LONDON COVID-19 COMMUNITY RESPONSE SURVEY: WEEK TWELVE/THIRTEEN QUESTIONS

FIELDWORK 29th JUNE-8th July 2020

CITY INTELLIGENCE

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Community Response Survey

The weekly COVID-19 Community Response Survey asks civil society organisations who work in London, a small number of questions to understand the impact of COVID-19 and associated policy measures, such as social distancing, on vulnerable populations in the capital.

The first week of the survey focused on asking baseline questions to capture organisational profiles, and included a small number of questions relating to the immediate impact post-lockdown of COVID-19.

Surveys from week two onwards are shorter, and ask organisations a number of questions about changes they have seen in the last week.

This latest survey includes data collected over two weeks.

Results from the survey are shared with responding organisations and with decision-makers supporting the pan-London response to COVID-19.

Cohort details

The questions were sent to more than 250 Civil Society organisations who have agreed to take part. The organisations were recruited through existing contacts and mailing lists held by the GLA Community Engagement and Equality & Fairness teams.

In addition, larger organisations and infrastructure providers were asked to cascade the invitation down to their networks.

A total of 115 organisations responded in full or in part to the questions, which were live between Monday 29th June and Wednesday 8th July 2020.

Note: due to the relatively small sample size and the targeted way in which recruitment was conducted, it is important not to extrapolate from any findings in the weekly survey to all civil society organisations in London or any particular population of Londoners. Results from the weekly survey should be used alongside other sources of intelligence to understand the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable communities.

CITY INTELLIGENCE

CHANGE IN NUMBER OF PEOPLE SEEKING SUPPORT

This week around half of responding organisations (57) saw an increase in the number of people seeking support, compared to the previous week. This is the highest proportion we have seen (see chart).
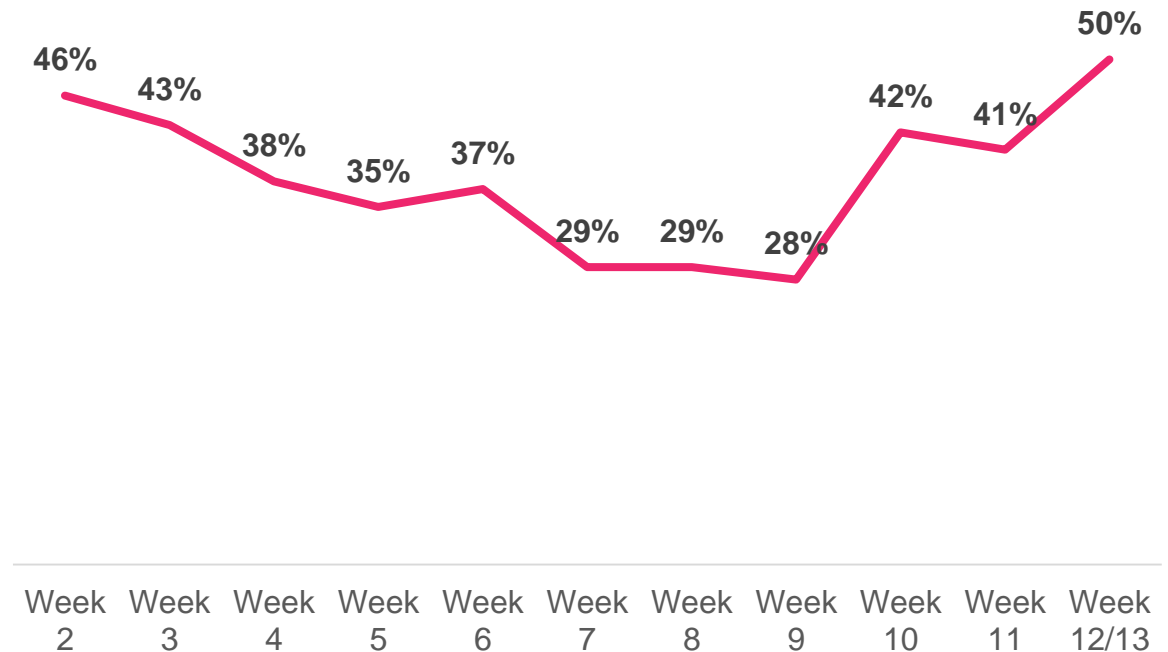
51 reported little change in numbers and 7 reported a decrease

Organisations working with socially excluded individuals were particularly likely to report an increase in demand (68 per cent).

