

# Archie's Child Bereavement Service



As we enter Spring, it can be helpful to some bereaved families, to leave behind the cold dark days and be in a lighter environment. We know that doesn't change the impact of grief, but sometimes it feels just a little less heavy, when we see the days become longer.

We have just passed Mother's Day, which is one of the annual days that can bring added sadness to those children whose mother is no longer here. Remembering mum can bring with it bitter-sweet memories, and for many children, they come to the realisation that their mum is no longer here.

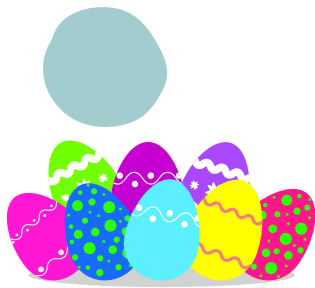
We at ACBS, support many children who have a loved one that has died, and for many children we support that will be their dad. Many mums find our support through the networks they have built, but father's of children whose mother has died are less likely to know about, and use our service. If you know of a dad who is in this position, then please let them know that we are here for them also, this can be during palliative care or at any stage of the bereavement process.

As you read through this newsletter, you will see that we continue our plight to increase our number of volunteers and to reach out to build our services in Highlands and Tayside. If you are aware of anyone who may be interested in joining us, we would be delighted to speak to them. We do have an application process and full training and support are provided. The more volunteers we have, the more bereaved children and young people we can reach.

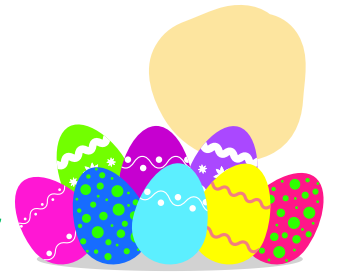
I would like to give my thanks to our current volunteers and ACBS team who always go that extra mile. I look forward to meeting families who come together at our activity days. It is always heart-warming to see children who arrive shy, build their confidence and leave with a big smiles. So please look out for our future activity days. You will always be provided with a warm welcome, as well as a cuppa and a chat.

In the meantime, I wish you all a good Easter.

Anne Bone  
ACBS Committee, Chair



# A Message from our Bereavement Support Manager



The first quarter of the year has been very busy with an ever increasing number of referrals looking for advice, support and guidance. As always a massive shout out to our volunteers, without whom we simply could not operate.

We have welcomed two new staff members this year, Audrey Watt who has taken on the role of Bereavement Support Coordinator in Tayside, based in the Archie Foundation office at Ninewells Hospital. Emily Cumming has replaced Jane Watson, working along side Caitlin Parkin, as our Children in Need Funded Bereavement Support Workers. The further good news is that Jane has not left us but in fact she has moved to a new role within our service and has become the Bereavement Support Officer for Education. Her piece in the newsletter will fully explain her new role. Fair to say that we have had a massive response from schools across the Grampian Region.

We are firmly establishing a footprint in Highlands and Tayside, thanks to the continued efforts of Audrey and our Highlands Coordinator Remi Martin. If we could encourage a few more people to be trained as volunteer responders in both of these regions it would assist us to offer all our services across all the regions that the Archie Foundation supports.

I hope you all have a good Easter and enjoy any breaks you have planned

Malcolm Stewart  
Bereavement Support Manager  
[malcolm.stewart@archie.org](mailto:malcolm.stewart@archie.org)

# Updates from our Bereavement Coordinators

## ACBS Highlands

As I'm sure you are aware, our Home Responder Visit service is one of our main sources of supporting bereaved children and families at ACBS. Whilst we are still quite new in the Highland region, we have not been able to offer this service as yet, but we have some fantastic news!

We now have one fully trained volunteer who will be able to support a number of our referrals. This is really exciting for us as we know how valuable our Responder service is to bereaved families as many have experienced in Grampian. We would like to give a warm welcome to our new volunteer, Hester and wish her well as she makes a huge difference and contribution to how our services will run here in the Highlands.

We also seeing a number of schools use our mentoring service, where one of our committee members provides support, guidance and practical advice on how they can support individual bereaved children in their school. This has been amazing, to build confidence in professionals to be able to have conversations with children that could otherwise be too uncomfortable or sensitive. We are grateful that we can make this impact in schools locally. This part of our service is suitable for any practitioner or professional working with children and young people who are bereaved - be sure to get in touch if you would like to obtain more information about this service.

