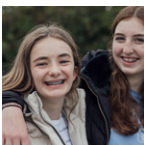


IMPACT REPORT 2025-26

Everyone is Family



Contents





1

Welcome

Welcome to “Everyone is Family”, our Impact Report for 2025-26. We are delighted to share with you the story of our year, where (as ever) there has been plenty to celebrate, commemorate and appreciate.

This year, Aberlour marked an incredible milestone of 150 years of supporting Scotland’s children and families. This was a very well-marked birthday, with a whole year of activities and events across the country providing the opportunity to acknowledge our past, recognise our achievements, and look ahead to the future.

Everything we do at Aberlour is shaped by the voices and experiences of babies, children, young people and families, from designing our services to our policy and influencing work. Many of our highlights

this year have had these personal stories at their heart, from bringing together former residents of the original orphanage in Aberlour village as part of our 150th celebrations, to providing a national platform for mums in recovery to outline the changes they want to see in policy and practice at our “Family Voices” event in Glasgow.

We have continued to grow our reach, impact and influence. In 2025-26 we supported 5,862 babies, children, young people and families, from the Borders to the Highlands, across a wide range of support and services. We also supported 8,551 families from across Scotland through the Aberlour Urgent Assistance Fund.

This year we were delighted to launch our new Inverclyde Intensive Family Support Service, and to expand our Intensive Perinatal services across Forth

Valley, Glasgow and Tayside. A common thread runs through all our services, of getting right alongside people and supporting them with their own issues and priorities.

2025-26 was marked by leadership changes at Aberlour, as we said goodbye to our former Chief Executive SallyAnn Kelly OBE, and welcomed Justina Murray as our new Chief Executive. Through SallyAnn's unwavering commitment over 11 years, Aberlour expanded its services, strengthened its voice as a champion for children and families, and placed advocacy at the heart of everything we do. First Minister John Swinney described SallyAnn as "a formidable champion for the children of Scotland and Aberlour" during First Minister's Questions, which was a wonderful testament to her contribution to our organisation and our country. Justina has stepped in to lead a flourishing and ambitious organisation, with over 700 staff and 300 volunteers. She brings energy, vision and a deep commitment to 'Being Brave' for children, young people and families.

Since 1875, our mission has remained constant: to provide care, support and love to children who need it most. While some of the challenges facing families have changed, child poverty, discrimination and inequality remain Scotland's greatest injustices, and our determination to tackle these is stronger than ever. We have continued to use our profile and influence to challenge decision-makers and amplify the voices of children and young people, as well as distributing over £1.3m of emergency cash relief for

food, clothing, bedding, utilities and other essentials through our Urgent Assistance Fund.

This year we have moved from an Annual Review to an Impact Report as we tell the story of 2025-26. This shifts the focus from what we do, to why and how we do it. Families tell us every day that our support has been life-changing, and at times life-saving. We would not, of course, be able to make this difference without the incredible contribution of our dedicated staff and volunteers, as well as our donors, supporters, funders and commissioners. Our heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you.

DAVID ROBB

Chair of the Board of Trustees

JUSTINA MURRAY

CEO, Aberlour Children's Charity

2

The year at a glance

Over the last year we have worked alongside children and families to improve lives and deliver brighter futures. The impact of our work would not be possible without our Aberlour family of supporters, funders and partners.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES



5,862

children and families supported across Scotland to build brighter futures

91%

of families supported said their lives had improved



61

services delivered across 30 local authorities, reaching children, young people and families in communities across Scotland

3,049

families facing complex challenges built confidence, connections and resilience through our family support services



437

children with disabilities and their families supported through vital short breaks



88

children and young people given loving, nurturing homes in our Sycamore children's houses and with our foster families, when they could not live with their parents

ABERLOUR URGENT ASSISTANCE FUND

£1,323,436

in emergency cash grants distributed to families in crisis



8,551

children and families supported through the Urgent Assistance Fund



£512,437

of total amount consists of Scottish Government emergency cash grants distributed in only 4 weeks to 1,072 children and families

