

chip+

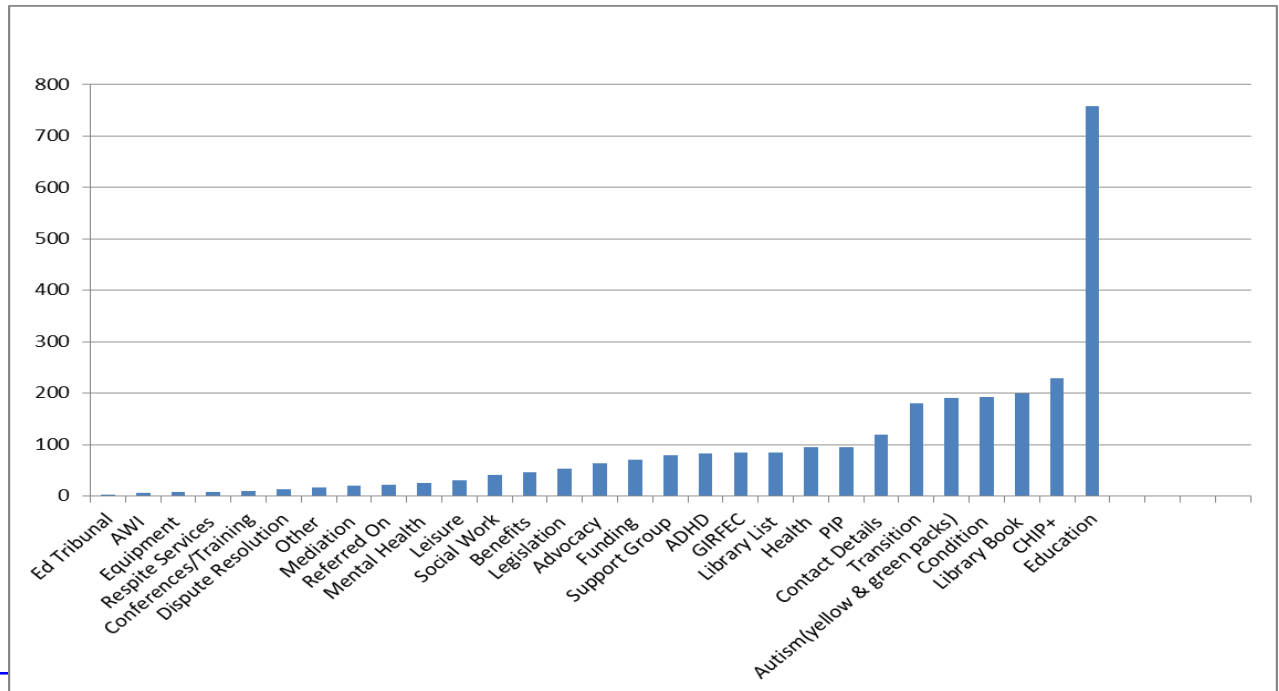
Children in the Highlands Information Point



