



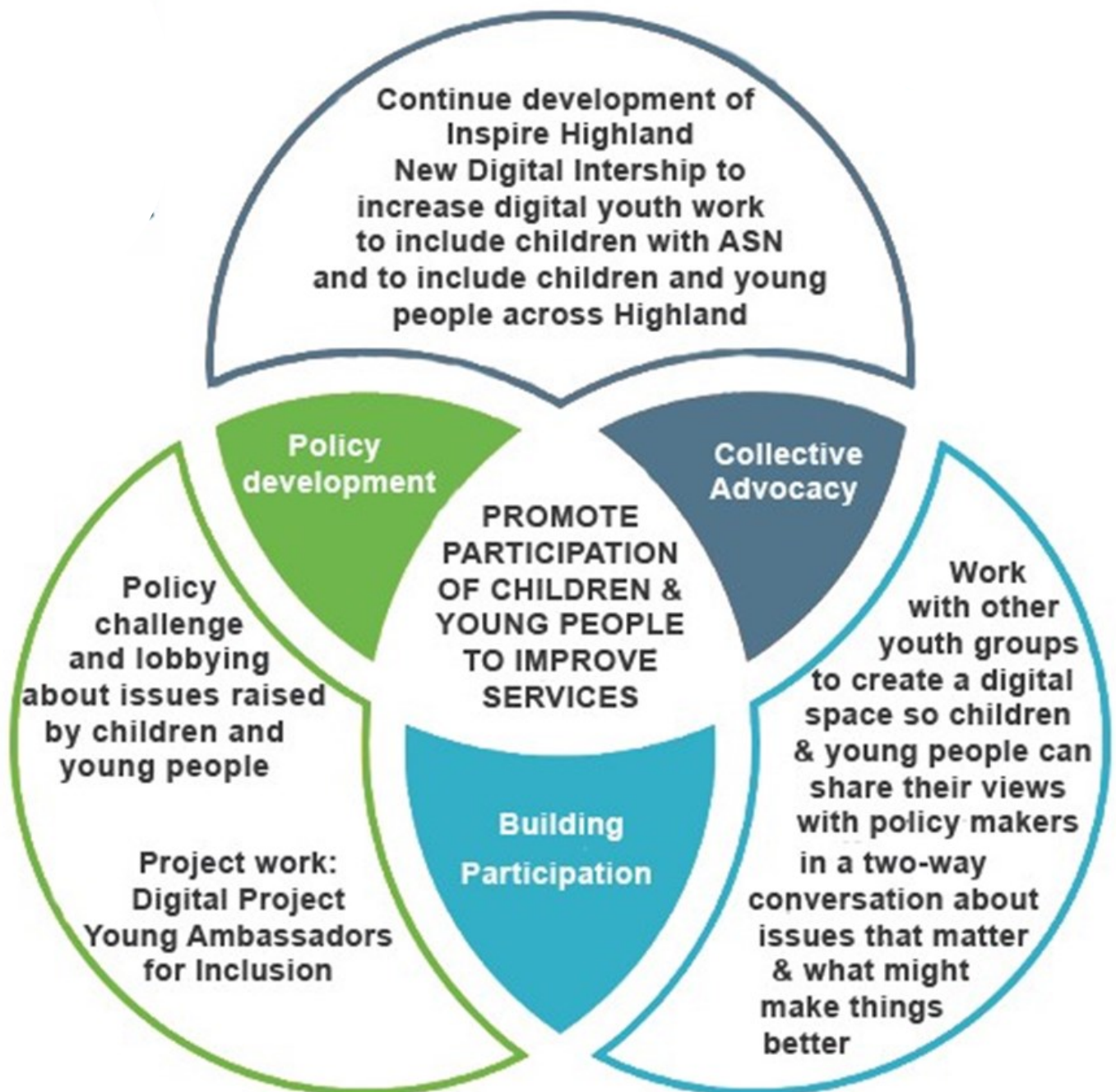
Highland
Children and
Young People's
Forum

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

hcypf.org

Charity number: SCO 49417

Development Plan 2020 to 2021



'A difficult but amazing year for our charity'

Norman MacAskill, Chair of HCYPF

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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(Chair)

James Gilzean

(Treasurer)

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Jenni Campbell

Gavin Cobb

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Laurie Symon

This has been a difficult but amazing year for our charity. Difficult because we have faced the same challenges as everyone else in this time of pandemic and lockdowns. Amazing because our team have risen to those challenges with vision, inspiration, creativity and sheer hard work.

