

Thursday 30 April 2020

Summary

- **Charities are the glue that holds society together.** In these times of immense and growing hardship, our services are needed more than ever.
- However, Covid-19 and the necessary lockdown have resulted in a significant proportion of **charity incomes being wiped out overnight** — with the voluntary sector set to lose £4.3 billion in a 12-week lockdown.¹
- **The Government's package of support for charities is a welcome start. However, it falls short of what is needed.** Without further support, many charities large and small are likely to remain in serious peril.
- As charities struggle to stay afloat, **many of the people who rely on their services and are most in need of support could miss out on vital support**, including vulnerable children and families.
- At Barnardo's we have around 500 staff still delivering frontline services with elements of virtual support too e.g. for disabled children, children in care and care leavers. In line with Government guidance, the rest of our services have moved to 'remote' or 'distanced' support, reaching vulnerable children on the phone, through instant messaging and using video conferencing. **We have been innovating at pace, but this has come at an additional cost.**

Voluntary sector income

- **91%** of charities said they expect their income to be disrupted - with a third predicting a 48% drop in income.²
- **52%** of charities said they had already reduced their levels of service.
- **Barnardo's has seen its own income slashed by £8m a month** — with retail stores closed, many of our fundraising activities on hold, and income from commissioners uncertain.

Support package for charities

- We are concerned that the **£750m pledged by the Chancellor to support the charity sector will still see many more charities unable to deliver vital services** or being forced to close. The Government should commit to reviewing the package with a view of providing additional funds to help charities adjust to the challenges they face.
- This support must reach charities **as soon as possible** to avoid any delay in service delivery.
- **The Government should consider creating an 'innovation fund' for charities**, to help fund the creation of new 'virtual' and 'remote' delivery models needed to reach vulnerable children during this crisis and in the future. (This would be similar to the £1bn+ innovation funding made available to businesses.)
- Whilst the **Government's Job Retention scheme** has been a lifeline for many charities, including Barnardo's, it **should be reviewed to enable staff on furlough leave to volunteer for the charity they are employed by.**
- Charity workers, like Barnardo's who are still providing face to face service to children in residential care with severe disabilities, and care leavers in supported

¹ [National Council for Voluntary Organisations](#) (NCVO), March 2020.

² [Institute of Fundraising](#), March 2020.

accommodation, **must have reliable access to personal protective equipment** - just like their colleagues in the NHS.

Questions for the Minister

- Will the Government commit to reviewing the package of support for charities on a monthly basis with a view to providing additional funding to help meet growing demands?
- When will Departments be announcing which charities will receive funding from the £360m strand of the £750m support package for charities?
- What steps is the Government taking to ensure charities have the resources they need to invest in innovation and adapt their services to reach vulnerable children and adults during the lockdown?
- Will the Minister make representations to the Chancellor to suggest the Government's Job Retention Scheme is amended so that charity staff on furlough leave can volunteer for the charity they work for?
- How is the Government working to ensure that charity workers who provided face-to-face support have access to personal protective equipment?

How Barnardo's is adapting its services

Delivering WRAP online

WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) is an internationally-recognised mental health and wellbeing programme, which is normally delivered in groups. In Bradford, this is normally delivered in school and youth club settings. With lockdown in place, this work has now been adapted to deliver through videoconferencing, telephone and text. Our group leaders are running sessions where young people find and talk about belongings that matter to them, as a way of articulating anxieties and working on strategies to manage them. So far 40 young people have been helped online in two weeks.

Working with local authorities to get food to vulnerable families

Our Byker SureStart centre offers valuable support to low-income families across Newcastle, with our Family Support service helping the most vulnerable to be safe and access the services they need. With the closure of the centre, Barnardo's has moved to offering support via the phone. We are looking at being part of a massive food distribution project, identifying families at need and providing food parcel distribution to them.

Ensuring help is there for those most vulnerable to COVID-19

Through our Orchard Mosaic service, we offer support and counselling to young people with Cystic Fibrosis and their families. With the spread of Coronavirus placing these children at great risk, the team have set up and run phone and video-counselling and proactively contacted families to make sure they know Barnardo's is here for them, at a time they need support most.

About Barnardo's

Barnardo's is the UK's largest national children's charity. In 2018/19, we supported around 300,000 children, young people, parents and carers through more than 1,000 services. For more information please contact Claire Stewart, Senior Public Affairs Officer, on claire.stewart@barnardos.org.uk or 07584 347 308.