



# Covid-19 and the changing needs and aspirations of the Lawrence Hill community

First Survey Report  
March 2020 data

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In collaboration with the University of Bristol



## Forward: Joanna Holmes, Co-Director, Wellspring Settlement

On 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 the UK government announced a lockdown in response to the Covid-19 pandemic emergency. In the week prior to this, a partnership between community anchor organisations and Bristol City Council established community hubs throughout the city with Wellspring Settlement becoming the hub for people in the Lawrence Hill area. The community hubs would provide a befriending service to people in isolation, distribute food, collect shopping and prescriptions and provide other essential services in the community.

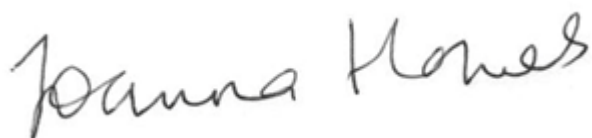
The ethos of Wellspring Settlement has always been that everything we do must be community-led. We knew that becoming a community hub would require a complete re-design of the way we provided services to local people. From the outset we decided we must understand the needs of our community in these new and challenging times. We therefore established a survey of users' needs to give us real time and ongoing community information we could use for designing and developing the hub services and to lobby for improved services the area.

In partnership with the University of Bristol we have produced this report which analyses responses from people in the Lawrence Hill area in the first month of lockdown.

What is striking about the responses from the local community is the expressed need for social contact. Many voice a sense of anxiety and sometimes fear. People express concern about their mental health as much as physical health. When asked if they wanted someone to stay in touch, the vast majority said yes, with many wanting weekly contact. The data suggests that staying in touch and social contact is one of the most important services that we can provide over the coming period. The words of one of our service users sums up well the anxieties of many:

*"..all my groups are cancelled. I have no purpose. All groups everything, my social life has been cancelled and for me that is not good, I am worried about my mental health."*

Through the coming months we will be providing regular reports that will show the needs – and the aspirations – of the Lawrence Hill community during this crisis. We hope these reports can influence future change for the good.



Joanna Holmes

Co-Director, Wellspring Settlement

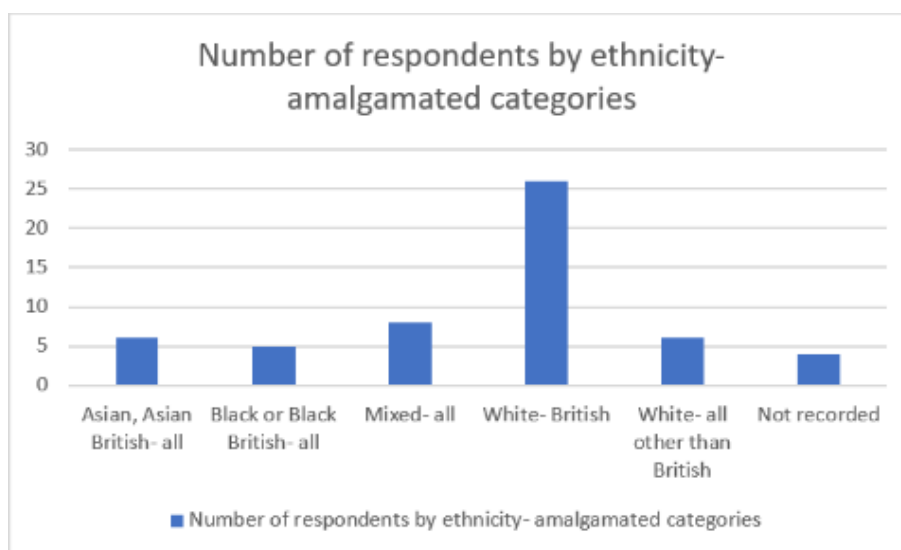
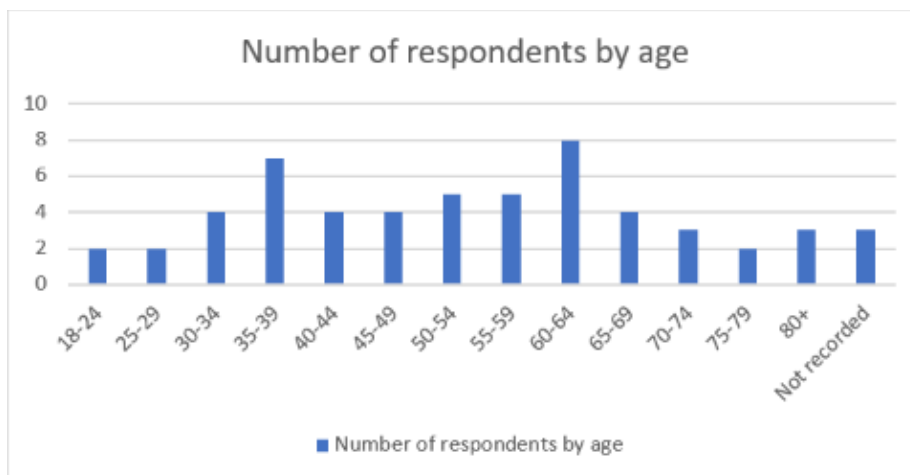
## Analysis of March 2020 Data

