

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Submissions Pack

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Contents

The Scottish Government	4
Education Scotland	8
Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland	14
The Education Endowment Foundation	19
Joseph Rowntree Foudation.....	25
The Poverty Alliance.....	31
The Poverty and Inequality Commission.....	37
Poverty Truth Commission	40
Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change.....	47
LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUBMISSIONS	55
COSLA.....	55
1 in 5, City of Edinburgh Council.....	60
East Ayrshire Council.....	64
North Lanarkshire.....	67
The Northern Alliance	72
Glasgow City Council.....	76
North Lanarkshire Council- additional submission.....	78
SCHOOL SUBMISSIONS	80
Dalmarnock Primary School	80
Kelvinside Academy	82
Tynecastle High School 1 in 5 group	83
SUBMISSIONS FROM UNIONS.....	85
AHDS	85
EIS.....	86
NASUWT	97
School Leaders Scotland.....	101
UNISON	104
SUBMISSIONS FROM PARENT REPRESENTATIVES	109
Connect.....	109
The National Parent Forum of Scotland	113
OPFS Submission	117
SUBMISSIONS FROM CHILDREN’S REPRESENTATIVES / CHARITIES	127
Aberlour.....	127
Barnardo’s Scotland	131
Children 1st.....	137
Children in Scotland.....	142
Children’s Parliament.....	148
Children’s University Scotland.....	152
Includem	158
Save The Children.....	161
Scottish Youth Parliament	166
OTHER ORGANISATIONS WORKING WITH CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES	170
Apex Scotland.....	170
The Church of Scotland.....	183

CLD Standards Council Scotland	186
Duke of Edinburgh Award	191
Generations Working Together	196
Home-Start UK	198
Home-Start UK – Supplementary submission	202
Home Start- Edinburgh West and South	206
Learning Link Scotland	208
The Prince's Trust Scotland	210
Reading Wise	215
Scouts Scotland	219
Scottish Outdoor Education Centres	224
Stretch a Nickel Foundation	229
The Spark	236
Young Scot	239
YouthLink Scotland	243
Youth Scotland	249
SUBMISSIONS FROM FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION	253
Colleges Scotland	253
Heriot-Watt University	258
Universities Scotland	262
University of Stirling	265
University of Strathclyde	267
OTHER ORGANISATIONS	271
The Awards Network	271
Axiom Consultancy (Scotland) Ltd	276
CELCIS	283
Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER)	290
Culture Counts	294
Edinburgh International Science Festival	297
Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society	302
The Equality & Human Rights Commission	306
Glasgow Centre for Population Health	308
Inch Youth Club	313
National Theatre of Scotland	316
NHS Scotland- Facing up to Poverty Practice Network	319
NHS Health Scotland	321
RSE	327
Scottish Library and Information Council	334
Social Work Scotland	337
Sumdog	341
SUBMISSIONS FROM ACADEMICS/ EXPERTS	344
Dr Lynne Duncan and Dr Sarah McGeown	344
Professor Stephen Gorard FRSA FAcSS	348
Andrew Green	350
Professor Grant Jarvie	359
Dr Morag Treanor	363
Dr Terry Wrigley	366
Lindsey Graham	371
SUBMISSIONS FROM INDIVIDUALS	375
Caroline Farquhar	375
Maggie Hodge	376
Niall MacKinnon	377
Lorna Walker	380
Mrs Carol H Aljundi	385

Vijay Kumar	386
Shelagh Campbell	387
Suzanne Ensom (English Speaking Union) & Nick Bibby	388
Simon Needham.....	390
Anonymous Submissions.....	391
Parent 1.....	391
Child /Young Person 1.....	392
Child /Young Person 2.....	392
Teacher 1	393
Teacher 2	394
Teacher 3.....	396
Teacher 4.....	398
Teacher 5.....	400
Teacher 6.....	402
Teacher 7	405

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

The Scottish Government

The Scottish Government's response to the Education and Skills Committee inquiry on the attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

I am writing today to welcome the above inquiry and set out the activity that the Scottish Government is taking forward to improve the attainment of children experiencing poverty.

Achieving excellence and equity in Scottish Education through reform

Through the [2018 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan](#), the Government has made clear its commitment to drive **excellence** through raising attainment, and to achieve equity by ensuring that every child has an opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap. The commitments of excellence and equity are shared widely across the education system in Scotland, and provide the focus of our transformational agenda for educational reform. Working in partnership with Education Scotland, local government, teaching and leader representatives, we have been developing our plans for system wide transformation, with a central aim to empower our teachers, parents and communities to deliver excellence and equity for our children and young people.

As set out in the June 2017 paper, [Education Governance: Next Steps](#), we will establish a Headteachers' Charter to set out headteachers' rights and responsibilities as leaders of learning and teaching in their schools. We are taking forward a range of actions to ensure that headteachers and their staff are supported in this role, including the creation of new Regional Improvement Collaboratives, to strengthen the support that schools can access in closing the attainment gap. To further support these reforms, we are committed to delivering an Education (Scotland) Bill to the Scottish Parliament in the current session. Development of that Bill is subject to consideration of responses to the formal consultation which closed on 30 January 2018, where we invited views on the potential for legislative underpinning to the Headteachers Charter and for the operation of Regional Improvement Collaboratives. We also invited views on potential legislation to: improve parental and community engagement in school life and learning; and to strengthen the voice of children and young people. We are considering consultation responses and will publish our analysis in due course.

The Scottish Attainment Challenge and Attainment Scotland Fund

The National Improvement Framework underpins the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC), our national programme for achieving equity in educational outcomes. Launched in 2015, it focuses and accelerates targeted improvement activity in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing and is supported by the commitment of the £750m Attainment Scotland Fund (ASF) over the lifetime of this Parliament.

In 2018/19 we will provide a total of £179 million through the ASF via three main elements:

- £120m of Pupil Equity Funding is allocated directly to schools, on the basis of the number of children in P1-S3 known to be eligible to receive free school meals, to help schools deliver activities and interventions that support children affected by poverty.
- The Challenge Authorities and Schools Programmes that provide targeted support to the local authorities and schools with the largest concentration of pupils living in deprived areas. The Challenge Authorities are Clackmannanshire, Dundee City, East Ayrshire, Glasgow City, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire and West Dunbartonshire. The Schools Programme supports 72 schools (46 primary schools and 28 secondary schools) with the highest concentration of children living in SIMD 1&2 across 12 other authority areas.
- In addition, the fund supports a range of national programmes, such as new routes into teaching, continuous and lifelong professional learning, and partnership working.

Plans for the use of the funding by local authorities and schools are expected to be based on a clear contextual analysis of the poverty related gap and to be grounded in evidence of what is known to be effective at raising attainment for children affected by poverty. They must also consider how to evaluate the impact of the funding, with clear outcomes to be achieved and how progress towards these, and the impact on closing the poverty-related attainment gap, will be measured.

Education Scotland provides a range of national and local support for authorities and schools, including the provision of named Attainment Advisors for each local authority and through the Interventions for Equity Framework and good practice exemplars on the National Improvement Hub. More information is provided in Education Scotland's response to this inquiry.

In addition, the Government has established the [Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative](#) (CYPIC) to deliver quality improvement throughout a child's journey. CYPIC is supporting schools, early learning and childcare settings and health services and family support services to use the 3-Step Improvement Framework for Scotland's public services to ensure that they are effective and responsive in tackling inequality and improving children's outcomes.

Evaluating the impact of the Attainment Scotland Fund

The Government has recently published its evaluation of the first 2 years of the Attainment Scotland Fund (ASF). The [evaluation](#) draws on data from a variety of sources, including a headteacher survey, local authority mini survey, Challenge Authority progress reports and an externally commissioned qualitative research study. The evaluation has provided critical insight into how key stakeholders viewed the impact of the fund as well as learning on what is working well and what could be improved in the implementation of the fund.

For example, the report provides evidence that the ASF is making a positive impact on: collaborative working, particularly within-school and with external partners; increased data/evidence usage and understanding; and the development of teaching skills alongside increased leadership opportunities. The evaluation found that 78% of surveyed headteachers saw improvements in tackling the attainment gap in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing as a result of the ASF. Furthermore, nearly all headteachers

interviewed (97%) expected to see improvements over the next 5 years as a result of the ASF.

The report also included evidence of the challenges encountered in the implementation of the fund. It reported that bureaucracy and challenging timescales could be improved in some areas and that recruitment of staff was a particular challenge, leading to underspend. The Government is working with partners to take action to address these challenges.

Stakeholders also recognised that poverty was a wider issue and that its impact could be not be mitigated by educational interventions alone. A strategy for the evaluation for the ASF in Years 3 and 4 has also been [published](#) and this will include consideration of Pupil Equity Funding, which commenced in Year 3. We expect evidence of impact on improving outcomes and closing the poverty-related attainment gap to continue to develop as the programme continues. A range of other evaluative evidence is also being gathered, including a focus on raising attainment and achievement in every school inspection.

A holistic approach to tackling poverty related attainment gap

We know that the socio-economic gap in cognitive development opens up well before children start primary school¹. Therefore, narrowing this gap in the early years through good quality, responsive ELC is an integral part of our strategy to tackle the impact of poverty on children. The expansion of ELC to 1140 hours is an important vehicle for driving up outcomes for children². Our new Funding Follows the Child approach, due for introduction in August 2020, will further prioritise and safeguard high quality provision across all sectors. This model will be underpinned by a national standard that all early learning and childcare providers will be required to meet in order to deliver the funded entitlement. At the heart of the standard will be a set of quality criteria. This should ensure that children have access to a guaranteed level of quality regardless of where they access their entitlement. Details of the proposed national standard will be published by the end of March 2018.

There is no getting away from the complex nature of child poverty, and the efforts in place to tackle this are of fundamental importance to the success of our children and young people in learning and life. The Government is fully committed to tackling child poverty and we have set ambitious income-based 2030 targets in our Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017. Our ambitious Delivery Plan setting out how we will work towards the targets will be published by April 2018, supported by a £50m Tackling Child Poverty Fund over 5 years.

Measuring the poverty-related gap and milestones towards closing it

Ministers are committed to making demonstrable progress in closing the gap during the lifetime of this Parliament, and to substantially eliminate it in the next decade. Following

¹ Evidence from the Growing Up in Scotland [[Tackling Inequalities in the Early Years](#), Scottish Government, 2015] has shown that children from lowest income quintile are over a year behind those from the highest on vocabulary development by the age of five.

² Studies have shown that good quality ELC can have a positive effect on the educational, cognitive, behavioural and social outcomes for children in both the short and long term, including those who are most deprived in terms of household income. [Scobie, G & Scott, E. [Rapid Evidence Review: Childcare Quality and Children's Outcome](#), NHS Health Scotland, 2017. Some research has found that the benefits of ELC are even greater for children from more disadvantaged families.

the commitment in the [2017 National Improvement Framework](#), the Government worked with key stakeholders to fully explore and agree what specific measures were felt to drive improvement most usefully across all stages of a child or young person's life. We also consulted on proposals for measuring the poverty-related gap and milestones towards closing it; focusing on the impact of the education system as a whole and using a range of measures that reflect key stages of the learner journey and the breadth of issues that can impact on attainment.

We received 102 responses from a range of interests, including 10 local authorities, and 38 individuals. Support was generally expressed for the approach we proposed: a basket of 8 key measures to assess progress, supported by a series of 17 sub-measures. There were concerns, however, that we had not identified sufficient key measures adequately to address the complexities of the education system. Therefore as a result, we have decided to include an additional three measures in the basket of key measures: two additional health and wellbeing measures, covering the social, emotional and behavioural development of children and young people (these were included as sub-measures in the consultation paper) and one new and additional measure around the achievement of one or more SCQF level 4 qualifications upon leaving school. This results in a basket of 11 key measures, supported by 15 sub-measures. The key measures were published in the [2018 National Improvement Framework](#).

For the first time we are providing a complete picture of how children in Scotland are progressing and these key measures will continue to be monitored and reported through the national improvement framework's evidence reports³. The 2017 [Research Strategy for Scottish Education](#) sets out the next steps for supporting the priorities in the National Improvement Framework by developing the research infrastructure, a knowledge base of what works and the capacity of the system to use evidence.

Future plans

Tackling inequality will remain at the heart of the Government's educational reforms and, through the National Improvement Framework, we will continue to monitor the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people. Further, we have committed to continue the Pupil Equity Funding and to support the Challenge Authorities and Schools Programmes until the end of the Parliamentary term, providing reassurance to local authorities and schools as they implement and monitor their own plans to improve the educational attainment of children and young people affected by poverty. We have also committed to continue to engage with stakeholders at all levels to tackle the impact of poverty on educational attainment and further extend the reach of the Scottish Attainment Challenge.

I trust this information is useful.

John Swinney
Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
20 March 2018

³ The National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education 2017 Evidence Report can be accessed <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/12/2624>.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Education Scotland

The work of Education Scotland in understanding and tackling the impact of poverty on educational attainment

Education Scotland is the national improvement agency for education and we support quality and improvement in Scottish education. As outlined in the Scottish Government Next Steps paper in June 2017, Education Scotland will have a new and enhanced remit to strengthen our inspection function; have a lead role in providing national support for professional learning and leadership development; and have a significant contribution to the development and implementation of Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs). Our unique combination of roles and capabilities has the ability to blend guidance, support and constructive challenge in ways which increase the pace of improvement across the whole education system. Our evidence shows that there are many strengths in the quality of provision and professional practice in Scottish Education. However, there is still a gap between the progress which is made between those living in Scotland's least and most deprived areas⁴. Tackling the poverty-related attainment gap is an issue for every school and every local authority in Scotland. However the scale of the challenge varies depending on the local context and there are many different ways to tackle this. We believe that local solutions, based on robust analysis of relevant data, understanding the social-economic context of the community and informed by research evidence of what works is crucial to success.

The relationship between poverty, attainment and achievement is complex and far reaching. We recognise that the use of Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)⁵ as a measure of poverty has its limitations and we encourage schools and local authorities to understand what poverty means in their local context, for example the impact of rural poverty. We recognise that there is no robust, single approach that supports local authorities in addressing this difficult and complex issue. Within Scottish education, we have a firm foundation in our key policies including Curriculum for Excellence; Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC); Early Learning and Childcare; Teaching Scotland's Future; and Developing the Young Workforce. These clearly set out what needs to be done to support every child/young person's successful learning journey from early years, through school and post-16 learning into positive destinations. We recognise that education alone cannot solve this deep rooted societal problem. Effective partnerships between health, education and social policy, including NHS, Community Learning and Development, third sector organisations and community planning are essential.

The Scottish Attainment Challenge is a key national programme to support the vision for education in Scotland set out in the National Improvement Framework – to achieve excellence and equity for all children and young people. The Scottish Attainment Challenge specifically supports the ambition to achieve equity to ensure that every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-

⁴ <http://www.gov.scot/ssl.n>, <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/63001.8312.html> ,

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/12/2624>

⁵ <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SIMD>

related attainment gap. Our approach takes account of learning from challenges in other parts of the UK including the London, Manchester and Welsh challenges. These programmes alongside research, for example, from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation⁶, Sutton Trust⁷ and the School Improvement Partnership Programme⁸ have influenced our thinking and the strategies and approaches we have taken to develop our Scottish approach. Through the Scottish Attainment Challenge, which is a joint programme led by the Scottish Government and Education Scotland, we are working alongside local authorities and other partners to develop approaches to close the poverty-related attainment gap. We are also promoting collaboration at school, authority and regional level to share what does and does not work. In addition, collaborative partnerships between local authorities and universities are leading to increased confidence in taking forward new approaches.

Curriculum for Excellence places health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy at its heart. Across local authorities, most interventions focus on literacy and health and wellbeing with an increasing focus now on numeracy. Developing leadership, learning and teaching and focusing on career long professional learning are a key part of the work local authorities and schools are developing to build capacity. There has also been an increase in planned activity to support families and communities.

Scottish Government is working towards almost doubling the entitlement to funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) from 600 to 1,140 hours by 2020 for all three and four year olds and some two year olds. The vision is to develop high quality, flexible ELC which is affordable and accessible for all. This will require a system of ELC (not just national Government funded hours) that is varied, sustainable and focused on delivering high quality.

Evidence of effective interventions and approaches

National Support

The Scottish Attainment Challenge brings a greater sense of urgency and priority for everyone involved in Scottish education to focus efforts relentlessly on narrowing the poverty related attainment gap, at all levels. The School Improvement Partnership Programme (SIPP) was a three pilot programme commissioned in November 2013 which is now directly influencing the approach being taken forward in the Scottish Attainment Challenge. SIPP was first and foremost a research programme, designed to provide an in-depth evidence base from a longitudinal study over a three year period to inform future ways of working within Scottish education. The results of the SIPP evaluation⁹ inform national and local approaches to improvement by encouraging collaboration between schools and across authorities. Education Scotland and researchers from the Robert Owen Centre worked together to provide professional learning and support in relation to the Collaborative Action Research methodology used within the SIPP programme. This evidenced based collaborative way of working is being promoted within the Scottish Attainment Challenge as part of the range of work being undertaken with local

⁶ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/closing-attainment-gap-scottish-education>

⁷ <https://www.suttontrust.com/>

⁸ <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/documents/sippfinalreportsept16.pdf>

⁹

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/research/The%20School%20Improvement%20Partnership%20Programme>

authorities. Scottish Government also employed an academic advisor to provide support and challenge to the Scottish Attainment programme. The lessons learned in tackling educational inequity have influenced learning and teaching and other measures across participating schools and have also been seen to extend to other schools in their local authorities.

Education Scotland provides a range of national support through the Interventions for Equity Framework and practice exemplars on the National Improvement Hub (NIH). The Interventions for Equity framework provides access to a range of educational interventions and approaches that are currently being used in schools across Scotland to help tackle the poverty-related attainment gap. The framework can be used by all partners and should help to inform the decisions schools make in partnership with their stakeholders. The structure and content is dynamic and will continue to evolve as an integral part of the NIH where a wide range of improvement, self-evaluation and research materials are available and where practice exemplars can be shared. Other research summaries and intervention examples will be incorporated as these become available. In addition, we have been working with the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) to develop a Scottish version of their Teaching and Learning toolkit. This offers a range of research based options about practice in Scotland and internationally to assist in decision making when planning interventions and Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) expenditure. The Scottish version of the EEF toolkit can be used by practitioners to support their own informed choices and adopt a more evidence-based approach to making decisions about which interventions are likely to lead to the best outcomes for learners. These approaches are designed to empower staff to make decisions at a local level, up skilling them in the selection of evidence based approaches to best meet the needs of their learners.

Education Scotland staff have also been delivering an interactive workshop on outcomes and measures to headteachers across Scotland. This workshop provides a possible framework for headteachers to use to support planning, the articulation of outcomes and measures to establish impact. To date, this workshop has been delivered in 16 authorities which has reached over 1500 headteachers, authority representatives and partners. In addition, three attainment advisors have used this approach in their own local authorities. Rapid Outcome Assessments (ROA)¹⁰ have been used across the three themes of use of data, leadership and parental engagement. ROAs have been used in eight local authorities. This approach is being adapted and developed by Education Scotland to assist in deepening the local and national understanding of what has actually changed and why, creating a cohesion between different aspects of the Scottish Attainment Challenge programme leading to improved self-evaluation.

Education Scotland staff with colleagues delivered a range of keynotes, seminars and workshops at local and national PEF focused events last year. These events are being delivered again this year in partnership with Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs). They provide an update on the national picture, refreshed guidance on planning and use of PEF, sharing examples of impactful practice from schools and providing networking opportunities for practitioners to plan together and learn with and from each other. This is important in further promoting collaboration. As a result of PEF, we are

¹⁰ ROA is an approach developed by the Institute of Overseas Development to understand the influence of organisations or projects on policy change.

seeing increased levels of specialist skilled officers in planning and data analysis working at authority level to offer targeted support and advice to schools. We are also beginning to see an increased level of cluster and neighbourhood approaches to PEF. In most cases, it is too early at this stage to comment on the impact of this work on closing the poverty-related attainment gap. We are evaluating the quality of collaborative planning, progress and impact through inspection and local authority reports.

Local support

Education Scotland provides each local authority with a named attainment advisor. These advisors work alongside local authority staff, community planning partners, headteachers and teachers to co-ordinate, plan and support appropriate evidence-based interventions and approaches. They provide expertise, support and challenge on closing the poverty-related attainment gap. Attainment advisors work across all levels in the system and provide front line support to schools. The specific remit of individual attainment advisors is bespoke to meet the needs of different contexts in individual local authorities. A significant impact of the attainment advisor role is in supporting and promoting improved collaboration within schools and local authorities, across RICs and with a range of local and national partners. They work with leaders and practitioners to build capacity to improve self-evaluation underpinned by robust evidence of what is working well and what needs further improvement. They also provide support in the effective use of data, tracking progress, supporting planning of interventions and the evaluation of impact. Attainment advisors also work in collaboration with Scottish Government improvement advisors and schools to develop approaches to ensure improvement can become self-sustaining. Attainment advisors regularly report on progress which informs decisions at national level. They also encourage examples of what is working to be shared across authorities. Exemplars are published on the NIH to ensure all schools and partner organisations are able to learn from the work and make use of materials shared. The approach taken places literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing; learning and teaching; families and communities support; and leadership as the core strands of the Scottish Attainment Challenge supported work.

Inspection

From August 2016 school inspections have included an evaluation on the six point scale of the school's success in raising attainment and achievement and ways in which they can demonstrate improvements to equity for all learners. Of the 120 schools across primary, secondary and special provision inspected as part of the sample for the National Improvement Framework between August 2016 and June 2017, almost all schools were evaluated as satisfactory or better (92%). Almost half (49%) were evaluated as good, very good or excellent in 'raising attainment and achievement.' This is clearly an area of focus to continue to enable improvement. Overall, children and young people's attainment and achievement continues to be too variable. School staff have an increased focus around data and the identification of 'gaps' in attainment and achievement. This data includes, for example, achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels, SQA results, attendance and exclusion statistics and levels of participation and engagement. In most sectors this data is increasingly well used by senior staff to develop strategies. There is a need for more consistent use of tracking and monitoring of children and young people's learning to improve attainment and achievement.

School inspection and other review processes are used, where necessary, to ensure schools use their PEF appropriately to improve outcomes for identified learners. In

addition, inspections of the attainment-related aspects of the education functions of the nine challenge authorities¹¹ will take place by the end of December 2018. These inspections take account of all activity in the local authority to improve learning, raise attainment and close the poverty-related attainment gap over time. To date, two local authority inspections have been completed with one underway and the remaining scheduled by Dec 2018.

There is a strong sense of momentum across Scotland through the Scottish Attainment Challenge. Our intelligence shows us that schools making the best progress clearly define what the poverty-related attainment gap looks like in their context and maintain a focus on health and wellbeing. They use tracking data effectively to identify and review the progress of individual children affected by poverty. They then plan additional activities, interventions and resources to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy to ensure all children achieve in line with national expectations. Finally, they continually evaluate the impact on children's progress and attainment and take further action where needed.

Challenges and barriers to success

As with all programmes, a number of challenges have arisen over the course of the Scottish Attainment Challenge both at local and national level. Education Scotland continues to work in partnership with colleagues in Scottish Government, RICs, local authorities and with other partners to overcome these challenges.

In some local authorities, levels of bureaucracy, procurement, timescales and reporting cycles have been reported as barriers to success. Working in partnership as outlined above, we have taken on board feedback and have worked with key people within the challenge authorities, schools and universal programmes¹² to streamline planning and reporting. We have provided advice to Scottish Government to realign timeframes to better align to existing planning and reporting schedules. The national PEF guidance for 2018¹³ now has a stronger focus on schools articulating defined outcomes to enable progress and impact to be measured and advocates the use of short, medium and long term outcomes to enable progress to be measured over time.

Almost all Education Scotland reports on progress highlight concerns about the ability to rollout ambitious programmes in the context of teacher and wider staffing shortages. We continue to have robust discussions with schools and local authorities to encourage lateral and innovative solutions to delivery using wider services and developing approaches to building capacity and sustainability beyond the programme. However staffing issues continue to be a challenge for a number of local authorities.

Six RICs have been established to support the mission of delivering excellence and equity for every child in Scotland. Education Scotland has established a team of six

¹¹ The nine 'Challenge Authorities' are those local authorities of Scotland with the highest concentrations of deprivation; Glasgow, Dundee, Inverclyde, West Dunbartonshire, North Ayrshire, Clackmannanshire, North Lanarkshire, East Ayrshire and Renfrewshire.

¹² Schools programme schools are those out with the challenge authorities, with significant proportions of their pupils living in deprived areas. The universal programme is national and local support for all other schools.

¹³ <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/pupil-equity-fund-operational-guidance-2018/>

Regional Advisors, each an experienced HMI, to link with each of the RICs. Our Regional Advisors maintain regular contact with each RIC Lead to provide on-going support and challenge as they develop their improvement plans. Work is well underway to develop our Regional offer and align our staffing and resources to meet the identified needs of each RIC.

It is widely accepted that the impact of poverty is a wider issue and education alone cannot bring about sustainable change. Wider partnerships across a range of other services are essential. Across Scotland, schools and local authorities are working with colleagues from NHS and social work to create bespoke packages of support. Many establishments are also working with Community Learning and Development and third sector partners. In particular they are well placed to support improvements to health and wellbeing. To further support this work, Education Scotland and Scottish Government worked with partners to develop and publish guidance on working with third sector partners which can be found on the NIH.

Future plans

As we move forward with the education reform agenda and Education Scotland's new and enhanced remit we will continue to improve the reach and impact of our work. Whilst there will still be a named attainment advisor for each local authority, attainment advisors will also work as a team across RICs. This will further support collaboration within and between local authorities and enable targeted support and deployment of the right skills and expertise where it is most required. Forming clusters of attainment advisor teams will ensure greater impact by more readily making connections across the improvement activity being progressed by local authorities. The attainment advisors will link up local project leads who are doing similar work so that they can consider joint delivery and share their experiences and learning. Education Scotland's governance arrangements, including regular internal monitoring and reporting shared with local authority colleagues, is also being further developed in alignment with the RICs. We will also continue to develop further our approach to evaluating the impact of our work within Education Scotland and collectively with Scottish Government colleagues.

Education Scotland
22 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland

Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) in Scotland - 22 March 2018

CPAG works on behalf of the more than one in four children in the UK growing up in poverty. It doesn't have to be like this. Our vision is of a society free of child poverty, where all children can enjoy a childhood free of financial hardship and have a fair chance in life to reach their full potential.

Context

Between 2014 and 2017, one in four children in Scotland were officially recognised as living in poverty,¹⁴ with forecasts projecting significant increases by 2020.¹⁵ There is clear evidence that growing up in poverty undermines children's attainment.¹⁶ The primary goal of policy makers must be to end the poverty that prevents children attaining to their potential. The 2017 Child Poverty (Scotland) Act is extremely welcome in setting statutory targets toward the eradication of child poverty, and creating a planning and accountability framework that requires national and local government to set out and report on the actions taken toward meeting those targets. It is now vital that the Scottish Parliament ensures priority and resources across government are directed at increasing family incomes (through improved employment and enhanced social security) as well as reducing the costs that families face (including childcare and housing costs.) *Preventing* the attainment gap by ending child poverty must be the primary goal. However, there are significant actions that can be taken at school to reduce barriers to learning, relieve pressure on family budgets and help reduce the attainment gap.

Poverty limits what children and young people can do and take part in at school.

Since 2014, CPAG's [Cost of the School Day](#) project has been working with children, parents and staff in schools across Scotland to identify actions which help tackle financial barriers to children's participation, learning and wellbeing throughout the school day.

From uniform, travel and trips to learning resources, lunch and clubs, we have gathered a wealth of evidence on the multiple costs that exist at school and the impact on children's participation, learning and wellbeing of being unable to meet them. We also have evidence of actions to tackle these costs which increase access to opportunities and improve pupil wellbeing.

Investigating school costs with children, parents/carers and staff and taking action to address identified problems and barriers can help

¹⁴ <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2018/03/3017/0>

¹⁵ <https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/10028>

¹⁶ E.g. <https://www.jrf.org.uk/data/education-scotland>

- ensure equal access to opportunities at school and remove barriers to learning and participation for children and young people from low income households
- minimise opportunities for poverty stigma and exclusion amongst young people
- reduce the pressures which school costs place on low family incomes and support families to access financial entitlements and maximise their incomes
- ensure that Pupil Equity Funding is accurately used to remove financial barriers at school for children and young people from low income households.

Cost of the School Day approaches are an integral part of closing the poverty attainment gap. Children can't learn when they can't participate or when they are unhappy. Action to address school costs helps to clear the way of the barriers which stop some children benefiting from teaching strategies proven to raise attainment. The Cost of the School Day project is recommended as an [Intervention for Equity](#) in the Pupil Equity Fund National Operational Guidance and a priority in the Scottish Government's [Fairer Scotland Action Plan](#).

How do school costs impact on the education of children and young people in poverty?

A range of school costs are difficult for low income families. This affects children's experiences at school – what they can do, what they can participate in, how they feel and how they learn.

Reduced and unequal access to opportunities at school

- Difficulty paying travel costs can affect attendance. Accessing after school activities and supported study is difficult in schools with school buses because staying on requires paying extra to get home later
- Difficulties managing costs for subjects like Home Economics, Technical, Drama and Art and Design limit access to the curriculum and affect subject choices at certificate level
- School staff are aware of hungry children in their schools. Hunger affects children's concentration and learning

"We have families who cannot claim for free school meals and they are breadline families. The parents are so proud and they go off to work but their children often come in hungry in morning." (Teacher)

- Lack of access to ICT and unsuitable home learning environments require additional resourcefulness and effort to complete homework

"I've got to go to the library because we don't have a computer at home and I've had to hand in homework late or rush it and it hasn't been the best because I've only been able to get there at lunch or break and sometimes I've got to skip lunch to make sure I get the work done." (Learner, S5)

- Some children are unable to attend and benefit from school trips. Effort is required from school staff to fund subsidies in schools where parents are less likely to be able to pay

- Entry costs, equipment and travel can stop children participating in the full range of school clubs and wider achievement initiatives
- Not bringing money for fun events may mean not getting to take part

“There’s nothing to do at the summer fair if you don’t have money. Even throwing a sponge at the teacher costs about £1. Sometimes you just have to sit in class if you don’t have any money, that’s happened to me. You get made fun of.” (Learner, P5)

Poverty shame and stigma affecting wellbeing

Inability to participate in the same activities as their peers can leave children feeling different and embarrassed. Children speak about being keenly aware of income differences and about feeling left out or deliberately self-excluding from opportunities.

“Well I think if all of your friends or people you know go to the after-school clubs, school trips, that kind of isolates you from them. You’re singled out, you’re not with them, just a spare person.” (Learner, S5)

- Insufficient, unkempt or unfashionable uniform can be picked on by other children. Non uniform days can place pressure on children to buy new outfits and they noticeably affect attendance
- Children can be sanctioned for having incorrect uniform or not having resources in the classroom, e.g. loss of Golden Time or detention

“Children have the embarrassment of us saying ‘do you have your money? You can’t cook today’. If you’re collecting money there are other things you’re not doing. Course fees are just really unfair. It’s not a free curriculum.” (Teacher)

- Children can feel embarrassed about asking for financial help and may not ask at all.

How Cost of the School Day supports school children experiencing poverty.

Cost of the School Day has worked intensively in Glasgow and Dundee and has provided resources, training and advisory support to over 20 local authorities:

We have raised practitioner awareness of the cost barriers which limit children’s learning and attainment and the impact of these cost barriers on children’s wellbeing at school. Key benefits noted by participants have included enhanced understanding of the impact of poverty, increased knowledge of how to support children affected by poverty, mindfulness of costs when planning day to day in school and greater confidence to take action on costs which limit children’s participation.

We have facilitated and advocated for policy and practice changes which ensure equal access to learning for children and young people. Schools report that policy and practice changes have removed financial barriers and reduced costs for families.

We have provided evidence to support authority wide actions to, for example, increase levels of school clothing grant and automate payment of school clothing grants.

Recent research from the London School of Economics¹⁷ tells us that money, in and of itself, has a causal effect on children's outcomes and that increased family income leads to improvements in children's outcomes, particularly cognitive development and school achievement. Therefore, approaches like Cost of the School Day which help families to maximise their disposable incomes can directly improve children's attainment.

Cost of the School Day actions which support attainment and achievement

There are many examples of schools making a difference to children and young people's participation, learning and wellbeing when they recognise likely cost barriers and pre-emptively act to remove them. Examples from our recent practice survey are listed below with teacher perception of impact.

Ensuring participation and access to learning

- A Falkirk Primary School spent PEF money on a supply of clothes which led to ***“improved self-esteem and engagement in learning. One pupil is now taking a full part in PE due to having an appropriate and fitting gym kit.”***
- A Dumfries and Galloway Secondary ensures access to the curriculum by offsetting Home Economics, Technical, Art, and PE costs: ***“Pupils do not avoid subjects as a result of curriculum costs. They are able to participate in all subjects without fear of extra costs.”***
- One Glasgow Secondary school in Glasgow says that the provision of resources to access the curriculum has led to ***“improved attainment and attendance for some vulnerable children.”*** A Moray Primary agrees that resource provision means ***“more children can take part and respond in class without stigma of having to say they didn't have a necessary resource that the others would take for granted.”***
- In a Glasgow Secondary, providing bus passes and lunch money led to ***increased attendance at an Easter revision programme*** by young people previously unlikely to attend.
- Breakfast club and free snacks in an Edinburgh Primary mean that ***“Children are able to concentrate better once they have eaten breakfast and their snack, thus having a positive impact on their attainment.”***
- 'Donation' only trips in a North Lanarkshire Primary mean that ***“children turn up on the trip rather than being kept off due to parental embarrassment at inability to pay for a trip.”***

Enhancing wellbeing

- One Primary School in the Scottish Borders discretely gives out uniform and gym kit where necessary. ***“Children who have been given clothing immediately look happier and more settled. One child had been lying about why he was not wearing his uniform. He was embarrassed and his behaviour was disruptive. When given a change of clothing and items to take home his mood immediately improved. He was smiling and his confidence and self-esteem improved.”***
- A North Lanarkshire primary makes sure that fun events are free – as a result there is ***“an inclusive ethos where pupils feel valued.”***

¹⁷ http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/case/_new/research/money_matters/report.asp

- A West Dunbartonshire Primary's preloved clothing bank "***reduces any potential bullying***... we have encouraged a 'no shame' approach and many parents and children access these clothes."

National applicability

Cost of the School Day approaches have grown rapidly over the last four years and now exist in over 20 local authorities. NHS Health Scotland's Child Poverty in Schools Practice Network has helped to bring local authority leads together to share practice and potentially develop work further. The action research model used in schools is applicable in any context in Scotland as action is guided by the needs and priorities of participants.

Conclusion

Child poverty rates in Scotland are high and look set to rise further in coming years without substantial policy changes at UK and Scotland level. It is vital that the Scottish Parliament prioritises action to end that poverty. In the meantime, children from low income households can't achieve at school if barriers created by poverty are not addressed. Cost of the School Day interventions puts money in family pockets and helps schools to remove financial barriers, clearing the way for children to fully participate, learn and achieve.

John Dickie

Director

Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland

22 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

The Education Endowment Foundation

The Education Endowment Foundation

1.1 The Education Endowment Foundation was formed in 2011, with a £120m grant from the Department for Education. The aim of the organisation is to break the link between disadvantage and educational attainment.

1.2 The EEF's activities include: the evaluation of specific programmes, particularly through randomised controlled trials (RCTs); summarising and disseminating evidence on effective education practices; and scaling successful approaches to schools across England.

1.3 The EEF aims to give teachers the information they need to provide all pupils with a high quality education, regardless of background. Where specific interventions or programmes are found to be effective, the EEF supports the scale-up of these approaches, so that a greater number of pupils are recipients of promising strategies for improving attainment.

1.4 In Scotland, the EEF is working in partnership with Education Scotland to increase the use of evidence. There is now a Scottish version of the EEF's Teaching and Learning Toolkit, an evidence synthesis of 34 approaches, summarising the average impact, cost, and security of evidence.ⁱ

Well-evidenced approaches to improving the attainment of disadvantaged pupils

2.1 The attainment gap

2.2.1 Within Scotland, there is a clear gap between pupils from deprived and non-deprived backgrounds. This gap is reported in PISA scoresⁱⁱ and in national testsⁱⁱⁱ. Sutton Trust research has also found that the attainment gap exists for pupils with high levels of attainment in Scotland.^{iv}

2.2.2 The Scottish Attainment Challenge was launched in 2015, and aims to achieve equity in educational outcomes. The Pupil Equity Fund provides direct funding to schools for each pupil registered to receive free school meals from P1 to S3.

2.2 Teacher quality

2.2.1 The meta-analysis in the Teaching and Learning Toolkit shows that, relative to other strategies, efforts to improve the quality of pedagogy appear to be the most cost effective ways of achieving improvements in attainment outcomes (see Figure 1). By contrast, approaches that focus on the school structure, such as school uniform, reducing class sizes and performance pay, are less cost effective.

