

Barnahus Quality Standard – Phase 2 Consultation (Barnahus Network)

Introduction

[The Council of the Baltic Sea States](#) (CBSS), in close collaboration with the [Barnahus Network](#), is currently developing a new Barnahus Quality Standard on child protection, in the context of an EU co-funded project called [Promise Soteria](#).

The Barnahus Quality standards were developed through a collaborative process in 2017 in the context of the first Promise project, and can be found [here](#). It has been a longstanding priority of the CBSS and the Barnahus Network to develop a standard to guide practice in Barnahus concerning child protection, which is an important aspect of the multidisciplinary interventions in Barnahus. The work to develop the standard began early 2024 and has so far been informed by a survey, a mapping, as well as written and oral consultations with members of the Barnahus Network (for more details see below).

The development of the standard has now reached a phase where we are reaching out to professionals outside the Barnahus Network. We would like to invite you to take part in this consultation phase, including a written consultation and focus group discussions. Please note that contributions will not be remunerated.

The aim of the consultation is to gather feedback and input from experts and professionals outside the Barnahus Network who have important knowledge, experience and insights that can support the development of a brand-new standard on child protection in Barnahus.

At this time, the consultation focusses on the wording and contents of the standard. Once the standard has been finalised, we will proceed with developing indicators and other sections of the standard (see Standard Outline below).

Development timeline and activities

The draft standard below for consultation has been developed based on:

- A mapping and analysis of child protection in Barnahus (Child Protection mapping. Outlining challenges and good practices in Barnahus supportive role to child protection) carried out by Linda Jonsson, Anette Birgersson and Sven Wilson, who also have contributed with feedback on initial drafts. (Report published in September 2024)
- Consultation on an initial draft with the authors of mapping (see above) (October 2024)
- Survey, written consultation and two focus group consultations with the Soteria Child Protection Standard Advisory Board consisting of 5 experts from Cyprus, England, Estonia, Slovenia and Sweden. (April - November 2024)
- Initial feedback from Rebecca O'Donnell (Child Circle) who is carrying out a mapping of laws and policy that will inform the standard. (October 2024)
- Written feedback and three focus group consultations with the Barnahus Network members. (Jan – Mar 2025)

Forthcoming activities

- Mapping of laws and policy relevant to the standard, carried out by Child Circle (April 2025)
- External Consultation. Invitation to provide written feedback on the standard to experts from other international organisations, researchers, professionals etc. (March/April 2025)
- Focus group consultation with experts from other international organisations, researchers, professionals etc. (May 2025)
- Bilateral consultations with Barnahus Network members (May/June 2025)

- The Barnahus Forum in June 2025 will have a specific focus on child protection, including opportunities to discuss and influence the wording of the draft standard. The Barnahus Forum will be open for Barnahus Network members and others by invitation. (June 2025)
- The draft standard will be integrated in a Barnahus Network project, funded by the Oak Foundation, that will gather evidence, research and/or practice-base for the Barnahus Quality standards and establish a evidence/research/practice-informed evaluation framework. (2025/2026)
- The Barnahus quality standard on child protection will be piloted in Barnahus across Europe. An evaluation report will be produced, which will inform potential review of the standard. (2026/2027).

Instructions to provide written feedback

This consultation document includes the draft standard. Please use track changes to make proposals for changes, including deletions, rephrasing and/or additions, and provide an explanatory note with reference to evidence, research and/or practice to your proposed change (in a comment).

Please submit your written feedback to olivia.lind.haldorsson@cbss.org by 25 April.

Please note that there are several cross-references to other standards, which cover related or sometimes overlapping practice in Barnahus. The standards can be accessed here: <https://www.barnahus.eu/en/the-barnahus-quality-standards/>

Standard 5, which recently has undergone review, but has not yet been published, can be found at the end of this document.

Focus Groups

We would like to welcome you to join online focus group discussion on the standard, which will take place in the week after the deadline to provide written feedback. To make sure that as many as possible can join the focus groups we are organising two different sessions. Please register for **one** focus group session on either of these dates.

7 May 15-17 CET Please register [here](#)

9 May 9-11 CET Please register [here](#)

Your Information:

Name:

Position:

Organisation:

Email:

NB. Contributors who wish to be mentioned will be listed in the standard. Being listed as contributor does not imply agreement or endorsement of the final version of the standard. It only indicates contribution. A disclaimer will be inserted to clarify this.

I agree that my name is included in the list of contributors: **YES/NO**

We thank you warmly in advance for your contributions!

