



Changing childhoods.  
Changing lives.

# Barnardo's Practitioner Survey

**Wave 16 – January 2024**

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# Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of Wave 16 of Barnardo's Practitioner Survey.

The survey is open to all staff who work directly with children, young people, parents and/or carers. Its purpose is to systematically capture insights directly from Barnardo's practitioners on emerging issues and impacts on children and families, and to capture data to track long-term issues and trends.

The benefit of capturing this data spans into influencing activity with current and future commissioners, parliamentarians, and practitioners; the media profile of the charity; the ability to secure corporate sponsorship and individual giving; learning for internal initiatives; and the ability of the organisation to allocate resources into emerging needs.

The data from the Practitioner Survey is used by a variety of teams including Policy and Public Affairs in briefings to MPs, Media and Fundraising for summer and Christmas campaigns, and Research and Evaluation in research reports.

## Key Findings

### Consistent Themes

#### 1. Financial Issues, Poverty and the Cost-of-Living Crisis

The primary concern of practitioners continues to be **financial issues, poverty** and the **cost-of-living crisis** amongst the children, young people and families they support. This has remained consistent since January 2023.

Financial issues, poverty and the cost-of-living crisis are frequently discussed in relation to families struggling to afford basic essentials such as food, bills or housing, the pressure and stress this is causing, and the impact this is having on mental health and wellbeing.

The impacts of financial issues, poverty and the cost-of-living crisis are being felt at home; 35% of practitioners were concerned that families were **unable to afford appropriate sleeping arrangements** for their children, over the last twelve months.

The impacts are also felt during school holidays; 43% of practitioners were concerned that children, young people and families **did not have enough to eat** during school holidays over the last twelve months, while 59% were concerned that they could **not afford activities** during school holidays over the last twelve months.

#### 2. Lack of Support and Resources

A lack of support and resources is another key concern of practitioners in relation to the children, young people and families they support. In all waves of the survey, practitioners have discussed this in relation to a **lack of access to mental health services**, due to long waiting lists and high thresholds. It is also frequently discussed in relation to **long waiting times for assessments for additional needs and disabilities**, and the impact this has on children and young people waiting for support.

#### 3. Education

While issues with education have been frequently cited by practitioners across all waves of the survey, they are discussed by a higher proportion of practitioners in this survey compared to other waves (17% of practitioners, compared to 13% in July 2023).

Practitioners concerns with education relate to **emotionally based school avoidance**; schools **not meeting the needs** of, or offering the **right support** to, children and young people (particularly those with special educational needs and disabilities); a high number of **exclusions**; and a **lack of nursery and specialist school placements**.

Almost 7 in 10 practitioners (68%) have supported children and young people who have struggled to attend school over the last twelve months. Of these practitioners, 83% think that these children and young people will continue struggling to attend school over the next few months.

#### 4. Mental Health and Wellbeing

A rise in **mental health** and **wellbeing** issues amongst children, young people and families continues to be a key concern of practitioners. Mental health issues are frequently mentioned alongside the **cost-of-living crisis**, the **prolonged impact of the pandemic**, and **emotionally based school avoidance**.

While the vast majority of practitioners (74%) think there has been an increase in the number of children and young people experiencing mental health and wellbeing issues in the last 12 months, the proportion of practitioners reporting this has declined over the last year (83% of practitioners in July 2023; 87% in January 2023).

Just over half of practitioners (52%) said there has been a change in the **types of mental health and wellbeing issues** experienced by children and young people, over the last twelve months. Practitioners who noted changes described an increase in **anxiety, self-harm, and long waiting lists** for children's mental health services.

Half of practitioners (50%) said there has been a change in the types of mental health and wellbeing issues experienced by parents/carers, over the last year. Practitioners who noted changes described the impact of worries about **financial issues, poverty and the cost-of-living crisis, anxiety, and long waiting lists** for mental health support.

#### New Themes

A small proportion of practitioners mentioned new areas of emerging concerns around **Home Office practice** and the rights of asylum seekers; young people experiencing **issues with eating** and their **body image**; young people worrying about **conflict in Ukraine and Gaza**; a lack of **affordable childcare**; a rise in **attachment issues**; and issues around **consent in relationships**.

#### Additional Key Findings

##### 1. Health

The most common health needs that practitioners are seeing in their service are **mental health and wellbeing needs** (60%); **diet and nutritional needs** (14%); and **additional needs** (ASD, SEND, ADHD, additional learning needs) (13%).

##### 2. Digital Tools for Services

57% of practitioners said that in an average week they lose time trying to work with the current digital tools in their service, 83% of these practitioners said they lose 1 hour a week or more.

##### 3. Online Harms

In the last twelve months, just over a third of practitioners (36%) have supported children and young people who have accessed **harmful content on social media platforms**; one in five (20%) have supported children and young people who have **viewed violent or extreme pornographic content**; and 7% have supported children and young people who have

experienced **harm through emerging technologies**, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) or Virtual Reality spaces.

