



ROOM TO RENT

The impact of the COVID-19 crisis on Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise organisations who rent out rooms in Manchester

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

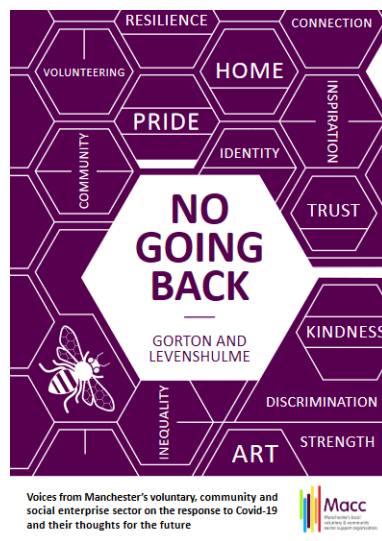
Thank you to all of the interviewees for your openness and generosity in giving your time. A list of the organisations that participated is given in appendix 1.

Thank you to the advisory group for helping to shape the research and commenting on the findings.

This report is the latest “No Going Back” publication from Macc, Manchester’s voluntary, community and social enterprise sector support organisation, following on from our two previous reports:



[No Going Back](#)



[No Going Back:
Gorton and Levenshulme](#)



INTRODUCTION

How many of us had ‘pandemic’ in our risk register? This is the title of a recent report by Community Matters, and it’s a good question. Whilst we encourage organisations to consider all the possible risks they might face, the subsequent scoring and ranking of those risks would have put a pandemic towards the bottom of things to tackle – some way below slips and trips and the boiler needing to be replaced. Yet here we are, on the anniversary of the first UK lockdown, still reeling from the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic.


Community buildings are widely considered to be the beating heart of local communities. Where they exist in a community, they are often the catalyst for great things happening in that community. People may use them to mark significant life events, groups will hold activities there, councillors will hold their surgeries there, and statutory services may deliver vital activities from them. All in all, often with minimum investment, community buildings deliver for their communities. There is evidence that points to the lack of community facilities in some urban spaces as being contributory to the lack of social capital in those areas.

So what happens to these spaces when a pandemic strikes and they are forced to close their doors? What happens to the activities that would normally take place in the community buildings? What

happens to the volunteers and the groups that manage or operate from the community settings? Where a community building, running at minimal cost to the local taxpayer and generating its own income to cover its running costs, suddenly finds itself unable to offer services or generate income, what happens?

Room to Rent is a report about the community buildings sector in Manchester. It presents the findings from a set of semi-structured interviews with a selection of organisations managing buildings around the city for the benefit of their local communities. The aim was to have conversations with a cross-section of organisations representing the many different communities in the city. So, we have some centres located in areas of high deprivation, centres based in predominantly BAME communities, centres in receipt of regular statutory funding and some run on a shoe-string by local volunteer management committees. The thing they all have in common is they all rent out spaces to generate income.

The aim of the report is not to say how badly the pandemic has affected these centres – it doesn’t need any kind of report to say that suddenly pulling essential income from organisations is going to have a detrimental effect on them - but rather to determine how the centres have reacted to their changed circumstances, positively or negatively. Once these various



reactions have been analysed, it can be determined if there are any wider lessons we can learn regarding this essential but often overlooked segment of the VCSE sector. Is the current funding model for community buildings sustainable, for example? Other reports have attempted to explain in more academic detail how community buildings add to the overall social capital of neighbourhoods, how they

enable communities to respond quickly to new situations, and how they generate economic benefit as well as social benefit to their localities. Room to Rent presents a snapshot of how some centres have responded to the pandemic in Manchester, and draws some conclusions about the frailty or otherwise of these precious resources.



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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following findings are based on interviews with 17 people from 17 organisations between November 2020 and February 2021.

