

Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee – 19 August 2026 Service Achievements

1. Comraich From Home Café – Celebrating Community, Culture and Collaboration

On 18 June, the *From Home Café* welcomed members of the public to the Capstone Centre on Alness High Street, marking a significant achievement in community engagement and partnership working. Developed through the collaboration of a wide range of agencies and partners, the event showcased the positive impact that can be achieved when communities come together around a shared purpose. Preparations included sourcing authentic ingredients from Eritrean and Somali suppliers, with partners travelling as far as Glasgow to support the young people's vision for the event.

The café attracted well over 100 local residents throughout the day, creating a vibrant and inclusive community gathering that celebrated culture, food, music and art. Visitors enjoyed a rich programme of activities and had the opportunity to learn more about the diverse backgrounds and experiences of the young people involved.

Central to the success of the event were the young people from Comraich, whose enthusiasm, commitment and leadership transformed the concept into a reality. Over several weeks they worked tirelessly to plan and deliver every aspect of the day. They developed the event programme, selected music and artwork that reflected their cultures and experiences of home, created paintings, and even composed an original song specifically for the occasion. The young people also shared traditional recipes and customs, designed promotional materials including posters and invitations, and chose the event's name, *From Home*.

On the day itself, the young people took responsibility for preparing and serving the food, welcoming guests and ensuring everyone felt comfortable and included. Their pride in sharing their cultures and traditions was evident throughout the event, helping to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere for all who attended. As the day progressed, more young people became actively involved, demonstrating growing confidence, ownership and a strong sense of community participation.

The positive impact of the event was reflected in the feedback received from attendees, many of whom left messages of encouragement, support and advice on a "Tree of Knowledge" created for the occasion. The young people themselves described the event as one of their best experiences and expressed enthusiasm for future *From Home* events.

The success of the *From Home Café* highlights the power of partnership working, community connection and cultural celebration. It stands as an excellent example of how collaboration, kindness and inclusion can strengthen communities, build confidence among young people, and promote understanding across diverse groups.

The event demonstrated the very best of Highland communities and the significant outcomes that can be achieved when people work together towards a common goal.



2. Publication of Angus the Bear's First Day at School

Angus is a real teddy bear who lives with his best friend Hayley in the Highlands of Scotland. He was created to help start conversations about the experiences of autistic young people and to support greater inclusion across our communities.

This story was developed by young people involved in the Inspire Highland project, supported and delivered by Inspiring Young Voices. Working alongside writer Jen Hadfield and illustrator Katie Wilson, they shaped Angus's first day at school based on their own lived experiences. The result is a gentle, engaging story that offers insight into some of the challenges faced in new or unfamiliar environments.

Inspiring Young Voices are sending a printed copy to every primary school and library in the Highlands as a free resource, and we hope it may support classroom discussions, assemblies, or community activities around understanding, empathy, and inclusion.

You can find out more at [Angus The Bear - Autism Awareness Book - Inspiring Young Voices](#)

Inspire Highland, established in 2018 in response to young people with disabilities and additional support needs expressing a need to have their voices heard, is a creative, dynamic, youth-led initiative that promotes the rights, participation and inclusion of Young People under 25 who face additional challenges in their lives. This work has been possible with support from the National Lottery Young Start Fund, the Highland Council, a Henry Duncan Grant and the Highland Cross.

3. First 'Home, Heart and Hoolie' event hailed a success for Highland young people and families

Around 100 children, young people, and family members came together at Inverness's Northern Meeting Park on 28 July for the first 'Home, Heart and Hoolie' event – a Highland Games with a difference which celebrated inclusion, wellbeing and community spirit.

Organised by The Highland Council and delivered in partnership with High Life Highland, the event was supported through the sportscotland Summer of Sport programme.

The invitation-only event provided a fun, welcoming and accessible afternoon for care experienced children and young people, young carers, children and young people with disabilities and additional support needs, minority ethnic families, unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people and families experiencing poverty, social isolation or other vulnerabilities.

The event brought together children, young people and families supported by Highland Council services, creating opportunities to build friendships, strengthen community connections and enjoy a range of free activities in a safe and supportive environment.

Participants enjoyed a packed programme of entertainment and activities inspired by traditional Highland Games, including toss the caber, 'welly wanging' and tug of war. There were also opportunities to take part in sessions led by Cheryl's Highland Dancers, enjoy inflatable activities, try accessible games and challenges, meet Scottish Fire and Rescue Service personnel, and learn about ferrets through a supervised educational display!

Home, Heart & Hoolie was made possible through partnership working between The Highland Council, High Life Highland and a range of partner organisations and volunteers who worked together to deliver the event.

Chair of The Highland Council's Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee, Councillor David Fraser, said:

"I was delighted that around 100 participants took part in the Home, Heart & Hoolie celebration. The event focussed on inclusion, community spirit and the importance of creating opportunities for all children, young people and families to come together, have fun and make lasting memories.

"All those who took part had the opportunity to enjoy the activities, build new friendships and take part in an event designed to ensure everyone felt welcome and included.

Organisers hope the success of this year's event will provide the foundation for Home, Heart & Hoolie to become a lasting annual celebration, showcasing the positive work taking place across Highland to support children, young people and families and ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to participate, connect and thrive within their communities



Above: Young people have a go at the toss the caber activity.

(Fiona Duncan, Chief Social Work Officer & Chief Officer)