

Written evidence submitted by Sported

DCMS's Call for Evidence on the Impact of Covid-19 on DCMS sectors

The evidence we are submitting primarily addresses your first question - What has been the immediate impact of Covid-19 on the sector? - specifically in relation to community sport.

INTRODUCTION

Sported is largest network of Sport for Development organisations in the UK, with over 2,600 members who are all using the power of sport to transform the lives of disadvantaged young people and build stronger, safer communities.

We specialise in supporting the survival, growth and long-term sustainability of local community organisations. The majority of community sport groups in the UK are under-funded and under-resourced, often run on shoestring budgets by only a handful of dedicated staff and volunteers, but their ability to engage and enhance the lives of the young people and tackle the problems that matter in their local community is unrivalled.

Our members are all using the power of sport and physical activity to prevent and counter the most pressing societal issues impacting young people today – youth violence, community cohesion and mental health, to name but a few. We exist to help these organisations survive and thrive.

INTRODUCING OUR MEMBERS

2,680 SPORT CLUBS, YOUTH GROUPS & SMALL CHARITIES USING SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT

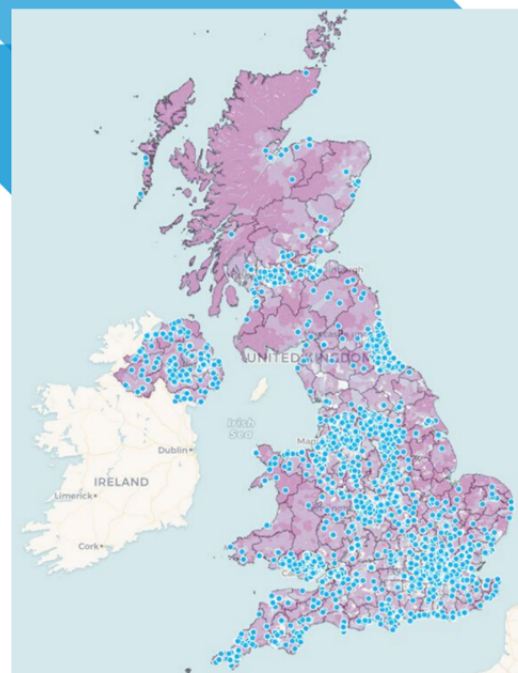
Delivering in the UK's most deprived communities

33% LOCATED IN 20% MOST DEPRIVED AREAS

Reaching over

484,000 + YOUNG PEOPLE

Improving young lives and communities across five social outcomes:



But these community groups need our support to survive...



Numbers of members accurate as of 31 March 2020
Other figures based on most recent information supplied by Sported members

Our response to the Coronavirus crisis is to support members through very uncertain times and prevent as many members as possible from folding. We set up the Community Pulse survey in mid-

March to gather insight from our members on the challenges they are facing at their group and within their communities. The purpose of the Community Pulse is to listen to our members so that we can tailor our support to best help their needs, and to escalate the needs and views of our members to other stakeholders through our position as a trusted voice for the sector.

Created on Survey Monkey, the Community Pulse offers a constant line of communication between Sported and our members. It captures information on stresses and strains on their community groups including operational challenges, risk of closure, wellbeing of group leaders and impact on people within their community. It also provides an opportunity for members to say what help would be most beneficial from Sported and other support agencies.

The survey went live on Thursday 19 March and will remain open throughout the period. Summaries are updated on a weekly basis and can be viewed [here](#) along with a link to the survey itself.

