

# Children's Services

## Service Overview

Highland Council is the lead agency for the delivery of children's services. The Care and Learning Service brings together the management of children's health services, social care and education.

All agencies including the Highland Council, Care and Learning Service; National Health Service Highland (NHS); Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA); Police Scotland and third sector partners collaborate to achieve our vision that:

All Highlands Children have the best possible start in life; enjoy being young; and are supported to develop as confident, capable and resilient, to fully maximise their potential.

## Council Performance

For Highlands Children 4 (FHC4) is the Children's Service Plan for the Care and Learning Service, and incorporates, as far as possible, the contribution of children's services delivered by National Health Service Highland (NHS).

The plan provides a performance framework for planning. The framework articulates the mechanism agreed for evaluating and measuring outcomes, responsibilities and timescales.

The cost per primary school pupil indicator is in the bottom quartile nationally at £5,241 compared to Scottish average of £4,750. The cost per pupil reflects our rurality; with a large number of small schools and a higher pupil/teacher ratio as a consequence. Other likely factors include Devolved School Management and budget structures in different authorities (for example, this year in Highland, printing budgets are in schools and in previous years that was not the case).

The cost per secondary school pupil is in the bottom quartile nationally at £7,456 compared to Scottish average of £6,523. Only the Island Authorities and Aberdeen City have higher costs for secondary pupils.

Cost per pre-school education registration remains broadly unchanged in recent years.

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Level 6 attainment by all children remains a very positive picture with improvement in recent years. However, there is still some variation across schools and departments in Highland which both the senior management teams and the Quality Improvement Team are challenging.

The SCQF Level 6 attainment by children from deprived backgrounds shows our least affluent pupils achieve less well than the national picture. Therefore we need to ensure that work is undertaken to close our attainment gap linked to deprivation (i.e. the link between pupil performance and deprivation). Closing the "attainment gap" continues to be a priority in Highland.

The percentage of adults satisfied with schools reduced from 88% to 79%. The Scottish average is 81% and the Council is ranked mid-range in Scotland. It should be noted that data is drawn from the Scottish Household Survey (SHS) and there are concerns over the sample size and therefore in the confidence that the result reflect fully Highland views. Our own survey shows slightly improving satisfaction over time in terms of net satisfaction (those satisfied less those dissatisfied). Although this is a different measure we reported a 9% increase in net satisfaction in 2014 which is not reflected in the national survey.

Our pupils entering positive destinations in Highland overall is in line with its virtual comparator and the national picture regarding overall positive destinations. This comparator is 'Insight' which is a National dashboard to measure school and Authority performance in four key areas: literacy and numeracy, attainment for all, attainment versus deprivation and leaver destinations. Rather than compare data with actual Authorities or schools with broadly similar characteristics, Insight creates a "virtual comparator". This is done by selecting four key characteristics which go into the make up an Authority or school: gender balance; staying-on rate; percentage of time spent in mainstream; and deprivation based upon the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). From these four areas Insight matches ten pupils from around Scotland to every one of the pupils in Highland and treats this matched group as the virtual school or Authority.

There remains a significantly higher proportion of young people entering employment relative to Highland's virtual comparator and the National picture. Consequently there is a lower percentage entering Higher Education, Further Education or Training.

CHN8a – This reflects the continued efforts to combine value for money with better outcomes for children. We have in place a contract with a provider which has reduced reliance on more expensive spot-purchased placements.

CHN8b – The Highland rates paid to foster carers are relatively low and had not been increased for 3 years. They have now been reviewed and increased to aid recruitment and retention of carers.

CHN9 – Highland has a high percentage of Looked After young people placed in residential care, rather than in foster care or at home. This is being addressed.

### **What the Council is doing to improve services**

Within our service plan 'For Highlands Children 4' an improvement framework has been developed which details how services in Highland will be maintained, strengthened and developed to ensure that all of Highland's children are:

- Safe
- Healthy
- Achieving
- Nurtured
- Active
- Respected and responsible
- Included

The achievement of better outcomes for Highlands's children, their families and the communities in which they live is the overarching objective for children's services.

The fourteen outcomes detailed in 'For Highlands Children 4' are centred on the wellbeing indicators.

Each improvement Group and operational team has an Improvement plan with a common format. The plans show all current improvement priorities centred on the Key outcomes. The plans are dynamic and monitored and updated regularly. Each plan is formally evaluated on an annual basis. Current Improvement plans for each Improvement group are maintained on the For Highlands Children Website (<http://www.forhighlandchildren.org/>).

### **How the public can get involved**

For Highlands Children 4 sets out a number of priorities to ensure we engage with and support the public across a range of policy areas and in service provision. This is achieved through wide engagement on how effective our services are including engagement events and audit. Our self-evaluative processes are centred on evidencing the views of children and young people making sure their voices are heard. This is achieved through engagement. Our priorities are:

- Children, young people and families are listened to carefully and improvement is determined by understanding their views, wishes, and expectations.
- Children, young people and families are treated in a fair and inclusive manner respecting diversity and difference.
- Children, young people and families are included meaningfully in processes and decisions about their lives and the help they need.
- Children, young people and families are enabled to tell us what they think about services
- Engagement with children, young people, families and other stakeholders clearly shapes our policies and informs our plans.
- Consultation with children, young people and families regarding our policies, plans and services are effective

Services actively promote multi-culturalism, support the implementation of the Fairer Highland Plan ([http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/3536/a\\_fairer\\_highland\\_leaflet](http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/3536/a_fairer_highland_leaflet)). This is the Highland Council's Equality Plan. A Fairer Highland presents our equality priorities during 2012 – 2017 including the duties of the Equalities Act 2010, ensuring that services users are treated fairly and with respect.

We measure our progress openly, report on it publicly and listen to communities to ensure we are delivering services that are matched to the needs of children, their families and the communities in which they live. All current improvement plans are on the For Highlands children website at <http://www.forhighlandschildren.org>. The plans details a number of ways in which we are working to improve public engagement and consultation.

Theme	Indicator Code	SPI - Benchmark	FY 12/13	12/13 Rank	FY 13/14	13/14 Rank
Children's Services	CHN1	Cost per primary school pupil - CHN1	£5,113.73	24	£5,240.72	25
	CHN2	Cost per secondary school pupil - CHN2	£7,143.15	28	£7,456.94	27
	CHN3	Cost per pre-school education registration - CHN3	£2,296.21	4	£2,259.67	3
	CHN4	SCQF Level 5 attainment by all children - CHN4	42%	10	tbc	tbc
	CHN5	SCQF Level 6 attainment by all children - CHN5	26%	12	27.7%	15
	CHN6	SCQF Level 5 attainment by children from deprived backgrounds - CHN6	19.5%	12	tbc	Tbc
	CHN7	SCQF Level 6 attainment by children from deprived backgrounds - CHN7	9.5%	15	11.8%	17
	CHN8a	Gross cost per bed/wk Children's Res units - CHN8a	£3,628.97	28	£2,846.58	14
	CHN8b	Cost of LAC per child per week - community - CHN8b	£208.39	9	£216.03	11
	CHN9	% of LAC in the community - CHN9	84.0%	30	81.0%	30
	CHN10	% adults satisfied - schools - CHN10	88%	9	79%	22
CHN11	Pupils entering positive destinations - CHN11	93.1%	11	92.7%	16	

For more information about our service plan and performance or further information on getting involved in helping to improve our services, please contact us on:

**01349 886606**

Or contact us by email: [www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk)