



# No more Lost Childhoods

Help us **transform** the lives  
of the UK's most vulnerable children.

Believe in  
children  
 Barnardo's







# Foreword



**At Barnardo's we believe in children.** We want them to grow up in a strong family, have a safe childhood and achieve a positive future.

Part of our mission is to raise the issues that really matter to children, and ensure their concerns are heard through the melee of politics, loud and clear. Their futures, literally, depend on it.

For this reason we're asking some difficult questions like what do we really know about the challenges children and young people face today? What is it that makes them "vulnerable"? And how can we respond quicker and "smarter" so children don't miss out on their childhoods and struggle unprepared and unequipped into adulthood?

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The nature of “vulnerability” is changing, and it doesn't respect class, culture or privilege.

At Barnardo's we're uniquely well placed to help answer these difficult, but necessary questions, and find solutions. For 152 years, Barnardo's has been changing the script for children who otherwise faced a future without hope. When Dr Barnardo first brought shelter to the children of Victorian London, the problems were severe, and clear for all to see. Children without parents, in poor health and out of school, sleeping on rooftops and in alleyways.

It's not like that today. There have been some huge improvements – especially in health and education. But the problems that do exist are very real and extremely complex.

**More than 1 in 4 children are growing up in poverty; 1 in 20 experience some form of sexual abuse; and with 3 children in every classroom thought to have a diagnosable mental health problem – things are reaching**

**epidemic proportions.** We know more and more children are ending up in the care system; and young people are falling prey to violent crime and drug trafficking.

But something else is happening too. The nature of “vulnerability” is changing, and it doesn't respect class, culture or privilege. Across the UK, there are children living in comfortable homes with their parents, who seem safe and secure, but the moment they switch on their smart phone, tablet or computer, they enter a whole new realm, where the usual rules, regulations and safeguards do not apply. From cyber-bullying to gaming addiction to online grooming, the risks are all too real – and they apply to everyone: rich or poor, straight or LGBTQ, disabled or not, across all communities.

So the challenges facing children have changed and evolved, at the same time as demand on services has increased, and resources have become constrained. Things are fast reaching a tipping point.

The question is: what do we do?

This booklet sets out Barnardo's vision for how we can tackle the really big problems facing children today. Under our ambitious 10 year Corporate Strategy, we are committed to reaching more children, deliver high quality support, and influencing the world around us. To achieve this we must ensure we are truly diverse and inclusive; embrace new technologies; and become a truly “Learning Organisation”.

But at Barnardo's we know we can't do this alone. That's why we've been developing Strategic Partnerships with local agencies and communities – co-designing and delivering services together with communities. **We're moving away from the short termism, the siloes and the transactional relationships, towards transformational interventions for the most vulnerable children in our society.**

Because at Barnardo's, above all else, we believe in children. We also firmly believe that together we can realise an approach to commissioning children's services that makes a lasting difference. We hope you can believe with us.

**Javed Khan**  
Chief Executive

# Vulnerability is changing

Children growing up today have fantastic new opportunities, but also face unique pressures and threats.

***Emerging evidence from our frontline services suggests some young people are facing multiple and overlapping dangers in all parts of their lives, from early trauma and neglect, to grooming and sexual abuse, through to criminal exploitation, drugs and gangs.***



Not too long ago, we thought we knew what vulnerability looked like. There were set categories in which a child would be seen to be 'at risk' – including children in care, and children growing up in severe deprivation.

However, that picture is becoming increasingly complex.

For example, we know that children who experience domestic abuse may be more likely to become a victim of sexual exploitation or to exhibit harmful sexual behaviour (HSB). Nearly 60% of our child sexual exploitation and HSB services told us that the families they work with are also affected by domestic abuse.



Our services tell us that young people referred to Barnardo's for support with their safety; mental health; education, training and skills; and other needs, often face a range of additional challenges. In a recent survey, almost 60% of our Service Managers said they had supported young people involved in criminal activity. 75% of those thought the young people may have been coerced, controlled, deceived or manipulated by others into breaking the law.

As a Learning Organisation, we are constantly gathering new evidence about the risks facing the children we support. But it's already clear our services are responding to increasingly complex and inter-related dangers.

We cannot ignore these new challenges.



# Pressure on external services

In the UK today, over 4.5 million children are growing up in poverty. In England alone over 2 million – 1 in 6 – children are living in families with substantial complex needs and 1.6 million of those children have no established form of additional support.<sup>1</sup>

We know the number of children needing urgent and substantial support from local authority children's services has grown significantly. Having risen steadily for 9 years, there are now over 70,000 children going into the care system<sup>2</sup> and the number of children subject to a child protection plan almost doubled in a decade.<sup>3</sup>

Children's services are operating in an increasingly challenging environment, where the demand for services and growing complexity of need are outstripping the resources available to local authorities.

