

A close-up photograph of a young child with light brown hair and blue eyes, looking directly at the camera. The child is holding a dandelion seed head in their mouth. They are wearing a grey zip-up jacket with a red lining and a small red patch with the number '8' on the chest. The background is a soft-focus green field.

# How you're putting Children first

Find out how your support is transforming lives

# A message just for you

I hope this newsletter finds you well and you've enjoyed the fabulous summer. I've certainly managed to spend lots of time outdoors with my three lovely daughters during my adoption leave, and we're all looking and feeling healthy.

You'll remember that I made a commitment to always put my children first and it is because of this that I now share my news with you. It is with a heavy heart that I have decided to resign from my post of CEO. I feel that I couldn't give my family the support and security they deserve and need, whilst carrying out the Children 1st CEO role and undertaking the travel this would involve.

The last few months has let me experience first hand the importance of providing families with excellent support and, with your help, I really hope Children 1st continues to lead the way in offering essential help for children and families in Scotland.

Mary Glasgow continues to fill the role of interim CEO and I wish you all every success in the future. Thank you for your continued loyal support; you make it possible to help children and families when they need it most.

Goodbye and Best Wishes,  
Alison Todd  
previous Children 1st CEO

All the best to Alison and her daughters for the future. As Alison says, with your help, we will continue to be there to give families the love and support they need to rebuild their lives. We look forward to welcoming our new CEO soon, and they'll be in touch to introduce themselves to you.





## You're helping to change the future

For most of its history Children 1st was the Royal Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (R.S.S.P.C.C.). Our Royal Charter, written more than 130 years ago, says the charity exists 'to prevent abuse and harm to children and to help children who have experienced harm or abuse to deal with that'.

It could not be more relevant to what we stand for today and why our loyal supporters, like you, are dedicated to being there for vulnerable children.

Today, in Scotland, thousands of children live with the daily trauma of violence, neglect, abuse, lack of emotional care and/or poverty. Sadly, there is a shocking lack of support for these children.

### **It doesn't have to be this way.**

Over the next five years, your support will help to double the number of children and families we can help. Together, we will reach every child who needs us, wherever they are in Scotland.

Together – we can create a new cycle of hope for every child.

Inside there are stories that show how you're making a difference to children's lives. You make it all possible. **Thank you.**

# How your support helped Joe

**Your support means children and families can receive help for as long as they need it. Thanks to you, there is always a special someone to turn to when things are tough, a skilled, kind listening ear to talk things through, to help build relationships and bring families back together.**

Joe kindly agreed to share a bit about how your support made a difference to him and his family.

Joe had never known his Dad and for his very young Mum, trying to cope alone with two small children and the trauma of her own childhood had quickly become too much. Joe and his sister were first taken into foster care when Joe was a toddler, before they were moved to his Gran's.

At the age of 13 Joe's short life was turned upside down – again. Following an emergency Joe was split from his Gran and his sister and taken on a heart-wrenching journey across Scotland, to a strange city and a new foster care family he had never met. He was terrified.

“When Joe came to us he was a poor wee lost soul,” says his foster mother, Liz. “He was very quiet, so sad looking and just desperate to

be part of a big family. The most constant person in his life had been Sian, the worker from Children 1st. Eight years later – she still is.”

“Sian's exactly the same today as when I first met her– she's brilliant.” says Joe. Sian gave Joe the safety, space and support he needed to let out his anger, loss and frustration.

Liz, Joe's foster mother, remembers, “One time Sian suggested Joe make the face of someone who had hurt him out of plasticine. As soon as he made the face Joe started banging it hard against the wall. He went on and on banging it. It was very upsetting to see what was really going on inside him.”

Today he understands what was happening: “I was worried about my sister and my Gran wouldn't speak to me. There was a lot of stuff going on in my head. Sian helped me get things out, talk through my thoughts and understand my feelings,” says Joe.

When Joe wouldn't listen to anyone else, he still took note of Sian. “I trust Sian,” Joe says.

