

Supporters News

SPRING/SUMMER 2016



Hello,

In this edition you can read about how we help children recover from abuse, involve volunteers in supporting kinship carers, empower children where formal decisions are being made about their future, and much more. I hope that this insight into our work highlights just how important every Children 1st supporter is to all we achieve.

The generosity of the Scottish public is always vital to Children 1st. But when vulnerable children and families, and our work to support them through difficult times, continue to bear the consequences of financial austerity, it becomes even more so. So whether you donate to us, raise money for us, or volunteer with one of our staff teams, your involvement is enabling us to do more and reach more people. Thank you.

Every little helps. That's why this spring we've launched 'Put it Second, Put Children 1st', a fundraising campaign calling on our supporters to go without a luxury or convenience for a while and donate what they save to Children 1st. When our fundraising team suggested that, as Chief Executive, I should lead by example I decided to give up my take-away coffee when driving to work for a month. I don't think I'll miss it too much - but my colleagues might if I prove to be a little grumpy first thing! For ideas on what to put second and how you can help us spread the word online visit

www.children1st.org.uk/second

Alison Todd,
Chief Executive

Contact us

t: 0131 446 2300

e: fundraising@children1st.org.uk

blog: <http://children1stblog.com>

 @children1st

 facebook.com/children1st


SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL CHILDREN'S CHARITY

Determined each child has reasons to smile



You gave children reasons to smile

A heartfelt 'thank-you' to everyone who gave to our winter appeal, which raised over £13,000. Each of you has become part of the recovery story for a child supported by Children 1st. A child like Lucy.*

When we first met Lucy, age 14, she was struggling to come to terms with the serious domestic abuse of her mum by her mum's ex-partner. Lucy wasn't just a witness – sometimes she had tried to intervene to protect her mum. This experience had left her emotions in turmoil. But in bottling-up what she was really thinking and feeling, she had turned to behaviour such as self-harming as a way of coping.

Lucy and her mum were introduced to us by her social worker because we were able to provide tailored support. Lucy agreed she would come to regular one-to-one support meetings with a Children 1st worker. Together, we would work towards her being happier, and more in control of her feelings and actions.

We met Lucy weekly for 10 months. We were inspired by her enthusiasm and determination to achieve her goals.

We helped Lucy find ways of lifting her mood, such as practice in positive thinking and believing in herself. We introduced her to techniques to help her calm and de-stress. With our support she began to better understand how her life experiences were influencing her thoughts, emotions and actions. Lucy found she could express her feelings through art materials, writing,



"My life is back on track. I'm liking who I am." Lucy

and in talk - using phrases such as "I feel angry because..."

Recovery is easier where there's an adult to trust and talk to, and that's the relationship Lucy was able to establish with her Children 1st worker. So they talked a lot about Lucy's self-image, music and lyrics, friendships and the complicated world of relationships.

Each meeting started with

an opportunity for Lucy to check on how she was doing on her journey to recovery. And through this we could also see real progress and over time the support she required reduced. Most revealing was that she began to plan for her future with enthusiasm and hope – travel, and possibly a career as a hair stylist.

* Lucy's name and some details have been changed.

**Be a life changer
Become a regular giver**

Did you know that £2 a month for a year can provide a therapeutic session for a child who has experienced abuse and trauma. Thank you to everyone already giving this way, it's fantastic to be able to count on your committed support.
www.children1st.org.uk/donate-now



Giving children a say in their future

Children 1st supports children and young people in Dundee to have a say where formal decisions are made about their future. Jane Greenshields from our Dundee team explains.

When a child or young person doesn't have a say in what's happening in their life, it can be really damaging. They can sometimes feel like puppets, pulled this way and that by adult decisions. In a world where decision-making meetings can be very adult focussed, children's views can all too easily be lost or overlooked. For many of the children we support they are often living in chaotic or complex circumstances. We know that we need to pay attention to supporting children to understand the situation so they can express and share their views, because it is unlikely to 'just happen'. When life changing decisions are being made, children should



"It made a difference that everyone would know my voice and not leave me out and stuff."



