

## CHAPTER 2

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### London as a Research Site

London was selected as the research site for this study because of the objectives of the LCCN as well as population and socio-economic factors. As mentioned previously, one of the main duties of the LCCN is to conduct a research study assessing the needs of Chinese organisations. Since there was no systematic research on UK Chinese organisations, London seemed to be an ideal research site given a high concentration of Chinese people and a wide variety of social and economic activities there.

The distribution of Chinese people in the UK is characterised by 'concentration in the South East and wide dispersion in other parts of Britain' (Owen, 1994; Chan & Chan, 1997; Cheng, 1997). Nearly 40% UK Chinese people live in Greater London (Lakey, 1997). Chinese community services are usually located in so called 'Chinatowns' of some bigger cities (Chinese in Britain Forum, 2001). This was reflected among older respondents in a study which found that elderly services in Yorkshire and Glasgow were not as good as in cities such as London and Manchester (Yu, 2000). Against these considerations, London, where a large number of organisations were providing a wide range of services for different age groups, was used as a case example illustrating the nature, development and needs of UK Chinese organisations.

### The Use of Questionnaire and In-depth Interview

The present study used both quantitative and qualitative research methods in terms of a postal survey and in-depth interviews. Data from the postal survey provided a general profile on London Chinese organisations such as types of services, finance, management, and their relationships with the government. Data from in-depth interviews gave detailed and concrete examples with regard to the objectives and constraints on services and management.

A Research Advisory Committee was set up (**Note 1**) and two focus groups were conducted (**Note 2**) in order to enhance the participation of Chinese community leaders and related mainstream organisations. The former, composed of experienced researchers and experts on Chinese organisations, provided essential technical advice on research design. The latter, consisting of representatives from various types of Chinese organisations, gave comments on questionnaire design and report writing.

The research team adopted a broad approach on the definition of 'Chinese community organisation' by including a wide range of organisations that chiefly provided social services for the UK Chinese people. This was because some organisations (e.g. business organisations) had traditionally performed crucial welfare functions (Chan, 1996). This tradition was evident in the work of Shang (1984), which showed that the UK Chinese Chamber of Commerce provided various types of social

services such as financial support and education. Thus, a complete picture of UK Chinese community organisations could be obtained only by including these organisations.

One of the difficulties in researching the Chinese community is the absence of a sampling frame for the whole Chinese community in the UK (Boxter, 1988; Pang, 1993; Parker, 1995). Researchers engaged in this project encountered the same problem as a result of the lack of a comprehensive list of London Chinese organisations. Several channels were used by the LCCN to compose a list of Chinese organisations in London.

1. Records of the Chinese in Britain Forum
2. Names of Chinese organisations in the Yellow Pages
3. Names of organisations from UK Chinese directory, new era (Yau, 2001).

A total of 136 Chinese organisations were identified as a result of this search, and a postal questionnaire was sent to these organisations on 3 October 2001. In order to increase the response rate, LCCN mailed two questionnaires to the organisations on 2 November 2001 and 4 December 2001 respectively. Follow-up phone calls were also made to check whether these organisations had received the questionnaires and to encourage participation.

Finally, a total of 30 questionnaires were received and the response rate was 28%. The response rate was affected by the following factors:

1. All media organisations (6) considered the research as irrelevant to their work.
2. Only 1 out of 12 religious bodies and 1 out of 7 business associations said that their activities were related to social services.
3. Clansmen associations were not easily approached by the public and expressed little interest in this study (1 out of 12 completed questionnaires).
4. The low response rate (2 out of 19 returned questionnaires) of Chinese schools might be due to a small number of part-time/volunteers who had little time to participate in this study.
5. The addresses and contact numbers of some organisations were no longer valid which created difficulties on follow up.

From the response patterns of the 136 organisations, it is evident that most business organisations, unlike the traditional ones, were no longer active in direct welfare services. However, this does not mean that they make no contribution to the welfare of the Chinese community. They might play an indirect role by giving donations to Chinese welfare agencies. This is an area that needs further investigation.

