

Glasgow Voluntary Sector Race Equality Network

Glasgow Communities Fund – Impact on BME organisations

17th September 2020

Introduction

This paper sets out the results of a snapshot survey of organisations led by, or extensively working with, BME communities who applied to the Glasgow Communities Fund 2020-23. The survey was carried out by CRER on behalf of the Glasgow Voluntary Sector Race Equality Network (GVSREN).

GVSREN is a platform through which voluntary and community groups led by (or working extensively with) people from BME communities can network, share concerns, raise awareness, work together, and develop a coherent and strategic voice for racial equality in Glasgow. The network has been in existence since 1997, formally constituted in 2000 and was previously known as Glasgow Black and Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Network.

Survey results were gathered electronically between 3rd and 9th September 2020, following the announcement of funding recommendations. Some further views were provided by email following this, and have been included in the analysis.

The intention of the survey is to provide clarity on the potential impacts of funding recommendations on organisations led by, or extensively working with, BME communities. It is recognised, however, that mainstream organisations also have BME service users who are affected by loss of funding (particularly organisations in areas with a higher BME population).

The results presented here will be shared primarily with GVSREN members, as well as relevant Glasgow City Councillors, Council Officers and Community Planning Partner organisations outwith Glasgow City Council. Results may be shared with wider stakeholders, for example potential funders and Scottish Government, and will be published online to allow all participants and GVSREN members to share as they wish.

The findings below are accompanied by two appendices, for context – Appendix A is a statement from GVSREN made on 2nd September 2020, and Appendix B provides some highlights of analysis of city wide and sector level awards made to GVSREN members and other organisations led by, or extensively working with, BME communities.

24 of the 62 affected organisations participated in the study. This included both organisations whose funding request was not approved, and those whose funding request was partially approved. In line with broader trends in Glasgow Communities Fund allocations, none were allocated full funding.

Proportion of funding request allocated

Over two thirds of respondents were not approved for funding (16 respondents). Of the remainder, 21% (5) received between 50% and 69% of the requested amount. Only three respondents received over 70% of their request.

Figure 1.

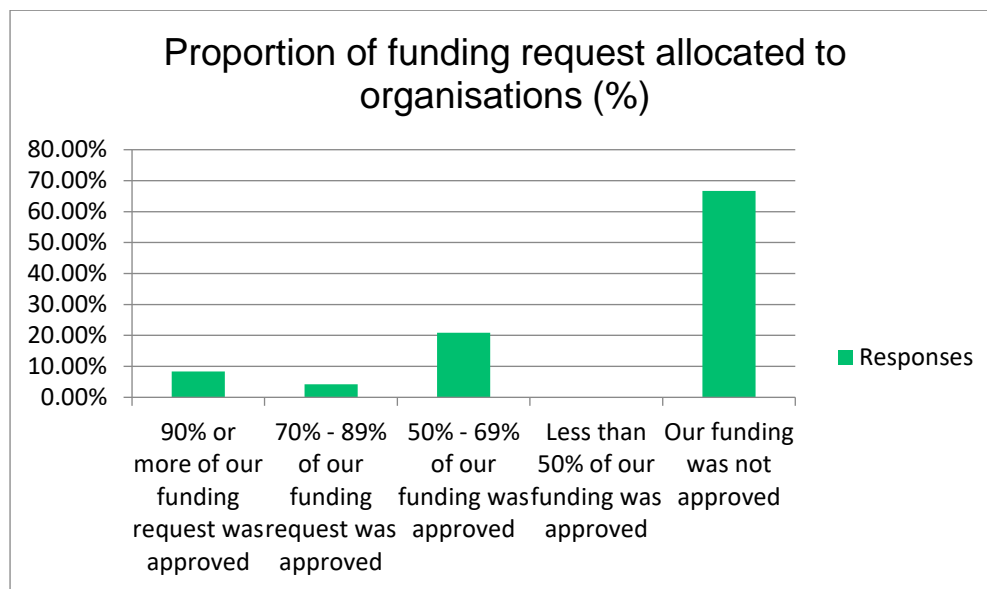
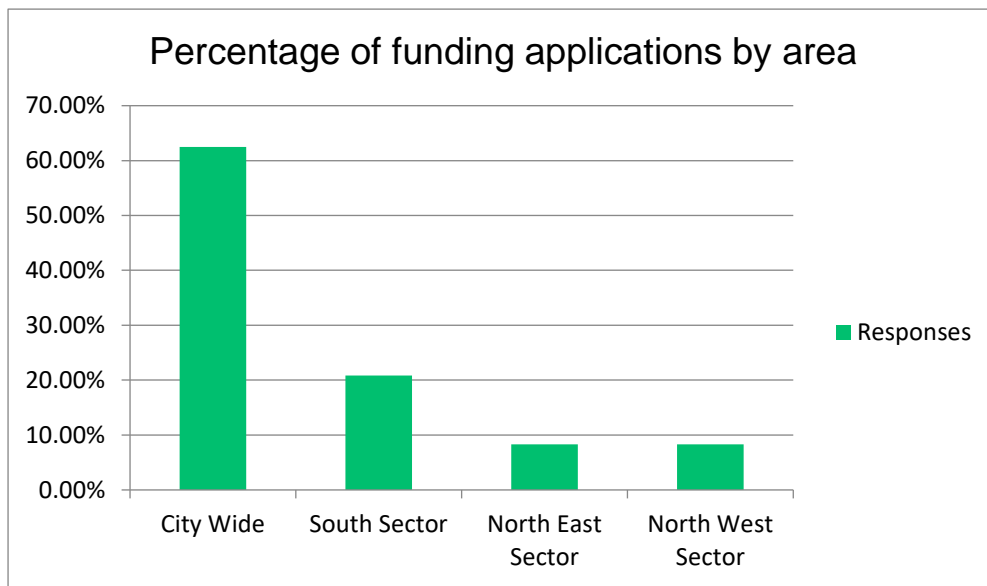