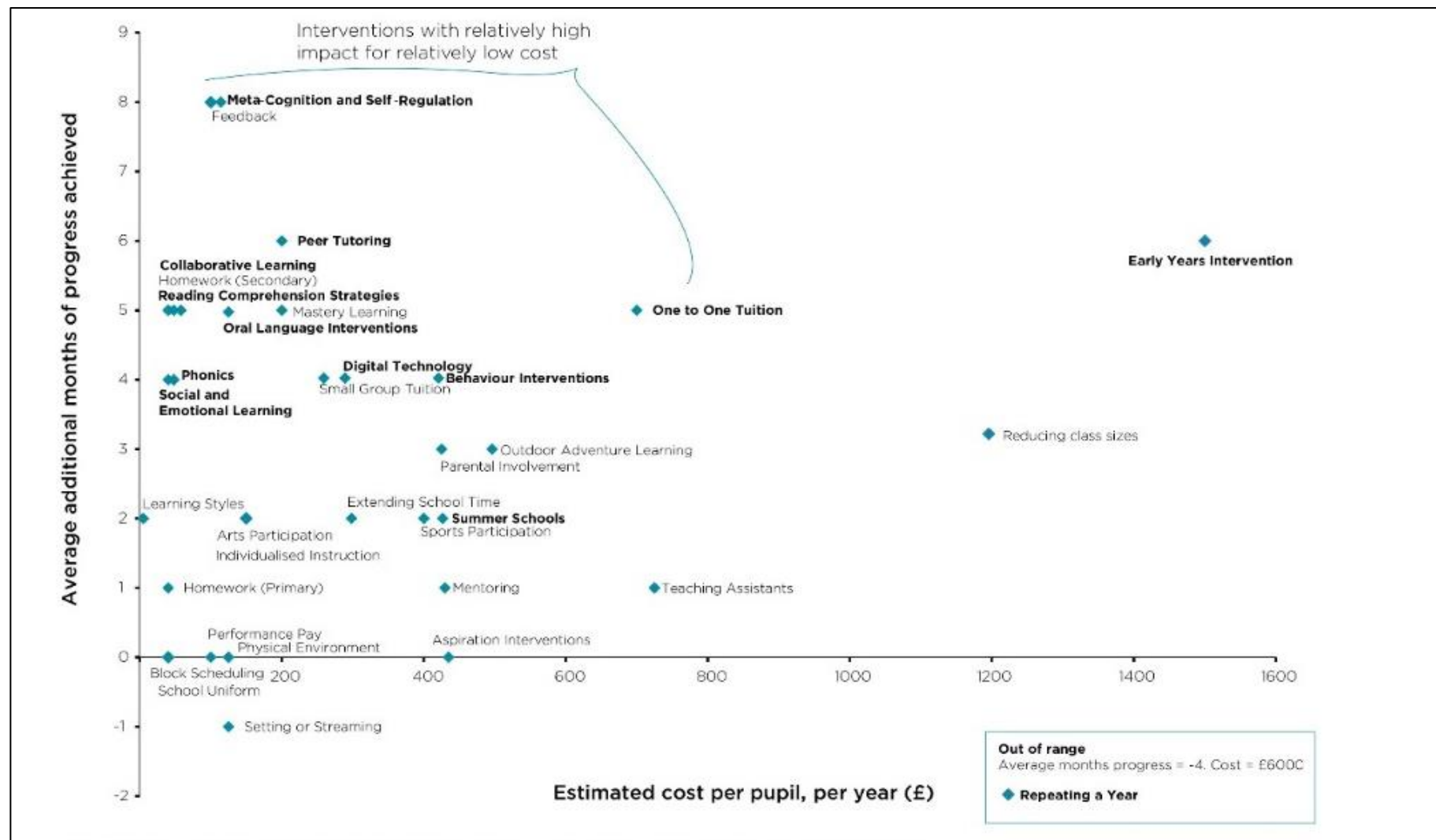


Figure 1: Cost effectiveness of the approaches listed in the Teaching and Learning Toolkit

2.2.2 There is evidence that improving the quality of teaching is likely to have a disproportionately positive impact on children from low-income families^v, and that the quality of teaching is generally lower in schools serving disadvantaged communities.^{vi}

2.2.3 Examples of cost-effective strategies that focus on teaching quality, include the use of metacognitive strategies, reading comprehension strategies, and the provision of effective feedback.^{vii}

2.2.4 The positive impact of using metacognitive strategies as part of teaching has been further supported by individual randomised controlled trials of programmes such as 'Using Self-Regulation to Improve Writing'; 'Thinking, Doing, Talking Science'; and 'Philosophy for Children'. Each of these programmes provided teacher training on a meta-cognitive strategy, and independent evaluations found promising impacts on attainment outcomes.

2.3 Early Years Interventions

2.2.1 Gaps between more affluent children and their peers emerge before the age of 5. A 2014 study by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that by age 5, there is a gap of 10 months in problem solving and 13 months in vocabulary. Effective early years provision is crucial in preventing gaps from emerging before the start of compulsory education.^{viii}

2.2.2 Evidence from the Teaching and Learning Toolkit, indicates that early years interventions, on average have an impact of five months' additional progress.

2.2.3 Improving the quality of provision – for example by training staff – appears to be more cost effective than simply increasing the quantity of provision. The 'Early Years Toolkit' is an evidence synthesis of 1,500 studies that aims to provide information on the cost, impact and evidence strength for 12 common early years approaches. Well evidenced approaches in early years settings include: developing early number concepts, using self-regulation strategies, and language development interventions.

2.2.4 There is weaker evidence on specific interventions that target children in early years settings. The EEF has evaluated one such intervention, which found promising impacts for an early language programme.^{ix} Six further trials are underway, but evidence on specific interventions is still limited.

2.4 Targeted interventions

2.2.5 There is consistent high quality evidence for targeted interventions such as one to one tuition and small group tuition.^x These approaches can be expensive, but in most cases lead to moderate to high improvements in pupil outcomes, and often with stronger positive impact for disadvantaged children.

2.2.6 Effective examples of targeted interventions typically involve structured approaches that provide staff with high quality training and support in delivering the programme.

2.2.7 A good example of how of structured interventions can be used effectively is

when deploying teaching assistants. Evidence suggests that teaching assistants can have minimal impact when used as a supplementary teacher and not provided with any professional development or support. However, when delivering structured interventions, consistently positive impacts have been found in high quality evaluations.

2.2.8 Targeted interventions can be especially effective at closing gaps in attainment. There is evidence that, when targeted effectively, interventions can have greater impact on pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. For example, an evaluation of ABRACADABRA – a structured approach to reading delivered by teaching assistants – found an increased impact on attainment for pupils eligible for free school meals.^{xi}

Barriers to closing the attainment gap

3.1 Untested approaches

3.1.1 While there is a growing evidence base on the effectiveness of various approaches, many schools still use practices or programmes that have not been tested. There is a risk that these approaches may increase the gap for disadvantaged pupils. For example, teaching assistants are frequently used to teach the disadvantaged pupils, despite evidence that this may increase attainment gaps if not part of a structured intervention.^{xii}

3.1.2 Numerous training providers sell approaches that have no evidence of effectiveness. For example, there is a growing market for Ed-tech, which aims to use of technology to improve attainment. Evidence shows that, while digital technology resources can be effective at improving attainment, impacts are contingent on being paired with good pedagogical practice.^{xiii} Schools may spend time and resources on approaches that are ultimately ineffective.

Teacher workload

3.1.3 Adopting evidence-based approaches to improving attainment for disadvantaged pupils requires time for selection, implementation and evaluation of such approaches. In numerous process evaluations for programmes evaluated in England, time and workload have been cited as key barriers to the effective delivery of approaches.^{xiv}

3.1.4 Time for implementing successful interventions can often be made through critically assessing and stopping existing practices that are not having positive impacts on learning. For example, in England a large amount of teacher time is spent on marking approaches that have no basis in evidence.^{xv}

3.1.5 Resources such as the Teaching and Learning Toolkit aim to reduce the barriers to using research by summarising findings that would otherwise be contained in academic journals across hundreds of separate studies.

Other areas of interest

4.1 Parental engagement strategies

4.1.1 The association between parental involvement and a child's academic success is well-established and there are numerous studies suggesting that increasing parental engagement may be an effective way of closing the attainment gap.^{xvi}

4.1.2 There is, however, little evidence on effective ways of engaging parents. The EEF has conducted three projects that have aimed to engage parents in training on how to support their children's learning.^{xvii} In each case, the study found that participation rates were low and that it was difficult to attract and retain parents.

4.1.3 Another EEF-funded project aimed to engage parents using text messages to communicate the dates of upcoming tests, whether homework was submitted on time and what their children were learning at school.^{xviii} This light-touch technique found small positive impacts on maths attainment and reducing absenteeism.

4.2 Retention and deployment of high quality teachers

4.1.4 If the attainment gaps between rich and poor pupils are going to be reduced, disadvantaged pupils need access to high quality teachers. There are a range of potential levers for either increasing the overall quality of teaching in the system or directing high quality teachers to areas of disadvantage.

4.1.5 There is a lack of high quality evidence around approaches that work to retain high quality teachers. Given teacher shortages in several key subjects and regional areas in Scotland,^{xix} this is an area that would benefit from evidence generation

4.1.6 In the USA, there have been several studies on incentivising high quality teachers to transfer to schools with poor performance or disadvantaged pupils. The largest study found an impact of 2-3 months on maths and reading scores.^{xx} There have been no high quality studies of such 'transfer incentives' within the UK. The EEF, in partnership with Wellcome, is currently selecting projects looking at the most effective ways to retain science teachers in schools serving disadvantaged communities.

4.3 Using school to school collaboration to support implementation

4.1.7 Partnerships between schools working on similar challenges can be a helpful way to support effective implementation of well-evidenced interventions. Schools can learn from each other, share resources (such as assessments checklists and access to training or coaching), and reflect on each other's successes and failures.

4.1.8 Scotland's Improvement Collaboratives could be used for this purpose if schools are able to self-organise or be supported to organise into groups of common interest, and if leadership of the groups is resourced. The EEF has been working in partnership with designated Research Schools to support a similar model in England.

The Education Endowment Foundation
22 March 2018

i <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/EEF-Toolkit.aspx>

ii Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2015: Highlights from Scotland's Results: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00511095.pdf>

iii Scottish Government (2015) Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy 2014 (Literacy). <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00475898.pdf>

iv Global Gaps (2017) Sutton Trust highlights the gap for high attaining pupils: https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Global-Gaps_FINAL_V2_WEB.pdf v See Improving the impact of teachers on pupil

achievement in the UK, 2011, The Sutton Trust: <http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/2teachers-impact-report-final.pdf>

vi Social inequalities in access to teachers (2016) Allen, Mian, Sims, Commission on Inequality in Education: <http://www.smf.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Social-Market-Foundation-Social-inequalities-in-access-to-teachers-Embargoed-0001-280416.pdf>

vii <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit> viii Closing the Attainment Gap in Scottish Education (2014) Edward Sosu and Sue Ellis: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/closing-attainment-gap-scottish-education>

ix Nuffield Early Language Intervention (2016) Education Endowment Foundation: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/nuffield-early-language-intervention/>

x Teaching and Learning Toolkit, Education Endowment Foundation: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit> xi ABRA: Online Reading Support (2016) Education Endowment Foundation: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Projects/Evaluation_Reports/ABRA_with_addendum.pdf

xii Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants Guidance Report (2015): https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Campaigns/TA_Guidance_Report_MakingBestUseOfTeachingAssistants-Printable.pdf

xiii Digital Technology, Teaching and Learning Toolkit: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit/digital-technology/>

xiv Including, but not limited to: [Teacher Observation \(2017\)](#), [Achieve Together \(2017\)](#), [Challenge the Gap \(2017\)](#) (All Education Endowment Foundation)

xv A Marked Improvement (2016), Education Endowment Foundation https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/EEF_Marking_Review_April_2016.pdf

xvi Parental Involvement, Teaching and Learning Toolkit, Education Endowment Foundation: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit/parental-involvement/>

xvii Education Endowment Evaluation Reports: [Mind the Gap \(2014\)](#), [SPOKES \(2016\)](#), [Parent Academy \(2016\)](#)

xviii Texting Parents (2016) Education Endowment Foundation: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Projects/Evaluation_Reports/Texting_Parents.pdf

xix Teacher Workforce Planning for Scotland's Schools (2017) Education and Skills Committee: <https://sp-bpr-en-prod-cdnep.azureedge.net/published/ES/2017/9/1/Teacher-Workforce-Planning-for-Scotland-s-Schools/10th%20Report,%202017.pdf>

xx Glazerman, S., A. Protik, B. Teh, J. Bruch, J. Max. (2013). Transfer Incentives for High Performing Teachers: Final Results from a Multisite Experiment (NCEE 2014-4003). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED544269.pdf>

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

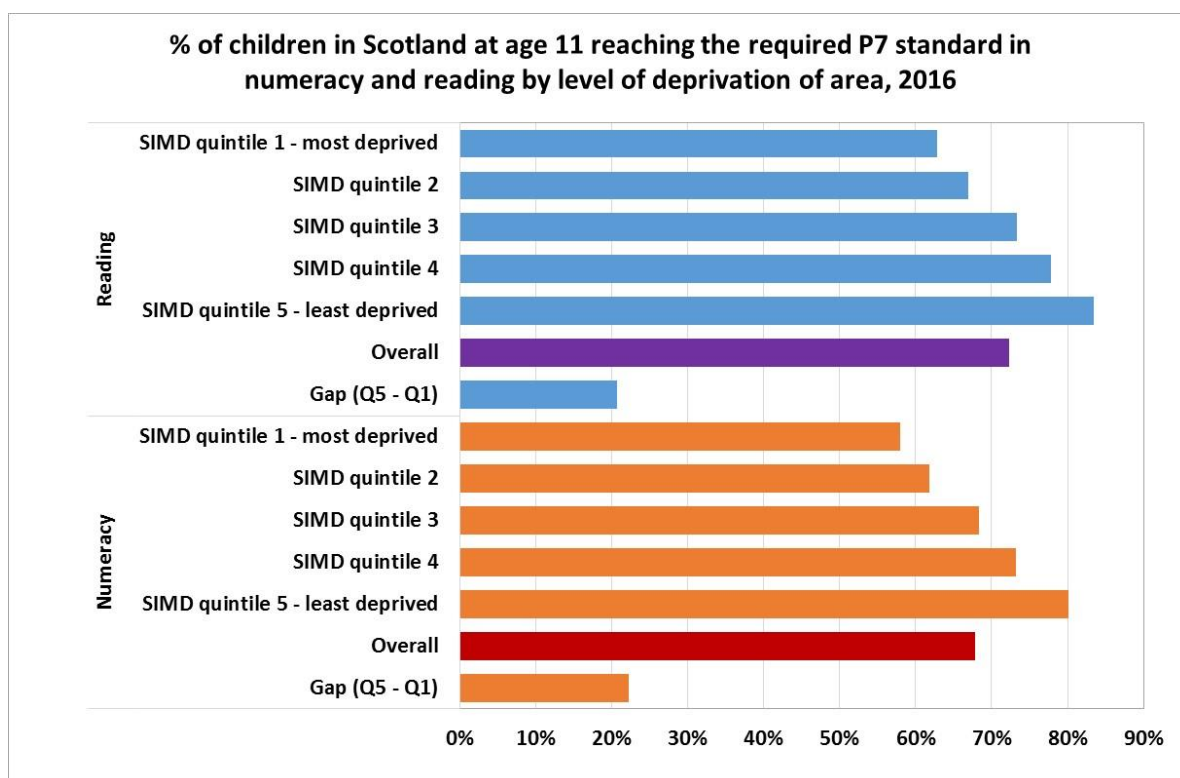
Joseph Rowntree Foudation

1. JRF warmly welcomes the Committee's inquiry. JRF is committed to identifying and addressing the root causes of poverty and disadvantage across the UK. We published a Solving Poverty strategy in 2016 to bring together the evidence on the causes and consequences of modern-day poverty and to set out solutions mapped onto the five key drivers of poverty including education and skills attainment. This drew upon the findings of a major Education and Poverty programme which concluded in 2014 with a review of evidence and solutions for Scotland by a team at Strathclyde University.¹⁸
2. JRF's latest state of the nation report on poverty in Scotland¹⁹ highlights the trends for households on low incomes. This includes a set of indicators on education and skills. These are limited to some degree by the way official statistics are framed. While richer information on child development in the early years is available through, for example, the Growing Up in Scotland (GUS) study, data on attainment and achievement in school age is mostly reported by neighbourhood type based on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). The relationship between child poverty (at family level) and SIMD measures (area level) varies considerably across Scotland, making it a valuable but limited measure. To have a stronger grasp of how attainment is changing for children and young people in poverty, we need better data to be available more consistently showing the relationship with free school meal eligibility and take-up, outcomes for specific groups including children with Additional Support Needs and care-experienced children.
3. The available figures show a clear gap in attainment – shown here for reading and numeracy – for children at age 5 between families in neighbourhoods grouped by SIMD scores. In 2016-17, the gap in reaching the required P1 standard was 16% and 14% in reading and numeracy between households in the most and least disadvantaged places. This snapshot conceals a gap that in language and cognitive development identified by the age of two. The attainment gap continues to widen as children get older. At age 11, the gap was 21% for reading and 22% for literacy. These and other figures can be viewed at JRF's Data Dashboard²⁰.

¹⁸ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/closing-attainment-gap-scottish-education>

¹⁹ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/poverty-scotland-2017>

²⁰ https://www.jrf.org.uk/data?f%5B0%5D=field_taxonomy_poverty_indicator%3A871

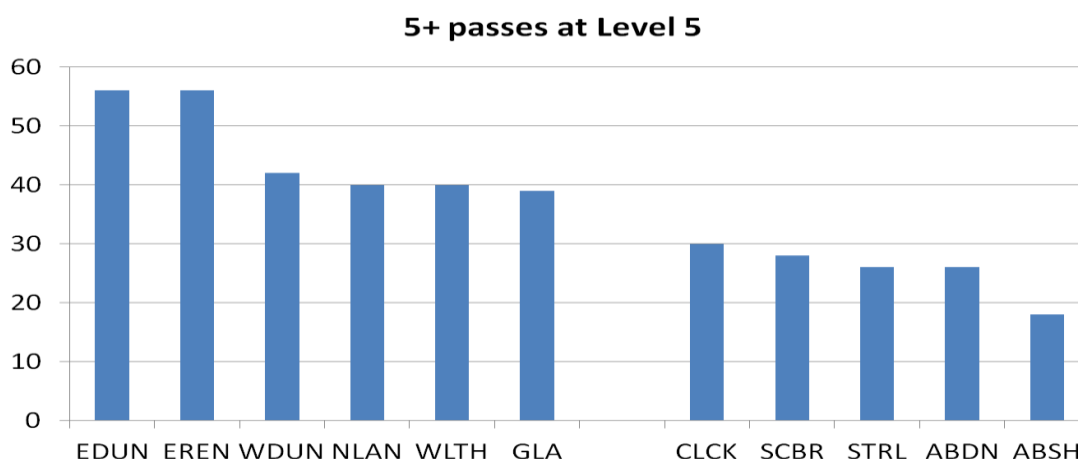


4. The percentage of school leavers in Scotland achieving at least one Level 5 qualifications increased from 77% in 2009-10 to 86% in 2015-16. The gap between children in the least and most deprived areas *reduced* from 33 to 20 percentage points in this period due to the improving performance in the most deprived areas.
5. Looking at a higher threshold of attainment – at least five passes at Level 5 – for children living in the most deprived neighbourhoods shows a highly variable picture. The Local Government Benchmarking Tool published by the Improvement Service²¹ shows attainment on this measure across Scottish local authorities. Taking an average measure over three years helps to reduce variations caused by small numbers or single-year events. Figure x shows that in two local authorities, young people living in the most deprived areas have at least a 50% chance of attaining 5+ Level 5 passes. These are more affluent authorities with pockets of deprivation. About 40% of young people in the most deprived areas of the next group of authorities attain 5+ Level 5 passes, including those with higher rates of poverty in the west of Scotland. At the other end of the spectrum, the odds of attaining at this level for young people from similar backgrounds are much lower – between 20-30% in a geographically diverse group of authorities. While the number and characteristics of deprived areas varies across local authorities, this comparison suggests that attainment varies substantially within deprived areas. The reasons for this are not fully understood, but we can speculate that these are likely to include school leadership and culture, use of data to inform practice,

²¹ Improvement Service Local Government Benchmarking Framework, indicator CHN6: <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/list-of-indicators.html#cs>

improvements in teaching methods, targeted resourcing and relationships with families, communities and wider stakeholders.

Young people in the most deprived areas attaining five or more Level 5 passes: variation by selected local authorities, 2014-16²²



6. We also know that attainment varies by ethnicity and gender. For example, at S4 average attainment among Chinese, Mixed Ethnicity and Indian Scots is higher than for their White-Scottish or British counterparts. It is similar for Scots of Pakistani background and lower than average among Scots of Black-African and 'Other' ethnic groups. Looking again at the most deprived neighbourhoods, the attainment gap is consistently lower (by 10 – 30 points) among minority ethnic pupils while BME girls outperform BME boys by an average of 15 points.
7. Action to reduce various elements of the attainment gap is needed in multiple settings - within, between and beyond schools (The Robert Owen Centre) and taking account of the age and stage of children. For example, international studies show that at age 7, parental/home influences are about five times more important for children's development than school influences. By age 11, these are broadly similar and by age 16, school effects are about four times more important²³.
8. Closer partnerships between schools and families can help to reduce the gap in specific skills including children's reading²⁴. When parents are helped to read to their children with support from high quality programmes, the gap in

²² East Dunbartonshire (EDUN), East Renfrewshire (EREN), West Dunbartonshire (WDUN), North Lanarkshire (NLAN), West Lothian (WLTH), Glasgow (GLA), then Clackmannanshire (CLCK), Scottish Borders (SCBR), Stirling (STRL), Aberdeen City (ABDN) and Aberdeenshire (ABSH).

²³ Sacker et al (2002) 'Social Inequality in Educational Achievement and Psychological Adjustment throughout Childhood: Magnitude and Mechanisms.' *Social Science and Medicine*, 55: 863-880.

²⁴ Goodall and Vorhaus (2011) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/182508/DFE-RR156.pdf

literacy standards is reduced modestly. When parents are helped to use specific techniques— e.g. pause, prompt, praise – a very significant reduction in the gap in children’s reading ability can be achieved.

9. JRF has also explored the relationship between parents, places and poverty on educational attitudes and aspirations²⁵. This looked at how aspirations form among young people and families, in disadvantaged areas of Glasgow, Nottingham and London. It found that low-income families mostly have high aspirations, but they can go off-track quickly. This reflects the knowledge, connections and experiences of families, including the patchy quality of careers advice and work experience. To raise and maintain aspirations, the range and quality of opportunities available to young people from low income families must also be raised for example through earlier high quality subject choice and careers guidance, work taster opportunities, pathways to build know-how and help achieve goals and specific support mechanisms (e.g. financial, mentoring, Foundation Apprenticeships).
10. High quality public services including education make an essential contribution to solving poverty. Thanks to a recent review of international evidence²⁶, we can also be confident that having an adequate income makes it easier to achieve a range of good outcomes for children. We know that poverty is strongly associated with poorer outcomes for many, but not all, who experience it. Families with short spells of poverty are likely to fare better than those in persistent or severe poverty. Those with other resources – for example savings, family members to help with money worries or with childcare – are likely to cope better. Poverty does not *determine* life chances, but it creates strong and often cumulative layers of risk.
11. How far does money matter for children’s outcomes compared with early learning and childcare, raising attainment in schools or better support for parents? Which outcomes are more sensitive to family income than others? These are among the questions explored by a team at the London School of Economics and Political Science²⁷ with support from JRF over two waves of research in 2013 and 2017. The research included 61 relevant, high quality studies with clear evidence on whether money affects child outcomes. These span 30 years of evidence. Most of the studies were from the USA but other significant studies have been done in Canada, Australia, Germany, Norway, Sweden and Mexico as well as the UK. Despite a lack of studies from Scotland, the pathways by which a lack of money affects children’s outcomes

²⁵ St Clair and Kintrea (2011) <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/influence-parents-places-and-poverty-educational-attitudes-and-aspirations>

²⁶ Kerris Cooper and Kitty Stewart (2017): http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/case/_new/research/money_matters/report.asp

²⁷ Kerris Cooper and Kitty Stewart: http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/case/_new/research/money_matters/report.asp

seem consistent across countries and equally relevant here: poverty drives parental stress, anxiety and especially maternal depression, material deprivation and a poorer home environment. Reductions in family income are likely to have wide-ranging negative effects. Long periods of poverty affect children's outcomes more severely than short spells.

12. Turning this round, what are the positive effects of families having more financial resources? A clear and consistent finding of the review is that more money does directly improve child development and that there is a significantly bigger effect for low income families: *"the overwhelming majority of studies find significant positive effects of increased family income across a range of children's outcomes, including cognitive development and school achievement, social and behavioural development and children's health"*.
 13. Some of these effects – notably for cognitive development - are stronger in early childhood. The impacts of increased income and spending similar amounts on *education programmes* appear broadly the same. Increases in family income for those on low incomes substantially help to reduce differences in school outcomes and wider aspects of child wellbeing. The researchers found that raising family incomes to the average for their household type would be expected to halve the attainment gap between children eligible for free school meals and others found in England at Key Stage 2.
 14. The evidence on *health* is now stronger than in 2013 thanks to a set of studies identifying positive income effects on birth weight in particular, although evidence is more mixed for later children's health outcomes including obesity and respiratory diseases. There is also further evidence of the positive effect of the American equivalent of working tax credits (Earned Income Tax Credits) on reducing maternal smoking, including during pregnancy.
 15. One particularly important new finding comes from the first study included in the review to consider the effects of income on *child abuse and neglect*. Allowing families to retain more of their child support payments rather than being deducted from benefits, was associated with significantly fewer investigations for child maltreatment. The authors single out this finding due to the devastating consequences of child maltreatment and the rigour of the study methodology
 16. What about *the means* by which more money enables better outcomes for children? Evidence for two main pathways is found:
 - Family stress: new studies on maternal depression amplify earlier findings about the damaging effects of poverty on maternal mental health, itself a vital sign of child well-being and development.
-

- Family investment - the ability of parents to invest in support and goods that enhance child development. Unsurprising but significant are two new examples in Canada and the USA where a higher family income is associated with lower 'food insufficiency'.
17. If there is clear evidence of cause and effect between money and children's outcomes, we are still left to ask how much does money matter? What is the 'effect size' in these studies? Where this can be estimated, impacts seem to vary quite widely. With the exception of maternal depression (where a strong impact is seen), the effects are described as modest but comparing reasonably well to the impact of other approaches such as spending more on education.
 18. This is an important and balanced conclusion for policy-makers in Scotland: money and high quality services both matter in broadly similar proportions when it comes to reducing child poverty. The authors find *"strong reasons to believe that reducing income poverty would itself have important and measurable effects both on children's [home] environment and on their development"*.
 19. Other approaches to improving the *prospects* of low-income children by improving learning environments at home, in nurseries and schools are essential. Scottish Government commitments to expanding early learning and childcare, reducing the attainment gap and expanding the supply of affordable housing will all help to improve children's life chances. However, very specific policy approaches on education, health or skills may have bounded (or 'domain-specific') effects. By comparison, addressing what's in the *pockets* of low income families affects different outcomes at the same time, spanning cognitive and behavioural, attainment, the home environment and health, including child anxiety and parental mental health.
 20. When it comes to improving educational outcomes for children in Scotland, reducing child poverty should go hand in hand with the Attainment Challenge. Actions to reduce the attainment gap will be more effective if we do more to help families avoid and escape poverty.

Dr Jim McCormick - Associate Director Scotland, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

The Poverty Alliance

Education and Skills Committee: Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty March 2018

1. Introduction

1.1 The Poverty Alliance is the national anti-poverty network in Scotland. We are an independent organisation with over 230 members drawn from the voluntary and public sectors, trade unions, researchers, faith groups and individuals with direct experience of poverty. Our aim is to work with others to enable communities and individuals to tackle poverty. We have a number of key policy areas that provide the focus for our activities; addressing low incomes, supporting services to reduce poverty, enhancing the participation of people with direct experience of poverty in policy development processes, and addressing attitudes to poverty.

2. The inquiry

2.1 The Poverty Alliance welcomes the Education and Skills Committee's inquiry into attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty. We believe that it represents an important opportunity to consider the ways in which poverty can restrict attainment and educational achievement, as well as identify the interventions that can support the Scottish Government's Attainment Challenge ambition of ensuring that Scotland is 'the best place to grow up.'

2.2 This submission has been based not only on the existing research and evidence base, but also by direct contributions from people with experience of poverty. To inform our response, we supported five discussion groups (three in Glasgow, one in Fife and one in Inverness) attended by people experiencing poverty who are also parents, at which they responded to the four key questions posed by the inquiry. We also received written responses from individuals with direct experience of poverty.

3. Costs associated with education

Uniform grants

3.1 The cost of uniforms was identified as a key issue by almost all of the discussion groups. While school clothing grants are available across Scotland, inconsistencies in the level of grants provided across different local authorities remain, and it was agreed in all groups that the level of grant can often be inadequate in meeting the needs of children, particularly older children.

School trips

3.2 The cost of school trips was identified as a barrier for many children's full participation in school activities, with some parents describing an approach to trips which can be exclusionary, including requests for payment which often place unrealistic demands upon parents.

Breakfast clubs

3.3 In some cases, the cost of breakfast clubs (sometimes £2 per day per child) is too high for people on low incomes. Particularly for people whose children do not receive free school meals, it can often be unsustainable to pay for breakfast clubs and lunches, especially if they have more than two children at school.

Access to cultural activities

3.4 Clear inequities exist in children's access to cultural activities such as dance, music and drama. While schools may deliver arts classes as part of the curriculum, access to extra-curricular activities is inconsistent and people with low incomes are often unable to afford to pay for extra tuition or out-of-school clubs. Given the strong link between participation in arts education and attainment, such inequities in access are of concern.

Childcare

3.5 Gaps in childcare provision, including variation in childcare costs between local authorities, continue to be a major issue for people on low incomes (particularly for people with children at different schools, e.g. primary and secondary, which may finish at different times and be located at a distance from each other).

3.6 With childcare costs often being prohibitive for people on low incomes, it can be hugely demanding to sustain employment while also co-ordinating childcare provision (especially if employers are unable or unwilling to show flexibility in their approach to working hours). Consideration must therefore be given to how universal childcare coverage, identified as the most effective way of addressing women and children's poverty and as the most effective way of addressing poverty and inequality before children get to school age²⁸, can be developed and implemented.

Transport

3.6 Particularly for children from low income families who live in rural areas, transport can present a significant barrier to attainment. In the absence of school transport, children can be reliant upon irregular or unreliable bus services which can often (particularly for families with more than one child) mean a significant financial outlay each month. Limited access to transport can also have an impact on children's ability to engage in afterschool extra-curricular activities, as well as their ability to undertake home learning following lengthy periods of travel to and from school.

4. Free School Meals

4.1 The extension of free school meals to all children from P1 – P3 has been positive, with discussion group participants welcoming the consequent reduction in school day costs and the contribution it can make to attainment. This supports an evaluation from England which examined the potential impact of offering free school meals to all primary school pupils in two pilot areas, and found positive effects of eating a nutritious lunch on attainment.²⁹

²⁸ Rummary, Kirsteen. *Why childcare is important to tackle poverty: What we can learn from international evidence*. Poverty Alliance Briefing 26, March 2017. Available at http://www.povertyalliance.org/userfiles/files/PA_Briefing26_ChildcarePoverty_March17_FINAL.pdf

²⁹ Kitchen S, Tanner E, Brown V et al. (2013) *School Meals Pilot: Impact Report, DFE-RR227*. Department of Education https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/184047/DFE-RR227.pdf

4.2 A recent announcement by Glasgow City Council that free school meals will be extended to children in P4 is welcome, and other local authorities should be encouraged to explore similar approaches to widen access to free school meals.

4.3 However, some participants did highlight ongoing stigma attached to free school meals in later primary school years and secondary school, with some schools still utilising a system whereby all children on free school meals are issued with a pre-paid card and children not in receipt of free school meals pay for lunches in cash. Such an approach runs clear risk of fostering stigma (which can have a negative impact on attendance and attainment), and should be discontinued.

5. Home learning

Home environment

5.1 Poverty Alliance research has shown that, particularly for younger children, a space at home to learn and complete homework is essential, yet this is not always an option.³⁰ Particularly for children living in inadequate or overcrowded accommodation, it can be hugely challenging to undertake work at home, with teachers not always fully understanding the home environment that they live in and how this may impact their learning.

5.2 Discussion group participants also highlighted the impact of fuel poverty, with some feeling they are unable to provide the kind of warm, comfortable home environment required for effective home learning. One participant spoke of how their child's school had provided money from the school's fundraising account to help them heat their home, after observing that their child was being impacted by a poorly-heated home environment.

5.3 Such issues underline the importance of afterschool supported study sessions or homework clubs, which can provide children experiencing poverty with the learning space and support they need.

Access to the internet

5.4 Ensuring free and consistent access to the internet for all children is a necessity in order to support their learning. Yet many children do not have access to a computer at home and, if they do, access to the internet cannot always be guaranteed due to cost.

5.5 It was suggested by discussion group participants that, where afterschool clubs are not available, schools work with local libraries to ensure that children are able to access internet services. Schools could also review the necessity of internet-based homework tasks and assess the ability of all pupils to participate.

6. Parental involvement

6.1 Research has shown that parents' active involvement in their child's school (for example helping with homework, talking to teachers, attending school functions, and taking part in school governance) not only leads to their children reporting more positive school experiences, but is also one of the most significant contributors to

³⁰ Poverty Alliance, Children in Scotland & Wheatley Group (2015). *Beyond4Walls: Participatory Youth Project* http://www.povertyalliance.org/userfiles/files/Beyond4Walls_Report_FINAL_Nov15.pdf

attainment.³¹ Yet parents on low incomes report lower levels of involvement³², with some discussion group participants, for example, reporting feeling unwelcome within school governance structures (such as PTAs) or unaware of opportunities to become involved.

6.2 Family support is also one of the most significant contributors to children's attainment, particularly for children in low-income areas, with the evidence suggesting that support which improves the quality of parent-child interactions is likely to have the biggest impact on educational achievement. Other factors such as improving connections between home and school are also vital.

6.3 Fife Gingerbread's Gateway project stands as an exemplar intervention that embodies many of these supportive factors. An early intervention partnership project, it offers support to vulnerable families where the oldest child is aged between 5 and 10 years. The Gateway aims to create opportunities for families to tackle their difficulties, building their resilience and developing personal and interpersonal skills. It does this by providing a 'whole family' approach with three strands: a) family mentoring, support and coaching b) family learning and c) volunteering opportunities.

6.4 One of the primary aims of the project is to improve children's educational attainment and improve relationships between families, schools and other services. The project's intermediary 'go between' role has been found to reduce the pressure on schools, as well as allowing them a clear route for supporting children with issues that were beyond their remit.

7. ESOL

7.1 Particular challenges relating to attainment can exist for children who are ESOL learners or whose parents speak English as a second language. Participants in one discussion group, who speak English as a second language, expressed concern that they are unable to fully support their children's home learning, given the English language skills required to do so. It was suggested that one way of addressing this would be to embed comprehensive afterschool 'supported study' sessions for children who may require additional support.

7.2 Within school, there is a need for dedicated and consistent ESOL support for any child or young person who requires it; both in order to raise and sustain their attainment and to support their wider integration and wellbeing.

8. Immigration status

8.1 For children whose families are subject to immigration control, stories of extreme hardship are commonplace; something which has a clear and obvious impact upon levels of attainment. Insufficient asylum support rates, for example, can result in children's basic needs (such as access to decent food), not being met. It can also mean that they are living in overcrowded, sub-standard and, at times, unsafe accommodation.³³ For children whose parents have No Recourse to Public Funds,

³¹ Save the Children. *Helping Families Support Children's Success at School*. [https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/Helping_Families_Review_of_Research_Evidence_\(5\)_1.pdf](https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/Helping_Families_Review_of_Research_Evidence_(5)_1.pdf).

³² Growing up in Scotland (2012) 'Early experiences of primary school' <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2012/05/7940/7>

³³ Home Affairs Committee, *Asylum accommodation*, 31 January 2017, HC 637 2016-17. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmhaff/637/637.pdf>

the situation can be even worse, with an ever-present risk of destitution having a hugely detrimental, if not destructive, impact on educational attainment.

8.2 Good examples of support were cited, with one parent reporting that their child had been given free access to a breakfast club due to her complex and insecure immigration status. Particularly in schools located in asylum dispersal areas, with a high proportion of children who are refugees or asylum seekers, there is a need to consider what additional academic, personal and emotional support they may require to support and sustain their attainment.

9. Play

9.1 Research undertaken by the Poverty Alliance highlights the importance of play in supporting children's development. In benefitting children's cognitive and emotional development, play provides a means for children to express and understand their emotions and the world around them; something that can enable higher educational attainment and achievement. Yet the research also found that significant barriers are in place that prevent children from families with low incomes accessing play, such as the cost of leisure activities, transport, or the quality of play space within the home.³⁴

9.2 It is essential, therefore, that local Child Poverty Action Reports recognise the impact of measures that may impact on low-income families' ability to support play for their children. This includes local authorities ensuring that leisure facilities are affordable for all.

10. Children with additional support needs (ASN)

10.1 Scotland has a higher prevalence of ASN among children living in the bottom two income quintiles, with boys in the bottom quintile having an ASN prevalence of almost twice the national average. Indeed, six times as many children in the most deprived quintile have been being identified as having social, emotional and behavioural difficulties compared with those in the least.³⁵

10.2 Yet some participants in our discussion groups identified a current lack of appropriate support for children with ASN in mainstream schools. They primarily attributed this to a lack of teaching capacity, including low levels of ASN teachers and pupil support assistants, which they felt was having a negative impact on their children's attainment. Given this, there is a need to ensure that any changes in staffing levels are considered in the context of their impact of children with ASN, and children experiencing poverty more broadly.

10.3 The discussions supported the concerns raised by the Education and Skills Committee in its *How is Additional Support for Learning working in practice?* report that "parents from areas of deprivation may have lower chances to present to receive advice and support to ensure additional support needs of their children are recognized and the necessary support for learning provided."³⁶

³⁴ McHardy, Fiona. *Play in and around the home: Play and poverty in Fife*, Poverty Alliance & Fife Gingerbread, March 2015

³⁵ Scottish Government (2012b) *Growing up in Scotland: Early experiences of primary care*, Edinburgh: Scottish Government <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2012/05/7940/10>

³⁶ Education and Skills Committee 6th report. *How is Additional Support for Learning working in practice?* SP Paper 140. May 2017

10.4 Good practice examples were highlighted, with one parent noting the transformative impact that a Nurture Group (based within school) has had on their child who has ASN. By providing in-school, teacher-led psychosocial interventions, the groups are proven to positively impact on pupils' wellbeing and academic performance, and should be explored further by local authorities as a key tool in raising attainment.