Gillian and Emma have played a blinder in their respective roles, and you can read about some of their achievements on these pages. Gillian's lifetime achievements were recognized in a Highland Third Sector Award and we could not be prouder of her.

Emma's achievements have also had recognition of a different kind, with policymakers and practitioners at local and national level recognising the importance of the Inspire Highland project which has thrived in lockdown and grown into something far greater than we could have imagined a couple of years ago.

Thanks to Inclusion Scotland internships, we have also been incredibly lucky this year to have Hannah and Alix working with us. They are brilliant colleagues who have contributed a vast amount to our work and it has been a joy and a privilege to work with them.

Our Board has evolved, with members stepping down and new people joining, bringing their own strengths and a shared commitment to the goals of the charity. It is now a very strong team and - best of all - they are all lovely people and Board meetings are fun!

We are now well placed to build on this year's successes, to consolidate our relationships as a key partner with stakeholders in Highland and to seek new funding support to develop our work. It is also time to refresh our branding to increase awareness and understanding of our work. More on this soon...

Anyway, here's to the next inspiring and amazing - but hopefully not quite so difficult - year!

Policy Lead Report: 2020 - 2021

Gillian Newman, Policy Lead

The year began with the first lockdown due to Covid-19. HCYPF swiftly moved to home working and online meetings.

The Policy Lead continued to lobby for engagement of children and young people with several policy areas of concern. Those most in focus were:

- Highland Partnership Integration Scheme between The Highland Council and NHS Highland
- Integrated Children's Services Plan
- Report on progress towards incorporation of UNCRC, children's rights
- Production of Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments

The time of the pandemic has brought unprecedented restriction of children's rights in the very year the Scottish Government voted for their rights to be fully incorporated into law.

Children's rights to an education, to play and socialisation were all directly compromised by the lockdown as well as changes to income and welfare meaning their right to have their needs met was also often compromised.

The Policy Lead hosted the Letters from Lockdown competition to enable young people to have their say about the experience of lockdown.

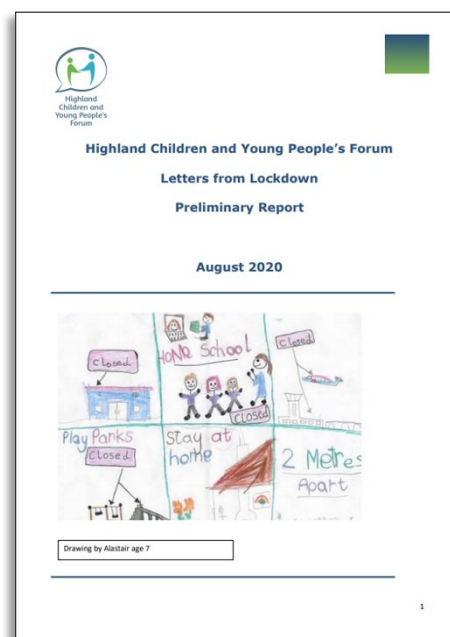
185 children and young people took part sending an amazingly creative variety of videos, letters, artwork, photographs to describe their time in lockdown.

This report was presented to the Education Committee by some of the young winners of the competition.

While there were many challenges to living in



Policy Lead Gillian Newman received a Lifetime Achievement Award in this year's Highland Third Sector Awards.





Phoebe Finnigan, age three, with the story she wrote and illustrated for Letters from Lockdown



lockdown recognised, young people's resilience and compassion also shone through with young people befriending elderly neighbours, delivering shopping, writing cards and otherwise caring for others as well as showing a real appreciation for nature and the beauty of living in the Highlands. Many had learned new skills.

The Policy Lead sits on the Integrated Children's Services Board and while there was not enough time to meaningfully engage children and young people in development of the plan, the Policy Lead has secured commitment to dialogue between policy makers and different groups of children and young people around both their priorities and those on the policy agenda.

This framework will take time to establish as trust builds on both sides.

The first area of development for this was the planning of the Healthy Minds Seminar to bring young voices together with policy makers and service providers to start a conversation about mental health and wellbeing.

Caithness Cares Pathfinder worked with us in the development of the Healthy Minds Seminar plans and invited us to contribute to the pathfinder engagement processes.

Another area of policy development is Children's Rights and Wellbeing Assessments (CRWIA).

The Scottish Government's incorporation of UNCRC into law means that CRWIAs should be carried out routinely on all new policy development.

