

Barnardo's – Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Fostering Case Study 2022

Paper Apart – Records and Reviews

This paper apart has been produced to assist the Inquiry with the fostering case study in relation to records and preparation for the case study.

The position in relation to the various types of records retained by Barnardo's over the years, and the format in which they have been retained, is not particularly straight forward. Barnardo's has therefore provided an overview of the historic records that have been retained relative to fostering. Barnardo's has indicated where it considers records may have been destroyed in line with contemporaneous record retention policies. It is, of course, entirely possible that additional records relative to fostering existed that Barnardo's has no knowledge of now.

Barnardo's has also included a summary of the approach it took to completing the Part A to D response and, in particular, what records were considered and what time period those records related to.

FOSTERING RECORDS

a) Children's records

Barnardo's started fostering (known then as boarding-out) in Scotland in the 1940s. Every child admitted into Barnardo's care has his or her own file maintained and retained in Barnardo's archive. That is the case whether the child was admitted into a residential children's home and then fostered, or was admitted directly into a foster placement. The records include information about the child and their family, the reason for admission, health assessments, educational attainment, details of home visits and aftercare. Barnardo's retained children's records well before there was any legislative requirement for them to do so. Over the years, the details recorded within the records have increased in line with increasing professionalisation of social work and foster care, and in keeping with legislative requirements.

Former residents or foster children of Barnardo's can access their records through Barnardo's Making Connections department. The records are held in hard copy, on microfilm/microfiche or electronically.

b) Foster carers

When Barnardo's first boarded-out children in Scotland, a separate file was not kept in relation to the foster carers. Details of visits and supervision were contained within the child's file. A small number of separate files dating to the 1980s and 1990s have been retained in the archive.

Most files prior to 2002 were scanned and saved on external hard drives. From 2002 to 2012, foster carer files were stored on content server. In 2012 all current carer files were transferred to the CHARMS database. This database is still used today.

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With the exception of children's files, Barnardo's destroyed most of their records in line with their records retention policy. Some foster carer files have, however, been retained. Barnardo's estimates that it has retained around 1,270 foster carer files from the 1980s to 2012. These files include all applications which did not progress to approval. That includes around 250 foster carer files from the Edinburgh Fostering Special Families and Edinburgh New Families services on an external database. These relate to the 1980s to the early 2000s.

The current policy requires that foster carer files be retained for 100 years.

c) Staff records

From the 1940s, Barnardo's had a Boarding-Out Executive Officer. It is anticipated that other members of staff, such as boarding-out executives and welfare officers, would have assisted with the administration of boarding-out. The earliest staff files within the archive date back to the 1940s and were largely administrative in content. The first full staff files date from around 1960 but these were not consistently retained for all members of staff. There is little information in the archives about the number of staff who had responsibility for foster care services from the 1940s to the 1980s. Latterly, staff files were retained and archived by the year that the member of staff left employment. From 2002 onwards, staff files were stored electronically by Barnardo's HR Department, which remains the case today.

d) Management records

Barnardo's has some governance, management and administrative papers in the archives dating from the 1940s to the 1960s. Both editions of the Barnardo Book have a section on boarding-out. Fostering agreements and reports on visits to boarded-out children have been retained dating back to the 1940s. A document entitled 'Notes on Boarding-Out' dating from around 1955 has also been retained. The Inquiry has already been provided with sample circulars, some of which relate to boarding-out and fostering in 1951, 1952, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1960 and 1961.

In the 1960s and 1970s, circulars were issued to members of staff to update policies and ensure compliance with new legislative requirements. In the 1980s and 1990s, a Social Work – Policy and Procedure Manual was issued. As policies, practices and legislation was updated, new sections of the manual were issued with instructions to replace outdated material with the new sections.

Barnardo's practice during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s was not to retain management, governance and administrative records. They did however retain a sample of the records from the 1970s and 1980s for archival purposes. This included a version of the Social Work – Policy and Procedure Manual which sections dating from 1980 to 1999. The section relating to foster care within the manual dates from 1996 to 1999. The manual does not show the development of policy and practice but instead offers a snapshot of the policies in place at one particular time. It contains a section on fostering from 1996.

WORK UNDERTAKEN TO PREPARE THE PART A TO D RESPONSE

From the information available in the archives, the number of children who were only 'boarded out' or fostered, as it became known, during the period 1930 to 2014 is 2,656. Between 1930 and 2014 a total of 4,815 children were either placed in residential children's homes, residential schools, or foster

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care. Information from the CHARMS database confirmed that 476 children have been accommodated in foster care in the Scottish services from January 2012 to December 2014.

In order to prepare its Part A to D response, Barnardo's consulted archived material including the Barnardo Books, Notes of Boarding-Out, fostering agreements and forms circulars, management of committee minutes, social work policy manuals. Annual reports, returns, newsletters and other ad-hoc documentation were also referenced

Barnardo's carried out a review of a random sample of 35 children's files where the child was placed in foster care from 1944 to 2010. 15 of these files related to the 1940s to 1960s.

The 35 files were selected from a database spreadsheet held by Barnardo's Making Connections department covering fostering. The 35 files were selected to cover each decade from the 1940s to the 2000s as fully as possible. Some of the files covered care from one decade into the next. Six files relate to the period 1940s to 50s, five files to the 1950s, three files to the 1950s to 1960s, one file to the 1960s, six files to the 1980s, one file to the 1980s to 1990s, five files to the 1990s and eight files to the 2000s. There were no files within Barnardo's database spreadsheet on fostering which related to the 1970s.

Barnardo's then considered a sample of foster care files from the 1980s onwards. In particular, Barnardo's accessed the foster files held relative to the Edinburgh Fostering Service which contained around 250 files from the 1980s onwards. Not every file was considered. Barnardo's approach was to continue looking through the files until several files from each decade had been reviewed. Pertinent search words were also used such as child protection and investigations, and any relevant files were considered. Barnardo's also consulted the archived files for the Glasgow and Aberdeen services.

Care Inspectorate reports dating from 2006 to 2018 were reviewed. Consideration was also given to a report on 'Barnardo's New Families Project Glasgow – The First Two Years' prepared by Carol Lindsay Smith dated 1980.

The aim was for Barnardo's to consider a sufficient amount of material to enable them to provide the Inquiry with an overview of the history and development of fostering at Barnardo's. Barnardo's considers that the Part A to D response provides the most detailed and accurate account of fostering that the organisation has.

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