

## Barnardo's Quarterly Practitioner Survey

### Wave 11 | Topline Data Tables

- This document presents the findings of Wave 11 of Barnardo's Quarterly Practitioner Survey
- The survey was administered via Survey Monkey, **31 January – 21 February 2022**
- The survey was open to all staff who work directly with children, young people, parents and/or carers
- The aim of the survey is to capture emerging issues, and impacts on children and families, directly from Barnardo's practitioners
- In total, **286 practitioners** responded
- Where percentages do not sum to 100, this is due to computer rounding or inclusion of multiple responses
- An asterisk (\*) represents a value of less than one half of a percent, but not zero; a '-' represents a value of zero
- 'All respondents' refers to the total number of respondents who answered a question
- 'Open text' refers to questions where respondents provide a response in their own words
- Wave 11 question areas:
  - About You
  - Emerging Vulnerabilities
  - COVID-19
  - Online Harms
  - Poverty
  - School Absence and COVID-19
  - Health Strategy
  - Post-Christmas
  - Support Needs
  - Service Provision
- For any queries about the survey or the data presented in this document, or to request any further breakdowns of data, please contact [Joelle.bradly@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:Joelle.bradly@barnardos.org.uk)

## **Abbreviations used**

ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
CSE	Child sexual exploitation
CYP	Children and young people
ESOL	English for speakers of other languages
HSB	Harmful sexual behaviour
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex +
MHWB	Mental health and wellbeing
SEN	Special educational needs
SEND	Special educational needs and disabilities
SPD	Sensory Processing Disorder
YP	Young people

## Overview of Key Findings

### Key Concerns

The primary concerns of practitioners continue to be an increase in **mental health** and **wellbeing** issues, and a **lack of support** and resources, in relation to the children, young people, and families they support.

A lack of support and resources continues to be discussed in terms of a **lack of mental health support** (including within schools), **long waiting times**, and the longer-term impacts of this on **escalating mental health issues** and **delays in assessments** for children with additional needs and disabilities.

**Poverty** and **financial issues** also continue to be identified as key concerns and are discussed frequently in terms of rising costs of living and household bills.

Practitioners state that all children and families, low income families, and teenagers are most impacted by these concerns.

### COVID-19

**Mental health** and **wellbeing** issues, continue to be practitioners' main concerns about the impact of the pandemic on the children, young people, and families they support. A higher proportion of practitioners cited this than in October 2021.

A **lack of professional contact** with children and young people is another key concern and is identified by a higher proportion of practitioners than in other waves of the survey. A lack of **face-to-face support**, **long waiting times**, and **overstretched services** are frequently mentioned in this regard.

In terms of the long-term impact of COVID-19 on the children, young people, and families they support, practitioners continue to cite the impact on **mental health** and **education**, a **loss of social skills/lack of socialisation**, and a **lack of support**.

### School Absence and COVID-19

Practitioner's main concerns regarding COVID-19 in schools are children **missing school** and the **impact on their education**; **mental health** and **wellbeing** issues; and the impact on children's **socialisation** and **development**. The proportion of practitioners citing these as concerns has increased since October 2021. Anxiety around attending school, school refusal, and widening attainment gaps were frequently mentioned in this regard.

Around two in five practitioners (38%) are currently supporting children who have not re-engaged with school since previous lockdowns or COVID-19 related absences. **Unmet mental health** and **wellbeing** needs, difficulties **adapting to changes in routine**, and **struggling to catch up with school work** are cited as the main reasons for this.

Practitioners identify children and young people with **additional needs**, **mental health** and **wellbeing issues**, **disabilities**, and **teenagers** as most likely to be facing additional barriers to re-engaging with school.

### Service Provision

The proportion of practitioners reporting an increase in the 'level of complexity of need' of service users, an increase in demand for their service, and an increase in the number of referrals to their service has declined slightly over the last three months.

