



# Supporting Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing in Scotland

April 2019

Believe in  
children  
 Barnardo's  
Scotland

## Introduction

Children’s mental health and emotional wellbeing is now a recognised public health issue in Scotland. Over 50% of children and young people with mental health disorders are diagnosed before the age of 14 and it is estimated that 1 in 3 adult mental health conditions relate directly to experience of childhood adversity.

Barnardo’s believes in children – in enhancing protective factors around them and intervening early to prevent developmental trauma and childhood adversity, and the subsequent negative impacts, which are closely linked to the emergence of mental health and wellbeing needs later in life.

Our work is underpinned by trauma-informed practice, supporting children and young people to process and recover from traumatic life experiences, reduce functional and behavioural difficulties, and build the skills and resilience needed to achieve their full potential.

To ensure that all of our services are not only trauma informed, but trauma responsive, Barnardo’s is working with specialist clinical psychologist Dr Karen Triesman to deliver a rolling programme of training for our entire workforce.

By building an organisational-wide understanding of the impact of developmental trauma and childhood adversity, we will achieve better outcomes for children, young people and families.

“

**Research shows that 75% of adult mental health needs start by the age of 18.”**



## Continuum of Support

We offer a Continuum of Support for Mental Health and Wellbeing, with a range of universal, early help and specialist services from pre-birth onwards, informed by our unique insight into the needs of the most vulnerable young people in our communities.



## Universal

Strong, secure attachments in nurturing, caring environments are crucial to ensuring children are able to build resilience, and maintain positive mental health, in order to cope with life's challenges.

Barnardo's Scotland staff are trained in the Five to Thrive attachment approach, which is underpinned by neuroscience and nurture principles. Five to Thrive promotes healthy brain development and positive parent child attachment.

Our attachment-based, relational approach has been shown to significantly improve parental understanding of the importance of relationships, attachment and the connections between healthy brain development in children, and their mental health and wellbeing in later life.

Barnardo's Scotland delivers a range of services at a universal level to ensure children and young people develop social and emotional literacy, build resilience and develop problem-solving skills.

“

**PATHS has taught me that all feelings are ok but the way I react sometimes is not ok”**

P6 pupil



## PATHS® – Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies

Barnardo's holds the UK licence for the internationally recognised evidence based whole-school programme PATHS® which aims to improve emotional and social competencies in primary school pupils.

PATHS® helps support children's mental health and wellbeing by explicitly teaching social and emotional skills including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making, all of which are fundamental to children's health, wellbeing and future success.

Data from schools we are currently working with in Glasgow tells us:

- 87% of teachers reported a positive impact on pupils with children using a wider range of emotional vocabulary to talk openly about how they are feeling.
- 91% of pupils said PATHS® had helped them to understand their own emotions.
- 100% of senior leaders reported that PATHS® had a positive impact on pupil relationships.
- 88% of pupils stated that PATHS® had developed their friendship skills.

## WRAP

Barnardo's Scotland has trained staff in the evidence-based Wellness Recovery Action Planning (WRAP) 'peer led' group programme, which supports individuals to learn about their own mental health and well-being, how to manage 'ups and downs', and build their resources to cope with mental health difficulties.

WRAP originated in the USA and was originally designed for adults, but Barnardo's has adapted it for use with children and young people of secondary school age and older.

Young people develop their own Wellness Plans which can then travel with them into other services; removing the need to keep re-telling their story and ensuring a joined-up approach to prevent them falling through gaps in service.

Feedback from WRAP participants:

***“I made my first ever real friends, am less scared, I enjoy life more, I don't hate myself as much, and am a little happier than I was before”***

***“I like that WRAP teaches you to speak up for yourself and what to look out for if something is wrong”***

## Early Help

We believe in preventing as well as reducing the impact of developmental trauma and adversity by providing early help and holistic, community based family support – particularly where issues such as poverty, adult mental ill-health, inter-parental conflict and drug and alcohol misuse can leave children in situations which may impact negatively on their own wellbeing.

Barnardo's Scotland can deliver a range of targeted interventions which enable children, young people and their families to get the right support as quickly as possible and prevent needs from escalating. This includes group and individual work; both in schools and in the community around issues such as:

- Anxiety, stress and depression
- Sexual exploitation and abuse
- Self-esteem
- Body image and eating disorders
- Self-harm
- Relationships and relationship breakdown
- Divorce and separation
- Sexuality and identity
- Trauma, bereavement and loss



“

**My Barnardo's Family Support Worker helped me improve my mindset and gave me help and advice to completely change my life and relationship with my family - especially on how to handle situations.”**

Parent

## New Horizons

Our New Horizons service in Ayrshire supports children and young people who have experienced significant trauma, bereavement and loss to find ways to process, manage and cope with their associated feelings in a realistic way.

We work with them to build their resilience and capacity to manage – now and in the future. We also build understanding of trauma, bereavement and loss in families, schools and health settings to increase community capacity to support young people experiencing these issues.

Referrals come via schools and Community Connectors to ensure an early response to prevent more chronic problems; and to improve pathways to CAMHS through reduced referrals/waiting times and “fast track” targeting of children and young people who do need a CAMHS assessment.

