





About Circle

Circle is a registered charity working at the heart of communities across central Scotland.

We work with families facing multiple disadvantage as a result of structural inequality, poverty, the effects of poor mental health, drug and alcohol use, trauma, abuse and loss. Circle works alongside the whole family promoting the positive involvement of all family members. We use a strengths-based approach that seeks to empower family members to find their own solutions and build resilience focusing on their hopes and aspirations.

Circle has its roots in the Family Service Units (FSUs), which were established during World War II to support the resettlement of families from bombed out communities. FSU came to Scotland in 1974 at the invitation of Lothian Regional Council to establish a specialist child protection service. In 2006, FSU was merged with another organisation in England and FSU Scotland became independent and evolved into Circle.





Our Vision

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



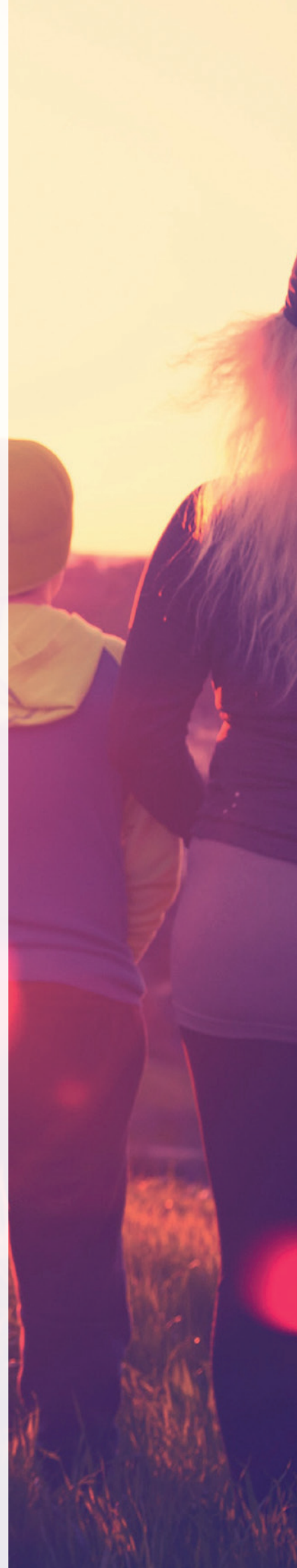
Our Purpose

To improve the lives of children by strengthening families

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The Circle worker has helped me move house twice from homeless into temp and into permanent. I have also been supported to reduce my medication. I think that if the Circle worker hadn't been involved I would have had to involve social work. She has went above and beyond.

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Our Approach

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 commit to taking the time to build relationships with families and to understand their unique situations, challenges and ambitions. We use a whole family approach to mitigate the effects on children of economic, structural, environmental or health inequalities.

Circle's strengths-based, whole family work seeks to empower families and build resilience, which helps families maintain established patterns in the face of challenges and promotes their ability to recover quickly from trauma or stressful events. We also work with families to build social resources and capital as this promotes better outcomes for children.

Our family outreach workers seek to:

- understand how each family, and each individual family member's beliefs, feelings, thought processes and behaviour impacts on children's wellbeing.
- understand how the interplay of wider systems impact upon each member of the family and upon the family system.
- work alongside families as active participants in their learning and in identifying how they want the family to be.
- foster an understanding of what the family members require to promote wellbeing.



In practice this involves aspects of family group work and one-to-one support for individual family members.

Family group work promotes predictable, consistent and attuned care to meet the needs of children. One-to-one work builds family cohesion and resilience in a way that promotes the wellbeing of children.

An emphasis is placed on ways of establishing stability and promoting resilience to strengthen the family and improve children's outcomes.



Work we do

Parenting support around routines and boundaries

One-to-one support for children to build coping strategies and resilience

Practical support to improve home conditions

Supporting children to be involved in more school and community activities

Supporting parental engagement with schools and child planning

Singing, signing and play based activities with babies and toddlers

Case Study

Children affected by substance use service.



Family Situation

The Graham family were made up of two parents and two children under ten. The parents were impacted by; complex parental poly drug use including cocaine, Valium and cannabis and this contributed to poor mental health. There was a low level of trust in services and professionals which resulted in lack of engagement with health and education services. Both children were worried and anxious about their parent's changing behaviour and struggled to engage with school.

