'Working Together Online'
Barnardos Digital Best Practice Framework 2022

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RETHINK IRELAND
Our Social Innovation Fund

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Section 1:

Introduction

Barnardos' mission is to deliver services and work with families, communities, and our partners to transform the lives of vulnerable children who are affected by adverse childhood experiences.

We provide practical and professional therapeutic services for children, young people and families across Ireland in 56 service locations. Barnardos works with children and families in a variety of different ways ranging from early intervention and early years to individual, group, and specialised supports.

The Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent government social distancing and closure guidelines resulted in a transformation of how Barnardos provides services to children and their families. During this time, Barnardos adapted to a blended approach to service delivery.

This involved a huge change in service delivery models, from one that was predominantly focused on face-to-face delivery to one that incorporated an online digital aspect. From the outset of the pandemic, Barnardos staff responded rapidly to the changing needs of our service users and teams quickly adapted to ensure that connection and supports remained in place.

Throughout this period of crisis response, there was little capacity to explore best practice guidelines regarding online working as teams responded to the needs created by Covid-19. The Digital Best Practice project[1] aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of Barnardos use of digital services and to build on our progress to date. In order to plan for the future of service deliveries, a detailed evaluation was conducted internally focusing on our use of digital tools in the delivery of therapeutic and practical support services to children and families.

The evaluation 'Working together online - A Barnardos Evaluation of Online Work with Children and Families' was carried out with 102 Barnardos children's services staff members, 139 parents/adult service users and 5 children in receipt of Barnardos services, and through consultation groups with 106 staff members in 19 Barnardos projects.

The findings of this evaluation were extensive and outlined many instances where staff, children and families had received benefits from online service delivery and where access to services had increased. The report also highlighted the challenges experienced by all when working online.

1   The Digital Best Practice Project was funded by Rethink Ireland.

The following nine key recommendations have been made based on the evaluation findings:

1. **Develop a Barnardos Digital Framework** that includes guidance documents, protocols, and assessment tools to support staff and service users working in an online space.

2. **Ensure there is an option for a blended approach to service delivery.** A blended approach would mean utilising online and face-to-face as complimentary mediums of service delivery. This would allow the service user to make a choice about how they engage in services. In cases where families will benefit from the option of an online service delivery, a blended approach to service delivery should be explored. In some circumstances, primarily with universal services, there may be a preference to fully deliver programmes online, particularly if there are geographical barriers.

3. **Complex needs.** Care and consideration to individual cases is of paramount importance when planning online work with families of all levels of need. Staff teams should utilise the tools within the Barnardos Digital Framework to assess whether the service is suitable to be delivered online. In the cases of complex needs and child protection concerns, face-to-face should be the dominant medium of service delivery and, in some instances, may be complemented online.

4. **Training and Development Plan.** In order to continue to build capacity and skills, a resource bank should be developed with guides and access to learning resources. A series of training webinars should be made available, training in programme delivery and online engagement.

5. **Providing online programmes to children.** Careful consideration should be given to the child's age and capacity to participate virtually. Work with children under 10 years of age should take place face-to-face where possible. There may be exceptional circumstances where a younger child may benefit from participating in an online service. Workers should discuss suitability of working online with children with their line managers and with the parent/guardian.

6. **Programme fidelity.** The process of adapting manualised and evidence programmes online is one that requires careful planning in order to maintain programme fidelity. A guidance tool on programme fidelity should be developed if programmes are to be utilised online in a long-term capacity.

7. **The safety and suitability** of utilising digital platforms should be reviewed by the staff and manager taking into consideration any risks, for example, potential risks to privacy. A risk assessment should be completed for online work to inform its suitability as a medium. A worker should review the protocols for working safely online, complete all training provided, such as cyberbullying and data protection, and be familiar with the policies and the I.T department guidelines to ensure online work is compliant with GDPR and Data Protection Policy.

8. **Confidentiality.** When working with groups and individuals online, staff should ensure that there are clear boundaries and guidance around role and confidentiality.

9. **Expand the reach** of Barnardos universal services to school-age children by delivering programmes to classrooms via video call using webcams or interactive whiteboards.

