



# Dundee Bairns “Cosy Bairns” Project



Cosy Bairns is a project set up by the local charity Dundee Bairns as an emergency response to the extra needs of children from low-income families during the Covid 19 pandemic. The project was set up to provide extra layers of clothing and additional kit for outdoor PE.



## **Dundee Bairns' "Cosy Bairns" Project**

### **How it all began**

Councillor Lynne Short, Fairness and Equalities Commissioner for Dundee City Council, picked up this issue during a regular weekly Dundee Food Insecurity Network meeting which plans emergency food provision around the city. The network regularly discusses other needs being faced by communities throughout Dundee.

Covid 19 guidance for schools had led to much more outdoor provision and classrooms were being well-ventilated, making for a much colder school day.

Parents had been asked by schools to provide extra layers of clothing for children who were studying in much colder classrooms, as well as additional kit for outdoor P.E or outdoor learning.

The additional costs to parents for providing such clothing were challenging. Many parents were reporting that they had to choose between heating and eating during the winter months of the pandemic. Families were already struggling with the economic impact of unemployment, furlough, reduced working hours or simply a rise in the cost of living. Several members of the network had been approached by families seeking assistance with the challenge of providing their children with extra warm clothing.

Councillor Short then approached Dundee Bairns, a local charity well-known for its aims to tackle inequalities for Dundee's children. She asked whether Dundee Bairns could adapt its mode of delivery of food to children in Dundee to help children stay warm as well as fed, active and stimulated.

### **Development of the Project**

Seed funding of £500 was acquired to buy samples of items to go into clothing packs: contents were determined by feedback from parents, school workers and teachers.

An initial survey of Dundee Schools' Family Development Workers and Guidance teachers established that there were at least 1500 Dundee children who would benefit from a supply of essential cosy clothing. An estimated cost was drawn up of £90-£100 per primary/nursery child and around £50-£75 for each Secondary pupil referred. This led to a rough estimate for the entire project of £87,000.



## Fast, flexible and ambitious

Dundee Bairns as a charity prides itself in its ability to respond to Dundee children's needs in a speedy, flexible and responsive way.

Given that the original idea for the project was conceived in late October 2020 and brought to Dundee Bairns' board meeting on November 13th, it was vital that the project was set up to respond quickly. It could not have been achieved without the energy and commitment from Councillor Short, Dundee Bairns' Project Co-ordinator, the Trustees/volunteers of Dundee Bairns and, most importantly our generous funders.

The charitable funds for Cosy Bairns were obtained from a variety of different sources and were matched with £31,415 funding in a decision made by Dundee City Council group leaders to allocate Covid Emergency Funding for this purpose. Appendix 1 shows the list of donors for the project.

Funding applications were made on behalf of the project by the Dundee Bairns Treasurer, Marjory Stewart, who oversaw the income and expenditure for the project. Dundee Bairns Chair, David Dorward also made funding bids, and Cllr Short championed the project to Dundee City Council.

Dundee Volunteer and Voluntary Action lent assistance by allocating a member of staff to make some funding applications on behalf of the project, which proved to be quite successful.

Public donations were made over the period of the Cosy Bairns project via a targeted Facebook post which was helpful in raising the profile of the project.

Funding was allocated very quickly by funders and donors (See Appendix 1), and the target figure was reached before mid -December 2020. [It was exceeded by the time the project was completed in January 2021.]

## *The process*

A Survey Monkey was issued to all Dundee School Family Development Workers to ascertain the number of children in need. Secondary school teachers were consulted about the most appropriate pack for these older pupils. Lynne Short suggested a variety of contacts in both the third sector and the business world and Dundee Bairns sourced procurement through these contacts. One of these was Bryce Gibson, the owner of Direct Soccer, a local sportswear firm, who provided the sportswear at cost price.