FUNDRAISING AND VOLUNTEERING



£1.9m

contributed by our amazing donors and supporters



£180,000

raised for struggling families by our Winter Poverty Relief campaign



5,000

hours of support for families delivered by our fantastic volunteers

CHAMPIONING RIGHTS AND INFLUENCING CHANGE



70,000

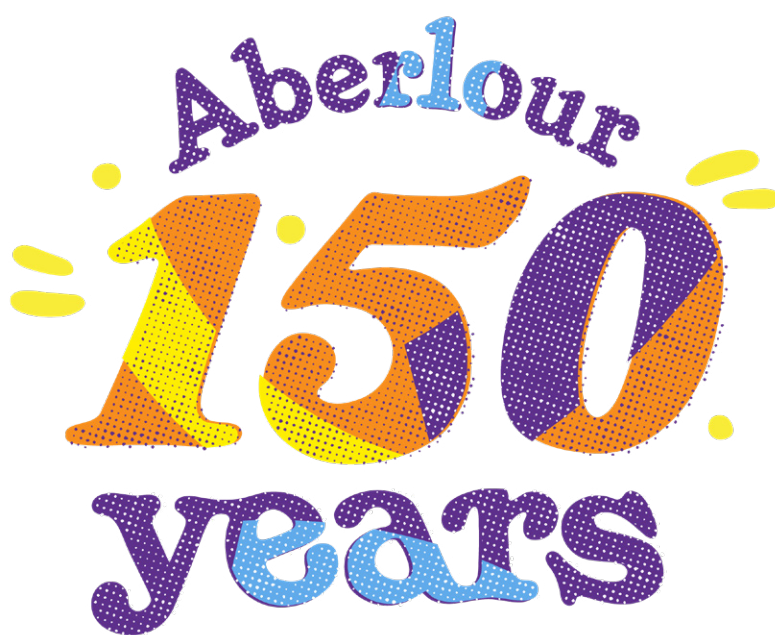
children had their school meal debts cancelled due to Aberlour's campaigning



50

young people had their voices heard at our AbJam residential





3

150 years of impact

Aberlour's 150th anniversary in 2025 was a significant milestone. An opportunity to celebrate our work and impact, while recognising and reflecting on our long history of supporting Scotland's children, young people and families.

Throughout the year, an incredible range of activities and events brought people together around three themes: acknowledging our past, celebrating our present and looking ahead to our future.

Our anniversary was a shared celebration, involving children, young people and families, former residents of the Aberlour Orphanage, staff, volunteers, supporters and Trustees. Together, we reflected on how far we have come, celebrated the difference Aberlour makes today, and looked forward with optimism to the next chapter of our story.

Here are some highlights from our milestone year...



Sycamore Big Walk

Young people and support workers from our Sycamore residential service raised vital funds by walking an outstanding 154 miles from Kirkcaldy to Aberlour.



Coming Home

Former residents from the orphanage and the local community gathered in Aberlour to mark the occasion and share their memories.



Memories Worth Sharing

We heard from former residents about their lives in the orphanage and what it meant to them.



The Aberlour Cycle

Our Chair, David, trustee Joanne, and their friend Neil cycled an impressive 150 miles from our founding village of Aberlour to our headquarters in Stirling.



Our 150th Tartan

We launched our beautiful 150th anniversary tartan.



A National Celebration

First Minister, John Swinney, children, families and guests attended our celebratory 150th event at the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh.



Creative Communities

Young people created stunning original artwork as part of our Creative Communities programme, which was exhibited at our event in the National Museum of Scotland.

Supporting Children & Families





1

Delivering impact: a spotlight on services

We continue to work alongside children, young people and families to help them feel safe, supported and that they belong while creating the foundations for a brighter future.