Around half of organisations working with people with a financial need (55 per cent), the general public (50 per cent) and BAME Londoners (46 per cent) reported an increase.

Organisations that work with young Londoners were less likely to report an increase in demand (26 per cent).

Change in numbers seeking support (proportion of organisations)

46%	43%	38%	35%	37%	29%	29%	28%	42%	41%	50%
Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12/13

Source: COVID-19 Community Response Survey (n=115)

CITY INTELLIGENCE

CHANGE IN NUMBERS SEEKING SUPPORT FOR SPECIFIC ISSUES

We asked responding organisations to tell us whether the number of people seeking support for a range of specific issues was higher, the same or lower compared to last week. We asked them to only answer if they deal with and have seen each of the issues. This week we continue to see shifts in the types of issues being reported: the proportion of organisations citing issues around employment has increased again, as has the proportion citing poverty. Other issues such as housing, digital connectivity and mental health remain important, with a high proportion of organisations referring to them. Physical health and domestic violence are less frequently reported as increasing, but have seen an increase compared to the previous week.

Issue	Proportion reporting higher demand	No. of responses	Issue	Proportion reporting higher demand	No. of responses
Employment	64%	50	Debt issues	40%	47
Poverty	60%	47	Childcare or Parenting	38%	34
Housing	59%	49	Immigration issues	37%	35
Digital connectivity	55%	66	Discrimination	37%	30
Mental health	51%	75	Access to health	35%	49
Access to benefits	46%	56	Grief bereavement	34%	38
Isolation and loneliness	45%	77	Access to food	33%	72
Physical health	45%	53	Victim support	33%	21
Domestic violence	42%	33	Access to care	33%	40
Capacity Building	41%	44			

CITY INTELLIGENCE

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOUR ORGANISATION IS FACING THIS WEEK?

We asked responding organisations to tell us the three biggest challenges they were facing last week. The most common challenges are still longer-term funding and recovery planning

Challenge	Number of organisations	Issue	Number of organisations
Funding - sustainability beyond the crisis	56	Capacity - due to reduction in volunteers	<10
Planning for recovery/easing of lockdown	37	Capacity - due to staff working from home	<10
Capacity - due to increased demand	21	Capacity - general	<10
Staff wellbeing and mental health	19	Difficulty in delivering services online	<10
Social distancing in delivery	18	Funding - relationship with existing funders	<10
Funding - general	18	Working with local authorities	<10
Access to urgent funding for new needs	17	Digital skills or training Advice/training on how to support vulnerable groups	<10
Digital or tech equipment	16		
Need to provide new or changed services	13	Capacity - due to furloughed staff	<10
Maintaining beneficiary engagement	12	Personal Protective Equipment	<10
Reaching vulnerable groups	12		

CITY INTELLIGENCE

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOUR BENEFICIARIES ARE FACING THIS WEEK?

We asked responding organisations to tell us the three biggest challenges their beneficiaries were facing in the last week. Similar to previous weeks, digital exclusion, social isolation, mental health and employment issues remain widespread. Issues around low income and access to food have risen in importance this week

Challenge	Number of organisations	Issue	Number of organisations
Digital exclusion	35	Home schooling	10
Low income	35	Bereavement	7
Social Isolation	34	Domestic violence	7
Employment issues	33	Family tension	6
Mental health	33	Multi-lingual support	6
Access to food and essentials	28	Access to benefits	5
Social distancing rules	17	Access to local authority support	4
Inadequate accommodation	13	Access to PPE	2
No recourse to public funds	12	Eviction	2

Source: COVID-19 Community Response Survey

CITY INTELLIGENCE

BENEFICIARY CHALLENGES BY BENEFICIARY GROUP

Do biggest beneficiary challenges vary by the main groups of beneficiaries organisations work with?

