

**BROMLEY VOLUNTARY AND
COMMUNITY SECTOR
COVID-19 EMERGENCY
RESPONSE FUND**

**MARCH
2021**

INTERIM IMPACT REPORT



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INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

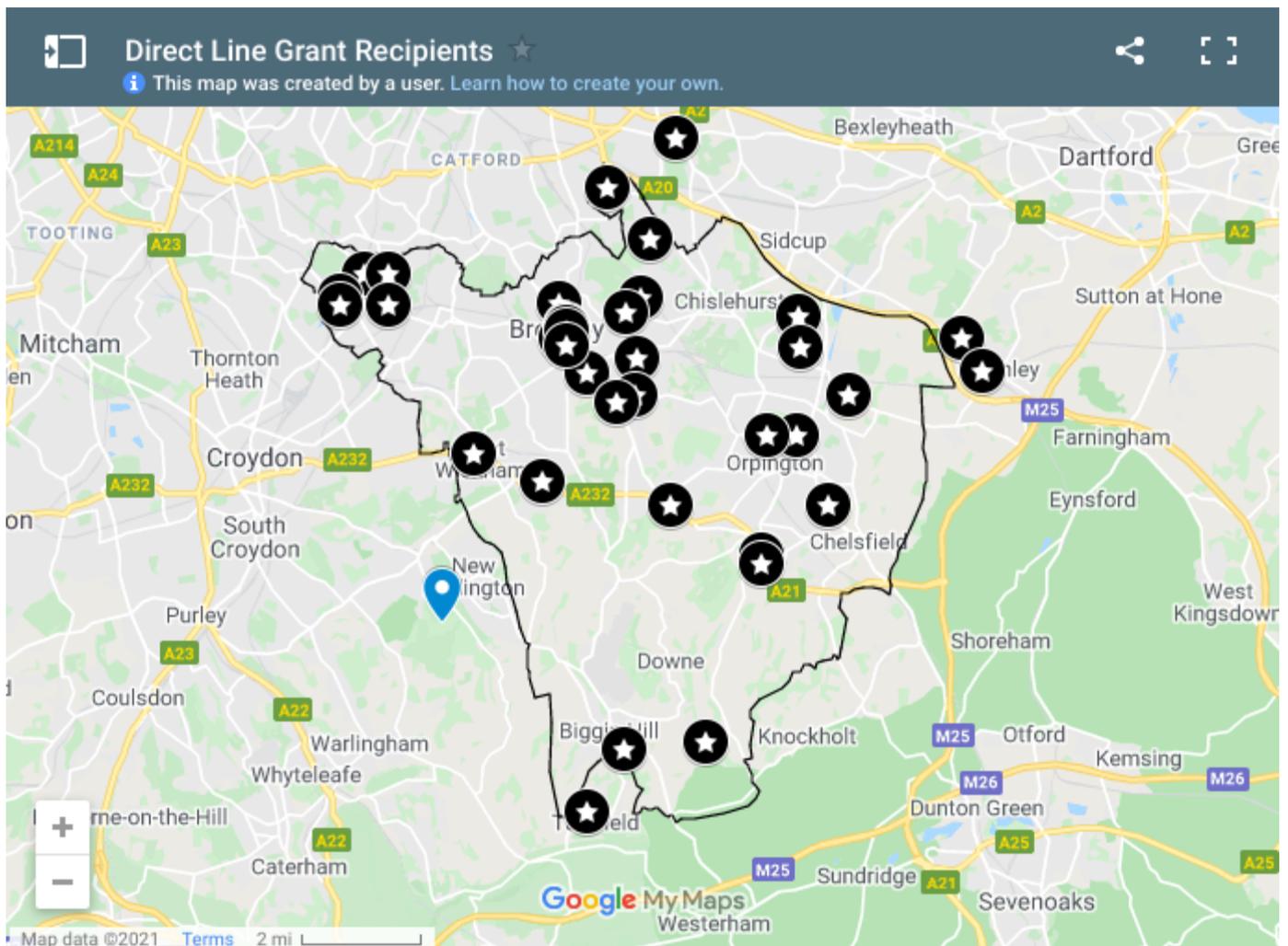
We were delighted that Direct Line approached Community Links Bromley (CLB) last year with a generous offer to provide emergency funding for voluntary and community groups and organisations in the borough who were facing unprecedented challenges as the COVID -19 pandemic grew.

