



COST OF LIVING

The Association of Service Drop-In Centres, ASDIC - is a membership organisation for the growing number of centres that deliver support, guidance, and a safe space for our veterans at their point of need, and have the shared goal of integrating every veteran into their community.



The Background

Over the last 10 years, the way veterans seek help and support has gradually changed. We have seen more and more are going to small, locally based organisations embedded in the communities in which they live. Many of these offer the shared lived experience of fellow veterans and they certainly bring the very personal touch to the care and empathy sought. We believe this reflects a whole societal shift to community based support, which we saw accelerate during the pandemic. For those that need help, this can bridge the gap between leaving service life and integrating back into society.

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ASDIC has seen rapid membership growth over the last 12 months and now represents 140 members across 200 locations throughout the United Kingdom. It is estimated that our members have an attendance of over 80,000 veterans annually. The majority of service users attend in person but increasingly centres have evolved to provide remote support too. Most are deeply embedded in the local or regional veteran welfare support landscape. This includes referring their service users to a variety of delivery partners including national support organisations, as well as local authorities and local charities.

The Survey

To better understand how the challenges of the current cost of living crisis is impacting our network, we conducted a survey of the membership between November and December 2022, focusing on the previous 6 months. We received responses from one third of the membership with submissions from every region and devolved nation of the UK. The survey contained multiple choice and matrix questions, as well as opportunities for respondents to provide answers in their own words. The survey focused on the following key areas:

Funding

↑
40%

Up to 40% of ASDIC members have reported a reduction in fundraising income over the last six months, as well as reductions in income from grants and local authorities.

Costs

↑
86%

Unsurprisingly 86% have reported significant increase in operational costs, which in some cases impacts on ability to provide support.

Service Users

↑
89%

As many as 89% have seen an increase in demand for services ranging from mental health to financial matters.



'We have had a reduced emergency funding, which was used to provide essential food and energy for our beneficiaries. Without this, our proactive action has been changed from instantly to 24-48 hours. In some cases, 2-5 weeks to attain funding.'



'An increase in demand without an increase in staffing/resources. We know there are more people requiring our support, but we cannot provide as much without compromising our current service quality level.'

Increasing Costs

RUNNING



SERVICE DELIVERY



VOLUNTEERS

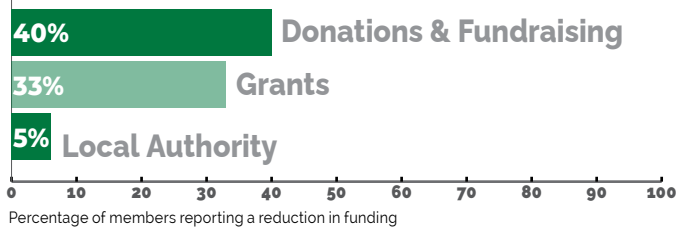


STAFF



Percentage of members reporting cost increases since May 2022

Funding



Percentage of members reporting a reduction in funding



INCREASE IN SERVICE USERS

6450

Estimate based on average increase in requests for support reported by those surveyed.



'Due to the current economic climate a number of our volunteers have had to reduce their available hours to gain further employment. We are actively looking to attract more specialist assistance to allow us to not only carry on but to expand on the services we offer.'

Service Users

Have the needs of your users changed in the last six months?



MENTAL HEALTH

86% report increased demand
14% report no change in need. **86%**



WELFARE

88% report increased demand
9% report no change in need. **88%**



COMRADESHIP

72% report increased demand
27% report no change in need. **72%**



HOUSING

66% report increased demand
25% report no change in need. **66%**



FINANCIAL

77% report increased demand
18% report no change in need. **77%**

Conclusion

The survey has identified a stirring anxiety within the membership, with demand for their services rising over the past six months. When asked how their organisations are coping with demand, over half answered: 'With difficulty – we meet most users' needs, but encounter some challenges'.

With demand rising, funding is the primary concern. Many have seen decreased funding from various streams, including grants and donations. Unfortunately this is concurrent with rising expenditure. As no one is untouched by the current cost-of- living crisis, not only are the centres seeing higher running costs and increased demand, but some centres are also seeing a drop in volunteers, as fewer are able to freely offer their time. There's a desire to employ paid members of staff, but not the funding to make this possible. Some are trying to find new avenues of funding, and many call for more sustainable grants as currently most funding is for short term projects, so planning for the future and day-to-day delivery costs is difficult.

However, they are not without optimism, showing the same resilience that brought them through the pandemic, the majority say their ability to meet users' needs has improved in the past six months. We will share our findings with the Office for Veterans Affairs to ensure that a spotlight is thrown onto this essential part of the veteran welfare sector. Results will be combined by them with ongoing research from across the sector. We will continue to monitor the situation over the coming months.