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Confederation
of School Trusts

CST National Survey 2024

Deep Dive

Public Benefit and Civic Duty

November 2024

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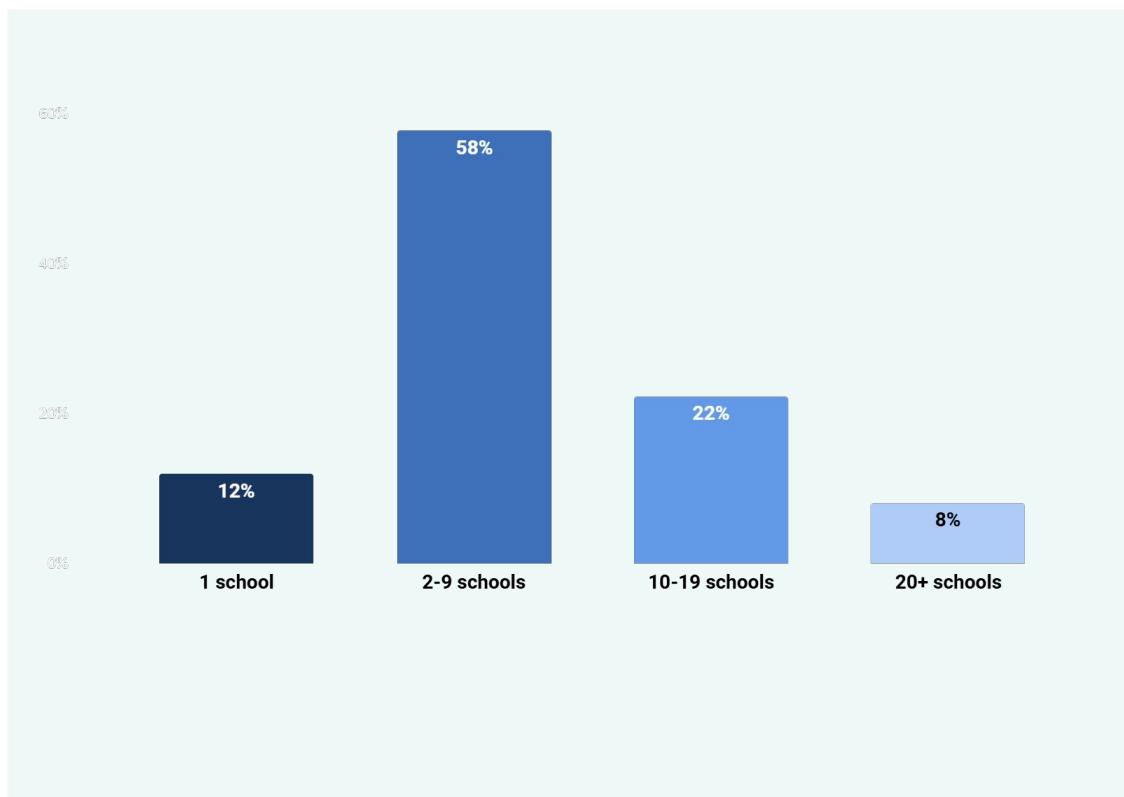
Research Methodology

Feedback from 417 Trusts

In June-July of 2024, the survey was answered by 417 trust accounting officers (the senior leader directly responsible to Parliament for their trust, usually the CEO) across England.

The survey covered trusts of all sizes, from trusts with single academies to running dozens of schools, making it a representative sample of school trusts across the sector.

Feedback was focused on trust experience and priorities for the 2024/25 academic year.



Survey designed around the CST's Strong trust framework

The design of the survey is informed by CST's Building Strong Trusts framework and explores accounting officers' priorities and challenges across the various elements of trust leadership.



