

Believe in  
children



**Barnardo's Accompaniment**

**Entitlement to request to be accompanied:**

1. Colleagues employed by Barnardo's and as and when workers who work to an as and when agreement have the right to request a companion (as outlined below) to accompany them during formal meetings held under Barnardo's policies and procedures regardless of whether a meeting is held in person or remotely.
2. Formal meetings that qualify as a statutory entitlement to request to be accompanied include 'hearings or 'appeal' meetings such as those held under the Resolution Procedure.
3. Whilst this legal right does not extend to investigation meetings held to gather evidence and establish the facts, colleagues may request to be accompanied by a companion (as outlined below) to formal investigation meetings held under Barnardo's Resolution Procedure.
4. Colleagues can choose a companion of their choice consisting normally of either:
  - a colleague that they work with;
  - a workplace trade union representative e.g., UNISON;
  - an official employed by a trade union.

A companion outside of the above categories may be requested to support a reasonable adjustment.

5. Whilst the right to request to be accompanied does not extend to witnesses attending an investigation meeting or a hearing, the provision of a companion may be offered to witnesses by the Chair or investigating manager if they consider it appropriate in the circumstances.
6. There is no statutory right to be accompanied at redundancy consultation meetings, however Barnardo's procedures offer employed colleagues the opportunity to request a companion (as outlined above) at the meetings so appropriate support can be provided.

7. Where this entitlement applies, (either under statute or Barnardo's procedures), colleagues will be advised accordingly in advance of the meeting. Colleagues will be responsible for arranging a companion and notifying the Chair or investigating manager of their chosen companion prior to the meeting.
8. A formal hearing or appeal may be rearranged to take place no longer than five working days after the original date specified if the colleague or their chosen companion is unable to attend. The Chair of the panel will be required to agree any extensions beyond this.

**For non-qualifying formal/informal meetings:**

9. Colleagues with a disability, physical or mental health condition or impairment may request to be accompanied as a workplace adjustment, to ensure that they can participate fully and fairly. Barnardo's will consider these requests as part of our duty to make reasonable adjustments.
- 10 Other colleagues may make a request to be accompanied in writing to their manager. However, Barnardo's reserves the right to refuse any such request, for example, if accommodating a request would cause a delay or where this might impact unacceptably on other individuals involved. (These examples are not exhaustive). Colleagues who are union members can seek guidance and support from their trade union. Further information is available on Inside.Barnardo's within [Sources of support](#).
11. The points on the choice of companion and the companion's role (below) also apply to all requests for accompaniment at non-qualifying meetings.

**Companion's role:**

A companion has the right to:

- Take written notes on the colleague's behalf if this is requested by the colleague.
- Present the case, either verbally or in writing, if this is requested by the colleague.
- Confer with the colleague during the meeting.
- Sum up the case for the colleague, either verbally or in writing.
- Respond to any comments or points expressed during the meeting.

A companion does not have the right to:

- Answer questions on behalf of the colleague, though they may supplement or assist with answers in support.
- Respond in a way that prevents any other individual participating from explaining their case or making a contribution.

Companions are expected to be professional and not disrupt the meeting.

For further information or guidance around any of the above points, please contact a member of the People Team.