

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry
Barnardo's Part B Response

Part B – Current Statement

3. Retrospective Acknowledgement/Admission

3.1 Acknowledgement of Abuse

- i. Does the organisation/establishment accept that between 1930 and 17 December 2014 some children cared for at the establishment were abused?

Barnardo's has received a small number of allegations of abuse from children who were cared for during this period. We refer you to **Appendix 1** for the detail, which includes details of the outcome of any internal investigation. Of the 3,600 children admitted to residential care, we are aware of allegations from 44. All represent disclosures made by former residents as adults.

One former member of staff pled guilty to charges of lewd and libidinous behaviour to one child. The charges related to residential care in the 1970s. The first allegations of abuse were made in 1998 and the abuser was convicted in 2004.

Barnardo's retains the files for all children who have been in care. If there are allegations relating to any child we would be very pleased to search our records.

- ii. What is the organisation/establishment's assessment of the extent and scale of such abuse?

See **Appendix 1**.

In addition, Barnardo's has received informal information that corporal punishment was on occasion administered in a manner which would now be considered as harsh or excessive.

Balcary

Barnardo's is aware of disclosures of sexual and physical abuse made by seven former residents at Balcary between 1956 and 1972.

Blackford Brae

Blackford Brae closed in 1973. The remaining children moved to a home on South Oswald Road. Barnardo's is aware of disclosures of

sexual, physical and emotional abuse made by two former residents between 1959 and 1989.

Craigerne

Barnardo's is aware of a disclosure of sexual abuse made by two former residents at Craigerne between 1967 and 1970.

Glasclune

Barnardo's is aware of disclosures made by eleven former residents of sexual and physical abuse at Glasclune between 1944 and 1980. There has been a conviction of a former member of staff for lewd and libidinous behaviour towards one child.

Stapleton Towers

Barnardo's is aware of disclosures made by three former residents of sexual and physical abuse at Stapleton Towers between 1941 and 1948.

Tyneholm

Barnardo's is aware of disclosures made by three former residents of sexual and physical abuse between 1954 and 1972.

Winton Drive

Barnardo's is aware of disclosures made by four former residents of sexual and physical abuse between 1947 and 1972.

- iii. What is the basis of that assessment?

See ii).

3.2 Acknowledgement of Systemic Failures

- i. Does the organisation/establishment accept that its systems failed to protect children cared for at the establishment between 1930 and 17 December 2014 from abuse?

Judged by contemporaneous standards Barnardo's believes that its internal safeguarding and child protection policies and systems stand up to scrutiny. Barnardo's developed those policies based on

available guidance, emerging research and the developing legislative framework. Its policies were updated appropriately over time, as set out in Part A. Local practice reflected those policies.

There is evidence contained in children's files of Barnardo's response to the emergence of child protection concerns. For example where a case of unlawful carnal knowledge came to light it was subject to appropriate reporting, enabling investigation and consideration for prosecution.

The abuse of any child represents a failure for the organisation responsible for caring for them. That is equally true for Barnardo's. However both with reference to what was known at the time and on review of the allegations of which we are aware, there is no pattern or underlying theme which would identify a systemic failure.

- ii. What is the organisation/establishment's assessment of the extent of such systemic failures?

We do not consider that there were systemic failings, for the reasons set out above.

- iii. What is the basis of that assessment?

We are aware of specific allegations as set out in **Appendix 1**. Those allegations do not indicate systemic failings.

- iv. What is the organisation/establishment's explanation for such failures?

Not applicable, for the reasons set out above.

3.3 Acknowledgement of Failures/Deficiencies in Response

- i. Does the organisation/establishment accept that there were failures and/or deficiencies in its response to abuse, and allegations of abuse, of children cared for at the establishment between 1930 and 17 December 2014?

The records show that when Barnardo's became aware of allegations or any risk of abuse they took action to investigate and remove a child from the placement where necessary. The actual decisions were

made according to contemporary standards and understanding.

In the main, disclosures have been made by adults relating to events in their childhood. Whenever Barnardo's has received an allegation of abuse from a former resident, we have followed our historic abuse procedure including by referring the matter to police, supporting the individual in disclosing it to the police and assisting the police with their investigation. We have provided support to former residents throughout the process.

- ii. What is the organisation/establishment's assessment of the extent of such failures in its response?

Not applicable.

- iii. What is the basis of that assessment?

Not applicable.

- iv. What is the organisation's explanation for such failures/deficiencies?

Not applicable.

3.4 Changes

- i. To what extent has the organisation/establishment implemented changes to its policies/procedures and practices as a result of its acknowledgment in relation to 3.1 – 3.3 above?

Barnardo's has learnt always to face up to its past honestly. Barnardo's has a strong history of support to those it has cared for, and that support continues today. Barnardo's has had a Historic Abuse Policy since 1999 which sets out clear guidelines and procedures for the reporting of abuse to the police, and to the local authority if there are current safeguarding concerns.

Barnardo's After Care Service, or Making Connections as it is known today, dates back to the time of Thomas Barnardo. It is there to help people who were cared for by Barnardo's when they were children. The Department has pioneered services for helping adults to come to terms with growing up in care, providing information about their

background and assisting them to trace family and relatives. People in Barnardo's care have been provided with information about their background for many years.

In 1999, Barnardo's developed with other national child care charities four principles from which standards and required actions are derived. These are designed to ensure that allegations of historical abuse are treated responsively and rigorously.

These principles are that Barnardo's:

- listens to, takes seriously and acts responsively towards allegations of historical abuse.
- seeks to promote the welfare of former service users who allege historical abuse.
- promotes the protection of children who may currently be at risk from alleged perpetrators of historical abuse.
- makes the protection of children and young people the primary aim of any intervention where there is a disclosure by adults who have sexually abused others.

The majority of disclosures of abuse have come as a result of an adult accessing their records. Concerns about what will be uncovered in their records and what memories surface mean that people are often extremely anxious and emotional during their visit. Issues of loss and separation are almost universal, whilst others may have very distressing memories from before or during their time in care. Many people suffer very low self-esteem because of their experiences and this may give rise to mental health problems. The social workers in Making Connections therefore have to make an assessment of whether the person requesting information is able to cope with the impact the information may have upon them or their families. In addition, the social workers need to assess what support networks a person may have, how vulnerable they are, and how the information will affect them.

Support is provided to the former service user for as long as they wish it. This could include telephone contact, assisting with access to counselling services and liaison with the police if there is a criminal investigation.

Barnardo's recognises that the organisation has a fundamental responsibility to make sure that children and adults at risk are protected and kept safe from harm. Barnardo's is absolutely clear that all children have the right to protection, regardless of background, and the organisation does everything it can to ensure staff are trained and fully understand safeguarding.

Today, as a learning organisation, Barnardo's has a regular cycle of review of policies and procedures. During 2016 Barnardo's carried out an extensive consultation on reporting of allegations and incidents and

as a result made some changes to the reporting process for serious safeguarding incidents, where a child has been harmed in some way, or there have been allegations against staff. Barnardo's has now separated these two issues into two distinct reporting processes, providing detailed guidance for safeguarding leads across the UK.

Other changes have been made to the organisation's Safeguarding Policies including:

- Definitions and language throughout the policy have been reviewed.
- The section on Serious Case Reviews has been updated.
- A section has been added on information sharing.