



Barnardos

Because childhood lasts a lifetime

Christmas FM Campaign Report for 2021

What we achieved together

Barnardos were delighted to be chosen as the charity partner for the 2021 campaign, allowing us to raise much needed funds and awareness for frontline work with vulnerable children and families' nationwide. We committed to **Giving the Gift of Childhood** and thanks to the incredible generosity of the Christmas FM listeners, we could do just that for over 6,000 children. We set a goal of raising €250,000 for Barnardos but we were delighted to confirm that an incredible **€331,515 was raised** across the 2021 campaign – all to support vulnerable children and families.



The challenges facing vulnerable families and children are more diverse and complex than ever – with multiple challenge points occurring for families all at once. The intensive and targeted support Barnardos offer families and children in need ensures that their complex and often debilitating challenges could be met and supported in a personal and focused way. The support from Christmas FM means that we provided **6,800 children** with access to nutritious food, support with education, or therapeutic services with our trained support teams.

Suzanne Connolly, CEO, Barnardos says of the current needs *“The last number of years – between Covid-19 pandemic followed swiftly by the cost of living crisis - have been challenging for us all and has made the future feel uncertain....It is our job as the adults in their lives to create a better future, for every child. And thanks to Christmas FM and their listeners, we can do that for 6,800 children”.*



Barnardos has continued to see an increase in demand for services rise sharply in 2022 through to 2023 as a result of the Ukrainian crisis and the cost of living crisis. Today, almost one in ten children (8%) find themselves living in poverty in Ireland today, while 49% of parents are concerned about whether or not their children will be able to access the necessary educational supports they need. 1 in 5 parents are worried about feeding their children. We want to continue to be there to support those who need us most, and thanks to you, we can.



“Across our services, we support thousands of children every year living in poverty. We see first-hand the impact it has on children’s lives and their families around them.

We witness the strain that the uncertainty of not knowing from week to week whether you can afford basic necessities places on parents and the direct negative impact it has on their children’s wellbeing.

For the families we support poverty can exasperate additional vulnerabilities such as parental mental health issues, parental substance use and increase parental tensions. It can also make confronting those issues all the more difficult.” Suzanne Connolly, Barnardos CEO

One parent told us recently that they “had to decide do I pay for food or put money on electricity. Robbing Peter to pay Paul.” The parents we support said that they would always prioritise their children when it comes to food but many have become so accustomed to this it didn’t seem like a sacrifice at all, it’s now just part and parcel of being a parent.

In a Barnardos survey, one in five parents (21%) stated over the past 12 months at some point they did not have enough food to feed their children. This figure is up from 19% in January 2022. The higher this number gets, the more parents there are in Ireland who are facing impossible choices each day. Heating or eating? Dinner for myself or dinner for my children? We know there is so much need for support across communities.

The direct impact your donation has made

Pillar 1: Early Years Support

In our **Early Years service**, Barnardos offer a warm, welcoming and engaging environment that support children to learn, develop, and increase their readiness for school, this programme also supports families to grow together and feel prepared for the difficulties they may face in life.

Pillar 2: Essential Care and Support

Our **Essential Care & Support** programmes are a key part of our Family Support unit which involve intensive, targeted and specialised interventions and supports to vulnerable families experiencing domestic violence, living in extreme poverty or at risk children whose parents are suffering from mental health issues. Family Support seeks to enhance family well-being and strengthen parenting capacity to reduce problems later in a child’s life. As part of this programme, we also provide essential supply and support packages that include items such as school supplies, nappies, formula, warm winter coats, and household supplies.



Pillar 3: Food Support

Barnardos’ **Food Support programmes** have never been more vital, as families feel the challenges of inflation and rising costs. One quarter of families worry about not being able to provide food for their children and 1 in 3 feel very close to food poverty at any one time. Barnardos offers support by providing breakfast and hot meals as well as food parcels and access to cooking and budgeting skills to ensure the most vulnerable families are supported.

Pillar 4: Specialised After School Care

For many of the families we work with, children need an extra helping hand to ensure they get the best opportunities for their educational, emotional, social and physical development. Our after school groups focus on encouraging team work and helping the children build on their ability to make and keep friends and manage their emotions.

What your support really means – Case Studies

Lucy's Story

Christmas is something that every child should be excited about.

But for Lucy and Mark and their mam Sandra the future wouldn't have looked so bright, if it wasn't for the generosity of our wonderful Christmas FM supporters.

Last winter, Lucy and Mark were sleeping on air mattresses, and their mam couldn't turn the heating on for fear she wouldn't be able to put food on the table. The cost of living crisis was hitting the family hard – bills were soaring and money getting tighter.



The scale of the current cost of living crisis is immense. In a recent Barnardos survey of parents and guardians we found that almost two-thirds (64%) of them are regularly worrying about being able to provide their children with daily essentials such as food, heat and electricity.

But thanks to the support for Christmas FM listeners, Barnardos can be there to support families, to help them put food on the table, pay their electricity or fuel bills and ensure Christmas comes to everyone house in Ireland!

Our frontline teams worked closely with Lucy's Mam, making sure they had access to food, heat and any necessities they needed. They worked with Lucy's family to help them get back on their feet and overcome the challenges life sent their way – with targeted interventions, specialised family support and practical supports.

Louise's story

Just one of these thousands is a family we've been working with are Louise & her 9 month old baby, Jess. They're living in emergency accommodation after being evicted. Louise loves Jess so much and is a good mum, who only wants the best for her baby. But she's struggling.

Her mental health is suffering and she worries for Jess's development with no room for her to crawl around and play in a completely new environment. Louise attends a Barnardos service with Jess, where she's storing their belongings until she can get back on her feet.

They've had to move a lot and are far from friends, family & important supports. Louise worries all this will set her and Jess back. As a result, she has concerns about her baby being taken away from her. All she wants is a roof over their heads & somewhere to call home.

But thanks to your support we can help parents with practical solutions, and offer support where we can when families need us most.

Thank you!

At Barnardos, we are constantly responding to the changing needs on the ground of the individual child and their family. Barnardos aims to respond to those needs in a tangible and targeted way, but we need funds to help us do that.

Barnardos' support programmes are based at the heart of their local communities and our objective is to equip families and children with the necessary skills to better cope and thrive, particularly in times of crisis.

Thank you for helping us to be there for those that need us most, when they need us most. Because childhood lasts a lifetime.

Thank you.

*Links to Barnardos surveys and findings mentioned above -

<https://www.barnardos.ie/policy/policy-reports>