#### **4. Displaced Children and Families**

Around a quarter of practitioners (24%) said they are currently supporting displaced children, adults or families. Practitioners felt the biggest concerns of displaced children, adults or families were **access to support services, mental health, and education**.

## Emerging and Changing Needs

**30%** of practitioners said financial issues, poverty, and the cost-of-living crisis are key issues that they are seeing amongst children, young people, and families (compared to 35% in July 2023)

**21%** of practitioners said a lack of support and resources is a key issue they are seeing amongst children, young people, and families (compared to 22% in July 2023)

**17%** of practitioners said education (including emotionally based school avoidance, a lack of support, exclusion, and a lack of school/nursery places) is a key concern amongst children, young people, and families (compared to 13% in July 2023)

### 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 (674)

	n	%
Financial issues/poverty/cost of living crisis	200	30
Lack of support and resources (incl. waiting times/higher thresholds)	144	21
Education (incl. school refusal/ESBA/exclusion/lack of support)	117	17
Increase in MHWB issues among CYP and families (incl. stress)	111	16
No change/nothing new	85	13
Increase in housing issues (incl. homelessness)	51	8
Increase in ASD & additional needs (incl. CYP self-diagnosing)	36	5
Increased impact of digital (incl. gaming, online scams)	32	5
Increase in CYP and families affected by substance misuse (incl. vaping)	24	4
Increase in violent/challenging behaviour (incl. knife crime, peer violence)	19	3
CCE/criminal activity/gang involvement	14	2
COVID-19 (incl. aftereffects/longer term impacts)	12	2
Physical health (incl. obesity lack of access to GPs/dentists)	12	2
Child development/speech and language delays	11	2
Lack of foster carers/suitable care placements	11	2
Increase in bullying (incl. online harassment)	10	1
Staffing pressures (incl. lack of/frequent changes of social workers)	9	1
More CYP & families affected by domestic abuse	8	1
Issues with sleep	8	1
Increase in CYP impacted by CSA/E	8	1
Lack of (affordable) childcare	8	1

Increase in gender identity issues	7	1
Trauma	7	1
CYP & families not being listened to/heard	6	1
Dysregulation of emotions	6	1
Isolation	5	1
More CYP/F with EAL/lack of translators	5	1
Worry about the world (Gaza, Ukraine)	5	1
Bereavement/loss	5	1
Family conflict/relationship breakdown (incl. placement breakdown)	4	1
Lower self-esteem, less resilience (incl. lower confidence)	4	1
Boredom/lack of activities for CYP	4	1
Police/courts/justice system	4	1
Issues worsened/more complex	4	1
Transphobia/anti-LGBTQI+ rhetoric	3	0.4
Exploitation (non-specific)	3	0.4
Home Office practice/rights of asylum seekers (incl. NRPF)	3	0.4
Issues with eating (incl. body weight/image)	3	0.4
Rise in asylum seekers	3	0.4
Consent/relationships	3	0.4
Job loss/employment prospects	2	0.3
Moving on to adult services	2	0.3
Lack of opportunities/access to opportunities	2	0.3
Safeguarding (non-specific)	2	0.3
Parenting issues (non-specific)	2	0.3
Attachment issues	2	0.3
Abuse/neglect	2	0.3
Other	40	6

# Poverty

**35%** of practitioners were concerned that families were **unable to afford appropriate sleeping arrangements (e.g. beds or bedding)** for their children, over the last twelve months

**43%** of practitioners were concerned that children, young people and families **did not have enough to eat** during the school holidays, over the last twelve months

**59%** of practitioners were concerned that children, young people and families **could not afford activities** during the school holidays, over the last twelve months

**Over the last twelve months, were you concerned that the families you work with were unable to afford appropriate sleeping arrangements (e.g. beds or bedding) for their children?**

*Base: All respondents (780)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	271	35
No	309	40
Don't know	200	26

**If yes, please provide further details** (open text)

*Base: All respondents concerned that families were unable to afford appropriate sleeping arrangements (271)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Lack of/unable to afford/replace beds, bedding or furniture	74	27
Applied for or used funding/grants/charities to access beds/bedding	60	22
Overcrowding/not enough beds/bedrooms	39	14
Cost of living/poverty/financial issues and impact (non-specific)	33	12
Homelessness/lack of (suitable) housing	32	12
Unsuitable beds/sleeping arrangements	30	11
Provided beds/bedding to families	19	7
Families unable to afford other basic essentials (e.g. food, bills etc.)	17	6
Beds/bedding (non-specific)	7	3
Problems with mould/damp/bed bugs	7	3
Yes, this has been an issue (non-specific)	4	1
Other	8	3



