

**The Highland Council**  
**ADULT & CHILDREN SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**19 February 2014**

Agenda Item	3ii.
Report No	ACS/17/14

**CHIP+: 20 Years On**

**Report by Director of Health & Social Care**

**Summary**

The report introduces a presentation by Christian MacLean, the Chief Officer of CHIP+, to celebrate the organisation's 20-year anniversary, focussing on the key strands of the charity's work over the past 20 years, and the issues it currently faces.

**1. Background**

- 1.1 Having a child with additional needs of any kind, can be a lonely and often bewildering experience, and parent/carers often speak of feeling powerless and isolated. CHIP+ was started in 1993 by a group of parent/carers and representatives of organisations working with children with disabilities throughout Highland. Together, they recognised the need for good quality and easily accessible information for both parents and professionals.
- 1.2 From its first year, with one staff member answering 103 enquiries from a base in Drummond School, CHIP+'s 4 staff now work from offices in the Birnie Centre and the Pines, answering 1200 enquiries a year from throughout Highland. The organisation also provides support to families at meetings, runs training workshops and a free library, and produces a newsletter and a series of information packs.
- 1.3 CHIP+ has continued to work closely with parent/carers and partner organisations, who now oversee its work through the Board of Directors. Although the underlying values and aims remain the same, the focus of CHIP+ enquiries has shifted over the years with a particular move towards Education-related enquires since the introduction of the Additional Support for Learning legislation in 2004.
- 1.4 At that point CHIP+ was given additional funding from The Highland Council and NHS Highland through an SLA, to develop its work as a one-stop shop for all enquiries relating to children and young people with Additional Support Needs, and since then the proportion of Education related enquires has risen to become the major focus of its work. The basis of the work in this area, is that early intervention in situations of misunderstanding or conflict, or at times of particular stress such as Transition, can prevent escalation of difficulties

and the resulting expense, time and distress experienced by the family and most of all by the child.

- 1.5 CHIP+'s most recent evaluation of service users found that a sense of isolation was the most frequently expressed concern. The need to find innovative ways of meeting this need is one of the issues currently facing CHIP; the other being the increasing pressure on the service from the growing number of very complex enquiries, often involving parent/carers in distress over a range of difficult situations.
- 1.6 Building on its 20 years' experience, CHIP+ continues to work with service users and partner organisations to meet these challenges and to continue to develop its service.

### **Recommendation**

The Committee is asked to consider and comment on the issues raised in the presentation.

Bill Alexander

Designation: Director of Health & Social Care

Date: 9 February 2014

Author: Bill Alexander, Director of Health and Social Care