



Edinburgh School Uniform Bank

Registered Charity No. SC047524 (SCIO)

Annual Report

Period from 1st July 2019

to 30th June 2020

Introduction

The service provided by Edinburgh School Uniform Bank (ESUB) is very simple but it has profound effects. A pack of school uniform is not just a bag of clothes. It is a chance for a child or young person to fit in, to feel confident, to be socially included and to make the most of their opportunities at school. It gives practical support to parents and carers when they are facing tough circumstances.

The work that goes on behind the scenes to provide packs of uniform can be complex and demanding, particularly in a year that presented us with the twin challenges of increasing demand and a global pandemic. None of it would be possible without the dedication and hard work of all our volunteers, and my thanks go to each and every one of them.

Julia Grindley

Chair

Structure, governance and management

Constitution

The Charity is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (a SCIO). It was registered in its current legal form on 22nd June 2017.

The structure of the organisation consists of the Members and the Board. Membership is open to any individual aged 16 or over with an interest the charity. The people serving on the board are referred to as Trustees.

During the year 2019/20, the Trustees were:

- Julia Grindley (Chair)
- Penny Baillie (Treasurer)
- Linda Russell (Secretary until 7th November 2019, resigned from the Board on 17th February 2020)
- Louise Kowalska (Secretary from 7th November 2019)
- Roger Horam (Trustee)
- Colin Hope (appointed Trustee on 20th April 2020)

Trustee recruitment and appointment

At each AGM all of the charity trustees retire from office but are then eligible for re-election. There must be a minimum of three and a maximum of twelve trustees. Board meetings are held throughout the year as required.

Management

Day-to-day management of our activities is conducted by volunteers, some of whom are also Trustees. We had no paid staff in the year 2019/20.

Objectives

In response to increasing financial pressures on families, Edinburgh School Uniform Bank was set up to provide new and nearly new school uniforms and other school essentials to those in need.

We aim to help relieve child poverty and increase self-esteem and well-being in children and young people, hence enabling them to get the most out of their education and to feel confident and included. Our service also relieves stress in parents and carers.

We also work to reduce the amount of school uniform going to landfill by re-distributing nearly-new school clothing.

Activities, Achievements and Impact

Core Activities

We collect donations of uniform and distribute them in response to referrals from professionals who work with families.

We do not have set criteria for accepting referrals. We trust the judgement of our referring partners to make requests appropriately. We cater for all ages ranging from 4 to 18 across all state schools in Edinburgh.

In 2019/20, we received **624** requests for individual packs of new school uniform. This figure is lower than the previous financial year because we suspended our operations for nearly 4 months in the spring of 2020 due to the Covid situation. The period of suspension included May and most of June, when we would usually receive hundreds of referrals.

A more meaningful comparison of referral numbers takes into account each full calendar year. In 2019 we provided packs of uniform to **1,009** children and young people. By the end of October 2020 we had provided **1,170** packs, despite the spring lockdown. We are projecting total figures for 2020 to be around 25% higher than in 2019.



A typical pack of uniform includes 6 core items such as trousers, jumpers and shirts as well as “extras” which vary according to the season such as warm hats in winter and stationery in summer.

We estimate that the value of the new items of clothing, stationery and accessories that we gave to families in 2019/20 was around **£31,000**. Approximately £19,500 worth of new items were donated to us by supporters and local businesses, and we bought the remaining £11,500.

All of the clothing and accessories that went into individual packs of uniform in 2019/20 were brand new. We also provided batches of nearly-new uniform to 13 schools and other organisations for them to pass on to children as appropriate, whether directly or via free “swap shops”.

In addition, we provided “pop-ups” at the council-run Discover! Hubs during the summer and October holidays. Our volunteers set out a selection of nearly-new schoolwear at each of the venues where families were taking part in holiday activities and accessing support services. Parents and carers were encouraged to take what they needed (at no cost). These uniform “pop-ups” proved very popular with local families.

We estimate that the weight of nearly-new clothing that we passed on, and thus diverted from landfill, was **1,074 kg** this financial year.



