‘Something Happened Here’

Exploring the Impacts of the Troubles on Barnardo’s Northern Ireland: Staff, Service Users and Professional Practice

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Introduction

Barnardo’s Northern Ireland

Barnardo’s has been working in Northern Ireland for over 108 years; we opened our first soup kitchen in Great Victoria Street in 1899. We no longer run orphanages but work with children and their families in communities throughout Northern Ireland.

With over 500 full-time and part-time staff we are Northern Ireland’s largest children’s charity, working in over 45 services with 9,500 children, young people and their families. Our pioneering services are wide-ranging but all share a commitment to improving children’s lives.

Barnardo’s believes in children regardless of their circumstances, gender, race, disability or behaviour. We believe in the abused, the vulnerable, the forgotten and neglected. We will support them, stand up for them and bring out the best in each and every child. We do this because we believe in children.

Background to research

NOVA Trauma Support is one of the 45 different services Barnardo’s offers in Northern Ireland. Since 1998, it has been providing therapeutic support to psychologically traumatised children, young people and their families, including a particular focus on those directly and indirectly affected by the Northern Ireland conflict of the last 30 years. NOVA maintains a psychosocial perspective within its therapeutic work, considering not only Service Users’ personal stories, but also the wider societal context in which these have been experienced. So much of this context has been coloured by the conflict.

In 2005 the Service Manager in NOVA, Martin Murphy, one of the authors of this report, took part in a programme run by the Office for Psychosocial Issues (OPSI), an international organisation and group of consultants based at the Free University of Berlin. The programme, ‘Reconstruction after Conflict and War’, was sponsored by the Community Foundation of Northern Ireland and focused on the personal, interpersonal and societal challenges of moving from a conflicted state to one of post conflict. One of the key ideas discussed concerned the issue of ‘conflict sensitivity’, i.e. how organisations took conflict into account in their practice, as well as how their practice shaped, and was shaped, by conflict.

In trying to integrate the ideas presented in this programme, with his own experiences working in NOVA, he identified two related tasks. Firstly, as a starting point, it seemed important to explore and acknowledge the personal impacts of 30 years of conflict on the staff and Service Users of Barnardo’s Northern Ireland. Within this it was important to also understand the impacts professionally of working during and after the ‘Troubles’. Secondly, to consider the implications of such impacts on how Barnardo’s continues to develop its services within the Northern Ireland context. Specifically, how might Barnardo’s Northern Ireland ensure it delivers effective, responsive and conflict sensitive services?

In 2005, an Assistant Director of Children’s Services in Barnardo’s Northern Ireland, was tasked with further developing and promoting an ‘Emotional Well Being and Mental Health’ agenda
within the organisation. As part of this, she convened a small working group (‘Legacy of the Conflict Group’ see Appendix I for list of members) to look specifically at emotional well being and mental health issues relating to children growing up during the conflict. The members of this group held a belief, based on their experience, that children and young people in Northern Ireland had very complex yet unique (in the context of the wider UK and Ireland) emotional health and well-being needs, as a result of growing up in a violently conflicted society. The Legacy of the Conflict Group (hereafter Legacy Group) then decided to take on the ideas proposed by NOVA and this culminated in the report presented here.

Rationale for research

The Office for Psychosocial Issues (OPSI) at the Free University of Berlin, with the Legacy Group at Barnardo’s NI and the Institute of Conflict Research (INCORE) at the University of Ulster, aimed to explore the potential for developing a conflict sensitive approach to Barnardo’s work within Northern Ireland’s divided society.

This was based on the assumption that for an organisation like Barnardo’s, working in Northern Ireland over the course of the conflict, created unique challenges for its staff and its organisational development. Arguably, the conflict would have shaped its services as the organisation developed and responded to the environment around it. Equally the staff, themselves, have also been part of the society, must have been affected in different ways by the conflict. This could have had an impact on service delivery, both positive and negative. At the same time, Service Users (i.e. those that benefit from Barnardo’s services at an individual, family and community level) lived through the violence, often in the worst affected areas, which brought with it additional life stressors. The possibility arises then, that this unique experience could have produced lessons for how to work in a conflicted environment.

Little research has been undertaken to test this assumption. Campbell and McCrystal (2005) carried out a study looking at the experiences of mental health social workers within Northern Ireland, focusing on the level of specific training received to support their work in this particular context. They concluded that ‘agencies should pay greater attention to past and present effects of the Troubles on social work practice and develop appropriate strategies for supporting, training and resourcing staff in this neglected area’ (Campbell & McCrystal, 2005, p.173). Similarly, in 2006, staff from The Family Trauma Centre in Belfast carried out a programme of awareness raising among Health and Personal Services staff, within the Southern Health and Social Services Board, about the impact of the Troubles. At the end of this programme, they concluded that acknowledgment is a central component in empowering staff with the knowledge, skills and confidence to be aware of their own needs, and the needs of service users affected by the conflict (Healey, Blaney and Harrison, 2006).

The project presented in this report sought to explore the issue further and with particular reference to the work of Barnardo’s Northern Ireland. At the same time, it was hoped more general learning around conflict sensitive service provision might also emerge. It was proposed that the first step of the research should be to assess how the organisation and staff have responded, developed and shaped their services over time. This should, it was hypothesised, paint a picture of the dynamic development of the organisation, extracting both lessons and challenges for the organisations ongoing work. To develop the research further, and embed it in
practice, it was also proposed that the research itself should become part of staff discussion and development. To that end, it was determined that, following the initial research, workshops should be held. These workshops would allow staff and research participants to review the findings of the research and jointly explore the need and potential for developing a more conflict sensitive approach to Barnardo’s work. This in turn was to lead to a Policy Brief, which could be distributed to the wider Barnardo’s organisation and beyond.

There were three phases to the project:

1. Research, carried out jointly by OPSI, INCORE and the NOVA service, into how Barnardo’s Northern Ireland and its staff and Service Users have been impacted on by the conflict, in and about Northern Ireland, and how this has uniquely shaped their work over time;
2. A series of staff workshops (including the research participants) to discuss the findings of the research and further explore the applicability of the concept of conflict sensitive service provision to Barnardo’s Northern Ireland; and
3. Dissemination of the research findings, potentially culminating in a Policy Brief. This would include any learning from the process of engagement with staff around these issues.

Specifically this meant:

**Step 1: Research**
- Interviews with 21 Barnardo’s Northern Ireland staff.

**Step 2: Managers’ workshop**
- Feedback of the initial research findings to managers and an invitation to make comments and observations.

**Step 3: Workshop on developing a conflict sensitive approach**
- A three-day workshop for 20 staff members, including those interviewed as part of the research, to be held in Berlin facilitated by OPSI & INCORE.

**Step 4: Production of a Policy Brief**
- The development of a Policy Brief (a Barnardo’s policy briefing paper) by OPSI, INCORE and the Legacy Group.
Methodology

Step 1: Research

Sampling

To carry out the interviews outlined in Step 1, it was necessary to select a sample of staff. A decision was taken by the Legacy Group that the research should reflect, as far as possible, the personal and professional experiences of all staff across the Barnardo’s Northern Ireland organisation. In addition, it was decided that only staff with a minimum of two years service within the organisation would be included for selection. To that end, all qualifying staff were categorised into 5 areas as follows:

1. Administration
2. Children’s Services Management
3. Children’s Services Practitioner
4. Other Management
5. Other

The ‘Other’ categories comprised of Property & Facilities Management, Finance, Information Services, Human Resources and Marketing & Communication staff. The numbers of staff across Barnardo’s Northern Ireland in each of the 5 were totalled, so percentages of total staff in Barnardo’s per category could be established. The twenty interview places were then proportionately distributed across all five categories. A random selection procedure was then employed to identify twenty individual staff members in line with this distribution. A further 10 staff were similarly identified as reserve interviewees in case the original 20 did not want or were unable to participate. Each of the first 20 was written to, to explain the research and invite them to participate in the interviews (see Appendix 2). An earlier email had been sent to all staff by the Barnardo’s Northern Ireland Director, to announce and explain the research to be undertaken (Appendix 3). Where a staff member declined, a reserve from the same staff category was then similarly contacted and invited. At the same time, an email invited volunteers to fill any interview places not taken up by those randomly selected. It was made clear that these volunteers would be accepted on a first come basis.

It should be noted that a decision was taken by the Legacy Group, at the outset, that the location of the future Berlin workshop would not be disclosed to other staff until Step 1 had been completed.

In total 21 interviews were carried out.

Research questionnaire and interviews

This was based largely on a questionnaire devised by Campbell and McCrystal (2005), who had already used it with a population of Northern Ireland based health and social care staff. This had been further validated internationally (see Ramon, Campbell, Lindsay, McCrystal, & Baidoun, 2006). It comprised 30 questions aimed specifically at mental health social workers working across a wide range of services.
On reviewing this for the current research, changes were identified to make it specifically relevant to all Barnardo’s Northern Ireland staff, especially because the sample included those coming from a range of professional and occupational backgrounds in the organisation. This resulted in a 36 item questionnaire. This covered background and personal details, personal experiences of the Troubles throughout life, experiences of the conflict while involved in work related activities, respondents’ thoughts on the exposure of Service Users to the conflict, and organisational responses to supporting staff and Service Users within this context (See Appendix 4). With regard to defining Service Users, this was broadened to include customers at retail outlets and other staff, for those departments whose primary contact is with staff rather than children, young people and families.

Interviews were carried out separately by the authors of the report. This took place over several days in December 2006 and January 2007, at two Barnardo’s locations, to be as convenient as possible to interviewees. The interviews varied in length, from 45 minutes to over two hours, allowing each interviewee to be as expansive in their answers as they wished, while ensuring that each interviewee was asked all the questions. By doing so, the researchers hoped to collect as much supplementary qualitative data as possible. At the end of each interview, the interviewee was asked if they would be willing to take part in future workshops, including Berlin.

Once all the interview data had been collected, i.e. both notes from the interviews and interview recordings, the researchers began a process of coding the data. Where quantitative data was available (e.g. number of staff, positions, etc.) this was totalled and tabulated. For the qualitative responses, based on the researchers’ notes and going back to interview recordings to clarify meanings where necessary, the researchers categorised the data into descriptive categories. The researchers coded a sample of each others interviews and cross-checked between interviews to validate that similar descriptive categories were being used by the researchers and being identified with some consistency. The various descriptive categories were then totalled and patterns, relationships and descriptions across the themes were discussed and extracted by the researchers. That said, although categories were given numeric values, this was done, in line with the ethos of qualitative research, to extract key themes and inferences, as well as to hypothesise about meaning. This was not done to establish a firm quantitative view of the data. The findings of this part of the research are reported later in the report.

**Step 2: Managers’ workshop**

**Workshop**

The Legacy Group had earlier decided that, during this work, a direct engagement with the managers of the organisation was essential. The hope was that, in so doing, it might maximise the potential for future implementation of emerging recommendations, across the organisation. This was agreed at Director Northern Ireland level, who issued a communication to all managers inviting them to attend the managers’ workshop (see Appendix 5 and 6 for communication and organisational flow chart).
The workshop took place at the end of January 2007. At this time the researchers were ready to present some initial quantitative data, with early qualitative information, emerging themes and some interviewees’ reflections on the process.

It began with an introduction to the research, the rationale and process. The researchers then presented their initial quantitative and qualitative findings. After this, the managers were divided into small groups to discuss and respond to the findings. Following a plenary, where this feedback was recorded, the managers were invited to return to their small groups, to brainstorm ideas and suggestions as to how this work could or should be taken forward. They also had to identify potentials and challenges. Again, their responses were recorded during a final plenary. In closing the workshop, participants were asked to indicate if they would be willing to take part in a further residential workshop in March 2007.

**Step 3: Workshop on developing a conflict sensitive approach**

**Workshop**

The decision to locate this workshop in Berlin was taken by the Legacy Group, on the advice of the OPSI and INCORE team, based on the latter’s previous experiences of facilitating this work in other organisations, in other countries. OPSI recommended the workshop be based in the former East Berlin. It was felt that if the workshop was to focus on conflict-sensitivity issues Berlin would provide an ideal venue as the conflicts of the past in that society were still real. Berlin could be useful, therefore, in not only taking Northern Ireland participants out of their own context to free up some time and create reflection space, but it could also provide a reference point on conflict.

