



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

**CABINET
Item 9
Voluntary and Community
Strategy**

9 November 2020

7.00 pm

Virtual meeting

Contact

Sandra Hancock Democratic Services Manager

democraticservices@watford.gov.uk .

01923 278377

Publication date: 6 November 2020

Cabinet Membership

Mayor	P Taylor	(Chair)
Councillor	K Collett	(Deputy Mayor)
Councillors	S Johnson, I Sharpe, M Watkin and T Williams	

Agenda

Part A – Open to the Public

9. **VCS Strategy** (Pages 215 - 335)

Report of the Voluntary Sector Specialist

Part A

Report to: Cabinet
Date of meeting: Monday, 9 November 2020
Report author: Voluntary Sector Specialist
Title: Voluntary and Community Strategy

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The new Voluntary and Community Strategy (VC Strategy) links to the ‘Watford Together’ Council Plan. In particular, the aim to: ‘Work even more closely with the Voluntary and Community Sector, to build a resilient community where people support each other’.
- 1.2 This new VC Strategy also supports the ‘Community’ work stream of the Council’s ‘Road To Renewal’ plan, which sets out how the council will focus on moving forward from Covid-19.
- 1.3 The VC Strategy also reflects the findings of the Member-led Watford and Three Rivers Trust Task Group which presented its final report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 October 2020.

2.0 Risks

2.1

Nature of risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of severity and likelihood)
VC Strategy is not adopted	Voluntary and Community organisations that support vulnerable residents will not be able to do so effectively due to lack of funding options, poor information sharing and inadequate	Adopt or amend the VC Strategy	Treat	4

	volunteer management.			
VC Strategy is not delivered	The wellbeing of vulnerable residents will be detrimentally affected by a less resourced, less informed and less coordinated Voluntary and Community Sector.	Detailed delivery plan developed in response to strategy	Treat	4
Only some aspects of the Strategy are delivered	Preventative support offered by many Voluntary and Community organisations will be less than satisfactory and may cause potential long-term health or social problems.	Annual review of progress against the plan	Treat	4

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 The Voluntary and Community Strategy is adopted.
- 3.2 That delegated authority be given to the Group Head of Community & Environmental Services to develop a 4 year action plan to deliver the Strategy, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder.
- 3.3 That, once completed, progress with this action plan is reported to Cabinet as part of the quarterly updates on progress with the Council Plan.

Further information:

Alan Gough, Group Head of Community & Environmental Services

Email: alan.gough@watford.gov.uk

Tel: 01923 278600

4.0 Detailed proposal

- 4.1 This report introduces the Voluntary and Community Strategy for 2020 to 2024 and links to the overall Council Plan. Please see the attached VC Strategy for further details.
- 4.2 There are 24 recommendations within the VC Strategy, listed below.

Post-Covid Recovery and Renewal

- 1. Review the Watford Helps triage and referral processes, to clarify the complementary roles of all signposting/social prescribing bodies, i.e. Watford Helps, HertsHelp, the W3RT Wellbeing Hub, Watford's Healthy Hub, HCNS, Watford Together, Neighbours Together, etc.
- 2. Ensure that partners at Hertfordshire County Council-commissioned service HertsHelp have accessible local information to support Watford residents effectively, and ease local services.
- 3. Consider how to work towards a long-term town-wide strategic approach to respond specifically to issues of social isolation and mental health in the community.
- 4. Build on best practice in the VCS to tackle digital isolation as part of the Council's Road to Renewal plan.
- 5. Work with W3RT to create and share accessibly a collection of case studies with innovations and best practices, developed in response to Covid-19, from the Voluntary and Community Sector.

Engaging Volunteers

- 6. Review the Watford Helps volunteer brokerage system, to clarify the complementary roles of all volunteering services which Watford residents might access, including TeamHerts Volunteering, do-it.org and W3RT.
- 7. Ensure that partners at Hertfordshire County Council-commissioned service TeamHerts Volunteering have accessible local information to efficiently help Watford residents, and ease local services.
- 8. Ensure that there is a formal process for volunteer referrals to organisations to ensure both skills and motivations are considered, and that engagement information is captured.
- 9. Coordinate approaches for the recognition of volunteers by the Council and other partners in the community.
- 10. Build on the response to the Covid-19 crisis as a basis to change attitudes to support the most vulnerable in society, by building opportunities for professional development and long-term volunteering such as trusteeship.

Diversifying Funding

- 11. Review the Watford Helps Community Fund, to clarify its role in relation to similar funds, such as HCF's Coronavirus Relief Fund and WCH's Community Development Fund.

12. Ensure that the administration of a revised Community Fund is done as collaboratively and transparently as possible. Consider support from a range of partners on this such as Hertfordshire Community Foundation.
13. Consider aligning Community Fund grants more closely to strategic priorities.
14. Consider allocating part of the Community Fund to projects lasting more than 12 months.
15. Align reporting schedules of all Watford Borough Council 'Business-As-Usual' expenditure with the Voluntary and Community Sector to ensure strategic priorities are considered.
16. Consider a full-time fundraising post, to support the Community Fund and VCS groups through the CVS.
17. Consider how to explicitly support the Voluntary and Community Sector to build financial resilience and diversify income streams alongside traditional fundraising.

Information Sharing

18. Review the Watford Helps networks, clarifying the roles of groups such as the Mayor's Volunteering Planning Group in line with the One Watford review due in December. Ensure that there is scope across Watford for VCS leaders to input to both operational and strategic discussions and decision-making.
19. Review principles of CVS approach so as to minimise any possible conflicts of interest between W3RT's support to its members and its role as a service delivery organisation.
20. Review the CVS staffing role at W3RT to ensure more WBC input with regards to strategic and operational responsibilities, with the aim to encourage long-term staff who can build up strong local knowledge and relationships.
21. Consider how to support VCS with collection, analysis and data sharing on changing needs across Watford, as part of wider approach by WBC and statutory partners.
22. Consider the groupings and 'themes' used to categorise VCS organisations as a means to link new and emerging groups to those with similar aims.
23. Refresh the CVS' KPIs on actively engaging with business so as to lay out explicit plans on how to share knowledge and skills between local businesses and the CVS.
24. Work with W3RT to create a proactive action plan to better engage with all parts of the Voluntary and Community Sector, particularly those that support underrepresented communities including those from BAME communities and those smaller groups that may not have their own physical spaces.

5.0 Implications

5.1 Financial

5.1.1 The Director of Finance comments that there are no financial implications for the Council arising from adopting the Voluntary and Community Strategy.

5.2 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)

5.2.1 The Interim Head of Legal comments that there are no legal implications.

5.3 Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection

5.3.1 As this is a new policy, an equalities impact analysis has been undertaken. The analysis is attached as Appendix 3 to this report. The main conclusions of that analysis is that the strategy will aim to actively aim to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, or any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people.

The strategy will aim to actively aim to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, or any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010 by:

- Creating a strategic approach to social isolation and mental health at Recommendation 3
- Ensuring that there is a formal referral process for volunteers at Recommendation 8
- Ensuring that there is collaborative and transparent administration of the Community Fund at Recommendation 12
- Avoiding any possible conflicts of interest at Recommendation 19

The strategy will aim to advance equality of opportunity for:

- all Voluntary and Community Sector groups, and those residents that benefit from their services, particularly those who are new and emerging; seeking to be more financially resilient; smaller or from underrepresented communities, as impact from all Recommendations
- Watford residents who seek support (particularly support with health, social isolation and digital isolation) by strengthening links between those organisations who are offering 'signposting' support, as an impact of Recommendations 1-3

- Watford residents who seek to volunteer, by providing them with a clear and thorough support, as an impact of Recommendations 6-8
- Improving support for all groups but particularly those that support underrepresented communities including those from BAME communities and those smaller groups that may not have their own physical spaces, as an impact of Recommendation 24

The strategy will aim to foster good relations between people through:

- Encouraging information sharing and collaboration among the Voluntary and Community Sector, as an impact of Recommendations 5, 9, 22 and 24
- Encouraging town-wide collaboration by strengthening links between the Voluntary and Community Sector and business, as an impact of Recommendations 17 and 23.

There are unlikely to be negative equalities impacts. The evidence base has identified the diversity of the Watford community and there is a need to ensure underrepresented VCS groups are supported and that the Watford community can engage with the voluntary and community sector across the town. Negative impacts would follow if the recommendations of the Strategy are not implemented in terms of reflecting the diversity of the Watford community.

Any future funding arrangements which come out of recommendations from the strategy will require their own Equality Impact Analysis to ensure that they are reflecting what we know about the Watford community.

There are no specific human rights implications under this report.

Having had regard to the council's obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018, it is considered that officers are not required to undertake a Data Processing Impact Assessment (DPIA) for this report.

5.4 Staffing

5.4.1 The action plan will be developed within existing resources.

5.5 Accommodation

5.5.1 N/A

5.6 Community Safety/Crime and Disorder

5.6.1 N/A

5.7 Sustainability

5.7.1 N/A

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Voluntary and Community Strategy
- Appendix 2 Survey Results
- Appendix 3 Equalities Impact Assessment
- Appendix 4 Voluntary and Community Strategy: Summary

Background papers

The following background papers was used in the preparation of this report. If you wish to inspect or take copies of the background papers, please contact the officer named on the front page of the report.

Watford and Three Rivers Trust Task Group report, presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 October 2020.



Voluntary & Community Strategy

October 2020

Foreword to the Voluntary and Community Strategy by Watford's Deputy Mayor



Welcome to Watford's Voluntary and Community Strategy

Voluntary groups in Watford have played a huge part in supporting the community in recent months. Despite the difficulties and challenges created by the Covid-19 pandemic, local volunteers, charities, faith groups and people across the town have shown creativity and adaptability to support each other. We want to do everything we can to support their hard work and this Strategy is a step towards thinking about how we can do that in the best way.

The Watford Helps partnership has shown what we can do when we work together. Over 1,700 volunteers have stepped forward, and together with Watford Borough Council staff we have made over 7,000 calls to keep in touch with our most vulnerable residents, helping them to resolve their issues and being a listening ear. Our fantastic Watford volunteers have collected over 400 prescriptions and delivered over 7 tonnes of food and PPE.

People have been magnificently generous and through the hard work of local fundraising done through sponsored walks, cycling, raffles and more, together we've raised more than £155,000 for the Watford Covid appeal. Already, more than £130,000 of our Community Fund has been distributed through our partners at Watford and Three Rivers Trust to more than forty voluntary and community groups doing urgent and important work across the town.

We want to work even more closely with the voluntary and community sector to build a resilient community where people support each other. In our Watford Together plan we promised to build upon the success of our Watford Helps initiative and harness the community spirit established during the Covid-19 crisis to work in partnership with charitable, community and voluntary organisations focused on helping our vulnerable residents live healthy, happy and independent lives. This Strategy is a step towards making this a reality.

We would like to thank everyone whose views and recommendations have helped to shape our plans. We very much value the insights and expertise of our community partners, and we look forward to working with them to turn this Voluntary and Community Strategy into action.

Councillor Karen Collett,

Deputy Mayor and Portfolio Holder for Community

Recommendations At A Glance [click to jump to section]

Post-Covid Recovery and Renewal

1. [Review the Watford Helps triage and referral processes, to clarify the complementary roles of all signposting/social prescribing bodies, i.e. Watford Helps, 'HertsHelp', the W3RT Wellbeing Hub, Watford's Healthy Hub, HCNS, Watford Together, Neighbours Together, etc.](#)
2. [Ensure that partners at Hertfordshire County Council-commissioned service 'HertsHelp' have accessible local information to support Watford residents effectively, and ease local services.](#)
3. [Consider how to work towards a long-term town-wide strategic approach to respond specifically to issues of social isolation and mental health in the community.](#)
4. [Build on best practice in the VCS to tackle digital isolation as part of the Council's Road to Renewal plan.](#)
5. [Work with W3RT to create and share accessibly a collection of case studies with innovations and best practices, developed in response to Covid-19, from the Voluntary and Community Sector.](#)

Engaging Volunteers

6. [Review the Watford Helps volunteer brokerage system, to clarify the complementary roles of all volunteering services which Watford residents might access, including 'TeamHerts Volunteering', do-it.org and W3RT.](#)
7. [Ensure that partners at Hertfordshire County Council-commissioned service 'TeamHerts Volunteering' have accessible local information to efficiently help Watford residents, and ease local services.](#)
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10. [Build on the response to the Covid-19 crisis as a basis to change attitudes to support the most vulnerable in society, by building opportunities for professional development and long-term volunteering such as trusteeship.](#)

Diversifying Funding

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Information Sharing

18. [Review the Watford Helps networks, clarifying the roles of groups such as the Mayor's Volunteering Planning Group in line with the One Watford review due in December. Ensure that there is scope across Watford for VCS leaders to input to both operational and strategic discussions and decision-making.](#)
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1 Post-Covid Recovery and Renewal

- 1.1 Review the Watford Helps triage and referral processes, to clarify the complementary roles of all signposting/social prescribing bodies, i.e. Watford Helps, 'HertsHelp', the W3RT Wellbeing Hub, Watford's Healthy Hub, HCNS, Watford Together, Neighbours Together, etc.

The Managing Director of Watford Borough Council, Donna Nolan, had only been in post around a month when the repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic began to hit at a local and national level. Working with Mayor Peter Taylor, the council reorganised itself into working 'cells'. One of the cells, a 'volunteering cell', coordinate many new initiatives, such as Watford Helps, the Watford Covid Appeal and Watford Together.

1.1.1.1 *Watford Helps*

This was an initiative – still running - to coordinate voluntary activity, encourage volunteers to sign up to support other residents, and to signpost vulnerable residents to support they might need. As part of the voluntary coordination approach, regular zoom calls took place, chaired by the Mayor, called Volunteering Planning meetings. This and other initiatives meant that groups which might not have worked closely at an operational level before began to do so, from foodbanks to faith groups to registered charities to residents' groups. This "resulted in new partnerships forming and a collective effort to make sure those most in need get help" according to a report by the LGA on the Council's response to the situation. The partnership working was an explicit aim from the beginning, as shown by a quote from Donna Nolan in the same report by the LGA: "The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the pivotal role district and borough councils play in leading and coordinating their areas at a time of emergency. Our strength comes from working alongside and understanding our communities as well as our ability to mobilise quickly and adapt to fast changing situations."ⁱ

The volunteer support and signposting roles of Watford Help were complemented by two existing services already commissioned by Hertfordshire County Council, 'TeamHerts Volunteering' (supporting volunteers), and 'HertsHelp' (a signposting and support service). Much of the work in these two areas was supported by the Watford and Three Rivers Trust, an organisation commissioned by Watford Borough Council to provide a CVS function for the town. They established a Wellbeing Hub which played a key role in supporting vulnerable residents. Staff from some of the non-CVS projects which closed during this time, such as Getting Together, were redeployed to this new Wellbeing Hub to cope with the increase in workload. It is worth noting that internally this caused some staffing changes and restructuring. Several participants who spoke to the report's author highlighted issues of capacity, and questioned the sustainability of this effort, especially in light of the fact that many paused programmes are now beginning again.

1.1.1.2 *Watford Together*

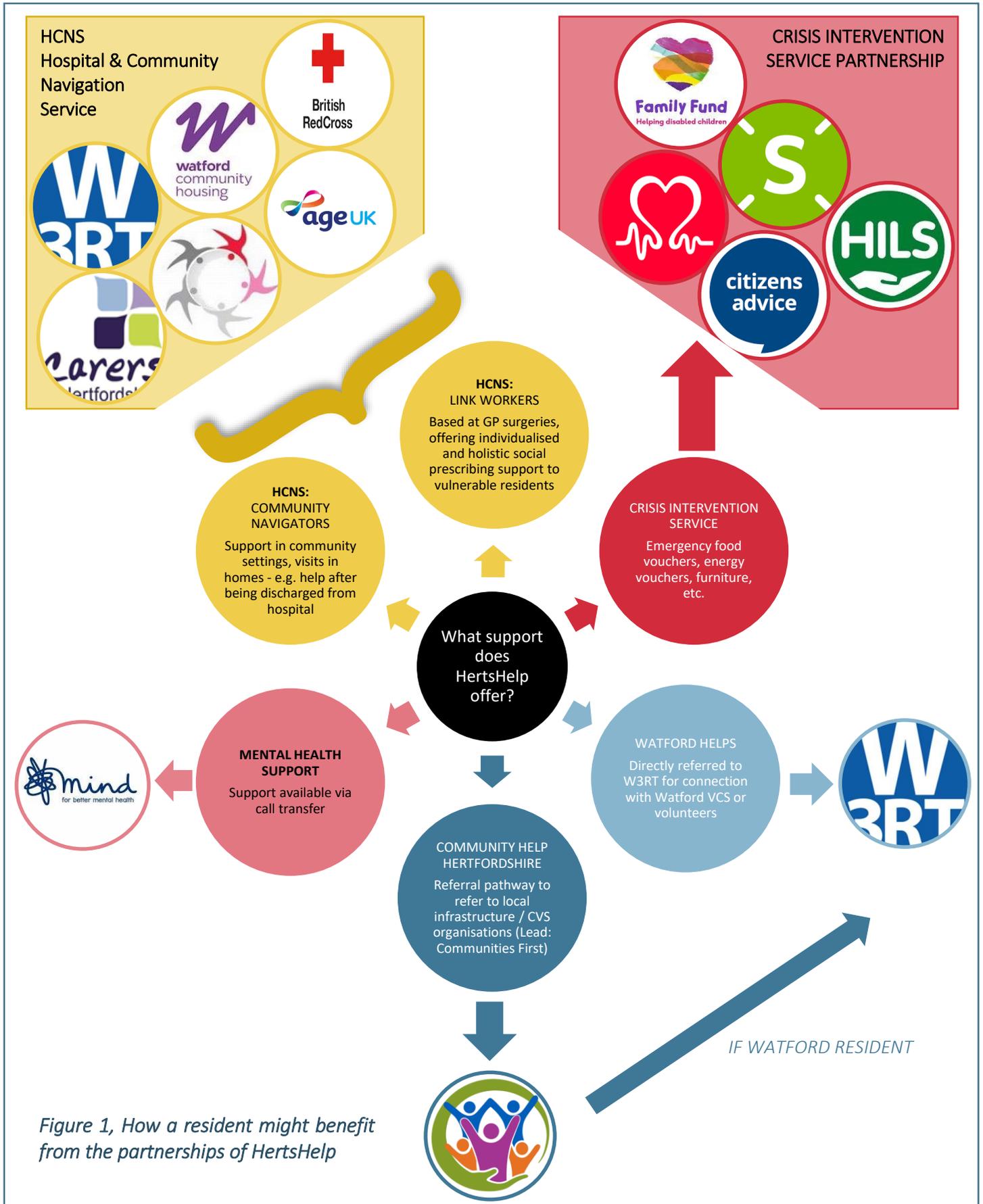
Government guidance on social distance, particularly during lockdown, presented particular challenges for the arts and entertainment sector, with public events almost immediately put on hold. Watford Palace Theatre, for example, closed for many months, but is now slowly reopening. However, Watford Borough Council recognised that cultural and heritage partners help to boost community spirit, and a new initiative, Watford Together, was created to do this. Activities have included One Town, One Book virtual book-club sessions and a writing workshop, aimed at bringing the borough together through a love of reading.

1.1.1.3 *TeamHerts Volunteering*

TeamHerts Volunteering is discussed in more detail in Section 2.1 below. However, it is worth mentioning here that one arm of TeamHerts Volunteering is the recently-launched 'Reach Out West' service. This is a hospital-to-home volunteer-led service which is operating in the Watford area, working alongside Watford General Hospital and Watford Link Workers (see 'social prescribing' below). This service offers volunteering support for up to six months for patients recently discharged from hospital who may be at risk of readmission, to promote physical resilience and prevent loneliness and isolation. Volunteers can help with shopping, pick up prescriptions, offer some light touch befriending/keeping in touch and also help to signpost to other services which might be needed.

1.1.1.4 'HertsHelp'

'HertsHelp' is an information advice, signposting and direct support service that benefits from many partnerships.





A countywide service, 'HertsHelp' is funded by Hertfordshire County Council and the two NHS Hertfordshire Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs): that is, East and North Hertfordshire CCG and Herts Valley CCG.ⁱⁱ The service existed before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic to help coordinate support for residents. It has a direct helpline which operates 7 days a week, website and email address. Staff there triage clients' needs providing direct support and/or making appropriate referrals or signposting residents to relevant support services such as help with finances, welfare benefits and debt management advice, and carers' support. 'HertsHelp' works can refer residents on for volunteer support (including shopping, medication collection, befriending, dog walking) through Community Help Hertfordshire (see below) and to an intervention service for people in crisis to include food, energy costs and other essentials. It can also refer on to home visits by Community Navigators, part of the HCNS social prescribing service (see below), who help people to identify and access community support that will help people to maintain their independence, health and wellbeing.

'HertsHelp' has a series of working partnerships which can benefit a resident needing support, as demonstrated above in Figure 1. It is part of the HCNS partnership (Hospital and Community Navigation Service) along with Age UK Hertfordshire, British Red Cross, Carers in Hertfordshire, Dacortium, Watford Community Housing Trust and W3RT. It is also part of a Crisis Intervention Service Partnership with Family Fund, The Samaritans, British Heart Foundation, Hertfordshire Independent Living Service (HILS) and all Hertfordshire Citizen Advice Bureaux. Its partnership with Mind also means that callers can receive mental health support via call transfer.

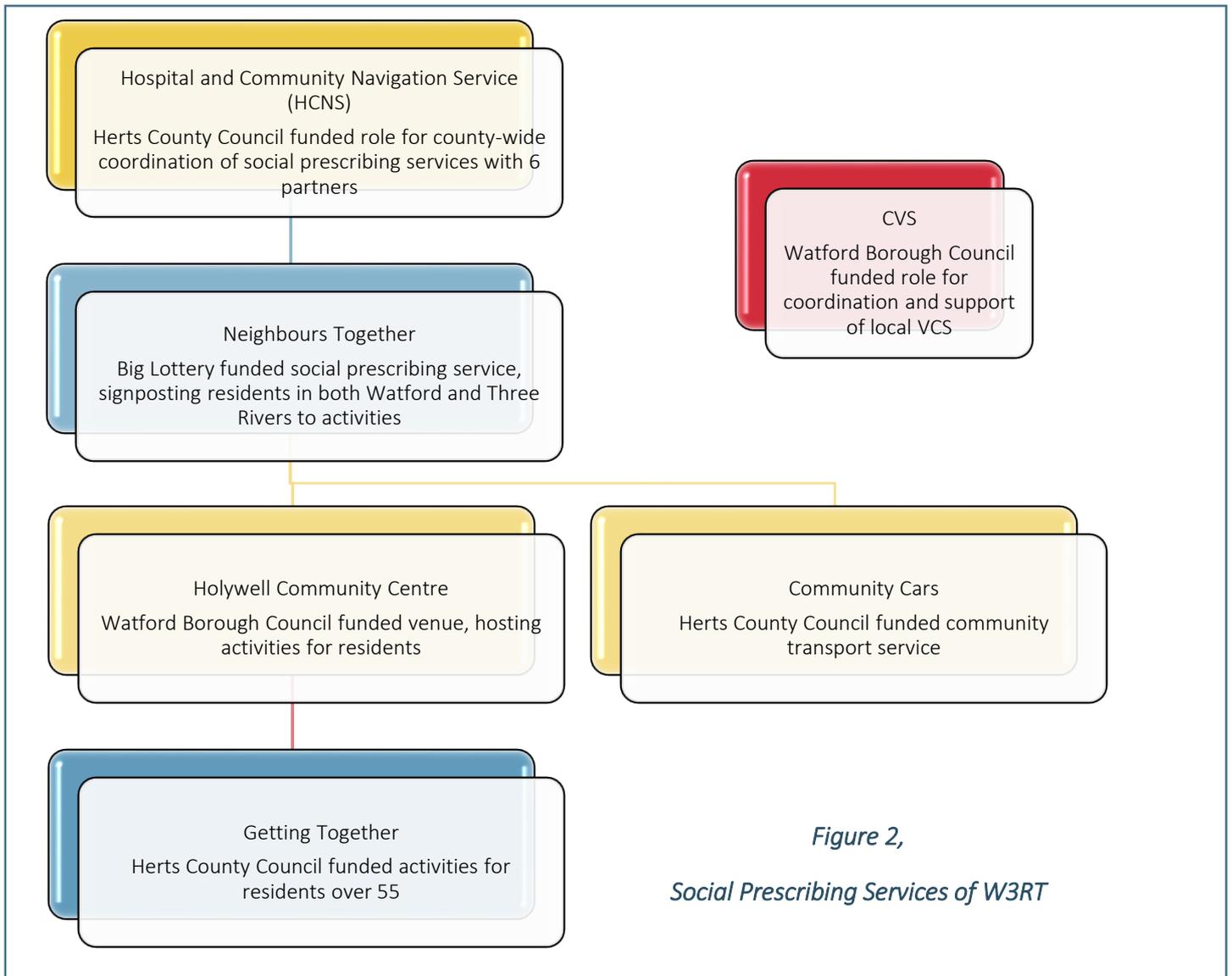
A network of voluntary sector infrastructure/ CVS organisations in Hertfordshire began working together to support local communities during the pandemic, called Community Help Hertfordshire. Led by the organisation Communities 1st (commissioned by St Albans and Hertsmere to provide a CVS service) the network has become a referral pathway for 'HertsHelp' meaning that residents who might benefit from guidance at a district level can be directed to their local organisation. In practice, Watford residents are directed directly to W3RT, rather than via CHH.

1.1.1.5 Social prescribing

The above three entities - Watford Helps, Watford Together and 'HertsHelp' - are only three of many which a resident in Watford can approach directly to be 'signposted' to other support from either statutory or Voluntary and Community Sector organisations. Prior to the impact of Covid-19, there were already various bodies doing this type of signposting either informally, or through a formal social prescribing model.

Social prescribing is a model, often used by the NHS, in which nominated link workers such as those working in GP surgeries can refer people to support in the community in order to improve their health and wellbeing. As the model has grown, the type of roles held by link workers, known sometimes across the UK as Community Connectors or Community Navigators, has extended beyond GPs to other people in the community, such as librarians, social workers or simply trained volunteers. Although much of the legal and statutory Public Health responsibilities lie at a Hertfordshire County Council, rather than Watford Borough Council, level, the work done by social prescribers will be key to Post Covid Recovery and Renewal at a local level. Indeed, those who are closely connected to the community are not only able to offer support to residents, but also share information to Public Health officials. The Public Health Director of Walsall Council has spoken about working with community associations, voluntary sector bodies, housing groups, local businesses - even hair dressers and gym instructors - to model and champion good practice on social distancing and engage with NHS Test and Trace, including calling round to share news on local positive tests.ⁱⁱⁱ

The work of community leaders and well-connected social prescribers therefore remains vital, and for this reason it is recommended here that the Council and other partners work in closer collaboration on this issue. It is particularly relevant in Watford because Watford and Three Rivers Trust (W3RT) carry out a variety of services in this area alongside their commissioned CVS role. This is why W3RT has two separate websites: <https://w3rt.org/> and <https://www.mywellbeing.community/>. A couple of participants who engaged with the author of this report questioned the reason for the different websites, suggesting that the latter does somewhat duplicate the work of 'HertsHelp' and may offer a layer of confusion for residents seeking help. The new Communications Officer at W3RT has clarified that the former is primarily to offer information to Voluntary and Community (VCS) groups, and the latter is for residents themselves. Since the work of W3RT is multi-layered, a diagram has been included below for clarity.



*Figure 2,
Social Prescribing Services of W3RT*

1.2 Ensure that partners at Hertfordshire County Council-commissioned service ‘HertsHelp’ have accessible local information to support Watford residents effectively, and ease local services

A poll carried out in June by the NHS Confederation’s Health and Care Women Leaders Network showed that 72% of respondents believed their job was having a greater negative impact than usual on their mental wellbeing as a result of Covid-19, while 52% said the same for their physical health.^{iv} Although of course staff who work directly in health services are currently in highly stressful situations, it is not unlikely that colleagues in the Voluntary and Community Sector working with vulnerable people, and an increased workload over a long period, might also be at risk of burnout.

This is one of the reasons that many organisations who have been approached for support have attempted to signpost residents to longer-term or more specialised support – in order to create some community resilience. Many groups spoke about their concerns that groups already vulnerable are becoming more so through isolation, and though they do not turn them away they hope to encourage them to find other means of support, for example, asking if friends or family might be able to support them. The balance is a difficult one. In Watford, various VCS organisations such as Sewa Day and One Vision have created leaflets which they put into their food packs. The leaflets have details of helplines and information for residents, for example with benefits advice or mental health support.



Despite these creative solutions, as the situation created by the Covid-19 pandemic may continue for many months to come, many local organisations, such as W3RT who run a recently set-up Wellbeing Hub, may need to assess whether the support and service they offer is sustainable. It is for this reason that this recommendation - to make better use of existing services such as ‘HertsHelp’ – is a key one.

‘HertsHelp’ is discussed in more detail above (Section 1.1.1.3) and is delivered in partnership with many other Voluntary and Community organisations. Its lead organisation is POhWER. It oversees the Hertfordshire Directory which holds the information for around 12,000 organisations across Hertfordshire including non-profit, private and statutory. Around 1000 of these organisations fall under the ‘Care and Support’ section of the directory, of which most are provided by the Voluntary and Community Sector, including many day centres, support for older people, and so on. Callers to ‘HertsHelp’ may be referred to W3RT if there is no information about an appropriate Watford group in this directory, in the hope that W3RT will know of one locally. Whilst ‘HertsHelp’ usually employs around 16 staff, in the past few months there has been rapid short-term recruitment with staff rising to around 60 due to a surge in demand.

In order to ensure that local demand for Watford Helps and W3RT is managed well, it is important that residents are able to access the full offer of services that ‘HertsHelp’ offers. This means that referrals from HertsHelp to W3RT should be kept to a minimum because the Directory is kept up to date (it is annually refreshed) but also that all signposting organisations are made aware of the different offers and services that it can offer in order to use it to its full capacity.

1.3 Consider how to work towards a long-term town-wide strategic approach to respond specifically to issues of social isolation and mental health in the community

When speaking with groups, many of them spoke – without being asked – about their concerns of long-term isolation would have on some of their beneficiaries. Unsurprisingly, and reflecting surveys done in other parts of the UK, the number one issue which came up on Survey Question 3 – regarding issues where a recent increase in the number of people seeking support has been noted – was mental health. Across is the graph showing mental health support as a clear area where demand is growing according to Voluntary and Community Sector partners.

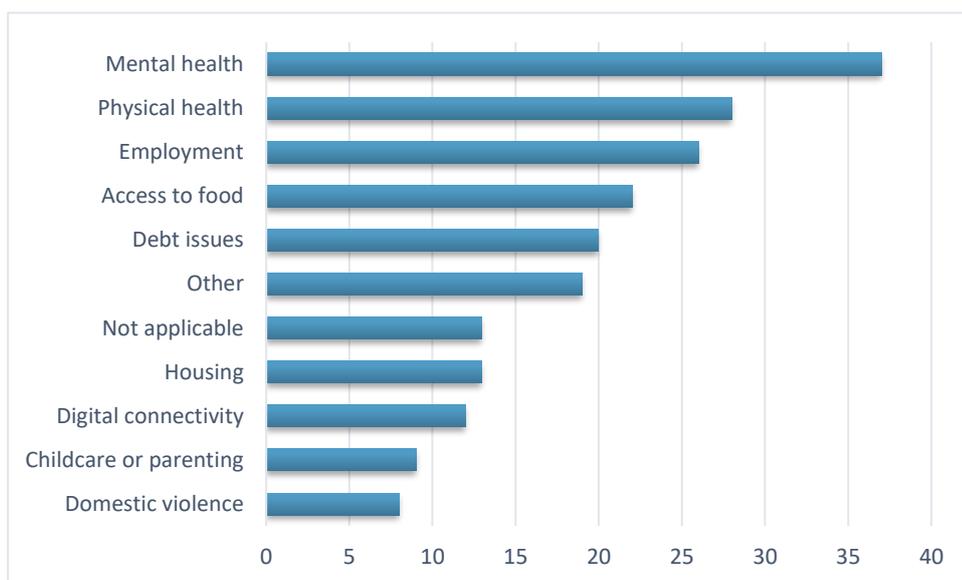


Figure 3, Respondents to the survey question: "Tick any of the issues where you have seen a recent increase in the number of people seeking support (only if your organisation deals with/ sees any of the issues below)".

74 out of 77 survey respondents answered this question, with 37 of that 74 (50%) selecting ‘Mental Health’.

In comments for this question, various respondents also explicitly listed isolation / loneliness and another listed suicide prevention. The charity Mind have said that amongst the general public young people, key workers and people who live alone seen biggest dips in their mental health.^v This issue, along with the others raised, will merit proper attention and strategic response.



The cause and effects of social isolation and/or mental health can be varied and often cut across statutory and voluntary service areas. For this reason there is an opportunity to approach the issue strategically from a town-wide approach. Examples of whole system approaches can be seen in, for example, the Lambeth Living Well Network Alliance^{vi}. However, unlike the unitary local authority Lambeth Council, Watford Borough Council does not have responsibility for all health and social care concerns of its residents. However, one participant praised the excellent work done by the Council and its partners to develop a Dementia-Friendly Town. It is therefore possible that a similar town-wide strategic approach to respond to issues of social isolation and mental health might be a beneficial approach.

As part of the Healthy Hubs initiative in Hertfordshire, Watford opened its Healthy Hub virtually on 1 May 2020^{vii}. It involves a number of VCS partners such as Mind and Watford's Women's Centre. Developing and promoting this will be important going forward, and this may be a quick way to begin working with the Sector and other partners on this area.

Certainly, as Winter approaches, the nature of Covid-19 as a virus which affects the respiratory system means that there is a risk of increased rates of infection compared to the 'first peak' in Summer. It was announced on 31 October that England would go into month-long lockdown from Thursday 5th October at least until 2nd December because of an increase in case numbers. This, combined with the fact – raised by one participant – that many university students will be returning home for Christmas, having themselves already had a less than satisfactory university experience, means that there may well be an increase in mental (as well as physical) health demands over the festive period. One organisation, Brick by Brick Communities, has been funded to reach out to support the African Caribbean Community to help them improve wellbeing over Winter as 'Winter Warriors'. The focus of the project will be on Early Intervention, Prevention and Self-Management.

This type of project should complement the Winter prevention work that Hertfordshire County Council will be leading on to work with all 10 districts for a consistent and co-ordinated approach to cold homes. The County is hoping to receive a small amount of money for each district from NHS Charities to help local charities support the most vulnerable. This should link in with the longer-term Population Health agenda which aims to create a partnership approach across the NHS and other services including councils, schools, the fire service, the voluntary sector, housing associations, social services and police. The agenda acknowledges that all have a role to play in addressing the interdependent issues that affect people's health and wellbeing'.

1.4 Build on best practice in the VCS to tackle digital isolation as part of the Council's Road to Renewal plan

Voluntary and community groups have been incredibly creative in the way that they have responded to government guidelines on social distance, and especially when these restrictions were at their most strict during the 'lockdown' which began in March 2020 when residents were asked to stay indoors as far as possible. Groups have responded with a mixture of carefully social distanced face-to-face activities and online activities, everything from individual counselling to tai chi lessons via platforms like Zoom. Pump House Theatre ran volunteer-led Watford Fringe Festival ran from 1-31st October with a blended combination of online and socially-distanced events. Their online work has been accessed by over 2000 people. The Watford African and Caribbean Association have been delivering a Black History Month programme of events virtually. Many organisations have used technology systems that had to be set up almost overnight, and staff have had to become up-to-speed with new approaches in a very short amount of time.

Online delivery is of course not without its disadvantages. Areas of concern raised relate to a) accessibility to hardware like phones and laptops, especially where a family is large, (b) access to the internet where the usual outlets like libraries are closed and/or Pay As You Go accounts on phones are limited, (c) ICT literacy, especially for older people. There was also concern raised in an online workshop about accessibility for different groups, such as those with different sensory abilities, and also for non-English speakers. One participant, from a group that supports residents with disabilities, said *'People think the internet solves everything, but there will always be some people that need face-to-face support, or at least someone sitting with them at a computer.'* The issue of digital isolation is in Watford Borough Council's Road to Renewal plan and work is underway in this area.

