



Improving Children and Young People's
Mental Health and Wellbeing through
a Whole Systems Approach

Barnardo's is setting out to work with partners to improve children and young people's Mental Health and Wellbeing through a whole systems approach.

We will do this by both improving children and young people's Mental Health and Wellbeing and by reducing the risks, so that all children and young people have improved life chances and potential.

This means we need to ensure:

- The determinants of Mental Health and Wellbeing are better understood and inform policy and practice.
- Children and young people are more resilient and equipped with coping strategies.
- Adults in children's lives are more resilient, better able to support Mental Health and Wellbeing, can identify issues early and are confident to offer early advice and support.
- Systems work better around the child or young person to provide joined up, easily accessible, appropriate support services for as long as needed.

Mental Health and Wellbeing is one of the major public health challenges facing our generation. The number of children and young people with mental health and wellbeing issues is increasing and services providing support are struggling with capacity to manage the ever increasing referral numbers. We need to address the challenge upstream, addressing prevention and early intervention.

To tackle the causes and not just the symptoms, our Mental Health and Wellbeing Core Priority Programme will focus on Prevention and Early Intervention, with our ultimate aim being to facilitate systems review and change. Barnardo's will demonstrate that whole systems redesign results in fewer children and young people requiring Tier 3 or 4 or equivalent support in the long term.



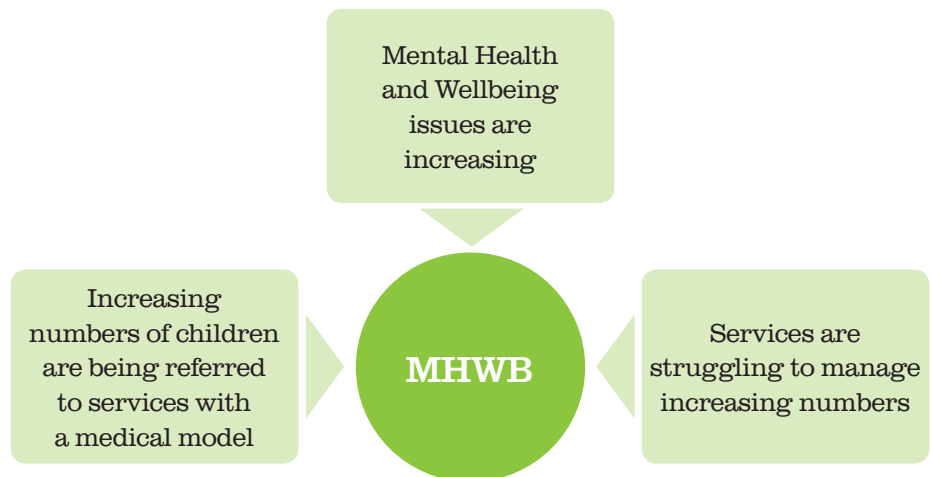
This core priority programme will work at whichever stages of the MHWB life course are identified as key to achieving this transformational ambition.

Believe in Me – Barnardo’s Corporate Strategy 2016 - 2025

To create better outcomes for more children, we need to be strategically focused. We’re committing to three strategic aims to help us to do that.



Core Priority Programme – Why?



Our approach to whole systems change will be evidence based.

1.

We'll listen to, and work with children and young people to utilise their expertise.

2.

We'll draw on our wide range of services, building the corresponding capability to deliver, and develop new services where needed.

3.

We'll engage a full range of partners to help support children and young people within localities, learning with both those services and others.

4.

We'll make sure we understand local populations of children and young people – designing services which support prevention and early intervention.

We are utilising a service design approach, that bring strategic design approaches (coupled with systems thinking, evidence-led and digital-enabled approaches) to help facilitate a process that seeks sense, probe, understand, co-design, test and iterate a range of change across policy, organisational systems, service systems and other strategic interventions.

