

# ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020



**befriend a child**



turn a frown upside down

[befriendachild.org.uk](http://befriendachild.org.uk)



Befriend a Child celebrating their inclusion on the Aberdeen Monopoly board with Aberdeen's Lord Provost Barney Crockett

We are the only specialist befriending charity for children in the North East



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Our team as of 31st March 2020

**12** staff members

**324** volunteers

**4** board members



## Welcome

Welcome to the Befriend a Child annual report 2019-2020 and thank you for taking an interest in the work we do to support children and young people experiencing difficult life circumstances across Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.

Over the last year we have continued to grow and we've supported over 250 children and young people through our 1:1 programmes and group projects which you can read more about on pages 4 to 9. At the heart of Befriend a Child are our team of inspiring and dedicated staff and volunteers who continue to make such a positive difference to the lives of local children and young people.

We are extremely thankful to our supporters, partners, and the local community who show a commitment to our cause that is second to none. With the outset of COVID-19 at the end of this year we have never been more grateful for this support.

Through the pandemic we have had to quickly adapt and change to ensure that, no matter what, support is in place for our young people and families. The year ahead will present many changes but we are confident that together we can overcome these to positively impact the lives of young people most in need in our local communities.

**Len Ironside**  
Chair of Trustees

**Sarah Misra**  
Chief Executive Officer



## Our mission

To support children and young people growing up in difficult life circumstances across Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire to develop into confident young adults and help them reach their full potential.



## Our vision

That all children experience a happy childhood and are given the best chance in life to thrive.



## Our values

### INDIVIDUALITY

We treat every child and young person as an individual.

### RESILIENCE

We ensure that our children and young people can overcome disadvantage by providing safe and healthy relationships and new experiences.

### INCLUSION

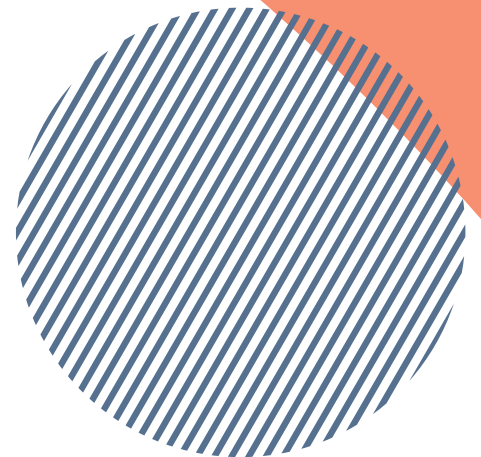
We respect the views and opinions of children, volunteers, staff and stakeholders.

### INTEGRITY

We are committed to delivering our work openly and transparently always acting in the best interests of the children and young people we support.

### FUN

We believe having fun is an essential part of growing up.





## 1:1 programmes and projects

Our 1:1 programmes and projects are designed to support children and young people living in difficult life circumstances. We match children and young people who are referred to us with trained volunteer befrienders and mentors who enjoy regular activities together, helping them learn new skills, build their confidence and self-esteem, improve their wellbeing and build a positive relationship with an adult role model.

## Befriending

Our 1:1 befriending programme is our largest and most in demand programme and is designed for children aged 4½ -16 years old who are experiencing difficult life circumstances through no fault of their own.

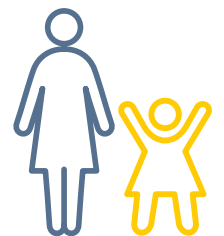
Volunteer befrienders and their befriendees meet once a fortnight for a few hours to take part in a range of fun activities and outings depending on the child's interests and hobbies. Befrienders also encourage the children to try new things to help them learn new skills, build their confidence and self esteem and discover more of what life has to offer.

From April 2019 – March 2020 our befriending programme helped 242 children, with referrals coming from social work, education, third sector organisations and health professionals.

As part of our befriending programme we ran a Transition Project, for children making the move to secondary school. Now in its final year the project, funded by the Volant Trust and Scottish Children's Lottery, has helped 52 children make the move from primary to secondary school over 2019-2020, a huge increase from the 21 children who benefitted from the project in 2018-2019.

