

A vision for recovery

Overarching principles and actions

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been widespread, affecting the lives of every child and young person in the country. Our organisations are calling for a new vision of childhood to support children, young people and their families to recover from the impact of COVID-19. But recovery must not mean going back to how things were before, with rising child poverty and services at breaking point.

We need a cross-government approach that considers the needs of children, young people and their families in the round, from conception to age 25. The voices of children, young people and families must be at the heart of the recovery process, and there must be renewed investment in the services and workforce that they rely on.

Here we set out the key principles and action necessary to make this vision a reality:

- **An integrated and holistic approach**
 - **National action:** deliver a single cross-government recovery strategy for children, young people and families; put children's rights, and the voice of children, young people and families, at its heart.
 - **Local action:** develop an integrated response to recovery, including community, health, education, social care and VCS services; co produce this plan with children, young people and families.
- **Protect and promote children's rights and entitlements**
 - **National action:** use realisation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as the basis for recovery; pay particular attention to children in vulnerable situations and young people whose rights are most at risk.
- **Treat children, young people and their families as partners**
 - **National action:** ensure the recovery planning process is conducted in partnership with children, young people and families; work with affected children, young people and families to understand their experiences to inform decisions; give children, young people and families the tools to make the best decisions for them.

- **Local action:** Work with children, young people and families to build trust and confidence in the system; understand the experience of particular communities in lockdown; work with children, young people, families and communities to plan what recovery looks like.
- **Have an explicit focus on reducing inequalities**
 - **National action:** recognise and reflect on why COVID-19 has affected particular groups more than others, for example Black and Minority Ethnic communities; provide resources to public services to prevent further widening of inequalities among children and young people; take urgent action to reduce child poverty and inequality.
- **Invest in children and young people's futures through a comprehensive, long-term funding settlement**
 - **National action:** acknowledge that public services entered the pandemic already facing financial challenges and must now address the backlog of pre-existing need in addition to the expected increase in demand; provide a comprehensive long-term funding that incentivises partnership working, free from silos.
- **Understand how needs have changed and respond**
 - **National action:** recognise that many children and families were not having their needs met before COVID-19; develop a comprehensive evidence base of how the needs of children and families have changed over the course of the pandemic and invest time and resources accordingly; prioritise an understanding of how children's wellbeing and mental health has been affected;
 - **Local action:** collect evidence from across all local services to assess need and provide the specialist support required; prioritise an understanding of how children's wellbeing and mental health has been affected; use data to consider how services need to change; invest in evidence based services.
- **Value and invest in the workforce**
 - **National action:** take active steps to protect the physical and mental health of the workforce during recovery; seek out, listen to and act on what they say; ensure that workers' rights are protected and upheld; understand how the knowledge and skills of the workforce needs to change to support recovery; recognise the breadth of the children's workforce, including volunteers and those whose decisions affect children.

Value strong relationships and take a person-centred approach to new models of service delivery

- **Local action:** recognise that digital delivery has worked for some children and young people and in some services and work to mitigate and prevent any negative impacts; recognise the importance of face to face meetings for building and maintaining relationships; base any decisions on face-to-face versus digital service delivery on an understanding of what children, young people and families want and the evidence.

These principles for recovery have been drawn up and are supported by the following children's sector organisations:

