



Rosa's Covid-19 Response Fund Impact Report

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The pandemic presented a profound challenge for women's and girls' organisations across the UK.

Covid-19 not only exacerbated existing inequalities faced by women and girls, it also exposed the injustices and disparities faced by women and girls from Black and minoritised communities.

The pandemic posed a real threat to the survival of already under-funded women's and girls' organisations, with scarce resources being stretched to the limit. Our report with the Women's Resource Centre and Women's Fund Scotland found that nearly half of all women's organisations surveyed feared for their future. Demands for support increased in volume and complexity, while many lost valuable sources of income and were faced with having to rapidly adapt services to reach women and girls most in need.

As the UK's only charitable funder of organisations led by and for women and girls, we aimed to respond quickly and effectively to meet the needs of the sector. With support from donors such as Comic Relief, Cummins, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, List Family Foundation, Oak Foundation, Indigo Trust and many more, we successfully raised more than £1.6 million. The funds were distributed to 110 organisations through Rosa's Covid-19 Response Fund and the Covid-19 Emergency Response for BME Women's Organisations developed in partnership with Imkaan. Both funds focused on supporting organisations working to end violence against women and girls.

This report shares insights from our Covid-19 Response Fund and examines its wide-reaching impact on the women and girls it serves. The findings are drawn from data shared by 129 grantees through various conversations and grant reports.

“Due to the impact of Covid-19, we have lost £15,000 of funding... If we cannot stabilise our financial position and plug the gaps, it is unlikely we will survive.”

**The Happy Mums
Foundation CIC, 2020**

How grants were awarded

We recognised early on that it was critical for women’s and girls’ organisations to receive funding for immediate needs that they had identified. It was imperative that funding could be easily accessed and awarded without adding to already challenging workloads.

Organisations told us they needed rapid, flexible funding, and in response, Rosa launched the Covid-19 Emergency Response Fund to provide quick, unrestricted funding of up to £10,000. Grants were awarded over three funding rounds, and in March 2021, all funded organisations were offered the opportunity to apply for a ‘follow-on’ grant of up to £8,000.

We prioritised smaller women’s and girls’ organisations and those led by Black and minoritised women and girls. We know these organisations frequently miss out on more mainstream funding to larger, race and gender-neutral organisations. Often left with fewer resources to fundraise, they are faced with the challenge of meeting increasingly complex needs with minimal funds.

Covid-19 Emergency Response Fund

£1.6m

total raised

392

applications received

136

grants awarded

£1m+

total investment

72

organisations funded

£7,500

average grant

75%

of organisations funded are small organisations with an annual income of less than £100K.

62%

of the 72 organisations funded are led ‘by and for’ Black and minoritised women.

How grants were awarded

The pandemic saw women's and girls' organisations work tirelessly to adapt their services to reach some of the most vulnerable groups. As statutory services struggled, many community-led organisations stepped up to deliver services outside their usual remit. This included distributing food, disseminating public health information in community languages, and supporting women who had lost loved ones to the pandemic.

Practical Support



- Dissemination of public health information in community languages
- Telephone and socially distanced welfare checks
- Distribution of food and essential provisions such as medicines and PPE

Capacity Building



- Extra staff and volunteer hours to meet surges in need
- Fundraising support to address losses in revenue
- New specialist staff such as Bereavement Support and Domestic Violence Workers to meet increasingly complex needs

Emotional Support



- Peer support and befriending to reach women and girls struggling with isolation and loneliness
- Online fitness, craft and social activities focused on improving wellbeing and mental health
- Bereavement support

IT Support



- Upgrading or introducing IT systems to enable swift online delivery
- Staff training to support and safeguard women online
- IT equipment for frontline staff as well as for women experiencing digital exclusion

Impact on women and girls

Many organisations expressed concerns about worsening mental health, rising income poverty, and escalating violence against women in the home. Deep-rooted inequalities were compounded by Covid-19, which disproportionately affected female health workers, carers, and mothers, leaving many women feeling anxious and isolated.

Reducing Isolation

Lockdowns put an abrupt end to regular social interactions, which caused a significant increase in cases of loneliness. Women with pre-existing mental health issues and those shielding were severely impacted. Many organisations used Rosa's funding to move social activities, classes, and peer support online to tackle isolation and loneliness. This created safe, supportive spaces where women and girls could reclaim time for themselves and share their struggles without fear of judgement.