**Over the last twelve months, were you concerned that the children, young people and families that you support did not have enough to eat during the school holidays?**

Base: All respondents (772)

	n	%
Yes	332	43
No	257	33
Don't know	183	24

**If yes, please provide further details** (open text)

Base: All respondents concerned that children, young people and families did not have enough to eat during the school holidays (266)

	n	%
Signposted/referred/provided access to food (incl. HAF programme)	102	38
Families cannot afford food/cost-of-living crisis	61	23
No access to free school meals/breakfast club during the school holidays	30	11
Families do not have enough to eat/displaying hunger/skipping meals	19	7
Accessed/used Barnardo's Cost of Living Fund/other crisis funds	14	5
Issues with benefits (incl. waiting times, not enough to cover costs)	9	3
Food bills/costs are higher with children at home during the holidays	9	3
Families have requested help/assistance with food	8	3
Aware of families struggling (non-specific)	7	3
Families struggling to/unable to budget	6	2
Families in debt	3	1
Families are unwilling/unable to access foodbanks	3	1
Given/offered support (non-specific)	3	1
Families cannot afford transport to foodbanks	2	1
Other	11	4
Don't know	2	1

**Over the last twelve months, were you concerned that the children, young people and families that you support could not afford activities during the school holidays?**

Base: All respondents (768)

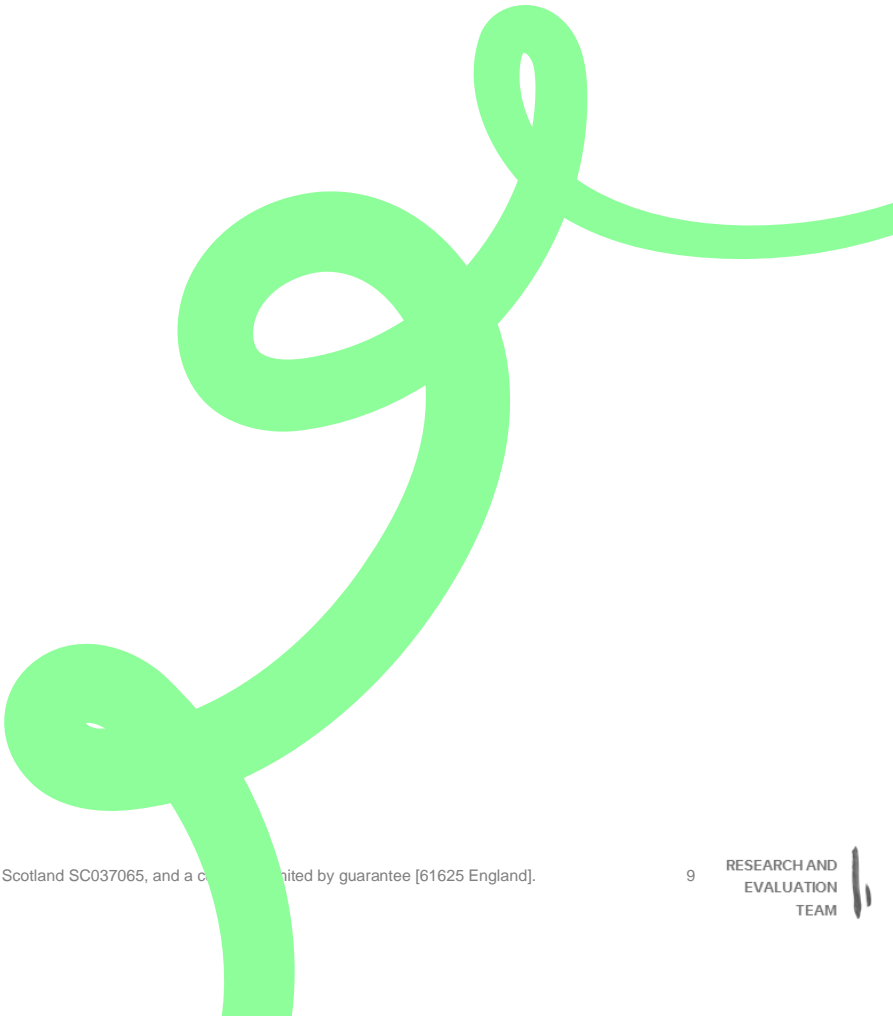
	n	%
Yes	451	59
No	143	19
Don't know	174	23

**If yes, please provide further details** (open text)

Base: All respondents concerned that children, young people and families could not afford activities during the school holidays (352)

	n	%
Activities are too expensive for CYP to take part	124	35
Money is spent on essentials (e.g. food), nothing left for activities)	53	15
Cost-of-living crisis (non-specific)	41	12
Lack of affordable/free activities (incl. youth clubs, long waiting lists)	37	11
Provided/signposted to activities/support	37	11
Cost/lack of transport/fuel prevents access to activities	27	8
Used Barnardo's Cost of Living Fund/other fund to provide support	23	7
Yes, CYP didn't take part in activities during school holidays	21	6
Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme provided	15	4
Higher costs for CYP/F with additional needs/disabilities	9	3