## ABOUT YOU

### Do you work...?

Base: All respondents (286)

	<i>n</i>	%
Directly with children and/or young people	99	30
Directly with parents/carers	39	12
Both	148	45

### Please tell us which region or nation you work in...

Base: All respondents (268)

	<i>n</i>	%
Cymru	15	6
England - North	55	21
England - Central	33	12
England - South West	24	9
England - South East	50	19
England - London	11	4
Northern Ireland	39	15
Scotland	39	15
Other	2	1

### What type of support does your service provide?

Base: All respondents (268)

	<i>n</i>	%
Youth Work (including Youth Justice)	14	5
ETS	1	0.4
Care leavers/Accommodation support	15	6
Advocacy, Children's Rights and Participation	10	4
Refugee and Asylum Seekers	7	3
Child Protection (e.g. Domestic Abuse)	13	5
Child Abuse and Exploitation (e.g. CSE, Missing, Trafficking, HSB)	9	3
Looked After Children (e.g. Family Placement, Residential Care)	19	7
Education	17	6
Disability/Health	15	6
Mental Health	39	15
Family Support Services (e.g. CAPI, Young Carers)	50	19
Early Support (e.g. Children's Centres, Parenting Programmes)	58	22
Other	1	0.4

### How long have you been working directly with children, young people and/or families?

Base: All respondents (268)

	<i>n</i>	%
Less than 1 year	56	21
1-2 years	41	15
3-5 years	27	10
More than 5 years	144	54

## EMERGING VULNERABILITIES

**Are there any new issues you are seeing emerging, or new things you are hearing from children, young people or families, over the last few months? (Open text)**

*Base: All respondents (224)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Increase in MHWB issues among CYP and families	69	31
Lack of support and resources (incl. lack of health resources)	43	19
No change/nothing new	33	15
Poverty/changes to benefits system (incl. increased need for foodbanks)	20	9
Financial issues	13	6
Increase in housing issues (incl. homelessness)	12	5
Isolation (incl. loneliness, loss of social contact)	11	5
Increased impact of digital	11	5
Transition back to 'normality'/returning to school	10	4
More CYP & families affected by domestic abuse	7	3
Education (incl. school refusal/exclusion/attainment)	7	3
Child development (incl. lack of social skills)	6	3
CYP & families not being listened to/heard	5	2
COVID-19	5	2
Exploitation (non-specific)	3	1
Physical health	3	1
Family conflict/relationship breakdown	3	1
Job loss/employment prospects	3	1
Increase in identity issues	3	1
Increase in violent/challenging behaviour	2	1
Increase in CYP and families affected by substance misuse (incl. addiction)	2	1
Lower self-esteem/motivation	2	1
Increase in (diagnosis of) ASD & additional needs	2	1
Language barriers	2	1
Bereavement	2	1
Increase in enforced criminal activity/county lines	2	1
Other	18	8

**What is your ONE biggest concern now for children, young people and families? (Open text)**

*Base: All respondents (225)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Lack of support and resources	63	28
MHWB issues among CYP and families	59	26
Poverty/changes to benefits system	28	12
Financial issues	21	9
Isolation (incl. loss of social/family contact)	9	4
Education (incl. attainment and exclusion)	6	3
Homelessness and housing issues	6	3
Increased impact of digital	6	3
Lack of resilience in CYP	5	2

COVID-19/lockdown (non-specific)	4	2
Domestic abuse	4	2
Not listening to CYP & families	4	2
Staffing issues/burn out	3	1
Family/relationship/placement breakdown	3	1
Lack of/changes to routine	2	1
Lack of support/information on gender identity	2	1
Exploitation (non-specific)	2	1
Family Court processes	2	1
Other	20	9
Don't know	1	0.4

**Which groups of children, young people and families do you think are most affected by the concern you raised above? (Open text)**

*Base: All respondents (224)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
All children/families	65	29
Low income families/workless/reliant on benefits	35	16
Teenagers and children aged 16+	23	10
CYP & families with disabilities	15	7
The most vulnerable children and families	14	6
Children with additional needs (incl. ASD, SEN & SPD)	12	5
All CYP our service/Barnardo's works with	10	4
Care leavers/care experienced YP	9	4
Secondary school aged children	9	4
CYP & families affected by mental health and wellbeing issues	6	3
Children aged 0-5	5	2
Children in care	5	2
CYP & families affected by domestic abuse	5	2
CYP with protected characteristics (LGBTQI+, ethnic minorities)	5	2
CYP & families with limited/no support network	4	2
Lone/single parent families	4	2
New/young parents/families	4	2
Refugee and asylum seekers/migrants/ESOL	4	2
Those in deprived areas	4	2
Primary school aged children	4	2
CYP with undiagnosed needs/awaiting a diagnosis	2	1
Young people (non-specific)	2	1
CYP & families with no/little education	2	1
Other	15	7

## COVID-19

**In your role as a practitioner, have you supported anyone who has had symptoms suspected to be associated with COVID-19?**

*Base: All respondents (227)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes - currently	56	25
Yes - but not currently	102	45
No	57	25
Don't know	12	5

**At present, what is your one main concern about the impact of the COVID-19 crisis/pandemic on the children, young people and families that you support? (Open text)**

