

## CUSTOMER STORY



### Barnardo's: Part 2 - Introducing Children's Services

#### Background

In 2020, following the successful rollout of Assemble for its retail directorate, the volunteer management software was implemented for Barnardo's Children's Services throughout the UK. These services are responsible for fulfilling specially commissioned projects within the community and are supported by some 1,800 volunteers to do so.

Barnardo's Children's Services volunteers help disadvantaged children, families and young people across more than 100 separate roles, ranging from befrienders, independent visitors and mentors to group helpers, therapists and counsellors.

CUSTOMER SINCE

**March 2019**

VOLUNTEERS

**1,800**

FAVOURITE FEATURE

**Analytics**

## **Before Assemble**

Prior to Assemble, the Children's Services teams worked independently to manage their own volunteering projects within the community. Any recruitment, scheduling, reporting or communications would be done by a volunteer coordinator - or nominated team member - using spreadsheets, email, or any other legacy process unique to that team.

Whilst this was working on a local level, it was impossible for the central team at Barnardo's to understand the true impact of volunteers. It also meant that there was enormous potential to improve efficiencies and create consistencies in terms of process. Standardising throughout the UK would ensure work was not being duplicated or being produced in multiple formats and measuring the success of projects could be improved.

## **Time for a change**

The Children's Services UK Volunteering Team, along with Project Manager Ben Hughes, began categorising and consolidating information from as many of the volunteer teams as possible. Important data regarding volunteer profiles, volunteer roles, locations, skills, and communications would be gathered and form a baseline for the content that would live on Assemble.

As with any digital transformation, Barnardo's were faced with typical challenges that included some resistance to new technology and a change in culture. This was overcome with a better understanding of the organisation's goals and the long-term benefits of Assemble. Educating users with a comprehensive training programme and support were essential, along with insisting on a consistent approach to logging everything via Assemble.

## **Best practice**

"If it's not on Assemble it doesn't exist!". This mantra – used previously in the Barnardo's retail rollout of Assemble – was introduced to encourage good habits around recording data. Over time, capturing volunteer contributions will generate quality data, help measure impact and inform decisions for both local and central teams.

Once the volunteer roles and data had been standardised, they were added to Assemble. The next step was to introduce the software to Children's Services volunteer managers, along with some training. This would enable managers to upskill volunteers and encourage them to manage their own personal profiles, shifts and hours with a 'self-serve' approach. Not only would this alleviate administration for volunteer managers and coordinators, but it also empowered volunteers to

manage their roles, safe in the knowledge that they remain connected with managers and teams, via Assemble.

A positive by-product of this exercise was that Children's Services volunteer managers around the UK were now regularly connected and talking - sharing information and best practice. This would go on to influence and improve process and provide a starting point to becoming more united and consistent as a unit within the organisation.

## **Efficiency on the up**

Since the introduction of Assemble, recruitment has improved enormously. Templates and emails have enabled managers to offer an 'on brand' and consistent experience for volunteers, while capturing all the relevant information in one place with a complete audit trail. Efficiencies have massively improved, and managers are spending less time chasing applications, making calls, planning rota's or collating paperwork and missing information.

## **Insights**

Arguably, the most valuable result is the way in which volunteer data is now being used by the Barnardo's business development unit. This team are responsible for pitching and

commissioning for Children's Services projects. When preparing a case to support a new or existing contract, important data needed to support the proposals, such as volunteer numbers, locations, skills and hours are now available at a click – or two – of a button. A previously manual process is now available to confidently and accurately support and inform business decisions. This saves time and substantiates Barnardo's abilities in meeting the criteria of the proposed work with the correct skills and resources.

Barnardo's Project Manager, Ben Hughes, adds, "It has been a pleasure to see how Children's Services and volunteer managers have taken to Assemble. There has been a huge change in culture and as a result we've seen greater collaboration between teams and an increase in engagement from volunteers. Simple features, such as the ability for volunteers to see a running tally of how many hours they have contributed is so rewarding and a real motivator."

For more on this customer story, see Part 1 of the journey, which covers Barnardo's Retail digital transformation – [www.goassemble.com/barnardos-customer-story](http://www.goassemble.com/barnardos-customer-story).