

Autumn 2025



Aberlour News

In this issue:

Returning
to our roots

Aberlour expands
support for new
mums and babies

'A youth club
changed
my life'

The end of an era



What a fantastic start we've had to our 150th year with celebrations taking place up and down the country. From parties with huge birthday cakes, new tunes composed for the bagpipes, to the launch of a cookbook, all of which have been created by our young people, it has been wonderful to be a part of it all.

At the end of November I will be stepping down as CEO of Aberlour. It has been a privilege to have served Aberlour, and the charity will have a special place in my heart forever.

The past 11 years have been the most satisfying period of my professional career. Leading Aberlour has been an incredible journey, filled with both challenges and triumphs.

Together, we have navigated through considerable obstacles, and I am proud to say that our organisation is now in a great place, poised for continued success.

During my tenure, together, we have achieved remarkable things. We have expanded our services to reach more children and families in need, implemented innovative new services that have made a real difference in our communities, and strengthened our efforts to ensure that every child can thrive.

We continue to be brave and speak truth, however inconvenient or uncomfortable that truth is, to those in positions of power and privilege.

These accomplishments are a testament to the dedication, hard work, and unwavering commitment of every member of the Aberlour team, and you, our supporters.

I am delighted to announce that Justina Murray will be joining Aberlour in late October as CEO. Justina has achieved great things leading Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs. During her eight years as Chief Executive of Scottish Families Justina has transformed the charity, introducing multiple new services and innovative programmes to extend their reach and impact.

Whilst we have made significant progress for children and families across Scotland there is still much to be done. Justina embodies the values of Aberlour and is committed to creating change to secure better outcomes for children and families.

I am confident I am leaving Aberlour in a very safe pair of hands for the future.

SallyAnn Kelly OBE
Aberlour CEO

Aberlour launches new report on the public debt crisis

Trussell
Ending hunger together

One Parent Families Scotland

For years Aberlour has campaigned the Scottish and UK Governments around the public debt crisis. We've shown how public debt, owed for example to councils and the department for work and pensions (DWP), pulls families deeper into poverty across Scotland and the UK.

This means more and more low-income families are finding it harder to make ends meet and unable to afford day to day essentials. Our recent research, carried out by **Professor Morag Treanor** from the University of Glasgow and in partnership with **One Parent Family Scotland** and **Trussell**, delves further into the level of debts owed to public bodies and the impact on disabled people and lone parent families.

We've discovered:

55%

of children with a disability are in a lone parent family. These families are most likely to depend on food banks and are at high risk of having fuel and energy debts/arrears

47%

of British households receiving Universal Credit **have a deduction due to debt**

£17.4m

per month is being deducted from claimants' Universal Credit across Scotland

£1bn

will be lost by low-income households in Scotland over the next Parliamentary term due to deductions

We're calling on the Scottish and UK Governments to:

- 1 Reform public debt recovery processes**
- 2 End Universal Credit rules** that push families into debt e.g. two child limit, five weeks wait for Universal Credit
- 3 Expand council tax exemptions** to all families living with a disability and lone parent families receiving benefits

“

At Aberlour we believe reforming our welfare system is necessary especially if it helps people who are able to work get into employment. However, we are clear that reforms should always protect the most vulnerable and should be implemented in a manner that does not push more people into further and more entrenched poverty.”

SallyAnn Kelly OBE, Aberlour Chief Executive

Returning to our roots



This spring a lucky few of the Aberlour team returned to our Moray roots to mark Aberlour's 150th anniversary.

We celebrated with an afternoon tea party, hosted by our chair **David Robb**, at the Fleming Hall in Aberlour village. Guests joined us from all over the UK and included former residents and people connected with the orphanage and our charity.

Former resident Ron spoke at the event sharing that his entire childhood was spent at the orphanage having arrived as a 10-month-old baby, suffering from pneumonia, alongside his eight brothers and sisters.

During the event young people supported by our YouthPoint service in Moray shared how Aberlour had supported them. Jack and Rhys composed and performed their own special tune on their bagpipes while Vange showcased the art created and on display by Aberlour young people – as part of the Aberlour 150th Creative Communities Project.

We had the honour of interviewing several of the former residents, including Ron, about their time living at the orphanage. Whilst positive about his experience at Aberlour, Ron welcomed the change from placing children in large institutions to housing them in small, family-style homes and said:

“The young children today have got a much better chance to get going in life.”

