

2021-22 Rising to the Challenge

Welcome from our Chair, David Robb

I've been delighted to see how our bold and ambitious Being Brave Strategy (2021-2025) has been implemented.

Progress has been made in our aims to fight against poverty and discrimination and to support more children and families across diverse communities.

I'm greatly encouraged by the relief and hope Aberlour brings to the increasing number of families across Scotland who are struggling to cope.

At the heart of everything we do are our values of Respect, Integrity, Innovation and Challenge. We stand up for what is right in society.

In the past year Aberlour became a contributor to the Financial Redress Scheme. This is an important step for Aberlour in coming to terms with the fact that in the past children were abused whilst in our care. Our involvement in the scheme sends a powerful message to those who have bravely shared their experiences and to those survivors who want to share their story.

Looking forward we will not stand still. It's crucial that we ensure our organisation is sustainable and we must grow our reach to help even more disadvantaged children, young people and families throughout Scotland.

A word from our CEO, SallyAnn Kelly OBE

This year has brought unprecedented economic uncertainty and financial hardship for families.

We've experienced a surge in demand for help. I'm proud to say we've risen to the challenge and strides have been made helping to alleviate poverty but - the need for Aberlour has never been greater.

We're determined to do right by each and every person in our society. We want to ensure those hardest hit avoid crisis.

In the past year:-

- We've supported more children and families struggling to cope.
- We've opened new services for families throughout Scotland and aim to make a long-term difference to their lives.
- We've elevated the voices of children and families to influence policy and practice. We know that they are best placed to speak truth to power. By empowering them

we have helped to effect positive change for children and families. Changes such as the doubling of the Scottish Child Payment.

- We've continued to raise more money for our Urgent Assistance Fund – since 2020 we have raised £2.3m from generous donors and given cash grants direct to 6,500 families most in need for essential items such as food, clothing, and heating.
- We've used new and flexible recruitment methods, including TV advertising for the first time, to address staff recruitment challenges.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us this year. Your continued generosity has allowed us to reach more children and families in Scotland most in need.

Spotlight on Services

We know that life can be challenging for parents. The struggle is made worse by financial hardship, by being a single parent or by coping with mental ill health.

We understand parents' challenges and recognise that they know the most about their own situation. Our Sustain services work alongside parents and empower them to make positive changes for their families.

By building and sustaining strong family relationships we have successfully prevented more children being taken into the care system.

We continue to grow our Sustain services across Scotland and have services in six local authorities.

In the past year we have been proud to expand our Sustain services further with new provision in Falkirk and in North Ayrshire where we have an exciting new partnership with CAMHS to tackle children's mental health and wellbeing.

We're committed to standing by families, to help them get back on their feet and supporting them for as long as it takes.

Glasgow Family Support Services

In September 2021 we opened three new services in Glasgow to promote the wellbeing of children and young people by offering caring and responsive support. This is now needed more than ever as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.

Two Aberlour Glasgow Early Intervention Services (North West and South) and Glasgow Intensive Family Support Service have been established in partnership with the Glasgow City Health and Social Care partnership and other third sector providers.

Our ambition is to help more children, young people and families feel safe, confident, capable and included, offering support when it is needed, including evenings and weekends.

To launch the new services we had a major recruitment drive. Despite challenging times for recruitment we hired over 30 new staff.

Intensive Perinatal Service Falkirk

We launched a new service to support families, in the Falkirk Council area affected by problematic substance use, to have the best start in life.

Our team helps parents on their road to recovery with a range of practical and emotional support. We work with families and new mothers during pregnancy up to their baby's 1st birthday.

We help by establishing routines, understanding child development, ensuring families can access financial support, attending appointments and supporting mental health and wellbeing.

We work in partnership with local children's services, health and addiction recovery services, to ensure that families get the best advice.

Our aim is for parents to be better equipped to provide a safe, loving, and consistent family environment for their child.

The Aberlour Fostering Family

In September we launched our new TV advert to recruit more foster carers.

Prestigious awards for Fostering

In November we celebrated two well deserved wins at The Fostering Excellence Awards 2021.

Foster carers, **Rhonda and Gordon Milne** won the **John and Kathy Broadbent Award**.

This Award recognises the outstanding work of a foster carer who specialises in fostering children and young people with learning disabilities.

Rhonda and Gordon have gone above and beyond to make sure their son is safe, happy, loved and thriving.

Calum Muir, 13 year old son of foster carers Lynda and Joe Muir, won the award for Outstanding Contribution - Sons and Daughters.

Calum and family attended the online presentation event where his story was shared and he received a prestigious trophy.

The Promise

Aberlour is committed to making real change to reflect some of the recommendations included in The Promise.

