One Parent Families Scotland

Annual Report 2025/26

Contents

Welcome 1

Who we are and what we do 2

Where we worked this year 3

Our successes 4

How we build support for single parents 8

What's been important to us 11

What single parents said about us 17

What staff said about us 18

Charitable spend and financial statement 19

Board of directors 21

Funders, supporters and donors 22

Our offices 23



To protect the identities of the families we support, some names have been changed and are marked with an asterisk (*).

Welcome



This year, single parents across Scotland continued to face escalating costs and systems that are stacked against them. Throughout 2025/26, OPFS stood alongside single parents. We offered practical help in communities and campaigned for change with decision makers.

Our work on child maintenance showed what is possible when parents' experiences lead the way. Together, we created evidence based recommendations to create a system that is better for everyone. Our evidence has been presented in both Westminster and Holyrood and helped secure investment from the Scottish Government in specialist child maintenance advice and support. Single parents' voices also played a vital role in seeing the two child limit being scrapped - a victory we are determined is just the start of action on poverty.

Our Childcare Connectors and our employment pathway with Public Health Scotland supported parents into sustainable work. Our teams supported families through debt, crisis and change.

It has also been a year of renewal for OPFS. We launched a new strategic plan, restructured our senior leadership team and welcomed five new trustees. We thank Keir Mitchelmore and our retiring Directors for their service. Achieving Investors in People Gold reflects the commitment of our staff, whose skill and compassion are at the heart of everything we do.

Since the year end, our new whole family support partnership with Relationships Scotland, Families Outside and Fife Gingerbread has secured Scottish Government funding. Whole family support is central to the Programme for Government, we are committed to making this count for families in the year ahead.

Our thanks go to our funders, partners and supporters, and above all to the single parents who trust us and campaign with us. Together, we will keep changing lives and challenging poverty.

Halena Gauntlett
Chair





Satwat Rehman
Chief Executive

Who we are

Established in 1944, One Parent Families Scotland (OPFS) is the leading charity working with single parent families in Scotland. We provide expert advice, practical support and campaign with parents to make their voices heard to change the systems, policies and attitudes that disadvantage single parent families.



What we do

We recognise that parents and children are part of one interconnected family system. When challenges arise in one area of life, they can affect the wellbeing and stability of the whole family.

We assess the family's holistic situation using **My Life and Me**, a framework of six key areas that influence a family's wellbeing, stability and opportunities.

My Life and Me is the beating heart of OPFS. The framework was developed by families and for families. It allows us to identify what matters most and where support can make the greatest difference.