11. Conclusion

There is a great deal of work already underway to address the attainment gap. The Scottish Government's Scottish Attainment Challenge is welcome, and the Getting it Right for Every Child approach should, by embedding early intervention, supporting joined up working and focusing on child wellbeing, support these efforts.

Yet this submission, which has been informed by the contributions of people with direct experience of poverty, has identified a number of areas where significant progress is required if we are to truly realise the vision of a Scotland where every child has the same opportunity to succeed, and where there is equity in educational outcomes.

The costs associated with education are a significant barrier to raising attainment and can, based on evidence provided by discussion group participants, both increase stress on families and impact on children's ability to fully engage with education and raise levels of attainment. This supports Child Poverty Action Group research which found that the cost of the school day can create barriers to participation and negative experiences for children and young people.³⁷ There is therefore a clear need to explore how costs associated with education can be reduced, in order to both loosen the grip of poverty on people's lives and support improved attainment among children from low income families.

As well as reducing the costs associated with education, consideration must also be given to how incomes can be increased. In the context of attainment, it is important to recognise the impact that increasing child benefit could have on parents' abilities to support their children's attainment, for example by supporting their children's participation in extra-curricular activities, or by contributing to childcare costs.

For more information contact:

**Neil Cowan,
Policy and Parliamentary Officer**

³⁷ Spencer, Sara (2015). *The Cost of the School Day*. Child Poverty Action Group http://www.cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/CPAG-Scot-Cost-Of-School-Day-Report%28Oct15%29_1.pdf

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

The Poverty and Inequality Commission

Poverty and attainment inquiry

Thank you for your email of 26 February 2018 inviting the Poverty and Inequality Commission to submit its views on tackling the impact of poverty on educational attainment. The Commission has not examined this issue in detail, so this response is based on the consideration that was given to education as part of the Commission's advice to Scottish Ministers on the Scottish Government's Child Poverty Delivery Plan.

It is important that the Committee's inquiry takes account of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 and the Scottish Government's first Child Poverty Delivery Plan. Evidence shows that children have worse cognitive development and schooling outcomes partly because of low income³⁸ and it is therefore crucial that continued efforts are made to reduce the numbers of children living in poverty.

The Commission's advice sets out actions that need to be taken in order to meet the statutory child poverty targets, as well as actions that deal with the consequences of living in poverty. The Commission expects that addressing barriers to education will be a key part of the Delivery Plan's actions to improve the quality of life, and future life chances, for children living in poverty. Action on education therefore needs to have a two pronged approach: raising educational attainment in order to reduce the likelihood of poverty in adulthood, and addressing the poverty-related barriers that prevent children from fully accessing education.

Raising educational attainment

In its advice the Commission welcomed the Scottish Government's commitment to, and investment in, closing the poverty related attainment gap. It is important that, in order to make a difference, funding should be explicitly directed towards the interventions which show the strongest evidence that they will make a difference. The Commission recommended in its advice that the Scottish Government should ensure that local authorities and schools have access to the best evidence about what works and that this informs the use of the attainment funding they receive. The impact of the £750m attainment funding should be monitored and evaluated. In order to drive good policy making it is important that the attainment gap should be measured in relation to family circumstance and not just on an area basis. This is especially important given that the majority of children in poverty do not live in deprived areas.

Given the gap that has already opened up between children from the most well off and the poorest households by the time they start school, stronger links should be made to the importance of quality in early learning and child care in order to close the attainment gap.

³⁸ Kerris Cooper & Kitty Stewart, *Does Money Affect Children's Outcomes? An Update*, CASE/203 (Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, 2017) http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/case/new/research/money_matters/report.asp

Analysis of data from the Growing Up in Scotland study suggests that children living in poverty value school as much as their better off peers but that parents living in poverty are less likely to believe that they can positively influence their child's achievement at school.³⁹ The Commission has heard examples where parents feel that teachers have assumed that pupils will either go on to low paid jobs or not work at all because they are living in poverty.

It is important that schools listen to children and parents about the range of barriers that they face in fully taking part in education, which may not always be obvious to the school, and also about what they value and their aspirations. Unless schools engage with children and parents to understand their experiences then interventions to address poverty and attainment may not meet their needs.

Poverty related barriers to fully accessing education

Costs of the school day was an issue that was raised with the Commission as a high priority for those with experience of living in poverty. The costs associated with education can both increase the stress on families and impact on children's ability to fully engage with education. These include obvious costs like school uniform, school trips, book fairs and non-uniform days. The Commission also heard, however, about examples of other costs being shifted from schools to families, for example through expectations that all families will have access to a computer to carry out homework and a printer to be able to print out material that is a core part of learning. Pupils are not always able to access these resources in school if they do not have them at home.

School uniform and the school clothing grant were particularly highlighted as an issue to the Commission. Under the 1980 Education Act local authorities must make provision for school clothing for pupils who would otherwise not be able to afford it. The eligibility for and amount of school clothing grant is decided by each individual authority and currently varies from £40 to £110 across Scotland. A short life working group looking at school clothing grant provision across Scotland reported in 2009. The group recommended that Scottish Government and COSLA should produce joint guidance for local authorities setting the minimum level of school clothing grant. Despite the Scottish Government securing power under the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 to introduce a minimum school clothing grant, a minimum grant has not yet been set. In its advice the Commission recommended that the Scottish Government should establish a minimum rate for school clothing grants.

The final area that the Commission identified in its report was delays and difficulties with payment of Education Maintenance Allowance which were identified as a risk in supporting young people to continue in education. Young people may struggle to pay for transport and school or college equipment until they receive their payment and the delay may make the difference in whether a young person is able to sustain further education. The Commission heard an example of a school acting to bridge the gap by providing a free bus pass until education maintenance allowance was received. The Commission recommended that the Scottish Government should work with local

³⁹ <https://www.era.lib.ed.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/1842/25787/CRFR%20briefing%2091%20-%20Treanor.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

authorities to find ways of making the application process easier and quicker, and providing free transport to school until payment has been processed.

Additional potential areas for consideration by the Committee

Discussions amongst the Commission prior to submitting evidence to the Committee identified a number of other areas that the Commission has not had an opportunity to explore in detail but that might be useful issues for the Committee to consider as part of its inquiry.

- Teaching and the pupil-teacher relationship as it affects children who experience poverty. Both positive and negative stories have been shared with the Commission about the impact of these relationships.
- Particular support for those children who are furthest from academic attainment
- Communication with parents
- Policies in schools that actively promote mental as well as physical health
- The extent to which an understanding of the impact of poverty is covered in initial teacher training education.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Committee's Inquiry. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact the Commission.

DOUGLAS HAMILTON

Chair

The Poverty and Inequality Commission

22 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Poverty Truth Commission

PUPIL ATTAINMENT AND POVERTY CONSULTATION: children's names anonymised.

PTC Respondent 1.

I have two children, one at Secondary School and one at Primary School. The Primary School my youngest son attends is very good at supporting children as it is placed in an area of high poverty and deprivation. It is well aware of the subject of poverty and goes out of its way to support and help families from all backgrounds and culture. However, the Secondary School my oldest child attends is in an affluent area of Glasgow. A bus is put on to take children from around the catchment area to the School. However, this facility was only able to continue after a year long campaign by parents to maintain it. The School authorities and Glasgow District Council were about to discontinue this service as a cost-cutting measure. This would have meant that children from the poorer areas of the catchment area of the school would have at least an hour's walk in some of the busiest roads in Glasgow. Further, extra-curricular activities within the school are held after 4pm. The School bus does not run after 4 pm so, students from the poorer areas are unable to attend these clubs etc unless they have access to a car, can afford bus fare or are willing to walk an hour or so in each direction. Also, there is the expectation that each child has access to a home computer to facilitate homework. If the child doesn't there is some access to computers within the School timetable – one hour a week and on a set day of the week! This has led to some students being punished for not completing work that had to be handed into the teacher BEFORE the child was able to access a computer at school.

Question 2 – I think I've covered that above.

Re Question 3 -This has impacted on my family in two ways – both good & bad. My youngest child had to be moved to another primary school due to bullying issues at his previous school. Due to the assistance and programmes he was able to access at his new school, he now actively wants to attend school and readily joins in with school activities. On the other hand, my oldest child could have been constrained in attaining his full potential if he wasn't so conscientious in his school work. He has no after school life as he is unable to access the various clubs etc due to the school runs issue. It was at a great financial and personal cost that a laptop computer was bought so that he could keep up with school work.

Re Question 4. My youngest son's primary school has achieved funding to provide each pupil with a tablet computer. I feel that ensuring each student in Secondary School education have 100% access to a computer as an educational priority is vital in helping that child achieve his/her full potential. Teachers should also be made aware of the impact of their decisions on a child impacted by his inability to complete tasks, which are inhibited by his financial background.

Respondent 2.

It is known that some teachers discriminate against pupils from poor areas, as if it's inevitable that they will either go on to low paid jobs or not work at all because of their postcode or family situation. No such thing as these young people going on to have a career. This isn't confined to Glasgow, it's Scotland wide. It was said at an actual teachers' conference I as a parent attended in Dundee a couple of years ago, by teachers who disapproved of this attitude from some colleagues in their schools.

I don't think young children, I am talking about primary age children, are reading enough out of school. This impacts on their English lessons when it comes to spelling and punctuation; this could be due to the fact a lot of libraries have closed in communities? As far as I am aware of anyway.

There are still a lot of households without internet and my boys' secondary school only allows the use of the computer at lunchtimes. A lot of their homework is online either the teacher emails tasks for them to do and topics to research. This greatly affects when the homework gets done and handed in on time. When there is study time at school they are sent to a classroom without internet access. Some school booklets need to be downloaded and printed off. This happened to my boy. A booklet had a lot of pages. He was lucky that he had a local youth project to print it off. Libraries charge per sheet which can amount to quite a bit of money. There was no support from the school to the young people who had no internet access or printer at home.

Study time at school for vital exams always take place after school hours. Young people who use the school bus are also instantly disadvantaged from taking part in after school activities with their peers. For example regarding sport, I think personally it is a good way to bond and create friendships. When the young people don't have this they feel isolated and then distanced from those who could problem solve homework or go over class work .

In my son's school and I know this again is Scotland wide. Pupils who achieve at school get more support than non-achievers. This is bonkers as they are obviously capable of getting on with class work and the teachers could spend that bit more time with those who aren't quite there yet.

My son's dad went to a parents evening and the maths teacher said me and your son have good chats about the football!!! the response he got back was you aren't paid to talk about the football you are paid to teach him maths. The English teacher said how can you give your son into trouble he is a lovely boy! I used to be at my wits end trying to get him to do homework and teach him essay writing and such when the teacher obviously wasn't concerned about it. My son was a very good all round athlete who represented the school well in football and running competitions. I feel they were not bothering about his academic skills because of his sporting skills. He gained his National 5 maths after school and had no difficulty.

My son's present girlfriend left the same school with 6 Highers and is at university studying accounting and business management . She went into the school last year

to hand in my son's lunch money that he had forgotten. She was proudly telling teachers that my son was her boyfriend . What she got back was you can do better!!

My son left secondary school without any qualifications. He started work the day after he left school at 16 and has never been out of work since. He now works for Mercedes Benz in Glasgow. He did it all without help or support from the school.

Schools need to start changing from primary and start giving more support to the kids who need it the most. They spend too much time on league tables, I think they should be scrapped, and on the school reputation. Kids who aren't attaining are left behind. More could be done to help the kids that are in poverty by providing assistance in accessing internet and supported study time table in school hours. Too much emphasis is placed on a full and proper school uniform for their own ego that kids are missing vital lessons by either getting sent home because they don't have full uniform or too embarrassed to go to the school and explain they haven't got it because they simply cannot afford it.

Children and young people from poorer backgrounds find it difficult to buy books that are needed to improve their education. Not all schools have it in their budget to pay for text books that are needed. Same with musical instruments. Parents cannot afford to pay for lessons out of school. This impacts on the ability to learn and perform in classroom lessons. A financially better off young person who may need extra support in subjects could pay for private tuition. This is the difference between children from poorer homes to those who live in more affluent areas.

Poverty seems to define a child at school. There are so many barriers from not being able to take part in school residential trips to not getting to the school prom because it's not a uniform policy for prom evening and the additional costs attached from evening wear to school year book. It is a lot of money for a house that's already suffering poverty. It sets children apart from the rest this has a negative impact on their learning.

Simple changes to the school day could help have a positive impact on a young person's school life. Teachers should identify the social activities young people do not take part in and reasons why they don't and why homework is late on a regular basis. Are there set days they are missing school? It could be they stay a distance from the school and travel money is not available to them. Could the school give them a place on the school bus free of charge if one is available in their area? If not could the school give the child a bus pass? Allow printing at the school and print out of homework for everyone, not set it out online.

Parents also have to play a part in it by finding out what is available to help their child in school and outside like homework clubs. Could the school provide a bus pass to allow the children to get home after supported study or after school activities?

I totally agree with the full uniform policy. School should provide some basic items free of charge for example a school tie and PE top. A reduction on the school blazer especially if these items needs replacing through the school term.

Living in poverty is itself a stigma that stays with a child throughout their school years. Primary school now is very competitive with designer bags and shoes.

There is in work poverty. A parent / parents who only just pass the income threshold and not qualify for free school meals and school uniform grants. More should be done to support these parents and children.

Respondent 3

1. **HOW YOUR CHILDREN HAVE BEEN SUPPORTED:** I am a single mum with a 16 year old son. Have supported Mark on my own without input from his father. I have enduring mental health difficulties. Our housing is poor, dampness and mould which affects Mark's health. He has had time off school, and school can at times completely miss the needs of Mark due to their own curriculum for excellence, and need to attain results. Individual needs can be overlooked, adding pressure to Mark. In respect of ability, Mark has attained standard results, however is capable of more. I have spoken to teaching staff regarding our needs, and sometimes I feel as though i am talking to a brick wall, almost robotic. Regardless of having various conversations with teachers who are lacking the insight to seeing the youngster as an individual with very individual needs, talents and gifts, the conversation is always drawn back to what "the school" must achieve. It is highly frustrating, and I really do not feel that this particular school is able to see the bigger picture. Very little support offered by a few teachers who are encouraging and supportive. I have attempted to try and hide the fact that we are in poverty, preserving Mark's dignity and I have tried to send him to school with the best uniform I can possibly afford. There is a stigma regarding poverty at the school. EMA payments have been virtually unattainable at times, and our living conditions exacerbate Mark's ill health. Despite many many frustrating conversations regarding this, I really do feel I am not heard, and there most definitely exists a class system within the school.
2. **WHAT WAS GOOD ABOUT IT AND WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN BETTER :** Some teachers have looked at Mark as an individual, encouraging and supportive. Communication could have been better. There have also been some positive developments in terms of career open days and guidance.
3. **HOW HAS THIS IMPACTED ON WHAT MARK HAS ACHIEVED :** Due to the inability of the school at times to develop a holistic view regarding Mark, he has felt withdrawn, and has on different occasions, lost the impetus and motivation to attend school. It has seemed that the banner of Curriculum for excellence only really shines the light on those who attaining, perhaps this is advantageous for the school as they produce results, passed exams, but for those on the margin, it does not seem to be the case. Mark has found it disheartening at times and has gone through periods of feeling that school for him is very impersonal, almost on a treadmill to achieve results. Due to Mark's relaxed and free paced style of learning, this does not tie in with the school and their very much driven motivation for results. Rather than the focus being on individual needs and learning experience, the focus is very much rooted in the reputation of the school, and this is very evident. It is very sad, and has proved to be marginalising for Mark, who is gifted, but does not find this approach

helpful at all. It has also been very difficult trying to financially support Mark at school, ensuring that a £90 blazer is worn at all times, and if it is not is an action which is punishable. When Mark experiences periods of illness, the school's main motivation for contacting me is to let me know that Mark will fall short of his weekly EMA, and that his attendance rate has dropped, rather than a genuine interest in Mark's wellbeing and academic support needs.

4. WHAT OTHER THINGS MIGHT SUPPORT YOUR CHILDREN IN ACHIEVING AT SCHOOL: Perhaps a lesser reputation based approach for the school, and more of an insight into why youngsters from single parent backgrounds are losing the motivation. Maybe less judgement and certainly less stigmatised approaches, as well as a more congruent and genuine approach to the student. Attainment equals class approach should be dropped, and teachers perhaps should be recognising the potential and helping the student grow, rather than merely setting an unrealistic, prescriptive level of attainment. I feel that there should be an accessible service relating to students' needs, not entirely based on academia, but based on what the student is capable of attaining. Meditation, mindfulness and relaxation periods should also be included in the school day. Mark also feels that a film club could be included as well as bullying awareness. Mark would also like to see more financial aid given to him as a student, rather than the current EMA system which is sometimes unattainable. In addition, some of the school trips abroad are quite expensive, and Mark feels that in our circumstances, this can be difficult to afford. Therefore, Mark has become quite demotivated and tends not to look at the excursions as he knows that this too can create stigma. Mark would also like to see Poverty Awareness and support groups freely available to students and their parents in order that they can pro-actively work with the school, implementing new strategies, and tearing down barriers, prejudice and discrimination which arises from experiencing poverty.

Respondent 4. My children have been supported outside school largely by the voluntary sector. There is a local community organisation based in the Gorbals called Bridging the Gap who run a drop-in every week, providing a cooked lunch and activities for all ages. They also run two play groups offering toast and tea and a healthy snack for the kids. In addition, they have a weekly dinner made by the community for the community, which live music. There are two other organisations SPARCS and The Barn youth club, which provide activities for kids and young people that my kids attend, both offering healthy dinner and/or snacks. There is also a drop-in on a Monday run by Crossroads at The Barn, offering soup, bread and the chance to meet people. All these services are free and there other organisations offering food too which I don't use. These services are a life line for many of us in the community who struggle to put food on the table. They give peace of mind to families that they and their kids can eat something every day (there is at least one organisation in the Gorbals offering free food in one way or another every day Monday to Friday). This is especially important for people when they are close to getting paid and are particularly hard up.

Inside school, I am not aware of any support tailored around lack of achievement based on poverty specifically. I would imagine it is a difficult thing for schools to tackle, given the complexity of trying to identify children who are suffering from

poverty and helping them in a way which avoids stigma. Free school meals for every primary aged child would be very helpful. Food poverty does not stop at Primary 3 age. There are still four more years at Primary school for these kids. Ensuring kids and their parents are aware of all the services available in the area that could help them, including public/voluntary sector organisations would also be helpful. Working together with other organisations to improve health of children and their families should be key. Teaching about poverty through informal workshops could help to raise awareness and encourage understanding about things like how it relates to bullying etc. It would also help to explore the unjust nature of poverty and how kids, their families and the wider community can play a role in using democratic mechanisms to bring about change.

There is help towards school uniforms but it does not stretch very far at all. It should be around £100 per child at the start of the year and then topped up by around £25 per child at the beginning of each term. Kids grow fast and many school uniforms are poor quality. Each family deals with issues which are unique to them when it comes to buying clothes for kids and can make school uniforms more expensive than average. In my case, my kids are very tall and my oldest is 9 and takes an adult size 9 in a shoe. I therefore do not have the privilege of buying kids shoes, which are cheaper. It will be the same for my other two.

I do not have any kids in secondary school yet but my observations leave me worried about when my kids start. My friend told me that she gives her son £6 per day for bus fares and lunch money and I know she does not have a lot of money. There is a lot of peer pressure at school to have money and freedom to leave school at lunch time and buy lunch from local shops and many of these are selling junk food. It is hard for parents to give their teenagers packed lunch when all their friends are leaving the school with money to buy from local shops. It is not fair that teenagers should be isolated from their peers in this way because their parents cannot afford to give them money every day. Also, much of the food they are buying is junk food, full of additives which make them hyperactive, sluggish, aggressive, tired etc. and this is not conducive to academic achievement. I suggest that secondary school kids should be required to or at least encouraged to stay on the school premises during lunch time. Free school meals should be available or at the very least a cheap and nutritious food outlet. Also, since secondary schools have been merged and are now largely outwith the area pupils live in, free school buses should be provided as bus and train fares are very expensive. I am dreading the cost of secondary school.

It is worth noting that the cost of school generally is creeping up too. I have three kids, one at nursery, and because schools and nurseries are often strapped for cash and lack resources, there is a lot of fundraising. I pay £12 per month for the nursery and £1 a month for own clothes day. I make my oldest child a packed lunch every day but give him £1.90 dinner money once a week so he doesn't feel too left out. Along with this, there are other fundraising events that ask for 50p here or a £1 there per child (I would say on average £1 per month per child). There is one nursery fundraising activity that asks us to get a minimum of £5 in sponsorship for our child. It is not always as easy as you would imagine to raise this, for example, most of my friends also have kids and are not very well off. I always just give the £5 so that my child does not miss out on whatever it is they are fundraising for. All this adds up.

Sometimes I feel that the activity they are fundraising for is not necessary, for example, one year my child went to Dobbies' for breakfast with Santa. I'm not sure this was necessary since the school and nursery both hold Christmas parties for the kids which include a visit from Santa and there are community organisations, including Bridging the Gap, which provides free Christmas parties with a visit from Santa. Again, if the schools worked more closely with other community organisations they would be more aware of this. It is often, in our case, the parents associations within the school who come up with some of the ideas so it is difficult. But some of these activities I do feel place unnecessary financial pressure on parents.

I would also like to note that the transition to nursery went very smoothly for my kids and I put this down to work of the community organisations I have attended/been involved in. Poverty can be humiliating and therefore very isolating but these organisations can draw people out of this isolation, give them something to do, help them build relationships and sometimes even to find work or education opportunities. This has a knock on effect on people's kids since they also get out of the house, socialise, have something to eat and drink. I sometimes feel that the role of these organisations in preparing kids for nursery and school are undervalued.

There is a family support worker based in the school my kids attend but she is only available for an hour and a half once per week. It would be better if she was available for longer as I would feel more inclined to go to her for help.

Poverty Truth Commission
20 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change

Introduction

It is widely accepted that pupils from more deprived backgrounds do less well educationally than their more advantaged peers (Francis and Perry 2010, The Sutton Trust, 2009, Wedge and Prosser 1973). There is evidence to suggest that particular interventions can have a short-term impact but sustaining and widening the impact is less well demonstrated (Greaves *et al.*, 2014). Teacher quality/effectiveness has been shown to be a crucial element in promoting positive educational outcomes irrespective of social/economic background (Ko *et al.*, 2013) and in the classrooms of the most effective teachers, 'at risk' students learn at the same rate as those from advantaged backgrounds (Hamre & Pianta 2005).

The key message is that for improvement in academic outcomes for young people to occur there must be a focus on improvements in the quality of learning and teaching. This will involve the development of teachers' knowledge, skills and commitment and of their 'distributed, instructional and inquiry-minded leadership' (Mincu, 2013). Evidence from the Sutton Trust, and other work such as that of Hattie (2008), suggests that effective learning strategies to tackle education inequity include: High quality feedback to pupils; peer-tutoring; developing thinking skills (meta-cognition) and a focus on Early Years.

However, it is also clear that while schools can and do make a difference to the outcomes of young people, with schools accounting for around 18-50% of the variance after background factors have been taken into account (cf. Sammons, 2007), as Basil Bernstein (1970) reminds us education alone cannot compensate for society and that we need to tackle structural factors that have a powerful and often critical impact on outcomes of some students.

The framework of within-, between- and beyond- was initially developed for new models of school leadership (Chapman *et al.*, 2008); we now apply it within the context of improvement to provide an overview of key themes from research and supplement this with some specific examples of practice. Taking each in turn:

(i) Within-school Improvement

First, schools should invest in teachers' professional development so that teachers develop a wide repertoire of teaching skills that can reflect the range of needs of their learners. Second, a focus on building leadership capacity at all levels within the school is key to success, as is leaders promoting a culture underpinned by high expectations and positive norms in staff and pupils. One strategy for achieving the above is to use collaborative action research (CAR) and other forms of structured enquiry to identify priorities for change, implement improvement strategies and track and monitor the impact of these interventions. This process can also inform the school's planning and strategic action. This type of approach is exemplified in the School Improvement Partnership Programme (SIPP), Raising Attainment for All (RAFA) and Network for Social and Educational Equity (NSEE).

In terms of teaching and learning, policies designed to close the attainment gap should balance promoting curricula interventions such as literacy and mathematics programmes with developing the highest quality learning and teaching in classrooms. An over-reliance on specific curriculum interventions and “off-the shelf” resources is misguided unless teachers understand how these work, how they can be adapted to suit the context and most importantly that the intervention is underpinned by the highest quality teaching methods. This is a risk for the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) where, quite rightly, schools are eager to demonstrate an impact on learning outcomes quickly and can be tempted to ‘buy in a solution’ by adopting an intervention that is seen to work elsewhere without framing it within their own context, relevance to their curriculum, learner needs or capacity or capability for effective implementation. In addition to focusing on the learning level schools should also invest in building leadership capacity and promoting authentic relationships between schools and families and communities.

In terms of building leadership capacity, international educational research and practice demonstrates that the most effective school/ system improvement efforts are locally owned and led by practitioners and leaders working in partnership and collaboration with like-minded professionals and other stakeholders (e.g. Fullan 2013, Chapman et al. 2012, Chapman and Hadfield 2010, Donaldson 2012, Ainscow et al., 2012, OFSTED, 2000; Harris et al, 2005, Hadfield and Chapman 2009; Kerr et al. 2003). They align their change processes with curriculum development, teacher development and school self-evaluation (Menter et al., 2010). Potter and colleagues’ (2002) review of the literature on ‘what works’ in school improvement in challenging circumstances again highlights the importance of school organisation, culture, leadership and ethos, to improve the levels of effectiveness.

The research literature and our own evidence, particularly from the SIPP and NSEE programmes, have highlighted that school improvement strategies that promote new ways of working for learning and teaching and building leadership capacity across classrooms, schools and local authorities that have a positive impact on tackling poverty related attainment are framed by the following principles, in that they:

- Adopt partnership working with a focus on exploring specific issues relating to educational inequity
- Use Collaborative Action Research (CAR) and a range of evidence to identify key challenges, frame key questions experiment and monitor developments to inform practice and understand impact
- Create leadership opportunities and promote professional learning of staff at all levels.
- Ensure efforts are locally owned and led with opportunities for staff at all levels to participate and contribute to the direction and leadership of the activity
- Understand that activity is tailored to individual needs and is context specific
- Invest time and space to build positive relationships and have a commitment to reciprocity and mutual benefit for all involved
- Develop arrangements to support long-term collaboration and new approaches to capacity building, so sustaining and building in effective approaches

- Have explicit links to strategic improvement planning in schools and local authorities
- Involve a range of relevant partners and draw on external expertise where necessary.

Evidence and experience suggests there is no single magic bullet that will close the attainment gap, or more broadly 'deliver' school improvement. Rather, adherence to the above principles with a focus on a small number of priorities, targeted at individuals and small groups, are key. For example, the evaluation of the Extra Mile programme found that there was a significant positive difference in GCSE points between students in receipt of free school meals involved in the programme and a matched sample of students not on the programme. This difference also equated to a 22% reduction on the IDACI scale or an 8% attendance rate (Chapman *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, to ensure effective implementation, and ultimately impact on outcomes, strategies also need to be matched to the specific context, capacity and capability of the school.

(ii) Between-school Improvement

This domain builds on and extends the within-school approaches and principles to involve partner schools and organisations in order to promote professional learning and coordination of systems to tackle inequality. By bringing together other schools and partners to the collaborative, there is greater scope for mutual support, innovation and sharing of ideas and evidence of 'what works' (Chapman, 2018). There can be benefits from economies of scale and the coordination of effort can also enhance collective motivation across teachers and partners. Movement of key staff around the collaborative helps to identify issues and support capacity building, succession planning and career management.

Structured collaboration between schools helps raise attainment. The evidence suggests that Federations involving higher and lower attaining schools significantly outperform non-federated counterparts, although this takes two to four years to impact on student outcomes and there is a positive impact on student attainment in both the higher and lower attaining schools. Also, secondary school federations outperform 'loose' collaboratives and executive leadership arrangements outperform traditional leadership arrangements. Effective leadership by the headteacher and senior leadership team has been found to be the single most critical feature that helps to generate improvements and build capacity for such federations to be sustained (Chapman and Muijs, 2013).

Between-school partnerships can also involve a process of collaborative inquiry which supports and informs experimentation with practice and evaluating impact, but also creates leadership and professional learning opportunities. Such joint practice development can be a key feature of 'Research Schools' acting as a hub to move knowledge, expertise and evidence around the system. Having a number of partners also tends to improve schools' access to support, advice and expertise regarding CAR methods, use of data, pedagogy and assessment.

In addition to the principles and characteristics stated previously, it is important that there is sufficient time allocated to foster clear understanding of goals and to build relationships and promote an ethos of reciprocal learning and improvement. While

this process can be strategically informed, it is important that the teachers in the partner schools have the commitment to collaborate with their partners and can see a rationale for this. School improvement that tackles inequality is much more likely to emerge as a result of collective capacity building across schools than through centrally driven top-down mandates underpinned by accountability mechanisms.

Meta reviews of the research evidence such as that by Mincu (2016) have found that the approaches adopted by SIPP and NSEE feature in successful strategies to tackle the achievement gap and educational inequity. For example, they have a strong focus on collaboratively developed and evaluated learning and teaching approaches and this shared professional knowledge is key to ensuring both effective learning processes and whole school improvement.

(iii) Beyond-school Improvement

Our research and support for collaborative networks of schools together with insights from our international networks confirms that while there is encouraging evidence for within- and between- school improvement as mechanisms to tackle educational inequity and attainment, this is a necessary but insufficient ingredient for success. A more coordinated holistic approach is required if we are to tackle poverty and the attainment gap. There is evidence that to make a greater and sustained impact on the poverty related attainment gap these education collaborations need to extend to include other partners and services beyond education to provide a more holistic approach. For example, research (e.g. Egan, 2013; Carter-Wall and Whitfield, 2012) has also highlighted that we also need to look beyond learning and teaching to address issues of pupil wellbeing; enrichment experiences; engaging parents and families in their children's learning; and strengthening links with communities. Indeed, this research shows that parental and family engagement is the most important factor, outside of schools, in influencing the achievement of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. This activity can also have positive outcomes for the parents, including promoting their skills and facilitating access to support networks.

Therefore, effective multi-agency partnership working is crucial to tackle educational inequity. Such partnerships enable schools to support school-family links, out-of-hours learning and mentoring interventions. Grayson (2013) found that such holistic interventions involving strong engagement between parents, schools and the wider community are necessary to narrow the attainment gap. Partnership working between a range of local services offers more opportunities to reach the most vulnerable families, as any service with which they are in contact can refer those families to supportive interventions. Schools have a key role to play here, often as network coordinators and co-deliverers of services to improve outcomes.

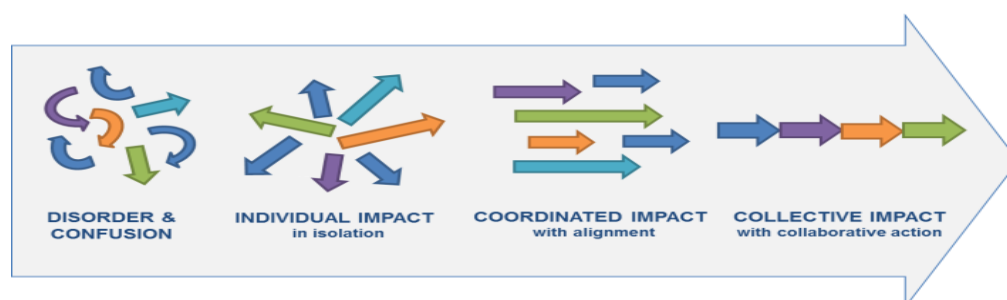
Partnership working between a range of local services offers more opportunities to reach the most vulnerable families and, if necessary, refer to other services. This can offer a co-ordinated approach to public service provision and integration of health, social and education services. Building such partnerships takes time but we have found that the benefits to local people in challenging high poverty circumstances are clear. This includes supporting parents and carers with fundamental needs so that their children can access and thrive in education. Co-location of services facilities, more reliable channels of communication and effective partnerships allow earlier intervention and a 'pipe-line of support across transition stages', with more effective

access to resources. This was demonstrated in our research evaluating the Renfrewshire Family First initiative (Hall *et al* 2017).

Taking a place-based perspective is a key dimension of beyond school improvement and there is growing evidence that this approach is an important lever for tackling intergenerational poverty and promoting a broad range of positive outcomes in a range of international contexts. For example, *City Connects* in Boston, MA works across 84 schools. The model brings together education, health, welfare and other services and has erased two-thirds of the achievement gap in math and half the achievement gap in English. The model adopts a whole child approach drawing on research that shows that students achieve better in school and in life when they are “educated across multiple dimensions—intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual, and physical”. An independent evaluation has also demonstrated that the model provides significant financial savings. (City Connects 2014).

In their review of ‘collective impact’ Henig and colleagues (2015) argue that collective impact involves all services are working together so that the totality of impact is greater than the sum of the parts (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Service provision and collective impact



(Henig *et al.*, 2015)

Five key principles underpin the concept of collective impact:

- **Common agenda:** All members of the collaborative need a shared understanding of the issue and an agreed approach to tackling it.
- **Shared data and accountability systems:** For alignment and accountability purposes, those involved need to have common indicators of success.
- **Mutually reinforcing agendas and activities:** Action needs to be co-ordinated to avoid overlap and gaps.
- **Clear and consistent communication:** In order to build relationships and trust, establish common objectives, and build shared purpose and a guiding.
- **Backbone support organisation:** A separate organisation is required to provide the administrative, logistical, and coordinating support necessary to create and sustain a successful partnership.

Our research and development work for Children’s Neighbourhood Scotland (CNS) presents a significant opportunity for tackling child poverty and improving outcomes. CNS is a Scottish example of taking a place-based approach to tackle child poverty and improve outcomes for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. To date, this approach has involved ROC, Policy Scotland and What Works Scotland at the

University of Glasgow and the Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) working in partnership with Glasgow City Council, Clyde Gateway and other local and national third sector and private organisations in the Bridgeton and Dalmarnock areas to harness the power of local networks and help bring together people, resources and organisations in the neighbourhood area, so that all can work together to promote better lives for the children living there. There is a strong focus on supporting young people's transitions over the long term with an emphasis on local voices. This work is complex and, given the diversity of stakeholders, has required significant investment in building and sustaining trusting relationships to deliver the intended outcomes. This work has provided a strong foundation for moving forward as we enter the next phase of CNS as the model is embedded and extended across Scotland. For further details please see <https://childrensneighbourhoodsscotland.com>

Concluding remarks

It is clear that many of the features of within-, between- and beyond- school improvement align with the best available research evidence and are key to closing the attainment gap. Whilst this is encouraging, in order to justify the allocation of public funds, policies and programmes in Scotland need to move to a position where they can establish the extent of their impact from independent sources sooner rather than later.

More broadly, each domain of the framework cannot be taken in isolation, nor can it be thought about as a linear or hierarchical framework for change and improvement. All three areas: within-, between- and beyond- must be worked on together, complimenting and reinforcing each other to create synergies and additionality rather than contradicting or competing with each other, and in doing so undermining efforts. Ultimately, the success of pulling all parts of this framework together and optimizing impact requires clear, consistent, collaborative leadership within and between services. When this is achieved then we will have successfully operationalised the intent of the Christie Commission (2011) across Scotland and gone some way to creating a more equitable education system where all can achieve despite where they come from.

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUBMISSIONS

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

COSLA

Introduction

1. COSLA welcomes the opportunity to provide the committee with evidence of the wide-ranging work taking place in local authorities to tackle the poverty related attainment gap. Councils spend £5 billion a year on educating children (age 2 to 18) around half of the overall local government settlement⁴⁰. The Scottish Government's proposals to reform the education system and the forthcoming Education Bill highlights the current high profile given to education and educational attainment and some of the risks this will bring.
2. If we are to tackle the unacceptable link between poverty, disadvantage and life chances, and commit to give all young people a great start in life, investment in education is of paramount importance. Nevertheless, our members have been clear that poverty is a multi-faceted issue requiring a societal response. Whilst schools and local authorities have a central role in tackling poverty and closing the gap in attainment it is not just the responsibility of those working in education. Many other local authority services and functions have a key role from housing to social work to environmental services. Employers in both the public and private sector also have vital roles to play in supporting families and there is of course a significant role for national governments primarily but not exclusively through the delivery of effective social security systems.
3. In your letter you asked about the work of COSLA in understanding and tackling the impact of poverty on educational attainment. It is very difficult within the restrictions of this submission to do justice to the work which takes place in every local authority across Scotland. This response outlines the work of our members in this area, what COSLA are doing and sets out a number of effective interventions and potential challenges to current work. We have tried to reflect the pivotal and integrated role of local authorities in tackling poverty, delivering education and closing the attainment gap.

Background

4. Local authorities are at the centre of efforts to tackle and eradicate poverty in Scotland's communities. Given the multi-dimensional and multi-faceted nature of poverty it is very difficult to extrapolate what activity is aimed at poverty alleviation and mitigation where children are involved and what activity is aimed at closing the educational attainment gap. The two are of course inextricably linked.

