IVAR we listen, and learn together

Powering people, partnerships and communities

A review of Hyde's contribution through grant-making, Funder Plus and social value activities

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Hyde Charitable Trust

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This report has been written by Jo Brown, Keeva Rooney and Katie Turner based on interviews, a survey and desk research carried out by the authors.

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Introduction

Context

The Hyde Foundation is the charitable arm of the Hyde Group. It comprises three distinct, but operationally interconnected, areas of work:

- **Community programmes and partnerships** – developing and implementing programmes of work, alongside community and strategic partners.
- **Hyde Charitable Trust (HCT)** – an independently registered charity that administers resident and community grants.
- **Social value** – leveraging commitments from supply-chain partners to benefit Hyde communities.

The Foundation's 2025-30 strategic plan focuses on three overarching objectives:

- 'Supporting **people** in their time of need, through improving access to and delivery of local services and provision of individual customer grants'.

'Working collaboratively with a network of long-term community and strategic **partnerships** across Hyde communities. Enabling community organisations to achieve more through tailored capacity building'.

- 'Developing a whole **place** approach in new and existing Hyde communities, by bringing together key stakeholders to tackle local priorities together and channelling resource to where it's needed'.

HCT commissioned IVAR to explore the contribution of its grant-making and Funder Plus activities. This encompassed the work of both the HCT and the wider Hyde Foundation team.

The review aimed to:

- Provide initial insights towards a better understanding of the Foundation's impact, based on the unique perspectives of various partners.
- Develop, test and refine key learning questions to enable the Foundation to explore its impact on an ongoing basis.

Our approach

This review explored how the HCT makes a difference to the organisations and communities it supports. To include a broad range of partner perspectives and to consider HCT's contribution at different levels, we took a mixed-method approach. This included:

- **A document review** to draw out statements of purpose and intent from the Trust's grants and Funder Plus offer, and to understand the Trust's internal ambitions in relation to impact.

- **In-depth interviews with 14 partners** to consider both the immediate and longer-term contributions HCT makes.
- **A focus group with the Hyde Foundation staff team** to explore their perceptions of HCT's contributions.
- **A survey** to capture insights on impact from the Trust's broader network of partners.

This report summarises the findings from the review and considers how they can inform HCT's future direction and continued approach to learning. The review draws upon qualitative and quantitative data from across the activities. It is important to note that findings are based on insights from a limited number of the Foundation's partners.

We have indicated the partner type when drawing on the qualitative data and, where possible, the quantitative data. However, due to sample sizes, we are unable to do any analysis of specific groups: non-funded community partners, strategic/sector partners, or those who have defined themselves as 'other'. Where appropriate, non-funded community partners are grouped with funded community partners.

Who we heard from

Partner type	Partner interviews/ staff focus group	Survey	Totals*
Funded community	6	31	37
Non-funded community	2	5	7
Sector/strategic	4	2	6
Supply chain	2	17	19
Other	0	1	1
Staff	12	0	12
	26	**56**	82

**People may have completed both the survey and an interview so this can only provide an indicative total.*

52 people completed the survey. Of those who responded to the survey, the majority (55%) were funded community partners. A third (30%) were supply-chain partners, 9% were non-funded community partners and 4% were strategic or sector partners.

Most survey respondents had a relationship with the Hyde Foundation for over two years: 36% had a relationship for 3-5 years and 41% for more than 5 years.

What is the length of your relationship with the Hyde Foundation?		
Length	**Number**	**Percentage**
Less than 1 year	4	7%
1-2 years	9	16%
3-5 years	20	36%
More than 5 years	23	41%
Total	**56**	**100%**

Key insights

The Hyde Foundation's added value

Key insights:

- The Foundation was consistently recognised as a **collaborative and supportive partner**.
- Relationships with staff were described as **trusting and reciprocal**, although some inconsistencies were noted.
- The Foundation plays a valued role as **a connector,** brokering relationships and opening doors to new opportunities.
- The Hyde Foundation's **local presence**, informal introductions and ability to spot potential was seen as **creating added value beyond funding**.
- The Foundation's approach is seen as **grounded and responsive to local need**. Flexibility and local tailoring were appreciated, though perceptions of the Hyde Foundation and HCT sometimes blurred with broader views of the housing association.

Direct support for communities

Partners received a wide range of grants and support from HCT. In addition to core or project-specific grants, some had received support through proactive grant-making (such as additional funds during the Covid-19 pandemic), described as timely and meaningful.

For some organisations, the funding was a lifeline that enabled them to keep their doors open. For others, it created the capacity to test new approaches or expand existing activities. These themes are explored further in later sections.

In some instances, The Hyde Foundation's support contributed to greater equity in service delivery. For example, helping them to remove financial barriers and reach people who were often excluded. One school shared how their relationship with the Foundation enabled them to make participation in additional activities free for all pupils:

> *'The biggest thing that having that access to that funding allows us to do is to make things accessible for everybody. We just have as a bottom line as a school that there is nothing that you would need to have to pay for to be able to take part.'* (Funded community partner)

Others highlighted how HCT's support allowed them to invest more in outreach, helping to engage those who were typically less likely to access services or activities.

This impact was echoed in the survey, where 88% of all respondents agreed that support from the Hyde Foundation had allowed them to deliver more activities in their local community. Among community partners specifically, this rose to 94%.

The breadth of this impact was summed up by one funded partner:

> *'Our relationship with The Hyde Foundation has had a significant and positive impact on our local community. Their support has enabled us to deliver more responsive and inclusive services, tailored to the needs of Hyde residents. Through this partnership, we've been able to increase community engagement, reduce isolation, and create more opportunities for residents to access support, build skills, and connect with one another.'* (Funded community partner)

> *Your belief in us has changed lives. I'll never forget the smile of an elderly woman who said, 'I haven't felt this seen in years.' And the man who told us, 'The doctor said I'd never walk again – look at me, I'm getting stronger. Thanks to you.' Those moments say it all. You've lit a spark that keeps growing – hope, dignity, and connection now reach places that were once quiet and forgotten. Thank you for being the heartbeat behind real change.* (Funded community partner)

Prioritising relational support

At the heart of the Foundation's contribution is the strength of its relationships. Partners consistently described a way of working that feels collaborative, human and rooted in trust. Rather than being a transactional grant-giver, the Foundation is experienced as a companion and adviser.

The Foundation staff are visible, accessible and willing to listen. Many partners mentioned specific individuals whose continued involvement makes a tangible difference:

> '[omitted] *has been phenomenal. She shows such support, not just for the work we do with Hyde but for the charity itself. We meet regularly; it is never just "here is the money, get on with it".'* (Funded community partner)

Partners spoke about a genuinely reciprocal relationship. Because trust is high, they are keen to respond to requests, yet the Foundation does not impose its presence or insist on publicity. One partner noted that, unlike some funders, the Foundation does not require photo opportunities or credit at every turn.

