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Department of Justice



An Roinn Sláinte  
Department of Health



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,  
Míchumais, Léimhártríochta agus Óige  
Department of Children, Equality,  
Disability, Integration and Youth



TÚSLA

An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency



An Garda Síochána  
Ireland's National Police and Security Service



**BARNAHUS**  
IRELAND

# BARNAHUS COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

*Version 1.0*

*November 2024*

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## 01

### **Introduction**

- 1.1.....Positioning Statement for the Communication Strategy
- 1.2.....The Irish Context
- 1.3.....What is Barnahus?
- 1.4.....What Happens at Barnahus?

## 02

### **Working Together**

- 2.1..... Why We Work Together in the Best Interests of the Child
- 2.2.....Principles of Collaboration
- 2.3..... Vision, Mission, and Values
- 2.4.....The Barnahus Visual Identity

## 03

### **Our Stakeholders and Messaging**

- 3.1.....Stakeholder Analysis and Segmentation
- 3.2.....Our Communication Goals, Key Messages, and Channels
- 3.3.....Effective Communication: Overall Guiding Principles
- 3.4.....Effective Communication: What to Avoid

# 04

## **Creating Social Momentum**

- 4.1.....Public Relations
- 4.2.....Prevention
- 4.3.....Communicating with Specific Groups

# 05

## **Implementation**

- 5.1.....Next Steps for Implementation
- 5.2.....Communication Governance

# 06

## **Action Plan**

- 6.1.....Action Plan for the Implementation of the Communication Strategy



# **Introduction**

# 1.1 Positioning Statement for the Communication Strategy

**FOR** Multidisciplinary Interagency Teams

**WHO** require clarity on a shared communication approach for Barnabus.

**THIS COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

**BUILDS** consensus around appropriate messaging, segmentation, communication channels, and engagement

**ACTING** as the go-to document to ensure that we are communicating in a timely and effective manner

## 1.2 The Irish Context

The needs of children who have, or who may have, experienced sexual abuse require specialised, timely, and various services to meet their needs. In Ireland, these needs have been met separately by the State agencies responsible for child protection, criminal investigatory, medical care, assessment and therapeutic service delivery. Multiple reports have concluded that a national model for children who may have experienced sexual abuse should incorporate all resources currently applied to sexual abuse services into an interagency coordinated service, providing standardised models of best practice in one safe place.

To respond appropriately, and to support children who may have experienced sexual abuse, it has been agreed by three Government departments (Departments of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), of Health, and of Justice) to establish the Barnahus model of care in Ireland.

A national Barnahus will operate across three regions with centres located in Galway, Cork and Dublin. The Barnahus in Ireland will be guided by the PROMISE Barnahus Quality Standards.





## 1.3 What is Barnahus?

Barnahus is a safe and child-friendly place where a team of trained professionals work together with the child and family when there is a concern of sexual abuse. Under one roof, the state agencies responsible for child protection, criminal investigation, medical care, and therapy services work together and deliver a coordinated and effective response that is guided by the child's best interests. The Barnahus model, originating in Iceland and meaning 'Children's House', has become a beacon for services across Europe.



## 1.4 What Happens at Barnahus

At Barnahus, the focus is on ensuring that children who may have experienced sexual abuse receive the right help at the right time. The Barnahus approach is child-centred, recognising that sexual abuse affects children and their families in various ways. Families often need guidance through complex systems, unsure of where to find the right support. At Barnahus, we bridge that gap, ensuring children and young people receive coordinated interagency assistance. This is achieved by co-locating essential services together under one roof, with four “rooms”, and where professionals work together in a multi-agency team.



## The four rooms of Barnahus are:

**Child Protection:** Led by Tusla, the first consideration is always the immediate and ongoing safety of the child. Social workers work together with families and children to conduct risk assessments and produce safety plans. Through this approach, the child's safety is ensured at home, at school and in their community.

**Criminal Justice:** When children who visit Barnahus are ready to talk, they meet specially trained interviewers - Gardaí and social workers from Tusla or the HSE. These specialist interviewers are skilled in asking questions and helping young people talk about what happened to them. They will listen and gather the best evidence for the case, should it go to court.

**Medical Well-being:** Not all children who come to Barnahus will require a medical assessment, but an assessment may be helpful for the purposes of physical, emotional and mental wellbeing, investigation, reassurance and recovery. The benefits of an examination and follow-up appointments will be discussed with the child and family, and they can decide, with the help of medical professionals, what would be most helpful to them. Specially trained HSE doctors and nurses carry out these child friendly medical examinations when it is agreed to be in the child's best interest.

**Emotional Well-being:** Children and their families will meet the Barnahus therapy team, who will assess their needs and introduce them to an advocate to walk the journey with them. Based on the outcome of this assessment, children and their families or caregivers may be offered a short-term trauma focused intervention at Barnahus, and/or they may be referred to a local service for longer-term support.

