

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry
Barnardo's Part A Response – The Establishment – Stapleton Towers

Part A – Background

Stapleton Towers opened in March 1941 as an evacuation centre for boys aged 5 to 14. It closed in June 1948.

1. Characteristics

1.1 History of the Organisation and Establishment

Please see Barnardo's part A response in relation to the organisation.

1.2 Funding of Establishment

Past

- i. How were the establishment's operations and activities, so far as relating to the provision of residential care for children, funded?

During Dr Barnardo's time all the homes were funded from donations by evangelists and wealthy families many of them bankers, like the Barclays, Bevans, Dennys and Tritons. They all knew each other and quickly spotted Dr Barnardo's gifts as a speaker, writer, fundraiser, teacher and philanthropist.

Stapleton Towers was loaned to Barnardo's for the duration of the war to house children evacuated from England. The daily operations were funded from voluntary donations raised through collection boxes and events.

- ii. Was the funding adequate to properly care for the children?

Comparatively, the children who were resident in Barnardo's homes received better material care than in many families. In the early years, prior to local authority support, the homes benefitted from a good level of donations. The Barnardo's Book was very specific on the level of support to be provided, to the extent of setting out the amount of pocket money children were to receive. Homes tended to spend as they saw appropriate and in response to the needs they identified.

The children were well-nourished. There was guidance in the

Barnardo's Book on meals and the provision of an adequate, varied diet for growing children.

iii. If not, why not?

Dr Barnardo's ever open door policy meant that no destitute child should ever be turned away. Barnardo's tried hard to find room for the children they were asked to care for. Children were provided with basic needs: shelter, food clothing and education. Some children went on a summer holiday within Scotland, usually as an exchange with another Barnardo's home.

iv. What state support did it receive?

Stapleton Towers did not receive any state support.

Present

v. If the establishment continues to provide residential care for children, how is that funded?

The centre closed in June 1948.

vi. What state support does it receive?

N/A.

1.3 Legal Status

(a) Organisation

Please see Barnardo's part A response in relation to the organisation.

(b) Establishment

Past

i. Did the establishment have a special legal, statutory or other status?

Stapleton Towers was an Evacuation Centre set up under a war emergency agreement.

- ii. If not, how was the establishment described?

N/A.

- iii. What was the legal basis which authorised, or enabled, the establishment to become responsible for managing the care of children in a residential setting?

Stapleton Towers was set up as an Evacuation Centre during World War II. Boys staying at other Barnardo's homes were sent to Stapleton Towers. The property was loaned to Barnardo's as part of an emergency war agreement.

- iv. Did that legal basis require the establishment, or its management, to meet, or fulfil, any legal and/or regulatory requirements in respect of children in its care? If so, please give details.

See above at 1.3 iii).

- v. Did the establishment have a legal duty of care to each child in its care?

Barnardo's, and those working in its establishments, owed a common law duty to take reasonable care of children placed in its care.

Present

- vi. With reference to the present position, are the answers to any of the above questions different?

The centre closed in June 1948.

- vii. If so, please give details.

N/A

1.4 Legal Responsibility

(a) Organisation

Please see Barnardo's part A response in relation to the organisation.

(b) Establishment

Past

- i. Did the establishment, or those in charge of the establishment, have any separate legal responsibility (separate from the organisation) for children in its care?

The establishment did not have any separate legal responsibility for the children in its care separate to that of the organisation. The organisation, and in turn, the establishment and the staff employed there, had a duty to take reasonable care of the children placed in its care.

- ii. If so, what was the nature of that responsibility?

N/A.

Present

- iii. With reference to the present position, are the answers to any of the above questions different?

The centre closed in June 1948.

- iv. If so, please give details.

N/A.

1.5 Ethos

(a) Organisation

Please see Barnardo's part A response in relation to the organisation.

(b) Establishment

Past

- i. What services were provided at the establishment, in terms of care for children?

Stapleton Towers was an evacuation centre for boys from both England and Scotland.

Stapleton Towers was part of the old style care system where emphasis on providing for a child's physical needs was paramount. Little emphasis was placed on the emotional wellbeing of children or on understanding the impact that long term residential care would have in later life (institutionalisation).

- ii. Did the establishment care for children of both sexes?

No, the centre was for boys only.

- iii. If the establishment cared for children of one sex only, what was the thinking behind that policy?

It was a temporary home for boys from other Barnardo's homes for the duration of the war.

- iv. Were any special child care, or child protection measures, taken in the light of that policy? If so, please provide details.

