



# LONDON COVID-19 COMMUNITY RESPONSE SURVEY: WEEK FORTY/FORTY ONE

FIELDWORK 11<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021

# 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 119 organisations responded in full or in part to the questions, which were live between Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January and Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

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.

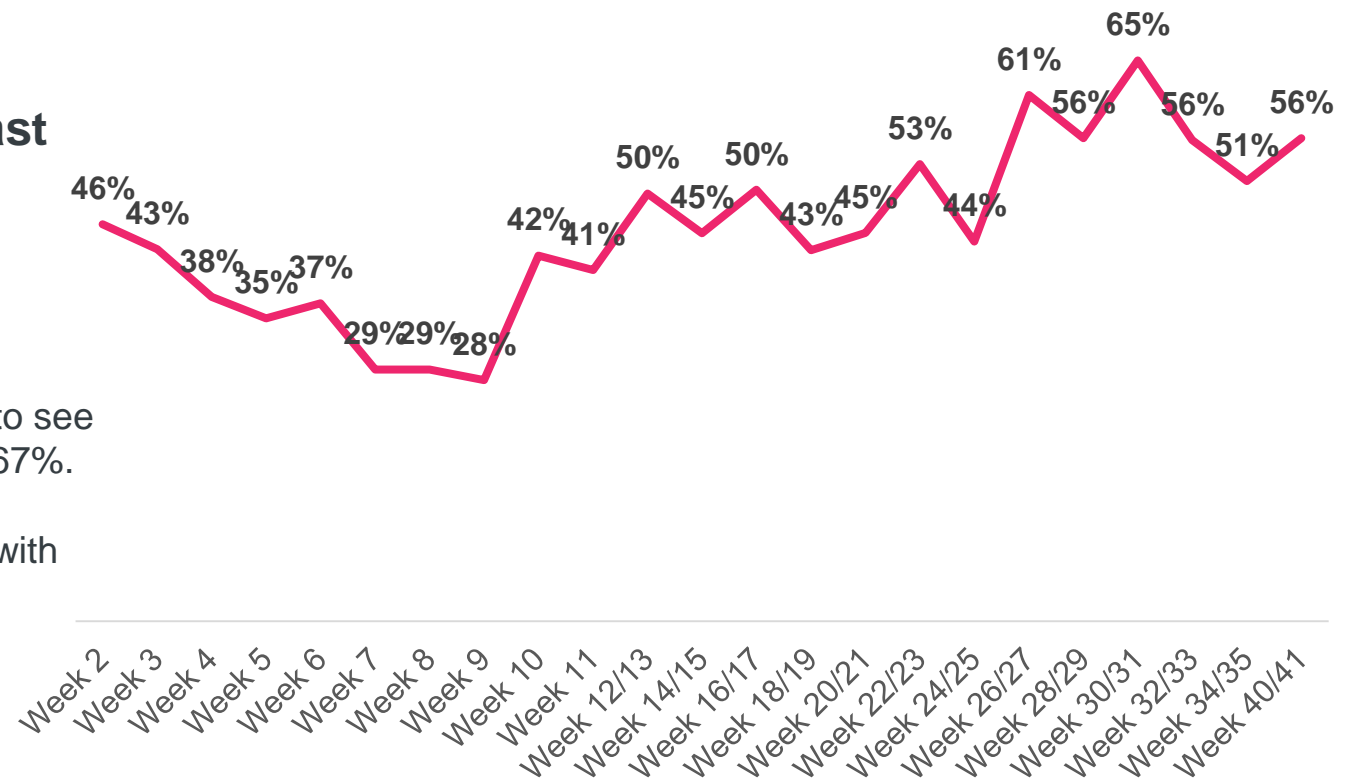
# CHANGE IN NUMBER OF PEOPLE SEEKING SUPPORT

**This week 56 per cent of responding organisations (67) saw an increase in the number of people seeking support in the last two weeks.**

37% reported little change in numbers and 7 organisations reported a decrease.

Organisations working with young people were more likely to see an increase in demand compared to the cohort average at 67%. Organisations working with BAME Londoners, Migrant communities and socially excluded Londoners were in line with the cohort average.