Higher costs of multiple children/larger families	7	2
There are free activities in the local area	2	1
Other	12	3
Don't know	3	1



# School Attendance

**68%** of practitioners have supported children and young people who have **struggled to attend school**, over the last twelve months

**83%** of these practitioners think children and young people will **continue struggling to attend school** over the next few months

**Over the last twelve months, have you supported any children and young people who have struggled to attend school?**

*Base: All respondents (766)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	521	68
No	197	26
Don't know	48	6

**If yes, please outline what support you have provided around this (open text)**

*Base: All respondents who have supported children and young people who have struggled to attend school (521)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Support with MHWB/emotions (incl. CYP experiencing poor MHWB)	146	28
Communicating/organising support with school/social workers/families	93	18
Supporting with attendance (incl. barriers to attendance, 1:1)	65	12
Practitioner aware/supporting CYP not attending school (non-specific)	57	11
Parenting support/advice/programmes	50	10
Support for CYP with additional needs (incl. SEND)	40	8
Signposting/referring to other support	28	5
Advocacy support	25	5
Provided/assisted with transport	25	5
Finding alternative provisions (incl. home schooling)	23	4
Support with routines/boundaries	22	4
Family support	15	3
Bullying (non-specific)	14	3
Helped with reduced timetables	11	2
Outreach support/services	9	2
Supported young carers	9	2
Support with behaviour	8	2
Financial support (incl. access to basic essentials e.g. clothes)	6	1
Supported CYP experiencing exploitation	5	1

Provided legal advice	3	1
Support with language barriers/English	2	0.4
Supported siblings	2	0.4
Helped CYP with employment/volunteering	2	0.4
Other	27	5
Don't know	14	3

**Do you think these children and young people are going to continue to struggle to attend school over the next few months?**

*Base: All respondents supporting children and young people who have struggled to attend school (521)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	432	83
No	21	4
Don't know	68	13

## Mental Health and Wellbeing

**74%** of practitioners think there has been an increase in the number of children and young people **experiencing mental health and wellbeing issues** in the last twelve months (compared to 83% in July 2023)

**52%** of practitioners have noticed changes in the types of mental health and wellbeing issues experienced by children and young people

**50%** of practitioners have noticed changes in the types of mental health and wellbeing issues experienced by parents/carers

### Do you think there has been a change in the number of children and young people experiencing mental health and wellbeing issues in the last twelve months?

Base: All respondents (747)

	n	%
Increased	556	74
Stayed the same	106	14
Decreased	3	0.4
Don't know	82	11

### In the last twelve months, have you noticed any changes in the types of mental health and wellbeing issues experienced by children and young people?

Base: All respondents (736)

	n	%
Yes	382	52
No	205	28
Don't know	149	20

### If yes, please specify what changes (open text)

Base: All respondents who have noticed changes in the types of mental health and wellbeing issues experienced by children and young people

(343)

	n	%
Anxiety (incl. social anxiety)	141	41
Self-harm	37	11
Lack of support/long waiting lists for CAMHS	29	8
Increase in MHWB/struggling with MHWB (non-specific)	27	8
Emotionally Based School Avoidance & school attendance issues	22	6
Additional needs (incl. SEND, ASD, ADHD, neurodiversity)	21	6

Financial issues/poverty/cost-of-living crisis strains and worries	20	6
Depression	19	6
Social media (incl. bullying on social media)	16	5
Social isolation/loneliness	15	4
Suicidal ideation	14	4
Bullying	14	4
Lack of confidence/low self-esteem/resilience	13	4
Lack of friendships/relationship skills	13	4
Prolonged impact of COVID-19	13	4
Trauma	11	3
Dysregulation of emotions	11	3
Worry about the world (Gaza, Ukraine)	9	3
Parent MH/worries about parents/family	9	3
Substance misuse (incl. vaping)	8	2
School related stress/problems in school	8	2
Withdrawal	8	2
Eating disorders	7	2
Body image	5	1
Peer pressure/fitting in with peers	5	1
Risky/challenging behaviours	5	1
Gender identity/sexuality	4	1
Stress	4	1
Violence/domestic abuse	4	1
Development/attachment issues	4	1
Sleep disorders	2	1
Other	18	5
Don't know	2	1

**In the last twelve months, have you noticed any changes in the types of mental health and wellbeing issues experienced by parents/carers?**

*Base: All respondents (660)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	327	50
No	171	26
Don't know	162	25

