



# Glasgow City Council Transition Fund

## OPFS Glasgow Case for Support

*September 2020*

### OPFS Services for Glasgow Single Parents

#### Background

One Parent Families Scotland is the leading charity working with single parent families in Scotland. We provide support to over 7000 single parents, children and young people each year through our community based support for families in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Falkirk and Lanarkshire, a free lone parent helpline and online advice through our [website](#) and well-being support at [my life and me](#) . We enable single parents to build their self-esteem, confidence and skills, to take up employment, training and education opportunities and to participate in OPFS influencing activities.

**Each of our services is embedded in the local community. Our Glasgow service team all live in Glasgow, our local single parent hubs involve and support local single parents. Through our work we serve single parents who together form an important 'community of interest.' Single parents are not a homogenous group, but most are mothers in their mid-30's and they share the unique challenge of being sole carers and breadwinners, many living in poverty. This is what binds them together in calling for recognition that they are an important part of Glasgow and need to be central to the city's plans to tackle child poverty. OPFS in Glasgow ensures that single parent**

**families, with lived experience have a platform to share their voice and influence services.**

**We are active partners in a number of Glasgow strategic groups which shows a huge commitment to contributing to the alignment of services with the aims of Glasgow City Council and Scottish Governments' Child Poverty Strategy.**

One Parent Families Scotland (OPFS) Glasgow Service has not been recommended for the Glasgow City Council (GCC) Communities Fund which may mean that vital services will be reduced or even closed.

The Glasgow City Council's City Administration Committee voted unanimously on Thursday 3 September to approve all recommendations on the allocation of the Glasgow Communities Fund. The committee also approved plans to distribute a £4m transition fund to third sector organisations who were previously funded and will not be supported under the new Communities Fund.

One Parent Families Scotland welcomes the news of transitional funding while awaiting detail from council officials on how this will affect our lifeline services for single parents. Commenting on the committee's decisions, our CEO Satwat Rehman said:

*"We welcome the announcement of transition funding for the next two and a half years. We are particularly pleased that there is recognition of the importance of services working with 'communities of interest', of which single parents are one of the biggest groups in Glasgow and among the most severely impacted by the pandemic and resulting lockdown. We know single parents and their children are in a unique situation and require a specialist response. We have provided that response in Glasgow for 14 years and have supported parents to meet some of their greatest challenges yet in the last 6 months due to COVID-19.*

*We have not yet had any confirmation that we will receive funding from the extra £4 million but we have been in touch with councillors and officials to highlight the importance of our service in contributing to the end goal of reducing child poverty and inequality in Glasgow. "*

Without transition funding from GCC for the core elements of the Glasgow service, a crucial springboard to other funding and additional project-based initiatives focusing on engaging with young single mothers and Universal Credit advice, will be withdrawn.

Over the last 3 and a half years (up to Sept 2020) OPFS Glasgow has received £41,900 a year from Glasgow's Citywide Integrated Grant and £17,200 a year from the NW Area Partnership. A total of £206,850.

This funding has enabled our Glasgow Service to gain additional GCC funding through the Glasgow Guarantee, Invest to Improve, and the Holiday Activity Programme – a total of £142,777. GCC Integrated Grant also provided a secure match to our ESF Employability Programme, bringing an additional £355,145 to support single parents living with additional barriers: lack of qualifications, English as a second language or living with disabilities to gain sustainable employment. The Children's Lottery enabled the Glasgow service to issue fuel grants worth £30,850. Further grants from other funders ( eg Comic Relief, Big Lottery) were successfully awarded providing an additional income of £606,000.

**Therefore, funding from GCC Integrated Grant Fund of £206,850 has enabled OPFS Glasgow to bring in an extra £779,62 to work with single parents in Glasgow. For every £1 from the Integrated Grant Fund OPFS Glasgow brought in almost £4 .**

We are also able to further to complement our services to single parent families through our long standing partnership working with: The Family Fund, Family Holiday Association, Glasspool, BBC Children in Need, Big Lottery, Aberlour Trust, Glasgow Spirit of Christmas and Cash for Kids.

## **Poverty & Single Parent Families in Glasgow**

There are 144,000 lone-parent families with dependent children in Scotland which is 25% of all families with dependent children. Almost four out of 10 children in poverty in Scotland live in a single parent family.<sup>1</sup> The majority of single parents are women, around 92% and many have experienced domestic abuse, so gender inequality is also a key issue.

