

HOW BARNARDO'S INNER RESILIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT (BIRD) SERVICE SUPPORTS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH

BARNARDO'S

**CENTRE FOR
MENTAL
HEALTH**

KEY GOALS AND OUTCOMES

- ☉ Increase access to mental health and wellbeing services and aid recovery and wellbeing; increase families' confidence to support their children or young people in crisis; improve understanding of what support services are available.

The children and young people who accessed BIRD reported improved mental wellbeing, greater confidence in managing their mental health, and stronger relationships with support workers.

Parents, carers, and families observed huge improvements in their children's mood, behaviour, and ability to cope with school and friendships.

Families saw clear benefits, such as better communication with their children and young people, and improved understanding of their children and young people's mental health needs.

- ☉ Reduce pressures for NHS colleagues.

BIRD has the potential to reduce pressure on emergency department and CAMHS Crisis teams. Most children and young people who entered the service said they would prefer support from BIRD over attending an emergency department.

- ☉ Reduce the number of children and young people re-presenting at emergency department with mental health and wellbeing needs.

Only 2.82% of children and young people were readmitted to the service within six months following BIRD support, substantially lower than the 21.4% emergency department readmission rate reported in the literature.

"I felt understood and was helped with issues in school and out, even when [I] was low."
15 year old referred due to self-harm behaviours

"before the BIRD service [was introduced], it might have meant that I would have had to hold onto a case for a lot longer than I do now".
CAMHS Crisis Keyworker,
Wolverhampton

Barnardo's Inner Resilience and Development (BIRD) service is a holistic, child-directed intervention that offers timely, tailored care and support to children and young people with mental health problems.

It primarily supports those who arrive at emergency departments and do not meet the thresholds to be able to access crisis support from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). The goal is a more responsive, compassionate system for children and young people.

Referrals: **418**
children & young people
1/2 from highly deprived areas
October 2023 - April 2025

"it [the BIRD service] was really helpful and saved my life."
13 year old referred due to self-harm behaviours

On average, children and young people rated the service as
9/10



97% of children and young people reflected an improvement in their wellbeing scores*

*Wellbeing measured by goal based outcome scores and child outcome rating scale.

99% felt they were treated well by the team.

96% felt their views were taken seriously.

96% felt they were listened to

SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Every **£1** invested has a potential return of **£3.04**
Calculated as social benefit-cost ratio

Always felt listened to by [staff] and supported, I feel much better and much more in control of my emotions".
19 year old referred for emotional wellbeing and support

CONCLUSIONS

- ☞ By offering early, community-based support, BIRD helps reduce crisis escalation, helps parents, carers and families to manage crises better and builds resilience in children and young people.
- ☞ Children and young people felt listened to, safe and not judged, they learnt effective coping strategies to manage negative emotions, and they improved their mental health and wellbeing and self-confidence in managing this.
- ☞ BIRD offers a practical and compassionate response to a real need. It deserves serious attention as a model for mental health service provision directed at children and young people.