Barnardo’s children
Thomas Barnardo

When Thomas John Barnardo was born in Dublin in 1845 no one could have predicted that he would become one of the most famous men in Victorian Britain. But by the time he was 25 he had started a charity which would become a household name and transform the lives of thousands of children.

The fourth child of six children born to John and Abigail Barnardo, Thomas grew up in an atmosphere of comfortable respectability. His father was a furrier who ran a shop and supplied the carriage industry. Although he lived close to some of the poorest districts of Dublin, Thomas Barnardo showed little interest in the kind of philanthropy which later made him famous. At the age of 16, however, he became converted to Protestant evangelism and joined a religious group called the Open Brethren. Inspired by his religious beliefs, he decided to become a medical missionary in China and set out for London to train as a doctor.

The London in which Thomas Barnardo arrived in 1866 was a city struggling to cope with the effects of the industrial revolution. Population doubled between 1821 and 1851 and doubled again before the end of the century. Much of this increase was concentrated in the East End, where overcrowding, bad housing, unemployment, poverty and disease were rife. One in five children died before their fifth birthday.
A few months after Barnardo came to London, an outbreak of cholera swept through the East End, killing more than 3,000 people and leaving many families destitute. Under the Poor Law the only place such families could turn to was the workhouse. But rather than face the humiliation of being branded a ‘pauper’, many tried to survive outside the workhouse. Thousands of children slept on the streets and many others were forced to beg after being maimed in factories.

During the cholera epidemic, Barnardo visited the homes of the poor to comfort the dying. This drew his attention to their plight and he began preaching in beerhouses and on street corners. His sermons were often met with abuse, and he was frequently pelted with rotten eggs and even physically attacked. Undeterred, he opened the East End Juvenile Mission in Stepney – a ‘ragged school’ where poor children could get a basic education. One evening a boy at the mission, Jim Jarvis, took Barnardo around the East End, showing him children sleeping on roofs and in gutters. The encounter affected him so deeply that he decided to drop his ambition to go to China and to devote himself instead to helping destitute children.

In 1870 Barnardo opened his first home for boys in Stepney Causeway. He regularly went out at night into the slum districts to find destitute boys. After he had gathered two or three and persuaded them of the benefits of life in his home he took them back to Stepney Causeway where they were given food, clothing and some work training.

The home bore the sign ‘No Destitute Child Ever Refused Admission’
At first Barnardo limited the number of boys who could use the shelter. This changed after an 11-year-old boy, John Somers (nicknamed ‘Carrots’), was turned away one evening and died two days later from exposure and malnutrition after spending the night asleep in a sugar barrel. From then on the home bore the sign ‘No Destitute Child Ever Refused Admission’.

Barnardo’s work was radical. The Victorians saw poverty as shameful and the result of laziness or vice. But Barnardo refused to discriminate between the ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ poor. He accepted all children – including black, disabled and illegitimate children – at a time when other organisations imposed restrictions. He stressed that every child deserved the best possible start in life, whatever their background – a philosophy which still inspires the charity today.

In 1872 Barnardo bought The Edinburgh Castle, a gin palace and music hall in Limehouse, and converted it into a coffee house and mission church. This bold gesture brought him the support of wealthy and influential evangelicals who backed his work with children. A year later he married Syrie Elmslie, the daughter of a businessman. The couple had seven children, including Marjorie who was born with Down’s Syndrome. According to Syrie’s memoirs, Barnardo was devoted to Marjorie and his experience of caring for her influenced his approach to the care of disabled children. The charity accepted children with both physical and learning disabilities and Barnardo later set up several specialist homes for disabled children.
Syrie Barnardo was an enthusiastic supporter of her husband’s work. She was particularly interested in helping girls who were led into prostitution – an important part of the charity’s work today. Together Syrie and Thomas Barnardo opened the Girls’ Village Home in Barkingside, Essex – a collection of cottages around a green, which eventually housed some 1,500 girls. More homes opened during the next few years, including Ever Open Door reception centres in cities across the UK.

