

Scrutiny Panel

All Members of the Scrutiny Panel are requested to attend the meeting of the group to be held as follows

Thursday, 23rd July, 2020

7.00 pm

Until further notice, all Council meetings will be held remotely

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Tim Shields

Chief Executive, London Borough of Hackney

Members: Cllr Ben Hayhurst, Cllr Mete Coban, Cllr Margaret Gordon (Chair),
Cllr Sharon Patrick, Cllr Sophie Conway, Cllr Sade Etti, Cllr Yvonne Maxwell,
Cllr Polly Billington and Cllr Peter Snell

Agenda

ALL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

- 1 Apologies for Absence**
- 2 Urgent Items / Order of Business**
- 3 Declaration of Interest**
- 4 Update on the Impact of Covid-19 on Poverty and Inequalities in the Borough** (Pages 1 - 132)
- 5 Covid-19, Corporate and Medium Term Financial Update** (Pages 133 - 134)
- 6 Communications and Scrutiny** (Pages 135 - 136)
- 7 Minutes of the Previous Meeting** (Pages 137 - 154)
- 8 Work Programme 2020/21** (Pages 155 - 156)
- 9 Any Other Business**

Access and Information

Getting to the Town Hall

For a map of how to find the Town Hall, please visit the council's website <http://www.hackney.gov.uk/contact-us.htm> or contact the Overview and Scrutiny Officer using the details provided on the front cover of this agenda.

Accessibility

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Induction loop facilities are available in the Assembly Halls and the Council Chamber. Access for people with mobility difficulties can be obtained through the ramp on the side to the main Town Hall entrance.

Further Information about the Commission

If you would like any more information about the Scrutiny Commission, including the membership details, meeting dates and previous reviews, please visit the website or use this QR Code (accessible via phone or tablet 'app')

<http://www.hackney.gov.uk/individual-scrutiny-commissions-health-in-hackney.htm>



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The Monitoring Officer, or the Chair of the meeting, may designate a set area from which all recording must take place at a meeting.

The Council will endeavour to provide reasonable space and seating to view, hear and record the meeting. If those intending to record a meeting require any other reasonable facilities, notice should be given to the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting and will only be provided if practicable to do so.

The Chair shall have discretion to regulate the behaviour of all those present recording a meeting in the interests of the efficient conduct of the meeting. Anyone acting in a disruptive manner may be required by the Chair to cease recording or may be excluded from the meeting. Disruptive behaviour may include: moving from any designated recording area; causing excessive noise; intrusive lighting; interrupting the meeting; or filming members of the public who have asked not to be filmed.

All those visually recording a meeting are requested to only focus on recording councillors, officers and the public who are directly involved in the conduct of the meeting. The Chair of the meeting will ask any members of the public present if they have objections to being visually recorded. Those visually recording a meeting are asked to respect the wishes of those who do not wish to be filmed or photographed. Failure by someone recording a meeting to respect the wishes of those who do not wish to be filmed and photographed may result in the Chair instructing them to cease recording or in their exclusion from the meeting.

If a meeting passes a motion to exclude the press and public then in order to consider confidential or exempt information, all recording must cease and all recording equipment must be removed from the meeting room. The press and public are not permitted to use any means which might enable them to see or hear the proceedings whilst they are excluded from a meeting and confidential or exempt information is under consideration.

Providing oral commentary during a meeting is not permitted.

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Scrutiny Panel 23rd July 2020 Item 4 – Update on the Impact of Covid-19 on Poverty and Inequalities in the Borough	Item No 4
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OUTLINE

The current pandemic (Covid-19) has had a significant impact on the UK, its economy and the daily lives of people. Local authorities and statutory partners have had to refocus their support offer to local residents whilst keeping key services operational. The Council and its statutory partners have also had to ensure its resources are best placed to help with the immediate challenges presenting now and in the future.

While Covid-19 does not discriminate, the impact of the pandemic appears to. There have been concerns locally and nationally about the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on certain communities and the impact this is having on poverty and inequalities.

The discussion will cover the following areas:

- The analysis and assessment of the impact on poverty and inequalities in the borough
- Information about the areas highlighted in a recent letter from Cllr Williams to a parliamentary inquiry on people and protected characteristics
- Verbal update on the future plans and refresh of the Corporate Plan as a result of Covid-19.

The reports attached in the agenda provide information about the impact of Covid-19 on poverty and inequalities in the borough.

Attending for this item will be:

- **Cllr Carole Williams**, Cabinet Member for Employment, Skills and Human Resources
- **Sonia Khan**, Head of Policy and Strategic Delivery

ACTION

The Scrutiny Panel is requested to note the reports and ask questions.

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Covid 19 - Impact Grid

Since the start of the Covid 19 outbreak the Policy and Strategic Delivery Team at London Borough of Hackney has been working to consider our existing understanding of vulnerability and different communities in relation to Covid-19 and to help the Council broaden its thinking about impact and groups most in need. The assessment, as it currently stands, can be found [here](#).

The Clinical Commissioning Group has produced a grid which compliments this document with links to data sources, which can be found [here](#).

During the course of this work we were asked to provide an indication of the level of risk associated with the various factors we have identified and to establish which are likely to have a short, medium or long-term impact. The table below represents an initial attempt at achieving this.

Defining parameters

Timescales

- We have defined short term as up to the end of September 2020
- Medium term is defined up until May 2021 (a year from now)
- Long-term runs to May 2022, the end of the current political administration in Hackney

Impact

- High impact is defined as being a significant threat to life or personal safety
- Medium impact, may have a significant impact on a person's immediate health or wellbeing, but are not life-threatening
- Lower impact, may cause some inconvenience or discomfort, but unlikely to have a serious, long-term detrimental impact

Wherever possible we use referencing to indicate the source of our assumption e.g. whether it comes from community insight, from data or from local services. We also indicate the degree to which each factor may be controlled or influenced by the Council. We have also tried to indicate which areas the Council can influence and which we can directly control.

Intersectionality

This assessment does not indicate intersectional impacts e.g. the impact of race and gender, or disability and age - we urge you to take three factors into consideration in your work.

We welcome your feedback.

Group impacted	Short term issues (until September 2020)	Medium term (to May 2021)	Long term (to May 2022)	Influence/ Control
Protected characteristics (2010 Equality Act)				
1. Households with young children (under 10 yrs) Page 4	Higher impact: Exposure to domestic violence and harmful substance use, sexual abuse. Families with no recourse to public funds may have no means of subsistence.	Eviction.	Homelessness, serious mental and emotional distress e.g. from having to move to temporary accommodation outside the borough	The Council can reduce the harmful impacts by working more closely with the community and ensuring vital services are sustained. However there will be financial challenges maintaining this approach in the long-term.
	Medium impact: Overcrowding, lack of digital access, lack of parental supervision if forced to work from home/ go out to work. Lack of access to nutritious meals-delays with free school meals, pre-existing financial problems are exacerbated e.g. problem debt, low pay, poverty	Falling behind with school work, lower than expected levels of social development, increase in unsecured debt.	Long term detriment to educational attainment, poorer economic prospects	The Council has tried to mitigate these impacts by providing education and activities online and via printed materials, reintroducing detached youth work and help with meals and supporting initiatives that increase digital inclusions. However, there will be challenges, particularly if free school meals arrangements are not

				resolved.
	Lower impact: Lack of access to open spaces and social opportunities		Could lead to increased overweight and obesity	The Council has a relatively high degree of discretion over how social distancing is policed, when parks can open and has tried to use these levers e.g. opening parks for longer hours.
<p>2. Young People</p> <p>Page 5</p>	<p>Higher impact: Online grooming, exposure to gang activity serious violence due to lack of oversight in open spaces/at school</p> <p>Higher impact- impact on young people’s mental health particularly significant due to the need of socialisation for adolescents’ health and wellbeing and development;</p> <p>https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanchi/article/PIIS2352-4642(20)30186-3/fulltext</p> <p>Higher impact: current local disproportionate impact on the mental health of young people from black communities and minority ethnic communities (see Kooth link below)</p>	<p>Long term serious violence, leading to possible criminal record, incarceration or death.</p> <p>Longer term impact on mental health and wellbeing</p> <p>Immediate risk of increased self-harm, including suicidal ideation and potential barriers to service access that could mitigate risk due to the quantity and quality of clinical services; need for</p>		<p>Council services, Schools, NHS and CVS organisations locally need to have collective conversation including the voices of young people and families on what is needed to respond more considerately and effectively</p>

	https://xenzone.com/kooth-sees-significantly-higher-increases-in-suicidal-thoughts-anxiety-and-depression-among-bame-young-people-compared-to-white-counterparts/	culturally appropriate and community led/based responses		
Page 6	<p>Medium impact: Predicted grades have disproportionate impact on non-white and working class young people. Increase in youth unemployment as businesses are forced to close/ cut back on recruitment.</p> <p>Young people can now exercise freely, but most will not go back to school until September - indeed risk of ASB and criminal activity.</p>	Young people fail to gain places at top educational institutions. Long-term unemployment leads to loss of confidence and feeling of low self-worth.	<p>Long-term scarring impacts of entering the job market during recession. Young people missing school, especially without access to adequate digital devices risk falling behind with school work or losing interest in education.</p> <p>Risk of depression and mental illness especially if restrictions continue.</p>	While the Council is doing what it can to support young people and businesses, it does not control decisions made by educational institutions or employers.
	Lower impact: Young people become bored and may experience mild depression, arguments with parents/ siblings			The Council has the ability to work with the voluntary and community sector and local communities to help alienate these issues. However,resources may not allow response to be as extensive and systematic as may be required.
3. Older People	Higher impact: Older people more likely to experience severe impacts of Covid 19 including higher mortality rates	<p>Those who have contracted serious Covid 19 are likely to need ongoing clinical and social care support.</p> <p>Concern that non-Covid-19</p>	Risk of serious illness and even higher mortality long-term.	

		related serious illnesses like Cancer and Heart Disease may go undiagnosed.		
	Medium impact: Older people more likely to be shielding or self isolating, therefore may struggle to access food and other essential supplies - particularly if they live alone	Mental health risks associated with loneliness self isolation. Health risks associated with lack of access to nutritious food.		
	Lower impact: Increased loneliness and isolation	Risk of depression, reduced mobility in the longer term		
4. Race Page 7	Higher impact: High Death rate from Covid 19 among those born outside the UK 70% in Hackney). Minority ethnic groups are more likely to be exposed to and at risk of Covid 19. Higher impact: Experiences of structural and systemic racism compounded to affect poorer outcomes across all markers (including but not limited to physical and mental health markers).	Ongoing serious health impacts from Covid 19 and unrelated serious illnesses that have not been addressed Higher impact: Experiences of structural and systemic racism compounded to affect poorer outcomes across all markers (including but not limited to physical and mental health markers).	Higher impact: Experiences of structural and systemic racism compounded to affect poorer outcomes across all markers (including but not limited to physical and mental health markers).	
	High/ Medium impact: Concerns about over-policing of social distancing, magnifying existing anxieties around Stop and Search	A worsening of relations between the police and the community, particularly young Black men, if people feel their concerns have not been listened to, addressed	Young, Black and people of colour are more susceptible to unemployment due to systemic racism. Non White communities are more likely to be adversely	

Medium: racist perceptions of Black sentience may result in Black and people of colour not getting the help they need, when they need and how they need it (including but not limited to physical and mental health markers).

Medium impact: concerns that predicted grades will damage prospects of non-white and working class children.

Medium impact: Those without English as a main language find it harder to access information and services, especially online.

Medium - mental health impacts of coronavirus have been evidenced to be more significant amongst young black people and people of colour. (Unsure of adult figures).

Medium -Young carers have been highlighted as a group significantly impacted and there is a higher proportion of YCs from black communities. These can often be 'hidden'/ not recognised.

Medium: Bereavement support is often white and euro-centric and potentially not supportive of needs

Medium: racist perceptions of Black sentience may result in Black and people of colour not getting the help they need, when they need and how they need it (including but not limited to physical and mental health markers).

impacted by a serious recession.

Medium: racist perceptions of Black sentience may result in Black and people of colour not getting the help they need, when they need and how they need it. This may affect access to services in future and aggravate poor outcomes across all markers (including but not limited to physical and mental health markers).

<p style="text-align: center;">Page 9</p>	<p>of non-white people. This is especially significant given the level of loss experienced.</p> <p>High: Higher proportion of children and adults from black backgrounds are in custodial settings where the risk to physical and mental health risks are exacerbated. This is also reflective in mental health in-patient settings.</p> <p>Medium: Higher policing of public spaces has an impact on communities and feelings of ownership by black and asian communities.</p> <p>Medium: higher proportion of black children have LAC status and access to placements has been significantly impacted by Covid-19 restrictions</p> <p>Medium: food poverty</p> <p>Medium: access to technology</p>			
<p>5. Faith</p>	<p>Higher impact: Higher death rates among those born outside of the UK (see 'race' above).</p>	<p>Those directly impacted by Covid 19 will require longer term care.</p>		

	<p>Medium impact: Concerns about cultural appropriateness of food parcels e.g. Kosher and Halal. Some groups don't access the internet for religious reasons. Risk of harmful religious practices due to reduced oversight from institutions like schools</p>	<p>Concerns about relations between faith communities and the rest of the community and between faith organisations if people do not feel their needs are being met.</p> <p>Risk of malnutrition longer-term if people cannot secure the food they need.</p>		
	<p>Lower impact: Risk of community tensions e.g. Mosques asking to celebrate Iftar/ issue call to prayer in parks.</p>			
6. Sex	<p>Higher impact: Men are more susceptible to Covid 19 than women</p>			
Page 10	<p>Medium impact: Women with No Recourse to Public Funds particularly vulnerable especially if they have children (rules relaxed somewhat following court case). Large increase in cases of domestic violence</p>	<p>Women at greater risk during a recession because of the type of work they do- retail, hospitality etc.</p> <p>Risk of homelessness or displacement of women experiencing domestic violence.</p> <p>The childcare market has been significantly impacted by Covid-19. Concerned about disproportionate impact on women, both as workers in this sector and regards to their own childcare options.</p>		
7. Disability	<p>Higher impact: Those with</p>	<p>Concern that relaxation of the</p>		

	underlying health conditions more susceptible to contracting Covid 19.	Care Act will mean disabled people will no longer receive the care they need and their condition will worsen. Those who have been exposed to Covid 19 will need ongoing support.		
		Medium impact: Concerns about increasing numbers of families with a disabled member registering as homeless or in housing need.		
	Lower impact: Risk of increased loneliness and isolation	Ongoing mental health impacts of loneliness and isolation from Covid 19.		
8. Marriage and Civil Partnership	Medium Impact: Risk of financial loss due to cancellation of wedding, and civil partnership ceremonies.(Average cost £15k)			
9. Sexual Orientation	Medium impact: Risk of loneliness and isolation, need for specialist support	Ongoing risk of serious depression due to isolation.		
10. Gender Reassignment	Medium impact: Risk of loneliness and isolation, risk that some may be tempted to self-medicate if gender reassignment treatment is delayed.	Risk of serious medical complications, problems with fertility if self-medication takes place inappropriately.		
11. Carers	Medium impact: Increased stress and uncertainty. Less availability of specialist support.	Longer term concerns that support to carers may be curtailed due to relaxation of the Care Act if insufficient funding is available.		

