

COVID-19: Summary of external research

28/05/2020

This newsletter series presents a digest of external research that the Greater London Authority is making available for the benefit of external stakeholders in tackling the COVID-19 crisis. These summaries have been prepared under challenging circumstances and to short timescales. They are not intended to be comprehensive and exhaustive and do not represent the full body of evidence on which Mayoral Policies are or will be based.

1. Introduction and summary

This is the latest edition in a series of briefings highlighting key statistics and external research and recommendations relevant to the GLA's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Each briefing will offer short summaries and a deep-dive into one or two topics. In this issue, there is an [overview of Universal Basic Income proposals](#), which have moved up the agenda as a possible response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The newsletter also includes regular sections on relevant [external research](#) and [policy recommendations](#). This week's edition also includes a [short summary of findings from a recent survey conducted to gather feedback on the newsletter](#).

Universal Basic Income Schemes

Universal Basic Income (UBI) schemes pay all citizens a minimum income, with no conditions attached and regardless of their other resources i.e. the payment is not means-tested.

In the context of Covid-19, it has been argued that a UBI could work well as an emergency response to the sudden loss of income experienced by many, supporting living standards and overall demand in the economy. Other arguments for a UBI include avoiding complex means-testing and ensuring a fairer distribution of income support resources than wage-based policies such as the Coronavirus Job Retention scheme. Arguments against a UBI include its unpopularity with the public, potentially negative impact on poverty and the large cost attached to UBI schemes.

In a recent experiment carried out by the Finnish government, a UBI was found to have a positive impact on the well-being and self-perceived financial security of unemployed recipients, although there is still limited evidence on the impact of a UBI on employment.

Proposals for a UBI in the UK tend to require tax rises in order to be affordable. Depending on the size of the payment and accompanying changes to tax and national insurance, a UBI could alleviate poverty. It may reduce work incentives for many people but can prevent very high disincentives to work.

2. Universal Basic Income Schemes

There has been growing interest in Universal Basic Income (UBI) over recent years as a policy solution to a range of issues. The Covid-19 pandemic has put UBI back on the agenda. This summary introduces the concept of a UBI and highlights recent research and commentary on the policy.

What is a UBI?

[House of Commons Library \(2016\)](#) In most proposals, UBI schemes pay all citizens a minimum income, with no conditions attached and regardless of their other resources i.e. the payment is not means-tested. While the details of proposals vary, usually all income above this minimum amount is taxed. UBI schemes are sometimes known by other names, including 'Citizens Basic Income' and 'negative income tax'. A 'Minimum Income Guarantee' (MIG) is similar but involves the minimum income amount being subject to tax or a means test. Where this is proposed it is usually to reduce the cost of the guarantee. An MIG is closer to the current system in the UK where benefits such as Universal Credit provide an income floor.

Some proposals add other features to a UBI scheme. For example, the [Citizen's Basic Income Trust](#) state that their proposal would be automatic, paid weekly or monthly without the recipient having to apply. Perhaps most importantly, the size of the minimum income payment varies between different proposals. Some proposals also include recommendations for other areas of policy so that they align with the UBI being proposed and can raise revenue to pay for it.

Arguments for and against a UBI

In the context of Covid-19, it has been argued that a UBI could work well as an emergency response to the sudden loss of income. As all citizens are eligible it prevents some of the holes in support within schemes such as the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, and as it is not means-tested can get money to citizens more quickly ([OECD](#)). In the context of recovery from Covid-19, it has been argued that a UBI could provide a demand stimulus, preventing a cycle of rising debt and falling demand.

There are other, longer-term arguments for and against a UBI, including:

[RSA \(2020\) The case for Universal Basic Income after Covid-19](#)

The RSA have been proponents of a UBI for several years. In this blog they review the key arguments in favour, including:

- **A lack of security:** the blog argues that the core case for a UBI is that individuals and households face financial and health vulnerabilities, and global economic re-structuring may reduce demand for some jobs in the UK. This leads to stress, anxiety and insecurity. A UBI that individuals can rely on would help soften these risks.
- **Issues with targeted benefits:** the blog argues that means-tested benefits are complicated to access. In the UK, Universal Credit requires a lengthy application and a five-week delay until the first payment. Elsewhere in the welfare system complex rules and the role of conditionality have led to hardship for families trying to claim. A UBI requires only basic information about people and can get cash to people much quicker.
- **A fairer distribution than other policies such as the job retention scheme:** the blog argues that policies such as the job retention scheme are not well targeted at those on the lowest incomes. It points to results from modelling that suggests that poorer households gain more from UBI schemes than those based on wages and other market incomes.

