



A Wellspring Settlement Report
The changing needs and aspirations of the Lawrence Hill
community in the Covid-19 crisis – March-July 2020

Gwendolen Brown, Nia Jones and Judith Kibuye
University of Bristol*

*written with support of Morag McDermont, Jack Nicholls and Jessica Sharratt (University of Bristol), and Alice Schuman and the staff of Wellspring Settlement. The research was funded by the University of Bristol's Temple Quarter Engagement Board

University of Bristol

Contents

Executive Summary	2
Wellspring Settlement as Community Hub	2
How the survey was conducted	2
Key Findings	3
Looking forward	4
Introduction	5
Analysis	7
Findings.....	8
Personal and Infrastructural Challenges	8
Pressure points	8
Accommodation and Safe Outdoor space	8
Finances and Employment.....	10
IT and Internet.....	11
Supermarkets, Food, Prescriptions and Shopping Deliveries.....	12
School Closures	13
Health Dimensions of the Pandemic.....	13
Pre-existing physical and mental health conditions	14
Social Isolation, anxieties, and uncertainty	15
Social Citizenship and Belonging.....	15
Community support networks	16
Neighbourly support.....	16
Concern for others and Social Responsibility	17
Wellspring Settlement and other existing support services	18
Ongoing needs of the community.....	19
Re-imagining post-lockdown life and need for change	19
Return to normality	19
Societal change and positivity.....	20
Conclusions.....	21
Reflections and Recommendations regarding Wellspring Settlement’s services	21
Priorities for future research	22
Bibliography	23

Executive Summary

Wellspring Settlement as Community Hub

Wellspring Settlement (WS¹) is an independent charity, formed in February 2020 through the merging of two community organisations, Wellspring Healthy Living Centre and Barton Hill Settlement. It is a community anchor with the mission to reduce both the cause and effects of social isolation. To achieve this mission, WS is guided by its impact areas including improving the community's economic resilience, inclusion, promoting stronger families, health and society. Upon COVID-19 being declared a pandemic and the ensuing lockdown announced by the UK government, a partnership was formed between community anchor organizations and Bristol City Council. The partnership established community hubs throughout Bristol where Wellspring Settlement became the hub for the residents of Lawrence Hill area.

The goals of the community hubs were to serve community members during lockdown by distributing food, collecting shopping, prescriptions, and providing other essential services. Driven by the community-centred practice and an ethos based on the impact areas highlighted above, WS opted for an evidence-based approach to address goals. In partnership with University of Bristol (UoB), WS conducted a survey to understand the changing needs of the Lawrence Hill community during the lockdown. This report explores the findings of this survey and aims to inform the development of hub services to best support the local community.

How the survey was conducted

The survey adopted a longitudinal design with data collected in 3 phases between March 20th to July 6th, 2020. Phase I took place at the beginning of lockdown (March 18th – 2nd April) and was conducted using a proforma designed by Settlement staff with responses from 55 WS service users (43 females and 12 males). For the subsequent phases the survey was developed and expanded by University of Bristol staff. Phase II involved 25 service users (22 female and 3 male) and was conducted between 9th – 29th April. Phase III was completed between 21st May - 6th July, with 15 respondents comprising 9 males and 6 females. All three phases involved a questionnaire that acted as an interview schedule for phone conversations between WS staff and volunteers and service users, though the extent to which the interview schedule guided conversations varied. Some of the data across the three phases came from routine phone calls with some service users. At the start of the phone conversation respondents were asked to confirm their consent and voluntary participation.

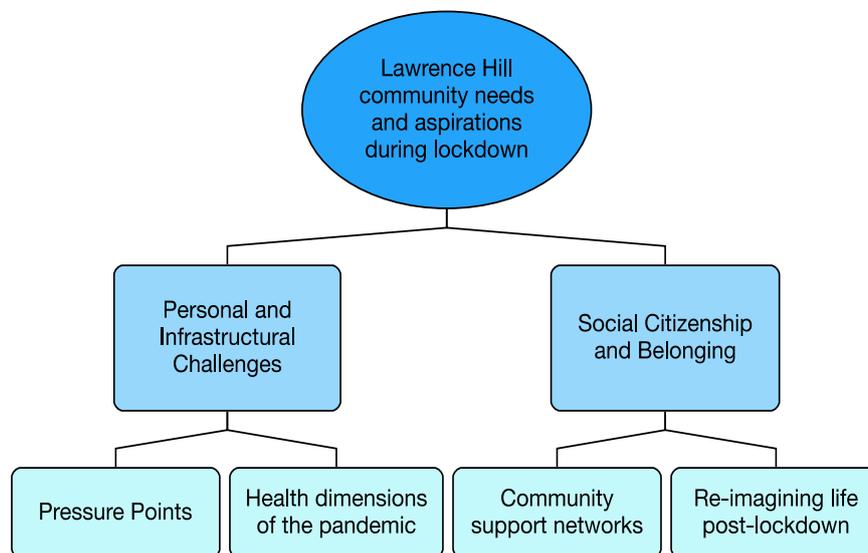
Phase I data did not employ computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS). Data from each question was converted from the excel spreadsheet into a Word document that enabled individual respondent's answers to be identified. This enabled a numerical analysis of responses. The analysis identified themes from the data which then structured the phase I report and also led to the redesign of the survey used in phase II and III, to capture

¹ In this report we use terms Wellspring Settlement, WS and the Settlement interchangeably

more detailed data from respondents. Phase II and III data analysis involved a step by step thematic analysis using CAQDAS, NVIVO. The steps involved familiarization with the transcripts, coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes defining themes and finally writing the report.

Key Findings

Thematic analysis of the survey produced two main themes. Firstly, ‘personal and infrastructural challenges’, which was divided into sub-themes: ‘pressure points’ and ‘health dimensions of the pandemic’. Pressure points refer to where lockdown restrictions further worsened existing problems such as accommodation and outdoor space, finances and employment, shopping and medical supplies, and school closures. Mental and physical health related issues are also explored under personal and infrastructural challenges. Secondly, the theme ‘social citizenship and belonging’ was divided into two sub themes: ‘community



support networks’ and ‘reimagining life post lockdown’. The first sub-theme, community support networks included neighbourly support, concern for others and social responsibility. Re-imagining life post-lockdown is the second sub-theme, which included both the desire for normality from many respondents and in some cases the need for societal change and personal growth. Others managed to find positives in their present experiences of lockdown, such as having more time to spend with family or feeling more appreciative.