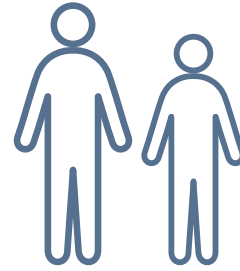
"My favourite part of having a befriender is that we get to do fun activities and spend time together"

13-year-old befriendees



242

children  
benefitted from  
our befriending  
programme



## intandem mentoring

Funded by the Scottish Government through Inspiring Scotland, intandem aims to support young people aged 8-14 years old who are looked after at home by their local authority by matching them with a trained volunteer mentor who acts as a positive adult role model helping them navigate their own personal challenges as well as young adulthood. Befriend a Child is one of 13 charities across Scotland selected to deliver the programme.

The programme, now in its fourth year, has continued to gain traction and recognition with local referral sources and 13 young people have benefitted from a mentor from April 2019 – March 2020.

Intandem mentoring has proven a vital service to the young people Befriend a Child support. Some of the children involved in the programme experience turbulent home lives and are lacking in a positive adult role model to turn to for support and guidance. Through the support of their mentors these difficulties can be alleviated and allow them the chance to look forward to their future.

"I know I can rely on my mentor to listen to me when I am having problems and I find her really trustworthy"

**15-year-old mentee**

# 13

**young people  
benefitted  
from a mentor**





## Michelle's story

### Michelle Eastcroft, befriender since 2015

Michelle decided to become a volunteer befriender after a conversation with a work colleague who was also a befriender at the time.

"I feel every child deserves a chance in life and the thought of being a positive role model and playing a part in helping someone made me want to become a befriender." – Michelle.

Following training Michelle was matched with 6-year-old Kayleigh who was living with her grandmother as her mum had sadly passed away. It was hoped Kayleigh could be matched with a befriender who would be a consistent presence in her life and could offer her grandmother some respite, and most importantly allow Kayleigh to engage in activities that could increase her confidence and self-esteem.

Since their first meeting 6 years ago Michelle and Kayleigh have enjoyed many activities such as trips to the theatre, strawberry picking and picnics, tubing, baking and jewellery making but the most valuable activity has been the time they spend together.

Kayleigh's grandmother has been so grateful for Michelle and the support of Befriend a Child, "Michelle has been the best thing for Kayleigh, she couldn't have had a nicer befriender. Kayleigh can chat to Michelle about things that she won't talk to me about, so I know she has someone to open up to."

"I remember our first meeting so well and how nervous I was, Kayleigh was very shy too. Throughout the visit I slowly managed to win her over and by the end she was showing me her toys and chatting"

Michelle

"Over the years I have watched Kayleigh grow from a shy little girl who would barely speak, into a caring and confident young lady and I feel our friendship and Befriend a Child has played a big part in shaping her for the road ahead"

Michelle





"I think the idea of mentoring is great, and something I would have liked growing up so I could see how it could benefit a young child"

**Robert**



# Robert's story

## Robert Fenton, intandem mentor since 2019

Robert decided to become a volunteer mentor as he felt it was something he would have greatly benefitted from having as a young person.

Robert was matched with 11-year-old Ben, who was referred to intandem as he was lacking in confidence and needed a positive male adult role model in his life as well as guidance on expressing his feelings in a healthier way.

"We were both quite nervous so for our first outing we started off slow with a game of Mario Kart and it didn't take long for Ben to come out of his shell!" - Robert

"Now we enjoy all kinds of activities together. As we are both quite active, I would say going swimming, playing football in the park and rewarding ourselves with ice cream afterwards would be our favourite things to do together"- Robert

Since becoming Ben's mentor there has been such an improvement in Ben both emotionally and in his relationship with members of his family.