⁴⁰ COSLA (2017) Fair Funding for Essential Services briefing
<http://www.cosla.gov.uk/sites/default/files/private/coslaspendingreviewbriefing.pdf>

5. It is also important to remember that 45% of children in poverty live in five local authority areas in Scotland (Glasgow, North Lanarkshire, Fife, Edinburgh, South Lanarkshire).⁴¹ 16% of children living in poverty in Scotland live in Glasgow. On the other hand many people living in poverty do not live in areas of multiple deprivation. The experience of poverty can differ depending on where families live and how local authorities work to tackle it. These local authority rates can, however, hide wide variation within local authorities. In Glasgow, for example, estimated poverty rates range from 22% in one local authority ward to 47% in another.
6. Poverty is also a key factor in attainment for those children living in rural areas. Rural Scotland is not homogenous and the challenges faced in addressing poverty in a rural poverty vary from area to area (e.g. rural Dumfriesshire compared to Lewis). COSLA are currently engaged with the Scottish Government and other stakeholders to consider evidence on the impact of rural poverty on attainment;
7. There has been a strong continuing commitment from local government to tackling poverty in their communities which recognises the importance of a multi-agency approach which considers all of the factors which impact on the lives of children and is in line with Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC). COSLA were supportive of the provisions in the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 and councils are now involved in developing a Child Poverty Action Plan which will be both retrospective, setting out what action has been taken, and forward looking, which will indicate what action they will take in the following year. The multi-agency response to closing educational attainment gap will be a priority in these plans.
8. Ensuring children from deprived backgrounds realise their full potential is essential but so also is ensuring that fewer Scottish families experience deprivation. This will require education to be part of a multi-agency approach and schools to be hubs for wider public service support.

Progress in tackling the poverty related attainment gap

9. Whilst we recognise that more needs to be done to improve outcomes for children and young people it should be recognised that progress has been made. Despite real reductions in the education budget of 3.8% since 2010/11, the number of pre-school and primary places in Scotland has increased by over 30,000, and measures of educational outcome continue to show positive progress, particularly for children from the most deprived areas. In addition, the percentage of funded early years provision graded 'good or better' has improved from 87.1% to 91.7% since 2010/11, although has shown a slight reduction in the past 2 years⁴².

⁴¹ 2End Child Poverty local indicators <http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/poverty-in-your-area-2018/> These estimates are not directly comparable with the Scotland level statistics produced by Scottish Government as they use different data.

⁴² Local Government Benchmarking Framework 2016/17

10. The most recent Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) reports that senior phase attainment continues to show a very strong improving trend in 2016/17.
11. The Scottish average tariff score has improved by 15.1% since 2011/12, and 1.2% in the past 12 months. Pupils from the most deprived areas have the fastest rate of improvement (30.5% since 2010/11 and 4% in the past 12 months). The pattern in the total tariff score data is replicated in the data on 5+ passes at SCQF level 5 and level 6 with average improvement rates of 17.6% and 30.8% respectively (1.7% and 3.0% in the past 12 months). For the most deprived quintile it was double that: 41.4% and 60.0% (5.1% and 6.7% in the past 12 months).
12. While achievement levels remain lower for children from the most deprived areas, there has been a faster rate of improvement within these groups. The percentage of children from the most deprived communities achieving 5+ awards at level 5 and 6 in 2016/17 was 41% and 16% respectively, an increase of 12 percentage points and 6 percentage points from 2011/12. This is an improvement rate of 41.4% and 60% compared to 17.6% and 30.8% for all pupils, leading to a relative narrowing of the attainment gap⁴³.
13. We do however recognise that there are still major inequalities in attainment between the most deprived pupils and others. We fully support continuing reform and improvement but it should be based on recognising the consistent pattern of improvement cross the last six years despite the resource constraints in place. This improvement has been realised by a system led by local authorities using a range of services designed to meet all of a child or young person's needs. It is critical to ensure that continued reform does not disrupt the stable and consistent improvement trend already there, as schools, councils and Regional Improvement Collaboratives adjust to new roles and relationships. This is not about whether continued reform occurs but how it is designed and implemented

What are local authorities doing?

14. Efforts to tackle poverty and close the gap in attainment have been prioritised by councils across Scotland. It is impossible to do justice to the myriad of activity that is taking place but it may be helpful to highlight to the committee the broad areas where intensive work is happening. In this context it is important to consider that there are initiatives and action focussed solely on education but there are also wider actions which will of course impact on a child or young person's ability to reach their full potential.
15. At a strategic level many local authorities have worked with local communities and local partners through poverty or fairness commissions or the development of anti-poverty partnership strategies to identify the priorities for tackling poverty in their areas. Much of the work of these initiatives has been about identifying wider actions to tackle poverty such as improving female

⁴³ Local Government Benchmarking Framework 2016/17

participation in the labour market, improving wage levels for women, payment and promotion of the living wage and the provision of affordable social housing

16. In relation to children and young people GIRFEC has been the driver at a policy and practice level in identifying individual children's needs and acting to address them. Poverty is of course a significant factor that will impact on a child's wellbeing and what they get out of their education. GIRFEC is the embodiment of the whole system approach that requires local authorities, schools and others to work together to support children and young people.
17. Many local authorities have been considering the cost of the school day and the impact that has on children and young people's ability to learn. COSLA are supporting that work and have been involved in positive discussions with the Scottish Government on how school clothing grants are provided. A number of our members have committed to providing meals to low income children and young people outside of normal school hours and we are working to better understand current provision of this type across Scotland.
18. Local authorities work closely with third sector organisations and commission family support, home learning and other services to low income families. These services take a multi-agency approach to supporting children and young people's learning and are firmly embedded in GIRFEC. These services also seek to work with families to address all of the factors that may be having a negative impact on a child's learning and to put in place supports to remove the barriers to education for that child.
19. We know that children and young people are ready to learn when they are emotionally stable, with positive relationships in their life and where they attend school on a regular and consistent basis. The LGBF notes that while the power exists to exclude children and young people from school, there have been significant, concerted efforts by schools and local authorities to implement a range of approaches and solutions to positively engage young people in their education and improve relationships and behaviour. This is based upon a shared approach of agencies working together and responding to the needs of learners early and effectively in line with the principles of GIRFEC. Between 2010/11 and 2014/15 exclusion rates reduced from 40% to 27%.
20. Local authorities are currently involved in discussions with the Scottish Government on the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare. A key part of this will be ensuring that the expansion is focussed on quality provision which offers a significant opportunity to address those factors affecting children's learning.

Challenges

21. Whilst there is much good work taking place across Scotland local authorities face a range of challenges in providing education which allows all children and young people to reach their full potential. As set out above despite real terms reductions in the education budget local authorities have achieved real results in terms of attainment and improvement. Nevertheless since 2010/11 there has

been a real terms reduction of £513 in spending per primary pupil, representing a 9.7% reduction. This reflects a 1.9% reduction in real gross expenditure which has occurred parallel with an 8.6% increase in pupil numbers.

22. COSLA has consistently argued that having so much of local government's budget protected through Scottish Government policy priorities prevents local government responding to local need. This is also true in education. Around 60% of primary and secondary school spending is teaching staff costs. Given the current agreement between the Scottish Government and local authorities, that teacher numbers will be maintained in line with pupil numbers, this represents a relatively fixed cost to councils. This means there are challenges for local authorities on how spending is prioritised.
23. The proposed changes to education governance pose a significant risk to local authorities pivotal role in a multi-agency, multi-faceted approach in joining up actions to tackle poverty which also impacts on educational attainment. There is a real danger that designing structures overly focussed on schools will not improve outcomes for children and young people. Removing the requirement for local authorities to produce local improvement plans for instance effectively removes the strategic overview required to ensure a joined up approach.
24. We have numerous examples of wider work to tackle poverty which impacts on educational attainment and we would be happy to share these with the committee. In one area for example the Care Inspectorate found that the community planning partnership was making a significant difference to the lives of children and young people by embedding a nurturing approach across children's services; mitigating the adverse consequences of child poverty through an extensive cross-cutting range of strategies and investing significantly in prevention and early intervention, especially from pre-birth to commencement at school. The proposed reforms will undermine this type of approach.

We would be happy to provide clarification or more information on any of the points made in this submission.

COSLA
23 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

City of Edinburgh Council 1 in 5

Despite being an affluent city, Edinburgh has 1 in 5 children or 22,480 living in poverty. Every area in Edinburgh has child poverty rates of at least 11 0/0 and in some areas as much as 33 0/0. In response to this the City of Edinburgh Council has been engaged in a programme of work under the banner of '1 in 5: Raising Awareness of Child Poverty' since 2015 with schools and community based organisations. This aims to:

- Highlight the scale, causes and impact of child poverty in Edinburgh and Scotland as whole and reduce poverty related stigma.
- Produce resources and support services to poverty proof policies and practises.
- Support schools to explore school related costs and reduce these wherever possible.
- Establish approaches to support income maximisation for families

1. 1 in 5: Raising Awareness of Child Poverty and the Cost of School

1a. 1 in 5 Training and Focus Group resources

At the core of the 1 in 5 project is a 2 hour interactive staff training session which explores the scale, impact and stigmatising effects of child poverty in Scotland as whole and in Edinburgh. It consists of presentations, film clips based on real case studies of young people growing up in poverty and interactive budgeting exercises. These are all resources that can then be used to train others. The session 'myth busts' misconceptions about poverty highlighting that there is now a growing 'working poor'. Participants are asked to budget for rent, bills and the cost of living based on what is the average lower income. By adding in case scenarios, such as an unexpected cost of a last minute school trip, it is revealed that for those living in poverty the choice as to whether to attend can mean the difference in the family eating or paying their bills.

Following this session staff can then take part in focus groups which explore specific school related costs and for staff to consider ways of reducing these costs. An assembly and focus groups are also available for pupils and parents and carers.

Within schools a Train the Trainer model has been adopted whereby one or two leads are identified by the school who attend training and receive the resources to deliver the training session and focus groups and lead poverty proofing activity.

To date 16 High Schools, 57 Primary Schools, 3 special schools and an early years centres have one or more named leads for taking forward 1 in 5 training and focus groups with staff, pupils and parents can carers (105 staff attended Train the Trainers overall). They are then at different stages of implementation in their settings.

Evaluation of 168 staff from across a number of schools in yr 2 of the project has found:

- 92.8% have increased understanding about the scale of child poverty
- 90% have increased understanding of the impact of child poverty
- 84% feel better able to identify children
- 78% feel better able to support children
- Schools have reported attitudinal and cultural change and increased empathy.

1b. Top Tips for Schools

This resource provides some simple ideas that schools can implement in order to reduce schools costs in relation to school uniforms, homework, trips and events. As a result of this booklet and the focus groups schools are developing a range of poverty proofing approaches which include: audit of all trips and events where money is requested and ensuring these are spaced out across the year and parents given support to pay or pupils can attend free of charge; school uniform flash sales and swap shops; stationary made available in every classroom, homework clubs being set up and establishing dressing up box for special days such as World Book Day etc .

Evaluation of the schools based 1 in 5 work is ongoing and this year a masters student on work based placement will be conducting research for their dissertation on the poverty proofing initiative schools has developed and the impacts this is having on staff attitudes and pupil and family engagement in school.

1c. 1 in 5 Training for youth work – Lothian Association of Youthwork 1 in 5 Lead

LAYC started providing 1 in 5: Raising Awareness of Child Poverty in 2017, with the aim of engaging third sector youth and children's organisations to compliment this work already taking place within the school setting. LAYC has experience of delivering youth work led training, specifically aimed at the community based youth work force.

To date 13 community-based youth and children's organisations have participated in this training session provided through LAYC. LAYC's pre and post training evaluation method has been used to evaluate this training. Training sessions have always evaluated overall as 'very good' with 100% of participants increasing knowledge, skills and confidence around poverty issues effecting children and young people. Participants have indicated that the impact of this training session will be an increased awareness and mindfulness of how poverty effects children and young people they are working with, some participants have found the section around poverty proofing their setting useful and have been keen to follow up with local schools and work in partnership to build on any good examples of practice regarding poverty proofing within the community.

1d. Making Education Equal for All: Edinburgh's Pupil Equity Framework

The costs associated with school, and the effect of negative attitudes towards poverty, are significant for low-income families . Closing the attainment gap will be more achievable if children and young people, and their families feel respected, valued, included and have a sense of belonging in the school community. Following

on from the focus group research as part of 1 in 5 the City of Edinburgh Council's Children and Family's Committee agreed for the development of Pupil Equity Framework to be distributed to all schools and services with an educational role. The document was developed by a multi-agency steering group with representation from the LA, third sector, NHS and Edinburgh University. It formalises guidance to support them laying the groundwork for equity at a policy and practise level and poverty proof the school, highlighting the following key areas:

- **Minimise costs and reduce pressure on family budgets:** This section include guidance on reducing the cost of attending school, ensuring all children have access to resources for learning in the classroom and supporting families to access financial support and maximise their income.
- **Ensure equal access to opportunities, regardless of income:** This will include consideration of access to extra-curricular activities, social and charity events in the school and support for learning a
- **Reduce poverty-related stigma:** This will include awareness-raising activity amongst staff, parents and children and young people by utilising relevant training materials and classroom resources.t home

This framework is currently being rolled out to schools and will form part of the evaluation to be conducted this year. It will be formally launched at the 1 in 5 conference taking place on the 27th April 2018 which will showcase work done in schools around 1 in 5, have a range of speakers who will further increase knowledge and understanding of societal impact of inequality, highlight the importance of maximising income and stimulate discussion on how all learning communities can continue to develop this agenda.

2. Income Maximisation for families

Part of the stigma around poverty lies in the fact that talking openly about family finances is often considered to be taboo, making it hard for families to be open and honest about money worries and changes in financial situation which can be impacting on ability to pay for school experiences such as trips, and afford core materials required for school such as uniform, classroom and homework resources and in even food and snacks for children. This stigma and a lack of clarity of the welfare system can also very often lead to families not claiming all the benefits they are entitled to. At the same time research (Cooper and Stewart 2017) shows that an increase in income of as little as £850 for low income families a year can have demonstrable impacts on cognitive, physical and emotional and behavioural impacts for children.

In response to this, and aligned to the 1 in 5 work, a partnership of CEC, NHS and third sector has developed resources and initiatives to maximise family incomes and ensure that discussions about family finances become part of a routine enquiry for schools and other staff working with families. This includes:

2a. Financial Support and Information for Famillies booklet. This includes ideas for supporting conversations with families about money as part of a routine enquiry. It also provides a comprehensive list of relevant supports available to families

experiencing poverty and low income including welfare advice services, foodbanks, community cook clubs and charities which help with clothing and uniform. This has been distributed to all schools and many organisations involved in working with families. It is also available to download online. It will be updated on an annual basis.

2b. – The Family Advice and Information Service

This has been a partnership approach developed between Schools and Community Services, NHS and the Community Help and Advice Initiative (CHAI), whereby a welfare advisor has been co-located to offer appointments to parents in schools. The pilot for this year has been happening in one cluster, with schools in the cluster each offering twice monthly appointments for parents with the welfare advisor. A slightly different model is also being developed with two Special Schools. The aim is essentially the same however- to ensure fast access to welfare advice in a safe and known environment to families who are experiencing financial difficulty and/or at risk of homelessness. An evaluation is currently being carried out but early indications are that this service is being utilised by families after some initial promotion in schools and the community and is managing to support families to access benefits they are entitled to as well as help with housing issues, employment and training and issues to do with Asylum and immigration. Schools in other clusters are keen to deliver a similar model and can utilise some PEF funding to do this. If setting up a cluster the financial outlay for employing an advisor is reasonably minimal for schools.

So far outcomes to date include:

Appointments attended by parents/carers/families – **64**

Families given ongoing support – **45**

Financial Gains achieved - **£136,712.73**

Financial gains are mainly from unclaimed benefits that clients are unaware they are entitled to. This is more prevalent where English is not the first language. The adviser is also identifying unclaimed disability benefits for children particularly in the schools where the children have additional needs.

3. Ongoing plans for tackling and mitigating the impacts of child poverty in Edinburgh include.

As well as plans to continue rolling out 1 in 5 and income maximisation work, thanks to additional funding received from the Scottish government the City of Edinburgh Council's financial plan for this year includes funding for:

- Raising uniform grant to £72 for all families in line with the national average.
- Funding to develop 8 Edinburgh School Holiday Challenge Hubs in summer 2018/19 which will involve 'food and fun' activities for children living in poverty and family support including welfare advisors, fun cooking and nutritional skills activities and opportunities for families to play together and attend trips. This will be fully evaluated

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

East Ayrshire Council

What has your school done to support children from families affected by poverty?

As part of the East Ayrshire attainment challenge work we have worked heavily across four work streams with three directly related to young people and their families. Key aspects of these are summarised below.

LITERACY AND NUMERACY Collegiate groups have developed curriculum planners for literacy and numeracy ensuring a shared understanding of what constitutes learning across a level. Education Managers developed and rolled out curriculum pathways for literacy and numeracy to ensure consistency of approach in all educational establishments. GLOW shared areas with exemplar materials bespoke to EAC are in place to support pedagogical development.

Literacy

Thirteen primary establishments are supported through the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) in making literacy a priority this session. The Literacy Manager ran various training events for challenge schools to further embed prior training of the North Lanarkshire Active Literacy Programme pedagogies (Aug-Sept 2017).

A resource to improve children's vocabulary (word aware) was introduced during Session 2016-17 by the East Ayrshire Support Team (EAST) and the Speech and Language Therapy team using Improvement Science. This pedagogy is being spread in identified schools who are focusing on literacy in Session 2017-18.

Numeracy

SAC numeracy teachers and over one hundred teaching staff from the year one & two numeracy Programme schools have participated in the 'Raising Attainment in Numeracy' three day training events at Early, First and Second Levels. Trained staff are implementing these strategies in relation to developing conceptual understanding of number. Evidence gathered from GL Assessments and baseline tracking tools in session 2016-17 show these approaches had a positive impact on pupil attainment in numeracy and mathematics.

Baseline tracking tools across Early, First and Second Levels have been developed and embedded for programme schools trained staff to track pupil progress through the key concepts in numeracy.

Approaching three hundred practitioners across the Authority have attended 'Number Talks' twilights and there is evidence across programme schools that this approach has been successfully implemented. Initial training was followed up by additional twilight sessions and coaching and modelling in classrooms provided by the SAC numeracy staff.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Restorative Approaches

East Ayrshire Support Team and SAC staff have supported schools in delivering training to staff (396) within all secondary and SAC target primary establishments.

Massage in Schools Programme (MISP)

We have 13 Massage in School Programme schools trained in December 2017 and the data collected is extremely positive. Staff have noted improvements in pupil confidence, calmness and relationships. One practitioner from each of the schools has come forward to undergo instructor training and class teachers have made a commitment to deliver at least one lesson per week.

HWB Coaches

The CA HWB Coaches are working in schools with CAs to build capacity through modelling & coaching and they are also working with 11 children who have SEBN needs (SIMD 1&2). After carrying out a needs analysis survey the Coaches have created and started to implement a comprehensive CA training calendar/programme (e.g. Restorative Approaches, Massage in Schools Programme, Outdoor Education). Sixty CAs underwent RAs training and stated that they preferred this peer lead approach.

Vibrant Communities

The Youth Literacy programme has been rolled out in five schools and forty four pupils have participated. Plans are in place to work in three schools per term, targeting one hundred pupils over the academic year. Since September 2017 nine Family Literacy programmes have supported fifty three families and sixty five children. Plans are in place to deliver the programme in six schools per term benefiting up to 100 families. In 2017/2018 terms 1 and 2, twenty nine families (sixty four pupils) have benefited from our Physical Literacy (SPLAT) provision. At the end of the year the staff will provide ongoing support to assist parents to run a parent-led afterschool club. Young People's Mentors (YPMs) are working in nine secondary schools. They are providing educational, behavioural and emotional support in group (85 pupils), 1-2-1 (31 pupils) and breakfast club settings (6 schools and 42 pupils).

Outdoor Education

A team teaching model and CPD sessions have been utilised to support twenty one Schools to complete their John Muir Award (266 children and young people who live in SIMD 1 & 2 and staff). The teacher enquiry work shows that staff confidence in using outdoor learning has increased and staff noted a change in pupil behaviour, engagement, relationships, confidence and social wellbeing. Staff comment that "literacy works well in the outdoors especially creative writing". The pupil survey indicates that they enjoyed working on their award, developed new skills and are proud of what they have achieved. Nine schools are being supported to deliver Green Gym. As a result of additional support being provided by The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) the schools are growing vegetables and enhancing their school grounds. The secondary schools have been challenged to develop a three year action plans to ensure Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) is accessible to all children and young people who live in SIMD 1&2. So far this sessions the SAC support schools

have increased new enrolments and the number of awards achieved has almost doubled when compared to previous years.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

We currently have eleven home link workers across our nine education groups. They are currently assisting 154 families.

Are there any services that your school has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

With respect to the work with our SAC team in East Ayrshire we are currently working effectively through this year's programme and we do not anticipate any issues with continuing with these interventions.

How do services provided outside of school support families who are affected by poverty help with educational attainment?

Our close working with Vibrant Communities (EAC CLD provision) has ensured partners are closely involved with working with families as described above.

What else could be done to support the attainment of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

Clearly a continuation of funding through the Scottish Government SAC programme would be beneficial with the opportunity to extend into areas of endeavour that could be seen as addressing the poverty related attainment gap such as holiday hunger programmes.

**East Ayrshire Council
20 March 2018**

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

North Lanarkshire

North Lanarkshire Council

Club 365: A proposed holiday and weekend project to tackle food poverty, inequality and learning loss

Preface

North Lanarkshire Council's (NLC) department of Education, Youth and Communities (EYC) is submitting this document in response to the Scottish Parliament's Education and Skills Committee's inquiry into programmes for school-aged children experiencing poverty. It explains the background to NLC's commitment to consider addressing the problem of "weekend and holiday hunger" on a 365-day basis and offers recommendations for Scottish Government responses.

Executive Summary

- **Food insecurity.** The problem of food insecurity in the UK has been highlighted in various statistics, including the growing incidence of foodbanks.⁴⁴ However, a full account of the phenomenon has been hampered by limited central government support for monitoring and research. One estimate, by UNICEF, suggests that 19.5 percent of UK children live in food insecure households, significantly above the rich country average (12.7%) and higher than similar countries like Sweden (4%), Germany (4.9%) and France (6%);⁴⁵
- **"Holiday hunger".** Interest in holiday and weekend hunger has grown in line with this broader interest in food insecurity. A literature review by University of Glasgow researchers notes that knowledge of holiday hunger is anecdotal but well established,⁴⁶ and several new academic papers are from UK universities are undergoing peer review. It is generally clear that an existing problem of food insecurity is heightened by the pressures of school holidays and weekends;
- **Projects.** Across the UK, and elsewhere, a variety of pilots and projects have made efforts to tackle these issues. However, University of Northumbria researchers describe many of these projects as "piecemeal" and "unregulated";⁴⁷

⁴⁴ See <https://www.trusselltrust.org/news-and-blog/latest-stats/>

⁴⁵ UNICEF (2017): **Building the Future: Children and the Sustainable Development Goals in Rich Countries** (Florence: UNICEF) pp. 17.

⁴⁶ M. Campbell, N. Watson and N. Watters (2015): **The Cost of School Holidays** (Edinburgh: What Works Scotland) pp. 6.

⁴⁷ M.A. Defeyter (2017) "Holiday hunger: Summer learning loss and wellbeing". Children in Scotland Conference, 1 June 2017, Glasgow. Available at <http://nrl.northumbria.ac.uk/33290/>

- **North Lanarkshire.** NLC has made a commitment in principle to addressing holiday and weekend hunger. The “Club 365” programme will commence with a pilot in Coatbridge which starts in Spring Break 2018. We hope to move towards a universal, 365-day model across the council area;
- **Strategic aims.** The project grew up around the strategic aims of EYC as outlined in the document *Our Ambition*. Part of that strategy was to confront the multifaceted nature of the Attainment Challenge, which involves looking at how the sociological environment beyond the classroom affects schooling in deprived communities;
- **Recommendation 1: fund research.** To compensate for a lack of central government funding, EYC recommends that the Scottish Government provide further research support to monitor and study food insecurity and holiday hunger projects;
- **Recommendation 2: fund local authority projects.** Additionally, EYC asks that the Scottish Government considers the partial central funding of local authority holiday hunger projects.

Background

- 1.1 Eliminating food poverty is recognised as a public policy priority and has been explicitly adopted as one of the Scottish Government’s key Sustainable Development Goals: “By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round.”⁴⁸ However, some statistics seem to indicate that the problem of food insecurity is growing. According to Trussell Trust figures, for example, 47,955 emergency food packages were provided for children in Scotland last year, up from 1,861 in 2011/12.⁴⁹
- 1.2 North Lanarkshire is listed as one of the Scottish Government’s nine “challenge authorities” with the highest concentrations of deprivation. 20.9 percent of children in this area live in low income households, higher than the Scottish average (18.4%). Life expectancy is below the national average. Research by Sheffield Hallam University commissioned by the Scottish Government also suggests that North Lanarkshire claimants will lose roughly £78 million per year due to post-2015 welfare reforms.⁵⁰
- 1.3 Interest in holiday and weekend hunger is a logical extension of the problem of food insecurity in general. It is likely that, where food poverty exists for families with school age children, it will intensify during holiday and weekend periods when a free good (free school meals) is withdrawn. However, more rigorous research is still needed to fully verify this assumption. In America, there is longstanding academic interest in the topic. In Britain, there are currently

⁴⁸ Scottish Government (2016): **Dignity: Ending Hunger Together in Scotland** (Edinburgh: Scottish Government) pp. 4.

⁴⁹ See <https://www.trusselltrust.org/news-and-blog/latest-stats/>

⁵⁰ C. Beatty and S. Fothergill (2016): **The Impact on Scotland of the New Welfare Reforms: Project Report** (Sheffield: Sheffield Hallam University) pp. 14.

several academic research projects underway, of which some are in peer-review process. The completion of these papers will add significantly to the current state of our knowledge.

- 1.4 Academics studies have noted that policy implementation is being held back by significant research barriers. “Despite the increasing recognition of household food insecurity as a policy issue, there is currently no routine measurement of food insecurity in the UK,” a recent paper observes. “There is nothing to suggest that Government will address this in the near future for all parts of the UK.”⁵¹ UNICEF has also criticised the current UK policy on these questions, referring to a “lack of comprehensive data on child food security, while some research indicate that currently available programmes, such as free school meal programmes, may not be effectively responding to child hunger.”⁵² UNICEF suggests that 19.5 percent of UK children live in food insecure households, significantly above the rich country average (12.7%) and higher than similar countries like Sweden (4%), Germany (4.9%) and France (6%);⁵³
- 1.5 Other research has pointed to the growth in holiday meal provisions in the UK. Northumbria University pointed to 837 projects in 2017. This includes a growth in Scotland from 26 to 67 programmes in one year between 2016 and 2017. Many of these programmes are run on a voluntary basis. At UK level, roughly 20 percent are local authority projects (N=111).⁵⁴
- 1.6 The Welsh Government has committed £500,000 to fund holiday clubs.⁵⁵ Recently, the Scottish Government has extended its Fair Food Transformation Fund with a commitment of £1 million over two years to tackle holiday hunger. However, this money can only be claimed by voluntary groups.
- 1.7 Child poverty is likely to rise significantly in the coming decade. Scottish Government projections suggest that 38 percent of children will grow up in relative poverty by 2030/1, while 32 percent will grow up in absolute poverty.⁵⁶

⁵¹ D. Smith et al (2018): “Identifying populations and areas at greatest risk of household food insecurity in England”, **Applied Geography** 91 pp. 21-31

⁵² Committee on the Rights of the Child (2016): “Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland”. Available at <https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2016/08/UK-CRC-Concluding-observations-2016-2.pdf>

⁵³ UNICEF (2017): **Building the Future: Children and the Sustainable Development Goals in Rich Countries** (Florence: UNICEF) pp. 17.

⁵⁴ E. Mann and G. Defeyeter (2017): **Holiday Club Survey 2017: Preliminary Findings** (Newcastle: Northumbria University)

⁵⁵ See <http://gov.wales/newsroom/educationandskills/2017/new-summer-holidays-lunch-and-funclubs-to-get-500000/?lang=en>

⁵⁶ S. McNab (2018): “Child poverty to rise by 130,000 across Scotland as cuts bite,” **The Scotsman** 26/03/2018.

Club 365 in North Lanarkshire

- 2.1 NLC is committed to considering full, 365-day coverage for holiday and weekend hunger for those who are currently entitled to free school meals. Based on our knowledge of previous programmes, we do not anticipate that all or even most FME pupils will attend during the holidays, partly because there is still a significant stigma attached to claiming this benefit. However, we do believe that demand is growing and that more public knowledge about food poverty is helping to lower the stigma surrounding these programmes.
- 2.2 We have committed to running a pilot in Coatbridge in the Spring Break of 2018. This pilot will be built out of existing council services and staff, although it will also involve some volunteer initiative. It will work as a piece of “action research” to test the capabilities and limitations of our Council services to engage in a more universal, all-encompassing programme. It will also give us a much fuller picture of demand for the programme, and on what practices are most effective in engaging communities.
- 2.3 The food will be provided by Facility Services within the Council, who are building a nutritious menu based on school dinner plans for primary schools.
- 2.4 NLC’s Active Schools team have prepared a range of sports and other activities for the club, partly to deflect from the well-publicised “holiday hunger” project aim which may have a stigmatising effect.
- 2.5 We are currently planning an audit of all existing services, voluntary, private and public, that offer holiday services within our authority area. This is designed to ensure that, in future, we do not simply replicate existing provision and that we work with partners to address the issue.
- 2.6 EYC has engaged a range of partners in the project, both within and beyond our Council. We have a partnership committee that includes NHS Lanarkshire, local police forces, faith groups, business, trade unions, and other representatives. We are also currently working with researchers at Strathclyde University on an evaluation strategy.

Recommendations

- 3.1 The Scottish Government should work with academic partners to address the gap in monitoring and research on food insecurity and on the scale of weekend and holiday hunger. This would help local authorities to base their modelling on a stronger evidence basis.
- 3.2 The Scottish Government should expand existing funding to help local authorities establish a systematic approach to holiday and weekend hunger. This could help address what University of Northumbria researchers describe

as “piecemeal” and “unregulated”⁵⁷ nature of existing provision. It may also help achieve the broader sociological implications of the Attainment Challenge.

⁵⁷ M.A. Defeyter (2017) “Holiday hunger: Summer learning loss and wellbeing”. Children in Scotland Conference, 1 June 2017, Glasgow. Available at <http://nrl.northumbria.ac.uk/33290/>

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

The Northern Alliance

1. How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

The Northern Alliance has a clear focus on improving outcomes for young people and we are committed particularly to ensuring equity and excellence.

Our emerging Regional Improvement Plan has a variety of work streams which are designed to improve the education attainment of children and young people. These include work streams which look beyond “school education” and which focus on areas including children’s services planning, Community Learning and Development and so forth.

We have also worked with a group of Head Teachers over the past two years with “10 key questions” to focus specifically on what they are doing in their own settings (many of which are rural and remote) in order to ensure equity and excellence. This has been very successful and the Head Teachers involved have appreciated the peer learning and “borderless” learning which this has allowed.

We are also undertaking work in relation to specific curriculum areas including literacy and numeracy, with some encouraging early data in relation to literacy improvements which we need to upscale across the area over the months and years ahead. One distinguishing feature of our Northern Alliance geography is our rural and remote communities, which are many. This has resulted in many barriers to securing sustainability of provision, such as the recruitment and retention of teachers and other professionals. However, work is being developed across the Regional Improvement Collaborative to develop new and innovative approaches to digital learning and the notion of the virtual classroom. This work is being led by the Western Isles as a result of their Esgoil and there is much we can do to develop this further, using other approaches in place elsewhere to ensure we can provide a sustainable curriculum for our children and young people.

It should, however, be noted that despite all these efforts the ongoing serious shortage of teachers across many Northern Alliance local authority areas continues to be a major obstacle for us in our endeavours to improve attainment as teachers are of pivotal importance. That said, we continue to pioneer new and innovative approaches to Initial Teacher Education (ITE), such as the DLITE and iSTEM programmes as well as supporting the expansion of newer providers such as the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI).

2. Are there any services that you / your organisation has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

Certain local authorities would very much like to develop new and innovative ways to address the learning estate and consider future models of delivery and there is Northern Alliance work stream focussing on this which is led by Orkney Islands Council. This work stream is focussing on a transformational change project within Orkney, which as a small local authority, allows this to be manageable and allows the Northern Alliance to measure outcomes more easily. As such these outcomes can, we hope, be more readily extrapolated to our larger and more dispersed rural authorities within the Alliance and beyond.

The transformational project in Orkney has four main sub-work streams:

- Digital culture: promoting digitalisation of learning across its dispersed island communities.
- Sustainable Communities: promoting the ownership by communities of the physical assets for learning.
- Staffing and Curriculum: promoting innovative ways of using human resources to deliver learning and the defining nature of the curriculum itself in an island context.
- Partnership Provision: how commissioned provision and inward investment can create the conditions where it is possible to do the same or more for less when meeting the needs of learners.

One barrier we face is the current legislation (2010 Act) and the presumption against the closure of rural schools. Whilst we acknowledge that rural schools will always require remote and rural educational settings, consideration must be given to the longer term viability and sustainability of the learning and estate and other public service estate buildings. Given the backlog of maintenance required on many of these settings and the lack of local authority resources available to tackle this, there are real risks to continuity of education for young people and this perpetual “make do and mend” approach is draining funds from other priority areas. A strategic overhaul of the learning estate would allow services to plan better for future needs and ensuring a truly response and fit-for-purpose 21st century learning estate which meets the needs of all learners and communities, including the most up-to-date digital facilities. This would be a major challenge for all concerned, but is one area which needs to be explored further.

3. If you work with schools/local authorities/others to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on this issue easy/difficult?

There is a strong culture of collaboration within the Northern Alliance and a commitment at all levels to work together, to share and learn together in the pursuit of improved outcomes for young people. That said, the sheer geography of the Northern Alliance is a challenge in terms of collaboration. Whilst we do aim to make the best use of digital platforms and e-learning approaches for staff development, these are not always reliable and various factors such as bandwidth and other connectivity issues etc. can cause serious disruption. When we do aim to get people together for a day of CLPL, this can

be almost a three day – and costly – endeavour given the travel times and geography involved in the Alliance.

4. What else could be done to support the attainment /achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

Concentrating resources on areas of deprivation using SIMD as a tool will mean a significant proportion of people with low incomes will be overlooked. SIMD methodology tends to produce higher concentrations of deprivation in urban areas and as such there is an urban bias in relation to how resources are allocated within Scotland which takes no cognisance of the effects of living in rural or indeed remote and rural poverty. This can be seen in current allocations of funding in relation to the Scottish Attainment Challenge and specifically Pupil Equity Funding.

Whilst there are some challenge schools within the Northern Alliance (in Aberdeen City and within Inverness in Highland) none of the constituent eight local authorities are “challenge authorities” and as such do not attract the levels of funding which are being allocated to more deprived local authority areas (based on SIMD data). However, being poor in a rural context is exceptionally challenging, particularly in relation to the provision of and accessibility of all services, with transport links being a major barrier for many families.

Given the dispersed nature of the populations who live rurally, these are not identified by the SIMD tool and as previously stated are overlooked. There are no straightforward solutions to this particular issue, but consideration must be given at a national level to how rural areas are resourced in terms of public services.

Research in Shetland, for example, showed that children from rural areas generally performed well. However, for those living in deprived circumstances isolation, and limited access to support and facilities, was shown to make their situation worse. Research on poverty in Orkney has investigated the most prominent poverty and disadvantage factors affecting children and young people on the islands and seeks to identify ways that service providers can mitigate the impact of poverty on them. It is intended that this will result in a poverty action plan for Orkney which will, both involve and be shared with, local authorities in the Northern Alliance and beyond.

The Northern Alliance welcomes the investment in equity and excellence in education, but is concerned that there is a risk that we create a two-tier system when it comes to the allocation of resource to close the poverty-related attainment gap, given the amount of funding allocated to urban, and predominantly central belt local authority areas. There is an on-going national commitment to investigate this further, but given we are approaching the half-way stage of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, we are concerned that a number of deprived young people living in rural and remote Scotland are potentially missing out as a result of how funding is allocated.

Northern Alliance
20 March 2018

Education and Skills Committee

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Glasgow City Council

[The Committee wrote to Glasgow City Council following the evidence session on 2 May, particularly in relation to the evidence it heard from Nancy Clunie, headteacher of Dalmarnock Primary.

The Committee asked how the excellent practice and approach of Ms Clunie is shared with her colleagues across Glasgow and the extent to which primary heads learn from each other's' successes and whether the secondary schools in Glasgow see the benefits of this approach in the attainment and readiness of the S1s.]

Thank you for this. I am pleased that the Committee enjoyed Nancy's evidence. Through our work being a Challenge authority we have a priority which focuses on children's health and wellbeing and one which focuses on supporting families. This means that we have an expectation that schools and nurseries include a focus on wellbeing in their improvement plans. This ties in very strongly with our aspiration to be a Nurturing City.

As part of our Challenge work, our primary schools are put into clusters of between three and five primary schools. Each cluster has a Challenge link officer – this is a member of the Directorate or a quality improvement officer who meets with the headteachers and carried out quality visits throughout the year. This approach allows us to actively promote the sharing of good practice and provide challenge and support. We also share practice through our regular headteacher meetings. We also have a Leaders of Learning team who support schools across the city, modelling good practice and sharing the good practice that they see as they work across schools. Our Headteacher Learning and Teaching maintains the overview of our work on the Challenge. Evidence is systematically gathered and then shared regularly through becoming a focus for training run by the Challenge team.

Almost all of our primary schools which are serving areas of deprivation are doing some work with families. We work closely with Glasgow Life and we have six family learning officers who work across the city building the capacity of schools to support family learning.

We also actively promote working with third sector partners, such as PEEK, who have been instrumental in the work being done at Dalmarnock Primary School.

The number of languages being spoken at Dalmarnock is not unusual in the city where we have around 115 languages being spoken. We continue to invest in a large English as an additional language team which support children and their families across the city.

Finally, Dalmarnock Primary School is part of a Children's Neighbourhood. This is a project which we are running in partnership with University of Glasgow and Glasgow

Centre for Population Health. Nancy has been a core part of the team. The aim of Children's Neighbourhoods is to galvanise all those in the community to ensure that all decision-making places children at the centre. This is new territory for us and we are learning a lot about communities and the different ways in which we can maximise the benefits of this approach. There is research underpinning the work and later this month a group of us are going to Belfast to look at how Children's Neighbourhoods have worked there. We have plans to extend the approach to other areas of the city.