Blended working in Barnardos

Blended working is a flexible approach that combines face-to-face and online service delivery. Blended working provides children and families with a greater choice and access to services as it reduces barriers to engagement such as travel, childcare, and time, all of which often impact attendance and participation.

Within the context of working with children and families in Barnardos, one example of blended working would be meeting a parent or child at planned intervals (initial assessment stage, review stage, closure) and carrying out virtual sessions in between.

Another example of a work plan might include virtual sessions every second week e.g. one week face-to-face, one week virtual and so on. For more intensive pieces of work, staff members could decide to meet a family once a week in person and complete a second check-in virtually later the same week. Similarly, for group work pieces, registration and consent might be obtained in person and the programme content delivered online. There are many options available that can be adapted to meet the needs of the child, family and service.

The Digital Best Practice Framework sets out to support the successful implementation of online services to achieve the following outcomes:

- Children and families will have increased choice and additional service delivery options to use with a blended approach to service provision.

- Children and families will experience services online that are equivalent in quality to face-to-face services.

- Children and families will achieve mutually agreed outcomes when accessing online services.

- Children and families will experience staff who are confident in delivering services online.

- Children and families will experience staff who have the knowledge and skills needed to deliver high quality services online.

- Clear processes/procedures will be in place to ensure best practice and safety when delivering services online.

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Section 2:

Guiding Principles for Online Service Delivery

We recognise that care needs to be taken to ensure that online service delivery is safe, meaningful and of a high quality for children and families. The provision of online services is underpinned by the following principles, the practical application of which will be explored later in this framework document.

1 Online service delivery is led by the service user's preferences, needs and service resources.

2 Barriers are removed for children and families accessing online services.

3 Staff are supported to provide quality services online.

4 A therapeutic relationship remains at the centre of online service delivery.

5 Online spaces are safe for services users and staff.

6 Online services are planned and outcome focused.

1. Online service delivery is led by the service user's preferences, needs and service resources.

Staff ensure that the children and families are at the centre of decision-making about the services and supports they receive. The decision to deliver elements of services online is based on the service users request, preference or need. Staff in collaboration with children and families should work together to identify the individual's needs and assess if those needs can be met by providing services online.

2. Barriers are removed for children and families accessing online services.

Children and families have varying levels of support needs online, ranging from confidence and skills, to internet and/or access to equipment. When assessing if an online service delivery offering is a viable method of delivery, staff should be conscious of children and families support needs. Staff work together with the service user to assess individual capacity to use online services and find solutions to potential barriers or challenges.

3. Staff are supported to provide quality services online.

Staff have access to and use learning resources, supervision and other supports to ensure they are skilled and confident in providing services online. Strong professional skills adapted to the online setting are the foundation of quality online service delivery. The technology involved acts merely as a tool in supporting the delivery of the therapeutic skills a worker uses to support children and families. The organisation has a responsibility to provide access to training and resources to support online service delivery. Staff have a responsibility to engage in learning opportunities in order to ensure they are equipped to provide services online.

4. A therapeutic relationship remains at the centre of online service delivery.

Building trusting relationships with children and families is a necessary and important task that is at the centre of all the work we do with services users. Therapeutic relationships are anchored by safety and trust, and enable children and families to connect with us in a way that fosters collaboration and meaningful participation. Staff should continue to use their interpersonal and professional skills to create emotionally safe and regulating spaces for children and families online. Ensuring confidentiality is key to supporting children and families to feel safe sharing during online sessions.

5. Online spaces are safe for services users and staff.

Online service delivery options create many opportunities and benefits for children, families and staff, but also potentially raise risks. When assessing if online service delivery is a suitable option with a service user, all potential risks must be considered. Staff should be conscious of the limitations to online work, and that there will be times when it is hard to assess safety in an online context. In these cases, throughout discussions with the manager and service user, face-to-face or blended work should be prioritised.

6. Online services are planned and outcome focused.

When planning a service delivery with children and families, staff need to take into account the suitability of the service or programme content and decide which components are to be delivered face-to-face or online. Staff should continue to utilise their professional skills, creativity and training to provide services that are engaging and meaningful online. As with face-to-face working, online service deliveries should be structured, planned and focused on achieving outcomes. Staff may need to tailor their approach for each child or adult depending on their unique needs and interests.