The themes which were established through research with service users are resonant with the range of services provided by Wellspring Settlement which would suggest that, overall, services offered by WS appear well aligned with the needs of the local community. This conclusion has been reached following extensive qualitative data analysis, and the themes which have been produced inductively from the data share a similar organizational structure to the services offered by the Settlement. There is clear appreciation for the many forms of support offered by the Settlement amongst a large proportion of respondents to the survey.

Services which were particularly emphasised by participants as being important include the family centre garden; befriending services; food parcels and collecting prescriptions. As well as these direct services, respondents highlighted the important role that Wellspring

Settlement has played in assisting mutual aid amongst neighbours, for example through establishing WhatsApp groups, and by being a known provider of support for friends and neighbours who were concerned about someone else.

The main transition visible through the period of analysis is the increase in more future-facing responses in phase III, particularly with regards to personal ambitions and growth.² For example, responses gathered later on during lockdown (phase III) placed more emphasis on personal educational and employment goals. With regards to services offered by WS, this suggests the vital importance of employment support in the form of advice or training, as well as opportunities for adult education.

The survey limitations are summarized below:

- Non-representative sample in terms of gender and ethnicity, and the progressive reduction in sample size in each subsequent phase means comparison may not be realistic.
- Use of non-standardised data collection tool across the phases and writing down of the responses rather than recording and transcribing may lead to human error in the data collection process. Furthermore, generation of data from routine phone calls, rather than via interview schedule may blur the line on whether the words cited are direct quotes from respondents or whether meaning may have been lost in the data collection process.
- A large percentage of the open-ended questions addressed the concerns of the service users and may have led to a biased focus on challenges, potentially leaving out narratives that may have focused on opportunities and aspirations.

Looking forward

Most of the challenges experienced by respondents may have existed before the lockdown, with many of the long-standing infrastructural issues described by respondents in this research already having been documented in previous research, such as the community canvassing survey conducted by Barton Hill Settlement (2018). The emergency measures which have characterized the COVID-19 lockdown have intensified existing pressures, such as accommodation, finances and health issues, the consequences of which may long outlast the lockdown period itself. Thus, to continue to meet the needs of the community it will be important to continue to provide adaptable support post-lockdown.

Wellspring Settlement's services will remain a vital means of support to those navigating the ongoing challenges and uncertainties ahead. When asked what WS can do to help in the coming months most service users cited services already offered by the Settlement, further suggesting that the services are aligned well with the needs of the community. This study has found a continued need for many of the services offered by Wellspring Settlement, including befriending, employability support and financial advice.

² However, note that the phases II and III surveys specifically included a forward-looking question that was not part of the phase I survey.

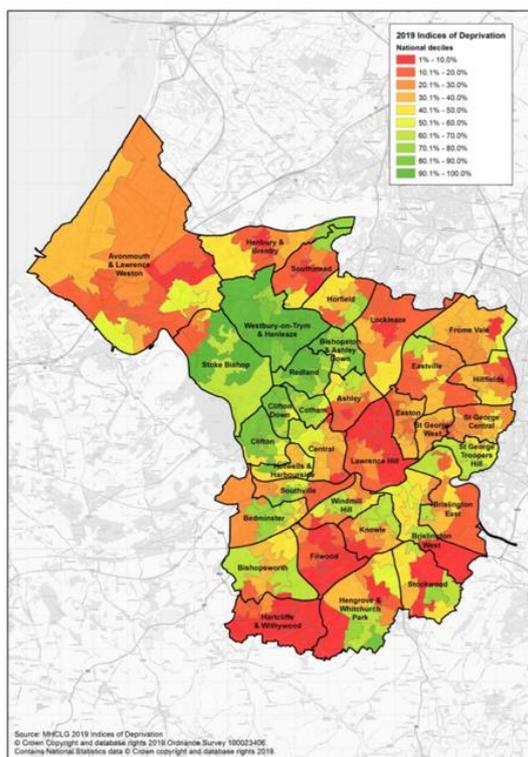
Introduction

In March 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, community hubs were established by Bristol City Council in partnership with community anchor organisations. Since becoming the community hub for residents of the Lawrence Hill area, Wellspring Settlement has provided support in the form of befriending, food parcels, and collecting shopping and prescriptions. In line with their community-led philosophy, Wellspring Settlement set up a survey of service users to understand the changing needs and aspirations of the Lawrence Hill community during the Covid-19 lockdown, in order to best align and develop hub services with the needs of the community.

Wellspring Healthy Living Centre and Barton Hill Settlement officially merged on 1 February 2020, forming Wellspring Settlement. Whilst both organisations have been working towards this moment since 2018, much work was still planned and in progress to bring teams and infrastructure together across the two sites in Barton Hill. The first all staff Development Day on 27 February was an opportunity to meet new colleagues, explore opportunities and discuss the future together. Then, with the outbreak of Coronavirus and subsequent lockdown, much of this was put on hold. The challenge of responding to the needs of the community was therefore compounded by two separate IT, database and staff systems, and many staff working from home, which also created complications in conducting an organisation-wide

survey.

Figure 1. 2019 National Deprivation Deciles by Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA)
Source: Strategic Intelligence and Performance using MHCLG 2015 and 2019 Indices of Deprivation



There were three phases of the survey, spanning in total the period from 18th March to 6th July. The following report, produced by Wellspring Settlement in partnership with the University of Bristol, encompasses analysis across all three phases of the survey. The present report takes a largely qualitative approach to analysis, thus for more quantitative details, please refer to the initial findings reports.³

Whilst the geographical spread of respondents to the survey was not strictly limited to the Lawrence Hill ward, the majority were from the BS5 area. Lawrence Hill is one of the most deprived electoral wards in the UK^{4,5} (Fig. 1). In 2015, Lawrence Hill also fell within the most deprived 10% of wards in terms of barriers to housing, which

³ See bibliography: Brown et al (2020, May and Aug); McDermont et al (2020)

⁴ <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/32951/Deprivation+in+Bristol+2019.pdf/ff3e5492-9849-6300-b227-1bdf2779f80>

⁵ However, since 2015, the Barton Hill and Stapleton Road Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) have moved out of the most deprived 10% decile within Bristol.

includes problems such as overcrowding, homelessness and affordability.⁶ Home ownership is low and more than 50% of residents live in social rented accommodation, with 66% living in apartments.⁷ Household overcrowding is also a problem with residents of Lawrence Hill experiencing almost double the rate of household overcrowding than in any other Bristol ward. The population of Lawrence Hill is diverse, with 60% of residents from black and minority ethnic communities.⁸

This report is timely, given recent research suggesting that more deprived areas are experiencing a higher rate of COVID-19 related deaths than more affluent areas;⁹ according to estimates by the Office for National Statistics (2020), the mortality rate in the most deprived areas of the UK could be more than double that of the least deprived areas. Whilst current research is preliminary, so far this correlation has been attributed in the media to cramped housing; people living in deprived areas being more likely to be crucial workers, and more likely to have long- term health problems (Forrest, 2020). This raises questions about the geographical variation in the impact of the virus, as well as the differential impact of lockdown restrictions on different areas.