Barnardo's has annual reports from 1946 to 1969 for Scotland. Each report includes a paragraph on each of the establishments in operation, including Stapleton Towers whilst it was in operation. There is no information within the annual reports or the archives which refers to special care or child protection measures taken at Stapleton Towers.

- v. What was the daily routine for boys/girls cared for at the establishment?

Life in the homes in the 1930's and 1940's was regimented with each day carefully planned and ordered. From accounts given to Barnardo's by former residents a typical day would include arising at about 6.30 a.m. followed by morning exercises. Children would then wash and clean their teeth with their numbered towel and toothbrush following which they would make their beds. Prayers were said followed by the singing of the National Anthem before breakfast. Children would then go to outside schools. On return to the home allocated jobs were completed such as cleaning and polishing shoes before the evening meal followed by leisure activities.

The boys attended a local school, transported by coach each day.

- vi. What were the on-site activities for children cared for at the establishment?

In the early days the activities would have included being read a story by a member of staff and playing outside in the grounds of the home. In an un-published autobiography of a former resident, known as an 'old boy' he recalls that *'in summer we spent most of the time playing in the grounds with just a swim suit on and on hot days the bell was rung and we all gathered on the yard and were sprayed with a hose which we all enjoyed.'* He also remembers having film shows in the large hall.

- vii. What were the off-site activities for them?

Barnardo's has been unable to find any information relating to specific activities at Stapleton Towers. In the un-published autobiography of an 'old boy' he describes going to Ayr one summer for a holiday.

There is evidence in a case file of one of the boys having piano lessons.

- viii. Did children work manually, either at the establishment, or externally (e.g. farming work or other labour), or both?

Children would have undertaken chores before and after school and at the weekends, ranging from polishing and cleaning their dormitories, to washing up and gardening.

- ix. If the establishment was run by a Catholic religious order, were any prospective members of the order who were in training permitted to care for children?

The home was not run by a Catholic religious order.

Present

- x. With reference to the present position, are the answers to any of the above questions different?

The centre closed in June 1948.

- xi. If so, please give details.

N/A.

1.6 Numbers

(a) Organisation

Please see Barnardo's part A response in relation to the organisation.

(b) Establishment

Past

- i. How many children did the establishment accommodate at a time?

Stapleton Towers opened in March 1941 as an evacuation centre for boys aged 6 to 15 years. It provided 44 places.

- ii. Did this change, and if so, what were the reasons?

Stapleton Towers closed after the war in June 1948.

- iii. How many children in total were cared for at the establishment?

Information contained on the database compiled by Barnardo's shows that 26 boys were in residence at Stapleton Towers between 1943 and 1948. Barnardo's has no records of placements during the period 1941 to 1943.

- iv. What accommodation was provided for the children?

Barnardo's has no information about the accommodation provided for children, other than it was a large house with grounds.

- v. How many children occupied a bedroom/dormitory/house?

Barnardo's has no information about the number of children occupied in a bedroom.

Present

- vi. With reference to the present position, are the answers to any of the above questions different?

The centre closed in June 1948.

- vii. If so, please give details.

N/A

1.7 Children's Background/Experience

Past

- i. Did the children admitted to the establishment generally have a shared background and/or shared experiences?

Generally children admitted to the homes shared similar histories of family breakdown due to a range of contributing factors including: poverty; neglect or other abuse, parental sickness or substance abuse; child extra-marital or otherwise illegitimate e.g. teenage pregnancy;

parent had learning or physical disability or mental health condition; child had a disability causing parental rejection or request for support with physical care; child had behaviour or mental health problems often related to one of the above.

- ii. Were children admitted into the care of the organisation as a whole, or were they admitted into the care of a particular establishment?

Children were admitted to the organisation as a whole. Barnardo's styled itself as "The Largest Family in the World" and children were encouraged to feel they belonged to Barnardo's.

- iii. If children were admitted into the care of the organisation, did the organisation decide which establishment they would be admitted into?

Since the founding of the organisation, decisions about placement of children had been made centrally at Barnardo's Head Office.

Decisions were based on age and gender of the child and where the vacancies existed at any point in time; sometimes consideration was also given to placement with siblings – see below at 1.7 viii).

The centralised nature of the organisation's administrative operation during the 1940s and 1950s was crucial to Barnardo's national evacuation programme during the 1940s when most of Barnardo's homes in Scotland opened solely for the purpose of evacuation.

- iv. Who placed children with the organisation?

The bodies responsible for placing children with Barnardo's included: the RSSPCC (now Children 1st); local authority children's departments; the court system; juvenile courts; and moral welfare agencies. In addition, in early years many children were placed by voluntary agreement. In the 1940s many children came to Scotland as part of the evacuation programme. Children moved from homes in or near large towns in England considered vulnerable to wartime bombs.