"Prior to Robert's mentorship Ben's typical emotional response would be anger as a defensive reaction to situations he was uncomfortable with, but now Ben is far more reflective and emotionally intelligent. As a result, Ben's relationships with his family and peers have improved," Aleisha Douglas, intandem Co-ordinator

Without a doubt Robert's involvement in Ben's life as a mentor has made a huge difference to his future.



# Group projects

Through our group projects we aim to alleviate social isolation our children and young people face as well as encourage peer to peer engagement which can be concerns raised at the point of referral.



## Playscheme

Funded this year by AABi, CNOOC and Exxon Mobil our playschemes ran during the Easter, Summer and October school holidays and offered children the opportunity to take part in a range of activities, learn new skills and make new friends of a similar age.

This year's holiday playschemes saw 72 children take part in activities such as museum visits, cooking, crafting, film making, rock climbing and nature walks.

"Playscheme offers children an opportunity to engage in activities during the school holidays that perhaps their home circumstances won't allow and gives them a chance to get outside and engage with their peers."

**Jean Gordon,**  
Head of Operations

## Youth Club

Supported by the Fairer Aberdeen Fund, Befriend a Child's Youth Clubs are hosted in the regeneration areas of Northfield and Woodside on a Tuesday and Thursday evening and allow children the chance to take part in a range of activities and enjoy carefree time with their peers.

The clubs have been growing in popularity with children from the surrounding areas through word of mouth and engagement of local schools.

This year 23 children have engaged in activities such as cooking, baking, arts and crafts and fun interactive indoor and outdoor games.

Children who are waiting to be matched with a befriender or mentor have been encouraged to attend the clubs along with those who have been matched in order to help them take that first step towards reducing their social isolation by making new friends.

"The best part is when children come over at the end to say thanks and they have a bundle of crafts that we have made or go away having enjoyed a new experience with big smiles on their faces."

**Beverly Angus, volunteer**



## Bev's Sessions

Bev's sessions are monthly activities hosted in our Playzone and outdoors in the Aberdeen area where children can make friends and try something new with their befrienders and mentors. The sessions, run by volunteer of 11 years Beverly Angus, have provided a range of activities for children to enjoy over the last year including arts and crafts, pizza making, outdoor games, tubing and pumpkin carving.

Around 20 children and their volunteers take part in these sessions each month. The sessions have not only provided fun and entertainment but the opportunity for volunteers to create a community where they can share their experiences in befriending and mentoring.

## Summer Outing

Our annual summer outing in Hazlehead Park brought together 24 children with their volunteers. Packed lunches were provided and fun and games were enjoyed by all.



## Halloween and Christmas parties

This year Shell hosted a Halloween party for us and we hosted a Christmas party sponsored by Camm-Pro, Absoft and the Aberdeen Festive Fund. Both parties were well attended and offered volunteers and children a chance to come together, have fun and enjoy holiday festivities together.

Halloween party was enjoyed by 70 children and their volunteers. The Christmas party was enjoyed by 71 children and their volunteers with 25 of the older children taking part in a fun and interactive escape room style game.





## Our impact

Through our 1:1 programmes and group projects we aim to positively impact the lives of the children we support by helping them in the following ways.

### ● Increase their confidence and self esteem

By treating them as individuals and allowing them the opportunity to share their views on their experiences, choosing outings to suit their interests alongside their volunteer and encouraging them to step outside of their comfort zone by trying new activities.

"I've noticed a huge improvement in my befriender's confidence since we were first matched, having someone to listen to him has made such a big difference to his self-esteem"

**volunteer befriender**

### ● Reduce their social isolation

Children are encouraged to take part in our group projects such as playscheme helping them meet new people and building friendships with their peers and others in the wider community.

"My son struggled socially but our family and his school have found he is coming out of his shell thanks to the support of his volunteer"

**child's parent**

### ● Learn new skills

Children are encouraged to explore new hobbies and interests with their volunteers, helping them build valuable skills for the future.

"My befriender has taken up a new interest in ice hockey since I introduced him to the sport by taking him to a game early on into our outings"

**volunteer befriender**

### ● Improve their wellbeing

Children are offered a safe space and have the opportunity to explore who they are outside of the family home with their positive adult role model volunteer.

