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# Charity Technology Leaders Report 2025

The annual **Charity Technology Leaders Report** is a comprehensive state-of-the-nation research project on the charity IT space in the UK.

From February to March 2025, we conducted a survey of charity technology leaders to understand the sector's priorities, risks, challenges and opportunities around IT.

Now in its third year, this report presents the key findings, trends and comparisons with last year, in partnership with Charity IT Leaders.

# Who took part?

- 50 organisations
- The typical income size of the organisations that completed the research was between £10 - £50m
- The respondents were mostly Heads of IT, followed by COOs, Heads of Technology and Finance Directors / CFOs
- The average internal IT team size was 11 people but typically ranged from 0 to 50

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This is the third year of Academia's 'Charity Technology Leaders Report' and we're proud to partner with our longstanding Gold Sponsor to share the results and consider the impact of the findings.

Each year, the report shines a light on what tech leaders in the charity sector are experiencing and each year, as we add another layer of data, the insights become even richer and more significant.

It's clear from the findings, that investment in Technology, Data and Digital (T,D&D) is absolutely critical if charities and not-for-profits (NFPs) are to benefit from the efficiencies, innovations and improved outcomes that T,D&D can deliver. In a world that is increasingly digital, reliant on tech and driven by data, failure to invest for the day-to-day, failure to invest for development and innovation and failure to put T,D&D at the heart of organisational planning and delivery is a huge and potentially dangerous oversight.

Surveys such as the Charity Technology Leaders Report provide insights and benchmarks that help tech, digital and data leaders to make informed and insightful decisions. They are also useful in helping to make the case for investment to exec teams and the Board.

This report and the trends it highlights, will help you as a tech, data or digital leader and can also help your exec team and Board to understand the priorities, challenges and opportunities and build the case for investment.

**Tree Hall**
CEO - Charity IT Leaders

# Executive Summary

While some focus areas remain similar to last year, other priorities have undergone noticeable shifts. Here are the **big 5 themes:**

## Infrastructure

The majority now consider cloud infrastructure as "delivered", although a strong focus remains on optimisation and getting the most out of existing tools.

**60%**

have now delivered cloud infrastructure.

## Strategy

Seeking strategic investment in IT has almost doubled in priority this year, as more IT leaders seek to raise the profile of IT at board level.

**45%**

increase in the number who view obtaining strategic investment as a critical area for improvement.

## Cyber Security

Cyber still tops the leaderboard as the highest priority for technology teams, with some progress made since last year.

**10%**

improvement in those who answered they are very well positioned to deal with cyber-attacks.

**18%**

answered their security posture is not well positioned.

## Resourcing

Reactive issues disrupting workflow are still the biggest challenge IT teams face.

**72%**

are now adopting a co-managed or outsourced resource model to help address this.

## AI

AI is now featured on IT roadmaps more prominently compared to last year.

**42%**

are now either piloting, implementing or have implemented some form of AI.

In the rest of the report, we examine the data in more detail and share the main trends and comparisons to last year.

# IT Infrastructure & Optimisation

Operational efficiency remains one of the top priorities this year – slightly higher than 2024, representing a key ongoing focus area.

Getting maximum value out of fewer toolsets is a strategic aim for almost every IT function. The desire to streamline and simplify IT operations may reflect the increasing pressure on charity budgets and cost increases such as National Insurance Contributions and inflation.

The goal of ‘reducing IT costs’ has risen to sixth place from seventh in terms of the overall “To Do” list.

## Cloud

The data shows a significant increase in the number of charities that have now delivered cloud infrastructure; a three-fold increase to

**60%**

who now feel their cloud journey is largely complete.

Additionally, more charities than ever before have implemented more robust Data Loss Prevention controls to help prevent corporate data from leaking onto personal devices or accounts.

## AI

The number of respondents who are not exploring AI has nearly halved from 34% in 2024, to 18% in 2025.

10% of organisations who responded to our survey are now actively implementing and rolling out AI solutions – compared to 0% last year. Furthermore,

**32%**

are now piloting some form of AI, up from 24% the year before.

Overall, AI is by far the biggest project that leaders are in Pilot or Assessment phase with, whilst Asset and Device Management are the projects that organisations are actively implementing right now.

# Telephony

There has been an increase in the implementation and delivery of modern telephony and voice solutions:

| 2024 | 2025 |
| --- | --- |
| 7% implementing | 15% implementing |
| 14% delivered | 42% delivered |

