

Highland Children's Forum

Representing Children in Need in Highland



Jack aged 11 years

Listening to Children
Speaking with Policy Makers

www.highlandchildrensforum.org

Supported by the
Scottish Executive United Voluntary Sector Fund

Highland Children's Forum

Annual Report 2006/07

Highland Children's Forum

Vision

Highland Children's Forum believes that a truly inclusive society is one where all members are valued equally and their views are sought and acted upon appropriately.

Mission

To contribute to the provision of the highest possible standards of services in the Highlands for the benefit of children in need and their families.

To work in partnership to develop the most effective methods of consultation with children in need and their families that allow them to express their views on their lives and how services affect them.

To encourage service providers to reflect upon these opinions and adjust their services accordingly.

Ambition

To see services in Highland resourced and structured to maximise the potential of children in need and their families.

To see service providers automatically incorporate the views of children in need and their families at every level of their design, development and delivery of services.

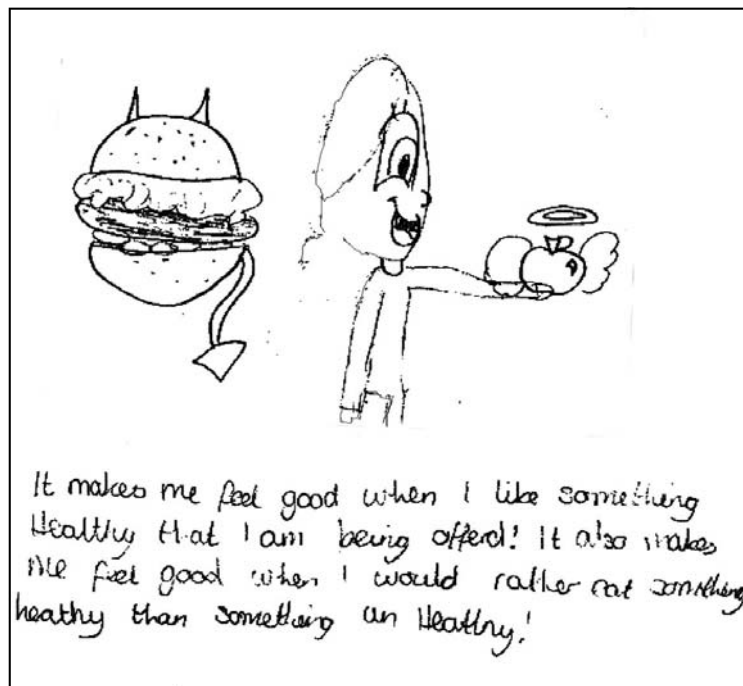
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The drawings illustrating this report were created by children and young people during consultation about making healthy life choices. Highland Children's Forum is grateful for permission to reproduce them.

Highland Children's Forum receives funding from the Joint Committee on Children and Young People of Highland and from the Unified Voluntary Sector Fund of the Scottish Executive

The printing costs of this report were met by funds from the Unified Voluntary Sector Fund.



Listening to Children - Speaking with policy makers

2006/2007 Chair's Foreword

This is the second Annual Report for the Highland Children's Forum. It's been another bumper year of activity for everyone; the management committee, the staff, and especially for all the children and families who have taken part in our various consultation projects. Detail of this work is summarised in the reports of the Children's Consultation Worker and the Development Manager. I will take this opportunity to publicly thank both members of staff most sincerely for their extremely high quality work, which shows their strong commitment to the voice of children in need. In addition to their reports, the Forum has made progress in other ways:

- Over the course of the year HCF has undergone a process of "re-branding", with a variety of children's artwork and accompanying text now being used at every available opportunity to bring attention to the validity of their contribution to service planning and design. Focus is firmly on children's views being communicated effectively to those who provide services.
- Further increases in Children's Consultation Worker hours allowing greater capacity at the heart of the Forum's work.
- The decision to use freelance Children's Consultation Workers for specific pieces of work. With in-house training these workers will enable the Forum to develop its capacity to consult children in need without the commitment of employing additional staff at this stage.
- Increased use of volunteers for general administrative work, including young people who have helped with the website.
- Staff appraisals have been undertaken for the first time and staff training needs accommodated. In addition the committee "away day" event yielded excellent results, with a renewed sense of drive from the team building and organisational planning activities.
- Monitoring the effect on services of Education Budget cuts and meeting with councillors to discuss impact assessment measures.
- The move towards a best practice protocol regarding suitable timeframes for quality consultation with children in need. Consulting children is not simple, not easy and not quick, and consulting children in need is even more complex. If it is to be done well, these factors need to be considered by service planners who have a duty to hear children's views, and sufficient advanced notice of consultation needs to be built into service planning.

These developments strengthen our ability to carry out our role - to collect and bring the voice, experience and views of children in need to children's services policy makers. The Joint Committee for Children and Young People recognises its duty to listen to that voice and it has continued to show its commitment to listening to their voice through being the main sponsor of HCF.

Thanks to everyone who has worked with and supported Highland Children's Forum over another exciting year.

Isabel Paterson, Chair

**Listening to Children - Speaking with policy
makers**

The Constitutional Objects of Highland Children's Forum

The object of the Forum is to contribute towards the provision of the highest standards of services in the Highlands [as determined by the Highland council area], for the benefit of children need [as defined in the Children (Scotland) Act 1995].

The Forum seeks to achieve its objectives by:

1. Representing and enabling the expression of the views and needs of children 0 - 19.
2. Incorporating the views of families and carers.
3. Sharing relevant information and experiences.
4. Representing the interests of individual and member organisations in a co-ordinated way to agencies for the purpose of general consultation and in specific joint future planning of service provision.
5. Identifying common concerns and taking appropriate action as agreed by members of the group (this will not include representing individual members in specific disputes).
6. Seeking funding to promote any of the above objects and related development work.

Listening to Children - Speaking with policy makers

The 2006/07 Committee

	<p>Isabel Paterson - Chair Isabel and her family live on the Black Isle. She is a freelance musician and music tutor. Isabel joined the Highland Children's Forum and its management committee in 2001, whilst working in the voluntary sector for PAMIS, working with people with profound learning disabilities and their carers. As a parent-carer herself she is passionate about the rights of children with disabilities and their families. Isabel has been Chair of the Highland Children's Forum since January 2005. Isabel sits on the Highland Adaptations and Equipment Project Team and Play Highland Committee and is a Director of CHIP+</p>
<p>Katie Adam - Treasurer Katie has worked in Finance in some form since her first employment. She states that she feels "privileged to be Treasurer of a very committed professional team" and "delighted to sign up to the positive ethos and determination of HCF to listen to and represent children's views". She has been committed to developing Quality Childcare since 1992 and is Chair of Feis a' Bhaile and Feisean Nan Gaidheal. Her other main interest and involvement with children (her family of 4 having grown up) is with Scripture Union. She works full time as North Team Manager of the S.C.M.A.</p>	
	<p>Susie Iredale, Secretary of the Highland AD/HD Support Group for the last 5 years, seeks to increase awareness and understanding of AD/HD across Public Services and voluntary organisations such as HCF and CHIP+. As mother of 2, Susie is passionate that 'Getting it Right for Every Child' becomes a reality with the vital role parents and voluntary organisations play in the process being recognised, to the benefit of all children and families in the Highlands. Susie is a Parent Representative for the AD/HD Care Pathway Team; Director and Vice Chairman of CHIP+ and a member of the Executive Committee of CHIP+; Chairman of the Patient Participation Group at the Dunedin Practice Inverness and Secretary of her sons' Scout Group Executive Committee.</p>
<p>Christian Maclean is Chief Executive of CHIP+, which provides information, support and advice throughout the Highlands to the families of children and young people with additional needs and to professionals working with them. She lives on the Black Isle with her family and has worked in the voluntary sector for 30 years, in a variety of roles but always with children and young people, their families and their communities. She is a member of the Contact a Family Scotland Advisory Committee and the Education Law Unit -User Advisory committee.</p>	