### 1. Introduction and Organisation of Report

1.1 55 Surveys were completed by Settlement staff following phone calls with service users between 18th March and 2nd April 2020.

1.2 Respondents by **gender**: 43 Female, 12 Male

1.3 Respondents by **age** and **ethnicity**<sup>i</sup>:



1.4 The report that follows details the responses to the questions asked in the survey (responses combined where questions were similar):

1.4.1 Section 2 analyses the data in response to the question: 'What are your immediate concerns';

1.4.2 Section 3 analyses the responses to: 'What are your concerns for the coming 2-3 months?';

1.4.3 Section 4 combines responses to the questions: 'Do you have friends/neighbours you think need support?' and 'Is there anything you can do for friends/neighbours?';

1.4.4 Section 5 combines responses to 'What can Wellspring do to help?' and 'Do you want us to keep in contact?';

1.4.5 Section 6 : contains observations on the limitations of the existing survey and ways in which the next (online survey) has been altered to respond to this and also to feedback from staff

completing the first survey.

## 2: Immediate concerns

2.1 12 people reported **no immediate concerns**. However, two of these were qualified:

- One had no immediate concerns as they were able to get out and have food
- The second was not worried because they were not going out onto the street
- One person felt much better as other pressures had been removed and she was enjoying time with her children.

2.2 8 people reported **work-related** concerns:

- Two of these were specifically linked to their mental health: one because they were on sick leave, the other was working for agency
- One appeared to have lost their job
- One reported a partner now at home sorting out work before shutting down
- One concerned about her self-employed husband, she wanted to know about benefits for people who need to stop working
- One concerned about the impact over time on their business
- Two people looking for work related concerns about libraries being closed and Job Centre Plus appointments which had been cancelled which limited their job search, alongside concern that there will not be any jobs.

2.3 20 People reported concerns to do with health, mental and physical including problems with accessing medicine:

- 6 specifically named **mental health** as an issue, one was concerned that all groups had been cancelled , 'my social life has been cancelled and for me that is not good'; another was concerned about running out of medication; another 70 year old was caring for a grown-up child with long term health problems and concerned about another with mental health problems living elsewhere
- For those who raised issues to do with physical health, their concerns often centred around dealing with existing health issues such as difficulty breathing, asthma, chronic fatigue syndrome (concerned about low immunity), Some stated they were 'at risk', though only one referred to having received an NHS letter stating this. Some mentioned help from neighbours and/or children living in the city
- 3 people were concerned about hospital treatment: one the GP had been in touch and arrangements had been made to move their care from the hospital to the surgery; another felt 'in limbo' regarding physio treatment after a hip replacement, their appointment would now will be on the phone
- 4 people specifically had concerns about getting medication: i) one has spoken to her doctor already and it has been ordered; ii) low on pain relief and would need a repeat prescription soon; iii) getting painkillers for his child- the shops were running out so is asking doctor to prescribe; iv) one was a carer for her husband but they were both 'at risk' and would need prescriptions collected.

