



## Highland Children and Young People's Forum February 2021 Bulletin



### The Forum Looks Ahead

The Forum is at an exciting time in its journey. We have been reviewing and developing our purpose and practice over the last three years, developing participation and collective advocacy along with the continuing work of consultation and influencing policy.

The Forum became a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation just over a year ago and required a new name for that purpose. The name of Highland Children and Young People's Forum was chosen to reflect the wider age range now included in our constitution and because the name was familiar, one people would still recognise.

We are now ready for rebranding, a change of name that reflects our new direction. We will be working with James Martin on our "Proposition, Identity and Communications Plan".

### **Join us on the journey: we are recruiting to the Board of Trustees**

The Board of Trustees is a lively group of people from a variety of life experiences who share a passion for promoting the voices of children and young people with additional support needs. This bulletin provides a overview of the exciting work we are involved in.

Do you want to be a part of it?

[Click here](#) to find out more and to hear from current board members.

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## Project Work

The Forum is excited with the additional capacity brought about by the recruitment of our wonderful new Digital Interns, funded in partnership with Inclusion Scotland. Alix Anderson is the digital intern working with the Policy Lead on the Highland Chat 4 Change and digital participation projects. Hannah Eaton is the digital intern for the Participation Lead, working on expanding the success of Inspire to widen its reach. Hannah is also working with the Participation Lead on a project that replaces the Young Ambassadors for Inclusion programme (halted due to the pandemic) with digital participation for children in primary around wellbeing and inclusion to contribute to the "Build Back Better" plans of Highland Council. Hannah will also be supporting work with the Caithness Pathfinder Project "Caithness Cares".



**Highland Chat 4 Change** is live and seeking to hear from any child or young person living in Highland.

What would make Highland the best place to grow up? [Find out more](#)

This project will set up a dialogue between the Integrated Children's Services Board (ICSB) and children and young people to help shape and review the Children's Services Plan.

The next children's services plan has 5 main priorities for improvement: mental health; equality (child poverty); children's rights; Keeping the Promise and transitions.

We are working with other groups to bring the voice of children and young people to improvement plans across these priorities.

### **Healthy Minds Seminar - Save the date 28th April**

HCYPF is hosting this seminar for integrated children's services and the Education and Health and Social Care Committees. This will bring young people directly, although digitally, into dialogue with policy makers and professionals. Young people will be looking for commitment to action and continued dialogue from delegates and the ICSB.

To register interest email Gillian: [policy@HCYPF.org](mailto:policy@HCYPF.org)

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**The Digital Project**, in partnership with UHI Digital Health and Day 1 Mentoring, funded by Alliance Scotland, are reaching the next stage of development of the digital solutions to wellbeing co-designed by young people. Coders have been engaged to develop the suggestions of the young people to:

- Develop Peer Support
- Choose and work with mentors
- Virtual reality – a chance to meet with a mentor virtually in relaxing space
- Creatively develop your own story

Co-design with young people takes you where you were not necessarily planning to go. The platform young people have described is incredible and will be empowering for young people using it. The early prototype of the platform will be ready for young people to review in May.

**We are recruiting young people to this next phase of development.** We are looking for 27 young people, in groups of three, aged between 11 and 18 to take part. Let us know if you have young people who might be interested.

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### **Build Back Better – work with children in primary**

This project, working closely with the Education Improvement Team, replaces the Young Ambassadors for Inclusion project, begun just before the first lockdown.

This work will involve fun and interactive digital sessions through Google Meet, to engage with children about their wellbeing and inclusion, to consider what is needed to build back better as children begin to return to school.

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### **Caithness Pathfinder Project: Caithness Cares**

Work with the Caithness Pathfinder Project will enable the Forum to explore developing a wider geographical and age range of children and young people in digital participation. The children and young people will contribute to the development of the pathfinder project.

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## Participation Work



Inspire Highland continues to live up to its name. It is truly inspiring. The outreach of the group has brought their style of youth participation to the Inclusion Scotland Highland Summit, the Scottish Governments Ministerial Advisory Group, Leonard Cheshire projects and a local Access Panel seeking to include younger people.

