Everyone should get the healthcare they need when disasters hit.

Right now, millions don't.

We need to change that.
Our vision
A world where everyone has the healthcare they need when crises or disasters hit.

Our mission
We save lives in emergencies.
When health services are overwhelmed, we get expert health staff to where they’re needed fast.
We help communities prepare for future crises.

Our priorities
01
We will respond rapidly to emergencies, delivering the expertise needed to support local health services and save people’s lives.

02
We will work with health staff to strengthen their response skills, enabling health services to be better prepared for emergencies.

03
We will continue to work with academic partners to promote evidence-based practice that improves patient care and the humanitarian sector.

Our values
Excellence
We set high standards for ourselves and the organisation. We strive to be outstanding in everything we do.

Learning
We believe in knowledge-sharing and giving people the means to develop their capabilities. We value learning and continual growth.

Collaboration
Working in partnership with stakeholders, communities and colleagues is key to the success of our work.

Compassion
We care about people. The health and wellbeing of our patients and our people is central to everything we do.

Determination
We have a can-do attitude and thrive on problem solving. No matter what the challenge, we explore all options so if there’s a way we’ll find it. We don’t give up easily.

Excellence
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Nurse Sophia was part of the international response to the measles outbreak in Samoa, 2019.
Our story

Born of the NHS, UK-Med has been working for over 20 years towards a world where everyone has the healthcare they need when crises or disasters hit.

UK-Med began life in Manchester.

UK-Med’s founder Professor Tony Redmond OBE was working as an A&E (Accident and Emergency) Consultant in busy South Manchester hospitals in the 1980s. In the days before paramedics, many patients would arrive at A&E beyond the help of emergency department staff.

Tony recruited a team of Manchester A&E consultants to sign up to an on-call register, ready to respond to emergencies in the area.

By accompanying ambulances to emergencies or when transferring critical patients, the volunteers were able to ensure many lives that could have been lost were saved.

When a huge earthquake hit Armenia in 1988, Tony led a team of local clinicians to help set up field hospitals to treat the injured. UK-Med’s international responses were born.

Tony continued to send teams worldwide throughout the 1990s and 2000s, and registered UK-Med as a charity in 1995.

When Ebola struck West Africa in 2014, UK-Med recruited and trained the 150 UK clinicians who worked alongside local medical teams to bring the outbreak under control.

Tony became Chair of Trustees in January 2018, handing the baton of CEO to me. All these years later, the charity is still answering calls for help.

Last year was a year like no other for us all. We found ourselves fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, some of the most challenging situations imaginable - from war-torn Yemen’s damaged hospitals, to refugee camps in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh.

We responded to calls for assistance in 13 countries and treated over 1000 health staff. Our support reached tens of thousands of patients.

As we show in these pages, the challenge the world faces in the coming years is huge.

As more and more people are hurt by disasters, this strategy lays out how we will save lives in emergencies.

It will take determination, collaboration and a commitment to excellence and learning. And we need you to join us.

Whether you’re a member, a supporter or a partner - we need you on the team. Now, more than ever, your compassion counts.

David Wightwick
CEO, UK-Med

Click here to read UK-Med’s full story
The crisis in numbers

235M
In 2021, 235 million people worldwide will need aid assistance.

308
In 2019, natural hazards triggered 308 disasters, 17% of which were climate and weather-related—six times greater than in the 1970s.

1.7BN
In the last decade alone, 400,000 lives have been lost and more than 17 billion people have been affected by weather and climate-related disasters.

45.7M
45.7 million people are estimated to have been displaced within countries because of conflict and violence.

The situation we're facing

A global crisis

Disease outbreaks, the climate emergency and conflict are hurting millions of people every year.

And that number is growing. It’s a global health emergency that affects us all, but the poorest are the hardest hit.

COVID-19 won’t be the last pandemic

An interconnected world means disease outbreaks can now spread more quickly than ever before. Even before COVID-19, the WHO (World Health Organization) had declared five Global Health Emergencies in the past decade alone.

