



Community Networks
Wellington Inc.



2020
JUNE

COMMUNITY NETWORKS WELLINGTON

2020 Members Survey

WELLINGTON'S NETWORK OF COMMUNITY
ORGANISATIONS

INTRODUCTION

It has been extraordinary times for the social service communities of Wellington, and all the people of Wellington as we navigate through this pandemic.

The number of people assisted during the lockdown and the difference of having connected and caring communities working collaboratively through a time of uncertainty and anxiety has had a profound impact on the well-being of our whanau and communities. They were supported and cared for by organisations that have a genuine love for the people and communities they serve.

It is with a real sense of pride that as Co-Chairs we are able to present to you this small snapshot of what our extraordinary members do.

Julia Hennessy and Mike Hinton

Co-Chairs of Community Network Wellington (CNW)



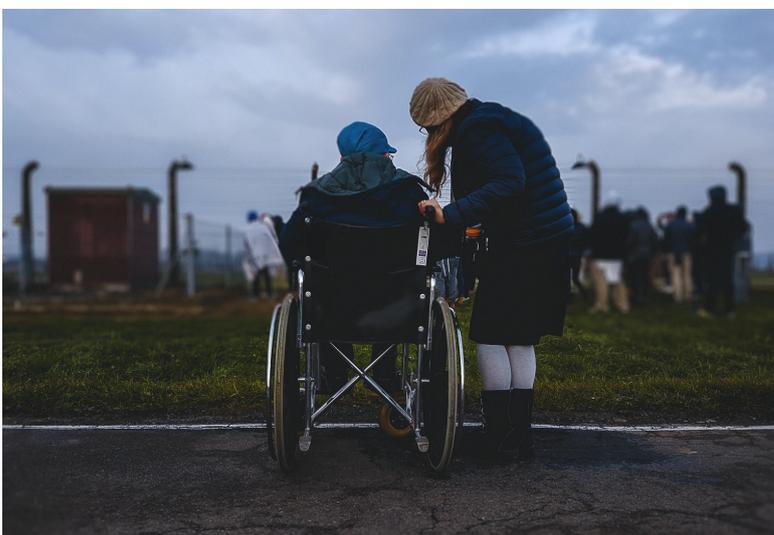
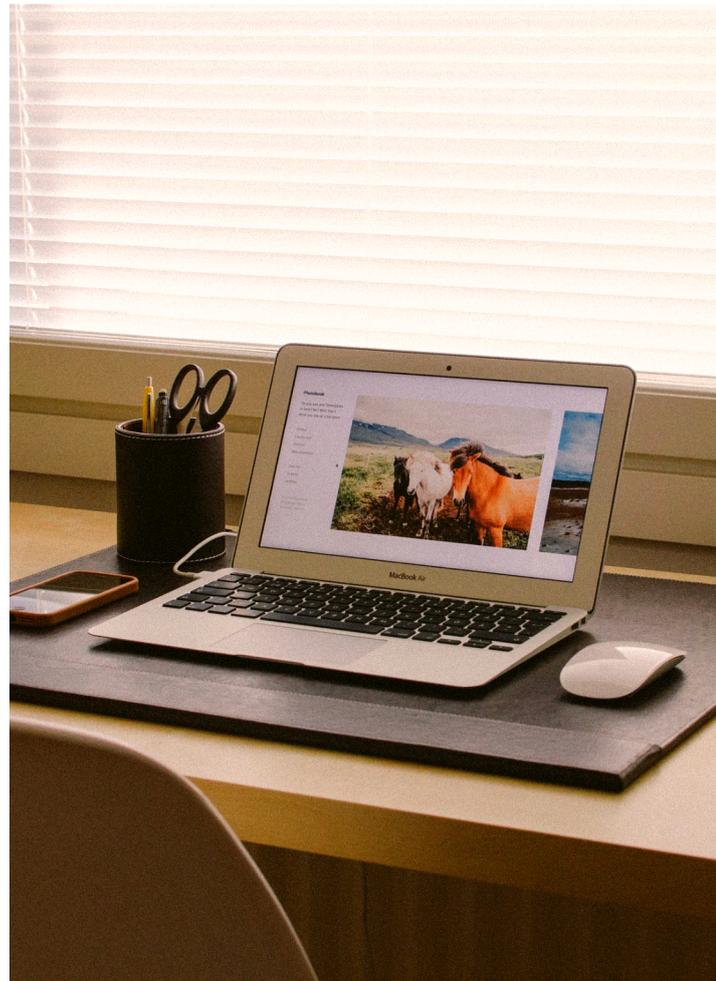
PURPOSE OF THE CNW MEMBER SURVEY

This Survey summarises the experiences of Wellington's Social Service's over COVID-19 Lockdown and the challenges our most at risk will face over the next months.

