

Insights and data

A snapshot of the sector through our portfolio charities progress in the last year

Autumn/Winter 2024

Image: Youngwilders

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The Fore's Autumn/Winter 2024 Insights and Data report offers a window into the achievements and challenges of the small charity sector through the experiences of the 23 charities and social enterprises that participated in our recent monitoring and evaluation (M&E).¹

Average score against stretch targets

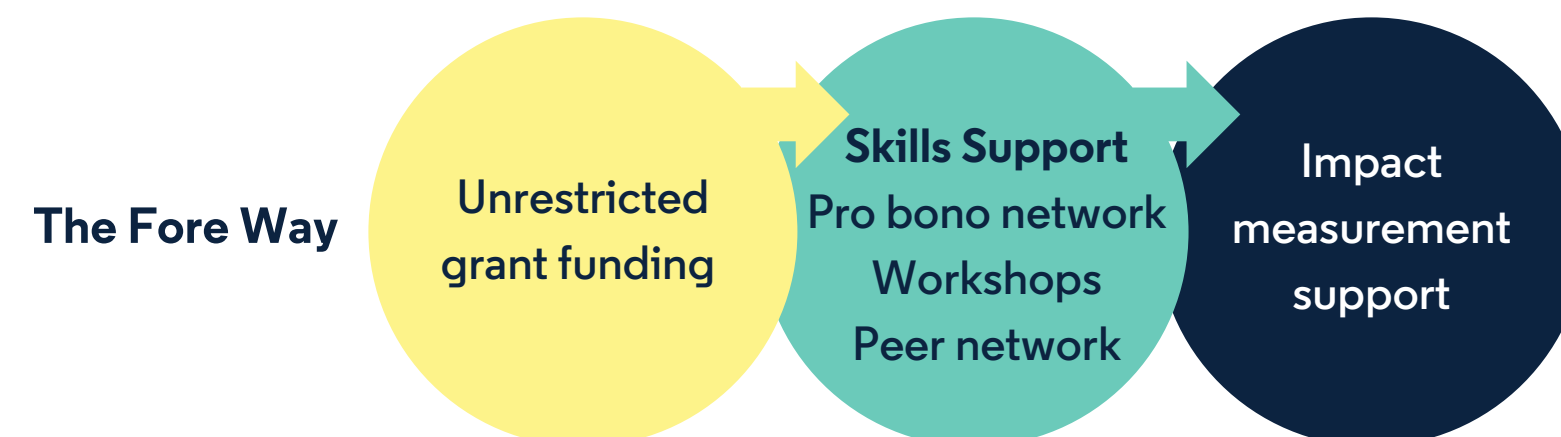
83%

Key findings from our Autumn/Winter 2024 M&E:

- Reasons to be cheerful: Financial wins
- Hiring headaches? The answer might be closer to home
- Don't get lost in jargon: Why a clear message matters

Why are our charities doing so well despite the challenging funding environment?

- Their exceptional strength of leadership
- Access to our unrestricted funding gives them the headspace to focus on long-term resilience and growth
- The skills and networks we offer are crucial in helping their organisations not just survive but thrive



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Our M&E process involves an online conversation (followed by a brief survey to collect quantitative data). This is used to measure charity progress by comparing their performance against stretch targets or KPIs agreed at the grant's onset.

Reasons to be cheerful: Financial wins

Many of our charities are paving the way to financial resilience by reducing their reliance on grant funding where possible. For example, some are doing this by growing their confidence in charging for their programmes. One charity successfully increased their fees for local authorities from £6,000 to £30,000 per person after demonstrating their outcomes outperformed those of higher-charging providers.

We have also seen many focusing on strengthening their case for funding by improving their monitoring and evaluation, helping them secure larger, multi-year grants. For example, Southwark Black Parents Forum focused on consistently collecting beneficiary feedback by using tools such as Google Forms and QR codes.

