

Pro Bono Economics/Civil Society Media results: 28 & 29 April 2020

Our weekly survey is designed to take the temperature of the civil society sector as the Covid-19 crisis continues to unfold, monitoring the pressures being faced by charities and voluntary organisations across the country and understanding how the picture is changing over time.

Over the course of 28 & 29 April 2020, a total of 433 respondents filled in the survey. The results showed:

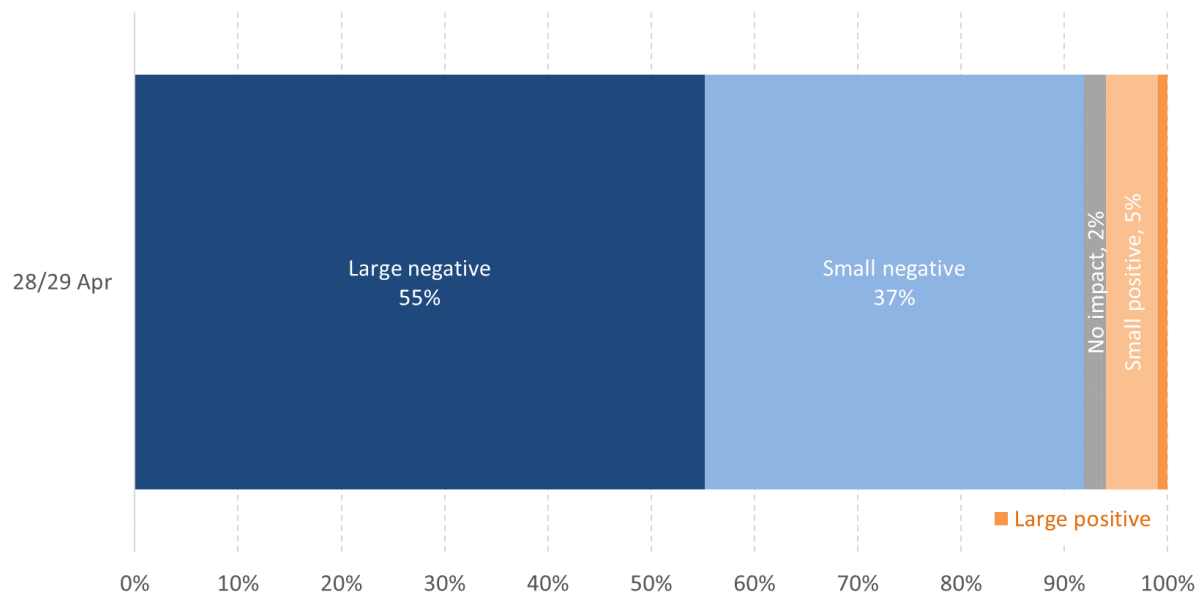
- 92 per cent said they expected Covid-19 to have a negative impact on their ability to meet their charity objectives over the next six months, with more than half (55 per cent) saying they expected it to be a “large” negative.
- Nearly half (48 per cent) said their level of concern was broadly unchanged over the past seven days, but 44 per cent said that their expectations had deteriorated – with 16 per cent saying their level of concern had increased “a lot”.
- Two-in-five (39 per cent) respondents said the single biggest issue they were facing was the impact of social distancing on their ability to deliver their services. One-in-three (31 per cent) said that the way in which Covid-19 had affected their ability to fundraise was the biggest single issue. One-in-five (21 per cent) instead pointed to its effect on their ability to plan for the future.
- Nearly all (96 per cent) of the respondents said they’d taken some form of action in response to financial challenge raised by the crisis. More than half (57 per cent) said they’d reduced their activity in a significant way. Likewise, the same proportion (57 per cent) said they’d furloughed staff and accessed the government’s Job Retention Scheme. Half (50 per cent) said they’d sought funder flexibility on their spending plans, project delivery and reporting requirements. More than two-in-five (44 per cent) said they had drawn down on their financial reserves. For now, just one-in-five (19 per cent) said they’d applied for support from the government’s £750 million charity-specific package.
- When asked to rate the sufficiency of the government’s financial support for civil society in the face of Covid-19 (where 1 = entirely insufficient and 10 = entirely sufficient), the average score across all respondents was 4.3. Nearly three-in-four (71 per cent) scored the response at five or below.

Commenting on the findings Matt Whittaker, Chief Executive of Pro Bono Economics, said:

These findings highlight the very considerable pressures being faced across charities and civil society organisations right now. Nine-in-ten organisations expect Covid-19 to harm their ability to function over the next six months, with just under half saying they’ve grown more pessimistic over the past week.