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 mental health, isolation, education and physical health. Organisations saw > 10pp increase across a wide range of issues, however there was a significant increase in the proportion reporting higher demand for support with education, physical health, childcare or parenting, grief/bereavement, access to social care and capacity building.

Issue	Proportion reporting higher demand	No. of responses	Issue	Proportion reporting higher demand	No. of responses
<b>Mental health</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>85</b>	Housing	56%	54
<b>Isolation and loneliness</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>83</b>	Access to benefits	52%	67
<b>Education</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>56</b>	Homelessness	51%	43
<b>Physical health</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>61</b>	Fundraising support	51%	49
Employment	71%	65	NRPF	50%	46
<b>Poverty</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>64</b>	Debt issues	49%	55
<b>Access to food</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>Discrimination</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Childcare or Parenting</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>40</b>	Hate crime	38%	37
<b>Access to health</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>68</b>	Domestic violence	37%	46
<b>Grief/bereavement</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>Victim support</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Access to social care</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>63</b>	Substance misuse	31%	35
<b>Capacity Building (organisations or volunteers)</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>57</b>	Immigration issues	28%	46
<b>Digital connectivity</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>71</b>	Youth violence	25%	32

# 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 40/41 were planning for delivery over the next 6 months, capacity to meet demand, funding sustainability beyond the crisis and staff wellbeing and mental health.

Challenge	Number of organisations
Planning for delivery over the next 6 months	55
Capacity to meet demand	42
Funding sustainability beyond the crisis	41
Staff wellbeing and mental health	35
Delivering services whilst following social distancing guidelines	26
Reaching vulnerable groups	25
Need to provide new or changed services	20
Maintaining engagement and contact with beneficiary groups	19
Funding until March 2021	16
Reduction in volunteers	12

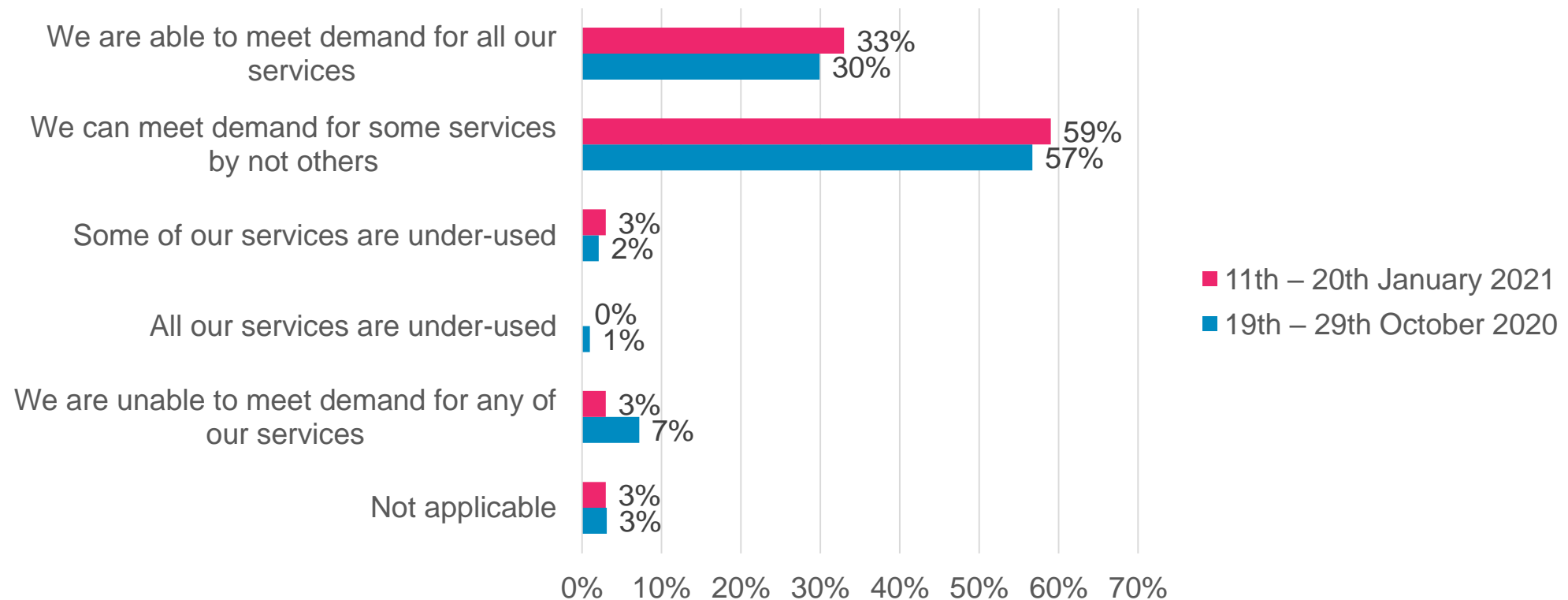
# WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE LONDONERS ARE FACING THIS WEEK?