In Glasgow child poverty is expected to rise further as a result of economic and welfare changes affecting families, with Glasgow's high proportion of single parent households disproportionately being affected by Welfare Reform and the pandemic. By 2021, without any additional intervention (locally or nationally) it is forecast that around 50,000 children in Glasgow (42%) will live in poverty.<sup>2</sup> Reducing child poverty in single parent families is essential to reducing child poverty in Glasgow.

The Scottish Government's tackling child poverty delivery plan, 'Every Child, Every Chance' identifies families most at risk of child poverty – specifically lone parents, families where a member of the household is disabled, larger families, minority ethnic families, families where the youngest child is under 1 years, and families where mothers are aged under 25 years.<sup>3</sup>

Glasgow has higher proportions of some of these groups than the rest of Scotland – for example, single parent households make up 40% of all households with dependent children in Glasgow – the highest local authority rate in Scotland, with the Scottish figure being nearly 25%. Glasgow neighbourhoods that experience high rates of child poverty have some of the highest numbers of single parent families. In Parkhead & Dalmarnock for example nearly 60% of children live in poverty, where 6 out of 10 households are single parent families.

Single parents are less likely to be in paid work and less likely to be in full time employment than the population as a whole. It is also estimated that over half the households in Glasgow's African black community are headed by a lone parent. In our day-to-day work in Glasgow we provide crisis intervention, family support, employability, preventative health and wellbeing input and financial inclusion services.

*Mary came to Scotland from Nigeria and is now a full-time carer to 2 of her children. Mary has been supported by OPFS Glasgow over a number of years and now attends our Peer Support Group. Our team provides holistic support tailored to meet single parents' needs.*

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.healthscotland.scot/child-poverty-in-scotland\\_priority-groups\\_lone-parent-families\\_briefing.pdf](http://www.healthscotland.scot/child-poverty-in-scotland_priority-groups_lone-parent-families_briefing.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/councillorsandcommittees>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/child-chance-tackling-child-poverty-delivery-plan-2018-22/>

“ One Parent Families Scotland support me a lot with things like filling in forms, or if I have some letters I don't understand, they will help me sort it. They are the first people I go to. They understand where you are coming from, they understand your condition, they understand everything about you. ”



## Issues facing Single Parents

Single parent families face significant challenges: poverty, isolation and loneliness, poor health or disability and judgemental attitudes. They face a number of, often interacting, issues which prevent them from reaching their potential such as:

- personal circumstances (including caring responsibilities linked to the age of their child, poor health, few qualifications and lack of access to private transport)
- the design and delivery of a benefit system that discourages single parents from participating in education (and boosting their earnings)
- limited availability of job opportunities that would allow single parents to meet their caring responsibilities and reduce poverty, especially in areas where single parents are more likely to live
- limited availability of flexible, affordable childcare that would allow single parents to manage caring responsibilities with earning and learning, again in those places where single parents are most likely to live.

Being both sole carer and breadwinner is a difficult balancing act because of the lack of flexible and affordable childcare and the lack of secure and family-friendly employment. This is coupled with the fact that the causes of single parenthood, which include bereavement and relationship breakdown, are in themselves stressful for parents and their children.<sup>4</sup>

The latest Scottish Government 'Annual Report on the Impact of Welfare Reform 2019'<sup>5</sup> shows the effects of UK Government Social Security reforms, introduced since the Welfare Reform Act of 2012. The impact of Welfare Reform for single parent families have been immense. For example:

**The Two-Child Limit:** Child tax credits and universal credit child payments are restricted to the first two children in a family. As of April 2019, 8,540 families across Scotland have been denied entitlement for a third or subsequent child and 40% of these were headed by a single parent.

<sup>4</sup> [www.opfs.org.uk/ScottishAffairsCommittee\\_Invstig\\_into\\_impact\\_welfare\\_reform-OPFS-Submission.pdf](http://www.opfs.org.uk/ScottishAffairsCommittee_Invstig_into_impact_welfare_reform-OPFS-Submission.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/2019-annual-report-welfare-reform/>

**The Benefit Cap:** The benefit cap, introduced in 2013, is a policy that sets a limit on the total annual payment a household can receive from means-tested benefits. Since 2016, the benefit cap has been set at £20,000 per year for couples and single parents. A total of 3,320 Scottish households were benefit capped as of May 2019, two thirds were single parent households.

