

London Assembly Economy Committee – 4 August 2020**Transcript of Item 6 – COVID-19 Economic Impact on Londoners**

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): The main item on today's agenda is the COVID-19 economic impact on Londoners. I would now like to take this opportunity to welcome our guests who are here today on this call. First of all, I would like to welcome Rajesh Agrawal who is the Deputy Mayor for Business and who also kindly joined us at the previous meeting in June. Thank you very much for being with us today, Rajesh. I understand that you are staying until 3.30pm so thank you very much for being here. We also have Laurie Heselden, who is the Regional Policy and Campaigns Officer at the Trade Union Congress (TUC). When I say "regional", that is the region that includes London. You are very welcome, Laurie. We have Andrew Chamberlain, who is the Director of Policy at The Association of Independent Professionals and the Self-Employed (IPSE). Thank you very much for joining us, Andrew. We are looking forward to hearing from you, Laurie and Rajesh. We have also got with us Mike Brewer, who is the Chief Economist and Deputy Chief Executive from the Resolution Foundation, looking forward to hearing from you too, and also John Macdonald who is here with us from the Adam Smith Institute and is the Head of Government Affairs. Later on this afternoon, Debbie Weekes-Bernard will be joining us at about 4.10pm, she is the Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement so I am very pleased to say that she will be joining us.

Without further ado, I am going to move on to the questions. I have a very broad question that I am going to pose to the panel but I would like to start with Rajesh as the Deputy Mayor for Business: how are Londoners faring and what are the main challenges that they are facing, in economic terms obviously?

Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business): Thank you very much, Chair, for kindly inviting me to this meeting. For every Londoner who has lost their job during this pandemic, this is clearly the worst time for them and their families. Overall, the rate of employment in the capital remains high and unemployment remains low. This suggests that the Government's unprecedented support package has so far helped to keep many Londoners in work during the pandemic. However, there are also worrying signs that ongoing support is still needed. From March to May this year [2020], the employment rate in London fell by 1.1% on the previous quarter. In those same months the capital's unemployment rate rose by 0.6%. These are the worst quarterly results in over nine years. Women have been most adversely impacted by the fall in employment and the rise in unemployment. Worryingly, eight of the top ten areas of the most furloughed workers have higher than average black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) populations. It is very clear that this pandemic economic impact is worse on BAME populations and on women. Our best forecast now suggests a slower, more U-shaped, recovery in which employment is unlikely to have recovered to the pre-crisis level before the end of 2022.

The Mayor has also repeatedly said that this crisis will require long-term economic intervention from the Government on an unprecedented scale. New figures that have been released by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) show an additional 216,700 furloughed employees in June [2020] for London, this brings the total number of furloughed employment in London to just under 1.3 million; that is 1.29 million in the capital. There was also a 51,000 increase in the number of people claiming the Government self-employed scheme in June [2020], which is more than any other region in the country. The figures show that it is the most deprived areas of London - West Ham, Feltham and Heston, East Ham and Brent Central - that saw the largest increases in furloughed workers last month and the biggest rises in unemployment in recent months. There is clearly a very high risk that as the [Coronavirus] Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) ends and the workers come off furlough, businesses in those industries that will continue to be affected by social distancing - like hospitality, retail,

tourism and creative industries - will not be able to afford to keep these people on. Last week the Mayor urged Ministers to maintain the Government's furlough scheme for employees in sectors such as retail, culture and hospitality.

We also continue to raise with Government that between a quarter and a third of London's 869,000 self-employed remain excluded from income support. It is far better that the Government intervene more now than we see a sudden surge in unemployment and the devastating poverty and homelessness that this could cause.

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): That is quite a devastating impact, which I think is probably no surprise to any Members of the Committee. Can I see if any of the other guests would like to add anything to what Rajesh has just said as a first set of comments?

Andrew Chamberlain (Director of Policy, IPSE): To pick up on some of the comments, we at IPSE represent the five million self-employed people in the United Kingdom (UK). We also do have a specific look at London because London has the highest proportion of self-employment in the whole of the UK. We have been very concerned since the beginning of the pandemic that this would have a big impact on self-employed people. We did some research that was taken in around about April this year [2020] so that is when the pandemic was relatively new, there had been a few weeks of lockdown at that stage. The vast majority of freelancers in London, 88%, were concerned at that stage about the financial impact of the coronavirus on their business, 66% of London freelancers said demand for freelance work had decreased already at that stage and 45% of freelancers in London said that they might have to close their self-employed business unless they got more support. Some people did get support, as has already been referred to. The schemes that the Government announced, particularly the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS), were really helpful. IPSE petitioned for a scheme. We set up a petition along with the Creative Industries Federation, a sector very badly affected by the pandemic. This was just before SEISS was announced. We got about 200,000 signatures very quickly to that so there was clearly a huge demand for this. SEISS was announced and we were absolutely delighted. It was a very, very generous scheme but it did have some very rough edges, which were clear from the outset. There were going to be some people who were not going to benefit from the scheme. It was good if you fell into it but if you fell outside of it, it would not be very helpful. We have been campaigning since then to try to get more people included within that or something else set up for some of those other people.

My final quick point, if I may, is that the one particular group we are concerned about are people who run their own limited company. They would not always describe themselves as self-employed but many of them would describe themselves as self-employed. They are essentially working for themselves, and very often do not employ anyone else but sometimes they do. Limited company directors are not helped by SEISS and they cannot meaningfully make use of the CJRS, which is the furlough scheme, if they pay themselves in dividends. The furlough rules are also very restrictive, they are not allowed to do anything while they are furloughed so it is quite difficult to essentially keep a business going while you are not allowed to work for it at all. Therefore, we have been campaigning to do more for the company directors, along with other groups who have also missed out like the newly self-employed. If you have only been in self-employment since April 2019 you do not get into SEISS, if less than half of your total income in previous tax years came from self-employment you do not get anything from SEISS, and if you earn over the £50,000 you do not get anything from SEISS. All of these sorts of rough edges we have been campaigning to get ironed out. On the company directors we have been saying, "Please can the Government look at that more closely". We have spoken to the Treasury Select Committee.

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): Andrew, I do not like to interrupt you, but we are going to come back to talk about the furloughed and the situation with the self-employed a bit later on as well. This is just some introductory thoughts at the beginning.

Andrew Chamberlain (Director of Policy, IPSE): I am sorry.

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): I do not want to stop your flow and the statistics from your survey were very interesting.

Laurie Heselden (Regional Policy and Campaigns Officer, TUC): A very quick review of the issues. Obviously, we are nowhere near the end of this. This might be the end of the beginning, but it is nowhere near the end. We are at that moment where there is a return to the workplace. The TUC is very keen to have a COVID-safe return to the workplace for everyone because it does not need many employers to get it wrong and you could have a domino effect like we had, for example, in Leicester. It is very, very important that employers do their risk assessments, do personal risk assessments with individuals, do speak to staff and unions and do publish those risk assessments. We have seen, obviously, a lot of redundancies announced, they may not all happen but then again, I am sure there is an awful lot more in the pipeline. I agree with the comments made earlier on, certain sectors of the economy in London are clearly under massive pressure and I am sure we will look at that soon.

There has been a differential effect, I think inequalities have become worse. Those people who have high-quality, good jobs that are secure have managed much better in this crisis than those who have insecure or temporary work. Foodbank use in London has increased by a factor of four. The differential impact on BAME has been mentioned. There is bit of a collapse going on in the childcare sector, particularly for those people who arrange childcare formally. There is a differential impact on young people and on people with disabilities.

The CJRS was very important and very successful but it is winding down, there is a taper, so we have the issue of dealing with redundancies that come forward in the next few weeks. I totally agree with the comments made about the SEISS. We have members in, for example, the Musicians' Union and nearly 50% could not access that at all. A structural problem for not just London but beyond is the issue around statutory sick pay, it is so low and is not available to two million people. That undermines even a successful track-and-trace system, which we do not have already. There are issues about Universal Credit (UC) that I think have left those people who are the poorest in our society much more vulnerable to this crisis. Therefore, a massive two-speed economy that makes any sense during this crisis, which will become worse in the following months.

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): That brings me on to my next question, which I would like put to you, Rajesh, which is really about the projections the Greater London Authority (GLA) might now have in terms of the possible long-term impacts of the pandemic on London's labour market. Given what the guests have been saying and what you were saying earlier, what do we think the possible long-term impacts might be?

Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business): GLA Economics' *London's Economic Outlook* published an economic scenario on 15 June [2020] but since then it has been updated in July [2020] as more and more data becomes available. If you look at the July scenario, it notes that London's GVA's, which is gross value added, growth rate could be minus 13.3% this year [2020] due to the current crisis. The growth rate is then expected to rebound to only 8.7% in 2021 before returning to more normal figures in 2022, which is 4.5%. In line with the GVA, London is projected in this central scenario to see a large fall in the number of workforce jobs in 2020, with quarterly growth resuming in 2021. Annual growth over the course of the year remains negative

before picking up in 2022. Therefore, London's household income and expenditure are both projected to decrease notably this year, in 2020, before starting to grow again in 2021 and then in 2022.

GLA Economics has also produced an upside and downside scenario based on the Office for Budget Responsibility work. What I have talked about just now is the central scenario. The numbers around employment and unemployment are extraordinarily stark and as the furlough schemes wind down, the unemployment numbers are likely to go up quite significantly. Like I said earlier, 60% of all the jobs that will be lost will be women, so women are disproportionately affected by the current crisis in terms of jobs, and also BAME as well. Eight of the top ten areas with the most furloughed workers have a higher than average BAME population.

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): That is very interesting, is it not. A couple of other people have pointed that out before, that it seems that in health terms it is men who have been predominately impacted by the virus, particularly overrepresented in those who have died, but women are very overrepresented in terms of the impact on their jobs. Thank you, Rajesh.

Laurie, I wondered if I could bring you back in because talking about this it sounds like a pandemic of unemployment that we are facing. What medium to long-term risks do workers face as a result of that and which sectors have been hit particularly hard?

Laurie Heselden (Regional Policy and Campaigns Officer, TUC): I think it is well publicised that there is a strong sector bias to this. We are looking at those sectors of the economy that cannot open yet safely; hospitality, tourism, restaurants, anything to do with performance, theatres, exhibitions and conferences. In terms of them being able to open safely, at the moment the Government has stepped back from some of those businesses being opened on 3 August [2020] and put that back two weeks. I am not a medical professional, but it is difficult for me to see how the circumstances are improving in the context of this happening with a return to semi-lockdowns in some urban city centres. Even if those businesses, such as theatres, were able to open under the latitude given by the Government, that gives them sometimes 25, 30 or the maximum of 40% attendance rates. I think theatres work on about 70 or 75%. Therefore, the word from that sector is that they are not intending to open even though the latitude has been granted anyway. They are asking, in particular, can they try to get some certainty and timetable - I have to admit, I think that is very difficult to give - so they know how to plan in the future for, for example, the performances around Christmas [2020] that are so important to their calendar of income. It is very hard to see that happening, I think. Sadly, with the projections given by the GLA - the central, the less bad and the downside - from the anecdotal evidence on the ground from the sectors that we speak to that are most affected, I think we concur more with the downside projection which obviously leads to a higher level of unemployment and a slower recovery, with perhaps the peak of unemployment being in the first quarter of next year [2021].

Again, I make the point that it is a very differential impact across different sectors, and it is a very differential impact across occupations and skill levels. For those people who have been able to work from home I think the economy, particularly in London, has been surprisingly robust and some positives can even come out of the new working arrangements. However, those people who are on the less secure end of the labour market - zero-hour contracts, insecure work, perhaps work in outsourcing in larger companies - are really struggling with employment and their income level.

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): For those of us who know the context in which staff work in London there is sometimes quite a lot of talk about levelling up. I know for people who live outside of London it seems very unfair that people get paid so much more in London, but then we know the cost of travel, the cost of renting, the cost of buying, the cost food, actually, in some cases in supermarkets because the rent that they pay for

the building puts an additional premium onto the cost of what you are purchasing just to keep body and soul together. I think that is all very difficult.