Issues/ themes				
<p>1. Digital inclusion</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 12</p>	<p>Medium impact: This has come up as a major concern for young people, older people and those claiming benefits. Latest Hackney household survey (2019) states that 89% of residents access the internet, 90% of whom are confident. 14% of residents access the internet at school, library or jobcentre. 65% want to engage with the local authority online- so potentially around 35% who either lack the hardware, broadband access, skills or motivation to interact online.</p> <p>This will impact their ability to access services, information, education or social opportunities at this time.</p>	<p>Risk that children will fall behind with school work and their long term educational outcomes will suffer as a result.</p>		<p>The Council can influence this situation by working with telecoms providers, tech companies and local residents with technical skills. A working group has been established and a workshop with VCS organisations is planned.</p>
<p>2. Food access</p>	<p>Medium impact: This pandemic has laid bare vulnerabilities in food supply and food poverty (already recognised as an issue). The Council and smaller food charities have at times struggled to secure enough food for vulnerable residents who are self-isolating.</p> <p>Links with the issue around Digital Inclusion e.g ordering/ paying for food online.</p>	<p>Need to ensure all residents have adequate supply of nutritious food and that food charities can access the food they need.</p>		<p>Prior to the Pandemic the Council had developed a Food Poverty Action Plan with the Food Justice Alliance. A food-based response has been developed during the Pandemic. As this is stepped down, recipients of food based support will be offered support to secure alternative provision.</p>

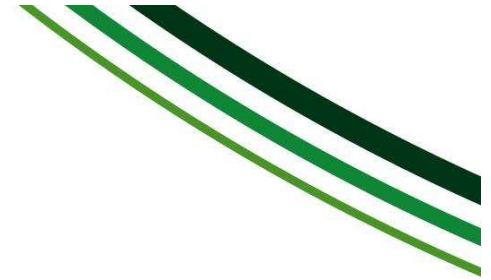
				<p>The Food Poverty work will be ongoing and will seek to learn and address the lessons of the pandemic.</p> <p>Will be needed for lobbying in relation to food security and affordability.</p>
<p>3. Housing</p> <p>Page 13</p>	<p>High impact: Rough sleepers - new to the street are still approaching at a high level.</p> <p>The Council has housed 184 rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping in C19 commercial hotels, including NRPF. A pan London move on strategy has been agreed but requires a local action plan against differing levels of need. Current move on options are severely limited.</p> <p>Those living in temporary accommodation who are self isolating have found it impossible to self isolate where they have to share kitchens and bathrooms with other households. Food access has also been difficult.</p> <p>Overall poor housing can have a detrimental impact on health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>Government has made a pledge to provide new housing units for some vulnerable rough sleepers- details to be confirmed.</p>		

	<p>Illegal evictions have increased rapidly. Government has confirmed suspension of evictions from social or private rented accommodation until 23 August.</p>			
<p>Page 14</p>	<p>Medium impact: Increase in homelessness applications from single people previously housed 'informally' e.g. sofa surfing with friends, in squats.</p>	<p>Risk of eviction of private rented tenants if they are unable to meet the rent longer term. This might include families as well as singles and couples.</p> <p>Changes to LHA legislation has meant the impact of the Benefit Cap is more severe and will likely double the amount of households affected by the benefit cap in borough. DHP funding is not enough to cover the shortfall.</p> <p>Reduction in voids as moves prohibited/ discouraged under lockdown.</p> <p>Number of new-build completions may decrease due to construction being cancelled during lockdown.</p>	<p>Unclear what the impact on house prices might be/what might happen to landlords who cannot collect rent from tenants unable to pay. Will they leave the market voluntarily? Will they be repossessed? Might some switch to renting to the Council instead?</p>	<p>The increased homelessness applications are likely to add to the Council's waiting list and increase the amount of households in temporary accommodation, which is already at the highest rate for a decade. A cost implication will be evident.</p> <p>Supply of new builds/ voids may be impacted by lockdown. There is a limit to what the Council can do with existing stock.</p> <p>May need to lobby for additional resources.</p>
<p>4. Inclusive Economy</p>	<p>High impact: Increase in numbers with no recourse to public funds as most residents who live outside the EEA are not able to apply for benefits.</p>			<p>Direct support available to people with no recourse to public funds is very limited - the Council is offering some enhanced react support at this time. We are also working .</p>

				A recent court case means families with children may be able to access more support from the Government, but more lobbying will be required.
	Medium impact: Some not covered by Government Business support. Claims for Universal Credit increased 60% from mid-May-mid-June	Risk of increased unemployment, unsecured debt, blight to some neighbourhoods if large numbers of businesses are forced to close.		The Council is providing support to businesses and residents who are out of work. The Council has been, and may have to lobby for benefit sanctions and restrictions to be lifted.
5. Voluntary and Community Sector	Medium impact: Estimated sector nationally will lose £4bn. Smaller groups providing direct services likely to be particularly vulnerable. Organisations like Charity So White have emphasised impact on non-white led community groups.	Risk organisations forced to close/ curtail their services.		The Council is working with other funders and repurposing its own funds to provide support to local organisations. More lobbying will be needed to ensure national response effectively meets need.
6. Community Cohesion	Medium impact: Overall there is a concern that certain groups may feel their needs have not been met and that this may impact on community relations going forward. There is a risk of increased antisocial behaviour, especially on estates as parents are encouraged to go back to work, but school does not open for most children until			The Council is working with community and faith organisations to address these areas of tension wherever possible. Detached youth work has resumed. Hackney Housing is in touch with vulnerable residents.

	<p>September.</p> <p>Some non-White communities have expressed serious concerns about over-policing of the lockdown-worsening existing unease around Stop and Search.</p>			<p>The Council is contacting RSL's to ensure housing plus services are in place.</p> <p>The Council is and will continue to lobby around safe return to school and adequate child care and support for those returning to work.</p>
7. Workforce	<p>High impact: To date, no Council staff have died as a result of Covid 19. The ongoing challenge will be to ensure this remains the case as lockdown restrictions are eased.</p>	<p>Need to maintain vigilance in the medium to long term to ensure there are no fatalities among staff.</p>		
Page 16	<p>Medium impact: At the moment most Council staff are working from home. This can be a challenge to mental health. There have been challenges securing PPE for frontline staff.</p> <p>It will be important to ensure that staff feel they are treated fairly and that streamlined and remote processes e.g. for disciplinaries and grievances do not disproportionately impact already disadvantaged groups e.g. BME and disabled staff.</p> <p>Need to ensure all staff can work from home safely, but the return to onsite working is conducted safely and fairly.</p>	<p>There could be a risk of redundancies if the Council is not able to meet the additional cost of the Covid 19 outbreak. There may be ongoing mental health issues relating to working from home or the stress and trauma of dealing with service users, colleagues or loved-ones directly impacted by Covid 19.</p> <p>Risk of spike in annual leave requests 2021-22 may impact service provision.</p> <p>Risk of spike in referrals to Occupational health.</p>	<p>The Local Government Pension Scheme may need to be modified if the stock market does not rebound as expected.</p>	<p>The Council has, and will continue to lobby the Government to meet the full cost of responding to Covid 19.</p> <p>There is a good deal the Council can do to ensure staff are properly managed., motivated, involved and informed throughout this process. A Future Workplace group has been established to oversee this process - ensuring equality is embedded into all aspects of its work is a key consideration.</p>

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Covid-19: Impact on Hackney communities



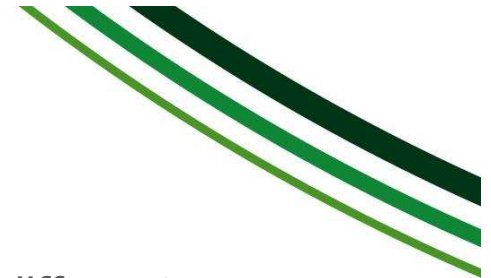
Context

Since changes in national government strategy towards the Covid-19 pandemic in mid-March the Council has been focussing its efforts on implementing and supporting the new public health policies.

The Council has primarily focussed on [identifying](#) groups of residents who are most at risk of Covid-19 from a health and economic perspective such as older people (70+), residents with certain health conditions, residents on low incomes and 'newly vulnerable' communities such as those who have lost their jobs, or who are self employed. This is the right focus in the immediate term and some great work has been done to supply [food](#) and immediate [humanitarian](#) aid to those most affected.

Purpose

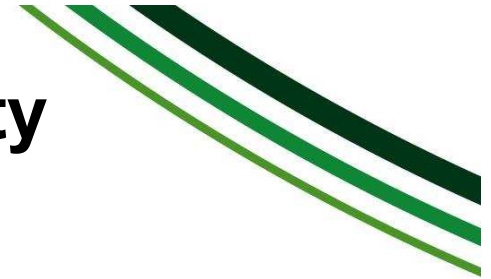
- To consider our existing understanding of vulnerability and different communities in relation to Covid-19 and to help the Council broaden its thinking about impact and groups most in need
- To keep track of our response to some of these issues and consider what else we could do to help
- To consider community cohesion as we respond
- To identify what positives from the situation we should help maintain and build on
- To help shape our plans about how we might best recover



What we have done

- Used existing evidence and analysis, community insight, data and conversations with staff to identify issues and the groups they affect.
- Identified those groups who we know are at a higher risk of poverty and those groups who face disadvantages that might make coping with Covid-19 more difficult.
- Looked at the ways in which different groups of people may be affected by multiple issues and the overall impact over time.
- Whenever possible noted our response to some of these issues
- Considered the immediate and longer term impacts

Groups impacted - Pre-existing poverty



Groups we know are already at a higher risk of poverty include:

- Workless households
- Lone parents
- Households with two or more children
- Households with children under 10 (especially when youngest child aged 4 and under)
- Households with a disabled person (parent and/or child)
- Families that claim benefits affected by welfare reform
- Households living in the private and social rented sectors
- Adults with no formal qualifications
- Structural inequalities mean that black and ethnic minority communities are more likely to be in poverty



Other vulnerable groups

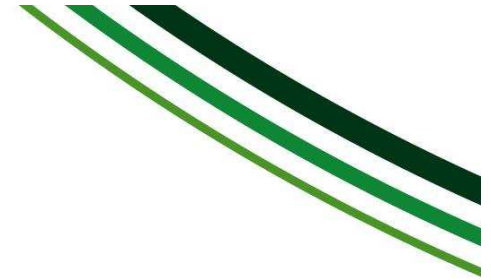
- Disabled people/those with long-term health conditions (excluding Shielding)
- People with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)
- Street and hidden homeless
- People with unsecured private debt
- People with English as an additional language and other communication needs
- People at risk of domestic abuse
- People with mental health needs
- People with drug and alcohol abuse issues
- Households who are digitally excluded
- Some faith communities



Community Assessment - Appraisal

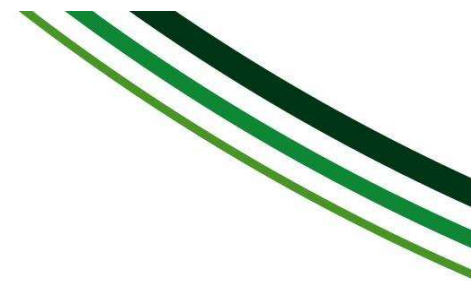


- Policy and Strategic Delivery maintain a master copy of the assessment for reference
- We create a highlight presentation each Thursday (these slides are added to the master copy)
- We are developing our thinking about how we understand impact on residents. For example, we are exploring what criteria we should use to assess which residents face particular difficulties and disadvantage which we should draw particular attention to.
- This appraisal may consider factors such as: impact at important life stages (e.g. 0-5 year old development, key points in education), reduced or loss of specialist/targeted services (e.g. SEND) and impact on particular communities



Part 1: Impacts on specific equality groups

Covid-19 in Hackney



Analysis from the Public Health team as of 8 June 2020

reports the following:

- 651 confirmed cases were reported (up to 3 June 2020)
- 176 deaths involving Covid-19 infection (up to 3 June 2020)
- Daily cases peaked in the first week of April
- Daily deaths peaked in the second week of April
- Daily cases and deaths have been consistently falling since early-mid April
- For the latest weekly report (28 May to 3 June) there were five confirmed cases of Covid-19 and no related deaths
- Over half of Covid-19 cases have affected residents aged 60+. Research does suggest a high proportion of undiagnosed cases.

Covid-19 deaths in Hackney

- Older people, migrant populations and people from lower socio-economic background have been more affected by covid-19 related deaths
- Of all deaths (176) around 70% were for residents aged 70+
- 57% of deaths were male and 43% were female
- 87% of residents who died had pre-existing health condition
- 69% (120) deaths were among residents born outside the UK - compared to 37% of the population who were born outside the UK
- 44 (27%) deaths were among residents born in the Caribbean
- 52% deaths were among people employed in routine and manual occupations compared to 32% of the Hackney employed in these occupations

Findings from wider literature review

- **Ethnicity:** Black and minority ethnic groups are more likely to live in overcrowded households, experience poverty and live in deprived neighbourhoods.
- **Gender differences:** Significant gender inequalities have emerged during the lockdown. For example, women are more likely to have been furloughed, have been made redundant or have left work. Women are more likely to be in higher risk occupations for contracting Covid-19 - 33% compared to 25%. Women are also consistently less likely than men to feel comfortable with the resumption of 'normal' activities.



Findings from wider literature review

- **Worse access to services:** Emerging evidence suggests that the lockdown have worsened access to services, including healthcare, social support, and justice services. For example, lower socio-economic groups are normally more likely to use A&E which is perceived as higher risk and leading to lower presentation for health conditions.
- **Education attainment:** The lockdown has exacerbated existing inequalities in educational attainment. For example, teachers in more deprived areas are more likely to report that their students are not sending back the work they have been assigned.

Families with children - Immediate impacts



- Lone parent families, families with 2 or more children and families with young children are all higher risk groups for poverty. Any fall in income due to job loss or reduced hours is likely to impact on this group quickly.
- CYP in households with problem debt are five times more likely than other children to have low well-being. Many families will experience higher food and utility bills caused by family being at home more.
- For working families leaving children at home alone may not be possible leading to a reduction in working hours or leaving employment with a subsequent fall in household income. This is also true for those able to work from home who will have childcare responsibilities in the home.

Issue: Free school meals (FSM)

- A national system is being put in place for the distribution of supermarket vouchers or for schools to provide meals and be reimbursed by government.
- Hackney schools have tended to distribute meals themselves
- This decision has been taken in order to (i) maintain contact with families (ii) ensure food support reaches those in need (iii) provide more nutritious food and (iv) avoid families having to travel to specific supermarkets to use vouchers
- In early April entitlement to FSM was extended to many families who often have no recourse to public funds (NRPF) including: Carers reliant on Section 4 support, Carers granted leave to remain as 'Zambrano carers', carers granted leave to remain under Article 8 ECHR and those supported under Section 17 Children Act 1989

Issue: Free school meals (FSM) considerations

- We have good awareness of what some schools are doing but not a comprehensive view at borough level. One unknown is which schools are using voucher schemes and the reach and success of such schemes.
- Education Secretary has acknowledged on 29.4 high levels of demand for the voucher scheme and delays and not all supermarkets taking part
- To date (30.4.2020) there has been no decision made about the continuation of FSM during the summer holidays
- There remains concern that a number of children will still not be eligible for support. For example, families who fall within the new eligibility categories but have an annual income of greater than £7,400 and children that are undocumented.

Families with children - Immediate impacts



- Families who become ill may become unable to care for their children (particularly lone parents). This could leave children and young people without adequate care and lead to children taking on household or care duties or the need for Council intervention.
- For parents/carers with children who become ill work may not be possible. This could result in lost income for this period not covered by sick pay (if eligible)
- For families with more than one child more help may be asked of older children with a negative impact on the child/young person
- Young carers - contact and support for those known to services continues, though identification of those unknown is more limited as young carers are more likely to be identified through their school
- Increased childcare responsibilities for parents while children are not in school, and without the possibility of help from family networks, this is exacerbated for single parents

Families with children - Immediate impacts

- Younger children may find it harder to understand the current situation and become upset and distressed by changes to everyday life. This can create strain for all family members.
- Families with disabled members (parent/children) or children with special educational needs will experience these issues to an even greater extent. Overcrowding will worsen the situation for larger families.
- Children and young people remain at risk of physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect and there are now fewer professionals in direct contact to observe harm or for this to be reported into services. Restrictions have limited contact with those who can help, and perpetrators may exert more control.

Families with children - Longer term impact

- It may be harder for families with younger children to achieve expected levels of development and education as this can be more reliant on a social setting than education in later childhood and adolescence.
- Families who are continuing to work may be unable to support their children with their education leading to lower outcomes and attainment.

Families with children - considerations

- How well is the support offer reaching families with young children? How are we supporting vulnerable parents (particularly lone parents)?
- Is the support offer meeting the needs of families with young children? (e.g. providing non-food items such as baby care products, children's clothing)
- Could we provide toys, games and books for families who may have limited resources in the home?
- What information and advice are we providing parents with young children?
- How are we hearing from families with young children? Are there more ways of hearing from this group (e.g. estate managers, VCS organisations)?
- How well is the Council reassuring parents about the support on offer and overcoming any worries about asking or receiving State support?

Families with children - considerations

- Disadvantage earlier in life can have long term impact. Should young children be a priority group for more targeted support as part of recovery or if the current situation continues in the medium-longer term?
- Is there best practice about how services support children who may be at higher risk of falling behind in terms of development and education?
- Restrictions on the use of playgrounds and parks will especially impact families with young children. Could we consider giving priority access to this group for using parks? For example, it was suggested that Brockwell Park open in the mornings only for adults accompanied by children and there has been discussion about using road closures to create more space for children to play.

Young people - Immediate impacts

- Young people who are already carers (known to services or not) or become carers/take on more caring responsibilities may experience a negative impact on their health and wellbeing, education, development and employment.
- Young people who are witnesses and/or victims of domestic abuse
- Young people in households where adults are struggling to cope with mental health issues exacerbated by the 'lockdown'.
- Young people at home with parents/family members with substance misuse issues (known or unknown to services)
- Not all young people will have an internet connection and a device for homeschooling putting them at a serious disadvantage
- 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 - Immediate impacts



- Closure of educational facilities and youth provision means that young people are and will become increasingly disengaged. Those with special needs or receiving targeted may become increasingly vulnerable.
 - Response: agreed protocol in place for contact with vulnerable cohort (HLT, Schools, CFS)
 - Young Hackney has created a virtual online hub to access a range of activities. For example, the hub includes workshops, meetings and opportunities for group work. Online drop-in services available for specific needs.
 - All families with SEND are phoned twice a week
 - 650 young people/families are receiving targeted support through various digital channels. Young people are being supported maintaining rhythm and structure to their days and linking to other support services
 - Prospects are available for young people who are unsure of next steps in an education context (post 16, post 18 transitions). The careers festival will now be online.
 - Substance misuse service is still available to young people online (caseload of around 100)
 - CAMHS is not providing as wide a range of services but in house clinical consultation still available

Young people - Immediate impacts

- There is a risk that social distancing is perceived to be enforced too severely or inconsistently leading to resentment and distrust for some young people (e.g. young Black men)
 - Response: The Youth Independent Advisory Group (YIAG) has continued to meet with the police (e.g. meeting on Tuesday 7 April) since the new restrictions have been put in place to voice community concerns. A request has been made to the Police for information about how Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) are being used and who is receiving a notice. This should help understand how public health guidance is being enforced.