"Jac's mentee has gone from a young girl who wouldn't attend school, to a young woman ready to take on the World thanks to her mentor"

**Aleisha Douglas, intandem Coordinator**

## Our children



**242**

children benefitted from our befriending programme

**52**

children benefitted from our transition project

**13**

young people benefitted from our intandem mentoring programme

**22%**

5 - 8 years old

**78%**

9 - 16 years old

**51%**

Male

**49%**

Female

In 2019-20 we worked in 13 areas of Aberdeenshire and 31 areas of Aberdeen City including regeneration areas of Northfield, Torry, Tillydrone, Mastick, Seaton and Woodside.

### Referral sources

- 45%** Social work
- 38%** Education
- 14%** Third sector organisations
- 3%** Health

### Reasons for referral

\*children can be referred for more than one reason

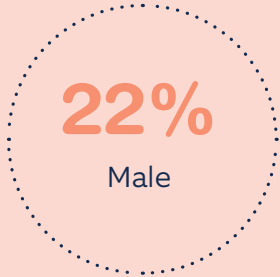
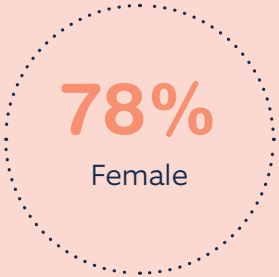
- 47%** Social isolation / lack of social skills
- 32%** Substance misuse in the family
- 32%** Behavioural problems
- 31%** Low self esteem
- 25%** Victim of abuse
- 20%** Parental mental health
- 12%** Positive adult role model
- 10%** Child mental health
- 9%** Domestic violence
- 7%** Young carer
- 1%** Affected by disability

# Our volunteers



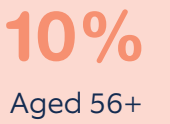
"At the heart of what we do are committed volunteers who are passionate about making a difference to the lives of our children and young people"

**Nicola Milne, Befriending Manager**



"The best thing about being a befriender is witnessing seeing the child happy, smiling and laughing. Making a difference in their life and watching them grow through learning and development."

**Alena Fiddes, volunteer befriender**



'It's great fun I feel guilty sometimes thinking I'm getting more out of the mentoring than my mentee does'

**Jacqueline Wilson, volunteer mentor**



"We have visited museums, an aquarium, the cinema, restaurants, Codonas, an ice hockey match and have undertaken activities such as archery, bowling, ice skating, breakout games, paintballing, horse riding and many others."

Garry



## Garry's story

### Garry Sturrock, befriending since 2015

Volunteer befriender Garry joined Befriend a Child as part of the befriending programme in January 2015. Garry first heard about Befriend a Child and our work through a former colleague who was a befriender at the time.

Garry got in touch with Befriend a Child and after an informal chat and a formal interview, he took part in Befriend a Child's volunteer training session.

"The training provided me with the knowledge to feel confident in starting to befriend. It was clear that a lot of time was spent by my Befriending Co-ordinator to ensure that I was matched with a suitable befriender, Jack."

Jack was referred to Befriend a Child when he was 9 years old due to low self-esteem / confidence, social isolation and behavioural problems. Jack was very withdrawn and would spend all of his time in his room playing games by himself. It was felt Jack would benefit from having a befriender who could help him engage in new activities to help increase his confidence and self-esteem.

Garry has been befriending Jack for 5 years now and in this time, they have enjoyed many fun activities together in Aberdeen and Shire, which have helped Jack strengthen his social skills and have new experiences.

Jack's family have praised his relationship with Garry and Befriend a Child for helping Jack come out of his shell.

"Without Befriend a Child, Jack may have struggled to find positive experiences to assist his social development. Jack's family has demonstrated their gratitude for everything that befriending has done for him." Linzi Bremner, Befriending Coordinator.