Figure 2 shows that over 60% of respondents’ funding applications were made to the city wide part of the fund. This is to be expected; as with other equality groups, the need for activity exists across the city and the work carried out by organisations is often of a strategic nature which fits poorly into sector based funding streams.

This aligns with the results at Figure 1, with most respondents being refused funding or receiving only 50%-69% of the amount requested. Respondents have been disproportionately affected by the lower level of awards at city wide level.

Figure 2.

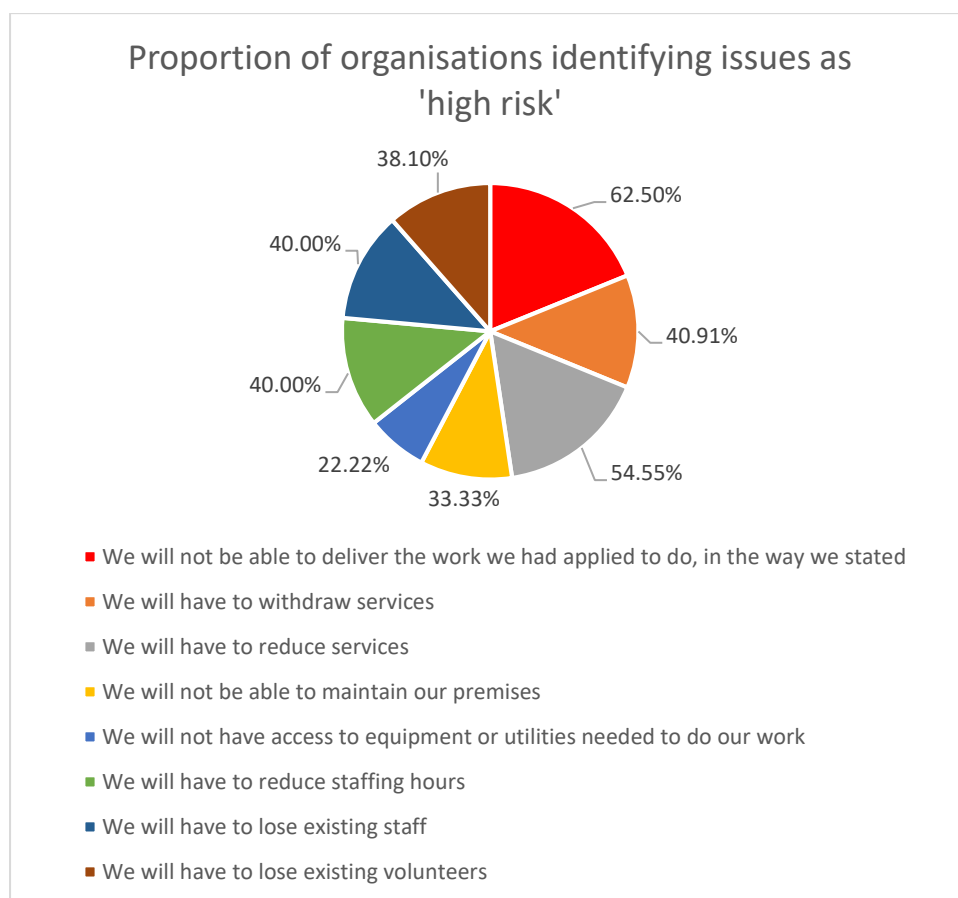


Organisational risks resulting from funding recommendations

Respondents reported a mix of potential organisational risks arising from the funding recommendations. All of the potential risks included in the survey are expected to impact at least some organisations.

To identify the most severe risks, Figure 3 presents the proportion of organisations identifying each potential risk as 'high risk.' Those who answered 'not applicable' have been removed from this analysis, so that only those organisations with the potential to be affected by the risk in question are counted.