Youth conversations

- On Saturday 2 May 2020 Hackney Young Futures Commission hosted a virtual Q&A with the Mayor. A total 43 young people took part.
- Planning for the future: Young people expressed worries about planning for their future. For example, concerns about predicted grades, applying and starting University and other courses in September and general disengagement.
- Stress at home: Young people are worried about domestic violence and family conflict - particularly between siblings.
- Housing maintenance: Young people said that with more people being at home and for most of the day the home environment is being impacted and repairs not carried out.

Youth conversations

- Overcrowding at home: The pressure on families to stay at home, work at home and share resources (e.g. computers) is creating considerable strain on some families
- Non-compliance: Young people were worried about people not following social distancing rules (e.g. London Fields).
- Response: A meeting is taking place on Tuesday 12 May with Young Hackney, LBH and VCS organisations to consider the broader response to some of these issues.



Youth conversations

- Over policing: Young people have reported feeling overpoliced and dealt with harshly by the police. This has been reported by young Black men in particular. The need at this time to recognise the multiplicity of identities that young black men have which includes being carers and having dependents.
- Youth workers: As the rules change youth workers being outside more may be beneficial. Youth workers should be seen as key workers and given adequate protection and freedom to do their jobs.
- Engagement: Youth groups are struggling to maintain engagement and move to online services - particularly amongst boys/young men.
- Sexual health: Worries about how to access contraception.
- Life after lockdown: Concerns about coming out of lockdown and the need for young people to express their frustrations and deal with loss and stress.

Young people - considerations

- How can young people be helped to make decisions about their future and stay motivated?
- Young people said they would like to see institutions (Council, NHS, businesses) offer more work placements and apprenticeships to create opportunities for young people.
- What can the Council and other partners do about home maintenance and repairs? Will there be a prioritisation process for non-emergency repairs when they become possible again?
- How does the council encourage compliance with social distancing and acknowledge that most young people are following the rules?
- Can additional resources be made available to families? Is the current offer getting to people? (e.g. computer equipment)

Young people - considerations

- Enforcement and the police need to be understanding when dealing with young people. There needs to be a fuller understanding of the roles young people play (e.g. carers, young parents etc). This can particularly be the case for young Black men.
- Could young people be consulted or more involved in emergency planning?
- Could youth groups be supported by other services on how to maintain engagement and different ways of working?
- What sexual health services or information could be made more available?
- How are young people who have experienced loss and/or considerable stress helped as we come out of the current lockdown?

Young people - Longer term impacts

- Young people may develop or experience more acute mental health issues
- As the weather improves, school holidays begin and social distancing continues there is a risk that some people, particularly young people, may not follow guidance.
- Young people not able to take their exams will be awarded their predicted grades. This may have an affect on their future life course and aspirations. It is also difficult for young people to make decisions about their future (e.g. starting training/college/University in September)



Safeguarding concerns

- Increase in domestic abuse referrals locally raises concerns about significant harm for children in those households.
- Loss of school as a protective factor for children/young people and a decrease in referrals to Children and Families Services
- Impact on vulnerable adolescents who ordinarily spend time in peer groups, online and in neighbourhood spaces - these can provide positive experiences but can also facilitate exploitation and harm.
 - Protocol for maintaining contact with this cohort (HLT, Schools, CFS)
- Some young people will find it difficult to follow the 'stay at home' message. With decreased adult oversight in many spaces there is increased risk of harm.
- The number of missing children has remained stable. However, one serious incident involving a young people was reported last week.
- Safeguarding in an online context is challenging with closed groups and young people at risk with regards to inappropriate, antisocial or illegal behaviour - bullying, grooming, sharing of inappropriate images/ harmful sexual behaviour, videos that incite violence



Older people

- Digital exclusion is highest among older people. This has presented challenges in terms of accessing information and support, social and networking opportunities and accessing and paying for food and other essential supplies
- Those who have recovered from Covid-19 likely to require ongoing care and support. Others with underlying conditions may need to self-isolate for a considerable amount of time
- Concerns about serious illness and excess deaths from diseases like Cancer and Heart Disease due to lack of diagnosis and treatment
- Covid-19 outbreak has created a wave of intergenerational solidarity - need to ensure this neighbourliness continues, but that older people play a full role in shaping it, so they are not just passive recipients of care

Pan-London insights - Gender

- 25% increase in calls to the Domestic Abuse Line, over-representation of women in the Care sector and low-paid employment, challenges with home-schooling, women are more likely to be primary carers for children or relatives
- Impact on women's organisations - 93% were concerned about staff mental health, 61% concerned about surviving the crisis, 83% said ability to run services effectively was their biggest challenge, 73% found moving services online challenging, 79% said crisis negatively impacted their income
- For Black and minoritised women-led organisations much greater concern about unemployment, physical and mental health staff absence higher, deeper concerns about financial constraints
- For disabled led women's organisations, concerned centred around food, access to health and medical services, support/independent living

Insights from Adult Social Care: Older People and People with Long Term Conditions

People with long term conditions and older people needing to isolate.

Humanitarian aid group ensuring access to medicines and foods

Cases of clients refusing social services due to fear of infection

Major home adaptations (e.g. walk-in showers) have been on hold which may increase risk of falls in this time

Reduced ability/willingness to access non-covid healthcare

People in care homes disproportionately affected. High mortality rate + associated psychological impact

Lockdown may cause a decline in mobility/independence

Virtual alternatives to regular services are being explored, though accessibility for some remains a challenge (e.g. lack of device)

Some services have had to pause e.g. those supporting sensory needs

3,912 deaths involving COVID-19 that occurred in March 2020, 91% were of people with at least one pre-existing health condition, 87% were aged 65+ ([ONS](#))

Potential for rise in [age-related discrimination](#)



Insights from Adult Social Care: Mental Health

- MH Services delivered in a new way, which will need adjusting to. Service is contacting everyone on the caseload. Essential services (e.g. injections or blood tests) provided in people's homes.
- MH care demand from older adults has increased
- Service is providing mobile phones and credit for people who are socially isolated
- Carers provision, emergency plans if they become unwell
- Psychological impact of lockdown across the population
- More calls to the crisis line
- Rise in mental health related to safeguarding

Insights from Adult Social Care: Learning Disabilities

The picture in Hackney has been similar to the stories reported in the national press such as

There has been a disproportionate number of deaths in the learning disability community, sadly there has been 5 deaths in Hackney.

In normal circumstances independent reviews are carried out when a person with learning disabilities dies. Under COVID rapid reviews have been implemented along with the CCG to learn lessons quickly with the CCG.

Nationally, it has been reported that Do Not Resuscitate instructions have been written into LD patient records. Locally, a service user was admitted to hospital and a do not resuscitate was placed on their file without the family being consulted and a consultant had to intervene to get this changed on the service users records.

These cases reflect some of the health inequalities that people with a learning disability face under the pandemic.

Learning Disabilities (cont'd)



For some residents with learning disabilities the current situation under lockdown and social distancing can be challenging to understand and can be difficult to explain so easy read resources are key to helping communicate the rules with service users.

For many service users who receive local community based support or support in education have found these services have closed or have had to adapt service provision.

This has meant that service users are spending more time in the home with their families. For many families these services provide much needed respite for parents who might also have other children they need to care for or homeschool. Especially in communities such as the Orthodox Jewish communities who have larger families.

This has meant there has been an increase in the need for help for families to deal with behavioural challenges and encourage positive behaviour through psychological support or resources for activities and also poses questions on how long families will be able to cope without these services.

ASC Integrated Learning Disability Service response

Carrying out welfare calls to all service users and family members to ensure their well being. Staff have been checking in with service users about their understanding of coronavirus, reviewing support packages, checking on mental and general health, ensuring access to food and shopping as well as checking if family members and carers are still able to support service user.

Producing and sharing easy read resources for service users.

Producing and updating Hospital passports for service users to explain medical conditions, medication and any behavioural issues if they get admitted to hospital

Checking in with providers to ensure they have what they need to carrying on providing support where they can.

Insights from Adult Social Care: Carers



The situation has really highlighted how crucial carers are for our vulnerable members of our community as they are relied on more than ever to look after family members.

The pandemic has uncovered “hidden” carers who aren’t normally known to services. This has highlighted the importance of support and networks that carers need to provide care to loved ones and has raised the profile of the care that they provide.

For some people under lockdown their carers have not be able to support them which has led to an increase in referrals to ASC, increase in care packages and Humanitarian Assistance group have stepped in to provide food and medication.

The council has worked with carers services in the voluntary sector to help carers carry out the duties that they do as they might not have been able to stick to some of the lockdown rules as they might need to leave the house more frequently to carry out errands for do food shopping for those that they care for. The council has provided a standard letter for many carers to confirm the need for them to do this without being questioned.



Pan-London insights - Disability

- 1.2m disabled people in London, already impacted by austerity, twice as likely to live in poverty or be unemployed
- Particular concerns re. Covid - 'Do Not Resuscitate' notices, lack of guidance from National Institute for Clinical Excellence, lack of British Sign Language Interpretation;
- Isolation, lack of support
- Access to food, PPE, social care, face to face services
- Challenges faced by disabled people's organisations - Staff and Trustees often face similar challenges to clients, moving services online, challenges of remote working - staff wellbeing, staff having to shield long-term;

Black and minority ethnic (BME) communities

- Before Covid-19, BME communities faced higher levels of unemployment, low pay and poverty. BME communities are likely to fare less well in a recession.
- BME communities are more likely to be working in frontline roles such as caring, cleaning and transport
- BME communities more likely to live in larger, multigenerational households, often more overcrowded
- BME communities also likely to experience higher rates of underlying health conditions like Diabetes, Cardiovascular Disease
- BME communities experience higher rates of unemployment and socio-economic deprivation
- There are higher rates of Covid 19 fatalities in BME communities.

Black and minority (BME) ethnic communities

- A quarter of Hackney's population do not have English as a main language, and may have difficulty accessing accurate information and support services. Older BME residents are more likely to be impacted in this way
- Concerns about enforcement, linked to the historic impact of Stop and Search on some BME communities, could be made worse during lockdown
- People from outside the European Economic Area not entitled to apply for benefits unless they have indefinite Leave to Remain or their spouse is from the EEA
- Those from outside the EEA are liable to pay for NHS treatment

Covid Deaths by ethnicity - ONS



On May 7 the Office for national statistics published data on Covid-19-related deaths by ethnicity up to 17 April. They found that:

When taking into account age, Black males are 4.2 times more likely to die from a COVID-19 and Black females are 4.3 times more likely than White men and women

People of Bangladeshi and Pakistani, Indian, and Mixed ethnicities also had [statistically significant](#) raised risk of death involving COVID-19 compared with White ethnicity.

After taking account of age and disability at the 2011 the risk of a COVID-19-related death Black males and females reduced to 1.9 times more likely than those of White ethnicity.

Similarly, males in the Bangladeshi and Pakistani ethnic group were 1.8 times more likely to have a COVID-19-related death than White males when age, health and disability were taken into account; for females, the figure was 1.6 times more likely.

These results show that the difference between ethnic groups in COVID-19 mortality is partly a result of socio-economic disadvantage and other circumstances, but a remaining part of the difference has not yet been explained.



Feedback from meeting with non-White-British led community organisations

- Concern food parcels do not always take account of dietary needs and sometimes don't contain right ingredients to cook a meal
- Digital exclusion, particularly for young and older residents;
- People not approaching medical services because of concern about catching Covid 19;
- Information in community languages;
- Lack of awareness about support for households self-isolating - food, access to medication, mental health and support with benefits mentioned;
- Greater understanding of diversity within communities needed;
- Concern about support for patients without English as a main language as hospitals have no visitor policies;
- Impact on mental health especially for key workers, lacking PPE, who may also be living in overcrowded conditions;

Feedback from meeting with non-White-British led VCS organisations

- Safeguarding - domestic violence - partners and children as perpetrators;
- Families in temporary accommodation living in very cramped conditions;
- Praise for schools, but concern about young people in care missing out on opportunities for social interaction as services moved online;
- Need to consider ways of bringing resources e.g. toys/books currently locked up to local people;
- Acknowledgement of importance of education as a means of social progression for non-white people;
- Discussion about term BAME - tendency to lump all non-White British communities together
- Lack of parity in funding of community organisations and charity sector;
 - Over £300m Lottery funding to be made available soon
- Risk of social resentment - not all in this together

PHE Review - Disparities in risks and outcomes

- On Tuesday 2 June Public Health England (PHE) published its [review](#) into the how different factors have affected COVID-19 risk and outcomes. It finds that the impact of COVID-19 has replicated existing health inequalities and, in some cases, it has increased health inequalities.
- The review takes into account age, sex, deprivation, region and ethnicity
- It does not take into account the existence of comorbidities which are strongly associated with the risk of death (e.g. hypertension, diabetes) nor does it fully account for roccupation.
- The review makes no formal recommendations. It does address its limitations.

Health in Hackney Scrutiny Commission discussion on the response to Covid 19

- This Tuesday Health in Hackney Scrutiny Commission held a meeting which included a panel discussion on the response to Covid-19.
- Discussion focussed on: contact tracing in Hackney/London, a report on Covid-19 options for the UK from the Government's leading scientific advisory group (SAGE) and a look at what measures guided the reopening of New York State.
- [Link](#) to agenda and papers
- [Link](#) to full video recording

Covid-19 and race

- The Health in Hackney session gained national news coverage (Channel 4 [link](#) and Sky) for the evidence given by Professor Fenton.
- His report looking at the impact on ethnically diverse communities is still to be published.
- He highlighted: deprivation, occupation, and stigma, structural racism and discrimination as factors affecting ethnically diverse communities. [Link](#) to media report.
- His comments on the need for action on racism and discrimination were of particular media interest
- The racial dimension of the pandemic and wider issues around race continue to be felt across Hackney with many residents and staff reporting considerable distress.
- Vigils have been held at the Town Hall and online this week for George Floyd each attracting several hundred people

Community Cohesion - Disparities in risks and outcomes



- It is important to acknowledge that the report and wider response has been criticised for its lack of recommendations - particularly in relation to protecting the non-White population.
- The racial dimension of the impact of the pandemic and the killing of George Floyd in the US have, in part, led to protests in this country.
- It is clear from events this week that the disparate impacts of COVID-19 will need to be acknowledged and addressed.
- From our community engagement it is clear that this is a moment of considerable pain and anger for many residents in Hackney in relation to the disparate impact of the pandemic

PHE Review - Disparities in risks and outcomes

- Age: People aged 80+ and diagnosed with COVID-19 are seventy times more likely to die than those aged under 40. (Largest disparity)
- Sex: Risk of death is higher in males than females. Working age men are twice as likely to die of the disease than working age women.
- Deprivation: Risk of death is twice as high for those living in the most deprived areas than those living in the least deprived.
- Ethnicity: Risk of death is higher in those in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups than for White ethnic groups. Bangladeshi people are twice as likely to die than White people. People of Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, Other Asian and Caribbean and other Black ethnicity have between 10-50% higher risk of death compared to people of White ethnicity.

PHE Review - Disparities in risks and outcomes

- Occupation: There is a higher risk of death for people working in a range of caring occupations (e.g. social care, nursing), those who drive passengers in road vehicles (e.g. taxi and minicab drivers), security guards and related occupations and people working in care homes.
- Occupation: Deaths for people aged 20-64 are 1.6 times higher than normal. For people in caring personal services this is 2.1 times higher, for taxi drivers/chauffeurs it is 3.2 times higher and for security occupations 3.4 times higher.
- Care homes: Deaths in care homes account for 27% of all COVID-19 deaths. This is over double (2.3) the number of deaths in care homes than would normally be expected.

PHE Review - Disparities in risks and outcomes

- Regional health have increased. For example, London (highest death rate) has a death rate three times higher than the South West (lowest death rate) and this difference is greater than normal (i.e. pre-COVID mortality)
- The disparity in the death rate between more and less deprived areas is also greater than normal
- Death rates are highest among people of Black and Asian ethnic groups. This is the opposite of what has been seen in previous years, when the death rates were lower in Asian and Black ethnic groups than for White ethnic groups.