Organisations working with socially excluded and vulnerable mention a wider variety of issues than other groups, but were more likely to mention issues around low incomes (55 per cent of organisations)

Organisations working with young people were more likely to mention home schooling (21 per cent of organisations), mental health (50 per cent) and social isolation (38 per cent)

Organisations working with the general public were particularly likely to mention access to food and essentials (31 per cent) and low incomes (47 per cent)
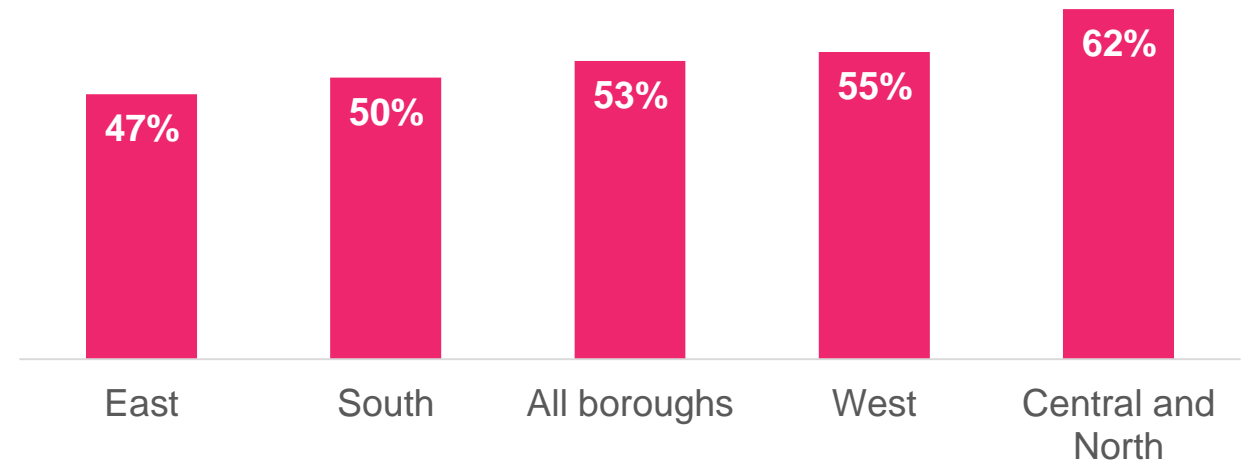
Organisations working with BAME Londoners were much more likely than other organisations to mention digital exclusion (46 per cent of organisations). Similar to other groups many mentioned employment issues (39 per cent) and low income (39 per cent)

Organisations working with the people with a financial need were particularly likely to mention access to food and essentials (50 per cent), employment issues (50 per cent) and low incomes (55 per cent)

CITY INTELLIGENCE

CHANGE IN NUMBER OF PEOPLE SEEKING SUPPORT BY GEOGRAPHY

Organisations working in the Central and North sub-regions are more likely to report an increase in the number of people seeking support, compared to last week.

Proportion of organisations seeing an increase in requests for support by London sub-region

47%	50%	53%	55%	62%
East	South	All boroughs	West	Central and North

Source: COVID-19 Community Response Survey

CITY INTELLIGENCE

What do you and your beneficiaries need to feel connected to and participate fully in London's recovery?

Regular information (16) – clear communication, data and information was the most commonly occurring need expressed. This included information about the current context, and also transparency about structures for decision making.

"Main thing is knowledge & information which can be given to our clients, so they can make informed decisions. No barriers to involvement. Programmes for engagement are community led."

"Strong effective two way communications and genuine partnership between regional and local government and other public bodies and the voluntary and community sector, real inclusion of equalities issues as a priority and transparent structures with siloing with recognition of intersectional identities and life experience Recognition that small grass roots groups have much to contribute but cannot necessarily easily gain access to either decision making or funding"

What do you and your beneficiaries need to feel connected to and participate fully in London's recovery?