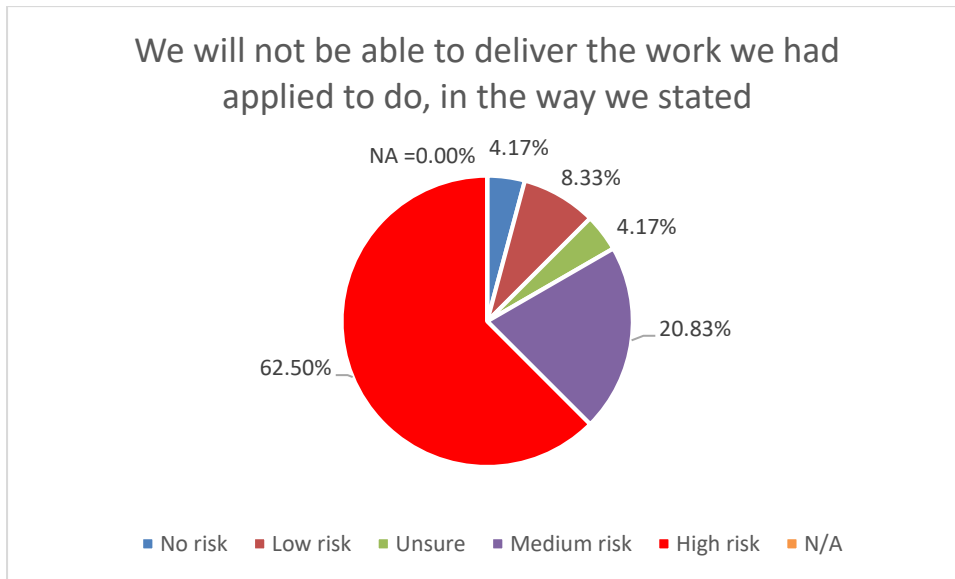
Figure 3.



Over 60% of respondents stated that there was a high risk they would not be able to deliver the work they applied to do, in the way that they stated. This was the most commonly reported high risk issue. Reduction in services was a high risk for over half of respondents, with a further 40% identifying withdrawal of services as a high risk. With regard to staff, 40% reported a high risk of reducing staffing hours, with a further 40% reporting that losing existing staff was a high risk. 38% reported a high risk of losing existing volunteers. In terms of physical resources, 22% reported a high risk that they would not have access to equipment or utilities required to do their work, whilst a third were at high risk of not being able to retain their premises.

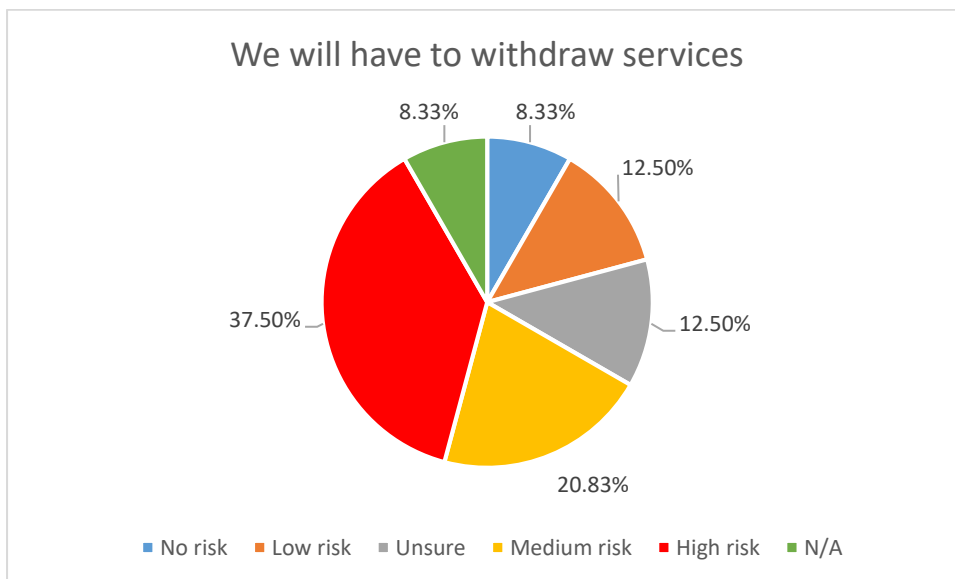
A full breakdown of answers for each potential risk is provided in Figures 4 – 11.

Figure 4.