Second, many traditional clansmen associations were less active on social welfare. It was likely that some of them no longer even existed, as evident from invalid contacts. The Chinese community worker mentioned in Chapter One said, 'the traditional organisations formed at a time of very limited access to statutory services. Some of these organisation still exist in name, their objectives are now outdated. In reality, they lost all

functionality except as a social forum'. Clearly, CCOs had experienced rapid changes, and it is imperative to study the changing nature of some organisations. Also, the response rate reveals the human resources constraints of some organisations, especially the Chinese schools.

At the second stage of the study, the LCCN invited organisations that had returned questionnaires to participate in in-depth interviews in order to explore their views on objectives, main services, financial conditions, and their relationships with the government. Finally, 16 out of 30 postal surveyed organisations were successfully interviewed from 21 November 2001 to 1 February 2002. The processes of in-depth interviews were taped and the Chinese versions of transcripts were prepared by staff of the LCCN and analysed by researchers of the Policy Studies Research Centre (PSRC) of the University of Lincoln, who also used SPSS to explore data from the postal survey for writing the report (Note 3).

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**Note 1**

The Research Advisory Group, which provided essential technical advice on conducting this research project, consisted of representatives from CCOs and statutory bodies including

1. Greater London Authority,
2. Commission for Racial Equality,
3. Hungerford Drug Project,
4. Chinese National Healthy Living Centre, and
5. Ealing Community Connecting Project.

**Note 2**

Two focus groups were conducted to modify the research questionnaire and give feedback on report writing. Members of the focus group were representatives of various types of organisations such as community centres, advice centres, health organisations and business associations.

**Note 3**

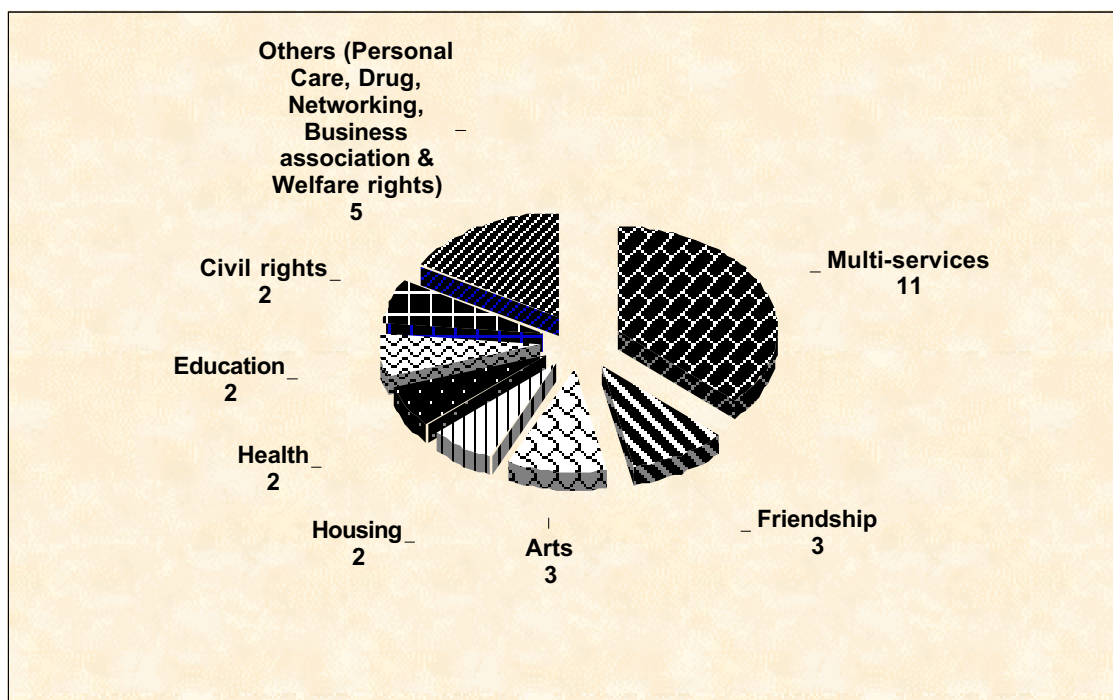
The research design and implementation of this study was done by the LCCN and its Research Advisory Committee. Dr. Chak Kwan Chan and Prof. Peter Somerville of the Policy Studies Research Centre of the University of Lincoln participated in the later stage of this research project, and were mainly responsible for analysing data and writing the research report.

