

Opening doors:

Helping disadvantaged young people to make the transition to work

Believe in children



Barnardo's





The urgent need to help unemployed young people

By the end of summer 2009, one million 16 to 25-year-olds are expected to be out of work¹. Young people aged 16 and 17 who have left school to seek work or an apprenticeship have the highest unemployment rate of any age group – with 31.7 per cent unemployed in the three months to June 2009, or 206,000 young people out of work².

This is not just a great waste of talent in today's difficult economic climate, but it may cause lasting damage to young people's prospects, long after

the recession has ended. Being unemployed at the start of working life can leave a long-term scar on future earning and employment prospects.

The recession is biting deepest in Britain's most deprived communities and hitting low skilled jobs the hardest³ – eroding the hopes and aspirations of thousands of young school leavers. There is an urgent need to reconnect these young people to the world of work – giving them the opportunity to spend time in the workplace, to gain new skills, grow in confidence, and take their first step towards sustainable employment.

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- 1 Estimate of number of unemployed 16 to 25-year-olds from the Local Government Association *Hidden Talents: Re-engaging Young People*, July 2009
 - 2 Office for National Statistics *Labour Market Statistics Bulletin*, August 2009
 - 3 Audit Commission *When it comes to the crunch*, August 2009

Barnardo's vocational training services

Barnardo's has been involved in vocational training since the late 1800s when Dr Thomas Barnardo founded a number of training centres to give young people the skills they would need to enter trades such as carpentry and leather-making.

Today, working in partnership with local employers, schools, colleges and other charities, we train and support over 2,200 young people every year. We work across the UK in sectors including construction, catering and hospitality, vehicle maintenance, business administration, horticulture, retail, warehousing and hair and beauty therapy.

The young people we work with are (or have recently been) 'NEET' – they are not in education, employment or training. Most are from disadvantaged backgrounds and many have struggled with challenging circumstances at home, such as family breakdown or bereavement, neglect and abuse. Some face barriers to training and making the transition to the world of work, for example some have learning disabilities

or are caring for a child or family member.

Together with local employers, Barnardo's vocational training services offer young people the chance to equip themselves with the necessary skills, confidence and ambition to find work and pursue a career that might otherwise be beyond their reach.

In today's difficult economic climate, we urgently need many more employers to work with us, to extend work-based training opportunities – and ultimately, real jobs – to disadvantaged young people in communities across the UK.



How we work

Barnardo's believes in the potential of every child and that, given the right opportunities and support, all are able to succeed.

We use a personalised approach to help young people overcome any barriers they face, working in small groups and providing one-to-one support where needed. Some young people need a lot of support to rebuild their confidence and improve their basic skills; while others just need a little encouragement and direction.

Barnardo's vocational services employ skilled tradespeople to train and motivate the young people we work with, and provide ongoing support to help young people to make a successful transition to the workplace.

Before placements

We work with young people on essential skills they will need in the workplace, such as timekeeping, communication and teamwork. We may also train them to meet industry requirements, for example the Construction Skills Certification Scheme card or a certificate in forklift truck driving.



Some examples of the types of services we run

The Base in Whitley Bay is a Barnardo's service for socially excluded and unemployed young people. It offers a wide range of drop-in services providing information, advice and support covering issues as diverse as housing difficulties, mental health and legal problems. The Base offers an E2E (Entry to Employment) programme providing flexible learning for the most vulnerable people.

Michelle says: 'If it wasn't for The Base helping me, if it wasn't for my key worker sticking with me, I don't know where I would be. It's taken me three years to understand that when they were trying to tell me about life, they were trying to help me... I can see it now, it's like the penny has dropped. I was so off the rails. I've now got a job on the rigs, I earn mega bucks!'

Dr B's Restaurant and Coffee Shop in Belfast offers a real work environment for young people aged 16 to 24, many of whom have learning disabilities. Young people can gain NVQs in catering over one to two years, after which many move on to permanent employment. The restaurant is open every weekday to the public and can be booked out for dinner.

Dr B's also runs a successful outside catering service allowing young people to experience a variety of different work environments before completing their course. As well as being able to gain qualifications that will enable them to find work, Dr B's provides an environment where young people can build their self-confidence and social skills whilst working, where necessary, on literacy and numeracy skills as well.