Disparities in risks and outcomes - Ideas

- The PHE review does not contain recommendations but other organisations have suggested what could help respond to the disparities.
- Some examples taken from two events attended by Hackney officers are included in the remaining slides
- Suggestions include:
 - Adequate income protection for people in low paid occupations and insecure work to reduce the need to risk their health (e.g. sick pay)
 - Reduce occupational risk with adequate PPE and clear guidance and enforcement of workplace safety
 - Reduce barriers in accessing healthcare for at-risk groups including migrants (e.g. remove NHS charges)
 - Targeted public health communications which are culturally and linguistically appropriate and reach at-risk groups

Insights from Hackney Refugee Forum



- GP waiting times getting longer for Connecting GPs and making appointments. Sessions not long enough to explain health problems properly, disadvantaged by lack of language skills.
- Mental health problems getting worse. Migrant families living in overcrowded places and experiencing isolation and anxiety.
- Homelessness is becoming worse, some East Europeans have no recourse to public funds
- Lack of information about testing.
- People reluctant to go hospitals even their conditions are serious/they have been infected, distrust of health services in some communities.
- Advisers of Migrant organisations facing difficulties completing benefit forms (often complicated). Using telephone is costly and can be difficult to navigate
- Concerns about non-emergency housing repairs.
- Lack of internet access or using computers and not having computer. Particularly affects older people who are struggling to access online services.
- Additional help/coordination needed for organisations supporting infected individuals who can't shop. Some organisations are trying to help them with their own capacity by organising their own food banks and water delivery at their doors. Maybe small grants for

Insights from Hackney Refugee and Migrants Forum

- Migrant groups for better signposting, basic advocacy even simple advice.
- Challenges with home schooling (lack of digital access, unfamiliarity with UK education system, language barriers) and need for more support for parents. Some organisations who have offered support to BAMER families have struggled to get schools to identify and refer families.
- Especially women living in houses of multiple occupancy find it difficult to find a safe, confidential space to access virtual services or join remote meetings. Particularly worrying given the increase in domestic violence
- Difficulty maintaining social distance/ proper hygiene measures in houses of multiple occupancy.
- People struggling to meet funeral costs, especially where families have lost multiple family members.
- Risk to community cohesion in Hackney as people become more isolated and interact only with their own communities. Increasing incidents of racist abuse/threats to some communities. This needs to be addressed in longer term covid recovery plans.
- Crisis has exposed underlying inequalities affecting BAMER communities. We cannot return to the previous status quo and covid recovery plans need to include addressing these inequalities and building back better support systems and services.
- Important role in this crisis played by small community organisations with limited budgets. Investment is needed to help them continue to function and support people most at risk who may not access other services.

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Pan-London insights - Race

- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities disproportionately affected by austerity pre-Covid, more likely to be in high risk, insecure employment
- Approaches based on diversity and unconscious bias ignored structural racism, Equality Impact Assessments often a tick box exercise
- Hidden impact on children with Sickle Cell, children of frontline workers, Gypsy and Travellers sites often lack facilities to shield against Covid
- Impact on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic-led voluntary and community organisations - 90% could be forced to close, 87% of those are micro-organisations (less than £10k annual income), many have adopted new ways of working, but need support, for some crisis management has become the new normal

Faith communities - Immediate impacts

- Cultural practices mean that the use of the internet and other forms of digital communication are prohibited. This could leave faith communities (e.g. Orthodox Jewish) without the most up-to-date public health information increasing the risk of contracting coronavirus.
 - Response: Mailshots have been sent to every household as well as communication in OJ media.
- Some faith communities may be more influenced by religious leaders than government advice. There is therefore a possibility that any inaccurate or misleading information puts this group at an increased risk.
 - Response: Conversations with community leaders ongoing in order to make sure the most up-to-date accurate information reaches communities. Enforcement of public health guidance is being carried out by community enforcement in the Stamford Hill area. Guidance developed in partnership with the Muslim community during Ramadan.

Faith communities - Immediate impacts



- Food availability may become a challenge for this group because of the limits on what may be eaten and preparation methods limiting supply (e.g. kosher and halal, particularly during religious festivals)
 - Response: The Orthodox Jewish community has responded by distributing hot meals. The group has also joined Hackney Food Justice Alliance. However, they have reached capacity and the Council is exploring ways to help scale up food parcel delivery to meet the demand.

Faith communities - Immediate impacts

- Closure of schools will create considerable childcare pressures at home for faith communities. For example, Orthodox Jewish families can be large and have multiple young children (under-10) in the household. This will create serious strain and leave parents (typically mothers) with many competing responsibilities and children may not be able to receive the care and support they need.
- Faith communities are more likely to experience overcrowding. Staying at home will put pressure on all family members and may result in distress and conflict. Overcrowding will also contribute to the likelihood of coronavirus affecting the entire household and makes self-isolation/shielding particularly difficult.

Faith communities - Immediate impacts

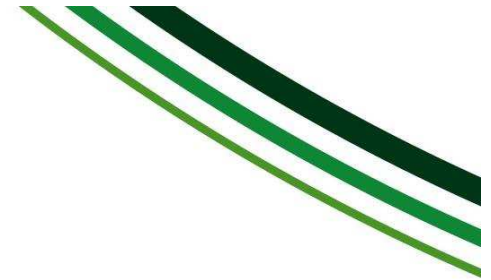
- The prohibition of using the internet (i.e. Orthodox Jewish) will make some elements of homeschooling more difficult.
- Closure of places of worship will have a particularly large impact on this group. It will prevent regular forms of worship, affect education and reduce other forms of social support.
- Some faith communities (e.g. Orthodox Jewish) rely more heavily on non-statutory community organisations who are facing financial pressure
- New legislation gives local authorities responsibilities for directing funerals and burial. It allows for cremations, which are not allowed for some religions, but any decision must 'have regard to the desirability' of any decision.

Community impact - Orthodox Jewish



- A food hub has been set up in the North East of the borough to serve the needs of the Orthodox Jewish community. Working on this project has led to the following community insights.
 - Low use of the internet and TV news limits the influence of key public health messaging for this community
 - There has been some concern about how this community are expected to use any tracing app that is recommended by government
 - Most children and young people attend Independent Schools and therefore are not eligible for free school meals. The replacement meals scheme or vouchers excludes these children.

Community impact - Orthodox Jewish



- Community insights:
 - As expected, larger families amongst this group and associated overcrowding is putting strain on families. This is particularly the case where there is a child in the family with a disability or special needs.
- A group is being set up chaired by Director of Communications to engage with different Orthodox Community groups.
- A helpline for Orthodox Jewish communities has been created to provide culturally specific support during the pandemic.

Pan-London insights - LGBT

- Consortium reports increase in isolation, LGBT people not feeling safe where they live - increased 'at home' hate crime, unable to access medication, health concerns (66% of LGBT people surveyed by the LGBT Foundation said they would rather receive support from an LGBT specialist organisation)
- For LGBT community organisations - 47% said they had experienced an immediate negative financial impact from Covid 19, 20% predict they will close in the next 1-6 months, 40% have lost volunteers, half have seen an increase in demand but forced to reduce services
- 70% of 'Consortium'; members are micro groups

Sex workers

- In 2019 Home Office research found while it is not possible to accurately estimate the prevalence of sex work in England ‘a substantial proportion of individuals (mainly women and trans women) sell sex to get by financially’. The stigma of their work makes them additionally vulnerable.
- The COVID-19 outbreak could exacerbate this by reducing their income and potentially encouraging more risky behaviour
- The English Collective of Prostitutes (ECP) report abuse of outdoor workers from members of the public
- The charity Streetlight has reported an increase in suicide attempts among women. “For drugs users in prostitution it has tipped some over the edge because they ... cannot get access to drugs,”
- Beyond the Streets wrote to the Government asking for an end to Police enforcement and benefit sanctions plus additional funding for services.



Prisoners

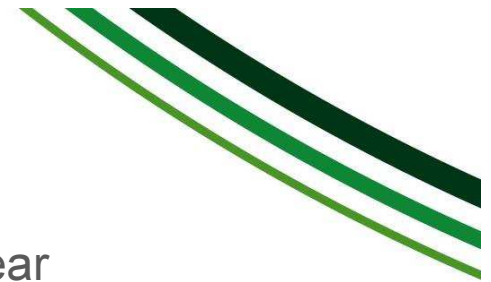
- Ministry of Justice announced some prisoners will be eligible for early release
- Only those assessed as low or medium risk of serious harm with less than two months of custodial sentence considered.
- Individuals who have committed a serious violent or sexual offence won't be considered.
- Anyone displaying COVID-19 symptoms, or who was convicted for a COVID-19 related offence will not be released early.
- Those without accommodation or with unmet health needs will not be in scope for early release.

Housing

- Increase in requests for advice, has not yet translated into significant increase in homelessness applications
- Higher proportions of single people seeking advice than usual
- The Greenhouse, which works with single homeless people with multiple needs has seen a doubling of approaches
- Increase in approaches from those who were previously informal tenants - those living with friends, in squats or short-term temporary accommodation withdrawn because of social distancing needs
- Number of new rough sleepers has increased tenfold (currently 10 per day)
- Shortage of self contained stock, support workers and clinical staff - Covid 19 has exposed a lack of infrastructure compounded by lack of testing and need for self-isolation of symptomatic clients, VCS organisations also under pressure. Some will require long-term support.



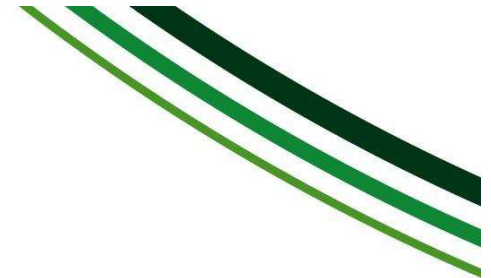
Housing



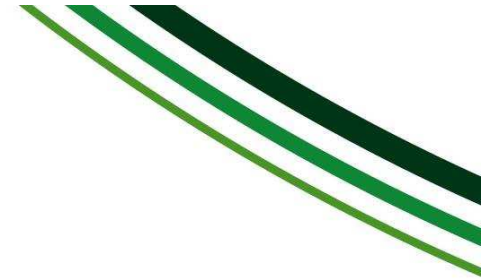
- Impact on Private Rented Sector in early stages, not yet clear
- Local Housing Allowance increased but no increase in the benefit cap
- Workless households face additional costs like food, fuel
 - In response the Council is spending £7,200 per day supporting homeless people. It is lobbying Government for necessary for additional funding and regulatory changes.
- Concern that increased demand for sanctuary will place additional pressure on refuges and homeless hostels, those with shared kitchens/bathrooms face challenges when self isolating
- Private tenants will not be able to access Housing Plus services which include community outreach, resident associations, and help with rent arrears.

Housing - longer term considerations

- Concern that increased LHA rate may become the market base
- Hope that smaller landlords will start to accept claimants
- Reports some tenants have stopped paying rent - concern this may lead to increase in evictions longer term
- Concern about problem debt if people use credit cards or expensive loans to cover arrears
- Concern that some affected landlords/tenants may not be known to the benefits system
- Hopes that more landlords may lease properties to the Council as confidence in market shaken by recent events



Housing - Longer term considerations



- Restrictions on construction during lockdown may impact the number of new build-completions
- Additional financial pressure on Hackney Housing and RSL's as tenants forced to take a rental holiday
- Restrictions on moves during lockdown and additional demand for social housing likely to impact the number of voids, which in turn will place upward pressure on the housing waiting list
- If the economic downturn persists landlords could be forced to reduce rents, homeowners and landlords may face repossession
- Fall in demand for housing could lead to fall in house prices - may impact some regeneration schemes

Housing - Further considerations

- What are our own communications with tenants and what do we know about how RSLs are communicating and supporting their tenants?
- Beyond the current three-month period what plans are there for supporting residents who may continue to struggle to pay their rent and/or be in greater debt from the March-June period?
- For rent arrears post-Covid-19 will the Council/RSLs take a different approach to debt collection? There have been calls at a national level for some private debt to be written off but how would the Council manage with this loss to revenue?
- Some families use laundrettes for washing clothes, what support or advice is on offer to these families?

Food access

- Some people who are medically Shielded and some who are isolated cannot afford food. Others can afford food but are unable to leave the house.
 - Response: Established a borough-wide and neighbourhood based network to deliver free or subsidised food parcels
 - Established a helpline, referral hub and network of volunteers
 - Working with food banks, community kitchens and Mutual Aid groups to meet wider food needs
 - Working with the Orthodox Jewish and Muslim communities in particular to ensure adequate supply of culturally appropriate food

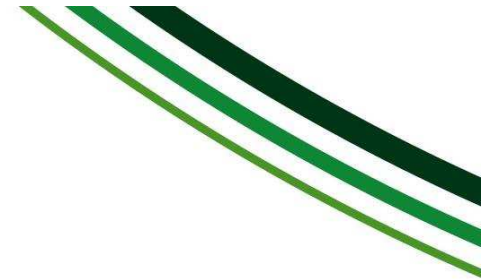


Businesses - immediate

- Loss of income
- Staff shortages
- Difficulties implementing social distancing
- Overheads, specifically rent, continue to accrue
- HMRC support for self-employed not due till June

Gaps in government support reported by businesses in Hackney:

- Especially for businesses in arts, entertainment and recreation
- Supply chain for shops, pubs and restaurants etc. gets no specific financial support
- Workspace providers and their tenants missing rate relief or grants
- Self employed limited company directors don't get income support. If working from home no rate relief or grants either
- Rate threshold for grants/rate relief not adjusted for London property values
- Support for startups only for those who already have £250,000 in venture capital - will exclude newer firms/those without access to funding



Business - Council response and longer term

Council response:

- advice via Hackney Business Network & Council website
- 3 month rent deferral for Council's commercial tenants
- letter to Chancellor re gaps in support for Hackney businesses (see slide above)
- monitoring impacts on local businesses via survey
- repurposing funding for Creative Enterprise Zone

Longer term

- Business closures damaging employment and growth - possibly blight in deprived neighbourhoods
- Closures risk knock-on impact on local businesses
- Locally concentrated unemployment could also lead to local knock-on impacts
- Some business owners personally liable for company debt
- Childcare providers vulnerable to closure due to loss of fees

Universal Credit - Changes

- Changes to Universal Credit award include: Increase in working tax credits by £20 a week (£1040 pa), revised Local Housing Allowance to cover at least 30% of the local rental market, and an end to the minimum income floor for self-employed people.
- Changes to claiming Universal Credit: Wherever possible claims are now made online and supported by telephone. Face-to-face meetings at Job Centres are suspended (excluding urgent need). Claimants agree to search for work where appropriate but no sanctions are being issued at present.
- The 5 week delay before a first payment remains in place. Claimants who need money immediately are offered an advance payment which is paid back in the longer term (repayments can be deferred for three months)

Universal Credit - Local response

- **Hackney JCP:** Between 13 March and 12 April 2020 Hackney Jobcentre Plus had 4442 new UC claims. By 12 April 2020 it had 13356 UC claims. Previously it had around 200 new claims a week and this is now 1000 claims a week.
- **Hoxton JCP:** Between 13 March and 12 April 2020, Hoxton JCP 3613 new UC claims. By 12 April 2020, Hoxton JCP had 10290 UC claims.
- Hackney has worked through the initial surge and backlog and is around the 90% target for timely payments
- DWP has responded to the increase in demand through recruitment and redeployment of staff

Universal Credit - Ongoing issues

- Some residents, who may not have claimed benefits before, are unsure how to get help and arriving through complicated routes
- Support is needed for existing claimants moving from face-to-face to online/phone based system
- Some residents think that they can access a rent holiday for three months and do not understand that these payments will need to be paid back
- Some residents will struggle to make a claim online even with telephone support
- Wider support needs may be going unaddressed (e.g. money management)
- Closure of JCP office to all non-emergency business limits contact with claimants with complex needs: substance misuse, domestic abuse and mental health conditions

Universal Credit - Response

- Hackney Council is developing its communications for: raising awareness of UC, helping people claim UC, and the need to continue paying rent/bills if able to
- Hackney Council is making contact with all residents who have not paid rent. Around 2500 households have not paid rent in the past month. Normally there are about 70-90 cases a week but this is now 600
- Hackney Council is developing a process for cash payers to move to digital payments (this mainly affects older residents)
- Meeting between DWP and LBH Client Financial Affairs Team to resolve issues relating to Corporate Appointees
- UC Partnership meeting is moving to biweekly meetings

Universal Credit - Considerations

- DWP staff have responded to the crisis and should be congratulated for maintaining a timely response to new claims. In the medium to longer term DWP will require additional resources to meet the needs of claimants. For example, to respond to reassessment and change in circumstances.
- Changes to making a claim need to be maintained or introduced only when necessary and with adequate resource in order for the system to cope (if at all)
- Digital access and support to claim and maintain a claim remains a priority
- Other services are anticipated an increase in demand i.e. Financial Inclusion
- Further reform to improve UC could include: changes to the savings limit, extending the repayment period and removing it for the pandemic

Digital exclusion

- This has come up repeatedly in our discussions with the community
- Groups particularly impacted at this time appear to be:
 - Older or disabled people who need to access food and other immediate support
 - Children and young people needing to undertake school work, socialise or access support services
 - Those who need to claim benefits or update their records with the DWP
 - Groups who do not use the internet for religious reasons, particularly the Orthodox Jewish community
- Specific problems cited are:
 - No internet access at all
 - No access to devices like PC's or tablets needed to transact online
 - Insufficient number of devices in the household e.g. for children to do schoolwork



Digital exclusion

- Ongoing concerns about health inequalities resulting from over-reliance on apps to track and test
- In 2019 the Hackney Residents Survey found that;
- 89% of Hackney residents now have access to the internet
- 80% of respondents said they were confident using the internet.
- Disability, ethnicity, English as an additional language, benefits and social tenure were key factors in digital exclusion
- 68% have access to mobiles, 65% to PCs and 25% to tablets.
 - 14% said they use computers at school, the library or internet cafe.

