



# Being Brave

For Children, Young  
People and Families

**Aberlour Strategy  
2021 - 2025**

**aberlour**  
scotland's children's charity



# Contents

# Page

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Aberlour's Achievements 2018-2021</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Our Vision, Our Values</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Our Core Priorities</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Our Statement of Intent</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Our Success Measures</b>	<b>11</b>



## **‘Aberlour needs to keep doing what it is doing and more. Keep it at 110%.’**

-Young Person supported by Aberlour

At the heart of Aberlour’s 2018-2021 strategy was our ambition to support children and families earlier. We know that support often comes too late in response to crisis. And we know that this has a negative impact on children already facing disadvantage because of poverty and discrimination.

Since 2018 we have achieved a lot. During a challenging period for third sector providers, we have continued to grow and innovate. Across Scotland, the services delivered by our staff make a difference to children and families every day. We constantly look for new and better ways to provide support.

**‘Aberlour is doing a great job. If it could do more, it would be to get even more people involved, support more young people and families.’**

-Young Person supported by Aberlour

# Aberlour's Achievements 2018-2021



16  
new service developments

70,983



hours contributed by Aberlour volunteers



80%

of children and young people in Sustain services avoided being taken into care

On average, 95%



of our services were scored GOOD or above by the Care Inspectorate



7%

total income growth



170

young people attended our AbJam participation events

# £1,447,033

given to



4,213

families through our Urgent Assistance Fund, including financial aid to families throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

# Our Vision

**'Not all children are born with an equal chance. We will work together to beat poverty and discrimination.'**

# Our Values

**Aberlour continues to be committed to addressing the effects and prevalence of poverty in our society. We remain concerned about the impact of chronic poverty on generations of families. We will work with others to ensure every child and every family is freed from poverty and can live life to the full. We believe that providing an adequate income to families is the best route out of poverty and we trust that families overwhelmingly will make the right decisions with the money they have. We will work with families that need extra support to ensure that their strengths and skills are respected: by building trusting, compassionate relationships and walking alongside them on their journey.**

These values remain the guiding principles that underpin all we do. They inform our interactions with the children, young people and families we work with, external partners and stakeholders, and importantly, with one another as colleagues. We use them every day and hold key decisions against them to ensure we live up and work to them. They guide and support us to respond compassionately as an organisation and ensure that the environments we create for our children and young people are loving and safe.

**'When we respond compassionately to children and families experiencing poverty and disadvantage, we better understand their needs. We must be brave to ensure children and families rights are being upheld and challenged when this is not the case.'**

**- Michelle King, Service Manager, Glasgow Family Support Service**

.....

## Respect

Means acting in a way that shows we care about one another's feelings and that we listen to one another's opinions. As a person-centred organisation that stands up for every child's right to flourish, a culture of respect is inherent in all our work.

.....

## Integrity

Means being courageous and brave enough to speak up when we know we need to. We recognise that to represent the concerns of Scotland's children and families fully; we may have to go against the grain or take difficult decisions. We will strive to act with integrity at all times.

.....

## Innovative

Means finding new, efficient and unique ways to do things. We are committed to learning and developing improved ways of helping Scotland's most disadvantaged children and families earlier and faster. We know that children and families are experts in their own lives and can help us become the best possible innovators. We will use that expertise to drive our ideas and our thinking.

.....

## Challenging

Means testing ourselves and those around us. It means not accepting the status quo and will require us to provide equality of opportunity within our organisation and promote it in wider society. Within Aberlour, we will challenge ourselves to be the best we can be and we will listen carefully to children and families about their experiences. Externally, we will use our campaigning voice to strengthen policies that promote equal opportunity and equality and ensure that our families' voices are heard.



## Our Core Priorities

Our refreshed strategy will see us continue to offer support to a diverse range of children and families. We reaffirm our commitment to:

- Supporting children and young people and their families earlier.
- Providing high-quality care and support in our children's houses and our foster care within a loving, homely environment where children and young people have a genuine sense of belonging and connection.
- Supporting children and families affected by disability to live life to the full free of discrimination.
- Offering compassionate support to families affected by domestic abuse and substance misuse in their efforts to recover from trauma.
- Offering young people support to regain control of their lives through building trusting and respectful relationships with them and their families.

We will drive change and improvement and ensure that key areas of public policy are enshrined in our approach.

## Responding to change

The environment we work in is rapidly changing. Some of this is shaped by new opportunities – for example, the opportunity presented by Scotland's commitment to The Promise to transform the lives of infants, children, young people, and their families in Scotland.

Some of it is shaped by challenges – including those which are unforeseen. Before COVID-19, around 1 in 4 children in Scotland were living in poverty. As we emerge from the pandemic, many more families are at risk of falling or being pushed deeper into poverty. Increasing numbers of families across Scotland are struggling to make ends meet as child poverty rises. We are pleased that ours and other's calls to introduce the Scottish Child Payment has been met, but there is much more to do.

