

Spring 2020



aberlour
scotland's children's charity

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Aberlour News



campaign update

“A bad start shouldn’t mean a bad end”

That’s the message of our hard-hitting campaign that launched in Autumn 2019. It followed shocking research that found children living in Scotland’s most deprived communities are three times more likely to die before the age of 25 compared with those living in the most affluent communities.

This alarming level of inequality has prompted Aberlour to campaign and do more to ensure all children, wherever they are born, have access to the same opportunities.

More than 400 amazing individuals so far have pledged their support by making a monthly donation to Aberlour to help children flourish and avoid that bad end. If you haven’t already, you can join that army of people who want to stand up for Scotland’s children and make sure that a bad start shouldn’t mean a bad end.

Alongside our need to raise vital funds, we’ve been pressing the Scottish Government and the business community to play their part too. We held an event that brought fifty of Scotland’s leading public, private and third sector figures together to ask what must be done to tackle poverty and reduce inequality in Scotland.

PLEDGE YOUR SUPPORT
Use the response form on the back page or visit aberlour.org.uk/nobadends



We are proposing that the Scottish Government supports local authorities with a transition fund to help move more money towards early intervention work whilst at the same time meeting their other priorities. By partnering with COSLA, Aberlour’s work was highlighted by BBC Reporting Scotland as an example of vital youth work taking place yet vulnerable to council funding cutbacks. You can watch this at [youtube.com/aberlourCCTchannel](https://www.youtube.com/aberlourCCTchannel)

“Improving lives across Scotland now and creating the conditions to ensure wellbeing for future generations”

We’ve asked that the Scottish Government also takes a child wellbeing approach to budget planning, something that has been welcomed and adopted. In February, the Scottish Government’s budget statement said that “Taking a wellbeing approach to the budget prioritises investment in areas that will have the greatest impact on both improving lives across Scotland now and creating the conditions to ensure wellbeing for future generations.” We are pleased to see our demand has been met.

Finally, with more than half of those in relative poverty living in a household with at least one adult in paid employment, **we’re calling on businesses to do more to create secure, well paid jobs for people.**

Our Chief Executive SallyAnn Kelly said “We’re pleased that this campaign has captured both the public’s and the Government’s attention. We’re delighted that so many people have stepped up to become regular donors to Aberlour to enable more of our vital work, and we’re pleased that doors are beginning to open at a society level which could lead to a radical new approach to lifting people out of poverty and creating a level playing field.”

Stay up to date at www.aberlour.org.uk



Our campaign film featuring Morgan and her powerful story has been shortlisted for Charity Film of the Year.

Watch the film at ABERLOUR.ORG.UK/NOBADENDS



“It is important for me to be here... I can start a new life and forget about the past.”

Meet Liz and Sarah. Liz has been Sarah's foster carer for under a year. Together they wished to share their fostering journey; the ups, the downs and their exciting plans for the future to encourage others to provide a loving home for a child or young person in need.

“I wanted to support a teenage girl on the cusp of becoming an adult, to help her navigate all the challenges and opportunities that brings with it,” explains Liz. “I thought I had something to offer, given my background as a youth worker and more recently my work on violence against women and girls.”

“The process to become a foster carer is very thorough and interesting. It really does prepare you for the commitment you are making to a young person and for the associated changes to your life. The Aberlour team is very supportive.”

“Only a short time after I became an approved foster carer, I received a call from Kerryanne at Aberlour to say a possible match had arisen.”

“The Aberlour team is very supportive.”

“Then two to three weeks later Sarah came for her first visit. It all happened really fast. Now Sarah has been living with me for nearly a year.”

After their first meeting, Sarah came to stay with Liz for a weekend. “The weather was great, we got to go out and do loads of things,” Sarah explains. “We planned how we were going to decorate my room and what furniture we needed to buy. I knew I wanted to move here and live with Liz, I just felt comfortable from the beginning.”

“I have been supporting her to become more independent and given her a fair amount of responsibility and trust.”

Liz adds: “It hasn't all been easy. There have been lots of discussions and boundary settings. However, as she is nearly 16 years old, I have been supporting her to become more independent and given her a fair amount of responsibility and trust.”

“She has responded brilliantly! Now she gets the train on her own and goes out with her friends at the weekend. We have only been able to do this through talking openly and honestly, with Sarah learning to take responsibility for her actions. It has been amazing to see Sarah grow in confidence over the past few months.”

“I feel really positive about what we have achieved so far together. After only a few months, Sarah is doing well at school. Now we are getting a plan in place to help Sarah with her exams. But it isn't just academic goals we are focusing on.”

“I'll be there every step of the way to support Sarah - no matter what she wants to do.”

- Liz,
Foster carer

Sarah explains: “I would like to get a job when I turn 16, so I can start earning a wee bit of my own money. Also, Liz is helping me to get back in touch with my family. It is really important to me to get to know my family better and it's good that Liz is helping me to do it.”


“If anyone is thinking of becoming a foster carer, I would definitely encourage them to do it. It is important for me to be here with Liz. Apart from the time with my dad, my past experiences with my family weren't always so good. But here I can start a new life and forget about the past. I can be me.”

“And I'll be there every step of the way to support Sarah - no matter what she wants to do,” says Liz, smiling.

Could you become a foster carer?

Every child has the right to live in a loving, caring and supportive home. Fostering is a way of offering young people like Sarah a home when their own family is unable to look after them. Our foster carers come from all walks of life but have the determination to give love and stability to a child or young person.

If you are over 21 and have a spare room, please get in touch with Aberlour Fostering by calling **01592 591500** or visit **www.aberlour.org.uk/foster-care** for more information.



What does a modern children's home look like?

Residential care is almost unrecognisable from how it looked in the past, but public perceptions haven't always kept pace.

What comes to mind when you think of a 'children's care home'? Large dormitory accommodation? Dickensian orphanages? Harsh or abusive regimes? And who do you suppose goes into care?

Modern day care is quite different to the orphanages of the past. Indeed, earlier this year, Aberlour issued a heartfelt and sincere apology for the abuse and lasting damage that was done to some children in our care in our historical past.

Aberlour has four children's houses in Fife and two in the Highlands. Each house is part of a community and looks like every other house on the street. We don't draw attention to these with any signage because a normal family home wouldn't have that.

We're striving to make our houses as homely as possible so that the children living there don't feel any more different to their school peers than they already do.

There are between five and six children staying in each house. These small numbers are intentional. Small enough for personal, one-to-one care, and large enough for children to make friends with each other.

You will have a different taste in décor and style to your neighbour, so the inside of your homes will be different. It's the same at Aberlour. Our young people take the lead in deciding what they'd like in their rooms, the colour of the walls, the toys they'd like to play with and so on.

All of the children we care for have experienced some form of trauma or loss. Some children have come into care because their parents are too unwell to look after them, or because they died and no one else in the family was available. Many others have come from families where they have experienced abuse or neglect, or witnessed domestic abuse or parental substance misuse. Some will stay until a situation settles down, others will live with us until they are an adult and only when they are ready to live independently.

And so we seek to create a safe, stable, loving space where children and young people can come to terms with their trauma and rebuild their lives and have hope for a brighter future.



Love in the care system



Can love exist in the care system?

A key recommendation from the Independent Care Review is for love to be put back into the care system. Aberlour is delighted to see this – it's something we've been championing for years. Because without love, our young people will not thrive. It is the absence of love that very often has led to the young person coming into care.

Some of the young people in our care have participated in our Love InC workshops, a project to listen to young people's views and ensure love is an integral and fundamental aspect of the care experience at Aberlour.

Tilly* lives in one of our Fife homes and has been part of Love InC. She explains that "it's just the little things that make me feel loved - spending time doing things I like." Lucy* says "I always get a cuddle when I need one" whilst John* simply but confidently states "I know they love me because they look after me."



5-Star Rating

Each of our children's houses are subject to inspection by the Care Inspectorate.

We are delighted that in the last quarter, two of our houses were inspected and **both received a '5' rating ("very good") for 'care' and for 'wellbeing'.**

John Ryan, Aberlour's Assistant Director for our residential services, pictured above, explains the vital role care has in providing stability, love and hope for young people.

"Our staff have an enormous privilege to be able to care for children and young people. It is a genuine joy to see how they care, the relationships they've built, and the effect this has on our young people. Day in day out, our staff go the extra mile for children, often where no one else has ever gone the extra mile for them."

"And that can include supporting them to attend school and helping with homework, to dealing with the trauma they've experienced before they came into care, through to supporting them to leave care and live independently. We seek to give our young people hope and help them build bridges at times where everything else has seemed impossible."

Care Review Reaction

In February the Independent Care Review published its findings into care in Scotland. Aberlour warmly welcomed this and were encouraged that so much of our current practice is already in keeping with the recommendations.

Find out more at www.aberlour.org.uk/care-review

*Another way we show love and respect for our young people is anonymising their names where it's important their true identities are not made public. Their stories and comments are true, but we've changed their names for this reason.

“Aberlour has helped me so much, they have given me so many opportunities that I thought weren't possible.”

“My school referred me to Aberlour to learn some coping mechanisms for my anxiety. I was hanging around with the wrong people; they peer pressured me. I was also getting bullied. It was really horrible.”

These are the words of fourteen year-old Vangelina, or Vange as she prefers to be known. It's how she introduces the Aberlour Youthpoint service in Elgin that she has benefited so much from.

“It's about her identity,” explains mum Yvonne. “When she first started at school, she struggled to mix in with other kids and didn't seem to fit into any of the friendship categories. She would struggle to want to get up and go to school in the morning.”