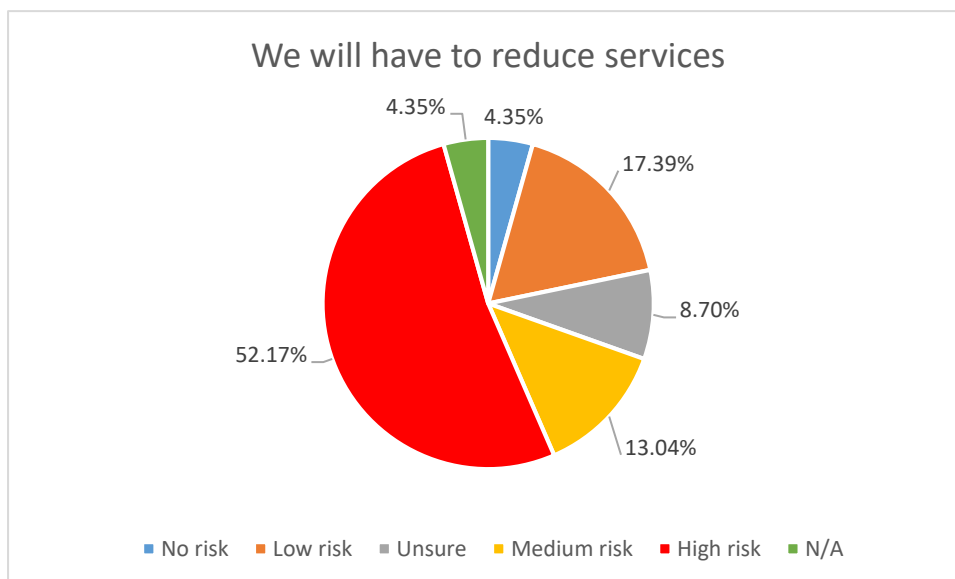
All respondents reported some level of risk that they would be unable to deliver the work as intended, with over 80% stating that this was a medium or high risk.

Figure 5.



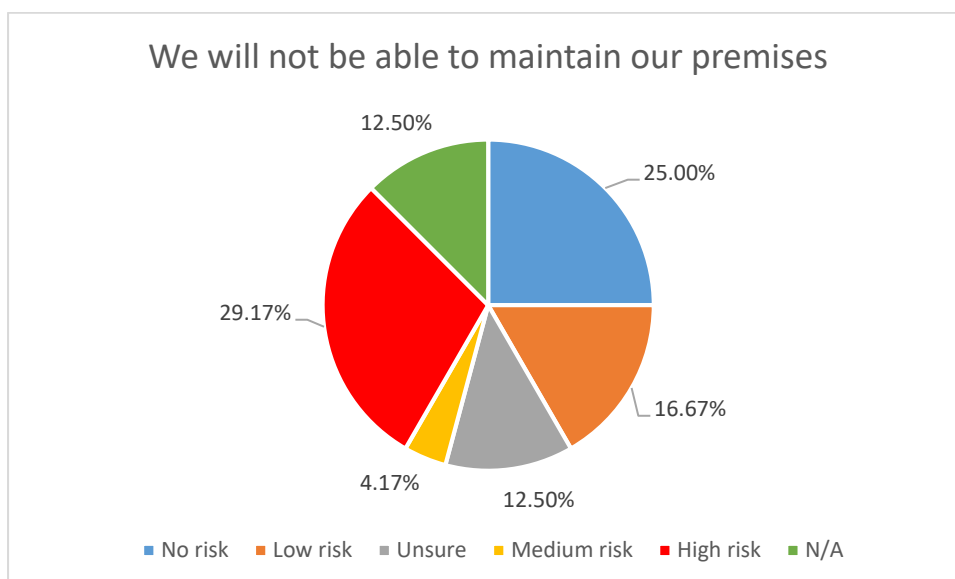
Over 90% of respondents identified some risk of having to withdraw services, with almost 60% feeling this was a medium or high risk.

Figure 6.



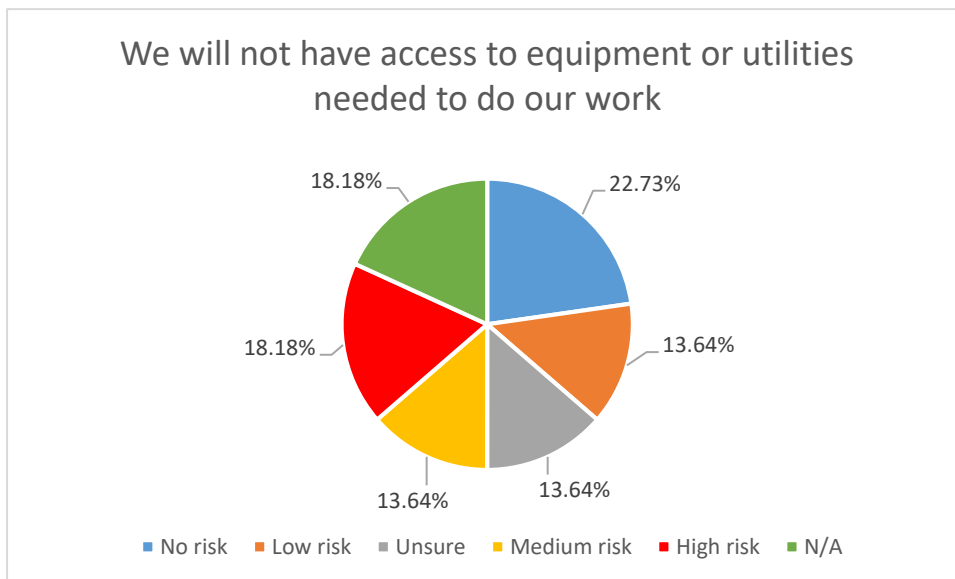
Almost all respondents reported some risk of reducing services, with 65% reporting a medium or high risk (over 50% identified this as a high risk).