Standard 11. Child protection¹

Draft version for external consultation, 250314

What is the standard?

11.1 Roles and responsibilities in Barnahus

- a. The role and mandate of Barnahus in supporting child protection assessments and interventions is clearly defined and formalised through agreements with agencies that have a statutory role in child protection in the Barnahus uptake area.
- b. Professionals with a designated role in child protection in Barnahus have clearly defined roles, tasks and responsibilities.
- c. Depending on legal and procedural frameworks, and procedures in Barnahus, professionals with a designated role in child protection may conduct, participate and/or observe explorative and/or forensic interviews.

Also see standards 2 and 9.

11.2 Coordination and collaboration

- a. The Barnahus plays an active role in supporting the coordination of parallel child protection, health² and criminal investigations and interventions, promoting a balanced approach, mutual trust and effective collaboration, with a specific emphasis on avoiding (re)traumatisation and undue delay (Standard 1.3).
- b. Special efforts are made to ensure that the coordination and collaboration with agencies with a statutory role in child protection supports a continuum of protection and care before, during and after Barnahus, and that gaps in protection, care, information-sharing and support are identified and addressed.
- c. Collaboration with agencies with a statutory role in child protection is regulated by formal inter-agency agreements and/or structured coordination mechanisms, including supporting exchange of information, and is facilitated by regular interagency meetings and ongoing dialogue. Also see standard 11.2 a.

Also see standards 1.3, 2 and 5.

11.3 Joint case planning and management

- a. Professionals who have a designated role in child protection in Barnahus are an integral part of the multidisciplinary team in Barnahus and play an active role in case planning and management. They

¹ Child protection is here defined as “measures and structures to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence affecting children” (UNCRC article 19)

² Health is here defined as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” (WHO)

participate actively and are heard in individual assessments, including concerning the best interests of the child, and case planning meetings, including follow-up and onward support.

b. Special efforts are made to involve case workers from agencies with a statutory role in child protection who are based outside the Barnahus in the multidisciplinary team, and to encourage active involvement.

c. Barnahus empowers and supports children to contribute to individual assessments, case management and planning of interventions carried out in Barnahus.

d. Barnahus carefully considers the views of the child in all case planning, protection measures and interventions in Barnahus, and in contributions to assessments, planning and interventions carried out by agencies with a statutory role in child protection, taking the best interests of the child into account.

Also see standards 1.1-1.3 and 5.

11.4 Skills, proficiency and professionalism

a. Assessments and interventions concerning child protection in Barnahus are coordinated and supported by professionals with a relevant education, specialised training, experience and expertise. Also see standard 9.

b. Assessments and interventions concerning child protection in Barnahus are carried out using consistent methods, evidence-based tools and practical checklists and routines.

c. Assessments and interventions concerning child protection in Barnahus draw on contributions from the multidisciplinary team, the child, caregivers, and other relevant professionals, in close liaison with agencies with a statutory role in child protection in the child's uptake area. Also see standard 5 and 11.3.

d. Assessments and interventions in Barnahus concerning child protection are inclusive, participatory, trauma informed, culturally sensitive, and adapted to each child and the situation and evolving circumstances of the child.

e. Professionals with a designated role in child protection in Barnahus have access to regular training, consultation, supervision and peer support, including on different forms of violence against children, social welfare and child protection systems, interventions for self-care, and measures to prevent stress and burnout. Also see standard 9 and 10.

f. All assessments and interventions concerning child protection in Barnahus are carried out in line with child safeguarding principles and practices, including preventing contact with persons that may cause harm to the child or put the child at risk.

g. Contributions to assessments and interventions concerning child protection that are carried out by agencies with a statutory role in child protection are done according standard 11.4 a, b, c, d and f.

11.5 Information and onwards support

a. Children and non-offending caregivers and siblings, where relevant and appropriate, should have access to relevant and targeted information, adapted to their individual needs and circumstances, regarding the process and available interventions. Children and caregivers should be informed about who to contact if they have questions or require further information. Children should have opportunities

to receive and seek information independent of their caregivers. Also see standard 1.2, 5.5, 5.6, 7.5 and 8.3.

b. Clear roles, responsibilities and routines are in place in Barnahus to inform, protect, and provide onwards support to children after a visit at Barnahus. Also see standard 1.2, 5.5 and 5.7.

