

# Stargazing

## Fife Gingerbread Strategy Development



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## Introduction

Over recent months Fife Gingerbread has embarked on a stargazing exercise to consider where we are now and where we'd like to be. We have engaged with our board, staff, volunteers and our parents forum to explore short term priorities and our longer-term ambitions.

It is without question that Fife Gingerbread will continue to deliver high quality family support services in Fife, focused on meeting the needs of lone parents and families in need. All of our work will be grounded in tackling child poverty. Offering both short term solutions to families in immediate need, and longer-term thinking around the systemic challenges surrounding child poverty.

We recognise that simply responding to need/demand and continuing to deliver family support services is not enough. All too often the systems that were designed to support vulnerable families are actually holding them stuck in place, trapped. We are committed to challenging the systems that are failing the community we exist to serve. Applying the 80/20 rule to Fife Gingerbread (Pareto Principle) compels us to dedicate 20% of our time, effort and resources into systems thinking, championing for change and tackling inequalities. Our theory of change is that this is where we will see the greatest results.

In other words... Let's start identifying, understanding and challenging the root causes of the issues families are facing. The issues we are seeing affecting families in Fife is similar to the story across Scotland. We believe that Fife Gingerbread can effectively connect learning from our family support services to influence, inspire and change systems. An upstream mindset is needed to change the trajectory for children and young people growing up in households facing multiple and complex barriers.

If we can make all of this happen then we can really bring to life our vision to *"create better todays and brighter tomorrows for lone parents and families in need"*.

## Re-imagine our values

As part of our stargazing process we revisited our values, and we reimaged these to reflect who we are today and our hopes for the future. We are invested in a values led approach.

We worked collaboratively to re-imagine our values to ensure that they are meaningful to families, volunteers and staff; it was an important (and fun!) exercise.

Our values will underpin not what we do, but how we support families, challenge systems and develop as an organisation.

We will embed our new values across the organisation whether this be in team meetings, home visits, partnership groups, posters in the office or social media content.



Value	Descriptor	Behaviours
Courage	We will be brave, passionate and strive to make a difference.	Strengths based approach. Solutions focused attitude. Amplify the voice of vulnerable families. Committed to systems change.
Connected	We will build connections and a sense of belonging for all.	Relationships centred around trust. Trauma informed resilient organisation. Welcoming in our approach. Remove power imbalances. Collaborative partnership approach.
Genuine	We will be a caring employer, family support service and partner organisation.	Act with respect and kindness. Be a good brand ambassador. Maintain a positive reputation.
Flourish	We will cultivate an environment where our staff, volunteers and families can achieve their potential with opportunities to adapt, evolve and learn.	Look after our health and wellbeing. Enable our people to act autonomously. Apply our E-S-P model. Invest in professional and personal development.

During the stargazing process priorities, hopes and aspirations emerged. Some of which are immediate priorities focused, longer term goals for the future and identifying systems changes priorities.

## How will we create better todays?

We have identified immediate priorities to continue our development, and longer-term goals. These will give families, volunteers and staff a shared sense of purpose.

### Immediate priorities (the next 12-18 months)

- Reimagine our Board and Leadership approach to ensure that this is dynamic and enables our immediate priorities, longer-term goals and manifesto.
- We will be the best employer possible. Offering our staff good well-paid employment that enables our people to have a healthy work/life balance.
- Revisit our approach to financial governance and management to ensure we are proactive and future proofing the organisation.
- We will identify and mitigate risks. Considering both our internal and external environment to inform our decision making and planning.
- We will be a good partner organisation and work alongside like-minded organisations to deliver family support services and champion for change.
- We will finalise a strengths based Volunteer Strategy that builds the capacity of the organisation to support families and enables our volunteers to develop skills, confidence and gain experience.

### Longer-term goals (the next 2-3 years)

- We will revisit and embed our Quality Assurance framework to ensure we are delivering high quality family support services that can be adapted to enable families to flourish.
- We will speed up our efforts to meaningfully embed lived experience in the organisation through our parents forum, progressive recruitment and pathways to work.
- We will continue to commission research (where beneficial) within our family support services to challenge our theory of change, evidence the need for the family support

and identify emerging themes.

- We will embed an upstream mindset across the organisation to ensure that learning, emerging themes and family's voices are amplified. Inspiring change across Scotland from the learning within our Fife based family support services.
- We will map and explore our circle of influence in order to identify gaps that affect our ability to inspire change.
- We will develop an innovative and ambitious fundraising architecture that supports our Strategy. This strategy ensures that we can continue to deliver sustainable, high quality family support services and enables an innovative approach to purposefully create systems change.

## How will we create brighter tomorrows?

As part of this process, we have developed a Fife Gingerbread Manifesto with five key areas where change is required in both policy and practice. Transformational systems change is required in each of these areas to tackle child poverty and achieve our vision at Fife Gingerbread of creating "*better todays and brighter tomorrows*" for families in Fife. These areas are our "asks" of decision and policy makers both locally and nationally centred around both anti-poverty and anti-stigma.

1. **Multiyear funding** for third sector organisations will create the stability of services required to offer holistic whole family support designed to meet the needs of families at a pace that meets their needs and facilitate sustainable change. Longer-term funding will create person led (rather than service led) whole family support.
2. We want to see a commitment to embedding a framework across Scottish businesses that promotes **Lone Parent Positive Workplaces**, designed to meet the needs of this key child poverty priority group and enabling employers to connect with this amazing pool of untapped talent.
3. Work in partnership to campaign for transformational change within **Child Maintenance** to ensure that the rights of children and young people to fair financial support from both parents (wherever possible) is upheld with a system that is fit for purpose.
4. We must see change in tackling Scotland's **Housing Emergency** to guarantee our children have safe, warm and happy homes to enable good childhoods for all.
5. The **cost of the School day** is a tangible opportunity for decision makers to improve the lives of children and young people through an inclusive stigma free Education system. It is essential that we poverty proof our Schools to help children and young people to flourish.

To successfully facilitate and raise awareness of our Manifesto "asks" we will need to create capacity to enable us to focus on influencing and change. We will also need to develop our approach to external comms, public relations, engagement and social media in order to gain momentum. This will include sharing our high level operational and strategic trajectory and our journey.

## What's next?

As we look ahead we will be collaboratively developing an implementation plan to monitor progress, celebrate achievements, identify barriers and continuously evolve. We launch our Strategy, and share our journey with key stakeholders. Watch this space!