Annual Report 2014-2015

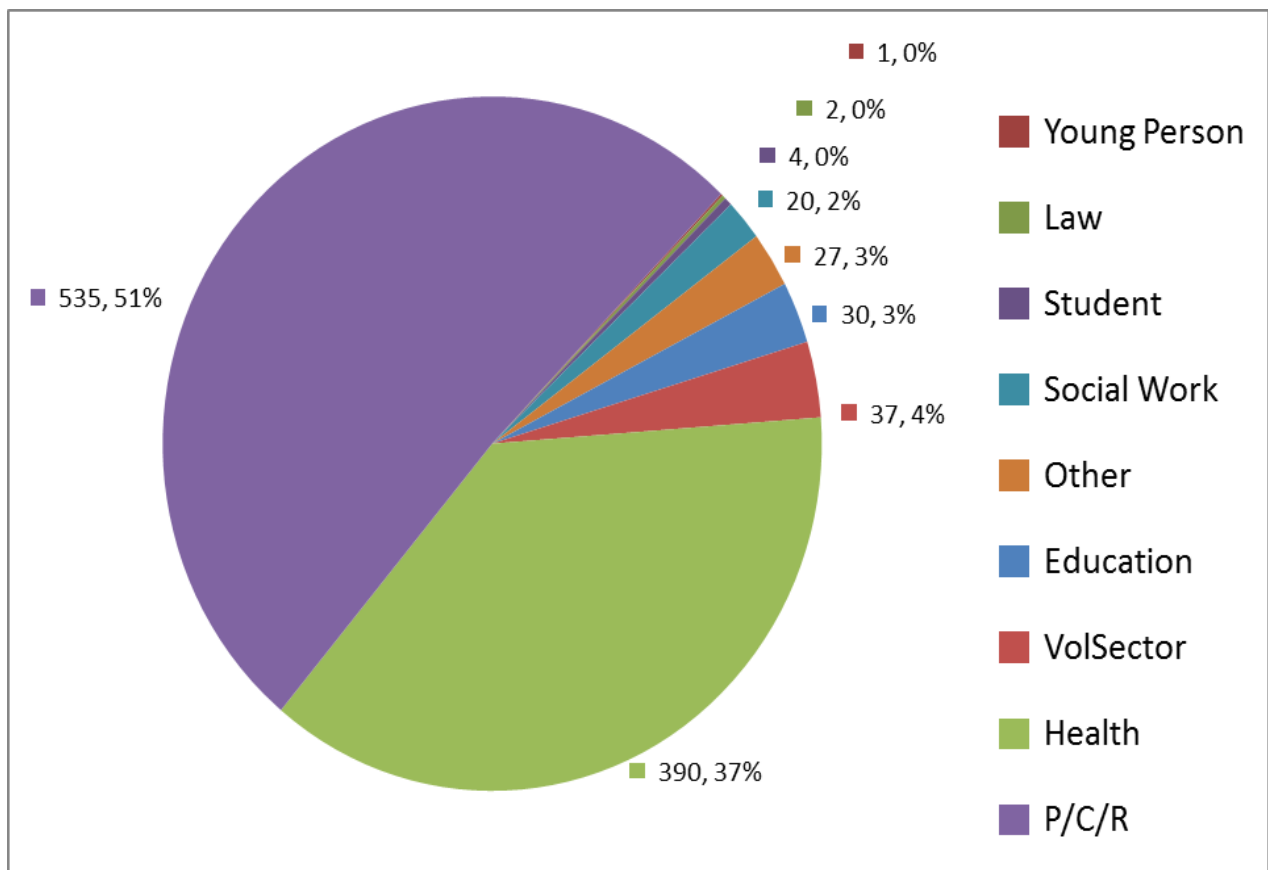
CHIP+ provides information, support and advice to the families and carers of children with additional support needs and to the professionals who support them.

Type of Information Requested



AWI = Adults with Incapacity/Guardianship

Category of Enquirers



Note: First figure is the number of enquiries CHIP+ received for the year from that category of enquirer. Second figure is the percentage of enquiries from that category. So for example CHIP+ had 535 enquiries from Parents/Carers & Relatives in 2014/15 which represents 51% of all enquiries.

Annual Report 2014 - 2015

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Front cover photo was taken at the CHIP+ 20th Birthday party at Drummond School in 2013.

Back cover photo is the CHIP+ stall at the Inverness Royal Academy for the Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI).

CHIP+ gratefully acknowledges the funding it receives from the Highland Council and NHS Highland.

MINUTES OF CHIP+ ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD ON THURSDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2014 AT 1.30pm

AT THE PINES, DRUMMOND ROAD, INVERNESS

PRESENT :-Gillian Newman (Chairperson/Chip+ Director), Karen Ross (Chip+Director), Marion McNeil (Chip+Director), Sue Miller (Chip+Director), Duncan Finlayson (Chip+Director), Wendy Kelsey (Chip+Director).

