

Characteristic-Specific_Vision Statements

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1. Introduction

These five vision statements have been developed in collaboration with equity-led groups in order to set out key inequalities experienced by different groups of Londoners that either drove the disproportionate impact of the Covid-19 pandemic or were created by it, and what successfully addressing them would look like. These statements have been used to shape an action plan on tackling inequalities led by the London Recovery Board.

The statements focus on women and girls, race equality, LGBTQ+ Londoners, older Londoners and deaf and disabled Londoners. Engagement partners on the vision statements have been: Action on Race Equality (formerly BTEG), The Ubele Initiative, The Consortium, Inclusion London, Women's Resource Centre and London Age-Friendly Forum. The vision statements also incorporate feedback from London Councils, Borough officers, this subgroup, members of the Mayor's Equality Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group and GLA staff networks.

The statements consider four priority areas which The London Recovery Board has agreed will be the focus of their action plan with focus on:

- Living standards/ financial inequality (including financial shocks)
- Labour market inequality (including workplace discrimination)
- Equity in Public Services (initially described as trust and confidence in public services)
- Civil society strength and support.

These four priorities sit across and beyond wider recovery work already taking place in partnership with communities across the organisation.

The vision statements suggest how the London Recovery Board can be used to address structural inequalities and what success for different groups of Londoners' might look like. The action plan focuses on those actions that can be taken by London partners on the board within the existing powers and budget available to them. Therefore, the scope of these vision statements is limited to those issues that can credibly addressed without the need for action by national government or significant additional funding.

2. ¹Characteristic-specific vision statement: Black and minoritised Londoners

- Data from the GLA's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Evidence Base for London shows that around four in ten (43%) of London's population is made up of Black and minoritised residents.
- Younger Londoners are more likely to be from a Black and minoritised background.
- 2020 Government figures from London schools indicate that 73.1% of pupils are from Black and minoritised backgrounds. (This figure includes the following White ethnic groups: Gypsy, Roma Traveller groups and 'any other White background'). If considering ethnicities other than White the percentage of Black, and minoritised pupils drops to 58.1%.
- 50% of London's working age population aged 16-64 are from Black and minoritised groups
- There is a wealth of research that provides evidence of the deep-rooted and longstanding structural inequalities that Black and minoritised communities experience. For example, structural racism, which underpins the uneven distribution of wealth and labour market inequality, has contributed to the much higher rates of poverty among Londoners from Black and minoritised groups - which is nearly twice that of White groups in London (38% compared with 21%).² This is in the context of poverty being higher in London than in any other region in the UK (28% of people live in poverty in London (2.5 million) compared to 22% in UK). Structural racism also drove the uneven impact of the pandemic on Black and minoritised groups. The GLA commissioned [Rapid Evidence Review](#) found that the risk of COVID-19-related mortality compared with White men and women was between 1.9 times and 1.3 times greater for greater for Black, Bangladeshi and Pakistani men and women and Indian men (even after considering differences in age, geographical factors, socioeconomic conditions, and health).
- The experiences of Black and minoritised Londoners therefore must be understood within the context of historic and current structural racism within which people exist, with the emphasis for change being on systems and institutions that perpetuate racial inequality. While those solutions can be co-produced or developed in conjunction with communities affected by racism, the onus must be on changing the way policies and services manifest negatively in the lives and experiences of Black and minoritised communities.

A note on terms:

¹

² [London's Poverty Profile](#) (Trust for London, April 2020)

1. There are not universally understood or agreed terms in relation to race and ethnicity. Wherever possible this statement aims to refer to specific communities, if data allows. Where this is not possible we use the term 'Black and minoritised communities'. 'Minoritised' recognises systematic oppression that has faced these communities and that they are part of a global majority, rather than in a minority. This term refers to ethnically diverse people and communities who experience racism. Feedback has been that the term 'BAME' (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) is unhelpful and commonly seen as homogenising of all non-white ethnic groups³.
2. Structural inequalities are the inherent biases in social structures such as businesses, social networks and public institutions, which produce advantages for some groups at the expense of others. Structural racism refers specially to how negative outcomes for Black and minoritised groups are perpetuated throughout society by these same unfair systems and institutional practices. People from Black and minoritised groups may also be affected by other aspects of structural inequalities, impacting on them as a result of gender, sexual orientation, age, disability or socio-economic status, for example. Equally, whilst some needs and disparities referenced in this vision statement span across different Black and minoritised communities, these communities will also have their own distinct needs, disadvantages and challenges which require tailored engagement and responses.

What is the change we want to see?

Living standards / financial inequality

The problem

We know that due to the higher rates of poverty among Black and minoritised groups of Londoners, people from these groups (particularly Bangladeshi, followed by Black African groups) were more likely than people from White groups to have experienced negative financial impacts due to the coronavirus crisis and lockdown.^{4 5} We also know that Black Londoners' lower levels of financial resilience (in common with those from some other minority ethnic communities) will have pushed more of them into positions where they could be exposed to Coronavirus, as a result of being less able to absorb the loss of income from self-isolation.

³ For example see: the [Booksa Papers](#) (Ubele Initiative, 2021) and '[BAME Over](#)'

⁴ Page 13, ([Runnymede Trust 2021: Over-Exposed and under-protected](#))

⁵ The Runnymede Trust found that three in ten BME people (32%) reported losing some income during lockdown, compared with just over two in ten white people (23%). Bangladeshi (43%) followed by Black African groups (38%) were the most likely to report loss of some income since COVID-19, compared with 21% of Black Caribbean groups and 22% of white British people. Around three in ten people from Indian, Pakistani and Chinese groups also reported a loss of some income during the crisis ([Runnymede Trust 2021: Over-Exposed and under-protected](#))

Due to income inequality and household composition, Black Londoners and some other minority ethnic communities rely on welfare benefits for a greater share of their income.⁶ This – combined with the gaps in advice provision for and by Black and minoritised communities in London⁷ and the financial shock of the pandemic being felt more acutely by workers from Black and minoritised communities than white workers⁸ – will have increased the salience of supporting Londoners from Black and minoritised communities to be able to understand and claim their entitlements during the pandemic. Many people from excluded migrant groups are also frequently prohibited from accessing adequate financial support, such as by the no recourse to public funds condition applied to many non-EEA visa holders, or the asylum support allowance, which is less than 70 percent the rate of mainstream benefits⁹.

The vision

We want to see a recovery where:

- The financial wellbeing and resilience of Londoners from Black and minoritised groups is strengthened, with their ability to withstand income shocks through increased financial and asset wealth increased. Financial and advice services are accessible and responsive to the needs of Black and minoritised and migrant Londoners.