## Being brave for children and families

To continue to be successful, we must build on our previous strategy. And we must be bold and ambitious. That is why the foundation stone of our new strategy for 2025 – and objectives with it – is a commitment to being brave – for children, young people and their families.

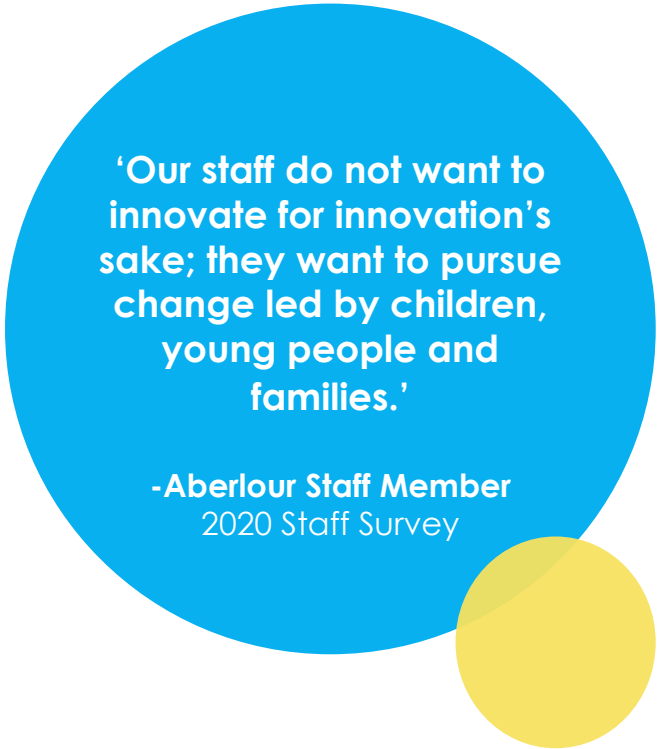
Underpinning everything we do is our ambition to ensure the children we work with have an equal chance regardless of their start in life. We will work relentlessly to ensure that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is fully embedded in law and is visible across our organisation and obvious in what we do and how we work with children, young people and their families.

## Working together

We can only achieve change by working together. Our new strategy recognises that if children and families are to beat poverty and discrimination, we must be fearless in supporting them and working alongside them. They are the experts in their own lives and we respect that.

If something is not working, we must stop, let go and restart. If something is working, we must find ways to amplify and invest in it. And our decisions must always be informed by evidence and experience.

**Our staff have told us they are proud to work for an organisation that speaks truth to power.**



**'Our staff do not want to innovate for innovation's sake; they want to pursue change led by children, young people and families.'**

**-Aberlour Staff Member  
2020 Staff Survey**

# Our Statement of Intent for 2021-2025

Our Aberlour  
**Being Brave**  
For Children, Young People and Families



## Delivered by strong leadership, values and support for innovation and change.



Grow our services to support more children and families earlier.



Reach more diverse communities.



Influence policy and practice by elevating the voices of our children and families.



Ensure that our organisation is sustainable - financially, socially and environmentally - and is focussed on children and families.



Be nimble and encourage change and innovation.



Strive to be the best employer we can be - somewhere that people choose to stay.



.....

### **We will grow our services to support more children and families earlier**

We will do this by expanding our offer as the key provider of excellent care and support in Scotland, including:

- Extending holistic family support by opening 10 new community-based family support services that have trusting relationships at their heart
- Extending our children's houses by opening 5 new houses including our new house in Tayside
- Increasing our disability short breaks provision by opening 5 new houses including our Fife, Borders, and Aberdeen developments
- Developing 2 new services for young people leaving care
- Supporting 24 new foster carers
- Establishing early help services with 2 new local authorities

Our growth ambitions will be backed by fundraising to support our early help services to families. We will continue to use our Urgent Assistance Fund to deliver vital emergency support to families living in poverty and experiencing desperate need. We will also invest in the development of key strategic and operational partnerships to consolidate our efforts.

'We know our goals cannot be delivered alone and that collaboration is vital.'

**- Jim Wallace, Director of Children & Families**

.....

### **We will reach more diverse communities**

We know that currently, the children and families we work with are not sufficiently representative of Scotland's population. Our work with the Scottish Refugee Council will be developed further. We will build a partnership with BEMIS, the national umbrella body which supports the Ethnic Minorities Voluntary Sector in Scotland and we will strengthen our commitment to diversity by:

- Developing specialist user-led services for children and families from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities
- Embedding inclusion for children and families affected by disadvantage and discrimination in all our services
- Strengthening the diversity of our people by recruiting more staff and volunteers from LGBTQ+, disabled, minority ethnic and disadvantaged backgrounds
- Ensuring our public campaign activities include a focus on those communities furthest away from support

'We know we are not yet fully inclusive of all Scotland's communities and that we need help to address this.'

**-SallyAnn Kelly, Chief Executive**

.....

