

TEXT 1

Laurence Lee is a senior correspondent for *Al Jazeera*, based in London. Before joining Al Jazeera, Lee worked at the *BBC* and *Sky News*.

Laurence Lee

London charity: Virus layoffs force families into poverty

Laurence Lee (reporter): In an affluent part of one of the world's richest cities a sense of how even before this new world¹, the wealth was shared so badly. All of this has been donated by people whose children no longer need it, for those so poor they can't afford it themselves.

5 Before the virus² expectant or new mothers from the poorest demographic³ would come here to be told that things would be okay. But now they can't, and the worry is that if they're at home they're stranded

Sophia Parker: Families were already struggling with a broken system before this all started and what we're seeing now is families struggling to get hold of the stuff that they need, struggling with incomes that are falling when they don't have a safety – they don't have a safety net, they don't have savings, but also just the social and emotional impact of being at home often with small children, often in quite cramped spaces.

Laurence Lee: The human cost of all those closed shops is just becoming understood. Many businesses can and have now applied for the government to pay their staff. But just as happened in Spain and Italy a few weeks ago⁴, well over a million people have suddenly now applied for government benefits⁵. In one of the world's most expensive cities, you could be from any social demographic with a baby due about now and be in a load of trouble.

15 It's already the case that nearly a third of children in the UK live in some form of poverty and the expectation is that perhaps a fifth of all adults in this country will be forced to claim benefits through losing their jobs because of the virus. That in turn means that even in traditionally middle-class areas like this, people are facing the prospects of bringing their children up on benefits.

20 Vicky used to receive support from the Little Village Charity⁶ when she was expecting, now she has to get by on benefits. She lives in a single room in a house with her daughter who's now two and a half. The virus means they're stuck in here together for most of the day. It's tough, it's expensive and it's endless.

¹ *this new world*: (her) verden under coronapandemien

² corona

³ befolkningsgruppe

⁴ *a few weeks ago*: (her) i foråret 2020

⁵ *government benefits*: offentlig understøttelse

⁶ *Little Village Charity*: engelsk velgørenhedsorganisation, der hjælper udsatte familier med fx børnetøj og legetøj

Vicky Jones: You know, other things go up, not just your rent, but your phone bill, cost of deliveries for packages that you need, because it's not always essentials you need, you need other things to keep your kids busy as well.

30 **Laurence Lee:** The UK government program known as Universal Credit⁷ was already controversial as the money takes weeks to arrive and forces people to choose between things like rents and food. Some big players⁸ in the charity world are now demanding the authorities go further to protect those most at risk.

35 **Charlotte McDonough:** They've got lots of extra costs with food, with extra energy, particularly with internet and to be able to support their children's learning at home, and they just need that bit of extra support to be able to cover those costs and to be able to make ends meet.

Laurence Lee: The Little Village Charity now describes itself as virtual, changing its model to deliver goods to the most desperate rather than hosting them. But they admit they're having to push hard to meet the fast-growing demands. The realization is dawning⁹ that just as those born after the banking collapse¹⁰ more than a decade ago grew up in austerity¹¹, so those born now
40 are going to be raised by parents with no idea when their work might come back, and potentially with years of hardship to follow.

Laurence Lee, *Al Jazeera*, in London.

(2020)

⁷ *Universal Credit*: statsligt britisk understøttelsesprogram

⁸ (her) aktører

⁹ *The realization is dawning*: Det står klart

¹⁰ *the banking collapse*: finanskrisen i 2008

¹¹ (her) i strenge økonomiske tider