JRF (2018) Universal Basic Income – not the answer to poverty

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation's mission is to end poverty in the UK. In this blog they set out some of the arguments often used against a UBI, including:

- **Unpalatable to most of the public:** the blog argues that adopting a UBI would require the public to accept that everyone should get a baseline level of state financial support, even if they choose not to do anything to try to earn money for themselves. The blog argues that long-standing evidence on public attitudes to welfare suggests that the public would not support this.
- **Issues with housing, childcare and other market-based costs:** the blog argues that a UBI, to achieve its aims, would have to replace support for housing and childcare costs in the current welfare system. The blog regards this as a challenge; a simple rent element in a UBI is difficult to conceive of without creating shortfalls in housing costs for some and/or large surpluses for others. This leads to a wider point made by the blog: 'the current system is designed to provide specific payments for people in specific circumstances'. By replacing these with a single payment you either have to use a large payment to cover those that need the most, or you lead to a shortfall for these groups.
- **Impact on poverty:** the JRF have funded modelling to explore different options for a UBI. They found that the modelled options increase poverty across all age groups. By giving money to those towards the middle of the income distribution, this raises the relative poverty threshold.
- **Expensive:** They have found that all of the above schemes were effectively ruled out because of the costs involved, ranging from £177bn to £210bn. In analysis of 'modified' UBI schemes, where tax and National Insurance rises were included to limit the gains to higher income households, the poverty rate does actually fall, although this moves away from a pure UBI scheme.

Other organisations, such as the [OECD](#), argue that because a UBI is unconditional, it can weaken incentives to work. While this may not be important in the early stages of the crisis, when policymakers do not want individuals to go out to work, it will become more important as recovery begins. The OECD also argue that because a UBI does not depend on income or employment, it does not function well as an 'automatic stabiliser', boosting demand as incomes and employment fall.

Evaluations of UBI and related schemes

A small number of UBI pilots and experiments have been conducted. Key findings from evaluations of these include:

Finland basic income experiment: A two-year basic income experiment was carried out in Finland in 2017-18. Two thousand unemployed persons were randomly selected and paid a monthly tax-exempt basic income of 560 euros, regardless of any other income or whether they were actively looking for work. Participation was not voluntary. Kela, the Social Insurance Institution of Finland, tested the impact of the payment on a range of outcomes, including well-being and employment, by comparing those receiving the payment to a control group of initially unemployed persons who did not receive the benefit. The evaluation has found:

- **Employment:** recipients were employed for an average number of 78 days between November 2017-October 2018, compared to an average of 73 among the control group
- **Well-being:** recipients had an average well-being score of 7.3 (out of 10) at the end of 2018, compared to 6.8 among the control group
- **Self-perceived financial situation:** 60 per cent of recipients rated their financial situation as 'living comfortably' or 'doing ok', compared to 52 per cent of the control group
- **Self-perceived depression:** 22 per cent of recipients reported depression at the end of 2018, compared to 32 per cent of the control group

Kela caution that new, more stringent entitlement criteria for unemployed persons were introduced at the beginning of 2018, complicating the analysis of employment effects. Before this point, there was no employment impact observed from the experiment. Kela have also carried out interviews with recipients, finding that the basic income strengthened perceptions of Autonomy, created opportunities for voluntary work and informal care, and many found the experience positive. Some found that the experiment created pressure to find a job.

The Finnish experiment was the first nationwide, statutory and randomized basic income experiment. Earlier pilot programs, primarily in the [USA](#) and in [Canada](#), have generally had smaller designs and evaluations that are more limited in scope. Other studies have used [natural experiments](#) to understand the impact of unconditional cash transfers.

It is generally agreed that more evidence is needed on the behavioral impact of a UBI. The RSA have published [guidelines](#) on how similar experiments could be set up and evaluated in the UK.

Proposals for a UBI in the UK

Several organisations and academics have modelled the design and impact of adopting a UBI scheme in the UK.