This survey identifies key issues that must be addressed as Wellington moves out of lockdown. It describes the specific areas of support the sector needs now and in the future.

CNW has conducted this survey to better understand the challenges our members have faced over COVID-19, and to understand how we can best support them as we move into our new normal.

This report will assist Wellington City Council and NGO's to identify the gaps in the social service sector moving forward post Covid-19.

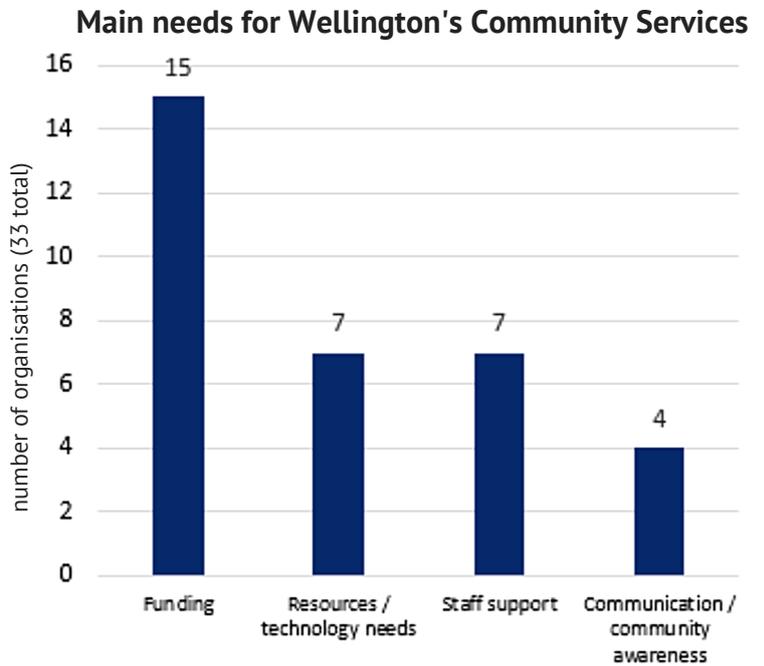


33,806

New Zealanders assisted
during lockdown
across 33 of the surveyed
CNW members.

This data is reflective of the 33 CNW member organisations surveyed. It presents a general reflection of the needs of Wellingtons Social Services and service users however some areas of need will have not been accounted for.

WELLINGTON COMMUNITY SERVICE'S LARGEST AREAS OF NEED - AS OF LEVEL 3



The **top four challenges** for Wellington’s community service **organisations** that have arisen since the beginning of level three are:

Finding, maintaining and/or increasing funding

Key challenges being:

- Ongoing funding being cancelled, postponed or modified
- Organisations unable to run funding events as per usual due to restrictions
- Grant funders having less funds to hand out to social services
- Lack of funding to support increased operational costs
- Finding ways to cover wages for those who could not work due to closure
- Grave concerns for organisations' abilities to maintain economic integrity for the future

Resource & Technology Needs

Key challenges being:

- Adjusting systems to continue social services online- i.e. having current and reliable IT devices/software, Zoom installation and internet
- Maintaining the same standard of support through non face to face communication via online services / phone calls
- There were limited numbers of staff and volunteer availability alongside increased demand
- Maintaining a safe support service for vulnerable, disabled and remote clients

Staff Support

Key challenges being:

- Finding funding and to support staff with their increased workload
- Providing emotional support for staff / tech upskilling and providing appropriate PPE
- Keeping staff and volunteers informed about changes to the system and lockdown updates

Communication & Community awareness

Key challenges being:

- Continue connecting with our communities that have become isolated and distanced
- Keeping the wider community engaged and aware

MAIN CHALLENGES AND AREAS OF NEED FOR SERVICE USERS AS OF LEVEL 3

The **five main challenges/areas of need** for users of social services as of level three are:

Lack of access to usual social services

- Increased problems for clients unable to access their usual support due to discontinued 'non-essential' services.
- Increased need for advice, mentoring and assistance due to changes in personal circumstances during lockdown.
- Continuation of 24/7 personal care, especially when the client is isolated and unable to access online services.
- Meeting people's needs that are under time pressure, especially if the client is very isolated i.e. no email.



