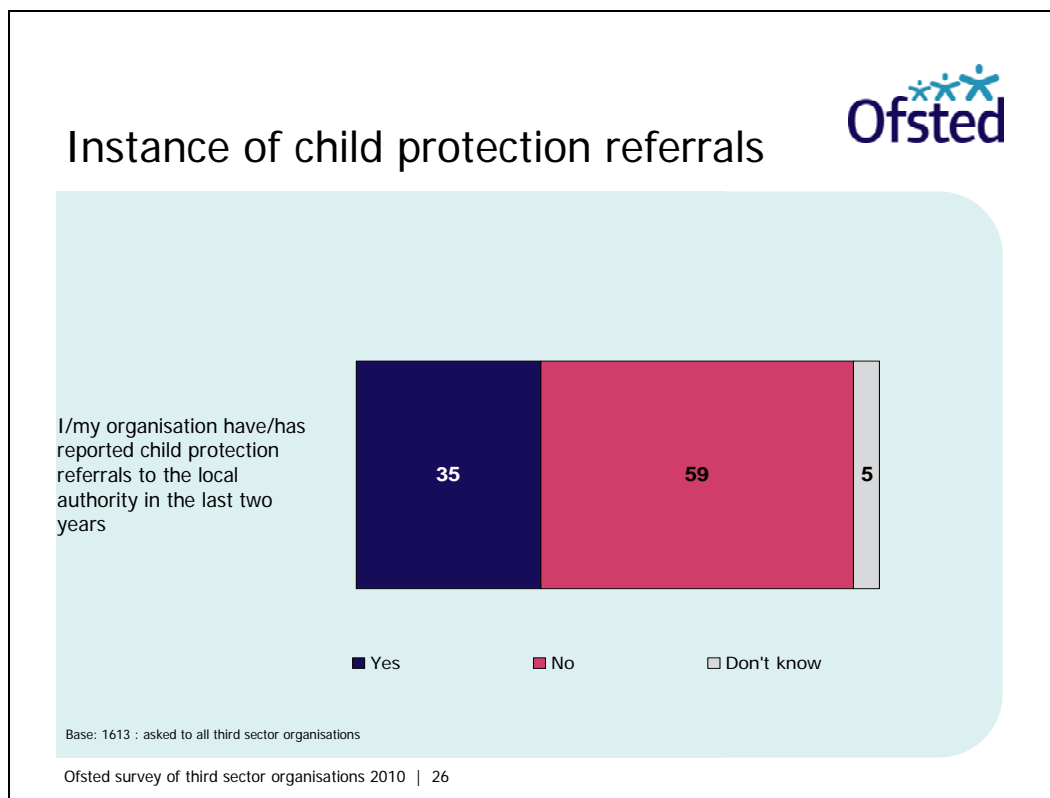
Child protection referrals

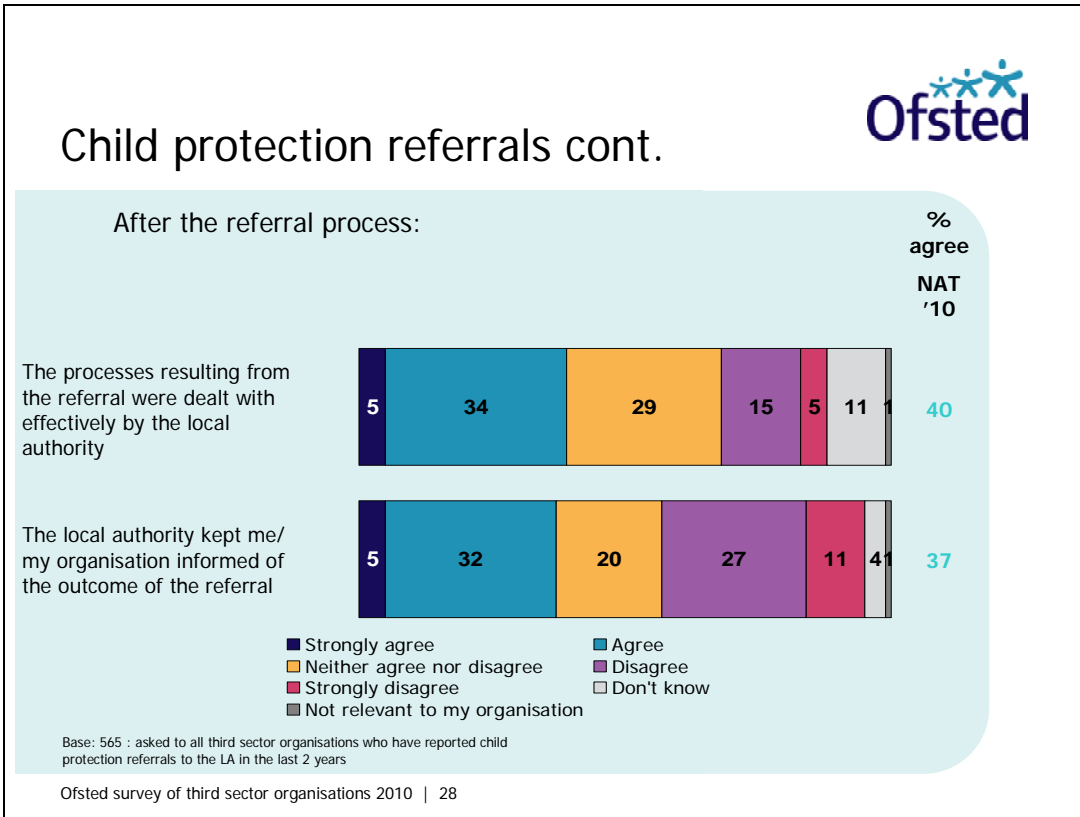
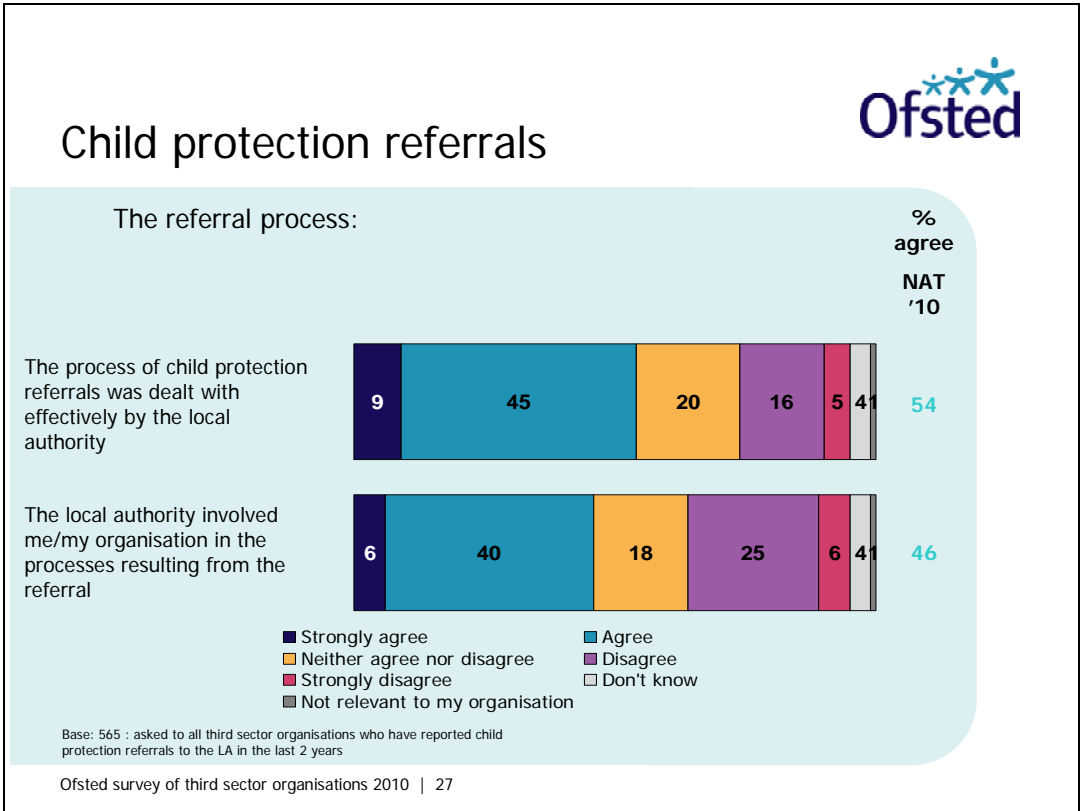
Although 54% of the 565 organisations who had made child protection referrals to the local authority agreed that referral processes were dealt with effectively, 38% disagreed that they had been kept informed of the outcome of the referral.

Anonymous comments included:

‘The Local Authority has a strong focus on early intervention, and a single gateway team for referrals’

‘We feel that there is little point in making a referral to social services on a safeguarding issue. There are so few resources that neglected young people are ignored without even appropriate assessment. We do still make referrals when necessary, but feel like we are wasting our time. The CAF process is long and arduous and appears to make little difference. We are aware of schools and other agencies that are not doing them because of lack of resources’.



