Culture in Crisis 2020

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About the Survey

Below are the survey responses from the *Culture in Crisis* survey, which was promoted on Twitter and LinkedIn. The survey was live from 8 May to 5 June 2020 and attracted 63 responses. A selection of free text quotes have been included here for illustrative purposes.

1. *Which word(s) best describes your role or department?*

Respondents were asked to select from the following options:

- Operations
- Visitor Experience
- Security
- Estates/Facilities
- Conservation/Collections Care
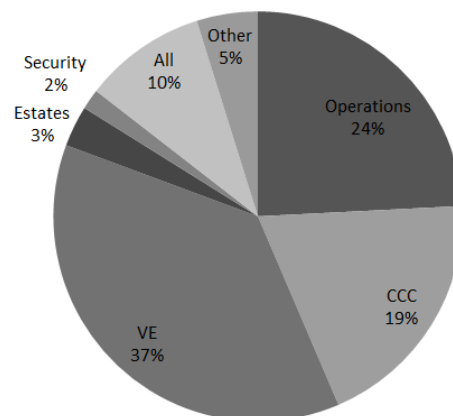- All of the above (overall management)
- Other

Fig. 1 Culture in Crisis Question 1 respondent chart

2. *Which word(s) best describe your individual operating level?*

Respondents were asked to select from the following options:

- Frontline
- Supervisor/Team Leader
- Administrator
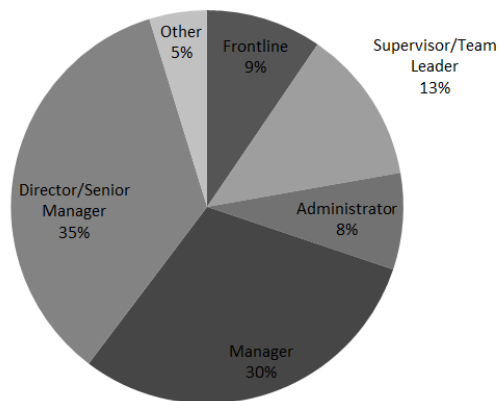- Manager
- Director/Senior Manager
- Other

Fig. 2 Culture in Crisis Question 2 respondent chart

3. *Which word(s) best describe your museum or heritage site?*

Respondents were asked to select from the following options:

- National organisation (multiple sites)
- National organisation (single site)
- Independent charitable trust (multiple sites)
- Independent charitable trust (single site)
- University museum/heritage site
- Local authority museum/heritage site
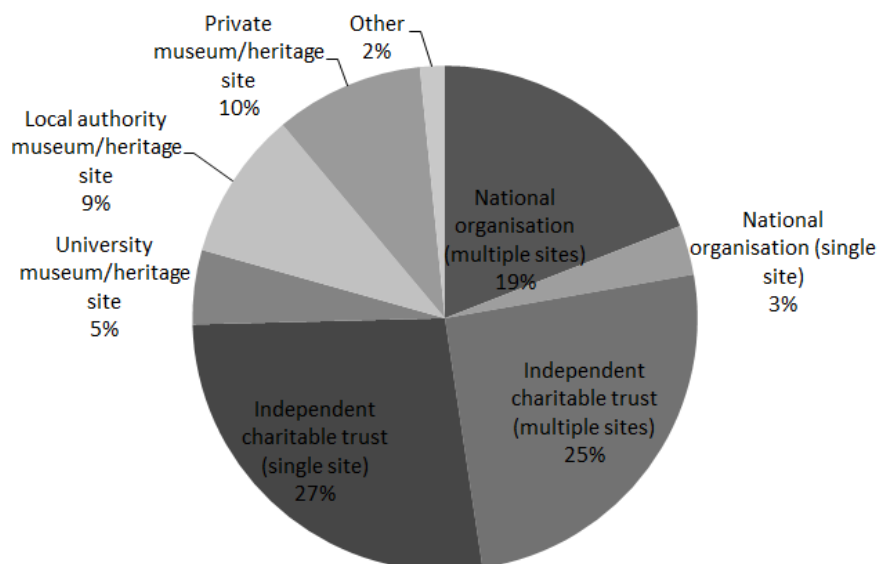- Private museum/heritage site
- Other

