



LONDON COVID-19 COMMUNITY RESPONSE SURVEY: WEEK THIRTY TWO/THIRTY THREE

FIELDWORK 16th – 25th November 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 113 organisations responded in full or in part to the questions, which were live between Monday 16th and Wednesday 25th November.

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.

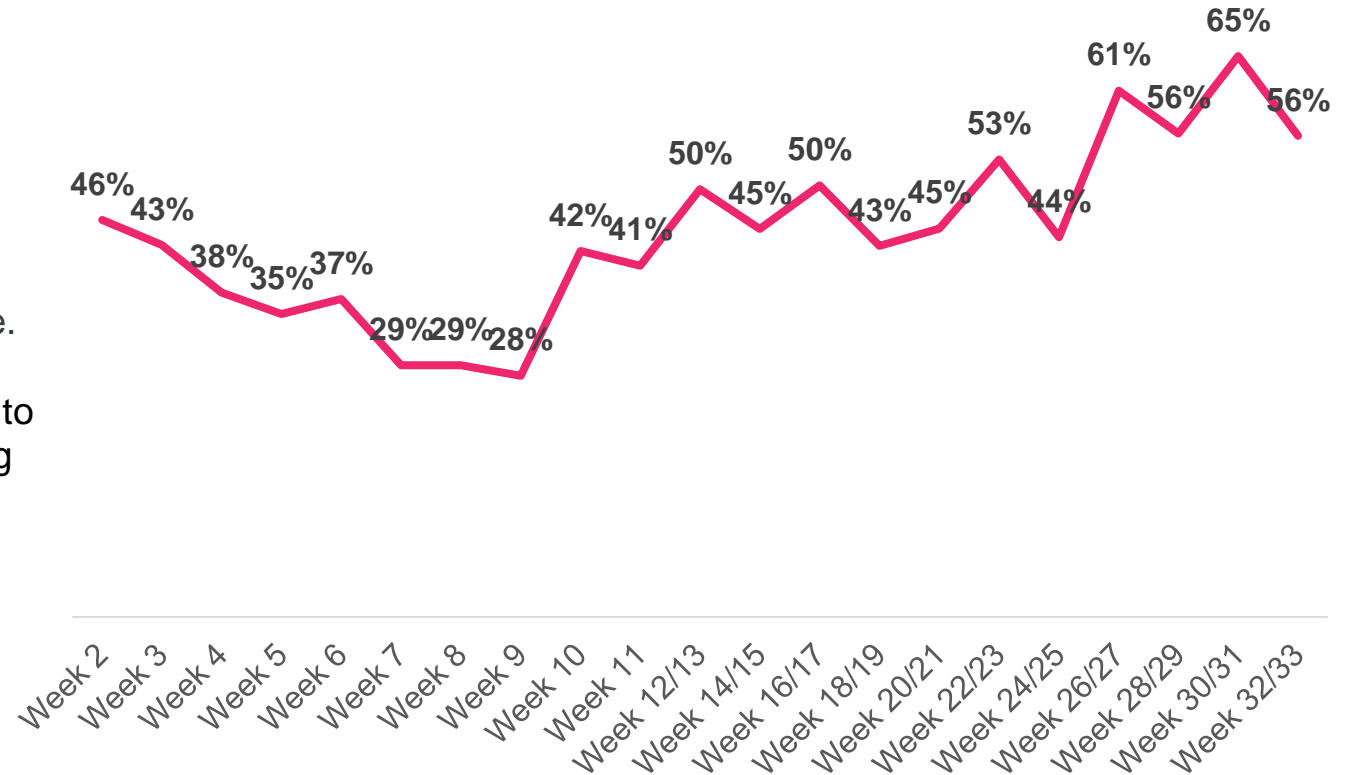
CHANGE IN NUMBER OF PEOPLE SEEKING SUPPORT

This week 56 per cent of responding organisations (63) saw an increase in the number of people seeking support in the last two weeks.

43 reported little change in numbers and 7 reported a decrease.