Between 2010-11 and 2015-16, central government funding for local authorities' children's services fell by £2.4 billion, 24%, in real terms.<sup>4</sup> The Local Government Association estimates councils face a further funding gap for children's services of at least £2 billion by 2020.<sup>5</sup> The Association of Directors of Children's Services has found that children and families are facing more entrenched and complex problems, making the planning and provision of support more challenging and resource intensive.<sup>6</sup>

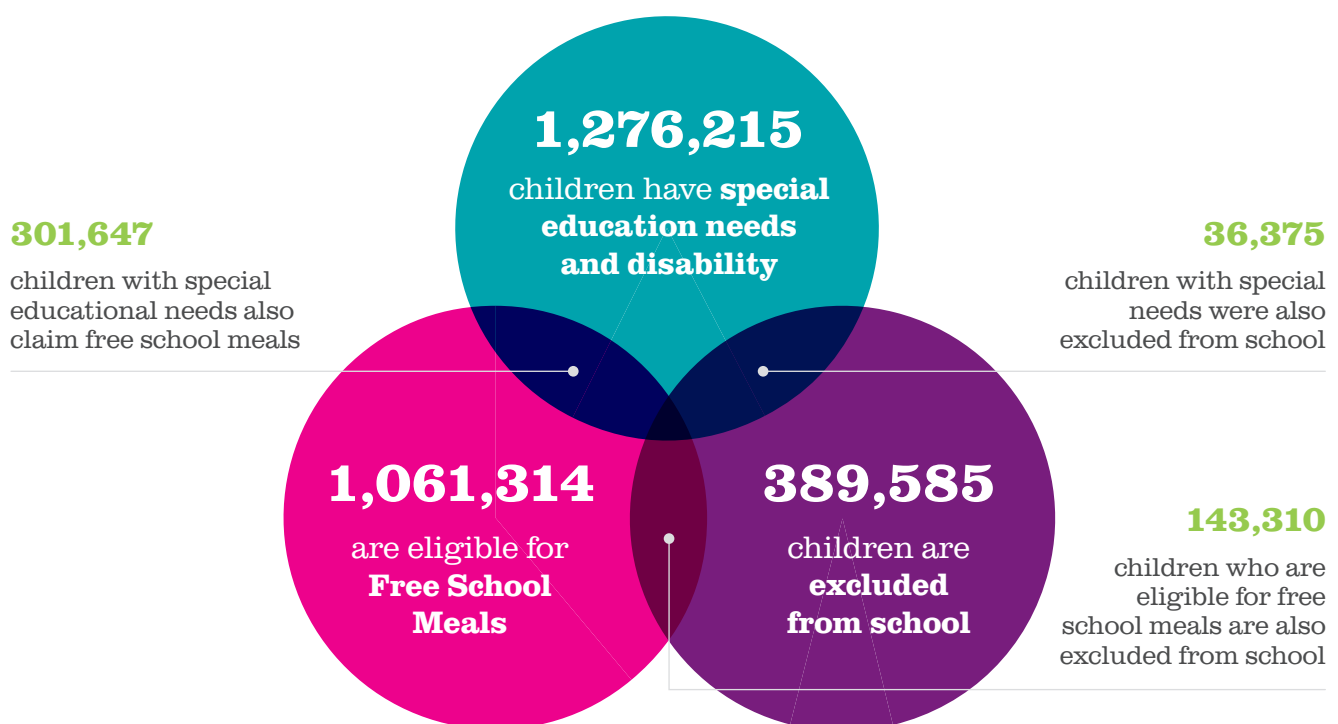
As a result, many councils have had to concentrate their limited resources on help for children with the highest level of need. And too often this is at the expense of preventative services – such as children's centres, family hubs and youth work – creating a vicious cycle where too many children reach crisis point before they can access support.

With more children facing complex challenges, and councils increasingly struggling to keep pace, we need a radical new approach.

## The role of commissioning

The current commissioning environment compounds these pressures on services, by encouraging competition over collaboration. Charities are forced to spend donors' money on bidding for work (even when they don't win) – using precious resource that could instead go into delivering direct support to children and families.

The government's new Civil Society Strategy promises welcome reform of commissioning to support charities and social enterprises to work together, and to involve communities. This is a valuable opportunity to deliver real change.





# Barnardo's vision: re-imagining children's services

Through our expertise and learning from our 1,000+ services across the UK, we have developed a radical and innovative new approach to delivering children's services and responding to the increasingly complex needs of children and their families through strategic partnerships.