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 social isolation, mental health, financial insecurity and loss of jobs or lack of employment opportunities.

Challenge	Number of organisations
Social Isolation	54
Mental Health	51
Financial Insecurity	44
Loss of jobs or lack of employment opportunities	37
Access to food and essentials	26
Concern about Covid	22
Digital Exclusion	21
Homelessness	11
Education or training	10

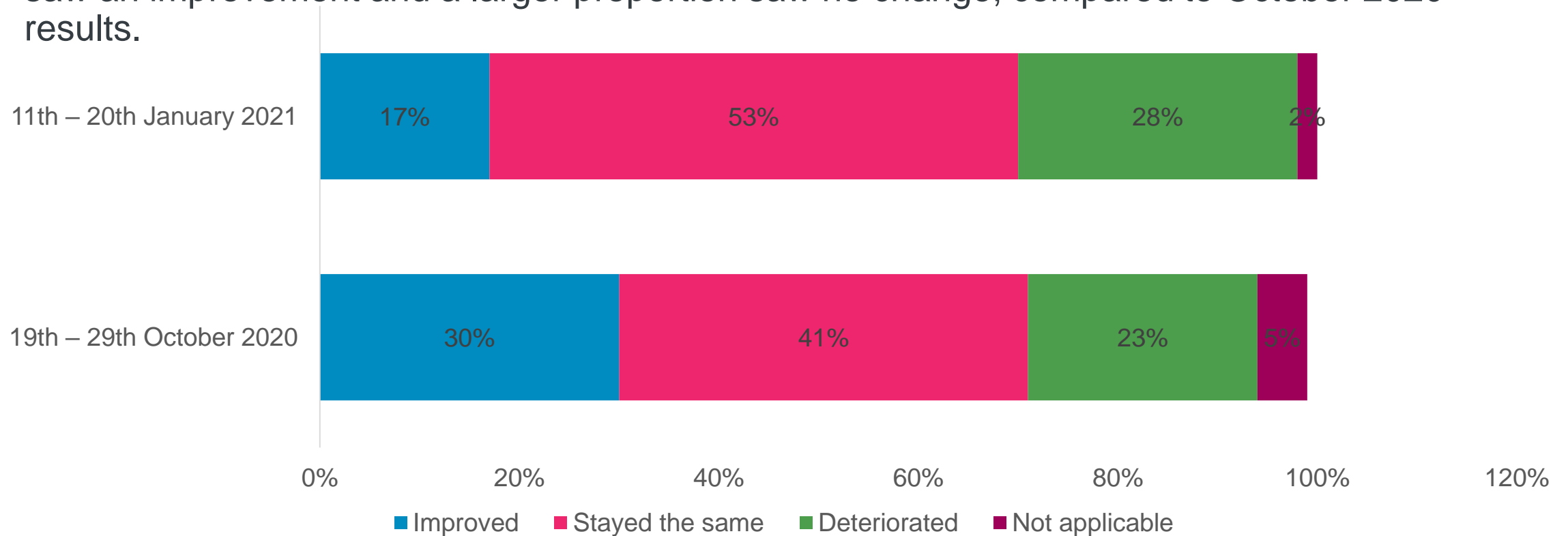
# ABILITY TO MEET DEMAND IN LAST TWO MONTHS

Over the last two months 3% of responding organisation were unable to meet demand for any of their services, 33% were able to meet demand for all their services and 59% were able to meet demand for some of their services but not others. The pattern does not appear to have changed significantly since we last asked this question in October 2020.



