

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 28 February 2024 12:32
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: PLUS application - Family Hub, Stirling

Dear [REDACTED]

I am writing to you on behalf of my daughter, who uses PLUS, to express what the charity means to our family.

My daughter [REDACTED] is six years old and has a rare condition called Aicardi syndrome. Her condition means that she is profoundly disabled; both physically and cognitively. She is nonverbal, non-ambulatory, doubly incontinent and cannot self-feed. She is also very socially, incredibly affectionate and loves to be around people.

[REDACTED] requires adults around her to care for every aspect of her needs. The only way she can interact with the world is by relying on caring, compassionate and enabling people supporting her to do so, and accessible environments.

PLUS has supported our family since [REDACTED] was a baby, when we attended a preschool group. I was able to meet other parents and gain peer support to navigate new challenges. PLUS staff would always be on hand to lend a compassionate ear, practical advice and signpost to other charities and organisations if necessary. During those early days the support I received was invaluable.

Once [REDACTED] started school, she began accessing their afterschool club which meant I could return to work. I would not be able to work if it wasn't for PLUS as there are no other services that provide afterschool care for [REDACTED]'s level of need.

[REDACTED] also attends fortnightly on a Saturday. She cannot attend any mainstream groups of classes. Her sisters can go to swimming lessons, ballet, gymnastics etc. There is nothing suitable for [REDACTED]. On those Saturdays PLUS becomes this suitable space. It is fun, enabling and enriching and has been immensely beneficial to her wellbeing. She is cared for by skilled and knowledgeable staff who ensure she enjoys herself.

As a parent I want nothing more than my children to be safe, happy and loved. PLUS ticks each of those boxes each and every time [REDACTED] is there. If it weren't for PLUS there would be nothing, other than home and school, that [REDACTED] could access that is tailored to her needs.

If PLUS successfully acquires the family hub the location would be far more suitable than the current building and the location would be easier to access. The opportunities for service users to access the local community and nearby environment would enrich the time spent there; something that isn't possible in the current location due to the industrial nature of the area. Also, the security of knowing that this would be a long-term move would lead to staff, service users and their families to feel settled and safe.

I feel that PLUS would have a positive impact of the community also. Disabled children and young people using the setting would be far more visible than in the current location which would give support to the wider community to normalise disabilities and potentially build confidence around interactions. As the hub is considerably more accessible than the current setting there may be more opportunities for voluntary activities (gardening, painting, work experience etc) for local schools and businesses to participate in.

The charity means so much to myself, my daughter and our whole family. I truly hope that PLUS is successful in their application so that they can continue to grow, thrive and support more families like mine.

Warmest regards and best wishes,