"We have delivered additional online services to help address the feelings of isolation and loneliness the women told us they experienced throughout the pandemic and particularly during lockdowns. Feedback gathered at the end of each session tell us that the women feel better connected with others, are grateful to share their experiences with others, and as a result, feelings of isolation and loneliness are reduced."

Positive Changes Scotland CIC, 2020

Coping With Grief

Many suffered the grief of losing loved ones to the pandemic. This grief came at a time when social interactions and support networks, which can be critical in times of loss, were limited or non-existent. Black and minoritised communities were particularly affected by bereavement, with higher death rates intensifying feelings of fear and anxiety.

Various women's and girls' organisations used Rosa's funding to help women through bereavement. From setting up specialist helplines to coordinating peer support groups. As trusted members of their communities, these organisations were able to quickly reach women experiencing acute grief and provide culturally sensitive support, often in community languages. Grantee feedback indicates that this created a sense of solidarity and increased confidence in seeking further help and support.

"BME women have experienced many losses due to the virus and have been left even more vulnerable, struggling to cope and feeling isolated."

Turkish Cypriot Women's Project, 2020

46,875

women and girls directly benefitted from Rosa's C19 Response Fund

96%

of grantees reported that Rosa supported their organisation to improve women's and girls' wellbeing and ability to cope during the pandemic

Women's voices

Migrant Family Support helps women, primarily of African origin, gain access to legal and rights-based education, therapeutic services, and holistic support around domestic violence, marriage, and parenting.

With funding from Rosa, the team were able to set up a culturally specific bereavement support group and one to one counselling sessions. This helped women like Fazana (name changed to provide anonymity) to grieve while remaining socially isolated.

"Fazana is a young Zimbabwean woman (21) whose mother died during the first wave of the pandemic. She had so much anger and was estranged from her father and grandparents. She was struggling to attend university and concentrate on part-time work. She was suicidal and drinking heavily to mask the pain. We were able to offer her one to one support. As her confidence increased, she was able to join the group sessions and found comfort in sharing her experiences and learning how to deal with grief. She gained the confidence to return to university and even work."

Migrant Family Support, 2021

"Thank you for stepping into my life when you did. You ladies all saved my life. I was on the verge of giving up on everything. Having a tribe of women to support me during my darkest hour is something that I will never ever forget. I know mum is gone, but I have gained sisters and mothers who are always there for me"

Fazana, 2021

Impact on organisations

“By supporting our Office Coordinator role, the funding from Rosa has been instrumental in the development and delivery of our remote services. Switching to 100% digital delivery was a big unplanned change and required the development and implementation of new policies, procedures, training and support”

Saffron Sheffield, 2021

Keeping doors open

Concerns around cash flow, severed income streams, and short-term sustainability were repeatedly raised by women’s and girls’ organisations. Many worried about their immediate survival and the impact of temporary closure.

Well over half of the organisations funded by Rosa reported that our support had helped to address immediate financial concerns. This funding has been a lifeline for four of our grantees, preventing the closure of their services. Many also highlighted the positive impact of flexible, core funding, particularly in allowing organisations ‘breathing space’ to respond to women and girls’ pressing needs.

Adapting work

The pandemic saw women’s and girls’ organisations rapidly change their working practices to respond to the needs of their staff and the women and girls they support. A significant number of women’s organisations used Rosa’s funding to support digital transformation initiatives. This came with its own set of challenges, such as training and familiarising staff with new software and ensuring appropriate safeguarding practices were in place. However, most grantees agreed that while it was a steep and sudden change to working practice, it presented a valuable opportunity to upgrade IT systems and improve processes.

“The funding from Rosa has allowed us to continue to operate during the pandemic. We were due to begin a project to generate our own income from delivering training but had to postpone this due to Covid-19. As a result, we found ourselves facing a cashflow crisis, and without this funding, we would have had to close”

Happy Mums CIC, 2021



of grantees reported that Rosa’s support had helped their organisation to adapt work or deliver core services in fundamentally different ways



of grantees reported that Rosa supported their organisation to be more sustainable and/or addressed significant cash flow issues

The value of Rosa's support

We strive to be a thoughtful, collaborative, and responsive grant-maker that puts women and girls at the heart of our practice. As an experienced and agile organisation, we are able to adapt our work swiftly to meet the changing needs of the sector.

"Rosa has the right balance of being there and on hand but also giving us the freedom and independence to get on things. This level of trust and respect really makes us feel valued and especially during this hectic time, it's such a nice relief to feel this way with a funder."

