

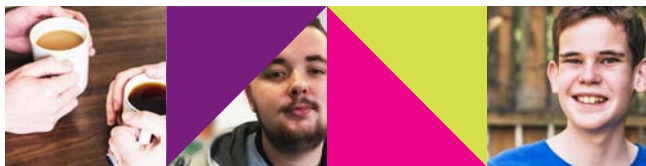
Believe in
children



Barnardo's
Northern Ireland



VOICES





Lynda Wilson
Director Barnardo's NI

Dublin-born Dr Thomas Barnardo founded the first ever children's charity in London in 1866. He set up homes for boys and girls, introduced fostering and provided training to give young people a trade or skill. His work was pioneering and his aim was to give those children a purpose and a future.

Today Barnardo's is still working to provide safer childhoods, stronger families and positive futures. In Northern Ireland we support over 8,000 children, young people and their families through a range of programmes and services.



The world has changed immeasurably since Dr Barnardo opened the doors of his first children's home and today there are the additional pressures of the digital age which can make life more complex and dangers more hidden, but the persistent issues of homelessness and food poverty continue.

Barnardo's aim however remains the same, to empower children and young people to believe in themselves and reach their individual potential.


This collection of children, young people and families' voices tell, in their own words, how Barnardo's has supported and believed in them. Their stories are moving and inspiring.

This is what we do every day and with your help we will continue to be there for children, for as long as it takes.

Thank you,

Lynda Wilson



A photograph of a woman and a young girl sitting on a dark leather couch outdoors. The woman, on the left, has dark hair with bangs and is wearing a sleeveless top with a blue and white floral pattern. The girl, on the right, has blonde hair with bangs and is wearing a light blue dress with a pink and white floral pattern. They are both smiling at the camera. The background is a blurred green landscape.

PIP (Parents and Infants Project)

Alisha & Mya Briggs (6)

A horizontal bar at the bottom of the page, divided into four colored segments: teal, purple, magenta, and lime green.

PIP - Outreach programme for children 0-3 and their parents/carers delivered in community settings in the Lisburn area.

“Mya was just turning two when we started going to PIP. I have ongoing medical issues and Mya had been born prematurely so we had continued contact with our Health Visitor. Before Mya was born I was medically retired out of work and from there I started to lose confidence. Once I had Mya I was afraid to go out, I worried that I wouldn't be able to cope with the baby as well as my condition and we became house bound. The Health Visitor recommended PIP to get us out and mingling with other mothers and babies. The first time walking into PIP was petrifying. We hadn't been out and Mya's pram was basically still brand new. Even when I left that day I didn't know if I could go back again, but I knew I had to for Mya and the more we went back the more it became part of us and then it became a lifeline. It was the social and mental support and the chance for Mya to be around other children that was so important. If we hadn't had the group I don't know how it would have been. PIP is so much more than just a play group. I couldn't speak highly enough about it. You come to them with no confidence, empty handed and asking for mercy and they'll do anything to help.”



