



About Aberlour Children's Charity

Aberlour is one of Scotland's largest children's charities which helps to improve the lives of disadvantaged children by providing support for families, including residential care, early years help, and urgent financial assistance, before they reach crisis point.

The charity is launching a "Poverty Relief" campaign again this year to secure vital donations for its Urgent Assistance Fund which provides emergency support to the country's most disadvantaged families in the form of cash grants, typically within 48 hours, for essentials such as food, clothing, beds and energy costs.

As a result of a surge in demand due to the cost of living crisis, Aberlour's Urgent Assistance Fund is running dangerously low and without help, it will run out by Christmas.

Aberlour has services throughout Scotland and teams who work with families facing the toughest economic conditions in decades.

Case Study: One Glasgow Mum's story

Aberlour's support has had a lasting impact on one mother from Glasgow, who has been working with the charity since she was a teenager. The 28-year-old single mum, who has three children under eight, said:

"I've been in touch with Aberlour for more than 10 years, from when I was a teenager struggling with my own issues until now, as a single mum.

"I've had a hard time with money. I've got three kids, I don't get benefit payments for the third, and with bills and everything else going up, never mind providing for us on my own, we're at breaking point.

"The children just keep growing, and this year I didn't have the money to buy them school uniforms, underwear, socks, shoes, jackets, bags or pencils with everything else I needed to pay for. School was starting in two weeks, and I was panicking but with help from Aberlour's Urgent Assistance Fund, I managed to get them kitted out in time, which was a massive weight off my shoulders. Without it, I would have probably kept them off school because I didn't have any of the stuff that they needed.

"I've also received money from Aberlour to buy beds for the kids. My four-year-old son had been having lots of accidents, and I tried to clean the beds as best I could, but it wasn't great. With the money, I was able to buy new bunk beds, mattresses, pillows, duvets and bedding for my kids, which helped massively.

Speaking about the impact of living in poverty, the single mum said:

“My mental health has been really bad; the cost of living crisis has really affected me, and I haven’t been coping. I’ve not been sending the kids to school and nursery when I should. It becomes such a struggle and sometimes everything seems to get on top of me.

“My eldest’s attendance has been pretty bad. For me, it is the thought of going out and being around people, and not knowing if I have the money to give him a snack when he wants it. I’m constantly worried about money all the time. I really worry they might tell their teachers that they are hungry, because it is a struggle to put food on the table.

“I have been trying to work since my youngest son was eight months old. Last year I worked two jobs to provide for my kids, but by the time I went into town for an hour shift, I was spending more money than I was earning.

“I definitely worry about how our situation will affect my kids. They’re only young once and I’m wasting their life doing nothing with them, stuck in the house because I can’t afford anything. I feel horrible that I have to choose which days to put the electricity on. Other days I have to pick between bread or milk. I skip meals and go hungry so my kids have what they need, but I’m only able to buy the cheapest food options just to make sure they are fed, and it worries me that I can’t give them better quality.

“I know my kids see me struggle too which is another worry; I’m often down and upset. My eldest is eight years old and it’s a lot of pressure on him. He asks if he can stay off school to help me. He has already taken on a lot to help me but he’s only little. He has had to deal with stress that no kid should have to deal with. He shouldn’t have to worry about choosing to buy a sweet in the shop and helping us buy food for dinner.

“I cannot take them out, we can't go anywhere, whether it's a soft play or basically anywhere. They're stuck in a house, so they're demented. They're constantly arguing with each other because they're stuck within the same four walls and there's not much for them to do. It's horrible. I'd just like to take them to soft play.

“As for Christmas they just don't understand why other kids have got more expensive stuff and they've got cheaper stuff, so they're like does Santa not like me? As a parent, I feel like a failure.

“I’m stuck in this rut and without financial support for people like Aberlour, I don’t know what I would do. Sometimes I feel like I’m in a hole and I can see the ladders, but I can’t reach them, but with Aberlour’s support I feel like I can start to get out.

“The support they give to families is amazing, they make you feel so welcome, like being part of a big family. I can’t describe how good it’s been to have their help. When I am really struggling, they go above and beyond. They will listen to me, speak to me and go out of their way to give support. If we didn’t have access to things like the Urgent Assistance Fund, it feels like we would have nothing. They have brought joy back to our lives when it feels like all hope is lost.”

The story is just one example of how Aberlour Children’s Charity works with families.

For more information about Aberlour’s Urgent Assistance Fund, visit: www.aberlour.org.uk/get-help/urgent-assistance-fund. Donations to Aberlour’s Urgent Assistance Fund via: www.aberlour.org.uk/povertyrelief.