## CHAPTER 3 FINDINGS- OBJECTIVES, SERVICES, AND USERS

### Areas of Service of Postal Surveyed Organisations

Among the 30 postal surveyed organisations, over one-third (11) were multi-service providers. Most organisations dealt with some particular issues of the Chinese community such as education, housing, health, drugs, personal care, civil and welfare rights. The work of three organisations was mainly concerned with strengthening the relationships of their members, while another three organisations promoted arts and cultural activities. The main duty of one organisation was to enhance the co-operation and development of UK Chinese organisations; the key task of another organisation was to represent the interests of the UK Chinese take-away business. The postal survey respondents can be classified into four types: (1) social service organisations, (2) kinsman/friendship organisations, (3) arts and culture organisations and (4) business associations.

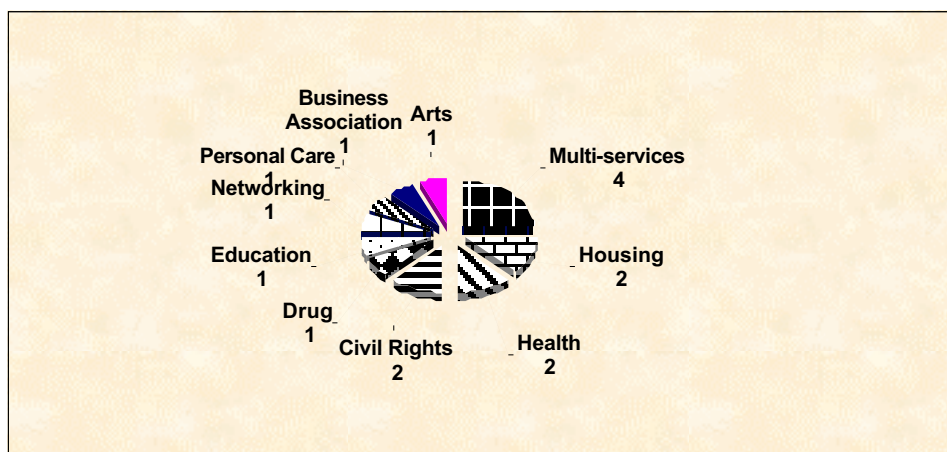
Chart 1: Areas of service of 30 postal surveyed organisations



## Areas of Service of In-depth Interviewed Organisations

Concerning the interviewees, nearly one-third (5) were Chairpersons of Management Committees, half (8) were Chief Administrators/Managers/Co-ordinators of their organisations, and nearly one-fifth (3) were frontline workers. Further exploration revealed that most respondents were responsible for making decisions, including dealing with the operation of as well as applying for grants for their organisations; they, therefore, might be able to provide up-to-date and representative views on their organisations. The main concerns of interviewees' organisations were as follows:

Chart 2: Areas of service of 16 in-depth interview organisations



The above data show that respondent organisations from both the in-depth interviews and postal survey were concerned with a wide range of issues; they, therefore, could be said to be representatives of different types of agencies.