Section 3:

Practice Guidance

This section identifies the components of the digital framework, provides guidance and outlines activities to be completed by staff members in order to support high quality online service delivery and achieve outcomes.

This section is divided into the subheadings:

1. Planning your Online Session

2. Safeguarding and Managing Risk

3. Maintaining Programme Fidelity

4. Delivering your Online Session

5. Building a Therapeutic Relationship

6. Evaluation and Reflection

7. Managing Staff and Services Online

In this section, staff members will find questions and statements to guide the planning, delivery and evaluation of online services. Barnardos have developed a number of user-friendly tools and resources for internal use that are linked throughout this section. These resources will support the delivery of high quality services online.

While this guidance is written for teams providing services to children, parents and adult service users online, the information and tips could be applied where appropriate to all areas of online practice including inter-agency meetings and team spaces.

1) Planning your Online Session

Online meetings and video conferences can be used in a number of different ways ranging from connection, i.e. calling to make sure the children and families we work with are well and supported (checking in to see how a new routine is going), to remote intervention (the provision of services and supports online). Below is a list of actions to guide staff members with the planning of online sessions for children and families.

Planning your Online Session
Service User Preference and Need
• Identify the family's needs and the purpose of the work through assessment, e.g. Barnardos Assessment Framework (BAF), Meitheal etc.
• Ensure that you have all the documents you require to begin online work with the service user, e.g. consent. Arranging to complete this paper work in person where possible can be helpful, especially when children and families are new to the service.
• Provide the service user with the option of face-to-face, online or blended working and establish their preference.
• If online or blended working is chosen, speak to the service user and agree on the device (e.g. laptop or phone) and platform (e.g. Zoom or WhatsApp) you will use for online sessions.
• Ensure the service user is comfortable with the chosen application and ask if they would like to have a practice session in person to learn how to use the app.

Staff Needs

- Before you deliver online services read the IT policy, Data Protection Policy, and complete Cyber Security training.

- Review the resources available for delivering online services to children and families. Barnardos resources include A digital webinar series that covers topics such as 'moving services online' to 'working therapeutically online' and online safety. Guidance booklets to support staff use of applications like Zoom, Teams and Whatsapp are also available. All resources can be found on Barnardos staff intranet

- Staff members should only use a work account and work device to log in and provide services. Accounts for platforms and applications should be set up using a work email address.

- Complete a practice run of using online applications with colleagues.

- Review the use of digital platforms for service delivery and any outstanding learning needs on an on-going basis with your line manager.

- Link in with colleagues within your staff team and in the wider organisation to address in the moment challenges regarding the planning of your online service delivery.

Access to Technology & Internet

- Ask the service user if they have access to a reliable internet connection and to a video-conferencing enabled device, e.g. laptop with a camera, IPad, tablet or smartphone.

- If not, check if your service has the resources to support the service user, e.g. lending a device. Follow guidelines as laid out in the 'Tablet Pilot Guidance' and Consent available on Barnardos staff intranet.

- Consider any financial implications of online working for the family, e.g. data caps or allowances/charges.

- Work in collaboration with the service user/family to find solutions to any barriers that inhibit them from receiving services through an online medium (if online working is their preference).

Environment

- Ask the service user where they plan to carry out virtual sessions and suggest that sessions take place in a quiet and private space. (See section Safeguarding and Managing risk for further guidance)

- Staff members should also make sure they carry out sessions in a quiet and private space.

Intervention Factors

- Is the programme/intervention adaptable online? (See section Maintaining Programme Fidelity)

- Are you running a group or individual session? As a general rule, the larger the number of participants the more structure is needed in order to ensure meaningful engagement and participation with online sessions.

- Provide the service user with the programme resources they will need to participate in each session.

- As part of the service review process check in and see if the online delivery is working well.

Back-up Plan
• Develop a back-up plan for situations where you cannot connect virtually, e.g. continuing by phone if either person's internet connection is lost.
• Consider what you will do if the home environment becomes too busy and is no longer appropriate for a virtual session, e.g. will you cancel the session and reschedule?