# CHANGE IN FINANCIAL POSITION IN LAST TWO MONTHS

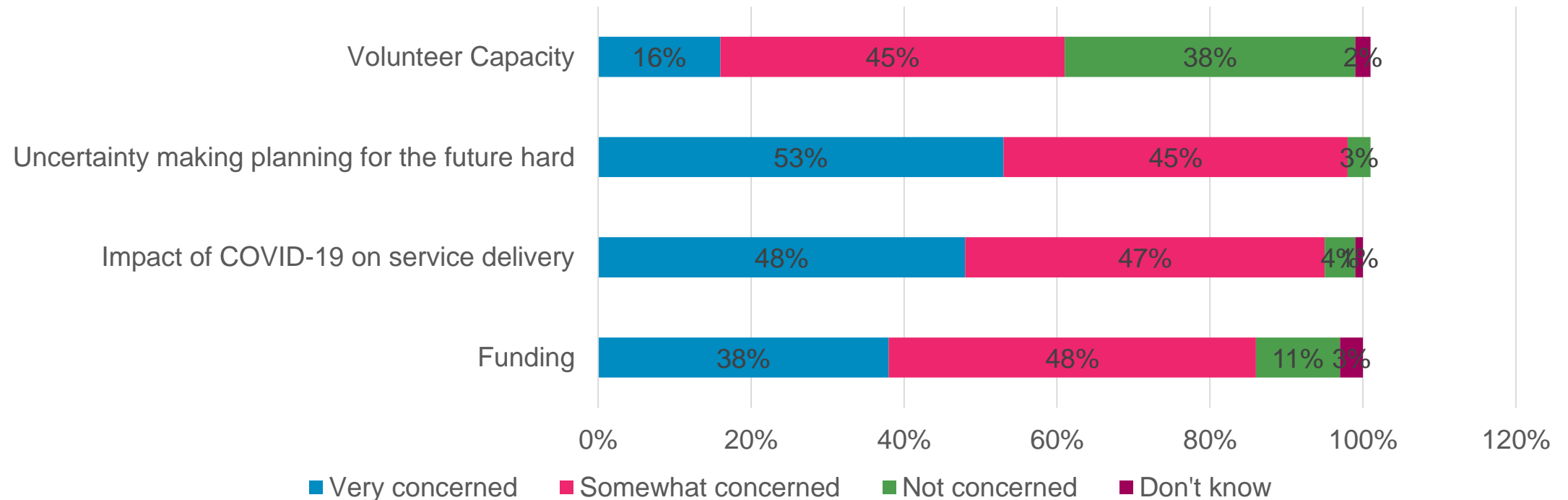
28% of organisations experienced a deterioration in their financial position over the last two months, 53% experienced no change and 17% saw an improvement. Fewer organisations saw an improvement and a larger proportion saw no change, compared to October 2020 results.





