



# Strategic Plan

2022 – 2025



REDUCING THE DAMAGING IMPACT OF CHILD POVERTY IN DUNDEE CHILDREN.



**"Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life. While poverty persists, there is no true freedom."**

Nelson Mandela



# Dundee Bairns Mission

The Dundee Bairns charity was set up with an aim to alleviate holiday hunger and ensure that no child in Dundee should go hungry. Our mission has now broadened to reduce the damaging impact of child poverty in Dundee children.





# Introduction

**O**ur aims have developed since 2020 and are now “to develop projects, in partnership with Dundee City Council, NHS Tayside and third sector parties, that can respond quickly and flexibly to identified needs, and improve the life chances of vulnerable children and families in Dundee.

The following report sets out Dundee Bairns Strategic Plan for the next three years. In late 2021, Dundee Bairns trustees undertook a strategic review, as much had changed since the publication of our 2020-23 strategic plan. Along with new projects we developed to help families cope with the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic, the Scottish Government published plans to tackle child poverty and the major problem of food insecurity. Whilst government policies and plans are extremely welcome, we still have evidence of families struggling with the growing cost of living crisis. Rising fuel bills, clothing and housing costs and expensive child-care costs are still a major issue for many families in Dundee.

Since 2017, we have grown and developed from a food insecurity charity to become a major partner in Dundee for identifying unmet need and deliver services that reduce the impact of family poverty on children. As stated in our 2020-2023 strategic plan:

*“Combating food insecurity will always be the priority, but there are other needs among Dundee’s children, for clothes, warmth and stimulating opportunity. Since COVID-19, there is growing concern amongst our partners for the children who have fallen behind their peers when it comes to educational achievement.”*







## Background

**I**n April 2016, a pilot Fun and Food Programme was established to address the issue of children who received free school meals during term time but had no equivalent provision during the school holidays.

The lunches provided through the Fun and Food Programme were delivered by volunteers and were provided at cost price by Tayside Contracts. In total just under 20,000 lunches were delivered in the summer of 2016. With a successful pilot delivered, Dundee Bairns was formally constituted as a charity in May 2017. In the five years since the first Fun and Food Programme in 2016, Dundee Bairns has provided

the equivalent of over 450,000 meals to Dundee children and families living in areas of deprivation.

**This report sets out Dundee Bairns Strategy for the next three years.**

Dundee Bairns shares the Scottish Government's aim to eradicate the need for Food Banks, to give financial support to families to care for their children with dignity and independence, and to tackle the barriers to employment through, for example, the provision of affordable childcare. In this report, we briefly summarise our interventions

and activities over the last three years, recognise the outcomes from our external evaluation by Professor John McKendrick of Glasgow Caledonian University, acknowledge the Scottish Government's policy initiatives and then identify our approach to meeting local needs in partnership with Dundee City Council and other agencies.

We set out our objectives for the next three years, showing how we will dovetail with the Scottish Government's and local policy and poverty initiatives to help tackle the growing needs within the city. We do this primarily through our Plan on a Page. (See page 12)





# Our Interventions and Activities since 2020

We appointed our first and only full-time employee as Project Coordinator in April 2020. We were able to take this action due to the generosity of the Rank Foundation who provided three years' funding for this post. During her first two years with Dundee Bairns, the Project Coordinator has contributed significantly to the development and delivery of the services we provide, in a period when extra demands have been placed on the charity. That having been said, the demands put on the charity through the increase in need means that we have just appointed additional staff to support the ongoing work and growth of our activities and services.



## Fun and Food Programme

In 2020 during the first Covid lockdown, Dundee Bairns delivered a remarkable 58,643 meals across 17 different projects, including Community Hubs, Churches, Food Larders, an Educational Outreach Service and Community Projects who either distributed lunches to individuals via socially distanced delivery or via walk-up services. During the lockdown and immediately thereafter, Dundee Bairns provided groceries so that community workers based in Coldside and Rowantree could provide needy families with a week's supply of groceries. When taking into account the deliveries of grocery bags at Coldside and Rowantree Hubs, we delivered a further 74,000 meals over the course of the initial 18-week lockdown period.

