

befriend a child



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Youth and Philanthropy Initiative (YPI)



Thank you for choosing Befriend a Child as your YPI charity!

By representing us at your school's YPI you are not only potentially raising an incredible £3,000 to go towards our work in the local community, but you are also raising awareness about our programmes and projects and the difference that they make to the lives of the children and young people we support.

This YPI pack was created to guide you through the work that we do and the impact we make, and to help inspire your presentation. Please do get in touch if you have any questions throughout the process or if you would like to arrange a visit. The team at Befriend a Child wishes you the best of luck!

Befriend a Child's history

Befriend a Child was formed in 1975 by two women on the Aberdeen Children's Panel who saw a gap in the support children were receiving between hearings. They saw the benefit of offering a child one to one support through a positive adult role model who could spend some time with the child and help take their minds off of the difficulties of their home life.

In 1992, Befriend a Child broke away from the Children's Panel and became an independent charity in its own rights. We are the only dedicated befriending charity for children in the North East of Scotland.



Who are we?

Befriend a Child is a local charity which supports children and young people growing up in difficult life circumstances across Aberdeenshire. Many of the individuals we support are experiencing social issues such as isolation, low self-esteem, are affected by disability or substance/alcohol misuse within the family.

Our goal at Befriend a Child is to help these children and young people develop into confident and competent young adults and achieve their full potential.

We offer 1:1 and group befriending and mentoring for school aged children and young people. This work is assisted by dedicated and passionate volunteers who are trained and supported by our experienced staff team.

Through providing a positive adult role model and positive life experiences our volunteers help children and young people build confidence and self-esteem as well as develop new life interests and skills. In time, the child's experience with their volunteer can have a transformational effect and allow the child to deal positively with the challenges they face. We believe every child deserves a happy childhood and the best chance to succeed in life.



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Befriending programme

Our 1:1 befriending programme is designed for school-aged children aged 4 ½ - 16 years old. Children who are referred to our befriending programme are matched with a trained volunteer who meets up with the child twice a month for 2 - 3 hours to take part in a variety of fun activities based on the interests of the child. These activities can include going to the cinema, ice skating, attending a football or an ice hockey match, going for a walk along the beach, getting a hot chocolate, or enjoying arts and crafts together in the Befriend a Child Playzone to name a few.

Befrienders can encourage the children to try new activities and learn new skills such as swimming, baking, horse riding, or a new sport. Children are supported through the challenges they are experiencing by having a consistent and reliable adult in their life.

Volunteers aim to develop trust and introduce their child to new experiences, so they can explore what life has to offer and become more confident around their peers.



Intandem mentoring

Befriend a Child is one of 11 charities selected to deliver the Scottish Government's mentoring programme for young people, age 8 - 14 years old, who are looked after at home by the local authority. Mentoring is goals-oriented, and one of the many ways a mentor can support their mentee is to experience new things together and develop the young person's skills and interests to motivate them to achieve their best in every environment they are in.

Children referred to our intandem program are matched with a trained volunteer. The volunteer will meet up with the child or young person weekly to build a consistent and trusting relationship and help improve their chances in life. Similarly to the befriending programme, the volunteers and their children take part in a wide range of activities on their weekly outings.

Family support project

After identifying a need for support from families with children and young people already befriended or mentored through Befriend a Child, the Family Support project was launched in 2022.

The aim of the project is to provide additional support to families in a variety of ways. This can range from information on local food banks, support during multi-agency meetings or advice and guidance on finance and benefits. The project also provides care packages which are provided to identified families experiencing financial hardship during the colder months of October to March.



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Group Activities

Our group befriending and mentoring programmes and projects prove successful in alleviating issues such as social isolation and lack of peer-to-peer engagement. The children have the opportunity to socialise and make new friends whilst taking part in fun activities together.



Youth club

Our youth club runs during term time and is for the children we support and children currently on our waiting list. The clubs are coordinated by a fully trained youth worker and the children attending get the opportunity to interact with their peers weekly, which is a considerable help to those who are struggling with self-confidence or isolation. Youth club involves a range of indoor and outdoor activities, from arts and crafts, baking and games sessions to visits to the park and outdoor summer games when the weather is good.

