



STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Family Placement Services

Region: Northern Ireland

Date: June 2018

Registered: N/A

Registration Body: RQIA

Registration Number: N/A



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Introduction

Legal Framework

This Statement of Purpose has been developed in accordance with regulations, statutory guidance and National Minimum Standards as applying to fostering providers, including:

- The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- Guidance for Health and Social Care professionals in NI on foster care is set out within;
- The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 – Guidance and Regulations – Volume 3 – Family Placements and Private Fostering 1996
- The regulations and guidance builds upon the legislative framework of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995.

Barnardo's status and constitution

Barnardo's is a company limited by guarantee (registered in England under number 61625) and a registered charity (numbers 216250 and SC037605). It was also registered as a trust corporation on 16 December 1926. Its governing instrument is the Memorandum and Articles of Association, most recently amended by special resolution passed on 17 July 2001.

Barnardo's Fostering Northern Ireland (BFNI) is part of the Barnardo's Family Placement Business Service.

The Head of Service is Brenda Farrell

Head Office Address:

Barnardo's
Tanners Lane
Ilford, Essex
IG6 1QG

Telephone: 0191 2404800

Fax: 0191 240 4801

Aims, objectives and outcomes

Aims:

Barnardo's Fostering Service is a leading national Independent Fostering Agency, providing fostering and short break services across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

We aim to achieve high quality, stable placements for children and young people by ensuring that foster carers are appropriately recruited, assessed, trained and supported within the required regulations and national minimum standards.

Objectives and outcomes

1. To protect children and young people from abuse and neglect.
2. To recruit, assess, support and train carers to provide a range of fostering placements for children who are unable to live with their birth families.
3. To provide short break care for children and young people with a learning and / or physical disability or complex health needs living with their birth families.
4. To ensure that foster carer recruitment strategies and initiatives are targeted appropriately so that children and young people have the opportunity of living within a family which values, recognises and supports their ethnic origin, cultural heritage and religion.
5. To provide support, regular supervision and training opportunities to equip foster carers in meeting the complex needs of children placed.
6. To ensure that all regulatory and minimum standard requirements are met in relation to the approval, review and supervision of carers and placement of children, and to monitor that they are being met via quality assurance processes.
7. To provide an out of hours contact service for foster carers.

8. To promote secure attachments and placement stability for children and young people in order to achieve better outcomes for children's health, education, employment and future independence.
9. To prepare young people adequately for when they leave their foster family and create lifelong attachments with foster carers.
10. To maintain and promote contact between children placed and their birth families and or significant others and communicate effectively with parents as appropriate.
11. To promote positive working relationships / partnerships between Barnardo's fostering, adoption and short break services and local authorities or trusts to facilitate communication and promote good practice for the benefit of children and young people who are placed by the service.
12. To ensure that the Fostering Panel operates according to guidelines laid down by legislation and regulations in relation to carer approvals, reviews, allegations and complaints.
13. To ensure that the way in which the Service develops takes into account the views and wishes of its carers, the foster children in placement and staff by encouraging feedback from staff, foster carers, looked after children and birth children.
14. To ensure continuous improvement and development of the fostering services through regular training for staff around changes to legislation and regulations and identifying the needs and type of specialist placements required.

Service registration details

Not currently registered due to no fostering standards being in place in Northern Ireland.

Name and address of the Registered Provider
Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority
9th Floor Riverside Tower
Lanyon Place
Belfast
BT1 3BT

Name and address of the Responsible Individual
Helen Browne
Assistant Head of Business, BFNI

