Voice4Change England

Covid Impact Report 2020-21

Foreword from Voice4Change England Director

We recognised very early in March 2020 that the public health crisis would be an extraordinarily challenging time for communities across the UK and the world.

We publicly highlighted concerns that Black and Minoritised communities who are on the frontline of the outbreak of the pandemic, are set to face a disproportionate impact through not being adequately included and considered in decisions being made by Government and civil society leadership.

We anticipated the disproportionate effects of COVID-19 reinforcing and deepening existing racial inequalities across health, housing, education, employment, criminal justice and beyond.

kunle Olulode

Emergency funds enable groups to tread water and, in some cases, even stabilise. However, as a national infrastructure support charity we were also aware throughout, that the emergency period would extend also into a broader debate around longer term support.

kunle Olulode

This impact report considers the work of Voice4Change England over the last two years of the pandemic. It is aimed to give internal reflection on impact as much as it is aimed at providing information to funding partners and interested stakeholders.

Background

In response to the Coronavirus pandemic, and the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on Black and Minoritised communities, funders recognised the need to develop new 'emergency' mechanisms to ensure fairer distribution of resources to affected communities.

As a membership organisation with excellent community links, V4CE launched a 1.1 million Covid 19 partnership fund with money pooled from Mind, Comic Relief and Sport England, with financial support for grants team staffing and development from Indigo Trust and the National Lottery Community Fund.

The following report provides a summary and analysis of two types of data collated as part of the application process which allows us to understand the following:

- **The geographic reach of V4CE**
This summary and analysis are based on postcode data from each eligible application that we received. This data has been underlined visually mapped, and used to identify our geographic presence, and consequently areas where V4CE has good reach as well as areas which need more work to develop relationships and communication.

- **Capacity Development Support Priorities**
As part of the application to the fund, we asked each applicant what their capacity development priorities were, and we provide a summary and analysis of each below.

> *"My experience with Voice4Change has been nothing less than amazing as their constant support, diligence and willingness to help smaller organisations, is incredibly motivating.*
>
> *They have played such a big part in the development of not just our organisation, but our community. Without their support and funding, some of the accomplishments made would not have been feasible."*
>
> *Ceebee Gold Foundation International*

The report gives a brief summary of the impact of grants reaching Black and Minoritised organisations and their beneficiaries. It shows the value given to the role of an intermediary grant making partner, V4CE, as one which facilitates access to desperately needed funds as well as helping organisations to be heard and to develop. The final section looks at the priority issues and the relationship with V4CE policy areas and campaigns.

Methodology

Data was collected from the applications received and processed and the following inclusion criteria was used:
In total, V4CE received 839 applications, of which some were late, and some ineligible (see figure 0.1).

Late and ineligible applications were not processed by the grants team, and so were missing from the spreadsheet used for analysis. Due to time constraints, data from late/incomplete/ineligible applications has not been used.

When collating this data, we recognised that some organisations applied more than once, applying again in different rounds, and so only one of their applications has been counted, this makes the total number of organisations included in this dataset is 588.

"Being managed by a Black and Minoritised ethnic communities-led organisation such as Voice4Change England has helped our group to be understood and supported because Voice4Change England better understands problems faced by Black and Minoritised ethnic communities. Thank you for your assistance during these critical moments."
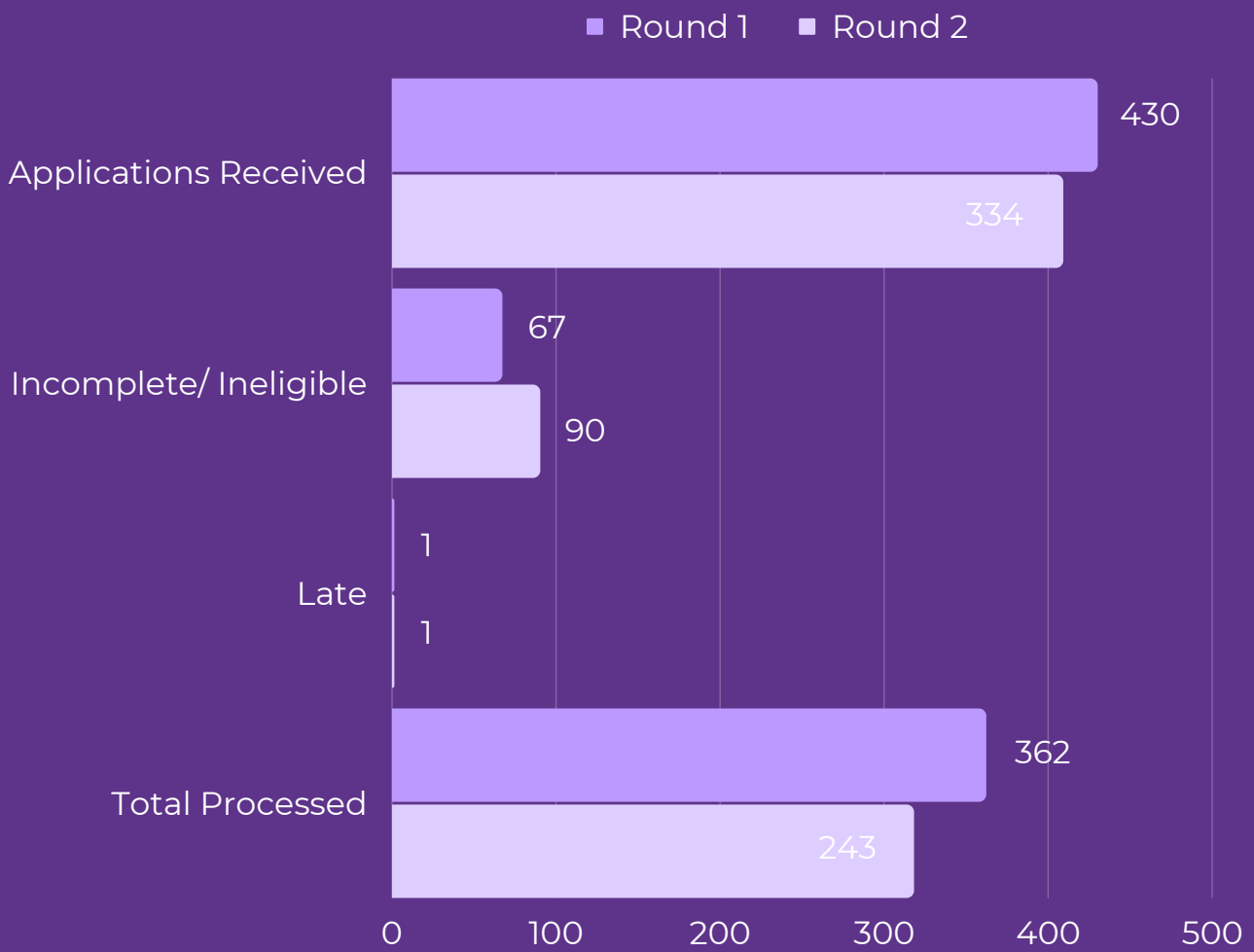
Care Link West Midlands