We're working on initiatives funded by The Promise to improve the experience for children living in care.

Safe, loving homes

Children and young people have a fundamental right to live in safe, loving homes.

We're proud to have led the way in reducing the use of physical restraint on children in their own residential houses.

Working in partnership with Kibble we are focusing on how we can better support children when they are distressed. We aim to understand children's needs better. We are determined to respond to them in a loving, caring way which does not rely on restrictive practice.

We've selected four other organisations to work with. They will develop their own blueprints for reducing physical restraint.

Our desire is to fulfil The Promise's ambition to have a restraint free Scotland.

Financial wellbeing

Parents tell us of the fear they feel when they receive another £200 added to their gas bill.

We know that financial hardship affects parents' mental health and wellbeing. They're already struggling with the stresses and challenges of parenthood.

We've established the Tayside Families Financial Wellbeing Project to address this. It explores what the long-term outcomes for families will be if we assist them with their finances and debt.

It looks at whether we can persuade and influence funders and local authorities to offer direct financial help to families.

This work has been generously funded by both the CORRA Promise fund and The Robertson Trust (Partners in Change).

One dad, John* speaking about debt said:

“I felt very depressed knowing I had this extra money to pay each month. It was on my mind constantly. I knew this was something that would be difficult to be paid off, especially with two young children and another on the way.”

Joanne*, mum of two, speaking about the help she’s had with her finances said: “The amount of stress that has been relieved is unreal and now I feel I can maintain and budget my current income to support my girls. Now my debt has been paid off, I am able to get support from housing to hopefully move to a bigger house with more bedrooms and I also want to go to college to do hairdressing.”

*names have been changed to protect identities.

Care leavers income

We want young people to get the practical, emotional and financial support they need once they leave care.

We’re working with care leavers, Scottish Government officials, MSPs, local authorities and third sector leaders to explore a Care Leavers Income pilot scheme. This is for care experienced young people moving into independent living.

Making children and families’ voices heard

We continue to lobby the Scottish Government to do more to lift families out of poverty.

We are clear that the best way to tackle child poverty is getting money into the pockets of low-income families.

As part of the End Child Poverty Coalition we successfully influenced the Scottish Government to double the Scottish Child Payment. Since April 2022 all eligible families get £20 per child per week in their pockets.

We want to ensure that families across Scotland who need extra help get the support they need. We have amplified the voices, insights and experiences of children, young people and families at Aberlour to highlight the benefit of holistic family support.

Paul Gallacher, dad helped by South Ayrshire Family Service said:

Thanks to Aberlour I have had the most amazing year. They took time to really listen and understand me. I was given the opportunity to get involved - to speak to politicians and the media about my experiences.

I feel much more confident about life and the future. If it wasn't for Aberlour I don't think I would be in the position I am in now."

Reaching even more children and young people

Our business development bid team had an outstanding year with a success rate of **92%** for tenders and strategic funding applications. This success is testament to the quality of the services we deliver.

Key achievements include:

- We were awarded £300,000 from The Robertson Trust's Partners for Change Fund to develop financial wellbeing support alongside intensive family support for families in Tayside.
- We secured £5.5 million commitment from The Scottish Government to develop two new national Mother and Child Houses. These will support mothers with substance misuse issues to get the residential care they need without being separated from their children.
- We have expanded our disability services in Fife with a new disability residential service and a new build respite service (£1.3m). This supports more children and young people with learning disabilities, autism or more complex needs.
- We established 3 new Glasgow Family Support Services – two early intervention services covering the Northwest and South of the City (£1.3m) and a citywide intensive Family Support Service (£1.8m)
- Expanding our Promise work – securing funding to explore changing the system of moving on support for care leavers in the Highlands and East Renfrewshire.

Fundraising and Marketing

Our 'Poverty to Hope' Autumn Fundraising Appeal was one of our most successful campaigns raising much needed funding for families.

Fundraising Campaign of The Year

We were thrilled to be awarded Fundraising Campaign of the Year for our Urgent Assistance Fund at the [Third Sector Awards](#), one of the UK's most prestigious awards in the charity sector.

Digital Innovation

We've developed a new learning tool for our Family Support services.

This enables us to better identify what support parents need as part of their assessment process. This exciting new digital innovation has been co-designed by our team and some of the families we support. We continue to do more to improve the lives of families.

The Last Word

Roisin Gilmour, mum to **Ashley**, who returned to Scotland to live in our new disability flats in Fife said:-

Aberlour never forgot about us, even when we weren't in contact. Some really good, caring people work there and it's so reassuring to be able to rely on their support; I can't imagine what would have happened if Aberlour hadn't been involved. They came to our rescue, again.

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