CHARITY CASE STUDY

Working with

BritishRedCross

Understanding vulnerability from data insight to target effective aid

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Highlights

- Identify vulnerable households by area based on up-to-date data

- Vulnerability indicators at neighbourhood level

- Vulnerability indicators based on market research plus location data

- GDPR compliant

About The British Red Cross

The British Red Cross was founded in 1870. The charity's most important value is kindness. It helps anyone, anywhere in the UK and around the world, to get the support they need if crisis strikes.

The British Red Cross has seen very high demand for its services in the UK during the coronavirus outbreak. Since the pandemic started, the Red Cross has undertaken a huge response to help the most vulnerable individuals and communities in the UK, reaching over 1.5 million people with food, medicine, cash, emotional support and other help and advice. Thousands of extra volunteers have joined the charity, helping it to support those who are suffering all kinds of hardship and distress because of the situation.

BritishRed**Cross**

The challenge
Identifying new areas of need and vulnerability

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the lives of entire populations: for The British Red Cross, the pressing need is to locate and help those who need it most. The pandemic has entrenched and increased existing vulnerabilities. But many people also require the charity's services and support for the first time, because previously secure livelihoods and relatively stable health conditions have been undermined by crisis events.

The British Red Cross needed to concentrate its resources on different people and make sure that its services were directed to meet the greatest needs. CACI's Vulnerability Indicators had the potential to help the charity identify specific local areas where there was likely to be a need for charity help and support in the pandemic.

The approach
Combining Red Cross knowledge with rich data insights

Dr Matt Thomas is the British Red Cross's Head of Strategic Insight and Foresight. He explains: "We have been working for some time on identifying the characteristics and behaviours of the groups of people that we can most effectively help. We look at medical, emotional and financial vulnerability. The coronavirus pandemic has applied new pressures that increase vulnerability. We wanted to look at the practical impact of the constantly changing situation of restrictions, lockdowns and infections in the UK communities where we work."

CACI offered The British Red Cross a three-month trial of its Vulnerability Indicators. After validating the potential of the data during the trial period, the charity took out a subscription.
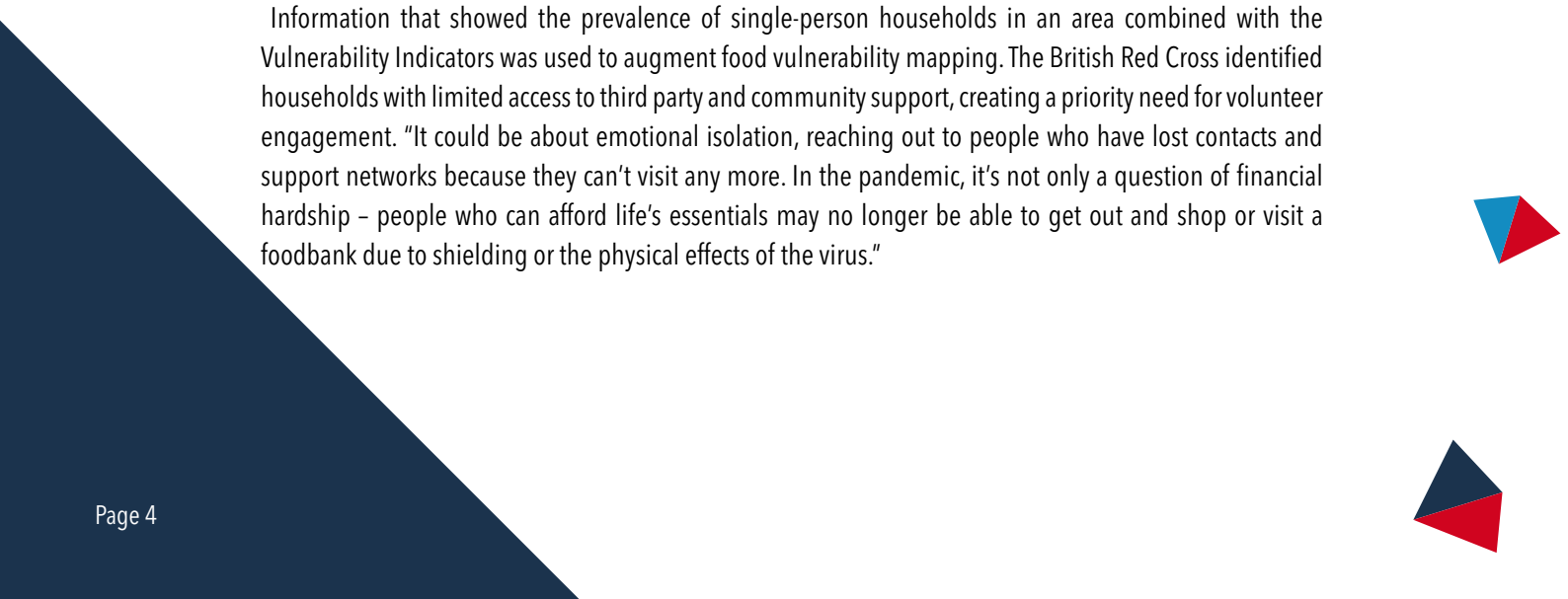
The British Red Cross used CACI's Vulnerability Indicators to index UK households in every neighbourhood (or MSOA - Middle Layer Super Output Area). Their modelling revealed locations where people were most likely to be in need of support, based on either their clinical, financial, socioeconomic and digital vulnerability as well as wider health and wellbeing. The British Red Cross used the analysis to understand how to focus effective support and communication.