Meanwhile, some VCS groups have been using a mixture of ICT and traditional post to positive effect. Sewa Day began the ‘Spread Some Joy’ campaign in which they asked volunteers and school children for pictures and letters to send in emails to residents in care homes. These were received enthusiastically and the organisation was delighted to receive responses by residents writing back or even painting pictures. With these relationships established, some residents in care homes began knitting ‘scrub bags’ to for Sewa Day distribute to households in need. This mixed approach works well to connect younger and older people, and may be a model for future intergenerational work.

Quick Case Study – digital meets paper



West Hertfordshire Hospital NHS Trust have begun using a mixture of digital and paper to connect friends and relatives of patients who are unable to visit them in hospital. Residents, as long as they know the full name, date of birth and ward of the patient, can now email a message to the patient experience team, who will print out the message, even with a photo, and ensure it's delivered to the patient.

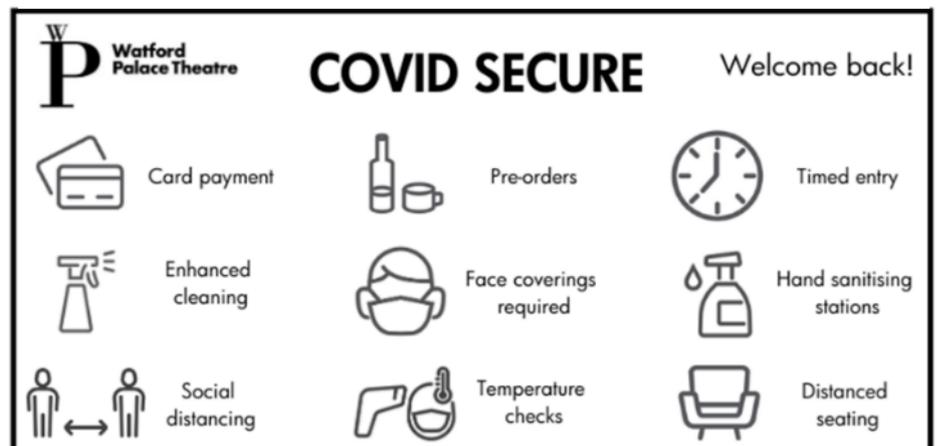
1.5 Work with W3RT to create and share accessibly a collection of case studies with innovations and best practices, developed in response to Covid-19, from the Voluntary and Community Sector

While many organisations have worked creatively to provide digital and online support, many have tried to listen to and respond to the wishes of residents who are keen to return to face to face activities. While phone calls and virtual activities have been helpful to many, some groups reported that they still did doorstep visits to check on some of their beneficiaries. *“Not every volunteer is going to get them [vulnerable residents] to talk. Often they would say they were ok, but it’s only when you’re on their doorstep that you realise something’s wrong,”* reported one participant. Another reported that a serious safeguarding issue was only spotted after several virtual calls.

Another organisation made the very important point that face-to-face services are vitally important not just directly for the beneficiaries they support, but often for the family and carers that support them. Without them, family may be unable to work because of full-time care duties, and also suffer themselves long-term because of stress and fatigue.

However, there are challenges: Many volunteers are older themselves and therefore may be more vulnerable during the Covid pandemic. Others are simply, understandably, hesitant to work in groups during this time. Where face-to-face support is in place, the nature of the Covid-19 pandemic means that transport has become a big issue for many groups, with the risk increased for residents travelling by public transport to day care services – and this is especially problematic for those who might, for example, have learning difficulties and struggle to adhere to government health & safety guidance. In some cases, for example where anxiety is a barrier heightened by the pandemic, residents will not travel to access support simply because the route itself seems too challenging. During online discussions, participants also explained the need for more guidance on the best way to work with small groups, and examples of best practice, as well as clear guidance on government legislation, for example around the ‘Rule of Six’ and other exemptions.

Figure 4, Health and safety precautions put in place at Watford Palace Theatre





Despite these challenges, many local VCS groups have responded creatively to existing social distance measures. Watford Workshop have given their users a pack which includes washable face coverings, with different colours for different days of the week. Watford Palace Theatre are reopening and have put a variety of new health and safety precautions in place, as shown in the infographic at Figure 4.^{viii} The Pump House Theatre too has managed to reopen, helped by the donation of Germicide UV lights decided to kill airborne viruses. The group One Vision hoped to mark a face-to-face 'Harvest' day to help stock their food supplies on 4 October, but with major events limited, they held a Drive Through And Drop event instead.

Quick Case Study – offering face to face activities safely



Nicky and Maria at CathARTic work with many vulnerable residents and have been in touch almost daily with their usual service users during lockdown, but were keen to connect face to face when government guidelines allowed, to avoid long-term isolation. They have now begun face to face activities again, but worried that many of the individuals they work with – such as those with dementia - would become stressed or agitated by being forced to wear face masks. Therefore, rather than dismiss reopening as too much of a risk, they decided to manage the risk differently. Here's how they did it:

- *We worked closely with the venues we were going to work with. We even asked them to provide us with copies of the floorplan, so we could to plan out how to measure out social distances in advance.*
- *We decided to set up regular sessions at regular times in order to help our users familiarise themselves as soon as possible to a regular routine, to support their mental wellbeing at having to adapt to changes. This meant we also had to ask venues for their cleaning schedules!*
- *We prepared our materials carefully in advance, planning out who would touch what. We could no longer allow users to share paint brushes and pots, and had to make up separate packs for each user.*
- *We decided not to require users to wear face masks, but that meant we as facilitators have to wear full PPE including masks, gloves and aprons. This is fine for us but at the very beginning of sessions we stand well back from everyone and briefly remove masks only so as to show our faces and our smiles. We find that to be very reassuring and help sessions go well.*
- *We worked closely with Watford Borough Council's Environmental Team to draw up a lengthy risk assessment that had various versions. It took some time but was ultimately very worth it.*



2 Engaging Volunteers

2.1 Review the Watford Helps volunteer brokerage system, to clarify the complementary roles of all volunteering services which Watford residents might access, including 'TeamHerts Volunteering', do-it.org and W3RT.

'Operation Shield' was the name given to the work undertaken by NHS and other partners to contact the most extremely vulnerable in the country and ask them to register their need for support. 18,000 people are on the extremely vulnerable list in Hertfordshire. 'Operation Sustain' was the name to the mobilisation of residents and voluntary sector to support anyone that has been affected by Covid-19, is self-isolating and/or vulnerable but who is not on the Operation Shield list. As of 5 May, over 10,000 volunteers had been recruited across Hertfordshire via the three key recruitment organisations working collaboratively on this: 'TeamHerts Volunteering', Watford3RT and Communities 1st. The number deployed at that stage was 4,030.^{ix}

'TeamHerts Volunteering' is a countywide Hertfordshire service providing information for individuals who want to volunteer and for charities or similar organisations who are looking to recruit and manage volunteers. It is commissioned to do this by Hertfordshire County Council though it is managed by North Herts CVS. In recent months they led a social media campaign to encourage more volunteers to sign up, as seen here. During lockdown, 'TeamHerts Volunteering' focused all its efforts on placing volunteers in roles exclusively to help those affected by coronavirus.



Figure 5, TeamHerts Volunteering social media campaign to recruit volunteers

Watford residents that approached either 'TeamHerts Volunteering' or Watford Borough Council to volunteer were directed to W3RT to help match them to local roles in the community. The role of W3RT as a provider of volunteer support therefore directly grew exponentially in the last few months as part of its response to the Covid-19 crisis. Over 1,000 volunteers had come forward by May 2020. This was a very large increase in the workload of W3RT and no extra funding was provided locally for this. In order to consider ways forward in terms of shared responsibilities, it might be advisable to consider a standard such as the 'Investing In Volunteers' standard^x which is made of nine standards, see below.

1. The basis for volunteer involvement
2. How the organisation resources volunteering
3. Diversity in volunteering
4. Steps taken to protect volunteers
5. Fair recruitment procedures
6. Volunteer induction
7. Volunteer support and supervision needs
8. Recognition of volunteer contributions.

It should be noted, though that the 'Investing in Volunteers' standard is relatively expensive. The website does say cost varies for each organisation but that 'for a small to medium sized organisation with less than 100 volunteers, 1-10 volunteer roles and based within one office, the cost of the IiV package would be around £2,205 + VAT.' It might be, then, that W3RT and/or WBC feels unable to justify this cost they might simply use the standards above as a starting point for richer discussions on ways forward.

While volunteer brokering itself may lie long-term more with ‘TeamHerts Volunteering’ than W3RT, alongside complementary digital tools such as the national do-it.org website – which itself is soon due to launch an updated app - some of the areas listed in the Investing in Volunteering such as ‘support and supervision needs’ and ‘recognition of volunteer contributions’ are areas that W3RT alongside the Council and other partners can continue to share best practice on.

2.2 Ensure that partners at Hertfordshire County Council-commissioned service ‘TeamHerts Volunteering’ have accessible local information to efficiently help Watford residents, and ease local services

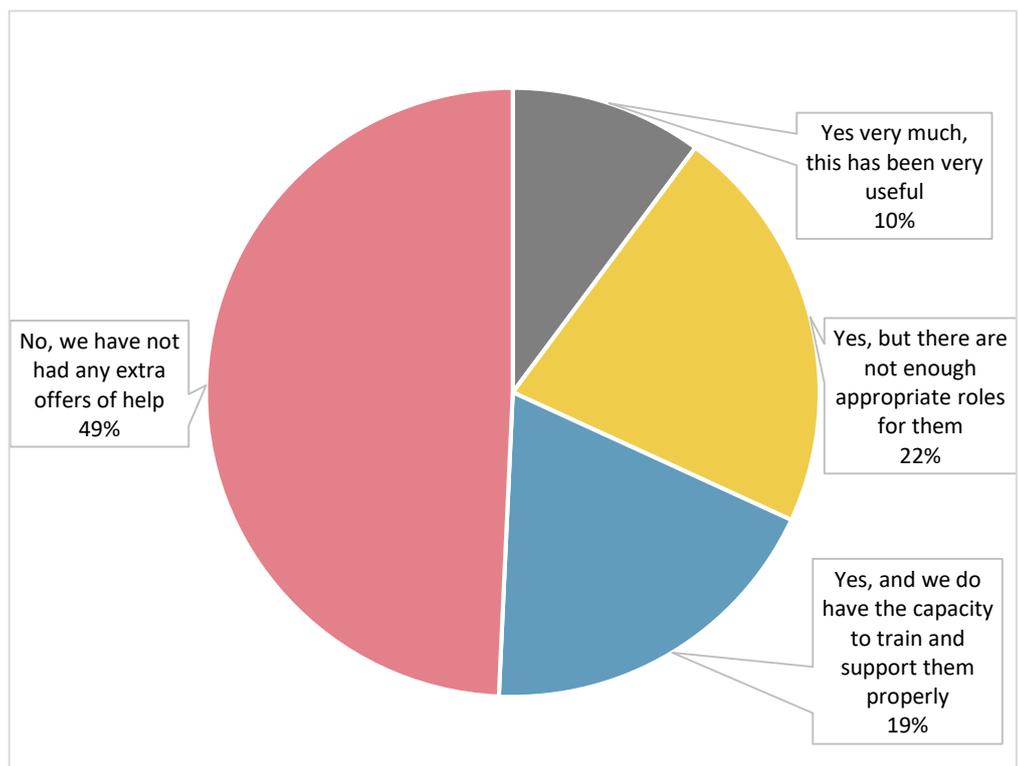
The ‘Watford and Three Rivers Trust Task Group’, a sub-group led by local Watford Councillors who compiled a report for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Watford Borough Council, 22nd October 2020, made a series of recommendations regarding W3RT and their response to the Covid situation. One recommendation was that “W3RT should ensure that connections with local partners and statutory bodies are maintained in order to maximise the number of volunteers locally”. Although the focus of the Task Group was W3RT, it would be advisable for all bodies working in this space to strengthen their connections, and this includes ‘TeamHerts Volunteering’, the countywide volunteering body.

VCS organisations reported that whilst the ‘lockdown’ period caused isolation for some residents, especially those shielding, it simultaneously had an effect of freeing up time for others: through saved time on long commutes; through needing to stay in their local area; being furloughed; made redundant; learning online only or otherwise just keen to busy themselves in new ways under the change of lifestyle the lockdown caused. Hence as well as as many more vulnerable residents needing support, there were also many more people willing and able to supply that support as volunteers. (However it should also be noted that many long-term volunteers who supported residents face to face were no longer able to do so, particularly older volunteers or others shielding.)

Watford Borough Council encouraged volunteers to sign up via their ‘Watford Helps’ initiative and volunteer numbers swelled massively. Volunteers were directed to W3RT. Simultaneously ‘TeamHerts Volunteering’ began directing volunteers who lived in Watford to W3RT. Altogether around 1700 new volunteers were recruited in the space of a few months. The sheer number directed to W3RT meant that capacity was stretched.

At first, W3RT responded to potential volunteers one by one, until officers of WBC encouraged them to send mass group ‘holding message’ emails and acknowledgements. One local councillor, speaking at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, said “I am not blaming W3RT, but they were overwhelmed.”

Figure 6, Respondents to survey question, 'Have you had an increase in the number of residents offering to volunteer with you in the last months?'



One organisation reported that even though they needed volunteers they had to chase W3RT several times, and the six volunteers that they were eventually connected with in June had first expressed an interest in March. However, discussion with W3RT on this point demonstrated some miscommunication: whilst groups sometimes requested names and contact details of volunteers, W3RT's process requires job roles or descriptions to be first drawn up (e.g. driving skills) which can then be sent to potential volunteers, who in turn then give consent for their details to be passed on. If these roles are not clarified there may be delays in the process.

This may explain, then, why despite the large number of residents who volunteered to support others, around half of those who responded to the survey conducted said they did not receive news of any extra offers of help (see above). By ensuring that 'TeamHerts Volunteering' have details of as many Watford VCS organisations as possible, it may be that they can help take some of the load going forward, and will no longer have to rely on referring to W3RT to identify suitable local matches.

As regions across the UK go into local lockdowns, volunteers from Spring and Summer may wish to volunteer again. One participant suggested that the database of those volunteers could be used effectively as a 'pool' to return to, and W3RT have said that they are planning to do this. This may lead to a situation similar to that of the Team London volunteers, many of whom joined as a result of the London Olympics, who continue to be managed by the Greater London Authority and are still offered a variety of volunteering opportunities. If this idea is implemented, W3RT will need to work closely with 'TeamHerts Volunteering' to ensure details are shared according to GDPR guidelines, to be accessed as needed.

Another reason to coordinate efforts closely with 'TeamHerts Volunteering' is to ensure that contact with potential volunteers is maintained, however infrequent, to keep them engaged and ascertain if their availability has changed. This will ensure that some volunteers will be able to be 'called up for service' at short notice if needed.

2.3 Ensure that there is a formal process for volunteer referrals to organisations to ensure both skills and motivations are considered, and that engagement information is captured.

Unlike 'TeamHerts Volunteering', whose sole aim is to recruit and support volunteers, and regularly post individual roles via Twitter and other forums, W3RT are not a direct volunteering service. W3RT has been funded in the past to provide a Volunteer Centre type model, but this has now ended and leadership are clear that they do not want to return to this model. The Volunteer Centre model is seen as less effective than other approaches, i.e. linking together volunteer coordinators of local groups, rather than brokering roles for individuals. That is, W3RT in the long-term are happy to promote volunteering but not necessarily play a key part in managing individuals' volunteer journeys.

The commissioned CVS programme of work at W3RT includes the following outcome: "Voluntary and community sector organisations are better equipped to run their organisations and build resilience and sustainability". However, although performance measures are recorded in terms of queries from volunteers, there are no specific KPIs in terms of volunteer brokerage. Options then are:

- Volunteer brokerage KPIs could be added to an amended CVS Service Level Agreement with W3RT in collaboration with WBC staff.
- A decision could be made to rely far more on 'TeamHerts Volunteering' to coordinate volunteering, with future volunteers directed there.
- Alternatively, a budget from HCC to recognise and support volunteers on a local basis would no doubt be used effectively.

It could well be that a combination of A and B would work well – with W3RT having explicit aims around supporting volunteers (not the brokerage part) and 'TeamHerts Volunteering' to be used more effectively for volunteer brokerage. At the moment the roles can overlap: W3RT usually has an annual Volunteer Fair, for example, which did not go ahead this year because of Covid-related restrictions. 'TeamHerts Volunteering' however had their very first virtual Volunteer Fair on the 30th September, with 10 organisations presenting their volunteering opportunities through video presentations followed by question and answer sessions.

In the future, whether it is WBC, 'TeamHerts Volunteering' or W3RT who are brokering the majority of volunteering roles in Watford, it is clear that a formal process may need to be established. If this can show engagement through tracking key milestones, (for example: date of signup, date contacted, date matched to VCS group, date match confirmed, date of safeguarding checks if necessary, first day in role, etc.) then there will be far richer data to analyse and make better recommendations for the future.

Alongside the milestone tracking above, it is recommended that the feedback from volunteers themselves is taken into account. This can be done via a survey to them directly, asking – among other things - how they were used and whether they felt they were appropriately matched to their role and tasks.

Systems may evolve organically but at the risk of causing delays and issues. In the circumstances, given the unique circumstances of the fast-moving Covid-19 pandemic, at the same as processing hundreds of volunteer applications, W3RT this Summer also to some degree creating the processes with which to do it. Whilst they have occasionally linked long-term volunteers to VCS organisations, the fast-moving nature of changes in government guidelines on social distance, and identification of vulnerable residents, meant that where there were short term or one off 'microvolunteering' opportunities (e.g. deliver a single package) that the organisation was not set up to efficiently respond to.

VCS groups created roles/job descriptions which they passed to W3RT, who posted these on a webpage to which volunteers could apply. [<https://www.mywellbeing.community/volunteer-opportunities>] This sort of traditional matching for long-term volunteering rather than faster methods is perhaps why the new and emerging informal groups and Mutual Aids which popped up on Facebook and other social media channels like Nextdoor often bypassed WBC/W3RT's volunteering channels. They were able to share opportunities in a quick and timely manner, using not just social media but also often WhatsApp. (W3RT did later begin to use WhatsApp with volunteers.)

Of course – as pointed out by several participants – the other reason local groups have popped up and been able to act so quickly with volunteers is because less intensive or specialised tasks, often favoured by Mutual Aids (such as food delivery) require little training or specialist skills, reducing the time needed for onboarding, and short-term tasks – such as sorting groceries in a foodbank – may not require time-consuming safeguarding and DBS checks.

Various IT solutions are now available to more easily match volunteers with requests for help. Indeed the national website do-it.org are soon to launch a new app. Some of these may well be worth exploring.

2.4 Coordinate approaches for the recognition of volunteers by the Council and other partners in the community.

2.4.1.1 *'I'm not a volunteer but...' - Donations, fundraising, special deals*

Watford residents have been incredibly generous in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst many might not call themselves 'volunteers', those who participated in fundraising for the Community Fund, or in donating food and other goods, have all played a key part in supporting the community. Local businesses too have donated time, goods, spaces. Various groups, for example, mentioned the generosity of local printers offering them free or greatly reduced rates in order to print flyers and leaflets. National organisations with local branches such as supermarkets or even manufacturers have also contributed to the community effort.

2.4.1.2 *The value of volunteering – wellbeing and inclusion*

Many of those who lead smaller organisations, or new and emerging groups like Mutual Aids, are in fact volunteers rather than paid staff themselves. As such, the role of volunteers in Watford not just as an essential support to many of the Covid response operations but also as a strategic lead in many cases should be acknowledged. VCS organisations spoke passionately and gratefully about the hard work of their volunteers, with one group calling them "silent soldiers". Existing organisations have been inspired by the fresh energy of new volunteers, and the selflessness and dedication of Watford residents who have offered support at short notice, during evenings, sometimes weekends, and despite personal risk to themselves (albeit managed).



Equally, it is clear that volunteers themselves benefit in terms of increased wellbeing. One participant said she felt the volunteers she managed were ‘getting something back’ in terms of mental and social stimulation, and renewed confidence. Another participant spoke about the positive experience he had of seeing groups of families interact, including some quite young children, whilst packing bags to distribute to vulnerable residents. Many tasks are also accessible to volunteers with disabilities and the author of this report witnessed the inclusivity of one group’s approach, as those with physical disabilities were supported to sort food. Another participant said they are attracting volunteers from different social demographics – perhaps because those traditionally volunteer have spare time because they are financially well-off, whilst those volunteering in this crisis now have ‘spare time’ because of furlough, redundancies or other situations.

2.4.1.3 The need for engagement

Many groups noted that volunteers seem younger than those that usually approach them (perhaps because of the issues around health vulnerabilities and the Covid-19 virus). One participant said that this resulted in an ‘instant gratification’ mindset of some younger generations, especially those who have grown up with digital technology, with volunteers expecting to be immediately onboarded. Indeed, W3RT reported that there are a significant number who originally signed up to volunteer but have since no longer responded to communication. This makes the pressure to maintain their interest and engagement even greater for voluntary and community groups. Once connected with an organisation, communication techniques vary but informal methods seem favoured with newer groups, i.e. WhatsApp or social media rather than email. One organisation reported having a WhatsApp with 150 people, others with only strategic members.

Quick Case Study – engaging volunteers

Dina at Sewa Day managed to source a lot of food to send out, but needed volunteers to help pack and send it all out. Here’s how she did it:



- *I try to work collaboratively as much as I can with other organisations. This is the third venue we’ve been offered this year! So word gets around. We’re really grateful.*
- *We try to reach out as much as possible. We ran a campaign called ‘Spread Some Joy’ where people could send pictures and letters to older people in care homes. To our surprise people wrote back! We really enjoyed seeing all the letters and paintings they’d done. It is really rewarding work.*
- *I love our volunteers. They’re amazing. I call them our “silent soldiers”. We find them from all over – from W3RT, from other organisations, from everywhere. We also tell a lot of people what we do to find vulnerable people – so emails, leaflets, Facebook – and people hear about us that way.*
- *We really enjoy working together. We have a lot of fun. I’m really lucky: All the people I work with are doing it for the right reasons, with the best intentions, and it means we all want to do our best. I love it.*
- *We’re open to swapping and sharing volunteers. If we hear about another organisation doing a big effort to do something like pack bags, we’ll get in touch and offer to come and help them. Our volunteers love this because it’s something different. And then when we need help they can send volunteers our way too.*

2.4.1.4 Possible approaches to engagement and recognition

Proper engagement is therefore crucial: at the onboarding stage of a volunteer’s journey; during their work; and to recognise their huge efforts during or after their commitment. Recognition of volunteers is important because it encourages other volunteers to step forward. At present this is done through a variety of means, such as the Local Hero Awards, the Audentior Awards, Volunteers’ Week, Watford Borough Council certificates, social media campaigns and more. In some ways the diversity here is appropriate, as while some volunteers are motivated by recognition and validation, others – as one participant reported – are actively discouraged by any kind of spotlight on them and prefer to work in the background.



In light of the special situation that Watford has been through in 2020, it may be time to refresh the processes of recognition and better coordinate the local approach. One WBC officer suggested that one way to align awards might be to have a 'volunteer of the month' and then have a special Audentior Award in which one of these is honoured particularly – but all participants are automatically on the shortlist.

2.5 Build on the response to the Covid-19 crisis as a basis to change attitudes to support the most vulnerable in society, by build opportunities for professional development and long-term volunteering such as trusteeship

Organisations greatly value the large number of volunteers who have stepped forward to support them with tasks which require a relatively small amount of supervision, such as bag packing. However there are organisations whose work requires staff and volunteers to have either specialised skills or to undergo a significant period of training – for example, those groups who work closely with physically disabled residents, or those working with residents with a variety of complex needs like homelessness and substance misuse. Organisations gave examples of how they have been training volunteers in the altered circumstances. Home Start, for example, now have 'remote only' volunteers, and have been offering them online training so that they can support residents via the internet/phone. One YMCA also now have weekly inductions and trainings of volunteers so that they can quickly upskill those volunteers that approach them. DRUM have been using students from West Herts College, who are studying Health and Social Care, as volunteers, and this not only enriches the students own learning but was described as helping to keep things 'young and vibrant'. The students at DRUM were particularly credited with helping with social media campaigns.

One participant spoke at length about the need to provide proper CPD (continuous professional development) for volunteers as well as for staff. The recent report by Danny Kruger MP goes one step further and suggests that volunteers should be redirected as necessary to take on duties of public service, such as VCS trustees, but also as magistrates and Special Constables.^{xi} In this way, the legacy of volunteering could build wider than the VCS sector to help to change broader attitudes and build a new societal norm to support the most vulnerable in society. One participant said in the survey "The cultural tide is running towards individualism and commercialising every aspect of daily life. People do not see themselves as being active participants in their community and neighbourhood." 'TeamHerts Volunteering' is supporting the recruitment of trustees, particularly young trustees, and is linking up with Hertfordshire Community Foundation and others for its Hertfordshire Trustee Conference on 2 November 2020.

This longer-term approach to volunteering (rather, perhaps than the short-term brokering) may be an area that W3RT can support. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee W3RT Task Group recommended that "W3RT needs to clarify its long-term strategy for recruiting and sustaining local volunteering activities". At a strategic level Watford Borough Council may wish to support this by, for example, joining international partnerships to learn from best practice, such as the 'Cities of Service' movement. Swindon, for example, has been part of this since 2014 and has helped isolated older residents to stay independent through the Swindon Circles initiative which galvanises the interests and availability of local volunteers.^{xii}



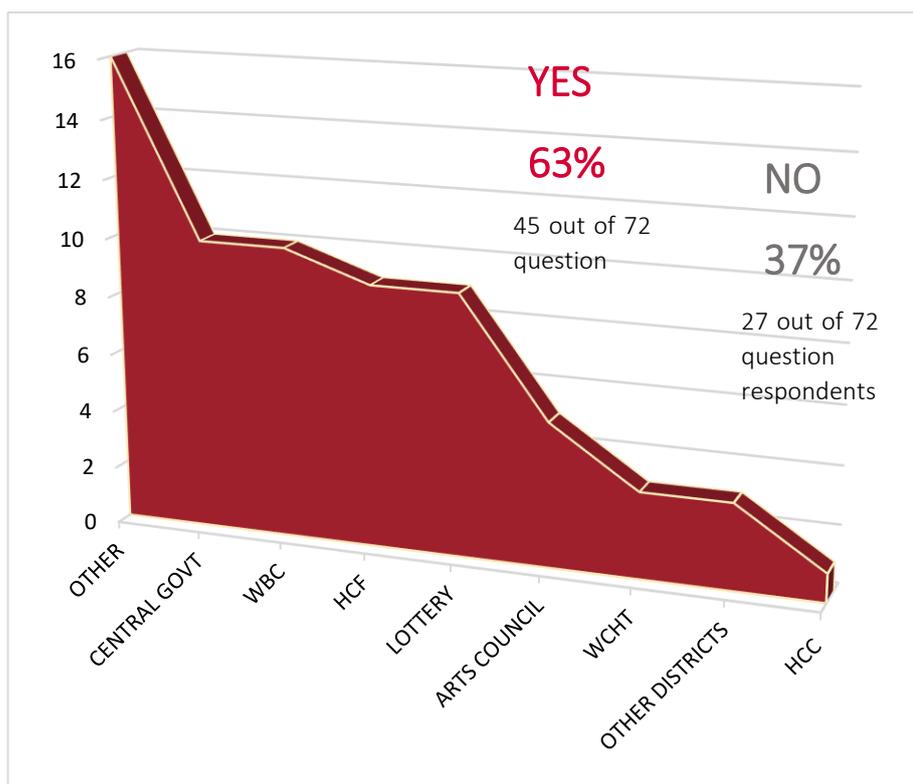
3 Diversifying Funding

3.1 Review the Watford Helps Community Fund, to clarify its role in relation to similar funds, such as HCF’s Coronavirus Relief Fund and WCH’s Community Development Fund

Much has been written about Covid-19 and its financial impact on the Voluntary and Community Sector. A June 2020 report based on research conducted by NCVO, the Institute of Fundraising, and Charity Finance Group, with support from PwC, showed that respondents from the charity sector reported an expected reduction of 24% to their total annual income: a potential £12.4bn loss of income if the average was applied to the sector as a whole nationally.^{xiii} With this impact in mind, the W3RT-distributed Community Fund was supported and promoted closely in 2020 by Watford Borough Council. With a key donation from Camelot (£100,000) and various other community fundraising efforts, the fund grew to more than £155,000. Of this, around £125,000 has so far been allocated to around 50 local organisations across Watford and Three Rivers. (See Section 3.2.1.4)

Watford Borough Council’s Overview & Scrutiny Committee W3RT Task Group recommended that “The Community Fund should be established as a lasting pillar of support for Watford’s voluntary sector.” If this tremendous effort is to be continued, it is worth considering its place in relation to other available funding. Below is a graph indicating – from the 71 respondents to a particular survey question – where local VCS groups have sourced Covid-related funding. It is worth noting that the majority have successfully sourced this type of funding (62%) and of these, the most popular source is central government (10 groups), followed by Hertfordshire Community Foundation, the National Lottery and other Watford Borough Council sources (9 groups each). Certainly it may be worth unpicking which, if any, groups received two types of WBC funding. In addition to this, an exercise to explore the nature of these other funding sources, to better understand how the Community Fund can complement them, will be useful. That is, are the other funding sources short or long term? Will they still be open for applications in 2021 and beyond? Do they have criteria which limits which kind of groups can apply? By carrying out this exercise, the Council will be best placed to work out how to support local groups – and thus local residents – in the most useful and effective way.

Figure 7, Responses to Survey Question: Aside from the W3RT Community Fund, have you received any other Covid-19-related funding? If yes, from where?



OTHER 'Bank', Herts Sports Partnership, Homeless Link, 'Individuals', Neighbourly, NHS Commissioning, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Resonance, Sports England, Tesco, Watford BID, and 'Various trusts and foundations'	16
CENTRAL GOVERNMENT Bounce Back Loan (x2), Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme ('furlough'), Retail Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund (x3), Small Business Grant Fund	10
WBC Watford Borough Council, e.g. Mayor's Small Grants Fund, Neighbourhood Locality Fund	10
HCF Hertfordshire Community Foundation	9
NATIONAL LOTTERY	9
ARTS COUNCIL	5
WCHT Watford Community Housing Trust	3
OTHER DISTRICT COUNCIL (North Hertfordshire District Council, Three Rivers District Council, Hertsmere Borough Council)	3
HCC (Hertfordshire County Council)	1



3.2 Ensure that the administration of the Community Fund is done as collaboratively and transparently as possible. Consider support from a range of partners on this such as Hertfordshire Community Foundation

Many local authorities have not directly funded their local voluntary and community sector in the way that Watford Borough Council (WBC) have. By working to source funding from a wide range of donors, both individual and corporate, the Community Fund raised over £155,000 of which £125,000 has already been distributed.

On the W3RT webpage for the Community Fund^{xiv} the following is written:

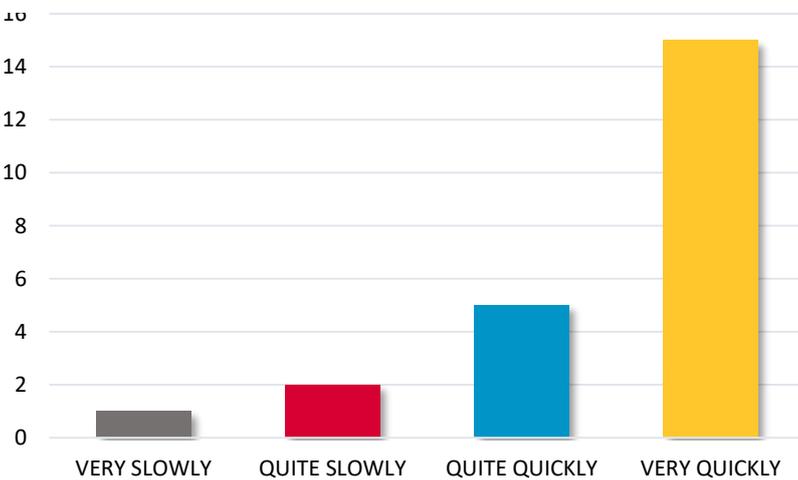
Once applications are received, they will be:

- i. reviewed to ensure they are clear and include sufficient information (will may raise questions with you);*
- ii. checked to ensure the needs identified are priority needs and cannot be addressed through existing projects or funding;*
- iii. assessed to ensure that the organisation is well placed to deliver the activities, will work in partnership with others, and can deliver the planned outcomes at good value;*
- iv. shared with key local partners for comments;*
- v. passed to W3RT trustees with a recommendation to fund wholly, partly or not at this time.*

We anticipate that steps ii) – v) above will take approximately 7-10 days.

3.2.1.1 The speed of fund distribution

Figure 8, Responses to the Survey Question: *If you received funding from the W3RT Community Fund, how quickly did you receive your funding? [Excluding 'Not Applicable']*



Since the Community Fund was originally part of W3RT, and usually distributed by them, it simply grew this year and therefore continued to be distributed by them. The large jump in the amount of money they were distributed did not stop them distributing the funds promptly according to survey respondents. Of the seventy-three who responded to the question on speed of funding, fifty chose 'not applicable', and of the remaining twenty-three the vast majority (fifteen) said they had received their funding 'Very Quickly' as you can see in the chart across.

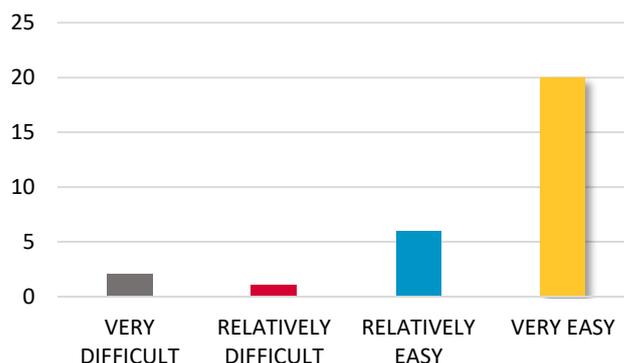
One participant reported that it took 7-8 weeks to receive funding from the Community Fund after an application, which they deemed to be too long, especially given that they were a registered charity. This may have been due to the fact that at one stage W3RT and WBC did decide to ask all organisations applying for funding to do with provision of emergency food to apply around the same time, in order to make a comparison around the same time. Groups that may have applied earlier, in this case, would have therefore had to wait until all other 'food' bids were in. Survey comments on this question varied: One respondent said "application and decision took about a month" whereas another said "Applied March 2020 and received funding July 2020". Officers at Watford Borough Council have said that the delays may have been due to the fact that W3RT spent some time liaising with groups where there was need to clarify areas in their applications. That is, although step siii) – v) will take approximately 7-10 days, the first step can take longer. W3RT apparently highlighted to officers when applications were taking longer and why, although this was largely done on an informal basis. Going forward delays are probably best formally recorded, if only on a spreadsheet.



3.2.1.2 The support offered to applicants

Figure 9, Figure 8, Responses to the Survey Question: If you looked into the W3RT Community Fund, how easy do you think the application process was? [Excluding 'Not Applicable']

Of the sixty-nine who responded to the question on the ease of the application process, forty chose 'not applicable' and, of the remaining twenty-nine, again the majority were very positive: twenty said that it was "Very easy with lots of support and guidance available."



An optional sub-question was offered, 'What might have improved the application process?' One comment had the following ideas: 'Someone to phone to discuss the application to make sure they understood properly the impact the proposed project could have. A much better application form. Proper and detailed feedback with offer of support to bridge the gap. Being linked with someone doing same or similar project.' A phone number and email was provided on the application form for questions but this may have been missed. Nevertheless the idea about 'being linked with someone doing same or similar project' is an interesting one and addressed more fully in Section 4.5 of this report. (W3RT have said, though, that when applications were received one of the first questions that might be asked of applicants is 'Have you spoken to other groups doing something like this already?')

These ideas may prove useful. In terms of making a 'better' application form, it is unclear what this might look like: certainly the form is clear and brief. At only 2 pages long, there are only three main questions:

1. What need is this grant intended to address?
2. How much money is sought and how will it be spent?
3. How will you demonstrate the impact of your work?

Given the relatively small amounts of funding available, and the fact that many groups responding to the Covid crisis may have been new to funding applications, the brevity of the form seems appropriate. If the fund grows and changes format, it may of course be necessary to review this.