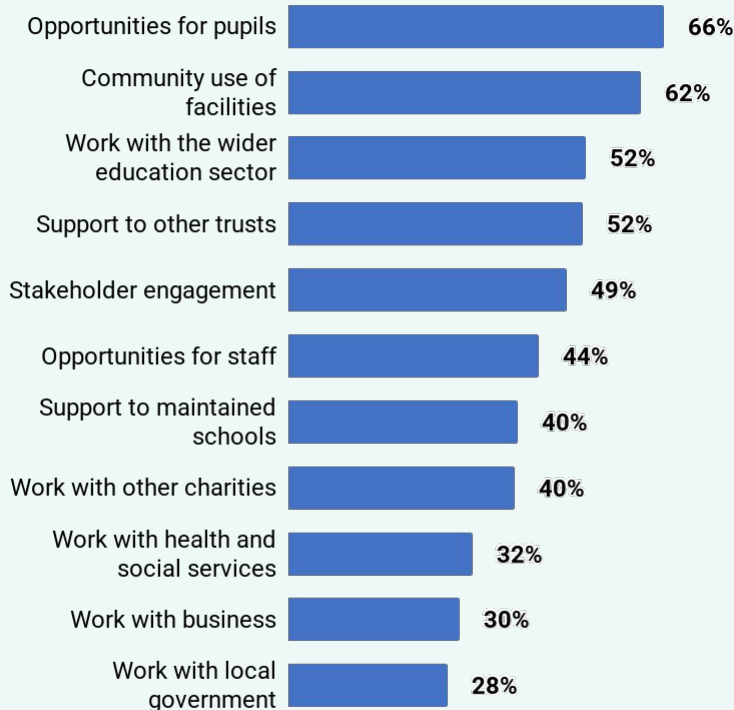
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Priorities

In which areas does your trust intend to focus its efforts regarding public benefit and civic duty in the next academic year?