Barnardo worked tirelessly to promote and raise funds for his work. He had a hectic schedule of interviews and public speaking, wrote hundreds of letters each week and often worked until the early hours of the morning. But his methods provoked controversy. His fundraising activities included selling ‘before’ and ‘after’ pictures of children committed to his care. Often the children arrived at the homes respectably dressed but were photographed in shabby clothes to arouse public sympathy. Barnardo was also accused by opponents of misappropriating donations for his own use and adopting the title of Doctor without having a medical qualification.

In 1876 Barnardo formally qualified as a doctor and a court case the following year cleared him of all the other serious charges, although he agreed to drop the practice of ‘before’ and ‘after’ photography. He also agreed to the setting up of a council of trustees to manage finances and improve accountability. To this day, the council exercises an important influence as the charity’s principal policy-making body. As a result of the court case, Thomas Barnardo’s fame spread across the country. Donations began to increase and popular interest in the work of the homes grew.

Barnardo refused to discriminate between the ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ poor
The social problems which first prompted Thomas Barnardo to begin his work with children continued into the 1880s and 1890s. Clearance for railways and rebuilding left thousands homeless at a time when the population of large cities was increasing, while a series of economic slumps caused further poverty and unemployment. Many families simply could not afford to look after their children and handed them over to the charity’s care. Thomas Barnardo and his staff were also active in removing children from parents whom they deemed cruel or neglectful.

Barnardo and the founders of other voluntary organisations believed that children in need should be ‘rescued’ from their surroundings. Residential homes were seen as places where they could grow up away from corrupting influences and learn to lead useful lives. The image of secure homes was also popular with the public and attracted substantial donations, enabling the charity to expand its provision of residential care. By the time Thomas Barnardo died in 1905 the charity he founded ran 96 homes caring for more than 8,500 children.

Barnardo wanted to save children from a life of destitution by preparing them for future employment. Even today, the charity is committed to providing training opportunities for disadvantaged young people. Shortly after opening the boys’ home in Stepney, Thomas Barnardo set up city messenger and wood-chopping brigades, while other boys were employed as shoeblacks. Later on he started workshops where boys were taught carpentry, boot-making, brush-making and other crafts.

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In 1903 the charity opened a naval training school in Norfolk, followed by a school for merchant seamen in 1919. Girls, meanwhile, were expected to become domestic servants and were taught household skills such as cooking, laundry, cleaning and sewing. Thomas Barnardo promoted his charity as a surrogate family, but he knew that large homes were not necessarily the best place for children. ‘I have a family of 20 girls in one of the cottages down in our Village here,’ he once said. ‘But did you ever know a family of 20 daughters?’ He believed that children should ideally be part of a family and introduced boarding out – an early form of fostering.

In Scotland boarding out had been common since the 16th century. Children from cities were placed with crofters or farmers in the country. Thomas Barnardo began his scheme in 1887, sending 330 boys to country homes. Foster parents had to be respectable, God-fearing cottagers or working people living in clean homes. They received five shillings a week for each child, but Barnardo stressed that they were not to be motivated by ‘the greed of gain’. Female doctors were appointed to check up on the welfare of the children, visiting unannounced at least every three months. Foster parents also had to sign an agreement which stipulated that boarded out children were to be trained as one of the family.

In 1889 Thomas Barnardo introduced a scheme to board out the babies of unmarried mothers. The mother was required to go into domestic service with an approved employer and board her baby with a family nearby. She was allowed to visit the children during her time off and paid for the fostering fee out of her wages, with the rest made up by the charity. The scheme was enlightened at a time when most voluntary organisations refused to give unmarried mothers any help.
By 1905 more than 4,000 children were boarded out. But unlike the homes, there was no focus for public sympathy and the schemes did not attract big donations. In 1896 donations for the Village home were more than £1,000, whilst boarding out only received £35. In terms of modern childcare, however, boarding out was one of Thomas Barnardo’s lasting achievements and paved the way for the charity’s fostering work in the 20th century and beyond.

In the 1880s Thomas Barnardo also began an emigration programme to settle children in colonies overseas. Child migration was not new. As early as the 17th century, vagabond children were shipped to the American colonies, and in the 18th century transportation of child convicts, women prisoners and their children was common.

