

# befriend a child



*turn a frown upside down*

North-east children's charity, Befriend a Child, is appealing for more volunteers having experienced an increase in the number of children being referred to its services. Befriend a Child supports children and young people (aged 4½ -18) who are growing up in difficult life circumstances from across Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire to develop into confident young adults and reach their full potential.

The 40-year old charity is now supporting over 300 local children each year through 1:1 befriending, after-school youth clubs and school-holiday playschemes, but the list of children waiting for a Befriender has grown to 87 children.

As a result of their living conditions and environment, the children and young people referred to Befriend a Child often suffer from low self-esteem, behavioural problems, poor communication and social skills and statistically under achieve academically.

Nicola Milne, Senior Support Worker at Befriend a Child says, "We know that Befriending has a direct and lasting positive impact on these children by helping them to expand their interests, discover their talents and raise their aspirations in life."

Volunteer Befrienders agree to be a positive role model, meeting with their matched child on a fortnightly basis for 3-4 hours at a time, and for a minimum of 1 year, to enjoy a wide range of activities aimed at introducing them to new experiences and increasing their confidence. Activities can range from attending a football match or visiting Dunnottar Castle to a simple walk along the beach or picnic in the park.

Nicola encourages anyone who wants to find out more about volunteering at Befriend a Child to get in touch with a member of the support team, "We're here to provide support and answers questions. We work closely with Volunteers to ensure they feel confident in their role and have a fun and positive experience." For more information, **email [info@befriendachild.org.uk](mailto:info@befriendachild.org.uk)** or visit Befriend a Child's website at **[www.befriendachild.org.uk](http://www.befriendachild.org.uk)**. Alternatively, the staff team are always happy to answer questions over the phone on **01224 210060**.