Karen Anderson (Parent/Carer), Tracey Smith (Parent/Carer), R Cochrane (Parent/Carer), A Kenton (Parent/Carer), Karen Sellers (Parent/Carer), Rebecca Huxtable-Smith (Parent/Carer), Louise Kerr (Parent/Carer), Donald MacLeod (Parent/Carer and Guest Speaker), Julia Sinclair (Grandparent/Carer), Karen Kelbie (Chip+), Karen MacKnight (Chip+), Catherine Louttit (Chip+), Christian MacLean (Chip+), Laura Fiddes (Safe, Strong + Free), Raymond Smart (Sight Action), Yvonne Robbins (CHAS at Home), Alison Footitt (NAS), Marion Fraser (Home Start), Mary Clark (Chip+Member), Elaine Adams (Connecting Carers).

APOLOGIES:-Calum Munro(HCF), Suzanne Brown (Highland Brain Injury Association), Barrie Forbes (Highland Council), Kathleen Murray, Sue Murray, Alison Wright (Lochaber Hope), Marea Foulis (Highland Council), Helen Allen (Family Fund), Carol Grant, Bernadette Cairns (Highland Council), Isabel Paterson, Marion Rennie, Silvie Mackenzie, Jaci Douglas (Councillor), Kath Nicolson, Liz Shannon.

Gillian Newman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1.	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS AGM (12.9.13) The Minutes of the previous AGM were read and approved. Proposed by: Rebecca Smith Seconded by: : Karen Ross
2.	MATTERS ARISING There were no matters arising.
3.	CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT/ANNUAL REPORT <p>The Annual Report for 2013-2014 was circulated prior to the meeting. Gillian informed the meeting that she had taken up the position of Chair for one year only and was standing down at this meeting.</p> <p>Although it has been a very tough year for Chip+ with many challenges to face, it has also been an inspiring year. She considered it a privilege to have been involved in Chip+'s amazing work with families and carers in Highland which continues quietly through all the ups and downs. Financial pressures had been a major issue throughout the year, and she paid tribute to staff for their cheerful and professional work under this pressure. Despite these constraints there have been interesting developments with sub-groups of Directors, staff and carers considering Fundraising, the use of volunteers and Social Enterprise. Gillian thanked the Board of Directors for their support and contribution to ongoing work and to new developments over the past challenging year. She also thanked The Highland Council and NHS Highland for their continuing support, which enables CHIP+ to survive and continue to support families and professionals throughout Highland. The full report can be found in the Annual Report.</p> <p>It was noted that Macleod and MacCallum continue to act as Company Secretary.</p>

4.	TREASURER'S REPORT
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A statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2014 was available on page 7 of the Annual Report. Following financial advice, Directors had agreed to move from Ledger to Cash Accounts this year. The chair passed on her thanks to Karen Ross (Treasurer), David MacBean and John Sutherland for their work on the accounts. Any members wishing to see a full set of accounts could request a copy from the Chip+ Office.

There were no questions from members and the Accounts were approved .

Proposed by: : **Marion McNeil**

Seconded by: **Rebecca Huxtable-Smith**

5.

ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

The Chair announced that the following Directors had resigned during the year: **Isabel Paterson, Kathleen Murray, Frances Nixseaman and Sarah MacKinnon** and that she herself (**Gillian Newman**) was also stepping down. The Chair thanked all retiring Directors for their commitment and support to CHIP+, in the case of Isabel Paterson in particular for many years.

The Chair also passed on her thanks to Kath Nicholson and Marion MacNeil for coming onto the board this year.

The following Directors had agreed to their names being put forward for re-election, and were elected en bloc as follows:

Duncan Finlayson
Sue Miller

Karen Ross
Kath Nicholson

**Wendy Kelsey,
Marion MacNeil**

Proposed: Marion Fraser

Seconded: Tracey Smith.

Karen Ross has kindly agreed to continue in the position of **Treasurer**.