- v. From 15 April 1971 (the date on which the Children's Hearing system was introduced), did the organisation/establishment receive children mainly from the Children's Hearing system?

The centre closed in 1948.

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- vi. If not, how generally did children come to be admitted into the care of the organisation?

The children were referred by moral welfare, charities, and family members

- vii. Was there a gender or other admission policy or practice operated by the organisation or any establishment run by it?

Stapleton Towers provided accommodation for boys only. As an organisation, Barnardo's accepted children of any age and both genders.

- viii. What was the policy/procedure and practice regarding admission of siblings?

In the 1940s it was more about the child fitting the age-range of the home as part of the evacuation programme.

- ix. How long did children typically remain in the care of the organisation?

The length of stay in the care of Barnardo's varied very widely. If restoration to the birth family was not possible then a child would typically stay in the care of the organisation until they reached school leaving age, after which their care and supervision would be passed to the After Care Department (see below 1.7 xx – xxiii).

Some children were admitted for a specific purpose aimed at supporting the birth family, with restoration to the family being part of the plan from the start. This was not the most common pattern but it demonstrates that planning for the children could be responsive to the circumstances within the child's birth family.

When children were admitted as babies or toddlers as a result of parental rejection or neglect / abuse, they would typically remain in Barnardo's care until they reached majority. After 1947, adoption would have been considered under certain circumstances, but not in all cases.

- x. Were children moved between different establishments run by the organisation?

In the 1940s and 1950s it was typical for a child in Barnardo's care to move from one home to another or to move from a home to a foster home (and vice versa), or between foster homes.

Later, from the late 1960s and onwards, it became more common for children to be restored to parents following shorter stays, or for the child to be moved to a more specialist provision which would better meet the child's individual needs.

- xi. If so, in what circumstances?

If a home was closing down or changing its purpose, the children were either dispersed to several other establishments or moved as a group to a new or existing home. Decisions about changes of placement were usually based on a child's age, and their 'suitability' or otherwise for fostering. Consideration might be given to placement with siblings (see above at 1.7 viii)).

As a young person approached school leaving age they were likely to be placed in one of Barnardo's vocational training schools to prepare them for the world of work until around the 1960s.

Children were also moved because their behaviour indicated that the home was not meeting their needs, in which case they might move to a more specialised establishment.

When Stapleton Towers closed in 1948 most of the children from Scotland moved to Tyneholme House. Boys who had been accommodated for the duration of the war went home and others returned to England.

- xii. Generally did children typically stay in one, or more than one, establishment?

Most children placed in Barnardo's in the 1940s, 1950s and early 1960s would have experienced a minimum of two placements within Barnardo's, and very many would have upwards of three changes of placement.

If a child came in for a shorter term placement they would be more likely to remain in one establishment for the duration.

In later years from the late 1960s, changes of placement became less common.

In the event of a foster home breakdown, or family breakdown following an attempt to restore to birth family, it was not uncommon for a child to be returned to the home from which they had most recently moved.

- xiii. What provision was made for contact between siblings while siblings were at the establishment?

Barnardo's have very few records relating to placement of boys at Stapleton Towers. Barnardo's are unable to confirm whether any provision was made for contact between siblings during the war.

- xiv. What provision was made for contact between children and their parents and wider family while children were at the establishment?

There is some evidence that local children were visited by parents during the war years. Other children would have had little contact with their parents during this time.

- xv. What provision was made for information sharing/updates about the children to their parents?

The nature of correspondence with parents changed over time. In the early days there was little contact. Generally, Barnardo's would write to parents to obtain their agreement to medical treatment and inform them about holiday arrangements. As it was the war, all correspondence was by letter. Barnardo's has no records within the archives but it is likely that correspondence was limited during the war.

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- xvi. What provision was made for information sharing/updates about parents to their children?

This changed over time. In the early days some children reported that they weren't told when a relative had died, others reported that parents were encouraged to tell the child about the death of their grandparent.

Children would not be burdened with news of day to day life in their birth families. Where the child had been abandoned or deserted, often no information was given. If it was thought to be in the child's best interests, the information was shared with the child.

As boys were placed at Stapleton Towers during the war, correspondence with parents was likely to be limited.

- xvii. What provision was made for the celebration of children's birthdays, Christmas and other special occasions?

In the early days children would have been given a birthday present by Barnardo's. In later years money provided by the local authority was given specifically for birthday gifts.