The fact that well over half of the charities filling in our survey say they’ve reduced their activity in a significant way in response to the financial challenges posed by Covid-19 is a finding that should concern all of us. We know that the support provided by civil society groups has major benefits for our society and for our economy. If such support is being scaled back – or even withdrawn altogether – then it is some of the most vulnerable in society who will be hardest hit. Ultimately, however, we will all be worse off as a result.

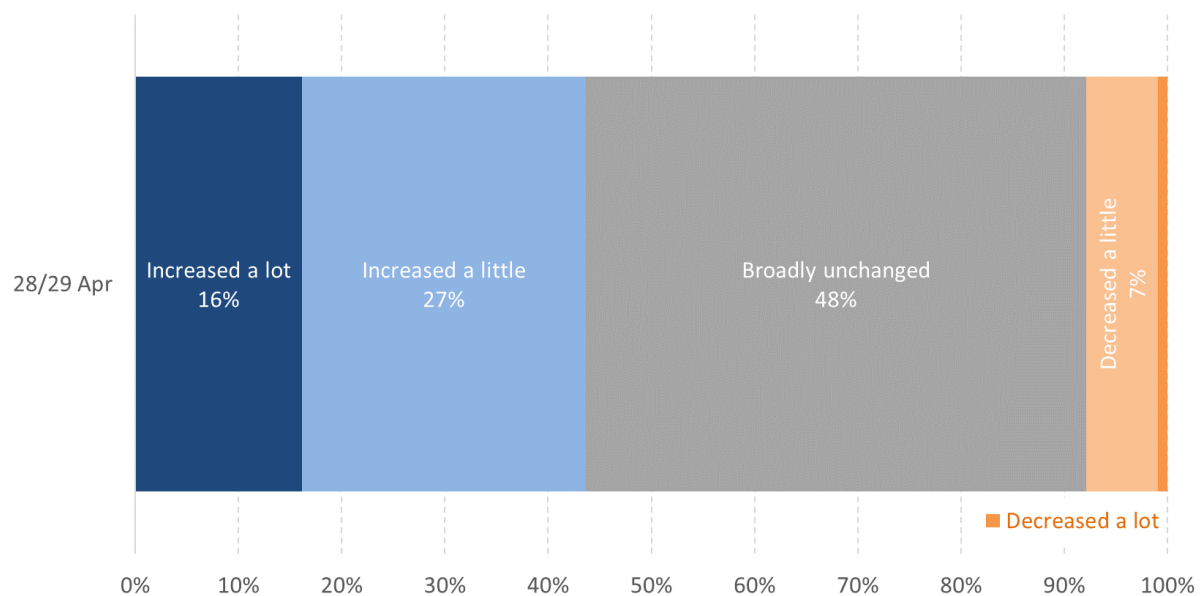
Figure 1: How do you expect Covid-19 to affect your charity's ability to deliver on its objectives in the next six months?



Notes: Sample size = 433. No demographic or qualifying data collected.

Source: Charity responses to PBE & Civil Society Media survey.

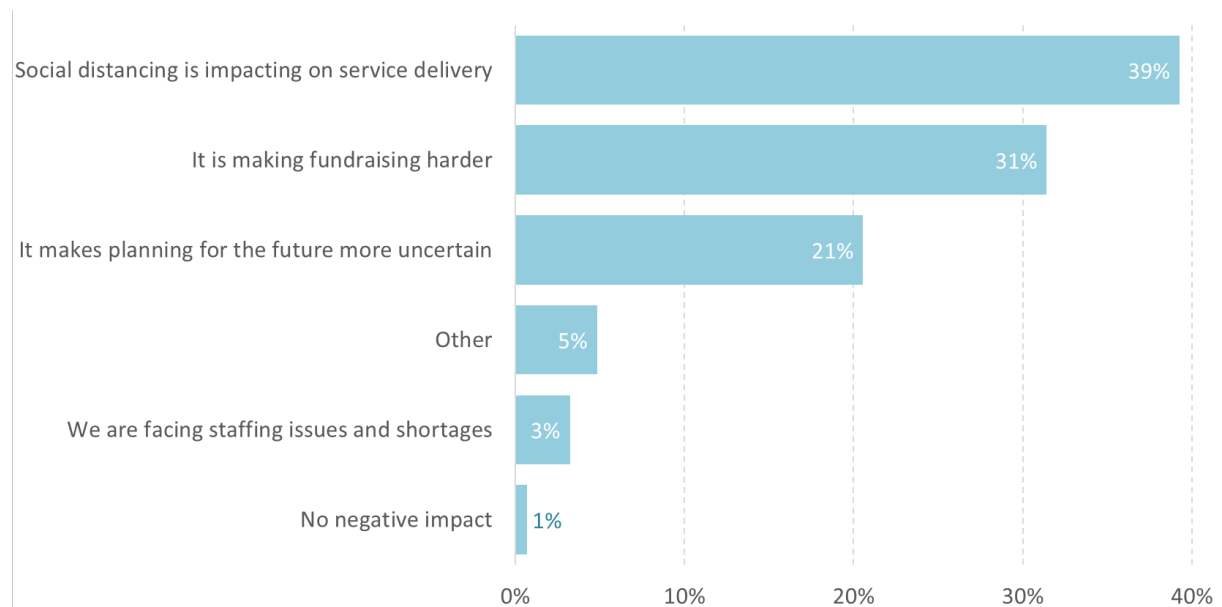
Figure 2: How has your level of concern about Covid-19's impact on your charity's ability to deliver on its objectives changed over the last seven days?



