

April 2008 Bulletin

Highland Children's Forum

Representing Children in Need in Highland



Listening to Children
Speaking with Policy Makers
www.highlandchildrensforum.org Supported by the Scottish Executive Unified Voluntary Sector Fund

"Asking me if I need any help. I felt better" Oliver aged 10 years

The printing costs of this bulletin were met from a Scottish Government Unified Voluntary Fund grant

"Are We There Yet?" Second Interim Report Published

The second report in the series has now been published and is available as a download from the Children's Forum website

www.highlandchildrensforum.org

Children's Forum members can obtain a printed copy free of charge by contacting the office. Other parties can obtain copies for a fee of £5 - cheques made payable to "Highland Children's Forum"

The next page is a copy of the Conclusion page of the report.

A key theme from the participants was "What are policy makers doing with our views?"

This message has been posed to all policy makers who have received a copy and Children's Forum staff have raised the question at Joint Committee events and at the Holyrood Cross Party Group on Children and Young People. Staff will be returning to policy makers to press the point.

CONCLUSION

It is hoped that in making this report about the qualitative information from C&YP, these windows in to C&YP's anecdotal experience will be valuable in influencing the evaluation and planning of services, along with the more measurable quantitative information provided by UHI and the final report from this study.

These experiences show that while many C&YP are indeed enjoying the experience of growing up safe, nurtured, healthy, active, achieving, respected, responsible and included in Highland, a small number of C&YP have a significantly different experience.

The C&YP recognised the huge impact that not having these needs met would have on a person's behaviour, achievement, ability and well being. Having someone available to speak to about confidential matters was seen as being so important, but teachers while available were not always the people C&YP wanted to talk to. Alternatives should be available and advertised to the C&YP.

C&YP also recognise that as

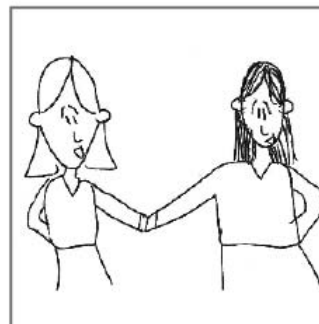
well as helping the C or YP themselves, some families may need support and help in meeting the needs of their C or YP.

C&YP can see that where adults do not listen but make assumptions, blame, stereotype or have double standards (such as being able to interrupt C&YP but not being interrupted by them) that this is not respectful of C&YP and will not bring about C&YP's respect and responsibility.

When considering issues such as bullying, exclusion from friends and peer pressure, some C&YP want to be able to face these issues themselves, as often no one else is available at the point of need. Schemes which empower C&YP to deal with these problems themselves seem well received and perhaps should be built upon.

C&YP would like to gain more life skills in order to take more responsibility for themselves. Information about life skills/choices needs to be presented in an interesting way.

C&YP wish to see improvement of facilities to encourage their being active and being able to



"Somebody including me and making me trust them more."

Angela

enjoy outdoors. Transport and cost are still barriers to inclusion and being active.

Listening to C&YP, supporting them, encouraging them, treating them with respect and recognising their achievements will go a long way to meeting their needs. This in turn will support our C&YP being enabled to be responsible and achieve their potential.

C&YP taking part in this project have been very responsible and thoughtful in their contributions and have given a valuable insight in to growing up in Highland and a debt of thanks is owed to them for their willingness to share this information. It is hoped respect can be shown to them in actions taken as a result of their contributions.

"Listen to Us!

Gillian has been working with the young people in Highland Youth Voice to explore how they can better access the views of children and young people with additional needs in the communities that they represent.

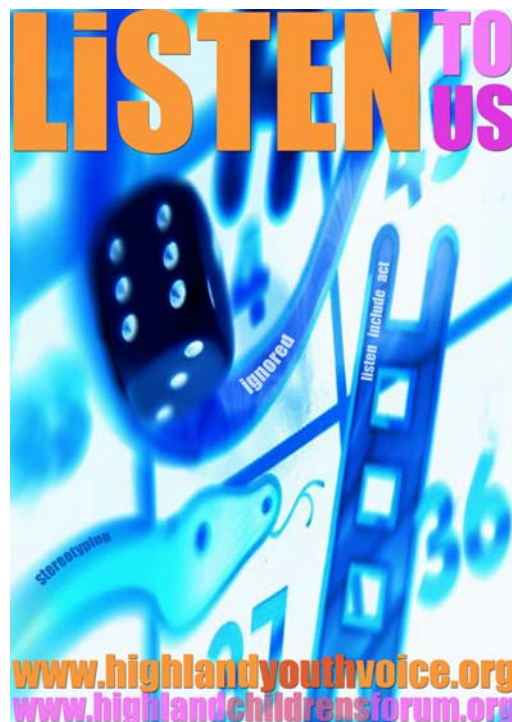
The Executive of Highland Youth Voice have worked with Gillian to develop a poster campaign based on the snakes and ladders chart that the Youth Voice young people created and displayed at the international "Building Better Childhoods" Conference in Aviemore last year. A second poster based on a scrabble board has also been designed. The posters will be used to make NHS and Council staff aware of their need to consult young people.



Picture courtesy of Mike Jones Highland Council

Gillian and young people from the Executive launched the posters

at the Highland Apprentice Day dinner. Young people had spent a day shadowing senior officers of NHS and the Council to see how they worked and to give them a young person's perspective.



Whole School Evaluation

Gillian is also working on a project at Fortrose Academy on a whole school evaluation on the school's bullying policy.

It is hoped that the lessons from the work will be shared with all schools in Highland to show how young people can be properly involved in evaluating schools.

**Advance notice of the
Annual General Meeting of Highland Children's Forum**

Tuesday 10th June 2008

At

7.30pm

In

The Chapel Room, Inshes Church, Inverness

[along from Tesco and opposite the Matalan Shop complex]

Please come along to discuss and direct the activities of the Children's Forum and support the election of the new Committee. Members seeking election to the Committee should contact Calum at the Children's Forum Office for information or see the notice on the "News" page of the website.

It's My Journey

It's My Journey - a report written from a consultation with young people with additional support needs during the transition from school and children's services into adulthood, is now available. It's My Journey was a multi-agency project involving the Children's Forum, the Highland Council and Barnardo's.

The consultation for this report was carried out to allow the experience of young people in transition to influence the writing of the new transitions

guidelines to accompany the new transitions protocol. The young people involved used a variety of media to tell their personal stories of transition. These stories are powerful and it was felt that they could stand alone in a report as well as influence the guidelines. The report gives insight in to what transition is like for young people but the young people were also able to make clear the things people could do to help that process. Soft copies will be available on the Children's Forum website shortly. Hard copies can be obtained from the Forum office.

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