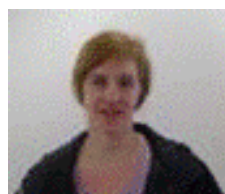
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Les Hood is Highland and Moray Services Manager with CHILDREN 1ST. He previously worked in NCH's Inverness Family Project, and has worked in services for children, young people and families for 20 years. Les works on the Highland Domestic Abuse Strategy Group, "Keeping Children Safe" and the Steering Group for the Ross and Cromarty Family Solutions.



Glyn Halksworth is currently the Manager of the Highland Carers Project. Previously he was the coordinator of the pan-Highland strategy for young carers. He has an acute awareness that not all children and families in our communities get the support they need. He believes that Highland Children's Forum provides a valuable conduit for these children and families to let services know how they want this to happen. Glyn sits on a number of national and regional committees relating to the carer agenda.

Anne Ross manages Barnardos Springboard, which provides the Throughcare Aftercare service on behalf of The Highland Council to young people aged 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ - 21 across Highland i.e. young people leaving or who have left the Local Authority care system (foster care, residential units, etc) to move to independent living. She has been involved in community work in both the public and voluntary sectors for 20 years with a focus on and commitment to children, young people and their families.



Rona Membury is involved in working for Public and Patient Involvement. She joined HCF because she felt that the focus was on the child as the core of our community, their benefits reached out to us all. Rona works on the following committees: Board member Highland Community Care Forum, member of CHIP+ Committee, local adviser to Scottish Health Council, member of SIGN patients and carers group, member of Scottish Society for Autism Alliance, Board member of Highland Print Studio, Secretary of Culloden Patient Participation Group, Co - chair of Inverness 'Same As You' Local Implementation Group and a member of the Highland Health Voices Network

Sally Ann Stephen is a mother to 3 children. Her eldest, Kerry is nearly 6 years old and has profound learning and physical disabilities and severe epilepsy. She believes in being a strong advocate for the rights of children with sensory and physical disabilities. She is a qualified children's nurse and worked in various parts of the world prior to the arrival of her first child.



Listening to Children - Speaking with policy makers

Listening to Children - The work of the Children's Consultation Worker (CCW)

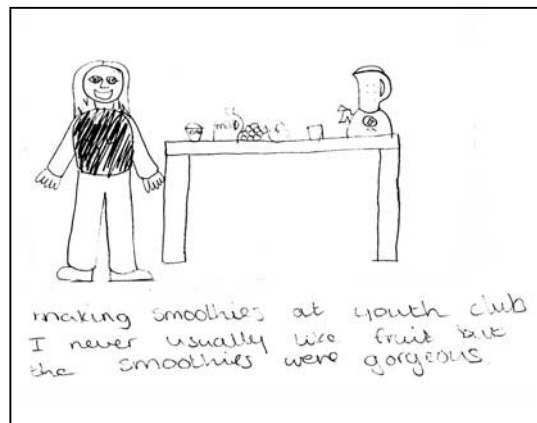
The first year of the For Highland's Children 2 consultation project, consulting with over 250 children/young people about their experience of children's services, was written up in a report called "Are We There Yet?" This report has been widely distributed in Highland and beyond, and has generally been well received. As it is the interim report on the first year of a three year project, the findings are only preliminary. The report is available on the HCF website. Gillian was invited to do a presentation for the Joint Committee for Children and Young People on the report. Interest was expressed in making an exhibition of the children's art work as part of the 2007 Year of Culture. Funding for this has yet to be secured.

The NHS Advisory Group, a group of young people from all over Scotland who advise the NHS on youth issues, critiqued the report and were very positive about it. They are interested in working with a group of HCF young people when designing the Action Framework for Health in a youth friendly format.