Figure 0.1: application number breakdown (2020 to 2021)

839
Applications Received

680
Applications Processed

Section 1:
Geographic Analysis of V4CE Reach
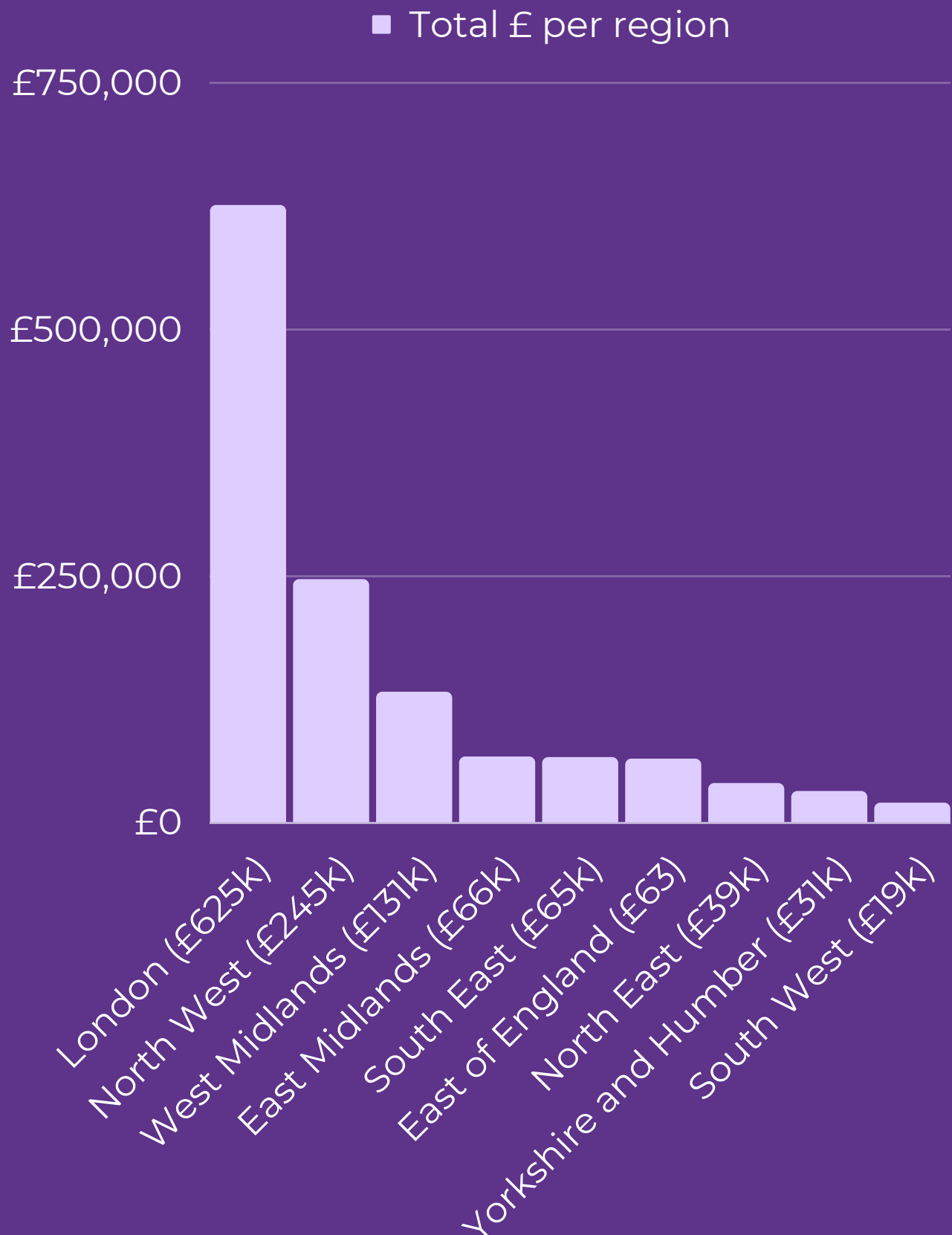
The following section is a summary and analysis of gaps in V4CE's geographic reach, as illustrated by the <u>following map</u>.

In this analysis, we look at each of England's 9 regions separately, before going on to look roughly at any counties that also showed particularly low turn-out. For context, please see the number of awarded grants broken down by county in Figure 1.1 and 1.2 below.

Distribution of COVID-19 Partnership Awarded Grants (Figure 1.1)

■ Total £ per region

£750,000	
£500,000	
£250,000	
£0	

London (£625k)
North West (£245k)
West Midlands (£131k)
East Midlands (£66k)
South East (£65k)
East of England (£63)
North East (£39k)
Yorkshire and Humber (£31k)
South West (£19k)

Distribution of COVID-19 Partnership Awarded Grants (Figure 1.2)