3.2.1.3 The decision-making process

The list of recipients from the Community Fund has not been widely published, although some of those funded are listed at the Watford Covid Appeal webpage^{xv}. A list of those funded up until September 2020 is at 3.2.1.4 below. The criteria for applicants' projects is listed on the application form. That is:

- The fund is open to support activities that are 100% charitable
- The fund is open to support activities that are carried out by any legally constituted group. All groups are expected to show that they have good governance and management arrangements and will work in partnership with other groups or services.
- Funds will only be allocated to support work in the area of Watford and/or Three Rivers.
- The fund is to support either: a) groups that have adopted new ways of working to meet the needs of existing service users (b) groups that face costs to ensure the resumption of their normal activities (c) groups that have undertaken new work or new projects to meet the needs of prior service users or the wider community (d) groups that have developed a new service or activity that can help Watford recover from the Covid-19 crisis.

One respondent to the above survey question remained unclear about the reasons that their application had been turned down, despite – as was confirmed in an Overview and Scrutiny Committee discussion – the fact that all groups have right to ask for feedback. A couple of participants shared concerns about the criteria used, particularly around the governance criteria, and shared their perception that there was a need to adopt a certain governance structure in order to be funded. W3RT have said that they require groups to be legally constituted and to operate legally, or that they work with individuals to mitigate risks. It may be that there is a need for more explicit clarification on this last point.



Legally, the final decision around which groups will be awarded funds from the Community Fund must currently be taken by W3RT trustees, but in practice the decision over the last few months has been reviewed first by W3RT CVS staff, which is then reviewed by the W3RT Chief Executive, which is then reviewed again by Watford Borough Council officers or the Mayor, and then finally W3RT trustees. However since the W3RT staff, WBC staff and W3RT trustees might change each time, it may be best to review this. To maintain and deepen confidence in the Fund, decision-makers should perhaps be explicitly named going forward, and their reasons formally recorded. When the Community Fund was originally created around 6 years ago (in a much smaller form) at W3RT, decisions were then taken by committees of three people – the previous Mayor, a W3RT trustee, and a member of the community such as the Chief Executive of Watford Chamber of Commerce. If the Fund is to move forward it may well be that decisions can be scheduled regularly and taken by a committee such as this, rather than decisions taken as and when applications come in.

At present, the Community Fund application form asks for: the organisation's name; charity number (if applicable); name of lead contact; address; email; telephone; website; date of application; bank details. It is recommended that going forward more information is required in order to properly monitor the reach of the fund. At the moment, equalities information is not requested. Examples might include: Is the Headquarters of the organisation based in Watford? ; Is the turnover of the organisation less than £10,000/ between £10,000 and £1 million/ over £1 million? ; Does the organisation aim specifically to work with groups affected by any of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation)?

Going forward, if the fund is to grow and develop, these processes will need to be as robustly explicit and transparent as possible. It may be that organisations specialised in grant-making, such as the Hertfordshire Community Foundation, might be able to advise or help manage the fund.

W3RT did approach some organisations from underrepresented communities about applying for funding. Some of these never applied, and of those that did there was no expectation that their application would be successful. The need to spend money at pace meant that equalities monitoring was felt to be an extra barrier for groups. However, W3RT have said that will be carrying out a full evaluation of the way they have funded groups, and have also asked Herts Equality Council and Brick by Brick Communities to work with them on their work in this area, that is, grant-making, but also on wider areas such as reaching all communities (see Recommendation 24).

3.2.1.4 Community Fund recipients

As of the third week of October 2020, 40 groups have received funding for Watford projects so far. No group requesting funding over £5000 has received the full amount requested. This in itself may be worth reviewing – although the words “in most cases, we think it unlikely we will make a single grant of more than £5,000 and most will be substantially smaller” is on the Community Fund website, going forward more specific limits to different amounts may help guide applicants. Below is the list of those funded as of the third week of October 2020.

1	Cathartic CIC	21	Playskill
2	Community Learning Partnership	22	Pump House Theatre
3	Disability Watford	23	Random Cafe
4	DRUM Watford	24	SEWA Day
5	Eastbury & Moor Park	25	Small Acts of Kindness Trust
6	Electric Umbrella	26	SPACE
7	Gokula	27	Sri Guru Singh Sabha Watford
8	Guideposts Trust	28	The Bowley Charity for Deprived Children
9	Hand On Heart	29	The Dan Tien Performing Arts Studios
10	Headway Hertfordshire	30	The Living Room



11	Herts Equalities Council	31	Watford CAB
12	Herts Inclusive Theatre	32	Watford COVID Support group
13	Herts Mind Network	33	Watford Elim Church Manna Project
14	Herts Musical Memories	34	Watford Food Bank
15	Homestart Watford and Three Rivers	35	Watford Mencap
16	HOPE	36	Watford Women's Centre
17	New Hope	37	Watford Workshop
18	One Vision	38	Wellspring Church
19	Para Dance UK	39	West Herts ABC
20	Peace Hospice Care	40	YMCA

3.3 Consider aligning Community Fund grants more closely to strategic priorities.

At present, the expenditure of the Community Fund has not been need-led, but in fact demand-led. That is, it has gone to organisations that have bid for it.

If the Community Fund continues, it may in the short/medium term support the residents of Watford as they cope with the impacts of Covid-19 and the government guidance linked to it. However, there is a need to decide whether the Fund will be used for other, non-Covid, projects. If so, it must be decided:

- 1) How the fund will differ from other local funds (as discussed above in section 3.1)
- 2) How the fund will differ from other Watford Borough Council VCS expenditure (as discussed below in section 3.5)
- 3) How the fund will respond to changing and emerging needs (as discussed above in section 1.3)
- 4) How the fund will align with priorities of Watford Borough Council (as discussed below in section 4.5)

Rather than one 'pot' of money, it may be that various 'pots' are set up. For example, since the Mayor's Small Grant Fund is for small one-off payments, the Community Fund may wish to follow the lead of many other local authority grant programmes, and ringfence pots of money for certain priorities – for example, groups and projects which support mental health and wellbeing, or those that tackle digital exclusion, two areas that were highlighted by the local VCS as being areas where demand is rising. Priorities here can be done by considering the evidence base for growing areas of need. Similarly, as discussed below in section 3.4, the Fund may wish to diversify its offer by offering funding for both short term and longer term projects.

3.4 Consider allocating part of the Community Fund to projects lasting more than 12 months

Many participants – both in online sessions and in phone calls – spoke about the short-term nature of funding, especially in relation to Covid-19 response. Although these have been welcome, there is a need for medium- and long-term funding to sustain organisations through the next few years. "9 times out of 10, projects are funded for 1 year only, then the money stops," said one participant. This of course means that VCS groups are limited to planning in short-term financial cycles. One participant said, 'We were told by one funder in October that we'd have to spend their funding by March – but we wouldn't know if we'd been successful until December. Not helpful!'

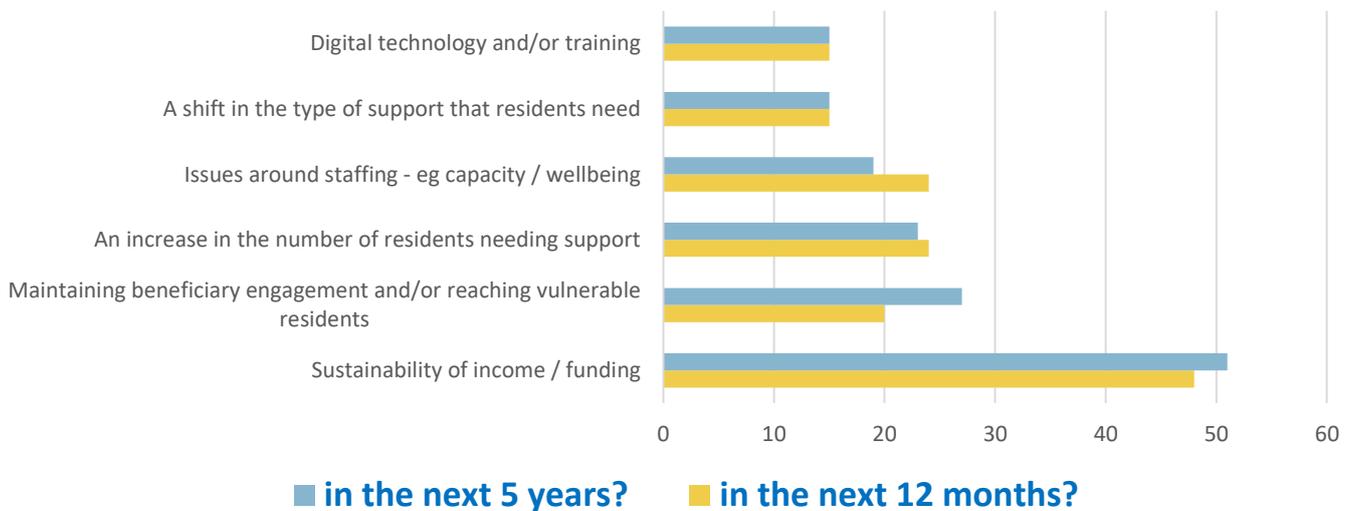
This also a direct impact on the way that residents are supported. Another participant, working with residents with complex needs including those with substance misuse issues, said, "that's just not the way that you change someone's life – you can't give it a deadline".



It is clear that there is a slight competitive climate between some voluntary and community organisations, rather than a collaborative one. The author of this report can count at least three instances during separate conversations with organisations when the phrase “He/She stole my idea” was used to refer to other groups. The emphasis on short-term project funding, which places a burden on organisations to be innovative each time they apply for fresh funding, does mean that groups may be less likely to freely share good practice with each other out of fear.

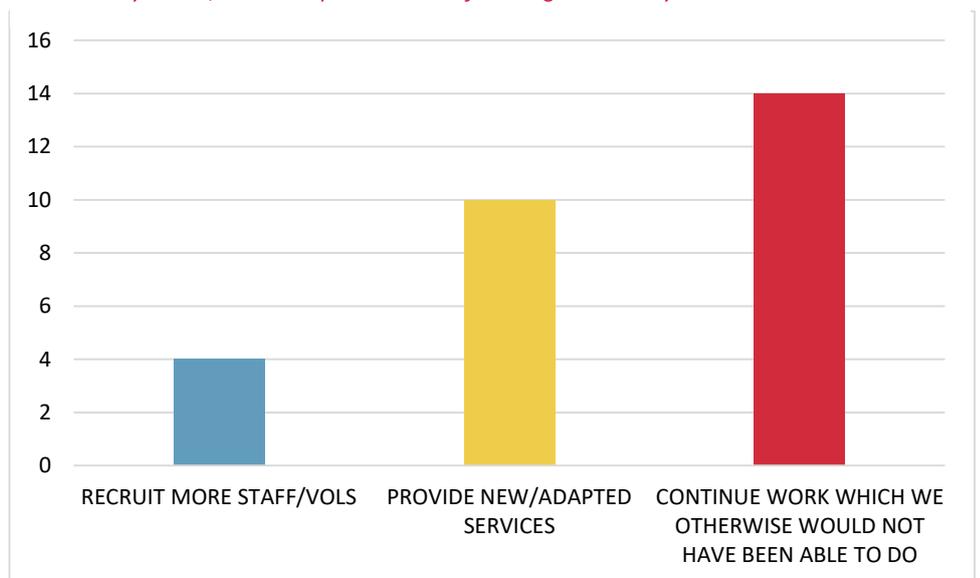
Below are the results in response to the two questions responding to “What will be the main challenges facing your organisation?” – comparing the next 12 months and the next 5 years. Clearly sustainability of income is, and is likely to remain, a key challenge.

What will be the main challenges facing your organisation...



Of the 28 survey respondents who stated that they had received Community Fund income and responded to the question around its impact, around half (14) stated that the money helped them to continue work which they otherwise would not have been able to do. This is an indicator that the fund has played a role not just in emergency and future adaptations, but in simply being able to continue current service as normal. This is perhaps a reflection of the shortfall in income many organisations felt as a result of their usual income streams – fundraising from events, charity shops, group activities, etc – drying up.

Figure 10, Response to survey question: If you received funding from the W3RT Community Fund, what impact did the funding have on your services?



Participants reported that a mixture of both small and larger pots of money would be welcome, as well as funding which covers not just projects but also core funding needs. Many groups stated that funding for project costs did not cover 100% of expenditure and so they have to be as creative as possible – using volunteers to test the feasibility and popularity of a service, for example, before applying for funding. When the service is proven to work, and has some level of sustainability through payment from users, the group might then apply for funding which might be used to cover a piece of equipment for that service, rather than rely on any external funding for running costs. However, this model relies on the availability of volunteers to test a model and where specialised skills are needed, this is not often not possible or unfeasible.



It was also pointed out in an online session that many groups have been working in completely different ways whilst the Covid pandemic has been impacting daily life. It was felt that funders should appreciate the impact of these changes, and accordingly be understanding. For example, many funders have signed to a pledge to be flexible around deadlines and other areas, something Watford Borough Council might like to consider^{xvi}.

Online session participants felt that where longer-term and big funding opportunities might be available, coordination of different groups to work in partnership to create a joint bid would be very welcome. The example of Hertfordshire LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) came up in one conversation: the perception is that the project needs to be for a minimum of £500,000, and that match-funding is required. It is worth exploring the reality of this perception since one of Hertfordshire LEP's priorities is Skills and Employment, an area which will no doubt be more important as the financial impact of the Covid-19 crisis deepens.

The concept of 'futureproofing' is commonly used with reference to electronics and industrial design, but was used in a participant during an online workshop to describe what was needed for the Voluntary and Community sector to go forward: that is, a process of anticipating the future and developing methods of minimizing the effects of shocks and stresses of future events. When asked what would help them 'future proof' themselves from future shocks, participants always referred to income first.

3.5 Align reporting schedules of all Watford Borough Council 'Business-As-Usual' expenditure with the Voluntary and Community Sector to ensure strategic priorities are considered

Alongside the (Covid Appeal) Community Fund, Watford Borough Council funds voluntary and community sectors in the following ways:

- Commissioned contracts (currently to 5 organisations)
- The Mayor's Small Grants Fund (currently £50,000 a year) up to a maximum of £3,000 per organisation
- Neighbourhood Locality Funds (each Ward, made up of 3 Councillors, has a possible expenditure of £3,000 a year)
- Financial assistance such as rate relief and rent subsidies
- There are also community development projects funded through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

As a local authority at District rather than at County level, the number of commissioned contracts may seem rather low to those unitary local authorities used to funding organisation who provide social care. However, discussion with organisations (statutory and otherwise) at Hertfordshire level during the creation of this report has highlighted that in fact Watford as one of the 10 districts in the County is actually known as one of the areas that funds the local voluntary and community sector most generously. The way that decisions are made around what is funded and why is obviously linked to council priorities, which in turn are linked to the evidence around needs in the borough. For this reason the discussion around Evidence Base later in this report will be key to considering approaches to commissioning going forward.

It is also worth noting that in various discussions with participants the issue of Social Value came up, and the national discussion on this has moved forward since the Public Contract Regulations of 2015^{xvii}. In September a report was published by Danny Kruger MP which urges the government to use social value as part of its commissioning processes.^{xviii} VCS groups are broadly warm to this suggestion since many of them offer extraordinary added social value to Watford in addition to their explicit services – for example, supporting people into employment through the route of volunteering, preventative support services which ease the burden on social care in later years, and often have rigorous environmental policies and procedures in place. If social value is to become embedded further at Watford Borough Council, either as part of the commissioning process or in relation to property value assessment, participants are clear social value bureaucracy should not become "largely tick-box exercises unable to escape the logic of a transactional system".^{xix}

When the Community Fund was being developed in response to the Covid-19 crisis, many of the local Watford Borough Council elected members decided to put their locality funding of £3000 towards the Fund. It might be that going forward the idea of pooling this fund in order to use it strategically each year could be considered in some way.



Another change this year was the way that the Mayor's Small Grants Fund (MSGF) was spent. The money is spent on a 'first come first served' basis (as long as requests for funding meet criteria). Usually the MSGF opens in April and is closed by January. However this year the fund was spent within one month of opening, as groups applied for emergency funding to respond to Covid-19 demands. The Fund is not as large as it has been in previous years, and the financial constraints make it unlikely that it might be increased. However, it may be that going forward the expenditure of this fund could be staggered throughout the year to ensure that a variety of groups throughout the year are able to apply at various times of the year in response to changing needs in the community.

Groups who receive money from the Mayor's Small Grant Fund, whether £100 or the maximum figure of £3000, are all expected to account for their expenditure, albeit briefly. Those groups who are commissioned by the council and have contracts have specific KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) outlined in their Service Specification which they have to respond to as part of their more detailed contractual obligations. All participants have been very positive about officers at WBC, both commissioning and grant-managing. One organisation told us that they welcomed the monitoring by WBC as they felt it helped them stay rigorous, and that knowing they had kept their policies and procedures up to a good standard – with the support of the Council – was useful to them. Another organisation even complained that the short 'one page' document that groups had to complete after receiving money through the Small Grant Fund was not rigorous enough!

3.6 Consider a full-time fundraising post, to support the Community Fund VCS groups through the CVS.

Money invested in the VC sector is crucial because the support offered plays a key preventative role, often not just complementing what statutory services do but also preventing future demand. One participant went further and felt that the VCS actually plugged gaps. She gave the example of mental health support for children and young people. Provided through the NHS CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) currently has, she said, an extraordinarily long waiting time, whereas civil society organisations are often able to offer some kind of support sooner, and thus avoid situations escalating to crisis level.

Supporting the VCS sector is also important because it contributes to thriving communities. A healthy voluntary sector full of active citizens and locally-led projects is a sign of a healthy community. Indeed, one of the three pillars of the Mayor of London's Social Integration policy (aside from equality and relationships) is participation – that is, supporting Londoners to be active citizens.^{xx} This can be nurtured not only through traditional voluntary work but also through emerging approaches such as via Mutual Aids and Asset Based Community Development.

Participants in an online session spoke about the need to spot a variety of funding opportunities. Organisations who do not have the resource for a fundraising position may not always have the capacity to search the horizon for opportunities, not just locally or at Hertfordshire level, but also nationally. 47 of the 75 respondents to the survey has not heard of the Community Fund – a fund that was promoted by W3RT, Watford Borough Council as well as members and others – so it is of course very likely that information on less well locally-promoted funds may not always reach VCS groups.

One participant commented that, through experience, they have realised that bid writing cannot be left to senior leadership of VCS groups alone. Firstly, it leads to capacity issues, since one Chief Executive cannot apply for the number of opportunities that several managers might be able to do.

“

A basic rule of fundraising is that people donate to causes, not organisations. We need a long-term plan to create and establish Watford as a cause.

”

-Bob Jones, Chief Executive of W3RT



Secondly, it leads to distraction, with Chief Executives falling into the trap of spending their time ‘chasing money’ rather than strategically thinking about future plans for the organisation. And thirdly, it means that wider members of staff are unaware of financial status of the organisation and unable to offer ideas and support as their skills and networks allow. Webpages such as ‘15 questions trustees should ask’ might help facilitate discussions around an organisation’s finances for team members.^{xxi}

Support with fundraising capacity-building across organisations, then, as well as simple signposting to funds and support with bid writing, should be provided by W3RT as part of its CVS role. At present W3RT has only one person fundraiser, employed on a part-time basis. This person was highly praised by many other participants who spoke particularly about her fantastic networking skills, with both VCS groups and local businesses. Indeed the W3RT fundraiser helped facilitate many connections for the research of this report. However with the number of organisations who might be struggling financially, extra capacity seems likely to be welcomed.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommended that “W3RT and the wider local voluntary sector would benefit from a dedicated fundraiser at Watford and Three Rivers Trust.” The co-location of the fundraiser at WBC is to be considered. W3RT have previously suggested a fundraising post embedded within WBC’s inward investment team. Certainly, if a fundraising officer were based at WBC – even partially - then it would help them feed into the strategy to develop the Community Fund and also look at a range of income diversification rather than traditional fundraising streams.

Although fundraising is continuing and there are plans to create a series of points around the town for people to be able to donate contactlessly, this work is in addition to that of many officers. During the compilation of this report the leadership of W3RT offered thoughts on how the marketing of the fund must be developed to create a town-wide brand, and this will require much work: see quote across.

3.7 Consider how to explicitly support the Voluntary and Community Sector to build financial resilience and diversify income streams alongside traditional fundraising

There are a small number of organisations for who the situation has meant that – in the short term at least – they have received funding and even managed to grow and develop their offer to residents. However there is certainly a fear that while ‘there has been a lot of money out there’, the emergency funding will soon dry up – even from trusts and large organisations like the National Lottery - and the future may be potentially more problematic.

During the period of time when government advised residents to stay at home as far as possible, informal online discussions became a key way for the voluntary and community sector to share information via platforms such as Nextdoor, Facebook, Twitter as well as complementary digital tools like WhatsApp. These forums have also proved useful in subsequent calls for funding, donations and volunteers. In organisations where social media skills are particularly good these have been useful as part of serious fundraising efforts, with groups who had lost out money where events had been cancelled using opportunities like the 2.6 challenge^{xxii} to not only raise money, but also awareness about their cause. For example, DRUM Watford used this campaign to raise over £7000 in funds.

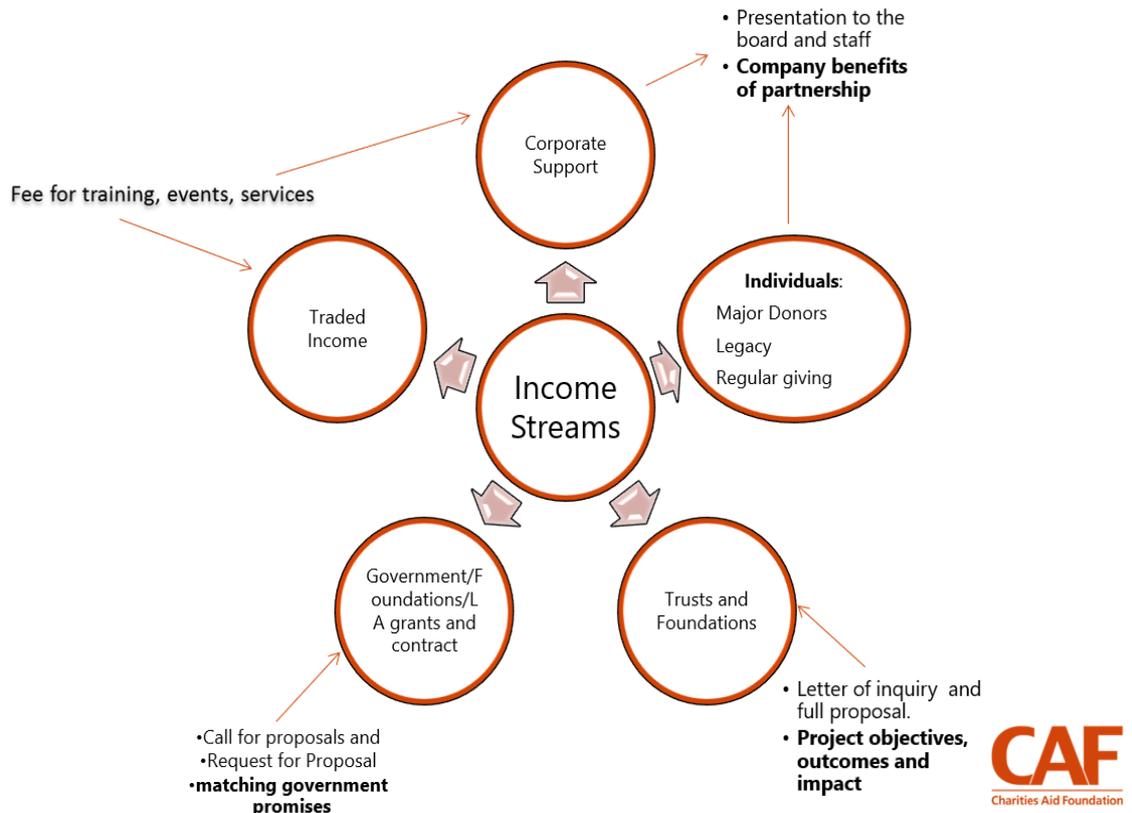
Where VCS fundraising has had to cease, for example, where opening charity shops has not been feasible, or large sponsored events have been cancelled, many organisations have found innovative ways to fundraise. The ability to use these alternative methods, which might not have been seriously considered previously, now too is an added asset for the future. It is worth noting here that the commissioned CVS programme of work at W3RT includes the following outcome: “Voluntary and community sector organisations are better equipped to run their organisations and build resilience and sustainability”. It also includes two (out of five) explicit areas of delivery relevant to this area: “Supporting individual Watford groups (funding/business planning)” and “Working with businesses and Corporate Social Responsibility”. In an online session for this Strategy, there was discussion about the need to look for ‘out of the ordinary’ opportunities: that is, where there is not an explicit grant or contract being offered, but where there might be an opportunity to collaborate. For example, there may be more scope for charities to link with different types of organisations that are able to trade, such as Community Interest Companies or other businesses.



In another discussion, a participant mentioned that they often facilitate educational visits from local schoolchildren, but are required to hire a speaker for this. Going forward, this might not be financially sustainable and there may be a need to create a method to have costs covered.

Support to develop this type of approach – a key one as the financial climate in the UK becomes more difficult post-Covid – is not explicitly offered by W3RT as a standalone project, although the bespoke support W3RT offers can include looking at this for groups, including using the Quality Mark IQ to assess whether their governance and business model is effective and sustainable.

Figure 11, Income streams for Charities (Charities Aid Foundation, 2020)



There are organisations which offer standalone projects to support capacity-building on income diversification, such as Impactful Governance, but these organisations must charge for these services. Hertfordshire Community Foundation also offer a comprehensive course for organisations, but numbers able to access it are short. However there are many other organisations across the UK that offer support with this. The diagram above might give some idea on the type of approaches which might be considered.

Quick Case Study – online fundraising

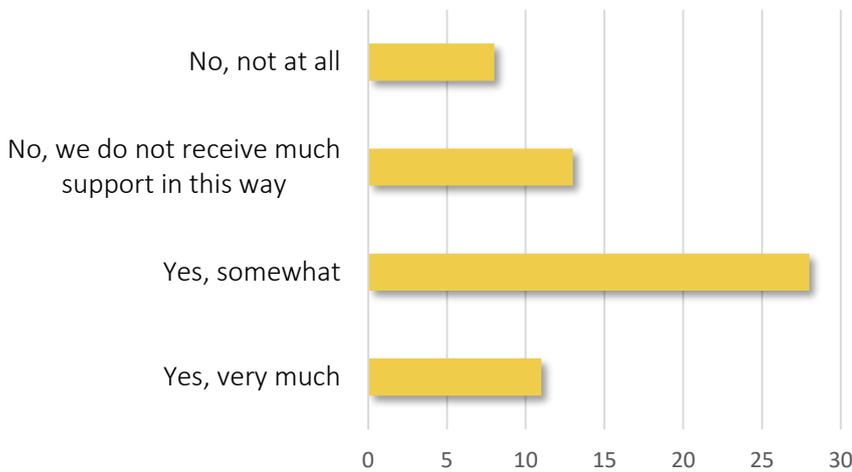
Sarah at DRUM knew she had to think about alternative ways to fundraise when large fundraising events were cancelled. Here’s how she did it:

- We applied to as many funds as we could and I managed to get something from Hertfordshire Community Foundation which has been incredibly helpful. We knew that we had to more than just apply for grants so thought about online fundraising.
- We’re lucky because we’ve got young staff and volunteers and they’re great with social media, so once the youngsters got involved it just took off!
- We decided to get involved with the 2.6 challenge, which was fantastic. Different people of all ages could support us in any way they wanted. We had people dancing in the street (great for them to keep active), people went for walks, bike rides and runs and our art tutor created a painting in 2.6 hours.
- In the end we were amazed at how people responded and we managed to raise over £7000. We’re really grateful and now it means we can try things like this again in the future no matter what happens.



Every single group asked about its relationship with Watford Borough Council expressed very positive opinions of the current Mayor Peter Taylor, who they feel is regularly out in the community, proactively visiting with groups and regularly listening to concerns. One participant said he was doing “an excellent job.” Many groups had been involved in the weekly zoom calls which the Mayor had held to discuss issues in the voluntary sector. Comments about officers were also positive, and groups felt that officers were supportive and aimed to treat them as equal partners. More established groups felt that they knew ‘who to ring’ if there was a problem. Others gave specific examples of support they have been offered – for example, council officers helping to print leaflets which had key support agencies to give out inside food delivery packages.

Figure 12, Do you feel that your organisation is encouraged and supported to be a part of local decision-making?



Many participants expressed that they felt there was not a clear sense of long-term or strategic planning for Watford’s voluntary and community sector. Making Watford a ‘dementia friendly town’ was felt to be success by one participant, perhaps because the lead for this was Watford Borough Council, and it was suggested that there could be a similar strategy for mental health, although WBC itself need not be the lead. Certainly although the CVS as an organisation might be one with a ‘birds eye view’ of the sector, their role was described as ‘reactive rather than proactive’.

In a response to a survey question (below) 65% of respondents said ‘yes’ to being encouraged and supported to be a part of local decision-making. Comments were varied, but including suggestions about beneficiaries/service users being part of the decision-making process, about the youth voice in the council and there were two comments about information being available in other languages. This latter about information being available in community languages was echoed in conversations with participants – not just for VCS leads but also for residents themselves. Clearly there is some appetite to be part of decision-making, but still some barriers to making it fully accessible for all.

In an online session it was pointed out that the VCS were not always sure of council priorities, and how they dovetailed with the priorities of local groups in order to respond to local needs of residents. It may be that this is an issue of promotion – i.e. that council priorities are not shared widely enough – or it may be a question of language – i.e. that the language used by officers and local members is not clear and consistent enough – or it may simply be that the VCS feel that council priorities are not clearly linked to what they are trying to achieve as local groups. Better evidence to link these to local needs based on evidence and data would certainly be welcome.

There are many networks, forums and groups which meet to share information in Watford – indeed, so many that the very abundance of so many different networks may in itself cause confusion. The One Vision project has an informal monthly group that has grown over the Summer months of 2020, albeit online, from around 38-51 participants. There is also a Health & Wellbeing Partnership, a Dementia Forum, Herts Homeless Alliance, Watford Pensioners’ Forum, Watford Interfaith Association, One Watford, Community Safety Partnership, as well as both longstanding and ad hoc groups run by W3RT, for example in response to emerging issues such as community centres re-opening, mutual aids, etc. Since the beginning of the compilation of this strategy, W3RT have also launched a Community Engagement Forum. There are also various networks within the corporate world of Watford, with the Chamber of Commerce also welcoming VCS organisations as members, but also other business networks such as B&I. There are also hyperlocal meetings held by Watford Community Housing Trust which are open to Resident and Tenants Association of a particular area, but also anyone else in the area including local councillors and police (although the perception of their openness was questioned by one participant).



There is a Leaders Forum held at Hertfordshire, however one participant commented that “only certain people are invited to join”. Many participants in private phone calls reported that when they have questions they prefer to use their own personal work networks, by calling - for example – on other charity Chief Executives that they have known for a number of years.

Many of the networks and groups have something of an informal nature. This is attractive and useful for new and emerging groups who need to build their peer support network, but was said to be less useful for groups that have existed for some time and would rather be involved in strategic discussions. W3RT’s leadership group, for example, does not have terms of references or aims, and given that many leaders of organisations would themselves require more than peer support, this may be a missed opportunity. In September 2020, a new W3RT forum, the ‘Community Engagement Forum’ was launched with its first meeting to be held in October. Without clear guidance, some local organisations were unsure how this would complement other existing forums and networks.

One network which emerged during the lockdown was the Mayor’s Volunteering Planning group, a regular group of local voluntary and community sector leaders who met with the Mayor via Zoom online. This is a largely informal discussion so that all partners can share key developments and collaborate where appropriate. (However one group we spoke with did say that, although they were grateful to be invited, they found the discussion too strategic for them and they ceased attending.) There is another group, more formal, known as One Watford. This group is a more longstanding community partnership which includes Watford BID, as well as Police and Fire Services, and has in the best past included Health colleagues as well as representatives from Watford Football Club. One participant suggested that in the recent months this group has become slightly too operational rather than strategic. It was also suggested by the participant that it was important that ‘the right people are around the table’. Watford Borough Council are undertaking a review of One Watford with assistance from the LGA in December of this year. It might be worth considering, then, how these two groups be reviewed together to consider how they complement one another. Certainly the membership of both might need to be reviewed in light of the closer working partnership between the Council and the Voluntary and Community Sector throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. It may also be that while One Watford is realigned to once again be more strategic, the Mayor’s Volunteering Planning Group – rather than being completely separate to this – responds to its recommendations on an operational level, with focussed task and finish groups where necessary, rather than ongoing.

4.2 Review principles of CVS approach so as to minimise any possible conflicts of interest between W3RT’s support to its members and its role as a service delivery organisation.

Watford and Three Rivers Trust (W3RT) is an organisation which began as began in 1974 as "Watford Council for Voluntary Service", or Watford CVS, a local infrastructure body to support the local voluntary and community sector. Its website (www.w3rt.org) states: “*This function remains at the heart of W3RT and we are still commissioned by Watford Borough Council (WBC) to deliver an effective CVS service for Watford.*” W3RT has about ninety staff members in total, but very few of these directly support the CVS role. Around 20 support the community centres, around 30 staff look the social prescribing projects, and another 40 are technically employed by other partners.

W3RT is funded £79173 annually by Watford Borough Council to run the CVS service. Participants from Hertfordshire County Council believe this to be comparatively generous, since many district councils in Hertfordshire do not spend any funding on CVS services. However, as a proportion of the overall annual income of W3RT, this is a small amount - around 5%. The vast majority of W3RT’s funding comes from funding to deliver services. They are funded by HCC to deliver the Hospital and Community Navigation Service (HCNS) across Hertfordshire with other partners. They also have two programmes offering support to older people: HCC funds the Getting Together service and the Big Lottery Fund funds Neighbours Together. In addition, W3RT receives funding from HCC to run the Community Cars transport scheme, and WBC funds W3RT to run the Holywell Community Centre. W3RT does not receive funding to run its other centre, The Barn.

Formally, Watford Borough council commissions a CVS service from W3RT with two explicit outcomes:

1. Voluntary and community sector organisations are better equipped to run their organisations and build resilience and sustainability.
2. The voluntary and community sector interests and concerns are represented to achieve a better outcome.

There are five areas of explicit delivery:

1. Membership and organisation information
2. Understanding membership & creating opportunities for engagement
3. Supporting individual Watford groups
4. Working with businesses and Corporate Social Responsibility
5. Networking: engagement with partnership bodies & statutory forums

Figure 13,

Criteria for the NAVCA Quality Mark

As mentioned in Section 4.1, the CVS role of W3RT was described as being sometimes ‘reactive rather than proactive’. One participant, whilst broadly positive about W3RT, suggested that this might be because as a whole they did not seem to be as active in their role as a provider of support to other groups – i.e. in their CVS capacity – as they were in direct service delivery areas. Around two or three established groups did report that it took them ‘a little while to work out what W3RT did’. This kind of comment complements one of the recommendations of the Overview & Scrutiny W3RT Task Group: ‘W3RT should take steps to improve understanding of its activities in the local community.’

One of the key areas recommended by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee is that ‘W3RT and WBC should maintain a strong and collaborative working relationship.’ To this end, and to assist W3RT with clarifying its position with the VCS, officers may wish to work with W3RT to review the principles of its CVS approach so as to minimise any possible conflicts of interest between W3RT’s support to its members and its role as a service delivery organisation, or where – there is deemed to be none – any perception of any possible conflicts of interest that might deter groups from working with them. Many groups discussed this issue.

One way to do this is to encourage W3RT to apply for a refreshed NAVCA Quality Mark. NAVCA is the national membership body for CVS organisations. It offers an optional quality award to test that a NAVCA member is delivering quality services to its local voluntary and community sector. It is assessed against the NAVCA Performance Standards and once awarded, the Quality Award is valid for three years. There are four areas which the NAVCA Quality Award assesses, as seen at Figure 13. A barrier to this may be, once again, the cost of applying for this mark. However just looking at the criteria in itself may be a useful starting point for WBC and W3RT to shape future discussions.