Where we worked this year

Glasgow

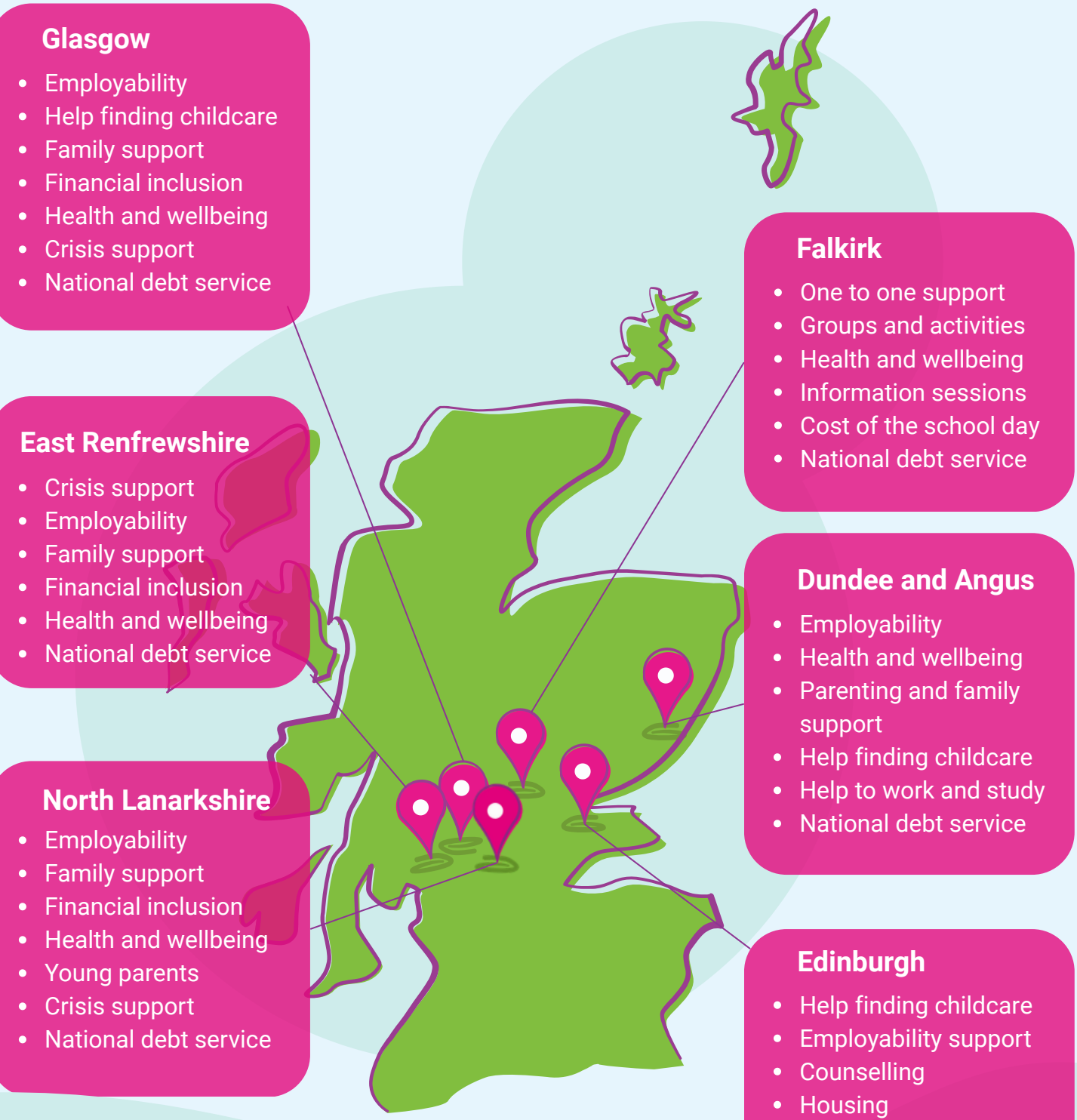
- Employability
- Help finding childcare
- Family support
- Financial inclusion
- Health and wellbeing
- Crisis support
- National debt service

East Renfrewshire

- Crisis support
- Employability
- Family support
- Financial inclusion
- Health and wellbeing
- National debt service

North Lanarkshire

- Employability
- Family support
- Financial inclusion
- Health and wellbeing
- Young parents
- Crisis support
- National debt service



Falkirk

- One to one support
- Groups and activities
- Health and wellbeing
- Information sessions
- Cost of the school day
- National debt service

Dundee and Angus

- Employability
- Health and wellbeing
- Parenting and family support
- Help finding childcare
- Help to work and study
- National debt service

Edinburgh

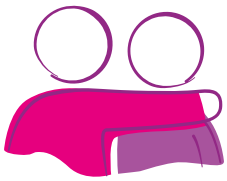
- Help finding childcare
- Employability support
- Counselling
- Housing
- National debt service



We also provide national support via our Lone Parent Helpline and live chat



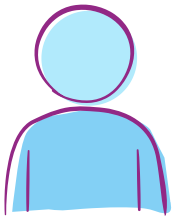
We supported 3,963 single parents across Scotland



91% of parents who disclosed their gender were **women**



60% had a **disabled** family member



34% identified as **Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic**



28% had **three or more children**



6% were caring for a **child under one**



10% were mothers aged **25 and under**

The families we support often face **multiple and overlapping challenges**, including disability, poverty, caring responsibilities and barriers to employment.

