



LONDON COVID-19 COMMUNITY RESPONSE SURVEY: WEEK TWENTY EIGHT/TWENTY NINE

FIELDWORK 19th – 29th October 2020

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Community Response Survey

The 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.

This week's survey collected data over two weeks.

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 360 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 100 organisations responded in full or in part to the questions, which were live between Monday 19th and Thursday 29th October 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.

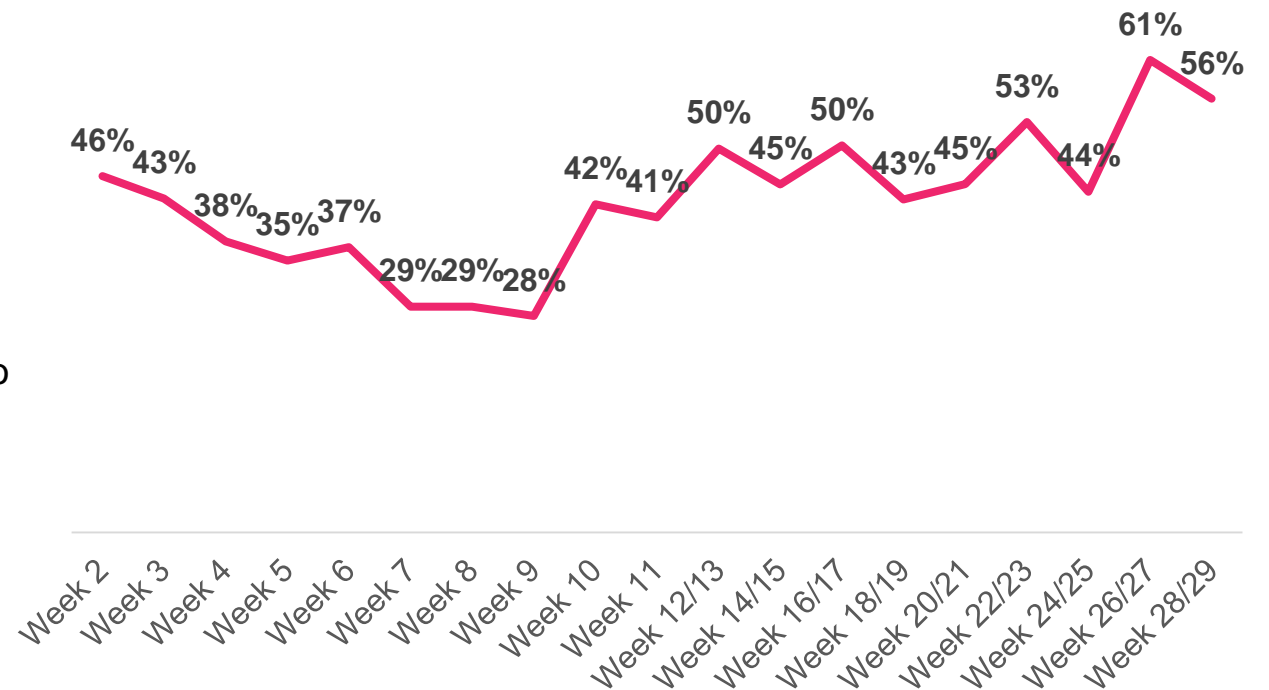
CHANGE IN NUMBER OF PEOPLE SEEKING SUPPORT

This week 56 per cent of responding organisations (55) saw an increase in the number of people seeking support in the last two weeks.

42 reported little change in numbers and 2 reported a decrease.

Organisations working with BAME Londoners were more likely to report increased need at 72%. Organisation working with older low income Londoners and young people were more in line with the cohort average at 50% and 55% respectively.

Increase in numbers seeking support



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. The issues with the highest proportion reporting higher demand are poverty, debt issues, employment and mental health. This week we have seen a noticeable (>10pp) increase in the proportion of organisations experiencing an increase in demand around poverty, physical health, access to food, bereavement and victim support.

Issue	Proportion reporting higher demand	No. of responses	Issue	Proportion reporting higher demand	No. of responses
Poverty	65%	48	Isolation and loneliness	53%	57
Debt issues	64%	47	Homelessness	52%	42
Employment	63%	52	Youth violence	50%	18
Mental health	63%	60	Immigration issues	45%	33
Education	60%	40	Access to social care	44%	36
Housing	58%	45	Grief bereavement	43%	30
Physical health	57%	49	Substance misuse	42%	26
NRPF	57%	30	Victim support	42%	19
Access to food	56%	62	Digital connectivity	42%	50
Access to health	55%	38	Childcare or Parenting	41%	29
Access to benefits	55%	49	Capacity Building/organisations or volunteers	39%	38
Fundraising support	55%	31	Sexual exploitation	38%	16

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 in the last two weeks. The top challenges in week 28/29 were planning for delivery over the next 6 months, capacity to meet demand and funding sustainability beyond the crisis.