■ No. of Awards
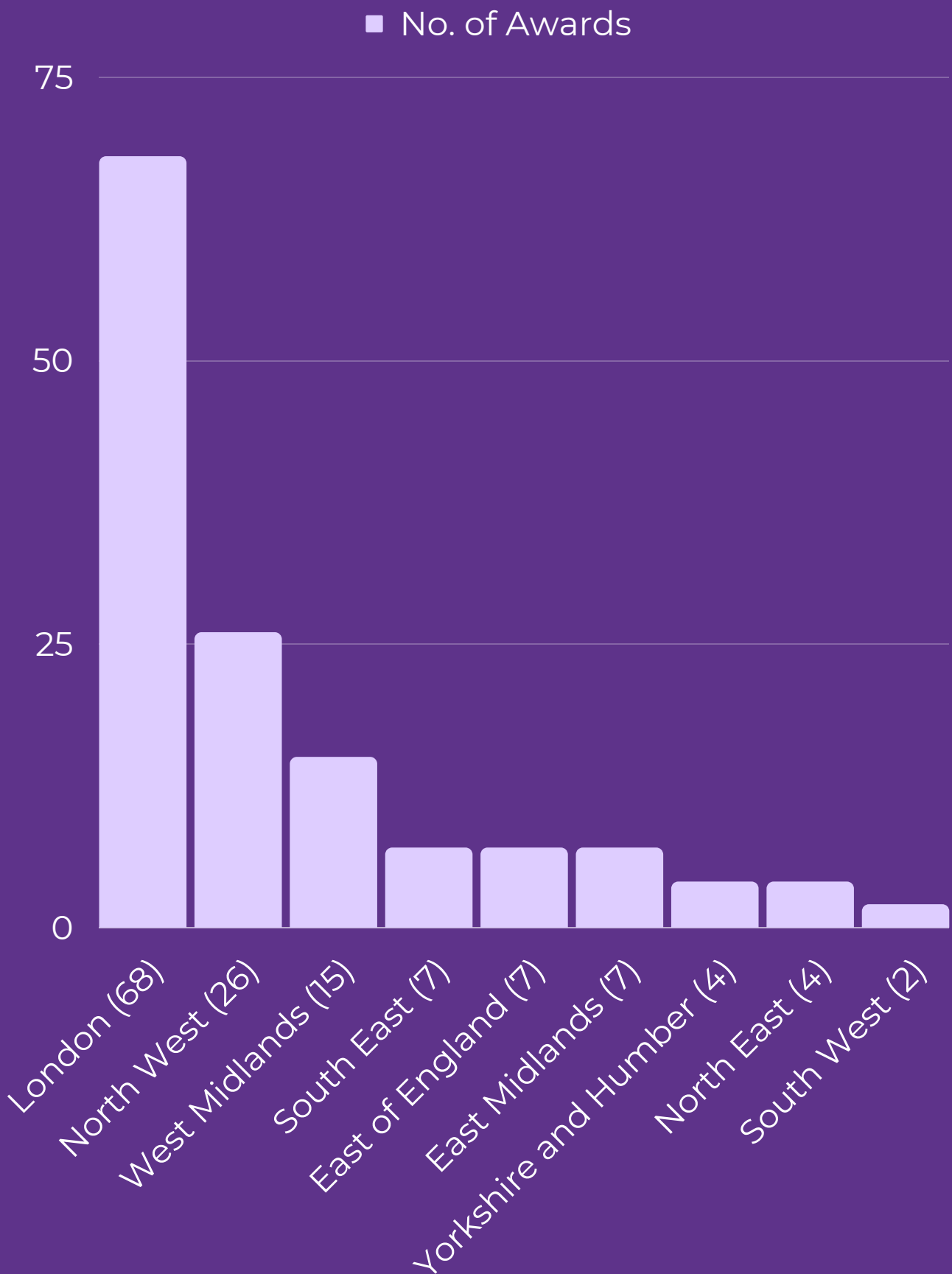
South West

The two funded applications from the South West of England came from the Bristol/Bath area. Most applications received for this region were largely from these areas.

We received virtually no applications from Cornwall, Devon, Dorset or Wiltshire, and only one from Somerset.

South East

Other than Brighton, Guildford and Portsmouth turnout was also relatively low, with gaps round the counties of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Oxfordshire and West Sussex.

East of England

East of England had a low turnout, with only seven organisations receiving funding.

Big cities such as Norwich, Ipswich and Colchester made applications, but we received very few from around Norfolk/Suffolk, as well as having low turnout from Cambridgeshire. Turn out in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire was relatively high.

Yorkshire and Humber

Strong turnout in urban areas of Hull, Sheffield and Huddersfield, but nowhere near the concentration in areas such as Bradford and York. North Yorkshire had an especially low number of applications.

North West

Strong number of applications in urban areas of Manchester, Blackburn, however, virtually no applications from Cumbria or Lancashire.

North East

The North East had the second lowest turnout, and very little spread of applications across the region other than those that came from Newcastle. We received virtually no applications from Northumberland or Durham. There were limited applications from areas with a traditionally higher population of Black and Minoritised communities such as Sunderland and Middlesborough.

East Midlands

- Seven applications were funded, with good reach in urban areas such as Leicester and less so in Nottingham, and Derby but still significant.

- We had virtually no applications from Lincolnshire, only a few from Derbyshire, with most Nottinghamshire applications coming from Nottingham itself.

West Midlands

- Applications from Birmingham, Wolverhampton and surrounding areas were strong.

- Applications from Shropshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire less so.

- The West Midlands received the third highest sum of money of all regions.

London

- The bulk of applications came from London, with almost half of our entire fund going to London based organisations due to the strength of their applications.

- It also showed a wide spread in London as the awards were across the city, and not concentrated in one particular area/ borough.

Section 2: Analysis of Applicant Development Support Data

In all Covid-19 Partnership application forms, we included the following question:

If you are successful with this application, you may be eligible for further support. Please select the top 5 areas of support you would like from the list below:

Media/ Social Media

Policies and Procedures

Funding

Employment

Partnerships and/or collaboration

Networking and Membership

Organisational repositioning/ strategy and structure

Finance

Organisation continuity planning

Volunteers: Recruitment and management

Marketing and Communication

Governance

One of V4CE's core priorities is to increase capacity and provide development support to the Black and Minoritised voluntary sector.

The data provided by almost 600 organisations on the key areas in which they would value support, input, or further opportunity is extremely valuable, this is especially the case as we are an organisation that sees support provision should be led by user need and feedback from members and associates, giving us information on Black and Minoritised organisational strategic and programme priorities.

Capacity Building Support Priorities

Category	Value
Networking and Membership (97%)	~580
Funding (79%)	~460
Marketing and Communication (46%)	~270
Media/Social Media (44%)	~260
Partnerships and Collaboration (40%)	~240
Organisational Continuity Planning (37%)	~220
Organisational Repositioning/ Strategy and Structure (35%)	~210
Finance (30%)	~180
Policies and Procedures (26%)	~150
Volunteer Recruitment and Management (21%)	~130
Governance (18%)	~110
Employment (17%)	~100

Figure 2.1: Total number of organisations that listed each support category as a 'Top 5' priority. (Data is as of April 2021. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest decimal point.)

Priority: Digitalisation

Grants team processed a huge number of applications during this period and a priority identified after administering Covid 19 partnership fund was that an urgent need for digitalisation of grant management from start to end of a cycle and membership work.

Having a grants management software and a relationship software will increase the capacity of the Grants Team further by freeing up their time and streamlining managing multiple grants simultaneously in an effective manner.

Analysis of the Data

The following analysis looks at how V4CE might be able to use this report, and the data it contains for future development.

- ## Quick wins

While it may not be possible to implement a whole programme of activity that immediately tackles the priorities listed above, it should be possible via the membership programme to schedule in some 'quick wins'. Some ideas for 'quick wins' are presented in the below section.

- ## Gathering Data

Members to lead/strengthen funding applications. Bringing in money to fund any infrastructure development activity may be part of the next step in our development work, using the findings and priorities summarised in this report will strengthen the evidence base and illustrate 'need'.

- ## Long Term Delivery Priorities

Developing a '5 year plan' or some sort of vision that ties together this data, with what we hope to achieve through the infrastructure delivery work puts us in a much stronger place strategically; it shows funders that we think long term.

