TITLE OF REPORT COVID-19 VCS Resilience Strategy update paper	
HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD - 11 NOVEMBER 2020	**CLASSIFICATION:** **Open**
WARD(S) AFFECTED **All Wards**	
CABINET MEMBER **NOT APPLICABLE**	
HACKNEY CVS	

1.   BACKGROUND

In response to the pandemic, Hackney CVS has been leading on the development of what was originally called a VCS COVID-19 Recovery and Resilience Strategy. As a result of conversations, and the recent onset of new government measures in response to a spike in cases suggestion a second wave on the on the horizon, we have elected to focus on resilience, accepting we are not yet at the stage where we are able to map out our recovery.

2.   RECOMMENDATIONS
   For members to note the report, and forthcoming timelines

3.   COMMENTS OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE RESOURCES

   N/A

4.   COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR, LEGAL & GOVERNANCE SERVICES

   N/A

APPENDICES

None

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Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to provide the HWB with an update on the progress made towards the development of a COVID-19 VCS Resilience strategy *(previously COVID-19 Recovery & Resilience strategy).* The author welcomes any comments from the board which the board feels will add value to the COVID-19 VCS Resilience Strategy.

Background

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Timeline of progress so far

- June – July 2020 – Surveyed c60 VCS organisations
- July – Aug – completed analysis of survey
- Aug – Sept – Held community conversations
- Sept – commenced write-up of initial draft

Strategic Objectives

From the data collected so far, the following objectives have been identified:

1. Support Hackney's diverse communities build resilience to any further impacts as the pandemic continues to evolve, and prepare for recovery
2. Support Hackney's vibrant voluntary and community sector build resilience from any further impact from the pandemic, and prepare for recovery
3. Align strategic priorities with our public sector partners; and ensure the strategy influences relevant local initiatives
4. Support and develop an inclusive leadership culture within the VCS, developing the workforce globally

Underlying principles

This strategy has been developed, and is to be executed adhering to the following principles:

1. Adopt a collaborative approach to partnership working
2. Provide clear, accurate, timely and targeted communication
3. VCS organisations are sustainably funded to deliver identified solutions
4. Commit to tackling inequalities – challenging imbalances of power and inequitable prioritisation
5. Champion innovation, and encourage a 'test and learn' approach

Who we have spoken to

Community conversations have been held with VCS / Community representatives representing the following impacted community cohorts:

- Carers
- Children and Families including Children with Special Educational Needs
- Disabled people

- Ethnically diverse communities
- Faith based communities
- Families on a low and uncertain incomes
- Older people
- Parents and guardians
- People living with dementia
- People with a learning disability
- Refugee and migrant communities
- Working-age people (experiencing financial hardship
- Young people/adults

Emerging themes

Based on the outcome of the conversations held and analysed so far, a number of themes have materialised where there is commonality between the experiences of various communities, these are outlined below:

1. Financial hardship	
Communities/groups affected	Disabled People
	Faith based communities
	Refugee and migrant communities
	Working-age people (experiencing financial hardship)
	Families on a low and uncertain incomes
	Ethnically diverse communities
Challenges experienced	No recourse to public funding
	Concerns about fewer employment opportunities for disabled people, due to increased unemployment rates
	High risk of experiencing unemployment and falling into financial crisis, with a real threat of losing their home; as well as experiencing food poverty
	DWP processes overwhelmed by numbers of new applications, resulting in delays to benefit claims being processed, increasing financial hardship

2. Complex needs / Living with long-term conditions	
Communities/groups affected	People with a learning disability
	Disabled people
	People living with dementia
	Older people
	Children with Special Educational Needs
	Children and Young People
Challenges experienced	Inadequate access to tailored and specific government guidelines, including ambiguity around what and how care can be

