

The Lifelong Links service is for children and young people who have been in care and have no plan to return home or be adopted.

Lifelong Links aims to help identify and find family members and other supportive adults in order to build a lasting support network for the child or young person.

They are brought together in a Family Meeting where they talk with the young person about what support they can offer - now and into the future. This is written down into a Plan so that everybody knows what they are doing. The Plan is then agreed with the young person's Social Worker providing it is safe.

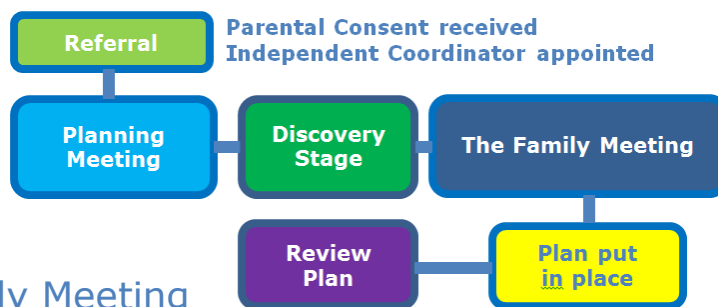
Building a lasting support network for children and young people

The Lifelong Links Process

Once it is decided that Lifelong Links is right for a young person, they are allocated a Barnardo's Lifelong Links Coordinator. Parental consent to the referral, either from a parent or a local authority, is required before the process can go ahead.

The Lifelong Links Coordinator will then:

- Meet with the young person and work with them to find all the people who may care about them
- With the agreement of the young person, contact all the people identified (where this is safe) and arrange to meet with them
- Discuss with the family and other supportive adults how they may best be able to support the young person and explain Lifelong Links and Family Group Decision Making
- In consultation with the young person and their Social Worker, invite family and supportive adults to a Family Meeting.



Following the **Discovery Stage** a **Family Meeting** will be arranged by the Coordinator for the family and supportive adults to make a **Plan** along with the young Person.

The focus of the meeting will be to:

- Explore the lasting relationships upon which they can depend
- Discover more about their own history which may add to a stronger sense of identity
- Enable the adults in attendance to identify the practical and emotional support they can offer. This could be telephone or email contact, outings, invites to family events etc.

The referring Social Worker and other relevant professionals will attend the start of the Family Meeting. This will vary but could include foster or residential carers and possibly an advocate if required for the young person or a family member. The Family Meeting includes some private time which professionals do not attend.

Following the Family Meeting the Social Worker should work with the young person and their support network to ensure that the Plan is carried out and that it is safe. A Review will be offered by the Lifelong Links Coordinator to enable the young person and their support network to check that the plan is working.



At Barnardo's we aim to provide a safe, positive, and nurturing environment where everyone is treated as unique and where we recognise and value individual differences. At Barnardo's, we believe in children regardless of their circumstances, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, belief, disability, age, or behaviour.

Barnardo's Falkirk Pathways

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