We accept donations of uniform and other essentials all year round (barring Covid restrictions), and this year we had three main appeals for donations:

- In the summer of 2019 we ran our popular “Sponsor A Child” campaign to encourage supporters to donate a whole set of uniform for a child. As in the previous year, hundreds of people responded and gave us full sets of uniform via our network of drop-off points around Edinburgh.
- In the autumn we asked our supporters to donate hats, gloves and warm jackets. The response was tremendous and we were able to add winter clothing into the vast majority of packs of uniform that we gave out during the colder months.
- In the spring of 2020 we launched our “Undies Appeal” for pants, socks and tights. Despite the curtailment of the appeal by the arrival of Covid restrictions, our supporters donated hundreds of items that we subsequently added to “back to school” packs in the summer.



This Annual Report pertains to the year ending 30th June 2020, which is in the middle of our busiest time of year. Facts and figures about half a summer period would not give the full picture, so instead it is best to summarise each full summer period when we supply “back to school” packs and run our summer appeal.



Having suspended our operations at the start of the lockdown in March, we started accepting referrals again on 26th June 2020. We re-organised our working space to make the packing process more efficient and to facilitate social distancing and other Covid-secure working practices.

During the summer we were unable to accept donations of clothing from our supporters due to restrictions related to Covid. With many hundreds of requests for uniform flooding in, we ran our summer appeal online by asking supporters to donate funds to allow us to shop for everything that was needed.

The local community rose to the occasion and donated just over **£15,000** to the online appeal. This allowed us to fulfil all the requests for help that arrived over the summer and into the start of the new term.

	Summer 2018	Summer 2019	Summer 2020
Number of “back to school” packs provided to families (from May/June until August)	359	673	537
Number of “sponsor a child” packs received from supporters	270	270	n/a
Funds donated by supporters for “back to school” packs	n/a	n/a	£15,160 (equivalent to around 300 packs)

We usually start packing summer bags at the start of May, so it was a tremendous challenge to get hundreds of “back to school” packs to families from a standing start at the end of June, whilst working under Covid-secure procedures. We are immensely grateful to our hard-working volunteers who pulled out all the stops to support local families, and to our supporters who provided the funds that were needed.



Other activities

The BBC featured our work in August 2019. The coverage no doubt helped us to reach new supporters and volunteers, and to raise awareness of the issues around school uniform for those facing hardship.

We are grateful to Becky Kleanthous, a local freelance writer, who overhauled our website (pro bono) during the winter of 2019/20.

We also appreciate the support of the creative agency DaySix who offered us their time and expertise as part of their Make It Happen initiative. They produced some fabulous short animations to promote our appeals for donations, and we look forward to working with them further.

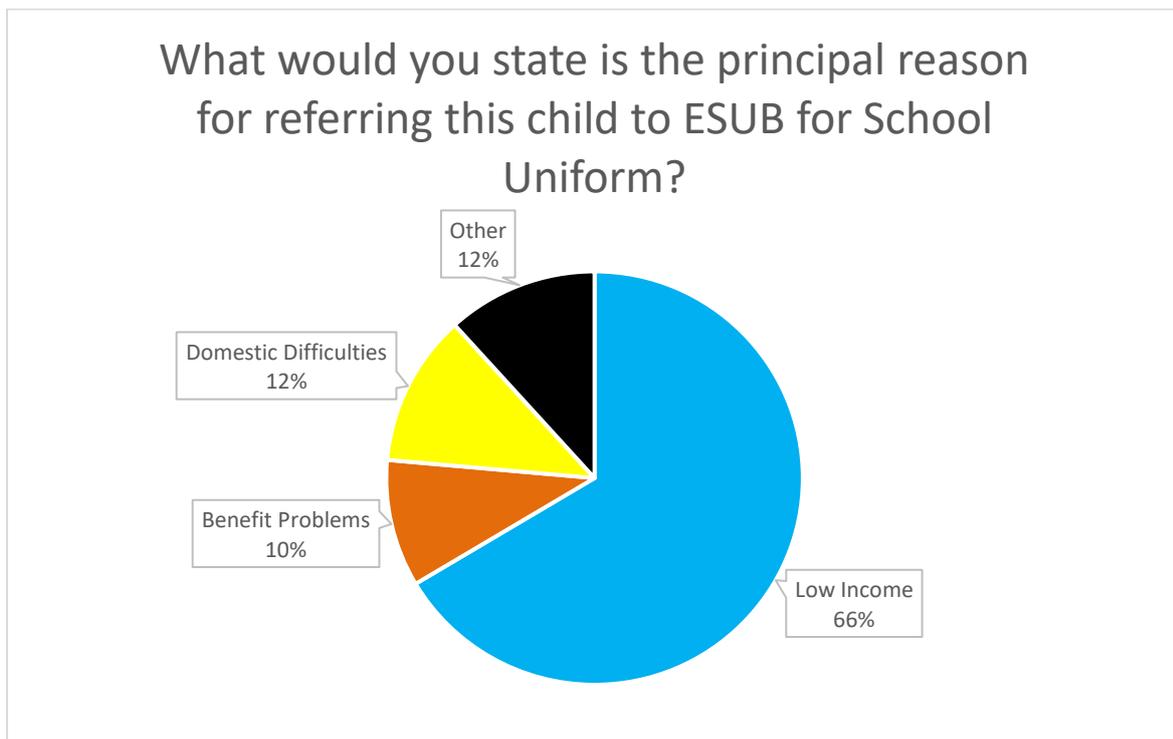
The spring lockdown was challenging but it gave us the opportunity to design, test and implement a new referral system that is fully integrated into our website. The new system cuts out a large amount of admin for our volunteers as well as making the process easier for our referring partners. The Board is immensely grateful to former trustee Linda Russell for undertaking this work.