**“I feel my teacher understands me now, it's not like before”**

**“It's helped me feel better about myself”**

## Listening Service

Our Listening Service offers a safe space for pupils to meet with one of our workers in school, and to talk through any issues that are impacting on their mental health and wellbeing before they escalate further. Pupils can self-refer, or be referred by a teacher.

Solution-focused techniques are used to support the young person to think through what is troubling them and, if required, longer term supports within the school, home or community are identified.

Our Listening Service provides children and young people with an alternative to other more formal mental health supports such as counselling.

**“I feel like I have someone to talk to and feel like there are actually people on my side”**

**“I feel like it's easier to talk to people about why I'm feeling the way I'm feeling”**

**We can help you find a...**



## Specialist

We work with some of the most vulnerable groups of children and young people in Scotland including those affected by issues such as child sexual exploitation and abuse, harmful sexual behaviours, domestic abuse, parental offending, as well as young carers, looked after children and care leavers, young people in prison, refugees and asylum seekers. We know these groups are more at risk of developing mental health problems.

We can offer significant expertise in terms of care pathways and the delivery of specialist services, through therapeutic interventions and wraparound support.

“

**Physically I am just different: I'm not a closed book anymore. I'm more happy... I feel that I'm not always aggressive; I'm not always just wanting to fight.”**

Young person,  
HMP & YOI Polmont

### Here And Now

Our Here and Now service works with young men and women within HMP & YOI Polmont to address issues around trauma, bereavement and loss. Young people in custody experience higher rates of bereavement than the general population – data shows 91% have experienced at least one and 67% have experienced 4 or more, often in traumatic circumstances such as parental suicide, sexual abuse, sexual assault of a family member and abandonment.

Here and Now provides specialist assessment and direct psycho-educational and psycho-therapeutic work. It also provides awareness-raising and training for Scottish Prison Service staff in Polmont to help them understand the impact of trauma and bereavement.

An external evaluation of Here and Now by The Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice found that:

**95% of participants experienced a level of recovery across every trauma symptom measured, and spoke of gaining new skills to help them begin to process or live with their experiences.**

The evaluation stated that Here and Now is **“what effective bereavement practice might look like at the YOI level, with a noticeable effect on trauma symptoms.”**

“ It took a couple of weeks to manage to come out with things, but once I did I felt a lot better. Just knowing that there was somebody there listening was good and not just feeling like the worker had to listen because it was their job.”

“ Obviously in here it's not exactly a nice environment, it's hard. When I first started talking, no chance would I have started talking about some of the things that by the end of it I had started talking about.”