I am not entirely clear on your second point about S1s and exactly what approach you are referring to. Transition is a key focus for Children's Neighbourhoods. One of the challenges we face is that Dalmarnock Primary School is linked to Eastbank Academy but many of the families live nearer to St Mungo's Academy and so choose this for their secondary school using placing requests.

I hope this response is helpful, please let me know if you need anything further. If you would like to know more about our work around the Challenge and our priorities – this is the link to our standards and quality report <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=18237>

Maureen McKenna
Executive Director of Education
Glasgow City Council
10 May 2018

Education and Skills Committee

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

North Lanarkshire Council- additional submission

[Following the Committee's evidence session on 9 May, the Committee sought additional information from North Lanarkshire Council.]

What North Lanarkshire is doing in the classroom setting to close the attainment gap and its impact?

- A number of interventions, including: YARC Testing (York Assessment of Reading Comprehension) assessments for young people who have not met expected reading milestones in order to provide a pre- and post-reading age in order to measure the success of the *Fresh Start: Read, Write Inc.* literacy intervention
- Also in relation to literacy, school librarians across all secondary schools have been allocated additional funds to purchase suitable reading materials which less fluent readers from SIMD 1/2 in S1 will enjoy
- Finally for literacy, each school is being allocated electronic 'reading pens' & Book Tokens for less fluent readers from SIMD 1/2 in S1-3
- Numeracy: Use of *Number Talks: Computational Skills & Number Talks: Fractions, Decimals & Percentages* pedagogical resources and associated staff training for all primary schools on a cluster basis which is now being extended across all secondary schools; introduction of *Mathematics Assessment for Learning & Teaching* (MALT) maths & numeracy pupil assessments
- Health & Wellbeing: annual S4 Arran Residential experience for pupils across all secondary schools to improve pupil motivation (led by Tree of Knowledge); first phase of Solihull training has been rolled out across all secondary schools (to further develop the nurturing school ethos which will promote learning, attainment & achievement); Mentoring Programme: all secondary schools benefit from 0.4FTE staffing (by retired pastoral support DHT or PT leaders) to set & monitor progress towards aspirational targets for identified SIMD 1/2 pupils from S1-3
- Staff development: NLC's annual Leadership Festival: for the first time, this featured three separate all-day Attainment Challenge 'Hubs' – one for Health & Wellbeing, Literacy & Numeracy (with glowing feedback from all three)

How does North Lanarkshire measure achievement?

- CEM ([Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring](#)) Testing data, the new SNSAs (Scottish National Standardised Assessments), YARC & NGRT ([New Group Reading Test](#)) data, SQA & *Insight* data
- Analysis of – for example – 'Number of Interventions' & 'Participation' levels for pupils across all primary schools...especially those pupils from SIMD 1/2
- Use of [SEEMIS](#) Click & Go by all secondary schools to record the 'wider achievement' of all pupils & inclusion of such data within each school's annual performance review report for the authorities senior leadership team

- North Lanarkshire's review of best practice of PEF initiatives.
 - Continuing Improvement Officers' Team's knowledge of school spends/PEF usage
 - SAC (Scottish Attainment Challenge): Group discussions at Keys to Success & Universal schools Headteachers meetings
 - SAC: Meetings of the Secondary Key DHT Links
 - NLC: Primary & Secondary HTs meetings
 - NLC: Locality HT meetings (North, Central & South)
 - NLC: Previously published PEF menu of authority-wide PEF interventions available.

Dr James Foley
 Performance Analyst
 Youth and Communities
 North Lanarkshire Council
 17 May 2018

SCHOOL SUBMISSIONS

Education and Skills Committee

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Dalmarnock Primary School

Dalmarnock Primary is a large primary school with 446 children. The catchment is a wide area of the east end of Glasgow covering Barrowfield, Bridgeton, Calton, Camlachie, Dalmarnock and Parkhead. 94.7% of our children live in SIMD 1 and 2. Of the other 5.3% almost all of them also live in SIMD 1 and 2 but their housing was built after the last census.

We have currently 42 different languages spoken in the school.

Our free meal entitlement is currently 49.85 - well above the Glasgow average. The number of children who are looked after also is almost double the Glasgow average.

For the past two years we have been granted the highest PEF for any primary school in Scotland.

Long before PEF money was given to school we agreed as a staff, with partner agencies and with parents, that the only way we could raise attainment was to involve and impact on the whole family.

We started trying to make the breakfast club more appealing to get children in school, on time, with food and some active time. We are blessed to have PEEK, a nationally recognised organisation, on our door step. They offered the children free play sessions that encouraged co-operation, teamwork, creativity and fun.

It was after this we started a homework club. At first it was very small and in school but it has grown and grown and now we feed between 80- 100 at every session. The format has remained constant - parents cook a meal, children are supported by school staff to complete homework, PEEK provide outside play session and then we all sit down to eat.

This led us to realise that the summer holidays were problematic for families and we decided to open the school two years ago for a summer club. This is not child care - children must be accompanied by adults - but it has impacted on everyone by developing better relationships between parents and statutory agencies. It has allowed parents to develop more friendships, reducing social isolation. It provided good, healthy food for all. The children were encouraged to play outside, whatever the weather.

Many activities from the summer club continue - The Blether allows parents to meet with a therapist for CBT, yoga and keep fit allow the parents to stay healthy, parents have achieved qualifications in cooking and food preparation. A group have been involved in a social democracy project that has brought about changes to make roads

safer. Currently a group of parents are working with their children and Glasgow Clyde College on a photography course that will lead to an exhibition of their work and then a dual language story book.

We have had all our work formally evaluated by a company Axiom, a master's student from Glasgow University and also from Northumberland University.

I have attached the summary of our main research paper and also 2 case studies. The full report is available on request.⁵⁸

Nancy Clunie, HT
Dalmarnock Primary

20 March 2018

⁵⁸ Members may request a copy of the full report from the clerk.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Kelvinside Academy

We run a number of outreach projects from KA, and I thought the following might be relevant to the inquiry.

Almost one third of S6 pupils at Kelvinside Academy volunteers to support two different local outreach projects: the Volunteer Tutors Organisation (VTO) and the Maryhill Integration Network (MIN).

With VTO, our pupils receive training on paired reading from the VTO leader. Thereafter, volunteers spend one afternoon a week working in the homework club of one of our partner primary schools in Maryhill, an area in the bottom deciles of the SMID.

The MIN Project sees pupils spend one evening a week with the local Syrian refugee community. Some of our pupils achieved a TEFL qualification this year and have used this to offer language support. The majority of pupils spend time with the teenagers in the group, playing sport and socialising. While the motivation for undertaking volunteering often stems from wanting to contribute to society and to help people who have not had the same opportunities they have, all pupils recognise that their work has been based on an exchange of ideas, where they benefit as much as the people they have set out to help.”

**Ian H Munro BSc, PGCE, MEd(Cantab), FRSB.
Rector, Kelvinside Academy
5 March 2018**

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Tynecastle High School 1 in 5 group

What has your school done to support children from families affected by poverty? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

As a school we have worked very hard to ensure that all members of staff have a thorough awareness of the issues facing children living in poverty. We have used the CEC '1 in 5' policy to educate all staff (including new staff when they arrive) about the barriers families may face and our role in ensuring equity.

As a result of this, we have implemented changes and initiatives. For example, since last August we have run a daily free breakfast club (food provided by Fair Share) open to all students. The uptake for this was immediately successful and has remained consistent over the whole year. When students were surveyed, it was clear that the majority of them would not have had any breakfast without this in-school provision, and that they valued the opportunity to prepare for the day and be ready to start learning. This also offers an opportunity to equip students with basics they may not have, and help them be ready to have a successful day.

This led to the development of a partnership with the Salvation Army to help provide food parcels during longer school holidays, as it became clear to us that some of our families would really struggle during holidays when there is no provision for those who receive free school meals. We are now looking at further ways in which we can provide lunches for students during longer holiday periods.

As part of our school commitment to equity, all letters home requesting money for trips and so on make all parents aware that they can apply to the Family Support Fund for assistance with costs. We also subsidise costs for those with FSM entitlement and those in SIMD 1-3.

One particularly effective example of our commitment to ensuring equity is our partnership with CHAI Family Support and Advice Service, which supports families to maximise their incomes. At last count, CHAI had helped five of our families maximise their incomes by £31000.

We have also worked with our prom committee to make sure that the price for attending prom is reasonable and we have gathered a large number of prom dresses and suits to ensure this is a 'Prom For All'- attendance should not be based on students' financial circumstances.

In the Maths department, all students in the target groups now receive scientific calculators so that cost of equipment is not a barrier to their attainment.

We have also made free sanitary products available so that all students know they can obtain a supply of these from a variety of staff members.

Are there any services that your school has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

Our '1 in 5' improvement group is now looking at the costs associated with choosing some subjects (e.g. CDT, Home Economics) and developing a policy regarding how these extra costs are funded and whether there is real equity of choice when there is a financial cost attached. We believe this should be part of a wider dialogue as we are aware that this is an issue for all schools.

How do services provided outside of school support families who are affected by poverty help with educational attainment?

As mentioned, we have worked with Fair Share and the Salvation Army on food provision, and CHAI to help with income maximisation. We have also referred students to the Edinburgh School Uniform Bank.

What else could be done to support the attainment of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

We believe that many of the barriers put in place, such as the difficulty in claiming certain benefits, the lack of travel costs for those out of catchment, the relatively low amount of money provided for school uniform and so on, could be easily remedied through more effective government policies and guidelines on these issues- too often the provision available varies considerably from school to school and authority to authority. As long as these students face such basic and ongoing barriers to participation, and feeling like they can take an active part in a school community, their attainment will always suffer.

SUBMISSIONS FROM UNIONS

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

AHDS

Poverty and attainment

The potential impact of different interventions is well set out in the Education Endowment Foundation Toolkit which is available on their website (<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/>). We have promoted this to our membership over a long period and it has now been highlighted by the Scottish Government and Education Scotland as a key resource.

The work undertaken in schools is extremely diverse as it is a response to the individual circumstances faced in each school. While AHDS engages with the Scottish Government and others on the development of policy in this area – to ensure that the perspective of school leaders is heard – we do not collect or collate information about specific interventions undertaken in individual schools so are unable to comment on the prevalence of different approaches around Scotland.

However, we do ask members about the barriers they face in seeking to improve learning and teaching in their schools. The responses we receive focus on three key themes:

- A lack of resources: This is particularly focussed on a lack of human resources. In addition to well publicised teacher shortages, this relates to shortages and reductions in management time as well as insufficient pupil support staff and administrative staff. All of this diverts school leadership teams from their core role of leading learning.
- A lack of support from local authorities: As a consequence of continued budget reductions there have been considerable reductions to local authority education support teams.
- An increase in non-education duties being placed on school leaders: Examples include HTs being asked to undertake and report on flagpole checks through to examining, copying and recording that all staff who might use their own vehicles for business have a valid driving licence, insurance, MOT etc.

I hope this is helpful and look forward to reading the outputs from your inquiry.

Greg Dempster
General Secretary

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

EIS

EIS Evidence to the Education and Skills Committee Enquiry into the Attainment and Achievement of School Aged Children Experiencing Poverty

The Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS), Scotland's largest teacher trade union, representing more than 50,000 members at all levels in the career structure and in all sectors of school education, has been a long-standing campaigner on the issue of poverty and its detrimental impact on the lives and educational outcomes of Scotland's children and young people.

EIS position on child poverty

The stark injustice that a young person's ability to thrive, to learn, to benefit from the myriad of opportunities that education has to offer, is stunted as a consequence of socio-economic deprivation, has never been acceptable to the EIS. For this reason, we welcome the opportunity to provide evidence to this Enquiry to inform what we hope will be more effective, strongly evidence-based policy and resource responses that reach all of the 260,000⁵⁹ children and young people across Scotland who are living in poverty, regardless of postcode.

The EIS is clear that the key levers for reducing inequality of educational outcome lie within other policy domains than education- most importantly, social security and tax credits, employment and fair work, and taxation and housing, since these are the factors that determine the income levels of the families of Scottish school children and young people. Familial income, is, of course, the most influential factor in children's in-school attainment and wider achievement; therefore, closing the poverty-related attainment gap requires an honest commitment to addressing the structural inequalities that emerge from policy decisions in those areas that are beyond the locus of the education system but which must be equally and fully aligned to social justice principles.

Extract from EIS Face Up to Child Poverty Survey Report, Session 2016-17⁶⁰

59% of respondents indicated that they had seen an increase in the number of children attending their schools who are experiencing poverty. This is consistent with the findings of the Scottish Government's Annual Report on the Child Poverty Strategy which highlights that both relative and absolute child poverty levels have risen in Scotland since the last annual report was published.

'Making it harder for people who are on low wages to access financial support – so hiding the real extent of poverty – especially among communities/families who want to work and will take any work regardless of the low nature of pay/poor long-term security, and see it as shameful to apply for assistance – the government are playing on this and children are the victims.' (Respondent comment)⁶¹

⁵⁹ <http://www.cpag.org.uk/scotland/child-poverty-facts-and-figures>

⁶⁰ <http://www.eis.org.uk/Content/images/campaigns/poverty/Child%20Poverty%20Survey%202017.pdf>

⁶¹ <http://www.eis.org.uk/Content/images/campaigns/poverty/Child%20Poverty%20Appendix.pdf>

While factors external to education are of essential importance, the EIS is clear that all parts of the education system must be enabled to mitigate as far as possible, the impact of poverty on children's and young people's daily experiences of school and on their outcomes at each stage in their education. This can only be achieved by greater investment of financial, including human, resource in the education system, to enhance the quality of children's and young people's learning experiences since attainment and achievement are, in terms of in-school factors, a by-product of these.

Current context: more policy; less resource

This Enquiry is seeking views on the effectiveness of current policy and resource interventions towards closing the attainment and achievement gap caused by poverty. In providing evidence, the EIS would wish to underline for the Committee, the condition of the system. While the design intentions of the current policy and legislative frameworks are designed to support the realisation of more equitable outcomes from the education system for Scotland's children and young people, the levels of investment in education since the onset of austerity politics, and arguably even before, have fallen far short of ensuring this.

Simultaneous to the development of progressive education policy and the passing of associated legislation, both of which require more, not less, resourcing, teacher numbers have fallen overall by more than 4000 since 2007; the numbers of qualified teachers in Nursery have been decimated- at least a 39% reduction in the past decade; class sizes have risen; additional support needs provision has become ever-more sparse; the case-loads of Pupil Support Teachers have burgeoned; teacher salaries have eroded and workload generally is at an all-time high with the consequence that we now face significant recruitment and retention challenges.

It is imperative that all who have an interest in the policy measures that are being and may be applied in the future, are fully aware of and honest about, this contextual reality.

Extract from EIS Face Up to Child Poverty Survey Report, Session 2016-17⁶²

'There have been so many cut backs within the school that the simple needs cannot be met with stationery, printing. Pupils not getting enough support due to legislation stating they don't require it. Lots of information is reported back to the school through our attendance officer who is now losing her job due to cut backs. This vital information such as children's houses having no carpets only floor boards, will not be reported back...' (Respondent comment)

Early years education

A principal element of education policy intended to reduce the impact of poverty in recent years, has been commitment to investment in the early years of children's lives. Resources have been channelled into offering 600 hours of free childcare for all 3, 4 and vulnerable 2-year olds, with entitlement soon to be doubled. This is impressive and welcome as the importance of high quality pre-school care and education has never been better understood. Within the pre-5 service, however, it is crucial that the role of education is given adequate attention. The EIS believes that the quality of nursery education is being compromised by the scaling back of trained

⁶²<http://www.eis.org.uk/Content/images/campaigns/poverty/Child%20Poverty%20Appendix.pdf>

teachers in these settings, thus ignoring the wealth of research evidence that extols the impact of fully trained teachers, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.⁶³

While the Scottish Government has committed to ensuring ‘access to a teacher’, some local authorities, with legal impunity, have been removing teachers from Nursery classrooms to reduce costs. The EIS concurs with the view of the wider education community that efforts to close the achievement gap must begin before formal schooling begins when the gaps in the development of children from poorer and more affluent families are already significant. Further, in line with international and Education Scotland’s own evidence, the EIS is of the view that the pedagogical input of qualified degree-educated teacher professionals, as part of a pre-5 workforce, is an essential ingredient to the CfE 3-18 curriculum if it is to lead to more equitable outcomes as intended.

In October 2015, the Scottish Government, seemingly persuaded that quality of early years provision is as important as quantity, announced its intention to provide additional qualified teachers or degree educated childcare workers for nurseries in the most deprived areas⁶⁴.

Though welcome, the pledge reveals a misunderstanding of the roles of teachers and childcare workers, a lack of awareness of the value of qualified teachers in the early years of education as evidenced in recent research by the Child’s Curriculum Group⁶⁵, and in terms of increasing ‘access to a teacher’, can only be a starting point. Without universally extending the commitment to a guaranteed minimum (and adequate) access to a nursery teacher, for all Scotland’s early learners, it will fall short of that required to meet the needs of the thousands of nursery-aged children living in poverty in homes whose postcodes lie out with the SIMD zones targeted by the current policy.

GIRFEC and Named Person

Within the GIRFEC (Getting it Right for Every Child) framework, inclusion is defined as children and young people ‘having help to overcome social, educational, physical and economic inequalities’. GIRFEC, having been implemented to varying degrees across local authorities in the past decade, is now enshrined in statute within the Children and Young People Act (CYP), with education authorities now bound to consider the effect of socio-economic disadvantage on wellbeing. The extent to which education authorities can act to mitigate the adverse impact of poverty on wellbeing, for example, through funding nurture groups, pupil counselling services, providing access to extra-curricular activities, is, however, resource dependent.

The EIS has been clear from the outset and has repeatedly stressed that the Named Person (NP) service will not succeed in the delivery of its functions through the passing of legislation by national government alone. The introduction of such legislation, should the existing legal hurdles be overcome, cannot be cost-free, it having significant resource implications in those hundreds of thousands of cases in which a school is expected to be the provider of the NP.

⁶³ <http://eppe.ioe.ac.uk/eppe/eppepdfs/RBTec1223sept0412.pdf>

⁶⁴ <http://news.scotland.gov.uk/News/Developing-potential-1e71.aspx>

⁶⁵ http://www.childscurriculum.org.uk/images/Sustaining_the_Ambition_Executive_Summary.pdf

The workload of teachers in Scotland is currently at a record high. In Secondary schools, Pupil Support Teachers are struggling with large, often unmanageable, caseloads; while in Primary, the workload of Headteachers, and where schools are fortunate enough to have them, Depute Head Teachers, is unsustainably demanding. It is therefore unacceptable to place additional workload burden generated by the associated administration of NP on the staff who will be acting in the capacity of Named Persons. It is the firm view of the EIS, therefore, that schools will need additional administrative staff to manage the increased record-keeping and inter-agency liaison demanded by NP.

Furthermore, the level of support to children, young people and their families that Named Persons will be expected to provide, is not yet universally clear. The system therefore requires to be resourced such that Named Persons have time to consider information sharing in the interests of children's wellbeing, to share it when judged to be appropriate, to meet existing needs, and to be responsive to changing and unforeseen needs arising from alterations to children's and young people's family circumstances or emerging emotional needs linked to their experiences of living in poverty, for example.

This has implications for the numbers of teaching staff employed within schools. For example, a Physics teacher in a Secondary school who is also a Pupil Support teacher and who has been identified as the Named Person for 250 children in the school, is likely to have less time available for the teaching of Physics than prior to the introduction of the NP service. Considering information, the wellbeing implications of sharing it, the wider legal landscape, and then, where judged appropriate, actively sharing the information with others, will take Named Persons away from the classroom or from other duties such as in the case of Primary Headteachers. In the case of the Secondary example, the gap would require to be filled with additional teaching staff whose specialism is Physics; in the Primary example, the requisite additional management time would have to be resourced with additional staffing.

If the GIRFEC approach in schools is to be effective in addressing the wellbeing needs of children experiencing poverty, additional staffing resource, both teaching and administrative, is essential.

Additional support needs provision

The Additional Support for Learning Act (2009) has the potential to be a strong lever in tackling the effects of poverty on children's learning and achievement since a disproportionate number of learners with additional support needs are from deprived socio-economic backgrounds.

In 2016, 170,329 pupils⁶⁶ (24.9% of all pupils), were identified as having additional support needs and 95% spent at least some of their time in mainstream classes. In 2011, the overall number was 98,523. The increase over those five years is 73%.

Against a backdrop of increasing numbers of children being identified as having additional support needs, and increasing numbers of children presenting with

⁶⁶ <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/TrendSpecialEducation>

complex social, emotional, behavioural and mental health issues, and rising numbers of children in poverty, there have been reductions in the numbers of essential specialist staff. Between 2012⁶⁷ and 2016⁶⁸ (per teacher census data) there were only five more staff categorised as 'Additional support needs auxiliary or care assistant' in Primary schools. In the same period, the number of Behaviour Support staff in Primaries declined from 45 to 19, a decline of 58%. In Secondary schools, the figures also show decline – 20% fewer ASN assistants and 4% fewer Behaviour Support staff.

Overall, the number of teachers with Additional Support for Learning as their main subject fell by 166 between 2007 and 2016, a fall of 5.4%. The reduction since 2009, when the number of such teachers peaked, is starker – a fall of 14.8%, with ASN teacher numbers falling in 16 out of Scotland's 32 local authorities over the period 2007 to 2016.

Cuts to English as an Additional Language services are also of concern. As one might expect, this issue is particularly acute in areas of the country where there have been significantly high levels of migration of families for whom English is an additional language. Similarly alarming is the reduction in Educational Psychological services. The number of Educational Psychologists practising in Scotland fell by 10% in the three years from 2012 to 2015. There were 370 trained educational psychologists practising in Scottish local authorities in 2015 - 10% fewer than the 411 in 2012. These staff provide valuable support to children with additional needs and can be of assistance to teachers in meeting children's diverse needs. Reduced funding training of EPs is undoubtedly a factor in this erosion.

What is now required is a review of the resourcing of additional support needs provision in Scotland. There must be genuine endeavour to ensure that what is promised in the ASL legislation is deliverable for the quarter of Scotland's children and young people, a large proportion of whom live in poverty, and who require extra, often specialist support; and that the commitment to include all young people in mainstream education as far as possible, is fully honoured.

Class sizes

The EIS has campaigned for some time towards class size reduction, not least because of the positive effect that being taught within smaller classes has on the outcomes of children and young people from poorer backgrounds and those who have additional support needs.

Notably, Finland, which measures high in international comparisons of excellence and equity, staffs its schools to ensure that children and young people are taught in classes whose sizes are favourable to producing such strong and equitable outcomes. The average class size is 19⁶⁹. Compare that figure with Scotland's where in Primary 23.5 is the average, with a maxima of 33 other than in P1 which is set at 25. Secondary BGE, non-practical classes, frequently have 33 pupils in them- more

⁶⁷

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/Summarystatsforschools/teachcensus2012>

⁶⁸

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/teachcensussuppdata/teachcensus2015/teachercensus2016>

⁶⁹ http://www.oph.fi/download/180148_Compulsory_education_in_Finland.pdf

than a third more students than in the Finnish equivalent; in the senior phase as students undertake National Qualifications, non-practical class sizes extend to 30.

The Finnish approach is underpinned by a consistent, undisputed commitment to equity as a fundamental aim of the education system. Regardless of the political administration, this remains a constant. The Finns mean it and they invest in ensuring it. They act on the evidence which shows that smaller classes have a positive impact on the attainment of children from more deprived backgrounds. Smaller classes enable each individual pupil to spend more time with their teacher, building relationships with their teachers and their peers, all of which can provide a major boost for their learning and attainment. This is one of the reasons why some parents in Scotland pay for private education- instinct and perhaps their own past experience tells them that smaller classes offer a more favourable learning environment for their children.

As Scottish education works hard to mitigate against the impact poverty on education – a situation that has grown worse in recent years and which is forecast to worsen still – reducing class sizes in our schools must remain high on the political agenda. All of our pupils, and particularly those who are disadvantaged by poverty, deserve the improved opportunities that smaller class sizes will afford them.

Progressive Pedagogy

Linked to smaller classes is progressive pedagogy. Having fewer pupils and students in a class opens up the space- both in terms of the physical space and classroom dynamics- in ways that are most conducive to learning and teaching approaches that encourage collaboration and creativity among pupils and students, and which are tailored more closely to the needs of individuals and small groups of learners. Curriculum for Excellence in its design was intended to encourage such approaches.

The EIS has been a longstanding exponent of mixed ability teaching, this shown to benefit learners from deprived socio-economic backgrounds in particular. The alternative- arranging pupils and students who are following the same course of study in classes or groups within classes by apparent 'ability'- amounts to a 'fixed ability' approach which best serves the more affluent pupils and students whose socio-economic background has resulted in their relative advantage in terms of achievement and attainment. We recommend that the Committee encourages serious consideration of the manner in which classes and groupings are arranged in Scotland's schools. School education in Finland is delivered entirely on a mixed ability basis for the reasons previously outlined. Again, though, this requires significant investment of additional resource.

A commitment to greater equity of outcome between the most and least deprived in our school communities must extend to assessment methodology. What we teach and how we assess the resultant learning must be aligned to social justice principles. An important CfE design principle was avoidance of the testing, targets and league-tables culture that characterised the previous 5-14 curriculum, and which international evidence shows, has the effect of compounding educational inequality. Formative assessment practice- teachers making well-informed judgments of children's progress in the natural course of their learning, supporting children to understand their own progress and teaching them how to evaluate that of their peers, is a key way of

enhancing the learning of all children. It is characterised by support and challenge, rather than the fear, anxiety, sense of failure and shame that can feature in the experiences, particularly of poorer children, amidst a high-stakes assessment culture.

Formal, high-stakes testing and examinations, and over-emphasis on and publication of the accompanying data, disadvantage children and young people from deprived socio-economic backgrounds. Yet, the Scottish Government, rather than challenge the blanket standardised assessment use by some local authorities in recent years, has introduced National Standardised Assessments and a system of school by school data collection and publication, which evidence shows, works to the disadvantage of the children and young people on whose behalf the government says that it wishes to intervene. The EIS is clear that the Scottish Government must act now to support the system around sound, progressive assessment practice and in the medium term, seek independent evaluation of the SNSAs and publication of CfE levels data in terms of the effect on the educational outcomes of Scotland's less affluent children.

Free School Meals

Since January 2015, the extension of free school meals eligibility for all P1 to P3s has mitigated some of the impact of food poverty for our youngest school children. While our 5-7 year-olds have a degree of protection from the misery and negative health impacts brought about by not having enough to eat, EIS members report growing incidence of hunger in their classrooms, which knows no age boundaries. For older children whose families' incomes are just above the threshold of entitlement to free school meals, hunger pangs accompanied by inability to concentrate and low energy, are a daily experience that hinder their participation in, enjoyment of, and outcomes from, school.

It is the view of the EIS that this is wholly unacceptable. It is imperative that the Scottish Government responds with universal provision of free meals for all children of school age. Hunger and poor nutrition cannot be allowed to mar the school experiences of any pupil or student, nor can the stigma of collecting a free meal in the school canteen while classmates pay for theirs.

Extract from EIS Face Up to Child Poverty Survey Report, Session 2016-17⁷⁰

In relation to food, nutrition and hunger, more than 50%, of those who took part in the survey reported an increase in the number of children coming to school without play-pieces, snacks or money for the tuck-shop, while almost a quarter signalled increased attendance at breakfast clubs and more than 10% highlighted that a greater number of families were requesting local foodbank referrals.

However more than 11% of respondents reported seeing families who were entitled to access free school meals, not doing so. This points to issues of stigma among both parents and children, and to lack of understanding of how to access entitlements.

Respondent comments⁷¹

'Children being hungry and needing fed before learning. Families struggling with Christmas. Universal Credit impacting on families so they have less money.'

'School has closer links with foodbank – they know certain families and deal with older children. This arises from difficulties accessing social security.'

⁷⁰<http://www.eis.org.uk/Content/images/campaigns/poverty/Child%20Poverty%20Survey%202017.pdf>

⁷¹<http://www.eis.org.uk/Content/images/campaigns/poverty/Child%20Poverty%20Appendix.pdf>

'Breakfast club funded by 3rd sector.'
'Lots of food groups; breakfast clubs, after school study sessions with food on offer.'
'Left-over food from lunches given to some children to take home. Teachers providing biscuits for children at break time.'
'Have breakfast cereal and snacks available in office for those who come to school without.'

Cost barriers

The EIS continues its campaigning work in relation to the cost barriers associated with children's attendance at school faced by families on low income. In 2015, the EIS issued guidance to members on this issue, seeking to raise awareness among members of the nature, causes and consequences of poverty and what might be done at school level to address the costs associated with school uniform, equipment and resources, homework, school trips, charity and fundraising events⁷². The EIS Face Up to Child Poverty publication was shared with all schools, local authorities and MSPs, and was well-received.

That said, the EIS is aware of continuing practice in some areas which perpetuates cost barriers and unwittingly limits children's and young people's participation in school life, both in terms of accessing the curriculum and taking part in the wider social and cultural activities that schools arrange. For example, the practice of charging Secondary school students for ingredients for cooking in Home Economics classes and for materials in Art continues in some schools, with some families accumulating 'debt' to the school because they are unable to pay. Not only does this carry stigma for the young people affected, it discourages them from choosing certain subjects for further study because they are aware of the associated costs and their family's inability to meet them. The EIS has written to local authorities, MSPs and Scottish Government recently, requesting that each plays their part in addressing such inequality within what is supposed to be a system of comprehensive education offering equal opportunity for all to participate and succeed.

In the same letter, we raised the issue of school clothing and clothing grants and the continuing variance across schools in terms of the costs of uniform, and across local authorities in terms of entitlement thresholds for clothing grants and adequacy of payments. The EIS has called on all to ensure that where school dress codes are stipulated, that all requisite clothing is widely affordable, with costs kept to a minimum, and for families on low income, that thresholds of entitlement are consistent across the country and the level of payment adequate. (The Poverty Truth Commission currently estimates the minimum cost of school uniform for a year to be £129.50.⁷³)

Extract from EIS Face Up to Child Poverty Survey Report, Session 2016-17⁷⁴

⁷²<http://www.eis.org.uk/Policy-And-Publications/2015-Childpovadvice>

⁷³ http://www.opfs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/SchoolClothingGrant_-Briefing_April-17.pdf

⁷⁴<http://www.eis.org.uk/Content/images/campaigns/poverty/Child%20Poverty%20Survey%202017.pdf>

In terms of clothing, two thirds of respondents indicated greater frequency of pupils coming to school inappropriately dressed for weather conditions, while 36% reported increased incidence of children not wearing uniform in schools where it is the norm to do so.

Respondent comments⁷⁵

'Children not coming to school because they have grown out of uniform and parents don't have money to buy new shoes, etc..'

'The payment of £1.00 for non-uniform days; the number of children embarrassed by not having a pound.'

'Not taking part in dress up days, non-uniform days and Christmas parties due to lack of fashionable clothing.'

'An increasing number of pupils taking part time jobs while still at school and then missing school to accept more working hours and / or too tired to attend and not completing homework or revising/preparing adequately for assessments and their exams.'

'We have seen a marked decrease in youngsters taking opportunities to take part in trips to theatre and other cultural activities. Due to location and costs a contribution is asked for but parents and carers are struggling to contribute. We are looking at having to cancel a trip to the panto in Glasgow at Christmas as not enough youngsters have brought in £15 – a heavily subsidised cost. Letters were distributed at the beginning of October with options to pay by instalments. Only ¼ of the number required to be viable have returned payment.'

'Pupils unable to access homework, assignments, revision materials...The response is that pupils access the information in the libraries at schools - again cutting these poor pupils off from their peers and the stigma of not being able to do the work at home. So, possible indicators of poverty - pupils sitting in the library or spare classrooms to access homework etc. when other young people are socialising at lunchtime. Some of these children do not take any lunch so that they can get the work done.'

Instrumental music tuition

The EIS has a particular concern at present regarding access by children from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds to instrumental music tuition. The EIS believes that this service should be universally and freely available to all pupils, the emotional, social, cultural and cognitive benefits of learning to play a musical instrument being widely known. Children attending independent schools are commonly recipients of school-based or other private instrumental music education. For several years now, music education across Scotland's comprehensive school sector has been under threat, due to budget cutbacks.

With regards to this Enquiry the main concern of the EIS is the increasing emergence of a 'who pays, plays' approach to music lessons. Many authorities have introduced charging regimes and the EIS fears that Scotland is rapidly moving towards a scenario in which only children from well-off families can learn to play an instrument. This would be unjust and unacceptable.

⁷⁵<http://www.eis.org.uk/Content/images/campaigns/poverty/Child%20Poverty%20Appendix.pdf>

The EIS has gathered recent evidence in relation to local authority instrumental music provision as follows:

- Eleven local authorities across Scotland increased their music tuition rates for the academic year 2017/18.⁷⁶
- Four authorities increased fees roughly in line with inflation, but other increases to the cost of a group lesson ranged from 3.7% (Shetland) to 22% (Fife).
- Among local authorities that charge for tuition, the average fee for group lessons in 2017/18, **£212 per pupil**, per year, increased by approximately 4.7% on 2016/17 fees; this follows an increase of 10.5% the previous year.
- The current cost of tuition for group lessons, among charging local authorities, ranges from **£117 to £378 per year**.
- Two music services charge an additional fee (from **£30 to £83 per year**) for hiring an instrument.
- Application of concessionary rates varies widely, from a low of 15% of pupils in Argyll and Bute, to 80% in Inverclyde. The average proportion of pupils receiving a concession is 36% and the mean is 34%. The criteria used vary substantially.

Charges for lessons and instrument hire limit access to music, and levy a high price on the development of young people's talent- a price that for families of the 260,000 children living in poverty, is simply unaffordable. The EIS would urge the Committee to consider this growing inequality and the array of opportunity brought by instrumental music education which is increasingly well beyond the reach of a sizeable proportion of our school population.

Conclusion

The EIS would reiterate the view that genuine commitment to ensuring more equal educational outcomes requires the alignment of all policy both external and internal to education, with social justice principles, including that related to assessment practice; the removal of cost barriers associated with children's and young people's school attendance; and adequate and sustained resourcing.

In terms of resourcing, that means, at the very least, enough teachers who have ongoing access to high quality CPD, including inputs on the nature, causes and consequences of poverty. It means increasing teacher numbers to deliver smaller class sizes arranged on the basis of mixed ability for the particular benefit of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. It means adequate specialist support for learners with additional support needs, including regular and sustained support for learners at all stages who have English as an additional language.

Tackling the impact of poverty on children's school experience requires adequate time for Pupil Support staff to attend to pupils' pastoral care needs; enough time for schools to plan and deliver approaches to enhance links between school and home, crucially supporting vulnerable parents to be involved in their children's learning;

⁷⁶ Improvement Service: <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/documents/research/IMS-survey-report-2017.pdf>

allowing maximum time for teachers to engage in meaningful professional reflection and collaboration around what works in improving outcomes for children living in poverty; and the provision of classroom resources and equipment that facilitate learning that has creativity and learner collaboration at the core of it.

There is no cheap way of delivering an education system that is both excellent and equitable. Only long-term, protected investment will deliver that worthy ambition.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

NASUWT

1. The NASUWT welcomes the opportunity to provide information to the Education and Skills Committee to support the inquiry on the impact of experiencing poverty on the attainment and achievement of young people at school.

GENERAL COMMENTS

2. More than 25% (260,000) of Scotland's children are officially recognised as living in poverty, compared to 22% (220,000) in 2014/15. This is a level significantly higher than in many other European countries. Indeed, the recent increase in child poverty is in keeping with independent modelling by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) which forecasts an increase of more than 50% in the proportion of children living in poverty in the UK by 2020/21: this would reverse most of the decrease in child poverty observed in the UK since the late 1990s.
3. One of the most profound and damaging consequences of child poverty is the impact that it has on pupils' educational attainment, their wider wellbeing and their future life chances. The establishment of a purposeful, coherent and integrated approach across Government policies and practices to tackling child poverty and social exclusion must, therefore, be regarded as a fundamental duty of any Government.
4. It is imperative that the Scottish Government takes all possible action within its remit to exert sustained downward pressure on child poverty and its causes. It is welcome that the Scottish Government has recognised that there are steps it can take to exert downward pressure on poverty levels in Scotland in, for example, the Fairer Scotland Action Plan and the recommendations of the Commission on Widening Access. Policy in Scotland sets out clear targets for poverty reduction by 2030. It is important that this area of policy continues to be prioritised by Scottish Ministers. The publication of periodic Child Poverty Delivery Plans offers an

important means by which progress towards these targets can be tracked, and all relevant stakeholders, including the NASUWT, can be engaged meaningfully in this work.

5. The Union is clear that key to tackling child poverty is:
- the establishment of an effective statutory and regulatory framework for policy development and implementation;
 - sustained investment in anti-poverty programmes;
 - co-ordinated Government policy on education, health and housing; and
 - a welfare system that supports children and families.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

6. Teachers and school leaders are acutely aware that poverty is a key inhibitor of educational progress. The NASUWT has undertaken extensive research into child poverty through studies on the impact of financial hardship on children and young people and the cost of education.
7. The principal contribution made by schools in enhancing the wellbeing and life chances of children and young people relates to their work in providing high-quality learning experiences.

POVERTY PROOFING

8. The NASUWT suggests that addressing the cost of education and making provision for regulations which will secure poverty proofing of the school day should be prioritised moving forward. It is essential that schools are given clear statutory guidance on charging policies and curriculum access.
9. The recent NASUWT Big Question 2016 survey of teachers in Scotland showed that 71% of teachers had seen pupils coming to school hungry; 81% of teachers had seen pupils who do not have the correct equipment for lessons; and 79% of teachers had seen pupils who are lacking in energy/concentration due to poor diet. In addition, the research showed that teachers are now regularly giving increasing numbers of children food, clothes and equipment, at their own expense.