Our work includes life-changing support through national recovery services for mothers and children, providing a Guardian for every unaccompanied asylum-seeking child in Scotland, and offering loving, nurturing foster placements for children who are unable to live with their families.

01.

Recovery,
Guardianship and
Fostering

02.

Family support - from
early help to intensive

03.

Residential and short
breaks for children
with a disability

DELIVERING IMPACT - SPOTLIGHT ON SERVICES

Mother and Child Recovery Houses

Our **Mother and Child Recovery Houses in Falkirk and Dundee** support women and babies affected by alcohol and drug use. We help mums stabilise their substance use, prevent drug deaths, reduce the risk of children entering care, and keep families together where it is safe to do so.

70% of babies and children supported by our Recovery Houses have remained in the full-time care of their mums – a significant success that leads to better outcomes for the whole family and substantial savings for the public purse.



of babies and children have remained in the full-time care of their mums

"My baby is calm, he's happy, he's just a really bubbly, bubbly boy... he runs about freely and loves to explore. He runs up to me with his arms open and gives me big hugs and smiles."

- MUM SUPPORTED BY THE MOTHER AND CHILD RECOVERY HOUSE



DELIVERING IMPACT - SPOTLIGHT ON SERVICES

Guardianship Scotland



**Guardianship
Scotland**
National Child Trafficking
Support Service

Guardianship Scotland is a specialist statutory service providing Independent Child Trafficking Guardians to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, victims of trafficking, and children vulnerable to trafficking who arrive in Scotland.

Delivered in partnership with the Scottish Refugee Council on behalf of the Scottish Government, the service supports over 1,000 young people across Scotland each year. Guardians help children and young people settle into life in Scotland, providing practical, emotional and specialist support as they navigate a new country and life away from their families.

1,000+

young people supported by
Guardianship Scotland each year.

Ibrahim's Story

"I remember the first British voice I heard - 'Welcome to Dover.' I was 16, freezing and hungry, hiding in a 2ft gap beside crates of peaches. When I checked my phone, I said, 'No way... I'm in the United Kingdom.' That moment felt like the beginning of the end of a journey that started years earlier in Daraa, where people were being killed without reason and it felt dangerous every day.

I left because I felt like I had no good choices, crossing borders and surviving violence, believing I might not make it. By the time I reached Scotland, I was so stressed, depressed, full of anxiety. But my guardian was always checking on me... such a kind person. **The Guardians have been my angels."**



Today, Ibrahim is rebuilding his life. He studies every day and is determined to support Scotland, give back and build a positive future.

Aberlour Fostering

Aberlour's Fostering service finds loving, caring foster families for children and young people unable to live with their families across Scotland. Our experienced team support foster carers to provide a safe, stable and nurturing home, helping young lives to flourish despite challenging circumstances. We currently support 29 foster families.



Jayden's Story

When Jayden first arrived with his Aberlour foster family he couldn't look at them in the eye, let alone realise his distant dream of being an actor. Now, with the support of his loving foster family, he's achieving his dreams.

"I take part in the musical theatre group at the Eden Court Theatre in Inverness. For me being in musical theatre has really been a privilege and I'm grateful that I can be a part of it. Ever since I was little, I wanted to be an actor and this has really helped me get a few steps closer! In this performance of Sister Act I am Curtis Jackson (the number one thug) and I'm so excited I can't sit down."

**- JAYDEN, SUPPORTED BY
ABERLOUR FOSTERING**



DELIVERING IMPACT - SPOTLIGHT ON SERVICES

Primary Years Outreach Service - Falkirk

Aberlour provides a wide range of family support services, from 'reach in' early help and support services, to intensive family support services working closely with social work and other statutory partners. For example:

Our **Primary Years Outreach** service provides an innovative telephone support line and community-based support 7 days a week for families with children aged 5 to 12 years who are experiencing emotional distress such as anxiety, depression and self-harm.