Challenge	Number of organisations
Planning for delivery over the next 6 months	43
Capacity to meet demand	39
Funding sustainability beyond the crisis	30
Delivering services whilst following social distancing guidelines	28
Staff wellbeing and mental health	22
Funding until March 2021	21
Reaching vulnerable groups	21
Need to provide new or changed services	16
Maintaining engagement and contact with beneficiary groups	9
Fall in public donations (including food)	8
Reduction in volunteers	

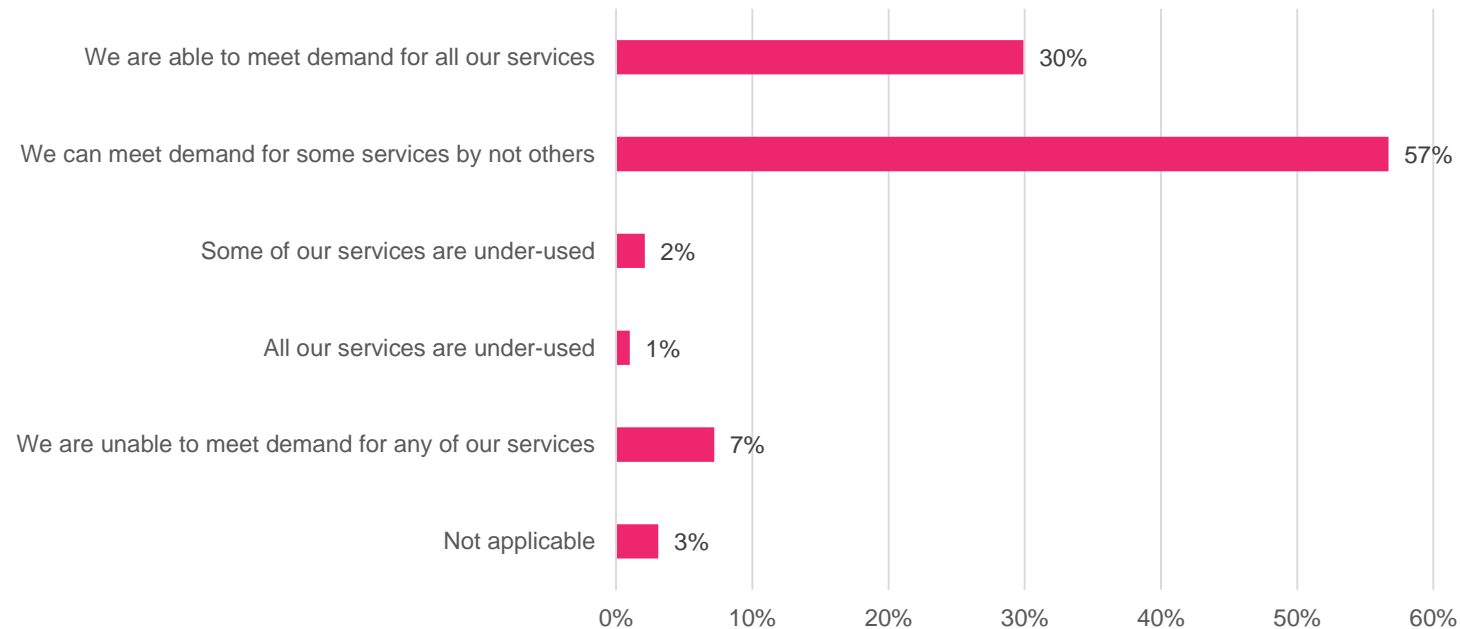
WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOUR BENEFICIARIES ARE FACING THIS WEEK?

We asked responding organisations to tell us the three biggest challenges their beneficiaries were facing in the last week. This week the top issues were mental health, loss of jobs or lack of employment opportunities and financial insecurity.