Outbreaks have a disastrous impact on families, societies, support systems and economies. The effects stretch beyond the lives tragically lost: health services are unable to cope, schooling is disrupted, and every day livelihoods are put at risk.

Vaccines are only part of the solution. Preparing is key.

Climate emergency: the siren is sounding

Storms, floods and droughts have tripled over the past 30 years. These events cause damage, but also make existing crises worse. Communities are locked in perpetual rebuild.

Just like with COVID-19, these events are not confined to poor countries. As wildfires and floods hit rich countries, there are less resources available globally and there’s more pressure on international assistance as aid budgets are cut. The aid system is already creaking under the strain—with not enough funding, people or goods to help those in need.

Urgent change is needed.

Conflict and fragile states

Conflict continues to be the biggest cause of humanitarian need. Aside from those injured and killed by violence, conflict means people are less able to access health services.

Those at greatest risk are those who live in refugee camps, which are vulnerable to disease outbreaks and extreme weather events.
Many of those who flee conflict are the most educated, including health workers, who may never return after finding opportunities and safety abroad. This leaves the countries to face decades of hardship as they attempt to replace these skilled workers.

Not only must we act to save lives and help those in immediate need - we must continue to support countries to rebuild national health workforces.

“A fork in the road”

The COVID-19 pandemic has reversed decades of progress alleviating poverty, improving healthcare and education, and progress towards the UN (United Nations) Sustainable Development Goals.

Without urgently addressing the growing humanitarian need, we stand little chance of meeting these goals.

“The world has reached a fork in the road. We cannot afford to pump carbon dioxide into the atmosphere at the same rate and still breathe clean air.

We must choose. We cannot afford ever-deepening inequalities and expect continued peace and prosperity.

We must choose. And we cannot afford to see health merely as a by-product of development, or a commodity that only the rich can afford.

Today and every day, we must choose health. We’re one big family.”

-WHO Secretary General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, addressing world leaders in November 2020

Brenda’s story

South Sudan has seen enormous levels of violence and unrest during its eight-year civil war. The war has forced millions of people from their homes, brought the healthcare structure to its knees, and left many without access to basic necessities. Human rights abuses, including gender-based violence, have been rife.

Because of the shortage of healthcare professionals, a mother in South Sudan is 87 times more likely to die in childbirth than a mother in the UK, and her baby 24 times less likely to reach the age of five.

In 2019, UK Meds team arrived in Kapoeta in south-west South Sudan to provide training for healthcare workers that improved their knowledge and skills around sexual and reproductive health, neonatal, obstetric and gender-based violence training.

Brenda was one of the dedicated and passionate midwives we worked with.

She shared the impact of the training:

“These skills that we receive - it is going to bring good impact. We are here to save humanity. And as you save mothers, you save the nation. If mother’s die, there is no nation...I believe it is a very good idea to form up this team and come and give the skills needed to reduce maternal and neonatal death.”

After the COVID-19 pandemic, we plan to return to South Sudan to follow up with those we trained and deliver a Training of Trainers’ session to ensure lasting impact and extend the training’s reach.
There are very few organisations worldwide that can respond to a wide range of disasters and provide the expert care that people need.

**Our response**

We will respond rapidly to emergencies, delivering the expertise needed to support local health services and save people's lives.

**How we'll do it**

- Deliver the expertise needed to support local health services and treat 20,000 patients.
- Be ready to respond to 25 health and humanitarian crises.
The challenge
National health staff in a country hit by disaster can save the most lives, but more investment in training and support is required.

Our response
We will work with health staff to strengthen their response skills, enabling health services to be better prepared for emergencies.

How we’ll do it
- Help national, regional and international organisations to be better prepared for emergencies.
- Provide face-to-face training to 5,000 health staff and remote training for 25,000 health staff to strengthen their response skills.

The challenge
The aid system needs to become more effective and better informed to keep pace with the scale of the challenge.

Our response
We work with academic partners to promote evidence-based practice that improves patient care and the humanitarian sector.

How we’ll do it
- Support and promote 10 academic papers and two policy papers.
- Help create two changes in the aid system due to our work or research.
A mix of expertise
Born in Manchester, we bring together the best of the NHS, international and local health experts - at the worst of times. Our diversity is a strength and we celebrate it across the organisation.