## Geographical Service Areas

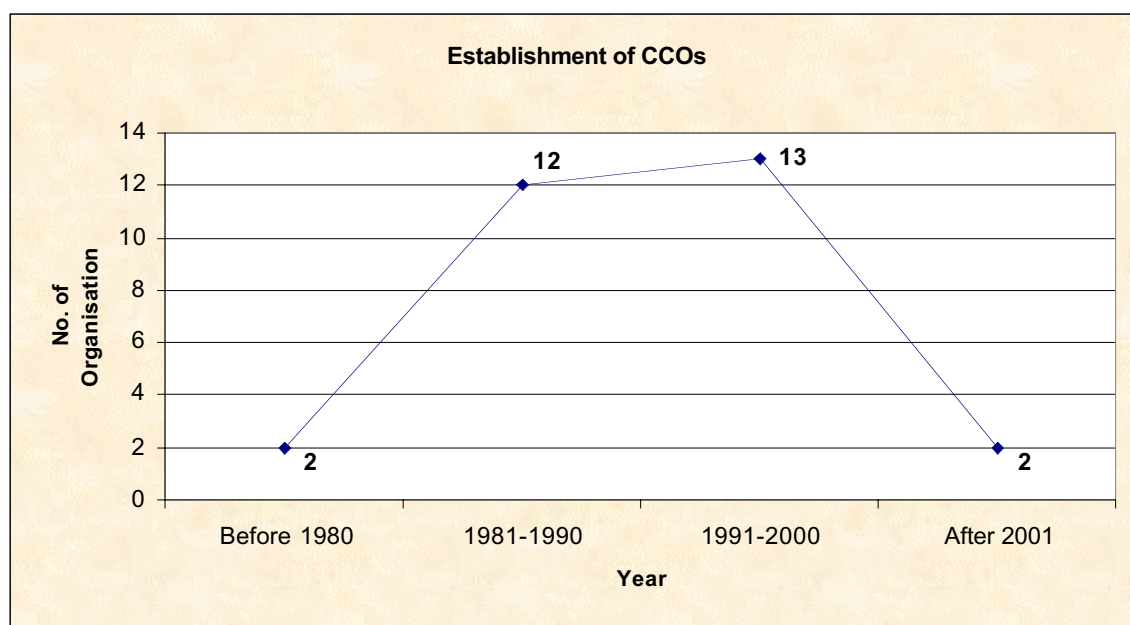
Respondents of the postal survey consisted of CCOs serving Chinese at national level as well as in London. 40% respondent organisations provided services for the whole of the UK Chinese community; 30% mainly dealt with the needs of Chinese people living in London; and the rest (30%) specifically tackled the problems of Chinese people in particular boroughs of London such as Camden, Islington, Croydon, Bromley, Hackney, Lewisham, Tower Hamlets, Westminster, and Kensington & Chelsea. As a large proportion of organisations were providing services beyond London, the views expressed by these organisations, to some extent, revealed the needs of Chinese organisations at national level.

## Objectives of Respondent Organisations

Among the 29 respondent organisations, only two were formed before 1980, while over half (15) were established after 1991. Previous literature

on UK Chinese organisations mentioned that traditional Chinese organisations have provided emergency relief, funeral arrangements and social activities for their fellow countrymen and women since the 1950s. However, the sample of this study reveals that an overwhelming majority (27) of London Chinese organisations were established after 1981. This might be related to socio-economic changes in the UK Chinese population. Some respondents (R1, 8, 12, 13) from in-depth interviews particularly pointed out that many members of their Management Committees were professionals such as accountants, lawyers, doctors, and social workers. As a respondent (R12) pointed out, 'seeing that there is no organisation specifically serving the mental health of the UK Chinese people, some mental health professionals set up this organisation'. Respondent (R8) of another organisation also stressed, 'our founding members included professionals such as accountants, lawyers' who noticed that there was no representative body safeguarding their business interests. According to a founding member of an organisation, the formation of his organisation was 'forced by the UK government', which claimed that 'foot and mouth disease' was caused by Chinese restaurants (R5). As the second and third generations of UK Chinese people are better educated, more proficient in English, and have a strong sense of citizenship, they are better equipped to protect the rights of their community. The characteristics of new Chinese organisations might be different from those of older ones in terms of the nature of their services, the administration of the organisation and the ideologies and expectations of committee members. Such development increased the diversity of UK Chinese agencies but at the same time might give rise to conflicts among Chinese organisations.

**Chart 3: Year of establishment of respondent organisations**



The objectives of respondent organisations were concerned with housing, health, development, and educational needs of Chinese people as well as safeguarding their civil rights. One of the common objectives shared by some organisations (R1, 2, 9, 10) was to help UK Chinese people to integrate into mainstream society. The language barrier, as pointed out by about 40% of respondents (R7, 9, 11, 14, 15, 16), is the key obstacle preventing their clients seeking public services. As one respondent (R11) stressed, 'the white community has neglected the needs of Chinese users. For example, without providing interpretation service, a Chinese person who knows nothing about English cannot understand your meaning no matter how slow the speed you speak. The person only nods his head. He, actually, understands nothing. This causes a lot of misunderstanding'.

