The Manchester Briefing on COVID-19

International lessons for local and national government recovery and renewal

Eleventh briefing: Week beginning 15th June 2020

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What is 'The Manchester Briefing on COVID-19'?
The Manchester Briefing on COVID-19 is aimed at those who plan and implement recovery from COVID-19, including government emergency planners and resilience officers.

Each week we bring together international lessons and examples which may prompt your thinking on the recovery from COVID-19, as well as other information from a range of sources and a focus on one key topic. The lessons are taken from websites (e.g. UN, WHO), documents (e.g. from researchers and governments), webinars (e.g. those facilitated by WEF, GCRN), and other things we find.

We aim to report what others have done without making any judgement on the effectiveness of the approaches, or recommending any specific approach.

This week
We have provided four briefings:

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Other information
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If you would be willing to contribute your knowledge to the briefing (via a 30-minute interview) please contact Duncan.Shaw@manchester.ac.uk

We also produce a blog series which you can access here along with other news about our team and our work.

Briefing A: Focus of the week – Ambition for Renewal

Introduction

We consider here **Recovery** and **Renewal** and explore how recovery actions relate to the concept of Renewal, which we have discussed in previous weeks of The Manchester Briefing. We also consider the extent to which recovery actions will extend into renewal, and whether they may fizzle out as fatigue as other priorities, such as Brexit, close in.

We have previously discussed (in Week 9), how the Recovery Coordination Group (RCG) can develop its work on **Recovery** and **Renewal** by commissioning an Impact Assessment to identify **effects**, **impacts** and **opportunities** from COVID-19. Then, these responses can be grouped into the six themes – Humanitarian Assistance (Including health), Economic, Infrastructure, Environment, Communication, Governance and Legislation – to identify **action areas**. Each action area can be mapped onto the consequences (direct, wider, and strategic) of COVID-19 and be addressed either through **transactional** actions (direct recovery actions, and wider recovery actions) or **transformational** actions (strategic recovery actions). Action areas are prioritised according to a range of contextual factors and allocated and monitored through to delivery.

We have also previously discussed (in Week 4) how **transactional recovery actions** can:
- **Reinstate** important activities that move the region/city/partnership to a normal state
- **Learn** from the response and feed that into recovery planning
- **Prepare** for future emergencies such as a second wave of COVID-19 and other concurrent emergencies

We have described how recovery actions should cover a range of people, place and process issues, and how they can be thought of as being transactional or transformational. We now provide here a series of examples to demonstrate these distinctions.

Transactional and transformational actions

We briefly introduce transactional recovery actions to provide context to our main focus this week – transformational recovery actions.

1) Transactional Recovery Actions

There will be a large group of effects, impacts, and opportunities which can be dealt with relatively quickly and in a relatively straightforward manner. We call these transactional recovery actions:
- **Direct Recovery Actions** – where the simplicity of the activity to resolve the action area means it can be conducted by a single organisation.
  For example, 'reinstate operations' through the activity of re-opening shops or re-starting services; or 'encourage ongoing good behaviours' through the activity of encouraging regular hand-washing or observing a 2 metre rule of social distancing
- **Wider Recovery Actions** – where the complexity/breadth of the activity to resolve the action area requires it to be conducted by partnership working.
  For example, acting to lower virus transmission on public transport by working across public health, transport authorities, public communications, and the business and retail communities to communicate with commuters and shoppers.

Transactional recovery actions are short-term, functional, and involve establishing a sustainable condition for people, place and processes.

2) Transformational Recovery Actions

When several transactional activities are combined together, they form a web of interconnected activity to be conducted as part of a portfolio of action. There are some impacts and opportunities that are so intractable, complex, far-reaching, and multi-perspective that single actions or single organisations cannot possibly address them satisfactorily. Such impacts and opportunities cannot even be defined as sitting within one of the broad categories of people, places and processes because the transformation needed to address them cross all three categories.

