



# **LONDON COVID-19 COMMUNITY RESPONSE SURVEY: WEEK THREE QUESTIONS**

**FIELDWORK 27<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2020**

# 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 profile, and included a small number of questions relating to the immediate impact post-lockdown of COVID-19.

The week two survey was shorter, and asked organisations a number of questions about changes they have seen in the last week. The week three survey uses the same questions.

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 205 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 113 organisations responded in full or in part to the week two questions, which were live between Monday 27<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> April 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.

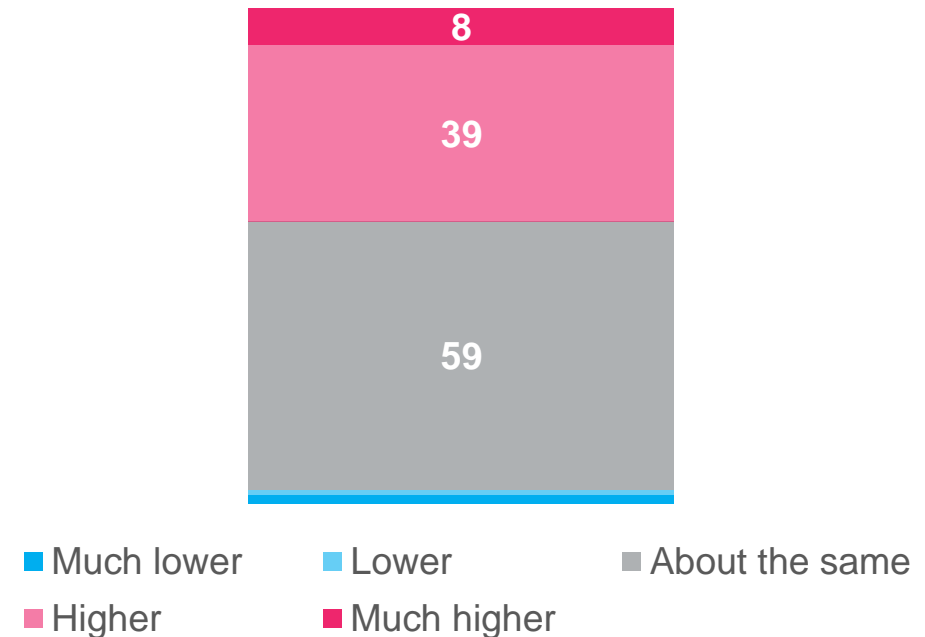
# CHANGE IN NUMBERS SEEKING SUPPORT ON LAST WEEK

**This week more organisations have seen little change (59) than an increase (48) in the number of people seeking support.**

Relatively few organisations (just 3) are seeing a fall in the number of people seeking support.

The proportion of organisation seeing an increase in numbers seeking support has not changed very much compared with last week, at around 40 per cent.

**Change in numbers seeking support compared to last week (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. All of the issues were mentioned by at least 40 organisations

Issue	Proportion reporting higher demand	Issue	Proportion reporting higher demand
Mental health	72%	Employment	47%
Digital connectivity	66%	Capacity Building or volunteers	43%
Isolation and loneliness	63%	Grief bereavement	36%
Debt issues	58%	Access to health	35%
Access to benefits	55%	Access to care	33%
Poverty	53%	Physical health	30%
Access to food	50%	Discrimination	30%
Housing	49%	Childcare or Parenting	27%
Domestic violence	48%	Immigration issues	27%

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

**Delivering digitally (26):** Organisations are facing the dual challenge of adapting services in order to deliver them online, whilst facing a context where beneficiaries might not have digital access. There are additional challenges where English is spoken as a second language or individuals have sight or hearing needs.

*“Adapting to the new way of running the service i.e. phone and online from face to face and reaching clients who don't have easy access to phone/internet”*

**Funding (24):** The two biggest patterns in people's responses around funding were, awaiting outcomes of current applications and thus not knowing what they have capacity to respond to, and uncertainty about long term funding and therefore not knowing how to plan for the future.

*“The inability to extend the online drop-in time as we are still using a free account and awaiting outcome of funding application made.”*

**Capacity (20):** Organisations spoke about the challenge in implementing new or increased services with reduced staff teams due to furloughing, shielding or caring responsibilities.