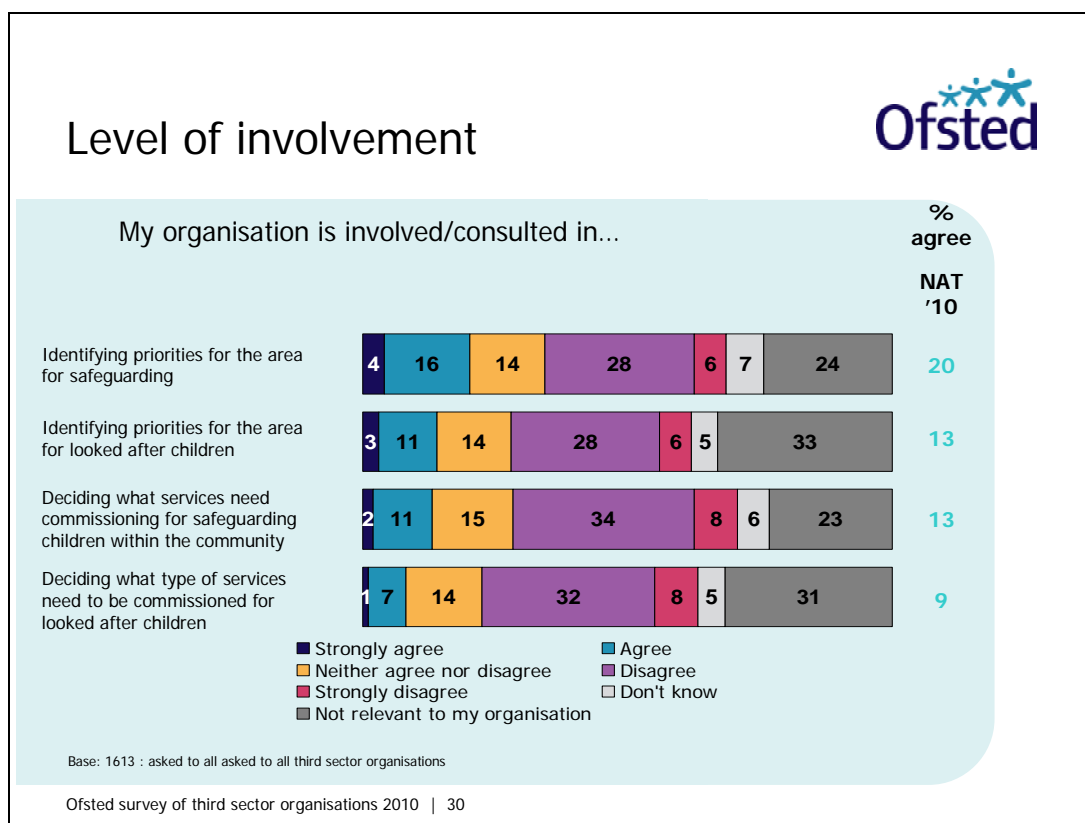


Commissioning/grant funded arrangements

Most of the third sector organisations responding either disagreed that they were involved or consulted in identifying priorities or service needs, or felt it was not relevant for their organisation (see appendices, Q14–16b). Of the 730 third sector organisations which had services commissioned in the last two years 44% agreed the commissioning process was 'efficient'. Anonymous comments included:

'We received money through the Aiming High. The SLA's were clear and the staff very helpful and we were invited to planning meetings beforehand which was very helpful'

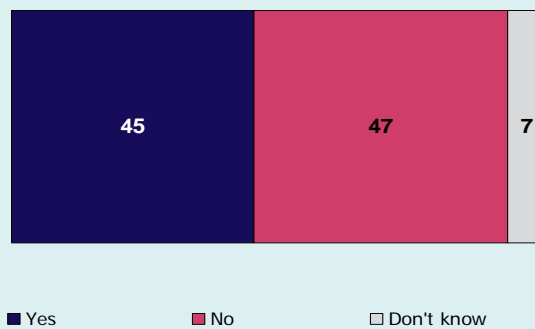
'More communication, recognition by council that organisations like ours have a valuable role to play. Sensible tendering/commissioning timescales (ridiculously short and decisions never on time, feedback not available) and packages (often so prescriptive that it appears the opportunity has been written with a particular organisation in mind)'



Whether the local authority has commissioned services



The local authority has commissioned services from my organisation in the last two years



