



In this issue:

A bad start shouldn't mean a bad end

An insight into Aberlour's new campaign

First Minister comes to tea

Children in our Fife home welcome the First Minister to dinner

Volunteer mentors needed

Aberlour launches new mentoring programme

A bad start in life shouldn't mean a bad end

Many communities all over Scotland are experiencing desperate poverty; places where many kids grow up believing they have no future and no life chances because no one has ever believed in that future for them.



“We recognise that not all children are born with an equal chance and that in many of Scotland’s poorest communities, children can often struggle to access the same opportunities as others. That is why we are launching our new campaign to ensure that “a bad start in life doesn’t mean a bad end.”

- SallyAnn Kelly, Chief Executive



In our most deprived communities, young people are three times more likely to die before the age of 25.

We are not prepared to let this continue. At Aberlour, we believe that a bad start in life shouldn't mean a bad end. We know you, as someone who supports Aberlour and has a concern for young people, will share that same belief.

That is why we will be holding community events, engaging with MSPs, knocking on doors, and advertising on trains, buses and billboards to raise awareness and support across Scotland for the vulnerable children and young people that we support.

Morgan is one of our young people who features in the campaign. She started life in a violent home, witnessing domestic abuse and substance misuse. She was struggling at school, had fallen in with the wrong crowd, and she had been a young carer for her mum since she was seven years old. The stress was almost impossible to bear. Is it any wonder that she couldn't see a way out?

“Morgan has something about her – that was clear when I first met her eight years ago. She had a spark – a desire to learn, to change her life. She didn't want to be defined by where she came from, but where she was going”, says Johnny, Aberlour Young People's Worker.

Morgan knew she wanted a different life. But she felt trapped by her friends, by school's lack of belief in her, and by her role as a young carer for her mum. Without Johnny and Aberlour, she would have had nowhere to turn.

Morgan didn't have the easiest start in life, and she still faces challenges. But thanks to her amazing strength and the support of Aberlour, she's looking forward to a better future. Today, she's the first person in her family to go to university.



You can make sure that a bad start in life doesn't mean a bad end for Scotland's most vulnerable children, with a monthly gift of just £10. Complete the response form on the back page or donate online: www.aberlour.org.uk/donate



Caring Caitlyn

wins national award
for dedication to
young people

A member of staff at Aberlour has won a prestigious national award after being nominated by one of the young people she supports for going 'above and beyond' to improve their experience of residential care.

Caitlyn Ross, who works at an Aberlour residential home in Fife, was selected as the Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care (SIRCC) Residential Superstar of the Year at their awards. The wider team was also awarded runner up in the Top Team category for the second year in a row. Caitlyn was nominated for the award by 15-year-old Samantha, who moved into one of Aberlour's residential children's homes last year.



"I haven't lived with my mum since I was nine years old" says Samantha. "She is blind and couldn't look after me properly. I then went to live with my aunt, but we didn't get on at all. When I first met Caitlyn, I was scared to like her or get attached because everyone I have ever liked in my life has left me. But, she never gave up on me. I now call her my silent cheerleader; she is the person who I know is always rooting for me to succeed and has my best interests at heart."

"I was scared to like her or get attached because everyone I have ever liked in my life has left me."

Over the past year Caitlyn has helped Samantha settle into her new home and get her education back on track. Samantha has now passed her National 4 exams, is working towards her National 5 qualifications and has a conditional offer to go to college to study English, maths and psychology.

"I feel very humbled to receive this award and I am just so incredibly proud of how far Samantha has come" explains Caitlyn. "It is nice to know that Samantha recognises that I only do what is best for her, even if it is giving her more motivation to go off to school on a Monday morning!"

A regular gift of £10 a month

to Aberlour will help more young people like Samantha with the tools they need to have the best start in life.



"Everyone at Aberlour is motivated by the same thing: to show young people like Samantha that they can be successful and to give them the tools they need to have the best possible start in life."

- Caitlyn Ross, Aberlour
Education Support Worker

First Minister comes to tea

We were delighted to welcome the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, to one of our children's homes in Fife recently after the young people invited her for tea.



In 2016, the First Minister announced that there would be 'a root and branch review' of the care system in Scotland and the government was committed to creating a system that puts love for children and young people at its heart. This summer, our young people wrote a letter to the First Minister to tell her they wanted to share their views about what changes they think need to happen to improve the care system in Scotland.

In their letter to the First Minister they said:

"All our journeys through the care system are unique and have helped shape us into the people that we are today.

