

Highland Children's Forum
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Protocol and Monitoring Leaflet

**Listening to Children and Young People – Speaking
with Policy Makers**

Scottish Charity SC031945

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Staff Timesheet and Expenses

Staff shall complete the HCF monthly timesheet and submit to the treasurer at the end of the calendar month. This is an Excel Spreadsheet with separate worksheets for the hours worked, annual leave and for expenses due.

In recording the number of hours worked on a particular date, staff should also indicate what projects/areas of work were included in those hours.

Staff need to keep a tally of any toil worked and carry this on to the following month if not reclaimed. No more than one week of toil hours can be accumulated and carried over in any one month.

Annual Leave must also be recorded on the timesheet and on the Annual Leave worksheet to show the amount taken and still available to take over the financial year.

Where staff work hours funded from grants or funds outside of the SLA, these need to be recorded accurately and submitted by the 12th of the month to ensure the additional hours are included in the month's payroll.

Expenses should be recorded on the expense worksheet. All receipts must be kept.

A hard copy of the expense sheet with all receipts attached should be posted to the treasurer on the last day of the month or nearest working day.

Where there is a special requirement for expenses to be paid before the end of the month, staff may submit the hard copy of paperwork earlier, so that payment can be transferred. The soft copy of expense worksheet should be submitted at the end of the month as usual, but with a note of any emergency payment of expenses already paid earlier.

Where staff need cash for consultation events to pay travel expenses due to children and young people or their parents, the estimated amount is to be submitted on a "Cash Expenses" form. All receipts and travel claim forms must be kept and submitted to the treasurer.

The completed timesheet should be submitted to the Treasurer: treasurer@highlandchildrensforum.org at the end of every calendar month.

Staff Induction, Mentoring and Appraisal

Staff will receive a full induction on appointment ensuring familiarity with the particular tasks and responsibilities of the role and all HCF policies, procedures and protocols.

Staff will be supported in their role through mentoring by one of the management committee. Mentoring meetings will happen approximately once a month or as required. The mentor will be contactable in between mentoring sessions for advice and support.

Staff annual appraisals will be held after the team away day has set HCF priorities for the following year. The staff member will complete a form in advance of the appraisal identifying personal strengths and learning needs as well as performance in the role. The appraisal will be held with the staff member, mentor and one other member of the management committee.

There will be a regular team meeting between committee meetings with staff members and the chair or other appointed committee member to discuss in detail the day to day working of HCF.

Where staff need approval, sign off or confirmation from the committee about any aspect of their work this will be sought by email. As committee members are volunteers and busy, issues requiring a response will be targeted to particular members of the committee on a rota basis, so that two committee members will be asked to check and respond to any particular issue. If one of those cannot comment in the given timescale, they can pass it on to the next committee person on the rota to ensure a committee response is obtained.

Staff Training Plan and Record

A staff training plan will be drawn up each year after the development planning away day and staff appraisals to ensure that the training plan reflects both the needs of the individual staff members and the HCF development plan.

Each staff member, in discussion with their mentor, will seek to identify and book suitable training within the identified training budget. Training out with the agreed training budget needs to be brought to and agreed by the management committee. Where suitable training cannot be identified, this should also be brought to the management committee for discussion.

A training record should be kept of the training completed by individuals in their staff folders. The HCF training record for all staff should also be completed.

Service Level Agreement Monitoring

The Policy Lead will take responsibility for the bi-annual report to Director of Health and Care in respect of the Service Level Agreement (SLA) between HCF and The Highland Council (THC). These reports are due in March and in September.

The Policy Lead will also liaise with THC Area Contracts Officer to ensure that all obligations under the SLA are met. These obligations include:

- Annual Report
- Bi-Annual Monitoring Reports
- Insurances as required
- Staff policy and procedures
- Business continuity plan
- Staff induction and training plan
- Staff qualifications
- Recruitment policy, procedures and records
- Latest newsletter
- Internal quality assurance systems: Policy and Consultation Monitoring
- Complaints procedures and log
- Annual Financial statements/audited accounts

When the SLA is due for renewal, the Policy Lead and Management Committee Chair will negotiate a further SLA with THC.

Consultation Monitoring

The Consultation Lead will liaise with Council members and service leads regarding areas of priority for consultation work within the SLA, identifying two main consultation projects over a year, each at different stages of the consultation process. Further short consultations may be agreed when consultation hours allow.

The Consultation Lead has responsibility to ensure that all consultations are ethical, academically robust and carried out in a timeous and methodical way. Informed consent will always be sought from children and young people (CYP). Where a CYP is under 12, or unable to understand informed consent, parental consent will also be sought.

All participation is voluntary and it will be made clear to CYP that they may withdraw at any time. For CYP who have parental consent, the CYP's engagement with an activity will be taken as assent and any reluctance to engage be taken as a voluntary withdrawal from the consultation.

CYP confidentiality will be maintained, except in the instance of a child protection issue, when the Child Protection Policy will be followed. This will be explained to CYP when seeking informed consent. Confidentiality will be ensured by use of pseudonyms in HCF reports and occasionally by changing any identifying details, e.g. number of siblings.

CYP will be given sight of the report before it is shared with others to ensure that the report does reflect their views and a copy of the report, in soft or hard copy, when it is published.

Consent forms will be kept secure and contact details deleted at the end of project unless CYP has consented to further contact and involvement.

Participant responses will be kept on file as evidence and participant numbers not names will be used to identify these.

Data will be input to an excel spreadsheet. The first worksheet will provide details of participants against the participant numbers, names and contact details will not be recorded in soft copy. Details requested from participants on the consent form, i.e. age, geographical area and gender will be recorded against the participant numbers. Other information from the consent forms relevant to the data analysis, such as type of additional support need, will also be recorded on this front sheet.

