



We'll be starting shortly

**Whilst we're waiting, please read these
Zoom logistics for today's event:**

**You won't be able to use your video or microphone during
this session as we are using a Zoom Webinar format.**

If you have a question for our speakers during the Q&A session you can ask them using the [Q&A function](#). You can also vote for questions you're interested in hearing the answer to using the 'thumbs up' symbol.

Please note:

We are recording today's session

You can find 'The Value of Small in a Big Crisis' report here bit.ly/VoS2021

What's coming up

10:00 Arrivals & Welcome – Duncan Shrubsole, Director of Policy, Comms & Research, Lloyds Bank Foundation

10:10 The Value of Small in a Big Crisis - What the research tells us

Chris Dayson – Associate Professor, Sheffield Hallam University and lead author of the report

Leila Baker - Independent researcher and consultant and co-author of the report

10:30 Baroness Diana Barran MBE, Minister for Civil Society & DCMS

10:40 Panel Discussion & Q&A

- **Sharmarke Diriye** - Programme Lead at GOSAD
- **Lorrissa Roberts** - Chief Executive at Advance Brighter Futures
- **Stephen Brown** - Head of Corporate Services at Bassetlaw District Council
- **Michelle Warburton** - Voice & Influence Manager at Salford CVS
- **James Rees** – Reader and Deputy Director of ICRD, University of Wolverhampton, and co-author of the report

11:20 Final reflections – **Paul Streets OBE**, Chief Executive, Lloyds Bank Foundation

11:30 Close



The Value of Small in a Big Crisis

The distinctive contribution, value and experiences of smaller charities in England and Wales during the COVID 19 pandemic

23rd February 2021



#ValueOfSmall

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Introduction



#ValueOfSmall

Building on the 'Value of Small'

The original **Value of Small** research (2018) identified **three core distinctive features** of smaller charities:

1. **Service offer:** who they serve and what they do.
2. **Approach:** how they work.
3. **Position:** the role they play in communities and their contribution to public services.



Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research



The value of small

In-depth research into the distinctive contribution, value and experiences of small and medium-sized charities in England and Wales



Centre for Voluntary Sector Leadership





#ValueOfSmall

Building on the 'Value of Small'

Combination of distinctive features creates **social and economic value** that is **more than the sum of their parts...**



Individual Value



Economic Value



Added Value



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Testing the Value of Small Framework

We revisited our **four case study areas** to:

- Explore **how smaller charities responded** during the COVID 19 pandemic
- Understand **why this mattered** to vulnerable individuals and communities
- Generate a deeper understanding of the **distinctiveness and value** of smaller charities
- **Provide evidence** for how their work could be promoted, developed and supported