1. Almost all room hire and other building-based services such as cafes stopped during the pandemic and along with it, a huge range of activities. Due to the nature of the activities, it is unlikely that many of them will have transferred online. The wider function of the organisations as community hubs also, in the main, stopped.
2. The formally contracted hire of rooms on a weekly basis from health service providers was an important source of income for some organisations.
3. Office rental continued with very little change or reduction in income.
4. It seems highly likely that activities such as sport, craft, dance, youth clubs, cooking will return once restrictions are lifted.
5. There are concerns that demand for room hire for activities such as meetings, conferences, and training will significantly reduce as they have successfully transferred online.
6. The overall loss of income for the 12 organisations that provided figures was £336k with individual losses ranging from £1.6k to 105k.
7. Six organisations were able to replace their income entirely, three to some extent and seven to a limited extent or not at all.
8. Four organisations made staff redundant and one is now being run by the trustees as a result.
9. Overall confidence that organisations will still be running in 12 months is high with only four of the organisations giving a rating of seven out of 10 or lower.
10. Of the organisations that had reserves, only four used a significant amount.
11. Five organisations spent very little on COVID-19 building-related expenses. For the rest, expenditure ranged from £200 to £7.5k with one organisation spending £80k.
12. Most organisations are focusing on short-term planning as there are too many uncertainties to make longer term plans.



METHODOLOGY

A sample of VCSE organisations who earn income through renting out rooms was selected from a larger list to ensure there was some mix of:

1. Large/small organisations;
2. Organisations from North, Central and South Manchester;
3. BAME-led organisations and organisations with significant numbers of BAME beneficiaries;
4. Different types of organisations including faith, social enterprise and charities;
5. Organisations that provided different kinds of services; community centres, youth centres, conference and meeting venues, service organisations.

The data in this report was collected through semi-structured interviews based on a questionnaire (see appendix 2) with opportunity for organisations to talk about any issues that they thought were relevant. The questionnaire was sent to participants prior to the interview so they had time to gather some of the numerical information requested. The notes of the interview were sent to the interviewees to give them the option to correct any errors and to provide any additional information that they were not able to provide during the interview.

A total of 17 people from 17 organisations were interviewed between November 2020 and February 2021.

FINDINGS IN DETAIL

Room hire

Ad hoc room hire virtually stopped and this is where the vast majority of income has been lost. The only organisations continuing to hire or in some cases hiring for the first time are those providing healthcare services.

The huge range of activities in the list below gives some idea of what has been lost to our communities during the epidemic from organisations hiring rooms in just these 17 organisations. This is not a comprehensive list as we only asked organisations for a selection of the activities going on in their premises.

Sports and exercise: yoga, Taekwondo, netball, football, basketball, bowling, Tai Chi, Zumba.

Arts and leisure: dancing, cooking, theatre, art classes, rehearsal, performances, children's craft, scouts, music, cinema.

Health, education and support: welfare benefits advice, debt advice, job advice, drop-in for disabled adults, training courses, NHS checks, carers group, and youth clubs.

Governance and local democracy: councillor and MP surgeries, ward meetings, local consultations, meetings, conferences, campaigns, residents' associations.

Social: weddings and parties.

Some of these activities are known to have transferred online such as councillor and MP surgeries but it is likely that the vast majority have not. The formally contracted hire of rooms on a weekly basis from health service providers was an important source of income for some organisations. This provision, in some cases, continued throughout or started during the pandemic.

Office rental

There has been little change in income from office rental, despite some renting organisations not being able to use their offices during the crisis and furloughing staff or working remotely. In a few cases, participant organisations lost income due to reducing rent for organisations that were not able to make full use of their offices during the pandemic. Some organisations renting offices have or are planning to downsize, either due to loss of income or a change to remote-working. There was only one new office rental across all the organisations we surveyed. A very wide range of organisations rented offices including organisations working in arts, sports, youth, community engagement, refugee support, campaigning, provision of supplementary education, financial support, health, community grocery provision and older people support.

Linked services

Other services linked to the premises also closed down. Three organisations were operating cafes, two of which also did external catering. One organisation rented out parking during football matches and lost a significant source of income.

Will organisations return?

Organisations have made some attempts to find out whether and which organisations are likely to resume room hire after the pandemic by maintaining informal contact or surveys. Others, particularly very small

organisations which had gone into hibernation, were just hoping that room hire would return to normal once they opened up again. There was a degree of uncertainty from most organisations as one might expect: *“the big question for us is who will come back?”*

Most organisations thought that it was highly likely that activity-based sessions such as sport, fitness, arts and cultural activities would return as soon as they could, and this was confirmed by the contact they’d had with them. A small number did restart briefly in the period between lockdowns.

Some support groups and volunteer-led groups, especially those hit

hardest by the epidemic, such as those for older people and people with mental health problems, may not come back as they have ceased to operate.

The picture is far less positive for training, conferences and meetings as people may have got used to working digitally. One organisation that earns a significant part of their income from these kinds of activities, was forecasting a large drop in use.