In 1850, legislation was passed which allowed local authorities to send children from the workhouses to Canada. Initially Barnardo hoped to send children to Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa, but until the 1920s only Canada accepted children in large numbers. The first party of 51 boys left Stepney in 1882 and were followed the next year by 100 more boys and 72 girls. The children over 13 were sent to live with farmers’ families and worked as agricultural labourers or domestic servants, while the younger ones were boarded out. At the beginning of the 20th century, the charity was sending about 1,000 children a year to Canada, and by 1939 around 30,000 had made the journey across the Atlantic. The reasons for settling children overseas were both practical and idealistic. It was cheaper to place a child in Canada than it was to care for a girl or boy in a home in Britain and Thomas Barnardo believed that by doing so he could help more children. He also believed that migration gave children a fresh start away from the vice and squalor of overcrowded slums and the ‘bad’ influence of their parents.
Barnardo set up a vetting and inspection system for his Canadian placements, stipulating that children should be treated as part of the family, go to church and be given time off to attend school. They were encouraged to write to the head of the Canadian homes and were visited at least once a year. But the huge distances involved and severe winters meant that children were often isolated on remote farms. Many were treated as slave labour and there were cases of abuse and neglect. Where the charity knew about abuse, action was taken to remove children or send them back to Britain.

Emigration to Canada was suspended during the First World War but resumed in 1920. However, public opinion in Canada was turning against child migration and child welfare experts felt that children were being placed with too little supervision or safeguards. In 1925 the Canadian government barred children under 14 without accompanying parents from entry for three years. The ban became permanent in 1928 and the charity sent its last party of children to Canada in 1939.
The memory of Thomas Barnardo overshadowed the work of the charity he founded for much of the 20th century. For many years after his death his successors followed without question the same methods of childcare. As a result, the organisation was often slow to change.

Residential care reached its height in the 1930s. In 1933, Barnardo’s had more than 8,000 children living in 188 homes across the country. The homes ran along strictly disciplined lines and children were instilled with a sense of responsibility and self-sufficiency. They were expected to rise early and spent hours cleaning and tidying their rooms, digging and planting in the garden and carrying out maintenance work. All children received elementary education and some form of job training. Boys were still trained for manual jobs and girls were encouraged to enter domestic service, although by the Second World War the carpenters and boot-makers of Thomas Barnardo’s day had given way to electricians and motor mechanics, while girls became librarians, typists and hairdressers.

Residential care emphasised children’s physical and moral welfare rather than their emotional wellbeing. Some homes accommodated hundreds of children and staff were sometimes harsh and distant. All aspects of life were controlled and even pocket money was regulated. Family contacts were not encouraged and children were not permitted to see their records to find out about their background. Instead, children were taught to see Barnardo’s as their true family, and the charity kept in touch with them even after they had left the homes as young adults.
Some adults who grew up in the homes look back with affection and believe that the charity was a true family. Others remember loneliness and bullying. A few feel that they were abused. These are the words of a handful of people who grew up in Barnardo’s care:

‘To look at, the grounds were lovely – the lawns, the flowerbeds and the almond trees. But there was a high fence and wrought iron gates, and once they clanged behind you, you were shut in and you didn’t feel free.’

Agnes Bowley (went to the Girls’ Village Homes at Barkingside in 1934)

‘Until I came to Barnardo’s I’d been shunted from relation to relation and I finally ended up in the arms of the law. Barnardo’s encouraged me to join a band, and for the first time in my life I felt a sense of achievement and comradeship. I played the silver bugle with pride and realised that I had finally begun to enjoy life.’

Malcolm Lang (bugler)

‘You had no personal life. Everyone was known by numbers. Mine was number nine and everything I had had to be chain-stitched with the number nine. What I remember above all was the hardness of the staff. We all had to have pudding basin haircuts and they regularly combed through our hair for nits.’

Mary (now married with a grown-up family)
'I came under the charity’s care when I was eight years old. I had never attended school, nor had I mixed with other boys. Men were ogres to me. I was disturbed, distressed and wayward. Under Barnardo’s influence all that changed. They taught by quiet example and commitment the merits of self-reliance, integrity of purpose and pride in competency, however lowly the task.’