> *For example, some 'big' issues that have become more acute, or alleviated, by the effects, impacts and opportunities of COVID-19 such as: slavery, xenophobia, gang culture, climate change, conflict, corruption, smart cities, government accountability, institutional discrimination, cyber security, health inequalities, recession – all of which need multi-partner collaboration across people, places and processes.*

Other examples of transformational activity, include the United Nation's seventeen sustainable development goals (SDGs) which show a spread of global challenges needed to transform our world, many of which will have been impacted by COVID-19 and which require transformational recovery action to address them:

- GOAL 1: No Poverty
- GOAL 2: Zero Hunger
- GOAL 3: Good Health and Well-being
- GOAL 4: Quality Education
- GOAL 5: Gender Equality
- GOAL 6: Clean Water and Sanitation
- GOAL 7: Affordable and Clean Energy
- GOAL 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
- GOAL 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
- GOAL 10: Reduced Inequality
- GOAL 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
- GOAL 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
- GOAL 13: Climate Action
- GOAL 14: Life Below Water
- GOAL 15: Life on Land
- GOAL 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions
- GOAL 17: Partnerships to achieve the Goal

While these issues need to be addressed globally, they will also need to be addressed locally, and may arise through the local effect, impacts and opportunities of COVID-19 and the resultant action areas and plans.

In the UK, these plans may be initially considered by RCGs given their strategic focus. However, their wide-reaching nature suggests that wider partnerships beyond RCGs are needed alongside considerable political backing. RCGs are well placed to begin such conversations on whether the time is now right to increase meaningful local action on these issues, as part of wider transformational renewal. We now talk about two steps to delivering renewal.

Two steps to Renewal

1) Appreciate

The first step is to 'appreciate' the current situation, to appreciate what happened, recognise the need for the healing of society, and consider where renewal should focus across people, place and processes.

The transformational recovery actions require deep thought and visioning by strategic leaders. We suggest that this could be initiated through a **Renewal Summit**. The Renewal Summit brings key strategic stakeholders, to explore the vision for delivering Renewal of local people, place and processes. The **aims** of the Renewal Summit might be:

- To agree a positive direction for change
- To align the multiple relationships and broader partnerships around an agreed vision
- To 'engage local politicians' since their support will be needed for the future

These summits could be particularly helpful where the local government landscape is complex, or where there are no pre-existing cross-cutting executive groups working towards shared outcomes. If such groups already exist, they can consider the same issues, outlined below.

The Renewal Summit is consistent with the first stage of Renewal (i.e. to **Appreciate**) as it focuses on the need to appreciate the current response and recovery, recognise the need for the public to become more familiar with the ongoing situation, and consider where renewal should head. The Renewal Summit would be enabled by:

- **Optimism:** aligning a Renewal agenda to opportunities rather than the negativity or fatigue of COVID-19
- **Ambition**: for common action, funding, efficiency
- **Determination**: shared strategies for regeneration, economic development, resilient society, health outcomes
- **Moderators:** pressure on LAs from response, recovery, renewal, Brexit, funding
- **Good practice**: alignment and engagement as outlined in HMG's Recovery Guidance[1]
- **Thoughtfulness**: provoke ideas
- **Participation:** involve a wide range of influential leaders and stakeholders, elected leaders, Chief Executives and Officers, leaders from faith and community, business, VCSE
- **Facilitation:** dialogue to synthesize common thinking, identify opportunities and vision

In practice, the Renewal Summit can consider information from the **action areas** along with other strategic information (e.g. from the UN's SDGs) to develop appreciation of the need for a vision for local renewal, and prompt thinking about what this may involve. The process of **appreciation** should seek to understand the

differences in views held, resolve different views, explore the boundaries of transformation, and galvanise local strategic thinking.

The issues to cover in the Renewal Summit may include:

Inputs
- Briefing on "Key learning for resilience"
- Briefing on what effects are already clear on economy, health, society
- Briefing on what Recovery and Renewal could mean in the local context of people, place and processes
- Briefing on how COVID-19 has reinforced local inequalities

Agenda
- Debrief what happened to people, place and processes during response
- Discuss existing development strategies, change programmes, long-term visions
- Agree the desired scale of ambition
- Agree some organising framework to conceptualise issues in the Renewal Summit e.g.:
    - Humanitarian Assistance, Economic, Infrastructure, Environment[1]
    - City/Regional Strategy
    - Sustainable Development Goals
- Discuss new ways of working together with communities
- Identify and explain possible Renewal opportunities which align with existing regional strategies – suggesting they may be more readily agreed upon as collective ambitions
- Identify and explain possible Renewal opportunities which are new or do not align with existing regional strategies – suggesting they may need more discussion because agreement is less clear

Outputs
- Agree the vision and ambition in relation to the opportunities for Renewal
- Agree recommendations to elected politicians on social, health and economic development
- Agree common actions, funding sources or efficiencies, and what we need to do together

2) Renew

The Renewal Summit leads to the second step – the **delivery** of Renewal activities through orchestrated fast/slow strategic action to implement strategies that renew people, place and processes.

