

Third User Group Report

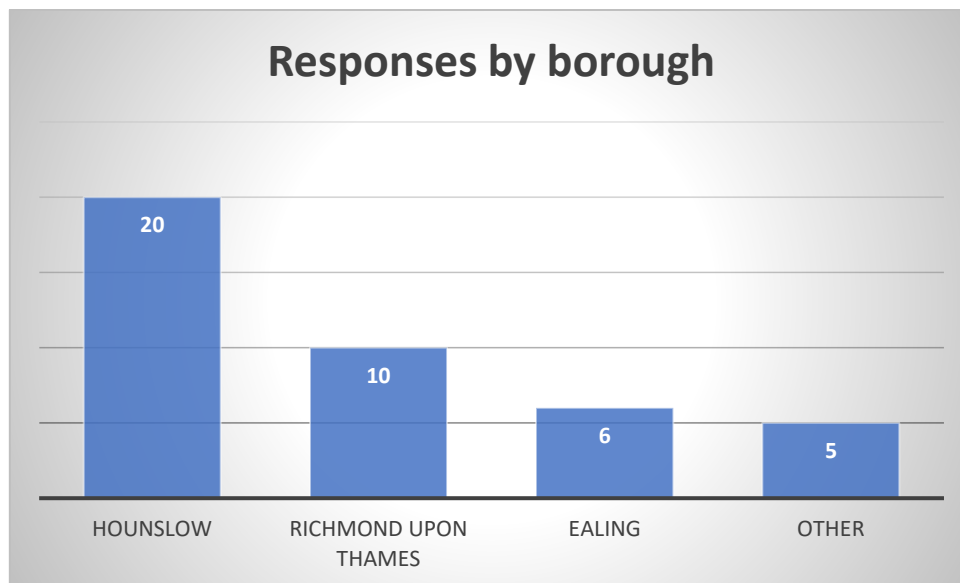
The Third User Group meeting was held on 31 March 2021. Five people, including one of the Trustees of the Mulberry Centre, were present. There were supposed to be six, but one person could not make it on the day due to illness. It is felt that these numbers were lower than ideal and some new initiatives are under consideration to invite more people to join.

The Questionnaire was the first one prepared and offered using Survey Monkey, which allows for greater flexibility in completing (as well as drafting and analysis of completed forms). The Questionnaire was completed by 42 users, following significant advertising to our registered users. This suggests that the changes due to the use of Survey Monkey were generally helpful to users and we will continue providing surveys in this way in future. With these numbers, there can be greater confidence in any conclusions drawn.

The subjects this month were asking for users' views on increasing the number of people responding to the User Engagement Questionnaire and canvassing their views on returning to the Centre once restrictions allow.

As usual questions one to four asked for people's sex, location, age range and ethnicity. 28 respondents were female (65%) and the age demographic showed a good spread throughout the ages with 12% being aged 19-44, 40% aged 45-64, 33% aged 65-74 and 16% being 75 year old or older.

While the majority of respondents were from Hounslow, with Ealing and Richmond boroughs well represented, entries were received from residents of Elmbridge, Harlow, Havering, Southwark and Brent. The graph below shows the geographical spread of Respondents.



With regard to ethnicity the majority identified as White (67%), then Asian or Asian British (17%) and Black/African/Caribbean/Black British representing 7% of respondents, 4% identifying as being of Mixed or Multiple origin and 4% being of Other ethnic group, with one Respondent not answering the question.

Question 5 asked whether people had responded to any of these surveys before. 42 users answered it, with the majority (79% or 33 people) saying that they hadn't. In the user group there was some confusion in the wording of the question, but it is felt that the question was sufficient clear to capture answers correctly in most cases.

Question 6 was answered by 34 people. The instructions were that only those answering “no” to the previous question should answer this one as the intention was to explore why they had not previously responded. The additional reply may be from the person who skipped the previous question.

The vast majority of respondents to question 6 (28 replies, 82% of the total) ticked that they had not heard about the Questionnaires or User Group before. This hopefully means that there is plenty of scope to increase numbers if we are able to contact and engage these people.

Open responses to the question were possible and each of the following reasons was given once: “I didn’t know how to complete the Questionnaire”, “Neither of the subjects interested me enough to respond”, “Meant to, but didn’t”, “I cannot recall previous ones”, “If I have responded before, I really don’t remember”, and “I’ve been unwell”.