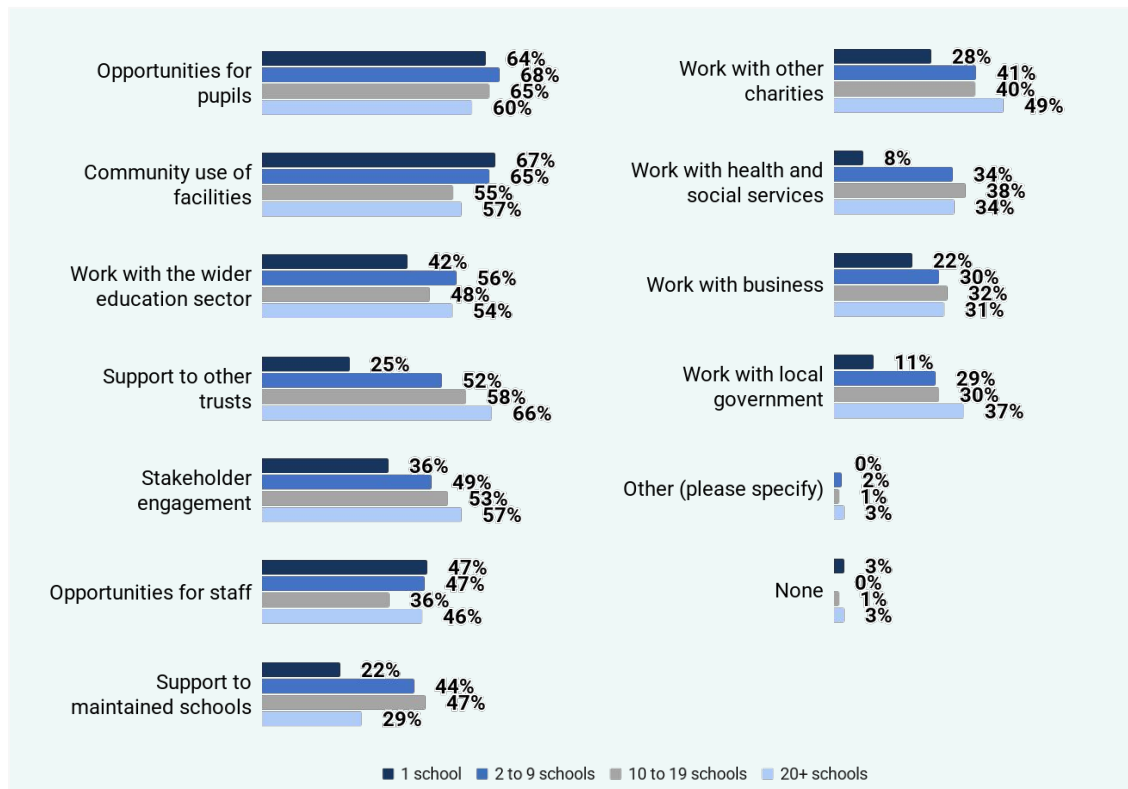


66% of CEOs plan to focus their trust efforts on providing opportunities for pupils, with 62% of CEOs also saying they plan to focus their efforts on improving community use of facilities.

Following these two areas, trusts' responses demonstrate a commitment to the wider sector, with more than half of CEOs stating that their trust is interested in working with the wider education sector and other trusts.

In which areas does your trust intend to focus its efforts on school improvement in the next academic year?

By trust size



- There is a slight difference in how civic impact tends to be viewed depending on trust size.
- Larger trusts are able to spend more of their effort on providing external support to other trusts as well as work with other charities, local government and businesses.
- Smaller trusts are slightly more likely to focus on opportunities for pupils and staff and use of facilities.
- Stakeholder engagement is also an area where the ability to focus on it increases with the growing trust size and operational capacity.

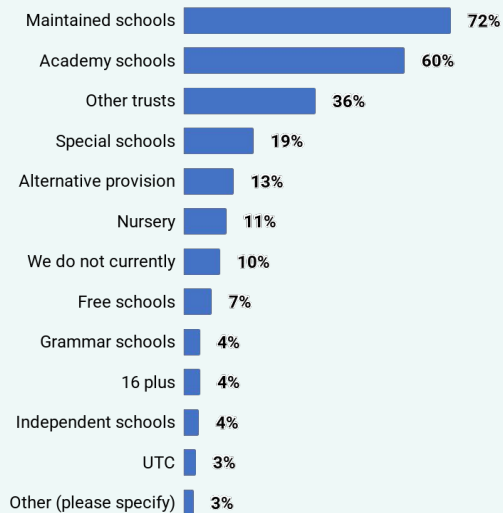
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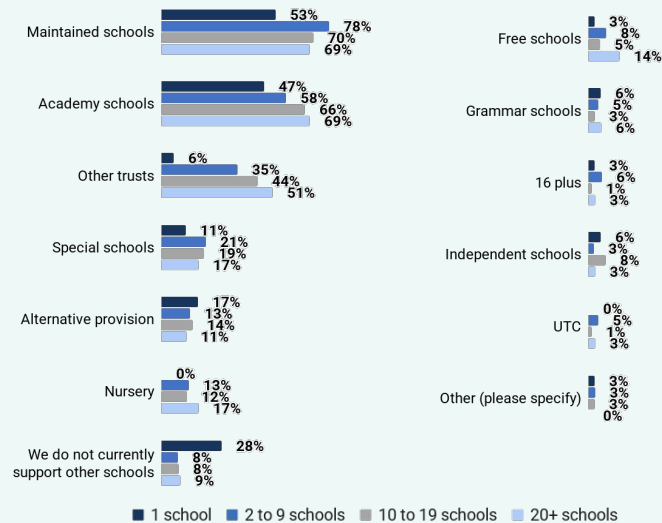
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External Organisations

What education organisations outside of your trust do you currently support?