The big question for us is: who will come back?

There was also worry whether councillor and MP surgeries would stay online rather than return to face-to-face meetings.

One of the organisations identified a

difference in risk approach between large organisations and smaller organisations. Smaller organisations were eager and willing to come back sooner. Larger organisations, such as Manchester City Council, were more risk averse, had stricter policies and were likely to take a longer time to return.

Impact on income

Office rental income has stayed the same with little changeover of tenants beyond what one might normally expect.

Room hire income has been drastically impacted for all organisations, apart from one where the increased usage by the health service led to a 20% upturn in room hire income.

The individual loss in income, for the 12 organisations which supplied information, varied between £1600 and £105k with most being in the region of £10k to £40k.

online fundraising, maintaining some limited on-site services, and, for some, new contracts. In the case of contracts, this meant replacing unrestricted income with restricted

Percentage of overall income lost	0-20%	20-40%	40-60%	60-80%	80-100%	Not collected
Number of organisations	5	2	2	4	2	2

The impact on income for the organisation varied depending on: whether the organisation delivered services, the overall income of the organisation and the balance between office rental and room hire income. For two organisations it was 100% of their income. For one it was only 2% of their income.

income and the accompanying lack of flexibility. One organisation received a loan which will have to be repaid.

The total income lost since March 2020 for the 12 organisations that gave figures was approximately £336K¹. One organisation increased its income.

The organisations least able to replace funds were either small organisations with limited capacity to search for alternatives, or organisations whose business depended to a large extent on hiring out rooms.

Replacement of lost income

Six organisations managed to replace their income entirely, three to some extent and seven to a limited extent or not at all. For those organisations that did manage to replace their income, the critical funding source for most was the government furlough scheme. Other sources were: Discretionary Additional Restrictions Grant Scheme, the National Lottery, the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund, a range of small grants or

The data for this report was collated at the end of the first lockdown so there is uncertainty about the impact on organisations as the lockdowns continue. *“We imagine the current lockdown will have the same financial impact but not the same level of support. We don’t yet know exactly what the impact looks like but are keeping close track of finances. We’ve probably lost at least another £20,000 through this second lockdown. We chose not to re-furlough people for only one month, plus the impact on staff the first time wasn’t good.”*

¹ The way that organisations calculated loss of income was not entirely consistent so this figure is indicative only of the amount lost.

Use of income

Unsurprisingly, given how the sample was selected, for most

Room hire income is our independence, it's freedom.

organisations the income received from rental is critical. It covers all or a significant part of core costs including staff and building-related costs. For all it has an extra importance, as it is unrestricted income that can be spent on whatever the organisation needs it for, to fund new activities or to subsidise the use of rooms for others or to supplement existing activities. As one organisation put it: *"room hire income is our independence, its freedom"*.

Impacts on organisation and activities

Some of the impacts on organisations were due to loss of income but many were due to pandemic restrictions on activities.

Staff, volunteers and trustees

Four organisations made staff redundant due to loss of income from room hire or the closure of services such as a nursery or cafes. One heavily impacted organisation made its entire staff redundant and is now being run by its trustees.

Most organisations with staff furloughed some of them and ceased to use sessional staff. Where organisations had volunteers, there was a large reduction in the use of volunteers especially older volunteers and those with health issues. There was considerable worry by some of the organisations about the wellbeing of their staff and volunteers.

Café users come to connect with people, to not feel lonely. So much so that we found users hanging around outside because this is their space, where they want to be and where they feel comfortable.

Services

The major impact for Manchester's communities is the loss of all the activities that are run by the organisations that hired out rooms. The organisations ceased to act as community hubs where communities come together, meet one another, either in an activity or by using the café or common space.

“Café users come to connect with people, to not feel lonely. So much so that we found users hanging around outside because this is their space, where they want to be and where they feel comfortable”.

Some organisations provided some measure of alternative services through outreach or online activities. There is fear that some of the organisations that used to rent rooms will not return because they have ceased to operate: *“It’s not just about the restrictions, it’s about the people. The people who ran the sessions may not want to, or be able to return”.*

Confidence that the organisation will be running in 12 months?

confidence level (1 low-10 high)	6	7	8	9	10
number of organisations	1	3	3	1	9

Overall, most groups were very confident that they would be still running in 12 months. For three of the groups, their confidence came from being backed by a housing association. However, several groups were worried about what would happen if the crisis didn’t end in the next few months, or other pressures, *“the hard thing is, if something else was to happen we’d be floored ... essentially, as an organisation we are feeling vulnerable.”*

Use of reserves

Five of the organisations had either very low or no reserves. Four of the organisations used a significant proportion of reserves varying from 15% to 95% and one received a loan. One of these organisations used reserves for redundancy costs, and the others to subsidise running costs.