Figure 7.



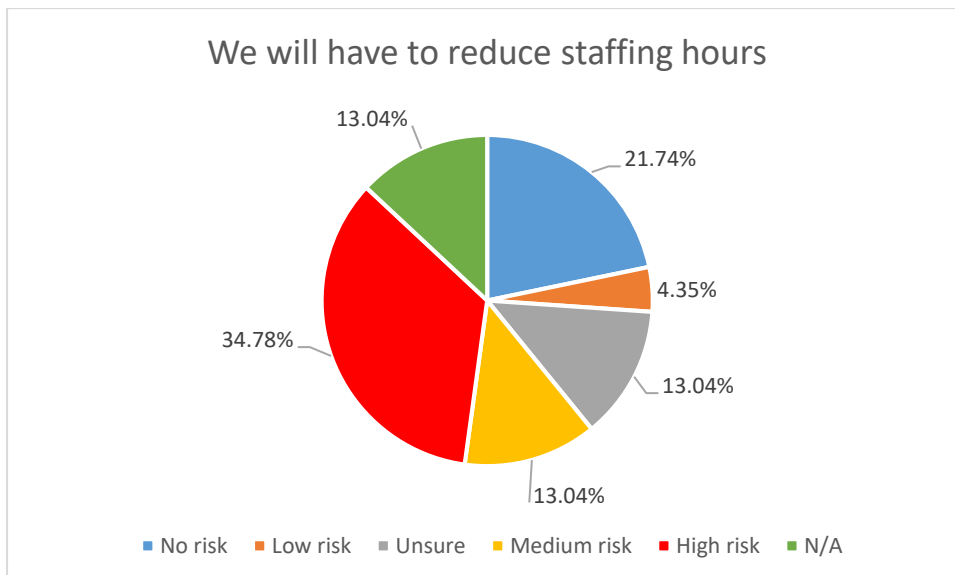
Responses on maintaining premises were very mixed, with 25% stating there was no risk of this but almost 30% identifying this as a high risk. Notably, 12% selected 'not applicable', meaning that presumably this proportion are unaffected as they do not have premises to maintain.

Figure 8.



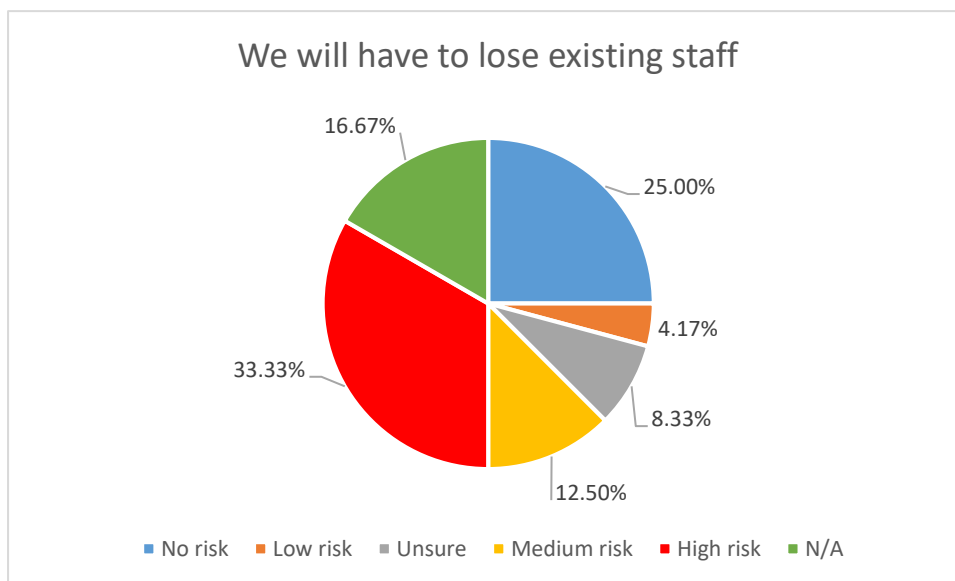
Responses on lack of access to equipment or utilities were even more mixed. Almost 20% (18.18%) felt that this was not applicable to them, whilst an equal proportion felt that this was a high risk, and over 20% identified this as a low risk. Overall, this appears to be the least frequently reported risk.

Figure 9.



