



**Edinburgh  
School  
Uniform  
Bank**

Edinburgh School Uniform Bank

Registered Charity No. SC047524 (SCIO)

# **Annual Report**

**Period from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021**

**to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022**

## Introduction

The past year has seen enormous challenges for families, on top of the legacy of Covid, and times are likely to be very hard going forwards. I am immensely proud of our team of volunteers, staff and trustees who work tirelessly to support local children, young people, parents and carers. Everyone deserves the best start in life and we do our part by giving children and young people the chance to walk into school with their heads held high regardless of their circumstances.

We are increasingly seeing that families who come to us for help are facing much more than financial difficulties; many are struggling with poor mental health, living in temporary accommodation or enduring domestic abuse. By providing school clothing and other essentials in a pragmatic and dignified way, we are not only easing family budgets but also supporting parents and carers in a wider sense. I hope that local families know that we have got their backs, whatever life throws at them.

I have had the privilege of being Chair of ESUB for nearly 4 years, and the time has come for me to step down. I will remain on the Board as a Trustee and I am delighted to support our new Chair, Margaret Civval, in taking the charity forward through these difficult times.

*Julia Grindley*

## 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 in the charity. The people serving on the board are referred to as Trustees.

During the year 2021/22, the Trustees were:

- Julia Grindley (Chair)
- David Heneghan (Treasurer)
- Margaret Civval (Secretary)
- Penny Baillie
- Louise Kowalska (resigned 30/5/22)
- Laura Scougall
- Stephanie Lloyd
- Janyce Holmes (resigned 7/12/21)

### 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 four and a maximum of twelve trustees.

## Management

The Board oversees the work of a small team of part-time staff, who in turn manage our dedicated volunteers.

Due to significant increase in demand for new uniform it became unsustainable for purchasing of stock and other operational tasks to be undertaken principally by trustees. Our Operations Coordinator was joined in April 2022 by an Operations Assistant. External recruitment found an exceptional candidate who is building on our expertise in clothing children and young people who require plus-size or non-standard size items that are not readily accessible to low income families.

## Objectives

In response to increasing financial pressures on families, Edinburgh School Uniform Bank was set up in 2015 to provide new and nearly new school uniforms and other school essentials to those in need.

Our vision is that all children thrive at school. We aim to mitigate the effects of 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. This part of our work focusses on providing free school essentials in a dignified, accessible and sustainable way.

## 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 2021/22, we received **2,055** requests for individual packs of new school uniform. This is a **30%** increase on the previous financial year which was in itself an exceptional year for demand. Historically, demand for support has been heaviest in the summer months. This financial year includes two summer periods, July and August 2021 and May and June 2022. 54% of our annual demand was within this period. This does result in significant time pressure on operational resources. We will be reviewing whether there are alternatives to this approach that even out demand across the year.

Packs of uniform went to children and young people in **115** schools across the city (94% of the 122 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. The number of items of new clothing that we gave out this financial year was in excess of **13,000**.



We estimate that the value of the new items of clothing, stationery and accessories that we gave to families in 2021/22 was around **£75,000**. In broad terms, approximately 40% of the new items were donated to us by supporters and businesses, and we bought the remaining 60%.

All of the clothing and accessories that went into individual packs of uniform in 2021/22 were brand new. We also provided batches of nearly-new uniform to **39** schools and other organisations for them to pass on to children as appropriate, whether directly or via free “community wardrobes”.



We weigh nearly-new clothing that we pass on, and divert from landfill. 1,381 kg was distributed this financial year. This figure is equivalent to around **800** children receiving 5 items of clothing each. This is a significant increase on the previous year, reflecting our efforts to make free school uniform available within local communities in a dignified and accessible way.

Around 700kg of donated clothing was unsuitable to be given out and was therefore passed on for textile reuse and recycling.

We accept donations of uniform and other essentials all 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. Supporters were able to donate funds or go shopping and drop their pack of uniform in to us.
- In the autumn and winter 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 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022, 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	Summer 2022
Number of “back to school” packs provided to families	359	673	537	1,007	1,100
Number of “sponsor a child” packs received from supporters	270	270	n/a	104	93
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)	£5,645 (equivalent to around 113 packs)

## Other activities

Our Chair, Julia Grindley, was given a Special Commendation in the “Trustee of the Year” category in the Scottish Charity Awards 2021.