Proposed: Karen Sellers

Seconded: Marian McNeil

Duncan Finlayson has kindly offered to take up the position of **Chairperson** for one year only.

Proposed: Sue Miller

Seconded: Karen Ross

The Chair also made an appeal for more Board Members: if anyone is interested in becoming a Board Member they should contact CHIP+.

6.

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER OF ACCOUNTS

As intimated at last year's AGM and agreed by Directors at a subsequent meeting, David MacBean, a retired Chartered Accountant, has offered to keep and produce the accounts on a voluntary basis. The Accounts had been examined by David in line with OSCR guidelines. It was proposed to continue with this arrangement for the year ahead. Gillian thanked David for his work on behalf of Chip+.

Proposed: Rebecca Huxtable-Smith

Seconded: Wendy Kelsey

7.	<p>AOCB</p> <p>Gillian thanked Karen Ross for her work as treasurer. On behalf of CHIP+. Christian then thanked Gillian for her agreement to act as Chair and for her inspiring work with staff and Directors, bringing new insights into the work.</p> <p>There was no further business and the meeting closed.</p> <p>Gillian then introduced the Guest Speaker, Donald McLeod, a Parent/ Carer and Third Sector Consultant. Donald gave a powerful and moving insight into his journey as a parent/carer and its challenges and joys.</p>
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CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT 2014 to March 2015

Dear Parents, Carers, Professionals and Friends of CHIP+,

I am very pleased to be introducing another Annual Report from CHIP+, as it means we have survived another year. This is in no small part due to the hard work and dedication of our staff, and our Chief Officer, Christian Maclean who this year marks ten years of service to CHIP+. On behalf of my fellow Directors I would like to take this opportunity to record our thanks and appreciation for their on-going commitment to the work of the charity.

I would also like to thank the Highland Council and NHS Highland for their continued financial and practical support. However, the reality is that CHIP+, in common with many other charities and support services, continues to live in a climate of financial uncertainty and diminishing resources.

Despite these challenges, CHIP+ continues to look for new ways to develop services and extend its reach. To this end we have been fortunate in securing funding to jointly employ, with HCF, a Digital Media Intern for a period of ten weeks. It is anticipated that the final report produced by our intern, Catriona Mallows, will suggest some new digital initiatives to assist us extend the support services provided by CHIP. These developments will hopefully allow us to make information more accessible, develop CHIP+'s communication, and provide networks to enable us to support one another more effectively.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the work of my fellow Directors who give generously of their time, skills and energy to ensure that the vital support service provided by CHIP+ continues to be freely available to all those within the Highland region.

Duncan Finlayson

CHILDREN IN THE HIGHLANDS INFORMATION POINT PLUS (CHIP+)
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2015

Statement of Financial Activities
for the Year Ended 31 March 2015

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31.3.15 Total Funds £	31.3.14 Total funds £
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Incoming resources from generated funds					
Voluntary income	2	6,382	-	6382	3,847
Investment income	3	508	-	508	169
Incoming resources from charitable activities					
Highland Council (Training Grant)		-	500	500	0
Autism Packs		-	2,497	2,497	909
ADHD packs		-	136	136	397
Service level agreement		87,164		87,164	87,164
Total incoming resources		94,054	3,133	97,187	92,486
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
Charitable activities					
Outreach work		-	-	-	-
Core Activities (Information / Support Service)		55,873	1,124	56,997	62,402
HI Hope Handbook		-	-	-	-
ASL Guides		-	-	-	-
Autism packs		-	2,497	909	909
ADHD packs		-	136	397	397
Support costs		25,943	-	25,943	30,920
PIP packs		-	-	-	-
Governance costs		5,730	-	5,730	4,729
Total resources expended		87,546	3,757	91,303	99,357
NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES	4	6,508	(624)	5,884	(6,871)
Gross transfers between funds					-
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources		6508	(624)	5884	(6,871)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		26,166	2,493	28,659	35,530
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		32,674	1,869	34,543	28,659