Christmas was celebrated in a big way. There was a large tree and a gift for every child. Gifts would be donated by the public or local charities, but children were told that these had been left by 'Father Christmas'. It was routine to give gifts after Christmas lunch. Children may have been invited to parties or taken to the pantomime, courtesy of local charitable organisations or military bases.

- xviii. What was the process for review of children's continued residence at the establishment, in terms of whether they continued to require to be there?

In the 1940s there were to be yearly internal reviews held at the home, supervised and attended by staff from Head Office. The reality was that there were very few reviews during the war.

- xix. When children left the care of the establishment, what was the process for discharge?

Discharge from an establishment within the organisation took place without much ceremony when a child was moving to another Barnardo's placement, be it foster home or children's home. In the 1940s, children frequently weren't given a detailed explanation of the reason for their move. They would be escorted between placements by a Barnardo's welfare officer or a 'travelling matron'. There was a similar approach where a child left in order to return to their birth family. The following observations therefore relate to children leaving the organisation and moving into work and independent living.

A "Farewelling" ceremony was routine in the 1940s and 1950s – the

young person spent a few days at Headquarters where they would be given clothing, a suitcase, and a Bible. They would be invited into the office of a senior manager who would discuss the advisability or otherwise of contact with birth family in the future, based on the information contained in their file.

Unless the young person was returning to live with their birth family they would be referred to the Barnardo's After Care Department for ongoing support. This was provided for as long as the young person needed it, which for some, was for many years after they left the care of the organisation.

From the database it appears all the boys at Stapleton Towers were transferred to Tyneholme House, returned to parents or returned to a Barnardo's home in England.

- xx. What support was offered to children when they left the care of the establishment?

The boys from Stapleton Towers were returned to parents, returned to a Barnardo's home in England or transferred to Tyneholme House in Scotland. The boys that remained in Barnardo's care would have had the support of Barnardo's After Care Department.

The After Care Department actively supported young people for as long as it was needed: welfare officers assisted young people to find accommodation and employment for them, and visited them on a regular basis. If necessary, a young person's wages would be supplemented to ensure their accommodation costs were covered, and to ensure they had appropriate clothing and tools for work.

Some of the homes accommodated former residents on return visits for weekends and holidays.

The After Care Department ran a Guild membership for former residents, and distributed magazines 3 to 4 times a year with news of the homes, of other former residents, e.g. weddings and children, and general developments in Barnardo's work. The department also helped former residents to renew contact with old friends from the homes.

There was also a scheme for the award of Good Conduct Medals as incentive for young people to stay in the same job for one, two and three years respectively.

In later years young people would be referred to Youth Employment services and their maintenance would be financed by the DHSS. After the late 1960s, many children were placed by local authorities. The

local authority placing the child was responsible for ensuring planning for independence took place ahead of the young person's date of discharge.

- xxi. What information was sought by the organisation and/or establishment about what children leaving its care planned to go on to do?

As xx) above.

- xxii. Was such information retained and updated?

The records of those boys who returned or were transferred to a Barnardo's home from Stapleton Towers after the war were retained and updated.

All care records and After Care Records for every child resident in a Barnardo's establishment or foster home have been retained in line with Barnardo's Records Retention Policy.

Barnardo's Making Connections service maintains the archive of children's records and provides an access to records service.

All contact with adults formerly in Barnardo's care or adopted through Barnardo's, seeking help or support or access to their information, is recorded and stored at the Making Connections Archive, in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Local authorities would have had records for those children which they placed in care.

We would also refer you to the opening statement at the start of the response on the organisation.

- xxiii. What was provided in terms of after-care for children/young people once they left the establishment?

- xxiv.

See above under 1.7 xx).

Present

- xxv. With reference to the present position, are the answers to any of the above questions different?

The centre closed in June 1948.

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xxvi. If so, please give details.

N/A

1.8 Staff Background

(a) Organisation

Please see Barnardo's part A response in relation to the organisation.

(b) Establishment

Past

Barnardo's does not have any information in the archives relating to Stapleton Towers so is unable to provide specific answers to the following questions.

- i. How many persons were employed in some capacity at the establishment?

<p>The annual reports from 1946 to 1969 comment on the staffing levels in the homes. The reports suggest that, in addition to the superintendent, there were housemothers who were in charge of a small group of children along with assistants. In addition there was a cook, laundry lady, seamstress, domestic help and a gardener. In addition there would have been trainees and local volunteers.</p>

<p>Barnardo's has no information in relation to the number of persons employed at Stapleton Towers. In the unpublished autobiography of an 'old' boy he talks about having fond memories of a matron with whom he remained in contact with for many years after leaving Stapleton Towers.</p>

- ii. How many of those persons had the opportunity of unaccompanied access to a child, or children, cared for at the establishment?