Challenge	Number of organisations
Mental health	38
Loss of jobs or lack of employment opportunities	34
Financial insecurity	32
Social Isolation	29
Digital exclusion	22
Access to food and essentials	19
Concern about Covid (including access to tests, fear of infection and confidence to leave home)	11
Social distancing rules	10
Homelessness	10

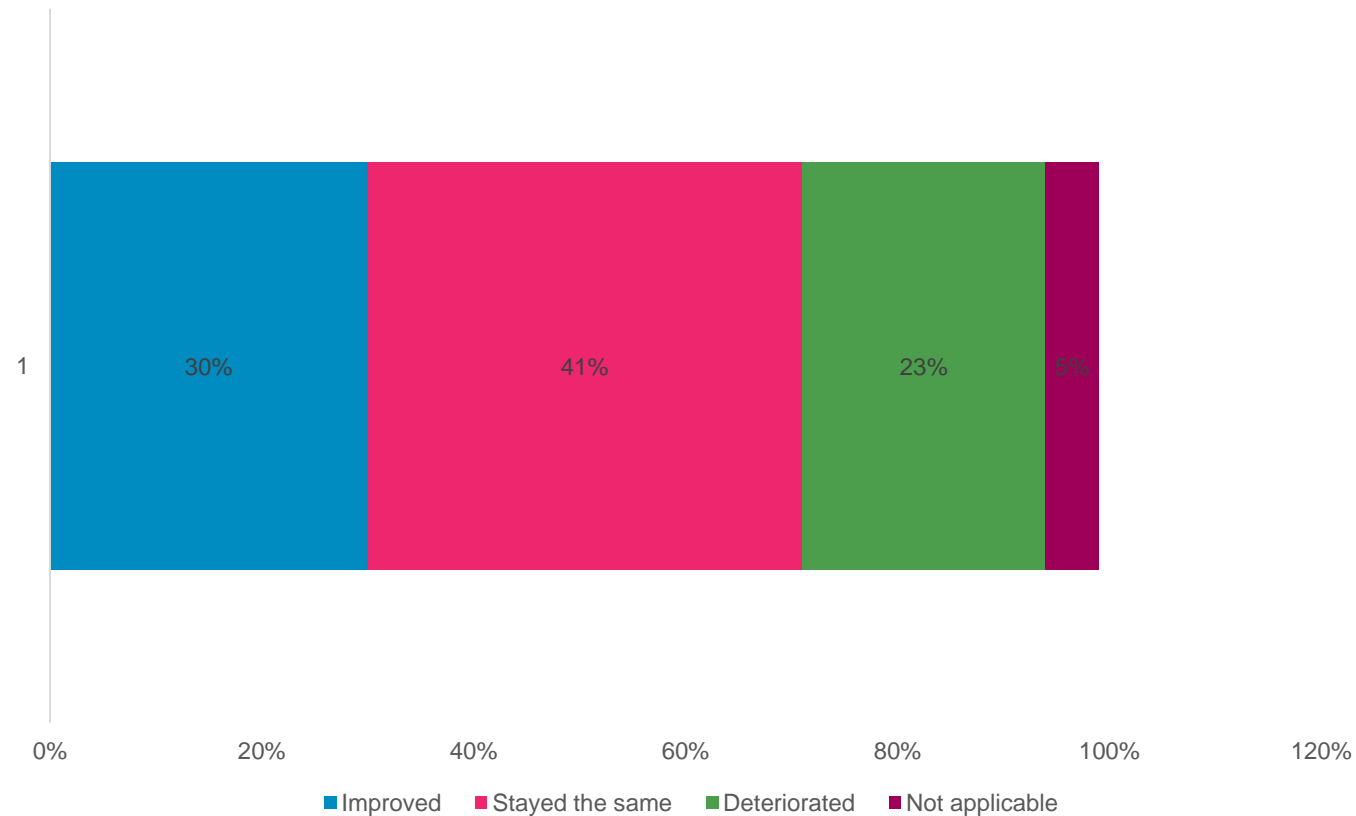
ABILITY TO MEET DEMAND IN LAST TWO MONTHS

Over the last two months 7% of responding organisation were unable to meet demand for any of their services, 30% were able to meet demand for all their services and 57% were able to meet demand for some of their services but not others.