I wonder if I can come back to Andrew again. You started setting out the impact on London's self-employed and freelance workforce. You may not be able to completely nail this down but you did your survey in April [2020] and obviously we are now into August [2020], what percentage of London's self-employed and freelance workforce would you say is now unemployed and how many of them over the coming months will continue to be unable to access benefits, other than presumably UC in some instances?

Andrew Chamberlain (Director of Policy, IPSE): A couple of things in there, we do a quarterly survey called our Freelancer Confidence Index (FCI). We ask the same questions every quarter and it is all about how you are feeling about the prospects for your business and the prospects for the economy as a whole. It is a confidence index, as the name would suggest. We also tack on some relevant topical questions and at the moment, of course, it is all very much coronavirus related. The statistics that I read out earlier were from that last one, which was the survey that took place that was assessing Quarter 1. We actually have the raw data back for Quarter 2, but we have not had a chance to analyse it yet. What I can tell you is that it is clear there is going to be a significant reduction in income for this second quarter. We have been doing the FCI now for six years. It looks like this is going to be the largest one-off dip in income. It is clear that many people are not working at all or, if they are working, they are doing less work than they would have expected to do at this time of year.

Thinking about then the public policy response to all of this, you are absolutely right there is the SEISS and there is also the CJRS but the CJRS does not work terribly well for company directors and the SEISS is only going to help sole traders and not those who run their own company and there are problems with that. If you fall outside of that then you can go into the UC scheme but there are barriers to that. For example, if your partner has income coming in, that will impact whether you can get UC and how much you will get if you can get some, as will if you might have some savings. Therefore, not everyone can access UC.

I think for the remainder, there is a push towards borrowing. We have had the Bounce Back Loans in particular, which many of our members have taken out. There were some good things about those. Especially when they first were announced they were quite easy to get and people found that it was not too administratively burdensome and they did not have to wait too long. Anecdotally I believe that those people who waited for a few weeks before applying for a Bounce Back Loan have found it harder, they are basically bumped further down the queue and they have waited for longer so there have been delays in getting that money out to them. Then you have the other question that although they are on competitive or advantageous terms - 0% interest for the first 12 months and then there is a six-year period to pay it back - you do wonder whether it is right that people should be encouraged to borrow at this time when in fact for their business they cannot really see light at the end of the tunnel at the moment, it is not clear they are going to be able to get back to work particularly, as we have just heard, in certain sectors such as the events and hospitality sector that we all know has been so desperately badly impacted by all this. A lot of self-employed people work in those sectors so it is bit of a 'double whammy' there.

Those are the sorts of issues that we are seeing. As I have said before, we have been campaigning to try to broaden out the schemes that we have now to help.

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): Sure. If you had to say what the major risks were for people who were self-employed in the short to medium-term, what would you characterise it as? Not being able to get any employment at all, not able to get back into doing the things that they did before, taking out the loans and needing to then repay them; what would you see in the short and medium-term?

Andrew Chamberlain (Director of Policy, IPSE): A couple of things that we are really worried about are debt and mental health. We are trying to do a bit more research to try to get a handle on this, it feels as if there could be a mental health crisis looming in the background of all this. For many self-employed people your business is an extension of yourself and if that is not going very well you are not going very well. It is not just anxiety over the household income not being there and perhaps going into debt to top that up, which is desperately worrying for many people, it is also the sense of the business --

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): Self-worth.

Andrew Chamberlain (Director of Policy, IPSE): Self-worth, yes, indeed.

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): I think it is the self-worth because a lot of people do really strongly identify with the success of their business and it becomes part of their own sense of their personal self-worth and their own success.

Andrew Chamberlain (Director of Policy, IPSE): Exactly.

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): Having been self-employed myself, it certainly feels like that because it is very closely associated. I think somebody else mentioned the mental health issues.

I would like to bring in Mike Brewer from the Resolution Foundation and also John Macdonald from the Adam Smith Institute. I would like to pose the same question to both of you: what measures do you think are needed to help London's labour market recover? What are the measures that we need to implement going forward?

Mike Brewer (Chief Economist and Deputy Chief Executive, Resolution Foundation): It is an incredibly difficult question. I might start, if I can, with the national policies although they may be policies that you cannot influence. As some of the previous speakers have said, the impact of the crisis is very, very different by sector and yet central Government's response has not really reflected that, especially the CJRS has been uniform across sectors. It is clear that what we have now and what we are going to have for the rest of the year is a problem that is concentrated, as the previous speakers were saying, in certain sectors that cannot operate, cannot work from home and where it is important to be close to somebody to provide a service that is required. What is needed then is a policy that is supporting businesses and employees who work in those sectors, which is the first thing. The second thing would be policies that are going to give employers in other sectors the confidence to expand. That is not going to be enough to 'mop up' the number of unemployed people, so we are also calling for central Government, local government and the local authority to do what they can to create jobs and increase public spending in areas that we know can 'soak up', if you will, large numbers of unemployed people. We identified social care and some green jobs, particularly in the area of retrofitting insulation. As a broad overview, those are my opening remarks.

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): OK, thank you. A more nuanced and sectorial approach and then giving confidence to sectors where we expect or need expansion to undertake that expansion to 'soak up' unemployment, which is a slightly difficult expression, but I do know what you mean.

Can I bring in John Macdonald now and see if you agree with Mike or if there is anything you would like to add that is different to his thoughts about the more nuanced sectorial approach?

John Macdonald (Head of Government Affairs, Adam Smith Institute): We should raise the Employer's National Insurance threshold to encourage hiring. The National Insurance threshold, where it is currently set, is an unnecessary drag and cost on employment. By raising it we can encourage more hiring. I also think reviewing occupational licensing will be a big positive. It is cost prohibitive and prevents people taking their skills elsewhere. For example, when we look back to when the Prime Minister [The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP] was talking about his treatment for coronavirus he made reference to "Jenny from New Zealand" who treated him. However, she had to relearn and retrain her skills as a nurse, I think it was, despite having practised in an equivalent healthcare system in New Zealand. I also think potentially we could experiment with a temporary coronavirus insolvency limited liability forgiveness scheme, particularly for the hospitality and tourism sectors that have been disproportionately affected during their lockdown. Their viability post-lockdown is vital to London thriving and their current struggles are, in most part, tied to the pandemic. Introducing a scheme that allows a small amount of debt forgiveness for those Bounce Back Loans perhaps might help. Also scrapping Sunday trading laws is something we should be pursuing.

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): Scrap Sunday trading laws as well, OK. I am going to ask both of you a final question from me and then we will move on to questioning from other Assembly Members. If I start with you, John, as you were just finishing on that, is there anything that you think we can learn from other countries in the way they have begun to undertake their economic recovery as they emerge from a severely locked-down period, obviously bearing in mind that I think everyone is now realising that we need to balance how lockdowns are imposed given that we seem to have spikes in very many countries coming up? Is there anything we can learn from others; from Denmark, Finland, New Zealand, France, Spain, whoever, but probably not Brazil?

John Macdonald (Head of Government Affairs, Adam Smith Institute): Probably not. On the CJRS I think we can learn from Australia in this regard. They have pursued a system that they call the JobKeeper Payment that pays a set amount for employees who work for a business that can demonstrate a substantial reduction in revenue due to coronavirus. The current setup with the next phase of the CJRS is the Job Retention Bonus which gives a £1,000 payout per employee retained but I think doing it more in line with Australia, doing a JobKeeper Payment, makes more sense.

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): OK, that is interesting. The same question to you as well now, Mike. Is there anywhere else around the world that you would strongly recommend that either central Government or possibly regional Government should be looking to, where someone is doing something creative and interesting and is particularly helpful in your view?

Mike Brewer (Chief Economist and Deputy Chief Executive, Resolution Foundation): No, I am afraid I have not got any ideas. When you look at most of the European countries they have lower levels of the virus so they do not have quite as difficult a challenge to deal with as we do in the UK. The only thing I would take from other countries' experiences is that they are also seeing a pick up in the virus as they ease their lockdown restrictions and that is worrying.

I am not answering your question directly but if you will forgive me for a few seconds, what I think we need in the UK are policies that are going to endure through what is now going to be a long period of living with coronavirus. When the virus hit us in March [2020] the Treasury leapt into action with the CJRS, with the increase in welfare support and support for business. However, I think it did it expecting the coronavirus to be a short, sharp shock. You can see that not just in the phasing out of the CJRS but the fact that to be eligible for the CJRS you had to be in work back in February [2020]. My guess is now we are moving to a world where over the next few months we are going to have different local lockdowns across parts of the UK as the virus flares up, like we had in Leicester and like we see in Greater Manchester. That is going to be really hard for

employers who started back up again. We cannot say to them, “Go and put your employees back on furlough” because they may well not have been employed last February [2020]. I think what all countries need to do is to find a set of policies which are going to allow us to continue with low levels of the virus and repeated, not second waves, ‘hot spots’ in the virus where we have to shut down economic activity; flexible policies and not ones that we have now, which were designed for what we hoped would be a short, sharp shock.

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): One thing that we picked up in our previous meeting, and you referred to earlier, was the idea of having more sectorial packages developed that perhaps last longer for some sectors that are less able to start to come back out of ‘deepfreeze’, if you like; a more nuanced approach and perhaps something that flows up and down according to what is going on in the economy. Otherwise for some of the things where the Chancellor [of the Exchequer, The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP] really did leap into action I think we run the risk of perhaps making those a bit hollow if we start to kill them off a bit too quickly when the virus itself is clearly not killed off, we still do not have a vaccine and we still do not really have any effective treatments.

Laurie Heselden (Regional Policy and Campaigns Officer, TUC): I will just put a few things on the table. I totally agree with the comment around whatever we do now needs to be coronavirus/COVID resilient. I urge every employer to look very, very deeply at their health, safety, welfare and - we mentioned mental health - their wellbeing practices, not just for their staff but for their customers as well, ramping up that health and safety agenda. That is partly us as consumers and passers-by recognising that we have responsibilities when we enter retail shops and pubs, etc.

I totally agree that we need sector-specific assistance that grows out of the general assistance that has been given by the Government. Something that would release lots of labour and deal with the problem in the labour market in London is a big investment in low-cost childcare to enable people to get back to work. In parallel to that, obviously there is a need for a lot of investment and a new model of delivering adult and social care in our economy and there are a lot of job opportunities associated with that as well.

Very quickly, I think to enable London’s labour market to stay open to all Londoners we need to ensure that Transport for London’s (TFL’s) budget is protected and secure. It would be catastrophic, for example, for there to be cuts in bus services that would very much affect outer London boroughs. If we are looking to the long term and countercyclical investment, it is a chance to solve some of London’s structural problems, for example investment in low-cost social housing in the longer term that would both fix a social problem and would provide a lot of new jobs as well.

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): Thank you, so not just retrofit but also the zero carbon to run and hopefully low carbon to construct housing. That is very interesting.

I wondered if Andrew would be happy to share with us, once you have done your analysis of your raw data. I think it would be really helpful for us to be kept up to speed with what is coming out of your surveys of your IPSE members, if that would be satisfactory to IPSE to share that with us.

Andrew Chamberlain (Director of Policy, IPSE): Certainly.

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): Obviously we are going to be looking at the impact on London’s self-employed and so on for some time to come. Thank you very much.

Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman): Chair, Mike, Laurie and John have made some very good suggestions, some things that I think need looking at more. What always troubles me with suggestions is what

scale are we talking about and what cost are your top one or two suggestions. What would they cost? If we are going to Government asking for money, I think it would be taken much more seriously if we give some kind of idea of the scale of that cost. It would be very interesting for us to hear what you mean. What is the cost there, are we talking about tens of millions or hundreds of millions? A comment has been made that there has been a lot of borrowing. I think Andrew made the comment that there has been a lot of borrowing and that is a worry if you run a business. Of course, as a country the level of borrowing we take on is also a risk as well so if we are going to do any policy the level of money we are asking for, I think, should be part of the conversation. I do not expect you to answer that straightaway but if you have done work on that or you have ideas on that I personally - through the Chair, of course - would like to have that information because it strengthens any ask we have when we have a figure attached to it, that would be my point.

Good afternoon, Rajesh. How are you?

Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business): Very well.

Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman): Let me start with an easy one. What actions has the Mayor taken to protect the employment of Londoners and what role does the Mayor have in supporting those Londoners who found it hard to get central Government support in the schemes as they stand?

Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business): The Mayor and I are fully committed to do all we can to support London's businesses of all sizes and sectors through this unprecedented crisis. In April [2020], the Mayor launched Pay it Forward London, which is a scheme enabling Londoners to support their favourite businesses and so far it has helped 180 businesses raise in excess of £280,000 with the help of 4,000 Londoners. The Mayor has also announced £1 million to match fund money that is spent by the public through the Pay it Forward London Scheme. It will be directed at businesses which are investing in measures to expand their operation online and to enable safe socially-distant trading. The Mayor will match funds raised by eligible businesses up to a maximum of £5,000, which stands to benefit around 200 small businesses. The Mayor also launched a £1 million London Resilience Fund that is supported by the London Economic Action Partnership (LEAP) to help small businesses and community groups to innovate and adapt after the pandemic. Businesses, social enterprises and community groups will be matched with innovators who will help them find new ways of delivering their products and services in these new circumstances. Grants up to £50,000 will be made available to support designing and testing these innovations as well. The Mayor has also allocated £1 million to grow City Hall's business support through the London Growth Hub and £2.3 million for the Culture at Risk fund to help some of London's most imperilled creative and night-time businesses, such as cinemas and music venues.

Another thing which is hugely important is what Sadiq [Khan, Mayor of London] has done by allocating £11 million to help the city's skills providers shift to online learning and training, including specific measures designed to reach Londoners who are currently less able to access online courses. I think as we see an increase in the unemployment rate it is very important to invest in reskilling people, so they are quickly able to find a job elsewhere. Sadiq [Khan, Mayor of London] and I have been constantly lobbying the Government for Londoners in all different sorts of schemes, pointing to the cracks in the schemes where they would not work for certain people. More recently we have been asking the Government to extend the furlough scheme targeted to certain sectors which are worst affected because, frankly, if you speak to any economist they will tell you that it is far harder and costs a lot more to get people into employment once you have lost them and once they become unemployed so it is best to try to retain the jobs, whatever it may be. I think London is disproportionately affected by all of this because London's economy is far more intertwined with tourism, retail, leisure and hospitality. We are talking about one in five jobs in London in these sectors, so we continue to lobby the Government to not take the support away so quickly.

Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman): We definitely have a visitor economy in London and the sectors related to that are hit. What are we doing to monitor the effectiveness of these schemes that we are putting in place? At the last [London Assembly] Plenary [meeting] we spoke about London's economic recovery and we mentioned that the Good Growth Fund had only delivered 109 jobs of the 6,000 it was looking to produce. Therefore, my two questions are how can you speed up the Good Growth Fund's delivery and how can we measure the impact of any of the initiatives you have spoken about? In order to make sure we spend the money we have properly we need to know and also it means we can double down on the things that are working. What is being done to monitor the progress? What are the key performance indicators (KPIs) on these things?

Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business): Every scheme comes with its own set of KPIs. Obviously, we are in a very challenging and unprecedented environment and it is quite hard to predict the future but before every pound is spent a full business case is done as to what the KPIs will be, what success looks like, etc.

Regarding the Good Growth Fund, do not forget it comes with a lot of strings attached by the Government already and a lot of LEAP funding is more for longer-term capital projects that often take longer to get through the door, longer to implement, and the effects are long term. What we are facing now is an immediate crisis so we require immediate action and not just looking at things that will bear fruit in five years' time.

Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman): Could some of those things be sped up? In view of the fact that we are in unprecedented times is it not incumbent on you to look again and see if there is anything that could be brought forward that will be impactful right here right now?

Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business): Like I said, a lot of the money comes in with strings attached from the Government and you cannot repurpose it and use it for another thing. That is why the Mayor has been lobbying the Government to provide more support which is more beneficial immediately, which is direct and immediate. I completely concur with you that we need to look at things that can be immediately done as opposed to waiting. The extension of the furlough scheme - immediately done by the central Government. The Good Growth Fund is longer-term infrastructural projects which will take time. Right now, if anything, we are looking at where the trends are going and perhaps it will change the dynamic. As people work more remotely, what will be the impact on the commercial real estate market? What will be the long-term impact on public transport, for example? All those are big questions, and all are relating to infrastructure. In the short term, to keep the jobs in place, we need to support businesses and we need to support these vulnerable Londoners. The poorer you are it seems like the worse you are affected from this crisis. If you are women, if you are BAME, if you are in low-income jobs it looks like you are worse affected. We need to protect jobs and that is why we continue to lobby. We also need to invest in skills, which is what the Mayor has done with his £11 million.

Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman): What additional powers would allow the Mayor to be more effective in his response to COVID-19, both for the current situation and any outbreak we have in the future? You have talked about long-term and short-term responses and we all understand that, of course, these things are intertwined. If you build things correctly in the first place you are in a stronger position when you start to face any situation. Therefore, I am asking you, again, what would allow the Mayor to be more effective in his response to COVID-19 as it has happened?

Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business): First of all, I think the Mayor has been working alongside the M9 Group of Mayors. I do not speak for the entire M9 Group, but I am sure a lot of them will agree to this, that there is more power in budgets that need to be given and to be devolved. For example, the configuration of replacement European Union (EU) funding is also urgently needed. That is something that can be immediately done with the Government as the London European Regional Development Fund programme is now virtually all committed to existing projects and the European Social Fund (ESF) is, by and large, fully committed.

Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman): They are all things that are happening. I am asking about what powers, what could the Mayor do and what could the Mayor be given, besides money. We all know that we want more budget, of course London wants more budget. Is there any other power that you could be given to help you respond in this situation, yourself and the Mayor?

Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business): Again, more support. Like I said, some of these things can be directly done to support business. What I would like to see is also the Government working more closely, involving the Mayor who has been democratically elected by Londoners in some of the decision making that relates to London. It is about being more supportive and the ability to utilise more powers. We are in a crisis situation. We all need to work closely rather than playing politics.

Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman): If we are going to talk about playing politics, Sadiq Khan [Mayor of London] is particularly good at that so I think --

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): Can we please stay focused on the Economy Committee meeting, Shaun, and not waste time commenting on the Mayor because he is not with us today.

Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman): Apologies to the Deputy Mayor for Business. Let us move on, Deputy Mayor --

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): It is not a private conversation, by the way.

Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman): Sorry for that, Chair. I am sorry you feel like you are not involved, please do leap in at any time.

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): That is hardly what I am saying.

Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman): What feedback or engagement has the Mayor had from businesses regarding the additional funds he has provided to support employment, etc, in London? What feedback have you had?

Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business): The feedback is obviously that it has helped save many businesses and many jobs. For example, the Pay it Forward London Scheme, which is a crowdfunding platform where businesses can go and sign up, then market it to their customer base and their customers can then purchase vouchers which can be used in the future. Many businesses have been helped. One example I think of is the Hackney Theatre which has raised a significant amount of money, as a result of which has been able to save a lot of jobs. A lot of businesses fail, not necessarily because there is a structural problem in the business but because they run out of cash in these difficult times. That is why the direct injection of cash is very helpful, which is what Pay it Forward London does.

I speak to businesses all day long, all the time. The feedback is that their ask from us is actually to lobby the Government. If you talk about the targeted furlough scheme extension, particularly for central London, about two-thirds of all jobs in London are in inner London, two-thirds, which is quite significant, huge numbers. Those businesses are suffering. Therefore, a lot of their asks are for us to lobby the Government on issues such as the extension of furlough schemes.

Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman): Has there been any feedback about how effective the Government has been for them already? There have been several comments that the Chancellor [of the Exchequer, The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP] needs to be actually getting things done. Have there been any comments about that? Also, in the way that Laurie and Mike made suggestions, are businesses starting now to give you feedback on what they would like to see happen next?

Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business): Of course, the Mayor and the businesses both welcome the support that has been given by the Government. Equally I have been contacted by many businesses that have fallen through the cracks and were unable to benefit from any of the Government support packages. That is particularly because a lot of grants, for example in the retail and hospitality sectors, were linked to the rateable value of the property that they are in and the value is currently set at £51,000. That does not work for thousands of businesses in central London, our estimate is something like 30,000 businesses could have benefitted from it but were unable to benefit from it. If you are running a small café in Westminster you are in a property which has a high rateable value but you are still a small business. Those are the businesses that come to us and they are very disappointed that, unfortunately, they were unable to benefit. The furlough scheme has really supported a lot of businesses and is very welcome but equally again businesses - particularly in sectors that are adversely hard hit like hospitality, leisure and tourism - come to me and say, "If this happens a lot of jobs are going to go. We cannot afford to keep these people on our payroll if the business does not improve." Again, we need to continue supporting these businesses.

Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman): OK, thank you. I will quickly move on. On 17 June [2020] at the Economy Committee [meeting] you indicated that there will be creation of an Economic Recovery Strategy for London. You said it was a top priority. What progress has been made on this?

Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business): There are two Boards that have been essentially created; one is the London Transition Board and the other one is the London Recovery Board. I am glad the Mayor has been working with Government very well on that. The London Transition Board is shorter term, looking at reopening the economy and we expect it will perhaps carry on until the end of the year [2020]. It is Co-Chaired by the Mayor and [The Rt Hon] Robert Jenrick [MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government]. The London Recovery Board, which is longer term, is Co-Chaired by Sadiq [Khan] and the Chair of London Councils [Peter John OBE]. It is a great coalition of different stakeholders. It is not just something that is done from City Hall, there are a lot of different people involved. What they are looking to do is to essentially reverse the pattern of rising unemployment and lost economic growth that is being caused by the coronavirus; supporting communities, including those that are most significantly impacted by the virus; keeping young people safe, again young people are disproportionately impacted by this; narrowing social, economic and health inequalities and overall to deliver a cleaner and greener London.

Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman): I am sure we can agree on the goals. What I am specifically asking is where is the strategy, when is it coming?

Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business): They have been working with businesses and things are being discussed, etc. Like I said, this is more longer-term. They have already identified various missions because it would be a missions-based approach. That is why I suggest talking to my colleague, Deputy Mayor

for Planning, Regeneration and Skills and Housing and Residential Development, Jules Pipe [CBE], who is quite actively involved and Co-Chairs the subgroup, along with Georgia Gould [Deputy Chair, London Councils].

Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman): Sorry, Deputy Mayor for Business, let me reword it in the interests of time. As it stands there is no delivery date on this plan. That will be very useful for us as a Committee because obviously we would like to scrutinise that. It means we could ask specific questions, such as: to what extent will youth unemployment need to be a feature of London's economic recovery? I ask that question because until that plan arrives will we get a detailed response to this? Could you answer that question now or do we have to wait for the plan?

Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business): Like I said, Jules Pipe [CBE] will be a better person to answer that. What I can say is that the missions have been clearly identified and number one is skills and employment in order to develop particularly people who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic or Brexit. By the way, Brexit is still not a done deal and still is a big risk looming on our businesses. It is supporting them, and no one should be left without access to education, training or job opportunities. Jobs really, employment and skills are very important. The second is The Green New Deal, which is again using this as an opportunity to make sure that our recovery is greener in nature and to accelerate job creation and make the economy more fair and inclusive. That tackles climate change, air pollution and builds longer-term community-led resilience. Then high streets and town centres; one interesting thing that we have seen recently is what some people around the world call a '15-minute city', where people are spending more time and more money locally. There is already evidence that the high streets in Zones 2 and 3 are doing better than the high streets in Zone 1, for example. I think there is a real opportunity for us to rejuvenate and reenergise our high streets and town centres so that is one of the missions as well. Then digital inclusion; I mean you and I are talking right now through digital means, all sitting remotely from each other. However, there are many people who have been left out from this digital revolution, whether it is skills or whether it is some of the other things. It is quite important that all Londoners have access to connectivity, basic digital skills and digital employment opportunities. On 24 July [2020], just recently, these missions were endorsed by the Recovery Board and the next step now is to go out to public engagement and talk to them about these missions.

Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman): Thank you, Deputy Mayor for Business. Chair, I think I will stop there, but could I ask that you write to the Mayor and ask when we will be getting this Recovery Strategy, because then we can see which questions we need to ask at the Economy Committee? Currently there seems to be no idea of when we will get this delivered and I would argue that speed -- you shake your head, Assembly Member [Russell]. Did the Deputy Mayor for Business give a date or any indication of a date? If he did, I will quite happily hear it, but I did not hear it.

