



QUALITY ACCOUNT 2024/2025



Changing childhoods. Changing lives.



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INTRODUCTION

About Barnardo's

For over 150 years, Barnardo's has been there for children and young people who need us most, bringing love, care and hope into their lives and giving them a place where they feel they belong. Together with our partners, we reach over 350,000 children, young people, parents, and carers every year. We have services for children across all four nations of the United Kingdom. Our services range from one-to-one support, through to children's centres and family hubs, to school-based programmes. One-to-one provision includes support for children and young people with our foster carers and adoptive families, in addition to support for care leavers; Children's Centres and Family Hubs provide a range of services with early support for families from pregnancy to age 19; and our school-based programmes include support with mental health and wellbeing.

Our publication from June 2025 - *Building families, building futures: The case for family hubs in every community*, provides robust evidence-based recommendations for these community-based resources that provide a range of support services for families with children from pregnancy through to age 19 (or 25 for young people with SEND). Community hubs are designed to be a central point of access where families can get the help they need. This is important because by investing strategically in effective early intervention and prevention, better outcomes can be achieved for children today and for their futures. [Building families, building futures The case for family hubs in every community.](#)

This year's Quality Account marks our continued commitment to creating a culture where excellent, inclusive care is standard practice, not just an aspiration. We are actively working to ensure that every voice is heard, every experience matters, and every action taken leads to meaningful, equitable improved practice and systems so they work for all children and young people.

CHANGING CHILDHOODS. CHANGING LIVES.

Our Strategy describes our ambition and purpose for 'changing childhoods and changing lives' by ensuring that in everything we do, we'll be working with children and young people to be safer, happier, healthier and more hopeful.

Barnardo's have set out specific areas of work to focus on as shown in the diagram below. We are focused on driving change for these groups:



In supporting these populations of children and young people, these are our three strategic goals in how we will work with children and young people to be safer, happier, healthier and more hopeful:



Our Theory of Change

Our theory of change is anchored in Barnardo's Strategy 2024-27, conveying intentional alignment to address the issues faced by children and young people, potentially limiting their ability to experience a safe and nurturing environment to grow and achieve positive outcomes into adulthood.

These are our outcome domains. All of the work that Barnardo's does is seeking to achieve outcomes for children and young people:

SAFER

So children at risk of harm are better protected.

HAPPIER

So children struggling with their wellbeing can access support and feel they belong.

HEALTHIER

So children struggling with their wellbeing can access support and feel they belong.

MORE HOPEFUL

So children experiencing challenges can move into adulthood with hope and confidence.

What is a Quality Account?

A Quality Account is an annual report that is published by all NHS healthcare providers in England, highlighting ongoing commitment to continuous quality improvement in care delivery. Barnardo's Quality Account provides transparency and reassures children, young people and families, partner organisations and communities that our health and social care services, across all four nations of the United Kingdom, are consistently delivered and evaluated, ensuring the highest standards of care.

Central to this report is a focus on safety, effectiveness, quality, and inclusion, acknowledging the crucial importance of providing equitable, inclusive care to all individuals. We actively incorporate feedback from children, young people, families, key stakeholders, and regulatory bodies, ensuring that their voices are integral to our service evaluation and development.

The Quality Account also allows us to critically assess the data we collect, helping us to celebrate our achievements, identify areas of strength, and recognise where further development or improvement is necessary to foster an inclusive, high-quality healthcare environment in the year ahead and beyond. In the next section, we specify the quality priorities for our health and social care services for the year ahead.

Statement from the Executive Director (Operations)

Children's Services



Barnardo's is the leading children's charity in the UK. We launched our Strategy 2024-27 in 2024. The strategy sets our ambition and purpose: Changing Childhoods. Changing Minds by ensuring that in everything we do, we work with children and young people, so they are safer, happier, healthier and more hopeful.

We are incredibly proud of what we have achieved so far. This report sets out our progress in health and social care over the last 12 months and looks ahead at what we would like to achieve in the coming year. Our key focus for 2025/26 is to grow our mental health and integrated child and family health services, thereby increasing the impact we are having and the difference we are making to children, young people and families. We are committed to improving access to integrated health and social care services, empowering the voices of underrepresented people, reducing health inequalities, and influencing national policy and systemic change.

Children and young people involvement and colleague engagement are consistently maintaining the areas that are key to us developing our services. Barnardo's is implementing the Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF), and our children and young people have further opportunities to influence our work through their involvement as Safety Partners. We are also implementing the Parent and Carer Race Equality Framework (PCREF) for our 87 mental health services.

Steve Oversby
Executive Director (Operations)
Children's Services



Our priorities for quality improvement 2025/2026

1. Review and Development of Health and Social Care Services

We will continuously improve the quality and effectiveness of our services through systematic review, service development, and evidence-informed innovation.