Figure 1: An overview of the case study areas and research undertaken

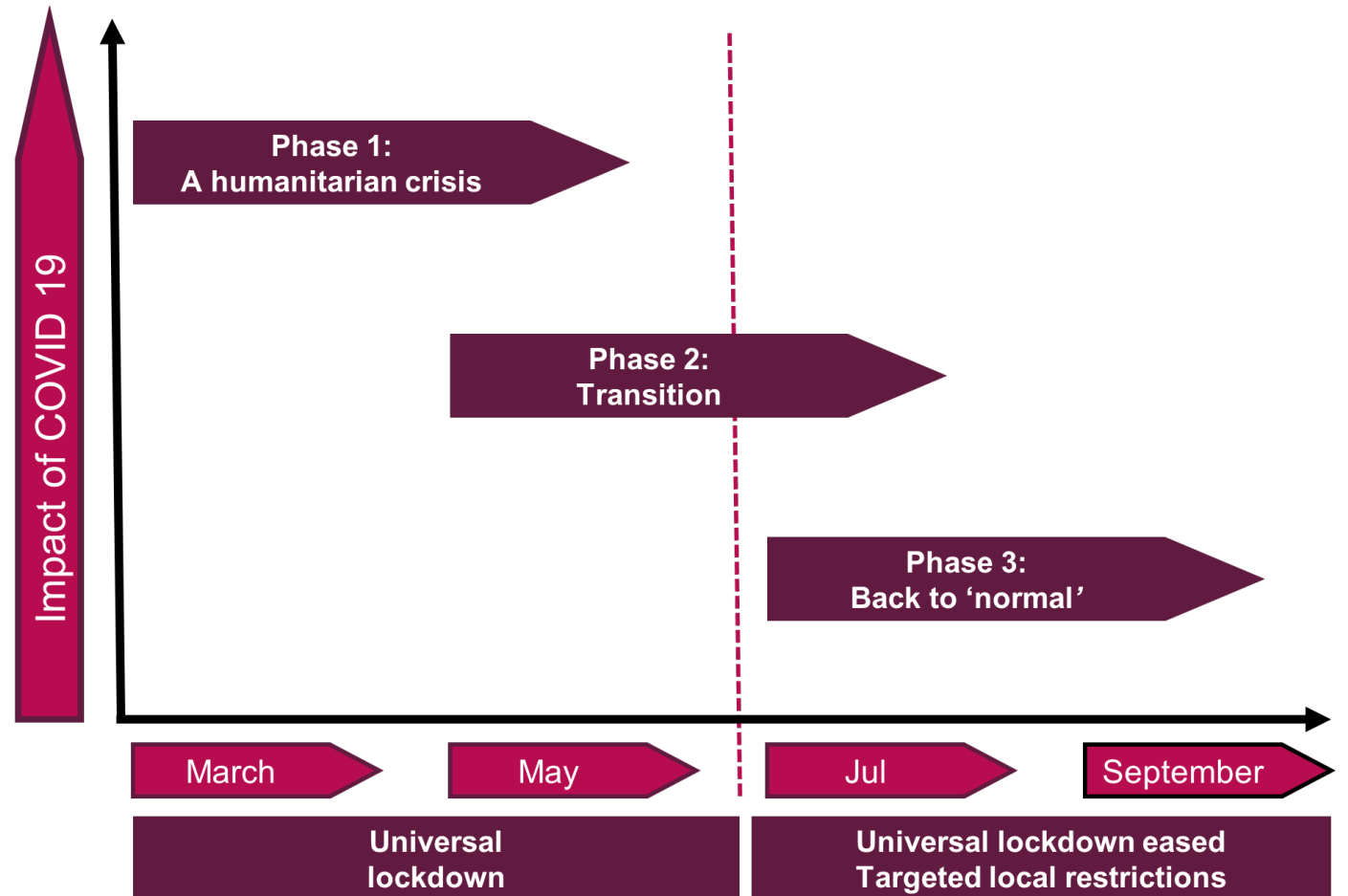


How Smaller Charities Responded to the COVID 19 Pandemic



Three Broad Overlapping Phases for Smaller Charities

- **Phase 1:** absorbing the shock of lockdown; taking stock of the implications; planning and implementing a response.
- **Phase 2:** adapting and adjusting provision in response to needs and circumstances.
- **Phase 3:** putting plans in place to resume core provision; facing up to the long-term effects of the pandemic.



**The Distinctiveness of Smaller Charities
During the COVID 19 Pandemic**



A Distinctive Service Offer

Who smaller charities supported set them apart as distinct from other types of providers...



People disproportionately affected by COVID 19 due to characteristics such as ethnicity, poverty and ill-health.



People who struggled to access or understand public health guidance due to language, literacy and digital exclusion.



People for whom face-to-face or in person services were still needed due to isolation and lack of support networks.

Focus on **addressing need** and providing **human contact** in areas where **public services were less visible or active**



*“It is about helping people and being at the front line... We’re used to firefighting, and we’re used to not being paid for stuff that we do, and doing it anyway. So I think for us, it’s just our norm. And we never have enough money anyway, so I think it’s definitely a cultural think. **And because you’re based in communities, working with communities**, it’s hard, if somebody’s got a real face, and you know their name, and where they live, it’s very hard to say, ‘ooh actually we’re a bit risk averse so we won’t deliver any services.’ You can’t can you, you just can’t do it.”*

(Smaller charity, Wrexham)



*“...if there is an outbreak in a particular community or a neighbourhood, and we know that there's VCSE organisation or **trusted organisation that operates in that neighbourhood** then we would like them to lead some of that key messaging rather than the council.”*

(Public Sector Stakeholder, Salford)



A Distinctive Approach

By **showing up** at the start, and **sticking around** for the duration, smaller charities were frequently **contrasted** with...



The Public Sector

Slow to react early on

Less personal

More remote

Mutual Aid

'On the ground' similarly early

Dissipated over time

Less co-ordinated



a **consistent and trusted presence** for vulnerable communities throughout the pandemic



*"Small charities can do what we struggle with – that **personal touch, getting to know someone, offering them a consistent face, they speak to the same person and build a relationship.** If you're that resident and you've not spoken to someone all week that continuity is really important."*

*"The small charities have **scaled up, increased their capacity and in a short space of time.** As a big organisation...we had 20 people trained on our inquiry line and **you speak to a different person each time**".*

(Public Sector Stakeholder, Ealing)



A Distinctive Position

Smaller charities were recognised for their unique ability to **reach certain communities** and get **support to them fast**



Disadvantaged neighbourhoods



Communities of faith or ethnicity



People seeking asylum



People experiencing poor mental health

Smaller charities were seen as **trusted conduits** for information and communication about the pandemic

But, **uncertainty about the lasting impact** on relationships with the public sector, particularly among **Black, Asian and minority ethnic -led charities**



