

Recognition Scheme Award  
for Organisations



**COSCA**

Counselling & Psychotherapy  
in Scotland

# Survey of COSCA Recognised Organisations September 2019

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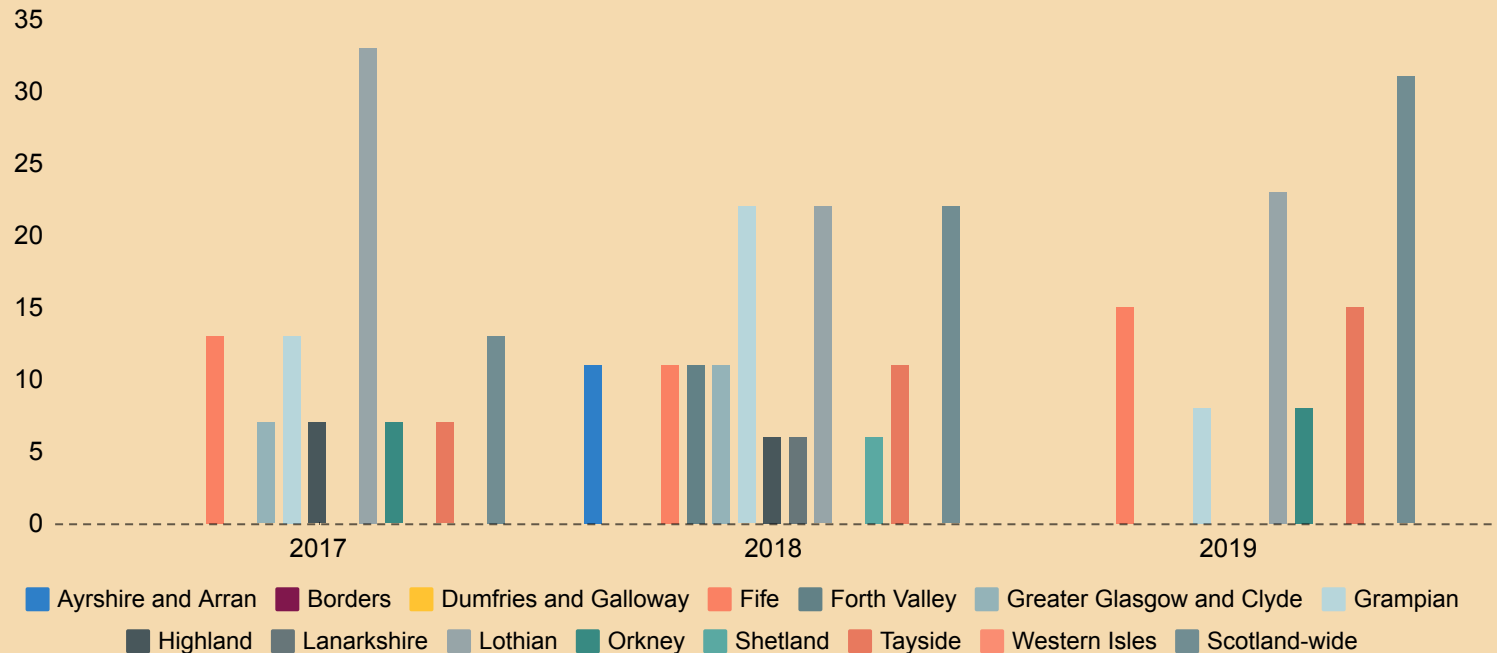
## SURVEY RESULTS 2019

# Introduction

There are currently 28 COSCA Member Organisations who have gained the COSCA Recognition Scheme Award. During Summer/Autumn 2019, COSCA Recognised Organisations were asked to respond to our survey. After last year's experiment, opening up the survey to all COSCA organisations, it was decided that the survey should represent the experiences of those who are Recognised as reaching COSCA's highest standards for membership.

13 Recognised Organisations responded to the survey and the insights they provided are given below.

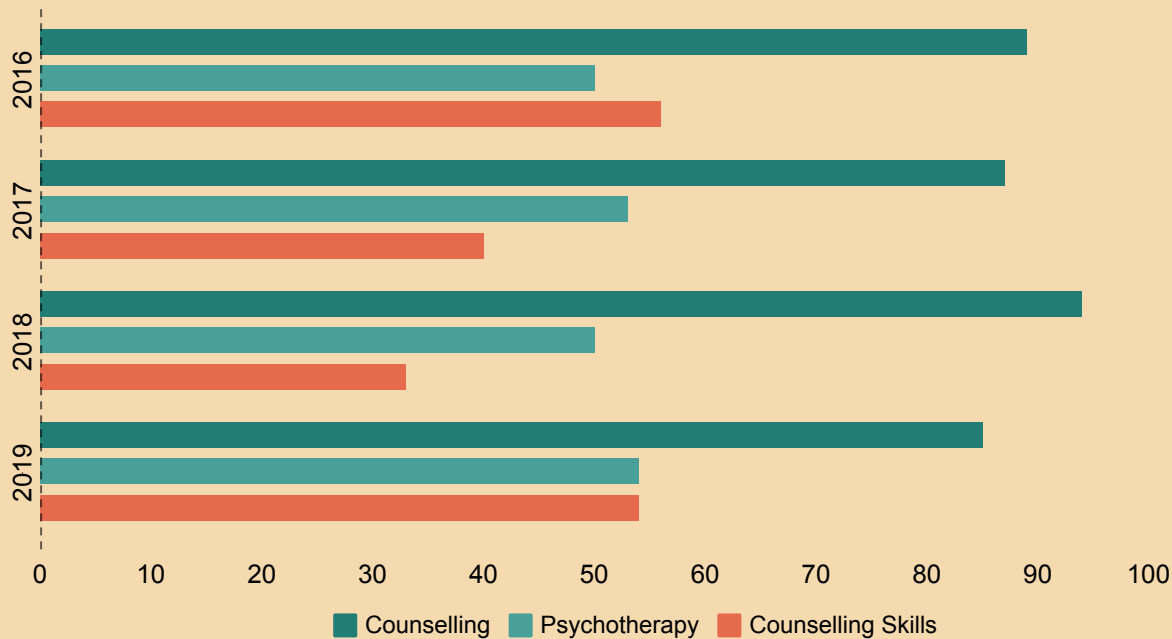
# 1. In which health board region(s) of Scotland does your organisation provide services?



This year had more respondents working Scotland-wide (31%), with Lothian services a close second (23%). 9 regions went unrepresented.

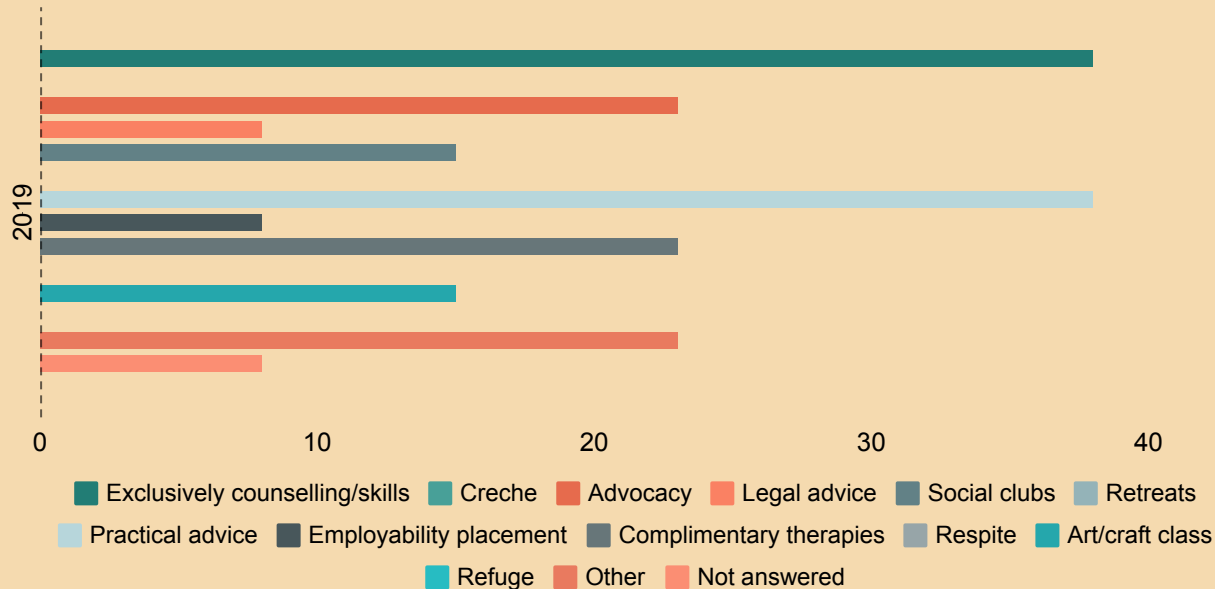
## 2. What services does your organisation provide?

### Counselling:



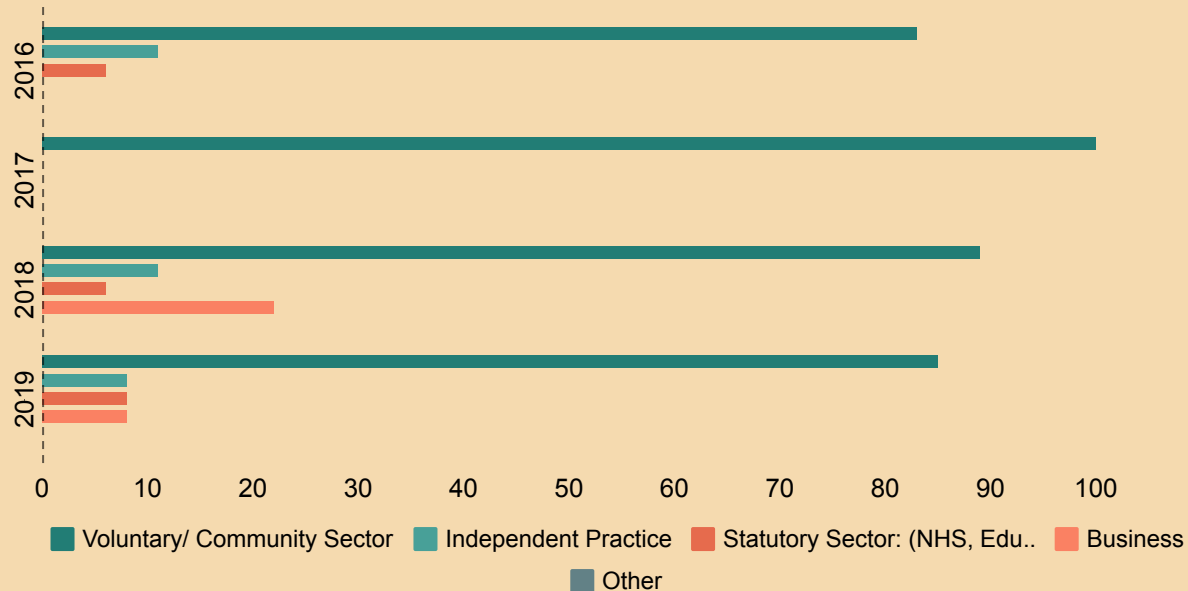
The split between respondents offering counselling, psychotherapy and counselling skills has remained pretty much the same since 2016. With 85% providing counselling and 54% providing counselling skills. How different terms are used is explored more in question 12 below.