- a. An organisation-wide review of service design and delivery through an anti-racist lens is in progress, co-produced with children and young people, families, staff and commissioners.
- b. Development of Perspective-Informed Pathway to Excellent & Inclusive Services, this programme will convene key stakeholders across the organisation (including lived-experience voices) to co-develop equity-centred methodologies by March 2026, to establish and embed new practice standards across service delivery.
- c. Building on Barnardo's Inner Resilience & Development Service, develop a model that is flexible and system-focused and that suits integration into acute settings, with the aim to reduce reattendance for children and young people at acute settings by 8%. This will result in reduced pressure on NHS systems, and measurable improved outcomes with families more equipped and able to manage crisis at home.
- d. Development of a Mental Health Support Worker model that sits in the community to support NHS statutory services/waits.
- e. Work with MEL (measurement, evaluation, learning) Research and Institute of Health Equity (IHE) to deliver an evaluation of the overall Children and Young People's Health Equity Collaborative (CHEC) programme and its interventions to demonstrate its impact.
- f. Barnardo's will develop an evidence-based tool, alongside comprehensive training, to ensure a consistent and structured approach to risk assessment, formulation and safety planning across all mental health services. This approach will be co-developed and delivered with children, young people, and families by trained practitioners, fostering shared understanding and collaborative care. This promotes a consistent approach to risk assessment that will help us to understand where the greatest levels of clinical risk are across the organisation.
- g. Align Barnardo's Signature Programme to neighbourhood health models for children and young people. This will test how Family Support Workers in primary care can be the catalyst for developing a children and young people neighbourhood model.



2. Increase Reach and Accessibility

We will expand the reach and accessibility of our services to ensure equitable access and positive outcomes for children, young people and their families, particularly those who experience health inequalities or barriers to care.

- a. Increase the number of children, young people and their families who benefit from the Virtual Family Space programme.
- b. Expansion of the 0-5 Early Years offer for parenting workshops, to include foster parents and extending the offer to families with children of older ages.
- c. Enhanced oral health pop up clinics – as part of a 3-year strategic plan, phase 1 is to enable 12 enhanced oral pop-up clinics in year 1 (over a minimum 9-month period), to be delivered in Wales (Swansea and Newport).
- d. The NHS 10-year plan sets out a vision and strategic priorities to support quality improvement efforts across children's services. Barnardo's intends to increase its reach to more children and young people through expansion of our mental health support teams (MHST) offer.

3. Key Frameworks

We will embed national frameworks into Barnardo's practice.

- a. Full establishment of the Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF).
- b. Oversee the implementation of the Parent and Carer Race Equality Framework (PCREF) action plan.
- c. Launch a series of 'legacy products' to support Integrated Care Systems (ICSs). These will include a CYP-engagement self-assessment tool, guidance on collecting child health equity data and how the Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector can contribute to this, and a self-assessment tool for Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) to understand their readiness to undertake work to similar to CHEC. Furthermore, Barnardo's will work with Institute of Health Equity (IHE) to develop a joint consultancy model of support for ICSs, working with ICS engagement leads to establish a legacy for the Health Equity Champions.

Key Areas for Assurance

We have established key areas of assurance:

Quality & Clinical Governance Framework

The framework sets out Barnardo's structured model to define the core components, systems, and mechanisms to ensure quality, safety and accountability in all of the health and social care services that Barnardo's is responsible for. The framework aligns with national standards and regulatory expectations from all four nations. This is essential for ensuring safe, effective work governed by continuous quality improvement, which supports a culture of continuous learning and excellence across Barnardo's.

Quality & Clinical Governance Strategic Plan

This is a 3-year strategic plan (2025-28) aligned with Barnardo's Strategy. This is vital to ensure that the voices, needs and safety of children and young people are at the heart of service delivery, supporting the strategic oversight of a culture of improvement, transformational change and forward-looking analysis to inform prioritisation and focus to achieve excellence. It is based on intelligence, inclusion and innovation.

Intelligence

This reflects evidence, organisational learning, and data-informed decision-making.

Inclusion

This strongly aligns with Barnardo's culture of our commitment to equity, voice and co-production, ensuring people are heard, acknowledged and respected.

Innovation

This signals a positive forward movement, improvement and creative thinking.

Quality Conversation

This quarterly reporting process brings together quality measures from children's services within Barnardo's to assess performance, learning, and impact. The aim is to use both quantitative and qualitative data to demonstrate that children and young people are safer, at reduced risk of harm, and better supported in their wellbeing. The data supports the identification of early trends to address risk before they escalate, highlighting patterns over time reveals trends that may not be noticeable when looking at short-term snapshots.

Contract Performance Monitoring

Each contract is discussed and evaluated in terms of performance outcomes and quality with commissioners. These meetings normally take place quarterly.