The consultation project is ongoing and the next interim report will look at the qualitative information gained from the

discussions with the children and young people as well as their drawings and comments. The final year of consultations and the full report will be completed early next year in order to inform the evaluation of For Highland's Children 2 and the design of For Highland's Children 3.

Following on from the Orchard report (last year) HCF was invited to involve some young people and some parents in the



Social Work inspection. 3 events were held; the SW inspection team visited the Orchard and met with children and young people who had taken part in the consultation there, parents were invited to meet with some of the SW inspection team at the Council Chamber and some young people with physical disability met with inspectors, showed a video made by one of them and talked about how they had been involved with consultation about services.

Listening to Children - Speaking with policy makers



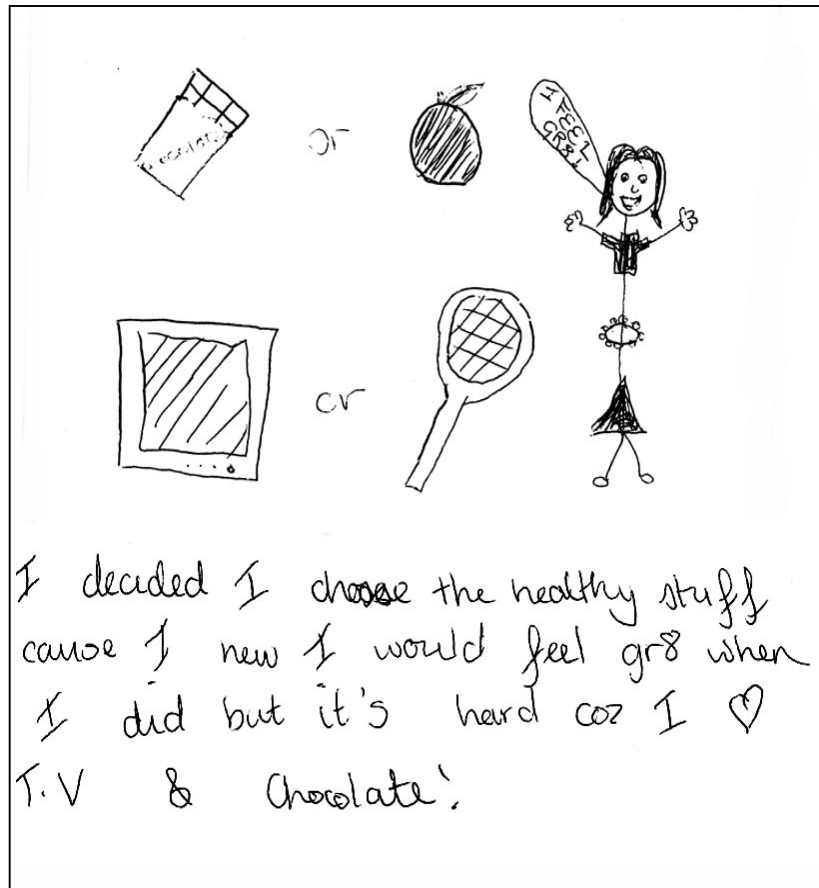
This year the CCW has been involved with a multi-agency project on transition in to adulthood for young people with additional support needs. This has been a very exciting and somewhat challenging project with many of the young people choosing to tell their story through video. As other agencies have also been consulting with young people, a much larger number of young people have been involved than HCF could have managed on its own. The enormous task now begins of putting all the information together in a way that can usefully inform the new guidelines for transition, provide information for young people coming up to transition in years to come and also provide an evaluation of transition as a process for both the Highland Council and Scottish Executive. There will be a conference later in the year where all the information and resulting recommendations for practice will be presented.

HCF has continued to be involved with the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) process by organising parent consultation events. Further opportunities to consult with young people were not forthcoming, but the FHC 2 consultation project has a lot of relevant information which is being made available to the GIRFEC team.