She was also named as a Point of Light by the Prime Minister, an award that recognises outstanding individual volunteers – people who are making a change in their community.



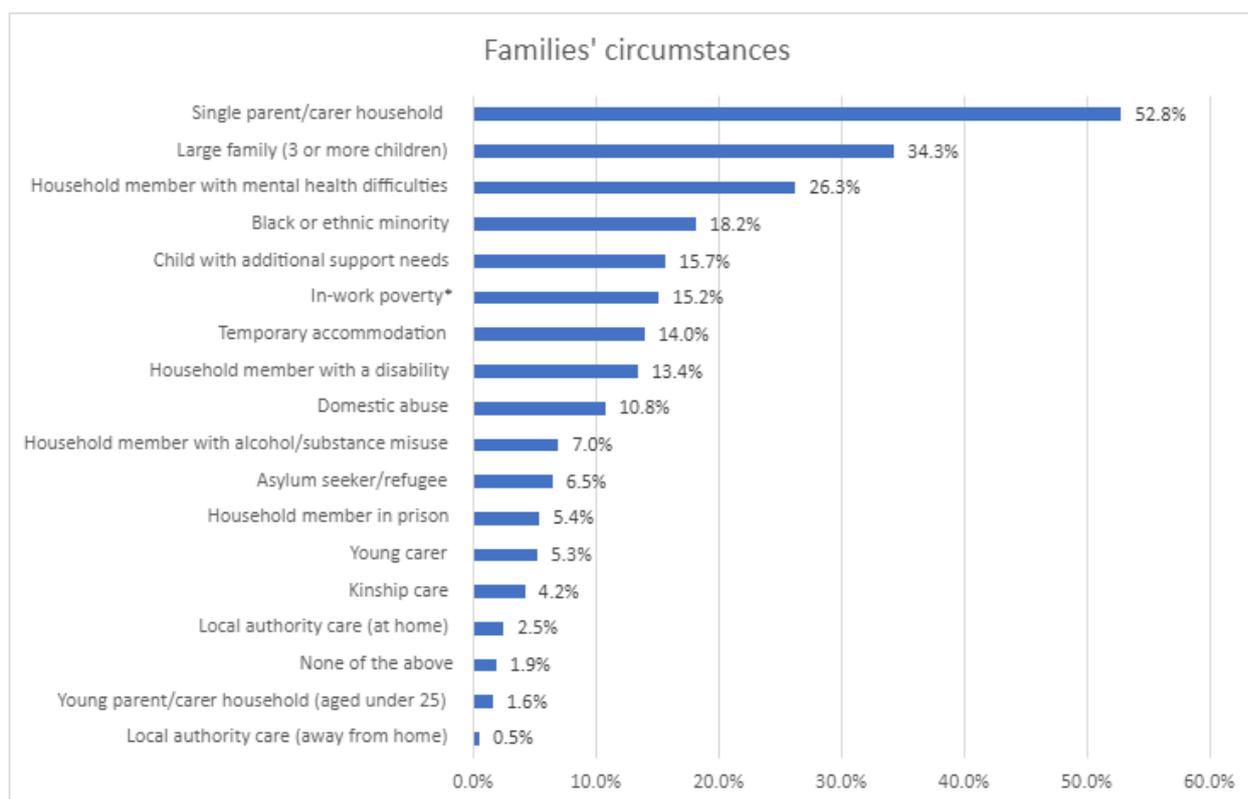
On receiving the award from 10 Downing Street, Julia said: *“We are honoured to receive this recognition of the work of Edinburgh School Uniform Bank. Our team works so hard to give children the best chances in life and to make sure that everyone can go to school feeling comfortable, confident, and fitting in with their peers. We bring together the whole community to support families who are facing tough challenges, and our thanks go to everyone who contributes to this effort.”*