Bill Hill (retired headmaster)

‘All the long-term children in our home were black. People didn’t want to foster black children. All the staff were white and I grew up with all-white authority figures. Until I was 11 I had no idea about my parents. I just thought some children had parents and some didn’t.’

Janet (left the homes in 1969)

Not all children committed to Barnardo’s care remained in the homes. Many continued to be boarded out or emigrated. After the First World War children began to be settled in large numbers in Australia. The Australian authorities welcomed immigration from Britain as a means of tackling the labour shortage after the war and curbing non-white immigration from Asia. Spurred on by this and by the British government’s offer of free passage for war orphans, plus £20 to outfit each child, Barnardo’s sent its first official party of 47 boys in 1921. They were followed two years later by 32 girls. The charity sent a total of 2,784 children to Australia, mostly in the years before 1939. Emigration was suspended during the Second World War and resumed in 1947. The numbers sent after the war were much smaller, with 442 children going between 1947 and 1965 and the scheme finally ended in 1967.
Children were mainly settled in Western Australia and New South Wales, where Barnardo's set up its own model farm school at Mowbray Park, Picton, in 1929. The charity had learnt lessons from the Canadian experience and younger children were cared for in homes rather than by foster families in remote locations. Older children worked mainly as farm hands or domestic servants. Girls were settled in groups and minimum wages were fixed. Local committees were formed to keep in touch with the girls and women visitors saw them monthly. Although life was hard in Australia, the young immigrants rarely suffered the same callousness as their predecessors in Canada.

In its time, child migration was considered an appropriate response to the social problems of the day, even if, by today’s standards, the practice seems cruel. Charities genuinely believed that migration gave children a chance to escape from industrial poverty and offered them a fresh start in a healthier environment. These ideas continued largely unchallenged until after the Second World War when the emphasis shifted towards keeping children and their families together in their own communities.

Charities genuinely believed that migration gave children a chance to escape from industrial poverty.
The Second World War marked a turning point in Barnardo’s development and in the history of childcare in the UK. Evacuation brought ‘charity children’ and those from deprived backgrounds into contact with ‘ordinary’ middle and upper class families and led to a greater understanding of their circumstances. The disruption of war also improved understanding of the impact of family break-up and the effects on children of being brought up away from home.

During the war Barnardo’s increasingly worked in partnership with government departments, local authorities and other voluntary agencies – initially to evacuate children from the homes to safer parts of the country. As a result of these contacts it began to change some of its own methods of care.

In 1941 a Ministry of Health report criticised the standard of accommodation and staffing at one of the homes. In response, Barnardo’s opened its first staff training school. Students studied childcare, child psychology, hygiene, first aid, home nursing, housecraft skills, children’s hobbies, games and Bible story-telling. The course ended with six months work experience in a home.

By 1942 Barnardo’s was committed to the new professionalism and appointed a qualified social worker to take charge of boarding out. Two years later a Home Office report pointed to the lack of pre-school training for under-fives and the need for more stimulating leisure for older children. In response, The Barnardo Book was published which advised staff on everything from daily routine (children should not rise before 6.30am) to discipline in the dining room (‘complete silence is not desirable and savours of institution rather than home’). Overall, the book aimed to encourage a more relaxed attitude towards children.
The impetus for change continued after the war, when public attention focused on the plight of children without families. A national report on children ‘deprived of a normal home life’ was published in 1946, prompting a revolution in childcare. Known as the Curtis Report, it looked at the circumstances of nearly 125,000 children, including those removed from their families, children who were homeless or destitute, those orphaned by the war and children with disabilities.

For the first time, children were acknowledged as the nation’s responsibility. Adoption was recommended as the best option for children without parents or a satisfactory home, with fostering as the next best option. If children had to be cared for in institutions, the report recommended that these should be small, with no more than 12 children to a home. They should be encouraged to make friends outside the home and keep in touch with relatives, and brothers and sisters should be brought up together.