Delivery involves the constant reflection, analysis, sharing, thoughtful appreciation and wider involvement of stakeholders to ensure the vision from the Renewal Summit is realised. This work needs to be done as collective endeavour across **partnerships** (not to some partners by others) by involvement (not only arms-length consultation). In particular, this should involve the community.

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[1] National Recovery Guidance: Common issues. HM Government, 20th February 2013.
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-recovery-guidance-common-issues#impact-assessments

Implementation is likely to be progressed by a programme management approach that will deliver the vision via a strategy and associated plans for delivery.

The pressures influencing transformational actions

The level of desired ambition for renewal is something to be discussed and agreed in the Renewal Summit. A Renewal Summit may decide to seize the moment to pursue ambitious programmes of strategic recovery actions to renew their people, places and processes – capitalising on opportunities to advance. Alternatively, a Renewal Summit may decide to deliver recovery through only transactional recovery actions (direct and wider recovery actions) that target important fragilities but do not seek transformational societal or economic change.

There are 'five tracks' of pressure which may disturb and undermine Renewal ambition. The five tracks will individually and in combination put pressure on local government by requiring significant resources and, potentially, run simultaneously:

- **Track 1: Response** – providing crisis response functions to first, and subsequent, waves of COVID-19 and to other emergencies. Looking forward, issues will arise about the effect of COVID-19 on response (e.g. social distancing on evacuation/sheltering and event management) and public focus on querying past decisions
- **Track 2: Recovery** – developing plans to reinstate operations, learn from response, and prepare for the next emergency
- **Track 3: Renewal** – delivering the ambitions that were agreed in a Renewal Summit to achieve transformational change and link to positive initiatives
- **Track 4: Brexit** – responding to the reality of Brexit which will re-emerge stronger as we edge towards its next deadline. There will be a need to review plans for a no-deal exit (Operation Yellowhammer) and for an orderly exit – considering implications for local government
- **Track 5: Financial pressures** – responding to implications of global financial downturns on operations of local government, local organisations, employment, household finances, etc

These five tracks of pressure will bring further stresses on the national narrative, further financial uncertainty, and could exhaust many of the public. If experience from Brexit is any indicator, a prolonged public narrative around a single topic (that is painful for many) may create fatigue and a public desire of just wanting the focus on COVID-19 to end. It may be more appropriate to use the opportunity of COVID-19 to redevelop wider regional strategies and embed action in a wider narrative which is not directly linked to the losses and stresses of COVID-19.

There seems to be three possible futures for the Recovery and Renewal of our countries, regions, cities from COVID-19:

1. **Recover** by reinstating operations, learning lessons, and preparing for the next emergency, then move onto non-COVID-19 priorities
2. **Recover** (as per 1.) and pursue **Renewal** to deliver a vision through a comprehensive programme of strategic recovery actions, perhaps aligned with non-COVID-19 related agendas
3. Something between 1 and 2

Questions for Renewal

This leads us to the following questions to consider for the Renewal of an area:

- Who will decide the level of ambition for renewal?
- What level of ambition do stakeholders have for renewal?
- How can the renewal process embed renewal into wider regional strategies to let the bad memories of COVID-19 rest?
- How might wider national narratives (e.g. Brexit) offer the type of renewal needed for the UK to emerge from COVID-19?
- Beyond the topic of Brexit, what role will wider political issues play in renewal?

Some primary drivers will be how much funding is available, where that money comes from, the political imperatives of the day, and the patience of the public with wider, competing activities.

Briefing B. Lessons from across the world

We provide the lessons under six categories, with sub-categories for ease of reference. We have selected lessons that are of specific interest to the recovery process although many also relate to the response phase, and the likely overlap between response and recovery.

This week our lessons on humanitarian assistance focus on mental health, food provision for vulnerable people and managing voluntary resources. Economic lessons include those on business regeneration through gap assessments of skills, collaboration with local business and the contribution of universities to local economies. Infrastructure lessons focus on mitigating disruptions in supply chains through appropriate analysis of risk and on building resilience in the energy sector. Environmental lessons address impacts of disposable PPE and integrating climate change and pandemic learning into urban planning. Communications lessons focus on recognising cognitive bias. Governance and legislation section includes lessons on emergency planning for concurrent emergencies and business continuity planning.