2) Safeguarding and Managing Risk

Assessing safety and risk can be more challenging in an online context. Staff members should be vigilant for any signs of concern and discuss these with a manager/designated liaison person in a timely manner. A list of guiding questions for managing safety and risk online can be found below.

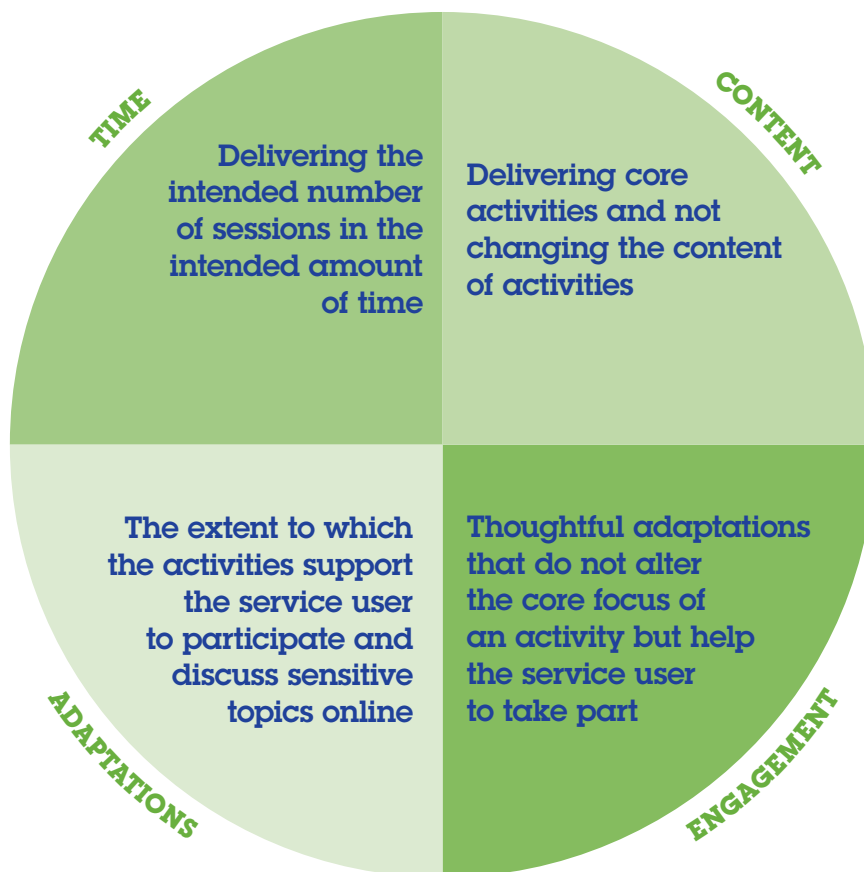| Guiding Questions for Managing Safety and Risk Online |
|---|
| **Pre-delivery** |
| • What is the purpose of the work? |
| • What information is available to the service about the service user/family? |
| • Does the service user have a private space to engage in online sessions? |
| • Does the service user have access to headphones in order to ensure that privacy is maintained throughout sessions for all participants? |
| • Does the service have resources, e.g. a tablet, to support the service user to engage in online work? |
| **During/Post Delivery** |
| • How did the service user present, e.g. did they appear worried, upset, less engaging etc.? |
| • Was the service user interrupted during their session? |
| • What was observed in the service user's environment? |
| • Did the service user share information of a concerning nature? All concerns of a child protection or welfare nature should be discussed with the designated liaison person and reported accordingly as per child protection policy. |

3) Maintaining Programme Fidelity

Programme fidelity is about delivering evidence-based programmes or services as intended.

The reason programme fidelity is important is because evidence-based programmes are more likely to aid families to achieve programme outcomes when delivered as designed or as per manual. Programme fidelity is about keeping true to core elements. The illustration below identifies core elements to consider when assessing programme fidelity.

These elements will act as prompts to think about when delivering an evidenced-based programme online and should be used to aid decision-making about whether or not programme fidelity can be maintained. For example, should extra time be added as online sessions may be shorter than face-to-face or can I share examples where relevant to support the service user's understanding?