Any conditions of registration on the Registered Provider
N/A

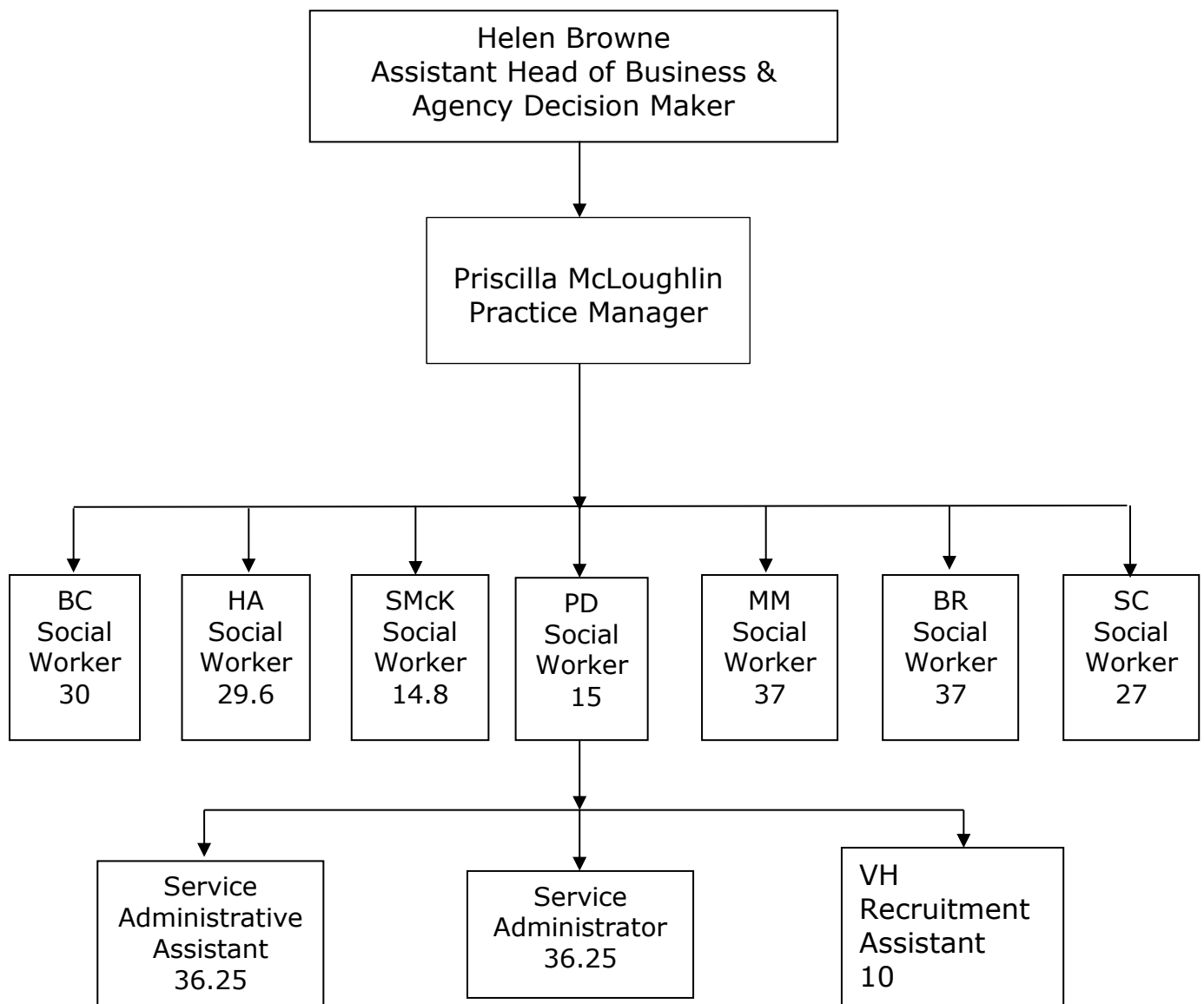
The relevant qualifications and experience of the Registered Manager

Qualified Social Worker – Dip SW

Service staff structure

This section details the number, relevant qualifications and experience of the staff working for the purposes of the agency.

Service, management and staffing structure



Job roles and qualifications

Operations Manager

(currently shared by AHOB and Practice Manager)

Are professionally qualified Social Workers registered with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) and hold management qualifications. Operations Manager is responsible for the overall operation of the fostering services to foster carers, children and young people.

