



LONDON COVID-19 COMMUNITY RESPONSE SURVEY: WEEK FOUR QUESTIONS

FIELDWORK 4th-7th MAY 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.

We aim to increase the size of the cohort and will continue to ask new joiners the week one baseline questions.

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 240 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 123 organisations responded in full or in part to the week four questions, which were live between Monday 4th and Thursday 7th May 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

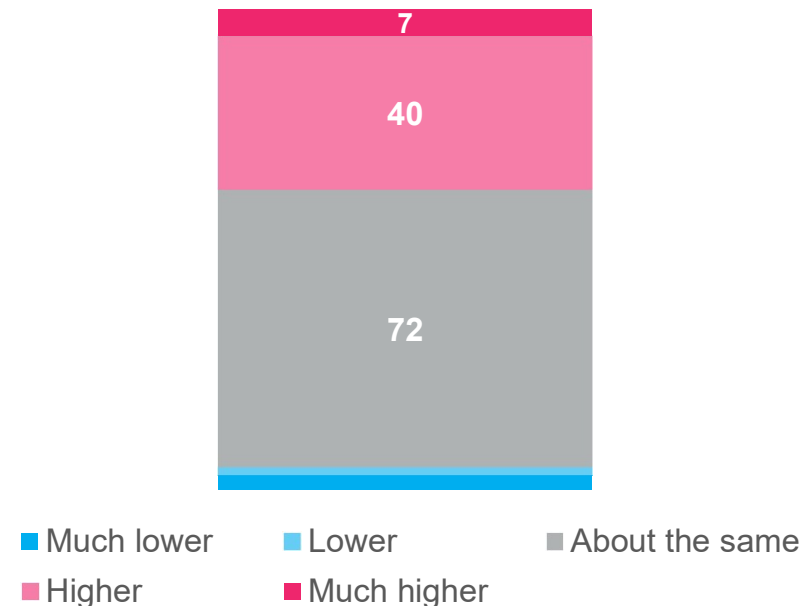
This week more organisations have seen little change (72) than an increase (47) in the number of people seeking support.

Relatively few organisations (just 6) are seeing a fall in the number of people seeking support.

The proportion of organisations seeing an increase in numbers seeking support has declined over the last three weeks, from 46 per cent two weeks ago to 38 per cent in the most recent week.

Organisations that work with socially excluded/lonely or vulnerable people are more likely to have seen an increase in demand (59 per cent) than those organisations that work with young people (25 per cent). Similarly, half of organisations that work with BAME Londoners saw an increase in demand in the last week (50 per cent).

Change in numbers seeking support (number of organisations)



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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. All of the issues were mentioned by at least 35 organisations. Issues shaded pink are increasing faster than last week

Issue	Proportion reporting higher demand	No. of responses	Issue	Proportion reporting higher demand	No. of responses
Mental health	70%	93	Employment	39%	67
Isolation and loneliness	64%	80	Grief bereavement	39%	49
Digital connectivity	59%	73	Childcare or Parenting	38%	55
Housing	57%	58	Physical health	38%	63
Poverty	55%	58	Access to health	34%	74
Access to food	47%	76	Victim support	32%	37
Domestic violence	45%	51	Capacity Building	28%	54
Debt issues	43%	58	Immigration issues	25%	48
Access to benefits	43%	72	Discrimination	24%	46
Access to care	40%	60			

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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. By far the most common challenges were around longer-term funding and recovery planning

Challenge	Number of organisations	Issue	Number of organisations
Funding - sustainability beyond the crisis	48	Capacity - due to furloughed staff	11
Planning for recovery/easing of lockdown	48	Need to provide new or changed services	11
Digital or tech equipment	27	Funding - general	10
Staff wellbeing and mental health	27	Funding - relationship with existing funders	10
Maintaining contact with beneficiaries	24	Working with local authorities	10
Reaching vulnerable groups	20	Digital skills or training	<10
Access to urgent funding for new needs	17	Personal Protective Equipment	<10
Capacity - due to increased demand	16	Capacity - general	<10
Difficulty in delivering services online	15	Advice/training on supporting vulnerable	<10
Social distancing in delivery	14	Capacity - due to reduction in volunteers	<10
Capacity - due to staff working from home	12		

Source: COVID-19 Community Response Survey (n=125)

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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. A slightly greater number of organisations are reporting issues around mental health, isolation and digital exclusion than issues such as job loss, low incomes and access to food and essentials.