Hiring headaches? The answer might be closer to home

Our charities continue to face recruitment challenges, from too few candidates applying to hires that don't work out. But some of the most successful organisations have grown their own talent, turning dedicated volunteers, work experience placements, or existing staff into their best hires.

One charity ran an extensive recruitment process, only for their new hire to leave soon after. They then appointed a long-standing volunteer who is now exceeding expectations in the role. Another struggled to fill a senior fundraising position after two failed recruitment attempts. Their solution? Extending the hours and responsibilities of an existing team member, who is already delivering results.

Don't get lost in jargon: Why a clear message matters

In today's tough funding environment, charities that communicate their USP clearly stand out. Funders and partners want to very quickly understand what a charity does, why it matters, and their impact. The most successful organisations are those cutting the jargon and refining their messaging. The Fore is going through this process too!

OmniMusic – a charity delivering accessible music sessions for people with disabilities – realised through our application process that they needed to sharpen their USP. This led to a rebrand, boosting credibility and traction. Since then, they've won an award, secured BBC Radio coverage, and landed a partnership with a major concert venue. Another charity hired a creative agency to professionalise their marketing and communications, and this is already paying off in fundraising.



Case study: A slam dunk for sustainable growth – How London Basketball Association laid the foundations for scale-up

Score against targets: 100%

London Basketball Association uses basketball to change the lives of young people in communities facing economic challenges. Led by Tony Lazare, who grew up in one such community, LBA provides pathways for young people to become accredited basketball coaches or officials, while building employability and life skills. The social cost savings from LBA's impact are estimated at £18 million yearly.

Despite supporting 4,000 young people and getting many into paid work for the first time, Tony knew LBA had potential to do more. The challenge? Time. While LBA was generating around £30,000 a year from birthday parties and the hiring of coaches and officials, managing this income generator was draining Tony's capacity. This meant he couldn't focus on long-term, sustainable growth and strategy.

With The Fore's funding, LBA hired a Sales Coordinator, streamlining operations and expanding income from the children's parties and coaching services, boosting financial resilience. Most importantly, this freed up Tony to develop a strategy with a strong corporate offer, securing new income-generating partnerships.

In just a year, LBA has nearly tripled their earned income, diversifying income sources. With this financial stability they've been able to recruit key staff to support further growth. The stage has now been set for scale up and LBA are ready to change the lives of considerably more young people across the capital.



London Basketball Association

Key stats from our Autumn/Winter 2024 monitoring and evaluation



average charity score against stretch targets

Based on 77 targets scored across 23 charities

Compared to 76% scored in our Summer 2024 M&E process



35%

increase in
beneficiaries reached



52

additional locations
operated in



25%

increase in programmes/
projects offered



600

additional
volunteers



25%

increase
in staff time



growth in total income

58% growth in restricted income

50% growth in unrestricted income

Increases are from last year to this year. Percentages (excluding target score) represent median increases.

Breakdown of target scores by category

Category of target	Number of targets evaluated	Average score against target	Score as a %	Change since Summer 2024
Increasing financial sustainability	24	4.1	82%	19%
Expanding charitable activity	13	4.5	91%	13%
Increasing organisational capacity	29	4.2	83%	-1%
Increasing efficiency	8	4	80%	-13%
Strategic planning	3	3.7	73%	8%
Total	77	4.2	83%	7%

Charities in our Autumn/Winter 2024 M&E process:

- Abortion Talk • Behind Every Kick • Better Giving Partnership • Diverse Voices Edutainment CIO • Equine Therapy Center
- Essex Respite & Care Association • Goods for Good • Home-Start Hillingdon • Just Psychology CIC • London Basketball Association
- Lyra • OmniMusic • ParaCheer International CIO • SAMEE • Shine A Light Childhood Cancer Support • Southwark Black Parents Forum
- Stable Lives • Streetlight UK • Success Club CIO • The Recruitment Junction • Trauma Treatment International • Youngwilders CIC
- YourStance



The Recruitment Junction