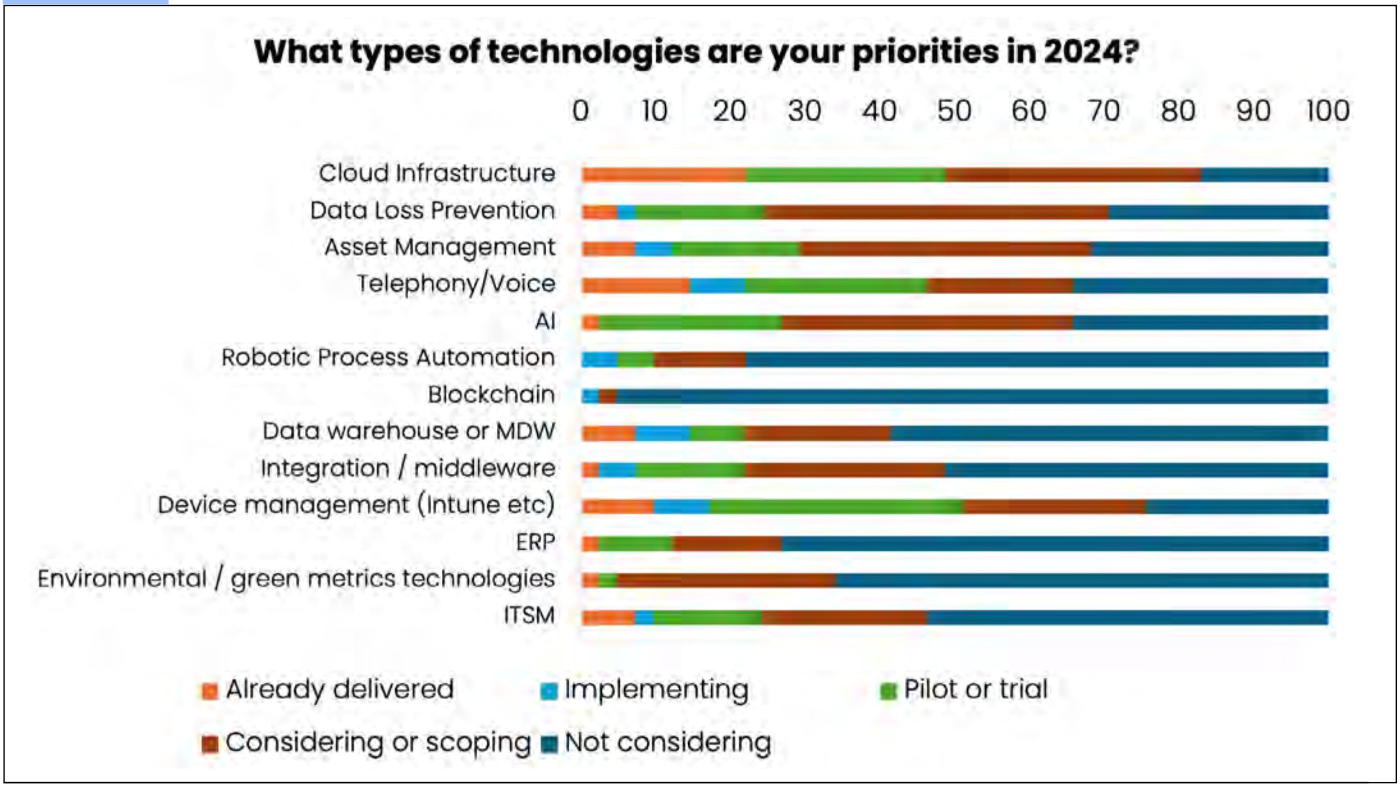
The national PSTN switch off at the end of this year / early 2026, combined with a general trend of consolidation and reduction in the need to have "landline" telephony at all (be that VOIP or traditional phone lines) has resulted in many more charities either retiring telephony altogether or consolidating this function into Teams Phone.

# ITSM

Many more charities are delivering or planning improvements in IT Service Management – nearly doubling from last year.

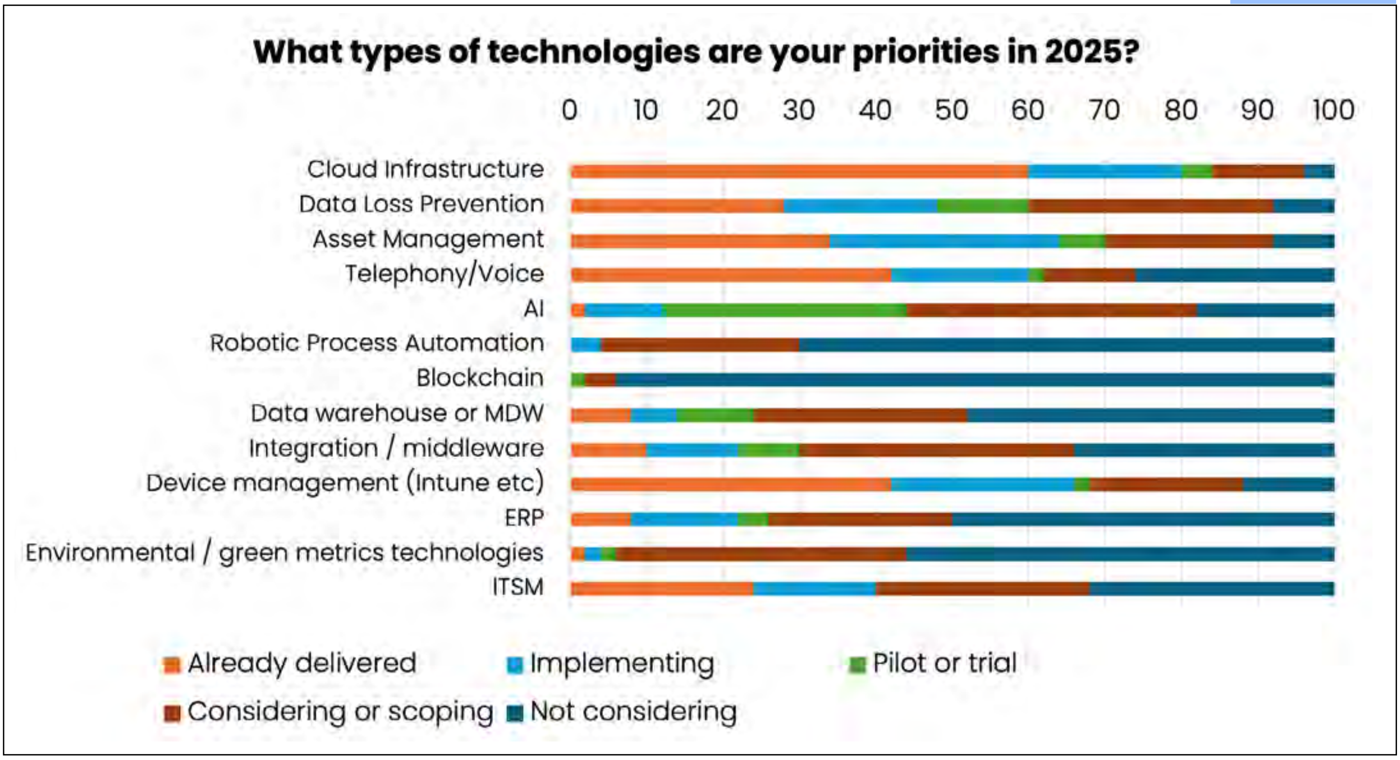
Platforms such as ServiceNow, AutoTask, FreshService and ManageEngine are being adopted more widely by in-house teams. At Academia, we anecdotally see a trend for expanding these toolsets into other areas of the business such as Finance, Facilities and HR to help centralise and manage workflows.

