



**Edinburgh
School
Uniform
Bank**

Edinburgh School Uniform Bank

Registered Charity No. SC047524 (SCIO)

Annual Report

Period from 1st July 2020

to 30th June 2021

Introduction

The past year has seen substantial changes at Edinburgh School Uniform Bank, alongside a turbulent year of intermittent school closures. The demand for our services has increased again, and we are expecting a significant rise in demand as families face reduced incomes and increased energy bills.

Many families who never dreamt of needing to ask for help from a charity are finding themselves in dire straits and seeking our support. Thanks to the hard work of our volunteers and staff, and the support of local people and businesses, we remain committed to giving every child the chance to go to school fitting in, feeling confident and ready to work and play.

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 2020/21, the Trustees were:

- Julia Grindley (Chair)
- Penny Baillie (Treasurer until 25th November 2020)
- Louise Kowalska (Secretary until 4th January 2021)
- Margaret Civval (appointed as Trustee on 23rd October 2020, Secretary from 4th January 2021)
- David Heneghan (appointed as Trustee on 3rd November 2020, Treasurer from 25th November 2020)
- Roger Horam (stepped down from the Board on 26th November 2020)
- Colin Hope (stepped down from the Board on 19th March 2021)

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. The Board is in the process of increasing the minimum number of trustees to four. Board meetings are held throughout the year as required.

Management

Until recently, day-to-day management of our activities was conducted by volunteers, some of whom are also Trustees. A paid employee, our Operations Coordinator, started working for ESUB part-time in April 2021.

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. A secondary effect of this part of our work is that wearing nearly-new clothing becomes more normalised, with positive consequences for sustainability as well as the reduction of stigma.

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 2020/21, we received **1,575** requests for individual packs of new school uniform. This is a massive 152% increase on the previous financial year. However, this figure does not give an accurate picture of the actual increase in demand, because it includes two busy summer periods instead of one. The “back to school” rush occurred later than usual in 2020 (July and August) due to covid restrictions, and the busy spell in 2021 ran from May to August. Our financial year finishes at the end of June.

A more meaningful comparison of referral numbers takes into account each full calendar year. In 2020 we provided **1,278** packs of new uniform to children and young people (27% up from 1,009 in 2019). We are projecting total figures for 2021 to be in the region of 10% higher than in 2020.

Packs of uniform went to children and young people in **106** schools across the city (88% of the 121 schools that have a uniform policy).



A typical pack of uniform includes 6 core items like skirts, jumpers and shirts as well as “extras” which vary according to the season such as warm hats in winter. In the summer of 2021, we added a pack of underpants into every pack, thanks to our partnership with Smalls For All. The number of items of new clothing that we gave out this financial year was in excess of **10,600**.

We estimate that the value of the new items of clothing, stationery and accessories that we gave to families in 2020/21 was around **£63,500**. Approximately half of the new items were donated to us by supporters and businesses, and we bought the remaining half.

All of the clothing and accessories that went into individual packs of uniform in 2020/21 were brand new. We also provided batches of nearly-new uniform to 10 schools and other organisations for them to pass on to children as appropriate, whether directly or via free “swap shops”.

We estimate that the weight of nearly-new clothing that we passed on, and thus diverted from landfill, was **214 kg** this financial year. This figure is equivalent to around 160 children receiving 5 items of clothing each. This is less than the previous year, as covid restrictions created multiple barriers to passing on nearly-new clothing.

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

- In the summer we ran our popular “Sponsor A Child” campaign to encourage supporters to donate a whole set of uniform for a child. Due to pandemic restrictions, we ran this appeal online only in the summer of 2020 – supporters donated the cost of a set of uniform and we sourced the clothing on their behalf. In 2021 supporters were able to donate funds or go shopping and drop their pack of uniform in to us.
- 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.