Ciaran who attends Dr B's says: '...the staff really helped me understand a lot of things, not just about food. I learned about being a good team member, being reliable, keeping myself safe, improving my reading and writing. There was so much more to learn than I thought.'

During placements

Young people receive practical support and encouragement from Barnardo's staff throughout their placement. Staff help to overcome any challenges outside of work, for example, helping young mothers to find suitable childcare. They help them make the most of their placement, through regular progress reviews.

Support for employers

We do everything we can to make the process of setting up a placement as smooth as possible – for example, helping with logistical issues like health and safety and risk assessments, contracts, and 'reasonable adjustments' for young people with disabilities.

We give employers as much support as they need to help prepare for the placement: from informal chats on the telephone to discussing any concerns, to designing and delivering full pre-placement training programmes.

When a young person is on a placement, we stay in touch through regular phone calls and visit as often as necessary. In a few cases, a Barnardo's staff member may even shadow a young person. It is very

important to us that employers know they can pick up the phone whenever they want to talk an issue over. We carry out structured reviews during the placement, and at the end, so employers can feed back to us and the young person regularly.

Benefits to employers

'Working with Barnardo's has been great for me and the salon, I get to offer the students a chance when perhaps they haven't had many before. It means they get proper work experience and they are always so enthusiastic about coming into the salon.' **Amanda Glen of Amanda Glen Unisex Hair Studio, Newcastle**

The benefits of working with Barnardo's to provide opportunities to disadvantaged young people go far beyond putting something back into local communities and looking good in your corporate social responsibility report. Employers we have worked with have reported a wide range of benefits including:

- A productive placement that delivers for your company as well as the young person.

Barnardo's does all it can to ensure a 'good fit' – carefully matching young people to placements (and longer-term opportunities) and providing the necessary support to ensure that they can make a success of it.

- Successful, sustainable recruitment. Many young people who undertake work-based training through Barnardo's are subsequently employed by the company they are placed with. Employers have the opportunity to get to know and trust a young person and see what they are really capable of, before employing them.
- Development opportunities for the whole team. For example, staff develop new skills and motivation through the experience of mentoring a young person.



How can employers help?

Employers can contribute in a wide range of ways – from short tasters through to apprenticeships and real job opportunities, as described below.

Volunteering some of your time

to share your expertise with your local Barnardo's training service

A local bank manager delivers motivational workshops, money management and CV writing sessions for young people at our Making It Work service in Manchester. Making It Work aims to increase the employability of young people aged 16-21 who are leaving care.

Arranging visits
for young people to have a look round your workplace and see first-hand what the world of work looks like

Providing short placements (around two weeks) for young people on training courses at Barnardo's

Running since 1991, Palmersville Training offers young people across the North East the chance to develop their skills, knowledge and experience in a range of industries including beauty therapy, horticulture, business administration and vehicle maintenance.

Young people at Palmersville often undertake short-term placements where they can get a 'taster' of an industry and make their own mind up as to whether it is something they would like to follow up as a career. Longer placements provide ongoing experience where young people can practise new skills and improve their employability once they have gained their qualification.

Providing **paid employment** opportunities

Providing **longer placements** (around three months) for young people on training courses at Barnardo's

Taking on an **apprentice** supported by Barnardo's as part of a nationally recognised scheme

Daniel was referred to Barnardo's Making It Work project after he failed to achieve the GCSE results he wanted, due to an unsettled home life and long periods of absence due to illness.

When he first came to us, Daniel lacked motivation and the confidence to look for employment. Fortunately the Barnardo's project was given the opportunity of recruiting some of its young people to apply for positions within The Royal Mail Group. Daniel attended a pre-recruitment interview, which

gave him the opportunity to meet the employers, receive support in completing the application process and gain an understanding of what the positions entailed. Daniel went on to attend an induction day, which was followed by a work trial at a Royal Mail sorting office and a permanent contract for a Saturday position.

Daniel says he is 'really enjoying working at The Royal Mail'. He added that he would 'never have had the confidence to apply' without support.



Where to go for further information

Barnardo's is looking for employers to work in partnership with its local services in a number of specific areas across the UK. We are also interested in forming national partnerships with employers who are likely to have opportunities across different areas of the country. If you feel that you would like to get involved, or have any opportunities that you think would be of value to our young people, we would be delighted to hear from you. Interested participants should contact:

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