

Highland Children's Forum

February 2017



Highland Children's Forum Consultation Work

Transitions Consultation: The Transitions Summary Report is at the printers and will be ready for distribution very soon. A copy will also be available to download from the Highland Children's Forum website. The Consultation Lead and young people will present the report to the Highland Council Education, Children and Adult Services (ECAS) Committee on 1st March. A presentation was also given at the Lochaber Transitions Forum meeting in Fort William in January and was very well received.

Sexual Health and Relationships Consultation: A draft brief and methodology have been developed for the sexual health and relationships consultation after extensive discussion with young people, professionals and parents. It is likely the consultation will be a mix of evaluating the SHARE* resource in schools and social research into young people's attitudes and behaviours within a sexual health and relationship context. As part of this consultation, the Consultation Lead attended the Youth Highland AGM and prepared an interactive workshop for young people. It is hoped that a small number of young people will be supported and trained to become peer consultants on this project. *SHARE is an educational resource for use by teachers to support learning about Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood.

Not in Full Time Education Consultation (NIFTE) Consultation: Consultations are well underway, particularly on Isle of Skye and thanks must be extended to colleagues on Skye for their support in linking us up with parent/carers and young people. Consultation workers continue to discuss and promote NIFTE among colleagues in Dingwall and Inverness and expect consultations in these localities to take off over the next month.

Other Projects:

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS): The EU Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme is funding research around young people's mental health services. Part of this programme is a Highland pilot on the [Development and Well-being Assessment](#) (DAWBA). Highland Children's Forum have been asked to support a young person to give a presentation in March about their experience of transitioning from CAMHS to adult mental health services (and Transitions Consultation) to delegates from Highland, Finland, Norway and Sweden.

Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival (SMHAFF)

Highland Children's Forum are meeting organisers of this year's SMHAFF to see if we can work with some young people on a project around mental health.

Please get in touch with if you are interested in finding out more about any of this work.

Emma, Consultation Lead on 07789 680811 or email: consultation@highlandchildrensforum.org or Maggie NIFTE Project Worker on 07539755480 or email: projectworker@highlandchildrensforum.org

Highland Children's Forum Policy Work

Strengthening the Voices of Children:

Highland Children's Forum have been working alongside Highland Third Sector agencies and the Scottish Health Council on [Voices Scotland](#) a pilot project to empower young people to have a voice in service design, to influence decisions, to focus on important issues and make a difference for their community. HCF accompanied a young person to Voices Scotland event. While young people appreciated having their voice heard, they stated the need to have feedback from services about what will change as a result or if not, why decisions were taken. Strengthening voices to be heard is important, ensuring there is feedback is just as important.

Inclusion Scotland Highland is a new Highland Project to increase the participation of people with disability in local democracy. With the new Community Partnerships and local plans, this is an opportune time to encourage people across the age and diversity range to become involved in local policy making. The Policy Lead is on the Advisory Group along with one of our younger (<25) members. There will be three capacity building events, in Inverness, Wick and Fort William. We will advertise these on Facebook when the details are known.

Audit Scotland Visit: HCF and CHIP co-hosted a parent carer focus group lunch for Audit Scotland to contribute to their 'Self-Directed Support: a follow up audit'. 7 parent carers attended and an interesting discussion was held. The Policy Lead also took part in a discussion with Audit Scotland and professionals. HCF carried out a consultation with young people and parent carers about Self-Directed Support (2015).

Health & Wellbeing for Mothers & Babies:

A number of priority outcomes for maternal and infant health and wellbeing are part of For Highland's Children plan. Some of these targets are regularly missed. While the statistics are regularly reported, the reason behind the missed targets is less clear. HCF has a survey for recent mothers about how they access support, what has been helpful and what would be helpful. Please forward this link to anyone interested:

[Mums and Baby – help along the way](#)

Self-Directed Support in Children's Services Where are we now?

From meetings with Audit Scotland:

Professionals reported that some parent carers have spent the social care budget on things that were not agreed in the support plan and that are an inappropriate use of public money. Concern was voiced that those in receipt of Disability Living/Mobility Allowance could be double funded for some things. The service response has been to introduce a list of limitations on self-direction.

