



*Transforming lives through  
money advice & education*

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Covid 19 in Newham: Threefold rise in demand for money advice services to Diverse Ethnic Communities (BAME)**

Newham-based social enterprise Money A+E has seen a record threefold rise in demand for its money Advice services during the Covid-19 crisis. It is now urgently calling for more funding for community-led money advice and education programmes. A large number of its service users have been plunged into severe hardship and have applied for its emergency grants to cover household expenses. The organisation primarily works with Diverse Ethnic Communities (DEC\*) (BAME) and disadvantaged communities in London and the South east.

Many people in the communities served by Money A+E were already in debt pre-lockdown with little or no savings to fall back on. They have therefore been hit especially hard by a loss of income. This is compounded in many cases by NRPF (No Recourse to Public Funds) status, social isolation or language barriers, particularly among local migrant communities.

**A 2018 Money Advice Service study (*'Mapping the Unmet Demand for Debt Advice in the UK'*) notes that there was 105% unmet demand for debt advice as a proportion of supply in Newham, compared to 80% in London and 60% nationally.** Money A+E advisers have been forced to place many enquiries during Covid-19 on waiting lists. This lack of availability is directly linked to a lack of funding for the sector.

'We have felt the disproportionate effects of Covid-19 in Newham first-hand, with the highest death rate in the country at [144.3 deaths per 100,000 people](#). Our Advice service is on the frontline of the crisis caused by Covid-19. Even pre-crisis, we saw clients every day with both financial issues and poor mental and/or physical wellbeing, and there is a clear link between the two. More funding is now urgently needed for the money advice sector, particularly the type of services that are most accessible to the communities we work with.' - **Jerry During, Money A+E CEO and Co-Founder**

'Newham is the UK's most ethnically diverse borough and has been hit hardest by Covid-19. This is a financial as well as a health crisis for our residents, who were already dealing with the highest rates of debt and of low pay in the country. They, and others in hard-hit areas, need urgently to be able to access emergency debt and money advice.' – **Rt Hon. Stephen Timms, MP for East Ham (Newham)**

**The service has received applications from care and hospital workers, including those earning as little as £8.77/hour and struggling with rent arrears and debt.** Hospital cleaner Jessica (name has been changed) [came to Money A+E's Advice service](#) when she was left unable to work, due to her employer requiring her to clean near Covid-19 wards without PPE and despite having an underlying health condition. Jessica identifies a link between her financial situation and her health issues: 'It makes me stress,' she says. 'I think that's why my blood pressure's been going up and down.'

Money A+E is also calling urgently for more funding for long-term financial education, for young people and adults from diverse ethnic and disadvantaged communities. The organisation also provides high quality financial education workshops for adults and young people in a 'prevention and cure' model that aims to prevent future financial crisis.



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\* 'The term 'Diverse Ethnic Communities' (DEC) refers to any and all ethnic communities. We prefer to avoid terminology that uses colour to describe people, as this is not always accurate. We also prefer to avoid using continents to describe people, as this may group many culturally disparate people together. We feel that both of these options can lead to inaccurate labelling and stereotyping of people and communities. We commit instead to describing people using their chosen nationality and/or country of origin wherever possible. We believe that this is more accurate and more respectful towards everyone whom we work with at Money A+E.

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### **About Money A+E**

Money A+E is an award-winning social enterprise that helps people find solutions to their money problems through friendly, compassionate advice and education. The staff and volunteers are beneficiaries of the service and are trained to deliver courses and mentoring advice to members of their local communities. The courses combine dealing with debt as well as building financial capability to prevent future financial crisis. Expert debt advice and high quality financial literacy are combined to amplify the impact that Money A+E's services have on the lives of individuals facing debt and poverty.

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