

July 2020

West Midlands Recovery Coordination Group

Citizens' Panel

Full debrief of findings

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1

Background and introduction

Background

- Outside of London, the West Midlands has been one of the hardest hit regions in terms of coronavirus cases and deaths in the UK. Alongside this, a number of reports have suggested that the region will suffer severe economic and social impacts as a result of the pandemic across the coming months and years.
- In response to this, a West Midlands Recovery Coordination Group (WMRCG) has been formed to develop priorities to inform the region's recovery approach.
- The RCG's report and recommendations will be presented to the West Midlands' Metro-Mayor and the leaders of the region's seven Local Authorities at the Mayors and Leaders Policy Forum.
- In addition to already ongoing work to assess the initial impact of the pandemic, the RCG have commissioned deliberative research with the public to ensure that the region's priorities are informed by the views, experiences and preferences of its citizens.

Objectives

The overarching objective for this piece of research was to help **ensure that the priorities for regional recovery agreed by West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) political leaders are guided by the informed recommendations of its citizens.**

Specifically, this meant getting a deep understanding of citizens’:

1

Experiences of living through the lockdown and the impact coronavirus has had on their lives

2

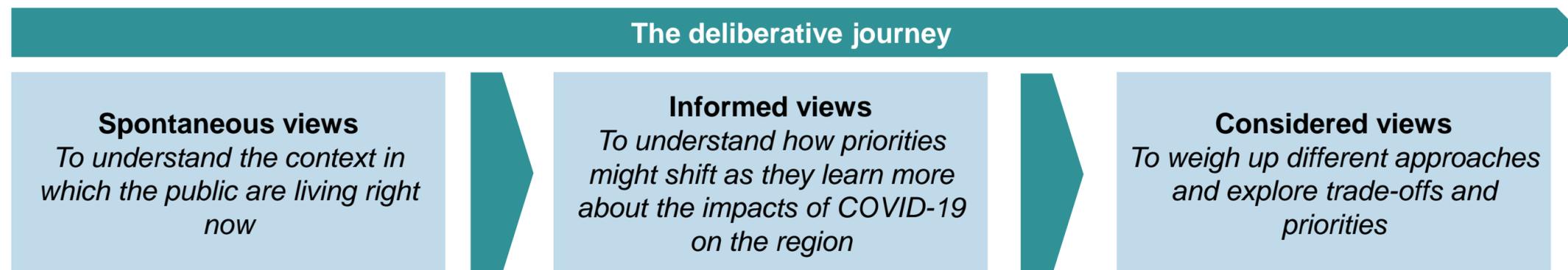
Views on the particular issues and areas of life that matter to them and that should be the focus of recovery plans

3

Recommendations for how the WMRCG should go about planning and delivering regional recovery

The complexity of the challenge facing the WMRCG, called for a deliberative method of engagement with members of the public

Deliberative engagement allows us to understand where members of the public get to on a topic when they are given the time, space and information to consider an issue or policy debate in real depth. This is a particularly useful approach on complex topics where there are trade-offs to be made or where an issue affects society as a whole and therefore needs to be considered from multiple perspectives and points of view.



The core feature of a deliberative methodology is that it takes members of the public on a journey, from a point where their views are informed only by their experiences and existing levels of knowledge, to a 'citizen mindset' where their views are also informed by information and ideas from professionals/experts and from listening to and deliberating with other members of the public from different backgrounds and with different life experiences.

Outputs from deliberative engagement exercises are distinct from other qualitative and quantitative research methods

The outputs and recommendations that emerge from deliberative research:

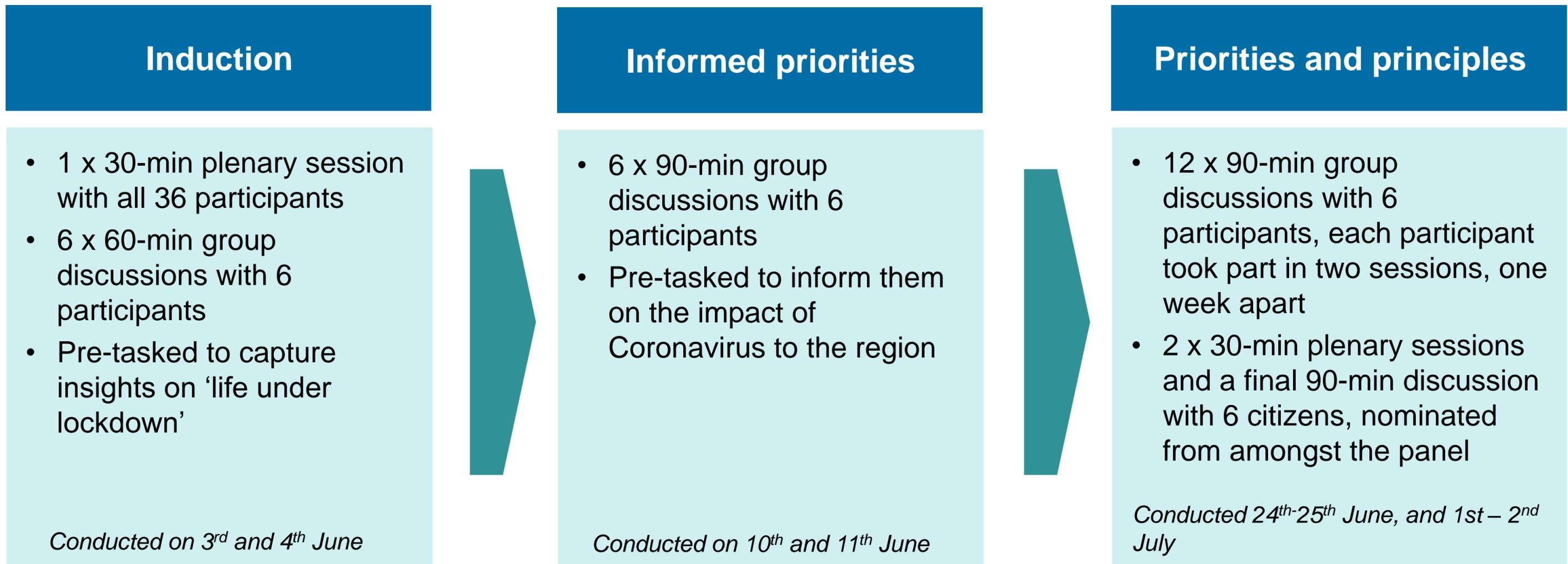
- ✓ Are based on underlying values/drivers, not just knee-jerk or top-of-mind responses
- ✓ Are informed by diverse views and experiences from people across the community, including seldom heard voices
- ✓ Are rooted in the values of real people whilst being cognisant of wider policy challenges
- ✓ Focus on points of consensus, rather than division

“I really looked forward to Wednesday evenings! Of the six people in our group, none of us do the same job, everyone is so different, and we’ve all got different opinions, but we’ve all worked towards the same priorities.”

I’ve found it really interesting, I’ve learnt things I didn’t know. It’s nice listening to other people’s points of view.”

