National Emergencies Trust Coronavirus Appeal Evaluation

Phase 1 Report

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Contents

Table of Figures

Table of Tables

Introduction

Following the tragic incidents at Grenfell Tower and the Manchester Arena, the UK Government and civil society developed a series of plans to help create a more enhanced and integrated approach to respond to the need of both people and communities after a national emergency. One aim was to create a single point of contact for all charitable giving, gifts, and donations to be processed, analysed, and shared with those most in need. In response to this the National Emergencies Trust was created to *"collaborate with charities and other bodies to raise and distribute money and support victims at the time of a domestic disaster."* (National Emergencies Trust, 2020). The National Emergencies Trust was established as an organisation in November 2019 expecting to activate on average every 2.4 years when a national domestic emergency occurred. It was one of the first UK-based organisations to launch an appeal in response to the Covid-19 pandemic a mere four months later, on 18 March 2020. The pandemic represents the largest and most long-lasting state of emergency in peacetime in the UK. The human toll ((175,256 people with Covid-19 on their death certificate and 15.9 million cases as of 24 January 2022, GOV.UK), the impact on societal functioning and uncertainty around its evolution was 'unprecedented'.

As a learning organisation dedicated to developing the best way to help those affected by disasters the National Emergencies Trust had committed to evaluate its first appeal to ensure lessons could be learnt for its own processes and actions and for the wider voluntary and community (VCS) and philanthropic sector in the UK and globally. As a trusted academic partner, Nottingham Trent University (NTU) was selected to undertake this evaluation, securing funding from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) to complete a two-phase evaluation of the National Emergencies Trust's first appeal.

This report outlines the findings from Phase 1 of the National Emergencies Trust Coronavirus Appeal evaluation. Phase 1 was designed to address decision-making around the:

- Relevance;
- Efficiency;
- Effectiveness;
- Sustainability of the appeal.

This evaluation has a particular focus on processes used to identify community need and groups, the evidence base used, how funds were allocated, the processes used in communications, the structures used to facilitate decision-making and finally the way these enabled the National Emergencies Trust to determine the effectiveness of this action.

The overall aim of the evaluation is to create a detailed picture of the National Emergencies Trust's Coronavirus Appeal (Phase 1) and its impact (Phase 2), helping the National Emergencies Trust and others in UK and other national governments, the VCS, philanthropy sector, disaster and emergency professionals, and academics to understand how it operated and how it supported the UK effort to tackle the impacts of the pandemic.

This report is written and presented with the acknowledgement that disaster management requires working with unknowns. Disaster philanthropy sits within this context of statutory response, voluntary and community response, charitable organisations, and other philanthropic organisations. The following quite exemplifies the challenging nature of this context:

> *"Arguably, there is no right way to distribute charitable funds in disaster situations; rather there are difficult choices with varying costs and benefits" (Leat, 2018; Distributing Funds in Disaster, LET)*

Within this context and the unprecedented scale of the pandemic, the National Emergencies Trust's staff team, trustees, and associated volunteers worked tirelessly to raise in excess of £97m of funding to support need across the UK during a time of national emergency. As the first appeal of a new organisation the scale of the pandemic presented a series of challenges, and a need to rapidly evolve. This evaluation is intended to support the ongoing development of the National Emergencies Trust and the broader sector to ensure leading practice is shared and lessons acted upon.

Purpose and scope of report

This evaluation aimed to assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of the National Emergencies Trust's first appeal in response to the Coronavirus Appeal relative to its objectives, to ensure accountability and transparency. The evaluation was funded by the ESRC, and delivered by NTU, working closely with the National Emergencies Trust. The evaluation comprises two phases, with Phase 1 creating a detailed picture of the National Emergencies Trust's Coronavirus Appeal and Phase 2 assessing its impact on organisations, communities, and individuals who were supported by the appeal.

This report is the culmination of the work undertaken in Phase 1. Specifically, the aim of Phase 1 was to evaluate the National Emergencies Trust's progress since the decision to activate, to identify and feedback key learnings to stakeholders, and inform planning for future appeals. As such it focusses on core processes within the National Emergencies Trust itself. The specific evaluation objectives for Phase 1 were to:

1. Objectively evaluate the National Emergencies Trust's decision-making processes during its first appeal in response to the Covid-19 pandemic
2. Identify areas of good and leading practice, and
3. Make recommendations where processes may be improved to ensure that those in most need are able to access appropriate support at times of national disaster.

Within these broad objectives, the evaluation focussed on the following criteria:

- the processes used to **allocate funds** to and **determine the effectiveness** of donations on relevant community groups and for achieving the National Emergencies Trust's objectives
- the processes used to **identify community need and groups** and the **evidence base used** to inform decision making
- the processes used in **communications** and **building relationships** with the public, community groups, vulnerable individuals, partner organisations, other charitable organisations, and local government bodies
- the processes used and structures put in place to support and facilitate **decision making** and **delivery** of the National Emergencies Trust's objectives.

Phase 1 of the evaluation comprised in-depth analysis of minutes from meetings from eight committees and the board of trustees that took place over the lifetime of the National Emergencies Trust's Coronavirus Appeal alongside reviews of over 400 National Emergencies Trust policy and appeal documents and 29 in-depth interviews with current and previous staff and volunteers of the National Emergencies Trust. The evaluation has been overseen by a steering group comprising colleagues from academia, the National Emergencies Trust board and staff, UK Community Foundation (UKCF), and independent experts, with weekly or bi-weekly meetings with a core member of National Emergencies Trust to facilitate the evaluation. Interim findings have been fed back through presentations to the board of trustees and staff team at the National Emergencies Trust and has informed a report to facilitate a National Emergencies Trust strategy day.

Findings

Evaluation of data from committee minutes, policy documents, and in-depth interviews yielded four key themes that are used to structure this report, with the specific learning and recommendations drawn out in each of these areas. These are:

A. Allocation of Funds
B. Identification of Need
C. Communications, Fundraising, and Building Relationships
D. Governance, Organisational Infrastructure, and Decision Making

The final section of the report shows how this learning maps onto the above criteria used to determine the scope of the evaluation in Phase 1. The themes and the sub-themes within them can support the National Emergencies Trust to learn and adapt to future appeals, facilitating the development and refinement of its decision-making processes and structural and strategic development.

Key Recommendations

The key recommendations from each section of the report are summarised below.

Allocation of Funds

Determine flexible allocation methods: As a disaster progresses, those impacted, and the nature of the needs experienced will vary. As new data are collected and analysed, people or needs that have not been supported may also be revealed. Developing processes which prompt the consideration of when and how to adapt the allocation methodology will facilitate the National Emergencies Trust in ensuring that funding reaches those in greatest need throughout the lifetime of the disaster.

Consider distribution partner function: Distribution partners will each have unique functions and reach with the communities they serve. At times of disaster, some distribution partners may be better suited to addressing and reducing the impact of the disaster on their communities, and this may change as the disaster – and therefore disaster needs – evolve and progress from immediate response, stabilisation, through to short-, medium-, and long-term recovery, and resilience. Developing formal processes which consider the beneficiary groups and the organisational purpose will facilitate the National Emergencies Trust in selecting distribution partners who are best placed to provide disaster relief in response to changing needs.

Develop beneficiary involvement framework: The National Emergencies Trust identified the need to amplify the voices of marginalised and underfunded groups during its first appeal, and as a result set up the Survivor's Advisory Forum and the Equity Scrutiny Group. Including intended beneficiaries in conversations and decisions around allocation helps to develop an understanding about the nature and extent of need that may not otherwise be possible. Developing a more enhanced framework for beneficiary involvement will facilitate the National Emergencies Trust in mobilising this support; in knowing how and when it wishes to benefit from those voices, and how to identify and include these groups during the appeal.

Identification of Need

Ascertain who is most suited to identifying need: As the National Emergencies Trust's identity and purpose have evolved through the Coronavirus Appeal; its position and expertise have also evolved. This leaves an opportunity for the National Emergencies Trust to reconsider the extent to which it is necessary to have centralised responsibility for identifying those who have been impacted at times of disaster, and for whom funding would relieve some of that impact. The National Emergencies Trust's distribution partner organisations may have greater capability, capacity, and resources to identify unmet needs during the initial and later stages of a disaster, depending on the nature of the incident. At times of disaster, ascertaining this suitability and utilising its network of partners and their expertise will facilitate the National Emergencies Trust in effectively understanding the nature of the needs of the disaster.

Consider a flexible policy of distribution: Through the appeal, the National Emergencies Trust has worked alongside voluntary and charity sector organisations (e.g., Community Foundations, the National Emergencies Trusts' National Funding Partners) to distribute funds to those in need. These organisations have various strengths and may each be suited to supporting people affected by disaster at different times, in different demographics, and different disasters. In response to this the National Emergencies Trust developed three distinct allocation and distribution models during the appeal in real time. Adopting a formalised and planned flexible policy would mean that the National Emergencies Trust could harness its evidenced strengths in flexibility and agility to respond in a bespoke way that was most effective in each situation.

Decide and communicate early: Inefficiencies in identifying need arose when different organisations were each attempting to identify it, and when it was unclear where responsibility for need identification lay. Deciding an approach for identifying need early and communicating clearly with all involved will facilitate the timely and efficient distribution of funding to those with greatest unmet need at the time, without placing undue load on key personnel, and without creating duplication of effort.

Incorporate intersectional needs: The most vulnerable at times of disaster are most frequently those with intersectional needs, who may already be at greater risk of impact, and whose needs may be more complex. These needs may be harder to identify and therefore have a greater likelihood of being missed from disaster relief efforts. By incorporating intersectional needs into need identification frameworks, the National Emergencies Trust will increase the likelihood of ensuring that the funding reaches those with the greatest needs at times of disaster.

Develop data expertise: Effective modelling of needs requires data literacy and statistical skills to be available throughout an appeal. These skills should include understanding the types of data that can be drawn upon, and how to ascertain meaningful answers about disaster needs from complex and messy data. This enables need-modelling and allocation formulae to be updated as the nature and impacts of a disaster unfold. By integrating this data expertise availability from the activation of an appeal through to its conclusion, the National Emergencies Trust will be better placed to develop nuanced understandings of need and flexible allocation formulae where required.

Communications, Fundraising, and Building Relationships

Continue to build wide and diverse networks: Identifying and understanding the experiences of people impacted by disaster can often be enhanced by the incorporation of people with related background and experiences, who are well placed to feed into decision making where appropriate. The National Emergencies Trust developed its model of engaging with beneficiaries and expanded the diversity of its trustees throughout the Coronavirus Appeal. It also included processes for drawing on and immersing more diverse networks in the board of trustees and in decision making processes. By continuing to develop and incorporate these processes, the National Emergencies Trust will increase its ability to understand and identify need from diverse and historically marginalised people across diverse socio-demographic and geographic groups.

Consider fundraising approach: The evolution of the fundraising and individual giving trends in recent years highlights that The National Emergencies Trust should continue to reflect on the way it works in this space. The Coronavirus Appeal raised c.40% of its funding from corporate donors, c.20% from major donors, c.20% from government, and c.20% from the public To some extent this spread of funds across donor types was unexpected but is reflective of the scale of the pandemic and a national level emergency attracting giving from high profile organisations.. The National Emergencies Trust's successful fundraising campaign was in large part due to its successful relationships with major donors (especially corporate and trusts & foundations), Formally incorporating these opportunities will enhance the National Emergencies Trust's ability to successfully fundraise in subsequent appeals and mitigate some of the competition for public donations with other charitable organisations that emerged during this first appeal.

Develop a system for sustainable relationships: When volunteers and staff with responsibility for relationship management move on from the organisation, there is a risk that the relationships that have been developed become severed across the National Emergencies Trust, with donors, and with funding partners. By sharing relationship management and stewardship across relevant staff and introducing a process for transferring relationship knowledge, the National Emergencies Trust will increase the likelihood of developing lasting relationships with stakeholders.

Governance, Organisational Infrastructure and Decision Making

Introduction of decision log: At times of disaster, decisions are made fluidly and in response to information that may change rapidly; this means that the nature and rationale for decisions may be lost, which often results in an inconsistent or disorganised approach as personnel transition into and out of roles and relevant details are forgotten. Introducing a decision log, with brief rationale for decisions will provide the National Emergencies Trust with a resource that can be consulted when making subsequent decisions, and that can be used in the National Emergencies Trust's drive to increase transparency of its operations.

Onboarding staff: The National Emergencies Trust evolved its team structure as it expanded its operations during the first appeal, which meant that it was recruiting for roles that were embryonic in nature, and staff spent a lot of time understanding and developing the parameters and responsibilities of the role. Introducing a formal onboarding process and clear role description and responsibilities would mean that staff are able to join the team confidently and make an efficient contribution to the team from the outset.

Map responsibilities across and between departments: Without formal department responsibilities and frameworks for feeding into each other, departments may inadvertently duplicate effort or miss relevant information when making decisions and recommendations at times of disaster. Introducing a formal process of logging responsibilities and co-operation will reduce the potential for such redundant effort.

Develop systems to evaluate effectiveness of allocation methods: Determining the efficacy of allocation methods requires an ongoing internal evaluation of how and where funds are being used, and cross-mapping to determine whether any groups or needs are better aided through different distribution routes. Whilst a number of reactive assessments were noted during the appeal, we recommend that the National Emergencies Trust develops a process for evaluating the allocation method suitability at agreed timepoints. This would mean that the National Emergencies Trust can quickly decide when and if to adapt the allocation methodology through an appeal in response to developing or changing circumstances.

Communicate mission: Effective strategic decision making is impaired when staff and trustees have diverging understandings of the appeal's aims. Furthermore, without a clear understanding the team may operate in an unfocussed way and may inadvertently engage in mission creep. Communicating with the National Emergencies Trust's staff, trustees, volunteers, and secondees about the appeal's aims will facilitate the team in working well together towards a shared goal; where the appeal aims change as the National Emergencies Trust responds flexibly and agilely. Communicating clearly about how and why the appeal aims are evolving will facilitate the team in collectively responding to the emerging needs.

Part One: The National Emergencies Trust and the Covid-19 Pandemic

A. The National Emergencies Trust

> *"… an original vision of the learning from 2017 of a sector coming together to collaborate better…. to do things better both operationally [in terms of distribution of funding] and in terms of fundraising [better co-ordination]."*

The National Emergencies Trust was launched in November 2019 in response to calls to enable the UK voluntary and community sector to better respond to disaster and crisis incidents of national significance after several high-profile events in 2017, including the Manchester Arena, Westminster Bridge, London Bridge, Finsbury Park and Parsons Green terror attack and the Grenfell Tower fire.

The public response to these incidents through donations enabled largely by online giving platforms generated large sums of funding raised by individuals who had little knowledge or experience of which VCS organisations would be best placed to manage and distribute these gifts. Correspondingly, several reports emerging after these incidents (Deeming, 2018; Leat, 2018; Plastow, 2018) found that those local charities and voluntary groups receiving such funds and responding to the immediate and longer-term needs of the communities affected found themselves overwhelmed, delivering services outside of their core missions and needing further guidance and support themselves, that at the time was difficult to source and access.

In 2017 following these incidents the Charity Commission sought to convene a group of organisations experienced in disaster response to identify ways in which the VCS could better respond to disaster. This led to the establishment of the National Emergencies Trust in 2019. The role of this new organisation was to provide a coordinated, national point for public donations and fundraising, with the corresponding skills, expertise, and capacity to ensure that any raised funds would be effectively and equitably distributed to individuals and voluntary and community organisations responding to disasters of national significance in a coordinated and well-managed way.

The National Emergencies Trust's response to the Covid-19 pandemic represented its first appeal and a test of this new model.

B. The Coronavirus Appeal

The National Emergencies Trust activated for the first time in response to the Covid-19 pandemic a mere four months after its establishment, with the launch of the Coronavirus Appeal on 17 March 2020. The scale of the pandemic has frequently been referred to as 'unprecedented' both in terms of geographical reach and its impact on the wider UK population.

Between 18 March 2020 and 28 February 2021, the National Emergencies Trust triggered its systems and processes to support the effort to tackle the short-, medium-, and long-term effects of the Covid-19 pandemic that swept across the UK. During the appeal the initial team of 2.5 staff and 12 trustees mobilised their networks alongside engagement with external communications contractors and voluntary support organisations to provide surge capacity. The National Emergencies Trust grew to an estimated team of 109 at the peak of the appeal with volunteers helping across a range of roles and with varying degrees of temporal engagement.

During this time of uncertainty for the UK, the National Emergencies Trust operated through a series of defined committees to evaluate and support day to day operational decisions with the Board of Trustees having final say on strategy and on all grant allocations. Over the course of the appeal the National Emergencies Trust recorded minutes from 162 committee and board meetings.

The National Emergencies Trust raised in excess of £97 million to help alleviate some of the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic across the UK, distributing funding through the national network of Community Foundations and a selected network of National Funding Partners (NFPs). Between March 2020 and March 2021, 13,286 grants were given to 10,662 VCS organisations, supporting those with differing, altering, and developing need across the course of the pandemic. This was achieved through both the onward distribution of grants via Community Foundations and later in the appeal through Comic Relief and direct distribution to nine NFPs.

Using the National Emergencies Trust's reporting criteria, the chart below outlines in graphic form where Community Foundations distributed funding to through the appeal. It highlights the difference in spend volumes of the 10 categories through time including the difference in spend on food and essentials relative to different services, from the beginning of the appeal. Where a line is horizontal (or near horizontal), this shows that little to new additional money has been spent on that service since the line goes horizontal; for example, there has been very little spending on information and advice, urgent mental health support services, and social isolation since October 2020, where food and essentials and general mental health support services continued to be supported through this time.

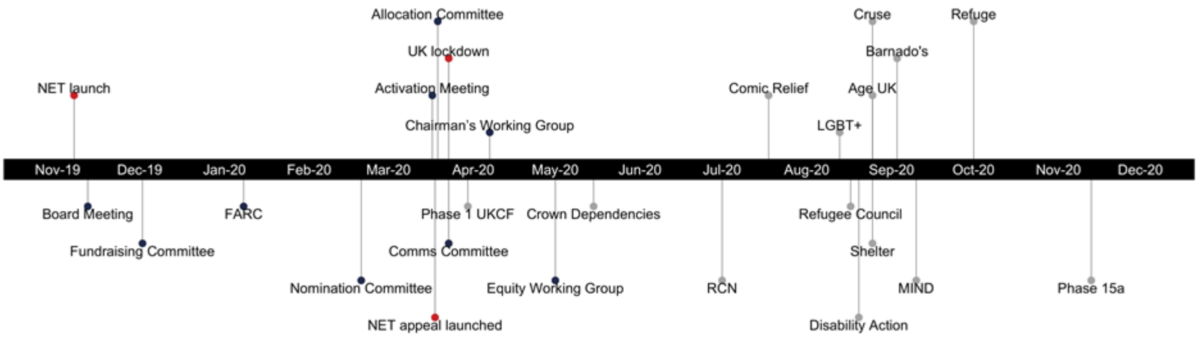

Figure 1: Timeline showing key National Emergencies Trust dates (red), the first committee meetings (navy) and the first distributions to distribution partners (grey)

C. The NTU Appeal Evaluation and Methodology

Since its formation and launch, colleagues at Nottingham Trent University (NTU) with extensive experience of researching disasters and emergencies offered academic research support to the team who developed the National Emergencies Trust. As a new learning organisation, the National Emergencies Trust committed to conduct an evaluation of the first appeal to ensure leading practice was shared and lessons were fed back into the organisation's strategic and operational systems.

Once the National Emergencies Trust activated in March to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, NTU colleagues began to design an evaluation proposal to share with the National Emergencies Trust's staff and trustees. This proposal was agreed and NTU secured external funding from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) for a two- phase evaluation of the National Emergencies Trust's first activation and the subsequent appeal. The NTU team and the National Emergencies Trust have worked together to shape an evaluation that will inform future activations and wider learning. This open and collaborative relationship has continued through the project with a high degree of trust and candour shown by the National Emergencies Trust colleagues, trustees, and volunteers. This helped ensure insights were shared and a collaborative relationship was created to support the National Emergencies Trust to learn and adapt.
The NTU evaluation team maintained regular dialogue with the National Emergencies Trust's staff through a dedicated evaluation manager who has facilitated access to the National Emergencies Trust material, staff, trustees and partners. The NTU team held fortnightly meetings (weekly during the earlier stages of the evaluation) with this staff member to discuss the needs and possibilities of the project. These processes have ensured lessons and insights can be fed back to the National Emergencies Trust in real time and

that data requests can be managed at speed.

The National Emergencies Trust's record keeping showed a clear desire to be transparent about processes and decisions in the heat of an emergency of a magnitude that required a huge increase in scale of their operation. To ensure the project creates robust findings an advisory board of independent academics, independent practitioners, and National Emergencies Trust staff, trustees and stakeholders was established to act as an independent critical friend and oversee and guide the direction of the project. This advisory board met every 6-8 weeks during Phase 1 and through Phase 2 every quarter.

To support this evaluation the National Emergencies Trust has collaborated with the NTU team to model a process of knowledge co-production and exchange. In doing do, they have provided the NTU team with access to all minutes, process documentation, terms and organisational charts. The National Emergencies Trust additionally facilitated access to staff, trustees, volunteers, and partners to support the study as interviewees and respondents to surveys. This has enabled the evaluation to draw accurately from the collective experiences and robust sources of data in analysing the appeal and drawing recommendations.

This cooperation has been essential in supporting the evaluation and the transparency, honesty, and effort of the National Emergencies Trust staff and volunteers during the evaluation has been commendable and extremely valuable.

The collaborative approach outlined above has allowed the National Emergencies Trust to incorporate learning into the continuing assessment and development of the organisation's overall and ongoing strategy, operations and governance. Interim findings have been fed back through presentations to the board of trustees and staff team at the National Emergencies Trust and has informed several reports to facilitate the refinement and improvement of the National Emergencies Trust strategy.