Caroline Russell AM: Assembly Member Bailey, sorry, the Recovery Board minutes are all available to us. It is not as if this is unavailable information.

Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman): Excuse me, I asked specifically because the Deputy Mayor for Business said a strategy will be released, so I am just asking when will his strategy that he announced be released. I have not heard a date or an indication of a date, so I am merely asking. Could someone follow up on that, because those details --

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): I think, if you do not mind, Assembly Member Bailey, we have heard from Deputy Mayor for Business, Rajesh Agrawal, and he has mentioned Deputy Mayor [for Planning, Regeneration and Skills], Jules Pipe [CBE], a few times. There is a lot of work that is going on between the different Deputy Mayors and I think the person who is holding the whole of the piece around developing the Economic Strategy

and I think the Industrial Strategy is Nick Bowes [Mayoral Director of Policy]. I think we could usefully write after the meeting to find out when the Economic Recovery Strategy is going to emerge, but it is obviously being consulted on and discussed with the businesses and the other bodies who are represented, which includes the TUC, London Councils and so on and so forth, both on the London Recovery Board but then sitting below the London Recovery Board we have also got the Economic Recovery Taskforce, which contains other people as well. There is this quite complicated structure and so I suspect it would be quite difficult for the Deputy Mayor for Business, who is not sitting on all of these bodies, to know exactly when they are going to finalise the documents.

Susan Hall AM: Before I start, Rajesh, if I may just go back to a couple of things that emerged from earlier questions. You were talking about match funding, which is interesting. How much money has been put aside for this match funding?

Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business): £1 million.

Susan Hall AM: £1 million. Where is that coming from, which budget?

Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business): Bear with me one second. I suspect it is coming from the LEAP budget.

Susan Hall AM: Can you confirm that?

Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business): I can always get back to you on this and I can confirm which budget it is from.

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): Yes, can we confirm that afterwards? We know that all of the money, I believe, is being repurposed from other activities, so I do not think there is any new money. Do you want to continue, Assembly Member Hall?

Susan Hall AM: I was rather asking the Deputy Mayor for Business, Chairman, if he knew where it was coming from and I wanted clarity on that. We must know where our money is coming from before we pledge to give it to other people, but thank you for interrupting.

Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business): It is supporting businesses. When you say "other people", we are supporting Londoners and businesses.

Susan Hall AM: I get that but, being the Chair of the Budget and Performance Committee, I am interested to know where these funds are coming from to ensure that they are coming from the right direction and that you are not over-pricing because that would not be very good, would it, Deputy Mayor for Business.

A question, please, to Andrew Chamberlain. What would you like to see in the Mayor's Economic Recovery Strategy? Not that we of course have the strategy or know when the strategy is going to come.

Andrew Chamberlain (Director of Policy, IPSE): A lot of our work is focused on the national policy response to this. It is very hard for me to sort of disaggregate that and think about how it could just impact London. If I may, would you mind if I just took a minute to outline a couple of quick things? I promise it will be quick.

Susan Hall AM: If it is quick, because we are really running over now. I think the Chair will agree with that.

Andrew Chamberlain (Director of Policy, IPSE): We would like to see the SEISS extended until October [2020] to be equal to the CJRS. Then further to what Mike [Brewer] from the Resolution Foundation was talking about, we would like to see those schemes adapted to become more long term and much more flexible so that they can go on for longer and really target those that need it the most. Finally, what we would like to see is the IR35 in the private sector policy to be reversed. That is going to be a work killer for many self-employed people who will be looking to return to work next April [2021] as we recover. That is going to be very difficult for them. Those limited company directors have not been supported throughout this process and they are going to be hit by that, so that is something else we would like to see changed. Thank you.

Susan Hall AM: OK. If we concentrated purely on the Mayor, is there anything the Mayor specifically could do?

Andrew Chamberlain (Director of Policy, IPSE): I do not think that I am able to really understand quite what the Mayor could do in this space. I can perhaps take that away and come back to you on that one. We do see this as a national problem and so all of our lobbying has been focused on that at the moment.

Susan Hall AM: I know. The thing is we are here to look at what the Mayor is doing. I completely understand where you are coming from, I have run a business for 40 years. I absolutely understand, but we are looking at challenging the Mayor and of course our Deputy Mayor for Business, who is here, to see what they can do, but thank you anyway.

Andrew Chamberlain (Director of Policy, IPSE): Perhaps discretionary grants to those businesses most in need. At a local level those have been handed out. Are those grants getting to the right businesses at the time they most need them? Some further work around that would be much appreciated.

Susan Hall AM: Would it help you to have a proper written up Economic Strategy appear from the Mayor specifically for London?

Andrew Chamberlain (Director of Policy, IPSE): I am sure it would be helpful to us and to all those self-employed people in London.

Susan Hall AM: I agree completely. I hope you are listening, Deputy Mayor for Business.

The next question then is to Laurie Heselden. What would you like to see in the Mayor's Economic Recovery Strategy, if we ever see one?

Laurie Heselden (Regional Policy and Campaigns Officer, TUC): It may help colleagues to know that I just came off - before doing this - a telephone call with the Mayor for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority. They are also preparing an economic response strategy and are consulting. They are hoping to have it ready in I think about four to six weeks' time. This is a process that is going on in all of the devolved authorities and it is not complete yet in authorities of any flavour, as far as I know.

What we would like to see the Mayor do: we do acknowledge that the Mayor of London, although an important office and quite a large staff, not many powers are ultimately devolved so I am going to refer to things that the Mayor can do directly. I agree that we need now a sector specific resilient response. The Mayor can be responsible for holding the ring for a dialogue between employers and other actors in those sectors, such as employees and trade unions, industry bodies or whatever, to bring those people that understand their sectors together to design that sector response. That is the first thing.

The second thing, access to employment. Getting around London is crucial, so that issue of winning more funding from the Government to support the TfL budget going forwards is crucial to support obviously there being - in particular, I have to say - bus services in outer London boroughs. It would be disastrous if they were cut. That cuts access to employment, especially for the low paid and especially for young people and especially for BAME workers.

The third area of work is that issue of skills, around which the Mayor does have competence and budgets. That should be responsive to the coronavirus scenario that we are in, particularly supporting online learning, people learning to use more remote technologies and people changing their career paths.

Then the last two items that I would mention again are long term. If we want to increase the employment rate in London, deal with some of the impact that the coronavirus has had particularly on women workers, then there is an opportunity for a real infrastructure investment in childcare provision in London. Then the last issue is very long term, but does have the potential to give a very substantial uplift in good social outcomes and employment outcomes, not just for men but for women and BAME people too. That is a programme to invest in social housing in London. The London Housing Delivery Taskforce published a report, I think in the second week of July [2020], which costed that with a variety of interventions, total cost £5 billion. That is not money that is just being thrown away, that is money that is an investment to produce good social outcomes for London and good long-term jobs too. That is five things the Mayor can do.

Susan Hall AM: Thank you very much. Bearing in mind you think he does not have much power, there are some interesting things there. I am sure the Deputy Mayor for Business was listening. We must never forget he has an £18.6 billion budget, so that is not to be sniffed at.

The next questions are back to Rajesh now. Can I ask you, Rajesh, what role does the Mayor's Good Work Standard have in ensuring workers in London are kept safe once transition out of lockdown begins and how effective has it been?

Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business): Again, this is one of the most difficult situations that the businesses and Londoners are in. That is why the Mayor has been urging people, wherever possible, to either walk or cycle. TfL has been publishing data on which are less busy times to travel on public transport, so it is a time where we need to work very closely, the Government and the employers and the employees. We all need to work closely together because, frankly, the last thing anybody wants is the second wave of infection. That is going to be worse obviously for human life, but also for the economy. It is a time to work together and make it as safe as possible for reopening.

Susan Hall AM: Does it need to be adapted or improved in any way to respond to the current situation?

Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business): Again, we need to get a grip on the virus. One of the things that is very critical in all of this, and when I talk to businesses they mention this to me, there has to be an effective track-and-trace system that works because that will give people confidence and reduce the risk of a second wave. That is hugely important, that we get a grip on the virus, because no employer would want to risk the lives of their employees until there is confidence amongst businesses and amongst consumers that it is safe to go out. That is why I think it is very important we get a grip on the virus.

Susan Hall AM: Has any work been undertaken so far to adapt the Good Work Standard?

Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business): Yes. The Good Work Standard already has a lot of similar pillars. I will give you an example, wellbeing. Somebody mentioned mental health earlier today and it is so important. A lot of people's mental health is being adversely affected. Sometimes they know it, most of the time they actually do not even know about it. The role of employers becomes hugely important in all of this, along with Thrive LDN, which is the Mayor's initiative to work with different partner organisations on mental health. It is a subject which is very close to my heart, which is very close to the Mayor's heart. In fact, the Mayor has come out publicly and given an interview and talked about how it has been difficult - just like pretty much every human being, every other Londoner - for him as well, how it has affected his mental health. Again, the Good Work Standard, the core pillars around employee wellbeing, remain the same.

Susan Hall AM: You have done some work on it. When will the changes be published?

Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business): I said they are already in place. There are about 200,000 staff that are protected under the Good Work Standard. There are about 75 employers. The building blocks remain the same, which focus on wellbeing, flexible working. One of the important parts of the Good Work Standard is flexible working, so glad it was in place, look at how everybody has benefited and are benefiting from it. Somebody earlier in the conversation mentioned childcare. Again, very important. It was part of the Good Work Standard. All the things that are important for employees and then in turn for employers - because good employees, happy employees, result in good business - are already there so the core building blocks remain the same. From day one, the focus of the Good Work Standard was to address equality, whether it is gender, whether it is pay gap, whether it is ethnic pay gap and so on.

Susan Hall AM: How are you supporting Londoners - many, many, many more Londoners - who are working from home at the moment?

Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business): Again, for example, a lot of people who are working from home - and I know a lot of my colleagues as well, especially the younger ones - may not have the right infrastructure in terms of working from home. They might be in a small flat with flatmates and they are probably living in the same room and working from the same room. It is quite tough for them and that is why on mental health, particularly via Thrive LDN, there is work that has been done. In fact, the GLA staff Wellbeing Network, I am the mayoral sponsor for that. It is hugely important to provide them that kind of mental health support and that feeling of community. My colleague, who will be joining this meeting later on, Debbie Weekes-Bernard [Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement], will be able to throw more light on some of the work that she is doing on this and helping the communities on this.

Susan Hall AM: Just to go back then, so you are making changes to this.

Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business): I did not say we are making changes to it.

Susan Hall AM: I do beg your pardon, I thought you were saying that you were working on changes.

Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business): No, no.

Susan Hall AM: That is why I was asking you whether you had published the changes.

Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business): No, I did not say that.

Susan Hall AM: You are not making any changes?

Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business): No, I said the building blocks of the Good Work Standard from day one have been around many things, including flexible working, employee wellbeing etc, so those exist within the Good Work Standard already. This is the right time to ask even more employers to participate in that.

Susan Hall AM: I beg your pardon then, I thought you did say that it had changed. Bearing in mind this could not have been envisaged - the situation we are in now - when you started the Good Work Standard, do you not think then it should be updated because we are living in a different situation now?

Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business): Again, a lot of these things are already in place. In fact, what I would say is that the employers that were already signed up to the Good Work Standard, perhaps they are actually in a better place now already to deal with the current crisis because they are already geared for providing flexible working, for child support and other things. Those building blocks, the core blocks are already there.

Whilst I am talking, can I also say regarding the Recovery Strategy, I never used the word and there is no such Recovery Strategy document? When Assembly Member Shaun Bailey asked me the questions around the Recovery Board, I did say that Jules Pipe [CBE, Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills] is leading on that but at the same time they have a missions-based approach and they have published that. That was agreed at the last meeting just over a week ago and we are working through that. I never talked about the strategy document, so I just want to be clear on that as well.