*“So, (they) **came together very very quickly** to pull together an offer for people who were not known to the mental health trust and who needed that mental health support. And we wouldn't have been able to mobilise something that quickly with a statutory organisation.”*

*“The **flexibility they had to deliver something in a very different way**, in a COVID way. But the way in which **they responded to do that in such a short space of time**, and with the link that they have in the reach that they have into wider (voluntary sector) partners was really well valued...”*

(NHS Commissioner, Salford)

The Value of Smaller Charities During the COVID 19 Pandemic



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England & Wales 

"Well, the word that immediately sprang to mind...was 'values'. What's the reason why they were set up? And that was to keep their communities safe, alive and well, and so they responded immediately. It is that value of small, where [in contrast] if you were cogs in the chain [of a bureaucracy] that need to be signed off, they can just do it. And the reduced level of governance definitely helps."

(Public sector stakeholder, Bassetlaw)



Value to Individuals and Communities

Smaller charities' work to **promote and preserve positive wellbeing** has been to the fore...



Keeping people physically safe and well fed through providing food and access to medicines.



Mitigating the impact on mental health brought about by lockdown, shielding and social distancing.



Providing information to people confused by government communications or by rumours circulating in their community.

Ensuring people and communities emerge from pandemic in a better position than may otherwise might be...with **less need for acute public services**



Value to the Economy

Although **economic downturn** and **funding pressures** are likely to reduce smaller charities' economic footprint, this has been **maximised** through...



Continuing to employ local people, limited use of furlough or redundancy



Accessing pots of funding to support crisis response that could not have been brought in by other providers

However, grants often small-scale and short-term and **unlikely to offset loss of income** from rental or trading



Value to Public Services

Most smaller charities focussed their work on supporting people and communities **most likely to be adversely affected** by COVID 19



Reducing the risk of people in extremely clinically vulnerable groups contracting the virus



Efforts incurred very little additional cost to the public sector



Minimising demand on the health system during when acute care was stretched to the limit

This is in addition to **longer-term upstream benefits** from mitigating the wider effects of lockdown



Added Value

Three main ways that smaller charities have been able to **add value to what was happening locally** during the pandemic



Using their networks and partnerships to maximise the effectiveness of the initial crisis response



Reassigning staff and volunteers to new roles to meet new needs as they emerged

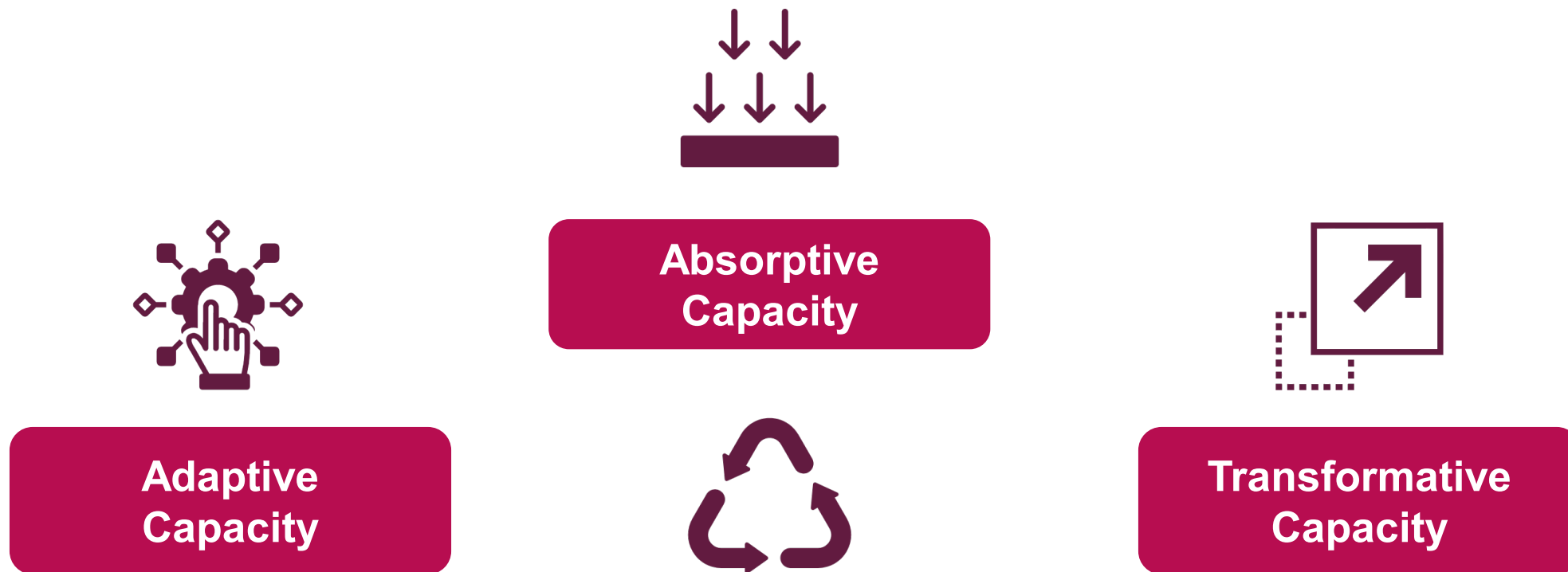


Communicating government messages to communities where these were not getting through