How we made a difference

Advice and Information service



- Support provided through helpline, webchat, email and online services
- **59 professionals** supported
- **81 parents** accessed free counselling
- Most common enquires were **Universal Credit, Scottish Benefit System and Child Maintenance**

2,401 parents supported

Financial inclusion



- **2,997** families supported
- **£572,566** debt managed
- **681 families** received **crisis and hardship support**
- **352 parents** supported to access **over £23,000 in direct fuel support**

£1.86m secured for families

Employability



- **691** engaged with employability support
- **160** gained qualifications
- **28** moved into volunteering
- **18** entered work experience or subsidised placements

209 parents in a positive destination

Digital reach



- **96,000** advice page users
- **3,400+** newsletter subscribers
- **500** forum members

163,000 website users

Our successes

Transforming Child Maintenance



OPFS, partners and single parent families at Westminster

Throughout 2025-26, OPFS worked with parents, Fife Gingerbread and IPPR Scotland to drive change in the child maintenance system and improve financial security for children. Our research and policy work culminated in Better for everyone: a new vision for child maintenance, setting out 14 recommendations for reform and placing parents' experiences at the centre of the debate.

More than 1,200 people backed our campaign for change, with parents taking their call for action directly to Number 10. We engaged decision makers across Scotland and Westminster, ensuring families' experiences informed national discussions on child maintenance reform.

Our work also demonstrated the impact of specialist support. In Fife, every family supported through a pilot child maintenance project established a maintenance arrangement, compared with just 15% before receiving support. Among those monitored for 12 months, 87% were receiving regular and reliable payments, helping provide greater financial security for children.



Parent speaking about her experiences at Westminster



Parents delivered open letter to 10 Downing Street

Alongside this, Fife Gingerbread delivered child maintenance training to 168 frontline practitioners across Scotland, helping embed child maintenance advice and support into everyday practice.

The success of this work helped secure Scottish Government investment in a new national child maintenance project, delivered by OPFS and Fife Gingerbread, extending specialist support to families across Scotland.

Photos: Emma Boyd

Our successes

Christmas appeal

The festive season can magnify the challenges many single parent families face throughout the year. With school holidays creating additional childcare pressures, rising energy costs contributing to fuel poverty and household budgets stretched even further by the cost of Christmas, many families face difficult choices.

Through our annual Christmas appeal, we work with supporters, donors and partners to provide extra help when it is needed most, helping families experience the joy and dignity that every child deserves at Christmas.

393 families supported with Christmas gifts

671 children received Christmas gifts

30 families received Christmas dinner

Thank you to everyone who donated to our Christmas appeal!

We are incredibly grateful to the many individuals, community groups and organisations who supported our Christmas appeal. While we cannot feature every donor or contribution, these photos showcase just some of the generosity that helped bring festive joy and practical support to single parent families.

Donations came from

- **228 individuals**
- **26 local businesses**













How we build support for single parents

Mobilising support for single parents

We took to the streets of Edinburgh as part of the Scotland Demands Better march, adding our voice to calls for urgent action on poverty, social security and economic inequality. Standing alongside single parents and allies, we campaigned for the policy changes needed to create a fairer Scotland for all families.







Influencing change

Our Policy and Influencing Lead, Leah, provided expert commentary to STV on the scrapping of the two child limit and what it means for families across Scotland.





Alongside this, our Head of Policy, Strategy and Communications, Charis, attended an evidence session examining the impact of removing the two child limit, ensuring the experiences and perspectives of single parent families are represented in discussions shaping future policy.

How we build support for single parents



Making a difference together

Taking part in the Kiltwalk has become a valued tradition at OPFS, bringing colleagues together to raise vital funds for single parent families across Scotland. This year was no exception. Celebrating 10 years with OPFS, our Business Development Officer, Angela, took on the challenge and raised an impressive £405, with a further £102 in Gift Aid, bringing her total fundraising contribution to £507.





Meeting families where they are

From community fairs to school events and local information days, OPFS teams were out in communities across Scotland, offering support, sharing information and connecting with families.

