

Methodology used in our Members' survey 2009 and definition of community anchor

The findings of the Community Alliance survey, carried out between July and November 2008, are based on responses from 626 community anchors (or emerging community anchors) across the UK – 43 per cent of all community anchors within the Community Alliance at the time.

This is statistically significant response rate which provides a solid base for comparing data in future years. This year we have focused on painting a broad picture of what community anchors do, how they do it and who they do it with.

Based on the data we received we have estimated combined income, earned income and asset values for the whole membership of the Community Alliance. In creating these estimates we have made sure that overall results were not distorted by individual results of a community anchor with particularly large assets, income or earned income. We have also aggregated estimated totals from each of the three networks rather than extrapolate from joint data.

The overall results are therefore conservative estimates and are more likely to 'understate' the reality by a small margin rather than overstate it.

What we mean by a community anchor

Community anchors are what we call 'multi-purpose' – they provide a range of affordable and accessible activities, services and facilities, which are as varied as the communities they serve. For us a defining feature of a community anchor is that it is based in a building that is either managed or owned by the community. This provides community anchors with the capacity to respond directly to local needs.

Community anchors can also bring about meaningful community engagement through the dialogue that they have with individuals and groups in their neighbourhoods and the spaces that they provide for communities to meet and organise. From this basis they are able to represent the views of local communities to the people that make decisions about what happens in that community, such as local authorities or Primary Care Trusts. Or they use their experience to support individuals and groups to represent themselves. This type of advocacy is a core part of anchor work.

Community anchors are there for the long term. Local people can rely on them.

Our 2008 Members' Survey was carried out with community anchors that are either established or are part way through the process of being recognised as meeting all the requirements necessary to qualify for community anchor status. The vast majority of the organisations that responded to our survey were established community anchors.

About the Community Alliance

The Community Alliance is a unique partnership of three organisations (*bassac*, Community Matters and Development Trusts Association) that all support community anchors. We have come together because we believe that working in partnership is powerful. Together we support community anchors in their advocacy work and to bring underused and disused buildings back into community ownership. We also provide practical support to help them deliver services to their communities, provide access to funding opportunities and organise networking and information sharing events.