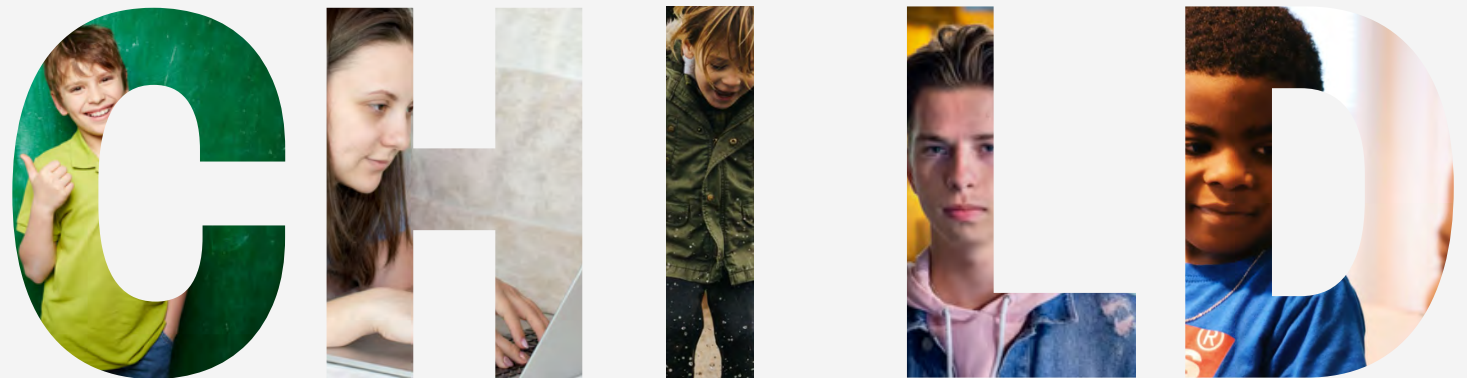




SHARED PARENTING SCOTLAND

Annual Report and Accounts
2021-2022

We put the best interests of the



at the heart of everything we do

Supporting separated parents to
share parenting, because children
need both parents

CONTENTS



Page 1

FOREWORD

Page 2

WHAT WE DO

Page 3

OUR TRAINING PROGRAMMES

Page 4

New Ways For Families®

Page 5

Online Training

Page 6

OUR TRAINING PROGRAMMES

Page 7

Shared Parenting Cross Party Group

Page 7

Children (Scotland) Act Progress

Page 8

Online Courts

Page 8

Petitions

Page 9

USER SURVEY RESULTS

Page 10-11 **Survey Results**

Page 12

OUR WORK

Page 13

Parliament Committee Round-Table

Page 13

Parent Participation in School Activities

Page 14

"Sharing My Parents" Research Findings

Page 15

Client and Helpline Statistics

Page 16

The Future of Legal Aid

Page 16

Publication of Judgements

Page 17

Our Group Meetings & WhatsApp Groups

Page 18

Christmas & New Year Messages

Page 19

International Council for Shared Parenting

Page 19

Our Family Wizard Webinar

Page 20

Scotland v Poland Fundraiser Friendly

Page 21-22

OUR FUNDERS

Page 23

NEW STAFF

Page 24-26

WORDS OF THANKS

Page 27-31

OUR FINANCES



SPS Trustee Amee Hood took part in the virtual Kiltwalk in 2021 and her picture was used in the Kiltwalk TV adverts.

2021-22 has been a very busy year for Shared Parenting Scotland. We have taken on new staff, launched the pilot of a new training programme for separated parents, conducted research on the views of young people about shared parenting and increased the support we offer through our helpline and other services.

Although the most severe impact of Covid-19 is hopefully behind us, parents and children have experienced major new stresses because of the lockdown restrictions, adding significantly to difficulties faced in sharing parenting after separation.

