



PRO BONO ECONOMICS

# Analysis of COVID survey responses

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# PBE's Charity Tracker survey – free text comments

From 29 April to 17 June 2020, PBE ran a week Charity Tracker Survey. Over the course of the survey, we also received over a thousand comments from survey participants, in response to the question:

*Add your comment on what COVID-19 means to your organisation and what more the government, funders or others could be doing to support you.*

## Headline findings: analysis of free text comments

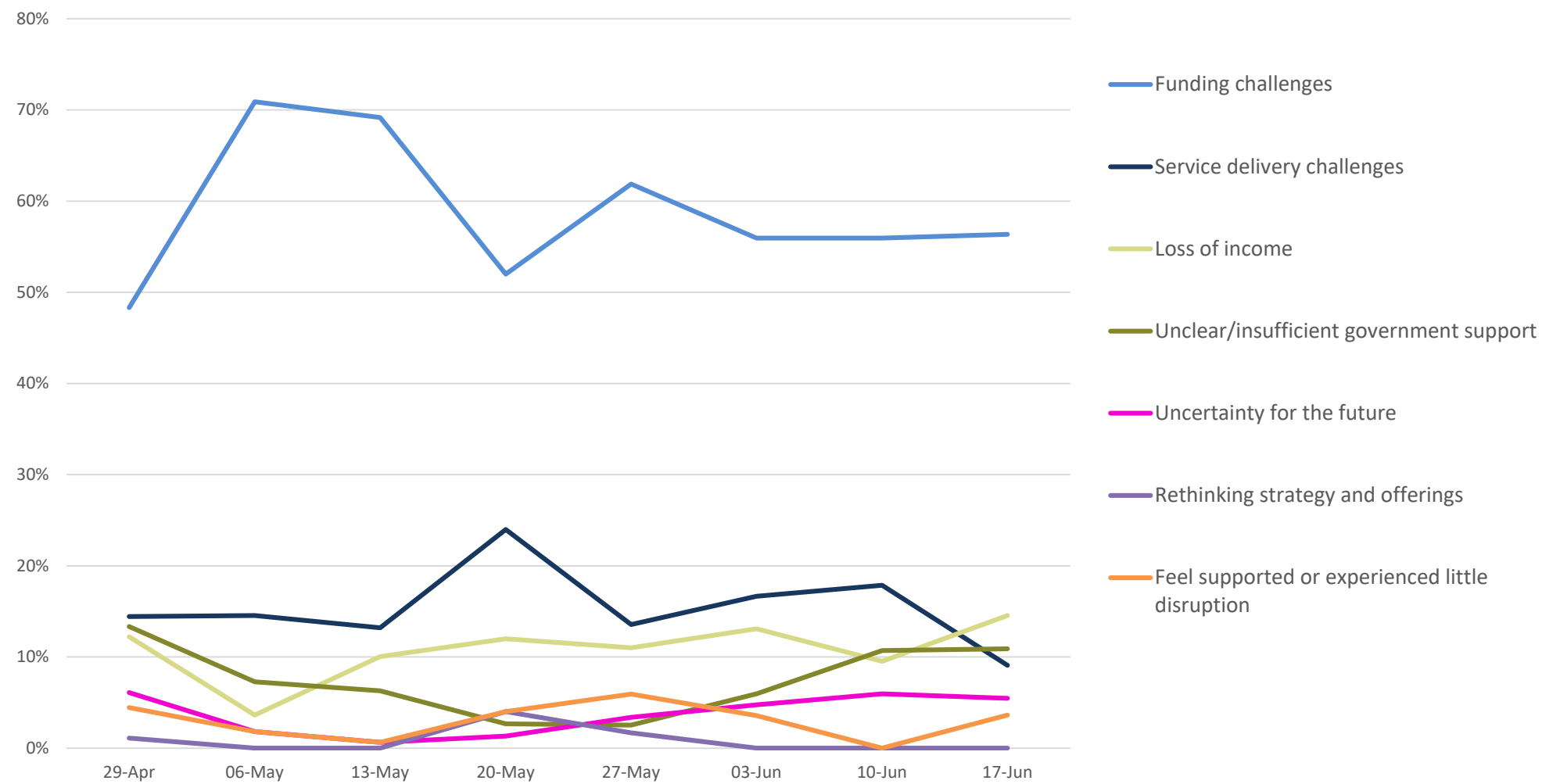
- Funding challenges dominated free text comments throughout May and June 20
- Excluding funding, service delivery was the most cited issue in comments, followed by loss of income
- The proportion of comments about insufficiency of government support dipped initially, but increased consistently from late May to mid-June
- Uncertainty about the future became a steadily more cited issue from mid-May onwards

**Key themes:** *Funding challenges, service delivery challenges, loss of income, concerns about the government's support package, uncertainty for the future, rethinking strategy, and feeling supported or experiencing limited disruption.*

Around 85 per cent of comments were categorised into these key themes, based on the strongest theme for each comment.

# What did charities talk most about in PBE's Charity Tracker survey?

Add your comment on what COVID-19 means to your organisation and what more the government, funders or others could be doing to support you.