Even small choices reflect this ethos. For example, the decision to refer to funded organisations as community partners was recognised as symbolic of the Foundation's collaborative approach. This seemingly small shift in language was seen by one community partner as affirming their value and agency. The survey responses back up

these reflections: 95% of respondents said their relationship with the Hyde Foundation feels collaborative.

The Hyde Foundation staff echoed this ethos, emphasising the ways that time invested in building partnerships led to greater impact for communities.

At the same time, some partners noted that the strength of the relationship could depend on who their main contact at the Foundation was: *'It comes down to people'*. This highlighted the importance of ensuring that the relational approach is embedded consistently across the organisation and not solely dependent on individual staff members going the extra mile. Embedding this ethos organisationally can help avoid variation in experience and ensure continuity, even as teams or roles evolve.

Building connections, establishing partnerships and identifying opportunities

Strong relationships also position the Hyde Foundation as an effective connector. Partners described the team as often spotting shared interests, bringing people together and opening up new possibilities for collaboration. This role was mentioned frequently across interviews, focus groups and survey responses. For some partners, the strength of relationship with the Hyde Foundation and the Foundation's networks and understanding of local systems was considered just as valuable as the funding itself:

> *'She seems to go round and collect people who she knows want to work that way and then put them in touch with each other.'* (Funded community partner)

The staff team are perceived as actively creating opportunities by brokering introductions, facilitating conversations and encouraging collaboration. This is not experienced as a formal or fixed process. Instead, it is dynamic and responsive, often led by relationships, intuition and local knowledge:

> *'She's* [Hyde team member] *out networking all the time anyway, so there've been lots of groups that she's forwarded to us that would have been interesting for us to work with.'* (Funded community partner)

This opportunistic and organic approach means the team can act quickly when potential links or gaps emerge. Staff are often able to see the bigger picture, joining the dots between partners that might not otherwise connect:

> *'We're able to harness offerings from elsewhere and then channel them back out into the community in the right places. Because of those connections that we've made, we've got our ear to the ground. We know who needs what. We know where we need to go.'* (Hyde staff member)

These connections have then led to practical outcomes such as new referrals and collaborative projects. This was particularly valued by smaller organisations who may not have had easy access to larger or more formal networks.

In the partner survey, 89% of respondents said HCT had connected them with other organisations or partners. Agreement rates were higher with community partners (97% agreed) than supply-chain partners, in which 71% agreed and 24% neither agreed nor disagreed.

The Foundation has also been able to build connections between other strategic partnerships it is involved in and its community and social value partners. This includes collaboration with initiatives such as the Partnership for Young Londoners and its leadership in cross-sector spaces like the Social Value Leadership Group:

> *'We were introduced to other partners and organisations through collaborative projects.'* (Funded community partner)

Staff reflected that their role as connector builds on relational trust and local embeddedness. This was particularly important when working to connect partners at different points in their journeys, enabling new partners to learn from more established ones.

Their connector role reflects the commitment to adding value beyond funding. Partners described it as distinctive and catalytic. It builds on trust, invites collaboration and helps create the conditions for long-term impact.

Adopting approaches embedded in local communities

The Foundation's approach is grounded in a strong, local presence. Staff are seen as genuinely embedded in the communities they serve. They are not operating from a distance or applying a one-size-fits-all model. This place-based orientation allows the team to remain closely attuned to changing needs and opportunities:

> *'That local level knowledge, that knowledge of different areas is really deeply embedded and something that we recognise as like a really strong expertise and an asset to the team.'* (Hyde staff member)

Community and sector partners highlighted a pragmatic flexibility in approach. They described a willingness to adapt support to local needs, rather than following a fixed formula. This responsiveness was seen as a strength, particularly during times of challenge or change:

> *'Hyde supported our project during a difficult period of funding instability. Without this support, our service may have ceased to exist. Their understanding of the local need and value of our service was crucial.'* (Funded community partner)

This pragmatic approach was reflected in the staff focus group, where team members stated that the Foundation operates with a mindset of *'people over process'*, prioritising human needs over bureaucracy.

The Foundation staff are also known for being visible and engaged in the places they work. This helps to build trust and credibility over time. Staff reflected on the importance of listening and adapting their approach based on what they see and hear on the ground.

While one of the Foundation's strengths was the 'ability to work hyper-locally to establish partnerships', their wider geographical reach was also seen as an asset by some partners. Being able to draw from work in other areas was felt to bring fresh ideas, while keeping support rooted in the local context:

> *'I think we can all become horribly insular … but when you scratch away at it and you do proper analysis, there are places up and down the country that have much the same issue.'* (Strategic/sector partner)

This responsiveness and local credibility supports deeper collaboration with public services and community organisations. It creates opportunities for more coordinated and effective action.

At the same time, some partners did not feel as strongly that the Foundation was a visible or positive presence in their local area. In many cases, it was difficult to disentangle this perception from wider views of Hyde as a landlord and housing association, rather than a community partner. Feedback often reflected frustration from residents about building-related issues, rather than concerns about the work of the Foundation or its staff. This distinction was not always clear, highlighting the challenges that can arise when community investment is linked to a larger organisational identity.

For consideration:

- Working in a very relational way is difficult with a small team, but what are the implications for working hyper-locally and prioritising relationships if Hyde continues to grow?
- To what extent can working in a relational and responsive way be embedded within the culture and policies of the Hyde Foundation to ensure consistency of experience and reduce the dependence on individual relationships? Taking into account that taking a relational approach *'doesn't come with instructions'* and is a cultural shift and learnt behaviour.
- Exploring how more explicit agreements on ways of working could be established at an early stage with third party management/joint developers.
- To counter the difference in individuals' experience of Hyde as a housing association and their interactions with the Foundation, is there an opportunity to develop a set of values and practices that can be applied across the whole of the Hyde Group?

Creating longer-term change

Key insights:

- Funding from HCT often **enabled pilots or new ideas** that later grew or attracted other funders. Partners appreciated the space to test and learn.
- The Trust's support often **acted as a springboard**, helping organisations develop proof of concept or build credibility with other funders.
- The Hyde Foundation celebrates its partners, amplifies their work, and is often seen as **sharing power through** its language, actions and approach.
- Some partners felt their experience with the Foundation helped **build trust in housing associations** more broadly.