## Young Parents

Every Child Every Chance<sup>6</sup> also identifies young mothers under the age of 25 as a priority family most at risk of child poverty. The issues facing young parents living in poorer areas are well documented resulting in them often being trapped in poverty, facing isolation, lacking confidence and self-esteem which makes them harder to reach.

Young mothers are a unique group as they face several major adjustments to their identity, and they can be particularly vulnerable to experiencing postpartum depression, stress and feelings of isolation.<sup>7</sup> It is widely recognised that teenage parents are more wary of formal support services and more reluctant to use them than older parents.

Since introduction of Universal Credit in Glasgow in 2018, young parents have been some of the worst affected, not only receiving a lower level benefits leaving them around £20 per-week worse off than over 25's but are now expected to be available for work when their youngest child is 3 years.<sup>8</sup> It is clear the only route out of poverty for many of these parents is to increase their confidence, employability skills, gain qualifications and move into paid employment.

## OPFS & Caledonian University Research

OPFS has worked with Prof John McKendrick, Caledonian University, who undertook research to find out more about the issues affecting single parents and what support they feel would help to improve their situation. An on-line and paper survey of 800 Single Parent's was carried out which included over 300 parents from the Glasgow area. Ten one to one interviews with Glasgow parents were also carried out. The aims were to better understand isolation and loneliness among single parents and impact on health, wellbeing and poverty. The research found well-being is much lower among single parents in Scotland compared to the general population- this included life satisfaction; happiness and anxiety. The research also established how and where Single Parent's access services and what new initiatives they would like to see. They told us they needed services which were tailored to the help deal with the daily challenges they face, and which takes account of their need for specialist advice and support.<sup>9</sup>

For parents like Suzanne our employability programmes help build the confidence & skills to move into work.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/child-chance-tackling-child-poverty-delivery-plan-2018-22/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/young-mums-together-report.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/press-releases>

<sup>9</sup> <https://opfs.org.uk/get-involved/single-parent-consultations/community-connections-project/>

“ My confidence is so much better from dealing with One Parent Families Scotland and them helping me look into work because I would never have thought of some of the jobs I could have done. They make you realise what being a single parent is and how many skills you’ve got. ”



**Suzanne**

Single mum of 2  
in Glasgow

## Impact of Covid -19

For over 75 years OPFS has been supporting single parent families across Scotland to find a way forward through difficult times. But never before has our service faced a challenge like the coronavirus pandemic. OPFS stepped in to support single parents and children with vital essentials - food, energy costs - when no-one else was there for them.

“ The pandemic is creating a unique challenge for single parents and their children. To weather the worst and rebuild, we need a community-minded approach, tailored to single parents’ needs. We, and the parents we work with, are dismayed that now, when families need it most, our vital services face drastic cuts. ”



