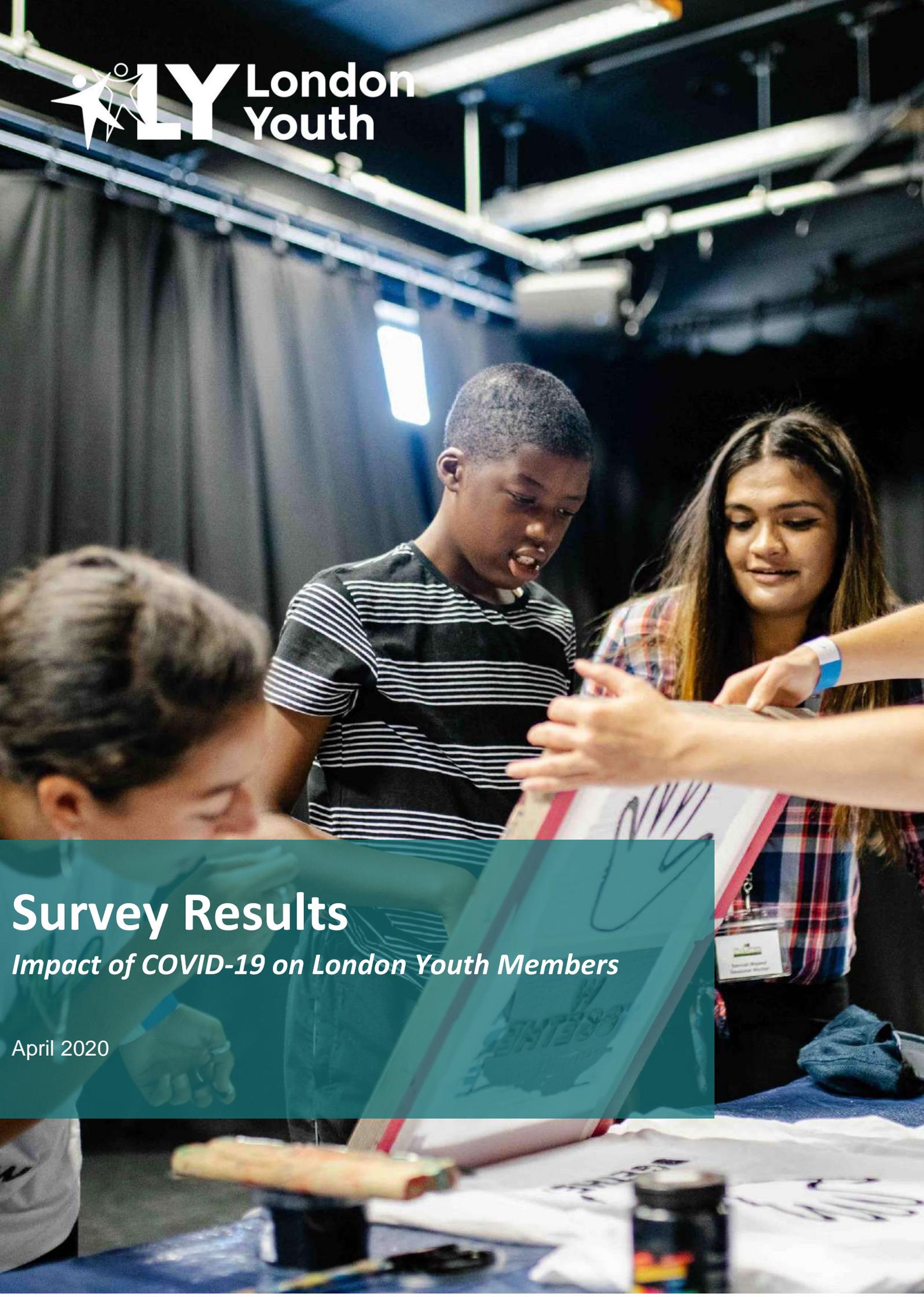


Survey Results

Impact of COVID-19 on London Youth Members

April 2020



| About London Youth

London Youth is the largest membership body for youth work in London. We are a youth charity on a mission to improve the lives of young people in London, challenging them to become the best they can.