Data will be analysed and categorised on subsequent worksheets as described in the particular methodology for the project. The Consultation Lead will seek a second person, the Policy Lead, someone from the HCF committee or a peer to verify the analysis of the data.

All participants will be invited to confidentially evaluate the consultation process. These evaluations will be kept on file.

Draft reports will be shared with participants to ensure that it does reflect the views shared, with the HCF committee for consideration of layout and presentation of the report and for peer review to monitor the academic robustness of the consultation.

Policy Influence Monitoring

The Policy Lead (PL) has responsibility to ensure that all issues raised to HCF through consultation with CYP, through contact from parent carers or through professional networking are taken forward to influence policy and practice in a way that is proportionate, appropriate and most likely to lead to improved outcomes for CYP.

The PL will attend meetings which support the ongoing delivery of For Highland's Children (FHC) service plan whenever possible and where the PL can make a relevant contribution in representation of the views of CYP with additional support needs (ASN). Where the PL cannot attend relevant meetings, he/she will liaise with other third sector partners who are in attendance to enable the HCF contribution to be made. The PL will also contribute to the Third Sector Children and Families Group (TCHFG) to support integrated and partnership working.

The PL will keep a note of the recommendations from HCF reports which been adopted by the Education, Children and Adult Services Committee

(ECAS) and follow up with the Children's Planning Manager to ensure these recommendations are encompassed in and evaluated by the relevant FHC improvement groups.

The PL will send out a satisfaction survey on an annual basis to ask the members of the ECAS, NHS Commissioning Group, the Leadership Group, Third Sector Children and Families Group and other relevant committees or groups to request a confidential response about the effectiveness of HCF in representing the views of CYP with ASN and about any change in understanding, policy or practice that has resulted. This will be before the annual HCF away day to set up the development plan for the following year.

Response to Issues Raised to HCF

HCF exists to capture the voice of CYP with additional support needs and ensure that this voice influences policy and service delivery to improve outcomes for CYP.

The direct testimony of CYP with ASN is the prime source of evidence for HCF. However, in order to make the most robust response to the issues experienced by CYP with ASN, we also gather evidence from others.

Indirect testimony re CYP with ASN may come from:

1. Other CYP
2. Others who listen to CYP with ASN
3. Parent carers
4. Other family members
5. People who work with CYP with ASN
6. National and international research

HCF will always seek to gather evidence in a way that is robust and unprejudiced. The evidence will be analysed to seek to identify recommendations for policy or service delivery to enable improved outcomes.

HCF will seek the most relevant person or body to approach with regard to the findings on any issue to enable the testimony to contribute to service improvement. The PL will seek a response from services and report this back to those who had raised concerns.

HCF does not provide advocacy and will lobby for change in an objective way without identifying individuals CYP or families.

Highland Children's Forum Development Planning

HCF will have an annual work plan to take account of:

- agreed consultation work under the service level agreement
- any additional consultation work to be undertaken
- identified policy work locally

- priorities of improvement groups in For Highland's Children
- agreed collaborative and integrated working with other third sector organisations
- agreed input to statutory sector meetings
- identified policy work nationally

Annual evaluation of policy work will be carried out in September. Consultation work will be evaluated within the project cycle.

In October, there will be a Development Day for all staff and committee members. The evaluations of the previous year's work will be considered and any lessons learned fed into the development plan.

The priorities for HCF, in terms of both consultation and policy, will be set for the following year. Any staff or committee training needs will be identified. Any funding requirements will be considered.

The annual development plan will be produced by end of October.

Staff Annual Appraisals will take place in November to take account of personal career development and the needs of the organisational development plan.

Communication and Digital Media Strategy

HIGHLAND CHILDREN'S FORUM FACEBOOK PAGE

Highland Children's Forum will have its own page, which will be a useful platform for all constituents to engage with Highland Children's Forum. Staff will seek to update and add information to Facebook at least weekly.

COLLECTIVE ADVOCACY FACEBOOK GROUP

A Facebook group was the preferred platform to engender dialogue amongst children and young people. This will take the form of a Collective Advocacy Network, where CYP in Highland who are involved in other organisations can raise issues and converse about topical matters within Highland. This group will be private and closed; Facebook users can only join if they are invited by Highland Children's Forum. Highland Children's Forum will monitor the group.

HIGHLAND CHILDREN'S FORUM TWITTER

HCF Twitter account will be used to share important information with regards to children and young people with additional support needs.

HCF's Facebook page and Twitter will not be used for private communication.

All platforms align with Highland Children's Forum's communication objectives as they improve communication from CYP with additional support needs throughout a geographically dispersed area and generally raise awareness of the charity.

WEBSITE

HCF's website is a platform where both internal and external communication will take place. A regular supply of news releases on the website will allow CYP and their families, carers, members, professionals and other organisations to stay up-to-date with HCF's activities.

The website's new design will also mean it is more accessible for all; it is easier to navigate to find information.

BULLETINS

In accordance with our communication objectives, ten regular bulletins will be published every year in a consistent format. They will be published on our website and sent out in e-mail to members.

Invoices, Contracts & Financial Transactions

Hard and soft copies of all invoices, contracts and other financial transactions for HCF will be sent to the treasurer's postal and email addresses as soon as possible.

A hard copy of each will be kept on file in the HCF office.

Financial transactions smaller than £50 and within the current budget projections can be initiated by the PL or CL. Larger transactions or any transactions outside of the projected budget, must be referred to the Chair and Treasurer who may sometimes refer to the full committee.