2024



What types of technologies are your priorities in 2024?
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100
Cloud Infrastructure
Data Loss Prevention
Asset Management
Telephony/Voice
AI
Robotic Process Automation
Blockchain
Data warehouse or MDW
Integration / middleware
Device management (Intune etc)
ERP
Environmental / green metrics technologies
ITSM
Already delivered
Implementing
Pilot or trial
Considering or scoping
Not considering


2025



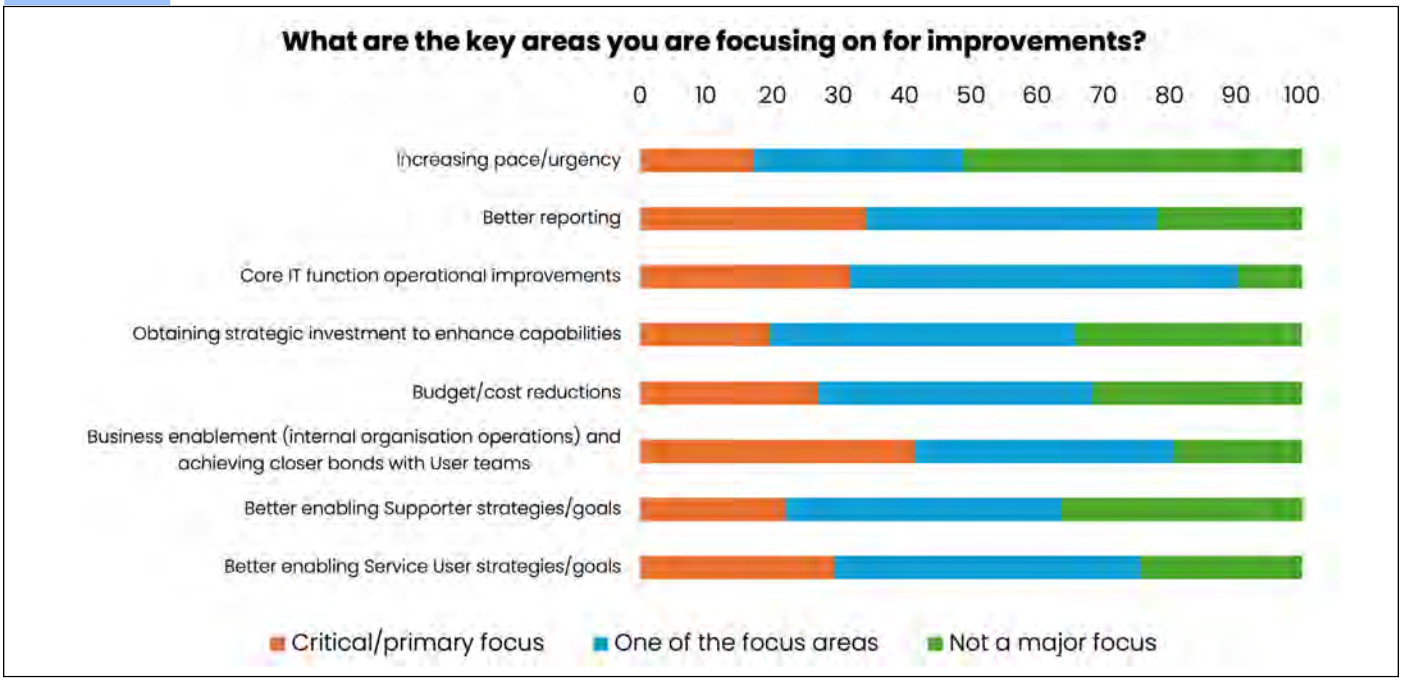
What types of technologies are your priorities in 2025?
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100
Cloud Infrastructure
Data Loss Prevention
Asset Management
Telephony/Voice
AI
Robotic Process Automation
Blockchain
Data warehouse or MDW
Integration / middleware
Device management (Intune etc)
ERP
Environmental / green metrics technologies
ITSM
Already delivered
Implementing
Pilot or trial
Considering or scoping
Not considering