10. The NASUWT has been conducting, since 2011, surveys of parents and carers on the cost of education. The results provide evidence of the increasing cost of education through school uniform, stationery and educational-visit costs. One of the most disturbing aspects, however, is that, increasingly, parents are saying that they are being forced to pay for educational visits which are an essential or integral part of the curriculum, such as field trips required for qualifications; 16% have had to pay for a trip linked to an exam. Furthermore, there is now more and more evidence emerging that some young people are being forced to reject the subject options they would prefer because their parents would be unable to afford the books, equipment or field trips necessary for the course; 3% of parents say their child had to choose subjects based on equipment costs.
11. Research and survey data available to the NASUWT indicate that many seniors are being asked to buy books for their courses, or to print resources for the courses they are taking at home. Teachers report that education cuts are preventing many local authorities from delivering their statutory duty to ensure equity irrespective of socioeconomic disadvantage. Many pupils can only pursue senior courses of study because their families can afford to pay for textbooks and resources.
12. It is also reported by teachers that large capital purchases in schools, together with the replacement of obsolete or broken equipment in departments such as science, are not being funded and in other schools practical science lessons are being cancelled because schools cannot afford chemicals and equipment. Undoubtedly, there are areas where parent-council fundraising can be relied upon to bolster a school's ability to weather the cuts, but this masks a larger funding crisis.

PUPIL EQUITY FUNDING

13. The processes underpinning Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) across Scotland have been variable. While the NASUWT welcomed funding targeted at closing the poverty-related attainment gap, feedback from members suggests that not all headteachers have liaised with their teaching staff to support the identification of

the best use for the money. Equally, the accountability mechanisms within local authorities need to be strengthened to ensure that PEF is being used appropriately.

14. Regrettably, while core services continue to be cut and support staff removed, PEF will not deliver the impact needed in reducing the poverty-related attainment gap.

EQUALITIES

15. Finally, it is important that the Committee recognises that the attainment gap is not limited to poverty-related factors, and that the experience of pupils who have a protected characteristic under the Equality Act is not totally overshadowed by a reliance on poverty as the sole factor affecting education participation and attainment.

Chris Keates
General Secretary

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

School Leaders Scotland

School Leaders Scotland confirms that the Scottish Government's policies are being implemented in Secondary schools throughout Scotland. The Association and its members have always been, and remain, committed to the principles and practices of Equity and social justice as they are evidenced in schools and exist within wider society. We welcome the raising of their profile within the Scottish Government's agenda and further welcome the support offered schools in the pursuit of equity and excellence for Scotland's young people. While acknowledging the critical role of education and schools in addressing the adverse impacts of poverty on attainment and achievement we feel it important to point out the need for commitment to a corporate and co-ordinated effort from all who have a responsibility for child well-being.

School Leaders Scotland appreciates the approach Scottish Government has taken through the direction of Pupil Equity Funding directly to schools hence giving Headteachers more flexibility in responding to identified local need in a timeous, direct, targeted and flexible manner. We welcome the opportunity to be able to deliver tailored and specific assistance at the point and time of need within the context of the school and its young people. We further welcome the extended enabling opportunities offered School Leaders within the Headteachers Charter.

We have found the framing of this approach within the National Improvement Framework useful in providing both direction and context. In this context we have provided significant Professional Learning opportunities for our members over the past two years. We are strong supporters and advocates of the National Improvement Framework and of its centrality in the Scottish Education Agenda. School Leaders Scotland would value the opportunity for an enhanced role in the evaluation of progress made against the NIF and to have high level involvement in the discussion around future priorities within it.

As previously stated we find much to recommend the PEF approach in that it gives schools the opportunity through their actions to impact directly on the debilitating and corrosive impact of poverty on young people's learning and well-being. One year on, we have seen value in the National PEF events in maintaining a high level message regarding expectations of schools but more significantly by exemplifying the variety of approaches and practices across the country. As we move into the second year we would encourage the promotion of system learning through the further dissemination of effective practice particularly with regard to the evaluation of impact on attainment and achievement. We see this as a core element in the model of high level guidance supporting local action.

School Leaders Scotland is aware of the wide range of strategies operating across Scotland in regard of obviating the impact of poverty on young peoples' learning and life chances. We recommend all or none as they are by their very nature designed to fit specific circumstance and meet identified individual need. We see strategies falling

into the following areas of action and designed to have clear and planned impact and outcomes:

- Getting young people into school
- Supporting young people while they are in school
- Keeping young people in learning
- Providing young people with the full range of opportunities
- Eliminating poverty of ambition
- Developing an aspirational awareness of positive leaver destinations

We see Pupil Equity Funding as a significant additional lever within the system, empowering schools to develop an imaginative approach to sustaining individual learner journeys. It for example enables decisions to be taken at the point of delivery to:

- Set up and sustain long term pupil support interventions
- Establish bespoke curricular initiatives
- Introduce specific interventions to support learning
- Engage the services of appropriate professionals
- Create opportunities to enable schools to get the right professionals working with the right young people

As with any such large scale innovation within the system, and notwithstanding the positive change which has been delivered, having reflected on the first year of PEF, we make a number of observations regarding current operational issues and challenges for the future direction of travel.

1. It is critical that we remain committed to equality and equity, raising attainment for all while closing the poverty related attainment gap but without stigmatising a specific group of young people.
2. The system must overcome the difficulties and uncertainties which blighted the early implementation of the scheme and are still prevalent in some areas today. The variability in approach across local authorities and lack of financial transparency has at times hindered effective progress and the development of a truly collegiate approach. A less variable and more imaginative approach to budgetary procedures would be welcomed. Above all Pupil Equity Funding must operate as obvious and genuine additionality to the system.
3. While understanding the rationale behind the use of Free Meal Entitlement as the sole determinant of poverty, the experience of one year has prompted us to suggest that we need to become more sophisticated if we are to reach and address all aspects of poverty as they impact on the life of individual young people.
4. Issues have arisen around the employment of staff (teaching and non teaching) to support young people's learning:
 - time lag between identifying task/outcome focussed job descriptions and appointment

- non permanent nature of employment
 - shortage of applicants
 - human resource challenges across/within local authorities
5. We would appreciate immediate discussion and thereafter clarity around the accountability framework and procedures which will be applied to schools to evaluate impact of actions taken, and value for money.
 6. We see it as critical to achieving maximum impact and value for money that there be a swift move towards aligning the strategic and functional capabilities, capacities and expectations of Schools, Local Authorities and Regional Improvement Collaboratives.
 7. We see a need to promote system engagement with the Widening Access debate

Jim Thewliss
General Secretary
School Leaders Scotland
21 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

UNISON

Introduction

UNISON is Scotland's largest trade union with members across the public, private and voluntary sectors. UNISON members work in a range of settings in nurseries, schools, health services and across local government delivering education and care services for children including those with additional support needs. UNISON therefore welcomes the opportunity to submit evidence to the inquiry into Poverty and Attainment.

Evidence

The enormous gap in qualifications between children in poor and wealthy areas in Scotland is simply a reflection of the inequality that scars Scottish society. A well fed child living in a comfortable warm home is going to find it easier to take part in education than one who is hungry and cold. Ending the poverty related attainment gap requires eradicating poverty itself. That requires a range of measure including decent benefits for those who can't work and decent wages and secure jobs for those who do. That does not mean that action cannot be taken to reduce the impact of poverty on children's attainment. This will require investment in a range of public services not just schools. The services also need to work to work together. This is why it important that education services are embedded in local authorities where links to social work, libraries, youth work, leisure and cultural services as well as social work, welfare rights, education psychologists and housing can be best co-ordinated.

As the Poverty and Inequality Commission paper⁷⁷ states:

“Action on education needs to have a two pronged approach: addressing the poverty related barriers that prevent children from fully accessing education, and raising educational attainment in order to reduce the likelihood of poverty in adulthood.”

A key driver of attainment is the chance to undertake educationally enhancing activities. These bring knowledge, skills, confidence and resilience to those who take part. It is clear that better-off parents have resources to allow their children to take part in a wider range of activities than their less well-off peers. For example, going to see a play live makes it easier to get good marks in English than just reading it in a book or out loud in the class.

Those who have the least opportunity to do these activities out with school need to have these opportunities in school. Sadly cuts in local authority funding mean that the cost of school trips, in school activities, music lessons and sports clubs are

⁷⁷ Poverty And Inequality Commission <https://povertyinequality.scot/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Child-Poverty-Delivery-Plan-advice-Final-Version-23-February-2018.pdf> Page 33

increasingly falling on parents. These are burdens that many families cannot meet and their children are losing out.

The attainment gap is a long standing issue but the last ten years of austerity has made it worse. Cuts to a range of local government services mean that families are no longer able to access a range of support. In schools cuts to classroom assistants, school libraries, technicians and educational psychologist mean that children aren't getting what they need.

Last year, in probably one of the biggest surveys⁷⁸ of school support staff ever in Scotland, our members reported; heavier workloads, job cuts, lack of educational supplies, and dirtier schools. This is while pupil numbers and education support needs are increasing. This means that children are not getting the support they need to achieve their full potential. Parents who are better off are able to spend their own money to make up for cuts in school support whether that's materials, tutors music lessons or other educational enhancing activities other's miss out.

There are 6707 more pupils since 2010 in Scottish schools, but there 1841 less support staff and 1389 less teachers. This means fewer classroom assistants, technicians, librarians and administrative staff. Our report confirmed the enormous stress this puts on support staff.

- 54% of support staff say budgets have been cut,
- 40% carry out unpaid work to meet workloads,
- 60% say morale is low, and
- 80% say workloads are heavier.

Services like school libraries are closing. Science classes have fewer opportunities for hands on experiments. Many report stress from the lack of training and support they receive for the tasks they are asked to carry out – like administering medicines or caring for pupils with challenging behaviour.

The new Scottish government report on behaviour in schools⁷⁹ found that there has been an increase in low-level disruptive behaviour since 2012. Staff also reported that it is this type of disruptive behaviour that has the biggest negative impact on their experience in schools.

Head teachers, teachers, support staff and pupils all agree that there is a clear link between having sufficient support staff in a classroom and positive behaviour in that classroom. Staff also felt that the reduction in support staff combined with growing numbers of pupils with ASN had resulted in a shortage of one-to-one support for pupils and a wider negative impact on behaviour.

Again in line with UNISON's research, it is clear that support staff do not have enough time for discussions with class teachers about pupils or involvement in whole school discussions about behaviour and relationships in schools. Headteachers also indicated that cuts in non-school based support for pupils with additional needs are

⁷⁸ Hard Lessons UNISON Scotland 2017 <http://www.unison-scotland.org/library/20170109-Schools-Damage-Series.pdf>

⁷⁹ Scottish Government Behaviour in Schools 2017 <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0052/00526338.pdf>

also impacting on the level of support available to pupils. It is also clear that when resources in schools are stretched in general then that has an impact on other aspects of school life which could promote positive behaviour. It is children from less well off backgrounds whose parents cannot buy them extra support who suffer most when schools are short of resources.

Child Poverty Action Group's Cost of a School day report⁸⁰ gives an excellent overview of the issues faced by those on low incomes and offers different ways of working to ensure better opportunities. There is not space here to cover the whole report but it is clear that attending school places significant financial costs on families. As school budgets are being cut and alongside that the loss of staff, these issues are getting worse instead of improving. There is lots of evidence of the growing costs of even the basics for children attending school.

“the commission also heard however, about examples of other costs being shifted from schools to families, for example as expectations that all families will have access to a computer and printer and be able to print out material that is part of core learning”⁸¹

Cuts to budgets mean that parents have to pay for music lessons, materials for art, woodwork and cooking classes or their children miss out. There are also the basic supplies to support study: note pads, pens, pencils, past papers, study guides, a warm quiet place to study. Curriculum for Excellence means that homework can take a number of forms and require lots of home research which requires internet and computers: Children are expected to produce power point presentation, films, cartoons, 3D models, and cake models not just written papers. These all cost money. The children from better-off families are still able to access a range of educationally enhancing and confidence building activities out with school: sports clubs, art clubs, and drama clubs because their parents can buy them. Here in UNISON we have been told by members on low wages or zero hour contracts of instances of their children, knowing the sacrifices their parents would make to find the money, not even telling parents about school trips. They'd rather miss out than see their parents suffer. These costs mean that far from narrowing the gap it will grow.

Schools in wealthier areas also have more access to parents who can financially support the school's fundraising activities so those schools have more resources available. This again widens the gap as some schools are then better funded. It does also create issues for those children attending those schools whose parent are not able to contribute whether to fundraising events or pay the increasing range and rate of charges to take part in activities that the school organises for those who can pay. If the discussion in English focuses on the play that a proportion of the class got to see live, those who only see it read out in class or read it themselves are at a huge disadvantage. The same is true for trips to historic sights, field trips and science centres.

⁸⁰ CPAG <http://www.cpag.org.uk/cost-school-day>

⁸¹ Poverty Commission 2018 <https://povertyinequality.scot/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Child-Poverty-Delivery-Plan-advice-Final-Version-23-February-2018.pdf> page 33

School libraries have been cut, many are only open part-time and there are fewer professional librarians in them to support research skills. While the internet gives us all access to more information than ever before, working out what is and isn't credible is a more vital skill than ever. Public libraries are also facing cuts, with reduced opening hours, fewer libraries and fewer professional staff in them when they are open. Those children who cannot get that support from parents are again losing out because of cuts to that support in schools. Libraries and school libraries in particular should be vital tools in closing that attainment gap. They should be places where those without computers, wifi and books at home can go and find the information they need to support their education. Where they can work in a quite warm place writing up essays and projects. They should also be staffed with information professionals who can provide the support needed to evaluate sources and learn how to properly undertake research. Many pupils whose parent's don't have these skills cannot get this support at home even if they do have computers and printers.

Instead both public and school libraries have experienced severe budget cuts⁸². The situation has resulted in a highly-varied level of provision that reduces equity of access including:

- Only 11 out of 32 local authorities who have a full time qualified librarian in every secondary school, every day;
- 19 Councils with part time librarians or a mix of librarians and library assistants in their secondary schools;
- One Council (Argyll and Bute) with no school librarians;

Our members also tell us that there are serious issues with the lack of support available for children with Additional Support Needs (ASN). We have some great strategies and policy commitments to supporting children with additional needs but these have not been matched with adequate funding to enable their implementation. Schools do not have enough money for recruitment, training and support for the staff needed to meet those needs.

There is also still widespread misunderstanding about who is actually working with these children and young people on a day-to-day basis. Again and again, in policy papers and inquiries, the focus is on teachers, teacher training and improving their skills and knowledge, these are not the workers supporting children. It is support workers, pupil support assistants and classroom assistants. There needs to be training and professional development for all the staff working with those children.

Parents often have to fight to get the additional support their child needs. This means that access to additional support is based on how able your parents are to win that support. East Renfrewshire has much higher rates of children with dyslexia than for example North Lanarkshire⁸³. Is there an epidemic of dyslexia or are parents there better able to get a diagnosis? Even when parents (who are able to fight) "win" that fight there is no additional funding attached to implement the decisions. Any

⁸² Chartered Institute of Librarians and Information Professionals in Scotland Briefing for John Swinney 2018

<http://www.cilips.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Briefing-for-DFM.pdf>

⁸³ Dyslexia Scotland

http://www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk/sites/default/files/page_content/Dyslexia%20identification%20vs%20SQA%20referrals.pdf

additional provision comes out of the school budget; this therefore has an impact of provision of services for other children relying on that budget. There then needs to be funding to meet those costs. It is also clear that there is a risk that those from better-off backgrounds have higher chances of winning those battles and so further increasing the attainment gap.

Any serious attempt to improve educational attainment has to start well before children get to school - that's why early learning is so important. In UNISON Scotland's [submission](#) to the Scottish government's 'Blueprint 2020' for early learning and childcare, we place an emphasis on the quality of the services and the need for public provision. As the JRF⁸⁴ report makes clear creating an anti poverty childcare service requires a supply side solution. We need to make sure that we learn the lessons of the adult care sector where we now have a fragmented service, which is costly and hard for users to navigate, with varying quality of service and a race to the bottom for staff terms and conditions. The money follows the child schemes proposed in the consultation have a high risk of creating a service based on low paid and unqualified staff. It risks creating a two tier system where those who can afford to pay more on top will have access to better nurseries than those on low incomes.

UNISON fully supports the government's aim of closing the poverty related attainment gap. In order to achieve this, the government needs to reverse cuts to local government budgets and to invest in the whole school team to ensure that all pupils get the support they need to achieve their full potential.

Conclusion

UNISON is Scotland's largest trade union with members across the public, private and voluntary sectors. UNISON members work in a range of settings in nurseries, schools, and health services and across local government delivering education and care services for children including those with additional support needs. Every day they see the impact of poverty on the attainment of the children they work with. Many members also live in poverty and see the impact on their own children. UNISON fully supports the commitment to close the attainment gap but cutting local government budgets and the numbers of people working in schools to support children will widen the gap. UNISON therefore welcomes the opportunity to submit evidence to the Inquiry into Poverty and Attainment.

Dave Watson
Head of Policy and Public Affairs
UNISON Scotland
March 2018

⁸⁴ Joseph Rowntree Foundation Creating An anti-Poverty Childcare System 2016
<https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/creating-anti-poverty-childcare-system>

SUBMISSIONS FROM PARENT REPRESENTATIVES

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Connect

1. Introduction

Connect (formerly SPTC) is delighted to respond to the call for evidence from the Parliament's Education and Skills Committee on the subject of the impact of poverty on Attainment and Achievement.

Connect is a long-standing independent parents group and a registered charity which provides support to parents and carers all over Scotland. We provide membership services to individual Parent Councils and PTAs, as well as offering advice and information to individual parents who have concerns about any aspect of the education of their child, or the wider education system. We support education professionals in developing their skills and understanding around effective partnership working with families and the wider community.

Given the short timescale to provide a submission, we had limited opportunity to engage parents in the conversation around our response, however we were able to use our on-line survey group - Parent's Voice - and our social media channels (Facebook and Twitter) to reach parents to ask specifically about:

- Understanding of actions taken by schools and/or Parent Councils to support families experiencing poverty
- The impact of that support on learning
- How parents are supported to apply for free school meals (FSC) when their children are eligible
- The experience of parents who claim FSM

In addition to the finding from this survey (which had 350 respondents up to this point) we have also tapped into our experience of working with school communities around Scotland in our work around member support and the Partnership Schools programme.

2. Connect's Mission and Policy Position

Connect's mission is to make parental engagement in education as good as it can be, for the good of children. It is well recognised that poverty has a significant impact on educational outcomes for children, and that poverty exists across schools throughout the country. In other words, every school in Scotland will have some children whose families are living in poverty.

What we know about the impact of poverty on learning outcomes:

- We know that attainment increases steadily as deprivation levels decrease
- The attainment gap is not simply about the least well-off 20%: it exists across every decile, with a decrease in attainment associated with every drop in level
- We know that 'poverty of aspiration' is a fiction: parents universally want the best for their children, and their ambition is that their children do better than they did. The challenge for many parents is to see how they can influence that outcome
- From our work, we know that parents and carers in schools located within deprived areas are as interested in supporting their children and school as those from more affluent areas: approaches and ethos of the school are the factors which make the biggest impact on levels of engagement from families
- Poverty is often not acknowledged or recognised and therefore not supported, and in some cases family circumstances are outwith social norms (eg family member in prison), thus attracting no support
- Poverty can impact in many ways: fuel poverty can militate against good home learning; transport poverty particularly impacts on families in rural areas but is also a significant factor for families wherever they live; the cost of the school day (eg. Transport, food, school trips, uniforms, course resources, fundraisers)⁸⁵ is a significant drain on family resources; young people themselves limit their choices at school because of family poverty, thus reducing the range of educational experiences they have⁸⁶
- We reject the notion of 'child poverty' as if it existed in isolation: where a child is experiencing poverty, it is because of family circumstances and so the experience of poverty is the family's, not simply the child's. The use of the term child poverty invites negativity and criticism of the role of the parent(s)
- Where poverty is combined with other factors which impact on family's capacity to engage with school and/or education, the impacts are significantly amplified

In our recently-published Manifesto, we clearly identified the impacts of poverty and austerity on the lives of families and the experience of children in education and called for:

- Fair and adequate funding for schools which is transparent
- A commitment to meeting the needs of all of our children, whatever those needs are and whatever the child's background or ability
- Parent Councils and schools to work together to support families living in poverty as much as they are able, to mitigate where possible the impacts on learning which are the result of poverty

Finally, the use of claim levels for Free Schools Meals as a mechanism for allocation of funding to schools is, in our view, an unacceptable one which dismisses what we

⁸⁵ Cost of the School Day, Child Poverty Action Group [http://www.cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/CPAG-Scot-Cost-Of-School-Day-Report\(Oct15\)_1.pdf](http://www.cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/CPAG-Scot-Cost-Of-School-Day-Report(Oct15)_1.pdf)

⁸⁶ Learning Lessons: Young People's Views on Poverty and Education in Scotland (Save the Children Scotland and Children's Commissioner Scotland) (<https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/content/dam/global/reports/education-and-child-protection/learning-lessons.pdf>)

know about poverty and its impacts across communities, and in fact punishes those families who are experiencing poverty but may be living in more affluent areas, where claiming benefits would be especially negative and stigmatising.

3. Parents' Perspectives

Our survey of parents has attracted 350 participants to date, the greatest percentage of these having children at primary school (70%). 12% have children at secondary school and 18% have children in both settings. **Key findings from the survey:**

1) When asked what the school or Parent Council does to support families experiencing poverty:

- a) 32% did not know
- b) 30% identified a free or subsidised breakfast club
- c) 53% identified help with payment of school trips
- d) 51% identified distribution of second-hand school uniforms or discounts on new

2) When asked if they had used the support, 88% had not.

3) Parents were asked if the support had improved their child's learning. Only 66 answered this question:

- a) 32% said there was no improvement
- b) 17% said attendance had improved
- c) 12% said attention in class had improved
- d) 5% said maths and/or reading had improved
- e) 38% said relationships with peers had improved
- f) 27% said physical and/or mental health had improved

4) Parents were asked if the school helps parents claim free school meals.

- a) 33% don't know
- b) 42% said help was available

5) Parents were asked if the Parent Council had helped with free school meal claims.

- a) Only 115 people answered this question, of which 66 did not know.
- b) 17 people (15% of respondents) identified awareness campaigning
- c) 23 (20%) mentions in newsletters
- d) A small number identified direct contact with parents as something which had happened.

6) Parents were asked if they knew how to claim FSM: 45% said they did

7) Asked if they claim or had claimed FSM, 85% had not, 6% did not claim even though they qualified. Stigma and varying income levels were identified as key issues here.

8) Asked if the school and/or Parent Council does enough to help families experiencing poverty, 42% commented that they do.

Many of the parents who took part in the survey added comments about the work they or their schools do in this area, their own experiences and their attitudes to the issue of what can or should be done.

These comments addressed many of the points identified in the questions, but they also provided more insight into the challenges and attitudes towards this issue:

- Online ParentPay style systems (run by local authorities) are particularly difficult for parents on low incomes and in some cases add a transaction charge, disproportionately penalising parents who are able to pay small amounts frequently
- Earning fluctuations (due to nature of contracts, self-employed status) made claiming for benefits generally very difficult
- In relation to school meals, special dietary requirements (eg celiac disease, significant food allergies) are not widely catered for
- Quality of school meals in terms of healthiness of what is offered and the quality of food served (for instance cook-chill) were identified as issues, along with tastes of children
- Fundraising in school (non-uniform days, World Book Day, fundraising events for instance) were seen as real barriers for some families, particularly those with a number of children
- The issue of families who are just managing and those in working poverty were highlighted

While some participants questioned why schools or Parent Councils should have any role in addressing poverty in the school community, the vast majority identified it as important and many reflected that, though their Parent Council had not specifically addressed poverty, they would take it up. Many Parent Council members identified that they are aware and working with their school in this area.

4. In Conclusion

We already know a lot about the impact of poverty on children's educational and life outcomes. We also know that parental engagement is a significant factor in improving outcomes for children. Further, we understand that parents are interested in their children and in supporting good outcomes for them. Our contention is that, while schools cannot fix the economic circumstances of families, they can do a lot (along with an active Parent Council) to help support families, given the right ethos and approaches. This is the work Connect is engaged in and one we are committed to.

Eileen Prior
Executive Director, Connect
22 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

The National Parent Forum of Scotland

The impact of experiencing poverty on the attainment and wider achievement of school aged children.

The National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFS) was established in 2009 following the introduction of parent councils by the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006. The Forum aims to support parental involvement in education and provides a parental perspective at a national level. The Forum is parent-led; comprised of volunteer parent representatives from each local authority area, who communicate with parent councils and support parent involvement at a local level.

We are pleased to have the opportunity to inform Scottish Parliament's Education and Skills Committee inquiry into the impact of experiencing poverty on the attainment and wider achievement of school aged children.

Parental and family engagement has a greater influence on children and young people's attainment than their socio-economic background, parents' educational attainment, family structure or ethnicity. The more parents engage in their child's learning, the more likely it is that they will help raise their child's attainment. This is backed up by research on school effectiveness, which shows parental engagement to be one of the key factors in securing higher achievement i.e. what parents do with their children at home and throughout their education is much more significant than any other factor open to educational influence (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003).

Effective parental involvement programmes can help to close the attainment gap associated with pupils from economically disadvantaged households. Such programmes focus on helping parents to use appropriate strategies to support their child's learning at home (Ellis and Sosu, 2014).

Rather than accepting low levels of engagement, schools should fully investigate why parents are not feeding back. It is not that parents do not want to engage with schools, a large amount of groundwork needs to be done for schools to be successful in breaking down barriers.

It is not enough to continue with the status quo. Instead of labelling parents as hard to reach, schools need to recognise that, for many parents, it is the school that is too far from reach. Most professionals and policy makers are now aware of the challenges that prevent some parents becoming involved. According to a recent YouGov survey of 296 Scottish parents with children aged 3-18 years who attend school, only 24% feel their school spends enough money in helping parents get more involved. We believe the next tranche of Pupil Equity Funding should be used, in part, to break down the barriers that many schools have already identified.

According to Ipsos MORI research, parents and carers:

- living in deprived areas are less likely to feed back to the school through

formal means (5% of parents living in the most deprived areas would feed back this way compared with 20% in the least deprived areas)

- with a lower socioeconomic status are less likely to be interested in joining the parent council (52% of AB parents interested, compared with 34% of DE parents)
- with a lower socioeconomic status are less likely to know what the parent council does (e.g. 32% of DE parents do not know if the parent council asks parents views about what the children are learning, compared with 17% of AB parents).

It is important that schools engage with these parents, but it is clear from this data that the current parent council mechanism will not be the appropriate way to do so. Research for our recent consultation responses and for the Review of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 found many challenges to involvement:

- Many parents do not have time to be heavily involved in school decision-making.
- The expense of involvement is a factor; many parents rely on public transport to reach their child's school, which can be costly.
- Many parents do not have the confidence to engage with the school and this can be related to having English as a second language.
- Parents struggle to understand the relevance of communications to their child.
- Parents do not receive communications that have educational jargon removed.
- Lack of easy to read versions make it more difficult for parents that struggle to understand communications.
- Many parents have work patterns and shifts that make it difficult to get involved in the school day.
- Many parents have younger siblings to look after and a lack of crèche provision can be an issue.

According to our research, specifically with ethnic minority parents, the fundamental aspects for involving more parents is ensuring that the school is welcoming and the headteacher is open and approachable. The YouGov survey discovered that 71% feel their school is welcoming to all parents but, as this should be a standard feature, school communities need to work together to achieve 100%. This also differed according to socioeconomic status: 75% of parents in the higher (ABC1) social grades felt their school was welcoming, but just 67% of the lower (C2DE) grades. Only 60% of parents felt their headteacher was open and approachable. This figure drops to 54% of parents in the C2DE socioeconomic bracket. Face to face consultation between parents and teachers is seen as having most value. The survey also found that only just over half (52%) of parents are satisfied with the amount of one to one time that they receive with their child's teacher(s).

Parents need to know why they are being engaged, why it is relevant and the benefits to their child. Not every parent needs to attend each meeting for parental engagement to be deemed successful, but all parents need a link with the school. Many schools have managed to establish this basic groundwork for good engagement, including:

- creating a welcoming environment
- making school activities more flexible to fit working parents
- giving sufficient notice for meetings and events
- working with potentially disadvantaged parents, particularly those who have had a negative experience of school themselves, to ensure they feel more comfortable in the school environment
- direct communication to increase awareness
- offering creche provision and or transport costs
- communicating to parents in a wide range of ways
- offering family activities that involve food or cooking
- supporting the parents of children with additional support needs.

Family learning is an effective approach that is often misunderstood by teachers. Homework is not family learning. It is a powerful tool that can challenge educational disadvantage, promote socio economic resilience and foster positive attitudes towards lifelong learning (Scottish Family Learning Network, 2016). Family learning allows families to develop positive relationships with educators that can lead to greater ongoing involvement with their child's education.

Research has shown that around 80% of the variance in how well children do at school depends on what happens outside the school gates (Rabash et al, 2010; Save the Children, 2013). Parents are the first educators of their child. The learning journey begins long before they start school and they continue to learn at home and in the community. Nurseries should be encouraged to support their families to take part in learning at home by clarifying what forms this can take and building on what parents already do to include learning in their everyday activities. This should take account of possible costs involved.

Finally, we know that a child living in poverty is surrounded by obstacles in every part of their life, including their education. The NPFS fully supports the Cost of the School Day campaign by Child Poverty Action Group and is pleased to have been involved in creating a national toolkit to help parent councils' poverty-proof their schools. The cost of every day school attendance and extracurricular activities places significant strain on some families and this impacts attainment and wider achievement. The campaign recognises this and aims to tackle these costs. Successful measures include reviewing school uniform policies, providing clear information of when costs will occur so parents can plan, providing extracurricular activities in the community instead of on school campus, and many more. It is important to note that this toolkit covers several issues unique to more rural parts of our country. We would refer the committee to the document to see many more examples of good practice across Scotland's schools: https://www.npfs.org.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2017/11/NPFS_toolkit_schools_E_1711.Pdf

In conclusion, we believe parents and families need help to understand and fulfil their crucial role in shaping and supporting their children's learning aspirations and attainment. A good level of parental involvement should be standard for all schools and established in ways which that suit whole school communities, not just headteachers. Inadequate levels of parental engagement and collaboration within schools limit the scope of parental involvement and the potential learning of young people. Schools should grasp the recommendations contained in our Review of the

Impact of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 to ensure consistency in this important area.

The NPFS would be pleased to speak with the committee about these issues.

Joanna Murphy

Chair

The National Parent Forum of Scotland

22 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

OPFS Submission

One Parent Families Scotland (OPFS) is Scotland's national single parent organisation. OPFS provides expert information, advice & family support, along with training activities, employability programmes & flexible childcare, tailored to the needs of single parent families. www.opfs.org.uk

Our submission is based on the view that while schools play a central role in closing the attainment gap, what they provide is only one feature of the multi-dimensional input across various agencies as well as the key role of parents. We believe that developing trusting and respectful partnerships to achieve better understanding of how poverty affects families is important in helping to close the attainment gap. Our submission highlights:

- Single parents do a brilliant job, but paying the bills and juggling work and family life on your own can be a real challenge. Children in single parent families are twice as likely as children in couple families to live in poverty.
- Single Parents have told us they often feel stigmatised by judgmental attitudes and their parenting is called into question. We believe single parents and their children should be treated equally and fairly.
- Schools and the education system are still designed around the two-parent family model – this causes extra pressures for single parents and can also stigmatise children.
- OPFS believes we need to take a family based approach and not solely child interventions; we cannot tackle underachievement by focusing solely on children.
- To tackle underachievement, we need to look at family, community and society level – family income and resources; childcare, training, education and social security infrastructure as well as individual child attainment focused work.

Single Parent Families – Issues

We agree with Scottish Government that we need a holistic approach to tackling the poverty related attainment gap. Research shows the socio-economic gap in a child's development starts before starting primary school.⁸⁷ Action to tackle the various influences on the attainment gap is needed within and outside schools and taking account of the age and stage a child is at. For example, international studies⁸⁸ show that at seven years of age, parental and home influences are about five times more important for children's development than school influences. By age eleven, these are broadly similar and by sixteen years, school effects are about four times more important. In this respect it is important to point out that the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has highlighted the strong evidence that growing up in poverty weakens

⁸⁷ Evidence from the Growing Up in Scotland, <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00486755.pdf>

⁸⁸ Sacker et al (2002) 'Social Inequality in Educational Achievement and Psychological Adjustment throughout Childhood: Magnitude and Mechanisms.' Social Science and Medicine, 55: 863-880.

children's educational achievement.⁸⁹ Policies to eradicate child poverty are key, particularly for single parent families and particularly when children are young, and a preventative approach is taken.

A quarter of Scottish families are single parent households. The Poverty and Inequality Commission, whose main role is to provide independent advice to Scottish Ministers on reducing poverty and inequality, has highlighted that 37% of all children in Scotland living in poverty live in a single parent family⁹⁰ and 94% of these single parents are women.

The most recent government statistics show astonishingly that **49% of children in single parent families now live below the poverty line.**⁹¹ A recent EHRC⁹² report highlights that by 2021 single parents and their children will lose a fifth of their income due to welfare reform - an average of £5,250 a year. The **predicted increase in the child poverty rate (after housing costs) for children in single parent households to over 62%** can only be described as catastrophic.

Many single parents face significant challenges resulting from low income, poor health, low qualifications and a range of structural barriers such as the lack of flexible, affordable childcare, low pay, irregular hours and insecure employment; expensive and poor quality housing and barriers to improving their skills or taking up training or further education.

Welfare reform has had big impact on single parents – for example families hit by the benefit cap are finding themselves in desperate situations. Research by OPFS and the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG)⁹³ describes cases where families face debt, eviction, homelessness or having to move away from their local community, family and the nurseries and schools their children attend. The impact on family well-being and children's education can only be detrimental.

In addition, single parents often feel stigmatised by judgmental attitudes which affect confidence levels and results in low self-esteem. A recent Single Parents and Stigma survey by OPFS revealed that three in four (74%) single parents have experienced negative attitudes or stigma in the last two years.⁹⁴ Experiencing poverty makes an individual 'different' from the normal expectations of participating in society.

"I feel like a 'shadow citizen'. I know there are lots of single parents out there but it's as if we are invisible"

The Scottish Government has said tackling child poverty is a key priority and has set out plans in the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act. OPFS is extremely pleased that the Act contains a duty to eradicate child poverty and that there are clear and identifiable

⁸⁹ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/data/education-scotland>

⁹⁰ <https://povertyinequality.scot/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Child-Poverty-Delivery-Plan-advice-Final-Version-23-February-2018.pdf>

⁹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-income-199495-to-201617>

⁹² <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/cumulative-impact-assessment-report.pdf>
p153

⁹³ http://www.opfs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/CPAG_OPFS_Benefit_Cap_Report_Feb18.pdf

⁹⁴ http://www.opfs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/survey-results_201411_single-parents-and-stigma.pdf

targets about when and how this should be achieved and that single parents are identified as a key group. In terms of the priorities as set out in the Scottish Government's 'Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan', for 2018 to 2022⁹⁵, we believe it is important to have delivery plans in place which support single parents to increasing their family incomes through access to training and education. Reducing the costs that families face is also vital - including the cost of school, childcare, housing and the poverty premium for energy.

Educational Attainment and Impact of Poverty

1.How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

In 2014, the Glasgow Lone Parent Project was set up by OPFS and Glasgow City Council to improve the way mainstream services support parents.⁹⁶ The project had single parent participation at the centre. Key successes and outcomes that the project contributed to included low income families automatically receiving a school clothing grant, instead of having to apply, tackling stigma and ensuring parents' voices influenced work, such as the review of Lifelong Learning undertaken by Glasgow Life.

In 2017 OPFS had a partnership project⁹⁷ with Ardenglen Housing Association in Castlemilk. The aim was to involve parents and children from two local primary schools to participate in finding some solutions to reducing the cost of the school day. Synthesised learning from three strands of work underpinned the project: using awareness of and responses to reducing the costs of the school day for low income families; ongoing efforts to tackle the socioeconomic barriers facing single parents; and the role that participatory budgeting (PB) could play in helping community members shape services to meet local priorities.

"I'm not angry at my mum because she's just had a baby and has three kids but its pressure for the kids and pressure for the parents because my mum felt guilty that I couldn't go. Why do we have costly (school) trips then? I mean I know they're more fun maybe but it puts people under pressure and it makes people embarrassed and disappointed if they can't go." (Young person, aged 11yrs)

Over 170 people attended an event to listen as parents and children pitched ideas to those attending, on how to use £20,000 to reduce the cost of the school day. The parents from the two groups had been supported by OPFS over a period of months to suggest ideas on how to use £10,000 in their school to reduce the cost of the school day and to consult other parents. Parents helped organise the day and took the lead in the activities. In terms of learning the project built on the knowledge of the parents about their children's school environment to:

1. Support parents to agree on the barriers to be tackled;
2. How this will be achieved and by whom;
3. Resources required;
4. Overview of outcomes;

⁹⁵ <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0053/00533606.pdf>

⁹⁶ <http://www.opfs.org.uk/glasgow-lone-parent-development-project-evaluation/>

⁹⁷ http://www.opfs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/OPFS_community_choices.pdf

5. Partners who need to be involved.

Nurture and Transition Groups

Through Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) in Falkirk for example, our remit is to improve relationships between families and the school. The benefits of this has been:

- Parents and children have a non-statutory point of contact. This is particularly beneficial for hard to reach families because there may be historical negative experiences of education, the support is offered on a voluntary basis and conversations identify the needs of the family as a whole unit.
- Space can be offered outside the school environment. This is beneficial if relationships between the school and family have broken down.

1.

Through the PEF OPFS has facilitated Nurture and Transition Groups. These groups allow children the opportunity to address concerns they may have around peer relationships, school or other issues that they may feel anxious about. Children who attend Nurture groups are identified by the education staff as requiring additional support around settling into primary school as they were very shy and struggled to mix with their peers or as having difficulties within peer relationships, group activities, turn taking etc. due to behavioural difficulties.

