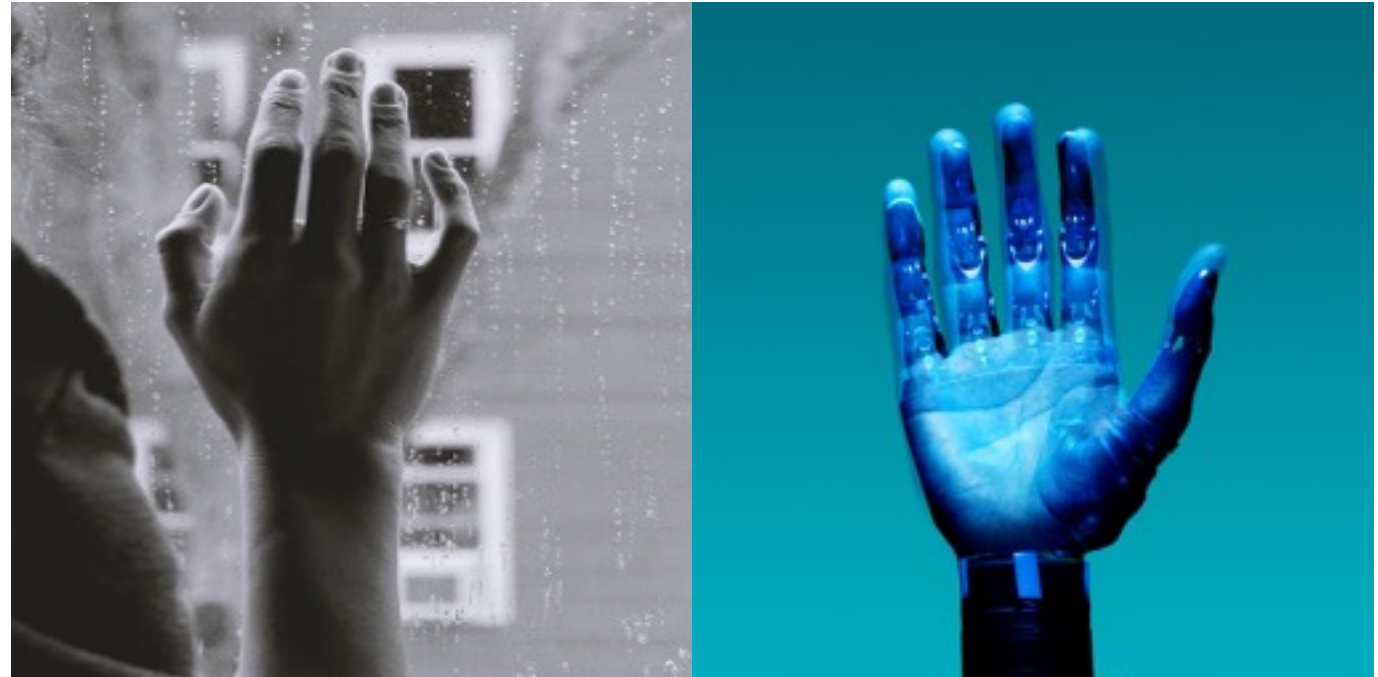


Have the digital solutions of small charities, community interest companies and community groups been effective in responding to Coronavirus?

A grassroots study within Waltham Forest, a densely populated, diverse, urban environment.



CharityTech

Waltham Forest

October 2020

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About the authors

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In mid-March 2020, with national lockdowns looming and the importance of this topic coming to the fore, this research was initiated by John Walker and CRATE St James Street, who have provided analysis and support throughout.

Acknowledgements

With thanks to the AD Charitable Trust for funding this research and St James Street Big Local, William Morris Big Local, Ding Digital, Waltham Forest Council and many others for in-kind assistance (Appendix 8).

Most of all, thank you to the charities and community organisations at the heart of this research, who have innovated, adapted and continue to battle through the pandemic to meet the needs of the diverse community that is the residents of Waltham Forest (for a full list of contributing charities and community groups, please see Appendix 6).

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY INTRODUCTION

In March 2020, with Covid-19 declared a pandemic, charities and community groups, like other organisations, were thrown into reactionary business continuity planning. Digital quickly became the main delivery route for many to maintain services.

This research report looks specifically at grassroots charities, community interest companies and voluntary groups – collectively referred to in the report using the sector acronym “VCOs” – voluntary and community organisations – and asks the question: how well have VCOs made the digital transition alongside staying financially afloat?

A second line of enquiry seeks to understand if there are common digital service delivery problems that aren't being resolved by local VCOs or other stakeholders. If so, can the research provide a clear view of issues and shine a light on potential solutions that can be agreed by the sector, deployed locally, and then scaled-up elsewhere?

To deepen understanding of how local VCOs deliver in-person and digital services, as well as how they co-operate with one another and local stakeholders, the research focuses on a narrow geographic area: the London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF). LBWF has approximately 250 VCOs (Appendix 3), serving an estimated 90,000 people, mostly children, about a third of the borough's residents.

The research comprised of detailed interviews, a standardised survey and a comparison of the local VCO experience to that of national charities and larger-scale organisations. Related, is the question of whether any of these national organisations are supporting local VCOs in LBWF or within other local authorities.



Local charities and stakeholders at CRATE St James Street



London/Waltham Forest map

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FINDINGS

Impact: need has increased, but reach has fallen

Despite attempts to transition digitally, the majority of local VCOs in the research have been unable to reach as many of their service users during the pandemic as they did pre-Covid. On average, service usage has fallen 43% (Figure 1) - we estimate this impacts 39,000 individuals in LBWF, most being young people, many of whom are vulnerable. This contrasts with a national picture of many larger charities quickly pivoting services to digital delivery and extending their overall reach.

Reduced reach is set against a backdrop of greater social sector need due to isolation, insecurity and anxiety across all age groups due to the pandemic. In our modelling we estimate a doubling of need means only 29% of LBWF residents are receiving VCO services that can make a difference to their life.

Innovation and strategy: ‘necessity is the mother of invention’

Necessity has seen unprecedented digital initiatives within local VCOs, such as on-demand videos, podcasts, online training/support resources, interactive workshops, digital storytelling, and content initiatives via social media and website platforms. The majority have targeted existing users, with a few serving new users.

However, digital isn’t always the answer. Delivering what is powerful face to face, doesn’t always have the same impact digitally. Performing arts video conferencing in particular, suffers sound lag and quality issues. Additionally for some, service usage lacks the same engagement: ‘it’s just ‘not the same.’ is a regular complaint. Other less digitally engaged user groups present different challenges, such as ex-offenders and the elderly.

The research found a mixed response to the quality of service enhancements, which contrasts with a more positive initial outcome to innovation within national charities. Unlike national charities, only a few local VCOs had planned technology roadmaps when the pandemic hit (see Figure 2). The absence of this key strategic tool was a factor in hurried design and compromised implementation.



Figure 1

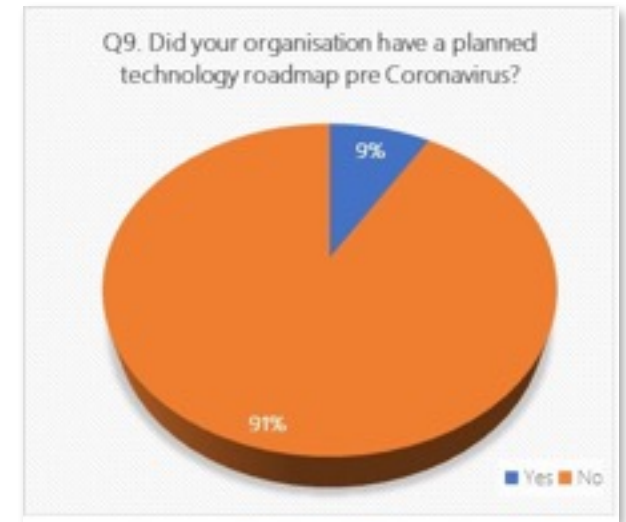


Figure 2

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FINDINGS

Internet poverty: the absence of hardware and data connectivity is debilitating

Digital exclusion in this research setting goes hand-in-hand with more widely recognised financial exclusion. Waltham forest has a very high child poverty level, with Walthamstow 9th worst in the UK.

Many families and individuals have not been able to access services at home as accessibility is limited to poor quality devices, typically mobile phones. Additionally, many families and young people lack access to reliable WiFi services, instead they have pay-as-you-go mobile phone contracts without the needed data allowances to access digital provision.

A few VCOs have tackled aspects of this shortfall with low-cost tablets, refurbished computers and corporate-sector help. This most basic building block of digital inclusion, that most of us take for granted, ranks highest in the digital needs survey.

Skills, experience and resource: common issues reveal a bigger picture of silo working and inefficiency

Discrete pockets of digital expertise exist locally with few organisations regularly using specialist service providers. Some VCOs access strategic partnership well for technology and user support, but most lack the know-how for these relationships. Other support initiatives such as tech buddies and listing services offer signs of hope, but lack scale. Historic digital funding has mostly been inaccessible, although that's significantly shifting at the time of writing. The overall picture in LBWF is fragmented, incomplete and inefficient.

The survey also hints at inexperience within local VCOs of what's required for digital management and innovation. This shouldn't be so surprising considering the speed of digital change and the lack of specialist technology resource and skills in local VCOs, given an average staff base of six and few formal trustees. This contrasts with larger national charities, where reports such as the annual National Digital Skills Report for VCOs help inform best practice and facilitate collaboration and strategic partnerships, often with larger technology providers.

There is little evidence of digital collaboration across local VCOs to pool expertise, improve delivery quality, meet target timescales and achieve cost efficiencies. The result is much slower progress, duplication of effort and inevitable repeating of each other's mistakes.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FINDINGS

Digital systems: definitions cloud major gaps in technology platforms

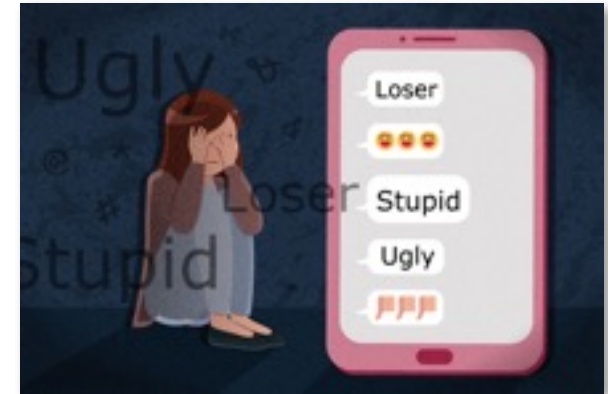
Digital can be a term with the potential to narrow scope, for instance towards a particular social media channel or content. This can result in a focus away from the technology and management information systems necessary to underpin user engagement. This research points to a sizeable gap in digital channel management solutions, but a bigger gap in the end-to-end technology needed to robustly support digital user engagement.

Safeguarding is a particular concern, which has meant some local VCOs have avoided transitioning online almost entirely. For others, the absence of detailed policies and control processes in this area is a risk they're looking to address as they go along – or they've reduced scope to stay compliant.

For services delivered in-person, process management and user engagement can rely on human interaction and basic record keeping. The absence of robust customer relationship management (CRM) type systems in all but one organisation means processes such as online access control and contact management become much harder. Related is the task of monitoring and evaluating service delivery online (M&E). Here, few undertake the same level of online record keeping and outcome tracking that traditional offline services are subject to.

The complexity of implementing new technology, and the skills gaps discussed previously, contribute to a sector-wide local problem of the de-prioritisation of back-end systems that are a necessary foundation for digital user engagement. A situation – and pain threshold – that larger organisations have mostly overcome.

Our interviews and survey responses identified inconsistencies in safeguarding and M&E, with survey responses scoring more highly than interviews and desk-top research would have suggested. We attribute this to a combination of terminology and VCO experience and believe the qualitative interview research is a more accurate reflection.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FINDINGS

Digital funding and fundraising: prospects look poor for the majority

Grant funding that can be used at a VCO's discretion for technology investment is generally not available, but seen by almost all local VCOs in the survey as important. Most funding remains programmatic and specific to service users. Information and guidance on how to access digital-only grants is not always obvious and so little accessed. Some VCOs with skilled bid writers are though 'punching above their weight' here, and accessing this finance.