The content of the report is organised as follows. Following this introduction, the methodology is outlined, which covers both data collection and data analysis and how this was divided amongst contributors to this report. The method of thematic analysis is outlined, with details on the conceptual frameworks as well as analysis decisions made throughout the process. The analysis section of the report is organised by the inductively driven conceptual framework and embeds quotes from the survey respondents to illustrate themes. Insights and comparisons across all three phases of the survey are included. Finally, conclusions and recommendations for further research are made.

The intention is that this report should provide useful insights both for Wellspring Settlement, as well as other organisations, into the needs and aspirations of the Lawrence Hill community during the COVID-19 lockdown and beyond. The crucial role played by the Settlement to many residents of the Lawrence Hill area was clear throughout the survey responses and is highlighted in the report. We hope that similar, community-led research can be continued, to ensure that services remain aligned with the needs of the area.

⁶ <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/32951/Deprivation+in+Bristol+2015/>

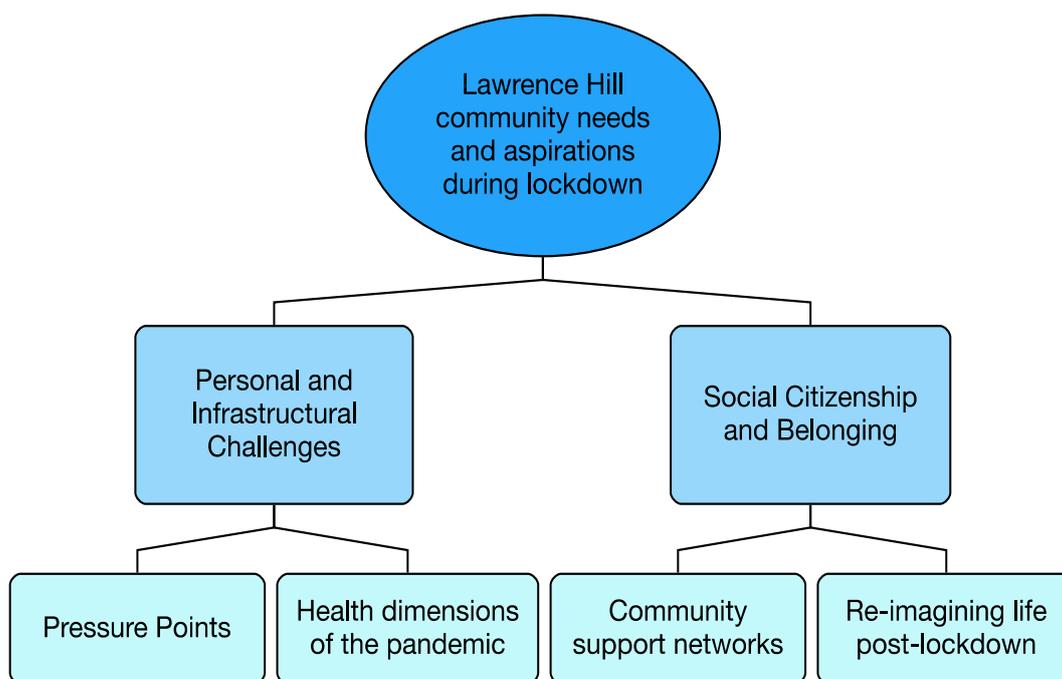
⁷ BHS Community Canvassing Report 2018, statistics from Bristol City Council, Lawrence Hill Statistical Ward Profile, November 2018

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsinvolvingcovid19bylocalareasanddeprivation/deathsoccurringbetween1marchand30june2020>

Analysis

This analysis is based on data collected from interviews with Wellspring Settlement service users to examine their changing needs and aspirations following COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. The phase II data was collected between 9th and 29th April, and phase III data was collected between 21st May and 6th July. Following computer-assisted coding of the data by the research team, two main themes were established: personal and infrastructural challenges and social citizenship and belonging (see thematic concept map below).



The theme 'personal and infrastructural challenges' covers material challenges, issues and needs that have arisen for the respondents, or those which were already present but have been exacerbated by lockdown restrictions. Within personal and infrastructural challenges, two sub-themes aid the further organisation of the data. Firstly, 'pressure points' captures areas which have caused concern or created difficulties for participants, such as transport, IT and technology and employment. 'Health dimensions of the pandemic' refers to both ongoing and long-term physical and mental health issues as well as concerns about COVID-19. Whilst also a 'pressure point', health has been separated due to the complexity and depth of information from respondents.

The second theme discussed is 'social citizenship and belonging'. The pandemic has had profound changes in how people can participate in social and civic life. Many people are at risk of social isolation. However, despite lockdown restrictions and social distancing measures, neighbour and community-based support networks have flourished. This theme comprises two sub-themes: 'Community support networks' and 'Reimagining life post lockdown'. 'Community support networks' covers local responses to lockdown, including sources of emotional, financial and practical support. This includes support from neighbours, friends, family, as well as from organisations such as the Wellspring Settlement, ACORN¹⁰ and

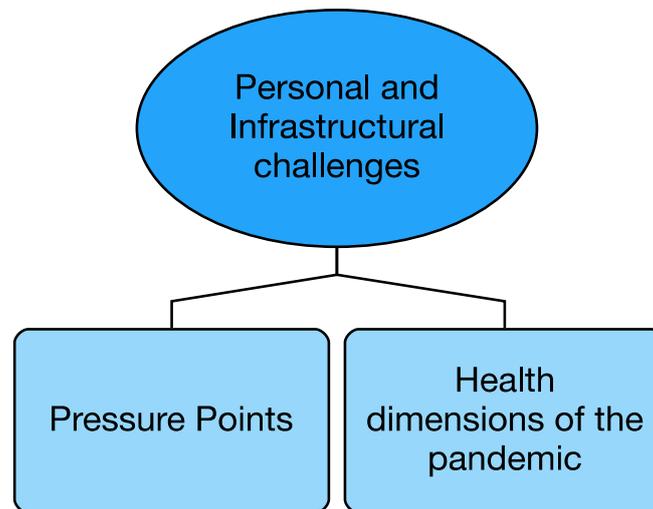
¹⁰ ACORN is a community-based union offering support for low-income communities.