TIME — Delivering the intended number of sessions in the intended amount of time

CONTENT — Delivering core activities and not changing the content of activities

ADAPTATIONS — The extent to which the activities support the service user to participate and discuss sensitive topics online

ENGAGEMENT — Thoughtful adaptations that do not alter the core focus of an activity but help the service user to take part

4) Delivering your Online Session

Below is a list of actions that will support you with the delivery of online sessions.

Delivering your Online Session
Service User Needs
• Share and discuss the work plan for sessions with the service user and make adjustments if necessary.
• Ensure that the service user understands from the outset which sessions will be online and which sessions may need to be in person.
• Talk with the service user about how they will prepare for an online session using the online session tip sheet in appendix A.
• Provide or support the service user to download the forms they need for online working, e.g. WhatsApp for Desktop tip sheet. Links to all guidance documents can be found in appendix D
Environment
• Choose the best space for your session. Where possible this should be a quiet space, where you can sit comfortably.
• Ensure you have a good internet connection in this room and it is well lit.
• Have any materials you need for the session ready/nearby.
• Consider what a service user can view from your background if you are working remotely outside of a Barnardos project. Care should be taken to protect your privacy, and background filters can be used if needed. Guidance on applying background filters can be found in the Zoom guidance document on Barnardos staff intranet.
Opening a Session
• Welcome the service user to the session warmly, as you would in face-to-face sessions.
• Check if the service user is in a quiet and private space. If not, can they move to a quiet space? If a child/young person attends a session alone, ask who is at home or with them. Ask parents to say 'hello' briefly with younger children.
• Ask some questions to establish the individual's mood and comfort levels, e.g. how has your day been?
• Ask the service user to turn their camera on during online sessions.
• When working with children, it can be helpful to discuss expectations by doing an online contract[2].
During a Session
• Consider what application and features you could use to make online sessions more engaging, e.g. sharing screen and using the whiteboard or poll features on Zoom. (See following section Building a Therapeutic relationship online for more detail)

2   An online contract may include information about the day/time of the online session, length of session, the application that will be used for sessions, where the child will sit during sessions, e.g. kitchen table, etc.

- Ask the service user if they can see and hear the resources you are sharing on screen.

- Check if the service user needs you to clarify any information throughout the session and give the service user the opportunity to comment and ask questions.

- Notice if the service user's energy and engagement levels appear to be reducing at any stage and ask if they would like to come back to an activity/session at another time.

- If delivering an online group, it is important to check in with some service users who may appear less comfortable taking part in online group discussions and offer a one-to-one call where necessary.

Ending a Session

- Reflect on session goals and summarise the conversation.

- Check that the child/parent has understood and has agreed to what has been discussed.

- Notice the service user's presentation. If a conversation was difficult and the service user was upset at any stage, continue to explore their emotional needs. Identify if further support can be offered from you or others.

- Engage in closure conversations at the end of the online session, e.g. ask "what have you got on for the rest of the day?" Or "what is one thing you will you do for yourself after this call?"

- If working with a child or young person, consider if you will need to speak with the parent/guardian before ending the session. If so, be clear with the child about what you will share with a parent/guardian.

- Let the service user know if you would like them to follow up on any tasks between sessions and also take note of any actions for you to complete in between sessions.

5) Building a Therapeutic Relationship Online

During face-to-face work, staff members are guided by a host of individual, situational and contextual factors, as well as verbal and non-verbal cues, most of which are either not present or are different in the online context. While these factors influence how we form relationships with the children and families we work with, establishing trusting relationships that empower service users is possible online, it just requires additional time and thought. Below is a list of actions to support staff to build therapeutic relationships online.

Building a Therapeutic Relationship Online

- Explain to the service user how their confidentiality will be protected during online sessions, e.g. that online meeting rooms will be locked/password protected and that staff members will wear earphones so only they can hear the service user. The service user's data/information will be stored as outlined in Barnardos consent form and parent/children's booklet.

- Offering the service user a 'taster session' using an online application can be helpful in preparing the service user for what to expect during online work. This in turn may support the development of a positive relationship between the service user and staff member.