We directly develop the confidence, resilience and relationship skills of over 27,000 children and young people each year through our arts and culture, employability, outdoor education, sports, and youth social action programmes. In every borough of London, through programmes run every day and most evenings and services open to all, our members reach tens of thousands more.

To keep our diverse network of over 500 community youth organisations in London strong, we provide funded opportunities, training and professional development, specialist member networks on issues affecting young people, Quality Mark accreditation, a policy and influencing voice, and research that evidences the needs of the young people and the youth sector.

London Youth is here to support our members and the London youth sector during COVID-19. We will continue to adapt and find new ways to back the amazing work that youth organisations are doing to challenge and support young people in this difficult period. Find out more [here](#).

| About this survey

Between 26th March and 23rd April 2020, we surveyed 290 youth workers from 149 youth organisations in our network on the impact of COVID-19 on their youth organisation, how they were adapting, and what support they needed.

London Youth will follow up this first survey to understand the initial impact COVID-19 has had on our members and their young people. We will monitor how this crisis continues to affect London's youth sector, the changing needs of young people and youth professionals and the sustainability of youth organisations.

COVID-19 represents an unprecedented challenge. It presents particular challenges for London, where the crisis has unfolded earlier and with a population that is especially vulnerable to the social and economic consequences of COVID-19. London has some of the most deprived and most densely populated areas with the least affordable housing, with more young people than any other part of the UK.

For the youth sector, a fragmented and uniquely vulnerable public service weakened by a decade of funding cuts, COVID-19 risks being a final blow for many of our members. Community youth organisations with strong relationships with young people and the local community, dedicated staff and volunteers, and high-quality opportunities will not all have the financial resilience to survive this crisis without sustained support. In the aftermath, London and young Londoners will need them more than ever.

| Executive Summary

A **third of youth workers** said that their youth organisation was facing significant and immediate financial pressure, with **a quarter of youth workers** listing funding and income as their organisation's most immediate concern.

While only **5% of youth workers** said that their organisation was still delivering face-to-face essential services to young people, **almost two thirds of youth workers** said that their youth organisation is moving to some form of digital provision, rather than suspending services and support entirely.

The following **key themes** came out of youth workers' responses:

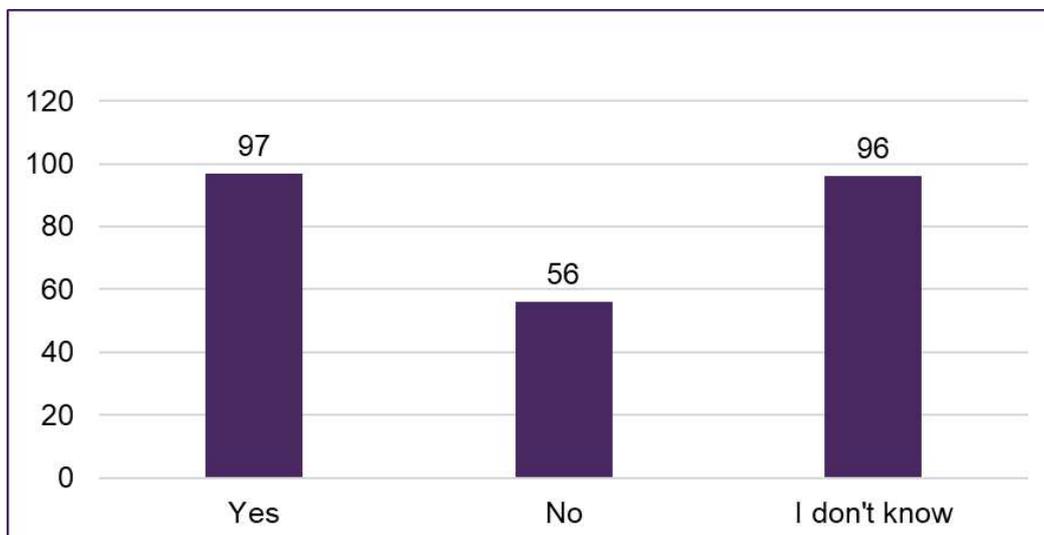
- Concern about the wellbeing and mental health of young people, particularly the most vulnerable, those in unsafe family or living situations, and those from deprived backgrounds or in substandard London accommodation.
- Concern about the 'digital divide' with many young people struggling to engage in digital youth work programmes and home schooling.
- Organisations are trying to answer the urgent question of how to maintain relationships with their young people in completely new ways of working.
- Organisations are trying to answer the question of what support young people need and how they can best meet those needs.
- Youth organisations are facing an unprecedented impact to three of their largest streams of funding simultaneously. Even previously sustainable organisations, such as social enterprises with very diversified sources of income, are affected:
 - Cancellation of all public fundraising campaigns and challenge events (eg, the London Marathon);
 - Income generating trading has stopped entirely (such as hiring out sports facilities or venues); and
 - Contracts based on delivery have often paused payments because the delivery has paused.

