



**One Parent
Families Scotland**
changing lives, challenging poverty

Recruitment Pack

Head of Policy, Strategy and Communications





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Welcome

Dear candidate,

Thank you for your interest in joining One Parent Families Scotland (OPFS).

By taking your next step with us, you would be joining an organisation where the work truly matters. It matters to the single parent who is juggling multiple responsibilities to provide for their family. It matters to the child who deserves equal opportunities to thrive. It matters to the families who face daily challenges and need support to navigate them. It matters to us because no one should have to face these challenges alone.

We're looking forward to hearing from people who are deeply committed to our vision: a future where every single parent and their children in Scotland are celebrated in all their diversity, are treated fairly and live free from discrimination and poverty. We believe that every family should have access to the resources and support they need, regardless of their circumstances. *Changing lives, challenging poverty* is at the heart of everything we do.

Our impact

You would be joining a team committed to making a meaningful difference. Every day, we are inspired by their dedication, expertise and commitment to enhancing the lives of single parent families. From our frontline staff who provide direct support, to our headquarters team who ensure smooth operations, and those who advocate for policy changes, our passionate team is focused on creating lasting, positive impact. One example of our impactful work is our Family Support Service. In the past year, we have supported 4,656 single parent families, helping them access essential services, financial support, and emotional guidance. Our programmes are designed with the input of those we serve, ensuring that our work is relevant and effective.

We know that we can't do this alone. Our work is strengthened by the voices and experiences of single parents who guide our efforts. Their insights are invaluable, and their collaboration is at the heart of everything we do. Through co-design and active participation, we ensure that our programmes are tailored to meet the real needs of the families we serve.

HEAD OF POLICY, STRATEGY AND COMMUNICATIONS



Partnerships

We place great value on our partnerships with community organisations, which help us deepen our impact and better understand what families need to thrive. These partnerships amplify our efforts, allowing us to reach more families and provide comprehensive support. By working together, we can create a network of resources and services that truly make a difference in the lives of single parent families.

Our culture

At OPFS, we strive to create a supportive and inclusive working environment. We believe in fostering a culture where colleagues feel valued and empowered to innovate. We encourage learning from mistakes and working collaboratively to achieve our goals. We are proud to have achieved the Investors in People Gold status, reflecting our commitment to excellence in people management and development.

At the core of our mission is the creation of a diverse and inclusive workplace. We recognise that our organisation thrives on the variety of backgrounds and perspectives that our team members bring, enriching our work in countless ways. We are dedicated to equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging, and these principles are embedded within our values and practices.

We encourage applicants who bring diverse skills and a strong commitment to our mission. Regardless of whether your career path has been traditional or unique, if you share our values and are passionate about making a difference, we would love to hear from you.

Thank you for considering a role with OPFS. Together, we can create a brighter future for single parent families across Scotland. *Changing lives, challenging poverty* is not just our strapline; it's at the heart of everything we do.



Satwat Rehman, Chief Executive



Halena Gauntlett, Chair



Background

Vision:

A Scotland where single parent families are celebrated in all their diversity, are treated fairly and live free from discrimination and poverty.

Mission:

To amplify the voices of single parent families in their unique role as sole carers and providers and together challenge stigma, poverty and inequality to achieve change.

About OPFS

Established in 1944, OPFS is the leading charity working with single parent families in Scotland. We provide expert advice, practical support and campaign with parents to make their voices heard to change the systems, policies and attitudes that disadvantage single parent families.

We work alongside single parents and their families, placing them at the centre of everything we do, creating ways to overcome barriers, changing their lives and fulfilling their potential. We also celebrate the many achievements of single parents and their children.

Our values

Our values are the principles or standards that we consider important in life. They shape behaviour and guide our decisions and actions.





OPFS values:

- **Justice:** Always keeping the scales of justice in balance, avoiding inequalities in the future.
- **Equity:** Everyone getting what they need, tackling inequalities in the here and now.
- **Trust:** Trusting that people will work to the best of their ability, while ensuring the best interests of others are central.
- **Collaboration:** Working together and focusing on solutions.
- **Compassion:** Recognising the challenges others face and then taking action to help.