The final staff group attending this workshop (see Appendix 7) comprised interviewees, managers from the first workshop, as well as the members of the Legacy Group. Again in discussion between the latter and OPSI, it was agreed that participation from the Barnardo’s Northern Ireland Director would be valuable, not least in conveying a message of the organisation’s commitment to this process. The Director willingly agreed to attend, but unfortunately had to withdraw at the last moment due to unavoidable circumstances.

Over the course of the three days, the participants were further briefed on the continuing emerging themes and findings of the research. They were invited to explore the experience of engaging on these issues as part of their work and the potential for continuing to do so in the future. To this end, they were introduced to the concept of conflict sensitivity in relation to organisations working in conflicted societies. In addition, other related concepts and ideas, including definitions of psychological trauma, were discussed (see Appendix 7 for full programme).

Conflict sensitivity was defined, using the (Africa Peace Forum et al., 2004) definition, as the ability of an organisation to:

- understand the context in which they operate
- understand the interaction between their intervention and the context and
- act upon the understanding of this interaction, in order to avoid negative impacts and maximise positive impacts.
According to the Consortium that developed the concept (Africa Peace Forum et al., 2004), the word ‘context’ is used rather than ‘conflict’ to point out that all socio-economic and political tensions, root causes and structural factors are relevant to conflict sensitivity because they all have the potential to become violent. ‘Conflict’ is sometimes, in the view of the Consortium, mistakenly confused with macropolitical violence between two warring parties (as with a civil war between a national government and a non-state actor). The context refers to the operating environment, which ranges from the micro to the macro level (e.g. community, district province, region(s), country, neighbouring countries) (visit http://www.conflictsensitivity.org for more information).

The workshop also included a walking tour of Berlin encompassing the Holocaust Memorial. A visit was also made to the Berlin-Hohenschönhausen former Stasi prison. Here the group was addressed by Prof. Dr. Hans-Eberhard Zahn, a clinical psychologist from the Free University of Berlin and a former political prisoner of the STASI and former East German state. His focus was on the human capacity and societal need to integrate effectively past experiences into post conflict environments.

The second half of the workshop then increasingly focused on what future plans were needed for developing a conflict sensitive approach within the organisation. In addition, on returning from Berlin it was felt that not all the issues discussed in Berlin had been completed, especially the issue of planning and what would happen with the research. A further meeting, therefore, took place in May 2007, back in Northern Ireland, involving the Berlin participants.

It should be noted however that although the Berlin workshop consisted of inputs, and exposure to different conflict issues in that context, it was also a time where participants got to share and discuss their own experiences of living with and working during the conflict in Northern Ireland. In this sense, it brought the interviews (Step 1) to life. This was done through providing space for participants to share their historical experiences in the company of others from different parts of the organisation and with different backgrounds.

It is important to note therefore that the above methodology, and even to a degree the findings we report below, in no way can, nor indeed attempt to, capture the personal, emotional experiences that were often evident and were openly and honestly expressed, by those participating in the workshops.

It is vital, therefore, to point out that the workshops, and particularly the Berlin experience, has profoundly shaped the process and outcomes of this research. The Berlin experience has, although maybe not articulated in as detailed a way as the interview data due to its more experiential nature, deeply informed the recommendations made in this report. These were further shaped directly by the feedback of participants who uniquely were both the interviewees but also part of the workshops, and most importantly individuals who were and are part of the Northern Ireland conflict context.

While responding to the uniqueness of this experience, of collectively exploring their personal histories of the conflict and its impacts, the participants ensured the process was attended to as the priority. As a result, the programme in Berlin was often punctuated by periods of expression, emotional pain, acknowledgement and reflection. This raises an important challenge
for any future work in this area, i.e. how to incorporate the experiential learning from this research and engagement into any future activities.

**Step 4: Policy brief**

The report presented here will be the basis on which the Policy Brief (a Barnardo’s policy briefing paper) will be developed. In addition, and in line with the participative methodology used in producing this report, the plan at the time of publication, was to present this report to the organisation in a workshop format so that the Policy Brief can be grounded in organisational experience.

**Scope and limitations**

Like all research this project has its limitations, most notably that the available resources dictated a limited sampling frame. As it was designed, the random sampling for this research attempted to include all staff working within the organisation. This was in recognition that, regardless of work or professional role, each member of staff exists, first, as a citizen of our conflicted society, with unique though often shared experiences of living in it. It could be argued that, as a primarily social work agency, however, the interviews might have been best concentrated within the direct services group of staff (i.e. direct to Service Users), particularly children’s services practitioners and managers. Alternatively, future follow up work could potentially be focused in this way.

The number of people interviewed equated to approximately 5% of the total Barnardo’s Northern Ireland staff group – so it provides at least some indication of what key issues might be if a larger sample was used. Although these interviews involved a considerable time resource, it might be argued that a larger proportion of the staff could have been interviewed, to achieve better representation overall. As already indicated, the interview questionnaire was based on a previously validated research tool. Given that each interview involved such a large time commitment, however, any future attempts to target a larger proportion of the staff group might necessarily involve a different form of interview.

As a result of the voluntary nature of the interview process, some staff categories were ultimately not represented in the final group of interviewees. The volunteers who made themselves available for interview, post random selection stage, tended to be from the same staff categories as those randomly selected, who agreed to be interviewed. Those randomly selected who declined could not be replaced by others from their own category, as no-one from these categories subsequently volunteered. As well as maximising learning available in this work, from the contributions of those who did participate, some future consideration might be given as to why some individuals, and indeed certain staff categories, declined to be interviewed. The reasons for not participating could potentially inform future attempts at engagement. They could also expand our understanding of the complexities involved in working towards conflict sensitive service provision, not least the ambivalence, reticence or general discomforts around ‘Troubles’ related discussions, be they between staff and Service Users or within the staff group.
One of the strengths of this research, it could be argued, is the questionnaires were not intended as an end in themselves. Not only did the interviews generate important information, but that information then served as a valuable tool for wider engagement on what could be considered difficult issues. This was very much the case, for example, in the manager’s workshop. This work can continue to serve as an opening to future discussions and dialogues with more staff and Service Users.

At the same time, the interview format employed allowed for the gathering of both quantitative and qualitative information. Importantly, the latter included interviewees’ reflections on the process of relating their personal and professional histories regarding the conflict. As previously indicated, this information adds further value to the research findings, and better guides decisions about future activities.

A very clear decision was made to involve managers (including Assistant Director level) throughout each phase of this work, for inclusion as interviewees and more widely through the later managers’ workshop. As a result, it could be argued, those most experienced in the development of the organisation, with greatest influence in future change, were actively engaged to take ownership of any outcomes. This was, of course, further supported by the Director’s evident commitment to the work from an early stage. The presence of “interviewees” (referred to as participants in this report) in all workshops also ensured that this project, to the degree possible, was participative and also shaped from the “bottom up” at the same time.

It must be highlighted, however, that a direct engagement with Service Users was not attempted within the time and resource constraints, nor were any Service User workshops held. This is clearly a limitation and an area that will require careful consideration, if this work is to be progressed. Similarly, future work should almost certainly involve much more detailed discussion with Children’s Services managers and practitioners on their understandings of what impacts the conflict has had, or continues to have, on the Service Users with which they work.
“I’ve been aware in work of having to persevere in trying to build rapport with clients when, for example, there is paramilitary paraphernalia in their home. At the same time, I have always had a particular empathy for those who have experienced what I had gone through”.
Findings

The findings presented in this Chapter stem from two primary sources. That is, firstly, the data gleaned from the questionnaires and interviews, and secondly, the learning taken from the workshops.

Findings from the interviews

General observations

The interview and the questions to participants was well received, and most were interested and keen to talk about their experiences of the conflict, the organisation and the implications of the conflict for their work. The fact that most interviewees went on to engage in a range of workshops and help shape the recommendations of the report is also testament to the interest in this area. Several participants mentioned the value of speaking and the comfort they got in being allowed to tell of their experiences. As one participant noted “The processing created by this interview has been thought provoking of itself”. It is fair to argue that the interviews themselves stimulated a range of ideas and in some case memories. Some of these were difficult to remember, as one participant said, the interview was “a strange experience in terms of the recounting of my stories, emotionally and physiologically”. A few participants became very emotional in the interviews, and others expressed relief about telling what happened to them. This sharpened the discussion on the need for staff support, and the Barnardo’s member of the research team who worked for NOVA, had to play this function in some cases.

A general observation of the researchers was, however, that despite the often harrowing account of seeing people being killed, or being evacuated from ones home as child due to bomb threats (or in one case the home being mistakenly shot up and another the house being damaged by a bomb across the street), there was a tendency of several participants to minimise or normalise their experience. There seemed to be a social qualification criteria operating, i.e. only if your story involved death was it legitimate to tell. Some participants said they felt guilty talking about themselves. This is summed up by one participant who said:

“It is rare that people talk about this so it is interesting…the things you accept as normal. Only when we move beyond, we realise it is extraordinary. My experience was not as deep, but talking brought up emotions for me”.
Demographics

The sample for this study was made up of 21 respondents, nine of the respondents were male and 12 were female. This three to four ratio contrasts with an organisational male to female ratio of one to six, so there was clearly a large over representation of males within respondents. The bulk of the respondents were also in the 41-50 age range, i.e. 13 or 61.9% of respondents. Although the study is based on a small sample, both these demographics are broadly representative of the organisation, although the latter may have been skewed slightly because participants were recruited based on their length of service in Barnardo’s NI being longer than two years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Nos</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>42.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>57.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Groups</th>
<th>Nos</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>61.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of religion the participants were majority Catholic (11 participants or approximately 52%), with the remainder being made up of 43% or nine participants being Protestant and one participant marking themselves as agnostic (coded as ‘Other’). This compares with an overall breakdown in Barnardo’s Northern Ireland of 41% Catholic, 51% Protestant and 8% ‘Other’. It should be added however that this does not equate with the same number of participants as practicing their religion, it is the perceived religious background from which the participants came.
Table 3 Religion of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Nos</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>52.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>42.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the same way that religion does not equate with whether participants were practising their religion, religion was also not a predictor of the way participants described their nationality, e.g. some Catholic participants saw themselves as British or Northern Irish, and/or some participants felt they belonged to more than one category such as British and Irish. In sum, approximately 42% of participants saw themselves as British, 38% Irish and 17% Northern Irish.

Table 4 Self-defined nationality of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Nos</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>41.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Irish</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24*</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Some respondents indicated more than one category.

Employment history and status

Barnardo’s Northern Ireland, as was noted in Chapter One is a large organisation with multiple departments and job functions. The study attempted to reach across as many departments within the organisation as possible. In the final instance however, and partly because the sampling process included several volunteers, most of the sample is made up of staff working in Children’s Services (16 participants or 76%), the remaining participants were two from the Information Support section, two from the Properties and Facilities Management and one from administration. That said various roles within Children’s Services were evident, including practitioners (33%), managers (29%) and administration (19%) (Although in the latter not all were in Children’s Services).

To this end the sample reflects the major component of Barnardo’s Northern Ireland’s work. Most of this is in the Children’s Services area, but it does not represent the full range of staff, for example those randomly selected from the Retail section declined to participate in the study, and neither did any of their colleagues volunteer.
The sample represented staff who had been at Barnardo’s Northern Ireland for over two years, with 13 participants (62%) having been at the organisation between six and 20 years. Two of the participants had been at the organization for more than 21 years and only 29% or six participants for 0 to five years. That said, the sample was probably also slightly skewed because the selection process stipulated that participants had to have worked at the organization for more than two years, and it is also possible that staff who had been at the organisation longer might have been more inclined to volunteer for participation. The backgrounds of the staff, that is where they had worked previously, revealed a fairly even split between those from the voluntary sector (12 or 44%) and statutory sector (11 or 42%), with a minority coming to Barnardo’s from the private sector (4 or 15%).
Table 8 Past areas of work of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past areas of work</th>
<th>Nos</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary / Community</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>44.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statutory</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>40.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>27*</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Some respondents indicated more than one category.