Susan Hall AM: I think the trouble we have here, Deputy Mayor for Business, is that you have been asked what sort of powers you would like and we never got a proper answer to that. We have asked when the Economic Strategy would appear and we have not got any answer to that. I am asking you about the Good Work Standard and --

Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business): Can I just say to the Assembly Member, you are confusing the --

Susan Hall AM: No, with the greatest respect, Deputy Mayor for Business, you are the one that is confused, not me. I am just slightly disappointed - very disappointed, actually - that you cannot produce what powers you would like. You are happy to have a go at the Government, but you cannot tell us what extra powers you would like. You cannot tell us when you have an Economic Strategy that will appear and you are not telling us that you are going to change anything to do with the Good Work Standard because it is all in place anyway, which I find incredible, given we are in a completely different situation than any of us would have envisaged at 1 January 2020. I have come to the end.

Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business): Can I just respond to that, Chair?

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): Sorry, I do not like to cut you off, but we have only got the Deputy Mayor for Business for another few minutes. I am sorry, Assembly Member Hall. No, I am sorry, Shaun, because you have had some questions and Murad [Qureshi AM] wants to come in.

Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman): Chair, I do not wish to be difficult --

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): I am sorry, I am not taking you back in again. You have just done a series of questions. I am sorry, I am not taking you back in again.

I just wanted to follow up on something from Assembly Member Hall, to say something about whether or not the Good Work Standard should be beefed up around the area of nutrition because it has been released in just the last few days, the impact of poor nutrition on people's health, eating too much processed foods and so on and so forth. Even though the Good Work Standard does cover some of these areas already, maybe that needs to be beefed up.

But before you answer that, I am just going to bring in Assembly Member Qureshi and then if you could answer that point and the points that he has indicated in advance that he wanted to make.

Murad Qureshi AM: Deputy Mayor, I first concur, I am disappointed that there has not been any emphasis on the Green New Deal and what we have instead is the meal deal. I know which I would prefer, but that is not actually the question I want to ask you.

I was interested in your comments about some of the issues raised in Westminster with small businesses. I think I have come across the same issue and I think what is happening - my analysis, and I have looked at three boroughs not only Westminster, but the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea as well as Camden - is that the Government has done well in suspending the business rates and also giving grants and the councils have done well in passing it on, but I do not think the landlords are passing it on to the operators, the small businesses, and they are actually running the businesses themselves. I am concerned that actually there is nothing we can do to tell landlords, who pay the business rates very often but are not passing it on to the smaller business operators, who very often come from other parts of London into central London to work in these places. I think you have touched on something which I have come across. I would like something done on that front and I would like possibly some of your time and your initial response to that as well.

Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business): Assembly Member Qureshi, I am very happy to do that. It is a huge challenge. Rent is a big cost in any business. Particularly if you are in central London as a business, it is a huge cost. It is something which we have to be very careful about because often landlords also have some sort of borrowing, they have got debt. If they are unable to repay that debt because they are not collecting much rent, then it might be difficult for them and it spirals into a whole sort of chain reaction. The Mayor has led by example on this. TfL is one of the big small business landlords. As the pandemic began, the Mayor immediately announced for all the small business tenants of TfL there would be a three-month complete rent relief. One of the biggest small business landlords in the country is a company called ArchCo that owns all the railway arches. The Mayor also wrote to ArchCo and they immediately replicated TfL's initiative and gave three months of rent relief to all the small businesses. I have met the Federation of Small Businesses on this matter in the past and I am also writing to some of the landlords again to be more considerate, particularly the ones who are dealing with small businesses. It is absolutely a huge issue, particularly when we talk about the hospitality and retail sector. A lot of small businesses are actually in those sectors, which are not seeing much revenue coming in at the moment, so very happy to do that.

On your point around looking at nutrition in the Good Work Standard, very happy for my team to look at the Good Work Standard. Again, the Good Work Standard was something that has been produced as collegiate teamwork. It was not solely done by us, we have trade unions involved and the private sector and the public sector involved, many employers, charities, the third sector involved as well. Very happy to do that.

Just before I go, I would like to be clear that the Economic Development Strategy is a totally different document, which is a strategy which was produced a couple of years ago. What we are talking about is recovery which is a mission-led approach and essentially that becomes our strategy. However, there is not a strategy document on recovery, which has been invented through the course of the last few minutes.

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): Thank you very much, Deputy Mayor for Business. I am conscious that you will have to go. I think the point about nutrition is made if you look at the difference between firefighters and bus drivers. As far as I understand it there is not a single firefighter who has passed away as a result of COVID-19 – you can see the difference in terms of firefighters, who have gyms at work and can do exercise and have canteens and get good nutrition, very important in their jobs – whereas, of course, bus driving is naturally a very sedentary occupation. I would hope it would be, it would be quite worrying if the bus driver was not sedentary while they were pursuing their occupation and perhaps there is not as much advice going to them in terms of nutrition. I think there are some messages here that would be good for us to be picking up in the Good Work Standard for other employers beyond the GLA Group because I am choosing two groups of staff, part of the GLA Group. Thank you very much for your contribution this afternoon.

We are now going to move on to a discussion looking at the Mayor's response to the Government's response.

Murad Qureshi AM: Caroline Russell [AM] and myself will cover this whole area about the Government's response. When the panel respond, please be mindful of what you have said already. I think that will probably help, if you see what I mean.

Firstly, how effective has the Government been in helping Londoners in need of financial support during this time? Can I start with our friend from the Adam Smith Institute? I think you may have a lively response.

John Macdonald (Head of Government Affairs, Adam Smith Institute): I think the furlough scheme was a huge and necessary intervention but it definitely served a specific purpose, which was to freeze employee and employer relations, it was to maintain the productive capacity of the economy. However, we should be under no illusions that once the scheme ends, unemployment will likely increase drastically. I think the Kickstarter Scheme to get young people into work should be welcomed. It is, however, I think, a tacit admission that the minimum wage often prices businesses out of hiring young people. We have been doing some research on this ourselves. We think it could be replaced with a negative income tax, for example, and I think the policy for the Government to pick up some of the costs of hiring young people sets an interesting precedent for that. In this way the Government would guarantee certain wages through direct transfer as opposed to wage-setting regulation like the minimum wage.

Whilst there is the Eat Out to Help Out, I think it is perhaps a waste of money. It is not entirely clear that the businesses that will be stimulated through the Eat Out to Help Out scheme will actually benefit particularly from it.

Finally, I think that the most important developments we have seen are in the planning reforms. I think we could also go a bit further than where we have gone, particularly in London, by extending permitted development rights to allow for dynamic repurposing of office space into housing. I think with the shift to flexible working that has been accelerated by the pandemic, the need for commercial real estate could be substantially reduced in the long term. We should look at removing Article 4 directions for the proper use of block developments and implement a broad baseline requirement for environmental health, amenities and external facades so we do not end up with ugly buildings. I think this is a huge opportunity to develop affordable housing inside London within the commuter belt. This would also serve to boost housing supply and provide jobs for refurbishers, painters, joiners, plumbers and all kinds of tradespeople.

Murad Qureshi AM: Thank you, John. I am glad the Adam Smith Institute welcomes such Government intervention. I share your concerns about meal deals as well. I would rather have the Green New Deal, personally, on a national basis.

Can I come to Mike Brewer, please? What effect has the Government had in helping Londoners with financial support during this time so far?

Mike Brewer (Chief Economist and Deputy Chief Executive, Resolution Foundation): The initial Government support for workers who have lost their jobs as a result of this crisis was based upon the CJRS, the self-employment grant and with UC providing the backstop. We have not mentioned so far the fact that of course the Government did increase the generosity of welfare benefits by about £9 billion a year when the pandemic hit. Part of that is through £20 a week extra in UC and working tax credits, which helps everybody across the country, but it also increased the generosity of Local Housing Allowance (LHA). We know the LHA is complicated, so that would help people in London. In some areas of London they have brought back LHA to the 30 percentile. Of course you still have the national cap to LHA which binds still in some areas of London, but certainly that measure is doing a great deal for those people who are reliant on the private rented sector and who have lost their jobs, so we should not lose sight of that.

Is there anything London-specific in that? No, there is not really. Also, we could ask: is there anything in the July summer economic update that is specific to London? Again, not really. I suppose one of the things that the Government has not really talked about - and I think perhaps that is an issue you can talk about with it - is what is the role of city centres and how can city centres function in the next few months while we are all living with coronavirus. I do not think that has really been addressed by central Government so far.

Murad Qureshi AM: Andrew, at the very beginning you made some references to UC. Can you expand on that, because I think that is a point that needs to be expanded and appreciated more fully?

Andrew Chamberlain (Director of Policy, IPSE): Yes. Also, UC has been made a bit more generous, as Mike just pointed out. They also removed temporarily this thing called the minimum income floor, which impacts self-employed UC claimants. It is something actually which I spoke to this Committee on about two years ago, we also thought it discriminated against self-employed claimants. That has been removed temporarily, so that is welcome. We would like to see that permanently removed or at least changed longer term as well.

If you did not get the SEISS, and for reasons that are varied and complex you cannot as a company director really make use of the CJRS, and if you do not want to take out a Bounce Back loan, you go to UC. If your partner has an income level above the threshold, you will not be able to claim UC or it will be the amount that you can get via UC will be impacted by that. That is one thing to just bear in mind, because a lot of people have said, "If you cannot get the SEISS or you cannot make use of the Job Retention that is OK, go to UC". A lot of would-be claimants have found that that has been a barrier. Also if you have savings of more than £16,000 then you cannot access UC either. Therefore, of course, the Government is essentially saying to people, "You have got your savings, so live off your savings. That is what savings are for." Well, sort of fair enough but the problem is that they are seeing other people who really arbitrarily are falling inside the generous SEISS grant and they cannot really see a difference between them and those who are not getting that grant. They are saying, "They are not having to dip into their savings and I am over here" or, "Because of someone's circumstances they can claim UC. I cannot claim UC and I am having to use my savings" or, "I am having to get a Bounce Back loan and essentially get into debt". That is the problem that we have had here.

Of course, it is almost inevitable that there would be some rough edges here, because these are big schemes which have been very quickly pushed out by the Government. I have to say, I take my hat off to HMRC and those in the Treasury who quickly turned around those schemes. They worked very hard to get those out, and they worked and they paid people but there are some people who have fallen through the gaps. What we have

seen, which is a bit disappointing, is perhaps an unwillingness from the Government to look at those gaps and meaningfully address them. It has looked at it and we have had conversations with it, but we have not felt that there has been a great sense of urgency in adapting the scheme so that those people, who I think most of us would agree should benefit from them, can benefit from them.

Murad Qureshi AM: Thank you for that, Andrew. Just one question to you on that front, and it is a criticism generally made, do you think one should wait five weeks for your first payments, given it may well put you into debt in the circumstances you already find yourself in? Is that acceptable in the private sector anywhere?

Andrew Chamberlain (Director of Policy, IPSE): No. The UC five-week wait is a big problem. I think that they did try to address that by potentially giving you a loan against your first payment but that did not always work in every circumstance, did it, and there were some problems with that too, I believe. No, it would be great if UC claimants could receive their first payments much quicker than they do currently.

Murad Qureshi AM: Thank you on that one. Can I go to Laurie now? We have heard there have been two great schemes, the furlough scheme and the SEISS, which if I was not back at City Hall I would probably be on myself.

Caroline Russell AM: Murad, sorry, are you heading towards the questions that I am asking?

Murad Qureshi AM: No, I have read the stuff, Caroline, and I am just trying to make the particular points I was going to make. The point I was trying to make here, before I lose my train of thought, is take-up. The take-up of the two programmes to help people in employment, the furlough scheme and the SEISS, actually is lower than one would have expected in London. Is that something that is mirrored in your experience, Laurie?

Laurie Heselden (Regional Policy and Campaigns Officer, TUC): I do not have any direct evidence of that. I think 1.3 million people in London have taken up the CJRS. I agree with all the previous speakers. I think it has been an incredibly important bridge to sustaining employment in London. If anything, we would like to see a selective extension of the furlough scheme for workers who are shielded, who may not be able to return to the workplace quickly and I think for selective lockdowns as well.

On the SEISS, London was a bit slow on the take-up of that. I cannot explain that but the direct evidence that we have had is that 40% of the members of the Musicians' Union cannot access the scheme, their criteria do not fit, and anything up to two-thirds of those who work in film and TV as freelancers have not been able to access either. I am not an expert on that, but if anyone wants more information about that I can directly link them to the Broadcasting, Entertainment, Communications and Theatre Union (Bectu), the trade union that organises those people. I think we need to be sensitive to the fact that self-employment in the UK has increased enormously, three million in 2000 to more than five million in 2020 and disproportionately so in London. Clearly this sector was helped, but it did not help everyone by any stretch of the imagination. The scheme was designed for those people who were, in a sense, at the top of the self-employment world, income up to £100,000, etc. Those on the lesser end of the income scale in self-employment, I do not think the scheme fitted them nearly as well.

