



Macc webinar pack

Macc webinar – MCC Covid-19 Update Number 2

Date of webinar: 4 June 2020

Key points from Fiona Worrall - Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods

- National test and trace have been launched and Greater Manchester has been identified as a beacon area.
- One of the key concerns emerging from Public Health England this week is the effect COVID-19 is having on BAMER groups.
- Manchester City Council's recovery work has started, and the updated version of this report is enclosed in this resource pack.
- The Our Manchester refresh will be a fundamental part of our recovery planning.
- We are envisaging some non-essential retail opening next week whilst adhering to social distancing measures.
- We recognise that George Floyd's death is having a significant impact on Manchester residents and Manchester City Council continue to promise to proactively challenge inequality.

Q&A

Q. At the last meeting you said co-production would be at the heart of everything, how do you see our older people who are not all digitally connected or mobile being included?

We have become aware that this a huge area not just for older people but for other residents who have been digitally excluded. We need to begin to look at this as 'skills for life' as opposed to skills for work. We have a small project that aims to work with people to learn the basics. We know we need to do much more to enable older people to connect digitally.

Q. Covid-19 has had a highly disproportionate impact on BAMER communities. How are you addressing this?

This is clearly a very complex issue and we are without a public health member of the team to support this. The evidence of the impact of COVID –19 on BAMER communities was significant and therefore the report was commissioned at a central governmental level.

People from BAMER communities are not more likely to get COVID-19 but the implications if they do are much more severe. There are a lot more questions than answers at this stage to understand these implications and what we do in response. We will need to be working with businesses and looking at factors including the type of work people are doing that might put people more at risk. We have been undertaking risk assessments for all our services and there are clearly individuals and groups affected.



Q. How have you been consulting BAMER VCSE groups and looking at this evidence?

We need more input from Public Health to answer this question and we will ensure they are present at the next update.

We are working together with colleagues from MHCC, who are working with BME VCSE groups to share their knowledge and experiences. It would be good to hear from them about this work on the next update.

Q. Can I ask what additional things are going to happen for the shielded group so that they can also start to go back to work and go outside to the park?

This is a clinical definition and we rely on information from government when it comes to advice for shielding groups. We do understand there will be another announcement coming towards 15 June. We are trying to find out what this information is in advance so we are prepared and can support people to make these changes safely. Risk assessments are paramount to ensuring the safety of shielding groups. We have attached a useful FAQ document from gov.uk that might be helpful.

Q. Is there anything the council can do to support people in shielding groups to feel less isolated?

A more localised offer for neighbourhood-based support might be useful.

Q. There seems to be a growing demand for IT hardware, software and training. How is the council helping with this?

We recognise that some adult learners are not accessing their existing or new learning opportunities because of the lack of technology or the skills to use it. There is a good offer from Manchester Adult Education Service and at the moment there is additional flexibility within the education budget for those who are under the furlough scheme to access learning opportunities. In terms of hardware and software, there is a gap at the minute for adult learners. There aren't any current government schemes, but we are looking for an option for this within Manchester more locally.

Q. Some VCSE organisations have been very hard hit by the crisis and need time to recover. Is the council thinking about providing grants without hefty requirements to allow groups time to recover?

I hope people feel confident and reassured that colleagues across the council are acutely aware and have relaxed requirements at the minute. We are bringing together various funding partners to make this more flexible whilst meeting the needs of residents in the city. We need to balance this. We need to make this as sensible as possible, allowing VCSE groups the space necessary to recover and to be sustainable. Our Manchester VCS programme is doing this work and we are wanting this to be reflected in our funding strategy.

Q. How and when will the council end the food provision scheme and what effects do the council think the end of the scheme will have on the VCSE sector?

There has been both a phenomenal demand and phenomenal response regarding this food provision scheme. Food banks worked with us to create a delivery model. Demand was huge and we recognised that we needed an emergency response over the weekend and so we chose to open Smithfield Market as a 7-day operation. We are still delivering 2,000 food parcels a day. The critical thing to note is that 80 percent require these on an ongoing basis. This is not sustainable;



we need to be able to step back whilst meeting demand. For people who are getting parcels who can pay, there is now an offer for online shopping and working with volunteers to pick up lists and shop on their behalf.

We need to be able to respond to demand and step this down in a safe way. This will include working alongside voluntary sector food groups to ensure they are able to deal with the demand. We are also considering factors that might mean that demand will rise, like unemployment for example.

Q The concern is that people are no longer budgeting in the same way for food because of this provision, this is a huge worry and it might be a bit of a shock to those who aren't budgeting, what is the best way to ensure this is done in a safe and measured way.

We recognise that this is not a 'forever service' and we will be stepping this down safely and recognise that not doing so could otherwise undermine the VCSE offer.

Q How can we work together to ensure that disabled people and people with long term health conditions are not further disadvantaged by COVID-19 when it comes to accessing work and training opportunities?

Are there any plans to reevaluate the work?

We are acutely aware that before Covid-19 people claiming benefits who are work ready are often those with a long-term health condition or disability. We know this will affect those people even more so now. As we are planning for recovery, we are looking at what the offer is. We are advocating for a focus on working with young people aged 16-24 and we anticipate huge numbers of people who are work ready and unemployed.

Q. In relation to contact tracing, what arrangements will be put in place to enable homeless people and precariously housed people to self-isolate if advised to do so?

The expertise on test and trace are clear in other areas that it is used within. Some of the challenges around COVID-19 and how it might work in the context of people being asked to isolate for 14 days remain unclear. Especially when people might not have the resources to do so.

This thinking is happening right now.

Resources

Coronavirus outbreak FAQs: what you can and can't do

The most frequently asked questions on what you can and can't do during the coronavirus outbreak. Including information for those in the shielded group.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do?utm_source=cb3015a8-99e2-4a77-9142-e4562102a11a&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate



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