Basic needs and mental health resources and services

- Housing, heating and power
- lack of food and access to food
- counselling services - especially family harm support
- supporting large families especially those which have children living with a disability and no access to a carer during isolation



Job insecurity and Income loss

Clients have experienced unemployment and income loss as well as running into employment law issues.

Demand for online services / amplified digital disparity

- Need easy to access, safe and functioning online services/ courses/ virtual spaces
- The in-access to digital devices, internet connection, and lack of safe spaces at home to talk online
- The lack of education on how to use or a fear to use online services
- The digital disparity was particularly potent for those who are non-verbal and/or blind and with intellectual or cognitive impairment.



Effects of Social Isolation

The loss of social contact created issues of loneliness particularly for clients with dementia and those who were living alone. This exacerbates mental health issues and brings on a fear of returning to normal social behaviours.

KEY COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS

According to the CNW members, there has been a significant **increase in collaboration** as well as an overall improvement in communication between social organisations in Wellington. We saw a **strengthening** of established relationships within the community as well as the formation of **new inter-organisational relationships**.

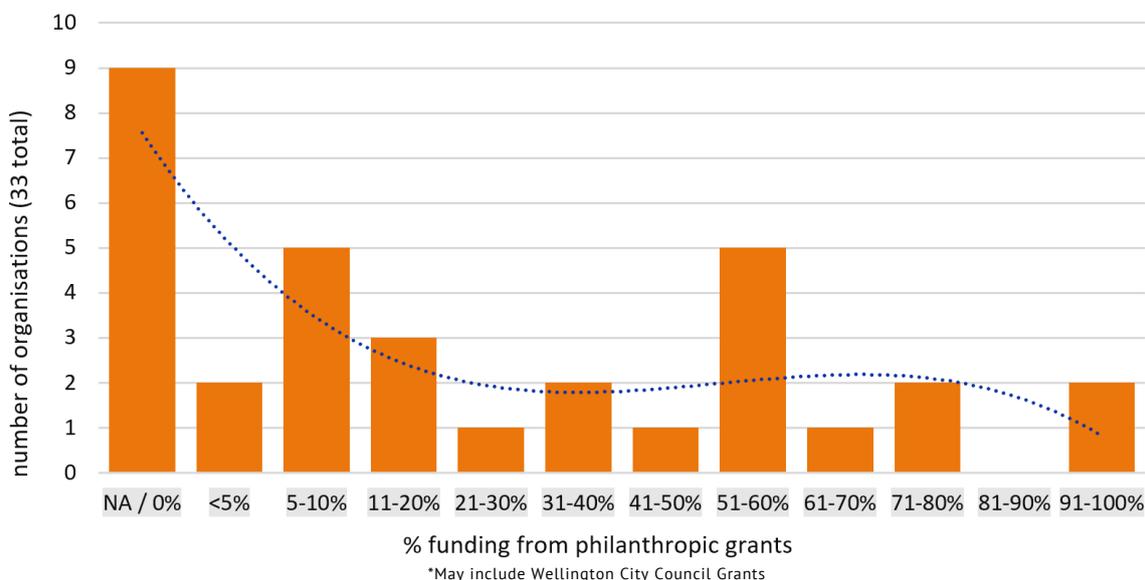


Key Community Collaborations included:

- **Mobile Phones/data:** Blueprint Church, The Free Store, Brooklyn and Lyall Bay, Community Church got in touch with Wellington City Mission and recieved an MSD grant of \$5000 to top up 100 people's phones with \$50 to enable connection + mobile minutes + data packages.
- **Food Support:** Organisations helping organisations with provision of produce and general community food support. Food bank collaborations increased.
- **Sharing staff/space:** i.e. the sharing of casual staff for housing services and provision of space and staff for disability organisations.
- **Online community setups:** Virtual collaborations online between different organisations and co-presenting online events/workshops.

PHILANTHROPIC GRANTS

% funding recieved from philanthropic grants during lockdown



Grant Funding According to the 33 organisations surveyed:

7 organisations recieved 0% funding from philanthropic grants and 2 answered Not Applicable.

