



Act for Change

Mental Health matters

COVID-19  
APPEAL

#mentalhealthmatterscovid19

# Act for Change, looking ahead

preparing for a rapidly evolving situation. We have been working since our inception in 2007 to overcome the additional barriers people who have a minority ethnic background often face when they need to access mental health services.

Our services are targeted to meet the needs of the specific young people we support and to offer a culturally appropriate service.

To help counter the racism and disproportionate impacts on our BAME service users:

We have a a diverse team and high number of BAME counsellors

We match our counsellors by ethnic background: our BAME counsellors work with BAME service users.

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## Campaign Goal

Reach **1000** young people within  
the next **six** months and raise **30K**

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We understand the specific needs of young people from black and minority ethnic groups.

We are familiar with the inequality and social disadvantage experienced by our service users in areas such as housing, education, employment, health and the criminal justice system.

We know that some people do not ask for support from mainstream mental health services. This results in them coming to attention when their case is more severe.

We are always looking to counter this tendency.



Act for Change

We must plan and prepare and, for that, we need your help.

**The coronavirus pandemic is a health emergency on a global scale such as we have never seen.**

It is also a mental health risk that puts pressure on young people and support services as never before. BAME communities are suffering the health consequence of COVID-19 disproportionately. The impacts of COVID-19 are felt across our society in unequal measure.

**We are taking action to help those most affected:**

There are a multitude of pressures on the social lives of children and young people: a rapidly evolving situation is disrupting family life and access to education, increasing the risk of education poverty.

Already now, but increasingly over time, we will be facing a domino effect on children and young people the combined economic impact of social distancing, educational impact of school closures, extreme poverty, and deteriorating mental health.

Lockdown is adding a whole new level of emotional load on vulnerable families and young people already struggling with experiences of trauma, school exclusion, child sexual exploitation and gangs.

We are also experiencing high levels of uncertainty, fear of loss of control, fear of death and bereavement. Isolation and loneliness and an increase of domestic violence and domestic abuse, anxiety and overwhelm.

The inequality that was always with us is now becoming starkly present. This list is growing as exponentially as the virus.

No one can be sure what the future holds. There is a wide range of possible outcomes.

We need to be ready for a prolonged period of uncertainty.

We need to be prepared to jump forward in response to need.



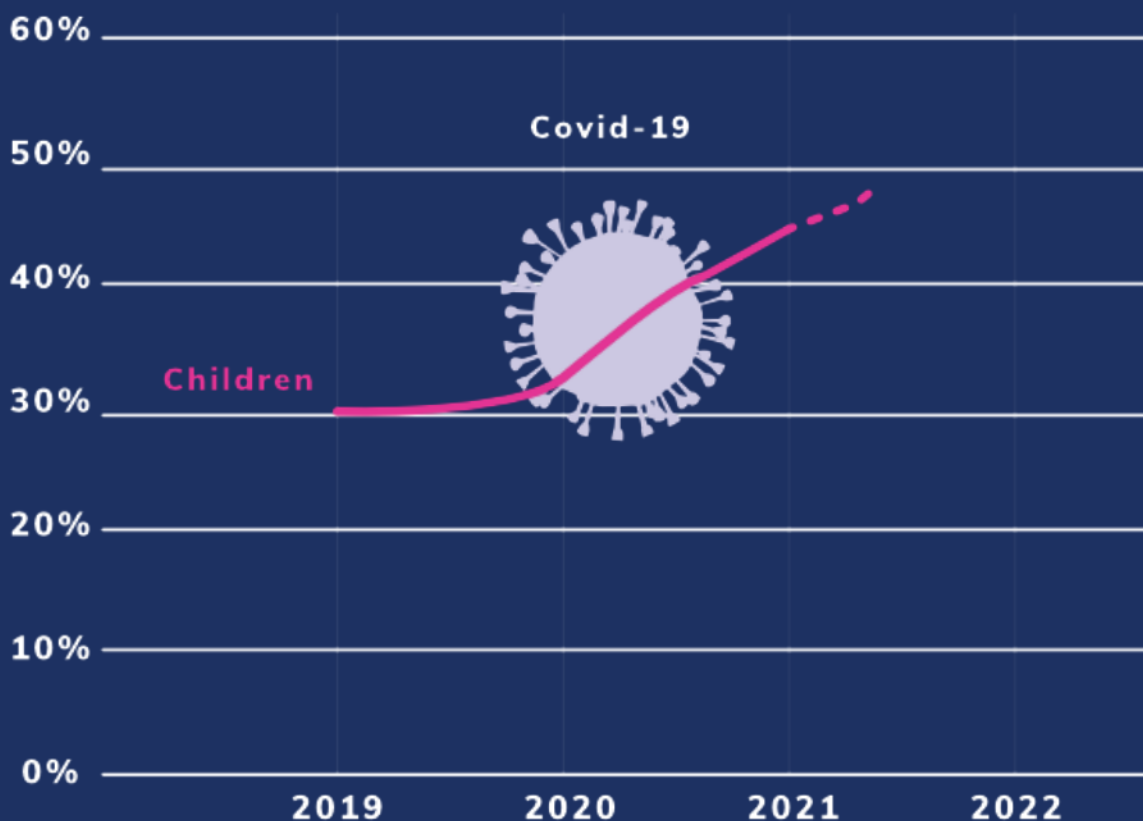
Extraordinary times require extraordinary measures

# Child poverty forecast

As child poverty is linked to macro-economics circumstances, there was in the last two years a steady increase in families' financial troubles caused by Brexit uncertainties.