*Stock image used.

“The crowd she was hanging around with were always getting up to mischief. She came home one night drugged up to her eyes and that scared me. I don't know how to cope with that.”

Vange managed to break free from that group of friends and hasn't touched drugs since but is now very isolated and her confidence has hit rock bottom. Yet coming to Aberlour Youthpoint has proven to be a source of new friendships and of great strength for both Vange and Yvonne.

Whilst resistant initially, Vange has got to know other young people and slowly started opening up. She attends the early intervention workshops and also the young mentors' group.

“This is a good place for her, the support is high level, the staff are absolutely fantastic.”

“This is a good place for her,” explains Yvonne. “The support is high level, the staff are absolutely fantastic, they're understanding, and they go out their way to help her. They make time to allow them to make choices and the ability to be themselves and express themselves and develop new skills. I can't fault them; I just wish there were more places like it in Moray.”

“Aberlour has helped me so much, they have given me so many opportunities that I thought weren't possible,” says Vange. “Anne is my one-to-one worker and she is the kindest soul. My anxiety gets really bad at times and I know I can call her up and she will listen to me and calm me down.”

With Vange's school attendance rate at just 20%, Anne also visits Vange each day at home to encourage her to attend school. “It reduces my stress and anxiety too,” says Yvonne. “It makes all the difference having that support.”



“We're just at the start of Vangelina's journey,” explains Anne. “We've had a breakthrough recently with her however. I encouraged her that if she can't say something verbally, then write it down so she did which was very good as it's helped us to know better what she's thinking, what her worries are. It's really helped the situation at school and it's just changed everything. It's like a release for her.”

“She's now able to express herself because of that great relationship with Anne and that's helping her move forwards,” adds Yvonne.

“Although she's come on leaps and bounds, there's still a long way to go to build her confidence and help her believe in herself,” explains Anne “and that's what we'll continue to do.”

Aberlour Youthpoint Moray provides one-to-one support, group work and mentoring services for young people in Moray. Find out more at www.aberlour.org.uk/services

A gift of £10 could help a young person like Vange access the help they need to turn their lives around.

Donate online or use the back page response form.

Ian's memorable hike makes the difference



Ian contacted our fundraising team because he wanted to raise money as a tribute to his late wife Mary, who supported Aberlour for many years.

Last summer, on the anniversary of his wife's passing, Ian and his grandson Kai undertook a two-day hike on the Isle of Skye. They walked in the sunshine and the pouring rain, and over some difficult terrain, but were determined to complete this challenge in Mary's memory.

Ian and Kai raised a staggering £1,658 which will make a big difference to the lives of vulnerable children, young people and families supported by Aberlour.

Ian says "Doing the hike was a massive achievement; I had not camped out in over 60 years! Having Kai's company made me more determined to do it. We spent a lot of time talking about the past and my youth. I really wanted to do this to honour Mary's memory. Aberlour was very close to her heart and she donated every month for many years."

Kai added "I enjoyed the time spent with Grandad even though we got soaked a few times and I even had to borrow his trousers! I knew that doing this challenge in memory of my Grandma was very important to Grandad, so we kept each other going in the wind, rain and sunshine, enjoying the fresh air and the most beautiful scenery."

We depend on donations to help children, young people and families all over Scotland who are having a tough time. Thanks Ian and Kai, and to all our generous supporters, for everything you do.



You can make a difference to children's lives while having fun and challenging yourself, just like Ian and Kai. The fundraising team will support you every step of the way.

Contact us at fundraising@aberlour.org.uk

Marks and Spencer provide bags of support for vulnerable children across the country

Marks & Spencer stores across the country have been helping Aberlour to support children, young people and families by volunteering and raising funds.



Shoppers have donated over £1,900 to date towards Aberlour services in the Borders thanks to our ongoing partnership with Marks & Spencer in Galashiels. Our heroic volunteers have packed hundreds of shopping bags to support children with disabilities in the area and have been given a warm welcome by staff and customers alike.

Marks & Spencer colleagues have also donated their time to Aberlour services across Scotland from Ayrshire to Elgin including Aberlour Futures – Aberdeen City and Shire service which trains the next generation of childcare professionals.

The service needed to renovate its car park and entrance area to ensure that students and visitors felt welcomed. Marks & Spencer came to the rescue, sending a team to paint a decaying fence and tidying the whole area.

The support we have received from Marks & Spencer is helping to support children, young people and families all over Scotland and we are truly grateful. **Thank you Marks & Spencer!**



"The work done is really good and does make the entrance much smarter."

**- Mary Crear,
Service Manager**

Can your workplace support Aberlour?

If your workplace can support Aberlour by raising funds or volunteering, or if you are interested in helping out at our bag packs and other fundraising events, please contact our team at **fundraising@aberlour.org.uk**

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

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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