



My Child's Plan: My views

Children's Summary

getting
it right
for every child

A Highland Children's Forum consultation on behalf of the
Highland Council.

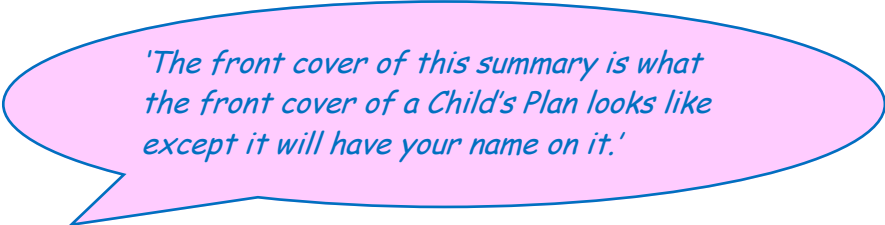
Tracy Anderson
2014



Remind me what this was all about?

My name is Tracy Anderson and I work for the Highland Children's Forum. Between January and May 2014 I met with you either in your home, in school or in a place of your choice. The reason I visited you is because you have a Child's Plan. The Highland Council wanted me to find out what you know about your Plan and what you think about it.

It was difficult to ask some of you questions about your Child's Plan because you didn't know you had one or didn't know what it was for. So, instead I asked you about the help you get from people, what difference this has made to you and what could make things better.



'The front cover of this summary is what the front cover of a Child's Plan looks like except it will have your name on it.'

This summary will tell you about some of the things you, and the other children and young people who took part, said. Everything you told me was confidential so all your names have been changed throughout the summary.



Who did I visit?

I visited 38 children and young people between the ages of 10 months and 16 years. I spoke with 29 of you and observed another 9. I chose to observe 9 children rather than have a chat with them due to them either being too young to talk to me or having a level of need which made conversation and understanding difficult.

The people who took part lived in 3 different areas of the Highlands. Some of you were living with your mum and dad, some with just your mum or just your dad, others were living with grandparents, a foster family, had been adopted, or were living in a care home provided by the Highland Council.

Why do I have a Child's Plan?

Everyone needs a bit of extra support from time to time for many different reasons. For example; having a medical condition or experiencing difficulties at school or home.

Sometimes when you are experiencing these difficulties it becomes harder for you to grow, develop and achieve the most that you are capable of.

It is very important that if you are a child or young person facing difficulties you are given extra support as soon as you need it.

A Child's Plan is written for you when you need some extra support. It makes sure that the people around you know what you need and can work together to make things better for you.

'I know I can stay with Granny and Grandpa now. They're my family. My Plan made me feel happier and safe.' (Eli age 8)



Your Plan might have been written by the Head Teacher in your school, your Guidance Teacher or maybe a Social Worker, depending on your needs. The people who develop your Plan should try and find out how you feel about things and this should be included in your Plan too.

**What kind of help
have we been getting?**

'My class teacher is helpful. She had a talk to the other children in my class about Tourette's. Now they understand more about me they look out for me.' (Bradley age 10)

'I'm really close to my Children's Services Worker. She gives me honest feedback so I trust her and know she's not lying. I have troubles with my friends and she is really supportive; she's given me leaflets and a CD in the past to help me deal with stress.' (Eva age 16)

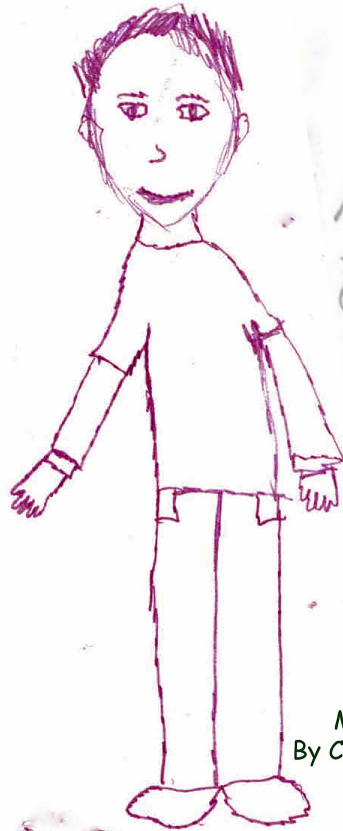
'I get help from a lady at the Birnie Centre. I enjoy seeing her; she helps me out when I get annoyed; she uses charts with different faces to look at how I'm feeling. I see her every week or 2.' (Charlie age 9)

'Having a Plan has meant I've had help with bullying, stress at home and transition from high school. Staff listen to me and have helped me get along well in my subjects.' (Struan age 16)

'I gave my helper [Pupil Support Assistant] a 'terrific' sticker. She helps me in the mornings; we do baking and make pizza.' (Lilly age 12)

'I was nervous about coming into P2 because I was meeting new people. My helper [Pupil Support Assistant] works with me in the classroom; she does 'Hop-on' with me to help with my spelling. It's really helpful having her to talk to.' (Fraser age 6)

What's important about the people who help you?