Enabling testing, learning and sharing

The Foundation's support was described by partners as trusting and open to new ideas**.** This approach was also reflected by Hyde staff: *'We're quite open minded and receptive to new ideas'.* Several partners shared examples of how the Foundation's willingness to embrace new ideas had given them the opportunity to test innovative approaches, respond quickly to emerging needs, or explore a concept before developing it further. This was particularly valued where funding acted as a springboard, helping to build confidence, generate early results or unlock future investment:

> *'It's allowed us to do, really, like, transformative things, try things that wouldn't necessarily we'd never have been able to afford, and you wouldn't have been able to get from before. And now I'm in a position where ... we've got another organisation to fund it, a similar pot of money'.* (Funded community partner)

One partner used short-term funding to purchase an electric minibus, the first of its kind in their fleet. It gave them the opportunity to test the model in a rural area, build internal confidence and begin sharing learning with others in the community transport sector. The experience has helped them think about how the approach could be replicated elsewhere.

Multi-year support was also seen as an important enabler. It gave organisations time to learn, adapt and demonstrate the value of their work. This, in turn, increased their chances of securing follow-on funding or refining their approach.

Some partners linked this space for experimentation to a wider culture of learning and openness. HCT's ethos and funding style were seen as aligned, encouraging partners to reflect, adapt and share learning with others. Being part of a community of funded organisations gave some the opportunity to connect, exchange ideas and learn from others doing similar work.

Building sustainable foundations

Although HCT's support is not always long-term in duration, partners often described it as playing a role in helping them build towards sustainability. Its value lay in creating the conditions for future impact by helping organisations create evidence on what works, build evidence of need and develop confidence in their approach. While partners were often in receipt of short-term grants which did not provide direct long-term stability, many had received repeated grants and had a longer-term relationship with the Hyde Foundation. This was crucial in ensuring that the Foundation's contributions supported longer-term impacts.

For some, the relationship with the Foundation helped to secure a foothold locally or to build the credibility needed to attract additional support or match funding: *'Solid backing from a corporate is very valuable'*.

One organisation described it as *'a cushion'* – the reassurance that allowed them to take on risk and gain momentum while positioning themselves for future funding:

> *'It's so much easier to go for a grant if you've already got evidence that there's a need and that it works.'* (Funded community partner)

Several partners also highlighted the Foundation's role in sharing relevant funding opportunities, signposting new connections, acting as a champion when engaging with other stakeholders, or providing additional business and strategy support. These seemingly small actions were described as making a significant difference in building resilience and enabling future planning:

> *'Hyde has given me a push and given me the drive. I already had the tools, but needed support from behind.'* (Non-funded community partner)

Several community partners mentioned that they had received match funding due to HCT's contributions. Rather than providing a definitive solution to the challenge of sustainability, HCT's support was seen as one part of a longer journey. By helping organisations to test, adapt and demonstrate their value, it gave them a stronger platform to build from, and allowed them to continue meeting local needs over time. By investing in relationships over a longer period of time, the Foundation avoided being seen as an in-and-out funder but rather as an ongoing partner:

> *'Encouraging partners to diversify their sources of income, gradually weaning them from our grant funding.'* (Hyde staff member)

This contribution to sustainability was also reflected in the survey, though with some variation. Among both funded and non-funded community partners, 78% agreed that the Hyde Foundation or HCT had helped them plan more strategically for the future. However, 17% neither agreed nor disagreed, suggesting that this impact is not always felt strongly or consistently across the network. While there is an indication that partners who have had a longer relationship with Hyde (over one year) are more likely to agree that their support has enabled them to plan for the future, we are unable, due to small base samples, to confirm that there is any causation or correlation.

Championing partners, sharing power and resources

Across interviews and survey responses, the Hyde Foundation and Charitable Trust were described as generous in how it uses its influence, taking time to celebrate and amplify the work of others. This was valued not only by funded partners, but also by those connected through the Communities Team and initiatives like the Social Value Leadership Group. The Foundation was seen as using its platform to recognise the contributions of others and help connect them to new opportunities.

This was strongly reflected in the survey by all partners, where 95% agreed that the work they do feels recognised and celebrated by the Foundation (50% strongly agreed, 45% somewhat agreed).

Even the language used by the Foundation was experienced as meaningful in reducing power dynamics. One partner described the term 'community partner' as helping shift the dynamic from one of transactional funding to genuine collaboration:

> *'Something which others* [other funders] *don't call us is a community partner … Others are generally just … "Yeah, you've been successful on a grant, here you go", whereas it feels like Hyde are by our side … That gives us confidence.'* (Funded community partner)

Foundation staff also reflected on this ethos in their own language, describing their role as enabling and supportive rather than directive:

> *'One of the biggest ways we add value is by enabling [residents] to be the heroes of their own story … We provide investment in whatever shape or form that looks like, following on from listening to the needs, and then stepping back and allowing people to do what they need to do'.* (Hyde staff member)

The Match My Project (MMP) platform was one example of this broader approach. It connects Hyde's supply chain with community organisations to provide practical support. Though not a direct funding stream, partners described it as a valuable source of additional support that had real-world impact:

> *'Match My Project really has been absolutely transformative, and we have been able to access huge amounts of support through that. Although it's support that doesn't come directly from Hyde, they are instrumental in leveraging it … in the way they've set this platform up.'* (Funded community partner)

MMP is explored in more detail in the 'Providing mechanisms to maximise impact and efficiency' section.

The Foundation's approach to championing extended beyond organisations to include community voices. One sector partner described the Foundation's role in promoting the perspectives of those often overlooked in housing and policy discussions:

> *'Especially with those very underrepresented groups whose voices aren't heard very much. You know, young people in care, young people being involved in the criminal*

justice system. I definitely think they're advocates for social justice.' (Strategic/sector partner)

Improving perceptions and building trust

Some partners reflected on how working with the Hyde Foundation had helped to challenge assumptions about working with housing associations and funders, and increased the community partners' confidence to engage more proactively with other housing associations:

> *'It was working with Hyde* [that] *has given us, has opened our eyes I suppose, to housing provider opportunities … already linking in with other housing providers and starting to have conversations about how we could do partnership working with them.'* (Funded community partner)

Others made direct comparisons with housing providers they had found less responsive or relational in the past: *'There are certainly housing providers who I don't think would provide the same level of compassion and understanding'.*

In one instance, a community partner described how they had been able to challenge negative perceptions Hyde Housing Association has within communities by making residents more aware that Hyde's community support was linked to the wider organisation.

Importantly, the Hyde Foundation not only influences other housing associations, but also aims to positively influence internal practices of the wider Hyde Group. One staff member reflected on this ambition:

> *'Hyde who are very good at understanding the bricks and mortar of our homes and understand how to maintain and how to upkeep those, keep those homes. But don't necessarily understand. You know what's happening on a day-to-day basis for the people living inside those homes.'* (Hyde staff member)

For consideration:

- How can the Hyde Foundation continue to gather learning and insights into the longer-term impacts of its contributions? Is it important that this is visible or directly attributable when it is positioned in a complex system of funding and support?
- Is there a role the Foundation could play in helping to convene other housing associations who are grant-giving to share good practice and learn from each other?
- Could the emphasis on short-term grants undermine the Foundation's relational and longer-term approach to working with community partners?