Parent carers take on the work of managing a Direct Debit on top of caring for a child with disability because they believe they can make choices that improve outcomes for their child and build family relationships to sustain caring. The new restrictions being imposed make it more difficult to spend the money on achieving these outcomes.

There are valid concerns from both parties.

Public money should be spent to deliver best value for children and families.

People should not receive double funding for the same thing. The Self-Directed Support approach is based on **evidence** that offering self-direction to families is likely to lead to better outcomes for less money. It should be better value for the public purse.

Services may lack understanding of the creative ways money can be used to deliver outcomes. Some families may lack understanding of how to enable progress towards identified outcomes.

Traditional services tended to offer "respite" in specialist provisions or support to access specialist activities. Self-Directed Support is to enable children with disability to **progress** towards wellbeing and inclusion in normal social community activities.

When families can only purchase traditional style activities, there is no self-direction and no value in Direct Payments. At the end of the focus group lunch, parent carers were asked if they would accept a smaller budget if there were more flexibility. There was a resounding "Yes". If the **intention** of progress towards outcomes is always the focus of support planning, then creativity should be enabled without risk of misuse of funds.

Participation Feedback Helix

Enabling meaningful Community Engagement

The new Community Partnerships (CPs) are starting to meet across Highland. CPs are tasked with carrying out community engagement to develop local plans for children, adults and community learning. As noted above, listening effectively to the voices of people across communities is only one part of community engagement. There is a need to also provide feedback about how that voice led to change.

HCF was funded to develop a [Participation Framework](#) by NHS Highland some years ago*. This interactive framework is no longer live. However, in light of the various conversations about the importance of feedback, a new version regarding community engagement is shown below. In the interactive version, each word/phrase was a live link to participation tools. The framework recognised that young people do not want to be consulted over and over again without any idea of the change resulting. Participation is about knowing your right to have a say and for that voice to influence personal planning, service evaluation and policymaking.

* Please see current Scottish Health Council [Participation Toolkit](#)



At a recent voluntary sector meeting hosted by **Highland Third Sector Interface**, Community Planning Partnership priorities were discussed. This is a summary from Policy Lead notes of the meeting:

To Increase Community Capacity: cultivate the good will contribution of folk such as retired people/young people/others; recognise the range of skills and abilities available.

To Strengthen Community Resources & Opportunities: map the resources already there; capitalise on the added value and innovation of voluntary organisations; connect people with shared interests to create opportunities.

To Connect Communities & Enable Access to Services: enter into *dialogue* with communities; foster networks; capture community conversations; feedback priorities/plans.

To Create Safer Communities: engender sense that everyone has a stake in the community and something to contribute; consider vulnerabilities of both those likely to offend and those likely to be victims; enable early intervention of voluntary organisations.

To Protect & Support Vulnerable Groups: identify vulnerable groups; make connections & build relationships through shared interests and good will.

National News

Child Poverty: as MSPs debate the Scottish Government budget 2017/18, with the new social security powers now devolved, organisations campaigning against child poverty are calling for an increase of £5 on child benefit. The campaign estimates that this move will reduce the number of children living in poverty by about 14%. With one in five children in Scotland living in poverty ([Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland](#)) this would surely be a welcome move. The complex and compound effects of child poverty, leading to inequalities across health, education and social outcomes, will need a varied menu of policy initiatives. If the Government is serious about Getting it Right for Every child, the newly devolved welfare and tax powers should enable investment in the social, mental and economic wellbeing of our children.

[Highland Council Community Play Award](#)- £1000 to the group, organisation or community that has done the most to promote self-directed free play and access to outdoors. Playhighland.co.uk

Regional News

HCF has had sight of the final draft of **Highland Care and Learning Service Accessibility Strategy 2016-2019**. The issue of schools purchasing minibuses that are not accessible has been raised to HCF. While the strategy refers to access to transport it does not specify school minibuses. HCF has raised the question with Care and Learning Service and will share any response received.

Highland Children's Forum is discussing with The Highland Council how affected families will be involved in the planned **return of some young people from Out of Authority residential placements** to individual packages of support in Highland. Bespoke and local solutions are likely to benefit young people and their families, but only if they are truly person-centred and meeting individual needs. This will depend on listening to the young people and their families.

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