

Covid-19 Hackney VCS survey & outreach



High level messages



Index

- p.3 Introduction
- p. 5 The challenges we are facing
- p. 9 What the VCS say they need and the response from both the VCS and Statutory Partners
- p.23 Case studies of VCS groups
- p.25 What Hackney CVS will be doing to support the sector
- p.26 Sources of information for this report

HACKNEY VCS Covid-19 survey results – high level messages

Introduction

Fifty voluntary sector organisations responded to the Hackney CVS survey that we sent out on 18.03.20. We also reached out to nearly 100 more organisations through our networks and online forums. We are hugely grateful to all those who took the time to give their feedback and insights during what are unprecedented times.

The results have provided us with a vivid picture of the impact on local people and the local voluntary and community sector organisations (VCS) that support them.

The purpose of this document is to respond to some of the issues raised, and to highlight to statutory partners what is happening in the sector and how it can help in the emergency as well as the support the VCS needs from them to facilitate a joined-up response. It will also help shape what Hackney CVS does going forward.

What is very clear is that there is generally a sense that there is limited time to get organised. Because of the onslaught of need and fast changing environment we need to use this time wisely to sort out key issues that have been raised.

What the survey found

Sector wide concerns: Almost all respondents noted a need to have clear guidance and information for residents on where to go for reliable and up-to-date information, and almost all respondents noted loss of funding as one of their top concerns – either through lack of revenue from service delivery e.g. venue hire / income from paid-for services or loss of grant funding.

Some respondents stressed they may end up needing to close their services completely. Loss of connections with other organisations and sources of information factored highly as a key concern, along with losing staff and volunteers.

A high proportion had reduced demand on their services (it's not clear if this a concern now or in the future due to the wording of the survey question). Some were concerned about being able to meet the demand on their services in the future. Working remotely due to social distancing measures, not being able to have contact with service users and not having the necessary infrastructure to work remotely was a concern for a number of respondents.

Immediate Impact: The majority of respondents have needed to suspend their services - however some said they have been able to provide support remotely using online/telephone communications/entertainment parcels but for many others this hasn't been possible. At the same time, most have reported a reduction in demand for their services, as clients / services users are being asked to self-isolate if they have been identified as 'vulnerable', or only leave home for essential activities. A minority report an increase in demand for their services, but being unable to meet this demand.

How organisations are adapting: The majority of organisations have closed their centres and stopped all face to face work. Many are adapting their services using technology, like digital drop-ins, and phone rounds to keep supporting clients. Some are offering support like online shopping. Larger organisations are also creatively adapting, e.g. Mind in the City, Hackney and Waltham Forest are offering broadcasts on mental wellbeing. Some are doing direct work, for example with homeless people, and, like Age UK East London, those recently discharged

from hospital. The VCS organisations using these direct and indirect support routes are helping thousands of the most vulnerable people in Hackney. At the same time, the newly created Mutual Aid groups are expanding in every ward and Hackney CVS and Volunteer Centre Hackney are working with them to link these networks with local VCS organisations. At this point Volunteer Centre Hackney are developing bespoke guidance on volunteering and brokerage for volunteers. Many community based-advice agencies are still offering a phone service and we have compiled a list of what is available in this document.

Future Impact: There is real concern about the ongoing ability to deliver practical support whilst having to socially distance. In addition, concerns about the demand on mental health services to support those needing to socially isolate or impacted by isolation and a lack of capacity to meet increased demand on services. There was an overriding concern about whether organisations will be able to survive the crisis, especially if social distancing goes on for a long time.

//

A strong sense of trust and community has been developed over the years and we are in touch with people who would not talk to anyone else or ask for help. For example we have already had to call 111 for a service user who is not well but 'doesn't want to bother' anyone".

"I'm not answering the survey, as the situation is unfolding. I have no idea currently how self isolating older people are going to get food delivered if they are not online, or how we can refer them to social services/health services for Army food drops".

COVID-19 MUTUAL AID UK

Local organising to support the most vulnerable in our communities



Follow

Covid-19 Mutual Aid UK

@CovidAidUK

Resources and support for network of independent community groups supporting vulnerable people through covid-19. For medical advice please visit the NHS website

📍 UK 🌐 covidmutualaid.org 📅 Joined March 2020

33 Following 17.6K Followers

Challenges

Locally and nationally there is very limited time to prepare for the surge in coronavirus cases and the support local people and communities need.

Information	<p>Almost every organisation we spoke to cited information as a key issue – both to enable them to support clients, and to keep their organisation going. We need to have good local structures of information so it can be disseminated quickly and everyone knows they have an accurate picture.</p> <p>Hackney CVS will send out newsletters 3 times a week – and will link in with statutory partners to ensure a flow of information.</p> <p>Through the Hackney Refugee Forum we are hearing of the need for information in other languages.</p> <p>There are gaps in our reach to the new volunteer groups, like Mutual Aid, to tenants' groups and to community groups working through faith organisations – which we need to address urgently.</p> <p>We will also call and email round organisations in the established networks.</p>
Organisational support	<p>We need to resolve funding issues swiftly so organisations can mobilise to concentrate on supporting their service users. And to ensure that there is a network of VCS organisations to help pick up the pieces when the emergency has passed.</p> <p>Organisations working on the frontline urgently need personal protective equipment.</p> <p>Organisations urgently need help adapting their services, particularly with using and paying for digital technology.</p> <p>Hackney CVS is circulating good information to the VCS. However, particular help is needed to make information available in community languages (for example for service users to understand how to use online tools such as Zoom to get together with friends/family digitally)</p> <p>Organisations also need help in supporting their staff and volunteers – we will be following up to understand this in more detail, as well as connecting them to mental health service links. In time we know organisations will need both practical and emotional support as staff become sick, or are bereaved – as will infrastructure organisations. Most VCS organisations are small and 1 or 2 people unable to work will have a big impact, and may mean they are not able to operate.</p>