# Strategy & Governance

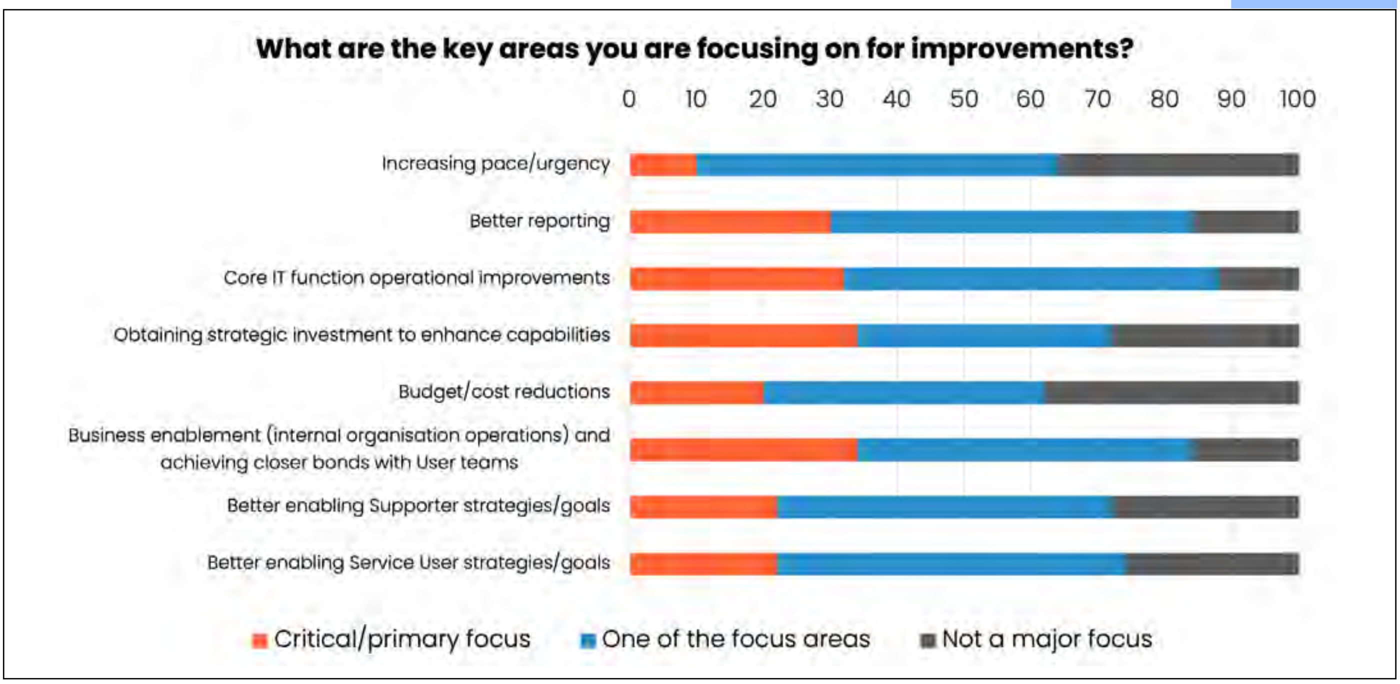
This year, the data shows a reduction in 'increasing pace/urgency' as a key focus area, which correlates with an increase in those reporting their cloud infrastructure journey is largely complete.

Improving reporting & management information remains high on agendas as it did last year, but the data shows a marked increase in organisations focusing on obtaining strategic investment at board level to fund IT and technology improvements.

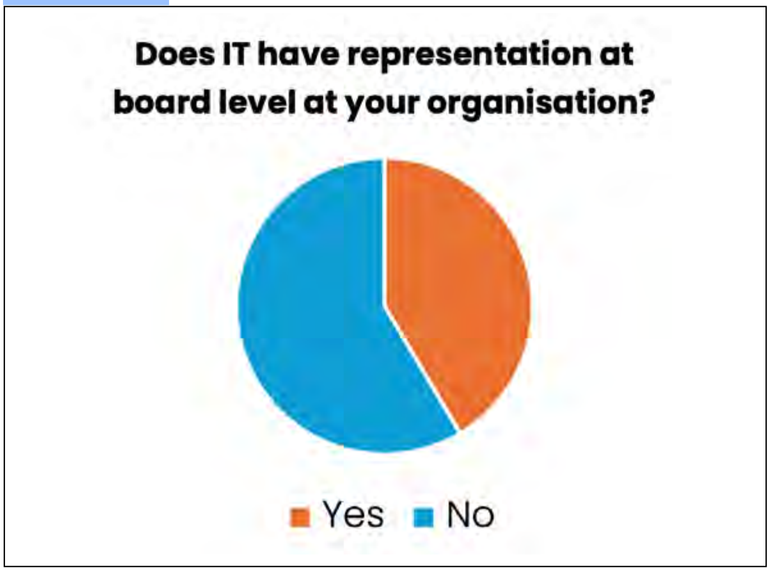
2024



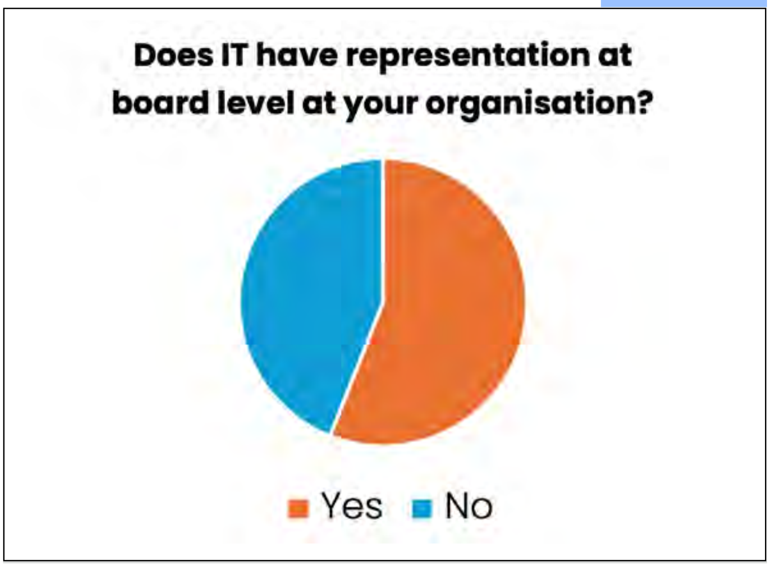

2025



2024


Does IT have representation at board level at your organisation?
Yes
No

2025


Does IT have representation at board level at your organisation?
Yes
No

# Cyber Security

The previous two years of data painted a gloomy outlook in relation to the cyber security posture of not-for-profit organisations in the UK. However, this year the outlook is more positive in terms of how confident IT leaders in the sector see their cyber security posture.