Pushing the social value movement

Key insights:

- The Hyde Foundation influences how supply-chain partners view and deliver social value, **strengthening their ties to local communities**.
- Tools like the Social Value Matrix and Match My Project **maximise practical social value delivery**, though some partners flagged areas for improvement or greater clarity.
- The Foundation plays a **visible leadership role** through the Social Value Leadership Group. Their ethos and practice were seen as generous and forward-thinking.

Increasing commitment to social value

It is important to note the differing nature of the relationships between partners we heard from in this review. There is a flexibility around working with community partners, supporting them according to their strengths to achieve more for Hyde residents and communities. This flexibility was clearly experienced by the community partners. However, delivery of social value is a contractual requirement of supply-chain partners and therefore there is a clear process, and expected outcomes are required.

The Foundation's work with supply-chain partners was often viewed as a catalyst for deeper engagement with local communities. Survey responses from strategic, sector and supply-chain partners showed that 84% agreed that collaboration with the Hyde Foundation and HCT had made them feel more connected to the areas where they operate: 11% of respondents 'neither agreed nor disagreed' with this statement and 5% 'somewhat disagreed'.

Partners described how the Foundation's expectations and guidance had prompted them to think differently about the social impact of their contracts:

> *'Our relationship with Hyde Foundation has made us more connected to the areas we work in and more aware of their community needs.'* (Supply-chain partner)

For some partners, delivering on Hyde's social-value commitments created first-hand insight into the lives of Hyde residents and created a stronger sense of purpose:

> *'By offering social value support and volunteering our time, we've been able to get involved in projects that have a real, on-the-ground impact. Whether it's supporting tenants with financial guidance, helping to boost employability, or simply being a friendly face at a community event, it's reminded us that positive change often starts small and locally. It's been a two-way street: we've shared our knowledge, but we've also learned a lot about the resilience, creativity and strength of the communities*

Hyde serves. And that keeps us grounded in the kind of work we want to do not just for our clients, but for society too.' (Supply-chain partner)

One partner discussed how having a presence at certain Hyde Foundation events helped them to build relationships with residents and led to residents then seeing them as more than just the contractor:

'We went to the opening of The Old Laundry … We got out there, we got involved, we met the kids, we escorted them from one estate to the other and brought them back. Suddenly you've got the residents thinking. "Oh [name of organisation]. *Oh, they do that as well." So, it helps, like, in terms of the relationship.'* (Supply-chain partner)

However, partners who already felt they had well-developed social-value processes sometimes found the Foundation's processes added complexity and did not have a significant impact on their commitment to social value:

'We have a desire to deliver regardless, but they certainly navigate where it's delivered. Their impact is huge for that … If some of the obstacles in delivering could be looked at, that would be handy.' (Supply-chain partner)

Overall, the insights suggest that the Foundation's influence has improved local connection and helped suppliers embed social-value considerations more deeply in their work. At the same time, feedback points to opportunities to streamline requirements so that motivated partners can deliver flexibly.

In some cases, the Foundation's influence also extended beyond their own supply chain. One housing provider described a sense of reassurance when working with contractors who had previously partnered with Hyde, noting that they were already familiar with the principles and expectations around social value delivery.

Providing mechanisms to maximise impact and efficiency

The Hyde Foundation is not only setting expectations but also providing tools to deliver on them by investing in building structures to make social value delivery more consistent and achievable across its supply chain. Partners pointed to tools such as the Social Value Matrix and performance dashboards as examples of good practice. These frameworks were viewed not only as helpful guidance but as having a wider influence across the sector, encouraging other housing associations to adopt similar approaches.

The different social value cultures across the partners that the Hyde Foundation works with reinforces the importance of having consistent processes, such as these frameworks, and being able to clearly articulate to partners the rationale for these processes. Many welcomed the clarity and intent behind these mechanisms; however, other partners pointed out that the effectiveness of social value delivery often depends on organisational culture and the infrastructure a supplier has in place. While this is beyond the Foundation's control, it presents implications for how the Foundation finds the right balance to achieve successful social value delivery. It was noted that the Foundation does not always have the capacity in place to help a supply-chain partner to fulfil their social value commitments.

For example, there is no in-house resource to help advertise job opportunities to help partners employ more Hyde residents.

Despite these challenges, some partners noted a positive shift in their own organisational culture**.** One supply-chain partner described how initial resistance from some colleagues was replaced by real enthusiasm once they began to see the value of their work. For example, they described how a contractor returned from working in a community setting feeling energised. Experiences like this help shift internal attitudes from seeing social value as a 'nice to have' to something more meaningful and rewarding.

One respondent noted that there could be greater visibility and celebration of social value contributions across the Hyde Group itself. The leadership dashboard was seen as a helpful tool in doing this, but awareness of how this was shared with the wider Hyde Group team varied. They also reflected on the need for clearer routes to cross-promote social value stories, particularly where partners are sharing work online.

This foundation of structured, intentional support provides a useful platform for initiatives like MMP**,** which offer more targeted ways of connecting supply-chain contributions with community partners to meet local needs. We heard that for many, the platform made it significantly easier to identify and respond to community needs in areas they were working in.

Partners also appreciated that the tool introduced greater fairness and transparency into the process of allocating social value support. Rather than relying on ad hoc connections or longstanding relationships, the system helped ensure that a broader mix of community partners had access to offers of support, *'So that one community partner isn't getting more than another. There's no favouritism.'*

Community partners generally viewed MMP as a valuable and low-barrier way to access funding, resources and practical support from Hyde's supply-chain partners. In contrast to more traditional grant funding, the platform was often experienced as responsive and efficient. Many described securing tangible, much-needed items or improvements through the platform, such as staff clothing, funds for activities and celebrations, and even a new carpet throughout a community centre. But the process was not always smooth. Several partners noted that they had received little instruction when first introduced to the platform, leading to confusion about how to use it, what to request, or how often they could submit applications: *'We were a bit sceptical. There wasn't really any information on how we use it'.* Although guidance and information on the platform exists on the Foundation's website, responses reflect an opportunity to raise awareness of existing guidance and support.

Some respondents reported needing additional support from the Hyde Foundation staff to complete applications, citing word count restrictions or a lack of clarity around what information would be most persuasive: *'They know best how to fill it out'.* This additional support often built partners' confidence to continue to use the platform on an ongoing basis.

The platform was generally valued for reducing the admin burden – for both social value and community partners – especially compared to traditional grant-making processes. However, concerns were raised about sustainability**.** Some community partners described feeling like they were hitting an invisible ceiling on how often they could receive support. Another worried about becoming reliant on a platform that offered no long-term guarantees:

> *'I had a few glory years where I basically just got everything I asked for … but then you get two years in and it becomes more like, "Oh, how are we gonna find the money for that next year?" So, there is no like security in that sense.'* (Funded community partner)

Overall, community partners appreciated the intent and value of MMP, especially in unlocking practical support from the supply chain. But the feedback suggests that there are opportunities to improve clarity, manage expectations, and provide guidance and reassurance for those who are less confident or have had limited success using the platform.