The Curtis Report paved the way for the Children Act in 1948, which placed a duty on local authorities to care for homeless children, and those whose parents were unable to care for them. The Act established specialised local authority children’s departments and stated that, whenever possible, parents, relatives or friends of the family should be helped to take back a child in care. Where children could not live with their families, fostering and adoption were preferable to residential care. The Act also set up a system of registration and inspection which aimed to integrate voluntary agencies, including Barnardo’s, into a national childcare network.
Barnardo’s had already complied with the spirit of the Act when, in 1947, it became a registered adoption society. Initially Barnardo’s only considered children under three for adoption, but as the number of unwanted babies fell, the charity began to concentrate on older children. Nowadays Barnardo’s specialises in finding families for children who are difficult to place, including those with profound disabilities, groups of brothers and sisters and children from ethnic minority backgrounds.

During the 1940s and 1950s the charity took its first steps towards closer involvement with families – an essential feature of the charity’s work today. As early as 1939 it introduced a scheme to foster illegitimate children of married women, whose husbands might otherwise have left home. Grants towards fostering fees were also occasionally made for the legitimate children of widows or separated wives and Thomas Barnardo’s original scheme to help unmarried mothers was updated to allow the mother to look after her own baby or employ a childminder while she went out to work.

In 1947, Barnardo’s began awarding grants to families in difficulties because the breadwinner was temporarily unable to work due to illness or accident. In the mid-1950s it developed a scheme to house whole families affected by ill-health, housing problems, unemployment and crime. The father was encouraged to find a job, while the mother was taught childcare and domestic skills. The local authority then offered them housing, while Barnardo’s provided clothing and furniture and even a holiday by the sea. By the end of the decade a quarter of the charity’s work involved helping children to stay with their own families.
The 1960s

The 1960s was a time of radical change for Barnardo’s. Since the end of the Second World War, the emphasis in childcare had increasingly moved from rescuing children from a harmful family or environment to improving family life so that children could remain at home with their parents. The foundation of the welfare state after the war led to better health, so that parents were living longer, while availability of social security meant that parents did not have to give up a child simply because they could not afford to keep them. As a result, the children which Barnardo’s had traditionally received were now staying with their own families.

Further changes in legislation reinforced the shift in childcare practice. In 1963, the Children and Young Persons Act placed a duty on local authority children’s departments to reduce the need to take children into care by giving advice, support and, occasionally, financial assistance to families in difficulties. Even where residential care proved necessary, local authorities preferred to accommodate children in their own purpose-built homes.

As a result, the number of children received by Barnardo’s was decreasing – particularly children referred privately by parents – and their average length of stay from seven years in the 1940s fell to less than three years. In 1964 Barnardo’s began a comprehensive review of its work, resulting in a policy statement the following year that the charity should ‘concentrate an increasing proportion of its resources on meeting new and hitherto unmet needs’. A commitment was made to cut down on residential services and to develop new work with disabled children and those with emotional and behavioural problems. By 1965 more than half the 8,000 children that Barnardo’s worked with lived with their own families. To reflect this, the charity changed its name in 1966 from Dr Barnardo’s Homes to Dr Barnardo’s.
Barnardo’s also began to consider the needs of black children in its care. In 1965, a working party was set up to look at the whole question of racial integration. Its report recommended that homes should be multi-racial, that more black staff should be employed and that more education and information should be given to white staff about black children’s countries of origin and their traditions and culture. Both black and white children were to be fostered at the same rate of pay and black families would be encouraged to foster and adopt. To help black children challenge prejudice, the issue was to be openly discussed.

In 1968 Barnardo’s work with babies and toddlers came under the spotlight. The charity was a considerable provider of nursery care and nursery nurse training, but childcare professionals suggested that institutional care was damaging to children’s emotional development. After sponsoring research, Barnardo’s began to change the nurseries into day care centres for the under-fives or units for severely disabled children.

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By the end of the decade Barnardo’s was moving fully with the spirit of the times, recognising that homes were not the right place for most children. Changing attitudes to single parenthood and the availability of contraception also meant that the traditional reasons for children being cared for by the charity were fast disappearing.