**Satwat Rehman**

Director, One Parent  
Families Scotland

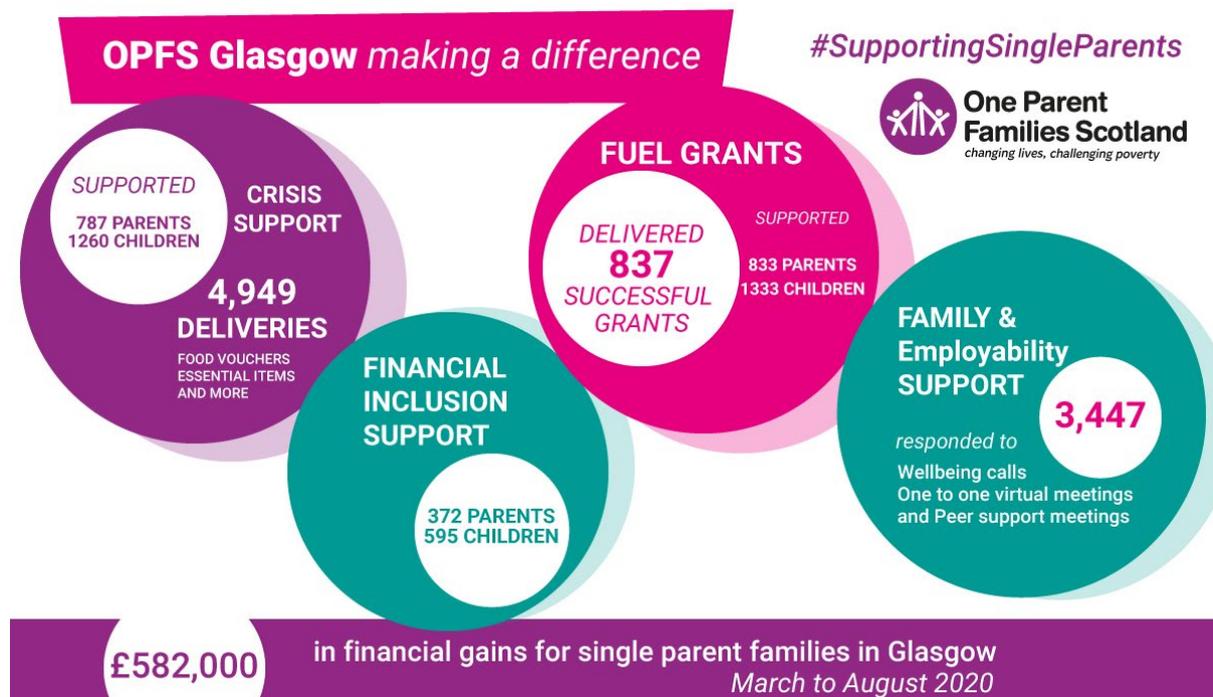
Four in ten families in Glasgow are single parent families, the highest rate in Scotland. Children living in a single parent family are twice as likely to be living in poverty and OPFS say the impact of the virus pandemic and lockdown has increased poverty, anxiety and distress. Over the last 6 months, OPFS Glasgow have extended a range of support to 1,423

single parent families single parent families and made financial gains for those families in excess of £582K.

OPFS Glasgow:

- **Delivered 4,949 lunch packs and food parcels, food vouchers & essentials to 1,260 children and babies during lockdown crisis worth £40,000.**
- **Gave benefits & debt advice to 372 single parent families putting almost £500,000 into family's income.**
- **Assisted 837 families with energy costs amounting to £41,614 for families who couldn't afford the cost of heating their home or cooking.**
- **Provided crisis support to ensure the health and wellbeing of 833 parents and 1,333 children.**
- **Gave 590 single parents free helpline and on-line advice on issues such as child maintenance, separating from your partner and child contact & residence issues.**

The diagram below shows how OPFS Glasgow has made an impact over the last 6 months, delivering a range of vital support to 1,423 single parent families and made financial gains for those families in excess of £582K.



Our work is developed with single parents as co-designers to meet their needs, supports them to tackle some of the barriers they face and lifts them out of poverty to achieve the aspirations they have for themselves and their children. We celebrate and work with the diversity of the single parent community and tailor services as needed for example for single

parents living with a disability, bringing up a child who lives with a disability, BAME single parents and young single parents.

We believe our work makes an immensely valuable contribution to the City's ambitions to reduce child poverty and inequality. At a time when our Glasgow service is more important and need than ever, we have had to make dramatic changes to ensure we can still be there for single parents and their children who need us. We have had a huge surge in demand from single parent families for our specialist services, no recommendation for transition funding will reduce our services dramatically and have an impact on levering in match funding to provide further support for disadvantaged and marginalised single parent families, living with local communities, across the city.

Our vital work with young parents in the north west of the city particularly in the Maryhill and Canal wards will come to end, these are the young parents in the city who need support the most. They are often the most vulnerable families and receive less social security benefit than other parents because they are younger and are raising their children in circumstances of persistent poverty. As one parent described it:

*"This service has been supporting me and my children during a time of crisis which has helped me to better manage my family's current circumstances, improve our family well-being and reduce my levels of anxiety, stress, and isolation.*

*We are living in difficult times and trying our best to reassure our children, this is hard to do when money is tight, daily living is restricted and the pressure of paying bills, feeding, clothing and entertaining children is high."*

## **OPFS Glasgow's contribution to tackling child poverty**

OPFS Glasgow works tirelessly to prevent and alleviate the impact of poverty and inequalities on the wellbeing of single parent families living in the City of Glasgow. We achieve this through the provision of an integrated, package of holistic support. We believe that when services and policy priorities are genuinely co-produced, they work better and provide a greater impact, because they make the most of the shared expertise of single parents who are 'experts through experience' along with our staff, many of whom, are or have been single parents.

