

Barnardo's Cymru Briefing for Local Election Candidates

Local Elections
5 May 2022



About Barnardo's Cymru

Barnardo's Cymru has been working with children, young people and families in Wales for over 100 years and is one of the largest children's charities. We currently run more than 60 diverse services across Wales, working in partnership with local authorities. Each year we regularly support more than 10,000 children, young people and families. We aim to secure better outcomes for more children by providing the support needed to ensure stronger families, safer childhoods and positive futures. We use the knowledge gained from our direct work to campaign to improve the lives of children, young people and families by promoting positive change in policy and practice. We believe that with the right help, committed support and belief all children can fulfil their potential.

Barnardo's Cymru policy asks for the 2022 local elections

Our policy calls for the 2022 local elections reflect our strategic aim to create stronger families, safer childhoods, and positive futures. We want local election candidates standing for the local election on 5 May 2022 to act with children, young people and families in mind.

Supporting refugees from Ukraine

The conflict and ongoing violence in Ukraine have caused families to forcibly leave their homes, in search of safety, with many arriving to the UK. Local authorities will have a crucial role to play, and we want local elected representatives to be aware of the action that Barnardo's is taking to support refugees from Ukraine and the support that we can provide. In Wales, we are in dialogue with voluntary sector and Welsh Government about how Barnardo's can provide support.

During this very distressing and uncertain time, children and adults will need continued support. In response to this, following discussion with the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain, Barnardo's has set up the **Ukrainian Support Helpline** to provide a holistic support service. The Helpline is available to anyone fleeing the conflict in Ukraine. You can get in touch by phoning **0800 148 8586** or emailing ukrainiansupport@barnardos.org.uk

Barnardo's support helpline will provide access to trauma support through online and face to face counselling and psychotherapy services. Refugees will be able to self-refer, in addition to referrals being made via the helpline through key workers, local authorities, health and education colleagues. Barnardo's will receive and screen the referrals, allocating appropriate services to respond to need. We also run **Cardiff Family Wellbeing Service**, which provides mental health support to refugees and asylum seekers in the city.



Third Sector Funding

Annual funding cycles and lack of longer-term certainty creates challenges for supporting children and families who need consistent help. That's why **we want every local authority to commit to ensuring that third sector partners are**

given more secure, longer-term funding to ensure those who need our services are guaranteed consistent support. Not only does the funding need to be longer-term it also needs to consider inflation and cost of living.

Mental Health & Wellbeing – invest in support for the whole family

Barnardo's Cymru currently offers a number of mental health and wellbeing services, which help support recovery and resilience in children and young people. Our services are strengths-based and trauma-informed, and we feel passionately about ensuring that children, young people and families get the best possible support. Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) play a huge role in how a child's brain develops and how they go on to see the world and experience it – both as a child and as an adult.

Trauma and/or ACEs can affect a person's entire lifetime, and many adults come to parenting or caring with their own history of trauma and the long-lasting effects of ACEs.

Parents/carers who have unresolved experiences of trauma can affect their adult/parenting function. Such trauma can be re-triggered with their children's experience or behaviour. However, our systems, while impressing the need for good parenting and understanding of such for future safeguarding, are not set up to respond to this. Barnardo's Cymru

would urge local authorities to prioritise investment in services that ensure parents are supported in their own right, and that these approaches are trauma-informed, evidence-based and ensure parents/carers are able to process their own trauma whilst responding to their child's needs. This means supporting the whole family, which our services have found can deliver stronger outcomes.

Service Spotlight

Beyond the Blue, based in Neath Port Talbot, provides a range of therapeutic interventions and counselling to children, young people aged 5 to 25 years as well as their parents on an individual, group and family basis. The service will also provide support specific to loss, as in bereavement, parental separation or parental imprisonment.

The aim of the service will be to improve the emotional health, wellbeing and resilience of individuals and enable them to better cope with the stresses and difficulties they may face.

Invest in early intervention

For many children and young people, early intervention is key. This means ensuring that services providing mental and emotional wellbeing support are widely available, work within the community and offer a range of evidence-based interventions. **Barnardo's Cymru urges local authorities to invest in and support early intervention wherever possible.**

Service spotlight:

Caban Bach Parenting and Family Support service provides holistic support for the whole family through individual casework

and group work with the aim to improve family well-being in Meirionnydd. The team are highly motivated and experienced in working with families with complex needs and all team members are able to communicate in both Welsh and English. Support includes evidenced based parenting programmes such as the Incredible Years and Family Links, positive relationships work, self-esteem and confidence building, financial capability, cooking skills, Baby Massage, Non-violent Resistance Approach and Mindfulness.

Investing in whole-family support for victims of domestic abuse

For victims of domestic abuse, the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns created opportunities for perpetrators to increase their use of isolation and control, for example by using lockdown restrictions as an excuse to move back into the victim's home and control movement within the house and preventing them from reaching out to family or friends. Calls to the Live Fear Free helpline increased significantly since the start of the pandemic, and this has been reflected in an increase in referrals to Barnardo's services.

Barnardo's Cymru urges local authorities to consider investing in whole-family approaches to domestic abuse that cut down siloes and provides vital support to both adult and child victims of domestic abuse, whilst also working with perpetrators to help effect safe and sustainable change.



Service spotlight:

Since March 2019, Barnardo's Cymru has delivered a whole-family domestic abuse service, Opening Closed Doors. Opening Closed Doors works with adult victims, child victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse to support the whole family. The [Opening Closed Doors](#) model, as described in an Institute of Public Care (IPC) [evaluation](#), is based on the premise that working with all family members meets their needs comprehensively, addressing the causes as well as the consequences of domestic abuse; helping to bring about sustainable change.

The Opening Closed Doors Service delivers a spectrum of support in Newport, Torfaen, Monmouthshire and Blaenau Gwent, that enables children and young people to recover from their experiences of domestic abuse, build resilience, strengthen parenting capacity and support system change to improve outcomes for children and their families. We recognise that domestic abuse may be one of many risk factors within the family home, therefore holistic support is offered. Since its inception, Opening Closed Doors has supported 395 children, 435 survivors and 268 perpetrators.

For information, please contact:

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