



Highland Children's Forum

Highland Children's Forum is Changing...

The greatest achievement of the last year has been for Highland Children's Forum to begin its transition.

While the aim of the Forum has not changed: "to contribute to the highest possible standards of services in the Highlands for the benefit of children and young people with additional support needs", our activities to deliver this have changed.

Our focus has moved from consultation work to participation work; not representing the views of children and young people, but empowering children and young people to directly influence policy and practice.

The Forum has also begun the process of becoming a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO).

The name will change to Highland Children and Young People's Forum.

The Management Committee are becoming a Board of Trustees. We have been delighted to have young people from the Young People's Action Group on the Management Committee this year.

Policy Work

The Policy Lead, as a Third Sector Representative on the Highland Council Care, Learning and Housing Committee, has campaigned to ensure the Redesign of Commissioned Services engages with key stakeholders (children, families and service providers) to ensure that public sector budget cuts to the third sector are managed in a way that does not negatively impact Highland's most vulnerable children and families.

The Policy Lead is a Third Sector Representative on the Highland Council Leadership Group and sits on five Improvement Groups to see inclusion and participation built-in to improvement processes across Highland. She also sits on the Highland Third Sector Children's Forum.

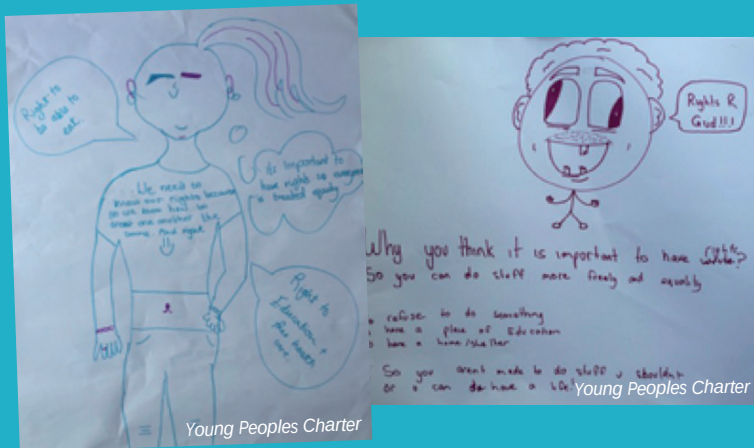
Highland Children's Forum has worked with partners to develop participation and inclusion on the following policies and strategies:



Highland Children and Young People's Forum

*Youth Work and Participation Strategies;
Mental Health Participation Framework;
High Life Highland Inclusion Policy and Promoting
Positive Relationships Policy and Guidance*

Highland Children's Forum Activity Report 2018-2019



YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

Fortrose Academy

Sessions were delivered to 100 pupils in Fortrose Academy on children's rights, in partnership with 6th form pupils. The pupils produced a Young People's Charter detailing how they wished to be treated by adults within the school, including:

- o Adults should remember we have rights.
- o Adults should understand our abilities and disabilities.
- o Teachers should treat us as equals.
- o Adults should not share things that others don't need to know.
- o We need to be treated well and with respect.

"We are being ignored by professionals and services."

"We want more change."

Partnership work with Highland Youth Parliament

We delivered training on young people's participation to Youth Parliament Executive Members.

We led a workshop session (in partnership with Health and Happiness) at the annual Highland Youth Conference on how local youth forums could involve more young people with additional support needs.

"We want to challenge injustice."

Three young people gave powerful testimonies

based on their personal experiences and received a rousing response from the conference delegates.

Inverness Young People's Action Group

The Young People's Action Group is made up of a vibrant and diverse group of 12 young people.

The group was established in December 2018 and meets monthly to speak out about the issues affecting young people with additional support needs.

The main issues identified by the young people include: negative attitudes and stigma, issues within education and physical accessibility.

"We want to speak out about what we need as this will benefit us in the long-term."



To challenge negative attitudes and stigma, the group are working in partnership with media students from Inverness College to produce short video clips based on young people's personal testimony.

"Adults need to recognise that we are unique and that one size does not fit all."

A key aim is to raise awareness of additional support needs with lecturers, teachers and young people in schools and colleges to challenge negative attitudes and increase understanding.