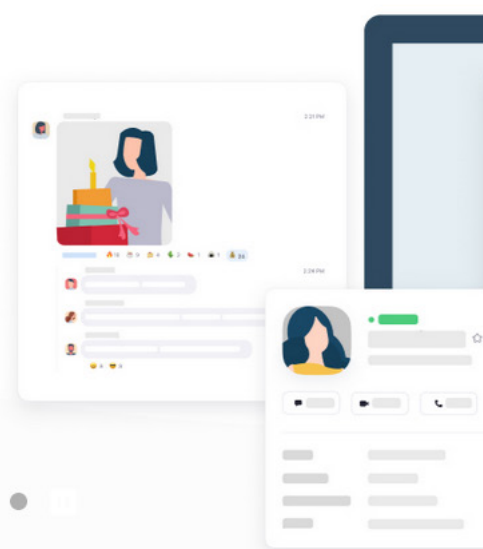
Mental Health support	<p>As the emergency develops, providing wide scale mental health support for residents needs to be prioritised as per need. The mental wellbeing of staff and volunteers working in the borough also needs to be supported.</p> <p>Effects of social distancing and isolating will be across the population, and increasingly the impact of sickness and bereavements. Many vulnerable groups will be additionally impacted, and will need help with the stresses of the continued crisis.</p> <p>Many VCS organisations are offering phone support to their service users. The Psychological Therapies Alliance, IAPT and the Wellbeing Network are all developing their response. Mind in the City, Hackney and Waltham Forest will be offering support in the form of wellbeing broadcasts which are available online.</p>
Other Support for residents in need	<p>Organisations we spoke to are concerned for their vulnerable clients – whether they can support them. They wanted to know about foodbanks, mental health support, signposting for medical advice, getting prescriptions and just knowing what support is out there – what services are open and how do people access them. As far as we can, we are sending out information in response to this.</p> <p>Ongoing concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • people who cannot be contacted by phone, for example many homeless people, and those who cannot afford to top up their mobiles • understanding new processes for benefits claims, and resolving issues. Are there any emergency funds residents can apply for? • practical support with bereavement, funeral processes • need for community wifi – many people are falling out of touch because they have no wifi. Children and young people in families without wifi will not be able to do school work, or keep in touch with friends so easily, who they will need to support them. People without wifi will be less able to find out what help is there and how to access it • how will people who are in stressful family situations cope, for example where they are overcrowded, in temporary accommodation, have children with special needs or otherwise where they are caring. What support can be offered • how will people who are frightened and isolated cope, for example self isolating with a long-term condition, concerns about neglect and hunger <p>Hackney Council are maintaining the Find Support Services map: https://hackney.gov.uk/find-support-services. Alongside this there are all the VCS networks and connections, trusted relationships developed over joint working – both between organisations and with service users, which can help reach those in the community who could otherwise fall through the gaps.</p>

Volunteers	<p>Volunteers will be a key part of the community response, because they can be very local to the person in need. Many VCS groups have volunteers working with them as they adapt their offer to support residents by phone or through online platforms.</p> <p>Volunteer Centre Hackney https://www.vchackney.org is leading the response, they are publishing guidance for volunteering in this time, and have a brokerage hub, where volunteers and those needing volunteers can register and be matched. The Council has set up a volunteer registration page which is linked to the VCH scheme.</p> <p>There are many self-help volunteer groups, like Mutual Aid, as well as within faith groups who are self-organising to offer help and support to neighbours, like shopping and collecting prescriptions. Some have advertised a phone number throughout their local area.</p> <p>Some local groups, and through networks like Hackney Refugee Forum, have indicated a need for support with fast track DBS checks.</p> <p>We will also continue to promote national volunteering schemes, like NHS Volunteer Responders.</p>
Community Connections	<p>Community safety concerns have been raised through the Chinese Centre about racial attacks on Chinese and East Asian residents. Also, youth groups are raising concerns about young people being criminalised if they are not keeping to the lockdown as it is enforced.</p> <p>We are working to keep the VCS organisations connected, through existing networks, by holding Zoom meetings, and calling around regularly. As far as we can we will pick up concerns and highlight them if we are not able to resolve them.</p> <p>We also plan to set up Neighbourhood meetings where they can connect to local volunteer groups, like Mutual Aid, as well as NHS and Council services locally. We have held one Zoom meeting for Well Street Common, which was the pilot area for the new Neighbourhoods model in the borough, and already had some infrastructure in place.</p>

In this together.
Keeping you connected
wherever you are.