The Kickstart programme, very welcome, but yes, obviously we have not seen it start yet, but if it works like the Future Jobs Fund worked in 2008 to 2010, then we would be very pleased about that. In terms of Government support for people, statutory sick pay (SSP), in international terms, is catastrophically poor in this country, £94.25 a week is incredibly low. We think that should be paid at the level of the real Living Wage or, in London, the London Living Wage. We need to remember that almost two million people, because of the lower earnings limit, £118 a week, do not even qualify to get SSP at all.

The changes to UC were welcome but it is still not an adequate scheme. The wait for five weeks for your first payment is punitive basically for lots of people. There have been 2.6 million new claims. A lot of people are not getting their money for five weeks. Getting a loan is great but these people are low income or have no income, so getting a loan against your income which you do not have is nonsense. Those loans, if people are in emergency need, should be grants, not loans.

The enormous increase in the use of foodbanks in London - the Trussell Trust tells us more than four times in certain London boroughs, nearly four times across the whole of London - demonstrates that the Government support, whilst it worked well for those people that received it, did not work well for everyone.

Two last points. Private sector rents, we have had a situation where there have been no evictions, but that is coming to an end and there could be a tsunami of evictions coming around the corner if there is no change. I was interested in the remarks about permitted development rights and offices transferring into domestic residences. Lots of research has shown office buildings that have been transformed into social housing, for example, are potentially the new slums of the future. Standards are incredibly important and if there is going to be any extension of permitted development rights in office developments then we need to look very closely at the issue of cladding. At the moment there is a register of high-rise buildings that are residential but no one has got the list of commercial buildings that are clad with materials that are now found to be not meeting building regulations. If anyone wants to come on a tour with me of offices that have been transformed into homes, they are welcome.

Murad Qureshi AM: Thank you, Laurie. At this point I am going to hand over to my colleague, Caroline Russell [AM], because I am in danger of stepping on her turf.

Caroline Russell AM: Yes, my questions are for Laurie and then Andrew [Chamberlain] from IPSE. First of all, looking at the furlough scheme, this main plank of the CJRS. Furloughed workers are now able to work part-time, which is helpful in some ways, but it is also worrying as furloughed workers see the end of the furlough scheme in sight. We have the tapering, the Government will pay up to 70% of wages in September and up to 60% in October. At the moment it looks like it falls off a cliff after that.

Laurie, I just wonder, it has been slightly covered already, but can you just talk a bit about the protections that furloughed workers have and the challenges that they face as the scheme comes to an end, supposedly at the moment, just as we have seen a series of spikes coming up elsewhere across the country and potentially in London as well?

Laurie Heselden (Regional Policy and Campaigns Officer, TUC): Explicitly in terms of protections, workers that are furloughed - and bear with me, I am not an employment lawyer - do not have any additional employment rights and so if you are furloughed you can be made redundant whilst you are furloughed. You do not have any special rights and the normal redundancy law will apply to you. The TUC was supportive of a tapered end to the furlough scheme, so we are welcoming the fact that people can return back to the workplace part-time. We do not want there to be a cliff edge, we do want that to be gentle. The absolute priority at the moment is that anyone who does return to work returns to work to a COVID-safe workplace. That is in their interests, in the businesses' interests and in the general public's interests.

We would be in favour of a selective extension of the furlough scheme to protect workers that are in local geographies where the lockdown is returned or partially returned. I think there is a strong case for doing something to extend protection of the 2.2 million workers, many of whom are in London, who were shielding

and are now being asked to return to work, that balance who will return to work. That is probably all I want to say on the furlough scheme, although I am happy to answer any more detailed questions.

Caroline Russell AM: In terms of the workers who have been shielding, are you seeing employers making an effort to find ways for those workers to continue to work from home rather than coming back into the workplace if they are feeling insecure about travel or the conditions in the workplace building or are you finding workers are being told to come back if they have been shielding without those accommodations being made?

Laurie Heselden (Regional Policy and Campaigns Officer, TUC): As always, with questions like this, there is an enormous spectrum. There are some employers that are demonstrating extraordinarily good practice and at the other end of the scale there are some employers that are either weak because they do not understand what the Government advice is and what the laws and responsibilities are and obviously some employers that are just downright abusive, so there is no one common story. We would urge every employer that employs someone who has been shielding that when that worker returns to work they get a one-to-one personal risk assessment that sits in the context of the broad risk assessment that they have done for the workplace and then puts over the top of that their personal circumstances. That would certainly include their shielding health factors, which would certainly include whether they are BAME, that may well include whether they live with someone who is also shielding, and it includes the means by which they get to work.

At the moment we are now being advised that all public sector transport is safe. That is a substantial change. I have to say from travelling on public sector transport I agree with the comment that was made earlier on about the number of people who are not wearing masks or do not wear them appropriately, which absolutely erodes confidence. I urge employers to work with the shielded worker to absolutely maximise their ability to firstly work from home and secondly to return to work by a safe means. I do not think it is rocket science. I have spoken to hundreds of businesses that say their most important asset is their people and now is the moment for employers to actually prove that they mean that when they are talking about the employment of shielded workers.

Caroline Russell AM: Then a final question on furlough, which is about the flexible and zero-hours contract workers and what particular challenges they have been facing with the furlough scheme. I understand you can be furloughed if you are on a zero-hours contract, but are there any particular challenges those workers are finding with it?

Laurie Heselden (Regional Policy and Campaigns Officer, TUC): Yes, you can be furloughed if you work on a zero-hours contract. I do not know how commonplace it is but what is clearly obvious is that we have a range of employment status in our economy, from employed through to worker through to self-employed or maybe not quite self-employed, because self-employment people are in vulnerable contracts. Those people who have the top-end employment status, people who are bona fide employees, have been the most likely to get furloughed. Those down the end of the employment status where it is insecure, sometimes their employers have decided that they cannot be bothered with the administration and they would rather, in a sense, lose their workers now and rehire if and when they can open their business again.

I think even Her Majesty's Government has really, really struggled to implement a good furlough scheme and SEISS because even it, I think, was surprised what a chaotic mess employment status was in this country. Some long-term tidying up of that would not just be in a lot of workers' interests, it would be in Government policy and programme interests as well. I do not want to put Mike on the spot, but the Resolution Foundation does

lots more original research about the impact of Government programmes on certain people of certain employment status so he could speak more eloquently than me on this issue.

Caroline Russell AM: Mike, do you want to come in on this in terms of the challenges for zero-hours and flexible workers in terms of the furlough scheme?

Mike Brewer (Chief Economist and Deputy Chief Executive, Resolution Foundation): Yes, that was a difficult group. Employers back in March/April could put zero-hours contract workers on the furlough scheme based upon their working patterns in February, but I imagine that many employers who employ zero-hours contract workers probably thought, "What is the point?" In any case, the rules meant that your circumstances in February now dictate what you are getting many months later. I think the key issue, as I said earlier, is that the CJRS was designed in a world where we thought there would be a really short, sharp shock and if you were not employed in February and March and you were not already put on furlough by July, it is too late for you.

What we need in the autumn is probably a new scheme or certainly a dramatically revised scheme - you might as well call it a new scheme - either that can cope for local lockdowns or that perhaps can cope with the shielded workers we have been talking about already, all just completely different. Indeed, what we at Resolution suggested, you could turn it into a wage subsidy type scheme. But I think probably it is very hard for Revenue to change the rules of the CJRS without inventing something brand new anyway and I think the real flaws with the current CJRS is that you had to be employed back in February to benefit from it and it is now too late to add new workers to it.

Caroline Russell AM: There are a whole load of new workers who have just graduated from universities and who do not qualify for anything.

Mike Brewer (Chief Economist and Deputy Chief Executive, Resolution Foundation): Absolutely, yes. Because the lockdown was eased in June there may well be some employers who were able to take on new people, perhaps new zero-hour contracts in retail and hospitality, so we have restarted economic activity in some sectors of our economy. It is possible that some of those could well be new employees. At the moment we do not have a scheme that would protect those workers if there is a local lockdown, if London has to shut down its economic activity again, other than making them go and claim UC. We have discussed the limitations of that earlier.

Caroline Russell AM: Yes. From the Resolution Foundation, are you suggesting some form of universal basic income or --

Mike Brewer (Chief Economist and Deputy Chief Executive, Resolution Foundation): We had a report in early July that was really focused on what the Government can do to stimulate the recovery. There our main call for the CJRS was to extend it in certain sectors, as we have already talked about, the ones where there is very little prospect of going back. We also suggested it get turned into a job protection scheme where it offers a wage subsidy where employers go back and certainly on a far more generous scale than what was announced by the Chancellor [of the Exchequer, The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP] in the summer economic update. We think the small rebate, the £1,000 that employers will get in January [2021], is nothing like sufficient. It is not worth half enough. That is what we think should be done with the CJRS in particular. Sorry, I have forgotten your full question, but if that is --

Caroline Russell AM: I was asking whether you were proposing a form of universal basic income.

Mike Brewer (Chief Economist and Deputy Chief Executive, Resolution Foundation): Sorry, yes, OK. When asked about this in the past I have said that had we gone into this crisis with a form of universal basic income then that would have helped in the early days and it would have prevented some of the queues we saw, the virtual queues, where people were trying to claim UC. Now we are well into the crisis I do not think it is worth spending the time setting up one now to deal with the current crisis. Instead we have got to deal with the policies available to central Government and those you can introduce quickly. UC is there as the kind of fall-back support and if there are problems with that, if you have issues with that, then I think I would be more in favour of fixing those problems rather than inventing a different scheme.

Caroline Russell AM: Yes, thank you very much. My next question was partially answered during the answers to Murad's [Qureshi AM] questioning, but again a question for Laurie, which is which sectors should the Government be focusing its support? You started to outline some of the gaps but obviously we have got sectors like retail and hospitality that are really struggling and are clearly going to struggle in the long term while we are living with the need for physical distancing. We were hearing this morning from Jules Pipe [CBE, Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills] about the importance of digital, the green economy and also health and social care but could you give us your view on what sectors should be getting that Government focus?

Laurie Heselden (Regional Policy and Campaigns Officer, TUC): Some of this is, I think, well known. Obviously, the hospitality, tourism, restaurants, anything to do with performance, theatres, some of retail are very severely affected. Those sectors come out top of all the sector analyses. I want to add two things really. The care sector has absolutely been through the wringer and definitely needs a lot of long-term attention and investment. Then I think a sector that has gone under the radar a little bit is the voluntary and community sector, which can provide local services, it can provide some of the glue in local communities. I have worked in the sector myself. Very often it runs on very slender, if you like, cash surpluses. Sometimes its income stream is dependent upon the use of public space, which has not been able to be let out and it is very --

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): I do not want to cut you short, but we are going to hear from the Deputy Mayor, Debbie Weekes-Bernard, and we are going to ask her some stuff. I know you flagged it --

Laurie Heselden (Regional Policy and Campaigns Officer, TUC): That is it. I am flagged, I am done. It is very fragile.

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): -- but we are going to hear probably a bit more detail from her. Thanks, Laurie.

Laurie Heselden (Regional Policy and Campaigns Officer, TUC): Very fragile and not on the radar.

Caroline Russell AM: Finally, I have got a couple of questions for Andrew which are about the specific challenges that self-employed people have faced in accessing the Government support measures. Andrew, you may have actually covered this in some of your answers to previous questions so just if there is anything extra that you feel has not yet been said.

Andrew Chamberlain (Director of Policy, IPSE): What I would like to just say is that if you qualify for the SEISS, it was a very smooth process indeed to go and access that. I have gone through the process with a couple of people that I know and I have heard really no bad reports of difficulties. The problems all come if you do not qualify. The reasons why you may not qualify is because you only started trading as a self-employed person since April 2019, you earned less than 50% - even if it is just less than 50% - of your overall income from self-employment in previous tax years and if you earn over the £50,000 cap, if any of those apply. Then the big one for us is if you happen to work through your own limited company.