The Operation Manager is responsible for budgetary control and involved with the development and implementation of the strategic aims and objectives of the organisation. The Operation Manager is responsible for the management of the Practice Manager, sits on Panel as Panel Advisor, ensure all policies and procedures are up to date, complete audits of the service to ensure a high standard, and monitor and advise on serious complaints and allegations ensuring appropriate procedures are followed and safeguards are in place.

Practice Manager

Are professionally qualified Social Workers registered with the NISCC and are responsible for the supervision and management of the Social Workers. The Practice Manager take responsibility for developing training and supporting services for foster carers. They coordinate training alongside responsibilities for recruitment and assessment.

Supervising Social Workers (SSW)

Are qualified Social Workers registered with the NISCC and undertake the assessment, support and annual review of foster carers. SSWs work in partnership with the looked after child's Social Worker to promote good outcomes. SSWs also support training, coordinate support groups and cover the out-of-hours support service.

Recruitment Assistant

This particular role will have an emphasis on driving our recruitment and marketing strategy into the future. The RA will have some marketing understanding, including knowledge and experience of fostering or adoption services throughout NI, or have experience in the voluntary sector.

Service Administrators

Service Senior Administrators undertake financial duties in the fostering service including invoicing, carer payments, credit control and accounts payable. They are responsible for health and safety and ensure that the office remains a safe working environment with appropriate risk assessments completed by staff. Service Administrators supervise the Administration team.

Admin Assistants

Undertake a wide range of admin tasks to support the work of the service such as inputting and monitoring of statistical data, coordinating training, ensuring all checks and repeat checks are completed.

Summary of current staffing

This section details the number of staff, hours worked, range of numbers of years' experience in each job role.

Within BFNI there are 7 qualified Social Workers registered with the NISCC which equates to 5.5 full time equivalent posts.

There is a range of experience in the team, all with a minimum 10 years' experience in fostering and social care including child care social work and safeguarding.

The Practice Manager and the Operations Manager / AHOB have over 30 years' social work experience each and both hold a range of management qualifications.

There are 2 administration staff equating to 2 full time equivalent posts.

There is 1 Recruitment Assistant equating to 0.30 full time equivalent post.

Services provided

Placement types provided

Standard

Most referrals will be considered as standard allowing for emergency, short and long term placements. Many of our carers are able to offer care for siblings groups to allow children to stay together.

Solo

We understand that some children and young people have complex needs stemming from multiple traumas and disrupted attachments. Our experience is that many of these children benefit from being the only Looked After Child in placement so there are no competing needs for the carers to balance and the children can benefit from intensive support. All carers undertaking solo placements will have specific attachment-focused training designed to enhance skills and confidence in responding to complex behaviour and to build nurturing and secure relationships into the future.

The need for a solo placement may be identified at the point of referral to BFNI or become apparent following placement. Where it is subsequently assessed by the Trust that the child's needs are such that it would not be in their interests for the carer to have a second child placed, this placement will be ring-fenced as a solo placement and the Trust will be invoiced accordingly.

Special Health Needs

We provide specialist placements for children and young people who have a severe learning difficulty, a physical disability or who need complex medical care. The team has extensive experience in making successful long-term placements as well as supporting children with special health needs on short breaks.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Our carers also provide placements for children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation, trafficking, and / or display harmful sexualised behaviours. These carers are provided with

additional support and training through Barnardo's Safe Choices.

Parent and Child

We are able to provide placements for parents who are under 18 years old, so that they can receive support in developing parenting skills. Foster carers can also assist Health & Social Care Trusts with their assessments by providing information relating to parenting capacity and capabilities.

Short Breaks

We have carers who provide short break placements either on a regular basis or one off basis. These can be for children living at home with birth parents, kinship foster carers, residential units or other Trust foster placements.

Added value of BFNI placements

Outcomes Measurement Tool

Outcomes assessments completed by experienced Barnardo's fostering social workers are evidence of good practice as well as measure of the child's journey and progress in a Barnardo's placement, and the work carried out by our foster carers.

There are 56 outcomes options to score for each child, however not all are relevant for every child in placement. In conjunction with the child's Trust social worker, Barnardo's supervising social workers are asked to identify and score the Outcomes that are particularly pertinent to each child in line with their care plan.