He finished by offering an emotional message to those currently in care:

“I would like to encourage the younger people to stick to their guns, and not to give up on their dreams.”

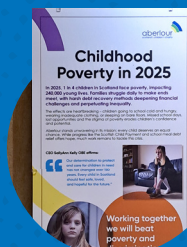
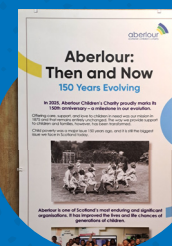
Watch the interviews with our former residents at [aberlour.org.uk/interviews](https://www.aberlour.org.uk/interviews)



At the event we unveiled our new Aberlour 150th anniversary tartan which was modelled by David and Ron on the day in their new kilts.



During the event we launched the **Aberlour: Then and Now** exhibition which was held at the Speyside Museum, in Aberlour, for two weeks.



Aberlour expands support for new mums and babies across Scotland

We're delighted to announce that from this summer, thanks to increased Scottish Government funding, we've been able to extend the reach of our intensive perinatal support services to Glasgow, Tayside and the whole of the Forth Valley.

Previously our service was only available to mums and their babies living in Falkirk. Our team offer a lifeline support service to new mums affected by substance and alcohol use. We're there to offer practical and emotional help with the aim of keeping families together.

Last year **Ashley** and **Kerri**, mums we support, spoke directly to MSPs explaining that the service had helped to save and transform their lives and called for the service to be available in every postcode.

Kerri, mum supported by Aberlour said:

"I was on the methadone project, just starting my recovery, when my partner at the time died through drugs. That was the night I found out I was pregnant."

Being referred to Aberlour was a turning point. They became my voice and went above and beyond. They weren't just ticking boxes, it was personal. If my baby wasn't here with me, then I probably wouldn't be here. I'd have relapsed.

My life is normal now. It's looking good."

With the right support we can keep families together and we're thrilled that we can reach even more children and families who need us.



“

It took just one person to see a wee bit of hope and things are totally different."

Ashley, mum supported by Aberlour said:

"I didn't know if I was going to be able to take my baby home, but I was referred to Aberlour and it felt like someone had got my back at last."

Every woman in every area should have someone like that in their corner. Every area needs a perinatal support service like this. It is a massive support. I was no longer on my own.

There is so much stigma around addiction and mental health but there is a trust there and it took just one person to see a wee bit of hope and things are totally different."

I'm proud of the mum I am now. My wee girl has changed my life, and I am entirely there for her."

Voices of Aberlour

It sounds dramatic... but that first night changed my life

The club is run by Johnny, a legend in Govan, and it is impossible to overestimate what he has achieved with young people growing up there.

His club had a huge impact on so many of us. It was never just four walls and a roof, it was a safety net, a place where young people could find help and encouragement when they might not have found it elsewhere.

It changed my life and, over the years, there have been hundreds, thousands, like me.

I was 16 when I first went in 2008 and mad about karate. I had won a world title in my age group and was hoping to get to Tokyo to defend it but the cost looked prohibitive.

I just remember Johnny being totally engaged as soon as he heard about it, getting sponsorship, publicity, just doing everything he possibly could to help.

In the end, I got to Tokyo and retained my title but my respect and gratitude to Johnny and Aberlour goes far beyond that.

Read more voices of Aberlour, like Alan's, by visiting aberlour.org.uk/we-are-family



He helped me in all sorts of ways. I wrote my first CV with the help of the club, for example, and was coached for my first interview there.

Sometimes life can change in an instant and walking into that club changed everything for me and loads of young people like me.

Alan

Youth club alumni

“

Johnny was doing it for me, but he would do it for every young person that came through the door. He is a force of nature and, when it comes to young people needing help, never stops."

150th updates from around Scotland!

Teens walk 150 miles to mark Aberlour's 150th anniversary

Young people who live with us have completed the Aberlour Big Walk, walking 150 miles from our first smaller residential house in Kirkcaldy to our founding village.

The epic trek took over a month to complete allowing young people from across our seven residential houses and our team to take part.

The walk, supported by Aberlour based Walkers Shortbread, ended with a celebratory party for all participants.

Congratulations to everyone involved!



Bagpipes, poetry, creativity, songs and a giant birthday cake!

Earlier this year our YouthPoint club in Govan marked 150 years of Aberlour with an incredible party, including unveiling a memorial bench created by our young people.

**Thank you to everyone
who took part!**



Dundee cookbook

To mark Aberlour's 150th young people supported by our disability service in Dundee wished to create their own cookbook to share their favourite recipes.