Labour market inequality (including workplace discrimination)

The problem

We know that workers from Black and minoritised communities' disproportionate likelihood to be working low-paid^{10 11} or insecure¹² roles or in particular sectors, gave rise to a range of risks during the pandemic. During the pandemic low-paid workers were more likely to lose their jobs¹³, while gig economy workers (usually on zero-hour contracts), who are more

⁶ Around 30% of London's Black, Asian and mixed/other households are located in the poorest 20% of households nationally, versus 16% of London's white households. In addition, 45% of London's Black, Asian and mixed/other households have children, versus 26% of London's white households. These factors have an impact on reliance on welfare benefits and therefore these groups are most affected by any changes. For example, see the GLA's [cumulative impact assessment of welfare reforms](#) (2019) which showed that Black Londoners were likely to lose more income than other ethnic groups as a result of welfare cuts.

⁷ Advising Londoners (July 2020): <https://asauk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Advising-Londoners-Report-30072020-1.pdf>

⁸ As of the end of July 2020, the earnings of BAME workers had dropped by an average of 14% (vs. their February level), whereas earnings of White workers had dropped on average by 5% (www.fca.org.uk/insight/covid-19-and-uk-bame-communities-economic-perspective)

⁹ [Unsafe Distance \(Doctors of the World\)](#)

¹⁰ <https://www.livingwage.org.uk/news/low-pay-disproportionately-affects-black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-bame-workers>

¹¹ Barry, 2021 – as quoted in pg 11, Runnymede 2021 ([Facts don't Lie](#))

¹² 'Insecure work' includes being employed on a temporary contract, working through an employment agency or being self-employed in so-called low-skilled occupations

¹³ <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/jan/22/low-paid-workers-in-uk-more-than-twice-as-likely-to-lose-job-in-pandemic>

likely to be from Black and minoritised groups, were at greater risk of financial hardship during the pandemic¹⁴ and men from Black and minoritised groups were more likely to be in shut down sectors¹⁵. Perhaps most significantly, people from Black and minoritised workers are over-represented in jobs that have been shown to have higher risks of COVID-19 infection and mortality, such as care workers and health care workers and transport workers, retail staff and security guards.¹⁶

We know there is also evidence that during the pandemic, Black and Minoritised workers faced discrimination at work and were singled out for higher risk work, denied access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), appropriate risk assessments and opportunities to work from home, and were unfairly selected for redundancy and furlough.¹⁷ These issues of bullying, discrimination and unfair treatment of Black and minoritised workers are well documented pre-pandemic¹⁸.

All these facts stem from structural racism in London's labour market, reflecting the position of workers from Black and minoritised communities in the workforce and the lack of senior representation. This is indicated by London having the largest ethnicity pay gap in Great Britain, as well as research showing lower earnings for Black graduates and less graduate employment for Black and Asian graduates.^{19 20} Organisation's procurement and tendering processes also risk providing unequal access to Black and minoritised groups²¹.

The vision

We want to see a recovery where:

- The type of work that Londoners do, the amount they are paid, and the way they are treated by their employers is not determined by their race and ethnicity.
- Employers must capture data that will enable them to understand, monitor and act on information on how workers from Black and minoritised communities are joining, being promoted and exiting within their organisations. London's public and private sector workforces are better represented at all levels of the communities they serve.
- Procurement processes, policies and supply chains actively increase suppliers from Black and minoritised led organisations.

¹⁴ According to the [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#).

¹⁵ Bangladeshi men were four times as likely as white British men to have jobs in shut-down industries, Pakistani men were nearly three times as likely. Black African and Black Caribbean men are both 50% more likely than white British men to be in shut-down sectors ([source IFS Deaton Review](#)).

¹⁶ Page 10 - <https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/IFS-Deaton-Review-New-Year-Message.pdf>. For example, more than 20% of Black African working-age women are employed in health and social care (Platt and Warwick, 2020b).

¹⁷ For example, see [Dying on the Job: Racism and Risk \(TUC 2020\)](#). There were also multiple reports about BAME [doctors](#) and [nurses](#) and NHS staff feeling pressured to work on COVID-19 wards.

¹⁸ For example see [Race in the Workplace: the McGregor-Smith Review \(2017\)](#)

¹⁹ [See Facts don't Lie](#) (Runnymede Trust 2021). In 2019 in London minority ethnic groups earned 23.8% less than White employees – worse than 2018, when the gap was 21.7%.

²⁰ [Graduate Outcomes in London \(SMF, March 2021\)](#)

²¹ Page 14, [The Booksa Paper \(Ubele Initiatives, 2021\)](#)

- Black and minoritised people can access and progress within their desired career paths.

The fair and equitable delivery of public services

The problem

Structural racism underlies the more negative outcomes for Black and minoritised communities in their access and experience of public services and these only became more apparent during the pandemic. For example, the stark ethnic inequalities in COVID-19 related mortality was in part due to historic racism and poorer healthcare service experienced by people making them less likely to seek care²².

The hostile environment and anti-refugee and migrant policies, such as NHS charging and entitlement checks, deterred migrant and asylum-seeking patients from accessing services during the pandemic, and these policies also have a greater impact on Black and minoritised people who have been targeted by them²³.

Historic and longstanding racism in relation to policing of Black communities was also more evident, through the work of the Black Lives Matter movement, and as a result of the extra powers granted to the police during the pandemic which impacted more on Black and minoritised people.^{24 25 26}

The pandemic also highlighted racialised divisions in accommodation and access to green space, which was seen to exacerbate the spread of the virus and mental health impact of the lockdown²⁷. In the education sector, the lockdown of school's risks exacerbating existing educational inequalities, with lost learning having a disproportionate impact on pupils from Black and minoritised groups (who are over-represented in lower income families).^{28 29}

The vision

²² See [Beyond the Data](#) (PHE, 2020)

²³ [A Rapid Needs Assessment of Excluded People in England During the 2020 Covid-19 Pandemic \(Doctors of the World; May 2020\)](#)

²⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/aug/25/stop-and-search-use-in-london-rose-40-in-lockdown-figures-show>

²⁵ From [The Mayor's Action Plan](#), page 15: 'In the twelve months to end March 2020 Black individuals were 3.7 times more likely to be stopped and searched compared to white individuals for any reason – based on 2020 London residential population projections. However, this increased to 7 times more likely for stops related to weapons, points and blades and 7.4 times for stops related to Section 60'.