## Support:



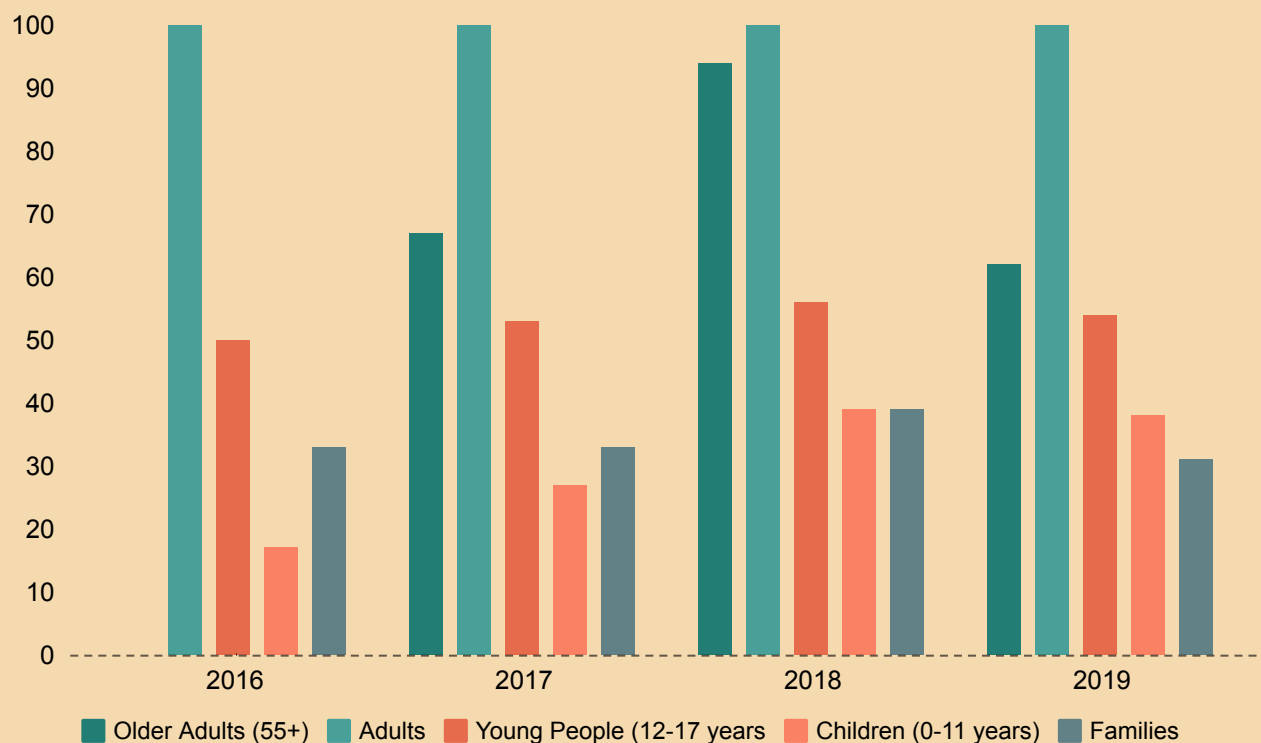
This question was a new addition this year and aimed to look more fully at the range of services offered by COSCA's Recognised Organisations. Nearly two fifths (38%) of COSCA Recognised organisations provide purely counselling or counselling skills, but the other 62% provide a number of complimentary support services including practical advice and complimentary therapies. This looks as if most COSCA Recognised Organisations provide a range of services. Is this a way to offer more support to clients or perhaps an alternative to long waiting lists?

### 3. In what context does your organisation work?



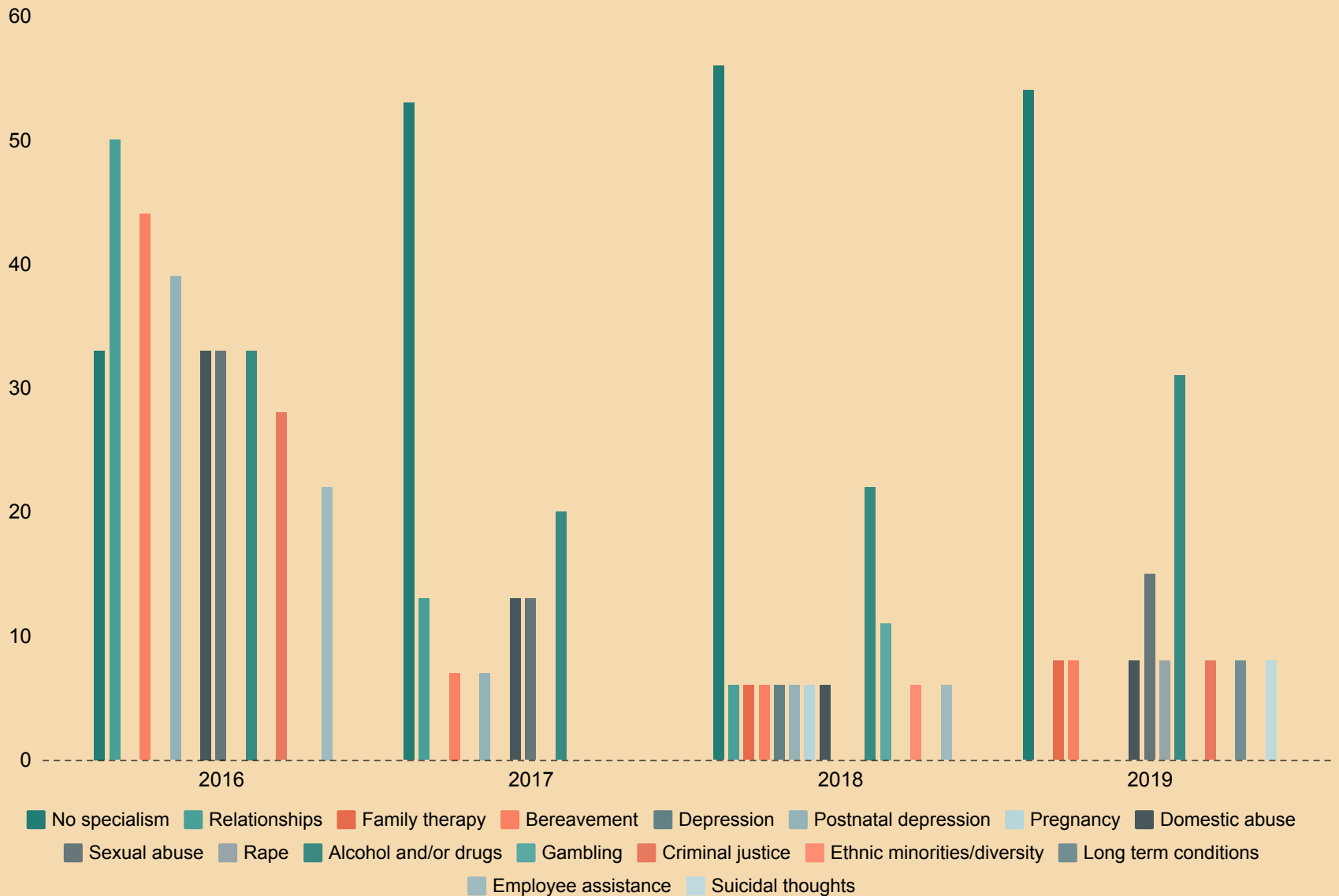
There has been a steady split in the context of counselling and counselling skills provision over the past 4 years. Of those able to complete the survey 85% were in the voluntary/community sector, compared with 8% in independent practice, statutory or business.

#### 4. What population does your Counselling/ Psychotherapy/Counselling Skills organisation provide services for?



All services offered support to adults with a decrease to 62% (from 94%) offering support to older adults. This suggests that last year's result was not representative of COSCA's Recognised Organisations. There is still a relatively low amount of provision for children and families (38% and 31%). The Scottish Government's pledge to spend an extra £250 million on mental health services appears to have had no impact on services as yet. It will be interesting to see if this changes after its implementation next year.

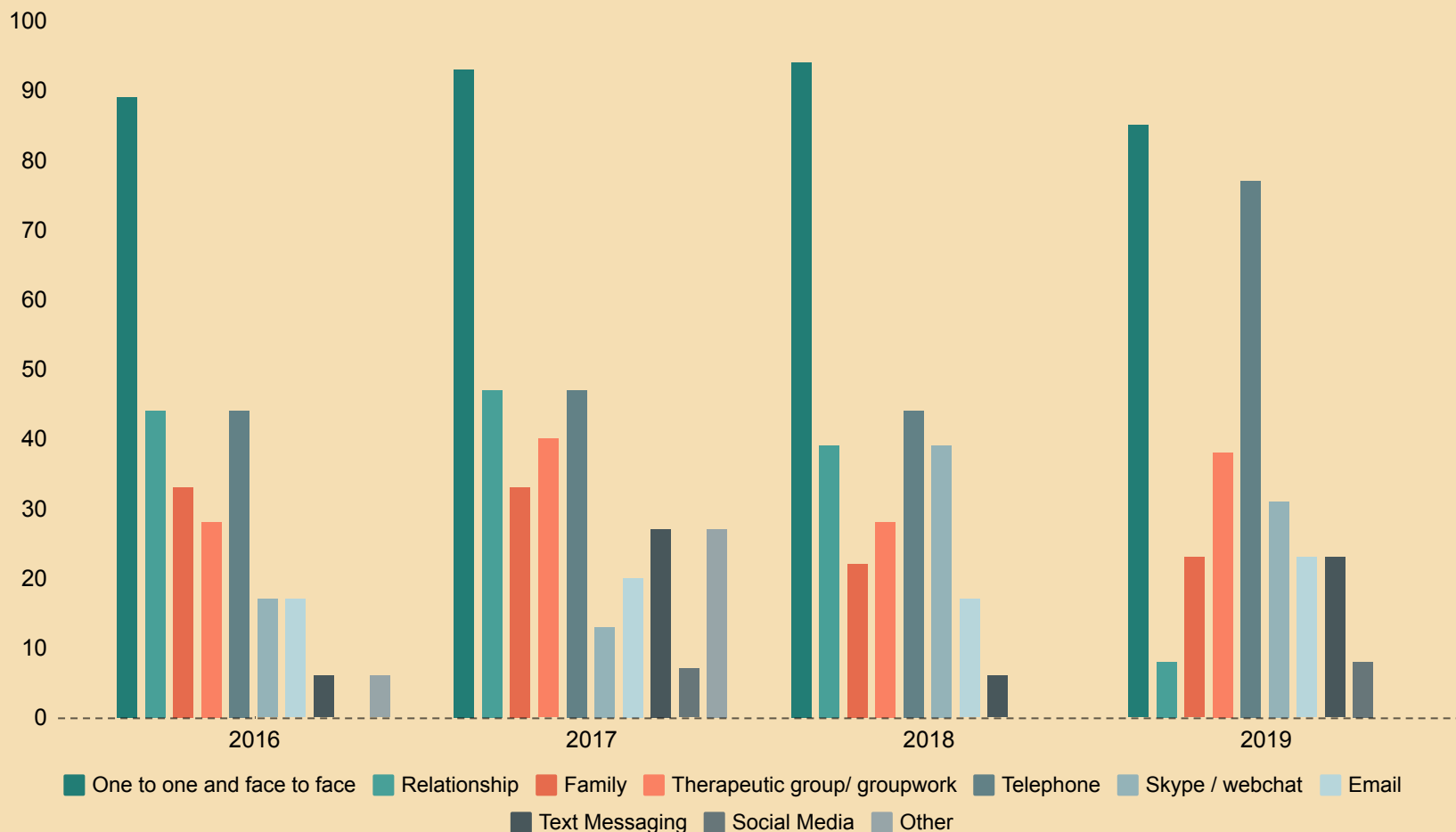
## 5. Does your service specialise in one or more areas?