NAVCA Standard 1: Development
The organisation supports the identification of needs in the local community and facilitates innovation and improvements in service provision to meet those needs.
 Outcomes: Identification of needs; Reviewing and adapting activities; Influencing policy and funding

NAVCA Standard 2: Support
The organisation supports local voluntary organisations and community groups to fulfil their missions more effectively.
 Outcomes: Diagnosing development needs; Performance improvement; Learning; Leadership and governance; Income generation; Volunteering

NAVCA Standard 3: Collaboration
The organisation facilitates effective communication and collaboration amongst local voluntary organisations and community groups and between different sectors.
 Outcomes: Networking; Collaborative working; Sharing resources; Create and promote formal networking opportunities; Record the tangible benefits for those that participate; Use insights gathered to inform future planning and practice

NAVCA Standard 4: Influence
The organisation supports local voluntary organisations and community groups to influence policies, plans and practices that have an impact on their organisations and beneficiaries.
 Outcomes: Foresight; Consultation; Accountable representatives; Capacity for influence; Working agreements

4.3 Review the CVS staffing role at W3RT to ensure more WBC input with regards to both strategic and operational responsibilities, with the aim to encourage long-term staff who can build strong local knowledge and relationships.

The lead staff member for the CVS is a key one at W3RT, since they gather and share information across Watford’s Voluntary and Community Sector. Unfortunately members of staff in this role at W3RT have changed fairly regularly – there have been around 3 in the last 5 years alone. This means that while contact can be made with groups, deeper strategic relationships are harder to form. The Chief Executive of W3RT, Bob Jones, often plays this role which – naturally - can stretch his capacity, since he leads across a number of projects as well as sitting on various boards.

Officers at Watford Borough Council often expressed that the role is very broad, and could easily be split between two people. Further discussion on this with W3RT staff (past and present) seems to suggest that the role can be challenging in that it bridges both a range of operational and strategic roles. The strategic side, particularly, sometimes overlaps with the role of the Chief Executive, and these may need to be unpicked and clarified.

Since the current postholder is employed on an interim basis, it is suggested that WBC staff work with W3RT closely on future employment to this role, with joint review of job descriptions, working hours, contract length, etc.

When one local group was asked, what would they like if they could wave a magic wand, they responded, ‘Just to have someone come and see us, see what we’re doing, ask us what we’re struggling with, and then give us a list of people that can help us.’ This is, perhaps, the role of the CVS lead – and one which no doubt is being done well with some groups, but with hundreds of VCS organisations across Watford, will need as much capacity as possible to do well.

4.4 Consider how to support VCS with collection, analysis and data sharing on changing needs across Watford, as part of wider approach by WBC and statutory partners.

Organisations in the VCS work directly with residents at ‘grassroots’ level and so often have a real understanding of the changing needs of their community. In the past few months, groups offering support to residents already knew who, of those they supported, were likely to be most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, and also how to find out from partners about other vulnerable groups. Newer or growing groups were able to work with existing groups to gather data on needs as needed. For example, the organisation Sewa Day had information and referrals from those who had already been ‘triaged’ from a range of other organisations, such as Watford Community Housing, W3RT, Watford’s Women’s Centre, Homestart, Mencap, care homes and schools. In this way they felt they were truly reaching the most vulnerable. Although

Watford Community Housing does not do ‘referrals’ in the sense of a social service, they do signpost residents to get support. For example, they often signpost groups to Watford Citizens Advice.

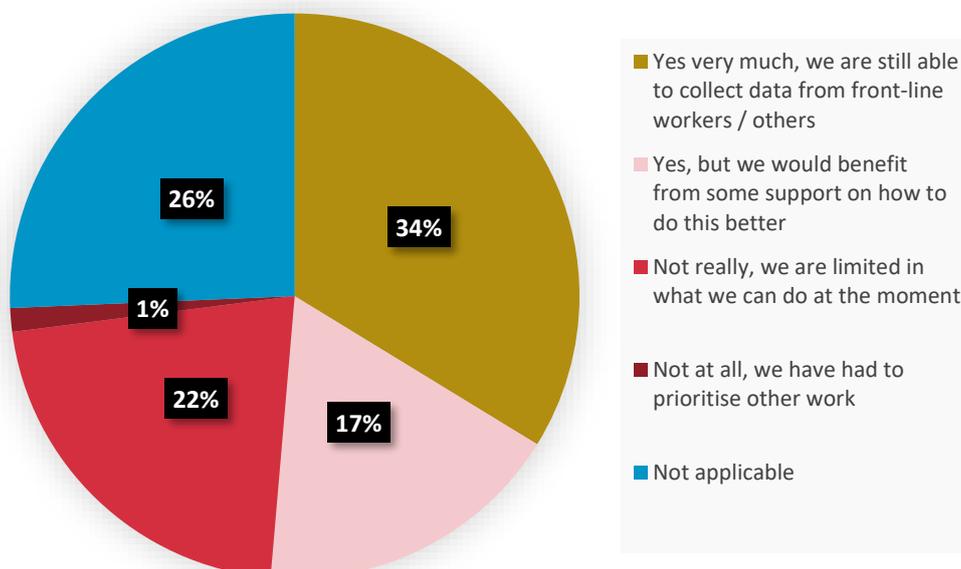


Figure 14, Response to survey question: If your organisation supports local residents directly, are you currently able to collect information on how their needs are changing?



However, when asked “If your organisation supports local residents directly, are you currently able to collect information on how their needs are changing?” almost a quarter said “Not really” or “Not at all”, another quarter said “Not applicable. That leaves only half of the VCS who responded said “Yes” – and even then 17% said “Yes, but we would benefit from some support on how to do this better”.

Many comments seemed to indicate that information was not done as a matter of course if funding was not involved.

Comments included “We collect information required by funders but don’t have the capacity to collect other data”, “We don’t have funding to reach out to our community” and “Whilst we have some ability to get feedback direct from local residents, our focus has been on our activities, though would benefit particularly over winter period, having more relevant info & stats to help plan for the future”. Three other comments spoke specifically about recent surveys they have sent out. While the use of surveys is an effective method in the short-term (as demonstrated through this report) there are other methods to collect information about changing needs over the long-term.

As discussed in an online session, VCS organisations gather a huge amount of information from residents. The national organisation Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) is a good example of this – as shown in the March 2020 video published via The Guardian Newspaper.^{xxiii} The manager of Watford CAB told us that the local branch also collects a large amount of data, but that it is not shared widely, partly because no one seems to be asking for it. There seems to be an opportunity, then, to connect or share data points that might help various groups better coordinate their response to changing needs in the community.

Hertfordshire County Council does have a data microsite called Herts Insights, which includes Watford-level data which is publically available^{xxiv}. However, much of this data is sourced by central government data. There is therefore much that could be done in terms of sharing information, but also in terms of encouraging the collection of it, potentially through approaches such as user-led research. One of the best local resources – mentioned by participants in online sessions as well as those spoken to on the phone – seems to be the Hertfordshire Matters report regularly published in paper and digital format by the Hertfordshire Community Foundation^{xxv}. Key trends are crucial to understand so that groups – along with the Council – can plan support accordingly. For example, along with some of the themes discussed in Section 1.3, there is, reflecting a national picture, an ageing population. Organisations that might offer support in these areas – such as veterans’ associations – are not present in Watford itself and might be worth linking up to in order to ensure support across the community.

4.5 Consider the groupings and ‘themes’ used to categorise VCS organisations as a means to link new and emerging groups to those with similar aims

New groups such as Coronavirus Community Help, Watford Covid-19 Support Group, the Watford & Bushey Covid-19 Mutual Aid Group, the South Oxhey Mutual Aid Group, the Chorleywood Corona Support Group and many others have sprung up in recent months in response to the difficulties faced by residents in light of the Covid pandemic and the social distance guidelines that have been necessary because of it. Many growing groups reported that they felt well-supported, through informal guidance, funding opportunities and even the offer of space by W3RT.

The legalities and governance advice given to new groups has been described as ‘light touch’ by W3RT leadership, so as to avoid dampening enthusiasm. This approach – almost of patient tolerance - was mirrored by a W3RT trustee who stated that whilst many emerging groups have excellent intentions, they do not always cooperate easily and their intervention at ground level can sometimes even be detrimental. However, generally larger VCS groups – and organisations at Hertfordshire level – felt that given the urgency of many situations, the risk of funding new and informal groups was a risk worth taking.

Many participants agreed that W3RT were experts on good governance, and this applied when it came to areas such as good volunteer management: i.e. the need for groups to develop a safeguarding policy, to understand when the need for DBS checks might arise and how to do this online, to protect the data of volunteers and beneficiaries in line with GDPR, and other matters. With emerging groups, support on this has been ‘light touch’ so as not to dampen the enthusiasm of new groups.

Participants in an online session suggested though that a simple ‘Best practice document’ could be put together, or indeed an existing one from another organisation could be shared. There exists a Volunteer Handbook, for example, on the Hertfordshire County Council website. Many older organisations in Watford already have volunteer guides and it may be that this information simply needs sharing more effectively.

The nature of crisis means that some groups may only be temporary, or fluctuate in form. The Coronavirus Community Help^{xxvi} group, for example, which covered Northwood, Northwood Hills, Eastbury and Moor Park, Pinner, Oxhey and Ruislip, is planning to dissolve, with smaller areas continuing to work through any subsequent lockdowns as local leads are able – for example, one participant involved in the original group hopes to continue to support the coordination of local section, likely to be called Moorpark & Eastbury Neighbours Together.

Quick Case Study – working with others

Lynne at Small Acts of Kindness has been working in collaboration for some time with a range of different partners in order to get the best possible outcomes for the people that the organisation supports. Here’s how she did it:

- *We try to complement the work of statutory services rather than replace them. That means that we stay in touch with them as far as possible to make sure that if we come across individuals who really need extra support with poverty, isolation and loneliness or digital exclusion, we signpost them to Hertfordshire County Council or Watford Borough Council.*
- *We also make sure that statutory partners are well aware of what we do. We have police officers who keep stocks of our bags with them or in the police station, and we also have bags in community pharmacies.*
- *We actively seek organisations that complement what we do. For example, we’ve worked with Watford Workshop who have helped us by moving stock and packed bags, and with Hertfordshire Health Walks in Watford who help us pack bags and then take bags to distribute to some of their walkers – either for direct use or for them to gift to friends and neighbours.*
- *We work with a range of corporate partners, but we’re careful not just to ask them for money. We are just as pleased if they can help us to spread awareness of what we’re doing or send us some people to help pack bags.*
- *Councillors are really involved in what we do – they have really excellent engagement and that helps us spread the word further.*



It is clear that there is much value to be had from strong collaboration between groups in the sector. Participants said that this can sometimes be hindered by a feeling of competition – especially in terms of funding – but that throughout Covid-19 groups have been working closer together. The zoom groups hosted by Alison May at W3RT for Mutual Aid groups, for example, were spoken of positively by all those who took part in them, since they helped groups – especially newer ones – share ideas and best practice.

However, some participants – both members of the voluntary sector and those outside of it - spoke about the need to avoid what they termed as ‘duplication’ between groups. It sometimes caused, they argued, confusion when signposting residents, and also sometimes caused tension in terms of delivery – with vulnerable groups sometimes even being given conflicting advice or support. One way to avoid this, again offered as an idea more than once during conversations for this report, was to create groups which organisations could align themselves with. These might be based around evidence of need (for example, all groups who deal with food poverty) or by the aims of groups. At present, W3RT has 12 ‘themes’ around which it organises the members of its directory. Therefore below these themes are roughly (albeit imperfectly) juxtaposed next to the 13 ‘charitable purposes’ defined by the Charities Act 2011.^{xxvii}

It is also important to take into account Council priorities. It may be, as was suggested by one participant, that to help non-VCS partners such as businesses better be able to choose VCS partners to work with, these categories could be reviewed to align with strategic town-wide priorities. Certainly, for example, since there is no current W3RT theme for



Environmental Protection it means that organisations wishing to instantly see a list of those groups working in this area – an increasingly important and high-profile area given both national and local commitments^{xxviii} – they are unable to do so.

Figure 15, A Suggestion on How to ‘Group’ Voluntary and Community Organisations across Watford

	W3RT 12 themes	Charities Act 2011’s ‘charitable purposes’	Links to Watford Together Plan
			Theme 1: A council that serves residents
1	Equality & Inclusion	<i>(no equivalent)</i>	Inclusion [Using Data for Well-Informed Decisions; Addressing Digital Isolation]
	“	human rights, conflict resolution or reconciliation, or the promotion of religious or racial harmony or equality and diversity	“
	“	religious or racial harmony	“
2	<i>(no equivalent)</i>	The relief of those in need by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage	Access to Support [Working with partners to ensure availability of Complex Needs support, including Homelessness and Mental Health]
			Theme 2: A thriving, diverse and creative town
3	Prosperity & Security	relieving poverty	Economic Prosperity
4	<i>(no equivalent)</i>	environmental protection or improvement	A Sustainable Town
	<i>(no equivalent)</i>	animal welfare	“
5	Community Development	citizenship or community development	Thriving Neighbourhoods
	Families & Youth	Education	“
	Faith	Religion	“
	<i>(no equivalent)</i>	promotion of the efficiency of the armed forces of the Crown or the efficiency of the police, fire and rescue services or ambulance services	“
	Inter’l Development	<i>(no equivalent)</i>	“
	Trading/ Fundraising	<i>(no equivalent)</i>	“
	Other Focus	Any purposes reasonably be regarded as within the spirit of those listed above	“
			Theme 3: A Healthy & Happy Town
6	Aging & Wellbeing	health or the saving of lives	Health & Wellbeing
7	Sport & Fitness	amateur sport	“
	Art & Culture	the arts, culture, heritage or science	A Flourishing Cultural & Creative Sector [including Heritage]

Given the table exercise above, there might only be 7 groups in line with the Watford Borough Council priorities^{xxix}:

A council that serves people:

1. Inclusion [Using Data For Well-Informed Decisions; Addressing Digital Isolation]
2. Access to Support [Working with partners to ensure availability of Complex Needs support, including Homelessness and Mental Health]

A thriving, diverse and creative town

3. Economic Prosperity
4. A Sustainable Town
5. Thriving Neighbourhoods

Theme 3 – A healthy and happy town

6. Health & Wellbeing
7. A Flourishing Creative & Cultural Sector



4.6 Refresh the CVS' KPIs on actively engaging with business so as to lay out explicit plans on how to share knowledge and skills between local businesses and the VCS.

This section could have fallen under 'Funding' rather than 'Information sharing' but that would defeat the very point businesses have tried to make: they can offer more than money. Participants have said that meetings between businesses and VCS groups sometimes feels like 'begging', which can make both sides feel uncomfortable. Instead, information sharing is needed: frank conversations about what is needed and why.

4.6.1.1 Support with fundraising

There is no doubt, as discussed above, that groups in the voluntary and community sector will need to diversify income streams. Business participants reported that - in general - they felt that organisations from the voluntary and community sector were not sufficiently commercially-minded. One participant told us that he felt that VCS groups are often not great at telling compelling stories about the impact their work has, and with support on marketing and communication - rather than funding - this might be improved to increase funding prospects in a more sustainable way. Often smaller organisations will aim to reach a particular figure through fundraising, for example, and do so by targeting the donations of individual people, rather than teams of people or businesses. Tickets for galas, dinners and quizzes might be better aimed at filling tables, it was suggested, for a set amount of money, rather than individual seats.

Some participants have said that they felt that the very nature of a crisis such as the one posed by the Covid pandemic means that some groups will be very short-lived in nature. Furthermore, the financial strain which the crisis has put on groups has sometimes revealed underlying problems which already existed. One participant said 'not every group is worth supporting', and that it would be inevitable that some groups would merge or close.

4.6.1.2 Other support

Many businesses themselves in Watford, as nationally, are experiencing financial stress as a result of the Covid pandemic. Whilst it therefore might be assumed that many do not want to be involved with charitable ventures because of other priorities, in fact many businesses in Watford have been greatly involved in the response to the crisis. Reasons given for this are: altruistic and philanthropic reasons; branding reasons i.e. to build trust with local residents and for wider Corporate Social Responsibility reasons; staff engagement. On the latter point, one participant told us that they see a clear parallel between staff engagement and their charitable efforts and allow them time to volunteer. The recent report 'Levelling Up Our Communities' made a recommendation that the government make it a requirement for employers to give time off to volunteer, though whether this will be actioned remains to be seen.^{xxx} Certainly one local councillor shared her view that businesses should do more in this way.

It was also recommended by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee that "W3RT and the business community should strengthen their links." Several groups were positive about past projects that the CVS have run, and in particular a project called the 'Dragons Apprentice', a programme which involved groups from the voluntary and community sector, local schools and businesses. Sadly this project has ended - because of lack of involvement from schools - but clearly the model is a popular one.

4.7 Work with W3RT to create a proactive action plan to better engage with all parts of the Voluntary and Community Sector, particularly those that support underrepresented communities including those from BAME communities and those smaller groups that may not have their own physical spaces.

The challenges faced by Watford residents, and the solutions to them, will continue to cut across public, private and voluntary sectors. While many Voluntary and Community groups in Watford have full and rich community networks, information does not always travel through them easily. For this reason, this section is sub-titled "information sharing" rather than "partnership working".

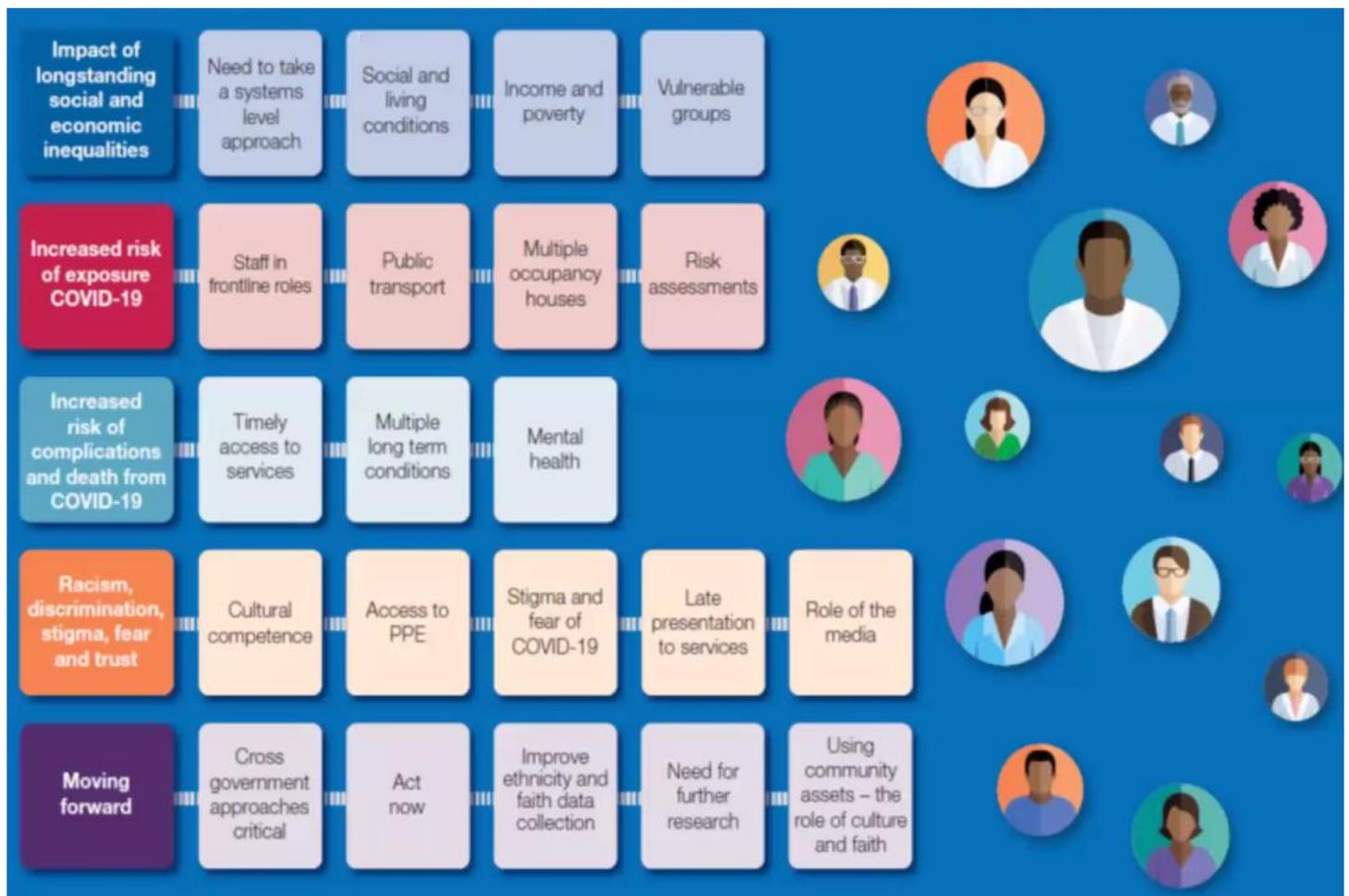
Although one is not possible without the other, the emphasis stressed by groups was not the need for more informal connections, but for stronger and more strategic ones. This would echo the work done on social contact and social capital by Professor Miles Hewstone, who stresses that social integration is best strengthened not through an emphasis on the quantity of connections, but by the quality of those connections.^{xxxi} In response to the question “*Aside from funding and help from volunteers, what else would enable your organisation to support Watford residents better?*” there were 39 responses in total, and of these sixteen of these were suggesting a need for better communication, partnership working or networking. A further 6 responses highlighted the need for better access to physical space, even shared space.

4.7.1.1 BAME Communities

In the survey the representation of BAME groups was brought up various times. Here is a selection of the comments:

- “We need a properly funded BAME voluntary sector infrastructure to support the BAME communities”
- “WBC should host at least 6 monthly meetings with BAME community organisation leaders with a view to listen and take forward actions”
- “A directory of services and organisations needs to be promoted properly in places where community members go and in other languages”

Figure 16, Some reasons for increased impact of Covid-19 on BAME groups, shared by Jim McManus, Public Health Director of Hertfordshire County Council. From: ‘Beyond The Data: Understanding the Impact Report’ (PHE, 2020)



There are around 200 languages spoken in schools across Hertfordshire County. Since much of the networking and communication that happens between W3RT groups is informal, the demographic makeup of staff and volunteers, and equalities training of staff and volunteers, plays a key role in how information is shared – not only between organisations, but also with residents. This is more urgent than ever in light of the Public Health statement stating that there is an association between belonging to some ethnic groups and the likelihood of testing positive and dying with COVID-19^{xxxii}. It is of course vital that staff and volunteers within VCS organisations continue to be able to work in a safe environment.

Reasons for an increased risk for BAME communities are varied and complex, as laid out below in Figure 15 above. Therefore a variety of organisations – including both voluntary and statutory – will need to approach these issues from a variety of angles. It is also important that a wide range of staff and volunteers in the VCS from a background of ethnicities and social demographics are able to join both strategic and operational discussions. This point was addressed recently in a May 2020 paper by the organisation CharitySoWhite, which includes the recommendation to ‘actively value lived experience in order to counterbalance the lack of diversity in the charity sector, give programmes integrity and ensure their success’^{xxxiii}.

4.7.1.2 Different types of groups

There are a variety of different groups which offer support across Watford. Faith groups of all sizes, for example, have played a key role in providing food not just to residents but even to hospital workers. The homelessness prevention charity New Hope originally grew out of a project by members of St Mary’s Church. The Watford Sikh Gurdwara offers support not only to its own elderly members but also supports local homeless residents via Watford’s Winter Shelter. These services are often vital, and one member of a faith group said, “We’re not very good at blowing our own trumpet; we need to make other people aware of what we’re offering”. Certainly collaboration between faith and non-faith groups could be even further strengthened, if only to clear misconceptions for residents. One participant said, ‘*I think residents get put off because they think, I’ve got to be from that religion to go there and ask for help*’.

Whilst formal charities are involved in many strategic discussions, participants shared that groups with other forms of governance – particularly Social Enterprises and Community Interest Companies – are not always invited to be part of conversations, despite having aims to benefit the community. It was felt that these groups have much complementary expertise to offer and should be welcomed warmly into discussions. Groups of this nature may be able to add to conversations, for example, because of the different types of information they are aware of through being part of business networks. Interestingly, to access this type of information one Watford faith group has signed up to Watford Borough Council’s Business E-Newsletter. (*‘There is information on things like energy efficient grants’* explained the participant.)

Many of the mutual aid groups which have sprung up explained that they communicate almost exclusively via social media. There is a need, then, for a social media presence – for both WBC and W3RT - to be a priority.

Informal groups – not just Covid-response mutual aids – can sometimes feel side-lined. For example, while events in the community are a key way for voluntary and community groups to share information with the public, and each other informally, about the work they are doing, one participant felt that events were not always done with impact in mind. He gave the example of a recent Pride event which had little publicity and was held at the very back of a park, so that visitors to the park itself might not be aware of its presence.

This was a perception shared by some organisations: “Small groups don’t hear things,” one participant said. An example was given of Watford’s Ghanaian community, some of whom meet for religious worship in non-specialised spaces, for example, schools, since they do not have their own physical spaces. Since it has not been possible to meet in large groups for much of 2020, due to Covid-19 government guidance on social distance, groups such as these have sometimes missed out on having information shared across their members effectively. Other groups without physical headquarters have also struggled. For example, the Watford African and Caribbean Association often used two sites pre-Covid, but both venues are not open for public use at the moment. They have been supported by W3RT, who they pay for some storage purposes and also officially use as their postal address.

“ Councils can continue to empower their local community groups to deliver innovative initiatives, with the question of: ‘What can you do for us?’ being re-framed to ‘What can we do together?’ ”

- Wiltshire Council, 2020

4.7.1.3 Working with Watford Borough Council

Watford Borough Council has many teams working with the community, and though all participants were very positive about the relationship with the council, it will be important to continue to strategically link the various projects which affect the Voluntary and Community Sector. For example, groups might benefit from one point of contact the council, rather than contact separately from the team working on the Community Fund, those coordinating Watford Together activities, or those coordinating the Big Events programme. It will be important that these avenues of communication are coordinated as far as possible.

Watford has many voluntary and community organisations which do excellent work, and local politicians are keen to support them where they can. Naturally, this means that there is occasionally tension between the different groups, with one participant describing the feeling in the sector as a ‘political playground’. However, another participant said that, despite the Mayor knowing of her opposing political views, he and the Cabinet Member for Community, Cllr Karen Collett, were both very supportive of her work in the community, and offered guidance where they could.

Generally participants are very grateful for the proactive help offered by Watford Borough Council during the Covid crisis, and feel that they are collaborating more closely than they have before. This was reflected in a quote from a Wiltshire Council officer, who felt their Council and VCS were collaborating more closely – see across.

As well as participants being positive about elected members, it should be noted that all participants - without exception - spoke positively about WBC officers, with many being able to name several personally and all stressing that they were always available for a call and help when needed.

4.7.1.4 W3RT

The commissioned CVS programme of work at W3RT includes the following outcome: “The voluntary and community sector interests and concerns are represented to achieve a better outcome”. It also includes three (out of five) explicit areas of delivery relevant to this area: “Membership and organisation information (directories)”; “Understanding membership and creating opportunities for engagement (profile mapping/Yammer group/voluntary sector fair)” and “Networking – engagement with partnership bodies and statutory forums”.

Some participants, although positive about W3RT in some ways, were critical in this area. One said: “They expect groups to go to them, or go to their website. They need to go out into the community more.” The Overview and Scrutiny Committee W3RT Task Group included the following recommendation: ‘There is a need for W3RT to build more and better partnership working across the local community.’ It would also be remiss of this report to ignore the many comments that participants have made about the tensions between W3RT, particularly its leadership, and other organisations. These comments have come from a wide variety of organisations. One reason given by participants for underlying tensions is the fact that W3RT are sometimes seen as a competitor to the members that they support. This is a risk that needs to be carefully managed going forward, and is discussed further in Section 4.2.

A final example, perhaps of how information is shared or not amongst the Voluntary and Community Sector, is the results of the question below. As seen, exactly 50% of the 76 question respondents had not heard of the Community Fund despite it being promoted widely both by W3RT, Watford Borough Council and others. Therefore there is clearly a need to work on better information sharing. If something as public as this did not reach all groups, then it is feasible to assume that other information does not always trickle through to smaller groups.

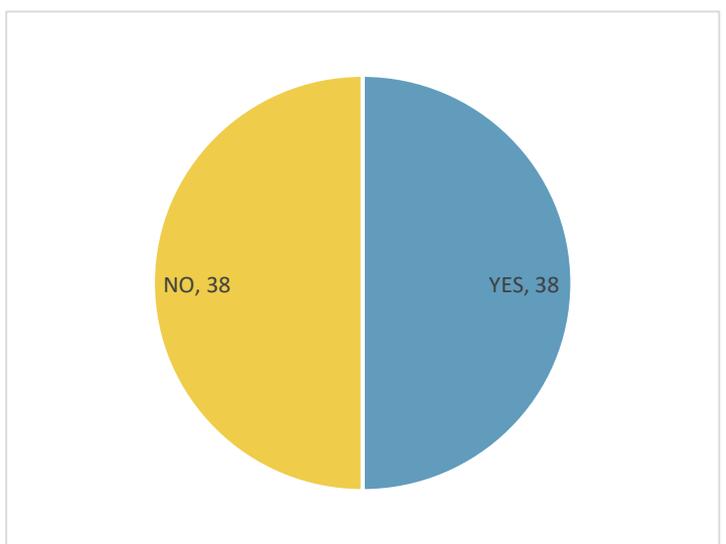


Figure 17, Responses to survey question: Have you heard of the 'Watford Helps' Covid-19 Community Fund, managed by W3RT ?



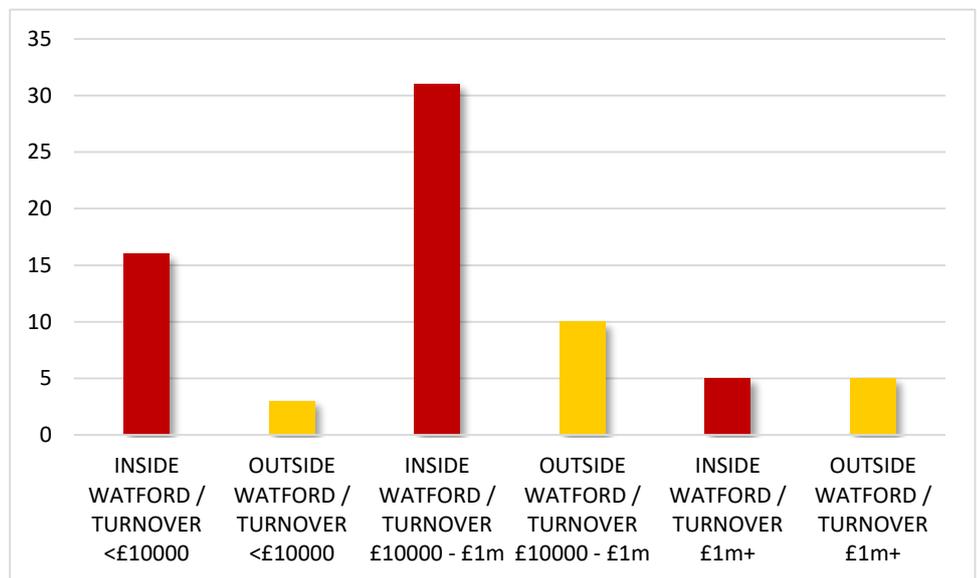
5 Community Engagement

This report was compiled by following a Communication and Engagement Plan which was reviewed by Watford Borough Council’s Communication team, and the following engagement methods agreed:

- Weekly face-to-face discussions, every Wednesday, government guidance permitting (*‘Walk n Talk’*) These were held in different parts of Watford in order to engage any groups who wished to speak informally face to face. These were in Holywell Community Centre (South Watford), Watford Palace Theatre (Central Watford), One Vision (North Watford), The Barn (Central Watford). Bookings were necessary so as to adhere to government Track and Trace guidelines, and to adhere to the Rule of Six guidance. Unfortunately the two Central Watford events were not popular and had no bookings, although this was to be expected in the middle of a health pandemic, but informal discussions were held face-to-face with two organisations in North Watford, and two organisations in South Watford. These were helpful to air some more critical discussions.
- Weekly online sessions, every Friday [this and the above bookable at <http://watfordcommunity.eventbrite.com/>] Four online sessions in total were held, and at least one member of W3RT was present at each. However, again, uptake was low – in total only six organisations participated in these. However these were useful to create the main themes for the strategy and build on key areas to address (that is, funding, volunteering, immediate Covid assistance and information sharing) and these themes were then explored in more detail in phone calls. Each session built upon the last, with additional ideas and issues being added each time.
- Attendance at existing VCS forums also took place to listen to insights and get a sense of recurring issues in the sector. This included Three Rivers Families First Partnership Meeting (which included many groups that support Watford residents), a W3RT Forum to discuss issues arising from Covid, the Mayor’s Volunteering Planning telephone conference, W3RT’s new Community Engagement Forum (9 October), and a Hertfordshire County Council-hosted BAME Covid Q&A.
- Attendance at online VCS events hosted outside Watford helped to offer alternative perspectives. This included the webinar on the Future Relationship between Kent County Council and the Voluntary Sector, the Charity Link webinar on Managing Small Charities in a Covid-19 World, the Islington Voluntary and Community E-Conference, and also a phone discussion with an officer at Wiltshire Council.
- Between 20-30 online meetings and phone calls were held with mainly Chief Executives but also other staff, and sometimes former staff, from various statutory and non-statutory, VCS and non-VCS organisations in Watford and Hertfordshire. These conversations offered participants a chance to offer views openly and honestly.

An online survey was created in collaboration by the officers of the Overview and Scrutiny Watford and Three Rivers Trust Task Group [available at <https://surveymonkey.com/r/watfordcommunity>] Input to this survey has come from various participants, both from inside and outside of Watford’s Voluntary and Community Sector. It was open between 20 September and 28 October 2020 and there were 77 respondents. A breakdown of the type of participants is to be found at Figure 18.

Figure 18, Type of organisations who responded to the survey (70 out of 77 respondents answered this question)



A full list of participants is to be found at the end of this report.



5.1 With thanks to the following organisations for their time and insights

Abbey Flyer Users Group	Rickmansworth Foodbank
Age UK Hertfordshire	Roundabout Transport
Assurability CIC	Salvation Army
Bobath Centre for Children with Cerebral Palsy	Scouts (29th Watford South (Methodist) Group)
Brick by Brick Communities	Scouts (4th North Watford, 1st Bricket Wood)
Bushey & Oxhey Care	Scouts (6th North Watford Group)
C V S Sailors	Scouts (9th North Watford Group)
Cathartic CIC	Seventh Day Adventists (Watford Town)
Christ Church and St Marks Churches	Sewa Day
Communities 1 st	Shopmobility Watford
Community Learning Partnership	Small Acts of Kindness
Coronavirus Community Help	Sri Singh Sabha Watford Gurdwara
Courtlands Residents Association	Stanborough Park Church
Disability Recreation Unity Movement (DRUM)	'TeamHerts Volunteering'
Dolphina Gym Club	The Ark Community Church
GROW Hostel	The Bowley Charity
Hand on Heart	The Living Room Hertfordshire
Hertfordshire Community Foundation	Three Rivers District Council
Hertfordshire County Council	Watford African and Caribbean Association
Herts Equality	Watford and District Industrial History Society
'HertsHelp'	Watford and Three Rivers Trust (W3RT)
Herts Inclusive Theatre	Watford Borough Council
Herts Pride	Watford Chamber of Commerce
Herts Vision Loss	Watford Citizens Advice Bureau
Holywell Community Centre	Watford Community Housing Trust
Home Start Watford	Watford Covid19 Support Group
Imagine Property Group	Watford Credit Union
Impactful Governance CIC	Watford Cycle Hub
Kent County Council	Watford Folk Club
Krishna Temple	Watford Interfaith Association
Music 24	Watford Muslim Youth Centre Trust
NCT Watford Branch	Watford Naturist Swimming Club
New Hope	Watford Polish Saturday School
Ngorli UK	Watford Sheltered Workshop
North Herts CVS	Watford Social Centre for the Blind
Oxhey Village Environment Group (OVEG)	Watford South Scouts
One Vision	Watford Underwater Club
One YMCA	Watford Workshop
Orbital Community Centre	Wiltshire Council
POhWER	Young People's Puppet Theatre
Pump House Theatre and Arts Trust	

And to those who chose to remain anonymous.