Methodology

Our Citizens' Panel for the WMRCG comprised of 36 participants who were engaged online – in plenary and in breakout groups - over three stages of fieldwork using the Microsoft Teams platform:



We recruited 36 members of the public to the Citizens' Panel

- Participants were recruited using professional market research recruiters using tailored screening materials to ensure we achieved a balanced sample that reflects the diversity of the region.
- Participants were drawn from across the West Midlands region as follows:

Constituent Authorities (27, min. 2 from each)

- Birmingham: 12
- Dudley: 1*
- Sandwell: 3
- Walsall: 4
- Wolverhampton: 2
- Coventry: 2
- Solihull: 3

Non-Constituent Authorities (9, max. 2 from each)

- Cannock: 0
- North Warwickshire: 1
- Nuneaton and Bedworth: 0
- Redditch: 2
- Rugby: 0
- Shropshire: 0
- Stratford-on-Avon: 1
- Tamworth: 2
- Telford and Wrekin: 1
- Warwickshire: 2

Criteria	Sub-quota	Total
Gender**	Female	16
	Male	20
Age	18-24	3
	25-34	5
	35-44	8
	45-54	9
	55-69	5
	70+	6
SEG	AB	12
	C1C2	13
	DE	11
Ethnicity	Black (including Caribbean, African, Black British)	5
	Asian (including Pakistani, Indian and Asian British)	7
Health	Physical disability or LTC	7
	Mental health condition	4
Location	Rural	6
	Urban	20
	Suburban/market town	10
Life stage	Parents with children 0-12	11
	Parents with children 13-18	7
	Parents with children 18+ / no children	23
Employment	Recently unemployed (i.e. in last two months)	1
	On furlough	4
	Non-frontline 'essential' workers (e.g. teachers, supermarket workers)	5
Voting history / intention	Conservative voters	20
	Labour voters	15
Shielded	Individuals currently shielding	5

*We had one last minute drop-out from Dudley, who we were able to replace with a stand-in, but only from another area.

**In the screener we allowed for potential participants to say they were non-binary or that they preferred to self-describe but didn't put any quotas on those gender identities.

2

Executive summary

Citizens' Panel Priorities

Citizens' Panel Principles

At the end of the deliberative process, the final outputs from the Panel were a list of priorities that they wished to see in the recovery plan and a set of principles to guide the WMRCG as it delivers the plan.

Citizens Panel priorities for the recovery:

Coronavirus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep the virus under control and reduce the impact, so that people can live without current fear and get normality back into daily life. This means making sure that everyone understands the rules and follows them, and are held accountable.
Physical and mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use face-to-face appointments only when necessary (and remote appointments where possible) to make sure that patients can be treated at covid-free clinics and the healthcare system gets back on track to diagnose and treat people when they need it. It also means promoting healthy living to reduce demand for the NHS in the long-term.• Make sure that anyone who needs mental health support knows where to find it and is guided to access support. There needs to be an extra focus on recognising the signs of mental illness in society. We should address the vulnerability of recently unemployed people, young people and the elderly. Teachers and employers should therefore also be trained to spot issues and offer support.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare children to go back to an adapted school environment, ensuring their safety and wellbeing. Make sure that every child is supported to make up for lost time so children from all backgrounds are equally able to achieve their goals.
Jobs and business	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create new jobs, with an emphasis on apprenticeships and entry-level jobs. Make sure that additional training is provided to give people the right skillset to enter the workforce. Get people who have lost their jobs for covid-related reasons back into work.• Promote and support business, especially smaller and/or local businesses and the self-employed (e.g. by encouraging people to buy local). Provide financial and business support to help them get back on their feet and protect jobs.

These recommendations were agreed by the Panel as a whole, and are expressed in Panellists' own words. They reflect the process of learning and consensus-building that had taken place over the previous four weeks.

Over the next slides we outline the 'deliberative journey' that Panellists went on with regards to each of the priorities.

Coronavirus

- **Keep the virus under control** and reduce the impact, so that **people can live without current fear and get normality back** into daily life. This means making sure that **everyone understands the rules and follows them**, and are held accountable.

Spontaneous views

- Spontaneously Panellists were of the view that coronavirus is here to stay – concern about managing the virus therefore informed discussions right from the start.
- There was a strong desire for members of the public to abide by the government guidelines and at the start this was discussed in terms of ‘punishing’ or ‘naming and shaming’ the rule-breakers.

Considered views

- By the the end of the deliberative process, whilst the concern about rule-breakers persisted, the language of ‘naming and shaming’ had given way to a less punitive focus on ensuring accountability.
- Finally, given Panellists did not make a distinction between a phase in which the virus was being tackled vs. a post-virus phase of recovery, it is important that ‘keeping the virus under control’ ended up in the final recommendations here.

Physical Health

- Use face-to-face appointments only when necessary (and remote appointments where possible) to **make sure that patients can be treated at covid-free clinics** and the healthcare system gets **back on track to diagnose and treat people** when they need it. It also means **promoting healthy living** to reduce demand for the NHS in the long-term.

Spontaneous views

- In the initial discussions, Panellists were mostly concerned with keeping people safe from coronavirus and ensuring people with the disease were being seen to and treated.
- Their thoughts tended towards the more immediate/practical aspects of protecting people's physical health.

Considered views

- By the the end of the deliberative process, there was a wider appreciation of the longer term impact of coronavirus on the healthcare system and an interest in ensuring people with other health issues were being treated to avoid problems being stored up for later down the line.

Mental Health

- Make sure that **anyone who needs mental health support knows where to find it and is guided to access support**. There needs to be **an extra focus on recognising the signs of mental illness** in society. We should **address the vulnerability of recently unemployed people, young people and the elderly**. Teachers and employers should therefore also be trained to spot issues and offer support.

Spontaneous views

- Right from the initial discussions, panellists said they felt there had been a widespread impact on mental health.
- Their own experiences and anecdotes underpinned this concern e.g. separation from family and friends was common to almost everyone; money/job worries were also an issue for some on the Panel and of course, some had been bereaved.

Considered views

- As the deliberation proceeded, the focus on mental health actually increased and expanded to include a conversation about the need for better supported mental health services and a desire for people (both members of the public and those in ‘public-facing roles’) to be better able to spot the signs and more open to talking about mental ill health.

Education

- **Prepare children to go back to an adapted school environment**, ensuring their safety and wellbeing. Make sure that **every child is supported to make up for lost time** so children from all backgrounds are equally able to achieve their goals.

Spontaneous views

- From the outset, Panellists were concerned about the impact of the pandemic on children.
- But, there were competing views in terms of whether the priority should be getting children back into school as quickly as possible or only opening schools when social distancing measures are fully in place.

Considered views

- The final recommendation that emerged from the deliberation represents a consensus view that attempts to ‘balance’ the priorities of going back to learning and ensuring safety.
- There was no clear resolution here, but Panellists got to the position where they were able to articulate the most important thing – that no child is put at any further disadvantage due to the pandemic.

Jobs

- **Create new jobs**, with an emphasis on apprenticeships and entry-level jobs. Make sure that additional training is provided to **give people the right skillset to enter the workforce**. Get people who have lost their jobs for covid-related reasons back into work.

Spontaneous views

- Protecting jobs and getting people back to work was one of the strongest themes from the outset.
- ‘Jobs’ were the main frame through which Panellists understood/discussed the health of the economy.

Considered views

- Panellists were exposed to more ‘ambitious’ approaches to job creation through the deliberative process (generating green jobs or high tech jobs for example) which built interest in and support for these types of ideas/approaches.
- However, the priority for Panellists at the end remained the accessibility of jobs.

Business

- **Promote and support business, especially smaller and/or local businesses and the self-employed** (e.g. by encouraging people to buy local). Provide financial and business support to help them get back on their feet and protect jobs.



Spontaneous views

- Panellists started out predominantly concerned about local businesses, particularly smaller, “high street” ones.

