



Invitation to submit a tender to evaluate the Barnardos Traveller Mothers in the Criminal Justice System Support Service

Invitation to tender: Overview

Barnardos wishes to contract a researcher, or teams of researchers, to conduct an evaluation of a new service supporting Traveller mothers involved in the Criminal Justice System. It is therefore seeking tenders from researchers to carry out this evaluation. This is an open invitation to tender, and all suitably qualified and experienced researchers, or teams of researchers, are invited to submit proposals.

1. About Barnardos

Barnardos is the largest charity in Ireland working with and supporting marginalised and disadvantaged children and their families who are impacted by adverse childhood experiences. Barnardos' mission is to help transform children's lives through our services; support parents; and challenge society where it fails our children.

To advance this mission, Barnardos provides a range of services for families and children over 45 centres around the country. By focusing on needs led, evidence informed and outcome focused work, Barnardos seeks to achieve the best outcomes for children in Ireland by working with them and their families through our services. The core service model is to deliver community-based services tailored to meet the needs of children and their parents. Barnardos staff work in partnership with parents and others to ensure a child's needs are met. Alongside Early Intervention Services for children, Family Support projects, and Young Parent Support programmes, Barnardos also provide a range of specialist programmes, such as a new service supporting Traveller Mothers in the Criminal Justice System, Parent Advocacy and Information Service, Guardian Ad Litem Service, a Post Adoption Service, a Bereavement Counselling Service, Roots of Empathy, and Wizards of Words.

2. Background and Context

The new service supporting Traveller mothers in the criminal justice system (CJS) was established in 2023 by Barnardos in partnership with Traveller Justice Initiative (TJI) and the National Traveller Women's Forum (NTWF). The new support service was set up in response to a feasibility study carried out by the NTWF in 2020 which found that the informational, emotional, tangible and appraisal needs of Traveller women in prison were not being met. The study concluded that it was necessary to establish an enhanced programme of structured and intensive support for Traveller women in prison and their families, which is trauma-informed and builds on the existing strengths of the women concerned, with the involvement of all key voluntary and statutory agencies.

The service is funded by the Department of Justice on a pilot basis for a three-year period.

The service operates as a Family Support Service with a specific focus on Traveller mothers in the CJS. The trauma-informed service model is flexible, person-centred and responsive to the varied and complex needs of Traveller mothers in the CJS. The service provides the following support:

Pre-sentence

- Legal information and practical support.
- Services to strengthen family communication and relationships.
- Planning for the safe care of children and minimising the impact incarceration on family functioning.
- Facilitate access to mental health, addiction, and other services.

Imprisonment

- Intensive family and parenting support.
- Facilitate access to education, training, and other prison supports.
- Referral to counselling, addiction, health, and other services where required.
- Facilitate links with local Traveller organisations to support family.

Pre- & post-release

- Preparation of family for release of mother.
- Support mother to transition back into parenting role.
- Facilitate access to accommodation, health, mental health, social welfare, education, training etc.
- Referral to Traveller organisations for information and support.
- Follow up to ensure needs are being met and services accessed.

The overarching goal of the service is to create positive change in the lives of Traveller mothers in the CJS. It aims to:

- Promote positive communication and relationships between mothers, their children and families throughout the criminal justice process; foster positive and effective parenting and improved engagement in decision-making in relation to their children; ensure that children are safe, adequately cared for and their needs responded to;
- Reduce reoffending/recidivism by improving protective factors (improved connection with families, enhanced emotional wellbeing, accesses to resources, services and supports) in the lives of Traveller mothers

At a broader level, the service aims to support and promote interagency collaboration and enhanced links with community-based services and Traveller organisations to ensure that Traveller mothers with involvement in the CJS benefit from a clear referral arrangement to ensure the timely delivery of appropriate supports and access to relevant services as required prior to, during and after imprisonment.

3. Evaluating the project

We now wish to commission an independent external evaluation of the service supporting Traveller Mothers in the CJS. We would like to explore how the service works to support Traveller mothers in the CJS and its success in promoting positive outcomes for service users and their families, as well as how the support service interacts with and impacts on the broader CJS.

We would like this to be a mixed methods evaluation involving the secondary analysis of data routinely collected with service users as part of their engagement in Barnardos services and primary data collected by the researcher(s) capturing the voices of stakeholders (Traveller mothers engaged in the service, Barnardos staff, professionals with the CJS, wider interagency services and other stakeholder groups).

