# BREC Application Form

This form provides Barnardo’s Research Ethics Committee (BREC) with the information they require to ensure your research is ethical and that the potential value/benefit of the research outweighs risk of harm. This helps children, young people and families to safely take part in research and ensures that their rights, wellbeing, safety and dignity are protected.

If you are planning to access Barnardo’s services, including service users, former service users**,** information/data relating to service users, or information/data from children and young people (CYP) and families accessed via Barnardo’s services,you need to gain support in principle for your research from service management. You must gain this support and **share your research proposal** or completed BREC Application Form with the service(s), **before submitting your full application to BREC**.

Please ensure you attach the following supporting documents to your application. Note, applications cannot be reviewed by BREC without relevant supporting documents and the review process cannot start until all supporting documents have been received.

* Recruitment materials, posters, recruitment letters/emails etc.
* Draft fieldwork tools (questionnaires, interview/focus group schedules, participant information sheets, consent forms etc.)
* Any applications to other ethics committees, and an explanation of the outcome or current status of these
* An email of support from the service(s) you wish to involve in your research.

Please send your completed application form and all supporting documentation to [brec@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:brec@barnardos.org.uk)

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| A green and white text on a black background  Description automatically generated**Application Details** |  |
| **Title of proposed research:** |  |
| **Name of principal researcher:** |  |
| **Email address of principal researcher:** |  |
| **If the project is related to one previously reviewed by BREC, please provide the name of the related project:** |  |
| **Research funder or commissioner:**  Please select all that apply | Barnardo’s  Research Institute: (please specify)  Government Department: (please specify)  A university: (please specify)  Student research project  Other: (please specify) |
| **Area of research:**  Please select all that apply. | CYP struggling with their **mental health and wellbeing**  CYP at greater risk of **poor health**  CYP living in **poverty**  **Families** **needing support** to give their children the best possible life chances  Children in **care and care leavers**  CYP at risk of **sexual abuse and exploitation**  CYP and families **seeking sanctuary** in the UK  Other: (please specify) |
| **Location(s) of research:**  Please select all that apply. | Northern Ireland  Scotland  Cymru  England – North  England – Central  England – South East  England – South West  England – London |
| **Please name the contact(s) within the service(s) who has seen your research proposal or BREC application form:** |  |
| **Date submitted:** | Click to enter date |

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| **1 Purpose and value of research** | | |
| *Question* | *Applicant Response* | *Reviewer Response* |
| 1.1 **Research aims and objectives:**  In this section of the application form you should consider what you hope to learn from the research, and clearly outline the overall aim of it.   * Do the research aims and objectives set out what the research is about and why it is required? * Are the aims and objectives realistic, achievable, and measurable? * If not, will this have implications for the value of the research? |  | This is satisfactory.  This needs more attention. |
| 1.2 **Research questions:**  In this section of the application form, you should consider the question(s) your research seeks to answer, and clearly outline your research questions.   * Are the research questions well focused and specific enough to answer? * Is the scope of the research questions appropriate (e.g. are questions too broad/narrow)? * Are the research questions relevant for addressing the research aims and objectives? |  | This is satisfactory.  This needs more attention. |
| 1.3 **Value of research:**  In this section of the application form, you should:   * Demonstrate how your research builds on other research on this topic. * Outline any gaps in the knowledge base that your research will address. * Describe the benefits of the research for the research participants (e.g. will participants enjoy the experience or learn something?). * Describe the benefits of the research for the wider group the participants belong to (e.g. will the outputs increase understanding of this group among policymakers or practitioners or lead to service planning/policy development?). * Describe how the benefits of the research outweigh the risk of harm it may cause. |  | This is satisfactory.  This needs more attention. |
| 1.4 **Dissemination of findings:**  In this section of the application form, you should outline your dissemination plan. You should:   * Consider who the audience(s) for your findings are (e.g. service users, practitioners, funders, policymakers, media, academics, Barnardo’s, etc), and describe what outputs will be produced for each (e.g. interim reports, final reports, podcasts, leaflets, press releases, oral presentations, journal articles, etc). * Outline how you will share your findings with: * Participants (e.g. by creating a child-friendly summary, sharing your final report with services, etc). * Barnardo’s/BREC. * Consider whether there are any risks associated with publishing your findings, or whether they could have negative consequences for your participant group or for Barnardo’s (e.g. could your findings lead to negative media publicity about young people?), and outline how you will minimise any risk(s) (e.g. will you actively consult with participants or services regarding your findings/conclusions/recommendations, pre-publication?). |  | This is satisfactory.  This needs more attention. |