These opportunities help us reach single parents where they are, build relationships and raise awareness of the services available to them.





How we build support for single parents

Childcare Connector

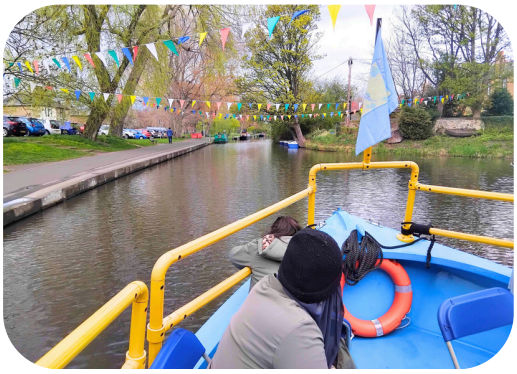


The Childcare Connector is a bespoke project that helps single parents and carers find and access childcare so they can move into work, education or training. Working collaboratively with the Employability Service, it provides joined up support to simplify complex systems, reduce stress and help parents and carers build sustainable careers.



During the summer holidays, many parents have less time to engage with support services as childcare responsibilities increase. To maintain connections and build trusted relationships, we created opportunities for families to come together, have fun and make lasting memories.

From canal boat trips and arts and crafts activities to cake decorating sessions and more, these events gave parents and children the chance to enjoy quality time together while connecting with other families in their community. Over 40 families took part, helping us strengthen relationships and ensure support remained accessible during the school break.



How it works in practice?



When Ana*, a single mother of four, secured part time work, holiday childcare costs threatened to become a barrier. The Childcare Connector arranged childcare, secured funding for upfront fees and managed the process from start to finish, enabling Ana to remain in employment without additional financial pressure.



What's been important to us

Our values aren't just words on a page. They underpin everything we do, from how we work with families to how we influence change. Here are just some of the ways we brought them to life this year.

Value 1 - Trust: Trusting that people will work to the best of their ability, while ensuring the best interests of others are central.

Investors in People Gold

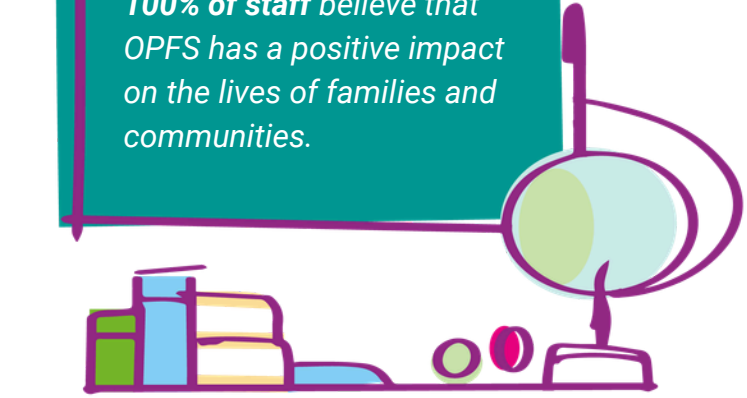


Carrol and Satwat accepting the Investors in People Gold accreditation.

Only 28% of organisations achieve gold. This achievement is possible only when every individual is involved in supporting one another and doing their best to improve the workplace.

Our 'We Invest in People' assessment was a great opportunity to hear from our staff and we've learnt a lot from it. Our values are so important and influence every aspect of our work, from policy and campaigning to the direct support we offer families, so it was fantastic to see this being recognised.

***100% of staff** believe that OPFS has a positive impact on the lives of families and communities.*



What's been important to us

Value 1 - Trust: Trusting that people will work to the best of their ability, while ensuring the best interests of others are central.