Sian has helped Joe get back in touch with his Gran and sister, regularly driving miles across Scotland, on much happier journeys than that very first one, so that the family can meet.

Today Joe is no longer the frightened lonely child who arrived at his foster carer's door in despair, nor the young person struggling to make sense of what happened to him during his childhood.

“Without Sian, I wouldn't be the same person,” Joe says. “Sian's been there for three-quarters of my life and I know that if I need it, she'll still be there for me.”


Having one trusting, supportive relationship can help children and adults overcome trauma and adversity and give them the strength they need to thrive.

Thank you for your continued support, you give young people like Joe hope for the future.



“It was upsetting  
to see what was  
really going on  
inside him”

\*This is a true story but names have been changed to protect the identities of the people involved.



“Children are often  
far more willing  
to tell a dog how  
they’re feeling”

Dogs are great listeners for  
children and adults alike.

[www.children1st.org.uk](http://www.children1st.org.uk)

# How therapy dogs can help

We'd like to introduce you to a new (furry) friend - Glen, a support dog in training. Pamela Finch, a Children 1st Project Worker, has taken on the challenge of training Glen as an anxiety and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) support dog.

Read on to find out why Pamela believes the therapeutic use of dogs, for children in particular, can be so beneficial.

"Dogs can be wonderful at working with children, as they can often provide a skill set that even the best human staff member can't. They're naturally playful, like children, and this can make them great for providing a happy distraction, which is more appealing for children than other more traditional anxiety management strategies.

They're also great listeners for children and adults alike. They can't talk back or interrupt and their facial expressions don't convey any real reactions to what a child may tell them. With this in mind, children are often far more willing to tell a dog how they're feeling and what they're hoping for.

Talking to a dog can be used as a way for a child to express difficult emotions, or as a means of opening

up discussions between a child and their play therapist. Dogs are great comforters and in many cases the main role of an anxiety dog is simply to be on hand for cuddles and petting. These simple acts can help lower anxiety, decrease blood pressure, slow heart rate and release oxytocin and serotonin into the blood stream to boost mood overall."

Glen loves his role and gets very excited when his working jacket comes out. Pamela explained, "Once Glen has gone through his full training and been assessed Children 1st will decide if there is a role Glen could help with. We'll need to wait and see after his assessment, just like humans each dog tends to be better in one or two areas rather than great at them all."

We wish Glen the best of luck for the rest of his training and when he becomes a fully qualified anxiety and PTSD support dog.

You make it possible to offer the right kind of support to every child. Family support workers use art, writing, talking and other tools to help children share their feelings and thoughts.

# You're making wishes come true

Your incredible support means communities know they have someone to turn to when things get tough, someone to help their families and ensure their children feel safe.

Thanks to you, children and families are receiving help across Scotland, from the Highlands down to the Borders. With your kind support, we can look at ways to help each community in the best way possible. Whether it's one-to-one sessions, talking with the whole family or holding activity groups, your support means children can be safer and happier.

In North Ayrshire Kirsty Aitken, Service Manager, shared how her team is talking with the community to help improve things for local children and families.

"We really want to make a real difference. We want to find out what the community needs, how they would like it to look and feel for them." Kirsty says. The community have come together and shared their views on what could change to make things better for children growing up in the local area.

Kirsty explained, "The first event was to open our doors and let people know we are here to help.

It went really well, and we then understood the need to speak with young people. The second event was to hear what young people thought were the good things about their community and what could improve. Finally we held a third event to talk about ways families would like us to help, things like a youth group and a parent and child group to give families the peer-to-peer support they want, and so they no longer feel lonely."

The next page shows some of the feedback the local community gave.

With your help, we're working with key partners to look at ways to make some of these things happen in North Ayrshire. Look out for more exciting updates to find out how the plans are coming together.

You're making it possible for these wishes to come true. The local community, along with the Children 1st team, can't thank you enough.

If you can please make a donation today and help provide support for local communities.

To donate please visit:  
[www.children1st.org.uk/donate](http://www.children1st.org.uk/donate)  
or phone: 0345 10 80 111



If you had a **magic wand**  
what would you wish for your community?