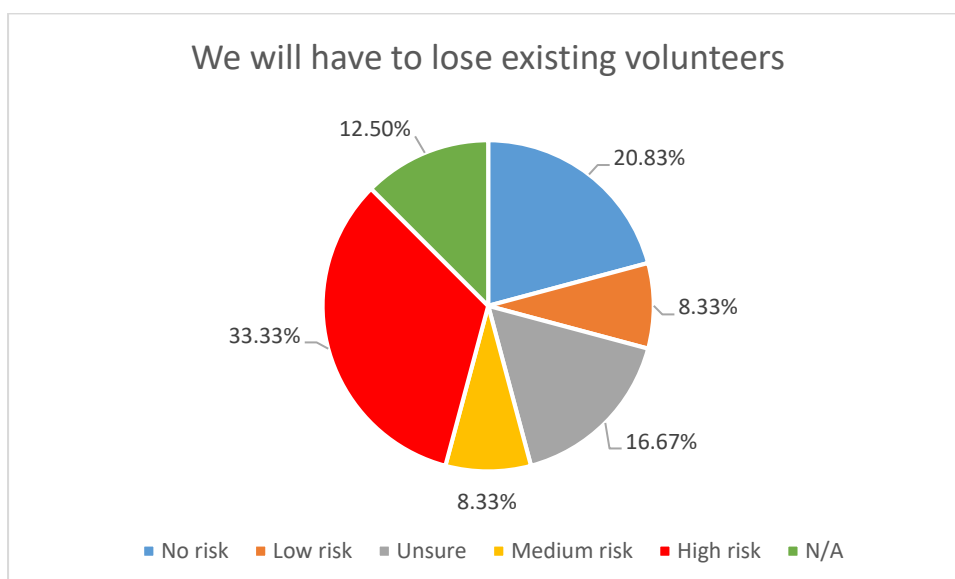
13% respondents identified that staffing was not applicable to them. For the remainder, almost half identified a high or medium risk of reducing staffing hours. Over 20% felt that there was no risk of this.

Figure 10.



Results for the risk of losing staff were somewhat polarised, with 25% feeling that this was low risk in comparison to a third stating that there was a high risk of losing staff. For 16% of respondents, this was not applicable.

Figure 11.



Over 40% of respondents reported a high or medium risk of losing existing volunteers, whilst over 20% identified that the risk was low. 12.5% identified this as not applicable. This risk factor drew the highest number of 'unsure' responses, at 16%.

Additional risks

Of the 24 responses, 18 contained detailed comments on the risks organisations face as a result of the funding recommendations.

Of the smaller proportion of respondents allocated upwards of 70% of their funding request, only one commented. They outlined plans to mitigate the cut by allocating GCF monies to salary costs, helping to save staffing hours, and to seek funding for delivery elsewhere. This is likely to be the realistic option for many organisations, as without staffing, projects cannot be completed. However, the risk remains that the project will fail if no alternative funding can be found. This would result in a loss of the work the Council's funding recommendations aimed to enable.

Three of the respondents allocated 50% - 69% of their awards commented. One of these was applying for something not previously funded, and so even a lower award than planned was felt to be of some benefit. For the remainder, a reduction in services and even the threat of closure of the organisation was identified.

The remaining 14 responses came from organisations whose applications were not recommended for funding. These organisations often identified that their work was with people who, for a variety of reasons, are consistently failed by mainstream provision and require the type of services detailed in their grant applications. They frequently stated that service users would have no other access to support as a result of this.

Risks identified by these organisations included:

- Impacts on organisation's sustainability and availability of resources for the community and beyond:
 - Potential loss of match funding for core costs, meaning additional investment in services in Glasgow may be lost, with further implications for these organisations through loss of core funding and resulting financial instability
 - Closure of a widely-used community facility, impacting 10+ community groups outwith the grant applicant
 - Loss of project work which brought unfunded benefits to partners in the city, for example access to the views of minority ethnic people for consultation and involvement in service development
 - Organisations with a community infrastructure role now being unable to fulfil this
- Loss of planned services supporting people at significant risk of isolation and/or factors affecting vulnerability from minority ethnic groups, including:
 - Older, isolated people

- People experiencing dementia and their carers
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- People experiencing mental ill-health
- People experiencing forms of extreme poverty, including destitution
- Women experiencing intersectional gender-based inequalities and gender-based violence
- Loss of opportunities for innovation in areas such as:
 - Environmentally friendly solutions to problems in the city
 - Training, development and upskilling in areas including digital inclusion, financial inclusion
 - Partnership working with unfunded / underfunded grassroots community led organisations to create high value outcomes for minimal cost

Organisations refused for smaller funding requests still identified detrimental effects arising from this, especially in terms of having the basic resources needed to maintain their work within the community and the impact withdrawal of existing approaches would have on trust and relationships between the organisation and the community members they work with. Impact on relationships was raised by several organisations, whether refused large or small grants. One described their relationship with service users as being ‘like a family’, and due to the nature of the service provided and close-knit support networks it builds, feared an increase risk of hospitalisation following withdrawal of their work.