CRUSE.¹¹ Re-imagining life post-lockdown includes responses relating to hopes and aspirations for the future, both personal, such as aspirations for further education or employment, as well as larger-scale societal aspirations such as those for a more appreciative society.

Findings

Personal and Infrastructural Challenges

It was an explicit aim of the survey to identify the challenges faced by the community throughout the crisis period and so many of the responses provided rich insights into areas in which the impacts of COVID-19 were particularly acute. The theme ‘personal and infrastructural challenges’ describes how the pandemic crisis has had material impacts in the lives of the participants. This broader theme had two sub-themes, namely ‘pressure points’ and ‘health dimensions of the pandemic’.



Pressure points

The data identified a lot of different areas where service users faced material challenges. Some of the pressures discussed here have originated from the crisis itself while others were pre-existing challenges, often exacerbated by lockdown restrictions.

Accommodation and Safe Outdoor space

The lockdown measures above all else had profound impacts in determining which indoor and outdoor spaces people were able to access; with early guidelines committing people to spending 23 hours each day at home. It follows then that the characteristics of these indoor and outdoor spaces would become a pressure point for many. Respondents reported

¹¹ CRUSE is a bereavement charity that offers free care and bereavement counselling in the UK.

challenges relating to where they were living in all phases of the research. Concerns about space appeared to become more pronounced with time; in phase I only a few participants cited concerns about where they lived, while in phases II and III, concerns in this area were more prevalent and highlighted issues of inadequate accommodation, including limited access to safe outdoor spaces such as private gardens or public parks. These challenges were personal in nature as they related to the home and the community, and infrastructural, highlighting issues such as neighbourhood overcrowding. This was particularly emphasised by respondents caring for children. The closure of schools had exacerbated pressures of inadequate space, particularly for those living in blocks of flats who had nowhere to take their children. Challenges relating to accommodation that may have been present before the lockdown appeared to have become more pronounced for some families:

“The neighbours downstairs are arguing due to lockdown and we can hear them and the bad language, they always do this but normally the children are at school and don’t hear them.”

Housing is an issue which existed before lockdown, but which has clearly been felt more acutely during the lockdown period, when people were told to “stay at home” by the UK Government. The 2018 Community Canvas carried out by Bartonhill Settlement (Griffin and King, 2018) found that less than 10% of respondents identified housing as a well-functioning aspect of where they live.¹²

Responses also highlighted that the participants wished for access to safe outdoor space. In phase II, two parents who talked about lacking outdoor space for their children cited the WS family centre garden as a key resource.

“...During this present time if it would not of been for the Family Centre access to a garden and Cashmore, I could not of coped with my little [one]... it has been a blessing, being able to use this provision has literally been a lifesaver.”

Issues around safety and security in local public spaces such as parks was a source of anxiety for participants in both phases II and III. As with challenges relating to accommodation, the issue of safety and security in the neighbourhood is likely to be an ongoing problem and not something originating from the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. However, the changes in lifestyle resulting from the lockdown restrictions may have narrowed the variety of spaces people were able to access, and this is likely to have brought the issue of security to the forefront. Anti-social behaviour, specifically amongst young people and in local parks, was also a concern raised in the BHS Community Canvas Report (Griffin and King 2018), suggesting it was an existing problem that has perhaps been worsened by lockdown restrictions limiting other socializing spaces for young people.

In phase III, many respondents discussed the challenges of living in an overcrowded area and talked about antisocial behaviour and security issues in their neighbourhood. One response indicated that this issue had escalated in recent times.

¹² BHS Community Canvassing Report 2018, statistics from Bristol City Council, Lawrence Hill Statistical Ward Profile, November 2018

“There are groups of young people in Gaunts Ham Park, a lot of gas cannisters on the floor, I hear report of attacks in the park, loud music, this is more recent in the day and at night.”

It might be that the presence of young people outside and in the neighbourhood has been more pronounced since social distancing measures have reduced the availability of social spaces, pubs and clubs and increased the pressures of overcrowding in certain neighbourhoods.

Finances and Employment

The lockdown measures have had considerable economic impacts with financial consequences for many individuals. Financial and employment related issues have become a ‘pressure point’ for many. In all phases of the research some respondents had lost work or income and were experiencing financial difficulties, including falling behind on recurrent financial obligations. In phase I, one person had lost their job, and others were concerned about how job centre appointment cancellations would affect their ability to find work.

Several participants in phase II noted that the government support they had received would end or run out leaving them unable to support themselves in the future, others were concerned about the delay in accessing the government scheme of support.

“Yes, husband is self-employed barber, doesn't know when he can work safely, no access to government scheme until June. Council are chasing for rent and council tax, so using DLA (child's disability benefit) to live off. I'm very worried about money and have been getting some help from East Bristol Foodbank.”

The responses in phase II indicated that financial pressures had mounted for some participants and point to a risk of debt post-COVID-19. Pressures caused by loss of work and income intersect with the pressures of living together within restricted space, as the quote below demonstrates:

“My husband isn't working so there is no money and they are at home all of the time so causing problems. I'm not paying my bills at the moment, the phones have been disconnected, the kids want to eat all of the time.”

Even when income had not been affected, some respondents indicated anxiety about the future stability of work or income, with some fearing the possibility of losing their jobs. One respondent captured this uncertainty in their comment: *“We both work at the moment although this may not be the case as it is a small company and things might change, who knows what can happen from week to week.”*

In phase II, a couple working in the NHS talked about the increased work-related stress and difficulties in the current situation, due to the stresses of having to work in lockdown alongside other concerns such as transport and childcare.

Employment Support



272
Employment
support interactions

*Conducted by Wellspring Settlement between 23rd March - 13th July 2020

In phase III, participants continued to share concerns around loss of work or income. Some had lost work due to the lockdown and had subsequently lost income and a further person said they would soon require financial advice as they faced a reduction in income. However, in phase III, concerns appear to become more future-focussed, with respondents sharing ambitions to pursue a career change or career development through education or retraining; two of these cited the instability of their current industry throughout the pandemic as a factor in this decision.

IT and Internet

In phase I data, one respondent indicated that lack of access to IT had been a problem. This led to the inclusion of a question in the phase II and III surveys which aimed to assess whether limited IT represented a significant pressure for others.