In addition to this, scheduling in regular consultations, meeting organisations, and/or using evaluation data to evidence the need for these delivery priorities is key, and should form part of the next steps for our infrastructure/development programme.
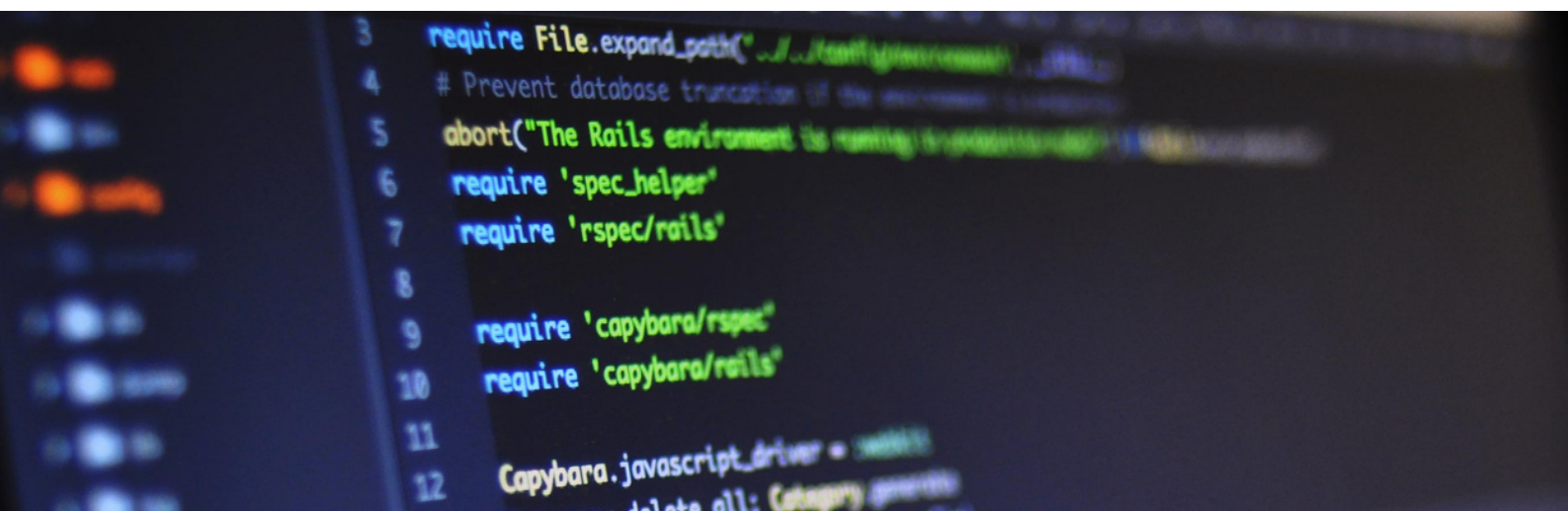
Networking & Membership

Almost every organisation included in this report marked 'Networking and Membership' as one of their 'top 5' priorities, making it the most popular option with 97% of organisations listing this as a priority.

The high priority given to networking shows that frontline Black and Minoritised organisations recognise that the main issue is not funding but not being heard, and building networks and influence will help ensure better services for beneficiary needs as well as greater provision for organisational needs.

There are a number of reasons that V4CE may want to consider what the reason for this support may be, thinking about how we could use our strengths to advocate for, or fund activities that overcome the following issues:

1. There has been a distinct lack in support for 'second tier' organisations across the sector in recent years, and this data suggests that organisations are keen to connect and share knowledge.

2. The Covid-19 pandemic has created more need than ever before in our communities, it may also be that leaders are keen to feel less isolated/looking to each other for solidarity and emotional support across a range of difficult issues that they may be facing.

Networking & Membership

4. It may be, that as a membership organisation ourselves, this was the biggest priority due to the visible gains of our networking and influencing.

5. Organisations may also want to build membership support to be able to better meet community needs as well as monetise their own strengths through membership structures and contributions.

Ideas/ Recommendations:

Bringing organisations together to share/network may be an excellent 'quick win' for our membership work; using our vast network of members, grantees etc.

This activity could also form part of a wider 'information gathering'/consultation piece of work, which helps us understand more about what the priorities and difficulties are, for the grassroots organisations that we work to serve.

Funding

Funding is a priority comes as no surprise owing to the vast under-investment in the Black and Minoritised community and voluntary sector, therefore we shall not spend time going over these issues once again.

However, thinking about how V4CE could use our strengths beyond making money available to the sector would be an excellent step in meeting some of this need. Some recommendations/ideas have been presented below:

Ideas/ Recommendations:

- Organising opportunities to bring big funders and small organisations together, especially funders who have current open calls that target organisations we have contact with. This could be a quick win.

- Approach grantees who have shown skills in particular aspects of fund raising to deliver peer-led workshops e.g. how to put together a successful bid, or how to turn assets of the organisation into enterprise income.

- V4CE surgeries to build fundraising capacity to help Black and Minoritised organisations develop their fundraising strategy and income diversity as well as develop understanding about what is needed for strong applications.

- Development of V4CE work with funders to address chronic under-engagement with the sector and lead to more inclusive, equitable and productive funding approaches, including participatory funding and social investment.

Marketing and Communication and Media/ Social Media

Marketing, Communications and Social Media ranked third and fourth respectively. It is clear that organisations are thinking more about how to increase what people know about them, and how people find out about them.

Ideas/ Recommendations:

- Utilise V4CE communications team to develop advice through surgeries and resources so smaller organisations have clear guidance on how they can market themselves better to potential beneficiaries and how they can raise organisational profile with relevant stakeholders, funders and decision-makers.

- Targeted V4CE publicity to spotlight the work of awarded organisations and the impact of this work.

- Targeted V4CE publicity and research dissemination to spotlight the talent, strength and resilience of the BaM community and voluntary sector.

Impact of Grant Distribution

Grants distributed were all small grants with a maximum amount of £10,000. While this amount could not cover more than project work, with a small contribution to core costs, the impact was huge for both the grant awarded Black and Minoritised organisations and their beneficiaries, helping meet need when COVID 19 had meant a huge increase in difficulties experienced. Dedicated funds for Black and Minoritised communities, with V4CE as an intermediary partner, reached many Black and Minoritised organisations doing valuable work, who had previously had low success in securing grant funds.

Each outcome lists the need for continued work. It was clear from monitoring that Black and Minoritised communities still face disproportionate impact of the pandemic in terms of increased isolation, poorer access to services, greater levels of unemployment and financial difficulty, issues with increased educational inequalities and impact on young people and poorer levels of physical and mental health. This has added to existing race inequalities. Organisations need more financial support to meet these serious needs. The case studies illustrate the impact of work.

Altogether, 140 grants helped 33982 beneficiaries directly, over a short period not exceeding a year. However, it is not the numbers that are significant but the quality, range and impact of the work making huge differences, sometimes through life and death interventions, to the lives of very disadvantaged and marginalised Black and Minoritised people, providing very personalised support.

This section is divided into the following 5 parts:

1. Help for Black and Minoritised communities
2. Case studies to illustrate significance of work
3. Impact on Black and Minoritised communities
4. Views on a Black and Minoritised intermediary partner to assist reach of funds
5. Necessary work in the future

Help for Black and Minoritised communities - Comic Relief

- 14 of the 49 groups said they dealt with all Black and Minoritised communities. The main communities supported by more specific support to particular Black and Minoritised communities, were Black British, African, Caribbean, Asian British, Pakistani, Indian, Caribbean and Somali.

- We noted that there were no successful awards to projects working specifically with Gypsy / Traveller and Chinese communities given the high numbers in the UK and we will look to see how we can increase our support for specific under-represented communities.