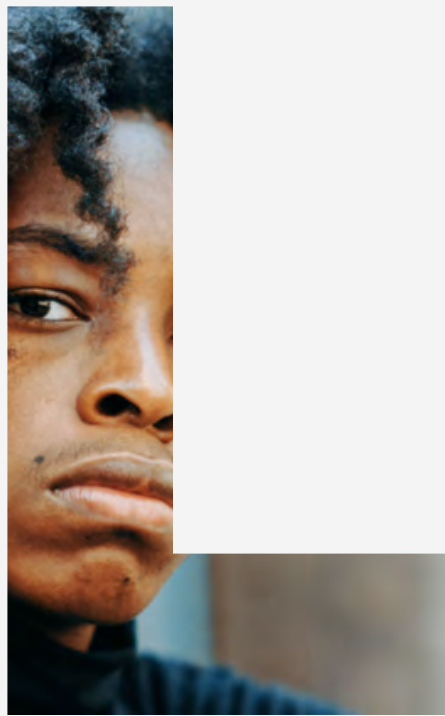
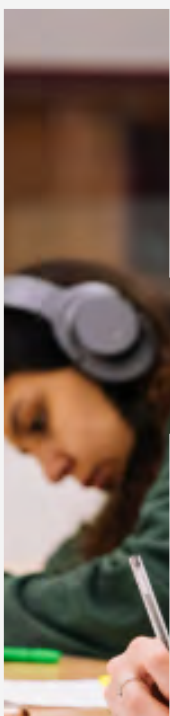
The Scottish court system has also been under increased strain. Courts have now settled into mainly online hearings. The accumulated impact of lockdown delays in hearings and contact centre placements and the reduced number of family lawyers taking on legal aid cases have increased the delays in the system.

Changes that were included in the 2020 Children (Scotland) Act are taking a very long time to emerge, as are the results of the Family Justice Modernisation Strategy and new case management rules.

Despite all these Covid consequences, we do hope that this major shake-up will eventually result in more support for separating families, fewer disputes having to be resolved in court and Scottish family court proceedings to be quicker, cheaper and less adversarial in future.

Ian Maxwell
National Manager

We put the best interests of the



at the heart of everything we do

We **campaign** for changes in law and legal procedures to support equal parenting

We **help** and support parents to resolve disputes and put their children first

We **inform** and educate professionals and politicians about latest research

We **listen** and provide support and assistance on our helpline

We **develop** a range of training programmes to assist separated parents

OUR TRAINING PROGRAMMES



NEW WAYS FOR FAMILIES®

NEW TRAINING FOR SEPARATED PARENTS

A very effective training programme for separated parents has been developed by Bill Eddy of the High Conflict Institute in San Diego. This mixture of online modules and one-to-one coaching is now helping parents in the USA, Canada and Australia to reach agreement, communicate more effectively and avoid court action. Shared Parenting Scotland is now the only European licensee of New Ways for Families®. We are now running an evaluated pilot of the programme with a team of Scottish lawyers, social workers, mediators and family therapists now equipped to coach the Scottish learners.

I really wish I did the New Ways for Families course before we got into the court process. However, better late than never. Thanks for your help getting me on this course."

Parent on the New Ways for Families® SPS Pilot



Bill Eddy - High Conflict Institute

Click to watch our New Ways For Families Pilot Launch Video, including a message from Bill Eddy (pictured), founder of the Programme

OUR TRAINING PROGRAMMES



Annual Report 21/22

CONTACT SESSION TRAINING EVENT

We know that seeing your child in a contact centre can be stressful for all concerned – both parents and the child. Child psychotherapist Jan Montgomery ran a training session on “Managing Child Contact Sessions – dealing with anxiety in children and parents”.

She explained how anxiety affects our body and mind, our thinking and behaviour. The session described how to decrease the impact anxiety has on both adults and children before, during and after contact sessions.

ONLINE COURSES

Since we couldn't run face-to-face training sessions during the past few year years, we have developed a number of online training courses, including courses on communication skills, stress management and money advice – all very necessary during the stress of Covid.

These courses continue to be available and we are planning to extend the programme to include an online version of the highly praised stress and trauma training we ran in Dundee in 2018.

LEGISLATION AND COURT



CROSS PARTY GROUP ON SHARED PARENTING

Meetings in the Scottish Parliament building haven't been possible since the start of the Covid lockdowns, but this Cross Party Group has continued to meet virtually, chaired by Fulton MacGregor MSP.

Speakers during the year have included Professor William Fabricius (below) talking about parenting arrangements after separation affect the emotional security of the children affected, Chris Mieztis from Fathers Network Scotland on paternal mental health in Scotland, Paul Bradshaw from Scotcen on the Growing Up In Scotland Study and the implementation of the Children (Scotland) Act 2020.