**Conflict-related experiences**

**Impact of the conflict on participants’ lives**

Participants were asked whether they felt the conflict had impacted upon their life. The vast majority of participants (16 of the 21 interviewed) felt it had and only five respondents felt that it had not. The latter described growing up in “sheltered” neighbourhoods or in safe areas where they felt there were good cross-community relationships.

Although some participants tried to minimize the impact on them (three participants), in terms of those who felt there was an impact most tended to feel the conflict was always there in the background (10 participants) or affected them but they were not sure how (two participants), and that there were always what were described as “day-to-day” disruptions such as bomb scares and road closures (eight participants), with six participants mentioning that they had to constantly take personal safety into account. A few participants spoke of feeling anxious as a child or they picked up on their parents’ own anxiety.
e.g. seeing them checking under their cars for bombs. A few other participants mentioned specific issues such as feeling controlled by the other “dominant community in my locality” (three participants) or “dominated by paramilitaries” (two participants), feeling they had to take sides and that being neutral was a “strain” (four participants).

Three participants did also say however that they felt the impact of the conflict had been positive, explaining that, as a result of the conflict; they felt more open to others, rejected violence and were less bigoted.

**Personal impact of the conflict**

In line with responses given above, a minority of respondents (five of the 21 interviewed) felt that they were unaffected personally by the conflict and it was “normalised” at times, e.g. as one participant put it: ‘checking under the car was part of the morning routine, it was normal like having breakfast it is in our heads but we don’t remember; it was shocking but we were not affected’. Others spoke of how it took some time or the visit from someone not from Northern Ireland to remind people that their reactions were not ‘normal’ as such, e.g. ‘[it surprises me] how you get used to things – like narrow letter boxes, what frightened me was how you get used to things. Visitors were horrified how we took things for granted’. Several times respondents spoke of themselves as lucky they were not affected more and that they had a general sense of “there but for the grace of God go I’.
The most common types of experiences listed included bomb scares and evacuations (eight participants), traffic disruptions (nine participants), and searches in shops and cars, roadblocks (10 participants). The disruptions of the Ulster Workers’ Strike were mentioned particularly by three participants.

About a third of the sample felt they had grown up in a conflict area, i.e. an area dominated by ‘no go’ areas, with a high police presence, and shootings and other conflict-related disturbances happening regularly. Three respondents mentioned gun battles near their home and witnessed shootings, and one related how their house was shot up by the army because they mistakenly thought there was a gunman in the house. The experiences of those, who grew up in areas of high levels of conflict was summed up by one participant who when asked to relate any incidents said: ‘just too many to recount them all’. One respondent dramatically spoke about how their father’s business was demolished during the conflict:

“My Dad managed a supermarket, there was a bomb there. We went with Dad the next day to clean up; it was the only time I saw my father cry. My father was in the Orange Order, sectarian in his views, but helped me see everyone was a victim. The shop was targeted because one employee was the sister of a Hunger Striker. She was then laid off.”

Four respondents, that is one in five of the sample, were subject of sectarian harassment and an equal number spoke of security force harassment and assault. Nearly half of the respondents had witnessed bombs or heard them, one respondent’s family member was caught up in a bomb and two described being the first on the scene following a bomb and seeing dead bodies. Four respondents had seen police or army killed or shot. Five of the sample said that family friends had been killed in the conflict, two had lost friends and two respondents had lost family members.

Taken together this means that about one in five respondents had either seen someone killed or severely injured as a result of the conflict, or lost someone they knew (often family friends) in the conflict. Taken compositely, and despite some participants’ attempts to minimize their experiences (e.g. they were not as bad as others), clearly most of the sample had grown up in an environment that was anything but normal, from the so-called minimum ‘everyday’ disruptions of bomb scares through to a significant number of people being directly affected.

Despite the plethora of experiences, however; the majority of respondents (57%) said they did not speak to people following various incidents. Those who did (38%) generally spoke to family and friends, and occasionally to trusted work colleagues. Coping seemed to be down, at least in the four cases where participants mentioned this, to the family unit and that families often protected their children from the conflict, creating as normal experiences as possible, e.g. “It
amazes me how my parents brought us up in that environment and that we were kept safe and sane. … At the same time, we kept so much from them, not wanting to upset them with what was going on for me”.

### Table 9 Speaking to someone following an incident

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Nos</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>38.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>57.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not answer / don’t know</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conflict-related incidents while at work**

The number of conflict-related experiences while at work seemed to be considerably lower than general experiences of the conflict. Most often this concerned disruptions, bomb scares, closures, avoid areas because of riots etc. and particularly at certain times (e.g. Drumcree, Anglo-Irish Agreement and Ulster Workers’ Strike) (four participants), and increased security concerns at certain times of the year (four participants). A lack of freedom of movement was also identified as a problem, nearly one in four participants said that they were fearful of working in certain areas and they felt they could not reveal their identity in such areas. Two participants spoke of feeling uncomfortable in Service Users’ homes especially where paramilitary symbols were displayed. As one participant noted:

“I’ve been aware in work of having to persevere in trying to build rapport with clients when, for example, there is paramilitary paraphernalia in their home. At the same time, I have always had a particular empathy for those who have experienced what I had gone through”.

The displays by Service Users of their sectarianism meant that, for some respondents, they were ‘trying to maintain neutrality constantly’ which was challenging. A fair number also found working with people, especially young people who had sectarian views challenging (six participants) and three spoke of clients or Service Users who reported intimidation by paramilitaries. A few participants (and this was reiterated in the workshops held around the research study) spoke of the challenges presented by the fact that, in some areas where they worked, there was still a sense of impunity for paramilitaries. As one participant noted:
“How do we hold paramilitaries accountable for domestic violence when society doesn’t hold them accountable? Social workers try, but can’t break into this violence culture. It negates the whole child protection ethos”.

That said, it should be noted that, on the whole, work life seemed to be less disrupted than general living conditions (and certainly as compared to the childhoods of several participants). For example, one participant noted how in coming to work there was actually a relief in getting away from their local community, where there had been a big bomb that had affected many. On the opposite end of the spectrum, a few participants spoke of concerns in the office, i.e. have internal censures on who to speak with about certain issues (three participants). One participant said that they found it hard when people referred to Barnardo’s as a Protestant organisation. A few participants (two) said that they felt isolated by colleagues of different religions, or a minority at work. One participant said their car was petrol bombed and another said they knew of a colleague who was assaulted by a Service User.

However, it is also important to remember that not all the incidents and issues were related to Barnardo’s Northern Ireland, as often participants spoke of impacts prior to joining the organisation. Issues of current concern for staff at Barnardo’s seem to still be about travelling into some areas (for about three participants) and feeling at risk as certain times of the year (two participants), and some of the ongoing threats by paramilitaries or having to go to Service Users’ homes where threatening symbols are displayed (one participant).

That said, such issues were time and again reinforced in the group meetings held as part of the study. Interestingly, it was found however that many staff did not speak with others when problems related to the conflict arose in work. 38% reported speaking to someone normally a manager or trusted colleague but 29% still said they did not speak with anyone. A high number
of participants did not answer this question, presumably because a high number did not report concerns or incidents at work, i.e. they “never felt the need” or it was not seen as necessary. In a similar vein, about one third of the sample said they did report incidents to Barnardo’s Northern Ireland’s managers, when they happened, but 19% said they did not and 47% felt this was not applicable or did not answer.

Table 10 Speaking to someone at work following a conflict-related incident

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Nos</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>38.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not answer / don’t know / not applicable</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11 Reported conflict-related incident to Barnardo’s officials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Nos</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not answer / don’t know / not applicable</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>47.62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where respondents did speak with their managers or trusted confidents if an issue arose, on the whole participants were satisfied with the responses they received. However, at the same time, there clearly was not a standard structure or process for reporting or dealing with conflict-related incidents.

Table 12 Satisfaction with support when reporting a conflict-related incident

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction level</th>
<th>Nos</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfied</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not answer / don’t know / not applicable</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>61.90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20 Something Happened Here
Conflict-related expertise and practice

Two-thirds of the participants in the interviews (14 respondents) felt that their work practice had changed over the years as a result of the conflict. At the same time, exactly how participants felt practice had changed revealed a wide number of responses that were difficult to categorise. For example, one participant felt that the conflict meant they had to have internal organisational discussions about their own prejudice, another felt they had to carry out unusual activities such as escorting children and young people to bonfires, so the latter did not go alone and put themselves at risk, which then ironically put the respondent at risk. Another felt the stories from clients had shaped them personally, and yet another felt that the conflict had kept alive their more activist understanding of what social work was.

When asked whether their responses were helpful only 29% or six participants said yes, although the vast majority (67% or 14 participants) said they did not know or felt the question was not applicable, suggesting the wording of this question might not have been exactly appropriate. There was a view expressed in the interviews, as well as in subsequent workshops, that the organisation had become increasingly skilled at dealing with conflict-related issues and had changed as a result of it, but what these skills were and exactly how the organisation had changed has not been documented. Exactly what the learned skills are was also not completely clear. Participants did however list some areas where they felt skills were developed, for example:

- Barnardo’s Northern Ireland has developed specific trauma-focused programmes, e.g. NOVA (three participants)
- Engaging with families about perceptions of religious identity of workers and implications for work (two participants)
- Skills learned concerning dealing with tension-filled situations and negotiating such difficulties (one participant)
- Need to be non-judgmental and discreet in work practice (one participant)
- Skills working with security force families (one participant)
- Identity issues and matching carers with children (one participant)
- Ability related to “tuning into” own biases (one participant)
- Working with young people on issues of sectarianism (one participant)
- Managing paramilitary risk to young people (one participant)
- Greater sensitivity, for example when doing risk assessments (one participant) and
- Facilitating carers who were willing to work across communities (one participant).

Experiences of Service Users, staff and general public

Although much of the study focused on Barnardo’s Northern Ireland staff, some questions were also posed about the experiences of the Service Users, staff and general public with whom those interviewed come in contact. This was a complicated part of the interview because different staff had contact with different groups, e.g. administration workers and Information Service workers primary contact was with other staff, while those in Retail and Fundraising or Properties and Facilities Management could more frequently work with the general public. To this end, the findings presented below should be read with the caveat that they merely present a broad outline of some issues faced by those Barnardo’s Northern Ireland staff work with; clearly more work is needed in this area.
The first question asked of participants in this area asked them to assess how many Service Users/staff/public they have worked with who they felt have experienced problems because of the Troubles (for example: intimidation; housing; bereavement; psychological trauma, physical trauma; others). As can be seen from the table below, at least 65% felt they had worked with over 60 people personally who were affected. This confirms the broadly pervasive nature of the political conflict.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number affected</th>
<th>Nos</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 to 10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 to 60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61 to 100</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-199</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200+</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not answer</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants who worked with staff in the organisation (four who responded) identified issues such as colleagues being anxious about going into certain areas, being concerned by visible displays of political perspective, knowing colleagues whose family life was affected by conflict, e.g. lost family business, violent areas, and knowing staff members who were injured in a bomb and who talked openly about it as in one case.

Participants who worked with Service Users in the organisation identified a range of issues. Some of the most common and serious problems they felt service users faced included:

- Threats from paramilitaries and ongoing intimidation (six participants)
- Social problems as a result of conflict: low-self-esteem, domestic violence, higher crime, alcohol abuse, poverty, etc. (three participants)
- Growing up in violent and dangerous communities (three participants)
- Living in paramilitary dominated communities (three participants)
- Segregation/sectarianism in communities (three participants)
- Punishment beatings (three participants)
- Bereavements due to conflict (three participants)
- Families of service users directly affected, e.g. bombings (two participants)
- Paramilitaries involved in the sexual exploitation of children (two participants)
- People being exiled from communities (two participants).

A few participants also noted that some of the problems outlined above have now become endemic with, for example, cycles of problems associated with violence, poor parenting, alcoholism and delinquency being common (three participants). This they felt was linked to the
political conflict. This was often compounded by living in deprived areas where people did not have a voice (two participants).