Considered views

- Through the deliberative process there developed some additional interest in larger businesses with a strong regional presence (especially in the manufacturing sector).
- The final recommendation reflects that it was still smaller businesses that were felt to need the greatest support - the deliberative process gave Panellists ideas about the types of support that they would like to see provided.

Panellists spent time discussing and deliberating in some detail the policy ideas that they wished to see included in the recovery plan.

Coronavirus	Clear, up to date and accessible communication on the measures we should be following to keep safe	Enabling social distancing and access to hygiene equipment in shops, schools and workplaces.	Enable easy access to testing both for coronavirus and antibodies	Stronger deterrence measures for those who don't follow the rules on social distancing		
Mental Health	Providing better access to mental health services	Informing the public about the mental health services available	Support children in schools to come to terms with the psychological impact of lockdown	Improve training for employers to be able to spot and support those suffering with mental health crises		
Physical health	Supporting those with non-covid related medical conditions to access the treatment they need from the NHS	Using technology for those who don't need to meet face to face and creating more "clean" hospitals and clinics				
Community	Encourage volunteering and training in local communities for those who are unemployed	Continue to look out for our neighbours so we can spot if someone needs an extra hand	Build on the progress of getting people off the streets to end homelessness	Use community spaces for events and get together	More police on the streets to tackle anti-social behaviour	
Essential workers	Support key and essential workers to get a fair wage	Continuing to respect key and essential workers (e.g. by no longer referring to them a low skilled)	Make those companies who have done well out of the crisis pay their fair share in taxes			
New jobs	Invest in infrastructure projects to create jobs	Support housebuilding to create jobs	Encourage "green" jobs	Incentivising businesses to create apprenticeships and ensuring these are easy to find	Investment in training for school leavers and those recently unemployed	Provide additional support for those who were unemployed or homeless before the crisis to get a job
Businesses	Support local businesses to keep afloat (e.g. by lowering businesses rates and/or helping businesses to diversify into other industries)	Provide clear communication on the next steps of recovery so people will feel confident to spend	Lower VAT to increase spending	Encourage businesses who are able to take people off furlough	Ensure those who need to can safely travel on public transport to work	Encourage people to shop with their local businesses
Environment	Protect and invest in local green spaces	Encourage and enable people to walk and cycle where they can	Establish a national park in the West Midlands	Enable all who can to continue to work from home, to minimise the number of people needing to commute.	Enable traffic free zones to decrease carbon emissions and pollution	
Education	Continue a slow transition back to school, allowing for social distancing and bubbles of students	Provide increased support for parents to help their children learn online	Employ more teachers and support staff to enable more children to go back to school	Think creatively about ways to enable younger people to socialise even if they are not able to go back to school full time	Enable remote access to classrooms for children unable to attend school, by providing technology for use at home and resources that can be used online	Involve young people in decision making about what happens next

Separate to the priorities, the Panel also developed a set of advice or ‘principles’ which they hoped would guide the WMRCG in the delivery of its plan.

The following slide lists these seven pieces of advice, in their own words.

The Citizens Panel principles for the WMRCG:

- **Make sure that the recovery plan considers and supports everyone** because everyone has been affected, but that it gives extra help to those who have been most affected.
- **Listen to the voices of people in the community**, particularly key workers and those most affected by coronavirus, so that you remain people-focussed.
- **See this as a great opportunity to be creative** in thinking outside the box and not continue doing things that weren't working before.
 - The RCG should learn from other countries and be flexible and open-minded.
 - The recovery should be tailored to ensure we are doing what people in the West Midlands need.
- **Lead by example** so everyone in the West Midlands can be proud of the recovery.
- **Have clear aims and objectives**, communicate it in a transparent way and give regular updates.
- **Take forward any positives from this pandemic** and make sure the recovery is realistic and sustainable.
- **Keep positive and encourage good practice in relation to the guidelines**, using enforcement action where appropriate to **hold people accountable** for their actions.

3

Experiences of lockdown and spontaneous views

We pre-tasked all Panellists and brought them together for a 30-min plenary before breaking out into six groups of six participants

- In the pre-task we asked participants to tell us, using words and images, how ‘lockdown life’ had been – both the things they had experienced and observed
- The group discussion was open and largely participant-led, covering:
 - Personal experiences of coronavirus and lockdown
 - Perceptions of the impact of coronavirus and lockdown in their local area and West Midlands
 - Introducing the concept of recovery and exploring spontaneous views on priorities
 - Identifying areas the recovery should focus on



Panellists drew on their own experiences, observations and sources of information to paint a picture of uncertainty and anxiety about the future

1

Spontaneously, Panellists spoke in negative terms about the impact of coronavirus and described the emotional and practical fallout from the lockdown.

2

Despite that, Panellists also said that there had been some positives to come out of the past few months, which they hoped would be continued and/or herald some change.

3

At this point in the deliberative process (and in the lockdown) Panellists were very much focussed on keeping safe from coronavirus and maintaining social distancing. The outlook was predominantly short-term and Panellists struggled at first to imagine what 'recovery' or coming out of lockdown would look like.

4

When prompted to think about recovery, Panellists felt it was health and healthcare, jobs/business and education that had been worst hit and would need the greatest attention.

For almost all participants, the lockdown had had an emotional fallout and left people feeling disoriented and worried

Missing friends and family – leading to loneliness for some

- Typically described as the hardest part of the lockdown, affecting people across life stages
- Loss of social interactions and emotional support leading to isolation, boredom, low mood
- More significant for those who were shielding, living alone, or on furlough

“It’s like I am in prison – I spend a lot of my time thinking about dreams that have been flattened.”

Lack of control and breakdown of trust

- Participants described feeling unsettled and anxious about the sudden disruption to normal life and uncertainty about the future
- Feeling a lack of control and witnessing others panic-buying and/or not following the rules made people feel scared and angry about others in their local area/in society

“It’s the uncertainty, not knowing what the future is gonna hold.”

Struggling with lack of routine/motivation

- With work, school and other activities on pause or drastically changed, many participants were finding it hard to establish new routines
- For some (e.g. those on furlough) this led to a feeling of monotony and having low energy
- For others (e.g. parents) the challenge was how to re-order busy lives under one roof

“My motivation is deteriorating.”

For some, additional challenges had been thrown up, both of a practical and emotional nature

Financial problems

- For those who had been made redundant or been furloughed, there were very immediate money worries and efforts to cut back spending
- There was anxiety amongst others about the prospect of redundancy
- Concerns about the broader economy and difficulties finding a new job in the current environment were raised

“I’ve been living on my basic tax credit. It’s hit me hard financially. There are no jobs.”

Bereavement

- Some had lost friends and family to coronavirus and/or had been unable to attend a funeral due to restrictions
- Those in households that were shielding described a constant fear they or their loved ones might get sick

“We lost my brother-in-law so that was very, very difficult with the funeral – only direct family, that was really hard.”

Struggling to work from home

- For those unused to working from home or who had been provided with poor technology by their employer, their jobs had become quite difficult
- Juggling children and work commitments was a real challenge for many parents, especially where space was a problem

“I find working from home difficult because I have kids and a poor set-up.”

But there were also positives that Panellists had observed or experienced over the lockdown

Seeing their community pull together

- Panellists felt proud of the way their community had come together to tackle the crisis
- This was epitomised by those helping older neighbours and a newly observed friendliness amongst strangers when out and about

“It has bonded people as it’s something that affects everyone – it has brought people closer.”

Appreciating nature and the fresher air

- Most had been spending more time outside on walks or in their gardens, giving them an increased appreciation of the natural world

“Nature seems to be healing itself – the sun’s been out, and plants are growing.”