²⁶ <https://libertyinvestigates.org.uk/articles/police-forces-in-england-and-wales-up-to-seven-times-more-likely-to-fine-bame-people-in-lockdown/>

²⁷ <https://www.runnymedetrust.org/blog/the-race-factor-in-access-to-green-space> and

<https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/rapid-evidence-review-inequalities-in-relation-to-covid-19-and-their-effects-on-london>

²⁸ <https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/learning-in-lockdown/>

²⁹ <https://ifs.org.uk/inequality/the-ifs-deaton-review-of-inequalities-a-new-years-message/>

- Public services review their behaviours, mindsets and processes in order to recognise; and take action to tackle structural racism.
- Londoners from Black and minoritised communities feel that public services understand and meet the specific needs of their communities and do not discriminate against them.
- Public services actively work with different communities to understand their needs, priorities and concerns and build confidence in their services. They ensure that services are planned and delivered in partnership with communities.

Civil society strength

The problem

Civil society is essential to the fabric of London, including in helping address many of the underlying causes that either led to the disproportionate impact of the pandemic or were exacerbated by the pandemic³⁰. While Black and minoritised-led organisations played a critical role providing vital services to communities during lockdown³¹ they experienced increased risk of closure during the pandemic³² – as a result of historic underfunding.³³

Institutional racism in the funding sector has stymied long term growth and impact of Black and minoritised-led civil society organisations through the perpetuation of uneven power dynamics between funder and funded groups, the fuelling of a competition culture and other barriers which prevent access to funds³⁴. Racism is also a significant issue within the charity sector workforce where Black and minoritised people have been found to be underrepresented at senior levels and subject to racism³⁵. This limits the extent to which the sector can contribute towards work to build a racially just society.

The vision

We want to see a recovery where:

- There is a thriving, well-funded civil society that is led by and supports Londoners from Black and minoritised communities.
- Work is funded across all types of civil society organisations to focus on racial justice and meets the needs of, Black and minoritised communities.

³⁰ For example see the issues raised in the map of community views <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/map-of-community-views> and forthcoming work on causes of loneliness that impacts on Londoners from BAME and Migrant communities (conducted by Neighbourly Lab, What Works Wellbeing and Campaign to End Loneliness).

³¹ “BAME community centres have played a key role during lockdown. Our local one produced up to 700-800 meals per day.” [Lockdown reflections: older BAME Londoners](#) (Age UK London)

³² [Impact of Covid-19 on BAME community and voluntary sector](#) (Ubele Initiative 2020)

³³ For example, see this April 2021 report: <https://www.equallyours.org.uk/funders-for-race-equality-alliance-report-a-quantitative-analysis-of-the-emergency-funding-to-the-uk-black-and-minority-ethnic-voluntary-sector-during-covid-19/>

³⁴ [Booksa Paper: exposing structural racism in the third sector \(The Ubele Initiative; April 2021\)](#)

³⁵ [ACEVO ‘Home Truths: undoing racism and delivering real diversity in the charity sector’ \(June 2020\)](#)

- Funding is accessible and allows for sustained, long-term growth of Black and minoritised civil society organisations.
- Social cohesion initiatives encourage equity and connect neighbours.

3. Characteristic-specific vision statement: Disabled Londoners

Background

This document has been developed in conjunction with Inclusion London in order to set out key inequalities experienced by Deaf and disabled Londoners that either drove the disproportionate impact of the Covid-19 pandemic or were created by it, and what successfully addressing them would look like.

We support the Social Model of Disability approach which recognises that it is the economic, social, cultural, physical and attitudinal barriers operating in society that disable and exclude people with impairments. We use the term disabled people in this to include all people with impairments including: people with physical, cognitive and sensory impairments, people with learning difficulties; people who are neuro-diverse; Deaf people, deafened, hard of hearing people, people with experience of mental distress and trauma and people with long term health conditions.

Disabled Londoners experience structural inequalities which can act as a multiplier effect to perpetuate disadvantage. One in three families in London with a disabled adult live in poverty. Working age adults with an unmet need for accessible housing are four times more likely to be unemployed or not seeking work due to sickness/ disability than disabled people without unmet housing needs. Many disabled people in London experience intersectional social, economic and health inequalities as a result of the profile of London's disabled population. Women are over-represented amongst disabled adults aged 16+ at 57% compared with 43% men. 66% of disabled Londoners are White, 10% are Black/African/Caribbean/Black British, 6.1% from Pakistani/Bangladeshi backgrounds, 5.9% from Indian background, 3.3% from mixed/multiple ethnic groups and 8.8% from other ethnic groups³⁶.

Disabled people continue to experience on-going structural inequalities including difficulties accessing services and support, exclusion, discrimination and rising poverty and financial hardship. The pandemic deepened these trends. Health inequalities have been starkly apparent for disabled people who account for 3 out of 5 of Covid deaths. The pandemic created additional problems for disabled people. Covid related issues include digital exclusion from online resources, limited access to health and social care, increased difficulties accessing goods and services in the built environment due to changes to high streets and public realm to accommodate social distancing and employment discrimination an increased financial hardship and new barriers with accessing advice and support.

What is the change we want to see?

Living standard and financial inequality

The problem

³⁶ Demography data from Adult Population Survey 2020

We know the economic consequences of the pandemic exposed Londoners' vulnerability to financial shocks and crises. With disabled households having entered lockdown with lower levels of financial reserves, 35% of disabled people say their finances have become worse during the pandemic³⁷. Disabled Londoners have experienced food poverty and struggled to meet bills as a result of the pandemic³⁸.

Disabled workers faced reduced hours and job loss causing loss of income and falling into debt. Disabled people were more likely to have to shield during the pandemic and some of those shielding or with long-term health conditions faced pressure from employers to use low paid sick leave entitlements rather than furlough. Disabled people are also less likely to access support or equipment necessary for an increasingly digital world associated with claiming benefits, accessing public services, and accessing rights information or advice services forced to pivot to online delivery during the pandemic³⁹.

We also know that disabled Londoners derive a greater proportion of their income from welfare benefits while also having lower taxable incomes creating greater vulnerability to cuts in benefit income and less well placed to benefit from tax cuts⁴⁰. Disabled Londoners can require extra assistance to navigate the benefits system,⁴¹ often requiring support from dedicated expert organisations and accessible technologies. Those claiming legacy benefits such as Jobseekers Allowance or Employment Support Allowance – who are more likely to be disabled – did not see those benefits increased in value as Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit were. Disabled people who receive social care support were further disadvantaged by increasing charges for social care, which remove their already limited benefits income.