Strategic objectives

- **Support** single parents to build on their strengths and attributes to achieve their goals.
- **Strengthen** single parent families' wellbeing, enabling children to be happy and thrive.
- **Influence** policies to eradicate child poverty, taking an intersectional, equalities approach to policy making.
- **Involve** single parents, experts by experience, to co-produce OPFS services & policy priorities.
- **Challenge** societal attitudes and behaviours to fully support and respect single parent families.

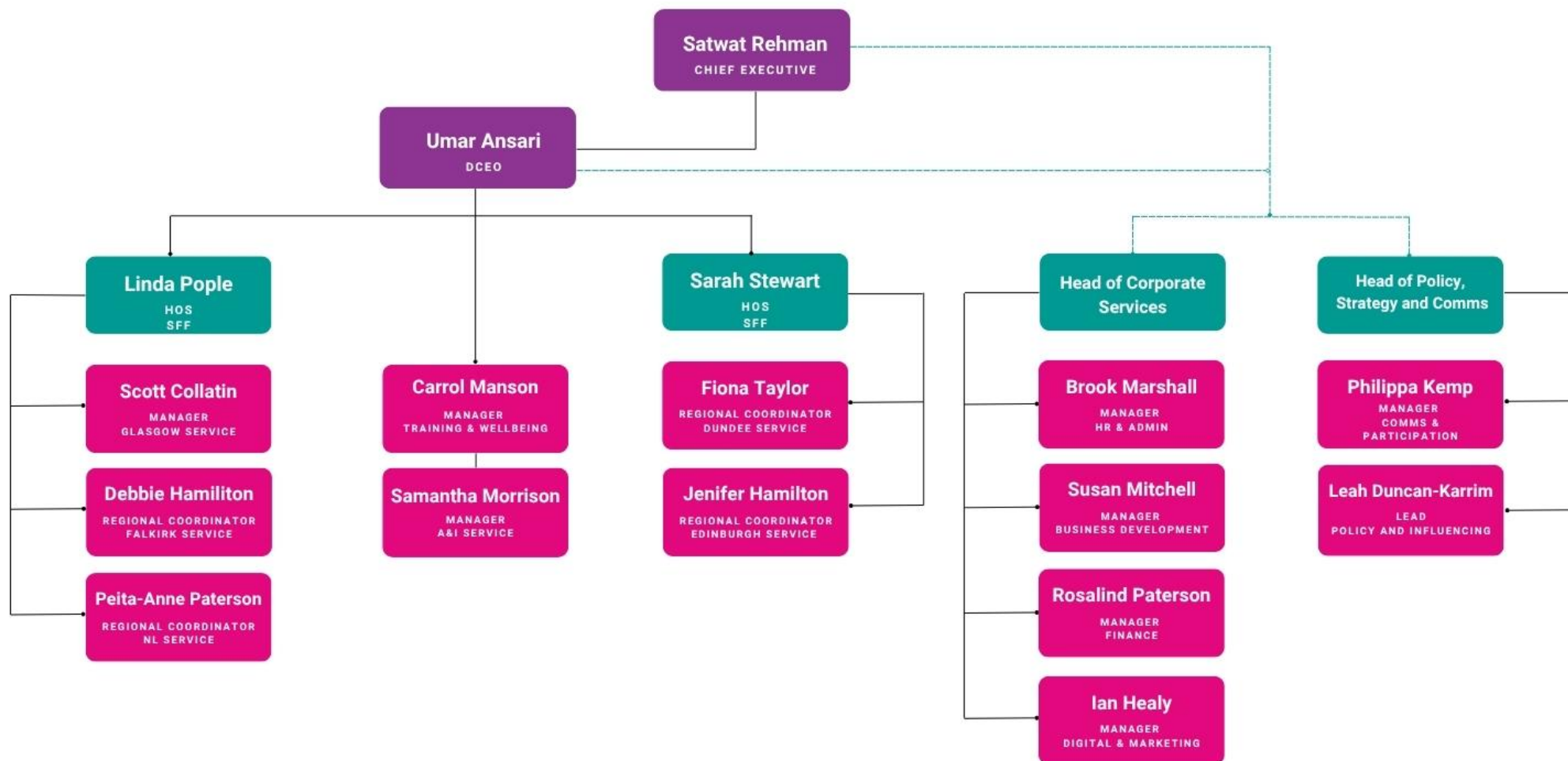
Outcomes

- Single parents know their rights and can access those rights.
- Their contributions to society are celebrated and recognised.
- They have a standard of living above the Minimum Income Standard.
- They experience stronger family wellbeing.
- They have a powerful voice in shaping services and policies.