Information Gathering

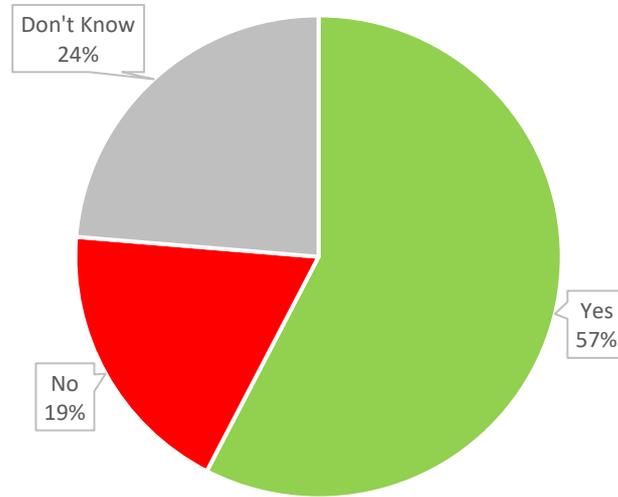
We gather information about the circumstances of the families who are referred to us in order to:

1. Become better informed about why families are referred to us, so that we can serve them as best we can.
2. Prompt and encourage our referring partners to help families to claim benefits and grants as appropriate and to spend them on essentials for their children.

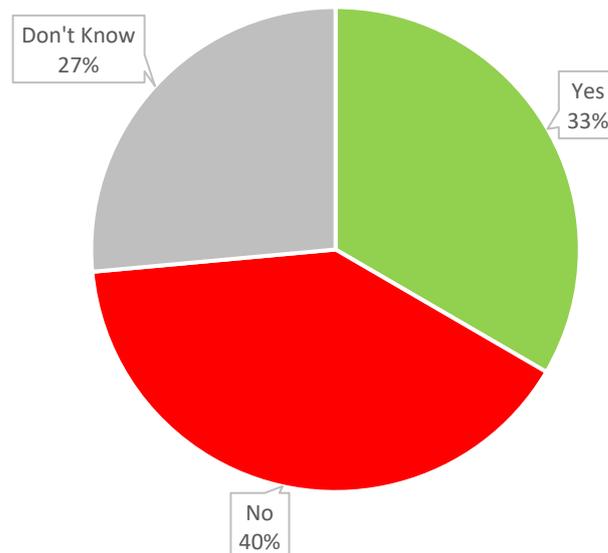
We asked each referring professional some key questions and the answers can be summarised as follows:



Is the family eligible for the council's School Uniform Grant?



If the family is eligible, has this child received the council's School Uniform Grant?



Impact

The impact of our work is best described by feedback that we have received from families and our referring partners:

“Many of the parents have broken down and cried with relief receiving the uniform packs as financial hardship is a huge issue for many of the families we support.”

“I love my bag, look mum I have a pencil case and a water bottle! When does school go back?” (from a child who did not want to return to school due to previously not “being the same” as the other kids who were all in uniform).

“Just a huge THANK YOU!!!! Wish you could see the joy of the kids receiving the packs.”



“The Edinburgh School Uniform Bank is one of the best resources I have come across for families in Edinburgh. The fact that it is non-means tested means that it is really simple and easy to refer people. It also provides an additional safety net for hundreds of families who don't quite qualify for the Council School Uniform Grant. It is non-stigmatising, very efficient and very easy to use. All of my colleagues greatly value the ESUB and have come to rely on it. We really appreciate the fantastic assistance you give to families. It makes a huge difference.”