Over the course of the evaluation, the NTU team has:

- analysed 162 minutes and accompanying documents from the committee and board meetings during the lifetime of the appeal. A further 11 sets of minutes and accompanying documents prior to the appeal have been analysed for context. The National Emergencies Trust has provided access to 420 appeal and policy documents, including reports, proposals, policy and governance documents, analysis of which has further aided the evaluation of the National Emergencies Trust's first activation

- conducted 29 interviews with past and current members of the National Emergencies Trust staff, trustees, volunteers, and key stakeholders
- completed a volunteer and secondee survey with 10 additional former and current appeal volunteers
- analysed UKCF's reporting data using a quantitative corpus analysis of Community Foundation-reported grant descriptions to explore and validate beneficiary groups and services from qualitative descriptions on the purposes of grants

The key findings from Phase 1 are outlined in the remainder of this report to provide insights to the National Emergencies Trust as it moves past its first appeal and begins to plan for future appeals.

Part Two: Phase 1 Criteria Findings

A. Allocation of Funds

Pre-launch the National Emergencies Trust policy documents outline that they originally envisaging distributing any funds raised through what is termed as *"an organisation best placed to undertake grant making in an effective, timely and fully accountable way."* (The National Emergencies Trust, Nov 2019, p.4). The National Emergencies Trust identified these organisations as one or more Community Foundations[1] operating in the area in which a disaster would occur. Grants would consist of gifts to individuals affected by disaster and small local organisations delivering disaster response services to such individuals (The National Emergencies Trust, July 2019, p.3).

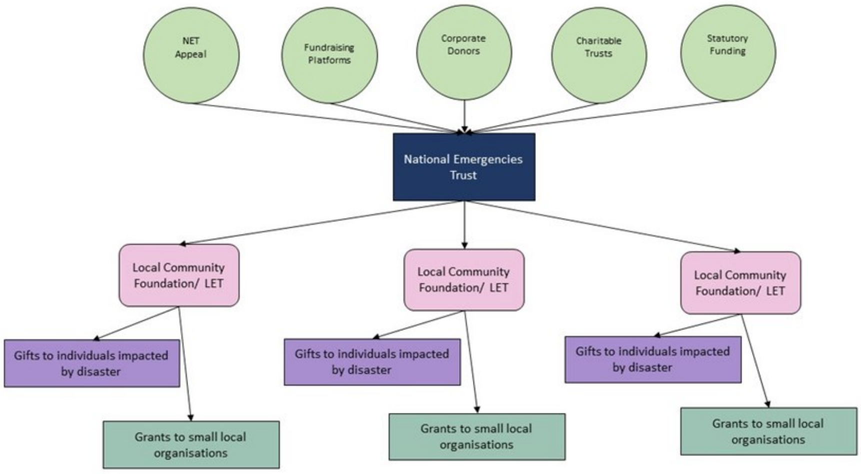

Figure 2: Pre-Coronavirus Appeal the National Emergencies Trust Grant Allocation Model

A clear narrative, however, can be identified in the minutes, accompanying documents and interviews from the onset of the Coronavirus Appeal that the National Emergencies Trust would need to develop an alternative distribution model due to the geographical impact and length of the crisis. The National Emergencies Trust quickly re-evaluated its approach and developed a framework to reach as many affected communities and individuals as possible (as identified through the allocation formula discussed in greater detail in Part 2b). This section outlines how this framework developed and adapted over the course of the appeal, and considers the driving principles behind this development, as well as the relative validity, impact, and usefulness of these in enabling the National Emergencies Trust to meet its developing objectives over the course of the Coronavirus Appeal.

1: Community Foundations can be defined as "independent philanthropic organisation[s] working in a specific geographic area which, over time, builds up a permanent collection of endowed funds contributed from many donors, provides services to those donors, and makes grants and undertakes community leadership activities to address a wide variety of current and long-term needs in its service area." (Feurt, 1999 cited in Jung et.al., 2013, p. 411).

At the point of activation for the Coronavirus Appeal on 18 March 2020, the National Emergencies Trust recognised that the impact of the pandemic would reach across the UK. As such the National Emergencies Trust, in consultation with UKCF, the centralised networking and membership body for Community Foundations in the UK, developed an allocation framework and agreement to enable distribution of funding to every Community Foundation across the UK, including Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Within this framework the National Emergencies Trust would allocate funding to UKCF who acted as administrator for the distribution of funds to all Community Foundations across the UK who would then provide specific grants to local community groups delivering Covid-19 response services in each UK region, as below:

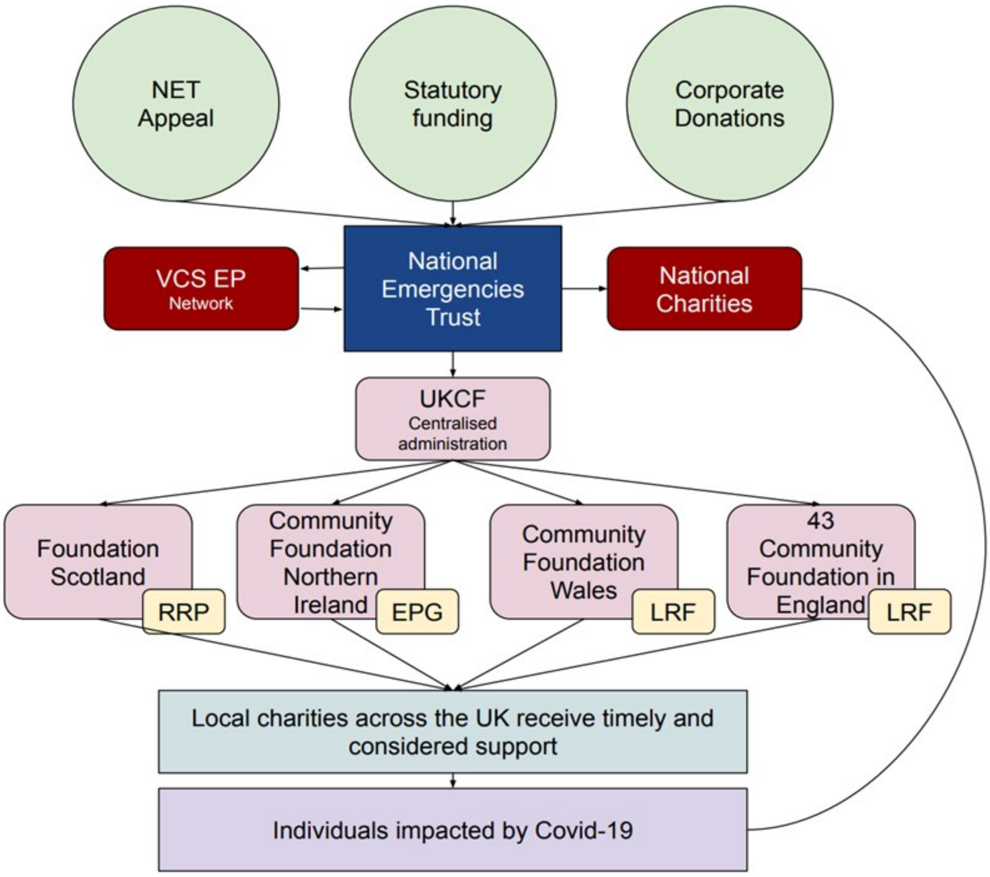

Figure 3: Proposed Coronavirus Appeal Allocation Model at Activation on Wednesday 18 March 2020 (Image from: the National Emergencies Trust Covid-19 Activation Committee Call PPT, 18 March 2020, for reference, RRP is the acronym for Regional Resilience Partnership, EPG is the acronym for Emergency Preparedness Group and LRF is the acronym for Local Resilience Forum)

It is worth noting that this model provides for distribution of funds to national charities, as well as the organisations within the Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership (VCSEP)[2]. However, formal arrangements to facilitate this distribution were not in place at the point of activation. A decision was therefore made early in the appeal that the

The VCSEP is a partnership of local and national voluntary and community sector organisations, formed in response to learnings from several national crises in 2017. It was recognised that a more coordinated response amongst the voluntary and community sector was needed when responding to an emergency and the Emergencies Partnership is supporting the sector to make this a reality. The Emergencies Partnership provides space and opportunity for 230 local and national voluntary and community organisations to come together and build connections that will ensure support reaches those in need more effectively (VCSEP, 2020)

UKCF/Community Foundation distribution model would be the National Emergencies Trust's primary grant-making approach.

In terms of developing the distribution model, it is evident that the length and breadth of the impact of the crisis could not have been envisaged. As one interview participant notes:

> *"The nature of the organisation [the National Emergencies Trust] was set up with a general expectation that any emergency it would be dealing with, would have you know, some limit on it".*

Moreover, wider evidence emerged as the disaster progressed of groups and communities that were both impacted by the virus and the impacts of lockdown to a greater extent, as well as often being "left out" or excluded from some of the packages of help and support that were provided more widely, potentially including those provided by the National Emergencies Trust and its distribution network of Community Foundations. The National Emergencies Trust responded to this emerging evidence by actively seeking to identify and fill gaps in provision through consultation with their own inhouse Equity Working Group and then the Equity Scrutiny Group, whilst working with UKCF incoming grant data to conduct a gap analysis of distribution to causes and groups across the network.

What emerges is a perception of the limited capacity of Community Foundations' onward distribution networks to reach these wider communities and groups, as well as report back on the communities and causes being served. This is coupled with a developing understanding within the National Emergencies Trust team that certain longer-term needs, such as the mental health impact of lockdown or increased potential for domestic violence may not be adequately provisioned for through the same network. As noted in the discussion of data collection and use in part 2b, these perceptions are driven largely by understandings of anecdotal evidence and are tricky for the National Emergencies Trust to quantify in real terms with the data and data analysis skills available to them. This leads to much debate and discussion both within the minutes and interviews with the National Emergencies Trust's staff, trustees, volunteers, and key stakeholders. However, the National Emergencies Trust moves towards expanding its distribution network during Summer 2020 to include 10 NFPs (as provisioned for in the original activation distribution model) – three of which provide onward distribution of grants and nine of which provide direct helpline services to targeted beneficiary groups, as shown in Figure 4.

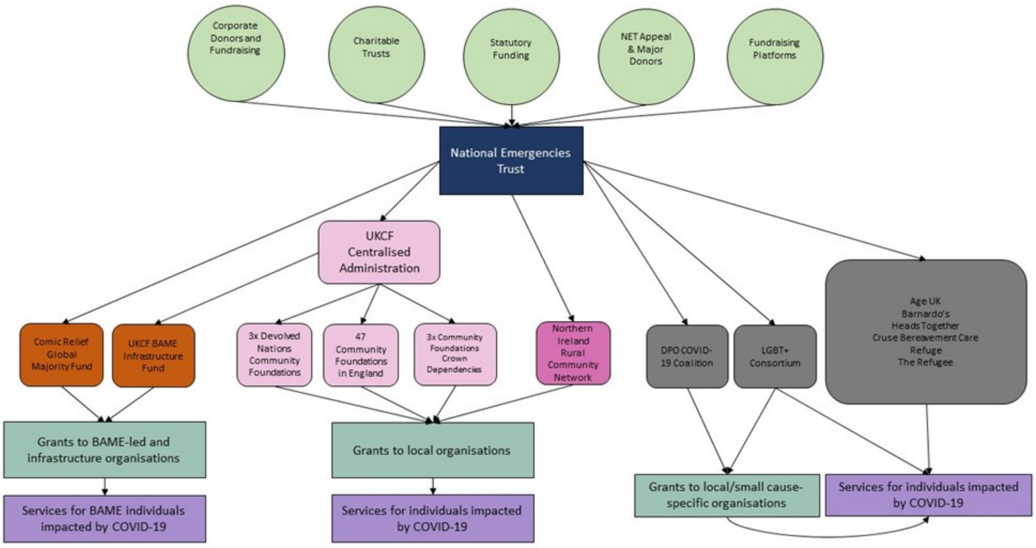

Figure 4: The National Emergencies Trust Coronavirus Appeal Grant Allocation Model, February 2021

Grant-making Models

Within this emerging distribution framework, the National Emergencies Trust develops three clear approaches to allocating funding, including:

1. The allocation of block grants to individual Community Foundations via the UKCF to enable local distribution of funds to groups across a large geographic area to "where the need is greatest".
2. Allocation of specific responsive funding to the UKCF BAME[3] Infrastructure Fund and Comic Relief Global Majority Fund for onward distribution to BAME infrastructure and led organisations in response to calls to the National Emergencies Trust, the UKCF and other grant-givers to actively address potential inequitable distribution of charitable and philanthropic funds to these groups and communities.
3. Allocation of grants directly to national charities and consortia (the NFPs) that have been pre-identified and invited to apply for the National Emergencies Trust funds as gaps in distribution become evident.

There is much discussion in the minutes across all committees, as well as reflection by interview participants as to the relative value and efficacy of each of the three allocation approaches outlined above, but it is unclear if and how this is or should be resolved. One interview participant captures these discussions when asked about the differing allocation models as follows:

3. The acronym BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) is commonly used in the UK to refer to people of historically marginalised ethnicities. The evaluation team has adopted this term throughout the report to refer the National Emergencies Trust's BAME Infrastructure Fund

"Now, this gets into a bigger point that it would be really good to explore a little bit, around kind of the role of National Emergencies Trust, the role of UKCF, and ... where you want decision making to be taken in an emergency. How centralised it is and how de-centralised. Essentially that is the fundamental question around how you set these [agreements] up. And is that the model which you choose? You can do either, but there's kind of trade-offs in both."

This interview participant highlights further the need for the National Emergencies Trust to clarify the role it seeks to play within voluntary sector and philanthropic responses to emergencies that are identified further in this report when determining its future approaches to grant-making, allocation, and distribution. The report will now explore the three different approaches in more depth starting with distribution through Community Foundations.

1. Community Foundations

The value of the Community Foundation network in providing a nationwide, flexible, and responsive distribution mechanism was recognised by almost all the those interviewed and throughout discussions within the minutes. Despite some early concerns by some about the variation in capacity of individual Community Foundations within the network, as well as that of the UKCF to manage onward grant allocation and later data collection and reporting, Community Foundations are broadly seen to combine the requisite grant making skills and expertise with local knowledge that the National Emergencies Trust required.

However, as noted, the variation in capacity, structure, and grant-making practices of each Community Foundation, as well as the UKCF itself leads to some difficulty, in collecting the standardised in-depth data and information that the National Emergencies Trust staff and volunteers feel was needed to adequately monitor and evaluate the impact of grants given. This differentiation moves beyond the data collection and management capacity of individual Community Foundations and the UKCF, but more pertinently is influenced and shaped by the inherent independence and unique organisational culture of each Community Foundation. As one interview participant notes:

"So not all [Community Foundations] will have bought into this [the National Emergencies Trust's way of working], and others have different degrees of capacity and capability, and also attitude."

Whilst this latter observation highlights what many participants view as the strength of the Community Foundation network and its unique positioning to respond locally to the need they observe, difficulties emerge around the lack of very clear understandings regarding onward granting criteria from the National Emergencies Trust, including who should be determining criteria. This appears in the minutes and in participants' descriptions of Community Foundation data collection and reporting as a lack of shared understanding about how grants are to be distributed, what data are to be collected, and how each Community Foundation should be reporting back on grants distributed. For example, in many of the Allocations Committee meetings, UKCF appeared to regularly seek clarification for how and where grants were to be distributed, and in the summer of 2020, the National Emergencies Trust asked UKCF to clarify how they planned to distribute funding going forward. Thus, whilst grant success within this allocation model appears initially to be determined using data on speed and geographic spread of distribution, the minutes and interviews suggest that the wider National Emergencies Trust and UKCF team were unclear about exact grant criteria, who determined them, when they should be used and how these should be updated and reported on. This further highlights the need for clarity to be developed about where responsibility for need identification and onward distribution parameters should ultimately rest.

This lack of clarity about who determines onward grant criteria underpins several issues identified in the evaluation. Analysis from the interviews suggests that the National Emergencies Trust team members themselves did not seem to have a shared understanding of what criteria should be guiding Community Foundations' onward grant-making, nor what information and data Community Foundations or the UKCF should be reporting back to the National Emergencies Trust. This is reflected in the varying narratives from the National Emergencies Trust team working directly with UKCF and the Community Foundations alongside the alteration of processes and models such as the introduction and then removal of a Theory of Change model that was discussed in the minutes in July 2020. This results in greater and less co-ordinated requests for data and information from UKCF and Community Foundations from various National Emergencies Trust team s which increased uncertainty and tasks for the National Emergencies Trust and their partners.

These varying expectations, and differing data and information needs of the National Emergencies Trust team s, coupled with the often-independent ways in which teams appear to have engaged with the UKCF, seems to have further congested and confused lines of communication in terms of expectations for Community Foundations. As one UKCF stakeholder notes:

"Now they [the National Emergencies Trust] recruited people that wanted to make a difference and have an impact. And what that meant was they wanted to try and see change and, not necessarily direct it, but kind of want to see progress continuously without really understanding the challenges of doing that. And without necessarily really appreciating the unique circumstances in which we'd [the UKCF/ the National Emergencies Trust partnership] set up. So, they hadn't seen the set-up, there weren't really the relationships there, or trust if I'm being honest, that were built in the first few weeks or month or so. And then kind of just basically, the relationship became a bit directive in terms of telling us what we needed to do and then checking on whether we had done it. And that, that caused a lot of friction, a lot of problems for us."

As this stakeholder notes in seeking to respond dynamically to the unfolding events associated with the pandemic, a mismatch in reporting expectations and the associated data requirement between the UKCF, Community Foundations, and various National Emergencies Trust teams develops.

However, more broadly, the evaluation team note a corresponding lack of knowledge and interaction amongst the National Emergencies Trust team of grant cycles and the realities of grant monitoring and data collection and reporting back of data from the field. Coupled with the observed lack of clarity about reporting expectations and data requirements, it became difficult for the National Emergencies Trust to confidently identify to what extent they had ensured equitable distribution of funds. Due to these issues, it became evident that a perception developed within the broader National Emergencies Trust team that there were gaps in Community Foundation provision and distributive capacity and that the decision to distribute funding primarily through the Community Foundations network hinders other grant allocation decisions as noted by another of the Allocation Committee's team:

"So, the approach we took was that we're going to stick with Community Foundations and they'll have to get us the information. And they sort of made some early promises that we'll get this. And I think we were a bit optimistic about how quickly that they're going to be able to get this information. And instead, we did not seek alternatives at that early stage, because we had made a Board decision that we were going to go through a Community Foundation. And so therefore, alternatives were not sought at that early stage."

Whilst it is recognised that Community Foundations provided an effective means to distribute funding quickly to many communities across multiple regions, there is a need for the National Emergencies Trust to clarify the ways in which they seek to work with their chosen distributors. This includes clarifying and then communicating the degree to which the National Emergencies Trust makes decisions about what need is, and the level of guidance and engagement that needs to be put in place in terms of how grants are distributed and reported on.

2. BAME Infrastructure and Comic Relief Global Majority Fund

There is less data and information about the relationship and impact of allocation of funding to the UKCF BAME Infrastructure Fund and Comic Relief Global Majority Fund, as these have not been the focus of Phase 1 of this evaluation. However, some insights can be drawn regarding the decision-making and allocation processes associated with this grant-making response from the minutes, interviews with key staff, as well as the UKCF's BAME Infrastructure evaluation report produced in December 2020 and the National Emergencies Trust's own BAME distribution audit.

The Phase 1 evaluation identifies the responsive allocation of focussed funding to address emerging understandings of the differential and often unmet needs of BAME groups and communities as providing promise for the development of future grant-making models that can enhance the National Emergencies Trust's responsiveness. The National Emergencies Trust identified a potential lack of knowledge and expertise within the area of providing funding for BAME communities and quickly created a partnership with the Comic Relief Global Majority Fund. As one interviewee notes, the swift identification and distribution of funding to BAME-led and infrastructure organisations proved initially to be outside of the National Emergencies Trust's emerging and evolving grant-making skillset or existing distribution networks:

> *"It's not an easy one to crack, because of years of under investment; there weren't any pre-ready organisations in the BAME infrastructure that exist. So as a result of that, Comic Relief were sort of quicker out, and trying to say, look we're going to change the way that we're going to approach this. We're going to appeal for organisations and so forth. And I think that... so there was a potentially readymade model that was being worked on that the organisations that were sceptical of National Emergencies Trust, were okay to work with Comic Relief. And so, we said, okay, it's maybe better if we also go through that route and use that as a means to explore how we can work with that."*

In total, the National Emergencies Trust allocated £4.8 million and with an additional £1.8 million from other funders to the Comic Relief Global Majority Fund for onward distribution. This facilitated the distribution of funding to over 16,000 beneficiaries via 10 BAME intermediary partners identified by Comic Relief, which extended the National Emergencies Trust's reach and impact on BAME communities without the investment in added resource, skill, and expertise that the centralised need-identification and allocation model would have required.

Alongside the Comic Relief funding the UKCF also created a BAME Infrastructure Fund, which the National Emergencies Trust supported with two funding rounds of £250,000 in June 2020 and a further £805,000 in two tranches in August and September 2020. The impact of this has not been evaluated here as final reporting for the fund remains outstanding. However, interview participants generally agree that this funding approach has been useful and impactful for the UKCF and the National Emergencies Trust, by beginning to establish a wider network and understanding of the ways in which differing communities require support in emergencies. One National Emergencies Trust team member highlighted that:

> *"Now not all of them were eligible, but it identified organisations that the Community Foundations have never heard of, and that they needed to engage with. And so, it was a quick win to be able to say, we need to increase that fund and get it to the million-pound mark, and still you're letting people down and not being able to fund everything. But just announcing that fund meant that organisations that those community foundations who would never have even considered as infrastructure, were able to come forward. And learning that for those organisations, for grass roots organisations with a specialism."*

The National Emergencies Trust, thus, achieves a decentralised funding allocation process that initial data indicates is effective in reaching a wider range of communities in need. In doing so, this aligns with the National Emergencies Trust's objectives of swift, responsive, and impactful allocation of incoming resources. Critically it utilised the understandings, knowledge base and skillset of both Community Foundations and Comic Relief's intermediary partners. This approach appears to be less resource intensive, whilst allowing the National Emergencies Trust to put in place clearer boundaries and reporting processes, whilst remaining responsive to need.