"It helped us not to be so nervous, and to tell people we wanted help for our mum."

never be left thinking 'Nobody really asked me'.

My job is to help children to participate and have their voice heard so that they can be part of the decision-making. I give them choices about how they want to be involved in meetings about their future, and time to prepare and think. They can choose different ways to express their views, from pictures to PowerPoint. Their views belong to them and are shared in the meeting in their own right, not through anyone else's lens. Children are not responsible for the decisions being made in their lives. But a child's view is such an important part of the jigsaw and the picture can never be complete without it.



"I like doing my picture best and would do this again if there was another big meeting. People listen sometimes. It was a good decision because things are better."

Why children need us to stop to listen

We've long been concerned about what happens when children find the courage to tell an adult that they've been sexually abused. Our professionals are committed and caring, but the way the child protection system works can leave children feeling that professionals don't provide the right support at the right time.

Sometimes the support children need to recover from abuse isn't available. Family members too need support; to make sense of what's happened, and to help them to be there for their child, but this is rarely on offer. Too often events move at a pace and in a direction out-with children's control. And there can be procedural delays, and a lack of communication about what's happening, that ramps up family anxiety levels.

That's why Children 1st has established Stop to Listen, a multi-agency national initiative to address flaws in the system that make it hard for professionals to give children who've been abused the right support. Over the next two years we'll identify problem areas, and develop and test improvements, with and in four local authorities; Renfrewshire, Glasgow, North Ayrshire and Perth and Kinross. Key national players are on board including; Police Scotland, the Scottish Government, health, social work, education, Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service, Scottish Children's Reporters Administration and children's charities.

So far the response from professionals across the public and voluntary sectors has been



encouraging. We look forward to achieving with them our shared goal - a system that children deserve and that we can all be proud of.

Not yet equally protected

November saw publication of a review of recent research into the physical punishment of children. Titled **Equally Protected?** it had been commissioned by Children 1st jointly with Barnardo's Scotland, NSPCC Scotland and the Children and Young People's Commissioner in Scotland. It found strong and consistent evidence from 98 pieces of international research that physical punishment increases aggression and antisocial

behaviour in children, causes depression and anxiety which may last a life-time, and is linked with physical abuse.

These findings didn't surprise us - Children 1st has long-campaigned for children and adults to have equal protection from assault. But by compiling the evidence in a way that was irrefutable it galvanised debate. The review received backing from across professional disciplines, including policing, nursing and social work. Sir Michael Marmot, Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health at University College London, said: "It is now absolutely clear that physical punishment damages children's wellbeing. And the effects remain even where the family environment is warm and loving."

Did you know

Scotland is one of a tiny minority of countries within the European Union that permits child physical punishment, Ireland being the most recent to ban it in 2015. But we believe that the Scottish Government has taken note of the reviews findings, and that positive change may be coming. Let us know what you think at fundraising@children1st.org.uk

Victims code launch at Children 1st Selkirk

A new Victims' Code for Scotland was launched by Paul Wheelhouse MSP, Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs, at Children 1st in Selkirk in February. The code clearly and simply sets out the rights of victims of crime in one place. Anna O'Reilly, Children 1st Assistant Director for Scottish Borders said: "From our base in Selkirk we support children and families whose lives have been scarred by abuse. Critical to that work is ensuring they aren't traumatised further by the process of bringing the perpetrator of their abuse to justice. So we welcome the Victims' Code, and the Scottish Government's commitment to publishing a child friendly version in the near future."



Anna O'Reilly with Paul Wheelhouse MSP

Your guide to putting Children 1st

You see a toddler wandering unsupervised and alone. You witness a parent or carer verbally or physically abusing a child in a public place. What do you do?