**If yes, please specify what changes** (open text)

*Base: All respondents who have noticed changes in the types of mental health and wellbeing issues experienced by parents/carers (322)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Financial issues/poverty/cost-of-living crisis strains and worries	106	33
Anxiety	68	21
Lack of support/long waiting lists	54	17
Depression	30	9
Stress	25	8
Struggling to support/manage CYP	22	7
Worry about CYP	11	3
Social isolation/loneliness	11	3
Issues with CYP's school & attendance	11	3

Trauma/PTSD	9	3
Fatigue/strain/lack of respite	9	3
Less able to cope/feel like they can't cope	9	3
Substance misuse	7	2
Prolonged impact of COVID-19	7	2
Lack of hope/hopelessness	6	2
Housing/homelessness	6	2
Suicidal ideation	5	2
Crime/criminal activity	5	2
Social media/Internet safety	5	2
Additional needs (incl. ASD, ADHD, neurodiversity)	5	2
Worry about the future	4	1
Parenting pressures/struggling to keep up	4	1
Struggling to/not leaving the house	4	1
Birth trauma/post-natal depression	3	1
Domestic abuse	3	1
Lack of confidence/low self-esteem	2	1
Self-harm	1	0.3
Other	15	5

# Health

The most common health needs that practitioners are seeing in their service are:

- Mental health and wellbeing needs (60%)
- Diet and nutritional needs (14%)
- Additional needs (ASD, SEND, ADHD, additional learning needs) (13%)

**How confident are you that the Barnardo's service(s) where you work are able to effectively support child, young person and family health? (Where 1= not at all confident and 5= very confident)**

Base: All respondents (693)

	<i>n</i>	%
1 – Not at all confident	11	2
2	29	4
3	146	21
4	252	36
5 – Very confident	225	32
Don't know	30	4

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

Base: All respondents (685)

	<i>n</i>	%
Working with/alongside health practitioners, or being supervised by them	379	55
Having online resources to support this work	343	50
BU learning modules/training and development options	200	29
Being part of a Community of Practice relating to this area	162	24
Knowing that we have a Health Team to contact	143	21
Being involved in/attending Share & Learn sessions	124	18
Access to clear health related policies and guidance	119	17
Health Space information, resources and knowledge	92	13
Having clear guidance on clinical governance	92	13
Having new model(s) of practice to work to	77	11
Nothing	53	8
Direct involvement in a Health Pilot	27	4
Other (please specify)	116	17



**What health needs are you seeing in your service(s) for children, young people and families? (Open text)**

*Base: All respondents (611)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
MHWB needs/lack of MHWB support	365	60
Diet/nutritional needs	86	14
Lack of support/long waiting list (incl. for assessment/diagnosis of additional needs)	79	13
Additional needs (incl. ASD, SEND, ADHD, additional learning needs)	78	13
Oral health issues (incl. lack of access to dentists)	68	11
Lack of support from/access to GPs & health visitors	46	8
Physical health needs/general health needs (incl. allergies, colds)	37	6
Sleep issues (incl. tiredness)	36	6
Developmental delays (incl. speech and language)	26	4
Lack of physical activity/exercise	22	4
Substance misuse/addiction	22	4
Trauma	21	3
Poverty/lack of basic essentials (e.g. food, clothing)	19	3
Long term/complex health needs (incl. liver issues, cystic fibrosis, fibromyalgia)	18	3
Weight issues	16	3
Sexual health needs	12	2
Challenging behaviour	12	2
School attendance	11	2
Toilet training issues	10	2
Pregnancy/post-natal support	10	2
Abuse and neglect	7	1
Social isolation	7	1
Poor/inadequate housing impacting on health	7	1
Respiratory conditions	6	1
Personal care/hygiene	6	1
Lack of confidence/low self-esteem	6	1
Not getting immunizations	5	1
Attachment issues	5	1
None	4	1
Gender identity	4	1
Bereavement/loss	3	1
Safeguarding	2	0.3
Giving CYP a voice	2	0.3
Domestic abuse	2	0.3
Unhealthy relationships	2	0.3
Other	28	5
Don't know	1	0.2

**What do you think is the most important thing that Barnardo's could do to make a difference to the health of children and young people? (Open text)**

*Base: All respondents (593)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Fund/provide more services, resources and staff	132	22

Continue to offer support/do what we're doing	78	13
Joined up/partnership/multi-agency working (with health care professionals, schools etc.)	50	8
Listen to/include/amplify CYP/F's voices	44	7
Provide education/information/advice/guidance for CYP/F	42	7
Provide support around MHWB (incl. eating disorders)	41	7
Support health needs/accessing health professionals	40	7
Training/upskilling staff	37	6
Campaign for change (e.g. lobby government, campaign with charities)	31	5
Provide parent/family support (incl. family hubs)	31	5
Provide consistent, long-term support	29	5
Provide financial support (incl. essential items/food)	27	5
Provide support to CYP/F	25	4
Advocate for CYP/advocate for change	22	4
Provide support around health eating, nutrition, cooking	21	4
Signpost/refer onto services	20	3
Provide activities/opportunities for CYP	17	3
Be there for CYP/F and ask them what they need	15	3
Support staff/practitioners	12	2
Build relationships and trust with CYP	12	2
Provide support for CYP with additional needs/SEND	11	2
Provide support around exercise/movement/sports	11	2
Provide community based support	10	2
Provide early intervention and prevention	8	1
Be accessible, available, inclusive	7	1
Promote/raise awareness of support available	7	1
Provide support around sleep	6	1
Provide trauma-informed support	6	1
Provide early support for infants	4	1
Highlight issues/systemic failures	2	0.3
Challenge commissioners	2	0.3
Other	50	8
Don't know	16	3

## Digital Tools for Services

**20%** of practitioners said they do not have the right online or digital tools to do their job effectively and efficiently

**57%** of practitioners said that in an average week they lose time trying to work with the current digital tools in their service

**83%** of these practitioners said they lose 1 hour a week or more trying to work with the current digital tools in their service

**Do you think you have the right digital tools (e.g. online or digital tools to record information, or tools to communicate with children and families) to do your job effectively and efficiently?**

Base: All respondents (677)

	n	%
Yes	429	63
No	138	20
Don't know	110	16

**Which tasks do you think could be made more efficient if you had better digital tools? (Select all that apply)**

Base: All respondents (646)

	n	%
Signposting	289	45
Gathering feedback about service user experiences	262	41
Communicating with children, young people and families	260	40
Making onward referrals	251	39
Sharing information about the service with potential service users	229	36
Gathering information from CYP/F and other professionals	228	35
Sharing information about CYP/F with other professionals	219	34
Carrying out assessments	182	28
Gaining consent from potential service users	182	28
Creating plans and setting goals	176	27
None of the above	81	13
Other (please specify)	81	13

**In an average week, do you lose time trying to work with the current digital tools in your service?**

*Base: All respondents (679)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	386	57
No	185	27
Don't know	108	16

**Roughly how much time a week do you lose?**

*Base: All respondents who said they lose time trying to work with the current digital tools in their services (385)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Less than 1 hour a week	66	17
More than 1 hour a week	226	59
More than 4 hours a day	85	22
More than 1 day a week	8	2

# Online Harms

In the last twelve months:

**36%** of practitioners have supported children and young people who have accessed harmful content on social media platforms

**20%** of practitioners have supported children and young people who have viewed violent or extreme pornographic content

**7%** of practitioners have supported children and young people who have experienced harm through emerging technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) or Virtual Reality spaces

## How important is having knowledge of online harms or risks to your role? (Where 1= not at all important and 5= very important)

Base: All respondents (662)

	n	%
1 – Not at all important	6	1
2	16	2
3	58	9
4	109	16
5 – Very important	455	69
Don't know	18	3

## How frequently do you come across online harms or risks in your role?

Base: All respondents (660)

	n	%
Very frequently	49	7
Frequently	114	17
Sometimes	252	38
Rarely	198	30
Never	47	7

## How confident do you feel supporting children or young people who may experience online harms or risks? (Where 1= not at all confident and 5= very confident)

Base: All respondents (661)

	n	%
1 – Not at all confident	17	3
2	54	8
3	220	33

	4	240	36
	5 – Very confident	101	15
	Don't know	29	4

**What would help you to feel more confident? (Open text)**

*Base: All respondents (560)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Training/continued learning and development	298	53
Being able to keep up to date with a fast changing environment	70	13
Increased understanding of online harms/risks (incl. platforms, trends)	63	11
Additional resources/guidance/information	47	8
Ability to signpost to other services/support	22	4
More/better resources/support for parents	20	4
Easier access to resources and information about online harms	19	3
Clear guidance on best practice (incl. reporting, policies)	17	3
Time/space to learn/share knowledge within organisation	16	3
Better understanding of how to support CYP	15	3
An expert/specialist contact or service	14	3
More/better resources to use with CYP	14	3
Nothing/already feel confident supporting CYP	14	3
Gaining experience and practice	13	2
Joined up/partnership/multi-agency working (e.g. with schools, police)	12	2
Specific resources/training (e.g. CYP with SEND, young children)	11	2
Support from colleagues/other teams	11	2
Real life examples/case studies	6	1
Hearing from/involving CYP	5	1
Other	19	3
Don't know	20	4

**How do you currently learn more about online risks or harms that children and young people experience? (Select all that apply)**

*Base: All respondents (658)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
From colleagues	481	73
By talking to the children, young people or families that I support	467	71
From my personal life (e.g. talking to friends or family)	363	55
Googling things	344	52
Online resources other than Google (e.g. Thinkuknow)	280	43
Other (please specify)	85	13