### Objectives of organisations mentioned by respondents from in-depth interviews

<b>Main Service of Respondent Organisation</b>	<b>Key Objectives</b>
<b>Multi-services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Improve the quality of life of UK Chinese people.</li> <li>➤ Provide services for the elderly.</li> <li>➤ Provide advisory services.</li> <li>➤ Fight for the welfare rights of Chinese people.</li> <li>➤ Integrate the Chinese community into mainstream society.</li> <li>➤ Serve Chinese people in London, especially those who do not know English.</li> <li>➤ Spread Christian beliefs in the process of providing services.</li> <li>➤ Improve the quality of life of local Chinese people.</li> <li>➤ Help them to integrate into society.</li> <li>➤ Assess and meet needs of local Chinese people.</li> <li>➤ Promote mutual help among UK Chinese people.</li> <li>➤ Help young people to understand Chinese culture through Chinese language classes.</li> </ul>
<b>Housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Meet the housing needs of older people.</li> <li>➤ Express the housing needs of UK Chinese people.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provide high quality and affordable housing for Chinese people.</li> </ul>
<b>Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Promote mental health in the Chinese community.</li> <li>➤ Do preventive education.</li> <li>➤ Referring UK Chinese people to mainstream health services (NHS).</li> </ul>
<b>Civil rights</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Safeguard the civil rights of the UK Chinese community, preventing their rights from being violated.</li> <li>➤ Handle complaints about the police and negotiate with the police on behalf of complainants.</li> </ul>
<b>Personal care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provide home care and personal services for older people.</li> </ul>
<b>Drug</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provide counselling for drug users and launch drug prevention education.</li> </ul>
<b>Networking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Help Chinese people to have equal opportunities to get public resources and grants.</li> <li>➤ Help community organisations and voluntary organisations to effectively participate in the community and achieve economic development.</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provide opportunities for Chinese children to learn Chinese language and Chinese culture.</li> <li>➤ Teach children about Christian beliefs.</li> </ul>
<b>Business association</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A representative body representing the views of UK Chinese catering businesses.</li> <li>➤ Influence government policies related to catering businesses.</li> </ul>
<b>Arts and culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Promote Asian traditions and cultures</li> <li>➤ The integration of Eastern and Western traditions and cultures</li> <li>➤ Make Asian culture a popular activity in the UK through performing arts.</li> </ul>

### Types of Services and Users

The respondent organisations provided various types of services for a wide range of clients. Several conclusions can be drawn from the nature of services and the types of users. Firstly, welfare advice and education programmes were two key services, which were provided by about two-

thirds of organisations. The main reasons why Chinese organisations had to provide this type of service were, as explained by respondents from in-depth interviews, due to poor English of the users (R2, 7, 9, 11, 16), the lack of written Chinese welfare information (R11), and users' lack of knowledge of the existing social services (R9). Chinese workers helped their clients to translate English letters, apply for benefits, and also accompanied them to see doctors (R2, 7). A respondent (R15) who served the UK Chinese community for over two decades emphasised, 'I have contacted a lot of Chinese people and found that many of them need assistance. Because of language barriers and the lack of information, they, very often, don't know their rights'. Thus Chinese advice workers acted as a medium linking Chinese users and public resources.

As for the education service, two types of courses were organised by the surveyed organisations. The first one was in English language, while the second one was in Chinese language and culture. The English course was for UK Chinese people to improve the standard of their English. This course could enhance their employment opportunities. A community centre manager (R2) pointed out that the English course helped women to integrate into society by getting jobs, for example, as cashiers. The Chinese course was for Chinese children to learn the Chinese language and traditional culture (R13). According to a Chairperson (R16), 'seeing the emergence of the second generation in UK, we organised a Chinese language class for them. If Chinese people do not understand the Chinese language, they do not know their own 'roots'.

