



# LINK Families Together Service

“ One of the main aims of counselling is ‘...to guide us from feeling victims of circumstances to feeling we have some control over our lives.’ ”

Hetty Einzig

“ The pandemic, and the new stresses, strains and isolation it has brought, has added to what was already a mental health crisis for children and young people. ” YoungMinds, February 2021

In response to a growing need for therapeutic support for children, young people and their families, Barnardo's LINK has developed their Families Together Service.

Commissioned by a number of agencies across the country, this service has helped to support young people experiencing mental health problems as well as supporting their families at a time of especial need. Working with a variety of presenting needs, **improving mental health and wellbeing is at the centre of our work.**

Barnardo's LINK does not provide any mental health clinical services, but instead focusses on therapeutic support.

Families Together is based on our trauma-informed Attachment Focused Therapy model, which enables parents and carers to adopt and maintain a therapeutic parenting approach, acknowledging and understanding the child's or young person's emotions and behaviours.

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### Aims & objectives of the service

- Provide therapeutic support to children, young people and families who are facing the additional challenges of mental illness;
- Encourage communication between family members;
- Explore any fears, anxieties, difficulty or distress;
- Help with conflict and conflict resolution skills;
- Help reduce feelings of isolation;
- Gain insight into, and explore strategies to improve, their situation;
- Find practical solutions to the daily challenges.

### Intended outcomes

- Secure the best possible outcome with regards to family stability, mental health and well-being;
- Alleviate the stress of social isolation;
- Reduce the negative impact of Covid-19 on family life.

**“I am so grateful to my therapist; I have found my strength through these sessions.”**

**Young Person, January 2022**

**“Link's Families Together has provided an invaluable service to families and has greatly supported our Crisis teams at this challenging time.”**

**Health Commissioner, July 2021**





### **The service comprises:**

The standard delivery model is eight therapeutic sessions of 45 minutes each, delivered either by telephone or a virtual platform such as Zoom according to the service user's preference. Families will not incur any costs however the service is delivered.

These sessions may be with parents/guardians/carers or with the child or young person, or a combination of both depending on the referral received.

After the sessions have been completed, the therapist will write a report on progress, outcomes and any identified further support

needs, which will be shared with the family and provided to the referrer. In recognition of the complexity of this work, LINK provides clinical support and peer supervision to all therapists delivering the Families Together service.

Contact and cooperation with the referring agency is maintained throughout, and any matters or concerns requiring an urgent response are reported as they occur. Any safeguarding concerns or alerts are managed in line with Barnardo's Safeguarding policy and the relevant protocols and processes of the referring agency.





## About Barnardo's

Barnardo's is the UK's largest charity serving children, young people, families and communities. For over 150 years we have been doing everything we can to enable young people to thrive.

## Mental health and wellbeing

Promoting mental health and wellbeing has always been at the heart of our work and is now explicitly a core priority in our new Ten Year Strategy, as we continue to measure our impact, learn, influence and innovate.

Since launching our first specialist bereavement counselling services nearly two decades ago, we are now commissioned to provide mental health and wellbeing for thousands of children and young people throughout the UK, operating right across the spectrum of prevention, early intervention, targeted and specialist support.

We provide a range of mental health and wellbeing services to children, young people and their families across a variety of disciplines and settings. These include universal wellbeing and resilience, early intervention and prevention, targeted support, counselling, therapeutic adoption and fostering provision, specialist services for highly vulnerable groups and integrated CAMHS services. Our staff take a trauma recovery informed practice approach.

At Barnardo's we believe children and young people should grow up feeling happy, resilient and confident to take on life's challenges. No child or young person should have to experience a mental health crisis because they didn't have the help and support they needed earlier.

## Family Placement

Supporting looked after children and finding a loving, stable home for them has been a priority for Barnardo's since day one. Our fostering services have been operating for over 100 years and Barnardo's has been a voluntary adoption agency since 1947. In 2019/2020, our adoption services placed 116 children with adoptive families.



As well as facilitating adoption matching and placements, Barnardo's currently delivers a number of Adoption Support services across the UK, including:

- Barnardo's LINK service: LINK provides an advice and information service and therapeutic counselling services for those affected by adoption and SGOs. By coordinating over 150 therapists, LINK offers a variety of therapeutic and family support interventions.
- Barnardo's CAFIS service: the service provides advice and guidance to birth parents, as well as intermediary services such as letterbox contact and contact support for adopted adults.
- Barnardo's works in partnership with Adoptionplus, an adoption agency based in Milton Keynes and operating UK-wide which specialises in placing and supporting some of the hardest-to-place children in the country.

## Our Clinical Governance

Barnardo's has robust governance arrangements in place to ensure that the charity delivers services safely and effectively. Barnardo's Clinical Governance Strategy sets out our commitment to delivering the highest quality of services to our service users, through a clear focus on the safety, effectiveness and the experience of that care and interlinks closely with the following:

- Barnardo's National Counselling Services Forum (NCSF) Minimum Standards for Counselling-based Services – these ensure safe, effective and ethical counselling practice within the organisation across the UK. These standards are based on current national guidelines within the counselling professions and apply to all Barnardo's services providing specialist support as a primary service or as part of the broader mental health and wellbeing offer.

- Barnardo's organisational membership of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and the requirement for all relevant staff to be registered with the relevant professional body and working towards accreditation, if eligible. Additionally, there are minimum qualifications set out in the NCSF Minimum Standards for counsellors / therapists and managers of counselling services.

## Clinical supervision

As outlined in Barnardo's Supervision Policy, clinical supervision is required for the relevant personnel to ensure professional standards are being met. Depending on the service and therapist, clinical supervision might be provided internally by qualified counsellors, or sourced from external professionals and should be delivered in line with BACP guidelines. All counsellors delivering services for Barnardo's work in line with Barnardo's arrangements and commitment to quality.