## Information Gathering

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

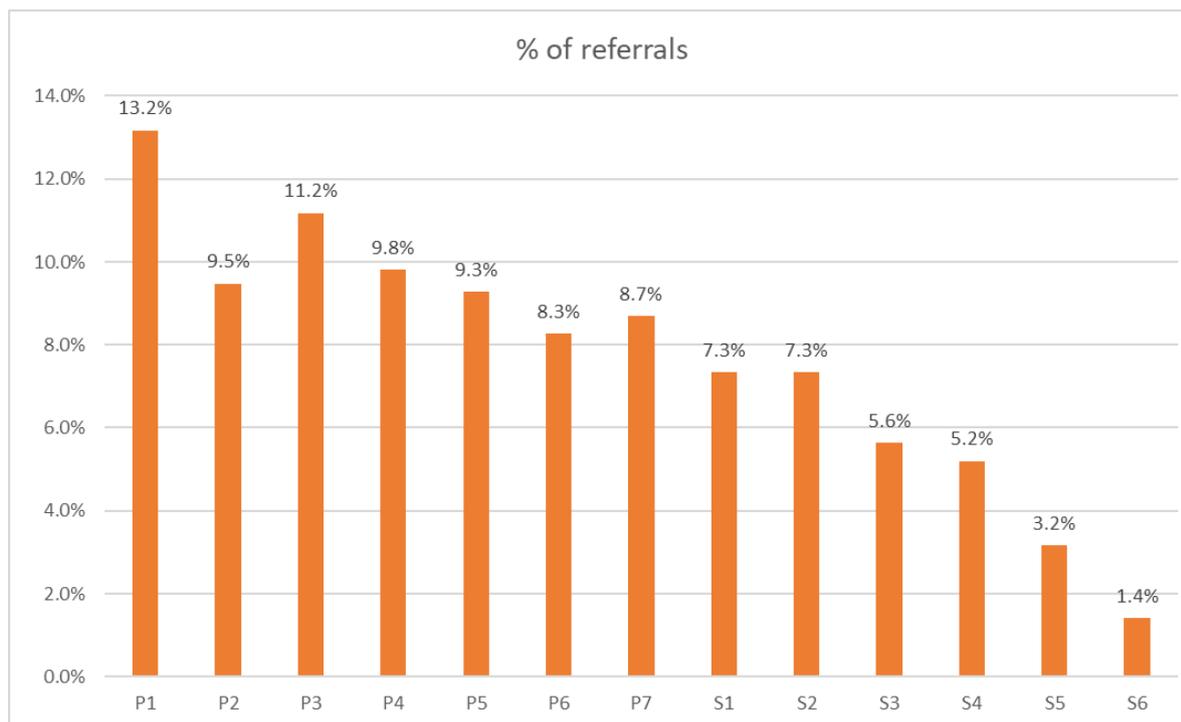
1. Become better informed about why families are referred to us, so that we can serve them as best we can.
2. Prompt and encourage our referring partners to help families to claim benefits and grants as appropriate and to spend them on essentials for their children.

Data from January to June 2022 are shown below:



Note that the category “in-work poverty” was added in May 2022, so the figures shown here under-represent those families who are working but still struggling to make ends meet.

It is also interesting to note the distribution of referrals by year group, below. Children in Primary 1 are disproportionately represented, whereas very few older high school pupils are referred to our service.



## Impact

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

*It helps parents enormously, many cannot afford to buy school uniforms, some children I support go to school with holes in their shoes, some are inadequately dressed for the weather. One little girl was just beaming when she tried on her uniform. I found this very emotional. She did a twirl with her skirt on, she was so pleased with herself. The parents are always very grateful.*

*Going to school with new uniform has a huge positive effect on wellbeing to the young people, they feel happy about going to school and not being made fun of by others.*

*You are an absolute necessity for the families we support and your speedy referral to collection process is amazing.*

*It is SUCH a relief for families to hear that they are able to access clothes for their kids.*

*Having access to school uniform the same as peers gives children a feeling of belonging and inclusion. Without this service lots of children in Edinburgh would not be in a position to have clean school uniform for every day of the week.*

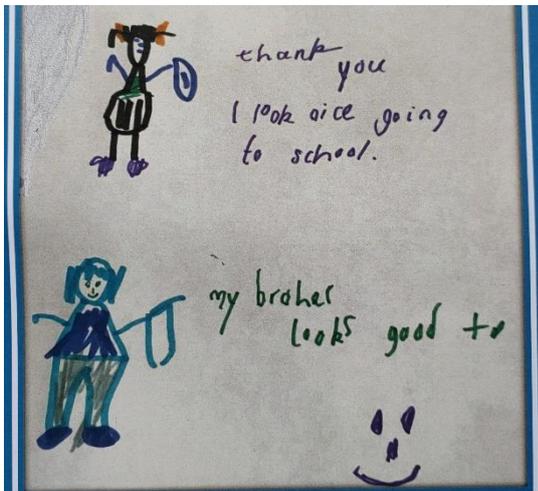
*Some parents can have very chaotic lives and this is one less thing for them to worry about.*