2.4 11 people were concerned about **accessing food and other supplies:**

- Generally, it was food and 'shopping' that was raised
- 3 were worried about getting nappies of a specific size, another about getting UHT milk and baby wipes for her children
- One person was worried about running out of specific foods and drink for their child with autism who would not eat/drink anything else and the supermarkets were placing restrictions on multiple purchases
- One said she was getting ready for isolation, had a base line of supplies but would need more in the future.

2.5 10 responses related to **caring for others:**

- One person at risk from domestic violence was concerned about their child's wellbeing
- Elderly couple where wife is carer for husband and both 'at risk'
- Mother whose Daughter (with long-term health issue) was living with her
- Person in regular phone contact with mother with respiratory health problems (in 'at risk' category)
- Four responses related to school age children: would they be able to access educational information if schools are off too long as no access to a computer or internet; how to access the voucher system for children eligible for Free School Meals; how to keep up daily routines for learning at home; and another whose children were bored and missing school
- Concern about how to do shopping with small child who refuses to walk at the moment.

2.6 3 raised concerns around **accommodation and where they lived:**

- One family with small child living in a bedsit who were trying to get rehoused. One family member had developed Covid-19 symptoms and had had to self-isolate in a small area because there is no other way to keep the family safe
- One living in social housing with self-employed husband worried about rent becoming in arrears and wanted advice
- Another staying with a friend after relationship break-down had applied for a move but had no response.

2.7 **Anxiety and fear** pervaded many of the responses, and often connected to mental health concerns:

- For some their anxiety was for others they care for, their child's well-being, elderly parents with health problems getting sick
- More general concerns about spreading the virus to other people and about family and people in general getting sick. This sometimes expressed about an anxiety about going out: 'I don't want to get the virus. I'm keeping off the streets'
- One person with long-term respiratory problems reported near panic attacks in shops partly because they felt like people were thinking they have CV19, partly arising from reports of violent skirmishes in supermarkets
- This concern around sources of information was also reported by others: becoming wound up by people on social media panicking; or simply concerned that they were

only getting information from news and what others say (suggesting an anxiety about the usefulness of news reporting?).

### 3. Concerns for next 2-3 months

3.1 Many of the concerns expressed were developments of immediate problems and concerns set out in Section 2.

3.2 **Work/financial/benefit** issues echoed the concerns above about not being able to do a job search: appointments to provide help with employability had to be cancelled and handing out CVs to shops was no longer possible. Obtaining letters from the GP to support benefits claims caused concern, as concerns about buying food on a reduced budget.

3.3 Similarly with **medical issues**:

- Concerns about what to do when medication runs out and how to get repeat prescriptions
- Two women who are pregnant wondered about midwife appointments. One whose partner is a taxi driver so is in contact with lots of people, was concerned he would have to isolate to protect the family
- Those with ongoing health issues were unsure about how health support will be provided e.g. the person who had a hip replacement was worried about damage to body without physio treatment.

3.4 **Mental health** concerns centred around the problems of being isolated, summed up well by: 'I haven't worried about food just the struggle of self-isolation, spending even more time on my own. I want to get out and help people'.

3.5 5 responses centred around concerns about caring for **children and schooling**:

- 3 worried about children being bored if at home and away from school for a long time and concerned to ensure she keeps up her education. One interested in some help with home schooling
- 2 concerned about how children will be looked after if they become ill with a flare up of existing condition or CV19
- Parent of a child with autism concerned about her son's anxiety levels as he doesn't understand what is going on.

3.6 Getting **food and supplies**: the concerns were similar to those above. Those living on their own and self-isolating were particularly worried about getting food.

3.7 The lockdown measures, along with fear about contracting Covid-19, exacerbate existing problems such as living in overcrowded conditions and fear of going out into the streets.

### 4. Helping others and others who need help

4.1.1 17 either offered to help or were already helping others – this includes:

- Doing shopping and food deliveries
- Sharing Somali language explanation videos with friends/ family

- Street whatsapp group already set up ready for any needs.