The vision

We want to see a recovery where:

- Disabled Londoners are supported to access and navigate a robust, accessible, and supportive safety net
- Disabled Londoners enjoy an adequate standard of living. This include adequate income, good housing, being able to get advice and support to get financial support, making sure new policies that are introduced do not disproportionately hit disabled people and make them poorer.

Tackling labour market inequality (including workplace discrimination):

The problem

³⁷ Scope [Disability Report](#), May 2020

³⁸ Inclusion London, *Locked Down and Abandoned*, February 2021

³⁹ Good Things Foundation, [Blueprint for a 100% Digitally Included UK](#), September 2020

⁴⁰ City Intelligence, [A Cumulative Impact Assessment of Tax and Welfare Reform in London](#), July 2019

⁴¹ GLA Briefing/Dalia Ben-Galim, [Universal Credit and Disabled Londoners](#), May 2020

Not all Disabled Londoners are able to work, but those who do, experienced disproportionate unemployment risks during the pandemic, with long-standing barriers to employment such as inaccessible recruitment practices, lack of flexible working opportunities and scant information for employers on programmes such as Access to Work compounded by discrimination and unfair treatment.

During the pandemic, 1 in 6 (17% of the working population) were facing redundancy, but the rate was 1 in 4 (27%) for disabled people, rising to 37% for those people whose disability has a substantial impact on their activities⁴². In addition, nearly one in three disabled workers said they had been unfairly treated at work⁴³, with employers refusing to furlough them or provide reasonable adjustments for homeworking – even at a time when attitudes to flexible working underwent a step-change.

Many disabled workers reported difficulties with DWP's Access to Work packages and administrative systems during the pandemic. Adjustments to packages to accommodate remote working were common requests but administrative systems were slow to respond placing disabled workers at a disadvantage alongside non-disabled colleagues. This is against backdrop of surprisingly low numbers of Disabled workers applying for the scheme which provides equipment, access budgets and support to disabled workers to support them in employment. Lack of awareness, fear of discrimination and bureaucracy of the application and management process are barriers.

Disabled people lack confidence in the ability of employers to meet their needs. Retention rates remain lower for disabled workers who fall out of work at almost twice the rate (9%) of non-disabled workers (5%) than non-disabled workers. Inclusive employment initiatives, critical to the inclusion agenda, such as supported internships and targeted CPD initiatives, were halted during the pandemic as focus and resources shifted to tackling immediate labour market responses.

Access to inclusive education and skills system is vital. Prior to the pandemic there was a significant gap between supply and demand for post-16 SEND provision. By 2022 there will be an estimated gap of 8,950 places for young people with SEND in post-16 education in London, approximately 45% of the projected demand. Delayed learning opportunities, a rise in health-related issues due to the pandemic and budget tightening by local authorities suggests FE institutions will be stretched in providing support for learners as the availability and value of EHCP has not kept pace with demand or costs respectively.

The vision

We want to see a recovery where:

⁴² Citizens Advice, [An Unequal Crisis](#) August 2020

⁴³ Disability Rights UK, [Employment Rights summary](#) June 2021

- Disability employment and pay gaps are reduced through the creation of better work and progression opportunities for disabled workers, with a greater priority placed by employers on understanding the position of disabled people in their workforces
- Employers comply with their Equality Act duties and commit to create and promote more flexible work opportunities
- Disabled workers are empowered to understand and assert their rights and to challenge discrimination in the workplace
- There is increased awareness and usage of Access to Work amongst both employees and employers.

Trust and Confidence in Public Services

The problem

We know that for many disabled people, confidence in statutory providers eroded during the pandemic. Disabled people saw significant reductions in their support, with day services being closed with no alternatives put in place, or in-person support replaced by phone calls. For many, funded support hours were cut diminishing what little opportunity there was to leave their homes. The nature of communication with local authorities, health services and other statutory bodies during the pandemic also is influencing disabled people's confidence in these bodies' ability to take their needs into account when making decisions on service provision or key forms of infrastructure⁴⁴.

Disabled people report difficulties in getting responses and having concerns addressed, as well as receiving information and guidance in accessible formats during the pandemic, with digital exclusion a particular challenge⁴⁵.

The introduction of social distancing measures, whilst vital for protecting the health and safety of the general public, created fresh barriers to accessing goods and services for disabled people, against a backdrop of long-term unequal access to shops and services. Concerns have been raised some providers are not fulfilling their duties under the Equality Act before taking decisions on service provision.

The vision

We want to see a recovery where:

- Disabled people have confidence in the statutory sector's ability to use its spending powers to secure best possible accessible, appropriate and timely support through a range of services which aim to remove the barriers Disabled people face and ensure Disabled people can fully enjoy their rights.
- There is investment in services that are run and developed by Disabled people.

⁴⁴ Women and Equalities Committee, [Unequal Impact? Coronavirus, disability and access to services](#), December 2020

⁴⁵ Women and Equalities Committee, [Unequal Impact? Coronavirus, disability and access to services](#), December 2020

- There are accessible easy and user-friendly complaint procedures that are focused on resolving the issue.
- Statutory bodies engage meaningfully with disabled people and their organisations to understand their needs and embed them into decision making.
- The work and services of public bodies and statutory agencies reflects the social model of disability
- Statutory bodies fully comply with their duties to make reasonable adjustments in all services they deliver and policies they develop.
 - Clear and transparent policies on how to request and get reasonable adjustments.
 - Statutory bodies to ensure new ways of delivering services/ including move to digital do not disadvantage disabled people.
 - Regular audits of existing services, policies and practice, including websites on compliance with accessibility standards and clear action plans on how to fix the problems if they are revealed.

Civil Society strength and support

The problem

We know the combined and conflicting priorities of meeting rising demand by disabled people, while experiencing disproportionate funding cuts by Local Authorities, has resulted in a really challenging environment for civil society organisations. The pandemic has increased and altered the needs of service users.

London's civil society organisations providing advocacy and support services to disabled Londoners find themselves in an increasingly precarious situation. Current resourcing is not meeting demand, especially where support needs are complex covering multiple areas of advocacy, support and welfare advice.

Provision is uneven and uncoordinated in London. Statutory funding available is invariably short term, restricted project funding that prevents civil society organisations building sustainability, developing services and investing in staff. Civil society organisations report tendering and procurement practices that systematically disadvantage smaller grassroots providers.

Civil society organisations working with disabled Londoners are experiencing recruitment difficulties. The barriers outlined under labour market inequalities and discrimination translate into difficulties recruiting skilled, experienced disabled people into civil society organisations. There is limited capacity to develop current and future leaders.