There was some concern that there would be more need to use reserves during the second period of lockdown.

Extra building-related costs due to the crisis


Five of the organisations had few costs either because their buildings

were not

being used or the building needed very little in the way of adaptation.

Costs for other organisations ranged between a few hundred and a few

The hard thing is, if something else was to happen we'd be floored... essentially, as an organisation we are feeling vulnerable.



thousand pounds (£200 to £7500) with one exception, a venue that needed very significant work done on ventilation and access to toilets, where the cost was £80k. Extra costs were for signage, screens, stickers, barriers, covers, wipes, hand gel, masks and sanitisers.

Future plans²

It's hard to know what to do, things have changed so much with all the different tiers we've been through


The experience of most organisations is that firm planning for six months ahead is simply not possible, there are too many unknowns, *"It's hard to know what to do, things have changed so much with all the different tiers we've been through. Organisations are planning a few weeks ahead or just playing it by ear and seeing what happens. We're not giving up! We just don't know exactly what it will be like yet."*

Just dealing with the constantly changing environment has been a major struggle *"I have spent a huge amount of time reading through guidance... The guidance for*

community centres came out two weeks into the second lockdown, it's not good enough. The first time it was the night before. And when you do finally get the guidance, it's just really inaccessible."

Some organisations have used the extra time they've had during the pandemic to make new relationships leading to new opportunities or to think about improving their buildings and grounds to increase income, to improve their advertising and are applying for grants to do so. For some organisations, the pandemic has meant a significant rethink of their business model, either because of their learning during the pandemic or because of fears about the future viability of their previous model.

² the survey was carried out before the announcement of the government roadmap




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One organisation, based on their experience of making new relationships and providing new services during the pandemic, is planning to move away from reliance on room rental and to develop a wider range of services. Some organisations, especially community-based organisations where room rental is focused on activities, are fairly certain that the organisations that rented their premises will return. For other organisations, there is far less certainty.

An arts organisation is predicting it will lose 2/3 of its room hire income going forward as people have got used to working digitally and can hold meetings and mini-conferences

online. They are trying to develop a new model focused on applying for funding to provide services and allow artists and community groups to use rooms for free, using their rooms for their own purposes rather than hiring them out. They are also looking at funding to enhance one of the rooms to make it into a digital learning space.

An organisation that focuses on providing a meeting and conference space is also predicting that many of their previous hirers will not return, though it's difficult to know for sure as the normal mechanisms for assessing demand, such as advertising and receiving queries, are no longer functioning. Ironically, offers by private sector businesses, during the pandemic, to allow organisations to use their premises for free, may undermine their normal business model. *"There are lots of questions but difficult to know what the answers are"*. They are looking at moving towards offering shared office space, as many organisations are looking to downsize as their workers move to remote-working. However, there is worry that shared and open-plan office space may be less attractive as it may be less COVID-secure. They are considering investing in a high quality digital and video suite to attract some organisations that are having national or international meetings.



If there's an advantage to all this, it's that it has made us focus more on thinking about our triple bottom line, about what we do for the community and the planet.

Another option that some organisations are considering is transforming low-capacity rooms from hire to office rental. The pandemic has meant that all organisations have had to think about how their buildings are used. As one organisation put it: "If there's an advantage to all this, it's that it has made us focus more on thinking about our triple bottom line, about what we do for the community and the planet. We've always considered this, but as a result of the situation now we've been thinking even more about it. We want to be even more values driven."

CONCLUSION & DISCUSSION

This research is a snapshot of the experience of 17 organisations at a very unusual moment, one that none of us have had any previous experience of and one we hope will not be repeated. The focus for this research is in exploring the diverse experiences of a diverse set of organisations. No two VCSE organisations are the same and thus one should be careful about drawing definitive conclusions or applying the lessons learnt by one organisation to another. However, we are confident that at least some of the range of experiences presented in this research will resonate with the wider VCSE sector that rent out rooms. We were careful to pick a broad range of organisations to interview. Whether this is reasonably representative of the rest of the VCSE sector is difficult to know and could only be proved by a large-scale survey but our judgement based on our collective expertise is that it is likely to be.