Dylan's Story



Dylan came to the service as he has additional support needs and often struggles with his behaviour at home. Masking this exceptionally well at school, the challenges experienced daily by the rest of the family are often unseen by others, which can feel very isolating

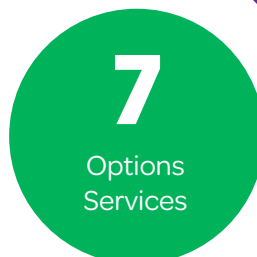
"Susie (Dylan's worker) has worked patiently and compassionately with Dylan, helping him to understand and develop strategies to regulate his emotions. Her approach has been thoughtful, consistent, and tailored to his individual needs, which has made a real difference."

**- PARENT OF DYLAN,
SUPPORTED BY PRIMARY
YEARS OUTREACH**

DELIVERING IMPACT - SPOTLIGHT ON SERVICES

Options Disability Services

Aberlour supports children with disabilities and their families to thrive. As well as our Options residential services in Fife and Aberdeen, we have seven Options short breaks services around the country. These provide safe, homely environments for children to make friends and have fun, as well as supporting families to take a break from their caring role. 437 children and their families were supported by our short breaks services in 2025-26.



"The staff are absolutely wonderful. I just wish (my son) could stay there forever! The staff are settled as a group, and we really get to know them. They are always the same, just grand."

- PARENT OF CHILD SUPPORTED BY OPTIONS DISABILITY - FIFE

Expanding Options - Aberdeen, Hopetoun Court

In 2025-26 Aberlour agreed to invest funds to improve our Options Aberdeen Hopetoun service for children and families. The development comprises a new two-storey and single-storey extension, alongside the creation of an accessible landscaped garden and play areas, providing additional space and enhanced facilities designed to meet current and future need. The project will ensure the service can continue delivering high-quality specialist care and support in a safe, nurturing and sustainable environment.

The accessible facility will strengthen Aberlour's ability to provide vital short breaks services, helping children with disabilities access specialist support, while also providing families with a valuable break and peace of mind.



"We are delighted with this important extension of Hopetoun Court. The development represents a significant investment in specialist support for children with disabilities and their families across Aberdeen and the surrounding area."

- LYNNE O'BRIEN, CHIEF OFFICER - CHILDREN AND FAMILIES



2

Reaching more children and families

This year we continued to grow our existing services and develop new support services across Scotland for children and families. This includes:

01.

Expanding Intensive Perinatal Services

02.

New Intensive Family Support Service in Inverclyde

03.

Sustaining early intervention and prevention

REACHING MORE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Expanding Intensive Perinatal Services

We secured **£1.1 million in funding from the Scottish Government** to expand Aberlour's Intensive Perinatal services across three areas: Forth Valley, Glasgow and Tayside. These services aim to support new mothers, keep families together where it is safe to do so, reduce drug-related deaths, improve outcomes for the whole family, and reduce the costs associated with babies entering care.



Scottish Government funding secured



Over the last year our Intensive Perinatal Services supported:

 **95**

mothers affected by substance use

 **77**

babies supported alongside their mothers

 **18**

unborn babies through early and pre-birth intervention.

The difference it made:

65%

of babies deemed "at risk" remain safely with their mothers



95

families with high level of need receive intensive support



reducing the number of babies entering care

"The service is providing truly transformational supports to women with the most complex needs and complicated lives, which directly benefits the health of the unborn child. We are seeing the intensity and approach of the service build engagement in health care, support and addiction services which for some women and children may make all the difference to the capacity for the mother to care for her child in both the short and long term."

- HEAD OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES, GLASGOW CITY COUNCIL

REACHING MORE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Introducing new Intensive Family Support Services

Inverclyde Council commissioned Aberlour to deliver Inverclyde's first **Intensive Family Support service**, launched in December 2025. This significant 4-year investment of £1.4m will help ensure struggling Inverclyde families get the support they need to stay together and thrive. The new service complements existing Council/Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) services to offer a comprehensive package of support for vulnerable young people and families seven days a week from 8am to 10pm.