The Covid-19 crisis will impact even more families and will worsen the situation of the ones already affected. Due to its scale, unseen since World War I, it could lead 2 million more children to poverty. Experts are forecasting an economic recovery to 2019 levels, around the second quarter of 2022.

## Estimated proportion of children in poverty in the UK, from 2019 to 2022



**4.2 million** children in 2020, up by 400,000 from 2018.

A family is classified as being in poverty if it has an income of less than **60%** of the median income for their family type, after housing costs.

Sources: DWP, 2020; Children in need census; HM&Revenues forecast, April 2020; KPMG, April 2020; YoungMinds, March 2020; FFCC, April 2020; Social Metrics Commission, Measuring Poverty, Sept. 2019.

# BAME

The effects of the pandemic on BAME can be summarised by 4 numbers. While representing **17%** of the Country, they are standing for **21%** of the health workforce in the UK. This group is suffering **34%** of the severe or critical Covid-19 cases and their death rates exceed by **100%** the rest of the general population.

In London, BAME represent **67%** of the medical staff

Of 119 NHS staff known to have died in the pandemic, **64%** were from BAME

The losses and the trauma endured by those communities will be felt for years. PTSD-like challenges are to be expected.

By experience, we know that the members of those communities are difficult to reach due to global defiance against administrations and organisations.

Sources: The Kings Fund, April 2020; HSJ, April 2020.

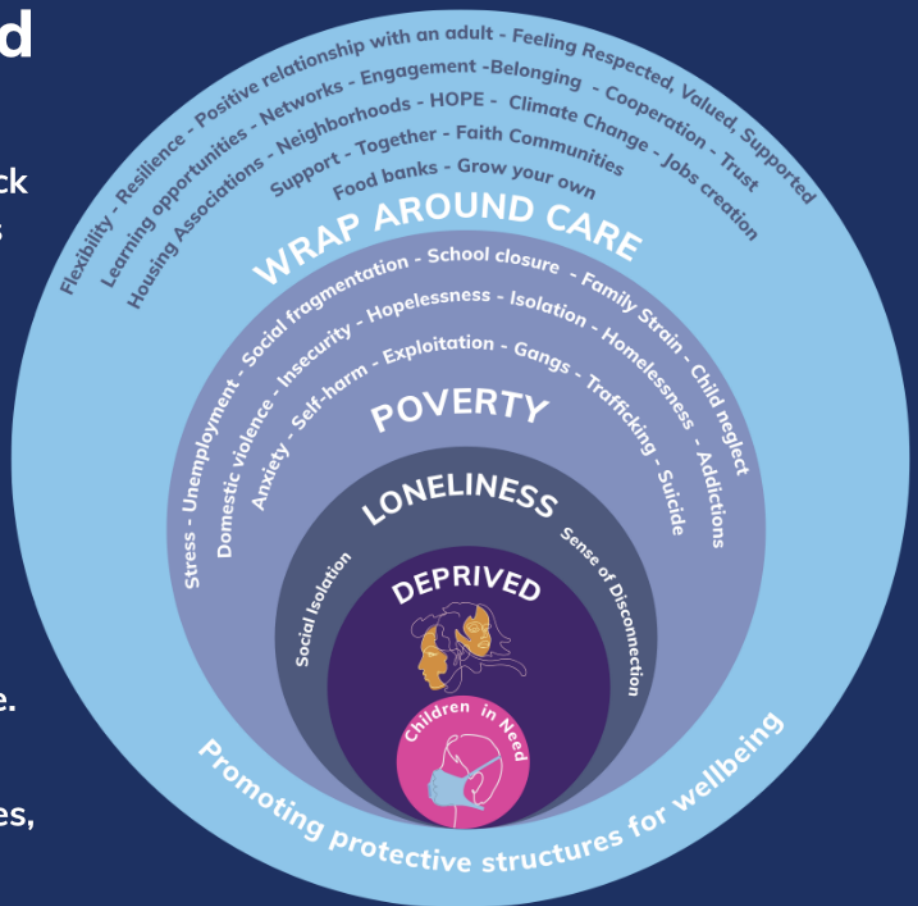
# Children in Need

We know that most of the factors, leading to the lack of adequate living conditions and education, will rise during the Covid-19 episode.

Poverty, poor mental health, violence, unemployment, and isolation are sky-rocketing.

Children in Need will face even more challenges and will need even more care.

The figures are showing a concerning increase in cases, as well as the extensive deterioration of this group.