3. National Funding Partners

The impact of the allocation approach adopted in relation to the nine additional national "funding partners" will be investigated in Phase 2 of the evaluation. Data from the interviews and minutes, however, provide some detail on the grant-making process that is useful to review here.

In Summer 2020, the National Emergencies Trust undertook a closed process to allocate funding to target specific groups and needs via nine invited organisations. This approach allowed the National Emergencies Trust to identify specific national groups who were potentially positioned to address specific needs or reach groups and individuals who were highlighted in the gap analysis on UKCF allocation data completed in June 2020. Interviews with National Emergencies Trust team members involved in identifying potential partners highlighted the complexity associated with narrowing down the list partner organisations and the specific services that the National Emergencies Trust wanted them to deliver. For example, one interview participant expresses this as follows:

> *"I mean I don't think that it was terribly well thought out, and I think that that was a function of rush. Yeah, I mean I think the principle was you know, large above a certain threshold, evidence of experience of running similar programmes. And similar programmes at one point meant, national help lines at a different point meant you know, direct service delivery, at a different point meant you know, distribution of food. It changed quickly over weeks."*

The issues related to the nature and amount of data in assisting the National Emergencies Trust to identify potential gaps in service provision and distribution are discussed in Part 2b below. This includes the changing nature of need identified by the participant above, as well as the complexity of the voluntary and community sector itself. The latter point highlights the potential lack of experience and in-depth knowledge of parts of the sectors with which the National Emergencies Trust sought to work with and is one of the key themes to emerge across this report. In this instance, initial identification of potential additional, national distribution partners was led by a small team of volunteers and contractual staff whose skills and sector experience did not necessarily fit with this role.

The quote above highlights a skills gap at a certain point in the appeal, however, this was addressed by the National Emergencies Trust executive and a more experienced grant-maker was actively recruited in June 2020 to lead on the completion of the National Funding Partners' programme. This process, once again, speaks to the National Emergencies Trust's responsiveness and the development of a more agile recruitment process to both identify the skillsets and expertise needed; as well as a flexible approach to acquiring these under constrained circumstances. Whilst the experienced grant-maker worked well to undertake this programme it is evident from interviews with the National Emergencies Trust team involved that the necessary process and systems to deliver the NFP's programme had to be fully developed and rolled out alongside the continued identification of need and allocation through the Community Foundations:

"So again, there was a period of time where effectively, certainly in relation to the national partners, [we] developed a complete application process, application form, assessment process, recruited an assessment team, determined the governance processes and the grant making panel processes, to make decisions, the grant contract, you know, all of those aspects. And then obviously subsequent to the grants being awarded, all the aspects related to the management of all those grants."

The above interview participant notes that the model developed to facilitate direct distribution to NFPs was labour intensive, requiring high levels of technical skill and human resource. However, the evaluation notes that it is less dependent on the data acquisition and relationship management associated with other models of allocation discussed earlier, which may allow for a more effective distribution of funding in complex circumstances. As noted above, this report will not assess the impact and value of the NFPs. However, it is evident that more time and thought can be invested to develop and maintain the process of setting up this alternative funding model. Additional expertise appears to have greatly enhanced the potential of this model and the National Emergencies Trust team should recognise their ability to spot a deficiency and tackle it in this space whilst noting the risk associated with the early stages of this endeavour.

Timing

Across the minutes and interviews there is evidence of the need to balance the objective of allocating pledged and incoming funds quickly with the speed of receiving actual funds in the bank. To accommodate this tension and uncertainty, the National Emergencies Trust adopted a phased allocation model in which funding was distributed to Community Foundations in 15 tranches over the course of the appeal. The National Emergencies Trust used an allocation formula to establish an equitable allocation across all Community Foundations. How this was formulated and the impact this had on allocations decisions is addressed below in section 2b.

Despite the responsive approach outlined above, there is evidence across the analysis of different data sources that demonstrate there was sometimes tension between the speed of allocation and making sure local needs were met appropriately. This is often presented as a dichotomous challenge by several interview participants – one that is not easily resolved and warrants further consideration as the National Emergencies Trust develops and refines its broader mission, strategic framework, and operating models in preparation for future appeals. To illustrate, an interviewee reflected on this tension as a fine balancing act with no clear resolution:

"Yeah getting the balance between making sure it's [incoming donations] spent correctly and making sure people get their money as quickly as possible - the speed of distribution with the relevance of distribution. I think it's [the National Emergencies Trust] an incredibly well functioning organisation and to be able to get the money out so quickly is incredibly impressive, and I don't think you'd want to fault that. But it's knowing how much you can hold that back to make sure it is going to where it's most needed. But then there's the risk of, you know, actually spending days, weeks, months, agonising over where it should be spent and not giving anyone any money."

There is additional evidence, particularly during Wave 1 (March – July 2020) of the Covid-19 pandemic, that there are different expectations by the National Emergencies Trust of the speed between allocation of funds to distribution partners and some Community Foundations' reported distribution of funds to recipients. This appears to be the result of differing distribution decision-making and reporting practices amongst the Community Foundations, as well as differing need profiles. The Allocation Formula and phased allocation model struggle to account for this, as observed by the following quote from one interview participant:

"And obviously that the primary kind of mechanism for getting the money out to communities, via the local Community Foundation network by default meant that although there would be individuals who would be benefitting as a result of that money being made available, beyond determining the allocations of that funding. Effectively at a geographic level, the National Emergencies Trust had no control over actually what a given community foundation's local policies were in terms of how then they were deciding to use the money."

This also reflects that at that point in time in the first activation, the developing National Emergencies Trust team was still aggregating their collective sector specific knowledge and familiarity of the complexity and extensiveness of the grant making process on the ground. As Leat (2018) notes in her evaluation of the London Emergencies Trust's experience of distributing and allocating funds during a local disaster, different groups and agencies "have different values, cultures, constraints and priorities that affect what they can and will do and when things are done" (p.4). The evidence of this evaluation shows that at that time, the National Emergencies Trust was in a stage of learning and developing their in-depth knowledge and familiarity with these complexities and should be cognisant of this stage in the planning and policy development for future scenarios that require surge capacity of staff for future activations.

The drive for rapid distribution appeared to ease slightly as Wave 1 of the

Covid-19 pandemic came to an end. It is evident in the minutes, accompanying documents and interviews with key team members that the National Emergencies Trust felt more able to slow the speed of distribution as they learned and aggregated their understanding and relationships with the VCS and grant-making sectors. In doing so, the National Emergencies Trust developed their grant-making approach to determine how to meet identified gaps through the selection of NFPs and targeted allocation of funds to the BAME Infrastructure Fund. However, there remained the requirement of rapid distribution and subsequent spending by recipients associated with government funds received by the National Emergencies Trust via the Department of Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS), as well as the grants that are distributed via the Comic Relief Global Majority Fund, which were required to be spent within a specified timeframe. During Wave 2 and 3 (September 2020 – April 2021) of the pandemic, the frequency of allocation slowed as the National Emergencies Trust maintained a watching brief, as incoming donations slowed, and the National Emergencies Trust's appeal funds diminished. Simultaneously, individual Community Foundations themselves reported a lower level of demand for funds.

Despite this apparent slowing down or change in demand for funding, there remained a sense of urgency related to allocation and distribution within the National Emergencies Trust structure. This appeared in interviews and the minutes as perceived pressure from the media and public for speedy distribution; existing interpretations of reports and evaluations of previous disaster responses; perceived donor demand to see the impact of their giving; as well as pressure from the Equity Scrutiny Group and advocacy groups such as Charity So White, for swifter distribution and evidence of the impact of the funds. An added complication was the uncertainty identified throughout this report around the continuing nature and broader, changeable impact of the pandemic and subsequent regional and then national lockdowns. This led some participants to question, as illustrated by the National Emergencies Trust team member below, whether the adoption of additional distribution models would have been the chosen course of action in a different type or shorter emergency.

> *"I think, if the impact of the pandemic had been broadly considered to be much longer lasting, as it ultimately proved to be, in the period of kind of middle of 2020. It's arguable that the National Emergencies Trust would ever have put money into the national response anyway."*

This observation highlights the differential issues associated with grant-making and distribution decision-making within similar philanthropic responses to disasters such as observed by Leat (2018). The first being the extent to which the narrative of immediacy and completeness of distribution is relevant and appropriate given the slightly delayed, but ongoing points at which the National Emergencies Trust and the VCS are responding to the impact of disaster, coupled with the inevitable time lapse between the onset of a disaster and the income drop from any appeal (Leat, 2018). The second is the extent to which the National Emergencies Trust - as primary generator of incoming funds - is responsible for determining where and how funds are best distributed. This is particularly important during urgent situations where funds are distributed through other organisations.

The first of these observations could be addressed through changing the National Emergencies Trust's policy on the creation and use of reserve funds, such as that maintained by the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC, 2021), that can be quickly and immediately allocated to distribution partners at the onset of a disaster response appeal. The second issue is potentially more fundamental as it is about how the National Emergencies Trust envisages its positioning and responsibility within the wider response to local and national disasters. These are not mutually exclusive issues, as the previous interview participant continues to note, and merits further consideration and resolution by the National Emergencies Trust as it continues to mature as an organisation and develop its response mechanisms:

> *"And I suppose the acknowledgement of where that kind of bar exists in terms of you know, how much is the need if you like, driven by the importance of getting the money out there quickly, and maybe not being overly concerned about necessarily where it's ending up. Or do you delay the money getting out the door, while you spend a long time deciding to make you know, making the most and best informed decisions about where it's supposed to be going in the first place? And by the time the money gets out the door, it will already have been too late."*

Equity and Reach

It is quite evident across the National Emergencies Trust's communications, documents, minutes, and interviews that the primary mission and desire is to ensure fair and equitable distribution of donated resources for disaster relief. Nevertheless, ensuring equitable distribution of grants was both complex and difficult to achieve throughout this appeal, due to the nature and scale of the emergency. This was the case not just for the National Emergencies Trust, but for the broader philanthropic sector and VCS (see for example, Murray, 2020) during the Covid-19 pandemic. Establishing the extent to which distribution is or has been equitable, and subsequently establishing where gaps in distribution lie, is complex due to the interplay between data currency and availability, data analysis, and grant-making structures and processes utilised. For example, one interview participant when speaking about equitable and redistributive grant distribution below notes one of the limitations as being the history, experience, and nature of grant-making structures within Community Foundations, and arguably the National Emergencies Trust itself:

> *So, having the community foundation as the majority distribution model, was quick and efficient, but I think it led to some of the problems of not getting some of the needs met. Because they were putting things out to an established group of organisations they'd already funded."*

Whilst it is noted that the National Emergencies Trust and the Community Foundation network begin to take proactive steps to address these difficulties through seeking out more relevant data (see Part 2b for more detail); consulting with and seeking the support of representatives (particularly from the BAME community) through the Equity Scrutiny Group and implementing targeted grant making through the Comic Relief Global Majority and BAME Infrastructure Funds, as well as NFPs, interview participants, and wider literature (see for example Lingayah et al, 2020) suggest that the National Emergencies Trust itself continues to develop its approach, policies, and practices to embed the experiences and expertise and specific needs of those from within these communities into to their own allocation criteria for future appeals. As noted by the interview participant below this should move beyond developing equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) policies for the National Emergencies Trust staffing structures and representative criteria within the Allocation Formula, to a consideration of what other types of data and information is sought to inform decisions, as well as grant criteria and then embedding these ubiquitously across all the National Emergencies Trust's distribution operations:

> *"I think my interest really has been that they have an equality diversity inclusion framework, but that's more in terms of the organisation. But I haven't, I'm not aware and I just might have missed seeing something like that in terms of the service delivery, the funding distribution."*

More broadly, interview participants suggested that the embedding of broader, more far-reaching grant criteria may require moving beyond ensuring representation, to developing an in-depth understanding of the communities and groups whom the National Emergencies Trust seeks to reach through allocation of funding to onward grant distributors. For example, one National Emergencies Trust team member suggests that:

"Now is the time to build relationships. Relationships are essential with diverse communities, and now is the time because you don't know what's going on when the next pandemic's going to happen. So now you need to do the footwork or the groundwork for making sure that you are aware of the issues, aware of the barriers these communities face. Because many people... I always turn round and say, many people think they know, but they don't really know. Until you're immersing yourself in those communities, you don't know. That's why I said when it comes to people with EDI, you have to be able to immerse yourself in those communities so you can understand what the issues are. So when you come to writing policies or when it comes to giving out funding, you know, for instance, why certain groups don't apply, and how you can change that. That will make a difference."

These observations broadly align with Lingayah et al (2020) and Leat's (2018) suggestions that in building and developing frameworks for more equitable grant-making and allocation practices, there is a need to move beyond a reliance on data and representation to building and establishing relationships with end- recipients, whether these be individuals or whole communities and embed these learnings in wider allocation formula, and distribution policies and operations. This evaluation can be used to prioritise the National Emergencies Trust's development of the emerging practices, processes and expertise developed during the Coronavirus Appeal to build the relationships and networks needed to continue to ensure the equitable, fair and impactful distribution of resources in future activations. These latter issues are the subject of further exploration within this report.

Recommendations and Key Points

The National Emergencies Trust had to expand at a fast pace and deal with the complexities of how to distribute funding nationwide in an efficient and timely manner. It is evident that the National Emergencies Trust had the appropriate reflexivity and feedback mechanisms in place early in the period of activation which enabled them to learn that differing grant-making models may be needed as the Coronavirus Appeal progressed. Consequently, they developed three distinct approaches with varying levels and type of impact. The extent to which these approaches are relevant and valid and the level to which they should be developed for future appeals will need to be explored further as understandings of their impact emerge. However, analysis here suggests that the following criteria may be useful in guiding decisions related to the adoption of future allocation and grant-making approaches:

- The adoption of specific allocation models is fundamentally born out of decisions around the levels of control sought by the National Emergencies Trust about with whom direct control and management should lie, and who is responsible for the impact of funding distributed. The National Emergencies Trust should consider to what extent responsibility for identifying specific localised, intersectional need, and granting directly for these, remains with the National Emergencies Trust, or whether the National Emergencies Trust's role is to enable and facilitate others to do so.

- Within the consideration above, it is evident that subsequent allocation / distribution relationship with Community Foundations or other local and national distribution organisations needs further clarification. For instance, many disasters will not include the intermediation of UKCF or others such as Comic Relief (and their intermediary partners) in the grant making process. Once lessons learnt regarding reporting expectations and distribution criteria are established, scalability can be written into how they are defined by the National Emergencies Trust, ensuring they are transferable to working with one or several Community Foundations, as well as several other local or national distribution and intermediary granting organisations.

- The specific distribution criteria, reporting requirements (and timelines) and timing of onward distribution associated with each type of granting relationship needs to be continually revisited and developed. The initial iteration of these should be established and agreed upon at the point of formalising agreements and clearly communicated to all stakeholders including grantees and the National Emergencies Trust's staff, volunteers and trustees working with grantees to ensure that expectations and ongoing distribution management are coordinated across the National Emergencies Trust team. These should then be revisited and reviewed against outcomes, and updated if needed, to ensure they remain fit for purpose for the period of activation. The National Emergencies Trust should be aware of the demands on grantees in terms of allocation of funds and ensure reporting mechanisms are as efficient as possible and tailored to the types of analysis that the National Emergencies Trust requires at different phases of an appeal.

- There is a clear benefit of the National Emergencies Trust staff furthering their own knowledge and understandings of the grant-making processes and practices of distribution partners and the challenges and limitations of these. This will enable them to align and manage these relationships successfully as activations become more challenging, as well as enable the identification of hidden opportunities associated with these. Recruiting skill sets and allocating space in job roles to facilitate this continual demand for knowledge gain would be advised for future appeals as the social, economic, and political contexts of partners changes over time and across different disasters.

- Finally, the National Emergencies Trust should consider to what extent and how intended recipient groups should be consulted about their needs, how much funding should be given, to whom, and when. It is recognised that this was difficult during a live, cross-geographical activation, however, it is recommended that the National Emergencies Trust develop mechanisms to achieve this, which engage with communities of geography or interest, so that they can easily activate these during future appeals. These mechanisms need to be in addition to the existing continued consultation with the Survivor's Advisory Group and Equity Scrutiny Group, to include as many beneficiary voices as possible.

B. Identification of Need

Establishing who the National Emergencies Trust provides funding to and how this is done are key issues, as this shapes the impact of the appeal and has consequences for who the National Emergencies Trust works in partnership with and its activities in the future. Who and what support is offered to communities and individuals affected by disasters and emergencies is often a contested and challenging issue in the sector, and this was made more challenging due to the scale and geographic reach of the pandemic during the Coronavirus Appeal. This section focuses on how need (as determined through the scope of the appeal) is identified and targeted in individuals and communities.

Identifying the individuals, communities, and groups with unmet needs during the pandemic was a central concern of the National Emergencies Trust; this is evident throughout the committee minutes, with regular consideration by the Allocations Committee, the Board of Trustees, and the Equity Scrutiny Group (formerly Equity Working Group). This was also a recurring theme and narrative within many of the interviews conducted.

The available evidence demonstrates that the National Emergencies Trust regularly considers its transparency, making it clear how decisions around need identification are evidenced, made, and implemented. Evidence from both the minutes and interviews suggests that the National Emergencies Trust faced considerable difficulties in obtaining and using reliable data for this aim. However, it was using this transparent approach that the National Emergencies Trust was able to identify that specific beneficiary groups had been in receipt of less funding than other beneficiary groups, and thus extended their distribution partnership from the sole model of using UK Community Foundations to introducing the network of NFPs and BAME distribution partners outlined in Part 2a of this report.

Data and Allocation Formula

The first funds were distributed to Community Foundations via the UKCF on 30 March 2020, using a simple formula of £100,000 each to Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland Community Foundations, with the remainder divided equally across 43 Community Foundations in England (totalling £54,651 each). This facilitated the National Emergencies Trust's commitment to get initial funding out so that Community Foundations could begin to support those for whom the pandemic had created urgent need, while allowing time for the National Emergencies Trust to finalise a refined allocation formula based on the identified emergent need.

The National Emergencies Trust determined a formula from 20 March 2020; three days before the UK Government announced the first national lockdown. This formula was used for funding distributed from 9 April 2020. The formula considered the population size, the proportion of over 65s, and the number of benefit claimants in each local authority within each Community Foundation's region, and then calculated a 'weighted need' based on the size of the geographical area covered and the deprivation, as calculated by the Index of Multiple Deprivation. These 'boost' weightings are included as deprived areas were identified as having a higher proportion of the population having needs, and larger geographical areas being more challenging to support. This formula was retained throughout the pandemic, with changes made to the weightings of self-isolation (proportion of over 65s) and economic need (benefit claimants) on 6 May 2020 and 3 July 2020 .

This formula was developed in response to the recognition that the pandemic would affect all regions in the UK and that much of the population would require support. It became known as the Allocation Formula and formed the basis for allocation decisions to Community Foundations throughout the Coronavirus activation.

$$need = ((a_{population} X\, n_{population}) + (a_{over65} x\, n_{over65}) + (a_{benefitclaimants} x\, n_{benefitclaimants}))$$

$$weighted\ need = need\ x\ (1 + boost_{size})\ x\ (1 + boost_{deprivation})$$

$$percentage\ of\ funds = \frac{weighted\ need}{\sum weighted\ need}$$

Figure 5: Original allocation formula presented to Allocation Committee on 24 March 2020. This formula considers populations at the local authority level, and the relative proportion of over 65s and universal credit claimants. The boost weighting includes an areas geographical area, and deprivation as measured using the index of multiple deprivation.

The original formula incorporating need-weighting was developed by a data expert seconded to the National Emergencies Trust during the first few weeks of appeal. The evaluation identified that the formula includes a number of data sets, but the primary determinants of need are the proportion of over 65s (a proxy for those who would be self-isolating, based on early government recommendations following the understanding of who would be at most risk of death if they contracted Covid-19) and the proportion of people claiming benefits (a proxy for those experiencing economic need) across the 43 Community Foundations in England. The formula was agreed and adopted at the Allocation Committee on 27 March 2020. As these data are not available in a comparable format for the devolved nations, the formula retained a standard allocation for Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland of 10%, 6%, and 3% respectively. The formula also included a base allocation, which remained at 10% of the overall allocation throughout the appeal, and which was a standard amount allocated to all community foundations before the weighted formula was applied.

Table 1: Development of the funding formula 30 March 2020 to 16 November 2020

Formula used	Formula description
30 March 2020	£100k per devolved nation, with remainder distributed equally across Community Foundations (£54,651)
9 April – 29 April 2020	10% Scotland / 6% Wales / 3% NI, with remainder distributed by model across Community Foundations (Baseline 20%, 80% split: Self Isolation weight 50% and Economic weight 50%)
6 May – 11 June 2020	10% Scotland / 6% Wales / 3% NI, with remainder distributed by model across Community Foundations (Baseline 10%, 90% split: Self Isolation weight 25% and Economic weight 75%)
3 July – 16 November 2020	10% Scotland / 6% Wales / 3% NI, with remainder distributed by model across Community Foundations (100% Economic Need + C-curve adjustment)

In July 2020, the data team suggest the addition of a "C-curve adjustment". The C-curve is a pattern of local authorities and regions across England identified as having needs that were not captured within the existing formula (as seen in Figure 6). Those areas highlighted within the C-curve show local authorities and regions more greatly affected by Covid-19 deaths, food poverty, vulnerability, and with most vulnerable BAME populations, and was facilitated by data modelling by the British Red Cross. The affected regions include the North-East, North-West, West-Midlands, London, and the South-East of England. The minutes, accompanying documents and interviews with members of the data team and Allocation Committee identify that the C-Curve was used to address increased need in urban areas, areas with greater proportions of BAME people, and people with protected characteristics.