"It was a real honour to be invited for dinner at the Aberlour Sycamore Service, and to receive such a warm and hospitable welcome from young people at the home. I have made a commitment to listen to as many care experienced children and young people as possible – and visiting the Sycamore Service was a fantastic chance to hear some of their experiences first-hand."

- First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon

We are all excited at the prospect of you coming to our home for tea and would like to use this unique opportunity to speak to you about some of the changes that we feel should be made within the care system."

The First Minister came to the house for dinner with the six young people who live there, members of staff and Aberlour Chief Executive, SallyAnn Kelly. She was treated to mince'n'tatties and chocolate cake for pudding. The young people spoke to her about living with Aberlour and their experiences in care. After a tour of the house, Ms Sturgeon even got to show off her hula-hooping skills!

Samantha, one of the young people, said about the visit "I was really nervous meeting you but you were really nice and I liked showing you my bedroom".

At Aberlour, we aim to make sure the children and young people who live with us feel loved by the adults who work with them. Our children's homes offer a safe and loving place to live for children who have experienced abuse and trauma or who are unable to live with their families. We take a therapeutic approach to helping them. This means we support them to understand and overcome their trauma. With our help, they can go on to live happy lives.

Find out more at aberlour.org.uk/services

Campaigning and political engagement update



As a leading Scottish children's charity and a major force for change, Aberlour strives to influence Scottish Government policy to make real differences to children and young people across Scotland.

The recent First Minister's visit was only one of our many engagements with leaders across the political spectrum:

We successfully campaigned, alongside 70 organisations from across Scottish society, to speed up the introduction of a new income supplement to tackle child poverty and say, "Kids can't wait". Introducing the new Scottish Child Payment of £10 per child per week early for families with children aged 6 and under by 2020/21 is an important step towards improving the lives of the 240,000 children in Scotland living in poverty right now.

The Minister for Children and Young People, Maree Todd (pictured), and Scottish Labour leader Richard Leonard, joined us in Elgin and Glasgow respectively to celebrate Volunteers Week.

Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government, Aileen Campbell visited our Scottish Guardianship Service to hear about our new befriending service which helps refugee children and young people, and victims of trafficking who arrive in Scotland alone.

Aberlour hosted a Parliamentary reception to talk about our "No Place Like Home" campaign, which highlights the support needs of parents with learning disabilities and their children.

Jeane Freeman, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport, visited Aberlour Perinatal Mental Health Services in Forth Valley which supports vulnerable new mums struggling with anxiety and depression in pregnancy, and after their baby is born.

"The recent visits from Scottish Government Ministers and the success of the "Kids can't wait" campaign show that Aberlour continues to influence policy at national level to ensure the voices of children and families across Scotland are heard."

Martin Canavan, Aberlour's Policy and Participation Officer

Support our 'A bad start shouldn't mean a bad end' campaign

by starting a monthly donation to Aberlour using the response form on page 12 so we can be the voice of vulnerable children and families in Scotland.

Volunteer mentors needed for new service

Have you ever considered becoming a mentor to young people?

Aberlour has launched a new mentoring programme in partnership with Renfrewshire Council to provide support and guidance for young people who are young carers or who are living in care, whether they are looked-after at home, staying with foster parents, or living in a residential setting.

Aberlour's new mentoring programme is part of Renfrewshire Council's wider commitment to closing the region's attainment gap. Recent statistics indicate that a quarter of school-aged children in Renfrewshire live in some of the most deprived communities in Scotland.

Aberlour Attain Mentoring Service - Renfrewshire matches looked-after young people across the region aged between 8 and 18 with a trained Aberlour volunteer mentor who will act as a consistent and positive role model to help them realise their full potential in life.

"We need to recruit around 120 mentors to support children and young people across Renfrewshire."

"Our vision is for every young person living in care, whatever the setting, to have the same opportunities and experiences in life as every other young person," explains Sarah-Louise Davies, Attain Programme Manager. "The key focus is to raise attainment.

"Our programme takes a complete 360 degree approach to mentoring, meaning our volunteer mentors will provide support and guidance in any aspect of their mentee's life, whether that is helping them revise for exams at school, providing guidance on career opportunities or talking through any other problems they may be facing.

"We need to recruit around 120 mentors to support children and young people across Renfrewshire. I'd encourage anyone interested in making a difference in a young person's life to get in touch to find out more; it may just be the best thing you've ever done."