Secondly, older people, women, refugees, asylum seekers, and people with physical disabilities were the other main clients of the respondent organisations. Over a half (17) of welfare agencies provide various types of services for older Chinese people including medical advice, home care, housing, luncheon club and social activities. The ageing of the UK Chinese population has been an issue of concern among the respondent agencies. Older people were considered to be 'the most disadvantaged group' (R2), and 'services for older people was seen as 'the key service' by one organisation (R7). According to a welfare worker, most old people using their centre were 'lonely and are not living with their children. Thus, we hope that their physical, psychological, and spiritual needs can be met through our services'. As another respondent observed (R15), 'I have contacted many older women who come to the UK to take care of grandchildren. They, however, are left at home, leading a lonely life after their grandchildren are grown up'. Chinese organisations seem to play a unique role in providing culture-orientated services for older Chinese people. As an in-depth interviewee (R14) pointed out, even some older people understood the English language; they also will use 'our service because of culture factor'. In response to the increasing needs of older people, one organisation was planning to develop an out-reach service (R7). Regarding refugees and asylum seekers, Chinese organisations helped them to integrate into society by providing them with essential information on their rights.

Services for new immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers were provided by 23%, 27%, and 30% of respondent organisations respectively. This shows that Chinese organisations played an essential role in helping newcomers to integrate into UK society. The ethnic and cultural

background of such organisations becomes a basis for establishing trust and mutual help that cannot be easily achieved by mainstream welfare organisations.

Thirdly, health is another pressing issue in which nearly one-third (9) of respondent organisations were involved. Data from in-depth interviews reported UK Chinese people's difficulty in accessing mental health services provided by mainstream organisations. One Chinese counsellor (R11) observed that mainstream services for Chinese people were constrained by stereotyping of Chinese people, communication barriers, and cultural differences. Facing this need, Chinese welfare organisations provided a wide range of services such as casework, hot-line Chinese language counselling, mental health talks and exhibitions.

The services of some organisations were focusing on safeguarding the civil rights of UK Chinese people or protecting the interests of Chinese small businesses. For example, one organisation dealt with Chinese people's complaints about the police. Over the past two years, they received 75 complaints, including complaints of wrongful arrest. Among these cases, 12 complainants were finally found innocent. The caseworker (R4) stressed that their experience showed that the Chinese community needed this type of service. If Chinese people were willing to fight for their rights, 'injustice can be addressed'. Another organisation lodged a petition, expressing UK Chinese people's dissatisfaction with the government officials who blamed UK Chinese restaurants for causing 'foot and mouth disease'. Another association organised seminars for take-away businesses. It also set up a 'Justice Fund' providing financial aid to those who had been unfairly treated or racially harassed. In addition, one organisation carried out some networking programmes, aimed at empowering UK Chinese organisations to get access to public funds and enhance their capacities. Thus, apart from traditional services meeting health, housing and social needs, some recently established Chinese organisations were concerned with the quality of citizenship and civil rights of UK Chinese people.