## Activities

The charity was also able to deliver a variety of activities for many young children during the Covid lockdown. During April 2020, we took delivery of 1,400 magazines from DC Thomson, which were delivered and distributed in two batches of 700 across our partner projects. Dundee Bairns arranged for Sheena Wellington, a traditional Scottish singer, to do a reading of the Dundee Gruffalo, and we then issued a video of this along with the book to all Dundee's primary schools. In total, we issued 300 copies to families and schools throughout the City. Many of the activities provided were funded through an internal fund called the Fabiola Fund.

In both 2020 and 2021, we ran a Christmas card competition and over the Christmas period provided food vouchers and hampers for over 300 families each year.



## Tea Clubs

In October 2017, Dundee Bairns were awarded a Scottish Government Innovation Fund grant to deliver an After School Tea Club pilot in five primary schools in Dundee. The pilot ran for ten weeks during January, February and March 2018, and a two-course hot evening meal was provided to the children and family members. An external evaluation of the pilot was carried out by Abertay University, and this concluded that the Tea Clubs had a very positive impact on the health, well-being and learning of the children. Dundee Bairns have supported Tea Clubs to varying degrees every year since 2018, and plan to continue them during the term of this Strategic Plan.

[Click here](#) to view the full report.

## Cosy Bairns

Cosy Bairns was a project and a fund-raising campaign set up in late 2020. The idea was to provide winter clothes and footwear to vulnerable children to help them keep warm in the colder weather, especially during the Covid lockdown where much school activity was taking place outside and/or in highly ventilated classrooms. Each school in Dundee received a bespoke order form, where they could order clothing packs for individual named children. Dundee Bairns were able to put together extensive clothing orders to two suppliers: Direct Soccer and Tesco. The project moved at an incredibly fast pace and was an amazing feat which helped over 2300 needy children across mostly every school in Dundee at a cost of £180,000. A report detailing the Cosy Bairns project is available on our website. In 2021, we changed our approach by issuing vouchers to referred families. So far over 2000 more children have been issued with clothing vouchers.

[Click here](#) to view the full report.



Cosy Bairns

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## Dundee Community Food Network (DCFN)

During the first Covid 19 lockdown in April 2020, a network of emergency food providers sprung up in Dundee and they formed a network of provision called the Dundee Community Food Network. This network was set up to provide a response to crises and immediate need. It became a vital reference group for Dundee Bairns to plan its activities during this very intensive period.

DCFN has a clear view that surplus food redistribution further entrenches food banks as a response to food poverty, and that we need to reverse the normalisation of foodbanks and work towards a position where everyone can afford to choose food that is right for them. This must be done through maximising income for families through a cash first approach, and the provision of fair wages and job opportunities.



## Glasgow Caledonian University Evaluation

In 2021, Professor John Mckendrick from the Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit at Glasgow Caledonian University was commissioned by the Scottish Government to research the work of Dundee Bairns. Professor Mckendrick published a report on the comprehensive evaluation of the work and impact of the Dundee Bairns since its inception in 2016.

**A few very positive outcomes were highlighted in the report, in particular the ongoing meeting of needs through;**

- Tackling food insecurity
- Supporting partners to deliver
- Relieving parental stress
- Positive impact on volunteers
- Contributing to ameliorating a 'wicked problem'
- Pride in place.

**The report went on to recommend further development of Dundee Bairns' activities through consideration of the following;**

- Consider the impact on the charity of SG plans to mainstream holiday food provision.
- Consider expanding the work of the Bairns beyond term time and to further enhance the lives of those in need: help families combat the impact of poverty and to prevent children in poverty becoming adults with children in poverty.