## What are strategic partnerships?

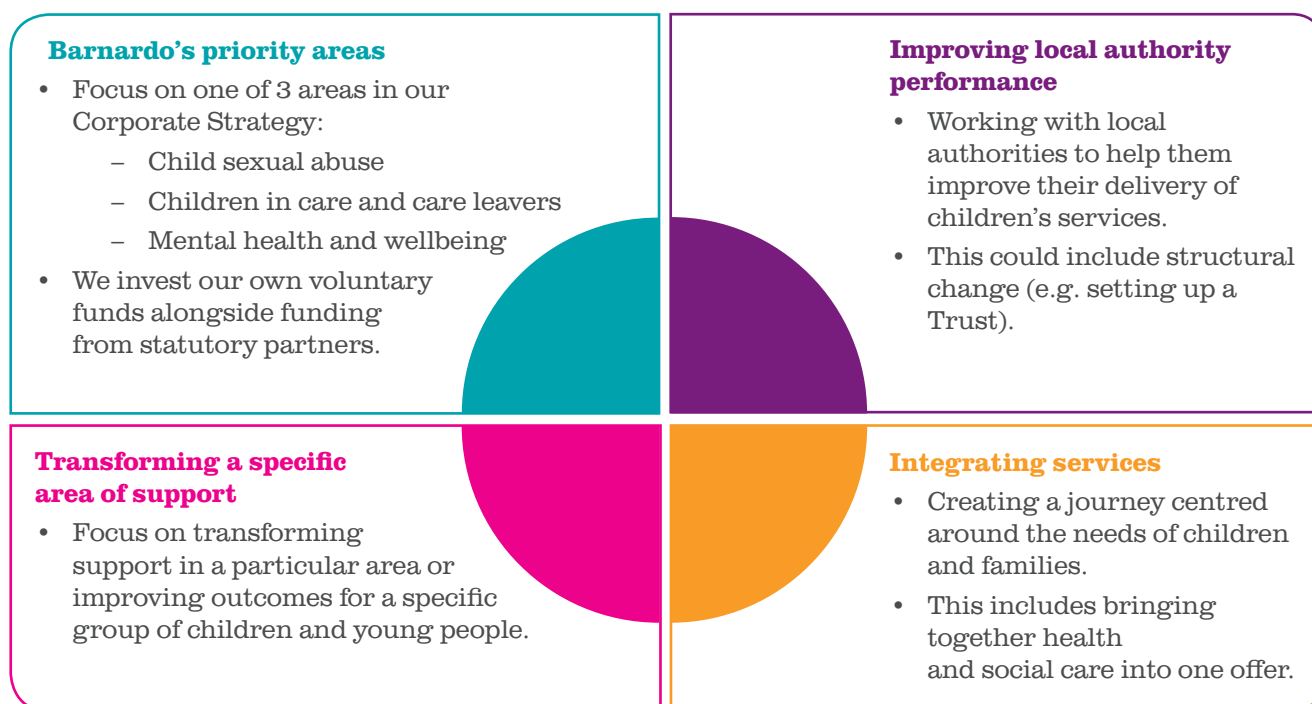
Strategic partnerships are where Barnardo's makes a formal agreement with others – such as a local authority, Police, NHS or another charity – to share finance, skills, information and other resources, so we can work towards our common goal: **better outcomes for more children**.

We know from our depth and breadth of experience that this goal is best achieved by moving away from traditional transactional relationships towards truly transformative, long-term strategic partnerships, which are focused on systems change.

All our strategic partnerships share 5 common features:

1. Aim to achieve systems change.
2. Work together to identify local issues and co-design and co-create solutions with local agencies and communities.
3. Involve children, young people and families by putting them at the centre of the service design and ensure that there is *"No decision about me without me"*.
4. Promote multi-agency working.
5. "Smart" use of resources – bringing different streams together.

Barnardo's is a national charity, but we tailor our work to local needs. Because every area is different we have developed 4 inter-related types of strategic partnership, to suit different circumstances.





# Our success stories

We have already developed innovative strategic partnerships that deliver measurable improvements in outcomes for the most vulnerable children and families.

## Norfolk

### New Directions Edge of Care Services

New Directions is a joint initiative of Norfolk County Council and Barnardo's working with children, young people and their families who are on the 'Edge of Care'.

It draws on the strengths and skill sets of both organisations, aspiring to deliver an Outstanding service using evidence-based practice.

The delivery model has also been developed in consultation with young people.

New Directions has developed effective responses to families on the edge of care, offering a wraparound service based on assessed need and close collaboration with families.

**Relationship breakdown** is a common cause for children coming into care. New Directions offers interventions tailored to the needs of each individual child and their family to make positive change that helps them stay together.

New Directions takes an innovative approach to encourage **family reunification**. Bringing together best practice and research it provides a practical guide for practitioners so they could help more families reunite successfully.

Although this partnership is still in its early stages, since delivery began in October 2017 it has reached and exceeded targets to reduce the number of children taken into care. Following intervention:

- 53 children were no longer in care/were reunited with their family.
- 460 of 500 families did not experience breakdown.
- 96% did not go into care.