**02**

**Working  
Together**

# 2.1 Why We Work Together in the Best Interests of the Child

**TO** help children who may have experienced child sexual abuse and their families

**WHO** have struggled to navigate the investigation process and various support services

**TO** understand that things can improve with Barnahus support and interventions

**INSTEAD OF** relying on the fragmented supports they may have experienced elsewhere

**BY** communicating and emphasising the Barnahus difference

**BECAUSE** of the Model of Interagency Practice we provide

## 2.2 Principles of Collaboration

Barnahus in Ireland operates on the principles of equality, partnership, respect, and consensus building. No one agency or discipline holds primacy in responding to the needs of children in Barnahus. Rather, teams collaborate as equals, always with the child at the centre, and are honest and flexible with each other. Our different regions and Barnahus centres work together fostering collaboration, cooperation and consistency within Barnahus.

Barnahus presents as one to children and families, with one voice, and one message:



to communities around prevention



to the government about legislative change, funding, their commitment, and policy alignment



to our stakeholders based on our key messages identified in this strategy and refined and strengthened together over time.

Collaboration is formalised by the Interagency Agreement that sets out clear roles and responsibilities, and also allows for flexibility. Together, we are leaving any failures of the past behind and seeking 'lightbulb' and 'Aha!' moments to learn from the past and break new ground. This involves collaborating with other organisations in Ireland, and with the European Barnahus Network, for guidance and sharing of best practice and creating new knowledge in the advancement of Barnahus Ireland.

In summary, at Barnahus, our principles of collaboration include but are not limited to:



**Integrated:** No single agency or discipline takes precedence over others when responding to the needs of children.



**Partnership:** Our partnerships foster cooperation, shared goals, and joint efforts to support children.



**Respect:** Our teams treat each other with dignity, acknowledging their expertise and perspectives.



**Consensus Building:** Decisions are made collectively, considering diverse viewpoints and are in the best interests of the child

## 2.3 Vision, Mission and Values

### Our Vision:

Our Vision is an Ireland where every child who has or may have experienced sexual abuse has timely access to coordinated, child-centred care, where children's rights to safety, recovery, and access to justice are fully upheld.

### Our Mission:

Our Mission is to have a Barnahus where we empower children by ensuring their voices are central, and where we work together with children, their families, and professionals to deliver a coordinated interagency response that promotes children's wellbeing by ensuring that their safety, physical, and emotional needs are met, and that they are provided with access to justice.

To achieve our mission, the Barnahus is underpinned by shared principles. The Barnahus principles are that:

- The child is at the centre of everything we do and is the expert.
- The Barnahus is the sole entry point for the child who experiences our different disciplines as a single common service.
- The Barnahus is a friendly and positive place to be for the child and family and inclusive for all.
- The Barnahus, and the support provided, is suitable for adolescents as well as for younger children.
- We are constantly growing and learning from each other as agencies and as people.
- We support our frontline workers with everything they need on a professional and personal level to enable them to grow in their jobs.
- We continue to support the child's journey back to the community.
- The justice process is swift, family friendly, and informed by the child's voice in recorded evidence, resulting in successful prosecution of perpetrators.

**Our Values:**

**Child-Centred**

Realisation of the needs and rights of the child, ensuring that they are heard, and that they receive assistance in a safe and supportive environment.



**Accessible**

Prioritising timely, comprehensive, and accessible services that address the unique needs of the child and their family or caregivers while keeping the child's best interests central.



**Collaborative**

Collaborative among our multidisciplinary professionals, preventing re-traumatisation and ensuring the best possible outcomes.



## Professional

Upholding high professional standards, training, and adequate resources and supports for our staff working with children and their families.



## Inclusive and Diverse

Ensure that all children who may have experienced child sexual abuse have access to integrated services, without any form of discrimination.





## 2.4 The Barnahus Visual Identity



The Council of Europe has collaborated with Juvo and Early Childhood Ireland to develop the Barnahus visual identity. This section outlines a synopsis of the child participation aspect that led to the final Barnahus logo design.

Early Childhood Ireland worked with early years and school-age care settings to engage children in a consultation on the key messages and visual identity of Barnahus. To promote meaningful participation, the consultation was guided by the Hub na nÓg Participation Framework, particularly the four elements of the Lundy model (2007): space, voice, audience, and influence.

Creative, activity-based focus groups, including observations, were used to capture children's views on the three logo iterations developed by Juvo. Opinion-gathering methods included collaging a cardboard Barnahus and mind-mapping with materials like colourful highlighter pens, shapes, sticky notes, and facial expression stamps.

Five focus groups were conducted with 26 children aged 3 to 11 years, including children with special rights and from diverse ethnic background such as the Traveller Community. Consent was sought from parents and negotiated with the children, who were informed of their right to be heard and their right to withdraw at any time.

Using picture cards, the children were introduced to human rights, specifically the right to be heard and the right to be protected. Then, the children considered the three proposed Barnahus logo iterations and provided feedback on what they liked, disliked, and would change.