Reassessing and trying new things

- Some Panellists felt this period had allowed them to reassess their personal priorities and many had lowered their spending on ‘non-essential’ items
- Some spoke about enjoying new hobbies at home such as gardening, crafting and cooking, now that they had more time on their hands

“I’ve been busy doing different things like gardening.”



Initially Panellists were very much focussed on the day-to-day and weren't thinking about 'recovery' or what this might look like

- Managing the live threat of coronavirus and infection was the most pressing concern
 - Especially for those who were shielding
- Keeping safe and avoiding a second spike dominated Panellists' thoughts of the future
 - They typically saw a continued need for social distancing measures and heightened hygiene practices as key to keeping safe
 - And there were concerns about others increasingly not following the rules and seeming to 'get away with it'
- It was hard for Panellists to imagine what the next few weeks and months would hold, which also caused a short-term outlook
 - But most expected that things would be unlikely to get back to 'normal' anytime soon

"I listen to the news and the amount of deaths there are every day has been very concerning for me, especially when I see not everyone has kept social distances."

"Everyone is referring to the same things. I don't think many people are talking far ahead. When you speak to people, it is more about complaining and worrying about current things, what they can and can't do."

But when prompted to think about recovery, Panellists felt it was health, jobs/business and education needing the greatest attention



Health

In the context of recovering from a pandemic, looking after people's health and supporting the healthcare system were seen as very important

- Panellists expected large numbers of people would be struggling with their mental health now and in the future
- They were worried about people with other health problems or illnesses who had not been able to get a diagnosis or treatment
- And there was a newfound appreciation for NHS staff whom it was felt deserved recognition/reward for delivering vital services under enormous pressure



Jobs and business

Panellists were worried about the effect on businesses and the knock-on impact on jobs

- They had seen with their own eyes how quiet local town/city centres had become
- Concern was centred around smaller businesses, high street retailers and the self-employed, but concerns about large regional employers cropped up too
- Panellists said they thought businesses would need help to be kept afloat, the recently made redundant would need help back into work and people's return to workplaces should be safely facilitated



Education

The closure of schools and other educational institutions was seen as a problem in itself and a blocker to recovery

- There were concerns (especially from parents) that being out of learning environments had set their children back, both academically and socially
- Parents also felt their ability to WFH effectively or to start commuting again was dependent on childcare/learning environments re-opening
- The challenge of socially distancing for small children was raised as a barrier to their return and to recovery

But when prompted to think about recovery, Panellists felt it was health, jobs/business and education needing the greatest attention



Health

“The NHS should be prioritised. We are lucky to have the NHS in the UK. We should be proud of it.”

“As much as we praise nurses and doctors, what happened is gonna affect a lot of them, they will need support as well as elderly, vulnerable.”



Jobs and business

“People’s jobs in general really, small businesses, protecting people’s jobs, so many people at risk from losing everything. My husband is in manufacturing, he loses his job... I don’t know what will happen.”

“Jobs start the rest of them rolling.”



Education

“The interactions they’re not having, they need to put in place support to help children with education.”

“They’re the next generation we don’t know how they’re gonna react in the years to come... support them in trying to regain what they’ve lost make them feel they can achieve their goals.”

And there were several other areas spontaneously mentioned by Panellists where they said they wanted to see change

Keeping the new community spirit alive

- Many commented they had grown closer to neighbours and were glad to see people supporting older and vulnerable people
- However, there was scepticism as to whether this community spirit would remain post-recovery

“I’d like people to be more mindful. I’d like to see people pulling together, people being respectful. I’ve seen that in my community. I like to think that community support is not just temporary.”

Ensuring essential workers are rewarded

- Ensuring essential workers such as supermarket workers and cleaners are recognised for their important contribution to society and rewarded suitably for their work in a way that was not the case prior to coronavirus

“I hope we will remain appreciative about ‘little people’ behind the scenes.”

Maintaining a good upkeep of local areas and the environment

- Maintaining good upkeep of local areas to cope with more people spending time outdoors and ensuring spaces are kept pleasant as lockdown eases
- A desire to see fewer cars on the road, lowering emissions and spending more time outside

“If we don’t sort out the environment, we won’t have any left – I’ve been appreciating it more.”

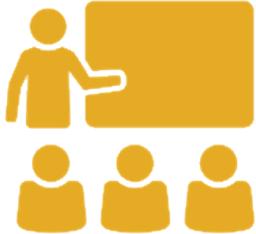
4 Informed views on the shape of recovery

A note on the methodology and research content

Panellists were provided with information* on the impact of coronavirus across six areas, to read ahead of the second group discussion



Jobs and business



Education and skills



Health and wellbeing



Community and neighbourhoods



Transport and environment



Crime

*Please see appendix to see the information shared with Panellists in a series of factsheets

After reviewing the information, Panellists began to consider the wider implications of coronavirus and this influenced their assessment of what could be needed for a successful recovery

1

Information about the scale of Covid-19's impact on jobs highlighted the urgency of getting the economy moving again.

2

Panellists began to place protecting employment as a priority alongside (although not above) protecting health and reducing transmission of the virus.

3

There was also a greater appreciation of how different parts of the recovery are linked and where the tensions and trade-offs lie.

4

However, across the panel there were still deep concerns about the safety implications of relaxing social distancing rules to allow businesses to reopen.

Panellists were struck by the scale of the impact Coronavirus had had on jobs and business in the West Midlands

- The information reinforced concerns from week 1 about high streets and small businesses being hit the hardest
- The increased impact of Covid-19 on the West Midlands economy was initially surprising and worrying
 - However, most understood that this could be explained by the region's reliance on the manufacturing sector
 - This helped to broaden the conversations about the types of businesses that must be supported, to include more than just those on the high street

"I didn't realise what the numbers were, I didn't realise how extreme they are. The Universal Credit figure – it's just unsettling when you see the numbers, once you have the scale."

"The most important thing to me is jobs and businesses. Without people earning money nothing else can follow."

Participants were particularly shocked by the reduction in treatment for non-Covid-19 patients and the longer-term implications of this

- This broadened their understanding about what might be needed to protect the health of the region as part of recovery
- The high levels of anxiety experienced by people in the region were unsurprising to most, but landed the point about the toll on mental health and encouraged some to share personal experiences about their mental wellbeing during lockdown
- The impact of coronavirus on minorities was shocking and Panellists found it difficult to understand
 - Many expressed confusion as to why they were more vulnerable suggesting that scientists should provide answers in due course

“It’s scariest for people who got cancer symptoms avoiding hospitals. Such a scary, long-lasting impact.”

“I didn’t realise how at risk the BAME society is – it was really shocking. When we had the risk assessment at work, my ethnic colleague ranked higher than me even though I was asthmatic – it was really shocking.”

Information on the reduction in university enrolment and the high number of businesses withdrawing apprenticeships stood out

- Hearing about the high number of parents lacking confidence in home schooling their children resonated with many on the Panel and landed the point about the longer-term impact of school closures
- The information also helped widen perceptions of how coronavirus is affecting young people's education and opportunities, by prompting them to consider the impact on:
 - Young schoolchildren
 - Those enrolling in university
 - Those looking for a job for the first time
- Panellists also drew the link that schools being closed means that parents will be unable to go back to work

"It feels like they'll be left behind. My son was supposed to go to Leeds [University] but he's not going now. He picked Leeds to be away from home, he doesn't want to do that [online lessons]... It's like we've lost a year."