The scheme was launched on 1 May with a grant pot of some £170,000. The scheme offered grants of up to £10,000 to support organisations working locally in Bromley that were either delivering COVID-19 front line services, or whose ability to operate had been impacted by the measures put in place to stem the COVID-19 pandemic.

The scheme was quickly oversubscribed and in total bids amounting to over £347,000 were received. Weekly panels were set up to make fast decisions to enable funding to get to where it was most needed as quickly as possible.

The grants were distributed to 38 groups of various sizes covering a range of services across the whole borough. The interactive map below shows the geographical base of the organisations who received funding, but we know that many organisations have an extensive reach outside of their immediate postcode. A full list of recipients can be found at Annex 1.

This interim report summarises how the grants have been spent so far and the positive impact that the funding has had on the organisations and the communities that rely on them.



COMMUNITY

The funding has been used by **Community Links Bromley (CLB)** to assist the recruitment and coordination of volunteers across Bromley during the height of the first wave. **Over 4,000 residents** registered to offer their time to help the most vulnerable. Approximately **1,800** were referred to CLB as potential volunteers. CLB matched **1089 volunteers to 1151 residents** requiring help. As the project began to wind down those who volunteered are being offered other opportunities for longer term volunteering roles through our online portal and advice service.

"It was a lovely experience to walk the dog. Kept me sane during the pandemic!"

"I have enjoyed volunteering, and will continue to do so"

Green Street Green Association has used the Direct Line funding to increase supply and frequency of newsletters to send to those who are without the internet, to provide up to date information on support and help available locally. **300 copies** were distributed by foot and **100 posted** to the remainder. Just under **200 members** receive emails advising when the newsletters are available online. The Association has also taken the opportunity of the closure of the Greenwood Centre and the funding to replace some hall equipment and ensure it meets Covid-19 requirements.

Biggin Hill Covid-19 Mutual Aid established the local area volunteer support network at the beginning of March. The initial biggest outlay was to print **5000 leaflets** printed for a mail drop to all local households. Approximately **160 volunteers** were recruited at the start of the pandemic. During the first national lockdown, there were approximately **130 households** requesting help at one time or another.

Of these, there was a core group of around **35 households**, the majority shielding due to age and pre-existing health conditions, for whom the group were shopping on a regular basis. Support was also provided to young families who were shielding because of a child or parent with complex conditions causing them to be more vulnerable.

The group also collected and delivered approximately **310 prescriptions** for many more than the core group. During the first lockdown period they completed **740 tasks** which included shopping, collections of medicine, delivery of emergency food packs and other support.

Cudham Environmental Activities Centre closed in March 2020. Volunteers have undertaken maintenance, decorating, gardening and other activities on site. Webinars have been delivered by Woodcraft Folk's Lead Safeguarding Officer and other experts in several areas including engaging young people safely online.

This campaign reached over **5,500 unique users**. Cudham provided weekly challenges to children and families to do online and in their household groups. They also facilitated LIVE programme, including issue-based activity linked to Black Lives Matter and on UK wildlife. Cudham supported **3,000 programme engagements** in online activities. They also created over **300 activity ideas**, children and families can do online, at home and in their household groups.

FOOD DISTRIBUTION

The grants have provided much needed support to the supply of food to families throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. **The Mottingham Foodbank** estimate to have met the food needs of **374 households** including **514 adults** and over **700 children**. Their other activities included prescription collection and delivery to some **44 households**.

The £10,000 grant to the **TBB Food Partnership** enabled the purchase of 40 insulated boxes for the transportation of chilled and frozen food from the warehouse. A large part of the grant was directed to the purchase of fresh and frozen food. The grant has also been spent on PPE for Warehouse and TBB Food partners. On average the TBB Food Partnership has helped feed approximately **1,250 adults and children** every week and nearer **1,400 in their busiest week**, during the first four months of operation. The Partnership has been handling up to **5 tonnes of food** weekly.