Derek Mawhinney, a Dundee businessman donated £500, which the Stobswell Community Forum agreed to hold in the interim in addition to any other funds allocated to the project if required. Different supermarket chains were researched for sample Cosy Bairns packs. Appendix 2 provides the detailed information about what was in the Cosy Bairns Packs.



Michelin Scotland Innovation Park identified space within their complex where clothes could be stored and all COVID guidelines met. A bespoke referral form was sent to all schools and returned within the deadline of the end of November. The number of children identified had now reached 2926. The orders were collated within three weeks and the first orders went into suppliers very quickly thereafter.



*Volunteers receive clothing from Tesco and pack it onto the van for delivery to MSIP.*

A local businessman Jimmy Fyffe donated the use of one of his JFKegs vans and volunteers collected all the clothing and footwear from the various suppliers and delivered it to the facility at the Michelin Scotland Innovation Park.

A delivery van was hired by Dundee City Council for Dundee Bairns and volunteer packer rotas were drawn up and some packs were delivered before Christmas. There was some delay with delivery of items from large supermarkets, which coincided with the Christmas break and then the new Covid lockdown regulations. Nevertheless, volunteers were able to work in socially distanced bubbles and all primary school and secondary school orders were completed and delivered by the week ending 22nd January 2021.



*Cosy Bairns volunteers sorting and packing clothes*

There were a few incomplete packs which were all dealt with through making direct orders from the suppliers. A small amount of excess items were initially stored at the Michelin site, but were later distributed between some primary and secondary schools for general use.

## ***Impact and Feedback***

Feedback in the main has been overwhelmingly positive. We have ascertained that the funding, time and resources given to this project have all been worthwhile. We have been told that the project has made a meaningful difference in nurseries, primary and secondary schools for staff, children and families who have received support during what has been a challenging and very cold winter period.

There has been no negative feedback, just some comments or suggestions on how to enhance the project. Many lessons were learned about the provision of a large amount of clothing in such a short space of time. We cannot assume that we got everything exactly right for every individual child, however, there have been many examples of positive feedback to convince us that this was a much needed project which has helped many families.

These are just a few of the feedback comments from the schools:

*“On behalf of XXXX High School I wanted to say thank you very much to you, David and all the wonderful people behind Cosy Bairns. At a time of real hardship and challenge we really appreciate the contribution you are making to the local community and I know that our young people and their families really appreciate the warm clothes you have provided.”*



*“Amazed at the efficiency of the service under extreme challenges at this time.”*

*“Packs have helped families to get warm clothes for their children when they have been struggling financially due the impact of COVID-19. For some families their circumstances have changed drastically in a short space of time, so the clothing packs have helped to ensure the children don't have to go without cosy winter clothing. Packs have helped children to stay warm in school especially since they are spending more time outside due to COVID-19. Thank you so much to all the staff and volunteers for putting the packs together. It must have been a huge task. The packs have been greatly appreciated by all of the families who have received them”.*

*“Families with more than one child who were struggling to cope with the demands of clothing their growing children along with managing the financial demands of Christmas. Cosy Bairns has given them new clothes so that they feel the same as their friends and not disadvantaged by wearing old clothes. Thank you so much for the support of our families”.*

## Summary and Conclusion

Cosy Bairns was an extremely fast-paced and ambitious project. Every nursery, primary and secondary school setting in Dundee were invited to apply on behalf of children they thought would benefit from a Cosy Bairns pack. Nearly 3000 children received essential winter and sports clothing and footwear during an unprecedented challenging time for many families. The process of ordering clothes, packing and delivery depended on the huge efforts and goodwill of Dundee Bairns' Chair, Treasurer, Project Coordinator and volunteers. Councillor Short was the initial inspiration behind the project and herself devoted many hours to some of the details of the process.

Dundee Bairns has learnt a lot from the project and is hoping to develop a follow-up service that will meet specific needs and iron out some of the logistical difficulties.

The project meets Dundee Bairns' aims and purpose for the next five years as set out in the following statement in our strategic plan.