This survey did not aim to look at the wider implications of the funding environment for work with minority ethnic people in Scotland, however responses made it clear that changes and delays in a number of different local and national funding streams are creating a perfect storm that severely threatens organisations led by, or working extensively with, BME communities in Glasgow. This is exemplified by several comments indicating that match funding or broader work aligned to the Glasgow Communities Fund grant would not go ahead. The funding provided by Glasgow City Council to BME organisations brings significant additional investment into the city. This may be particularly the case where core costs are met by the Council, as simple project funding is easier to access through external means, allowing people in the city to receive many essential services and initiatives to support their wellbeing which would otherwise not exist due to lack of premises or staffing capacity.

Impact on the people organisations work with

A further open-ended question was provided to allow respondents to enter any information about the impact on the people they work with. 16 responses were received.

For the only respondent receiving funding for the first time without a reduction severe enough to make their original plans untenable, the new funding represented a chance to substantially improve the position of their organisation and develop new work. This organisation particularly appreciated the longer-term nature of the funding on offer, highlighting the difficulties caused by annual funding cycles. A further organisation felt that, despite reductions, moving provision online would enable them to continue to do more with less. However, these were the only positive impacts identified by respondents.

Whether organisations could continue to provide their planned service at all was brought into question by several respondents who had been allocated funding at a reduced level. This included one which had previously not received IGF funding, but was already at risk of having to cease its core work due to lack of funding in general.

Some of the most marginalised minority ethnic communities in Glasgow, which have very little provision even within community organisations, are facing closure of the already limited services available to them. In one particular case, there is a significant risk of closure of the only grassroots organisation led by and working for that community in Scotland.

Other expected impacts included:

- Increasing vulnerability, isolation and worsening of health/mental health issues for those now cut off from services and support networks
- Loss of accessible services for particular groups at risk of various disadvantages and vulnerabilities, including older people with specific language or cultural needs impacting the type of support they require and young people with a need for culturally sensitive counselling services
- Loss of networks within communities through reduction in volunteering and other forms of participation in community organisations' work
- Removal of opportunities for disadvantaged adults and young people (in some cases, who are refugees/migrants facing additional challenges) to receive free training/development or volunteering opportunities that would positively impact their employability and quality of life

The additional pressures brought by Covid-19, particularly on mental health, isolation and poverty, were raised by several respondents as challenges they would struggle to rise to for their service users due to reductions in funding.

Transitional Support Fund

Following publication of the funding awards made through the transitional support fund, the position of those survey respondents who provided their organisation's name (15 of 24) remains unchanged, as none were awarded funding. Two BME-led organisations will benefit from transitional funding, 8% of 23 organisations in total. However, as with the main fund, both were awarded vastly lower amounts for each of the three years than requested in their application. This could make it impossible to sustain activity. Despite being described as a transitional fund, the process of awarding this funding appears to be primarily an extension of the main fund.

Conclusion

Although this survey represents only a brief snapshot of the impact on 24 of the hundreds of affected organisations, these responses clearly support the initial statement made by GVSREN, as detailed at Appendix 1.

The predicted closures or severe reductions in specialised services which cannot be replaced by mainstream or other local provision is of particular concern. It was hoped that the Transitional Support Fund could mitigate this for at least some of the organisations whose applications were not recommended for funding, however only two organisations supporting BME communities specifically benefitted from this.

Across all of the funding streams, serious concerns have to be raised about whether those organisations offered significantly reduced awards can maintain the proposed work. This should have been evident during the decision making process. This should have been informed by a full Equality Impact Assessment focussed on the impact of decisions on people with protected characteristics, rather than the structure of the funding system alone.

Given the severe risks identified by respondents to the GVSREN survey, solutions and mitigating actions should be identified in partnership with the affected organisations as a matter of urgency.

For more information on this report, please contact:
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Appendix 1:

Glasgow Voluntary Sector Race Equality Network Statement on Glasgow Communities Fund recommendations

2nd September 2020

TO: Cllr Jenn Layden, City Convener, Community Empowerment, Equalities & Human Rights

c.c. Members of the City Administration Committee

I'm writing to you on behalf of the Glasgow Voluntary Sector Race Equality Network (GVSREN), who wish to raise a number of concerns about the recommendations for the Glasgow Communities Fund.

GVSREN are deeply concerned that BME and race equality organisations are over-represented in terms of being rejected for funding (making up 14% of applications, but 18% of rejections) and, also, many are receiving vastly reduced levels of funding at city wide level within the Glasgow Communities Fund recommendations. The total amount combined that the 10 approved BME / race equality organisations will lose out in the city-wide fund compared to their request in Year 2 is £378,578.¹ A further 24 organisations were rejected entirely.

This will put these organisations in precarious financial situations and undermines the vital work done by these groups across Glasgow. This is especially so in light of Coronavirus and the essential roles third sector BME groups took on at this time, including communication of public health messaging and distribution of essential supplies such as food. Feedback from GVSREN members has confirmed that the impact of cuts to funding to organisations will result in staff redundancies and vastly reduced service delivery. Although time is too short to provide detailed examples at this time, an evidence gathering exercise will be carried out in the next few days to establish impact.