"I have gained a lot from befriending. It has helped me see the world in a different and more altruistic way and it has diversified my own intrapersonal skills. I have also had the opportunity to get involved in activities that I might otherwise not have done."  
Garry





## Fundraising



Without the support of so many partners and donors we would not be able to make such a positive impact on the lives of so many local children and young people. In 2019/2020 Befriend a Child's total income was £610,585. This year we have been successful in securing funding from trusts and grants, new and existing corporate partners, individuals in the community and have continued to deliver campaigns and fundraising events to engage further support.

### Trusts and Grants

We have been fortunate to receive grants from charitable trusts and foundations such as Inspiring Scotland, Ina Scott Sutherland Charitable Foundation, The Volant Charitable Trust, John Gordon Charitable Fund, Hugh Fraser Foundation, The Stafford Trust, AABi, Bank of Scotland Foundation, Fairer Aberdeen Fund, Mrs Elizabeth S Wilson's Trust, Scottish Children's Lottery, Souter Charitable Trust, The R S Macdonald Trust and The Robertson Trust. Funds from all our grant makers have proven vital in ensuring we can deliver our befriending and mentoring programmes.

### Corporate partnerships

This year we have been fortunate to have received the support of a growing number of companies. Partnerships with companies have taken a variety of forms including project funding, sponsorship, volunteering and charity of the year involvement.

We are extremely grateful to Saltire Energy for their continued support over the last 8 years as they have enabled us to work with and reach so many children and young people. This year we have worked with Deloitte for the final year of our three-year partnership and have partnered with BIG Partnership, Aberdeen International

Airport, Village Hotels, CNR International and OGA. Many companies have also generously supported us through fundraising, one off donations, sponsorship, our Giving Tree Appeal, The Disco Ball and providing pro bono work or gifts in kind.

### Community Support

With our increasing presence and growing profile in the community we have seen a great uptake in community support over the last year with individuals taking on challenges and hosting events and community groups considering us for donations.



Bonnymuir Bowling Club



Steve Rae

This year we have been the recipient of funds from a number of sources including a £13,000 donation from the Bonnymuir Bowling Club, £7,871.35 from Handelsbanken employee Steve Rae who took on a charity cycle, £4,330 from individual fundraiser Holly Taylor who hosted a ball on our behalf as well as a volunteer coffee morning which raised £1,291 and was hosted by long term volunteer Craig Duncan and his team of volunteers.

We appreciate the support of all of our community and individual fundraisers and the funds raised have helped us in reaching out to more children in need of a befriender or mentor across 2019.





# Befriend a Child events



## Giving Tree Appeal 2019

Our annual Giving Tree Appeal engaged 90 businesses across Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire and was successful in raising £17,632 worth of toy donations as well as cash donations totalling £10,907.



## Disco Ball 2020

This year we welcomed 288 supporters to our Big Kids' Ball which took on the theme of Disco. We enjoyed a memorable night hosted by Northsound 1's Jeff Diack and Lauren Mitchell with themed games and great prizes kindly donated by businesses and individuals across Aberdeen. Thanks to the generosity of our guests and supporters we raised £49,404.18. Particular thanks go to our sponsors 80:20 Procurement, Apache, Wood and XIC.



## Sponsored Events

Individuals and teams took part in a range of sponsored events for us across the country including the Kiltwalk, Ride the North, BHGE10K and the Banchory Beast Race. This year we were once again fortunate enough to be one of two charities to benefit from the Aberdeen Runway Run organised by Ryan Broadhurst and hosted by CHC in June which raised £14,538.94 for Befriend a Child.