Here are a few of their own projects they are currently working on:

- Contributing to the development of mental health resources for Personal and Social Education with the Education Improvement Team
- Continuing planning creative mediums (photography, writing, drawing) to raise awareness of autism, including Autism Bear
- Plans for a multi-media presentation/awareness raising material around the physical aspects of anxiety
- A survey to young people 16-25 years old on mental health issues
- Linking in with other young people's campaigning groups e.g. Association for Real Change, Divergent Influencers' Group
- Meeting with elected officials
- Animation: production of 3 short films for p4-5 on awareness of diversity, equality and additional support needs. It is planned to develop activities to complement the videos.

In seeking to expand its reach and include a wider range of young people the group are seeking to develop groups for:

- Young people with a visual impairment
- Young people within the custodial justice system

To check out their inspiring work follow:

Facebook: [Highland Children's Forum](#)

Instagram: @inspire\_highland

You Tube: [Inspire Highland You Tube](#)

To find out more email Emma: [participation@HCYPF.org](mailto:participation@HCYPF.org)

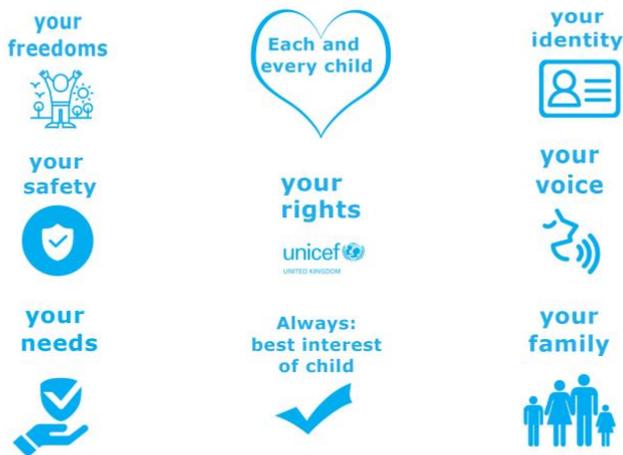
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## Policy Work

The **Integrated Children's Services Board** is working hard to complete a Children's Services Plan for submission to the Scottish Government in April.

The board are committed to engaging with children and young people to develop the plan in a dynamic way as well as building their voices into the performance review. The Forum is leading this work through the Highland Chat 4 Change initiative. We are working with other organisations across Highland seeking to include as many voices as possible in this engagement process.



UNCRC incorporation into Scots law continues.

### **Children's Rights and Wellbeing Assessments**

(CRWIA) should be included in all policy development.

The guidance for carrying out CRWIA is bureaucratic and not accessible to children and young people, whose voices are meant to be included in them. The Forum is connecting with the Scottish Government and the Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People's Office to see a child friendly version developed. HCYPF policies are under review taking the CRWIA into account.

**Caithness Pathfinder Project:** The Forum has joined the project board to contribute to the development of engagement with children and young people in the pathfinder project.

The Policy Lead continues to contribute to the Education Committee, Joint Monitoring Committee, Keeping Children Safe, Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI) Children's Forum meetings and to engage with other professionals and service providers to ensure participation of children and young people are central to the development of plans across children's services and support in Highland.

## Other News

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Gillian Newman, Policy Lead, was given a Lifetime Achievement Award from the HTSI at their awards ceremony.

Of receiving the award Gillian said: "I suppose the 'lifetime' reflects my age - more career behind me than ahead at this stage!

"Achievement? Well for me that would be if Highland really was the best place to grow up, where every child got the right help at the right time and inclusion was not a term about where you received a

service, but how you felt when you got there. That would be achievement. But if you mean aiming high and trying hard - I have been trying. I sort of hope I am quite trying to those who are not making enough progress towards that aim.

"Yet to be chosen for an award from the many creative, compassionate, committed people who volunteer and work for the third sector in Highland is a startling thing, a true honour. It is paradoxically humbling to have been chosen. I am very thankful."