Broadcasting, Entertainment, Communications and Theatre Union was mentioned earlier and it has done fantastic campaigning for those who work in film and television. For many people in that industry, the reason why they could not access SEISS is because they happened to have a limited company, very often because they were told by whoever was engaging them that they must have a limited company. When the Chancellor [of the Exchequer, The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP] stood up and said, "We are not going to leave any self-employed people behind, we are doing this fantastic scheme", they all thought they were in that. They were very surprised to learn that because they had a limited company, this thing they do not think about and never really wanted, they could not get into it. That is probably the biggest problem with the SEISS scheme.

The CJRS you can make use of if you are a company director but it does not work very well in practice. It does not take account of dividends. We believe it could do; the Government has said it cannot do. Also, it is very difficult to be a sole director of a company and furlough yourself and for that company not to die. Therefore, that is very difficult as well. Those have been the main problems with the scheme.

If you are in it, it is pretty generous and it is easy to use, but it is ending at the end of August. It comes to an end. Everyone is talking about the possibility - the probability perhaps - of a second wave or a new spike, whatever you might want to call it, yet it seems as if the Government is saying that it wants to avoid another national lockdown. "Let's get everyone back into central London, everyone should go back to work, everyone should go and eat in restaurants" and it will even pay you to do so. It does not want another national lockdown. What it is relying on, it seems, is a test-and-trace system, which is going to be all about regional lockdowns, very small lockdowns, and advice to individuals, saying, "You are at risk so you should stay there."

If you are self-employed and you get the phone call saying that you have been in contact with someone and you must quarantine for two weeks, what are we going to do to help those people? SEISS is ending at the end of August. The next phase of policies that we would like to see is some support that works. Enforcement is one thing but if you are being told you have to quarantine and you feel fine and you are going to get no income for two weeks if you do quarantine, the Government could usefully step in and say, "We will help support your income over that period." There has been no talk about that at the moment.

Caroline Russell AM: Thank you. That is a great idea, having something that supports workers who are being targeted through the test-and-trace system. If we cannot make the test-and-trace system work and if people do not quarantine, the likelihood of getting on top of any potential new rise in cases is difficult.

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): I am going to welcome Deputy Mayor Debbie Weekes-Bernard. Would you like to lead off in this section on supporting in-need Londoners and the role of the voluntary and charity sectors (VCS) by making a few remarks? We are all relatively pressed for time in the sense that we do not want to be here for too long, but could you introduce some thoughts on this? I know you have had some meetings on a roundtable basis with people, trying to gauge the impact on Londoners. It would be helpful for the Committee to hear from you at this point.

Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): I would like to make a few initial comments about the VCS. I know that it was raised initially and I would like to thank the gentleman for raising it. It is an important sector. It is one that we know has stepped in to support some of the most vulnerable groups, not just in London but across the UK. The reason that it is such an important sector - and perhaps you may have talked about this previously - is we know that COVID-19 has had a disproportionate impact on particular groups of individuals. If you come from a BAME background, if you are disabled, if you are already on a low income, if you are a migrant, if you come from some faith backgrounds, COVID-19 has had a very detrimental impact upon you, not just in terms of infection

rates but also in terms of your livelihood. You may well have been talking about some of the sectors that had to close during the lockdown, and we know that there are certain groups of individuals who are more likely to be found in certain sectors than others. Obviously with the closing down of those sectors it would have had a hugely disproportionate impact on those individuals most likely to be found in some of those sectors.

The reason that the VCS is so important is because it has stepped up continuously to support some of those individuals who, for want of a better phrase, have fallen through the cracks. I know we have been talking a little bit about the CJRS and talking about the support for self-employed individuals, the SEISS. We know that the Government has put quite a lot of money into the welfare system, which has been welcome, the £1,000 a year that has been put into the standard allowance in UC. All of this has been incredibly welcome and important for those on some of the lowest incomes but there still remain individuals who have fallen through the cracks, unfortunately, maybe because they have insecure status. If you are a migrant with no recourse to public funds you cannot claim UC and you are more likely to need to rely on the VCS for advice on welfare, on legal advice about your status and for support if you are worried about friends and relatives who themselves are shielding, who are locked down, who you are not able to visit. We know that this is a sector that has also provided befriending services for those who are isolated and also do a lot of work to support those who come from certain BAME backgrounds.

It is a sector that has seen a lot of demand placed on it at the beginning of the lockdown. We know that there were lots and lots of people who were seeking advice and seeking support, but also the ones who had fallen through some of the cracks that I mentioned in terms of the schemes that the Government put in place, which had not quite started, but had lost their jobs already. These were individuals who might have found themselves for the first time either having to make a claim for UC or having to turn to a foodbank. The VCS is a sector that does support a lot of food aid organisations and foodbanks that do provide a lot of welcome and much-needed support to people, but these were foodbanks who themselves, because of the start of the lockdown, found themselves with a lot more demand but a lot less in terms of donations. A lot of them were seeing lots of shortages in terms of dried foods and all sorts of items that people would have needed.

What we decided that we had to do was to step in and support that sector, by pooling with around 60 funders to develop what we called the London Community Response Fund (LCRF) to try to enable that sector to remain sustainable. It is a sector that could not rely on the furlough scheme because these were individuals who needed to work. It was not a sector that needed to close down, it was a sector that needed additional support so that it could continue to support others. We felt it was important for us to work with London funders, with City Bridge Trust and with a number of other funders to raise a pool of funds, which sits at the moment at £43 million. Around £23 million has already gone out of the door to 1,600 organisations. This has been an important way of us trying to provide support to a sector that we know does need a lot of support for it to continue to provide that continued demand for some of those groups that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID.

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): One of the issues that I wanted to ask you about was what engagement the Mayor has had with London's VCS through the pandemic, but that is a very practical example of the kind of convening power that the Mayor over the years has used in the past and is continuing to use now from the Mayoralty. I personally know in my own constituency - and I know other Assembly Members have felt the same - that local councils have also relied on the VCS in many ways to work with them.

Could I ask you a slightly more philosophical and general question, to bring you back up to the top and some of the things that you have touched on at the beginning? How do you perceive from your perspective as the Deputy Mayor for Social Inclusion that COVID has impacted on the social and economic disparities that already existed in London?

Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community

Engagement): That is a really good question. I mentioned before that it has had a disproportionate impact on certain groups. We know that, for example, there are women, many of whom have been pregnant, who have been mistakenly placed on sick leave when they should have been placed on furlough. We know that there are huge numbers of women who unfortunately are seeing a real impact on their finances as a result of some of these practices but also as a result of their loss of jobs. Between March and May of this year the employment figures for men in London went down by 4,000 but went up for women by 32,000. We know that women have certainly been the ones who have taken on the burden of a lot of childcare and home schooling during the pandemic but that this has had a detrimental impact on many of them to be able to keep their jobs. We also know that women are more likely to be found working in some of those sectors that had to shut down during the lockdown.

We also know that there are some groups of individuals who, by virtue of the roles that they do, have found themselves also detrimentally impacted by the lockdown. For example, Institute for Fiscal Studies research has suggested that black African and black Caribbean men are 50% more likely to be working in those sectors that had to lock down at the start of the pandemic.

I mentioned before those who have insecure migration status. If you have no recourse to public funds (NRPF) you cannot claim for UC. Many of these individuals who have NRPF are the ones who were found working in some of those sectors that have closed down. Also, there were many who found themselves - because they knew they could not avail themselves of the schemes that the Government had set up, they could not avail themselves of UC - having to work through the pandemic and put themselves at increased risk. I know that this has certainly been represented in some of the infection and death rates that we have seen have impacted upon some of these communities in particular.

One of the other things that is incredibly important is that when you talk about those who fall through the cracks, you have to think that there is the VCS sector that tends to step in and support those individuals but it has a huge impact on people who may find themselves for the first time either having to make a claim for UC or finding themselves for the first time having to go to a foodbank. The impact that it has on people's access to nutrition is also incredibly important. There is research to suggest that over the past six months the numbers of children who have been admitted to hospital with malnutrition has doubled. The Trussell Trust has talked a lot about the numbers of individuals who have been seeking out food parcels. Of those seeking out emergency food parcels, the increase has gone up by 89% over the pandemic period. That goes up to around 107% when you are thinking about children who are needing to access emergency food, particularly for those who were not able to access some of the food vouchers that the Government made available for children who were free-school-meal eligible. We all know that there are still some of those individuals who are not eligible for free school meals but are living in food insecurity. There are around 196,000 children who are eligible for free school meals in London but we know that there are around 400,000 children who are living in food insecurity, which means that they do not have access to an affordable meal. That means that there are around 200,000 children currently who are not being served by the system that is set up to support them.

When we think about that disproportionate impact, there are lots of individuals who are living either on the edges of society who the VCS is able to support but who have not been able to be able to avail themselves of some of the schemes. There are also those who have found themselves for the first time having to face the experience of losing their job and making a first claim or finding themselves having to ask for food and support for others. It has been a traumatic time for many individuals when you couple that with the high rates of infection and deaths that have been found within some of those communities. The Public Health Units review

suggested that if you were BAME your risk of dying from COVID was between 10% to 50% higher than anyone else's. All of that has combined to create quite a terrible time for some of our Londoners.

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): I am particularly struck by you saying that the number of children going into hospital has double in relation to children going into hospital with malnutrition. That is a strong signal to us. We have just been hearing about the assistance that the Government has been giving to individual Londoners but despite all of the work that has come from Government, one of the things that has come out of today is that there are still some cracks there in the very welcome assistance that has been given.

Susan Hall AM: In February the Marmot review *10 Years On* highlighted the huge health inequalities that exist for those earning below Living Wage. COVID-19 has obviously made this much worse. The Mayor pledged to make London a Living Wage accredited city but there are only 1,929 employers that are accredited out of the over one million businesses in London. What more are you doing to increase that number of employers?

Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): One of the best vehicles that we have - and I do not know if Rajesh [Agrawal, Deputy Mayor for Business] spoke about this when he was on the call earlier - is the Good Work Standard. It is one way of trying to get employers not only to pay their staff a good Living Wage but also to recognise that you need to provide a holistically positive working environment for people so that they want to work with you, that they feel that they are able to progress out of low pay, that they are able to access support from you in terms of health and wellbeing and also that you have a workforce that is representative of the city in which people live. There are 75 employers currently signed up for the Good Work Standard. It is about 200,000 people who are able to benefit. You are absolutely right there is more that we can still do. We have to continue to work with employers in London to get them to consider working towards signing up to the Good Work Standard, because it is incredibly important, now more than ever that as an employer you show your employees that you care about their wellbeing by paying them at least the London Living Wage.

As we know, once the furlough scheme does come to an end - and we suspect that the impact this will have on unemployment figures in London will be stark - it is important for those employers who are still operating within the city and who have been able to allow their members of staff to work from home but who have been enabled to remain viable, to continue to do so and not to let this be a moment at which they think about paying their staff members less. The pressure that this will place on many of the VCS sectors that I mentioned before, on the foodbanks and on the welfare system will be incredibly high if those employers were then to think that it would be better and easier for them to pay their workers less than the London Living Wage than to pay them at the London Living Wage or indeed more if they could do so.

Susan Hall AM: I understand that. Are you doing anything specifically around that at the moment or do you have any plans to do anything specifically around that?

Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): This is a question for Rajesh and his team because they are the ones who work on the Good Work Standard specifically, but I am always happy to work with Rajesh and his team to ensure that we are working as much as possible to encourage employers to pay their staff the London Living Wage. It is an important thing to do and I will always lend my support to any Deputy Mayor or anyone across City Hall who wants to work closely with employers to do that.

Susan Hall AM: Yes, because it is semi part of your remit when you look at that. You would be prepared to work with them or you are working with them?

Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): I am always working with Rajesh to do this work. A lot of the focus that we have, or that I have, is not just on working with the employers but it is also working with the employees. Often it is about trying to support the employees to have as much information at their disposal to be able to go to their employers to make requests for a promotion or to make sure that they are aware of their own rights at work. We have an Employment Rights Hub that we have set up that has been specifically targeted at making sure that all employees know what their rights are at work. We are very keen to make sure that we do that, and that work is very closely aligned with the Good Work Standard initiative as well so that employers know that we are as concerned about making sure that they are good employers as we are for making sure that employees have a good experience at work.