Table of Contents

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Recovery: Categories of impact	Actions	Country/ Region	Source
Humanitarian Assistance			
Mental health	**Consider how to manage emotional health and wellbeing during COVID-19.** See Case Study 1.	UK	

Vulnerable people	**Consider large-scale need of vulnerable people for food.** Every local government area is likely to have a large number of people who are vulnerable but not eligible for a government food parcel delivery. Some of these people will not be able to access the food they need to stay at home due to:
	▪ Too little money to buy food (including problems with benefits payments)
	▪ Personal crisis for reasons other than COVID-19 (e.g. domestic violence)
	▪ Health issues, disability or caring roles personally, or in the household
	▪ Lack of friends, family or social support to deliver food
	In Greenwich, strategic 'food pathways' have been mapped to organise partnerships for large-scale food provision for vulnerable groups, and to relieve pressure on food banks. Pathways include:
	▪ *A model for local governments, local resilience forums and the voluntary sector to work in partnership.* To determine appropriate interventions, local governments triage those requiring food support into people who are:
	    o financially secure but cannot shop
	    o financially insecure and can shop
	    o financially insecure and cannot shop
	▪ *A model for community/ third sector groups.* Based on this triage, community groups can assess the needs of community and provide appropriate interventions e.g. emergency individual meals or signposting to services
		UK	https://www.sustainweb.org/secure/Food_for_vulnerable_people_in_covid-19_lockdown_april2020.pdf

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Recovery: Categories of impact	Actions	Country/ Region	Source
Volunteers	**Consider an integrated programme of support to vulnerable people that combines contributions from civil society and business.** In Colombia, the Red Flags movement (vulnerable people hung red flags from their homes to signify a need for assistance e.g. food, finances) led to a rise in ad hoc voluntary contributions. Local government used this opportunity to develop an integrated system of relief. They: ■ Created a single point of donation for all resources (human, in kind and financial), combining private and civil society donations to create a substantial, long-term resource ■ Used big data including population age, location, data on links to existing social support to capture voluntary work undertaken, needs of individuals, and areas served ■ Linked data and the centralised donation system to an economic committee comprised of local government, businesses, voluntary sector and charity sector to jointly decide allocation of finances to support voluntary organisations ■ Developed a campaign for local businesses to 'adopt' a university student from one of the five city-owned universities – whereby the sector donated 2-3 semesters of student fees. The aim of the campaign was to support students' access to education to mitigate the long-term economic impacts of a lost generation of university graduates	Colombia	Chief Resilience Officer
Economic			
Economic strategy	**Consider undertaking capability gap assessments for skills needed for recovery.** In Australia, local government are undertaking capability gap assessments to identify sectors that lack enough skilled personnel to undertake recovery projects. In New Zealand, the government is focusing on the role of the construction industry in positively impacting the economy and are implementing programmes to upskill trades people in preparation for building works. In addition, both countries are reinstating apprenticeships in vocational jobs such as construction, plumbing and electrical work to support young people, and short/long-term economic regeneration.	Australia New Zealand	Economic strategy

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Recovery: Categories of impact	Actions	Country/ Region	Source
Business regeneration	**Consider increased collaboration with local business associations.** In one city in Denmark, a number of meetings are being held with local businesses to support local business and economic regeneration. These include: ■ Weekly meetings with the local business association and the Mayor to explain the city's economic situation, advise on help packages for businesses, and explain business regeneration schemes ■ Additional meetings to ask local businesses what type of projects they need to have funded immediately to inform local government's funding agenda ■ Meetings to allow local businesses to bid for local regeneration projects funded by local government. These have included retrofitting schools with solar panels, renovation of local high street shops and buildings, and road works ■ Local government have committed to paying invoices to business at the beginning of projects rather than the end, to provide businesses with more liquidity	Denmark	Chief Resilience Officer
Public sector	**Consider the importance of universities on local economies.** Universities have a positive impact on future regional growth of GDP per capita. In the UK, universities support community activity, work on an applied level with many smaller businesses, and students stimulate the local economy. Consider how to: ■ Support existing university-business relationships and encourage new partnerships to benefit both parties ■ Develop regional offices to help build local knowledge to identify and convey concerns of universities to national bodies. These may be co-located with other local partnerships and institutions ■ Foster a bottom-up, local consensus across geographical areas that identifies the resources universities need from government ■ Ensure that university cities are safe and secure places for students, and to be communicated as such ■ Ensure that overseas students have access to health services as required	UK	https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0272775718300414 https://yorkshireuniversities.ac.uk/2020/05/06/the-coronavirus-pandemic-universities-and-the-economic-recovery-of-place/

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Recovery: Categories of impact	Actions	Country/ Region	Source
Infrastructure			
Supply chains	**Conduct scenario analyses to plan for supply chain disruptions and account for risks.** Globally, supply chains face challenges in responding to disruptions as a result of COVID-19. Consider: ▪ Contingency plans that adequately review project controls, risk management and governance processes to provide early warnings of risk impact e.g. a second wave of COVID-19, and the cost, time or contractual impacts of this ▪ How changes to demand, use and other consumer behaviours will place extra pressure on revenues ▪ How restrictions on people's movements impact productivity ▪ How alternative delivery methods and increased supply chain visibility can mitigate supply delays and expose key vulnerabilities ▪ How the use of advanced controls and technology can ensure more efficient use of resources and better decision-making • Strategies for transparent communication with all stakeholders, including employees and every party along the supply chain. This can boost reputations, morale and trust among all stakeholders	All	https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/industries/capital-projects-infrastructure/publications/infrastructure-covid-19.html
Energy	**Consider how to protect the functionality of the utility sector including, long-term resilience, reliability and sustainability.** COVID-19 has exposed the vulnerabilities of critical services and infrastructures. Electrical power systems have been severely affected by the pandemic, threatening not only their current functionality but also their longer-term resilience, reliability and sustainability. Consider: ▪ How to improve communication between core utility sectors such as water and energy sectors (including renewable energy). Often these sectors have been planned, operated and regulated in isolation which reduces overall resilience of the sector in an emergency ▪ How to ensure decarbonization of the electricity sector is adequately integrated into COVID-19 recovery strategies to support economic growth and jobs ▪ How to encourage a collective response from organizations and stakeholders across multiple sectors e.g. electricity generation, water management, finance and investment, agriculture etc to ensure the growth of low-carbon infrastructure to holistically address actions that reduce cascading climate risks.	All	http://www.futuredams.org/power-systems-covid19/?utm_content=bufferaa952&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer

Recovery: Categories of impact	Actions	Country/ Region	Source
Environmental			
General environmental	**Consider the environmental impacts of disposable PPE purchased by the public.** While disposable masks are necessary for keyworkers, promoting more environmentally friendly alternatives such as reusable masks and more frequent hand washing (opposed to disposable gloves) could be considered. Plastic pollution, already a threat to marine life and oceans has increased as a result of COVID-19 waste. Public campaigns to encourage the use of environmentally friendly alternatives and appropriate disposal could be considered.	All	https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jun/08/more-masks-than-jellyfish-coronavirus-waste-ends-up-in-ocean
Urban planning	**Consider integrating climate change, society and pandemic learning into urban planning as part of Renewal.** In Denmark, an urban development project considers: ▪ Mitigating loneliness e.g. day-care for children has been integrated into a nursing home ▪ Bike lanes that link the suburbs to larger cities ▪ Availability of accessible green spaces to support mental and physical wellbeing ▪ Social housing to improve quality of life of poor or marginalized people. This includes a health focus on proximity living which can increase risk of disease ▪ Renewable energy supply to the building to provide energy security which is important during emergencies	Denmark	Chief Resilience Officer
Communications			
General communication	**Consider facilitating effective communication through awareness of cognitive bias and the impact of this on how the public perceives and receives information.** Cognitive bias affect how events are remembered and how people behave, so can influence decision-making that can impact recovery. For example, not showing symptoms of COVID-19 may lead people to think that they are immune or won't infect others. Other cognitive bias is related to people's selectivity about what they pay attention to and so what they do in response to public health advice. Cognitive bias may be mitigated by: ▪ Communicating testimonials and stories to challenge thinking about practices that are safe and unsafe ▪ Sharing transparent and consistent information across all platforms to reduce misinformation and distrust ▪ Providing easy to find information through mechanisms such as Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to reduce ambiguity ▪ Providing information that supports collective action so people feel they are part of solving the problem	Australia	Risk Manager