The vision

We want to see a recovery where:

- Voluntary and civil society advice providers are able to meet demand and provide accessible good quality advice to Disabled people.
- User-led disability organisations are funded in more sustainable ways, including by providing core funding, with a long-term approach so that organisations can plan better for the future.
- Capacity building and talent development pipelines support sector workforce
- Intersectional issues come forward through a civil society sector through increased representation of the diversity of the communities in which disabled Londoners live
- Procurement and tendering processes evaluate the expertise of London's civil society providers rather than 'best value'

4. Characteristic-specific vision statement: LGBTQ+ Londoners

This document has been developed in conjunction with The Consortium in order to set out key inequalities experienced by LGBTQ+ Londoners that either drove the disproportionate impact of the Covid-19 pandemic or were created by it, and what successfully addressing them would look like.

Prior to the pandemic many LGBTQ+ people and representative organisations were aware that for many decades data has actively not been collected about LGBTQ+ people and as a result these communities remain invisible or under served in health, social and wider research and service settings.

As with most protected groups of Londoners impacted by the pandemic is it Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic, Deaf and disabled and older, trans LGBTQ+ people that have been disproportionately affected due to historic and longstanding intersectional and structural inequalities.

The Rapid Evidence Review commissioned by the Greater London Authority to document and understand the impact of COVID-19 concluded that the experiences of LGBTQ+ people have not been a focus of any of the major academic health and social surveys conducted in the UK, nor of any the research projects funded to examine experiences and consequences of the pandemic.¹

Therefore, most services that should be available for LGBTQ+ people continue to fail to address their needs and have little or no information or understanding about LGBTQ+ Londoners increased risks of exposure to COVID-19.

Between 2018 and 2019, the proportion of people who identified as LGB increased for England (2.7%, up from 2.3%). People in London were most likely to identify as LGB (3.8%).²

There is a lack of robust data around trans and non-binary people living in the UK. The Government Equality Office we tentatively estimate that there are approximately 200,000-500,000 trans people in the UK. Stonewall confirm that there isn't an accurate figure for how big the trans community is. There also isn't any existing research that covers enough people to be statistically significant. The best estimate at the moment is that around 1% of the population might identify as trans, including people who identify as non-binary. That would mean about 600,000 trans and non-binary people in Britain, out of a population of over 60 million.

The proportion of the UK population aged 16 years and over identifying as heterosexual or straight decreased from 94.6% in 2018 to 93.7% in 2019, with an estimated 2.7% identifying as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) in 2019, an increase from 2.2% in 2018.

Younger people (aged 16 to 24 years) were most likely to identify as LGB in 2019 (6.6% of all 16 to 24 year olds, an increase from 4.4% in 2018).

Older people (aged 65 years and over) also showed an increase in those identifying as LGB. This rose from 0.7% in 2018 to 1.0% in 2019 of this age category.

It is widely accepted that these figures won't be an entirely accurate representation of the number of LGBTQ+ people in London/the UK as statistics vary greatly dependant on the research source ³. The 2021 census will hopefully give us a much better picture for LGBT+ populations when those data are published,

What changes do we want to see?

Financial hardship and living standards

The problem

We know that LGBTQ+ communities living in London face a number of common as well as unique issues that impact upon their daily lives, including issues relating to financial hardship and living standards and subsequently their health and life chances.

Almost 40 percent of LGBTQ+ people consider themselves to be on low incomes, with a third frequently worrying about having enough money to survive from day to day or to meet monthly outgoings.

Conversely, only a small proportion of those on low incomes are in receipt of state supported welfare benefits. Despite over a third living on less than £15,000 per year, a figure that falls below the UK average income of £24,700, just 13 per cent specified that they are currently receiving State benefits.⁴

The vision

- There is a re-examination and correction of the biased stereotypical perception that the demographic profile of LGBTQ+ people living in poverty does not align with the common representation of the general population experiencing economic and social deprivation.
- Service providers must give greater consideration to the actual needs of LGBTQ+ Londoners through detailed research into the demographic and intersectional profiles of LGBTQ+ communities and the issues that these communities face.

Labour market inequality (including workplace discrimination)

The problem

We know that despite some employers in the UK making progress towards inclusion in their workplaces, LGBTQ+ people still face discrimination, exclusion and barriers at work. These issues are exacerbated for trans, Black, Asian and minority ethnic and younger LGBT employees.

Recent research found that LGBTQ+ employees take home on average £6,703 less per year than their straight counterparts. The survey, conducted by YouGov in coordination with LinkedIn and LGBTQ+ organisation Black Pride, found the shortfall is equivalent to a pay gap of 16 per cent — almost double the UK's 9.6 per cent gender pay gap.⁵

The vision

- Businesses must promote an inclusive workplace culture and bring inclusive voices and practices into the day-to-day running of a business to ensure that LGBTQ+ employees are valued, respected and can work with confidence and in safety without experiencing discrimination or violence.
- Businesses recognise that LGBTQ+ people are not a homogenous group of people that there are many intersecting characteristics, including race, gender, age and disability etc that exacerbate workplace inequality.

Trust and confidence in public services

The problem

We know that the needs of LGBTQ+ communities too often remain invisible in health, social, education and wider research and service settings, due to a lack of insight into the needs of and barriers experienced by LGBTQ+ people when accessing services. There is no data on Covid-19 infection and mortality rates by sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression⁶. This is an example of how mainstream services can fail to address or meet the needs of LGBTQ+ people.

We do know that the pandemic exacerbated mental ill health amongst LGBTQ+ communities, with almost four in five LGBTQ+ people saying their mental health had been negatively affected by the lockdown⁷. Large numbers of people experienced poor mental health, including depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts about the impact lockdown was having on their lives and they were unable to safely access appropriate advice or support services⁸ as a result of a lack of tailored support to meet need, or a lack of awareness by LGBTQ+ people that support and advice was available.

The vision

- We want to see service providers adopt the tools and methodologies necessary to actively engage with the spirit of the Equality Act 2010 and base their services on meaningful insight into the needs of LGBTQ+ Londoners to improve service provision
- Service providers need to address structural bias/disparities/barriers before they can begin to address mental health-related disparities affecting LGBTQ+ Londoners, including the underlying issues relating to higher levels of smoking, obesity and use of alcohol and/or substance misuse.

- Service providers work with the VCS to create services and provide spaces and wellbeing services that are advertised, visibly welcoming and appropriate to the needs of LGBTQ+ people in distress.