Workers are asked to score at least 1 outcome against each of the 8 areas underlined below:

1. Being Healthy & Active
2. Staying Safe & Nurtured
3. Enjoying, Included & Achieving
4. Making a positive contribution & Respected
5. Economic Wellbeing & Responsible

Outcome measurements are available on request for children's LAC reviews and other professional discussions.

Permanence

BFNI has a proven track record in low disruption rates and achieving permanence for children. This is evidenced in our commitment to young people post 18 through the Going the Extra Mile (GEM) Scheme and those who have achieved permanence through long term fostering and adoption by their existing carers. Children's welfare is at the centre of our work with carers and we support and encourage our carers to make those life decisions.

Additionally, through our integrated model with Children's House, BFNI has demonstrated expertise in achieving permanence for harder to place children. We can accept a referral of a child with a permanence plan for whom the Trust has been unable to identify a suitable placement for child-specific family finding.

Life Story Work

All our supervising social workers are trained in Dyadic Development Psychotherapy (DDP) and they work closely with carers to support their understanding of the impact of trauma for children placed and in taking a therapeutic care- giving approach to aid recovery. We recognise the also the crucial importance for children in foster care of being supported and enabled to talk openly about their past experiences and families of birth so some of our DDP Level 2 social workers have been trained to undertake both life-story and narrative work with children in placement alongside their carers.

This resource is available to Trusts where children are placed on a long term basis with our foster carers.

Recruitment, approval, review and support for foster carers

This section provides information on the procedures for recruiting, preparing, assessing, approving and supporting prospective foster carers.

Barnardo's policies, procedures and standards for the recruitment and assessment of foster carers are in line with required regulations and standards for fostering services.

Responsible authorities are required by regulation 4 of the Foster Placement (Children) Regulations to review the approval of foster parents /carers at least once a year. Changes of circumstances such as change of address, death of a spouse or remarriage or change in health will normally call for an early review.

Enquiries

On receiving an enquiry from a prospective foster carer the Service requests basic information and sends out an information pack containing material about Barnardo's, the Service and fostering generally. An initial home visit is then arranged by a fostering social worker from the Service to discuss in more detail the work of the Service and to answer any queries or concerns the enquirer may have. A decision will be reached as to whether the prospective foster carer wishes to and is suitable to proceed.

Assessment and Approval

If a prospective foster carer is deemed suitable and wishes to proceed, an Application to be assessed / Registration of Interest form will be completed together with written consents to enable the Fostering Service to ascertain their suitability to foster.

Barnardo's process for assessing a person's suitability to foster consists of two parts. This is referred to as **Stage 1** and **Stage 2**.

These stages can be carried out concurrently, but the information for **Stage 1** must be sought as soon as possible, and the decision about whether an applicant has successfully completed Stage 1 must be made within 10 working days of all the information required in that stage being received by the fostering agency.

Stage 1

The information gathered in Stage 1 includes:

- Full details of the applicant(s) and all household members as well as any children of the applicants living elsewhere.
- Checks undertaken with the police via the DBS / Police Checks/ Access NI on all household members 10 years and over years, as well as with the Department of Health, Social Services and any other relevant agency, for example Health, Education, NSPCC, Ofsted, previous fostering and adoption agencies.
- DBS checks may also be undertaken on any other regular visitor to the household who may have care of foster children when placed. Some checks are repeated every three years.
- The applicant is required to have a medical examination which is completed by their GP, who sends the completed Medical Report to Barnardo's Regional Medical Adviser for comments about the applicant(s)' health.
- The applicant is also asked to name three to six personal referees from which a minimum of three will be selected to provide written references and who will also be interviewed as part of the approval process. Where appropriate we also ask for permission to approach the applicant's current or past employer. Adult children and previous partners will also be contacted.

Stage 1 of the assessment process is intended to provide the decision maker with basic information about the applicant's suitability (or not) to proceed to Stage 2 of the assessment in which more detailed information is collected.