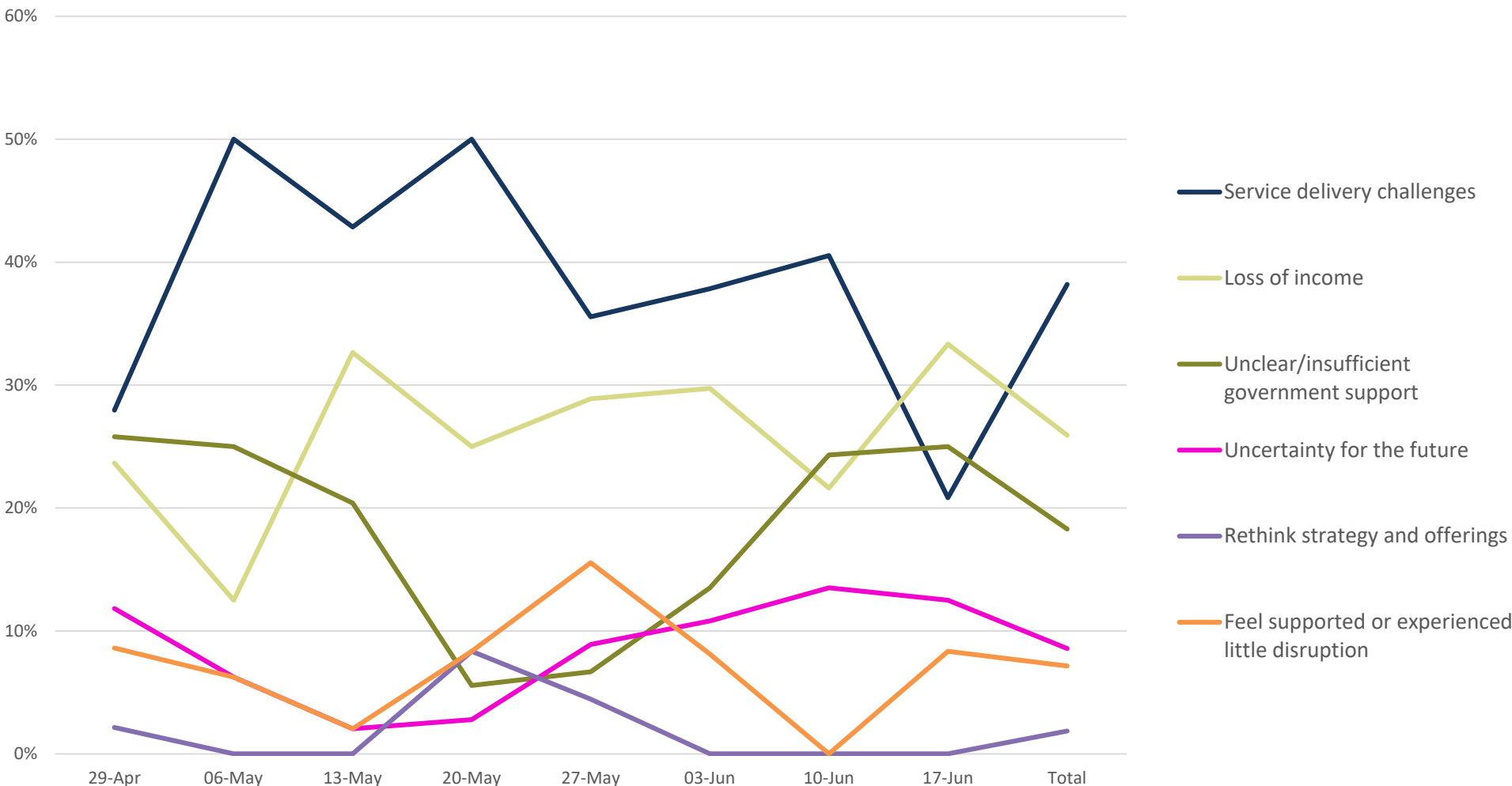


Analysis of comments by theme showed one topic dominating - funding challenges were the most commonly cited issue throughout May and June 20

Notes: Percentage of comments received each week analysed by theme, 1055 responses analysed

# Excluding funding challenges, the overall picture is less clear

Add your comment on what COVID-19 means to your organisation and what more the government, funders or others could be doing to support you.



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The proportion of comments about insufficiency of government support dipped initially, then increased from late May to mid-June.

Uncertainty about the future became a steadily more important issue from mid-May.

Notes: Percentage of comments received each week analysed by theme excluding comments about funding challenges, 582 responses analysed

“Funding”, “support”, “income”, “services” and “need” were the most common terms used in the survey comments



# A more detailed analysis highlights some nuance within the themes

## **While many charities are facing income challenges as a result of Covid-19, the challenges are more acute for some**

- While our survey showed that most charities have faced a financial hit as a result of Covid-19, this was mentioned particularly by charities who told us they are reliant on outdoor events, rental income or client services to generate revenues.
- As of mid-June, many charities told us they still had staff on furlough, working remotely or have had to reduce headcount, making income generating activities difficult to run. Respondents suggested a more flexible furlough scheme would have been better, so that staff could work part time or voluntarily.

## **Funding has been a growing pain over the course of the pandemic, with charities expecting more support from both government and funders**

- While some charities told us they do feel supported by the government, many told us they wanted government to fund specific types of additional costs being incurred (e.g., purchase of PPE, training volunteers, additional staff to meet higher demand) or the core operational costs (e.g., rents, rates)
- Some charities told us they are struggling to access funds as they don't have resources to apply for additional funding.
- Certain types of organisation, particularly smaller local organisations, those working overseas, those not operating on the 'frontline', or those focused on arts and culture have felt neglected, reporting they are ineligible for funding schemes or other government support.
- Some charities would like to see funders focus on investing in connectivity and tech so that more services can be delivered digitally, and to provide additional flexibility in grants.

## ***Looking ahead, charities are struggling to plan for next 6 months and beyond***

- Many expect funds and resources to run out in 2020/2021.
- There is considerable uncertainty over service demand and business trading levels, especially if there are further infection waves.
- Social distancing and lockdown rules mean some organisations are uncertain about how they will continue to operate.