



LONDON COVID-19 COMMUNITY RESPONSE SURVEY: WEEK NINE QUESTIONS

FIELDWORK 15th-18th JUNE 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 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 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 92 organisations responded in full or in part to the week seven questions, which were live between Monday 15th and Thursday 18th June 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.

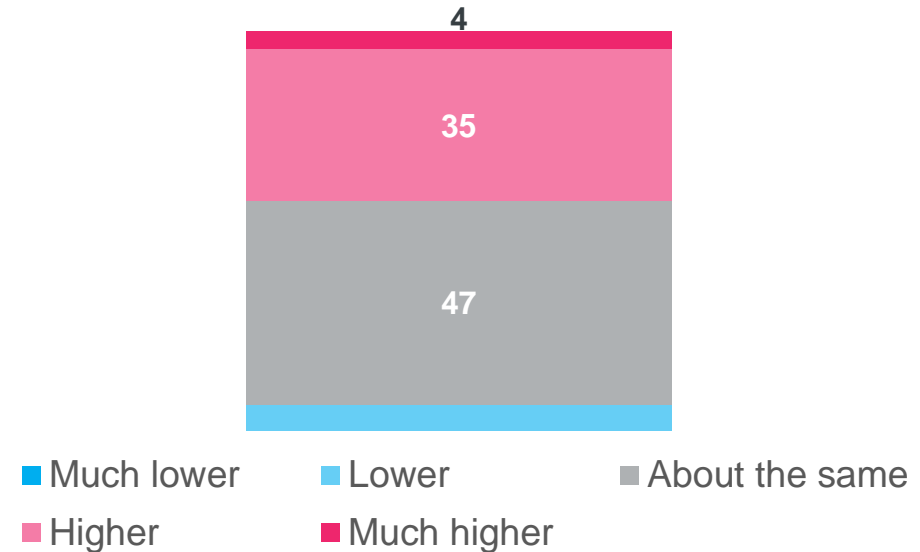
CHANGE IN NUMBER OF PEOPLE SEEKING SUPPORT

This week more organisations have seen little change (47) than an increase (39) in the number of people seeking support.

However, the proportion of organisations seeing an increase in numbers seeking support has increased on last week, rising from 28 per cent last week to 42 per cent this week. Next week's results will tell us if that is a one-off variation or a bigger shift.

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

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 several shifts in the types of issues being reported: the proportion of organisations citing issues around capacity building (among organisations or volunteers) have increased, as has the proportion citing housing as an issue. Other issues such as mental health, employment and isolation/loneliness remain important, with a high proportion of organisations referring to them.

Issue	Proportion reporting higher demand	No. of responses	Issue	Proportion reporting higher demand	No. of responses
Capacity building	55%	38	Childcare or Parenting	29%	24
Housing	51%	39	Physical health	28%	40
Mental health	46%	65	Domestic violence	27%	30
Employment	46%	46	Access to health	26%	42
Isolation and loneliness	44%	52	Grief bereavement	25%	28
Digital connectivity	44%	50	Immigration issues	25%	28
Poverty	40%	42	Access to care	23%	30
Debt issues	38%	42	Access to food	18%	50
Access to benefits	35%	48	Victim support	12%	17
Discrimination	35%	34			

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	40	Access to urgent funding for new needs	<10
Planning for recovery/easing of lockdown	34	Capacity - due to furloughed staff	<10
Funding - general	15	Digital skills or training	<10
Staff wellbeing and mental health	15	Working with local authorities	<10
Capacity - due to increased demand	14	Capacity - due to reduction in volunteers	<10
Digital or tech equipment	14	Capacity - due to staff working from home	<10
Social distancing in delivery	13	Funding - relationship with existing funders	<10
Reaching vulnerable groups	12	Difficulty in delivering services online	<10
Maintaining beneficiary engagement	11	Personal Protective Equipment	<10
Need to provide new or changed services	10	Advice/training on supporting vulnerable	<10
Capacity - general	<10		

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. Mental health and isolation remain the most widespread issues reported, followed by digital exclusion.