The evaluation should to contribute to understanding how the support service operates and will make recommendations focusing on the practice of the programme, the remit of the programme, and the role of wider services and policy-makers, which will maximise outcomes for the women. The objectives of the evaluation are as follows:

1. To map and analyse the model/project (see Appendix 1), in terms of its capacity to achieve desired outcomes and impacts including:

- Understand how the service helps the Traveller mothers who are engaged in the service in their role as parents (build parenting skills; strengthen family relationships, understand children's needs; improve family communication, ensure meaningful access and positive family time; and supporting parental engagement in decision making relating to their child)
- Understand how the service supports the wellbeing of Traveller mothers engaged in the service

2. To gather information on the experiences of Traveller Mothers engaged in the service and stakeholders/professionals' perspectives on the interventions provided by the SS:

- Analyse demographic characteristics and needs and outcomes data to build a profile of Traveller mothers engaged in the service
- Capture the voice of Traveller mothers engaged in the service and their experiences of service delivery
- Capturing the voices of other stakeholders involved in service delivery, the CJS, and wider service community.

3. To determine how the support service interacts with and impacts on the broader CJS:

- Determine systemic impacts (improved service user engagement in support services, reduced risk of reoffending, reduced recidivism)
- Examine facilitators and barriers to service impact and success

4. Timeframe

The closing date for the submission of proposals is the **25/04/2025**. It is expected that the evaluation will be completed across **15 months** with a final report completed by **August 2026**.

5. Management of the evaluation process

Day-to-day management of the evaluation process/contract will be led by Barnardos' Evaluation & Research Manager. An evaluation sub-committee will be established and will support the implementation of the research.

An application for research approval to the Irish Prison Service will be required. The successful tenderer may also be required to seek approval through Tusla Research Ethics Committee.

6. Format of tenders

Selection of a researcher or research team to carry out the evaluation will be made at the discretion of Barnardos. Applicants should submit a tender document which addresses the points listed below in the order given. The tender document should be no more than **10,000 words** (excluding researcher CVs, which should be added as appendices).

Information headings to be addressed in the tender document

General information

- Name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the applicant, who should normally be the principal investigator or leader of the research team.
- Name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the person who will act as administrative contact, if not the same as the applicant.
- Name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of any third parties, partners or collaborators involved in the tender, along with a description of their role or the element of the contract that they will fulfil.
- Confirmation of acceptance by the applicant and any third parties of the conditions of the tendering process as set out in section 10.
- A copy of your Tax Clearance certificate, or in the case of a non-resident applicant, a statement from the Revenue Commissioners confirming suitability on tax grounds.

Previous relevant experience and expertise

- Outline of the qualifications and relevant professional experience of each member of the evaluation team. Please add a summary CV of each member of the research team as an appendix to the tender document. Each CV must not exceed **three A4 pages**.
- In particular please describe how the team's expertise and competencies relate to the area of work described in the tender, substantiated with evidence such as published work where possible.
- Provide evidence to demonstrate the team's knowledge and experience of conducting research with the Traveller community, current national and international policy and practice with respect to support services within the CJS, particularly those that meet the need of the Traveller community.
- Outline your understanding of data protection legislation including your approach to consent, data sharing and data protection impact assessment.

Evaluation methodology & approach

Based on the description of the required evaluation in above, provide an account of how you/your team would tackle the evaluation. This should include:

- An outline of the methodological approach to capturing project impact including positive outcomes for the Traveller mothers involved in the service and broader outcomes/impacts for the CJS (including establishing protective factors in the lives of Traveller mothers engaged in the service, reduced risk of reoffending, reducing recidivism)
- Methodology for capturing the voices of key stakeholders involved in the service.
- Proposal for a calendar/time-table of activities from start to finish (for the purpose of the tender, assume a contract is signed by **31/05/2026**, on the understanding that dates will be adjusted accordingly if contracts are agreed later than this).
- Outline of the principal resources which will support the project

Schedule of costs

Notes:

- ✓ Quote costs in euro (€).
- ✓ The value of the tender should be in region **€22,000** inclusive of VAT.
- ✓ The budget must show the total costs of the evaluation project, including any expenditure to third parties, collaborators or subcontractors.
- ✓ Use the following as main headings for the breakdown of costs. Subdivide these as required.
 - Salaries/ studentships (include details for each person involved and note their role or position in relation to the project).
 - Data collection and processing costs, including IT.
 - Administration (explain the basis of apportionment of costs).
 - Overheads (give details of cost headings for overheads, and explain the basis of apportionment of costs).
 - Other costs appropriate to a project of this nature (which must be specified and defined).