CHILDREN (SCOTLAND) ACT PROGRESS

Although this Act was passed in 2020 the main progress so far have been the consultations on measures such as the registration of contact centres and changes to child welfare reporting.

Shared Parenting Scotland held meetings on both topics to collect views of professionals and parents before making submissions and we have also taken part in various stakeholder group meetings.

Our views on all the changes that could be made to improve family courts and dispute resolution in Scotland were presented at our AGM in November 2021.

Our 10-point plan includes hearing of contact cases within two weeks and a problem solving approach for all family court hearings.

ONLINE COURTS ARE NOT THE ANSWER

In March 2020 almost all court hearings in Scotland became telephone conferences. Since then the Webex online platform has been used by almost all courts.

While there are advantages for procedural hearings to continue online, Shared Parenting Scotland has argued for face-to-face court hearings to be the norm for child welfare hearings and other family court hearing at which decisions are made.

Amongst the reasons we gave for this view in our submission to the consultation on this issue was that sheriffs need to see and be seen by parents in court to emphasise the importance of court decisions.

PETITIONS

We responded to two of the petitions considered by the Scottish Parliament in the past year.

PE1917 seeks to provide full legal aid to all parents fighting for access to their children. Our response mentioned the current problems in obtaining legal aid but also stressed the need to resolve more disputes out of court.

PE1838: concerns regulation of non-statutory child advocacy services. In our response we drew attention to the extraordinary and unacceptable situation in which an adult whose identity, qualifications and PVG status are not known may be spending time alone with children as young as 4 years old over many months without the knowledge or permission of one of the child's parents or any form of due process. This petition has been concluded on the basis that the Scottish Government is planning to act on this issue.

USER SURVEY RESULTS



USER SURVEY RESULTS

95%

found meeting an SPS staff member helpful, with 1 in 4 finding it life-saving

(3% increase on previous survey)

94%

found attending a group meeting helpful (12% life-saving)

(1% increase on previous survey)

56%

found our WhatsApp groups helpful or life-saving

69%

noted experiencing less stress and anxiety since contacting us

(10% increase on previous survey)

61%

felt better informed about options available to them for maintaining a relationship with their children after contacting us

ALMOST
1 in 3

of respondents had no contact at all with their children at the time of response

USER SURVEY RESULTS

Annual Report 21/22

55%

had increased contact with their children after contacting us

(3% increase on previous survey)

38%

had difficulties in finding a legal aid lawyer despite qualifying for legal aid

47%

of respondents paid over £10k for legal and court action

31%

of respondents have shared care (have children for > 2 days/week)

50%

of respondents reached agreement with their ex-partner without court action

1 in 4

had a court case settled within a year. 39% of cases lasted over 3 years

OUR WORK



PARLIAMENT COMMITTEE ROUND-TABLE INPUT

Ian Maxwell was amongst the witnesses invited to a round-table meeting of the Equality, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee.

He presented various suggestions on how to change family court hearings. He commented that a form of early triaging, now that we have had a taste of it during the Covid restrictions, could inject a sense of urgency into the whole court system.

Months of a child's life should not be allowed to slip by because the system is slow. The Cochem family court in Germany has found that such a radical change works very well; cases there have a first hearing in two weeks, not two months.

Click below to watch the full roundtable.



PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

In general most Scottish schools comply with the expectation of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 which makes clear that when parents do not live together they are both equally entitled to information about their child's educational progress and any issues that arise.

The period of Covid restrictions and transfer of communication onto online platforms has been problematic for some.

We try to work with both parent and school to resolve such glitches but it remains an issue with some schools that including both parents equally is perceived as a problem rather than an obligation. We will shortly revise and update our 'Equal Parents' user guide.





Jamie Wark



**Click to view and
download the report**

"SHARING MY PARENTS" RESEARCH FINDINGS

Shared Parenting Scotland published "Sharing my Parents" the findings of a research project into the experience and reflections of young people who experienced the break up of their parents' relationship during their childhood.

The research was carried out by Glasgow University psychology undergraduate, Jamie Wark, during a paid intern placement with Shared Parenting Scotland last summer. The placement was funded by the Robertson Trust.