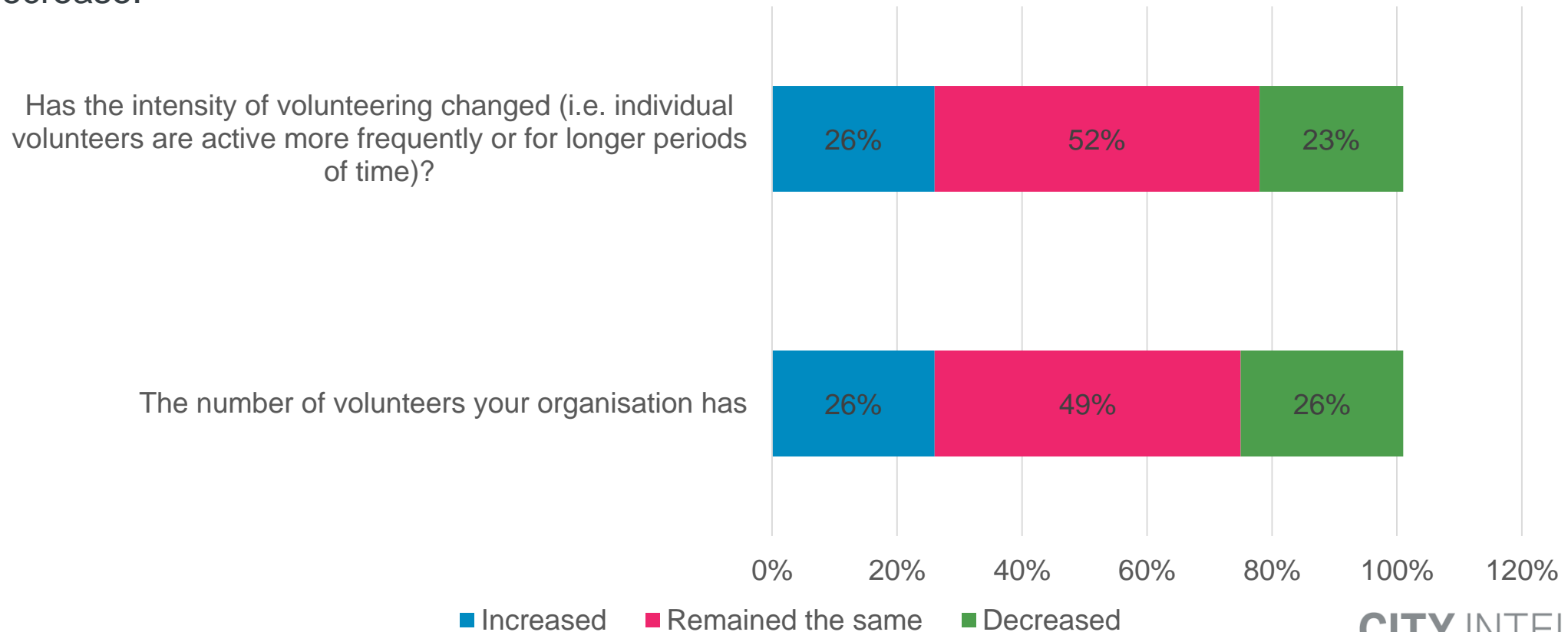
# CONCERN ABOUT ORGANISATION'S ABILITY TO DELIVER AGAINST OBJECTIVES

We asked organisations how concerned they were about a range of issues affecting their ability to deliver against their objectives. 98% of organisations were concerned about uncertainty making planning for the future difficult, 95% about the impact of COVID-19 on service delivery, 86% about Funding, 61% were concerned about volunteer capacity.