ACBS has kindly been donated a variety of days out that will be used for the families we support. Just to mention a couple, the Aviemore Reindeer Centre and Strathspey Stream Railway, their gifts provide a great opportunity for families to take some time out to spend together away from the hustle and bustle of family life as well as a bereavement. A huge thank you to all of our sponsors who make this possible. If you or anyone you know, wish to donate day out experiences in the future, please get in touch with me.

Lastly, we have been busy preparing for our amazing Conference, on 12th September in Inverness, for all professionals in the Highlands. This event will help and guide practitioners and professionals to better support bereaved children and young people. We are excited for the day to come and the impact it will make in the long run for families locally.

Remi Martin  
ACBS Highland  
[remi.martin@archie.org](mailto:remi.martin@archie.org)

## ACBS Tayside

As already mentioned by Remi in the Highlands, we in Tayside are also looking to welcome new Responders into our service to enable us to provide the full support to our referrals. If you would like to find out more about becoming a volunteer, please either feel free to visit me on Level 7, Ninewells Hospital, Dundee or by emailing, [Malcolm.stewart@archie.org](mailto:Malcolm.stewart@archie.org).

In the meantime, we continue to offer advice and support. Our Book Gifting service has seen an increased popularity through our referral system. We have many categories of books to help bereaved children of different ages and covering all bereavement circumstances. Please feel free to contact me for additional information about this service n.

Audrey Watt  
ACBS Tayside  
[audrey.watt@archie.org](mailto:audrey.watt@archie.org)

## ACBS Grampian

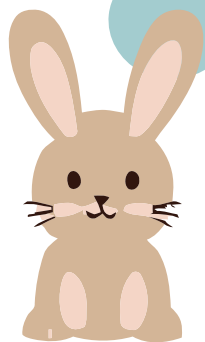
Already this year there has been a successful Activity Day at Stewarts Hall, Huntly, and our Easter Activity Day at Brimmond Church, Aberdeen. Both of which were run by volunteers and feedback from those who attended has been very positive and further information about these days can be found later in this newsletter. I would encourage you to keep a look out for more activity days coming soon.

Demand on our services has been on the rise since the start of the year, with 45 referrals already in Grampian, this sadly means that families have suffered a bereavement, but we are here and ready to help.

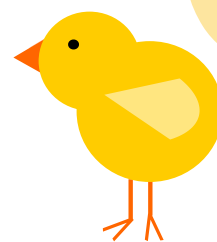
My thanks to all of our brilliant volunteer Responders who offer their support, time and time again to help bereaved children all across the region, I know how much of a difference they make to people's lives.

Training for new Responders has recently been completed, with another 10 added across Grampian however we are still in real need of volunteers in the Buchan and Moray areas to meet the high demand.

Kevin Walker  
ACBS Grampian  
[kevin.walker@archie.org](mailto:kevin.walker@archie.org)



# Bereavement Support Workers Grampian



## Children in Need Project

Caitlin and Emily have been out and about promoting our Children in Need Project to NHS Grampian staff and colleagues. We are excited to now be including Paramedics, Technicians and Student Nurses to the groups who we support as a result of funding from Children in Need.

We are delighted to be part of an annual training workshop session provided to RGU Student Nurses so that, going forward, all nurses in Grampian, through their roles, will be aware of the ways they can better support children, including the ways that we can help through a referral to us.

The Ambulance teams will also be receiving an upcoming training session so that they too can be included in supporting children and connecting them and their families to our services, so that they may be better supported through challenging times.

We look forward to expanding our communities in the upcoming months and if you would like to know more about how our service can best support you, get in touch.

Email : [caitlin.parkin@archie.org](mailto:caitlin.parkin@archie.org) or [emily.cumming@archie.org](mailto:emily.cumming@archie.org)

## Education Service

This recent expansion of our service has found itself even busier than first expected. Jane, our Bereavement Support Worker in Education, has been in and around Grampian promoting the new service and has organised FREE Grampian in-service day training for Teachers and PSA's in November. To book a space, please email Jane.