Challenge	Number of organisations	Issue	Number of organisations
Mental health	41	Access to benefits	<10
Digital exclusion	29	No recourse to public funds	<10
Social Isolation	26	Domestic violence	<10
Employment issues	22	Home schooling	<10
Access to food and essentials	16	Multi-lingual support	<10
Low income	16	Bereavement	<10
Social distancing rules	11	Access to Medicine	<10
Family tension	<10	Access to PPE	<10
Access to local authority support	<10	Eviction	<10
Inadequate accommodation	<10		

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 more likely to mention mental health (63 per cent of organisations), social isolation (38 per cent) and family tensions (25 per cent)

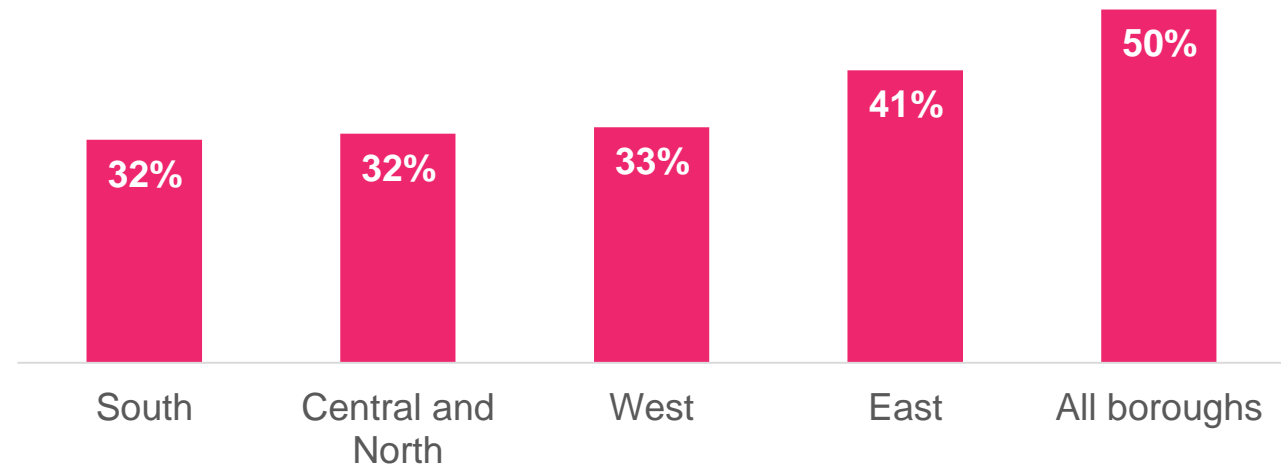
Organisations working with the general public were particularly likely to mention access to food and essentials (21 per cent), employment issues (38 per cent) and low incomes (25 per cent)

CHANGE IN NUMBER OF PEOPLE SEEKING SUPPORT BY GEOGRAPHY

Organisations working in the East and across London are more likely to report an increase in the number of people seeking support, compared to last week.

32 per cent of organisations working in the South, Central and North, and 33 per cent of organisations working in the West, reported an increase in numbers seeking support, versus 41 per cent in the East and 50 per cent of organisations working across all boroughs

Proportion of organisations seeing an increase in requests for support by London sub-region



IMPACT ON FUNDING AND OPERATIONS

Funding expectations

Almost a quarter of responding organisations told us that they expect Covid-19 will have a positive (8 per cent) or negligible (15 per cent) impact on their funding over the next 6 months.

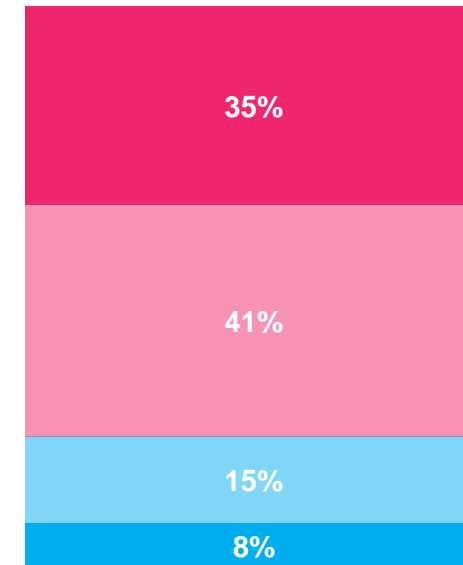
Over three-quarters of respondents thought that Covid-19 will have a negative impact on funding, with over a third expecting to lose more than 25 per cent of their funding.

Impact on operations

Nine per cent of organisations reported that the financial challenges raised by Covid-19 mean their organisation was very or quite likely to no longer be operating in six months time.

Sixty-nine per cent of organisations said it was very or quite unlikely they would no longer be operating, and 22 per cent said it was neither likely nor unlikely.