Draft accounts to be ratified at AGM
For a full set of Accounts please contact the CHIP+ office

CHIP+ BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2014-2015

Chairperson: Duncan Finlayson - Support for Learning Teacher (retired)

Treasurer: Karen Ross - Parent/Carer (FACES)

Wendy Kelsey - Parent/Carer (Highland AD/HD Support Group)

Sue Miller - Retired Social Worker

Rebecca Huxtable-Smith (Parent/carers)

Marion McNeil (Connecting Carers)

Gillian Newman (Highland Children's Forum)

Karen Anderson (Parent/carers, Connecting Carers)

Company Secretary: Macleod and MacCallum

Children in the Highlands Information Point 2014-2015

"When I felt isolated with my children, CHIP+ were very supportive and have enabled us to grow in confidence as a family." (parent/carers, 2015)

Throughout 2014-2015 CHIP+ continued to support the families of children and young people with Additional Support Needs, and those supporting them: families struggling with isolation, confusion and worry against an increasingly difficult financial background. The service CHIP+ provides is marked by four continuing features. It is:

User-led: Half our Directors, and 2 of our 4 staff, are parent/carers themselves, and the views of our users continue to shape the services we offer throughout Highland;

Preventative: The appropriate low-key intervention at an early stage in a situation can prevent it escalating into a crisis, which causes additional strain on stretched services, greater expense, and above all greater distress for the carers and child involved. CHIP's experience as a first-stop shop for families- providing good information, signposting to appropriate services, suggesting ways to move forward in challenging situations-has consistently shown the value of appropriate intervention when support is first needed;

Reliable: CHIP provides an authoritative source of information, providing accurate, up to date and accessible information and support in a friendly and confidential setting;

Independent: As an independent charity operating since 1993, CHIP+ provides unbiased and objective information and advice.

The past year has been a testing one for CHIP, as for many charities, as we have struggled to maintain services in an increasingly difficult financial environment. In common with many charities, the demand for our services continues to increase as our own resources have become increasingly stretched. Against that challenging background, however, CHIP has maintained its service, begun to stabilise its financial situation and succeeded in moving forward with new developments.

So what have been the main features of the past year?

Enquiries and support: Our two Information and Support Officers, and our Information and Admin Officer have continued to answer enquiries (usually in person or by phone, and occasionally online), as well as to provide more detailed support necessary to prepare for Child's Plan meetings or to attend them with the parent/carers. Statistics for the past year show that the total number of enquiries answered by CHIP has dropped from previous years, but a closer analysis of the figures shows that the drop has been entirely in Stage 1 enquiries (that is, requests for relatively straight forward pieces of factual information). More complex and time-consuming enquiries have continued to increase, as has been the pattern over the past few years, as have enquiries where CHIP staff offer ongoing support to parent/carers before or at a meeting regarding their child. We have not been able to determine the reason for the drop in number of basic enquiries as numbers varied through the year, but it is likely that it is related to the increasing availability of good information online, including on our own website. Staff continued to be heavily stretched in meeting the number of very complex situations brought by enquirers: a period of staff illness in the early part of 2015 made clear how stretched the service is

As has been mentioned in previous Annual Reports, we continue to deal with a much greater number of complex enquiries than we did 5 years ago, but with fewer staff.

Funding: The urgent need to stabilise CHIP's financial situation has been a dominant feature of the past year: thanks to huge efforts from a range of people, however, we ended the financial year with a small surplus, a triumph after the two previous financial years where we have had to dip into our Reserves to meet a deficit. A range of generous donations were received (from Lifescan, Friends of Autism Highland, ASDA, Munro Sawmills, Inverness South Rotary Club and Caring and Sharing, as well as from a number of families and individual supporters of CHIP). Staff ran in a 10k race and organised car-boot sales, and a large number of CHIP users, Directors and staff ran a charity shop in Inverness for a week in June. Three major fundraising applications were submitted (two for digital development and one for increased staffing to enable us to meet the need for more information on Self-Directed Support); sadly only one of these-to provide a Digital Intern, working in partnership with HCF, was successful. We registered with Easy fundraising and Just Text Giving, and through the year a small fundraising committee worked hard to increase funding, and in particular unrestricted funding.

