

Situational update – South West

Key points from the Pulse Check Week 9 results (30 – 1 December, 2020)

- **21%** 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 **(this is up 61% from last week)**.
- **25%** 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 **(this is up 19% from last week)**.
- Areas highlighting **significant concerns** about the level of unmet needs in the South West were: Bracknell Forest, Cornwall, Devon, Reading, Slough, Torbay, West Berkshire, Windsor and Maidenhead, and Wokingham.
- Areas highlighting **significant concerns** about ability of voluntary sector organisations to provide assistance to people in need in the South West were: Bath and North East Somerset, Bracknell Forest, Bristol, Devon, North Somerset, Reading, Slough, Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Torbay, West Berkshire, Windsor and Maidenhead, and Wokingham.

Latest Pulse Check data for the South West (collected 30-02 Dec)

08 Dec 2020

No concerns	Slight concerns	Significant concerns	Major concerns	Not sure

In which county/unitary authority does your organisation operate?	Thinking about the last seven days, do you have any concerns about the level of unmet needs in your area?	Thinking about the last seven days, do you have any concerns about the ability of voluntary sector organisations to provide assistance to people in need?
Bath and North East Somerset		
Bath and North East Somerset Bristol North Somerset South Gloucestershire	We have not picked up any significant concerns of unmet needs. These is an underlying anticipation for which tier our areas are put into (three into tier 3 and one into Tier 2)	Concerned about increasingly fragmented and different calls for 'volunteers' resulting in core volunteers who are engaged with local mutual aid groups being diverted into other programmes such as mass vaccination, mass testing or NHS VR. Now the tiering has been announced there is need to get information out to community groups.
Bracknell Forest West Berkshire Reading Slough Windsor and Maidenhead Wokingham		
Bracknell Forest Wokingham		Digital abilities of those running charities/ groups. Capacity of different charities and groups to deliver.
Bristol		
Cornwall	I had heard reported that Cornwall is possibly facing long term high unemployment (up to 20%) of the population up to 10 years. I think this will have major implications on our ability to bounce forward.	I don't think we are seeing the full impact of Covid on the sector yet in terms of its reduced capacity.
Cornwall		As we are entering Tier 1 from today, the situation should now be improving
Devon	Demand on food banks, child poverty and worklessness - delays in benefits system	Demand for food parcels, mental health support
Devon		
Devon		Demand is fairly stable at the current time but growing
Devon	Unchanged from last few weeks - older people, isolation, mental health Also interested to see whether people continue to self-isolate with lifting of some restrictions (into Tier 2)	Remain concerned that some people really do need face to face support now but it is mostly unavailable
Devon	Numbers needing foodbanks etc rising. Hidden need and people not coming forward eg re. MH, DV, Caring responsibilities etc	VCSE are responding by telephone at the best level they can, but they can't do face to face or respond to hidden need, meaning there are gaps evolving.
Dorset		Tier 2 restrictions are new for Dorset and will require further adaptations for many and will mean remaining closed for some others.
Gloucestershire		
Oxfordshire	Digital inclusion	Capacity to deliver
Reading	Carers continue to be under a lot of stress and exhaustion.	A lot of services have been at a distance for a while now and struggling to meet needs of people who have been living in isolation for many many months.
Slough		
Somerset	Growing number of people not able to heat homes. Invariably on low incomes, therefore not eligible for allowance from HMRC. Increase in calls to mental health helpline and to CAB service (specific issues around debt, universal credit and housing). Ongoing concerns about food resilience but support holding up.	Continued increase in demand for mental health support and debt/benefits/housing advice. Emergency response issues lessening, but huge concerns about the sector's ability to be sustainable/have sufficient capacity going forward. We have seen a marked increased in groups coming to us for funding - and frustration that much of the funding available is still focussed on funding rather than the growing issues that lie ahead. Reports of small newly formed community groups being unable to open bank accounts, which is inhibiting their ability to function. We did a ring around and found only 2 banks currently opening accounts, with an 8 week waiting list. Still issues around capacity - sector just about coping but resilience an issue too. Reports from CYP organisations about a significant lack of experienced youth workers - and their concerns about mounting challenges around drug use and County Lines. A general sense that we need to be looking beyond the emergency response now to focus on the difficult issues that already existed, that are now worsening in the wake of Covid.
South Gloucestershire	Food requests are high and rising. Foodbanks and mutual aid not coordinating as well as they could	Anxiety about new testing, vaccination schemes adding to confusion at present
Swindon		
Swindon		Just for those who are digitally excluded due to everything being delivered remotely at this time
Torbay	Growing demand for Mental Health specialist befriending, now at capacity locally. Growing demand around food and fuel poverty, food covered, but additional capacity around fuel poverty would help	see previous
West Berkshire		possibly around debt and Citizens Advice
Wiltshire		