



COVID-19 COMMUNITY-LED
ORGANISATION RECOVERY SCHEME



30TH APRIL 2021

COMMUNITY RECOVERY IN BRENT

NOVEMBER 2020 TO APRIL 2021

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PROJECT HISTORY AND OUTCOMES

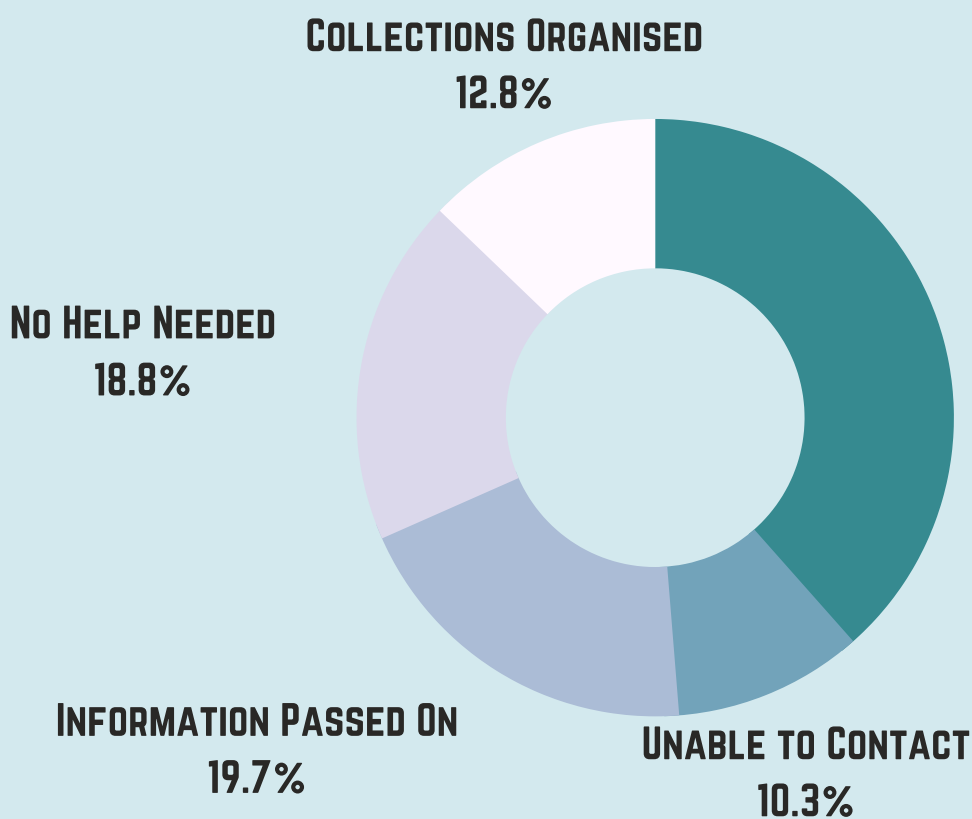
The **Ashford Place Community Recovery Project** was put together to help combat the difficulties encountered by many Brent residents during the pandemic year, as the announcement of the first lockdown brought a lot of fear and uncertainty for many. Locally, a group of concerned supporters developed a useful and much-needed service to aid those in need during these trying times, forming **Mutual Aid Food Willesden (MAFW)**. In **November 2020** the Ashford Place Team offered to support the small MAFW team and go further with services contributions. This support allowed for a wider range of services to be offered to members of the community in need.

Initially, the service was to offer food aid to those struggling due to lockdown restriction rules. Many people at the time were shielding with no other support. Some lost their jobs or simply were not able to afford the essentials. Very quickly, however, it was discovered that there was a much wider need for multiple services.

During November 2020 and April 2021 period, we identified many service requirements. **Ashford Place** team assured each of the **120**-service users were contacted at least once before the Christmas 2020 period, and an extended list of services and support needs was established by then. During our 6 month period, we have been working very closely with the MAFW team to make sure each service user has had their requirements attended to.

We maintained regular contact with each of the services users, helping them through Ashford Place services or connecting them to other relevant services in the borough of Brent. In many cases, we were required to carry out our research to identify other services in the neighbouring boroughs due to services user's relocations. We have encountered many unique cases with more than one service need and worked closely with those cases to make sure each of those requirements was achieved.