“When I received your offer of assistance I nearly broke down in tears. Our cupboards were nearly empty and genuinely didn’t know where I was going to get food to feed myself and my children. The weekly foods parcels and contact with people have really made a difference at a time when I couldn’t help myself.”

The £2,000 grant to **the Central Eltham Youth Project** was used to purchase essential food supplies to distribute to local people in need. The food was included in “comfort boxes” that were distributed during July to September to **83 households**. The project estimates that it helped **249 different individuals** by distributing a cumulative total of **31, 374 individual meals**.

The funding provided to **Living Well Bromley** allowed them to build an outside storage area where dried foods can be safely stored, and donations taken, freeing up space elsewhere for other food items. From March through to the end of July Living Well gave out **2,266 food bags**, made **495 home deliveries**, made **120 family home deliveries**. Living Well estimates that the number of people supported could exceed **4400** during this period. This compares to 2804 in 2019, up 57%.



YOUNG PEOPLE

The Bromley Children and Families Voluntary Sector Forum has some 250 member organisations, many of which are small. The demand on the Forum increased, requiring the delivery of more support, funding opportunities and information to members' during very challenging times.

The funding allowed for the transfer of services to online, to increase the frequency of forum meetings to share information and advice and to be more responsive to a dramatic increase in demand for help and support from members. The forum held **5 Zoom** open 'Keep Connected' meetings during the Pandemic with between **10-30 in attendance**. They discussed a range of topical issues that organisations were facing.

"I was impressed at the number of participants on the calls, especially as many would have had to learn new skills. I found the meetings just as effective, helpful and supportive as face to face meetings so credit to the BCFForum team who managed the online sessions so effectively."

Since Lockdown began **JusB** has continued to interact and connect with young people via Zoom, telephone calls and activities in the local parks and woodland areas when permitted.

These meetings included quizzes, games, breakout rooms, music events and dress-up (or dress-down) Fridays. JusB had an attendance of **4-11 young people** at each of these meetings. Young people talked about their anxieties concerning missing school, about the difficulties of being at home all the time and the tensions between them and siblings and the tensions with parents. Youth workers were able to use these meetings to reassure young people that they were not on their own and use games and activities to help relieve stress.

We knew that one young girl had not been outside of her home from the beginning of Lockdown to the middle of June. She was very anxious about catching COVID-19 and also about how people would view her if she wore a mask. Youth work staff worked with her, helping her to make a mask that she felt comfortable with and encouraging her that it was important to go out for a walk and get some fresh air. It was a great delight to us when she sent us a photo of her and her sister wearing masks going to the shop.



YOUNG PEOPLE

Several of Bromley's scouts and guiding organisations who provide for young people were awarded small grants. **4th Scout Bromley, 5th Bromley Scout Group, 7th West Wickham Scout Group, Orpington Division Girl Guiding and Goddington Girlguiding** all received grants of varying amounts.

The grants have eased pressures on funding at a time when normal fundraising activities were cancelled, and many were calling on reserves. Many reverted to delivering their activities online through Zoom meetings which involved games and quizzes and kept the scouting spirit alive.

Some face-to-face activity began in September. This included fun days at Cudham Girl Guiding Camp Site. A Ranger group met for an Outdoor movie night. Other groups met outside where their units took part in games and various other socially distanced activities.

Christmas craft packs were prepared by leaders. Other highlights on the run up to Christmas included making Christmas cookies and doing quizzes. Snowman Bingo on zoom was also popular. The grant will help units struggling financially to pay the annual subscriptions as many families will be unable to pay the subs.

"without financial support we may not have been in a position to be able to quickly open our doors and start as we have. We may have needed to increase our membership fees making it less accessible for low-income families. So, thank you direct line!"



PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

New Lodge Riding Disability Association received a grant which helped to cover the main day to day running costs that are normally covered from revenue from the rides. The cost of keeping the horses and premises increased as many volunteers had to self-isolate so extra help was paid for.

