

Devon Community Foundation

COVID-19 Response Weekly Briefing 21 May 2020

Hello everyone and welcome to this week's briefing. We'd like to make this as useful and interactive as possible, so welcome feedback and suggestions about content.

If you know anyone else who'd be interested in receiving the briefing, feel free to forward, and encourage those to whom you forward to email [**nicola@devoncf.com**](mailto:nicola@devoncf.com) to be put on the mailing list. Briefings will come out on a Thursday.

Click on the **BOLD COLOURED** links to be redirected to useful resources - Right click on the links if you want to open it in a separate window.



State of the Sector

Monday of this week saw the e-launch of NPC's [State of the Sector report](#). They now have data stretching back four years, and are able to identify a number of interesting trends. This report was researched and largely written before the crisis, and is therefore a snapshot of the starting point for charities before coronavirus hit.

First, a couple of significant points raised by the report itself:

Charities reported doing more, and with a fairly static funding base, before coronavirus. This raises the concern that, even before the crisis, the sector was stretching itself rather thinly, and that this of course will have been exacerbated by subsequent events.

The number of small and medium-sized charities subsidising public sector contracts through additional funds has doubled since 2017. How will this be maintained when fundraising has become so challenging?

Confidence in using digital technology had wavered recently, possibly as organisations become aware of how much they don't know. This, combined with an intelligent approach to data collection and analysis, will be all the more important as we go forward, to ensure charities are doing the right things, in the right ways, with the right people, when face-to-face feedback is in short supply.

The launch event featured some thought-provoking contributions, from which I've selected some highlights.

Here's **Diana Barran, Minister for Civil Society and DCMS**:

- the Department's priorities remain: building community, young people, and improving how government funds the voluntary sector
- there may be an increasing focus on digital skills, and on BAME communities
- government is 'not good at hyper-local', but we must build a grassroots community movement, learning from the experts
- there is a need for the voluntary sector to prioritise as we recover. This is not a popular approach within the sector, but it won't be possible to do everything.

Then we heard from **Javed Khan, CEO of Barnados**:

- This ought to be a resurgence, not just a recovery (ie, not back to where we started, but on to something better)
- The problems we are going to be dealing with will be too big to solve in any traditional way – C-19 is a catalyst for systems change, and could signal the end of 'wasteful' contractual relationships between public and private sectors, in favour of a more collaborative, co-production model.

And finally, **Duncan Shrubsole, from Lloyds Bank Foundation**:

- It is important for small charities to feed directly into policymaking
- We must do more to think through the relationship between the centre and the local

Lots of ponder here, and other thoughtful speakers too.

My first questions were:

- Should/could central government really 'lean in' to the hyper-local? Is there a danger of this destroying what is valuable?
- How can funders facilitate the contribution of small organisations to policymaking, at whatever level?

What were your responses? Would love to hear!



Spotlight on ... BAME

“COVID-19 is not a social equaliser. It is disproportionately impacting BAME communities and we need urgent action”
www.charitysowhite.org

There are a number of aspects in which it is important to consider how somebody’s ethnic origin might affect their experience of the COVID crisis, some of which obviously touch the work of our sector more than others:

BAME people are more likely to die of coronavirus than white people; the reasons are likely to be partly physiological, partly socio-economic, partly cultural. This highlights long-standing health inequalities in this part of the population. There are also concerns that interpretation and translation services may be in short supply, further impacting care.

The NHS and social care workforce has a large proportion from BAME backgrounds.

The socio-economic status of many BAME people could mean they suffer more adverse impact from the lockdown than white people – they are over-represented in public-facing occupations with a consequent higher risk of infection, and more likely to be in over-crowded accommodation, without [access to outside space](#). The [TUC](#) has plenty on this. They may also find it harder to seek appropriate support.

Migrants and asylum-seekers with No Recourse to Public Funds are especially at risk, without easy access to healthcare.

There have been incidents of racialised discrimination and harassment related to the crisis. There is of course a broader question about racism within the voluntary sector, which is made all the more urgent under current conditions. The Ubele Initiative’s [research report](#) revealed in April that nine out of 10 BAME VCS organisations are at [risk of closure](#) in the next three months. Many of these work on the front line, providing emergency response services. Their work will be critical to an equitable recovery.

The campaign group Charity [So White](#) claims that funders’ usual practices can reinforce structural racism and have led to a severely under-funded BAME VCS sector. In order to rebalance this, and to provide an effective emergency response, Charity So White urges funders to hand power and funds to those who are best placed to ensure an equitable impact on communities. So White has outlined [two simple actions](#) for funders in the emergency response.

The first call is to ensure that people with race equality expertise are involved in decision-making for funding distribution;

The second is to ringfence 20 per cent of funding for BAME VCS organisations, to be managed by BAME infrastructure organisations that have the expertise and relationships to ensure the funding goes where it needs to be.