[New Economics Foundation \(2020\) Building a minimum income guarantee in the UK](#)

A recent proposal from the New Economics Foundation argues that a MIG may be an effective solution to supporting incomes among those who miss out on the job retention and self-employed income support schemes. Their proposal includes:

- A MIG set at the value of the minimum income standard for a single adult, of £221 per week. A couple payment would also be available worth double this amount. To deliver this they argue that the main adult element in UC and equivalent legacy benefits should be increased.
- Eligibility would be for all adults who wish to apply via the advanced payment system in UC. Once someone is in receipt of the job retention or self-employed income support schemes they would not be eligible. For anyone for whom the MIG takes their net income above £2,500 per month, the value of their income above this would be repaid in additional tax in the 2021/22 year.
- Cost: NEF estimate that increasing benefits in this for existing claimants would cost £3bn per month. For every additional 500,000 claimants the marginal cost above existing benefits would be £0.5bn per month. They estimate that total costs relative to baseline would be £13.5-£20bn over three months, dependent on uptake

[University of Bath \(2017\) IPR Policy Brief: Assessing the Case for a Universal Basic Income in the UK](#)

This project from Luke Martinelli at Bath University has published three papers on the case for a UBI, as well as the fiscal, distributional and work incentive effects of a UBI in the UK. In the latest paper, three proposals are explored:

- UBI set at the level of the tax saving implied by personal income tax allowance (PITA)
- UBI set at the level of existing benefits
- UBI set at the level of existing benefits with premiums for individuals determined as disabled or severely disabled

The paper includes the following key findings:

- 'The proportions of households gaining and losing from reform is important, as positive distributional effects on aggregate can mask significant losses for some households'.
- When a UBI is paid for 'by withdrawing a large number of benefits and increasing payroll taxes, large numbers of households will inevitably experience significant losses of income.' These losses are found to be proportionally larger for middle and low income households.

University of Essex (2018) EUROMOD Working Paper Series: evaluation of an illustrative Citizen's Basic Income scheme

Evaluation of an illustrative Citizen's Basic Income Scheme. Their proposal includes a number of features:

- The Citizen's Basic Income is set at different rates for different ages: £40 per week for 16 to 19 year-olds not in full-time education, rising to £63 a week for 25-64 year-olds, with £40 a week for those aged 65+.

The proposal also includes the following changes to the tax benefit system:

- Child Benefit is increased by £20 a week for each child
- Various changes to National Insurance and Income Tax are used to raise revenue, including reducing the personal allowance to £0 and raising the basic rate of income tax by 3 percentage points

They find the following impact of the scheme, assuming no behavioural changes:

- Inequality, as measured by the Gini coefficient, falls
- The child poverty rate falls by more than half, from 14 to 6 per cent
- The working-age and pensioner poverty rates also fall

They also find that incentives to move into work and to increase earnings generally fall, although the number of people experiencing very high disincentives to work falls.

3. COVID-19 external research

This section highlights external research into the economic and social impact of COVID-19.

The Health Foundation – Care homes in London and the North worse hit by COVID-19 than other areas of England (26/05/2020)

- **London and the North of England are the hardest hit in terms of the proportion of deaths among care home residents.** While the South East has seen the most COVID-19 related deaths, after adjusting for the number of care home beds within each region, London and the North have had the highest number of deaths per care home bed – 4.68 and 3.16 deaths per 100 beds. Whereas the South East, South West, East Midlands and East of England have had least – 2.47, 1.83, 2.03 and 2.06 deaths per 100 beds, respectively.
- A lack of detailed up-to-date data prevents us from fully understanding which homes are most vulnerable and why. However, several factors are likely to be playing a role:
 - Differences in how the outbreak has spread through different parts of the country and whether care homes had enough time and support to put in place measures to reduce likely routes of transmission from the community and from hospitals.

- Factors related to the staff and residents in individual care homes, including their own health and vulnerability to COVID-19.
- Individual care providers' financial and organisational resources, and their ability to procure PPE and access to testing for staff and residents.
- Regional variation in deprivation – nationally, care homes are relatively evenly distributed across poorer and wealthier areas, but within regions the proportions vary widely. Compared to the South, more care homes in the North of England are in underprivileged areas.