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| **2 Research methodology** | | |
| *Question* | *Applicant Response* | *Reviewer Response* |
| 2.1 **Sample and recruitment**  In this section, you should outline:   * Your criteria for selecting research participants (e.g. in terms of age, characteristics, gender, ethnicity, type of service they are receiving) * Your sampling strategy (e.g. random sampling, quota sampling, purposive) * How participants will be identified (e.g. from an established list, from service staff identifying appropriate participants) * How potential participants will be approached to take part (e.g. service staff will ask them, researcher will send them a letter) * How you will ensure all eligible participants can take part/how will you try to avoid the exclusion of certain groups (e.g. provide interpreters or translators) * The limitations of your sample (e.g. who will your sample exclude and how will this affect your findings)   Recruitment materials should be submitted with your application (e.g. posters, recruitment emails, etc). |  | This is satisfactory.  This needs more attention. | |
| 2.2 **Data collection and fieldwork:**  In this section, you should:   * Outline the methods you plan to use in your data collection. * Provide justification of why you have selected these methods. * Are they the most appropriate to answer your research questions? Why? * What are the pros and cons of your chosen approach? * Will any creative methods be used to encourage participant engagement with your research (e.g. drawings, use of scenarios, storyboards, role play, etc.)? * How will potential distress or burden to participants be minimised (e.g. by providing comfort breaks, not beginning interviews with sensitive or personal questions)? |  | This is satisfactory.  This needs more attention. | |
| 2.3 **Interpretation of data:**  In this section, you should describe:   * How you plan to analyse your data (e.g. thematic analysis, framework analysis). * How you will make sure that your interpretation of data is valid (e.g. will you recognise your own bias? Will your interpretation of the data be peer reviewed? Will you verify your interpretation of the data with participants, and if so at what stage?). |  | This is satisfactory.  This needs more attention. | |