Selecting and preparing excellent people
Our register of expert health staff is rigorously trained and prepared for emergencies. The patients we reach receive the best possible care because our teams are verified to international standards by the WHO.

Protecting our patients from harm is central to both recruitment, training and care – we will not tolerate abuse and exploitation.

An emphasis on partnerships
Utilising our international network of partners, we can get to disaster zones at short notice. We may be small, but our impact is big.

We seek long-term relationships rather than long-term presence, maximising value for money. Responses should be as national as possible and as international as necessary to save lives.

Partner in the UK EMT
The UK Emergency Medical Team (UK EMT) is the UK government’s frontline response to a humanitarian crisis overseas funded by UK Aid via the FCDO (Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office).

We prepare teams of health staff who are ready to respond to disasters anywhere in the world within twenty-four hours, and lead the health response for the UK EMT.

Flexible, quick and locally-led responses
The EMT network is driven by the WHO and ensures that teams that respond following disasters are well trained, self-sufficient and have the skills and equipment to respond effectively rather than imposing a burden on the national system.

This approach means we respond to local requests for support and plug vital gaps at key points in a crisis. We only go where we can add value.

Helping at home
Health is a global good and the bedrock of peace and prosperity. A global outlook is vital for the wellbeing of everyone, everywhere.

Supporting better health internationally helps here in the UK. Through sharing skills and learning from others, the experience gained by our dedicated health staff benefits patients at home.
Small charity, big impact

A focus on work during the COVID-19 pandemic

Since early 2020, our teams have worked alongside the WHO and Ministries of Health around the world to help deal with COVID-19.

With the pandemic still affecting millions around the world, this work has been vital.

Our teams have, and will continue to, support and protect health care workers through training. We empower communities to manage their own risks and fight misinformation. We help keep health services going and support national vaccination campaigns.

We care for patients and work to reach displaced people living in refugee camps who have limited access to healthcare.

Our work in numbers

8000
We reached over 8000 health staff with our training last year.

17
We have responded to emergencies in 17 countries during the pandemic.

64
Last year, we provided support to 64 healthcare facilities.

2
We also set up two longer-term projects; in Yemen, we're supporting the country's COVID-19 response; and in Myanmar, we are supporting a programme of training for health staff.

Click on the map to learn more about each response
Our global health network

Responding to a health emergency anywhere across the world

Register of 1000 professionals selected, trained and ready to respond

Click here to hear more from our Health Director

UK-Med Clinical Governance Committee

NHS health and allied staff
NHS workers are essential to our work. Using an on-call system, they are rapidly released from trusts for weeks with a huge breadth of clinical specialisms and high level expertise.

UK-Med Community of Practice
By being members are selected from an incredibly diverse global network of over 4000 health staff, humanitarian workers and allied health staff.

Experienced humanitarian staff
Humanitarian staff have knowledge of the local areas as well as the humanitarian system. They are often able to respond for longer periods with a multi-disciplinary expertise across health, logistics, humanitarian assistance, logistics, WASH, HR and finance.

2021-2026 Strategic Plan

UK-Med Core Health Team

Health Director

Head of Learning & Capacity Building

Learning & Capacity Building Manager

Learning & Capacity Building Coordinator

Pharmacist

Senior Health Advisors (Disease & Outbreaks)

Health Referents (7)

Senior Health Advisor (Fragile States & Disaster Risk Reduction)

Health Network Advisor (Myanmar)
Our four types of responses

EMT responses
We intervene as an Emergency Medical Team during medical emergencies.
We provide temporary support by request to overwhelmed health services where a short-term intervention is needed.

Conflict and complex emergencies
We will work in a small number of humanitarian crises that need a longer-term approach.
We provide support where a country has high levels of humanitarian need, significant gaps in health care, lack of basic service provision and high barriers to entry and exit that would go beyond an EMT response.

Emergency preparedness
We provide capacity building and training for health staff and services.
Where countries are vulnerable to health and humanitarian crises, we help strengthen emergency preparedness and develop national capacities.