Three Strategic Partnerships Identified

As the largest children's charity in the UK we have the scale, expertise and experience to enter into a new type of partnership with Local Authorities, the NHS, third sector and other partners to help make the changes that can make a real difference. We'll make significant investments in each of the three geographical areas – to drive the level of change and impact that our ten year strategy is committed to.

Scotland

Renfrewshire

Northern Ireland

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

England

North Tyneside

Three Strategic Partnerships Identified



- **Better outcomes**
- **Joint investment of resources**
- **Higher quality needs analysis**
- **Improves assessment, measurement, impact**
- **Greater resource**
- **Service redesign**
- **Explore opportunities for wider application**

The three Strategic Partnerships were selected following a rigorous internal selection process and are now being established. Each is led by a Barnardo's Programme Manager, working closely with the local partnership board made of key members from children's health, education and social care.

Each partnership is exploring **systems transformation** following a process of **local discovery** of what the context, strengths and challenges are, **prioritisation**, to agree the focus of small scale pilots to test out what works. Core to our approach is **co-production and co-design**, with children and young people at the centre, along with strategic partners and key practitioners.

Barnardo's commissioned **Evaluation** partner, **Mental Health Foundation** will be with us in this journey, working on the ground with each partner to help us fully understand and test the evidence base of what works, how, and what the impact and sustainability is.

Fundamental to our **systems change/transformation** approach is to:

- Taking a **Life Course** approach, we will collectively understand and address which **Early Intervention and Prevention** approaches work in order to apply this learning in other areas
- Pilot small scale **new** social and non-clinical approaches which are **trauma informed and responsive** to promote self-care skills and resilience of children and their families, schools and communities, identify earlier children and young people with emerging MHWB issues
- As evidence base grows, scale up new models, flexibly, continuously testing out, with our Evaluation partner
- Prevent escalation into higher tier child and adolescent mental health services
- Achieve sustainable impact in arresting the emerging crisis in MHWB of our children and young people

Further information on each Strategic Partnership

North Tyneside

Barnardo's and North Tyneside have been working strategically together for some time on a system change approach to children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. This exciting partnership is exploring how we shift to social models of support, building child, family and community resilience.

A series of workshops took place between March and July 2019 involving over 90 young people, practitioners and strategic managers, enhanced by surveys with 132 parents. The workshops themes were to seek perceptions across a child's Life Course on local strengths and gaps for children and young people, families, schools, communities, organisations and policy.

A small number of key themes have emerged with next steps being to carry out more in depth discovery to inform small scale pilots to test out what works, themes are:

Stronger social model of support across the community

Across both primary and secondary students, the need for holistic and social support pre-CAMHS, with an interest in resilience support, peer-to-peer models and art/sport activities that are mental health aware.

How to have good conversations (and in turn reduce stigma)

In the parent to child relationship, child to child relation or trusted adult to child relationship knowing how to start the conversation, how to respond and support and building a confidence to do that.

- **Support in schools**
- **Support to parents**
- **Peer support**
- **Alternative activities to clinical medical approaches (arts, music, culture, sports etc.)**



Northern Ireland

This partnership has been developed between Barnardo's NI and the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT). These two organisations have a good working relationship which has developed over time; Barnardo's have been delivering services in the SEHSCT area for over 25 years. These services historically mainly provided support to parents of young children so Barnardo's has a strong reputation for Early Years work in this Trust area. Barnardo's has also had a strong presence in Infant Mental Health developments both in the SEHSCT and in other Trust areas throughout NI. This strategic partnership has therefore been developed with a focus on Infant Mental Health (from conception–24 months). As the strategic partnership progressed, we invited two other partners into this: Tiny Life due to their expertise in meeting the needs of premature babies and PIP UK for their expertise in establishing Parent Infant Relationship teams across the UK.

A large body of evidence demonstrates that experiences in the first 1001 days, continue to have an impact on us throughout our lifetime¹. We believe that the promotion of positive infant mental health and wellbeing which protects and nurtures mental health in early childhood contributes to productive social relationships, effective learning and good physical and mental health throughout life.