Inspections

Announced and unannounced inspections are carried out by Barnardo's Audit and Assurance team in individual services or clusters of services, organised thematically to identify broader organisational learning.

Independent Safeguarding Reviews

Barnardo's has an Independent Safeguarding Officer who is responsible for delivering reviews and providing assurance over the management of safeguarding risks, across the organisation.

Policy Reviews

Policy reviews are an important part of the clinical effectiveness work in Barnardo's. They are completed in line with Barnardo's policy governance framework.

Patient Carer Race Equity Framework (PCREF)

PCREF has been established and implemented in Barnardo's since March 2025.

Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF)

Barnardo's has implemented PSIRF and has Integrated Care Board (ICB) approval for its PSIRF policy and plan.

Anti-Racism Framework

Barnardo's has anti-racism commitments, which sets out the actions we commit to take, both collectively and individually to challenge racism wherever we see it.

Overview of Barnardo's health contracts

Across the whole of 2024/25, Barnardo's had 197 public sector commissioned service health contracts, of which 105 were mental health and wellbeing contracts and 38 integrated child and family health contracts. Barnardo's also had 8 Keyworker Schemes as well as 10 contracts for Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) across England.

Research, programmes and services in the last year

Family Support in Emergency Departments across NHS England (NHSE) regions

In 2024, NHSE commissioned Barnardo's to deliver a 12-month pilot to embed Family Support Workers into Emergency Departments (ED) within the seven NHSE regions. The aim of this pilot was to reduce the pressure on emergency departments, supporting families with children under 12 to access the right services at the right time. Learning from the pilot will be shared at a series of external events.

Children and Young People's Health Equity Collaborative (CHEC)

Barnardo's is working in partnership with the Institute of Health Equity and three Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) (Birmingham & Solihull, Cheshire & Merseyside and South Yorkshire) to deliver the Children and Young People's Health Equity Collaborative (CHEC). A series of products are being produced to support other ICSs wishing to undertake work to improve child health equity to be launched at an event in partnership with the King's Fund.

VCSE Health and Wellbeing Alliance

Barnardo's is a member of the VCSE Health and Wellbeing Alliance (HW Alliance), a five-year contract (2021 – 2026) with the Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England and the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities. The aim of the HW Alliance is to support and challenge policymakers to embed inclusion in service development and improvement and tackle health inequalities. Barnardo's leads a consortium of 11 community and social enterprise groups working with diverse minoritised ethnic communities. In 2024/25 we led a project to develop a set of recommendations to tackle health inequalities in oral health among children and young people, working in partnership with NHS England, ICSs and VCSE partners to collate best practice examples and co-develop recommendations for future policy and practice.

Maternity Equity Hub and Perinatal Mental Health

As people from Black and Minoritised Ethnic backgrounds are likely to have greater perinatal mental health needs and less access to services, Barnardo's is working with partners in Peterborough (Cambridge, Peterborough and South Lincolnshire Mind, the Raham project and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICS) to develop a Maternity Equity Hub. It was coproduced with parents from diverse families to build community resilience, taking a rights-based approach to birth planning and offer practically and emotional support post birth.

Barnardo's Inner Resilience and Development Service (BIRD)

Barnardo's works in partnership with Black Country NHS Partnership and Merseycare NHS Foundation Trust to deliver a co-located pilot service for mental health and wellbeing support for Children, Young People and their families who access acute services in a mental health crisis. BIRD is being evaluated by the Centre for Mental Health and is demonstrating a reduction in re-presentation to Emergency Departments.

Link Social Prescribing

LINK is a national award-winning Social Prescribing Service for Children and Young People aged 5 to 19 in Cumbria. LINK works alongside GP practice teams to support children and young people with their emotional health and wellbeing.

Virtual Family Space

The Family Space website and its sister offer, the Virtual Family Space (VFS), are Barnardo's evidence based national digital platforms designed to provide consistent, expert-led parenting support to families across the UK. Family Space offers access to parenting resources, key service information, and on-demand support tools, while the Virtual Family Space delivers live, virtual group-based sessions facilitated by trained practitioners. The offer includes targeted support for parents and carers of neurodivergent children, helping families feel informed seeks to ensure that families feel safe, informed, and empowered throughout their parenting journey. Uptake and feedback are closely monitored, with data showing high levels of satisfaction, repeat attendance, and improvements in parental confidence.