Funding (15) – the second most common need expressed was funding to support organisations to meaningfully engage, and also recognising barriers that communities might face.

"As a small organisation, we need to be supported to engage in this process as we all work part-time. Support could look like funding for more staff, or sensitivity and flexibility around meeting times. Our clients would need support around costs of attending meetings and assurance re their data not being shared in a way that might negatively impact on their immigration status."

CITY INTELLIGENCE

What do you and your beneficiaries need to feel connected to and participate fully in London's recovery?

Meaningful opportunities to be involved (13) – the abridged quote below captures the sentiment raised by a number of respondents.

"The GLA needs to create co-designed opportunities for residents to input into recovery strategies that will affect them. We have heard repeatedly from local residents that they want to have a say in how to tackle the issues that affect themselves and their community. Consultation is not enough; they want to be part of generative discussions, and to play an active role in how the big issues for London like safety, housing, and racial inequality are dealt with. Co-designing engagement strategies with the people affected by the issues will be key to ensuring representative engagement.

We understand from our own co-designed approaches to engagement the importance of safe places, trusted partners, interpreters and refreshments for different communities. It is also worth recognising providing residents with opportunities to be part of conversations about the future in itself builds community, through the development of relationships and understanding between people with different experiences. Finding ways to share resources and power with individuals and small but vital voluntary groups will be key to recovery. A focus on a transfer of power to local community groups and members who are already motivated to make change would be transformative in London's Recovery."

CITY INTELLIGENCE

What do you and your beneficiaries need to feel connected to and participate fully in London's recovery?

Addressing digital exclusion (11) – the need to ensure we engage with those who do not have access to digital forms of communication was another reoccurring theme.

"Need to ensure everyone has equal access. Many of the people we support have no access to technology or are unable to use it so are left behind"

"Our beneficiaries need information translated in their own languages, they need to be able to access testing simply and be supported in their own language to do so, a programme of long term pre-entry English support that suits their home situations and barriers they face, they need access to smart phones, credit, computers and intensive support to learn how to access information online."

Thoughts or reflections on your experience of the survey so far, and what would be most useful for you in the upcoming months.

The majority of responses focussed on the survey being both useful and interesting.

"The survey has given XXX direction, understanding, data and support to fine-tune the COVID response strategy.   It has also created a network or strong, likeminded businesses and individuals. It would be great to continue this support/ sharing group, post Covid."

"The survey enabled an opportunity to review and reflect on the impact Coronavirus was having on an already disadvantaged and vulnerable group of people."

What are the key questions or lines of inquiry that you think need to be explored at this stage?

Civil Society		
Funding	**Collaboration**	**Service design**
What support will be put in place to ensure that charities could survive if this happened again? Sustainability of anchor and other orgs that rely on rental income for survival Flexible funding to allow for innovation How do we make sure that the VCS can access longer-term funding, especially with the C19 emergency funding coming to end in the months to come? How can statutory/voluntary sectors and funders work more closely to identify issues quicker and target funding at areas with the most impact?	How can agencies work closer together in a sustainable way without services becoming overwhelmed? How to create joined up systems of support for service users to avoid duplication of work (e.g. finding laptops/tablets for digitally excluded residents) or residents getting lost between systems. How we can help one another? Fresh Partnership suggestions. How best to pool resources? More informed approach to beneficiary needs analysis. How do we make sure that we nurture and strengthen genuine partnership between local authorities, VCS and other (non) statutory providers? And, especially with local authority budgets further squeezed, how do we avoid the VCS indirectly taking up statutory duties?	I guess it would be good to know what is needed in the long term. What service can we provide to help? What barriers might there be to beneficiaries taking advantage of a different type of service? What resources are no longer needed/relevant in a post covid world? Can those resources be redirected? What services have proved "essential" during this time and how can we support them to continue to add value to our society How can we create a sustainable response What are the new directions/ focus of other charities/ organisation on bringing all communities together. Are there any unexpected indicators of resilience?