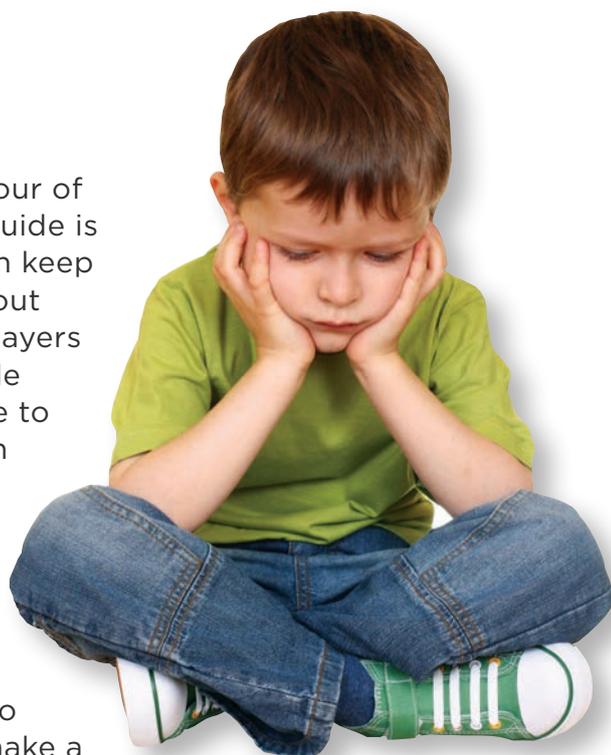
Most adults will recall an instance when they've been concerned about a child but unsure how to act. 'Am I misreading the situation?' 'Is it my place to get involved?' 'What if I intervene and it backfires on me?' Such thoughts can make even the most caring person freeze and do nothing.

A new guide to putting Children 1st can help. It offers advice for a range of situations; from what you can do if you notice a family is under stress, to how you can respond if there are changes in

a personality or behaviour of a child you know. The guide is pocket-sized so you can keep it handy when you are out and about. Thanks to players of the People's Postcode Lottery we've been able to include a free copy with every postal edition of Supporters News.

Everyone has a part to play in looking out for and protecting children. And by acting, perhaps when no one else will, you can make a world of difference to a child.

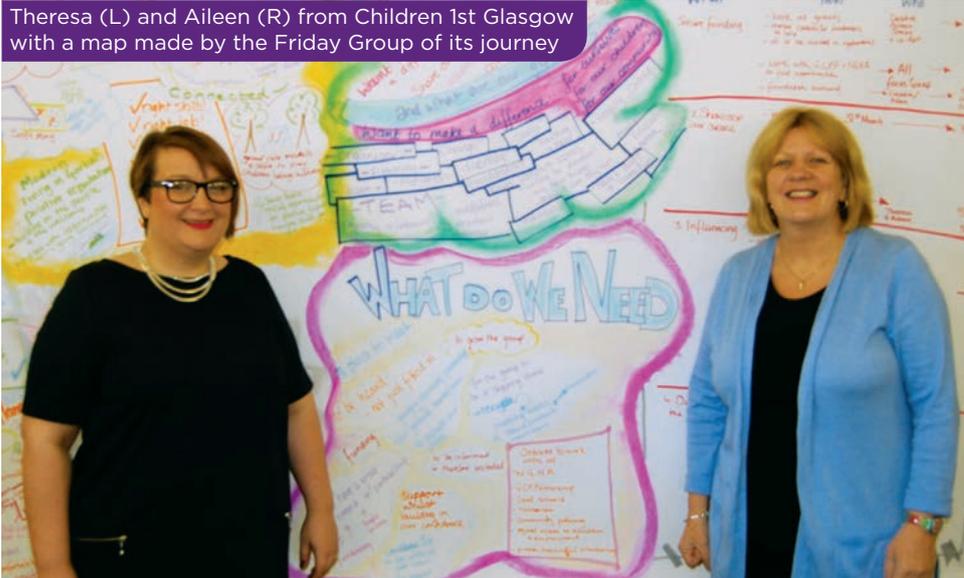
The guide is available online at www.parentlinescotland.org.uk, where you'll also find additional advice about the most serious of concerns about children; sexual abuse, physical abuse, domestic



abuse and neglect. ParentLine Scotland also offers advice on everyday parenting problems including family relationships, online safety, bullying and family separation, online and at **08000 28 22 33**.