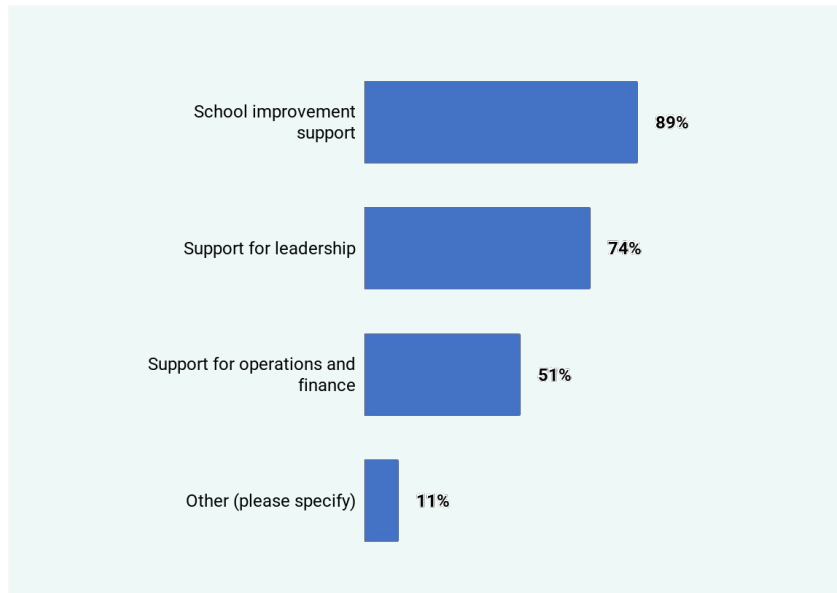


By trust size

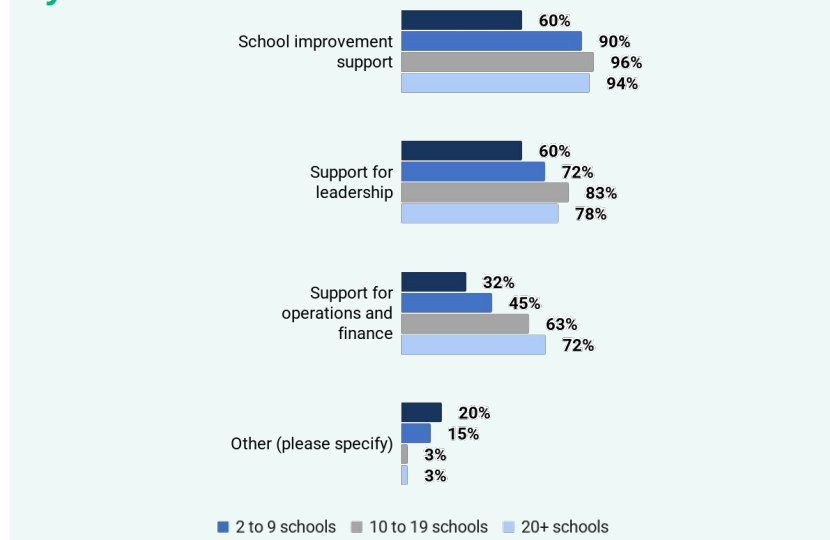


72% of CEOs reported that they support maintained schools, 60% said they support academy schools outside of their trust, and 36% support other trusts. These answers show a considerable increase in support to other organisations compared to 2023, with a particular increase in trusts supporting other trusts.

What types of support do you offer?