***To what extent do you feel your organisation is positioned to identify and deal with current and near future IT security/cyber attacks?***

**2024**

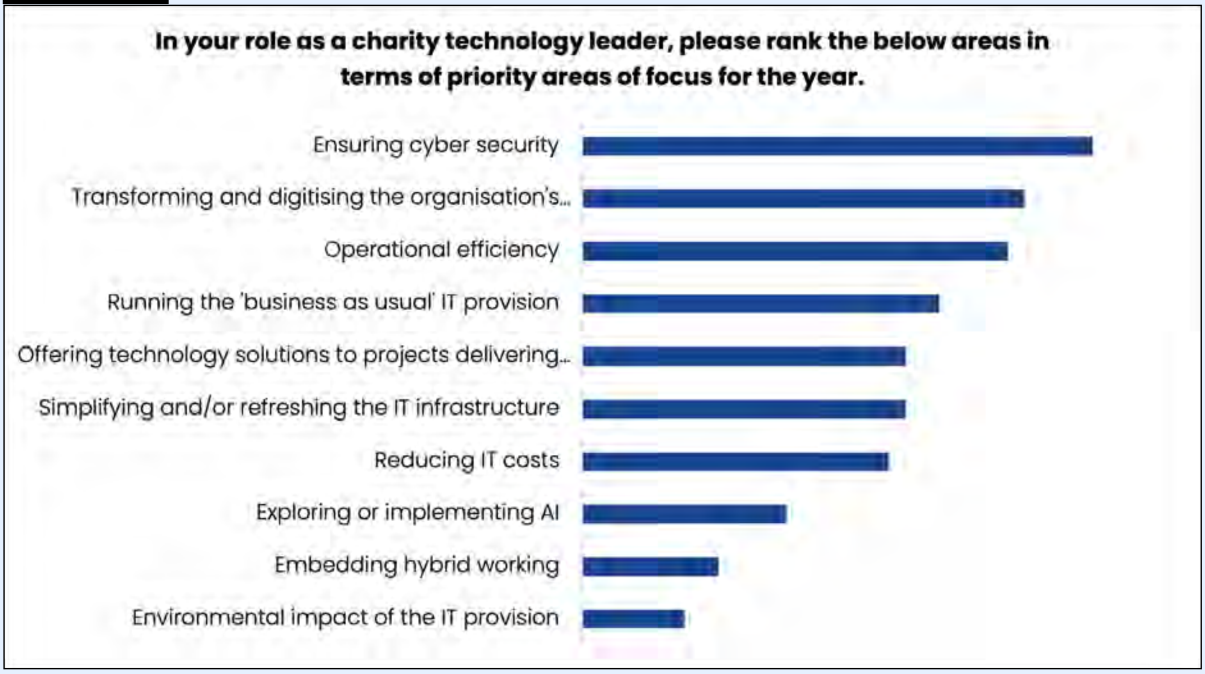

**2025**


A big trend we are seeing across the sector is the consolidation and optimisation of security controls around the Microsoft Defender stack.

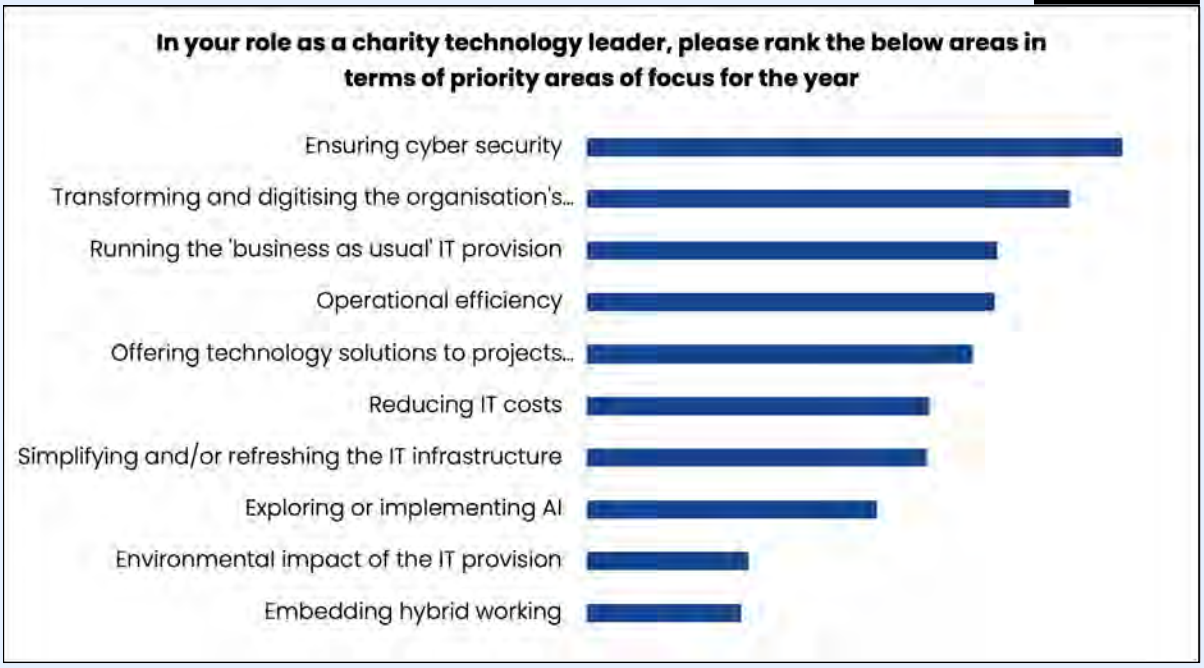
Now a Gartner Magic Quadrant leading platform, the Defender portfolio is directly competing with traditional security vendors such as Sophos and CrowdStrike. This also often has the benefit of potential cost savings, as many security controls are now included in existing Microsoft subscriptions such as Business Premium and E3.