That Friday feeling comes to Glasgow Gorbals

Theresa (L) and Aileen (R) from Children 1st Glasgow with a map made by the Friday Group of its journey



When Children 1st starts work with a child or family it's because they are going through difficult times and we believe we can help. But obvious as that approach seems, we wondered if sometimes it might be better to do things differently?

What if, instead of starting by looking at what help a family needs, we look at their strengths and built on these? What if we did the same with communities; to make them better places for children? Now, thanks to a pioneering Children 1st project in Glasgow Gorbals, we're finding out.

Mums in the Friday Group meet weekly with big ambitions; to become a voice in the community, to develop confidence to influence decision making, and to make the Gorbals a better and safer place for children. Project worker Aileen Kenny says: "The biggest strength of any community is its people. So we wanted to give parents who were isolated an

opportunity to become more involved, less isolated and have a voice. We floated the idea of a group throughout the local

"The mums have run focus groups with school pupils to find out what they think needs done to make the area safer, and a better place, for children."

nurseries and schools. The mums came forward because we said 'tell us what you like about the Gorbals, what should change, what help you need to make change it - and we'll help you to make it happen.'

"At first some lacked confidence even to make eye contact. A few had some

experience of consultations in the community, but had felt unable to speak up. Yet after just a few weeks with the group their confidence levels were higher. They were ready to get more involved, to the extent that they were booking meeting rooms, getting small grants, and even asking us to take a back seat! They formed friendships and were no longer isolated - two even discovered they lived in the same tower block."

Part of Aileen's role is to help group members reflect on their journey and to speak up on issues within their community. For example a local nursery kept hens and a cockerel. "One mum said that every morning her family had a rude awakening because this cockerel crowed at 5:30am. Thanks to the group she found the confidence to explain to the nursery that it was a problem."

Group members are showing they are serious about changing the community. "The mums have run focus groups with school pupils to find out what they think needs done to make the area safer, and a better place, for children. They've met with community planning professionals to find out how the system works and how they can have more say in local decisions. And they're planning an information day to tell other parents and carers they know are isolated what can happen if they come together." Working to their strengths has empowered them to be more active in their community.

Someone just for her

“These children really are a blessing and give me a lot of joy and happiness.” That Molly*, a kinship carer, is able to enjoy her two grand-daughters this much just three years on from the events that put them in her care, is amazing. And thanks in part to Children 1st volunteer Louise.

Almost every week for more than a year Louise has been giving Molly’s grand-daughter Anna the special attention she deserves. “When the girls came to me they left behind a very chaotic home situation,” says Molly. “Anna was the younger one, and because of it all had quite a lot of emotional problems.” Now, through activities including swimming and crafts, and trips to the library, cinema, beach and adventure park, Louise and Anna have formed a great relationship. “It’s someone just for her” says Molly. “She’s broadened Anna’s range of experiences beyond what I could, being on my own and working full time. Anna is now

much more confident. Her anxieties are away.”

Anna isn’t the only family member to benefit. “When Louise takes her out I am able to spend time with my older grand-daughter,” says Molly. “And I feel I’ve built up a really good relationship with her too.” Molly has been impressed by Louise’s warmth, but also her appreciation of boundaries. “When she has to say no to something she does it so diplomatically, and never hurts the girls’ feelings,” says Molly.

