

Believe in children **Impact of Covid-19 on the charity sector**



Barnardo's

DCMS Select Committee
2pm-5pm, 31 March 2020

The charity sector urgently needs support from the Government

- Practical support:
 - Charities supporting children and young people with complex health and social care needs, including in residential settings and short breaks urgently need a supply of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and testing for vulnerable service users and staff.
- Financial support - every day counts:
 - Automatically defer PAYE/NI for 3 months. At the moment we can apply for it, but it isn't guaranteed.
 - Make Gift Aid a priority payment - it should not have a time lag.
 - Send a strong message to commissioners about honouring contractual commitments and paying charity providers in a timely way.
 - Provide a ring-fence grant funding to pay for the immediate, innovative work we are having to do to adapt services e.g. move them online.
 - Commit to future sustainable funding for charities supporting the growing number of vulnerable people affected by the virus and the response.
 - Facilitate easily accessible, affordable loans for charities.

Key questions:

- When will the Government announce a package of support for charities?
- A fifth (19%) of teachers working in disadvantaged schools say one in five of their pupils do not have adequate access to the internet.¹ What recent discussions has the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport had with tech companies to support vulnerable children at home to access appropriate and sufficient devices and the internet?
- Will the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport commit to providing additional resources for charities to adapt their services where possible to have an online element, to enable them to continue providing support during strict social distancing?

¹ TeachFirst, 2020. *Only 2% of teachers working in the most disadvantaged communities believe all their pupils have adequate access to devices for home learning.* Available [online](#).

1. Impact of Covid-19 on charities

- The pandemic is a threat to the existence of charities and the third sector, with an estimated £4.3bn loss in 12 weeks.²
- In times of crisis charities are key. They are trusted by local partners and most importantly vulnerable families. They are relied on to support the vulnerable in society and the demand is already increasing.
- More families are being pushed into crisis and the most vulnerable children are in the greatest danger as pressure from families increases and vital support systems disappear.
 - Avon and Somerset Police has reported a 20% rise in domestic abuse.³

2. The impact on children and young people

- Families are being pushed into crisis and the children most vulnerable to abuse and neglect are in the greatest danger as pressure from families increases and vital support systems disappear e.g. closure of schools, ending face-to-face meetings with social workers
- We are seeing an increase in domestic abuse in countries in lockdown - children are hidden victims as we show in our latest research.⁴
- Some families live in digital poverty, with no or limited access to the internet, making it difficult for them to access support services or school work.
- Long-term it is likely we will see:
 - Mental health of children and young people going from crisis to catastrophe with more needing support for the first time;
 - More children entering the care system;
 - Increase in poverty due to an economic shock;
 - an increase in the exploitation of children, criminally and sexually, on and offline, heightening the poverty of hope already experienced by children across the UK; and
 - Overall an increase in the adverse childhood experiences we know increases the likelihood of exposure to trauma.
- **Learning from abroad** - From Brazil to Germany, Italy to China, we are seeing an alarming rise in domestic abuse. China saw a threefold increase in call outs during the period of isolation to domestic abuse services.⁵ Whilst Northern Ireland has seen a 20% rise, Paris 32% and New South Wales 40%.⁶

² NCVO, 2020. *Every day counts as charities still wait for Government support*. Available [online](#).

³<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-rise-in-domestic-abuse-incidents-during-covid-19-outbreak-police-leader-warns-11963647>

⁴ Barnardo's, 2020. *Not just collateral damage: the hidden impact of domestic abuse on children*. Available [online](#).

⁵ Guardian, March 2020. *For some people, social distancing means being trapped indoors with an abuser*. Available [online](#).

⁶BBC, March 2020. *Coronavirus: 'Domestic abuse pandemic likely due to shut down'*. Available [online](#).

3. Impact of Covid-19 on Barnardo's

- Overnight our income has been slashed by £8m a month.
 - We have closed over 700+ retail stores, fundraising activities have been cancelled, and our income from commissioners is uncertain.
- In line with Government guidance around 600 Barnardo's staff are still delivering face-to-face services, like residential provision for children in care, our special schools for children with special educational needs and disabilities; our supported accommodation for care leavers and young people who would otherwise be street homeless; and our nurseries for vulnerable children and children of key workers.
- Almost all of our remaining c.1000 services are now delivered remotely. We are innovating at pace to deliver over the phone, via apps, or through video conferencing where possible. This has required additional resources which we are not funded for.

Examples of 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.