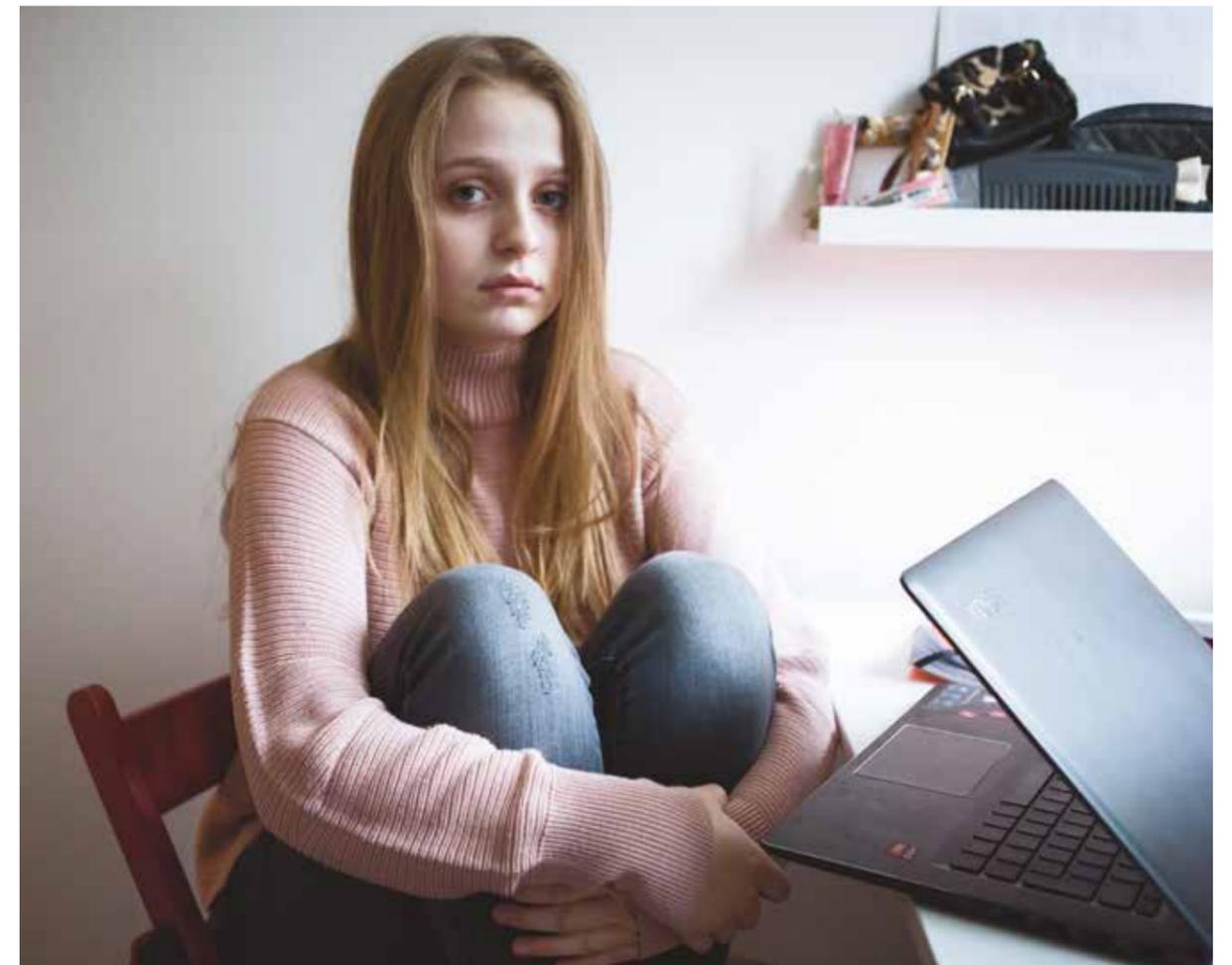
## Family Placement

Our Adoption Service offers a range of therapeutic supports to birth parents, adoptive parents, and the children involved, to help them process their feelings of grief and loss. We can offer interventions around Early Placement Therapy, Attachment Focused Therapy, and Play Therapy. Support groups for adopted children and adoptive parents provide space to share feelings. We also employ a network of therapists, all of whom attend Adoption Knowledge training.

**“I feel the group is a place which holds space for adopted people to talk freely and without fear about their experiences”**

Barnardo's Foster Carers have access to a comprehensive range of trauma-informed training. We also have a range of therapists delivering individual work with children to support specific needs, and consultancy to social workers and foster carers. In addition, our Children's Team support children to develop their confidence, self-esteem and identities.

**“Your skill, kindness, and wisdom ...a wonderful help and support to me over the past few years”**



## Partnering with child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)

Barnardo's is working collaboratively with CAMHS in other parts of the UK to jointly deliver services for children and young people who require support for their mental health and wellbeing, resulting in an increase in engagement and improvement in access to services.

Children and young people are getting the right help, quicker.

### SOLAR – Single Point Of Access Service

SOLAR is an integrated CAMHS service delivered jointly by Barnardo's and Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation.

The service replaces the more traditional CAMHS service model with an open door, single referral point, one assessment process and a seamless service. It has been designed around the needs of children and young people and offers a comprehensive range of services, to keep them healthy, as well as treating those who are ill.

The service is not about thresholds or tiers, but about timely access to appropriate support in line with children and young people's needs.

***“We work together, train together and learn from one another, which is all contributing to continual improvements in the care that we provide”***

**SOLAR Worker**

**National Mental Health Data Set showed that Solar is the only service in England to have met the national target of 30% increase in access to CAMHS – it achieved 34.7%.**

### Transitions

In Wales, Barnardo's is supporting young people with a mental health diagnosis in their transition from CAMHS to adult mental health services, using a Transitions Passport approach.

The Passport comes from a strengths-based perspective and was developed in consultation with young people and professionals. It empowers and supports young people to take ownership of the process and enable them to have a good transition.

Alongside the Passport, structured interventions include 1:1 and therapeutic group work, social activities and mentoring; with a focus on accessing employment, education and training opportunities whilst managing physical, psychological and social functioning.

Our data from 2017/18 tells us:

**80% of young people reported their emotional and mental health and wellbeing had stabilised**

**77% of young people felt better equipped to deal with their thoughts and feelings**

**74% of young people were feeling less isolated**

## Policy and Influencing Work

The Barnardo's Scotland Policy Team has a strategic focus on influencing at a national level on issues relating to the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.

Our influencing work also covers the continuum of support for mental health and wellbeing, focussing on:

- **Universal** – The role of trauma-informed practice within education to support the mental health and wellbeing of all children and young people;
- **Early Help** – The need for alternative models of support for children and young people who do not reach clinical thresholds for access to CAMHS but still require support and intervention around their mental health and wellbeing;
- **Specialist** – The importance of appropriate and timely access to CAMHS for those for whom this is appropriate.

We want to see trauma-informed, relational practice forming part of a universal, early intervention and prevention approach, where all those working with children and young people are able to recognise when behaviour might be related to developmental trauma and early adversity, and provide support as and when appropriate.

Ensuring children have access to a safe, stable, trusting adult relationship should form the foundation of good mental health and wellbeing. Ensuring those adults with caring responsibilities are supported with their own mental health and wellbeing is also crucial – only regulated adults can help a dysregulated child.

“

**We will use our knowledge and skills from working with vulnerable children, young people and families who have experienced adversity to influence Policy and Practice for all children and young people.”**



## Contact us

If you would like to learn more about the services Barnardo's Scotland can provide in your area, please get in touch.

For more about our policy work please contact  
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