

Findings from the Kingston Voluntary Action Extraordinary survey



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Introduction

This report is based on the responses received to the KVA Extraordinary Survey that took place in autumn 2020. 27 voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations in Kingston took part. These included a wide range of organisations including those delivering to children and young people, disabled people, older people, etc.

1. Coronavirus and its effect on the sector



92% of services stayed open

1.1 Have you kept your services open during the coronavirus crisis (since March 2020)?

Respondents' comments included:

- "We provided online support during the lockdown April-June 2020 and then offered some 1-1 socially distanced support (walks etc.) from June onwards."
- "We originally closed for a while but since July have rearranged our building to make it COVID19 compliant. Our capacity has reduced from 150 to 40"

Yes, we stayed open	15
We stayed partially open (red...)	10
No, we closed our services	2

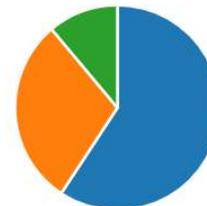


Demand has gone up for 59% of services.

1.2 Has the demand for your services increased/decreased/stayed the same since the start of the coronavirus crisis?

For most (16) demand increased - by around 30%. For some (8), it stayed the same. For a small number (3) demand decreased, by up to 95%.

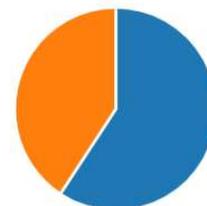
Increased	16
Stayed the same	8
Decreased	3



1.3 Have you been able to bring in any additional income to the borough during the Coronavirus crisis?

For the 16 organisations that reported additional income, this increase ranged from £3000 to £150,000. The average was £32,000 additional income.

Yes	16
No	11





1.4 Was any of this due to support from KVA (including Superhighways, Love Kingston and Connected Kingston)?

Yes	10
No	6

Comments included:

- *Some funding ideas from Joanna.*
- *Linking in with grant fundraiser sitting under KVA. KVA courses on fundraising also helped.*
- *Our application to the lottery was entirely due to advice from Alison at KVA*



1.5 Did you apply for the Retail/Hospitality/Business grants?

Yes	6
No	21

Six applied for Retail/business grants. Two received £10k and three received £25k. One was unsuccessful.



1.6 Was any of this due to support from KVA (including Superhighways, Love Kingston and Connected Kingston)?

Two of the successful applications were due to KVA support.

Comments included:

- *"Sanja was incredible at keeping in touch and checking we had everything available to us."*



1.7 How many volunteering hours (in total) do you estimate have been invested in your organisation throughout the coronavirus lockdown period?

Between the 27 responding organisations an estimated 22,815 volunteering hours took place.



1.8 How many of these hours do you estimate are additional to your normal numbers?

For about half the organisations there were additional volunteering hours.

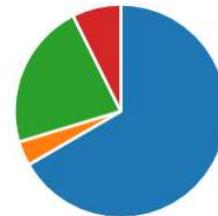
These ranged from between 10 hours and 4000 hours. For some organisations volunteering hours went down. Comments included:

- "We are entirely volunteer run. COVID 19 has meant that a smaller number of volunteers are doing more hours, and doing different things."
- We could not have coped without our volunteers
- Our regular volunteers haven't been involved
- Previously I attended meetings regularly. This has not been possible during Lockdown and will continue this way as I am shielding and am a carer.
- it didn't increase really as we lost our advocacy volunteers most of whom had kids etc... at home with them and didn't have capacity to do any work.
- Greater work by trustees. Greater work by those supporting online provision and arranging shopping for food, collection of medicines, etc. (but not as much as anticipated)



1.9 Have you interacted with KVA (including Superhighways, Love Kingston and Connected Kingston) more or less since the start of the coronavirus crisis in February / March 2020?

More	18
Less	1
About the same	6
Not sure	2



2. KVA support to the sector

2.1 How, if at all, have you or your organisation interacted with KVA during Covid-19? (1 being not very useful/informative and 5 being extremely useful/informative)

Table 1. The table below summarises the responses to this set of questions.

	Average rating, out of 5	Area of work	Number responding 'yes' (out of 27)
	4.3	Attended one of the thematic partnerships workshops with a view of bidding..."	13
	4.3	Attended one of the workshops on Income Generation through Covid-19?	6
	4.0	Attended CEO Network Meetings?	12
	4.0	Attended the 'Preparing to return to work in the 'new normal'" workshop?	6
	4.6	Attended the 'Test and Trace' webinar?	11
	4.4	Read the KVA e-bulletins?	27
	4.2	Visited the KVA website?	19
	3.9	Participated in a partnership funding bid?	9
	4.3	Received fundraising support?	11
	4.4	Received any other 1 to 1 support? (e.g. support with your finances, website, digital technology, etc)	9



2.2 Were you aware that you can contribute 'good news' stories to be added to the #NeverMoreNeeded page on KVA's website www.kva.org.uk/kingston-s-vcs/stories/ ?