7. Requests for further information or clarification

Requests for further information or clarification on any aspect of this process or expectations for this evaluation can be made by email to research@barnardos.ie.

Further information regarding the service approach is available from Heather O'Shea, Project Manager Barnardos by email to heather.oshea@barnardos.ie.

To ensure equitable treatment of prospective tenderers, where such additional information or clarification is provided, Barnardos will seek to make relevant information available to all. All those who are interested in preparing a tender should therefore provide a contact email address to the Barnardos Research and Evaluation Manager to facilitate this information-sharing.

8. Submission of tenders

Tenders should be submitted by email attachment as a single PDF or Microsoft Word document (with researcher CVs as appendices) to: research@barnardos.ie.

Receipt of tenders will be acknowledged.

The closing date for receipt of completed tenders is the **25/04/2026**. Incomplete tenders, tenders that do not follow the format prescribed above, or tenders received after the closing date will not be considered.

9. Assessment of tenders and selection of researcher(s)

The following criteria to assess all complete tender documents received by the above closing date:

- The proposed approach and methodologies for evaluating service impact and delivery
- Experience of working with the Traveller community
- Knowledge of the subject area, particularly the experiences and needs of vulnerable groups involved in the Criminal Justice System, and/or evaluation of support services delivered within the CJS
- Experience of evaluation in service settings, particularly prisons/within the CJS
- Budget and value for money
- Proposed time-frame, and evidence of ability to meet deadlines
- Capacity for project management and administration
- Capacity to develop and maintain relationships with the variety of stakeholders
- Capacity to develop reciprocal relationships and be open to feedback
- Ethics and ethos

Barnardos reserves the right to seek additional information and/or interview tenderers in connection with its assessment of their tenders,

It is anticipated that a number of tenderers will be shortlisted for interview, and interviews will be conducted in **late April or early May**.

The principal investigator and other key members of the research team should be available to attend the interview. Barnardos will not be held liable for any costs incurred by tenderers in relation to the tender submission or the assessment/interview process.

Barnardos reserves the right not to award the contract in the event that no tender is found to be suitable.

10. Terms and conditions

10.1 Conflict of interest

Any registered interest involving the contractor and Barnardos, their staff or relatives must be fully disclosed in the response to this Invitation to Tender, or should be communicated to Barnardos immediately upon such information becoming known to the contractor. In any case, such information must be made available prior to the award of the contract. The terms "Registered Interest" and "Relative" shall be interpreted as per Section 2 of the *Ethics in Public Office Act 1995*. Failure to disclose a conflict of interest may disqualify a tenderer or invalidate an award of contract, depending on when the conflict of interest comes to light.

Any other conflicts of interest must also be fully disclosed to Barnardos.

10.2 Freedom of information

Information supplied in respect of this tender may be disclosed by Barnardos under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act, unless it is exempt from Disclosure under that Act (e.g. personal information or commercially sensitive information where the public interest in non-disclosure outweighs the public interest in disclosure). Tenderers are invited to indicate if they consider any information supplied to be

sensitive. Under Section 29 of the Act, any tenderer must be consulted by Barnardos before any decision to disclose such information.

10.3 Ownership

Barnardos will remain the sole owner of all end-products including, but not limited to, research data, reports, manuals or other documentation, programmes, information, etc., irrespective of whether or not the project is completed. The contractor's work shall be acknowledged by Barnardos in materials produced and disseminated on the basis of work completed under this contract.

Proposals for scholarly/academic publishing under the name(s) of the researcher(s) arising from this research can be discussed with Barnardos, as owner of the data and other products of the evaluation, and may be agreed to subject to prior approval in writing from Barnardos.

10.4 Garda clearance

All researchers who may be required to work directly with vulnerable adults, children and families throughout this evaluation process may be subject to Garda clearance. If any such researcher has been living or working outside Ireland in the past three years, Barnardos may also require equivalent clearance from the police in the country or countries where she or he has been living or working.

10.5 Changes to invitation to tender

Barnardos reserves the right to update or alter the information contained in this document at any time, but not later than seven days before the closing date for the receipt of tenders. Participating tenderers will be informed as the need arises.

There is no obligation on Barnardos to accept the lowest cost or any tender, and it may be decided, following the review of the tenders, not to proceed or to proceed with a new invitation to tender or an amended version of the proposed research.

Appendix 1: Traveller Mothers in the Criminal Justice System Logic Model



