



Barnardo's UBUNTU NI Practitioners Network

Terms of Reference

Background

Ubuntu NI is a Project led by **Barnardo's** funded by the UK Lottery Fund and is one of three strands of a wider project supporting children, young people, and their families who have arrived seeking sanctuary. The Network works alongside an **Ubuntu NI Community Development programme**, which supports community-based organisations to create local projects and activities that help families arrived seeking sanctuary integrate and engage within their communities.

The project also includes a **Regional NI Youth Voice Network**, which connects young people arrived seeking sanctuary, reduces isolation, and helps them amplify their voices on issues affecting them directly. This youth advocacy work is further supported by Barnardo's Policy Team, helping ensure young people's views reach local, regional, and national decision-makers.

Purpose

The Ubuntu Practitioners Network exists to strengthen support for children and young people, and by extension their families, who have arrived in the region seeking sanctuary. The Network is open to practitioners and professionals who:

- work directly with these children and young people; or
- may encounter, support, or provide services to them and their families as part of their wider roles.

Its core purpose is to connect practitioners across key organisations, creating a structured, regional space for collaboration, intelligence sharing, and joint problem-solving. The Network aims to knit together agencies and stakeholders with a shared interest in the welfare, rights, and outcomes of sanctuary-seeking children, young people, and their families.

Role and Remit

The Ubuntu Practitioners Network aims to build a **cohesive, informed, and collaborative multi-agency community** that enhances the experiences and outcomes of sanctuary-seeking children, young people, and their families.

Barnardo's will lead in convening meetings, arranging venues, preparing agendas, chairing meetings, and take and distribute meeting records. At times, Barnardo's and other policy teams may seek feedback from the Network to support advocacy, and members may be invited to have their organisation's name or logo included when contributing to such activity.

The Network will act as a central hub for best practice, enabling members to:

- share best practice and learning to support children, young people, and families seeking sanctuary.
- Exchange up-to-date intelligence on emerging needs and system changes.
- Build practitioner connections, peer support, and wellbeing.
- Coordinate joint advocacy to address gaps, barriers, and policy issues.
- Improve understanding of regional services to support effective signposting.

Membership

Membership is open to practitioners and professionals working directly with sanctuary seeking children and young people, as well as those who may encounter, support, or provide services to them and their families as part of their wider roles.

Membership is free.

All members are expected to display behaviours that reflect the values of 'Ubuntu', including respect, kindness, solidarity, and a commitment to collective wellbeing. Membership is voluntary and can be withdrawn at any time or rescinded by the group if behaviour falls outside these expectations.

Multiple practitioners from the same organisation are welcome to join the Network; each individual must register and agree to these Terms of Reference in their own capacity enabling us to place them appropriately within a peer circle.

To register as a member of the Practitioners Network, you must:

- Be at least 18 years old.
- Represent or be part of a registered charity, constituted community group, or statutory organisation.
- Belong to an organisation or group with an up-to-date child protection policy and appropriate GDPR processes.
- Work directly with children or young people arrived seeking sanctuary, or be in a role where you may encounter or support them or their families, even if this is not your primary function.
- Demonstrate a commitment to improving outcomes for sanctuary seeking children, young people, and families, and contributing positively to regional collaboration.
- Not be a commercial organisation offering goods or services for payment.

By signing this Terms of Reference, you confirm that you understand and accept that you meet the requirements and expectations described above.

Authorisation and Responsibilities

Practitioners are responsible for following their own organisation's policies and procedures, and for completing all necessary due diligence checks when making referrals, recommendations, or sharing event information with service users.

Ubuntu NI is not liable for auditing, verifying, or quality-assuring the organisations, events, or groups listed or promoted on its Resource Hub.

When you register to join the Practitioners Network as, or on behalf of, a registered charity, constituted group, or statutory organisation, you confirm that you are authorised to act on behalf of that organisation.

The Network is not intended for commercial companies, third-party service providers (e.g., law firms, accountants), or consumers. It is directed to organisations and groups located in Northern Ireland. We do not represent that content available on or through the Network is appropriate for use or available in other locations.

Meetings

The Network will operate through **online peer learning circles** with a wide geographical membership. These circles will meet **bi-monthly**.

Throughout the year, peer circles will also come together for shared learning events on agreed themes relating to children, youth, and families arrived seeking sanctuary, including an **Annual Conference**.

The structure of the meetings will adhere to this suggested rolling agenda:

1. Welcome & Check In
2. Spotlight Topic
3. Peer Sharing & Problem-Solving
4. Resource Exchange & Updates
5. Reflection & Closing

Recommendations and Decision-making

The group will work towards reaching consensus wherever possible, with the aim that recommendations reflect the views and perspectives of all members. Every effort will be made to continue discussions until a shared position is achieved.

Where consensus cannot be reached on an issue requiring a decision by Barnardo's, all viewpoints will be carefully considered before Barnardo's makes the final decision. Members will be informed of the rationale behind any such decision.

Use of the Online Resource Hub (Padlet)

An online resource hub (Padlet) will be used to share events, signposting opportunities, training, and resources.

These Terms refer to additional terms governing your use of Padlet.

You agree to comply with Padlet's terms and conditions: <https://legal.padlet.com/terms>

General

- We make no representations, warranties, or guarantees, express or implied, regarding the accuracy, completeness, or currency of content on the Hub.
- The Hub is not intended as advice. Professional guidance should be sought where required. The Hub is not intended to amount to advice on which you should rely. You must obtain professional or specialist advice before taking, or refraining from, any action on the basis of the content of the Network and Hub
- We do not guarantee that the Hub will always be available and uninterrupted. Access may be suspended, restricted, or withdrawn at any time.

Links

- We have not reviewed, and cannot review, all of the material, made available through the websites and webpages to which the Online Resource Hub links. Ubuntu does not have any control over those third-party websites and webpages and is not responsible for their content or their use.
- By linking to a third-party website or webpage, Ubuntu does not represent or imply that it endorses such website or webpage.

Changes to the Online Resource Hub

Ubuntu NI may update or change the Hub from time to time. New features and services will also be subject to these Terms of Reference.

Individual Cases

Individual cases must **not** be discussed. Generalised learning or non-identifiable patterns may be shared where appropriate.

Terms of Reference Amendments

This ToR may be amended, added to, or updated at any point, including where members propose suggestions.

Term

This Terms of Reference is effective from January 2026 and will remain in place until the conclusion of the current project in December 2028. It is the intention that, by this point, the Network will be positioned to continue beyond the lifespan of the existing funding, through a suitable partner organisation taking on convening responsibilities, or through securing future funding or support that enables its ongoing role in regional collaboration. The Terms of Reference will be reviewed periodically by Ubuntu NI.

Agreement

By typing my name and submitting the online form I agree to the Terms of Reference outlined above in my capacity as a representative of my organisation and confirm my participation as a member of Barnardo's Ubuntu NI Practitioners Network.