As this research report has progressed, the landscape for digital funding has been moving fast, with multiple funders coming forward to support the sector. This may prove a double-edged sword, with proficient bid writers disproportionately securing emergency funds that are less needed, to the disadvantage of others working out their technology needs over a slightly longer timeframe, at which point technology-themed funding may have dried-up.

Digital individual giving/fundraising is not yet remotely developed in the borough and the absence of traditional giving is a major issue for the sector. Only one VCO has raised funds through digital channels – consequently, it's now seen as a crucial area of digital service enhancement, an understandable response to a funding crisis.

Nationally and with larger organisations, unrestricted funding and digital grant funds also remain the exception, and part explains why half of larger charities still don't possess clear technology strategies (National Charities Digital Skills Survey). Individual giving online is though far more evolved with larger charities, where the ask is more smartly integrated into multi-channel stakeholder engagement.



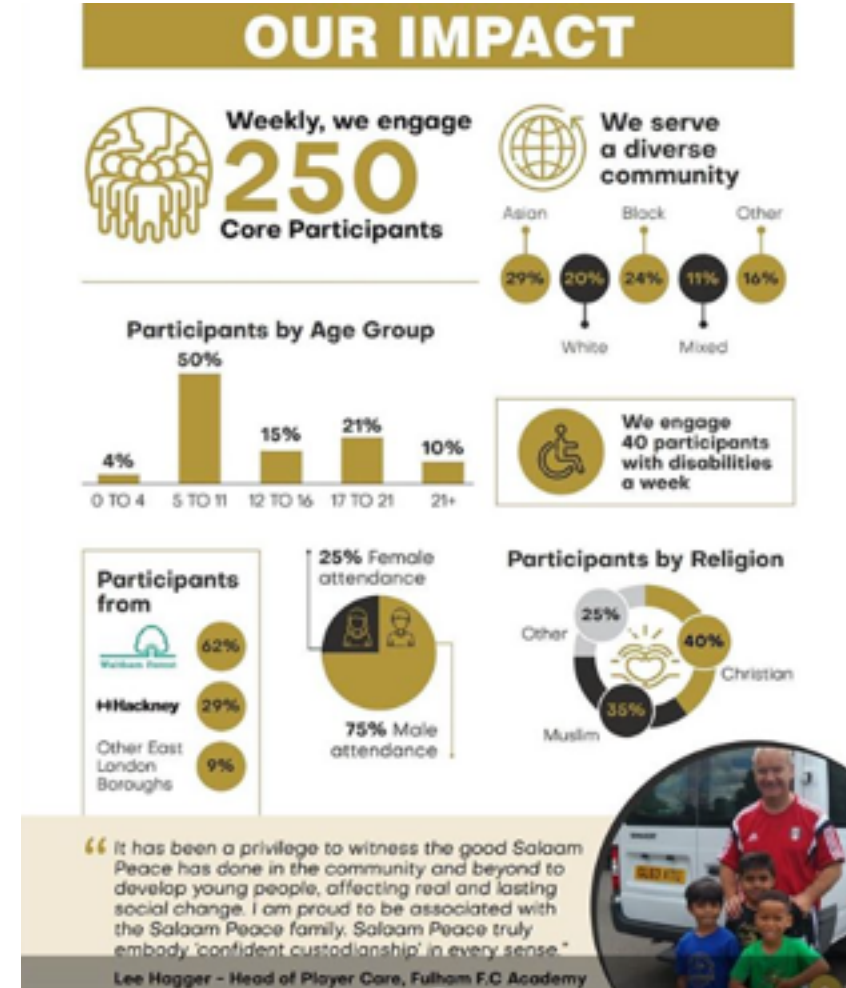
NSPCC website

CELEBRATING SUCCESS...

Regardless of the reduction in reach, the positivity, passion, commitment and creativity from each and every representative involved in the research must be celebrated.

During the most challenging time in their history, there has been a very loud and powerful collective, 'we can' message. Organisations have never faltered with a dialogue suggesting that they just 'couldn't' or that it was 'too difficult' to transition services.

Despite the very real challenges of the virus, these VCOs have balanced managing their businesses, with the additional wellbeing needs of staff and volunteers, as well as finding new ways to reach their users and offer an alternative programme against a backdrop of reduced resource, time and funding to do so. (See Appendix 14, Author's Blog [Driving with the brakes on](#) – a recognition and celebration of tenacity and positivity in Waltham Forest).



Salaam Peace - delivering infomercials and on demand videos during Covid and providing much needed tablets for families otherwise without devices

CELEBRATING SUCCESS...continued



Joy Riders London - producing safe cycle routes via Youtube videos for key workers during lockdown

Project Zero - engaging disadvantaged children and raising funds during lockdown for a new Youth Hub




ELOP online
18-25s LGBTQ+ group
meets twice a month
every 2nd & 4th Thursday: 7-8:30pm

A relaxed, fun & inclusive space, to enjoy activities & chat all things LGBTQ+

Come & join us...

8th Oct 2020: National Coming Out Day
Discuss guidance
Hear stories & different journeys

22nd Oct 2020: Racism in the LGBTQ+ Community
Discuss how we must fight against racism in our community



elop
LGBT+ support, health and wellbeing

INFO & SIGN UP
Email: youth@elop.org

ELOP is a Registered Charity (2007094)

ELOP - providing online meet ups and increased telephone support during Covid

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations and ideas to address the issues identified in this research are a starting point for discussion, validation and solution consensus-building with local stakeholders.

1. Build on the initial momentum and promote collaboration

Share and celebrate the different examples of digital success across multiple VCOs, including collaboration examples, while also still highlighting the need for more investment and innovation. This promotes and brings together the pockets of expertise that exist, while communicating it's far from 'job done'.

2. Using digital for existing services is not always the answer, but service re-invention could be

As digital doesn't replace in-person interactions in all settings, there's a need for information sharing on innovative ways alternative service models have re-invented themselves and not just digitised. For instance when shifting services towards user generated content in performing arts.

3. Track reach as a proxy for impact

Mechanisms to track reach across VCO delivery channels should be implemented. This could be through an annual re-running of this research for three years (essentially similar to the National Charities Digital Skills Survey, but at a local level). This could have knock-on benefits, as the exercise itself provided opportunities for VCO development and collaboration

4. Internet Poverty - hardware and connectivity

Digital hardware and connectivity deprivation is a modern-day poverty, not always obvious or visible when mobile phones are omnipresent. This issues requires urgent local attention to ensure that LBWF's VCOs are pooling efforts so as to maximise impact. Solutions here can build on local responses such as laptop lending and re-furbished equipment services initiated by some VCOs, but a more comprehensive scalable solution must consider accessing corporates and charities active in provision of scalable low-cost technology solutions (e.g. laptops) in the UK and the developing world. For instance, there is an innovative charitable provider of emergency relief communications systems service based in Waltham Forest.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

5. Centre(s) of excellence to build capability and capacity

Leveraging resource economies of scale is essential as digital skills and technology capacity-building need further investment in almost every organisation encountered. VCOs are mostly missing the same skills: digital communications, user experience designers, software developers, security design, project management, content management systems, management information systems and workflow capabilities.

Building on fledgling best practice, including tech buddy schemes, a network of borough-wide expertise in three-to-four areas of digital discipline could be funded to provide practical solutions, as well as hands-on technology implementation support. Alternatively, attention should focus on any organisations that could naturally and cost-effectively develop into the go-to centre of excellence across multiple disciplines.

6. Technology support hub

The opportunity exists to use the gaps in safeguarding and/or monitoring and evaluation as a pilot for a borough-wide VCO technology hub for information, support and guidance resources. Existing support platforms, such as WF Connected and CRATE's Boost business support service, lend themselves as effective 'open source' content platforms.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

7. Strategic fundraising

Assign local fundraising expertise to organisations lacking the skills and experience for identifying grants and/or applying for grants. Signpost VCOs to available local and national funding schemes and provide assistance to bid writing. Consider pooling single grant applications across multiple organisations. Consider a bold major initiative to fund a large-scale three-year technology investment fund for LBWF's VCOs, with an ambition to transform the sector's digital landscape (e.g. a £150,000-£200,000 annual fund, with grants from organisations such as the GLA, corporate entity foundations, trusts and philanthropists).

8. Strategic partnerships

Target the 2,500 LBWF-based professionals in the technology sector (nomisweb), to move these individuals from just giving arms-length support to becoming an active stakeholder. Publish a clear call to action through local and regional media channels to inspire and encourage these local residents to use their skills and networks over and above examples such as a low-level tech buddy scheme. This can work alongside the technology fund concept in point 7.

9. Individual fundraising

Digital individual giving overlaps with wider digital user engagement and this area is in its infancy with local VCOs, with the complexities likely underestimated. Building individual digital fundraising capabilities requires a far more strategic approach to digital stakeholder engagement over the medium term. A centre of excellence provides the opportunity to develop several robust examples of best practice in the borough for replication.



Splash image



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY NEXT STEPS

Next steps: validation, building consensus and a business case

The next step is to validate the research findings with interviewees, local VCOs not in the original round of interviews and a broader stakeholder community including local political leaders and large-scale grant funders, foundations and philanthropists.

With agreement on the issues, a deeper exploration of solutions can be explored, beginning with the recommendations in the research. In parallel, further comparisons within other tightly defined geographic regions can be assessed.

With consensus on a solution, a fledgling business case would be required to present the solution and finance requirements.

Funding for the next step

It's estimated that the next phase of the project would take 12 weeks at a cost of £5,000



Google images (uncredited) Walthamstow garden party

CharityTech Waltham Forest

FULL REPORT

Have the digital solutions of small charities, community interest companies and community groups been effective in responding to Coronavirus?

A grassroots study within Waltham Forest, a densely populated, diverse, urban environment.

INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVE



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Following almost a decade of council and social sector reductions in funding, charities, community groups and social enterprises (collectively referred to as voluntary and community organisations in this report – “VCOs”) have emerged to fill the gap in addressing social disadvantage, particularly for children.

The vast majority of needed services have been delivered and administered face-to-face. With Covid-19, this delivery model – and much donation-based fundraising at in-person events – has come to an abrupt halt. Affected smaller charitable organisations in the field have also been low priority issues for government support, which has largely focused on business. Some nimble, larger and better capitalised charities have quickly adapted services to digital delivery. Others have tried, but have lacked the skills and funds to do this effectively.

This study is a response to this problem of a ‘perfect storm’ of a marked increase in need, constraints in maintaining service delivery, a dramatic reduction in traditional public fundraising and the prospect of further local public service funding cuts. The research seeks to shed light on the problem and establish the extent to which technology is the answer. The research deliverables include a summary of possible solutions.

Supported by many local stakeholders and funded by the AD Charitable Trust, this research looks into the digital support needs of small VCOs in the London Borough of Waltham Forest during Covid-19 restrictions. The findings of the research can lead to a follow-up implementation project, the deliverables for which have re-usability and scalability across London and beyond.

The report is organised into different topic areas: i) Impact, ii) Innovation & Strategy, iii) Internet Poverty, iv) Capability and Skills, v) Digital Systems, and vi) Funding.

RESEARCH APPROACH



Desk top analysis

To ensure a diversity of perspectives, research examined a range of different social sectors including mental health, social care for older people, music and arts, youth engagement, gangs/violence, sports and domestic violence.

To understand the macro landscape, a fairly detailed investigation of online resources was undertaken. This included various reports, blogs, journals, government reports, charitable data and commercial statistics.

In addition, relevant digital development and transformation models used inside and out of the sector were applied to the local landscape. (See appendices 12 and 13 for a full bibliography).



Interviews

Phone, video and face-to-face interviews were conducted with a wide range of stakeholders; including charities, funders, community groups, commercial providers to the sector, the local council and umbrella organisations (Big Locals). A target of interviewing 10% of LBWF's 250 VCOs was achieved. Interviews followed a set of common starter questions, with flexibility to allow for exploration of topics specific to each interviewee. All quotes are anonymous in this report.



Survey

As the interview phase allowed for a deeper understanding of local challenges, this shaped the scope of the survey. It was apparent that the term 'digital' was used in many different ways and this informed questions on relative priorities. A Google Survey was used for speed and efficiency of dissemination and collation of responses (see Appendix 1). A target sample size of 10% of the sector was again set and achieved.



