



LONDON COVID-19 COMMUNITY RESPONSE SURVEY: WEEK FOURTEEN/FIFTEEN QUESTIONS

FIELDWORK 13th JULY-22nd July 2020

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Community Response Survey

The 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 week's survey collected data 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 130 organisations responded in full or in part to the week seven questions, which were live between Monday 13th July and Wednesday 22nd 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.

CHANGE IN NUMBER OF PEOPLE SEEKING SUPPORT

This week 45 per cent of responding organisations (58) saw an increase in the number of people seeking support in the last two weeks.

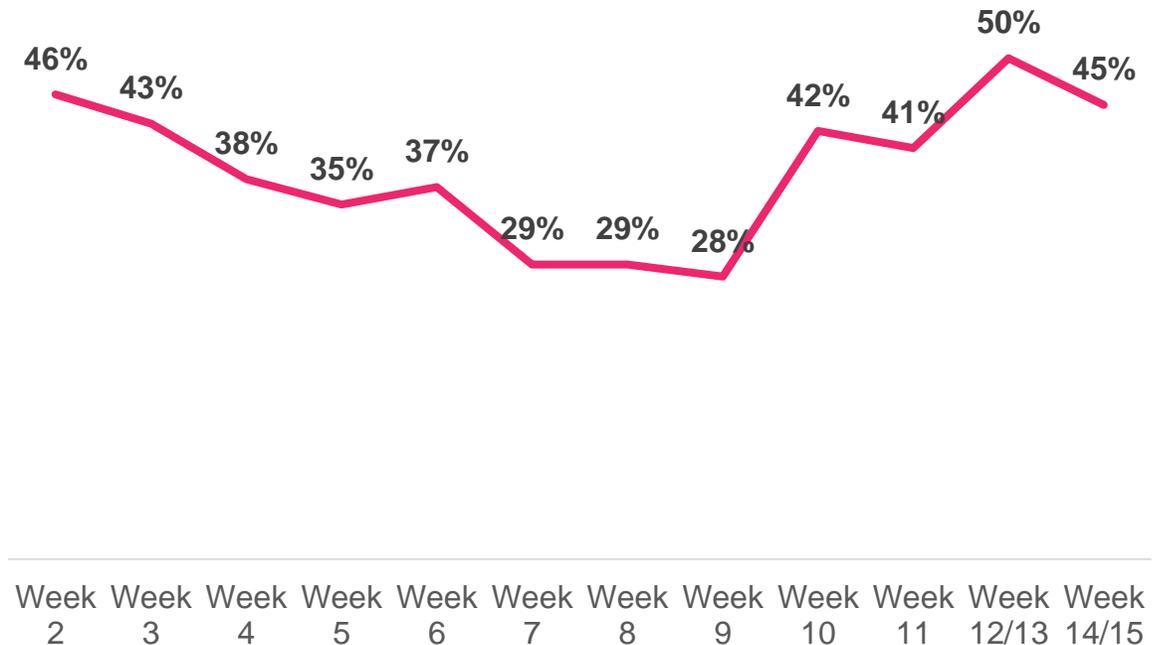
58 reported little change in numbers and 14 reported a decrease

Organisations working with socially excluded individuals and BAME Londoners were particularly likely to report an increase in demand (60 per cent).

Half of organisations working with people with young people reported an increase (50 per cent).

Organisations that work with people with a financial need (45 per cent), and with the general public (41 per cent) were slightly less likely to report an increase in demand.

Change in numbers seeking support (number of organisations)



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 have seen a noticeable increase in the proportion of organisations experiencing an increase in demand around mental and physical health issues, and around capacity building.