These specialist support services include:

- Crisis Support,
- Financial Inclusion,
- Young Single Parents Employability Programme,
- Family Health and Well-being Project,
- Family Support
- [On-line advice](#) and [wellbeing support](#) tailored for single parents
- [Freephone Lone Parent Helpline](#)

OPFS Glasgow services will contribute to tackling poverty and inequality in Glasgow through building the skills, capacity and resilience of single parents and their children and to support and empower these families to become involved in the social, economic and cultural life of the city. Services will be targeted at Single Parents who are:

- Living in Poverty
- Living in areas of high deprivation
- Young parents under the age of 25
- From ethnic minority backgrounds
- With larger families affected by the benefit cap
- Living with disabilities / who have children who live with disabilities.

We work to release the power of parents to support each other as we know that parental involvement is the key to better services & policies. Our model of family support harnesses the skills, experiences, and knowledge of parents, carers, and partners – to better support families and ultimately reduce family poverty and improve the life chances of children.

## **OPFS Glasgow Services**

### **Crisis Support**

OPFS crisis support services provides immediate help and support to families living in poverty. Interventions include:

- OPFS Family Essentials Bank providing emergency items; food, clothing, fuel grants, baby essentials, children's toys and equipment
- Support to access local foodbanks
- Support to access local baby and school uniform banks
- Help to apply to Social Welfare Fund
- Charitable applications for essential household items
- Access to OPFS Christmas Appeal and supporting parents to meet the additional costs associated with bringing up children, birthdays etc.

### **Financial Inclusion**

Our specialist Financial Inclusion service delivers ongoing support through our local services:

- Specialist Universal Credit support, advice and information on conditionality
- Child Maintenance claims and follow-up on non-payment
- Welfare Rights & Benefit Advice.
- Money and Debt advice including Fuel Debt Assistance.
- Income Maximisation including Charities and Trust Fund Assistance.
- Money management and Financial Capability training.
- Representation and advocacy at appeal tribunals.
- One-to-one meetings and groupwork sessions. (currently virtual).

### **Family Support**

Our specialist Family Support service enables families to move from crisis to stability by addressing root causes of ongoing issues that contribute to the impact of living in circumstances of poverty providing families with lasting positive change. This service provides:

- Emotional and practical support
- Advocacy
- Family Holidays to reduce stress levels and build happy family memories
- Encouraging parents to access local support services
- Peer Support, reducing isolation and loneliness.
- Access to OPFS Glasgow Holiday Activity Programme
- One-to-one meetings and groupwork sessions (virtual)

### **Mental Health and Well-Being Support**

Poverty, isolation and loneliness take their toll on single parent's mental health and wellbeing, leaving many suffering the effects of anxiety, stress and even depression. This service provides (currently virtual):

- One to One support
- Workshops and support sessions addressing to help reduce the impact of mental health and well-being and increase resilience for single parents
- One to One Counselling services provided by trained counsellors

## **Young Parents First Steps Project**

OPFS First Steps Project provides integrated employability support dedicated to meeting the needs of young parents. Our package of support and portfolio of specialist services engages with the hardest to reach and provides services which help young parents to:

- Increased uptake of local services including childcare
- Better relationships with statutory services
- Greater confidence in using support services
- Reduce their sense of isolation
- Build confidence and sense of self-worth
- Improve social skills
- Access training opportunities
- Enter education and suitable employment
- Feel more optimistic about their future
- Reduce and alleviate the impact of living in poverty.

## **Employability**

Our specialist employability service addresses the needs of single parents living with complex needs and facing multiple barriers to entering suitable employment. Through Glasgow City Council Employability Pipeline this staged approach supports single parents to:

- Complete their Individual Needs Assessment & Personal Action Plan.
- Address their barriers to employment through access to OPFS integrated package of specialist support.
- Accessing practical and sustainable childcare.
- Access vocational activities supporting parents to build their skills and confidence to prepare for entering work
- Participate in work preparation activities
- Enter suitable employment that provides single parents and their families with a better standard of living.
- In-work support enabling parents to sustain and progress in paid work.