Sign up for Free

Helpful Resources



Strategic Issues	<p>Hackney CVS and the VCSE TLG are at the heart of networks of voluntary and community sector organisation – need to be included in thinking and planning about the response, so can give best information and support to the sector. As one survey respondent said "Use the VCS to reach people on the ground – we know local areas very well".</p> <p>Some communities such as African and Caribbean Heritage communities lack well resourced organisations and networks to keep people connected, but we have many links with local BAME organisations we can utilise. We can also use the infrastructure in the Well Street Common neighbourhood to link people but this is one part of Hackney so we need to address this to be able to link to other Neighbourhood teams and locally recruited volunteers.</p> <p>The VCS leadership group chair, Vanessa Morris, CEO of Mind in the City, Hackney and Waltham Forest, has been invited to join the borough-wide emergency planning group.</p>
-------------------------	---



COVID-19 Support and Information	About	Our Services
---	--------------	---------------------

COVID-19 Update: The Way We're Offering Services is Changing

Click below to read an update on services, training and events in the coming weeks

List of what VCS organisations say they need, what HCVS is doing to respond to this and what we know of what others are doing to respond to this – both VCS and Statutory Partners

What was raised by VCS organisations through survey and calls to networks	What HCVS, the wider VCS, the Council, the NHS and other statutory partners are doing
INFORMATION Information in general	
<p>Hackney CVS is seen as a trusted source of information, with requests to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • share Information on emerging NHS plans • act as a central point for information (about funding streams, cash relief, volunteering, supplies, medical advice, signposting) • continue to provide up to date information about the Covid-19 outbreak 	<p>Hackney CVS will continue to send out regular updates to the sector about help for organisations and their clients – 3 newsletters per week. Coronavirus information page https://hcv.org.uk/coronavirus-information/</p> <p>Hackney CVS is listing other Frequently Asked Questions for both organisations and residents, for the council and NHS to respond to.</p> <p>The Council has a Coronavirus page on its website with links to a lot of information https://hackney.gov.uk/coronavirus</p> <p>We will stay connected with Communication teams at Hackney Council, Public Health, NHS and the Volunteer Centre in particular – keeping up to date with all developments</p> <p>We will continue to update you regularly with information about any information we have</p> <p>For those not online, importance of phone calls/print media</p>

[Subscribe](#)
[Past Issues](#)
[Translate ▼](#)

[View this email in your browser](#)

#Fairer Hackney

hackney

CVS

Join us on a journey to make a fairer Hackney

News, 24 March

14,485 France
8,897 Korea, South
7,014 Switzerland
5,071 United Kingdom
4,216 Netherlands
101 Belgium

Government Guidance

INFORMATION

Information for clients

Good information about what to say to clients – what other support is there for people, where do they signpost, how do they find out?

With so much misinformation/ rumours about, we all need to make sure volunteers are well informed and briefed about what messages they should be sharing with people.

This message has come loud and clear through the survey, through networks including the Refugee Forum.

Particular requests for information about foodbanks, mental health support, signposting for medical advice, getting prescriptions and just knowing what support is out there.

Are there any emergency funds for people to pay immediate bills and buy food?

What services are running, who is coordinating what and how to refer people with new ways of working.

We need safe ways for taking money from people to do their shopping

VCS organisations providing services are mapped here:

<https://hackney.gov.uk/find-support-services>

Let us know to include your organisation:

<https://bit.ly/2WSx3v4>.

Help for vulnerable residents

The Council have a single point of contact:

<https://hackney.gov.uk/coronavirus-support#vulnerable>

Call coronavirus helpline: **020 8356 3111** (8am-5pm Monday-Friday).

Medical advice

Medical advice should only be from the NHS –call either 111 or GP. Always call 999 in an emergency.

Prescriptions

If someone needs a prescription picked up they should put the request in to the council single point of contact and this will be passed to a DBS checked volunteer to carry out.

Food

Information about foodbanks, meal deliveries, and everything to do with free food is being shared through the Food Justice network. Email : hackney_food_poverty_justice-subscribe@lists.riseup.net and follow the instructions in the auto-response email you receive.

The council are proposing a food hub for those with medical needs and working on their role in helping meet wider needs. Age UK East London have set up a food hub for those just left hospital.
Emergency funds for residents

Advice Services

LBH funded advice service provider are still providing advice over the phone and email: <https://bit.ly/2xz6SyS>

Benefits – new and existing

Government advice page: <https://bit.ly/2Jsx5ld>

ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT

Safeguarding, Confidentiality and GDPR

How to deal with safeguarding issues in these new ways of working. New community volunteer organisations are rapidly emerging and may need guidance on volunteers, DBS checks, safeguarding practices etc. Also, organisations need to think through implications of online working (e.g. doing group video calls from home where there may be children in the background).

GDPR training/guidance. Particularly when using new forms of communication (e.g. getting consent to add people to WhatsApp groups, making sure people's phone numbers are not visible to the whole group on Zoom if they join by phone. There is a way to prevent this on Zoom but you need to go in and change the standard settings).