The three logo iterations were shown to children for feedback as follows:

### Logo Iteration 1

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Bright colours

Vibrant

Rounded characters to appeal to children

House motif

Leaves to represent growth and development



### Logo Iteration 2

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Warm comforting colours

Contemporary tones

Quirky, playfull typeface originally designed for children's stories

House motif





### Logo Iteration 3

Bright primary colours

Contemporary tones

Jigsaw idea based on the existing design

House motif

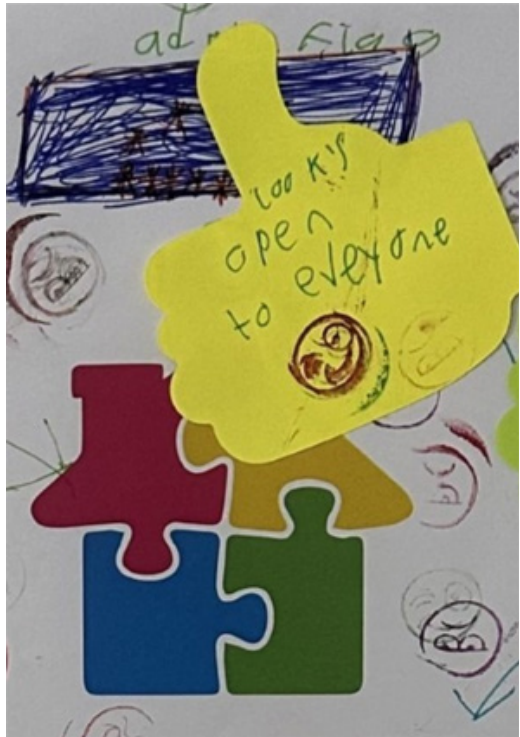


Creative, written and spoken data were analysed and five central categories were identified.

1. Children expressed that colour(fulness) is important, but tone or brightness was less significant.
2. Significant features included a love of rainbows and 'we need a flag'. Overall, the 'jigsaw house' was the most popular logo based on the clear house motif, but children suggested combining elements from different logos.
3. The writing was important to older children who preferred the 'round', 'wonky' lettering in Logo One but suggested it should be 'easy to read'. Many children liked the colourful lettering, and some insisted that 'Ireland' should be green.
4. Audience and age appropriateness were considered, particularly that the logo is liked and recognised by younger children, avoiding adult-centric writing or designs.
5. Mixed opinions on the name 'Barnahus' and its language, with some preferring English or Irish and others suggested changing the name altogether.

Overall, there was a strong message of diversity and inclusion, highlighting the importance of creating a logo that resonates with children of different ages and identities.

The children's insightful ideas were compiled into a report for the adults involved in Barnahus communication strategy decision-making. A key purpose of the consultation was to ensure that children's ideas 'influence' the Barnahus communications strategy, which requires adults to act on children's ideas, choices, and feelings. Incorporating the children's feedback into the final logo and wider communications not only respects these children's contributions but also ensures that the logo resonates with all children.



Considering the child participation results and wider stakeholder feedback, the final Barnahus logo was developed and agreed as follows:



**BARNAHUS**  
**I R E L A N D**

**03**

**Our  
Stakeholders  
and Messaging**

# 3.1 Stakeholder Analysis and Segmentation

To plan for how we will effectively communicate and engage with a wide Barnahus stakeholder base, we have identified four distinct stakeholder segments. These four stakeholder segments are:

1. **On Our Journey:** Those involved in commissioning, overseeing, planning, or operating Barnahus Centres.
2. **Professionals Directly Impacted by Barnahus:** Practitioners whose roles may change due to Barnahus.
3. **The General Public:** Including children and families who may need to access Barnahus in the future.
4. **Referred Children and Families:** Those referred to Barnahus.

We then subcategorised our stakeholder segments based on their relative power and interest in Barnahus:

- High Power, Low Interest - Satisfy Curiosity
- High Power, High Interest - Manage Closely
- Low Power, Low Interest - Tailor Appropriately
- Low Power, High Interest - Keep Informed

This segmentation and content was developed during a series of workshops held with teams from the agencies and departments involved in Barnahus in Ireland.



# 1 On Our Journey

Those commissioning, overseeing, undertaking planning for, and / or operating Barnahus centres

## High Power, High Interest (High Priority Stakeholders)

Interdepartmental Group (IDG) Members  
Barnahus Committee (BNASC) Members  
Regional Steering Group Members  
Barnahus Centre Core Teams  
Sexual Assault Treatment Units (SATU) Reps

## High Power, Low Interest (Keep Satisfied)

Leadership in Depts of Justice, Health & Children (DCEDIY)  
Tusla Leadership  
HSE Leadership  
CHI Leadership  
Garda Leadership  
Local TDs and Representatives  
Ombudsman for Children's Office  
Cabinet Ministers  
Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP)

## Low Power, High Interest (Minimal Effort)

Clinical Staff in Wider Health System  
Therapy and Mental Health Service Providers  
Mandated Persons under Children First  
CAMHS Representatives  
Children's Rights Alliance  
Children and Young People's Services Committees  
Communications teams in Depts and agencies  
Wider Staff in Depts and Agencies  
Volunteer Groups & NGOs  
Divisional Protective Services Units (AGS)

## Low Power, Low Interest (Keep Informed)

General Public  
Other Government Departments  
Local & National Media

# 2

## Professionals Directly Impacted by Barnahus

The professional practitioners whose role will, or may, change due to Barnahus.

