



Highland Children and Young People's Forum October 2020 Bulletin

Forum News

Highland Children and Young People's Forum (HCYPF) is growing its digital youth work. To that end, in partnership with Inclusion Scotland, **we are able to offer a six month internship to develop digital youth work** to widen the reach of HCYPF across Highland and also to offer a way for younger children with Additional Support Needs to become involved in finding their voice.

This is a fantastic opportunity for a dynamic, passionate person who wants to promote the rights of children and young people; who is digitally literate; who self-identifies as having a disability and who is unemployed or underemployed.

Click here for an [application pack](#).

Please share this opportunity with anyone you think might be interested.

Letters from Lockdown: 5 of our prize winners attended the September Education Committee and shared their experiences of both lockdown and the return to school. They were brilliant. Catch it on the Highland Council [webcast](#) item 4.

Do you know a family struggling to keep up with online learning due to connectivity difficulties?

The Highland Council Connecting Scotland Team can help:

"As part of the Connecting Scotland Project, we want to ensure that in Highland young people are not excluded digitally. We are aware that some young people may be experiencing issues connecting to the internet from home which is key in the Digital Learning.

We may be able to assist you with providing 12 months connectivity for free via a MIFI dongle. This is a handheld device which can be utilised in areas where there is mobile signal, acts as a mini wireless broadband which then can be shared between mobile enabled devices such as Chrome Books and smartphones.

In order to progress you will need to qualify to receive such a device and we kindly request that you email you're your details, reason for request and any information you think is relevant to Schools.ConnectivitySupport@highland.gov.uk

Qualifying criteria for families are among others:

- Poor connectivity or no broadband at home
- Families that are receiving benefits
- Families that are eligible for free school meals
- Families with siblings who are sharing WiFi with pressure on network

Many thanks and with our kind regards,
The Highland Council Connecting Scotland Team"

[The Rare Reality of Covid-19](#) is a report about how people with rare genetic conditions have fared during the pandemic. It makes for challenging reading.

Some recommendations from the report:

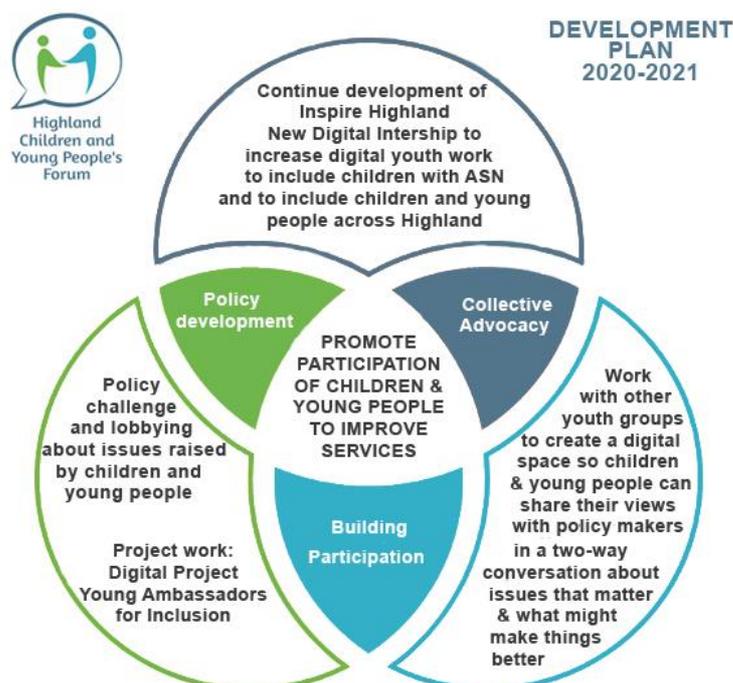
Enable ongoing telecare for children and families where that had worked better
Support to schools/colleges to enable children and young people who have been shielding to return to education

Better information regarding shielding in the future

HCYPF Development Plan

The Board of Trustees and Staff Team met for their annual development day. The plan supports the ongoing development of the digital youth work and collective advocacy of Inspire Highland.

HCYPF is working with third sector partners and the Highland Council Integrated Children's Services Board to develop a space for ongoing dialogue between children and young people already engaged with third sector partners, to enable them to have a say about matters that are important to them. This dialogue will contribute to the dynamic development of the Children's Services Plan over the next three years. The Digital Project and Young Ambassadors for Inclusion project have adjusted to a digital format and continue. The work of the Forum to challenge policy makers and take forward the views and aspirations of children and young people will continue.



Participation Work



Inspire Highland are now on Instagram and You Tube:

[You Tube Inspire Highland](#)

Instagram: [Inspire Highland](#)



Nairn Fun Day Out: finally for the first time since lockdown, young people were able to meet up for

socially distanced outdoor fun.

The young people currently have a **focus on mental health** and are keen to improve mental health awareness in schools. They have approached John Swinney MSP and Deputy First Minister about it.