Leading by example

The Foundation's leadership in social value is not limited to their own communities or supply chain. Through their work convening peers across the housing and public sectors, they are recognised as helping to drive a wider movement, both by sharing practice and championing collective ambition: *'I think* [member of Hyde team] *has, really led the way in terms of building a collective voice across the G15'*.

A key part of this influence is Hyde's leadership of the Social Value Leadership Group, which brings together over 60 professionals across housing associations, local authorities, and supply-chain partners. This network was described as *'progressive'* and *'groundbreaking'*, both for the ambition it sets and the openness it encourages.

Partners emphasised the generosity and intentionality with which the Foundation approaches this work. They were seen as generous with their time, tools and learning, from onboarding each new group member individually to actively exploring how to share resources across organisations:

> *'They're not just thinking, how does this impact a Hyde customer, they're thinking … how do we use our resources, our time, our expertise, our innovation to make greater impacts in our communities.'* (Strategic/sector partner)

This commitment to sector-wide impact was seen as helping shift the thinking of other housing associations who are less far on their social value journey. *'It's pulled us along to go, "Actually Hyde's going. We need to go with them".'*.

This role as a convenor is underpinned by strong relationships, shared values and a focus on practical collaboration. As one partner noted, the ability to share funding or delivery responsibilities across organisations opens new possibilities, particularly for activities that would otherwise be out of reach.

Ultimately, the Foundation's influence in this space is grounded in both relationships and a shared commitment to outcomes for the communities they serve:

> *'You always want to work in partnership with people that have the same values and ethos as you and are ethical about actually customers have to be first.'* (Strategic/sector partner)

For consideration:

- While MMP is a valuable tool and well used, is there an opportunity for increasing partners' awareness on the guidance available? Is there additional learning which could be shared on how to maximise effectiveness and manage expectations around the nature of MMP funding? Could this be a positive opportunity for peer learning from those community partners most engaged with the platform?
- The different approaches to social value and social value cultures across the partners that the Hyde Foundation works with reinforces the importance of having consistent processes and being able to clearly articulate to partners the rationale for these processes.
- While the social value league table is visible to all supply-chain partners, is there a way to share with partners how this is communicated and celebrated within the wider Hyde Group?
- Consider how the Social Value Leadership Group can help to ensure alignment in supply-chain partners' experience.

Conclusion and next steps

This review evidenced a myriad of ways in which the Hyde Foundation makes a difference to the sector, the communities it serves and the organisations and individuals it supports.

At the heart of its contribution is the relational approach which underpins the Foundation's activities and partnership approach. The Foundation plays a valued role as a connector, brokering relationships and opening doors to new opportunities for partners – ensuring that value is added beyond funding. The Foundation's openness to new ideas means it's often experienced as an open and trusting funder and, importantly, provides partners opportunities to test and learn. The Hyde Foundation celebrates its partners, amplifies their work, and is often seen as sharing power through its language and actions. This generous and forward-thinking approach is also evident within the Foundation's leadership in the social value space.

The review identified areas for further exploration and consideration. Key considerations include the Foundation's ability to sustain its relational and hyper-local approach if it continues to grow, and how these approaches can be consistently embedded in the culture and policies. There is an opportunity to reflect on how this relational approach may not align with the prevalence of short-term grant-making.

There are opportunities to improve consistency and counter the difference in individuals' experience of Hyde as a housing association and their interactions with the Foundation, through developing shared values and practices that can be applied across the whole of the Hyde Group. The Foundation could also maximise its leadership role to convene other housing associations who are grant-giving to share good practice and learn from each other.

The different approaches to social value and social value cultures across the partners that the Hyde Foundation works with reinforces the importance of having consistent processes and being able to clearly articulate to partners the rationale for these processes. The Hyde Foundation is not only setting expectations but also providing tools to deliver on them. However, there are opportunities to maximise the impact of these tools, such as additional capacity building for community partners to better use MMP, and increasing the visibility of the social value league table to celebrate exceptional social value delivery.

Learning questions

This report captures insights on the Hyde Foundation and HCT contribution at a moment in time, it provides a base for the Foundation's future learning and direction.

At the beginning of the review, we worked with the Hyde Foundation team to develop a set of key learning questions which could both inform the review itself and provide prompts for ongoing reflection. Learning questions enable a reflective, inquiry-based approach to learning by moving away from information acquisition to engaging in an ongoing dialogue about our learning and assumptions. Key aspects of learning questions include being action-orientated and future focused, prompting ongoing reflection and acknowledging

complexity. The learning questions used and refined through the review process are outlined below:

- How is our work adding value and directly contributing to the areas and communities we work within?
- How is our work strengthening communities' growth and sustainability to create longer-term change?
- How is our work pushing the social value movement through enabling and sharing good practice and providing generous leadership in the sector?

Taking the learning questions forward

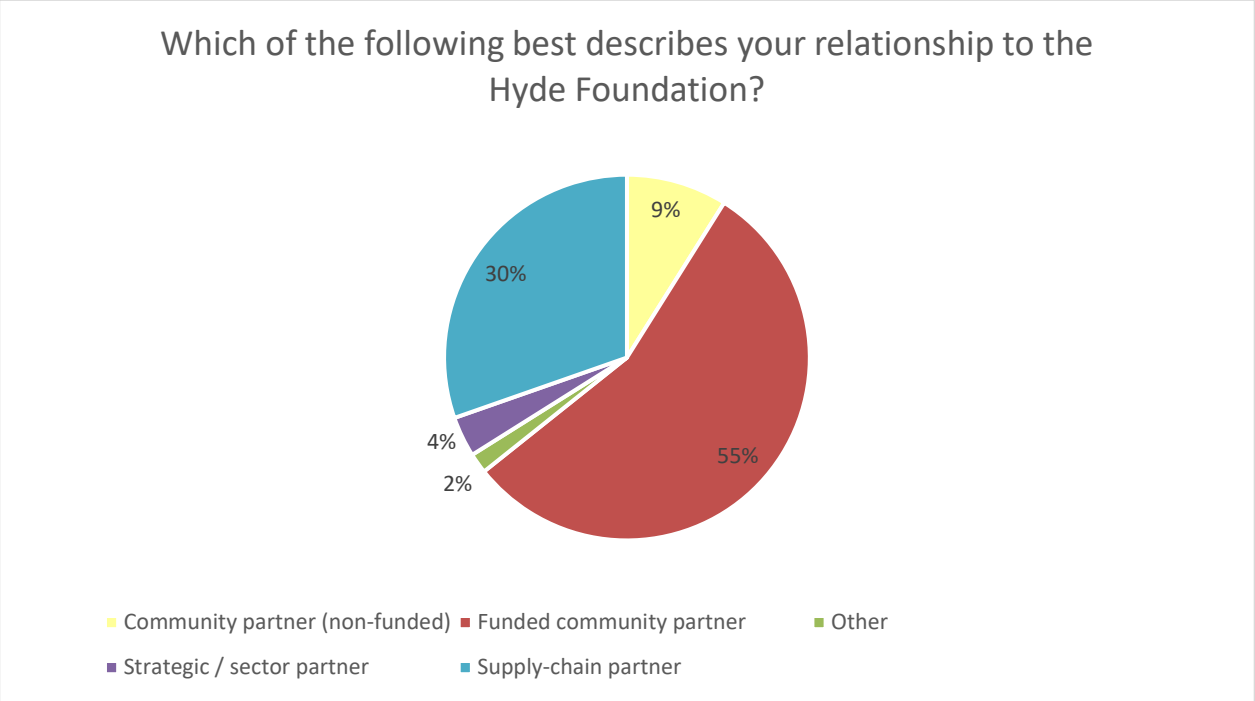
These learning questions should inform strategic discussions and support ongoing reflection within the Hyde Foundation team. The questions can also be used to gather routine feedback from partners. Each learning question below is paired with some useful prompts for partners:

Learning question	Questions for partners
How is our work adding value and directly contributing to the areas and communities we work within?	• What difference has funding or support from us made when delivering your work and meeting your organisational aims? • How has your relationship with us impacted the people you work with/community members you support?
How is our work strengthening communities' growth and sustainability to create longer-term change?	• Has funding or support from us helped your organisation to grow, develop, and/or plan for the future? • Have you observed or experienced any wider impacts the Hyde Foundation has had on your community?
How is our work pushing the social value movement through enabling and sharing good practice and providing generous leadership in the sector?	• Has your relationship with us shifted or influenced your thinking in any way (e.g. thinking around social value, the communities you are working in and your understanding of their needs)? • Has your relationship with us shifted or influenced your ways of working in any way (e.g. increased social value activities, use of Match my Project, changes to organisational culture or priorities)? • Has your relationship with us helped you better understand the need for standardised social value systems to govern social value delivery?

Appendix

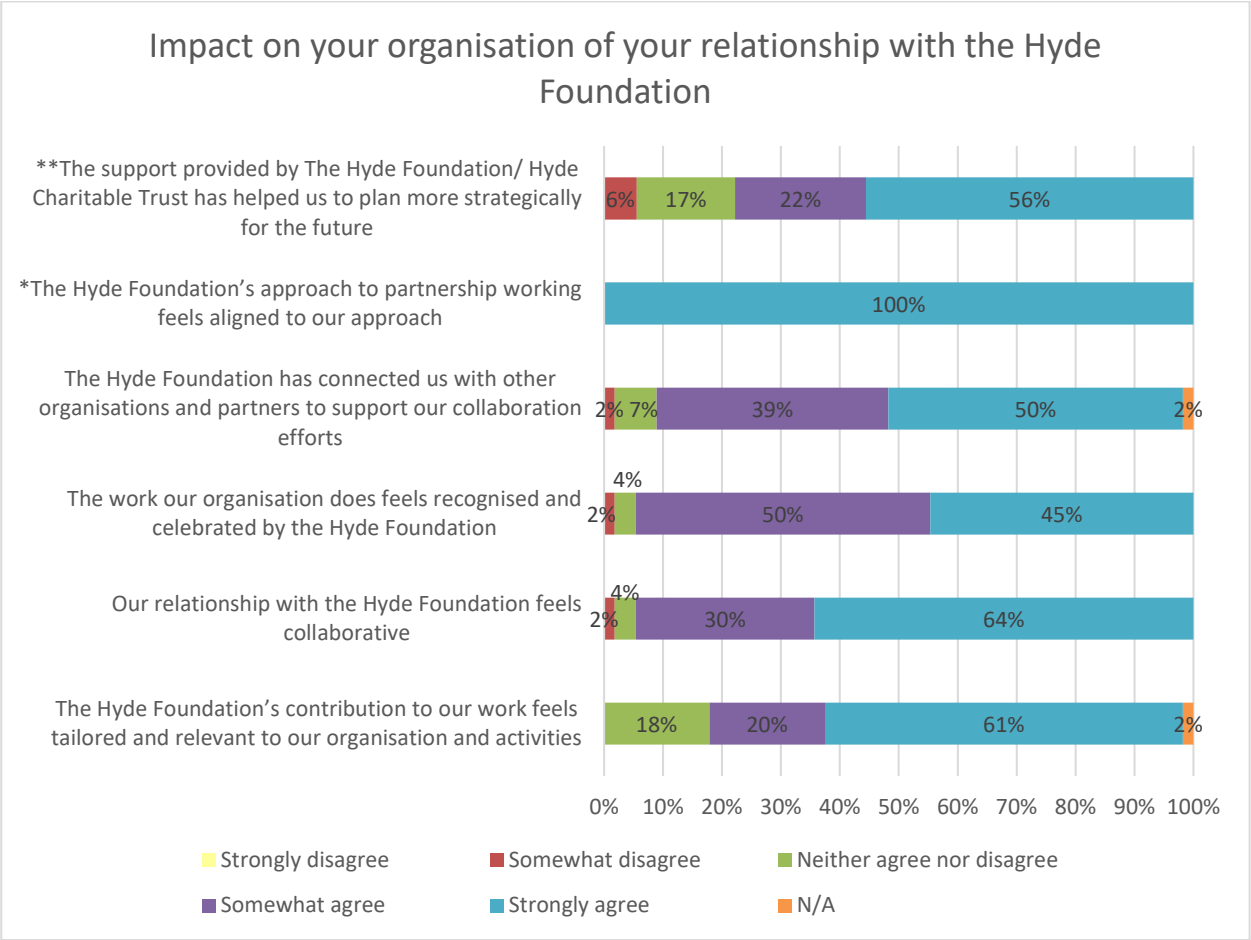
Survey results

Overview of responses



Base=56

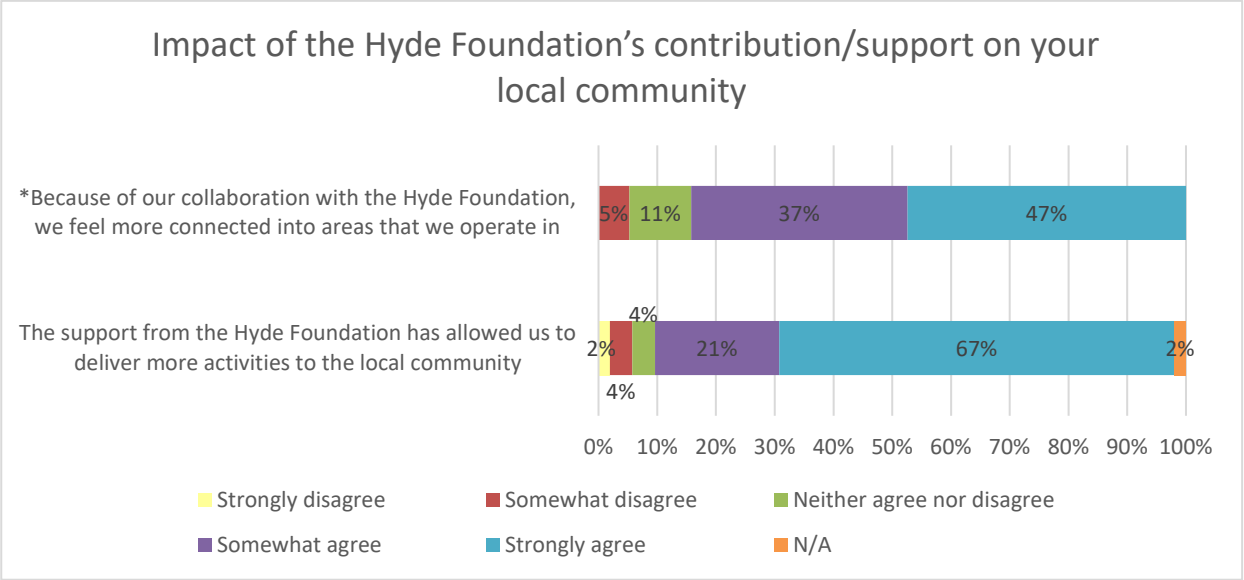
What is the length of your relationship with the Hyde Foundation?		
Length	**Number**	**Percentage**
Less than 1 year	4	7%
1-2 years	9	16%
3-5 years	20	36%
More than 5 years	23	41%
Total	**56**	**100%**



Base=56

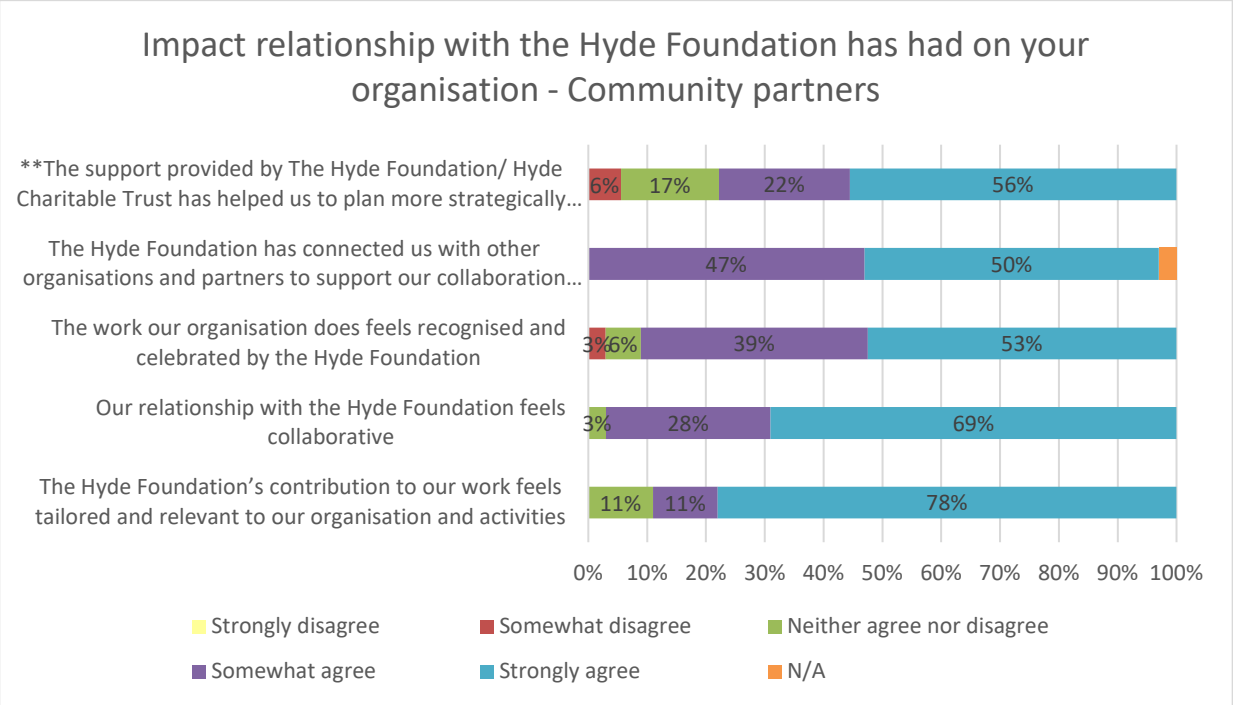
** Only sector/strategic partners were asked this question (Base=2)*

*** Only community partners were asked this question (Base=36)*



**Only supply-chain, sector/strategic partners, and 'other' were asked this question (Base = 19)*

Community partners' responses only



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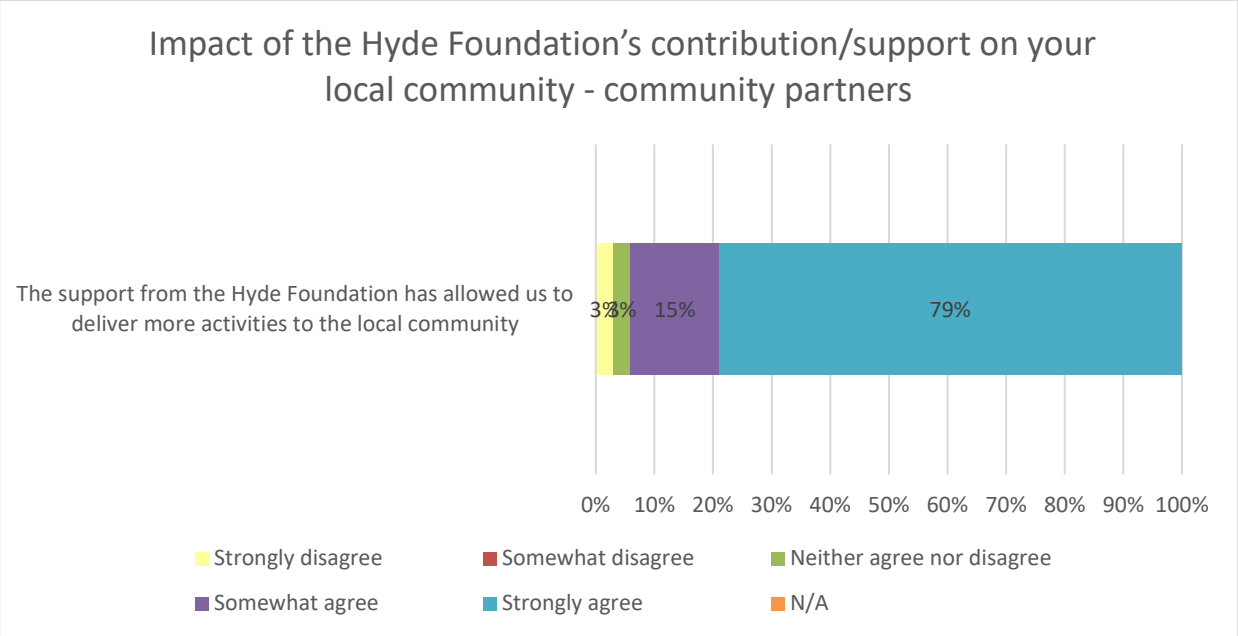