Next we asked what would make them more likely to respond in future and 41 responses were recorded. Most popular was “seeing suggested changes happen” (27% or 11 responses) followed by “the results being publicised more” (17%), “longer response times” (15%). “Being able to respond by a different method” and “different subject covered in questionnaires” together garnered 7.3% of the responses, which were broken down again by the free responses of “not applicable- I would be likely to respond again if I were a service user”, “at the moment can’t be bothered”, “always pleased to assist in these matters”, “happy to participate”, “my interest in the Mulberry Centre is not based on the activities you offer, although I did avail myself of them some years ago”, “ask me to name which of the activities I enjoyed before the pandemic lead to lockdown restrictions: Art & Watercolour painting” and “having questionnaires like this one that are easy to fill in”.

The next question asked whether people were prepared to come to the centre when restrictions eased and we could re-open. 42 people (out of 43) answered this; 33 (79%) said yes and 10 said no (clearly someone answered both yes and no). Question 9 canvassed what precautions people wanted in place and 35 people answered it. Just under half (17 respondents) said being provided with a new, clean facemask before they entered the building would help, 16 people (45%) said classes being held in the open air, weather permitting and 13 (37%) said “only using the large rooms for treatments”.

Eight respondents gave their own ideas for things to support re-opening, which include “standard Covid testing should be adequate”, “I live 120 miles away”, “allowing those who are exempt from wearing masks to do so- without fear of judgement from others”, “I wear my own washable high-grade masks- and generally do not attend classes”, “Art & Watercolour sessions please invite clients to bring their own drawing & painting materials. Provide hand sanitizer gel & hand washing place”, “to still have zoom groups running for those who can’t attend for whatever reason” and “sanitising facilities and social distancing to protect each other.”

Question 10 explored the people who gave the answer “No” to question 8, saying they wouldn’t come back to the centre. Answers included “I think virtual works well, saves a lot of unnecessary time and travel”, “it’s only because of my commute, and my circumstances, that the present options are more practical for me”, “extra cleaning of surfaces, chairs etc after each use. Automatic doors so no need to touch door handles. Temperature checks on every body entering etc.”, “continue to run the zoom groups”, “not at the moment” and “I’m largely recovered and likely to return to work once Covid dies down so unlikely to use the centre’s services for much longer.” Clearly there is still concern and some people favour offering a blended option even when the centre is open.

This concurred with the user group, who all answered the questionnaire before the meeting.

In the user group, we had an active discussion regarding any blended offering versus maintaining groups online and the views expressed were similar to the points made above. One participant said that she had had it expressed to her that people were allowed not more than six treatments and felt that, rather than having a hard and fast rule in these matters, it should be considered on a case by case basis. This user was currently undergoing a further series of Chemotherapy treatments and so the intervention was not well timed, nor was the motivation behind any policy explained adequately.

Conclusion

42 completed questionnaires were received, which is a significant increase in the last survey, where seven people completed questionnaires. This significant improvement was probably down to a change in the advertising and design, moving it online so that people could access and complete it remotely. There were enough responses for robust conclusions to be drawn.

Although the standard question regarding ethnicity, age range etc., are included in every Questionnaire, it is clear that we have a good demographic range answering our surveys. It is also clear that some people are still resistant to returning to the centre and the results of this survey would seem to support the last survey, with a preference amongst some users to either retain our remote offering exclusively or offer a blended system where some people attend in person and others attend remotely. The user group expressed some concern about rules for people who hadn't been vaccinated, whether through choice or for medical reasons, and this is one of the issues under consideration for re-opening the centre.

The new way of completing the questionnaire (using Survey Monkey) seems to have worked well. There were more respondents this time than last and the comments in the User Group were backed up by one respondent, who commented on the ease of completion. We will continue to prepare and offer questionnaire using Survey Monkey.

Clearly some people want to know that their views are being listened to and what is being done as a result of their input. All reports have been placed on the website and I feel that this should continue with the new website. Following publication of the First User Group report, it was amended to include a section entitled "You said, we did", which could be continued if there are suggestion points that can be shown to be acted upon.

There was some discussion in the user group regarding whether to include "cancer" in our name. Opinion was rather split, between those in favour and those against, but it would seem to have been answered by the new logo.

Presented by Tom Stockton