

# Map of Community Views: COVID-19

GLA Community Engagement Team

## CONTENTS

Background .....	3
Methodology.....	6
Map of Community Views: COVID-19 .....	7
Cross Cutting Issues .....	12
How have we used the Map of Community Views so far.....	13
Thanks .....	15

## Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has not impacted everyone equally. Research from Public Health England\* and from City Hall\* shows how Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities were disproportionately impacted by the virus, and the measures to contain the virus.

To understand different communities' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, **Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement, Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard** and the GLA Community Engagement Team convened a series of virtual roundtable conversations and community meetings with groups and community leaders between April and September 2020.

The primary focus of the roundtables was ethnicity and faith. Though some insight on other protected characteristics came through, there is a gap in the narrative of this specific piece of work around the impact of COVID-19 on Disabled Londoners. This is addressed in wider insights we gained through the [Rapid Evidence Review](#) by University of Manchester.

The roundtable conversations covered a range of complex issues. We heard about the overexposure of BAME communities to the pandemic because they often work in frontline roles; the upsurge in hate crime against East and South East Asian Londoners; heightened need for domestic abuse support and better community language translations including specific dialects; the deep impact the virus has had on specific groups such as Somali, Bengali and Pakistani Londoners, particularly because of challenges with housing arrangements; the challenges for families around education for many groups including Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities; concerns for LGBT+, Younger and Older Londoners; the impact of the Black Lives Matter movement; faith communities having to adapt their services and facing loss of income as a result, and much more. It was clear throughout that grassroots Faith and Community groups have played a crucial role meeting essential needs.

The map of community views does not name specific groups but captures themes that can be addressed at policy level in close partnership with those affected, by recognising the strength of London's community sector.

Over the next few months, the Community Engagement team at City Hall will support and champion Community-Led action to respond to all we have heard through grants and learning networks.

**21 Roundtables and Community Meetings**  
**250 Civil society and community groups reached**

The following roundtables took place:

<b>Community Group</b>
Veterans
Somali Roundtable *
Citizen-led Engagement
Young People's Discussion
Civic Futures
Mental Health
Bangladeshi
Pakistani
Latin American
Turkish & Kurdish
Eastern European Roundtable
BAME Access to Health Systems
Ibero- American/Spanish Portuguese Speakers
East and Southeast Asian
Arab and Middle Eastern
Gypsy Roma Traveller*
Jewish *
Christian *
Muslim *
Sikh *
Hindu *

\*These roundtables were co-convened with an external organisation

## Disproportionate Impact of COVID-19 Issues Map

### Roundtables focused on the following questions:

- How have you and your community in London been affected by the outbreak? What particular impacts do you feel are unique to your community and what impacts have been worse for your communities?
- What would help your communities with the current pandemic and future crises?
- What are the assets (e.g. resources, skills, organisations) in your community that are enhancing health and wellbeing during this period? Does your community need support and what would this look like?
- What changes, that would directly benefit your community, would you like to see as part of London's COVID-19 recovery?
- As we move into a transition phase, what are some of the key concerns held by members of your communities for the near future?