Below we have put together a breakdown of the number of service users we have worked with during this period and the type of services we have encountered.



FOOD AID ASSISTANCE

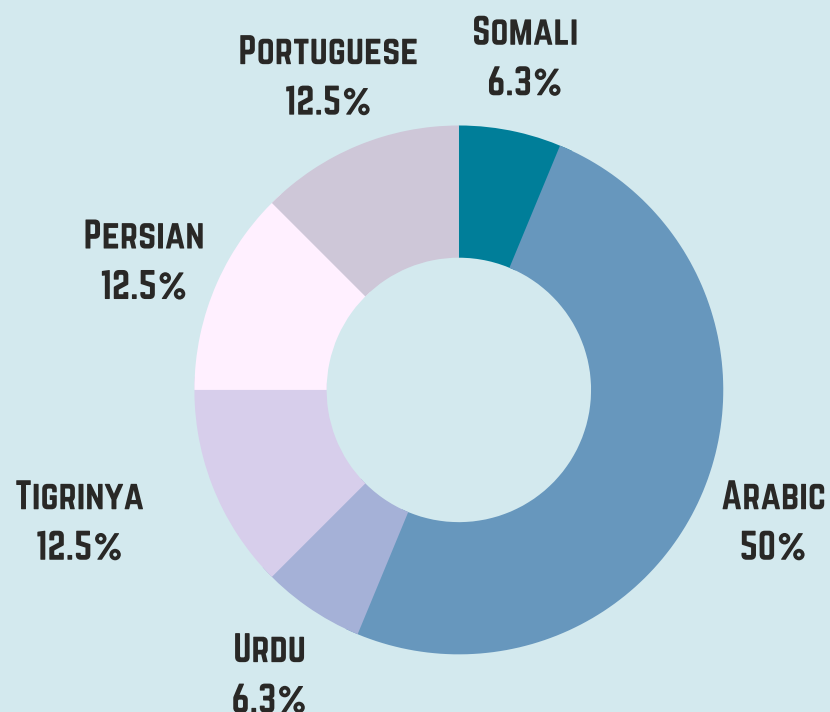
**DELIVERIES ORGANISED
38.5%**

Those in need of food aid had deliveries or collections organised, while those who did not need the help currently were given information for how to use the service should they need it in the future.

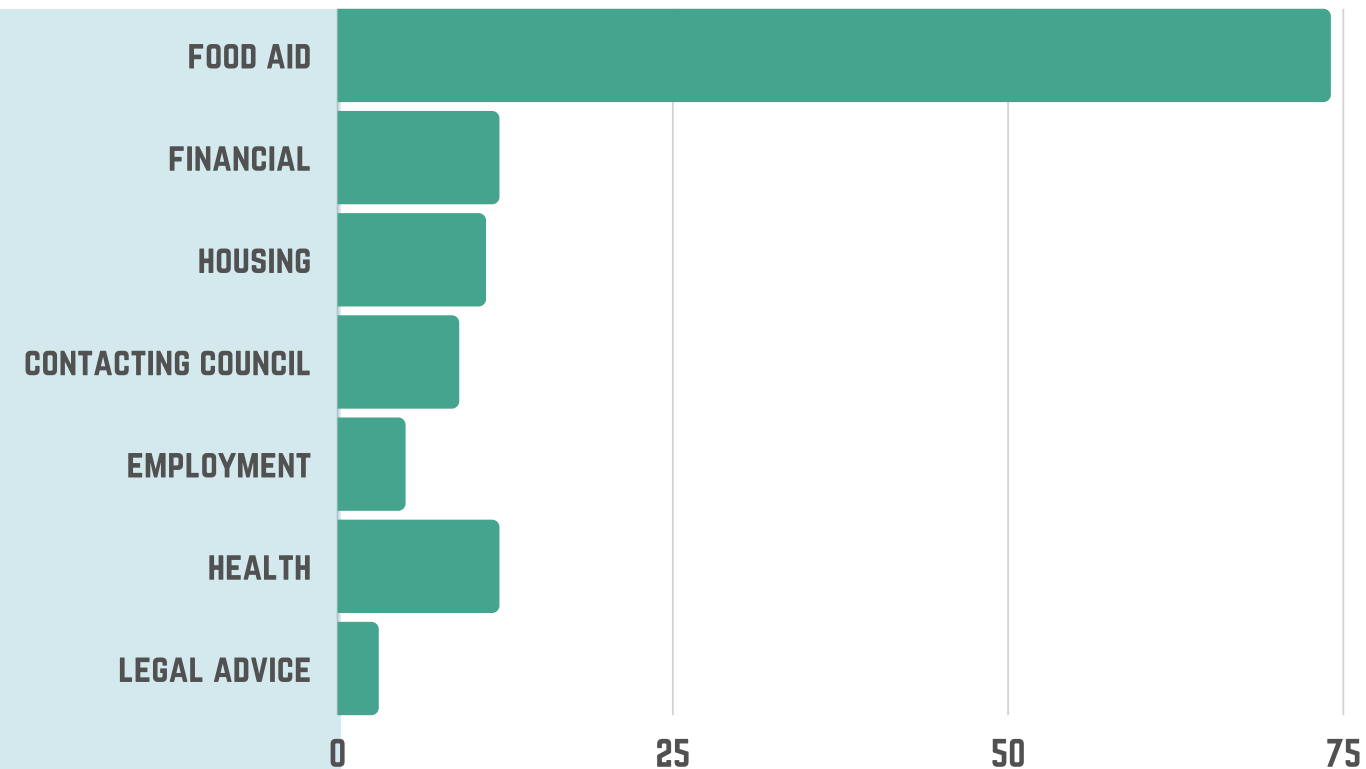
We were unable to contact a small number of service users, usually due to issues with contact information.