<p>It is likely that all employed staff would have had unaccompanied access to boys at Stapleton Towers. The staff were predominantly female as the home was set up during World War II.</p>
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- iii. How many were involved in the provision of care to children accommodated at the establishment (child care workers)?

Barnardo's is unable to provide a definitive answer to this question as staff lists are no longer in existence. The superintendent and deputies, plus the houseparents and child care staff would have been involved in the provision of care.

- iv. What experience and/or qualifications, if any, did the child care workers require to have?

The original model for a Barnardo's home was based around the recreation of the family unit within a residential setting. Married couples were generally recruited to be in charge of each home. However, Stapleton Towers was only open during WWII, and married couples were less available.

In the early days prior to World War II residential staff would have had little or no formal qualifications. Some superintendents had nursing qualifications and later residential child care qualifications.

Barnardo's has no information in relation to the experience of the staff employed at Stapleton Towers.

- v. What was the child care worker/child numbers ratio?

Barnardo's does not have any information relating to the staff ratio.

- vi. What was the gender balance of the child care workers?

As it was the war the staff would have been almost exclusively female.

- vii. Was any attempt made to employ child care workers in looking after children of the same sex as those workers?

Barnardo's practice was to try and employ a married couple as superintendents as far as possible.

Present

- viii. With reference to the present position, are the answers to any of the above questions different?

The centre closed in June 1948.

- ix. If so, please give details.

N/A

2. Organisational Structure and Oversight

2.1 Governance

Please see Barnardo's part A response in relation to the organisation.

2.2 Culture

Please see Barnardo's part A response in relation to the organisation.

2.3 Leadership

Past

Barnardo's does not have any information in the archives relating to Stapleton Towers so is unable to provide specific answers to the following questions.

- i. How was the establishment managed and led?

Stapleton Towers was run by a superintendent and his wife.

- ii. What were the names and qualifications of the persons in charge of the establishment? Please include the dates for when each of the persons was in charge.

Dates	Superintendent	Qualifications
1941 – 1948	Mr and Mrs Smoothy	No information about their qualifications.

- iii. What was the oversight and supervision arrangements by senior management within the establishment?

The senior staff would have surprised the junior staff.

- iv. What were the oversight arrangements by the organisation, including visits by or on behalf of the organisation?

There were annual visits by the domestic advisor, the medical advisor and education advisor who provided annual reports to the Board of Trustees. The Scottish Trustee representative would visit annually as would senior management from Barnardo's Head Office in London.

Present

- v. With reference to the present position, are the answers to any of the above questions different?

The centre closed in June 1948.

- vi. If so, please give details

N/A.

2.4 Structure

Past

- i. What was the structure of the organisation?

Please see Barnardo's part A response in relation to the organisation.

- ii. What was the structure of the establishment?

Barnardo's does not have any information in the archives relating to Stapleton Towers so is unable to provide specific answers to the following questions.

Present

- iii. With reference to the present position, is the answer to the above question different?

The centre closed in June 1948.

- iv. If so, please give details.

N/A.

2.5 Hierarchy and Control

Please see Barnardo's part A response in relation to the organisation.

2.6 External Oversight

Past

Barnardo's does not have any information in the archives relating to Stapleton Towers so is unable to provide specific answers to the following questions.

- i. What were the arrangements for external oversight of the organisation and the establishment?

This is not known.

- ii. Who visited the organisation and/or the establishment in an official or statutory capacity and for what purpose?

The visitors' book which would have captured the names of all those who visited Stapleton Towers was destroyed under Barnardo's destruction policy. Barnardo's is unable to say who visited the home in an official or statutory capacity.

- iii. How often did this occur?

This is not known.

- iv. What did these visits involve in practice?

This is not known.

- v. What involvement did local authorities have with the organisation and/or the establishment in respect of residential care services for children?

Stapleton Towers closed before the Children Act 1948 and the creation of local authorities.

- vi. What involvement did local authorities have with the organisation and the establishment in respect of the children at the establishment?

As above.

- vii. If the establishment was run by a Catholic religious order, what actual involvement and/or responsibility, whether formal or informal, did the Catholic Hierarchy/Bishops' Conference have, either directly or at diocesan level, in the creation, governance, management and/or oversight of the establishment?

The establishment was not run by a Catholic Order.

- viii. What was the nature and extent of any pastoral care provided to the establishment, if it was run by a religious order?

N/A.

Present

- ix. With reference to the present position, are the answers to any of the above questions different?

The centre closed in June 1948.

- x. If so, please give details.

N/A.