Children accessing Transition groups are identified by education staff as children who would find the move to high school particularly difficult for a variety of reasons such as, being very shy, having difficulties with peer relationships, finding small transitions within school difficult to cope with etc. The Transition sessions include topics which address: hopes and worries; a typical day; myth busting; who can help me; bullying and cyber bullying; online safety and social media and keeping yourself safe. There is always scope within the group for the young people to request specific topics which they want to know more about, this will usually include alcohol and drug awareness and how to avoid them. Teachers have told us that we manage the groups well and are able to connect with the children

One to one support sessions

OPFS also offer one to one support sessions to children experiencing difficulties in school. Issues address can include peer relationships, bullying, family issues, risk taking behaviours and on-line behaviour.

One young person supported in Falkirk, found it difficult to cope with bullying and conflict situations. She openly discussed her thoughts around suicide and had begun to access online videos showing tips for committing suicide. We offered a space to talk and openly discuss what was upsetting her and supported her to become more confident by suggesting better ways to communicate with her peers. This enabled her to work towards improving her resilience and coping strategies. To help keep this young girl safe and reduce the risk factors involved OPFS offered information about other support networks available to her, such as her pastoral teachers and the learning support team.

School Clothing Costs

Tackling the often-unrecognised cost of attending school should be an important part of closing the poverty attainment gap. Single Mothers in an OPFS Glasgow Insight workshop described how they faced financial challenges when paying for children's clothing. Solutions were talked about in the form of top-up costs to clothing grants. Some of the mothers put forward problems of gaps in availability and receiving of funding and difficulties that this then gave them when getting children ready for going back to school. In 2017 CPAG in Scotland, OPFS and the Poverty Truth Commission undertook a survey of parents on the school clothing grant. The report provides a useful snapshot of the challenges faced by many parents across Scotland as well as recommendations which include introducing a minimum level of school clothing grant set at a realistic level across the country.⁹⁸

*“Provide a decent amount for school clothing grant, £20 for a year!!
My daughter rips a pair of tights at school every day. £6 for pack of 3 tights x
32 weeks in the year is not cheap. Outdoor and indoor gym kit, School uniform
is a kilt, not cheap. Went through 4 pairs of shoes / boots already since
August.”*

It's clear from our local work that children can't learn when they can't join in, when they are hungry or when they feel judged or stigmatised. Our Braes Children & Family Centre in Falkirk has seen huge successes in supporting families with the cost of school through our emergency store and school clothes project. Children who have said they are not going to school because they cannot wash their hair or because they do not have enough sanitary product or their clothes are dirty have been able to access products which can solve these issues. From August to December 2017, 31 parents accessed school clothing donated by the local primary school. This saved families a total of £1,416 and 26 families have accessed the emergency store. The store has been used 78 times. Families made a saving of between £13 - £30 each visit.

Extra-curricular costs of school

OPFS has also supported families to afford the additional cost of the school day by providing extra-curricular items such as African Flag, World Book day, Superhero and Pudsey attire. Many individuals are unaware of the hidden costs these days incur and this very often results in non-attendance as parents and children are embarrassed that they cannot afford to be involved.

The Hidden Costs – One Family's experience

One example of the hidden cost on top of the costume cost was of one parent attending the Centre that had four children attending the local primary school. She was told on a Thursday before a long weekend school break that the children were to dress up in colours of an African Flag. As she did not have appropriate clothes she would have to take her six children (two high school pupils) on the bus into town. The tee-shirts would cost £8.00, however, the bus fares would have cost £22.50, additional lunch costs, as the children would want to eat in town, would cost £14.00

⁹⁸ www.opfs.org.uk/school-clothing-report/

*for a happy meal and a treat while in the shop might cost £14.00. Buying the required items would, therefore, cost £58.50. On top of this the children are asked to pay a pound for the privilege of wearing the tee shirts, an additional £4.00. A total of **£62.50**. Plus, as the school was closed for an extra three days the mother had to provide lunch to replace the free school meal. Possibly £30.00.*

Transition Support

OPFS Falkirk service facilitated a group for 6 boys who were identified by the local primary as struggling with future transitions into Primary 7 or High School. These sessions included Canoe Orienteering, Rock Climbing, River Inflatables and educational sessions both outdoors and in the Centre. Feedback from the school was extremely positive and the boy's confidence had grown over the summer which meant they were more comfortable with the transition to Primary 7 and S1.

Children affected by issues around parental trauma

OPFS ran a group for girls aged 5 to 9 years who had been impacted by parental mental health or trauma with 8 girls attending the 12-week programme.

Reducing the Barriers

OPFS family services enable us to promote the benefits of education and learning to both parents and their children while reducing barriers to attending school by improving confidence and celebrating achievements.

Feedback from Parents

[my son] has really enjoyed doing all the activities. His confidence has really improved over the course of the summer holidays and I have noticed a difference in him wanting to give new things a go! He has gained lots and we are so pleased he has been given the opportunity.

I hope other children get a chance to do this.

He is not so shy and he is more forward.

[My child] has thoroughly enjoyed the programme throughout the summer. I have noticed a big difference in his approach to new things and doing things without a family member. His anxiety has decreased and confidence has increased. This has been very beneficial for him, especially starting the high school.

"Got her out and gave her some alone time and made new friends"

"[My child said it was fun, she liked baking cakes"

"[My child] really enjoyed attending group it gave her time away from her brother who is autistic. She was also given the chance to do a wide range of activities"

"Girls group was very beneficial helped [my child] to mix with other kids & gave her some time on her own. Great group"

Keeping children connected – Activities during summer

During the school holidays in Falkirk OPFS provided a Summer Activities Programme. These events included lunch and activities. 25 parents and 47 children attended on a regular basis. OPFS are aware that many children who normally access free school meals suffer during the holiday period as household funds are more stretched than normal. The holiday period can also be very isolating as children can lose contact with their peers. This can have a detrimental effect on the child returning to school. By offering activities during holiday periods children can maintain essential friendships. Staff also offer structure, routine, boundaries and offer a space where children and their parents can discuss concerns before they become a crisis. All of this makes children's transition back to school much smoother.. We know that the above interventions work and have received positive feedback. Because of previous our success we are one of the few third sector organisations to be approached to deliver projects in Falkirk schools through the Pupil Equity Funding.

Are there any services that you / your organisation has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

OPFS would like to see mental health and wellbeing support for children being offered at an earlier stage as the main and often only option is Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services or Educational Psychology (both underfunded). Our experience is also that children attending these services become stigmatised and enter into the statutory system whereas if issues are dealt with early there may not be a need for statutory interventions.

Our service offers lower level support around emotional health and wellbeing; however, funding is tight and precarious.

If you work with schools/local authorities/others to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on this issue easy/difficult?

In Falkirk for example there is fantastic track record of collaborative working between statutory and third sector organisations. The buying into GIRFEC was positive because all services used the same paperwork and talked the same language. All partners are now finding it increasing difficult to attend multi agency meetings, TAC's, forums, working groups etc. This is having a detrimental effect on the support being offered to our young people.

What else could be done to support the attainment /achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

As well as the family income, issues which impact on a child's attainment include parental attitude to learning often based on their own experiences and a feeling that they cannot positively influence or support their child's journey through education, children being unable to manage in class and a lack of appropriate support, peer relationships and bullying, caring responsibilities due to parental illness and mental health issues.

Children living in poverty do have high aspirations for themselves, although the jobs aspire to are often of the gendered variety familiar to them within the context of their knowledge and experience.

The Impact of School Exclusion

OPFS has supported around 15 children in Falkirk where their parents have been affected by their child's school hours being reduced or parents needing to be available during school hours at very short notice. This has the potential of having a very serious impact on a single parent's efforts to look for and take up paid employment or to participate in training or further education.

The Impact of School Exclusion - Case Studies

One parent we support told us that she felt she had to leave a shopping trolley full of groceries as the school had called to say she must pick up her child immediately. On another occasion she was asked to leave the house during winter with wet hair as she was told that she had to come and get her son immediately. This was not an unusual scenario for this particular parent as her son was on a part time timetable and was often sent home at short notice over a period of four years running from Primary 2 to Primary 5.

A second parent has told us that because her son must be taken home for lunch, as he is unable to cope with the lunch routine, she has no time for grocery shopping due to the infrequency of public transport to the outlying village. The parent initially didn't discuss this with anyone which led to her running out of all essential items and approaching us in a very distressed state. On this occasion we delivered a range of items from our emergency store and enough food to last until the weekend when her older child could look after the younger ones and allow her to shop, as her son's difficulties mean that public transport and supermarkets are too overwhelming. This has since been shared with the school who are looking at alternative arrangements to support the child to be in school over lunch.

Conclusion

Through our work in local communities we see the impacts include the actual effects of living on a reduced family budget. This consists of not being able to afford: travel costs for children going to school, to hospital appointments, holidays, birthday presents, after-school clubs, leisure and social activities as a family. In a recent OPFS survey⁹⁹ most respondents said that at some point or another in their life they had suffered from mental health problems and/or poor mental well-being. This was being caused by the stress of poverty, as well as having an important role in trapping parents in poverty. A recent OPFS briefing provides more background information on single parents, gender & health.¹⁰⁰

Parents responding to the survey described how they face a range of interconnected barriers which have at the core the unique challenge of the sole responsibility for the care of their children as well as the conditionality pressures to work full-time when their child reaches 3 yrs. of age. In response to these very specific challenges single parents face we believe mainstream services, including education services should provide more tailored support to single parents.

⁹⁹ <http://www.opfs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/ChildPoverty18.pdf>

¹⁰⁰ <https://vhscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/SINGLE-MOTHERS-HEALTH-AND-INEQUALITIES.doc.pdf>

Our experience of working with single parents has not highlighted any 'poverty of aspiration'. Parents want the best for their children and even in very difficult circumstances will often go without themselves and put their children first.

At OPFS we take a two pronged approach – tackling the causes of poverty through supporting parents to reduce costs and increase income; and the effects/impacts of poverty on educational achievement through our work on cost of school day and holidays and the group/individual/family work we do.

Key points are:

- Recognition by the education system that family make -up is now very diverse. Support for children and flexibilities within the system should reflect this. One size does not fit all.
- Start early – taking a preventative approach, supporting parents and children - Early Learning and Childcare expansion is an opportunity.
- Reduce hidden costs of Early Learning and childcare and school.
- Provide support for families – see school as an enabler (parents can work, train, study; children can learn):
 - Provide opportunities for local parents to have a say in what happens in their local school;
 - Provide an effective link between the local community and local democratic processes;
 - Increase accessibility of small scale funding to local parent-led initiatives, including those that have not been funded previously or recently;
 - Encourage active involvement of parents in ways to reduce the impact of low income in very practical ways.
- Develop solutions that work for the family and not add to strains and stresses as illustrated by the part-time timetable case; keeping children in school, engaged and learning.
- Work in partnership with family and third sector to provide support that allows families to flourish, children to be able to attend school without stresses of hidden costs of involvement and ready to learn.
- We believe that tackling the impact of 'adverse childhood experiences' needs to take place within an anti-poverty framework that recognises the structural causes of inequality which can exacerbate the impact of adverse experiences on individuals, families and communities. Poverty reduces ability to put into place protective and remedial factors; impacts in terms of capacity and resources to deal with effects of ACEs. It is important not to get side-tracked by behavioural, individualised descriptions of poverty.

OPFS supports the Scotland's Poverty and Inequality Commission advice that the Scottish Government should "make significant use of new social security powers if it is going to meet challenging targets to reduce child poverty." Evidence suggests that topping up Child Benefit by £5 per month would lift 30,000 children out of poverty.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ <http://www.cpag.org.uk/content/give-me-five-child-benefit-top-campaign>

The most recent IPPR report also strongly recommends reversing the Two Child Limit on Universal Credit to reduce child poverty.¹⁰²

However, benefits are not the only answer. More needs to be done to support single parents into sustainable family friendly employment that pays the living wage while finding new ways to reduce housing costs for those on the lowest income.

There is much that can be done across the areas of devolved responsibility to minimise the impact of poverty on families and lift families out of poverty. Central to all of this must be the voices of families themselves.

Marion Davis and Satwat Rehman
One Parent Families Scotland

¹⁰² <https://www.ippr.org/blog/an-anti-poverty-scotland-budget-are-income-tax-cuts-on-lower-earnings-progressive>

SUBMISSIONS FROM CHILDREN'S REPRESENTATIVES / CHARITIES

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Aberlour

Aberlour's submission to the Scottish Parliament's Education and Skills Committee inquiry on the attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Introduction

Aberlour works with vulnerable children and families throughout Scotland across a range of settings and contexts. Working in over 40 locations around the country, we help them to overcome significant challenges, like growing up in and leaving care, living with a disability, poor mental health, or the impact of drugs and alcohol on family life. We aim to work with families at the earliest stage to prevent problems spiralling out of control. Often, we find there is one recurring theme in the lives of these children and families – poverty. We see the effects of poverty every day and the impact it has on so many children and families, and their communities. As a result of our work we recognise that poverty cannot only be identified and measured in financial terms, but also represents a poverty of ambition, opportunity, skills and encouragement. Consequently, low educational attainment is a significant issue for many of the children and young people we support and much of our work focuses on supporting children and young people with their education and learning, both in and out of school, either with dedicated educational programmes or through focusing on improving their health and wellbeing.

How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

Our work supporting children and young people's education varies from service to service, and area to area. In every instance the work we do is founded on the key principles of early intervention, providing relationship-focused support designed to meet the individual needs of each child and young person.

Aberlour's Family Support Centre in Falkirk works with vulnerable families who experience inequality and disadvantage. The service works with children to help them with their learning and to achieve in school. This includes individual nurture sessions providing children with an opportunity to participate in a wide range of activities helping to improve their confidence, self-esteem and emotional literacy. The service also delivers attainment focused work directly in local primary schools, providing one-to-one support to children experiencing behavioural and/or emotional issues.

In Dumfries and Galloway, Aberlour Futures helps young people who are experiencing social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties that impact on their education and who need extra help. Individually focused support provides young people with a person they can talk to, as well as someone who can support them with

their learning, giving them the opportunity to shape the style and content of their education. For example, they can choose to get help with school work, alongside support with practical skills, activities, sports and arts and crafts. The service works in partnership with local education, social work and health departments to improve the wellbeing of young people and reduce the risk of exclusion, supporting young people to remain in their communities and access education.

Aberlour Family Outreach in Dundee works with vulnerable children and families, including providing support and practical help with schoolwork and homework. The service also supports families to attend meetings at their children's school when necessary, and ensure families are getting the appropriate help and support they need with their children's education.

Aberlour Youthpoint Moray works with children and young people who need extra support, and who are at risk of being excluded from school. Through providing one-to-one help for children and young people, in a safe and relaxed setting, they are helped to understand the issues that are affecting them, that can sometimes be the cause of their behaviour. The service works with them to help them take steps to overcoming challenges at home, in school and in the community.

Aberlour's Sycamore Education Centre and Nurture Hub provide additional help and support for children and young people who live in our cluster of residential children's homes based in Fife, supporting those who need extra help with school and those who can't attend mainstream school.

Support with education and learning has always been a key element of the work we do with many of the children and young people we support. However, Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) has provided us with further opportunities to develop and focus that work not only with schools we already work with, but also to establish new links with other schools and in areas where we have not always delivered services. In many instances we believe PEF has provided schools with an opportunity to plan and deliver the necessary additional help and support to those children and young people who most need it.

We find the key elements of the support we provide which most often lead to positive outcomes and improved attainment for children and young people include:

- working with the whole family and providing support beyond the school gates;
- continuity of support in and out of school from the same key worker(s), helping positive, trusting relationships to develop;
- recognition from schools that most often there is no 'quick fix' with a long-term commitment to providing whatever additional support is necessary;
- a trauma-informed approach to supporting children and families recognising the effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).

Conversely, there are barriers and challenges we encounter to delivering this work in some areas, as a result of:

- schools that do not recognise the value of the type of community-based support we deliver in addressing issues around attainment

- literacy and numeracy being prioritised over health and wellbeing by some schools in raising attainment
- a general inconsistency of approach to addressing issues impacting upon attainment from one school to another, even in areas where many of the same social and environmental issues are prevalent
- a difficulty in evidencing small incremental improvements in the short term in relation to health and wellbeing

Are there any services that you/your organisation has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

Aberlour Bridges Glasgow was an early intervention service supporting primary school aged children and their families in the north of the city, aimed at breaking cycles of poverty and deprivation and tackling the long-term cost implications of poor educational outcomes. The service was designed to develop and deliver interventions with parents, carers and children, in order to improve children's educational, health and wellbeing outcomes. The person-centred service model offered a 'menu' of interventions, undertaken with families according to individual needs. This included practical, social and emotional support for parents/carers at times when they identified they have the most need, such as early mornings to establish routines to get children ready for school on time. Individual and group parenting programmes, joint adult and child play session and educational support through individual and group work in and out with school, such as homework support for children and their parents, were also key elements of the service. All of the interventions were intended to be flexible in order to meet the individual needs of children and families. Despite well evidenced positive outcomes and improved educational achievement for children supported by the service, and significant support from schools and local social work teams acknowledging the value and impact of the service, Aberlour Bridges Glasgow was forced to close in 2016 as a result of being unable to secure funding.

Many aspects of support provided by Aberlour Bridges Glasgow are replicated in the work we do in other parts of the country, and these models of intervention and support are well evidenced at addressing or mitigating some of the social and environmental issues for children and young people experiencing poverty, helping to improve attainment for many. However, we believe the absence of Aberlour Bridges Glasgow has left a significant gap in accessible resources and support for children and families from one of Scotland's most deprived communities, adversely impacting on the educational attainment of many of those children.

If you work with schools/local authorities/others to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on this issue easy/difficult?

The experience of partnership working with the local authority has been positive in Dumfries and Galloway. The service continues to be able to support the local authority in a value-added way by providing the use of rooms in our buildings in Annan, Dumfries, & Stranraer at no cost, for Support for Learning Assistants and local authority tutors to deliver additional support to young people.

More generally, however, the work we do to support children and young people's health and wellbeing can often be hard to measure or evidence in ways that satisfy

school outcomes or in ways intended to evidence the impact on attainment and meet PEF recording and reporting requirements.

What else could be done to support the attainment/achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

Aberlour administers an Urgent Assistance Fund which provides grants to families living in poverty. These small cash grants are provided to help and assist families to purchase essential household items and goods they could not otherwise afford, such as baby equipment, children's clothes, school items, bedding and sensory play equipment for children with disabilities. Year on year we find the number of applications for assistance through this fund are increasing.

We also do what we can beyond financial assistance to support and empower families who are affected by poverty. Our Family Cook Group in Dundee provides an opportunity to learn cooking skills so families can cook easy, healthy and cost-effective meals. Similarly, our Summer Food Programme in Falkirk supports families to learn how to cook cheaply and healthily and to ensure their children are well fed during the school holidays. Through providing families with the skills to cook and eat healthily and budget effectively we believe we can empower, rather than stigmatise, families who are living in poverty.

In order to fundamentally address the wider issue of poverty, and as a consequence the poverty-related attainment gap, we believe efforts must also be focused across other policy areas to achieve long-term enduring change. In our opinion, such areas of focus should include: income and resource maximisation for families and households; well-designed and sustainable homes for families with low incomes to live in; a just and humane welfare system; and a proper universal living wage which increases with the cost of living.

Aberlour welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the discussion around the impact of poverty on educational attainment, and to highlight the experiences of the children and families we work with who are affected by poverty. We also welcome any opportunity to comment further by providing evidence to the Committee or contributing to any further discussion in this regard.

Martin Canavan
Policy & Participation Officer
22 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Barnardo's Scotland

April 2018

Our ambition is to enable Scotland's children to arrive at the school gates ready to learn. We will achieve this by helping parents build strong and healthy relationships with their children which will in turn increase their educational attainment and life chances."

Martin Crewe, Director, Barnardo's Scotland

Introduction

Barnardo's Scotland works with thousands of vulnerable children and families every year, many of whom live in poverty and areas of disadvantage. We see the impact of this poverty on a daily basis in both the homes and communities of these families. Every day vulnerable families are waking up to profound problems: how to keep a roof over their head and how to put food on their table. This in turn generates profound challenges for all those who provide services to children.

Schools are increasingly on the frontline of responding to the immediate effects of poverty for children who come through their school gates, and understanding these effects is crucial.¹⁰³ The longer term impacts of poverty are less visible, but extremely important for us to understand and tackle.

We now understand more than ever the impact that the stress caused by Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and trauma can have on a child's development, their ability to learn and their mental health and wellbeing. The day to day reality of living in poverty exacerbates the toxic stress that many children across Scotland live with, and which can have an impact for the rest of their lives. Growing Up in Scotland (GUS) findings confirm this; they show that it is not poverty per se, but poverty combined with other disadvantages or adversities, which are associated with the worst outcomes for children.¹⁰⁴ Our joint research with NSPCC Scotland 'Challenges from the frontline: Supporting families with multiple adversities in a time of austerity' found that many services working with families are increasingly needing to meet basic material needs and stabilise home conditions before intensive family support can begin.¹⁰⁵

Our services work holistically with families to address all the issues that may be affecting families' ability to thrive, and importantly to support their children to thrive. Recent research we collaborated on through the Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland (CCPS) highlighted the important role that family support

¹⁰³ <https://www.scotsman.com/news/education/teachers-are-buying-food-for-hungry-scots-pupils-warns-charity-1-4698457>

¹⁰⁴ <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2010/04/26095519/0>

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/challenges-frontline-scotland-multiple-adversities-report.pdf> (6)

services play in actively mitigating against the impact of poverty. Our services and many others work to reduce financial barriers to engagement for families, and this was seen as extremely valuable and hugely appreciated by the families who participated in the research.¹⁰⁶

Poverty and academic achievement/attainment

We understand that many of the children who face inequity in attainment are those who face the greatest challenges, often marked by poverty and multiple adversities.

Children living in poverty are likely to be delayed in terms of language acquisition, and have a higher incidence of behavioural problems than their more affluent peers.¹⁰⁷ Responses and behaviours associated with early trauma and adversity can often manifest themselves in a school environment, and are too often misconstrued as bad behaviour requiring discipline rather than support. This behaviour can be challenging and confusing for teachers, but it is the outward expression of unmet needs. Positive attachment and trauma-informed responses from education professionals are key; when children feel safe, behaviour improves and children are better able to reach their full personal and academic potential.

We know that poverty, adversity and the many difficulties of living on a low income are at the root of the problems faced by these children and families. It is also true that for many of these children the challenges faced by their parents mean that they miss out on the vital, positive attachments they need to ensure the healthy brain development which is so crucial to their education.

Living on a low income is not just about the struggle to pay bills. We know that poverty prevents and inhibits good attachment; children in poverty often live in high stress environments, and as a result may also have experienced broken or disrupted attachment relationships. Families whose emotional resources are absorbed by managing the stress of not being able to afford necessities like housing, food and fuel can find their capacity to nurture family relationships diminished. Not having enough money can compromise any family's stability. The core of our work across Scotland is embedded in the Five to Thrive approach which supports and encourages strong, positive attachments between care givers and children.

Recent research by the University of Stirling found that families from lower income backgrounds were just as aspirational for their children as those from affluent backgrounds.¹⁰⁸ This supports our own experience: families and parents want the best for their children but may lack resources and capacity and will often need intensive support.

For many of the families we work with, the parent's own experiences of education and of involvement with services is key. Parents may be reluctant to engage in the formal structures of education or school communities because of their own negative experiences. This can result in them being seen as 'hard to reach' and subsequently being isolated. It is crucial that support for these families is available, as poverty

¹⁰⁶ <http://www.ccpscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Family-support-research-project-Part-1.pdf> (25)

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2010/feb/15/poor-children-behind-sutton-trust>

¹⁰⁸ http://www.heraldsotland.com/news/education/16117385.Study_explodes_myth_that_poor_families_have_lower_ambitions_for_their_children/

compounds many of these issues. Research very clearly shows the intergenerational problems associated with ACEs, and highlights the need to support parents to work through their own experiences in order to best support their children.

Family Support Workers – Attainment

Through the Attainment Challenge Fund (ACF) we have been able to provide Family Support Workers linked to primary and secondary schools in many local authorities across Scotland.

In order to address the issues highlighted above we take a proactive partnership approach with families and communities, working *with* them from before a child reaches school and throughout their journey through primary and secondary education. We focus on promoting secure attachment, recovery from toxic stress and trauma, and building resilient communities alongside families, schools and other partners.

Within schools we support staff to create safe, nurturing, trauma-informed environments which support children's mental health and wellbeing. We know that children, who are experiencing toxic stress at home, often related to poverty, will struggle to access the curriculum as we know that health and wellbeing underpins attainment. Something as small as offering a child a piece of toast or asking them how they are feeling when they get to school can have a huge impact.

Question 1

How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

Support

Our work is focused on increased early intervention with families facing adversity and we are seeing the real difference this work can make in preventing families getting to crisis point. Our Family Support Work linked to schools allows increased holistic working; not only linking school to home and vice versa but also creating a partnership where home and school can work together. Our work within the home with families helps to establish nurturing environments, as well as strategies and routines for children. Our Family Support Workers also carry out this work within schools to allow for continuity of support.

We are seeing an increased understanding within the schools where we work of why a child might be struggling to engage in learning. Our workers can advocate for the family, share assessment of need and directly link this to why the child may be struggling in terms of their attainment. This increased understanding supports teachers to be compassionate about what the child faces within the home environment and use more nurturing techniques within the school environment.

We deliver workshops for teaching staff on ACEs to build knowledge and understanding of the impact of these experiences on children's brain development

and capacity to learn. Teachers can then adapt their teaching to suit the child's needs. We use attachment based approaches to build positive relationships, and our workers and school staff work together to develop a joint understanding of each other's roles and ways of working.

Barriers

Our experience is that there can be a lack of understanding from teaching staff about the impact of poverty and adversity, in particular the impact of in-work poverty for children and families. A lack of understanding around trauma-informed practice can also lead to poor practice such as conducting ACEs inquiry with children, or patting a child down to check for weapons as part of a risk assessment, without considering whether these things may be traumatising or upsetting for the child.

A 'traditional school ethos' is still present in some schools with examples of out-dated practice which does not place the health and wellbeing of the child at the centre, for example 'if you can't learn, engage or behave you are out of the class'. More often than not, what is going on in a child's home life is the reason they are unable to concentrate, take part or engage with their learning. We work to support schools to understand what lies behind a child's behaviour and put in place strategies and processes to support that child in a nurturing and trauma-informed way.

Question 3

If you work with schools/local authorities/others to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on this issue easy/difficult?

We work with many schools across Scotland and believe that the key to collaboration and successful joint working is a strong school-wide culture and ethos which is trauma-informed, nurturing, and rooted in attachment. A clear view from the school about desired outcomes for any work is also an important starting point.

At times we have found that there can be differing views about what is causing the attainment gap. Health and wellbeing is often not prioritised and if it is it tends to be physical health rather than wider wellbeing, including the impact of poverty and adversity. A recent survey of teachers by SAMH found that many were concerned that the imperative for schools is less on health and wellbeing, and more on literacy and numeracy.¹⁰⁹

We work with lots of fantastic schools and staff, but our overall experience is that there can still be some resistance to constructive feedback from partner agencies and there may still be a professional hierarchy at play. Many schools and institutions are open to change and doing things differently, however others are not and in those cases it is sometimes easier to see the child in terms of 'bad behaviour' or 'poor parenting' than to bring about institutional change within an establishment.

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.samh.org.uk/documents/welltrained.pdf>

Question 4

What else could be done to support the attainment/achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

We would like to see more emphasis in teacher training and CPD on health and wellbeing, the impact of trauma and adversity and the importance of creating strong resilience factors for all children and young people.

The Trauma Knowledge and Skills Framework¹¹⁰ developed by NHS Education Scotland is a critical document for the entire workforce, particularly those working with children and young people. We understand NHS Education Scotland is currently developing Scottish Trauma Informed Leadership Training. We would like to see this training form part of the new Head Teacher qualification and be a central focus in the development of the proposed Head Teachers' Charter.

When our children feel happy, safe and secure they are better able to learn and senior leadership is essential in ensuring that trauma-informed practice is embedded in all schools across Scotland.

Learning from our Family Support Work has also highlighted that areas of support for children should link with adult support services – for example breakfast and supper clubs in school for children only feed the children, if there is a need for this work in the family then chances are the parent may be hungry too.

Conclusion

The impact of poverty on children's attainment and achievement is something everyone should be concerned about. As we have evidenced above, it's not just the financial strain but all the other compounding issues which build up and can have a huge impact on a child's ability to learn and engage with their education. Schools must take trauma-informed approaches to supporting children and young people, especially those who have experienced poverty and adversity.

Our experience highlights a real need to ensure greater investment in children before and beyond the school gates so that they all have the chance to reach their full potential. Central to this is providing the right support to families at the right time.

You can read more about our work to close the poverty related attainment gap here:

http://www.barnardos.org.uk/19823_barnardos_gap_brochure_2018.pdf

We have included a case study from our Family Support Work at the end of this briefing – Annex A.

¹¹⁰ <http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/media/3971582/nationaltraumatrainingframework.pdf>

Annex A

Case Study

A request for assistance was received for Holly due to her low school attendance which was 53%; this low attendance was due to anxiety. On engaging with the family the Family Support Worker found that Holly's mum Sue had poor mental health which was having an impact on Holly's wellbeing. The family had very little support, had experienced historic domestic abuse perpetrated by Holly's father and social work involvement was at an early stage.

Sue had negative memories of her own time at school and therefore found it difficult to engage with the school in order to ensure that they were aware of Holly's unique needs. She was also anxious about how Holly was coping when at school. The Family Support Worker arranged informal meetings with Holly's guidance teacher and home-link worker to discuss her anxieties and what support was required. This also allowed the school staff to reassure Sue that Holly was managing well and appears happy and settled when at school. After meeting with the school, Sue felt more confident to contact Holly's guidance teacher when she had any concerns and felt they now had a better understanding of her difficulties.

Sue is also a carer for her elderly mother. This was impacting on the time she had available to spend with Holly and Holly was finding this difficult.

Through discussions with social work and the family it was agreed that the social worker would focus on supporting Sue to access carers support for herself and additional help, while the Barnardo's worker focused on supporting Holly and working with Sue on how to support Holly with her anxiety. The Family Support Worker also made a request for assistance to CAMHS.

Financial difficulties were exacerbating Sue's mental health condition. Christmas was a strain and huge concern, the Family Support Worker supported Sue to apply to the Salvation Army toy bank as well as apply to the foodbank for a Christmas hamper.

The Family Support Worker enlisted the help of a local financial inclusion project and supported Sue to engage. Sue has reported that this has reduced her financial worries and she has engaged well with the service. The Family Support Worker has also regularly passed on information to the financial inclusion project, with Sue's consent, as she can tend to ignore any letters regarding financial issues such as bills. The worker has supported Sue to seek help from the project when these situations arise.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Children 1st

Children 1st is Scotland's national children's charity. We have over 130 years of experience of working alongside families to provide relationship- based support when they need it and to help children and families to recover from the trauma associated with childhood adversity. We focus our work on three main areas: prevention, protection and recovery from trauma.

End Child Poverty figures reveal that poverty affects children in every part of Scotland, with as many as 34% of children living in poverty in some local authority areas - compared to one in ten in others. In Glasgow it is estimated that 34% of children are living in poverty.¹¹¹

Children 1st have seen a substantial increase in the number of individuals we work alongside experiencing financial hardship. Some of the families that we support have told us that they have to choose between 'eating and heating'. For the children that we support growing up in poverty means feeling cold, going hungry, being unable to fully join in activities at school, with friends or in the wider community and spending time feeling worried about their financial situation at home, or even where they are going to live.

For many of the families that we work with poverty can place intolerable stresses and strains on daily life and can impact on their ability to support a safe and nurturing environment for children to grow and develop. Where there are issues relating to poor housing, economic or financial uncertainty, job insecurity or unemployment some families can find it hard to develop safe, attachment- based relationships while experiencing poverty. Children may find it difficult to concentrate at school or to build resilience while dealing with not having enough to eat or worry about what is happening at home.

We also know that some parents use coping mechanisms to deal with the trauma of poverty, such as using drugs or alcohol to cope, that can have an impact on family life. For others, living in poverty is compounded by unresolved trauma from childhood adversities like experiencing domestic abuse as a child, child abuse or neglect or a parent being in prison. Research also talks about the impact of poverty on intergenerational trauma. Children 1st's experience is that financial instability can be a result of—or result in—a range of social and emotional factors which in turn can affect family functioning. A 2016 Joseph Rowntree Foundation evidence review talked about the links between family socio-economic circumstances and child abuse and neglect.¹¹² Research from England has also found that Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) have been shown to be related to deprivation, with the experience of four or more ACEs being reported by 4.3% in the least deprived quintile and 12.7% in the most deprived quintile.¹¹³

¹¹¹ <http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/poverty-in-your-area-2018/>

¹¹² Bywaters, P, et al., (2016) [The relationship between poverty, child abuse and neglect: an evidence review](#), York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Pg.3

¹¹³ Bellis MA, Hughes K, Leckenby N, Perkins C, Lowey H. National household survey of adverse childhood experiences and their relationship with resilience to health-harming behaviors in England. BMC Medicine 2014, 12:72. <http://bmcmmedicine.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1741-7015-12-72>

Children 1st's submission to the Committee focuses on the impact of poverty on children and families' lives and the way in which experiencing poverty can affect all areas of family life, including achieving in school. We believe that it is important to explore and acknowledge the links between poverty and childhood adversity and trauma in order to fully address the attainment gap. Crucially, our view is that closing the attainment gap should not solely be down to schools but that support should be in place, where required, to help all families to ensure they have the resilience and relationships to be safe, healthy and happy.

Attainment is not just about a single child but about the whole family and the support around that family—acknowledging this, and the importance of strong attachments and building resilience to help prevent and overcome the impact of trauma, will be the key factor in closing the attainment gap in Scotland.

1. How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

Children 1st's view is that easily accessible, non- stigmatised, compassionate, trauma- informed family support has the potential to help families to overcome trauma and build resilience to prevent problems from escalating to a point of crisis. We believe that child- centred, family- minded support will help children to become emotionally healthy and resilient individuals and, where appropriate, their parents are able to access early help to resolve what happened to them in their own childhood and to support the development of positive, safe, loving family relationships.

Once children feel safe, happy and loved (and their parents are emotionally and financially resilient) we believe it is much more likely that they are able to achieve what they want both at school and in their home lives.

For this reason, our work to support the educational attainment gap has involved some core elements of supporting families to recover from trauma and build resilience, including:

- a) Working collaboratively with families by providing Money and Welfare Advice to help them to access the financial support that they are entitled to and manage debt, where required. We aim to deliver integrated benefit, debt and money advice within the wider context of trauma informed family support. This work acknowledges the importance of financial stability for families.
- b) Children 1st also deliver IFF Kitbag sessions in schools and directly with families. Kitbag is a tool to build and develop resilience, emotional literacy and compassion in children. By building children's capability to name and discuss feelings we believe that it has the potential to change individual, family and school culture to recognise that children's behaviour is wholly linked to their emotional development.
- c) In many local authorities we are commissioned (or we fund ourselves) to deliver relationship- based, trauma- informed family support to families who invite us to work alongside them. We work using a 'hub model' of integrated family support, where everyone is working to the same agenda and is underpinned by the same trauma- informed processes and practice. Our support workers are trained to meet the complex and varied needs of families and to help them with problems

that they identify—which may include money advice, housing, parenting support and issues stemming from relationships. Our support workers are adaptable and able to respond to the needs of the family, drawing on expertise from those with more specialist knowledge if required. We believe that these services are successful because they include the whole family rather than just working with the child.

In addition to these specific areas, Children 1st runs ParentLine, the national family support service, that operates advice and information about family life via a helpline, text messaging service, webchat and through online information.

It is also important to highlight the role that Family Group Decision Making (FGDM), piloted by Children 1st in Scotland nearly 20 years ago, has had in helping families to build resilience. Since the first Family Group Meeting we have seen dramatic impacts on the reduction of children being accommodated and increases in family confidence to create and own their own plans and decisions. The principle of this model is that at Family Group Meetings families are asked to help in looking at solutions for families as a rights- based, trauma- informed way of bringing the family together.

Since Family Group Decision Making began being offered to every child at risk of becoming accommodated in Edinburgh City Council in 2016 the local authority has seen a decrease in the numbers of children in the care system. In 2015 Edinburgh Council delivered an estimated 227 Family Group Meetings per year with 10.5 staff at a cost of just over £2,000 per family meeting. Conservative estimates for savings made for children whose meetings resulted in an alternative to residential care placements (for example, kinship care placements) as £1,077,000.

2. Are there any services that you/ your organisation has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

Despite research consistently pointing towards the need to invest in family support and trauma recovery we have not seen the type of investment in preventative services envisaged by the Christie Commission in 2011. The Early Intervention Foundation states that in England and Wales late intervention costs £17 billion per year which “underlines the need for effective, targeted early intervention to address the demand for late intervention.”¹¹⁴

Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership spends over half its budget for children’s services on looking after nearly 1,350 children and young people at an annual cost of £95m. Of that nearly £42m is spent on 239 children and young people in care – at an average cost of £175,700 per year, per child.¹¹⁵

Although the evidence tells us that over half of all mental ill health starts before the age of 14 years and 75% has developed by the age of 18,¹¹⁶ thousands of children in distress in Scotland are on waiting lists for mental health support or rejected from services because they don’t meet eligibility criteria. We also remain concerned by the lack of available services to address parental mental health and trauma recovery. A Scotland-wide mapping study of post-sexual abuse services conducted in 2008 found

¹¹⁴ Chowdry, H., and Fitzsimmons, P., The Cost of late Intervention: EIF Analysis 2016, Early Intervention Foundation

¹¹⁵ <http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/16078218.alan-sinclair-on-how-to-improve-the-lives-of-scotlands-children/?ref=mr&ip=12>

¹¹⁶ Murphy M and Fonagy P (2012). Mental health problems in children and young people. In: Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer 2012. London: Department of Health.

there was no consistent or coordinated approach to provision in Scotland and the services which existed were unable to meet demand.¹¹⁷ The majority of specialist and general services are provided by the third sector, but this is dependent upon short-term, fragmented and insecure sources of funding.¹¹⁸

Even though local authorities are aware of the importance of identifying resource to invest in innovative practice that could produce longer-term savings they are finding it increasingly challenging to identify resources due to a reduction in budgets.¹¹⁹

Children 1st is currently piloting a family wellbeing project that aims to provide universal services with an option to refer children who are demonstrating coping or traumatised behaviours to family support instead of to CAMHS. Innovative approaches like this, which aim to increase the health and happiness of the whole family, should be invested in, in order to produce long-term savings both financially and in terms of human cost.