During lockdown no riding was possible, but children with special educational needs were still able to interact with their favourite horses and do some grooming which helped them. Starting back was a fantastic moment after all the preparations had been put in place to make riding safe. The children were delighted at being able to return and made it very clear how much the riding means to them. Parents commented that the mental health of their children had suffered during lockdown and that this was the first activity they were returning to. At the time of this report the Association is giving rides to approximately **30 riders** each week.



Advocacy for All identified a need to keep their adult members with learning disabilities connected through IT when face to face meetings and activity was limited. The aim was to reduce isolation and loneliness of members through the roll out of IT to members. Where the devices have been rolled out the focus has been on Zoom and WhatsApp so that individuals can stay connected. The project still hopes to meet its original target of reaching **50 beneficiaries** through the remainder of the project.

Many vulnerable clients that **Bromley Mencap** support have been isolated for long periods and most services they regularly attended have been closed. With the support of the grant Mencap was able to enhance the virtual support they delivered, and this helped to bring families together and ensure lines of communication remained open. The funding enabled Mencap to provide weekly wellbeing telephone calls to **65 client** and radio Podcasts. Mencap also organised a virtual disco and they had **61 people** on a zoom 'watch party' disco. In addition, activity boxes were delivered to **60 clients**. The boxes contained a selection of activities which clients could do either by themselves or with their families. Project staff set up closed Facebook pages for groups of clients which created safe spaces to chat and share information.

"Thank you for the opportunity to exercise virtually and keeping in touch with my friends. I would have been so lonely and depressed without your support. You have really helped my mental wellbeing."

FAMILIES

Bromley Parent Voice (BPV) increased the working hours of employees so that the organisation could listen to more families. The themes and experiences that were experienced by families have been recorded and used to form a Covid-19 Issues Response Team. The sessions included support for families, signposting, transportation, support on Dyslexia, and transition from various school settings. In total **195 interventions** were made.

The Direct Line funding was instrumental in keeping **Winning Stars** going throughout last summer. **27 families** benefited from the project. Family fun days and gardening challenges were organised. Three sessional workers were hired to help run the project. Outings were made to Beckenham and Norman Parks. A gardening workshop was organised in Orpington and plants were distributed to some families.

"X is 15 years old, is autistic and has other medical issues. They have attended Winning Stars for three years. This year they are isolated with no activity. Their mother called and sent messages asking whether there would be any activity for the families this year. The whole family was happy when they learned that winning stars received funding for new activities this summer. X never done gardening before, but they love nature. X had never been to an allotment before and did not know where most of our vegetable came from. This year was their first time to see a tomato plant. X was very happy and excited about this project and does not want it to end. Their mum has created a small plot in the garden where X is now growing some tomatoes and onions. X is planning to do some work experience in the local garden centre after their GCSE."

Bromley and Croydon Womens Aid (BCWA) experienced an increase in demand for their services to provide support to women in the community experiencing domestic abuse. Covid-19 brought additional challenges to these women with up to **54 women** and **66 children** at any one time in 9 refuges.

To keep service-users and staff safe, it was important to adapt BCWA services from face to face to online. This included remote working and online delivery of a range of specialist support services. In the period of the project between **100 and 150 children and adults** are expected to benefit from this improved communication.



FAMILIES

The grant allowed for the recruitment and training of **19 parent volunteers** at **Home-start**. Each of the volunteers was matched to provide befriending and mentoring support to families living in Bromley with at least one child under the age of 5. The online discussion groups were extended which allowed participants to discuss some of the difficult challenges that they were facing and gain practical support. On average Home-start was able to work with an additional **15 parents** on this forum. Home-start was also able to deliver some essential supplies to families which included clothing and some emergency cash payments.

The funding allocated to the **Maypole Project** was to help provide support to the existing cohort of **78 families** supported and to respond to a **25% increase** in requests of support from those families and to increase referrals by 20%. The weekly contacts to existing clients continued and requests for contact between sessions for information or support increased exceeding 25% requests for support.

