

Redress Report – Aberlour December 2023- December 2024

Introduction

This report provides information about the activities Aberlour Child Care Trust has carried out to support survivors of abuse and highlights additional measures we have put in place to safeguard children who live with us currently.

This fulfils Aberlour's requirement to produce a 'redress report' under the Redress for Survivors (Historical Child Abuse in Care) (Scotland) Act 2021 (section 99). It includes information about any support which Aberlour has provided for individuals who were abused as children, including;

- activities relating to the acknowledgement of abuse and providing a meaningful apology.
- advice and assistance on accessing historical records.
- support for individuals who were abused as children.
- funding for emotional, psychological, or practical support.
- advice and assistance on tracing and reuniting families.
- other relevant examples of support provided to survivors.

Activities relating to the acknowledgement of abuse and providing a meaningful apology to survivors

We have issued one formal written apology to a person who experienced care during the period covered by the Inquiry. The request was received through the survivor relations scheme. Aberlour also invited the requester to meet in person with the Chief Officer, Children and Families and Director but this was not taken up.

Advice and assistance on accessing historical records

Aberlour ensures a thorough and sensitive approach to responding to requests for access to historical records. In all our responses for orphanage and early group home records we acknowledge that historical casefiles are typically brief and usually focus on the practicalities of admission and discharge rather than progression or experience whilst the child is resident. When we can supplement the casefile with copies of the orphanage magazine or other records we will do so. The scarcity of identifiable photographs is a particular regret.

We have provided guidance for requesters on making Data Subject Access Requests (DSAR) to other bodies and responded to a request to verify an individual to a local authority. Details of activity relating to providing access to records is outlined below.

Types of requests	Total	Description
DSAR from data subject or parent	30	
DSAR via agency	6	For example, Birthlink/Wellbeing Scotland/solicitor
Family member requests	31	This covers historic requests for deceased family members.
Redress Scotland requests	13	Verification of prior payments and confirmation of requester identity
Police Scotland requests	2	With regards investigation into historic abuse
Void requests	6	These are not valid requests because either no service was provided to the data subject or the verification of identity requirements was not completed. Source may be either the data subject themselves or from an agency (for example, Birthlink/Wellbeing Scotland/solicitor)
Total requests received	84	

Support for individuals who were abused as children

Our approach to subject access requests and historical records request processes is trauma informed. This means we are open, sensitive, and compassionate in all dealings with people who seek to access information. We provide clear and transparent information to requesters about what information we might hold about their life and why we hold that information. We are honest with requesters that although we have extensive historical records, they are incomplete, and we may not always be able to provide evidence of time in care for requesters.

We ensure that a trauma-trained senior manager or Quality Improvement Partner is available in the process. We make the offer of providing in-person or virtual professional support to requesters to review their records, to help provide some answers and most importantly because some of the content could be re-traumatising for requesters. Requesters may not wish to access the support initially, and we ensure that this offer remains open should the requester wish to come back at a later date.

Funding for emotional, psychological, or practical support

We provided direct funding to one individual whose time in care only partially met the time criteria for the historic abuse enquiry. They were on the waiting list for support with Future Pathways. We made an offer £3000 for emotional, therapeutic support to enable 50 sessions from a service identified by them.

Advice and assistance on tracing and reuniting families

Contact information to *Birthlink* and *In Care Survivors Scotland* are routinely included in our responses. Furthermore, where a requester is seeking to trace or reunite with their family, we will sign post them to appropriate organisations who may be able to assist them with their search for information.

We also have an open dialogue with organisations that are providing direct support to requesters either during a redress application or during their search for information about their past.

Additional activities

- In July, contributed to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) Focus Group on guidance for SAR responses from social care professionals. This is part of an ongoing project exploring the experience of those individuals with care experience and accessing their care records. We wrote about the project here - [ICO calls for people to share experiences accessing care records as it vows to improve support | ICO](#). This drew together controllers to share experiences about their DSAR handling and the processes/procedures that support responding to requests.
- In September met with the improvement team at The Promise to share our experience of using digital living archives (Memory Bank from the ARCH project) and to learn more about their 'My Care Records' project.
- Responded to a questionnaire and interview with the Data for Children Collaborative - Survey for Data Protection Specialists for their work for The Promise on digital archives.
- In August Data Protection and Information Governance Manager joined the Social Work Scotland Historic Abuse Subgroup (SWS HAS) to contribute to their consultation and development of the Gold Standard of recording from the 'Accessing Records in Scotland: What people with care experience tell us about the Right of Access' [Publications - Social Work Scotland](#) engagement.
- In November our Chief Executive called for contributions from people placed with Aberlour in our 150th event. She again recognised the past abuse that had occurred (see Appendix 1).
- Findings from the research work with one of our residential services provided evidence for a published article from the ARCH project [Everyday records or living archives? An analysis of record-keeping in residential children's homes in Scotland](#) (Archives and Records, Taylor & Francis, Published online: Dec 2024).

Improving record request processes

Aberlour recognises the importance of improving the experience of people receiving their records and want to continually improve our approach. To achieve this, we are attentive to sector good practice standards as well as critical review of internal processes to work effectively and efficiently.

Claire Johnson – Data Protection and Information Governance Manager

Helen Jones – Head of Quality and Safeguarding

Appendix 1: Call for contributions to 150th anniversary event

Moray roots being traced by Scotland's biggest children's charity

By [Alistair Whitfield](#) - alistair.whitfield@hnmmedia.co.uk

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Scotland's biggest children's charity will return to its Speyside roots its 150th anniversary next year.

Aberlour, named after the Moray town where its work began, has supported thousands of young Scots since the Reverend Charles Jupp opened an orphanage in 1875.



Aberlour Orphanage.

SallyAnn Kelly, Aberlour's chief executive, said: "We might do things differently today than 150 years ago but our mission and determination to protect and care for children in need is unchanged."

"Next year will be a significant milestone for our charity. How our journey began in Aberlour led us to where we are today and will guide us into tomorrow."

The charity is also, however, determined to acknowledge a darker chapter in its history during the anniversary.

In 2020, the third phase of the Scottish Child Abuse inquiry concluded children cared for at the orphanage and other homes run by Aberlour, had suffered physical, emotional and sexual abuse between 1921 and 1991.