Safeguarding

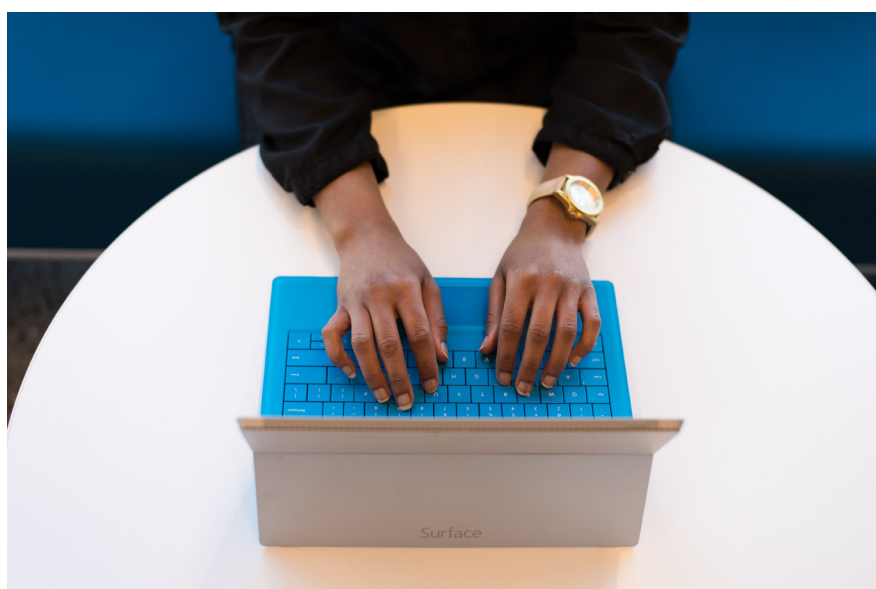
There are 14 adult safeguarding champions. We are in a climate where we adults at risk can easily be abused, it is important to echo key messages about DBS checks and the importance of getting references.

Please note, although the term vulnerable is now fashionable again we must still remember the Care Act kicked the word vulnerable out of the dictionary.

Service users need to be addressed in terms of adults with care and support needs.

Safeguarding Work with CHSAB to ascertain the role of the champions at this time. Other issues include:

- How to provide support to people not contactable by phone at all (especially homeless people), also people who cannot afford to top up
- Fears that current volunteering relationships (i.e. one to one relationships built over time) will lose momentum in their work together
- Possible longer term risk that current programmes won't engage young people and volunteers.



FUNDING

Almost all respondents noted loss of funding as one of their top concerns – this would be either be through lack of revenue through service delivery e.g. venue hire / income from paid-for services but also grant funding.

Clarity about their funding, and ability to be flexible with their services.

Some need emergency funding to cover their immediate costs.

There is an issue about ensuring up front payments, rather than payment in arrears.

Refugee Forum reports current donors seem to be being flexible and accommodating in use of grants, monitoring requirements and extending current grants.

Funding was a significant concern for many as detailed already. Organisations said that they need relaxing/ supporting with financial costs so they are able to mobilise effectively

Hackney Mayor, Phillip Glanville, has written to the Treasury to making the case for additional national funding for the VCS to support organisations through the emergency.

The Mayor also pledged Council rent holidays and flexibility around all Hackney funding for the VCS, saying "In Hackney, we are suspending rents for our VCS tenants within our own property portfolio for three months; we have been in contact with all our VCS organisations that have an existing grant relationship with us (commissioned or grant funded) to relax the terms of their grant funding in line with the London Funders pledge; and we are looking at repurposing existing sources of funding such as our existing community grants"

The CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) have let us know that they too will be writing to those they fund.

London Funders have joined together as London Community Response – including £1m from the London Mayor. They are offering wave funding. They say "the first wave of funding will focus on urgent needs, though later funding will support organisations to deliver services in new ways to support communities, and to ensure that their longer-term needs are considered by the funding community".



Hackney Giving Coronavirus Response Fund



53 Supporters

Why we need your help

FUNDING

The overall request is that HCVS needs to use its influence to lobby the public sector to provide financial assistance including:

1. paying annual grant payments upfront rather than quarterly to help with cashflow problems
2. directed to cash relief for VCS orgs to pay for staff, freelancers, rent, utilities.
3. promote VCS venues as rentable spaces once social distancing measures have been relaxed
4. offer interim grants
5. rent breaks

The National Lottery Community Fund said it will speed up grant allocations for the coming six-month period, worth £300m, prioritising support for community organisations struggling financially as a result of the pandemic, as well as those providing activities "specifically geared to supporting communities through this crisis".

Hackney Giving launched by HCVS aims to raise £30,000 by the end of April through crowdfunding. It will offer grants to the small, local organisations that care for our communities every day during the coronavirus crisis. Go here to donate: <https://bit.ly/33Ws65Y>

Charities Aid Foundation has just launched a fund for grants for small charities. affected by the impact of Covid-19. Grants of up to £10,000 to help deliver much needed support to our communities across the UK.

Hackney CVS have set up a dedicated page to sources of funding for organisations struggling with the impact of coronavirus <https://hcv.org.uk/coronavirus-funding/>

STAFF AND VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

Help in supporting staff and volunteers

Wellbeing tips, supporting staff and volunteers.

Volunteers and staff who are isolating at home due to living with long term conditions/disability.