The research and report break new ground in Scotland by asking young people directly about the effect on their own life of parental separation. A key finding from the study was the lack of support available to young people struggling with their new arrangements post-separation as noted in this quote from one of the interviewees: "I went to a school counsellor, and I hated it and never went back, um and then I just kind of talked to my mum".

A Scottish Parliament motion applauding the study was signed in March 2022 by 24 MSPs from all political parties.

990

total number of
clients in 2021

58%

new clients

71%

male

(83% in 2019)

29%

female

(17% in 2019)

4357

helpline interactions

Email received by SPS	1272
Email sent from SPS	1450
External Meeting	4
Facebook Message	18
Face-to-Face Meeting	43
Letter received by SPS	8
Letter sent from SPS	7
Planned Zoom call	47
Telephone call from SPS	185
Telephone call into SPS	1010
Text received by SPS	70
Text sent from SPS	30
Thank you letter	213

THE FUTURE OF LEGAL AID

During the past year we have heard from increasing numbers of parents about great difficulty in finding a family lawyer who will represent them on legal aid.

The main reason for this shortfall appears to be the low rate available for such work – a problem which is affecting all types of civil and criminal work.

In representations to the Scottish Legal Aid Board and the Scottish Government, we suggested that legal aid can play an important role in supporting alternative, less adversarial routes to helping parents resolve their disagreements about parenting after separation or divorce.

PUBLICATION OF JUDGEMENTS

In October 2021 Sir Andrew Macfarlane, President of the Family Division in England and Wales announced a major shift in culture and process to increase transparency of family court decisions. Shared Parenting Scotland raised this issue with Lord Carloway, the head of Scottish courts. The Lord President assured us that he is in favour of the publication of judgements in family cases (anonymised as appropriate) and he is clear that it is in the interests of open justice that such a practice is followed.

Although almost all Court of Session judgements are published, it is up to individual sheriffs to decide whether their judgement is published. Our view is that publication of all Sheriff Court family judgements would help to show people what to expect if they pursue a case to the proof stage. Although almost all family cases are heard in the Sheriff Court only 10 such judgments were published in 2021.



Lord Carloway

419

people attended our
group meetings in
2021-22

GROUP MEETINGS

All of the local support meetings went online in March 2020. Since the easing of restrictions the meetings in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dundee and Stirling have resumed, and each month we continue to hold an online meeting for people who cannot attend the city meetings.

Although the number attending these meetings has reduced since the start of Covid, they still provide vital support for parents and other family members who are struggling to make contact arrangements or facing other shared parenting issues.

Every meeting has at least one family lawyer attending to help with legal issues, and we are very grateful to our pool of 30 experienced family lawyers from firms across Scotland who take part in these meetings on a pro bono basis.

12190

WhatsApp messages
sent across our 5
groups in 2021-22

WHATSAPP

The number of messages posted on our six WhatsApp online forums has increased steadily since we established this service. These forums give parents a chance to express their feelings and share issues at any time of day or night. The message might be about a legal issue or a shared parenting problem – people are grouped according to where in Scotland they live so that local tips can be passed on.

OUR CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Making use of our new capacity to produce short, punchy messages, we issued our Christmas suggestions for separated parents in video form this year. This approach was justified by the lively response on social media: reaching over 3000 people on Twitter and 700 people on Facebook



OUR NEW YEAR MESSAGE

In our New Message for 2022 we stated that: “research from around the world confirms the benefits to children of shared parenting. In most cases children who have close to equal time with both parents after separation do better in most areas of their life with fewer adverse experiences and better psychological health into adulthood. It also helps parents move away from perpetual conflict. An increasing number of jurisdictions are recognising this reality in their approach to settling arrangements for shared or co-parenting after divorce or separation.

Unfortunately, Scotland is behind the curve in this area. There are too many incentives in attitudes, systems and procedures in Scotland for parents to battle over time with their children and too few that help them take the long view of what will be best for their kids. Our message for 2022 is for Scotland to catch up – to help parents problem-solve rather than prolong conflict and above all to free children to have a positive relationship with both their parents and both extended families.”

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SHARED PARENTING (ICSP)

Shared Parenting Scotland continues our involvement with the ICSP, including contributing to the European Shared Parenting Map project – bringing together comparative information on the legal status and national policy of various aspects of shared parenting. This follows on from a mapping exercise comparing all the States in the USA in order to encourage them to adopt more supportive policies and legislation.