Most of the respondents surveyed in phase II had no concerns about access to IT while 1 person expressed that lack of a laptop was an impediment to their children's education, and 1 respondent mentioned that sharing one computer between members of the household was problematic. Although the problem was not common, with only one family experiencing IT access as a point of significant pressure, for this family it was a major source of stress, overlapping with concerns around children's wellbeing and education. That *"children can't do their homework as the laptop is broken, children worrying they are getting behind"* was raised by this family throughout the survey in response to multiple questions, making clear the extent of the impact that it was having on them. Despite IT access not being flagged as a particularly acute problem by respondents to this survey, anecdotal evidence from WS staff suggests that issues of access to communication technologies is an important issue amongst service users.

The phase II data highlighted the benefits of IT for communication and maintaining social links throughout the crisis period. A respondent spoke of their increased appreciation for the benefits of using IT to maintain social and community links during the lockdown and noted that they had recently realised the benefits of having access to a mobile phone thus:

"I've learnt how to get onto ZOOM on my landline. I have listened to my church's service although I can't see it... it's so nice to hear about what is going on in the service with parishioners. I cried after the first time I used it, it is so marvellous, I could imagine where people were sitting in the church, but they were all at home."

In phase III, only one person cited concerns about accessing IT as they had a poor connection and libraries had been closed. Another person commented that they would like to develop their IT skills. This comment resonates with the tone of much of the phase III data, in which

respondents appear to be considering their hopes for the future more alongside present challenges, as will be discussed under the subtheme 'reimagining post lock-down life and the need for change'

Supermarkets, Food, Prescriptions and Shopping Deliveries

Lockdown restrictions and social distancing measures created obstacles to easily accessing necessities for many people. Pressures relating to accessing food and other supplies are the result of infrastructural challenges such as access to transport and supermarket supply and personal challenges, such as mobility and financial challenges. This issue became a common point of pressure for the respondents of the survey.

In phase I, concerns were raised about accessing repeat prescriptions, food, and other supplies, particularly among those living alone. One participant requested support from Wellspring Settlement in accessing food and supplies.

Concerns around accessing food and other supplies continued to be relevant in the phase II data, though some noted an improvement in the availability of supermarket stock compared with the beginning of the lockdown period. Transport and childcare were cited as barriers to accessing shops and although it is unclear from the data whether these barriers were experienced before lockdown.



*By Wellspring Settlement between 23rd March - 13th July 2020

The accumulating pressures of living with reduced income generated food insecurity. Respondents in phase II received support obtaining supplies from a variety of people and institutions. For example, some cited neighbours, ACORN volunteers, NHS volunteers, WS food parcels or food banks. One person talked about the emotional dimensions of using food banks stating that: *"Visiting food bank so degrading and embarrassing, there's people worse off than me, am I using other's vital food."*

In phase III, three people cited concerns about accessing food and five mentioned that they received support in accessing food, either through food parcels, the Settlement, or via friends and family. Certain respondents had received support in accessing food but were not concerned about it, this perhaps indicates that where people had received support in accessing food, this helped to alleviate such pressures and related concerns.



*By Wellspring Settlement between 23rd March - 13th July 2020

Despite lockdown restrictions easing, financial uncertainties resulting from the lockdown continues to put families at risk of food insecurity.

In phases I and II, collecting prescriptions was a concern for some people, but was also an area where people were largely being supported. In phase III, concerns with collecting prescriptions were not mentioned by any respondents.



*By Wellspring Settlement between 23rd March - 13th July 2020

School Closures

In phase I, five out of 55 responses centred around concerns about caring for children or schooling, with parents worrying about the impact of school closures on their children's education and their ability to home school.

School closures continued to have a profound impact on respondents with school-going children in the phase II data. More than half of the survey respondents reporting concerns about childcare and the impact of the lockdown on children's health, wellbeing and education. Such parents have had to contend with the added pressures of caring full time for their children and taking responsibility for their educational needs on top of their usual responsibilities. One participant talked about the difficulties of engaging with online learning for their autistic child. Commonly, people were worried that their children would fall behind.

"The only concern I have is about the children's schooling for the future and at the present the problems we have working and trying to manage who will have the children."

In the phase III data, there were no mentions of school closures or children's education. This may be because of differences in data collection and subsequent differences in the sample. In phase II, more of the data had been collected via the Family Centre and therefore the sample of participants contained a higher proportion of parents. Phase III included surveys collected via volunteer befrienders and respondents were therefore more likely to be isolated or shielding and possibly less likely to have young children than those contacted via the Family Centre. There is also the possibility that the later point of lockdown expectations of what could be achieved via homeschooling may have decreased, and therefore concerns about achieving those possibly reduced.

Health Dimensions of the Pandemic

Challenges relating to health were a key issue raised by participants throughout the COVID-19 lockdown. Participants shared health concerns related to their risk of contracting the virus, or their fears about the effect of the virus on long-term mental and physical health. Furthermore, responses highlighted a number of ways in which management of ongoing health issues had been impacted by lockdown restrictions. Health concerns lie at the

intersection of personal and infrastructural challenges, determined by individuals' experiences of health by healthcare institutions.

Pre-existing physical and mental health conditions

Many respondents across phases had pre-existing or ongoing mental and physical health issues, or were worried about friends, relatives or neighbours with ongoing health conditions. Some health challenges mentioned include dementia, arthritis, diabetes, rheumatism, Parkinson's and respiratory problems such as asthma.

The halting of medical care was a recurring issue raised through phases I – III. This issue is infrastructural in nature as it relates to the capacity of the health service, yet the specific ways in which this challenge is experienced are of course personal. In phase I, respondents were concerned about hospital treatment, with appointments being moved from hospitals to GP surgeries, or physio treatments post-operations taking place over the phone. Phase II responses further indicated that the lockdown had exacerbated long-term and ongoing health conditions, in some cases because medical care had been halted, but also as respondents were nervous about attending appointments with their GP or in hospitals due to the risk of contracting COVID-19. One person explained how anxieties around contracting COVID-19 had contributed to their decision to avoid attending appointments in the hospital.

“My dad has Parkinson's and his appointments have been cancelled. Normally he has aches and pains and would go to the GP, but we are putting this off as we are concerned that he may have go into the hospital and this is scary as he is vulnerable and makes him more risk.”

This fear of visiting the doctors or hospitals, has been highlighted by Goulabchand and colleagues (2020) as a serious consequence of the virus, in their article considering the potentially underestimated impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on non-COVID patients in France. In phase III, a respondent also raised concerns about their arthritis.