*Base: All respondents (217)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Impact on MHWB	82	38
Lack of direct professional contact with CYP	44	20
Isolation & loneliness	38	18
Educational concerns	15	7
Economic/financial impact	12	6
Loss of social skills/impact on development	12	6
Lack of/changes to routine	7	3
Loss of protective environments/people	5	2
Workforce/staffing issues (incl. burnout, lack of staff, overstretched)	5	2
Risk of increase in domestic abuse	5	2
Limitations of non face to face support	4	2
Too much time online	3	1
Not getting vaccine/fear of vaccine	3	1
CYP's confidence	3	1
Lack of respite/pressure on parents	2	1
Family contact issues	2	1
Impact of getting COVID-19 (bereavement, illness)	2	1
Other	19	9

**What is your ONE main concern about the long-term impact of the COVID-19 crisis/pandemic on the children, young people and families that you support? (Open text)**

*Base: All respondents (216)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Impact on MHWB	94	44
Lack of support	38	18
Loss of social skills/lack of socialisation	26	12
Educational concerns	25	12
Isolation	20	9
Economic/financial impact	10	5
Impact on development	9	4
Poverty	7	3
Loss of protective environments/increased vulnerability	7	3
Lack of opportunity/impact on future	5	2

Physical health	3	1
Family/relationship breakdown	3	1
Readjusting to 'normality'/routines	3	1
Workforce/staffing issues (incl. burnout, lack of staff)	2	1
Not getting vaccine/fear of vaccine	2	1
Lack of motivation	2	1
Other	10	5
Don't know	1	0.5

## ONLINE HARMS

**In the last year, have you supported...?**

*Base: All respondents (226)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Anyone who you know has had negative experiences of online gaming	36	16
Parents, carers, or other supportive adults in children's lives, to respond to online gaming concerns about their children	54	24
Neither	158	70

**In the last year, have you supported any children under 10 that have been sexually exploited/abused by an adult online?**

*Base: All respondents (226)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	17	8
No	176	78
Don't know	33	15

## POVERTY

**In the last year, have you given service users food because you're worried they are hungry, or will have nothing to eat?**

*Base: All respondents (226)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	133	59
No	93	41

**In the last year, have you given service users clothing because you're worried they will be cold or don't have enough suitable?**

*Base: All respondents (226)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	97	43
No	129	57

## SCHOOL ABSENCE AND COVID-19

**Are you currently supporting any families with school-aged children?**

*Base: All respondents (226)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	184	81
No	39	17
Don't know	3	1



**What is your main concern regarding COVID-19 in schools? (Open text)**

<i>Base: All respondents supporting families with school-aged children (179)</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Missing school/impact on education/attainment (incl. school refusal)	79	44
MHWB	31	17
Impact on socialisation/development	18	10
Spreading/contracting COVID-19	17	9
Staffing levels	14	8
Lack of support	12	7
Understanding/following guidance/restrictions (incl. changes to guidance)	12	7
Disruption/changes to routine	8	4
Difficulties with home-schooling/lack of devices	6	3
No concerns	6	3
Isolation	5	3
Loss of protective environments/increased vulnerability	4	2
Having to self-isolate	3	2
Low self-esteem/motivation	2	1
Fear/worry about COVID-19	2	1
Other	14	8

**Have you supported children who have not attended school due to testing positive or having symptoms of COVID-19 during this school year?**

<i>Base: All respondents supporting families with school-aged children (183)</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	124	68
No	49	27
Don't know	10	5

**Are you currently supporting children who are not attending school because they have tested positive or have symptoms of COVID-19?**

<i>Base: All respondents supporting families with school-aged children (183)</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	48	26
No	130	71
Don't know	5	3

**Are you currently supporting children who have not re-engaged with school since previous lockdowns/COVID-19 related absences?**

<i>Base: All respondents supporting families with school-aged children (183)</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	70	38
No	101	55
Don't know	12	7

**What are the reasons for children not re-engaging with school? (Select all that apply)**

<i>Base: All respondents supporting children who have not re-engaged with school (70)</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Unmet mental health and wellbeing needs	53	76
Difficulties with adapting to another change in routine	48	69

Struggling to catch up with school work	43	61
Challenges reintegrating with peers at school	40	57
Complex challenges at home, without sufficient support	38	54
Failure to meet the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)	29	41
Fear of COVID-19 infection at school	28	40
Difficulties following new rules around social distancing	19	27
Risk (real or perceived) of exclusion	16	23
Friends or peers not returning to school	14	20
Other family members have COVID-19	11	16
Potential impact of financial factors	9	13
Moving care placement without the right planning or availability of appropriate local school placements	6	9
Other (please specify)	5	7

