

“At Circle you feel like you are part of something. The Circle gets bigger, like a family and makes you feel like you are someone that matters.”

(Parent)

Introduction

Circle is a registered charity working at the heart of communities across central Scotland. We work with families facing multiple disadvantages because of structural inequality, poverty, drug and alcohol use, imprisonment, poor physical and mental health, trauma, abuse, and loss.

We believe that every child, no matter their background or circumstances, should have the support they need to live a happy and healthy life.

Circle works alongside the whole family promoting the positive involvement of all family members. We use a whole family, strengths-based approach that seeks to empower family members to find their own solutions and build resilience focusing on their rights, hopes and aspirations. At the heart of Circle's approach are the relationships, based on trust, openness and honesty, that we build with families.

Our model is rooted in a belief that families are best placed to provide their own solutions to the challenges they face. We work to alleviate the real multi-generational impact of structural inequality and poverty while also working to prevent them in the future.

Our Vision



For all children to be safe, happy, healthy and nurtured within a stable family, which supports them to achieve their potential.

Our Purpose



To improve the lives of children by strengthening families.



"Circle made me feel safe and trusted to share my experience and open up to accept help"

(Parent)

I am delighted to share the impact that Circle has made in 2021-22.

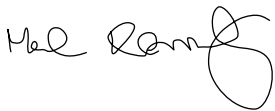
Though circumstances remained difficult, as the ongoing pandemic continued to create challenges for the children and families that we work alongside, Circle continued to provide services that supported the healthy development of children and families.

During the year our outreach and groupwork services transitioned back to in person provision and this was appreciated by families and workers. There were many positive developments across our services in the year. Highlights included: the development, with partners, of the BWell Together service in North Edinburgh that works to improve the mental health of children and young people: the doubling of our Women's Outreach Team in North and South Lanarkshire, that supports women and their families affected by imprisonment: and the development of a new partnership service in East Lothian, supporting families affected by homelessness.

As well as this, we were successful with a range of funding applications that will allow us to grow our services in the coming year, by adding Children's Resilience and Family Peer Support Services.

We are particularly proud of the work we did to involve children and families in the design and development of our services, as well as creating opportunities for them to contribute to the framing of Circle's values.

I strongly believe that the strides we have taken this year have set us up to continue our positive progress and support even more children and families in the coming year.



Mark Kennedy, Chief Executive

Highlights

NUMBER OF
FAMILIES **474**
SUPPORTED

550 **PARENTS
& CARERS**
SUPPORTED

NUMBER OF
**YOUNG PEOPLE
& CHILDREN** **720**
SUPPORTED



WE ARE GROWING
STAFF NUMBERS
APRIL 2021: **40**
APRIL 2022: **44**



**WORKING ACROSS
CENTRAL SCOTLAND IN
12 LOCAL AUTHORITIES**



**WE DEVELOPED SIX NEW SERVICES
ACROSS OUR PROJECTS**



Project Reports

Harbour

The Harbour Project team supported more than 130 families across Edinburgh through our Children Affected by Parental Substance Use, Young Persons', and Fathers' services.

Despite challenges posed by the pandemic, Harbour still managed to deliver high quality outreach and group support to a large number of parents, children and young people.

A key achievement this year was our success in securing additional funding to develop new Peer Support and Family Inclusion Services. The desire to develop this work is rooted in what the families we work alongside have told us that they need and what works for them.

We were also invited to join a partnership with Stepping Stones and The City of Edinburgh Council to deliver a new service focussing on the needs of parents that have had their children permanently removed from their care. This is another exciting development for the Harbour Project.

In addition to all the direct individual and family work taking place over the year, the project also offered additional opportunities for children, young people and families in Edinburgh to come together over the summer holiday period and at Christmas. Activities included beach trips, picnics, festival shows and Christmas parties.



"Since working with Circle my child is my priority and I am doing better. I hope to get my child back"

(Parent)

East Lothian

This year has been one of growth and development for our East Lothian Project, achieved against a backdrop of adversity as a result of the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis that has hit our families hard.

During 2021-22 Circle's Families Affected by Substance Use team have offered whole family support to 28 families to mitigate the effects of parental drug and alcohol use on children. Our Pregnancy Service has worked intensively with a further seven families. Our Children's Resilience Service has worked with a further eight children intensively on a one-to-one and group work basis to help them to address the effects of trauma, stigma, and loss.

We have successfully increased capacity of the project by adding a Family Peer Support Service. We have also doubled the capacity of the Children's Resilience Service. We are delighted to have long term funding from Corra

Foundation over five years for both these developments.

Additional funding for East Lothian Children's Services has also allowed us to add extra capacity to our established Families Affected by Substance Use and Pregnancy Services.

Finally, in partnership with Cyrenians we have developed a new service to prevent homelessness through Whole Family Support and Mediation.

These additions to our services will allow us to provide vital services to an increased number of families in East Lothian.

Families Affected by Imprisonment (FABI)

The FABI Project works across central Scotland providing services in: North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, West Lothian, Fife & Forth Valley and Tayside. The project aims to minimise the impact of parental imprisonment on children and families.

As well as our own services, the team are involved in national projects such as The Shine Mentoring Service and The Caledonian Project.

In the last year the FABI Project has supported 114 families comprising of 129 parents and 160 children and young people.