One of our mentors, Ross, gave us an insight into his experience:

"I was looking for a volunteering role in an organisation that worked with children and young people as I wanted to further increase my life experiences, bolster my CV for greater career prospects and give back to the community I live in. When I came across the role with Aberlour I knew this would be the perfect opportunity. I enquired about the role by contacting one of the mentoring coordinators. He gave me some more information and organised a meet up for an informal chat and to iron out more details about this fantastic opportunity.

"He was extremely friendly and really welcoming. This made me feel even more

excited about taking on the mentoring role. We soon got into training where I got to meet my fellow mentors. There are six compulsory training sessions, as well as a couple of online modules to complete and of course further optional training available too.

"The team that organised the training was great and really took time and effort to make sure we were equipped and ready to carry out the role.

"My mentee has had a number of difficult issues to deal with at school. However, in our most recent meeting, he told me things were improving and he was just trying to get his head down and make better choices. He also mentioned that he really had a great time hanging out with me. We then proceeded to make a lot of plans for the weeks ahead, so we have plenty of activities to look forward to. This was a real positive moment for me: it makes me feel that I am starting to make a difference."



Details of all our volunteering roles can be found at www.aberlour.org.uk/volunteer

Find out more

If you would like to find out more about becoming an Aberlour mentor, please get in touch by emailing volunteering@aberlour.org.uk or calling Aberlour Attain Mentoring Service - Renfrewshire on **0141 260 9180**.



Get involved!

From fostering to fundraising and volunteering, to starting a monthly donation, there are so many ways you can help children and families in Scotland. Your support makes all the difference!

Gifts left to Aberlour in Wills substantially help vulnerable children in Scotland

One way to get involved is to leave a gift in your Will to Aberlour. After you've looked after your loved ones, a gift left to Aberlour will make a long-term lasting impact on the next generation of children and young people. Find out more by emailing legacy@aberlour.org.uk or calling **0800 085 6150**.



Foster

- Become a foster carer with Aberlour and give a child a loving home – see www.aberlour.org.uk/fostering or call **01592 591 500**

Fundraise

- Hold a cake bake, coffee morning, movie night or party to raise funds – visit www.aberlour.org.uk/spendanhour to download our most recent seasonal fundraising toolkit filled with fun ideas.
- Invite a free speaker from Aberlour to come to your community group or church.
- Get your workplace involved by nominating Aberlour as your charity of the year.
- Take part in sponsored events. See www.aberlour.org.uk/events to sign up or for more ideas.
- Have a Facebook or Instagram fundraiser for Aberlour encouraging your friends to donate for your birthday.

Raise awareness

- Follow us on **Twitter, Facebook, Instagram** and **LinkedIn** to stay up to date and see the impact of your support.
- Share this newsletter with a friend to spread the word about our new campaign.

Donate

- Support our '**A bad start shouldn't mean a bad end**' campaign by starting a monthly donation to Aberlour using the response form on page 12.
- Choose Aberlour as your nominated charity on **Amazon Smile**. Go to smile.amazon.co.uk and login using your usual Amazon account details. Choose Aberlour Child Care Trust from the charity options, before you begin shopping, and you will raise funds automatically every time you shop. Easy!

Volunteer

- Volunteer your time to help us achieve our mission to improve the lives of Scotland's children and young people. See our current opportunities at www.aberlour.org.uk/volunteer

I'd like to make a gift to help children in Scotland



1 I would like to make a regular gift

I would like to give: £3 £12 £24 £36 £50 or my choice £ _____ each month

Starting on 1st / 15th of the month

Name(s) of account holder(s) _____

Bank/Building Society account number

Sort code

Instruction to your Bank/Building Society

Please pay Aberlour Child Care Trust Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Aberlour Child Care Trust and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank or Building Society.

2 I would like to make a one-off gift

I enclose a cheque for: £15 £25 £55 or my choice £ _____ made payable to Aberlour

Please debit my Mastercard / Visa / Maestro / CAFcard £15 £25 £55 or my choice £ _____

Name on card _____

Card number

Start date

Expiry date

Security code

3 Your contact details

First Name _____ Last Name _____ Tel _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Email _____

We'd love to keep in touch. Please tick the box below to indicate how you prefer to receive further communication from Aberlour. by post by telephone by email

You can change your preferences at any time just by contacting us. We store your details securely and will never share them with any third parties for the purposes of their marketing. See website for full privacy statement.

4 *giftaid it* I want to make my gift worth 25% extra at no cost to me.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Signature(s) of account holder(s) _____ Date _____

Thank you

Completed forms can be sent to
Aberlour, Kintail House, Forthside Way, Stirling, FK8 1QZ.

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