Issue	Proportion reporting higher demand	No. of responses	Issue	Proportion reporting higher demand	No. of responses
Employment	70%	76	Debt issues	45%	66
Mental health	64%	97	Discrimination	44%	45
Housing	60%	63	Grief bereavement	42%	43
Poverty	59%	78	Education	41%	49
Capacity Building	58%	62	Immigration issues	40%	50
Physical health	58%	69	Access to health	35%	62
Substance misuse	55%	33	Childcare or Parenting	33%	45
Digital connectivity	52%	85	Access to care	31%	48
Homelessness	51%	53	Access to food	30%	106
Access to benefits	50%	74	Victim support	30%	27
Isolation and loneliness	50%	92	Hate crime	28%	32
Domestic violence	49%	43			

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	50	Need to provide new or changed services	12
Planning for recovery/easing of lockdown	39	Capacity - general	11
Capacity - due to increased demand	28	Digital skills or training	11
Funding - general	24	Working with local authorities	10
Funding - access to urgent funding for new needs	21	Difficulty in delivering services online	<10
Social distancing in delivery	20	Funding - relationship with existing funders	<10
Staff wellbeing and mental health	20	Capacity - due to furloughed staff	<10
Capacity - due to reduction in volunteers	16	Maintaining contact with beneficiaries	<10
Digital or tech equipment	15	Personal Protective Equipment	<10
Reaching vulnerable groups	15	Advice/training on supporting vulnerable groups	<10
Capacity - due to staff working from home	12		

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. Over time we are seeing a trend towards issues around employment and income becoming more frequently mentioned, although issues around mental health/social isolation are still frequently cited

Challenge	Number of organisations	Issue	Number of organisations
Employment issues	52	Access to benefits	10
Low income	49	Access to local authority support	<10
Mental health	45	Domestic violence	<10
Social Isolation	36	Bereavement	<10
Digital exclusion	35	Multi-lingual support	<10
Access to food and essentials	29	Home schooling	<10
Social distancing rules	13	Substance misuse	<10
Inadequate accommodation	12	Access to PPE	<10
Family tension	11	Eviction	<10
No recourse to public funds	11	Hate crime	<10

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 likely to mention issues around low income (44 per cent of organisations), employment (36 per cent) social isolation (28 per cent) and access to food (28 per cent)

Organisations working with young people were more likely to mention family tensions (23 per cent of organisations), mental health (50 per cent) and social distancing (23 per cent)

Organisations working with the general public were particularly likely to mention access to food and essentials (36 per cent), loss of jobs (49 per cent) and low incomes (51 per cent)

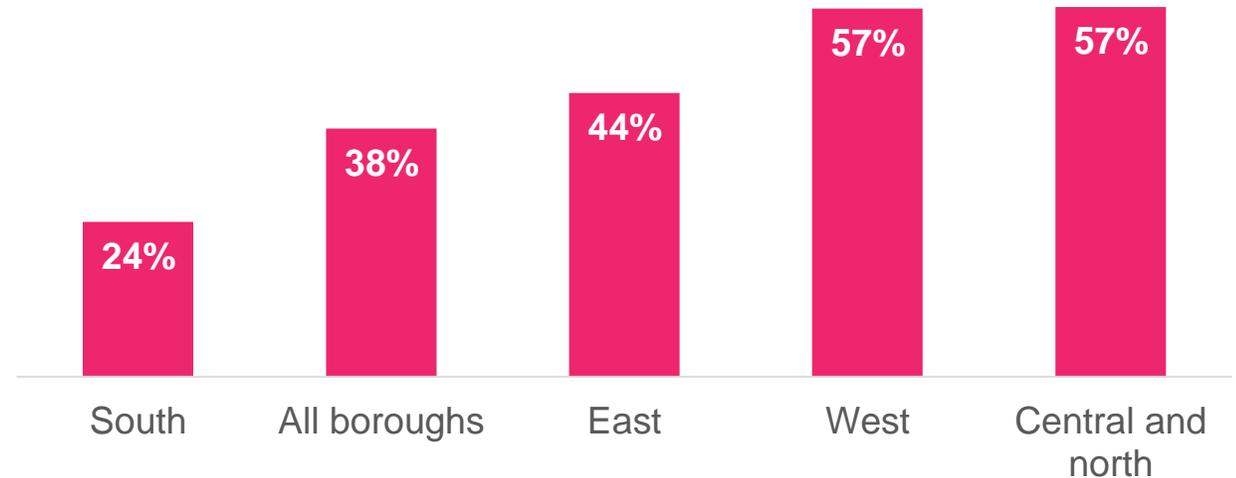
Organisations working with BAME Londoners were much more likely than other organisations to mention digital exclusion (48 per cent of organisations). Similar to other groups many mentioned employment issues (56 per cent) and low income (48 per cent)

Organisations working with the people with a financial need were particularly likely to mention access to food and essentials (36 per cent), employment issues (50 per cent) and low incomes (64 per cent)

CHANGE IN NUMBER OF PEOPLE SEEKING SUPPORT BY GEOGRAPHY

Organisations working in the Central and North and West 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



CASE STUDIES

A previous survey asked respondents to share key questions they were asking/exploring. We grouped these together in to the four key areas and asked for case studies addressing them.