CHC Runway Run



BIG Partnership at the Kiltwalk



Volunteer coffee morning



# Financial information

Statement of financial activities for the year ended March 31st 2020

<b>Income</b>	<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	<b>Restricted funds</b>	<b>Total funds 2020</b>
Donations	£348,063	£87,620	£435,683
Donations in kind		£94,374	£94,374
Charitable activities	£79,992		£79,992
Investment income	£536		£536
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£428,591</b>	<b>£181,994</b>	<b>£610,585</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	<b>Restricted funds</b>	<b>Total funds 2020</b>
Raising funds	£86,022		£86,022
Charitable activities	£289,458	£234,688	£524,146
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£375,480</b>	<b>£234,688</b>	<b>£610,168</b>
<b>Net income / expenditure</b>	<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	<b>Restricted funds</b>	<b>Total funds 2020</b>
Movements in funds	£53,111	(£52,694)	£417
Funds brought forward	£241,607	£75,680	£317,287
<b>Total funds forward</b>	<b>£294,718</b>	<b>£22,986</b>	<b>£317,704</b>

A full breakdown of our accounts are available online or upon request to the charity.





Thank you to everyone who has supported us this year, without you we would not be able to continue our work with local children and young people. The following organisations and individuals have raised or donated £500 or more for Befriend a Child this year.

80:20 Procurement  
 Aberdeen International Airport  
 Aberdeen Riding School  
 Aberdeen University Medics  
 Aberdeen University Student's Association (AUSA)  
 Absoft  
 ACVO  
 AFC Community Trust  
 Alan Davidson Foundation  
 Albyn Lower School  
 Anderson Anderson Brown Charitable Initiative (AABi)  
 Apache  
 Ardoe House Hotel  
 Atkins  
 Bank of Scotland Foundation  
 Barclays  
 BIG Partnership  
 Bonnymuir Bowling Club  
 BP  
 Brodies LLP  
 Burness Paull  
 Camm-Pro  
 Chartered Institute of Bankers in Scotland  
 CHC Helicopters  
 Chrysaor  
 Cineworld  
 CNOOC Limited  
 CNR International  
 Codonas  
 Craig Duncan  
 Deloitte  
 Dr Guthrie's Association  
 Dyce Academy

Dyce Community Music Group  
 Elsick House  
 Ethos Energy  
 ETKO Sports Academy  
 ETSY summer market  
 Evelina and John Davidson  
 Exxon Mobil  
 Fairer Aberdeen Fund  
 Ferryhill School  
 Fit Likey Brewery  
 Handelsbanken  
 Hilton Treeptops Hotel  
 Holly Capel  
 Holly Taylor  
 Hugh Fraser Foundation  
 Ian Duncan  
 ICR Integrity  
 Ina Scott Sutherland Charitable Foundation  
 Inspiring Scotland  
 Inverurie Locos  
 Inverurie Panto  
 Jean S Innes Charitable Trust  
 John Gordon Charitable Fund  
 JP Morgan Force for Good  
 Kenny Gibb  
 Kirk of St Nicholas  
 Lizard Festival  
 Marion Gibb  
 Martin Connell Charitable Trust  
 Mattioli Woods  
 Miss M E S Paterson's Charitable Trust  
 Miss Violet M Lessel's Trust  
 Mrs Elizabeth S Wilson's Trust  
 Natalie Tough Dance School

NESCOL  
 Northsound Cash for Kids  
 Oil & Gas Authority (OGA)  
 One Stop Waste  
 Order of St Lazarus  
 PDI  
 Right Here Productions  
 Robin Wilshaw  
 Route 66  
 Ryan Broadhurst  
 Saints and Sinners Club  
 Saltire Energy  
 Sandwich Larder  
 Scotland's Open Gardens  
 Scottish Children's Lottery  
 Sharon Gray  
 Shell  
 Skyline Trampoline Park  
 Souter Charitable Trust  
 Sport Aberdeen  
 St Katherine's Trust  
 St Margaret's School for Girls  
 St Mark's Church  
 Steve Rae  
 Stuart Benson  
 The R S Macdonald Charitable Trust  
 The Robertson Trust  
 The Stafford Trust  
 The Volant Charitable Trust  
 Transform Foundation  
 Transition Extreme  
 Trend Magazine  
 Village Hotel Aberdeen  
 William Wilson  
 Wood  
 XIC

# Thank you



**befriend a child**



turn a frown upside down

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