In 1969, Barnardo’s produced a report which outlined plans to provide childcare services where they were most needed, taking into account the work of local authority children’s departments and other voluntary agencies. The geographical spread of the charity’s work was revised, moving away from its traditional concentration in the rural south of England to target inner city areas in the Midlands and the north and to meet needs in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Childcare services were divided into eight areas – providing a regional framework which still remains the basic structure of the organisation today. Plans were also made to close down large numbers of homes and to convert some into specialist units and residential schools.
The 1970s and beyond

The process of reorganisation and change continued during the 1970s when professional opinion swung even further against residential care. Experts argued that a child had the right to a secure future and emphasised the importance of providing a permanent home base for children and one set of carers.

Between 1969 and 1980 Barnardo’s closed around 90 homes and expanded its work in fostering and adoption. This led to new recruitment methods to attract potential carers. In 1979 the charity opened the first ‘adoption shop’ in the country, where photographs and details of children needing families were displayed in a high street shop window. The move was controversial at the time, but has since become common practice in fostering and adoption work.

In 1970, the Local Authority Social Services Act led to the setting up of social services departments which incorporated the former children’s departments. The immediate result was the loss of specialised childcare knowledge and an influx of former local authority staff to voluntary organisations including Barnardo’s. Strengthened by the professionalism of its new recruits, Barnardo’s worked alongside the social services departments to provide specialist input and develop new approaches to childcare. Local authorities continue to be important partners in much of Barnardo’s present-day work.

The growth in day care for under-fives began at the end of the 1960s and was developed into a broader model of family support as Barnardo’s set up family centres in deprived areas. The centres, which continue to operate today, were situated on run-down and isolated council estates where there were few shops and leisure facilities. They set out to help families facing problems such as unemployment, poor health, bad housing and poverty, with the aim of defusing the stress and tension which might lead to family breakdown and child neglect.
Another significant development was the charity’s work with young offenders. The Children and Young Persons Act of 1969 made all young people in trouble with the law the responsibility of the local authority. Many authorities contracted voluntary organisations to run schemes to tackle offending behaviour; Barnardo’s set up its first Intermediate Treatment Centre in Yorkshire in 1974. The centres developed into today’s youth justice projects which form an important part of the charity’s work with disadvantaged young people.

Barnardo’s also pioneered schemes for children with disabilities. Work progressed in finding foster and adoptive homes for children with severe disabilities and projects successfully brought profoundly disabled children out of long-stay hospitals to live in small, community-based units. At the same time, the charity started schemes to support families caring for disabled children at home. Like the family centres, these offered a place for parents to meet, get advice and share experiences, while the children had a stimulating place to play.

In the 1980s and 1990s Barnardo’s developed new areas of work in response to public concern over issues such as child sexual abuse, homelessness and children affected by HIV/AIDS. In addition, there was a new focus on families living in poverty and on developing self-help schemes in disadvantaged communities. Barnardo’s also made a commitment to campaign nationally on childcare issues and to influence other professionals by publishing research and practice reports. In 1988 the organisation changed its name from Dr Barnardo’s to Barnardo’s to reflect the contrast with its Victorian past, and the last traditional-style home closed in 1989.
Although the large children’s homes which first made the charity famous are a thing of the past, Barnardo’s still supports those people who lived in them as children. The charity’s Making Connections service helps around 2,000 people every year to come to terms with growing up in care by providing them with information about their backgrounds, helping them to trace relatives and assisting with reunions. Since 1995 people have been able to see their original records and a social worker is assigned to each individual to help them cope with revelations about the past. For some it can be a distressing experience. For others it can help them to make sense of their lives. Barnardo’s believes that it still owes a duty of care to the people it looked after and the Making Connections service is an important part of that process.

Fact file
- Thomas Barnardo was born in Dublin in 1845 and died in Surrey in 1905
- The first home for boys opened in Stepney Causeway in 1870
- Barnardo’s emigrated 30,000 children to Canada between 1882 and 1939
- The charity sent 2,784 children to Australia between 1921 and 1967
- Barnardo’s began its boarding out scheme in 1889
- More than 350,000 children and young people were helped by Barnardo’s in its first 100 years
- Barnardo’s became a registered adoption society in 1947
- In 1966 the charity changed its name from Dr Barnardo’s Homes to Dr Barnardo’s
- Between 1969 and 1980 around 90 homes were closed down
- In 1988 the charity changed its name from Dr Barnardo’s to Barnardo’s
- The last traditional-style home closed in 1989
- Today Barnardo’s runs more than 400 services across the UK
- The charity works with more than 100,000 children, young people and their families each year
- Barnardo’s employs more than 7,000 staff
- There are more than 370 Barnardo’s charity shops
- Around 12,000 regular volunteers work for Barnardo’s in children’s services, shops and fundraising groups
- There are independent Barnardo’s charities based in the Republic of Ireland, Australia and New Zealand
Barnardo’s today