*“Now that Dundee Bairns has demonstrated a firm commitment to work with volunteers and partners in meeting identified needs in Dundee, there is a growing ambition to tackle inequality in other areas as well as food.*

*Combatting 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.”*

As ever Dundee Bairns is indebted to our many volunteers (see Appendix 3), without whom we would not have been able to deliver the Cosy Bairns project and provide warm clothing and footwear to 2,926 children and young people in Dundee.



***Jacquie Roberts***  
***Vice Chair, Dundee Bairns***  
***18th February 2021***

***Genna Millar***  
***Project Coordinator, Dundee Bairns***  
***18th February 2021***

Appendix 1  
Major Funders and Donors



<i>Name of Funder</i>	<i>Received</i>
<i>Derek Mawhinney (prototype funding) £500 less prototype exp £173.25</i>	<i>£327</i>
<i>DVVA</i>	<i>£5000</i>
<i>Barnardos</i>	<i>£2000</i>
<i>Gertrude Patullo Trust (Blackadders)</i>	<i>£1500</i>
<i>John Maurice Aitken (JMA) Trust</i>	<i>£2000</i>
<i>Dundee City Council</i>	<i>£31,415</i>
<i>Help for Kids</i>	<i>£5,000</i>
<i>Nine Incorporated Trades</i>	<i>£5,000</i>
<i>Rollos LLP Donation</i>	<i>£500</i>
<i>Northwood Trust</i>	<i>£15,000</i>
<i>Tesco Charity Contribution</i>	<i>£8,000</i>
<i>Rotary Club Dundee</i>	<i>£1,000</i>
<i>Facebook/other donations</i>	<i>£700</i>
<i>Rank Foundation</i>	<i>£20,000</i>
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b><i>£97,442</i></b>



Appendix 2: Items in Cosy Bairns packs



<i>Nursery and Primary School Pupil Packs</i>	<i>Secondary School Pupil Packs</i>
<i>Coat</i>	<i>Coat</i>
<i>Gloves</i>	<i>Gloves</i>
<i>Hat</i>	<i>Hat</i>
<i>Shoes</i>	<i>Shoes</i>
<i>Wellies</i>	<i>Towel</i>
<i>Socks</i>	<i>Joggers</i>
<i>Tights</i>	<i>Hooded Top/Sweatshirt</i>
<i>Pants</i>	
<i>Vests</i>	
<i>Joggers</i>	
<i>Hooded Top/Jumper</i>	

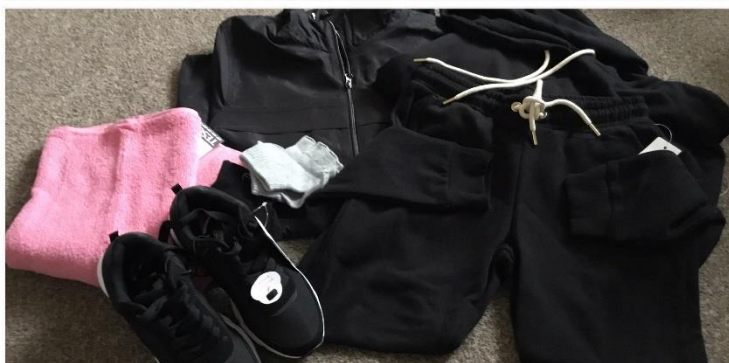


Image shows the prototype packs for Nursery/Primary pupils (top) and Secondary pupils (below)

### *Appendix 3*

With grateful thanks:



#### **Cosy Bairns Volunteers**

Ken Clark  
David Millar  
Stuart Galloway  
Ameed Shakhsheer  
Jen Clark  
Doug Milne  
Jo Clark  
Rebecca Holmes  
Lynn Hay  
Marjory Stewart  
Sharon McLeod  
Jacquie Roberts  
Richard Roberts  
Dale Mudie  
Kayleigh Flinter  
Linda McDonald  
Brian Oliphant  
David Dorward