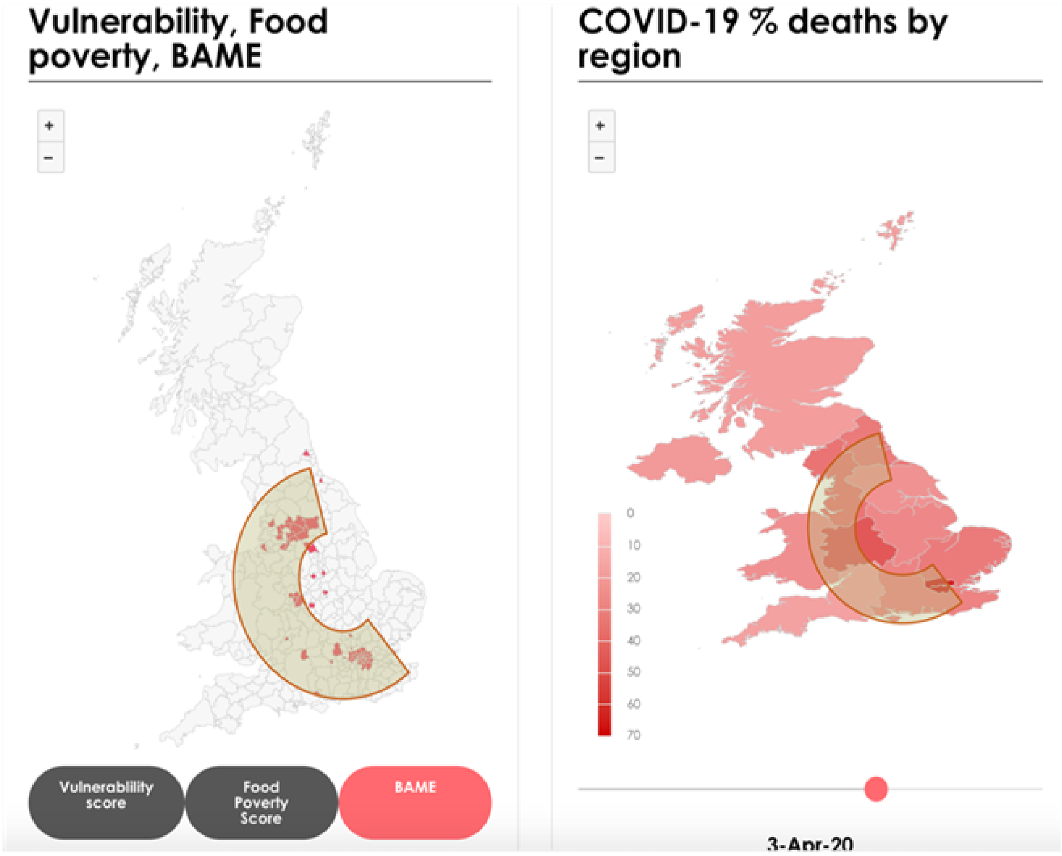

Figure 6: Data Insights from 11 May 2020 Allocation Committee showing the introduction of the C-Curve

The purpose of the allocation formula was to ensure that funds were allocated across the population equitably, such that each Community Foundation received enough funding to be able to make meaningful grants to those in most need, whilst ensuring that each Community Foundation received enough funding in line with the identified need in their geographic region based on the proportion of the population deemed to be needful in terms of the social isolation and economic impacts being in isolation.

The allocation formula allowed funds to be distributed at speed, across a wide and complex geographic and socio-demographic landscape. The Allocation Committee discussed the difficulty in obtaining and using more granulated, accurate data to inform decisions, but ultimately decided that the simple model would ensure that most vulnerable people and groups would be reached, rather than the small proportion classed as hyper-vulnerable, as noted in the minutes from their meeting on 27 March 2020:

"Phase 2 allocation to be kept simple and focus on vulnerable category rather than hyper-vulnerable, as this is easier to communicate to a wider audience at this stage and will assure most that they have not been left out. Also agreement that not enough granulated data for more complexity at this stage, but this can be incorporated into further distribution phases. All agree that they are happy to keep need distinction to 2 categories of those economically at risk and those in need of support dues to self-isolation"

It is evident from the minutes and interviews that the Allocation Formula was considered an effective tool to assist in decisions regarding the equitable allocation of funding to Community Foundations. Data from the evaluation highlight six broad areas of consideration in relation to the use of the allocation formula:

- **Single formula:** The allocation formula uses two facets of identified need; economic and self-isolation. Data show that parameters within this were updated in terms of the relative weighting of these two facets of need and attempts were made to add to the formula, although the rationale for these changes was not clear in the data the evaluation team reviewed. Data from interviews and minutes show that other forms of need were considered, and some of these were modelled, with attempts to overlay these outcomes on the outputs of the original funding formula. However, despite considerable ongoing debate it appears that ultimately the allocation formula was not updated to integrate these. This was likely due to the complexity of this, uncertainty in terms of the appropriateness of other types of data to draw upon, and an incomplete understanding of the funding formula. As the interviewee below notes, making changes in circumstances of high uncertainty can be difficult:

"Once we'd come up with a formula for distributing funds, that proved enormously hard to shift. There had to be, there would have to be a very strong reason to move it. So we tended to sort of work, having got a formula, even though we kind of... everyone said, look it's imperfect, but we're not going to tinker with it, we're just going to sort of carry on doing it. So you'd see, week after week, you'd see these allocations of exactly in proportion of you'd seen those, see anything doesn't work. And I would have hoped that there would have been a little bit more radical that how they'd choose, in adjusting their prior decisions. But I kind of get the psychology, once you've decided something; to change your mind is to say that what I decided the first time around was wrong.

So I kind of get the psychology of that. But I would have hoped that they would have been happy to take new information, or better analysis into account, and make some quite radical changes in how they were doing it."

Critically, as the interview quote above further highlights, reliance on a single formula constrains the types of decisions that can be taken, and significantly reduces the degrees of freedom within which need can be conceptualised. A base formula with iterations, possibilities, and assumptions should be scoped and developed to provide a handrail for future appeals to develop and nuance the base model to future appeals, enabling specificity to the nature and scope of the disaster. As in the first appeal, the National Emergencies Trust should seek to integrate significant resource and skill sets to consider how to build a formula within which more variables (aspects of need) can be integrated and consider as to what forms this might take at different times during an appeal and in different situations. For example, additional data during the Coronavirus Appeal could have included shielding provision, take-up of the furlough scheme, data on the economic impact of the pandemic on different employment sectors and localities, and data on the social impacts of the pandemic). This would ensure the level of flexibility and agility that the National Emergencies Trust may need in future activations is delivered.

One outcome of the relatively static nature of the Allocations Formula is that the alternative means of allocation and distribution to achieve an agile, flexible response was not deliverable. The changes made to the formula during the Coronavirus Appeal had only a relatively small impact on the funding received by most Community Foundations; the different between Phase 10, using model 2, and Phase 11, using model 3 resulted in a median difference of £3,500, where the median allocation was £68,000. However, developing a process for a flexible allocation formula would ensure the level of agility that the National Emergencies Trust may need and desire to ensure it meets the needs of those impacted during future appeals. Crucially, it is essential that future allocation formulae are designed to enable the integration of new data sources as new intelligence emerges from government departments and teams, local authorities, civil response structures, voluntary and community organisations, and those impacted by the disaster.

- **Static high-level data.** The data sets utilised provided an adequate nationwide data set through which to tailor the allocation formula accordingly. However, the data used lacked currency, being based on census data from 2011. Data sets were also high level and did not aim to provide a fine grained, localised picture of need. Importantly, the major sources of underpinning data were static, and did not appear to change as the pandemic progressed.

- **Unused data:** A significant issue with using a static formula is that it may not be possible to integrate some forms of information into it. It is evident that the National Emergencies Trust sought data from UKCF and the NFPs to facilitate decision making and identification of need; however, the allocation formula does not allow for the incorporation of this form of data to inform allocation changes or easily allow for refinement of the formula. Similarly, data shows that modifying the formula in any way was a complex process, that involved significant work. In the future it is important that the National Emergencies Trust map out anticipated data sources in advance and design a workflow and model of how these can be used to determine need and the required resource to support them.

- **Data expertise:** The development of the allocation formula was reliant on the skills and expertise of volunteer / secondee data scientists with the knowledge and expertise to find and use relevant data sets, and to create an allocation model. These data scientists were not present throughout the appeal, which the evidence shows was problematic in terms of adapting the formula as the pandemic progressed:

"The challenge that we had with that, is that the original model that was created by [original secondee data expert]; there was no explanation or description as to how they calculated that. We could see the outputs of what they'd produced, we could see the data that we're using, but we weren't able to see the calculation of how they put it all together. So there was a lot of reverse engineering that had to be done to try to sort of backward work out what data they had, so we could then bring new data into that. And that was a challenge. In fact we could never accurately get back to what was originally created. So we just found ourselves sort of having to perhaps overlay data a little bit on top of that.... and we were always then stuck, because you couldn't just change the ways that things were then going to be re allocated in a different way. Because the original model had been set down, we could

only ever move, make changes to that base model instead of throwing it out and just saying, well actually this model will be better."

The National Emergencies Trust's structure did evolve to include a data team, however it is not clear whether the members of this team held the requisite data literacy and statistical skills, as well as knowledge of how data is collected and reported by the VCS and distribution partners, to continue to model need. As such, whilst using a formula is an efficient method to allocate funding, reliance on volunteers with broad skillsets established in the corporate sector to create and maintain this creates a significant risk, as there may be insufficient organisational memory and knowledge of the sector within which the National Emergencies Trust works to understand how to modify or incorporate new data sets into this process appropriately, as they come on stream during an appeal.

- **Expert judgement:** Quantitative data are seen as offering objective truths to the identification of need; and these data certainly allowed the National Emergencies Trust to compare the demographics of different localities to identify areas with greater needs. However, alongside this use of data is the need to accurately understand and articulate which individuals and community groups have greatest needs, which requires an expert understanding of disasters and disaster needs, as well as the role of the VCS in responding to these. This is incorporated into the allocation formula discussion of 27 March 2020 to some degree, which shows how various factors were considered and modelled and the rationale for these factors. The Equity Scrutiny Group and the development of the Survivors Advisory Forum are well placed to include qualitative data on disaster needs into decision making, and the National Emergencies Trust should consider how to incorporate those with expertise in disaster needs from various demographics into the development of future allocation formulae or algorithms.

In summary, it is evident that using an allocation formula is a highly pragmatic and efficient way of determining need and allocating funding. The National Emergencies Trust distributed between £50,000-£100,000 to each Community Foundation in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland by the end of March 2020, with further funds of £28,000-£513,000 distributed on 9 April 2020. This "initial rule of thumb" allocation meant that initial funds could reach beneficiaries in a very timely manner without the need for an algorithm to be developed, and those Community Foundations responding to greater community need due to economic and shielding factors received further funding once a formula had been developed.

Once developed, the funding formula used several important facets of unmet need that allowed more nuanced allocation decisions and fast decision making. When allocating resource, there will always be a tension between the time taken to bring together different data sources of high specificity and currency versus the need for efficient decision making and funding allocation. Generating models a priori that can integrate different forms of data may enable a more nuanced understanding of need to be generated that is more sensitive to the variability in unmet need in a local community. However, no formula is ever going to be sensitive enough to recognise all the individuals and groups facing hardship because of a disaster. In practice, by the National Emergencies Trust allocating funding primarily through distribution partners, this cedes decision making to these partners on how to meet unmet need, and these partners may be much closer to the local situation and have local data and intelligence to understand where that need lies. In such a context, a high-level allocation formula appears to have worked well in terms of efficient allocation. To create sustainability and flexibility it is important that a more flexible, transparent, and modifiable funding formula, overseen by a highly skilled team is used in future appeals.

Distribution Partner Data Collection, Receipt, And Use

Community Foundations, the National Emergencies Trust Executive, and data experts identified and reported back on the various support needs and beneficiary groups that were being met through grant distribution. Data evaluated for this purpose did not specify how these had been identified and whether any criteria utilised to identify need were determined and specified by the National Emergencies Trust or whether Community Foundations were reporting Community Foundation needs and beneficiary groups that they themselves had identified. Nevertheless, the original reporting structure from Community Foundations to the National Emergencies Trust involved many beneficiary and service categories which the National Emergencies Trust team found difficult to apply in understanding how grants were being spent, as observed by this interviewee:

> *"So we were getting that data coming back from the Community Foundations. And what we were then trying to do was, go back to them and get them to improve the way in which they were recording the data. I think the responses that we were getting back; they maybe had... who knows, like maybe 50 or 60 different categories, maybe even more*

than that. Or they maybe just described, they wouldn't necessarily identify on a very clear categorisation model what the thing was for, what the grant was for. But what we had was a description. So we then had to read through the description and pick out key words that sort of told us what it was. And then we [would] use that, we ultimately had to try and condense that down. I think we had about 11 or maybe 12 categories at the end. And then that allowed us to do the analysis on that"

To enable the National Emergencies Trust to understand the needs of communities, interview participants described how qualitative descriptions of grant purposes were subsequently used to generate a set of categories reported through customer relationship management software Salesforce that was based on the first UKCF reporting data from April 2020. These allowed the National Emergencies Trust to analyse funding distribution in each Community Foundation and nationwide, and report back to funders.

Evaluation of meeting minutes and interviews shows a clear desire, however, for finer grained data from UKCF and Community Foundations to influence the National Emergencies Trust's understanding of need as well as manage grant allocation throughout the pandemic, as observed by the National Emergencies Trust's team member below:

"We were really pushing them [Community Foundation's] to think a little bit more granular on the data. And it is just basics of: is this going to support a religious group, is it going to support a group that are very specific to an individual community, is it going for very specific reason? Is it going for food, is it going for technology, is it going for clothing? Whatever it is, it's just getting that granular breakdown, because that would allow us to be able to understand regionally what the hotspots are for particular needs of people who can't get support through normal benefits systems etc. And having that much more granular data would just allow things to be targeted a little bit better was well I think, in the future."

However, interviews also highlight the new and emerging nature of data from the field that is extrapolated and collected from grant applications and reporting from beneficiaries themselves. Simultaneously some data was simply not available or difficult find. As such there is a lack of clarity about where Community Foundations will gain the data and information that the National Emergencies Trust was seeking. Data from interviews, particularly from those working with data, indicate that distribution partners need to be empowered and enabled to provide feedback data to the National Emergencies Trust and that the National Emergencies Trust needs to find a way of incorporating these data and information into any allocation formulae/decisions through a formalised route. There were attempts to do this during the Coronavirus Appeal but it was challenging, as described in the allocation formulae discussion earlier in this report.

Using the Salesforce categories identified and in consultation with the UKCF, the National Emergencies Trust eventually devised a simple, standardised reporting structure for all Community Foundations to report back on grant spending. This enabled a robust, structured database of reporting which facilitated subsequent data deep-dives using categories of primary beneficiary group, secondary beneficiary group, and service type, with space for Community Foundations to include qualitative details on the purpose of the grant. The National Emergencies Trust completed a gap analysis in June 2020 using these data, focusing on individual groups in terms of UK population size and the volume of funding allocated to these. This gap analysis aimed to identify which groups may need additional funding and was successful in this.

However, it was unclear what information was available or requested to help understand if different groups had specific and targeted needs due to the pandemic. That is, the emerging needs at times of disaster may need to be prioritised to ensure the needs that are considered most urgent are met with the National Emergencies Trust funds, and because the cost of meeting those needs may vary; for example, the per capita cost of providing ongoing food parcels may be greater than a one-off support for provision of laptops to facilitate home-schooling.

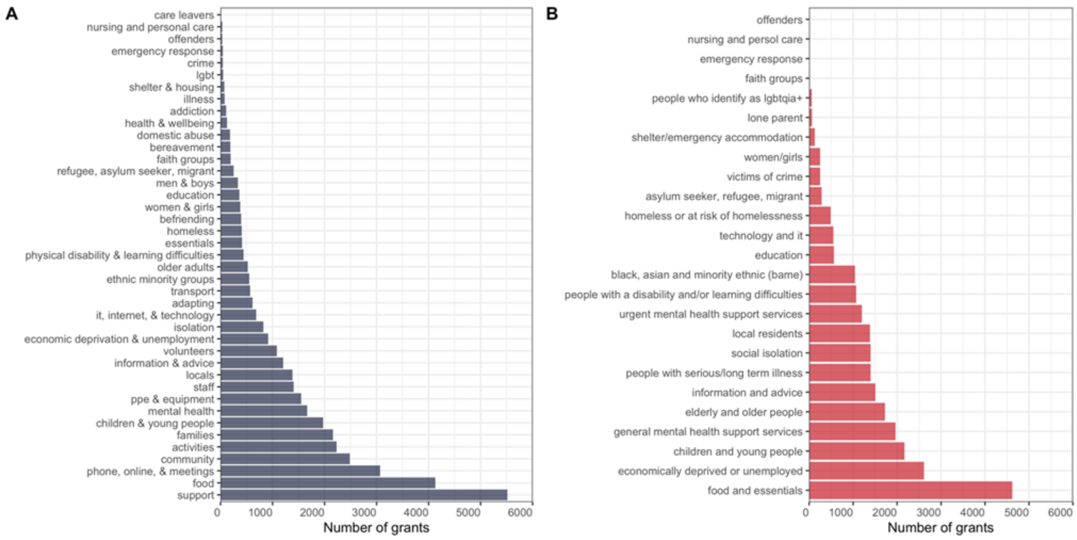

Figure 7: Proportion of grants allocated to beneficiaries and services using (A) NTU's quantitative corpus analysis from UKCF grant reporting from Community Foundations and (B) the National Emergencies Trust salesforce beneficiary and service type categories

Furthermore, the deep dive used the quantitative reporting from the Salesforce categories but did not utilise the qualitative information on the details of the grant reported by Community Foundations. An inductive semantic analysis was conducted by the evaluation team to explore and compare the grants awarded for different service needs and beneficiary groups between March 2020 and March 2021 (Figure 6A) was compared with grants data from Salesforce categories (Figure 6B) and demonstrated that many grants were unsurprisingly classed and described as ‘support’. This analysis also identified greater nuance of what grants were used for; the Salesforce category of ‘food and essentials’ was largely ‘food’, and many grants were given to support the provision of remote support, including phone, online, and meetings. This inductive analysis also identified further categories of services, including meetings, befriending, and other activities. This inductive approach identifies that the National Emergencies Trust’s Salesforce categorisation was useful in providing a simple reporting structure for Community Foundations, however, some of the nuance in what grants are used for may be lost with this simple structure, and it may not capture intersectionality of need in a way that becomes possible through interrogation of qualitative information.

The National Emergencies Trust’s initial needs evaluation included a range of factors (e.g., food and funeral costs), which developed over the course of the first wave (e.g., by including mental health). However, as the scale of the pandemic emerged, more focus was given to ensuring that vulnerable groups were identified and allocated funding equally, and discussions about the identification of which support needs the pandemic created reduced. An important part of emergency response is understanding how need is evolving and developing. It is evident that the National Emergencies Trust was aware of evolving need, however, it is unclear from data evaluated how the National Emergencies Trust created a two-way dialogue with the Community Foundations that enabled an evolving understanding of developing need. For example, it is unclear how the National Emergencies Trust’s granting criteria for Community Foundation were updated and evolved. Similarly, case study data were collected to inform communications, but it was unclear how this informed need identification.

Indeed, there is evidence of tension between Community Foundations and the National Emergencies Trust in developing a mutually evolved criteria process for grant distribution. the National Emergencies Trust recognizes the need for robust and accurate data which are regionally consistent, and therefore allows a comparison of need across regions. However, as each Community Foundation and the National Emergencies Trust were operating as separate organisations, there was limited oversight of each other’s processes, and therefore a lack of understanding of the various pressures that Community Foundations in particular were presented with in the field; that is, some Community Foundations were struggling to provide reporting data at the speed that the National Emergencies Trust required it, while the National Emergencies Trust was frustrated at the lack of speed in

Community Foundations reporting back, as these data would be useful in reporting back to funders and driving further intelligence to determine subsequent distribution of funds. One Community Foundation participant frames the tension as follows:

> *"The requests coming through [for data for the National Emergencies Trust] were not only unrealistic but actually muddled and there was no real purpose behind them. They felt like they should be asking for this sort of stuff, because wouldn't it be nice to know if we knew exactly how much was going to this group in this way."*

It may therefore be useful to have a mutually agreed data collection and reporting process at times of disaster, with understanding of the limitations of distribution partners, and the National Emergencies Trust's reporting priorities developed and agreed during times of non-disaster, as indicated by the interview participant above in their continued consideration:

> *"Normally with anything like this you would have six months of prep. We're already reporting on a daily basis on the grants we're making. You need to decide what you most need to know at this point in time. Is it around fundraising, is it around broadly allocating it across fairness criteria in determining that? What are you actually trying to direct? Where the grants are going, for what purpose? And doing it with a feedback loop that's almost immediate. To then change whether you use the data that's coming back from grant awards to decide what the future allocations are going to be. Because if you don't do that then that's not what the data is designed for, because it doesn't tell you that; it doesn't tell you where the demand is, it doesn't tell you what the future demand is, it doesn't tell you all of that."*

Addressing Intersectional Need

There is no question that identifying all those with unmet needs at times of disaster is challenging, not least given the scale of the pandemic and the far -reaching impact it had on the whole world. The National Emergencies Trust allocation formula was first derived by attempting to understand who would be experiencing hardship due to the pandemic; identifying those who were shielding (self-isolating) and those who had experienced job loss or other changes to their working potential (economic), as those in these situations may be unable to support themselves or access food or prescriptions and may be struggling financially due to such changes in their circumstances.