Circle support

The Circle Family Outreach Worker built a trusting relationship with the parents, improving their confidence to engage with recovery and mental health services. Parents were supported to attend recovery services. Both children had 1 – 1 support in a school setting and were helped to understand, and come to terms with, their parents' behaviours.

Outcomes

The parents are more open to support, and sustaining engagement with addiction recovery services. The parents completed Living Life to the Full programme and are more confident in their parenting role. The children are happier, more settled and attaining more at school and feel less anxious about their own and their parents' situation.



Strategic Ambitions

To **increase** the numbers of children and families who benefit from the Circle approach.

To build collaborative approaches and services, creating effective and lasting **partnerships** with organisations that share our commitment and values in the voluntary and statutory sector.

To promote and develop the value of our whole family approach by **influencing** the policy environment in Scotland.

To **innovate** to meet future challenges through developing our own expertise and the knowledge base of the wider social care workforce.

To **build** our organisational resilience and sustainability to be leaders in supporting families and children.

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Without Circle I wouldn't be in the positive place I am now. I would be dead or have lost my daughter and be living a nomadic lifestyle.

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How we will reach our goals

Increase numbers of families benefitting from our approach

- Work with partners, families and children to deepen our understanding of the communities we work in and the needs of families in those communities.
- Sustain, and build upon, our services, increasing our impact in communities where we work.
- Broaden the focus of our work reaching children and families affected by a wider range of challenges such as mental health, poverty, domestic violence, homelessness and social exclusion.
- Increase the number of communities across Scotland that we work in.
- Increase the amount of direct work we do with fathers and promote their positive involvement in their children's development.

Partnerships

- Build and deepen existing relationships with partners in voluntary and statutory sectors.
- Increase participation of families in governance, service design, and service delivery.
- Develop new partnership approaches with people who share our ambitions and values.





Influencing

- Play an active part in local partnerships and networks in the communities where we work.
- Disseminate more widely the findings of our research and the benefits of our approach.
- Be a standard bearer and advocate for the whole family approach.
- Have an influential voice on local and national policy forums.
- Be seen as the leader in the delivery of whole family, strengths based support.

Innovate

- Listen to the voices of families to identify emerging challenges and devise solutions.
- Build the expertise of our staff team to deliver more effective support to families.
- Use data more effectively to demonstrate effectiveness of our whole family approach.
- Adopt and develop innovative approaches to supporting families affected by a range of challenges.
- Create opportunities for the development of the wider workforce through providing student placements that enhance knowledge of our strengths based whole family approach.

Build

- Continue to build a strong and diversified funding base for the organisation.
- Maintain and develop strong governance structures and policies to promote organisational resilience and reduce risk.
- Promote staff satisfaction, wellbeing and development; be an employer of choice.
- Develop our ability to communicate the value of our work with stakeholders and the wider public.





How we will measure success

Circle understands the need to be able to evidence the difference that we make for the families that we work with and the funders who work with us. We also understand the need to ensure that the work we do contributes to wider national strategic goals.

This is why we have adopted the Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) approach when working with families. This supports children and young people to grow up feeling loved, safe and respected and to realise their full potential. At home, in school or the wider community, every child and young person should be Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included. These SHANARRI indicators are what we use to measure the progress made by the families we support. Annual analysis of the data collected against these indicators allows us to assess our impact at an individual, project or organisational level in a way that is measured against recognised national frameworks

- We will continue to commission independent evaluation of services to ensure effectiveness and identify emerging needs.
- We share this learning with the wider sector through events and publication.
- We gather feedback from children, parents/carers and professionals, both at the time of service ending for families and on an annual basis. This feedback is collated, analysed and used to inform annual reports, funding applications and service improvement. This is in line with our Participation Strategy, the aim of which is:

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Children and their families are empowered to have their voice heard and will be listened to when decisions which affect them are to be made.

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- The health and wellbeing of our staff are paramount in ensuring that we are always in the best place possible to deliver our crucial services.
- We consult with staff on an ongoing basis to ensure they are supported to be the best they can be.