Group Activity Sessions

Our long-term Befriend a Child volunteer Bev Angus hosts monthly group activities for the children we support at Befriend a Child. As well as giving the children the opportunity to make new friends, Bev's sessions are a great opportunity for our volunteers to meet one another as volunteers attend these sessions with their befriender or mentee. Past Bev's sessions the children and volunteers have loved include tubing, pizza baking, slime making, and seasonal crafts.



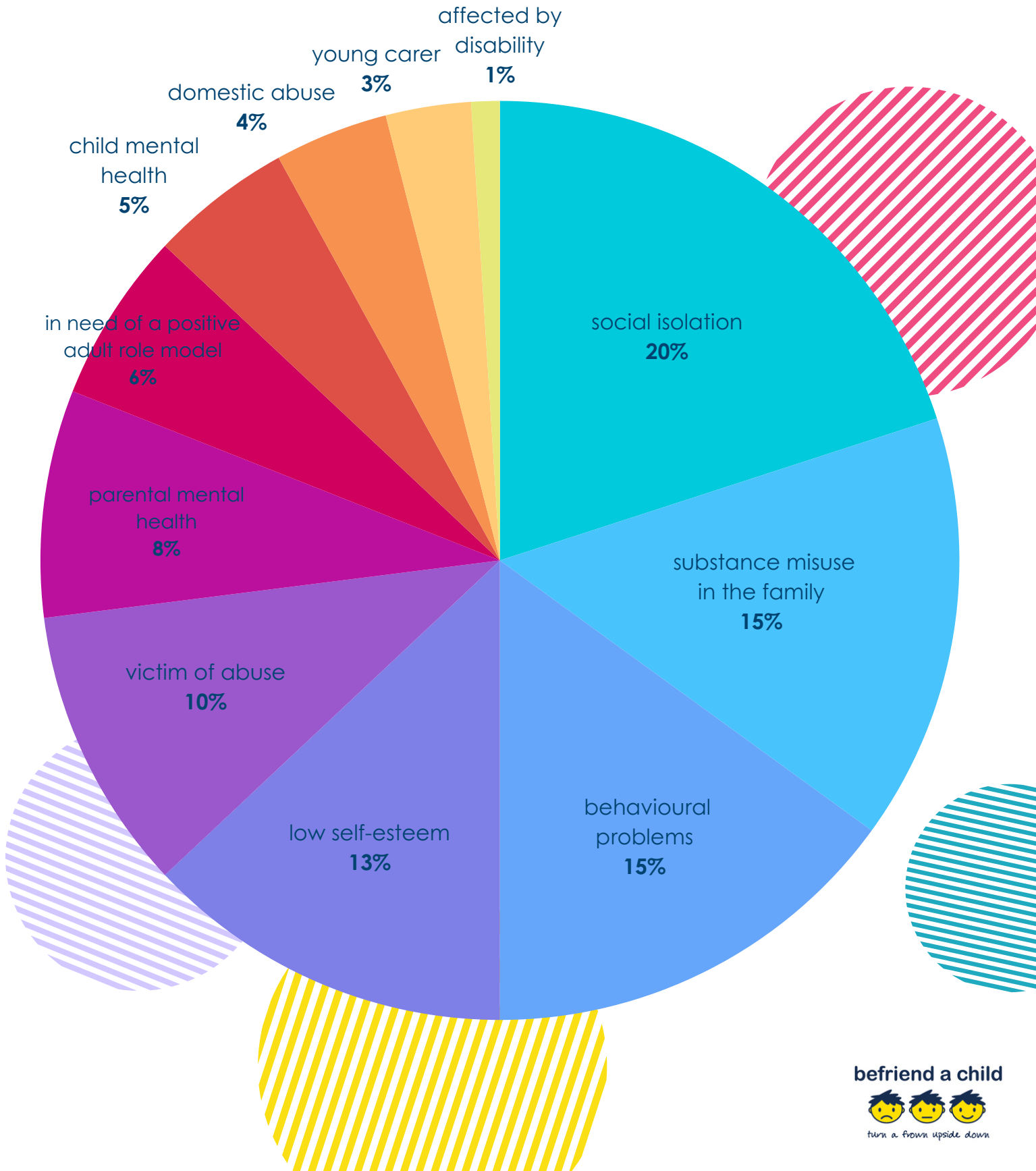
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Reasons for referral and sources