14 organisations recieved under 50% of their funding from philanthropic grants.

The remaining 10 organisations recieved over 50% funding from philanthropic grants during lockdown

WELLINGTON COMMUNITY SERVICES

Key learnings and experience gained over lockdown

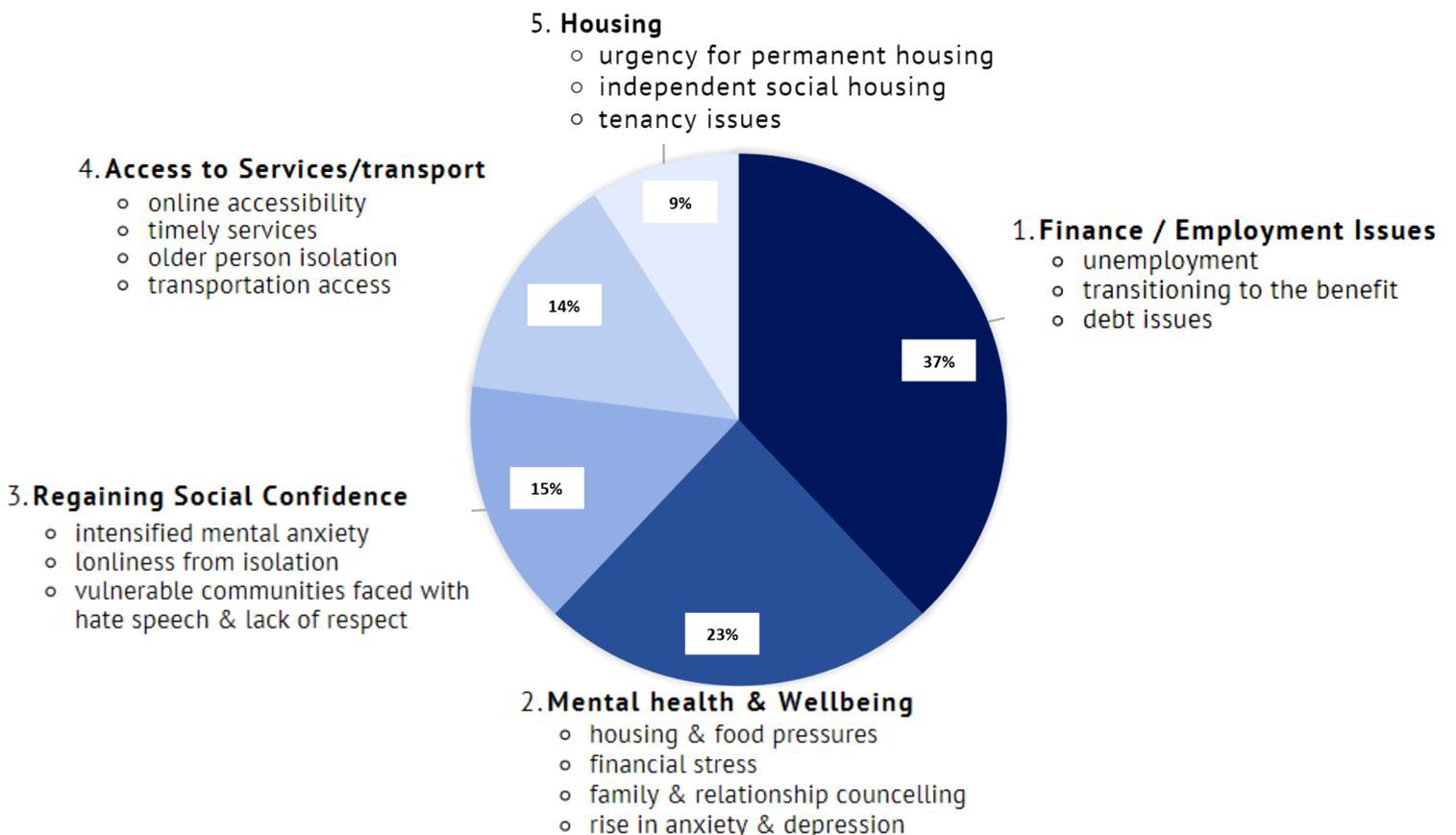
The CNW survey asked what experience did organisations gain over lockdown as well as their key learnings, particularly concerning the gaps in our communities.