Fig. 3 Culture in Crisis Question 3 respondent chart

4. *How soon was the possibility of closing your site because of Coronavirus discussed at your organisation?*
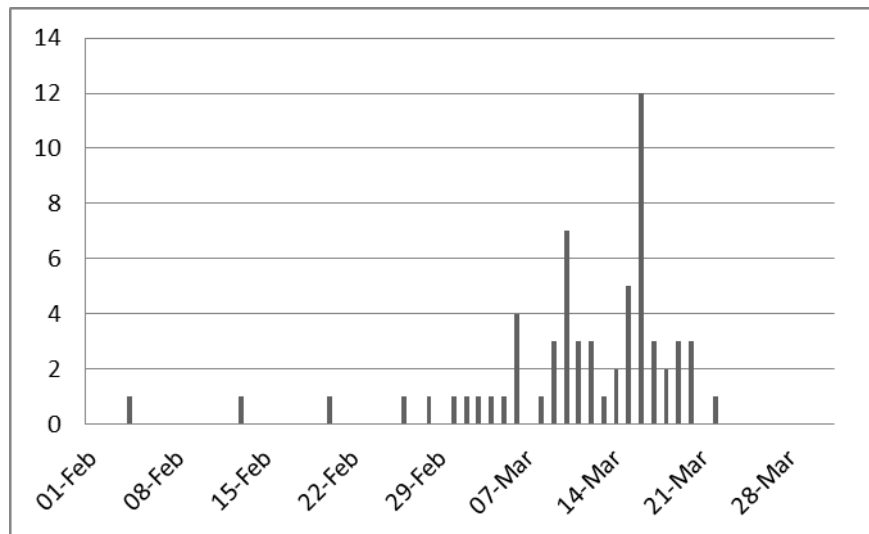
Respondents were asked to give a date.

Fig. 4 Culture in Crisis: Question 4 respondent chart

5. *When did your organisation close its doors to the public?*

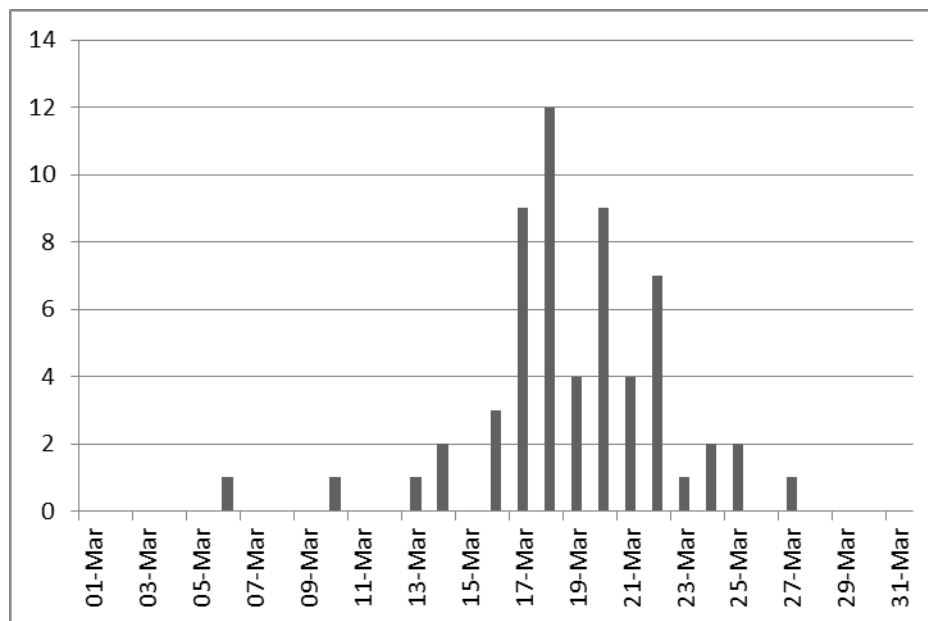Respondents were asked to give a date.