In other cases, respondents were unable to manage their condition as they usually would due to lockdown restrictions. For example, in phase II, multiple respondents who suffer from arthritis suggested that their conditions worsened due to less mobility as they have been staying inside more and walking less. As one person explained, *“I have arthritis, it has been quite bad because I haven't been moving around so much. I do go for a walk every day but not as much as I would normally”*.

Managing ongoing conditions presented problems for survey respondents, and some talked about the challenges associated with managing their children's health conditions. A parent of an autistic child explained how they could not take their child outside as they could not socially distance and went on to raise concerns about impacts on their development. Another respondent linked her children's respiratory problems to poor accommodation as they have no garden, while another was concerned about the impact of being inside all day on their child's mental health. This highlights how the health concerns of many participants intersected with other concerns.

There were concerns about the negative impact of lockdown on mental health. Mental health was often combined with other concerns, such as health, accommodation, employment, and was linked by two respondents to the need for social contact. For respondents with existing mental health issues, such as anxiety, the lockdown has exacerbated these issues, in some cases due to loss of routine. One participant was taking increasing doses of medication to relieve anxiety.

Social Isolation, anxieties, and uncertainty

For some people, shielding due to underlying health conditions, or anxieties around contracting the virus have contributed to feelings of social isolation :

“I feel like I'm hibernating in the bedroom at the moment, I don't want to get the virus because I have poor health. I wear a mask and gloves if I go out which is about once every three weeks”

For other respondents, lockdown measures and requirements for physical distancing were contributing to feelings of social isolation.

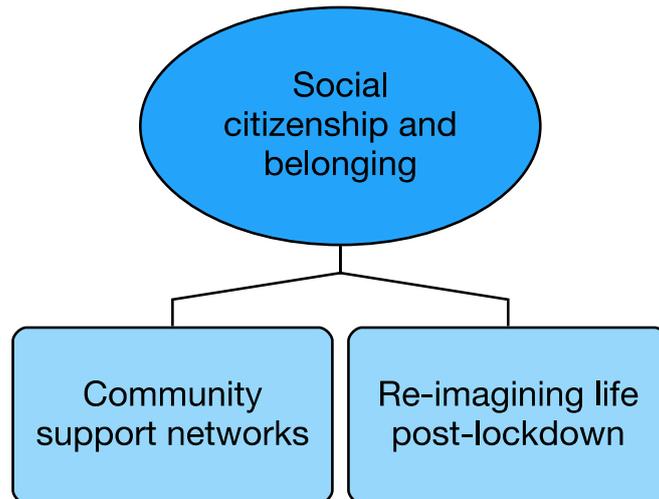


*By Wellspring Settlement between 23rd March - 13th July 2020

Many respondents expressed feelings of anxiety and uncertainty about the future, for some this was about their health, for instance, how they would cope if they fell ill. For others, anxieties were rooted in other pressures. The condition of uncertainty and the anxieties it created was a cross-cutting issue and latent across many of the themes outlined.

Social Citizenship and Belonging

The pandemic has had profound impacts on how people are able to participate in social and civic life. Despite lockdown restrictions and social distancing measures, neighbours continue to support each other and the need for social connectivity remains pertinent. This theme had two sub-themes: community support networks, which describes the routes by which people give and receive support; and re-imagining post-lockdown life, which considers the broader socio-political context and people's hopes for the future.



Community support networks

This sub-theme covers the responses of participants relating to support from their local communities. Community here includes a range of shared support networks: some pre-date COVID-19, whilst others have developed since lockdown. Different forms of support received and given included emotional, financial, practical as well as resources, such as access to outdoor spaces. Across the three phases of the survey, respondents expressed the need for different types of support, and most respondents were receiving this support from various sources, including friends, family, neighbours, and community organisations.

Neighbourly support

In phase I, many respondents were already helping others, or said that neighbours, friends or family they were worried about were already being helped. This sentiment was echoed in phase II, in which a majority of respondents stated that neighbours had been looking out for one another, with only two respondents suggesting they are not in close contact with neighbours. Neighbours provided emotional support by checking in on one another and staying in contact, as well as practical support in the form of collecting shopping and prescriptions. One respondent stated, *"I have brilliant neighbours around me; they help me do practical things and also shop and buy me things for the children."* In phase III, social contact between neighbours was mentioned again as an important form of emotional support for one respondent.

This finding is reinforced by those of Jones and colleagues (2020) who carried out an online survey of 522 people in Bristol and the West Country (244 of whom live in Bristol) between 6-12th April focussing on neighbourly support and the COVID-19 lockdown. Their findings that "neighbour-based support during the pandemic appears to have been going positively, with 51% of respondents agreeing that neighbours are supporting each other very well at this time" (2020: 2), are in line with the findings of this study, thus corroborating the conclusion that overall, neighbours have been supporting each other well.

As well as offering direct forms of support, some respondents spoke about concerns for vulnerable neighbours, for example, those who have no friends or family living close by, or who they knew were struggling with mental and/or physical health issues in their households, or who had been out of contact for a while. Participating in supporting others and receiving support in return likely contributes to a sense of social citizenship and belonging.

The BHS Community Canvas Report (Griffin and King 2018) found that many local residents felt a strong sense of community and belonging, even pre-lockdown. In 2018, a good level of social cohesion was apparent in the ward, as the majority of respondents rated the quality of their relations between community members between 7 and 10 out of 10. In this present survey, whilst respondents raised some problems with their local area, these were largely linked to anti-social behaviour and public outdoor spaces such as parks, whilst relations with neighbours were generally very positive, reflecting the earlier findings of the BHS community canvas report. Whilst many respondents appeared to hold a strong sense of belonging pre-lockdown, as outlined in the BHS Canvas Report, some responses across phases suggested that this feeling had increased since the COVID-19 lockdown. One respondent explained: *“I think this has brought people closer in the community, people helping each and looking out for each, I'd like to see that continue”*. This suggests that for some respondents, lockdown has led to the creation of new neighbourly ties and new systems of support, which they hope will persist, this finding is expanded on in the following section ‘re-imagining post-lockdown life and the need for change’.

Respondents who felt there wasn't much they could do to further support others spoke about referring vulnerable people to the Wellspring Settlement or said they had already or would in the future pass on the hub contact details to friends or neighbours they were worried about. Importantly, responses highlighted the central role often played by the Wellspring Settlement in how some neighbours provide support to one another. Concerns for vulnerable friends or neighbours were less apparent in phase III responses, perhaps indicating that people felt that those in need were already receiving support by this point.

