



LONDON COVID-19 COMMUNITY RESPONSE SURVEY: WEEK SEVEN QUESTIONS

FIELDWORK 26th-28st MAY 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 270 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 96 organisations responded in full or in part to the week seven questions, which were live between Tuesday 26th and Thursday 28th May 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

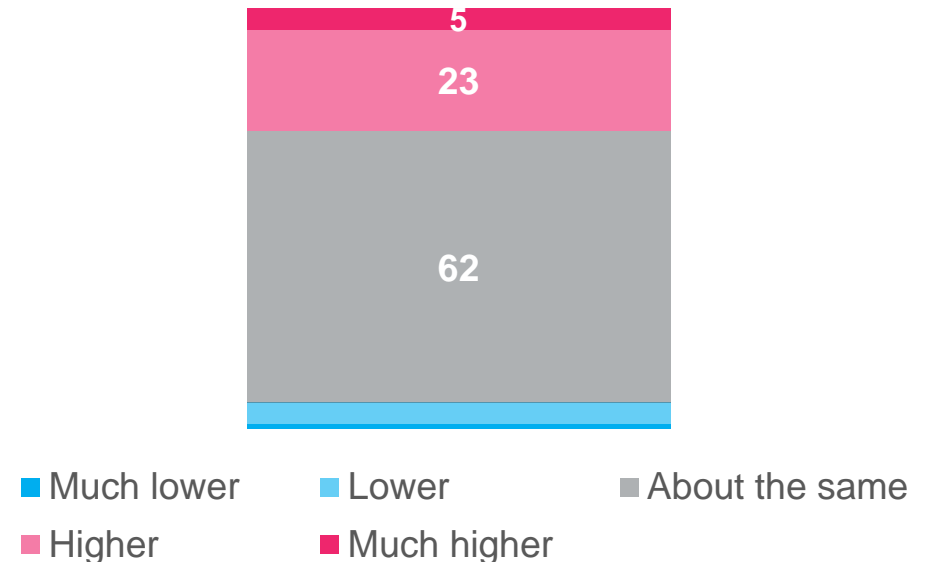
This week more organisations have seen little change (62) than an increase (28) in the number of people seeking support.

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

The proportion of organisations seeing an increase in numbers seeking support has stayed similar to last week, although over the last four weeks it has fallen from 46 per cent five weeks ago to 29 per cent in the most recent week.

Organisations working with the general public and those working with young people were more likely to report an increase (67 and 70 per cent respectively).

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 an increase in the proportion of organisations mentioning domestic violence, physical health and discrimination

Issue	Proportion reporting higher demand	No. of responses	Issue	Proportion reporting higher demand	No. of responses
Mental health	65%	70	Debt issues	38%	49
Isolation and loneliness	63%	65	Capacity Building	32%	35
Employment	62%	46	Access to benefits	31%	52
Domestic violence	52%	37	Grief bereavement	31%	37
Digital connectivity	49%	60	Access to health	28%	50
Childcare or Parenting	49%	32	Access to care	27%	43
Housing	45%	47	Access to food	27%	51
Physical health	43%	41	Immigration issues	27%	33
Poverty	43%	49	Victim support	27%	19
Discrimination	40%	31			

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
Planning for recovery/easing of lockdown	40	Difficulty in delivering services online	<10
Funding - sustainability beyond the crisis	34	Social distancing in delivery	<10
Staff wellbeing and mental health	19	Capacity - due to furloughed staff	<10
Digital or tech equipment	17	Digital skills or training	<10
Capacity - due to increased demand	14	Funding - relationship with existing funders	<10
Funding - general	14	Working with local authorities	<10
Reaching vulnerable groups	14	Capacity - due to staff working from home	<10
Funding - access to urgent funding	13	Personal Protective Equipment	<10
Reaching vulnerable groups	11	Capacity - due to reduction in volunteers	<10
Capacity - general	10		
Need to provide new or changed services	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	40	No recourse to public funds	<10
Social Isolation	36	Access to benefits	<10
Digital exclusion	28	Inadequate accommodation	<10
Employment issues	23	Access to local authority support	<10
Low income	21	Domestic violence	<10
Family tension	12	Bereavement	<10
Access to food and essentials	11	Multi-lingual support	<10
Social distancing rules	<10	Access to PPE	<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 particularly likely to mention family tension (27 per cent of organisations) and mental health (73 per cent)

Organisations working with the general public were more likely to mention employment issues (38 per cent of organisations), low incomes (43 per cent of organisations) and access to benefits (24 per cent of organisations) and social isolation (56 per cent)

EASING OF LOCKDOWN

Several respondents highlighted the complexities in planning for the easing from lockdown. Issues mentioned included practical considerations around social distancing, moving back to core business after focussing on critical service provision and loss of volunteers.

“Returning from lockdown is extremely hard to plan. We already had very little space in which to run our services and will further struggle with social distancing rules. We also work with many volunteers and are struggling to plan for return knowing that volunteers may choose not to come to any face-to-face activities.”

“Challenge for organisations that have who quickly transformed and moved people resources into critical service provision (e.g. food/medicine delivery) and how they move back into their core business. Issues re dependence of service users for critical support and how to support with reducing reliance on crisis services.”

“We are worried about loss of committed and reliable volunteers that we have trained together over last 9 weeks and are a team.”

NEEDS OF SOMALI LONDONERS

One respondent shared details of the gap in services offered to Somali Londoners, highlighting the critical role the communities play in mediating access to health care.

"Key issues identified in hospitals are: Chaplency service, do not have a Somali speaking Imam, in the whole of London. That's created huge tension within the community. In addition to this the food in the hospital does not reflect the community (sadly a number of people who passed away called their family stating they were hungry).

What is quite apparent that the community provided interpreters, food and Imam services within the community. Local mosques and family members met those needs, but following the lockdown it has really highlighted inequalities/lack of access of services. Covid has highlighted the gap in services, and has made the community avoid going to hospital or accessing mainstream services due to fear or lack of transparency and trust."

EVERYONE IN

Respondents highlighted concerns about support for rough sleepers out of hotels, and increased need for advice services.

“We are also aware that when the "Everyone In" initiative comes to a close, there is likely to be an increased number of referrals for legal advice to support rough sleepers to regularise their status. Indeed it might be necessary to start this provision as soon as possible in hotels. Legal advice services may need to be included in planning and potentially funded to offer this support.”

"How will existing system manage the recovery focused rehousing of the homeless clients currently in the various Hotels?"

NEXT STEPS

Week eight survey in the field between 1st – 4th May.

Results available on Monday 8th June.

This week's survey marks the two-month mark, we have decided to continue weekly surveys for an additional third month. We will then review the context and adjust frequency of surveys accordingly.