This research, though it does include one faith-based organisation, does not explore the impact on the broader faith sector who rent out rooms. We are aware that there are many faith organisations across Manchester who both provide services and rent out rooms. However, they do not tend to be part of Macc's networks.

One clear and not unexpected conclusion is that room hire stopped except where the premises were being hired by health services. This

is where the income was lost, a sum in excess of £330k for the organisations who gave us figures.

Some organisations managed to replace all of this income but most didn't; they had to furlough staff or in some cases make staff redundant. Where the organisations that hire rooms are local and activity based, there is a high confidence that the organisations will start to hire rooms again as soon as they are allowed to and this is based on direct contact, to some extent, with those organisations. There aren't really any alternatives. You need a room to run a dance class; the Zoom alternative is only a temporary solution. There is far less confidence that hiring for performance, training, conferences and meetings will return to the same level as before the pandemic, however this is based on less evidence. No-one really knows what is going to happen and when. Will there be more digital conferences and fewer physical ones, more training online and less face-to-face training? How soon will full occupation in theatres, cinemas and music venues be allowed and will the audiences return?

For some organisations, formal contracted hire from a statutory body that continued during the pandemic was an important and continuing source of income. Having more of these services based in VCSE venues may be a way of offering greater security to community venues.



Income from office rental was largely unaffected. It seems likely that this may have been, at least partially, due to government subsidies for the organisations renting offices, but this was not investigated in this research.

Organisations that hired offices out continued to receive income to cover running costs and, in some cases, to cover a portion of staffing costs. A mixture of office rental, ad hoc room hire and formal contracted room hire may be a way of spreading risk. However, one must be very careful in drawing lessons from experience gained during such an unusual time.

Some organisations weathered the storm better than others. The ones that did best, based on this research, were medium-sized organisations (those with several staff) that run community venues hired out by local groups and who also run services or other activities. They had the management capacity to react creatively and dynamically to changing circumstances and the ability to divert focus from room hire to services. Small organisations, with only one or two staff members or those run by trustees didn't have the resources, financial or human, to operate differently, so went into semi-hibernation. Organisations who offered a more city-wide service primarily focused on room and office hire were hard hit financially and even if they had the human resource, did not have the flexibility or the desire to start offering other services.


There is an argument that could be made for investing in smaller

organisations to help them build capacity to deliver other services, to increase staff numbers and skills, so they have a greater degree of resilience as circumstances change. However, the same argument could be made about most small organisations.

A worrying finding is that five of the organisations have very low or no reserves. This reduces the flexibility of the organisation to develop new services and to respond to crises. Without the understanding of grant funders and COVID-19 related government funding, it is possible that some of these organisations might not have survived. As the lockdown continues and government grants are reduced, they may still be at risk.

One of the classic mantras of VCSE finance is 'diversification of income' and more specifically increasing income from sources other than grants and contracts. Depending on the type of income this can be unrestricted income, the most prized form of income, the income that organisations can spend on whatever they think is most important. This is something that all VCSE organisations will continue to try to obtain, regardless of whatever other pressures are on them. One of the consequences of the pandemic was that it reduced the flow of unrestricted income and thus arguably, the effectiveness of VCSE organisations to meet the needs of the people they serve.

At times, there has been considerable pressure from grant funders to push VCSE organisations



towards greater diversification. Financial diversification has been confused with organisational sustainability, a much broader and more complex concept. The pandemic was predicted and probably inevitable but it is not something that any VCSE organisation had prepared for, they had not built it into a business continuation plan. The impact on organisations depended both on the nature of their activities and their ability to respond to changing circumstances. It showed, once again, that income diversification is not sufficient. No-one knows what might happen. More important is the ability of the organisation to

flex, adapt and to plan in the short-term.

Finally, it is worth restating the importance of room hire and the work done by all the organisations we interviewed. The work they do, and that is done by other organisations that rent out rooms, supports a vast and wonderful range of activities, many of which have ceased to operate during the pandemic with unquantified impact on not just mental and physical health, but also on the democratic vitality of Manchester. We hope that they all will soon be able to fully re-open their doors.