National Comparison

A national comparison was outside the scope of the original terms of reference, but absorbed within the original budget. This helped paint a picture of how LBWF's small VCOs performed relative to the sector more widely. The 2020 Charity Digital Skills Report provided the back-bone of the analytical comparison to national/larger organisations (See Appendix 2 for key elements of this report).

LOCAL LANDSCAPE WALTHAM FOREST



250 Charities, community interest companies, social enterprises and community organisations (VCOs) – (see Appendix 3 for details and source).

The Covid-19 pandemic social restrictions have highlighted social and economic inequalities in communities across the UK and around the world. Densely populated urban environments, such as those within the London Borough of Waltham Forest have presented challenges that rural and affluent neighbourhoods do not. This, coupled with economic uncertainty and low/negligible savings of low earnings families, means children of poorer families in particular suffer disproportionately. Today, almost 39% of Waltham Forest's children live in [poverty](#) after housing costs, a level that was already rising before the pandemic.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

1.3m

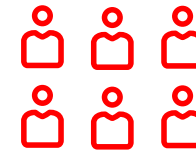
1.3 million service encounters delivered per year across all 250 VCOs

33%

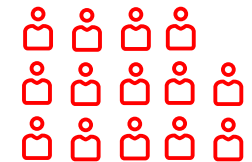
Of the total population of Waltham Forest use VCO services (over 90,000 local people)



Estimated that each service user interacts with two VCOs



Average of six staff per VCO in LBWF, many working part-time (1,500 employed in the borough).



14 volunteers per VCO (3,500 volunteering in the borough)

IMPACT SURVEY RESULTS

- 96% of organisations have managed to transition some or all services digitally, but on average there has been an average 43% decline in the number of service users reached (Figure 3 & 4).
- The majority of respondents did not reach as many of its service users during lockdown as it would have done pre-Covid (Figure 5) and none reported an increase.

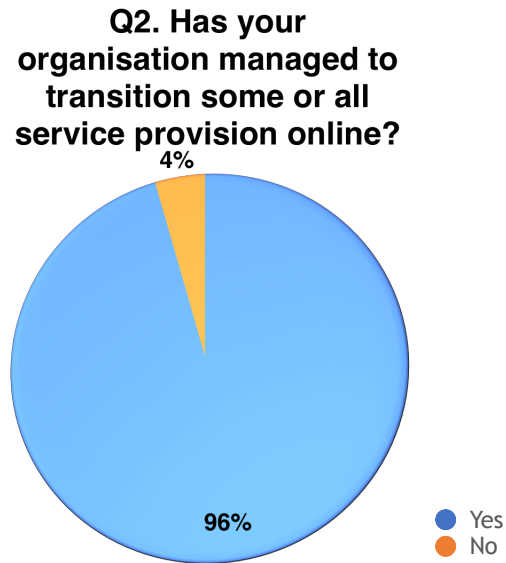


Figure 4

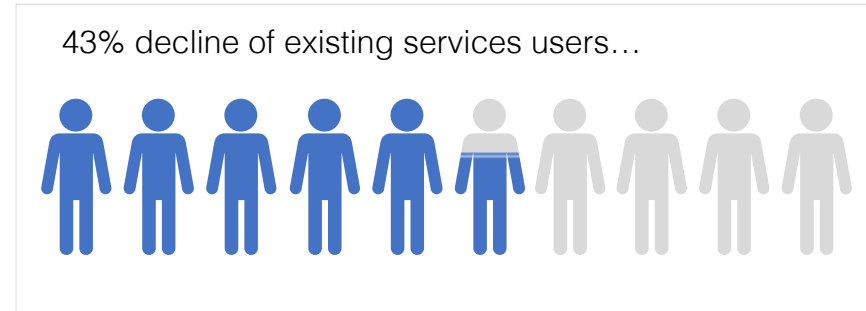


Figure 3

Q6. With or without digital delivery, what level of core service user decline has your organisation experienced during Covid-19?

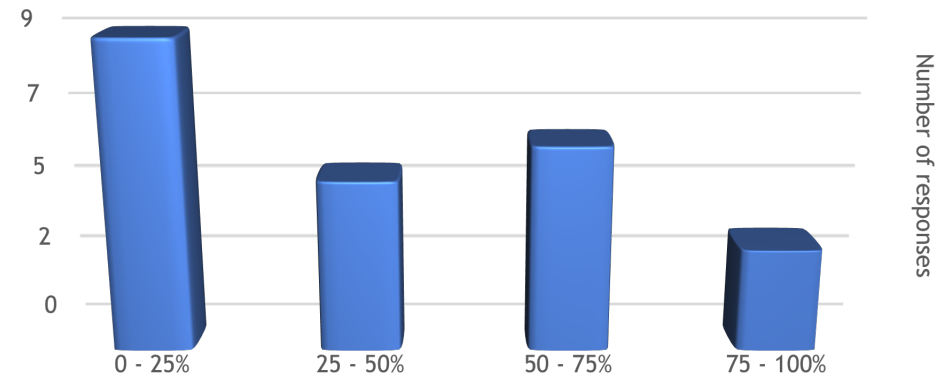


Figure 5

IMPACT SUPPORTING RESEARCH



INTERVIEWS

- In only a few cases did a new venture/digital enhancement actually reach more people online than it would have done if delivered face-to-face.
- Private safe spaces for service users, particularly children, to actively engage with online services is difficult in many households, meaning users disengage or don't access at all.
- There's an inclination to push out information to service users, rather than connect with them, owing to a lack of contact information on file.
- Reduced reach is set against a backdrop of greater social sector need due to isolation, insecurity and anxiety across all age groups due to the pandemic.



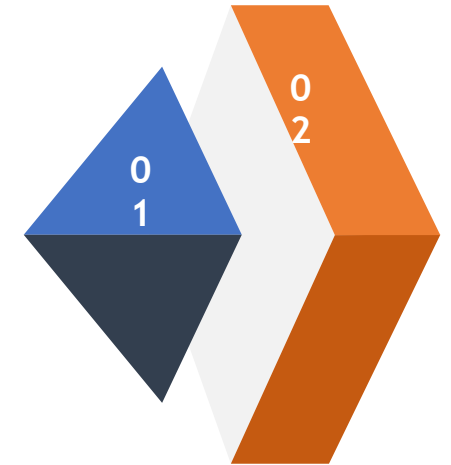
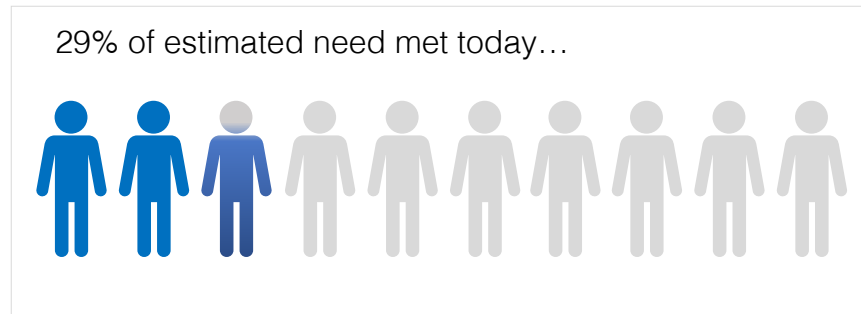
NATIONAL COMPARISON

- Survey findings accord with national news reports that children's services have been affected the most nationally, '*Coronavirus sees more than a million children 'fall off the radar' of youth services,*' (ITV 2020).
- Many organisations are at risk - '*almost half of London's child poverty charities could close*' (Whitehead, H. 2020).
- Many examples exist of national organisations extending their total user reach, but Coronavirus remains a huge challenge to the sector overall - 30% have cancelled services because either their charity or their users don't have the necessary skills or tech (Digital Skills Survey, 2020).

IMPACT ANALYSIS

01. CONCLUSIONS

- 39,000 individuals in LBWF are impacted by a 43% drop in reach, most being young people, with many vulnerable
- In our modelling we estimate a doubling of need means only 29% of LBWF residents are receiving VCO services that can make a difference to their life
- Larger national charities have more readily pivoted services to digital delivery and extended their overall reach. Simpler user service models, established technology and deeper resources will have contributed
- With no robust contact systems to record data and easily provide alternative digital options to service users, many young people have not been reached during the pandemic and this will hold back any future service development
- Innovative local solutions have emerged against a backdrop of an incredibly challenging environment and limited resource



02. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Given what's been achieved with relatively little, incredible solutions can emerge building on existing capacity 'Inspired by the creative blood running through our community's heart and the spirit which binds us together'.
- Need to provide increased information and resources for service users that encourages digital engagement over 'broadcast'
- Mechanisms to track reach across VCO delivery channels should be implemented. This could be through an annual re-running of this research for three years (similar to the National Charities Digital Skills Survey, but at a local level). This could have knock-on benefits, as the exercise itself provided opportunities for VCO development and collaboration.

INNOVATION & STRATEGY SURVEY RESULTS

- Nine out of ten organisations entered the pandemic without a technology road-map. Most are now working on their plans (Figure 6 & 7)
- Priorities focus on video conferencing, recording devices and associated equipment, better social media and online payments (Figure 8)
- CRM systems rank far down the list of priorities

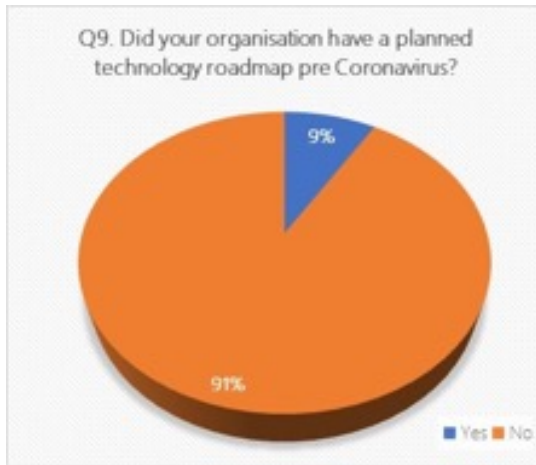


Figure 6



Figure 7

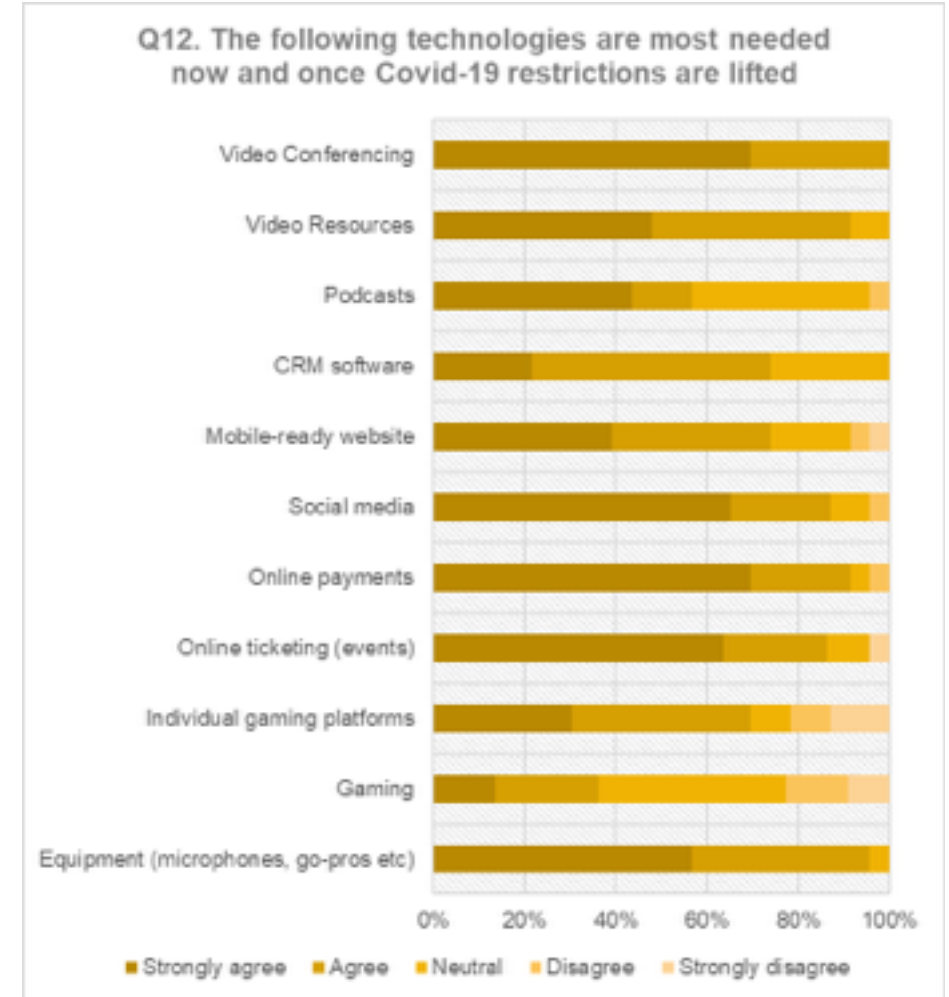


Figure 8

INNOVATION & STRATEGY SUPPORTING RESEARCH



INTERVIEWS

- 'Covid has forced our hand positively'
- 'The pandemic can breed a whole new cohort of Social Entrepreneurs who can leverage technology'
- 'We have found that face to face contact has been missed by our young people and staff'
- Despite digital delivery, service users become disengaged as it's just 'not the same.' This transcends the types of users - e.g. ex-offenders just don't 'connect' digitally and the elderly often don't understand how to (and clearly during this time have had to prioritise focus on staying well particularly when living in care homes)
- Delivering online what is often incredibly powerful face-to-face presents genuine issues with the transition and sound quality of music and dance programmes (e.g. via Zoom).



