

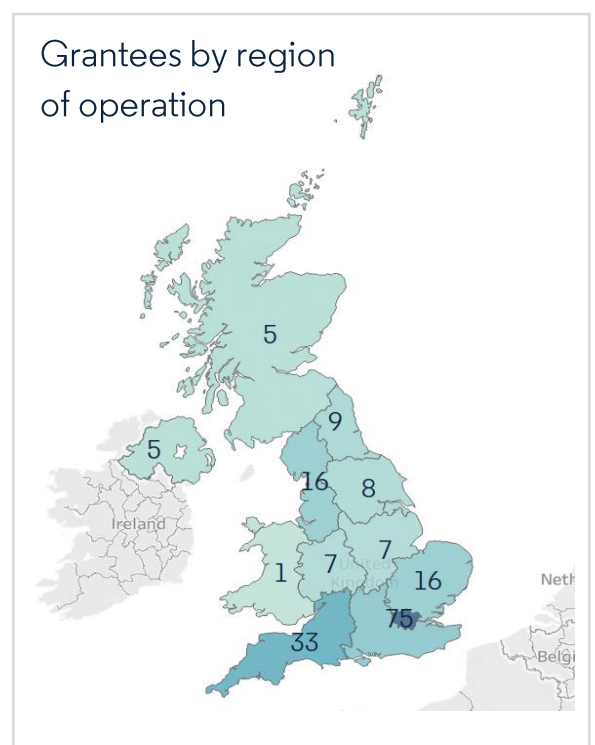
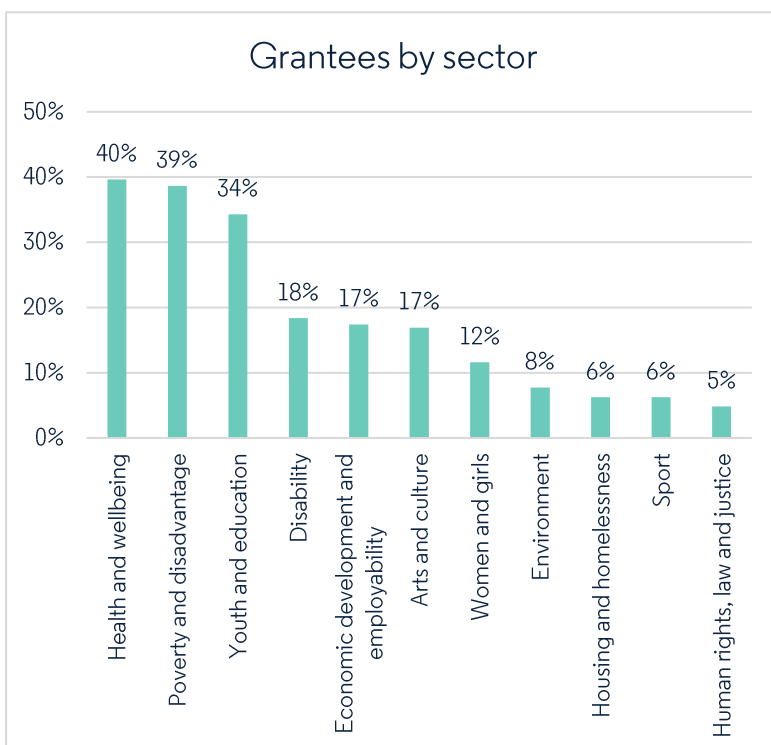
On April 1st 2020, The Fore launched RAFT (Rapid Action by The Fore and Trusts) to provide urgently-needed support to small charities and social enterprises during the coronavirus pandemic. RAFT was a collaborative initiative led jointly by The Fore and Lovington Foundation, and supported by the many partners listed at the end of this report. RAFT was launched with two components – the Immediate Response Fund, providing short-term grants of £5,000, and the RAFT Directory, a resource that helped organisations source skilled volunteers to support them through the challenges posed by the pandemic. Together, these measures formed a lifeline for hundreds of organisations doing vital work in their communities.

