

Videoconferencing for Cost Effective Collaboration

One of the UK's leading children's charities, supporting over 100,000 children and their families, uses high definition videoconferencing to connect dispersed teams, reduce travel and save money.



Founded in 1866, Barnardo's is a not-for-profit business that supports over 100,000 children, young people and their families every year. With some 6,500 employees and over 11,000 volunteers working with the charity across five regional and four national offices, keeping project teams connected is a big challenge. With so many groups working on hundreds of critical projects everyday, constant and direct communication is key. But with the high cost of oil and the economic downturn, like many organisations, travel reduction became a necessity.

Barnardo's decided to look at videoconferencing as a means of saving the organisation money by reducing travel while also replicating the face-to-face meeting experience crucial to keeping over 400 current charitable projects running smoothly. Barnardo's sought out leading UK videoconferencing integrator Videonations to help them understand the technology and its merits. Following a period of consultation and demonstration where Richard Madden, Account Manager at Videonations and Paul Panton, Telecommunications Director at Barnardo's reviewed various videoconferencing offerings, Barnardo's opted for an organisation wide roll out of high definition (HD) videoconferencing systems from LifeSize Communications and interactive audio visual solutions.

Paul Panton says, "Why send an email when you can share a presentation and talk over the report face-to-face? We chose LifeSize because the systems are easy to use and give you incredible quality."

Videonations installed 14 LifeSize systems across Barnardo's headquarters, regional and national centres, including LifeSize Express™, LifeSize Team MP™ and LifeSize Room™ endpoints. LifeSize Control™ management system was also implemented in order that Barnardo's IT team may seamlessly manage the endpoints themselves.

Videonations also integrated interactive whiteboards within the training and conference facility located at the Liverpool office so that presenters can be interactive whilst sharing PC data and multimedia content.

As well as consulting, supplying and installing the equipment, Videonations also hosts a fully managed 'Virtual Meeting Room' service for Barnardo's via an in-house HD MCU (multipoint conferencing unit). With ISDN gateway capability, Barnardo's are able to benefit from multisite meetings with internal as well as external participants.

Paul Panton adds, "It's been a pleasure working with such a knowledgeable and friendly team at Videonations. Richard Madden, in particular, has been highly dedicated and his continued support remains invaluable. Next on the agenda is the integration of desktop conferencing. It's our aim to have a PC or laptop in every project site across the UK with desktop conferencing capability so we can run various projects between the project sites and Barnardo's regional offices."

Since the implementation of HD videoconferencing, Videonations and its partners have helped Barnardo's do what they do best – help children. Barnardo's has realised improved business support, more streamlined operations, collaborative connections as well as significantly improved communication between regional and national offices resulting in significantly reduced travel. Paul Panton says that while some travel simply cannot be avoided, Barnardo's has seen a large number of meetings now occurring over video. From an environmental standpoint, the organisation's carbon footprint has also been reduced.