- Position your device so that you are at eye level with the camera. This helps to replicate face-to-face interactions. Additional tips for connecting in a virtual space can be found at **www.arielgroup.com/replicating-in-person-interactions-in-a-virtual-world/.**

- Consider how you will open your session, e.g. if running a group, you might play music as the service users enter the meeting room. (See section 4 Delivering your Online Session for further detail)

- Consider what is being communicated to the service user through your own body language, e.g. eye and head movements, facial expression, tone of voice etc.

- Use summary statements, reflections, and observations frequently to let the child/parent know that you are listening.

- Notice the service user's body language, do they appear comfortable or uncomfortable? When in doubt, never assume. Ask clarifying questions, e.g. "I'm wondering if what we are talking about is making you uncomfortable. Are you ok to continue?"

- There are a number of different ways to build relationships with and support children and families' engagement during online sessions. For example, using exaggerated expressions and gestures can be helpful when engaging with young children. Further information on communication and building rapport online can be found at **www.thriveworks.com/blog/ways-to-build-rapport-with-online-counseling/.**

- Children may enjoy drawing pictures that they can then share through the camera while telling a story. Children may also use play or show you their favourite toy or pet. A game of X's & O's on the Zoom whiteboard is an example of a great ice-breaker.

- For older children, you can ask if they have any art, journaling, music, or anything else to share with you. Consider engaging older children or teenagers by exploring an online activity together, e.g. ask the child to play you their favourite song.

- For additional tips on creative and fun ways to connect online go to **www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2021/aug/23/zoom-dilemmas-solved-expert-advice-on-making-video-chats-less-awkward-and-more-fun**

6) Evaluation and Reflection

After delivering an online session, you should refer to the guiding questions outlined below to reflect on and evaluate the online session. As outlined in the previous section, any child welfare/safety concerns should be flagged with a manager/designated liaison person in line with Child Protection Policy.

Guiding Questions for Self Evaluation and Reflection Post-Online Delivery
Environment & Presentation
• Was my environment inviting, relaxing and free from distractions?
• Was I close to the camera? Was my eye level ok? Could they see my whole face?
• How was my volume? Could the person hear me ok?
• Did I appear overly calm/anxious?

Preparation
• Was I and the service user prepared for the session?
• Did I involve the service user in planning?
• Did I have materials prepared/on hand?
• Did I provide appropriate materials/instructions?
• Did I have enough or too many activities?

Session Structure

- Was the session structured sufficiently?

- Did I cover all the session goals?

- Did I have enough time?

- Did I summarise the session at the end?

Building Relationships

- Did I build rapport with the service user? How did I do this? What was most effective? What didn't work?

- How was my body language? Did I make any distracting movements/facial expressions?

- Did I demonstrate good listening?

- Did I allow the service user time to talk? Did I allow for silence where appropriate?

- Did I appropriately respond to questions/concerns?

Technology

- Did technical issues take up too much time?

- Did I appropriately communicate minor technical issues to the service user?

- Did I become overly distracted with technical issues?

- Did I need to re-arrange or use a back-up plan like a phone call because technical issues caused delays?

Outcomes

- Did I have a review/closure meeting with the service user to capture their views and experiences of online working?

- Did I track programme outcomes explicitly, stating that work was carried out in an online context?

7) Managing Staff and Services Online

Managers have an important role to play in leading out on digital practice where it can support communication and connection within teams and the wider organisation and improve outcomes for children and families. Listed below are actions that will assist managers to support staff members working online as well as supporting online service delivery.

