

# **SOCIAL ACTION IN MANCHESTER DIOCESE**

## **Statistics for Mission 2017**



**November 2018**



## Social action survey

In 2017 a one off section in Statistics for Mission asked churches across the Church of England about social action and community outreach in relation to nine project types from youth work to foodbanks (see Box 1). Churches were asked whether they ran projects, hosted them, worked in partnership with other organisations, or supported projects in other ways (e.g. through donations and volunteers). They were also asked about other forms of social and community activity in which they were involved.

The 2017 survey amounts to the largest to date of the extent of the Church of England's work with some of the most vulnerable in society (Church of England 2018). It found that:

- more than 33,000 social action projects - from breakfast clubs to debt counselling - are run or supported by churches.
- 80 per cent of congregations are involved in one or more forms of social action.
- 60 per cent are involved in either running or supporting food banks through volunteers, donations and providing venues.

This report presents the survey findings for Manchester Diocese. To enable comparison with the findings for the Church of England, the data are presented as closely as possible to the national report.<sup>1</sup> The analysis also draws upon a Church Army report based on the survey returns for Liverpool Diocese (Church Army's Research Unit 2018), particularly the categories developed to group responses within the "other community" category.

### **Box 1 - Project Areas**

*Community café*

*Food bank*

*Holiday / breakfast / after school clubs for children*

*Lunch club or drop in*

*Money matters and debt advice*

*Night shelter or other homelessness provision*

*Parent / carer and toddler group or play group*

*Pastoral provision for the wider community (e.g. Street Pastors, counselling / support, befriending schemes)*

*Youth work (for the wider community)*

*Other community activity (please specify)*

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<sup>1</sup> I am grateful for the assistance of Dr Ken Eames from the Church of England Research and Statistics Unit.

## Social action projects

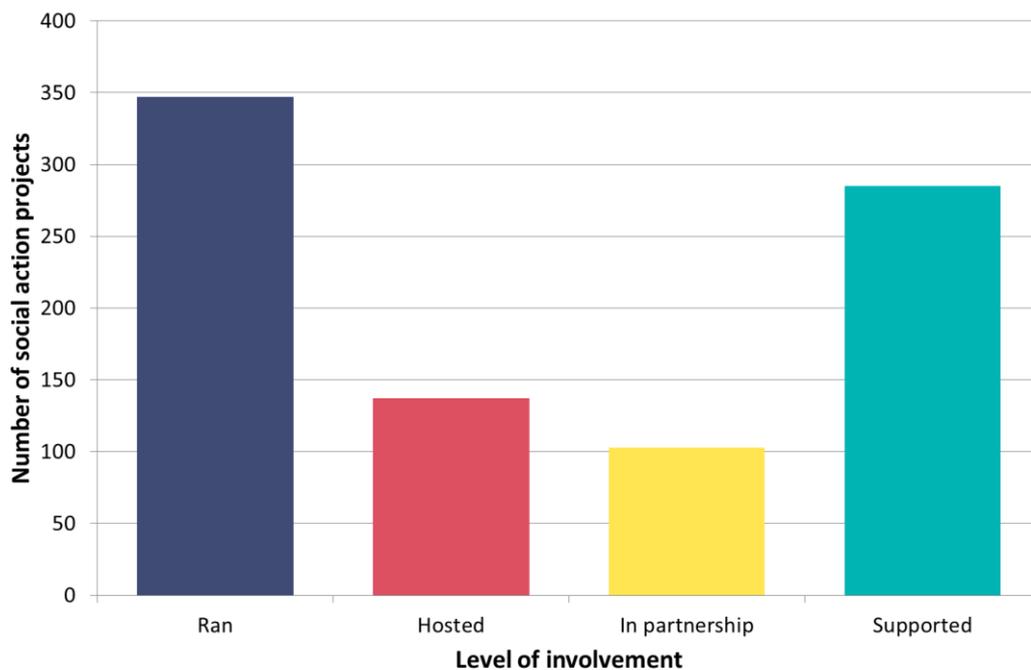
The 2017 survey identified 872 projects run, hosted, developed in partnership or supported by Manchester churches.