“All the people I have dealt with are responsive, compassionate and well organised. It is truly an excellent service.”

“This service has been a huge benefit for all the families that I have referred. If it hadn't been for the service many families may have had to cut back on meals to find money to provide school uniform for their young people. It has reduced stress for all of the families and assisted with their mental health staying more stable.”

“The Uniform is such good quality and the school bags are lovely. This enables the children who receive them to fit in with all the other children at school. They don't stand out because they are wearing poor quality clothing or because they don't have a school uniform at all. The uniform bags help remove some of the stigma of poverty.”

“The families we work with are often under huge financial pressure which has a massive impact on the health and well being of the family. The pressure to provide school uniform - particularly in larger families cannot be underestimated. The

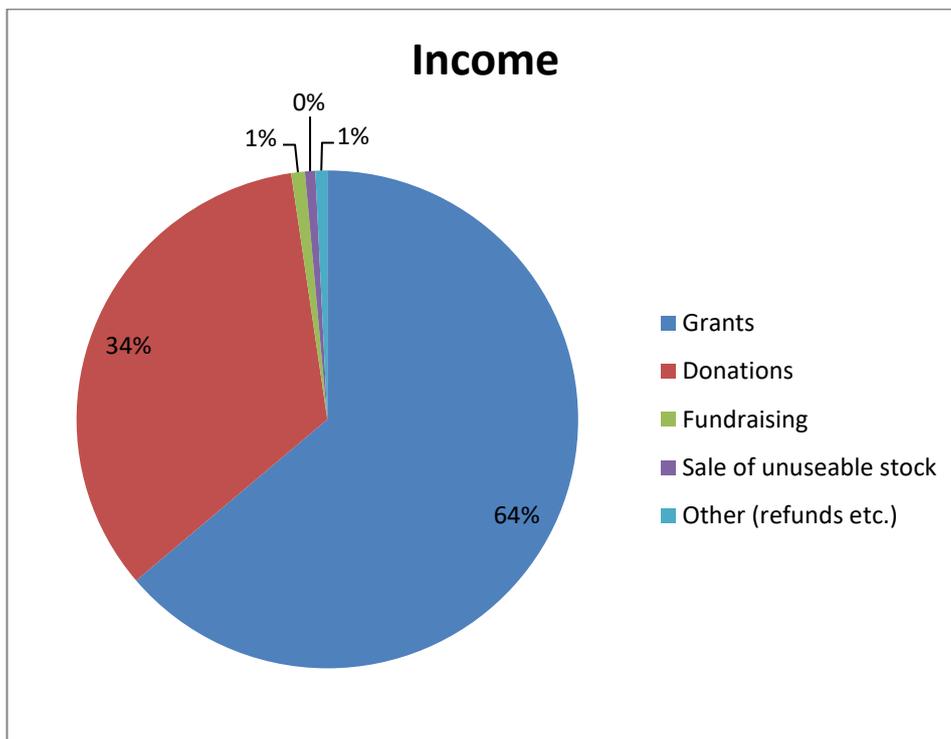
uniform bags are an enormous help to these families and is provided in a speedy, lovely, non-stigmatising way. It feels as though you are giving a family a present rather than giving them charity.”

“The staff have been absolutely amazing and we really don't know what we would do without your support.”

Financial review

Income

Our total income for the financial year 2019/20 was £29,545. Much of this came from grants awarded to us by various funding bodies and a substantial portion was donated by individuals, businesses and school/community groups.