In response the Council is proposing to bring colleagues and VCS partners together in mid-May to design a package of support aimed at addressing issues like lack of broadband access, lack of access to hardware, digital skills and increasing motivation to use services online.

Voluntary and community sector

- VCS organisations are able to furlough staff, however, for many this is a difficult decision to make as needs for service-users increase.
- VCS organisations directly responding to Covid-19 are concerned they may not be able to provide support due to lack of funding.
- VCS organisations not directly providing support concerned they may face closure as resources are directed elsewhere.
- Concerns about access to PPE
 - Response: Raising awareness of an emergency fundraising appeal through Hackney Giving, Working with other London funders and providing additional funding to those providing Covid 19 related services (e.g. hot meals) and lobbying the Government for additional support

Council workforce

- Some staff (e.g. care workers, cleaners) are at higher risk of contracting Covid-19 and require adequate protection to do their job safely.
- Some staff will be under considerable stress in their role. For those with direct experience of the illness and working with those affected this could be traumatic.
- Some staff will suffer family illness and bereavement
- Some staff may be negatively impacted by lockdown (e.g. experiencing higher levels of stress, anxiety, frustration, loneliness or isolation)





Council workforce

- Lockdown may adversely affect morale and cohesion within some teams, work may be needed to repair trust and relationships in the longer term
- There may be worry amongst some staff about the risk of service being cut and redundancies in the longer term
- The Council's Pension Fund has been adversely affected by the downturn in the stock market. Staff pensions will be adversely affected if there is a prolonged economic downturn

Covid deaths by Occupation - ONS

On 11 May the ONS published a study of working age deaths from Covid 19 to 20 April by occupation.

- 2,494 deaths involving Covid-19 in the working age population (aged 20 to 64 years) of England and Wales:
- Nearly two-thirds (64.6 per cent) were male, 1,612 deaths, 9.9 deaths per 100,000 males compared with 5.2 deaths per 100,000 working aged females.
- Men working in lowest skilled occupations had the highest death rate involving Covid-19, with 21.4 deaths per 100,000 males (225 deaths); male security guards among highest with 45.7 deaths per 100,000 (63 deaths).
- Men and women in social care, including care workers and home carers, had significantly raised death rates involving Covid-19, 23.4 deaths per 100,000 males (45 deaths) and 9.6 deaths per 100,000 females (86 deaths).
- Healthcare workers, including doctors and nurses, were not found to have higher death rates from Covid-19
- Other occupations with higher male death rates involving Covid-19: taxi drivers and chauffeurs (36.4 deaths per 100,000); bus and coach drivers (26.4 deaths per 100,000); chefs (35.9 deaths per 100,000); and sales and retail assistants (19.8 deaths per 100,000).

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- Beyond the Streets wrote to the Government asking for an end to Police enforcement and benefit sanctions plus additional funding for services.
 - The Council continues to fund Open Doors, a specialist support service for sex workers, which has adapted its ways of working to the current situation.



Social isolation

- For people with substance misuse problems and those living with them (particularly those not known to social services) social isolation might worsen this situation. There is risk of withdrawal, relapse or domestic and financial abuse. In the medium-longer term this could lead to higher levels of dependency, deterioration in health and relationship breakdown.
- For people with mental health issues (especially those not known to social services) social isolation might make the problem worse. In the medium-longer term this could lead to a person developing a more acute and chronic mental health condition.
- There could be an increase in harmful cultural and religious practices arising from reduced surveillance

Physical Activity

- How can physical activity be used to help the impact of Covid 19 and what needs to be considered. For instance, identification of suitable community provision to engage and encourage physical activity (in and out of lockdown)
- Being inventive to reach the community e.g. online classes or exercise dvds to your home
- Helping to prevent health and wellbeing issues which will in turn reduce visits to GP/hospital
- Being aware of the benefits that physical activity brings e.g. helping to reduce risk of chronic conditions, mental health episodes, musculoskeletal conditions, weight management problems and social isolation.
- In response the Council is encouraging physical activity by keeping parks open for longer, and lining residents into home-based exercise activities



Access to parks and open spaces - ONS

On 14 May the ONS published analysis of access to green spaces - including parks and private gardens. They found that:

One in eight households (12%) in Great Britain has no access to a private or shared garden. This rises to more than one in five households in London (21%), the highest of all regions. In England, Black people are nearly four times less likely than White people to have no access to any private outdoor space including balconies or patios (37% compared with 10%), according to Natural England survey data.

Even when we compare people of similar age, social grade and living situation (similar area, with or without children), those of Black ethnicity are 2.4 times less likely than White to have a private garden.

Access to public parks is more evenly distributed, with people from minority ethnic groups almost as likely as White people to say their local greenspaces are “within easy walking distance” (86% compared with 88%).

The briefing contains data on proportion of households without private open space by ward and access to parks by postcode.

Community cohesion

- Risk of loss of trust in the Council if residents feel the response is not targeted at those most in need but those best able to seek help.
- Risk of damage to Council reputation if everyday services (e.g. waste collection, street cleaning and pest control) are not maintained to a minimum standard.
- Risk of noise nuisance and ASB, particularly on estates, leading to community tension.
- There is risk of prejudice (possible hate crimes) against certain groups wrongly blamed for Covid-19 (e.g. SE Asian communities)
- Some faith groups (e.g. Evangelical Churches) have continued to meet and had to be dispersed. This needs to be done sensitively and could create a challenge for enforcement



Community cohesion

- Cancellation of large events like Carnival undermines general feeling of togetherness. This is also true of family fun days and play schemes which often take place over the summer months.
- Regular volunteering opportunities may have been interrupted or stopped.
- Voluntary and community sector organisations have raised concern about paying staff.
- Voluntary sector organisations close due to lack of funding
- Any early release of prisoners may lead to community tension

Community cohesion - Conversations



- Ongoing series of neighbourhood conversations across the borough with LBH, local NHS and Volunteer Centre Hackney and VCS organisations
- Conversations to answer questions and hear from community groups what the issues are, how they are coping and how we can work together
- Conversations WC 20.4 in Shoreditch and Hackney Downs: focus on food and medical needs and linking vulnerable families/individuals to wider support (e.g. befriending)
- Conversations WC 27.4 in Springfield and London Fields
- Other issues raised: support for families in TA, resources for people living with dementia and learning disabilities, home schooling and overcoming stigma of asking for help

Community cohesion - Conversations



- Other issues raised include: digital divide, cultural divide (including language and translation services), safeguarding (e.g. protection against scams and abuse) and signposting to up-to-date and accurate information especially for families with children.
- Longer term issues identified: long term if not permanent health impact on older residents and the need for a strong VCS sector to support recovery when many may fail by this point
- The Communications team have set up a resident survey to hear from residents about how they are coping with the pandemic, impact on employment and finances and views on how the council is responding

Community Cohesion - Conversations



- Increase in demand for different kinds of support such as befriending, practical help, mental health and bereavement support. An expanded offer of befriending is much needed and understanding the effects of trauma for staff and residents.
- Longer term there are worries about people not accessing preventative care and accessing health services as well as addressing fears relating to threat of contracting Covid-19. The Council is developing plans for this.
- As we move to the next phase, we need to sustain and co-ordinate a bigger picture of change and building on the opportunities of positive change that could emerge. This includes mutual aid groups continuing in the longer term as a form of social support.

Community Cohesion - Conversations

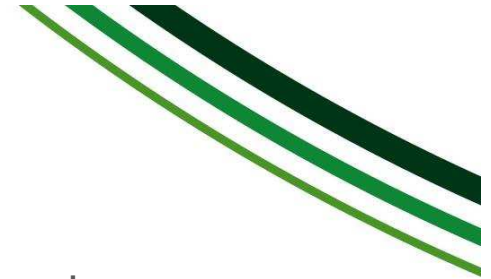


- How can the Council and partners support easier signposting? Particularly for families with children?
- Hackney Volunteer Centre is developing its befriending offer already. How can we support this and other forms of social support for residents?
- What is the specific offer for bereaved friends and family? Are these culturally appropriate and accessible for different communities?
- Do people know what non-emergency health services they can access?
- The Council and partners are already considering this but as we anticipate some changes to lockdown how do we communicate this to residents and shift from the current messaging?
- How do we create together new opportunities for groups that emerged in the immediate response to continue in the longer term?

Community cohesion - Conversations (21 June update)

- Following on from last week's focus on the digital divide, there is concern that COVID-19 testing requires digital booking which excludes those who are most marginalised.
- There is a desire amongst some households receiving food parcels to move to a different form of food supply. The Council is developing its plans for changes to this service while ensuring residents receive sufficient food supplies.

Community cohesion - Conversations



- Non-urgent health conditions (excluding covid-19) which have been postponed by the health service or have not been raised by residents are becoming more serious and some have resulted in the need for urgent care. We have approached the CCG for more information about plans for health and care services.
- There are moves within the voluntary sector to move from looking at transactional styles of volunteering to more asset based community volunteering where every resident shares their skills, experience and expertise.

Things to watch - Medium and Long term

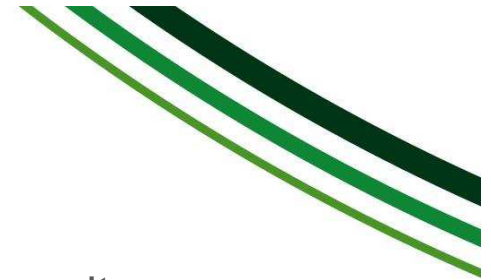
- Lower levels of development and educational attainment for children and young people (particularly for younger children)
- High levels of debt and arrears with long term financial consequences
- Longer term and more complex social care needs for older residents
- Young people lose motivation for carrying on with education and training and at risk of negative influence (e.g. gangs, exploitation)
- A rise in unemployment will lead to more demand for employment support
- Businesses pause or stop activity leading to longer term unemployment
- Effects of trauma on individuals and families (especially the bereaved) having a lasting effect on people and leading to more demand on services

Some additional considerations

- What information and advice do we have for people struggling with private debt?
- Could we use our existing relationships to promote take up of more affordable credit for those who need it (e.g. Community Credit Union)?
- How are we helping protect residents from scams?
- What support is there for bereaved families?
- Beyond communication about social distancing and use of open spaces what messages do we have about how we support one another through the crisis?
- Is there a way for the borough to celebrate what residents are doing to help one another and the work of grassroot organisations?

Building on the positives

- How do we help support the work of the voluntary and community groups which have responded to the crisis?
- How do we maintain and support relationships between businesses and voluntary organisations?
- How do we learn from the immediate response and wider community engagement about what matters to residents?
- How do we help maintain positive changes in behaviour? (e.g. daily exercise, car free streets, volunteering, donations, cycling, and community networks)
- How do we continue to work in partnership with other Statutory services, businesses and VCS organisations to respond to shared problems?



How we support recovery



- What can we do to prevent long term damage to some groups (e.g. additional educational support for children in low income families, risk of more serious violence, especially when restrictions are lifted)?
- Which groups do we need to prioritise help to recover/get back on track? (e.g. young people joining the labour market)
- How do we manage the transition in how services operate as the situation develops? This is especially the case for particular sources of support that depend on emergency council services, public donations, networks of volunteers.
- What failures or weaknesses in policy has the crisis taught us (e.g. welfare system) and how do we avoid these returning?

Written evidence submitted by the London Borough of Hackney (MRS0450)

1. About Hackney and Hackney Council

1.1 While Covid-19 does not discriminate in its infection of people, the impact of the crisis appears to, so we welcome the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry.

1.2 We share the concerns raised locally and nationally about the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on certain communities. For this reason, we have called on the Equality and Human Rights Commission to review the Government's coronavirus response and the impact of their actions on individuals with protected characteristics, as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

1.3 Hackney is a mix of different communities. According to the 2011 Census:

- Around 40% of the population come from Black and Minority Ethnic groups and over 89 languages are spoken in the Borough.
- Hackney is home to one of the largest groups of Charedi Jewish people in Europe, representing 7% of the borough's overall population, and also a large muslim community.
- 14.6% of Hackney's population reported they were disabled or they experienced long-term limiting illnesses.
- Hackney is a young borough, with 25% of its population under 20 and a further 23% aged between 20-29 years. People aged over 55 make up 18% of the population.

1.4 Equality of opportunity and improving life chances are at the heart of what we do. 'Tackling Inequality' has been the first priority. It is central to our Community Strategy¹, Single Equality Scheme² and all of our work.

1.5 We know that there is a clear link between inequalities for many people with a protected characteristic and economic deprivation. In London, poverty is largely driven by markets and austerity - unaffordable housing, the cost of living, the hollowing out of the labour market, and national changes to welfare and social support systems. In Hackney, one in three households are in poverty after housing costs and nearly half of children live in poverty.

2. How people have been affected by Covid-19 or the response to it

2.1 We are aware from our own work to support local residents through lockdown, as well as statistics recently published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), that people who were already at greater risk of poverty and of growing inequalities are more likely to be exposed to the virus and its after-effects and by the economic impacts of this pandemic. They will be under greater pressure as a result of social isolation and are marginalised by some of the new ways essential services are delivered. Thinking about their health needs during the stage of the crisis will be vital.

2.2 We are committed to continually appraising our responses to check it is targeted and does not further entrench inequality. We know we need to set up the right medium-term support for those already affected by Covid-19, to prevent further disadvantage.

2.3 Deaths in Hackney

2.4 As of April 28, local death records show that almost 70% of all deaths registered in City and Hackney were people born outside the UK and 58% of deaths were people employed in routine and manual occupations. Of these deaths, 52% were men, 48% women and two thirds were people aged 70+. This indicator appears to show that people from ethnic minority backgrounds, older people and those from a lower socio-economic background are disproportionately affected by the epidemic.

2.5 Employment and economy

2.6 In Hackney the employment rate for residents from ethnic minority backgrounds is lower than for white residents and black male graduates are nearly twice as likely to be unemployed as their white counterparts. The employment rate for disabled residents is around 40% lower than for non disabled residents, and women between 24 - 49 years have a lower employment rate and a higher unemployment rate than men.

2.7 Our Inclusive Economy Strategy³ aims to enable local neighbourhoods to thrive, support local businesses and connect residents to high-skilled, quality employment opportunities. Despite the interventions we are making as a local authority to try and mitigate against this, the Covid-19 outbreak jeopardises these aspirations.

2.8 There are gaps in Government support to businesses. Workspace providers do not qualify for rates relief; those supplying restaurants and pubs do not qualify for financial assistance; self-employed people working out of limited companies with income from dividends do not qualify. The threshold for rate relief does not account for London property values. Government support for self employed people will not arrive until June.

2.9 In the longer term business closures will lead to a loss of employment for local people. Large-scale businesses closures in poorer neighbourhoods may lead to blight.

2.10 In Hackney, claims for Universal Credit increased by 4,000 from mid-March to mid-April, an increase of 60%. Some digitally excluded residents have been unable to contact Jobcentre Plus online or by phone and fear losing benefits.

2.11 We welcome the additional £20/week Universal Credit uplift and the increase in LHA rates back to the 30th percentile. However, in a high rent area like Hackney, many households will not benefit from these changes, as in households where no one is working claims will exceed the Benefit Cap.

2.12 Many new claimants have never applied for benefits and are unfamiliar with the system. We agree with the Resolution Foundation⁴ that the availability of Universal Credit as a safety net should be widely publicised. We are concerned that those with as little as £6,000 savings

still receive reduced payments and those with over £16,000 savings will not qualify. Messaging around rent holidays needs to be clearer as some are not aware they will have to pay eventually.

2.13 We welcome that claimants can take an advanced payment rather than waiting five weeks, but are concerned this will be taken from future payments when they are potentially meeting other debts.

2.14 Longer term, as claimants are reassessed and conditionality rules start to be reapplied some may no longer be eligible for Universal Credit. We urge the Government to take this opportunity to provide the DWP with the long-term funding needed to speed up the claims process, and dispense with some of the conditionalities associated with Universal Credit, for example, the need to attend regular meetings at the Jobcentre or permanently abolishing the Minimum Income Floor for self employed people.

2.15 *Financial strain on the voluntary sector*

2.16 We commend the work of the voluntary sector, which has been at the frontline of the response, offering crucial support for residents and underpinning plans to support the most vulnerable.