"It seems like a no-win trade-off – safety vs their improvement and education – I wish I knew and I have agonised over this as I have a son who can go to school but the other can't."

Though Panellists were pleased to see a reduction in crime, there was a sense this would 'naturally' return to normal after lockdown

- Some suspected that anti-social behaviour, speeding and theft of bicycles had increased, both from their own experience and what they had seen in the media
- Others suspected that these figures had fallen because police had less time and capacity to monitor and record these crimes

"I was shocked that there was more crime during lockdown (domestic violence) – it made me feel really shocked and sad that people were acting in that way during this awful situation."

"I think of all the stats that one makes the most sense. If you've got no respite anywhere to go, it does make sense."

Panellists were pleased to see information supporting the positive outcomes they had highlighted in the first week of groups

- The positive changes made as a result of coronavirus that were highlighted by the Panellists that they hope to remain post-Covid-19 include:
 - Reduction in carbon and other gas emissions
 - Less traffic on the roads
 - An increase in people walking and cycling
 - Greater sense of community spirit
 - The large number of people who signed up to volunteer

“Sooner or later, things will go back to normal and people will be travelling again by plane and train so in terms of pollution it will increase again.”

“This seems like one of the best areas with the 8 o’clock clapping and people shopping for each other – it’s really good to see”

Through the course of the discussions, Panellists drew out the connections and tensions they saw between the different areas

High employment rates are important to protect mental health, tackle homelessness and reduce crime

In order to get residents back to work, Panellists noted it will be important to open schools and ensure safe access to public transport

Maintaining high levels of community spirit in the recovery was felt in turn to potentially improve mental health

As people return to work, it was felt it will become more difficult to lend a hand to neighbours and keep the community feeling alive

The expectation was that once businesses reopened, many people would need to travel by car to work, and emissions would increase

5

Narrative questions and policies

We asked panellists to deliberate on four narrative questions, crafted to reflect the key areas of interest that emerged from the informed priorities:

How to we get people in the West Midlands back to work?

How do we keep people in the West Midlands safe and well?

How do we ensure we don't have a lost generation of children and young people in the West Midlands?

Where are there opportunities in the West Midlands to make things better than they were before the Coronavirus pandemic?

Panellists were asked to draw on the policy content of videos from our 'expert vox-pop library' to help answer these four questions and to create a 'long-list' of ways to achieve a successful recovery.

Using the policy ideas to ‘think with’, Panellists explored the feasibility of different ways of planning a successful recovery:

1

Panellists felt there should be a push on creating new jobs and support for businesses to protect existing ones.

2

A strict approach to containing CV, getting the NHS back on track and help to access mental health services were seen as vital.

3

Panellists wanted a safe transition back to classrooms, short term support for children and opportunities created for school leavers.

4

There were seen to be opportunities for stronger communities, rewarding essential workers more and the environment.

1. How do we get people in the West Midlands back to work?

Panellists felt there should be a push on creating new jobs and support for businesses to protect existing ones

- Panellists saw new job creation as essential:
 - Investing in local sectors (e.g. infrastructure) to create jobs, making these 'green' where possible
 - Encouraging businesses to create apprenticeships to help young people entering the workforce
 - Additional support (e.g. training) to those who were unemployed pre-crisis
- Supporting local and / or small businesses to protect existing jobs was also felt to be key, e.g. by encouraging employers to take people off furlough and encouraging people to shop locally

Panellists also linked this to:

- Making working environments and public transport safe from coronavirus (e.g. socially distanced), so people feel comfortable going to work
- Preventing a 'lost generation' of young people (through training / apprenticeships)

"Some of the videos spoke about the sectors the West Midlands should be investing in, and I think we should be looking at that. Looking at the skills we have in the West Midlands and what employers are looking for."

"Now would be an ideal opportunity for the government to fund apprenticeships and allow people to learn new skills."

2. How do we keep people in the West Midlands safe and well?

A strict approach to containing CV, getting the NHS back on track and help to access mental health services were seen as vital

- Panellists advocated a 'strong and strict' approach to safety around the virus, including:
 - Stronger deterrents to rule-breaking, including 'naming and shaming'
 - Clearer communication of guidelines
 - Better access to testing
- For physical health, creating more 'clean' clinics to help people with non-CV illnesses access treatment and continuing to use digital appointments where possible to get the NHS back on track
- For mental health, improved signposting to services and training employers to spot the signs (in addition to increasing support services overall)

Panellists also linked this to:

- Giving key health workers more recognition and rewards to help the NHS
- More policing to support enforcement of the CV-related rules
- Keeping up community spirit to support mental health

"Keeping everyone up-to-date by social media. Perhaps it could be a daily bulletin...to ensure people know that sticking to the rules keeps Covid at bay."

"Mental health has touched almost everyone at some point during this pandemic and services were especially under strain before it came along. We need to be able to point people to services, as problems have expanded beyond belief."

3. How do we ensure we don't have a lost generation of children and young people in the West Midlands?

Panellists wanted a safe transition back to classrooms, short term support for children and opportunities created for school leavers

- They wanted to see safety measures put in place (e.g. bubbles) and more staff employed to make school re-opening this successful
- In the short term they thought children should be given the tech and resources (e.g. summer catch up programmes) they need to learn remotely, and extra support should be offered to parents
- There was a heavy focus on school leavers and those entering the workforce, with Panellists wanting:
 - Investment in training
 - Encouragement businesses to offer apprenticeships
- Finding creative ways for young people to socialise (in communities and in schools) to help their mental health and the impact lockdown has had on their development / wellbeing

Panellists also linked this to:

- New jobs aimed at school leavers e.g. entry-level jobs
- Promoting awareness of mental health support for young people
- More police on the streets to tackle anti-social behaviour

"In a school, social distancing should be encouraged... keeping them in bubbles or smaller groups so that if a child is displaying symptoms, that whole bubble can't come in."

"Training and job opportunities. I think a lot of kids and school people will have had their education and exams disrupted, but are also going into an economy that has been affected."

4. Where are there opportunities in the West Midlands to make things better than they were before the Coronavirus pandemic?

There were seen to be opportunities for stronger communities, rewarding essential workers more and protecting the environment

- Building on how communities bonded organically in lockdown by creating more local events, but also helping some vulnerable groups:
 - Encouraging volunteering and training for the unemployed
 - Maintaining progress made in getting homeless off the streets
- Improving respect for key/essential workers (e.g. no longer calling them 'low-skilled') and supporting them to get a fairer wage
- Encouraging walking, cycling and WFH to reduce pollution, but also investing in and protecting green spaces so we can continue to enjoy them as we have in lockdown

Panellists also linked this to:

- Improving mental health through stronger communities and green spaces
- Helping the NHS get back on track and supporting physical health through increased of key workers
- 'Green jobs' for people in the community, particularly the young and unemployed

"I love the idea of improving local parks. And then go further and use them for community events to bring people together. So maybe do a fayre, or outdoor cinemas. More community-based stuff."

"It's not just about respecting them, health workers need to get paid for the work they do and the contribution they have made during this time, and then going into the future."

6

Priorities and principles

- Priorities
- Principles

6

Priorities and principles

- **Priorities**
- Principles

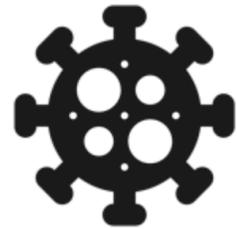
The long-lists of suggested actions and policy ideas from across the Panel were combined and grouped under broad headings

Coronavirus	Physical Health	Mental Health	Community	Essential Workers
New Jobs	Businesses	Environment	Education	-

For each area, Panellists were asked to draw on all the policy ideas* and summarise in one sentence what the overall aim of the recovery should be in relation to that area.