Concern for others and Social Responsibility

Beyond immediate friends, family and neighbours, some respondents also expressed concerns about people in a wider sense, worrying about the possible impact of the lockdown restrictions on the mental health and financial wellbeing of people across society. For example, one participant considered how *“this virus is going to create a lot of mental illness, people will be in debt”*. This general concern for the wellbeing of unknown others relates to feelings of responsibility to adhere to regulations for the benefit of society. Thinking beyond the local community and caring about other members of society in general could be interpreted as building a greater sense of social solidarity. Social responsibility covers responses which mentioned both governmental responsibilities to establish trust and reliable regulations, and individual and/or societal responsibility to adhere to such regulations. In phase II, two respondents were worried about the risk of a second wave, either due to the government deciding to relax restrictions too early, or the public not following rules. Lack of trust in government regulations was also raised by another person. Another respondent hoped that in the future other members of the community will adhere to changing government regulations such as social distancing

guidelines. In phase III responses, two people were concerned about others not socially distancing, and the prospect of another 'spike' following the relaxing of lockdown restrictions.

Wellspring Settlement and other existing support services

A wide variety of support networks and initiatives have developed since the beginning of lockdown. Most respondents were aware of support from local community organisations, with particular emphasis placed on Wellspring Settlement as a source of support. In terms of feeling part of a community, for many local residents WS is a central part of infrastructure which helps to structure their interactions with others and creates a sense of belonging and social citizenship amongst local people.

In phases II and III, a direct question on support available in the community was included. Respondents expressed how they drew on support networks to meet their changing needs during the lockdown. Such sources of support listed by respondents to phase II included: the Wellspring Settlement (13); WhatsApp and Facebook groups (8); ACORN (3); local schools (2); the BCC helpline (2), as well as individual respondents mentioning Radio Bristol, the Family Centre, the Somali Resource Centre, the Somali Task Force, St Luke's Church and NHS volunteers. In phase II, almost all respondents were aware of where they could access support in the local community, and the majority cited the Wellspring Settlement as one such source of support. Respondents highlighted certain services provided by the Settlement during lockdown which have been indispensable. Most mentioned were the WhatsApp groups set up with help from the WS Family Centre, access to the Family Centre garden and food parcels. One respondent stated that *"going to the family centre has saved me, my little boy has space and freedom."*, whilst another participant explained that, *"I had food and they call me all the time to make sure that I am okay"*. Another also summarised how:

"during this the help of Wellspring Settlement made a huge difference, the phone, the food parcels and taking the kids to the family centre while everywhere else was locked. Thanks to them."

Finally, phone calls to check in were mentioned as being very important, re-emphasised by the fact that almost all phase II survey respondents want WS to stay in touch over the coming months.

Responses in phase III, as in phase II, underlined the centrality of the Settlement as a support structure. Specific services mentioned as important included: befriending or phone calls (2), shopping (1), and help booking the family centre (1). Additionally, one response mentioned support from neighbours in the form of social contact, one from friends helping with shopping, and another mentioned family members and CRUSE. One response mentioned a delivery from another Community café. Social media support groups such as the aforementioned WhatsApp groups were not raised by any respondents in phase III. Notably, in phase III, responses were mainly collected by volunteer befrienders and the Somali Parenting Support Practitioner, rather than the family centre (as in phase II), who established the WhatsApp groups, which could also potentially explain the differences.

Ongoing needs of the community

The participants in phase I reported the need for contact, for practical support with shopping and deliveries, as well as three respondents asking for information or advice on finances, particularly benefits. Moving into Phase II, respondents expressed a continued need for existing services provided by WS, such as practical support in the form of collecting shopping and prescriptions, resource support in the form of food parcels and use of the play centre, as well as emotional support provided by checking-in phone calls. One phase II respondent requested support in accessing a laptop for their children's schoolwork. By phase III, the need for more future-focussed support became more pronounced than in phase II, with responses focussing on the need for advice (about finances and personal goals such as education), rather than immediate, material needs such as food parcels.

Re-imagining post-lockdown life and need for change

The participants expressed a longing for a return to normality, yet at the same time hoped for positive changes post-lockdown and a better future. Others had a positive outlook despite the ongoing difficulties brought about by the pandemic and the resultant lockdown. This future-facing theme relates to social citizenship as perhaps following the increased mutual support amongst local residents during lockdown, people feel more able to participate in changes and are motivated to continue new support systems.

Return to normality

While a return to normality was not discussed explicitly among phase I participants, it was referred to in a subtle way. For example, there was hope for the resumption of healthcare services to enable some of the respondents with long-term health issues to access appointments. In contrast, phase II and III participants desired a return to normality and talked about it clearly. For example, four out of the 25 phase II participants explicitly expressed hopes for some kind of 'return to normality', with some referencing places or activities that they missed.

The need for a return to normality was motivated by a variety of reasons. Some of the reasons mentioned in the data included the aspiration to see friends and family members, socialise and visit places special to them including favourite shops, clubs, venues and church. Some desired their old routines, while others wanted to be able to go for their preferred exercises. A participant yearned for an opportunity to use the bus again, while another lamented how lockdown led to the reliance on others and thought that *"having to ask people to keep on doing things for them"* is undesirable. Another was finding it difficult to *"organise everything"* because children were home and they were still working, meaning arranging for childcare. The lockdown restrictions have impacted all areas of life, with one respondent explaining she had forgotten how to use the chip and pin when she went shopping. There was unease about missed opportunities to participate in an annual Ramadan tradition involving family members outside the UK: *"My mum is in Kenya and we normally send pictures of when we break the fast, we can't do that this year."* Similarly, amongst phase III participants there was a desire for a return to normality, with aspirations such as taking trips and connecting more with people post-lockdown mentioned.

Though the return to normality was the desire of many participants, it also came with some anxiety for both phase II and III participants. A participant feared that infections would get bad among children if schools open. Another participant in phase II also demonstrated a more general sense of uncertainty when they expressed how *“I don't know what will happen in the future because coronavirus is all round the world.”*

In both phase II and III, the return to normality was also overlapping with the need by some participants to pursue personal ambitions. Respondents in phases II and III spoke about personal aspirations and needs, such as education or the need for work. For example, one stated that *“I would like a job at the end of this”* while another mentioned *“going back to school”* as one of their personal goals when things get back to normal.