2.17 Diverse, densely populated urban communities like Hackney with high socioeconomic deprivation need strong voluntary and community sectors. There is a need to ensure that all organisations, including smaller charities providing tailored support to communities with protected characteristics, like organisations providing services to specific ethnic groups, disability organisations and LGBTIQ organisations have adequate funding. That support needs to go beyond the immediate “crisis response” and recognise the vital role of the voluntary sector in addressing the broader direct and indirect impacts of coronavirus.

2.18 The results of one national survey⁵ reveals that 9 out of 10 ethnic minority-led micro and small organisations are set to close if the crisis continues beyond 3 months following the lockdown

2.19 On 18 March 2020, Hackney CVS issued a survey seeking to capture the impact of Covid-19 on local voluntary sector organisations. Fifty organisations responded. In addition, Hackney CVS reached out to nearly 100 more organisations through their networks and online forums.⁶ Almost all respondents noted a loss of funding as one of their top concerns. Some respondents stressed they may end up needing to close their services completely.

2.20 The £750m Government support will not meet the estimated £4bn loss in income by charities over 12 weeks. Some will have to cut back or close.

2.21 *Lockdown / social isolation*

2.22 We know there were people experiencing loneliness and social isolation before the Covid-19 outbreak. We were concerned by the findings of the ONS's May 2020 report into Personal and Economic well-being in Great Britain. ⁷

2.23 *Housing / homelessness*

2.24 Homeless people are among the most vulnerable in our community. The Covid-19 outbreak has amplified this. It is virtually impossible for those in hostels sharing kitchens and bathrooms with others to self isolate. Before the lockdown over 70% of those on our housing waiting list where ethnicity was known were non-white and where gender was known, 64% were women.

2.25 Hackney Council, working with the GLA, has housed over 80 rough sleepers. Some of these are individuals with no recourse to public funds for whom there are limited pathways into lasting accommodation.

2.26 Voids have decreased as house moves are restricted. New-build completions are likely to be down. Housing waiting lists are likely to lengthen.

2.27 Loss of rents as tenants are furloughed, lose their jobs or misunderstand entitlement to rent holidays will increase financial pressure on councils and Registered Housing Providers.

2.28 Over a third of Hackney's households live in Private Rented housing. The full impact of Covid-19 on the Private Rented Sector is not yet known. We are concerned that even with the uplift to Local Housing Allowance, this will not fully cover the cost of rent and that those without savings will fall into arrears and eventually face eviction.

2.29 In a sustained economic downturn rents and house prices could fall, some landlords may face repossession. Home owners may slip into negative equity, or face foreclosure.

2.30 The Private Sector Housing Team is providing advice and support for landlords and tenants. We are lobbying the Government for increased protection for private tenants.

2.31 Councils need support from the Government to plan and meet potentially large increases in demand for temporary accommodation and social housing.

2.32 *Food access*

2.33 Before the Covid-19 outbreak it was evident that a significant number of residents could not afford nutritious food. We have developed a Food Poverty Action Plan⁸ with the Food Justice Alliance.

2.34 The Covid-19 outbreak has worsened the situation. Smaller food-based charities have struggled to secure enough food to scale up their operations. Hackney Council has to date

delivered nearly 5,000 food parcels to residents in addition to those on the Government's shielded list. The Council has also, at times, had difficulty securing sufficient food. We echo the concerns of Professor Tim Lang about the fragility of the food supply chain and hope this will be addressed in the emerging National Food Strategy.

3.35 Around 5,000 Hackney residents are receiving food through the Government's shielding programme. These parcels often do not contain the right mix of produce to create meals. Residents report an absence of culturally specific ingredients, options for people with allergies or medical conditions, vegans and vegetarians.

3. People with protected characteristics

3.1 Older people

3.2 In Hackney 21% of shielded residents are aged 70+, and 53% of residents who are receiving food assistance are aged 60 and over.

3.3 Those infected by Covid-19 may need additional support for some time. We share the concerns of groups like Cancer Research UK⁹ about long-term serious illnesses and excess deaths from other diseases undetected or untreated during this crisis.

3.4 Older people are most likely to be digitally excluded. During this crisis older people risk being unable to tap into formal and informal support now delivered online.

3.5 Children and young people

3.6 We know from our poverty reduction work that households with children are particularly susceptible, especially lone parent households, those with a disabled member, special educational needs, larger households (with more than two children), those with children under five, workless households, ethnic minority households and those where parents have lower levels of educational attainment.

3.7 The current lockdown and school closures will place even more pressure on these families, the bulk of whom live in overcrowded accommodation without direct access to outdoor space. We are concerned about the extra stress on parents going out to work, or those working from home while looking after young children. We have seen a 60% increase **3.8** in referrals to our Domestic Abuse Intervention Services. We are concerned about the wellbeing of children and young people exposed to domestic violence and substance misuse.

3.9 We are anticipating a further increase in referrals as lock down eases and some of the existing barriers to seeking help / leaving the home are lifted.

3.10 With less adult oversight at home, school or in open spaces young people may be at greater risk of grooming and illicit activity. We know from our work on Digital Inclusion¹⁰

that many families are not adequately digitally connected or have insufficient devices to enable their children to effectively engage with educational or social activities online. This is likely to adversely affect their educational prospects.

3.11 The supermarket voucher scheme for families on Free School Meals has faced delays, and there continues to be uncertainty regarding arrangements for the summer holidays. There was a three and a half week delay in extending the eligibility for Free School Meals to include (some) children with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) following the Government's initial announcement.

3.12 There is no other national recognition of the additional needs of children whose families have NRPF who are ineligible for Section 17, or Section 4 Asylum Support. Councils are having to meet these additional costs.

3.13 We echo the concerns of the Sutton Trust¹¹ about the negative impacts of predicted grades on students from ethnic minority, and working class backgrounds. These concerns are echoed by parents and community-led groups due to unconscious bias in the classroom.

3.14 We share the Institute for Fiscal Studies¹² concerns about the long-term scarring effects for young people entering the job market during recession.

3.15 In Hackney we are offering lessons and youth activities online, providing hot meals at schools, engaging with vulnerable young people and providing employment support to college and university leavers. The Government is not fully recognising or addressing the needs of children and young people from socio-economically deprived backgrounds in this crisis.

3.16 *Disability*

3.17 The factors outlined above are compounded for young people with special educational needs and disabilities. We note the extensive objections raised by disabled people, their families and disability organisations to relaxing SEND reform duties from the 2014 Children and Families Act and also the Care Act duties, which loosens the Council's obligations to provide specialist provision alongside personal and respite care. While Hackney continues to **3.18** provide support to disabled people, as for all Councils Covid-19 has placed considerable strain on Hackney's budget. We expect a £19m shortfall in the next three months due to Covid-19 costs exceeding government funding, and we urge the Government to adequately fund Councils to ensure all residents are appropriately supported now and into the future.

3.19 The Government must not absolve itself of the responsibility of providing oversight of the provision of disability services in light of the Special Needs and Disability (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 and their changes to section 42 of the Children and Families Act.

3.20 Changes to the Mental Capacity Act could severely restrict the liberties of people with longer periods of detention and reduced oversight.

3.21 *Marriage and civil partnership*

3.22 March - August 2019 saw nearly 700 marriages and civil partnerships in Hackney. Cancellation of wedding and civil partnership ceremonies will put many couples under financial strain given the average cost of a wedding is now over £15,000.

3.23 *Pregnancy and maternity*

3.24 We share the concerns of organisations like Maternity Action¹³ that women claiming Maternity Benefit (mainly lower paid, and self employed) will be worse off under Universal Credit rules than those claiming Statutory Maternity Pay from their employers, as Maternity Allowance is counted as earned income and deducted from Universal Credit, whereas Statutory Maternity Pay counts as unearned income and is not.

3.25 *Race*

3.26 The Intensive Care National Audit and Research Centre found that 35% of almost 2,000 patients critically ill with Covid-19 in UK hospitals were non-white — nearly triple the 13% proportion in the country's population as a whole.

3.27 In London 44.9% of all NHS trust staff are from black, asian and other minority ethnicity backgrounds, as are 67% of the adult social care workforce in the capital.

3.28 In Hackney, 50% of council staff are from diverse backgrounds, but there is an overrepresentation of black, asian and minority ethnicity staff in the bottom quartile — 63.1% vs 36.9%.

3.29 Locally, we are addressing this issue through our Single Equality Scheme which focuses on workforce diversity and leadership culture to tackle the underlying and systemic issues that might drive these inequalities.

3.30 This suggests that vital key workers responding to the crisis will be more diverse. Ethnic minority staff are on the frontlines of tackling the greatest public health crisis in a generation, while disproportionately making-up those who are critically ill from the virus itself.

3.31 In addition to being more heavily represented in frontline roles, people from ethnic minority backgrounds are more likely to have poorer clinical outcomes where they live in larger, multigenerational households or where they have higher rates of underlying health conditions like diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular disease.

3.32 Workers from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) who become ill, are furloughed or rendered jobless cannot apply for state benefits and are charged to use the NHS. They will be forced to return home, live off savings or go into debt.

3.33 A quarter of Hackney's residents do not have English as a main language. This is particularly true for older residents, who may miss out of key messages.

3.34 Conditions on movement imposed during lockdown concerns all communities but impact some communities more than others. One parent spoke at an online meeting about the risks involved in taking her child to regular medical appointments, using public transport. Another spoke of the stress of moving around the borough to go shopping to buy food for her child with food intolerances. Speaking of communities that have negative experiences of Stop and Search, one Faith partner said:

“African Caribbean men are more reluctant to go out to the shops... due to the fear of being stopped and charged for being out unnecessarily.”

3.35 *Religion or belief*

3.36 We are concerned that during the Covid-19 outbreak some may be at greater risk of harmful religious practices. Some faith or ethnic groups may feel that state interventions aimed at enforcing social distancing were unfairly applied, or that the particular needs of their communities are being overlooked.

3.37 We are working hard to ensure fairness and maintain cordial community relations. However, more resources may be needed to rebuild trust once lockdown ends. At the same time we celebrate the huge voluntary and community effort through Mutual Aid and civil society. We will need time to properly understand the lessons of this crisis so we can harness these excellent relationships and structures to better support vulnerable residents in future.

3.38 The Government Parcels which are being delivered to the Extremely Vulnerable Group do not cater for any dietary requirements or religious restrictions. The onus is placed on local government. The Jewish community in particular has faced challenges providing Kosher food to those shielding or self-isolating.

3.39 We have supported our faith communities by providing grants and fundraising support; worked with Orthodox Jewish leaders to produce and distribute advice in print, as they do not access the internet; funded a group of Orthodox Jewish organisations to establish a helpline and Kosher Food Hub; and worked with the Muslim community to develop guidance for Ramadan and organise weekly Faith Forum meetings online.

3.40 The national response to Covid-19 needs to fully recognise the disproportionate impacts on racial and faith communities and the additional costs of providing a culturally competent response.

3.41 *Sex*

3.42 Women with NRPF are particularly vulnerable during this crisis, especially if they are or become victims of domestic abuse.

3.43 Under existing legislation, there is provision for support for women with NRPF under the Children's Act provided they have children. Before the current crisis, we along with local domestic abuse providers were concerned about increases in victims of domestic abuse with no recourse to public funds without children, for whom no statutory provision is made. Now, the Council has been going beyond the existing legislative frameworks to ensure we provide these women with accommodation but this needs to be funded and supported by the government.

3.44 Like many sectors, the childcare market has been significantly impacted by Covid-19. We are concerned about the disproportionate impact this will have on women, both as workers in this sector and as with regards to their own childcare options.

3.45 *Sexual orientation*

3.46 We are concerned that the social isolation that many Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual people face due to family estrangement and rejection from the wider community may be amplified at this time and that specialist advice and support must be in place, including mental health support. LGBTIQ people are also at higher risk due to health inequalities, the number of young homeless, and also because people avoid treatment for fear of discrimination.

3.47 *Gender reassignment*

3.48 In addition to loneliness and isolation, we are concerned that gender reassignment treatment may be delayed for some as NHS resources are targeted to fighting Covid-19 and that some may be tempted to self-medicate.

4. Recommendations

4.1 We urge your committee to call on the Government to:

4.2 *In the next three weeks:*

4.3 Take a holistic approach to Covid-19: As we have tried to illustrate, the impacts of Covid-19 go way beyond those directly affected by the disease. These needs must be recognised and fully met.

4.4 Recognise that providing a response that effectively meets the needs of diverse, densely populated urban communities with high socioeconomic deprivation costs more than for more

affluent communities. These costs need to be fully met¹⁴ to avoid harmful cuts to frontline services in future.

4.5 Ensure that any future public health response to this crisis does not further entrench health inequalities. This can only be achieved by recognising the differing needs of diverse communities, including language barriers, and addressing the digital divide with regards to contact tracing, especially if there is an over reliance on apps and online reporting.

4.6 Ensure those receiving Government food parcels can access culturally appropriate food and foods that meet religious requirements like Kosher and Halal to reduce the need for people to go out shopping. Government food parcels should also offer options for people with food allergies, medical conditions as well as vegan and vegetarian options and ingredients to cook nutritious meals.

4.7 Extend funding to support the protection from domestic abuse of women with no recourse to public funds to include those not eligible for support under the Children's Act.

4.8 Address gaps in support to businesses and the voluntary and community sector.

4.9 Publicise the availability of Universal Credit as a safety net and the availability of face-to-face services at Jobcentres for those without digital access.

4.10 Delay advance benefit repayments for at least six months.

4.11 Suspend Section 11 of the Coronavirus Act and ensure adequate funding is available to ensure disabled people and those with Mental Health needs receive the support they need.

4.12 Initiate a public information campaign to prevent scams.

4.13 Provide families with assurance that the Free School Meals voucher scheme will continue during the summer holidays to avoid holiday hunger, should the lockdown continue into this period.

4.14 Introduce a fairer and more adequate safety net, for example relaxing some of the conditionality of Universal Credit and the ban on migrants from non-EEA countries claiming benefits.

4.15 *In the next six months*

4.16 The Government should consider long term impacts on low income residents and ensure that the benefits system is adequately resourced to support this.

4.17 Lift the visa cap for migrants working in key sectors.

4.18 Remove the data sharing duty between health and immigration enforcement.

4.19 Correct some of the key factors driving health inequalities such as the housing crisis.

4.20 Value care workers, cleaners and supermarket workers. This is a chance to improve employment conditions, skills and progression routes.

4.21 Build on the numerous positive examples of public, private and community partnerships and Mutual Aid for people on lower incomes.

4.22 Develop a system of flexible, high quality childcare that is properly funded to help parents to take full advantage of a more remote, agile workplace.

May 2020

¹ <https://hackney.gov.uk/community-strategy>

² https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Vg5tLUBj-laVQ7RH0S4oe_cUH7aE8aMq/view

³ <https://hackney.gov.uk/inclusive-economy-strategy>

⁴ <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/no-work-no-pay/>

⁵ <https://www.ubele.org/news/2020/4/30/9-out-of-10-bame-micro-and-small-organisations-set-to-close-if-the-crisis-continues-beyond-3-months-following-the-lockdown>

⁶ https://hcv.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/hackneyvcs_survey_final.pdf

⁷

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/personalandeconomicwellbeingintheuk/latest>

⁸ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JO6KQL9FrUNBwUuaSUXtfmj5cJE1EUs/view>

⁹ <https://scienceblog.cancerresearchuk.org/2020/04/21/how-coronavirus-is-impacting-cancer-services-in-the-uk/>

¹⁰ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_PD1WLcjgVuwpacLx7nE1w3cchBEZ_9R/view

¹¹ <https://www.suttontrust.com/news-opinion/all-news-opinion/grade-calculation/>

¹² <https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/10180>

¹³ <https://maternityaction.org.uk/2020/03/universal-credit-when-is-maternity-pay-not-maternity-pay/>

¹⁴ <https://www.lgcplus.com/finance/hackney-mayor-couldnt-rule-out-s114-without-extra-funding-23-04-2020/>

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<p>Scrutiny Panel</p> <p>23rd July 2020</p> <p>Item 5 – Covid-19, Corporate and Medium Term Financial Update</p>	<p>Item No</p> <p>5</p>
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Outline

The current pandemic (Covid-19) has had a significant impact on the UK, its economy and the daily lives of people. For councils this is likely to have had a direct impact on costs from being in lockdown, on activity planned before the virus outbreak, recovery and the local economy.

This has put huge amounts of pressure on councils finances and had a direct impact on council budgets. To support this the Government has given councils a package of grant funding to help support the additional pressures. Even with this support councils are facing budget deficits that are likely to be impossible to avoid. Ultimately the length of the lockdown will determine the final impact on a council’s financial outcome.

This discussion will look at the financial position of the Council and the affect that Covid-19 is having on the Council’s budget.

The report for this item is dependent on the full knowledge of funding levels and other key information which is in the process of being assimilated and is therefore marked ‘TO FOLLOW’.

Attending for this item will be:

- **Ian Williams**, Group Director Finance and Corporate Resources

Action

The Scrutiny Panel is requested to note the presentation and ask questions.