Institute for Fiscal Studies – Cash borrowing by the public sector was £89 billion in April 2020, far more than in any previous month on record (22/05/2020)

Discussion on ONS' monthly public finance release for April. Key comments included:

- The ONS figures make it clear that “borrowing will increase to historic highs this year. Borrowing of around £300 billion, or 15% of GDP, as the OBR's Coronavirus reference scenario projects, certainly seems plausible”. However, **for subsequent policy, the size of the spike this year will be less relevant than the shape of the subsequent recovery.**
- If the increase in borrowing is a one-off, then one option could be to manage down the elevated debt stock gradually over many years. However, **it is possible that higher borrowing, to some extent, will endure.** This is for three reasons:
 - There will be an additional debt interest spending to finance, though at current interest rates this impact is modest
 - If the economy does not rebound fully from the current crisis then receipts will to some extent continue to be impaired
 - It is possible that even after the immediate crisis, has passed, voters and policymakers will push for increased public spending in some areas. This could be the NHS and social care, but also preparedness and stockpiling for future pandemics or other disasters, or a higher level of social insurance in “normal” times
- In this case, tighter fiscal policy – “perhaps more likely through tax rises rather than spending cuts” – would be required if borrowing is to be brought back onto its pre-crisis trajectory.

Institute for Fiscal Studies – Job vacancies during the Covid-19 pandemic (19/05/2020)

Analysis of a daily census of all job adverts posted on Find a Job (FJA), a recruitment website maintained by the Department for Work and Pensions. Key findings include:

- **By the time the lockdown was announced, firms had stopped posting new vacancies almost entirely.** New postings on 25 March were just 8% of their levels in 2019.
- **Vacancies fell across the wage distribution.** The fall was sharpest in low-paid occupations directly affected by social distancing measures, but new vacancies for higher-paid jobs in legal and managerial professions also saw falls of over 60% relative to 2019.
- **There have been some tentative signs of recovery since mid-April, but this has been entirely driven by vacancies in health and social care.**
- Whilst the initial drop in job postings was evenly distributed across more and less deprived areas, the recovery in health and social care vacancies has been concentrated in more affluent areas.
- The health and social care occupations in which vacancies are recovering pose relatively high health risks. They are relatively difficult to do from home, involve working in close physical proximity to others and are more exposed to disease.
- **The new jobs that are emerging require high levels of preparation.** Jobs in health and social care require a high level of training, but even outside healthcare, labour demand has recovered more in occupations that require higher levels of preparation. This suggests that workers who have been

furloughed or made unemployed are likely to struggle to fill vacancies in areas where labour demand is recovering.

[**Institute for Fiscal Studies - Learning during the lockdown: real-time data on children's experiences during home learning \(18/05/2020\)**](#)

Evidence from a new survey designed by the IFS and the Institute of Education (IoE), designed to capture parent's experiences of how their children are spending time during the lockdown. Findings include:

- **Higher-income parents are much more likely than the less well-off to report that their child's school provides online classes** and access to online videoconferencing with teachers
- **Children from better-off families are spending 30% more time on home learning** than are those from poorer families
- **Better-off students have access to more resources for home learning**

Overall, the report concludes that school closures are almost certainly going to increase educational inequalities. The report also notes that higher-income parents seem to be more willing for their child to go back to school. This suggests that simply opening schools may not mitigate against worsening educational inequalities.

[**New Philanthropy Capital – State of the Sector 2020 \(18/05/2020\)**](#)

Publication on the state of the charity sector in the months before the Covid-19 pandemic. Key findings include:

- **Two thirds of charities reported changing their operations as a result of austerity.** Conversely, most had made no attempts to prepare for Brexit
- **Charities perceptions of their digital ability have become more negative since 2017**
- Of organisations who receive money from independent funders, only 47% thought that they offered appropriate core funding and only 45% thought their funders collaborated well
- **Four in five charities (78%) say that they think their current staff are not fully representative** of the population they serve

[**Resolution Foundation – Young workers in the coronavirus crisis \(18/05/2020\)**](#)

Findings from the Resolution Foundation's coronavirus survey on how different age groups have been affected. Key findings include:

- **Younger and older workers have experienced the brunt of the hit to jobs and pay, with the very youngest in the most challenging position:** "One third of 18-24-year-old employees (excluding students) have lost jobs or been furloughed, compared to one-in-six prime-age adults, with these experiences also more common among employees in atypical jobs. Similarly, 35 per cent of non-full-time student 18-24-year-old employees are earning less than they did prior to the outbreak, and 30 per cent of those in their early 60s, compared to 23 per cent of 25-49-year-olds".
- **The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme has been well-received, especially by the youngest workers:** "around two-thirds of 18-24-year-olds who have been furloughed are happy about that outcome. And around seven-in-ten 25-39-year-olds in work are currently working from home at least some of the time. This is also the age at which workers are most likely to expect to work from home more in the future than they did before the coronavirus outbreak".