2 new groups are in the planning stage.

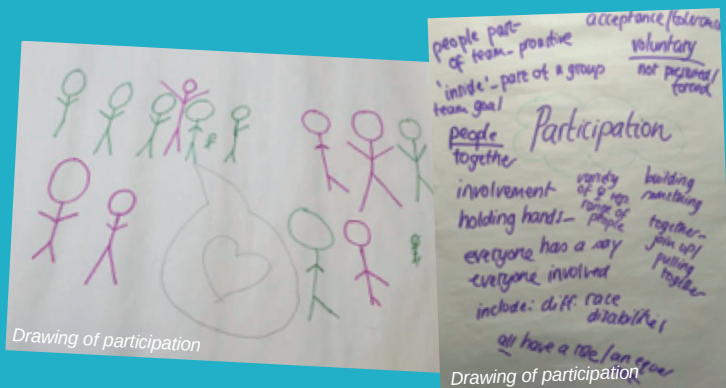
CONSULTATION

Highland Children's Forum was commissioned by Highland Council to undertake a service evaluation of the school sexual health and relationship education (SHARE programme) to find out if the current provision meets the needs of young people in Highland.

Three separate, but linked, consultations took place:

- o Consultation with young people in ASN Departments and Special Education.
- o Consultation with young people in mainstream schools.
- o Consultation with school staff delivering SHARE.

"We want to show our potential and our abilities."



KEY FINDINGS FROM ACROSS THE REPORTS:

- o Teachers and young people recognise the importance of good sexual health and relationship education (SRE).
- o Current delivery of SRE is not consistent across Highland secondary schools
- o The quality of the SHARE programme could be improved, and the resources updated.
- o Young people with additional support needs are not receiving SRE in a way that meets their needs.
- o Some young people with additional support needs had sensibilities about discussing sex and

"I want to make sure every young person's voice is heard."

"We want our dignity and confidentiality to be preserved."

sexual health that makes delivery of appropriate information challenging for staff.

- o The range of topics covered in SHARE does not meet the current needs of young people. More is needed on e.g. porn, social media, sexting, pregnancy and abortion.
- o School SRE is not meeting the needs of young people who identify as LGBT+.
- o Homophobic bullying is an issue and needs to be tackled within SRE.
- o Teachers need ongoing professional development and training to feel confident delivering SRE.

Mental Health Consultation and Participation

On behalf of the Children's Commissioner for Health, Highland Children's Forum hosted the third annual mental health consultation event, where young people identified these key actions:

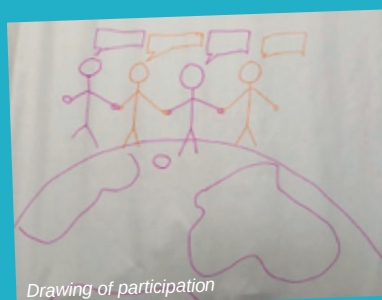
"To help us grow in confidence with our disabilities."

- o Development of mental health resources to provide information for children, young people and adults.
- o A pathway to show how children and young people can access mental health support.
- o A participation pathway describing how children and young people can engage with mental health services.
- o A participation plan that ensures those who attend Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services can comment on their experience and participate in service development.

"We should have control over the major issues in our lives."

Highland Children's Forum continues to work with SPEAK and Child and

Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to take these actions forward.





ABOVE:
Young Peoples Action Group



Management Committee

A huge thank you to all our Management Committee for their hard work, support and on-going commitment:

Gaener Rodger
Chair

Kirsty Hunter
Treasurer

Sarah Fowler

Bec Nicholson
Vice Chair and member of the Young People's Action

Judith and Stephen Hope
Secretary

Clair Nichols

Bec Raynes

The Management Committee are grateful for the contributions of **Linda Munro** and **Rachael Hatfield**, both of whom stood down from the Management Committee this year. Rachael remains a valuable member of the Young People's Action Group.

Staff

Emma Thomas
Consultation Lead

Gillian Newman
Policy Lead

Highland Children's Forum would like to thank The Highland Council for its continued financial support and Highland Cross for a grant for accessible participation resources.

CONTACT DETAILS

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Full details of HCF activities, constitution, policies and finances are available from the website:

www.highlandchildrensforum.org

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