Chart 4: Types of services provided by the postal surveyed organisations

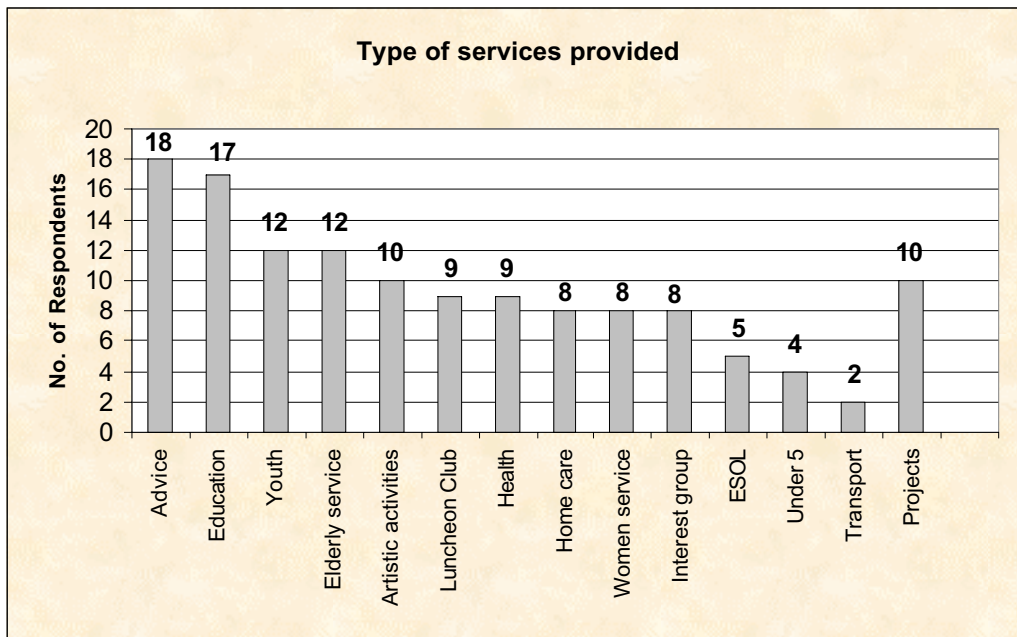
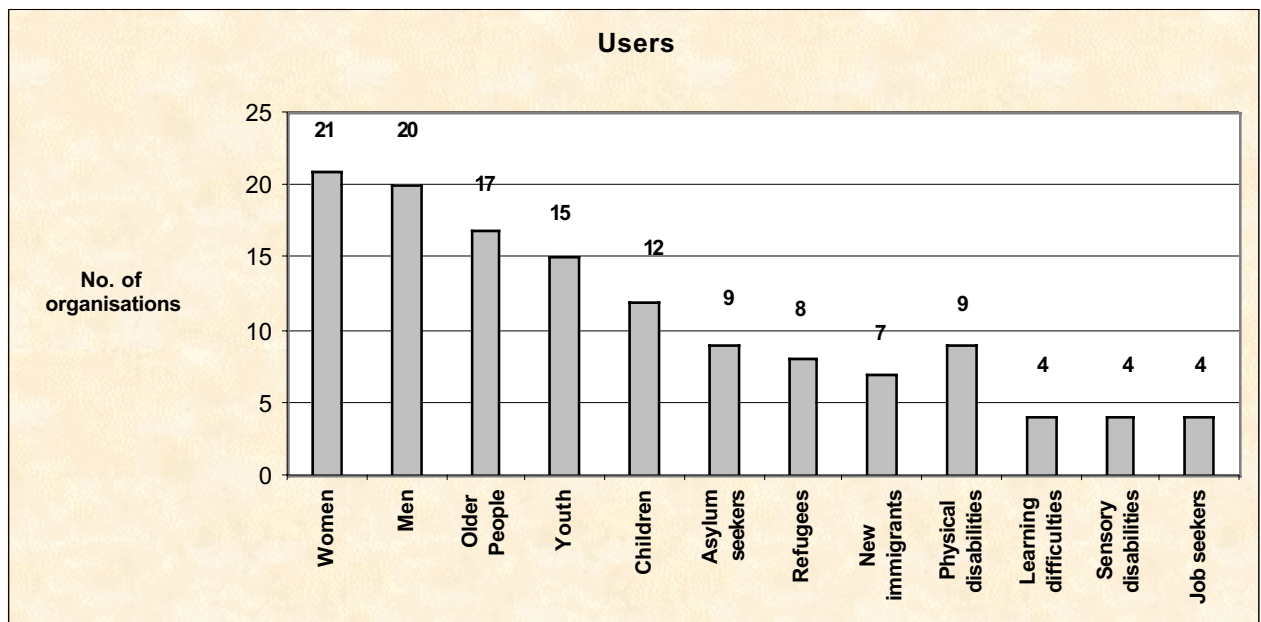
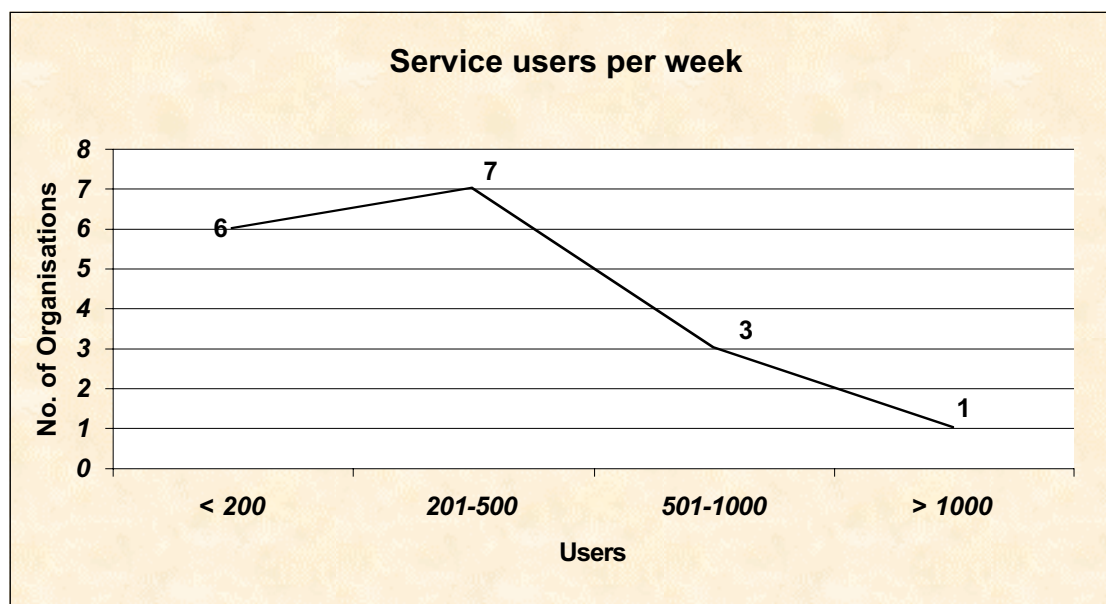