[Read our strategic plan to find out more.](#)



OPFS organisation



What we do

OPFS is a national charity with over 80 years' experience of supporting single parent families. We aim to enable single parent families to achieve their potential, to reach a decent standard of living and contribute to Scottish society. Those with the greatest expertise about what makes a real difference are single parents with lived experience. We support all single parent families whether headed by mothers or fathers, young parents or kinship carers.

Last year, we marked the 80th Anniversary since the organisation was established. You can read our story and more about our history [here](#). We are governed by a [board of trustees](#) and our organisation is led by our SLT. As well as our [annual report](#), we regularly produce [impact reports](#) to highlight and share the experiences of single parents.

Our services

National Lone Parent Helpline

Our Lone Parent Helpline provides advice and support to single parents. Single parents can call us about anything from dealing with a break-up, sorting out child maintenance, understanding benefits, money when having a baby, studying or moving into work.



We provide a free confidential friendly service including webchat that provides advice and supports wellbeing, whatever a single parent is going through.

See some of the ways that single parents can [‘talk to us’](#).

Online support

Website

[Our websites](#), particularly [“My Life and Me”](#), offer a range of advice, support and information on the areas single parents tell us is most important to them. Other initiatives include [Ask-a-question](#), [single parent stories](#) and [podcasts](#) to highlight real life experiences of single parents.



Single parent forum

We have a dedicated [online single parent forum](#), where parents can chat anonymously to one another about any topic.



Policy, research & influencing

Through our policy, research and influencing work, single parents tell us that they face several significant challenges:

Poverty, employment barriers, childcare costs, housing, mental health, child maintenance



Addressing these issues requires comprehensive policy changes and support systems tailored to the unique needs of single parent families.

We have been leading on and involved with a number of projects including:

- **Debt (public)** - Aberlour, OPFS and the Trussell Trust are working together through this [research project](#) to better understand public debt and its impact on families especially single parents who also have a disability.
- **Child Maintenance** - Our Robertson Trust funded research project '[Transforming Child Maintenance](#)' is now moving into its final phase of influencing change based on the policy solutions that have been developed with policy experts, single parent experts by experience and non-resident parents.
- **Single Parents and Higher Education** - Funded by the Robertson Trust [this research report](#) highlights the real time barriers for single parent students (both current and potential) with recommendations on system improvements that will support completion rates.
- **UC & Digital by Default** - We have been working with academics at Edinburgh University whose [research shows DWP's 'automation' of universal credit discriminates against single mothers](#).
- **A Wellbeing Economy for Scotland** - The 'Empowering Single Parents: Shaping Scotland's Wellbeing Economy' project funded by [Friends Provident Foundation](#) aims to ensure single parents' unique role as sole caregiver and provider is recognised within the development of a wellbeing economy in Scotland.

Our [Policy & Research](#) section on our website will provide more information about the areas and [campaigns](#) that OPFS has been involved in.

We have also recently published our [Single Parents' Manifesto](#) for Scottish Parliament election 2026.



Direct services

We currently have direct services in Angus, Dundee, Edinburgh, Falkirk, Glasgow, North Lanarkshire.

Our direct services tailored to the needs of single parent families cover:

- Tailored advice and information.
- Family support.
- Mental health and wellbeing support including counselling.
- Groups and events.
- Support into training, education and employment programmes.



We want to change single parent families' experiences of isolation, loneliness, poverty, inequality, stigma and poor health, for the long-term. Our approach supports single parents to build their self-esteem, confidence and skills, to take up employment, training and education opportunities and to participate in OPFS policy and campaigning activities.

See details of our [local services for single parents](#).