Girldreamer, 2020

"The application process wasn't too onerous or in-depth, which was very welcome during the stress of this pandemic. I had a useful videocall mid-way through our grant period, where I was able to ask questions and receive feedback. The reporting requirements have been proportionate, and that is also very helpful for a small organisation like ours."

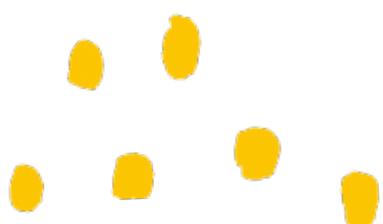
Happy Mums CIC, 2020

Organisations recognised and valued Rosa's understanding of the women and girls sector and our investment in smaller, community-led organisations. Grantees appreciated Rosa's straightforward application and reporting forms, as well as the quick turnaround for grant approval. This helped to ease the financial strain and allow organisations to respond quickly to women's and girls' needs.

Organisations commended Rosa's openness and flexibility as a grant-maker. Grantees appreciated Rosa's willingness to award grants that provided flexibility, looked beyond specific projects and helped organisations expand, purchase equipment, or increase staff hours.

"As a relatively new women's charity, we were pleased that Rosa could see what we were trying to do and helped. I firmly believe that being funded by Rosa helped us secure further funding from other organisations."

Feathers Futures CIC, 2020



Women's voices

In addition to financial support, Rosa helps to connect and build the capacity of women's and girls' organisations.

The Feel Good Women's Group is a community-based group that organises health and wellness activities led by and for Black and minoritised women in the South-side of Glasgow. Here they reflect on the safeguarding training coordinated by Rosa as part of this fund.

"One of our members, who regularly attended our fitness classes, informed us about the domestic abuse she was suffering throughout the lockdown period. Through the help we received from Rosa with creating a vulnerable adults policy, we took her through a process of gathering information, informing the police and signposting her to support services. She now is living away from her abuser, receives financial support for her children and herself and has even found a part-time job in childcare."

Feel Good Women's Group

Driving change

The continuation of specialist services run by and for women and girls throughout the pandemic is testament to the resilience of the sector and its ability to adapt in times of crisis.

The effects of the pandemic will no doubt be felt for many years to come. It is crucial that we continue to listen to what organisations are telling us so that we can develop partnerships and channel investment where it is needed most.

Through our research and conversations with grantees, we found that several issues are of immediate concern:

Complex needs

Organisations are seeing greater numbers of women and girls presenting with complex needs. Isolation, worsening poverty, and unemployment have resulted in a marked increase in mental health struggles. Many organisations suggested that without sufficient support for counselling and wellbeing activities, their staff were at risk of experiencing burn out.

Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls

A significant number of organisations believe the risk of violence faced by women and girls has increased. Being permanently at home with abusive partners and extended families has made it harder for women to reach out. Organisations working to tackle violence against women and girls highlighted the need for long-term grant funding and specific investment in services led by and for Black and minoritised women.

Longer-term funding

Many organisations stressed that sourcing sustainable funding remains an ongoing challenge. Organisations that have rapidly adapted to work within a new context highlighted the need for more time and investment to re-evaluate their strategy 'post-pandemic'. Many reported needing help with organisational infrastructure to support remote working and professional development.

“Our interactions with other women-led organisations have highlighted several challenges, including increasing numbers of women who require support for mental health issues, food poverty, sexual exploitation, and social isolation. This is especially so for organisations supporting migrants with no recourse to public funds”

Diaspora African Women's Support Network

“The challenges we see ahead are those to do with capacity building, to be prepared should any similar event happen again. [We need support] to assist us with our project to redefine our place in the community and restructure our organisation to meet future uncertainties.”

Sandwell African Women Association

Rosa is committed to resourcing women-led organisations and helping them to influence wider change for all women and girls across the UK.

Our trust-based approach allows us to build strong relationships with women's and girls' organisations and stay abreast of current and emerging challenges.

Now, as the women and girls sector navigates its journey beyond the pandemic, we must work collaboratively to draw in and distribute the resources it so urgently needs.

Thank you to Emily Simpson for her contribution to this report.



Please note that all plots on the map are approximate locations.