Inspire Highland has hosted Highland events for the **Disabled Children and Young People Advisory Group** and through this connection have been asked by the Scottish Government Children and Families Directorate share the good practice of Inspire Highland's digital engagement. Here is what the Directorate said:

"The Highland Children's Forum model appears to be particularly successful in that you have regular well-organised meetings, uptake in participation, good access to a spread of age ranges and that contact has been able to continue throughout the pandemic, we would be very keen to hear from you to discuss this and share your good practice."

Inspire Highland are also working on the ChangeMakers animation project with Highland One World, where young people share their hopes and dreams for the future.



Perspire Highland virtual fundraising event where young people hoped to cover the distance from Nairn to John O'Groats by walking in their gardens or local parks, is ongoing. The young people have long passed John O'Groats and are now virtually walking along the north coast.

If you would like to support their fundraising: [click here](#)



Meet Autism Bear designed by Inspire Member Hayley "Autism Bear represents for me to say I have autism. It can help the world know people can have a disability and they should not be yelled at or swore at because I am not able to wear a facemask."

Policy Work

After a period of suspension in policy development in Highland, there is now a flurry of activity.

The new **Integrated Children's Services Board** is developing the children's service plan for the next three years. The engagement with children and young people, and families and carers, will be built into this plan from its development through to its dynamic review and evolution over the three year period.

The Forum will lead on the development of this engagement working in partnership with our third sector partners.

The current identified priorities are:

- **Children's Rights and Participation:** UNCRC rights of the child, long supported by HCYPF, now upheld by law in Scotland.
- **Mental health:** an issue of concern before the pandemic, but growing now.
- **Child Poverty:** another issue of concern that is escalating in this crisis.
- **Corporate Parenting:** keeping "The Promise": the Scottish Government care review calling for Scotland to "come together and love its most vulnerable children to give them the childhood they deserve".
- **Transition:** to support our vulnerable young people through adolescence and into adulthood.

Other policy development:

Joint Monitoring Committee will draw up and agree the new integrated services agreement for Lead Agency Model of the Highland Council and NHS Highland by the end of the financial year.

Young Carers Strategy Group and Carers Improvement Group are taking forward the development of the strategy and support for unpaid carers, whatever their age or the age of those for whom they care.

Education Improvement Team are working with us to increase the voice of children in education through "Build Back Better Blethers". HCYPF involvement in this will be from the Young Ambassador for Inclusion project funds. This is an exciting collaboration with the Education Improvement Team who are committed not just to hear what children and young people are saying, but to work with them collaboratively to bring about change.

Building Back Better

There is a lot of talk about the possibility of building back better after this pandemic. The pause on usual activity does present the opportunity for rethinking the way things are done.

The **Letters from Lockdown report** demonstrated the potential of building on the four capacities of the Curriculum for Excellence that this time presents.

Effective Contributors: Letters from Lockdown showed how children could describe their experience in so many amazingly creative, thought-provoking, fun and poignant ways.

Responsible Citizens: Children and young people are suddenly very aware of the news and being a part of something global, understanding that what they do as individuals matters.

Confident Individuals: Children and young people showed a real understanding of the value of good relationships and of developing life skills for coping in this place of crisis.

Successful Learners: even the youngest children wanted to learn about Coronavirus and how it affects others. Their interest is captured: the beginning of successful learning.

Help On Hand is a proposal to recruit volunteer school-based mentors for local schools to meet weekly with individual children or young people who may have struggled during lockdown for a variety of reasons and who could benefit from one to one mentoring: someone who could listen and be there for the child/young person in terms of their wellbeing and to help the child/young person catch up on lost learning. To find out more contact Gillian policy@HCYPF.org

Children and young people have often spoken to HCYPF about the **attitude of others** towards them, especially professionals, and the **impact of words**. This is a lovely [newsclip](#) about a mother who is trying to address some of the careless ways words can be used. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-england-54546967>

Mental Health Voices Sought

Do you have a story waiting to be told around your experience of depression?

Or perhaps you've been impacted by a family member's depression?

The University of Edinburgh is embarking on an exciting new public engagement project, **"My depression, your depression. Same name, different stories."** They are looking for both adults and young people (16-20) to embark on a digital storytelling process.

Over 6 online zoom sessions you'll be supported to make a 3-5 minute creative story (images with voiceover) that gets your message of choice across. These videos will be used to inform a wider audience, from policy makers to community groups so it is an incredible experience to have your voice heard and make a difference.

They recognise that this is a big commitment so they will be making a monetary contribution towards participant's time. If you're interested, you can find out more here. Or come along to one of our information sessions on Zoom.

- Sunday 1st November, 2pm
- Wed 4th November, 7.30pm

Any questions, please email Iona – iona.beange@ed.ac.uk

To sign up now, fill in the form at: <https://tinyurl.com/digitalstoriesdepression>

BBC Scotland would like to hear from **young people living in Highland who have experience of being inpatients in the Dudhope Young Peoples Inpatient Unit, or in receiving support in Highland to avoid becoming an inpatient.** If you know of anyone who would be interested in speaking to the BBC, please contact Gillian policy@HCYPF.org

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