

# A PLACE TO BELONG

Winter Edition 2026

**BARNARDOS**

Changing childhoods. Changing lives.



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## HELLO!

Hello! We are Becca, Doreen, Gracie and Helen – we've all been supported by Barnardo's, and we're so excited to introduce your newsletter!

What connects us is simple: we all know what it's like to finally feel like we belong. Barnardo's helped each of us feel seen, included and understood – and honestly, that kind of support changes everything. When you've got people in your corner, you start to believe in yourself and what you can do.

This Autumn was a total whirlwind. We got to work with the Barnardo's team on their partnership with *Wicked: For Good*, and it was such a magical experience. We even ended up in the TV and cinema advert! It felt really special to represent other young people and share our stories with brilliant supporters like you. Want to hear more? Flip to page 6!

Inside your newsletter you'll hear from other young people too – plus parents, foster families, Barnardo's project workers, and brilliant supporters and volunteers. Every story shows just how much your help matters, especially with so many families having a tough time right now.

Because of supporters like you, children and young people like us get to feel like we belong. Thank you so, so much – from all of us.

Becca, Doreen,  
Gracie and Helen

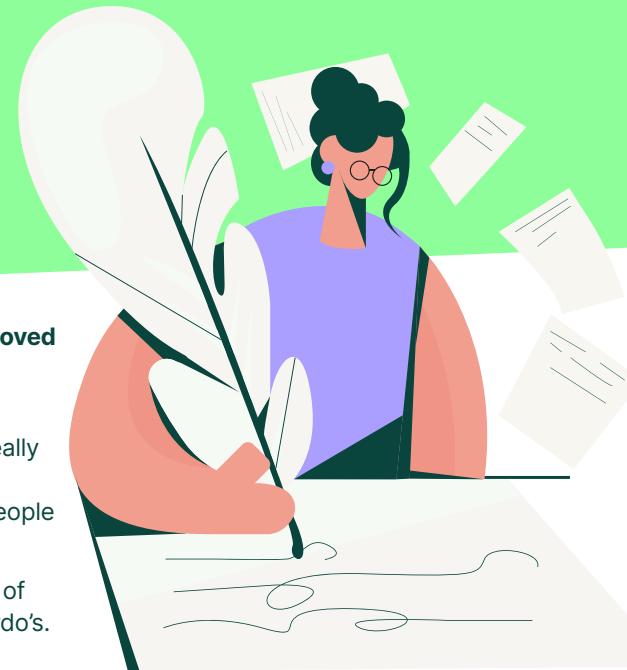


# FINDING MY PLACE

Hi! I'm Michelina and I'm 16 and moved to the UK a year and a half ago. It wasn't an easy time for me.

Getting support from Barnardo's really helped. Later, I joined their Youth Forum, where I met other young people and got involved in projects.

I wrote this poem about the sense of belonging I found thanks to Barnardo's. I hope you enjoy these extracts.



...A chair was pulled out, a smile found me there, a nod that said stay, like I mattered somewhere.



No one demanded the story I hide, they simply left space for me to decide.

I breathed in a freedom I'd never quite known, a place where the weight didn't feel like my own.

The silence was softer, the laughter more kind, a healing I thought I'd never find...

...I've lived in the shadows, I've hidden away, but here in this club, I was welcome to stay.

Not asked to be perfect, not pushed to belong, just given the chance to be human, not wrong.

And though I still wonder what people can see, I left with a thought, they'd accepted me.

Not certain, not proven, but maybe it's true – this club stitched a home from the lives we outgrew.

# HELPING A MUM THROUGH CRISIS

Looking after a family on a tight budget is harder than ever, which is why services like our Birmingham Forward Steps are so vital. Here, Project Worker Francine explains how Barnardo's Poverty Fund helped Janet, through a particularly difficult time.

"When I first met Janet, she and one of her children were sleeping on mattresses on the floor. The other children's beds were broken. We provided support to get new beds and bedding for all the children and Janet.

Janet also accessed funding for a tumble dryer as hers was broken. She was trying hard to keep the children's clothing clean but as it was during the winter, she was struggling to dry them.