Summary sentences from across the Panel were synthesised, then reviewed and written through a final time by a representative group of 6 Panellists, to reach this set of “citizens’ priorities for recovery”:

- Keep the virus under control and reduce the impact, so that people can live without current fear and get normality back into daily life. This means making sure that everyone understands the rules and follows them, and are held accountable.
- Use face to face appointments only when necessary (and remote appointments where possible) to make sure that patients can be treated at covid-free clinics and the healthcare system gets back on track to diagnose and treat people when they need it. It also means promoting healthy living to reduce demand for the NHS in the long-term.
- Make sure that anyone who needs mental health support knows where to find it and is guided to access support. There needs to be an extra focus on recognising the signs of mental illness in society. We should address the vulnerability of recently unemployed people, young people and the elderly. Teachers and employers should therefore also be trained to spot issues and offer support.
- Prepare children to go back to an adapted school environment, ensuring their safety and wellbeing. Make sure that every child is supported to make up for lost time so children from all backgrounds are equally able to achieve their goals.
- Create new jobs, with an emphasis on apprenticeships and entry-level jobs. Make sure that additional training is provided to give people the right skillset to enter the workforce. Get people who have lost their jobs for covid-related reasons back into work.
- Promote and support business, especially smaller and/or local businesses and the self-employed (e.g. by encouraging people to buy local). Provide financial and business support to help them get back on their feet and protect jobs.



Keeping the virus under control and reducing the impact, so that people can live without **current fear** and get normality back into daily life. This means **making sure that everyone understands the rules** and follows them and are **held accountable**.

- ‘Keeping the virus under control’ and ‘reducing the impact’ came from a pragmatic understanding that the virus will be around for a while
 - We should aim to minimise, rather than eradicate, damage
- There was an urgent sense the guidelines should be pushed harder to ensure everyone ‘understands the rules’
- Panellists wanted to see people breaking the rules ‘held accountable’ so that others would be deterred from doing so
 - They were keen to see consequences for people and companies causing harm but Panellists moved away from the language of ‘naming and shaming’ which they felt might be too harsh (as well as being impractical)

“It's to reduce the coronavirus at the end of the day. Lower the infection, so not many people are getting it.”

“I do think we had stronger consequences put in...if everybody abided by the rules, we would be in a stronger situation now. People are getting a bit complacent now...to keep the West Midlands safe they need to be strict and strong.”



Using face to face appointments only when necessary (and **remote appointments where possible**) to make sure that patients can be treated at **covid-free clinics** and **the healthcare system gets back on track to diagnose and treat people when they need it**. It also means **promoting healthy living** to reduce demand for the NHS in the long-term.

- Panellists felt we should continue utilising technology to reduce pressure on the health service
 - But they were keen that a F2F option must be communicated for those likely to be anxious about digital appointments e.g. the elderly
- They saw covid-free clinics and hospitals as important to make sure people would feel confident to attending appointments for diagnoses and treatment
 - Promoting better physical health
- Panellists also thought the RCG should capitalise on increased consciousness around healthy living and promote this to lessen demand for the NHS in future

“The aim is to utilise modern technology to keep hospitals minimally used. Keep clean hospitals and clinics, allow hospitals to become covid-free and allow people to resume treatment visits without fear of catching coronavirus.”

“We need to promote exercise, eating well, healthy living, wellbeing...to reduce the pressure on the NHS.”



Making sure that anyone who needs mental health support knows where to find it and **is guided to access support**. There needs to be an extra focus on **recognising the signs of mental illness** in society. We should **address the vulnerability of recently unemployed people, young people and the elderly**. Teachers and employers should therefore also be trained to spot issues and offer support.

- Panellists felt many people in society still don't know how to access support, and that there needs to be an active push and helping hand to guide people to it
- The recently unemployed, young people and the elderly were seen as groups particularly at risk of mental health issues following the impacts of the pandemic on them, and so were singled out as needing extra attention
- Raising awareness of the signs (but particularly training employers and teachers to spot these) was seen as an effective solution

“We need to make sure it's more available in terms of how to go about it ... you get told how to wash your hands but not everybody knows how to seek help. There needs to be a lot more advertising.”

“We need somebody to spot who has got mental issues, as in teachers, nurseries, better training for them. There's going to be a lot more mental health issues now that people have been stuck inside.”



Creating new jobs, with an emphasis on **apprenticeships** and **entry-level jobs**. Making sure that **additional training** is provided to give people the **right skillset to enter the workforce**. Getting **people who have lost their jobs for covid-related reasons** back into work.

- Those newly entering the workforce were seen as needing additional support due to missed opportunities as a result of the pandemic
 - Both work (apprenticeships and entry level jobs) and training (to get the right skills) were felt to be essential
 - It was seen as important to invest in training up local workers to benefit the West Midlands economy
- Those made redundant for coronavirus-related reasons were also felt to be a priority group to get back to work
 - As they might be struggling financially or with mental health

“We need to train the skilled workers so that we can keep using local builders, plumbers, electricians so that we can help the West Midlands economy rather than having to pull them in from other parts of the country.”

“Also give those people [who aren’t working] some sort of job within the community.”



Promote and support business, **especially smaller and/or local businesses** and the self-employed (e.g. by **encouraging people to buy local**). Provide financial and business support to help them get back on their feet and **protect jobs**.

- Supporting local businesses (big or small) was felt to be crucial for re-building the West Midlands economy and to keep people employed/earning money
 - Panellists felt support could including guidance on operating safely or pointing them to financial support
- Actively promoting local businesses and encouraging people to shop locally were seen as particularly important for small businesses who are more vulnerable and less able to do this themselves
- Protecting businesses was ultimately felt to be the best way to protect jobs

“I think the recovery needs to promote local businesses in the area... maybe set up directories online, maybe this is how they can help particularly smaller businesses.”

“Supported in all aspects, in making sure they are safe financially. Even just guidance on how to manage their finances at this time.”



Preparing children to go back to an **adapted school environment**, ensuring their **safety and wellbeing**. Making sure that **every child is supported** to make up for lost time so **children from all backgrounds are equally able to achieve their goals**.

- Panellists felt a great deal more thought needs be put into how classes will be adapted, and how to prepare children for this
 - They wanted children to be safe, but also get the wellbeing benefits of socialising again
- They saw a need to support children from all backgrounds (not just the 'affluent')
 - There was a keen awareness some children have been set further behind during lockdown period, so we should give whatever support is needed to help them succeed

“We've built those Nightingale hospitals we need to do something similar with schools in building temporary classrooms... 'we need to think creatively, think out of the box on how we're going to get them back.’”

“We need to support them in trying to regain what they've lost and make them feel they can still achieve their goals.”

There are some areas not covered explicitly in the final priorities list which panellists described as important to them throughout the deliberative process.

Although less of a priority for recovery, Panellists were supportive of policies that built in consideration of the environment

- Throughout the process, Panellists highlighted an opportunity to build on recent progress regarding the environment
- Ultimately, they felt it was a bonus if the environment could also benefit from policies related to their top priorities around health, jobs/business and education, for example:
 - Making as many of the new jobs 'green jobs' as possible (but more jobs being the priority)
 - Encouraging walking and cycling to keep people fitter and healthier, reducing demand on the NHS
 - Maintaining green spaces and people's connection to nature to improve wellbeing

"I think the priority should be jobs and health. But could we tie together jobs with making the environment better? Create opportunities for jobs in that sector. Get communities involved in cleaning up parks. Does it have to be mutually exclusive?"