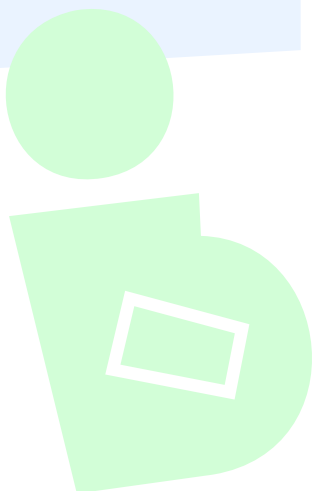
Tower Hamlets Perinatal Mental Health and Parent-Infant Relationship Strategy and Pathway Development

The first 1,001 days-from pregnancy to a baby's second birthday are critical for shaping lifelong psychological, social, and emotional wellbeing: with nurturing relationships and parental mental health at the heart of positive outcomes. Commissioned by London Borough Tower Hamlets as part of the Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme, Barnardo's led the co-production of the Nurtured Together Strategy, engaging parents and professionals to identify five shared priorities: Enhancing inclusive culturally responsive and trauma-informed services, stronger service connections, community empowerment, increased expertise in parent-infant relationships, and a shared approach to outcomes.

A key element of the work included a Pathway Development of services throughout the first 1,001 critical days before any challenges escalate. With over 5,700 parents and 1,500 early relationships estimated to benefit over the next three years, this strategy reflects a commitment to timely, trauma-informed, and nurturing care to help every baby, parent or carer, and family in Tower Hamlets thrive.

Sure Start Centres Northern Ireland

Barnardo's are the lead organisation for three Sure Start Centres in Northern Ireland. This is a government initiative funded through the Department of Education to support parents with children aged 0-4, who live in areas of deprivation, with aims centred on Health, Social and Learning. Sure Start centres are led by multi-disciplinary teams supporting parents from pregnancy through to transition onto Nursery school. They offer home and group support, provide a range of family support services, and support groups such as Antenatal and breastfeeding support and parenting programmes. Other programmes provided include baby massage, baby yoga, toddler swim, bedtime reading, songs and rhymes, mini movers, and a pre-pre-School programme for 2-3-year-olds. The aim is to give the children the best start in life.

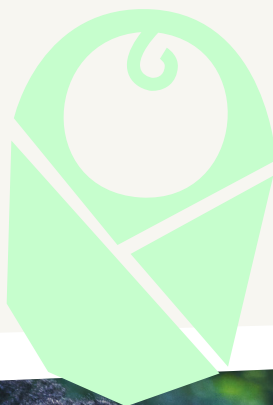


Health Inequalities Approach

'Our approach to health inequalities' has been developed to illustrate how Barnardo's work addresses health inequalities and aligns with national policy. Our aim is to improve the understanding of health inequalities faced by babies, children, young people and families. Through the establishment of a health equity mindset, reducing health inequalities is the 'golden thread' that runs through all of Barnardo's service offers and contracts. Demonstrating our role and impact in tackling health inequalities through the collection of meaningful data and insights is vital for our compliance with NHS contracts and the Patient and Carer Race Equality Framework (PCREF).

Bump Birth & Beyond is based in South Yorkshire and is an early intervention pilot for pregnant people and families. This is an innovative approach, providing holistic support for some of the most disadvantaged families in our communities. To understand and address the underlying causes of poor health in pregnancy, poor pregnancy outcomes and their relation to lifelong health, is essential to breaking the cycle of inequality.

In 2022, local data revealed that 46% of birthing people giving birth in South Yorkshire were from the most deprived quintile, 14% were recorded as having a complex social factor affecting their pregnancy, such as homelessness, domestic violence, or migrant or asylum seeker status, all connected to poorer outcomes for both birthing people and their babies. One of the impacts of the pilot has been longer appointment times with midwives which provides the opportunity to discuss the significant range of clinical, medical, social and wellbeing indicators relating to her pregnancy care.



Review of Quality Performance

Safety

Regulatory inspections

This section outlines inspection outcomes and activity across the regulated services during 2024-25.

Barnardo's currently has 86 Regulated services across 6 individual regulators with their associated frameworks; for example, Ofsted have 4 separate frameworks for inspection of Early Years, Social Care, Education services and Supported accommodation/ Lodgings 16+.

There have been 11 inspections during 2024-25, with 9 of these being from Ofsted (Early Years, Social Care and Education frameworks) and 2 Services inspected by

the Care Inspectorate Scotland. Of these inspections, 9 services received a 'Good' judgement, and 2 services received a "Requires Improvement" judgement. Following the "Requires Improvement" judgements, Ofsted will complete an Assurance Inspection within 6 months. The further Assurance Inspection visit will assess the progress made in addressing the requirements since the last inspection.

All services inspected this year have action/ improvement plans in place to support compliance with the recommendations and continuous improvement.