Support

Participants were asked what support services were offered to Service Users, staff, public or clients who had experienced conflict-related incidents or problems. As a result of the fact that some participants were talking about their work with Service Users as the primary constituency with which they work, while other staff such as those working in administration were referring to fellow staff, the answers to the question were somewhat conflated. That said the responses provide a useful list of the type of services available. The most common responses were giving of advice or referral peer support, groups, counselling services or other support services. The list of services offered is provided below. It should be noted that participants often identified more than one category of support. To this end, the list is best viewed as simply that, a list of types of services used rather than an assessment of what services are most frequently used in Barnardo’s Northern Ireland.

List of the types of services offered to clients, Service Users, public and staff:

- Counselling, including trauma counselling (four participants)
- Advice (four participants)
- Referral, e.g. for peer support, groups, counselling or other support services (three participants)
- Listening (two participants)
- Speaking to colleagues and/or informal supports (two participants)
- Family work (one participant)
- Domestic violence services (one participant)
- Doctors (one participant)
- Group work (one participant)
- Employee assistance programme (one participant)
- Referred on for benefits (one participant)
- Keeping them safe (one participant)
- Information sharing (one participant)
- Training (one participant)
- Trying to fulfil role as ‘good parent’ (one participant)
- Advocacy (one participant).

Numbers of problems since the Belfast Agreement

One of the key issues often considered by those working in the social work and support arena is whether conflict-related referrals have increased or decreased since the Belfast Agreement 1998. Some maintain that referrals will increase as people might now feel safer to come forward once a crisis has averted. Several participants were of the view that the problem was now less acute but now more chronic. In their opinion, there was a ‘bounce back’ of ‘trauma energy’ from the conflict in communities, manifesting in different ways such as paedophilia, youth violence and alcoholism. However, others contend referrals directly linked to the conflict have decreased now that the source of the problem, (e.g. punishment beatings, bombings), have
dissipated. Of those participants who felt able to answer, most seemed to feel that problems have remained consistent on the whole, with similar numbers feeling there had been an increase or decrease in amount of referrals. Overall, it is clear the organisation still remains overstretched either way. That said, the majority of participants felt they were not sure or felt unable to answer this question as their primary group with which they worked and their job disruption (say in administration) was not to directly assess such issues and make referrals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referral quantity</th>
<th>Nos</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduced a lot</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced a bit</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stayed about the same</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased a bit</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased considerably</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not answer / don't know / not applicable</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>57.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current context

Part of the interviews with participants, as was noted above, focused on their personal experiences of the conflict in the past. However, it was also explored with participants whether there were ongoing issues or if the conflict continued to affect their lives.

Affect of conflict in current context

Participants were asked specifically whether they felt the conflict still affects their lives. The majority (12 participants or 57%) felt it did and about 38% or eight participants felt it did not. In terms of those who felt the conflict did still affect them, generally they spoke of the residual impact rather than an acute and direct impact such as threats or attacks. Typically, they referred to how the political divisions, sectarianism, segregation, and bitterness endured in many communities and was always present or affecting their lives. Some spoke of their efforts to continue to shield their children from such problems, and one participant said that there were attacks going on in their community. Interestingly, some of those who said they felt the conflict no longer affected them did at the same time seem say the conflicts of the past still shaped the present to a degree. Thus, we can conclude that the conflict does indeed have an impact on the present, even if on the whole this is no longer accompanied with direct violence.
### Table 15 Do you feel the conflict still affects your life?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Nos</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>57.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>38.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not answer / don’t know / not applicable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Affect of conflict at work currently**

Participants were asked whether they felt the conflict still affected their working environment or culture. Overwhelming, the view seemed to be that it did, with 76% of participants (16 in total) saying this. There was, however, not one particular way that participants felt that the conflict persisted, but a range of different ways. Some felt it was always there or that there were “undertones”. Others, however, were more specific. The list of responses, of which some focused on the internal work environment and others on the external context, included:

- Segregation is still there and staff have to work in segregated areas (two participants)
- Trauma victims still coming for help, or transgenerational trauma (two participants)
- Staff not liking to go into certain areas
- Always there but people opt out of it, or not dealt with directly, e.g. Barnardo’s
- Political stagnation and wastage of resources
- Working relationships with colleagues
- Client perception of the organisation
- Young people still no voice.

### Table 16 Do you feel the conflict still affects your working environment or culture?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Nos</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>76.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not answer / don’t know / not applicable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to asking whether the conflict still affected the working environment, participants were asked whether they felt safe at work. The vast majority 86% (18 participants) said that they did. Two of the participants (which amount to nearly 10% of this small sample) felt that they did not. These participants sometimes said they did not feel safe in certain areas, in one case because they were a ‘lone female’.
Table 17 Do you feel safe in undertaking your work?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Nos</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>85.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not answer / don’t know / not applicable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conflict sensitivity

This section of the study focused specifically on what the implications of the conflict have meant for the organisation. The term conflict sensitivity is used as an overarching theme denoting the degree to which Barnardo’s Northern Ireland takes the conflict into account in its activities and practices.

Taking the conflict into account

When asked directly if Barnardo’s Northern Ireland took the conflict into account in the nature of its services, 14 of the participants (67%) felt it did, with four participants (19%) feeling the organisation did not. When asked to explain the former view, however, it became clear that it was the presence of some services, such as NOVA, or that the organisation simply worked in all areas, that informed this view. It did not appear that the organisation had a conflict-sensitive approach embedded throughout the organisation and that although there was some awareness of the conflict “more could be done” as one participant put it.

Table 18
Has Barnardo’s NI has taken conflict-related issues over the years into account?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Nos</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not answer / don’t know / not applicable</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of other gaps, two participants were of the view that less effort was put into political conflict issues despite their pervasive nature than other programmes such as SafeZone or campaigns like ‘challenge disadvantage’. SafeZone was an awareness raising programme within the whole of Barnardo’s, aimed at better supporting the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered staff and Service Users. As a participant noted:
“How can we have SafeZone, which is great, but totally ignore this issue? Seems to be an assumption that if your father wasn’t killed or you weren’t out rioting, you weren’t impacted”.

Another noted they felt the organisation was rather avoidant of conflict issues:

“I don’t think so…they set up services, but there is no specific work on building relationships – not much focus on conflict, ‘get on with work and avoid issues’”

Others felt the organisation was reactive rather than proactive when it came to conflict issues. This was also emphasised at the various workshops facilitated as part of the research process. Some referred to more internal organisational issues and felt the organisation had moved considerably since the 1980s, with attempts to recruit more Catholic staff and deal with the perception of the organization as largely Protestant. At the same time, it was felt that more work was still needed in this area because, as one participant put it, the organisation still had a poor profile in some Catholic areas.

As was mentioned above, programmes such as NOVA were praised for bringing the trauma focus to the organisation, but at the same it was recognized that it only operated in one Board area. In addition, at the workshops that were run around the process, it was noted that although the NOVA service was innovative and positive, it was often also seen as the area of the organisation that dealt with the political conflict issues meaning such issues were not mainstreamed in the organisation. This was not seen as sufficient, given that all staff can potentially be confronted with conflict-related issues while undertaking work activities. Other gaps identified in the organisation’s conflict focus included some areas still not being reached, no training of local people to deal with conflict issues and a lack of understanding in dealing with impacts of the conflict on staff within parts of the organisation.

Conflict-related training and role of the organisation

Participants were asked: have you ever been offered, or undertaken, education or training in dealing with problems associated with the Troubles? Overwhelmingly participants said they had not undertaken such training with 76% or 16 participants expressing such a view. Only five participants or 23% had received any training.
Table 19 Received Troubles-related training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Nos</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>76.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not answer / don’t know / not applicable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where people did receive training, the types of training listed included:

- Anti-sectarian training
- Reconciliation training
- Trauma and intergenerational trauma workshop, and as a student
- Anti-oppressive training
- Basic introduction to counselling
- Child protection training.

Thus, although it is clear that some training has taken place, this seemed to be limited, and any training that directly focused on how the conflict impacts on work practice or staff was completely non-existent. That said, when asked what training might be needed, participants came up with a raft of suggestions. Many of these were wider than a conflict focus. All, however, are listed below, i.e. training on:

- Sectarianism, e.g. using resources from Equality Commission
- Assistance to those who are still “bitter about the past” and where bigotry comes from
- Mediation
- Dialogue skills
- Conflict resolution
- Insights into the conflict
- How the conflict has affected children and others
- Issues NOVA deals with, i.e. trauma
- Suicide awareness
- Capacity building of staff to deal with young people.

Other suggestions were also made such as:

- Generic support and training for staff, and for those affected by the conflict
- Developing an awareness of users needs because of the conflict, including a focus on parenting
- Developing awareness of how staff have been affected, recognising staff experiences and sharing experiences
- Subsidies for counselling for some staff members if they need it
- Basic counselling or support for administration workers
- Dealing with vicarious traumatisation where it arises
- Integrating conflict-awareness into supervision.
At a wider level it was felt the organisation needed to:

- Continue to actively address the fact that it is historically perceived as Presbyterian middle class organization despite the changes that have taken place in the last decade
- Consider the issues of racism and its potential impact
- Consider the issues relating to homophobia and the conflict
- Continue the type of research embodied in this research study
- Foster all-Ireland links and
- Generally move towards being a proactive and less reactive organisation.

**Uniqueness of Barnardo's Northern Ireland**

Part of the interview process was aimed at trying to assess the degree to which participants felt the organization, its staff and their experiences, together with the context in which it worked, created additional particular challenges to Barnardo’s Northern Ireland. When asked: “how do you think this makes it different to other Barnardo’s Regions or Nations”? (in Barnardo’s, ‘Regions’ refers to areas within England such as the Midlands or South West, with sub-national headquarters, while ‘Nations’ include Barnardo’s Scotland, Barnardo’s Cymru, as well as Barnardo’s Northern Ireland), most respondents responded by saying they felt the context was different. The embedded nature of violence differentiated the context from other Regions and Nations according to three participants; with one participant even adding this had led to a ‘desensitised workforce’. A few participants spoke of how the conflict was always in the background, and the ongoing challenges of sectarianism, segregation and diversity. Two participants felt there was an “island mentality” that exacerbated this, i.e. parochial issues became embedded and seen as large and important. One participant said that they felt the other Regions and Nations, however, failed to fully grasp the challenges faced by Northern Ireland, a view others expressed in workshops.

Other participants said that were also issues that were similar to other contexts, such as poverty or homophobia, but added the presence of political violence exacerbated this further. It was also expressed that, although Northern Ireland had to deal with sectarianism, it was still the least racially mixed area and other regions had to deal with racism and related problems. That said, it was acknowledged that this was a growing problem in Northern Ireland. Two participants, by contrast however, felt that the issues faced in Northern Ireland were in fact the same as in other Regions and Nations.

An attempt was also made to establish whether participants, if they considered the context was unique, felt the organisation had taken this into account. From the data gleaned from the interviews, this was difficult to assess, as not too many participants answered the question. At least 5 of the participants felt the organisation had taken the unique situation of the conflict in Northern Ireland into consideration. This was evidenced by the reach of the organisation, that it worked in all areas, had strict policies and procedures on fair employment and had services such as NOVA and others which worked directly with the legacy of the conflict. As was evidenced from the earlier sections in this report, a number of participants felt more needed to be done.
Exporting lessons

As a way of concluding the interviews, participants were asked if there were lessons they felt that could be exported from Northern Ireland that might be relevant in other conflict situations. Some of the lessons identified included:

- The knowledge and skills built up in some of the more obviously conflict-focussed services within Barnardo’s Northern Ireland
- Lessons on how to set up policies and procedures for fair employment
- Importance of listening to stories and having these validated, and storytelling
- The durability and resilience of people
- The use of arts in impoverished areas
- The multi-layered nature of differences
- Tolerance and acceptance can be determined by the way you are brought up, and not just through society
- Impact of historic job inequality and how this can be changed
- The relationship between poverty and conflict
- How to create dialogue and name the ‘elephants’
- How to pull a political conflict back ‘from the brink’.