The service quickly reached capacity, working with 30 families at any one time. It aims to keep at least 75% of families together and avoid children entering statutory care, also helping children and young people in care return to their families where it is safe to do so.



£1.4m

four-year investment in
Inverclyde Families

30

families supported at
any one time

75%

of families aimed to be kept
together, avoiding statutory
care

"This is a fantastic new service that is already making a positive impact to vulnerable children and families throughout Inverclyde. Working alongside existing services, the Intensive Family Support service proactively identifies children and families that need that extra helping hand and provides a tailored and comprehensive package of support to help them with a variety of challenges they face."

- **INVERCLYDE COUNCIL SPOKESPERSON**

REACHING MORE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Sustaining early intervention and prevention services

We secured a further 3-years funding (£229k/annum) for our **Dumfries & Galloway Alternative Routes** service from the Inspiring Scotland Cashback for Communities Fund to support young people who may be at risk of becoming involved in antisocial and/or offending behaviours.

Over the year we worked with 105 young people, with 95% of them reporting they felt less inclined to participate in anti-social/ criminal behaviour.



young people supported
over the year



reported they felt less
inclined to participate
in anti-social or
criminal behaviour



"You have been the only consistent person in his life through all his troubles. I love the bond he has with you."

- Feedback from parent

5

Delivering Emergency Relief



Delivering emergency relief

Aberlour's Urgent Assistance Fund provided £1,323,436 in emergency cash grants to 8,551 children and families in 2025-26.

This enabled parents to put food on the table, buy clothing and bedding for their children and heat their homes. The difference it makes has been so much more...

£1,323,436

in emergency cash grants in 2025-26

8,551

children and families supported

WHAT FAMILIES ASKED FOR MOST



Children's clothing



Food



Bedding

We provided cash grants to families across all 32 local authorities in Scotland.



"This support has not only provided financial relief but has also significantly reduced my stress and increased my confidence. Knowing that I had this assistance during such an important transition gave me peace of mind and allowed me to focus more positively on settling into our new home."

- PARENT SUPPORTED BY OUR URGENT ASSISTANCE FUND

'Due to this funding, it has allowed me to see a better future, with choice and opportunities. I no longer feel a financial burden, and I really appreciate the support where I feel there was no judgement, which made a massive impact throughout the process.'

- PARENT SUPPORTED BY OUR URGENT ASSISTANCE FUND

Distributing emergency grants at scale



£512K

Scottish Government
grant provided at short
notice



4 weeks

From award to families
from Jan/Feb 2026



1,072

Families reached by our
staff and volunteers

Thanks to an incredible effort by our staff, volunteers and partners, we were able to rapidly distribute a **£512,437** grant from the Scottish Government to families facing winter hardships in less than a month, from mid-January to mid-February 2026. This cash boost grant was provided at very short notice, and our dedicated teams worked hard to ensure it quickly reached **1,072 families** in need. This support helped families put food on the table, heat their homes and provide their children with warm winter clothing.



"My heartfelt thanks to the team at Aberlour for their financial support at this time. I can't believe I'm in a position where I'm struggling to put food on the table. We've suffered a lot of loss in the family and it really has had a snowballing effect on us, including our income. We are so grateful for this support, and we don't take it for granted. Thanks for being there at a time when we didn't know where to turn."

- PARENT SUPPORTED BY OUR URGENT ASSISTANCE FUND

Championing Children's Rights & Influencing Change





1

Championing children's rights

Our belief that children's rights, as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), must be protected in law, policy, and practice is at the foundation of everything that we do. We continue to influence and support implementation of the UNCRC in Scotland and work to #KeepThePromise.

01.

Introducing the Rights in Practice Team

02.

Another successful AbJam event for our young people

03.

National Play day event

CHAMPIONING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Introducing the Rights in Practice Team

To ensure this happens, Aberlour has invested this year in a **Rights in Practice team**. Their role is to work with Aberlour's services and support teams to embed the UNCRC in everything we do.