The next phase of RAFT will be a Transition Fund, launching on July 20th 2020, which will offer larger grants of up to £15,000 to help small, high-impact organisations adjust and strengthen their business models to become sustainable in the post-coronavirus world.

The RAFT Immediate Response Fund¹

The RAFT Immediate Response Fund offered short-term unrestricted grants of £5,000 to help organisations weather the crisis and continue to meet the changing needs of their beneficiaries. The fund awarded grants to a subset of The Fore's existing grantees, and also received 500 applications from other charitable organisations in a matter of days. The first grants were made from the fund just 15 days after the UK entered lockdown.

Grants made	224
Amount distributed	£ 1,062,925
Average grant size	£4,745



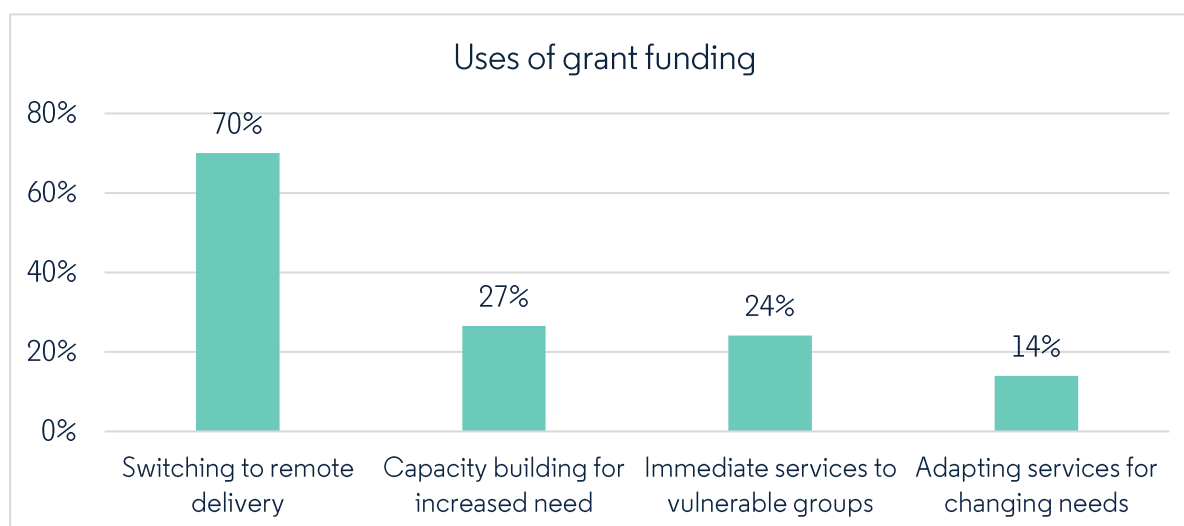
¹ Grantees can work across multiple sectors, so the figures in the following graphs add to more than 100%. The heatmap of grantees by region only includes grantees who named a specific region as their area of activity.

How RAFT grantees used their funding

Funding from the RAFT Immediate Response Fund was unrestricted, meaning that grantees could use it for anything that they wished. Our post-programme analysis found that grantees primarily used their funding in four ways:

- To switch existing programmes to remote delivery (for example, by purchasing equipment or software for working virtually).
- To build capacity for increased needs after the acute phase of the crisis has passed (for example, growing or upskilling the staff team in expectation of increased demand)
- To provide immediate services to vulnerable groups (for example, switching the organisation's work to providing food to the hungry or urgent psychological support for those in distress)
- To adapt their services to meet changing beneficiary needs (for example, setting up a new programme for people experiencing increased stress or isolation)

By far the most common usage of grants was for switching programmes to remote delivery (70% of all grants). Among grantees switching programmes to remote delivery, most organisations used the funding to cover staff time for creating new materials or delivering remote work (55%). Requests for funding to cover equipment were less common (30%), and requests for software/IT support were uncommon (16%).²



Case Study: The Claudia Jones Organisation

Based in Hackney, The Claudia Jones Organisation provides intensive emotional and practical support to women of Afro-Caribbean heritage and their families, many of whom have been affected by domestic violence or gender-based violence. The Claudia Jones Organisation also works with elderly Afro-Caribbean people experiencing severe social isolation and poor mental wellbeing.