It has been an incredibly busy and exciting time of development of services and increased involvement of families own voices in our work.

We have doubled the size of our Women's Outreach Team, that supports women and families at risk of, or involved with justice services, and who are affected by domestic abuse, poor mental health and drug and alcohol use in North and South Lanarkshire.

We have established our Parents Forum which gives families a voice in how we shape and develop our work and services. Our Children's Forum is in its early stages but already informing us on what would make a difference with one child commenting they would like,

“Circle to do more slime and calm activities and it will help me since daddy died and I would want to do more activities to meet other children.” (Child)

Our work has also been strengthened through families' involvement in our 'Shanarri Safari Project'. Their insight has provided us with improved understanding of well-being indicators from a family's perspective.

We have also run a weekly Women's Zoom Group focusing on the themes of Positive Choices, Supporting Change, Managing Anxiety and Parenting.

“I've enjoyed just being able to be me and not being ignored or judged by anyone.”

(Parent)



Haven

Circle's Haven Project is based in North Edinburgh and provides Early Years group work, family outreach, fathers support, mentoring for primary aged children and wellbeing support for children and young people.

During the Covid-19 pandemic the approach to group work was creative and resourceful. Singing sessions, mother and baby yoga and a parenting programme took place online. Additionally, baby massage and cooking videos and sensory packs were shared. As restrictions lifted Haven returned to in-person groups for parents and children.

Fathers support during the Covid-19 pandemic included quizzes and walk and talks. In the summer there were activities for fathers to attend with their children on a weekly basis. The fathers have also assisted in clearing a garden and contributed to a recent GIRFEC event.

Outreach support during the covid pandemic primarily consisted of activity packs and funding applications for financial support. Subsequently the focus has returned to parenting advice and support.

BWell is a new project offering support to young people experiencing issues with their mental health. In conjunction with Stepping Stones (North Edinburgh) 34 young people and their families have received support. Initial feedback is positive.

20 children attended our ISSEP mentoring programme last year. The children who attended reported increased confidence in school, that they had a space for themselves, and they developed new friendships and had new experiences.

"Everything that Julie has done and shown me is what I'd say I'd want to expect workers to be like. She's done so much and stuck by me and understood me when no one else could or would."

(Haven parent)

West Lothian

Circle's West Lothian Family Support Service works to improve the lives of Children affected by parental drug and alcohol use.

During the year the service supported 42 families that consisted of 66 parents and 83 children and young people.

In the last year the West Lothian staff team have been trained in the PuP (Parents Under Pressure) Programme and are all now fully accredited. PuP is a programme specifically designed to work with families affected by parental drug or alcohol use. It is a strengths-based approach which increases parenting capacity, strengthens family relationships, and increases confidence in their parenting role, which hugely benefits the whole family and leads to improved outcomes for children.

We were successful in securing funding for the introduction of a new Fathers Service, that will support the positive involvement of fathers with their children. This will allow us to broaden the scope of our work in West Lothian by supporting fathers in their parenting role. This will improve outcomes for children, leading to safer and more secure family environments.

We have also joined with partners WLDAS and The Youth Action Project to better support communities affected by drug and alcohol use. The new service will work specifically with young people, and will help them to improve family life, increase engagement with education, reduce risk taking and improve health and wellbeing.

Participation and Values

To ensure that children and families are at the centre of all we do, we created opportunities for families to participate in the development of our values, policies and services.

We are acutely aware that to properly support families to find their own solutions it is necessary to give voice to their thoughts, concerns, and aspirations.

We consulted with families to develop a new set of values, to define and guide our work going forward. We asked families what they thought were the defining characteristics and values of Circle's work and staff, and these views formed the basis on which the values were developed with additional input from the staff and trustees. We are delighted with the outcome and look forward to living these values, with families in the coming years.

Inclusion

Our core approach is based on inclusion, working alongside the whole family, recognising the aspirations, strengths, and rights of each family member.

"Circle support the whole family; they are not just here for me, they involve everyone."

Empathy

Taking an empathetic approach, we stand alongside families, supporting them to develop their own goals and ambitions, through adversity and success.

"Circle is like a friend that is there for you and tell you as it is; they cheerlead and challenge you."

Commitment

We build strong relationships based on trust, committing to families for as long as it takes. We are passionate about listening to and supporting families and provide a reliable source of motivation and encouragement.

"Circle keep in touch, every week, they find a way to keep in touch."

Empowerment

Circle support families to discover and appreciate the strengths they already have, whilst developing knowledge, capacity, and skills to address the specific challenges that they face.

"Circle always give you options; they enable you to do things yourself and don't try to fix things for you."

Growth

We are collaborative and ambitious about the growth and development of families, and work to develop the skills, knowledge, and wellbeing of our staff team, and the wider caring workforce.

"It's not just a job for staff, they go out of their way to help when you need it."

The year in numbers



Thank you

Though the wider environment remains challenging, and there is an increased level of competition for funding of every type, Circle's fundraising team had a successful year.

We succeeded in sustaining funding for all our key projects and had a good year for unrestricted fundraising to support our work with children and families and strengthen our overall financial position.

We continue to appreciate and value the support of our funders, donors, and everyone who took part in fundraising events. It is this continued dedication to Circle's work that allows us to work towards our vision for all children to be safe, happy, healthy, and nurtured in a stable family environment which helps them to achieve their potential.

Other figures...