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VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY STRATEGY 2020

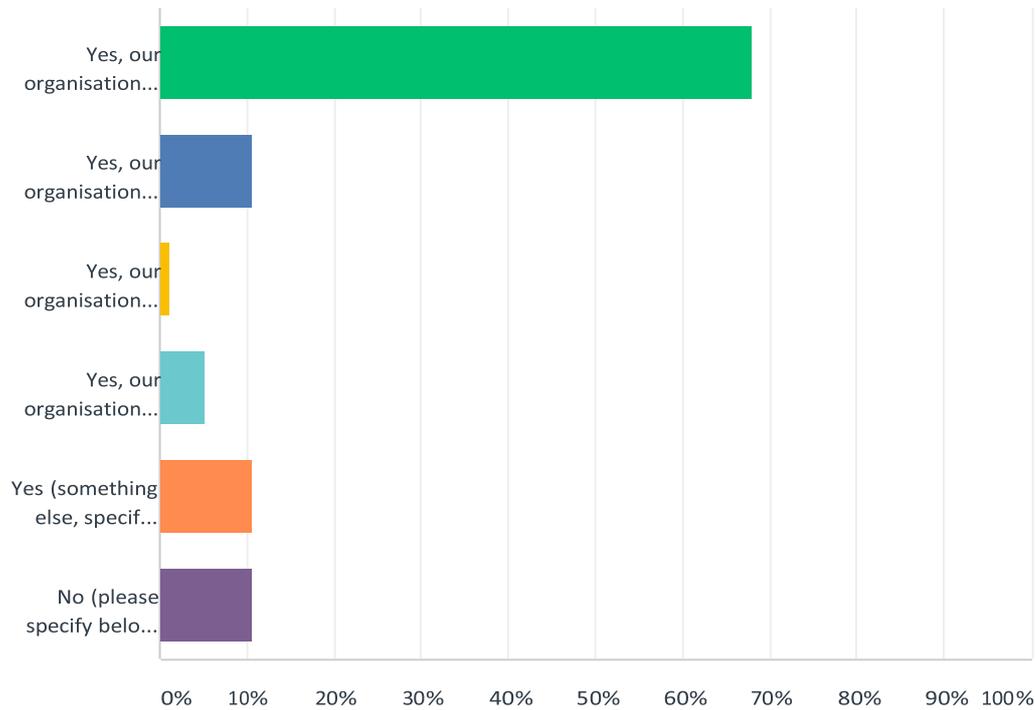
Appendix: Full Survey Results

[77 respondents]

[Survey open from 20 September – 28 October 2020]

Q1 Are you an organisation from the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)? (tick as many as applicable)

Answered: 75 Skipped: 2

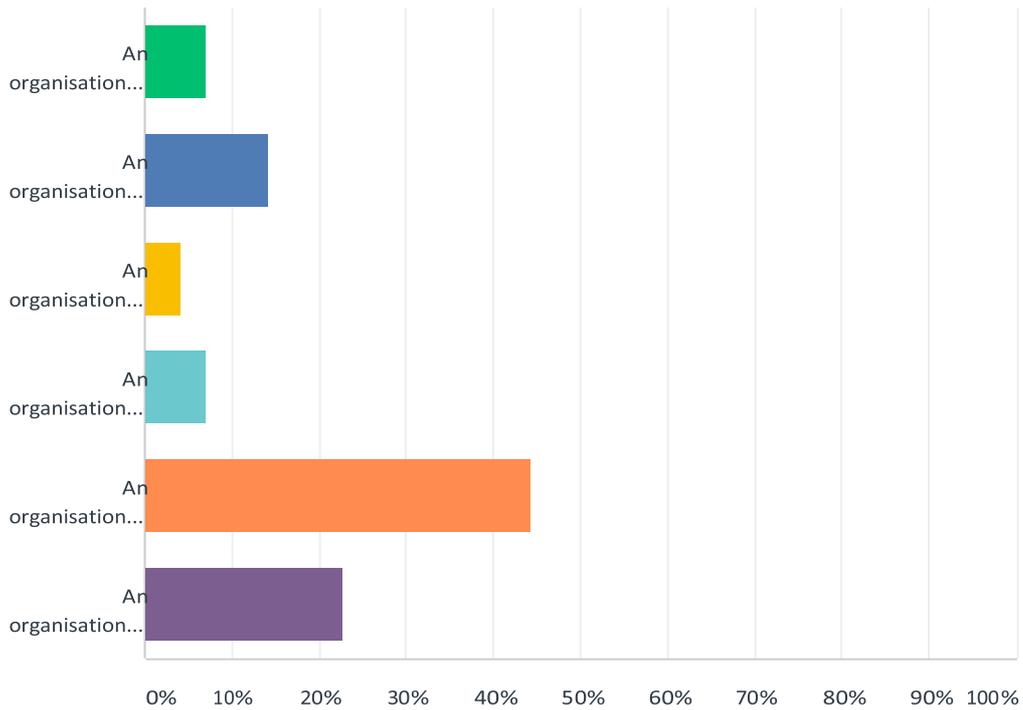


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, our organisation is a registered charity	68.00%	51
Yes, our organisation is a social enterprise	10.67%	8
Yes, our organisation is a Mutual Aid	1.33%	1
Yes, our organisation is a faith group	5.33%	4
Yes (something else, specified below)	10.67%	8
No (please specify below what kind of organisation - e.g. business; public sector; educational institution; etc)	10.67%	8
Total Respondents: 75		

#	A DIFFERENT KIND OF ORGANISATION? (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Community group, not for profit	10/15/2020 9:54 AM
2	Parish Council (neighbouring)	10/9/2020 3:04 PM
3	Not for profit	10/8/2020 4:15 PM
4	Resident's Association	10/7/2020 11:32 AM
5	Business but with social and community focus and aims	10/2/2020 4:14 PM
6	A swimming club	10/2/2020 4:10 PM
7	CASC	10/2/2020 1:51 PM
8	campaigning group	9/28/2020 1:10 PM
9	We are a local Scout Group operating under the Scout Association which is a registerd charity	9/26/2020 3:56 PM
10	Community interest company	9/25/2020 9:03 PM
11	A covid 19 response group	9/25/2020 5:58 PM
12	An interfaith group	9/25/2020 2:58 PM
13	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	9/25/2020 2:14 PM
14	Community Organisation / Project	9/24/2020 9:32 PM
15	Community Interest Company	9/22/2020 12:51 PM
16	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	9/21/2020 10:29 PM
17	local authority	9/21/2020 7:53 PM

Q2 What kind of organisation are you?

Answered: 70 Skipped: 7



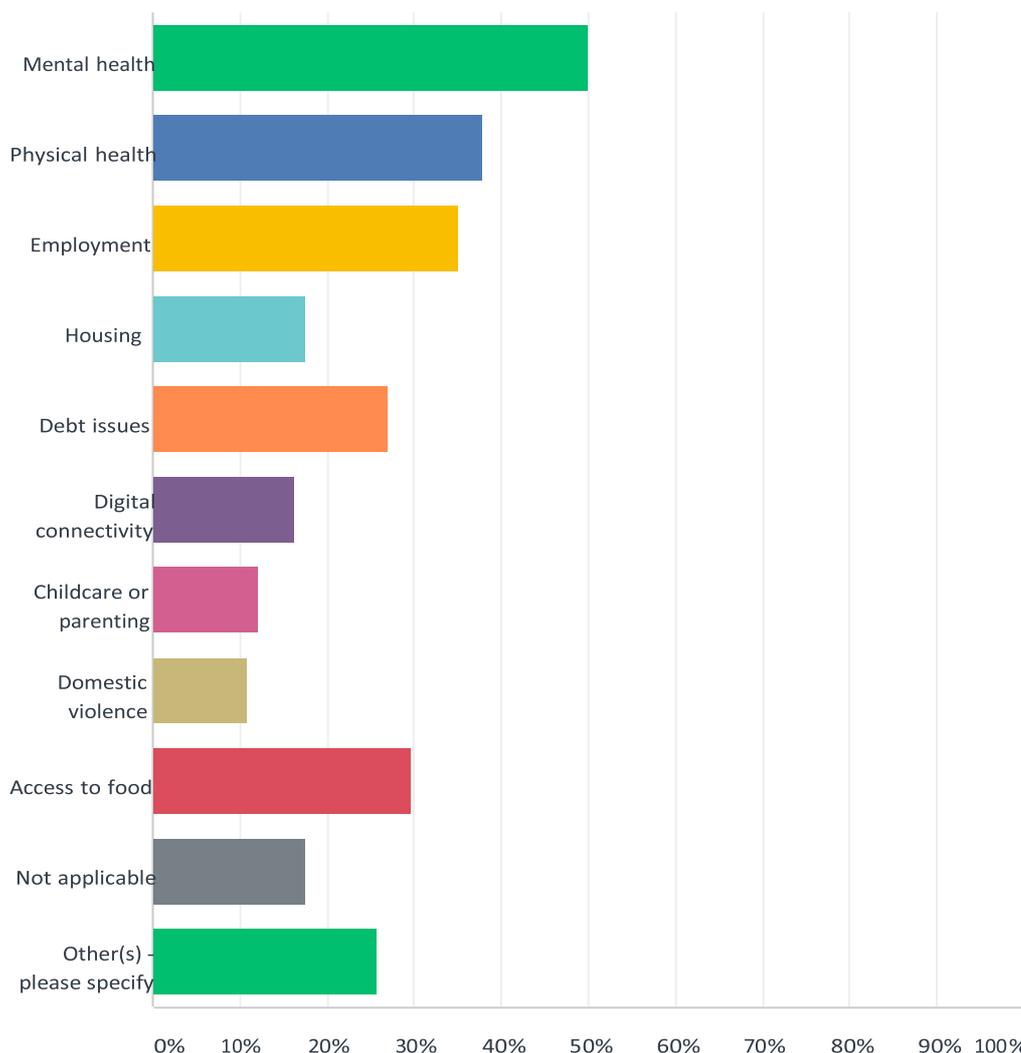
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
An organisation with headquarters outside Watford and more than £1m turnover	7.14%	5
An organisation with headquarters outside Watford and between £10,000 and £1m turnover	14.29%	10
An organisation with headquarters outside Watford and less than £10,000 turnover	4.29%	3
An organisation with headquarters inside Watford and more than £1m turnover	7.14%	5
An organisation with headquarters inside Watford and between £10,000 and £1m turnover	44.29%	31
An organisation with headquarters inside Watford and less than £10,000 turnover	22.86%	16
TOTAL		70

#	(OPTIONAL) YOU MAY TELL US THE NAME OF YOUR ORGANISATION IF YOU WISH	DATE
1	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	10/15/2020 9:54 AM
2	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	10/14/2020 4:19 PM
3	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	10/9/2020 8:34 PM
4	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	10/9/2020 3:18 PM
5	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	10/9/2020 3:04 PM
6	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	10/7/2020 11:32 AM
7	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	10/2/2020 4:14 PM
8	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	10/2/2020 4:10 PM
9	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	10/2/2020 1:51 PM
10	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	9/28/2020 12:20 PM
11	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	9/27/2020 5:07 PM
12	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	9/27/2020 3:25 PM
13	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	9/27/2020 2:24 PM
14	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	9/26/2020 3:56 PM
15	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	9/26/2020 3:55 PM
16	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	9/26/2020 12:05 PM
17	No headquarters	9/25/2020 9:03 PM
18	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	9/25/2020 6:24 PM
19	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	9/25/2020 5:58 PM
20	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	9/25/2020 2:58 PM
21	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	9/25/2020 2:14 PM
22	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	9/25/2020 2:05 PM
23	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	9/24/2020 9:32 PM
24	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	9/22/2020 10:51 PM
25	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	9/22/2020 2:39 PM
26	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	9/22/2020 1:56 PM
27	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	9/22/2020 1:05 PM
28	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	9/22/2020 12:51 PM
29	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	9/22/2020 11:04 AM
30	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	9/22/2020 7:57 AM

31	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	9/21/2020 10:29 PM
32	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	9/21/2020 2:28 PM
33	* removed to adhere to Government Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) *	9/21/2020 9:44 AM

Q3 Tick any of the issues where you have seen a recent increase in the number of people seeking support (only If your organisation deals with / sees any of the issues below)

Answered: 74 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Mental health	50.00% 37
Physical health	37.84% 28
Employment	35.14% 26
Housing	17.57% 13
Debt issues	27.03% 20
Digital connectivity	16.22% 12

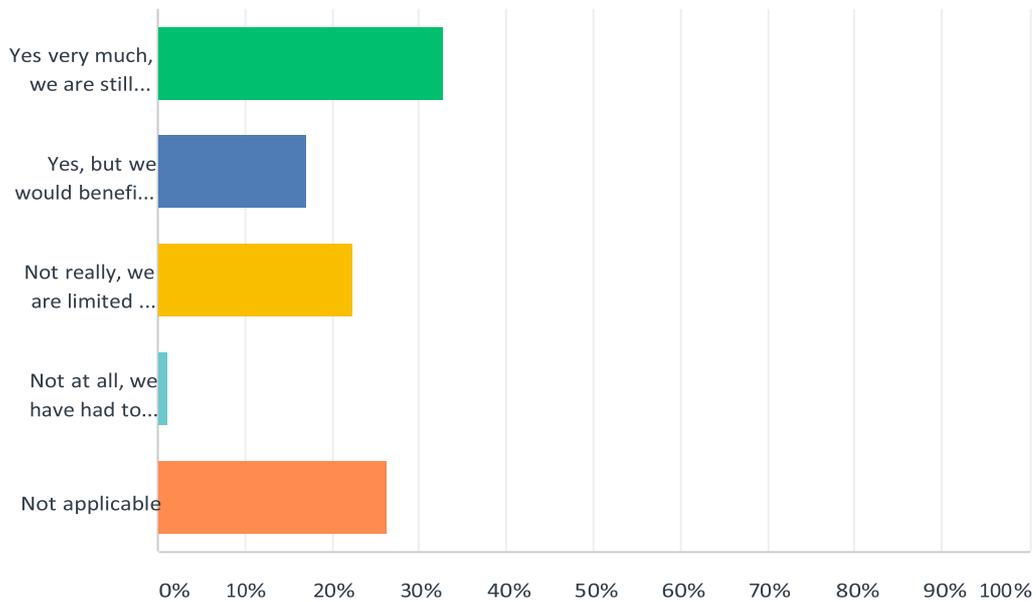
Childcare or parenting	12.16%	9
Domestic violence	10.81%	8
Access to food	29.73%	22
Not applicable	17.57%	13
Other(s) - please specify	25.68%	19

Total Respondents: 74

#	OTHER(S) - PLEASE SPECIFY	DATE
1	Caring and supporting those affected by a brain injury both survivors and carers	10/9/2020 3:18 PM
2	Advice on local issues, including Covid19	10/9/2020 3:04 PM
3	access to grant aid	10/6/2020 11:27 AM
4	Rough sleeping	10/2/2020 5:06 PM
5	public transport issues	9/28/2020 1:10 PM
6	Suicide Prevention	9/26/2020 12:26 PM
7	Isolation	9/26/2020 10:30 AM
8	loneliness and isolation	9/25/2020 5:58 PM
9	Sport & education	9/25/2020 1:53 PM
10	Families rarely share their problems so it is very hard to know	9/24/2020 11:32 AM
11	Isolation	9/23/2020 10:40 AM
12	We support with educational needs and help	9/23/2020 2:01 AM
13	Welfare benefits	9/22/2020 4:15 PM
14	Social activities for the elderly	9/22/2020 2:39 PM
15	Food Parcels, Hot Meals,	9/22/2020 1:56 PM
16	digital fraud/scams	9/22/2020 1:05 PM
17	Support group and social club for those with a visual impairment	9/22/2020 7:57 AM
18	Day opportunities and support for adults with physical and/or sensory disabilities. Carers.	9/21/2020 2:28 PM
19	Need for children's bedroom furniture and household appliances	9/21/2020 9:44 AM

Q4 If your organisation supports local residents directly, are you currently able to collect information on how their needs are changing?

Answered: 76 Skipped: 1

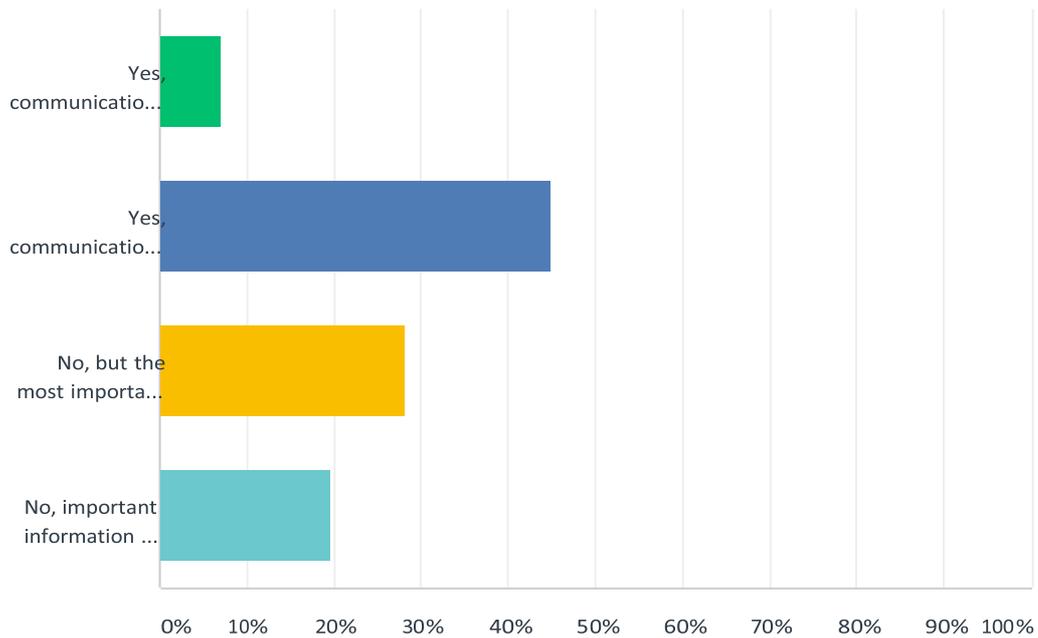


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes very much, we are still able to collect data from front-line workers / others	32.89%	25
Yes, but we would benefit from some support on how to do this better	17.11%	13
Not really, we are limited in what we can do at the moment	22.37%	17
Not at all, we have had to prioritise other work	1.32%	1
Not applicable	26.32%	20
TOTAL		76

#	FEEL FREE TO ADD ANY EXTRA COMMENTS ON THIS AREA IF YOU WISH	DATE
1	Mainly because the normal routes for meeting people are restricted at the moment	10/9/2020 3:04 PM
2	We don't have any funding to reach out to our community	10/5/2020 11:05 AM
3	Work on river Colne through Watford	10/2/2020 5:06 PM
4	Whilst we have some ability to get feedback direct from local residents, our focus has been on our activities, though would benefit, particularly over winter period having more, relevant info & stats to help plan for the future	10/2/2020 4:14 PM
5	Some travel from Watford to Hatfield to access our service	9/26/2020 12:26 PM
6	we are sending out surveys to all our users to update their information after 6 months of operation	9/25/2020 5:58 PM
7	We gather information from the faith communities as to social and health needs	9/25/2020 2:58 PM
8	We collect demographic data from our members/users but not 'front-line' data.	9/25/2020 1:53 PM
9	We have also sent out a service user survey	9/24/2020 9:32 PM
10	Families rarely share their problems	9/24/2020 11:32 AM
11	As most of our volunteers are over 70 we have sadly had to close	9/22/2020 10:51 PM
12	We collect information required by funders but don't have the capacity to collect other data	9/22/2020 1:05 PM
13	We are part of the Watford Food Bank.	9/22/2020 11:04 AM
14	We are awaiting surveys to be returned	9/21/2020 10:29 PM
15	We are increasing our dataset to monitor applicants' changing needs and circumstances .	9/21/2020 9:44 AM

Q5 Is information on the changing needs of local residents shared well between organisations?

Answered: 71 Skipped: 6

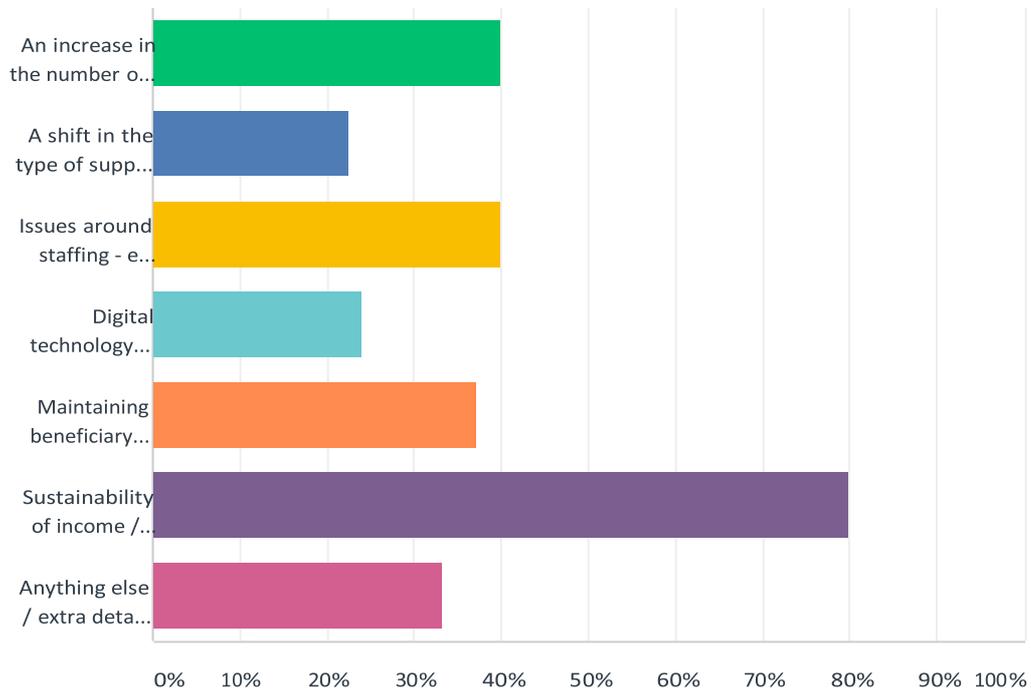


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes, communication is excellent	7.04% 5
Yes, communication is good between some of us - but not all	45.07% 32
No, but the most important local information reaches us	28.17% 20
No, important information is not shared	19.72% 14
TOTAL	71

#	WHAT COULD IMPROVE INFORMATION SHARING ? (OPTIONAL)	DATE
1	We don't feel able to comment as we have only recently become aware of local support.	10/8/2020 4:15 PM
2	Better use of social media amongst those most vulnerable eg the elderly	10/7/2020 11:32 AM
3	local council and/or cvs to collate info from each registered organisation and send it out to whole group weekly	10/6/2020 11:27 AM
4	WBC only give funding to their known charities and small charities can't access funds or even know where to access funds. Small charities need longer term funding not "one of projects"	10/5/2020 11:05 AM
5	Better inter borough communication	10/2/2020 5:06 PM
6	Not aware, therefore not really able to make comment. Instinct suggests it could be better. Collecting data re led rides and cycle training is done through Caroline Roche though there doesn't appear to be a mechanism to collect info from us regards areas that we could provide. This data could be used with other data & info.	10/2/2020 4:14 PM
7	Everyone opting in to The Hertfordshire Suicide Prevention Network	9/26/2020 12:26 PM
8	Impact on Lgbt people	9/25/2020 9:03 PM
9	all groups being in contact via something like our ONE VISION COMMUNITY GROUP NETWORK OF 51 COMMUNITY GROUPS who all share with each other	9/25/2020 5:58 PM
10	Transparency between organisations	9/25/2020 4:41 PM
11	More contact	9/25/2020 2:58 PM
12	More up-to-date and accurate data.	9/25/2020 1:53 PM
13	Proper promotion of the engagement opportunities and how to sign up. At the moment it is by word of mouth	9/23/2020 10:40 AM
14	Hubs to facilitate sharing information	9/22/2020 4:15 PM
15	LGBT+ community had no support this year and the last Pride was badly publicised to the community	9/22/2020 12:51 PM

Q6 What will be the main challenges facing your organisation in the next 12 months? (tick as many that apply)

Answered: 75 Skipped: 2

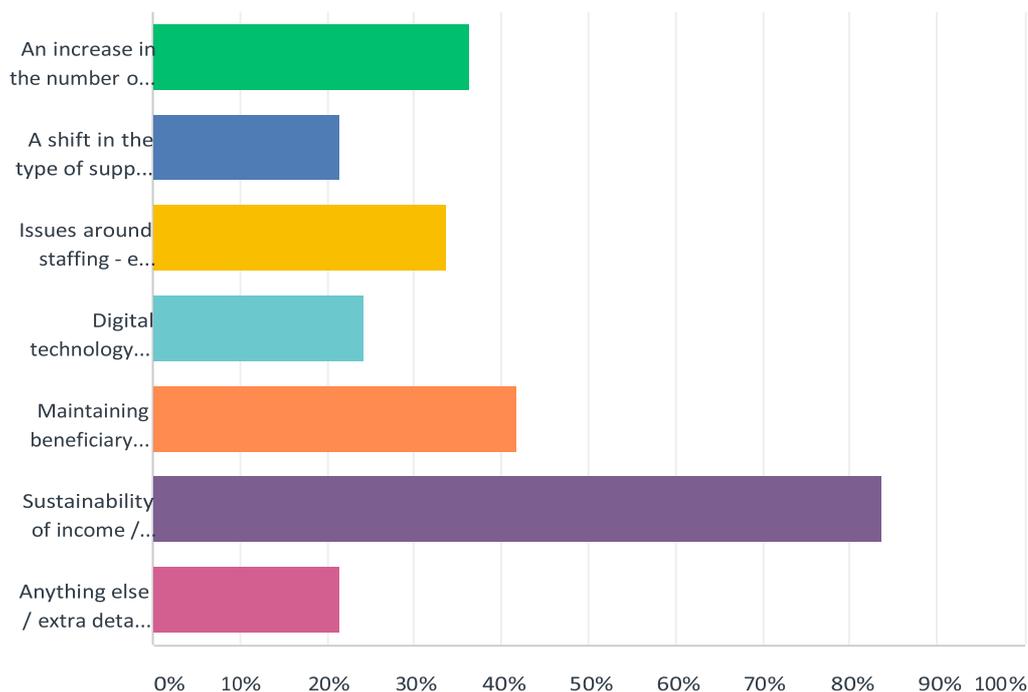


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
An increase in the number of residents needing support	40.00%	30
A shift in the type of support that residents need (please specify briefly below)	22.67%	17
Issues around staffing - eg capacity / wellbeing	40.00%	30
Digital technology and/or training	24.00%	18
Maintaining beneficiary engagement and/or reaching vulnerable residents	37.33%	28
Sustainability of income / funding	80.00%	60
Anything else / extra detail you'd like to share	33.33%	25
Total Respondents: 75		

#	ANYTHING ELSE / EXTRA DETAIL YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE	DATE
1	Availability of new volunteers	10/15/2020 9:54 AM
2	Working together as a Council - difficult to meet in person and maintain relationships within the Council and with the community	10/9/2020 3:04 PM
3	Our organisation is quite small and managing the changes to our services is a terrible strain on our very limited resources	10/8/2020 4:15 PM
4	accessing funding	10/6/2020 11:27 AM
5	Meeting cultural and language sensitive service	10/5/2020 11:05 AM
6	Developing links and ways the community can engage take more & take ownership of local amenity improvement	10/2/2020 5:06 PM
7	Establishing demand and then establishing capacity to support	10/2/2020 4:14 PM
8	how to support parents safely	9/27/2020 5:07 PM
9	Organising meetings	9/27/2020 2:24 PM
10	Finding adults willing to volunteer to run the Group	9/26/2020 3:56 PM
11	Getting people confident enough to start their group activities again and therefore need transport for said activity	9/26/2020 3:55 PM
12	We rent premises, but many of our Men (it's mainly men) are of an age where they are vulnerable to Covid19. Therefore we haven't got the throughput of product to sustain the Social Enterprise. Yet Suicide Prevention is increasingly important in a downturn economy.	9/26/2020 12:26 PM
13	Volunteers particularly drivers available between 12.30 and 4pm	9/25/2020 5:58 PM
14	Adults volunteering to help	9/25/2020 5:03 PM
15	Covid-19 and effects on trading/opening/ delivery of programmes.	9/25/2020 1:53 PM
16	Supporting service users with mental health issues and signpost to services	9/24/2020 9:32 PM
17	Reaching people who are new to requiring support. There will be many and if they have previously been in employment for example and suddenly lose their jobs how do they find out who/how to access support	9/23/2020 10:40 AM
18	Need financial support to reach out to the community as they need us	9/23/2020 2:01 AM
19	Isolation	9/22/2020 5:58 PM
20	We have tapped into the short term funding opportunities but long term funding streams are still quite rare.	9/22/2020 4:15 PM
21	Recruitment onto training courses if lock-down restrictions are reimposed.	9/22/2020 12:51 PM
22	Seriously improving our contact database	9/22/2020 11:04 AM
23	more telephone contact than face to face at the club which we can not open.	9/22/2020 7:57 AM
24	Transport for service users	9/21/2020 2:28 PM
25	More applicants in temporary accommodation which we do not normally fund because they may move out of Watford and Three Rivers.	9/21/2020 9:44 AM

Q7 What will be the main challenges facing your organisation in the next five years? (tick as many that apply)

Answered: 74 Skipped: 3

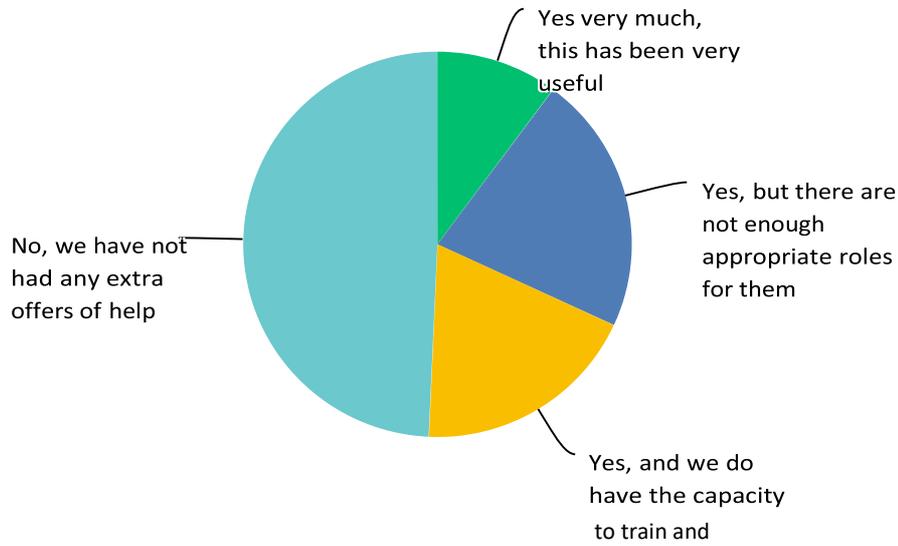


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
An increase in the number of residents needing support	36.49%	27
A shift in the type of support that residents need (please specify briefly below)	21.62%	16
Issues around staffing - eg capacity / wellbeing	33.78%	25
Digital technology and/or training	24.32%	18
Maintaining beneficiary engagement and/or reaching vulnerable residents	41.89%	31
Sustainability of income / funding	83.78%	62
Anything else / extra detail you'd like to share	21.62%	16
Total Respondents: 74		

#	ANYTHING ELSE / EXTRA DETAIL YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE	DATE
1	As issues around mental health continue to increase, finding appropriately trained staff will be a challenge	10/9/2020 3:33 PM
2	Finding new people willing to volunteer to become councillors and contribute to Parish Council activities	10/9/2020 3:04 PM
3	not being to meet in groups	10/6/2020 11:27 AM
4	Establishing a clear set of joint objectives that are in tune with the Borough Council & needs of the residents	10/2/2020 4:14 PM
5	Finding volunteers willing to go into uniform	9/26/2020 3:56 PM
6	As above	9/26/2020 3:55 PM
7	Probably more intensive support	9/26/2020 12:26 PM
8	as above and volunteers to man the food hub and cooking teams	9/25/2020 5:58 PM
9	Volunteering, Availability of places to meet	9/25/2020 5:03 PM
10	Possible office affordability	9/25/2020 2:14 PM
11	Moving with the times, e.g. IT, repairs, improvements to property, capacity issues.	9/25/2020 1:53 PM
12	We rely entirely on volunteers	9/24/2020 11:32 AM
13	We need the financial support to help our community	9/23/2020 2:01 AM
14	Building capacity in my centre post COVID 19	9/22/2020 2:39 PM
15	space to continue servicing the community	9/22/2020 1:56 PM
16	Transport for service users	9/21/2020 2:28 PM

Q8 Have you had an increase in the number of residents offering to volunteer with you in the last months?

Answered: 69 Skipped: 8

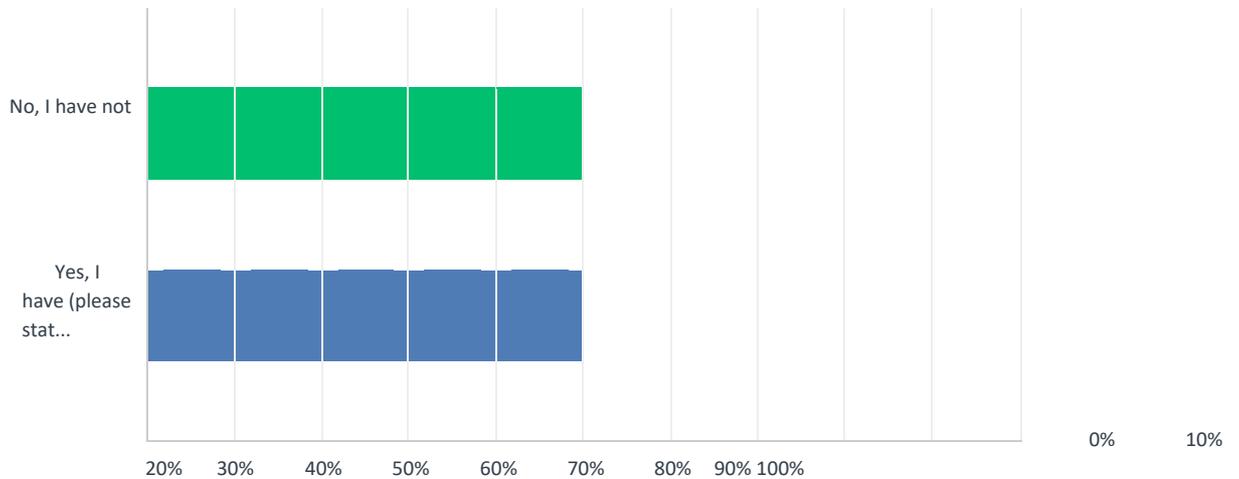


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes very much, this has been very useful	10.14%	7
Yes, but there are not enough appropriate roles for them	21.74%	15
Yes, and we do have the capacity to train and support them properly	18.84%	13
No, we have not had any extra offers of help	49.28%	34
TOTAL		69

#	ANY OTHER COMMENTS ON VOLUNTEERS/VOLUNTEERING?	DATE
1	We have had volunteers helping local residents during lockdown but no new volunteers in the organisation	10/15/2020 9:54 AM
2	We'd love to work towards a more formal volunteering and internship programme to support the volume of applicants we receive.	10/9/2020 8:34 PM
3	We encouraged people to volunteer for Covid19 support roles, and had over 400 responses. very difficult to find appropriate tasks because of health and safeguarding issues.	10/9/2020 3:04 PM
4	Yes, though need to determine roles, capacity to train and space to meet social distancing guidelines	10/2/2020 4:14 PM
5	Volunteers extremely thin on the ground.	9/29/2020 1:23 PM
6	Being in a commuter area we are told people cannot get back here in time to help	9/26/2020 3:56 PM
7	Changing rules mean we can't offer consistency at the present time	9/26/2020 12:26 PM
8	They are given an induction and history of the One Vision story and then availability is noted and DBR checks done if deemed necessary	9/25/2020 5:58 PM
9	We have a normal input of new volunteers but not enough to support the young people who wish to join us	9/25/2020 5:03 PM
10	Difficulty finding volunteers/members willing to take on responsibility	9/25/2020 2:14 PM
11	Our volunteers tend to come from either retired or younger people whilst at school or university.	9/25/2020 1:53 PM
12	We have gained one volunteer recently	9/24/2020 11:32 AM
13	N/A	9/22/2020 10:51 PM
14	We don't have the capacity to manage many volunteers	9/22/2020 1:05 PM
15	We have only been reopened 3 weeks and are running at a reduced capacity and service	9/21/2020 2:28 PM

Q9 Have you heard of the 'Watford Helps' Covid-19 Community Fund, managed by W3RT ?