Our impact

Who we reached

28%

single parent families,
were from minority ethnic
families

4,656

single parent
families supported

50% included a
disabled person

Building community

1,379

parents attended
support groups

664

children took part in
holiday activities

800

parents involved in
our online forum

123 expert parent
contributors



Financial support

£1.6m+
financial gain for
2,351 families

375 families received
debt advice

2,279 accessed
our advice service

1,125 received
financial advice

£3m+ predicted
in future gains

Employment and skills

626
parents accessed
employability
support

98 achieved
qualifications

96
moved into
positive destinations

Sarah's journey: from crisis to confidence

Background

Sarah, a single mum to two children, found herself in crisis after a difficult relationship breakdown. Forced into temporary accommodation and recently made redundant from her part-time job, she was struggling with isolation, debt, and her mental health.

Reaching out: helpline support

Sarah discovered OPFS through a social media post and called the Helpline, where a friendly adviser offered immediate emotional support. The adviser listened without judgement and helped Sarah feel heard for the first time in months. She was referred to local family support.

Family support: building stability

Sarah began working with a dedicated Family Support Worker. Together they identified areas Sarah wanted to work on and developed the steps together plan:

My home - Advocated for more stable housing.

My children - Created a routine to support her and the children's wellbeing.

My money - Accessed a hardship grant for school uniforms and essentials and referral to OPFS Debt and money.

My health and wellbeing - Referred for OPFS counselling.

My relationships - Encouraged to join our various groups and OPFS online Single Parent Forum, helping her feel less isolated and more connected.

Counselling: emotional recovery and confidence

Sarah was offered 12 sessions through the OPFS Counselling Service. These sessions gave her space to process her experiences, manage anxiety, and rebuild her confidence.

Debt and money advice: regaining control

A Money Adviser helped Sarah:

- Maximise her income through benefits and grants.
- Supported her to apply for Child Maintenance.
- Apply for the Scottish Welfare Fund and energy support.
- Set up manageable repayment plans for debt.

With this support, Sarah regained control of her finances and reduced her stress levels.



Employability support: looking ahead

As support progressed, conversations about future identified Sarah wanted to return to work in the care sector. Through the OPFS Employability Service, she accessed:

- Confidence-building sessions tailored for single parents.
- CV and interview support.
- A short training course in adult care.
- Help from the unique Childcare Connector, who sourced affordable childcare that fit around her training and job hours.

Sarah secured a flexible part-time job and is now working toward an SVQ in Health and Social Care.

Parent participation: influencing policy change

As Sarah's confidence grew, she got involved in OPFS's parent participation activities. She shared her experiences through focus groups and consultations that informed OPFS's policy recommendations to government. Her voice helped shape policies to better support single parent families across Scotland.



Being asked what I thought - and knowing it could help change things - was so empowering. I wasn't just surviving anymore, I was part of something bigger.

Outcomes

- Stable housing secured.
- Income increased and debts managed.
- 12 counselling sessions improved whole family wellbeing.
- Returned to work with childcare in place.
- Confidence rebuilt and training underway.
- Actively contributing to policy change for other single parents.



I never thought I'd get back on track. OPFS helped me believe in myself again.



Head of Policy, Strategy and Communications

Location: Edinburgh HQ / Hybrid

Contract Type: Permanent

Working Hours: 35 hours per week

Reports to: DCEO / CEO

Salary: Scale Points 31-33 (£47,970 - £53,300) (subject to salary review)

About the role

We are looking for a visionary and collaborative leader to help drive the implementation of our new strategy, policy development and communications at OPFS - the only national organisation dedicated to single parents in Scotland.

This role will shape public affairs and advocacy, support evidence-informed policy change, and lead our external communications. Working closely with the Chief Executive (CEO) and Senior Leadership Team (SLT), you will ensure that the voices of families and children shape decision-making and public discourse, and that OPFS remains a trusted and influential voice in Scotland.

You will also lead a multi-disciplinary team, fostering a culture of strategic insight, innovation, and equity.