- Comic Relief has started discussion with V4CE to extend the work of the fund.

CASE STUDY 1 - COMIC RELIEF

Background	Struggle	Support
J, a care worker, had a relationship breakdown. Her partner left and refused all further contact and to give any help. She was pregnant at the time, and had three other children: an adult daughter who had left home, one doing A levels and a six year old.	J's employment was on a zero hours contract and the employer refused to furlough her. She had round the clock childcare responsibilities, reduced income and post-natal complications. She succumbed to depression and became bed-bound, and was unable to look after her children fully.	The group supported the family with their basic needs, providing food and hygiene products as well as baby food; arranged child care, as well as dropping and picking the six year old from school; got J to attend mentoring sessions, which increased her emotional strength; acted as advocate to help her get furlough and maternity pay. She is now back at work.

CASE STUDY 2 - COMIC RELIEF

Background	Struggle	Support
N came to Wolverhampton from Pakistan in 1971, aged 21. He is widowed and does not see his children often as they live in other areas. He has Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and sight degeneration and was already in receipt of support from the group with regard to these conditions, his loneliness and help with basic needs.	In November 2020, he urgently needed medical consultation. This was not easily accessible with COVID restrictions. N was unable to get an appointment and was only able to secure this through group advocacy. He was diagnosed with cancer and the only hospital that could provide the specialist care needed was in Surrey.	The group helped him arrange and get to appointments for tests, get to and from the Surrey hospital, visited him during his 9 days stay so he could talk to a mother tongue speaker, and acted as an advocate to help him get an effective care plan. N has made a good recovery from the cancer surgery. However, his MS has deteriorated after this. The group are currently liaising with the local authority to arrange supported accommodation.

In total, 49 projects helped 14,822 beneficiaries. 49 grants meant organisations were able to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Helping the most disadvantaged increase ability to meet daily needs

Delivery was also made to the homeless, and organisations then helped with resettlement. Food provision was also linked with befriending support for those who were isolated through the pandemic. This was important as most other conventional support, e.g. through food banks, did not cater well for different cultural needs. This continues to be a huge need, made worse by rising debt and job losses as a result of the pandemic and exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis.

2. Improving quality of life for housebound people by helping them with shopping and digital inclusion

Perhaps not enough has been publicised about the impact of families separated by restrictions, reducing support from family members. This has an additional dimension in Black and Minoritised communities where some older people may lack confidence in their English and so be rendered more unable to meet social or cultural needs.

3. Improving outcomes for Black and Minoritised young people through befriending, mentoring and coaching

National research showed the disproportionate rise in mental health issues among Black and Minoritised young people as compared to general rates. There was an additional risk of engagement in crime and of joining gangs. There were also risks of increased suicide attempts and self-harm. School closures added to stress coupled with the rising inability of young people in poverty to maintain educational levels. Funded groups provided invaluable services helping young people stay disengaged from crime and gangs, and helping them set goals and return to education. They also helped with advice for parents and with enabling better family relationships.

4. Reducing isolation, loneliness and poor mental health through befriending and wellbeing services

Services were run for those who were isolated, lonely, and/or had increased stress, anxiety, fear and depression as a result of the pandemic. All applicants talked about the difficulties that had arisen with the restrictions of COVID 19, leading to much higher rates of isolation, loneliness and mental health issues. Loneliness research shows disproportionate levels among Black and Minoritised communities and this will continue to be an issue, particularly for older Black and Minoritised people.

5. Providing specialist services tailored to improve ability to tackle intersectional disadvantage

We were impressed with the number of applications offering this tailored and effective specialist support e.g. for women facing domestic violence who had no recourse to public funds, or unaccompanied minors who were asylum seekers. Given increasing political and media hostility to migrants and refugees and rising levels of racial violence this support is essential. More needs to be done to establish the specific needs of Black and Minoritised women and what is needed in support. The Women's Budget Group published research showing that this group had the greatest issues through the pandemic with a quarter struggling to feed children and over half unsure of where to go for help.

6. Help to move Black and Minoritised people closer to the labour market through employment and skills development services

Projects understood the impact of the pandemic on BAM unemployment and need to secure better paid work. Coupled with this was discrimination resulting in lower Black and Minoritised numbers who were given furlough and higher numbers at risk of redundancy. Organisations not only helped individuals, but helped them secure better conditions from their workplace. It is likely that rising and disproportionate underemployment and unemployment will need continued help. We would also be interested to see Black and Minoritised access to support e.g. trade unions, given the chequered history of trade unions with regard to race inequalities, such as catering to fears that migrants bring down wages.

7. Helping people through improving their understanding and ability to secure rights and benefits

This is key given the insecure employment and exploitation of Black and Minoritised people, particularly recent migrants. One project helped 19 people sort cases of employer exploitation and recovered over £4000 of unpaid wages. Help to secure benefits meant survival for many. Exploitation or non-payment of benefits could continue because Black and Minoritised people are not aware of what they are entitled to or feel there could be detrimental comeback if they claim their rights. More needs to be done to raise awareness and confidence in making claims.

Help for Black and Minoritised communities - Mind

In total, 42 projects directly benefitted 6502 people and indirectly benefitted a further 11702 in terms of family support.

- The fund from MIND brought greater information on disproportionate rates of mental illness and stress in Black and Minoritised communities as well as discriminatory treatment.

- In 2020, research showed that Black people were more than four times as likely as white people to be detained under the mental health legislation. The risk of psychosis in Caribbean groups was estimated to be nearly seven times higher than that of the white population. Black people were 40% more likely to access treatment through a police or criminal justice route and more likely to be on a high-security ward, subject to seclusion and restraint during their treatment.

- There are disproportionate rates of self-harm and suicide in young South Asian women and higher than average rates of young Black and Minoritised people with mental health issues.

- It was also noted that Black and Minoritised children were more likely to live in deprived areas and less likely to receive a psychosocial assessment. Figures from the UCL COVID-19 Social Study quoted on the Government website show that people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups reported worse mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic than White people in 2021.

All applications showed Black and Minoritised people had poorer access to services that could help with mental health issues. 42 grants meant groups were able to achieve the following:

1. Advice, support and help with mental health issues

This was divided between organisations that worked with all Black and Minoritised communities and those that worked with specific communities such as Black British, African, Caribbean and Asian although there were other communities such as the Portuguese community. Help ranged from counselling, therapy, befriending, referrals to access relevant services and resources to tackle stigma within the community. Some of the projects were gender specific. Given the current research and growing inequalities in mental health support, this will continue to be an urgent need for some time. V4CE could also help by collecting and disseminating information on issues within Black and Minoritised communities, resources to help and access to mental health services.