'Ensuring cyber security' still ranks as the number one priority for charity technology leaders, as it has done for three years in a row.

## 2024




## 2025



# Data Protection and Governance

The role of the Data Protection Officer remains a highly specialised skillset and one that can be hard to recruit for.

The increase in appetite for an Information Governance Manager from 2024 to 2025 could be for several reasons, although the upcoming 'Data Use and Access Bill' which is currently circulating within parliament could be a major factor in this increase. This legislation introduces some key changes to data protection legislation in the UK that are very likely going to impact the third sector.

For example, the change which will allow charities to use the 'soft-opt' in mechanism to communicate with their supporters is likely to increase supporter engagement and therefore the sector will want to ensure that they have expert
advice on doing this in a way that is compliant with data protection legislation.

The data also shows us an increasing appetite to partner with specialists in this area to deliver fractional expertise as and when needed.

When asked which components of the IT function they would consider using a partner to deliver, leaders told us:

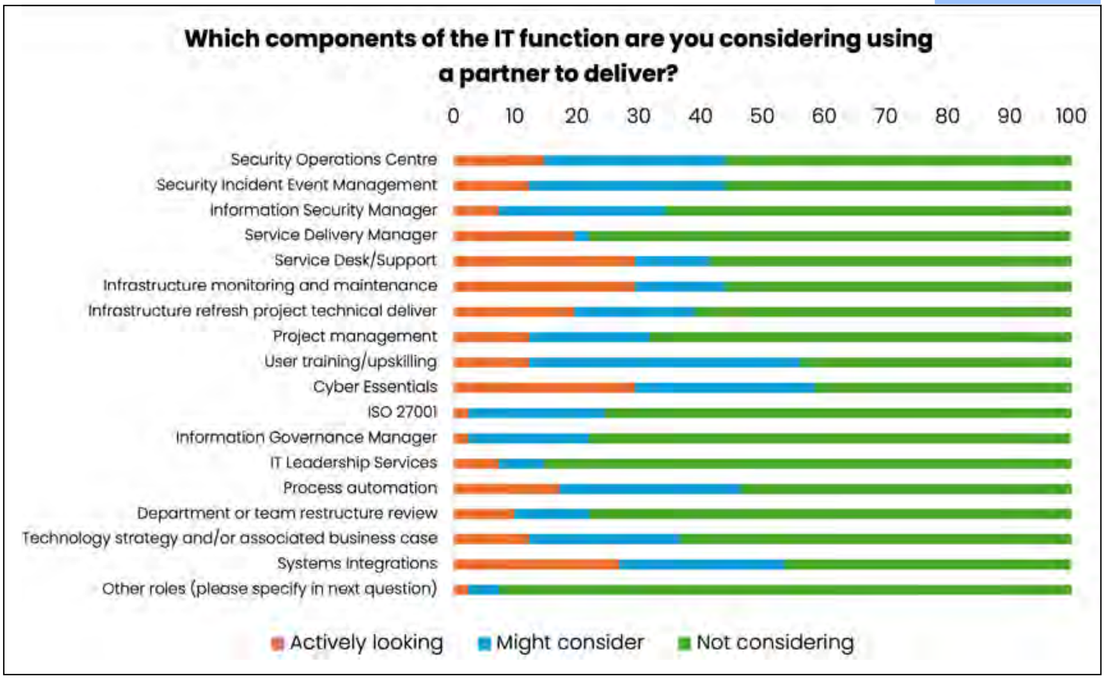
| 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|
| **78%** not considering an Information Governance Manager | **66%** not considering |
| **19.5%** might consider | **26%** might consider |
| **2.4%** actively looking | **8%** actively looking |