Looking to the future, how will organisations cope when staff become sick or are bereaved

This needs further additional exploration as the survey doesn't allow us to analyse what kind of support respondents are seeking to provide e.g. advice on how to get financial support / emotional support / support with remote working.

In reality, it is likely to be all of these, but some phone calls with a number of respondents might help further understand this. This may then confirm which elements are short term, and which are medium-long term

Technical Support for Organisations

We have found Zoom instructions in several languages including Arabic, Somali and Bengali as well as a simple English user guide that can be translated. If other organisations have capacity to translation into their community language and share this to the group it would be very welcome

Technical support and advice with remote working, and platforms for engaging with clients

Request for help paying for Zoom accounts

Request for tips on facilitating online meetings

Help in knowing how to use Zoom translations in to community languages.

We are circulating information like this to help support organisations

Here are some resources -

Tools for remoting working: London Catalyst, together with the Small Charities Coalition, have provided useful guides to online tools that'll help you stay connected in these difficult times.

How to choose the right video calling tool for your charity:
<https://bit.ly/39DI2fv>

Getting started with Zoom: <https://bit.ly/3bBukKu>

Getting started with Google Hangouts: <https://bit.ly/2WZdPUz>

Getting started with Skype Video: <https://bit.ly/2xGPcRM>

Getting started with Microsoft 365 Teams:
<https://bit.ly/2wUnvF5>

And here is a useful post on How to Facilitate online meetings:
<https://bit.ly/2xJ5wBu>

If you've not organised one before, you'll find there's more to it than sharing an agenda and getting everyone connected!

One-Hour Free expert digital advice: Digital Candle, a crowd-sourced advice platform for charities, is offering charities an hour's free advice with a volunteer digital expert on all things digital:

Charities needing urgent help to ensure business continuity - remote working, tools to support their communities and so on will be prioritised. For more info visit Digital Candle:
<https://www.digitalcandle.org.uk/>

Protective Equipment	
<p>Those doing direct work urgently need Personal Protective Equipment</p> <p>Hand sanitizers, paper towels etc in communal areas in shared blocks.</p>	<p>We have raised this with the Council who are addressing this.</p>

Volunteers	
<p>Through the survey and our outreach we found organisations needing volunteers - some needing volunteers rapidly - and organisations with volunteers and staff who can be redeployed.</p> <p>There were requests for virtual volunteers, and volunteers with language skills.</p> <p>Also, there is a desire to share and learn from others good practice in volunteer management.</p> <p>Some asked for support processing DBS checks.</p> <p>Some asked for information on how to refer vulnerable people for support from NHS volunteers or Mutual Aid groups e.g. for grocery deliveries.</p>	<p>Volunteer Centre Hackney is leading the response. They are publishing guidance for all volunteers, and have a brokerage scheme where those wanting to volunteer are matched with organisations needing volunteers.</p> <p>We have collated a list of those offering and those needing volunteers and have passed this to the volunteer centre who are matching up the offers and needs.</p> <p>The Council has set up a page where residents can register to volunteer, and this is linked to the Voluntary Centre Hackney scheme. https://hackney.gov.uk/coronavirus-volunteering</p> <p>NHS Volunteer Responders has been set up to support the NHS during the COVID-19 outbreak. To do this the NHS need an 'army' of volunteers who can support the 1.5m people in England who are at most risk from the virus to stay well. Join the NHS volunteer team today: https://www.goodsamapp.org/NHS</p> <p>Some faith groups are part of the VCS network, and many VCS organisations have links with faith groups or Mutual Aid community volunteers. We are working through these networks to create better links.</p> <p>Can Hackney CVS do DBS checks?</p>

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Keeping in contact

Organisations concerned about losing touch with each other and with their volunteers

Community Safety

Reports from Hackney Chinese Community Services of racial attacks on Chinese and East Asian people

Potential criminalisation of those, young people if going out, when lockdown is more strongly enforced

Community Connection

Mobilising the community to support the community.

In the long term, there are concerns about the impact on community cohesion in Hackney. People are limiting contact to their immediate circle and their own community. How do we ensure that this doesn't widen gaps between communities and maintain community trust and cohesion?

We are calling round the networks of organisations, as well as arranging online meetings

We are escalating this issue.

The Account group have been going through the policing aspects of the emergency bill and we are asking for young people to be involved with emergency planning locally.

HCVS network leads are ringing around organisations to keep in touch, and understand their needs – as well as arranging online meetings.

The Well Street Common VCS Neighbourhood Pilot held an online meeting for local VCS and residents, which included Council and Mutual Aid representatives, and local GP volunteer organiser. We intend to set these up in other neighbourhoods. Please contact katie@hcv.org.uk if you are interested.

For the longer term we will continue the conversation to ensure that the insight from community organisations is highlighted with policy and decision makers, and that we facilitate ideas coming from the VCS as far as we can. We will also continue to pass on information we have from statutory organisations and other VCS organisations and volunteer initiatives.

ISSUES FOR INDIVIDUAL GROUPS

Issues for Young People and Youth Organisations

Groups working with young people have stopped face to face services. Like all VCS organisations they worry about staff, funding and losing contracts.