Answered: 76 Skipped: 1



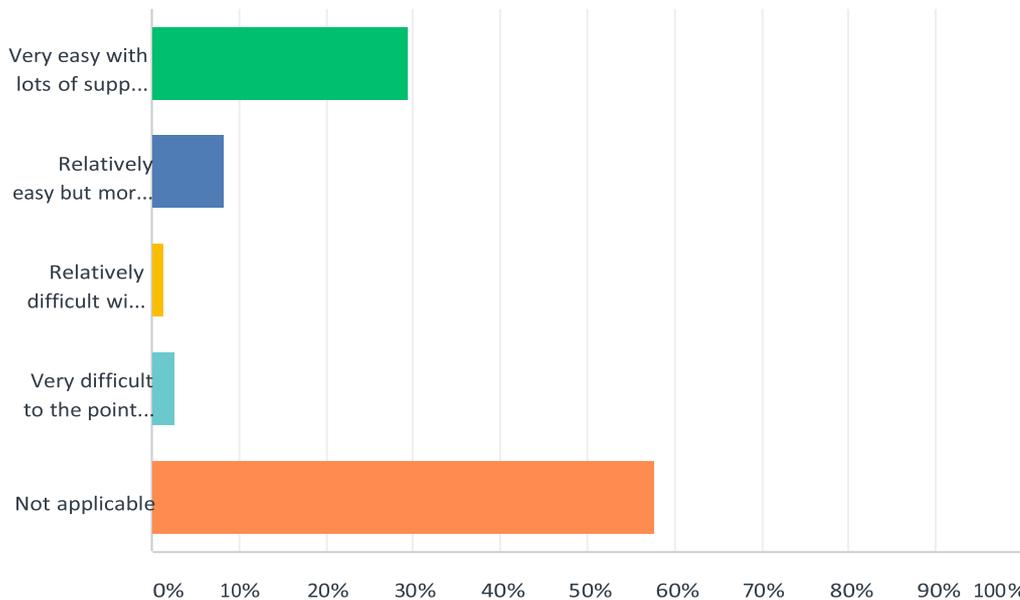
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
No, I have not	50.00% 38
Yes, I have (please state where from)	50.00% 38
TOTAL	76

#	YES, I HAVE (PLEASE STATE WHERE FROM)	DATE
1	From being part of the food distribution network up until August	10/14/2020 4:19 PM
2	emails	10/12/2020 3:13 PM
3	We heard about it but very late so we were not able to take advantage.	10/12/2020 9:11 AM
4	website	10/11/2020 12:00 PM
5	O	10/11/2020 11:52 AM
6	WE were successful in funding.	10/9/2020 8:34 PM
7	Three Rivers Forums	10/9/2020 4:53 PM
8	Email alerts	10/9/2020 3:33 PM
9	From WR3T team	10/9/2020 3:18 PM
10	We were advised to apply by the Mayor Peter Taylor	10/8/2020 4:15 PM
11	online	10/8/2020 4:15 PM
12	Website	9/28/2020 1:10 PM
13	they approached us	9/27/2020 3:25 PM

14	The Mayor Peter Taylor	9/27/2020 11:45 AM
15	EMAIL	9/26/2020 4:04 PM
16	Council	9/26/2020 10:30 AM
17	Beuase Bob Jones W3RT is a member of One Vision Community	9/25/2020 5:58 PM
18	zoom	9/25/2020 2:48 PM
19	On the Watford.gov website	9/25/2020 2:07 PM
20	We have applied for the fund	9/24/2020 9:32 PM
21	church & trdc	9/24/2020 9:47 AM
22	meetings	9/23/2020 3:27 PM
23	Mayors office	9/23/2020 10:40 AM
24	WBC	9/23/2020 9:37 AM
25	By email	9/22/2020 10:51 PM
26	Council	9/22/2020 5:58 PM
27	W3RT (we are a beneficiary of the fund.	9/22/2020 4:15 PM
28	working with them - Holywell Centre	9/22/2020 1:56 PM
29	From our partnership meetings and Alison May	9/22/2020 1:26 PM
30	email	9/22/2020 1:05 PM
31	Watford Council	9/22/2020 12:32 PM
32	W3RT	9/22/2020 10:15 AM
33	Leaflet that we deliver to all households we serve	9/21/2020 10:29 PM
34	Alex at W3RT	9/21/2020 9:04 PM
35	word of mouth	9/21/2020 7:53 PM
36	Social Media, emails, website, Zoom	9/21/2020 2:28 PM
37	Partnership Connections	9/21/2020 2:19 PM
38	Faceboo	9/21/2020 9:44 AM

Q10 If you looked into the W3RT Community Fund, how easy do you think the application process was?

Answered: 71 Skipped: 6

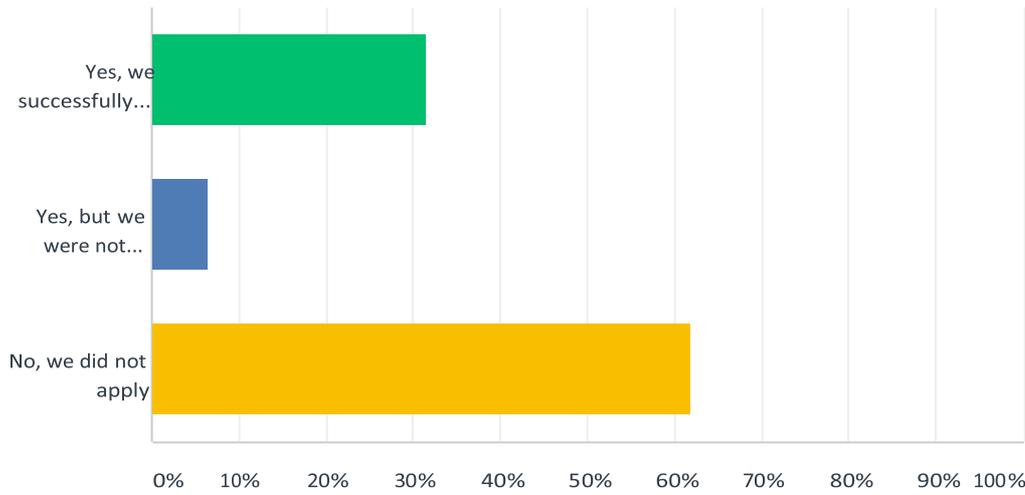


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very easy with lots of support and guidance available	29.58%	21
Relatively easy but more support would have been welcome	8.45%	6
Relatively difficult with little support available	1.41%	1
Very difficult to the point where it was somewhat off-putting	2.82%	2
Not applicable	57.75%	41
TOTAL		71

#	(OPTIONAL) WHAT MIGHT HAVE IMPROVED THE APPLICATION PROCESS?	DATE
1	Someone to phone to discuss the application to make sure they understood properly the impact the proposed project could have. A much better application form. Proper and detailed feedback with offer of support to bridge the gap. Being linked with someone doing same or similar project.	10/6/2020 11:27 AM
2	I have no idea. Some things they're very good at, though not sure they're appreciative of or experienced regard the type of needs or opportunities we have	10/2/2020 4:14 PM
3	Better transparency; quick turn around of funds (real time); on site assessments of true needs; details of how allocated amount worked out	9/24/2020 9:32 PM
4	We applied and then rejected but told we didnt give adequate information even though the info they required was not asked for on the form. We were told to try elsewhere an come back if we didnt get anything. Not helpful!	9/23/2020 10:40 AM
5	I have not looked at it and I have just requested information about it from W3RT	9/22/2020 2:39 PM

Q11 Have you received funding from the W3RT Community Fund ?

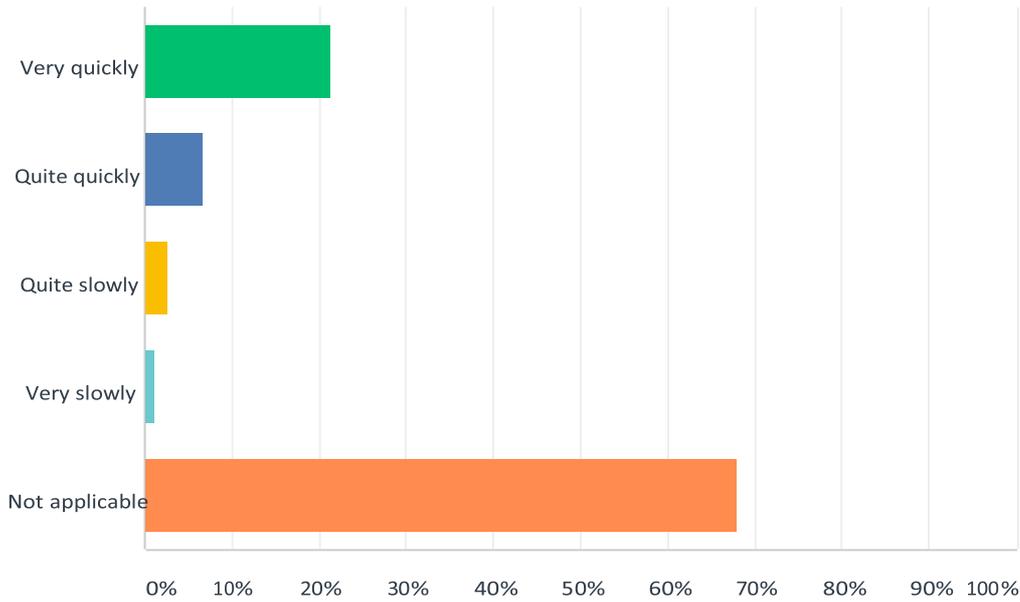
Answered: 76 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, we successfully applied and received funding	31.58%	24
Yes, but we were not successful and did not receive funding	6.58%	5
No, we did not apply	61.84%	47
TOTAL		76

Q12 If you received funding from the W3RT Community Fund, how quickly did you receive your funding?

Answered: 75 Skipped: 2

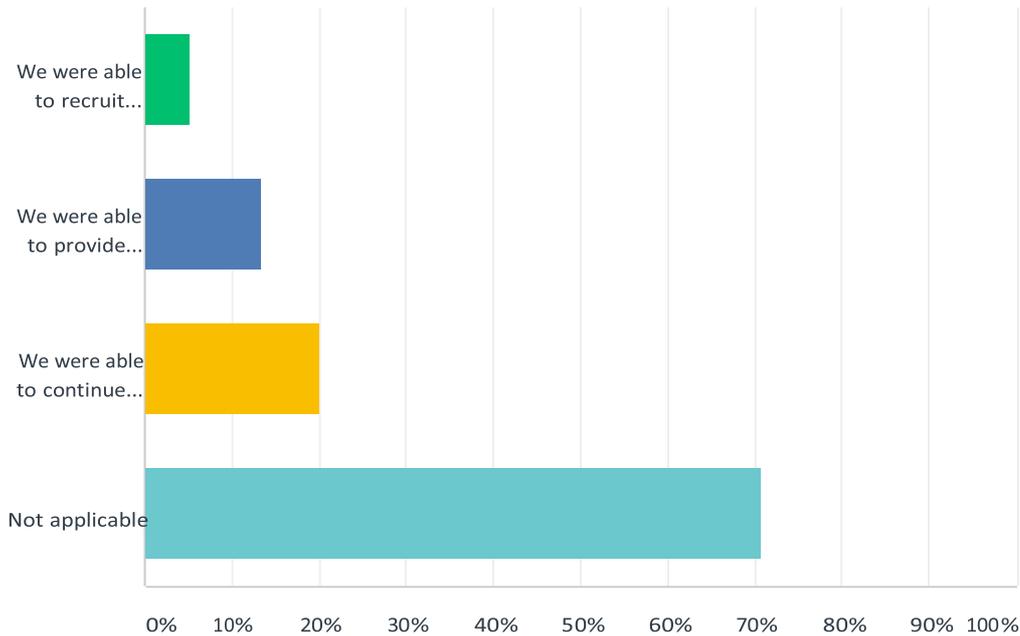


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Very quickly	21.33% 16
Quite quickly	6.67% 5
Quite slowly	2.67% 2
Very slowly	1.33% 1
Not applicable	68.00% 51
TOTAL	75

#	ANY OTHER COMMENTS ABOUT HOW YOUR APPLICATION WAS MANAGED?	DATE
1	Great support during the whole process.	9/25/2020 2:05 PM
2	Applied March 2020 and received funding July 2020. Second application rejected August.	9/24/2020 9:32 PM
3	Whole process managed poorly and unclear who had taken the decision and what their criteria had been process s not transparent	9/23/2020 10:40 AM
4	Not heard yet as only recently applied	9/21/2020 9:04 PM
5	application and decision took about a month	9/21/2020 2:28 PM

Q13 If you received funding from the W3RT Community Fund, what impact did the funding have on your services? (tick all applicable)

Answered: 75 Skipped: 2



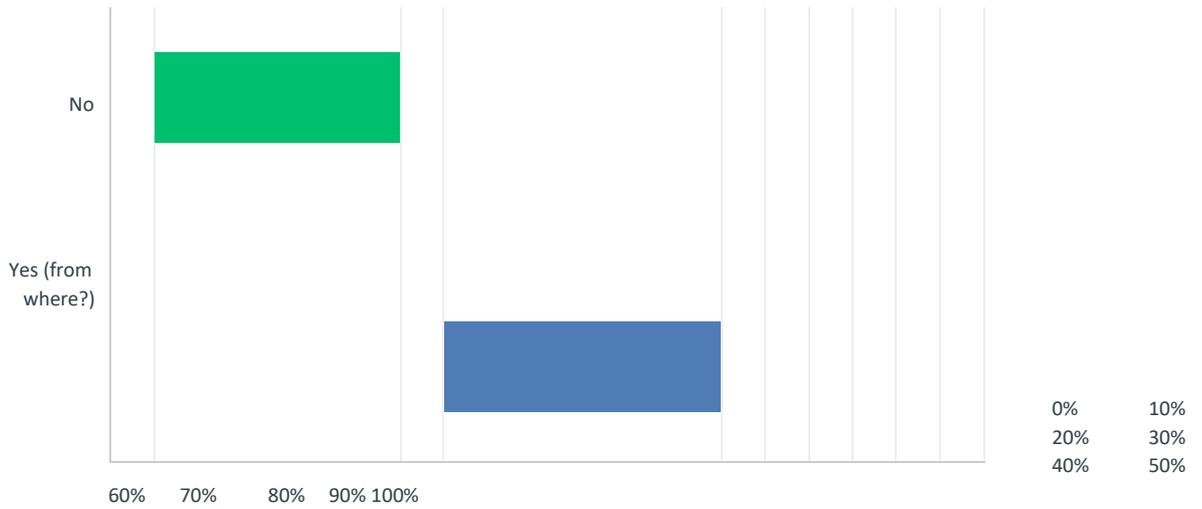
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
We were able to recruit and/or support more staff/volunteers	5.33% 4
We were able to provide new/adapted services to residents	13.33% 10
We were able to continue work which we otherwise would not have been able to do	20.00% 15
Not applicable	70.67% 53

Total Respondents: 75

#	(OPTIONAL) ANY OTHER IMPACTS?	DATE
1	They should feedback regarding the impact your project would have on the community you are targeting	9/23/2020 10:40 AM
2	We are in the process of recruiting and offering more services	9/22/2020 1:26 PM
3	Answered if are successful	9/21/2020 9:04 PM
4	We were able to support more children and families	9/21/2020 9:44 AM

Q14 Aside from the W3RT Community Fund, have you received any other Covid-19-related funding?

Answered: 73 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
No	38.36% 28
Yes (from where?)	61.64% 45
TOTAL	73

#	YES (FROM WHERE?)	DATE
1	Mayors Small Grants Fund	10/14/2020 4:19 PM
2	other charities, businesses	10/12/2020 3:13 PM
3	Watford Community Housing	10/12/2020 9:11 AM
4	lottery.	10/11/2020 12:00 PM
5	Arts council	10/11/2020 11:52 AM
6	National Lottery, Arts Council, Locality Budgets, HCF, individual giving	10/9/2020 8:34 PM
7	Various other Trust and Grant bodies	10/9/2020 3:18 PM
8	Three Rivers District Council	10/9/2020 3:04 PM
9	The Big Lottery & NHS Commissioning	10/8/2020 4:15 PM
10	Watford Borough Council, Hertsmere County Council, National Lottery	10/8/2020 4:15 PM
11	Arts Council, National Lottery, Watford Community Housing	10/6/2020 11:27 AM
12	Arts Council and HCF Emergency Funds	10/5/2020 11:18 PM

13	Herts Community Foundation, Paul Hamlyn Foundation	10/3/2020 1:50 PM
14	Furlough & Business Bounce Back Loan	10/2/2020 4:14 PM
15	sports england and watford council	10/2/2020 1:51 PM
16	Resonance	10/2/2020 10:26 AM
17	This is information with the CEO.	9/29/2020 1:23 PM
18	HCF, NHDC, HSP, other	9/28/2020 12:34 PM
19	Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund	9/28/2020 12:20 PM
20	other trusts and individuals	9/27/2020 3:25 PM
21	WATFORD BID	9/26/2020 4:04 PM
22	Lottery Covid -19 support fund	9/26/2020 3:55 PM
23	Bank	9/26/2020 10:30 AM
24	some groups received the retail and leisure grant	9/25/2020 6:24 PM
25	The Government's Hospitality and Leisure fund	9/25/2020 5:03 PM
26	Central government	9/25/2020 4:41 PM
27	Watford Borough Council	9/25/2020 2:14 PM
28	The funding was not related to Covid 19	9/25/2020 2:05 PM
29	Local / central government support £25,000	9/25/2020 1:53 PM
30	Locality budgets and other supportive organisations	9/24/2020 9:32 PM
31	Retail hospitality and leisure grant from government	9/24/2020 11:32 AM
32	individuals	9/24/2020 9:47 AM
33	Lottery	9/23/2020 3:27 PM
34	Arts Council and National Lottery	9/23/2020 10:40 AM
35	Herts Community Fund, Neighbourly, Tesco, Homeless Link	9/23/2020 9:37 AM
36	Bouncy loan	9/22/2020 5:58 PM
37	HCF, central government funding via our head office and a few other charitable foundations.	9/22/2020 4:15 PM
38	Watford Community Housing Trust	9/22/2020 1:56 PM
39	HCF	9/22/2020 1:26 PM
40	Trusts and Foundations	9/22/2020 12:32 PM
41	Mayors fund	9/22/2020 11:54 AM
42	HCF, Arts Council, Lottery and Various Trusts	9/22/2020 10:15 AM
43	Government Small Business Grant	9/22/2020 7:57 AM

44	Hertfordshire Community Foundation (HCF), HCC, Watford Housing Trust	9/21/2020 2:28 PM
45	Watford Mayor's Grant	9/21/2020 2:19 PM

Q15 Aside from funding and help from volunteers, what else would enable your organisation to support Watford residents better?

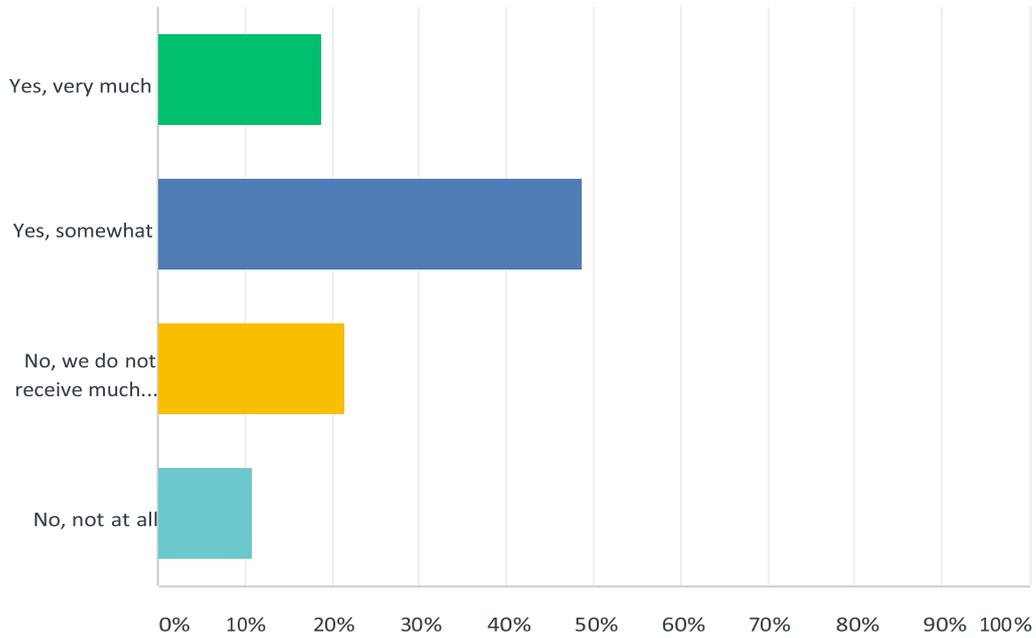
Answered: 38 Skipped: 39

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Over time access to accommodation for activities or funding to secure this on a regular ongoing basis. Funding for admin staff.	10/12/2020 9:11 AM
2	Funding	10/11/2020 12:00 PM
3	Better facilities	10/11/2020 11:52 AM
4	More funding to have a broader reach - deliver to schools and families on lower income that can't pay our fees. We are doing as much free stuff as we can but have to balance it with keeping the organisation afloat	10/9/2020 8:34 PM
5	A neutral space/shop in Croxley at affordable rent	10/9/2020 4:53 PM
6	Greater partnership working between the voluntary sector and/or engagement with the corporate sector	10/9/2020 3:33 PM
7	That's what we need !	10/9/2020 3:18 PM
8	We are primarily concerned with the Croxley Green community.	10/9/2020 3:04 PM
9	Support with promoting our services	10/8/2020 4:15 PM
10	The ability to meet and socialise in meaning full numbers!	10/7/2020 11:32 AM
11	Information on IT such as ... Teams is free but Zoom you have to pay for. Zoom training session. Opportunity to do on line group chat with CVS.	10/6/2020 11:27 AM
12	Covid training for staff for when we aim to return to usual activities	10/5/2020 11:18 PM
13	We need a properly funded BAME voluntary sector infrastructure to support the BAME communities. Watford has a large BAME population but WBC is not acknowledging or choose to ignore the BAME communities and there needs and address many barriers BAME faces. WBC has failed to hold any meaningful dialog with BAME communities as a result of BLM. WBC is not engaging with the BAME communities.	10/5/2020 11:05 AM
14	Helping us build our network with more schools (and perhaps with other creative organisations)	10/3/2020 1:50 PM
15	Raising community awareness, generating interest & support for environmental & amenity improvements	10/2/2020 5:06 PM
16	Connections with other businesses and groups = time! We're trying to adapt our organisation structure to build the capacity	10/2/2020 4:14 PM
17	Better communication between organizations and local authorities.	9/29/2020 1:23 PM
18	networks with relevant agencies/charities/groups	9/28/2020 12:34 PM
19	a local charity support network b y which we share what we have to offer and get the right help to the right people quicker	9/27/2020 3:25 PM

20	Better understanding of how a Scout Group operates and what it brings to the community. We have been here for over 90 years and people assume that it will continue without input from them	9/26/2020 3:56 PM
21	Not much really - we are ready when people want to return.	9/26/2020 3:55 PM
22	A Men's Shed in Watford	9/26/2020 12:26 PM
23	Help with securing the future of our meeting places	9/25/2020 5:03 PM
24	Being able to get out and be with people again.	9/25/2020 2:58 PM
25	na	9/25/2020 2:48 PM
26	Better marketing of services/centre and social media use.	9/25/2020 1:53 PM
27	Access to funding opportunities and partnerships. Networking. Stable funding for specific sectors. Training. Discounted rates for hiring of sites to operate from	9/24/2020 9:32 PM
28	More volunteers	9/24/2020 11:32 AM
29	Community directory. Linking groups to work together. Forum for groups to explain their projects to each other. Opportunity to share facilities/services such as IT skills.	9/23/2020 10:40 AM
30	More physical space	9/22/2020 4:15 PM
31	Access to resources A conduit is needed to ensure we are aware of the local issues	9/22/2020 2:39 PM
32	ASCEND run a variety of services and of which many are now on line which are open to anyone living in Hertfordshire	9/22/2020 1:26 PM
33	Working effectively with other partners to target vulnerable residents who would benefit from our services.	9/22/2020 1:05 PM
34	Being seed-funded to deliver outreach, engaging business and generating self-sustaining future income to support Watford community activities	9/22/2020 12:51 PM
35	Volunteer help	9/22/2020 11:54 AM
36	Better information sharing. Availability of additional funding where applicable.	9/22/2020 11:04 AM
37	regular donations of ambient groceries to meet service users requirements	9/21/2020 10:29 PM
38	Well Supported by the Watford Community Housing	9/21/2020 2:19 PM

Q16 Do you feel that your organisation is encouraged and supported to be a part of local decision-making?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes, very much	18.92% 14
Yes, somewhat	48.65% 36
No, we do not receive much support in this way	21.62% 16
No, not at all	10.81% 8
TOTAL	74

#	WHAT COULD BE DONE TO INCREASE THE INVOLVEMENT OF UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS? (OPTIONAL)	DATE
1	Very difficult. People don't think they have enough time to spare for voluntary activities in the community	10/9/2020 3:04 PM
2	Information in other languages, stop focusing on the Mosque and Gurdwara and calling it 'engagement' - spread the net wider, publish list of organisations and ask people on the list to let you know if any groups are missing, publish information on projects you have funded, help to promote projects, ethnic monitoring form, disability monitoring form, some idea of how many femal led groups are supported, regular group zoom calls,	10/6/2020 11:27 AM
3	Include beneficiaries/service users in decision making process	10/5/2020 11:18 PM
4	WBC should host at least 6 monthly meeting with the leaders of the BAME community organisation leaders with a view to listen and take forward actions.	10/5/2020 11:05 AM
5	Comes back to question of available time & capacity	10/2/2020 4:14 PM
6	We understand, we aren't Watford based anymore.	9/26/2020 12:26 PM
7	networking and sharing and inclusion in all emails and group networking	9/25/2020 5:58 PM
8	To have a youth voice in the Town.	9/25/2020 1:53 PM
9	Directory of services and organisations but it would need to be promoted properly in places where community members go and in other languages.	9/23/2020 10:40 AM
10	Better consultation; better understanding of needs, changes to the way we do things to accomodate them.	9/22/2020 2:39 PM
11	Speaking more to organisation like ASCEND and W3RT	9/22/2020 1:26 PM
12	Supporting us to raise our profile for the work that we do as we have limited capacity.	9/22/2020 1:05 PM
13	Open partnership arrangements to allow other organisations to access funding.	9/22/2020 12:51 PM
14	Publishing the results of the survey	9/21/2020 2:19 PM

Q17 Is there anything else that you would like to share?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 55

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	We want to play our part. However, the funding that is available often has inappropriate strings & doesn't recognise what diversity means and the implications for how support is given.	10/12/2020 9:11 AM
2	We love Watford!	10/9/2020 8:34 PM
3	The cultural tide is running towards individualism and commercialising every aspect of daily life. People do not see themselves as being active participants in their community and neighbourhood.	10/9/2020 3:04 PM
4	We have been really grateful for the help and encouragement we have received from the Mayor and his team	10/8/2020 4:15 PM
5	Our primary purpose is to support local community engagement and engender community spirit. Whilst social media, notably Facebook, has been a boon and at least half of our households are engaging in this it misses the technologically challenged part of the group. The current inability to organise live events seriously inhibits our activity.	10/7/2020 11:32 AM
6	An up to date report on how the CVS performs against the Equalities Act 2010 - carried out by the council equalities team. CVS to stop waiting for organisations to come to them and to reach out into the community.	10/6/2020 11:27 AM
7	As an organisation we have looked at WBC website and the council has no information about their equality duty which reinforces our understanding that WBC does not care about the needs of ALL the BAME communities other than one or two who have political representation on the council.	10/5/2020 11:05 AM
8	Love to but trying to meet the deadline	10/2/2020 4:14 PM
9	I am not sure that this is relevant to our naturist swimming club	10/2/2020 4:10 PM
10	Scouting can play and does provide an important part in youth development but the modern world brings more and more challenges and responsibilities which makes it much harder to recruit help	9/26/2020 3:56 PM
11	no	9/25/2020 6:24 PM
12	The process for acquiring volunteers is not helpful we asked for 14 in March and until June 14th had no response from W3RT at all, then I was given access to 6 people at 2.30pm after asking since March who I contacted at 2 45pm they all attended induction on Mon 17th June and have been with me ever since	9/25/2020 5:58 PM
13	We need to look after the mental and social welfare of our young people better.	9/25/2020 5:03 PM
14	We are extremely grateful for all the support we have received from the council and the local community, which enables us to bring together people of many faiths and backgrounds in support and understanding.	9/25/2020 2:58 PM
15	na	9/25/2020 2:48 PM
16	N/A	9/25/2020 1:53 PM
17	There should be a follow up to each organisation in how the funding met the needs of the group/org. Also, to see what further support will be needed going forward. The funding was received very late from application. Dealing with real time situations during a national crisis, there should have been better organisation in issuing the funding as this puts pressure on organisations to find it elsewhere whilst responding to the service users needs.	9/24/2020 9:32 PM

18	More needs to be done to encourage BAME community groups to come together.... at the moment the system is reaching the same small sections over and over again.... not all "Associations" are properly representative of their whole communities.... so the Mosque does not represent all muslims..... and when you continuously follow this direction of thinking in a nut shell you are generally reaching an older man who is speaking for young people pr women he has never bothered to consult.	9/23/2020 10:40 AM
19	The community needs the support and will like the help	9/23/2020 2:01 AM
20	Funding, and funders not paying on time, is causing cash flow problems.	9/22/2020 1:05 PM
21	Some meetings have no Terms of Reference, there are no Actions and are mostly a conversation group that is not worth attending without clear objectives.	9/22/2020 12:51 PM
22	We are Grateful to W3RT for their continued support and appreciate the support with funding and training opportunities. Thank you!	9/21/2020 2:19 PM



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

Equality Impact Analysis

Title of policy, function or service	Community and Environmental Services : Voluntary & Community Sector Strategy 2020
Lead officer	Alan Gough
Person completing the EIA	Nicola Marven
Type of policy, function or service:	Existing (reviewed) <input type="checkbox"/> New/Proposed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Version & Date	Version 2, 30 September 2020
	Version 3, 30 October 2020

1. Background

The Voluntary and Community Strategy connects and builds on the following three programmes of work at Watford Borough Council.

1.1. The Council Plan 2020-24 entitled ‘Watford Together: Our Town, Our Future’ which was adopted on by Council on 14 July 2020

The Council Plan 2020 - 24 includes the aspiration to ‘Work even more closely with the Voluntary and Community Sector, to build a resilient community where people support each other’.

This commitment aligns with the outcome outlined in the Council Plan Delivery Plan 2020-22 to ‘Support the voluntary sector in Watford to provide positive outcomes for those in need. We will build upon the success of our Watford Helps initiative and harness the community spirit established during the COVID-19 crisis to work in partnership with charitable, community and voluntary organisations focused on helping our vulnerable residents live healthy, happy and independent lives.’

1.2. The ‘Community’ work stream of Watford Borough Council’s ‘Road to Renewal’ plan

This work stream aims to: recognise the work of the community; engage the community in the renewal process; support residents who have suffered as a result of the pandemic; put in place mechanisms to identify and address ongoing vulnerabilities; identify funding opportunities; deliver memorial and thank you initiatives; provide effective community leadership.

1.3. Overview & Scrutiny Committee’s Watford and Three Rivers Trust Task Group

Under a service level agreement, Watford Borough Council (WBC) commissions Watford and Three Rivers Trust (W3RT) to provide infrastructure support to the voluntary and community sector in the town. The Council funds W3RT £79,173 per year to support the community and voluntary sector as a CVS (that is, a ‘Council for Voluntary Service’) and has worked closely with W3RT to respond to the challenges faced by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Watford Borough Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee created a Watford and Three Rivers Trust Task Group to review how well the community and voluntary sector were supported by W3RT during the Council’s response to the pandemic and to establish whether there were areas for improvement. Seven key themes were identified to guide the work of the W3RT Task Group:

1. What is the long term plan for volunteers and volunteering – sustaining what we have, recruiting and retaining new volunteers?
2. What is the impact of volunteers currently and how could this be improved?
3. How do we sustain the current effort and support community organisations?
4. How successfully did the trust collaborate with businesses, statutory and public sector organisations in responding to COVID 19?
5. Based on data and evidence, what was the delivered response to COVID 19?
6. What is the overall strategy, vision and business plan for W3RT, including harnessing the positive outcomes from the crisis, and how does this support the CVS role commissioned by WBC?
7. How do we turn the Community Fund into a legacy of COVID 19, including:
 - Governance and the role of WBC
 - Links to existing Watford based charities e.g., New Hope, Peace Hospice etc., and how we involve them in promoting and supporting the Community Fund
 - The need for a dedicated fundraiser at W3RT

The following eight recommendations were proposed by the W3RT Task Group to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 22 October 2020, and were approved. They will now be proposed to WBC's Cabinet on 9 November.

1. W3RT should take steps to improve understanding of its activities in the local community.
2. There is a need for W3RT to build more and better partnership working across the local community.
3. W3RT and the wider local voluntary sector would benefit from a dedicated fundraiser at Watford and Three Rivers Trust.
4. The Community Fund should be established as a lasting pillar of support for Watford's voluntary sector.
5. W3RT needs to clarify its long-term strategy for recruiting and sustaining local volunteering activities
6. W3RT should ensure that connections with local partners and statutory bodies are maintained in order to maximise the number of volunteers locally.
7. W3RT and the business community should strengthen their links.
8. W3RT and WBC should maintain a strong and collaborative working relationship.

2. What we know about the Watford population

Population

the current population of Watford is 96,600 (ONS mid-2019 estimate). This was slightly less than estimated in 2018 (96,800 rounded). The slowing of population growth across the UK (marked by a fall in Watford) is attributed to the lowest number of births for 14 years alongside an increase in emigration and a fall in international immigration.

Watford's population is currently projected to increase to 105,000 by 2025 and 110,300 by 2035, a rise from 2016 of 14.2%. This growth will be a challenge for Watford, given our tight borough boundaries and is recognised within the Council Plan, shaping a number of our commitments and areas for action in the Delivery Plan.

The graphs below show a comparison between the sex and age profile of England's population with that of Watford. (ONS 2018).

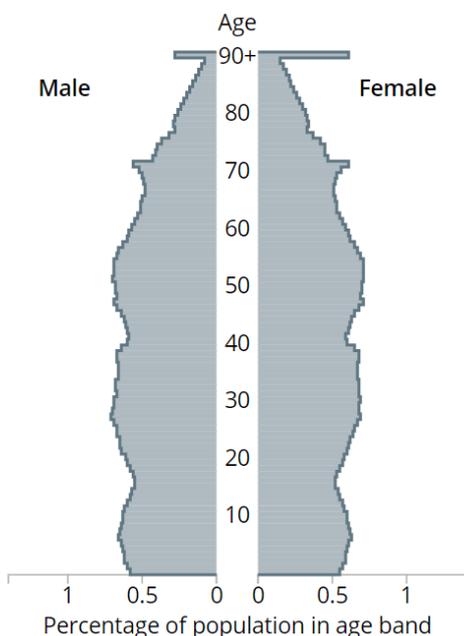
ENGLAND

WATFORD

55,977,178 people in 2018

All ages

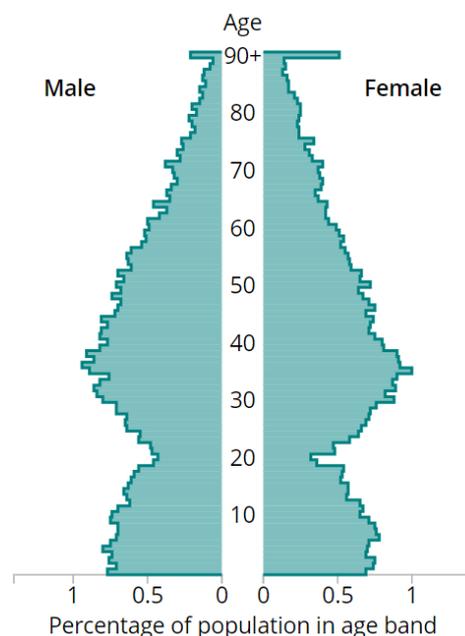
27,667,942 males 49.4% 
28,309,236 females 50.6% 



96,767 people in 2018

All ages

48,011 males 49.6% 
48,756 females 50.4% 



Overall, this comparison shows that Watford is a relatively young town. This is particularly the case in the 0 to 19 age range where 26.5% of the population are between those ages, compared with 23.6% nationally. Similarly the 30 to 49 cohort accounts for a significantly higher proportion of the Watford population at 32.1%, compared to 26.1% nationally. This means that we are a town which is popular with families and, whilst we are a town for all, we recognise that our plans need to reflect our large number of young people and families.