# Team Structure, Resourcing & Partnering

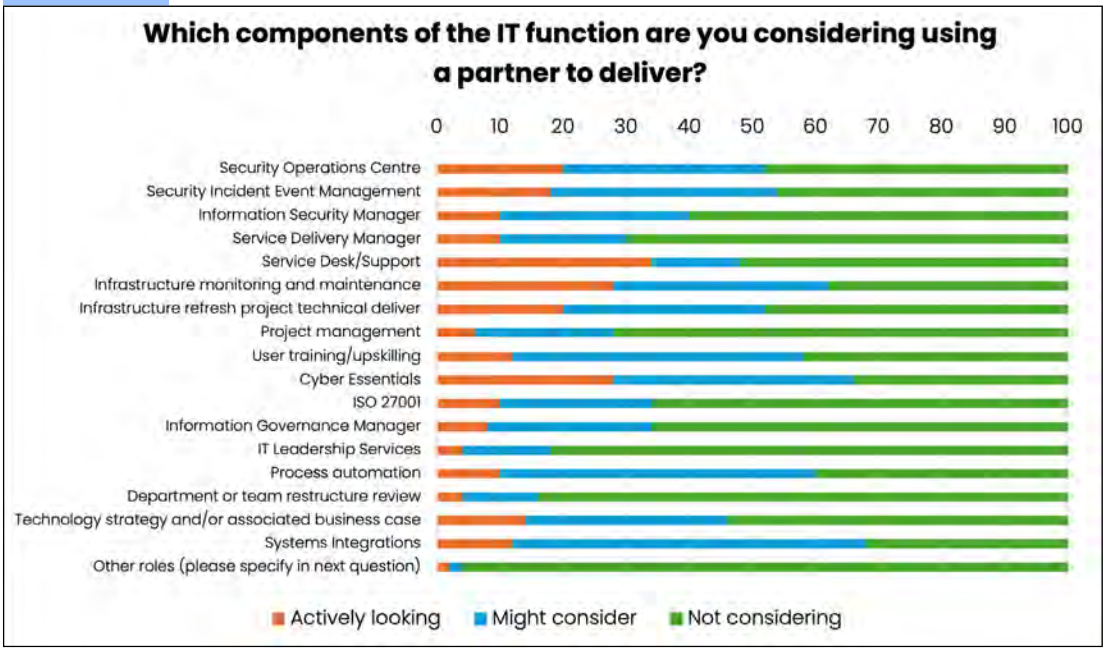
There has been a noticeable shift in the sector this year to using partners across more areas, as these graphs below show.

There is now a greater appetite for bringing systems integration in-house as a function and more desire to outsource areas such as Infrastructure and IT Operations to partners.