Interact  
more as  
a community

A safe place  
for our  
children  
to play

Less  
alcohol  
and drug  
missue

A stable  
place for  
families to  
connect and  
interact

A friendly  
environment  
to meet

What **worries** do you have about your  
children growing up in this community?

Peer pressure  
to become  
involved in  
anti-social  
behaviour

Violence

Level of  
crime  
and  
gangs

Online  
access to  
inappropriate  
materials

What might make things **better**?

Youth  
groups

A slide in  
the park

Football  
pitches

Social  
events

Educating  
children  
about  
healthy  
eating

"I wish for a  
better and safer  
community"

"I wish for more  
things to do in my  
community"

"I wish for a  
safer future for  
my children"



Each Trauma Teddy will help a child and their family.

### These teddies may be tiny, but with your help they're putting big smiles on children's faces....

Trauma Teddies is a partnership between Police Scotland, Children 1st and your Scottish communities, aiming to provide comfort and support to any child affected by traumatic or distressing events.

Police Officers find that when they are attending incidents and leave a family, after their role has ended, there is no support for the child or the family. Children may be left with a scary or negative impression of the police and this might impact on them asking for help in the future.

Police Officers will give Trauma Teddies to children as a simple distraction to help take a child's focus away from potentially

upsetting circumstances. The teddies are knitted by local communities, given to Children 1st and then passed on to Police Scotland for use on a daily basis.

As well as providing comfort to children, families will be shown how to access Parentline – for ongoing support via a helpline or online chat, to help their family recover from their experiences.

Thanks to the wonderful help of knitters across the country, countless Trauma Teddies have already been donated.

Inspector Chris Boath said, "This scheme is aimed at bringing something positive to what can be a traumatic or upsetting situation for a child."

# Trauma Teddy Appeal

Linda Jardine, Children 1st Director of Children and Families' Services, said, "Knitting a trauma teddy is a lovely way to comfort and support children who have suffered from crime. If children and families get help to understand their experience, recover and move on with their lives, they can overcome the traumatic effects of being a witness to crime or victim of distressing incidents or events."

Thanks so much to all of you who already responded to our call for knitting help. Your teddies have begun their journey and may have already done their important job of offering comfort to a child and their family.

## Could you knit or crochet a trauma teddy?

The teddy is based on a very simple knitting or crochet pattern, so anyone can have a go and support children to recover from trauma.

If you or someone you know would like to get involved you can find the pattern at:

[www.children1st.org.uk/  
traumatededdies](http://www.children1st.org.uk/traumatededdies)



Contact us to find out more.

Email:  
[fundraising@children1st.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@children1st.org.uk)  
Phone:  
0141 419 1159



Don't look down!

## Lynne's fundraising abseil challenge

When Lynne was 5 years old, someone from the R.S.S.P.C.C. came out to talk to her class at the local community hall in Burghead, Morayshire. Lynne said, "I can remember them speaking about 'how to keep yourself safe' and how important it was to have an adult you could trust and talk to".

Lynne and her excitable classmates decided to take on the incredible challenge of a sponsored silence.

Lynne explained, "It's quite ironic when I think about doing a sponsored silence now, but we did it and managed to raise money to help other children.

We were all really pleased to receive a certificate when we completed it!"

Lynne has even kept the certificate as proof of her great achievement!

35 years on, Lynne is now a team leader at Children 1st, taking her passion of helping children into her working life. This year, Lynne has decided to go the extra mile and signed up to do a sponsored abseil from the Forth Rail Bridge.

Lynne talked to us about why she was happy (well almost) to “hang off a bridge” to raise vital funds.

“I thought, for me, it’s fine to do a job I really enjoy and love, but I wanted to do a bit extra for a cause I truly believe in, to help vulnerable children and families. I know, first hand, the difference people’s generous donations make to helping families.”