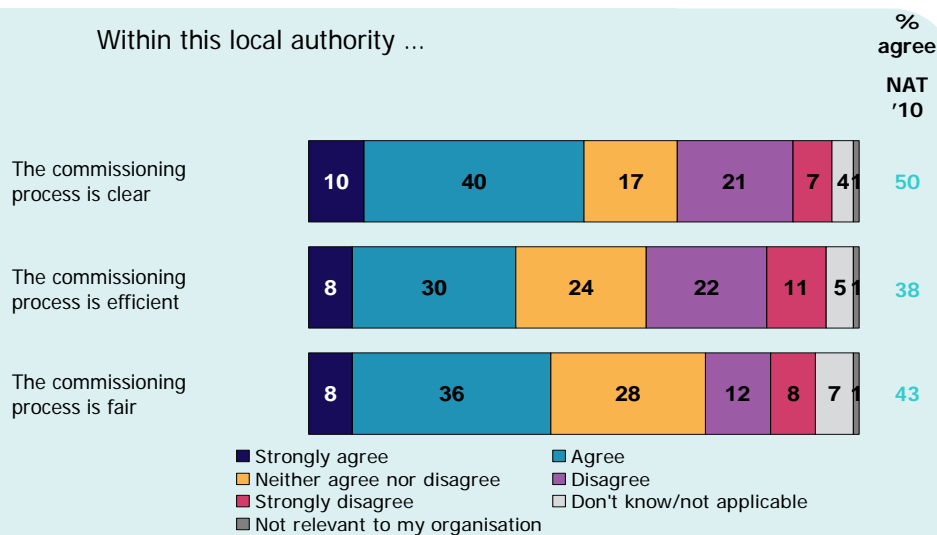
Base: 1613 : asked to all third sector organisations

Ofsted survey of third sector organisations 2010 | 31

Views on commissioning process




Within this local authority ...



Base: 730 : asked to all third sector organisations which have had services commissioned in the last 2 years

Ofsted survey of third sector organisations 2010 | 32


Appendices



Summary of all questions

	Agree/Yes %	Disagree/No %
Q1) There is effective partnership working between the third sector and the local authority	49	18
Q2) My organisation is/was involved in the development of the local area agreement	23	60
Q3) My organisation is represented on the Children's Trust	18	67
Q4) My organisation is involved in the Local Safeguarding Children Board	24	65
Q5a) My organisation contributed to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment	14	66
Q5b) My organisation contributed to the Children and Young People's Plan	34	51
Q6a) The Local Safeguarding Children Board provides good leadership in improving safeguarding of children and young people	44	6
Q6b) The local authority involves my organisation appropriately in strategic planning for safeguarding and looked after children	25	28

Ofsted survey of third sector organisations 2010 | 34



Summary of all questions

	Agree/Yes %	Disagree/No %
Q7a) The views of my organisation are taken into account by the local authority in strategic planning for safeguarding and looked after children	21	29
Q7b) The local authority is good at dealing with any concerns my organisation raises about vulnerable children	36	13
Q8a) I believe that the local authority ensures that my organisation has a good understanding of the arrangements for addressing the needs of looked after children and young people	38	19
Q8b) I believe that the local authority's arrangements for addressing the needs of looked after children and young people are effective	31	10
Q9) I believe that the local authority ensures that my organisation has a good understanding of the arrangements for safeguarding of children and young people	49	16
Q10a) I believe that the local authority offers good support and training for my organisation around safeguarding children and young people	49	16

Ofsted survey of third sector organisations 2010 | 35



Summary of all questions

	Agree/ Yes %	Disagree/ No %
Q10b) Is safeguarding training available to you from your Local Safeguarding Children Board?	57	8
Q10c) Is this safeguarding training provided free of charge?	78	9
Q10d) The safeguarding training provided by the Local Safeguarding Training Board is of a high standard	70	2
Q11) I/ my organisation have/ has reported child protection referrals to the local authority in the last two years	35	59
Q12) The process of child protection referrals was dealt with effectively by the local authority	54	21
Q13a) The local authority involved me/ my organisation in the processes resulting from the referral	46	31
Q13b) The processes resulting from the referral were dealt with effectively by the local authority	40	20
Q13c) The local authority kept me/ my organisation informed of the outcome of the referral	37	38

Ofsted survey of third sector organisations 2010 | 36



Summary of all questions

	Agree/ Yes %	Disagree/ No %
Q14) My organisation is involved in identifying priorities for the area for safeguarding	20	34
Q15) My organisation is involved in identifying priorities for the area for looked after children	13	34
Q16a) My organisation is consulted in deciding what types of services need to be commissioned for safeguarding children within the community	13	42
Q16b) My organisation is consulted in deciding what type of services need to be commissioned for looked after children	9	40
Q17) The local authority has commissioned services from my organisation in the last two years	45	47
Q18a) The commissioning process is clear	50	28
Q18b) The commissioning process is efficient	38	32
Q18c) The commissioning process is fair	43	20

Ofsted survey of third sector organisations 2010 | 37