- Creating joined up systems of support for service users to avoid duplication of work (21)
- Addressing underlying inequalities that led to disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on some communities (23)
- Supporting those groups hardest hit to be able to participate in London's recovery (5)
- Reaching people who are digitally exclude (18)

A huge amount of information was shared and we will take some time to draw out the case studies more fully by following up with individual respondents, the following slides include some initial responses.

JOINED UP SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT

We received 21 responses to this area of inquiry, with groups referencing collaboration with Local Authorities and other health services, role of infrastructure and the use of technology such as WhatsApp to communicate.

“When it all started, many different bodies, statutory, voluntary sector and citizens directly through mutual aid groups, all stepped up to action and realised very quickly that not coordinating with each other could have consequences, which might even go beyond duplication and wasting of resources, and actually compromise the very people whom we were trying to reach most.

For example, texts going round on WhatsApp groups in newly set-up mutual aid groups that included personal details of vulnerable people. We quickly brought together the 8 local voluntary sector organisations who were able to offer a food delivery service and the Council and worked up a single, council operated hub that assessed need (with, at the time not very stringent criteria, given the emergency) and refer to the VSO according to geography, what need they could meet and capacity, so we were not overwhelmed.

In this way between ourselves and the Council we were able to meet all the emergency food needs of the borough. The council supported about 700 and the rest was met by the rest of us: several times that number. We have met weekly to trouble shoot.

What is happening now that the crisis phase is coming to an end, is organisations starting to retreat back to their old habits and ways. We need to work hard to avoid this and use the momentum generated in joint-up working to continue the collaboration. For example, recently the Council was about to send a letter, unilaterally to the households they were supporting to say their support will stop when shielding is paused. We are working hard using our weekly food hubs meeting to create a conversation to flesh out the consequences of such an announcement being made without coordination with the rest of us. Essentially, we will all be overwhelmed.”

ADDRESSING UNDERLYING INEQUALITIES

Respondents wrote about interventions related to mental health, social isolation, employment and debt. Organisations are developing innovative solutions to take a systems approach to addressing underlying inequalities.

“Food aid has to be an emergency stopgap. It is unsustainable and in the long term, it is debilitating for the people getting the aid and for society. We are starting a Good Food Box (vegetables) alongside our food aid in order to in a small way address some of these problems. This is aimed at low income families and starts with a small box for £3.10 a week. It will accept Healthy Start Vouchers as well. The boxes will have some choice of culturally appropriate food as well as come direct from small farmers.

This project will employ people at more than London Living wage and is sustainable as well as provide healthy food to low income families and give farmers an adequate price for their food and direct contact with people taking out the expensive middlemen. We see this as one replicable model for the beginnings of a new food system.”

SUPPORTING GROUPS TO PARTICIPATE

The example below sets out details of how one organisation is supporting groups who have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 to participate in the recovery process.

“XXXX has launched a new action research project to understand how the COVID-19 crisis is affecting low income and other disproportionately affected households in London, including renters, disabled people, single parents and people from certain BAME communities.

For this project, we have recruited 17 researchers with direct experience of the issues being investigated. They are aged between 20s and 70s, and they speak 13 languages amongst them. Over the next five months, they will use their networks to contact households in London to take part in the research, and will support their peers to record their experiences through interviews, self-filming, and diary writing.

Community researchers will also work with us to develop and shape policy solutions informed by the community insights. Together with the XXXX Research and Policy Team, the community researchers have chosen to focus on how the following factors have impacted their peers' wellbeing during the pandemic: - Powerlessness over sources of income and expenditure - The help and support households receive - Digital access - Mental health

This research will give policy-makers the opportunity to hear directly from those most affected about their financial challenges before and during the pandemic, and their own suggested solutions for increasing their financial resilience.”