The question was slightly modified this year to ask Recognised Organisations if they provided a specialist service, although this appears to have had very little impact on results. The majority of Recognised Organisations offering a generic service continues to be more than half of those surveyed (54%). 'Training organisation' was removed as offering training does not change the counselling/skills service(s) provided.

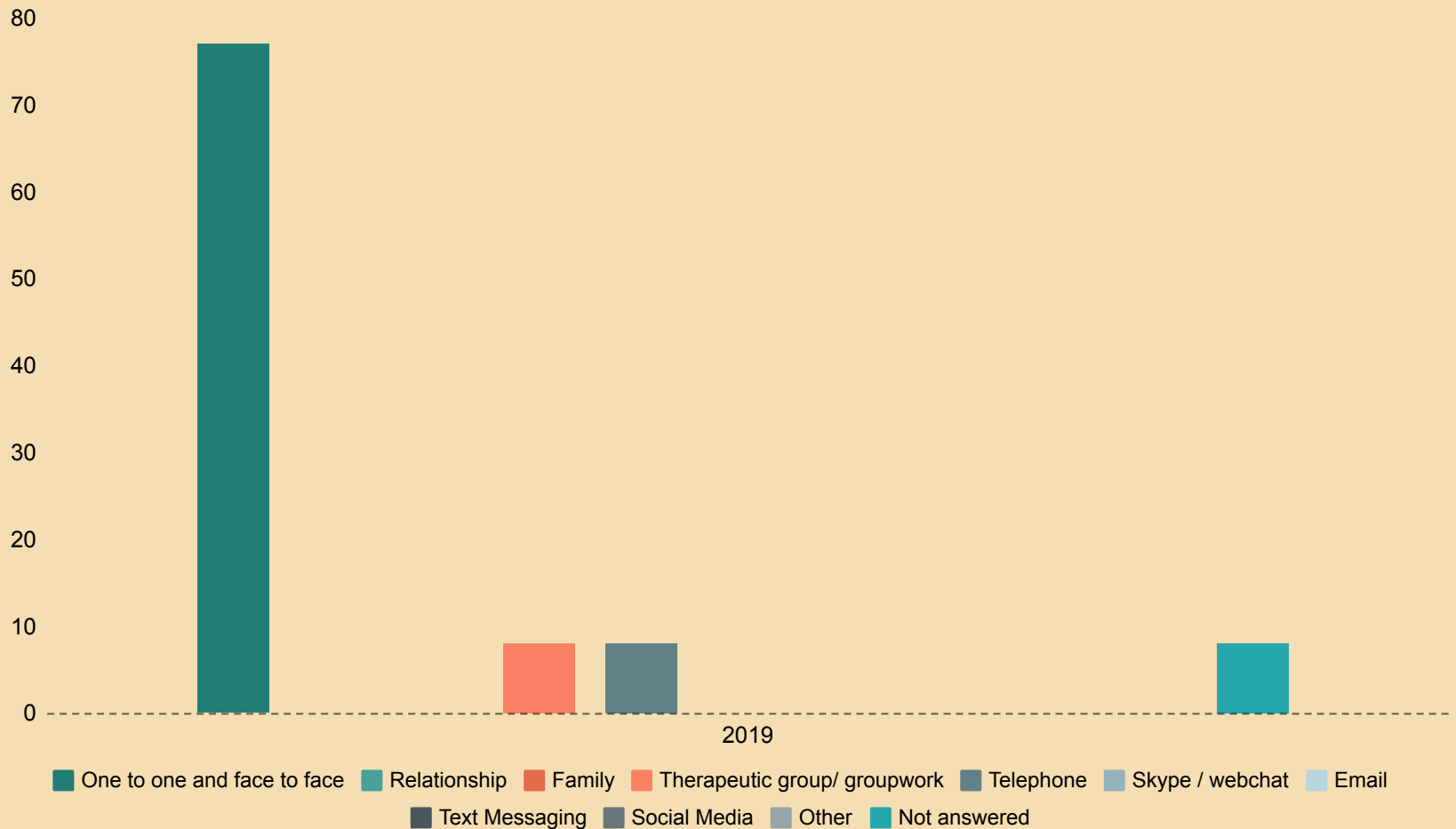


## 6. How do your counsellors/ Psychotherapists/ Counselling Skills users (practitioners) work with clients?



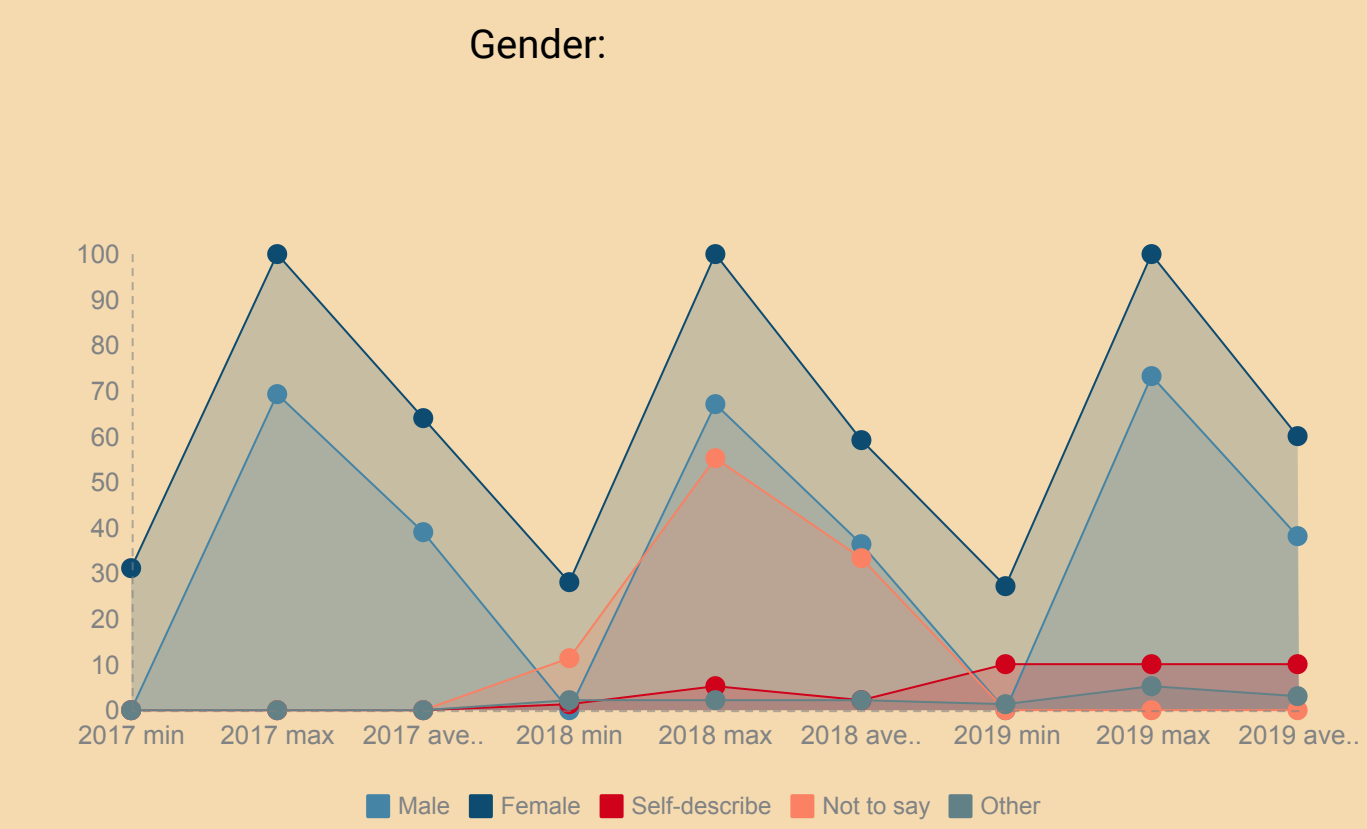
The vast majority of counselling and counselling skills is still mainly offered face to face (85%) as expected from previous surveys (89%, 93%, 94%). There has also been a large rise in the amount of organisations offering telephone contact (from 44% to 77%). As we move into 2020 will we continue to see a rise in technology being offered in counselling and counselling skills services?

