

September 2022

Children 1st

Bairns Hoose

Moray - Family session

What have we been up to?

We met with 5 children and young people, alongside 3 mums in the Children 1st Moray service. The session was filled with lots of lovely conversations about what the Bairns Hoose might look and feel like. The group explored what makes a place feel safe, comfortable and cozy. This session focused on 'right place and space'.

The right place and space

The families shared their personal experiences of navigating through the justice system, and reflected on what a Bairns Hoose might look like within a rural community.

'It's all about having a choice
and having a voice.'
Mum



Key Themes



Choice

Throughout the session the families shared the importance of choice being key to ensuring families feel safe enough and supported.

Gender of Police:

It was felt having the choice to decide what gender of police officer would be important. Through their own personal experiences this was not an option but would have been hugely beneficial. They shared that through their own experiences having this choice would have ensured the child was supported and felt safe enough to ask to go to the toilet and ask for sanitary products. In their experiences the child did not feel she could ask for either as the officers were male. They family reflected if there had been a choice in the gender of officer, they would have felt more comfortable with female officers.

Activities:

The families shared that having lots of choice in activities in the welcome room and other parts of the house would be helpful for children, young people and their families. They felt it would be good to have various toys, games, music and other forms of activities/entertainment. They felt this is important as everyone is different so this should be reflected in what is available in the Bairns Hoose. They also felt it is important to have headphone and internet connection available for families to use as and when they want.

Community



The families shared their thoughts on what a Bairns Hoose might feel like within a more rural community. They agreed needing to travel far for court was not a good experience, so access to a local Bairns Hoose would be helpful. They shared that in a smaller community many people know other people's business and news can travel fast, so having a Bairns Hoose not directly in the centre of the community would work best. They felt it would be better if it was located on the edge, with easy transport links.

Physical space



The families shared the importance of the physical space feeling right for children and young people; they felt it would be good to have spaces which are big enough for children and young people to move around, where they can do mini-gymnastics, dance, and jump. They reflected that physical movement can help in stressful situations.

The families shared that the Bairns Hoose should feel warm and comforting, so plain white walls would be a 'no go', but instead bring in warmer, pastel colours - particular favourites were blue, green, yellow and purple. It was felt that artwork would be an important way to help ensure the spaces feel cozy. They felt abstract and photography would work best - these would add a more personal touch to the space. It was also suggested that mirrors are important.



'Sometimes you can look at yourself and she looks sad, but when you look in a mirror and see your reflection you can smile and remind yourself you're OK.'

Girl, aged 6

The young people shared they would find it helpful to know who is who in the Bairns Hoose, so having a pin board with who is working that day would be a nice touch. They also felt that staff should wear plain clothes - including police officers, as this can help make it feel less daunting and help children and young people feel more comfortable.

The families agreed that having a worker present to dip in and out would be helpful. They felt a youth worker, or a similar type of worker would be nice as they are not a social worker or police officer which would help them feel at ease. The parents agreed the process might bring up big feelings for parents and carers so having a worker present to support the family would be helpful. They also reflected that parents and carers might need a breather so having a youth worker present would support them in these moments.

One further suggestion was to have cosy slippers available for children to wear as this can help a child feel at ease and comfortable.

outdoor space



The families felt an outdoor space is really important as many children and young people like to play outside. They felt this would be particularly important as physical play can help balance out big feelings and emotions. They explained that going to a Bairns Hoose might feel scary for children and young people, so swings and areas to explore and play were seen of significant importance to help regulate big emotions.

They also felt it would be nice to have colourful flowers which would attract wildlife such as butterflies and bees. They said it can be really peaceful when you watch a butterfly fly around pretty flowers.

They also reflected that plants and flowers inside the house might also help bring feelings of calm.