Challenge	Number of organisations	Issue	Number of organisations
Mental health	59	Home schooling	13
Social Isolation	47	Domestic violence	10
Digital exclusion	37	Multi-lingual support	<10
Loss of jobs	30	No recourse to public funds	<10
Low income	25	Access to PPE	<10
Access to food and essentials	21	Bereavement	<10
Family tension	16	Eviction	<10
Inadequate accommodation	15	Access to Medicine	<10

Source: COVID-19 Community Response Survey (n=123)

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BENEFICIARY CHALLENGES BY BENEFICIARY GROUP

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

Organisations working with young people were particularly likely to mention social isolation: half of these organisations mentioned it, versus 1 in 10 orgs working with BAME Londoners and a third of orgs working with socially excluded/vulnerable Londoners

Organisations working with BAME Londoners were particularly likely to mention digital exclusion: half of these organisations mentioned it, versus under a third of orgs working with young or socially excluded/vulnerable Londoners

Organisations working with socially excluded/vulnerable Londoners and those working with BAME Londoners were more likely to mention loss of jobs or lack of employment opportunities than those working with young Londoners, almost half of these organisations mentioned it, versus less than 1 in 5 or organisations working with young people

What support needs have you identified for your beneficiaries and your organisation as we move into the recovery period?

Delivering services whilst maintaining social distancing (43) – Groups shared concerns about access to PPE, impracticality of maintaining social distance in a small office space and the need to completely shift how they deliver in order to follow guidance. Groups also indicated a need for clear and consistent guidance for civil society groups.

“Space: we already struggled with too little space, but are struggling to plan a way to deliver services that would allow for distance both within our office and between beneficiaries in group activities; we envisage needing more staff in order to open for extended hours as we will not be able to have such a high volume of people on site as before.”

“Mental health needs of our beneficiaries (LGBT people). The early discussions are still including social distancing measures, which we feel will not help ease isolation or allow us to provide face to face group services which are aimed at reducing this in the early stages. Our office is cramped, and we could not safely manage 2 metre distancing for our staff and volunteers needing desk access, and only manage a VERY reduced capacity in our group spaces.”

What support needs have you identified for your beneficiaries and your organisation as we move into the recovery period?

Funding (29) – funding was another major theme in the responses, with a particular focus on the need to increase staff costs due to extended services as a result of social distancing measures or the significant shift in the business model.

“With social distancing still in place, we would not be able to deliver our services to a capacity that is sustainable. The cost to open will be higher than the income, but if we do not open when the Government eases lockdown, then we will lose all of our beneficiaries and our relationships with them will suffer. Our organisation will need support to run our activities at a loss, to ensure that we still can provide activities in the transition period.”

What support needs have you identified for your beneficiaries and your organisation as we move into the recovery period?

Digital exclusion (21) and Mental health (21) — remain a significant concern for organisations and their service users.

The digital divide remains a huge problem amongst poorer communities and in the event of a second wave of Covid, we would like to be better prepared (eg through distributing simple tech devices with data and training to enable people to stay connected during periods of isolation).

“Mental health remains a huge priority, for both our staff and the young people of the communities we support. Regaining the connection with those young people that were digitally excluded so haven't received the current support on offer”

What support needs have you identified for your beneficiaries and your organisation as we move into the recovery period?

Additional themes that were mentioned less than 15 times, however important to note:

- Building service users and staff confidence in entering public space (11)
- Employment support for beneficiaries (8)
- Social Isolation (7)
- Housing support and debt collection (6)
- Volunteer recruitment (6)

Additionally it should be noted that a range of organisations highlighted needs of LGBT+, Disabled, Women and BAME communities in particular.

Groups whose needs are not being met by the current support available in response to COVID-19

49 groups responded to this question. The most commonly occurring groups were:

- Disabled people (8)
- Gypsy, Roma or Travellers (7)
- NRPF (6)
- LGBTQ+ (5)
- Homeless Londoners (5)
- BAME groups (4)
- Freelancers or self employed workers (4)

“The current situation has exaggerated 'normal' inequalities. That means that those who are discriminated against on a normal day on grounds of race, disability and sexuality are facing yet more barriers to support.”

Groups whose needs are not met

The following quotes have been selected to provide a bit more detail of the nature of the needs not being met, they are each from one organisation.

“Gypsies and Travelers where there is no authorised site provision problems of clean water and social distancing.”

“A specific group that is not being considered in enough depth are visually impaired people for whom social distancing makes life lived independently very challenging, for example inability to queue at required distance, avoid others without guidance, access to public transport.”

“Rough sleepers in our area, particularly from non-English speaking communities. They don't seem to be aware of their rights or how to access what little support there is available from the council.”

“LGBT people (our beneficiaries) still feel absent from the national and regional narrative.”

New or growing issues

43 groups highlighted new or growing issues. Below are some of the issues that have not already been captured in the analysis:

- Carers - increase in responsibilities/ suffering from bereavement (6)
- Groups who haven't accessed benefits before needing support or facing destitution e.g. Roma or South Indian (4)
- Parents keeping children engaged/occupied (3)

Another issue that was flagged across a number of issues is concern about when creditors re-start recovery action and how vulnerable groups are supported.

NEXT STEPS

Week five survey in the field between 11th – 14th May.

Results available on Monday 18th May

Cohort has now increased to 247 and ongoing recruitment will continue to grow the cohort