Susan Hall AM: Does that work as well with the mental and physical disabilities groups? Are you working with the volunteering sector on this around the whole work issues?

Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): Absolutely. Another thing that we think is incredibly important for wellbeing and good mental health is giving employees the opportunity to volunteer. We are very supportive of employer-assisted volunteering and we do encourage employers to allow their employees to have some time during the year where they can volunteer for local causes. It is important for them to feel that they are giving back and it is also important for some of those charities in the VCS that I mentioned before to avail themselves of the skills of those who are working either in their local vicinity or elsewhere who could help them to bolster the work that they are doing to support others. Therefore, yes, definitely support volunteering and also definitely support making sure that as part of the element of the Good Work Standard that focuses on wellbeing, that employers do all they can holistically to provide a working environment that supports their employees' health and wellbeing.

Susan Hall AM: How has that changed over the last few months? You were doing that before. What have you changed in the last few months? Obviously, everything has changed in London. What have you done specifically that is different, if I may ask that?

Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): Yes, it is a fair question. When it comes to employees' rights, we have readapted our Employment Rights Hub to make sure that it has frequently asked questions available on it if people have worries or concerns in relation to coronavirus. We have updated it so that they are aware of what they need to do with regards to sick leave, with regards to maternity pay. We have made sure that some of our new pages have been translated into 20 languages, because one of the additional elements that the COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare is that there are lots of individuals who do not have English as a first language and who were not able to get the support that they need to know how to keep themselves safe because a lot of the advice and guidance that they were receiving, either from Government or elsewhere, including the NHS, was not translated into their mother tongue. There were lots of people who found themselves at risk as a result. We translated as many pages as possible on our Employment Rights Hub into 20 languages. I recognise it is only 20. People speak about 300 [languages] here in London alone. Therefore, we have made an important start on trying to address that.

We have tried to make sure that we have updated all of our information, certainly on that side in relation to employment rights at work, to ensure that if you are worried about worker exploitation, for example, or if you are worried about whether or not you were previously able to be eligible for the CJRS or any of those sorts of questions, that you would be able to go to our sites and be able to get the information that you are seeking.

Susan Hall AM: What about the positive side? You are saying the rights and their entitlements and everything else. What about the encouraging side? What are you doing to encourage any of these groups to try to get jobs, and employers to employ them? We are in a completely different ballgame now and I imagine all your previous ways of working have to change. One of the things we have been trying to get out of you and the Deputy Mayor is what has changed. We all know, living in this world, it has changed drastically. What I am trying to get out of a couple of you is what methods have you changed to accommodate what we have all been going through, not just a way people can make sure they access their rights? I am sure the unions are brilliant at that. That is fundamental with what they are doing and they do it well. What are you doing to encourage employers to take on people with mental illnesses or disabilities, physical disabilities? What are you changing now that will help the situation as it is changed?

Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): One of the things that it is important to recognise is that employers themselves have faced a very challenging time during this pandemic. We have a programme that we run that has specifically been about trying to get those people who are furthest from the labour market into work. It is the Workforce Integration Network (WIN); you may have heard of it. It is specifically addressing the fact that if you are aged between 16 and 25 and you are black and you are male, your rate of unemployment is incredibly high in comparison to any other group. It is an unemployment rate of around 33% in comparison to a rate of 15% for your white male counterparts.

Prior to the pandemic we were working very closely with some of those sectors that were clearly growing: the tech sector and the construction sector. The construction sector we recognise is a sector that clearly had to stop operating during the lockdown. The tech sector is a sector that could continue to work because obviously you can work from home if you are working with that sector. One of the things that we clearly had to do to adapt - and many of the Deputy Mayors or others who you may have spoken to will probably same thing - is that we have had to adapt a lot of our programmes and bring them all on line, which for some people has been quite tricky.

For example, we have been working with a group of young men for whom digital access is really difficult. We have been running a series of interventions online with the employers who we have built up really strong relationships with who have built good working relationships with these young men. However, the young men themselves, unfortunately, during the lockdown, have not been able to access digital equipment in the same way that others may have been able to do so, because these are young men who are living in challenging circumstances.

We have been working with employers not only to get them to do this online work with us but also to get them to think about providing some support to those young men so that they can access Wi-Fi or broadband on their phones so that they can join a Zoom call, or, for those who do not have access to the equipment, speaking to the employers to see whether or not they would be amenable to providing some of these young men with equipment that will enable them to do that. It has been incredibly clear that there is an enormous digital divide that has opened up during this pandemic. Yes, we have brought a lot of our resources online; I have mentioned the Employment Rights Hub. We have provided of our additional support online for those who have been seeking advice about migration status, for example those seeking the EU Settlement Scheme. We have also tried to spend some time and money on printing leaflets and doing leaflet drops where we can because we recognise that not everyone has access to online. We have tried to adapt as much as possible.

Susan Hall AM: I am glad to hear you talking about employers, because they are the clue to getting more employees. If we take that scheme as an example, what is the name of that particular scheme you have just told us all about?

Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): That is the WIN.

Susan Hall AM: How many students or people are involved in that?

Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): I do not have the exact number because I think we have lost quite a few during the pandemic.

Susan Hall AM: How many did you have?

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): Can you send that to us afterwards, perhaps?

Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): I could send that to you afterwards, definitely.

Susan Hall AM: Approximately, just approximately?

Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): I do not have the approximate number. I would have to get that for you, Susan, I am sorry.

Susan Hall AM: Do you know how many employers were involved in that?

Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): No, not offhand I do not. Initially we were working with around ten to 20 construction organisations but then we were bringing on tech companies. Because we have gone through the current crisis, I am not sure now how many are still working with us. When I say we are trying to work with employers to get them to provide some of that tech, it is about trying to make sure that we can keep hold of some of the employers that we have built relationships with.

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): Send it to us after the meeting.

Susan Hall AM: Perhaps you will send us how many employers and how many employees. Can you tell me how much that particular scheme has cost?

Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): I do not have that.

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): Can you send that to us as well?

Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): Yes, I can.

Susan Hall AM: Can I ask how much?

Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): No, I do not have that figure to hand.

Susan Hall AM: If you give an example of how well you are doing on something, which all of us are interested in, it is interesting to know whether we are talking about five people, 50 people, 500 people, how many employers are involved in that --

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): Assembly Member Hall, we are running short of time now. Can we hurry up a bit?

Susan Hall AM: I do not care. And how much it is actually costing, because we must make sure, because that is our job, that money, taxpayers' money --

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): Yes, we must and the Deputy Mayor has agreed to send us that information. I am sorry, Assembly Member Hall, you have had 15 minutes on these questions and we know your view.

Susan Hall AM: Sorry, I thought that was what we were here for.

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): The Deputy Mayor has just agreed to send us the information and we are not going to badger her in the meeting now. Can we go back to my questions? We went over to the ones that you wanted to ask.

Susan Hall AM: I am asking a question and that is what we are here for, Chair.

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): Could I come back to the points that you were making on the wider basis rather than about the specific scheme? I know you have been holding these roundtables to try to get a qualitative feel for how the virus has been impacting on different communities across London. Do you know whether we have been collecting information at City Hall so that we can have a better quantitative understanding in terms of which of London's communities have had the worst impacts and are therefore most in need of support? Is that something that you are able to tell us? Is that information being collected?

Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): Absolutely, yes. During the pandemic we have been holding roundtables with many of the communities that have been adversely affected by the pandemic and we have also been conducting a weekly survey with organisations to find out how they are faring during the pandemic and what other sorts of things the people they have been working with or the communities they have been serving have been asking for. I have had around 16 roundtables so far, which have covered all of the faith organisations, all the faith groups, including Jewish groups, Muslim groups, Hindu, Sikh and Christian. I have also held roundtables with Filipino and South East Asian workers, who have talked both about their experience of race hate crime during the pandemic as well as the impact that COVID-19 has had on some of their healthcare workers, as well as Somali Londoners who have talked a lot about the way in which their inability to properly get the support that they need from the welfare system has impacted upon their household incomes.

We have done that work and also I mentioned that there is the fund that the Mayor contributed to, which is called the LCRF. As part of that fund we have been holding weekly surveys with all of the organisations that have either received funding or have applied for funding, to find out from them the sorts of issues that are important to them or have been important to them during the pandemic. They have told us that some of the biggest issues for them as organisations have been the things that we would accept. Funding and capacity and the ability to remain sustainable are some of the biggest issues. When they are talking about some of the

areas of demand that some of the Londoners that can come to them for support with, Londoners have come to them for support with mental health and they have come to them for support with regards to food and with regards to isolation.

We have been using that survey and our regular roundtables with community groups and organisations to try to get a barometer for how Londoners are faring during this pandemic and to make sure that the work that we are doing is directly targeted at need, and also that the LCRF that I mentioned, that when we have subsequent waves of funding that it is specifically targeted at the areas that Londoners are coming to them saying that they need advice, guidance and support for.

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): That sounds like a lot of data that you have been able to collect. Could you share that with us as a moving picture of what has been going on for Londoners from March? Also, when you were talking about the LCRF you said that 1,600 organisations have already benefited. Could we have a picture of how they spread in terms of the kinds of sectors that they are in? You also said that £23 million has been allocated already. It would be good to get a picture of how that is being allocated now. With waves in the future, are you in a position yet to say how that further £23 million that has not yet been allocated might be allocated to support organisations and to support those communities going forward? It would be helpful if we could have that information.

Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): Absolutely. We would be happy to provide some of that information. We are working on this with London funders and we would like to make sure that we are working with them and seeking their permission to share some of that information with you. I am sure that they would be happy for us to do that. Yes, I would be happy to share that information.

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): Thank you very much. I think it is slightly unreasonable to expect you to bring every last miniscule piece of information along to this session today. If you can follow that up and also the things that Assembly Member Hall was requesting, that would be very helpful.

Can I turn to Mike Brewer from the Resolution Foundation? We have been talking a lot with Deputy Mayor Debbie Weekes-Bernard about the role of the VCS, which is of course in and of itself a sector in which many people from BAME communities work. How sustainable is it for us as a city - for City Hall and also I know it has been the case for a lot of local authorities - to rely on charity and voluntary support in this kind of crisis and what can the Mayor and the Government do to prevent Londoners from needing to rely on the CVS in this way? It does seem to me that this has been a very large set of sticking plasters that we have had to produce at very short notice, because the gaps have been quite big, I feel, particularly for Londoners.

Mike Brewer (Chief Economist and Deputy Chief Executive, Resolution Foundation): With apologies, I do not have very much to say about that. If we look at the groups who are excluded from the Government measures, probably the most important one is migrants, who have no course to public funds. Obviously, they will be dependent on the voluntary sector. You are highlighting a much wider issue about what local Government can do. I am afraid, being an expert more on national Government policies, I do not have anything to say.

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): Laurie, would you like to add anything to that thought about whether or not the reliance on the charity and the voluntary sector is something that we perhaps we ought to be thinking beyond?

Laurie Heselden (Regional Policy and Campaigns Officer, TUC): That is a big question that could take a long time to answer, which you are not going to let me do so I will do a short version.

We believe at the TUC that the best organisations to deliver core public services are public sector bodies. Where public services leak outwards and there is outsourcing, that does lead to a situation where those services that we depend upon are indeed unsustainable. However, in a context of where core public services are provided by public sector bodies, there is still a role for the charity, community and voluntary sector to play. Having worked in the sector myself, I know that many voluntary and community bodies work on very slender cash flows. They cannot bridge easily from cash crisis to a cash crisis. Ordinarily in the past the problem has been where organisations have been dependent upon, for example, funds from the ESF and that being slow at being paid. What we have today is a far more acute crisis and if those organisations go down then we lose valuable assets in our communities.

On the whole, the amounts of money that organisations need to sustain themselves are not huge and I think it is very important that the Mayor and other funders do work collectively to ensure that there is a sustainable future for those groups. It is also true that at a community level those organisations do often provide services to those people who do not benefit from mainstream services very easily, such as migrants and refugees. Therefore, it is an important sector, it is very vulnerable and it needs to be sustained.

Léonie Cooper AM (Chair): Thank you. I would like to thank all of our guests for their contribution.