**Being able to access the poverty fund to purchase a new dryer made a big difference."**



Scan this QR code to hear more about Janet's story, or visit [barnardos.org.uk/janet](http://barnardos.org.uk/janet)

\*Janet's story is true; however, names have been changed to protect the privacy of the children and families we help.

# TURNING HARDSHIP INTO HOPE



**I think the government needs to provide more support for families. I haven't had any financial help outside of Barnardo's. So many people are struggling day-to-day."**

We also provided Janet with brand new school uniforms for the children, so she has a spare set while the others are being washed.

The cost-of-living crisis is having a serious impact on families in our district. The Barnardo's poverty fund is a vital lifeline for so many of our families."

Thanks to you, our Child Poverty Fund was there for families when they needed it most. Together, we supported more than 1,400 families living in poverty with the little things that make a big difference in the summer.

Because of supporters like you, families enjoyed much-needed fun days out, and children returned to school with the uniforms they needed and joyful stories of summer.

**Thank you!**



**This grant made such a difference - I even cried when I saw the email. I can't thank Barnardo's enough."**



**I am grateful to have been supported by the fund. We got to do things as a family we haven't been able to do for a long time."**



**Thank you so much for organising the kayaking, it was amazing!"**



**RIGHT NOW...**

The two-child benefit limit will be lifted in April this year – meaning 350,000 children are about to be lifted out of poverty. It's a change we've fought hard for, with your support. But we're not finished. The benefit cap still pushes the poorest families into struggle, and we need a fairer system for every child.

You're stepping in when winter feels overwhelming for so many families. You're helping to put heat back in homes, food back on tables and coats on in the cold. We couldn't be more grateful to have you by our side.



To learn more about how your support has made a difference for families over the last year, scan this QR code or visit [barnardos.org.uk/annualreport](http://barnardos.org.uk/annualreport)



# POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS SHAPED BY YOUNG VOICES

Dive behind the scenes of two of our life-changing partnerships and hear directly from the young people whose ideas and voices are helping bring them to life.

## A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

As glasses clinked and applause filled the room at the Co-op's glittering Pioneer Awards, three young people supported by Barnardo's took to the stage. Troy, Scarlett and Lilli spoke from the heart, showing 1,500 guests the impact of a partnership that's changing what's possible for young people

Lilli spoke to Dermot O'Leary about losing her dad and grandparents, and how Barnardo's has supported her through her grief: **"They wouldn't want me to hold myself back or stop doing the things I love doing."**

Barnardo's and the Co-op are on a mission to change the future for one million young people across the UK.



**By using our voices and sharing our stories, we can encourage other young people to share their own stories too, and to know that their voices matter. Every young person deserves that opportunity."** Troy



# TOGETHER, ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE



**Every child and young person deserves a place to belong and a chance to discover their true powers. That's why joining forces with Wicked: For Good has been so exciting – and from day one, young people have been in the driving seat.**

From joining workshops to starring in TV and cinema adverts, Gracie, Doreen, Helen and Becca's voices have shaped every step of the journey together.



**This partnership for me is quite important because I see myself a lot in Elphaba who cares for her sister."** Becca, young carer



**Everybody is different, no matter who you are. Instead of suppressing that, we should make it our superpower."** Doreen, SEEN ambassador



To hear more from Gracie, Doreen and Becca, scan this QR code or visit [barnardos.org.uk/wickedtogether](http://barnardos.org.uk/wickedtogether)

# BECAUSE OF YOU

Here's a look at the extraordinary support you helped provide for thousands of children and young people – and how you helped change what tomorrow looks like.

We hope you feel as proud reading this as we do sharing it.

**Thank you!**

Last year, you helped us reach

**359,392** children, young people, parents and carers through our services and partnerships.

Last year, we supported:

**96,100**  
children and young people with one-to-one support

**270**  
children's centres and family hubs

**72**  
school-based programmes

**5,500**  
children, young people and families living in poverty



# THRIVING TOGETHER: HOW ANDI FOUND HER STRENGTH

Six years ago, foster carer Laura welcomed Andi and her newborn baby Isla into her home. Andi had come from a domestically abusive relationship that had led to her two older children being removed from her care.