Fig. 5 Culture in Crisis Question 5 respondent chart

Analysis of the answers to questions 4 and 5 also provided information on the amount of time between the first discussion of a shutdown and the day the organisation closed its doors. The average time between the first discussion and closing was 8.5 days. Three respondents claimed to have 0 days between the first discussion and closing.

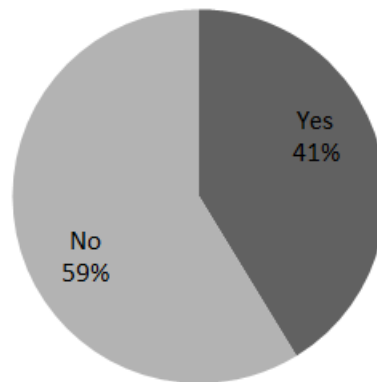6. *Were you involved in this decision?*

Fig.6 Culture in Crisis Question 6 respondent chart

7. *If so, what factors drove this decision?*

This was a free text question. Answers fell into the following areas:

- Public safety
- Staff safety
- Government direction or advice (including lockdown order)
- Reputation
- Lack of staff (due to isolation or shielding)
- Public behaviour (e.g. refusal to social distance or hand wash)
- Anticipating lockdown
- Following other organisations
- Other

The following chart shows how many times these areas were mentioned by the respondents:
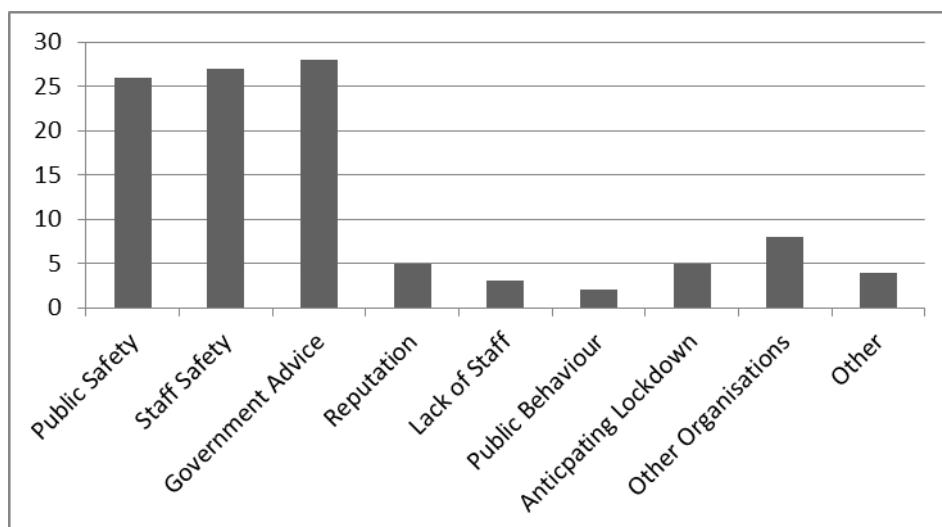

Fig. 7 Culture in Crisis Question 7 respondent chart

"We suspected full lockdown was coming and felt it necessary to take action ahead of any political decision to aid planning and dissemination of decision." - Operations Director/Senior Manager, Independent Charitable Trust (single site)

"Following what other organisations had already done" - Frontline Visitor Experience Respondent, Independent Charitable Trust (multiple sites)

8. *Who was involved in shutting down your attraction?*

Respondents were asked to select all the teams involved from the following:

- Conservation/Collections Care
- Security
- Operations
- Visitor Experience
- HR/Finance/Other corporate services
- Health and Safety
- PR/Comms/Marketing
- Public Engagement/Learning
- Curatorial
- Commercial
- Estates/Facilities
- Other (enter here)