Managing Staff and Services Online
What do I need?
• Read and review the IT Policy, Data Protection Policy and complete Cyber Security training.
• Review the resources available for delivering online services to children and families. Barnardos resources include A digital webinar series that covers topics such as 'moving services online' to 'working therapeutically online' and online safety. Guidance booklets to support staff use of applications like Zoom, Teams and Whatsapp are also available. All resources can be found on Barnardos staff intranet.
• Access additional resources for leading teams in a virtual space at **www.arielgroup.com/virtual-leadership/**
• Work with Administrators to set up accounts for online platforms and applications using a work email address.
• Complete a practice run of using online applications with colleagues.
• Review the use of digital platforms for service delivery and any outstanding learning needs on an on-going basis.
Online Supervision
• Meet with team members to understand personal preferences regarding online work.
• As much as possible, give the staff member a choice of face-to-face or online supervision. You can find a helpful resource for online supervision at **www.ucc.ie/en/media/academic/appliedsocialstudies/oswp/ Remotesupervisioninsocialwork.pdf.**
• When delivering supervision online explain how you will protect the staff member's confidentiality. For example, lock the online meeting room, wear earphones so that only you can hear the staff member and sit in private room.
• Explore with the supervisee if they have a similar quiet and private space to sit in for online supervision.
• If carrying out supervision virtually, records may be signed electronically. A guidance document for creating a digital signature can be found on Barnardos staff intranet.
• Ask staff members what training or support they need in order to work online. Direct staff members to this framework document for guidance.
• Discuss the potential challenges of online working for the staff member and work together to find solutions where possible. Potential barriers may include access to equipment, e.g. laptop/smart phone.
• Additional guidance on providing therapy and/or supervision using technology can be found at **www.iacp.ie/ onlinecounselling.**

Staff Safety & Well- Being

- In addition to regular supervision, allocate time to check in with staff members who are working remotely or a greater distance away from service.

- In collaboration with staff members, decide what method of communication you will use to discuss immediate safety concerns when working remotely.

- Where possible, meet with staff members to debrief following a challenging online meeting. It may be helpful to ask staff members to inform you of any planned meetings that they believe could potentially be challenging so you can support accordingly.

- Support staff who are working from home to create boundaries and to disconnect from work when their working day is done.

- Where staff members do not have an opportunity to connect face-to-face regularly, build in some time for virtual connection, e.g. virtual coffee break.

- Encourage staff members to take short movement breaks if they are spending a large amount of time online, e.g. attending training via Zoom.

Service User Safety & Well-being

- In consultation with the staff member and taking into account the service user's preference and needs, consider if online service delivery alone is sufficient or if the service user will benefit from a blended approach.

- What is the need, e.g. what do you know about the service user's communication style, abilities, computer literacy or general literacy?

- Consider arranging a face-to-face meeting where a sensitive or challenging conversation needs to take place.

- Discuss with the staff member what they/you will do if there are worries or concerns about a child or adult service user after a call.

Appendices

Preparing for your Online Session – Tip Sheets for Families

Preparing for your Online Sessions	
Environment	• Where possible, sit in a comfortable, well-lit and quiet space.
	• Consider where you will put your phone/device down during the session (so you don't need to hold it!).
	• Have any materials that you will need for the session nearby e.g. pen and paper.
	• Turn off any TV, radio etc. to limit noise distractions.
	• Let the people in your home know that you will be attending an online session to avoid any unwanted disruptions.
	• If necessary, make sure your child/children have everything they need before the session starts.
Equipment	• Charge your device before your session or have it plugged into a charger for the duration of the session.
	• Check your internet connection before the session starts.
	• If you need a link to access your session make sure you can access it easily from your phone/device.
	• Open your app, e.g. Zoom, a few minutes before your session begins.
	• Talk to your worker about what you will do if you can't connect online due to internet or device issues.
	• Use headphones where possible to protect your privacy and the privacy of others, e.g. if you are attending a group.
	• Position your phone/device so that you are at eye level with the camera. This helps to replicate face-to-face conversations.
Ending a Session	• Make sure you are clear on what was discussed, and any follow up needed from you. Ask questions if you are unsure.
	• Discuss any problems with the video call, e.g. internet connection.
	• Confirm the date and time of the next session, and check if it is online or face-to-face.
	• 'Hang up' by ensuring that you click 'leave' or 'end' make sure the site is closed down.