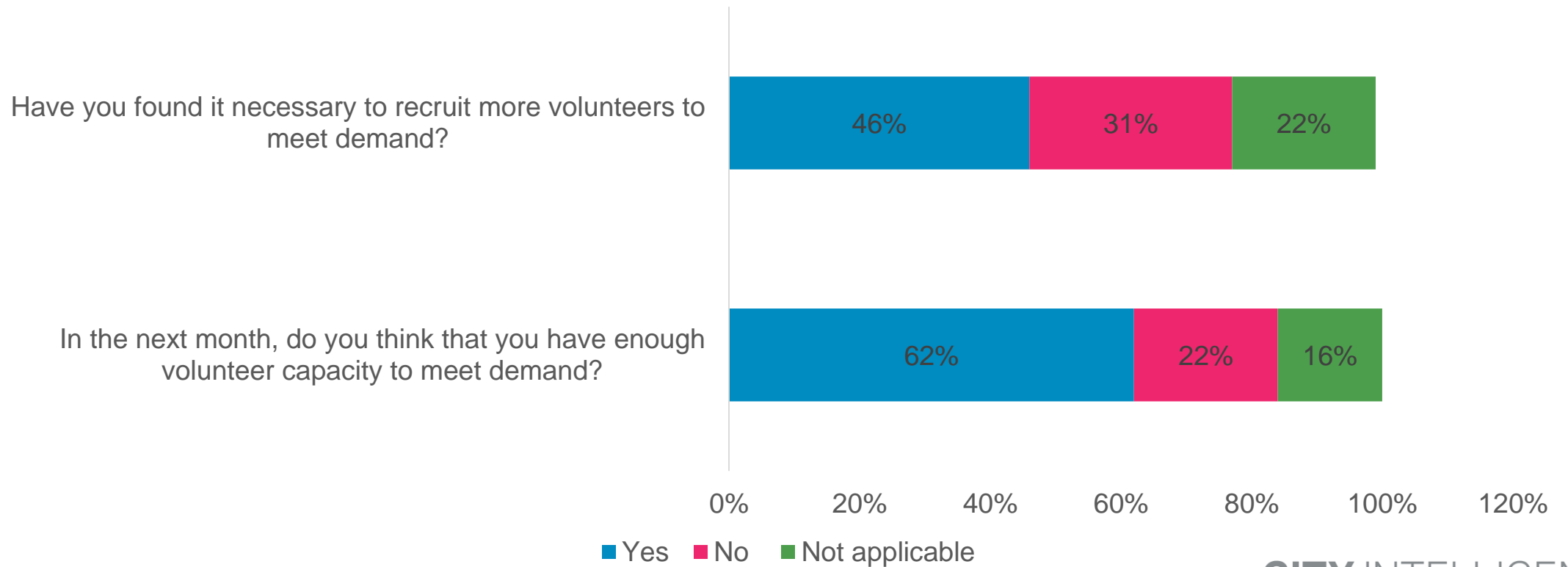
# IN THE LAST MONTH:

26% of organisations saw a fall in volunteer capacity over the last month, and an equal number of organisations saw an increase. Almost half of responding organisations saw no change in the number of volunteers. There was a similar pattern with regards to intensity of volunteers, with just over a quarter of organisations experiencing an increase in intensity, and just under a quarter experiencing a decrease.



# QUESTIONS RELATING TO VOLUNTEERING

46% of responding organisations needed to recruit more volunteers to meet demand. 62% of felt they have sufficient volunteer capacity to meet demand, and 22% do not have sufficient capacity.



# KEY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT THE VACCINE

The most common theme in the responses related to when people would have access to the vaccine, both for particular groups and also general confusion about how it is being rolled out across this city. Unpaid carers were highlighted as a particular group who are concerned about when they will be vaccinated.

This was followed by high levels of mistrust of the vaccine amongst a range of communities, creating hesitancy. People want to understand it's development and composition.

"How can community care workers access the vaccine? Those providing care in residential care settings are being vaccinated in the care homes they work in. This is not available to care staff working in education and community settings."

"When it will be available to refugees, asylum seekers, how will they know and what should they do."

"A concern from the LGBT Community is that those working with homeless people are offered the vaccine and that homeless people are also considered earlier in the roll out process."

"We have a large number of members aged 80+ some of whom have received 2 vaccinations, some have received only 1 and are concerned and confused as to why their second vaccination is being delayed and whether it will be as efficient and some who have not even been contacted to have their vaccination including one of our members who is 91"

"Fake news / conspiracy theories are rife amongst some communities and it doesn't help that no-one provides consistent messaging - NHS , public health, local gov etc all put out information - why don't they all work together on messaging?"

"Getting information in community languages; lack of trust; concerns related to origin of vaccines, for example Roman Catholic church concern about possible use of stem cells, contents of vaccine (animal products)"

"There's a general worry about the vaccine in the Black community, because of the past trust issues with the health system. We are going to have a huge problem on our hands if the government or health bodies don't explain how the vaccine will work and what it will do to our bodies. We need evidence that they have tested the vaccine on Black people. People need to hear how many Black people the vaccine has been tested on and that it is safe for them. The worry is people won't take up the vaccine because they have not been given the correct information. There are a lot posts on social media saying the vaccine will impact differently on the genes of Black people and that it will have an adverse affect on Black people. If this is not cleared up, people will not take the vaccine. This mistrust is very old, and it's coming on top of the failure of the health system to support Black people during the crisis."