Stage 2

If it is decided to undertake Stage 2 of the assessment requires the fostering service to obtain the information about the applicant in relation to the following areas:

- Details of personality and life experiences.
- Religious persuasion and capacity to care for a child from any particular religious persuasion.
- Racial origin, cultural and linguistic background and capacity to care for a child from any particular racial origin or cultural or religious background.
- Past and present employment or occupation, standard of living, leisure activities and interests.
- Previous experience (if any) of caring for their own and other children.
- Skills, competence and potential relevance to their capacity to care effectively for a child placed with them.

A qualified and experienced social worker will carry out the assessment by visiting the applicant(s)' home and meet with all members of the family and collate information about the applicant(s)' experience and skills. The information from the social worker's visit will be collated and forms the basis of an assessment report (BAAF Form F). This report is shared and discussed with the applicants.

During the assessment preparation period, training – Skills to Foster - is provided by the Service. This training includes the role and responsibilities of foster carers, working with different agencies, and child development. All applicants are required to attend.

The completed assessment report is presented to Barnardo's Fostering NI Foster Panel. Applicants are expected to attend the Panel.

The Panel will then make a recommendation about the suitability of the applicants to be approved as foster carers. These will be passed to a Senior Manager in Barnardo's, who is

nominated as the organisation's 'Agency Decision Maker', who has the final decision about approval on behalf of Barnardo's.

Applicants are informed verbally and in writing of the Agency Decision Maker's final decision.

Foster Carer Reviews

Reviews take place by Barnardo's Fostering Service, in line with regulatory requirements of a foster carer Regulation 4 Foster Placement (Children) Regulations.

A first review must take place within 12 months after approval and subsequent reviews take place every 12 months thereafter. Barnardo's must be satisfied that the foster carers continue to meet the required standards as set out in Regulation 4.

Reviews may also take place at other times for example as a result of a request to change the terms of approval; following a serious complaint, allegation of abuse, or other matters of serious / safeguarding concern; in response to a significant change of circumstances, such as a carer's adult child returning home, relationship problems or separations, significant health issues, pregnancy, etc.

Foster carer support

Barnardo's Fostering Service values the work that foster carers do and the contribution they make to the lives of children and young people in their care. The key to a successful placement is the quality of support that foster carers receive. Barnardo's Fostering Service offers the following support to all our carers:

- Supervision and support from a named qualified and experienced Social Worker Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm.
- Frequent visits, (minimum of once per month), negotiated with the carer and regular telephone contact from the supervising social worker. Including at least two unannounced visits per year.

- Regular support group meetings and / or Buddy Support.
- Events for children in placement, carers children and carers.
- Support/activity groups for carers children.
- Where appropriate, and where in line with the child's care plan, a short break service to provide alternative experiences / respite for the child and a short break for the main carer.
- Good quality liaison and working arrangements with local authorities including attendance at relevant meetings such as Education (PEP) and Looked After Child reviews.
- A level of financial support that values and recognises carer's skills, achievements and time including a foster care fee and fostering allowance.
- A buddy system for carers to share experiences and receive advice and support.

Foster carer training

Barnardo's Fostering Service recognises that fostering is an extremely complex and demanding job and we are committed to providing high quality training that is accessible and relevant to all our foster carers.

Training is provided to help foster carers develop their fostering role, to improve knowledge and to define and refine the skills they already have. The training is delivered within an explicit value base which promotes equality of opportunity and recognises and celebrates diversity. It seeks to ensure that all carers are competent and confident in providing safe care and in protecting children from harm.

As outlined in Regulations and Guidance Vol 3, 1996, opportunities for training are provided at three levels:

- Support, discussion and evaluation in the home
- Participation in foster parent / carer groups
- Participation in formal training events with other foster parents / carers and social workers.