The Claudia Jones Organisation expects significantly increased demand for its services as lockdown eases due to the strains COVID-19 has placed on mental health. Funding from the RAFT Immediate Response Fund is enabling the organisation to develop the skills, protocols and systems to provide a robust and higher quality therapeutic service to a greater number of people.

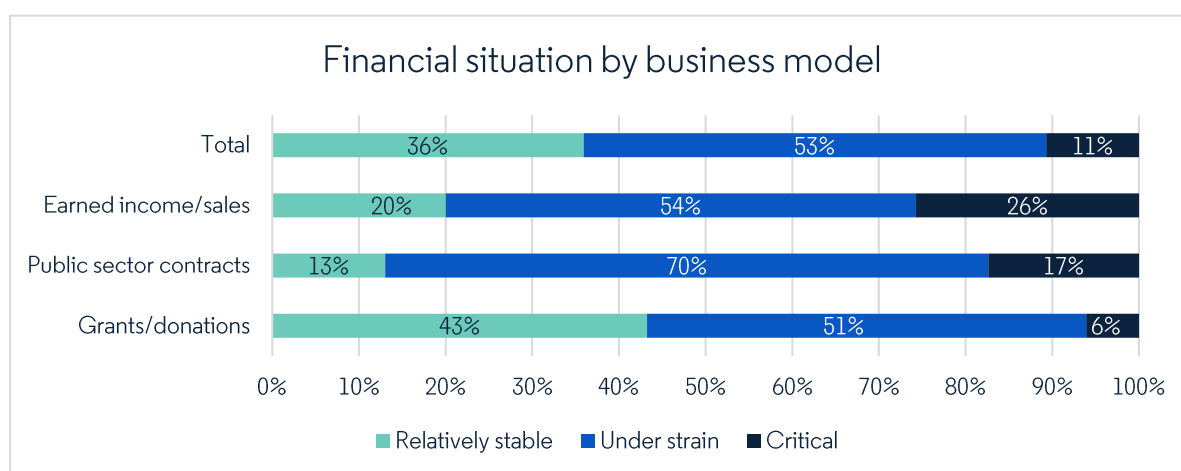
² These figures do not include grantees whose funding came from a funding pot ringfenced for organisations in the London Borough of Havering (17 grants).

Grantee Business Models and Financial Situations

Reviewing the organisations that received funding from The Fore’s RAFT Immediate Response fund, we have found that 72% of all grantees were reliant primarily on grants or donations as their main source of income. 17% were reliant primarily on earned income (sales to individuals and corporates) and only 11% were relied principally on contracts with public or quasi-public bodies. The Fore grouped these organisations according to their financial situations into the following categories:

- Relatively stable (i.e. no significant operational changes were necessary, aside from furloughing staff, for the organisation to remain financially viable in the short-to-medium term).
- Under strain (i.e. significant operational changes were necessary in order for the organisation to remain viable in the short-to-medium term).
- Critical (i.e. there was a plausible threat of the organisation becoming insolvent in the short term).³

The majority of organisations were classified as under strain (53%), while 36% were relatively stable, and 11% were in a critical condition. These findings would suggest that organisations that generate income through sales were by far the worst affected by the crisis, with 26% in a critical condition. Organisations reliant on public sector contracts have also been hit hard, with 17% in a critical condition. Organisations funded principally through grants or donations, however, have fared much better, with only 6% in a critical condition, and almost half being relatively stable. These figures indicate that the crisis has hit the social enterprise sector particularly hard and that, despite the growth and encouragement of this sector over recent years, much progress is at risk of being lost.