# What is the main way your Counsellors/Psychotherapists/Counselling Skills Users work with clients?

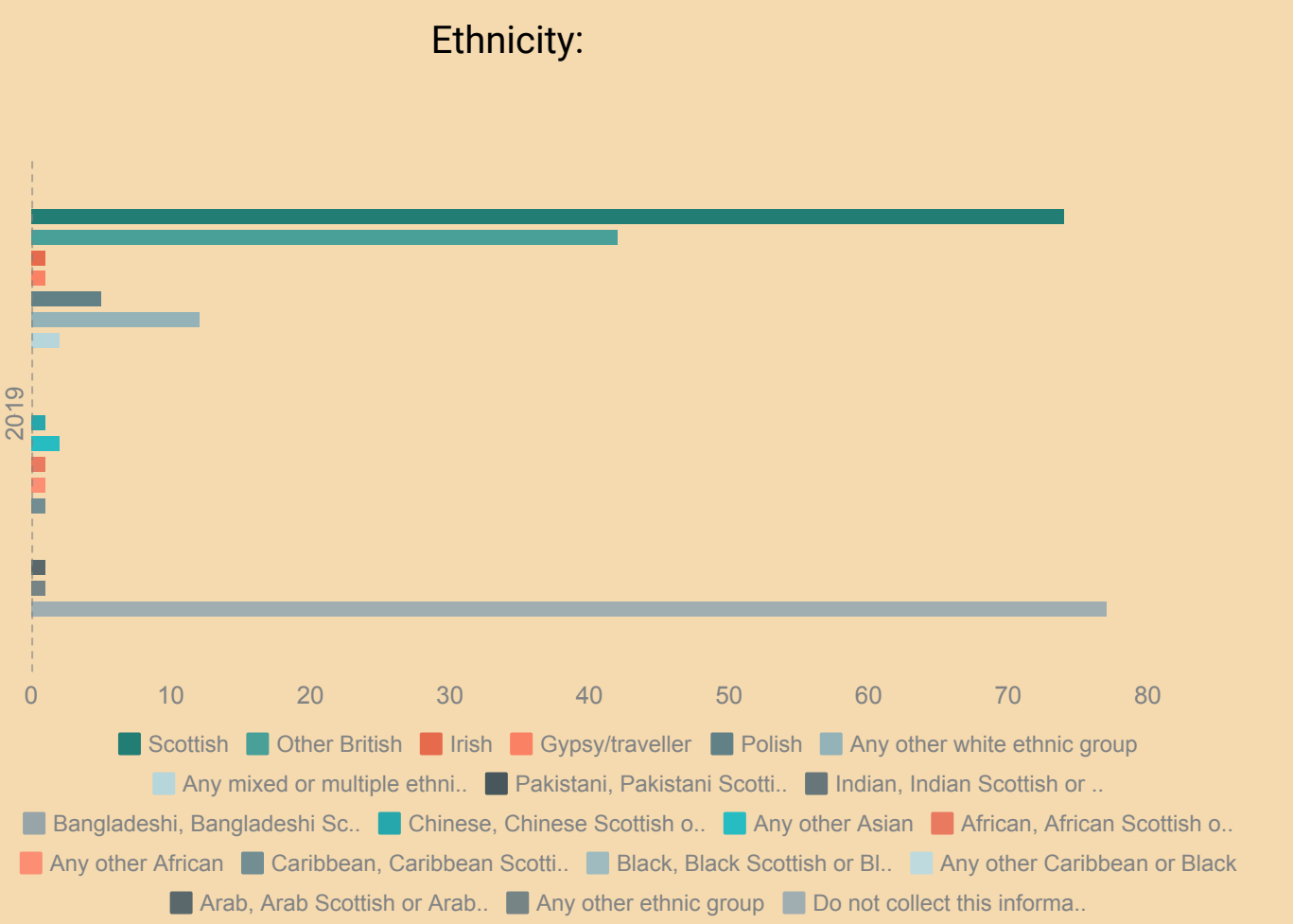


The picture changes slightly when we look at the main way services are offered. 77% of organisations offer mainly face to face and one to one counselling or counselling skills, with only 8% providing services by telephone. Face to face, it seems, is still the preferred way to deliver counselling and/or counselling skills. Perhaps technology should be seen as a compliment to face to face work as opposed to replacing it?

7. How many of your clients state they are:

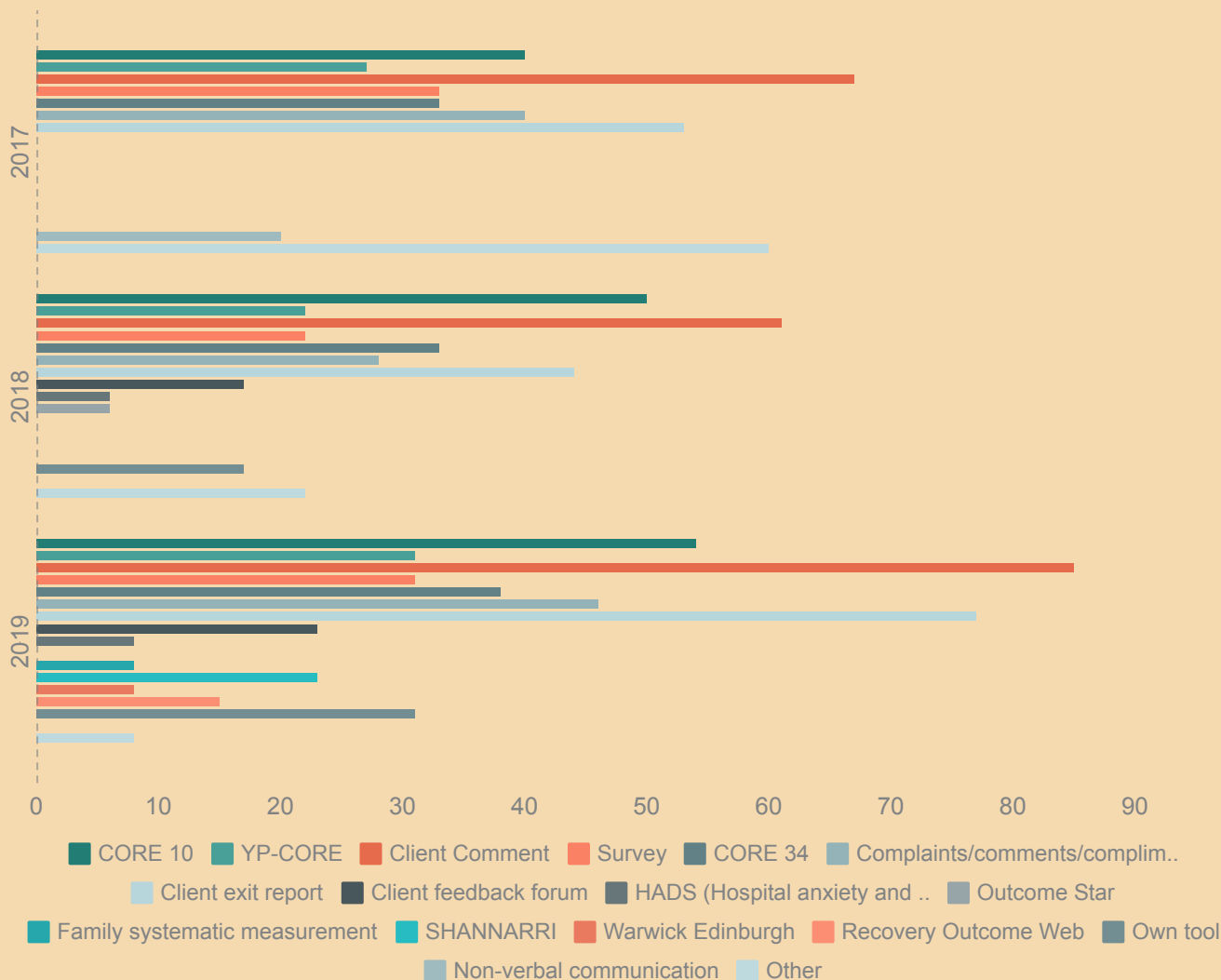


This year's responses were in line with last year's. The percentage of male clients ranged from 0% to 73% with an average of 38%. Female clients ranged from 27% to 100% with an average of 60%, so we can see that more women (22% on average) take up counselling services than men. There were still few, although slightly more (4, up 2 from last year), organisations that reported that anyone selected the self-describe, prefer not to say or other options. One organisation did not collect gender data at all. Are Recognised organisations not asking for this data, not attracting those who do not conform to binary genders; or is it that they don't need counselling or counselling skills services?



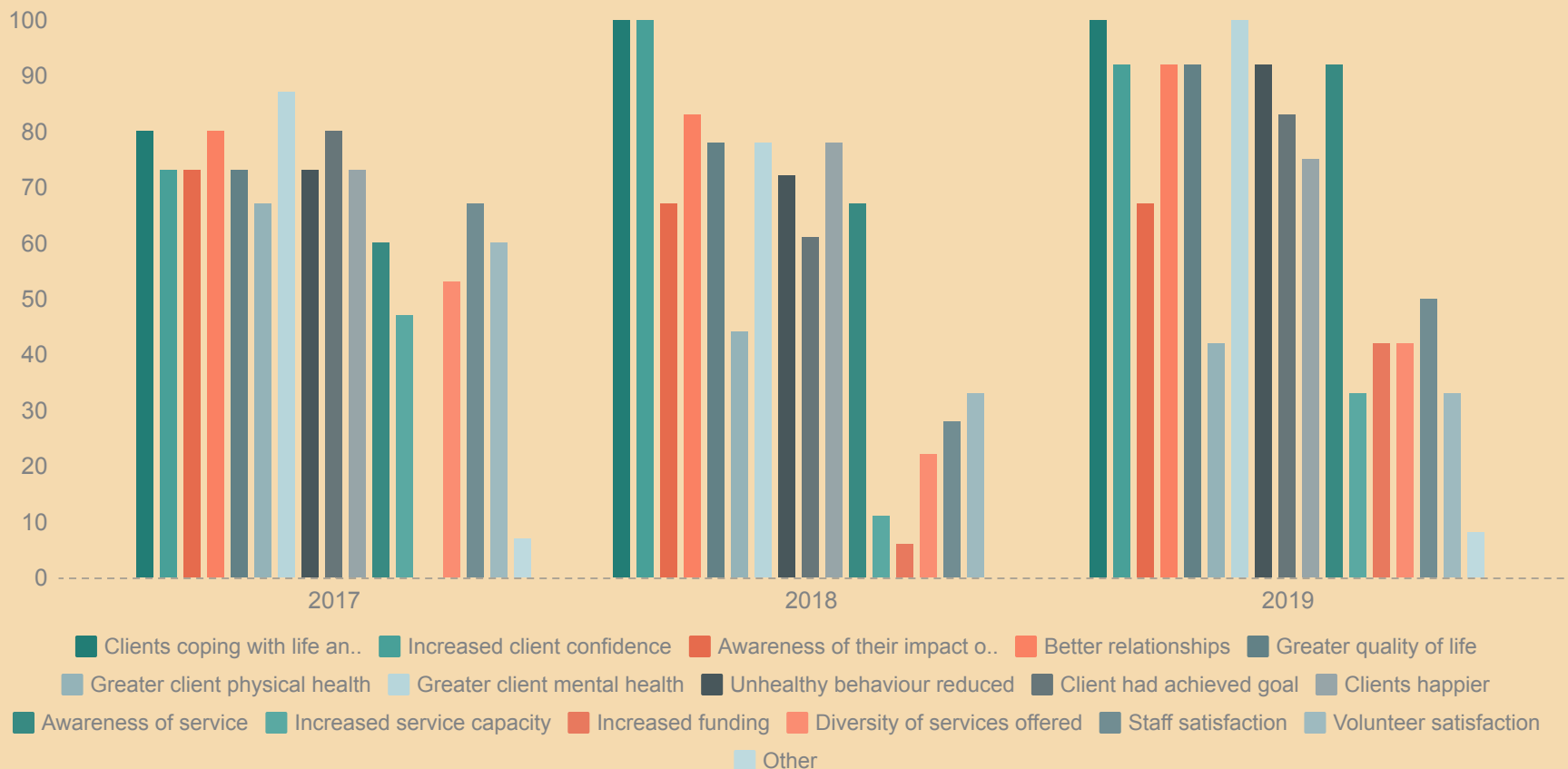
This year ethnicity has been added to the client monitoring in line with PSA recommendations. As to be expected, the vast majority of COSCA's Recognised Organisation's clients are white Scottish (74%), with a few other ethnicities represented. More surprising was that only 3 of the 13 organisations who responded provided data, leaving 77% unrepresented. Why are organisations not collecting this data? One organisation commented that they had been advised by their GDPR training not to collect this data. COSCA would counter that if we don't know who is using our services, how can we know that we are being truly accessible to everyone who might need them? GDPR doesn't prevent this as long as you follow the correct procedure for doing so.

## 8. How do you measure the outcomes of your service?



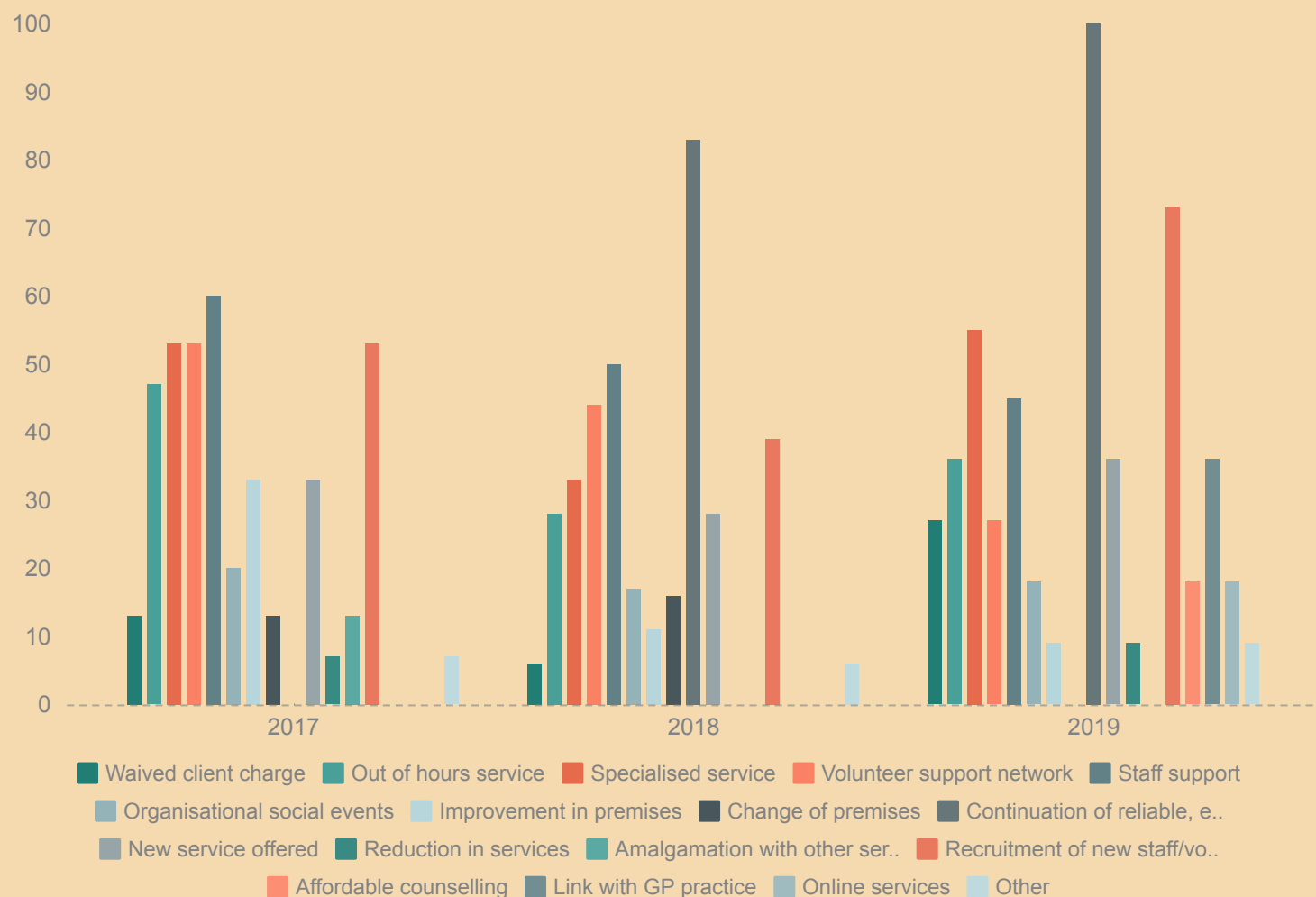
This year, again, reflects the huge amount of diversity in data collection methods of COSCA Recognised Organisations. Client comment (85%) and exit report (77%) are still the most popular way of gathering data, but CORE 10 (54%) and a variety of bespoke tools are also used to indicate outcomes. Most importantly COSCA's Recognised Organisations are monitoring the effectiveness of their services and doing so in a variety of ways.

## 9. What are the outcomes of your service in the last year?



This graph shows how much and in what diverse areas COSCA Member Organisations improve the well-being of their clients; with 100% reporting that their client were better able to cope with life and stress and had greater mental health. Staff satisfaction has risen to 50% (from 28% in 2018) and volunteer satisfaction remains at 33%. Mike Moss pointed out at COSCA's 2019 AGM that both client and counsellor can grow within the therapeutic relationship. Is this not happening in all of COSCA's Recognised Organisations (which I very much doubt) or is this growth not something that is seen as important when collecting data?

## 10. What activities produced the outcomes in the question above?



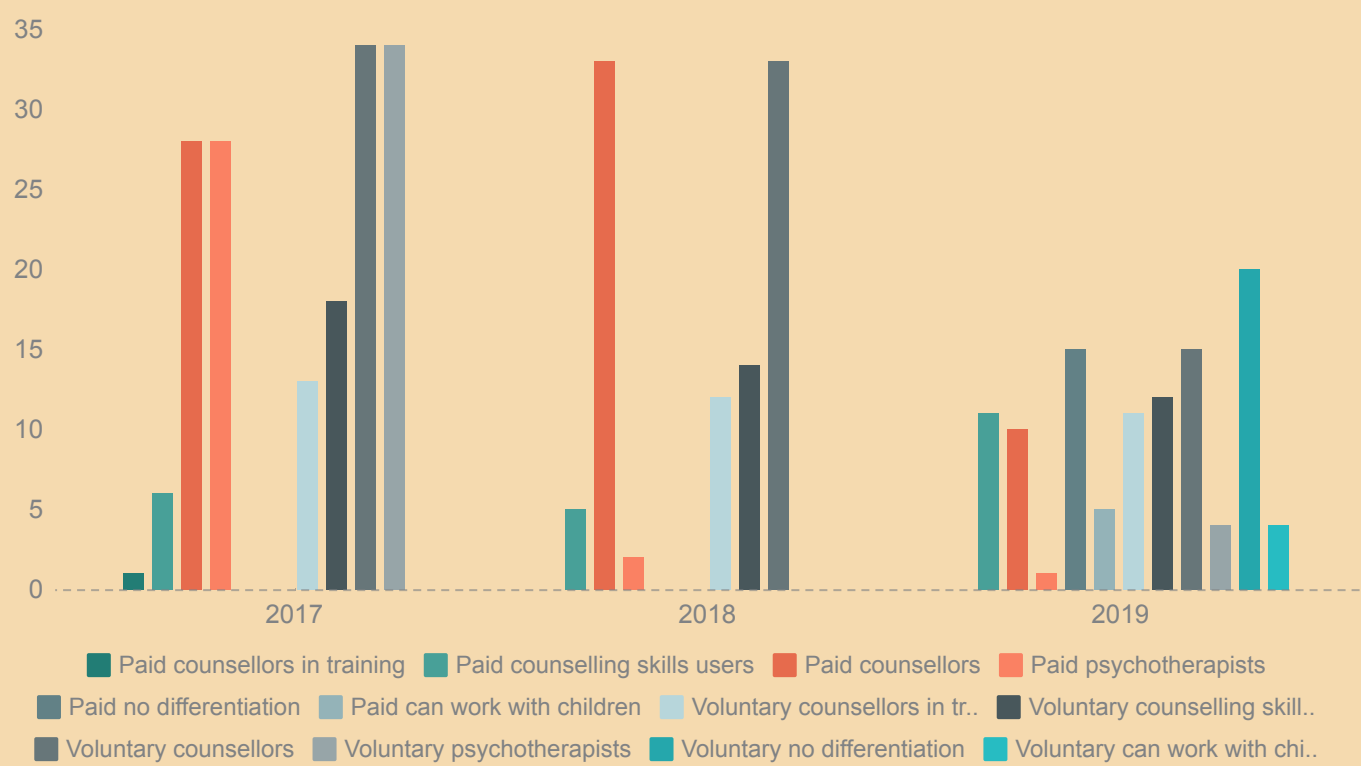
100% of Recognised Organisations cite continuation of reliable, established services as contributing to their ability to offer their high quality counselling and counselling skills provision. Not far behind (73%) say that recruitment of new staff/volunteers is also a huge contributor. One service commented that continuation of a reliable, established service is the biggest factor in client satisfaction, but that funders are often looking for an exciting new project making sourcing core funding difficult. Whilst innovation and being adaptable are essential in today's climate, COSCA agrees that it is essential that established services should not be overlooked. This survey aims to promote the services of COSCA's Recognised Organisations by showcasing their invaluable work.

## 11. What were the challenges for your service in achieving the above impacts/ outcomes?



Funding is still the biggest challenge for COSCA Recognised Organisations at 64%. This is closely followed by premises, social stigma and lack of services elsewhere (a new addition to this year's survey) all at 45%. Irregular attendance is still a large contributor at 36%. It seems that most challenges are continuing to rise. One Organisation commented "funding, funding, funding - its being cut everywhere, but the demands on the service increase".