"I think the RCG can push people to walking and cycling more. There's statistics about car journeys you can easily walk... through advertising and promotion encourage that and reduce car journeys and people get fitter and healthier."

There was a real desire to continue the momentum in building stronger communities

- Panellists wanted to see good practices continuing, where possible:
 - People reaching out to others and check in with neighbours
 - Encouraging formal and informal volunteering that has flourished
 - A particular focus on vulnerable groups in the community, especially the homeless and unemployed
- Panellists felt if this could be part of the recovery, it would also benefit some of their highest priorities:
 - Maintaining physical and mental wellbeing of communities
 - Volunteering would keep young and unemployed people busy

“We need to continue building upon the community spirit that's already in place and minimise impact of unemployment and homelessness.”

'We need to make sure everyone is feeling safe and no one is left feeling vulnerable thinking no one is there for them...even just spotting your neighbour is not coming out or something doesn't look good.’

Panellists were passionate about giving key and essential workers improved working conditions and more financial recognition

- Panellists were vocal in agreement that key and essential workers should not just be respected more, but also have higher wages to reflect their value
 - Rewarding them for their work during the pandemic, but also give them better working lives for the long-term
- The quality and quantity of health workers was also connected to getting the health service back on track
 - Ensuring staff are treated well and making professions more attractive would help hiring and employee wellbeing, boosting performance

“The wages are awful. My daughter got nothing, had to go into the critical care places with a young family of her own. There are no rewards for them I don't think.”

“We need to make sure we have enough of them to help the NHS, if we have strong nurses and doctors. That would create more jobs as well.”

6

Priorities and principles

- Priorities
- **Principles**

We used a series of scales to stimulate discussion about how the RCG should approach the recovery and to establish principles

These are the scales we used in the discussion sessions:

- Focus on what we know works ←-----→ Be innovative and try new things
- Work behind the scenes ←-----→ Be a strong voice of your own
- Encourage different parts of the region to approach things differently ←-----→ Encourage a region-wide approach
- Focus on positive encouragement ←-----→ Be prepared to 'name and shame'
- Focus on actions that will help the most people ←-----→ Focus on the most vulnerable groups
- Work with the most helpful people and groups ←-----→ Make sure everyone pitches in

We used a sliding scale in the groups to prompt consideration and explore caveats/exceptions to the principles they developed:



The principles from across the Panel were synthesised, then reviewed and written through a final time by a representative group of 6 Panellists, to reach this set of “citizens’ advice for the WMRCG”:

- Make sure that the recovery plan considers and supports everyone because everyone has been affected, but that it gives extra help to those who have been most affected.
- Listen to the voices of people in the community, particularly key workers and those most affected by coronavirus, so that you remain people-focussed.
- See this as a great opportunity to be creative in thinking outside the box and not continue doing things that weren't working before.
 - The RCG should learn from other countries and be flexible and open-minded.
 - The recovery should be tailored to ensure we are doing what people in the West Midlands need.
- Lead by example so everyone in the West Midlands can be proud of the recovery.
- Have clear aims and objectives, communicate it in a transparent way and give regular updates.
- Take forward any positives from this pandemic and make sure the recovery is realistic and sustainable.
- Keep positive and encourage good practice in relation to the guidelines, using enforcement action where appropriate to hold people accountable for their actions.

Three of the Panel's pieces of advice relate to factors that could inform the content of the recovery plan

Getting the content right

- **Make sure that the recovery plan considers and supports everyone** because everyone has been affected, but that it gives extra help to those who have been most affected.
- **Listen to the voices of people** in the community, particularly key workers and those most affected by coronavirus, so that you remain people-focussed.
- **See this as a great opportunity to be creative** in thinking outside the box and not continue doing things that weren't working before.
 - The RCG should learn from other countries and be flexible and open-minded.
 - The recovery should be tailored to ensure we are doing what people in the West Midlands need.

Make sure that the recovery plan considers and supports everyone because everyone has been affected, but that it gives extra help to those who have been most affected.

- Panellists wanted the recovery to take into account the way everyone has been impacted, rather than just focusing on specific groups
- However, they wanted to ensure that groups who have been particularly impacted (or who were vulnerable prior to coronavirus) have access to a 'safety net' of support
 - This could mean giving additional support to those groups

“Of course its really important that we protect our vulnerable people but there's so many people who have been affected... the RCG has to do both.”

Listen to the voices of people in the community, particularly key workers and those most affected by coronavirus, so that you remain people-focussed.

- Panellists wanted the public to be consulted and thought those key and essential workers who have been on the frontlines and impacted heavily should have extra weight
- They wanted this engagement with the public to continue as part of recovery planning – and go beyond consulting ‘experts’ and politicians
- Some Panellists commented that involvement in the Panel itself had made them see the value in hearing the views of people from different backgrounds

“I just want to emphasise staying people-focussed. These sessions have shown that we’re all on the same wavelength as to what needs to happen.”

See this as a great opportunity to be creative in thinking outside the box and not continue doing things that weren't working before. The RCG should learn from other countries and be flexible and open-minded. The recovery should be tailored to ensure we are doing what people in the West Midlands need.

- Panellists were quite clear that they wanted the RCG to push to be innovative, as this has been an unprecedented crisis and requires 'out the box' thinking
- Many felt the UK's response has not been as good as other countries, so the RCG should look else where for inspiration
- However, they felt the focus must ultimately be local and decisions based on what works best for local people

“The world is going to be a completely different place after this, so pretty much the only way to deal with this is being innovative.”

Two of the Panel's pieces of advice relate to the communications of the recovery plan



**Getting the
communication
right**

- Lead by example so everyone in the West Midlands can be proud of the recovery.
- Have clear aims and objectives, communicate it in a transparent way and give regular updates.

Lead by example so everyone in the West Midlands can be proud of the recovery.

- The RCG must ‘practice what they preach’ in terms of both:
 - Promoting the right messages (e.g. around following the guidelines)
 - Leading by example with their actions
- The RCG should have its own strong voice and not be afraid of ‘going against the grain of what other areas are doing’, if necessary

“Lead from the front, lead by example. You need to have goals and be seen to be doing something, rather than sitting and doing nothing or doing something that people can't see.”

Have clear aims and objectives, communicate it in a transparent way and give regular updates.

- Panellists wanted the RCG to convey its objectives in a clear way, especially using plain English
- They asked the RCG to be transparent around their aims and what they are doing to achieve these
- For example, they thought giving regular updates on the recovery plan via social media or through other mediums for people who can't access technology would be of value

“They need to make sure they're clearly visible and heard to everyone and everyone can see what they're trying to achieve.”

And the remaining two principles relate to how the recovery plan might be executed

Getting the execution right

- Take forward any positives from this pandemic and make sure the recovery is realistic and sustainable.
- Keep positive and encourage good practice in relation to the guidelines, using enforcement action where appropriate to hold people accountable for their actions.

Take forward any positives from this pandemic and make sure the recovery is realistic and sustainable.

- Panellists wanted the RCG to balance being innovative with taking forward positive learnings from this period
 - Particularly around stronger communities and home working practices
- At the same time, they wanted the plan to be realistic and ensure what it can sets out to achieve will be sustainable
 - For example, creating West Midlands jobs that will exist for the long term

“They need to be innovative and try new things. We are in unprecedented times and a lot of this is new to everybody and does require new ways of thinking new ways of tackling problems.”