- Members highlighted the importance of **digital inclusion**.
- Lockdown gave community services an opportunity to provide services in a **different way**.
- Coordinating **food insecurity services** and **mental health support** are vital for reducing inequality in Wellington.
- Lockdown revealed the immense **kindness** and **consideration** present within our Wellington community.



LOOKING FORWARD

Key areas of concern for the Wellington community moving out of lockdown



DIGITAL INCLUSION

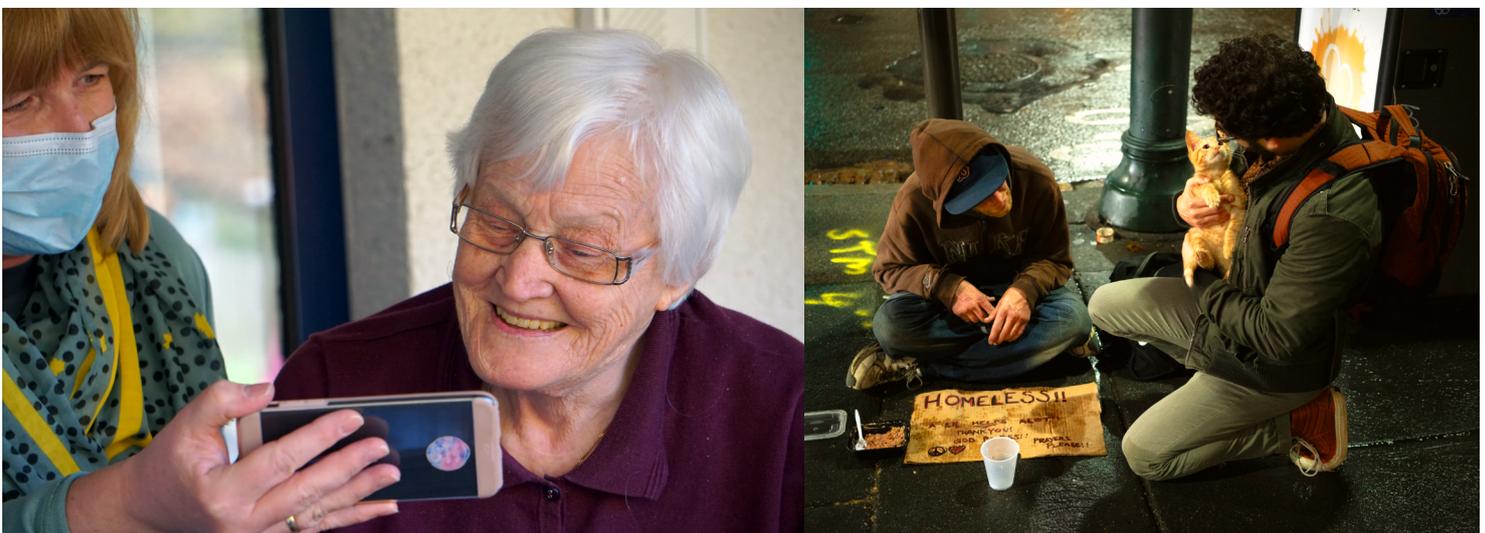
Social concern for the Wellington community

COVID-19 lockdown undeniably **magnified the pre-existing gaps** in society. The compulsory and quick transition into the virtual and digital services, left those without internet or appropriate technology unable to access social services. **Digital inequality** is a significant disparity in our community and one which was highlighted to be a main issue by well-over half of those surveyed. People **without access** to internet and appropriate technology became largely **vulnerable and isolated** in comparison to those with access.

One surveyor voiced this digital disparity:

"We have had to find a way of connecting with our communities in different ways - we did this through phone, What's App, email, FB, Viber and our website. We realised that this only enabled us to connect with a small number of our very large community..."

The problem for Wellington's community organisations was this inability to reach people who had no online access or lacked the ability/facilities to learn. The fear for organisations is that many of their clients weren't able to manage being in an isolated space independently, heightened by this digital disparity. There continues to be a pressing need for digital inclusion as we move out of lock down and as services continue online.





Community Networks Wellington Inc. gratefully acknowledge the financial support we receive from the Wellington City Council, Ministry of Social Development, COGS, The Wellington Community Trust and The Community Awareness and Preparedness Grant Fund.

Thank you