The process as set out in government guidance is bureaucratic and not accessible to children and young people, although the guidance asks for evidence that they are involved.

The Policy Lead has been working with both national and local officials to develop an approach that will be accessible and proportionate.

The Policy Lead, as third sector representative, attends the Education Committee where the Policy Lead continues to lobby for improved services for children and young people with additional support needs.

The Policy Lead also sits on the Joint Monitoring Board where she lobbies for those people whose circumstances do not neatly fit in Highland Council or NHS Highland services:

Neuro-developmental Assessment Service; Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services; Joint Transitions Team; young carers and parent carers.

As part of the Highland Third Sector Interface the Policy Lead has been involved in discussions with the Highland Council with regard to the review of third sector contracts.

The Digital Project, started last year, has continued to the next stage of development, with engagement with young people moving to digital participation.

This is a partnership project, funded by Alliance Scotland, working with Day 1 Mentoring and UHI Digital Health to involve young people in the design of digital solutions to their wellbeing offering them more autonomy in their lives.

This project received an extension in time and funds to allow it to continue through online engagement.

This wide range of work has been made possible by the welcome addition of two Digital Internships through a partnership with Inclusion Scotland.

The intern appointed to the Policy Lead was Alix Anderson. Alix increased capacity to enable the delivery of this year's growing policy and participation developments, in particular taking a lead in the Digital Project.

Alix has also carried out a detailed review of all Forum policies to ensure all were up to date and relevant to the increased amount of online work.

The logo for the Digital Design Project, featuring the words "Digital", "Design", and "Project" stacked vertically in a bold, blue, sans-serif font, set against a light grey rectangular background.

Inspire Highland

Inspiring Young People To Move Forward



Participation Lead Report 2020 - 2021

Emma Thomas, Participation Lead

Inspire Highland are a group of Highland young people with diverse experiences and disabilities who come together to inspire young people to speak out and move forward. The last year has seen an incredible development in Inspire Highland's digital youth participation.

We have increased our meetings from 20 per year pre-Covid to over 200 a year using online platforms. Our structure has also changed significantly to reflect our new way of working.

We have the main Inspire Highland meetings, which all the young people are invited to, and then we have smaller 'mini' meetings which are thematically based:

Digital Youth Participation Worker Hannah Eaton, on an internship, has done amazing work supporting the activities of Inspire Highland.

Some of our recent achievements include:

#EyeInspire

We established #EyeInspire, our mini group for young people with a visual impairment. We developed our high-viz hoodies and campaigned on sight-loss related issues.

Sarah said: "I want to be part of a group where young people with a visual impairment can share experiences and provide peer support; where we can have fun but at the same time speak out about the barriers and challenges we face in our lives."

Erica, 11 years old, the youngest member of the group added: "I want to live my life and not throw it away just because I have lost my sight.

"I want to carry on being me. I want to get off this little island I am on now and not be stuck in the mud any more.

"This group will show me I am not alone and I can



#EyeInspire merch!



Hayley from Inspire Highland with her creation, Angus the Autism Bear

learn from other young people how to adapt and cope.”

Angus the Autism Bear

We worked alongside an award-winning Scottish author and writing our Angus the Autism Bear picture book for primary school children.

Short film

We produced a short film about young people and mental health and developing a pilot school PSE mental health programme.

Speaking at conferences

Members of the group spoke at national conferences as an exemplar of good practice in digital youth participation.

Representation

Inspire Highland became a permanent member of the Disabled Children and Young People’s Advisory Group, a group that advises the Scottish Government on issues around children and disability.

Survey on anxiety

We developed and distributed our ‘It’s not all in the Mind’ survey aimed at young people 13 - 25 years old across Scotland.

The survey aimed to find out the effects of anxiety on young people and to provide a much-needed opportunity for young people to speak out about emotional and mental health issues.

Perspire Highland

Ten young people took part in ‘Perspire Highland’, a virtual walk of around 140 miles from Nairn to John O’Groats and raised £400 for Children in Need.

Lobbying decisionmakers

We met with several MSPs, Councillors and MPs to lobby them and raise issues of concern to the Inspire Highland group.



Veteran fundraiser Shona led a virtual walk to John O’Groats



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Charity number: SCO 49417

WATCH THIS SPACE ...

Big changes are coming to our charity later this year. Check our website, Facebook and Twitter and sign up to our newsletter to be first to hear the exciting news!