The National Emergencies Trust data from UKCF reporting included information on both beneficiary groups (those being funded) and service needs (what the needs were). These data were useful in helping identify what the above needs were, and who was experiencing them, and facilitated the development of a nuanced picture of developing need throughout the pandemic.

Evidence in May 2020 began emerging both in the media and in wider society of the variable impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in ethnically marginalised groups who were particularly vulnerable to facing hardships due to their intersectionality of ethnicity, coronavirus, and often other identity markers (e.g., disability, gender, socio-economic status). At this time, the National Emergencies Trust and Community Foundations' allocation and distribution strategies were questioned by Charity So White as being particularly exclusionary (Murray, 2020; Charity So White, 2020). The National Emergencies Trust attempted to use data collected from UKCF to identify groups that were underfunded or who were not captured by their allocation formula. This was evident from April 2020 but was given greater priority from mid-May and used both the processes mentioned above used by the Equity Scrutiny Group (formerly Equity Working Group) to identify previously unknown ethnic minority groups, and the June 2020 gap analysis to identify underfunded groups.

Through this approach, the National Emergencies Trust identified several beneficiary groups who were receiving less funding relative to the proportion of the population, and took measures explored in Part 2a to rectify this, including through the introduction of NFPs. Additional National Emergencies Trust funding was then allocated to these organisations, to increase service provision to those identified as receiving less funding through other means.

However, as noted previously, it was evident that data about the impact of the pandemic - particularly on these groups - were slow to appear, difficult to come by, and took time to integrate into decision-making (either through fully integrating into the allocation formula or otherwise). This is understandable due to the novel nature of the pandemic and because aggregate relevant data were hard to identify and access.

One challenge in identifying intersectional need identified by many of the National Emergencies Trust team members is that people facing intersectional hardship are unknown to grant makers or those making funding decisions because of their specific socio-demographic background and positioning. Additionally, as suggested by the interview participant below, grant-makers and distributers had simply not collected or recorded data in this way prior to the emergence of the evidence above, due to limited knowledge and experience of these wider groups:

> *"It's not just our data on BAME… it was that we didn't have good enough data generally. But that also meant that we didn't have good enough data on how much was going to BAME organisations as well. So because of that issue …, of primary beneficiary and secondary beneficiary, when National Emergencies Trust data team analysed the results from that, it was showing four or five percent max that was going to BAME groups. And we knew it was much higher, but [grantees] just weren't filling in the form in that, in a way that counted the information."*

The National Emergencies Trust and Community Foundations took proactive steps to address these issues, by seeking to widen their data collection, reporting, and collections strategies, and this has enabled them to broaden and diversify their grant allocation activities to reach more diverse groups. However, without a continued dialogue with people from diverse cross-sections of society, there is the risk that some groups may remain invisible or lack effective advocacy and voice to those in positions of power (e.g., for making decisions about where funding should be distributed). The National Emergencies Trust has taken steps to facilitate this dialogue with diverse groups through the implementation of both the Equity Scrutiny Group and Survivor's Advisory Group. However, there now remains the process of integrating what is learnt and the intelligence to emerge into planning and design for future allocation formula and grant allocation processes utilising recommendations for the development of these highlighted above.

Recommendations and Key Points

One of the National Emergencies Trust's core aims is to ensure equitable, impactful distribution of funds raised through any appeal in a manner that is demonstrably based on evidence of need and is transparent and equitable. To facilitate a manageable means of making allocation decisions within the wide geographical and societal affect that the Covid-19 pandemic presented, the National Emergencies Trust developed an allocation formula that facilitated the effective and equitable allocation of funds to 62 distribution partners across the course of the activation. Thereby, demonstrating the National Emergencies Trust's commitment to open, transparent, and non-discriminatory data-led grant-making. However, evaluation of the Allocation Formula and associated data collection, analysis (see Part 2a above) and use have highlighted the following key learning points to enable a more robust development and implementation of this commitment for future activations:

- The National Emergencies Trust made good use of the data collections and analysis expert available to them within the specific context presented by the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown. However, due to the voluntary nature of this expertise it was only available on a short-term basis and was particularly tailored to the needs of the contexts in which the National Emergencies Trust operates. This highlights the need to develop and secure specific expertise to analyse data sources for the National Emergencies Trust's purposes whether this be the National Emergencies Trust staff or through surge capacity or through academia / partnerships.

- The National Emergencies Trust should consider who is best placed to identify the needs of those impacted by disaster; whether this is best undertaken by the National Emergencies Trust, or whether this is most effectively undertaken by distribution partners. If the National Emergencies Trust uses a flexible model of grant distribution recommended in Part 2a, whereby in some disasters the National Emergencies Trust distributes funds directly to beneficiaries, they may choose to use one model for identification of need in these situations, and another model where distribution partners are brought in. In any model of grant distribution, it is important that the National Emergencies Trust establish from the outset who is responsible for identification of need and ensure that this responsibility is communicated clearly.

- The National Emergencies Trust is developing a prioritised framework of disaster needs; in doing so, it would be useful for the National Emergencies Trust to consider intersectionality of need and the various service needs of different groups. Such planning should consider the broader knowledge base on disaster vulnerability, especially among under-reached and under-represented groups. the National Emergencies Trust may consider using a model whereby allocation of funding considers the costs of services and equipment required, rather than costing all needs equivalently.

- In so doing the National Emergencies Trust should seek to work more closely with distribution partners to develop common data collection and recording methodologies that work within the parameters and limitations of both parties, whilst also developing the capacity of distribution partners to develop their own data collection and reporting mechanism.

- The National Emergencies Trust has begun to develop a dialectic, relational approach to data collection through establishing relationships with groups such as the Equity Scrutiny Group and Survivor's Advisory Forum. It is necessary to continue to invest in these mechanisms and processes whilst exploring means to incorporate qualitative, dialectical data into any future allocation formulae and need identification tools.

C. Communications, Fundraising and Building Relationships

The evaluation identifies a complex network of external stakeholders with whom the National Emergencies Trust engages from the outset of the pandemic. Much of the National Emergencies Trust's activity centres around external communications with the National Emergencies Trust's portfolio of distribution partners, emerging donors-base and other important stakeholders within the VCS and government, each of which appears to widen and flex throughout the course of the pandemic.

The National Emergencies Trust Executive and Board recognised that effective communications were central to the Coronavirus Appeal and that there were differing communication needs for differing groups - so sought to structure communications accordingly. Initially, communications and fundraising were delivered through three communications agencies as well as the British Red Cross. In addition, the National Emergencies Trust's own in-house communications and fundraising teams, processes, and platforms were developed as the nature of the appeal and the National Emergencies Trust's confidence and organisation developed.

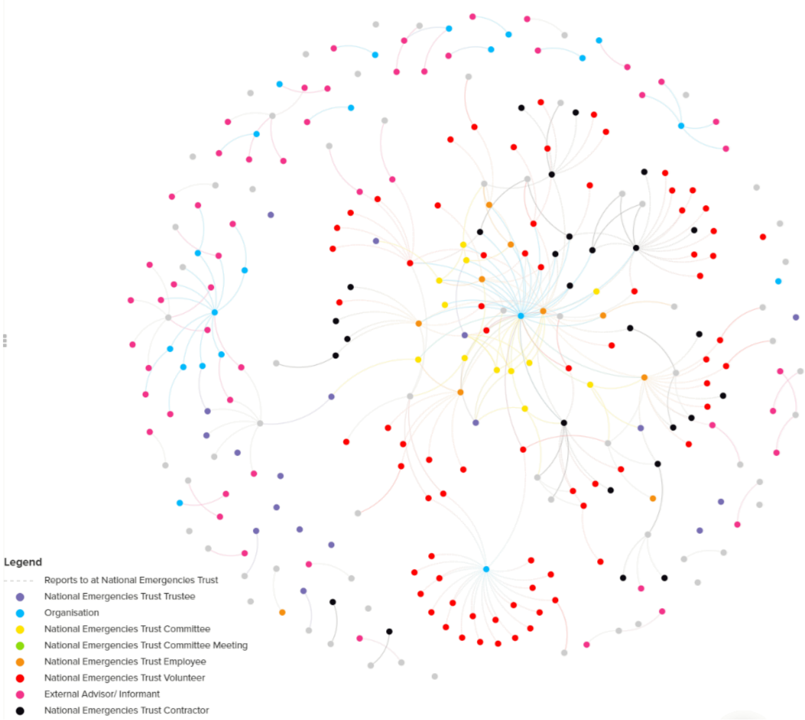

Figure 8: Network Map showing The National Emergencies Trust Network of people and committees

Figure 8 represents the staff, volunteers, and consultants that the National Emergencies Trust engaged with during the appeal that were identified through minutes and formal the National Emergencies Trust documentation. It highlights the size of the core team represented by the central cluster alongside the wider network around it which represents those volunteers and supporters of the National Emergencies Trust who supported the committees during the appeal.

This section considers the way in which the National Emergencies Trust's external communications, fundraising, and wider networks developed to accommodate the growing nature and complexity of the Coronavirus Appeal and contributed to the organisation's development. There are differences between fundraising, communications related to fund distribution and allocation, and engagement with external stakeholders. It is worth noting that that these are all interlinked and reflected in the complexity of interactions and relationships managed across the National Emergencies Trust by different teams and individuals.

Fundraising

1. Fundraising from the public

When the National Emergencies Trust was established in 2019, communication with the public was initially aimed at raising awareness with the intention of co-ordinating the fundraising efforts of the public in line with the originally envisaged purpose of the National Emergencies Trust. This intention is outlined by the interview participants below, as well as in pre-Coronavirus Appeal documentation.

> *"… that was the premise on which we [the National Emergencies Trust] put our operating model together, that we'd be like a hopper that brought in the generosity of the public."*

> *"… coordinating the patchwork of fundraising"*

To accommodate this role, an agreement was established with the British Red Cross, whereby the National Emergencies Trust would utilise the British Red Cross's fundraising infrastructure and expertise to receive and manage any incoming donations from any appeal. Thus, as one interview participant notes,

> *"the expectation was that the British Red Cross would run the fundraising, full stop".*

As such, the National Emergencies Trust had not yet developed a formal fundraising strategy prior to the appeal as part of their operational strategy. However, as one National Emergencies Trust team member below notes, the National Emergencies Trust Coronavirus Appeal is launched within a highly competitive and complex national fundraising space:

> *"So normally, National Emergencies Trust would be responding in a given community. And that's when you would pick up you know... so if something horrific happens in Macclesfield, or wherever the hell it is, and the same way with Grenfell, there's an upwelling of a national wish to help. And National Emergencies Trust was really created to deal with that. But because this happened everywhere you know, so National Emergencies Trust did pick up some of that. But you know, normally in a disaster, and you'll know this, normally if it's a local disaster… you are on the front page, you're the top banner headline, you're in the national news. So your appeal can be there. National Emergencies Trust's appeal couldn't be that, because everyone, every other charity was running an appeal, the government you know, everyone was just trying to... well we're still doing it now, every day. What the hell is this disease doing to us, and how is it going to affect our lives?"*

Within this field, the British Red Cross also felt pressure to respond, and subsequently launched their own appeal, which discussions with interviewee participants and within the minutes show result in concerns regarding a lack of both public awareness of the National Emergencies Trust's own appeal, as well as confusion about where and how funds were to be distributed. The National Emergencies Trust must consider and be aware of how it works with and reacts to such appeals including those such as Captain Tom's which gain media interest and virality during disasters. There is a consequent move to bring the National Emergencies Trust's public fundraising in-house. As such, the development of an active public fundraising approach on the part of the National Emergencies Trust can be tracked across the Coronavirus Appeal.

It was recognised by the board and the new and growing communications team early in the appeal that there was a need to connect with the giving public in more explicit and proactive ways. Discussions in the newly formed Communications Committee and - from April 2020 - the Fundraising Committee demonstrate that the aims of fundraising and communications developed to actively engage the public in fundraising activities such as the Big Night In, Final Replay 66, and the Big Give[4] events, whilst seeking to grow a broader public awareness of the National Emergencies Trust brand through traditional and social media sources.

This active fundraising approach matured as the appeal grew and the

4. The Big Night In, Final Replay 66, and the Big Give events were mass public fundraising events that the National Emergencies Trust partnered with to raise funds for the coronavirus appeal.

communications team developed a more sophisticated approach to communicating with the public and asking for funds. There was growing recognition that the public needed to be actively made aware of and encouraged to give to the National Emergencies Trust appeal, and in doing so would have a desire to know what their money was funding:

> *"I think it was the key part earlier on about the case studies, I think, it was about communicating the benefit and the impact of what was happening on the ground. So getting those images and videos and stories from the people that had received the funding….., I felt that that was important because it put the human story out there so people could understand from a previously unknown charity how was really helping people that needed it the most."*

The National Emergencies Trust established several additional roles across several teams to engage with Community Foundations and grant recipients to collect and collate case studies to service the needs of the growing communications and fundraising teams. Whilst simultaneously developing the National Emergencies Trust's more formal and proactive fundraising strategy with corporates, trusts and foundations and major donors (*See Figure 11*).

2. Fundraising from Organisations

An unexpected outcome of the National Emergencies Trust's first activation was what one interview participant describes as:

> *"This extraordinary outpouring of corporate funding which I just don't think they [the National Emergencies Trust] anticipated."*

Despite the "unanticipated" nature of the response to the appeal from corporate donors, as well as trusts and foundations, the National Emergencies Trust actively adapted, refined, and further developed their communications, active relationship building and fundraising over the course of the appeal with the assistance of external contractors. By the close of the appeal, the National Emergencies Trust had secured and distributed almost £64m from these to sources – 65% of the total income raised through the appeal.

Interviews and discussions within the minutes suggest that the National Emergencies Trust team were initially actively approached by these donors because of existing relationships with corporate donors and the Association of Charitable Foundations both within the executive and the board. For example, one interview participant expresses pride in how the National Emergencies Trust generated funding:

"The profile of the National Emergencies Trust is (sic) pretty much non-existent and they've done an incredible job. And I just wish that more people knew what they'd done. Because a huge amount of that funding, all the money that came in, is basically based off [the executive and board's] relationships and fundraising and, you know, amazing work that [they've] done."

However, after an initial flurry of donations, discussions within the Allocation, Communications, and Fundraising Committee meeting minutes and interviews evidence that the National Emergencies Trust tried to develop a more clear and proactive approach to requesting and securing support from donors. As one interview participant observes:

"A big part of it [The National Emergencies Trust's fundraising approach] was about fundraising as well as fund collecting. And I think that's the piece.... People won't give you money unless you fill in the application form. People don't give you money unless you make sure you make a presentation to the board. There's all that, it's not... I think there was a kind of fence of the board that'd just be about going - thanks very much, thanks very much for the money - see ya, we're spending it - and of course, it's [fundraising] not like that."

This more active and intentional fundraising approach also required a shift in the National Emergencies Trust's gift acceptance policy and subsequently, a change in how donations and relationships were managed once received. After an initial reticence to accept donor-restricted funds, the minutes show that the National Emergencies Trust developed a framework for assessing each funding offer and agreement on its own merits. This leads to the National Emergencies Trust securing several substantial gifts with which to extend its capacity to reach more beneficiaries and groups. This also required a shift in fundraising communication to deliver the individualised relationships and gifting experiences that researchers and leading practitioners find that donors who give large amounts seek (see for example Alborough, 2017; McDonald et.al., 2011; Cluff, 2009). As one the National Emergencies Trust team member observes, this requires a somewhat different approach to reporting and engaging than is initially conceived of by the National Emergencies Trust executive and board:

"And this is actually where with fundraising, with communications and with finance, it was difficult to articulate.... and indeed with my own team. It wasn't that you needed to say, that £1 million has been spent in you know, East Anglia on food banks. It was more that you needed to say, for £1 million, we can support X food banks, or whatever. So there was a kind of confusion there sometimes, to do with reporting and restricting. And I think going back to your earlier question, that's where

the board got a bit confused as well. Because reporting on it is different to restricting it, if that makes sense. And there was a kind of over... in my view, over focus on complicated data. Whereas actually, we just needed to tell people that £1 million had just been spent in East Anglia, and it had helped X people, and provided Y meals, or whatever it was. And that was... I'm not sure if anyone... I'm not sure that was well understood."

Later, the same participant notes that even those corporates who provide so called "unrestricted" grants, require far more engagement, stewardship, and support than is initially envisaged by a pure "fund collection" model:

"... corporate funding does come with strings attached. And because a lot of the corporate funding came from employees of a corporate taking actions. So let's take an example, so if you take [corporate donor], made up of multiple different [subsidiary organisations] raised 10 million pounds - fantastic relationship. A lot of that came from the individual activation of employees. Which doesn't happen by default, that happens because somebody on the fundraising team is providing them with content, and working with them every day, and really stewarding it. So yes, some of the donations are just straight donations, but an awful lot of those big ones were employee and promotionally based."

Consequently, this generated the recruitment and building of a large campaigns team which included digital communications, more general communications, and mass fundraising, as well as a dedicated fundraising team that was resourced using external contractors; paid consultants and volunteers – many of whom become paid staff as the appeal progressed. As such, the National Emergencies Trust evolved throughout the pandemic to begin to resemble and behave as a mature fundraising - and distribution - agency. The evolution of the National Emergencies Trust's fundraising strategy and operations also meant that its position within the sector also evolved. This creates challenges, one of which is around competing in the fundraising space, as indicated by one interview participant:

"Yeah, you see I bet National Emergencies Trust was never really set up to fundraise. It was set up to be a receptacle for funding that people want to give in response to a disaster. And I think, if you step into the fundraising space, then you are competing with other organisations, and I don't know that that's something National Emergencies Trust should be doing."

However, interview participants broadly recognise that the National Emergencies Trust has developed over the course of its first activation into an effective fundraiser and its unique position lies in being able to generate and maintain the support of corporate donations, whilst also providing a suitable means for trusts and foundations to speedily respond to crisis where their own existing granting systems do not allow for this. This led the following interview participant to suggest a refocussing of the National Emergencies Trust's broader communications strategy:

> *"Do we want to be public facing [in our fundraising] so are our media outlets, you know, the broadsheets and local radio? Or do we want to be the people that work at slightly less brand recognition amongst the general public, more credibility in Trust, amongst the strategic givers, and there're we're the people that immediately get into you know, via the head office, we get into bed with the local banks when there's a local emergency? So I, I mean it's not a binary decision, but if I was sitting on the trustee role, I'd be saying, we need to be clear about this. Because it absolutely drives our spend, and our income. I would also say, it's going to be a lot less expensive to focus on the chunkier givers than on the public."*

Given the evidenced success of and the processes, structures, and relationships the National Emergencies Trust has established, engagement with the fundraising and philanthropic research suggests that the National Emergencies Trust should seek to consolidate, build on and develop frameworks to build on these processes in preparation for future appeals (need to find citation here). More importantly, the evidence suggests that deeper engagement with larger corporate partners both provides and supports access to and engagement with a wider range of donors including public donors, corporates, employee and customer bases, other high net-worth individuals, and new, forming, and existing trusts and foundations.

Distributors and Grant Recipients Communications and Engagement

There is evidence throughout the minutes and interviews of robust communications between the UKCF and the National Emergencies Trust with UKCF representation on the Allocations Committee and Equity Scrutiny Group. The UKCF provides regular reports on grant distributions, as well as their own Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion framework development and other COVID-19 responses. Key National Emergencies Trust staff members also regularly attend UKCF meetings, as outlined by the interview participant below. The extent to which direct relationships with individual Community Foundations and end grant recipients are established will be explored further in Phase 2 of the study:

"UKCF set up weekly, Monday lunchtime [meetings], I think they might have happened even more often that weekly in the first few weeks, it was probably every two or three days, liaison meetings. And we had them from UKCF, and often [staff member], or one of the other you know, fabulous National Emergencies Trust volunteers. Would be meeting with the UKCF, with the chief execs, and there was a really rich exchange of conversations you know."

There is additional evidence that staff members from across the National Emergencies Trust structure communicated directly with UKCF staff. As noted previously, the National Emergencies Trust structure rapidly expanded and changed and this contributed to unstandardised data collection and unclear and multiple reporting criteria and processes. These factors appeared to lead to some perceived over-burdening and confused communications between the UKCF and the National Emergencies Trust. However, these are broadly overcome and resolved as the relationships between key staff members in each organisation strengthen and develop across the appeal.

Communications with NFPs appear to be more structured with the establishment of a more robust grant application process and reporting criteria and structures as discussed in Part 2b of this report. The impact of these communications on funding partners and their beneficiaries will be further explored in Phase 2 of this evaluation.