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| **3 Responsibilities towards participants** | |  | |
| *Question* | *Applicant Response* | | *Reviewer Response* |
| 3.1 **Competency of researcher(s)**  In this section, you should:   * Provide the names and titles of all researchers. * Clearly outline the roles of each member of the research team. * Identify members of the research team who will have contact with research participants. * Outline relevant experience/qualifications of the research team, including any relevant training (e.g. if researchers will have contact with participants who are vulnerable, what experience/qualifications do they have the will help them do this sensitively? Have researchers completed, e.g. child protection training, research skills training, etc.?). * Outline any policies around research ethics that researchers will be following (e.g. own organisation’s policies, service policies, or partner agency policies, etc.). |  | | This is satisfactory.  This needs more attention. | |
| 3.2 **Voluntary, informed consent of participants**  In this section, you should detail:   * How participants will first learn about the research (including the purpose and who is carrying it out, e.g., posters in service, service staff talking to participants, researchers talking to participants directly). * How you will ensure information is accessible to (potential) participants (e.g. use of accessible language or pictures, piloting of information sheets/consent forms to ensure suitability, sharing information sheets with services before fieldwork visits, etc). * How you will check that participants fully understand what their participation will involve. * How participants will know that they can choose not to be involved, or can withdraw, without adverse consequences. * Up to what point participants can withdraw their contribution to your research, and how they will be made aware of this. * How will you encourage participants to raise questions or concerns about the research. * How participants will demonstrate their informed consent (e.g. signing consent forms, verbal consent, etc.).   Participant information sheets and consent forms should be submitted with your application and tailored to the age group of participants (e.g. age appropriate, jargon free, and easy to read). Participant information sheets should include the following information:   * + A date up to which participants can withdraw from the research.   + Information to state that not taking part, not answering any questions, or later withdrawing from the research will not affect the service that participants receive from Barnardo's.   + A contact for making complaints about the research. |  | | This is satisfactory.  This needs more attention. | |
| 3.3 **Consent of parents/carers**  In this section, you should detail:   * If/how you will be asking parents/carers to consent to their child’s participation, and an explanation of why this is felt to be necessary/unnecessary. You must have the consent of a parent or legal guardian before asking for a child or young person (up to the age of 16) to participate in your research.[[1]](#footnote-2) * How you will approach parents/carers to give them information about your research (e.g. service staff talking to them, send them a letter, etc.). * How parents/carers will provide or refuse consent (e.g. verbally to service staff, returning a consent form in the post, etc.).   Parent/carer information sheets and consent form(s) should be submitted with your application. |  | | This is satisfactory.  This needs more attention. | |
| 3.4 **Participant comfort**  In this section, you should detail:   * How you will make sure your participants feel comfortable and secure. * What steps you would take if a participant became uncomfortable. * How will potential distress or burden to participants be minimised (e.g. by providing comfort breaks, not beginning interviews with sensitive or personal questions)? * How you will accommodate participants’ needs and preferences (e.g. accessibility requirements, provisions for a friend/worker/advocate to accompany them, etc). * Whether you will be asking participants about personal experiences or life events, and if yes, how you will do this in a sensitive way. |  | | This is satisfactory.  This needs more attention. | |
| 3.5 **Safeguarding children, young people, and vulnerable adults**  Researchers must follow **Barnardo’s Safeguarding & Protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults: Code of Conduct for Researchers**, which is attached as an appendix. Additionally, researchers must follow the safeguarding procedures of any individual service they will be working with. Ensure you have seen and understand these. In this section, you should detail how you will adhere to **Barnardo’s Safeguarding & Protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults: Code of Conduct for Researchers**during your research, and any other safeguarding procedures you will adhere to.  This section should include a description of how you will put this into practice – e.g. the types of issues you have considered, what you will do, and who you will contact if you suspect a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm to themselves or others. |  | | This is satisfactory.  This needs more attention. | |
| 3.6 **Confidentiality**  This section should detail the framework of confidentiality you will work within. You should describe:   * The level of confidentiality participants will have. * Who will know that participants have taken part in your research. * Who will know about the information participants give you. * Instances where confidentiality would be broken. * How you will explain to participants the level of confidentiality they will have. * What steps you will take to maintain participants’ confidentiality throughout the research process (e.g. discuss with participants before they participate, in information sheets and consent forms, etc.). |  | | This is satisfactory.  This needs more attention. | |
| 3.7 **Recording and storing data**  In this section, you should describe:   * How you will record data. * Whether the data you store will be anonymous, or whether it will include identifiable information (e.g. names or addresses, etc.). * How you will store data securely. * Who will have access to the data you collect. * How long you will store data for. * How you will dispose of data at the end of storage period. * How you will gain permission from participants/their parents or carers to record and store data (e.g. discuss with participants before they participate, in information sheets and consent forms, etc.). |  | | This is satisfactory.  This needs more attention. | |
| 3.8 **Anonymity of findings**  In this section, you should describe:   * The level of anonymity participants will have. * How you will explain to participants the level of anonymity they will have. * How you will avoid participants being identified in your outputs (e.g. by using pseudonyms, by not naming the service or regions, etc.). |  | | This is satisfactory.  This needs more attention. | |
| 3.9 **Concluding relationships with participants.**  In this section you should describe:   * + How you will end relationships with research participants (e.g. ‘closing down’ activities, debriefing meeting with service staff, etc.).   + Outline the processes that are in place if participants have support needs post-participation in the research, or to help them to manage any feelings that may be prompted during the research (e.g. will service staff be available)?   + What will Barnardo’s service's role be in providing follow up support?   + Confirm if you’ve discussed/agreed follow up support with Barnardo’s services beforehand. |  | | This is satisfactory.  This needs more attention. | |
| 3.10 **Recognition of participants time and effort**  In this section you should describe how you intend to thank participants for their time and effort. |  | | This is satisfactory.  This needs more attention. | |
| 3.11 **Complaints procedure**  In this section you should detail how (potential) participants or services involved in your research will be able to make a complaint about the research or researcher(s), and how their complaints will be addressed.  Research approved by BREC should include an independent avenue of complaints for (potential) participants accessed through Barnardo’s (e.g. Barnardo’s project sponsor or University Research Ethics Committee). |  | | This is satisfactory.  This needs more attention. | |