In Devon

The 2011 census gave geographical Devon's BAME population as 2.8%, rising to 3.9% in Plymouth and 6.9% in Exeter. There are significant refugee populations in both Plymouth and Exeter, and Exeter particularly has a strong Chinese or Eastern Asian population. Outside of these urban centres, the BAME population is scattered.

In this context, there is a debate to be had about how practicable is an approach which champions BAME-led organisations working exclusively within BAME communities. Or, indeed, how desirable this would be as a funding strategy. Because of the relatively small size of our BAME population, many organisations are informal or small-scale.

A spokesperson from the [Plymouth and Devon Racial Equality Council](#) says:

"I think there are several barriers facing small groups; language of course, but also the lack of infrastructure such as a constitution and board. I was interested to see that you can have a host organisation that can manage the money for you, which is very useful."

Clearly, in areas with a very small BAME population, eligible organisations are unlikely to be available, and, arguably, a place-based approach, working with local groups who know the specific needs of their communities, irrespective of ethnic origin, might be more fruitful. Either way, this is a debate we need to have, and it is one which much be informed and shaped by lived experience. It is not a conversation to put aside as a 'nice-to-have, but we're busy right now'.

Some Devon BAME community organisations' responses

[Exeter Communities Together](#) is a partnership aimed at promoting the voice and visibility of BAME residents of Exeter. They have links to the Ubuntu counselling service, which is continuing to offer support remotely. They are distributing free meals during the crisis.

[Devon and Cornwall Refugee](#) Support Working with the Red Cross to identify vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers requiring help - the Home Office continues to send new refugees to Plymouth throughout the lockdown.

[Students and Refugees Together](#) (START) Working in a variety of ways to minimise the impact of the crisis on a vulnerable population: liaising with schools, explaining systems for accessing healthcare and benefits during social distancing, supporting mental health.

[OHOB](#) (originally Open Hearts, Open Borders – Refugee Aid) Supports refugees in Devon and Cornwall, as well as asylum seekers in camps in Greece and France. It runs a Support & Relief Fund for individuals and families for food and hygiene items, food vouchers and reimbursement for goods and services. OHOB also supports homeless projects and Plymouth foodbank. It has extended its usual provision to the wider disadvantaged community affected by COVID-19.

[Refugee Support Devon](#) Continuing to provide support and advice to refugees and asylum seekers remotely.



DCF Funding Update

Take a look at this page of our [website](#) for the latest stories relating to grantmaking from this fund.

Tiverton Cooperative Learning Partnership - £12,000

Tiverton and surrounds

Provision of dongles to enable internet access for disadvantaged students who are struggling to access online learning.

Baby Bank Network Exeter - £1000

30 mile radius of Exeter

Responding to an increased level of referrals for supporting families with provision of essential baby items, including nappies and clothing

Dartmouth Caring - £3000

Dartmouth

Continued provision of regular hot meals and food parcels to those in the community who are self-isolating or shielding, mostly older people

Families In Grief - £600

Undefined (we will direct support all referred families) An interim strategy of providing activity packs for children faced with bereavement as a means to introduce and partner remote support to replace usual home visits and group sessions

Simply Counselling - £3000

Plymouth

Repeat application for remote counselling session by phone or online for individuals and groups. Aimed at addressing emotional needs as a result of the crisis before they develop into trauma

Young Devon - £4500

Newton Abbot

Supporting and maintaining contact with young people in emergency accommodation and out of hours, to help ensure their safety and reduce incidences of homelessness

Heart of Torbay CIC - £700

Torbay

Distributing activity packs with meals and food parcels to support positive mental health amongst vulnerable people

Improving Lives Plymouth Ltd - £7500

Plymouth

Remote support for ex-service personnel and their families to continue transition support from military to civilian life, addressing isolation and loneliness

Live Music Now South West - £470

Totnes, Dartmouth, Bovey Tracey and Kingsbridge

Production and delivery of personalised DVDs to enable Memory Cafe attendees to watch and listen to familiar songs and pieces performed by musicians known to them from group sessions, helping them to feel connected with others and to stimulate conversations with those in their household

Plymouth Hope - £9800

Plymouth

Working with several ethnic communities to address lack of connectivity, isolation, food poverty, lack of educational support and to provide advice and support through trusted key community representatives



Coronavirus
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Devon Coronavirus Response & Recovery Fund



Click to donate to the national appeal



#shouldertoshoulder #GiveLoveDevon

Call for Input : Young People

Next week we'll have a focus on the impact of the crisis on need in this area, and on the organisations who work to support those affected. Please do be in touch with any stories, examples, reflections from your own experience, or with details of people and organisations we ought to talk to. Please email: insights@devoncf.com.