**Can you provide further detail of these issues? (Open text)**

*Base: All respondents supporting children who have not re-engaged with school (59)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
CYP/families struggling with changes to routine	14	24
Lack of support/needs not met (incl. lack of MH support)	11	19
Anxiety/fear about returning to school	10	17
Anxiety/fear about COVID-19	8	14
Difficulties with re-integrating/re-engaging with school	6	10
Pre-existing MH problems have worsened	4	7
CYP fallen behind (incl. difficulties with online learning)	4	7
Having time off due to catching COVID-19/isolating	4	7
Lack of support for CYP with additional needs (SEND, ASD)	3	5
Difficulty understanding/adhering to COVID-19 restrictions	3	5
Poor MHWB	3	5
No	3	5
Low confidence/self-esteem	2	3
Loss/grief/bereavement	2	3
A combination of reasons	2	3
Other	5	8

**What have been the impacts on children and families of children not re-engaging with school? (Select all that apply)**

*Base: All respondents supporting children who have not re-engaged with school (70)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Impact on child's mental health and wellbeing	69	99
Child has fallen behind with learning	62	89
Impact on parent's wellbeing	59	84
Reduced social interaction	59	84

Increased family conflict/stress/reduced respite	54	77
Increase in challenging behaviours	53	76
Child has little/no contact with professionals	43	61
Impact on parents' work	38	54
Financial impact of child being home all day	23	33
Increased risk of gang-involvement, criminal and sexual exploitation	14	20
Other (please specify)	1	1

**Do you think particular groups of children have faced additional barriers to re-engaging with school?**

*Base: All respondents supporting children who have not re-engaged with school (70)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	53	76
No	5	7
Don't know	12	17

**Which groups of children, and what additional barriers have they faced in re-engaging with school? (Open text)**

*Base: All respondents who think particular groups of children have faced additional barriers to re-engaging with school (51)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
CYP with additional needs (incl. ASD, SEN & SPD)	24	47
CYP/families affected by mental health and wellbeing issues	9	18
CYP with disabilities	5	10
Teenagers and children aged 16+	5	10
Low income families/workless/reliant on benefits	4	8
The most vulnerable children and families	4	8
Young carers	4	8
CYP who struggle with school (incl. school refusers)	3	6
Those who experienced difficulties prior to the pandemic	3	6
CYP in exam/assessment years	2	4
CYP/families with limited/no support network	2	4
CYP with protected characteristics (LGBTQI+, ethnic minorities)	2	4
Other	7	14

**Health Strategy**

**To what extent are you aware of the Barnardo's Health Strategy 2020-2024?**

*Base: All respondents (221)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Very aware – I understand the direction we want to travel towards and how we propose to get there	15	7
Quite aware – I'm aware of the Strategy and its intentions but not so much about the detailed direction of travel	78	35
Not very aware – I've heard about the Strategy but I'm not really sure what it's about	88	40

Not at all aware – I've not heard about the Strategy and/or don't know about it at all	40	18
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**How confident are you that the Barnardo's service(s) where you work is able to effectively support child, young person and/or family health as defined in the Strategy? (Where 1 = not at all confident and 5 = very confident)**

*Base: All respondents (218)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
1 – not at all confident	3	1
2	12	6
3	47	22
4	53	24
5 – very confident	49	22
Don't know	54	25

**What has helped you to feel confident about your or your service's ability to support child, young person and/or family health now or in the future? (Select all that apply)**

*Base: All respondents (214)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Having online resources to support this work	74	35
Working with/alongside health practitioners, or being supervised by them	72	34
Specific learning modules/training and development options	67	31
Nothing	46	22
Having clear guidance on clinical governance	38	18
Being part of a Community of Practice relating to this area	33	15
Having new model(s) of practice to work to	27	13
Having been involved in developing the Strategy including 'task and finish groups'	10	5
Other (please specify)	21	10

**What, if anything, do you think would help with your confidence in being able to support child, young person and/or family health in the future? (Select all that apply)**

*Base: All respondents (211)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Specific learning modules/training and development options	141	67
Having online resources to support this work	108	51
Working with/alongside health practitioners, or being supervised by them	98	46
Having clear guidance on clinical governance	74	35
Having new model(s) of practice to work to	69	33
Being part of a Community of Practice relating to this area	56	27
Other (please specify)	7	3

