



Children 1st Redress Report

Reporting period 26th August 2022 – 7th December 2022

1. Introduction

Children 1st's ambition is for every child in Scotland to be safe, loved and well with their family. The charity offers emotional support to help families to put children first and campaign to uphold the rights of every child.

Children 1st is a contributor to Scotland's Redress Scheme and was added to the contributors list on 26 August 2022.

As well as providing a fair and meaningful financial contribution to the scheme, the *Redress for Survivors (Historical Child Abuse in Care) (Scotland) Act 2021* requires contributors to the Redress Scheme to report annually on their wider (i.e., non-financial) redress activities, such as providing emotional, psychological, or practical support for people who were abused as children; providing assistance to survivors to access historical records; providing assistance in tracing and reuniting families; or providing apologies to survivors.

Children 1st (Royal Scottish Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children) became a contributor to the Redress scheme on 26 August 2022 and as such this report covers our non-financial redress activities from that date until the end of the first reporting period, 7 December 2022.

2. Non-Financial Redress Activities

2.1 Trauma informed request for information process

Children 1st has long been a leading advocate and provider of trauma recovery support to children and their families. Children 1st has aligned our subject access request and historical records request processes with our trauma informed way of working with the children and families we currently work alongside.

This means we are open, sensitive and compassionate in all dealings with people who seek to access information. We provide clear and transparent information to requesters about what information we might hold about their life and why we hold that information. We are honest with requesters that although we have extensive historical records, they are incomplete, and we may not always be able to provide evidence of time in care for requesters.

We ensure that a trauma-trained Children and Family Services senior manager is involved in the process. We make the offer of providing in person or virtual professional and specialist support to requesters to review their records, to help provide some answers and most importantly because some of the content could be re-traumatising for requesters. Requesters may not wish to access the support initially, and we ensure that this offer remains open should the requester wish to come back at a later date.

Furthermore, where a requester is seeking to trace or reunite with their family, we will sign post them to appropriate organisations who may be able to assist them with their search for information.

We also have an open dialogue with organisations that are providing direct support to requesters either during a redress application or during their search for information about their past.

2.2 Recruitment of a Research and Archive Assistant and ongoing work on our historical archive

In August 2022, Children 1st recruited a Research and Archive Assistant to assist with our archive collections, our historical records and to assist requesters who are seeking to piece together their life story through accessing historical records.

The Research and Archive Assistant has started the process of creating a secure database of children who were previously supported by the RSSPCC or were resident at the Children's Shelter or Dundonald House. The work undertaken to date has reduced the time spent on historical subject access requests by 75% on average. Reducing the time it takes to respond to requesters can assist with reducing the anxiety and stress that some requesters feel when having to wait for a response to their request for information about their life.

In September 2022, the Research and Archive Assistant began the process of fully digitising our archive collection. We have invested in digitisation equipment to prioritise digitisation of all records relating to the Children's Shelter and Dundonald House.

We have also been working with our archive partner to begin the process of digitising our entire archive from 1884 through to present day and work on this will continue into 2023.

2.3 Funding for emotional, psychological, or practical support to survivors

During the reporting period, Children 1st has not been in direct contact with survivors of abuse and as such has not directly provided funding for support for individuals. However, as, and when survivors contact us either directly or through their representative, we will offer a trauma sensitive, open and compassionate response. Specifically, we will offer one to one initial support and counselling and where appropriate signpost survivors to other specialist organisations who may be able to offer ongoing support.

2.4 Provision of apology to survivors

During the reporting period, Children 1st has not been in direct contact with survivors of abuse and has not had the opportunity to provide a direct apology to a survivor of abuse. Within our public statement published in September 2022, we offer our unreserved, whole-hearted apologies to anyone who suffered harm as a child whilst in our care. As and when we are contacted by survivors, we will make a direct apology to survivors and offer survivors the opportunity to discuss their experience.

3. Conclusion

As the Redress scheme matures, Children 1st is fully committed to its responsibilities both financial and otherwise to ensure redress applicants are fully supported and listened to. We will continue to provide a trauma-informed response to support and meet the needs of requesters, develop our historical archive to assist survivors with their search for answers and commit to providing apology and support when we are in contact with survivors. Finally, Children 1st will continue to acknowledge, support and champion the rights of survivors.