Anxiety from parents and young people especially those who are vulnerable, with learning difficulties and underlying health issues.

Worry about young people experiencing hunger and neglect and losing social contact.

In multi-generational and extended family settings - young people may be finding it difficult to self-isolate. In overcrowding and unstable family settings this is made worse.

Young people need wifi for accessing school work, which some don't have.

Concern about young people who are carers, whether they know they are carers or not.

Concern about potential criminalisation if out, and the lockdown is enforced.

Many youth organisations are looking at alternative ways for young people to access their services and developing remote services but using phone and WhatsApp to maintain contact in the meantime. They are setting up practices like peer to peer befriending. Some groups are involved in organising food and care parcels

Hackney CVS will collate best practice about working remotely with young people and the challenges around detached work. We will circulate this to the sector, and continue to provide guidance and support and an outlet remotely for young people to express their concerns and ask for help and advice.

We are convening a meeting with the VCS youth sector on the impact of Covid-19 on our work and the worries we have about how restrictions will impact on young people particularly young black men.

We are working with Partnership for Young London on training during this time and will be sharing best practice about remote networking so we can continue to support youth groups in this current context

Issues for Children and Families

The feedback from the children and families sector indicates that parents face a great challenge with maintaining the school curriculum at home. The challenge is particularly hard for parents that have children with additional needs.

The health crisis is an additional worry for children.

Parents of children on free school meals are in need of financial support.

Children need wifi for accessing school work.

Housing is an issue – teenagers in overcrowded accommodation are at risk of being sent out by parents.

More university students have returned home.

Some households do not have smart phones and laptops so children require other ways to keep up with their learning.

Childcare and education provision to children of key workers and low-income families who have no option but to work.

Anxiety from parents and young people especially those who are vulnerable, with learning difficulties and underlying health issues.

A few charities are working with the Food Poverty Alliance.

It is important that the family support VCS are supported to use tools that will allow continuous support from virtual class room learning.

NSPCC are doing regular updates and have published the following : Talking to a child worried about coronavirus (COVID-19): <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-we-do/news-opinion/childline-coronavirus-counselling/>

Check ins with colleagues on a weekly basis

- Ascertain their needs and request support from policy influences and funders
- Cascade information about containing the disease
- Reduce children's stress level
- Protect those at risk of self-harm and suicide
- Increase parents ability to manage at home
- Support parents to vary the timetable
- Gather insights to the role of public sector and special interest groups such as disabled children
- Share relevant sources to support parents – including Zoom and free conference facilities
- Support organisations with service users that are affected by Universal Credit

There African and Caribbean heritage led VCS are low in numbers and generally communicate orally. They are underrepresented in the number of organisations that completed the survey. There is no BMAER education, arts, housing or health support group. Support for children and families are the Black Majority faith sector, Growing Minds 9- 25 years old mental health programmes and OMA Open Minds Alliance.

Hundreds of children counselled over impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

Over 900 counselling sessions about coronavirus have taken place with children and young people¹

Childline has experienced an unprecedented demand for its services as the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic starts to affect children's lives.

Government has given Childline staff and volunteers key worker status as they battle to keep the vital service running and continue to support children. Support hit a peak on Wednesday 18 March, the day the Prime Minister confirmed UK schools would shut, with 121 counselling sessions delivered.



Health and Social Care Forum issues

Carers mentioned often – especially older carers.

Concerns for residents who are isolating at home due to living with long term conditions/disability.

Concerns about how to provide support to people not contactable by phone at all (especially homeless people), also people who cannot afford to top up their mobile.

Homelessness services needing to support three different groups to isolate themselves: rough sleepers; people in hostel/temp accommodation with shared cooking/washing facilities; people at risk due to uncertain income and the Universal Credit system being overwhelmed.

Concerns about supporting those **bereaved**.

Raised need for clear info for people with learning disability and others about social distancing (LD team are producing info, making the links to share it)

Supporting people with new **DLA and UC claims**, need to be able to refer clients to specialist advice services.

For new claims, people do not have to physically go in, but can do their meetings via phone or online, but waiting times are very long. For claimants who are unable to access phone or internet (e.g. homeless clients), there is in theory still the option for face to face meetings but these seem to be difficult to access.

People at increased risk of **domestic abuse**- need to know what support services are still running and how people can access support remotely.

Challenges for people to self-isolate safely, particularly for people who live in poor accommodation often sharing with multiple others. What is being done to identify & support them?

People living in **supported housing** are particularly vulnerable. There is a need to ensure they are being reached, and how organisations can refer vulnerable people for support (e.g. through NHS volunteers).

The vast majority of our beneficiaries are in the governments vulnerable list- although Hackney Adult services are not providing any guidelines and not letting the VCS know if payments would be coming to cover absences.

The Council's advice on help for homeless people. How you can help:

- Tell Street Link – if you're concerned about someone rough sleeping.
www.streetlink.org.uk

- Contact Hackney Council– if you or someone you know is at risk of homelessness:

<https://hackney.gov.uk/housing-options?medium=email&source=gov-delivery>

- Let your property – if you or someone you know has an unused, self-contained property that could be used as emergency accommodation by a family that needs it. email: housingsupply@hackney.gov.uk

Carers: [City and Hackney Carers Centre](#) and [Carers First](#) working together.