At sectoral level, although we have not seen the same disproportionality in rejection rates, many vital services will still be lost due to those rejected for funding. The proportion of requests allocated for Year 2 was far higher at sectoral level, but varied between sectors, creating a postcode lottery for the viability of services.

¹ NB: Statement written before transitional support fund awards; updated total on p.16.

With regard to the decision making process, GVSREN are especially concerned by the lack of an Equality Impact Assessment on the detail of funding decisions made, including importantly, the decisions to withdraw or vastly reduce funding for previously funded organisations. The existing Equality Impact Assessment relates to the funding system, as opposed to the decisions made, and therefore does not take account of any actual impact on people from protected characteristic groups. This is arguably not legally compliant, and could possibly put Glasgow City Council at risk of judicial review by affected groups. A full analysis could also have allowed for better coordination in decision-making relating to funding of services from the city-wide pot and sectoral funds.

Further issues raised by GVSREN members include:

- The move away from the previous fund was intended to be with the purpose to open the door to more charities being eligible for potential funding. However, many small, new BME organisations have been rejected for funding. On the other hand, for instance, applications at sector level from very large charities with dedicated fundraising support (for example Children 1st and Action for Children) as well as Colleges have been approved for funding. This seems at odds with the intention of opening up the fund in order to better support local voluntary and community groups.
- The scoring process is not transparent, and scores / decisions have not been discussed with affected organisations. It is entirely unclear why some organisations have received half of what they require to carry out their work, whilst others received over 90%. Glasgow City Council should urgently reflect on their communication, both with individual applicants and publicly, with consideration of publishing more detailed information on decisions.
- Members are not confident that due consideration has been given to intersectionality within the funding decisions – many BME groups provide services to individuals with multiple protected characteristics yet were rejected for funding.
- Given the impact of Coronavirus, many deliverables outlined in original proposals will no longer be possible. However, as funding recommendations have gone ahead regardless, there is no opportunity to allow organisations to recalibrate their proposals.

The vital roles race equality and BME groups play in Glasgow should not be put under threat, particularly during this time of need and in light of the global awakening to continued racial injustices seen through the Black Lives Matter movement.

It is unclear whether any of the recently announced £4m additional investment will be used to address the potentially grave consequences of these funding

recommendations on the BME sector in Glasgow, however, GVSREN would urge Glasgow City Council to ensure that a full Equality Impact Assessment is carried out into how this funding should be disbursed.

GVSREN would welcome further discussion on these matters, and the wider future of funding for the race equality sector in Glasgow.

Thanks,

On behalf of the Glasgow Voluntary Sector Race Equality network

(co-ordinated by the Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights)

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Appendix 2:

Analysis of Glasgow Communities Fund recommendations for organisations led by, or extensively working with, BME communities.

The results by sector show that city wide organisations faced far more severe rates of refusal or reduction than organisations at sector level. This goes against the reassurances given by Glasgow City Council that city wide equality organisations would not be treated unfavourably by the new Glasgow Communities Fund.

At sector level, allocations have been made slightly more favourably in the North of the city, with little reduction in funding allocations for most (but not all) organisations and roughly equal chances of being approved in comparison to non-BME focussed projects. In the South, BME organisations were more likely to be approved for funding than could be expected, however reductions in allocation were more severe than in the North.

The table overleaf includes the mode proportion of the requested award for Year 2 (the first full year of funding). This expresses the percentage of funding requested that was most commonly awarded to organisations in the relevant area. The mode has been used instead of the average to reduce skewing caused by a small number of outliers in each of the three sectors.

Note that, at city wide level, the mode is less useful as award allocations diverged more widely. Removing the one outlier receiving over 90% of their request, the city wide average allocation was just 65%. As these were intended to cover the whole of the city, many of the requests for funding at city wide level were relatively high. This also impacts the amount of funding in monetary terms which is lost as a result of the recommendations. Taking only the 11 BME projects approved for funding at city wide level (including through the transitional support fund), the reductions in amount result in a funding gap of £403,523 in Year 2 alone.

In all parts of the city, organisations receiving severely reduced awards are at particular risk of loss of services, staffing, premises and in several cases, ultimately at risk of closure. It is important to note this alongside the more obvious and sometimes devastating impacts on those organisations whose funding requests were not approved.

Summary of GCF funding allocations to BME projects by sector

City wide and North West sector results adjusted to account for funding awarded through the transitional support fund.

	BME projects as % of total applications	BME projects as % of approved applications	BME projects as % of rejected applications	Mode proportion of funding request allocated (year 2, %)
City wide (34 applications out of 242 total)	14	15	17	70
South (17 applications out of 126 in total)	13	17	9	79
North East (7 applications out of 86 in total)	8	8	9	93
North West (10 out of 86 applications in total)	12	12	9	94