**In practice, to what extent are you involved in supporting child, young person and/or family health (whether to address or to prevent health problems)?**

*Base: All respondents (221)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
A lot – this is a major part of the work I do	49	22

Quite a lot – I am involved some of the time in assisting children, young people and/or other family members with their health) whether directly or through identification of needs and signposting	95	43
Not much – I am rarely involved in assisting children, young people and/or other family members with their health and/or I mostly signpost these needs to other services	68	31
Not at all – I am never involved in supporting or signposting the health needs of children, young people and families	9	4

**What sort of involvement do you have?** (Open text)

*Base: All respondents who are involved in supporting child, young person, or family health to some extent (185)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Signpost/refer to appropriate health agencies/professionals	62	34
Direct work with CYP & families/provide support	49	26
Multiagency approach/engage with professionals	29	16
Provide MHWB support (incl. therapeutic support)	27	15
Practical support with arranging/attending appointments	21	11
Not much/no involvement	18	10
Provide advice/information on health/healthy lifestyles	9	5
Support CYP & families with disabilities/complex health needs	4	2
Manage staff/teams	4	2
Home visits/check-ins	4	2
Advocate on behalf of CYP & families	4	2
Complete training/learning	3	2
Support families experiencing domestic abuse	2	1
Other	7	4

**To what extent do you see Barnardo's as an organisation here to support child, young person and/or family health?** (Where 1 = I don't see Barnardo's as this kind of organisation and 5 = Barnardo's is definitely an organisation able to support child and/or family health)

*Base: All respondents (214)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
1 - I don't see Barnardo's as this kind of organisation	-	-
2	5	2
3	25	12
4	47	22
5 - Barnardo's is definitely an organisation able to support child and/or family health	130	61
Don't know	7	3

**What do you think would help Barnardo's to be recognised as an organisation here to support child, young person and/or family health?** (Open text)

*Base: All respondents (154)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Spreading awareness/advertising/marketing	47	31
Collaboration/partnership working with other organisations	20	13
Media/social media presence/campaigns	13	8

More services/staff specifically focused on this	13	8
Improving access to services/support	9	6
Continue with current ways of working/already have this recognition	9	6
Better training	8	5
Have a holistic understanding of health	3	2
More funding	3	2
Influencing policy/government	2	1
It depends on how health is defined	2	1
Other	14	9
Don't know	18	12

## POST CHRISTMAS

**Did your service provide children/young people/families with food or food vouchers during the Christmas period/in the run up to Christmas?**

*Base: All respondents (214)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	145	68
No	52	24
Don't know	17	8

**Did your service host a party for children/young people/families at Christmas?**

*Base: All respondents (214)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	53	25
No	151	71
Don't know	10	5

**Did your service provide children/young people/families with presents or vouchers to buy presents at Christmas?**

*Base: All respondents (214)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	150	70
No	48	22
Don't know	16	7

**Did your service enable children/young people/families to have anything else at Christmas that they wouldn't otherwise have experienced?**

*Base: All respondents (214)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes – please state	69	32
No	68	32
Don't know	77	36

## SUPPORT NEEDS

**Do you work with any young people/parents/carers who would benefit from education on healthy eating and cooking skills?**

*Base: All respondents (213)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	166	78
No	22	10
Don't know	25	12

**Do you work with any young people/parents/carers who would benefit from digital skills training, e.g. paying online securely?**

*Base: All respondents (214)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	127	59
No	45	21
Don't know	42	20

## SERVICE PROVISION

**Has there been an increase or decrease in the number of referrals to your service over the last 3 months?**

*Base: All respondents (227)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Increase	116	51
Decrease	12	5
About the same	38	17
Don't know	47	21
Not applicable - new service	14	6

**Has there been an increase or decrease in the 'level or complexity of need' for individual service users over the last 3 months?**

*Base: All respondents (227)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Increase	149	66
Decrease	-	-
About the same	33	15
Don't know	35	15
Not applicable - new service	10	4

**Do you feel that demand on services has increased or decreased over the last 3 months?**

*Base: All respondents (227)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Increased	156	69
Decreased	4	2
About the same	26	11
Don't know	30	13
Not applicable - new service	11	5

**To what extent do you feel able to meet demand? (1 = can't meet demand, 10 = able to meet demand)**

*Base: All respondents (224)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
1 – can't meet demand	3	1
2	7	3
3	19	8
4	12	5
5	30	13
6	25	11
7	44	20
8	48	21
9	14	6
10 – able to meet demand	22	10