



Insights and data

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

Spring 2025

Photo: Clear Sky Children's Charity



The Fore's Spring 2025 Insights and Data report offers a window into the achievements and challenges of the small charity sector through the experiences of the 31 charities and social enterprises that participated in our recent monitoring and evaluation (M&E).¹

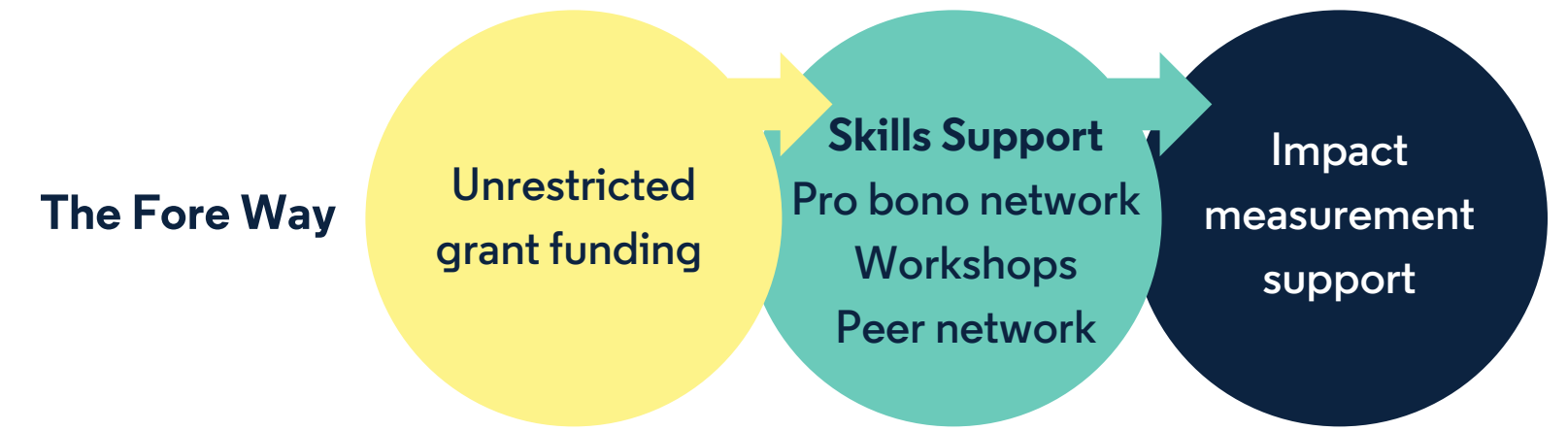
Average score against stretch targets
80%

Key findings from our Spring 2025 M&E:

- Pruning the tree to let it grow
- Statutory setbacks: maximising opportunities
- Fighting burnout

How do our charities continue to march forward even as funding gets tighter?

- Their exceptional leadership and governance
- Access to our unrestricted funding is enabling vital strategic planning and resilience-building
- The skills and networks we offer are filling critical gaps that set organisations up to 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.

Pruning the tree to let it grow

In today's tough funding climate, some of our charities have chosen to retract or pause. This isn't just out of necessity, but as a strategic, conscious effort to focus on what matters most.

Rather than chasing growth for the sake of it, they're asking bold, honest questions: What's actually delivering impact? What should we stop doing? Where is our time best spent? For some, this has meant pausing geographic expansion, streamlining programmes, or stepping back from lower-value partnerships. For others, it's about growing in a more measured, deliberate way, deepening impact before widening reach.

Our charities are showing that cutting back isn't about shrinking. It's about growing smarter and setting the stage for stronger, more sustainable growth when the time is right.

Fighting burnout

Small charity leaders have always had a lot on their plates, but this pressure is now at a whole new level. As organisations are expected to do more with less, leaders are juggling more, from fundraising and delivery, to strategy, governance, and operations.

It's a recipe for burnout, but many are finding ways to protect themselves. We're seeing leaders strip things back to focus on what really matters, and refresh their boards to bring in more active, engaged trustees who can help share the load. These steps won't solve everything, but they create space for better decisions, stronger leadership, and long-term resilience to begin.

Statutory setbacks: maximising opportunities

Many of our charities are exploring ways to generate unrestricted income by offering products and services to statutory organisations such as schools, care homes or GP surgeries. But with cash-strapped public services, many tell us this income has dried up – even after investing significant time and effort in building these relationships.

To make the most of the limited opportunities, some of our charities are shifting strategy. One has moved from targeting individual schools to working with umbrella bodies, opening doors to a wider network while saving time and resources. Another is embracing technology to stand out in a competitive landscape. They developed a digital platform that led the NHS to bulk-buy their courses. Although statutory funding remains tight, innovative solutions are helping charities unlock new opportunities.



Case study: Face Equality International – making space to scale

Score against targets: 90%

Face Equality International (FEI) are creating a world where everyone is treated fairly. Led by Phyllida Swift, who has personal experience of facial scarring, FEI tackles the injustices experienced by people with facial differences, from everyday discrimination to severe human rights abuses.

Rather than focusing on medical fixes, FEI leads a global alliance of organisations advancing face equality through public awareness and policy change. Last year, their Face Equality Week campaign reached over 1 million people, but with new research revealing the scale of global facial discrimination, the need to expand their global alliance became urgent. Like many small charity CEOs, Phyllida faced a familiar barrier: time. Managing day-to-day communications, while vital to the movement, left little space for strategic leadership or fundraising to fuel growth.

The Fore's funding changed that. It enabled her to bring in new comms capacity and focus on the organisation's upward trajectory. In one year, FEI have doubled both income and reach, now engaging over 2 million people. They've launched a fee-paying training programme, secured major partners like Amazon and Sephora UK, and attracted new trust and foundation support to fund strategic roles like a Head of Policy and Education. This is taking them closer to a world where people with facial differences can live freely without injustice and discrimination.



Face Equality International

Key stats from our Spring 2025 monitoring and evaluation



average charity score against stretch targets

Based on 117 targets scored across 31 charities

Compared to 83% scored in our Autumn/Winter 2024 M&E process



20%

increase in
beneficiaries reached



23

additional locations
operated in



25%

Increase
in volunteers



16%

increase
in staff time



14%

growth in total income

12% growth in restricted income

27% 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 Autumn/Winter2024
Increasing financial sustainability	24	3.5	70%	-12%
Expanding charitable activity	31	4	81%	-10%
Increasing organisational capacity	39	4.3	86%	3%
Increasing efficiency	16	4.1	81%	1%
Strategic planning	7	4	80%	7%
Total	117	4	80%	-3%

Charities in our Spring 2025 M&E process:

- Build Up Foundation • Changing Relations CIC • Clear Sky Children’s Charity • Community Integration and Advocacy Centre
- CRIPTic Arts CIC • Dress for Success Scotland Limited • Every Future Foundation • Everyday Plastic CIC • Face Equality International
- FarmAbility • Grace Enterprises Nottingham Ltd • Grow Cardiff • Hotel School • Informing Choices NI • LMK (Let Me Know)
- Love4Life • Mafwa Theatre CIC • Mission Remission • Ms Independent Careers • OYA Organisation of Young Africans
- Real Lives Real Choices • Rolladome All Skate Limited • Say Aphasia • Sisterhood School CIC • Split Banana CIC • The Fun Hub CIC
- The Reconnect Education Project CIC • The Sound Waves Foundation • Voices for Life • You Can Flourish • Youth Leads UK