Remote support
We are expanding our virtual training and remote support programmes.
We believe national actors are best placed to respond in crises, but do not always have access to the tools needed. We provide additional remote support and training, a sustainable and cost-effective way to bridge the gap.

Logistics
Our ability to respond rapidly to emergencies and provide high-quality health services is underpinned by our specialised logistics team.
UK-Med responses range from individuals right up to a surgical Field Hospital staffed by 60 clinicians. This is only possible through our team’s specialisms in the following:

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)
We ensure high levels of infection prevention and control (IPC), clean water production, and effective waste management.

Pharmacy
UK-Med is unique among UK-based INGOs. We have the licensing and capacity to procure, store and ship all the pharmaceuticals required to support our clinical care.

Field and medical logistics
We have the experience and capacity to manage and maintain the medical equipment, infrastructure and supplies involved in our responses.

Supply chain
All our logistics activities are robustly supported by our capacity to source, store and supply infrastructure, equipment and medical supplies. This ensures both value for money and a timely response.
Ensuring excellence and protecting our patients

Safeguarding

We believe that everyone we interact with has the right to be protected from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin.

UK-Med will not tolerate abuse and exploitation by our staff or associated personnel.

We are committed to addressing safeguarding throughout our work with a three pronged approach of prevention, reporting and response.

Code of Conduct

UK-Med are signatories of the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations in Disaster Relief. Our work also abides by the Core Humanitarian Standards.

Environmental impact

We are signatories of the Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations, adopted by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

We are committed to doing our part to respond to these crises, meeting needs, and work together to prevent further death and suffering.

Jessie's story

In November 2019, a devastating measles outbreak ripped through the tiny Polynesian island of Samoa.

UK-Med sent a team of 26 medics for four weeks to support the local medical teams who were working around the clock in a desperate attempt to treat the sick.

Jesse was sixteen months old when he was admitted to the paediatric ward at the main hospital in Apia. Normally Jesse was a happy, smily baby, fascinated by glasses. But just before Christmas, he became one of the 5,655 people who caught measles during the outbreak.

He was receiving treatment and enjoying cuddles from the staff, when on Christmas Day he suddenly took a sharp turn for the worse. As he struggled to breathe and rapidly deteriorated, our team were there to help. The team were on hand to resuscitate him and treat him on the High Dependency Unit where he could be carefully monitored.

Thanks to the expert care he received and the love and support of his family, Jesse survived, and his mother Monika was grateful to be able to take him home.

She expressed her thanks to the teams who supported the Samoan national staff throughout the outbreak.

“They are always friendly and smiling and always asking how we are and trying to make the babies laugh. They have served us good. We will miss you.”

In Samoa, our teams were able to care for over 500 children like Jesse, so they were able to return home with their families.

A huge thank you to Jesse's family for sharing their story.
Inspiring support for our mission

Together, we’re saving lives in emergencies

Our lifesaving work is only possible with the backing of our donors and supporters.

Thank you for believing everyone should get the healthcare they need when disasters hit. Together, we’re building a world where that’s a reality.

We know that there are more lives to save, so we must strive to unite as many people as possible behind our mission.

Inspiring solidarity from the British people

Our fundraising focus will be inspiring solidarity from the British people, who have already shown great generosity in times of crisis.

For strategic partnerships, we will look to the UK and globally.

We will continue to tell positive impact stories that demonstrate the difference the support of the UK public makes overseas. By showcasing the work of our members and our unique link to the NHS, we can connect more people to our mission.

Your compassion counts

We know we can’t do it alone. There are three ways you can save lives in emergencies:

- **Help us act fast.** Your one-off or regular gift to our response fund will help us respond rapidly to unpredictable emergencies.

- **If you share our values, let’s talk.** Building long-term partnerships with other organisations is the only way we’ll achieve our mission.

- **Use your voice, donate your time, connect with your community and spread the word.** Use your passion and inspire others to build a world where everyone gets the healthcare they need when crises or disasters hit.

Use your passion and inspire others to build a world where everyone gets the healthcare they need when crises or disasters hit.
Building a world prepared to help.