HCF was commissioned by Rocket Science to carry out a short consultation with children and young people who use specialist children's health services and their parents. This report contributed to the national consultation carried out by Rocket Science which informed the development of the Action for Health Framework. Unfortunately the tight timescale of this project meant that numbers were limited to 7 children and 14 parents, with only one young person from a remote rural area taking part. It is hoped that HCF will be involved earlier in any national consultations in the future.

The Office of Disabilities Issues ran a national consultation on the effectiveness of the Disability Discrimination Act. Again the late notice to HCF of this consultation meant that our contribution was limited to sharing the consultation documentation with other bodies and encouraging their response.

Listening to Children - Speaking with policy makers



The draft "Children's Services (Scotland) Bill" was out for consultation in the early part of the year. HCF produced a summary of the draft Bill and this was widely distributed for consultation with children and young people and with their parents. The replies received were collated and returned to the Scottish Executive.

HCF was asked to be involved in the consultation with children and young people about the Local Authority Disability Equality Scheme (DES).

However, again not enough notice was given and the 3 week time scale meant that real consultation was not possible. The DES requires a commitment from the Local Authority to consult and involve children and young people in the ongoing development of the DES and HCF will do its best to see that this occurs.

HCF has been making contact with Highland Youth Voice and the CCW will do a workshop at the next Youth Voice event to encourage participation and interest in disability issues.

Speaking with policy makers - The work of the Development Manager

The Development Manager's role is to make the Forum - Viable, Visible and Valued. These three elements are interlinked tightly.

The access to the authentic voice of children in need achieved by the Children's Consultation Worker is the unique resource that the Development Manager brings to the development of children's services in strategic committees. Making this evidence visible to policy makers makes the Forum valued both as a partner and representative body and in turn this value supports the Forum's viability.

Viable

Negotiations with the Joint Committee resulted in an increased allocation which consolidated the funding for the Consultation Project and general consultation activity. Office costs and core funding were maintained through money drawn down from the Unified Voluntary Sector Fund. The Development Manager acted as the facilitator for the partnership of charities that operated out of the Lotland Street offices. Despite initial indications that the partnership would not receive further funding

from the Scottish Executive the partnership successfully submitted a three year funding bid to the Executive. This funding stream will support HCF's and its partner's office costs until March 2010.



Visible

The Forum was represented by its Development Manager at some 30 meetings of strategic committees dealing with children's and young people's services in Highland. He also secured a place for HCF on the National Children's Voluntary Organisations Forum which meets with the Deputy Minister for Education and Young People. The Development Manager has represented the Forum at the Scottish Health Council

consultation, Youth Voice and the NHS Scotland Specialist Children's Services Consultation. Following on from the NHS Scotland Specialist Children's Services Consultation he negotiated a contract from the commercial consultation provider, Rocket Science, to undertake supplementary work for the national process.

Partnership work with the Highland Community Care Forum and CHIP+ continues and the Development Manager attended information days and spoke at meetings of Community Care Forums across Highland.

Communication was enhanced by the creation, along with the Children's Consultation Worker, of the Forum's website and its continued development together with quarterly bulletins. HCF has a number of condition specific groups as members and these have assisted with the distribution of the bulletin to their individual members. This has given the bulletin a circulation of up to 400 copies per issue.

The year ended with HCF's first "political" campaign - "What are your resolutions for children in need in Highland in 2007?" A series of cards and letters were sent to all Highland candidates in both the local and Holyrood elections. Over 20 candidates

posted statements on their intentions on the HCF website.



Valued

As the Children's Consultation Workers' reports circulated more widely across the statutory sector the Forum received an increasing number of invitations to join committees and working groups. These were accepted where they fitted with the strategic objectives of the Forum and capacity existed to appropriately contribute to them. Participation in these groups allowed the voice of children in need to be exposed to an ever increasing audience.