This Annual Report pertains to the year ending 30th June 2021, 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:

	Summer 2018	Summer 2019	Summer 2020	Summer 2021
Number of “back to school” packs provided to families (from May/June until the start of term in August)	359	673	537	1,007
Number of “sponsor a child” packs received from supporters	270	270	n/a	104
Funds donated by supporters for “back to school” packs	n/a	n/a	£15,160 (equivalent to around 300 packs)	£5,570 (equivalent to around 110 packs)



Other activities

The scale of our operation has grown substantially and in February 2021 we moved from our room in Balerno High School to a space at 525 Ferry Road. We are grateful to Balerno High School for hosting us for several years and to MintBox Removals who kindly transported our stock and equipment at no charge.

In the autumn of 2020 we started partnering with Edinburgh Food Project to pool resources for gathering donations around the city. EFP's team of transport volunteers kindly collect donations of school uniform on our behalf from baskets located next to the food donation points in several supermarkets.



In June 2021 we heard that our Chair, Julia Grindley, had been named as the Lord Provost's Inspiring Volunteer of the Year. In accepting the award, Julia paid tribute to the entire team of volunteers, past and present, who have done such a fantastic job. She also received a Special Commendation in the Trustee of the Year category of the Scottish Charity Awards 2021.

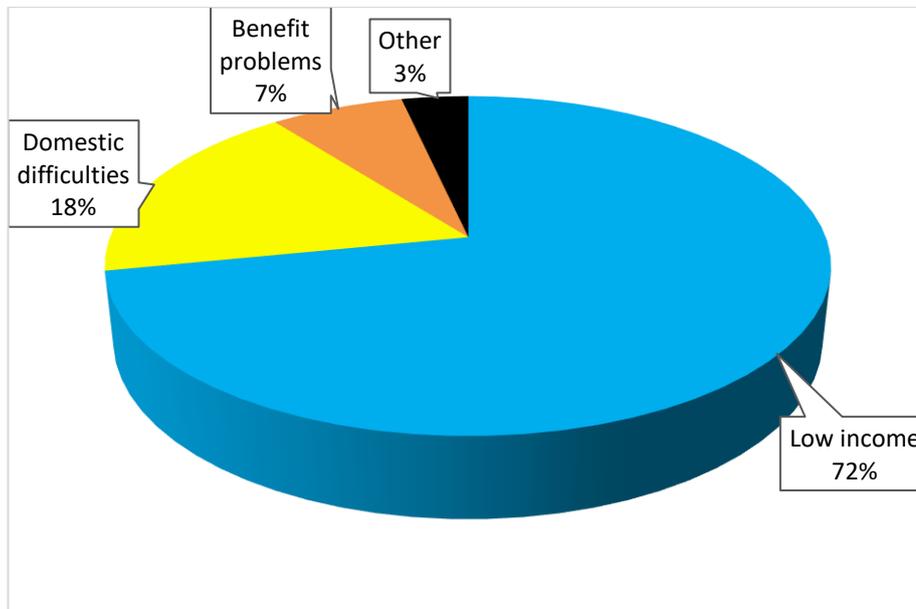
Information Gathering

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

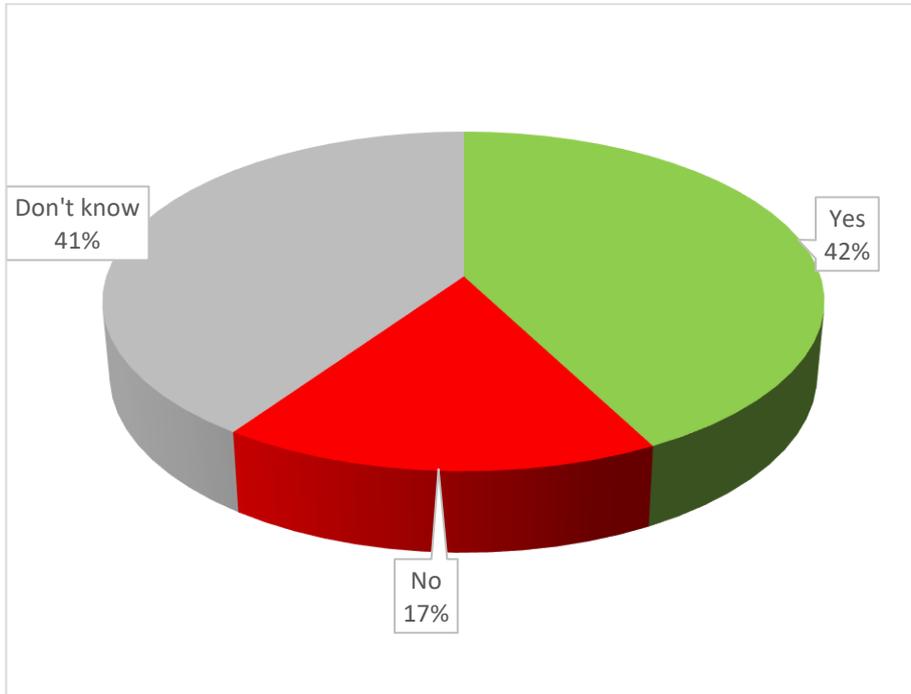
1. Become better informed about why families are referred to us, so that we can serve them as best we can.
2. Prompt and encourage our referring partners to help families to claim benefits and grants as appropriate and to spend them on essentials for their children.