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New Directions Intervention has helped Children's Services achieve the outcomes that were expected. The Court process [in relation to a vulnerable child] has ended with a clear acknowledgement of New Direction intervention” ... “In my opinion, the (positive) outcome would not have been achieved to this degree without their intervention.”

Social worker





# Newport

## Integrated Family Support Service

Back in 2012 service leaders in Newport City Council and Barnardo's developed a vision for transformative change in Newport. Barnardo's and Newport committed to investing significant resource, as equal partners, to develop a sustainable model for delivering better outcomes for vulnerable children.

The idea was to create a **continuum of integrated family support services** for Children in Need and their families that is effective in protecting children from harm and promoting family well-being, including through:

- Safely reducing the number of children in care, in proceedings or on the Child Protection Register;
- Bridging the gap between universal and specialist service provision to prevent the need for more intensive interventions;
- Reducing specific risk factors for individual families by 25% or more (and therefore by increasing child and family resilience);

The Oxford Brooks University's Institute of Public Care (IPC) conducted an independent evaluation which found 48% of all families the team had worked with – many of whom were on the brink of care – had achieved very positive outcomes including children being able to remain safely at home.<sup>7</sup>

In other areas, without this form of intervention, the IPC found only 21% of families had such positive outcomes.

IPC's evaluation of this service found it is also **highly cost-effective** with an average cost benefit ratio for successful cases of £64 savings for every £1 spent on the service and a return of approximately £31 for every £1 spent on the service overall.<sup>8</sup> The service appears to be considerably cheaper than other intensive and systemic models evaluated elsewhere.

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The Newport CC/Barnardo's Partnership and the services offered under its aegis to vulnerable children and families... has led to the development of a consistently evidence based, preventative and cost effective set of family support services – one of the most impressive overall models to be evaluated by IPC to date.”





# London Borough of Redbridge

## Support for Care Leavers and Wellbeing Hub for Families

### Support for Care Leavers and Wellbeing Hub for Families

Our partnership with Redbridge Council began in 2013 and originally aimed at improving outcomes for care leavers. Barnardo's provides the statutory Personal Adviser service, and, crucially has an equal place on an integrated partnership board. This board has a role in planning for future demand and transition, and is a forum for challenge and discussion, ensuring the best possible outcomes for children and young people.

For example, the forum identified the need for more suitable accommodation for care leavers. We therefore created a Supported Lodgings Scheme, which has five places earmarked for care leavers.

As a result of this strategic partnership:

- 97% of the current 164 care leavers accessing the service are in suitable accommodation and;
- 56% of care leavers are in education, employment or training, compared to a national average for care leavers of approximately 50%.

Whilst our partnership initially focused on meeting the needs of care leavers, we have recently identified other services that would benefit local families. For example, we formed a Wellbeing Hub, which provides mental health and wellbeing support, including to children with disabilities, their parents and siblings.



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# Barnardo's Impact 2017/18

Last year, we supported more than 301,100 children, young people, parents and carers through over 1,000 services across the UK. Our ambitious 10-year Corporate Strategy sets our 3 strategic aims to build Stronger Families, Safer Childhoods, and Positive Futures.

## Stronger Families

We are building Stronger Families by providing early years services, family support and specialist mental health provision. Last year, we supported:

- 143,500 children, parents and carers through our Children's Centres.
- 91,800 children, young people, parents and carers through our family support services, up from 30,600 in 2016/17. These services support children with a parent in prison; with caring responsibilities; who have been bereaved; and who are at risk of being taken into care.
- Over 32,000 children, young people, parents and carers through our mental health services, including 23,500 children in school-based programmes which are aimed at improving emotional health and wellbeing.

## Safer Childhoods

We are building Safer Childhoods by providing adoption services, foster care placements and specialist support to prevent and address child sexual abuse. Last year, our services:

- Placed 121 children with adoptive families.
- Placed 847 children with foster families.
- Supported 6,500 children, young people, parents and carers through our specialist child abuse services, including:
  - 3,300 children, young people, parents and carers who have experienced or are at risk of sexual exploitation.
  - 2,286 children and young people who have gone missing or are at risk – 30% of whom were in care.
  - 473 people who have been trafficked or are at risk.
  - 456 people who display harmful sexual behaviour.
  - 40 people who have experienced female genital mutilation, or are at risk.

## Positive futures

We are building Positive Futures by supporting young people who leave care. Last year, we supported:

- 4,700 young people in our leaving care and accommodation services.
  - 2,900 in leaving care services;
  - And 1,800 in housing and homelessness services.
- 2,200 young people through our employment, training and skills services.





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For more information about the work of Barnardo's please contact:

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