[Medium \(article\) - The city and the virus \(14/05/2020\)](#)

- There are **six key theories on cities' role in the spread of COVID-19**:
 - Urban density means that there is a higher spread of disease. There are two variants of this:
 - Global flows of people and goods are additional channels for viruses to spread.
 - Features of urban form, such as public transport networks, put cities at higher risk.
 - Urban living conditions put cities at higher risk, especially overcrowded housing and multigenerational households in expensive cities like London.
 - Urban economic structures are the driving force: specifically, the large numbers of high-contact, low-wage jobs that cannot be done remotely.
 - Cities with weaker local government – and tax bases – are less able to counterbalance errors and failings of central government.
- The relationship between COVID-19 cases and population density has weakened from 23 March to 1 May, as COVID-19 has spread across the country. Controlling for urban form, demography and economic conditions brings the relationship close to zero by 1 May. However, **many of these features are highly correlated with each other as well as density, making it hard to establish causality.**
- However, IMD data shows that **the relationship between COVID-19 and deprivation holds – albeit weaker – when controlling for demographic, urban and economic features.**
- There is **no clear geography of the economic impact** – existing analysis is conflicting (i.e. some studies estimate small and medium sized towns will be worse affected than cities and vice versa).
- **'Post-virus' cities might see the following changes:**
 - Urban infrastructure changes e.g. making public transport safer.
 - Living with greater surveillance.
 - Shifts in the way of working e.g. lower-density office spaces and increased remote working.

[Resolution Foundation This time is different – Universal Credit's first recession \(27/05/2020\)](#)

Analysis and new survey results on the role of Universal Credit (UC) in the current crisis.

- The report makes the point that the UC system is performing well – **over 90 per cent of payments have been paid in time.** Seventy-four per cent of new UC claimants reported they were satisfied with the way DWP handled their claim
- **The emergency boost to UC, tax credits and housing support on 20 March boosted the incomes of families in the poorest quarter by 5 per cent on average**
- Workers who are made redundant as the JRS phases out may face large falls in income, because the **median fall in income if furloughed is 9 per cent, compared to 47 per cent if people lose their jobs**
- **Among UC claimants, 36 per cent are having trouble keeping up with bill payments,** 42 per cent have cut back on spending to prioritise housing costs, and over half have already dipped into their savings

4. COVID-19 external policy recommendations

This section highlights policy recommendations that have been published in the last weeks by influential external organisations. Inclusion in this section does not mean the recommendations are endorsed in any way by the City Intelligence Unit.

[The Progressive Policy Think Tank – Inside the black box: the public finances after coronavirus \(19/05/2020\)](#)

- **High borrowing and increased debt levels are manageable in the medium term, based on the results of an interactive forecasting model** which allows you to alter assumptions to observe how these affect forecasts of the deficit and debt. While the model's forecasts are rigorous enough to use in policy planning, a key purpose of the model is educational.
- Two scenarios are used to illustrate impacts: a three-month lockdown in which growth returns to its pre-Covid level, and a six-month lockdown in which 'scarring effects' cause a reduction in the medium-term growth rate.
 - In the first scenario, public debt rises to around 120% of GDP. In the second, it rises to around 135% of GDP. Therefore, although there is considerable uncertainty associated with these forecasts, **we can assume with some certainty that the debt-to-GDP ratio will rise above 100% of GDP as a result of the crisis.**
- However, **these debt levels do not imply the need to return to austerity**, as the interest rates at which the government borrows are very low by historical standards and the Bank of England has indicated its continued support for Quantitative Easing.
- "A more equitable way to place the public finances on a sustainable footing is through progressive taxation, including taxation of wealth. **Given that government spending as a share of GDP will need to rise higher tax shares should be a medium-term policy goal**".

[TUC A Better Recovery Learning the lessons of the corona crisis to create a stronger, fairer economy \(20/05/2020\)](#)

A wide-ranging set of recommendations from the TUC that they intend to form an 'investment for growth' recovery plan. Proposals include:

- **Decent jobs:** the TUC argue that the national minimum wage should rise to £10 an hour, pension contributions should be calculated from the first pound of earnings, not the lower earnings limit in National Insurance, a range of changes to employment legislation and relaxation on restrictions on rules governing trade union activity.
- **Building a sustainable industrial base and a green recovery:** the TUC argue that investment programmes from the government should be accompanied by an 'Olympics style plan for decent jobs'. They argue for a jobs guarantee and an individual right to retrain, supported by a funded individual learning account. In addition they argue that any recovery programme of measures should deliver benefits in terms of reducing carbon, as well as jobs.
- **Rebuilding public services:** the report recommends a pay rise for public sector workers, integrated health and care, a needs-based funding settlement for local government, as well as increased funding for health and education and an end to outsourcing.