The following chart shows how many times these teams were mentioned by the respondents:
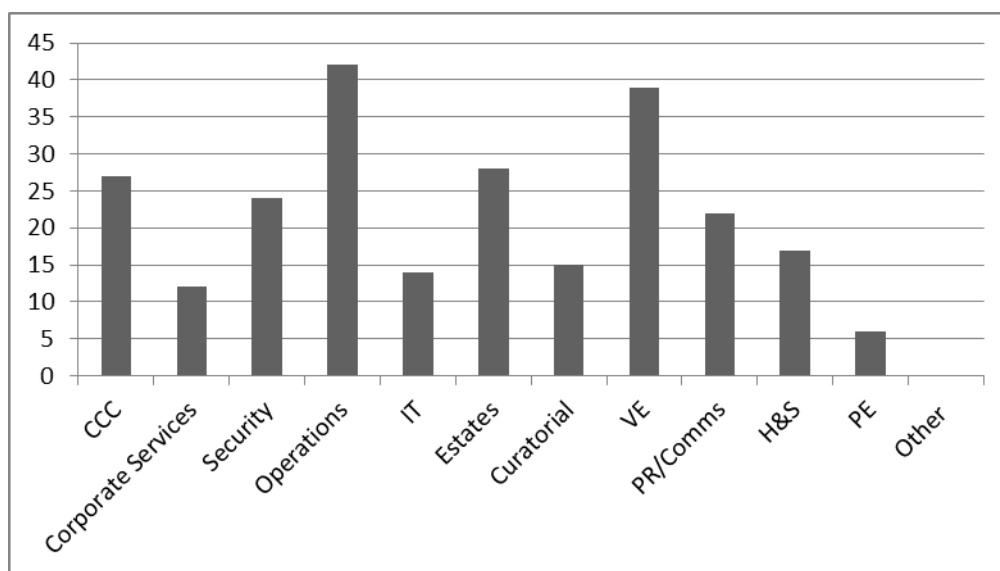

Fig.8 Culture in Crisis Question 9 respondent chart

9. *What were the main priorities to consider when closing down? (E.g. availability of home working for staff, collections care, system maintenance etc.)*

This was a free text question. Answers fell into the following areas:

- Collections care
- Ability to work from home
- Security of site
- Building management or maintenance
- Finances
- Future planning
- External communications
- Internal communications and staff wellbeing
- Repurposing space or staff to Coronavirus related activities

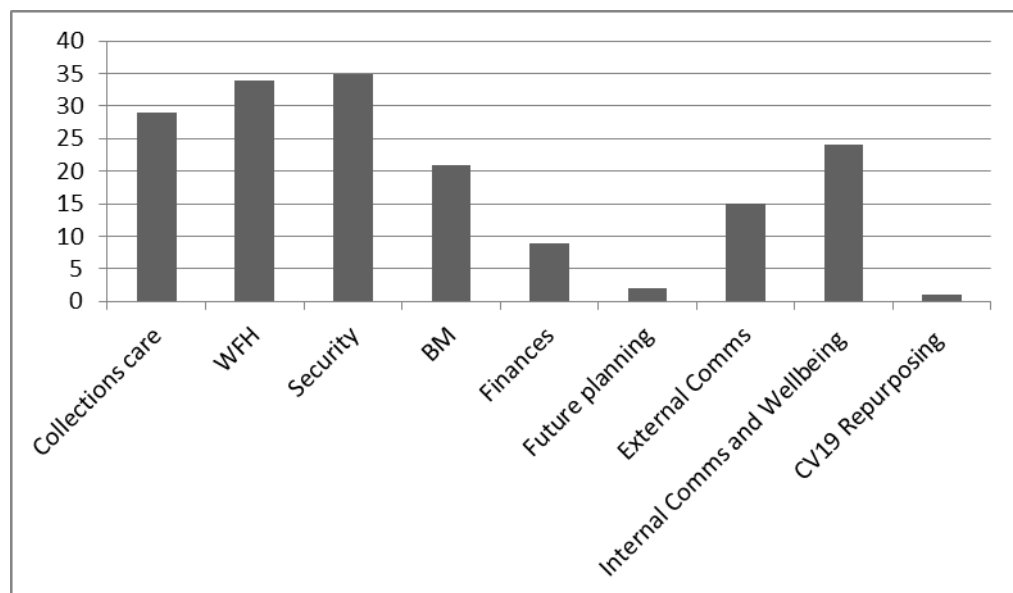The following chart shows how many times these areas were mentioned by the respondents:

Fig. 9 Culture in Crisis Question 10 respondent chart

"None of this was considered. The decision was taken rapidly following Boris Johnson's speech. There was no planning. A few of us had to come in to complete urgent tasks (like payroll). Everyone else was just told not to come in." – Visitor Experience Manager, Independent Charitable Site (single site)

"The conversion of our cafe into a village shop." – Conservation/Collections Care Manager, Independent Charitable Site (single site)

10. *What was the biggest challenge in closing your site down?*

This was a free text question, and the full responses are provided as part of Appendix 4. Answers fell into the following areas:

- External communications
- Internal communications
- Cancelling plans
- Lack of time
- Homeworking resources
- Security of site and collections
- Money
- Facilities management
- Lack of staff
- Persuading others (internally)
- Lack of planning or preparation
- Uncertainty

The following chart shows how many times these areas were mentioned by the respondents:

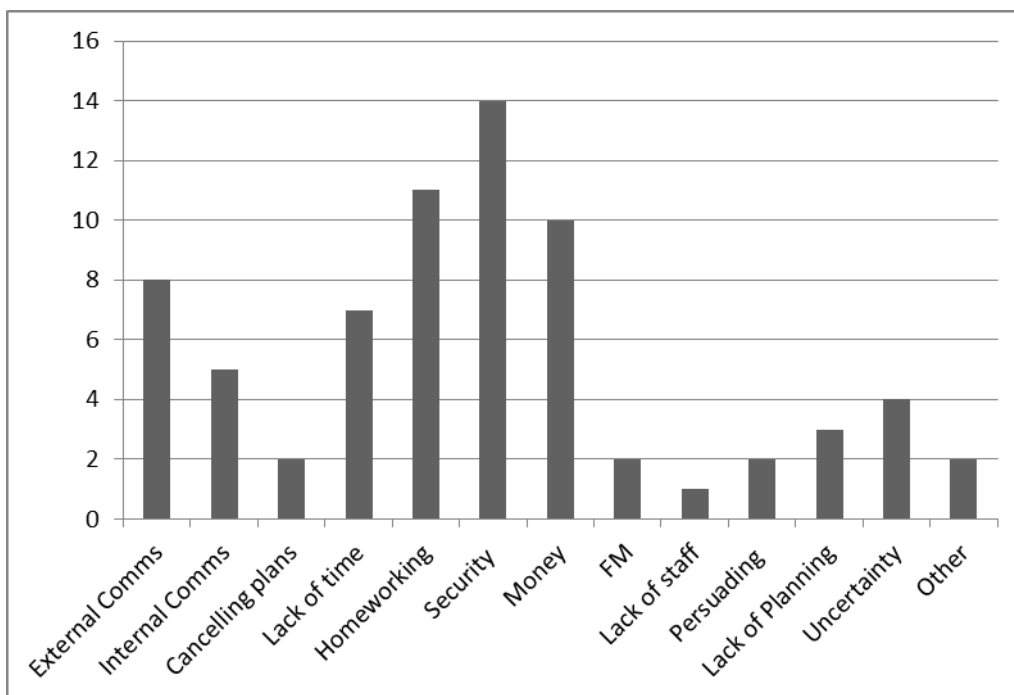*Fig. 10 Culture in Crisis Question 11 respondent chart*

"As a leader I don't like not to be able to have the answers; or point the way to one. It was the uncertainty for all of us that was hard" – Visitor Experience Director/Senior Manager, Independent Charitable Trust (single site)

11. *Did you have to undertake any new tasks not normally in your job description in order to close down your site?*
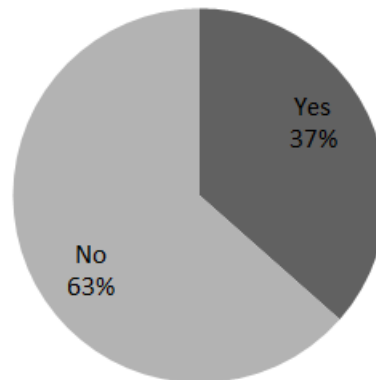
Fig. 11 Culture in Crisis Question 12 respondent chart

12. Tell me more about the types of things you had to do.

This was a free text question. Some quotes are included below for illustrative purposes.