## **Community Outreach Advice & Support Hubs(currently virtual)**

These weekly local hubs bring single parents together to build solidarity and peer support:

- Build positive activities into their weekly routine.
- Alleviate their sense of isolation and build confidence.
- Experience positive Peer Support.
- Gain information on the resources, opportunities and services available that will support their future goals.
- Genuinely know that they do not need to struggle with everyday challenges and stresses on their own.
- Look to the future, find solutions to barriers and work towards reaching positive goals.
- Further build their parenting skills.
- Share common issues, goals.
- Gain an awareness of the Welfare Reform system.
- Build information and support networks and make friends.

- Feel a sense of belonging and a valued part of their community.
- Gain motivation and encouragement to actively participate on training options which support parents to sustain their progression out of poverty.

## **Freephone Lone Parent Helpline**

The Lone Parent Helpline provides support, advice and information on issues affecting single parents including;

- Making arrangements for children
- Dealing with a break-up,
- Moving into work
- Child maintenance
- Benefit advice
- A translation service in 250 languages.

## **Geographical Areas**

OPFS will target areas where there are the highest concentrations of single parent families combined with the highest levels of deprivation as listed within GCC Ward Profile.

OPFS Glasgow Service also works with some of the most disadvantaged and marginalised single parent families across Glasgow. Using data from HMRC, these will include the four poorest areas in Glasgow: Calton 49%, South Central 37%, Springburn 34% Pollokshields 24%. We will also target the areas where there are the highest concentrations of single parents combined with the highest levels of deprivation including Maryhill, Possilpark, Cranhill and surrounding neighbourhoods, Shettleston and Pollok.

## **What will the Service achieve with Transitional Funding?**

### **Outcomes**

We will engage with and deliver services to 1,800 disadvantaged Glasgow single parent families over 3 years and support 90 single parents to volunteer to provide a peer support role. **Through this we will achieve the following outcomes:**

1. The crisis support service will support 300 single parents a year to deal with the immediate crisis thus stabilising their situation.
2. As a result of accessing OPFS Financial Inclusion service 600 single parents a year will be more resilient through income maximisation, have improved money skills and reduced levels of debt.
3. The family support service for Young Parents will 50 support young parents a year to improve their aspirations, confidence and skills to progress along the employability pipeline.
4. The Family Support & Health and Well-being service will enable 200 single parents a year to improve the mental health and well-being and enable them to take control of their lives and well-being.

5. The Employability Services will enable 100 single parents a year to move into sustainable employment that improves their standard of living for themselves and their families.

## Overall impact

### Single Parents will

- 1. Have improved their standard of living so reducing child poverty and contributing to GCC child poverty reduction target. We will do this by:**
  - Increasing income for families. Through take up of entitlement to benefits or through sustainable employment.
  - Reducing household costs. Through advice and information to reduce bills, support with housing; support with accessing affordable childcare.
- 2. Have increased capacity and resilience to deal with issues so reducing demand on GCC family support services. We will do this by:**
  - Parents receiving information and advice, so they know their rights.
  - Parents being supported to deal with crisis and overcome personal barriers.
  - Parents accessing and making use of available support, whether that is peer support, family support or professional support.
- 3. Be supported to build their aspirations, confidence and skills to move into training, education or employment. We will do this by:**
  - Single Parents having increased resilience, enthusiasm and are more confident parents.
  - Single Parents feeling less lonely, have increased their support networks.
  - Single Parents are participating in positive activities to build their future aspirations.
- 4. Have improved mental-health and family well-being. We will do this by:**
  - Single Parents reporting that they feel less anxious, happier, content and settled.
  - Single Parents having improved physical health and better self-care.
  - Single Parents having increased their support network and feel more hopeful for their family's future.
- 5. Be empowered to participate in local decision-making processes and influence policies and service delivery. We will do this by:**
  - Parents having opportunities to influence policy and practices through being involved in focus groups
  - Success of digital campaigns in sharing single parents' positive messages about single parents. Reducing stigma and removing societal barriers to participation.

- Single parents' experience feeding into Council policy processes to ensure one parent families' needs are considered in policy and service development

## OPFS Glasgow Strategic & Policy Input

### Partnership Working

OPFS Glasgow has an excellent reputation as an effective and efficient partner and places a very high value on partnership working. We recognise very clearly the benefits to be gained from working together with our statutory and voluntary partners, and share a willingness to invest time, energy, and resources to support this, avoiding duplication.

