

Refusing to ignore people in crisis: our advocacy plan

In 2017 we are asking all political parties to consider policies that support our vision for people in crisis:

- > **HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE:** everyone should get the support they need to live independently at home
- > **FIRST AID:** everyone should know how to save a life
- > **REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS:** those who seek sanctuary in the UK should be treated fairly and humanely
- > **INTERNATIONAL:** principled humanitarian action should be protected to ensure the most vulnerable are assisted

Health and social care

Everyone should get the support they need to live independently at home

Challenge

- > Too many people have to reach the point of health and social care crisis before they receive support.
- > Despite the Care Act's (2014) prevention duty, a lack of local authority funding means preventative budgets are reducing.
- > A lack of care at home and in the community means too many people have nowhere else to go but to hospital for help.

Key calls

- > **We want to see a long-term, person-centred plan for health and social care in England developed in partnership with patients, professionals and the wider sector.**
 - > This should prioritise ensuring people get the support they need to live independently at home.
- > **We want social care to be given the priority it deserves.**
 - > An independent analysis of current and predicted levels of unmet need in the short, medium and long term, including costings, should be carried out as a priority by the new government.
- > **We want to see more people able to access preventative services, and fewer people reaching the point of health and social care crisis:**
 - > The Care Act's prevention duty and responsibilities should be met with new additional resources.
 - > All health and social care planning documents, national and local, should fully incorporate and prioritise prevention.
 - > The importance of non-clinical interventions, such as the provision of short-term wheelchairs, support at home and services that help reduce loneliness and social isolation, need to be recognised.

Evidence

- > Each year the Red Cross helps over 200,000 people to live independently at home.
- > British Red Cross research has shown that ensuring people with lower-level needs can access services that prevent, reduce and delay the need for further care and support is good for the individual and the public purse.
- > Red Cross research found the Care Act's prevention duty has not been fully realised on the ground.



First aid

Everyone should know how to save a life

Challenge

- The actions of the first person on the scene in an emergency are critical, yet too few people have the confidence and skills to carry out basic first aid.
- This can lead to unnecessary deaths, injuries and suffering, and can put greater pressure on emergency services.

Key calls

- There should be more opportunities to learn first aid throughout an individual's life, starting at school, but also through the driving licensing system and public health initiatives.
- Every child should have the opportunity to learn first aid at school; it should be a mandatory part of the curriculum.

Evidence

- In 2016 the Red Cross helped 267,815 people learn first aid across the UK.
- Up to 59 per cent of pre-hospital deaths from injury could have been prevented with basic first aid – applying pressure to stop bleeding, and turning someone on their side and tilting their head back to open the airway.
- British Red Cross research also shows that first aid can make communities stronger and more resilient.



Refugees and asylum seekers

Those who seek sanctuary in the UK should be treated fairly and humanely

Challenges

- > Thousands of British Red Cross service-users, including those who have been granted refugee status, experience serious problems with the asylum system, leaving them distressed and destitute.
- > Too many families are torn apart and struggle to reunite due to the complex process and restrictions. Even after refugee families have been reunited in the UK they can routinely experience destitution. This impacts both integration and family relationships.

Key calls

- > We want to see a fair, effective and humane asylum system for people seeking sanctuary in the UK.
- > Safe and legal routes to the UK, including refugee family reunion and resettlement, should be available to people fleeing war and persecution. This includes unaccompanied minors with family ties to the UK.
- > All asylum seekers, new refugees and reunited families should be able to access and exercise their rights to obtain essential support. This includes extending the grace period afforded to people moving from asylum to mainstream benefits in order to help prevent destitution.
- > Discretionary leave to remain, including a right to work and recourse to public funds, should be granted to fully refused asylum seekers who cannot leave the UK for reasons beyond their control.
- > People who have been trafficked should be protected and empowered to make their own choices before and after the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), and the conditions that contribute to people being at risk of trafficking and exploitation must be addressed.

Evidence

- > In 2016 we provided support to 14,908 refugees and asylum seekers who had been left destitute in the UK, a 10 per cent increase on the previous year.
- > Some asylum seekers who have been refused permission to remain in the UK cannot leave because they lack documents such as passports, their nationality is disputed, or because there is no viable route back to their country of origin.
- > Our family reunion travel assistance programme reunited more than 750 families in the UK last year – the largest group being from Syria – including nearly 1,900 children. In 2015, we reunited around 400 families.



International

Principled humanitarian action should be protected to ensure the most vulnerable are assisted

Challenge

- > Humanitarian and development aims are increasingly being defined through the language of trade and security. This runs the risk of blurring the lines between humanitarian assistance and economic and national interests.
- > In a world of ever expanding and unmet humanitarian need, humanitarian actors need to find a more effective way to collaborate on a local, national and international basis to help those in crisis.

Key calls

- > The UK's commitment to development aid must be protected and allocated on the basis of need to ensure the most vulnerable are assisted.
- > Humanitarian aid should always be distinct from any political, security, economic or military objectives in order to protect the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. The Red Cross Red Crescent Movement relies on these principles to work in some of the most difficult contexts and hard to reach areas.
- > The UK Government should ensure that humanitarian preparedness and response is "as local as possible, as international as necessary". Empowering national and local actors creates a more inclusive and effective system that recognises the needs of the most vulnerable.

Evidence

- > Over the last five years alone, UK Aid has helped more than 13 million people with emergency food aid and nearly 63 million with access to water, sanitation and hygiene.
- > UK Aid has supported emergency response programmes and contributed to building resilience against the effects of future disasters across the world. Disaster risk reduction is a priority for the British Red Cross, to ensure communities are better equipped to prepare for, respond to and mitigate the effects of disasters.
- > The strengthening of national partners is a long-term vision of the Red Cross Movement, and together with the ICRC's unique mandate under International Humanitarian Law (IHL), the Movement is well positioned to respond to humanitarian needs in an increasingly insecure world.

The British Red Cross is a volunteer-led humanitarian organisation that helps people in crisis, wherever and whenever they are, with more than 20,500 volunteers and 4,000 staff in the UK. We are part of a global voluntary network, responding to conflicts, disasters and individual emergencies.

Based on our experience we also speak out and give a voice to people in crisis to try to address the root causes. We refuse to ignore people in crisis.

Support our vision **#RedCrossCrisisPlan**

Find out more: redcross.org.uk/about-us/Advocacy Contact: advocacy@redcross.org.uk