12. How many practitioners within your organisation are:



This year there were two new options: no differentiation between counsellors and psychotherapists and qualified to work with those under 18 years. Voluntary counsellors still make up the bulk of the counselling provision at 35% (20% from no differentiation) The percentage of paid is down to 25% (15% from no differentiation). The opposite is true of counselling skills users. Paid counselling skills users have more than doubled to 11% (from 5% last year), whereas voluntary are slightly down to 12% (from 14% last year and 18% in 2017) making a roughly even split between paid and unpaid counselling skill users. It will be interesting to see in further surveys if this trend to pay counselling skills users, but not counsellors continues. It still shows how volunteers are essential in providing counselling and counselling skills services in COSCA Recognised Organisations.

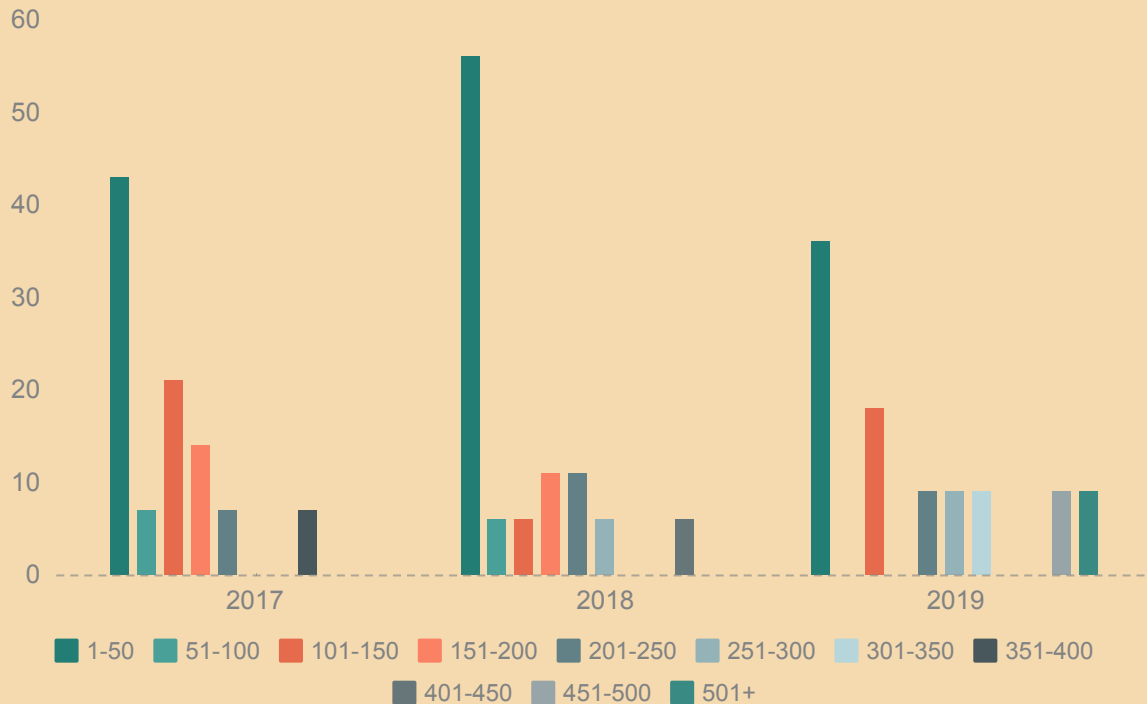
It is also interesting to note that only 9% of counsellors are qualified to work with children. What will happen when the Government's Mental Health Strategy comes into force?

Is your organisation interested in delivering counselling in schools under its Mental Health Strategy?

In this follow up question 67% of organisations would be interested in providing services, 11% were not interested and 22% were unable to provide them. Interestingly two organisations are already hoping to take part as they currently have counsellors in local schools and one is now considering it as the result of being asked the question in the survey. COSCA is promoting the use of fully qualified and registered counsellors in schools and pointing towards our members as suitable candidates.

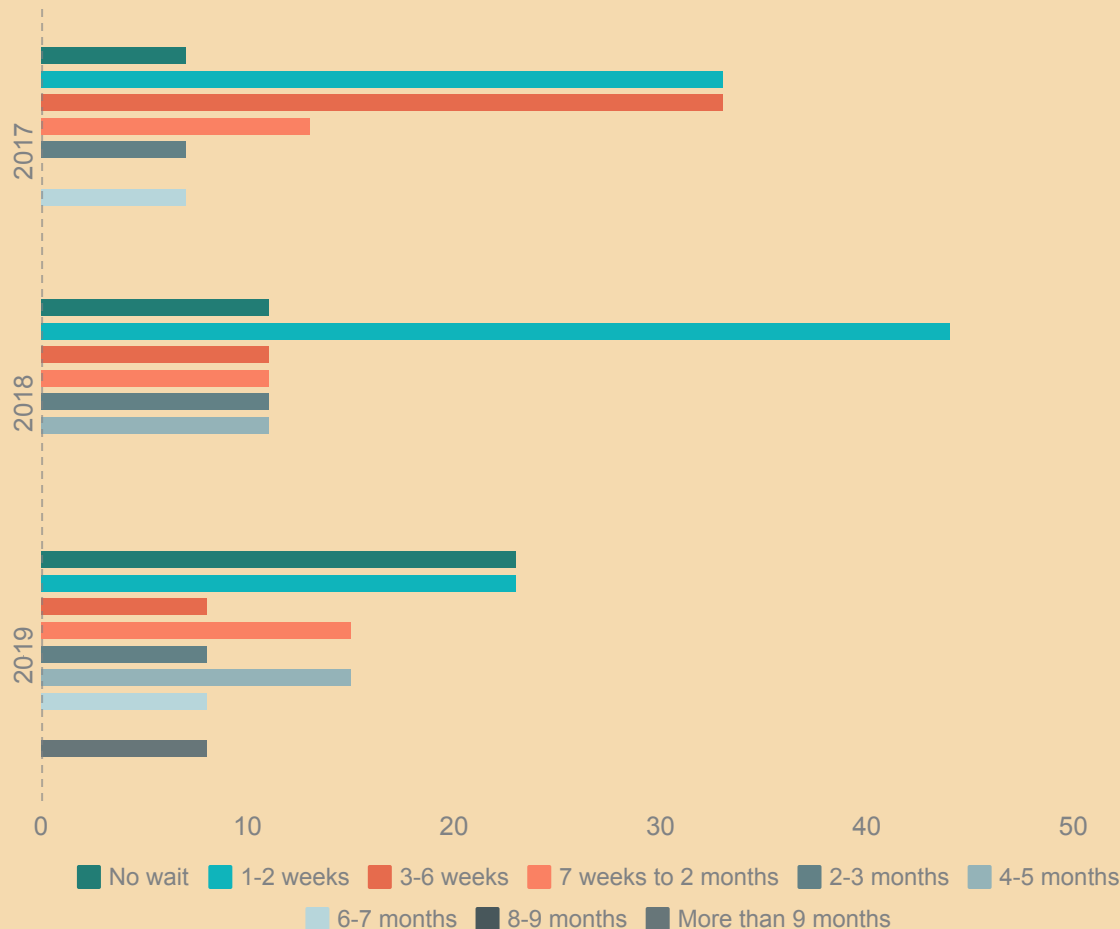


### 13. On average, how many hours of counselling per week are provided by your organisation?



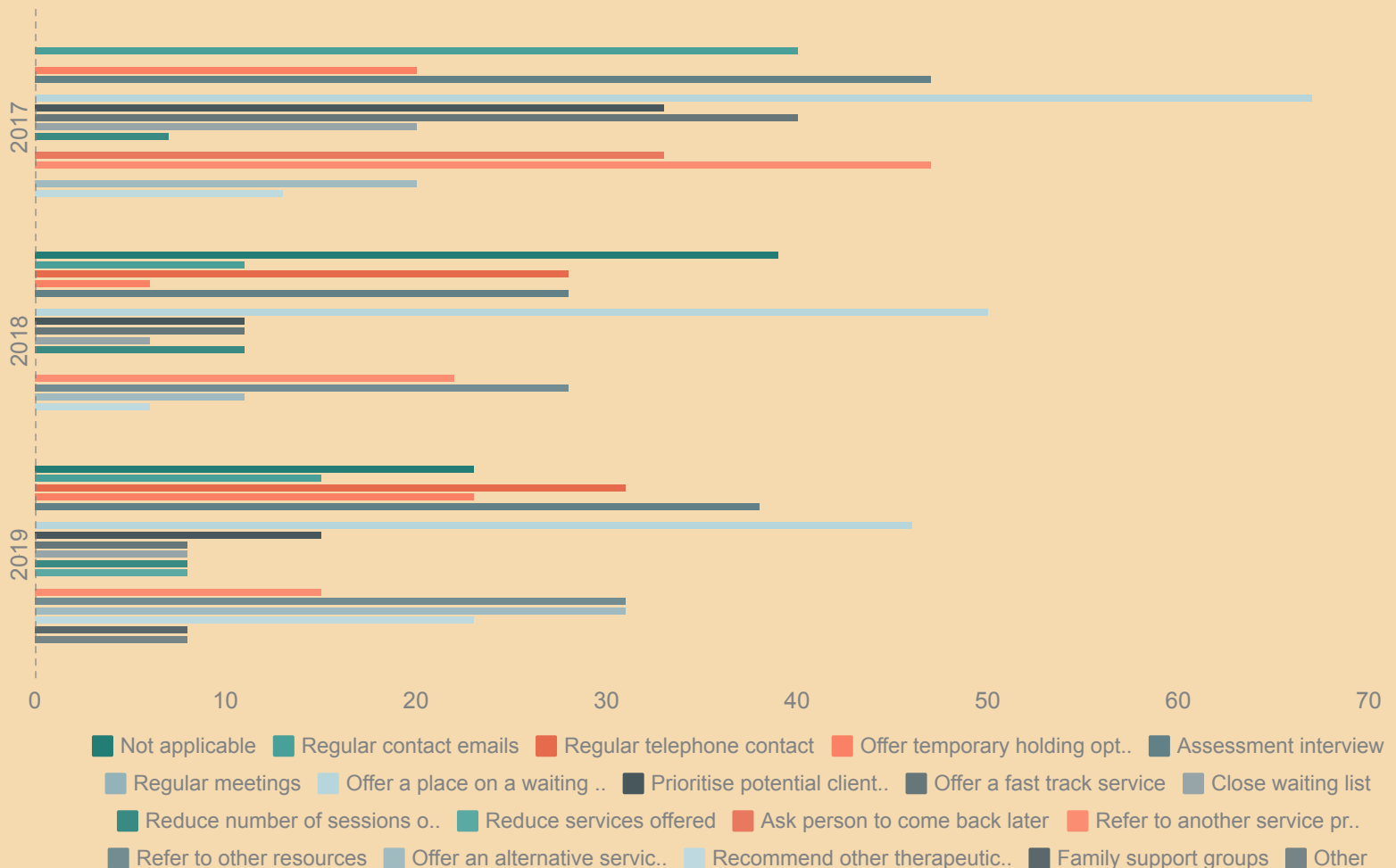
This year, again, the majority of Recognised Organisations offer from 0 to 50 counselling sessions per week (36%); although this is down from 56% last year. This year nearly half of Recognised organisations offer more than 200. This suggests a continuation in the trend of a wide range of provision. Large or small, COSCA's Recognised organisations continue to provide essential services for their communities.