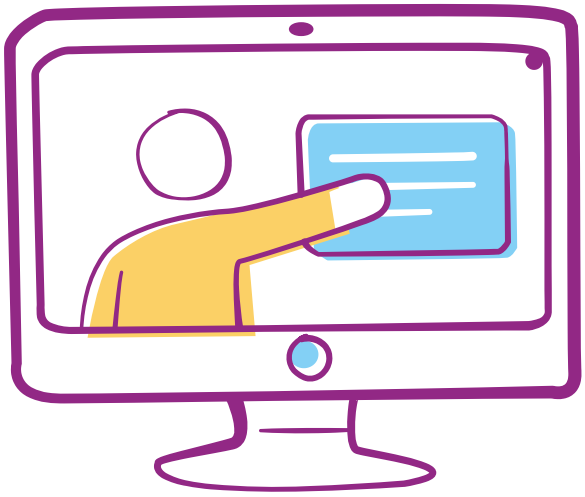
North Lanarkshire Employer Charter Bronze Award



Members of the North Lanarkshire team receiving the Bronze Award through the North Lanarkshire Employer Charter.

The NL Employer Charter, developed by North Lanarkshire Council, recognises organisations that demonstrate responsible business practices, fair work principles and a commitment to the local economy.

We are delighted that **our Lanarkshire team has achieved the Bronze Award**, reflecting our commitment to supporting staff, promoting positive workplace practices and contributing to the communities we serve.



What's been important to us

Value 2 - Equity: Everyone getting what they need, tackling inequalities in the here and now.

From barriers to belonging

Through our partnership with Public Health Scotland, we helped design and deliver an employment pathway shaped by the experiences of single parents. Alongside inclusive recruitment and flexible working, parents received tailored support through our Training Academy before, during and after the application process.

The programme enabled all eight participating parents to progress from initial 9-month contracts to permanent employment. Some moved into full time roles and completed SVQs in Business Administration and Management. They improved confidence, wellbeing and family stability while demonstrating how fair work can help tackle poverty and create lasting opportunities.



Natalie with her son



Ada with her daughter

I wanted to work, but there were so many barriers that I couldn't see how this could ever happen for me.

OPFS didn't just help me get a job - they stayed with me every step of the way. [...] This is the best thing I have ever done. It has changed my life, for me and my son.



What's been important to us

Value 3 - Justice: Always keeping the scales of justice in balance, avoiding inequalities in the future.

Influencing systems change for single parent families

Throughout the year we continued to work alongside decision makers to secure positive policy and systems change for single parent families. Our policy work is anchored in the lived experiences and expertise of the families we support. We work collaboratively with single parent families, campaigning together for systemic change.



Leah giving evidence to the Scottish Parliament

In September, our Policy and Influencing Lead, Leah, gave evidence to the Scottish Parliament as part of Pre-Budget Scrutiny.

This was a valuable high level opportunity to influence the Scottish Budget. We called for change to improve employment, social security and unpaid care so that single parent families are supported to thrive.

This represents one of many opportunities that OPFS has had over the last year to influence decision makers. Through our work in this space, we have seen tangible changes that improve the lives of families including the two child limit being scrapped and securing funding for a specialised child maintenance advice service in Scotland.



What's been important to us

Value 4 - Collaboration: Working together and focusing on solutions.

Higher education research



OPFS completed a major research project exploring the barriers single parents face in accessing, sustaining and completing higher education in Scotland.

More than **280 single parents shared their experiences**, alongside focus groups with families connected to our local services in Dundee, Glasgow and North Lanarkshire.



Working collaboratively with single parents, we built a strong evidence base highlighting the challenges families face, from poverty and childcare pressures to inflexible course structures and concerns about welfare benefits.

The findings make a clear case for higher education to be "single parent proofed". This means ensuring that financial support, childcare provision, flexible learning, advice services and mental health support are designed around the realities of single parent family life.

With The Robertson Trust committing funding for a further three years, we are now working with partners across the sector to turn these recommendations into lasting change, improving access, participation and outcomes for single parent families in the years ahead.