My helper
By Caroline age 9

nice
Helpfull
Kind
Funny
Friendly
trustwearing
Understanding
Silly

'The people who get the job interviews should be good listeners, not too strict, fun, happy and they should be people who don't get out of control.' (Charlie age 9)

'People need to tell me what's going on.' (Daniel age 8)

'Being able to speak to someone and not feel like they're analysing me. Just being able to have a regular conversation; laid back, private and trusting, this is so important.' (Carla age 16)

You told me about lots of different people you can trust and can talk to but there were 4 people mentioned most often. These were Class Teachers, Pupil Support Assistants (Helpers), Support For Learning Teachers and Social Workers.

You also told me about some of the things people help you with. There were 2 things that were mentioned by lots of you. These were feelings and emotions, and friendships.

It is really important for anyone facing difficulties to have someone they can trust and talk to. All the children and young people I spoke with had someone they could go to. Sometimes the person was a professional and sometimes it was a parent or carer.

'People need to know how to help you when you're feeling upset or bad. They've got to be happy even if you're talking to them about sad news. They need to keep positive and be good listeners.' (Beth age 11)

What's not working so well?

'There's no point in the Child's Plan if the views of young people are not heard. It doesn't matter in what way they are heard, it's a waste of time without their views; after all it's our future and we should know what's going on and have a say.' (George age 16)

'You don't get much time to think at the meetings and you never know what's going to be asked so I don't always know what to say.' (Christopher age 14)

'I would just like people to explain things to me, like why is the Children's Services Worker not working with me anymore? Also why has the Speech and Language lady stopped coming?' (Anna age 12)

'I go to the meetings which is good so people listen to me but I don't really want to go to them after school because all my friends are outside playing football; I would rather be outside playing with them.' (Gregor age 11)

'It's difficult when my teacher shouts. I don't like it when she shouts; it makes my heart beep a lot. I get really upset when she shouts.' (Harry age 7)

'I don't feel comfortable discussing sensitive issues in front of my parents at meetings.' (Freya age 16)

Some of the things you mentioned would cost no money to improve. However, the Highland Children's Forum can only make recommendations to the Highland Council and hope they will make those changes in the future.

What could make things better?

One of the things lots of you find frustrating is when people don't tell you what's going on and don't share information with you. Sometimes adults forget to share information with children and young people or don't realise how important it is to you. You told me this is especially frustrating when it involves changes to timetables or the people who work with you.

'I think the Plan was helping but not any longer. The teacher [Support For Learning] used to take me out of class for time-out every Wednesday but now that's stopped and no-one's told me why.' (Caroline age 9)

'When mum told me the teacher was changing my timetable tomorrow I was really mad. School need to ask me what I think before they change anything. If they don't give me a chance to say what I think then they really have ruined my life.' (Harry age 7)

'It would be helpful to know who the information from the Child's Plan has been shared with; then you would know who you could talk to about things.' (Christopher age 14)

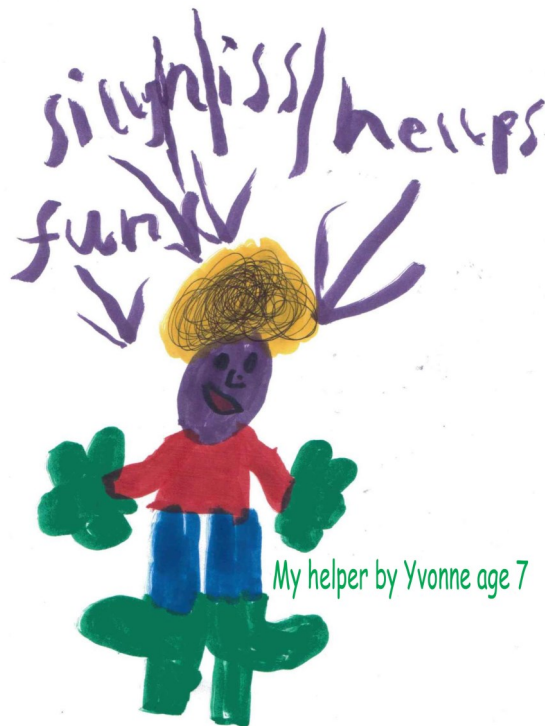
'It would be good to know who's coming to the meetings beforehand. The school nurse once brought along a student and that made me feel really uncomfortable. I should have been told they were coming and asked if I minded.' (Freya age 16)

Many of you said you would like more information about your Child's Plan. Even those of you who know you have one, and have had it explained, feel you still don't really understand what it's for. This is something the Highland Children's Forum will be recommending is developed in the future with the help of children and young people like you.

Overall most of you feel you are getting, or have had, support which helps make a difference. For some the difference is very small but this can still make things a little better. There are some of you who are still finding things difficult and there will be more information written about this in the bigger report.

Thank you for taking part in this project and allowing the Highland Children's Forum to gather your views.

When the Highland Council read this, and the main report, they will use some of the things you told me to help them decide how to make things better in the future.



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