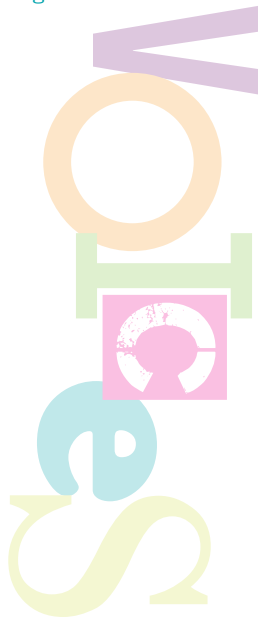


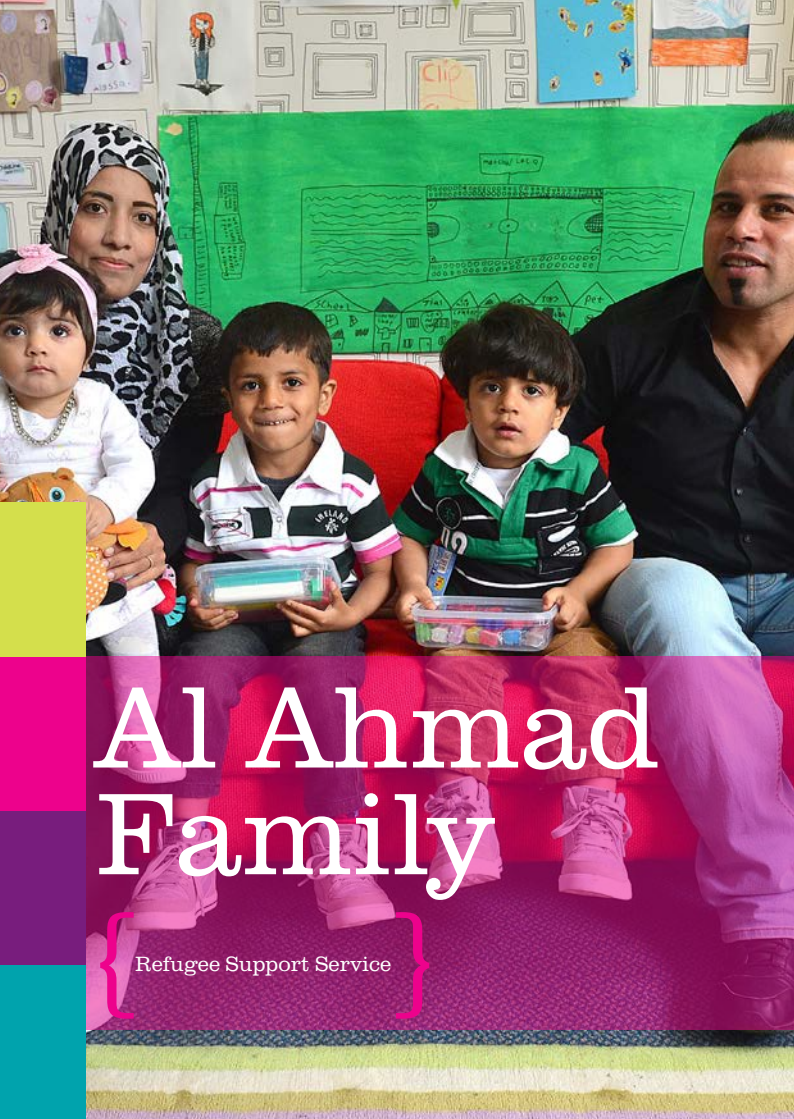
Jamie Curran (14)

Disabled Children and Young People's
Participation Project (DCYPPP)

Jamie has autism and attends DCYPPP which is an advocacy group based in Armagh championing the rights of children and young people with disabilities.

“At DCYPPP I can just be myself and feel accepted. I can be who I am and forget my stresses. I really want to come every time and I go like a bullet. It’s given me so much confidence and it’s helped me control my autism. I can speak in public without stuttering and fidgeting. By speaking out on issues like self directed support, decision making and disability awareness training I can help make a difference for children younger than me - make it better for their futures. It makes me feel like I can really make change for the good, like I’m a superhero!”





Al Ahmad Family

Refugee Support Service

Barnardo's NI established its Refugee Support Service at the end of 2015 in response to the arrival of Syrian families in Northern Ireland. One of the first families to arrive was Bassem Al Ahmad, his wife Rola and their three children Mousa (4) Mohammed (3) and Maleik who was only 2 months old. The family are originally from Damascus. As the situation deteriorated they fled to Lebanon where they stayed for three years before being selected by the UN to travel to the UK through the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme. Once they arrived in Belfast they were assigned a Barnardo's support worker who helped them settle into their new community:

“Marianne from Barnardo's took care of everything, from getting food to registering the kids into a creche and getting the shopping and taking us to shopping centres. She also helped us with bank accounts and cards and she helps us with forms and letters as well. For the first three months she came every day. She still comes to us now if there is something important and we thank her very much.”

The family had never heard of Northern Ireland before they arrived, but with the help of Marianne they are settling in and Bassem says they finally feel safe:

“It's like we have just been born again and we are getting into life step by step. It's a new life and this is a second home.”