Key responsibilities

Strategic leadership

- Be the SLT Lead for the monitoring and review of OPFS's strategic plan.
- Collaborate with SLT to set strategic direction, manage risk, and lead organisational improvement initiatives.
- Support collective decision-making and innovation through collaboration with other Heads of Service, the Deputy CEO and CEO.
- Support Board governance and engagement in policy development.
- Represent OPFS externally, building partnerships for policy and research with universities and colleges, third sector organisations, think tanks and policy organisations.
- Foster an inclusive culture of engagement, creativity, and trust across the team and organisation.



Policy, Research & Advocacy

- Lead policy development, integrating research and lived experience to influence systemic change.
- Monitor legislative trends and generate high-quality analysis and briefings.
- Design and deliver advocacy strategies to influence Scottish and UK-level policies on child poverty and related issues.
- Oversee research and participation strategies developed in partnership with children and families.

Communications & Public Affairs

- Develop and lead OPFS's communications strategy, acting as a key spokesperson and media representative.
- Build and maintain strategic relationships with ministers, civil society organisations, parliamentarians, and influencers.
- Elevate the profile of OPFS and drive public engagement through clear and impactful messaging.

Innovation & Growth

- Embed systems for continuous learning, impact measurement, and evidence-sharing across departments.
- Identify emerging trends and innovations in policy, public affairs and external communications to strengthen OPFS's effectiveness and reach.





Person specification

Essential skills & experience

- Significant senior leadership experience in public affairs, policy or communications within a national organisation.
- Relevant qualification (e.g. Public Policy, Communications - SCQF Level 10+) or equivalent training.
- Proven success in achieving policy change through effective lobbying and stakeholder engagement.
- Track record of applying research and evidence to drive impactful policy positions.
- High-level communication skills and media confidence; broad network of external contacts.
- Excellent leadership and collaboration skills, with the ability to develop talent and promote performance.

Application information

OPFS is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from members of all communities. We are committed to equality of opportunity, inclusion and diversity.

OPFS encourage and welcome applications from all parts of the community regardless of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and marriage and civil partnerships. We particularly welcome applications from single parents or those who have experienced poverty and / or have tackled poverty.

OPFS, we are committed to protecting personnel, children, adults, and service users from any harm arising from each other, themselves, our activities, or organisational failings whilst in contact with us. More information on our [privacy](#) and safeguarding policies can be found on our website.

Please let us know if you will require any reasonable adjustments should you be called for an interview.

Please note that all job offers are subject to 2 satisfactory references and a disclosure satisfactory to OPFS from the Disclosure & Barring Service.



Making an application

Send your CV (no more than four sides) to jobs@opfs.org.uk. A supporting statement (no more than 1,500 words) that sets out why you think this role is the right move for you and how you meet the knowledge and experience criteria. You should address the key responsibilities, experience and skills.

Please also tell us about how two of our values are, or have been, particularly relevant in your work or life, outlining how you have demonstrated a commitment to them and how they would influence your approach as Head of Policy, Strategy and Communications.

We would also be grateful if you would complete the [Equality and Diversity monitoring form](#) during the application process.

This form is for monitoring purposes only and is not treated as part of your application.

Closing date: Noon of 29th August.

Interviews & adjustments

What to expect from your interview

All our interviews will take place face-to-face. We'll ask you a set series of questions, and there will also be time at the end for you to ask us any questions you have about the role.

Some roles may also require a task to be completed in advance or during the interview; your interview confirmation email will provide all the details on this.

During the interview, it's fine to ask the panel to repeat a question, or to take a moment or two to think before answering. We want you to feel comfortable as possible during the interview and get the best from you.

Reasonable adjustments

If you are invited to an interview, and you have a disability or long-term health condition, please let us know if there is anything we can do or should have in mind to help you participate in the interview.

Please inform us of your reasonable adjustment needs when filling out your application, and/or if you are invited to an interview. This information will be shared with the interview panel to ensure appropriate adjustments are made.



We're very happy to make adjustments to ensure any accessibility requirements are met.

Examples of reasonable adjustments we can provide include:

- Sending you this job pack in a Microsoft Word format.
- Giving you more time to complete a task during your interview.
- Changing the interview location to accommodate accessibility needs.

How to prepare for interview

Prepare well - read about the role you applied for and OPFS before you sit down for your interview.