2. Help for specific mental health issues

This covered a range of organisational specialisms such as work to help people with Alzheimers and dementia, or work to help families caring for an autistic member. The work highlighted the growing needs of older Black and Minoritised people who had lost family support either through COVID illness or through restrictions. In some cases, this was compounded by poor levels of English and low confidence in using technology to access services or to communicate. With autism and similar conditions there was recognition of the impact on the family as support was harder during restrictions of lockdown. Organisations provided family/ carer support as well as resource packs to help engage and stimulate children. The social model of disability shows the impact on socialisation, added to by marginalisation through race inequality and discrimination. This was made worse by lockdown, and isolation and loneliness increased. This is an ongoing issue that needs continued support, as does increasing knowledge of what works to reach Black and Minoritised people with specific mental health issues.

3. Provision of services for older people

21% of projects were for work with older people, given the impact of COVID and restrictions on their support services had left them more isolated and in greater need. These projects offered much needed general support, including help to access health services and befriending. Some were for specific communities such as African, Caribbean and Asian elderly and for less seen communities such as Orthodox Jewish elderly. Some were for older women with complex needs. Disproportionate illness and mortality rates of younger Black and Minoritised people through the pandemic makes it evident that ongoing support is vitally needed.

4. Provision of services for specific groups

We were impressed by the range of applications that broke down Black and Minoritised needs to specific work required by a sub group. Projects catered for the specific mental health needs of refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, women and young people. Applications noted the increase in issues like domestic violence and modern-day slavery among Black and Minoritised women. The innovative nature of the work can be seen in an organisation that built an app so young people at risk of being involved with gangs could use this to help with exploring feelings and getting support.

5. Other issues that were dealt with

19% projects were all very distinct and could not be categorised easily. 1 provided support for Black and Minoritised trans people who were failed by NHS services unable to take them because of the impact of COVID on health providers; 1 provided therapy for a range – children with disabilities, those with dementia, domestic violence survivors, refugees/ asylum seekers etc.; 2 targeted the unemployed/ low income with 1 working with the homeless and 1 providing counselling for those who had suffered bereavement through COVID; 1 targeted those with additional disadvantage; 1 provided discussion spaces through theatre performances for adults and children; 1 focussed on wellbeing activities for those with mental health issues through unemployment, debt and disturbed family relationships.

CASE STUDY 3 - MIND

Background

V is an asylum seeker who fled his home country after violent persecution because of his sexual orientation, including the murder of his partner. He is a highly vulnerable adult and has been subjected to abuse and exploitation in the UK. He suffers from PTSD, learning difficulties and a dissociated personality disorder, leading to audio-visual hallucinations.

Struggle

When the group first met V, he was homeless and they successfully campaigned for him to be placed in supported accommodation by the local authority. V is an anxious, shy person, unable to articulate needs or to defend himself. If he was asked if he wanted a tea or coffee, he would not be able to answer and would agree to either. Because of this, V did not feel talking therapies helped.

Support

The group got him access to a course of equine therapy, which he attended with a group worker who helped familiarise him with the place.

V learned how to build calmness and confidence in order to work with the horses and get them to follow his instructions. V went from being extremely shy to being able to command horses using his voice and body language. V started articulating his needs. He was even able to assert himself and say no to things like making an appointment with someone. He became much more confident and vocal at the organisation's group support sessions, even challenging something someone else had said.

The most significant example was when he was alone in his room and was assailed by a flashback from a violent attack he has experienced in the past, he was able to calm himself and dismiss the visions of the assailants, by using the body language and commands he had learnt when working with horses. Equine therapy and group support benefited him on a deeper level than had been possible with talking therapies.

Help for Black and Minoritised communities - Sport England

CASE STUDY 4 - SPORT ENGLAND

Background

This was a project for Black and Minoritised children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), who were deeply impacted by school closures. The targeted Jewish children are from Yemenite, Israeli and French backgrounds.

Struggle

C has difficulties interpreting social cues and struggles with low verbal ability. A social skills assessment concluded that C had significant skill deficits in initiating interactions, and maintaining interactions with peers.

Although her vocabulary was in the average range for children her age, she seldom used her language spontaneously with classmates and teachers. She spoke only when asked direct questions and interacted only when others initiated the interactions. She spent the majority of her playground time by herself, with little peer interaction.

She expressed her loneliness by saying "I don't need to be a social butterfly, but I wish that even one would look at me and be my friend. My face is dark because I'm Yemenite." Her mother said "She has been struggling socially with maintaining friendships and understanding and using appropriate social cues. I've been seeing a pattern of exclusion at school. I know there are many perspectives involved where social dynamics among Year 4 kids are concerned, but I am desperate to give my daughter something concrete and tangible that she could use as a toolkit."

Support

C joined the group's virtual dancing sessions and gained tremendously in confidence and ability to make online conversations. She regained a joy in exercise, where she had been inactive in the playground, and this helped her feel physically and mentally better. She felt the group sessions were an incredible gift and has been able to use these to develop strategies and verbalise better. She has improved peer communication abilities by teaching dance moves to her peers and even led a dance session.

The organisation's support at sessions and the development of friendships and confidence has made her see that it is not a handicap to have a dark skin.

SPORT ENGLAND

In total, 49 projects helped 12658 beneficiaries and Sport England has contracted with V4CE to deliver a new phase in 2022-23. 49 grants meant groups were able to achieve the following:

1. Provision of physical activities and sports

It was clear that lockdown and restrictions during the pandemic reduced access to physical activities and exercise, with a harmful impact on physical and mental health and wellbeing. The impact on Black and Minoritised communities was made worse because there had been lower levels of activity before the pandemic, and a greater number with increased poverty and so unable to afford local provision. There are higher levels of certain illnesses such as diabetes in Black and Minoritised communities meaning a greater need for physical exercise. A large number of organisations offered activities to reduce inactivity levels and the first participation from Black and Minoritised people. This included activities such as walks, online physical exercise classes, dance, aerobics, Pilates and yoga. Some increased sports activity mainly in boxing, martial arts, tennis and football.

2. Provision for particular groups

Groups that were targeted to deliver specialist services were older people, children and young people, women and refugees and asylum seekers. There were also projects running sports and physical exercise for groups with particular disabilities. For children and young people school closures had cut off an avenue for activity. The impact was huge: children and young people felt better about themselves; had reduced depression, stress and anxiety levels; changed attitudes to physical activity and increased take up of other sports and activities; were less likely to be involved in gangs and anti-social behaviour; had improved sleep patterns and developed friendships. Activities also helped children and young people tackle racism and discrimination. Again, this work needs to continue as issues of Black and Minoritised children and young people remain.

3. Holistic approach to sports and physical activity delivery

The average grant award was double the normal Sports England average, showing Black and Minoritised needs. Most groups needed funding for clothes and equipment to help people participate. A large number aware of difficult nutrition levels of their members felt they had to provide food to enable participation. Projects had clear advice and referral pathways and ways to run sports activities to help participants raise concerns. It is clear that this multi-faceted approach works in terms of reaching and engaging Black and Minoritised participants and more work is needed to continue this, till levels of participation are the same as the average and health inequalities get addressed. While the projects were Black and Minoritised community based, they helped people access general local opportunities, improving integration and inclusion. This trajectory needs to be helped to continue.