Preparing for your Child's Online Sessions	
Environment	• Where possible, set up the phone/device in a well-lit, quiet and private space that is distraction free.
	• Consider where the child will put the phone/device during the session (so they don't need to hold it!).
	• Turn off any TV, radio etc. to limit noise distractions.
	• Where possible, remain nearby while your child is working online but also give your child enough space and privacy to talk with their worker.
Equipment	• Charge the phone/device before the session or have it plugged into a charger for the duration of the session.
	• If possible, your child should wear headphones when engaging online to limit any noise distractions and to protect the privacy of others, e.g. if attending a group.
	• Gather any equipment your child may need prior to the session, e.g. pen, paper, worksheets etc.
	• Position the phone/device so that your child is at eye level with the camera. This helps to replicate face-to-face conversations.
Ending a Session	• Talk to your child about the purpose of the session and tell them how long the call will last.
	• Check your internet connection before the session starts.
	• Talk to your worker about what you will do if you can't connect online due to internet or device issues.
	• If you have any questions before your child's online session, ask your worker who will be happy to talk through any concerns or questions you may have.

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WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN WORKING ONLINE?

RCN: 20010027

1 At Barnardos you have the option to work with us in-person, online or have a mixture of in-person and online sessions. Online work with Barnardos can be one-to-one with you and your worker or group work with other children and young people. We use phones, laptops, and tablets to meet with children and young people online.

2 Your Barnardos worker will meet with you and your parent/carer to decide together if online working is the right fit for you.

3 You will decide what app to use for online work. Your worker will ask you if you would like to practice using the app before your first session.

4 What you will need:
  - Quiet & private room
  - Internet
  - Charged device e.g. laptop
  - Pen & paper
  - Headphones (If possible)

5 At the start of your session, your worker will chat with you about how you have been since you last spoke and will explain the activity you will complete together that week. There may be a task or activity that your worker would like you to practice at home between calls, they will let you know before finishing up.

6 At the end of every call your worker will ask if you enjoyed your online session or if there is anything you would like to change. Your feedback is so important!

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE ASK YOUR BARNARDOS WORKER WHO WILL BE HAPPY TO HELP.

YOU CAN CONTACT YOUR WORKER AT _____

Barnardos

Because childhood lasts a lifetime

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN WORKING ONLINE?

RCN: 20010027

1 At Barnardos you have the option to work with us in-person, online or have a mixture of in-person and online sessions. Online work with Barnardos can be one-to-one with you and your worker or group work with other parents and adults. We use phones, laptops, and tablets to meet with people online.

2 Your Barnardos worker will meet with you, give you information about online working and together you will decide if online working is the right fit for you.

3 You will decide what app to use for online work. Your worker will ask you if you would like to practice using the app before your first session.

4 What you will need:
- Quiet & private room
- Internet
- Charged device e.g. laptop
- Pen & paper
- Headphones (If possible)

5 At the start of your session, your worker will chat with you about how you have been since you last spoke and will explain the activity you will complete together that week.
There may be a task or activity that your worker would like you to practice at home between calls, they will let you know before finishing up.

6 At the end of every call your worker will ask you how you experienced your online session and if there is anything you would like to change.

Your feedback is very important.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE ASK YOUR BARNARDOS WORKER WHO WILL BE HAPPY TO HELP.

YOU CAN CONTACT YOUR WORKER AT _____

All Digital Best Practice guidance documents and tip sheets are available for Barnardos staff to access on the Staff Intranet, they can also be downloaded and printed if required.

For Staff:

↗ **Staff Zoom Guidance Booklet**

Provides guidance on setting up a Zoom meeting, sharing screen/presenting on Zoom, and using advanced settings such as breakout rooms, polls, and audio.

↗ **Teams Guidance Booklet**

Provides guidance on the use of Microsoft Teams instant messaging function, setting up and joining a Teams call, and sharing screen/presenting on Teams.

For Parents:

↗ **Parents & Adults Zoom Guidance Booklet**

A short three-page document for parents and adults that provides guidance on setting up a Zoom account, joining an online session, and tips for video and audio settings.

↗ **Tablet Pilot Guidance and Consent**

Provides guidance for staff and a consent form for parents and families who wish to borrow a tablet from Barnardos for a specific period of time in order to participate in a service.

For Parents & Staff:

↗ **WhatsApp Tip Sheet**

Provides tips on downloading and installing WhatsApp to a smart phone and additional information about using WhatsApp on a computer.