

Situational update – South West

Key points from the Pulse Check Week 7 results (16-18 November, 2020)

- **28%** of respondents in the South West said that they had **significant concerns** about the level of unmet needs in their area in the last 7 days.
- **28%** of respondents in the South West said that they had said that they had **significant concerns** about the capacity of the voluntary sector in their area in the last 7 days.

Concerns about the level of unmet needs in the South West in the last 7 days?

- Lack of resources to meet **mental health issues**
- **Community service closure impacting isolated residents** in disadvantaged areas, so remaining services/centres stretched.
- level of universal support for **mental health**
- Ongoing concerns that **digital exclusion** means no-one has a good picture of what unmet needs there are.
- Concern has been raising slowly **on Discharge to Assess**; now being piloted across a couple of sites in our area and concern that people/patients and their carers may not be as ready as Hospital Teams think they are - role of VCSE being tested across pilot sites
- Less confidence within the sector to meet **increases in demand. People are tired.**
- Generally this lockdown appears to be less impacting than the first one however we don't know what we don't know and the **mental health issues that must be festering in the community are concerning** as well as **the impact immobility in older people, educational gaps on YP and the forecast unemployment**
- **Hidden unmet needs** within community & **domestic situations.** Concerns re. **self isolating, shielding letters, invitations for covid tests and Christmas.**
- **Growing demand for debt advice**
- **Hardship, debt, unemployment and mental health** continue to be strong causal factors
- Challenges around **access to support** services generally
- Immediate needs still broadly being met within communities. Was concern around food for families, but food resilience is working well, which involves partners across statutory and voluntary sector. Ongoing concerns **about social isolation/mental health/anxiety.** How can we cater for these needs on a community level when so much support activity is compromised due to Covid? **Real concerns that preventative and outreach work was already lacking before Covid, yet the need for this is even greater at the moment.**

Concerns about the capacity of the voluntary sector in the South West in the last 7 days?

- **Longer-term funding** increasingly an issue for VCSEs. Particularly concerned about **burnout, among paid staff, volunteers and trustees**. Risk of **permanently losing vital community assets**.
- **Face to face services** not taking place again due to lockdown but **people really now needing them** - particularly those facing **loneliness and isolation** - we are really seeing **breakdown in mental health** because of loneliness and isolation
- We know there are lots of **smaller support groups and clubs and activities that simply still aren't running**.
- **Capacity** to deliver
- More work, different provision, **Staff & Volunteers self isolation & wellbeing**. Clients not understanding why they can't get normal service and other issues
- Covid lockdown **limits volunteers**
- **Capacity** to meet additional and more complex needs
- Issues around **funding needs** to meet local demand across all services
- Continuing issues **around burnout and resilience**. Many VCSE groups are reporting real issues **with staff wellbeing**. We know that this is a marathon, not a sprint, but the demands on our time feel like we are constantly in emergency response mode.

New Victim Support report: Crime and Covid-19 - How victims have been impacted by the pandemic

This report is based on a survey of 295 frontline Victim Support staff and a mixture of open and closed and analysis of VS case management data.

Table 7: Weekly average of children and young people referrals compared to baseline level by number of cases and percentage change

Date period	Average number cases 12 years and under per week compared to baseline (0)	Percentage change of cases 12 years and under on average week during period	Average number cases 13–17 years per week compared to baseline (0)	Percentage change of cases 13–17 years on average week during period
23/03/20–31/05/20	-147	-55%	-409	-51%
01/06/20–05/07/20	-72	-27%	-157	-20%
06/07/20–30/08/20	-11	-4%	-82	-10%
31/08/20–01/11/20	120	45%	46	6%

There was a significant decline in the number of children and young people (CYP) accessing VS services when lockdown began with levels remaining notably below average until the beginning of September. **Alarmingly, 6,000 fewer CYP have accessed VS services between 23 March and 1 November** than if levels remained at baseline.

‘Something needs to be put in place for vulnerable children. Only after this pandemic will we get a full picture of the impact on vulnerable children has been, when there is no school no play group and no socializing with friends then children go off the radar, somethings needs to be in place to prevent this in the future.’ Support worker