## 14. How long can a client expect to wait from first contact with your organisation to the start of regular counselling?



This year sees a growth in no wait to 23% (from 11% last year) and a decrease in 1-2 weeks to the same 23% (from 44% last year). Until this year 7 months was the longest wait, but this year shows that waiting times can be up to 9 months. Is this signalling an increase in demand for COSCA Recognised Organisations? Two organisations pointed out that client availability can have a large impact on waiting lists, but this is often overlooked in discussions about waiting lists.

## 15. What are you doing to manage these waiting times?



Offering a place on a waiting list is still the most widely used measure (46%, slightly down from 50% last year and 67% the year before). Regular telephone contact (31%), assessment interview (38%), refer to other resources (31%) and offer alternative service within your organisation (31%) are also frequently used. These last two suggest that COSCA Recognised Organisations are diversifying the types of support that they offer as both are up from last year.

## 16a How many sessions are your clients offered?

In addition to last year this year's survey asked how many sessions clients are offered as this would affect the number of sessions they are able to attend. These ranged from 6 (usually with the option to extend if necessary) to open ended. 3 were open ended, but with those removed the average offered was 23.

## 16b How many sessions do your clients attend on average?

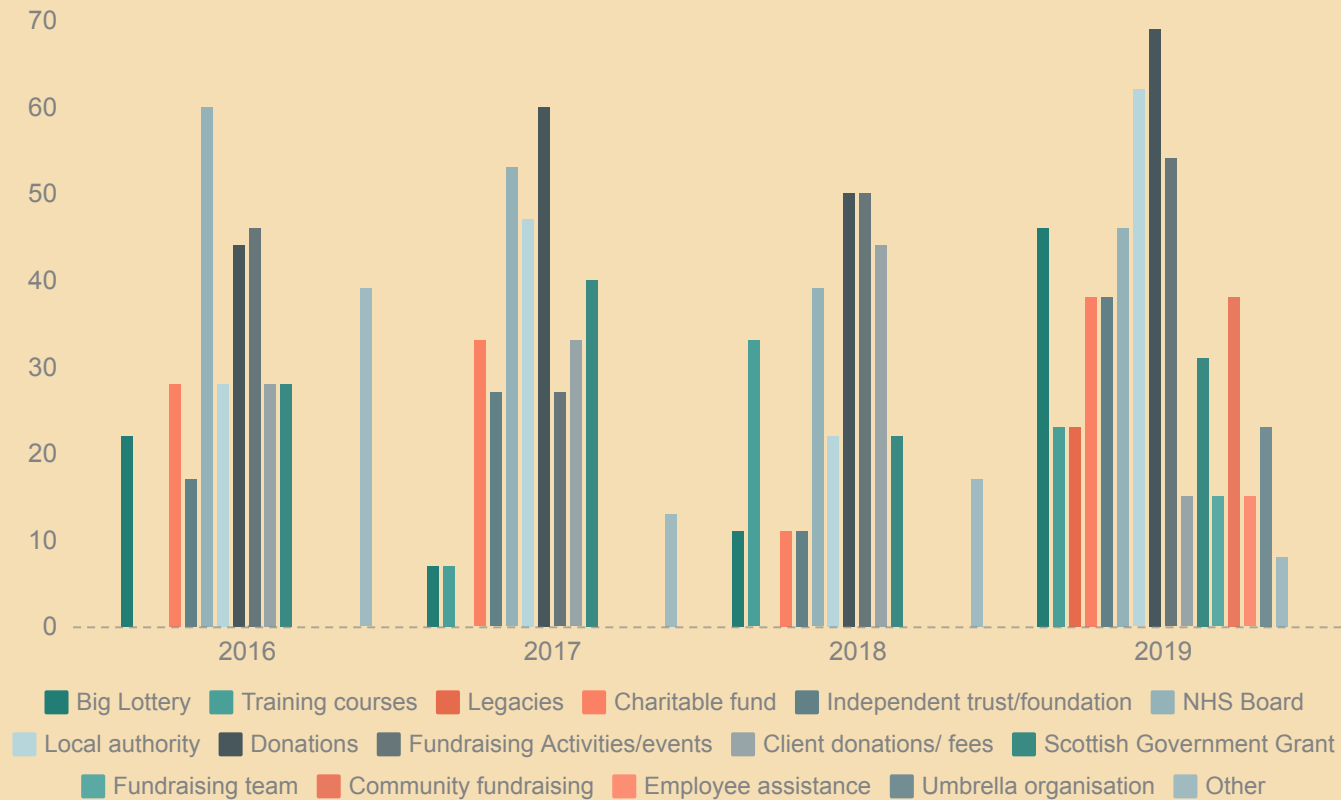
Clients attended, on average, between 1.8 and 25 sessions, with an overall average of 11 sessions, much the same as last year. This is interesting as the average number of sessions offered is 23 and the average taken up is 11. On one hand a counsellor could see one client coming for two years or nine clients could be offered 11 sessions. On the other, perhaps clients to open ended services come to as many sessions as they need, be that 1.8 or for a few years.

## 17. Has your organisation experienced an increase or decrease in demand for support over the last 12 months?



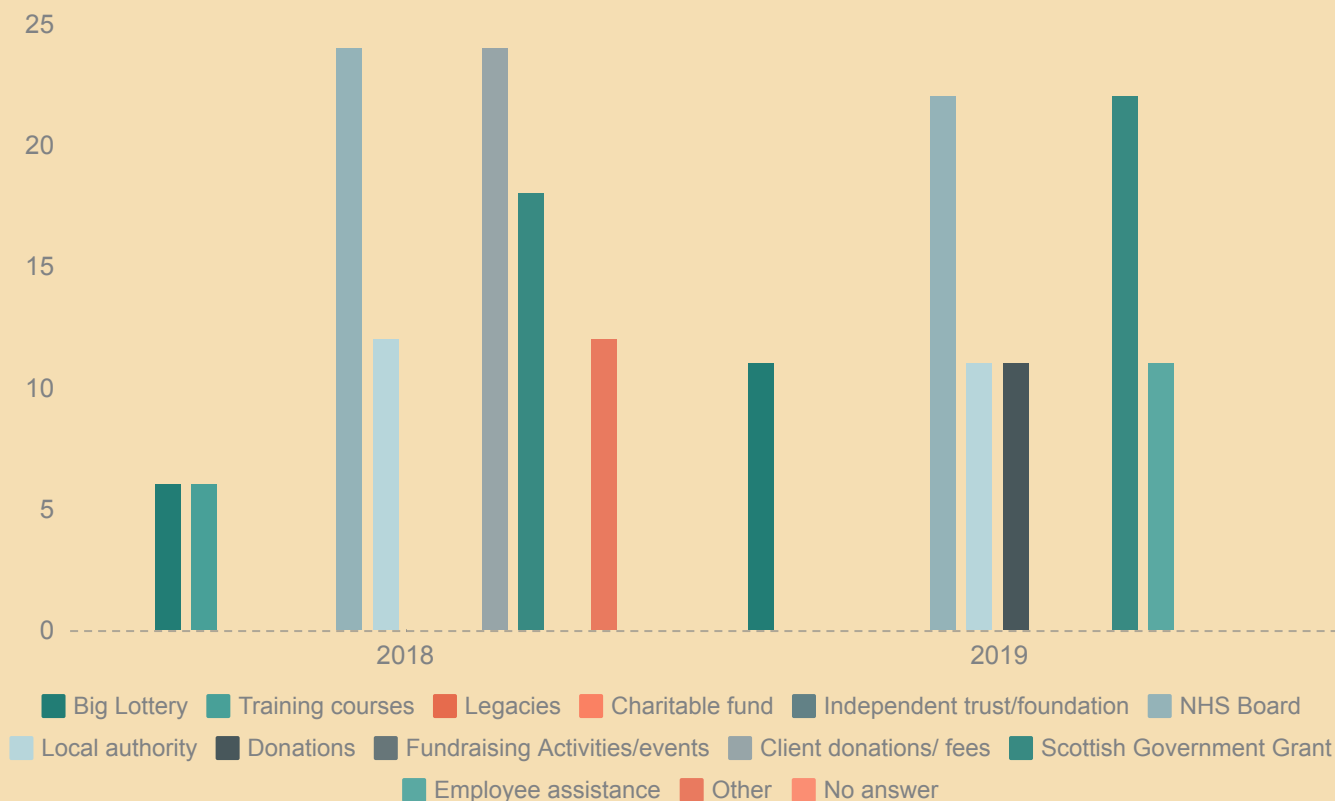
Most, 46% of COSCA's Recognised Organisations saw a medium increase in demand for their services in 2019. Only 8% saw no change and no Recognised Organisation reported a decrease. This question, coupled with the increase in waiting times (in question 14) suggests an overall increase in the number of people seeking counselling and counselling skills services. One organisation commented that they would have seen a large (as opposed to medium) increase, based on previous figures, if they had not closed their waiting list due to reduced funding.

## 18. a) In what way(s) do you generate income for your organisation?



Donations (69%) closely followed by local authority (62%) were the most utilised by our Member Organisations, with Big Lottery (46%), NHS Board (46%) and Fundraising Activities (54%) close behind. It seems that there are a diverse range of funding sources.

## 18. b) Which of those is your main source of income?



NHS Board and Scottish Government Grant were the most utilised sources of funding at 22% each. Big lottery, Local Authority, Donations and Employee Assistance were all at 11%. It seems that COSCA's Recognised Organisations are diverse in the ways that they try to generate income, but that the largest sources of income are the NHS and Scottish Government. Interestingly, last year Client donations were a significant source of income (24%), but that has not continued this year (0%).

## 19. Is there anything of which you are particularly proud to have achieved this year?

There are many things of which our Recognised Organisations are very justifiably proud.

These include:

Police cell health phones within custody suites, the ongoing development of new digital supports, The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, high levels of client and volunteer satisfaction, engaging CPD programme, generating sufficient funding to secure a future without depending on public or grant funding, Scotland wide Scottish Government contract, expanded Wellbeing Worker service in schools, successful Time to Talk campaign, continuation of intern project and hospital amputee programme, Scottish Parliament's commending of 40 years of service, Organisation of the Year Award by Fife Voluntary Action, David Thomas MSP lodging a Members Motion to commend a retiring volunteer after 18 years of service, retaining COSCA Recognition for another year, Big Lottery funding to restart their young people's bereavement service, creating new adult counselling posts due to substantial funding being offered by their local authority, cultivating a disused piece of land for use as a therapeutic space by the public, kept waiting times low and partnership working.

