

# Accompaniment

## Entitlement to request to be accompanied:

1. Employees and workers have the right to request to be accompanied at any formal meeting held under Barnardo's procedures.
2. Formal meetings that qualify for this statutory entitlement to request to be accompanied are 'hearings' or 'appeal' meetings, such as disciplinaries, dismissals and grievances. There is no entitlement to be accompanied at investigation meetings, even if they are conducted in a formal manner.
3. Some Barnardo's procedures permit employees to be accompanied when there is no statutory entitlement, e.g. during redundancy consultation meetings held during the consultation period.
4. Where this entitlement applies (under statute or Barnardo's procedures) employees and workers will be advised accordingly in advance of the meeting.
5. To exercise their entitlement to request to be accompanied, employees and workers must make a reasonable request before the meeting. What is reasonable will depend on the circumstances of each individual case.
6. Employees and workers can choose a companion of their choice consisting normally of either a UNISON/other trade union representative<sup>1</sup>, an official employed by a trade union or a Barnardo's colleague. Employees and workers may alter their choice of a companion, if they wish, choosing from one of the previously advised categories. In making their choice of companion, employees and workers should bear in mind the practicalities of the arrangements. For instance, an employee or worker may choose to be accompanied by a companion who is suitable, willing and available on site rather than someone from a geographically remote location.
7. Employees and workers should consider how they make their request so that it is clearly understood and provides enough time for it to be considered.

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<sup>1</sup> A trade union representative, who is not an employed official, must have been certified by the union as being competent to accompany a worker.

### **For non-qualifying meetings:**

8. Employees and workers with a disability, impairment, mental or physical health condition may request to be accompanied as a workplace adjustment, if their disability, impairment, mental or physical health condition has an impact on them participating fully. Barnardo's will consider these requests as part of our duty to make reasonable adjustments.
9. Other employees and workers may make a request to be accompanied in writing to their manager. However, Barnardo's may refuse any such request, for example, when accommodating a request would result in a delay to the proceedings or where this might impact unacceptably on other individuals involved. (These examples are not exhaustive). Employees, who are union members, are able to access support from UNISON/other trade union. Alternative avenues of support are outlined within Sources of Support, which is accessible via Inside.Barnardo's.
10. The points on choice of companion and the companion's role (below) also apply to all requests for accompaniment at a non-qualifying meeting.

### **Companion's role:**

A companion has the right to:

- Address the hearing if this is wanted by the employee or worker;
- Confer with the employee or worker during the meeting;
- Sum up the case of the employee or worker;
- Respond on their behalf to any views expressed at the meeting.

A companion does not have the right to:

- Answer questions on behalf of the employee or worker;
- Prevent the employer from explaining their case.

Policy & Advice Team  
September 2019