[RSA Covid-19: A year of stabilisation to build bridges to the future \(24/05/2020\)](#)

The RSA have begun a programme of work thinking about opportunities for positive change that might have emerged from the crisis. In this blog they sketch out principles and policy ideas for the next year and beyond:

- Principles: the RSA argue that in a 'stabilisation year', **measures must be direct**, getting support to where it is needed, they should be **comprehensive and universal** rather than hyper-targeted, and **they should create capacity** that can be built upon in the future

Some of the specific ideas the RSA have recommended include:

- Establish a trial Universal Basic Income

- Distribute work through a six-day week with two three-day shifts
- Support workers to develop skills and retrain, through including scaled-up digital accreditation
- Reconfiguring road space for walkers, runners and cyclists
- Develop a remote volunteer tutor scheme whereby education can provide to those disadvantaged by home learning

[Hepburn et al. \(Oxford Review of Economic Policy\) Will COVID-19 fiscal recovery packages accelerate or retard progress on climate change? \(08/05/2020\)](#)

The paper by Oxford economist Cameron Hepburn and with co-authors including Nick Stern, Nobel Prize winner Joseph Stiglitz and the London Sustainable Development Commission's Dimitri Zenghelis looks at the potential impact of COVID-19 fiscal recovery packages on climate change policy.

The highlight that **packages of intervention aimed at revising the economy can either set the global economy on a pathway towards net-zero emissions or lock it into a fossil fuel system which it will then be very difficult to move away from.**

The authors catalogue over 700 stimulus policies proposed or enacted during and since the financial crisis and develop a set of 25 policy archetypes. They then carry out a survey of 231 finance ministry officials, central bank officials, and other economists, representing 53 countries (including all G20 nations) to elicit their views on the effectiveness of these archetypal policies.

Combining survey responses with evidence from the literature, the authors conclude that five policy types look particularly attractive in terms of economic and climate impacts:

- **clean physical infrastructure investment** in the form of renewable energy assets, storage (including hydrogen), grid modernisation and CCS technology;
- **building efficiency spending for renovations and retrofits** including improved insulation; heating, and domestic energy storage systems;
- **investment in education and training** to address immediate unemployment from COVID-19 and structural shifts from decarbonisation;
- **natural capital investment** for ecosystem resilience and regeneration including restoration of carbon-rich habitats and climate-friendly agriculture;
- **clean R&D spending.**

5. Third party analysis newsletter: readers' survey results

We have had 11 respondents to our survey. Thank you! Key findings were as follows:

- Q1) Respondents gave the newsletter a 4.2 star average rating.
- Q2) All respondents think the newsletter is about the right length.
- Q3) Seven respondents think the newsletter should be sent weekly. Four respondents think fortnightly.
- Q4) Topics that respondents think we should be covering include among others:

- Housing impacts
- More targeted analysis of impacts on specific sectors and issues relevant to GLA policy.
- Cross comparison with other countries
- Impact on other global shifts e.g. Brexit, climate change;
- Actions from other Combined Authorities e.g. Greater Manchester etc.
- More embedding of gender and equalities perspectives across the topics and sources we review
- Revisit past newsletter themes with updates on what's changed.
- Testing and tracing strategies.

Q5) Some respondents suggested we look at research published by some equalities think tanks and organisations such as the New Economics Foundation. Other asked for greater emphasis on peer-reviewed work as opposed to consultancy/commercial reports.

In response to the suggestions at Q4 and Q5 we are going to adopt a more systematic approach in our trawling of websites of academic and research organisations so that we can identify relevant and interesting work across a broader range of authors and topics. We will also continue to seek to present research and analysis from a variety of perspectives, although we will retain a focus on evidence-based reports as opposed to advocacy or campaigning literature.

At the same time it is worth noting that only a relatively small part of the COVID-19 literature on socio-economic impacts has so far appeared peer reviewed journals. Even academic publications at this stage often take the form of working papers or analytical briefings as researchers have arguably faced incentives to publish quickly in order to influence policy debates.

Finally, other helpful suggestions which we will try to take on board included greater use of direct quotations from our sources and greater use of tables and infographics when summarising findings of multiple analyses.