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

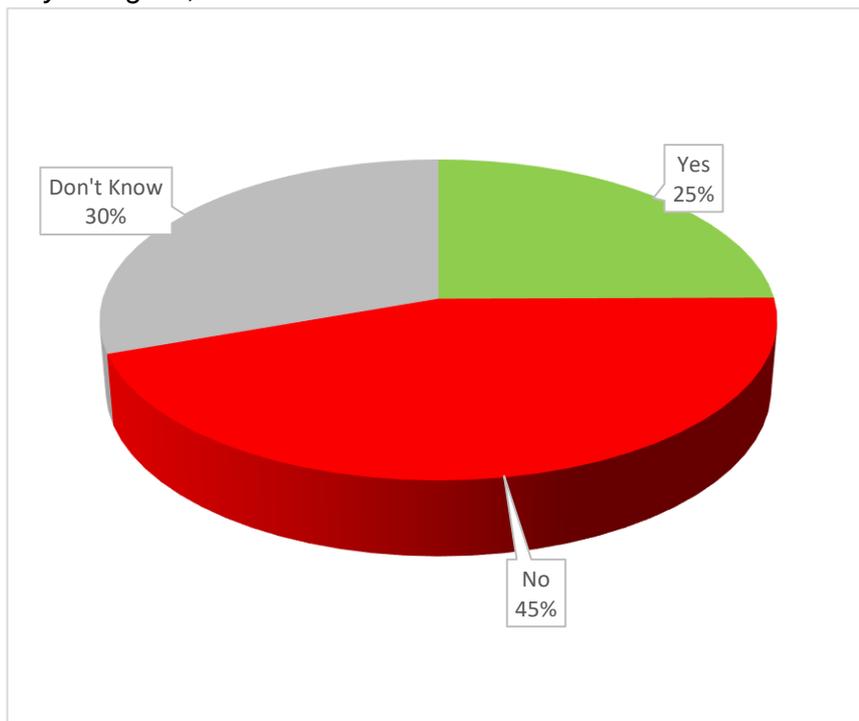
What would you state is the principal reason for referring this child to ESUB for School Uniform?



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?



It should be noted that referring professionals answered these questions at the time of making a referral – it is likely that some families did indeed receive their uniform grant at a later date.

Impact

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

“The families I referred would not have managed to send their children to school without this service”.

Message from a carer – “thank you for the amazing stuff you gave [girl] for school. That is a massive help to us!!! She loves everything....thank you”.

“Many families live in poor housing which is often damp and cold. Money is spent on rent and bills and very little is left for uniform. Often pupils will not attend school due to no uniform, this service is vital and appreciated by many of the families we work with”.

“Just enormous smiles and excitement on the doorstep, in particular [girl] going into P1, running off to get changed into her uniform straight away”.

“Many of the S1's have arrived in their new school in full uniform which would not have been possible without the intervention of uniform bank”.

“You provide good quality, well presented items, in a respectful, non-judgmental manner”.