Population density

The population density for Watford is circa 4,600 people per square kilometre. This makes it the most densely populated district area in Hertfordshire and in the country (432 per square kilometre). This is a reflection that we are an urban district, with many characteristics of a metropolitan borough. In comparison with many metropolitan boroughs, particularly those in and around the outskirts of London, our density is relatively low.

Ward level populations (mid-year 2018 estimates)

The ONS publishes experimental data on ward level populations. The last release date was for mid-year 2018. This showed Central ward had the highest population (9,447) and Tudor the lowest (6,825). Further analysis shows that Nascot ward had a significantly higher number of elderly residents than other wards in Watford, whilst Central a significantly higher number of under 20s. The age profile of Nascot ward was recently highlighted by the COVID-19 crisis, when it experienced the highest death rate of any ward in Watford.

Ward	Mid-year 2018
Callowland	7,928
Central	9,447

Ward	Mid-year 2018
Oxhey	6,847
Park	8,698

Holywell	8,610
Leggatts	7,757
Meriden	7,972
Nascot	8,815

Stanborough	7,403
Tudor	6,825
Vicarage	8,854
Woodside	7,611

ONS experimental data (Ward Level Mid-Year Population Estimates (experimental), Mid-2018)

Households

Number of households

The ONS data, based on the census, says that there were 36,681 households in Watford at the time of the Census; as of 31 May 2020 the figure was 40,275 (council tax base).

The average household size in Watford is currently 2.45. This is currently average for the region. Nationally, there is downward trend in household size projected over the next 20 years. The Watford average household size is envisaged to drop to 2.33 person household in 2039, which this is larger than that projected for the English average (2.21 in 2039) and the Hertfordshire average (2.29 in 2039). These projections have implications for Watford in terms of development and growth.

Household size

The 2014 projections estimate that, between 2014 and 2039:

- Watford's average household size will decrease from 2.45 to 2.33
- Hertfordshire's average household size will decrease from 2.42 to 2.29
- England's average household size will decrease from 2.35 to 2.21

Household Composition

From the 2016 projections, one person households see the biggest increase in household growth in Watford, representing 44% of the total household growth.

However, households with dependent children see the next biggest rise, with 35% of household growth; couples with other adults make up 9%; other (multi-person adult) households make up 7% and couple households (without children or other adults) make up the remaining 6% of all estimated growth.

Ethnicity

Watford has a very diverse population, more so than the rest of Hertfordshire; it is one of the strengths of our town and what makes us such a vibrant and diverse town.

For Watford, the Census 2011 shows the following main breakdown in terms of ethnicity: White British (61.9%), White other (7.7%), Pakistani (6.7%), British Indian (5.5%), British other Asian (4.4%) and African (3.5%), White Irish (2.3%) and Caribbean (1.7%).

The full breakdown from Census 2011 is at Appendix A.

In 2016, the ONS published population estimates by ethnicity. This did not report ethnicities to the level of granularity that the Census reported ethnicity. The estimates for 2016 were: White British (59% - 57,000 residents), Asian / Asian British (19% - 19,000 residents), All Other White (12% - 12,000 residents), Black / African / Caribbean / Black British (4% - 4,000 residents), Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Group (4% - 4,000 residents) and Other Ethnic Group (1% - 1,000 residents).

National insurance registration: Census information is now nearly 10 years old and it is likely that the ethnic profile of the borough has changed during this time. For example, it would not have captured the more recent EU arrivals to the borough (EU2 countries – Romania and Bulgaria, who were given residency rights in 2014). We know from other data such as National Insurance Registration that Watford has experienced a relatively high increase in nationals from the EU2 countries applying for National Insurance registrations as Watford residents. This follows a period of a high number from EU8 countries (including Poland, Latvia, Lithuania) who were given freedom of movement to the UK from 2004. Throughout the period the arrival of new residents from south Asia (e.g. Pakistan / India) has remained relatively constant. The National Insurance Registrations for January – March 2020 shows there were 2,194 registrations in Watford, of which 640 were from Romania and Bulgaria, 527 from South Asia and 395 from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden. 148 came from sub Saharan Africa and 30 from North Africa. The most recent breakdown (March 2020) is at Appendix B.

Language spoken at home: Other data sources, including school language survey on the languages spoken by Watford school children at home, endorse the National Insurance findings that Watford remains a town with a diverse community with English still the predominant language (at around 60%) followed by (in order of self-selection by Watford families): Urdu, Polish, Tamil, Romanian, Gujarati, Pahari, Gujarati and Hindi. The most selected African language spoken is Arabic (113 families – although not spoken exclusively in Africa) and Akan/Twi-Fante (78 families). The full breakdown for 2018 is at Appendix C.

Births and origin of parents: In 2018, nearly 60% (59.6%) of children born to Watford based parents, had one or both parents born outside of the UK, with 42% having both parents born outside of the UK. 52% of new mothers in Watford were born outside of the UK (1397 births in total, with 667 to mothers born in the UK and 730 born outside of the UK. Of these 257 mothers were born in the ‘new’ EU countries – those that had joined since 2004) and 252 in the Middle East and Asia. 88 mothers were born in Africa.

EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) quarterly statistics (28 August 2018 to 31 March 2020) – experimental data: In May 2020, the Government issued data on the number of applications made to the EUSS from 28 August 2018 to 31 March 2020, and applications concluded during the same time period. This shows that up to March 2020, 11,630 people in Watford had applied for EUSS. Of these the following were the highest number of nationalities who had applied: Romanian (3,530), Polish (1,810), Portuguese (1,020) and Bulgarian (580). The full analysis is at Appendix D.

Age

The largest populations by age band in Watford are:

- 35-39 years (8,537)
- 30-34 years (7,921)
- 40 -44 years (7,458)
- 5 -9 years (7,027)

Compared with other districts in Hertfordshire, Watford has fewer 65+ years residents. The age profile of the borough is more comparable with cities who have younger age profiles and where younger people are attracted by lifestyle opportunities, affordable housing and good transport links.

Median age: the median age in Watford is 37 years. This compares to 40 for England (mid-year 2019 population estimates)

Disability / Health

Around 85% of the population of Watford state that they have 'good health' and just under 14% record a disability. We do not have details as to what these disabilities are but they will include a wide range of physical and mental health disabilities or impairment (Census 2011). The 2019 NHS Health Profile's summary conclusion is that the health of people in Watford is 'varied' compared with the England average. About 12% (2,300) of children live in low income families – this is an improvement on 2016 (14% / 2,700). Life expectancy for men at 65 is similar to the England average but for women it is significantly worse (2016-18). The profile also shows that Watford is below average for a number of important health indicators, which may have had some impact on the town's rate of deaths from COVID-19. These include: residents eating the recommended 5 a day portions of fruit and vegetables, over-18s who are obese and physically active adults. All reported cancer screenings were below average for Watford and emergency admissions for falls from the age of 65 plus were worse than for the England average.

Religion / belief

The religious breakdown in the Census 2011 of the main religions in Watford was: Christian (54.1%), Muslim (9.8%), Hindu (4.8%), with no religion stated at 21.4%.

In 2016, the ONS published population estimates by religion. This took an estimated population of 94,000 for Watford and the main religions identified through the estimates were: Christian (53%), Muslim (10%), Hindu (9%) with no religion at 26%.

Sexual orientation / Transgender

Watford has no specific data on the transgender community within the borough or for the sexual orientation of its community. It is anticipated that these questions will be asked in the Census 2021.

Education and skills

A skilled workforce supports the economic development and employment aspirations for Watford. There has been a mostly increasing trend in educational attainment in Watford over the last few years. Watford's working age population has the fourth highest percentage (44.4%) in Hertfordshire of those with qualifications at NVQ 4 and above (Three Rivers is the highest with 63.5%, St Albans the second highest at 58.5% and East Herts third highest with 45.7%); this is close to the Hertfordshire average of 42% average but higher than the Great Britain average of 40.3%.

83.7% of Watford residents have achieved 5 A*-C or equivalent. This is better than the England average of 75.6 (Jan – Dec 2019)

Homelessness

Whilst this is not a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, the council recognises that the particular circumstances of people without their own home might be a factor in their taking an active role in our community. We currently have 17 statutory homeless (September 2020) and 97 households in temporary accommodation (March 2020).

Deprivation

The English Indices of Deprivation (IoD) 2019 were published by the Government in September 2019, and updates the previous 2015 Indices, published in September 2015. The Indices of Deprivation measure relative levels of deprivation in 32,844 small areas or neighbourhoods, called Lower-layer Super Output Areas, in England

The IoD2019 is based on 39 separate indicators, organised across seven distinct domains of deprivation which are combined and weighted to calculate the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019

In the IMD 2019, Watford is ranked 195 out of 317 authorities, putting it in the 7th decile nationally. This means that, overall, Watford is less deprived than half the authorities in England.

Watford is the third most deprived authority in Hertfordshire. (Stevenage and Broxbourne are the most deprived.) However, three Hertfordshire authorities are among the 10% least deprived authorities in England (Three Rivers, East Herts and St Albans).

Overall, Watford is not an area with significant deprivation issues and the majority of the LSOAs within the town are in the bottom 50% of LSOAs nationally for deprivation; the borough's position has improved relative to that of 2015.

The combined deprivation index, which weights income and employment more heavily than the other domains, obscures the more deprived areas in Watford, which are affected by crime, living environment deprivation, health and disability, and education, skills and training deprivation in particular. This is, at least in part, because income and employment deprivation are less of an issue for Watford than for other areas.

The ten most deprived LSOAs in Watford, as ranked in the IMD 2019 are as follows (the ranking for the last IMD data in 2015 is shown in brackets in the first column). Deprivation has also been identified as an indicator for poorer COVID-19 outcomes so understanding our areas of deprivation, particularly if we apply greater granularity around health and income deprivation. The LSOA, which contains some of Whippendell Road, Chester Road and Durban Road West is within the second most deprived health and disability quartile does not feature in the top 10 most deprived LSOAs.

Watford rank	Ward	LSOA code	Hertfordshire		England	
			Rank	Decile in Herts (1st = most deprived)	Rank	Decile (1st = most deprived)
1 (1)	Central (Water Lane, Gladstone Road, Grosvenor Road, part of Radlett Road, Brockleberry Close, Raphael Drive, top part of Queens Road)	E01023860 (009B)	5 (5)	1st (1st)	5055 (5005)	2nd (2nd)
2 (3)	Holywell (Caractus Green, part of Charlock Way, Moor View, Jellicoe Road, Stripling Way, Rose Gardens)	E01023865 (011C)	21 (22)	1st (1st)	7239 (7800)	3rd (3rd)
3 (2)	Meriden (Garsmouth Way, Aldbury Close, Harvest End, part of York Way)	E01023876 (003D)	26 (19)	1st (1st)	7924 (7590)	3rd (3rd)
4 (4)	Holywell (Ascot Road, Greenhill Crescent, Caxton Way, Croxley View)	E01023866 (011D)	27 (30)	1st (1st)	8294 (9203)	3rd (3rd)
5 (7)	Woodside (Haines Way, Queenswood Crescent, Sheriff Way, Nottingham Close)	E01023906 (001C)	61 (41)	1st (1st)	10719 (10062)	4th (4th)
6 (10)	Oxhey (Deacons Hill, Blackwell Drive, Riverside Road, Eastbury Road, Thorpe Crescent)	E01023883 (012B)	62 (49)	1st (1st)	10758 (10710)	4th (4th)
7 (13)	Callowland (Maude Crescent, St George's Road, Breakspeare Close, Nicholas Close)	E01023857 (006C)	67 (56)	1st (1st)	10894 (10812)	4th (4th)
8 (9)	Meriden (Gaddesden Crescent, Bovingdon Crescent, Garston Lane)	E01023877 (003E)	73 (75)	2nd (2nd)	11225 (11837)	4th (4th)
9 (12)	Leggatts (The Harebreaks, Chestnut Walk, Foxhill, Brushrise, Elm Grove)	E01023870 (004C)	78 (52)	2nd (1st)	11515 (10734)	4th (4th)
10 (5)	Stanborough (Clarke Way, Rushton Avenue, Orbital Crescent, Harris Road)	E01023891 (002B)	92 (31)	1st (1st)	11970 (9377)	4th (3rd)

MOSAIC profile

Our MOSAIC profiling of the borough enhances our understanding of our population and provides valuable context for our decision-making as well as underpinning our communications and engagement. It confirms we are a young and diverse borough.

	Mosaic Code	Name	Description	Number of Household	2017 Watford %	2016 Watford %	Difference	Trend	Rank (last year)
1	J40	Career Builders	Singles and couples in their 20s and 30s progressing in their field of work from commutable properties	4,045	12.5%	11.9%	0.6%	▲	1
2	I36	Cultural Comfort	Thriving families with good incomes in multi-cultural urban communities	3,321	10.3%	8.7%	1.6%	▲	2
3	D14	Cafes and Catchments	Affluent families with growing children living in upmarket housing in city environs	2,499	7.7%	8.0%	-0.3%	▼	3
4	D17	Thriving Independence	Well-qualified older singles with incomes from successful professional careers living in good quality housing	2,422	7.5%	5.4%	2.1%	▲	7
5	M56	Solid Economy	Stable families with children renting better quality homes from social landlords	2,172	6.7%	6.4%	0.3%	▲	6
6	J44	Flexible Workforce	Young renters ready to move to follow worthwhile incomes from service sector jobs	1,954	6.0%	7.0%	-1.0%	▼	4
7	H35	Primary Ambitions	Forward-thinking younger families who sought affordable homes in good suburbs which they may now be out-growing	1,550	4.8%	6.8%	-2.0%	▼	5
8	B08	Premium Fortunes	Influential families with substantial income established in large, distinctive homes in wealthy enclaves	1,237	3.8%	3.2%	0.6%	▲	10
9	I37	Community Elders	Established older households owning city homes in diverse neighbourhoods	1,128	3.5%	4.1%	-0.6%	▼	8
10	I39	Ageing Access	Older residents owning small inner suburban properties with good access to amenities	1,099	3.4%	3.4%	0.0%	◊	9

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Key issues identified from our borough profile for the Voluntary and Community Strategy:

- The most recent census data on Watford is from 2011. This shows that Watford is slightly more religious than the England average – only 20.9% stated that they had no religion compared with 24.3% at England level. Therefore faith groups are therefore an important group to engage with (and at least 50 have been invited to participate.) Names of some of those groups engaged with are listed at the end of the Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy.
- Watford has a very diverse population and a town that continues to attract people from across the globe and with a high proportion of BAME residents [see Recommendation 24]
- Watford residents have some underlying health related issues, particularly around preventative health measures and healthy living [see Recommendations 1-3]

3. Focus of the Equality Impact Analysis

There are 24 recommendations proposed in the Voluntary and Community Strategy, grouped into four themes:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Post-Covid Recovery and Renewal | [5 recommendations] |
| 2. Engaging Volunteers | [5 recommendations] |
| 3. Diversifying Funding | [7 recommendations] |
| 4. Information Sharing | [7 recommendations] |

This Equality Impact Analysis will outline how the 24 recommendations proposed in the Voluntary and Community Strategy will aim to add positively to the consideration of Equalities with regards to the Council's work with the Voluntary and Community Sector.

3.1. Post-Covid Recovery and Renewal

The first three recommendations under this theme are related to health:

1. Review the Watford Helps triage and referral processes, to clarify the complementary roles of all signposting/social prescribing bodies, i.e. Watford Helps, Herts Helps, the W3RT Wellbeing Hub, Watford's Healthy Hub, HCNS, Watford Together, Neighbours Together, etc.
2. Ensure that partners at Hertfordshire County Council-commissioned service Herts Help have accessible local information to support Watford residents effectively, and ease local services.
3. Consider how to work towards a long-term town-wide strategic approach to respond specifically to issues of social isolation and mental health in the community.

The issue of health is of chief importance given the current Covid-19 pandemic, the government guidance in response to it, and the impact of both. The importance of both mental and physical health was confirmed in the results of a survey, conducted between 20 September – 28 October, done as part of the background work to the Voluntary and Community Strategy. When 77 respondents to the survey, of which 72 self-declared as members of members of the Voluntary and Community Sector, were asked to respond to the question 'Tick any of the issues where you have seen a recent increase in the number of people seeking support', the most popular answer (37 respondents) was Mental Health, followed by the second most popular answer (28 respondents) which was Physical Health.

These three recommendations on health are not proposing new projects or programmes of work, rather they focus on better coordinating the work being done already in the community, so as to offer better advice to residents.

The impact of these three recommendations, if accepted, would be to strengthen guidance to Watford residents who are seeking health support. This would be as a result of the organisations offering this guidance (as listed in the recommendations) deepening their connections with, and understanding of, the health services available to Watford residents, both by Voluntary and Community Sector organisations and by statutory bodies, enabling them to signpost residents more effectively to the most appropriate support.

The final two recommendations under this theme are related to sharing best practice:

4. Build on best practice in the VCS to tackle digital isolation as part of the Council's Road to Renewal plan.
5. Work with W3RT to create and share accessibly a collection of case studies with innovations and best practices, developed in response to Covid-19, from the Voluntary and Community Sector.

The issues of digital isolation is important because – particularly under Covid-related government guidance which requires strict social distance – information and advice on a range of issues such as health, employment and housing, is often offered online. The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) have responded to the challenge faced by digital isolation with energy and creativity.

These two recommendations on sharing best practice are not proposing new projects or programmes of work, rather they build on existing work being done by (a) the Council, and (b) W3RT.

The impact of these two recommendations, if accepted, would be to a) better support Watford residents to access advice and information via the Internet, by strengthening the work of WBC on digital isolation, (b) build the resilience of Voluntary and Community organisations as they respond to the challenges faced by the Covid-19 pandemic, by helping them to learn from lessons learned of one another.

3.2. Engaging Volunteers

The first three recommendations under this theme are related to short and medium-term operations:

6. Review the Watford Helps volunteer brokerage system, to clarify the complementary roles of all volunteering services which Watford residents might access, including Team Herts, do-it.org and W3RT.
7. Ensure that partners at Hertfordshire County Council-commissioned service Team Herts have accessible local information to efficiently help Watford residents, and ease local services.
8. Ensure that there is a formal process for volunteer referrals to organisations to ensure both skills and motivations are considered, and that engagement information is captured.

These three recommendations are not proposing new projects or programmes of work, rather they build on existing work being done by the Council, TeamHerts Volunteering and W3RT.

The impact of these three recommendations, if accepted, would be to better support Watford residents who seek support with the process of becoming of a volunteer by ensuring that they are given prompt and through guidance by the correct organisation.

The final two recommendations under this theme are related to longer-term strategic aspirations:

9. Coordinate approaches for the recognition of volunteers by the Council and other partners in the community.
10. Build on the response to the Covid-19 crisis as a basis to change attitudes to support the most vulnerable in society, by building opportunities for professional development and long-term volunteering such as trusteeship.

These three recommendations are not proposing new projects or programmes of work, rather they build on existing work being done by the Council, W3RT and other partners across Watford.

The impact of these two recommendations, if accepted, would be to increase the number of Watford residents who would like to volunteer, thereby increasing opportunities for greater support for vulnerable residents across the community, and also increasing confidence and wellbeing for the volunteers themselves.

3.3. Diversifying Funding

The first four recommendations under this theme are related to the Community Fund:

11. Review the Watford Helps Community Fund, to clarify its role in relation to similar funds, such as HCF's Coronavirus Relief Fund and WCH's Community Development Fund.
12. Ensure that the administration of a revised Community Fund is done as collaboratively and transparently as possible. Consider support from a range of partners on this such as Hertfordshire Community Foundation.
13. Consider aligning Community Fund grants more closely to strategic priorities.
14. Consider allocating part of the Community Fund to projects lasting more than 12 months.

These four recommendations are not proposing new projects or programmes of work, rather they build on existing work being done by the Council and W3RT. There is no recommendation here that there should be any increase or decrease in expenditure to the Community Fund by Watford Borough Council.

The impact of these four recommendations, if accepted, would be to support the Voluntary and Community Sector by offering more clarity and flexibility from the Community Fund. A review of the Community Fund's role and administration will necessarily closely involve the current administrators of the fund, W3RT, but should dovetail with existing work streams of both WBC and W3RT.

The final three recommendations under this theme are related to the Council's support of the VCS:

15. Align reporting schedules of all Watford Borough Council 'Business-As-Usual' expenditure with the Voluntary and Community Sector to ensure strategic priorities are considered.
16. Consider a full-time fundraising post, to support the Community Fund and VCS groups through the CVS.
17. Consider how to explicitly support the Voluntary and Community Sector to build financial resilience and diversify income streams alongside traditional fundraising.

These three recommendations are not proposing new projects or programmes of work, rather they build on existing work being done by the Council and W3RT. There is the possibility of a financial impact if WBC decide to create a fundraising post, but Recommendation 16 will need to be considered alongside Recommendation 20 (Review the CVS staffing role at W3RT) in order to make a more detailed future recommendation.

The impact of these four recommendations, if accepted, would be to ensure better clarity and resilience for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) by building their financial capacity and capabilities. If Recommendation 16 is approved, and then in future enacted, it would also potentially increase the number of projects and services offered by the VCS to Watford residents through providing more available income.

3.4. Information Sharing

18. Review the Watford Helps networks, clarifying the roles of groups such as the Mayor's Volunteering Planning Group in line with the One Watford review due in December. Ensure that there is scope across Watford for VCS leaders to input to both operational and strategic discussions and decision-making.
19. Review principles of CVS approach so as to minimise any possible conflicts of interest between W3RT's support to its members and its role as a service delivery organisation.
20. Review the CVS staffing role at W3RT to ensure more WBC input with regards to strategic and operational responsibilities, with the aim to encourage long-term staff who can build up strong local knowledge and relationships.
21. Consider how to support VCS with collection, analysis and data sharing on changing needs across Watford, as part of wider approach by WBC and statutory partners.
22. Consider the groupings and 'themes' used to categorise VCS organisations as a means to link new and emerging groups to those with similar aims.
23. Refresh the CVS' KPIs on actively engaging with business so as to lay out explicit plans on how to share knowledge and skills between local businesses and the VCS.
24. Work with W3RT to create a proactive action plan to better engage with all parts of the Voluntary and Community Sector, particularly those that support underrepresented communities including those from BAME communities and those smaller groups that may not have their own physical spaces.

These seven recommendations are not proposing new projects or programmes of work, rather they build on existing work being done by the Council and W3RT.

The impact of these four recommendations, if accepted, would be to ensure better peer support and information for groups from the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) – particularly new and emerging groups – thereby helping them to become more effective, resilient and proactive. Recommendations 19 and 20 may also improve the VCS' relationship with W3RT, thereby increasing the positive impact of the WBC-commissioned CVS work there.

4. Engagement and consultation

This is the second version of this Equality Impact Assessment. The first version was submitted to WBC's lead for equalities on the 23 September 2020, in order to ensure the participatory process which informed the Voluntary and Community Strategy was one that was open and accessible to all.

In order to engage gain a range of perspectives on the work of Watford Borough Council, W3RT and the VCS in general, around 400 organisations were approached. To ensure that VCS groups – many of whom work with residents that share characteristics protected in the Equalities Act 2010 – were represented appropriately, an exercise was carried out in which every groups who was invited to participate was categorised roughly as falling under either one of the 9 Protected Characteristics, or as 'universal'. That is, they may support residents who share these characteristics, but not exclusively. The characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex (gender)
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership

For the purpose of this exercise, groups that supported residents who might need support as a result of falling under the characteristic of 'gender reassignment' were classified as belonging as either 'universal' (as this may not be a characteristic known to the VCS supporting them), or 'sex (gender)', or in some cases 'sexual orientation'.

Groups who supported residents whose characteristic might relate to 'marriage and civil partnership' were largely categorised under 'universal'. This is because the 9 protected characteristics were cross-analysed with the 12 themes which is used by W3RT to categorise groups, one of which was 'Families and Youth'.

The analysis of groups who were invited to take part as of 23 September 2020 are in the below table. There were around 50 more groups approached since this date.

W3RT Themes	Age	disability	pregnancy & maternity	race	religion/ belief	Sex	sexual orientation	universal	Grand Total
Theme : Art & culture	1	2		1				32	36
Theme : Community development				2	1			22	25
Theme : Equality & inclusion		6		6		2	1	2	17
Theme : Faith				2	49	1			52
Theme : Families & youths	61	5	5	4	2		1	1	79
Theme : International development								5	5
Theme : Other focus								6	6
Theme : Prosperity & security	1				3			17	21

Theme : Sport & fitness	1	3						18	22
Theme : Trading & fundraising	12							13	25
Theme : Wellbeing & aging	21	35				4		7	67
Grand Total	97	51	5	15	55	7	2	123	355

4.1. Walk n Talk Sessions

Voluntary and Community groups (over 300 as of 23 September 2020) were invited to participate in face to face sessions 'Walk n Talk' sessions, weekly on Wednesdays. These were scheduled to take place outside four locations to cover South, Central and North Watford. The different locations were chosen in order to encourage participation from across Watford geographically. The locations were all outside Voluntary and Community organisations: that is, outside Holywell Community Centre in the South, outside Watford Palace Theatre and The Barn in Central Watford, and outside One Vision/ Stanborough Park Church in the North.

In order to adhere to government guidelines on social distance, participants were asked to book for the face to face sessions on Eventbrite, in order to confirm to share contact details which could be used in line with Track and Trace protocol.

The 'walks' were wheelchair accessible, and where interpreters were needed these would have been provided. The Watford Deaf Sports and Social Club enquired about whether British Sign Language interpreters would be made available, and it was confirmed that if a confirmation of attendance was made then an interpreter would be sourced and funded by Watford Borough Council. In the event, although the information was circulated amongst members, no booking to attend was made.

4.2. Online sessions

The same number of groups were invited to participate in online sessions, weekly on Fridays. These will held using secure software 8x8, enabling participants to dial in where internet access is a problem.

4.3. Survey

The same number of groups were invited to complete a survey. This was available at surveyMonkey.com/r/watfordcommunity Groups that did not find this accessible were sent paper versions of the survey on request – and indeed an alternative version was sent to a member of Disability Watford, for example. In the end, 77 organisations completed the survey, of which 72 self-identified as belonging to the Voluntary and Community Sector. Full results to the Survey are attached as an appendix to the Voluntary and Community Strategy.

5. How the Council will ensure that equality is promoted through a Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy

Under the Equality Act 2010, three areas need to be considered when analysing the equality impact of a Voluntary and Community Sector:

1. **eliminate** discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
2. **advance** equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it

3. **foster** good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not

One of the four themes that the Voluntary and Community Strategy specifically addresses is the issue of information sharing. This is to ensure that accessibility to information and support among the Voluntary and Community Sector, and the communities that they support, is widely available so as to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. There are also specific Recommendations (such as creating a strategic approach to social isolation and mental health at Recommendation 3; ensuring that there is a formal referral process for volunteers at Recommendation 8; ensuring that there is collaborative and transparent administration of the Community Fund at Recommendation 12; and avoiding any possible conflicts of interest at Recommendation 19) which, if adopted, will actively aim to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, or any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010.

There is also a Recommendation (24): 'Work with W3RT to create a proactive action plan to better engage with all parts of the Voluntary and Community Sector, particularly those that support underrepresented communities including those from BAME communities and those smaller groups that may not have their own physical spaces.'

This Recommendation aims to not only aim to support and engage with underrepresented communities, but also to involve them actively in local decision-making and leadership.

A. Positive impacts

The strategy will aim to advance equality of opportunity for:

- Watford residents who seek support, particularly support with health, social isolation and digital isolation, by strengthening links between those organisations who are offering 'signposting' support, as discussed
- Watford residents who seek to volunteer, by providing them with a clear and thorough support
- All Voluntary and Community Sector groups, and those residents that benefit from their services, particularly those who are new and emerging; seeking to be more financially resilient; smaller or from underrepresented communities.
- Improving support for all groups but particularly those that support underrepresented communities including those from BAME communities and those smaller groups that may not have their own physical spaces.

The strategy will aim to foster good relations between people through:

- Encouraging information sharing and collaboration among the Voluntary and Community Sector, as per recommendations 5, 9 and 24.
- Encouraging networking and peer support among the Voluntary and Community Sector by encouraging groupings and 'themes' to link new and emerging groups to those with similar aims.
- Encouraging town-wide collaboration by strengthening links between the VCS and business.

B. Negative impacts

There are unlikely to be negative impacts from the Strategy. The evidence base has identified the diversity of the Watford community and there is a need to ensure underrepresented VCS groups are supported and that the Watford community can engage with the voluntary and community sector across the town. Negative impacts would follow if the recommendations of the Strategy are not implemented in terms of reflecting the diversity of the Watford community.

Any future funding arrangements which come out of recommendations from the strategy will require their own Equality Impact Analysis to ensure that they are reflecting what we know about the Watford community.

6. Overall conclusion

Positive Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to ensure the positive impact
Equality of opportunity for:		
Watford residents seeking support with health, social isolation, digital isolation	Universal	As per recommendations
Watford residents who seek to volunteer	Universal	As per recommendations
All VCS groups	Universal	As per recommendations
Underrepresented VCS groups	Dependent on group but to recognise the diversity of the town including its BAME groups	As per Recommendation 24
Good relations due to:		
All VCS groups	Universal	As per recommendations

Negative Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to address the negative impact
Potential negative impacts if recommendations in relation to the town's diversity is not reflected in actions taken forward	All	Robust and effective monitoring of the recommendations of the Strategy, including in terms of impact on protected characteristics in relation to groups supported, volunteer base and the community accessing VCS groups / support. Equality Impact Analyses to be required for any funding or policy decisions emerging from the implementation of the Strategy.

**This Equality Impact Assessment has been approved by:
Kathryn Robson, Equalities Lead for Watford Borough Council**

Date: 1 November 2020

Appendix A:**Census 2011: Watford Borough ethnicity data**

	WATFORD 2011
White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	61.9% (55,875)
White Irish	2.3% (2,063)
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.1% (61)
White: Other White	7.7% (6,947)
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: White and Black Caribbean	1.1% (990)
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: White and Black African	0.5% (412)
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: White and Asian	1.0% (939)
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: Other Mixed	0.8% (763)
Asian/Asian British: Indian	5.5% (4,923)
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	6.7% (6,082)
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	0.4% (362)
Asian/Asian British: Chinese	0.9% (822)
Asian/Asian British: Other Asian	4.4% (3,981)
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African	3.5% (3,142)
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Caribbean	1.7% (1,558)
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Other Black	0.6% (529)
Other ethnic group: Arab	0.3% (294)
Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group	0.6% (558)

Appendix B:

National Insurance registrations – Hertfordshire – March 2020

		European Union				Non-European Union (Other Europe)	Asia				Rest of the World				Unknown	
	TOTAL	European Union EU15	European Union EU8	European Union EU2	European Union Other	Other Europe	Middle East and Central Asia	East Asia	South Asia	South East Asia	Sub-Saharan Africa	North Africa	North America	Central and South America	Oceania	Unknown
Broxbourne	809	130	80	342	11	104	9	9	31	8	62	8	10	8	6	..
Dacorum	1,228	233	111	449	7	44	12	12	143	14	124	10	19	18	28	..
East Hertfordshire	1,089	569	117	208	5	30	6	9	42	10	31	..	20	24	18	..
Hertsmere	1,131	229	81	464	8	78	17	12	88	30	86	9	15	16	8	..
North Hertfordshire	509	126	66	114	7	19	7	9	75	7	34	..	11	8	15	..
St Albans	885	321	74	132	7	54	13	23	87	23	51	9	30	22	45	..
Stevenage	794	104	63	228	5	22	5	8	180	59	60	14	14	16	9	..
Three Rivers	532	114	29	163	5	30	6	10	88	9	24	7	16	10	25	..
Watford	2,194	395	159	640	5	74	23	15	527	68	148	30	17	56	25	..
Welwyn Hatfield	3,191	348	231	702	25	75	35	30	1,228	124	285	17	24	32	26	..

World area reporting structure - subgroups and nationalities.