| What our members told us

| Key figures

| Is your organisation facing significant financial pressure?

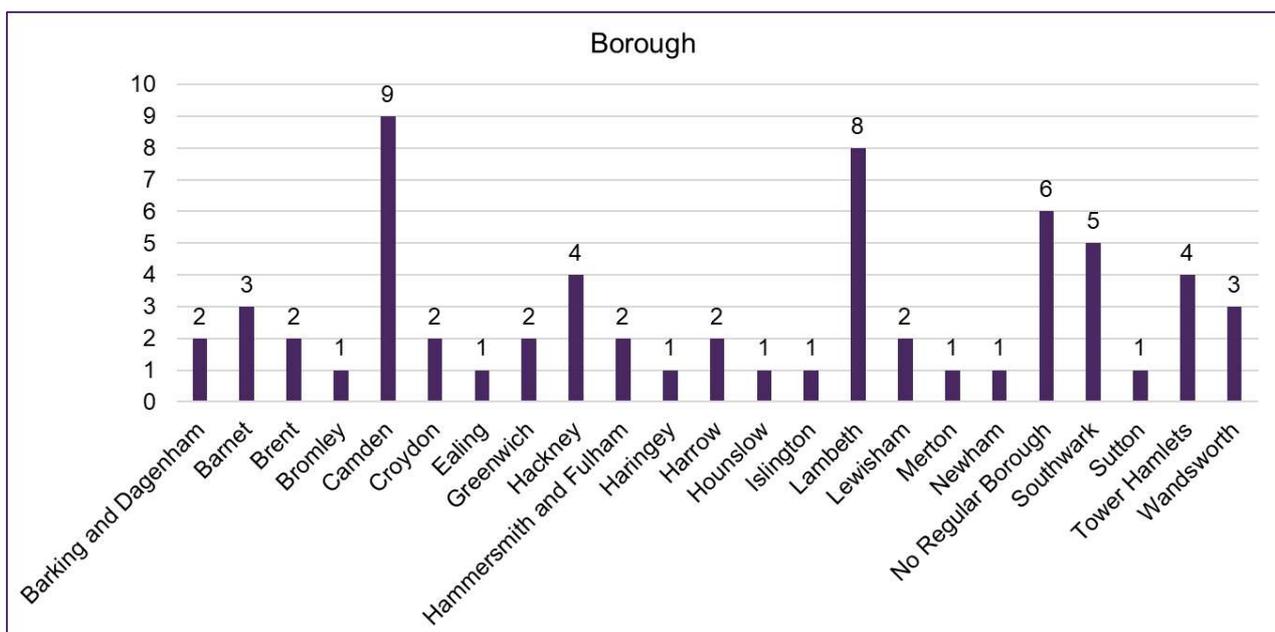
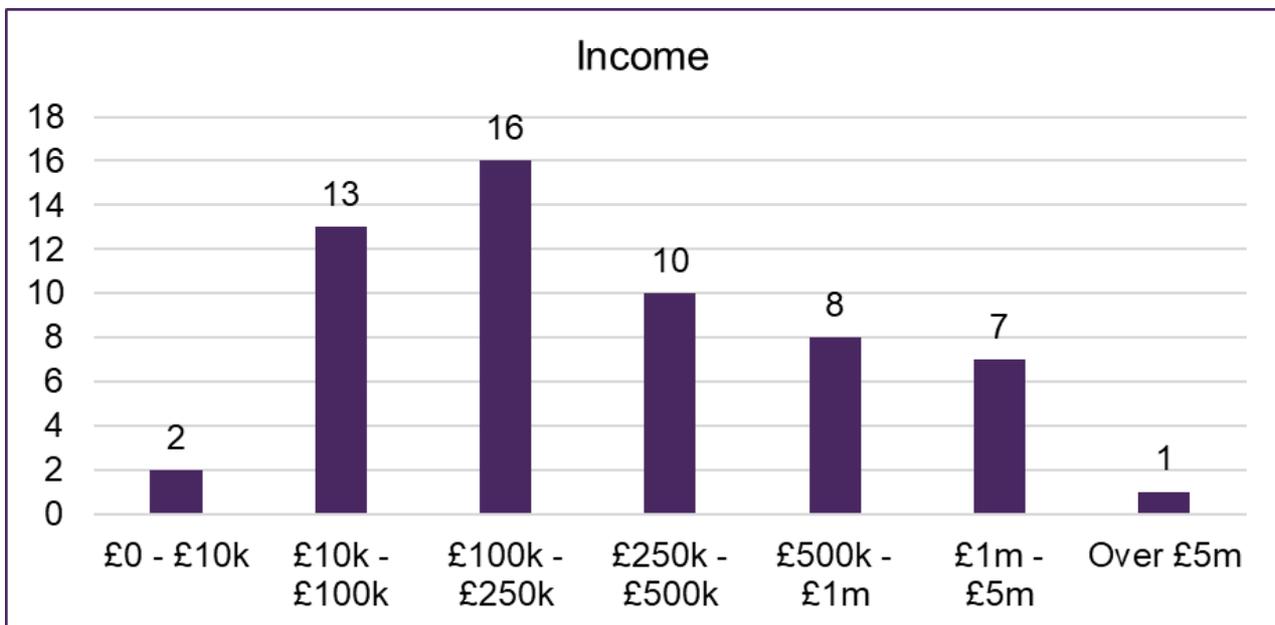
97 of 290 youth workers (33%) said that their youth organisation was facing significant and immediate financial pressure to the extent that they were considering redundancies or had concerns about covering rent or the future sustainability of the charity.