Civil society strength and support.

The problem

We know that the pandemic had a devastating impact on civil society organisations that support and provide services to LGBTQ+ Londoners⁹, with many organisations, already operating on a shoestring prior to the pandemic, experiencing significant reductions in income whilst managing greatly increased need and demand for their services from vulnerable LGBTQ+ individuals, thereby exacerbating inequality.

The vision

We want to see a recovery where:

- The LGBTQ+ sector is adequately funded and supported to establish appropriate services across the breadth of London particularly where service deserts exist across London, particularly for LGBTQ+ Black and minoritised, older, younger and trans and non-binary people
- The mainstream services that do exist and provide excellent services to the majority of the population are more aware of the many needs of LGBTQ+ Londoners, upskill their own staff, and promote their services visibly as a welcoming and viable alternative to LGBTQ+ specific service provision. This would go some way to also filling the many geographical service gaps across the city.

5. Characteristic-specific vision statement: Older Londoners

This document has been developed in conjunction with the London Age Friendly Forum in order to set out key inequalities experienced by older Londoners that either drove the disproportionate impact of the Covid-19 pandemic or were created by it, and what successfully addressing them would look like.

The pandemic had a devastating impact on older people, leading to more deaths amongst this age group, than among any other. Prior to the pandemic both the number and proportion of older Londoners in London's population was increasing. Inevitably and sadly the pandemic will have slowed down this change.

Following the first lockdown of the pandemic (mid 2020) there were around 2,582,700 (29%) Londoners aged 50 and over, with 58,700 (0.7%) being aged 90 and over, out of a population of 9,002,500 Londoners.¹

The percentage of older Londoners who are women increases to 65 per cent for Londoners aged 90 and over.

The ethnic diversity of older Londoners decreases by age group. 73.5 per cent of Londoners aged 90 and over are from a white British background compared with 33.4 per cent of Londoners aged 49 and under.² On the other hand, the proportions of Londoners who are from a Black Caribbean or white Irish backgrounds is larger among older (50 and over) age groups than among younger age groups. Plus, there are higher proportions of people from Indian and Black African backgrounds among some older age groups than in younger age groups.

Around a quarter of Londoners aged 50 and over and just over half of Londoners aged 65 and over are disabled, compared with 12.7 per cent of Londoners aged 16 to 49.³

What change do we want to see?⁴

Living standards and financial inequality

The problem

We know that, in common with most groups, the financial resilience of many older Londoners will have been negatively affected by the pandemic – particularly those who are self-employed or long-term unemployed⁵. Sadly, pensioner poverty has started to increase,⁶ with London having the highest pensioner poverty rate in England⁷, and more older Londoners claiming out of work benefits, since March 2020.⁸ And the long-term impact of job losses and the associated reduction in pension contributions holds the potential to drive income inequality for older Londoners in the future.⁹

We also know that many older Londoners experienced increases in material deprivation over the course of the various lockdowns. Older Londoners were particularly vulnerable to

experiencing food insecurity due to the pandemic¹⁰ – with some struggling to access culturally appropriate food.¹¹ And with older Londoners living in poorly maintained housing¹² and being particularly vulnerable to fuel poverty and susceptible to the associated dangerous respiratory diseases,¹³ many will have been challenged by the winter lockdown – and will be by any future winter restrictions.¹⁴

Older people face additional costs from the continuing suspension of use of the Freedom Pass, getting on-line, on-line deliveries and the forthcoming increase in national insurance, for older people still in employment. Older people are not on-line have not been able to benefit from getting cheaper rates for energy, goods and services. Fraud and scams proliferated during the pandemic, with older people often being targeted and losing substantial amounts of money.

The vision

We want to see a recovery where:

- older Londoners are aware of the support that's available to them to increase their incomes and reduce their costs, and are enabled to access that support
- older Londoners are able to rely on local authorities, housing associations and others, as well as a thriving civil society sector to support them with the impacts of financial hardship or material deprivation
- older Londoners, who are victims of scams, have the confidence to report it and are aware of the support available.

Labour market inequality (including workplace discrimination)

The problem

Keeping older people in the labour market is important for the economy and for older people's well-being. Not least because they, in particular older women, make up a disproportionate amount of the workforce in the health and social care sector. Prior to the pandemic the employment rate of older people had been increasing. During it, the rate decreased, especially for older men¹⁵.

Long-standing barriers to accessing the labour market experienced by older Londoners have been exacerbated by the pandemic.¹⁶ Employees over the age of 60, Londoners and people with low qualifications were more likely to be furloughed and then made redundant than their counterparts, compounding this impact on older Londoners. Many of these redundant workers are dropping out of the labour market altogether.¹⁸ Developments in flexible working such as increased home working hold the potential to help older workers to stay in the labour market – but levels of adoption in the sectors most likely to employ older workers are low.¹⁹

Where older Londoners are in work or seeking work, barriers, including ageism, remain. During the pandemic older employees - women and employees aged 65 and over, in particular - reported working fewer paid hours than they usually would have.²⁰ And among

older employees who worked reduced hours because of the coronavirus, the percentage who received full pay decreased with age, while the percentage on no pay increased.²¹

We also know that the offer and take-up of skills and training provision amongst older people, which was already lower, has fallen particularly steeply over the past 15 months.²² This is particularly concerning in relation to digital skills, as this is now a pre-requisite for most jobs, while many jobs are only advertised online, and training opportunities offered as online courses.²³

The vision

We want to see a recovery where:

- older Londoners who wish to work or leave the labour market are supported and enabled to do so and in a way that suits their circumstances
- older Londoners are able to access the same level of education and training support that will enable them to obtain good, secure jobs, wherever they live in London

Trust and confidence in public services

The problem

We know that the shift during lockdowns to digital becoming the default method for providing support and services left older Londoners – who are more likely to be digitally excluded – at risk of missing out on vital support and information.²⁴ Where telephone-based services were provided, they were sometimes at full capacity or did not cater for people who are hard of hearing. These problems were even greater for those older Londoners who did not speak English confidently.

The pandemic further exacerbated the lack of confidence in local authorities in providing support for older people who need or who are providing care.

Older people born outside of the UK who have, for example, been through the asylum system or are members of the Windrush generation, may have had negative experiences that undermines their levels of trust. Historic discrimination of older LGBTQ+ people often means that they do not have trust in confidence in public services and rely on support from LGBTQ+ organisations.