All the hard work paid off, and we owe a huge thank you to all who supported us: but a real question remains over how sustainable this level of fundraising is for a small charity. Most of our users are parent/carers struggling to deal with the challenges of their own lives: staff are already fully stretched, and Directors are needed for a wide range of input other than fundraising.

Organising fundraising events is very time-consuming; contacts with corporate donors challenging for a small charity, and preparation of funding applications a major investment of staff time. Nevertheless we remain committed to seeking more sustainable funding to enable us to plan and maintain our work.

Communication: Library, newsletter and Information packs:

"The CHIP library is a great resource. They have a huge range of books...I have found it very helpful to try before I buy". (Parent/carer, 2015).

The CHIP library continued to be heavily used through the year, and a number of reviews of books by library users have been really appreciated.

- The newsletter is increasingly being sent online and we are seeking to develop this (while still offering hard copies to those who need/prefer this). It is planned to move to a more regular online Bulletin over the next year as we receive so many requests to advertise events and feature different groups.

It's essential that our range of Parent Information Packs is continually updated to ensure accuracy and to keep them as accessible and user-friendly as possible. Work continued through the year on the new Autism Information booklet, produced in collaboration with Highland Council and designed to replace the "Green pack" (the Information pack given to families on diagnosis of their child's Autism). This has been a long and challenging process but we expect the new booklet to be ready for the start of the 2015-2016 school session. Through the year a new ADHD pack was also produced and launched at an event for professionals.

Training and Outreach:

- The Pines coffee mornings (run jointly by CHIP and the NAS) continued, with themed sessions (monthly) on topics such as sleep or Self Directed Support alternating with informal drop-in sessions. These are regularly attended by up to 25 parent/carers and a close and supportive group of users has developed, with professionals also valuing the opportunity to meet a group of parents together. Following consultation, it was decided to restrict the informal sessions to new parents, those awaiting or who have recently received a diagnosis, or people who are new to the area, to encourage more new users to attend. A number of themed twilight sessions-to meet the needs of working parents, have also been popular and well-attended.
- CHIP organised three training events in December where Ian Nisbet of the Education Law Unit spoke on developments in the Additional Support for Learning legislation. The events-in Inverness, Wick and Fort William were attended by a total of 69 carers and professionals, with very enthusiastic feedback.
- CHIP staff also participated in a range of other training events and Outreach, including providing an information stand at the Transitions Fair, running workshops at Carers Week events in Fort William, Wick and Inverness, and giving talks about our work at three training sessions for staff from the Children's Unit at Raigmore Hospital.