Invite carers to register to prompt support. Carers First moved to on-line groups, including around mental health peer support. City and Hackney Carers Centre is, amongst other things, providing online classes such as dance to help carers to stay fit and also have more 'fun' activities to look forward to.

Hackney Refugee Forum

Refugee organisations reflected many of the issues raised through the survey, , in being concerned about knowing what is happening, how to refer and support clients, what is happening about funding, and issues about benefits and accessing food.

They also raised some specific issues:

- How to use zoom translations in to community languages
- The need for space for organisation leaders to talk and share
- Information on what services are running, who is coordinating what and how to refer people with new ways of working
- Can any community organisations/ others help with translating simple signs/ information about social distancing into different languages to display at the sessions and to help volunteers communicate to clients?
- We need to provide technical support for people who have limited English and limited digital skills to ensure they can continue to access services that organisations are providing online.

Hackney Refugee Forum are holding regular Zoom meetings with organisations, and collating and responding to issues that they raise about access to services and concerns about their service users.

There is a need for information in community languages, and resources to help translate local information.



Older People's Organisations - from Connect Hackney

26 organisations answering the survey work with older people, and of these 9 are Connect Hackney projects and 4 of 5 from the BAME network.

They are concerned about service users, e.g. experiencing hunger and neglect – as well as the risk of risk of serious health conditions and deaths that will in all likelihood occur.

Concerns about the increasing sense of loneliness and isolation felt by older people through loss of contact during self-isolation.

Concern that older people more likely to be disconnected from services - research shows that older people are less digitally connected.

Safeguarding is a greater concern for older people who are more vulnerable to scams, either face to face or on the phone.

Another concern is that older people are less likely to reach out for help, with an old school mentality of not wanting to put anyone to any bother; and therefore, may not disclose concerns.

By the time of the lockdown on 23rd March 2020, as far as the programme had been informed, 22/24 Connect Hackney projects had stopped delivery as per their signed 'Agreement' with Hackney CVS.

Most organisations are providing telephone support and signposting services users and volunteers to relevant sources of support/aid - including foodbanks.

Some are developing online learning/ video socials/ WhatsApp Groups.

The Older People's Reference Group holding virtual meetings.

Connect Hackney continues to offer direct support to older people's organisations and is currently gathering data from Delivery Partners on the 'ranges' of digital connectivity in respect to participants. Where possible the programme will also provide information for older participants using their services in general through the website.

Connect Hackney are looking into the 'Friends Against Scams' website for guidance.

Connect Hackney also developing a range of ideas for VCS to maintain contact with older people during social isolation, with a focus on maintaining a sense of community and connectivity, particularly for those without internet access.

Mental Health support

Many raised concerns about the needs for mental health support, both for those already needing support, and for many more in the longer term.

Issues raised included those for issues relating to isolation – as with many issues – particularly for those who are not online, those who are overcrowded and those who are older or with underlying conditions.

Young people and children isolating when living in overcrowded accommodation.

Also, information on what to do in a mental health emergency.

Need for bereavement support.

The psychological therapies alliance (group of statutory and VCS providers) is taking the lead of mental health oversight generally.

Mind in the City, Hackney and Waltham Forest is developing a range of training for practitioners and residents.

NHS England will also be rolling out a training package for local Talking Therapies services to roll out.

24 Hour Helpline 020 8432 8020 or call 999
This is for people of any age who may have long term psychological issues or who have had a sudden crisis such as a major life shock, for example, bereavement, relationship issue, etc. They offer confidential expert advice and guidance support and referrals to local services if needed.

Mind in the City, Hackney and Waltham Forest is organising broadcasts for all Hackney residents and lots of support and education activities moved on-line. Those at high risk being contacted daily.

Growing Minds partners have increased their services, providing additional hours to offer parents online support info@growingminds.org.uk. This includes online class rooms for parents on courses such as Non-violent resistance training.

List of websites to support parents so that children can remain calm.

<https://www.childline.org.uk/toolbox/calm-zone/>

Off Centre and Family Action will offer therapy online.

(OMA) a new project funded to address black men's mental health (18 to 65 years old) – 12 week support groups online.
Contact: Kristine@hcv.org.uk

A few Case Study snapshots of how organisations are responding

Snapshot: Lunch Clubs

- All 14 lunch clubs have responded and they are all in telephone contact with their members to check how they are coping and support their mental wellbeing.
- Some are able to deliver meals to their vulnerable members, make shopping runs.
- All are concerned about longer term support for their members.
- We have asked them to make lists of vulnerable people who may need help later.
- Some lunch clubs are able to provide use of their premises for community support initiatives.

Contact: suj@hcv.org.uk

Age UK East London – working on the frontline

Age UK East London are working on the frontline with those newly discharged from hospital – most with no care packages. They are also already opening a food distribution hub in Tower Hamlets

Jane Caldwell, CEO of Age UK East London comments: "It will pretty much be all hands-on deck for the next couple of weeks and...it's essentially a humanitarian response right now. Parts of the Care Act have been suspended and we are going to take residents information under the principle of duty to share but I will be clarifying this with health and social care stakeholders.

PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) – we have been promised but none has arrived. Currently we have gloves and aprons and some sanitiser – although hand washing is better. Frankly, many district nurses don't have masks etc at the moment so it's hard to complain – everyone is trying. What we have done is roll out on-line infection control training for all our staff, myself included, as a refresher.

Getting PPE to care staff is going to make or break this crisis. At the moment my staff are working with gloves, aprons and hand washing but as the hospitals become full of just CV cases, the stress level will increase. Over the next few days, staff, volunteers, taxi drivers etc are going to be asked to step up and we/they need to be protected so we can protect residents".

www.ageuk.org.uk



Mind in the City, Hackney and Waltham Forest

Mind in the City, Hackney and Waltham Forest are continuing to support clients to stay mentally and physically well. The team are concentrating on staying calm and connected, and looking after each other.

Vanessa Morris, CEL, says "We are already in daily contact with Adult Social Care regarding capacity and need. The Wellbeing Network and Psychological Therapies Alliance will be contributing to developing an approach for this. We, and other partners, will want some of the resources to go to Recovery clients, most of who will be on the SMI (Serious Mental Illness) register. Some of these people won't be accessing medical support; grassroots intelligence and the Community Hub will help identify them.

We are [also] willing to deploy staff to support the Homerton and Whipps Cross hospitals as needed".

www.mindchwf.org.uk

Minik Kardes

Nurseries have closed and 8 outreach workers are supporting families through 1:1 phone calls, WhatsApp groups and online meetings. They can take referrals to support Turkish speaking families with children under 16.

They are posting daily online exercise videos for children at home in Turkish language, accessible via the [Minik Kardes facebook page](#).

Mini Kardes are holding an online seminar in Turkish language from psychologists to help people deal with anxiety and isolation. The pilot webinar is on 31 March and if successful they will repeat it via facebook live and can open it up more widely to Turkish speakers.

They are experimenting with online training and if successful they can make courses available to service users from other organisations e.g. parenting courses.

What Hackney CVS will be doing to support the sector

Working with the VCSE TLG (the voluntary and community leadership group), and through the networks built up over the years, we will be working to support the sector through this crisis, to help enable them to reach those residents most in need of all our help.

Short-term

- Continuing to ensure accurate, reliable and up-to-date information is made available which signposts to key information, particularly around financial relief and help
- Providing support for VCS organisations to adapt to working remotely, and providing services this way
- Lobbying the Council/NHS for any immediate financial relief that they can provide to the sector
- Signposting to funding opportunities e.g. London Funders pot, and support with applications where necessary
- Providing advice on how VCS organisations can support staff
- Ensure key VCS representatives are included in emergency planning structures led by the statutory sector and feeding back what is being planned

Medium-term

- Provide a connecting role, to ensure that the VCS stay connected to each other, so they are aware of what everyone is doing and can receive / provide support as necessary
- Work with providers to consider how their services may need to adapt for the longer term, as the needs of their service users/clients evolve, and the financial situation becomes more clear

Longer term

- We'll need to be the voice for the sector, making clear that funds will need to be made available long-term as demands for their services will likely increase – this will be particularly important in helping to rebuild communities during the recovery period We need to identify which services are likely to need the most injection of investment e.g. Mental health service providers, providers working with older/vulnerable disproportionately impacted / young people, disconnected communities etc. – we will need to play a role in setting out who and how to prioritise, when in reality, insufficient funding will be available to meet all needs/demands
- We will need to be a voice for the sector, and the communities who already have high needs, and will presumably now be at risk of de-prioritisation. We'll need to advocate on their behalf, and make sure they aren't left behind as focus shifts to the ongoing efforts to support those affected by COVID-19 and the long-term impacts.
- Social isolation will be a significant issue for everyone, providers, staff, volunteers, clients and service users, and services needed to support those affected will need to be fully considered. We have a wealth of information and data on social isolation and loneliness already, and will continue to gather more learning as this crisis evolves and can play a crucial role in helping to shape the long-term local response.
- To make sure that once the crisis is under control, a thorough evaluation is undertaken which looks at what worked, what didn't and what we can learn to be better prepared for future pandemics, which are likely to increase in number

Sources of information for this report >

Consultation with VCSE TLG members – the voluntary and community sector leadership group

50 organisations have responded to the Hackney CVS survey

Survey of Lunch clubs

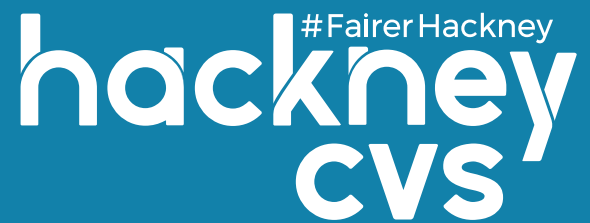
Online meeting of Hackney Refugee Forum

Contact through Children and Young People's Network

Contact with Youth Leaders and Youth Organisations

Well Street Neighbourhood online meeting

Contact with Connect Hackney Delivery Partners on the impact on Covid-19 on service delivery



Hackney CVS
The Adiaha Antigha Centre
24-30 Dalston Ln
London E8 3AZ

t: 020 7923 1962
m: reception@hcv.org.uk

www.hcv.org.uk