# KEY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT THE VACCING

We received many responses relating to the safety of the vaccine, connected to speed of development, how much it has been tested and who it has been tested on.

An equal number of respondents raised concern about poor information and communication about the vaccine.

“Everyone wants an end to the fear and anxiety. For some the vaccine signals this but for many there is too much uncertainty around it. Is it safe? It hasn't been tested for long enough to know. Is it effective and if so how effective? Does it mean you can still pass the disease to others? How long does it last? What are the long term side effects? Will I get the second dose and if I don't get it will the vaccine still work or will it work for a shorter time or what? It has not done that much to lessen the anxiety. The news is saying its coming and coming soon and yet many elders have heard nothing and are asking and asking where is it?”

“Is it safe? There are concerns it has not been tested for long enough and there maybe long term side effects. Many younger people are saying they will not have it.”

“Many people are suspicious of the vaccine. The main concerns is that it is being rolled out too quickly without being monitored over a period of time.”

“How vaccination will happen for housebound individuals? Confusion - being told to wait to be contacted but then aware that some people are contacting hospitals directly for appointments.”

“Information about access to the vaccine being rolled out to remote communities e.g., homeless asylum seekers etc. Those not already failing within the healthcare system who will not receive information regularly. Support services limited capacity to provide joined up coordination at grassroots level.”

“Uncertainty about the vaccine, want more knowledge. Reliable knowledge - worried by news they get from social media. Also gossip about side effects. Also want to get back to normal and think that with the vaccine they will get back to normal quickly - not need to stay at home etc.”

“Where is it available? Who is eligible? Who is administering it and why isn't it my GP? Headlines media is not reflection of reality Why is our area that is hit harder not have a local vaccine centre People do not understand rational of needing to travel especially on public transport (which increases their exposure to virus) because their borough has no vaccination capacity”

# ANY OTHER ISSUES OR GROUPS WHOSE NEEDS ARE NOT BEING MET

A number of respondents raised concern about the impact of this lockdown on civil society and their ability to continue delivering within the current context.

The gap in support for refugee and migrant communities, in hotels and more widely were once again flagged as a risk.

“The worst happened - 6 volunteers in one of our teams got Covid. We had to close for a week over Christmas...Its very upsetting for everyone that this is the case. We have gone round and round with how we could have prevented this. But have had to accept that volunteering is not risk free and we are not immune from the disease. It is incredible upsetting to be in the position of making people near death ill or worse...The number of people needing cooked meals is rising quickly. Why is there no help from Social Services or meals on wheels? Why are voluntary groups being asked to pick up the pieces? The week we were closed people were wandering into the building with no food at all and no money. How can it be in this city with such wealth and abundance that people are starving? People need to be given cash so they can buy the food they want and the economy is also helped and it will take the pressure off food aid which must eventually stop. Its obvious to us Further how we will move away from all this dependency we are creating?”

“Being an adventure playground, we are unable to open during the lockdown and although we are still engaging with many of our young people it is difficult, due to the nature of our usual work to engage properly”

“We have been significantly hit by volunteers home schooling their own children and therefore unable to support our service. ”

“Continued concerns about the support being provided by statutory agencies (via contractors) for asylum seekers in hotels and how much case work we are getting as families and individuals struggle with isolation due to covid or other health matters. Migrant help has extremely long waiting times.”

Older people in care homes-COVID is preventing staff from addressing their immigration issues. Students registered for courses at UK Universities from 2020 unable to attend due to COVID-now have no right to reside-can not apply under the new immigration rules until October 2021

“People in hotels are not getting the care they should. In particular, there are very few female staff and the Clearsprings provider and Home Office are not providing caseworkers or welfare officers for women and the most vulnerable (pregnant women, disabled people, people with severe mental health issues). The food provision is sub standard and hotel managers are often heavy handed with rules imposing conditions that are an infringement of the human rights of the residents and are not consistent with Government's Covid guidelines.”



# NEXT STEPS

The next survey will cover two weeks, being in the field between 25<sup>th</sup> January – 3<sup>rd</sup> February.

Results available on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> February.