NATIONAL COMPARISON

- Covid-19 success stories include creativity on a scale rarely seen before. It has been the pandemic itself which has led the digital transformation many organisations were apprehensive about making. The pandemic situation has "*given us the opportunity to transform the way we work for good,*" (Amar, Z., 2020).
- Many had strategic digital roadmaps in place pre-Covid, (49%), enabling operational adaption to meet Covid-19 challenges.
- Covid-19 is driving digital change across the sector. Two thirds of charities are delivering all work remotely (Digital Skills Survey, 2020).
- Organisations with substantial resources such as Versus Arthritis, Parkinsons and Macmillan Cancer Support have built on existing tools and infrastructure with technology specialists and innovation teams to develop, adapt and scale fast, (Marrins, K., 2020).
- Many successful initiatives have come to fruition by joining forces with strategic partners through amplifying a shared voice, e.g. The Scouts and BBC Children in Need, Action for Children and Amazon (Lepper, J. 2020).

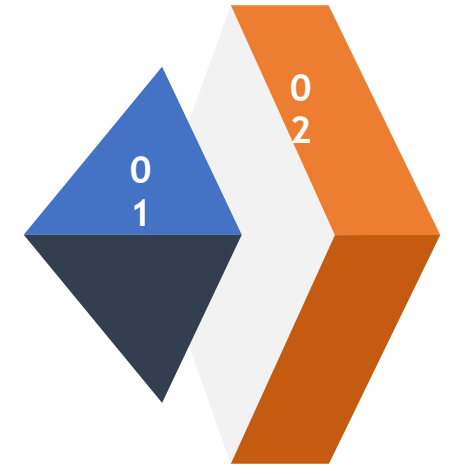
INNOVATION & STRATEGY ANALYSIS

01. CONCLUSIONS

- While Covid may be leading the digital transformation, successful innovation appears built on existing infrastructure, skills and processes – without these, the foundations of innovation look fragile
- Digital transformation plans have been accelerated with new programmes to address communication, outreach and service delivery taking priority, but this is against a backdrop of limited planning, where sequential development may have gone out-of-step, weakening effectiveness
- While local VCOs have taken advantage of the digital tools available – online video conferencing, pre-recorded videos, podcasts and social media networking – traction with these initiatives has been quite variable. Little or no time to co-create these solutions with users may have impacted success
- Youth sector service users stepping up and supporting their own digital production through for example YouTube videos highlights that ‘Digital Natives’ have adaptability and innovation and can gain the personal satisfaction that comes with greater independence and their own achievements

02. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Support the introduction of a middle-term plan to invest in sector-wide infrastructure and processes that support innovation
- Encourage the conclusion of digital roadmaps that also pick up wider technology plans at organisations
- Encourage service users to be front and centre of technical innovation. Including placing the tools entirely in their hands including delivering directly, rather than delivering innovation for them



INTERNET POVERTY SURVEY RESULTS

- Without access to the internet, services cannot be delivered (Figure 9) – this is seen as the most significant barrier to service usage, particularly for children living in poverty (36% in Waltham Forest, Waltham Forest 'Creating Futures for Young People', September 2018)

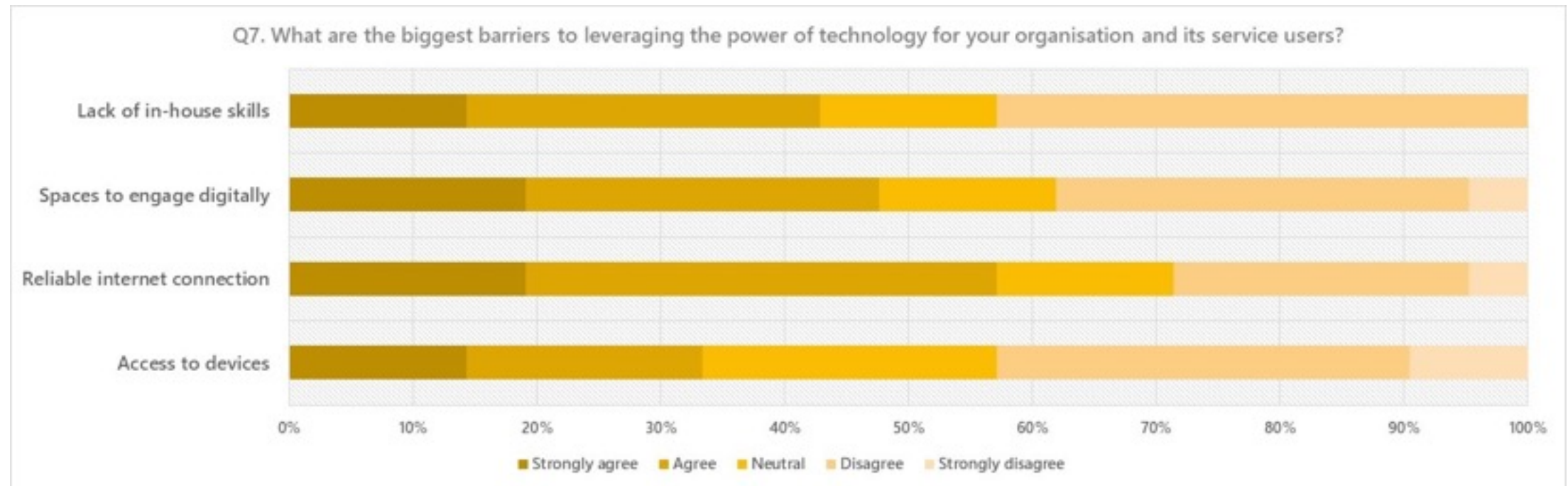


Figure 9

INTERNET POVERTY SUPPORTING RESEARCH



INTERVIEWS

- As schools closed it was assumed all work would go online, done from pupils' home. The reality is, many did not have the equipment or knowledge or the home environment to achieve this.
- Some organisations were quick to devise a community response to internet access – with one supplying over 50 tablets and laptops to families - as well as providing other resources and online tutorials.
- This challenge is compounded by interview feedback that the young BAME community are disproportionately suffering internet poverty.



NATIONAL COMPARISON

- Lockdown is creating a stark digital divide in the UK, with 1.9 million households with no access to the internet and tens of millions more reliant on pay-as-you-go services to make phone calls or access healthcare, education and benefits online ([The Guardian, 2020](#)).
- Few national initiatives exist. One is from the Good Things Foundation and their [Devicesdotnow](#) programme, which asks businesses to donate devices, sims and mobile hotspots: they've helped 11,000 people through 5,000 devices.
- The Lancet reports little progress on digital exclusion and highlights there are massive overlaps between digital exclusion and social exclusion, poverty, and health inequalities ([The Lancet, Covid-19 and Digital Divide in the UK, 2020](#)).
- The digital divide doesn't just mean having access to WiFi, but the ability to pay for it. ([Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2020](#)).

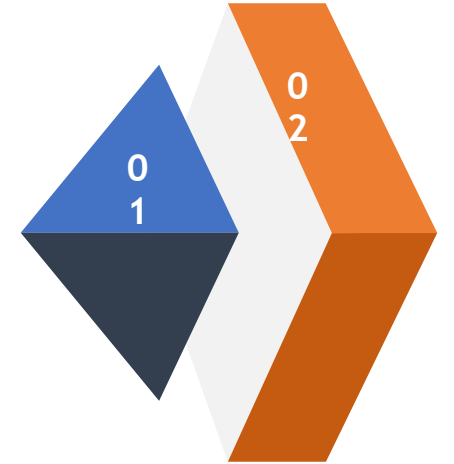
INTERNET POVERTY ANALYSIS

01. CONCLUSIONS

- The scale of the challenge is formidable and the national response falls far short of what's needed and lacks a cohesive approach.
- Many service users would have previously relied on free WiFi in council buildings, libraries, cafes, bars and other public buildings, that are no longer accessible in the same way under social restrictions.
- VCOs are endeavouring to tackle the problem, but largely operating in uncoordinated silos, duplicating effort and not pooling expertise.
- Young people unable to access VCO services are equally exposed to school lockdowns and being educated from home without the necessary facilities, perpetuating inequalities.

02. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Pool local expertise and coordinate a borough-wide response building on existing competences. This can include expanding successful lending schemes and accessing new low-cost devices through corporate relationships.
- Explore solutions and best-practice on connectivity including accessing the insights of LBWF charitable specialists such as Jangala.
- More comprehensive and accessible data communications that bridge the digital divide require free/low-cost WiFi for vulnerable and low-income groups. Information on existing initiatives is not widely known by VCOs, let alone end users. A first step is to direct VCOs and end users to freely available service points, albeit under another full lockdown these may be inaccessible.



CAPABILITY & SKILLS SURVEY RESULTS

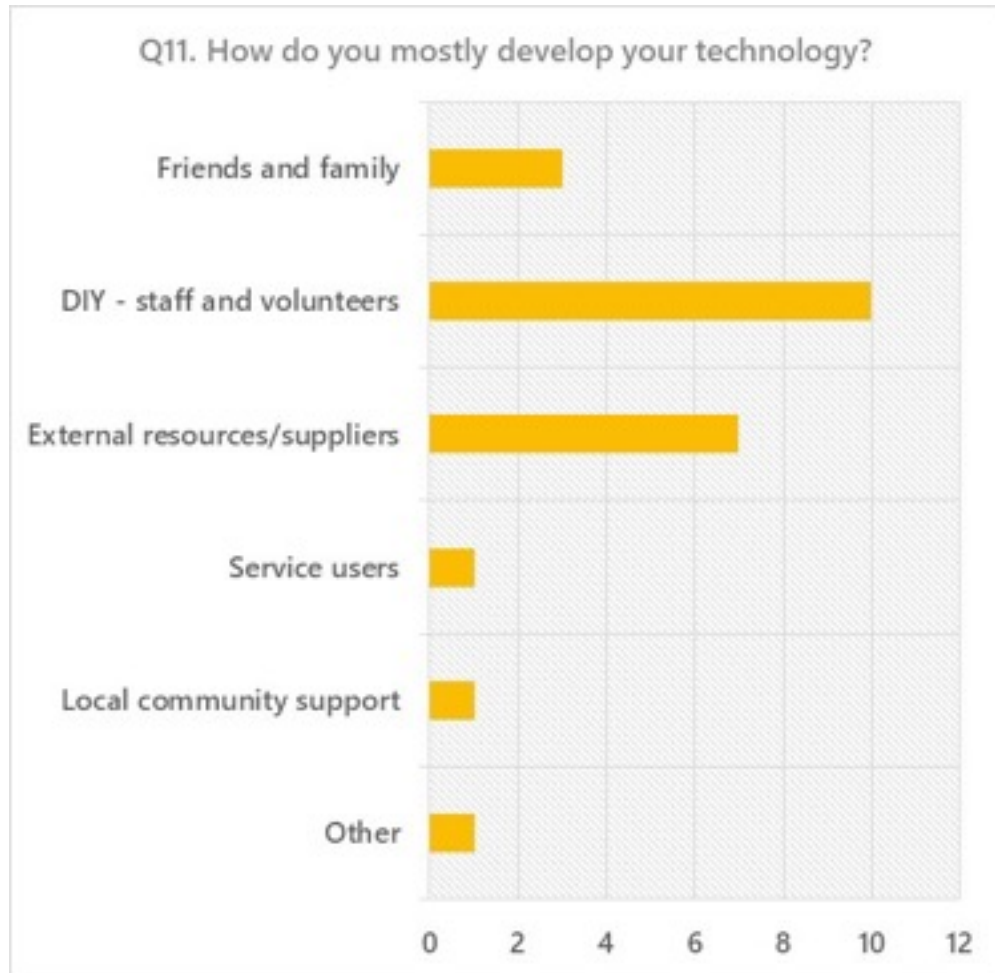


Figure 10

- The approach to software development is varied, with many VCOs relying on less formal structures (Figure 10)
- Only 30% of organisations develop technology externally in spite of 60% lacking time and resource
- To deepen understanding in this area, important information from the interview process has been used to analyse capability and skills and the technology journey the VCOs have been on
- The technology Fear, Learning and Growth Model (Wagman) highlights that digital innovation involves a journey of engagement with stakeholders that draws on skills development. Analysis indicates that LBWF's VCOs are successfully moving along the development journey (see Figure 11 below and also Appendix 5)

Zone	Fear	Learning	Growth
March 2020	45%	55%	0
August 2020	14%	45%	41%

Figure 11

- Examples of this growth and development include peer learning within a tech buddy scheme that has increased to a point where next generation volunteers are buddies to others in the community.