CITY INTELLIGENCE

What are the key questions or lines of inquiry that you think need to be explored at this stage?

Inequality
Why has this pandemic disproportionately affected the BAMER community?
At this stage, we like to look back and see why this level of inequality still exists.
How can we challenge, identify the inequalities that Covid and the black lives matter campaign has shown?
How can we ensure, that the barriers and the parallel world that many communities live in, continues to be overcome?
Identify - perhaps through the mortality figures the causes of the disproportionate number of deaths in the BAME community and socio economic groups - learning disabled and autistic people look as if they have died in disproportionate numbers.
What do older people feel has supported them most effectively?
Who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic? How are they accessing support now?
Why more people from the BAME community are dying due to COVID-19?

CITY INTELLIGENCE

What are the key questions or lines of inquiry that you think need to be explored at this stage?

Participation and engagement

What is needed to ensure those groups hit hardest are able to participate in London's recovery?

How do we make sure that young people, one of the groups most impacted by C19, will remain central to the recovery process – immediately and longer-term?

How do we get knowledge and information from the grass roots about needs and solutions to those making decisions?

A system of e-portals around specific areas in the recovery process for all stakeholders to feed in ideas; learn from the ideas proposed by others; and establish relevant networks and partnerships.

How to engage directly with older Londoners and their reps in the Age Friendly London process - including strategic and priority development, research, implementation and oversight of progress?

How can the GLA actively engage with older Londoners and their reps in making the LRBs recovery plans more inclusive of older and younger people?

How do we engage the recipients of support during the crisis in a meaningful conversation that goes beyond consultation or listening, and starts to create a sense of agency in people in solving entrenched structural problems?

How do we harness and maintain community owned action, and neighbourhood communication without seeking to formalise or shape it?

What are the key questions or lines of inquiry that you think need to be explored at this stage?

Digital Exclusion	Housing and Homelessness	Welfare support
How can we address the issue of digital exclusion, when so much official communication during this pandemic has relied on this? How to reach people who have no IT – what is the new future? How can people with no digital access and skills access services and support? How do we ensure those without digital skills and equipment are further excluded by the crisis? People who cannot afford wifi or the expense of equipment i.e. android phone with data. How do they seek advice?	How do we avoid further increases in rough sleeping and make sure vulnerable groups, like young people, are getting access to safe accommodation? How do make sure post-lockdown homelessness prevention work also for those who are hidden homeless, not only for the those at risk of eviction? What can be done to pursue the government to provide homeless people with legal right to emergency accommodation, regardless of their immigration status?	How can we collaboratively influence government about the need for social housing and good planning (with proper local government involvement)? *How will we work together on influencing government on e.g. necessary benefit changes? Going forward, how are we assisting those on Universal Credit to regain employment? Especially those with no recourse to public funds, who often work in the informal sector? In addition, how are we ensuring no one, after being given assistance (such as Universal Credit), doesn't slip through the cracks in the coming months and years?

CITY INTELLIGENCE

What are the key questions or lines of inquiry that you think need to be explored at this stage?

Food	Social distancing and second wave
How to end need for food banks through ending poverty with Universal Income for all at birth? How to create sustainable food supplies for low income families? How to promote healthy food over high cost to health and environment low priced processed food? What are the root causes of food poverty that this crisis has highlighted?	How can we get back to service provision with social distancing is place. When will local community spaces run by the council be reopening How do we start face to face activities again? How can we be prepared, for a possible peak/or any future Pandemics. How can we support each other to prevent it from happening again?

CITY INTELLIGENCE

Any other issues

Access to advice – a few respondents raised concern about access to advice and support.

"Disadvantaged BAME groups who have been disproportionately affected are reluctant to go out and are not accessing services such as welfare benefits advice."

"There has been an expected increase in the number of cases referred to our Free Legal Advice Centre for employment advice. Housing and family matters are also issues that many clients are contacting us about."

NEXT STEPS

The next survey will cover two weeks, being in the field between 13th July – 22nd July.

Results available on Monday 27th July.

CITY INTELLIGENCE