Training is offered throughout a carer's career with Barnardo's Fostering Service and incorporates a range of topics which evolve with changes in practice, legislation and needs, examples of which are:

- child protection
- recording
- first aid
- managing difficult behaviour
- attachment
- bereavement and loss
- health and safety
- relationship and sexual health
- sexual exploitation
- resilience building
- self-esteem & identity
- life story work
- managing and promoting contact
- child development
- equal opportunities
- drugs and alcohol awareness
- education and health
- anti-radicalisation

Monitoring and evaluation

There is a range of systems in place to monitor and evaluate the provision of Barnardo's fostering services, to ensure they are effective and that the quality is of an appropriate standard.

The following mechanisms are in place to monitor and evaluate the service:

- Carer(s)' Annual Reviews
- Carers' Consultation Forms
- Children's Feedback Forms
- Children's feedback from individual and group participation sessions
- Annual staff appraisals
- Monthly supervision of carer(s)
- Regular supervision of staff
- Feedback from carers regarding training
- Feedback from carers via annual service satisfaction questionnaire
- Feedback from other professionals
- Feedback from local authority/ trust workers at children's LAC reviews
- Feedback from local authority/ trust workers prior to carer(s) reviews
- Evaluation of carers by trainers
- Feedback from panel members
- Panel Attendees Form
- File Audit
- Service Quality Assessment, annual assessment undertaken by the Assistant Head of Business
- Quarterly performance reviews by the Assistant Director
- External Monitoring via LA / Trust / Framework monitoring processes
- External monitoring via regulatory body The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) when it comes in to force.

Complaints, allegations and whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the reporting of a concern in the public interest that something is happening within Barnardo's that should not be, or not happening that should be. It is based on the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA).

Barnardo's is committed to the highest standards of openness, integrity, accountability and practice and concerns can be raised via the Whistleblowing process.

For details on where to report a concern see Section 8 – Other Contacts.

Complaints

The aim of Barnardo's complaints process is to resolve a complaint at the most informal level possible.

Complaints can be made in writing or orally to any member of staff up to and including the CEO.

Complainants and staff subject to complaints are kept informed of the progress of the investigation and any associated procedures subject to normal staff confidentiality.

The stages to managing any complaint are:

- Stage 1 Local Resolution
- Stage 2 Independent Investigation
- Stage 3 Review of Process

Stage 1 Local Resolution

This stage will be conducted by the line manager of the person or service being complained about. At the outset the complainant must be asked for their desired outcome.

Stage 1 should normally be completed within 10 working days.

Stage 2 Independent Investigation

The investigation should be completed within 25 work days from the date of agreement that it should take place. Extensions can be given if agreed by the lead manager, the Complaints Officer and complainant and the reasons for delay must be recorded.

Stage 3 Review of Process

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the independent investigation (Stage 2) they or their advocate can request review of how this was undertaken and their representation considered.

For details on where to report a concern see Section 8 – Other Contacts.

Other routes of complaint

If a service is registered with an external body (e.g. Ofsted or RQIA) complainants may directly approach the relevant regulatory body at any stage. The regulatory body has the power to investigate the complaint itself or require Barnardo's or the relevant local authority / trust to do so.

For details on the relevant regulatory body and their contact details see section 9.

Allegations against foster carers/staff

Allegations made by a child (or on behalf of a child) will be followed up via the Safeguarding Board Northern Ireland (SBNI). The SBNI is to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Northern Ireland under Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2016.

Regulation and inspection of services

RQIA: *when in force*:

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority
5 Lanyon Pl,
Belfast
BT1 3BT

Other relevant contact details

Whistleblowing

Contact the whistleblowing hotline run by Barnardo's Independent Corporate Audit and Inspection Unit (CAIU) on:

Telephone: 020 8498 7311

Email: whistleblowing@barnardos.org.uk

Complaints

Barnardo's Head Office

Tanners Lane

Ilford, Essex

IG6 1QG

Telephone: 020 8550 8822

Mobile: 07917 187718 (*for text or voice mail about complaints*)

Email: cs.complaints@barnardos.org.uk

Barnardo's Northern Ireland

542 – 544 Upper Newtownards Road,

Belfast

BT4 3HE

Telephone: 028 9067 2366

Email: cs.complaints@barnardos.org.uk

You could also text or email – see information under Barnardo's Head Office

Children's Commissioners

www.niccy.org