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Recovery: Categories of impact	Actions	Country/ Region	Source
Governance and legislation			
Emergency planning	**Consider how local government can support businesses to develop business continuity (BC) plans.** Consider using the Emergency Planning College Business Continuity (BC) checklist to understand how well BC is incorporated into core areas such as risk management (see BS65000 for further examples). The checklist provides signposting to relevant guidance. Example guidance includes: ***Roles, responsibilities and competencies*** ▪ Identify BC roles and command and control structures e.g. strategic leads; BC advisor/coordinator; incident management etc ▪ Promote effective leadership (e.g. ISO22301; ISO22330) ▪ Document information including plans, procedures, roles and competencies, and the recording of decisions, actions and rationale (e.g. ISO22301: Clause 7.5) ***Monitoring and evaluation and decision making*** ▪ Effectively monitor impacts and use of trusted, key guidance for BC to inform decisions ▪ Agree decision-making methodology and governance structures for BC ▪ Use models such as the Joint Decision Model (JDM) for making decisions for multi-agency response or organisational level ▪ Agree processes for effectively standing response down, including decision makers and deciding factors (e.g. ISO22301: Clause 8.4.4.3,) ***Recovery of businesses and Maintenance of BC*** ▪ Promote recovery as a chance for innovation of current processes, organizations, communities and behaviours, which is in keeping with 'Continual Improvement' (e.g. ISO22301: Clause 10.2; 'Innovation' in BS65000) ▪ Advocate the lifecycle of the BC plan and the accuracy of priorities and how lessons are learned from incidents	UK	Emergency Planning College Business Continuity (BC) checklist https://www.epcresilience.com/EPC.Web/media/documents/Tools%20and%20Templates/20200421-EPC-BC-Checklist-NEW.pdf

Recovery: Categories of impact	Actions	Country/ Region	Source
Emergency planning	**Consider how to manage the response to concurrent emergencies during COVID-19.** Consider a consistent approach to the response to, and management of, risks arising from COVID-19. This includes consideration of impacts on transition periods from emergency response into recovery, or recovery into renewal. ▪ Agree a process to approve any declaration of a state of local emergency or local transition period for emergencies that need to consider COVID-19 related matters. For example, consider who declares the emergency, the powers to enforce, what enforcement means, the role of political leaders in approval ▪ Agree plans for concurrent emergencies – to declare a state of local emergency (for a non-COVID-19 event, such as a flood) when a state of national emergency is in place for COVID-19. Consider impacts on these transitions ▪ Agree plans to declare a local state of emergency (for a non-COVID-19 event, such as a flood) that does not end any national transition period in force for COVID-19 ▪ Agree plans for a local transition period for a non-COVID-19 related emergency when in a national transition period for COVID19	New Zealand	https://www.civild efence.govt.nz/ass ets/Uploads/public ations/Factsheet-changes-to-the-CDEM-Act-May-2020.pdf

Briefing C: Case Study - Emotional health and wellbeing during COVID-19

COVID-19 has had widespread consequences on all aspects of health and wellbeing. In particular, it has taken a toll on emotional health and wellbeing as a result of remaining isolated or physically distant from friends, family and normal support structures. Additionally, the effects of COVID-19 on risk factors including socioeconomic inequalities, poverty, debt, unemployment, food insecurity, and physical inactivity[2] have had significant impacts on the emotional health and well-being of many[3].

These impacts can be understood on a continuum, from those experiencing some effects on their emotional health and wellbeing, perhaps for the first time, such as intermittent loneliness; to those suffering from more serious mental health disorders such as anxiety, depression or post-traumatic stress disorder; and those who require medical intervention and psychiatric care. This presents three core challenges for mental health provision[4]:

1. Prevent an associated increase in mental health disorders and a reduction in mental health wellbeing across populations
2. Protect people with a mental disorders from COVID-19, and the associated consequences, such as increased risk of COVID-19 infection and mortality due to increased vulnerability
3. Provide appropriate public mental health interventions including for health professionals and carers

The challenges of understanding how emotional health and wellbeing have been affected is complex as many people may develop negative psychological responses after an event, so, even as the threat of the pandemic lessens, more people may reach out for support[5]. This is a particular concern for frontline medical staff, many of whom have not had time or space to process their experiences and may suffer from mental and physical fatigue[6].

The challenges faced in providing adequate care and support are not just related to the increasing numbers of people who require mental health services. Mental health services claim historically under-funding[7], and the expected compounding of the impacts of a global recession on the resources available; further stretching the sector[8]. Across the UK, the voluntary sector has played a key role in service provision and developing innovative and flexible care models[9]. Voluntary sector support ranges from helplines to peer support, and alternatives to inpatient care. They may be large national charities delivering a range of responses in different localities or smaller local social enterprises providing a specific service, such as a crisis café[10].