Chelsea Duncan (19)

Leaving Care Supported
Accommodation and Dr B's Kitchen

Voices

Leaving Care Service: Semi independent accommodation for young people leaving care.

Dr B's Kitchen: Training for young people with learning disabilities for a career in the hospitality industry.

“I am with two Barnardo’s services in Belfast - Dr B’s Kitchen and Leaving Care. I moved into one of the Leaving Care flats from foster care and I’ve been training in waitressing at Dr B’s Kitchen for the past two years, although I’m about to start my first job which they helped me find. When I first arrived at Leaving Care and Dr B’s I got upset a lot and would lose my temper because I had so much going on in my head. What I’ve learnt is that you just have to keep positive. I think if I hadn’t gone through fostering and Leaving Care, or come to Dr B’s I wouldn’t have met everyone I know and life would be a whole load different. Everyone is really supportive all you have to do is ask. I would tell anyone to take the help and look on the bright side.”



Barnardo's 1952 - 1963

Jimmy Kennedy (70)



Voices

“I was the eldest of five children. We grew up in inner city Belfast and my mother died when I was four years old. Our father looked after us for the next two years and then we were taken in by Barnardo’s. I remember getting into a car and going down a driveway to what to me was a mansion on the shores of Belfast Lough. It was an adventure and a whole new world. I’d never been anywhere like it. I remember that first night lying in bed beside a window with the moon shining in and not knowing what I was going to waken to but we had been lifted out of Belfast to somewhere that felt like heaven. We had three meals a day, clean clothes and baths five days a week. When I was 13 I went to Barnardo’s training school in Hertfordshire - Goldings to learn a trade in boot and shoe repairing. I loved it there, you could play every kind of sport and I was really into sports especially running and football. I also got to be a Ball Boy at Wimbledon and was one of the first ever Ball Boy Guards of Honour for the Queen.

After Goldings I moved back to Belfast to start a job. The people who looked after me from Barnardo’s had a big influence on my life and where I am today. I owe Barnardo’s everything. If I hadn’t gone into Barnardo’s I don’t know where my life would have gone, but it worked for me.”



Toby (12)

Play For All, Bangor Saturday Club

A I R

Voices

The Play for All, Saturday Club is for children with learning difficulties, medical conditions and sensory impairments.

“I started going to Barnardo’s Saturday Club when I was six so I have been going for six years. I have autism, ADHD and complex learning difficulties so it’s difficult for me to go to other after-school clubs where they don’t understand all those things. I really like going and look forward to going. It gives me two hours of freedom and a break from my parents! I like it because they know me so well and they know things I don’t like, like balloons, so they never have them. I like going and playing with people I know. There are lots of different people and things to do. I play tennis with Big Andrew and I look forward to seeing him and we talk about rugby and motorbikes. It’s good there’s a club like the Saturday Club otherwise I would just have stayed at home and been bored. It’s important to me and I will miss it when I don’t go anymore.”



Abi (20)

Leaving Care - supported accommodation



Leaving Care Service: Semi independent accommodation and support for young people leaving care.

“I was in care from the age of 14 and moved to Barnardo’s Leaving Care Service when I was seventeen and a half. It was terrifying, really terrifying, I was crying the day before saying I didn’t want to go. It’s semi independent living and it’s just you, you have to do everything there’s no one making you dinner. But that being terrified disappeared really quickly. If I needed anything it was just a question of asking. Just having someone to talk to after college was great and they really encouraged me with my baking. They always tried to help even if it was something they didn’t know about. I could talk to the staff about anything.

Through Barnardo’s I’ve had so many opportunities. I was also chosen to help bake the cake for Barnardo’s 150th anniversary which was presented to the Duchess of Cornwall at a Barnardo’s Garden Party at Buckingham Palace. I felt like I was dreaming! It was unreal. I couldn’t stop smiling. Barnardo’s has always encouraged me no one ever once put me down. Barnardo’s is freakin’ awesome!”



Voices



{
Young Carers Service
}

Jordan (18)



Young Carers Service - Counselling and support, both individual and group, for young people who are carers.