FURTHER READING

Community groups in a crisis – Groundwork, November 2020

<https://www.groundwork.org.uk/about-groundwork/reports/communitygroupscovid-19/>

This research looks at the experiences of grassroots community groups during spring and summer 2020: how they have been affected by the impact of the virus, how they have responded to support their communities, and how they can be empowered to continue playing a key role in their neighbourhoods through the next phase of the crisis and recovery.

Value of small in a big crisis – Lloyds Bank Foundation, February 2021

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

This is a follow-on survey from the 2018 'Value of small' report. It looks at the distinctive contribution, value and experience of smaller charities in England and Wales during the COVID-19 pandemic, and examines how contributors to that earlier study have fared during the pandemic.

Co-op community wellbeing index, October 2020

<https://communitywellbeing.coop.co.uk/community-wellbeing-index-reports/>

The Community Wellbeing Index examines what it is that people value about their communities – including a sense of place.

Charity property matters survey, 2020 – Ethical Property Foundation, November 2020

<https://www.russell-cooke.co.uk/media/1042177/cpms-survey-2020.pdf>

The Charity Property Matters Survey is conducted bi-annually by the Ethical Property Foundation. The survey was launched pre-COVID-19 but ran the first few months of the initial lockdown. It provides a snapshot of the key issues and trends affecting charities with property.

Respond, recover, reset, the voluntary and Covid-19 - The Centre of People, Work and Organisational Practice, Nottingham Trent University, March 2021

<http://cpwop.org.uk/what-we-do/projects-and-publications/covid-19-vcse-organisation-responses/>

A regular survey undertaken in partnership with NCVO to ascertain the state of the VCSE sector. New reports are published every two months.

How many of us had pandemic in our risk register? A snapshot of experiences of community buildings during the lockdown of 2020 - Community Matters, January 2021

<https://www.sectorsupportnel.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/A-Snapshot-of-Experiences-of-Community-Buildings-during-the-Lockdown-of-2020.pdf>

In those places in which the community response has been strong and sustained, the key enabler has often been community buildings of every form and function. Research in this report shows that from youth centres to village halls, libraries to community hubs, the ability of communities to meet local need would have been significantly reduced if these buildings hadn't been there.



APPENDIX 1: PARTICIPANTS

Trinity House Community Resource Centre, in the heart of Rusholme, exists to provide a safe and accessible community centre providing education, training, personal development and recreational services for the benefit of local children, young people, parents and carers.

4CT support people, neighbourhoods and communities across Greater Manchester through the development of services, partnerships and community facilities to improve opportunities and quality of life for residents. They run four community centres including the Grange, a multi-purpose community venue close to the Etihad stadium.

Aquarius Centre is based in the middle of the Aquarius estate in Hulme and is a hub for the local community. They work with local residents on activities they want to develop and get involved in. They run a health hub, educational and social activities and manage space available for hire.


Birch Community Centre work with the local community and other voluntary and statutory organisations to improve education, recreation and leisure opportunities for the Birch-in-Rusholme neighbourhood and surrounding postcodes. The Association maintains and improves the 100-year-old building making it more

able to meet current community needs and to adapt to the future.

Bridge 5 Mill Centre for Sustainable Living is a hub in Ancoats for groups, organisations and individuals working towards a more sustainable future – one that is greener, safer, healthier and equitable. It is part of the Fairfield Environmental Trust group and rents out office and meeting space to those who share their ethical principles of environmental and social justice.

Burnage Library, Activity and Information Hub is run by Friends of Burnage Library, in partnership with Southway Housing Trust and Manchester City Council. Located in the centre of Burnage, the Hub is run by a dedicated team of volunteers who run activities and educational events for community groups, children and adults. The Hub is also the base for an outreach library service.

Friends' Meeting House is a venue for conferences, meetings and events in central Manchester. As a Quaker-owned business, their work is guided by Quaker values. The revenue generated goes to fund charitable activities - helping to run places of worship and offer support to local groups working with refugees and other vulnerable people.



Gorton Community Centre is run by the community for the community, running activities such as dance classes, Zumba and older people's activities. It has a meeting room that can be hired and operates a community grocer from the centre. Advice sessions also run from the centre.

Higher Blackley Community Centre provides the people of Blackley and the wider community with an accessible, affordable and usable community space. They work with local people, support the older and isolated members of the community, and support improving health and wellbeing. The centre hosts a range of groups, such as arts groups, a theatre group, and exercise groups.