2021-2022 EST. 530,000

+4%

2020-2021 EST. 510,000

+25%

2018-2020 404,710

+4% from 2017-2018

Source: Children in need census

# Adapting our services

**We are committed to continuing our counselling services to re-double our efforts to reach everyone impacted by the current crisis.**

Within a week of lock-down, **Act for Change** reconfigured its provision of counselling services to be delivered online and by phone.

We have:

- made a prompt and successful migration online
- eliminated our waiting list.
- redirected our efforts to ensure each young person is seen within days of referral.

Not every young person is amenable to online counselling. Some will need additional scaffolding for the therapeutic journeys they are on to access our online counselling provision.



We have developed pro-social pathways for personal development and life skills acquisition through gamification (worked on for the past three years).

It empowers young people as individuals to decide what activities they would like to do within specified themes.

In the process, on the online platform we developed, they gain an understanding and strengthen their internal sense of agency and focus of control.

Particularly in these times of lock-down, offers a diversion from boredom, a sense of isolation and abandonment for young people - children in care and those who are excluded from school.

## Ethical Entrepreneur Youth Pathway

builds their experience base, and at the same time, they, in turn, contribute to their local community and our planet at this time when every effort can make a difference and each one matters.

Accredited at Bronze & Silver levels.



### **Young people 11-15 engage with local and global issues.**

They are encouraged to form creative social networks as opposed to gangs. This strand takes on an even more critical dimension in this time of uncertainty and change.

Young people, like their adult counterparts, need to contribute and see themselves as contributing towards a better world. This will help reduce their anxieties, sense of hopelessness that some may have and help increase their sense of control and agency in their lives.



### **Older youths 16+ learn and develop entrepreneurial skills to harness local businesses, community and families to the natural enterprise of young people.**

Older adults with tech and entrepreneurial savvy will mentor the young people through training and by breaking down the work involved in entrepreneurship, into achievable bite sizes. This is a motivational activity that opens up pro-social activities and increases assertiveness, confidence and self-esteem.

We need one last push before we can go live with it and impact many thousands of young people, to enable them to use this 'downtime' to explore pathways for their lives in a safe and controlled environment.

We need **£5,000** to get these programmes operational.

# Our new services **SAVING LIVES**

## **Online Crisis Intervention for Families**

As a charity specialising in the mental health and wellbeing of young people and their families, we are launching this new service which offers direct consultation and support by a trained counsellor for young people and their families.

Our service will be one of the rare support lines to offer callers direct immediate counselling.



**We have a dedicated helpline, which families can access between 10am to 10pm, seven days a week.**

The service represents a vital alternative to other helplines and oversubscribed services with waiting lists stretching into several weeks and months.

## **Act4Change - Wellbeing**

To address the coming spike in mental health needs, we are expanding the number of counsellors available, together with our partners, **Engfospro**.

We are fully operational and ready to start delivery of this service.

- Volunteering counsellors vetted rapidly & DBS checked
- All counsellors registered with BACP/UKCP
- Receive induction training
- Weekly supervision of counsellors & safeguarding provisions in place
- Start supporting people in need of emotional support coming through local Helplines within a week of registering.

## **Act4Change Community Forums**

Starting conversations 'Dreaming the Future' across communities.

What if we don't have to choose between economy and health?

What if the intractable issues of our time are solvable with a different mindset?

These local grassroots conversations will help us pick up our leadership wherever we are.

Find out how to start a Dreaming the Future conversation amongst your friends and family.

**Contact us for a friendly facilitator. This is our gift to you.**



# You can **HELP**



## **COVID-19 makes us all vulnerable.**

COVID-19 impacts every aspect of what it means to be human. Enforced social isolation is exposing our vulnerabilities.

Each of us is having to work out new ways of coping.

**AFC** therapists and counsellors can support you as you navigate your way, increase your resilience and stretch your emotional and social resources.

## **We are all in this together. We are here to help.**

Let our counsellors' support you to cope with the real fears and anxieties caused by COVID-19.

The problems generated by the pandemic also create opportunities to address a climate of change and transform into a caring society such as we all hope for and, mostly, haven't dared dream possible before.



## **There is no health without mental health**

- At such a time when the mental health of all is impacted, our economic recovery and our productivity depends on our mental well-being
- Only together can we make the shift away from a mental health emergency
- Only together can we make the shift from fixing people to developing potential
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# We are all in this together.

## How can you help?

- Help improve the response and recovery capacity of children and young people
- Increase the resources available to our local communities
- Play your part towards a mental health recovery from the pandemic

### Ethical Entrepreneur

**£25** will enable a young person to be matched to their mentor and provide them with access to the AFC-accredited scheme.

### Crisis Intervention Service for Families

**£60** will provide crisis intervention and follow-up for one family

**£30** will provide punctual crisis intervention for one family

### Trauma Informed Counselling Service

**£360** Counselling for one young person for 12 weeks, this works out at **£30** per session

**£480** Counselling for a family for 12 weeks.

# Every Donation Counts



Your generous gift gives children and families in need a chance for a brighter future.

Please donate at  
[www.actforchange.org.uk/donate](http://www.actforchange.org.uk/donate)



Our promise is that every penny counts towards the delivery of high-quality services provided at cost.



# Act for Change

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