



**END
CHILDHOOD
CRISIS**

**Young people's reflections on
childhood during coronavirus:**
protecting children from the
effects of poverty

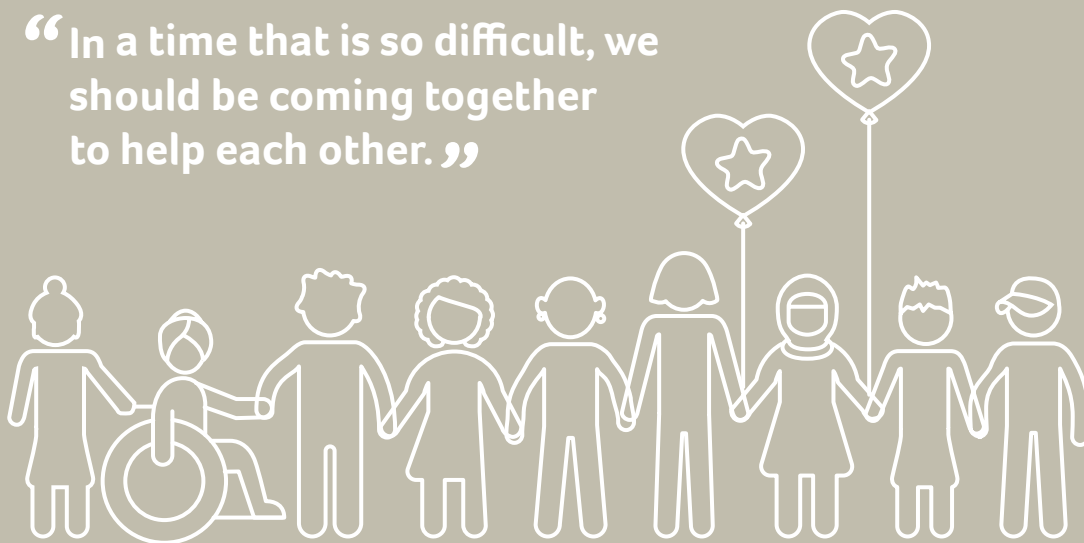
When the coronavirus outbreak hit the UK, Action for Children launched an appeal to raise money to help children, young people, and families who were struggling. A family could get a grant of up to £250 from the Emergency Fund. This could be used to buy essentials like food, learning and play resources, home appliances, as well as being used to help pay bills.

Action for Children analysed the information about the families who had been helped by the Fund.

We read through the findings and have created this report to share our thoughts and recommendations to reduce poverty and end childhood crisis.

– Mariam and the young people’s group

“In a time that is so difficult, we should be coming together to help each other.”



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Food and bills

“Families shouldn’t have to worry about where their next meal is coming from or choose between eating and having electricity on.”

Getting to the shops can be difficult. If a family member has health issues, they may be scared to use public transport, and so will need to pay for taxis.

I found it shocking that over a third of people needed help to pay for food. **People are struggling to afford what they need to survive.**

Free school meal vouchers seem to have been the biggest help during this difficult time [...] **these should continue to be given out** as children will be fed and happy.

Prices for essentials have also gone up. So families will need to decide what’s really essential and what they can go without.



39%

of the households we supported with the Emergency Fund requested help to afford food.



12%

requested help to afford household bills (such as fuel, and other bills including Council Tax).

Education

“Playing is a huge part of a child’s development. Children couldn’t go out to play and socialise, and not having things to do at home will have negatively impacted on their learning and also their mental health.”

I did not expect the figures to be that high.

Schools should be able to give out stationery and resource packs to students.

Help should be available so that every child receives the resources they need to learn.

33%



of the households we supported requested help to afford resources for children’s learning and play (such as stationery, books, activity books and toys).

8%



requested help to afford technology and devices for online home learning (such as laptops and tablets).

Support for young carers

“The current times are so uncertain and this puts excess pressure onto families.”

It's really important for the government to look at individual people's stories.

There wasn't enough support for young carers through the pandemic. **The government must consider the needs of all groups.**

10%



of households we supported included at least one child who was a young carer.

Benefits and support for families

“ If someone is applying for Universal Credit then they obviously need money now. Waiting five weeks is longer than you’d wait to receive your first pay cheque. ”

This shows that the amount [of money] people are receiving is not enough.

There are so many reasons why people aren’t earning enough or are out of work, and I think this shows that there’s a flaw in the system. **People aren’t looked at as individuals but instead are put into categories.**

30%



of the households we supported were struggling to access enough welfare benefits to meet their daily living costs.

86%



of households subject to the benefits cap (a limit to their benefits) in May 2020 included children, according to Government statistics.

60%



of parents receiving Universal Credit or Child Tax Credit needed to borrow money since the start of the pandemic, according to a survey in May–June 2020.

Mental health

“The pandemic has made the lives of both children and parents very difficult. Children **may be picking up on their parents’ anxieties as well as having their own**. The children may not have fully understood what was going on.”

There also aren't the boundaries that children have at school. When they're around their parents 24/7 it will confuse them and take them out of their routine.

Being in lockdown could've been a very stressful time and may have had a massive effect on adults and children.

60%



of households we supported were struggling with adult or child mental health concerns as a result of the pandemic.



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for safe and happy childhoods

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