## Methodology

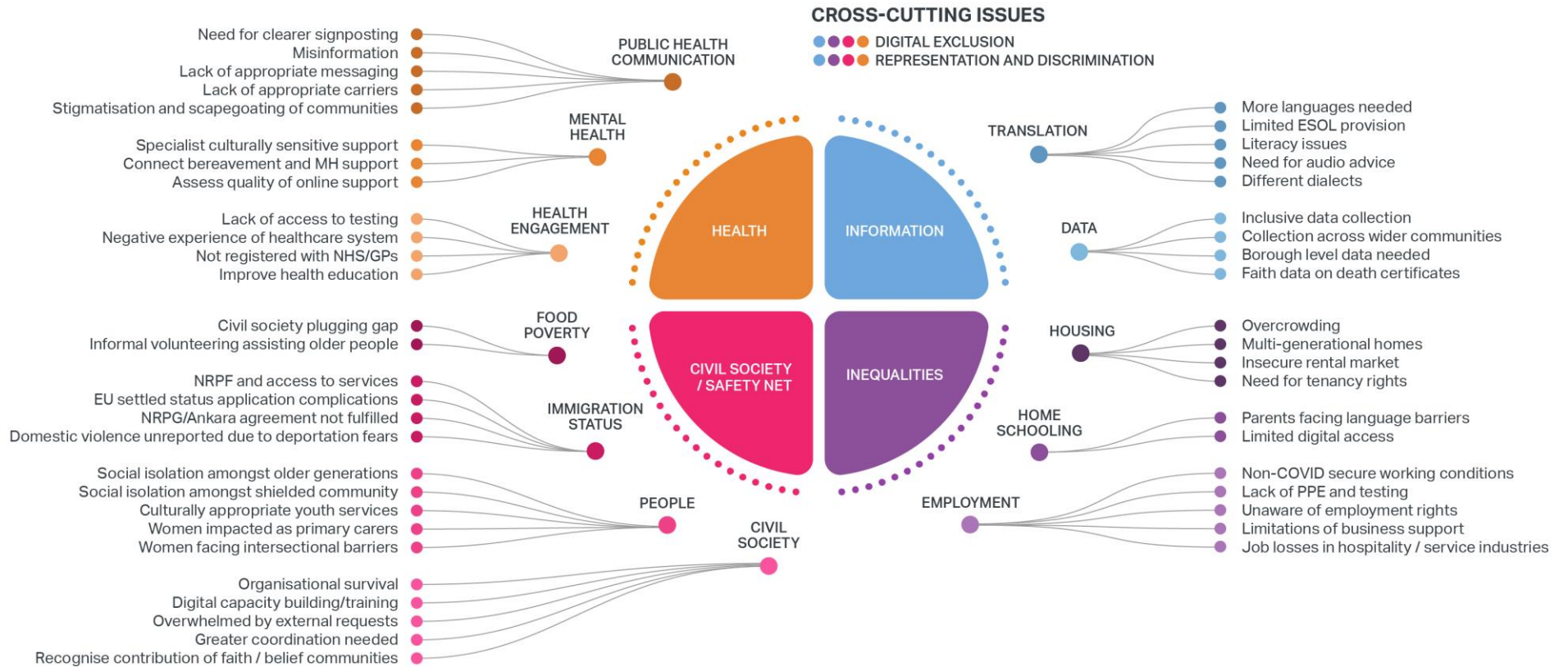
During the roundtable meetings the team took detailed notes and followed up with attendees for any clarifications or further comments if needed. Those notes were then combined into one spreadsheet so that we could see the concerns that were raised across all 21 meetings.

The full spreadsheet was then analysed, with concerns being grouped into themes. Any frequently raised concerns were also flagged. For example, the issue of gaps in funding for community groups came up in 9 roundtables. Other frequently cited issues were the need for coordination amongst civil society and mutual aid groups, fake news and misinformation, and the complexities of providing translated guidance due to the variety of dialects and literacy levels across languages.

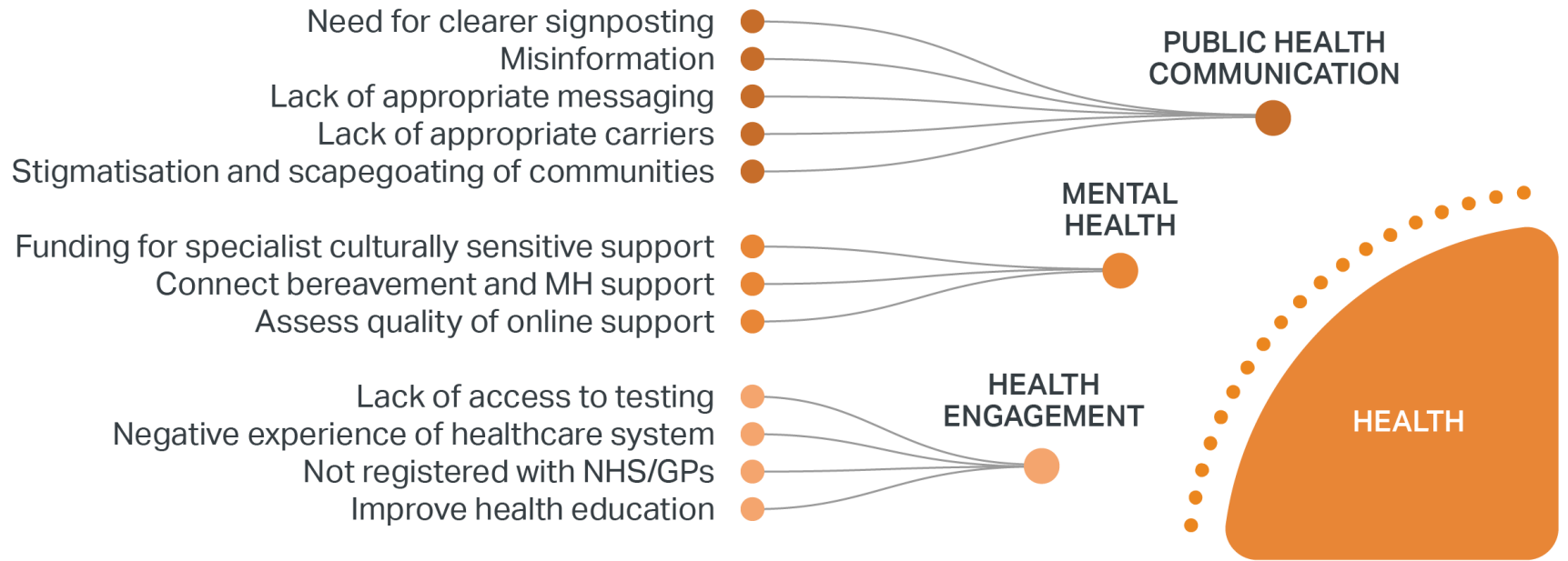
These initial themes were then further condensed, by combining similar themes together e.g., Brexit and immigration status. The final themes are those that are visible on the map.