This very positive independent evaluation has helped us plan and build on our successes and hard-won reputation, so that we can continue to be a key influencer in both local and national family based anti-poverty initiatives.

[Click here](#) to view the full report.





# How we link with Scottish Government's anti-poverty strategy

The Scottish Government in Best Start, Bright Futures: tackling child poverty delivery plan 2022 to 2026 has set out how we all must work to tackle child poverty and deliver the change needed for children and families.

The commitments from Scottish Government include:

- increasing the Scottish child payment
  - widening the eligibility for Best Start Foods payments by removing the means test
  - extending universal free school meal provision to all primary aged children
  - allocating a winter heating allowance to support families with severely disabled children
- investing in the Scottish Attainment challenge to address the poverty related attainment gap, with a focus on literacy, numeracy and health and well-being.

Added to this the Scottish Government intends to invest in the design of an “all-round school-age childcare system”, along with building an evidence base to inform the development of a high quality offer of early learning and childcare for 1 to 2 year olds.

All these ambitious commitments help Dundee Bairs focus on identifying the gaps in provision and direct our additional charity resources to where we can have the most impact in tackling the damaging results of child poverty.







## From National to Local

**T**he Government programme and Tackling Child Poverty delivery plan both provide Dundee Bairns with the opportunity to develop its services to fill any identified gaps in Dundee.

We intend to seize the Scottish Government policy initiatives and plan our work to meet local priorities and unmet need. The day-to-day life for many of Dundee's children is simply not good enough. In the "End Child Poverty" report published in 2018, Dundee was identified as having one of the highest levels of child poverty in Scotland. An estimated 31% (over 8,000) children were growing up living below the poverty line. The "Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan" still projects that 17% of Scottish children (170,000 in number) will be living in relative poverty in 2023-24. As a charity, Dundee Bairns is committed to reducing this number and contributing to the overall target of fewer than 10% by 2030.

The Scottish Index of Multi-Deprivation in 2020 shows that 70 of Dundee's 188 data zones (ie 36.6%) are in the lowest 20% deprived in Scotland. This has got marginally worse since a similar analysis in 2016. Many of these zones are in the East or North-East of the city.

Dundee City Council is developing a targeted approach to tackle this inequity in the Linlathen and Stobswell areas with selected families with children. This will be a collaborative project, and Dundee Bairns have been asked to join a steering group to develop proposals and oversee the work, and to provide charitable assistance where appropriate. The learning from these pilot projects will significantly help Dundee Bairns plan and develop its future activities.







# Future direction of travel

Having considered what we have achieved over the last few years, and in light of national and local policy initiatives, external research and a strategic session of the Board, we have summarised our next steps below.

This will help us ensure that we become the children's charity of choice in Dundee. The strategic direction and aims for the next three years are presented as a "Plan on a Page" on p12. It shows how our plans dovetail with Scottish government and local government policies and will be supported by detailed activities to be undertaken by Dundee Bairns staff and Trustees.

## 2022/23 YEAR ONE

1. Work with partners to develop weekend food and activity provision.
2. Extend the reach of the internal Fabiola Fund, giving grants to children to pursue chosen activities to enhance their well-being.
3. Work with partners to extend our tea Club provision from 5 to at least 10 schools.
4. Embed a reliable system for referrals to Cosy Bairns and other initiatives.
5. Review our approach to volunteering, giving the development of recruitment, co-ordination and support an even greater priority.
6. Review stakeholder engagement to consider establishing focus groups, reference groups and take part in collaborative projects targeted on areas of multiple deprivation.
7. Review the relationship with Tayside Contracts and related to this explore potential supplementary providers.
8. Review our approach to communications and secure potential investment in this area to improve our profile.
9. Invest staffing resource to meet our growing objectives.
10. Work with partners to consider the provision of low-cost, flexible childcare.
11. Provide funding for holidays and/or trips for children living in poverty.
12. Work with partners to provide necessary life skills eg cooking classes in schools and other family-based food activities, to encourage healthy eating and family support.
13. Maintain our profile with funders and draw up a financial plan to support our ambitions.
14. Review governance arrangements and update the skills matrix for the Board.