“This is an invaluable service that helps many children and families feel more included within their school community”.

“The families have all been grateful and very thankful for the support. They have said that they did not know what they would have done without the support”.

“It's an amazing and sadly much needed service. I'm delighted you are a resource I can refer to to support the families who are in need. Thank You, to all involved. You really do make such a difference”.



“The mother was extremely grateful and the school have commented on the children being in full uniform so far this term which they hadn't been previously”.

“It really supports our most vulnerable families by alleviating the stress families have when trying to save money to buy school uniform, which is increasingly expensive as a child grows up. It also ensures that these children are able to attend school feeling equal and included as they have proper uniform like their classmates. This in itself is a huge confidence builder for children”.

“This service has a hugely positive affect on children and their families, especially this year due to Covid 19. The staff worked so hard to get the uniforms out before school started which was an amazing achievement”.

“It has a huge impact as it takes some financial pressure of the parent/carers. For the child the impact is possibly greater as they are able to attend school dressed in the appropriate

uniform colours, the same as their friends/classmates. The items are good quality and the choice of shirts/trousers/leggings etc ensures they can dress like their friends promoting self confidence and a sense of belonging. This is especially important for children in kinship care as they may have had to change schools suddenly, leaving behind everything and everyone they knew”.

“Your service has a significantly positive impact on families that we support. Children are able to go to school well presented because of your support. It allows children to have some spare sets of uniform to allow parents to wash their clothes. Children are then able to feel the same as the peers which also supports better chances of forming a friendship group at school”.

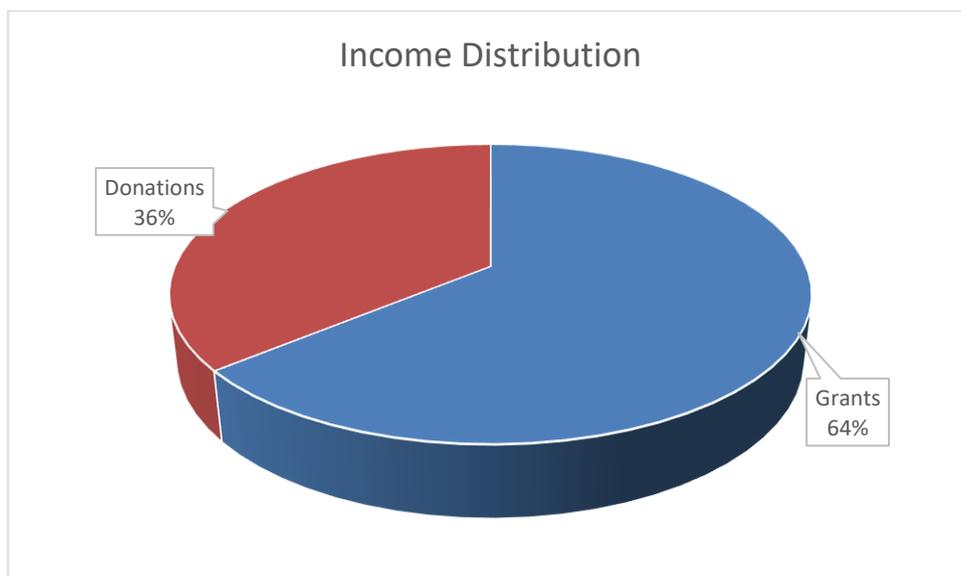
Financial review

Income

Our total income for the financial year 2020/21 was **£98,507**. Much of this came from grants awarded to us by funding bodies and a substantial portion was donated by individuals, businesses and school/community groups.