OUR FAMILY WIZARD WEBINAR

We held a webinar about the Our Family Wizard app to pass on the information about a service that we often recommend to parents. Parents using the app can simplify, document and improve communication with their ex-partner. It includes features such as a ToneMeter to review the tone of a message before it is sent, a shared calendar, an information bank to share family pictures and key documents relating to the children, recording of expenses and a journal which can be used to record attendance at handovers.

[Click the logo to learn more](#)



Scotland v Poland Friendly at Hampden

Millions of Ukrainian children have been separated from at least one parent by war.

We organised a group of 22 Scottish and Polish supporters to attend the friendly match at Hampden Park on March 24th as a show of solidarity and to contribute to the UNICEF fundraising effort.

The match itself raised more than £500,000 for UNICEF's work in support of Ukrainian children.

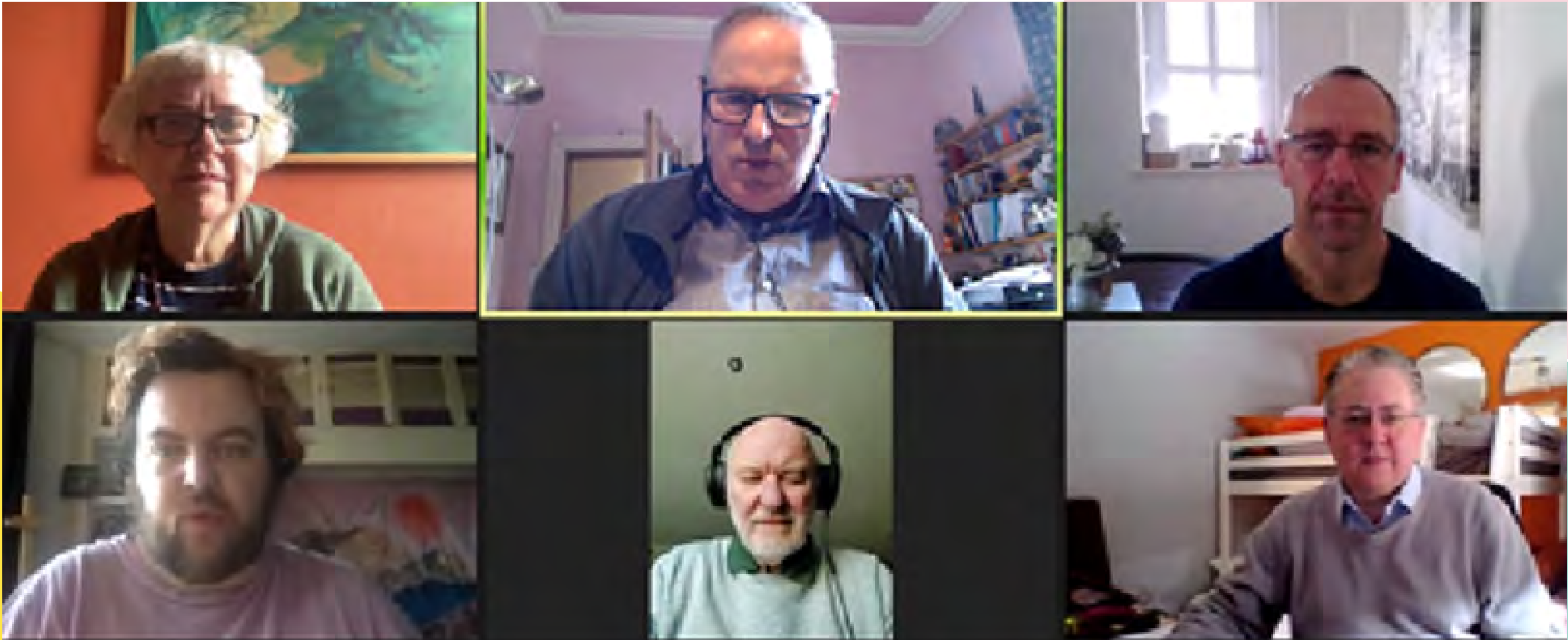
OUR FUNDERS



Shared Parenting Scotland is very grateful for all the support we have received in the past year from the Tudor Trust, the Scottish Government Children, Young People and Parents Early Intervention Fund, Scottish Government Civil Law and Legal System Division, National Lottery Community Fund, Allen Lane Foundation, Walter Craig Charitable Trust, JTH Charitable Trust, Leng Charitable Trust, W. M. Mann Foundation, Nancie Massey Charitable Trust, Souter Charitable Trust, Tillyloss Trust, WM Sword Charitable Trust and the Kintore Trust,

We are also very grateful to individual donors and the supporters of the charity who raised sponsor money by taking part in the Kiltwalk which was doubled in 2020-21 by the Hunter Foundation.