Over six weeks our nine budding chefs cooked lots of delicious food to decide what recipes to include and how to showcase them in a wonderful cookbook.

You can download the cookbook at aberlour.org.uk/dundee-cookbook

Garden party fun!

Our disability team in Lothian celebrated Aberlour's 150th with cake and a garden party.

It was wonderful for all our team, young people and their families to come together to celebrate and have fun!



The North

Dundee

Prestonpans

Glasgow

It might be a swim, a chat or a walk in the park

It's all about the mums, what they want, what they think might help.

I've been a Perinatal Befriender since 2019 helping new mums who have been referred to Aberlour because they might need some extra support.

I'll do whatever is going to help make things a little easier for them. I'm there to help, to allow her to take a breath and decide for herself how things can work.

It's about listening, not judging, and giving women space to talk about whatever is on their mind.

I have always had an interest in the welfare of children and enjoy being around babies and children.

It's a two-way thing and I get so much from the mums I meet.



The training of volunteers is terrific. It is a privilege to be alongside women and their little ones.

We are told that we are not there to "fix things" but to listen, provide a bit of space for the mums to offload and then work out what they need to do for themselves.

We are often working with quite vulnerable women and building trust is important but so is the relationship between the befrienders and our Aberlour coordinator.

It's all built on trust, good training and knowing support is there if needed.

It's so important to get the early years right when the babies are tiny and that ripples right through into adulthood.

Jen

Volunteer Perinatal Befriender

Find out more about volunteering roles available in your area by visiting aberlour.org.uk/volunteer or get in touch with George via email: volunteering@aberlour.org.uk or call **0141 260 9180**

This Advent you can help disadvantaged children across Scotland

by holding a Christingle service in aid of Aberlour



The money raised by your congregation will directly help children and families living in poverty.

Many churches in Scotland celebrate Christingle, and Aberlour has been fortunate to have benefitted from many collections and donations marking this occasion.

The service usually includes prayers, readings, hymns and carols, and of course the lighting of the Christingles.

Christingle was created with children in mind, and the celebrations are the perfect event for children and families and can be enjoyed by people of all ages, even if they don't regularly attend church.

Holding a Christingle celebration in support of Aberlour will directly benefit children and families in Scotland.

Our team is happy to help and support you in making sure your Christingle goes smoothly. Call us on **0141 260 9190** or email hello@aberlour.org.uk
Visit aberlour.org.uk/christingle for more information

I'd like to make a gift to help children in Scotland



1 I would like to make a regular gift

I would like to give: ☒ £3 ☒ £5 ☒ £8 ☒ £10 or my choice £ ____ each month

Name(s) of account holder(s) _____

Bank/Building Society account number

Sort code

Instruction to your Bank/Building Society

Please pay Aberlour Child Care Trust Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this Instruction may remain with Aberlour Child Care Trust and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank or Building Society.

2 I would like to make a one-off gift

I enclose a cheque for: ☒ £10 ☒ £25 ☒ £50 or my choice £ ____ made payable to Aberlour

Please debit my ☐ Mastercard / ☐ Visa / ☐ Maestro / ☐ CArCard ☒ £10 ☒ £25 ☒ £50 or my choice £ ____

Name on card _____

Card number

Start date

Expiry date

You can also give children in Scotland a brighter future by remembering Aberlour in your will. Supporters over 50 can write a will for free with our partners Thomas Bradley & Co. Call 0330 390 9200 for more info.

3 Your contact details

First Name _____ Last Name _____ Tel _____

Address _____

Email _____ Postcode _____

We'd love to keep in touch. Please tick the box below to indicate how you prefer to receive further communication from Aberlour. ☒ by post ☒ by telephone ☒ by email

You can change your preferences at any time by contacting us at hello@aberlour.org.uk or 0141 260 9190. We store your details securely and will never share them with any third parties for the purposes of their marketing. See www.aberlour.org.uk for full privacy statement.

4 *giftaid it*

☒ I want to make my gift worth 25% extra at no cost to me.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Signature(s) of account holder(s) _____ Date _____

Thank you

Completed forms can be sent to
Aberlour, Kintail House, Forthside Way, Stirling, FK8 1QZ.

Aberlour Child Care Trust | Scottish Charity no: SC007991 | Company reg no: SC312912
Registered Head Office: Kintail House, Forthside Way | Stirling FK8 1QZ
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