Louise’s befriending is just one part of the support Molly’s family has received from her local Children 1st kinship care team in Highland. “When the children first came to me I was completely unprepared,” says Molly. “There were so many

practical things to organise; extra cooking and washing, sorting bedrooms. The girls were so anxious and we were all missing sleep. I knew I needed help but there was nothing. Then I found Children 1st online and sent an email.”

Soon a Children 1st project worker was round for a chat. “She listened, and understood where I was coming from. She told me about help I could get and gave me ideas for things like raising issues with the school.”

“From her I learned about child-development, which has really helped,” says Molly. “It’s been lovely seeing the girls become happier and more confident, making good progress at school and developing healthy relationships.”

* Names and some details have been changed.

Did you know?

Our commitment to volunteers has won us ‘Investing in Volunteers’ accreditation for 10 years and now we’re going for three more. Want to volunteer? Call **Sarah** on **0131 446 3977** or email **sarah.latto@children1st.org.uk**



Look out for the flying Scotsman

Ex-pat John McGurk is aiming to raise £30,000 for Children 1st by running 560 miles in a kilt. With a team of six the Glaswegian plans to run non-stop from Osnabruek in Germany to Glasgow this June, pausing only on the ferry crossing. Over 24 years he has raised nearly £1 million for children’s charities across the world. “I chose Children 1st because they help children to recover from trauma, and families who need support,” says John. “That’s what needs addressed, and what I want to change.”

John’s route will take in Lockerbie, Dumfries, Kelso, Gullane, Edinburgh and Stirling. After Glasgow he plans to continue north to Fort William. You can follow John’s run on Twitter [@children1st](https://twitter.com/children1st), including where to cheer him on along the way.



John with Children 1st Chief Executive Alison Todd

Oh... Vienna!



Our annual Touch of Tartan Ball took place in November, an amazing evening of music, merriment and pop legend Midge Ure that raised over £140,000 for Children 1st. A huge 'thank you' to our fantastic Ball committee, for all their hard work organising such a wonderful event.

Skyscanner puts Children 1st

A team from Skyscanner has created a haven for children in Glasgow receiving support to recover from abuse, neglect or other traumatic experiences. Staff from the online global travel search company also raised £50,000 for Children 1st. What stars!



The Skyscanner makeover crew (L-R) Eileen Ogg, Suzanne Watt, Andrew Wilson, Hayley Smith, Lakshmi Pericherla

Players put Children 1st again

Young people at the Chill Out Zone healthy living centre in Bathgate say thanks to the players



Players of the People's Postcode Lottery have awarded a record £600,000 to Children 1st for 2016. Their commitment to Children 1st is hugely appreciated; £4.2 million raised by players for us alone since 2008.

Challenge yourself to put Children 1st

- 23 April** – Firewalk, Cromarty
- 23/24 April** – Run Balmoral, Deeside
- 24 April** – Kiltwalk, Glasgow
- 15 May** – Baker Hughes 10K, Aberdeen
- 28/29 May** – Edinburgh Marathon Festival, Edinburgh
- 5 June** – Great Women's 10k, Glasgow
- 18 June** – Edinburgh Night Ride, Edinburgh
- 19 June** – Men's Health 10k, Glasgow
- 25 June** – Tough Mudder, Dumfries & Galloway
- 2 July** – Great Glen Coe Challenge, Glen Coe
- 13 August** – Great Wilderness Challenge, Ross-shire
- 24 September** – Banchory Beast, Banchory
- 25 September** – Loch Ness Marathon

Find out more at www.children1st.org.uk/events

Who you know could boost our fundraising

In November ParentLine Scotland volunteer Ursula introduced us to Schuh through a family member who worked with the footwear company in Livingston. The end result was a donation of more than £5000 from Schuh to our healthy living centre for young people in Bathgate; the Chill Out Zone.

Do you, or your relatives or friends, work with companies who support charities and may be open to an approach from Children 1st? Call **Paul** on **0131 446 2317** or email paul.mckeown@children1st.org.uk