



## Why stream for Barnardo's?

It can be tough growing up, and this past year has been especially difficult. **Young people are more lonely, sad and stressed than before lockdown.** And for many, gaming is a much-needed escape. A way to combat loneliness, feel connected to a community and get out of their own head, even if just for a little while. So what better way to support them, than by holding your own livestream and raising money to help young people struggling with their mental health across the UK.

**We want you to feel confident talking about Barnardo's, and the vital work we do.** We have collected some key information about Barnardo's, the mental health challenges facing young people today, and the vital difference a donation can make, which you can share with your viewers during your stream.

## “So – why Barnardo's?”

- Barnardo's is the **largest national children's charity in the UK.**
- Barnardo's was founded in **1866** by Thomas Barnardo – that's exactly 100 years before Ralph Baer came up with the idea of the first ever video game console!
- We support **358,800 children, young people, parents and carers**, across more than **800** services throughout the UK.
- During 2019-20, Barnardo's supported **55,000** young people through our **mental health services** – to put that into context, that's enough to fill London's O2 Arena almost three times over.

## “Ok – but why is Barnardo's work so important right now?”

- **Over 80%** of our frontline staff are supporting someone with an increase in mental health issues linked to Coronavirus.

## and that's not all...

- Even before the pandemic hit, more children were struggling with mental ill health than ever before.
- **Over a quarter** of young people aged 11 to 16 with a mental health condition attempted **suicide or self-harm**, rising to 47% of those aged 17 to 19.
- **One in ten** aged 11 to 22 years old say that they **often or always feel lonely**.
- Children from **low-income families** are **4 times more likely** to experience mental health problems than children from higher-income families.

## “What exactly does Barnardo's do to help?”

At Barnardo's, we're constantly trying to innovate and adapt our mental health support services, finding new ways to reach the young people who need us most.

We want to introduce you to the amazing work done by our **Swindon Trailblazers Service** who have introduced an original and effective method to help young people cope with feelings of anxiety and worry.

The method: **video games!**

**But not just any game. The service has been using a game called Pesky gNATs, which is specifically designed to help mental health professionals deliver therapy to young people.**

The purpose of the game is to teach young people how to recognise and challenge Negative Automatic Thoughts (NATs). This is the scientific term for the niggling anxious thoughts that everyone gets when they're worried or stressed.

In the game, these thoughts are represented by a series of flying gnats, which the player will encounter as they explore 'gNATS Island'. There are many types of gnats (representing the many types of negative thoughts), like the 'black and white thinking' gnat or the 'it's a disaster' gnat.

These gnats can sting the player, at which point the game prompts the young person to think about their own thoughts and experiences with this specific negative thought. **This process teaches the player how to challenge their negative thoughts.**

Louise, one of the mental health professionals at the Swindon Trailblazer Service, said:

*“Pesky gNATs is a great way to engage with young people, and help them understand and cope with their feelings of anxiety and worry.”*

[Read more about Pesky gNATS on our website by following this link](#)



## “How could my donation help?”

5%	<b>£5</b> could provide paints for art therapy, which help children express themselves in a non-verbal way
10%	<b>£10</b> could provide craft equipment for a child to make a calm box, helping them manage their emotions
25%	<b>£25</b> could pay for therapeutic books for use in counselling sessions with young people
50%	<b>£50</b> could pay for frontline staff to deliver an hour of face-to-face counselling or online support – giving a safe space for a child to talk through their feelings and find practical ways of coping with challenges
75%	<b>£75</b> could pay for an initial mental health assessment for one young person
100%	<b>£100</b> could help fund the toys and resources needed for one of our specialist counselling rooms

## “What do I do if I need help with my mental health?”

**If you, or someone you know, needs urgent support, or just needs to talk, you are not alone.**

You can get help, at any time of the day or night, and talk about anything that's troubling you, no matter how difficult. Find out [here](#) you can get the help you need.

**Covid-19 is affecting us all, but some more than others.**

Whatever your worry, Barnardo's are here to help you with any difficulties and anxieties you're experiencing as a result of the pandemic. You can get support the way you feel most comfortable: head over to our [website](#) to find out more.

We have also created an interactive [hub](#) for young people to access a range of materials, resources and much more to help deal with some of the challenges the pandemic has presented.