**In the last twelve months, have you supported children and young people who have experienced harm through emerging technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) or Virtual Reality spaces (i.e. the Metaverse)?**

*Base: All respondents (661)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	48	7
No	494	75
Don't know	119	18

**In the last twelve months, have you supported children and young people who have viewed violent or extreme pornographic content (e.g. content which sexualises children, or pornography which suggests child sexual abuse between family members)?**

*Base: All respondents (656)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	131	20
No	402	61
Don't know	123	19

**If yes, please provide further details (open text)**

*Base: All respondents who have supported children and young people who have viewed violent or extreme pornographic content (59)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Access/exposure to pornography/harmful content	24	41
CSA/E (incl. CYP shown pornographic material, asked to share photos)	7	12
CYP sending/sharing sexual content	6	10
CYP displaying HSB (incl. peer on peer abuse)	5	8
No age restrictions in place/parents don't understand the risks	4	7
Pornographic content has impacted/shaped CYP's behaviour	2	3
CYP accessing age inappropriate video games	2	3
Yes, on a variety of social media/gaming platforms	2	3
Other	9	15
Don't know	2	3

**In the last twelve months, have you supported children and young people who have accessed harmful content on social media platforms?**

*Base: All respondents (654)*

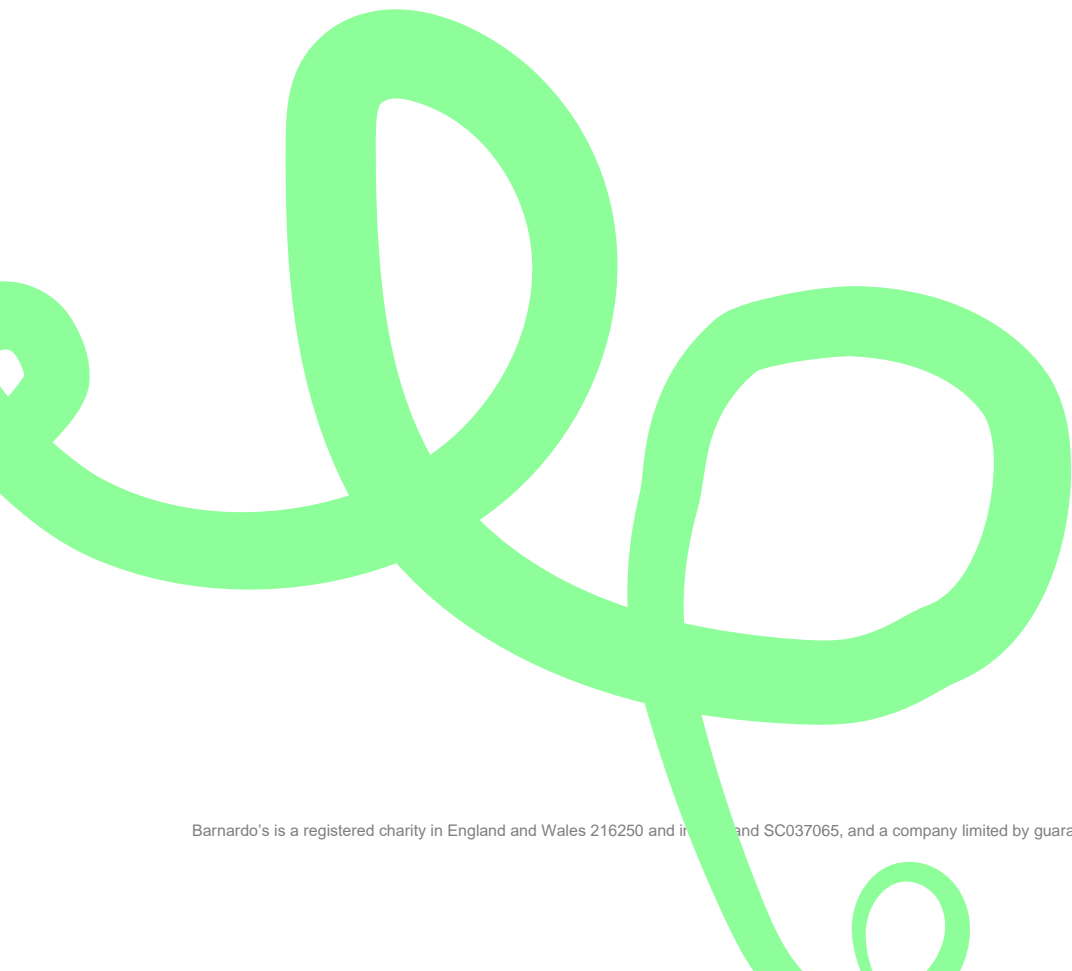
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	237	36
No	292	45
Don't know	125	19