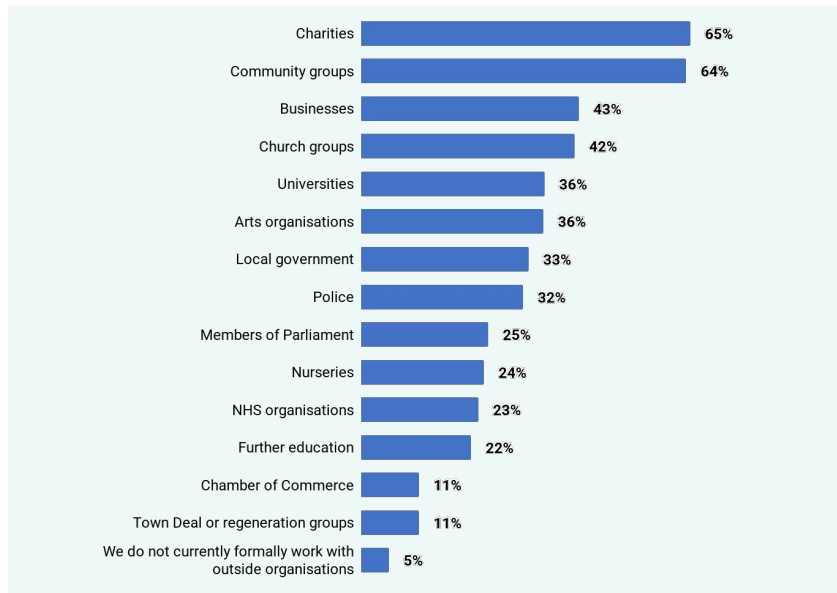
By trust size



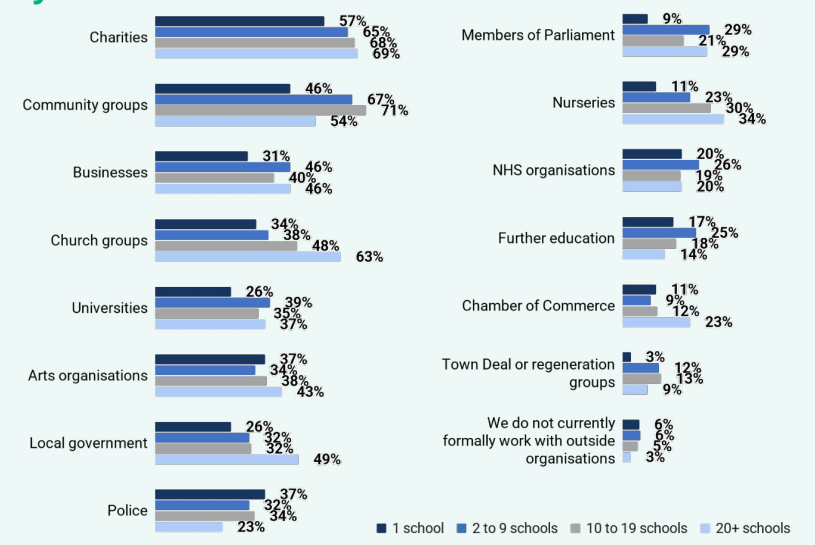
89% of CEOs reported that their trust offers School improvement support to education organisations outside of their trust. 74% reported that they offer support for leadership and a further 51% offer support for operations and finance.

Larger trusts were more likely to offer support for operations and finance to education organisations outside of their trust compared to smaller trusts.

What types of external organisations do you work with for civic impact?



By trust size



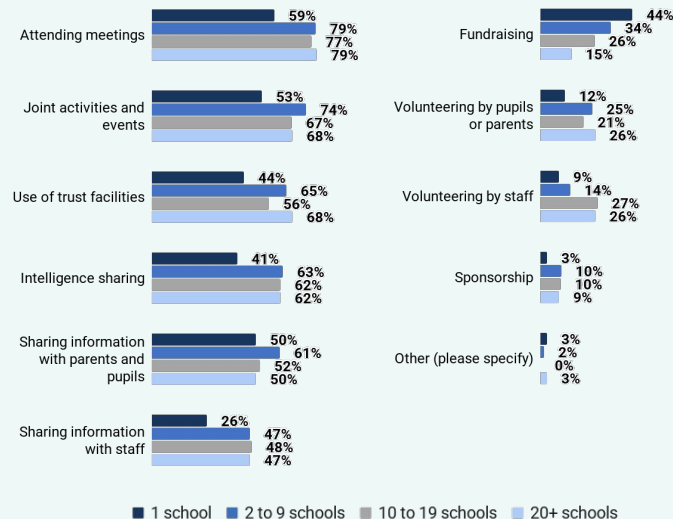
65% of trusts report working with charities and 64% of trusts report working with community groups. These were the 2 most commonly reported external organisations that trusts work with for civic impact.

Larger trusts were more likely to report working with church groups, local government and nurseries compared to smaller trusts.

What types of support do you offer to these external organisations?



By trust size



The most common types of support that CEOs report offering external organisations they work with for civic impact are; attending meetings (76%) and Joint activities and events (70%). 61% of trusts allow external organisations to use their facilities and 60% reported sharing intelligence with these external organisations.

Smaller trusts were far more likely to offer support fundraising to external organisations they were working with for civic impact.