External Regulatory body	Service type	Number of services inspected	Inspection outcomes
Ofsted Early Years (EIF)	Early Years	2	2 services November 24 = Requires Improvement February 25 = Good
Ofsted Family Placement (SCIF)	Fostering	1	1 service June 24 = Good
Ofsted Education	School	1	1 service November 24 = Good
Ofsted Social Care	Residential	5	4 services July 24 = Good Dec 24 = Good Feb 25 = Good Feb 25 = Good 1 service July 24 = Requires Improvement
Care Inspectorate Scotland	Support Service	2	1 service August 24 = Good 1 service November 24 = Good

Key inspection themes that have informed our improvement plans

Strengths	Recommendations
Safeguarding is effective within all but one inspection	Staff turnover and changes in leadership were impactful
There are positive, warm, respectful relationships between CYP and colleagues	Risk assessment and quality reviews require further oversight
The voices of CYP are valued and their wishes and needs identified	A consistent approach to teaching practice/ opportunities to learn



Information Governance

All NHS-funded health and social care services delivered by Barnardo's complete an annual Data Protection Combined Assessment (DPCA), which aligns with the requirements of the Data Security and Protection Toolkit (DSPT). Barnardo's is fully compliant with the DSPT, achieving a status of 'Standards Exceeded', supported by our attainment of Cyber Essentials Plus certification. This status is publicly confirmed on the NHS England (NHSE) website.

In 2024/2025, Barnardo's recorded 294 data breaches. Most were isolated, low-risk incidents. We take every breach seriously and use the learning from each incident to strengthen our approach to data protection. Through ongoing training, process improvements, and refined data handling practices, we continue to uphold high standards.

Learning from adverse events

Learning from adverse events is shared across services on a local and national level. We also have a serious incident de-briefing service. Serious Safeguarding Incidents (SSIs) are investigated locally with support and guidance from the Safeguarding Team. Each region has a safeguarding lead who disseminate any learning from reviews.

Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF)

The Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF) (2023) has replaced the Serious Incident Framework (2015). Barnardo's has embedded PSIRF across all health and social care services and has established a PSIRF plan and policy. These have been reviewed and approved by NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) as the main ICB approver. Patient safety and PSIRF training is being rolled out across the organisation to support all colleagues to meet the compliance with the PSIRF principles.

Our commitment to the Patient Safety Incident Response Framework | Barnardo's

Learning From Patient Safety Events (LFPSE)

Learning from Patient Safety Events (LFPSE) is a national NHS system developed for the recording of patient safety events that occur in healthcare services, to support learning and improvement. These can then be analysed in terms of themes and trend analysis to inform providers and commissioners to identify areas for local support and where safety improvement work is required.

Barnardo's NHS services continue to use the reporting systems and functions such as Datix to record patient safety incidents directly into the LFPSE via the following link. For our other services, where there are no existing arrangements to use partner systems, all health services in England will be supported to establish a secure login so that incidents and events can be recorded directly into the LFPSE data base.

Incident Reporting

Safety Online Reporting Tool (SORT) – We have introduced the Safety Online Reporting Tool, our new streamlined platform for reporting all Health & Safety and Safeguarding incidents. From 1 July 2025, all incident reports in Children's Services are submitted through the SORT. The questions in the tool correspond with LFPSE questions.





Clinical Effectiveness

Patient and Carer Race Equality Framework (PCREF)

The Patient and Carer Race Equality Framework (PCREF) empowers organisations to improve access and experiences of services and improve outcomes for diverse ethnic, racial, and cultural communities. This mandatory framework aims to support service providers in their journey to becoming actively anti-racist organisations.

By adopting and implementing the PCREF, Barnardo's has demonstrated our firm commitment to reducing racial inequalities within our mental health services. This is essential to our work and aligns directly with our Strategy, Theory of Change, Voice & Inclusion Approach and the Quality & Clinical Governance Strategic plan.

Barnardo's PCREF report and action plan were published on the Barnardo's website at the end of March 2025. The Barnardo's PCREF report details some good practice and highlights areas where we need to focus and improve. It provides Barnardo's with an evidence-based framework for moving towards good and outstanding practice and lays the foundations for the work we are seeking to do as a charity to develop excellent and inclusive children's services, and reduce racial inequalities within our mental health services.

The PCREF action plan sets out our strategic commitments for the forthcoming 12 months, guided by the three core PCREF components.

- **Leadership and Governance** - Legislative and Regulatory Obligations
- **National Organisational Competencies** - these are national competencies that a culturally responsive and responsible mental health service should demonstrate
- **Feedback Mechanisms** - embed patient and carer voices at the heart of the planning, implementation and learning cycle.

Whilst we recognise that we are at the beginning of the PCREF journey, our robust monitoring and reporting systems, will demonstrate the outcomes of this journey, and the progress achieved and will actively demonstrate how we are reducing inequalities for racialised and ethnically and culturally diverse communities.

The Standard NHS Contract

The NHS Contract is used across England for the commissioning of healthcare services and sets out the expectations, standards and obligations that providers meet when delivering NHS-funded care. Barnardo's delivers 60 contracts underpinned by NHSE Terms & Conditions. Barnardo's is fully compliant with the NHS Contract, and this is essential for ensuring the quality, safety, and equity of services.