The additional enquiries from existing clients ranged from support in understanding the status of their child and family regarding "shielding", financial support, gaining food, a connection to the parent advocacy worker to assist with care needs. Maypole also received requests for different types of support; couple counselling, liaison with parents when they had been working with a child, for example.

Maypole received **10 direct family referral enquiries** for services in Bromley related to this grant. This figure increases dramatically if the additional indirect support provided is included.

CASPA received £8,000 to help them to continue developing services for people suffering from autism. It has also provided resources to lever further funding from other national funders.

Lockdown brought about the CASPA Still Standing campaign, mostly delivered through Facebook which included a broad range of activities. Zoom was also purchased to run workshops, social groups and other meetings. Some face-to-face activity resumed in August. During the COVID -19 pandemic CASPA has managed to retain contact with **200 families** and hundreds more have interacted with the online content and social media.

"CASPA has been an absolute lifeline for my family during lockdown. The zoom sessions have been amazing for the kids to engage on a weekly basis and keep a routine going but also as a parent being able to access support through the parent zooms has been fantastic at a time where it can be quite isolating and exhausting. I have looked forward to these. The summer scheme meant that we were able to get out and do things as a family that we would otherwise not have been able to do without the support of our CASPA family. We are so grateful to have been able to access this."

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Orpington FC Supported the club members and their families in meeting their physical health, mental health and community support needs during lockdown. As all football training and games were cancelled abruptly before the end of the season, OFC met the needs of players and their families during this difficult time through weekly fitness training sessions. This included a 60-minute training session over Zoom that was accessible for all players and their families from age 4-60.

The sessions were attended by over **100 families**. It is estimated that these fitness sessions provided over **2,000 exercise hours** for **150 families** during lockdown which supported peoples' mental and physical health.

OFC created two different Strava Clubs where members travelled to all 20 Premiership Club Stadiums and the Champions League European football stadiums. These Strava challenges recorded over **40,000 miles** of running, cycling, walking and swimming by over **200 participants**. A proportion of the funding was allocated to purchase T-shirts to challenge, engage and reward participants in all the Lockdown fitness programmes.

200 PARTICIPANTS
40,000 MILES

1200 PARTICIPANTS
8,100 VIEWS



Magpie Dance's main activity of weekly dance sessions in Bromley and surrounding areas for people with learning disabilities were cancelled in early March. To support the local community, Magpie created an eight-week series of twice daily dance classes, keeping people active and aiming to reach new participants in the process. This has been a great success, reaching **1,200 unique participants**, and totalling **8,100 views** so far.

For 66% of participants this was the only physical activity they were taking part in, providing essential regular fitness activity in lockdown. For many of the community, they are in highest-risk group, which is making many still wary of returning to in person activities. Continuing to provide an online offer, is therefore vital to their continued physical and mental health. 100% of participants enjoyed the classes, with 90% happy to continue dancing online.

"My daughters have participated in Magpie Dance classes for many years and they have thoroughly enjoyed the virtual classes during lockdown, which have made them very happy"

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The Chartwell Cancer Trust had its fundraising activities halted by the Covid 19 pandemic. This has impacted on the organisation's ability to fundraise and has impacted on current and future fundraising income. The grant enabled the Trust to protect and honour its commitment to fund the vital post of Health Care Assistant at the Chartwell Cancer and Leukaemia unit at the Princess Royal Hospital. As a result, the Trust has been able to maintain the same high level of care for its beneficiaries during this difficult and challenging time.

The Primrose Centre is unique in south east London as the only out of clinical setting for Cancer patients and their families. The charity is financed completely by donations and receives no funding from central or local government or health agencies. Patients have had their diagnosis and treatment delayed whilst they have been shielded, and the NHS focused on dealing with COVID. This has had a devastating impact on them and their family's mental health as they worry about the short- and long-term impact of the delays. This combined with not having access to the Centre with the help and support that is offered has left a big gap and increased anxiety for all concerned.

During the months of closure, some of the talking and mindfulness therapies offered were delivered online which the Direct Line grant of £3,000 helped to fund.

