

### **Key Points**

- The announcement of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund, resourced by £500 million over the lifetime of the Parliament, is a welcome step in the right direction which will help deliver support to families and help us #KeepThePromise.
- Barnardo's Scotland 'Challenges from the Frontline Revisited' joint report with the NSPCC highlighted the impact of inequality on families in Scotland, with escalating need from an increasing number of families with complex challenges. The pandemic has only increased this level of need, with poverty being a core issue.
- We urge the Scottish Government to move faster on doubling the Scottish Child Payment, as children in need cannot afford to wait.
- A key focus of the Parliament should be prioritising early intervention to improve the mental health and wellbeing of Scotland's children and young people, many of whom are facing huge challenges in the wake of changes caused by the pandemic.

## **1. Family Support Services and the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund**

Barnardo's Scotland has family support services across the country which support children, young people and families and **provide practical, financial and emotional support**. Our experience suggests that this is most effective if it can be at an early stage rather than when a child or family reaches crisis point.

Barnardo's joint report with the NSPCC, '[Challenges From the Frontline: Revisited](#)', published last year, documents the decline in available family support services since 2013. At the same time, **challenges and adversity for many families has increased**, with poverty being a core issue.

A key catalyst for the announcement of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund has been the work of The Promise team which is taking forward the recommendations from the care review and has highlighted that current activity on family support is simply not sufficient.

This is a step in the right direction, but if we are to keep The Promise, we need **a long-term commitment to take forward the work of the Family Support Delivery Group and deliver large scale investment** to ensure family support is universally available.

## 2. Child Poverty

**1 in 4** children in Scotland were living in poverty prior to the pandemic, and **86 per cent** of Barnardo's practitioners reported that they think the number of families we work with who experience poverty has increased compared with pre-pandemic.

As members of the End Child Poverty Coalition, and [signatories to the letter](#) to the First Minister ahead of the Programme for Government calling for the Scottish Child Payment to be doubled immediately, we continue to urge the Scottish Government to **double the Scottish Child Payment in this year's budget** in order to make the necessary progress towards meeting the interim child poverty targets.

## 3. Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

Recent statistics revealed that pressure on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), and **the need for support after the pandemic, has never been greater**, with **1,686** children waiting over a year for support in June 2021 – double the figure from the previous year.

Barnardo's believes in intervening early to prevent developmental trauma and childhood adversity, and the subsequent negative impacts, which are closely linked to the emergence of mental health and wellbeing needs later in life. Our work is underpinned by trauma-informed practice, supporting children and young people to process and recover from traumatic life experiences, reduce functional and behavioural difficulties, and build the skills and resilience needed to achieve their full potential.

Investment in CAMHS to reduce waiting lists must be supported **with renewed focus on early intervention** and adequate resources to provide wraparound support that promotes wellbeing at the earliest stages.

## 4. "Get into Summer" Programmes

Due to Scottish Government investment, we delivered the [Barnardo's Active Summer Engagement \(BASE\) programme](#) during the summer of 2021. This included a virtual offering alongside a range of locality based, in-person programmes. The delivery of summer activities took place across 18 local authority areas. We delivered a range of creative activities including working in partnership with The Wave Project in Tayside to deliver surfing lessons for an Additional Support Needs group and building on our B-Wild approach, which supports existing Barnardo's services to develop outdoor therapeutic practice, with bug hunts, den building, nature walks and camping trips.

We led a **comprehensive programme of activities** across our services which included pop up play, day trips, family fun days, groupwork and individual supports. Barriers to participation were removed through the provision of food and covering travel costs.

We reached 5287 number of people through 1578 number of individual children and young people.

**About Barnardo's**

Barnardo's is the UK's largest national children's charity. Barnardo's Scotland works with more than 16,300 children, young people and families in over 140 specialised community-based services, and we have 95 shops. Our work includes supporting children, young people and families through fostering and adoption services, child sexual abuse and exploitation services, support for young carers, young people entering employment, education and training, and families living in poverty.

We use information and experience from our services across Scotland, and from the children and young people we work with, to develop our policy positions. We seek positive change in policy and practice based on what matters to the people who use our services and what we see working in communities. We work collaboratively across all sectors and political parties to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people.

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