Engagement with Children and Young People

The Children and Young People's Health Equity Collaborative

The Children and Young People's Health Equity Collaborative (CHEC) is a partnership between Barnardo's, the UCL Institute of Health Equity and three Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) - Birmingham and Solihull, Cheshire and Merseyside, and South Yorkshire.

More than 300 children and young people across the three ICS regions have shared insights into what health means to them, sharing their lived experience and the factors which influence their lives and wellbeing. The findings from this engagement have been incorporated into the Child Health Equity Framework to ensure children and young people's views and lived experiences inform and are embedded in it.

The voice, opinions and views of children and young people continue to be central to all the CHEC's work through our Health Equity Champions. They have been involved with the programme since October 2023, and their insights have shaped this programme of work.

NHS England Youth Forum

On behalf of NHS England, Barnardo's coordinates and facilitates the NHS Youth Forum (NHS YF). NHS YF members operate in monthly consultations with NHS England teams to have their voices heard and input on key health issues, with opportunities to take part in different projects and pieces of work, like focus groups, content creation, skill workshops and attending events!

Found out more here:

<https://www.barnardos.org.uk/nhs-youth-forum>



Young Researcher reports

NHS Young Researchers consulted 504 young people on four key areas: mental health, transitional care, new hospitals, and the NHS workforce. They produced a report for each theme, outlining findings and recommendations for NHS England.

The reports can be found here:

<https://www.barnardos.org.uk/nhs-youth-forum>



NHS YF member, Veronica, giving a speech at the Barnardo's Winter Parliamentary Reception in the presence of Secretary of State for Education, Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP.

Colleague Engagement and Culture

During this year, Barnardo's continued to focus on embedding a culture where everyone can belong, grow and thrive.

Pay, Reward and Recognition

This year, we continued to demonstrate our commitment to invest in our colleagues, through our pay approach, based on the core principles: Fair, Attractive, and Progressive. For 2024/25, we maintained our ongoing commitment to pay all colleagues the Real Living Wage, in line with our principles as a social justice organisation.

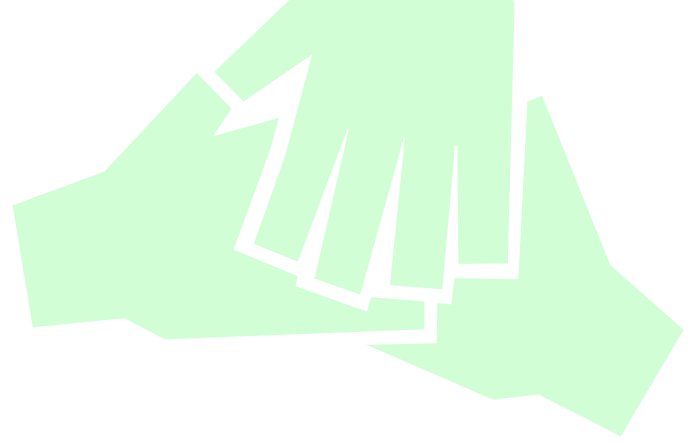
We also rolled out a new approach to performance and growth, following a successful pilot with our management and leadership cohort in the previous year, to help drive excellence on behalf of children and young people.

During this period, we made changes to our reward offer and our policies including continued recognition of contribution to Barnardo's throughout the colleague lifecycle. Key moments include our quarterly Values in Practice awards and our annual Excellence Awards – an in-person event that celebrates colleagues, including volunteers and children and young people who achieve outstanding impact across the charity. We remain focused on colleague engagement and participation, holding a survey of all colleagues, which provided key insight and comparisons with similar organisations.

Values and behaviours

During the year, we have continued to ensure that our values and behaviours are woven into everything we do – from our policies and projects, new initiatives and how we interact with our colleagues.

Values	Respecting the unique worth of every person	Encouraging people to fulfil their potential	Working with hope	Exercising responsible stewardship
Behaviours that support our values	Inclusive	Supportive	Positive	Accountable
	Create a thriving, inclusive environment that celebrates difference, to achieve greater diversity.	Make and take opportunities to learn, develop and grow.	Set ambitious goals.	Always act in the interests of Barnardo's.
	Respond to each other's needs and perspectives.	Offer and ask for help when needed.	Be creative in finding solutions.	Spend resources (time, energy and money) on the important outcomes.
	Explore and value each other's skills, experience, knowledge and strengths.	Collaborate to achieve greater impact.	Reflect on what works, learn and make changes where needed.	Make evidence-informed decisions.
	Raise concerns if you witness behaviour that is not inclusive.	Give and value honest feedback; have open conversations.	Celebrate making a difference.	Speak up when something feels wrong.



Equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging

We have continued to make progress against our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan, which makes key commitments to our colleagues, our culture and our communities.

Key activities included continuation of our 'License to Recruit' training programme for managers; a focused EDI workstream to improve our recruitment practises, and continued work on our Anti-Racism action plan (linked to our Anti-Racism Commitments), Disability Equality action plan, LGBT+ action plan and Gender Equality commitments. We held a number of informative and celebratory events on a variety of issues and maintained our presence at key community events, including LGBT+ Pride events.

We also focused on enhancing our data, so we have better visibility and understanding of the protected characteristics of our colleagues, including our

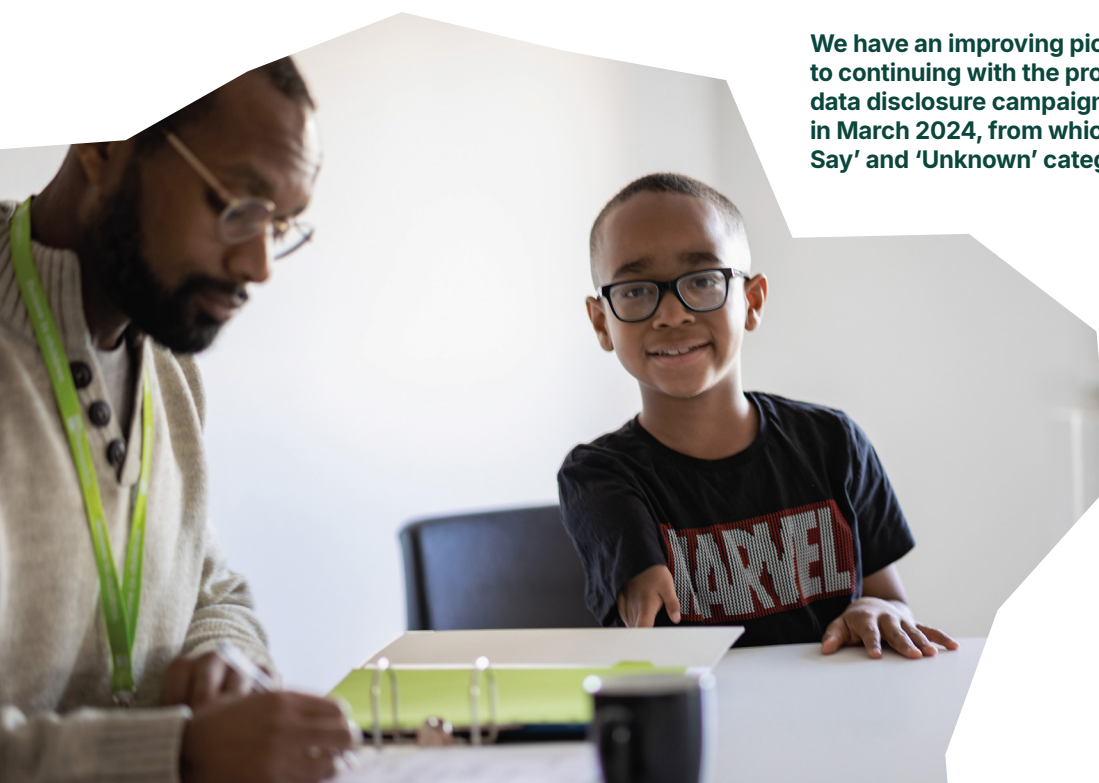
volunteers, and the children, young people, parents and carers we support. We are using this to inform performance indicators and actions across the charity, in line with our EDI objectives. Specifically, this is key to help us work towards delivering excellent, inclusive services.

Diversity amongst our colleagues

Following a review of the data we have available about our colleagues, we identified that the percentage identifying as Black or Minoritised Ethnic and as Disabled, was lower than the percentage in the working age general population, as determined by the 2021 census. We therefore started to track the rolling average for our colleagues, to encourage colleagues to disclose their characteristics, and to try to improve application and successful appointment rates through our recruitment processes.

Based on the data we have available; we have the following representation amongst our colleagues:

Representation	2024/25	2023/24	2021 census
Proportion of colleagues who are Black and Minoritised Ethnic	12.10%	11.8%	19.3%
Proportion of colleagues who are Disabled	8.4%	6%	22%



We have an improving picture, and we are committed to continuing with the progress made. Our 'This is Me' data disclosure campaign for colleagues commenced in March 2024, from which we saw the 'Prefer Not to Say' and 'Unknown' categories reduce.



Diversity Pay Gap

In April 2025, we published our April 2024 Diversity Pay Gap report, bringing together data and analysis on our gender, ethnicity, and disability pay gaps, and reporting for the second time on the gap for colleagues who are LGB+.