Number	Organisation Name	Location	Total Grant
1	4Wings Northwest CIC	Liverpool	£18,000
2	Angels of Hope for Women	Manchester	£5,000
3	Argyll and Bute Rape Crisis	Argyll and Bute	£17,604
4	Ashdon Jazz Academy	Lambeth	£17,420
5	Baby Basics	Sheffield	£13,264
6	BelEve UK	Lewisham	£17,960
7	COMMUNITY NETWORK GROUP CIC	Ealing	£18,000
8	Craft Collective	Causeway Coast and Glens	£1,500
9	Diaspora African Women's Support Network	Glasgow City	£17,533
10	Diyya Project	Dudley	£18,000
11	Dostiyo Asian Women and Girls Organisation	Northampton	£17,900
12	Dynamic Support of Greater Manchester	Manchester	£17,059
13	Enfield Saheli	Enfield	£17,527
14	Feathers Futures CIO	Great Yarmouth	£13,968
15	First Step	Newcastle upon Tyne	£14,052
16	Fourth Action	Northumberland	£17,756
17	FTWW (Fair Treatment for the Women of Wales)	Conwy	£18,000
18	Gilgal Birmingham	Birmingham	£15,295
19	GIRLDREAMER LTD	Birmingham	£17,000
20	Giving Life Opportunities to Women	Belfast	£13,000
21	Goldstar Creative Marketing	Hackney	£18,000
22	GoodAz Gold Events t/a GAGE CIC	Croydon	£17,953
23	Granby Somali Women's Group	Liverpool	£18,000
24	Heart & Parcel	Manchester	£16,995
25	Hillingdon Women's Centre	Hillingdon	£16,198
26	Hull Sisters	Kingston upon Hull	£18,000
27	Inspiring Futures Partnership CIC (Inspire Women Oldham)	Oldham	£13,265
28	International Women's Association Doncaster	Doncaster	£10,000
29	KairosWWT	Coventry	£8,024
30	Kosmos Centre	Camden	£18,000
31	La Dolce Vita Project	Derry and Strabane	£9,360
32	Lesbian Immigration Support Group	Manchester	£10,980
33	Lighthouse	Hackney	£18,000
34	Migrant Family Support	Coventry	£15,293
35	Mother and child welfare organisation	Hammersmith and Fulham	£17,884
36	Mums4aChange CiC	Plymouth	£16,405
37	Muslim Sports Foundation	Harrow	£10,000
38	Muslim Womens Council	Bradford	£18,000
39	NORTH WALES WOMEN'S CENTRE	Denbighshire	£14,698
40	Nottingham Muslim Women's Network	Nottingham	£16,405
41	Pandora Project	King's Lynn and West Norfolk	£11,264
42	Phoebe	Ipswich	£18,000
43	Positive Changes (Scotland) CIC	Stirling	£15,307
44	Positive Steps Community Centre	Mid Ulster	£8,938
45	Refugee Women's Association	Hackney	£9,980
46	Rivers LPC	Crawley	£18,000
47	Rotherham Mothers for Justice	Rotherham	£9,677
48	RUBIES	Redcar and Cleveland	£16,367
49	Saffron Sheffield	Sheffield	£13,201
50	Sahara Project (Preston) Ltd	Preston	£16,491
51	Sandwell African Women Association	Sandwell	£17,735
52	Skills and Training Network	London	£17,742
53	South Liverpool Domestic Abuse Services	Liverpool	£18,000
54	Street Talk	Islington	£10,200
55	Sunbeams London Ltd	Hackney	£17,954
56	SWAN WOMENS CENTRE	Sefton	£13,134
57	Tassibee	Rotherham	£18,000
58	Teen Action	Hackney	£17,168
59	The Feel Good Women's Group	Glasgow City	£17,986
60	The Growing Club CIC	Lancaster	£10,232
61	The Happy Mums Foundation CIC	Carlisle	£13,910
62	The Homeless Period - Wolverhampton	Wolverhampton	£13,000
63	The Hull Lighthouse Project	Kingston upon Hull, City of	£5,395
64	The Motherhood Plan Community Interest Company	Manchester	£11,604
65	THE ROOT MHSF COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY (CIC)	Thurrock	£16,704
66	TiffinWalli CIC	Newham	£9,300
67	TIME TO HEAL	Aberdeen City	£15,000
68	Torbay Women's Circle	Torbay	£13,000
69	Turkish Cypriot Women's Project	Haringey	£16,408
70	Wight DASH	Isle of Wight	£11,646
71	Winchester Pregnancy Crisis Centre	Winchester	£6,600
72	WomenAfterGreatness	Hackney	£14,500