The outputs
Clear priorities for mobilising volunteer support

Matt Thomas says, "As freedoms and norms have changed along with the lockdown rules, we've seen harsh social and economic impacts on some of the hardest pressed families and individuals in the UK."

Information that showed the prevalence of single-person households in an area combined with the Vulnerability Indicators was used to augment food vulnerability mapping. The British Red Cross identified households with limited access to third party and community support, creating a priority need for volunteer engagement. "It could be about emotional isolation, reaching out to people who have lost contacts and support networks because they can't visit any more. In the pandemic, it's not only a question of financial hardship – people who can afford life's essentials may no longer be able to get out and shop or visit a foodbank due to shielding or the physical effects of the virus."
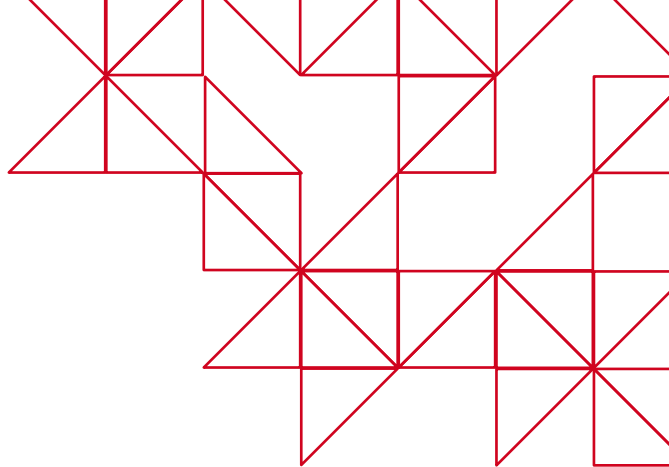
The benefits

Effectively targeting the people who need most help now

Vulnerability modelling now enables the British Red Cross to deploy volunteers in the right places, meet emerging needs and advocate for targeted financial and practical support for the most vulnerable people at this time.

By defining areas where financial vulnerability is greatest, The British Red Cross can apply local knowledge about available support or facilities. Volunteers can help individuals and families access these. If they're insufficient, vulnerability model insight can help community organisations and charities make a strong case for grant or lottery funding to help improve, using granular data evidence that relates to a specific area.

Where digital vulnerability is a key issue, such as for people living alone without technology skills or facilities, the British Red Cross can reach out to householders using leaflet drops or doorstep visits to offer assistance and information.

The British Red Cross has also made its vulnerability and resilience modelling and analysis freely available via public web portals. "This insight can help all kinds of charities, public and private sector organisations make evidence-based decisions to focus and develop their services and activities to have the most beneficial impact," says Matt.

The future
Predicting changing support needs to plan resources

Mapping vulnerability and how it's changing over the months of the Covid-19 pandemic also provides vital foresight into what might happen next.

Matt Thomas explains:

> *The impact is going to continue for a long time. There will be people in financial hardship for the first time next year, because they have lost their jobs or their savings have run out. There are three million people who are not entitled to any of the current government support packages. Some of them will certainly be in desperate need of advice and both financial and emotional support. We will be doing more qualitative scenario planning and focusing on anticipatory work, to meet emerging future needs.*
>
> Dr Matt Thomas, Head of Strategic Insight and Foresight,
> The British Red Cross

View the British Red Cross's open datasets and mapping for vulnerability and resilience:

https://britishredcrosssociety.github.io/covid-19-vulnerability

https://britishredcross.shinyapps.io/resilience-index/

> "CACI's Vulnerability Indicators are vital to creating maps that reveal where we need to target our support. In the pandemic, circumstances have changed for many people – using modelling and mapping we can actively reach out to those who find themselves in need for the first time, rather than waiting for them to find us.
>
> Dr Matt Thomas, Head of Strategic Insight and Foresight, The British Red Cross

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