About the organisations facing significant financial pressure

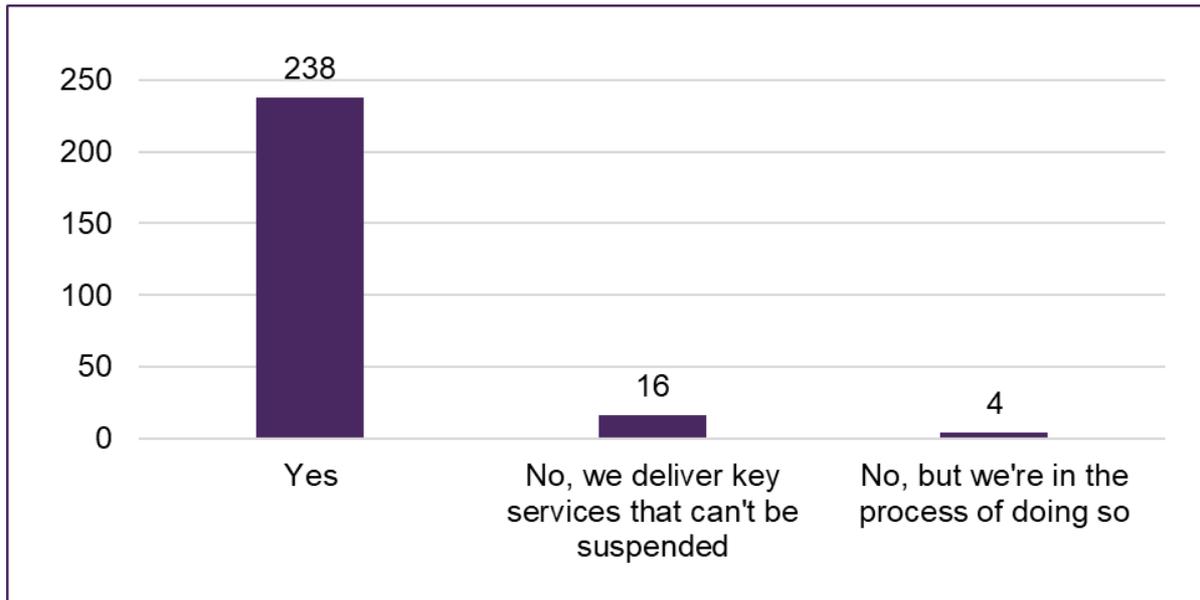
We can provide further insights on 65 of the youth organisations where youth workers have stated that they are facing significant financial pressure due to COVID-19:

- A total of 13,714 young people are registered at these youth organisations (average of 305 per youth organisation).
- They employ 1,042 full-time and 969 part-time staff (average of 43 and 42 respectively), and work with 118 full-time and 673 part-time volunteers (average of 8 and 59 respectively).
- Over half of these organisations (37) hold a current London Youth Quality Mark, have achieved one in the past, or are currently in the process.



| Have you suspended your face-to-face provision with young people?

16 of 290 youth workers (5%) said that their youth organisation was delivering an essential service still requiring face-to-face provision of some sort.



| How has Covid-19 affected your organisation and how have you had to adapt?

183 of 290 youth workers (63%) said that their youth organisation is moving to some form of digital provision, rather than suspending services and support entirely.

| What are the most immediate concerns for your organisation?

The most immediate concern for most youth organisations was the health and wellbeing of the young people they work with.

76 of 290 youth workers (26%) said that one of the most immediate concerns for their youth organisation was income and funding.

| Support that our members are asking for

| Funding

- Core funding to cover running costs (specifically wage support for non-furloughed staff, rent and utilities, expenditure on facilities) in the medium term or until face-to-face provision can resume.
- Clarity from funders on adapting contracted programmes to online delivery.
- Concern about the medium-term impacts of postponing or repurposing towards the COVID-19 response of all funding streams. A common response was that even organisations not in need of emergency support currently will require additional funding in the next few months and into 2021.
- Funding to support increased demand or new services (eg, administration support for adapting services, homelessness support, PPE for organisations still delivering, staff equipment like laptops).

| Resources to support young people

- Food and other emergency support for families and the wider community.
- Devices (eg, laptops or smart phones) for young people and other service users.
- Internet access (eg, data top-ups) for young people and other service users.
- Vouchers or prizes to encourage young people to engage in new ways.

| Guidance

- Specific guidance on delivering youth work online.
- Specific and practical risk assessment and safeguarding guidance for working online, interacting with young people via social media, and updating consent forms.
- Directories of digital opportunities, funding, and support services that are available.

| Training

- Technical support for staff working on new platforms.
- New opportunities for those staff whose workload has changed significantly because of the new circumstances.

| Impact on members

| Impact on young people

Key themes:

- Concern about the wellbeing and mental health of young people.
- Concern about the physical safety of young people.
- Concern about the most disadvantaged young people becoming more disengaged from support.
- Concern about access to appropriate devices or a sufficient internet connection to allow young people to engage with digital support and activities.
- Concern about the financial impact of the crisis on families and communities.

“We are concerned for our participants, especially the more disadvantaged and hard to reach young people who will be either isolating in potentially dysfunctional homes or not abiding to the lockdown measures and putting themselves and others at risk.”

“We are primarily concerned with maintaining relationships where possible with the young women we would usually see on a weekly basis.”

“The club is built around community, and our obvious concern is that for young people their weekly time at the club is something they look forward to. Some for working towards performance goals, some for general fitness and exercise, some for camaraderie and friendship and just to have some fun. We will do the best we can to keep everyone connected, but we are also aware a number of our parents/guardians aren't very tech savvy, so will likely miss out. Ways around this area being considered. The real risk is after months of isolation and not being on bikes, which will be the reality for a few young people and indeed volunteers, there may be total lack of interest for returning to a regular routine - this could be based on lethargy, fears of the virus, exercise can be done virtually, etc.”

“Keeping young people engaged with our services and interested enough to re-engage on reopening.”

“Young people losing motivation or not having support from youth workers in this current climate.”

“Young people not communicating about their mental health due to online environment.”