Figure 1 shows that 347 projects were run by churches. In addition to running projects themselves, churches hosted another 137 projects; a further 103 projects were carried out in partnership with other organisations; an additional 285 projects were supported by churches in other ways.

45 churches reported that they ran more three or more projects. Together these churches account for nearly half (47%) of the total. Nine churches each ran five or more projects.

In keeping with the findings for the Church of England fewer projects were hosted by churches or delivered in partnership. Manchester projects were more likely to be hosted by churches, whereas across the Church of England projects were more likely to be delivered in partnership. 285 projects were supported in other ways.

**Figure 1 – Number of social action projects in which churches were involved, 2017<sup>2</sup>**



*Note: Figure 1 is based on 300 responses.*

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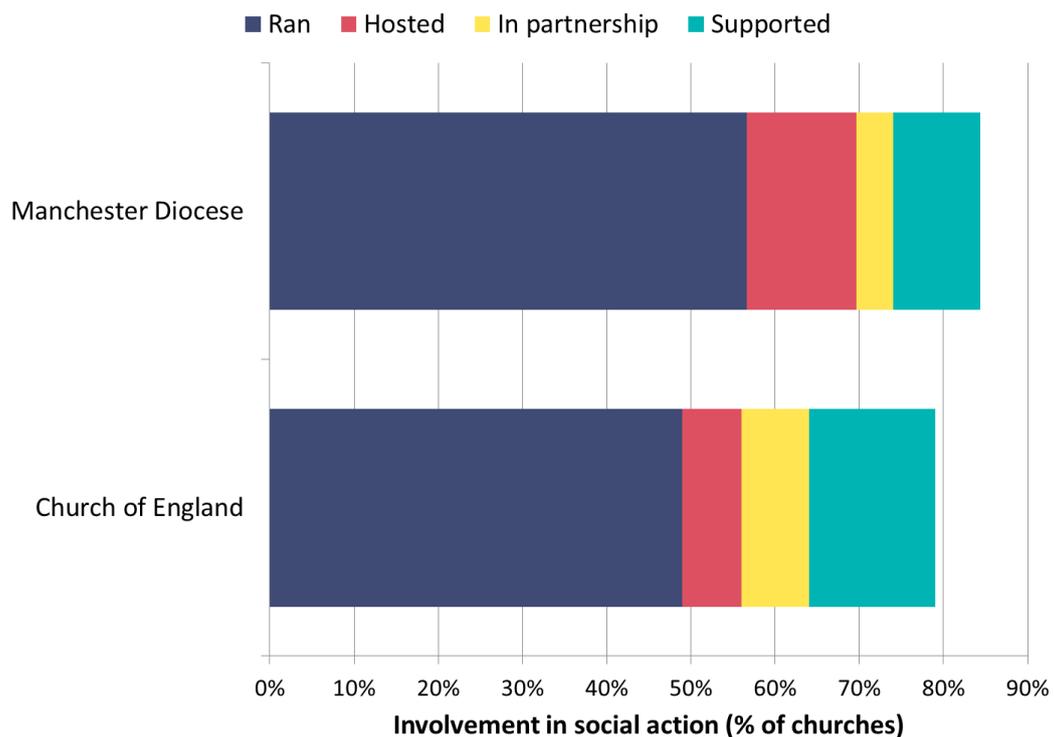
<sup>2</sup> Churches may be involved in projects in multiple ways, for example running, hosting and providing volunteers. To minimise double counting, the Church of England Research and Statistics Unit treats types of involvement hierarchically so that the red bar in Figure 1 represents churches that did not run but hosted a project.

## Church involvement in social action

84% (253) of Manchester churches were involved at different levels across a range of social action projects, higher than the national figure.

Figure 2 shows that 57% (170) of churches ran at least one project. An additional 13% (39) hosted at least one project; an additional 4% (17) worked in partnership on at least one project; and an additional 10% (31) supported one or more projects in other ways.

**Figure 2 – Percentage of churches involved in social action projects, 2017<sup>3</sup>**



*Note: Figure 2 is based on 300 responses for Manchester Diocese and 12,927 responses for the Church of England.*

<sup>3</sup> Churches may be involved in projects in multiple ways, for example running, hosting and providing volunteers. To minimise double counting, the Church of England Research and Statistics Unit treats types of involvement hierarchically so that the red bar in Figure 2 represents churches that did not run but hosted a project.