"I realise it is not possible to understand the difference £3000 has and will make but it has, believe me, they are so pleased Direct Line has helped the charity"

The benefits from the equipment and software that the grant has secured has already been felt by carers as the **Bromley Chill and Chat** Leaders are easier to contact, leaders can hold small zoom meetings and leaders now are just a dedicated telephone call away. Previously they were having to use their personal phones. Leaders are now able to have group specific email accounts that will enable them to contact supportive organisations and agencies on behalf of their Chill and Chat Groups.

The Black Heroes Foundation received a grant to run the online Virtual Locomotion Club for the lonely and isolated. The project aims to stimulate, motivate, and inspire the community. Pride is promoted through cultural awareness, education, and entertainment. The activities include an information session on a local hero and quiz. There is also singing, exercise and dance activity. Participants also receive training on using Zoom so they can communicate with others outside of the sessions. The sessions were focused on the elderly and isolated, but attracted a wide range of age groups. 57% of participants had some form of disability and the majority were retired, or self-employed. Over 50% of the participants were of African or Caribbean origin. There was a total of **164 participants** over the 3 month period.

"The existence of a welcoming online club during these difficult times when many people are feeling very isolated and cut off from their usual support networks has been invaluable. Its fair to say that the mixture of quizzes singing, movement and dance has meant that there is something for everyone"

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Throughout the Coronavirus pandemic, St Cecilia's care home run by disability charity **Leonard Cheshire** has been home to **28 adults** with physical disabilities.

The grant to provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) has contributed significantly in keeping not just service users safe, but also in protecting the carers, their families and the communities they form a part of. The funding has been used to acquire considerably greater quantities of PPE than have ever been necessary before.

'J' is a resident aged in his early 30s. Like several of the residents - he needs advanced personal care and is extremely vulnerable. He is supported daily by his key worker, a further support worker and receives regular assistance from a physiotherapist. A domestic support worker visits his room every day to clean thoroughly. Throughout the home staff in other roles such as catering, and maintenance perform background tasks to support J's everyday needs. During the course of any one day, each of these personnel are required to wear one or more sets of PPE - at varying levels of complexity, dependant on their role and proximity to J. Every care is taken to protect J - by protecting the carers who look after him and by reducing any element of risk to anyone working in the care home setting. The care home is to J - his home and his family. We will do everything we can in our power to keep him safe and well. To do this, we must protect the support network who care for him. The provision of adequate PPE is a formidable line of defence in protecting our service users and carers in our battle against Coronavirus.'



London Search and Rescue's normal fundraising routes have been cancelled during most of 2020. The team experienced a higher level of demand to help find missing persons as the mental health impacts of the Covid -19 lockdown restrictions took their toll. The organisation has responded to **6 call outs** between March and May when there had been just 4 in the preceding 2 months.

ANNEX 1: GRANT RECIPIENTS

1. 4th Scouts
2. 5th Scouts
3. 7th West Wickham Scouts
4. Advocacy for All
5. Biggin Hill Mutual Aid
6. Black Heros Foundation
7. Bromley and Croydon Women's Aid
8. Bromley Children and Families Voluntary Sector Forum
9. Bromley Chill and Chat
10. Bromley Foodbank
11. Bromley Mencap
12. Bromley Parent Voice
13. The CAP Bromley Partnership
14. CASPA
15. Central Eltham Youth Project
16. Chartwell Cancer trust
17. Community Links Bromley
18. Cudham Environmental Centre
19. Goddington District Girl guides
20. Green Street Green Assoc
21. Hilda Lane Community Lane
22. Home Start Bromley
23. ICARE DAY CENTRE TRUST LIMITED
24. JusB
25. LATCH (Living Amicably Together in Caring Homes)
26. Leonard Cheshire
27. Living Well Bromley
28. London Search and Rescue
29. The Maypole Project
30. Magpie Dance
31. Mottingham Food Bank
32. New Lodge Riding for the Disabled Assoc
33. Orpington Division Girl Guiding
34. Orpington FC
35. The Primrose Centre
36. Somali Well Women's Project
37. Welcare
38. Winning Stars