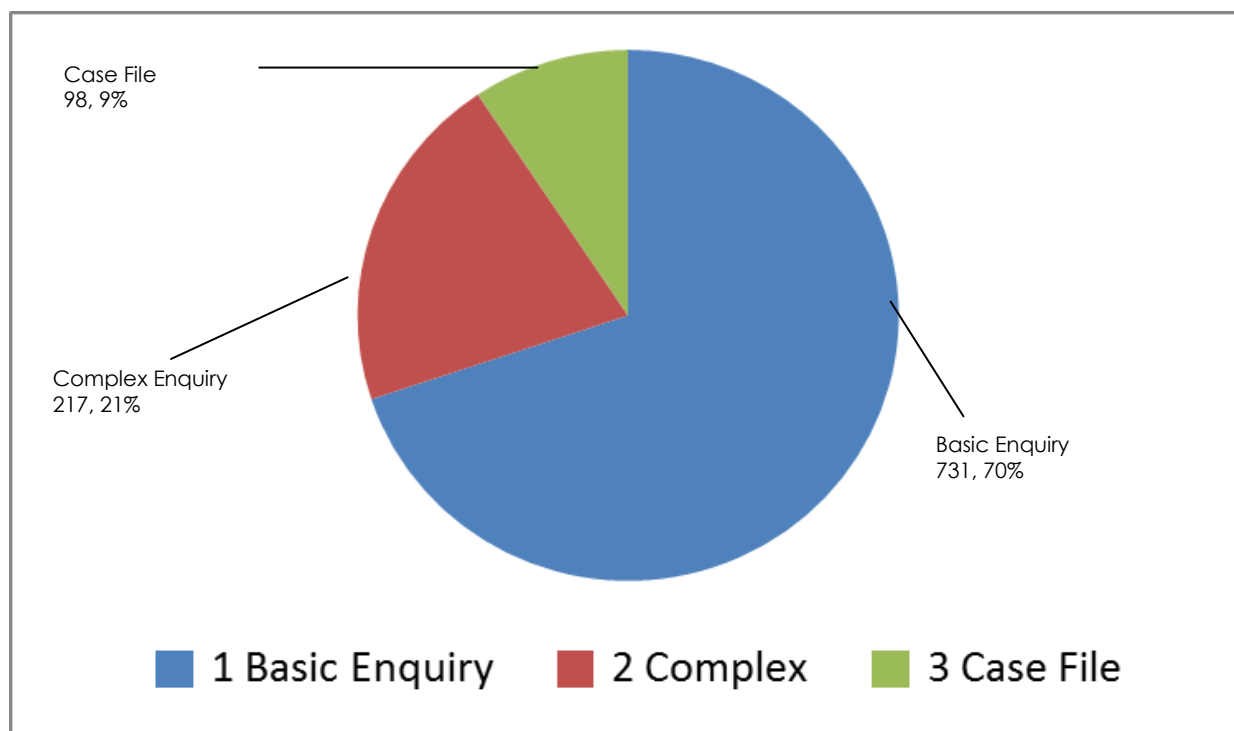
Links to other groups: A major feature of our work is signposting enquirers to other services which might be useful to them, or can offer more specialised support where necessary. More generally, we recognise the importance of working in partnership with other organisations, to share resources and information as well as maximising the impact of our work. CHIP serves on the board of Contact a Family (Scotland) and has close working links with the Education Law Unit based in Glasgow. Locally we are represented on the boards/committees of Highland Children's Forum, the Highland Third Sector Children and Families Group, the Carer Improvement Group, Dyslexia Association and the Down's Syndrome Association. We also have close working links with colleagues in both The Highland Council and NHS Highland, and are represented on a range of working groups with them. Over the past year we have submitted two funding applications in partnership with Highland Children's Forum, who work with the same constituency of carers, children and young people with Additional Support Needs in Highland, and we are keen to further joint working where appropriate to maximise our impact.

CHIP is fortunate to have a group of committed and enthusiastic Directors, who, as well as giving wise counsel through the year, have participated in a range of working groups, undertaken fundraising on our behalf, and are always ready to provide challenge, ideas and support. Two Directors resigned through the year, Gillian Newman (now Policy Lead with HCF) and Kath Nicholson (parent/carer), and we welcomed two new Directors, Karen Anderson and Becky Huxtable-Smith (both parent/carers). We were all saddened by the death of our former long-standing Treasurer, Mary Clark: books for the CHIP library have been purchased in her memory thanks to a donation from her family. At the last AGM Duncan Finlayson took over the Chair from Gillian Newman and staff and Directors have all appreciated his supportive and thoughtful leadership. Thanks are due to all Directors for their continuing insight and inspiration, and to our funders in The Highland Council and NHS Highland for their continuing support.

A parent recently described CHIP as "the unsung heroes" in the life of families with children with Additional Support Needs. Much of the work undertaken by CHIP is low-key and quiet: but knowledge is power: ensuring that families and others caring for children and young people in Highland are well-informed and supported can and does transform lives.