We have entered a new phase by taking on an employee and moving to larger premises, and our finances reflect this. The figures also show that we are actively planning for a significant increase in demand for our services caused by various factors including:

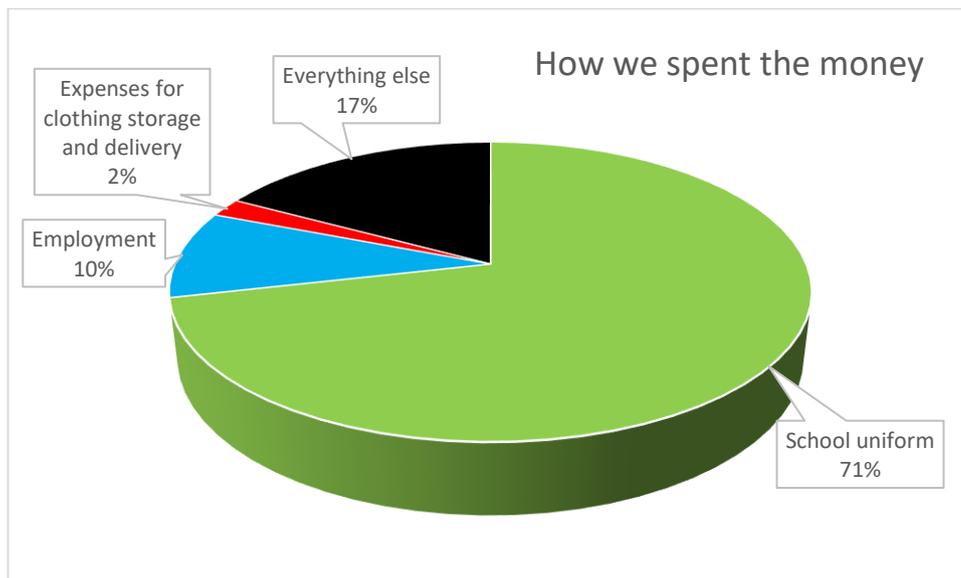
- the sharp drop in the amount of Universal Credit that many families receive
- significant rises in families’ energy bills
- extensive unfulfilled demand for our service; even before the pandemic, child poverty was rising with nearly one in four children in Scotland living in poverty.



Expenditure

We spent **£54,624** in 2020/21, with the vast majority of expenditure being on school uniform, school bags and other essentials that we gave to local children and young people. As previously noted, this financial year includes two busy summer periods, when we spend significant sums on new school clothing, whereas a typical year would only cover one busy spell.

Some of the expenditure went to support our plans for increased demand going forward, including fitting out our new working space and increasing the amount of stock that we hold. Our logistics are now geared up for the anticipated increase in demand and we are able to get clothing to families in a short time frame.



Further details can be found in our Annual Accounts.

Reserve policy

We carry a reserve of £4,556 which represents around 2 months' operating costs.

Future plans

Our plans for the future include:

- Continuing to monitor and review our service to best meet the needs of local families.
- Seeking substantial funding to enable us to fulfil requests for uniform and to cover our operating costs.
- 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.
- Taking on an additional employee for the summer months.



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
- Edinburgh Food Project
- Smalls For All
- DaySix
- The Write Stuff, Stockbridge
- Staff at Amazon Customer Services
- Slater's Menswear
- Kangaroo Storage
- MintBox Removals
- Appin Sports
- Edinburgh Mask Makers
- Mark Slater Joinery Services
- Balerno High School
- Heriot's Junior School
- Royal Bank of Scotland
- HSBC
- Taylor Wimpey
- Unite Leonardo Branch
- "Comiston, Buckstone & Pentland People" group
- Fairmilehead Parish Church
- Coulters
- The Sportsman's Charity
- Tartan Army Children's Charity
- The National Lottery
- Corra Foundation
- One City Trust
- Spifox
- Edinburgh and Lothians Trust Fund
- Ryvoan Trust
- The Scottish Children's Lottery
- Cash For Kids
- The Souter Charitable Trust
- Ponton House Trust
- Bank of Scotland Foundation
- St James's Place Charitable Foundation
- The Robertson Trust
- Persimmon Community Champions
- Grand Lodge of Edinburgh
- Arnold Clark Community Fund
- Waitrose
- The Co-op
- ScotMid
- Morrisons
- Asda
- Tesco

Declaration

Signed on behalf of the Trustees:

Name Julia Grindley

Designation Chair

Signature *JA Grindley*

Date 23/10/21

Name David Heneghan

Designation Treasurer

Signature *David Heneghan*

Date 23/10/21