11.6 External competence and capacity-building

a. Barnahus provides capacity-building and training for relevant professionals including from agencies with a statutory role in child protection, including on the type of cases seen in Barnahus, specialised interventions in Barnahus, interagency collaboration and coordination in Barnahus, joint case planning and management in Barnahus. Also see standards 9 and 10.

b. Training, formal and informal consultation and exchange of expertise with professionals from agencies with a statutory role in child protection is carried out in an collaborative way that

- values and recognises the social work professionals' expertise in child protection, communication, and advocacy for children,
- builds collaboration and mutual trust within the pathway and across the child protection continuum, and
- emphasises and strengthens interagency collaboration in children's recovery.

Also see standards 9 and 10.

c. Barnahus promotes consistent use of evidence-based tools and methods, and provides consultation to case workers and agencies with a statutory role in child protection who liaise or work together with Barnahus on specific cases.

Also see standard 10.

Outline of the Standard

Like the other Barnahus Quality standards, standard 11 will be completed background information, indicators, practical resources and case examples. Contributors who wish to be mentioned will be listed as contributors. These sections will be developed when the standard has been completed.

Contributors

List of people who have contributed to the development of the standard (voluntary, and does not imply agreement or endorsement, only contribution).

What is the Standard

Why should this standard be met?

References to international and European legal obligations

References to Guidance

Research and Experience

Examples of indicators and/or evidence that the standard is being met

A series of indicators that help Barnahus understand and measure the practice connected to the respective standards, will be developed in the second phase of developing this standard, and once key elements have been agreed.

Learn More

Practical Resources

Implementation Handbook for Barnahus Quality Standard on child protection standard (forthcoming)

[Toolkit for implementation of Barnahus Quality Standard 5](#)

Please contact Olivia Lind Haldorsson, olivia.lind.haldorsson@cbss.org, if you would like to include resources that support implementation of this standard.

Practical examples of good practice, documents etc from Barnahus around Europe

Please contact Olivia Lind Haldorsson, olivia.lind.haldorsson@cbss.org, if you would like to contribute with examples of good practice from your Barnahus that supports implementation of this standard.

Cross-references with other standards

Standard 11 is linked to many of the other standards, in terms of synergies, and, often mutual, impact on the fulfilment of the standards, in particular:

Cross-cutting principles and practices (Standard 1)

Assessment of the best interests of the child

Children and caregivers influence on timing, location and set up of interventions

Adequate information, adapted to child

Preventing undue delay in planning and executing assessments and interventions

Multidisciplinary Team (Standard 2):

Formal interagency collaboration agreements

Roles and responsibilities

Liaison and interagency team: Mutual respect, collaborative and inclusive culture

Monitoring and Evaluation

Process and practice during and after Barnahus

Interagency collaboration and joint case management (Standard 5)*:

Formal Procedures and routines

Individual Assessment

Continuous case planning and review

Support Person

Child participation

Follow up and onward support

Capacity Building (Standard 9)

Training of professionals

Guidance, supervision, counselling

Prevention: Information sharing, awareness raising and external competence building (Standard 10)

Data Collection, information sharing and awareness raising

External competence building

*) Standard 5 has recently undergone review and is therefore included below for reference.

Standard 5. Interagency case management

5.1 Formal procedures and routines: Interagency case review and planning is integral to the work of the Barnahus team and the respective agencies in the Barnahus. It is formalised by procedures and routines, mutually agreed by the Barnahus team and the respective agencies that practice in Barnahus.

5.2 Individual Assessment: The Barnahus ensures that there is an individual assessment of each child who is referred to Barnahus. The individual assessment is carried out and updated, drawing on contributions from the interagency team, the child, caregivers, and other relevant professionals. The individual assessment establishes the circumstances of the child, special needs and other elements that must inform planning, interventions (including the child investigative interview) and follow up.

5.3 Continuous case planning and review: Case review and planning meetings, involving the relevant agencies in the interagency team, takes place on a regular basis in the Barnahus.

5.4 Continuous case tracking: The Barnahus ensures continuous documentation and access to relevant case information for interagency team members on the progress of the case until the case is closed, observing national laws on data protection, privacy, and confidentiality.

5.5 Support Person: A designated, trained individual or member of the Barnahus team oversees and documents the multidisciplinary response to ensure that there is continuous information-sharing, support and follow up with the child and non-offending family/caregivers.

5.6 Child Participation: Children are empowered and supported to contribute to their own case planning and management in Barnahus. Barnahus carefully considers the views of the child in all case planning and management.

5.7 Follow up and onward support: Case management in Barnahus connects with relevant external and parallel case management, interventions, processes, and agencies to ensure coordination, timely referrals, follow up, and onward support during and after the interventions in Barnahus.