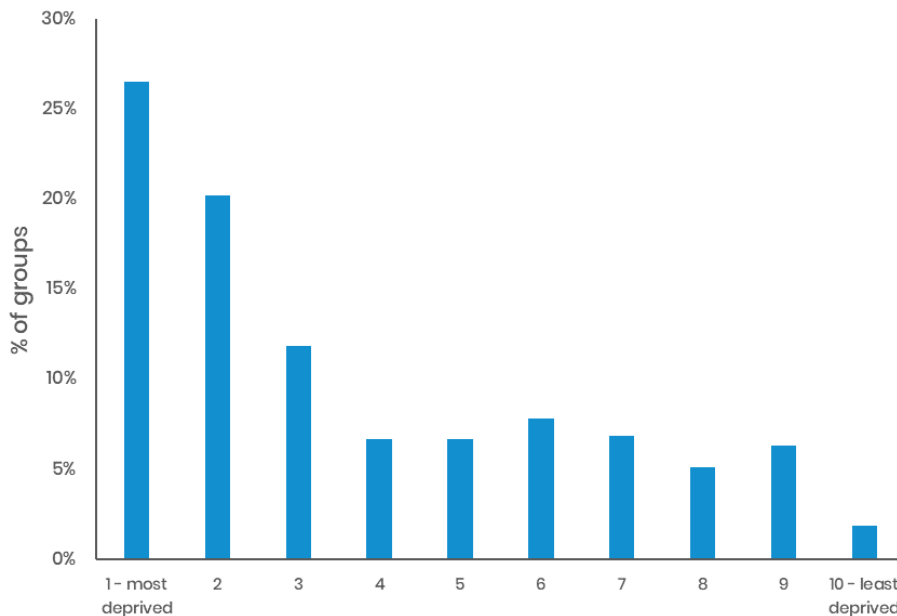
COMMUNITY PULSE SUMMARY

Data correct as of 19th April 2020.

Respondents: 538

(240 completed via online link, 298 completed over the phone with Sported staff member)

47% of respondents are located in the bottom 20% areas of deprivation.



69% of respondents are from England, 14% from Northern Ireland, 11% from Scotland and 6% from Wales.

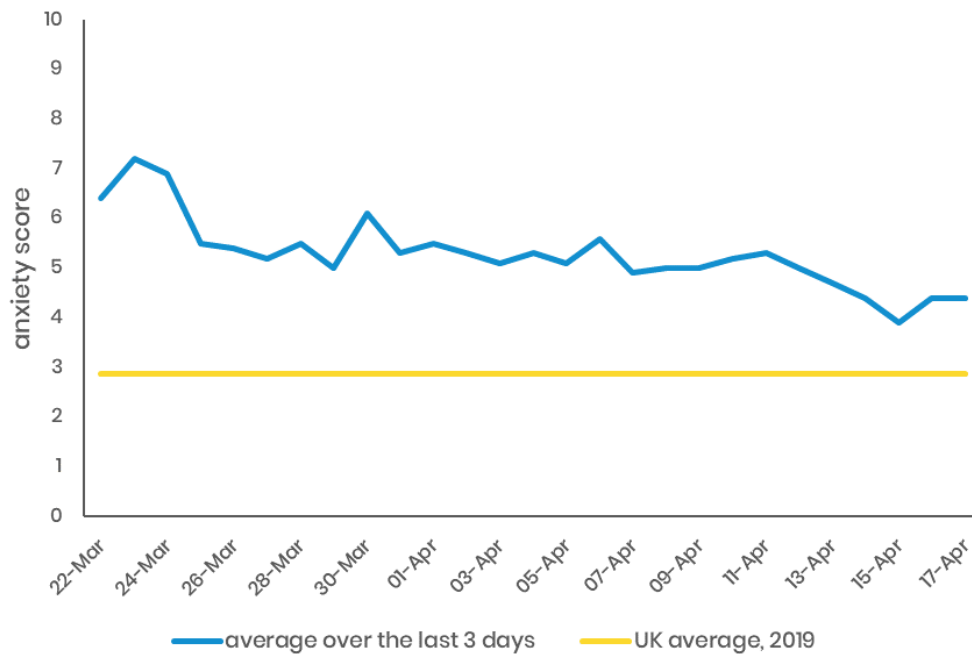
This summary covers:

- Group leaders' anxiety
- Challenges facing community sport groups
- Chances of survival for community groups
- Areas where community groups most need support
- How groups are adapting