Future practice

The final issue enquired into was participants views on how they thought their practice might change over the next five years, in relation to the wider political environment. In this regard, it is important to note that the interviews took place prior to the re-establishment of devolution in May 2007. That said, at the time of interviews this looked likely and a number of participants spoke about what they thought might happen were devolution to return. Most notably they thought there might be a shift towards dealing with ‘ordinary’ issues such as health, education, housing etc. (three participants) and that this might have some administrative and financial implications (one participant). Devolution, it was felt, might also decrease fears (one participant), increase development (one participant), but that there might also be a resistance to change which could lead to new conflicts (one participant). One or two others felt, on the other hand, that work would just be the same, and that there will be structural changes but not practice based ones. The need for specific services to continue was highlighted, although it was felt by one participant that Troubles related referrals might decrease over time. Others too highlighted the issue of violence with one participant saying that men needed to be engaged in terms of their predisposition to violence, and their role as fathers. Young people who have ‘known only the violence of the Troubles’ will also need to be engaged. There would be a growing need for work on professionalism and class, religious identity, gender issues and prejudice according to another participant. Another said that more family support work will be needed.
Findings from Workshops

Managers’ workshop

A total of 14 managers attended this workshop, which was presented and facilitated by the two researchers and another member of the Legacy Group. This represented almost one in three of all Barnardo’s Northern Ireland management. Attendees included two Assistant Directors of Children’s Services (ADCS), one of whom was a member of the Legacy Group and an Assistant Director from another staff category. Two other Assistant Directors, one from Children’s Services and one other, had also planned to attend, but were unable to make it on the day. The rest of the workshop comprised 12 Children’s Services Managers (CSMs), two of whom were presenting or facilitating. It is important to note also that 6 managers attending had also been interviewees in the research, some randomly selected, others who had volunteered to be interviewed.

As a result of the fact that attendance was voluntary, the attendees were asked to state what it was they wanted from the workshop. In addition to hearing the early feedback from the research, participants expressed a need for ‘recognition of what has happened here, how it impacts on the organisation and those we work with’. There was an indication that ‘we are ready to discuss issues’, but an important caveat was that this had to be considered in terms of a ‘process and not just an exercise’ at this particular time. Participants openly acknowledged mixed feelings about engaging in this work, as well as feelings of guilt or discomfort that some had been ‘worse affected’ than others. Regarding longer term goals, participants hoped that this type of opportunity could be extended to others in the organisation, as well as to teams within services. It was also thought that a useful outcome might be the equipping of staff with new skills, in terms of handling conflict related issues, including mediation and trauma.

Early findings from the research were then shared with the group, who were asked to consider their reactions to this within three smaller groups. Feedback from the latter was similar across each of the smaller groups and included the following:

- There was concern expressed about the emotional impact of the research on interviewees and researchers.
- At the same time, there was a general satisfaction that the research was being undertaken.
- It was noted that those who had previously been interviewed found it generally more comfortable to engage in these conversations now, so that participants were at different starting places on the day.
- Those interviewed had had their own experiences validated by the collective information from the research and from the smaller group discussions, and this was helpful to them.
- The normalising of the “bizarre” was highlighted, while at the same time being recognised as a survival function (an example was given of a school principle being under death threat).
- The minimising of impacts was not a surprise to the groups and easily recognised as a phenomenon that is common.
- It was questioned whether the organisation could be viewed as avoidant or neutral in its response to the conflict context, including specific examples (Glenbryn/ Holy Cross conflict).
- At the same time, it was wondered what learning there might be in terms of how staff coped, i.e. mention of the concept of resilience.
A question was asked if 21 interviewees could be reasonably considered as representative of a workforce of nearly 500 people.

More work needed to focus on the transgenerational impact of the Troubles, it was noted.

‘Post conflict’ was questionable as a description of where Northern Ireland was presently.

In the second part of the workshop, the same three smaller groups were asked to consider what the priorities would be in taking this work further within the organization. There was a clearly shared view that it should be. The following points emerged:

- A wider dissemination of the research and its purpose in order to garner widest possible commitment across the organisation.
- An audit would be needed of work currently undertaken within the organisation related to conflict.
- Barnardo’s Northern Ireland needed to adopt a position of a ‘curious organisation’ in terms of what has happened and its current impacts.
- More opportunities for ‘conversations’ were needed.
- Barnardo’s Northern Ireland needed ‘to take control of how it is perceived’.
- Staff need to be better equipped in terms of knowledge and skills, and ensure there was an opportunity to learn from each other in this.
- There should be a central place to log and learn.
- There is a need to educate not accuse as we identify our needs in this area.
- There is a need to learn from other areas of conflict regarding our work with children and young people.

Some cautionary points were also raised. There was a concern as to where all this work would go, the implication being that a clear commitment to follow through was not necessarily evident, to date, from the highest levels of the organisation. Some also asked if indeed it was wise to ‘open old wounds’ around these issues, especially if it all proved a tokenistic exercise.

Considerable debate took place at the end of this workshop, as to whether the interview process should be re-opened and made available to more staff. Alternatively, should some less time-intensive tool be used that would maximize involvement across the staff population. It was not possible to reach consensus on this, though it was generally agreed that some further engagement should be considered for a larger group of staff.

**Workshop on developing conflict sensitive service provision**

A total of 20 staff were identified to attend this workshop, held in Berlin over three days in March 2007. Four were the members of the Legacy Group. Of the other 16, only one (the Director Northern Ireland) had not been interviewed for the research. Only three of the original interviewees for the research declined to be involved in this workshop. Unfortunately two staff, including the Director Northern Ireland, had to withdraw shortly before the workshop, while another had to withdraw due to illness, on the day of departure to Berlin. The remaining 17 who attended included one Assistant Director; who was also a member of the Legacy Group, seven Children’s Services Managers (including the other three Legacy Group members), five Children’s Services Practitioners, one Administrator (not Children’s Services) and three staff from the ‘Other’ staff category. Thus, Children’s Services were over represented.
in this group as compared to other staff categories. This was, in part, because the Legacy Group members were all from Children’s Services. It was also the case, however, that only staff from this group volunteered for interview when not randomly selected.

Due to flight schedules, the workshop consisted of only a two hour introductory session for the first evening, to welcome and orientate the group to the programme (Appendix 7) and locality, as well as framing the forthcoming days within the overall research. As part of this, the group were asked what overarching issues needed to be highlighted, from the outset, which might shape all the activities during the ensuing three days. The following list was compiled:

- Safety and creating an environment of sensitivity
- Anticipating intense anger and other emotions and managing these
- Being uncomfortable with uncertainty
- “Real talking” about conflict, safely
- Gender, sexual orientation and other issues also to be considered too
- Awareness raising and
- Tensions of task and process.

After agreeing a comprehensive set of ground rules (Appendix 8), the group were invited to articulate their expectations for the workshop, in terms both of what they wanted to achieve and what they needed in support, from the facilitators, to help them realise this.

These were summarised, on flipcharts, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hoping from ourselves</th>
<th>Wanting from facilitators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How to help men who have become abusive as a result of conflict process i.e. how victims use violence</td>
<td>Help think clearly/limits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is meant by post-conflict society?</td>
<td>Impact of post-conflict society on me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about own prejudices/need for prejudice?</td>
<td>A round of drinks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People I work with and youth too – to know person behind it</td>
<td>Learn more about Berlin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work through impact of past on me</td>
<td>That it goes somewhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want to hear others experiences, give stories</td>
<td>Understand from other perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding impact of conflict on young people</td>
<td>Parallels to other contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something concrete – something to offer</td>
<td>Be able to say how I feel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope impact on job on a broader level</td>
<td>Challenge us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn impact on job on a broader level</td>
<td>Safety/containment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective experience and onus and how fits with my view</td>
<td>Hold uncertain positions/curiosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guide to outcome – informed by wider experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How we take it forward and then how I might make an impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inspiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Help us if stuck – encourage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support in conversations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 2

Hoping from ourselves

- Needs of staff/Service Users
- Learn something new/potentially to change
- The findings of the research
- Conflict acknowledged
- Process: how we work on this/a model? (broadens process)

Wanting from facilitators

The first evening ended with a group dinner at the hotel, as an opportunity for participants to meet the facilitators, and each other, more informally.

The next day commenced with a presentation by the researchers of the initial findings from the interviews. Participants were then asked, in small groups, to consider two questions; ‘What has it been like to be part of this process?’ and ‘Do the findings resonate with your personal and work experiences?’

Below is the collated feedback (from flipcharts) during a plenary session:

What has it been like to be part of this process?

- Initially felt isolated (interviews). Then hearing the collective was validating – the sharing of experience
- Different from other organisational engagements/consultations
- Initially unsure why Berlin, but last night – context helped
- Through this – felt organisation listening and re – no hidden agenda – a different listening – genuineness – caring, valuing
- Experience of vulnerability/leadership, responsibility as part of process
- Mirror of conspiracy of silence – easier to talk political rather than personal – interpersonal
- Potential for submerging other issues – sexuality, race, class – under surface
- Feels a real opportunity
- Strangeness – overwhelming – transforming (healing) – raised issue of timing – a beginning?
- Very positive and empowering
- To be talking about this – talking around elephant in the room.

From this, it can be seen that the whole interview and follow up process had initially been challenging, then validating, a generally positive experience that, for the most part, encouraged participants of the value of this work and the commitment of the organisation to further supporting it. These observations are further reinforced by the responses below to the second question. The overall sense gained from the answers to question two also suggest that, the interview phase of this research served to stimulate participants’ thinking about the conflict and their personal and professional connectedness to it.
Below is the collated feedback (from flipcharts):

Do the findings resonate with your personal and work experiences?

- Yes – very clearly
- Raised question of connections – internal, external
- Brought back some of the sensitivities
- And “so, what next”?
- Process of opening up of dialogue and disclosure
- How useful is it to distinguish between us and service users
- Statistics were informative but also emotive
- Corresponded with other engagement with young people – paramilitary influence, all so ingrained to everyday lived experiences
- Raise question of normality
- Raise issue of intergenerational – trans-generational
- Service users always minimise experience
- Stance of ‘getting on with it’ – minimising, resilience
- Some issues not yet emerging (sexuality/class/race/gender) – more complexities – need to go past scratching surface
- Post conflict looks different – urban realities
- Organisation - vs. - service activity/response. Also difference between services – cultures, diverseness
- How do we do relationships – why so? – function?
- Raised some of the myths – do more work
- Make us wonder – how age/generation differs, make accounts of trauma differ
- How do we marry these?
- Normalising – abnormal circumstance
- Emotive response to statistics
- Hearing other staff experiences
- What does it look like when mapped across whole organisation?

The middle part of the workshop, although constantly interactive between participants and facilitators, was much more didactic. The facilitators provided input on concepts of conflict, models of understanding and contextualising traumatic experience, and culminating with an
introduction to and exploration of the concept of conflict sensitivity, including how it might apply to Northern Ireland and with examples from other conflicted societies.

Following on from this, and as the workshop moved into its final phase, the participants were increasingly challenged to focus on going forward, in terms of what work needed to be done, if conflict sensitivity was to be developed as a key principle underpinning Barnardo’s Northern Ireland’s future. Initially, the participants looked at activities such as engagement with stakeholders, internally and externally, and including Service Users, at the same time identifying factors such as resistance, fear and avoidance that might challenge engagement. They highlighted that there were resource issues, though at the same time recognising how the organisation already held many resources that could be mobilised to support this work. More general considerations included the work required to create safety at all levels and the importance of the organisation mirroring internally what it tried to develop in its service delivery, in terms of greater conflict sensitivity.

The group then visited the former Stasi prison met with Professor Dr Zahn, one of its former inmates. This proved a very powerfully emotional experience and encounter for group members, which appeared to further shape the direction taken during the final part of the workshop.

It had been planned that the three days would conclude with an action plan, produced by the participants, to present to the organisation, based on the research and the common experience of engaging in one to one and group dialogues, on the impacts of the Troubles. It became increasingly clear, not least from the direct feedback of group members, however, that the very process of engagement and sharing stories was absorbing most of the participants’ focus by this stage. As a result, the group requested that the emotional and relational component of this process be attended to, as the workshop came to an end, as a priority over the task completion of an action plan. To not do so, it was offered, would threaten or even negate the positive experiences of engagement thus far, as well as leading to an inferior version of any action plan.