### High Power, High Interest (High Priority Stakeholders)

Barnahus Centre Core Teams (West, East, South)  
Tusla Duty Intake + OOH Teams  
Tusla Social Workers  
FME / Medical Teams  
The Alders Units Teams  
Gardaí DPSU Teams  
Gardaí Specialist Interviewers  
Other Trained Specialist Interviewers (Tusla / CHI)  
SATU Teams

### High Power, Low Interest (Keep Satisfied)

Leadership in Depts of Justice, Health & Children (DCEDIY)  
Tusla Leadership  
HSE & CHI Leadership  
Garda Leadership  
Local TDs and Representatives  
Ombudsman for Children's Office  
Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP)  
National Media

### Low Power, High Interest (Minimal Effort)

Clinical Staff (Doctors, Nurses, Occupational Therapists etc)  
Therapy and Mental Health Service Providers  
Private Mental Health Agency Workers  
Creches, Primary and Secondary School Teachers  
Youth Organisations and Sports Club Leaders  
CAMHS Staff  
Volunteer Groups & NGO workers

### Low Power, Low Interest (Keep Informed)

Immigration Service Staff  
Social Workers  
General Public Sector staff  
Employee Assistance Program Leaders  
EYPIC Champions  
Community/Church Leaders  
HIQA Workers  
Ambulance Workers

# 3 The General Public

The wider public, including those children and families who may in the future need to access Barnahus.

## High Power, High Interest (High Priority Stakeholders)

Potential Barnahus Service Users  
(Children & their Parents / Caregivers)

Creches, Primary and Secondary Schools

Children's Rights Alliance, CYPSCs  
& their clients

Youth Organisations and Sports Clubs

Foster & Residential Care staff and  
residents

Ombudsman for Children

## High Power, Low Interest (Keep Satisfied)

Government Officials

Local TD's and  
Community Representatives

Social Media Platform Reps

Comms Teams & News Reporters

Local Radio Station Presenters

Magazines, Newspapers & Publishers

## Low Power, High Interest (Minimal Effort)

Children in Care

Separated Children Seeking  
International Protection

Children in Rural Areas

Roma & Traveller Children and  
Minority Groups in general

Children with Disabilities

Survivors of CSA

Disability MADP

## Low Power, Low Interest (Keep Informed)

General Citizens

Local Communities (Church,  
sport, volunteer groups etc)

EU Countries

Universities

Rape Crisis Centres

# 4

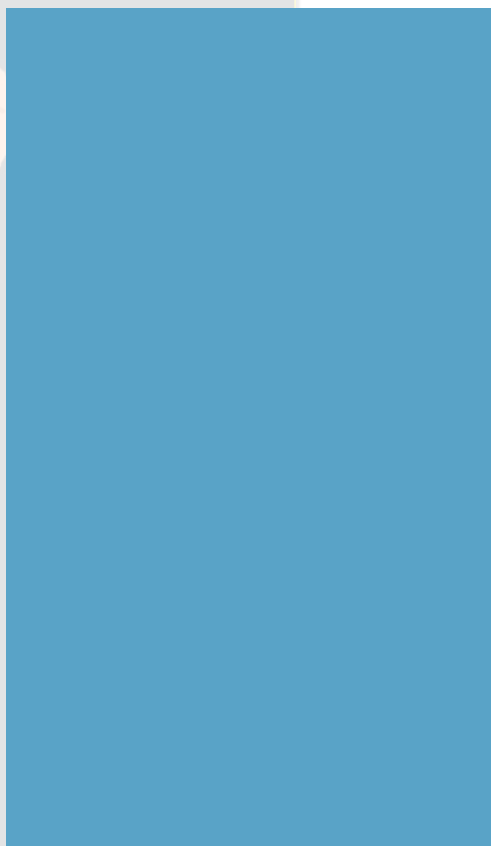
## Referred Children and Families

The children and families who are referred to Barnahus.

### High Power, High Interest (High Priority Stakeholders)

Barnahus Service Users (Children & Their Parents / Caregivers)

Schools, clubs, other services engaging with the child and family (e.g., GP, CAMHS etc).