Fraser Wilson joined us this year in a new Digital Communication post. The staff team is Claire Ross, Ian Maxwell and Mark Downie (upper row) and Fraser Wilson, John Forsyth and Alastair Williamson (lower row).

WORDS OF THANKS



WORDS OF THANKS

"Contact with my daughters was reinstated at the weekend. Sending a strong lawyer's letter made this happen. I cannot thank you both enough for your ongoing support, without which I probably would have given up. This is the closest I have come to the heart-breaking decision to let go of my daughters, move on and hope that they will find their way back to me in the future."

A mother commenting during a 6-year struggle to stay in contact with her children

"Thank you very much for the supporting letter. Today I spoke to Anna in the Welcome Centre, she has discussed my case with Crisis and putting through a referral through the private rent team at the council to see if I am eligible for help to rent deposit scheme that is carried out by Crisis"

This father was homeless after leaving the family home and needed to arrange contact with his children.

WORDS OF THANKS

"All communication from her has completely broken down, she is punishing me for the sins of the father (my son) in spite of trying many ways to communicate with her so I was communicating with her through my lawyer and hers but I can't afford a lawyer any more. Thank you very much for all the information, I really appreciate it. I will try the links you have given me."

A grandmother trying to resume contact with her grandchild

"Thank you for supporting my family through what was a truly nightmarish and harrowing time in our lives with sleepless nights and constant anxiety - and the demons that one has to battle. Thank you for showing my son a glimpse of light in the darkness and for guiding him the way to go. I was there for that very special moment and for the first time in nearly a year - he got to sing his own son to sleep again at night.

You can imagine the tears that we shed in joy."

A grandfather whose son finally resumed contact with the grandson after a long struggle

OUR FINANCES



Accounts for period ending 31 March 2022

Charity no. SC 042817

Principal Place of Business:

10 Palmerston Place, Edinburgh, EH12 5AA

Tel: 0131 557 2440

Email: info@sharedparenting.scot

Board members:

Margaret Ashman (Secretary)

Sumit Ghosh (Chair)

Jane Cooper

Gavin Watson

Guy Holloway

Julie Bills

Amee Hood

Joe Mandava

Banker:

TSB

Independent Examiner:

A.W. Scotland CA

10 Craighall Crescent

Edinburgh

EH6 4RY

The Board presents the accounts for the period from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022. The comparative figures cover the year ended 31st March 2021. The accounts show a deficit of £19,374. The policy of the charity is to have reserves of 3 months expenditure and we seek to maintain this reserve in 2022-23 whilst investing in further online training services.

STATEMENT OF RISK

The Board continues to assess the major risks to which the charity is exposed and will continue to establish procedures and policies to mitigate those that are identified as a result.

STATEMENT OF BOARD'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board will prepare financial statements for each financial year and give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and the surplus or deficit of the charity for the period. In preparing these financial statements, the Board is required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently.
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- Prepare financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Board is responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Accounts (Scotland) regulations 1992. It is responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity

and hence for taking responsible steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities. These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective 2015).

Independent Examiner

The management committee have appointed A.W. Scotland CA as Independent Examiner of the charity. A resolution to continue this appointment will be proposed at the Annual General Meeting.

BY THE ORDER OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



Margaret Ashman, Secretary, 17/05/22

Independent Examiner's Report to the members of Shared Parenting Scotland SCIO for the period ended 31st March 2022 set out in pages 28-31.

Respective Responsibilities of the Board and Examiner

The Charity's Board are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the terms of the Charities and Trustees Investment (Scotland) 2005 Act and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. The Board considers that the audit requirement of Regulation 10(1) (d) of the Accounts Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts as required under section 44(1) (c) of the Act and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Statement

My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Charity and a comparison of the accounts represented with these records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seek explanations from the Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and, consequently, I do not express an opinion on the accounts.