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| **4 Researcher welfare** | |  |
| *Question* | *Applicant Response* | *Reviewer Response* |
| 4.1 **Researcher’s physical welfare**  In this section, you should describe how the researcher(s) will avoid placing themselves at risk of physical harm (e.g. conducting fieldwork in pairs, proposing meeting participants in public places or services, ensuring colleagues know their whereabouts during fieldwork, etc) |  | This is satisfactory.  This needs more attention. |
| 4.2 **Researchers emotional welfare**  In this section you should:   * Detail the ways in which you anticipate the research might be upsetting to the researcher(s). * Detail how the emotional wellbeing of the researcher(s) will be safeguarded (including support in place to help the researcher(s) cope with any emotional distress resulting from undertaking the research). |  | This is satisfactory.  This needs more attention. |

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| **5 Fieldwork tools and attachments** | | |
| *Question* | *Applicant Response* | *Reviewer Response* |
| 5.1 **Fieldwork tools and attachments**  In this section, please list the fieldwork tools (questionnaires, interview/focus group schedules, participant information sheets, consent forms etc.) and other supporting documents you have submitted with your application**.** |  | They are satisfactory.  They need more attention. |

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| **6 Outputs from this research** | |
| **Please list the output(s) you plan to produce and the estimated date(s) you plan to produce them** | |
| Expected Output(s): |  |
| Date(s): |  |

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| **7 BREC Reviewer Feedback / Application Outcome**  **(for office use only)** | |
| Name of reviewer: |  |
| Position: |  |
| Date reviewed: | Click to enter date |
| Review outcome: | I am satisfied that this research conforms to Barnardo’s ethical research guidelines.  I am satisfied that this research conforms to Barnardo’s ethical research guidelines. The comments above should be addressed before the research proceeds, but the applicant does not need to re-submit their application.  This application should be declined. The submission requires amendments before it conforms to Barnardo’s ethical.  research guidelines. Research should not proceed at present, and the applicant should re-submit their application once above comments have been addressed. |

## Appendix

## Barnardo’s Safeguarding & Protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults

## Code of Conduct for Researchers

It is vital that researchers understand their safeguarding responsibilities and know what to do to safeguard the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. Researchers must:

* Create a culture where children/vulnerable adults are valued and their right to safety and respect is upheld.
* Actively managed risk to minimise circumstances where children/vulnerable adults using Barnardo’s services may suffer harm.
* Work collaboratively with other organisations to ensure that children/vulnerable adults are safeguarded and protected.

Researchers must follow this *Code of Conduct for Researchers* alongside local interagency procedures, protocols & arrangements devised by Local Safeguarding. Partnerships/Regional Safeguarding Children Boards/Child Protection

Committees/Safeguarding Board Northern Ireland.

Researchers must also follow the Safeguarding procedures of any individual service(s) they plan to involve in their research.

### Researchers must understand the limits of confidentiality

All researchers who have access to information about children/adults at risk have a duty to preserve confidence. Each individual’s right to confidentiality must be respected. **All personal information must be treated with care and kept securely; this means not disclosing it to people who do not need to know**.

