

PRESS RELEASE

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Social care & mental health charities show united front and call on government for help

A group of social care and mental health charities have united to strengthen calls on the government to help them to continue to deliver services to those in need.

On Monday 8th April 2020, Health Secretary Matt Hancock announced an investment boost of £750m for charities. However this money focuses specifically on providers such as, Hospices, St John Ambulance, Domestic Violence agencies and the Citizens Advice Bureau. Mental Health provision was not included and controversially, social care providers were offered a badge!

Dissatisfied with Mr Hancock's handouts, The Kaleidoscope Plus Group, Impact, SAFS and Wish have united to make a stand and lobby the government to form a safety net around the services they provide to those in need during these unprecedented times.

Monica Shafaq, CEO of The Kaleidoscope Plus Group, the charity leading the #TogetherForChange collective said, "We are facing a worsening mental health and social care crisis in the UK. Many people are finding their current circumstances particularly difficult. Isolation, income reductions, business closures and the general uncertainty of the whole situation has undoubtedly increased stress and anxiety levels. Those who haven't needed to access mental health support in the past are now also coming forward to seek assistance and information."

"Third sector organisations, like ours, that do so much to help the communities they serve are literally fighting to survive. If we as charities aren't able to help those who need our services, the UK will inevitably see an increase in mental health related problems such as anxiety and depression, as well as a rise in addictions and social consequences such as homelessness and relationship breakdowns."

"The scale of the looming crisis is too serious to ignore, both in terms of every person that may be affected, and in terms of the wider impact on society. The government's current line of sight seems to only be 12 months ahead, what about after that? We know that the impacts of this pandemic will

rumble on long after 2021 and we need support to make sure that we can continue to provide services to those who've been affected by the crisis. We as organisations have the experience and infrastructure to change the current trajectory but a huge and disproportionate amount of additional funding is not going to help us succeed – we need government financial support now more than ever.”

Joyce Kallevik, director of women's mental health charity Wish, pointed to the impact coronavirus is having on those who were already struggling with their mental health – and the knock-on effect this may have on charities.

“Many of the women we work with are at serious risk of re-traumatisation – the combination of lockdown, isolation and the anxiety around what's happening may be triggering previous trauma.”

“We're putting everything into our coronavirus response to increase our services and gain further funding, but there's a danger that if we become too depleted we won't be able to help those who need it once this is all over.”

“We don't just need to think about now – we need to ensure charities are safeguarded for the future, too.”

Claire Hopkins, Director at Impact said, “We, as charities, can continue to make a difference to people, if we act now and have the support we need from government. It has been known for some time now that Third Sector providers are best placed to be working with our most vulnerable in society. We know our families, we know our patch and we know how to make the changes necessary to turn the curve in this unprecedented crisis.”

Poppy Dhatt, CEO of SAFS concluded, “We are all in this together, as a nation, as companies and as charities. We recognise the need to pull together as a team through this crisis and direct our services as far and wide as possible to make sure that no one falls through the cracks, that's why we've formed #TogetherForChange. We have responsibilities as organisations to support and care for the people who need us and come what may, we will continue to do just that.”

The four charities hope that their combined efforts will help their calls be answered. They are working together for a collective purpose; to continue to bring about change and help people who need their support right now, as well as into the future.

The Government announced that the £5 million grant for mental health will be administered by Mind, however organisations can only apply for £20-50k over a 12-month period, which means that demand for the grant will be high and begs the question as to whether it's right that certain charities are to be given funds without question, whilst many others will have to compete for it?

Monica Shafaq, CEO of The Kaleidoscope Plus Group is calling for other charities to join forces with the #TogetherForChange collective to ensure that all third sector organisations can continue to offer their vital services.

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors:

About The Kaleidoscope Plus Group:

Established in 1973, The Kaleidoscope Plus Group support thousands of people all over the UK each year. The charity offers a wide range of services for those experiencing mental health difficulties, as well as residential care homes and supported houses for the most vulnerable in society. The Kaleidoscope Plus Group works to promote and support positive health and wellbeing and is committed to making sure that the services and facilities they provide are of the highest possible quality.

<https://www.kaleidoscopeplus.org.uk/>

About Wish:

Established in 1987, Wish is the only national, user-led charity working with women with mental health needs in prisons, hospitals and the community. Wish provides independent advocacy, emotional support and practical guidance at all stages of a woman's journey through the mental health and criminal justice systems, acts to increase women's participation in the services they receive, and campaigns to get their voice heard at a policy level. It is unique in its long-term commitment to each individual as they move through hospitals, prison and the community.

<https://www.womenatwish.org.uk/>

About Impact:

Impact is a not-for-profit social enterprise, based in Leeds, focused on improving children's mental health. They are commissioned by the local authority, CCGs and grant funders to provide a range of specialist psychotherapy services for children and young people aged 0 – 25 and their families with wide ranging complex needs in a variety of settings, including children's centres, primary and secondary schools.

<http://impactnorth.co.uk/>

About SAFS:

SAFS provides a number of social care and health & well-being services to children, young people, adults and families who have disabilities, complex health needs and/or life-limiting conditions in Sandwell, Birmingham and neighbouring boroughs.

Their services include: Domiciliary Care for children and adults, a Personal Assistant (PA) and community-based service for children, young people and adults, a Lifestyles Drop in Service for young people, support services for Parent and Carers as well as day trips and events for families. SAFS works predominantly within the South Asian Community but also supports other BAME communities, ensuring all cultural, religious and linguistic needs are met.

<https://www.safscare.org>

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