LANGUAGE SUPPORT NEEDED

16% of service users needed language support.



TYPES OF ISSUES SUPPORTED



Over 25% of service users required more than one service.

In order to support them, we engaged with many different services.



CASE STUDIES

JJ

Ashford Place team contacted **JJ** at the start of the project to identify which services she may need. Mutual Aid in Willesden had supported **JJ** initially during the first lockdown however, now, she and the family had moved to a different area and were finding it difficult to get any support in the new area. We discussed their service needs and possible ways to support them.

JJ's situation was difficult because the area she moved into was new and unfamiliar, and she did not have any connections with other supporting services. She lived with her young children and her partner, both unemployed at the time. Her younger one had COVID-19 and was difficult to manage with her siblings around.

We maintained contact, called and exchanged messages with **JJ** often to offer emotional support but also discuss ways for the immediate support they needed. The team began researching possible services in South West London to support **JJ** and her family, and at the same time, maintained regular contact with her. During this time, the whole family got COVID-19, and they were struggling to get any type of support while they were isolating. After numerous attempts to find the relevant services in the South West area and many emails and voicemails, at the beginning of December, the MP for the area called our team to notify they have received our requests and will get in touch with **JJ** and arrange the support she and family needs.

CHALLENGES

JJ case was a unique case mainly because of the relocation. We were required to research and identify services in other boroughs to signpost **JJ** and her family to the relevant support. Each borough has a different working structure, and with the COVID-19 restriction in place, communication was difficult. The research and reaching out to contacts in the South West area at times proved to be time-consuming and not very productive. With many services hard to reach and email response almost non-existent, this case intense and became a priority for our team. **JJ** also had many challenges in her life, such as 2 small children experiencing COVID-19, both her and her partner were unemployed and therefore had no income, the move to a new area made it hard for them to recognise any service offered in the area and most of all they had no other family or friends for support.

CASE STUDIES

JJ

PROGRESSION

Between the first contact and now, **JJ** has been settling in into the new area well. We were able to connect her with the MP for the South West area to offer her the support she and her family needed at the time. Initially, she was not able to get all the types of support she had previously been receiving in Brent, but eventually (our last contact March 2021), she was able to register for food aid, housing support, and immigration support for her and her partner. She says her children are well and happy and are going to the local nursery and reception. We exchanged Christmas wishes with **JJ** and her family, and the photo below speaks many words.