All the children we support at Befriend a Child are referred to us from an approved professional partner or voluntary organisation and are assessed against set criteria to determine the greatest need. Our referral sources include education (primary and secondary schools), social services, health care practices, and other third sector organisations.

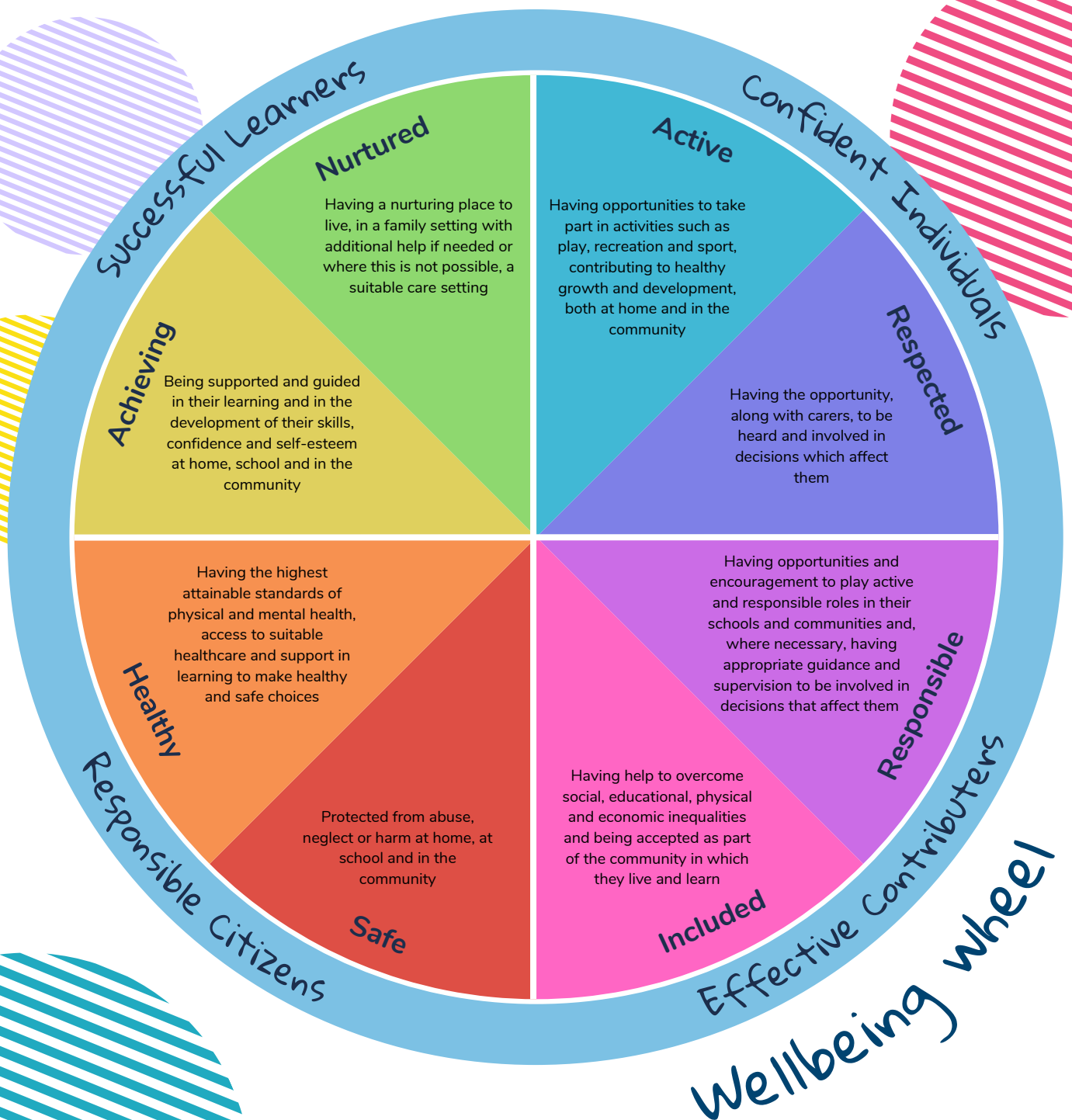
Below are examples of why children are referred to us, most children have more than one reason for referral:



The benefits of befriending and mentoring

There are many benefits from having a volunteer befriender or mentor. The social issues that many of our children and young people are affected by are a huge part of their lives. However, with a positive role model, many of these issues can be addressed.

From looking at the fundamentals of the SHANARRI Wellbeing wheel, we can identify some examples of positive outcomes that the children and young people we support have experienced as a result of having a befriender or mentor:



The difference made

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

- 13-year-old befriender



"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

"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



"It's good for me to have someone separate from teachers and workers. I like having someone who wants to do the same fun things and I know I can talk to him about anything. He helps me see the positive in things if I've had a bad week."

- 14-year-old mentee

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Why are we important?

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

Through our programmes and projects we aim to help children:

- Increase in confidence
- Increase in self-esteem
- Reduce their social isolation
- Learn new skills
- Improve their wellbeing

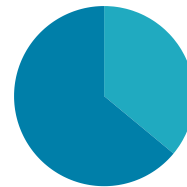
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Children are on the waiting list to be matched with befrienders or mentors

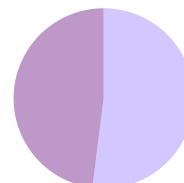
Befriend a Child supported 254 children in 2024/25

- 194 as part of our befriending programme
- 23 as part of our intandem programme
- 52 as part of our Youth Club
- 44 as part of our Family Support Project

- 14% aged 5-8
- 55% aged 9-12
- 31% aged 13-17



- 51% Boys
- 48% Girls
- 1% Non Binary



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Befriend a Child volunteers

At the heart of Befriend a Child are our inspiring volunteers. They are invaluable in engaging and encouraging children and young people across Aberdeen City and Shire. The majority of our volunteers are befrienders or mentors, but we also have those who volunteer at our youth clubs, group sessions, fundraising events, and also on our Board of Trustees.

At Befriend a Child we are committed to equipping volunteers with all the necessary skills to deliver quality befriending and mentoring programmes in both a 1:1 and group setting and to also help them handle situations which may arise during their time as a volunteer.

Training for volunteers covers a range of subjects from child protection laws to practical tips on planning outings with the child. All volunteers are PVG checked and support is offered throughout the befriending and mentoring journey.



Volunteers are assigned a support worker who will help guide them through the process, from meeting the child and their family to reviewing their experience and offering help and guidance where required.

Anyone over the age of 18 can enquire about becoming a befriender or mentor, our volunteers come from all walks of life and are a variety of ages. We just ask that individuals interested in volunteering commit to a minimum of one year with their child.

Our volunteers benefit from the befriending and mentoring experience, many find they gain a great sense of satisfaction and pride seeing their befriendees or mentees grow and mature, developing new skills as they experience new activities.

"We have done so many things over the years including sing along 'Frozen' at His Majesty's Theatre, strawberry picking, picnics, tubing, jewellery making, chocolate making, crafts. You name it, we have done it. I have really enjoyed all of our outings and when you ask my befriendees what her favourite outing has been over the years, she always says ALL OF THEM!" - Michelle, volunteer befriender

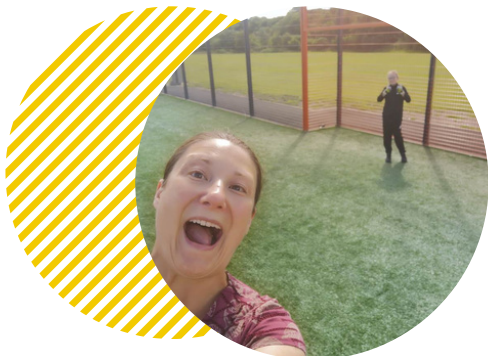


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What our volunteers say...