"Overnight I became an IT contractor!" – Operations Director/Senior Manager, Independent Charitable Trust (single site)

"As a member of staff living on site I had to take on additional administration and gardening duties - organising delivery of post, changing the back-up tape, security checks and watering many, many plants!" – Visitor Experience Manager, National Organisation (multiple sites)

"Furloughed teams meant more responsibility e.g. pest control, online shop orders, assisting with membership mail outs, ticket refunds and Comms etc." – Visitor Experience Manager, Independent Charitable Trust (single site)

13. How would you describe the experience of closing your site down in one word?

The word cloud below shows the variety and frequency of words used:

Fig. 12 Culture in Crisis Question 14 respondent graphic

14. What resources did you find useful in the initial weeks?

Respondents were asked to select all that applied from the below categories:

- Government updates
- NHS updates
- Updates from sector colleagues (in person, over email, on social media)
- Sector body updates (such as ALVA, ICON, AIM)
- Other (enter please)

The following chart shows how many times these categories were mentioned as being useful by the respondents:

Fig. 13 Culture in Crisis Question 15 respondent chart

15. What other resources would have been useful?

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This was a free text question. 32% of respondents said clearer Government guidance or direction would have been useful. Some quotes are included below for illustrative purposes:

"Clearer guidance from government" – Operations Manager, National Organisation (multiple sites)

"Robust emergency plan that included pandemics" – Conservation/Collections Care Team Leader/Supervisor, Private Museum/Heritage Site

"Clearer information earlier on - this is a fault I lay with government rather than the sector" – Operations Manager, Independent Charitable Trust (single site)

"Clear government guidance. Everything was left up to individual institutions initially which was hugely unhelpful" – Visitor Experience Director/Senior Manager, National Organisations (multiple sites)

16. *How prepared did you feel in dealing with the Coronavirus crisis in those initial weeks?*

Respondents were asked to rate their preparedness from 1-10 with 1 being extremely unprepared and 10 being extremely prepared. The average rating was 5.

17. *Did your organisation have an emergency plan and business continuity plan before this?*
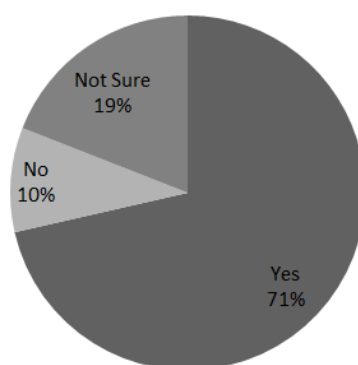

Fig. 14 Culture in Crisis Question 18 respondent chart

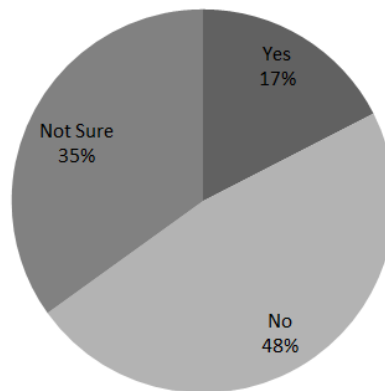18. *If so, was 'pandemic' included as possible incident to be managed?*

Fig. 15 Culture in Crisis: Question 19 respondent chart

19. Prior to this, have you ever been given any information about crisis managing through a pandemic?
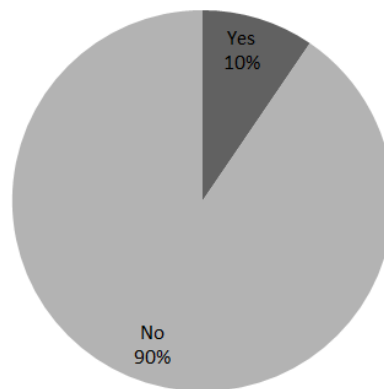