Moray  
Forres Academy  
13th November

Shire  
Ellon Campus  
16th November

City  
Airyhall School  
17th November



The new service is available to help school communities when there has been a death. This service includes 1:1 support for pupils, group sessions and staff training as well as mentoring.

If you would like more information on our Education Service or training, please get in touch.

Email: [jane.watson@archie.org](mailto:jane.watson@archie.org)

# Become a Volunteer

Grampian, Highlands and Tayside  
We need you!

A big part of our service is our Home Responders carrying out vital direct work with bereaved children and young people. Just like Hester McMillan, who volunteers for us in the Highlands.

## Hester McMillan

I have just completed my training to be a responder volunteer for Archie's Child Bereavement Service. I decided to sign up to become a responder because I believe it is such a valuable role, to help children and young people through a difficult time and to offer an impartial, neutral set of listening ears. When a family is grieving, it can be difficult to support children through loss as well as managing our own emotions and so my role as a responder can help a whole family by guiding children and young people.

The training sessions were excellent. They were so informative, interesting and offered deep insight to the process of supporting young people. I thoroughly enjoyed re-entering the process of learning for such a worthwhile reason.

These wonderful and important services cannot happen without volunteers. If you feel you could be a responder, you should contact Malcolm. You will learn so much and you will make connections and create a network with a whole group of other responders who can offer support and guidance too.

## Welcome aboard our new volunteers

A warm welcome to our newly trained volunteers, Anna McDiarmid, Emily Annand, Marion Chapman, Moonah Al-Abry, Pauline Insch, Laura Roy, Lanna Gordon, Anna Chavasse, Wendy Legge, Louise Robertson and our first volunteer responder in Highlands Hester McMillan. Its fantastic to have you all on board and we know that you will make such a difference to the lives of children and young people moving forward.

As ever, we need to highlight the fact that without our wonderful volunteers we could not provide the many and varied services that we do for bereaved children and young people. We are always looking to recruit new volunteers to deal with an ever increasing demand for services. We are especially keen to recruit volunteer responders in Tayside, Highlands, Moray and the Buchan area.

**If you feel that you have the time to help children and young people in your community who have lost a loved one please email [malcolm.stewart@archie.org](mailto:malcolm.stewart@archie.org) for more information.**



# Activity Days

## Huntly Activity Day

Our first activity day of the year was held at Stewarts Hall Huntly. The children made memory passports and 'built' a train to take them on a journey of memories of their loved ones. A great time was had by all.



## Easter Activity Day

On Saturday 25 March we held our annual Easter activity day at the Stables, Newhills Church in Aberdeen. A great day was had by the 19 children and their families who attended.

Easter bonnets were made, eggs hunted for and some crafts and opportunities to remember loved ones were all part of the day.



# Teenage Group

2023 has proven to be a fun filled year so far for our Grampian Teenage Group. Our teens have so far enjoyed a wreck it room, which, pardon the pun, was a smash hit and an escape room.

To find out more information on how to join the Grampian Teenage Group, please contact our Grampian Bereavement Coordinator Kevin Walker on [acbs.grampian@archie.org](mailto:acbs.grampian@archie.org)



# STAND BACK

# WE ESCAPED





# WhatsApp Group

Our parents WhatsApp group, for adults who have been bereaved of their partner or spouse is still well used. We have 45 members currently using this service.

As well as providing some of their own experiences, the group is used to share information about activity days. Members also use it to communicate with other families to check who is attending future activity days. Children often make great friendships there and knowing others that are attending makes being part of the activity day something to look forward to.

It's a great wee community that's there if and when you need it. If you wish to be included in this group please contact [kevin.walker@archie.org](mailto:kevin.walker@archie.org).

We also administrate a WhatsApp group for adults who have lost their parent, again if you would like to be added to the group get in touch with

[kevin.walker@archie.org](mailto:kevin.walker@archie.org)



## Thank you



We would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has donated their time and fundraised for Archie's Child Bereavement Service. Without you, we wouldn't be able to support the hundreds of bereaved children and young people that we do.



Patricia Hunter Brew Dolphin Enquest

The Robertson Trust The Chester Hotel

Castleton Farm

Mackie Academy

The Gordonstoun School Staff

The Cloggy House