DIGITAL EXCLUSION

One of the primary mechanisms for overcoming digital exclusions mentioned by groups is the distribution of tech or data.

“The iPads have been matched with older service users to enable them to connect with friends and family. This has been especially important during this difficult time when many older people are more isolated than usual. We have first talked to the service user over the phone to find out their interests and what they would like to be able to use the iPad for. We have then set them up so they are 'ready to use' on delivery.

We hold a handover/training session at their home (in full PPE) and then follow up with telephone support as needed. One older service user has been able to join a zoom meeting for the first time and have a virtual 'coffee morning' with friends. Another service user has been able to use iPlayer to catch up on TV programmes she has wanted to watch! Another has been able to watch YouTube videos of their favourite singer, we even set her screensaver with an image of the singer, which was a nice surprise when she turned the device on!”

EXISTING RESEARCH

Survey respondents were asked to share existing research or evidence to feed in to the London Recovery process. Below is a list of reports shared, groups also shared further details of areas of research they are interested in. We will be doing further analysis on the responses.

Report by	Link
Kanlungan Filipino Consortium	https://www.kanlungan.org.uk/a-chance-to-feel-safe-report
Street Games	https://www.streetgames.org/the-experience-of-the-coronavirus-lockdown-in-low-income-areas-of-england-and-wales https://network.streetgames.org/sites/default/files/Youth%20Voice%20Research.pdf
Alexandra Rose Charity	https://www.alexandrarose.org.uk/blog/rose-vouchers-helped-bushras-family https://www.alexandrarose.org.uk/blog/how-rose-vouchers-helped-ferdaushis-family https://www.alexandrarose.org.uk/blog/how-rose-vouchers-helped-kimberlys-family
Carers Trust	https://carers.org/what-we-do/our-survey-on-the-impact-of-coronavirus-on-young-carers-and-young-adult-carers
Positive Ageing In London	http://pailondon.org.uk/london-recovery-plan/ http://pailondon.org.uk/age-friendly-london/ http://pailondon.org.uk/more-pail-campaigns
Centre for Ageing Better	https://www.ageing-better.org.uk/blogs/how-are-older-people-adapting-digital-technology-during-covid-19-pandemic https://www.ageing-better.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-07/back-on-track.pdf Poverty/Disadvantage https://www.ageing-better.org.uk/news/lockdown-could-leave-next-generation-retirees-poorer-and-sicker-last https://www.ageing-better.org.uk/news/lockdown-could-leave-next-generation-retirees-poorer-and-sicker-last
Transport for All	https://www.transportforall.org.uk/files/streetscapestfatraveltalkreportjune2020.pdf

ENGAGEMENT PLANS & SUPPORT

In response to a question about organisational plans to engage users in recovery, respondents spoke about using surveys and user forums to understand the impact of COVID-19 and hold conversations.

“We have conducted a number of local research surveys throughout the lock-down period to measure the impact on our local civil society organisations and residents. We are in the process of devising a further survey to elicit information regarding recovery and adapting to the new normal. Template surveys and shared learning would be welcomed.”

“We are hoping to carry out research bringing together a number of other surveys and pieces of research on the impact of Covid on specific equalities groups, providing some consolidation and highlighting intersectional issues. It would be really useful to have information about what others are doing, and for others to share any specific surveys/research they have done on the impact on specific equalities groups”

ANY OTHER ISSUES

- Support for Older Londoners – this week 4 organisations wrote in to highlight exclusion faced by older Londoners, particularly in relation to digital access.

“As I have indicated, the over 80s who are not digitally aware are often missed out. Perhaps it takes too long to write a letter in today's digital world and therefore communication is poor with the elderly. The older generation are growing in number and it will be fine when the 70s of today reach their 80s and 90's although technology moves so fast that they may get left behind, but for today's generation of 80s and 90s and of course 100s they remain, in the main, out of the loop.”

“For our synagogue, it is the impact of coronavirus on older members of the community who do not have internet access or any access to digital devices and so miss out on our Zoom services and groups.”



NEXT STEPS

The next survey will cover two weeks, being in the field between 27th July – 5th August.

Results available on Monday 10th August.