### **We will influence policy and practice by elevating the voices of children and families**

We want to effect positive change for disadvantaged and marginalised children, young people, and families across Scotland. We will provide platforms that enable them to share first-hand experiences and express their views. Using this approach, we will continue to influence legislative and policy development nationally and locally. In particular, we will:

- Campaign to end child poverty through maximising incomes of families experiencing financial hardship or living in poverty
- Seek to influence national policy on the development of holistic family support to realise the ambition of The Promise
- Continue to influence the incorporation and implementation of the UNCRC, ensuring that children and young people's rights are the foundation of what we do.

'We can only ensure change is meaningful and sustainable if children, young people and families are at the heart of Aberlour's influencing and campaigning work.'

**- Martin Canavan, Head of Policy and Participation**

.....

### **We will be nimble and encourage change and innovation**

We know that delivering our objectives will require us to be agile and adaptable. We need a culture that encourages new ideas, celebrates innovation, and fosters learning. To ensure our systems and processes are aligned to our values, we will:

- Provide choice for our children, young people, and families in the ways we support them, and they engage with us
- Convert our information into business intelligence that improves service delivery and impact, highlights patterns and trends, and motivates fundraising
- Streamline the use of our offices in light of likely increased desire for home working

‘Our values inform the way the organisation lives and breathes, how we work with one another and the people we support.’

**- Liz Nolan, Depute Director**

.....

### **We will be the best employer that we can be – somewhere people choose to work and stay**

Aberlour’s people are our biggest asset and our most precious resource. We want to champion employment and volunteering relationships that are transparent, mutually supportive and meaningful. We will do this by:

- Offering terms and conditions that staff can recognise as being excellent in the care sector
- Showing our support for gender equality and the contributions of LGBTQ+, those affected by disability and staff and volunteers from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background.
- Recruiting more staff and volunteers from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities
- Promoting and supporting a positive work-life balance – using ‘Healthy Working Lives’
- Delivering training to meet professional development requirements
- Building increased organisational

understanding of the impact of adversity, discrimination and trauma

- Developing plans, policies, and procedures to support a balanced approach to office and home working

‘Everyone working and volunteering for Aberlour needs to know their contributions matter and make a difference to what we do.’

**- Allan Kerr, Director of People & Quality**

.....

### **We will ensure that our organisation is sustainable - financially, socially and environmentally - and is focussed on children and families**

Our financial, social, and environmental health is critical to the organisation’s long-term success and our ability to deliver our objectives. To ensure continued sustainability, we will:

- Steward assets effectively and ethically, forming partnerships that maximise efficiency
- Build an efficient operating model able to exploit opportunities, but which has people at the heart
- Balance growth in crisis support with increased development in early intervention activity
- Grow our brand awareness among key influencers and the general public
- Grow our donor base and engage supporters through the lifetime of their giving journey with Aberlour.
- Attract innovative income sources through our policy engagement and campaigning activity
- Make our contribution to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
- Seek advice and set realistic targets for improving our environmental impact

‘Without achieving sustainability across our finances, people and environmental impact, we cannot properly support our beneficiaries – children, young people and families.’

**- David Robb, Chair of the Board of Trustees**

# Our Success Measures

**Our organisational performance will continue to be monitored against four key measures – quality, impact, sustainability, and growth. We have tried and tested performance indicators and targets by which we measure our success.**

## Quality

- We will aim for all registered services to achieve scores of 4 or above by the Care Inspectorate
- We will aim to achieve 90% or above in our Aberlour employee satisfaction score

## Sustainability

- We will aim to reduce staff turnover by 5% over 2 years and maintain it at that level for a further 2 years
- We will aim to maintain public funding at a minimum of £16.4m


## Impact

- We will aim for 80% of SHANARRI indicators - Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, and Included - to score as either maintaining or improving

## Growth

Annual targets will be in place to make progress towards:

- A 20% increase in overall revenue by 2025
- An increase of 30 in the number of available placements for residential and fostering by 2025
- A 20% increase in the percentage of people supported by our early intervention services



**'Aberlour's core purpose is supporting children, young people and their families compassionately and respectfully - working with them to change their lives. Our dedicated staff provide a wealth of support across Scotland every day. But service provision is not an end in itself - it is how we provide relationship-based support and drive social change.'**

**This strategy is about how we continue to support and work alongside children and families to make sure their voices are elevated and listened to. It describes our ambition to be better at what we do - to learn, adapt and innovate. And it sets out our goals. These goals will stretch us - that's what 'Being Brave' means. It is not simply a slogan. It is a commitment to challenge ourselves, to challenge others - and to be challenged by the children, young people and families we support.'**

**-SallyAnn Kelly and David Robb**  
Chief Executive, and Chair of the Board of Trustees



## **Aberlour Children's Charity**

Registered Head Office  
Kintail House  
Forthside Way  
Stirling  
FK8 1QZ

[www.aberlour.org.uk](http://www.aberlour.org.uk)

 AberlourCC

 AberlourCCT

 AberlourCC

Scottish Charity no: SC007991  
Company Reg no: SC312912



**aberlour**  
scotland's children's charity