Direct communications and interaction with end grant recipients and communities lies predominantly with the National Emergencies Trust's distribution partners - whether this be individual Community Foundations, NFPs or Comic Relief – who advertise funding opportunities, manage grant applications, make grant decisions, distribute grants, manage ongoing communications, reporting, and feedback directly with grant recipients. The extent to which these communication and grant-making practices are effective will be investigated during Phase 2 of the evaluation. However, the National Emergencies Trust does seek to support and bolster distribution partners' engagement with recipients with their own communications. The minutes demonstrate a reliance on press releases to mainstream media outlets, including print and broadcast, voluntary sector specific, and social media to communicate with the public and targeted beneficiary groups. Whilst there is no readily available data on the impact of these communications, there is some evidence within conversations with the National Emergencies Trust staff of intended and potential recipients seeking to secure funding and/or help from the National Emergencies Trust directly. One interview participant provides the following examples:

"I only would hear stories coming back after they'd been funded, or I would hear some groups that I'd spoken to early on in the appeal and they would say, yeah we've run out of money and not able to get a grant from the Community Foundation, or, I'm not sure what to do next. And we would always point them at how they can get funding again. There were specific channels that they would be able to go to, to reapply for… so I would hear about recurring need. But as far as any stats went, we would only hear about how it was spent, we wouldn't… Oh, no hang on, there is a good thing, [our team] would receive contact from members of the public from other charities to say, how can we get support, we are in this situation, blah-blah-blah, you know, some of them were quite personal, it would come from, you know, a mother herself saying, I'm struggling, how can I get help? And there was a set kind of line to take to say, please reach out, our community foundations… not our community foundations, the community foundations are open and accepting claims, reach out to them, and if there isn't any comeback then, you know, reach back out to us. So there was a… if there were any needs that were brought to our side of the organisation we would point them in the direction of how to make an application for a grant."

From early in the appeal, the minutes do record that the communications team identify challenges in targeting communications at BAME and "under-funded" beneficiary groups that were identified through the gap analysis conducted in June 2020. There is evidence in the Equity Scrutiny Group and Communications Committee minutes, as well as descriptions from some interview participants, that from May 2020 the Equity Scrutiny Group assisted the communications team in identifying additional and new relevant communications outlets for advertising grants and recruitment to reach these groups.

The UKCF BAME Infrastructure Fund was established in partnership with Comic Relief to resolve some of the above communications and reach issues, as well as to develop the capacity of these groups to access funding as noted in Part 2b. The NFPs programme adopts a similar approach. However, there is no evidence to suggest that the National Emergencies Trust engaged with recipient individuals or groups directly and relationships are maintained with UKCF, Comic Relief and the NFPs organisations. It is not always apparent that end recipients are aware that the National Emergencies Trust is the originating donor. Thus, here the National Emergencies Trust adopts a traditional grant distribution approach in which relationships with recipient groups is mediated by intermediary distribution partners. The relative strengths and weaknesses of various versions of this approach have already been explored in Part 2b of this report, as well as the wider literature on grant-making (see for e.g., Ostrander & Schervish, 1990; Daly, 2011; Leat, 2016). However, in terms of communications and broader relationship and network building there may be trade-offs to be made in terms of establishing the National Emergencies Trust's overall profile when seeking the support of the public and future donors who are seeking to understand the National Emergencies Trust's role, as well as future funding and distribution partnerships that incorporate the fair, equitable and accessible grant distribution mechanisms that the National Emergencies Trust seeks.

Wider External Communications and Relationship Building

Key to the National Emergencies Trust's successful fundraising and distribution was the organisation's ability to activate its wider networks and existing and emerging relationships to establish its credibility within the UK's philanthropic and VCS disaster response field. Whilst the National Emergencies Trust is working to build its public profile, it is evident in interviews with external stakeholders in particular that the National Emergencies Trust board and executive are both active and instrumental in establishing working relationships with key figures and organisations within government, various media outlets, VCS, and major corporate and trust and foundation donors as outlined in the first part of this section.

Notably, the National Emergencies Trust board and executive also use both their professional and personal networks to great effect to bolster resources and build the National Emergencies Trust's infrastructure in what can only be described as the "constrained" circumstances presented by a national lockdown. This is particularly evident in the National Emergencies Trust volunteers and staff's descriptions of the recruitment process with more than half describing existing connections or relationships with the core or wider National Emergencies Trust team. Additional external relationships associated with the National Emergencies Trust's core operational purpose and strategy were not formalised or negotiated within the four months since the National Emergencies Trust's launch in November 2019 and the launch of the Coronavirus Appeal in March 2020, such as relationships with key media outlets and stakeholders. These appear to have been activated and secured for the purposes of the Coronavirus Appeal through existing staff, volunteer, contractor, and board networks.

However, the lack of an existing formal agreement in some instances appears to have slightly hindered or delayed some of the National Emergencies Trust's desired work, especially with regards to fundraising from the public. For example, the minutes show that negotiations with a national broadcaster to feature or back the appeal appear to have been difficult to secure in the early part of the appeal. This, however, changes rapidly as the National Emergencies Trust is selected as one of the recipients of the DCMS match funding associated with a large-scale televised fundraising event.

The National Emergencies Trust volunteers, staff, and contractors are also seen to be proactive in utilising their own networks to facilitate access to expertise and support. For example, the small team of data experts are proactive in establishing or driving forward the National Emergencies Trust's involvement with the DCMS Data Sub-Group, and members of the Finance Team secure the support and expertise of former colleagues to gain knowledge and understanding of specialised accounting packages. However, the evidence also suggests that the longevity of involvement within these networks or external relationships remains dependent on individual volunteers, staff members, or contractors and many external relationships with wider stakeholders are abandoned or lost once a volunteer leaves the National Emergencies Trust, such as the National Emergencies Trust's involvement with the DCMS Data Sub-group.

The infancy of both the National Emergencies Trust and related envisaged VCS response network evident at the onset of the pandemic and the National Emergencies Trust's first activation meant that some of the anticipated networks and associated relationships were not able to be activated and developed in the way that the National Emergencies Trust team had anticipated and planned for. One such primary relationship is the VCSEP noted by this interview participant:

> *"Whereas when we go back to the original design, the Emergency Partnership was supposed to have all the consortium of organisations, and the sort of connection to the communities in which they'd be operating. And the National Emergencies Trust would work closely with the Emergency Partnership and fund some of that. And so that didn't materialise."*

In response, the National Emergencies Trust worked hard to redevelop these networks through the UKCF and Community Foundation network in the first instance, which interview participants highlight as a key success for the National Emergencies Trust as it enabled a deeper, nationwide distribution and engagement with key local stakeholders (even in lockdown conditions), as evidenced in this interview extract:

> *"But normally you know, or we now have in every community through the community foundation... and it's a great strength you know. So all*

Community Foundation Chief Execs will know the Chief Execs and leaders of their top tier local authorities. They will know their Lord Lieutenants, they will know their Chief Constables, and they will be able to mediate conversations for the National Emergencies Trust. Because you know, everyone's parochial. the National Emergencies Trust needs the door... you know, local politicians need to know why the smart folk from London are rocking up. And if their local Chief Exec of the community foundations says, these are the good guys, they're going to help bring money in, this is what we did through the pandemic. Then you know, the arms are going to be open, and it's going to be, come on down. So I can you know, I see a very positive future for the National Emergencies Trust built on the track record of you know, of what's already been done."

As the National Emergencies Trust's understanding of need matured and developed, it actively sought to widen its VCS network and relationships with key groups through the UKCF BAME Infrastructure Fund, Comic Relief Global Majority Fund and most significantly, the Equity Scrutiny Group. However, there is some evidence in the minutes and interviews that whilst these activities do begin to widen the National Emergencies Trust's distribution to - and connection with - these groups, it was noted that there was still a degree of homogeneity with the National Emergencies Trust's governance structure. One stakeholder remarked that it became difficult to secure involvement on the ESG and Allocations Committee from representatives of certain groups and communities:

"But I'm not sure why it's not working in terms of getting non race members. I mean I would have thought that certainly the disability sector is big enough to get people from the disability, you know, from there. Mental Health, you know. The others are sort of... may find it more difficult, so I don't know why. I mean we've never had that discussion, which again I think would be useful in the equity steering group to see why our membership is limited to the race sector."

Another interview participant recognised that building new networks and relationships was slow and difficult, especially within an active response to a crisis and in conditions where relationships needed to be built from a distance:

"I think the National Emergencies Trust was trying to make strong relationships really quickly through the Equity Scrutiny Group, and I think that those relationships didn't stand up to the pressure of the situation with lack of information. So I think investing in building stronger and more respectful consultative relationships before the crisis

even kicks off, I think that would stand the National Emergencies Trust in… I think that would be the right thing for the National Emergencies Trust to do."

The evidence reviewed indicates that the National Emergencies Trust has done much to establish core fundraising relationships; deeper working relationships with distribution networks have been active in activating networks to extend and bolster resources and infrastructure, as well as extended their reach and engagement with BAME and groups with protected characteristics. A key consideration is the importance of building on these emerging relationships to develop and consolidate a consultative, relational stakeholder network that can be trusted and activated in future disasters to affect the speed, agility, and equitable response that is at the heart of the National Emergencies Trust's strategic mission.

Recommendations and Key Points

The National Emergencies Trust adapted and developed its communications strategy and approach effectively and efficiently over the course of the Coronavirus Appeal. This was largely achieved through activating the networks of the board and its core executive to enable and facilitate a hugely successful fundraising campaign and bolster its human resources and access to key expertise. Additionally, the analysis of the minutes, core documentation, and interviews show how the National Emergencies Trust's extended team actively sought external relationships to strengthen and build its networks to develop a more comprehensive and robust distribution network. This allowed the National Emergencies Trust to respond to need as it was identified. It is apparent that these approaches contributed to an evolution of both the National Emergencies Trust's strategic framework and operational capacity over the course of the pandemic. This would be expected from a new and emerging organisation. Within this context, the following key points are worth noting and considering:

- The National Emergencies Trust's fundraising approach and strategy can be seen to move from one of passive fund collecting to active fundraising from the public, but more notably from major corporate and trust and foundation donors through the development of key relationships within the networks of the National Emergencies Trust's board and executive. Given this evolution the National Emergencies Trust should evaluate the extent to which the move away from its fundraising and communications approach is permanent and applicable to the more localised appeals it originally anticipated. There is a clear opportunity to build on the successful relationships established and the related structures and skillset that were established during its first appeal. In doing so, the National Emergencies Trust can enhance its emerging mass donor and public communications at times of activation to develop an ongoing relational fundraising approach that is recognised within the field to be cost-, resource-, and time-effective in times of active fundraising (see key accessible fundraising texts). A key consideration is how the National Emergencies Trust sustains these relationships between activations, and outside of the transactional and less personalised digital and direct marketing approaches associated with mass public fundraising without burdening individual National Emergencies Trust team members, while also ensuring continuity and ease of seeking support when appeals are launched.

- Related to the above point is that the National Emergencies Trust has moved to become an active fundraiser within an already competitive disaster fundraising field. A focus on the National Emergencies Trust's evident corporate and relational fundraising capacity will go some way to mitigate and manage competition within the disaster fundraising sector, as the National Emergencies Trust further establishes and refines its unique positioning and contribution within the field.

- It is evident that the National Emergencies Trust has put together a team and created an environment in which staff and volunteers are both willing and have the capacity to activate and draw on their own networks to provide extra resource, as well as extend, develop, and maintain the National Emergencies Trust's distribution network and fundraising capacity. However, considering the evidence indicating that some of these networks and relationships are abandoned when volunteers or staff leave the National Emergencies Trust, establishing ways of sharing relationship and stakeholder management will ensure continuity and coordination of communications, as well as prevent overburdening of staff or stakeholders, partners, and donors.

- Analysis here suggests that whilst the National Emergencies Trust is effective at activating and instrumentalising various strategic relationships, these networks may be somewhat homogenous in terms of personal and professional lived experiences, which may limit the potential to work most effectively for those in greatest unmet need at times of disaster, across the charity sector. As such, the National Emergencies Trust should continue to aim to develop partnerships between different actors in the sector. To this aim, the National Emergencies Trust should consider finding (and re-connecting with) those with mutual or overlapping values but different objectives, to ensure that the National Emergencies Trust works collaboratively and effectively across the sector. In addition, this should avoid unintentional competition for resources (donations, sector support) and doubling up the provision of support for some beneficiaries, while missing out other beneficiary groups.

D. Governance, Organisational Infrastructure and Decision Making

The National Emergencies Trust rapidly expanded its operation since the launch of the Coronavirus Appeal on 17 March 2020, developing a large team of trustees, executive team, staff, contractors, and volunteers. The National Emergencies Trust's appeal governance is structured across the board of trustees, and eight committees and groups, with the Allocations Committee meeting almost daily for a considerable period at the beginning of the appeal. The resulting strategy and operational documents, minutes and accompanying reports show diligence in record keeping and transparency that has been invaluable in developing an understanding of how the core decision making groups communicated and shared relevant information.

It is evident that to expand its operation the staff/volunteer team also changed during this time, initially growing rapidly and then contracting during the latter stages of summer of 2020 and during Waves 2 and 3 to a core team. There is no doubt that the people the National Emergencies Trust was able to activate and engage during this time were (and remain) motivated, enthusiastic and focused on the task of supporting individuals and communities affected by the pandemic.

In this section, the records kept by the National Emergencies Trust team are drawn on, along with an analysis of in-depth interviews with key members of the broader National Emergencies Trust team to explore how the National Emergencies Trust's governance, organisational and decision-making structures have flexed over the course of the first activation, with a view to identifying areas of best practice to replicate and develop in preparation for future activations.

Evolving Governance and Organisational Infrastructure

The National Emergencies Trust's model was to grow/surge its capacity at activation based on a planned core structure of 2.5 executive staff and a 12-member volunteer board of trustees. This model is in many ways a requirement of the way the organisation has set up allowing it to keep overheads low and be ready for significant emergencies when they occur. As this was a new organisation the National Emergencies Trust had run desktop exercises and researched the best models for standing up to respond to emergencies and had experts on their Board and wider network with experience of these models. Based on these desktop exercises and an initial assessment of the likely duration and impact of the Coronavirus Appeal, the core executive proposed the initial National Emergencies Trust Coronavirus Appeal Structure shown in Figure 9. This structure was discussed by the Board on the 25 March 2020 reflects the learning and specific requirements that this appeal created.

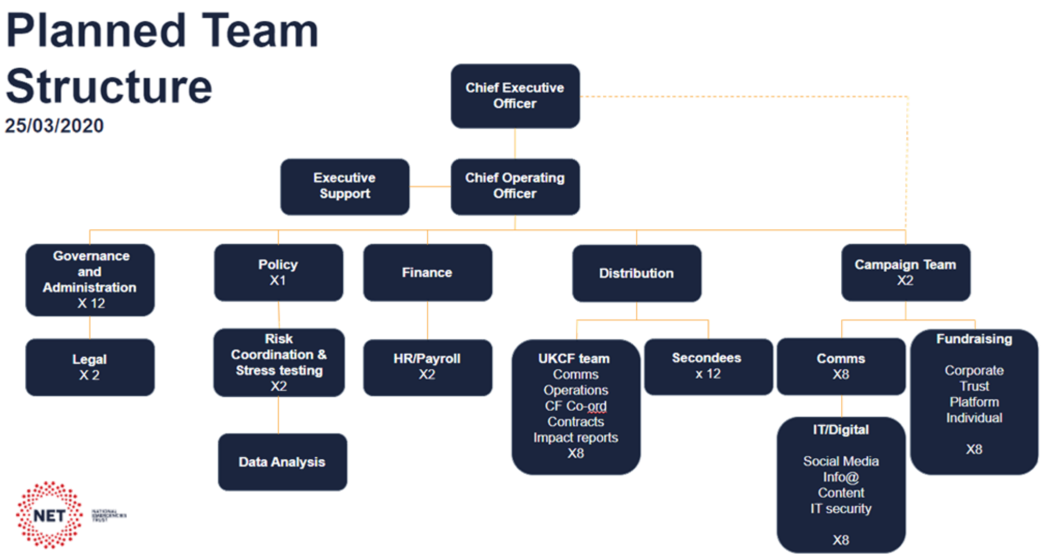

Figure 9: Planned team structure as of 25 March 2020

This planned team structure covers the top line requirements that might be expected and did not change significantly even at the height of the first wave at the end of May 2020 (Figure 10). The developed structures highlight the ability to activate the National Emergencies Trust's staff and board networks to bring in organisations and individuals to support the appeal.

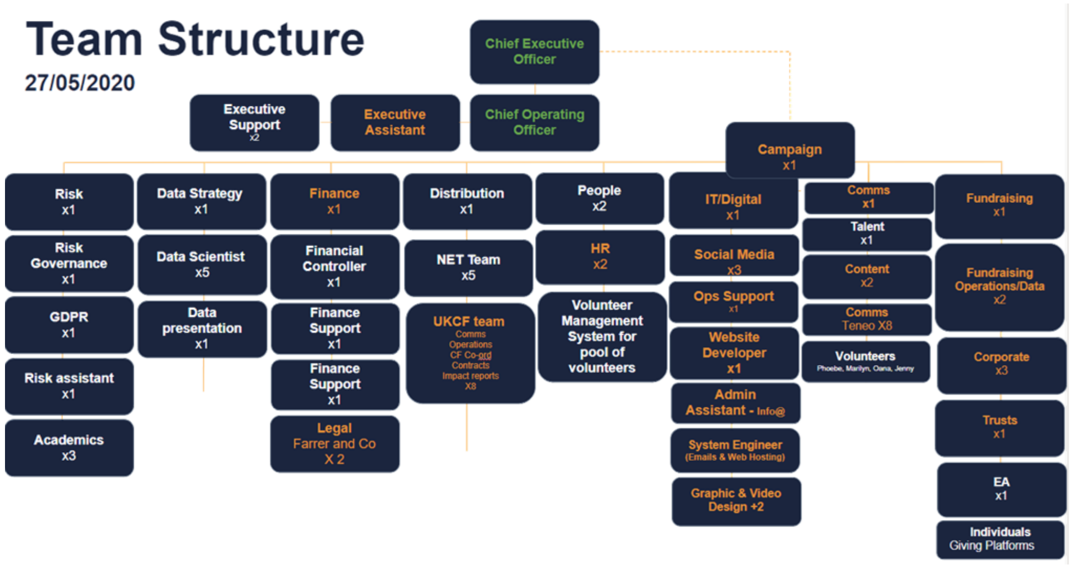

Figure 10: Revised team structure as of 27 May 2020

Through review of the National Emergencies Trust documentation and discussion with the National Emergencies Trust personnel as part of the evaluation it is evident that a new National Emergencies Trust structure was developed based on a review during the appeal to reflect the learning undertaken during the appeal (Figure 11). This new structure highlights a balanced focus on Communications, Fundraising, Distribution and EDI, Finance and HR/Governance with staff resource to cover these roles designed into the structure that describes a 3-year plan for this approach. It is evident through reviewed documentation that further thinking is ongoing regarding how to ensure surge capacity, especially around fundraising. Given the need to surge and flex, it is important that job descriptions and role profiles are created for these surge roles ahead of the next activation along with organograms and management support to create clear and open lines or responsibility and tasking for volunteers. Due to the voluntary nature of many of these roles, it is advisable for the National Emergencies Trust to test these with proposed partners and volunteers to ensure a robust support network can be activated during future emergencies.

Figure 11: New structure considered by National Emergencies Trust

Figures 10-12 demonstrate that the National Emergencies Trust has evolved its structures as the pandemic has progressed and considered how to incorporate learning from their first activation. The initial governance structure of the National Emergencies Trust is shown in Figure 13; during the appeal, key changes to the governance structure were made to include the Equity Scrutiny Group, while the complaints committee was dropped. This again indicates the National Emergencies Trust's desire to be agile and respond to changing need and demand.

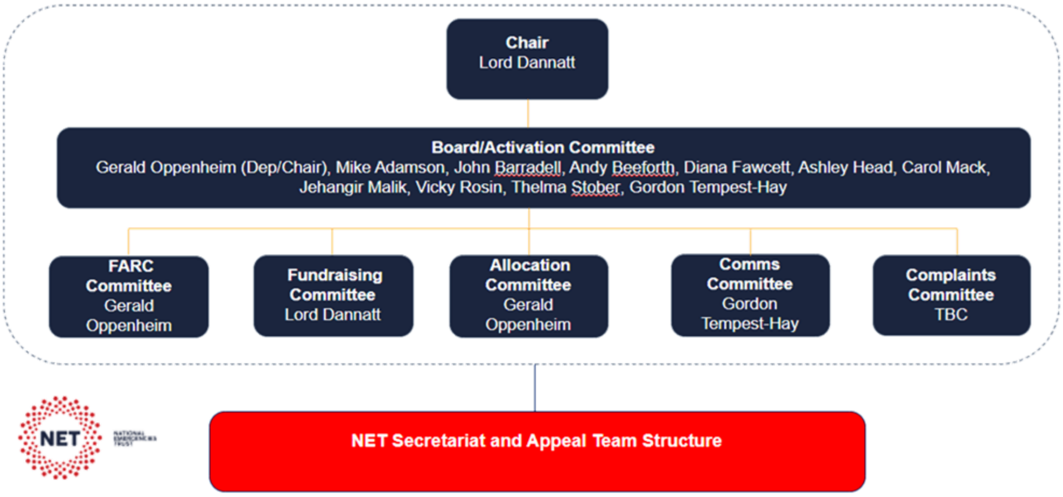

Figure 12: Appeal governance structure.