Our analysis shows that with 84% of our colleagues being female, Barnardo's overall median gender pay gap was 5.09% in favour of men and our mean gender pay gap was 12% in favour of men. Our median gap has reduced by 2.7% this year – continuing our downward trajectory and putting us even further ahead of the national average of 13.1%.

Our wider diversity pay gap analysis shows:

- a -6.85% median pay gap in favour of Black and Minoritised Ethnic colleagues (-10.1% the previous year).
- a -4.56% median pay gap in favour of colleagues with a disability (-3% the previous year).
- a slight gap of 2.56% favouring heterosexual colleagues (-1.5% in favour of LGB+ colleagues last year).

(To note, negative values are used where the gap is in favour of the minority group.)

However, we are conscious that for all these characteristics, our sample sizes are smaller, so we are cautious in drawing conclusions until we have more data from future years and a clearer understanding of trends.

This pay gap has been decreasing overall since reporting began in 2017, excluding the years impacted by the pandemic and furlough scheme. Our goal is, of course, to seek to eliminate our pay gap, and we are focused on the work we need to do to get there.

Ongoing work to achieve our goals

We are looking to enhance our pay governance principles with an EDI lens, continuing to review the pay governance measures, increase frequency of pay gap checks, exploring our ability to calculate our 'adjusted pay gap', use Belonging Boards to develop actions to address specific gaps and continuing to improve the completion rate of Equality Impact Assessments, which are a key feature of our proactive approach to challenging discrimination and promoting equality.

We also continue to deliver on our longer-term commitments and actions including:

Our Anti-Racism Commitments

We are committed to addressing barriers in recruitment and progression and improving development and internal progression opportunities for Black & Minoritised Ethnic colleagues.

Disability Equality Commitments and Action Plan

We are committed to reviewing our current processes and guidance in offering and making reasonable adjustments, and to look at ways which encourage disabled colleagues and volunteers to apply for opportunities at Barnardo's and progress within the charity. We know this is a journey and our ambition is to make progress every year.



Learning & Development

Our commitment to building a proactive learning culture where our colleagues and volunteers can grow and develop skills continues to be a priority for Barnardo's. We have launched a new approach that encourages colleagues to think about and take more of an active role in their own learning.

This approach is divided into three intersecting layers: Fundamentals: learning opportunities that are essential to effectively carrying out your role. Focus: focus skills that are specific to the role that you are carrying out, is split into two areas: technical (for example, first aid skills or lifting and handling), and behavioural (for example, communication skills or team working). Curious: a wide selection of learning opportunities available for everyone to explore

Linked to Barnardo's Strategy we have established clearly stated learning and development aims, namely "to ensure that all colleagues and volunteers are capable, safe and deliver excellence, and that focus and budget is directed towards learning and development that will have the greatest impact. These aims are underpinned by the following principles: Relevant, Inclusive, Accessible, Sustainable, Dynamic and Measurable"

Working with our Procurement Team we have been building a Preferred Suppliers List which will be launched in 2025/26. This will include Training Providers selected for the delivery of the Oliver McGowan courses.

We have introduced a range of new Learning & Development opportunities including Leadership Apprenticeships at Levels 3, 5 and 7 for aspiring, emerging and strategic leaders; mentoring opportunities via Charity Mentoring Network; a series of confidence building courses for all women and social learning circles open to all and initially focused on leadership behaviours. We have extended access to the Care Knowledge site for continued professional development to all colleagues and volunteers and have piloted two Care Knowledge programmes focused on critical thinking. We continue to offer the Department of Education Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme and are engaged with its transition to Social Work Induction Programme (SWIP).



How we are working to improve EDI across the organisation for children and young people

Anti-Racism Work

We are focusing on inclusion as a key part of our approach to service design and are currently designing a framework of what good anti-racist practice looks like within the context of an inclusive practice approach.

We have adopted NHS England's Patient and Carer Race Equality Framework (PCREF) that supports organisations to become actively anti-racist. Our Voice and Influence team have incorporated this into their strategic plan.

For our workforce, we are producing a 'heatmap' based on our Colleague Voice Survey so we can understand the results from the perspective of colleagues with protected characteristics.



We are all responsible

For speaking up and speaking out against racism.

For living our values, behaviours and purpose.

For marbling anti-racism into everything we do.

We are all committed

To our learning and development being anti-racist.

To making the places where we work safer, inclusive and representative.

To championing and celebrating our anti-racism achievements.

We are all accountable

For supporting colleagues, children, young people and families we work with who are impacted by racism.

For deleting racism where we see it.

For recognising, reporting, responding to and learning from racism.

Complaints

We analyse complaints data to identify patterns related to racism and identity, helping us to understand where systemic and cultural issues may exist. This insight will inform our EDI framework by highlighting areas for improvement and promote targeted actions to foster a more inclusive environment.

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All images are posed by models.
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