

Principles for Conducting Research in Barnardos

Barnardos recognises the role of research in contributing to the achievement of the organisation's strategic goals and is committed to implementing a programme of research that is informed by the circumstances, needs and concerns of the families using its services. Barnardos is fully aware that its greatest research strength lies in its ability to carry out solution-focused, applied research studies with the children and families accessing our services as participants in the research process.

As an organisation that provides services to vulnerable and marginalised children and families, it is essential that the research work carried out by or on behalf of the organisation does not cause harm or distress for any child or family member participating in a research study. Therefore, the following principles shall be applied to all research conducted by or on behalf of the organisation:

- Respect
- Consent
- Anonymity, Confidentiality & Privacy
- Data Security
- Relevant
- Solution-focused
- Methodologically Robust
- Accessible
- Value for money

External researchers who wish to conduct research with children and families who use Barnardos services must demonstrate in their research proposal how they will incorporate these principles into their own research study.

Respect

Barnardos¹ recognises that we have a responsibility to ensure that the physical, social and psychological well-being of research participants is not adversely affected by our research programme. We will strive to protect and respect the rights and dignity of those who participate in research activities as well as their interests, sensitivities and privacy.

¹ For the remainder of this document reference to Barnardos should be understood to include research consultants or research institutes commissioned to conduct research or evaluation on behalf of the organisation.

Barnardos strives to ensure that research methods, tools and research materials used are appropriate to the age groups of participants, and are respectful of their abilities, needs and feelings.

Consent

Barnardos will ensure that the recruitment of research participants is based on freely given, informed consent - in line with GDPR requirements. Barnardos will at all times make initial contact with participants. We will explain, in appropriate detail and in terms meaningful to all potential research participants what the research is about, who is undertaking and financing it, why it is being undertaken and how it will be disseminated and used.

Barnardos recognises that research with children requires particular care. The consent of a parent or responsible adult will be obtained for the participation of the child in a research study. **The assent of the child will also be sought.**

Research participants will be made aware of their right to refuse or withdraw participation whenever and for whatever reason they wish. Participants will be made aware that they are not obliged to take part and this includes the right to withhold answering a specific question or element of a questionnaire.

Anonymity, confidentiality and privacy

The anonymity and privacy of all those taking part in Barnardos research will be respected and personal information regarding research participants will be kept confidential.

Barnardos has a duty of care to take steps to protect a child or children taking part in any of our research studies, if they are considered to be “at risk of significant harm”. The limits of confidentiality should be outlined with all participants before the commencement of any research activity. This should also be explicitly stated in information sheets and consent forms given to all research participants. Researchers must adhere to the Barnardos Child Protection Policy under the Children’s First Act 2015 at all times.

Data Security

Appropriate measures must be taken to ensure that all data is stored securely in line with Data Protection Legislation and Barnardos Data Protection Policy and Data Retention Policy. Barnardos has full regard for its obligations under Data Protection Legislation on the appropriate security measures to be taken against unauthorised access to or alteration, disclosure or destruction, of personal data.

Relevant

Barnardos will ensure that research undertaken will be worthwhile and relevant to the mission, vision and strategic direction of the organisation and will have no adverse effects on research participants.

Solution-focused

Barnardos is committed to ensuring that its research programme is solution-focused; the function of the research programme is not to merely identify problems associated with disadvantage and marginalisation among vulnerable families, but to actively identify, develop and implement solutions to these problems.

Methodologically Robust

Barnardos will ensure that the methodologies and techniques chosen for all our research studies will be appropriate to the scope and definition of the research question. The target population of the research study and the resources available to the research team. All research methods and tools/materials used should be based on best practice and evidence-based research from the field and/or area of interest.

Accessible

Barnardos recognises that our research outputs are relevant for a wide range of people. This includes the research participants, other Barnardos service-users and staff members, service providers, stakeholders within the broader children's services sector and decision and policy makers at organisational, local and government levels. Barnardos will therefore endeavour to disseminate our research findings and recommendations in as wide of a variety of ways, across different formats, platforms and languages, where appropriate.

Value for money

Barnardos will ensure that research studies undertaken in-house or on behalf of the organisation will be efficient, make best use of the organisation's resources and will make a meaningful contribution to achieving the overall strategic goals of the organisation for our service design. This research will also contribute to the further development of our services, as well as advocacy and policy activities carried out by the organisation.