“I’ve been looking after my mum and my two brothers since I was very young. When I was nine I was referred to Barnardo’s Young Carers Service. I had a lot of anxieties at the start but as I got to know the workers and trust them I realised I could talk to them about what was worrying me and I didn’t have to be defensive. I would never have spoken much about home I would have tried to hide it. I didn’t want to talk to my teachers because I was scared that I would land Mum or myself in trouble but I could talk to Barnardo’s. Young Carers was a never-before-seen support for me, it was a safe haven. Young Carers gave me a focus and took me away from reality. I live in an impoverished area which has problems with alcohol, drugs and sectarianism and with everything that went on it would have been easy for me to stray off the path, but Young Carers gave me a focus. I’ve got so much praise for it, if it wasn’t for them I wouldn’t be doing as well as I am and I’m really grateful for the support.”



Voices



Adam (2)

Families Matter parenting programme

Sarah and her partner Peter are parents of two year old Adam. Peter is currently in Maghaberry HMP serving a four year sentence. A year ago he was offered a place on Barnardo's NI Families Matter parenting course and Sarah says it has turned their lives around:

“When Peter told me he was thinking about applying to be on the Barnardo's Families Matter programme we didn't really know what it was but I encouraged him to go for it and it has turned out to be great. During the extended family visits we are a family. Peter can walk around with Adam, lift him and crawl on the floor with him. There's the opportunity for that bond to grow which is so important. As a mummy that's what you want, for that bond to be there. When Adam arrives and his dad lifts him up I just burst with pride. The Barnardo's staff really care, really empathise and give us the opportunity to talk. When I think about how far we've come and what we've had to go through to get here, it's been hard, but I couldn't say enough about the Families Matter Programme and what Barnardo's has done for us.”



Voices



Laurence (18)

{ Choices Family Support }

Choices Family Support: For young people aged 10-17 and their parents. Includes advice, individual and group support and volunteer mentoring.

“I was fifteen and taking drugs – coke, meth, Class A, Class B and things were getting to a crisis point with the family. I was stealing from my brothers and mother and it was causing serious fall outs. I grew apart from the family and was always out. Things were really bad. As an addict I wanted help but it was too difficult on my own. Mum found out about Barnardo’s Choices Family Support and they put me touch with Catherine. I was really nervous the first time I met her. It took a couple of meetings to open up and get the problems out and then we started dealing with them. We talked about my addiction and made plans to pay my family back. She helped me through it all. We did a time plan and had a pie-chart so I could see where I stood and I could see maybe I wasn’t as bad as I thought. I loved talking to Catherine. She was honestly wonderful and never judged me and I could tell her anything. I’m one hundred per cent sure if I didn’t meet Catherine at that time I wouldn’t be living at home now and I probably wouldn’t be in work, I would be sitting in someone’s house waiting for the next bag to come in. It’s been a complete change. I get on brilliantly with my family and Mum and me are as close as ever. I’ve got a full time joinery job and I’m paying Mum off as we go. I love going down to her on a Friday and giving her the money – it puts a smile on her face and on mine. Barnardo’s really changed my life and I’m hoping to go back and volunteer as a mentor to help other young people because it meant so much to me.”



Tommy Wallmsley (72)

{ Barnardo's 1945 - 1959 }

“I was fostered through Barnardo’s from the age of two to a family in Co Fermanagh. I don’t know what my life was before I was two and I have never looked for my natural parents. I always saw Herbert and Nellie Quinton as my mother and father and I was well looked after by them. When I was fourteen I was asked if I would like to go to Barnardo’s Goldings School in Hertfordshire to train as a painter/decorator. I’d never been further than Fermanagh and Donegal so it was a big adventure. The school was on a huge estate with a huge house. It had everything, tennis courts, a swimming pool, a cricket field and football pitches. While I was there I was a ball boy at Wimbledon in 1958/59. I had never seen tennis before in my life. It was all new to me. I remember we used to get the sweat bands from the players at the end of the matches.

After Goldings I worked in London for a while before I moved home. I was lucky I had a good family through Barnardo’s. The trade that I got through Barnardo’s stood by me for life and I was never out of a job. They gave me a chance at a life that I would never have had and it was up to me to take it.”



Voices



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