*“Capacity- making time to implement the ideas we have to improve services when staff are at home with children.”*

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

Other challenges highlighted by a small number of organisations (less than 15) but of interest for future monitoring include:

- **Staff wellbeing (13):** Mental health and wellbeing of staff was raised, a few organisation expanded on this response to refer to wellbeing in the context of rapidly changing policies and services.
- **Concern about long term recovery (13):** this was especially spoken about in reference to the high degree of uncertainty about what the future will look like with regards to social distancing guidance and when face to face services will be able to resume.
- **Delivery services whilst social distancing (8)–** Housing associations/homelessness charities in particular spoke about the challenges of continuing to deliver services whilst following social distancing guidance.

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

**Anxiety/mental health (29) and Isolation and loneliness (20):** There was not a huge amount of detail provided in individual responses, but where detail was provided respondents referred to anxiety due to future uncertainty, impacts of isolation and the challenges in accessing support for mental health due to digital barriers or limited referral pathways.

*“Isolation, low morale, anxiety, planning for the future when it is so uncertain”*

**Finances/bills/lack of money (20):** This was most often referred to in relation to loss of employment, and individuals struggling with paying rent, buying food or paying bills.

**Access to food (17):** Respondents referred to rising costs of food and challenges in accessing food banks as well as difficulty in securing food delivery slots. One organisation’s social care survey found that 54% of respondents were struggling with food deliveries to the home.

**Digital exclusion (17):** Digital exclusion remains a concern for many groups, respondents spoke about the challenges this creates for people to access services or online learning and the impact on mental health or isolation.

*‘Some people we are in contact with are particularly at risk, such as one gentleman who is elderly, deaf, no longer receiving unpaid care from a friend who is self-isolating, and has no access to the internet.’*

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

Other challenges highlighted by a small number of organisations (less than 15) but of interest for future monitoring include:

**Challenges with supporting young people/children (12):** Respondents spoke about increasing pressure on families causing interfamilial conflict or challenging behaviour management.

*“Parent's and carers really struggling to support their young person due to boredom leading to challenging verbal and physical behaviour.”*



# GROUPS WHOSE NEEDS ARE NOT BEING MET

**56 organisations said there were groups whose needs are not being met by the current support available in response to COVID-19. Groups identified include:**

**Digitally excluded (14)** – concern about those that are digitally excluded remains high. Some respondents indicating the need for blanket postal communication to residents, especially in community languages with contact details of advice services. The intersection of digital connectivity with language barriers was a reoccurring theme in the responses.

*“So much provision is now only available online, and in English only.”*

**Young people (8)** – respondents spoke about the needs of vulnerable young people not being as visible in the response efforts, including young carers, NEETs and those who are unsafely accommodated.

*“unpaid carers and young carers - continue to be not be included as vulnerable group in govt comms”*

**No Recourse to Public Funds (8):** Respondents referred to the needs of those with no recourse to public funds.

*“Both our advice service teams and local community are making it clear to us that people with NRPF are facing desperate situations with no safety net to catch them. Families and individuals with NRPF are losing work and some have already been evicted by their landlord due to loss of earnings. They have no welfare support to tide them over.”*

**CITY INTELLIGENCE**

# NEW/EMERGING CHALLENGES

No consistent pattern, but things that were mentioned that have not already been picked up in the analysis:

- Access to local authority and other statutory services (5) – e.g. DWP and the length of time it takes advice staff to support people to access.
- Increase in domestic violence (4)
- Families not accessing Free School Meal provision (2)
- The status of EU nationals not being clear (2)
- Youth violence on the rise, but not reported (1)
- Clearer information for Gypsy and Traveller community about funerals and burials (1)

# IMPACT OF SURVEY

Below are some of the ways in which last week's survey fed in to strategic London wide discussions:

- Informing new priorities of the London Community Response Fund
- Identifying the increased need for support on bereavement, mental health and social isolation. The Strategic Coordination Group is working on identifying how it can better coordinate support across London
- Fed in to conversations regarding additional funder plus support that organisations need during this time
- We are citing evidence from the survey in the GLA's submission to the DCMS select committee

# NEXT STEPS

**Week four survey in the field between 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> May. This will collect new data on recovery needs.**

**Results available on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May**

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