4.1.2 3 others were reporting on what is happening in other organisations in the area.

4.1.3 7 said were staying in touch with friends and offering support (emotional, 'good advice') but not going out.

4.1.4 When asked about others they knew who might need help, many answered they were already helping others, or parents/neighbours they were concerned about were already being helped. However, there were a few who identified specific people or groups of people they thought needed help and were not getting it:

- Husband with heart problems and no network of support from neighbours
- Elderly mother on her own having lost her husband, another family member visits daily but they are also not in good health
- Friend with children who is working for NHS who does not have access to childcare at the weekend, as existing carer now isolating
- Friends with mental health/anxiety problems who are self-isolating and whose children have fevers and may need help.

## 5. Help and support from the Wellspring Settlement

5.1 45 out of 55 answered positively when asked: Would you like us to keep in touch over next few weeks? Some stated wanted weekly contact, 2 in a month's time.

5.2 When asked what could WS do to help, many asked for regular contact, 6 said delivery of food or supplies (1 offering to do so). There were a few more specific requests:

- How to get a computer/laptop and access to internet if schools are closed for ages
- Information about the voucher system for school dinners
- Financial advice
- A person who cannot access their money which is in a savings account and has no payment card.

5.3 One asked that the Settlement stay open as normal providing the full client support and advice services.

## 6. Observations and Next Steps

6.1 **Need for more detailed responses:** Responses from the first survey sometimes lacked detail that would be useful in designing how WS should respond – e.g. concerns were expressed about work, but generally no indication of the respondent's employment status or no detail of the nature of their concerns about work. The April survey questions have been designed with prompts to encourage the recording of more detail.

6.2 **Access to IT and internet:** Only one person raised concern about lack of access to IT or internet, which was in relation to her children's schooling. This may become more of a concern once the new school term starts and parents find they are limited in what their

children can participate in. A more specific question on digital access has been included in the April survey.

- 6.3 **Need for advice:** A few responses picked up on the need for advice – about benefits mostly. The more detailed questions in the April survey may identify more advice needs. As these come through it would be useful to discuss with UoB Law Clinic the need for legal advice. We are already responding to this through the production of leaflets on employment rights.
- 6.4 **Identifying community hopes and assets:** This first survey was designed as an immediate response by Wellspring Settlement staff to understand the changing needs of their community in the coronavirus crisis. We would hope that future surveys will also begin to identify the community's hopes and aspirations alongside needs and a question has been included in the April survey to pick this up.
- 6.5 **How Wellspring Settlement is responding:** This survey is not intended to record what action is being taken by Wellspring in response to individual service user requests. This information is being recorded through Wellspring Settlement's FOCUS database in a way that will enable analysis at a future date of all Covi-19 response work.

For more information regarding this survey and future survey reports, contact:  
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## Endnote

<sup>i</sup> Data on ethnicity was collected according to the Wellspring Settlement's monitoring categories, which are based on UK census categories. Given the low number of respondents in the black and ethnic minority categories, the data has been aggregated in the following way:

1. Asian, Asian British- incorporating: Asian or Asian British- Bangladeshi; Asian or Asian British- Chinese; Asian or Asian British- Indian; Asian or Asian British- Pakistani; Asian or Asian British- Other.
2. Black or Black British- incorporating: Black or Black British- African (non-Somali); Black or Black British- Caribbean; Black or Black British- Somali; Black or Black British- Other.
3. Mixed- incorporating: Mixed- White and Asian, Mixed- White and Black Caribbean, Mixed- White and Black African, Mixed- White and Chinese, Mixed- Other.
4. White- British.
5. White- all other than British- incorporating: White- Eastern European; White- Western European; White- Gypsy; White- Irish; White- Irish or Scottish Traveller; White- Roma; White- Other.
6. Other ethnic group- incorporating: Other ethnic group- Arab; Other ethnic group- Iranian; Other ethnic group- Iraqi; Other ethnic group- Kurdish; Other ethnic group- Turkish (no respondents in these categories).
7. Not recorded.