Organisations working with BAME Londoners were more likely to report increased need at 60%. Organisation working with young people were significantly less likely to report higher demand at 29%.

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, mental health, isolation and access to food. This week we have seen a noticeable (>10pp) increase in organisations experiencing an increase in demand around debt issues, access to health, access to social care and substance misuse.

Issue	Proportion reporting higher demand	No. of responses	Issue	Proportion reporting higher demand	No. of responses
Poverty	69%	55	NRPF	49%	33
Mental health	69%	83	Access to benefits	46%	57
Isolation and loneliness	67%	72	Fundraising support	45%	44
Access to food	61%	73	Grief/bereavement	44%	45
Debt issues	58%	50	Domestic violence	43%	45
Access to health	58%	56	Immigration issues	42%	47
Employment	58%	57	Discrimination	36%	42
Homelessness	57%	46	Childcare or Parenting	31%	38
Digital connectivity	55%	64	Youth violence	30%	30
Housing	54%	55	Substance misuse	29%	34
Access to social care	53%	53	Hate crime	28%	31
Education	51%	47	Victim support	14%	28
Physical health	51%	59	Sexual exploitation	12%	24
Capacity Building (organisations or volunteers)	49%	49	Child abuse	6%	30

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 32/33 were planning for delivery over the next 6 months, capacity to meet demand, funding sustainability beyond the crisis and staff wellbeing and mental health. Organisations working with BAME Londoners were more likely to cite funding sustainability and the need for digital equipment as a main challenge. In contrast to the cohort average, the top challenges identified by organisations working young people were working with local authorities and difficulty in delivering services online.

Challenge	Number of organisations
Planning for delivery over the next 6 months	41
Capacity to meet demand	40
Funding sustainability beyond the crisis	29
Staff wellbeing and mental health	29
Delivering services whilst following social distancing guidelines	28
Funding until March 2021	22
Need to provide new or changed services	20
Reaching vulnerable groups	20
Maintaining engagement and contact with beneficiary groups	16
Difficulty in delivering services online	10

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE LONDONERS 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, social isolation, loss of jobs or lack of employment opportunities and financial insecurity. Organisations that work with BAME Londoners were more likely to cite financial insecurity and digital exclusion as the biggest challenge for their beneficiaries. Organisations that work with young people were more likely to identify loss of jobs as the biggest challenge for their beneficiaries.

Challenge	Number of organisations
Mental health	55
Social Isolation	44
Loss of jobs or lack of employment opportunities	42
Financial insecurity	39
Access to food and essentials	24
Digital exclusion	24
Concern about Covid (including access to tests, fear of infection and confidence to leave home)	10
Housing	10

ANY OTHER ISSUES

A range of issues were raised this week by respondents. Two common issues that were raised related to demand for food aid and support for carers.

"Some carers are concerned about access to family members in care home. Home based work i(and other issues) is making it harder for statutory services to be contacted. There has been frustration from some carers in getting GP appointments. Once they get the appointment the contact via phone or video call is not always satisfactory"

"Carers continue to face pressures caused by isolation and difficulty in accessing services."

Support for carers

Demand for food aid

"As I stated in the questionnaire we are a homeless outreach group but are seeing more and more people who have somewhere to stay that are coming for food. We try to give out food hampers but never have enough. We are finding it difficult to keep up with the demand"

"We have seen a big jump in the number of Clinically Extremely Vulnerably people needing support with access to food (and deliveries)."

"It has been an extraordinary few weeks with the rise in demand going through the roof. XXX has had so many new calls from people asking for food, some who are ill, some with COVID but mostly with other major chronic diseases who are either shielding or cannot cook because of their condition ... People are ashamed, angry and upset at having to ask for help and feel they are asking too much, sometimes getting angry and embarrassed when their real situation becomes more apparent to us...We had thought that in this lock down the Local Authority would pick up those who were too ill to cook and shop. But that does not seem to have worked ... Instead the voluntary sector with little money is asked to pick up the slack."



NEXT STEPS

The next survey will cover two weeks, being in the field between 30th November – 9th December.

Results available on Monday 14th December.