It seems like it has been a busy year for COSCA's Recognised Organisations with some amazing achievements; some of which have been celebrated with prestigious awards.



## 19. Have you found anything particularly helpful or inspiring in the last year?

COSCA Recognised Organisations found a lot to inspire them in the past year. The highlights include partnership and engagement working, beginning to achieve stability after a financially challenging time, commitment and dedication of volunteer counsellors, expressive wall frieze developed by their self management group, resilience of clients, dedication and loyalty of volunteers, commitment and dedication of volunteer staff, recognition through Parliament Members' debate, recognition from peers, working in partnership with the NHS to provide more cohesive care, increased "flow" within the organisation to allow clients to make use of multiple projects, truly wonderful comments from service users making them feel like they really make a difference in their lives, skills and commitment of our counselling team.

In summary, COSCA's Recognised Organisations provide amazing services for their users due, in no small part, to their excellent staff and volunteers. Some have been recognised publicly, but all are Recognised by COSCA as providing the highest levels of support to their communities.

## 20. What are your hopes for next year?

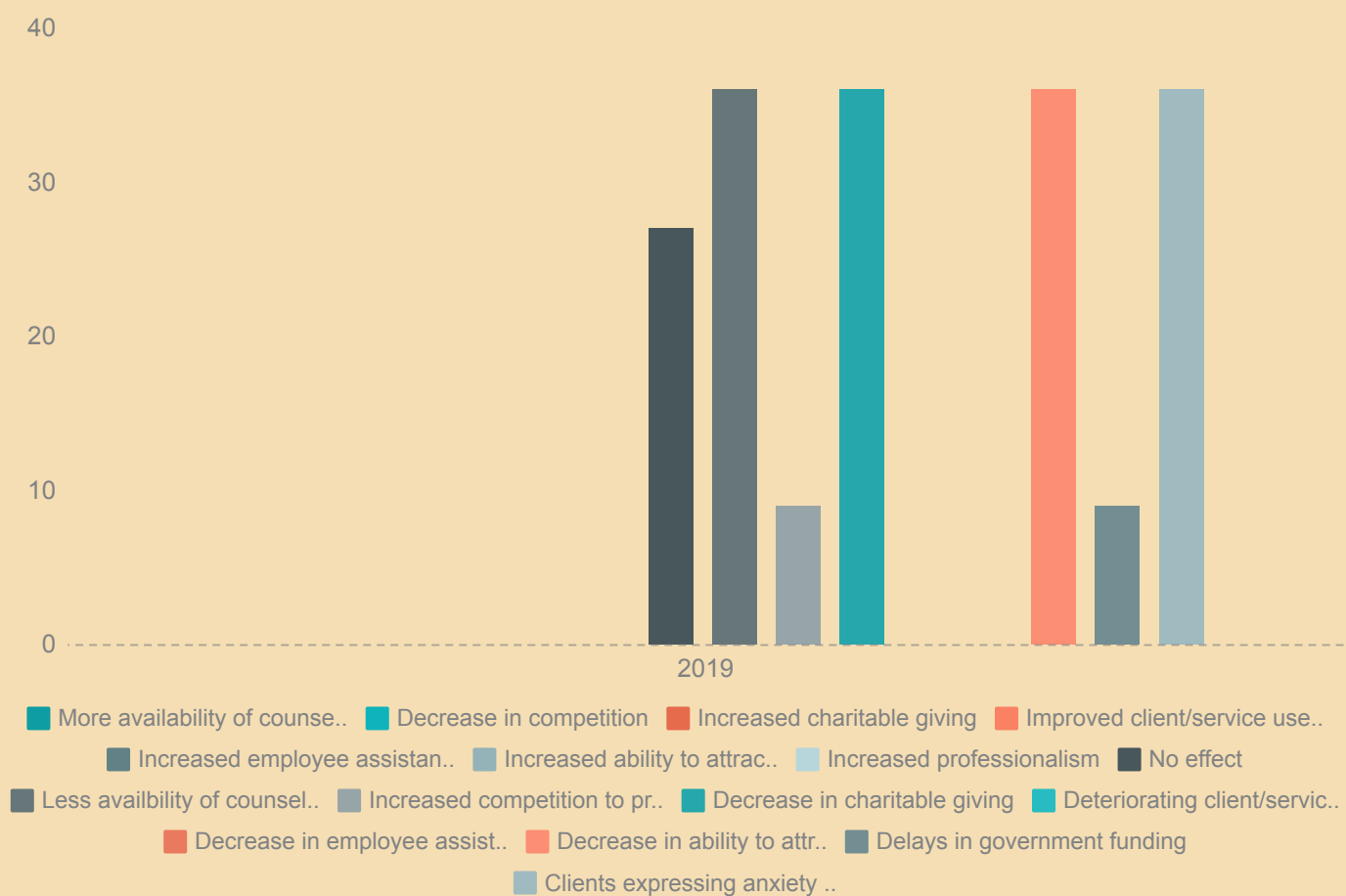
COSCA Recognised Organisations had very high hopes for the year to come. More of the above, increased staffing, continue to develop the service to engage hard to reach communities, improve financial security, to maintain high levels of service, professionalism and reputation; to decrease waiting list and increase capacity, to continue to develop innovative services whilst maintaining support, to continue to offer a high-quality core counselling service whilst developing new projects to meet identified client need, organisation consolidation after securing two new streams of funding, an improved database to streamline reporting, a commitment of more than a year of funding from their local authority so that they can employ counsellors beyond the one year term, offering a CPD programme to generate income, reduce waiting times, that we continue with our work despite challenging times, maintain current level of service whilst identifying potential future services.

COSCA Recognised Organisations hope to continue their work and to add innovative projects to their existing invaluable services where they can. COSCA will continue to support you to do this in any ways we can.

Some areas do not need to be explored every year, but are very relevant at the time. To capture and share this information COSCA ask a guest question.

Guest Question:

What effect do you think this extended process of Brexit has had on your organisation's ability to offer counselling and counselling skills services?



COSCA Recognised Organisations are already experiencing more challenging times due to the extended process of Brexit. They are reporting less availability of counsellors and counselling skills workers, decrease in charitable giving, decrease in ability to attract funding and clients expressing anxiety over Brexit (all 36%). One organisation commented that "with Brexit, and the increased demand on funds, I do worry about our future funding, or lack thereof". Another commented "the organisation has contacted individuals offering support to those likely to be affected by Brexit, particularly as it relates to citizenship and/or right to remain". Another reported "increased worry and uncertainty in non-UK EU nationals volunteering as our counsellors." And another "We are concerned what the impact on funding will be as and when the financial impact of Brexit is felt."

There is clearly a lot of anxiety about what Brexit will bring and its impact on non-UK European citizens who both work/volunteer and use our Recognised Organisation's services.

## Conclusions

This year's survey has revealed new insights and confirmed the results of previous surveys.

The wide coverage of COSCA Recognised Organisations continues, as does the provision being mostly that of counselling in the voluntary/community sector for adults. This is the first year that the survey has asked about the range of services offered and three fifths of those offered a variety of complimentary services. If it is possible, the effect these complimentary services have on the provision of counselling and counselling skills could be an area to explore.

There is still an even mix of specialist and generic services being offered by COSCA Recognised Organisations. Most of these services offer face to face contact, but they also seem to be offering additional telephone contact. The use of technologies for counselling and counselling skills seems slow to grow. Is this the nature of the work or is this something that will change dramatically in the future?

There was a small increase in the number of organisations collecting data on non-binary gender. This is something that COSCA would encourage everyone to collect so that accessibility can be assessed.

A similar picture arose with ethnicity data with only 3 of the 13 organisations that responded able to provide any data. Every client has the right to decline to answer, but we need to be asking the questions so that we can make our services as inclusive as they can possibly be.

In other respects COSCA Recognised Organisations are collecting a great deal of data, using a variety of different methods and measures.

This data collection is not just to impress funders, but also for organisations to be able to see their own impact on the communities they serve.

It is not just the clients and service users that benefit from the counselling and counselling skills provision. As Mike Moss pointed out at COSCA's 2019 AGM it is a relationship. The counsellor or counselling skills user also has the opportunity to grow and develop. It is interesting then that staff and volunteer satisfaction are still so low in the outcomes question. Is this not happening, not important, or is it (more likely) that this is not data that COSCA Recognised Organisations collect and so are missing this?

Reliable, established services are essential for good counselling and counselling skills provision, but some Organisations are saying that funding is much easier when they have brand new, exciting ideas to try. COSCA is working to promote existing, effective service provision. Most recently, this can be seen in COSCA's promotion of our Member Organisations to fulfil the Government's Mental Health Strategy.

It looks like COSCA's Recognised Organisations are doing an amazing job despite both the current economic circumstances for themselves and the lack of other services nearby. This is not to say that practicalities like irregular client attendance don't also have an effect on waiting times. Hopefully the money being invested in the Mental Health Strategy will reach many of the 67% that would be interested in delivering services.

The wide range of services continues from the larger offering over 500 hours a week to those offering up to 50. COSCA is proud to promote Recognised Organisations of any size as we can see the huge amount of difference that they are making to their communities.

Waiting lists are becoming more of an issue. An increase in demand, as can be seen in question 17, is creating more strain on services. COSCA knows that Recognised Organisations are doing everything that they can to reduce waiting times and also appreciate that there is a limited amount that can be done. It is also interesting to note that offering more sessions does not seem to increase the number of sessions on average taken up by clients and service users.

Income is still generated mostly by the NHS and Scottish Government Grant, but it looks as though there is more of a trend towards diversification. COSCA Recognised Organisations seem to be trying to make up shortfalls in funding by diversifying their sources.

The guest question made for pretty a pretty bleak outlook. COSCA's Recognised Organisations are worried about what new challenges Brexit will bring. Will they be able to attract enough counsellors and counselling skills workers when those from other EU countries might not feel welcome? Will funding become even more difficult to come by? Will people be less likely to make donations when they feel more uncertain themselves?

However, this has also been a good year for COSCA's Recognised Organisations. There have been new contracts, new projects, a number of awards. Recognised Organisations are having victories in service provision and these victories are being noticed.

There is also much that inspires COSCA's Recognised Organisations. Among these are working in partnership both within and without their organisations. Their excellent staff and volunteers, but also their clients really make them feel like they are making a difference.

I felt during the survey that COSCA's Recognised Organisations are justifiably proud of their achievements, but are constantly looking for ways to improve; be that by reducing waiting lists, diversifying funding or looking for new ways of working with and additional services that they can offer their clients. That unwillingness to sit back and rest on past achievements is what I find most inspiring about COSCA's Recognised Organisations.

This has been a hard year with fears for the future, but also one full of hope for COSCA's Recognised Organisations. Funding is tight, but that is not stopping them from achieving great things.

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