The vision

We want to see a recovery where:

- all services are accessible to older people through face to face, telephone or paper, as well as digitally
- information about and communications from public services, including the ability to provide comment and ask questions, are provided in formats that make them accessible to all, including older people.

- older people are actively involved in planning, shaping and delivering high quality and responsive public services.

Civil society strength and support

The problem

We know that the lockdown squeezed civil society organisations – many of whom were reliant on older Londoners as volunteers²⁵ – through a combination of increased demand for provision²⁶ and decreased income, due to constraints in trading and fundraising activities.²⁷ Levels of hesitancy amongst older volunteers may remain high for some time.²⁸

In addition, we also know that the pandemic highlighted the gaps in digital infrastructure and skills of VCS organisations²⁹, older volunteers³⁰ and older beneficiaries.³¹

Historic discrimination, such as BAME and LGBTQ+ people, means that older people from these communities look to BAME and LGBTQ+ communities and organisations for trusted support. The pandemic has made these organisations precarious.

The vision

We want to see a recovery where:

- older Londoners get support, build strong community and intergenerational networks and face no barriers to volunteering and playing a full and active part in the full spectrum of civic life
- civil society organisations that support and provide services to older Londoners recognise and reflect the diversity of older Londoners and are able to thrive
- older people and their representatives are actively involved, supported and trained to be active co-producers of the recovery and age friendly London planning, implementation and oversight and monitoring at London wide and borough levels.

6. Characteristic-specific vision statement: Women and girls in London

This document has been developed in conjunction with the Women's Resource Centre in order to set out key inequalities experienced by women and girls in London that either drove the disproportionate impact of the Covid-19 pandemic or were created by it, and what successfully addressing them would look like.

Women and girls make up 50% of London's population of 8.97 million people. There were approximately 4.49 million females and 4.48 million males living in London in 2019⁴⁶.

While the number of men and women is almost equal in London, Londoners' experiences of city life differ significantly by gender, as a result of deep-rooted and systemic sexism and gender inequality. Women from marginalised and minoritised groups such as disabled women, women from Black, Asian and other ethnic minority backgrounds, trans women and refugee and migrant women experience compounded challenges on account of their gender as well as other characteristics. This document also considers the disproportionate impact of the economic crisis on older and younger women, as well as pregnant women and mothers, who have seen significant consequences across employment, healthcare and the distribution of unpaid care work.

Globally, women and girls have been more vulnerable to the economic effects of Covid-19 because of pre-existing gender inequalities. This has been no different in London, where we have seen women bear the brunt of the crisis in many respects.

The demands of unpaid care work increased over the pandemic and consistently fell mostly to women, with knock-on effects on women's employment and the gender pay gap⁴⁷. Increased flexible working helped some women achieve a work-life balance, but too often this was only available to women on higher incomes and in more secure work. Women are disproportionately likely to work in part-time and flexible roles, and 70% of those who don't earn enough to qualify for Statutory Sick Pay, so vital during periods of illness and self-isolation, are women⁴⁸. Women were more likely to work in health and care roles on the frontline of the pandemic, which exposed the insufficient pay and conditions of many care workers, some being paid less than the minimum wage⁴⁹.

While the immediate financial effects of furlough and school closures may be temporary, there are serious concerns that women's experiences of income and job losses in the pandemic will cause scarring, and have longer lasting impacts on women's incomes and gender inequality more broadly. As well as addressing these effects, lasting change cannot be achieved without work to tackle the root drivers of the disparate experiences between genders.

⁴⁶ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1064772/population-of-london-by-gender/>

⁴⁷ <https://ifs.org.uk/publications/14860>

⁴⁸ <https://wbg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/WEP-statement-Sept-2020-updated.pdf>

⁴⁹ <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06838/SN06838.pdf>

Lockdown measures have exacerbated women and girls' experiences of violence and abuse, and shut down routes to safety and support. The London women's VAWG sector has witnessed an increase in demand, an increasing complexity of need and greater strains on frontline workers supporting survivors. The Mayor of London pledged in his manifesto to refresh the city's Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy, so it takes a public health approach, includes a focus on prevention and responds to changing pressures. Experiences of violence and harm shape too many women's lives in London, and we want to ensure that survivors' experiences of inequalities in living standards, in the labour market and in trust and confidence in public services are reflected in this work too.

What is the change we want to see?

Living standards and financial inequality

The problem

We know that the impact of job losses and reduced hours caused by the pandemic fell harder on women, exacerbating the higher levels of poverty that women – especially women with children and pensioners – experience.⁵⁰ And the increasing reliance of parents – especially lone parents, who are usually women – on forms of crisis support, such as baby banks, highlighted the vital role that front-line charities are playing in helping alleviate the effects of financial hardship.⁵¹

We also know that the majority of low paid workers in London are women, with Black, Asian and ethnic minority women the most likely to be low paid⁵². These workers were most likely to see a reduction in their income and were least likely to have savings to fall back on⁵³. Women were also less likely to be able to afford to take time off work to self-isolate, risking their own health and their colleagues', because they were less likely to earn enough to qualify for Statutory Sick Pay⁵⁴. An important driver of women's lower earnings is that

⁵⁰ As women are more likely to rely on social security, they are more likely to be affected by reductions in its generosity. For example, by the removal of the £20-a-week uplift to Universal Credit, or the fact that Child Benefit and legacy benefits, which women are more likely to claim, were never uprated despite the fact that the real value of these benefits has been reduced by consecutive freezes and uprating by less than inflation.

⁵¹ <https://littlevillagehq.org/news/little-village-releases-report-it-takes-a-village-how-to-make-all-childhoods-matter/>

⁵² <https://www.trustforlondon.org.uk/publications/impact-covid19-londons-low-paid-workers/>

⁵³ <https://www.trustforlondon.org.uk/publications/impact-covid19-londons-low-paid-workers/>

⁵⁴ This is a symptom of women's income inequality; research by the Women's Budget Group showed that women are less likely to qualify for SSP because of "low or intermittent pay, zero-hours contracts and not enough regular hours/ earnings due to caring

women are more likely to work part-time hours, because often a lack of access to affordable childcare in London means that mothers reduce their hours of work.

Women are more likely to rely on benefits than men, so are more affected by reductions in its generosity. Child Benefit and Legacy Benefits, which women are more likely to claim, were not uplifted during the pandemic (unlike Universal Credit), even though the real value of these benefits has been reduced by consecutive freezes and uprating by less than inflation. Women with No Recourse to Public Funds are highly vulnerable to financial crises and the implementation of support that women with NRPF can access varies across London.

