

PRESS RELEASE

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BBC Children in Need remove Pudsey's bandana to show that mental health issues aren't always visible on the outside



- For Mental Health Awareness Week, Pudsey's temporarily removed his iconic bandana to show that mental health issues can be less visible on the outside, but that conversations can help
- A new Censuswide survey on behalf of BBC Children in Need has found a quarter of young people (26%) feel the need to regularly hide their feelings and over a quarter of young people (27%) have not talked to someone they trust about their mental health in the last six months
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- Dr Alex George is named as BBC Children in Need's Behind the Bandana Ambassador

Monday 15 May 2023 - To mark Mental Health Awareness Week 2023, BBC Children in Need have launched a new campaign – **Behind the Bandana** – which sees the charity temporarily remove Pudsey's iconic bandana to show that not all of the challenges that children and young people may be facing are visible and to encourage the right conversations between children and parents, carers and other trusted adults to ensure no child faces their emotional and mental health challenges alone.

Behind the Bandana was developed by **BBC Creative** – the BBC's in house creative agency - in recognition of the unprecedented rise in children with mental health problems. In the last 3 years, the likelihood of young people having a mental health issue has increased by 50% (2021)¹, and 75% of children and young people who experience a mental health issue aren't getting the help they need².

Through the BBC Children in Need £10m impact programme **A Million and Me**, which was developed to support children with their emotional wellbeing before mental health problems are established, BBC Children in Need found that moments of true connection between children and the adults they trust nurtured stronger mental health and that everyday magic such as good conversations, shared activities and having fun can keep mental health on track.³

As a result of this, *Behind the Bandana* was developed to highlight that not all of the challenges that children and young people may be facing are visible and to encourage parents, carers and trusted

¹ [Good Childhood Report](#)

² [Mental Health Foundation](#)

³ [Centre for Mental Health](#)

adults to give children, parents, teachers and guardians the tools they need to discuss feelings in a healthy way.

As part of the campaign, BBC Children in Need have released the findings of a new **Censuswide** survey which sheds light on how comfortable children feel when asking for help with their feelings and emotions, how often they feel they need to put on their own metaphorical bandana and hide how they are feeling, and how often they talk to someone about their mental health. Interestingly, whilst just over 9 in 10 parents surveyed (93%) say they talk to their child about their mental health at least once a month over a quarter of young people surveyed (27%) say they have not talked to someone they trust about their mental health in the last six months.

The UK wide survey commissioned by BBC Children in Need of 2,502 parents⁴ and 2,502 children and young people⁵ aged 11-18, also reveals that:

- Just over a quarter of young people surveyed regularly⁶ (26%) feel the need to hide how they are feeling e.g. sad, worried or anxious⁷
- A third of young people surveyed regularly feel anxious (33%) or worried about their future (29%)
- A third of young people surveyed do not feel comfortable asking for help with their feelings and emotions (32%)⁸
- 1 in 6 parents surveyed (17%)⁹ are not confident in recognising signs of poor mental health in their child.
- Almost half of parents surveyed (49%)¹⁰ do not feel there is sufficient support available for children who are struggling with their mental health
- Almost a third of parents surveyed (32%)¹¹ are not confident they could secure additional support for their child's mental health
- Over half of parents surveyed (58%) would like access to additional support and resources to help conversation with their children about their feelings and emotions.

BBC Children in Need's Chief Executive **Simon Antrobus** said: "This research is a clear indication that our *Behind the Bandana* campaign is urgently needed. What's also clear is that we can all play a role in addressing early signs of worry and anxiety, by showing children and young people that we're here to listen and to support them. By recognising and acknowledging that some feelings of worry and anxiety can be hidden means early conversations, sensitively delivered with kindness and empathy, can make a real difference to a child's wellbeing and can help prevent mental health problems from becoming embedded."

Rasmus Smith Bech, Executive Creative Director at BBC Creative, stated: "I am incredibly proud of this campaign, and the powerful message it delivers in such a visually and thought-provoking way. We believe that seeing Pudsey in such a new light will spark discussion, which in turn will help us encourage conversations about kids' mental health, which is vital because simple conversations really can help keep a child's mental health on track."

⁴ Total sample size was 2,502 parents who have children aged 11-18. Fieldwork was undertaken between 30 April 2023 – 4 May 2023. The survey was carried out online. Censuswide abide by and employ members of the Market Research Society which is based on the ESOMAR principles and are members of The British Polling Council.

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⁶ A combination of 'Always' and 'Often' answer responses combined

⁷ A combination of 'Always' and 'Often' answer responses combined

⁸ A combination of 'Not very comfortable' and 'Not comfortable at all' answer responses combined

⁹ 'Not at all confident' and 'Not very confident' answer responses combined

¹⁰ 'Not at all confident' and 'Not very confident' answer responses combined

Behind the Bandana Ambassador, **Dr Alex George**, commented: “I know how important early intervention is in helping make a difference to the emotional wellbeing of children and young people and so I am very proud to be the ambassador of such a powerful campaign that really shines a light on the mental health crisis we are facing. As highlighted by Pudsey bear himself, mental health issues can be less visible on the outside, but conversations and positive relationships really can help.”

With thanks to donations from the UK public, BBC Children in Need is currently supporting 461 projects focused on emotional wellbeing and mental health to the value of £30million. These projects provide support for children and young people across the spectrum of mental health from emerging signs of anxiety to more significant mental health challenges through a wide range of activities and services.

To find out more about Behind the Bandana, and to access resources to start a conversation, or to access signposting to local and national organisations supporting children’s mental wellbeing visit bbc.co.uk/pudsey.

~ENDS~

- BBC Children in Need contact: henni.cardy@bbc.co.uk
- Dr Alex George photography can be found [here](#)
- Dr Alex George video assets can be found [here](#)

Notes to Editors

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JCDecaux, Alight, Clear Channel, MediaCity UK and Ocean Outdoor have all gifted out of home advertising to support the campaign.

About BBC Children in Need

BBC Children in Need believe every child and young person deserves the opportunity to thrive and be the best they can be.

BBC Children in Need’s ambition is to create lasting, positive change across the UK for the children and young people who need it most. Together with the BBC and partners, BBC Children in Need aim to inspire the nation in support of their work.

BBC Children in Need’s 1,800 local charities and projects work tirelessly in every corner of the UK to help children & young people overcome the additional challenges they currently face, including supporting children and young people living in poverty, providing emergency support to families in crisis, providing comfort to children feeling sad, lost and alone, helping children overcome social injustice and supporting children to feel safe and secure again.

Further information can be found at www.bbcchildreninneed.co.uk

About BBC Creative

BBC Creative is the BBC's in house creative agency.

BBC Creative are responsible for all the BBC's Marketing and Branding – all designed to ensure audiences love & value the BBC and appreciate its unique role in British culture.

That leads to our mission: to leave a positive mark on popular culture in everything we do.