During the data sorting, **two cross-cutting issues** emerged: **Digital Exclusion** and **Representation and Discrimination**. These impacted upon several of the other themes arising from the conversations. For example, the lack of representation of certain groups on census data meant that they were not receiving targeted support or that their language needs were not catered for in translated guidance. Those who raised concerns about digital exclusion lost access to support when services were moved online, and their children could not participate fully in online home schooling or additional afterschool support.

## Map of Community Views: COVID-19

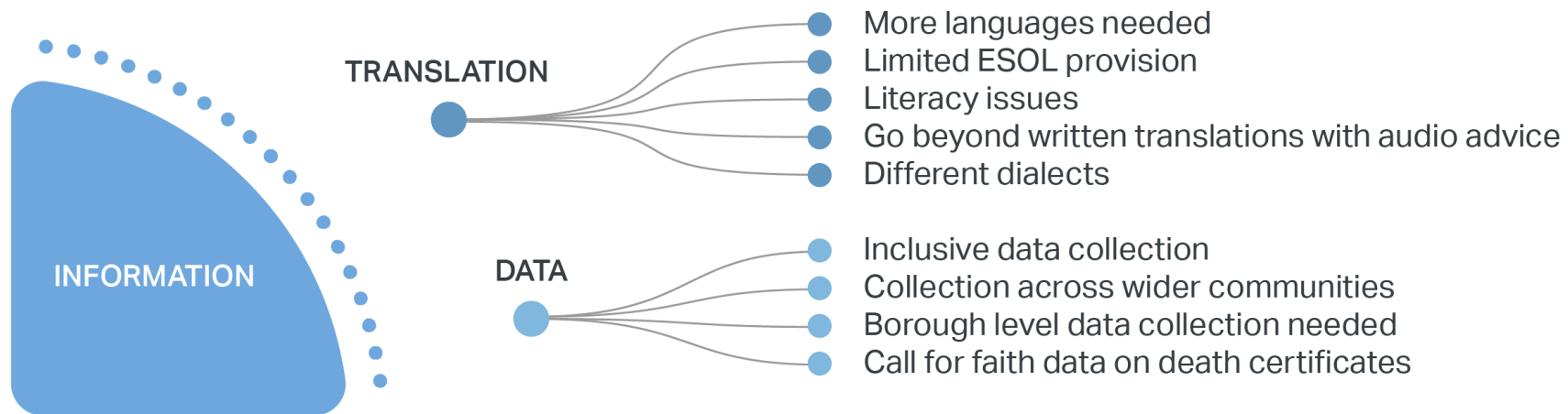


# Disproportionate Impact of COVID-19 Issues Map

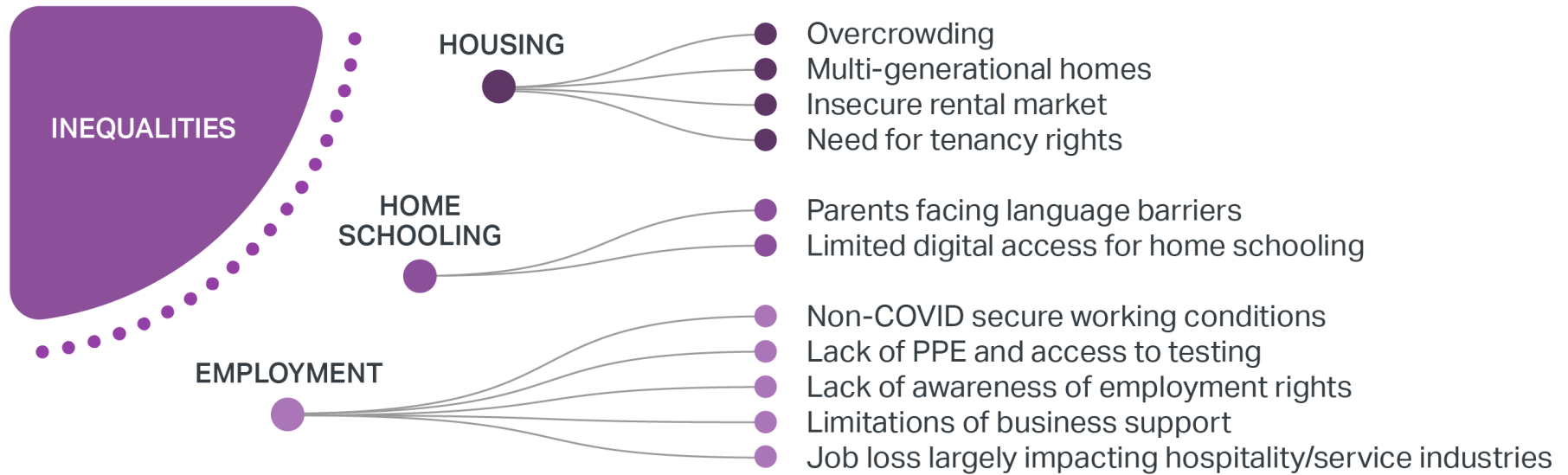




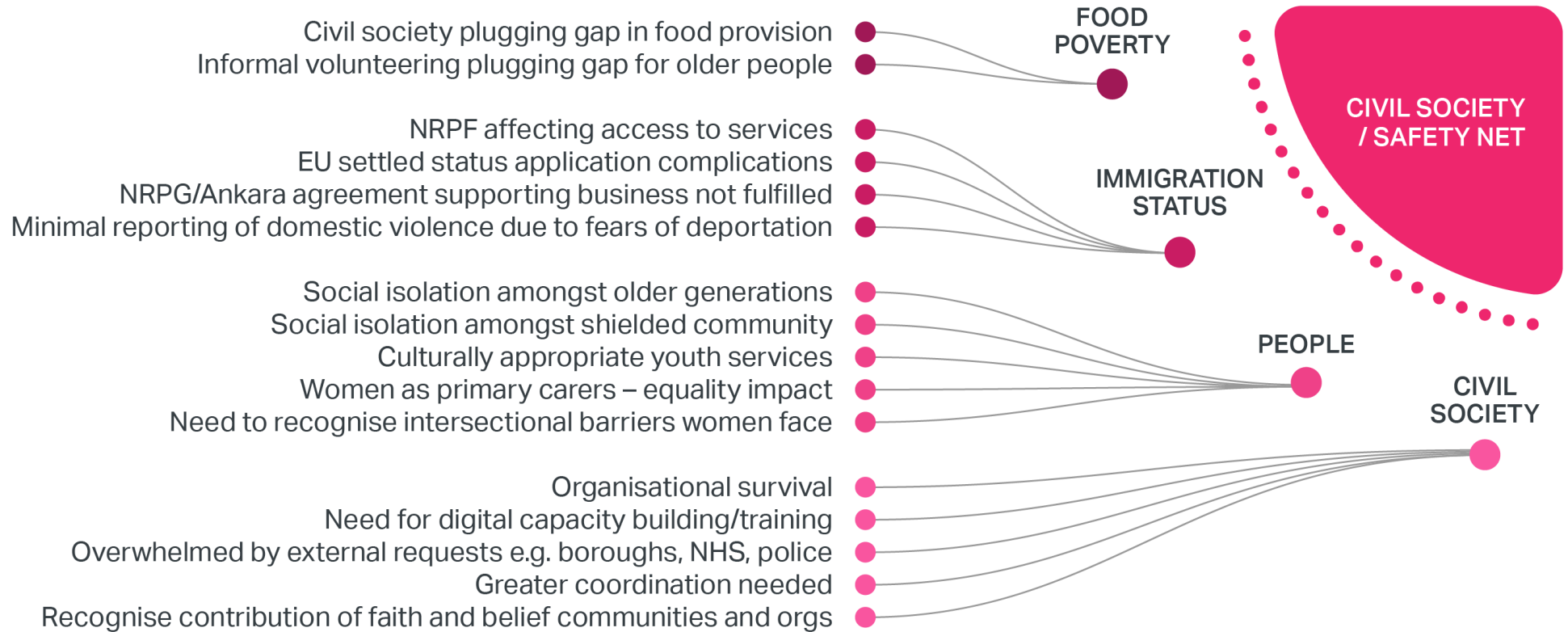
## Disproportionate Impact of COVID-19 Issues Map



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Disproportionate Impact of COVID-19 Issues Map



## Cross Cutting Issues

During the community roundtables and meetings, two cross-cutting issues emerged: Digital Exclusion and Representation and Discrimination.