[2] https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366(20)30240-6/fulltext
[3] https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/06/08/mental-health-support-necessary-during-covid-19-pandemic
[4] https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366(20)30240-6/fulltext
[5] https://scienmag.com/global-study-launched-to-examine-impact-of-covid-19-on-health-and-wellbeing/
[6] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/07/health-experts-on-the-psychological-cost-of-covid-19
[7] https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/Mentalhealthfundingreport2_0.pdf
[8]https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/07/health-experts-on-the-psychological-cost-of-covid-19
[9] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5695387/
[10] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5695387/

To meet the expected demand for mental health support, the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector organisations are working with their NHS and local government partners to respond to the pressing needs of the communities they serve and come from[11]. Key priorities have been identified to maintain these services[12]:

- **Rising service demands** – there is a significant rises in helpline usage which has led to concerns about the provision of effective support to every caller; especially those in crisis
- **Workforce** – consideration of: reductions in personnel due to isolation or secondments to statutory services; gaining key worker status and recognition for voluntary mental health providers, and testing
- **Loss of access to care coordinators** – a care coordinator plays a key role in helping people to manage and monitor their care, including support with medication, physical health, housing, employment, finances and home care. Support service users who have not been able to contact their care coordinators due to their redeployment to COVID-19 response teams, and/or sickness, self-isolation, etc
- **Infection control** – PPE and clear guidance on its use is needed for regulated and unregulated services. A considerable number of staff are also working on the frontline with service users, and require protection
- **Collaboration with statutory services** – VCSE organisations have extensive experience of working alongside statutory bodies in the provision of mental health services. In many areas, partnership working between the VCSE sector, NHS and local government is well-established but, in other areas, it has not always been easy to form effective working relationships
- **Advocacy services** – appropriate access to advocacy services is important for people with mental health conditions. During COVID-19, some people who have been sectioned need more contact with others. While some people have been provided with mobile phones by hospitals, other people need more support to make contact with others to avoid isolation
- **Adapting service delivery** – with social distancing policies in place, many services are being moved online or to telephone. Provision for anxiety and crisis support have reported an increase in calls to helplines. Some have reconfigured services but consideration needs to be given to the sustainability of this
- **Changes to legislation** – emergency legislation (Coronavirus Act 2020) includes temporary changes to the Mental Health Act and local authorities Care Act. Consideration of the effects of this on the availability, accessibility, commissioning and provision of mental health care and support services is needed
- **Sustainability of the VCSE sector** – concerns about funding streams, cash flow, and long-term sustainability of service providers has been raised. While the Government have provided financial support, the long-term sustainability of the mental health sector at a time when services are needed should be considered

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[11] https://amhp.org.uk/covid19-vcse-mental-health-sector/
[12] https://amhp.org.uk/app/uploads/2020/04/Covid-19-and-VCSE-Mental-Health-Sector-Briefing-Paper-1.pdf

Briefing D: Useful webinars

Taken place in the past week	Webinar Title	Link to presentation
3.6.2020	Water and food security in the face of COVID-19: Finding robust solutions	https://www.sei.org/events/webinar-water-and-food-security-in-the-face-of-covid-19-finding-robust-solutions/
10.6.2020	Observations of NHS leadership behaviours during COVID-19	https://www.facebook.com/168327416542829/videos/261869488466131/
10.6.2020	Ensuring resilience, accelerating progress -Examining the impact of COVID-19 on the Sustainable Development Goals	https://www.preventionweb.net/events/view/72094?id=72094
Coming up		
Date	**Webinar Title**	**Link to registration**
19.6.2020	India's food security in a pandemic	https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_u88M8NTUSOC7wh3j5Tye0A
22.6.2020	Economics of COVID-19 in Africa: African Feminist Perspectives	https://www.soas.ac.uk/economics/events/22jun2020-economics-of-covid-19-in-africa-african-feminist-perspectives-webinar.html
24.6.2020	How to build a new society after the Covid-19 crisis	https://www.soas.ac.uk/economics/events/24jun2020-how-to-build-a-new-society-after-the-covid-19-crisis-webinar.html
1.7.2020	The impact of COVID-19 on routes to funding for SMEs	https://www.alliancembs.manchester.ac.uk/events/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-routes-to-funding-for-smes/