“The negative impact of COVID-19 on our stakeholders and users from having to stay indoors and self-isolate is a major concern on people's health, well-being and mental state of mind. Many of our families will live in social housing and cramped accommodation with small apartments but sharing and living with numerous family members. This will cause an unbelievable amount of stress and pressure within a household.”

“Many young carers will have a significant increase in their caring role because their usual respite (school) and young carer service is closed to face-to-face contact.”

“We have been trying to reach out to them remotely as although they could access activities via the internet it is the actual interaction that is required. Some homes are not safe for our young people for various reasons and they need to know we are still there should they wish to reach out. We try to have daily contact with each one and ensure they are coping and know we are at the end of a phone.”

“Our most immediate concern is being able to support our vulnerable young people without the face to face interaction and support. Many of the young asylum seekers have been heavily impacted by the reduction in services - many are feeling very lonely, living in sub-standard accommodation, and mental health conditions have been exacerbated by COVID-19.”

“Losing contact with existing young people - some of our young people do not have phone or internet access. Concerns over young people who are still rough sleeping or staying in unsuitable accommodation - they cannot self-isolate and are at increased risk if not picked up by local authorities soon. Currently not set up to deliver youth work sessions. Concerns over the knock-on effect on finances. Although we are not currently facing significant pressure, this may change, or be experienced further down the line.”

“Being able to support our vulnerable young people without the face to face interaction and support. Many of the young asylum seekers have been heavily impacted by the reduction in services. Many are feeling very lonely, living in sub-standard accommodation, and mental health conditions have been exacerbated by COVID-19.”

“Ideally, we would want every young person to be able to access the internet and allow our dedicated staff to support them. We would love to have better social media equipment for us to contact more of them in group sessions. We would love assistance with utility bills and

maintenance as when we get back we know that by having 2 full sized artificial pitches they will have been accessed. If all students in education could have a Chromebook and our staff have better cameras etc for remote training that would be amazing. We are worried that many of our young people will get distracted and the last year's work be wasted. Also we need things to encourage them to participate in what we offer with prizes, vouchers or trips. Not being able to escape their challenging lives is putting them back tenfold."

| Challenges of switching to digital provision

Key themes:

- Need for risk assessment for online provision and increased social media use.
- Need for governance and training to support staff delivering youth work in new ways.
- Need for technical support for staff working with new platforms.
- The cost of purchasing new equipment.
- The increased time to run online delivery, leading to higher staff costs.
- Need to reach agreement with funders over what delivery looks like and how it is measured.

"We have kept contact with all our young mums and are offering either online therapy, phone calls or text messaging support. Our main concern is for the clients but also we have a new therapist due to start and it is very challenging to manage that when we can't do a usual induction and her work will have to be all online it by phone. We are very busy as we are aware how vulnerable our clients are and are trying to support some of their basic practical needs as well as emotional needs eg with nappies and formula."

"We have had to develop the food bank service and expand it to cope with extra demand, we have had to source new food donations and funding streams to cover the costs."

"Staff are currently working from home with workers going in twice a week to pack food parcels and co-ordinate local volunteers to distribute them. We are meeting by Zoom to set-up activities and support services we can deliver remotely. Right now we are making contact with all our users to find out what their needs are. We are delivering food packages to local residents and have started to receive referrals from other agencies. We are coordinating workers and volunteers to collect and deliver food and basics. We are looking for sources of food, masks, hand gel and gloves for workers and volunteers. We are investigating sources of food to purchase and are asking for donations."

"Our most immediate concern is keeping in touch with and supporting the vulnerable people of ages we work with. Our users live on high density deprived social housing estates in an inner London borough. Some are self-isolating due to medical conditions or because they are in high risk groups, such as older people or those with under-lying health conditions. Many of them have multiple complex needs and our staff teams work with them and other agencies to deliver services and networks that support them. Many of the services normally accessed by our project users are either currently not available or are severely restricted. These services are lifelines for vulnerable people. The services we offer to children and young people are vital to keep them safe. We are working hard to set-up internet support and services for them. Home schooling is proving a challenge for many of users because English is not their first

language and some of them do not have access to laptops or internet. We are looking at ways to support parents/carers with home schooling.”