The Attachment Bonding Communication Parent Infant Partnership (ABC PiP) builds on already established relationships, connections and developments within the SEHSCT area regarding Infant Mental Health. It brings together multi-disciplined staff from across the community, statutory & voluntary sectors, as it recognises a whole systems response is required to protect and promote healthy early relationships. To date much work has focused on creating systems change across this area of practice. The strategic partnership has:

- **Identified key stakeholders and in particular their role in supporting ABC PiP to review systems and consider how these can be changed**
- **Clearly articulated a theory of change for the service and Infant Mental Health systems**
- **Developed a logic model**

¹ <https://www.1001criticaldays.co.uk/>

- Developed an implementation plan with connections between the sequencing of different elements of work clearly articulated
- Developed an appropriate decision support data system
- Identified how implementation drivers could be best supported in the capacity building systems change element so changes would be sustained over time
- Delivered training (Five to Thrive, Baby massage/Yoga and Community Resilience Model) to build capacity in the local workforce²

2 (Pg 13) <https://www.pipuk.org.uk/sites/default/files/PIPUK%20Rare%20Jewels%20FINAL.pdf>



Renfrewshire

Barnardo's has a long standing and strong working relationship with Renfrewshire, including over 20 years of service delivery across a number of areas including pre and post-natal early intervention and family support, advocacy, capacity building across early years establishments and primary schools and specialist services to support gender based violence and substance misuse.

Barnardo's Core Priority Programme is aligned with Renfrewshire Council's Community Plan that identifies Mental Health for CYP as a rising priority and highlights a willingness to adopt a long term approach to achieve transformational change. Renfrewshire Council is an innovative Local Authority open to exploring new ways of working and delivering services from a prevention and early intervention approach.

Steering group

A steering group has been established to drive forward developments in Renfrewshire and is chaired by Renfrewshire Council's Head of Childcare, Criminal Justice and Chief Social Work Officer. Membership of the group includes Barnardo's, Head of Schools, Head of Health and Social Care, Head of Specialist Children's Services, Principal Educational Psychologist, Social Work, Third sector representative and the MHWB evaluation partner for the strategic partnerships.

The Scottish Recovery Network is a partner within the Renfrewshire work, contributing significant knowledge and expertise in the areas of recovery with individuals and communities and coproduction.

Progress to date

A Participation lead has been recruited to post as it was identified by the partnership that the involvement of children, young people, families and communities must be central to every aspect of this process from consultation, decision making, co-production and evaluation.

A number of workshops, consultations and surveys have taken place with 164 children and young people, practitioners and managers across the local authority contributing to this process. This has provided the opportunity to communicate the aspiration, understand local assets

and barriers and create 'buy in' from stakeholders, whilst identifying potential champions/collaborators to involve in co-design. The next steps are to work alongside children, young people and families to gain a deeper understanding of some of the key themes emerging and areas for prioritisation. A number of workshop sessions have been planned across the local authority for young people, practitioners and managers to come together to explore a greater understanding of the principles of co-production.

Learning so far:

- **A need to shift the understanding of mental health from mental illness to understanding the whole spectrum from wellbeing through to distress in response to normal life events, to poor mental health and then mental illness.**
- **The need to build child, family and community resilience to ensure less children and young people require support within a medical model.**
- **Increasing awareness of the spectrum of MHWB and therefore enhancing the ability of families, communities and professionals to respond safely and proportionately with access to non-stigmatising support as required.**
- **A framework to support a shared language being established around Mental Health based on what works for children and young people and not what works for professionals.**
- **An understanding that conversations about Mental Health should start from a place of wellbeing, not mental illness and that opening conversations can be as a result of noticing behaviours rather than verbal language.**
- **The need to develop the prevention and early intervention space from a social model of support to promote good mental health for children and young people and enhance the pathways to Tier 3 and 4 support for the children and young people who require it.**



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