# 3.2 Our Communication Goals, Key Messages and Channels

Stakeholder Segmentation	1 On Our Journey			Those commissioning, overseeing, undertaking planning for, and / or operating, Barnahus centres.							
WHO? <small>(Stakeholder Segmented Targets)</small>	WHY? <small>(Why Communicate with them?)</small> Aims & Goals	WHAT? <small>(What to Communicate?)</small> Key Messages		HOW? <small>(How to Communicate with Them?)</small> Channels							
High Power, High Interest	Ensure clear and impactful two-way communication, actively involving stakeholders in the conversation throughout	We will be child-centric in how we plan, operate and oversee Barnahus	Consultation and collaboration with those from different disciplines and backgrounds is essential for the success of Barnahus	New ways of working must be understood before implementation can be possible	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Social Media</td> <td>Video Conference</td> <td>Circulated Minutes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Traditional Media</td> <td>Annual Reports</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Social Media	Video Conference	Circulated Minutes	Traditional Media	Annual Reports	
Social Media	Video Conference	Circulated Minutes									
Traditional Media	Annual Reports										
High Power, Low Interest	Bridge the gap between national and local levels so a consensus around ownership and responsibilities can be built and maintained	Building confidence in, and understanding of, the Barnahus model will be in the best interest of the child	Barnahus is the most viable choice when seeking support and best outcomes for children	Barnahus will help you to deliver on your duty of care to children and must be within your professional interests and responsibilities	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Social Media</td> <td>Site Visits</td> <td>Post Launch Dept Meeting</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Traditional Media</td> <td>One-off Introductions</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Social Media	Site Visits	Post Launch Dept Meeting	Traditional Media	One-off Introductions	
Social Media	Site Visits	Post Launch Dept Meeting									
Traditional Media	One-off Introductions										
Low Power, High Interest	Get frontline staff involved and on board to enable the reinforcement of the Barnahus mission and values for children and families	Child protection is everybody's business	There is a new referral approach, and we can help you understand how this will work	You have a duty of care and obligation to refer children to Barnahus, when appropriate, to help ensure they get the full benefits of the service and required support	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Quarterly Intranet Messaging</td> <td>2 Way Communication and Consultation</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Quarterly Intranet Messaging	2 Way Communication and Consultation				
Quarterly Intranet Messaging	2 Way Communication and Consultation										
Low Power, Low Interest	Boost societal awareness and inspire the public to do the right thing so victims can receive justice	Children are entitled to protection from harm, so learning how you can refer is vital	Know the signs for referral of a child, there is no shame in doing the right thing only in	Include stark CSA statistic / fact... children need your help referring, which is easy...	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>TV Personal Stories</td> <td>Children First Training</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	TV Personal Stories	Children First Training				
TV Personal Stories	Children First Training										

## Stakeholder Segmentation

# 2 Professionals Directly Impacted by Barnahus

The professional practitioners whose role will, or may, change due to Barnahus.

WHO? (Stakeholder Segmented Targets)	WHY? (Why Communicate with them?) Aims & Goals	WHAT? (What to Communicate?) Key Messages	HOW? (How to Communicate with Them?) Channels
High Power, High Interest	Ensure clarity on eligibility criteria, roles, and referral pathways, as well as promoting a shared vision that will address budgetary, legal, and oversight considerations and interagency expectations	<p>Barnahus is a trauma-informed, multidisciplinary, and child-centered service that aims to support and protect children</p> <p>Reporting to Barnahus, when appropriate, is vital as it ensures the child's well-being and provides them with the necessary support</p> <p>Barnahus operates based on agreed government policies and works towards improving the child's experience while minimising trauma</p>	<p>Roadshow</p> <p>Workshops</p> <p>Team Social</p> <p>HSEland Training</p> <p>Video Recording</p>
High Power, Low Interest	Diminish uncertainty around the Barnahus model in practice so staff can feel supported and have their confidence restored	<p>The best interests of the child is at the heart of Barnahus and it is the right place for children</p> <p>Barnahus provides children with access to the best available expertise, with multidisciplinary staff working together under one roof.</p> <p>Do the right thing, do not ignore the signs</p>	<p>Departmental Sharing</p> <p>Council of Europe Website</p> <p>HSEland Training</p>
Low Power, High Interest	Establish clear steps for staff on how to handle disclosures and promote Barnahus as a safe and supportive environment for children	<p>There is support for you as a professional but also consequences for not reporting</p> <p>Together we are the Barnahus model</p> <p>We have a new model that is different, with the child at the centre but it cannot work without your support</p>	<p>Barnahus Points of Contact</p> <p>Out of Hours Staff</p>
Low Power, Low Interest	Demonstrate the need for change and the necessity of the Barnahus service by showing hard facts & figures to induce urgency as well as promoting openness and removing fear.	<p>Know the signs you should look out for</p> <p>Know what to do and what not to do</p> <p>Know that Barnahus exists and why it should be used</p>	<p>Broad Advertising Campaigns</p> <p>3 Minute Film</p> <p>Sign Posting on Website</p>

## Stakeholder Segmentation

# 3 The General Public

*The wider public, including those children and families who may in the future need to access Barnahus.*

### WHO? (Stakeholder Segmented Targets)

### WHY? (Why Communicate with Them?)

### WHAT? (What to Communicate?)

### HOW? (How to Communicate with Them?)

#### Aims & Goals

#### Key Messages

#### Channels

**High Power, High Interest**

Educate on the lifetime impact of handling CSA cases well versus poorly for children, emphasising coordination rather than creation

This is how families can access the Barnahus service...