Khizra Mosque in Cheetham Hill is part of the nationwide UKIM Islamic organisation. It is both a place of worship for Muslims and provides several services, clubs and facilities for the local community, including a supplementary school teaching Arabic and the Quran.

Levenshulme Inspire is a community-led, multi-purpose venue delivering services that promote the wellbeing of residents of Levenshulme and beyond. They run several activities including events, classes and activities which benefit the local community as well as a café plus room and office space rental.


Manchester Settlement is rooted in the urban communities of Manchester. Based in Openshaw,

the charity delivers a range of services to meet the developing needs of individuals, families and communities. They deliver supported housing, community, family and childcare services so that people can be healthy, compassionate and empowered contributors to diverse communities.

Miners' Community Arts and Music is a regenerated social club in Moston, North Manchester. The centre provides space for local bands to rehearse, local artists to exhibit their work, a community cafe and larger function rooms that are available for events. The centre is also used by a number of local community groups including disability groups, drama and arts groups, and faith groups.


Moss Side Millennium Powerhouse is a charity based in Moss Side providing a Multi-Service Youth Hub for central Manchester and a range of services for young people which include; mental health, careers advice and guidance, specialist programmes for young people 16-19 who are NEET.

Simpson Memorial Hall in Moston is managed by the Simpson Memorial Community Association. The building has a variety of rooms and facilities including for theatre, music and meetings use which are available for hire. Several community groups and clubs use the centre including for amateur theatre, bowling and martial arts.



Tree of Life Centre in Wythenshawe is a centre for health and well-being, responding to the needs of the community and building resilience, independence and minimising social isolation. Services include an IT learning centre, job club, community café, supported volunteering and a second-hand furniture shop for those in the local deprived community to be able to afford good quality furniture.

Z-Arts is an arts and theatre hub (previously the Zion Arts Centre) in Hulme, housing a 225-seat theatre, a studio theatre, dance space, recording studios, art studios, gallery and cafe bar. They deliver creative learning and education through shows and participatory classes.



APPENDIX 2:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Briefly describe the work of your organisation (or lift from website or ask them for standard paragraph)
2. Which types of organisations continue to rent rooms from you:
 - office rent
 - room hire
3. What types of organisations have stopped renting rooms from you during the COVID crisis?
4. How likely are they to return? (e.g. statutory organisations that are no longer going to be renting rooms).
5. Have there been any new organisations booking spaces with you?
6. How has your monthly income from room rental changed since Mar 1st? What was your income in the corresponding period last year before COVID?
7. What does this figure represent as an approximate percentage of your overall income for that period before the crisis started?
8. How important is this income to your organisation overall and why? Or how would you have used this income?
9. Have you managed to replace that income and if so how?
10. What impact has this had on your:
 - Staffing
 - Services (including groups that use rooms but aren't charged)
11. What plans are you considering for the next six months of the crisis?
12. As you see things today, on a scale of 1-10, where 10 is high, how confident are you that your organisation will still be running in 12 months?
13. Have you used reserves to keep yourselves going? What percentage of the reserves you had, prior to the COVID reduction, have you used?
14. Have you incurred extra building related costs as a result of COVID, how much and what for? (screens, barriers, signs, tape, provision of hand gel, extra cleaning)
15. Is there anything else that you want to tell us?
16. Are you okay for us to use the name of your organisation in the report in a list of organisations we spoke to?
17. If yes to the last question, would you be okay for us to do a case study about your organisation if we think it would be useful (we'll check it with you before using)?
18. Any questions or feedback?
19. Are there any other organisations that you think it would be good for us to interview (contact details?)



APPENDIX 3: ADVISORY GROUP

Adrian Ball, Manchester Settlement
Anton Schulz, One Manchester
Claire Evans, 4CT
Jane Gant, Southways Housing
Jessica Waugh, Manchester City Council

Our thanks to the advisory group for helping to shape the research and commenting on the findings.

ABOUT Macc

Macc is a registered charity and works with a range of partners and other organisations to increase and develop the support available to the city's 3300+ voluntary organisations, community groups, charities and social enterprises.

Macc delivers a wide range of these services including:

- capacity building support for local groups
- support for local people wishing to volunteer (Volunteer Centre Manchester)
- policy support, insight and influence – including convening the city's Voluntary Sector Assembly
- distributing grants to local groups and projects
- celebrating the work of the sector and communities through our annual Spirit of Manchester programme.

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