What impact do you expect Covid-19 to have on your organisation's income over the next six months relative to your pre-crisis expectations?



■ Positive impact ■ Zero impact
■ Reduction 0-25% ■ Reduction 25%+

Getting London thriving again

60 respondents wrote in to share perspectives on what else the London Recovery Board should focus on to get London thriving again. Across different issues the importance of directly involving communities and those most affected was highlighted as a priority.

We also asked respondents whether they agreed with the aims of the London Recovery Board. Among the 89 respondents who answered this question:

Over half said that they agreed (54 per cent), with an additional 1 in 5 saying they 'strongly agreed' (19 per cent).

Seventeen per cent of respondents either 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed', with the remaining 10 per cent neither agreeing or disagreeing.

Getting London thriving again

Tackling structural racism and inequalities (10) – this was the most common issue identified in the cohort, with a focus on systemic and structural forms of discrimination. There were reflections that ‘support for Londoners’ should be more proactive and explicit.

“The Recovery Board could go further to be explicit about structural inequality in London and what is required to address this. To narrow social, economic and health inequalities requires an examination of the city's treatment of race, poverty and allocation of resources. We don't need more charities and projects, we need money to be reinvested where it's been stripped out so London residents have access to a decent quality of health care, decent housing options and jobs that aren't precarious and keep people below the poverty line.”

“Address discrimination, systemic issues of bias and reduce hate crime. It is important that London's communities are untied and work together to support each other in these difficult times.”

Getting London thriving again

Support for civil society (7) – the need to ensure the sector is supported to respond to increasing need, with a focus on grassroots activity and local ownership.

“Central government is not doing enough to support local government and they not doing enough to support organisations on the ground. When there is will things can change very quickly as we saw with homelessness and food aid. But now going 'back to normal' people are being dropped by those who receive money directly from us in the form of taxes. The voluntary sector cannot do this big a job. Priorities need to change. Scrap defence budget and put it into social care. Then we can see some changes for the better.”

Collaboration (7) – importance of working in partnership and facilitating collaboration across sectors

“Make sure that representatives from all communities, and especially the BAMER community, are involved in decision making from the get go. Encourage and facilitate partnership work between charities, schools and businesses.”

“Making sure communities, charities, and organisations generally are able to connect and work together to solve issues. This is going to require some London wide resourcing to make sure all groups can be connected (and pro-actively reached) rather than relying on grassroots alone.”

Getting London thriving again

Young people (5) – concern about educational inequalities exacerbated as a result of the crisis, opportunities for school leavers and the importance of involving young people in recovery work.

“There is a concern that young voices won't be heard or their concerns given air time – young people have been unheard in lots of ways in terms of the COVID discussions and it is really vital that they should have a voice in what comes next. Representation from young people and groups which are led by young people should be addressed urgently (RSPB represented but not youth organisations like London Youth?). Keeping young people safe is vital as we move forward, but to do this they need to be heard and involved in shaping the recovery strategy.”

Mental health (5) – ensuring there is a focus on addressing the mental health impact of COVID-19

“Trauma and mental health issues which have risen so dramatically, and will last much longer than the physical effects of the virus.”

Getting London thriving again

Increased housing provision (5) – the importance of ensuring different housing options are available for Londoners.

“Solving the housing crisis in an equitable way, making sure that Londoners' needs for social rented homes (including Gypsy and Traveller sites) are met urgently; Communities should be at the heart of decision making and delivering the vision for recovery”

Additional issues that were raised were narrowing the **digital divide (4)**, **improving transport (4)**, **clear guidance on social distancing (4)** and **skills/ESOL provision (4)**.

Any other issues

The most common grouping of issues in response to this question related to tackling structural racism and support for BAME communities (8).

“We need to deal with structural racism.”

“BAME community and civil society organisations are poorly resourced, (both financially and in terms of personnel) in order that they may adequately respond to the influx of demand in the wake of the resurgence of the #BlackLivesMatter movement.”

“As mentioned clients from BAME background who do not have access to trustworthy institutions to seek justice when they have been discriminated against in health care settings, by housing or police. I also don't see the wider organisation I'm based in (****) responding adequately to the disproportionately negative impact of covid on black and asian workers in particular.”

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NEXT STEPS

Week eight survey in the field between 22nd – 25th June.

Results available on Monday 29th June.