Barnardo’s Research Ethics Committee [BREC]

Changes to BREC

## BREC no longer will review research (including evaluation) conducted with Barnardo’s staff

Before the review, research “Involving staff, that might lead to publication”[[1]](#endnote-1) needed a BREC review. BREC no longer will review research where the participants are Barnardo’s staff.

**Why?**

* This distinction unnecessarily complicates BREC remit.
* BREC could involuntarily prevent some Barnardo’s staff to take part in external research projects. BREC have had several people who want to take part in external research projects, where Barnardo's wouldn't be named, but having to come through the BREC process has stopped them from doing so (usually because of time). In all cases there has been little risk to the staff members, Barnardo’s reputation, and it felt unreasonable. We don’t believe it should be up to BREC to say if staff members are allowed to participate in research.
* BREC is reviewing research with staff members that is being published externally as a risk mitigating measure to help protect Barnardo's reputation against findings that might reflect poorly on its staff and services. This is not research ethics and BREC does not have final sign-off of research outputs, and therefore it shouldn’t be in BREC’s remit.

## Research (including evaluation) published both internally and externally does need to be submitted to BREC for review

Before the review “Gathering insight that you do not intend to share with people outside of Barnardo’s (other than ‘business as usual’ reporting to commissioners, which itself does not need to be submitted to BREC)”[[2]](#endnote-2) did not need to be reviewed by BREC. The publication status of a project does no longer determines if it needs a review or not. If the project is research, it needs to be reviewed irrespective of who the research is published for.

**Why?**

Research which involves service users, former service users, or children and young people accessed via Barnardo’s services as participants need a BREC review to protect their rights, safety, dignity and wellbeing, irrespective if the research is published externally or internally. Research could be damaging to participants throughout the research process irrespective if the research is published internally or externally.

## BREC will allow undergraduate or masters’ students access to Barnardo’s service users if the students are Barnardo’s staff

It has been BREC’s advice that undergraduate or masters’ students (including Barnardo’s staff) should not normally be given access to service users for research purposes. BREC will no longer advice against research just because a member of staff is doing the research as part of an undergraduate or master’s study.

**Why?**

When a member of Barnardo’s staff is undertaking undergraduate or master’s research, it is inconsistent and unfair to advise against them doing research just because it forms part of their undergraduate or master’s course. Barnardo’s staff who are students should be able to demonstrate that they meet the necessary level of experience/knowledge required by BREC to do research on Barnardo’s service users, as all other members of Barnardo’s staff. The BREC group agreed that this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

## BREC no longer will ask for researchers’ CVs as part of the BREC application

BREC used to ask researchers to submit their CVs as part of the BREC application process. Researcher CVs were used to help reviewers assess the competency of researchers.

**Why?**

In BREC’s experience researcher CVs have not been helpful in judging researcher competence. BREC make decisions on the strength of the application based on the content in the Application form and CVs could confuse or influence decision making. BREC still require researchers to provide information about their training, experience, qualifications and the policies they plan to follow when conducting their research, but not in a CV format.

## The BREC Application form and Guidance for Applicants form has been combined

The B\_BREC Application from and C\_Guidance for Applicants forms use to be 2 forms that had to opened and downloaded and separately.

**Why?**

To improve the user experience for researchers and expediate the process of completing the BREC Application form, the B\_BREC Application form and C\_Guidance for Applicants have been combined into 1 document, the B\_BREC Application form.

## Further Changes

Further changes to BREC are expected as part of Phase 2 and 3 of the review of BREC. The above-mentioned changes are based on Phase 1 of the review that looked at BREC’s remit and scope. Phase 2 will look at BREC’s processes and Phase 3 will look at how BREC manages its reviewers.

1. BREC Terms of Reference [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. BREC Service User Insight Checklist [↑](#endnote-ref-2)