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Scrutiny Panel 23rd July 2020 Item 6 – Communications and Scrutiny	Item No 6
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OUTLINE

It is important for the function to be open and transparent about its work. One of the key messages scrutiny chairs have taken away from talking to residents is the lack of knowledge about the work of Overview and Scrutiny in the Council.

This discussion will cover the following areas:

- Explore how scrutiny councillors can use different communication channels more effectively like You Tube videos or live streaming.
- The communication strategy or system in place for non-executive Councillors
- Explore how scrutiny councillors can make their work more publicly accessible through the communication channel of public choice.
- Discuss the barriers and challenges that need to be overcome to enable scrutiny councillors to communicate more flexibly with the public.

Attending for this item:

- **Polly Cziok**, Director - Communications, Culture and Engagement

ACTION

Members are asked to give consideration to the response and ask questions.

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Scrutiny Panel 23rd July 2020 Item 7 - Minutes and matters arising	Item No 7
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OUTLINE

Attached are the draft minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Panel held on 13th May 2020.



ACTION

Members are asked to agree the minutes.

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London Borough of Hackney
Scrutiny Panel
Municipal Year 2020/21
Date of Meeting Wednesday, 13th May, 2020

Minutes of the proceedings of
the Scrutiny Panel held at
Hackney Town Hall, Mare
Street, London E8 1EA

Chair	Councillor Margaret Gordon
Councillors in Attendance	Cllr Ben Hayhurst, Cllr Mete Coban, Cllr Sharon Patrick, Cllr Sophie Conway, Cllr Sade Etti, Cllr Polly Billington, Cllr Anna Lynch, Cllr Anthony McMahon, Cllr M Can Ozsen and Cllr Ian Rathbone
Apologies:	Cllr Penny Wrout
Co-optees	
Officers In Attendance	Ajman Ali (Interim Group Director, Neighbourhoods and Housing), Martin Bradford (Overview and Scrutiny Officer), James Goddard (Director, Regeneration), Henry Lewis, David Padfield (Interim Director, Housing Services), Cathal Ryan (Service Manager, Children and Families Service), Tim Shields (Chief Executive), Gilbert Stowe (Divisional Head of Tenancy and Leasehold Services), Timothy Upton, Ian Williams (Group Director of Finance and Resources), Sarah Wright (Director, Children and Young People's Service), Amanda Neuth (Legal Services), Jarlath O'Connell (Overview & Scrutiny Officer), Philippa Lewis (Programme Manager IT) and Mario Kahramann (IT Programme Manager)
Other People in Attendance	Mayor Philip Glanville (Mayor), Councillor Clayeon McKenzie (Cabinet Member for Housing Services), Councillor Sem Moema (Mayoral Adviser Private Renting and Housing Affordability), Councillor Caroline Selman (Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Policy and the Voluntary Sector), Chief Supt Marcus Barnett (Hackney Borough Commander, Metropolitan Police) and Ed Sheridan (Journalist, Hackney Citizen)
Members of the Public	
Officer Contact:	Tracey Anderson  0208 3563312  tracey.anderson@hackney.gov.uk

Councillor Margaret Gordon in the Chair

1 Apologies for Absence

1.1 Apologies for lateness were received from Cllrs Hayhurst and Wrout.

1.2 The Chair stated that this was the first formal meeting of a Hackney Scrutiny Committee which was taking place virtually under the government's new guidance as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic. She read out the guidance for how the meeting would operate and the expectations for behaviour from all participants. She reminded everyone that the meeting was being both recorded and livestreamed via the Council's YouTube channel and that everyone needed to be mindful of this.

2 Urgent Items / Order of Business

2.1 Cllr Gordon stated that the meeting would also be a joint one with Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission and that item 4 related to that Commission's work and would be chaired by Cllr Patrick.

2.2 She welcomed Members of Living in Hackney to the meeting and also all the stakeholders and officers as well as the Mayor and Chief Executive.

3 Declaration of Interest

3.1 Cllr Lynch stated that she was employed by NHSE and NHSI and currently working on the emergency response on Personal Protective Equipment.

3.2 Cllr Gordon stated that she was a solicitor and an advisory lawyer for the government's legal department, advising the Department of Work and Pensions on pensions issues.

4 Living in Hackney on the Impact of Covid-19 in relation to Housing and Domestic Violence

4.1 Cllr Patrick took the Chair and stated that there were two aspects to this item. A briefing on the impact on Domestic Violence support services locally of the Covid 19 lockdown and a briefing from Housing Services providing an overview on how they are supporting residents across council, Registered Provider and Private Rented Sector housing.

4.2 Members' gave consideration to the briefing papers in the agenda pack about the impact of Covid-19 on patterns of domestic abuse within the borough and information about the service responses for DV and ASB/Noise. She welcomed for this item:

Detective Chief Superintendent Matthew Barnett, BCU Commander,
Metropolitan Police Service

Cllr Caroline Selman, Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Policy and the
Voluntary Sector, LBH

Sarah Wright (SW), Director of Children and Families, LBH

Cathal Ryan (CR), Service Manager for the Domestic Abuse Intervention Service, LBH

- 4.2 Cllr Selman thanked the Commission for focusing on these key concerns adding that home was not a safe place for many and increased pressures for those stuck indoors added to existing economic and social pressures. The key focus was to reach victims in need of support and to ensure there was enough resilience to meet demand. As well as the current increase in referrals they were expecting a further increase after the lockdown when more would feel more comfortable to report.
- 4.3 CR stated that there had been a 73% increase in high risk cases in Hackney during April as well as a 60% rise in reporting since 23 March. Demand had been met by redeploying staff. The team chaired fortnightly meetings with the statutory partners and third sector providers of domestic violence support services. The focus was to look at all current barriers to access, to ensure they're aware of difficulties, to ensure adequate risk assessments have been done and that all vulnerabilities in the system are met and ensuring the work between partners is joined up. He described the social media campaign which is now running in various settings. This was a key part of their 4-pronged approach to ensure key messages got out to the public. The messages were: it is safe to leave the home; there is support out there; if you can't leave safely there are ways to reduce risk. They'd also worked to ensure Mutual Aid groups etc were able to identify and properly respond and there was a need to provide a raft of training to partner agencies in the community to ensure that victims were properly identified and supported. He added that there remained sufficient capacity in the Refuge Providers across London and that they were fully staffed. They did however expect a surge as lockdown eased.
- 4.4 MB stated that these were difficult times but that the Met Police's partnership working in the borough had been improved and strengthened. They had not seen any rise in reporting of domestic violence to them however. There had actually been a 10% reduction in cases compared with 23 March to 30 April 2019. There had been a 15% reduction in reporting and a 19% reduction in arrest rates. They were expecting a surge after lockdown and were working hard to increase confidence in reporting. He stressed that there was no reduction in the police service capacity to respond to reporting or enforcement because of Covid 19 and if victims come forward they were in a position to do everything possible to help them seek justice and security.
- 4.5 SW stated that further to CRs update she could report that referrals to Children's Service were up 10% compared with the same period last year. Overall referrals in the service however were down 50% because they normally came via the schools. She echoed MBs comments on the strength of local partnership working. They had also increased capacity in the Domestic Violence service to respond to the increase in demand.
- 4.6 The Members then asked questions of the officers and stakeholders on the domestic violence briefings and the following key points were noted in the responses:
- (a) Chair commented that the rise in reporting to the Council's DV service but not to the Police was significant. She added that she had not seen any of

the posters referred to despite frequently walking around the borough and asked if the information on the council's website could be presented more clearly. She asked how the team was dealing with inter-generational violence and tackling the perception that the service was just for women and children and abuse within couples. She asked if the current large capacity in Refuges was more of a sign of failure than success.

- (b) The Vice Chair asked to whom the updates referred to from the DV Partnership were sent. She asked about whether the DV Protection Orders would still be applied during Covid 19.
- (c) CR replied that posters had been sent to parks, schools, Childrens' Centres, the Homerton Hospital and while there had been a delay in authorisation for them going into pharmacies, this had now taken place and they would be displayed both in the public areas and in the consulting rooms of pharmacies. Regarding the DV service website, he added that at the top of the page they had clearly demarcated a section on Covid 19 and how to contact the service during lockdown. On intergenerational abuse, that was something they dealt with regularly and they got referrals from many sources including older adult children. They worked with both perpetrators and victims and he urged anyone with concerns to contact them. On Refuge capacity MOPAC had made 87 beds available across London via the three support agencies involved and there was still capacity. These can be accessed via the VCS groups. Plans were also being made to cope with an expected surge following lockdown.
- (d) MB stated from 23 March to the date of the meeting 74 DVPOs had been authorised and they were working closely with the CPS and the courts including the specialist DV Court. Even if the court was closed they had procedures to have these issued and nothing in terms of support for DV had waned or stopped.
- (e) SW replied that two cohorts of social workers had been trained as part of the initiative they were running with Waltham Forest Council. The approach, adopted from the US, focused on working with the victim to support her as a mother and not hold her responsible for the partner's behaviour but also working with fathers to hold them responsible for their behaviour as fathers. They were looking closely at online training as part of this ongoing project. The work was being evaluated by Stirling University and the feedback so far had been positive. This represented an important change focused on keeping the children with the non-abusing partner.
- (f) Members asked whether there had been a drop in Emergency Department/A&E attendances due to Covid as it was often the first point of call for many victims of abuse. They also asked about supporting victims of non-physical harm. SW reiterated that if anyone contacted the council or partner agencies they would get support
- (g) The Chair thanked all officers for their briefings and repeated that she looked forward to seeing the posters and that the profile of support for intergenerational abuse be raised within the service so that the public

know whom they can turn to. She particularly thanked the Metropolitan Police for all their work during the lockdown.

- 4.7 Members gave consideration to the report from Housing Services and the Chair welcomed to the meeting:

Cllr Clayeon McKenzie, Cabinet Member for Housing Services
Cllr Sem Moema, Mayoral Advisor Private Renting and Housing Affordability
David Padfield (DP), Director of Housing Services
James Goddard (JG), Interim Director Housing Regeneration
Gilbert Stowe (GS), Housing Officer

Members also gave consideration to a slide presentation from the Cabinet Member.

- 4.8 In his briefing Cllr McKenzie highlighted that both managers and unions had implemented existing business continuity plans but these had not been up to the unprecedented scale of this crisis and so had to be quickly adapted and there had been great cross service co-operation within the Council. Housing Officers had to respond within a service where the bulk of the staff had to work from home and there was a need to adapt policies and procedures, for example, temporary suspension of Section 20 Notices. He also described the Let's Talk Project which was key to supporting many residents and the need for face to face contacts to continue. Emergency Repairs still had to take place and the Voids Team still arranged viewings because of the urgency involved. The Residents Safety Team still had to do fire and safety inspections often with wary residents and the Grounds Maintenance Teams still kept green areas looking their best. Many TMO workers had volunteered to deliver food to those on the Shielding List and he read out some messages of gratitude which the TMO's and tenants had received. He added that many blue-jacket staff had been applauded by residents when delivering essential items and a true Hackney Spirit was in evidence.
- 4.9 DP gave further details on the service. There had to be swift action to check vital services could be sustained. 70% of staff were still available at any one time. They had switched to urgent only repairs service and for a period gas servicing had to be suspended because of the government guidance on entering people's homes. Access to properties had been an issue at times as people were reluctant to even let gas repairs services in. Most of the capital work had also been suspended and they were in talks with contractors about how to re-start. Housing Offices were closed and the frequency of inspections reduced. Court actions and evictions had been suspended. Rent staff made visits to help people with repayments and there was help to older people re their post office payments. Rent arrears had increased by more than £1m and 4000 telephone calls had to be made to the most vulnerable residents including leaseholders. Those requiring shielding were directed to appropriate help and those just outside the guidelines but needing support also were assisted. The Residents Participation Team worked with those who were isolated and depressed. The Voids Team kept their work going and regular communications to residents continued. In relation to ASB there had been a significant increase during April. Normally 260 cases but now 900 cases, a 370% increase during lockdown. Drug use, verbal abuse and intimidation had also increased. The Council was using telephone and warning letters to these residents. They also

urged residents to use the 'good neighbour' app on their phones to record noise disturbance and they worked closely with enforcement and with legal to process the more serious cases. They were also reviewing the 'Good Neighbour Agreement'.

- 4.10 Members asked questions of officers and the following points were noted:
- (a) Members thanked all in Housing Services for their efforts and commented that it had been humbling to see so many re-purpose their skills at this time of crisis. Members asked what financial support the government was making available so that the council could continue to pay contractors for capital works and how the service was ensuring that the investment made in housing stock in the lead-up wasn't jeopardised. DP replied that there was no government assistance for this. They were implementing Cabinet Office guidance. He gave the example of one contractor sitting on a supply of very expensive fire doors which otherwise would have been fitted. They had put in place an order so that those doors belonged to the Council and its asset were protected in case the contractor went bankrupt in the interim.
 - (b) Members asked how residents not on social media were being supported. The Cabinet Member replied that they had extended the shielding list which had revealed a lot of new cases of those who were struggling with feeling alienated and isolated. It had thrown a spotlight on those needing ongoing assistance however and there needed to be a degree of caution as there was a limit to what they could do with finite resources. He provided assurance that these residents would not be forgotten. GS added that there were 400 lonely and isolated tenants that they had identified a key subset of these were phoned on a frequent basis. They were working with Adult Services on this and the VCS so that support could transition smoothly to the voluntary sector where it could continue on a more sustainable basis.
- 4.11 The Chair stated that Housing Services were doing excellent work and asked officers about the support to those in private rented sector.
- 4.12 The Mayoral Advisor (Cllr Moema) stated that the issues she and the Interim Director of Housing Regeneration faced were similar to those outlined earlier. They had welcomed that the Section 21 eviction notices has been paused for two months as this would delay many becoming statutorily homeless. There was also much work going on in signposting. Many in the private rented sector had never experienced applying for Universal Credit before so they had to help them to maintain their tenancies. On another aspect there had been a massive drop off in the numbers coming forward to make complaints as these had often come via councillors surgeries. The challenge was to separate out longstanding issues with those which were Covid-19 related. Another issue raised by an estate agent was around people moving in and out of properties when a short tenancy came to an end. She added that there also needed to be changes in the ways in which Housing Associations were compelled to report and what they had to report. Overall a key issue would be the impact of Covid-19 on short term lets in the borough.
- 4.13 JG added that one of the challenges was around the reporting regime for Housing Associations. They only had to report on 3 metrics (gas, fire, repairs) in the situation reports and, on others, only weekly by exception. They had

asked the main 16 housing associations in the borough a range of questions on voids, repairs, gas repairs, asbestos, ASB and 11 had replied. Generally they had the same kind of issues as council providers such as lack of PPE for staff coming into personal contact. A key focus has been on voids and the need to increase housing supply. The Housing Associations had offered 74 voids (60 coming from the larger ones) and this was a lower figure than normal so they were analysing this data. The focus of the Housing Regeneration team, like others, was changing during the crisis and they were triangulating information received from a number of sources including councillors' case work.

- 4.14 The Chair asked for a brief update on work in Private Rented Sector and the reports of a planned rent strike by residents in Somerford Grove. JB replied that the dispute with the landlord didn't directly affect the council. The key issue went back to government guidance. The Council expected landlords to meet certain minimum standards and the government guidance was often unclear. The Mayoral Adviser added that they had offered assistance to the residents and had been very careful in the advice and support they gave but there had been different interpretations of the situation within that building. While she was sympathetic to the plight of the residents, it would be remiss of the council to encourage anyone to stop paying their rent and it was important that all parties found a way to work through the issues.
- 4.15 On the general issues in the private rented sector JG added that while case work had dropped significantly during lockdown they were expecting to be hit by a wall of complaints once things reopened, for example, on the issue of rough sleepers.
- 4.16 The Chair commented that the concern was about the situation tenants would find themselves in in a few months' time when they might be laid off work. The Mayor Advisor agreed and stated that the situation in the private rented sector was the same as in social housing. New cohorts of people across different industries – porters, cleaners, couriers were being hit. The focus was to help them apply for Universal Credit so that when the furlough assistance was ended by the government Housing Needs might be better prepared to deal with the expected increase in cases.
- 4.17 The Chair stated that they had run out of time but thanked all for their input.

RESOLVED: That the reports be noted.

5 Scrutiny Panel Cabinet Question Time on the Impact of Covid-19

- 5.1 Cllr Gordon took the Chair and explained that a key element of the scrutiny function was to hold the Mayor and Cabinet to account, in public, as part of a Cabinet Question Time Session. The Mayor's question time session was the responsibility of the Scrutiny Panel. The current pandemic (Covid-19) had had a significant impact on the UK, its economy and the daily lives of people, she added. Local authorities had to refocus their support offer to local residents whilst keeping key services operational. Councils also had to ensure their resources were best placed to help with immediate challenges presenting now and in the future. The Mayor and the Chief Executive had been invited to

discuss how the Council was responding to the pandemic, the lessons learnt, strengths, weaknesses and the resilience of the Council and had been asked to address these three particular questions:

1. The Council's preparations and response to the crisis particularly for vulnerable residents.
2. How the Council was working with partners, voluntary sector, local businesses and trade unions.
3. How the Council was reviewing the long term impacts of the pandemic on the borough.