CAPABILITY & SKILLS SUPPORTING RESEARCH



INTERVIEWS

- *'I know what I want to do but it can feel intimidating when I don't always know how'*
- Many organisations have subsequently leant on the support from the London Borough of Culture project.
- Staff and volunteers need digital skills that include gaming technology.
- When expert help is needed, signposting is often poor, with organisations randomly finding suppliers.
- There is limited resource and time in-house to invest in digital enhancements - *'we just don't have the time'* – and what is done is DIY.



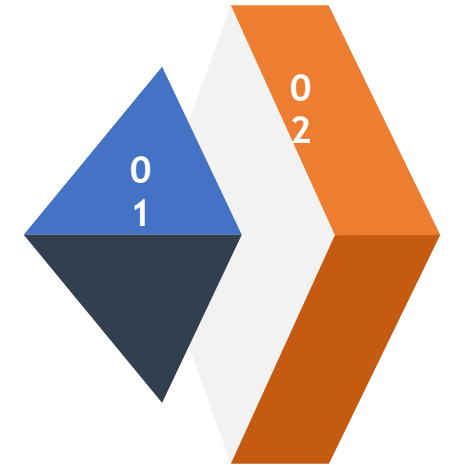
NATIONAL COMPARISON

- The sector needs more digital trustees - most charities (66%) rate their board's digital skills as low or having room for improvement, down 2% from 2019 (Digital Skills Report, 2020).
- The Digital Skills Partnership brings together public, private and charity sector organisations to help increase the digital capability of individuals and organisations in England. Working in partnership with a local DSP could improve digital capability across the whole skills spectrum.

CAPABILITY & SKILLS ANALYSIS

01. CONCLUSIONS

- If internal resource is limited, over-worked and lacking in skills, a shortage of confidence in accessing external suppliers is likely to present a major barrier to greater use of this supply method.
- The absence of a central source of 'one stop shop' support and guidance likely perpetuates a fragmented market and inefficiencies.
- Where charities have trustees with experience in either digital or funding, they have been more successful in both securing funding and transitioning services online.
- Where charities have a strong business network locally, and/or are part of a national organisation, both funding for digital projects and resources to support digital transition have been more readily available.

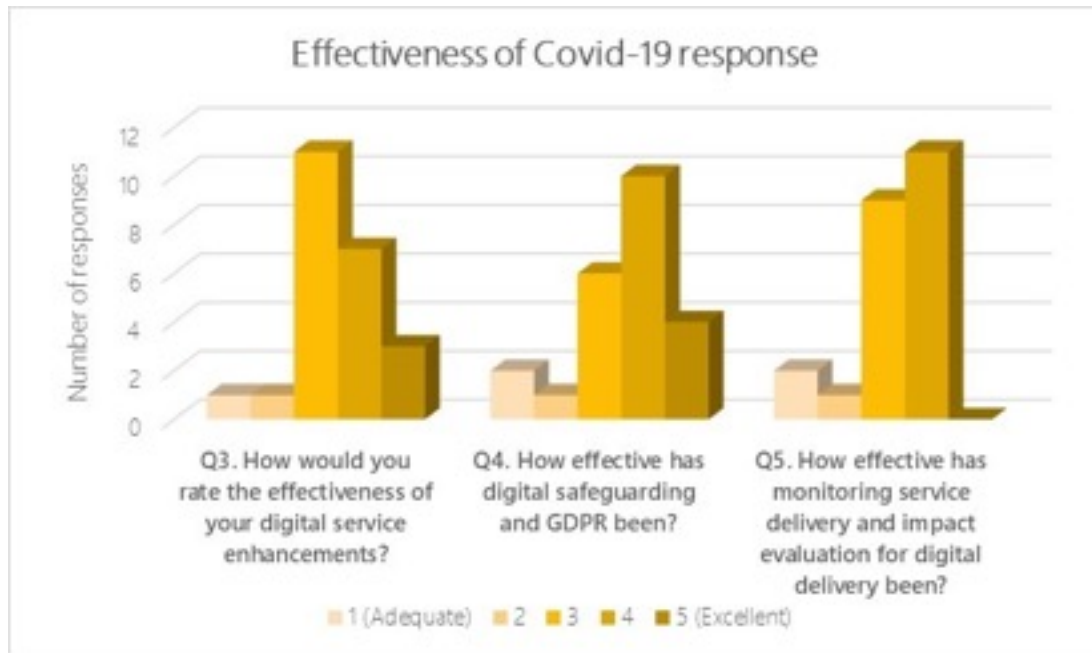


02. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create a network of digital champions in the borough for the different disciplines within technology management and service development. Create bridges with relevant educational establishments to leverage innovation, creativity and delivery with local major stakeholders, such as Big Creative Education.
- Assess demand for a digital event bringing together local technology stakeholders (tech buddies, digital champions, VCOs and businesses).
- Develop a central hub of publicly available support and training resources.
- Consider what services can be cross-provided by one VCO to others, to avoid duplication.

DIGITAL SYSTEMS SURVEY RESULTS

- The survey questions have shown a level of inconsistency with interviews, where survey respondents have generally been more positive than the interviews would have indicated (Figure 12)
- Positive answers to digital service enhancements are likely skewed towards those solutions that became operational, regardless of engagement and impact, although it's maybe unsurprising to see monitoring scoring so highly, given services haven't been operational for long and monitoring is thus unproven. Evaluation is also internal and has not been validated by service users, and is therefore not aligned to a true user centric approach to digital. Narrow definition issues on digital also cloak issues.
- Digital transformation emphasizes the need for organisations to transition operationally and culturally before they can transition digitally. Morgan's '12 Steps To Move Faster' has been used to capture the average position of LBWF's VCOs on this journey of transformation (Figure 13).



Not meaningfully started	Early-stage progress	Tangible progress
Organisational structure	Customer focus	Technological decisions
Change management	Transformational approach	
Integration across the organisation	Internal customer experience	
Data security, privacy and data ethics	Logistics and supply chain	
	Evolution of products, services and processes	
	Digitisation	
	Personalisation	

Figure 12

Figure 13

DIGITAL SYSTEMS SUPPORTING RESEARCH



INTERVIEWS

- Safeguarding is 'sketchy' in places with few having stated online digital safeguarding policies, which has held some organisations back from transitioning provision.
- No two organisations use the same website platform, which range from Ding Digital, New Nuovo, [wix.com](https://www.wix.com), GoDaddy, XPdient and Seebiz to Wordpress and SquareSpace.
- A number of organisations do not have an online web presence - many only use social media as it's quicker and free.
- Safeguarding has been more effective when VCOs have had the support of trustees with expertise in this field.



NATIONAL COMPARISON

- 83% of national charities now say they are fair to poor at digital service delivery, materially worse than the 53% in 2018 (Digital Skills Survey). Local VCOs were more positive on their abilities. Only 8% of national charities rated engaging digitally with customers as excellent – again, local VCOs rated themselves higher.
- National organisations such as Sport England, UnLtd and London Sport have provided safeguarding advice via webinars and peer support.
- Best practice guides and policy support is present at a national level from organisations such as the NVCO, NSPCC and The Catalyst.
- National policy guides are used by a minority of interviewees.

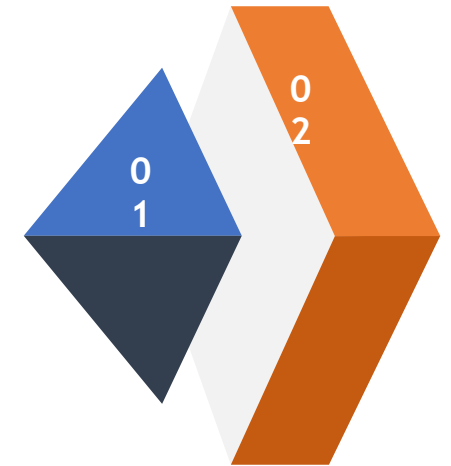
DIGITAL SYSTEMS ANALYSIS

01. CONCLUSIONS

- Difficultly accessing best practice templates and guidelines including safeguarding in a digital context increases risk through isolated implementation, as well as duplicating effort and increasing inefficiency.
- Only one VCO identified themselves as using a specialist CRM platform embedded into its website (the Xpdient solution from a social enterprise based in east London working with clients across the voluntary sector).
- A robust CRM system that captures the details of service users, young people, parents and carers is a base requirement to move from a broadcast mode to digital user engagement.
- Impact evaluation is more difficult due to less engagement during Covid and compounded by access to technology issues, for example, access to the services and equipment required to handle online forms, scanning and emailing responses.
- Where organisations don't have a website, this hinders organisational visibility in internet searches.
- Transitioning to a digital model has some way to go based on the Morgan 12-step analysis.

02. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create a Digital Hub that can be used to support organisations and their teams in all things digital. This includes an A-Z of external suppliers and digital support and resources – fundraising, bid writing, safeguarding tools and resources, 'How to Zoom' and deliver webinars, setting up company pages on social media and delivering group sessions online (Zoom/Microsoft Teams, Music Jelly, Open Online Theatre).
- The Waltham Forest Hub is an existing pilot platform offering high-quality practical information, guidance and links to the best online and face-to-face resources to start, grow and manage a business - all transferable for VCOs: <https://bwl-wf.crateuk.com>. This platform could be extended to become a digital and tech hub for VCOs, hosted under Creative Commons licensing.
- An online map such as [Walthamstuff](#), with contact details of all VCOs in the area - to promote awareness, cross working and strategic alliances.