	provided, as well as lack of PPE; unable to access usual support worker / network to help with interpretation of guidelines
	Interruptions to regular routines significantly impacting on mental and emotional wellbeing, levels of isolation and feelings of loneliness, and confidence levels
	Reduced regularity of access for support workers and family/friends acting as unpaid carers; telephone support not an adequate solution
	Digital divide significant, widening the inequalities faced by those unable to get online
	Condition may limit person's ability to adhere to social distancing guidelines; either through lack of understanding, or limitations due to nature of condition or disability, and may place them at risk of being unable to protect themselves against COVID-19, or from abuse from others
	Fear of public transport, limiting mobility and ability to access services and lead active lives
	Face coverings / masks are proving to be a communication barrier for people with a hearing impairment, and rely on being able to lip read to be able to communicate
	Families under strain if/when lockdown measures restrict movement – increasing levels of depression
	Children with SEN or living in stressful living conditions are less able to keep up with distance learning
	Particular concern for children 16+ who are between educational phases e.g. school / college, and who are no longer eligible for children's services who have off the radar, and therefore not necessarily receiving support

3. Parents, Guardians and Carers	
Communities/groups affected	Parents and guardians
	Carers (including unpaid/informal carers)
	Families on a low and uncertain incomes
Challenges experienced	Carers / adult children /parents distrustful of government data and guidelines, and therefore acting as a barrier to the person they're caring for being able to leave the home
	Lone parents unable to access childcare, either due to government restrictions, financial hardship, or fear; lone parents concerned about how child(ren) will be cared for if they develop COVID-19
	Parents missing out on opportunities to attend parent groups, and gain support from other parents, and develop their parenting skills
	Risk of families unable to engage digitally falling off the radar, and may prove challenging to re-engage – or if are been seen

	digitally, safeguarding concerns, due to not being able to see the complete family dynamic
	Parents / Carers unable to get respite from parenting / caring responsibilities, negatively impacting on their mental and emotional health and wellbeing, and potentially that of the people they are caring for

4. Cultural Impact	
Communities/groups affected	Ethnically Diverse
	Faith based communities
	Refugee and Migrant communities
Challenges experienced	Individuals recorded as Black or Asian ethnicity at higher risk of COVID-19 related mortality, and whilst the full reasons are not fully understood, structural racism, and a higher proportion of people from these ethnic backgrounds employed as key workers, or living in overcrowded housing are thought to be contributing factors
	Lack of culturally specific provisions available to people from ethnically diverse communities, with ethnically diverse led organisations under-resourced to meet increased demand
	Rise in racially motivated incidents directed at the Chinese community (or those assumed to be Chinese)
	Community discourse for why retail outlets were able to open, whilst places of worship remained closed
	Some religious / faith-based communities citing reservations about wide-spread uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine, due to religious beliefs around vaccinations
	Churches seeing a decrease in church donations due to inability to host services, which is placing churches, in particularly independent churches, under financial strain
	Limited funding sources, due to restrictions from some religious communities accepting Lottery sourced funding; combined with beliefs by some faith-based communities that LBH do not fund religious institutes.
	A feeling amongst refugee and migrant communities that there was a lack of action from some public sector bodies
	Some migrant and refugee communities unable to access medical support and care; could place those with suspected COVID-19 at risk if they are unable to seek treatment

There are however a number of communities, which have been identified, but where have yet to hold conversations, or where we are missing data to fully understand their experience, and therefore their needs:

5. Hidden communities / Hidden needs	
Communities/groups affected	LGBTQ community
	Families on a low and uncertain incomes
	People experiencing homelessness
	Victims of domestic abuse
	Undocumented migrants
Challenges experienced	people living in hostile and/or dangerous environments with limited access points to seek help or access support due to restricted movement and lack of access to services either in person or online
	fewer people coming forward asking for financial support – possibly due to lack of access to ask (digitally excluded)
	People not able to access emergency funding due to NRPF

A key priority will be to continue to understand this cohort better, and ensure that solutions are developed, and/or adapted, to take account of their needs.

Next steps
- **w/c 02/11** – complete analysis and complete write-up of strategy document, detailing suggested solutions based on evidence collected; identification of where gaps exist within the data, or where solutions needed to be developed
- **w/c 09/11** – Final consultation, input from HCVS staff
- **w/c 16/11** – Strategy put out for wider consultation with key stakeholders
- **w/c 12/11** – Review of comments
- **30 November (TBC)**– Sector wide event, to launch strategy, sharing findings, and hosting workshops to find remaining solutions. This event will be the first of a series of events/activities which will be necessary to track progress, share lessons, and evolve in line with national progress