Independent Examiner's Statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention.

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 44(1) (a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations, and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 9 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations

Have not been met, or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



A.W. Scotland CA
10 Craighall Crescent
Edinburgh

17/05/2022

Income and Expenditure Accounts and Statement of Financial Affairs for year end 31 March 2022

2020-21	Incoming Resources	2021-2022
	From Charitable Activities	TOTAL
	Grants	
£32,000	The Tudor Trust	£30,000
£33,000	CYPPEIF	£33,000
£9,844	Voluntary Action Fund	
£11,560	Scottish Govt. Justice	£34,680
	National Lottery Community Fund	£7,000
£33,250	Other	
£119,654	TOTAL	£104,680
£268	Other Income - Bank Interest	£146
	From Generated Funds	
£9,672	Donations - trusts	£16,750
£9,955	Donations - general	£11,876
£139,549	Total Incoming Resources	£133,452
	Resources Expended	
	Charitable Expenditure	
£87,347	Staff costs	£127,432
£5,286	Office rent	£6,119
£1,367	Phone, stationery etc.	£1,500
£377	Insurance	£377
£3,299	IT and web site	£7,721
£97	Staff travel	£473
	Travel to groups	£93
	Local group costs	
£4,349	Events, training, subscriptions	£3,945
	Bank Charges	
£9,023	Online Training	£4,666
£111,145	Total	£152,326
	Fundraising Expenditure	
£420	Fund-raising costs	
	Governance Expenses	
	Board Expenses	
£300	Independent Examiners Fee	£500
£111,865	Total Resources Expended	£152,826
£27,684	(Deficit)/Surplus for the period and net outgoing resources	-£19,374
	Funds at 1st April 2021	£33,293
	Funds at 31st March 2022	£13,919

Independent Examiner's Report to the members of Shared Parenting Scotland SCIO for the period ended 31st March 2022 set out in pages 5-7.

Respective Responsibilities of the Board and Examiner

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Have not been met, or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



A.W. Scotland CA
10 Craighall Crescent
Edinburgh

17/05/2022

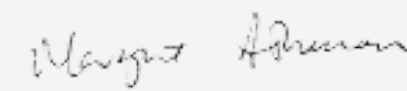
Income and Expenditure Accounts and Statement of Financial Affairs for year end 31 March 2022

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£9,023	Online Training	£4,666
£111,145	Total	£152,326
	Fundraising Expenditure	
£420	Fund-raising costs	
	Governance Expenses	
	Board Expenses	
£300	Independent Examiners Fee	£500
111,865	Total Resources Expended	£152,826

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2022

Current Assets	2021	2022
Debtors (Note 4)	£0	£17,340
Cash at Bank	£38,443	£13,674
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year (note 3)		
Accruals	£5,150	£17,095
Net Current Assets - Net Assets	£33,293	£13,919
Represented by		
Unrestricted Funds	£33,293	£13,919
Restricted Funds	£0	£0
	£33,293	£13,919

The accounts were approved by the Board by email on 17/05/2022


Margaret Ashman, Secretary

Notes to the Accounts for Period Ended 31 March 2022

1. Accounting Policies

Accounting Convention

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles FRS 106, the historical cost convention and the guidelines laid down in the Statement of Recommended Practice – Accounting and Reporting by Charities (2021).

Income:

Income is accounted for when received. All other activities are dealt with in unrestricted funds. Grants relating to specific years are accounted for in their respective periods.

Expenditure:

Expenditure is accounted for on accruals basis and includes unrecoverable value added tax.

Period of accounts:

The accounts cover the year ended 31st March 2022.

The comparative figures cover the year ended 31st March 2021.

2. Board Expenses

Board members received no remuneration and the members were reimbursed a total of £nil (2020/21 nil) for travel and other expenses as all board meetings were held online.

3. Creditors - amounts falling due within one year

	2021	2022
Grants for 2022/23 received in advance	-	£12800
Accruals	£2643	£1623
Taxation	£2507	£2672
	£5150	£17095

4. Staff Costs

The charity had an average of five employees during the year (2021, 3)

	2021	2022
Salaries	£81994	£118733
National Insurance	£3335	£5641
Pension Costs	£1730	£2540
Processing Costs	£288	£518
	£87347	£127432