Yes	19
No	8



2.3 Do you feel that KVA has represented the interests of the local VCSE sector during the Coronavirus crisis?

Very well	18
Well	7
Not so well	2

Suggestions for how KVA could have represented them better are shown below:

- *I think KVA did a good job, given the circumstances.*
- *Not so much how you could do it better, but the challenges of getting the information from the sector.*
- *You couldn't you were incredible*
- *KVA is very helpful. It would be helpful if there was a way to print off answers to this questionnaire, if one could see the questions before one had to answer them and if it was clear what the questions were about in advance so it was easier to decide who was the best person to respond to it.*
- *I think there has been a really great support from KVA surrounding a range of local and wider issues that has been really helpful to access.*
- *one-to-one support in a funding session*
- *It seems good for most if others but not much to us*
- *You couldn't - you've been absolute champions throughout this whole crisis.*
- *Thank you so much for all the extra hours you've all undoubtedly put in to keep us all going and motivated.*
- *Continue doing what you are doing and being the go-to for the voluntary sector. Thank you so much for offering the support we needed to get through this period.*
- *The advice we have received from KVA has been timely and extremely useful. I think KVA has been doing the right things!*
- *Not sure you could have, you are representing a diverse group of organisations.*
- *I think you have highlighted the stresses and strains that are faced by the voluntary sector well, the funding and time constraints are well documented and you have stayed in touch with our needs.*



2.4 Is there anything you think KVA should stop doing (please state what)?

Most answered 'no' to this question. A few did have suggestions, including:

- *I think KVA should stop being so insular and get out and visit voluntary organisations.*
- *Should KVA be delivering services such as Eco-op?*
- *No, a comment would be that possibly not the best time for some charities to start doing new work and diversifying unless it responds to an existing felt need in the local community.*



2.5 What would you like to see KVA continue doing?

Responses included:

- *Training and support*
- *Training, funding updates, organising funding partnerships*
- *Keeping local voluntary organisations and individual volunteers informed about relevant activities in the borough.*
- *Joint funding bids were new and I think very constructive.*
- *Supporting Org's like ours with improving access to info, training and kept abreast of new info in relation to the pandemic*
- *Promoting the worth of the voluntary sector and increasing the understanding of this.*
- *Fundraising support and training*
- *more of the same, more suggestions on where to find funding*
- *I think the workshops have been fantastic such as Track and Trace, Unconscious Bias, Connected Kingston etc*
- *IT training*
- *Keeping up the good work as you have shown that during the covid crisis.*
- *Good as it is*
- *Offering opportunities at all levels of vol organisations.*



2.6 Is there anything you think KVA should start doing (please state what)?

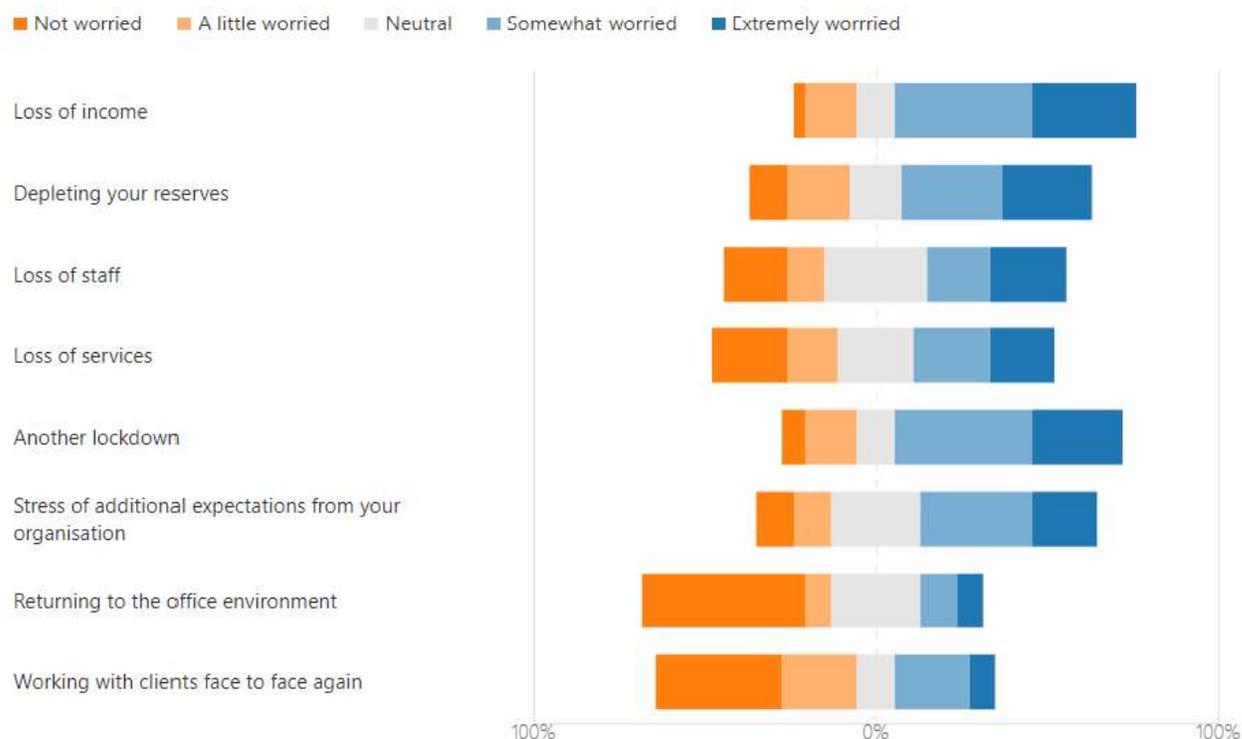
Responses included:

- *Advertise volunteering activities for the local interested population.*
- *Bring the community adviser back on board (rather than contracting out) and also give more time to Jacky to work within the community.*
- *I think KVA should be networking throughout the voluntary projects and assessing needs and recruiting suitable volunteers for projects.*
- *Maybe look at ways to help support more partnership working across organisations.*
- *One-to-one support in an online funding session.*
- *I think we all need to help support you to seize the changes that have been created during COVID.*
- *Supporting small charities who are growing to navigate change.*

3. The future for the sector

3.1 What worries do you have about the future of your organisation?

What is worrying you about the future of your organisation in the next 12 months?



3.2 Do you have any other worries or concerns at this time?

Further concerns included:

- *Having to close the service*
- *worried about contracting Covid virus among members*
- *"Handling elderly us hard. They are getting distress. Running charity shop by elderly members. "*
- *Core cost revenue. All our usual sustainable and fundraising income streams have disappeared..*
- *The pressure on front-line services has been relentless. So I am concerned for staff well-being. Funding is very short-term and normal funding streams may dry up. So putting enough 'strategic' time into our organisation is all important.*
- *Our volunteers are vital to us. The longer the crisis continues, our ability to regain those who have, for instance, been self-isolating, or to recruit new volunteers, becomes more difficult.*
- *Clawback of funding that has already given to us*
- *Lack of understanding or an appreciation of managing difficult operations*



3.3 KVA is currently reflecting on the services it provides in the light of the coronavirus.

What kinds of services or topics do you think organisations like your own might find useful over the next few months?

Responses included:

- *Training on Theory of Change*
- *During lockdown, KVA took the lead within the voluntary sector to pull different strands together and this has been very positive. It would be great to maintain this strong leadership role and to enable virtual attendance at meetings to become more mainstream.*
- *Sorry haven't thought of it as busy firefighting.*
- *More support for website updates and tech support*
- *I would like to see more partnership working and perhaps working on strengthening communications.*
- *Fundraising*
- *joined up working with statutory agencies*
- *Because a lot of our work is by telephone and e-mail and we are an almost totally volunteer run organisation we are in a better position than many charities. But there is the worry that there will be a large increase in mental health problems.*
- *Continued support would be great.*
- *Working in Covid, supporting people to access local services and what services are available, local Kingston information (such as the track and trace).*
- *Funding applications*
- *I feel like I informally get a bit of organisation MOT when I talk to one of you.*
- *Mentor matching for new CEOs.*
- *same as now*
- *Your courses are great and those of Superhighways. Please keep them revolving regularly according to demand.*
- *"fundraising, collaboration, partnership bids "*
- *Continued advice on the complex world of regulations.*
- *Some opportunities to speak to KVA directly about the issues relevant to your organisation.*
- *Support to look at areas where we might be able to apply for core funding and future planning for short, medium and longer term the e-bulletins with updates about legislation are very helpful. Zoom training.*



3.4 Overall, how useful have you found KVA's response and support to the VCSE through the coronavirus crisis?

Very useful	23
Quite useful	4
Not very useful	0



3.5 What do you think of KVA's coronavirus response?

Responses included:

- *Very impressive*
- *Strong*
- *Fantastic and fast responding*
- *Excellent*
- *exceptional*
- *I think KVA have worked hard to keep the voluntary sector informed and part of the wider efforts of RBK.*
- *KVA's response has been really positive, and I am glad we have had access to the support that has been offered.*
- *I think KVA did great job in responding coronavirus crisis. We are a small charity and we rely on KVA for support and help.*
- *Always felt we were #initttogether"*
- *Everyone is going above and beyond. You all need a holiday!*
- *You have been there for the voluntary sector - hopefully large and small organisations have felt the benefits of the support you have offered.*
- *Useful source of support.*
- *Good and appropriate.*
- *I think its been helpful, having the CEO meeting more frequently. Keeping organisations up to date with the council's activities etc.*
- *You have kept us regularly informed, Jo Oliver has been a source of support for fundraising issues, there have been good opportunities to interact with KVA if needed.*



3.6 Any final comments?

Responses included:

- *Terrified that we will close and older people will die*
- *"Not enough information for LD especially for those living in Supported Living (government guidelines not until 6th August) Different providers use government guidelines in a really strict or non strict way, why is there not standard across borough so we all know where we are?"*
- *Thank you for your support*
- *I would love to answer this but I am really under time pressure at this time*