

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 29 February 2024 23:58
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Support for PLUS Forth Valley

Hi [REDACTED]

I am writing in support of PLUS in relation to the potential for the asset transfer of the Family Hub. My reasons for this are as follows;

1. PLUS was founded in 1988. The services have grown and developed over the years, listening to the needs of the young people and their families to ensure the service remains relevant.
2. PLUS is a significant health and social care provider – primarily in the Stirling area, but a small number of families in Clacks and Falkirk also benefit.
3. The focus of PLUS is unique. Not only are the services supporting children from birth through to adult aged 35, but families and siblings (carers) also benefit significantly. Services are so varied and include parent and toddler sessions, after school clubs, groups specific for autistic children, home based support, college support, community volunteering opportunities, life skills groups, community activities, play events, coffee mornings, information events and parent support opportunities.
4. PLUS is a well regarded organisation in the area and are involved in several local strategic groups. This helps to ensure that the voice of parent carers and disabled children and young people can continue to be heard. Some examples of this has been as a steering group member for 'Stirling Alive with Volunteering', creating a Stirling Volunteering Strategy which has now been adopted by the local authority and being implemented by the 3rd Sector. PLUS was represented in the last Parenting Strategy for Stirling Council, one of the only 3rd Sector Organisations in Stirling to be involved via invite as a valued partner. Likewise, PLUS was on the steering group for the creation of the Physical health and wellbeing strategy which was led by Active Stirling on behalf of Stirling Council. PLUS has sat on the many iterations of the Autism Strategy for Clacks and Stirling and continues to do so. In addition, we contribute to the Health and Social Care Partnership via the 3rd Sector forum and via the Carers Sub Group. This evidences that PLUS is more than just a service. By supporting, developing and implementing policy and practice at a local and regional level PLUS is able to influence from decision making back to grass routes to enable better opportunities for children and adults with disabilities and their parent carers.
5. PLUS is a significant employer in the area with roughly around 70 staff at any one time and 20 volunteers. Staff live in the Forth Valley area, primarily Stirling and for some it is a part time job whilst they are studying. For others it is their vocation. It is amazing to see where staff have moved onto – Commissioning roles within Government agencies, Social Work, Family Support, Training leads in national charities, Teachers, Principal Teachers, Head Teachers, GP's, Doctors, Nurses, Prison Service.... The list is endless. What this shows is that their principles and values of inclusion learned at PLUS progresses with them as they move through their careers showing a longer lasting impact of being a member of staff in the team. PLUS regularly hosts placement students from the university and college, including OT students, Psychology students and Social Work Students
6. Impact – families can tell you the impact of the service. In a few words? A sense of belonging, someone who cares, first time I have friends, I don't have to mask I can be myself, we feel safe, we feel accepted, you don't judge, you are a lifeline, this is the only support we get, I don't know where we would be without PLUS. These are all quotes we receive from families most weeks.
7. Vulnerability – despite the above, it is all at risk of stopping. With eviction being served in January 24, it highlights that until PLUS can have their own premises, the organisation is at

such a high level of risk. Having tried to find suitable premises, we have some very vague solution which would have been detriments to many children and their families. PLUS needs to find premises in a community to enable us to continue to foster a sense of belonging.