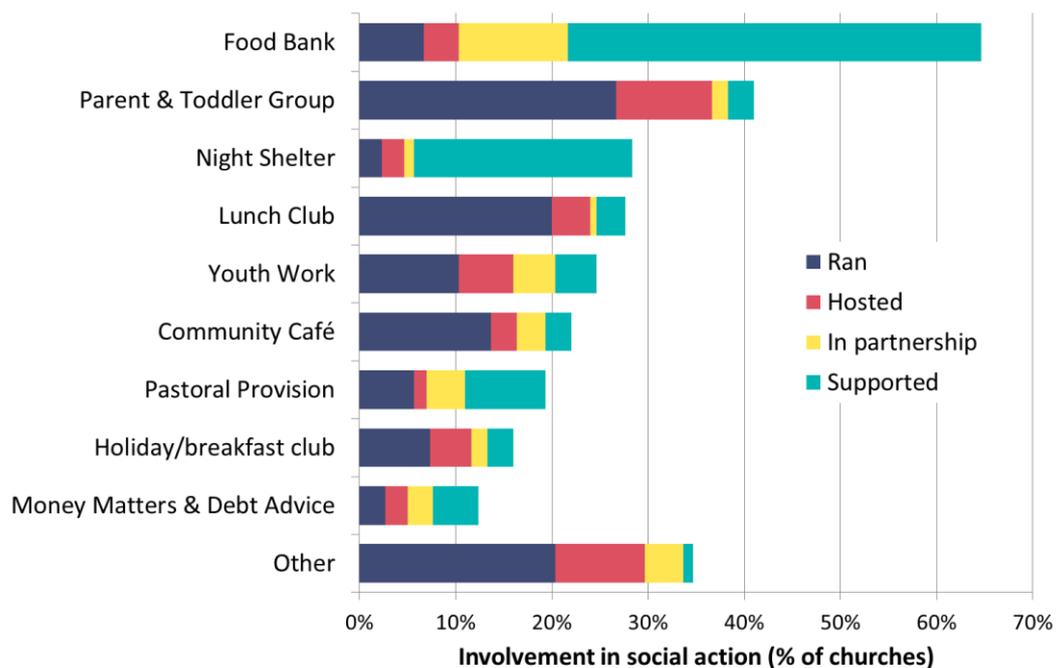
## Church involvement by project type

Manchester churches were involved in all nine specified project types. Figure 3 shows that involvement was highest with food banks (65%) followed by parent and toddler groups (41%). Night shelters and homelessness provision (28%) ranked third.

Figure 3 also reveals differences by level of involvement. It shows that Manchester churches are:

- most likely to **run** parent and toddler groups (27%) and lunch clubs (20%).
- most likely to **host** but not run parent and toddler groups (10%) and youth work within the community (6%).
- most likely to **do in partnership** but not run or host food banks (11%) and youth work (4%).
- most likely to **support** but not run, host or do in partnership food banks (43%) and night shelters (23%).

**Figure 3 – Percentage of churches involved in different types of social action projects, 2017<sup>4</sup>**



*Note: Figure 3 is based on 300 responses.*

<sup>4</sup> Churches may be involved in projects in multiple ways, for example running, hosting and providing volunteers. To minimise double counting, the Church of England Research and Statistics Unit treats types of involvement hierarchically so that the red bar in Figure 3 represents churches that did not run but hosted a project.

Table 1 ranks the nine project types in Manchester and the Church of England by the percentage of churches involved at all levels. The first and second ranked project types in each case are food banks and parent and toddler groups. The Church Army’s Research Unit (2018) reports that both types are also first and second ranked in Liverpool, another urban diocese with high levels of social deprivation.