Lynne said, “For me, It was between the abseil and the Kiltwalk, but I thought I’d be happier to hang off a bridge than walk 25 miles! I’m really scared of heights and not looking forward to it at all, but I know it’s for a good cause that will really make a difference to help children and families.

For anyone thinking about fundraising for Children 1st, I’d say go for it! The money raised is spent wisely and gives children and families vital support when they need it most.”

Good luck to Lynne. If you would like to sponsor Lynne, please visit [aceabseil-oct2018.everydayhero.com/uk/lynne-s-fundraiser-page/](http://aceabseil-oct2018.everydayhero.com/uk/lynne-s-fundraiser-page/)

## Could you join Team Children 1st?



There are lots of ways you can raise money to help vulnerable children and families across Scotland.

We’re here to help you every step of the way and would love to hear from you.

**To find out more visit:**  
[www.children1st.org.uk/events](http://www.children1st.org.uk/events)  
**Email:**  
[fundraising@children1st.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@children1st.org.uk)  
**Phone:**  
**0141 419 1158**

# Recipe book cooks up success

Specialist umbrellas, mouthwatering recipe books and art jams were just a few of the incredible ideas from teams who took on the 2017/18 Dragons' Glen fundraising challenge.

Dragons' Glen teams are asked to create a product and establish a business. The fundraising goal is to generate the most profit for Children 1st as possible in just five months. The teams are mentored by our Dragons, prominent Scottish business leaders.

This year, a team of employees from People's Postcode Lottery won the competition by raising £11,534. Their recipe book "25 Ways to Fake It" provided a healthier spin on takeaway favourites.

Other award winners included: EY, Blackadders LLP and Thorntons Law.

Catherine-Ann Lavery, a Dragons' Glen participant from EY, said: "It was a once in a lifetime experience; it felt great to work as a team and produce a product, and even better to support the charity."

Dragons' Glen is a unique opportunity for companies to promote staff engagement and development.

To find out more visit:  
[www.children1st.org.uk/dragons-glen](http://www.children1st.org.uk/dragons-glen)



People's Postcode Lottery  
blow judges away with their  
'25 Ways to Fake It'



## Your gift of hope

Like you, one day, we hope every child will have the chance of a happy, healthy childhood. Until then, could you help to ensure support is there for every child who needs it in the future?

Children 1st have been helping to protect vulnerable children for more than 130 years. This is thanks to kind people like you. Whether you fundraise, donate or volunteer, you are changing children's lives for the better.

Children 1st also rely on kind people leaving a legacy donation in their Will. These donations allow you to change the future, to be there forever for vulnerable children who need support. Every gift, large or small, will make a huge difference to the lives of vulnerable children and families.

To find out more about leaving a gift to Children 1st in your Will, please contact Ann Davis:

**Email:** [ann.davis@children1st.org.uk](mailto:ann.davis@children1st.org.uk)  
**Phone:** 0131 446 2331

## New Children 1st Patrons Club is coming soon

Individuals will be invited to provide major support to fund future large projects to help vulnerable children and families.

You could also offer vital funding in order for us to plan ahead, so no matter what the future holds we can be here to offer support when children need it.

If you are interested in investing in a safer, happier and healthier future for children in Scotland, please get in touch today to register your interest.

**We'd love to hear from you**

**Email:**

[patrons@children1st.org.uk](mailto:patrons@children1st.org.uk)

**Phone:** 0131 446 3974

The logo for Children 1st, featuring the text "Children 1st" in a white, rounded font with two small circles above the 'i' and 't'. Below it, in smaller white text, is "SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL CHILDREN'S CHARITY".

**Children 1st**  
SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL CHILDREN'S CHARITY



In partnership with



**McClure**  
SOLICITORS

## Free Will Service

**McClure Solicitors will prepare your Will free of charge  
- a service which usually costs £150 for a single client.**

All you need to do is consider leaving a donation to Children 1st, to help transform the lives of vulnerable children in Scotland.

**Book your appointment on 0800 852 1999  
or email [contactus@mcclure-solicitors.com](mailto:contactus@mcclure-solicitors.com)**