Anxiety

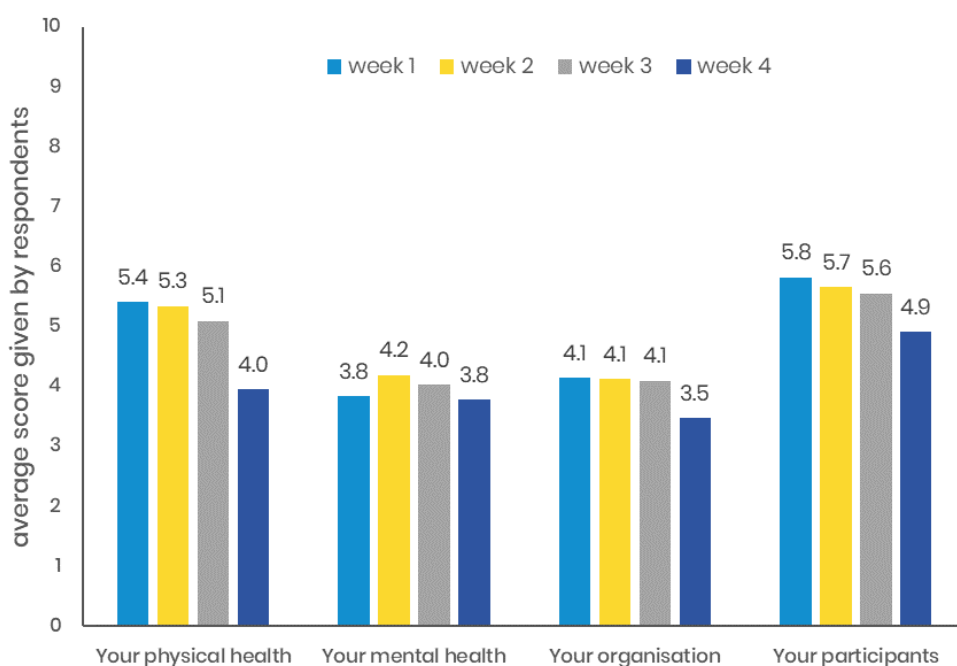
The self-reported anxiety levels of community group leaders peaked around 22nd-24th March but is slowly declining towards normal levels.

Reported levels of anxiety – ONS measure
 [0 = not anxious at all, 10 = completely anxious]



Community group leaders are most anxious about their participants. Although group leaders' anxiety over their own physical health is reducing as the weeks pass, their anxiety over their mental health is remaining fairly constant.

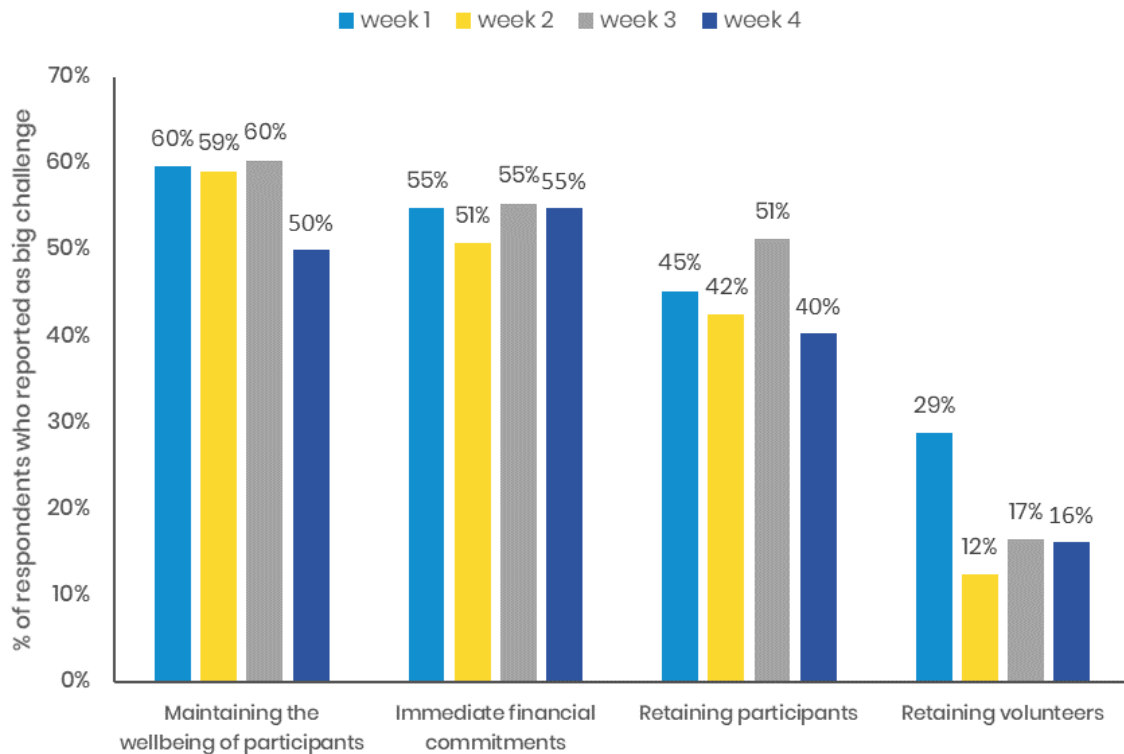
Reported levels of anxiety, in relation to different aspects