“All face to face interaction has been stopped and this is difficult in building the sense of community. We have stopped taking in new referrals and new volunteers and carrying out check in calls with 300 beneficiaries and consulting on future provision online. We are piloting few new groups next week and have started working on mental health support for the most vulnerable. We are very aware of screen time for young people and do not want to do too much provision online, as they are already getting all the school work on screens - hence working with partner organisations to see what other ways we could engage with young people - arts challenges, etc.”

| Impact on youth workers

Key themes:

- Concern about the safety of staff and volunteers delivering key services.
- Concern for the wellbeing of staff adapting to new ways of working.
- Concern about the income of freelance and part-time staff and volunteers.
- Difficulty keeping volunteers engaged without opportunities.

“Health and wellbeing of our casual and freelance staff, many have seen income dry up, also the artists and companies we work with - the whole arts/youth sector is on its knees!”

“Keeping staff engaged, productive, mentally and physically safe and well whilst isolated at home and looking after vulnerable family members.”

“We are concerned for our staff who rely on income from paid work at the charity.”

“This is essential as I'm acutely aware that some of my staff are truly torn between their duties as 'key workers' and the need for them to protect their families who may want them to stay at home! Over the coming weeks pressure may increase as those young people we have risk assessed as being safer off at home are finding that, as this lockdown continues, their mental health is deteriorating rapidly and parents/guardians/carers are asked for them to return to our provision on site so an increase in returning numbers of beneficiaries against a potential reduction of staff capacity may be an issue.”

“We have also been strongly encouraged by DfE to continue our operation during the current Easter Holidays which we will do but again this puts extra stress onto our staff. We are happy to adapt our ways of working to the benefit of our primary beneficiaries and as long as even just one vulnerable young person needs our services on site, we will remain open, provided of course that staffing numbers are sufficient in terms of safeguarding and health & safety.”

“As a theatre we have had to close down, the majority of staff have been furloughed. Our creative learning/ outreach team is working to find creative ways to support our local community. We are adapting youth provision to run online.”

"We are currently losing key staff members and because of this, other workers have to take on extra work loads in order to provide support to the young people who need it the most at the moment. Some of our staff are being furloughed and we are going to have to take on extra workloads and some young people may not receive the right support they need."

"Freelance staff need supporting so they can pay their rent and bills whilst they wait for who knows how long for insufficient Universal Credit."

| Impact on organisations

Key themes:

- Concern about medium and long-term income, even for those with reserves. For many, reserves are already running low or are expected to be exhausted over the next few months.
- Running costs remaining high, despite the loss of income (eg, one member has animals that are expensive to feed and keep healthy, but no income to support these activities).
- Increased staffing costs from delivering COVID-specific support or in adapting organisation to new circumstances.
- Unreclaimable costs from cancelled work (eg, renovation of facilities), events (eg, performances), and fundraising events.
- The burden of reporting on grants.
- Difficulty finding core costs funding.
- Funders changing the focus of open funds to focus on COVID-19 response.
- Concern that emergency funds are smaller amounts and more specifically targeted.
- Need for extensive negotiation with existing funders (eg, reporting and KPIs, flexibility to use funds to keep organisation operating). While many funders have been understanding, this still takes a huge amount of staff time.
- Concern that long-term that fundraising is on hold.

"We have no income coming in and as an organisation that up until a couple of weeks ago was sustainable, we are now fighting for our lives."

"We have had to close our delivery and main office premises. We have had to lay off 3 freelance members of staff who are struggling massively to access Universal Credit. We have had to put on half-time 1 member of staff. We have had to put the CEO on a voluntary basis for now as she has a small pension income."

"We've closed, the majority of our income streams have ceased, we're still committed to delivering funded work but are in the predicament of honouring committed fees now, but then needing to find those funds again once we're up and running and ready to start delivering again. We're forecasting to run out of cash in 6-9 months and will probably need loan financing as we rebuild. Most of our staff are furloughed, although we are trying to maintain interesting social media feeds with content to entertain and support create learning."

"We have had to stop all face-to-face projects including a large scale opera production we

were due to put on in April 2020. Money has been spent on these projects which we cannot recover. We are working from home but are having to use our own laptops/ink/paper as our company do not have laptops just desktops which are in our locked office. We are looking at how we can deliver some of our work digitally although the work through the Young Londoners Fund cannot happen as we would need direct access to the attendees online through the schools and we do not have this access.”