They listen to what colleagues across the organisation need to feel confident in championing our supported children, young people and families' rights, and to support systems and culture change around how we embed a children's human rights approach in all of our work.



AbJam 2025

We held our Annual Aberlour Jamboree (AbJam) in August 2025 at Lockerbie Manor, Dumfries and Galloway. This two-day residential saw over 50 young people make new friends, take part in fun outdoor activities, and have the opportunity to say what is important to them.



50

young people
attended AbJam

"At first, I felt completely out of my comfort zone trying new things, but being surrounded by such supportive people made all the difference. Everyone encouraged me, and knowing I was in a safe space gave me the confidence to push myself. In the end, I was really proud of what I achieved."

- YOUNG PERSON AT ABJAM



850

People
participating

CHAMPIONING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

National Day for Play

Aberlour Options Aberdeen hosted our second annual celebration for the National Day for Play in recognition of the Right to Play UNCRC (Article 31).

The free and inclusive event was held at Hazlehead Park, Aberdeen and promoted play as essential to child development and community engagement. Staff supported children with additional needs, and resources were tailored to diverse age groups and backgrounds. Over 850 people participated throughout the day in a variety of activities.



"Thank you so much, Aberdeen doesn't have enough of this sort of event."
- **MOTHER OF 3 ATTENDING PLAY DAY**



2

Influencing change

Our policy and influencing work is an important pillar of Aberlour's commitment to Being Brave for Scotland's children and families, and to beating poverty and discrimination. We work hard to influence Scottish and UK policy and practice through amplifying the voices and experiences of our children, young people and families, aiming to bring about much-needed change.

01.

Ensuring families' voices are heard

02.

Cancelling school meal debt

03.

Our calls to the Scottish Government

INFLUENCING CHANGE

Ensuring families' voices are heard

"I was crying out for help but felt like no one could hear. It felt like I was being kept in a perpetual state of addiction."

- MUM SUPPORTED BY ABERLOUR

In December 2025, we brought together mums and babies, policymakers, practitioners, researchers and commissioners for a national event to launch our **Families' Voices** report. The report highlighted how the life chances of mums and babies affected by substance use are being put at risk by a postcode lottery of specialist support. It called for the nationwide rollout of specialist recovery services to ensure every family can access the support they need, wherever they live.

At the event, mums, accompanied by their babies, shared powerful and deeply personal evidence about the difference specialist support had made to their lives. They spoke about how effective support had helped them on their recovery journey, while also protecting their children and helping them stay together as a family.

The day featured presentations, panel discussions and creative arts, providing an opportunity for families' experiences and voices to take centre stage. We were delighted to be joined by **Maree Todd, Minister for Drugs and Alcohol Policy**, alongside commissioners, researchers and practitioners from across Scotland.



Cancelling school meal debt

This year also saw the culmination of our campaign to remove the burden of school meal debt from struggling families.

Since 2023, we have campaigned alongside **The Scottish Sun**, calling on the Scottish Government and local authorities to cancel existing school meal debt and ease the financial pressure facing families.

Our campaign contributed to a significant change, with **70,000 children and families having their school meal debt cancelled** through the Scottish Government's School Meal Debt Fund.

This was a fantastic result for families across Scotland, removing a significant financial burden at a time when many households continue to feel the impact of the cost-of-living crisis. Most importantly, it demonstrated what can be achieved when families' voices are heard and organisations work together to create meaningful change.