Impact on Black and Minoritised organisations

Small grants had a huge impact on the funded organisations. Feedback showed that some of the benefits were improved:

- Strategic planning and monitoring and evaluation
- Fundraising strategy and increased confidence in applying for funding
- Partnership, networking and collaboration with key decision makers in the area, and with organisations that could further essential work
- Recognition of the value of work and more consultation from external agencies to improve their inclusion and understanding
- Confidence about how to deliver tangible benefits and increased resilience in tackling local issues
- Ability to develop whole organisational thinking about delivery
- Ability to reach marginalised groups more effectively e.g. women who were diffident about attending in a public space; catering for children with complex needs
- Development of better support round physical and mental health and to help tackle racism
- Ability to work with fractured families and aid relationship development
- Learning that helped develop training and resources
- Publicity that brought in new users and volunteers
- Digitalisation and technical resources

A comment that captures some of this is

"A lot of Black and Minoritised members are dying silently and no body reaches out to them and they don't want to bother anyone with their own problem.

V4C allowed us to reach them and to give them a sense of belonging. This has strengthened our skills in delivering services during difficult times as covid. Our knowledge on health and safety, hygiene, manual handling, record keeping, monitoring and evaluation has increased greatly. The positive difference of this funding to our organisation is huge. It has taken our organisation to a higher level.

We are now looked at as a leading Black and Minoritised group in the East of England. We are constantly being consulted by various government groups on information and how to reach Black and Minoritised members. We are indeed grateful for this, the opportunity to address the need of Black and Minoritised members is a privilege."

Views on a Black and Minoritised intermediary partner to assist reach of funds

Over 90% of the organisations awarded grants said that they had approached these funds because of the role of a Black-led organisation in administration and awards. This was based on three main reasons:

1.The difficulty with securing funds through a conventional grant application process. In some cases, groups said they had tried applying to these funders and felt processes were not fully inclusive e.g. "We sometimes get the feeling that as an ethnic minority group we are not recognized as well by other funders who aim that the funding should reach a diverse group of users which the funder understands, which in essence leaves out our marginalised ethnic groups" and "No, we would not have applied for this project directly to [the funder]. We do not believe that Black and Minoritised communities are a priority for them. Many from our community feel forgotten and wonder when the lockdown long purgatory will come to an end. Many wallow in deep poverty, often jobless casualties of this virus- we believe Voice4Change England helped us make sure they do not go hungry by being a great conduit [between us and the funder]. By engaging with experts on Black and Minoritised inclusion and listening to diverse voices from the Black and Minoritised community, we have made some progress in challenging the systemic barriers faced by people from minority ethnic backgrounds."

2. That V4CE added value because as a Black and Minoritised sector organisation and advocate, it understood the environment of Black and Minoritised frontline groups, the issues these organisations needed to tackle with its hinterland of racism and discrimination, and the value of lived experience in designing and running services e.g. "In light of the current effects on the Black and Minoritised community by the pandemic and the lack of diversity in the grant giving sector amongst this community, we felt a sense of confidence in applying to a fund that understands our work, our beneficiaries and the challenges that come with Black-led organisations and the communities we work with" and "Being managed by a Black-led organisation such as Voice4Change England, has helped our group which is also Black-led to be understood and supported because Voice4Change England better understands problems faced by Black and Minoritised organisations. Thank you for your assistance during these critical moments."

3. Appreciation of V4CE personalised support e.g. "V4CE understood us as a small group and helped e.g. with budgets. Love the way this is designed for Black and Minoritised groups."

Views on a Black and Minoritised intermediary partner to assist reach of funds

V4CE has unique strengths to help Black and Minoritised groups access funds, as well as help funders reach diverse community groups, including more recent or little know ones.

1 V4CE is a membership organisation and already has trusted relationships with many Black and Minoritised groups, strengthened by a long history of collaboration with other race equality organisations. Handling this grants administration showed that V4CE could handle the assessment process (with its inevitable rejections) without damaging its reputation as an advocate acting on behalf of the sector.

2 V4CE is also able to collect information on concerns within Black and Minoritised communities and link these to the development of its own policy work, helping Black and Minoritised voices be better heard.

3 V4CE proved its ability to identify and work to end race inequality through its long body of research and dissemination, from the 2020 Home Truths report (with ACEVO) which revealed racism in the charity sector to new work in 2022 on reframing messages in the public domain to tackle bias, ill-informed discourse and racism.

4 Finally, V4CE has stepped up its role in encouraging social investment and enterprise in the Black and Minoritised sector, through securing National Lottery Community Fund money to develop this programme, and this work will complement any further grants distribution.

Necessary work in the future

While restrictions and serious levels of COVID have decreased, Black and Minoritised people still need the continued help of these community groups particularly round services to:

- Help people secure basic needs, because of increased poverty and the cost of living crisis
- Tackle deprivation and homelessness also higher because of increased poverty and the cost of living
- Secure necessary support for mental health needs and to increase wellbeing
- Tackle unemployment and underemployment as well as discriminatory employer practice
- Help Black and Minoritised people understand entitlement to benefits and other forms of support
- Help Black and Minoritised people tackle debt and other financial issues
- Combat isolation and loneliness, given evidence and research on disproportionate and increased levels in Black and Minoritised communities after the outbreak of the pandemic
- Improve levels of physical activity
- Continue support for young people to help them address needs, and to set and meet goals, plus help to tackle the damaging impact of interrupted education for Black and Minoritised children in deprivation

Grant funding to tackle COVID related issues has diminished, in spite of growing inequalities faced by Black and Minoritised communities and continued underfunding of the sector.

Without more resources to address this underfunding and sustain the impact of the Sector's work, many Black and Minoritised people will face devastating consequences and Britain will continue to be a deeply divided country with all the detriment this brings.

More needs to be done to assess the value of a Black and Minoritised led intermediary partner in increased ability to reach diverse community groups, and help to address the imbalance of funding.

Policy and Public Affairs

V4CE influence and engagement role

Sixteen years on, the need for V4CE is as strong as it ever was, although the environment which fostered our early development has changed.

There is a continuing need for a national body with the reach and credibility to represent the sector's interests to policy makers and to help with the development of Black and Minoritised communities.

In recent years, the political landscape changed considerably with a few seismic events shifting the Overton window - the spectrum of ideas on public policy and social issues considered acceptable by the general public at a given time.

Both the Windrush scandal and the murder of George Floyd in 2020 ignited the public consciousness around racism. It shone a spotlight on how endemic this scourge is and increased literacy around how it still blights structures to enable discrimination to persist.

This translated into an increased recognition of the significance of supporting the Black and Minoritised communities.

V4CE looks to empower Black and Minoritised organisations, including financially by helping them leverage funding and by being a source of funds. V4CE also looks to represent Black and Minoritised sector interests including as a leading advocate in the public policy arena. Our work with grant awarded Black and Minoritised organisations has shown that the following policy areas are hugely important to organisations and their beneficiaries.