This is who families can talk to and who needs to know...

This is the scope and availability of the Barnahus service including service equity...

Social Media

Video Conference

Email

Information Leaflets

QR Codes

Existing Websites

**High Power, Low Interest**

The public understand how and where they can go for support from Barnahus and the success and benefits of the service are established in society

Local TD's and community reps are our voice in government

Barnahus Ireland strives to be the leading example in the EU context

Access to support is available regardless of your location

Social Media

Local Forums

Senior management Liason Forums

Via CYPSC

Website

**Low Power, High Interest**

Trust is established amongst our most vulnerable and marginalised groups as Barnahus strives on inclusivity and diversity of care

We are here to help you

We are dedicated to building your trust

You will never be in trouble for coming forward. Barnahus also has a safety and wellbeing focus, it is not just police

Via ISPPC

**Low Power, Low Interest**

The Public understand their responsibility to protect children from harm and know to always turn to Barnahus

We support children and families in whichever route they choose to take

Engaging with Barnahus helps us move towards more progressive child friendly justice

Barnahus is not just for families who wish to engage in the criminal justice system

Advert Campaign

Festivals Recruit Students

Universities Recruit Students



## Stakeholder Segmentation

4

## Referred Children and Families

The children and families who are referred to Barnahus.

### WHO?

(Stakeholder Segmented Targets)

High Power,  
High Interest

### WHY?

(Why Communicate with them?)

#### Aims & Goals

Ensure the privacy and involvement of children in decision-making processes, while also addressing concerns related to diversity, cultural considerations, myths, fears, and language barriers.

Children are provided with age-appropriate information and support throughout their journey and their families and siblings are also considered during each step in the process

### WHAT?

(What to Communicate?)

#### Key Messages

It is always worth coming forward

The person who did this to you will never be at Barnahus

We are here to guide you through every step of the process and answer all your questions

We will always be transparent and the door is always open

This is what you can expect... and this is who you will meet along the way...

We are not here to substantiate, but to believe and always take children seriously

### HOW?

(How to Communicate with Them?)

#### Channels

Face to Face Meetings

QR Code

Videos with Subtitles

Changing Futures Website

Website Section for Foster Carers

Siblings Piece

Leaflets Made By Parents

Social Stories

Designated Info Sharing Person

FAQs on Website

Parent Liason & Self-help

Character Animations

## 3.3 Effective Communication: Overall Guiding Principles

Effective Barnabus communication will prepare our stakeholders for change by delivering targeted messages at the right time and through appropriate channels.

To help enable effective communication, we have:

- Aligned on the Barnabus vision, mission, and values.
- Understood our stakeholders deeply.
- Undertaken Stakeholder Analysis, Stakeholder Segmentation and defined why and what we are communicating.
- Tailored activities to meet stakeholder needs and consider the most suitable communication channels.

It is important too that we acknowledge that there is a difference between communication and engagement. Communication allows our Barnabus oversight groups to disseminate information directly, in a one-way manner. Engagement goes beyond mere communication. It not only facilitates information sharing but also provides recipients with an opportunity to express their thoughts, raise concerns, ask questions, and contribute ideas in a two-way interaction.

## Our effective communication at Barnahus is:

**A Proactive Approach:** Early engagement and communication planning ensure that the right messages reach the right people at the right time.

**Audience Aware:** Effective engagement and communication are relatable and tailored to the audience, addressing the impact and benefit to them (the “What’s in it for me?” factor).

**Clear and Consistent:** Key messages must be consistent nationally and are easily understood, using plain language.

**Focused on “the Why”:** Engagement and communication clearly conveys why change is being adopted.

**Delivered Appropriately:** Recognising our stakeholders will need to hear key messages from the appropriate representatives.

**Regular and Reinforced:** Regular two-way communication is essential; our key messages need to be reiterated to ensure full understanding by stakeholders.

## 3.4 Effective Communication: What to Avoid

**Tick Box Exercise:** Engagement and communication is a process, not an event. It needs to happen on an ongoing basis to support people through.

**Lastminute.com:** Last minute engagement / communications means that our key stakeholders aren't part of the change. As a result the change required is less likely to be embedded.

**Wrong Person:** Communications / engagement delivered by the wrong person reduces the impact of the messages.

**One Size Fits All:** Messages should be tailored to meet the needs of the audience, and to directly address their fears/concerns/questions.

**Single Channel:** Even effective engagement / communications through a single channel will have a limited impact and audience.