Consider how your values fit with OPFS mission and vision, and bring this to life in your answers.

Think of examples of when you've demonstrated the behaviour or skills needed for this role in a previous role or in your personal life.

Prepare any questions you have for the panel ahead of time. Questions you ask the panel aren't scored as part of the interview so make sure you're asking questions that will help you decide whether the role is right for you.

Things to remember during interview

We want to get the best from you!

Relax and take time to think about a question before you answer it.

Ask for clarification if you don't understand a question. We won't ask you trick questions or try to 'catch you out'. All the questions we ask you will be relevant to the job.

If you cannot attend any of the offered interview slots, please let us know - please note we cannot guarantee we will be able to provide an alternative slot, but we will try our best to.

Post interview

We will provide constructive feedback to all candidates who attend for interview.



Staff benefits

Pensions

On appointment you will be automatically enrolled in the OPFS Pension Scheme with The Pensions Trust with a 3% contribution from you and 7% from OPFS. It is a money purchase scheme, which means that the money is invested in a pension fund and the final value of that fund will provide you with a pension when you retire. You can apply to increase your contribution at any time after the completion of your probation.

Holiday entitlement

All full-time staff are entitled to 37 days paid holiday annually with part time staff entitled to a proportion of this allowance, based on hours of work. Entitlement is given to you in hours each year and the leave year runs from 1st January to 31st December. After 5 years' service you are entitled to an extra 5 days' holiday or a proportion of this if you are part time.

Employee assistance program

All staff will have access to our Health Assured - Wisdom app. This support is dedicated to assisting you and your immediate family with balancing work, home life and any other personal issues. Their confidential support includes counselling, debt advice, legal advice and assistance with family issues. Additionally, you can use wellbeing trackers, access health resources, call the helpline and lots more.

Bike loans

If a member of staff wants to cycle to and from work, on all or some occasions, arrangements can be made to assist with financing this. Please ask the finance team for further information.

Death in service benefit

Death in service benefit of three times salary will be paid in the event of a staff member under the age of 70 dying whilst an OPFS employee.

Season travel ticket loans

Arrangements can be made, if necessary, to allow all staff to access cheaper travel through season tickets through a salary advance for the purpose. Please ask the finance team for further information.



Sickness pay

We have a generous sick pay scheme as detailed below:

Staff absent from duty as a result of sickness are entitled in any one period of twelve months, starting from the first day of certifiable leave, to paid sick leave in accordance with the following table and the OPFS Sickness Absence Policy.

Service at Commencement	Full Allowance	Half Allowance
During 1st year	1 month	1 month
During 2nd year	2 months	2 months
During 3rd year	4 months	4 months
During 4/5th year's	5 months	5 months
After 5th year	6 months	6 months

Carers leave

Staff can request a total of 5 days' carers leave within any leave year, pro rata for part time staff, to provide care for a dependent, such as your child, parent, spouse, partner, next of kin or nominated next of kin, in an emergency or to attend an appointment that requires their presence.

Emergency leave

Up to 5 days within any leave year for dealing with emergencies such as fire, flood, accident, victim of crime or other circumstances that require immediate attention. Discretion of managers.

Flexible working

OPFS recognises that staff should have a healthy work/life balance and may also have additional responsibilities, such as being a carer for a family member. All staff can request to carry out their job duties within a flexible working pattern which may be temporary or permanent. Employees wishing to work flexitime should discuss this with their manager in the first instance.

Long service recognition

Staff receive recognition for every five years' service with OPFS commencing at 10 years' service. At each 5-year milestone you will be offered a choice of benefit either a cash payment or additional leave days. (pro-rata for part-time staff).



Our offices

Edinburgh Headquarters

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OPFS Glasgow

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Email: glasgow@opfs.org.uk

OPFS Lanarkshire

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Tel: 01698 239 961
Email: lanarkshire@opfs.org.uk

Lone parent helpline: 0808 801 0323 Helpline email: helpline@opfs.org.uk

Together we can make a difference to children's lives.

Support the work we do by [donating](#).



www.opfs.org.uk

OPFS is a charitable company limited by guarantee.

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