This was agreed, and as part of the processing, the group participated in a number of rituals and activities to acknowledge and represent their collective experience.
At the same time, in concluding the work, and in attempting to harness some of the intensity of this experience, the group members were invited to write their personal versions of a future Barnardo’s Northern Ireland Mission Statement. One that would incorporate the ideas around conflict sensitivity, as applied to Northern Ireland and the organization (see Appendix 9). Some common themes presented through these individual statements included a commitment to acknowledge and respond to the particular experiences of, as well as needs arising out of, the Troubles, the potential to embrace diversity within Northern Ireland as part of that process, the positioning of Barnardo’s Northern Ireland as a proactive agent in addressing the legacy of the conflict and as an advocate for a shared future. It was also repeated through these statements, that any such work should include Service User, staff and organisational dimensions.

The workshop ended without completion of the action plan, therefore, participants agreed that the group should reconvene for a follow up workshop, once back in Northern Ireland.

**Follow up workshop**

This workshop took place at the Regional Office in Belfast in May 2007, eight weeks after the Berlin workshop. Due to the time gap time was taken to re-orientate the participants to the work, as the workshop began with the facilitators eliciting members’ current views of the Berlin experience. It is important to consider how these retrospective reflections, might similarly reflect others’ future experience if engaged in this work. Indeed, participants...
reported a wide range of responses, from those who ‘had parked it, put it back to bed, due to
the busy-ness of life and work’ to those who reported having ‘had a continuing sense of
connectedness’. Others highlighted the emotional impact of the experience, even to the point
of ‘still being rocked by it’ and the ‘emotional shock still being felt’. Others spoke of a ‘life
changing event’ or how ‘mind blowing’ it still felt to have had the “chance to explore my past”.
Some participants had shared the experience with family and friends, others with colleagues. In
all of these cases, they were impressed by the interest generated in others. This latter point
was wonderfully captured in a small group discussion, where a number of participants
described having begun their ‘own wee Berlins’ back home.

In general, there was agreement that ways should be found to continue this work and to
engage as wide a number of stakeholders in it as possible. The group believed this should be
done, in the first instance, by a dissemination of the research findings and the Berlin experience.
At the same time, the possibility of extending the research in some way should be considered.
Further, that consideration should be given to “staff-care needs” that allowed for the particular
context of Northern Ireland, as a safety device for wider engagement. The group also agreed
that a process of awareness raising, possibly akin to the SafeZone model, should be undertaken
early on, to represent part of an organisational acknowledgement of the impacts of the conflict.

In concluding this phase of the work, the group expressed their hope that through these
activities, Barnardo’s Northern Ireland would embark on a process, whereby conflict sensitivity
would increasingly become ingrained in all aspects of the organisation’s culture and activities.
Summary and conclusions

Although one cannot generalise to all Barnardo’s staff given the size of the sample, a detailed qualitative analysis of the interviews provides some clear trends and highlights a range of issues. Most of these were in turn confirmed within the workshop process. In addition, the workshops added a number of valuable issues in their own right. The findings and conclusions can be summarised as follows:

1. Staff, with a few notable exceptions, were impacted upon by the conflict both personally and in the working environment (to a lesser degree directly). These experiences and the skills developed by staff to deal with them personally and professionally, differentiate Barnardo’s Northern Ireland from other Barnardo’s Regions or Nations.

2. Childhood/adolescent memories of disruption, bomb scares, roadblocks and the like were common, and these were, usually, punctuated by key moments e.g. Ulster Workers’ Strike, Bloody Sunday, Bloody Friday and the aftermath, etc. One in five of the 21 people who participated said in interviews that they were subjected to sectarian harassment and an equal number spoke of security force harassment and assault. Nearly half of the respondents had witnessed bombs or heard them, one respondent’s family member was caught up in a bomb and two described being the first on the scene following a bomb and seeing dead bodies. Four respondents had seen police or army killed or shot. Five of the sample said that family friends had been killed in the conflict, two had lost friends and two respondents had lost family members. Taken together, this means that about one in five respondents had either seen someone killed or severely injured because of the conflict, or lost someone they knew (often family friends).

3. At the time of the incidents listed above, most of which took place when participants were young, there was little or no support available. On the whole, and historically, this confirms that people did not seek support for conflict-related issues. Few said they talked about conflicts in the past. In contrast, most participants said they found it helpful to talk in the interviews and some said they had never mentioned the issues in Barnardo’s before. A similar experience took place in the workshops. In Berlin, it seemed that overwhelmingly the participants found it helpful to tell their stories and to hear the stories of others.

4. Taken compositely, most of the sample had grown up in an environment that was anything but normal, from the so-called minimum ‘everyday’ disruptions of bomb scares through to a significant number of people being directly affected. Nonetheless, there was a tendency by many participants to minimise and normalise conflict experiences on themselves despite rather severe impacts. Some felt their role (as a service provider) meant they could not respond to specific issues. With others feeling that their experience was ‘minimal’ compared to others. Some participants were almost apologetic because they felt they could not offer enough support to others, or their ‘Troubles’ story did not involve the direct loss of a loved one. Participants found it interesting to reflect on these issues in the interviews and workshops.
5. On occasion, some participants were surprised by their own experiences of recalling the incidents (e.g. became emotional when relating the so-called ‘normal’ things they grew up with). There were several occasions, particularly in the Berlin workshop, where participants found it emotionally challenging to share their experiences of the past. Of course, however; this should not be misinterpreted to read that participants were not coping with the past. Being emotional does not necessarily mean that an individual has not dealt with an earlier trauma; in fact it could mean they have. On the whole, most participants seemed to be coping well in the current context and most did not recall struggling in the past. In the present it seemed (for the majority who felt the conflict had impacted on them as a child) that the professional lives of most participants had resulted in them ‘moving away’ from the troubled contexts of the past. It was also suggested by some participants that their current ability to cope may have been the result of protective/ameliorating influences on them most notably, parents and families, and in some cases social and economic factors. That said, many counted themselves ‘lucky’ not to have been more affected (e.g. narrowly missing a bomb).

6. In the interviews and workshops one issue that arose was definitional. Exactly what was a ‘conflict-related incident’ proved challenging. For example, participants asked: can we distinguish the impacts of issues such as poverty and deprivation from direct harm such as murder? Are these not all related to the conflict? Participants questioned if ‘everything’ is not an ‘incident’ or linked with the conflict. This raises questions about how trauma is understood. Trauma is often defined narrowly (due to an over medicalisation of the concept) and in relation to direct physical incidents rather than as a process made up of cumulative interrelated experiences over time; the effect of which could even change depending on the current context. This was one of the issues discussed in the Berlin workshop, i.e. how we understand and define trauma.

7. The number of conflict-related experiences while at work seemed to be considerably lower than general experiences of the conflict. On the whole, work life seemed to be less disrupted than general living conditions (and certainly as compared to the childhoods of several participants). Interestingly however; drawing on the interviews and experience in the Berlin workshop, it was clear that the conflict felt as if it was still ‘in the background’ despite direct ongoing impacts being minimal. There seemed to be an overwhelming view that the conflict still affected work life, not in acute and direct ways, but in a residual manner. In the interviews, when asked if the conflict still affected their working environment or culture, overwhelmingly, the view seemed to be that it did, with 76% of respondents (16 of the 21) holding this view. In Berlin it was also noted that, to this day it was not common for people from different backgrounds to share experiences and that underlying distrust still existed.

8. Similar to the points made above, when it came to working in the community, it was felt that the conflict was still ‘there in the background’ despite the peace process. It affected everyday practice in that areas were still segregated and some deprived. Most participants, however; felt safe at work. That said, there was a general unease for some staff about other issues such as having to visit Service Users in homes where political paraphernalia were displayed that were contrary to their own views, or working around...
the July Marching season in some areas. A few people (10% or two participants) did not feel safe at work and there were still anxieties about going into some areas.

9. In the workshops, it seemed that initially there was a reticence to share experiences. However the more comfortable people became the more willing they were to talk about the past and their current views, suggesting at least a basic level of trust in the organisation to deal with some conflict-related issues. However, if problems did arise, especially related to the conflict, there remained a tendency to speak with trusted confidents or the narrow confines of the team within which people worked. There does not appear to be a standard structure or process for reporting or dealing with conflict-related incidents. That said, in the interviews participants said that when they had spoken with supervisors or managers, about concerns linked to the conflict, they were generally satisfied with the response.

10. Broadly it was felt the conflict was ‘taken into account’ by the organisation, evidenced by its reach into difficult areas and services such as NOVA. This was very much a view expressed in the interviews. However, the deeper discussions in the workshops revealed that some felt that trauma and conflict-issues were compartmentalised into services such as NOVA. Although the overwhelming view was that NOVA offered an excellent service (and it was felt that some other projects, individuals and programmes considered how the conflict impacted on services and services impacted on the conflict, and took this into account) the core of what NOVA dealt with was not mainstreamed into other services.

11. One of the main challenges raised for the organisation was how to take on a more conflict sensitive approach to its work. There was a view in the interviews that the organisation was prone to a ‘sort of’ statutory approach, i.e. being ‘neutral’ and to ‘get on with work and avoid issues’. This type of approach was a major focus of discussion in the Berlin workshop and was raised in the managers’ workshop. This revolved around the concrete example of the Glenbryn/Holy Cross conflict. Questions were asked, and a debate ensued, about whether the organisation was proactive enough in trying to stop the dispute and if offering services to the children was a sufficient intervention in this case. Staff also highlighted day-to-day issues they had to deal with in relation to the conflict. For example, working in contexts of ongoing sectarianism and segregation, as well as communities where there was a political vacuum (e.g. concerning policing) so paramilitaries were still powerful. In these contexts, the decision facing workers was whether they had to challenge the situations which were causing distress to young people and children or ‘work with it’ to best meet needs under the circumstances. In the workshops it was noted that staff have come up with ways to deal with these situations and staff teams provided support for this, but it begs wider questions about organisational and institutional policy on such matters.

12. Although training is not a panacea to all problems, in the interviews it was found, rather startlingly, that 76% or 16 participants felt they had never been offered, or undertaken, education or training in dealing with problems associated with the Troubles. Only five participants or 23% had received any training. Although participants, especially when talking in the workshops, highlighted how they had developed ‘on the job’ training and
become very skilled in dealing with conflict-related issues (and some parts of the organisation run sophisticated training on conflict-related issues), this finding highlights that conflict-related training offered in this area are currently limited.

13. As was noted in the section on limitations of this study, it primarily focused on Barnardo’s Northern Ireland staff and not Service Users. Staff identified a range of conflict-related issues facing the Service Users with whom they work, e.g. ongoing violence in some areas, poverty, segregation, sectarianism, youth violence. However; perhaps more than anything, this study highlights the need to think more thoroughly about how Service Users have been impacted upon by the conflict and how the interventions the organisation undertakes, run by staff who themselves are part of the society who have also been affected by the conflict as this research shows, interact with each other. This raises the issue of how a conflict sensitive approach can be furthered developed.

14. At the time of undertaking this research, changes in the political process were underway. Many participants were positive about this and that a devolved administration would bring new possibilities for the organisation. Participants were ambivalent about whether this would mean a ‘space’ for more people to come forward with conflict-related traumas or simply new everyday issues such as housing, ongoing poverty and issues such as racisms to new immigrants would become more commonplace. However, what this research has shown, especially through the participative workshop processes, is that talking about the conflict is still an emotive and live issue. Ongoing practical legacies still remain. The research presented in this report, as participants in the workshops pointed out time and time again, is only the start of a process.
Recommendations

It is recognised that Barnardo’s Northern Ireland has taken a bold step by considering the impacts of the conflict, and how to deal with it, by commissioning the research presented in this report. There was a general appreciation by participants for this, however they also noted that this report and the processes linked to it was (hopefully) only the start of a wider process. Below are recommendations on how to extend and deepen the process.