Challenges

Maintaining the wellbeing of their participants and immediate financial commitments remain the biggest challenges facing community sports groups.

Biggest current challenges reported by members



On retaining participants, respondents said:

“engagement has dropped from 40 per night to around 10 young people engaging with us online.”

“We hope young people will come back to the club and we can start all over again but concerned this will take a long time to sort out.”

Chances of survival

1 in 4 groups aren't sure that they will still exist in 6 months' time.

Respondents commented:

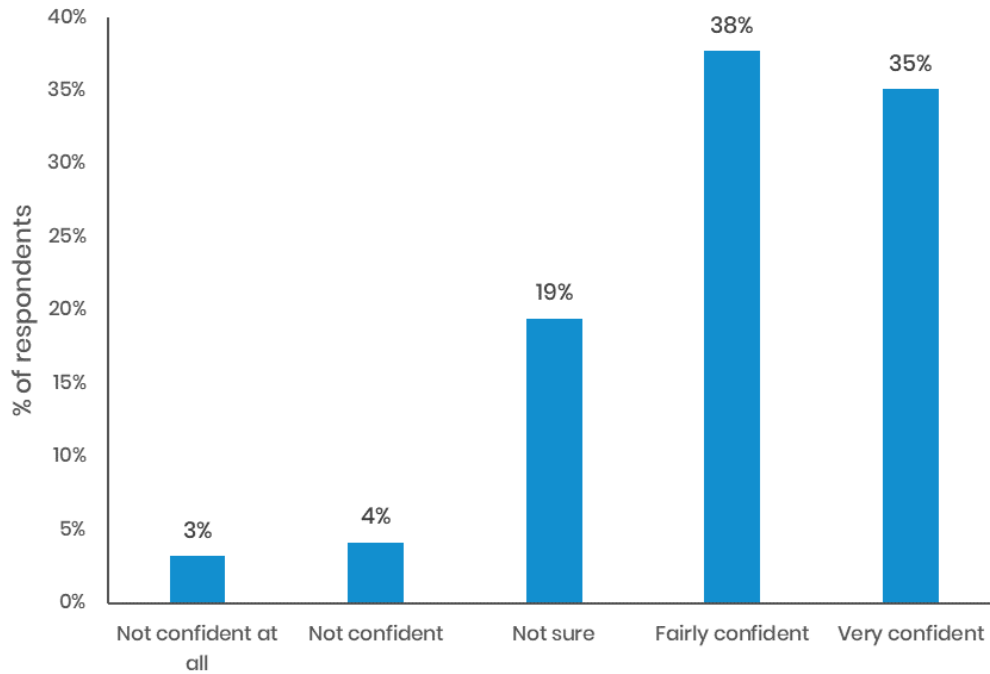
“Everything has closed down and there is no cashflow because of this. All the staff have been furloughed but still have to pay rent.”

“We have had to close our clubhouse and cancel all fundraising plans which has left us with no source of income to pay our coach and the bills for the club.”

“Currently have no money coming in, we may have to use their own money to support the club in the coming months.”

“We have had to totally close down which has meant all our income has stopped. We have spent the last 2 years building our community club, club house and income streams and just as it has got going it has been stopped.”