"It's a freeing time for me, a little escape from my own realities. Fun and laughter really is the best medicine! I leave feeling refreshed and rewarded knowing we've made the best of our time out and that this time is appreciated by him and his family!" - Leigh, volunteer befriender



"I already work with children teaching safety and I love doing that. I had never thought about mentoring until hearing more at an RGU volunteering event. Without having a mentor, my mentee may not have had the confidence to achieve even the smallest of goals, for example, take a bus on her own, order meals in a restaurant or have had the confidence to make a return to school" - Jacqueline, volunteer mentor

"My befriender has become a good friend and planning and partaking in our outings has given me a purpose in my life. I think there's certainly an element of escapism because the few hours we spend together every month I am totally focused on her having fun and enjoying herself and so everything else is on hold. I've had loads of great experiences and new opportunities too. It's something I love and am very proud of and always enjoy talking about." - Kate, volunteer befriender



"I've gained so much from befriending. Our role is to provide the child with a friend, an adult they can trust and learn from, but the friendship goes both ways. I'm as excited for outings as my befriender, and I look forward to the days when we go out. I'm always eager to hear what they've been up to and what new things they've tried, and they're happy to teach me and get me to try these things. (Even if, in some cases, the new thing they want me to try is the strange combination of chicken nuggets dipped in ice-cream.)" - Siobhan, volunteer befriender

"I have never felt this fulfilled with any job I have undertaken. Even though this is a voluntary role, my reward comes with every smile from my little one at every visit." - Henry, volunteer mentor

"Befriending has had a massive impact on us. It has increased our confidence when interacting with children, and we feel a huge sense of pride when our befriender gains a new skill, or makes progress at school. As a couple it's been great for us having a shared interest and having our outings to look forward to together." - Phil and Catriona, volunteer befrienders



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Befriend a Child HQ - Our Base

Our base at 9 Bon Accord Square comprises of our offices and meeting rooms, plus three rooms available for use by the children we support and their befrienders and mentors. Each room can be booked for use each Saturday and throughout the school Easter, Summer and October Holidays.

The Playzone

Thanks to a grant we received from The Wooden Spoon charity, we were able to refurbish the basement at our base creating 'The Wooden Spoon Playzone'. The Playzone is a well-stocked playroom, complete with books, games, toys, dressing-up costumes, and a pull-down screen and projector. It's also where we run regular volunteer training events and seasonal parties for the children. Befrienders and mentors are also welcome to book the Playzone for their weekly or fortnightly outings!



The Kitchen

Our fully equipped kitchen is very popular with the children and is often booked by befrienders and mentors as an activity space for their outings. The children and volunteers often make pizzas, brownies, cupcakes, soup, or even smoothies together in the Befriend a Child kitchen.



Media room

Our multi-media room is packed full of video games and DVDs. The big TV is often used for film screenings by groups of children and their befrienders and mentors. We also have a new electric guitar and a PS5, which are popular with our young people and volunteers alike. It's a great space to have a movie day when the weather isn't great!



How we fundraise

As our befriending programme isn't funded by the government, we rely solely on fundraising to provide this service. Below are some examples of how we fundraise at Befriend a Child.

Community

We are very grateful that various community groups in Aberdeen City and Shire fundraise for us throughout the year. These include university societies, sports teams, music groups, drama groups, Schools, local businesses, and churches to name a few.

Individuals in the community also choose to fundraise for Befriend a Child. This may be through holding a Facebook birthday fundraiser, organising an event, or taking on a challenge for us. Individuals may also decide to sell items or baked goods to raise money for Befriend a Child.