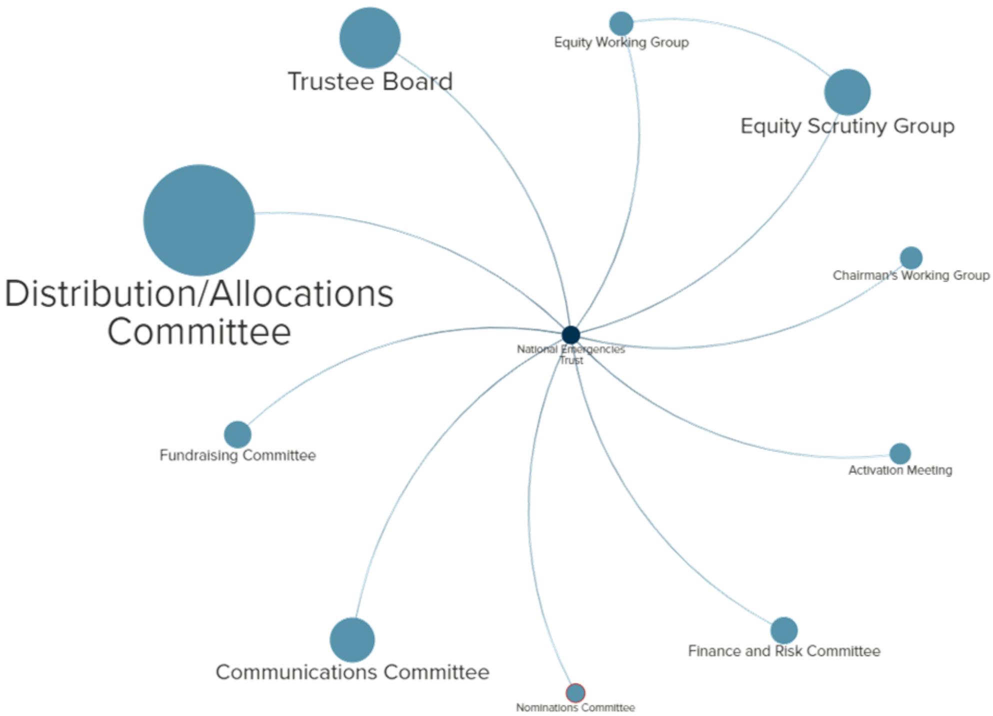

Figure 13: The National Emergencies Trust Committees sized by number of meetings held during the coronavirus appeal (minimum = 1, maximum = 64)

Decision making, inter-committee and staff communication

As the Coronavirus appeal moved through time and demands changed, the National Emergencies Trust reacted to this and changed/updated their aims and strategic objectives in line with their evolving role in a national emergency. This is reflected within the changing governance and staffing structures above. In response to these evolving aims and objectives were a series of corresponding adaptations to the originally planned for decision making and communications strategies and structures that are evident in documentation and minutes prior to the Coronavirus Appeal activation.

An analysis of the changing Terms of References for each existing and newly developed committee and advisory group demonstrates clearly that decision making responsibilities change with the Board having final say on all decisions. However, as Terms of References are not often revisited or developed after committees are formed or change, there is some indication that not all committee members or those outside of individual committees are always clear on what these changes are and how these should affect decision making processes. This put a considerable strain on some committees who often met regularly whilst waiting for board sign-off. This is especially the case with regards to the Allocations Committee who met almost daily and then several times a week during the appeal, discussing various permutations of the allocation formula and proposed distributions (outlined in Part 2b), which in turn increased the workload of key members of the National Emergencies Trust executive to service these meetings.

There is evidence of informal reporting between committees and the board on decisions made from trustees' cross-committee memberships. This appears to have been an intentional strategy on the part of some key trustees to attempt to embed continuity and co-ordination of the recognised complex decisions that needed to be made across the appeal and distribution. The interviewee below frames this approach as follows:

> *"So it's very key that those subcommittees actually work well. And that in general, the board doesn't just rubber stamp what they say, because obviously you know, there are opinions and there are other things that have been brought into it. But in general you really go along with what's coming to the table from those committees. So I think it's essential that you've got two or three trustees that are actually on several of those committees. So they can understand the whole logic and understand the thread of what we're trying to do is being consistently interpreted across the way those various committees are chaired."*

There is, however, evidence from the minutes and interviews that suggest that this inter-committee communication, dependent as it is on key members of staff and/or trustees reporting between groups, can be variable. For example, the minutes indicate that reporting from the Equity Scrutiny Group to the Allocations Committee declines or alters significantly in Waves 2 and 3 after there is a change in staffing. This leaves some committee members unclear of what decisions do reach the board or what the outcomes of some discussions and/ or input from various committees are. As one committee member notes:

> *"But it's not always clear, like I described the sessions about saying I wanted to see more of as planning session on how the [committee] took on its role … I've never seen that. So, you know, so the things where I feel we're making suggestions and I'm not sure where they go. I mean as an example recently [staff member] invited us to comment on the work [they were] doing … and we met, we talked about it, I had a very strong view on what was being planned, but I'm not sure what happened after that."*

Additionally, decisions were not always clearly minuted or recorded or consistently shared among the various committees or at board meetings; and as such, form an incomplete decision log on which members of various committees can assess decisions reached and where their specific decision processes may fit in or have an impact. Part of this is explained by the sheer intensity of the activation. A notable exception to the above, is the inception of the Equity Scrutiny Group that introduced summaries of decisions made in the Allocations Committee and Board meetings and by the staff team. However, as noted by the interviewee above, it is not always clear within these written summaries how and where decisions and advice provided from the Equity Scrutiny Group impact or make their way into the final decisions made at Board level. Later in the activation, there is evidence of written summaries of Equity Scrutiny Group recommendations with regards to the selection of National Funding Partners being presented to the Board and Allocations Committee, however, there appears to be no formal feedback to the Equity Scrutiny Group itself or across other committees other than the Allocations Committee and Board. Nevertheless, these written summaries and briefing documents appear to enable clearer and faster decisions to be made by the Board and Allocations Committee and is worth replicating across other decision-making processes both within the Board and across committees.

There is clear evidence in the minutes and in interviews of instruction and comment from the committees and the Board to staff through core executive representation at meetings. There is also reporting and information provision through papers and reports produced by members of the staff team as well as through staff representation at meetings to the committees and the Board. Furthermore, interviews with staff and volunteers outline initiatives to establish reporting structures via weekly staff team meetings online between the executive and core members of the team. However, many staff and volunteers felt that they had little input into or clear understanding of how decisions are made and their role within them, and the efficacy of these structures remains unclear. The interviewee below captures how this lack of clarity impacted their work as they come into the organisation at a later stage of the activation:

> *"The work was extraordinarily difficult to kind of pick up. And because everyone was working so intensely, and again, it was very clear from literally the first couple of days, of you know, people were clearly still working late into the evening, getting up early in the morning and working. There was very limited kind of structure outside of the kind of governance you know, the committee and the board structures really, to have an opportunity to kind of have a more collective kind of discussion and understand it. Because it was you know, understandably so kind of task focussed."*

The importance of clear reporting structures for work effectiveness and understanding of the decisions and directions taken by the organisation is evident from the interview data. It is, therefore, important that from the outset of each activation the National Emergencies Trust builds in communication strategies and structures with its staff base and between the different committees that are sustainable throughout an appeal.

The role of existing strategic frameworks in decision making and guiding work

Prior to activation for the Coronavirus Appeal in March 2020, the primary role of the National Emergencies Trust executive was to develop and put into place the strategic frameworks and policies to guide the National Emergencies Trust's future operations and any activations. These and their adaption through the timeline within the activation have been tracked through the documentation provided by the National Emergencies Trust. As is repeatedly observed through this report the extent and nature of the Coronavirus crisis coupled with the evolving role of the National Emergencies Trust at the time of activation means that it becomes clear that there is a general perception within both the Board and executive that many of the pre-prepared frameworks were not considered suitable for this appeal. As the Allocations Committee member below outlines, the nature of the anticipated decisions that would need to be made were somewhat different than those envisaged whilst the National Emergencies Trust was being established:

> *"Yeah, it's just that... if you think about it, we weren't making the sorts of decisions as an allocation committee we were expecting to have to make. We were thinking there would be an emergency that was in a*

discrete place. That it will be obvious which Community Foundation was responding to it. And the sort of decisions the Allocation Committee would be making was similar to the ones that got made by the London Bombing Charitable Relief Trust. When it decides you know, how much do you give to a dependent, who counts as a dependent, what happens if someone is injured? The thinking was that it... not even explicitly, but just that was certainly the expectation. That it would be those sort of decisions we were making, and those are they sorts of things we heard about. Whereas in reality, this was an emergency that was happening across the UK. Do you just hand all that money over to UKCF? Well you can't do that, then you're not taking seriously your responsibilities as a trustee. You have to decide where that money is best spent. And it's that that we didn't have an answer to. We were working on this allocation formula. Rather, we were giving feedback and insight to the person working on the allocation formula would be a more accurate description of what we were doing. And also, we were getting updates as to how much money there was to be distributed."

It is evident that policies were altered or abandoned in favour of other ways of working in response to the unanticipated scale of activation on planned operations. However, as decisions were not always recorded in committees it is not possible to evaluate the rationale for changes to decision making processes. For example, the generic activation and appeal guidance policy and monitoring framework (see the National Emergencies Trust Operating Model Process) developed in 2019/early 2020 appears not to have been used to either inform this activation decision, nor manage the ensuing appeal and distribution. This fragmented reference to existing policies in committees, as well as monitoring, reporting and operational documents likely contributed to the issues with cross-organisational reporting and communications identified in the previous section. This also impacted on staff performance (see following sub-section) because there was lack of clarity around the National Emergencies Trusts evolution in terms of its role and expected response within the sector.

Analysis of existing policies, strategic frameworks and operational documents highlight a focus on the point of activation of any one appeal. Thus, initial decision-making monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes are based on KPI's, assessment of risk and outputs focussed on the efficacy and speed of the launch of an appeal and in anticipation of response to impact on individuals and communities in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. Yet, it is noted in previous studies such as those by Leat (2018) and others, that the voluntary and community sector organisations and charities, who are the National Emergencies Trust's target distributors and recipients of funds raised, work in a space that is not necessarily in the immediate response phase, but rather in the medium- to longer- term beyond the onset of a disaster. And as the Covid-19 pandemic has evidenced the response required may require a commitment from grant-makers beyond the initial, active, and high-profile stage of any given disaster. A recognition of this and subsequent development of strategic and operational frameworks focussed on operations beyond the point of activation may have assisted with guiding some of the National Emergencies Trust's responses to the longer-term and emerging impacts, such as the variable effect of the pandemic on BAME groups. In doing so, some of the "narratives of immediacy" associated with a strategy focussed on responding to the immediate impact of disaster may have been mitigated and allowed the National Emergencies Trust to develop alternate distribution or clearer granting criteria earlier on in the appeal (Leat, 2018). Initiating this would enable the National Emergencies Trust to step back from a "task focussed" approach and may facilitate a more strategic view as to how to move beyond activation and assist the National Emergencies Trust in resolving some of the issues identified around the adoption of grant making models and approaches to identification of need identified in Parts 2A & B of this report.

Organisational and workplace culture

Staff and volunteers expressed pride at being part of this appeal and everything that it achieved but there were also some areas to improve on that may have further enhanced the appeal for those who worked on it. These are clustered around role profiles and tasks, work loading, and skills, the way teams worked with each other and the model to grow for an appeal. In any organisation that grows rapidly and engages volunteers of varying timelines and roles it can be difficult to track and support these individuals, this is exacerbated during a national pandemic when staff were online and onboarded and supported remotely. Our analysis has identified 394 individuals who have some connection to the National Emergencies Trust Coronavirus Appeal. These individuals and organisations highlight the ability of the National Emergencies Trust to engage people to support the core mission of the National Emergencies Trust, but it also raises challenges too. As one interviewee highlighted:

> *"The team of people that work there are really, really brilliant people and they would put their all into it, and it almost felt like you were part of that and you were able to help and you were able to, you know, carry some of the load. So it became one of those things that you know that*

you're doing good, you see the money is going to the right people, you see that they are raising huge amounts of money and it was just kind of all hands to the pump."

However, it was also clear that some people who supported the National Emergencies Trust faced challenges and barriers based on the speed of the growth and the clarity of role profiles and tasking that was requested. The same individual stated that,

"because the whole organisation blew up so quickly it was not always so kind of strictly laid out of how things should work."

The rapid change in need and requirements of the appeal also appear to have stretched some people at the National Emergencies Trust and made them question if the infrastructure was set up in a sustainable way:

"So it was very… and I think the commitment that they required, we're talking seven days a week, two o'clock in the morning phone calls, you know, it was very, very intense."

This process of reaching out and engaging people to support the National Emergencies Trust worked. Core staff and the board activated their networks and brought together powerful teams to deal with the appeal as the National Emergencies Trust needed them, but this approach was seen by some as ad hoc. In future activations the National Emergencies Trust needs to develop a robust and developed recruitment model that builds from the required roles they created in this activation and develops a set of role specifications and job descriptions that can be recruited to and shared with potential recruitment pathways and organisations such as Associated Charitable Foundations and First Aid Nursing Yeomanry. One interviewee suggested that the National Emergencies Trust needed:

"a clear set of responsibilities, clear definition of that 'I joined with the title of […]', without sort of really knowing what it was. And kind of quickly realised that it kind of really wasn't defined that well, sort of no job description"

By creating clear roles, the National Emergencies Trust team would be more productive and able to work clearly together, avoiding uncertainty and repetition of effort. Whilst this is challenging, it is even more vital that this organisational clarity is developed because of its importance in emergencies. There was a clear call for a stronger structure and clearer way of working across teams. It is evident that the National Emergencies Trust is learning lessons from its activation in terms of redeveloping its dormant overarching structure (see Figure 11 above). It is important this work is continued at all levels of the structure including the volunteer and secondee roles the National Emergencies Trust expects to need in future emergencies. In doing so, it is important that the National Emergencies Trust works with its partners to stress test the new structure and roles and responsibilities.

Pressure

Pressure to perform and to accomplish a task can be a motivating factor and the National Emergencies Trust colleagues highlighted a strong sense of purpose and commitment to the appeal. However, this pressure does seem to have negatively impacted some staff with one account outlining that:

> *"The message was right, what they've achieved is amazing, I just think there's been some personal collateral along the way."*

To secure sustainability of future activations it is important that any surge in capacity allows for processes to be put in place to ensure the 'always on' and' 2am response' are not long term and are not developed into cultural norms, as this may drive away willing and committed volunteers and staff. The National Emergencies Trust needs to consider if the expected level of commitment and work loading from volunteers over repeated activations can be sustained especially given that subsequent activations may not bring sweeping changes to the way our society had to operate (e.g., lockdowns). One interviewee highlighted a desire for a strengthened HR department and additional staffing to manage the scale of the appeal:

> *"I would say, hire more people, don't always rely on everyone being superhuman because there were breakdowns. I mean actual emotional and… you know, people have been off ill, people have had, you know, serious burnout because of the amount of pressure. I would say a real HR department would be important because it's a difficult time and there was no, you know, they were hiring on the hoof."*

Onboarding

The data evaluated do not identify processes for formally and informally onboarding staff and volunteers to the National Emergencies Trust although they do refer to exit interviews. As previously stated, this first activation occurred at a time of lockdown and significantly reduced in person social interaction. As such, it is difficult to make definitive recommendations surrounding how the National Emergencies Trust builds and maintains organisational culture. However, it is important that informal processes for engaging staff and volunteers should sit alongside formal ones to ensure people understand their roles, the tasks to complete and who and where to go with questions, concerns, and ideas. A formal induction and exit process should be in place which streamline individual and organisational learning for the National Emergencies Trust and to ensure the best people join as staff and volunteers, as one interview noted:

> *"We had some great volunteers that, you know, the National Emergencies Trust was really lucky to have, but also some that perhaps have not been. But if you hire at pace you don't have the same due diligence that maybe you could do, you know, it was a bit of a quick growth to the team."*

When interviewees were asked about priorities one highlighted that their:

> *"third priority would be, roles and responsibilities and having a team ready to go that is equipped, supported and competent at what their expectations are. I think the National Emergencies Trust was full of people like that, I really do, but a lot of that falls down to people being off work. The next emergency there won't be a raft of wonderfully qualified financial managers and, you know, PM's and all... they just won't be off work like they were for this. So I would say, having that surge capacity is the underpinning priority for this. So that's the capacity to distribute and capacity to deliver from the personnel point of view"*

Organisational set-up

The nature of the appeal's growth and the National Emergencies Trust's response to manage this have highlighted a series of challenges around structure and cross-team working. This may well have been due to the nature of the remote response but the National Emergencies Trust should explore strengthening structures and provide clarity of roles. One the National Emergencies Trust worker started that:

> *"when we were going through that, we tried to make it up a little bit more, or... we tried to make up the role, or try to improve what we think the role, interpret what we thought the role was trying to do."*

Analysis also indicates that some common organisational processes and documentation was developed during or after it was required, reflecting the National Emergencies Trust's organisational age. Although this could be construed negatively, it has also allowed the National Emergencies Trust to evolve and adapt. One interview stated that:

> *"the Terms of Reference were sort of drawn up after we'd been meeting for some time. I mean it would have been good to have had that to start with so you understood exactly what your role was and how it connected. In some ways it was good because then it actually gave*

people the opportunity to say why they felt it wasn't working, and then that was taken onboard."

The ability to learn and adapt is a common theme and other interviewees also highlight this noting that the challenges around organisational structure and approach were being voiced and tackled in real-time which showcases the capacity of the National Emergencies Trust to adapt and grow.

Workloads

Through the evaluation of the minutes and documentation the high levels of hands-on engagement by the National Emergencies Trust Board to support the strategic and operational running of the National Emergencies Trust's appeal is clear. This is to be commended and it highlights the value and importance they put on the National Emergencies Trust mission. However, there is also a potential risk of burnout and even further risk if a key member of the National Emergencies Trust (e.g., a trustee) has to step back. The National Emergencies Trust should consider the level of engagement particularly required of trustees. Analysis of committee membership has shown that three trustees engaged in over 90 meetings each and nine were present at over 40 meetings each during the appeal. Alongside the time spent in those meetings, this represents a huge time commitment preparing and considering the implications of these sessions. As one interviewee noted:

"Hopefully we won't be in crisis mode the whole time, and it can be much more strategy, operation sits over there, not with me. At the moment it does feel as Board members, that we're too involved in operation, still."

The National Emergencies Trust should consider the volume and scope of these meetings and the scale of participation. One trustee highlighted that they would have preferred:

"probably just had a few less meetings, and a bit more side thinking time, and a bit more you know... it did feel like we were... it was feel like a hamster wheel. And you'd almost think, hang on we talked about this yesterday, and we talked you know, if it's Wednesday, we talked about this on Monday, and it hasn't actually progressed. And you felt the need to be there because we were all committed to it."

The table below outlines the number of meetings, average attendance, and full membership of these committees. In total the National Emergencies Trust hosted 162 minuted meetings during the appeal. The time and space to service this is a significant time allocation. One interviewee shared that:

> *"you're, you know your daily committee meetings you know, you have committee meetings. So you're up till sort of midnight sort of figuring out what you're going to do for the next day, and you've sort of got to land them back by midnight. You know, you're not... good visualisation takes a long time to prepare as you know."*

This highlights the potential impact on wider workload and activity for staff and Trustees where 1725 'people' were in meetings across the appeal. The National Emergencies Trust should assess whether this model is sustainable. Indeed, one trustee highlighted that had there not been significant overlap with their day job they would not have been able to participate to such a degree which has the potential effect of weakening the National Emergencies Trust's ability to support those in need:

> *"it started feeling like, that I had a full-time job as well as a part time job at the National Emergencies Trust as well. So there was quite a demand on the trustees. And it was a full team, and they were building, and everything was required. And so there was quite a regular... there were meetings three times a week [across committees]. And so you know, there was quite a demand"*

Table 2: Meeting attendance results across the National Emergencies Trust board and committees between March 2020 and March 2021

Group Name	Group Details	
Board Meeting	Meeting No.	30
	Attendee No.	51
	Average Attendee No.	7.3
	Average Attendance per meeting	12.4
Fair Meetings	Meeting No.	7
	Attendee No.	16
	Average Attendee No.	3.3
	Average Attendance per meeting	7.6
Activation meeting	Meeting No.	3
	Attendee No.	16
	Average Attendee No.	1.9
	Average Attendance per meeting	10.0
Allocations Committee	Meeting No.	63
	Attendee No.	41
	Average Attendee No.	17.9
	Average Attendance per meeting	11.6
Communications Committee	Meeting No.	21
	Attendee No.	32
	Average Attendee No.	6.3
	Average Attendance per meeting	9.7

Group Name	Group Details	
Fundraising Committee	Meeting No.	7
	Attendee No.	13
	Average Attendee No.	3.9
	Average Attendance per meeting	7.3
Chairman's Working Group	Meeting No.	4
	Attendee No.	14
	Average Attendee No.	2.2
	Average Attendance per meeting	7.8
Equity Working Group	Meeting No.	5
	Attendee No.	24
	Average Attendee No.	2.6
	Average Attendance per meeting	12.4
Equity Scrutiny Group	Meeting No.	20
	Attendee No.	41
	Average Attendee No.	5.4
	Average Attendance per meeting	11.1

One of the challenges faced under such conditions is maintaining communication and understanding around the direction of travel. Indeed, our analysis of meeting minutes and interviews shows that for some staff and volunteers there was not always a consistent understanding of the purpose of the National Emergencies Trust and the role it was playing within the pandemic response.

An unintended consequence of this is that it has challenged the way some staff and volunteers and trustees saw their role within the wider purpose and the mission of the National Emergencies Trust. This in part is because by distributing funds through the UKCF and then the National Funding Partners the National Emergencies Trust became one step removed from end recipients of grant allocation decisions. Interviews conducted for the evaluation highlighted that some staff needed more clarity and understanding of this evolution and were concerned that this may have hampered their ability to perform effectively. It may be useful to consider how this can be addressed given disaster response is fast paced and will always require adaptation.

Recommendations and Key Points

The National Emergencies Trust managed to engage a large volume of enthusiastic individuals and organisations to support it to deliver an appeal to help those most in need during the Covid-19 pandemic. This was coupled with a rapid and ongoing re-development of both the National Emergencies Trust's strategic frameworks and policies, as well as governance and decision-making structures and processes. The rapid growth of the National Emergencies Trust and its agile response to a novel large-scale disaster is to be applauded. However, it also created tension and stressors that should be addressed for future activations with the following key points in mind:

- For future activations the National Emergencies Trust should consider revisiting and refining the Operating Model Processes tool to aid reflection and evaluation of each activation against this model. Within this review, focus should be given to developing a tool that can flex to different types of emergencies and that recognise the point at which voluntary and community sector responses are being funded beyond the point of deciding to activate.