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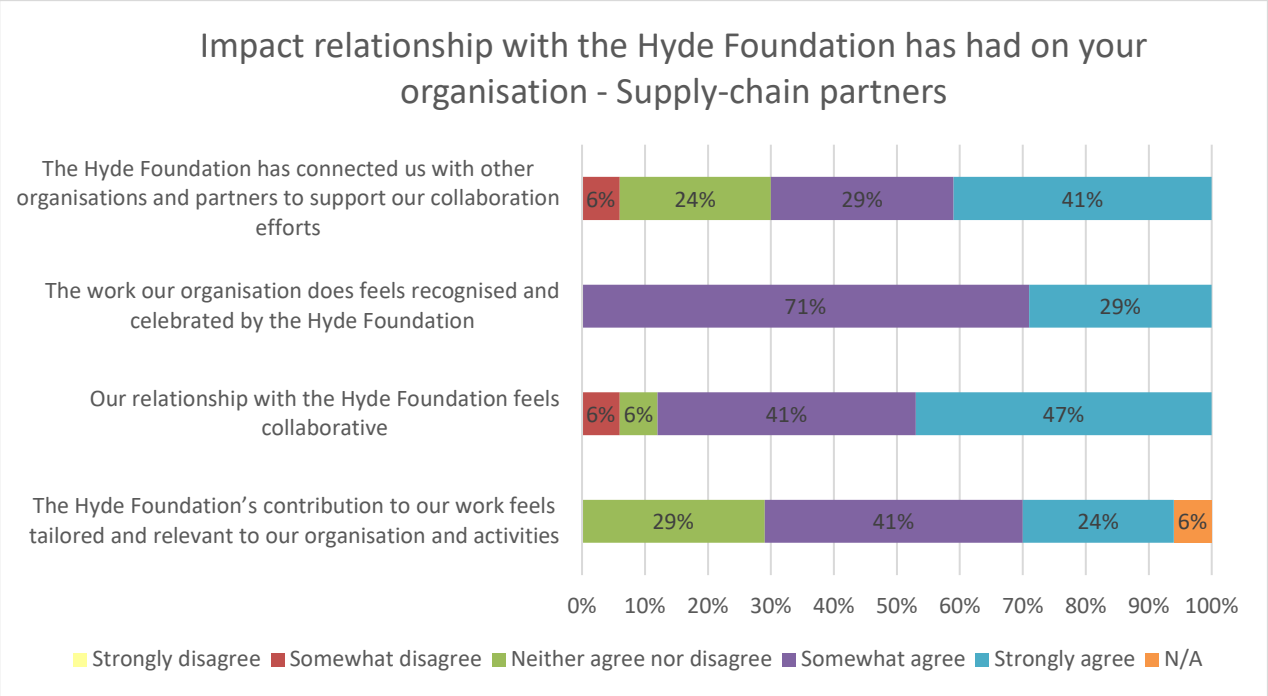
Supply-chain partners' responses only



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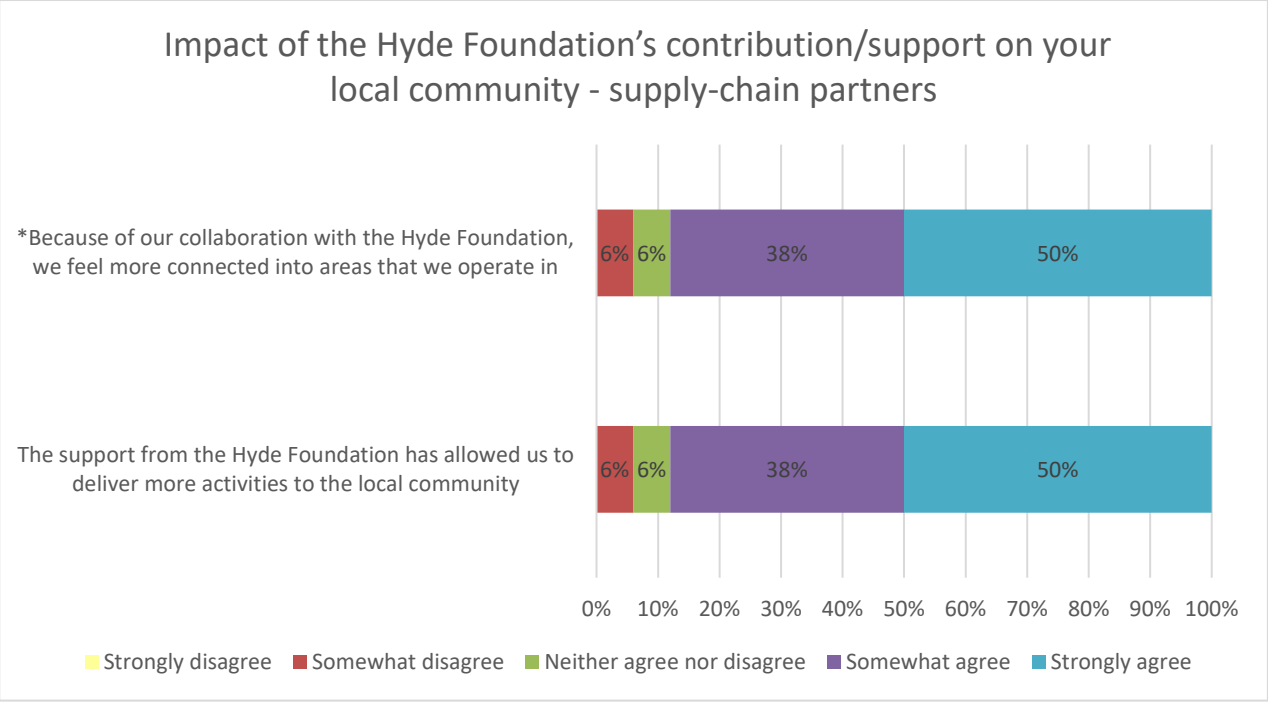

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