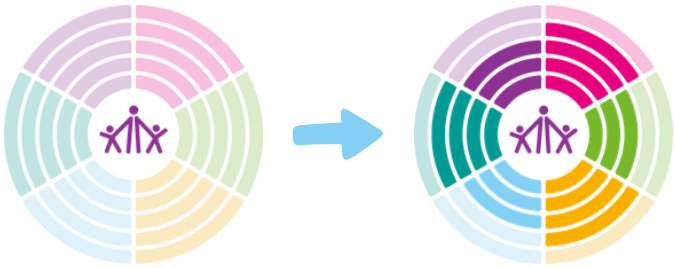


What's been important to us

Value 5 - Compassion: Recognising the challenges others face and then taking action to help.

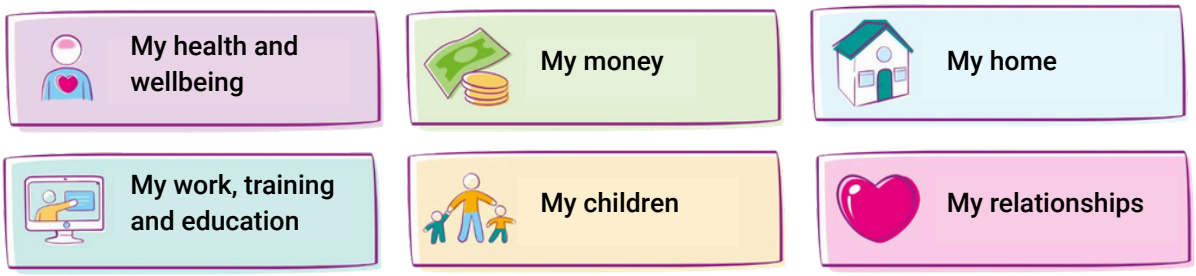
My Life and Me framework

At OPFS, we place families at the centre of our support. My Life and Me is the beating heart of the support we provide. It is our family led framework, helping us build a holistic picture of each family's strengths, challenges and priorities.



Using the My Life and Me wheel, families assess key areas of their lives, creating a baseline score that shows where support is needed most.

Together, we develop a tailored support plan and work towards the family's goals. Over time, the assessment is revisited to measure progress, celebrate achievements and identify any further support needed, helping families build resilience and achieve lasting positive change.



How it works in practice? Callum* shares his experience

Our lives changed forever when my children's mother died, leaving me to care for our two young children on my own. In the months that followed, I struggled to access the support we needed and felt overwhelmed by grief, financial pressures and the challenges of becoming a sole parent.

After being referred to OPFS, I received joined up support that made a real difference. The Childcare Connector helped secure childcare, food vouchers, clothing,
Christmas gifts and family activities, while the Financial Support Team helped me tackle growing debts.

I was also connected with the Employability Support Team, who are supporting me to take steps towards returning to work.

The support from OPFS has lifted a huge weight from my shoulders and given my family renewed confidence for the future. It has felt like having an umbrella of support at a time when we needed it most.



What single parents said about us

You are a lifesaver, wow! OPFS has had an amazing contribution to my journey and is helping me achieve all my goals.

My life and my daughter's life has changed so much! What OPFS do is just incredible, they helped me in getting nursery for my child as I went back to school. I feel like I'm not on my own and can always text or phone, if I need help.

They helped me deal with the debt that I had. I was at my wit's end; couldn't eat or sleep. I didn't know what to do or where to turn. They made it seem easy. They reassured me that it could be managed, and they made it so. I don't know what I would have done.

Thank you so much for the trip to the zoo, it is something that is usually too expensive for us to enjoy as a family. This way we didn't miss out.



I only phoned to ask about help with paying for childcare but I got so much more. I wasn't aware of half of the things available to us. I now have childcare in place and am back at work but also we are in a better place financially.

What staff said about us

As a service we are able to be family-focused on our own families at home.

I'm very well supported by the senior leadership team – everyone is very approachable.

I've had scope to grow in the organisation and play to my strengths.

It's been an amazing snowball of great opportunities.

I'm well paid for what I do and it's flexible enough to be the parent I want to be.

The support and encouragement, as well as the opportunities for get togethers, are great.

My workload is perfect.

I learned a lot from young parents and how resilient they are.



There's no-one in the organisation I couldn't email and ask for help.