“Charity premises rent is paid up to date but needs support in meeting the next 3 months as we can no longer deliver small local projects on full cost recovery.”

“We were supposed to renovate our workshops over the summer and have had to postpone the fundraising event that would have raised the funds for this renovation. We have also had to close our shop, which raises money to support the charity. We don't know when this will be able to be back open for online fulfilment or in store sales. We are most worried about retaining and motivating our volunteers - a key workforce of 250 people - if we cannot provide enough volunteering options for them remotely/online.”

“The financial impact that will be felt by some families may potentially also filter through to decisions around paying for attendance at sessions, which then may result in much lower numbers when we do return to some semblance of normality. The consequences for the club will also reverberate as we continue to pay our running costs, lose revenue from sessions and kit sales, etc. Longer term we are very concerned about the impact this will have on cycling for young people in general, the lack of direction and leadership from national governing bodies etc and grassroots having to fend for themselves, the impact on volunteering in general in what was an already challenging arena.”

“The sudden lack of money typically received from: funding applications for face to face programmes, annual fundraising event that usually brings in £30k+ for the charity, and income from concerts and education workshops.”

“The charity’s cash flow for April-June is at risk as we had unrestricted income forecast from challenge events (now cancelled) and four likely statutory contracts (suspended as DWP staff have been diverted to Universal Credit claims). The social enterprise’s two stores have had to close which means a total loss of sales income.”

“The charity is organised to generate enough income during the Spring and Summer to sustain the organisation through the colder and quieter winter months. We have now lost all of this income, which coupled with a large deficit, puts the survival of the charity at grave risk. Most staff are now furloughed also. The charity’s animals still need to be fed and housed which comes in at great expense. Without reserves to draw upon to do this, the charity is in a dire situation. My grave concern is that the financially crippling effect this has might mean there isn't an organisation for the young people to return to when this is over.”

“We are financially stable for 3 - 6 months, but we are concerned about the future if we are unable to apply to find trusts, foundations and corporate partners. We are about to launch

online writing clubs and have invested in bringing back and upgrading an old digital creative writing platform we had developed in 2015. We are trying to secure final funding for this tool, but are keen to use it as a way for our young people to continue to receive mentoring support, and for them to use the platform to publish their writing and find inspiration to write.”

“On keeping in contact with the parents/guardians, it is looking that about a third of them are now out of work, so once they get back to work, depending if their job is still there for them to go back to, will they be able to bring their young people back to the club? Our management committee are looking at the idea of giving every member a free months training to help the parents/guardians get back on their feet, we are cancelling the increase in membership fees for this year, they will not now go up until April 2021, which means we will be keeping the club running for the first month back from our own club funds. Since June 2019, we have been running a once a month judo session for young people with Autism, which was free for them to take part. We have been paying for these sessions from our own club funds, and was looking to get a grant for our council to fund the project for another 2 years but it now looks like, they will be holding back the grant, and giving the money to other groups affected by the coronavirus19 outbreak. So with less money coming into the club, it looks like we will have to close down the session for the young people with Autism, as its cost £200 a session to run it once month on a Sunday morning.”

“Funding still remains our most immediate concern. Some of our funding applications have been unsuccessful due to funders changing the focus for funds. We are managing to complete and submit applications for COVID19 funds, however these are for much smaller amounts. Whilst we remain optimistic, these are really very worrying times for everyone.”

“Another huge worry is potentially closing down and the organisation not being sustainable which will mean job losses, redundancies etc. This again will impact massively on each service which in turn will have a negative impact on families and the community.”

“Sustainability. I have 50% of my 2020/21 budget. 2 of my funders have withdrawn their funding, as their donations are dependent on their local BID business partners (£5000).”

“April is the grant reporting period and all the funders not only want to know what we did in 2019/20 but also provide revised project/service delivery plans in the light of COVID 19. And they all want it now! Pressure is not fair as we are on the one hand firefighting and same time need to plan ahead.”

“Limited access to new funds following July 2020 - uncertainty about whether we will be receiving any new funding - limited fundraising options at the moment and our cash flow will be decreased.

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