She welcomed to the meeting: Mayor Philip Glanville and Tim Shields, Chief Executive.

- 5.2 The Mayor stated that he echoed the Chair's opening remarks on the economic and human impact on the borough. There had been 200 registered deaths and 142 of them had been Hackney residents. The Council had of course taken part in a pandemic flu exercise previously but it turned out that this was a very different proposition and indeed this was a lot worse. With something like a flu pandemic you preserved the rest of capacity of council to continue but this pandemic was had been all encompassing. He paid tribute to the council staff who had moved to remote working very quickly and to making sure front line services had kept running. Close partnership working with the NHS was critical and the crisis needed a political response not just operational ones, thereby leaving the administration to focus on frontline aspect. A Cabinet Sub Committee on response to Covid-19 had been set up comprising himself, Cllr Selman and Cllr Kennedy and initially it had met daily. It now meets Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Work had to take place to ensure that the governance structures returned promptly and there was also a need think of the impact beyond the immediate health crisis. They knew that shielding and humanitarian aid would be needed and setting up multiple new services to lead on the humanitarian effort was important. They were now moving on to the ongoing work on befriending and on mitigating the impacts of isolation. He had set up fortnightly meetings with the Voluntary Sector and especially HCVS and Volunteer Centre. Weekly meetings had been set up with the Hackney Borough Police and with the CCG as well as weekly meetings with other boroughs via London Councils. This had been important in getting a sense of how the government was coping. They were now on the second set of surveys to gauge the local impacts. It was essential to respond quickly with grants packages for local businesses and 80% of those had been issued already. He also worked with the VCS on how to challenge the government to come up with the right packages of support. There would be a need to look at resilience and befriending and tackling social isolation. There would be a need to respond to expected increases in levels of domestic abuse reporting once lock down had eased and to look also at the longer term impact on young people and to continue to advocate for greater funding. The Council was also working with the GLA in relation to emergency housing for rough sleepers. There would of course be further phases of this crisis and resilience to that needed to be addressed as we moved to the next stage. In terms of what happens next the focus would be on the principle of 'Build Back Better'. The Council's key strategic docs would need to be revised including the Community Strategy and

Sustainability strategies. Young Futures initiative and Ageing Well Strategy would also need revising.

- 5.3 The Chief Executive stated that the pandemic was having a huge impact on the borough, affecting every part of our community as well as the staff. It touched on every aspect of work. There had been a great emergency response over the first few months giving humanitarian assistance and ensuring staff were safe and could deliver services. At the outset the Council had set some key priorities to govern this work: To preserve, life, welfare, property, environment, to protect and assist the most vulnerable and to minimise disruption. To assist the other key local organisations, to monitor and protect the welfare of staff and to facilitate a fast recovery to what will be a 'new normal'. In the first phase the council had provided emergency food to 2000 residents via the Food Hub in Hackney Wick and the helpline that was linked to that. It had distributed millions of pounds of business grants to businesses and ensured that essential services could continue. The calls on Adult Services and Children's Social Care were many and complex and even Refuse Services were affected because collecting refuse from those with Covid was complicated. Great work was done to ensure proper social distancing in parks. The council had to ensure that the children of key workers or those in vulnerable categories could still go to school. He had spoken to staff meetings including some of 700 and 800 workers and this important internal communications work would also have to continue.

In a more normal crisis, such as a flood for example, it would be got through using the relevant business continuity plans and it would be followed by as quick as a possible a return to normal. This was unprecedented however and its effects would go on and there would be as yet unseen impacts. The financial impact alone would be significant and this was set out in stark terms in the recent detailed report to Cabinet. While we had Business Continuity Plans for every service this tested them to the limits, he added. He stated that the government had issued further guidance on the previous Sunday which would have to be examined. He added that the experience taught us a lot about the resilience of staff in working from home and it also meant more needed to be done about supporting their health and wellbeing.

In terms of the community there were specific challenges for the Charedi community for example that had to be addressed. The Council also got involved in a hot food offer to certain vulnerable residents and this was all new in terms of the service offer. The feedback received from the public had been fantastic and he had heard about them in regular check-ins with staff and directly from residents. The work of doing the day job in a crisis by for example gas servicing in housing services or in the parks team or in refuse services was to be commended. Having to pay out nearly £50m in business grants so quickly was a new challenge and it had been met.

The Council's sound financial management had meant that we were doing very well but we are still extremely stretched, he added. The Council was hit by both loss of revenue e.g. commercial waste charges, council tax, business rates etc yet we still had to pay out for many new services during this crisis.

There was much work going on in Public Health on the analysis of what is happening with the spread of the disease. The Council's new technology

system had stood up very well and we had been able to run the business with almost all staff working from home while supporting those who had to go on the frontline.

In terms of the challenges going forward, implementing social distancing would be a huge challenge as the borough opens up more and more. There were challenges on testing and tracking and tracing and in relation to the schools opening up again. We have been working amazingly well with partners especially the health partners and those involved in delivering sustainable transport.

He added that there were constant discussions with central government on funding and on new guidance and with TfL, the GLA and the health sector. There was also a huge amount of work going on with voluntary sector with particular challenges around making sure the government offer via the food hubs included kosher food, on the urgent need for grants for VCS orgs, and on the need to sustain the VCS over the longer term as we begin to climb out of this crisis.

5.4 The Chair thanked the Mayor and Chief Executive for their opening remarks.

5.5 Members asked detailed questions and in the discussion the following points were noted. The Chair began by stating she had 3 key questions:

(i) Regarding the government's announcement many residents were frightened about going back to work and what can we do to reassure them about keeping safe;

(ii) Regarding the government's evolving plans for testing, tracing and tracking of Covid cases and the new App, she stated that she was interested to learn that the Mayor and Cabinet and local MPs had made a very bold offer to test the App locally and asked how they would reassure residents on the data protection and accuracy concerns about the App, which had put its effectiveness into question and also what help would there be for those in the community who don't have smart phones. Also what ability would the private sector have to access the App and its data?

(iii) The crisis had unleashed a great Hackney Spirit and much innovation and increased partnership working and what were the more hopeful signs going forward?

5.6 The Mayor replied that he had stated on the BBC earlier that week that the main challenge for councils was that government announcements were firstly leaked in the press which created great uncertainty and then regulations appeared which have to be applied suddenly. The announcement around green spaces came out on a Sunday with the implication that the regulations would be in place by mid week as the country faced into a holiday weekend and a period of hot weather. He added that they had had weekly meeting with the trade unions and this was not the government's approach. He added that Cllr Bramble was rightly concerned about the mixed messaging around the reopening of schools. Landing information suddenly into the public domain was proving difficult he added. The Council had taken the view that there were construction sites locally that could operate now but an announcement from the Secretary of State on longer hours then came out of nowhere. He stated that

the Council was looking to reconfigure streets and pavements in the borough in line with social distancing requirements to reduce traffic and ease pedestrian and cycle traffic.

On testing he stated that two weeks previously he had written to the Secretary of State and only that day had they seen some progress such as the high level appointments onto the task force on testing of Tom Riordan, the Chief Executive of Leeds City Council, a sign that they were finally listening directly to local government leaders. He stated that it was disappointing that the government always seemed to reach first for Deloitte and Serco rather than the existing public sector infrastructure when responding to issues. This had led to a situation where the public and unions were increasingly distrustful of what was being planned. He added that the digital divide was stark and issues around community access and community languages needed to be considered. Locally too, the Charedi community, for example, wouldn't be using the technology needed to access the government's planned contact tracing App. A top down approach of using private sector always and avoiding tapping into local skills and knowledge was a mistake. He added that all across the VCS new connections were being made eg with the growth of the excellent Mutual Aid Groups and these were completely different relationships. There had also been some great work on safe discharging between the Homerton, the CCG and local GPs and that this kind of partnership approach was key to how we tackled such big issues as food poverty and unemployment.

- 5.7 The Chief Executive responded by stating that in relation to opening up the economy there will be a need to continue to support local businesses and residents and part of this is to give out clear advice in order to demystify the various new guidance and regulations. In terms of travel safety, while it isn't possible to give people assurances about safety, what the Council can do is to ensure alternatives are provided. On testing, tracking and tracing, councils will have a key role in helping to shape the system and make it better. The App is being tested in the Isle of Wight and there have been assurances re data protection. He added that it is not possible to comment on it in any more detail until we had more information from the pilot.

In relation to access and smartphones he was aware that the government intended to employ an army c. 15k people to work as direct contract tracers using mainly phone calls. Since the lockdown the Council and health partners had built up a significant data base of the vulnerable and so are in a better position locally to navigate through this in a much more nuanced way. Going forward he hoped the Council can build on these relationships and support networks.

- 5.8 Members asked detailed questions and in the responses the following points were noted:

(a) Members asked for further detail on the financial impacts including the lost income. The Mayor replied that there had been two tranches of emergency funding, the first one a month previously comprising £10.1m, with a second tranche of £7.4m to come and had been allocated on a per capita basis from a national pot of £1.6bn. Another £600m had been announced for Local Authorities that day which was still to be allocated. Another £6.4m hardship funding scheme had also been allocated for Council Tax Reduction Scheme

and the Council had matched that with investment in its own hardship fund. Despite all this, there remained a substantial gap of £19m for the year with areas not receiving special funding as well as the impact of the loss of revenue. Unless further funding was received it was projected over the year that this gap would remain. Added to this there were savings which had been foregone. Considering, that within the envelope of austerity, half of the council's budget had already disappeared over the past decade, some real challenges would lie ahead, he added. The Chief Executive added that they had presented a very full report on the finances to Cabinet and the Group Director of Finance and Corporate Resources was working hard to coordinate on behalf of the other London boroughs a response to the government's proposals.

(b) Members asked whether the Council was delivering culturally and religiously appropriate food to residents via the Food Hub. The Chief Executive replied that one of the unfortunate aspects of the government food deliveries had been that neither culturally nor diet specific foods had been issued and it had not been packaged in ways to be easily dispensed to individuals as opposed to families. Because of this, early on in the process, they had to come up with local solutions so that the local Food Hub could offer a more nuanced offer. The Council had worked to deliver kosher food parcels to the Charedi community and to incorporate their needs as part of the helpline. They had been delivering to over 100 Charedi residents in Stamford Hill. There was also a hot food offer developed with the third sector which had accommodated to the culturally specific needs of the different communities. The Chief Executive added that he was very proud of the work to deliver food parcels to those who were shielding or who were vulnerable and the Hub had flexed the offer when the government response had not been appropriate for the local needs.

(c) Members commended the letter the Chief Executive had sent to staff for its content and tone.

(d) Members asked how the Council could be more agile in supplementing the government's actions in tackling the crisis. They noted that Durham County Council had worked with its local CCG and tested residents in care homes and also set aside separate Covid areas within them. They asked further that, without undermining the government message, what ability did the Council have to quickly supplement the inadequacies of the government approach, such as being slow in getting contact tracing off the ground, and how might the Council be able to input additional support.

The Mayor replied that Members had hit several nails in the head with this question. The Council's room for manoeuvre was limited. The communications gaps had been filled by the Council in providing information through people's doors on 3 occasions with specifically targeted information for particular communities. In relation to what Durham had done, it had to be remembered that parts of the country had retained public health labs for testing eg Leeds and Durham and their local health systems were able to tap into that. We have coterminous NHS organisations in City and Hackney he added but for London wide initiatives 32 boroughs are involved. In rolling out programmes the government sometimes decided not to use existing footprints. The borough needed accessible sites for testing stations and they finally got that set up in Dalston and now a further solution is being rolled out locally for testing in care homes. The government did not seem to learn that if you centralise things in

this way you will replicate the mistakes made previously and so we pleaded with them not to pursue that approach. Thanks to the LGA, the government was finally seeing the key role that local government has to play. One area which Hackney was leading on was in PPE distribution as we were the local hub for the NE London boroughs. The key was to supplement and not to duplicate.

The Chief Executive added that Hackney was in a position of reacting to government announcements and being expected to have the answers the following day, when official Guidance had still not been published. He gave an example that a 50 page document which had been issued at 2.00pm that afternoon laying out how we were expected to manage open spaces, however there was a need to examine closely how this could be implemented locally.

e) Members relayed concerns from businesses about phase two of the easing of lockdown and queries from smaller businesses categorised as 'non essential' about when they were going to be allowed to open. They asked what was the guidance for businesses and how would it be distributed.

The Mayor replied that he was struggling with the how things land from central government because uncertainty is sown, for example, on returning to work. The question is what bits of the economy will be returnable to, he added. Parts of economy were already saying they were not ready with hospitality stating they cannot reopen with social distancing in place and continue to be sustainable. There had been contradictions and mixed messages and an obsession seemingly with "home counties" concerns such as garden centres and golf clubs. He explained that the government had announced a week previously a discretionary fund and the council had just received the guidance on that. The Council would be able to use underspend to plug some budget holes he added. A rich seam of information had been collected on the local economy and he urged every business in Hackney to join the Hackney Business Network who had just issued some great guidance for retail on social distancing. He added that they were also communicating closely with the supermarkets.

The Chief Executive added that he was proud of the speed at which those business grants had been allocated and in the future they would go back and study how that had been achieved.

f) Members commented that the Secretary of State for Transport had announced on the previous Saturday some £2m to promote more cycling and walking and added that what was needed was not temporary measures but rather the infrastructure to be put in place to make these changes permanent.

The Chief Executive replied that the plan with 'Build back better' focused on how to build on the changes made during the lockdown. Of the £2m funding it was not clear how much was per local authority. He concluded that we do need to try and capture some of the good things that have come out of this terrible crisis and see how we can boost cycling and make travel more sustainable

g) Members commented on the tragic loss of staff at Homerton University Hospital FT and gave their condolences and asked what guarantees there had

been from the Homerton management that all the workforce would now receive optimal PPE.

The Mayor replied that he had written to Tracey Fletcher to pay tribute to those three staff members. He added that he didn't want to second guess the position around PPE as it wouldn't be helpful. Homerton had never reached over capacity and their logistical systems ensured the pressures on PPE weren't the same as in other parts of country. The Council and the Homerton were constantly checking PPE stocks he added. He added that in relation to unions, that Deputy Mayor Bramble was working closely with the NEU and the Head Teachers on the concern locally about plans to re-open schools.

The Chief Executive added that he too had sent condolences to the families of those staff who had died and added that he couldn't comment on the union issue.

h) Chair of Audit Cttee (Cllr Sharman) congratulated the Mayor for keeping meetings running and things open as part of building the community's trust. There was an issue in the medium term however and financial priorities would need to be amended and Audit Committee was looking forward to a financial framework emerging which would address this. He suggested that Scrutiny Chairs should join Cllr Rennison as Cabinet Member for Finance to explore a joined up view of the financial priorities going forward and suggested that there be a meeting on this in the next week or so.

The Mayor replied that he agreed about the need to focus also on the medium term. Huge financial pressures would lead to some difficult decision making. There has been no short to medium term decision to pull back from services or to furlough staff or to stop doing things, but we do need to have an eye to the longer term also, he added. He added that there wasn't an emergency budget around the corner and that would give us some time and space to do what had been suggested. The Chief Executive urged caution however. He highlighted that the council as an organisation had been doing an amazing job in setting up new complex systems and it had been stretched to capacity. There would be a need to reflect in time on that work and on the next steps when all officers weren't working from home and focused so much on frontline delivery. The organisation was being stretched by constant government announcements so the timing of this work would be crucial.

- 5.9 The Chair stated that she would have to draw the item to a close as the allocated time had passed and she thanked the Mayor and Chief Executive for their attendance.

RESOLVED:	That the discussions be noted.
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6 Scrutiny Panel Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- 6.1 Members gave consideration to the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 3 February 2020. The Chair stated that the actions would be reported on at the next meeting.

RESOLVED:	That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2020 were agreed as a correct record.
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7 Any Other Business

7.1 There was no other business.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00 - 9.20 pm

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Scrutiny Panel 23rd July 2020 Item 8 - Scrutiny Panel Work Programme for 2020/21	Item No 8
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Outline

New Work Programme 2020/21

The Scrutiny Panel is asked to consider and make suggestions for the SP work programme for 2020/21.

Proposals for the SP work programme rolled over from the last municipal year:

Discussion items

- Poverty Strategy
- Update on Advice Services
- Information about how the learning from complaints is cascaded and used by service areas. First directorate to be discussed is Neighbourhood and Housing.

Standing Items

- Quarterly Finance Update – each SP meeting
- Cabinet Question Time with Mayor of Hackney – dates to be agreed.
- Executive Question Time with Chief Executive of Hackney – dates to be agreed.

Scrutiny Panel Meeting dates for 2020/21

- 23rd July 2020
- 5th October 2020
- 1st February 2021
- 26th April 2021

Action

The Scrutiny Panel is asked to agree its work programme for 2020/21.

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