MERRY CHRISTMAS, THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR HELP

CASE STUDIES

AJ

AJ's contact information was given to Ashford Place by the Mutual Aid Food Group, Willesden. He had previously been receiving food parcels during the March-June 2020 lockdown. On our first conversation with **AJ**, it became apparent that he was in a difficult situation due to COVID-19. He needed food deliveries for his four-person family ASAP as they were all shielding due to genetic lung issues and hadn't received a food delivery in over 8 weeks.

AJ said he would like a caseworker to assist him with filling forms to receive benefits and help with housing issues. His elderly mother has moved in with him as she had been without hot water in her council housing for over two weeks. **AJ** was also having employment issues. Though he has a medical note to shield, his employer was refusing to accept it. After talking a while, **AJ** mentioned he had been struggling with mental health issues that were perpetuated by COVID-19 and that mental health issues ran in his family. He had been referred for therapy but needed further help.

CHALLENGES

From the first conversation, **AJ** was very clearly distressed. This made it difficult to always be able to understand what he was talking about, as he often got distracted while talking and changed the topic. However, it was apparent that he was in need of many different services, which we were able to develop ongoing support to provide.

During our period of contact, from December 2020-February 2020, **AJ's** brother, unfortunately, died of COVID-19. This added to his family struggles, and for a while we were unable to contact him.

CASE STUDIES

AJ

PROGRESSION

Despite **AJ** living outside of the target area, we were able to organise some initial deliveries to him from the Mutual Aid Food-group Willesden (MAFW) while he was connected with Sufra NW. He is currently receiving food from a local Church but is aware that he can receive deliveries from Sufra NW should he need. He was connected to the benefits team at Ashford Place and also to an employment lawyer to assist with his work issues. Although his workplace issues are ongoing concerning his medical note, **AJ** mentioned he was no longer concerned about losing his job.

AJ has now received his first COVID-19 vaccination, and although he is still shielding, it has helped his confidence should he have to leave the house. In terms of his mental health, he has signed up for the Brent Thrive services and is in contact with his GP to try and access further mental health resources.

Despite the challenges, **AJ** has been very proactive about changing his situation. **AJ** is now receiving Universal Credit, and Brent Hubs are supporting him with his rent issues. He was also able to get support to pay for his brother's funeral.

Ashford Place has been in regular contact with **AJ** for many months now and is happy with the progress **AJ** is making. He is aware that he can reach out to Ashford Place or MAFW should he need further help and is in continuous contact with Brent Hubs.

CASE STUDIES

LD

We contacted **LD** back in January 2021. She mentioned that she was receiving support from the Food aid team, but it has been a while since she has received any more support.

We discussed her current situation together because, due to her immigration status, she is not yet entitled to receive any benefits, and this has made her situation even harder. **Being** a single mother with an autistic son 5 years of age and a 3-year-old daughter, LD mentioned she has been struggling to feed her children. She also mentioned that she had previously been in an abusive relationship and would need some support to overcome the fears and anxieties developed as a result.

We talked about the type of support she would need and ways to provide that, maintained contact with **LD** for emotional support, and conducted our research for the further support she required.

CHALLENGES

This was another unique case with many different service needs. It has been hard for **LD** to look after her children, having come out of an abusive relationship, as well as the struggles she was encountering to offer the necessary support to her autistic son. Although she had a support worker to help her with her son, she lacked support in many other parts of her life. However, she mentioned the support worker is also looking into other services for her to get the support she and her children need.

This was a case with many essential needs for our team and to develop ongoing support for **LD** and her young children.

CASE STUDIES

LD

PROGRESSION

With our team's help, we were able to connect **LD** with two different charities to support her with emigration status and the women and girls network, which offers emotional support to women who have been through abuse.

She was referred to MAFW for food aid, and we delivered toys and clothes for her children several times. We have been in touch with **LD**, and she mentioned that the support for her son has increased, and she is still waiting for her emigration case to be reviewed. She has also had some support from the women and girls network, but due to COVID restrictions, support is not consistent.

The last time we met **LD** and her little girl during March 2021 to deliver her toys for her children, she mentioned she is so happy that we did not forget about her and is grateful for all the support. Although hers is a complex case with many needs, she is now feeling a bit better and is hopeful her emigration case will be finalised soon so she can continue her life here.



THANK YOU SO MUCH ☺ SHE IS VERY HAPPY