## 2023/24 YEAR TWO

1. Commission/access research to determine the extent of unmet need, potential for expansion of current programmes, and investment in new programmes to include more activities and family-based support and holiday breaks.
2. Consider respite provision for disabled children and their families.
3. Working with the National Literacy trust and other partners such as Bairns' books to offer supported reading opportunities.
4. Review further our role to consider the potential to be a key influencer of policy and provision by statutory agencies, Scottish Government and other partners, in order to promote our work
5. Explore new opportunities and funding sources to tackle the consequences of poverty for children.
6. Review all partnership arrangements.
7. Review capacity and resources available within Dundee Bairns (to include resources for funding).
8. Embed risk management in Board's decision-making processes.

## 2024/25 YEAR THREE

1. Publish results of our new initiatives, particularly the place-based pilot projects.
2. Evaluate and then embed the more successful pilot projects.
3. Review partnerships arrangements and plan for the next five years.
4. Appoint new Board members following skills mix assessment.
5. Plan for a national conference on tackling and therefore reducing child poverty and its consequences, with a focus on sharing best practice across Scotland and the UK.

**Our strategy will be underpinned by a three-year financial and fundraising plan.**



# At a glance: Dundee Bairns

## HIGH LEVEL PLAN ON A PAGE



Activities and Outputs	Medium Term Outcomes	High Level Achievements	Local Outcomes	National Outcomes
	Dundee Bairns Strategic Plan 2022-25	Glasgow Caledonian Impact Evaluation	Tayside Children's plan	Scottish Government's Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan
<p>Fun and Food Program – Holiday &amp; Weekend activities.</p> <p><b>Cosy Bairns – Provision of clothing and bedding.</b></p> <p>Tea clubs – Expand provision &amp; develop food-based activities .</p> <p><b>Learning Initiatives – Identify &amp; research gaps in provision.</b></p> <p>Review &amp; develop partnership arrangements including Pathfinder project.</p> <p><b>Referral processes– To maximise access to activities.</b></p> <p>Increase number &amp; coordination of volunteers.</p> <p><b>Draw up marketing, fundraising &amp; financial plan.</b></p>	<p><b>We are a key influencer in policy provision &amp; delivery.</b></p> <p>Fabiola fund repositioned to extend its reach.</p> <p><b>Build the team to support expansion of its services.</b></p> <p>Expand after school provision in areas of deprivation.</p> <p><b>Access charitable funding to support expanded offer.</b></p> <p>Achieve good governance status.</p> <p><b>Shift balance of provision to affordable childcare leading to increased employability.</b></p>	<p>Contributing through reducing the impact of poverty.</p> <p><b>Supporting the delivery of food that provide healthy activities.</b></p> <p>Relieving parental stress through providing food and clothing.</p> <p><b>Positive impact on volunteers: a sense of purpose and fulfilment.</b></p> <p>Tackling food insecurity in areas of deprivation.</p> <p><b>Pride in place. Becoming the Local children's charity of choice.</b></p> <p>Strengthening community connections building community capacity.</p>	<p><b>Our children, young people and families at risk have improved life chances.</b></p> <p>Our children have the best start in life in a nurturing environment.</p> <p><b>Our children grow up healthy, confident resilient with improving physical and mental health ad emotional wellbeing.</b></p> <p>Our children and young people are safe from harm.</p>	<p>Fewer than 14% of children living in absolute poverty by 2030.</p> <p><b>Children live in communities that are inclusive, empowered resilient and safe.</b></p> <p>Children are healthy and active.</p> <p><b>Children grow up, loved, safe and respected so that they realise their full potential.</b></p>