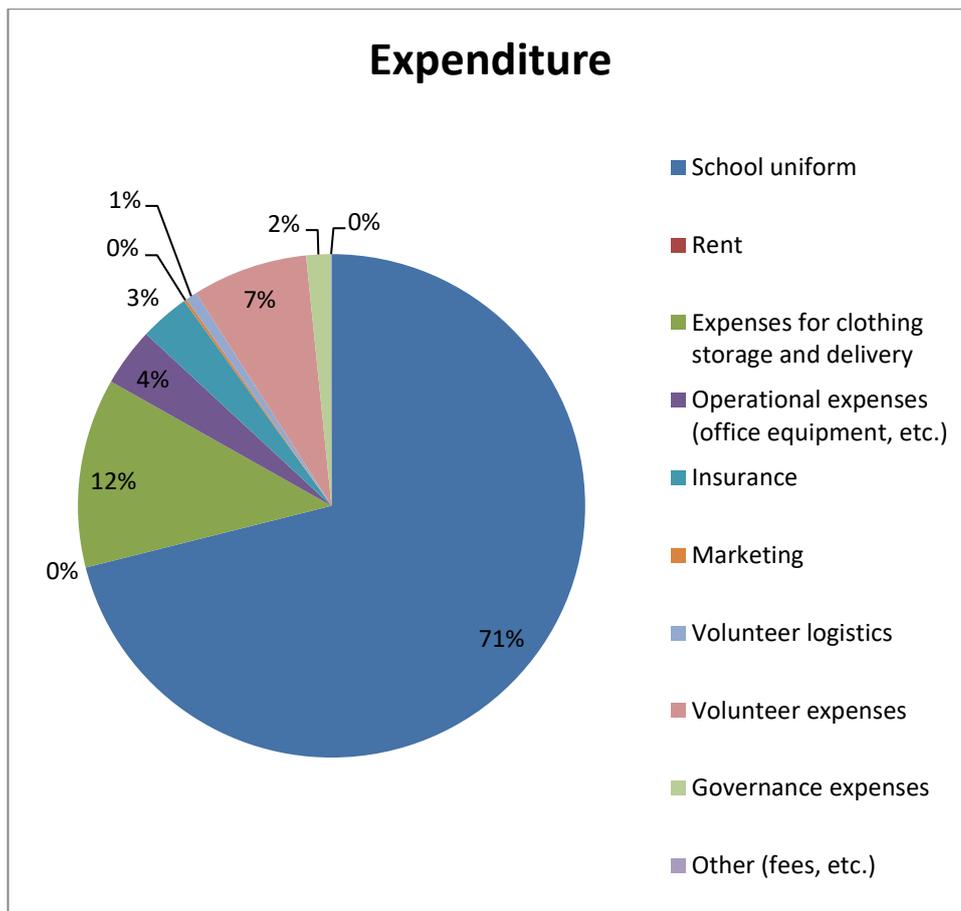


Expenditure

We spent £16,090 in 2019/20, with the vast majority of expenditure being on school uniform, school bags and other essentials that we gave to local children and young people.

We kept our operating costs to the bare minimum thanks to the hard work of our volunteers and the support of our host building Balerno High School. As our workload has increased, so has our need for space. Packing bags in a socially-distanced way has put further pressure on space, and we now rent a unit at Kangaroo Storage (at an annual cost of around £2,000) as well as enjoying the use of a large room at Balerno High School.

As mentioned previously, we spent around £11,500 on school uniform and accessories, and we also gave out around £19,500 worth of new items that were donated directly to us by supporters and local businesses.



Further details can be found in our Annual Accounts.

Reserve policy

Our reserve has been set at 3 months. For the financial year 2019/20 this was just under £5,000 and we have sufficient funds to cover this.

Future plans

Our plans for the future include:

- Continuing to monitor and review our service to best meet the needs of local families, particularly in the light of the challenges brought on by Covid and Brexit.
- Seeking substantial funding to enable us to fulfil requests for uniform and to cover our operating costs.
- Seeking larger premises to accommodate our increased workload.
- Strengthening and expanding links with the local community including individuals, businesses, schools and other third sector organisations.
- Expanding our Board of Trustees to bring in a wider range of experience and expertise.
- Building on and expanding our internal policies and procedures.
- Taking on a paid employee.



Acknowledgements

The Trustees would like to thank the following for their support over the past year:

- All our volunteers
- Everyone who donated uniform
- The many individuals who donated funds
- Balerno High School
- Flora Stevenson Primary School
- Liberton Primary School
- Cliftonhall School
- Becky Kleanthous
- DaySix
- The Write Stuff, Stockbridge
- Staff at Amazon Customer Services
- Balerno's Galloping Gourmet
- KPE4 Trust
- The Entertainer, Cameron Toll
- TK Maxx
- The Sportsman's Charity
- Cash For Kids
- Waitrose
- The Co-op
- Baillie Gifford
- Barratt Homes
- Ecclesiastical
- The Souter Charitable Trust

Declaration

Signed on behalf of the charity trustees:

JA Grindley

Print name

JULIA GRINDLEY

Designation

CHAIR

Date

15th November 2020

Peny Baillie

Print name

PENELOPE BAILLIE

Designation

TRUSTEE

Date

15th November 2020