Here, Laura and Andi chat about parent and child fostering, and the unique support that gave Andi the confidence she needed to keep Isla in her care. Now, they are both thriving!

**Andi:** I needed someone to be able to give me that chance, to give me that courage because it had been squashed inside of me in so many ways by so many different people. It was very, very daunting but when I met you...I knew then, there was a click between us.

**Laura:** As soon as we met, you were just so positive about coming into the placement that it made it a lot easier.

**Andi:** I can remember you trying to reassure me and help me understand how to read Isla's cues, how to calm her down and work out what she was



**“**  
**Laura gave me that opportunity. My daughter would not be in my care if it wasn't for her.”** Andi

actually wanting. And those moments have stuck with me even though now she's almost three years old.

**Laura:** I could see the good practice that you had, so it was about encouraging you to see that actually you are doing really well.



To find out more about Andi's story, scan this QR code or visit [barnardos.org.uk/andi](http://barnardos.org.uk/andi)



To find more information on fostering as well as listen to our Northern Ireland fostering podcast, scan this QR code, or search Barnardo's Fostering & Adoption Podcast on your podcast player.

# THE HEARTBEAT OF THE BARNARDO'S FAMILY - YOU!

Every day, we are wowed by your efforts to make life better for children and young people. Thank you for being such a vital part of the Barnardo's family!

## A CONNECTION THAT STILL BURNS BRIGHT

Born in 1918, Basil's bond with Barnardo's lasted a lifetime: from being cared for as a child to volunteering in retirement. When he died in 2007, Basil's daughters Christine and Alison set up a Tribute Fund in his honour donating on his birthday and at Christmas. They've now raised over £2,500 helping so many more children find a place to belong.



If you'd like to remember a loved one, just scan this QR code or visit [barnardos.org.uk/inmem](https://barnardos.org.uk/inmem)



## RUNNING WITH A REASON

When Emma signed up for last year's Great North Run, she knew exactly why she wanted to take part – her dad grew up in care, and his experience inspired her to run for Barnardo's:



**If you're going to do something like this, you need to pick a charity whose support means something. Barnardo's to me was the connection my dad had with Barnardo's as a boy."**

A massive thank you to everyone who has run for Barnardo's over recent months – your achievements mean so much to children and young people.



## 80 YEARS YOUNG - AND STILL STEPPING UP!

A huge shout-out to Siva, who raised more than £11,000 for Barnardo's to celebrate his 80th birthday! Together with his community and students, Siva took on a massive 3,970km sponsored team walk and run. Thank you for changing so many childhoods and lives!

**"Helping children has been at the centre of my life's work. That's why I've chosen Barnardo's." Siva**



## I LOVE VOLUNTEERING AT BARNARDO'S

Meet Marion, a retired school librarian who now volunteers in one of our shops:



**Now I apply my organisational skills to shelving the book donations. I love the work as I get to talk to customers about what they're looking for and can usually suggest books for them to buy."**

A heartfelt thank you to Marion and every single one of our wonderful volunteers across the UK!

Flip to the back page to discover some fantastic events you won't want to miss!

# GET INVOLVED! UNFORGETTABLE EVENTS THAT CHANGE CHILDHOODS



## LONDON LANDMARKS HALF MARATHON

Feel the thrill of racing through the heart of London, past iconic sights like St Paul's and the Tower of London.

**When: 12 April 2026**

## SKYDIVE FOR BARNARDO'S

Fancy taking flight? Push your limits with an unforgettable, adrenaline-fueled skydiving experience!

**When: all year round**



## TOUGH MUDDER

Challenge your strength, stamina and determination on the ultimate obstacle-course adventure!

**When: all year round**



## BIG TOTTE

Get ready for adventure! Our safari-themed half-mile walk is back for your littlest explorers!

**When: 8-14 June 2026, sign up by 1 June**



To find a fundraising event that's perfect for you, just scan this QR code or visit [barnardos.org.uk/eventscalendar](https://barnardos.org.uk/eventscalendar)

# BARNARDO'S

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