Fig. 16 Culture in Crisis Question 20 respondent chart

20. Have you ever done any 'live' training (e.g. incident management exercise, role playing or 'tabletop' exercises) about crisis managing through a pandemic?
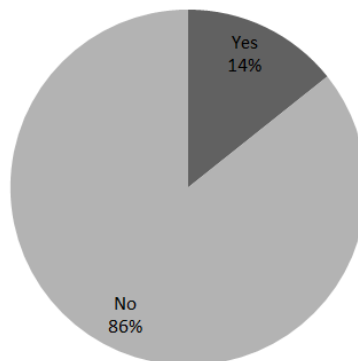

Fig. 17 Culture in Crisis Question 21 respondent chart

21. *What additional preparation would have been useful for you from a crisis management perspective?*

This was a free text question. Answers fell into the following areas:

- Preparing for larger scale emergencies
- Planning for working from home
- More planning and training on internal crisis management structures
- More thinking and planning for a site shutdown
- Earlier planning for Covid-19
- Better planning for communications
- Other

The following chart shows how many times these areas were mentioned by the respondents:
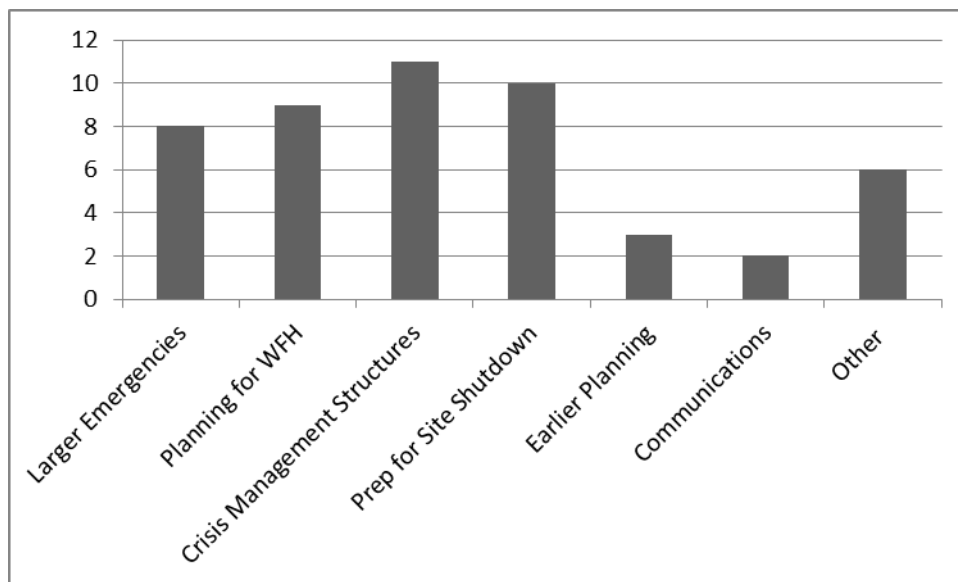

Fig. 18 Culture in Crisis Question 22 respondent chart

"We're a small organisation, but a collaborative and realistic approach might have been more helpful. We met daily and discussed what was happening, but really were focussed on remaining open, rather than what would happen should we have to close. Crisis Management Planning is now on my list of things to implement - as I'm sure might be the same for others too" – Visitor Experience Director/Senior Manager, Private Museum/Heritage Site

"Would be easy to say pandemic but we haven't had one for a hundred years so why would we. It would be better to have a process for total closure" – Visitor Experience Director/Senior Manager, Independent Charitable Trust (multiple sites)

22. *What is the one piece of advice you would give to yourself in mid-March 2020?*

This was a free text question. Some reflective quotes are shown below:

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"Don't wait for government advice, be prepared and try and see what's coming before it does" - Operations Director/Senior Manager, Independent Charitable Trust (single site)

"Save more files to Cloud!" - Conservation/Collections Care Manager, National Organisation (multiple sites)