**If yes, please provide further details (open text)**

*Base: All respondents who have supported children and young people who have accessed harmful content on social media platforms (115)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Content around self-harm and suicide	18	16
Yes, on a variety of social media/gaming platforms	17	15
Online bullying	13	11
Harmful or violent content (incl. video games)	13	11
Sent/shared inappropriate content	11	10
Age inappropriate content (incl. video games)	11	10
Pornographic or sexual content	9	8
No age restrictions in place/children can bypass age restrictions	8	7
Exploitation/grooming/blackmail	8	7
Viewed harmful content by accident/content was shared with them	8	7
Speaking to strangers online (incl. adults posing as children)	7	6
Content around eating disorders	6	5
Unrealistic body/image standards	4	3
Yes, this is regularly happening (non-specific)	4	3

Personal information shared	3	3
Right wing/extremist content	2	2
The dark web	2	2
Other	10	9
Don't know	1	1





# Displaced Children and Families

**24%** of practitioners said they are currently supporting displaced children, adults or families

Practitioners felt the biggest concerns of displaced children, adults or families were

- Access to support services (73%)
- Mental health (67%)
- Education (55%)

## Are you currently supporting...

Base: All respondents (662)

	<i>n</i>	%
Unaccompanied displaced children	44	7
Displaced adults with children	114	17
Displaced adults	21	3
Neither	505	76

## What type of support are you providing? (Open text)

Base: All respondents (151)

	<i>n</i>	%
Employment, education and training (incl. ESOL)	26	17
MHWB/emotional support/counselling	25	17
Financial support/fundraising	23	15
Housing support	23	15
Advocacy/rights support	23	15
Providing access to services/supports	20	13
Parenting support	18	12
Support within regular service remit	17	11
Signposting to support	16	11
Food/access to foodbanks	13	9
Access to basic essentials (e.g. bedding, clothing, furniture)	10	7
Family support (general)	10	7
1:1 support	8	5
Medical/health support	5	3
Child abuse/exploitation (incl. trafficking)	5	3
Developmental support	4	3
Other	14	9

**What do you think has been the biggest concern of the displaced children, adults or families that you support, over the last few months (Select all that apply)**

*Base: All respondents (153)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Access to support services	112	73
Mental health	103	67
Education	84	55
Food	77	50
Employment	69	45
Physical health	45	29
No/lack of access to technology (e.g. mobile phones, internet)	41	27
Other (please specify)	37	24

**Do you think these concerns are likely to change in the next few months?**

*Base: All respondents (154)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	13	8
No	96	62
Don't know	45	29

# Appendix

## Methodology

- The survey was administered via Survey Monkey, **23 January – 12 March 2024**
- In total, **985 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 provided a response in their own words
- For any queries about the survey or the data presented in this document, or to request any further breakdowns of data, please contact [laura.parkes@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:laura.parkes@barnardos.org.uk) or [sohila.sawhney@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:sohila.sawhney@barnardos.org.uk)

## Abbreviations Used

ADHD	Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.
CCE	Child criminal exploitation
CSA/E	Child sexual abuse and exploitation
CSE	Child sexual exploitation
CYP	Children and young people
CYP/F	Children, young people and families
EAL	English as an additional language
ESBA	Emotionally based school avoidance
ESOL	English for Speakers of other Languages
HAF	Holiday activities and food programme
HSB	Harmful sexual behaviour
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex +
MHWB	Mental health and wellbeing
NRPF	No Recourse to Public Funds
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
SEND	Special educational needs and disabilities

## Sample Overview

### Service users supported

Base: All respondents (985)

	<i>n</i>	%
Children and/or young people	317	12
Parents/carers	118	12
Both	550	56

### Region/nation worked in

Base: All respondents (977)

	<i>n</i>	%
Cymru	86	9
England - North	241	25
England - Central	118	12
England - South West	106	11
England - South East	139	14
England - London	45	5
Northern Ireland	112	11
Scotland	101	10
Other (please specify)	29	3

### Service type

Base: All respondents (889)

	<i>n</i>	%
Youth Work (including Youth Justice)	33	4
Employment, Training and Skills (ETS)	13	1
Care Leavers/Accommodation Support	39	4
Advocacy, Children's Rights and Participation	44	5
Refugee and Asylum Seekers	16	2
Child Protection (e.g. Domestic Abuse)	21	2
Child Abuse and Exploitation (e.g. Child sexual exploitation (CSE), Missing, Trafficking, harmful sexual behaviour (HSB))	60	7
Looked After Children (e.g. Family Placement, Residential Care)	46	5
Education	50	6
Disability/Health	57	6
Mental Health	135	15
Family Support Services (e.g. children affected by parental imprisonment (CAPI), Young Carers)	109	12
Early Support (e.g. Children's Centres, Parenting Programmes)	240	27
Other (please specify)	26	3

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