World region	Sub group	Nationality
Asia	East Asia	China
Asia	East Asia	Hong Kong
Asia	East Asia	Japan

World region	Sub group	Nationality
Asia	East Asia	Macau
Asia	East Asia	Mongolia
Asia	East Asia	North Korea
Asia	East Asia	South Korea
Asia	East Asia	Taiwan
Asia	Middle East and Central Asia	Afghanistan
Asia	Middle East and Central Asia	Bahrain
Asia	Middle East and Central Asia	Iran
Asia	Middle East and Central Asia	Iraq
Asia	Middle East and Central Asia	Israel
Asia	Middle East and Central Asia	Jordan
Asia	Middle East and Central Asia	Kazakhstan
Asia	Middle East and Central Asia	Kuwait
Asia	Middle East and Central Asia	Kyrgyzstan
Asia	Middle East and Central Asia	Lebanon
Asia	Middle East and Central Asia	Oman
Asia	Middle East and Central Asia	Qatar
Asia	Middle East and Central Asia	Saudi Arabia
Asia	Middle East and Central Asia	Sharjah
Asia	Middle East and Central Asia	Syria
Asia	Middle East and Central Asia	Tajikistan
Asia	Middle East and Central Asia	Turkmenistan
Asia	Middle East and Central Asia	United Arab Emirates
Asia	Middle East and Central Asia	Uzbekistan
Asia	Middle East and Central Asia	Yemen
Asia	South Asia	Bangladesh
Asia	South Asia	Bhutan
Asia	South Asia	British Indian Ocean Territory
Asia	South Asia	India
Asia	South Asia	Maldives

World region	Sub group	Nationality
Asia	South Asia	Nepal
Asia	South Asia	Pakistan
Asia	South Asia	Sri Lanka
Asia	South East Asia	Brunei
Asia	South East Asia	Burma
Asia	South East Asia	Cambodia
Asia	South East Asia	East Timor
Asia	South East Asia	Indonesia
Asia	South East Asia	Laos
Asia	South East Asia	Malaysia
Asia	South East Asia	Philippines
Asia	South East Asia	Sabah
Asia	South East Asia	Sarawak
Asia	South East Asia	Singapore
Asia	South East Asia	Thailand
Asia	South East Asia	Vietnam
European Union	European Union EU15	Austria
European Union	European Union EU15	Belgium
European Union	European Union EU15	Denmark
European Union	European Union EU15	Finland
European Union	European Union EU15	France
European Union	European Union EU15	Germany
European Union	European Union EU15	Greece
European Union	European Union EU15	Ireland
European Union	European Union EU15	Italy
European Union	European Union EU15	Luxembourg
European Union	European Union EU15	Netherlands
European Union	European Union EU15	Portugal
European Union	European Union EU15	Spain
European Union	European Union EU15	Sweden

World region	Sub group	Nationality
European Union	European Union EU2	Bulgaria
European Union	European Union EU2	Romania
European Union	European Union EU8	Czech Republic
European Union	European Union EU8	Estonia
European Union	European Union EU8	Hungary
European Union	European Union EU8	Latvia
European Union	European Union EU8	Lithuania
European Union	European Union EU8	Poland
European Union	European Union EU8	Slovakia
European Union	European Union EU8	Slovenia
European Union	European Union Other	Croatia
European Union	European Union Other	Cyprus
European Union	European Union Other	Malta
Non-European Union (Other Europe)	Other Europe	Albania
Non-European Union (Other Europe)	Other Europe	Andorra
Non-European Union (Other Europe)	Other Europe	Armenia
Non-European Union (Other Europe)	Other Europe	Azerbaijan
Non-European Union (Other Europe)	Other Europe	Belarus
Non-European Union (Other Europe)	Other Europe	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Non-European Union (Other Europe)	Other Europe	Bouvet Island
Non-European Union (Other Europe)	Other Europe	Faroe Islands
Non-European Union (Other Europe)	Other Europe	Georgia
Non-European Union (Other Europe)	Other Europe	Greenland
Non-European Union (Other Europe)	Other Europe	Iceland
Non-European Union (Other Europe)	Other Europe	Liechtenstein
Non-European Union (Other Europe)	Other Europe	Macedonia
Non-European Union (Other Europe)	Other Europe	Moldova
Non-European Union (Other Europe)	Other Europe	Monaco
Non-European Union (Other Europe)	Other Europe	Norway

World region	Sub group	Nationality
Non-European Union (Other Europe)	Other Europe	Russia
Non-European Union (Other Europe)	Other Europe	San Marino
Non-European Union (Other Europe)	Other Europe	Serbia & Montenegro
Non-European Union (Other Europe)	Other Europe	Switzerland
Non-European Union (Other Europe)	Other Europe	Turkey
Non-European Union (Other Europe)	Other Europe	Ukraine
Non-European Union (Other Europe)	Other Europe	Vatican City
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Anguilla
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Antigua
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Antilles (Netherlands)
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Argentina
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Aruba and Curaçao
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Bahamas
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Barbados
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Barbuda
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Belize
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Bermuda
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Bolivia
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Brazil
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Cayman Islands
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Chile
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Colombia
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Costa Rica
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Cuba
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Dominica
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Dominican Rep
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Ecuador
Rest of the World	Central and South America	El Salvador
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Falkland Islands

World region	Sub group	Nationality
Rest of the World	Central and South America	French Guiana
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Grenada
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Guadeloupe
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Guatemala
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Guyana
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Haiti
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Honduras
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Jamaica
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Martinique
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Mexico
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Montserrat
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Nicaragua
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Panama
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Paraguay
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Peru
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Sint Maarten (Dutch Part)
Rest of the World	Central and South America	South Georgia & South Sandwich Island
Rest of the World	Central and South America	St Kitts and Nevis
Rest of the World	Central and South America	St Lucia
Rest of the World	Central and South America	St Pierre & Miquelon
Rest of the World	Central and South America	St Vincent & Grenadines
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Suriname
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Trinidad & Tobago
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Turks & Caicos Islands
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Uruguay
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Venezuela
Rest of the World	Central and South America	Virgin Islands (British)
Rest of the World	North Africa	Algeria
Rest of the World	North Africa	Egypt

World region	Sub group	Nationality
Rest of the World	North Africa	Libya
Rest of the World	North Africa	Mauritania
Rest of the World	North Africa	Morocco
Rest of the World	North Africa	Sudan
Rest of the World	North Africa	Tunisia
Rest of the World	North Africa	Western Sahara
Rest of the World	North America	Canada
Rest of the World	North America	Puerto Rico
Rest of the World	North America	United States
Rest of the World	North America	Virgin Islands (USA)
Rest of the World	Oceania	American Samoa
Rest of the World	Oceania	Antarctic Territories (British)
Rest of the World	Oceania	Australia
Rest of the World	Oceania	Christmas Island
Rest of the World	Oceania	Cocos (Keeling) Islands
Rest of the World	Oceania	Cook Islands
Rest of the World	Oceania	Fiji
Rest of the World	Oceania	French Polynesia (inc. Tahiti)
Rest of the World	Oceania	French Southern Territories
Rest of the World	Oceania	Heard Island & McDonald Islands
Rest of the World	Oceania	Micronesia (Sub Region)
Rest of the World	Oceania	New Caledonia
Rest of the World	Oceania	New Zealand
Rest of the World	Oceania	Niue
Rest of the World	Oceania	Norfolk Island
Rest of the World	Oceania	Papua New Guinea
Rest of the World	Oceania	Pitcairn
Rest of the World	Oceania	Samoa
Rest of the World	Oceania	Solomon Islands
Rest of the World	Oceania	Tokelau

World region	Sub group	Nationality
Rest of the World	Oceania	Tonga
Rest of the World	Oceania	Tuvalu
Rest of the World	Oceania	US Minor Outlying Islands
Rest of the World	Oceania	Vanuatu
Rest of the World	Oceania	Wallis & Futuna
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Angola
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Benin
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Botswana
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Burkina Faso
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Burundi
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Cameroon
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Cape Verde
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Central African Republic
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Chad
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Comoros
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Congo
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Congo (Democratic Republic)
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Djibouti
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Equatorial Guinea
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Eritrea
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Ethiopia
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Gabon
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Gambia
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Ghana
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Guinea
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Guinea-Bissau
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Ivory Coast
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Kenya
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lesotho
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Liberia

World region	Sub group	Nationality
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Madagascar
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Malawi
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Mali
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Mauritius
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Mayotte
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Mozambique
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Namibia
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Niger
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Nigeria
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Reunion
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Rwanda
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Sao Tome and Principe
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Senegal
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Seychelles
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Sierra Leone
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Somalia
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	South Africa
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	St Helena
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Swaziland
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Tanzania
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Togo
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Uganda
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Zambia
Rest of the World	Sub-Saharan Africa	Zimbabwe

Appendix C:

Languages spoken at home from Watford school survey

Language	Total	Percentage
English*	8751	59.10%
Urdu	980	6.62%
Polish	501	3.38%
Tamil	456	3.08%
Romanian	380	2.57%
Gujarati	373	2.52%
Pahari (Pakistan)	265	1.79%
Hindi	226	1.53%
Other than English*	150	1.01%
Portuguese	150	1.01%
Panjabi	121	0.82%
Malayalam	117	0.79%
Arabic	113	0.76%
Sinhala	97	0.66%
Italian	96	0.65%
Telugu	81	0.55%
Akan/Twi-Fante	78	0.53%
Bulgarian	77	0.52%
French	75	0.51%
Spanish	74	0.50%
Albanian/Shqip	64	0.43%
Nepali	61	0.41%
Turkish	58	0.39%
Bengali	56	0.38%
Hungarian	55	0.37%
Russian	49	0.33%
Filipino	48	0.32%
Chinese	44	0.30%
Chinese (Cantonese)	41	0.28%
Marathi	38	0.26%
Dari Persian	35	0.24%
Somali	34	0.23%
Portuguese (any other)	33	0.22%
Lithuanian	32	0.22%
Panjabi (Mirpuri)	32	0.22%
Romanian (Romania)	32	0.22%
Pashto/Pakhto	31	0.21%
Persian/Farsi	31	0.21%
Slovak	31	0.21%
Shona	30	0.20%
Wolof	30	0.20%
Akan (Twi/Asante)	29	0.20%
Japanese	29	0.20%
Chinese (Mandarin/Putonghua)	28	0.19%
Refused*	28	0.19%
Yoruba	28	0.19%

Czech	27	0.18%
Portuguese (Brazil)	24	0.16%
Farsi/Persian (any other)	24	0.16%
Tagalog/Filipino	24	0.16%
Tagalog	21	0.14%
Classification pending	21	0.14%
Bengali (Sylheti)	19	0.13%
Panjabi (any other)	19	0.13%
Greek	18	0.12%
Kashmiri	18	0.12%
Panjabi (Gurmukhi)	17	0.11%
Kannada	16	0.11%
Akan (Fante)	15	0.10%
Dutch/Flemish	15	0.10%
Bengali (any other)	14	0.09%
German	14	0.09%
Swahili/Kiswahili	13	0.09%
Thai	13	0.09%
Igbo	12	0.08%
Believed to be other than English*	11	0.07%
Vietnamese	11	0.07%
Kikuyu/Gikuyu	10	0.07%
Other language	10	0.07%
Katchi	9	0.06%
Korean	9	0.06%
Macedonian	9	0.06%
Swahili (any other)	9	0.06%
Ukrainian	9	0.06%
Danish	8	0.05%
Guarani	8	0.05%
Arabic (Algeria)	7	0.05%
Ewe	7	0.05%
Konkani	7	0.05%
Kurdish	7	0.05%
Lingala	7	0.05%
Serbian	7	0.05%
Latvian	6	0.04%
Panjabi (Pothwari)	6	0.04%
Believed to be English*	5	0.03%
Ga	5	0.03%
Hebrew	5	0.03%
Manding/Malinke	5	0.03%
Bosnian	5	0.03%
Sindhi	5	0.03%
Afrikaans	4	0.03%
Arabic (any other)	4	0.03%
Caribbean Creole English	4	0.03%
Chinese (any other)	4	0.03%
Chichewa/Nyanja	4	0.03%

Fula/Fulfulde-Pulaar	4	0.03%
Ndebele	4	0.03%
Slovenian	4	0.03%
Berber (Tamashek)	4	0.03%
Finnish	3	0.02%
Greek (any other)	3	0.02%
Krio	3	0.02%
Norwegian	3	0.02%
Pahari/Himachali (India)	3	0.02%
Romanian (Moldova)	3	0.02%
Croatian	3	0.02%
Swedish	3	0.02%
Amharic	2	0.01%
Arabic (Morocco)	2	0.01%
Caribbean Creole French	2	0.01%
Idoma	2	0.01%
Luganda	2	0.01%
Manding/Malinke (any other)	2	0.01%
Bambara	2	0.01%
Ndebele (South Africa)	2	0.01%
Romany/English Romanes	2	0.01%
Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian	2	0.01%
Tibetan	2	0.01%
Adangme	1	0.01%
Assyrian/Aramaic	1	0.01%
Bemba	1	0.01%
Burmese/Myanma	1	0.01%
Bengali (Chittagong/Noakhali)	1	0.01%
Chinese (Hakka)	1	0.01%
Welsh/Cymraeg	1	0.01%
Ebira	1	0.01%
Esan/Ishan	1	0.01%
Estonian	1	0.01%
Greek (Cyprus)	1	0.01%
Ilokano	1	0.01%
Kisi (West Africa)	1	0.01%
Kurdish (Kurmanji)	1	0.01%
Lusoga	1	0.01%
Malay/Indonesian	1	0.01%
Malay (any other)	1	0.01%
Mauritian/Seychelles Creole	1	0.01%
Ndebele (Zimbabwe)	1	0.01%
Romani (International)	1	0.01%
Sotho/Sesotho	1	0.01%
Tiv	1	0.01%
Berber/Tamazight (any other)	1	0.01%
Uzbek	1	0.01%
Venda	1	0.01%
Xhosa	1	0.01%

Zulu		1	0.01%
14808	100.00%		

Appendix D:

EU Settlement Scheme: applications by nationality, region and local authority, 28 August 2018 to 31 March 2020 (Countries A-K)

Hertfordshire Districts and Borough comparisons

	Total	Austria	Belgium	Bulgaria	Croatia	Cyprus	Czech Republic	Denmark	Estonia	Finland	France	Germany	Greece	Hungary	Iceland	Ireland	Italy
Broxbourne	6,320	30	30	390	*	80	40	20	10	*	110	90	130	200	0	10	1,220
Dacorum	6,950	20	80	410	*	*	80	40	10	10	230	210	120	270	*	*	640
East Hertfordshire	6,120	30	20	280	10	20	100	40	20	30	230	210	180	240	*	10	990
Hertsmere	7,630	30	70	310	20	40	100	30	20	30	240	200	180	280	0	10	530
North Hertfordshire	3,590	10	40	130	*	20	40	30	20	30	260	180	80	150	*	*	580
St Albans	6,340	40	80	230	20	30	100	70	10	60	410	300	320	250	*	10	880
Stevenage	4,260	20	30	200	30	20	40	*	*	*	110	150	50	200	0	*	270
Three Rivers	3,930	20	20	150	*	*	40	30	*	20	140	100	40	100	*	*	230
Watford	11,630	20	90	580	10	10	100	40	20	30	330	240	210	510	*	*	1,100
Welwyn Hatfield	8,160	10	70	340	20	50	80	30	20	20	140	160	200	590	*	*	520

* = 1 to 9

EU Settlement Scheme: applications by nationality, region and local authority, 28 August 2018 to 31 December 2019 (Countries L-R)

Hertfordshire Districts and Borough comparisons

		Latvia	Liechtenstein	Lithuania	Luxembourg	Malta	Netherlands	Norway	Poland	Portugal	Romania
Broxbourne	6,320	130	0	450	*	*	50	*	1,310	210	1,330
Dacorum	6,950	120	0	210	*	10	130	10	1,070	330	2,130
East Hertfordshire	6,120	60	0	160	*	*	110	20	1,020	680	890
Hertsmere	7,630	50	0	190	0	20	140	*	920	400	3,050
North Hertfordshire	3,590	50	0	140	0	*	100	*	640	150	420
St Albans	6,340	40	0	120	*	10	180	20	870	380	760
Stevenage	4,260	70	0	160	0	0	70	*	1,010	170	1,190

Three Rivers	3,930	40	0	170	*	*	80	20	500	760	1,070
Watford	11,630	100	0	240	10	10	210	20	1,810	1,020	3,530
Welwyn Hatfield	8,160	90	0	260	*	10	110	20	1,860	390	2,430

		Slovakia	Slovenia	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	Non-EEA
Broxbourne	6,320	60	*	160	30	*	220
Dacorum	6,950	140	*	260	50	20	330
East Hertfordshire	6,120	80	10	400	50	20	160
Hertsmere	7,630	180	*	230	50	*	300
North Hertfordshire	3,590	70	*	230	60	20	140
St Albans	6,340	140	*	620	90	30	250
Stevenage	4,260	80	*	170	20	10	150
Three Rivers	3,930	60	*	120	50	20	120
Watford	11,630	130	10	500	80	*	650
Welwyn Hatfield	8,160	150	*	230	40	10	280

* = 1 to 9



WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR STRATEGY SUMMARY

1 Review the Watford Helps triage and referral processes

Many entities offer information, advice, direct support and referrals elsewhere ('signposting') including:

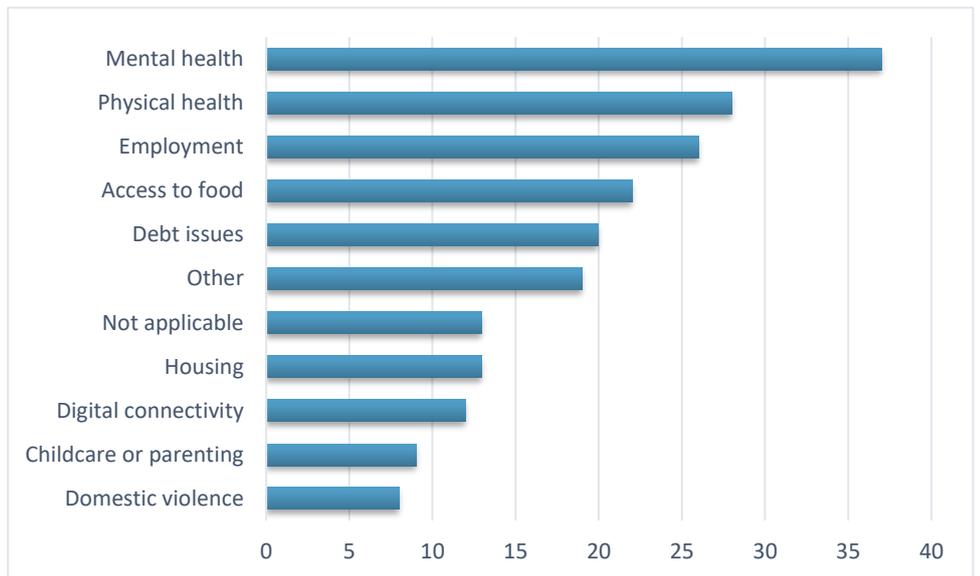
- Watford Helps, which coordinates voluntary activity and signposts vulnerable residents to support they might need.
- Watford Together, an opportunity for cultural and heritage partners to boost community spirit with activities.
- Reach Out West, a hospital-to-home volunteer-led service run by Team Herts Volunteering.
- HertsHelp, an information advice, signposting and direct support service with a direct helpline 7 days a week.
- Social prescribing is also crucial and W3RT play a key role in this area.

2 Ensure that 'HertsHelp' can support Watford residents effectively to ease local services

Many organisations try to signpost residents to longer-term or more specialised support to create community resilience. Some Watford groups have created leaflets to put into food packs with details of helplines and information for residents, for example with benefits advice or mental health support. The situation created by the Covid-19 pandemic may continue for many months to come and many local organisations, such as W3RT who run a recently set-up Wellbeing Hub, may need to assess whether the support and service they offer is sustainable.

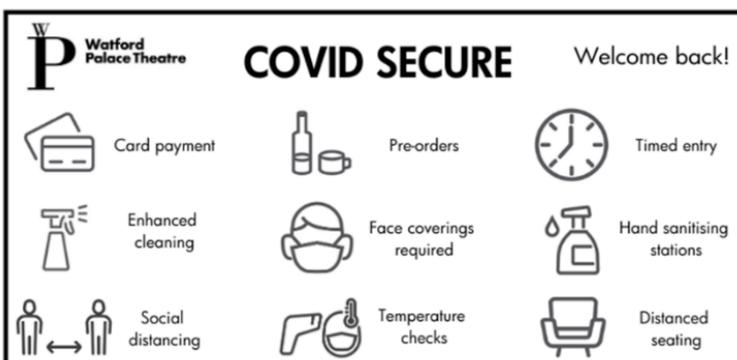
3 Consider a town-wide approach to social isolation and mental health

The number one issue which came up on the survey question about recent increases in the number of people seeking support was mental health. In comments for this question, various respondents also explicitly listed isolation, loneliness and another listed suicide prevention. This issue will merit proper attention and strategic response.



4 Build on best practice in the VCS to tackle digital isolation as part of the Council's Road to Renewal

Voluntary and community groups have been incredibly creative, running everything from online counselling to tai chi lessons via platforms like Zoom. However, there are still barriers to access, such as: a) accessibility to hardware like phones and laptops, especially where a family is large, (b) access to the internet where the usual outlets like libraries are closed and/or Pay As You Go accounts on phones are limited, (c) ICT literacy, especially for older people, (d) accessibility for different groups, such as those with different sensory or learning abilities, and also for non-English speakers. One participant, from a group that supports residents with disabilities, said *'People think the internet solves everything, but there will always be some people that need face-to-face support, or at least someone sitting with them at a computer.'*



5 Create a collection of Covid-response case studies with innovations and best practices

Face-to-face services are vitally important not just directly for the beneficiaries they support, but often for the family and carers that support them. Despite challenges, many local groups have responded creatively to social distance measures. Watford Workshop have given their users washable face coverings with different colours for different days of the week and One Vision marked 'Harvest' with a Drive Through And Drop event.

ENGAGING VOLUNTEERS

6. Review the Watford Helps volunteer brokerage system

As of 5 May, over 10,000 volunteers had been recruited across Hertfordshire via the three key recruitment organisations working collaboratively on this: 'TeamHerts Volunteering', Watford3RT and Communities 1st. The number deployed at that stage was 4,030. 'TeamHerts Volunteering' is a countywide Hertfordshire volunteering service. Watford residents that approached either 'TeamHerts Volunteering' or Watford Borough Council to volunteer were directed to W3RT to help match them to local roles in the community. This was a very large increase in the workload of W3RT with no extra funding. Volunteer brokering itself may lie long-term more with 'TeamHerts Volunteering' than W3RT, alongside complementary digital tools such as the national do-it.org website and app.

7. Ensure that 'TeamHerts Volunteering' has accessible local information to ease local services

Whilst the 'lockdown' period caused isolation for some residents, it simultaneously had an effect of freeing up time for others. Hence as well as many more vulnerable residents needing support, there were also many more people willing and able to supply that support as volunteers. The sheer number of volunteers directed to W3RT meant that capacity was stretched. One local councillor, speaking at a Watford Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, said, "I am not blaming W3RT, but they were overwhelmed."

This may explain why, despite the large number of potential volunteers, around half of those who responded to the survey conducted said they did not receive news of any extra offers of help. By ensuring that 'TeamHerts Volunteering' have details of as many Watford VCS organisations as possible, it may be that they can help take some of the load going forward, and will no longer have to rely on referring to W3RT to identify suitable local matches.



8. Ensure that there is a formal process for volunteer referrals to organisations

Unlike 'TeamHerts Volunteering', W3RT are not a direct volunteering service. They promote volunteering but are not set up to play a key part in managing individuals' volunteer journeys. The commissioned CVS work at W3RT does not include specific KPIs in terms of volunteer brokerage and this could be reviewed and/or 'TeamHerts Volunteering' might be used more effectively for volunteer brokerage. At the moment the roles can overlap. A formal process may need to be established, showing engagement through tracking key milestones, such as date of signup, date matched, first day in role, etc. Alongside the milestone tracking above, feedback from volunteers themselves should be taken into account, including feedback on how they were used and whether they felt they were appropriately matched to their role and tasks.

9. Coordinate approaches for the recognition of volunteers

Whilst many Watford residents might not call themselves 'volunteers', there have been those who participated in fundraising, by donating food, and by helping neighbours informally. Local businesses too have donated time, goods, spaces. VCS organisations spoke passionately and gratefully about the hard work of their volunteers, with one group calling them "silent soldiers". Equally, it is clear that volunteers themselves benefit in terms of increased wellbeing and renewed confidence. At present recognition is done in many ways: the Local Hero Awards, the Audentior Awards, Volunteers' Week, Watford Borough Council certificates, social media campaigns and more. In light of the special situation that Watford has been through in 2020, it may be time to refresh the processes of recognition and better coordinate the local approach.

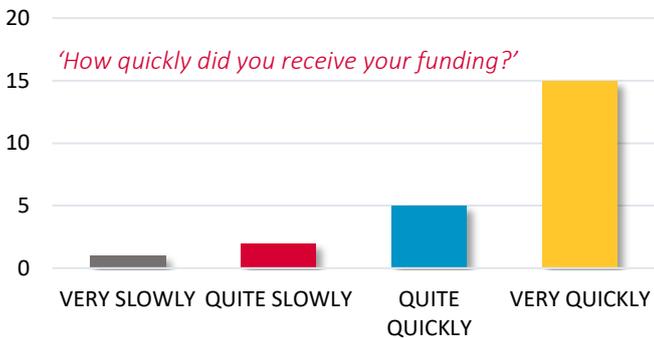
10. Build on Covid-19 response as a basis to change attitudes to support the most vulnerable in society, by building opportunities for long-term roles and volunteer development

Organisations greatly value volunteers who can support them with tasks requiring a relatively small amount of supervision, such as bag packing. However there are organisations whose work requires staff and volunteers to have either specialised skills or to undergo a significant period of training. One participant spoke at length about the need to provide proper CPD (continuous professional development) for volunteers as well as for staff. The recent report by Danny Kruger MP goes one step further and suggests that volunteers should be redirected to take on duties of public service, such as VCS trustees, but also as magistrates and Special Constables. This longer-term approach (rather, perhaps than the short-term brokering) may be an area that W3RT can support. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee W3RT Task Group recommended that "W3RT needs to clarify its long-term strategy for recruiting and sustaining local volunteering activities".

DIVERSIFYING FUNDING

11. Review the Watford Helps Community Fund to clarify its role in relation to similar funds

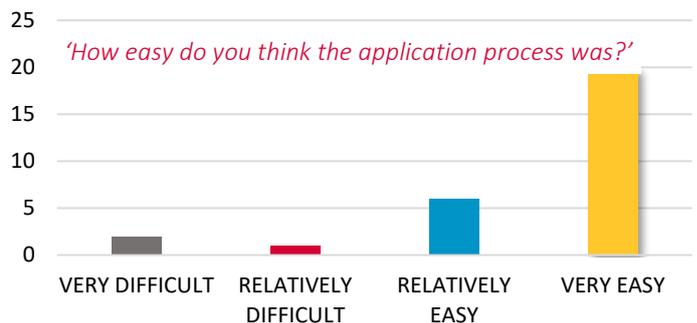
The W3RT-distributed Community Fund was supported and promoted closely in 2020 by Watford Borough Council, growing to more than £155,000. Watford Borough Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee W3RT Task Group recommended that *"The Community Fund should be established as a lasting pillar of support for Watford's voluntary sector."* If this effort is to be continued, an exercise to explore the nature of other funding sources will be useful.



Some participants were unclear as to why their application was turned down. A couple of participants shared concerns about criteria and decision-makers. To maintain confidence, decision-makers should perhaps be explicitly named going forward, and reasons formally recorded. More information might be collected to monitor the reach of the fund. Examples include: Is the HQ in Watford?; Is the turnover less than £10,000? ; Do you work with groups affected by the Equality Act's protected characteristics?

12. Ensure the Community Fund is managed collaboratively and transparently

Since the Community Fund was originally part of W3RT, and distributed by them, it simply grew this year and continued to be distributed by them. The large jump in the amount of money to distribute did not stop them distributing funds promptly according to survey respondents, as shown below. The majority were also very positive about the ease of the application.



13. Consider aligning Community Fund grants more closely to strategic priorities.

At present, the expenditure of the Community Fund has not been need-led, but in fact demand-led. That is, it has gone to organisations that have bid for it. There is a need to decide whether the Fund in future will be used for non-Covid projects and if so, how it will align with changing needs and the priorities of Watford Borough Council. It might be that pots of money are ring-fenced for certain priorities such as mental health and wellbeing, or digital isolation.

14. Consider allocating part of the Community Fund to projects lasting more than 12 months

In response to the questions *'What will be the main challenge facing your organisation in the next 12 months/ 5 years?'* the most popular answer on both was *'Sustainability of income'*. Many participants spoke about the need for medium- and long-term funding. Groups are limited to planning in short-term financial cycles, impacting the way that residents are supported. One participant said, *"That's just not the way that you change someone's life – you can't give it a deadline"*.

15. Align reporting schedules of all Watford Borough Council expenditure with the VCS

Alongside the Community Fund, WBC funds the sector in the following ways: Commissioned contracts; The Mayor's Small Grants Fund; Neighbourhood Locality Funds; Financial assistance such as rate relief and rent subsidies; Development projects funded through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). In various discussions with participants the issue of Social Value came up and VCS groups are broadly warm to incorporating this into discussions on expenditure since many of them offer extraordinary added social value – for example, supporting people into employment through volunteering.

16. Consider a full-time fundraising post

Money invested in the VC sector is crucial because the support offered plays a key preventative role. At present W3RT has only one part-time fundraiser. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommended that *"W3RT and the wider local voluntary sector would benefit from a dedicated fundraiser at Watford and Three Rivers Trust."* The co-location of the fundraiser at WBC is to be considered. If a fundraising officer were based even partially at WBC then it would help them feed into the strategy to develop the Community Fund and also look at income diversification models.

17. Consider how to support the VC Sector to build financial resilience and diversify income streams

There is a fear that while *'there has been a lot of money out there'*, emergency funding will soon dry up and the future may be problematic. Groups have lost money where fundraising events have been cancelled, charity shops have been shut and face-to-face donations have ceased. Online opportunities like the 2.6 challenge can help and some local groups have used it to good effect. Support for *'alternative'* approaches like this is not explicitly offered by W3RT as a standalone project, although the bespoke support W3RT offers can include looking at this for groups. There are organisations which offer standalone projects to support capacity-building on income diversification, such as Impactful Governance. Hertfordshire Community Foundation also offer a comprehensive course, but numbers able to access it are short.

INFORMATION SHARING

18. Review the Watford Helps networks and ensure scope for both strategic and operational input
Every single group asked about its relationship with Watford Borough Council expressed positive opinions of the current Mayor. Groups also felt that WBC officers were supportive and aimed to treat them as equal partners. However, in an online session it was pointed out that the VCS were not always sure of council priorities and there was not a clear sense of long-term planning for Watford's voluntary and community sector. Despite this, 65% of survey respondents said 'yes' to being encouraged and supported to be a part of local decision-making. There are many networks, forums and groups which meet to share information, many with something of an informal nature. This is attractive and useful for new and emerging groups who need to build their peer support network, but was said to be less useful for groups that have existed for some time and would rather be involved in strategic discussions. The Council are undertaking a review of One Watford in December of this year. It might be worth considering how it complements other networks.

19. Review principles of CVS approach to minimise any possible conflicts of interest

Watford and Three Rivers Trust (W3RT) is funded by WBC to deliver support to other groups in the voluntary and community sector. W3RT has about ninety staff members in total, but very few of these directly support the CVS role. Around 20 support the community centres, around 30 staff look the social prescribing projects, and another 40 are technically employed by other partners. Officers may wish to work with W3RT to review the principles of its CVS approach so as to minimise any possible conflicts of interest between W3RT's support to its members and its role as a service delivery organisation, or where – there is deemed to be none – any perception of any possible conflicts of interest that might deter groups from working with them.

20. Review the CVS staffing role at W3RT

The lead staff member for the CVS is a key one at W3RT, since they gather and share information across Watford's Voluntary and Community Sector. Unfortunately members of staff in this role at W3RT have changed fairly regularly – there have been around 3 in the last 5 years alone. Officers at Watford Borough Council have often expressed that the role is very broad, and could easily be split between two people. Further discussion on this with W3RT staff (past and present) seems to suggest that the role can be challenging in that it bridges both a range of operational and strategic roles. The strategic side, particularly, sometimes overlaps with the role of the Chief Executive, and these may need to be unpicked and clarified.

21. Consider how to support VCS with collection, analysis and data sharing

Organisations in the VCS work directly with residents at 'grassroots' level and so often have a real understanding of the changing needs of their community. However, when asked "If your organisation supports local residents directly, are you currently able to collect information on how their needs are changing?" almost a quarter said "Not really" or "Not at all", another quarter said "Not applicable. That leaves only half of the VCS who responded said "Yes" – and even then 17% said "Yes, but we would benefit from some support on how to do this better". Many comments seemed to indicate that information was not collected systematically as a matter of course if funding was not involved.

22. Consider 'themes' used to categorise VCS organisations to link groups with similar aims

Many new groups have sprung up in recent months in response to the Covid-19 difficulties faced by residents. Some participants – both members of the voluntary sector and those outside of it - spoke about the need to avoid what they termed as 'duplication' between groups. It sometimes caused, they argued, confusion when signposting residents, and also sometimes caused tension in terms of delivery – with vulnerable groups sometimes even being given conflicting advice or support. One way to avoid this would be to create informal groups which organisations could align themselves with. At present, W3RT has 12 'themes' around which it organises the members of its directory. By mapping these against the Charities Act's 'charitable purposes' and themes in the Council's Watford Together Plan one suggestion might be the following 7 groups:

[A council that serves people:](#)

1. [Inclusion \[Using Data For Well-Informed Decisions; Addressing Digital Isolation\]](#)
2. [Access to Support \[Working with partners to ensure availability of Complex Needs support, including Homelessness and Mental Health\]](#)

A thriving, diverse and creative town

3. Economic Prosperity
4. A Sustainable Town
5. Thriving Neighbourhoods

A healthy and happy town

6. Health & Wellbeing
7. A Flourishing Creative & Cultural Sector

23. Refresh the CVS' KPIs on actively engaging with business

This section could have fallen under 'Funding' rather than 'Information sharing' but that would defeat the very point businesses have tried to make: they can offer more than money. It was recommended by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee that "W3RT and the business community should strengthen their links." The financial strain which the crisis has put on groups has sometimes revealed underlying problems which already existed. There is no doubt that groups in the voluntary and community sector will need to diversify income streams and businesses know how to do this. Many businesses themselves in Watford, as nationally, are experiencing financial stress as a result of the Covid pandemic. Whilst it therefore might be assumed that many do not want to be involved with charitable ventures because of other priorities, in fact many businesses in Watford have been greatly involved in the response to the crisis.

24. Work with W3RT to create a proactive action plan to better engage with all parts of the Voluntary and Community Sector, particularly those that support underrepresented communities

In response to the question "*Aside from funding and help from volunteers, what else would enable your organisation to support Watford residents better?*" there were 39 responses in total, and of these sixteen of these were suggesting a need for better communication, partnership working or networking.

In the survey the representation of BAME groups was brought up various times. There are around 200 languages spoken in schools across Hertfordshire County. Since much of the networking and communication that happens between W3RT groups is informal, the demographic makeup of staff and volunteers, and equalities training of staff and volunteers, plays a key role in how information is shared – not only between organisations, but also with residents. This is more urgent than ever in light of the Public Health statement stating that there is an association between belonging to some ethnic groups and the likelihood of testing positive and dying with COVID-19. Since reasons for an increased risk for BAME communities are varied and complex, a variety of organisations – both voluntary and statutory – will need to approach these issues from a variety of angles. It is also important that a wide range of staff and volunteers in the VCS from a background of ethnicities and social demographics are able to join both strategic and operational discussions. This point was addressed in a paper by the organisation CharitySoWhite, which includes the recommendation to 'actively value lived experience in order to counterbalance the lack of diversity in the charity sector, give programmes integrity and ensure their success'.

There are a variety of different types of groups offering support across Watford. Faith groups, for example, have played a key role in providing food not just to residents but even to hospital workers. Alongside charities, participants shared that groups with other forms of governance, such as Community Interest Companies, are not always invited to be part of conversations. It was felt that these groups have much complementary expertise to offer. Many of the mutual aid groups which have sprung up explained that they communicate almost exclusively via social media. There is a need, then, for a social media presence – for both WBC and W3RT - to be a priority. Informal groups – not just Covid-response mutual aids – can sometimes feel side-lined. This was a perception shared by some organisations: "Small groups don't hear things," one participant said. Some participants, although positive about W3RT in some ways, were critical in this area. One said: "They expect groups to go to them, or go to their website. They need to go out into the community more." The Overview and Scrutiny Committee W3RT Task Group included the following recommendation: 'There is a need for W3RT to build more and better partnership working across the local community.'

Voluntary & Community Strategy Recommendations in Full

Post-Covid Recovery and Renewal

1. Review the Watford Helps triage and referral processes, to clarify the complementary roles of all signposting/social prescribing bodies, i.e. Watford Helps, 'HertsHelp', the W3RT Wellbeing Hub, Watford's Healthy Hub, HCNS, Watford Together, Neighbours Together, etc.
2. Ensure that partners at Hertfordshire County Council-commissioned service 'HertsHelp' have accessible local information to support Watford residents effectively, and ease local services.
3. Consider how to work towards a long-term town-wide strategic approach to respond specifically to issues of social isolation and mental health in the community.
4. Build on best practice in the VCS to tackle digital isolation as part of the Council's Road to Renewal plan.
5. Work with W3RT to create and share accessibly a collection of case studies with innovations and best practices, developed in response to Covid-19, from the Voluntary and Community Sector.

Engaging Volunteers

6. Review the Watford Helps volunteer brokerage system, to clarify the complementary roles of all volunteering services which Watford residents might access, including 'TeamHerts Volunteering', do-it.org and W3RT.
7. Ensure that partners at Hertfordshire County Council-commissioned service 'TeamHerts Volunteering' have accessible local information to efficiently help Watford residents, and ease local services.
8. Ensure that there is a formal process for volunteer referrals to organisations to ensure both skills and motivations are considered, and that engagement information is captured.
9. Coordinate approaches for the recognition of volunteers by the Council and other partners in the community.
10. Build on the response to the Covid-19 crisis as a basis to change attitudes to support the most vulnerable in society, by building opportunities for professional development and long-term volunteering such as trusteeship.

Diversifying Funding

11. Review the Watford Helps Community Fund, to clarify its role in relation to similar funds, such as HCF's Coronavirus Relief Fund and WCH's Community Development Fund.
12. Ensure that the administration of a revised Community Fund is done as collaboratively and transparently as possible. Consider support from a range of partners on this such as Hertfordshire Community Foundation.
13. Consider aligning Community Fund grants more closely to strategic priorities.
14. Consider allocating part of the Community Fund to projects lasting more than 12 months.
15. Align reporting schedules of all Watford Borough Council 'Business-As-Usual' expenditure with the Voluntary and Community Sector to ensure strategic priorities are considered.
16. Consider a full-time fundraising post, to support the Community Fund and VCS groups through the CVS.
17. Consider how to explicitly support the Voluntary and Community Sector to build financial resilience and diversify income streams alongside traditional fundraising.

Information Sharing

18. Review the Watford Helps networks, clarifying the roles of groups such as the Mayor's Volunteering Planning Group in line with the One Watford review due in December. Ensure that there is scope across Watford for VCS leaders to input to both operational and strategic discussions and decision-making.
19. Review principles of CVS approach so as to minimise any possible conflicts of interest between W3RT's support to its members and its role as a service delivery organisation.
20. Review the CVS staffing role at W3RT to ensure more WBC input with regards to strategic and operational responsibilities, with the aim to encourage long-term staff who can build up strong local knowledge and relationships.
21. Consider how to support VCS with collection, analysis and data sharing on changing needs across Watford, as part of wider approach by WBC and statutory partners.
22. Consider the groupings and 'themes' used to categorise VCS organisations as a means to link new and emerging groups to those with similar aims.
23. Refresh the CVS' KPIs on actively engaging with business so as to lay out explicit plans on how to share knowledge and skills between local businesses and the VCS.
24. Work with W3RT to create a proactive action plan to better engage with all parts of the Voluntary and Community Sector, particularly those that support underrepresented communities including those from BAME communities and those smaller groups that may not have their own physical spaces.