The work of Barnardo’s has been changing lives for nearly 150 years. Today, as the UK’s biggest children’s charity, we work intensively with the country’s most disadvantaged and hardest to reach children, young people and families.

Barnardo’s believes in children regardless of their circumstances, gender, race, disability or behaviour. We believe in the abused, the vulnerable, the forgotten and the neglected. We will support them, stand up for them and bring out the best in each and every child.

Barnardo’s vision and purpose

• Barnardo’s vision is that the lives of all children and young people should be free from poverty, abuse and discrimination.

• Barnardo’s purpose is to help the most vulnerable children and young people transform their lives and fulfil their potential.
Community projects

Today we run more than 400 projects in local communities throughout the UK, including:

• children’s centres and play schemes for children in poverty
• counselling for children who have been abused or self-harm
• help for young people who are being sexually exploited
• day and residential schools for those with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
• support for young carers
• fostering and adoption services
• care and community projects for disabled children
• vocational training for young people
• practical help for young people leaving care
• counselling and practical help for women and children who have suffered from domestic violence
• parenting courses
• support to families in temporary accommodation and young people who are homeless.
Barnardo’s in action

Eight-year-old Matthew has epilepsy and learning and behavioural difficulties, which began after he contracted Meningitis aged two. He has short seizures every day, which can make him fall over and seem dazed. Matthew now attends Barnardo’s Caern project in Edinburgh. He stays overnight once a week and really enjoys the activities available. ‘Matthew has a fantastic time,’ says his mother, Christine. ‘We’ve got a photo of Caern at home and he says, “I want to go and see the guys!”’ With the help Barnardo’s is giving us, we’re starting to rebuild our lives and we have the space to relax a bit. It’s been a lifesaver for all of us.’

Three years ago Blaise Magee had dropped out of college and was in trouble. ‘I was doing drugs,’ Blaise recalls. ‘I was unemployed and I wasn’t sure what to do.

Blaise’s life changed when a friend mentioned Dr B’s, a Barnardo’s project in Belfast which trains young people with learning disabilities or support needs to gain qualifications in catering. Despite never having cooked before, Blaise had a natural talent and achieved his level 1 NVQ in catering. He went on to work at London’s fashionable L’Escargot restaurant.

Now Blaise works at Belfast’s only five-star hotel, The Merchant. ‘If it wasn’t for Dr B’s I would probably be in prison – or dead,’ says Blaise. ‘Barnardo’s really does change people’s lives.’
Campaigning for children

We use the knowledge gained from our direct work with children to campaign for better policies for children, young people and families and to champion the rights of every child. Some of our highest profile campaigns have included lobbying the Government to eradicate child poverty, to reduce the use of custody for young offenders and to provide more local services for children who go missing and are at risk of sexual exploitation.

Help fund our vital work

We rely upon donations to fund our work and help all the children that we do. For every £1 donated, 95p goes directly to helping vulnerable children, young people and their families, excluding property development and retail shop costs.

Show that you believe in children and donate today online, by phone, by post, or include a gift to us in your will.

Website: www.barnardos.org.uk/donate
Tel: 0800 027 3439
Post: Please make cheques payable to Barnardo’s and send to: Barnardo’s, Tanners Lane, Barkingside, Ilford, Essex IG6 1QG
Basis and Values

Barnardo’s, like many organisations, has a set of principles and values which inspire its work and relationships.

Basis

- Barnardo’s is an association whose inspiration and values derive from the Christian faith
- These values, enriched and shared by many people of other faiths and philosophies, provide the basis of our work with children and young people, their families and communities

Values

- Respecting the unique worth of every person
- Encouraging people to fulfil their potential
- Working with hope
- Exercising responsible stewardship