**All Talk:** Effective engagement & communications needs to be backed up by successfully delivering the change.

**Full of Jargon:** Communications / engagement needs to be written in plain English i.e. clear, easy to understand and without jargon or

**Senior Stakeholders Only:** All stakeholders need to be communicated and engaged with, and not just senior management.

**04**

**Creating Social  
Momentum**



## 4.1 Public Relations

Before the commencement of Barnahus public communications, it is important to ensure our Segment 1 group and frontline staff (Segment 2) share consensus and are aligned. We have, together, defined our communication segments, objectives, key messages, audiences and channels. There will be a requirement, prior to initiating public communications to outlining carefully and explicitly in details what we want to convey and why, to assist in ensuring that we include all necessary information. This process will also help eliminate irrelevant details. We will consider our audience, their needs or filters, and organise our messaging and package our information for delivery.

Providing context and making the material matter to our audience is imperative. The better organised our Barnahus communication delivery, the better opportunity for our key audience (Segment 3) to follow along. Connecting new information to something they care about will be paramount in motivating the public to become informed and engaged in Barnahus communications.

## 4.2 Prevention

In addition to the direct role of Barnahus in working with children who may have experienced sexual abuse, Barnahus will also work collaboratively with other Irish agencies that are involved in the prevention of child sexual abuse and with the European Barnahus Network and Council of Europe that is supporting the implementation of Barnahus in Europe. There are other established services working in Ireland with children who may have experienced sexual abuse. In Barnahus we will work to enhance the community network, to establish links with these services and to find ways to work collaboratively in the best interest of children.





## 4.3 Communicating with Specific Groups

It is important that Barnahus communications are suitable for, and accessible to, all our stakeholders, and co-creation and consultation with representatives from specific groups will be required to ensure that this is the case. Resources are available to inform meaningfully consultation and to actively involve people and their representative organisations in developing accessible communication materials. These include the National Disability Authority's "Ask Me" guidelines which take a universal design approach to all public consultation and participation processes so that disabled people can participate on an equal basis with others.

**05**

**Implementation**

# 5.1 Next Steps for Implementation

The Communication Action Plan (Section 6) outlines the prioritised activities to initiate implementation of the Barnahus Communication Strategy. These include:

## General Communication

- Define and implement communication governance framework with accountability to oversee progression of strategy implementation.
- Establish Barnahus Communication team / group with responsibility to implement strategy.
- Review and approve branding and logos for Barnahus in Ireland.
- Create Barnahus communication content calendar 2024-2025.
- Co-create principles for development of accessible and inclusive communication with special groups.
- Establish processes and structures for communicating and collaborating with Irish and European partners and for knowledge sharing.

## Segment 1: On Our Journey

- Develop and implement reporting templates to enable more effective two-way communications between oversight groups (BNASC / IDG) to regional steering groups and relevant Segment 1 stakeholders.
- Communicate key dates in 2024-2025 for Barnahus milestones and expected approval of national guidance / documents to regional steering groups and relevant Segment 1 stakeholders (BNASC and IDG).
- Develop and disseminate, to relevant Segment 1 stakeholders, the Barnahus operational governance framework reflecting Barnahus oversight and reporting guidance when all regional centres are operating.

- Define KPIs aligned to Communication Strategy.
- Enduring activity: Structured communication between regional groups / centres and oversight groups on performance, in line with operational governance framework.
- Enduring activity: Review communication performance in line with KPIs and refine and enhance messaging.

## Segment 2: Professionals Directly Impacted by Barnahus

- Develop and disseminate tailored content for professionals (Segment 2) based on goals, key messages, and channels identified in the strategy.
- Standardise referral form, information / SOP, and training materials and launch same for professionals referring into Barnahus.
- Enduring activity: Define and adopt open communication channels with professionals to share changes in practice as the Barnahus is operating and evolving nationally.

## Segment 3: The General Public

- Develop materials for public (Segment 3) campaign reflecting “Barnahus is Coming” message.
- Develop Barnahus Ireland website on Gov.ie.
- Establish Barnahus in Ireland social media presence.
- Launch national media campaign for Barnahus.
- Enduring activity: Continued communication on Barnahus impact, changes, and key milestones with the public.

## Segment 4: Referred Children and Families

- Standardise nationally the information materials (leaflets, forms, social stories) for children and families referred to Barnahus.
- Develop visual story of “The Child’s Journey” (magazine, video, etc) and “what’s next” closing leaflet to share with those referred to Barnahus.
- Enduring activity: Consult with children and families and adapt / develop communications based on feedback.