Charitable spend and financial statement

Statement of Financial Activities (incorporating Income and Expenditure Account)
Year ended 31 March 2026.
The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard 102 (effective January 2019), the Companies Act 2006, Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 and follow the recommendations in Charities SORP (FRS 102), the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and Regulation 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) regulations 2006.

Incoming resources:

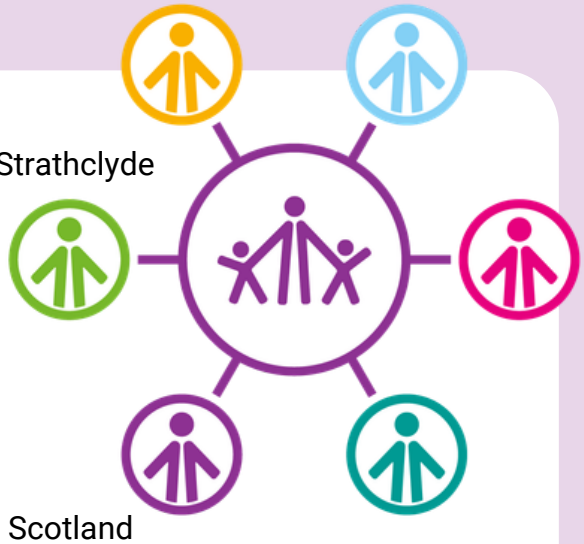
Income from:	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	2026 Total	2025 Total
Donations	£154	£36,801	**£36,955**	£31,651
Investments:				
Bank interest	-	£10,936	**£10,936**	£9,813
Charitable activities:				
Awareness of need, training & policy research	£348,347	£384,450	**£732,797**	£854,681
National information & support services	£435,801	-	**£435,801**	£388,261
Family support services	£1,684,168	£80,372	**£1,764,540**	£1,694,548
Investment income	-	£13,949	**£13,949**	£15,590
Total income	**£2,468,470**	**£526,508**	**£2,994,978**	**£2,994,544**

Charitable spend and financial statement

Expenditure on:

Charitable activities:	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	2026 Total	2025 Total
Awareness of need, training & policy research	£415,693	£466,922	**£882,615**	£816,820
National information & support services	£435,143	-	**£435,143**	£428,568
Family support services	£1,728,355	£77,268	**£1,805,623**	£1,666,159
Investment management costs	-	£5,715	**£5,715**	£5,752
Total expenditure	**£2,579,191**	**£549,905**	**£3,129,096**	**£2,917,299**
Net income/expenditure	**-£110,721**	**-£23,397**	**-£134,118**	**£77,245**
Transfer between funds	£34,258	-£34,258	-	-
Gains/(losses) on investment valuation	-	£54,238	**£54,238**	-£3,898
Actuarial losses on pension scheme	-	-£837	**-£837**	-£11,965
Net movement in funds	**-£76,463**	**-£4,254**	**-£80,717**	**£61,382**
Total funds brought forward	**£577,166**	**£515,180**	**£1,092,346**	**£1,030,964**
Total funds carried forward at 31 March 2026	**£500,703**	**£510,927**	**£1,011,630**	**£1,092,346**

Board of directors



Chair:

Halena Gauntlett - Senior Safeguarding Advisor - University of Strathclyde

Vice Chair:

Keir Mitchelmore - Retired Solicitor (Stepped Down Jun 25)

Treasurer:

Fiona Duncanson - Business Director - St George's School

Board members:

- **Clare Simpson** - Retired Charity Leader
- **Susan Smith** - Campaigns Manager - Chest, Heart & Stroke Scotland
- **Addie Dinsmore** - Head of Communications & Fundraising (Scotland) - WWF UK
- **Alison Livesey** - Managing Director - JP Morgan Chase Payments Business
- **Dr Andrew Sharman** - Managing Partner - RMS Switzerland
- **Mhairi Ross** - Academic (Appointed Apr 25)
- **Pinky Ghadiali** - Entrepreneur (Appointed Dec 25)
- **Rhys Nealon** - Digital Leader (Appointed Dec 25)
- **Emma Marley** - Operations & Governance Leader (Appointed Dec 25)
- **Lizzy Barbour** - Learning & Development Advisor (Appointed Dec 25)

Company Secretary:

Rosalind Paterson - Finance Manager

The Board was supported by two dedicated committees that help provide oversight, expertise and strategic guidance across key areas of the organisation.