Keep positive and encourage good practice in relation to the guidelines, using enforcement action where appropriate to hold people accountable for their actions.

- Early on in the process, Panellists were keen on ‘naming and shaming’ rules breakers, due to anger around this
- However, by the end, most felt a more neutral tone should be taken around adhering to the virus guidelines
 - They thought it was very important that companies/individuals breaking the rules/law should be punished for doing so and deterred from repeating that behaviour
 - But said they didn’t want a ‘witch hunt’ culture of naming and shaming individuals over minor incidents

“You get more of what you focus on, you don't want it to turn into a witch hunt...but maybe companies who make people work when on furlough, those maybe could be named and shamed.”

7 Appendix

**Informed priorities information cards
shared with participants ahead of the
second week's sessions**

Jobs and Business

The impact of Coronavirus in the West Midlands on:

Businesses Closing

Approximately **1/3** of small businesses in the West Midlands are **unsure if they will reopen**

Approximately **70%** West Midlands' businesses reported an unexpected **decrease in turnover for this time of year** vs. Approximately **60%** Businesses in England overall

Unemployment

Almost **420,000 people** are signed on to universal credit in the West Midlands

That's approximately **120,000** more people than February of this year.



Nationally, almost **9 million workers have been furloughed** approximately a quarter of the workforce.



Nationally, around 45% of the jobs most vulnerable to the impact of COVID-19 are held by younger people aged 35 years or less, with young women being the most at risk.

Industry

The West Midlands is predicted to be the **hardest hit economy** in the country*, partly because it is home to many automotive manufacturers. Four out of ten most affected local authorities in the UK are in the West Midlands - Solihull, South Staffordshire, North Warwickshire and Stratford-on-Avon

Health & Wellbeing

The impact of Coronavirus in the West Midlands on:

Minority groups

People of **Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, Other Asian, Caribbean and Other Black** ethnicity had **between 10 and 50% higher risk of death** when compared to White British people.

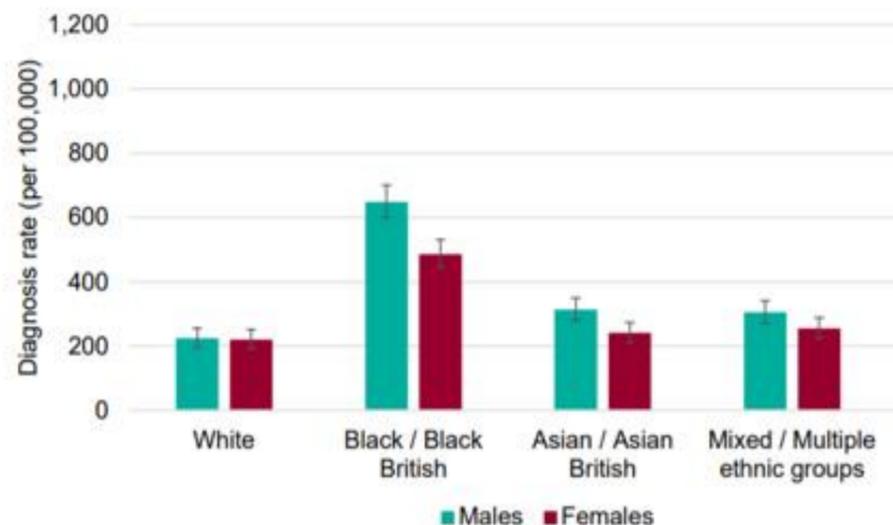


Figure 4.2. Age standardised diagnosis rates by ethnicity and sex, as of 13 May 2020, England. Source: Public Health England Second Generation Surveillance System.

Cases of Coronavirus

There have been **22,802 confirmed cases of Coronavirus** in the West Midlands region* and **4,493 Coronavirus related deaths**

Hospitals

Compared to pre-lockdown, **national cancer referrals have dropped** by almost two thirds and heart attack-related visits have halved. **A&E visits fell** by 25% in the week after lockdown as people avoided hospitals.

Wellbeing

Reports of anxiety have increased
In March 2020, over

1/2

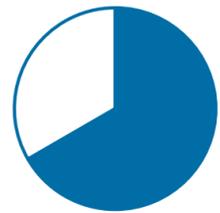
of UK adults reported high anxiety

This compares with 1/5 of UK adults at the end of 2019

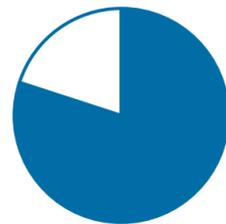
Community and Neighbourhoods

The impact of Coronavirus in the West Midlands on:

Volunteering



Two thirds of British adults have said that the local community would support them if they needed help during the lockdown.



80% of British adults believe that people are doing more to help others.

Nearly 3,000 new mutual aid groups have been set up in local communities across the UK, and 750,000 volunteers have signed up to the NHS Volunteer army.

Local Government

Nationally, **Local Government finances will be hit hard by Covid-19**, with a projected shortfall of more than £9bn for 2020-21. In Birmingham, this figure is estimated to be £222m for 2020-21.

Homelessness

In the West Midlands*, over

4,000
families

1,000
single households

are living in temporary accommodation.

Education and Skills

The impact of Coronavirus in the West Midlands on:

University and Further Education

There has been a significant reduction in first year enrolments for university, likely caused by school leavers reluctant to do remote learning. This will cause an estimated **loss of income of £245 million across the West Midlands.**

40% of Further Education Colleges also predict a drop in income as enrolments decline.

Primary and Secondary School

Less than **1/2** of parents without higher education qualifications **feel confident directing their child's home learning.**

Only 23% of the most deprived schools in England had access to an online learning platform to send work to students before lockdown.

In the West Midlands **1 in 10** are classed as non internet users. Nationally, **12%** of 11 to 18 year olds are reported as having no internet access at home. **...making it difficult to learn online.**

Apprenticeships

Almost **2/3** of employers have **withdrawn apprenticeships** for the upcoming year.

Transport and Environment

The impact of Coronavirus in the West Midlands on:

Carbon Emissions

30%

of predicted levels

Lower levels of road traffic have meant that **carbon emissions across the West Midlands were 30% of predicted levels** at the beginning of April.

The West Midlands* region has committed to carbon neutrality by 2041. This will require reduction in emissions by:



Public Transport*



36% of people in the West Midlands* said they were less likely to use public transport post-lockdown.



1 in 5 said they were likely to cycle more*.



Almost half intend to do more walking*.

Working from home



Over half of British adults think spending more time at home has been a positive (56%).

Crime

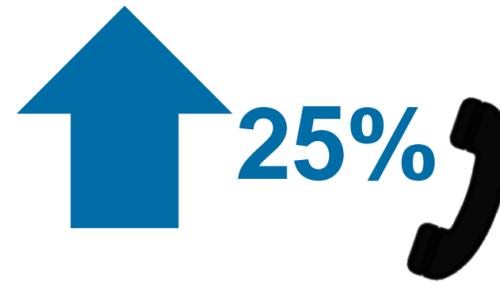
The impact of Coronavirus in the West Midlands on:

Robbery



West Midlands police* report that **personal robbery offences have reduced by over 50%** since schools were closed and restrictions put in place.

Domestic Violence



Refuge, a national charity, says **enquires to its domestic abuse helpline have increased**, as more people are spending prolonged periods with their abusers.

Vulnerable Children

The Children's Society say
"Without [school as a safe place], more children will be at greater risk. With less contact between young people and trusted professionals, it's more likely that cases of abuse, neglect and exploitation will go unseen and unreported."

Thank you

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