The vision

We want to see a recovery where:

- Women can access a local safety net which is sufficiently generous and flexible to enable them to withstand financial shocks and crises, given that they are disproportionately likely to need it.
- Women don't face additional barriers to accessing the safety net compared to men, and disparities between experiences of the safety net by gender are addressed.
- The underlying income inequality that limits women's access to the social security system when sick is addressed.
- Childcare is accessible, affordable, and supports women to continue in work, should they choose to.

Labour market inequality

The problem

We know that the unemployment rate for women has increased by more than that for men – potentially as a result of the fact that women were a third more likely than men to work in a sector that was shut down due to Covid-19. The pressures of unpaid care work disproportionately fell on women and mothers, with more women than men leaving their jobs or reducing their hours to accommodate caring responsibilities⁵⁵. And we know that women took on the bulk of unpaid care and domestic work during the pandemic, risking an exacerbation of London's already sizeable maternal employment gap⁵⁶.

responsibilities". 70% of those who don't earn enough to qualify for SSP are women; 1 in 10 women are in this position.

⁵⁵ According to GLA Economics, in London, female unemployment was 7.2% in the three months to December 2020, compared to 6.7% for men. The unemployment rate for women in London is currently 0.5 percentage points higher than for men. The female unemployment rate has increased 3.5 percentage points over the last year, compared to 2 percentage points for men.

⁵⁶ 69% of mothers are employed, compared to 75% in the UK as a whole:

<https://data.london.gov.uk/economic-fairness/equal-opportunities/parental-employment/>

The social care sector, which is made up of predominantly female staff, played a vital role in the Covid-19 pandemic caring for vulnerable residents with often little guidance, equipment and support. While there was greater recognition from the public and politicians of the important work care workers do, care workers are still generally low paid, even underpaid, and too often have substandard working conditions⁵⁷.

We also know that many pregnant women experienced discrimination in the workplace during the pandemic, such as being forced to take unpaid leave, forced to start maternity leave early, or being chosen for redundancy^{58 59}.

The vision

We want to see a recovery where:

- Efforts to create and protect jobs recognise and address the gendered impact of the employment crisis
- The employment gap in London is reduced, with more women able to participate in the labour market
- More women are paid at least the London Living Wage and fewer paid below the National Minimum Wage
- The gender pay gap, and other intersectional pay gaps affecting women, are reduced.
- The care sector is valued as skilled work, and more care workers are paid at least the London Living Wage. Pregnant mothers and those on maternity leave are aware of their rights in the workplace, can be confident that their employers will uphold those rights, and know how to enforce them if they are not
- Access to flexible, affordable childcare is not a barrier to employment. Employers are encouraged to adopt family-friendly policies which enable women to stay in work and support progression. This includes menopause policies, premature birth and neonatal care policies, as well as policies which allow men to take time off to care
- Women have greater access to finance for business start-ups and entrepreneurship

Trust and confidence in public services

The problem

While the Equality Act 2010 mandates that public sector bodies undertake equalities impacts of all policies and programmes, too often women and minority groups do not see

⁵⁷ <https://www.homecare.co.uk/news/article.cfm/id/1649295/Care-workers-more-likely-not-to-be-paid-minimum-wage-prompting-calls-for-clearer-payslips>

⁵⁸ <https://maternityaction.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/MaternityActionRedundancyJointBriefing2020.pdf>

⁵⁹ The EHRC described instances of pregnancy and maternity discrimination as one of “the most urgent, immediate threats to equality” during the pandemic
<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/4597/documents/46478/default/>

their needs accounted for in the design of interventions⁶⁰. Public organisations can often be unaware that their policies and programmes discriminate against women. On a national level, women have been largely invisible from the UK government's Covid-19 crisis decision making table. As women's organisations like the Fawcett Society have pointed out, this has led to a national response that in many ways has not recognised the gendered impact of the pandemic.

As well as services inadvertently failing to meet women's needs, women also report experiences of public services being inaccessible and discriminatory. Women surveyed by the Women's Resource Centre for this project reported feeling judged, not taken seriously or disbelieved when approaching statutory services, and some feared repercussions such as deportation or having their children taken away from them⁶¹. These problems were most commonly experienced by women from Black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds and disabled women.

Experiences of interaction with police services were particularly challenging, and improvements to recruitment, transparency, training, culture and prosecutions of police officers who have committed crimes are needed.

The vision

We want to see a recovery where:

- Public organisations ensure women are represented at all levels of decision-making
- Women feel confident that public policy is designed in a way that's sensitive to their experiences, centering the experiences of Black, Asian and ethnic minority women, disabled women, working class women and women with caring responsibilities.
- Women have increased opportunities to contribute to the design of public services
- Public services offer culturally competent, accessible and inclusive support for all women

Civil society strength

The problem

According to the Women's Resource Centre's national survey of women's organisations, including the anti-VAWG sector, the most pressing challenges for women's organisations in April 2021 were increased demand, an increasing number of complex cases and lack of

⁶⁰ In their campaign work on 'Equal Power', the Fawcett Society attribute much of this problem to the underrepresentation of women at all levels of Government and the fact that only 34% of MPs and 35% of local councillors in England and Wales are women. According to Operation Black Vote's database "The Colour of Power", of the 1160 most powerful people in the UK, only 327 are female, 0 are non-binary and 0 are trans. Only 19 are female and from a Black, Asian or ethnic minority background.

⁶¹ Women and Girls in London: a consultation on the London Recovery Board equalities subgroup's 4 priorities, November 2021

sustainable funding⁶². While organisations in London were well supported by funders during the pandemic, the end of emergency Covid-19 funding is a concern⁶³. The longer-term impacts of the pandemic on women's incomes, mental health and safety, coupled with the fact that many organisations could only partly meet this demand during the pandemic, even with emergency funding, means that any more shortfalls could be disastrous. Recruiting staff is also a challenge, given the specialist experience required, low salaries and high cost of living in London.

The vision

We want to see a recovery where:

- Women's organisations are funded in more sustainable ways, with a long-term approach so that organisations can plan better for the future. Black and minoritised women's organisations, disabled women-led organisations and those working with asylum seekers all benefit from ring-fenced funding.
- Funding for women's organisations encourages organisations to collaborate and work in partnership with each other as well as other specialist support services
- Women's organisations are not required to fill gaps in statutory service provision for free

⁶² All the statistics in this section are drawn from <https://www.wrc.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=ea650667-be7b-4e7c-a515-86d26b33d544>

⁶³ 88% of London-based organisations reported receiving emergency Covid-19 funding compared to the UK average of 79%.