VOICE4CHANGE ENGLAND

**Nationality and Border Bill
"Some British citizens are more equal than others."**

Discriminatory citizenship-stripping policies are eroding many people's sense of belonging within the UK.

Nationality and Borders Bill

We understand the valid concerns of Black and Minoritised communities and have demonstrably highlighted problematic areas, with our opposition to the Nationality and Borders Bill, particularly Clause 9 whereby individuals could be stripped of their British citizenship without warning under this proposed rule change. It is feared that this could be applied disproportionately to Black and Minoritised communities, given the institutional racism that was highlighted in the Wendy Williams report on the Home Office.

We have actively engaged with policymakers and made our opposition well known around the government's Rwanda Plan and unethical deportations.

We will use our role in civil society to monitor application, campaign against discriminatory and disproportionate application and apply pressure to policy makers to ensure that the UK remains a tolerant and pluralistic society as a whole.

Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill

We have also sought to voice our opposition to the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill which would widen stop and search powers – which allow "individualised suspicion-less" searches and would put Black and Minoritised communities at risk of harassment and oppressive monitoring.

VOICE4CHANGE ENGLAND

Kill the Bill Protests Taking Place ahead of Votes on Policing Bill

Why is this bill a devastating attack on our democratic right to be heard?

VOICE4CHANGE ENGLAND

Public Order Bill

You may have noticed that many of the proposals are the same as the ones rejected from Priti Patel's Policing Bill.

Public Order Bill

We have been eager to keep our members informed with regular briefings on its successor the Public Order Bill which could stifle the right to assemble and protest – a key pillar of any liberal democracy.
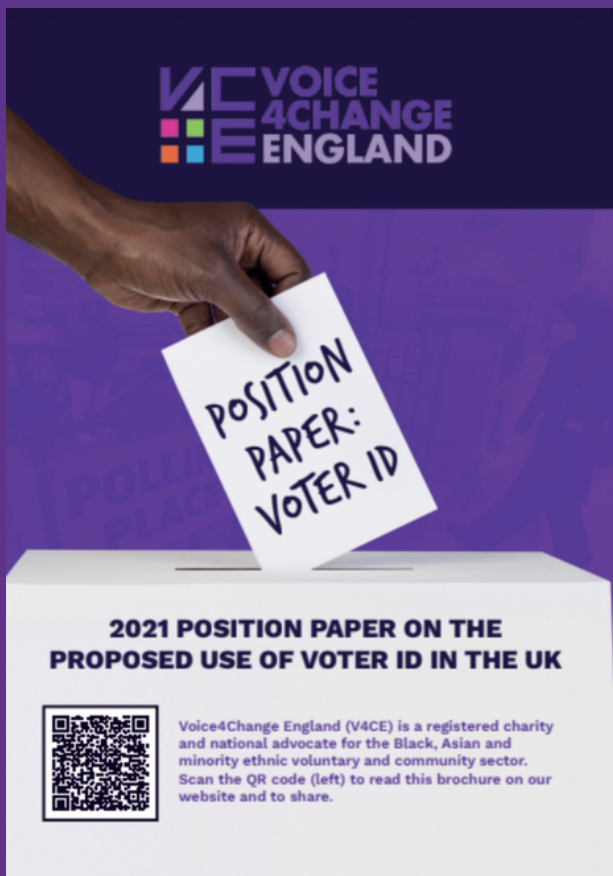
V4CE strives to ensure that our members are heard, and their concerns reflected in our policy/ advocacy work. Our efforts on the Elections Bill, particularly addressing concerns about bringing in voter ID, epitomises this very ethos.

Tower Hamlets Case Study

V4CE ensured its members were kept abreast of the passage of the Elections Bill as they were also informed by its Voter ID Position Paper.

Furthermore, V4CE worked to counter ill-informed and racist narratives around Tower Hamlets in a widely read piece titled *Tower Hamlets: The bogeyman of UK electoral reform.*

VOICE4CHANGE ENGLAND

ELECTION FRAUD

Tower Hamlets: The bogeyman of UK electoral reform

Why has the Tower Hamlets case been focused on so heavily?

VOICE 4CHANGE ENGLAND

POSITION PAPER: VOTER ID

2021 POSITION PAPER ON THE PROPOSED USE OF VOTER ID IN THE UK

Voice4Change England (V4CE) is a registered charity and national advocate for the Black, Asian and minority ethnic voluntary and community sector. Scan the QR code (left) to read this brochure on our website and to share.

Voter ID Position Paper

This culminated in a Voter ID workshop event at the RSA, open to the public, which served as an opportunity for parliamentarians to unite in their determination to oppose this legislation.

Though the bill passed, V4CE will remain steadfast in its commitment to increasing democratic engagement in the form of encouraging voter registration, and is currently driving for those without the necessary voter ID to acquire an accepted form of ID.

Levelling Up Agenda

V4CE is also undertaking work around the government's 'Levelling Up' agenda and what that means for the UK's Black and Minoritised population.

A lot of the commentary around economic geography and income inequality fails to factor in race; this offers virtually no admission that income inequality will be felt differently and worse for Black and Minoritised communities.

V4CE is exploring what 'Levelling Up' looks like for our members. We will ensure that we are central to and are shaping that conversation.

COVID-19 Response

V4CE has also been keen to tackle COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Black and Minoritised communities.

V4CE championed Black and Minoritised health and care workers who were doing all they could to keep their patients safe while facing a disproportionate risk from COVID-19 themselves.

Home Truths Project

V4CE's pipeline of cutting-edge research continues to go on from strength to strength with the commissioning of Home Truths 2.

The first Home Truths project was that we need in the charity sector to face up to the fact that racism exists in our settings as it does in others. In order to take the necessary steps, we also need to understand racism as commonplace, systemic and institutionalised.

In Home Truths 2 we will challenge the slow pace of change in the charity sector on race equity and offer practical support to move things further and faster. Through this new work, we will make it easier for charity leaders to take practical action to improve race equity and contribute to a climate that makes it harder for civil society organisations to do little or nothing. It will be encouraging the charity Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) agenda to become explicitly anti-racist.

V4CE served as a lifeline to organisations securing resources via V4CE's COVID-19 Partnership Fund to ensure neglected communities received the support they needed. This financial assistance has aimed to ameliorate the inequalities of Black and Minoritised communities, and deliver mental health and well-being services to those impacted by the pandemic.

In addition, we have been at the forefront of supporting the vaccination uptake in the Black and Minoritised communities because of the negative experiences within a culturally insensitive healthcare system.

These are just two ways in the midst of a public health emergency in which we have managed to serve the needs of our members.

Going forward, V4CE will strive to act as a source of counsel, advice, and support for the Black and Minoritised sector and in conjunction act as the bridge between the Sector, Government, and other key policy/ decision makers.

A MASSIVE THANK YOU TO

indigo

COMIC RELIEF

mind

SPORT ENGLAND

COMMUNITY FUND

VOICE 4CHANGE ENGLAND

Address: 2c Falkland Road, London NW5 2PT

Charity Number: 1140624