

## Summary

### Help for families

- Barnardo's welcomes the **£500m** for supporting families, including parents with babies.
- **In particular we welcome the funding** for a network of family hubs in 75 local authorities in 2024-5 which is an important step forward. **However, with tens of thousands of children taken into local authority care each year in England, Barnardo's is continuing to call on the Government to go even further and ensure there is a hub available to those who need it in every community.**

### Keeping young people safe

- We welcome the **£560m** for youth services over the next 3 years, which will provide up to 300 youth facilities in disadvantaged areas.
- Barnardo's recent report [Exploited and Criminalised](#) found that children are at increasing risk of criminal exploitation, including online.
- **Whilst this announcement is a helpful starting point, there is much more to do to help keep children in every community safe from gangs.**

### Children's mental health needs urgent attention

- Barnardo's is disappointed that the spending review did not commit to further investment for Mental Health Support Teams in Schools.
- Given the lengthy CAMHS waiting lists and official figures showing 1 in 6 young people now have a mental health disorder, this is a worrying omission<sup>1</sup>.
- There are 24,360 schools in England<sup>2</sup>. By 2023 only 3,000 schools in England will be supported by 400 mental health support teams.<sup>3</sup>
- **Barnardo's is calling for a proportion of the additional spending allocated to schools to be spent on speeding up the Mental Health Support Team programme so that every child can access the support they need, when they need it.**

## 1. Help for Families

The Government has committed to **£500m** over the next 3 years to transform "Start for Life" and family help services. This includes a network of family hubs in 75 local authorities in 2024-5, which is an incredibly important step forward. Key services include parenting support, perinatal mental health and breastfeeding. Barnardo's has demonstrated the potential return on investment, with evidence showing that intensive family support in our Isle of Wight service **alone saves the taxpayer £1m** a year<sup>4</sup>. Barnardo's provides children's centres and 62 family hubs across the country, and we know they make a vital difference to parents and children struggling with challenges like poverty, mental health and domestic abuse.

We also support the commitment to **£104m** for unregulated provision in children's social care and **£259m** for residential children's homes. This will lead to welcome improvement in placement options for some children with complex needs.

**Taken together this is a welcome step forward in investment in vulnerable children and families. However, much more will be needed, including in response to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care, expected to report in Spring 2022.**

<sup>1</sup> <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-in-england/2020-wave-1-follow-up>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.besa.org.uk/key-uk-education-statistics/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2021/05/more-than-a-million-children-given-access-to-nhs-mental-health-support-at-school/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.barnardos.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-09/It-Takes-a-Village-the-case-for-family-support-in-every-community.pdf>

## 2. Keeping Young people safe

Before the pandemic, spending on youth services in England and Wales had **declined by 70%** in real terms in less than a decade, with the loss of £1bn of investment resulting in zero funding in some areas, according to research from the YMCA.<sup>5</sup> Barnardo's (which provides the co-secretariat to the APPG on Knife Crime and Violence reduction) found that areas suffering the largest reductions in spending on young people have seen an increase in knife crime. The average council had reduced in real terms spending on youth services by 40% over the past three years. Some local authorities have reduced their spending by 91%.<sup>6</sup>

**The announcement of £560m for youth services over the next 3 years must be only the starting point. Young people in every community should have access to youth services to help access opportunities, build positive relationships and keep them safe from gangs and the risk of criminal exploitation.**

Barnardo's welcomes the funding for victim support services to over **£185m** by 2024-25. However, it is critical that this investment supports the children as well as adults affected by crime. Today, new official figures show **168,960** children were referred to Children's Services due to domestic abuse last year.<sup>7</sup>

**It is vital that the Government invests in long-term support for the whole family in the context of domestic abuse. It is also vital that children who are victims of sexual abuse and exploitation can access the specialist help they need.**

## 3. Children's Mental Health needs urgent attention

Barnardo's is disappointed that the spending review did not include additional investment for Mental Health Support Teams in Schools. In 2017, the Children's Commissioner for England highlighted that early intervention mental health support is far cheaper to deliver<sup>8</sup>:

- £5.08 per student: the cost of delivering an emotional resilience program in school
- £229 per child: the cost of delivering six counselling or group Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) sessions in a school
- £2,338: the average cost of a referral to a community CAMHS service
- £61,000: the average cost of an admission to an in-patient CAMHS unit.

**Barnardo's is calling for a proportion of extra funding allocated to schools to be spent on speeding up the Mental Health Support Team programme.**

### Questions for the Chancellor of the Exchequer

1. Whether he or his officials are aware of new research from Barnardo's showing that intensive family support delivery through their Isle of Wight family hubs saved the taxpayer £1 million over a year? Will he commit to a family hub in every community by the end of this Parliament?
2. What provision he has made to fund forthcoming commitments from the Independent Review of Children's Social Care due to publish in April 2022?
3. What proportion of Victim Support funding has been allocated to a) to support victims of child sexual abuse and exploitation; b) support for the 'whole-family' for domestic abuse, and c) Children who are exhibiting harmful sexual behaviour?
4. What additional financial steps will be taken to ensure that youth services are available in all communities, in an effort to tackle knife crime and child criminal exploitation?
5. Whether a proportion of the additional spending allocated to schools in the spending review could be assigned to speeding up the Mental Health Support Team programme so that all schools benefit by 2023?

<sup>5</sup> [Time is Running Out report September 2021](#) - National Youth Agency and the YMCA

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.barnardos.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/APPG%20on%20Knife%20crime%20-%20Young%20people%27s%20perspective%20August%202019.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/characteristics-of-children-in-need/2021>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/report/briefing-childrens-mental-healthcare-in-england/>