In normal circumstances the child/adult who is the subject of the information will be required to give consent before the information about them can be shared. The consent of the person who provided the information/gatekeepers may also be required. Irrespective of the age, abilities, or level of maturity of the child/adult, if information is disclosed which indicates that the child/adult (or another person) is at serious risk of harm, then **confidentiality cannot be preserved as safeguarding procedures must take precedence**.

Data protection legislation permits sharing of information where it is critical to prevent serious harm or distress, or in life-threatening situations.

### Before the child/adult participates in the research

**Explain the limits of confidentiality**. Before a child/adult takes part in research, researchers must explain to them the limits of confidentiality – including an age-appropriate explanation of your requirement to pass on any information that suggests someone is at risk of harm, and the process you will adopt for this.

### How researchers should respond to safeguarding concerns

RESPOND

If a child/ adult discloses information to you about abuse or harm that they have experienced, are experiencing, or are at risk of experiencing, you must:

* Listen carefully.
* Reassure. Always offer reassurance, listen to, and take seriously, what they are saying.
* Do not ask probing questions. It is not your job to investigate or examine the child/adult; this is the statutory responsibility of the local authority/child protection services and/or the Police.
* Explain that confidentiality must be broken. Never promise to keep secrets or be persuaded by the child/adult or family not to take action. Explain the process to the child/adult: that you will need to pass this information on, to whom, the reasons why and possible actions.

If a child/ adult discloses information to you about abuse or harm that they have experienced, are experiencing, or are at risk of experiencing, and you **are not sure whether the service already knows about it**, you must:

* **Ask the child/adult whether the Barnardo’s service already knows** about the information they have disclosed.
* **Regardless of whether the child/adult says the service already knows** about the information they have disclosed, or whether you suspect the service already knows, you must promptly inform the service of the disclosure/concern – just in case the service does not know.
* **Explain that confidentiality must be broken**. Researchers must explain to the child/ adult why they are required to pass this information on, to whom, the reasons why, and possible actions.

RECORD

**Record as much factual information as possible**. In all circumstances, you must record what your concerns are, identify what action has been taken, and pass this record to Barnardo’s (details of who to pass your record on to is in the ‘Report’ section below). Your report must include:

* Date and time of when you pass the record on
* Name of person you are passing the record on to
* Your name, number, and email address
* Name of the child/adult
* Personal information about child/ adult (gender, age, ethnicity)
* Brief description of the nature of the disclosure/concern
* Date and time you received the disclosure/concern
* Any other information

REPORT

* + **If you have accessed the child/adult through a Barnardo’s service, the researcher must inform the Manager of the service immediately.** Share your record of the incident with them. They will decide on the next steps and will store your record in the child/adult’s file.
  + **If the Manager of the service is not available, and if the child/adult is at immediate risk**, call Barnardo’s Head of Safeguarding and Quality on 07584 206139, to ensure that action is taken as soon as possible and within 24 hours. Share your record with them. You must check that action has been taken, after you have informed Barnardo’s.
  + **If the child/adult is not connected to a specific Barnardo’s service, and therefore you cannot pass your record on to a service Manager**, you should email your record to Safeguarding@barnardos.org.uk (as well as calling Barnardo’s Head of Safeguarding and Quality on 07584 206 139 if the child/adult is at immediate risk).
  + **If you are a member of Barnardo’s staff**, you must also report the incident to your Barnardo’s line manager immediately. Consult with your Barnardo’s line manager to agree the course of action but do not delay if this would place a child at increased risk.
  + **If you are not a member of Barnardo’s staff**, but an external researcher, do not pass your record/sensitive data regarding the child/adult to third parties outside of Barnardo’s - unless it is in the ‘Vital Interest’ of the child/adult, where it is critical to prevent serious harm or distress or life-threatening situations.
  + After you have passed your record to the appropriate people, and have checked that action has been taken, **destroy your own record of the disclosure and personal information of the child/adult**.
  + For more information visit <https://inside.barnardos.org.uk/safeguarding>.

IF A CHILD/ADULT IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER, CALL THE POLICE

1. <https://user-research.education.gov.uk/guidance/ethics-and-safeguarding/research-with-children-and-young-people> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)