

### **Key Points**

- Barnardo's support to families from Ukraine over the past year builds on our significant experience across the UK of supporting refugees arriving from Afghanistan and Syria through a range of services.
- In Scotland, we have developed the 'Barnardo's Scotland Welcome (Ukraine) Service' because we recognise the need to reach those children, young people and families coming to Scotland to seek refuge from the war against Ukraine.
- We fully understand that families fleeing Ukraine are likely to have experienced significant trauma and have limited resources which requires significant continued investment to provide them with appropriate support.
- We welcome commitment from the Scottish Government that those who have made Scotland their temporary home will be welcome for as long as they need.

### **Barnardo's Scotland Welcome Ukraine Service**

The Barnardo's Scotland Welcome Ukraine Service comprises an operational manager, seven project workers operating across Scotland, as well as a flexible bank of sessional staff to further support areas of specific need. So far, **we have supported more than 400 children and young people and their families.**

The service has recruited several staff who have been displaced from Ukraine, along with staff from Ukraine who have already been settled in the UK for a number of years and speak fluent Ukrainian and English.

**We offer support across the whole of Scotland, which is particularly important to those families who may need to move, ensuring support can move with them if required.** Contact and support takes place both face-to-face and online and is conducted both on a one-to-one basis and group work.

An initial assessment allows workers to ensure that **the needs of each family are prioritised.**

This can include practical support – for example, access to **digital devices** to ensure families stay connected to loved ones, **information about how to access support** with money, housing, benefits and employment along with exploring ways to reduce isolation.

We have **access to therapeutic services** to address the impact of trauma, and staff work with children, young people and families navigate their new lives here in Scotland.

Using our Emergency Fund, Barnardo's Scotland has also been able to ensure that essential items such as food, utility support, clothing, footwear, baby items, strollers, wheelchairs and walking aids have been sourced and provided.

The service also works closely with Scottish Government and local authority resettlement teams and with other third sector partners such as Scottish Refugee Council and British Red Cross.

## **Barnardo's Scotland support for Hosts**

Barnardo's Scotland also recognises the value of those that have welcomed Ukrainian families into their homes and has worked to ensure that they feel supported. After listening to the needs of hosts, Barnardo's developed online host workshops. The programme of workshops aims to help hosts to support children and families from Ukraine with presenting needs arising from the difficult experiences which led to them being displaced, across a range of different topics.

We have so far delivered these workshops to 429 hosts and a digital peer network will begin in February 2023. This will enable hosts to meet on a monthly basis to come together in a digital space to listen, learn, make local connections and discuss any issues, concerns or worries that they or their guests may be experiencing.

## **Barnardo's Ukrainian Support Helpline**

Following discussion with the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain, Barnardo's UK set up the Ukrainian Support Helpline to provide a holistic support service. The Helpline is available to anyone fleeing to the UK as a result of the war against Ukraine and can be accessed by calling 0800 148 8586.

The Helpline provides: **therapy** with a qualified psychotherapist, delivered via the phone or online, with access to interpreters; **advice** on a range of issues e.g., housing, accessing key health services, education, employment and more via our trained helpline support workers; **practical support**, such as access to digital devices to ensure families stay connected to loved ones during this worrying time, as well as stimulating toys for children, food vouchers and more.

"I had someone to talk to, someone who was willing to listen to me, because I never feel people want to listen to me. I feel stronger now and I wish everyone would listen to me like you have."

*Quote from a Ukrainian caller to the Helpline*

## **Case study**

Katerina\* contacted the Barnardo's Welcome (Ukraine) Service through the Helpline. The Helpline allocated the case to a project worker in their local area, who got in touch with Katerina and discovered that she was part of a large family living at a hotel.

The family was made up of four generations, with a range of health needs. A Barnardo's worker provided support around registering and attendance with a GP, filling out benefit forms, travel passes for going to school, toys and clothing vouchers. The family were then transferred to another local authority in Scotland, far from where they first arrived. Barnardo's helped provide support to prepare for the move including helping the family with re-registering for school, nursery and a local GP as well as referrals for support to get into work.

Katerina\* said: "We hope that we will find good accommodation and Scotland will be the place we feel like home in these difficult times for our Motherland. We wish for a quick victory for Ukraine, but we realise it will be difficult to reach. We would like to make Scotland another Motherland where we feel safe and live here for a longer time.

"I would recommend to all of Ukrainians, especially with children or people who face difficulties with special needs to call Barnardo's, and to receive some advice and help."

*\*Names have been changed to protect anonymity.*

## **Recommendations for ongoing support**

One year on from the beginning of the war in Ukraine, Barnardo's continues to stand in solidarity with all of those who have been displaced by the conflict.

Our recommendations<sup>1</sup> focus on all governments across the UK working together and acting swiftly to ensure all families have access to support to address their trauma and access to education, training, and suitable, long-term housing. It is vitally important that the voices of these children and young people are at the heart of all decision-making; by listening to their views, we will be able to best support their needs and allow them to integrate into society.

**Safe accommodation:** We must ensure that all displaced families from Ukraine have access to long-term, safe, and suitable accommodation. Safeguarding should be at the heart of the rules and guidance setting out the details of how the extension of Homes for Ukraine will operate in practice. Where families are unable to live with host families, the government should provide greater support to find alternative appropriate accommodation either through social housing or in the private rented sector.

**Continuity for families:** It is essential that the importance of consistent childcare/schooling, access to employment and English language courses are taken into account before relocating families with children. Where children are attending school, schools need to be equipped to welcome and provide support to these highly vulnerable children; ensuring the curriculum is culturally sensitive and accessible to those whose first language is not English.

**Mental health support:** Our services have reported declining mental health as a common theme. It is therefore essential that children can access the appropriate support as soon as they need it. This could be through lower-level support provided for in schools and communities or specialist ring-fenced therapeutic support. Specialist support will require sufficient investment, to combat the long waiting times and ensuring the right pathways are in place to access the NHS.

**A consistent approach:** All families and children seeking sanctuary in the UK need support to address their trauma and to access education, training and suitable housing, regardless of their nationality. The UK offers a number of different schemes for settling unaccompanied children in the UK depending how they arrived in the UK and their country of origin. We are urging the UK Government to consider these together to ensure uniformity and consistency for all children regardless of their nationality and route to entry, and urge Scottish Government to press for the same outcome. For example, thousands of families from Afghanistan remain in hotel accommodation, and they would benefit from a scheme similar to Homes for Ukraine.

### **About Barnardo's**

Barnardo's is the UK's largest national children's charity. Barnardo's Scotland works with thousands of children, young people and families every year in over 100 specialised community-based services. We use information and experience from our services across Scotland, and from the children and young people we work with, to 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.

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<sup>1</sup> [Barnardo's Ukraine Briefing – September 2022](#)