Can you share examples of successful civic partnerships for your trust?

Examples of successful civic partnerships:

- ◆ “Partnerships on curriculum and work with the police (e.g. Pol-ED). Successful business partnerships to provide resources for our learners, breakfasts, educational equipment, beds & white goods for families, funding for ski trips and educational activities. As well as curriculum enrichment, and collaborative projects with high-performing businesses that lead to mentoring, apprenticeships etc for our young people.”
- ◆ “An Intergenerational project bringing elderly care home residents into routine contact/ relational engagement with nursery pupils. Charity and business sponsorship of our enhanced provision facilities for pupils with SEND. Secondment of staff to work within leadership teams for another academy, a maintained school, for research with EEF and for the local authority school improvement advisory team.”
- ◆ “Working alongside further education on workforce requirements for the profession. Piloting the apprentice route to teaching. Engaging in local community groups and Charities. Running functional skills classes in partnership with local providers. Partnership with major regeneration charity in locality. Hosting students from the local population for work experience, and providing community kitchen facilities for the local families.”

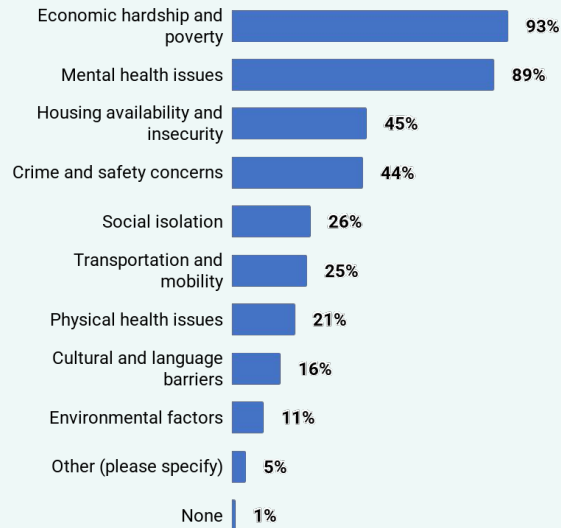
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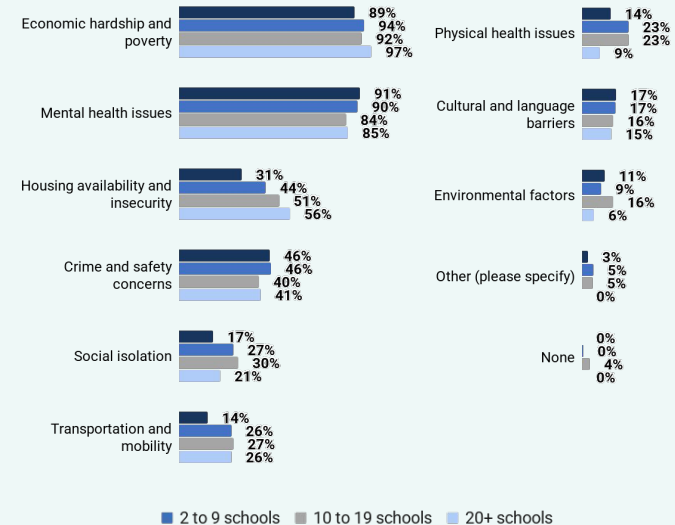
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Families

What are the main external factors putting pressure on your children, families and communities?



By trust size



Nearly all CEOs say that their communities are influenced by economic hardship and poverty, as well as mental health issues. Additionally, about half of trust CEOs report housing issues and crime as important factors.

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Conclusion

Leora Cruddas CBE, Chief Executive, CST



School trusts are sometimes the last public institution left standing in their community, and pupils and parents look for support in many ways. No one wants to walk away from a child in need, but to be truly effective we need to work

in partnership with central and local government, with charities, and with business to support families. There are many models for this, and it is great to see trusts innovating and improving their communities.

This year saw school trusts become the operators of the majority of schools in England for the first time. This is in no small part to the enthusiasm with which trusts reach outside of their own organisations to support maintained schools and fellow trusts.

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