*The choice option is definitely appreciated by families so that they can tailor the requests to meet their particular family needs.*

*A fantastic service that is invaluable in the area I work in, a great thing to be able to offer families and hopefully encourage engagement with our services.*

*I think your service takes pressure off parents who are living in poverty, as school uniform can be a massive stress factor. I think that removing the stress from parents allows them to be more relaxed, which had a great impact on children and young people, as they can often feel the anxiety of their parents and can sometimes be the ones who have this projected on to them.*

*The beginning of any school term is a worrying time for most parents, your service provides a huge sense of relief for the parents we support, that their child/ren will be able to walk into the playground looking smart. Parents are also grateful that their children will be warm enough through the winter and cool for school in the summer.*



*ESUB has been a fantastic support to the families I am working with, easing financial strains at difficult times and giving children confidence to attend school and be successful learners. The referral process is simple and easy to use and the staff are incredibly helpful, supportive and approachable. Being able to refer the families I am working with to ESUB has helped me engage and build relationships with families that might not have worked with me otherwise. ESUB is a great service, they could not have been more helpful to me and the families I support. Thanks to everyone at ESUB.*

*My parents very much appreciate the uniforms as they would have to forego food or utilities to pay for this as they are on a very small and limited amount per week.*

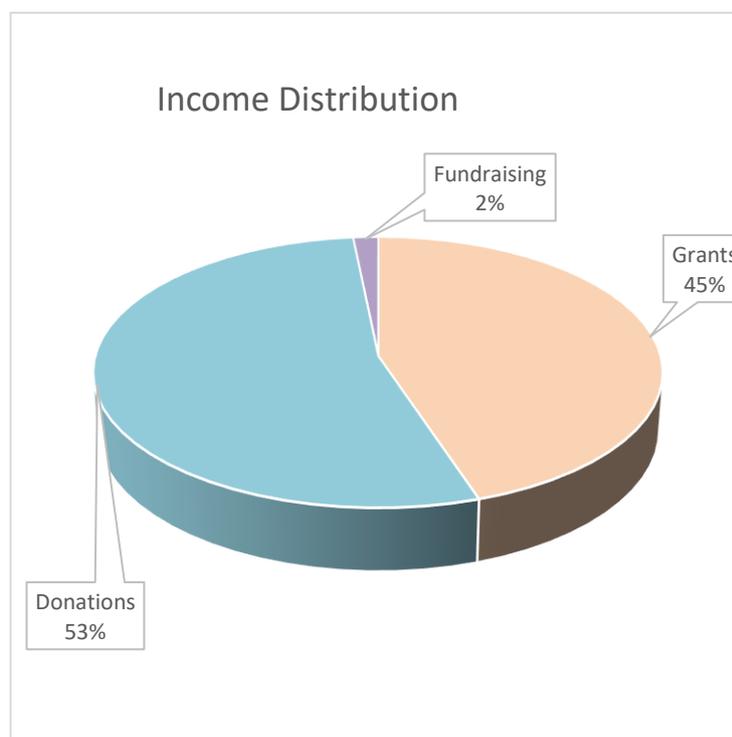
*Many of my clients have told me their children seem to feel more confident in their appearance at school and so are more likely to attend.*

## Financial review

### Income

Our total income for the financial year 2021/22 was **£114,989**. Some of this came from grants awarded to us by funding bodies and a substantial portion was donated by individuals, school/community groups and businesses including those supporting our work as part of the Community Benefits scheme run by the City of Edinburgh Council.

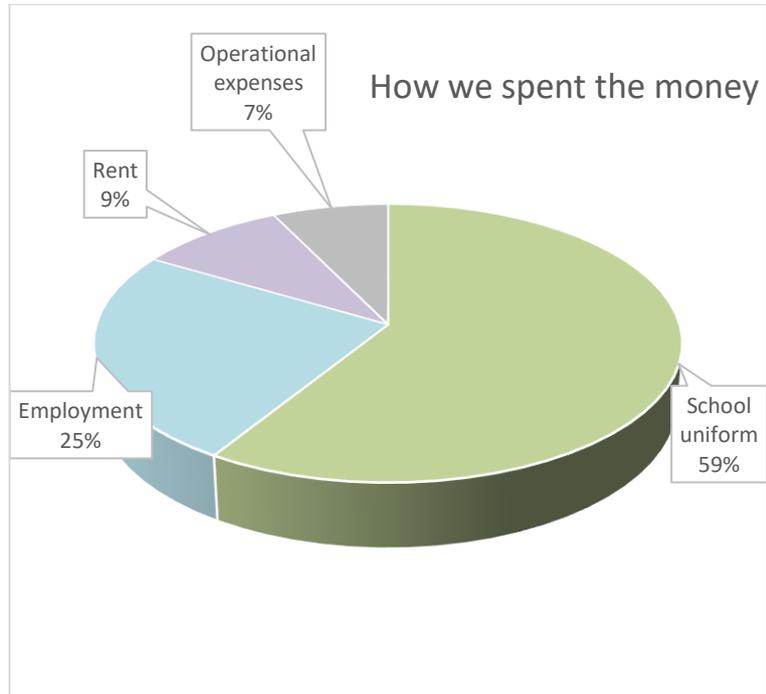
We have entered a new phase by taking on employees and moving to larger premises, and our finances reflect this. The figures also show that we are actively planning for a significant increase in demand for our services caused by various factors such as the cost of living crisis and unfulfilled demand for our service.



### Expenditure

We spent **£70,444** in 2021/22, with the majority of expenditure being on school uniform, school bags and other essentials that we gave to local children and young people.

With a second employee in place we began streamlining our purchasing approach and finding efficiencies in our processes, as well as working closely with corporate partners to source clothing directly.



Further details can be found in our Annual Accounts.

### Reserve policy

We carry a reserve of **£32,000** which represents around 6 months' operating costs. With core cost grant funding increasingly challenging to secure, the board felt increasing reserves was prudent to ensure continuity of service and employment.

## Future plans

Our plans for the future include:

- Continuing to monitor and review our service to best meet the needs of local families.
- Expanding our outreach activities to make good quality free school uniform available in local communities in a dignified and accessible way.
- Seeking ongoing 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 to re-balance the workload between staff and trustees



## Acknowledgements

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

- Our amazing volunteers and dedicated staff
- Everyone who donated uniform and other essentials
- The many individuals and families who donated funds
- All our drop-off points

We are also very grateful for the support we have received from numerous organisations:

AECOM	Lanes Group
Aico	Lloyds Banking Group
Alpha Data Parallel Systems	Maclin Electric Ltd
Amazon Customer Service staff	Maxi Construction
Appin Sports	Mitie
Atelier Ten	Morris and Spottiswood
Baillie Gifford	Morrison Construction
Balfour Beatty	North Merchiston FC
Bank of Scotland Foundation	Nottingham Rehab
BELAC	PJ's Foods
BE Uniforms	Poundland
Bell Group	PW and Partners
Buckstone Primary School	RJ Lifts
Cash For Kids	Robertson Construction
CCG	RON Services
Craigdon Mountain Sports	Ross Quality Chartered Surveyors
D2H2 Ltd	ScotMid
Dem Master	Slater's Menswear
Eden Group	Smalls For All
Edinburgh and Lothians Trust Fund	Smith Scott Mullan
Edinburgh Food Project	Stothers
Fairmilehead Parish Church	Taylor Wimpey
Faithful and Gould	Taylor Wimpey
Firhill High School	Tesco
Flora Stevenson's Primary School	The Entertainer
G3 Consulting Engineers	The National Lottery
Gas Call Services	The People's Postcode Lottery
George Heriot's School	The Robertson Trust
Gore Ltd	The Royal Bank of Scotland
Graham	The Write Stuff
J B Bell	Thomson Gray
James Breck Ltd	Trams to Newhaven / Turntown
Juniper Green Primary School	Travis Perkins Managed Services
Landcare Solutions	Waitrose

## Declaration

Signed on behalf of the Trustees:

Name Julia Grindley

Signature

Handwritten signature of Julia Grindley in black ink, enclosed in a light blue rectangular box.

Date 14/11/2022

Name Margaret Civval

Signature

Handwritten signature of Margaret Civval in black ink.

Date 14/11/2022