- As noted, continuity of reporting and evaluation as well as understandings of the differing roles of governance and decision-making entities seem to be dependent on individual staff members, volunteers, and trustees with many processes stopping or rationale for decisions or changes in operations being lost when staff or volunteers leave the organisation. Given that the National Emergencies Trust's operational model is predicated on a reliance on surge capacity at times of activation, organisational memory and continuity needs to be embedded in written and accessible policies and strategic frameworks such as the Operating Model highlighted above, as well as terms of reference for committees, rather than key information and understanding sitting with individuals.

- To enhance transparency within the organisation and across committees standardised decision logs should be developed and maintained both at the time of activation and during non-emergency operational periods. This will ensure a record of decisions and thinking is reviewable by both current and new staff/volunteers to help breed a strong work culture and to avoid duplication of effort (evidenced across the minutes analysed), as well as facilitate a reduction in the number of meetings needed across an activation.

- To facilitate an effective and rapid surge at times of activation, as well as ensure clarity of roles within the dormant phase, it is important that the National Emergencies Trust develop a robust process for onboarding and exiting staff and volunteers (potentially mirroring that in existence for trustees). Within this framework, there is a need to develop and promote clear organisation and individual task and role profiles and ensure regular reviews of these are conducted and formally shared widely across the organisation.

- Formal processes need to be put in place to aid and guide work across department heads to ensure tasking and resources are monitored and tracked to reduce duplication, especially at times of surge and onboarding of new staff and volunteers who need to rapidly gain familiarity with processes in times of high stress.

- There is a need to review the role and responsibilities, as well as time commitment of the National Emergencies Trust Trustees to ensure sustainability of their participation in decision making processes, rather than being diverted into managing and directing operational tasks.

Part 3: Summary of Recommendations and Next Steps

Summary of Phase 1 Recommendations

This report has presented findings from Phase 1 of a wider two-phase evaluation of the National Emergencies Trust's first appeal in response to the Coronavirus Appeal from March 2020 to March 2021. The particular focus of this first phase of research has been on understanding and evaluating the development of the National Emergencies Trust's decision-making processes, procedures, and structures over the course of the appeal. Evaluation of the data yielded the four overall themes below with corresponding subthemes.

A. Allocation of Funds
   - Grant-making Models
   - Timing
   - Equity and Reach

B. Identification of Need
   - Data and Allocation Formula
   - Distribution partner data collection, receipt, and use
   - Addressing Intersectional Need

C. Communications, Fundraising and Building Relationships
   - Fundraising
   - Distributors & Grant Recipients Communications and Engagement
   - Wider External Communications and Relationship Building

D. Governance, Organisational Infrastructure and Decision Making
   - Evolving Governance and Organisational Infrastructure
   - Decision making, inter-committee and staff communication
   - The role of existing strategic frameworks in decision making and guiding work
   - Organisational and workplace culture

The structure of Part 2 reported on the findings within each theme and subtheme and presented a set of recommendations. The purpose of this section is to show how these map to the Phase 1 evaluation criteria that guided the scope of Phase 1 of the evaluation.

Criteria 1. *The processes used to allocate funds to and determine the effectiveness of donations on relevant community groups and for achieving the National Emergencies Trust's objectives:*

The National Emergencies Trust has to expand at a fast pace and deal with the complexities of how to distribute funding nationwide in an efficient and timely manner. In response to the requirement to develop an adaptable and agile fund allocation methodology that effectively reached communities in need across the United Kingdom and associated territories, the National Emergencies Trust adopted three distinct grant-allocation approaches over the course of the appeal. Decisions around the adoption of these methods were informed by various summative and live processes developed to determine both the effectiveness and emerging impact of distribution of funds received, including weekly reporting from Community Foundations and a gap analysis in June 2020. The final impact of these grant-allocation approaches and the corresponding processes used to determine their effectiveness is still emerging, however, this report has identified the following key points to guide decisions related to the adoption of future allocation and grant-making approaches:

1.1. The National Emergencies Trust should consider to what extent responsibility for identifying specific localised, intersectional need, and granting directly for these, remains with the National Emergencies Trust or whether the National Emergencies Trust's role is to enable their chosen distribution partners to do so.

1.2. Lessons learnt regarding reporting expectations and distribution criteria associated with the grant allocation models should be written in such a way as to be transferable to working with one or several Community Foundations, as well as other local or national distribution and intermediary granting organisations, depending on the scale and nature of the disaster being responded to.

1.3. Initial distribution criteria, reporting requirements and timing of onward distribution associated with each type of granting relationship should be formalised and communicated with all stakeholders at the point of activation. These should be continually revisited and developed throughout the appeal to respond to the contextual demands of distribution partners, and specific data and information the National Emergencies Trust requires at different phases of an appeal.

1.4. The National Emergencies Trust should focus on recruiting skill sets and allocating space in job roles to facilitate staff and volunteers' own development of their knowledge and understandings of the grant-making processes and practices of distribution partners. This will enhance the effectiveness of the allocation of funds in future appeals as the social, economic, and political contexts of partners changes over time and across different disasters.

1.5. The National Emergencies Trust should consider the depth and methods of consultation with recipient communities to understand their needs, how much funding should be given, to whom, and when. Mechanisms to achieve this should be in addition to the existing continued consultation with the Survivor's Advisory Group and Equity Scrutiny Group and must ensure a high diversity of voice from across communities.

Criteria 2. *The processes used to identify community need and groups and the evidence base used to inform decision making:*

The National Emergencies Trust developed an allocation formula to identify need in communities impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic across England, Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland. The formula facilitated the effective and equitable allocation of funds to 62 distribution partners across the course of the appeal, demonstrating the National Emergencies Trust's commitment to open, transparent, and non-discriminatory data-led grant-making. Evaluation of the Allocation Formula and associated data collection, analysis, and use have identified the following recommendations regarding data collection and use for future appeals:

2.1. The National Emergencies Trust made good use of volunteer data collection and analysis experts drawn from across their network. However, access to these experts did not extend across the appeal or their expertise were not specific to the contexts in which the National Emergencies Trust operates. To mitigate this uneven access the National Emergencies Trust should seek to secure specific expertise to analyse data sources for the National Emergencies Trust's purposes through the appointment of staff or through surge capacity from academia or its network of partners.

2.2. The National Emergencies Trust should consider who is best placed to identify the needs of those impacted by disaster. Whether this is best undertaken by the National Emergencies Trust, or whether this is most effectively undertaken by distribution partners will be determined by which grant allocation models are adopted by the National Emergencies Trust in response to specific disaster needs. It is important, however, that the National Emergencies Trust establish from the outset of each grant distribution agreement who is responsible for identification of need and ensure that this responsibility is communicated clearly.

2.3. The National Emergencies Trust is developing a prioritised framework of disaster needs; in doing so, it would be useful for the National Emergencies Trust to consider intersectionality of need and the various service needs of different groups. Planning should consider the broader knowledge base on disaster vulnerability, as well as a consideration of the costs of services and equipment required, rather than costing all needs equivalently.

2.4. The National Emergencies Trust should work more closely with distribution partners to develop common data collection, recording, and reporting methodologies that work within the parameters and limitations of the National Emergencies Trust and the distribution partner. There is potential for the National Emergencies Trust to contribute to developing the capacity of distribution partners to develop their own data collection and reporting mechanisms.

2.5. During this appeal, the National Emergencies Trust developed a dialectic, relational approach to data collection through consultation with their own Equity Scrutiny Group and Survivor's Advisory Forum. Investment in these mechanisms and processes should continue whilst exploring additional means to incorporate qualitative, dialectical data into any data-driven tools developed to identify need.

Criteria 3. *The processes used in communications and building relationships with the public, community groups, vulnerable individuals, partner organisations, other charitable organisations, and local government bodies:*

Over the course of the Coronavirus Appeal, the National Emergencies Trust mobilised the networks of the board and its executive to enable and facilitate a hugely successful communications and fundraising campaign, bolster its human resources, access key expertise, and develop strong external relationships with key stakeholders. In doing so, the National Emergencies Trust has built its networks to ensure a comprehensive and robust distribution network that was able respond to need as it was identified. This has contributed to an evolution of the National Emergencies Trust's strategic framework and operational capacity over the course of the pandemic, and this context frames the following recommendations:

3.1. Over the course of the appeal, the National Emergencies Trust's fundraising strategy developed to incorporate active fundraising from the public (c. 20%), trusts and foundations (c. 20%), the government (c. 20%) and most notably major corporate donors (c. 40%). The National Emergencies Trust should evaluate the extent to which this development in its fundraising and communications approach is permanent and applicable to more localised activations than it originally planned for. There is a clear opportunity to build on the successful relational fundraising that the National Emergencies Trust established during its first appeal to enhance its emerging mass donor and public communications in a cost-effective manner. The National Emergencies Trust should consider how these relationships can be sustained between appeals in a way that meets the needs and interests of its core emerging donors to ensure that funding partnerships are easily and quickly activated at times of need.

3.2. The National Emergencies Trust should consider the level to which the focussed development of the organisation's corporate and relational fundraising approach may contribute to and enhance philanthropic giving overall, as well as mitigate fundraising competitiveness across the voluntary disaster response field.

3.3. To mitigate the effects of volunteer and surge capacity turnover, ensure continuity and coordination of communications, and prevent the overburdening of staff and other stakeholders, the National Emergencies Trust should develop means of sharing relationship and stakeholder management both across and between appeals alongside clear recruitment and engagement systems for the volunteer/surge needs during appeals.

3.4. The National Emergencies Trust should continue to develop partnerships between different actors in the sector with a view to extend their engagement with and understanding of the personal and professional lived experiences of the various communities whom they seek to serve. This can be achieved by finding (and re-connecting with) those with mutual or overlapping values but different objectives, to ensure that the National Emergencies Trust is able to work collaboratively, effectively, and inclusively across the VCS at times of activation.

Criteria 4. *The processes used and structures put in place to support and facilitate decision making and delivery of the National Emergencies Trust's objectives:*

The National Emergencies Trust's first appeal has seen a rapid and ongoing re-development of the organisation's strategic frameworks and policies, as well as governance and decision-making structures and processes. This has been supported by a surge in human resource capacity from enthusiastic volunteers and committed expert organisations. The National Emergencies Trust's agile response and growth to a novel large-scale disaster is impressive, but has also highlighted the following key points for consideration in preparation for future appeals:

4.1. The National Emergencies Trust should seek to revisit, refine, and further develop the Operating Model Processes tool (NET, 2020a) and associated activation guides discussed in Part 2c of this report. Within this review, focus should be given to developing a tool that can flex to different types of emergencies and that recognises the point at which VCS responses are being funded beyond the point of deciding to activate.

4.2. To ensure continuity of reporting, evaluation, and knowledge of governance and decision-making entities, the National Emergencies Trust should seek to embed organisational memory and continuity into written and accessible policies and strategic frameworks (such as the Operating Model), as well as terms of reference for committees.

4.3. To enhance transparency within the organisation and across committees, standardised decision logs should be developed and maintained during both appeals and non-emergency operational periods. This will ensure that a record of decisions and thinking is reviewable by both current and new staff and volunteers to help breed a strong work culture and to avoid duplication of effort.

4.4. The National Emergencies Trust should continue to develop robust processes for onboarding and exiting staff and volunteers. This should include the development and promotion of clear organisation and individual task and role profiles. These should be reviewed regularly and formally shared widely across the organisation.

4.5. Corresponding formal processes need to be put in place to aid and guide work across department heads to ensure tasking and resources are monitored and tracked to reduce duplication, especially at times of surge and onboarding of new staff and volunteers who need to rapidly gain familiarity with processes in times of high demand.

4.6. Finally, a review of the role, responsibilities, and time commitment of the National Emergencies Trust trustees and non-trustee members of sub-committees is recommended to ensure sustainability of their participation in decision-making processes, rather than being diverted into managing and directing operational tasks.

Evaluation Progress and Next Steps

This Phase 1 evaluation is part of a broader, ongoing evaluation that will include an assessment of the impact of the appeal on the organisations, communities, and individuals who were supported by the National Emergencies Trust during the Coronavirus Appeal. In doing so the evaluation has explored - and will continue to explore - the National Emergencies Trust and its distribution partners' response to the Covid-19 pandemic using the broader criteria outlined for the evaluation below. This final section will highlight how these broad criteria have been addressed within this Phase 1 report and identify the areas that will be evaluated in greater detail during Phase 2 of the study.

- **Relevance: Did the activation meet National Emergencies Trust's strategic objectives?**
  National Emergencies Trust's stated mission is to "harness the nation's generosity to support those affected by a national emergency at their time of greatest need". It aims to achieve this "working collaboratively to raise and distribute funds fairly and efficiently at a time of domestic disaster" (National Emergencies Trust, 2020). Phase 1 evaluation findings demonstrate that these objectives have been broadly met during the National Emergencies Trust's first activation. However, the nature and reach of the pandemic has required National Emergencies Trust to revisit how these strategic objectives are delivered and achieved, with a corresponding exploration and, at times reconsideration, of the National Emergencies Trust's role within the sector, specifically around where responsibility lies for determining need, the National Emergencies Trust's fundraising approach, and the wider role that the National Emergencies Trust aims to fulfil within the disaster response sector. These are addressed across this report in Parts 2a, 2b, and 2c, and Recommendations 1.1, 1.5, 2.2, 2.3, and 3.1, and will continue to be actively assessed through engagement with the National Emergencies Trust's distribution partners and grant recipients in Phase 2.

- **Efficiency: Were resources managed and used efficiently? Was the activation managed swiftly and efficiently?**
  The National Emergencies Trust raised and distributed in excess of £97m across the course of the Coronavirus Appeal. The first grants were distributed within 10 days of the launch of the Coronavirus Appeal and receipt of the first donations. The Phase 1 evaluation has

demonstrated that this remarkable distribution was managed at speed and with minimal spend on overheads. The National Emergencies Trust has ably drawn on its networks to ensure and resource the skills and expertise needed to deliver these outcomes. The National Emergencies Trust's original operational planning and adaptation of these models (especially grant-making approaches) in response to emerging need across the pandemic has highlighted the National Emergencies Trust's agility and capacity for learning and adaptation. The Phase 1 evaluation has, however, found that there is an inherent balance to be maintained between efficiency of distribution and with ensuring that need is adequately identified and appropriately met. This is addressed in Parts 2a and 2b and Recommendations 1.3, 1.5, and 2.2. Phase 2 of the evaluation will explore the extent to which the National Emergencies Trust's timing and efficiency of allocation of funding enabled a corresponding efficiency of response from distribution partners.

- **Effectiveness: Did the activation achieve its aims and objectives of fairly distributing financial aid to those in most need?**
  Between March 2020 and March 2021, the National Emergencies Trust facilitated the distribution of 13,286 grants to 10,662 voluntary and community organisations across all nine UK regions, the devolved nations, and Crown Dependencies via the Community Foundations. A further £16,741,184 was distributed to national charitable organisations with the capacity to reach marginalised groups who were particularly vulnerable to the impact of the pandemic and who may have less access to charitable funds based on emerging evidence and findings from the National Emergencies Trust's own gap analysis and social commentary. The National Emergencies Trust developed and used the allocation formula to determine where need was most acute and to ensure a fair distribution of funds to Community Foundations, and then latterly incoming data from grant recipients to identify and fill potential gaps in provision. In this respect the Phase 1 evaluation has found a commitment in the National Emergencies Trust to ensure that allocation and distribution decisions are fair and have as wide and equitable reach as possible within the constrained circumstances presented by the pandemic. This has undoubtedly been broadly achieved. However, there are some issues to be addressed with regards to how and where need is identified and who is responsible for identifying need, as well who determines which and whose needs are to be met through the National Emergencies Trust's funding. These are explored in Parts 2a and 2b and Recommendations 1.1, 1.3, 1.5, 2.2, and 2.3. Phase 2 of the evaluation

will build on these findings to determine a clearer understanding of how and whose needs were met by onward grant distribution and service delivery organisations, and the extent to which the National Emergencies Trust's granting criteria and processes enabled a fair distribution at the level at which these organisations operate.

- **Outcomes: What social, psychological, and economic outcomes occurred as a result of the activation?**
  The Phase 1 evaluation of grant distribution data revealed an evolved focus from immediate needs such food and essentials in the initial stages of the pandemic to general mental health support as the pandemic progressed, as demonstrated in Figure 1 in this report. It is difficult at this stage to determine what specific impact these grants have had on outcomes for grant recipients. An assessment of these outcomes where this is possible will be incorporated in Phase 2 of this evaluation. This will include analysis of data from surveys with Community Foundations and NFPs; interviews with Community Foundations and focus groups with grant recipients, but will not undertake a form of impact assessment or return on investment calculations.

- **Sustainability: Were the structures and organisation of work sustainable for the likely length of the activation?**
  The National Emergencies Trust operated across eight committees and seven staff teams for the duration of the Coronavirus Appeal. The Phase 1 evaluation mapped the growth of the organisation from 2.5 staff to a team of approximately 109 resourced by volunteers, staff, and key contractors and consultancies at the peak of the appeal in May/June 2020. This evaluation has noted that a new dormant structure has been developed based on a review during the appeal that describes a 3-year plan for this approach. It is beyond the scope of this evaluation to determine the level to which this structure and plans for surge capacity for future appeals will be sustainable. However, the Phase 1 evaluation has identified areas to improve on that may further enhance ongoing planning for sustainability in Part 2d and Recommendations 1.4, 2.1, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.3.

- **Relationships: for the first activation only: Do the processes during activation facilitate strengthening relationships with community partners, stakeholders, and government?**
  The National Emergencies Trust activated the networks of its board, staff, and volunteers to develop and strengthen an expanding network of relationships with its existing and new distribution

partners, stakeholders within the media and wider voluntary and community sector, and core government actors. Phase 1 has mapped how the consolidation of these relationships has extended the National Emergencies Trust's reach, as well as provided access to resources and expertise in constrained circumstances. The Phase 1 evaluation has demonstrated that the National Emergencies Trust has been particularly adept at building and strengthening relationships with core donors, as well as establishing and building new relationships within diverse communities within civil society through the establishment of the Equity Scrutiny Group. The developments, strengths, and areas for improvement within the National Emergencies Trust's relationship building, communications and fundraising are mapped in Part 2c and Recommendations 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4. The impact and quality of the National Emergencies Trust's relationships with core distribution partners and recipient communities will be further evaluated in Phase 2 of the evaluation.

- **Quality Assurance: Review and assess the quality of the activation monitoring and evaluation system, specifically: Assess the appropriateness of the indicators and the robustness and reliability of the monitoring protocols.**
  As a new organisation responding to a novel disaster, the National Emergencies Trust has developed and refined its appeal monitoring and evaluation systems across the course of the pandemic. The Phase 1 evaluation has mapped the development of the tools and systems adopted to collect and analyse data to determine need, track the extent to which need is being addressed through grant distribution and identify areas where provision needs to be enhanced or revised. Given the complex, universal, and protracted impact of this disaster, the National Emergencies Trust has had to adapt these tools several times over the course of the appeal, which has been identified as being a challenge at times. However, the Phase 1 evaluation has identified and made several recommendations to address these difficulties in Parts 2a and 2b and within Recommendations 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, and 4.4. Phase 2 of the evaluation will contribute findings from the distribution partners' experiences of the National Emergencies Trust's monitoring and evaluation systems to develop further recommendations for the development of ever more robust systems for future appeals.

Governance: Review the National Emergencies Trusts governance structures, capacity, and capability during activation, to identify good and leading practice, and areas to improve for future activations.

The National Emergencies Trust had an established governance structure in place prior to the Coronavirus Appeal in March 2020. The structure remained broadly the same over the course of the appeal which has been mapped in Part 2d of this report. The Phase 1 evaluation has noted that there was an evolution and adaptation in some planned governance structures to accommodate and provide surge decision-making and, at times, executive capacity at the peak of the activation. This has identified the need for some clarification of roles, responsibilities, and time commitment of the NET trustees and non-trustee members of sub-committees to ensure sustainability in section 2d and Recommendations 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6, and a consideration as to how the lived experienced of more diverse communities can be incorporated into governance structures in Parts 2a, 2b, and 2d and within Recommendations 1.5, 2.5, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.6.

Phase One Report Conclusion

The National Emergencies Trust's first appeal occurred at a time of almost unprecedented upheaval and challenge across the whole of UK society and the globe. The observations made in this evaluation should be considered within this context. National Emergencies Trust's decision-making leading up to activation and during the appeal clearly supported many individuals and communities in need during the three waves of the Covid-19 pandemic in the UK. To support the National Emergencies Trust to from the first appeal, we have considered the decision-making processes of the appeal for this report and themed our analysis around four key areas.

A. Allocation of Funds
B. Identification of Need
C. Communications, Fundraising and Building Relationships
D. Governance, Organisational Infrastructure and Decision Making

Sixteen sub-themes were identified across the four areas within which to explore the learning that the National Emergencies Trust can take forward, helping to ensure future appeals can learn and build on the Coronavirus Appeal. As a learning organisation which has committed fully and in good faith to this evaluation it is recognised that many of the recommendations developed have already been engaged with and explored by the National Emergencies Trust team through our collaborative approach to this evaluation. Ongoing and continuous learning is required in this sector where no two emergencies are ever the same. We hope that this report and its findings provide useful learning for the National Emergencies Trust trustees, staff team, and wider community that is committed to saving lives and relieving suffering caused by the disasters and emergencies that befall us in the UK.

The second phase of this evaluation is now underway and will report findings and recommendations in the Spring of 2022.

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