FUNDING SURVEY RESULTS

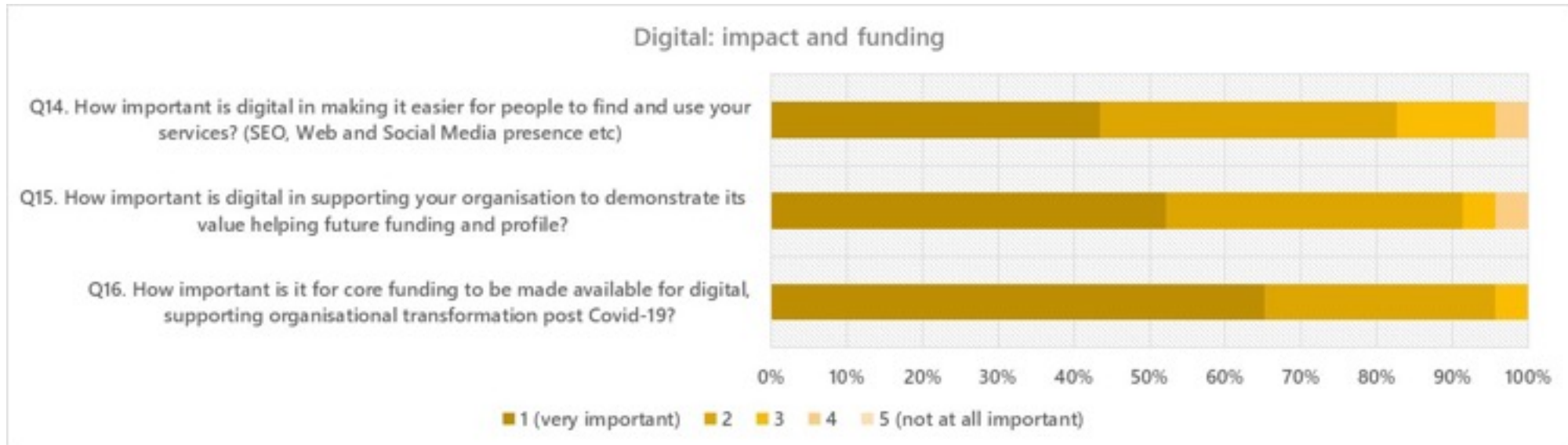


Figure 14

- Survey respondents are looking for core funding for digital and see demonstrating digital capability as essential to raising funds (Figure 14).
- Many VCOs lack the time and dedicated staff resource to focus on fundraising activity. Those organisations who fare better than most have trustee members who specialise in the field and have spent much time on funding bids, with a number being very successful via local and national grants.
- This leads to a mix of views:
 - “It frustrates me when people say that it’s difficult to get funding. There are pots of money everywhere and for mental health, isolation and all sorts of community initiatives. It’s also been made very clear to access with an even easier process since Covid. Just go out and get it!”
 - “We’re supposed to all be working together but we’re all fighting for the same pots of money.”

FUNDING SUPPORTING RESEARCH



INTERVIEWS

- Procurement - some organisations have access to technology via strategic partnerships and know how to utilise these relationships (see also Appendix 7).
- Where services are charged, there is an acknowledgement that the service has just not been a priority from customers during this time.
- It's unclear who to approach for funding.
- Funding availability is increasing weekly in response to the crisis – (see Appendix 9).
- Providing pre-recorded videos/tutorials/podcasts presents examples of what the organisation delivers to more proactively reach new audiences, supporters and funders.



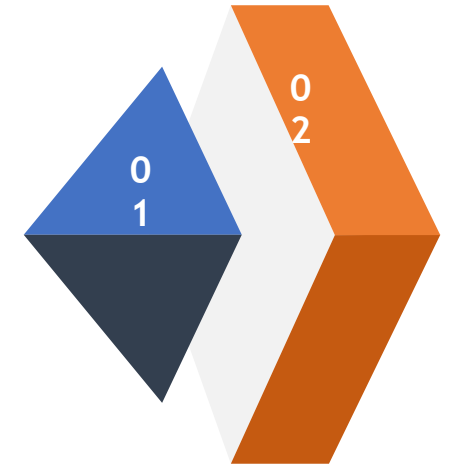
NATIONAL COMPARISON

- Over the last year, just under half of national charities advised that their organisations have not accessed any digital funding. 50% cited lack of funding as the biggest barrier they face to digital progress, similar to last year. Almost all respondents strongly agree or agree that core funding should be made available for digital, supporting digital transformation. This views aligns locally.
- Practical tips on funding applications and marketing masterclasses are available via the London Community Foundation.
- Whilst there is a difference in fundraising locally and nationally - local charities tend to bid for funding rather than fundraise through individuals and so this wasn't in focus locally. On rating how important online Individual giving platforms will be post Covid, 70% of local VCOs 'Strongly agree' or 'agree.'
- Charities need help with digital fundraising - one of the weakest skills for charities, with 45% saying that they are poor at it.

FUNDING ANALYSIS

01. CONCLUSIONS

- There are few examples of charities teaming up for a joint funding bid – collaboration is promoted, but rarely actioned
- To enhance Individual giving options digitally requires a major re-work of stakeholder engagement and communications, e.g. 'By donating £10 a month, you are supporting one family to access childcare provision for a year.'
- Interviews point to a disparity between funding and fundraising skills. There are those that struggle to know how to access funding and have gaps in writing funding bids, and there are others who 'punch above their weight' and access a wider range of funding pots locally and nationally.
- Do organisations always have the skills to seek out funding for digital solutions if they don't know what they need? Do they look beyond historical and local funding streams?



02. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide access to fundraising information (see Appendices 9 & 10), skills development and support for the wider benefit of all charities, enabling a clearer focus on service delivery.
- Provide affordable 'bulk-buying' access to technology including licences and software across the board, from website platforms and apps to Zoom and Microsoft Teams
- Inspire and encourage the estimated 2,500 local residents working in technology organisations (nomisweb) through local and regional media channels. Instead of contributing, say, £5 personally, they galvanise their employer to contribute £500 or much more. These residents move from just giving to being engaged and active longer-term stakeholders.
- Consider a bold major initiative to fund a large scale three-year technology investment fund for LBWF's VCOs with an ambition to transform the sector's digital landscape (e.g. a £500,000 fund over three years from organisations such as the GLA, corporate foundations, trusts and philanthropists).

NEXT STEPS

Next steps: validation, building consensus and a business case

- The next step is to validate the research findings with interviewees, local VCOs not in the original round of interviews and a broader stakeholder community including local political leaders and large-scale grant funds, foundations and philanthropists.
- With agreement on the issues, a deeper exploration of solutions can be explored, beginning with the recommendations in the research. In parallel, further comparisons within other tightly defined geographic regions can be assessed.
- With consensus on a solution, a fledgling business case would be required to present the solution and finance requirements.

Funding for the next step

- It's estimated that the next phase of the project would take 12 weeks at a cost of £5,000.
- It is suggested that the funds for the next phase are raised from across The AD Charitable Trust (initial research report funder), St James Street Big Local, William Morris Big Local, UnLtd and LBWF.

Report dissemination

- To compound both the power of the report findings, and the nature of its subject matter, its launch and further dissemination should focus on digital channels. To maximise reach, a digital version of this report will be hosted on the Waltham Forest Connected website, produced in tandem with a new page built specifically to host the three main areas of the project; why we embarked on exploring the digital needs of VCOs in LBWF, what the findings highlighted in terms of challenges, successes and future needs and what happens next.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – VCO survey



How are we doing?

But how is Waltham Forest fairing in this new and digitally enhanced landscape?

As part of a Research Project supported by St James Street Big Local and a Charitable Trust, we have been exploring the challenges, successes and future digital needs of Charities and Community Interest Companies within the Borough during and post Covid-19. There are some interesting themes forming but we would like to hear from more of you.



A new 'normal'

Covid-19 has changed the way we work, live and play and in so many ways. Without doubt, Digital has helped build bridges across all aspects of our lives. From connecting our families via Zoom, helping us reach the most vulnerable in our communities through a variety of digital tools - from *on-demand videos and tutorials to podcasts and gaming technologies* - to largely providing us and the organisations we represent with a cost effective way of working - from reduced office overheads/expenses to zero commute and 'coffee' bills.

Have your say

We're keen to reach as many of our 250/300 Charitable organisations as possible to ensure we have captured a wide spectrum of views and experiences. It takes less than 3 minutes to [complete the survey](#) and expires on the 21st August 2020.

[Complete the Survey](#)

What happens next?

The survey findings will help form a final Research Report which will be published at the end of August 2020 and hosted on the Waltham Forest Connected [website](#).

Whilst there is no guarantee, we are hopeful that the report will help secure additional funding in the future. The aim being to bridge any gaps the report may highlight.

Thank you for your support

#walthamforest, #charity, #localcharity, #digital, #digitaltransformation, #digitalfirst, #community, #strongertogether

APPENDIX 2 – National Digital Skills Report key findings

[The 2020 Charity Digital Skills Report](https://www.skillsplatform.org), is produced Nationally and by Charity Comms and in partnerships with Skills Platform (<https://www.skillsplatform.org>) and Catalyst (<https://www.thecatalyst.org.uk>). Published since 2017, this year's report will share a number of findings and calls to action:

1. COVID-19 is driving digital change across the charity sector. Two-thirds (66%) of respondents are delivering all work remotely. In turn, this is opening up new opportunities: 61% will be offering more online services and 47% are collaborating and sharing learning with others around digital.
2. Charities need support with strategy
Just over half of charities (51%) don't have a digital strategy - either standalone or part of their organisational strategy. This number has barely moved in the four years the report has been published.
3. Charities need additional, COVID-19 specific, digital support
27% of charities have cancelled services because either their charity and/or their users don't have the necessary skills or devices. Funders need to offer support for devices, software and skills development as charities adapt to the crisis.
4. We need a concerted effort by funders to support charities with digital
50% cited lack of funding as the biggest barrier they face to digital progress, similar to 2019. Just under half (48%) of respondents said their charities have not accessed any digital funding over the last year.
5. Leaders need to focus on their digital vision
Respondents cited strong digital leadership as a key need, similar to last year. 67% want their leadership team to offer a clear vision of what digital could help them achieve. As a sector leaders training and support to develop this.
6. Digital should be a critical priority for trustees
Most charities (66%) rate their board's digital skills as low or having room for improvement, down 2% from 2019. More digital trustees are required and all trustees need to take responsibility for skilling themselves up in digital. [Reach Volunteering](#) can help charities recruit digital trustees. Chairs can make a difference here by encouraging trustees to ask the right questions about digital.
7. Charities need to commit to understanding their users better
Just 8% of charities rate themselves as excellent at understanding users - whether that's beneficiaries, donors or supporters. Wider adoption of service design techniques is needed across the sector and better use of existing data and insights. User research also needs to prioritise diversity and accessibility.
8. Charities need help with digital fundraising

Charities need to grow digital fundraising to plug major income gaps from lost face-to-face events decimated. This is one of the weakest skills for charities, with 45% saying that they are poor at it. Good digital fundraising skills and what success looks like need to be shared widely. [Source: Amar, Z. \(2020\).](#)

APPENDIX 3 – LBWF VCOs



Figure 15 - Centre for London, 2018, A strategic review of giving in London) – charities and CICs serving the local area per 1,000 people (LBWF red box)

APPENDIX 4 – Analytical matrix for successful digital initiatives

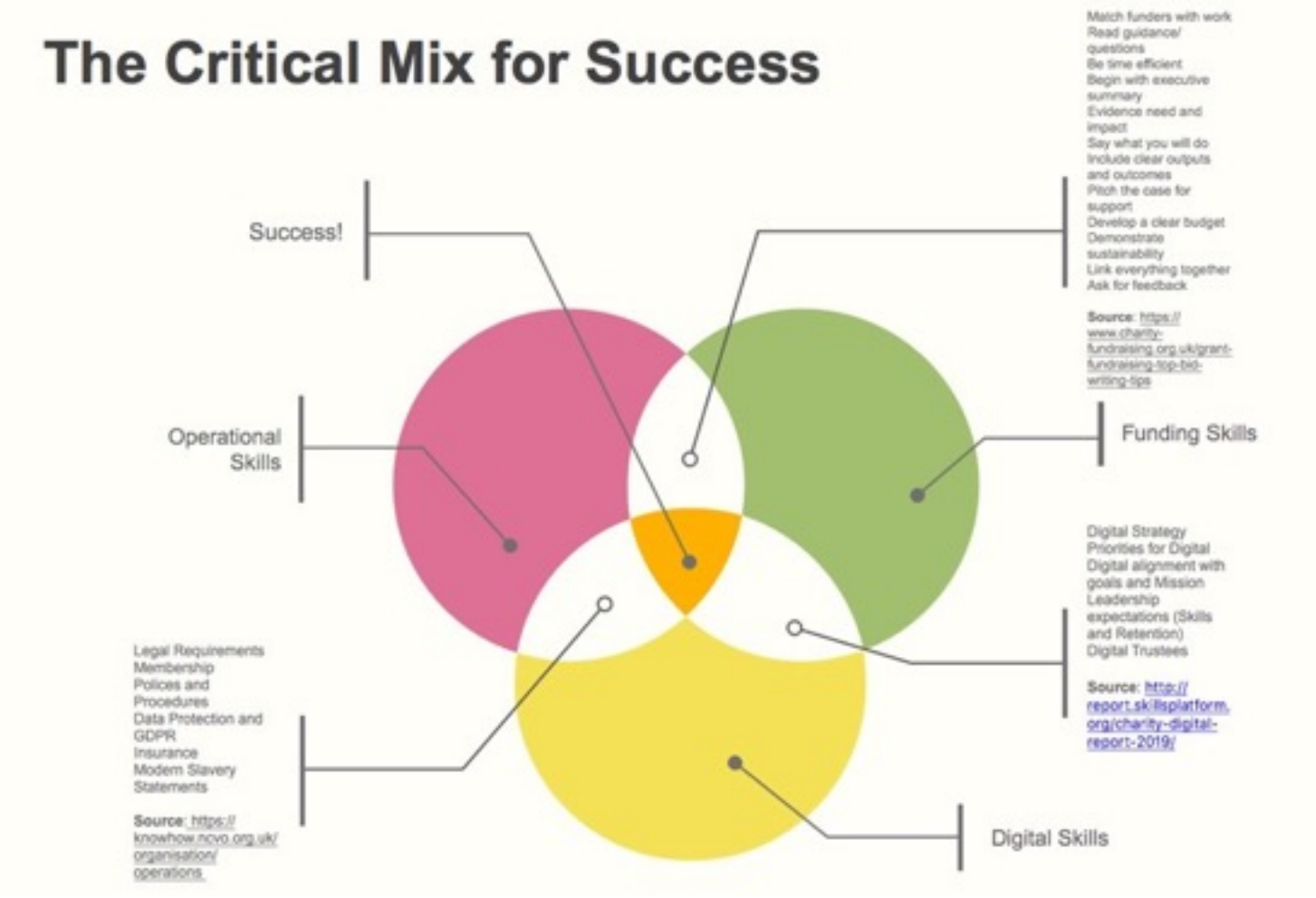


Figure 16. The Critical Mix for Success. Nassim, L (2020)