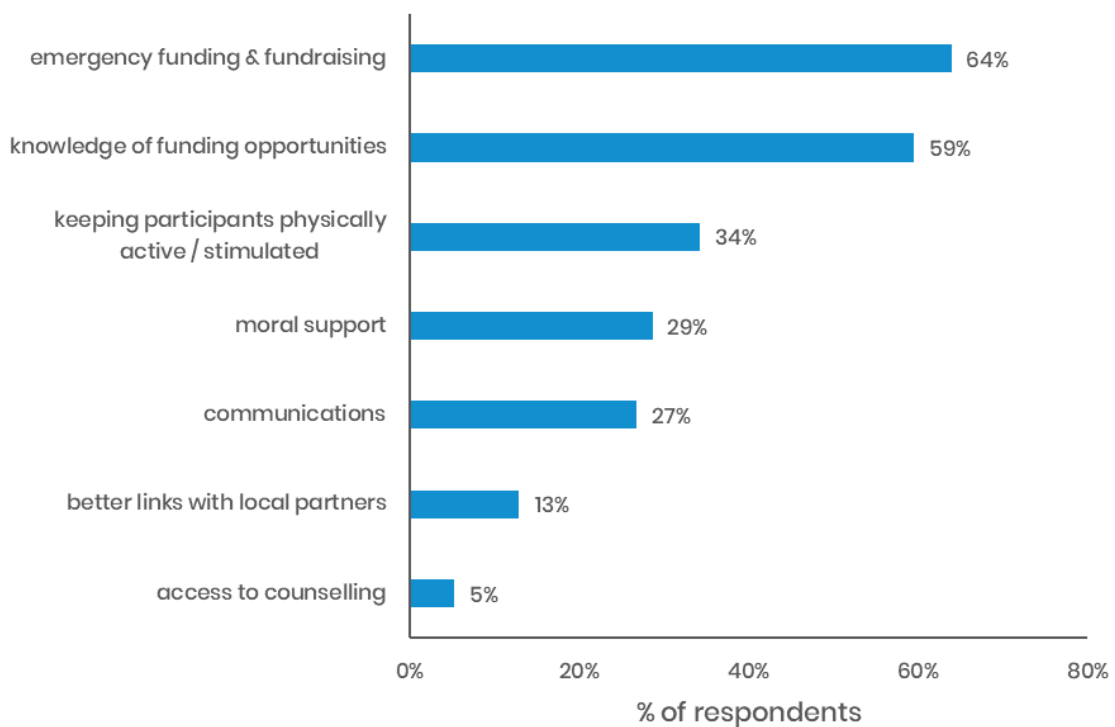
Confidence of group’s survival in 6 months’ times



Support needs

Community groups immediate needs are around funding and fundraising.

Immediate support needs reported by members



A few community groups commented that they face additional complications due to the nature of their venue or activity.

"It is very unlikely that we will open this summer as by the time lockdown is lifted and things go back to a bit of normality it would take 6 weeks to get the pool ready for a 4 week season of which the income wouldn't cover the expenditure (outdoor lido)."

"Due to our venue being converted into an emergency hospital no idea when or if we will be able to fulfil this season (wheelchair basketball club)."

"can't even coach through zoom due to guidelines of needing multiple coaches (gymnastics club)."

How community groups are adapting

18% of groups are now engaging with participants virtually. This has increased each week. This includes delivery of activity and social connection with participants.

"We have run competitions online, given some coaching to our more vulnerable participants and have set 24 challenges for the kids."

"we are engaged with young people via social media and keeping spirits high."

8% of groups say that volunteers (or staff) are refocusing to support the Covid-19 effort within their communities.

"Turned into a food bank using staff to deliver food to vulnerable families in the community."

"We have closed to all the public but are open to help the local community who have nowhere else to turn or language problems (Bangladeshi group)."

"Helping a lot with food donations in the local community and have set up a helpline also to support around delivering food to the most vulnerable and to support people with their mental health."

Sported's response to date

- Review of our current projects and adapted to remote delivery where appropriate
- Increased our capacity dedicated to reaching out to members
- Checking in with our volunteers to understand their ability to support members at this time
- Developing support in new areas such as how to connect and delivery remotely
- Increasing the frequency of our Funding Bulletin, a detailed overview of funds currently available
- Coordinating with funders and partners including StreetGames to share insight and coordinate support

Sported will be furloughing a number of staff from 28 April 2020, but we will continue to support our members through a central core team during this period. Our focus during this time will also be on the rebuild of the sector and the support our members, and other community sport groups, are likely to need once current social distancing restrictions start to lift.