Christian MacLean
Chief Officer

Enquiry Stage



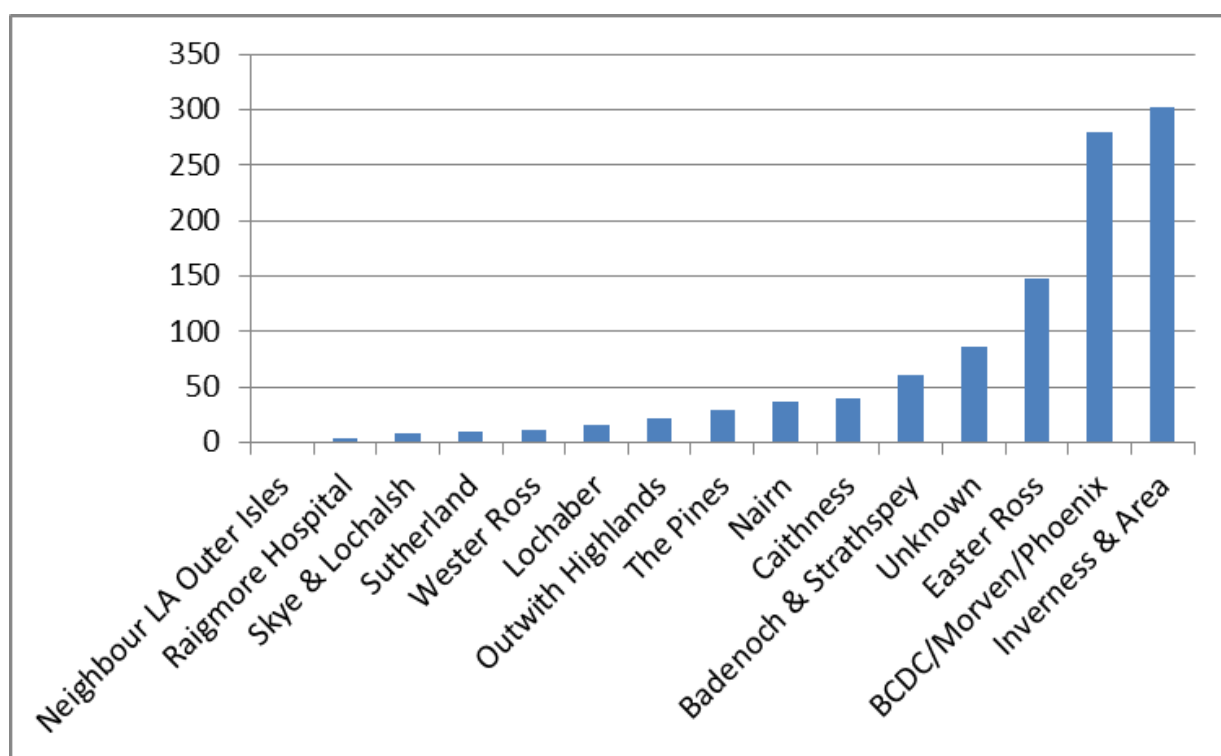
A **Basic Enquiry** is one that would generally take no more than one or two hours to deal with .

A **Complex Enquiry** would involve a lot of information and support to a parent/carer by phone, e-mail and/or post and may involve face to face or telephone meetings on more than one occasion.

A **Case File** is classed as such when a CHIP+ Information & Support Officer would attend a school meeting with a parent/ carer.

The figures above are the number of different stages of enquiry and the percentage pertaining to the total.

Enquirer's District



Neighbour LA = Neighbouring Local Authority

BCDC/Morven/Phoenix = Birnie Centre, Morven House and Phoenix Centre

chip+

Children in the Highlands Information Point



The **CHIP+** library
Is a great resource.

The staff's kind-
ness & patience
goes well beyond
the call of duty.

CHIP+
Birnie Centre
Raigmore Hospital
Inverness
IV2 3UJ

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#supportingparentcarers

Scottish Charity Number: SC024835
CHIP+ is a Company Limited by Guarantee
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