APPENDIX 5 – Digital learning and growth model



Figure 17. Fear, Learning and Growth Model. Source: Wagman, C (2020)

From the interviews conducted, charities have in the main progressed through Zones between March and August. It is fair to say that many organisations have navigated past the Fear Zone - they are Learning and looking for ways to Grow.

Zone	Fear	Learning	Growth
March 2020	45%	55%	0
August 2020	14%	45%	41%

APPENDIX 6 – VCOs & stakeholders contributing to study

	CHARITY/CIC/ORGANISATION	SECTOR	CONTACT DETAILS/CHARITY NUMBER
1	Salam Peace - Using a number of tactics to both promote the positive elements of Islam and develop opportunities for its members to volunteer, train and gain work.	Youth (Sport)	Sabir Bham sab@salaampeace.org #bethatchangewf, @BTCWF, contact@salaampeace.org http://www.salaampeace.org
2	Project Zero - Engaging young people in positive activities to promote social inclusion and prevent anti-social behaviour. Our vision is a year with zero deaths of a young person by knife or gun crime.	Youth (Gang)	Steve Barnabis, stevebarnabis@gmail.com https://projectzerowf.co.uk/about-us Twitter - @ProjectZeroWF1, Facebook - @ProjectZeroWF Youtube - Project Zero WF
3	MBilla Arts - Offering projects, workshops , classes and performances in traditional African drumming and dance, Afro-Brazilian drumming African storytelling, drama improvisation and spoken word poetry.	Youth (Arts-Dance/ Music)	Chantelle Michaux, michauxchantelle@mbillaarts.co.uk https://www.mbillaarts.co.uk Facebook - @MBillaArts
4	Make & Create E17 - Creative workshops, gifts and craft kits to encourage positive mental health and reduce stress and anxiety - especially during COVID-19.	Youth (Arts)	Zoe Watson: makeandcreatee17@gmail.com
5	MVP Workshops - Providing successful personal and social development programs in the creative arts for young people to build vocational skills and to improve self-image.	Youth (Arts - Creative)	Joanna Vasanth: samuel.vasanth@mvpworkshops.co.uk Cascade Tech (Nat and Farheen)
6	The Lloyd Park Childrens Charity -Founded to build brighter futures for local children and their families. Learning through play, we strive to understand every child, plan for their needs and work in partnership with parents to ensure that each child can reach their full potential.	Youth/Family	Wendy Fields, wendyf@tlpcc.org.uk https://www.tlpcc.org.uk Facebook - @lloydparkcc Registered Charity - 1102134
7	Ever Better Sports - Community Basketball for young people, ensuring their enjoyment and engagement and seeing them safe	Youth (Sports - Basketball)	Joshua everbettersport@gmail.com
8	The Mill - A Community Centre run by and for people in Walthamstow	All	https://themille17.org , Helen Johnston - Comms Coordinator, #TheMillOnline, Registered Charity: 1143365 info@TheMilE17.org .
9	The Blair Academy - We envisage a world where Hip Hop brings Health, Happiness and Well-being to the lives of many. Since 2018 we have engaged over 4000 people from care homes to hostel shelters with our Hip Hop dance classes	All (Arts - Hip-Hop)	https://www.theblairacademy.com theblairacademy@gmail.com Charlie Blair
10	Positive Tools 4 Life - A community-based mental health, volunteer-run organisation based in Walthamstow - aiming to support people within the community suffering from stress, anxiety and depression by providing low-cost counselling and affordable wellbeing workshops.	Mental Health	https://www.positivetools4life.co.uk/our-vision/info@positivetools4life.co.uk Helen

APPENDIX 6...continued

	CHARITY/CIC/ORGANISATION	SECTOR	CONTACT DETAILS/CHARITY NUMBER
1 1	The Brain Unwired - Mental Health support.	Youth (Mental Health)	Hadisa Awan, hadisa_awan@hotmail.co.uk
1 4	Curious Wilds - providing opportunities for people in Waltham Forest and East London to explore, connect, and have fun with nature, embracing our local urban wild spaces.	Youth	Rachel Summers https://www.curiouswilds.co.uk/
1 5	The Hornbeam Café – a community café, as well as housing the Hornbeam Community Distribution Centre serving Waltham Forest.	All	https://www.hornbeam.org.uk info@hornbeam.org.uk
1 7	Youth Engagement Coordinator - Metropolitan Police Reducing Violence Crime, and reoffending via sport	Youth (crime)	Jason Hill, jason.hill@met.police.uk https://allianceofsport.org
1 8	Break Tha Cycle - Set up in response to high increase in gang activity and YP related issues. Supporting disadvantaged children, Yp and their families.	Youth (Crime)	info.breakthacycle@gamil.com Kasima, Facebook and Twitter https://www.breakthacycle.org
1 9	Love Life Generation - Working with young people from diverse and disadvantaged communities Registered Charity: 1144539	Youth	Jasmine Danish, jasmine@lovelifegeneration.org https://www.lovelifegeneration.org
2 0	Worth Unlimited - Working with young people from marginalised communities to reach their potential.	Youth Christian	https://worthunlimited.co.uk/waltham-forest Helen Perry, helen.perry@worthunlimited.co.uk Registered Charity: 1068782
2 1	Joyriders London - empowering women by introducing them to the joys of cycling. Women – and BAME women in particular, encounter many barriers to taking up cycling. Women see themselves as less able to cycle regularly because of their age, fitness, dress and appearance.	Women	https://joyriderslondon.org Vieve Ford, info@joyriderslondon.org Facebook, Twitter, /Instagram,
2 3	The Man Den -The Man Den is a space for boys (aged 8-16) and men in our community to connect and have fun playing board games!	Family	Kevin, themanden.uk@gmail.com https://themanden.uk.com
2 4	UnLtd - Supporting social entrepreneurs in offering the best solutions to loneliness, community resilience and our nations long term economic, social and cultural health	All	https://www.unltd.org.uk SimoneWatson@unltd.org.uk Reg Charity - 1090393
2 5	LB Waltham Forest	All	Connecting Communities Network Manager Walthamstow, Hinnah Gill

APPENDIX 6...continued

	CHARITY/CIC/ORGANISATION	SECTOR	CONTACT DETAILS/CHARITY NUMBER
2 5	St James St Big Local	All	Rachel Carder
2 6	Waltham Forest Connected	All	Riley Ramone riley@dingdigital.co.uk
2 7	William Morris Big Local	All	Gabriel Anderson/Helen Holmes, devwmb@gmail.com http://wmbiglocal.org
3 2	Star Children Initiative - A home for children with disability	Grace Abimbola	https://www.starchildreninitiative.org/contact-us/
3 5	The Limes	Liz Fraser	https://thelimes.org.uk jessie@thelimes.org.uk
3 6	ELOP - East London Out Project - is a holistic lesbian and gay centre that offers a range of social, emotional and support services to LGBT communities, includes counselling and young people's services	Sarah	http://elop.org chair@elop.org Registered Charity:1067 474
3 7	32nd Chingford Scouts - providing #SkillsForLife to 10 - 14 year olds	Dan Magill	http://www.32ndchingfordscoutgroup.co.uk Registered Charity:306101

APPENDIX 7 – Discounted charity procurement

Links to free tools and resources:

- Unsplash - free image library, <https://unsplash.com>
- YouTube - 'Unlock The Space' where participating channels get free access to YouTube events, workshops and production resources <https://www.youtube.com/intl/en-GB/space/london/unlock/>.
- General and [comprehensive support](#) for the new charity sector work-from-home-force. Available here: <https://www.lightful.com/blog/digital/free-coronavirus-resources-for-charities/>
- General advice for Charities delivering public support services here <https://www.nVCO.org.uk/>
- Groop - a social business committed to supporting community groups in a sustainable way to collaborate and communicate. Providing facilities to enable organisations to schedule multi-user meetings and deliver group sessions with participants via GroopEvents. They are offering to support voluntary, charity or small businesses during COVID-19 with a free 7 day trial to Groop, including GroopLive and a 60% discount for three months – £7.99 per month. Available at <https://groop.com/new-grooplive/>.
- Charity Digital has a range of support, from software discounts and digital resources for charities to tools for managing remote teams.
<https://charitydigital.org.uk/topics/16-excellent-digital-resources-for-charities-5443>
- Salesforce is offering [free support](#) to charities tackling Coronavirus.
- Slack, Facebook Workplace, Hootsuite and many other tech companies are offering free or heavily discounted internet—and even [phone](#)—services to charities during the crisis. The full list is available here: <https://fundraising.co.uk/2020/03/18/tech-resources-to-help-fundraisers-amid-the-coronavirus-outbreak/>.
- Charities can also access tech free via the TT exchange. Available at: https://www.charitydigitalexchange.org/about_tt-exchange
- Links to Amazon Smile - offering 0.5% donation back to Charity for users/community making personal purchases and therefore supporting fund raising efforts. Lloyd Park already utilise this fundraiser.
- Charities that need help with digital initiatives (or even just IT projects) can contact the CITA (The Charity IT Association) who have volunteer IT resource who can help. On LinkedIn or at <https://www.cita.org.uk>

APPENDIX 8 – Study in-kind stakeholders & contributors

Organisation	Contact	Channel/Reach
Waltham Forest Connected	Riley Ramone	Website: https://wfconnected.org 491 Monthly Users, Average Time On Page: 1.20 82% New Visitors, 18% Returning E-newsletter - Reach 250
St James St Big Local	Rachel Carder	Website http://www.stjamesbiglocal.co.uk E-newsletter - Reach 2,000 Twitter - 1,905 followers Facebook - 787 followers Instagram - 1,274 followers
William Morris Big Local	Gabriel Anderson	Website http://wmbiglocal.org E-newsletter - Reach 2000 Twitter - 914 followers Facebook - 343 followers
Waltham Forest Council	Riley Ramone	E-newsletter - 2,000
Ding Digital	Riley Ramone	Website https://walthamstuff.com 321 Monthly Users, 91% New Visitors, 19% Returning Social Twitter - 368 followers
Crate St James Street	John Walker	Website : https://bwl-wf.crateuk.com/grow-your-business/ Instagram: 8,300 followers Facebook - 769 followers Twitter - 358 followers
Waltham Forest Connecting Communities	Hinnih Gill	
All Charities and CICs that contributed via social		Websites, Social Media Channels, e-newsletters
Lyndsey Nassim		Linkedin Blog - over 600 connections

APPENDIX 9 – Sources of local funding

Funding is currently sourced from a number of key funders and is project specific as shown in the table below. Many have recently benefitted from Emergency Covid-19 funding which has been made available from various sources,:

Organisation	Type of Fund	Available Funds
St James Street Big Local	Grants to get community projects up and running	£500
William Morris Big Local	Community Chest - available for organisations to run open events and activities that bring people together	£700
Clarion Housing	Digital Grants - available for Charities and community organisations to support Clarion Housing customers of all ages to get and stay online	£1000 - £10,000
Sport England	Community Emergency Fund	Amount unknown - On hold now due to reviewing all Covid-19 applications
	Small Grants Fund	£300 - £10,000
	Community Asset Fund	Amount unknown - On hold due to Covid-19
Comic Relief	Sport for Change	Up to £10,000
London Youth - London Community Response Fund	Supporting community/voluntary organisations facing immediate pressures and uncertainties because of Covid-19	£10 - £50,000 Wave 3 opened 1 July
National Lottery	Emergency Covid-19 Funding	£300 - £10,000
L & Q Housing Association	Helping People Thrive	Total fund £37,500 to distribute across projects
City Bridge Trust	Covid Emergency Response	£22 million collectively available

APPENDIX 9 – Sources of national funding

VCOs within Waltham Forest should also consider applying for funding, which many have not yet done. Some support mental health and Sports initiatives and others supporting organisations by offering better services to their beneficiaries by using technology:

Organisation	Website	Type of Fund	Available Funds
Big Lottery	https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk	Community Fund	From £300 to £10,000
Comic Relief and Paul Hamlin Foundation Tech	https://techforgoodhub.co.uk/how-and-why-we-changed-our-tech-for-good-initiative-in-2020	Tech for Good - Funding organisations to make digital transformation by offering better services to their beneficiaries using technology. Up to 22 June 2020	£5,000 for single organisations and £7,500 for collaborations
The Foyle Foundation	http://www.foylefoundation.org.uk/small-grants-scheme/	Small Grants Scheme designed to support charities working at grass roots, covering core costs or delivery of online digital services Open from 1 June 2020	£1000 - £10,000
British Cycling	https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/road/article/20190304-road-British-Cycling-earmarks-more-than-£2-million-for-small-scale-funding-from-the-Places-to-Ride-fund-to-transform-community-cycling-facilities-0	Places to Ride transforming community cycling	£1,000 to £50,000
Pixel Fund	https://www.pixelfund.org.uk	Focussed on the mental health and wellbeing of children and young adults	£500 to £5,000
Tesco Bags of Help	https://tescobagsofhelp.org.uk/tesco-community-grants/	Community Funds - For Charities and CICs	£500 - £2000
Co-operative Membership Community Fund	https://www.coopfoundation.org.uk/	For groups carrying out positive work in the community and a project must: address a community issue; provide a good long-term benefit to the community; support co-operative values and principles ideally be innovative in its approach.	£100 - £2000

APPENDICES 10 – National funding resources

Charities Aid Foundation

A hub for the latest funding and resources to help charities and other social sector organisations throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Available at:

<https://www.cafonline.org/covid-19-support/help-for-charities>

<https://www.fundingcentral.org.uk> - costs £60 for individuals and £120 for organisations to be a member able to access more information

https://www.edgefund.org.uk/other_funders

<https://www.artshealthandwellbeing.org.uk/resources/funding-sources>

<https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/get-involved/time-change-champions/sources-funding>

Charity Excellence Framework is offering [free toolkits](#) for charities suddenly charting un known territory, including tools for assessing risk, for rapid strategy reboot and for online fundraising. Available here: <https://www.charityexcellence.co.uk>

Small Charities Coalition Bulletin: <https://mailchi.mp/smallcharities.org.uk/coronavirus2032020>

For Emergency funding support email: support@smallcharities.org.uk

NVCO - The Institute of Fundraising and others: Back the #NeverNeededMore campaign.

APPENDIX 11 – National charities used in comparison

CHARITY/ SECTOR	INITIATIVE	MISSION/OUTCOME
Action For Children - Youth	<p>Coronavirus Children's Appeal https://www.linkedin.com/company/action-for-children/ Can't Talk, Write https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/what-we-do/children-young-people/mental-health/cant-talk-write/?utm_source=linkedin&utm_medium=socialorganic&utm_campaign=&utm_content=jkrowling Set Out for Children Challenge https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/how-to-help/make-a-donation/step-out/?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=socialorganic&utm_campaign=&utm_content=step-out-for-children-challenge. Young Carers Scheme. Partnership with Amazon providing vouchers helping to fund phone cards, art and craft supplies, wellbeing supplies, music or books.</p>	<p>Helping 387,000 children and families each year</p> <p>Fundraising campaigns, literacy support and online resources</p>
Bookmark - Youth	<p>View from the Window - increasing awareness of literacy issues in YP compound by Covid-19: https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=656525651571994</p> <p>Raising funds in absence of London Marathon: #TwoPointSixChallenge Online Reading Programme: https://www.linkedin.com/company/bookmarkreading/ Champions for Children: https://www.linkedin.com/company/bookmarkreading/</p>	<p>700,000 children in London live in poverty.</p> <p>8 children in every class leave unable to read properly</p>
The Scouts - Youth	<p>#TheGreatIndoors. Digitalising resources to support YP and their families during Coronavirus: https://www.scouts.org.uk/the-great-indoors/ Raising over £348,000 For BBC Children and Need: https://www.scouts.org.uk/volunteers/scouts-at-home/scouts-helping-others/hike-to-the-moon/</p>	<p>Helping over 460,000 young people in the UK develop #SkillsForLife</p>
UK Youth - Youth	<p>Champions For Children: https://www.linkedin.com/company/uk-youth/ Digital Resources, webinars and online engagement programmes: https://www.instagram.com/p/CA-mRj8n753/ A guide to delivering Digital Youth Work During and post Covid-19: https://www.ukyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Digital-Youth-Work-Guide.pdf</p>	<p>Helping young people facing an uncertain future. Ensuring the survival of vital youth services for young people</p>
Teach First - Education	<p>Rapidly update programmes online: https://www.teachfirst.org.uk/shut-in-not-shut-out Covid-19 School resource Hub: https://www.teachfirst.org.uk/shut-in-not-shut-out/school-resources Online panels: https://www.teachfirst.org.uk/shut-in-not-shut-out/future-terms-panel-series</p>	<p>Building a Fair Education for all - unlocking the potential in all our children, not just some</p>
Oak Academy	<p>https://www.thenational.academy</p>	<p>Online classroom delivering over 10,000 resources during Covid</p>

APPENDIX 11...continued

CHARITY/ SECTOR	INITIATIVE	MISSION/OUTCOME
Mind - Mental Health	<p>Mental Health e-learning courses for Managers: https://www.linkedin.com/company/mind_2/</p> <p>Resources to support educators during school closures: https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/twinkl-partnerships/mind-partnerships?utm_source=Mind&utm_medium=LinkedIn&utm_campaign=Twinkl</p> <p>Virtual Crafternoon online fundraiser: https://www.mind.org.uk/get-involved/donate-or-fundraise/do-your-own-fundraising/crafternoon/virtual-crafternoon/</p> <p>General blogs and videos to support all age groups and backgrounds</p>	15.9 million accessing resources and 118,000 queries answered via Helpline 2018.19
Devon Air Ambulance Trust - All	Microsoft teams is default workspace	DAAT uses operational management system Centrik to manage its air operations, safety reporting and training requirements - leading to safer and more efficient operations.
Macmillan - Cancer	Introduced a new account system and registration process with social authentication options delivering a personalised dashboard for users to manage preferences and marketing consent. The dashboard is a launch pad for relevant Macmillan offers, services and products as well as personalised content curated around and for our core audiences. In partnership with #Endava	
NCT - Family	Online NCT courses	Running 500 courses weekly for expectant parents and creating a support network of other parents having a baby at the same time
Wednesdays Child - Youth	Upgraded helpline services	Accelerated existing plans to diversify front-line touchpoints. The early launch of its essential telephone helpline services and remote support was done in partnership with technology company, DPS.

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APPENDIX 14 - Author's blog, a personal reflection

DRIVING WITH THE BRAKES ON, Lyndsey Nassim, July 2020

I'm a West London girl. Brought up in Fulham with a five-minute walk to the River Thames and the towpath to Bishops Park which became my playground as a child. It wasn't until my early twenties that my partner and I at the time, (now husband), wanted to buy a place together that we moved North of the river. We settled on Chingford. The draw was the incredible Epping Forest on our doorstep, the vibrant High Streets and markets in the local area (Walthamstow still a massive attraction as Europe's longest outdoor market) and the fact we could still be in central London within 40 minutes.

I've been an active member of the community over the last 20 years. Supporting local events and independents, keeping up to date with developments, and helping to run my local Scout Group in a number of different roles from an occasional helper to now, an Assistant Scout Leader. Our community work has seen us support the elderly by making friends in care homes, raising funds for our local church, working with a homeless charity giving out food and clothes during the winter and more recently taking donations to local food banks. But it has only been over the last few weeks that I've truly appreciated just how brilliant the Borough of Waltham Forest is. Aside from its space (one of the greenest boroughs North of the river), diversity (*62% of residents are from minority ethnic backgrounds) and culture (home to Britain's most exciting designer William Morris and Borough of Culture 2019), it is its people working to connect the community that shines through the most.

I was recently commissioned by a Charitable Trust and supported by St James Street Big Local, to work on a research project looking at the Digital support needs of small Charities and Community Interest Companies (CICs) across the borough during and post Covid-19.

The context to this, following a decade of council and social sector funding cuts many third sector organisations have emerged to fill the gap in addressing social advantage, particularly for children (**almost 36% of Waltham Forest's children live in poverty after housing costs). This level was already rising before the pandemic and is now only likely to dramatically increase placing immense strain on already stretched resources providing such valuable support.

I have interviewed around 30 organisations across social sectors - young people, mental health, gangs, domestic violence - (and many more will be involved in the research), with a focus on how much, if any, service provision they have been able to transition online since Covid-19 forced us into lockdown. Their mission of course, has always been to reach those most vulnerable but the pandemic compounded the need for an emergency response to connect with those most isolated from a new, unknown and largely unwelcome reality of social distance.

APPENDIX 14...continued

The findings are of course vital to the final report - ultimately, we're hopeful of building a case for core funding to support future digital roadmap plans. But the essence of this message is that I have been genuinely blown away by the positivity, passion, commitment, and creativity from each and every representative of these organisations - from CEOs and Directors to Community Managers and Volunteers - during the most challenging time in their history.

There has been a very loud and powerful collective, 'we can' message. They have never faltered with a dialogue suggesting that they just 'couldn't' or that it was 'too difficult'. Despite the very real challenges of the virus, these Charities and CICs have balanced managing their businesses, with the additional wellbeing needs of staff and volunteers, as well as finding new ways to reach their users and offer an alternative programme against a backdrop of reduced resource, time and funding to do so.

Although there has been an unfortunate overall decline in the number of users engaging with the Charities and CICs during Covid-19, in a few cases, the successes have seen increased numbers and new audiences across social media platforms, particularly Youtube and Facebook. Examples include Joy Riders London who have produced a number of interactive cycle route videos supporting key workers on their journeys to work and The Mill on Coppermill Lane Walthamstow and Lloyd Park Children's Charity who have transitioned online producing some excellent resources. The Blair Academy have just produced a 3 part video series designed to keep older adults active at home during lockdown combatting loneliness through Hip Hop.

And addressing, without doubt, the biggest common challenge all our Charities and CICs faced, The Salaam Peace were quick to devise a Community Response to Covid-19 - supplying a number of tablets and laptops to families who just didn't have devices at home - as well as providing a wide range of Sports equipment to enable their communities to access the new tutorials, videos and infomercials they produced and launched on YouTube. There are many more examples of triumph over adversity - a result of the sheer hard work and creativity of these incredible organisations who are connecting our community.

A big thank you to everyone who has taken part in the project so far and for your continued work to support our most vulnerable. Your work is more important than ever and we are so very grateful for all that you do.

If you work for or represent a Charity or Community Interest Company within the London Borough of Waltham Forest, and would like to be involved in the research, please complete the survey <https://bit.ly/digital-support-needs>. A final Research Report will be published at the end of August and available from the Waltham Forest Connected website <https://wfconnected.org>.

Source:

*<https://www.london.gov.uk/in-my-area/waltham-forest>

**<http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/>