70,000

children and families having their school meal debt cancelled through the Scottish Government's School Meal Debt Fund





CHAMPIONING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS & INFLUENCING CHANGE

Calls to Scottish Government

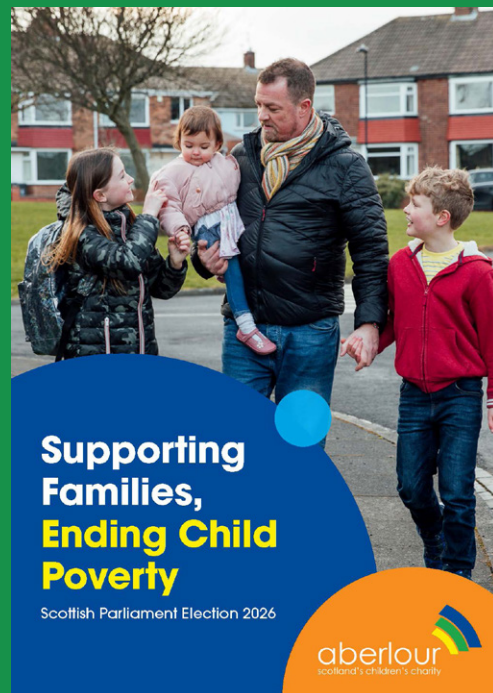


more than 1 in 5

children in Scotland continue to live in poverty

Supporting Families, Ending Child Poverty

Ahead of the Scottish Parliament election in May 2026, we launched our manifesto calls to all political parties to end child poverty.



Supporting Families, Ending Child Poverty

Scottish Parliament Election 2026

aberlour
scotland's children's charity

Fundraising and Volunteering



FUNDRAISING AND VOLUNTEERING

Raising vital funds

We are incredibly grateful to all of our donors, supporters, funders and corporate partners who make it possible for us to have such a positive and lasting impact on the lives of children and families who need us most. Thank you!

Aberlour's fundraising team had its most successful year ever, raising almost **£1.9 million** to support our vital services for children and families across Scotland. The generosity of our donors and supporters has made a direct and positive difference to the lives of the children, young people and families we support.

Throughout the year, our fundraising team worked closely with our fantastic donors and supporters to build strong, meaningful and lasting relationships. We are proud that our approach goes beyond fundraising, it is about making every supporter feel valued and connected to the difference they are helping to make.

OUR MOST SUCCESSFUL
YEAR EVER

£1.9m

Total funds raised to support our vital services



"Thanks for reaching out, it will mean a lot to my mum. She has asked for a donation to go to you for a few years now for Christmas and birthdays, and we've donated to Aberlour before. But from all the charities we've done this with, Aberlour has been the only one to reply to her personally, both times. It might be a small thing, but it really means an awful lot. Thank you."

- ABERLOUR DONOR

Our supporters went above and beyond

Last year, more than **100 organisations and individuals** took on fundraising challenges to support Aberlour. From skydives and sponsored events to 73 Kiltwalkers and 17 marathon runners, our supporters went above and beyond to raise vital funds and help us continue our work.



100+
organisations and
individuals



73
Kiltwalkers



17
Marathon runners



Thank you

to every single person
and organisation who
fundraised for Aberlour,
donated, supported us or
helped spread the word.

Your generosity is helping
us make a real difference
every day!

FUNDRAISING AND VOLUNTEERING

Supporting more volunteers to help families

Thanks to our invaluable volunteers and their dedication, **over 5,000 hours (including 3,800 hours of direct support)** were provided to children, young people, and families across Scotland.

This included thousands of activities, emotional support calls, home visits, and more. It cannot be underestimated the transformational impact this work has, not only on those we support, but also for our volunteers themselves.

From improved maternal wellbeing in our Perinatal Befriending Services to life-changing support for children, young people and families through mentoring, befriending and support roles within services, our volunteers truly delivered for us in 2025-26.



3,800

hours of direct support to children, young people and families



5,000

total volunteering hours contributed



Final word

“

I am extremely grateful to this charity as they provided not only financial relief but returned my sense of hope in what felt like a dark time, where I felt this was impossible.

They have made it possible, and without them I do not know where me and my daughter would be. I will be forever grateful.”

**- PARENT SUPPORTED BY ABERLOUR'S
FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES**



Thank you to all our supporters!





Aberlour Children's Charity

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Scottish Charity no: SC007991
Company Reg no: SC312912