Notes: Sample size = 433. No demographic or qualifying data collected.

Source: Charity responses to PBE & Civil Society Media survey.

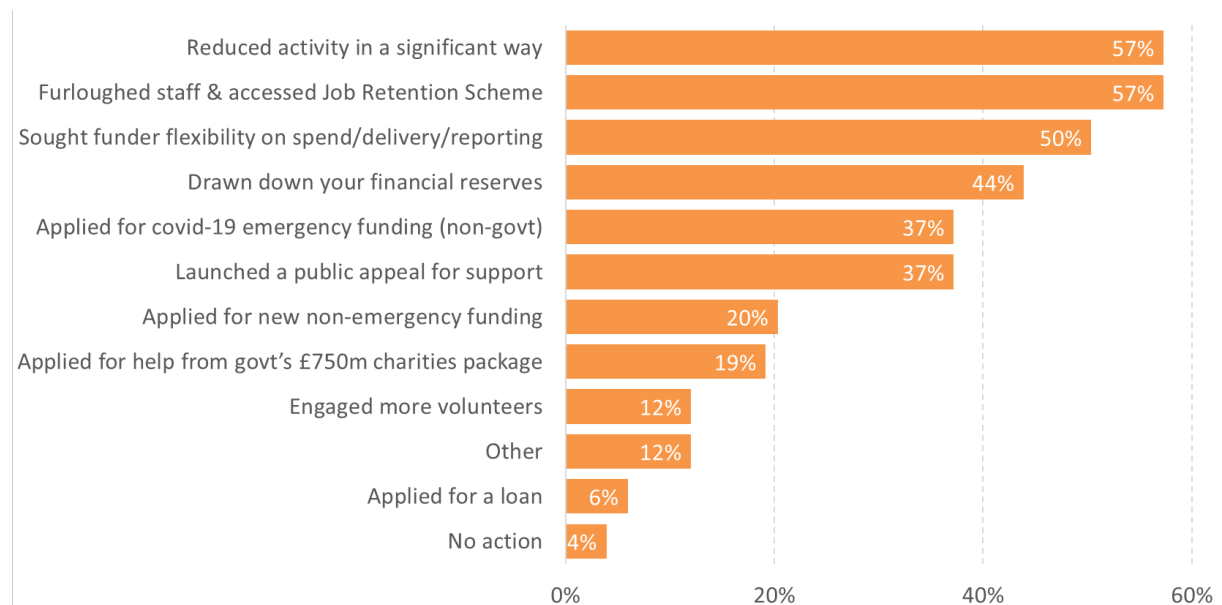
Figure 3: What is the current single biggest negative impact of Covid-19 on your charity's ability to deliver on its objectives? 28-29 April



Notes: Sample size = 433. No demographic or qualifying data collected.

Source: Charity responses to PBE & Civil Society Media survey.