2024

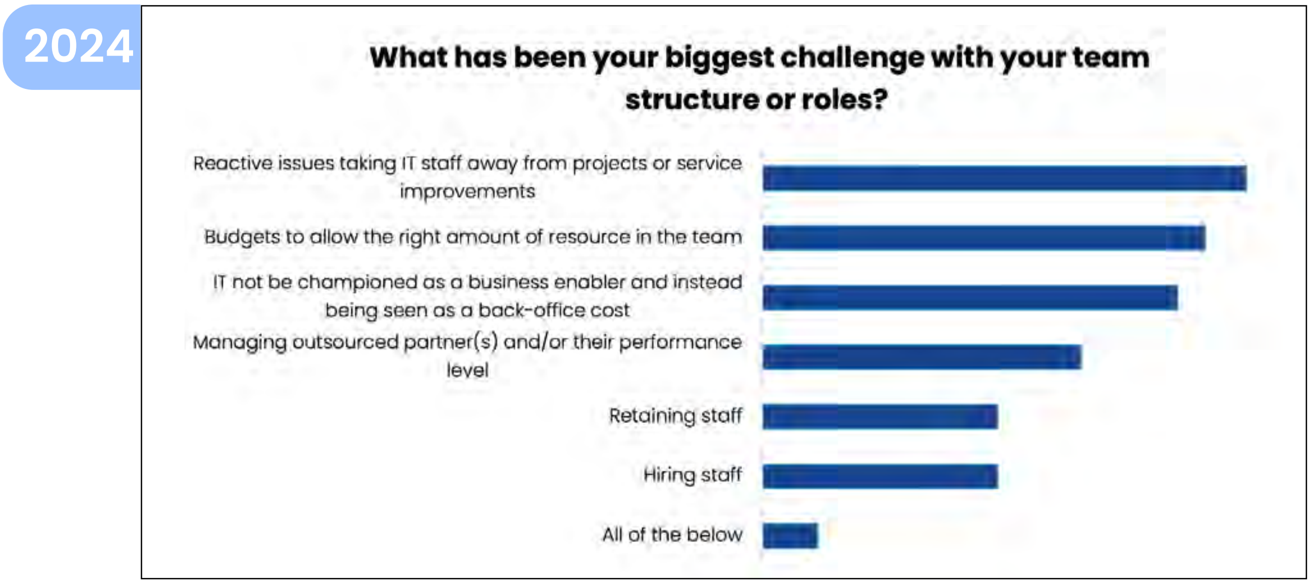


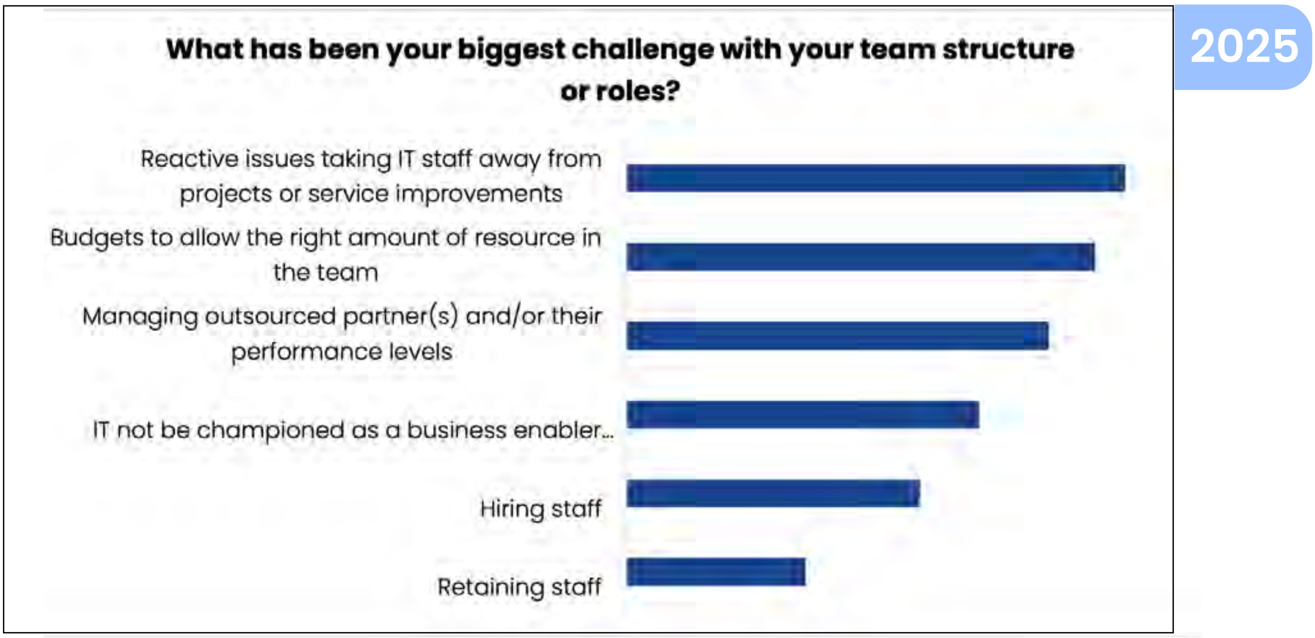

2025



The top 5 challenges reported by IT leaders in the sector are:

1. Reactive issues and budgets remain the biggest challenges (unchanged)
2. Budget to obtain the right level of resource (unchanged)
3. Managing outsourced partners (up from 4th place last year)
4. IT not being championed as an enabler (down one place)
5. Hiring staff (up one place and a significant increase in those reporting it)
6. Retaining staff (down one place and a reduction in those reporting it)



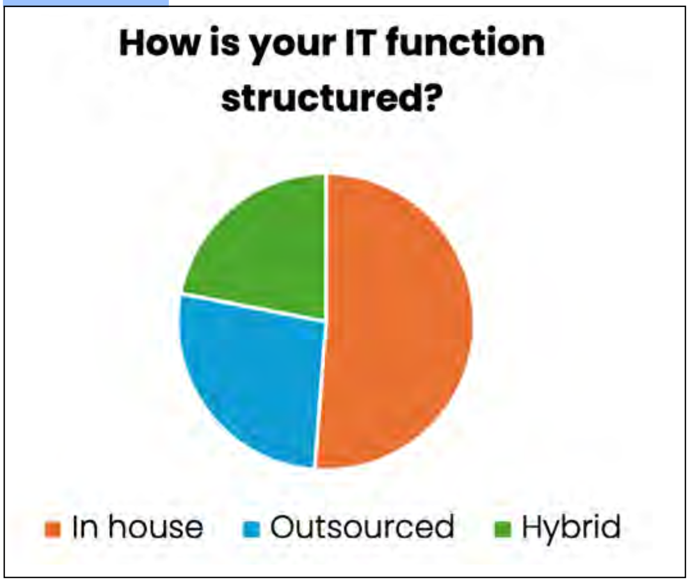




Hybrid IT teams (ones that merge in-house with outsourced) have seen a big increase this year – up from 22% to 40%.

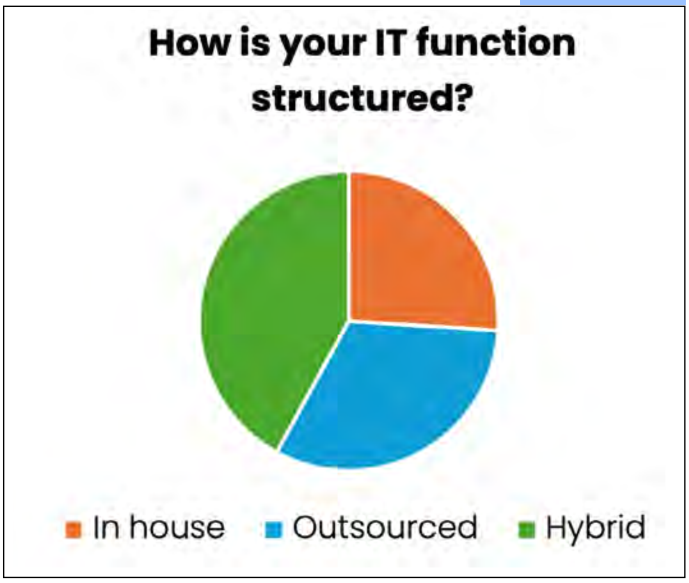
Conversely, IT teams running 100% in-house have seen a reduction, dropping by almost half.

Those using fully outsourced IT have seen a 5% increase.

2024


How is your IT function structured?
In house
Outsourced
Hybrid

2025


How is your IT function structured?
In house
Outsourced
Hybrid

# Closing Remarks

This year's survey highlights some significant shifts in IT provision and priorities within the charity sector.

Hybrid IT teams have seen substantial growth, while fully in-house IT teams have been reduced, no doubt because IT teams are being asked to do more and have more specialist knowledge, while costs around them in general increase.

AI adoption and implementation has now moved from "interested" to a key focus, with a big rise in charities actively piloting and even rolling out AI solutions.

These trends suggest a broader move towards resource flexibility and innovation, with IT leaders prioritising hybrid models and AI solutions to enhance efficiency and stay ahead of technological advancements.

Thank you for reading the report and we hope you found it useful. Keep an eye out on LinkedIn for our webinar with Charity IT Leaders to walk through the findings in more detail and hold an open Q&A with the sector.

If you would like to discuss any of the topics raised in this report, please feel free to book a consultation with us **here.**

**Mark McCormack**
Manaing Director

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