The Development Manager has worked with the membership of

Youth Voice to encourage them to expand their activities to actively seek the inclusion of children and young people with additional needs. This work has led to an invitation to the Children's Consultation Worker to undertake training with them on how they can better engage with the young people HCF seeks to represent.

The Development Manager was a founder member of the Highland Voluntary Sector Forum and worked on the group that developed the Highland Voluntary Sector Manifesto securing coverage of children's issues in it.

The Manager acted as a facilitator between parent carers in Portree and the Head of Education. The meetings were intended to improve communications and help parent carers understand and contribute to the improvement processes in place following the HMIe inspection of Portree High School.

The Forum is willing to engage with politicians on the national scene and in August 2006 the Development Manager organised a meeting between George Lyon

MSP, the Deputy Minister for Finance, Public Service Reform and Parliamentary Business, parent carers and partner organisations.



In a letter following the meeting the Deputy Minister stated:

"... I very much appreciated the candour and positive approach shown during the discussion we had. As I said at the time, our ambition is to ensure the delivery of world class services built around the people who use them and need them: the opportunity to engage with the Forum has helped that understanding greatly."

Financial Report

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st March 2007

	Core	Projects	UVSF	2007 Total	16 months to 31 March 2006 £
INCOME					
Grants	40,024	8,000	12,431	60,456	57,057
Donations	-	-	-	-	3,593
Bank Interest	801	-	-	801	1,012
Total Income	40,825	8,000	12,431	61,256	61,662
EXPENDITURE					
Conference/Training	565	-	-	565	2,181
Advertising	-	-	1,445	1,445	-
Equipment	-	-	-	-	-
Administration	27	-	3,238	3,265	5,690
Rent and Electricity	-	-	6,374	6,374	10,222
Telephone	-	-	1,333	1,333	1,845
Salaries	38,002	7,785	-	45,787	46,391
Travel	1,563	1,367	-	2,930	2,841
Independent Examination	-	-	262	262	262
Total Expenditure	40,157	9,152	12,652	61,961	69,432
Deficit for Period	663	(1,152)	(221)	(705)	(7,770)

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2007

	2007 £	2006 £
Current Assets		
Bank	31,199	31,612
Debtors	10	403
Current Liabilities		
Creditors	600	700
Net Assets	30,609	31,315
Reserves		
Bal B/F	31,315	39,085
Deficit for Period	(706)	(7,770)
Bal C/F	30,609	31,315

Treasurer: Katie Adam

Dated

18th May, 2007

Independent Examiners Report

I have prepared the attached Statement of Accounts from the accounting records, information and explanations supplied and confirm that they are in accordance therewith.

Independent Examiner: Andrew Callanan

Date

18th May, 2007

Listening to Children - Speaking with policy makers

Staff Profiles

Gillian Newman - Children's Consultation Worker



Gillian joined HCF in 2004 with over 16 years experience in child care, from child minder through

various years of study to managing the family centre, Cromarty Action for Young People, for 4 years. Since joining HCF she has completed a B.A. in Child and Youth Studies and is about to embark upon her honours studies. She is married and parent to a large grown up family with only her youngest daughter still living at home. She has one grandchild. She is active in community causes in Cromarty.

Calum Munro - Development Manager



Calum joined HCF in 2004 after a 28 year career in the Fire Service. During his career he successively had strategic responsibility for Training, Fire Safety and Technical Services.

He was the co-founder and is the current Organising Secretary of Highland Cross [www.highlandcross.co.uk] a charity that has raised over two million pounds for social and medical causes in Highland over the past 25 years. He is a Director of the Council for Voluntary Services Inverness. He tries to keep himself fit by cycling and by jogging after his dog. He is married with three "grown up" children.

Listening to Children - Speaking with policy makers

**Highland Children's Forum
Unit 6
15 Lotland Street,
Inverness
IV1 1 ST
01463 223000**

**gillian@highlandchildrensforum.org
or**

calum.munrohcf@btconnect.com

www.highlandchildrensforum.org

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