The **Finance & Business Development Committee** oversees OPFS's financial performance and sustainability, supporting the Board through budget scrutiny, financial risk monitoring and identifying opportunities to strengthen our impact and future growth.

The **People & Culture Committee** supports the Board on workforce wellbeing, organisational culture and people policies, helping to ensure OPFS remains an inclusive and supportive place to work, volunteer and contribute.

Senior Leadership Team

Satwat Rehman
Chief Executive

Charis Chittick
Head of Policy, Strategy and Comms

Linda Pople
Head of Service: Support for Families

Umar Ansari
Deputy Chief Executive Officer

Morag Boyter
Head of Corporate Services

Sarah Stewart
Head of Service: Support for Families

Thanks to our funders, supporters and donors

Our work would not be possible without the generosity and support of our funders, donors and partners. Thank you for helping us support single parents, influence change and build a brighter future for families across Scotland.

- Alexander Moncur Trust
- Angus Council
- Arnold Clark Community Fund
- Binks Trust
- City of Edinburgh Council
- Clyde Gateway
- Cruden Foundation
- Dr Guthrie's Association
- Dundee City Council
- Dundee Partnership
- East Renfrewshire Council
- Edinburgh City Council
- Falkirk Council
- George McLean Trust
- Glasgow City Council
- Glasspool Charity Trust
- Hugh Fraser Foundation
- John Napier Charitable Trust
- Leng Charitable Trust
- Murgitroyd Foundation
- NHS Tayside Charitable Foundation
- North Lanarkshire Council
- Regenerative Futures Fund
- Tay Charitable Trust
- The Bairdwatson Charitable Trust
- The George and Grace Thomson Fund
- The Iron Bridge Trust
- The James Inglis Testamentary Trust
- The Nancie Massey Charitable Trust
- The National Lottery Community Fund
- The Northwood Charitable Trust
- The Robert Haldane Smith Charitable Foundation
- The Robertson Trust
- The Scottish Government
- The Souter Charitable Trust
- The Walker Shoolbraid Charitable Trust
- Thistledown Trust
- Turn2us
- VANL
- W.A. Cargill Fund
- Walter Craig Charitable Trust
- Warburtons Community Grants
- WCH Trust for Children
- William Grant Foundation



Our offices

OPFS Edinburgh
2 York Place
Edinburgh, EH1 3EP
Tel: 0131 556 3899
Email: opfsedinburgh@opfs.org.uk

OPFS Glasgow and East Renfrewshire
Standard Building
94 Hope Street 6th Floor
Glasgow, G2 6PH
Tel: 0141 847 0444
Email: glasgow@opfs.org.uk

OPFS Dundee and Angus
Families' House
20 Grampian Gardens
Dundee, DD4 9QZ
Tel: 01382 501 972
Email: dundee@opfs.org.uk

OPFS Lanarkshire
39 Civic Square
Motherwell, ML1 1TP
Tel: 01698 239 961
Email: lanarkshire@opfs.org.uk

OPFS Falkirk
68-70 Forgie Crescent
Maddiston, FK2 0LZ
Tel: 01324 711 271
Email: falkirk@opfs.org.uk



One Parent Families Scotland

changing lives, challenging poverty

Do you follow us on social media?

Facebook
OneParentFamiliesScotland

Instagram
@OneParentFamiliesScotland

YouTube
@opfs

BlueSky
@opfs.org.uk

Threads
@oneparentfamiliesscotland

LinkedIn
One Parent Families Scotland

Registered Office:
One Parent Families Scotland
2 York Place, Edinburgh, EH1 3EP
Company No. SC094860
Scottish Charity No. SC006403