**Digital exclusion** was a widespread concern for many groups that affected both their ability to access resources and their ability to ensure that their voices were heard. Digital literacy, particularly amongst isolated older community members was cited as an important issue as many services were moving online and face to face engagement stopped. Digital literacy of volunteers, as well as service users, had been a problem for many organisations. When organisations were able to access equipment to deliver services online, it was difficult to train service users and volunteers to adapt to digital methods. Many Londoners are still without an internet connection at home and were unable to engage fully in support, community information sessions, and even schooling.

**Representation and Discrimination** were raised in most of our discussions with community groups. The pandemic led to an increase in hate crime towards East and South East Asian communities. Media coverage was seen to imply that others such as London's Islamic communities, Orthodox Jewish communities, and GRT communities were not following the rules and spreading the virus leading to these groups facing discrimination in public spaces and online. LGBTQ+ groups also reported a rise in hate crime against their communities. Many groups also highlighted that they had previously experienced racism or discrimination when accessing NHS services, and that this acted as a barrier for them to engage with the NHS around COVID-19.

Alongside discrimination, many people felt that their communities had been made less visible. In many cases, this was believed to be a direct result of the way data has been collected at borough and national level. This led to many groups feeling unrepresented in mainstream communications and support packages. This was particularly true for groups who are not represented on the census. The lack of clear data about communities that had suffered disproportionately due to COVID-19 meant that community and civil society groups were unable to make their messaging as strong as they wanted to in order to keep their service users and stakeholders safe and to advocate for more increased support. Groups called for increased access to decision makers and for local forums or assemblies to begin to tackle these issues.

## How have we used the Map of Community Views so far...

### Translations and Audio Clips

Concerns raised about the format of translations and the limitations of written translations of relying solely on written translations provided valuable evidence to the External Relations and Social Integration teams. These insights were used to build the case for audio translations of government guidance. We also gathered insights from community groups that stated they relied heavily on WhatsApp chats for distribution of important information. City Hall has now produced audio clips outlining government guidance for the second lockdown, and London's move into tier two and translated clips for tier three guidance are being finalised.

### Housing Meeting

Housing emerged as a particular area of concern during many of the roundtables and community meetings. On 19 November 2020 we hosted a meeting between community and civil society organisations and the GLA's Housing and Land Team, so that community groups could share their concerns with policy makers and seek further guidance.

Further meetings will take place based on other major themes arising from the map of community concerns in 2021.

### Public Health Meetings - began in November

A number of concerns emerged from the meetings related to engagement with health services and access to public health information. Beginning in November 2020 the Community Engagement team have been hosting public health briefings for communities and civil society groups led by Professor Kevin Fenton. 160 people attended the most recent briefing on Tuesday 15 December.

### Wider dissemination

The insights from our conversations are a useful resource and have been shared widely, both internally and externally, with GLA Policy teams, Civil Society and funders, helping to shape both policy and programme design and delivery.

Insights from discussions were also shared with the policy teams who lead on the issues raised including:

- London Recovery Board and Mission Teams

## Disproportionate Impact of COVID-19 Issues Map

- Community Engagement and Equality leads for each of the nine Recovery missions.
- Research and Insights team
- MOPAC (Hate Crime Stakeholder Group)– community organisations who highlighted a rise in hate crime and discrimination were connected to MOPAC’s Hate Crime Stakeholder leads
- Social integration team - specifically relating to the impact of COVID19 on impact on migrants/those with NRPF/access to immigration and employment advice and guidance
- Supporting resource for our grant's prospectuses and our engagement with funders. The map of community concerns has also been an important supporting resource for our prospectuses for upcoming grants programmes and our engagement with funders.

## Thanks

Thanks to all of the 250 civil society and community groups who engaged with us through roundtables and community discussions. We recognise that many participants took time out to speak to us when they and their organisations were extremely busy with crisis response.