## 5.2 Communication Governance

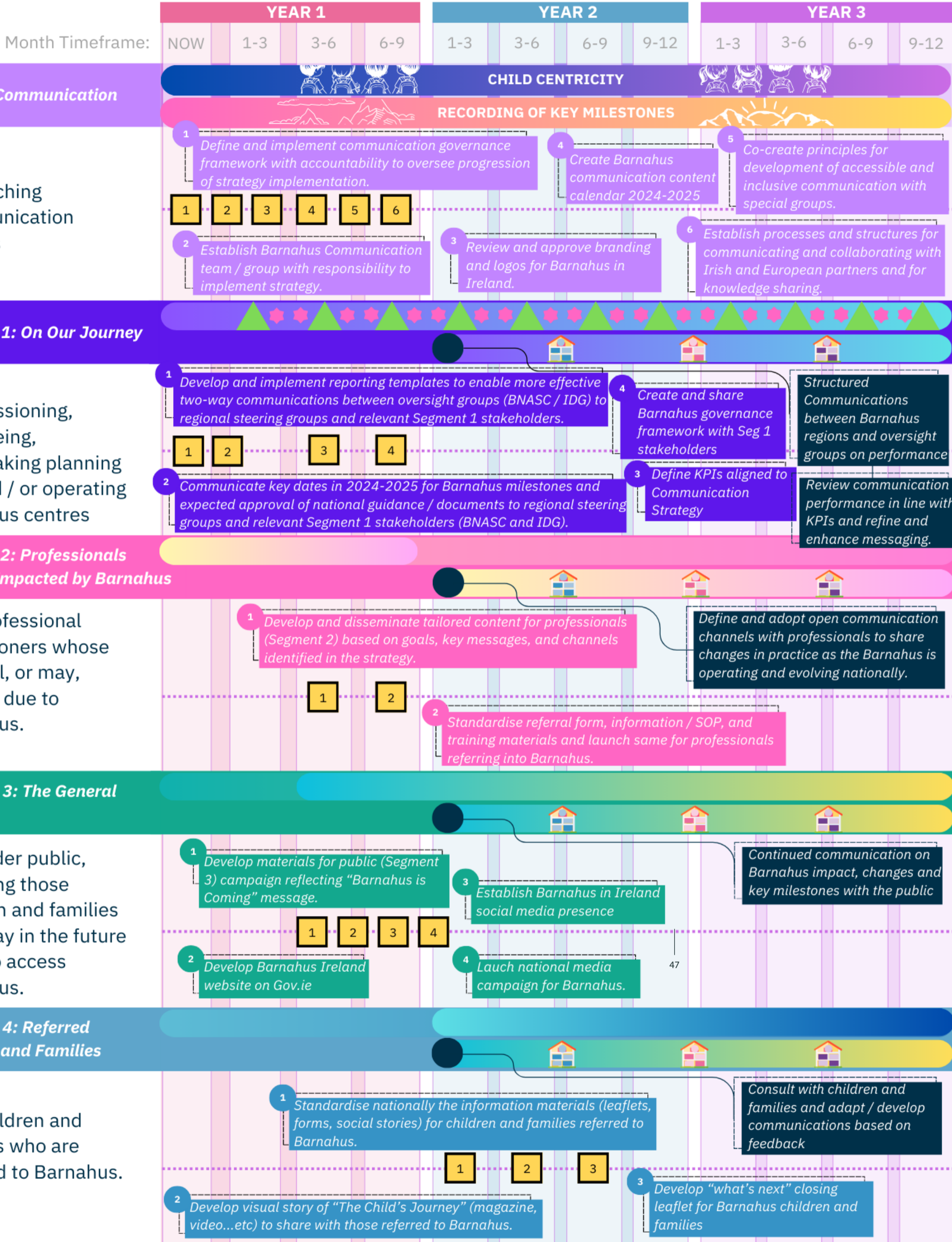
Effective and structured communication governance and oversight will be crucial for the successful implementation of the Barnahus communication strategy. Communication governance refers to the framework, processes, and policies put in place to ensure that communication efforts align with our vision, values, and brand identity. This will involve defining clear roles and responsibilities, establishing guidelines for content creation and distribution, and implementing mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating communication activities. Effective communication governance will assist in maintaining consistency, coherence, and compliance across all communications with our four identified segmented stakeholder groups.

Oversight of communication activities involves the supervision and management of communication processes to ensure they are in line with, and reinforcing, our defined key messages and achieve our desired outcomes. This will include monitoring the implementation of the communication strategy and action plan, assessing performance against predefined metrics, and making informed decisions to refine and optimise our communications. Oversight also involves managing risks associated with communication, such as potential reputational damage or misinformation about Barnahus, by proactively identifying potential issues and implementing mitigation measures. Ultimately, robust communication governance and oversight will contribute to building trust, enhancing the reputation, and driving success for Barnahus.



# Action Plan

# 6.1 Action Plan for the Implementation of the Communication Strategy



- ACTIONS**
- ENDURING ACTIVITIES**
- BNASC MEETING (EVERY 6 WEEKS)**
- IDG MEETING (EVERY 3 MONTHS)**



An Roinn Dlí agus Cúir  
Department of Justice



An Roinn Sláinte  
Department of Health



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,  
Méichumais, Líonpháirtíochta agus Oige  
Department of Children, Equality,  
Disability, Integration and Youth



TÚSLA

An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlaigh  
Child and Family Agency



Children's Health Ireland



An Garda Síochána  
Ireland's National Police and Security Service



# BARNAHUS COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Version 1.0

November 2024

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