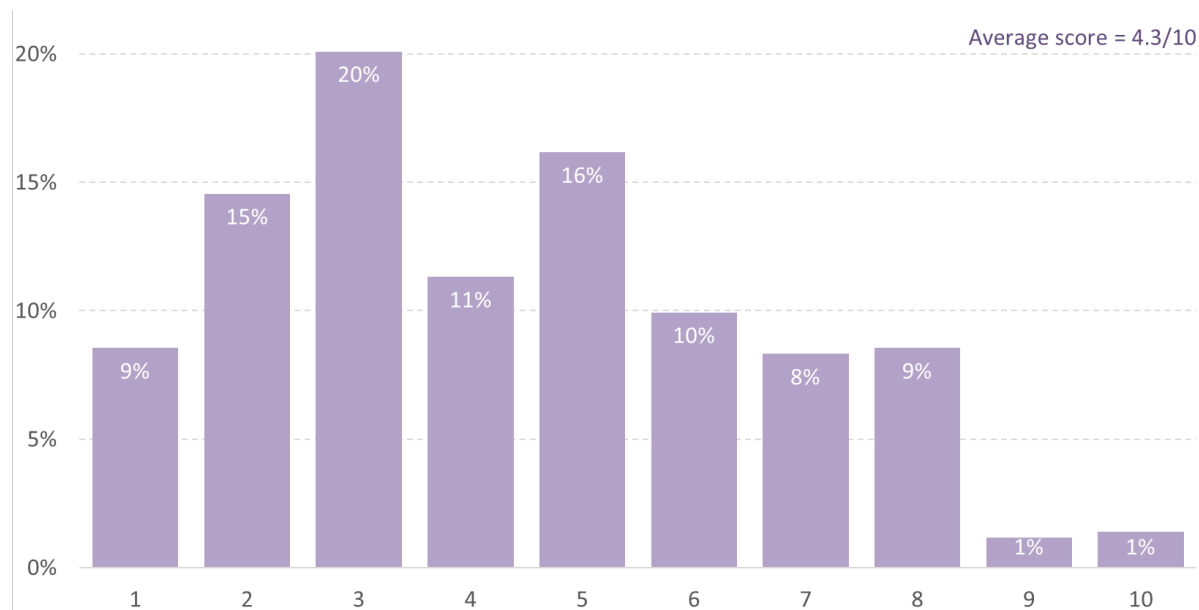
Figure 4: What actions have you taken in response to any financial challenges that Covid-19 have presented to your organisation? 28-29 April 2020



Notes: Sample size = 433. No demographic or qualifying data collected. Responders were asked to tick all options that applied.

Source: Charity responses to PBE & Civil Society Media survey.

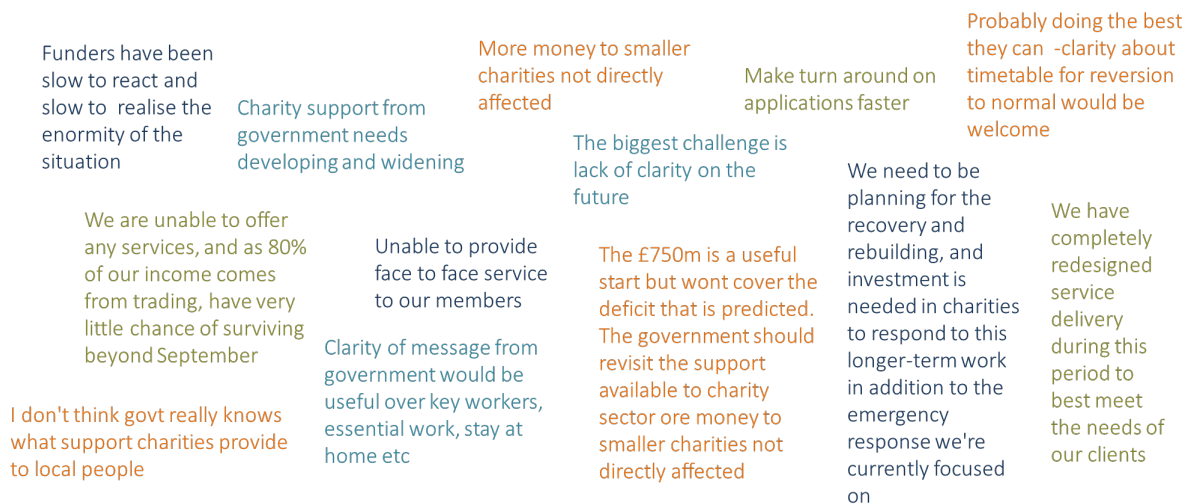
Figure 5: On a scale of 1-10 (1="entirely insufficient"; 10="entirely sufficient") how would you score the Covid-19 financial help being provided to civil society by govt? 28-29 April 2020



Notes: Sample size = 433. No demographic or qualifying data collected.

Source: Charity responses to PBE & Civil Society Media survey.

Figure 6: 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: 28-29 April 2020 (selection)



Notes: Sample size = 433. No demographic or qualifying data collected.

Source: Charity responses to PBE & Civil Society Media survey.