Societal change and positivity

There was also a desire for wider societal change in both phase II and III, respondents across both phases expressed hope for some positive social change to grow out of the current situation, such as strengthened communities. Such hopes included more social solidarity and closer ties among members of the local community. For example, a participant in phase II hoped that *“... society changes priorities. things need to change in terms of their humanity. life needs to slow down.”* Whilst another hoped that *“people are more thoughtful for their neighbours, check on each other more. That we think more about the environment”*. A participant in phase III hoped that: *“people will respect their neighbours and think about each other more. That the government sort their selves out and start doing things properly.”* These comments resonate with Jones *et al.* (2020) as their findings also suggested that lockdown has the potential to change communities, with almost half of their 522 respondents hoping to get more involved in their neighbourhood in the future.

Another participant further suggested that *“...our neighbourhood needs a lot of work from the council, police and anyone who can help to improve the living conditions of this neighbourhood.”* While this is a little unclear, it might relate to infrastructural issues such as overcrowding mentioned elsewhere in this report.

Despite all the negative aspects of the pandemic, a respondent in phase II was able to frame the lockdown as a positive thing that helped people slow down and hence enabled her to spend more time with the children. While there were no such positive observations in phase III, two responses in phase II observed positives in the present situation, mentioning people being kinder and more thoughtful towards one another since lockdown and expressed hopes that this might continue:

“I think that it has been positive having family time and not worrying about things that we used to worry about. We are getting more rest and time for the kids. I think that people are kinder and nicer to each other so that would be good if that continued. The roads are quiet which is lovely, no young people hanging around the shops and being silly, so you can move around without worrying.”

Conclusions

This study set out to assess the changing needs and aspirations of Wellspring Settlement service users from Lawrence Hill community during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. The research has highlighted the impacts of the lockdown in many areas of life, including on financial, physical and mental health. Some of the impacts are likely to have long lasting effects in the lives of the participants. For example, financial strains and the risk of debt associated with the economic impacts of the lockdown may long outlast the lockdown period. In addition, pre-existing mental and physical health conditions may have been exacerbated by the lockdown itself and by infrastructural obstacles such as appointment cancellations. Issues such as these are likely continue into the future even when lockdown restrictions lift, which may impact on the way the Settlement supports service users going forwards. To best meet the changing needs post-lockdown, it will be important to continue to monitor these challenges as they evolve in the long-term.

The findings also revealed that community-based support has been a valuable resource for many throughout the period. Although much support was informal and based on existing relationships within the community, there were also new channels set up through which grassroots community support could be organised. Examples include the local neighbourhood WhatsApp groups set up with support from Wellspring Settlement, which were used by many participants throughout the research period. Additionally, organisations such as ACORN have adapted their services to address changing needs during lockdown, offering support in new areas. As expressed by participants in the survey, there are hopes that these new support networks and new forms of community solidarity amongst local people and organisations can outlive the lockdown and continue to provide support into the future.

In concluding this report, we have identified two types of action that we will take:

1. Reflections and recommendations regarding Wellspring Settlement's services.
2. Priorities for future research.

Reflections and Recommendations regarding Wellspring Settlement's services

The research has shown how important Wellspring Settlement services have been throughout the crisis. Most of the respondents were aware of support available through Wellspring Settlement and some felt that the Settlement could not do any more than they were already doing to support them.

Services which were particularly emphasised by participants as being important during the survey period include the family centre garden; befriending services; food parcels and collecting prescriptions. As well as these direct services, respondents highlighted the important role that Wellspring Settlement has played in assisting mutual aid amongst neighbours, for example through establishing WhatsApp groups, and by being a known provider of support for friends and neighbours concerned about someone else.

Despite ongoing concerns about the risk of contracting COVID-19 and anxieties regarding the potential of a second wave of infections, the focus of many participants has shifted towards

the future and to their long-term needs and goals and the disruption to all areas of people's lives has perhaps led people to wish to seek more security with regards to employment. There is a need for support in the form of financial advice, support in finding work and in finding opportunities for education and training.

Overall, the themes which were established through a data-driven approach, align well with the organisation of services currently offered by Wellspring Settlement, leading to the conclusion that the structure is well suited to addressing the needs of the community as they currently stand.

Priorities for future research

Future research could aim to investigate whether there is scope to embed community-based support into the neighbourhoods in the long term. A future survey could investigate participants' experiences of using social media support network such as the local WhatsApp groups to assess how they have been used and whether they can be part of the community building strategy going forward. As communications technologies have replaced face to face contact for many, certain demographics may be at risk of digital exclusion. A future study could also investigate the perceptions of those without regular internet access to determine whether they felt disadvantaged throughout the period.

Bibliography

Reports marked with an Asterix * can be obtained by contacting Morag McDermont: morag.mcdermont@bristol.ac.uk

Brown, G., Jones, N., and Kibuye, J. (2020, May) *Covid-19 and the changing needs and aspirations of the Lawrence Hill community: Second Survey Initial Observations Report, Data Collected between 9-29th April 2020*, Bristol, Wellspring Settlement

Brown, G., Jones, N., and Kibuye, J. (2020, Aug) *Covid-19 and the changing needs and aspirations of the Lawrence Hill community: Third Survey Initial Observations Report, Data Collected between 21st May and 2nd July 2020*, Bristol, Wellspring Settlement

Forrest, A. (2020). *Coronavirus death rates twice as high in more deprived areas, new figures show*. Available: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/coronavirus-death-rate-uk-deprived-inequality-ons-latest-a9493716.html> Last accessed June 2020.

Griffiths, E. and King, O (2018) *Findings From Bartonhill Settlement's Community Canvassing Week 2018*, Barton Hill Settlement*

Goulabchand, R., Claret, P. and Lattucac, B. (2020). What if the worst consequences of COVID-19 concerned non-COVID patients?. *Journal of Infection and Public Health*. (In Press), 1-3.

Jones, M., Beardmore, A., Biddle, M., White, J., Ismail, S., McClean, S., Gibson, A. and Sabey, A. (2020). *Apart but not Alone Neighbour Support and the Covid-19 Lockdown*. Centre for Public Health and Wellbeing UWE Bristol. Available: <https://uwe-repository.worktribe.com/preview/5919421/UWE%20Apart%20but%20not%20Alone%201st%20Research%20Report%2022.04.20.pdf> Last accessed July 2020.

McDermont, M., Sharratt, J., and Schuman, A. (2020), *Covid-19 and the changing needs and aspirations of the Barton Hill community: First Survey Report, March 2020 data*, Bristol, Wellspring Settlement

Office for National Statistics. (2020). *Deaths involving COVID-19 by local area and socioeconomic deprivation: deaths occurring between 1 March and 30 June 2020*. Available: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsinvolvingcovid19bylocalareasanddeprivation/deathsoccurringbetween1marchand30june2020> Last accessed July 2020.