Night shelters are ranked third in order of priority, noticeably higher than the rank not only for the Church of England (7<sup>th</sup> of 9) but also for Liverpool Diocese (8<sup>th</sup> of 9). 28% of churches are involved with night shelters compared with 18% nationally, the most marked difference between involvement in Manchester and across the Church of England. This activity has a “reach” far beyond the relatively small numbers running or hosting projects: Figure 3 shows that more than one in four Manchester churches supported night shelters in different ways. The priority given to this project type undoubtedly reflects the work of the Greater Manchester Winter Night Shelter.<sup>5</sup>

The lowest ranked project type in Manchester and across the Church of England is money matters and debt advice. Yet in Liverpool Diocese, where activity has been promoted and resourced, this project type is ranked higher (6<sup>th</sup> out of 9). This, together with the impact of night shelters in Manchester, suggests that investment in an area of social action can have a real impact even over a relatively short period.

**Table 1 - Project areas ranked by percentage of churches involved, 2017**

	Project areas ranked by % churches involved (where 1 = highest and 9 = lowest)	
	Manchester Diocese	Church of England
Community Café	6 (22%)	5 (22%)
Food Bank	1 (65%)	1 (61%)
Holiday/breakfast club	8 (16%)	8 (17%)
Lunch Club	4 (28%)	3 (26%)
Money Matters & Debt Advice	9 (12%)	9 (8%)
Night Shelter	3 (28%)	7 (18%)
Parent & Toddler Group	2 (41%)	2 (32%)
Pastoral Provision	7 (19%)	4 (23%)
Youth Work	5 (25%)	6 (19%)

*Note: Table 1 is based on 300 Manchester responses and 19,927 Church of England responses.*

<sup>5</sup> At the time of the 2017 survey the Greater Manchester Winter Night Shelter had run as a pilot project in early 2016 and as a full project over Winter 2016/17.

## Other church involvement

In addition to the nine specified project areas, the survey also asked churches about their involvement in other areas of social action. Figure 3 shows that 35% responded: 20% ran other social action projects; an additional 9% hosted projects; an additional 4% worked in partnership; and an additional 1% supported in other ways.

127 churches submitted responses to an open question about activities not captured by the nine categories discussed in the previous section. The majority of respondents submitted more than one activity.

The analysis of write in responses is an exercise not amenable to quantification: “Neonatal Knitters”, for example, is a craft-based activity but might also provide social support to the knitters as well as a service to recipients. To analyse the data this report therefore draws upon the eight categories developed by the Church Army’s Research Unit (2018) to group the diverse activities reported by Liverpool Diocese:

- Social and support groups
- Uniformed organisations (e.g. Scouts/Brownies)
- Community-related meetings
- Crafts-based activities
- Performing arts, social and community events
- Support for people with addictions
- Engagement with refugees and asylum seekers
- Activities which support the disabled, elderly or unemployed.

The majority of Manchester responses are covered by these categories, and there is good representation of activity in every category. Some categories might be expanded to include new groups, for example support for vulnerable women and the victims of human trafficking featured in the Manchester responses. There are also clusters of activities associated with health, sport and fitness and with education.

A number of churches listed prayer and worship as part of their social action, suggesting a cross-fertilisation in practice between areas often viewed as separate. Some ran fresh expressions of church, such as Café Church, Messy Church and “experience” events at Christmas and Easter, which had a clear outreach dimension. Others organised worship at venues outside the church, for example in care homes or schools, and for specific groups in the community such as children with special needs. In addition, churches – sometimes with ecumenical partners - offered prayer, services and quiet spaces as their distinctive contribution to community events and local festivals such as Whit Friday.

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## References

Church Army's Research Unit, (2018). *A bigger difference: social action and church growth in the Diocese of Liverpool*. [online] Available at: [https://churcharmy.org/Articles/532825/What we do/Research Unit/A Bigger Difference.aspx](https://churcharmy.org/Articles/532825/What_we_do/Research_Unit/A_Bigger_Difference.aspx) [Accessed 17 November 2018].

Church of England, (2018). *Full extent of Church of England work to support local communities revealed*. [online] Available at: <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/full-extent-church-england-work-support-local-communities-revealed> [Accessed 5 November 2018].

Church of England Research and Statistics, (2018). *Statistics for Mission 2017. Social Action*. [online] Available at: <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/policy-and-thinking/research-and-statistics> [Accessed 5 November 2018].