OPFS Glasgow Services compliment and make a vital contribution in sharing the voices of single parents with the following:

- Child Poverty Steering Group
- Poverty Leadership Panel
- Citizens Activist panel: OPFS parents have active membership
- North West Locality Planning Forum
- North West Children and Families Steering Group
- Glasgow Family Support Strategy Sub-Group: OPFS parents participated
- Third Sector City Wide Steering Group
- ESF Employability Partnership Network

The forums, steering groups and panels listed above include active membership of key staff from statutory services; Social Work, Education, Health, JCP, GCC: 3rd sector organisations include; Glasgow North communities United, Home Start, Barnardo, Quarriers, Aberlour, Children First, Stepping Stones for Families & Rosemount Lifelong Learning

### Glasgow Council Policy Input

OPFS has been a partner in developing policies and services to tackle poverty in single parent families in Glasgow and is a member of council strategic groups such as the Child Poverty Group and the Poverty Leadership Panel. OPFS Glasgow has also supported single parents to be involved in various council services: improving the delivery of the council's Scottish Welfare Fund; take up of school clothing grants; improving the application process for free school meals; ensuring single parents apply for Best Start Grant and foods - to name only a few!

Recent publications by Public Health Scotland<sup>10</sup> and the Scottish Government<sup>11</sup> highlight the challenging circumstances single parents are living in as we emerge from lockdown and head into a deepening economic crisis. Public Health Scotland have highlighted that the challenge for Local Authorities in Scotland to support low-income and vulnerable local populations during this crisis will have been very significant.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.healthscotland.scot/child-poverty/child-poverty-overview/lone-parents>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/ISBN/978-1-83960-783-7>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.healthscotland.scot/media/3131/covid-19-and-lone-parents-with-dependent-children.pdf>

*“The local actions that we know can support low-income lone-parent families to maximise their income from benefits and reduce the cost of living include: increasing awareness and take-up of the Scottish Welfare Fund (Crisis Grants) including as a source of support to help applicants access food; Discretionary Housing Payments, and the Council Tax Reduction scheme; increasing awareness and take-up of the Best Start Foods card and grants, increasing awareness and take-up of the Education Maintenance Allowance, School Clothing Grant and Free School Meals; Poverty-proofing policies and practices to avoid inadvertently penalising single parent families by using, for example the OPFS Participatory One Parent Proofing toolkit.<sup>13</sup>”*

Now more than ever we need expert specialist support for single parents. GCC funding supports the core of a vital single parent specialist service which is preventative and empowering. It saves council money as further interventions are avoided through holistic family support and advice.

### **If OPFS Glasgow Services Disappear .....**

As we move out of the current phase of the virus lockdown crisis, this ‘recovery phase’ will bring many challenges for single parents, particularly as support provided, such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, is reduced or withdrawn and as job losses increase, including in the sectors of the economy where single parents tend to work.

- There is a risk that the future for many single parents and their children is one of increased poverty, increased levels of debt and arrears, losing yet more income as they transfer to benefits or are at risk of losing their tenancy or homes.
- Poverty is not an inevitability. Government, local authorities, the NHS and third sector must work together to tackle single parent family poverty and the gendered nature of that poverty. In Glasgow this could prevent yet more single parents falling into crisis and desperation but OPFS Glasgow will no longer be able to ensure that we can contribute using our expertise and the trust of parents to make that difference.

**“The COVID-19 virus pandemic is creating a unique challenge for single parents and their children, as they depend on one income and don’t have the support of another adult in the home to share childcare & parenting responsibilities. Our service in Glasgow has always responded quickly to new challenges and involved parents in all our work. We believe the expertise and experience of our community-based services will be vital in the recovery effort that lies ahead. In the hardest of times, we have risen to the challenges thrown at us.**

**To weather the worst and rebuild, we need this kind of community-minded approach which is tailored to single parents’ particular needs. We, and the parents we work with, are dismayed that now, when families need it most our vital Glasgow services face drastic cuts”**

**One Parent Families Scotland**  
2 York Place, Edinburgh EH1 3EP

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<sup>13</sup> [https://opfs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Participatory\\_Single\\_Parent\\_Proofing\\_Toolkit.pdf](https://opfs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Participatory_Single_Parent_Proofing_Toolkit.pdf)

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