1. One of the discussions held frequently over the course of this research was whether the sample was large enough and if more research was needed to gain a full picture of the experience of staff in the organisation. That said, there seemed to be a consensus among participants that the interviews, when complemented with the workshops, provided a rich tapestry of information. The findings presented here rang true for most participants and managers and by the end of the process most felt it broadly reflected the experiences of the staff in the organisation. It is recommended, however; that further research is considered to establish all of the conflict-related impacts on staff in the organisation, while at the same time, recognising that the research also highlighted the value of ‘processes’ of talking about the impacts of the conflict with others (the Berlin experience). Those at the Berlin workshop felt that such a process ‘stands on its’ own, outside of the wider research, as a valuable endeavour (one respondent described it as the ‘best experience in three years at Barnardo’s). It is recommended that additional processes that engage staff in dialogue and mutual sharing of experience about the conflict, as well as how they have managed it in the past and deal with it in the present especially in their professional lives, be undertaken. This might be more effective than further research as this report has already provided some baseline.

2. This report indicates that some staff have been impacted on by the conflict fairly severely in the past. The report also highlighted continuing challenges of working in a divided society. Most staff, who formed part of this study, continue to deal with and adapt to such challenges successfully. However, given the extent of the impacts highlighted, it is inevitable problems will arise personally and at work (e.g. two of the 21 participants still feel unsafe at work). Where staff have had difficulties in the past and dealt with them through current organisational support structures, the research shows they are broadly satisfied. That said, there does not appear to be a standard structure or process for reporting or dealing with conflict-related incidents in the organisation. When it comes to sensitive issues related to the conflict, selected confidants, trusted colleagues or teams are generally used as the mainstay of support. It is recommended therefore that a review of how and what options are available to staff to discuss conflict-related issues is undertaken, with special consideration been given to how these are marketed and made available to staff, and used. Current informal supports which exist (at the team level) also need to be acknowledged and supported, so learning can be shared, resulting in formal and informal supports being enhanced.

3. Those who took part in this study felt that training on conflict-related issues, and conflict sensitivity specifically, is needed across the organisation. There was also recognition that the organisation offers a range of quality conflict-related training. However the research also found that limited participants in this sample had utilised such training or been
offered it. It is recommended that the training currently available linked to the conflict is reviewed and steps taken to offer and resource relevant training to a wider staff pool.

4. Barnardo’s Northern Ireland and its staff have developed skills and ways of dealing with conflict-related issues on a day-to-day basis. There is a wealth of skills and experience that differentiates Barnardo’s Northern Ireland from its counterparts elsewhere. It is recommended that an internal reflection and learning process is undertaken, that begins to capture this learning and share it not only internally but with a wider audience.

5. Through the participative process with staff and managers, as well as the interviews, there seemed to be an endorsement that the organisation take a more proactive and reflective approach to conflict at an institutional level. This was especially important when difficult issues arise. The conflict sensitive model was endorsed by participants in the workshops. It is recommended that a conflict-related task force is set up to help foster this and consider how the organisation can respond to conflict in a sensitive way. The implication of taking a so-called ‘neutral’ stance on some conflict-related questions will need to be considered by this group, as well as how the organisation is perceived internally and externally. The issue of making a public statement on Barnardo’s Northern Ireland’s historical and current approach to the conflict should be seriously considered.

6. As was noted earlier, this research focused on staff. It is recommended that a process of assessing the ongoing needs of Service Users in relation to the conflict is set in place. Subsequently, steps should be taken to ensure Service Users needs can be brought into any process the organisations takes forward, as it attempts to embed a conflict sensitive approach in its practice.
References


Appendix

Members of the Legacy of the Conflict Group

Tina McCrossan, Assistant Director Children’s Services
Rosie Burrows, Children's Services Manager, Parenting in a Divided Society
Trish Moore, Children’s Services Manager, Learning Together
Martin Murphy, Children's Services Manager, NOVA Trauma Support
Letter/email to randomly selected interviewees

Subject: Acknowledging the Legacy of the Conflict

You will have received a communication recently advising you of a three phase project exploring the impacts of the Troubles. You have been randomly selected to participate in a one to one interview as part of Phase 1 of this project.

This interview will be conducted by Martin Murphy, CSM, NOVA or Brandon Hamber, Consultant, both of whom are experienced interviewers. The interview will take approximately one hour and will be based around of series of questions. Some of these questions will relate to your current role and your length of service within Barnardo’s. A major part of the interview will focus more closely on your personal experiences of the Northern Ireland Troubles, how the Troubles might have affected your working life and how Barnardo’s as an organisation has responded to this.

We fully understand that these can be extremely sensitive issues and recognise the potential for discomfort in discussing them. Our hope ultimately, however, is to learn how Barnardo’s Northern Ireland can best support its staff in the future within our very particular social context. It’s important to stress that these one to one interviews will be treated in the strictest confidence, the records will be anonymised from the very beginning and none of the information used will be directly attributable to any member of staff.

Although participation in this interview must be on a completely voluntary basis we would ask you to give serious consideration to taking part. If you have any questions or concerns about any of this before deciding to become involved please feel free to contact Martin Murphy in NOVA on 38335173 or martin.murphy@barnardos.org.uk. Due to the short time frame it is important that you contact Martin no later than 27th November to confirm whether or not you wish to be involved. Martin will then confirm your date, time and venue with you if you choose to go ahead.

Dates to choose from:

8th December in Regional Office
11th December in either Regional Office or in Barnardo’s, 1 Sackville St, Lisburn
9th January in Regional Office
11th January in Regional Office

With Thanks

Lynda Wilson
Director
Barnardo’s Northern Ireland
Letter/email to all staff announcing the research project

Subject: Acknowledging the Legacy of the Conflict

As part of Northern Ireland's Emotional Well Being and Mental Health work a group of staff came together in summer 2005 to explore how the legacy of the conflict impacts on us as individuals and as an organisation. To date the group has comprised Rosie Burrows, Trish Moore, Martin Murphy and Tina McCrossan. From the outset our aim was to identify the personal and professional impacts of the Troubles on staff within Barnardo’s and how this, in turn, has shaped how we deliver our Services within Northern Ireland.

In May 2006, with a view to progressing this, we began discussions with Brandon Hamber and David Becker from the Office of Psychosocial Issues (OPSI) from the Free University of Berlin. The OPSI group have had extensive experience of exploring the needs of populations within conflicted societies and those organisations that seek to support them. This has included South Africa, Chile, and the former Yugoslavian states.

Out of these discussions our group together with OPSI have developed a proposal to begin understanding and articulating the needs and issues that are specific to the Northern Ireland context in terms of the children, young people, families and communities we work with as well as our staff. This in turn will give us a more informed understanding of how we have developed organisationally and in how we deliver our Services. Intuitively we suspect that, for example, how we work with adolescents in Northern Ireland will be distinctive from how a similar piece of work might be delivered in London or Cardiff. Ultimately we hope that this process will enable us to ensure that the Services we provide are context specific and that the organisation is best placed to support staff in doing this.

This proposal has been accepted and the first of three phases will commence in December. This first phase will involve one-to-one interviews with 20 staff selected from across Barnardo’s Northern Ireland using a method of random selection. These interviews will be conducted by Martin Murphy and Brandon Hamber and they will focus on how individuals have experienced living and working through the conflict including how the organisation has supported them through working in this context. Those selected for interview will be contacted directly by the end of November.

Given the scope of these interviews and the volume of information which will need to be collated and analysed we are limiting this phase to 20 people. However, anyone who is interested in this process should contact tina.mccrossan@barnardos.org.uk. A waiting list of people will be compiled for involvement in phase 3.

The initial analysis of Phase 1 will inform the structure and content of Phase 2. This will consist of a one day workshop on 18 January, to which all CSMs and NICMG will be invited and will be facilitated by Rosie Burrows and Brandon Hamber.
The feedback from Phase 2 together with the fuller analysis of the Phase 1 interviews will then be used as part of a three day residential workshop in the week starting 19th March 2007. This will be open to the original interviewees and anyone else who expresses an interest to Tina following this communication. Numbers will be limited so a waiting list will be compiled on a first come basis.

We hope there will be a number of outcomes from this 3 phase process:

- A research paper will be compiled around the analysis of the interviews
- A report which outlines the process and the findings
- Recommendations to NICSMT for consideration in future planning processes
- Dissemination of findings across the organisation e.g. staff workshop

We are very enthusiastic about this piece of work and its potential contribution to our development as an organisation and we invite you to consider participating in this initiative.

Regards

Lynda Wilson
Director
Barnardo’s Northern Ireland
LEGACY OF THE CONFLICT QUESTIONNAIRE

INTRODUCTION

This interview will be conducted by Martin Murphy, CSM, NOVA or Brandon Hamber, Consultant. The interview will take approximately one hour and will be based around a series of questions. Some of these questions will relate to your current role and your length of service within Barnardo’s. A major part of the interview will focus more closely on your personal experiences of the Northern Ireland Troubles, how the Troubles might have affected your working life and how Barnardo’s as an organisation has responded to this.

We fully understand that these can be extremely sensitive issues and recognise the potential for discomfort in discussing them. Our hope ultimately, however, is to learn how Barnardo’s Northern Ireland can best support its staff in the future within our very particular social context. It’s important to stress that these one-to-one interviews will be treated in the strictest confidence, the records will be anonymised from the very beginning and none of the information used will be directly attributable to any member of staff.

BACKGROUND DETAILS

1. LIVING IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Please indicate in which Northern Ireland postal areas (BT codes) you have been resident, and place them in chronological order from the earliest to the present:


2. SEX (please tick one box)

Male □ Female □

3. AGE (please tick one box)

21-30 □ 31-40 □ 41-50 □ 51-60 □ 60+ □

4. RELIGION (please tick one box)

Catholic □ Protestant □

Other (Please specify) ___________________________________________________________
5. NATIONALITY (please tick one box)

British ☐ Irish ☐ N. Irish ☐

Other (please specify) ________________________________

6. ETHNICITY

White Caucasian ☐ Other (please specify) ________________________________

7. WHAT AREA OF BARNARDO’S NI DO YOU CURRENTLY WORK IN:

Retail ☐ Children’s Services ☐

Other (specify) ________________________________

8. NUMBER OF YEARS WORKING FOR BARNADOS (please tick one box)

0-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-15 ☐ 16-20 ☐ 21+- ☐

9. CURRENT POSITION (please tick one box)

☐ Administration

☐ Children’s Services Practitioner

☐ Children’s Services Management

☐ Other Management

Other (please specify) ________________________________

10. PAST AREAS OF WORK (please tick more than one box if necessary)

Voluntary/community sector ☐ Statutory sector ☐ Private sector ☐

TROUBLES RELATED INCIDENTS

11. Do you think the conflict has impacted on your life or your work? If yes, how?
12. I am interested in finding out specifically how our staff have been affected by the Troubles over the years. Could you please recall the types of incidents you have been exposed to throughout your life?

(for example: sectarian threats; problems in carrying your day to day activities; bombings; shootings; bomb scares; traffic disruptions; others-please specify)

Write the type of incident which has occurred most frequently at 1, then 2, and so on.

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Please comment and describe some of the incidents and when did these occur, i.e. recency:

13. Have you normally talked to anybody following these incidents?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please rank order in terms of frequency who you talked to (for example: family and friends, social work colleagues; line managers, other professionals; a counsellor; others (please specify), with the most frequent at 1, then 2 and so on.)
### PERSON YOU TALKED TO IN RANK ORDER OF FREQUENCY

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Please comment:

14. Could you please estimate how often you have been caught up in 'incidents' in your everyday work practice

(for example: sectarian threats; problems in carrying your everyday work activities; bombings; shootings; bomb scares; traffic disruptions; others-please specify)

Write the type of incident which has occurred most frequently at 1, then 2, and so on.

### INCIDENT IN RANK ORDER OF FREQUENCY

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Please comment and describe some of the incidents and when these occur; i.e. recency:
15. Please indicate to what extent the above was experienced while working for Barnardo’s NI?

16. Have you normally talked to anybody following these incidents?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please rank order in terms of frequency who you talked to (for example: family and friends, social work colleagues; line managers, other professionals; a counsellor; others (please specify), with the most frequent at 1, then 2 and so on.