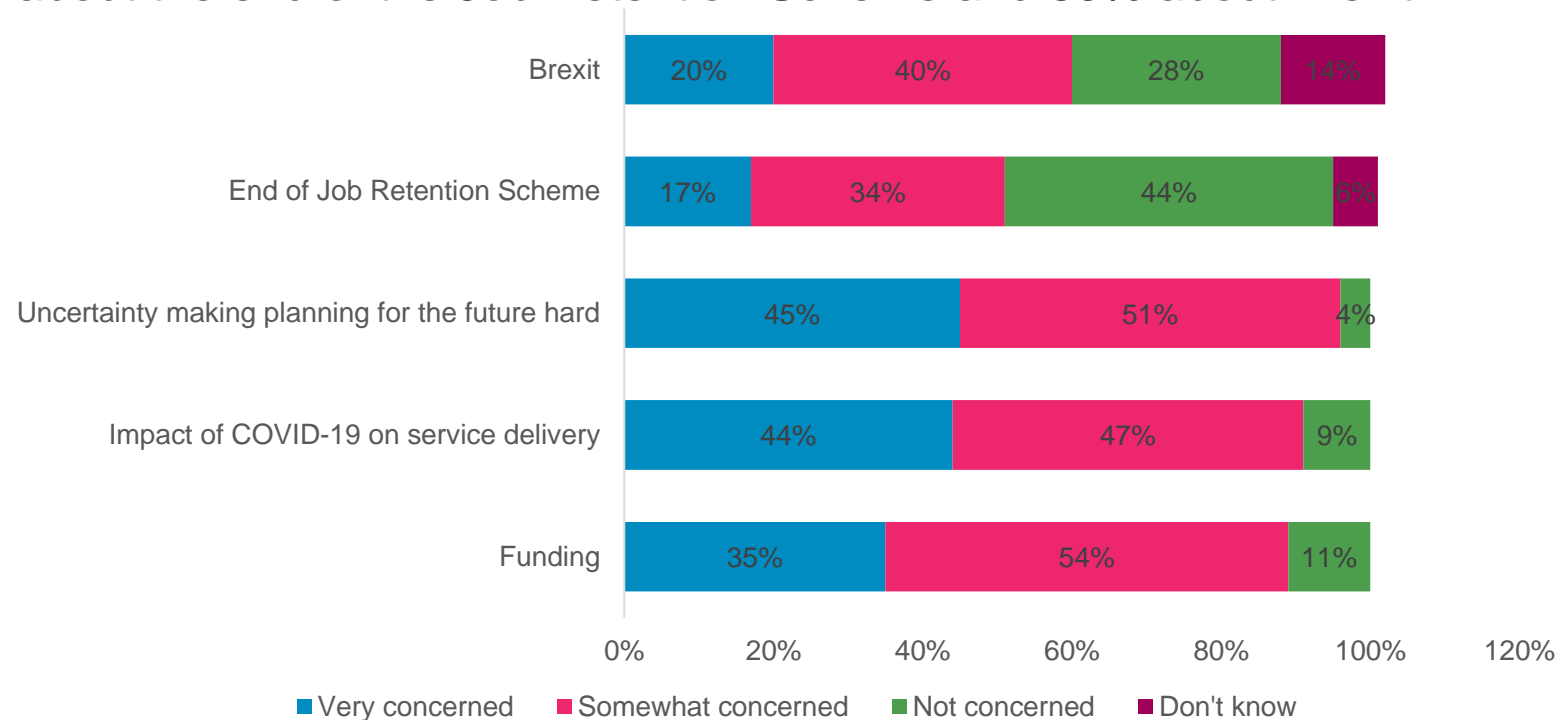
CHANGE IN FINANCIAL POSITION IN LAST TWO MONTHS

Almost one in four organisations experienced a deterioration (23%) in their financial position over the last two months, 41% experienced no change and 30% saw an improvement.



CONCERN ABOUT ORGANISATION'S ABILITY TO DELIVER AGAINST OBJECTIVES

We asked organisations how concerned they were about a range of issues affecting their ability to deliver against their objectives. 96% of organisations were concerned about uncertainty making planning for the future difficult, 92% about the impact of COVID-19 on service delivery, 88% about Funding, 51% about the end of the Job Retention Scheme and 59% about Brexit.



ANY OTHER ISSUES

This week respondents raised concern about increasing numbers of Section 21 notices being issued, continued challenges with digital exclusion and its impact on mental health and learning.

"Since the lifting of the ban on evictions we are starting to see people who have received s.21 notices. This is expected to build up to large-scale evictions and homelessness by late Spring early Summer next year."

Housing and homelessness

"We are terrified by the prospect of whole family homelessness due to NRPF for those who were working in insecure jobs."

Digital exclusion, ESOL and AEB

"Very low level ESOL learners are hugely disadvantaged by the uncertainty in the sector (eg whether face to face learning can go ahead) as well as accompanying restrictions. Many are excluded from learning because of lack of access to laptops/tablets/wifi, lack of digital literacy and almost no pre entry provision. There are also no courses with creche in the whole borough which disproportionately affects female learners. "

"We are very concerned about the mental wellbeing of people who are digitally excluded. The few solutions that we have been part of have not really been resourced well enough and focus basically on sending kit to people who can't use it. The training provided assumes a lot of prior knowledge, familiarity, resources, support, basic literacy and numeracy, or indeed physical ability; assumptions that are not always borne out to be justified."

"We need to be able to use AEB more flexibly to be able to provide immediate support for unemployed adults and to meet the needs of socially isolated groups such as ESOL adults/parents, SEND and carers and older people. We are well placed to meet needs but funding regs are too narrow and inflexible"



NEXT STEPS

The next survey will cover two weeks, being in the field between 2nd – 11th November.

Results available on Monday 16th November.