



Highland Children and Young People's Forum Bulletin

December 2020

Seasons Greetings

It has been an extraordinary year. It will be an unusual festive season.

All of us at Highland Children and Young People's Forum wish you an enjoyable and "as sociable as allowed" Christmas. We hope that the New Year will see the much repeated phrase "Build Back Better" become a reality.

Our hopes for the next year:

Children's Rights in Scotland are made real as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is fully incorporated into Scot's Law. This will involve every child knowing their rights as well as every adult supporting them.

The Highland Council and the Scottish Government find ways to truly deliver on "Keeping the Promise" for all children and young people who are care experienced or on the edges of care.

Ways are found in Highland to reduce the inequality brought about by increased child poverty and adversity, including those families who have lost income or struggled through the pandemic.

Chat4change, the new engagement project that will form a participation framework for the Integrated Children's Services plan, truly enables dialogue between children and young people and policy makers across sectors in Highland.

Forum News

In Partnership with Inclusion Scotland, Highland Children and Young People's Forum are delighted to be welcoming two six month internships for Digital Participation Workers. This will support the development of four of our participation projects which will be online:

- Continued growth and Development of Inspire Highland
- "Build Back Better Blether" in primary schools project (an adaptation to the Young Ambassador for Inclusion project)
- Chat4Change - exciting new participation framework for the Integrated Children's Services Plan
- Digital Project next phase of participation

If you would like to become a member of the Forum to support our work, please click here for a [membership form](#).

We are currently recruiting for new board members. If you would like to apply, please email Gillian: policy@HCYPF.org

Participation Work

Inspire Highland continue to flourish with a host of new projects they are initiating.

There are two mental health sub-groups, a school age group who have been meeting with elected MPs and MSPs to discuss how mental health awareness could be improved in the Personal and Social Education Curriculum. The young adult group are developing materials to raise awareness about the physical aspects of anxiety.

Autism awareness sub-group is developing film and other creative media to share different aspects of autism. Other ideas are being developed

Hayley's autism bear has had some lovely media coverage:

<https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/highlands/2615311/nairn-woman-creates-autism-bear-to-raise-awareness/>

<https://news.stv.tv/highlands-islands/hayley-wants-her-autism-bear-to-become-a-necessity?top>

inspire Highland has been promoted as an example of good practice in Digital Youth Work and young people have presented to the Government Ministerial Group through the Disabled Children and Young People's Advisory Group and to the Govan Law Centre



This project is to set up an ongoing dialogue between children and young people and policy makers around the Children's Services Plan.

In January the five themes of the plan will go out for children and young people to have their say about what works, doesn't work or could be better on each theme.



Children and young people can take part individually or in a group, they can engage as much or as little as they choose and can contribute through email or through social media in writing or by video, story-telling, drawing, photography or any other expression.

The Forum will ensure those voices are brought to policy makers and that policy makers respond to the children and young people.

This is an exciting new start to a participation framework and we hope a lot of children and young people choose to get involved (as often as it suits them) over the next three years.

To find out more contact Gillian policy@HCYPF.org

Project Work

The Digital Project, to co-design digital wellbeing solutions with young people, is moving into the next phase of development. At the first stage of participation, young people identified a need for:

- Peer support
- Creative opportunities to tell their story
- Finding a digital mentor (Mentor Matching)
- Being able to access a virtual safe/relaxing space to meet with a trusted mentor or peer

This is a partnership project, working with Day 1 Mentoring and UHI Digital Health, funded by Alliance Scotland Self-Management Fund. We are grateful to Alliance Scotland for extending the length and funding for the project to take account of changes necessary due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Watch this space for more news.

Help on Hand, a project developed in response to the Letters from Lockdown project, seeks to bring Volunteer Learning Mentors alongside individual children who may have lost out on learning or had additional stresses during lockdown and over the pandemic period. The project is being tried out in one school.

Policy Work

Many different organisations and policy making groups are looking at mental health issues, which have been thrown into greater focus by the pandemic. The Forum has had agreement from the Education Committee and the Health and Social Care Committee for a mental health seminar where young people from a number of organisations will present their views to Highland Council, NHS Highland and third sector organisations with an interest in young people's mental health.

The Forum welcomes the reactivation of some policy groups which have been in abeyance: young carers strategy group; mental health improvement group; equalities and rights group.

Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments are now a statutory duty for policy development. The Policy Lead is in communication with Together Scotland and the Scottish Children and Young People's Commissioner about how to ensure the child's voice is captured in these assessments and that the process is robust and effective in realising the rights of children in Scotland.

Naked Brains

Bec Nicholson, a previous Board member and Inspire Highland member has recently created her business 'Naked brains' where she delivers a bespoke training program that revolutionises how we perceive and deliver person centred care.

Do you need help to train your staff?

Do you work in care sector and want to learn from someone with lived experience about the importance to wellbeing of enabling choice and control?

Naked Brains can help.

<https://www.facebook.com/Naked-Brains-Consultancy-106855564626325/>

Bec lives in Highland supported by her wonderful canine partner, Gregg, and is carrying out a cycle to raise money for Canine Partners.

Support Bec's 60 hour cycle for Canine Partners Donate here:

https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/rebecca-nicholson13?utm_campaign=eua-share-facebook&utm_content=Rebecca-Nicholson13&utm_medium=shares-from-eua&utm_source=facebook&fbclid=IwAR0otp-6hAc3YGhcdX_0qVefvs-D-pbXmR9ZtkjZnpVU2rLc1PuP3ju4OQ