Sponsored events

There are several sponsored events and challenges that take place locally and further afield throughout the year. Many individuals or teams choose to take part in such events whilst raising money for Befriend a Child. Some of these include Ride the North, Kiltwalk, Run Balmoral, The Beast Race or our very own INFERNO FIREWALK challenge!

Events

A large part of our income comes from fundraising events which we organise throughout the year. Our largest fundraiser of the year is our annual BIG KIDS BALL which we host in May every year.

Corporate

Many businesses choose a charity of the year which they hold fundraisers for and donate money to throughout the year, the charities are often nominated by staff members. These businesses may hold raffles and events for Befriend a Child or choose to pull a team of colleagues together to take part in a sponsored fundraising event for us.

Trusts and grants

Grant making trusts and foundations are charities which are set up for the primary purpose of giving money away to other charities. Trusts have specific fundraising interests and as a charity, we can apply to certain trusts to receive a sum of money towards specific programs and project such as our 1:1 befriending programmes, Christmas, and Halloween parties and the outings enjoyed by the children and their befrienders and mentors.



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Youth Philanthropy Initiative

What social issues do we help with?

We receive regular referrals from professionals for a variety of reasons. Some of the main issues for a child or young person being referred are social isolation, behavioural problems, substance use in the family and low self-esteem. However, we also receive referrals for those affected by disability, parental or personal mental health and those who are young carers.

A Poverty Demographic Report from Aberdeen City Council showed that 21.8 per cent of youngsters in Aberdeen City have been judged to be living in poverty, with 21% of children in Scotland living in marginal, low or very low food security.



What is the demand for our help?

Across Aberdeenshire, the demand for our service is high and, according to a report by Deloitte, it is estimated that 8000 children and young people could benefit from our help.

It is expected that throughout 2023, we will have over 260 children and young people use our service and are from a variety of priority areas within Aberdeen City and the wider area of Aberdeenshire.



How would we use the YPI grant?

If your group won the £3,000 YPI grant for Befriend a Child, the money would go directly towards the children and young people we support and their outings with their volunteers.

It costs approximately £1,500 to fund a befriending relationship for one year, this means we could spend the £3,000 YPI grant on matching two children on our waiting list and funding each of these befriending relationships for one whole year!



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Presentation ideas

YPI presentation inspiration

We know the YPI judges love engaging and creative presentations and we also enjoy seeing how much you have learned about our charity and how you convey the message for support.

Remember to visit the YPI website for some inspiration from their Creativity Zone or why not consider some of the following options to help you stand out from the crowd!

Performance presentation

You could write a short play about the work we do at Befriend a Child and perform this as part of your presentation.

Put yourself in their shoes

Think about how you would feel to be living with difficulties at school, at home, with friends, with disability or any of the social issues our volunteers help support our young people with.

TikTok

Why not film a creative Tiktok video?
You can use the effects, captions, and editing capabilities on the app to display the benefits having a befriender or mentor has on the children in an engaging and fun way.

Poem, song, or rap

At the beginning of your poem, song, or rap, you could focus on the difficult circumstances these children are facing, then on how the lives of these children have improved as a result of having a befriender or mentor.

Drawings or stop motion drawings

Your group could sketch some drawings to create a stop motion film. Using a voice over or on-screen captions you can create a story and take the viewers on a child's journey, illustrating the child's life, their experience with their volunteer and the benefits this has had.

Dance

Are members of your group keen dancers? You could create a dance routine for your presentation. For example, you could do an interpretive dance performance with a dancer acting as the child, a dancer acting as the difficulties the child is facing and a dancer acting as the volunteer. You could use this performance to show how much enjoyment and positivity having a befriender or mentor brings into the child's life.

Video

You could begin your video in black and white, gradually changing it to colour as the child becomes happier. You can use impactful music, from sad to hopeful, to help you portray your points and elicit emotion.



Good luck

We hope this YPI information pack has helped get you started with your presentation. The team at Befriend a Child wishes you good luck! If you have any more questions or need any more information at all, please don't hesitate to contact fundraising@befriendachild.org.uk, we are here to help!

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