However, many smaller charities – Black, Asian and minority ethnic -led organisations in particular - feel that **this value remains poorly understood**



Rethinking the Value of Smaller Charities



Ultimately, need to recognise that **smaller charities' response to the pandemic is evidence of their value...**

...and that **social value runs through everything** smaller charities do

Challenges Facing Smaller Charities Due to the COVID 19 Pandemic



Consistent Challenges Facing Smaller Charities

These apply regardless of field or size – reflecting the sheer force and universality of the shocks faced



1. Service user and community needs

- Increase in existing need
- Changes in need linked to adverse impacts of COVID 19
- Identifying and addressing new need



2. Financial and human resources

- Declines in funding
- Funding unpredictability and volatility
- The specificity of funding for COVID 19 activity
- Staff wellbeing and guarding against burnout



3. Relationships and networks

- Tension between online and face-to-face provision
- Retaining volunteers and planning for new forms and levels of volunteering
- Lack of coordination in some instances



*“At its most extreme we found that a family
was living in a shed.”*

(Smaller charity, Ealing)



*“For the funders they need to realise that **right now small charities need unrestricted funding** because things can change before they know it which makes it easier for them and **easier for us to keep doing the activities our communities need** without worrying about the finances.”*

(Smaller charity, Wrexham)



*“... (we) have found **funding significantly and adversely affected as a result of the pandemic...with sector cuts on the horizon alongside expected spikes in need**”*

(Smaller charity, Ealing)



*“...it is difficult for us to switch online because **the community we serve most of them are not people who use online.** And also, asylum seekers, they are destitute, and it is difficult for you to think they have access to IT – **they can’t afford to pay for internet, or they don’t know how to use.**”*

(Smaller charity, Salford)

Policy Recommendations



A Call for National and Local Action

How to foster **local ecosystems of providers** capable of absorbing, adapting and contributing to **transformational change**?

#1

Fostering a thriving and resilient population of smaller charities

#2

Long-term, flexible, core funding for smaller charities

#3

Investing in social and community infrastructure

#4

Putting social value and wellbeing at the heart of public commissioning and procurement

#5

Enhancing digital inclusion and service delivery



The Value of Small in a Big Crisis

Chris Dayson, Leila Baker and James Rees

With: Ellen Bennett, Beth Patmore, Katie Turner, Carol Jacklin-Jarvis & Vita Terry

Find out more and download reports

www.lloydsbankfoundation.org.uk/we-influence/the-value-of-small-in-a-big-crisis

www.shu.ac.uk/news/all-articles/features-and-comment/what-the-pandemic-has-taught-us-about-community

Panel discussion

- **Sharmarke Diriye** - Programme Lead at GOSAD
- **Lorrisa Roberts** - Chief Executive at Advance Brighter Futures
- **Stephen Brown** - Head of Corporate Services at Bassetlaw District Council
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- **James Rees** - Reader and Deputy Director of ICRD, University of Wolverhampton, and co-author of the report
- **Duncan Shrubsole** (Chair) - Director of Policy, Comms & Research at the Foundation

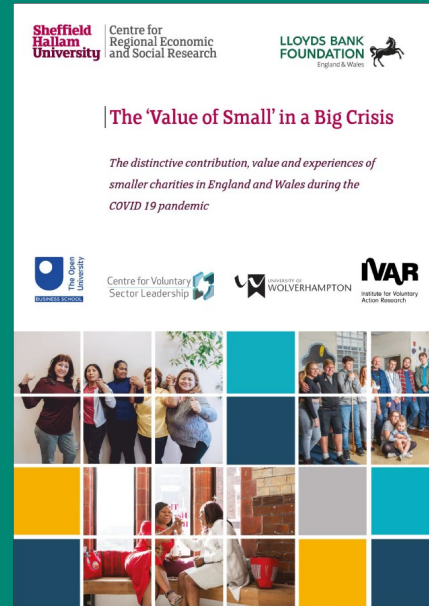


If you have a question for the panel, please use the Q&A box



Thank You

Download your full or summary copies of
The Value of Small in a Big Crisis report by visiting bit.ly/VoS2021



Full report



Summary report