Case Study: The Just Finance Foundation

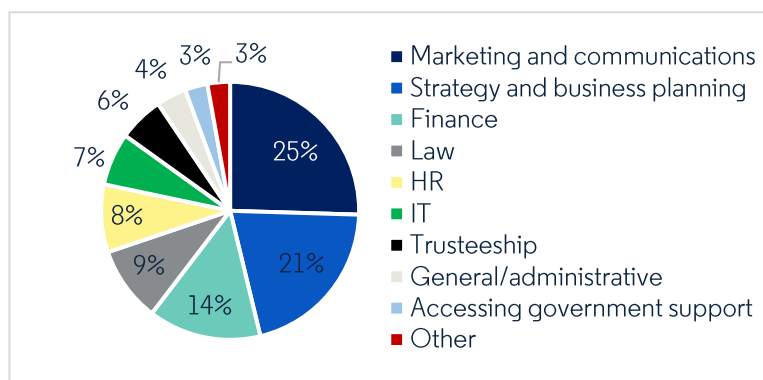
The Just Finance Foundation addresses the issues of financial exclusion, distress caused by unmanageable money worries and debt, and the lack of practical knowledge around budgeting, saving and spending. They support people who are suffering from exclusion from the financial system who may have experienced a life shock such as bereavement or divorce or have mounting debts that have overwhelmed them, and don't know where to turn. The Just Finance Foundation deliver programmes across the UK, including a schools-based programme called 'Life Savers'. The Just Finance Foundation has created a COVID Crash Course, to help people deal with the financial effects of the crisis (designed to be delivered remotely). Funding from RAFT will enable the organisation to deliver nine 'train-the-trainer' courses, ultimately leading to 236 COVID Crash Courses being delivered in communities across the UK.

³ These categories do not take funding from RAFT into account – so if an organisation was facing an existential threat that was abated by receiving funding from RAFT, this organisation would still be categorised as 'critical'.

RAFT Directory

The RAFT Directory was developed to provide an online resource where small charities and social enterprises could request pro bono support from skilled volunteers from within The Fore’s networks. This included sourcing volunteer support from some of the UK’s most prestigious firms as well as specialist organisations such as the Media Trust and Cadence Partners. These volunteers have provided vital help that to enable organisations to successfully navigate the new challenges posed by the pandemic. Results to date are:

Total requests for volunteers	230
Volunteers introduced to charities	105
Charities connected with volunteers	81



Case Study: Clowns Without Borders

Clowns Without Borders works with professional artists and performers to bring play to children undergoing immense hardships around the world. Guided by the UN Convention of the Rights of Child, Clowns Without Borders recognises laughter and play as a vital stabilising influence for children living in disaster zones.

Clowns Without Borders came to The Fore looking for pro bono support in developing new remote delivery models and online resources, and were looking for support with PR, campaign design, technology and data protection. The Fore connected the organisation to employees at Rothschild & Co. to advise on the strategic direction of the organisation in light of coronavirus, and also with another volunteer who supported with communications, social media coverage and online messaging. The Founder and Director of Clowns Without Borders said, “To have pro bono support at this time is incredible. It’s a little ray of light in a very complicated, busy time for us. We’re really grateful.”

RAFT Partners

RAFT was anchor funded by The Lovington Foundation and Garfield Weston Foundation. The Fore would also like to thank RAFT’s other funders, including AOK Foundation, Four Acre Trust, Golden Bottle Trust, Henry Oldfield Trust, LCCP Foundation, LGT Vestra and its clients and employees, Lightbulb Trust, Michael and Sarah Spencer Foundation, The Bulldog Trust, Tribe Impact Capital and UBS. The Fore would also like to thank its regular funders – BlackRock, Moody’s, Rothschild & Co., Netherby Trust, Postcode Local Trust and Power to Change – for agreeing to redirect a share of their previously committed funding to support the RAFT programme.