

Examples of Learning Activities across Barnardo's

This document gives some great examples of learning already taking place across the charity in response to The 3 Day Learning Commitment. If you have more examples, please email: LO@barnardos.org.uk

West Region, Children's Services

Study visits:

One Assistant Director of Children's Services knows there is an integrated health and early help opportunity on the horizon and is also aware of work we have secured with large health partners in other parts of the country. He wants to use his three days of learning for an in depth road trip/study visit to meet with staff and partners to better understand models of provision, partnership agreements, lessons from implementation etc. with a view to better positioning the locality for a successful bid.

Research projects:

An Assistant Director of Children Services wants to revise the operational model for one of our thematic areas of work. She wants to take development time for a literature review which she would work with policy colleagues to obtain, with protected time to read, digest and disseminate to inform future planning and reconfiguration of the work. This might have an element of the study visit outlined above to see one or two services.

Shadowing/Work Experience:

We have links to some external international companies in the region. One of my colleagues would like to spend time within their work environment to look at systems and processes relating to project management in one of the associated work streams.

Corporate and Assessment Inspection Unit (CAIU)

Being a Peer Inspector:

A group of around 40 people are signed up as peer inspectors to assist our inspections team on service inspection or bespoke pieces of consultancy work (depending on need). Feedback is often positive and gives people valuable experience of how other services operate. It is a great opportunity to use the three days, adding value to Barnardo's (as inspections are a vital piece of our assurance framework) and gaining personal development through challenging conversations, learning how other (good and bad) teams operate etc.

Retail audits:

We perform more than 100 retail audits a year, which I find are a great chance to get out to stores, speak to the teams and understand their processes (which inevitably also helps in understanding their problems and challenges). We have an open offer to retail managers to 'buddy up' with our auditors on store visits. That could be expanded to all employees as a chance to understand more about the retail business from the shop floor, to empathise with the job they do and to come up with ideas to take the business forward.

Mentoring:

I have a mentor from an external organisation who I sourced when I got a new job at Barnardo's. I really value having someone who is experienced in the non for profit (NFP) and commercial world but isn't associated with Barnardo's.

Secondments:

We've had three people seconded over to finance for specific projects and business partnering roles, providing a positive learning experience.

National Counter Trafficking Service, Project Workers

Debriefs:

We complete debriefs at the end of working with a family – what went well, what could have gone better, and shared learning with other direct workers. This provided the team with a time together to reflect on the work and added something extra to the 1:1 supervision discussions. We then collated examples of best practice into a document so that it is recorded.

Retail

ELearning:

An Area Branch Manager struggled with our IT and has already used 2 days as "study leave" to complete the beginners and intermediate excel courses on eLearning and has also improved their general use of both email and PowerPoint. The time they invested in eLearning has improved their effectiveness and communication; they feel more confident using IT and their colleagues have noticed a difference.

Developing a Specialism:

An Area Branch Manager had already started learning British Sign Language (BSL) and was improving their skills and techniques relating to working with deaf children. They identified further learning and plans to use time from their "3 days" to further enhance and improve their skills in BSL. Although not part of their day job, together with their management, they are looking to utilise this in Barnardo's work in the future.

Visit a Service:

An Area Branch Manager has already booked time with their local Children's services in Northern Ireland to learn more about where the money raised in store goes and to look for practical ways in which to build the skills needed to encourage cross-functional working between Children's Services and Retail.

Cymru

Collective Learning:

The Operational Management Group Away Day brings together managers from Children's Services across Cymru with colleagues from IS, Retail, Volunteering etc. to learn. Our last away day was all about the practical work we do every day to support children, young people and families. Staff practitioners ran sessions on mindfulness, Five-to-Thrive, disability support, bereavement services etc. The aim was to get people from across Wales thinking about evidenced based practice and whether they could include these in their services.

Take the lead:

An Assistant Director of Children's Services in Cymru utilised the learning they had received on a leadership coaching programme about the traits of a high performing team to coach and develop their locality management team of Children's Services Managers. By cascading this learning, her direct reports started to see themselves more as a supportive team rather than individual managers. It helped to foster a more supportive and collaborative environment.

"It strikes me that so much of this seems like it should be business as usual stuff but the reality is that the space and time to stand back is increasingly limited. It's nonetheless interesting to note that what's surfaced to date is entirely aligned to the organisation's objectives (growth, reach, impact and innovation) and the permission to think just a little bit bigger has started to generate some ideas that can be nothing but mutually advantageous in terms of job satisfaction and continuous improvement".

Lynn Perry, Director of Children's Service, West Region