Chart 5: The types of users of postal surveyed organisations



Among the 17 respondent organisations which could count the number of clients per week, over two-fifths (7) had between 201 and 500 users, and nearly one-quarter (4) had 501 or over.

Chart 6: Number of users per week of postal surveyed organisations



Nearly half (14) of the respondent organisations had set up membership schemes. Among 12 respondents, half (6) had less than 500 members, one-quarter (3) between 501 and 1,000, and another quarter (3) 1001 or more. However, there were big differences in the size of membership fees with 12 organisations having membership fees between £2.50 and £10, while 2 charged over £11 (one business group charged £30 and one Chinese school charged £105 for annual school fee). Such a difference might be related to the nature of their clients. Organisations whose clients were mainly older people and students might find it difficult to set a higher fee. On the other hand, organisations that served the interests of businessmen might have scope to levy higher contributions from their members.

Chart 7: Number of members of postal surveyed organisations

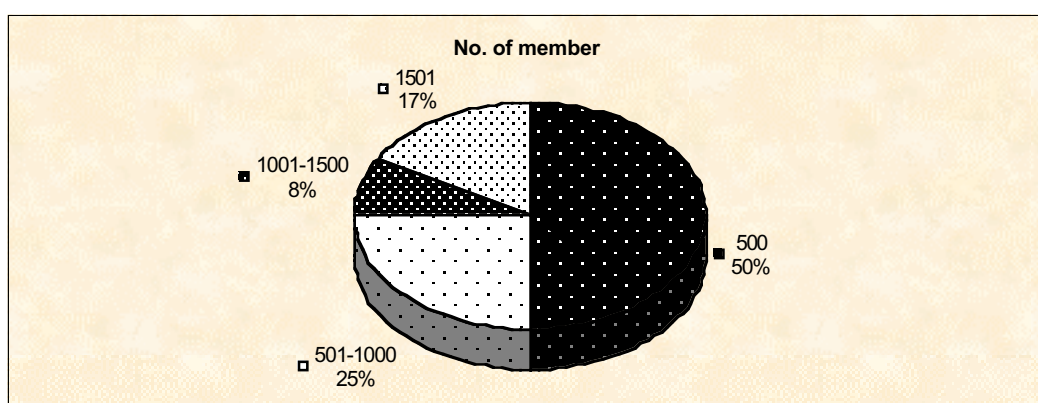


Chart 8: Membership fees of postal surveyed organisations

