



# LINK 2020 Family Support 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 coronavirus pandemic has disrupted the life of every child in the country. It is not only an unprecedented public health emergency, but also a challenge our society and our economy have not seen in peacetime ”

The Children's Society

When the government imposed a national lockdown in March 2020, Barnardo's LINK developed its 'Family Support Service', virtually delivered by trained therapists, who respond to the family's individual needs with acceptance, understanding and empathy.

Commissioned by a number of agencies across the country, this service has helped to support families with children to cope with the emotional and psychological impacts of Covid-19. We are working with families and young people who have a variety of presenting needs, **with improving their mental health and wellbeing at the centre of our work.**

The Covid-19 pandemic will have consequences lasting many years and will have the greatest impact on some of the most vulnerable children and families in this country. Barnardo's LINK is committed to supporting these families wherever and whenever it is needed.

---

### Aims & objectives of the service

- Improve mental health and wellbeing
- Reduce feelings of isolation
- Help take control at a time of uncertainty and confusion
- Acknowledge and support negative feelings
- Explore and support any fears, anxieties, difficulties or distress
- Encourage communication between family members
- Explore strategies to improve the situation and find practical solutions to daily challenges.

### Intended outcomes

- Improvement in personal wellbeing and mental health
- Improvement in family stability and resilience
- Overall reduction of the negative impact of Covid-19, and its aftermath, on personal and family life.

**“Talking to you has given me hope.”**

**Adult Service User, March 2021**

**“Thank you for working so closely with our Early Intervention Service. Your service has helped families to increase their knowledge and understanding of their child’s emotional wellbeing.”**

**Team Manager (CAMHS), September 2021**





### **Referral, Service Delivery and Reporting Model**

The service is delivered virtually by telephone or video link. The family does not incur any costs in using this service.

The standard model for the 2020 Family Support Service is 6 x thirty-minute virtual sessions, either once or twice a week, depending on the needs and circumstances of the family. An initial minimum of 6 sessions is recommended, with any extensions to be agreed between the family, the therapist and the commissioner .

In addition to the six sessions with the family there is a preliminary telephone consultation with them, in order to establish their particular

circumstances and needs, based on the information provided by the referring agency.

After the sessions have been completed, there is a further non-contact session for the therapist to write a report on progress, outcomes and any identified further support needs, which will be provided to the referring commissioner.

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 according to 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.