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Please comment:

17. If incidents occurred linked with work, have you normally informed Barnardo’s officials about such incidents?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes please give details of the agency response:

If no can you comment on why:

18. If you answered yes to Question 18, overall how satisfied were you with this? (Please Tick one box only)

Very satisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ Unsure ☐ Unsatisfied ☐ Very Unsatisfied ☐

Please comment:
19. Do you think your personal work practice changed over the years in response to conflict-related issues? If yes, specify:

20. Do you think such responses have always been helpful?
   Yes [ ] No [ ]
   Please comment:

21. Do you think from experience you or your colleagues have developed any particular expertise in dealing with conflict related issues?
   If yes, please specify

CONTACT WITH SERVICE USERS/STAFF/PUBLIC

22. In the course of your work in Barnardo’s please estimate how many Service Users/staff/public you have worked with who have experienced problems because of the Troubles (for example: intimidation; housing; bereavement; psychological trauma, physical trauma; others). (Please tick one box only).

   0-10 [ ] 11-30 [ ] 31-60 [ ] 61-100 [ ]
   100-199 [ ] 200+ [ ]
23. Please rank, in terms of frequency, the types of Troubles-related problems faced by your Service Users/staff/public

(for example: intimidation; bereavement; housing; physical trauma; psychological trauma; financial benefits; other – please specify).

Write the most frequent problems at 1, then 2 and so on.

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Please comment:
24. Please rank order in terms of frequency the type of help you offer such Service Users/staff/public

(for example: general support; advocacy; advice re housing or benefits; counselling; group work; training; referral to other services/agencies; other – please specify).

Write the most frequent at help at 1, then 2 and so on.

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Please comment:

25. Since the ‘Belfast Agreement’ (April 1998) have the number of Service Users/staff/public referred to you with Troubles-related problems (Please tick one box only):

- Reduced a lot
- Reduced a bit
- Stayed about the same
- Increased a bit
- Increased considerably

Please comment:
CURRENT CONTEXT

26. Do you feel the conflict still affects your life?
   Yes ☐   No ☐
   If yes, please specify

27. Do you feel the conflict still affects your working environment or culture?
   Yes ☐   No ☐
   If yes, please specify

28. Do you feel safe in undertaking your work?
   Yes ☐   No ☐
   If No, please specify

   Overall we have spoken about the impact of the conflict on your work and life. We are interested in drawing out the implications of this for work of Barnardo's NI.

29. Do you think Barnardo's NI has taken into account the impact of the conflict or changed the nature of its services to deal with conflict-related issues over the years?
   Yes ☐   No ☐
   If yes, please specify

   Are there any continuing gaps that exist?
30. Have you ever been offered, or undertaken, education or training in dealing with problems associated with the Troubles?

(For example: counselling; crisis debriefing; anti-sectarian training; community work; reconciliation work; other – please specify). (Please tick one box only).

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please specify

31. What other support, training or policy implementation do you need to support you in your role within Barnardo’s NI?

32. Are there any other things you feel the organisation could do to make the work of the organisation sensitive to the context in which it works?

33. Overall, do you think Barnardo’s NI has taken the unique situation of the conflict in Northern Ireland into consideration in the way it works? If yes, please comment.

34. How do you think this makes it different to other Barnardo’s Regions or Nations?

35. What lessons could be exported from here that might be relevant in other conflict situations?

36. Given all we have talked about, do you imagine your practice might change over the next 5 years in relation to the wider political environment? Please comment.
 RESPONDENT DETAILS

All responses will be kept confidential in the report, i.e. they will not be attributed to any person. If you are happy however will you provide your contact details for the researchers and also to invite you to follow up workshops?

Name: 

Address: 

Telephone: 

Email: 

Once again, many thanks for your time and patience in completing the questionnaire.
Director’s email regarding managers workshop

Subject: Acknowledging the Legacy of the Contact

You will have received a communication recently advising you of a three phase project exploring the impacts of the Troubles. Phase 1 involves one to one interviews with 20 randomly selected members of staff. Phase 2 will be based on an initial analysis of the findings of the interviews and will take the form of a one day workshop on 18 January in Regional Office, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. This will be facilitated by Rosie Burrows and Brandon Hamber, the consultant who will carry out the interviews with Martin Murphy. I would now like to invite you to participate in this workshop which is open to all Children’s Services Managers and NI Corporate Management Group. Can you please confirm your attendance with tina.mccrossan@barnardos.org.uk by 27 November? If you are interested in being involved in the three day workshop in March can you also confirm this with Tina, please?

Some of your staff may be selected for interview or may be interested in the three day workshop and I would welcome your support in encouraging them to become involved. If you, or they, have any questions please contact Martin in relation to the interviews or Tina for general questions or concerns.

Regards

Lynda Wilson
Director
Barnardo’s Northern Ireland
Barnardo's Northern Ireland Organisational Chart – June 2007

NORTHERN IRELAND COMMITTEE

Lynda Wilson, Director
Karen Leitch
PA to Director

NI Corporate Management Group

Linda McClure
Head of Children's Services Operations

William Dinsmore
ADCS Education

Margaret Kelly
Assistant Director of Finance & Resources

Brian Phillips
Assistant Director of Policy

Marea Barr
Senior Area Business Manager (NI)

Vincent Casolla
Property & Facilities Manager

Fiona MacMillan
Media & Comm. Manager

Sean McKay
Assistant Director IS

Jeannie Rogers
Head of Fundraising

Billy McMillan
ADCS Education

William Dinsmore
ADCS – Looked After Children

Maurice Leeson
ADCS – Southern Area

Una Magee
ADCS – Regional Services

Tina McCrossan
ADCS – Belfast & South Eastern Area

Vacant
ADCS – Northern Area

Patricia McCormick
Temporary ADCS

Stephen Knox
ADCS – Looked After Children

Elaine Diver
Business Manager

Jim Whiteside (Temporary)
Business Manager

Dolmen Rice
Victoria Dunn
Finance Admn

Julie Healey
Policy & Research Officer

Nicola Darnbrook
Policy & Information Officer

Sandra Farrell
Research Assistant

Alan Brown
P&D Consultant

Wendy Young
P&D Consultant

Kerry Cartledge
Angela Duffy
Lynsey Midgley
P&D Administration

Michelle Scullion
Senior Practitioner

Norman Porter
L&D Consultant

Billy Baird
Senior Surveyor

Colin Frazier
Maintenance Technician

Beth Dugan
Administrative Secretary

Joanne Carson
Secretary

Helen McCune
Administrator/PA

Martin Duffy
Peter Gallop
Senior IT Officers

Helin McCune
Administrative Assistant

Barbara Norton
Administration Assistant

Maureen Hill
Education Fundraiser

Jill Kennedy
Corp. partners Fundraiser

Lynn McNutt
Volunteer Fundraiser

Lynda Wilson, Director
Karen Leitch
PA to Director

= line managed by Head Office

= member of the NI Corporate Management Group
Berlin participants and programme

Participants

Tina McCrossan
Rosie Burrows
Trish Moore
Martin Murphy
Carrie Lindsay
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Beth Dugan
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Maddie Bell
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Alison Morrow
Barry Sinclair
Connie Moore
Brandon Hamber (INCORE & OPSI)
David Becker (OPSI)

Programme

Developing a Conflict-Sensitive Approach to Working in Divided Society

Workshop Title:

Acknowledging the Legacy of the Conflict

Date:

20-23 March 2007

Facilitators:

Brandon Hamber (OPSI)
David Becker (OPSI)

Venue:

Quality Hotel & Suites Berlin City-East
Programme

Day One – Tuesday 20 March AM

AM
Arrival

18.00
Welcome & Introductions

20.00
Dinner

Day Two – Weds 21 March

9.00
Research Findings

10.00
Group Discussions: Thoughts on Findings

11.00
Tea

11.30
Plenary: Extracting key thoughts

13.00
Lunch

14.30
Input: Conflict Sensitivity (OPSI)

15.30
Tea

16.00
Group discussion on Conflict Sensitivity

17.00
Closure

Day Three – Thursday 22 March 2007

9.00
Recap

9.30
Group discussions: implications of research & conflict-sensitive approach

10.30
Plenary: Report backs

11.00
Tea

11.30
Group sessions: identify recommendations and future actions

13.00
Lunch

14.00
Presentations and discussion: developing a framework for action & monitoring

15.00
Closure

15.30
Tour of Berlin
Day Four – Friday 23 March 2007

9:00 Finalising next steps and organisational plan

10:00 Evaluation

11:00 Closure
Berlin workshop ground rules

GROUND RULES

- Limit/realistic
- Informative
- Genuine/being yourself/honesty
- Respect/value/respecting difference
- Tolerance/non-judgemental/not neutral
- Understanding/listening and working with the shadow
- Empathy
- Curiosity
- Empowerment
- Appropriate self-disclosure
- Collaboration – value yourself
- Challenging yourself
- Actions speak louder than words
- Unity
- Seek support
- Responsibility (for what you say)
- Confidentiality – not-attribution
Berlin workshop proposed mission statements

Examples of mission statements from group members

- Barnardo’s Northern Ireland is committed to acknowledging and responding to the ongoing legacy of political conflict and trauma on children, young people, parents/carers, communities and wider societal structures and relationships.

- As Barnardo’s Northern Ireland we value the rich and varied life experiences of the children, young people, families and communities we work, and those of our staff. This both requires and enables us to work in ways which reflect this diversity, is safe for all, and challenges the attitudes and structures which lead to isolation, hurt and inequality.

- Acknowledge - Embrace experiences – Validate - Integrate

- Give people space and the opportunity to acknowledge and embrace their own and each other’s experience in a validating way and where the richness of these interwoven stories and the learning will provide a springboard from which we can better understand, serve and support the children and young people who have also inherited this legacy.

- Barnardo’s will develop a process that looks at reality/experience of conflict and integrate there by:
  - Underline further reason to open up the discussion/lead.
  - Allow services to develop local responses.
  - Care for their staff in a supportive way.

- For Barnardo’s Northern Ireland conflict sensitivity is paramount to our organisation for service users and staff. We will endeavour to work in a conflict sensitive way.

- We will be proactive in supporting staff in whatever way they feel appropriate to deal with the impact of the conflict. We will promote the development of conflict sensitive practices within and outside of the organisation. To enable service users to also experience conflict sensitivity practice. We will proactively encourage feedback for service users to enable us to respond to their needs in ways they feel appropriate.

- Based on addressing what might be some of the recommendations the research report might make future actions team/work. Could help to relate to context better.

- As an organisation which advocates for the rights of children, Barnardo’s inevitably advocates for the future.

- As a group of staff we share that future and we have shared a past.

- What we know of the importance of self-awareness in individual work must apply equally to our place as an organisation in society. Barnardo’s desires to involve its entire staff and all of its service users in a process of working constructively on the issue of our shared past.
Barnardo’s Northern Ireland provides a forum for freedom of choice to speak, recognise each others individual worth. For all. Recognise each others lives in the context of conflict and post conflict. To be sensitive in our approach to each other, to help each other and the service users in our day to day lives. Too acknowledge the past and to work for the future. We march on for a better life.

Impact – continuing
- Acknowledge trauma
- Choice (timing) - staff and service users
- Learning from the past to inform the future
- Create a safe space
- Support.

Barnardo’s Northern Ireland
Recognising the traumatic legacy of the conflict and changing the cultural conversation. We can’t afford to be neutral about children and young people.

Barnardo’s Northern Ireland Aim
Will be working predominantly with our staff, partners and stakeholders at all levels including grass roots, with the aim to help build the capacity of individuals and their organisation for conflict sensitive work and peace building in the areas where it is most needed.

Barnardo’s Northern Ireland
Aim is to have a conflict sensitive approach to staff and in our work with children, young people and their families taking into account that we all have a complexity of identity.

The organisation recognises the continuing impact of working in a post conflict society. It aspires to consider the diverse impact of this on service user and staff. Our engagement with each other and service users should strive to develop services and policies that recognise and promote positive interventions which consider this diversity and healing process.
Believe in Children

Barnardo’s Northern Ireland
BELIEVE IN CHILDREN

www.barnardos.org.uk