3. If you work with schools/ local authorities/ others to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on the issue easy/ difficult?

Children 1st is privileged to work with a large number of dynamic and forward-thinking support staff, teachers, headteachers and other school staff. In many schools it is the leadership of senior staff driving forward an understanding of the impact of trauma and the links to poverty and attainment that make a difference.

We find that the culture within a school is a vital part of reducing the attainment gap. A rights- based approach to attainment, through a trauma- informed lens, whereby staff and teachers consider what each child and family may need on an individual basis is vital. This means exploring coping and traumatised behaviours, rather than reverting to a behaviour management based model that does not ask what has happened to cause the behaviours.

Those trauma- informed schools that have a clear understanding of what traumatised behaviour looks like and engages with parents are more likely to find out what support the child and family may need. In turn, they reduce the attainment gap by building resilience in their pupils and creating a safe and supportive learning environment.

In some circumstances we are concerned by a lack of training and broader understanding for teachers about the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences and trauma and find this a significant barrier to building resilience and raising attainment. In some schools we have been concerned about a lack of awareness of the systemic impact of poverty on families and a perceived detachment from wider local authority strategic planning.

Compassionate and curious practice that explores what is happening within a family is more likely to have an impact on improving emotional and financial stability- and in turn attainment- rather than ignoring the wider context.

¹¹⁷ NSPCC The Right to Recover: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/right-to-recover-sexual-abuse-west-scotland.pdf>

¹¹⁸ NSPCC The Right to Recover: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/right-to-recover-sexual-abuse-west-scotland.pdf>

¹¹⁹ <http://www.careinspectorate.com/index.php/news/3362-joint-inspections-of-services-for-children-and-young-people-2014-16>

We also find the power dynamics between local authorities and schools and the third sector and communities or families can be difficult to navigate. Those schools that establish a real relationship with families and acknowledge that they have within them resources and can be part of the solution can foster a trust and understanding that forms an important part of trauma recovery.

4. What else could be done to support the attainment/ achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

As stated above, there is an urgent need for a strategic and sustainable expansion of trauma- informed, relationship- based family support models across Scotland. Children 1st believes that the prevalence of childhood adversity in this generation of children is linked to the recovery of the previous generation. It is this systemic approach, which acknowledges prevention and recovery as part of the same continuum that will help us tackle the many issues that are linked to unresolved childhood adversity. We often find that it is only by working with the entire family, and helping to resolve parental trauma caused by their own childhood adversity, that we resolve issues for the child. However, we have concerns that some funding is divided into specific 'child services' and 'adult services' which causes an arbitrary divide instead of allowing organisations to apply for funding to work with the entire family.

In our view, in some cases, working to prevent unresolved trauma from manifesting as coping behaviours and strategies or becoming mental health issues will help to strengthen families and reduce the likelihood that children will feel unsafe at home. In order to achieve this, a wide range of services is required to meet all needs. There is an urgent need for universal services to be trauma informed and to understand the symptoms of trauma, adversity and challenge faced by children and families.

Recent research from Glasgow Caledonian University found that intense child poverty can be found in some of Scotland's most affluent areas, with two- thirds of those suffering income deprivation (468, 430 people) living outside areas identified as 'deprived'.¹²⁰ We therefore think it is important to ensure that SIMD classification is not the sole determinant of funding allocations or service provision.

For further information please contact Chloe Riddell, Policy Manager, at chloe.riddell@children1st.org.uk

¹²⁰ Research from Glasgow Caledonian University Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit published in March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Children in Scotland

Giving all children in Scotland an equal chance to flourish is at the heart of everything we do. By bringing together a network of people working with and for children, alongside children and young people themselves, we offer a broad, balanced and independent voice. We create solutions, provide support and develop positive change across all areas affecting children in Scotland. We do this by listening, gathering evidence, and applying and sharing our learning, while always working to uphold children's rights. Our range of knowledge and expertise means we can provide trusted support on issues as diverse as the people we work with and the varied lives of children and families in Scotland.

Children in Scotland is pleased to be able to respond to the Education and Skills Committee's inquiry on Attainment and Achievement of School-Aged Children Experiencing Poverty. We welcome the focus of this inquiry in recognition of the Scottish Government's emphasis on action to reduce the poverty-related attainment gap. However, we also recognise that poverty, while an important driver of attainment inequalities, is not the only factor to consider. Equally, poor attainment is a significant risk but not an inevitability of growing up in poverty. We strongly recommend therefore, that this inquiry should recognise the relationship between this agenda and other current related areas of national policy and legislation, including the Child Poverty Act, Social Security Bill, expansion of early learning and childcare, and the extension of child rights under additional support for learning legislation, as well as educational policy and legislation.

How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

Children in Scotland conducts a substantial volume of participation and engagement activity and consultation work with children and young people. Much of this activity has taken place in a school setting and/or has an education-related focus. In the last three years this has included engagement around school governance, school nursing, and STEM guidance. These activities have enabled children and young people to reflect on their educational experiences and what makes school an environment that puts children and young people in a position to succeed in education.

Research continues to show the impact of wellbeing on attainmentⁱ. A literature review in recent research by Health Scotland also highlighted the benefit of social and emotional learning programmes on wellbeingⁱⁱ. As a partner in the **Leaders of Learning** project we supported pupils to identify school-based solutions to support wellbeing. Children and young people identified wellbeing as a key factor that helped or hindered their learning:

"I want teachers to understand that when I feel sad it's hard to learn. I want teachers to be aware that I might be putting on a brave face and to take the time to understand what I might be going through at home and within myself"

(Young person, Leaders of Learning)

Children identified that supportive teachers, options such as cool-down rooms or access to other relaxation resources for all children could improve their learning environment and put them in a position to succeedⁱⁱⁱ.

Our multi-award-winning partnership programme **Food, Families, Futures** (FFF) has aimed to address food poverty, particularly during school holiday periods, and its links to wellbeing and education. Research has shown that learning loss does occur over summer holiday periods, particularly for children and young people living in areas of high deprivation^{iv}. Equally, families in receipt of free school meal entitlement have the added challenge of meeting the additional costs of providing an extra meal for children over holiday periods. Food, Families, Futures supported communities in areas with a high rate of free school meal entitlement to roll out summer clubs with provision of free meals.

The 2017 FFF evaluation report highlighted a range of positive impacts of the project, and in terms of attainment, indicated a positive impact on numeracy levels among children who attended^v.

"It feels really good because we're like learning new stuff before we even get in to school into our new classes and the teacher will be impressed by everything we have learned so far." (child, FFF project)

It is important to stress that the clubs provided free food for all attendees, not just those with free school meal entitlement, removing the stigma of receiving such provision. Furthermore, food formed only one part of the summer clubs, and they also presented an important opportunity for parent/child interaction, fun and play, supporting parents to improve their cooking skills and create positive relationships between families, schools and the wider community. For all of these reasons, we recommend that similar approaches are developing in all local authorities across Scotland.

As we will elaborate on later, family learning can have a beneficial impact on the attainment of children and provision of this nature should include the option for this.

Finally, we feel it is important to stress that evidence shows a large proportion of learning takes place outside the school setting, and that pre-school learning and development is vital to educational attainment^{vi}. In particular, high quality early learning and childcare that meets the EPPE (Effective Provision of Pre-School Education) criteria has a key role to play in supporting child development and educational attainment and closing the attainment gap^{vii, viii, ix}. Our **CHANGE** project aims to develop community-driven models of high quality early learning and childcare to meet local delivery needs in the East End of Glasgow, within in the context of expanding provision. Learning from this indicates that there are still many challenges associated with providing accessible and high-quality childcare in areas of deprivation. We strongly recommend therefore that the committee consider the impact of early years services in any inquiry into effective methods to close the attainment gap.

Are there any services that you / your organisation has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

Children in Scotland acts as the representative voice for the children's sector in Scotland, and through policy development, conducting research, carrying out participation activities, delivering workforce development opportunities and raising awareness of how children and their families can most effectively be supported, aims to achieve positive outcomes for all children and families across Scotland.

We believe it is better to avoid, as far as possible, the emergence of an attainment gap. Preventing a problem is almost always more effective and less costly than trying to solve it once it has become entrenched. Growing Up in Scotland, has found that significant differences in cognitive ability already emerge by the age of three, that these differences were strongly associated with socio-economic status and, more concerning, had increased by age five. This is also correlated with poorer outcomes later in life^{x,xi}.

This data highlights the importance of pre-school interventions. Enabling children to have the kind of experiences in early life that promote cognitive development and learning is shown to be the most effective method of reducing educational inequalities. A key factor highlighted by The EPPE Project, among much other research, was the importance of high quality provision to success^{xii}. A 2015 paper indicates that 'high quality' is consistent with high (ie university) qualification levels for staff, high staff/child ratios and an appropriate curriculum (in this respect, countries that place strong emphasis on creativity, play and social relationship development perform better than those who focus on formal competence acquisition)^{xiii}. The Scottish Government needs to ensure provision meets these criteria if it wishes to improve attainment.

The quality of the home learning environment is also critical. Several approaches have been shown to effect improvement in this area. Individual support through universal services such as Health Visiting and programmes like Family Nurse Partnership; peer support and group learning of the type provided in Family Centres and high quality out-of-home care (high quality group care as outlined below) or family-based care, such as the Community Childminding scheme operated by the Scottish Childminding Association can all have a positive effect^{xiv,xv,xvi}.

For children of school age, evidence suggests that the relationship between the child and the teacher and the capacity of the school to form the kind of relationships with parents that effectively engages them as partners in the learning process, are critical^{xvii}. However, we know from our work with the National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFS) that many parents still face barriers to engaging with the school community and schools need to do better to support parents to become involved in their child's learning. Both NPFS and Parenting Across Scotland have also highlighted that parental engagement needs to be better supported in early learning and childcare settings.

To identify solutions to this problem of parental engagement we would point the committee in the direction of an evidence review conducted by the Centre for Research on Families and Relationships at Edinburgh University, which collaborated

with Children in Scotland on an evidence review on what works in family engagement. This provides a comprehensive overview of effective approaches^{xviii}.

We also believe that an understanding how to develop and sustain nurturing and supportive relationships should form a key part of teacher education. Despite the documented importance of developing supportive relationships between school, child and family, this currently receives little or no attention in initial teacher education.

If you work with schools/local authorities/others to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on this issue easy/difficult?

Our work on our FFF project has been successful in large part due to positive collaboration with the schools involved. Schools presents vital community hubs, with access to resources and equipment, including kitchen facilities. Often these excellent community resources go unused during the school holiday periods. We recommend that better access to the school estates should be more widely explored to support greater community use and help build positive relationships between the school and parents by association.

The other important aspect of the collaboration has been the relationships between Children in Scotland, schools and other local delivery partners. Where partnerships were developed early and partners involved, co-ordinating activities clubs were able to have a wider reach and engage more children, young people and families. Partnership working also supported a wider range of activities that could promote attainment, ranging from food, to play, to health and wellbeing^{xix,xx,xxi}.

What else could be done to support the attainment /achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

Poverty has a range of impacts that can have negative consequences for the attainment of children and young people affected by it. The stress of living in continually straitened financial circumstances can also have a negative impact on parental capacity to give their children the best start in life. We believe therefore that Scottish Government efforts to **eliminate child poverty** through the Child Poverty Act should have a positive impact on the poverty-related attainment gap, and we would recommend that attainment is included within the revised measurement framework to help evaluate the impact of poverty reduction on attainment. We do however believe that the Scottish Government could go further still, through full use of its powers under the Social Security (Scotland) Bill. Evidence suggests that topping up Child Benefit by £5 per month would lift 30,000 children out of poverty^{xxii}. The most recent IPPR report also strongly recommends reversing the Two Child Limit on Universal Credit to reduce child poverty^{xxiii}.

It is vital to be clear, however, that as a single variable poverty is not the most significant determinant of educational attainment. **Parent attributes**, behaviours and style are far more relevant. For example, attachment and warmth are important factors in educational attainment (and, indeed in other life outcomes)^{xxiv}. However, the existence and extent of these factors is strongly associated with material poverty, that is poverty which makes it harder for parents to provide these factors. The stress of

living in challenging financial circumstances and the lack of financial resources can limit the opportunity for parents to give their children these developmental ‘inputs’ so critical to academic attainment. Parents living in poverty are also less likely to aspire to their children entering higher education^{xxv}.

To address this meaningfully it is vital that, firstly, parents are enabled to support their children’s healthy learning and development to the best of their ability. There are many tried and tested approaches to this; evidence indicates that individualised support, embedded within strong universal services, are more effective than targeted programmes.

We need to recognise, however, that parental capacity is not infinite, and that high quality early learning and **childcare** services have a role to play in ameliorating the issues that children who experience poverty face, as we have outlined above.

Children in Scotland manages Enquire, the national advice service for **additional support for learning**. The evidence is clear that poverty is both a cause and an effect of additional support for learning needs^{xxvi}. We believe one of the key barriers to supporting and improving the education attainment of children and young people experiencing poverty is that poverty and additional support needs are often treated separately in policy, resource decisions and, as a trickle-down affect, at the frontline in schools. There needs to be some rationalisation of education policy and practice to reflect the two-way relationship between poverty and additional support needs.

In recognition of the considerable resource committed to schools through the **Pupil Equity Fund**, we recommend that a thorough independent review is undertaken on the use of this funding and its impact on poverty-related attainment. This should be undertaken to better understand how this fund can be most effectively used to support it to achieve greater impact in the future.

Finally, and importantly, we recommend that the committee listens directly to the **experiences of children, young people and families** to understand what supports attainment from their perspectives. Reports and videos from our projects highlighted above, and from other voluntary sector partners, including End Child Poverty group members, would provide invaluable evidence to shape the inquiry’s conclusions and recommendations.

Amy Woodhouse
Head of Policy
Children in Scotland
22 March 2018

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EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Children's Parliament

INTRODUCTION

Children's Parliament is Scotland's Centre of Excellence for children's participation and engagement. Children's Parliament works for a future where all children in Scotland are actively engaged in shaping our world so that everyone is healthy, happy and safe. All our work is delivered through the lens of human dignity.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide views to the Committee. Our response is based in direct engagement with children. We address broad issues concerning the experience of poverty, how poverty impacts on the experience of school and our work to address the poverty-related attainment gap. Quotes are from children.

"I think that children should be treated fairly and should always have what they need for a normal kid's life." (age 12)

In our 2017 publication *What Kind of Scotland*¹²¹, a review of our work on our 21st birthday, we reported:

"Children identify poverty as the most important barrier to a good life. Some say they worry that their family does not have enough money to buy what they need. Poverty affects children day to day, in terms of practical things like having enough food to eat, a house that is warm and has the necessities of life, but also because worrying about money is stressful for adults. Children see, hear and feel this worry and stress. Children say that the cost of things at school can get in the way of their full participation in learning. In Scotland today, some children rely on the food they get at breakfast club or school lunch, and when they go home the best option is to go to bed to stay warm".

POVERTY AND SCHOOL

"Education is free, but a lot of things are not." (age 11)

Children's Parliament was commissioned by the Scottish Government to undertake a consultation with children on the **Child Poverty Bill and Delivery Plan**. This has been submitted to Scottish Government but as we make this submission this is not yet published. The report addresses poverty in the context of life at home, in the community and at school. In summary and in relation to school and learning children report the following.

There are many additional costs involved with going to school which may be significant barriers for families living in poverty. Being unable to afford new school uniform at the start of each school year or replacing lost or outgrown items might

¹²¹ What Kind of Scotland <https://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/about-us/publications/>

mean that children feel unhappy and different from others. In some cases, not wearing the dress code can result in the child not going to school as the child can be sent home to put on the correct uniform which they may not have. Children can feel confused and upset in such a situation, or perhaps frustrated and angry.

School supplies such as schoolbags, pencil cases, stationery and books are items families living in poverty can struggle to afford. This can impact on a child's ability to complete schoolwork at home, and might result in the child feeling annoyed, left out and worried about getting into trouble. Using computers and internet at home for school projects or homework can be required and children who do not have access to these may feel upset and anxious about not being able to complete their homework.

Hunger can impact upon a child's ability to function at school. Breakfast clubs and milk schemes can be helpful for children who do not get breakfast at home, but these sometimes come with a cost which some parents cannot afford. Some children may not have enough money for school dinners or, for those at secondary school, to buy food at lunchtime. Children entitled to free school meals may not take this up.

“Children should get breakfast so they're not hungry and tired and can focus on their work.” (age 10)

Poverty can also impact upon children's participation in opportunities such as school trips and residential. Children feel it is unfair that there are children who cannot afford to go on school trips. They may feel embarrassed, disappointed and lonely because they get left behind when everyone else is away.

Feeling disengaged at school and struggling to fully participate in the classroom may also have consequences for the child's future. Feeling worthless and isolated in school may affect a child's experience as part of the school community, perhaps missing out on opportunities such as being part of the pupil council or leadership team. Poor education might lead to not getting into university or college or getting a good job, continuing the child's feelings of being left out, hopeless and worthless.

The anxieties and adversities children experience at home can have a profound knock-on effect on children's experiences at school. Children may be absent a lot, perhaps due to not feeling very well or difficulties at home. Children may be anxious about getting into trouble for being late or missing the school bus despite this not being their fault. Children feel it is important to have trusting, supportive teachers who they can talk to about worries or problems they might be having. Teachers should understand what goes on in a child's life outside of school.

Children's recommendations from the consultation regarding poverty and school:

- Reduce cost of school trips and residential
- Create a way for children to get cheaper school supplies
- Provide free / cheaper school uniforms for children
- Provide food cards to children for school dinners / lunch money
- Make bigger libraries at schools with better access to educational books
- Provide young people with career / further education support

- Provide schools and colleges with more money for libraries, school materials and free meals
- Give young people more financial support to attend college or university
- Talk with children who are living in poverty and listen to their suggestions.

POVERTY AND ATTAINMENT

The poverty-related attainment gap is a human rights issue. As such it is the responsibility of adult duty-bearers to address the breadth and complexity of the issue and remove barriers. While improvements to teaching and resources for literacy and numeracy learning matter, to impact on attainment in the long-term and in ways that are sustained for the learner and for teachers when it comes to their classroom practice there is a need to address culture in both how children see themselves as learners, and to create classroom environments where children are both loved and nurtured. This is what Children's Parliament has been doing in our **Doing Our Best** programme, facilitated for 2 years in Aberdeen City's attainment challenge primary schools. The work is innovative and challenging; it has evaluated strongly and is now profiled on the National Improvement Hub¹²².

The first focus of the programme is on learner (academic) self-perception. Educational Psychologist Bob Burden recognised: **'Ability alone is not enough: how we think about ourselves matters too.'** By an early age, children living in disadvantaged communities can believe that school/education is not for them, they have a poor sense of agency relating to learning optimism, they feel they cannot do things (learned helplessness) and they have little or no enjoyment in problem solving. But this is not inevitable, it can be changed. Children can learn about learning; their confidence and skills can be built. This is where the second element comes in, our programme promotes rights-based relationships as essential if we are to create safer and happier learning environments.

Our focus on the poverty related attainment gap will not reap rewards for the children who need it most if we do not address the cultural barriers to learning, the belief that the learner must have in him/herself as a learner, and foster teaching approaches based on kindness, empathy and trust. We would pose this question: do enough of our attainment related efforts do this?

I learned things that help me learn and what gets in the way. (age 11)

I can do what I dream. (age 9)

In our healthy, happy and safe school friends would be the most important thing because without them you wouldn't want to learn as school would be boring, like a prison. We want to change our school so there are no arguments or bullying. People would all want to play with one another. (age 10)

I like that the children are learning vocabulary about their learning that is unrelated to their level of intelligence and more to do with learning qualities.
(Teacher)

¹²² Doing Our Best <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/practice-exemplars/Doing%20Our%20Best>

The project has had an overarching effect on how I work with the class – I feel I am more aware of how they learn, and I have seen great progression in confidence with the class as a whole but especially with some individuals.
(Teacher)

To end, some further reflections from children on **poverty**:

“I think you should move poverty up as a priority because it’s becoming more likely to happen.” (age 12)

“There are so many people that do not have money. As we know, money is an everyday necessity, especially for those with children or no job. I personally feel that we could do much more!” (age 12)

“Poverty might put people under stress which might make them unsafe.”
(age 10)

“People in poverty might be scared to ask for help or go to a foodbank because they don’t want to look weak. They want to be seen as strong.”
(age 10)

**Children’s Parliament
20 March 2018**

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Children's University Scotland

Children's University Scotland Response to the Education and Skills Committee Inquiry: Attainment and Achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Introduction

Children's University Scotland welcomes the Committee's inquiry into the attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty. We are a national charity that works with schools, universities and community partners to support children and young people aged 5-14. Our vision is for every child to have the opportunity to learn and pursue their ambitions to the fullest.

Over the next few years we aim to work at every age and stage of children's education, strengthening the role we play in learning at home (including in the early years) increasing opportunities to learn outside of school and contributing evidence on what works to close the achievement gap. We welcome that the inquiry is considering the contribution that a wide range of partners make to the achievement of children experiencing poverty and that members are looking beyond schools to understand the impact of learning that happens outside of the classroom.

Our response shares initial learning and analysis from our work in Scotland. It also draws upon some of the wider research into the educational experiences of children living in poverty. We would be happy to share further details or discuss any of the points raised in this response.

How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people?

Children's University Scotland was founded in 2013 to support children to find and take part in enjoyable learning at home, in school and within their local community. Through our partnerships with schools, universities and learning providers, we have helped to increase children's participation in a wide range of out-of-school learning opportunities. We have also worked with partners to innovate new ways of engaging children in activities that can strengthen learning at school.

We believe this is vital to supporting the educational achievement of children experiencing poverty. Opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities such as team sports, arts and music classes, volunteering or mentoring, can be important for children's health and wellbeing; develop skills that contribute to their education and help children to explore their talents and interests.

Research has also suggested that participation in extra-curricular activities can also have a positive effect on children's academic attainment (Demos 2015). However, we know that children living in poverty are less likely to participate in the types of activities that can make the biggest difference (JRF 2013). Over the next few years, our work is developing a specific focus on supporting the learning and development of children experiencing poverty and multiple disadvantages (such as young carers and refugee and asylum-seeking children).

We are particularly focused on ensuring that children have access to high quality out of school learning opportunities that can support their achievement.

Our impact

In our first 5 years, we have:

- Supported over 8,000 children to access out-of-school learning opportunities
- Validated 1,200 learning providers' activities
- Worked with over 150 schools across 12 local authorities;
- Secured partnerships with government, universities and national learning providers;
- Innovated a ground-breaking digital platform for out of school learning

Our work with schools has helped to improve understanding of the contribution that out of school learning makes to a child's educational achievement. Our approach has sought to build capacity within the education system to meet children's learning needs, building on their unique interests and learning preferences. We have achieved this through convening effective local partnerships which add value to what is already being delivered locally. The most impactful partnerships have worked to link curricular learning to the out-of-school activities that children take part in at home or in their local area.

Our Aspire platform (and previously our 'passport scheme') have provided ways for pupils to record their learning and for teachers to understand what children are achieving outside of school. Anecdotal evidence suggests this has supported teachers to have better quality conversations with their pupils about their learning goals and has been effective at increasing children's motivation to learn.

We have seen a particularly significant impact in schools that have embedded the Children's University Scotland approach into their school culture. We have also developed successful partnerships with universities, enabling them to reach children and families that are under-represented within Higher Education. These partnerships offer pupils a programme that goes beyond what schools can offer alone, adding depth to pupils' out of school learning experiences by helping them recognise and celebrate their learning and achievements. Our partnerships have additionally assisted participating schools to go beyond what they were otherwise able to offer their pupils and provides a possible model for helping to widen access to Further and Higher education by tackling the gap in access to out of school learning.

We have also supported young people themselves to promote the benefits of out of school learning for younger children through our Children's University 'Ambassadors' approach allowing more engaged children the chance to take on a leadership role and further build valuable confidence and life skills. Peer mentoring models have been tried and tested in many schools and has worked well, increasing younger children's participation in activities that are available in the community.

We have additionally worked with parents to provide opportunities for them to take part in volunteering in their school and have worked with partners in the Further and Higher Education Sector to develop bespoke learning activities to support family learning. Our experience suggests that active communication, including sharing opportunities for learning at home through informal conversations with parents;

organising launch events, celebrations and 'graduations' for young learners can all be effective at stimulating positive changes in the children's attitudes towards learning and increase support for learning at home.

Aspire

Aspire is our new digital platform that offers children a fun and engaging way to participate in non-formal learning. It enables children to search online for affordable learning activities that are delivered in their local area. These include museums, historic sites, science centres and galleries, a network of community-based groups and clubs; and organisations which offer opportunities for high quality at-home learning.

These organisations, which we refer to as our learning destinations, complement the work of schools by offering a more diverse range of opportunities for children to learn and supports schools to take innovative approaches to education. We have found that working closely with learning providers to build a platform where children can access reliable information about local and national learning opportunities has been effective at engaging children in out of school learning and increasing their participation.

Children gain credits and awards through Aspire that recognise their commitment to learning and incentivises their continued progression. Credits are awarded for each learning activity they complete, and enables children to gain skill points for each activity they take part in. This helps them to identify the types of skills they are acquiring as well as enhancing their appreciation of the value they have for their later life and learning. Aspire additionally offers children the opportunity to rate activities and provide a review based on their enjoyment, level of challenge and learning gained. We are currently testing the model and are exploring its potential to provide a national platform for supporting out of school learning

Future Work

Over the next 10 years our organisation is focused on securing a number of changes that will help to improve the educational achievement of children experiencing poverty:

- **Improving the availability of and access to affordable learning opportunities** –We will work with partners to increase the range of free and affordable activities that children and young people can access and to promote new ways of increasing out of school learning (for example, at-home or digital learning opportunities), particularly for children experiencing poverty.
- **Increasing children's participation in non-formal and informal learning:** We will work to encourage engagement and participation in the opportunities for learning that are available outside of school, ensuring that young people know these opportunities exist and the confidence to access them, as well as identifying new ways to develop child-led learning experiences.
- **Enhancing the quality of learning provision to boost children's learning and achievement:** we will work to improve the quality of out of school learning provision so that children and young people can benefit from opportunities that make the biggest difference to their enjoyment of learning and their educational achievement.

Measuring impact

Over the next few years our Aspire platform will develop a new source of data on children's learning preferences and participation in extra-curricular activities. We are also looking at ways in which this might track children's progress and understand how learning beyond the classroom impacts on their educational achievement; measure how often parents are engaging in their children's learning and support children to identify activities that can best support their attainment. In addition to this we are also working in partnership with academic researchers to undertake qualitative research into the impact that Children's University Scotland is having on children's learning and achievement more widely. This study will be piloted with a school learning community in the coming academic year before being rolled out to a larger group of schools and children. We would be happy to discuss the findings from this work and to share additional learning from our current programmes with the Committee.

Are there any services that your organisation has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

In addition to work that we intend to take forward over the next few years, Children's University Scotland is also trialling a virtual school approach. This will enable us to provide a more targeted model of support for groups of children that experience multiple disadvantage e.g. young carers, care experienced children, children affected by family imprisonment and asylum-seeking families. Many of these children are at a high risk of experiencing poverty. The approach will enable us to develop tailored approaches to supporting children's educational needs whilst also enabling them to gain recognition for the learning that they already do out of school. Our new work will particularly focus on capturing the impact of child-led learning and testing ways of helping the education system to better understand how to best support children's learning beyond the classroom and improve children's awareness of the skills being developed (e.g. as young carers or as translators for their parents etc.).

We are also exploring the potential to expand the work that we do to better support children's learning before starting school. Numerous studies have shown the importance of the early years in supporting children's outcomes and development and the positive effect that home learning can have on closing the attainment gap. We believe that opportunities for learning within the home and community should be made widely available in the early years, particularly for families experiencing poverty. We recommend that future stages of this inquiry focus on this issue and on understanding the impact that efforts in the early years (including through the early learning and childcare system) are having on the achievement of children living in poverty.

Supporting Collaboration

Successes: Children's University Scotland works with universities, colleges, learning providers, schools and a wide range of other organisations that share our ambitions to enhance children's learning. We have found that values-based partnerships are the most effective at fostering constructive collaborations to improve education with a wide range of partners. In our definition, these are partnerships in which stakeholders work together to plan and deliver opportunities for children, built around common goals and a shared ethos. Our most successful partnerships typically include a shared recognition of the role that 'out of school' or non-formal activity plays in

supporting children's achievement, as well as a shared respect for children's rights to make decisions about their own learning journey.).

Our experience suggests that focussing on the value added through working in partnership and supporting regular and open communication between partners is key to success. Building strong working relationships between key staff involved in the delivery of a partnership is also important, particularly where work is taking place across organisational boundaries (such as schools and the third sector). We particularly find that it is important for partners to have a similar understanding of what success looks like, for example discussing the contribution that a partnership will make to children's learning outcomes and the value that one part of the education 'system' can add to another. If it is not clear what will be gained from working together then a partnership will often have limited impact.

Challenges: We are concerned that cuts to local authority budgets and the impact this is having on local spending priorities mean that many areas are seeing a reduction in leisure and cultural provision. This is likely to have an impact on the quality and availability of out of school learning opportunities that children have access to over time. We anticipate that this is likely to be a growing challenge and barrier to ensuring that young people can access a wide range of activities that enhance their learning outside of school over the coming years.

We also think it is crucially important that all partners in children's education recognise the value of informal learning and the contribution it can make to children's attainment. This is an area where we can sometimes face challenges as activities that take place at home and in the community are not as well-researched or understood.

What else could be done to support the attainment /achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

Children's University Scotland is focused on identifying innovative new ways of supporting children's learning and will be delivering a partnership event in Autumn 2018 to help stimulate debate on this question. We are keen to invite members of the Committee to attend this and would be happy to discuss further how it can build upon and support the work of this inquiry. Based on our own work and on our current understanding of the evidence base in this area, we suggest that members consider a number of initial suggestions:

1. Provide free access to extra-curricular activities for children living in poverty (both within the school and wider community).

We suggest that the Committee:

- considers learning from providers that have developed low-cost models of service delivery and initiatives that have been successful at providing free access to extra-curricular opportunities for children experiencing poverty
- explores the potential for 'extra-curricular grants' to support parents to meet costs of school trips and materials (i.e. through a similar model to school clothing grants)
- considers the role of legislation in regulating school charging policies for extra-curricular activities at school (as is the case in England, for example). We suggest this approach would need to be supported by sufficient funding and guidance to enable schools to meet requirements.

- looks at ways in which Pupil Equity Funds can be utilised to this end and consider the potential to provide funds directly to young people themselves (i.e. through a young person's account or other mechanisms), enabling them to personalise and self-direct educational opportunities that can support learning outside of school.
2. **Consider designing programmes for children experiencing poverty to benefit from out of school learning in the community, particularly after school and during holiday periods:** this could include the provision of dedicated programmes focusing on increasing children's engagement and enjoyment of education; boosting health and wellbeing and accelerating progress for children struggling in key attainment areas. We also recommend that it looks at learning loss during holiday periods and key transitions.
 3. **Work to improve the quality of out of school learning provision, including development of clearer standards and toolkits for evaluating and developing effective services:** This is something that Children's University Scotland is exploring as a potential development through our own work. We would be happy to discuss this in more detail.
 4. **Further investment in research and evidence to understand the value added by out of school learning:** in particular, there is a need to identify what types of approaches make the biggest difference to children's attainment and can help to close the attainment gap

For further information about Children's University Scotland and our response to the Committee's Inquiry, please contact Neil Mathers at neil@childrensuniversity.scot

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Includem

About Includem

Includem is a specialist Scottish charity which provides intensive, personalised support for vulnerable young people and their families. We believe that no young person is beyond help and that with a responsive, consistent service at the time of most need we can rebuild relationships and deliver positive, sustainable outcomes.

Our work is focused on providing support for young people and families so we can help them unlock their full potential. Our approach is preventative – whether preventing unnecessary accommodation away from home or exclusion from school. In all cases our framework of support consists of professional one to one relationships with to address the underlying needs and challenges in order to develop hope, aspiration, resilience and improved family relationships.

An increasing focus of our work is on earlier intervention through direct referrals from schools. We support young people and their families who are at risk of exclusion and who have poor engagement with school.

Our work on raising attainment

Includem has always supported young people to attend and engage with school as an outcome to improve their wellbeing generally. More recently we have developed new services focused specifically on improving attainment, with young people being referred directly by schools rather than our more traditional route through social worker services. This is an opportunity to address barriers to attainment at an earlier stage, before potential social work involvement.

Working as an external provider alongside pupil support teams, we provide out of school, home based support for young people and their families to address the underlying barriers to attendance and engagement in school. The service is focused on working with young people out of schools hours, in evenings and weekends when they need support most, and builds on the strengths of whole families, recognising the crucial role parents and carers play in education.

We are currently delivering this service in Dundee, Glasgow, West Dunbartonshire and North Lanarkshire, with a combination of funding from independent trusts and from the Scottish Attainment Challenge Fund.

What the support looks like

Our service focuses on building relationships with young people based on mutual trust and respect. This relationship is the key to unlocking change in the young person and their circumstances, allowing us to do focused work on managing emotions, risk taking behaviour, strengthening relationships with people in their lives and improving engagement with learning.

On average we work with young people four times a week totally around six hours of support, with additional support provided to families. Every young person has a personalised support plan which meets their individual needs so we have flexibility to increase or decrease activity depending on their circumstances in any given week. We also have a 24/7 helpline which allows young people and families to get support (including a face to face response) whenever they need it.

Some of the work our project is involved in with young people and families includes:

- Practical support for families to ensure attendance at school such as developing and helping to reinforce routines at home, e.g. around bedtime, homework and use of the internet;
- Proactive support for parents to help them set boundaries and manage challenging behaviour;
- Support for young people to understand and manage their emotions and frustrations in a positive way which does not result in negative outcomes at school;
- Working with families to improve access to health, housing and income maximisation services which are often the factors which make parenting so challenging;
- Close working relationship between school, home and Includem to pick up on emerging issues and share information where appropriate – e.g. sharing why a young person might be late to class to avoid them being excluded and put back into a cycle of exclusion/non-attendance;
- Close working relationship with social work and other services around child protection concerns which may not have been known by other services

Young people usually move on from our project after nine months, although again there is flexibility to work with them for longer if their needs remain. The key focus for us is on building resilience and a network of other supports so that the family has other people they can turn to if they have a continuing need of support.

Working with schools and local authorities

Our project in Dundee is in each of the local authority's eight secondary schools, with a crucial coordinating role played by the City Council. Each of the schools has a direct link into the service and the City Council sits on a joint Project Board to oversee the delivery aspects of the work. They are also involved in coordinating activity between each of the secondary schools and provide a bridge between social work services for those young people who have met the threshold for compulsory intervention and those who are on the edge of compulsory measures.

In our submission to the Scottish Government's consultation on the proposed Education (Scotland) Bill we raised questions about the potential shift in the coordinating role by local authorities towards regional improvement collaboratives.

For us, it is important to recognise that although schools play a crucial role in breaking the cycle of poverty and helping to close the poverty-related attainment gap there are also a range of services outside of school which play an equally important

role. Schools cannot themselves break the poverty/attainment cycle. We are concerned that by changing the education governance structures this collaborative approach between schools, public sector services and specialist third sector inputs may be more difficult as services which will continue to be delivered on a local authority basis (e.g. social work or social work commissioned third sector services) may not be as effectively co-ordinated alongside education specific services.

Jonny's Story

(Name has been changed.)

Jonny was 13 when we started supporting him because of school attendance at below 50%. He had been excluded on a number of occasions for violent outbursts and disruption in the classroom. He was defeatist and disengaged and believed he had no future at school. Neither of his parents offered him any encouragement to even attend school.

We supported him to rebuild his confidence, and get him to think positively about future goals and ambitions. We helped to rebuild his relationships, and to challenge head-on his negative behaviour by providing structured support for his parents on setting boundaries and expectations. Both Jonny and his parents used our 24/7 helpline to reinforce the routine and to seek help before his behaviour reached crisis point. We planned a number of 8am sessions to get him up, make sure he had breakfast and take him to school to reinforce a positive routine of going to school. Alongside improved attendance, the work on improving his self-confidence led to him seeing a purpose in going to school and wanting to engage in lessons.

What more could be done?

Addressing the poverty-related attainment gap must involve far greater recognition of the complexities of young people's lives outside of school. For young people's attainment to improve they need a stable family life, with positive relationships and encouragement to attend and engage in school. Families need support to make this happen – to overcome the multitude of challenges they face.

One solution or programme will not solve this, but personalised approaches, focused on the individual needs and risks of young people and families are part of the answer.

Michael Shanks

Communications and Policy Manager

Includem

22 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing

Save The Children

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

We welcome the Committee's keen focus on closing the poverty-related educational attainment gap and the opportunity to share our views on what works. Save the Children has a long-standing commitment to support efforts to address the poverty-related attainment gap. We work directly with schools and families; delivering innovative, evidence-based programmes, and influencing wider systems change through demonstrating effective practice. Our comments reflect our focus and expertise in working with young children during the early years of primary school (P1-3).

Key messages

1. **Engaging beyond the school gates to support parents to engage in their children's learning is key** to improving the attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty. Our strategy at national level should give further priority, action and resource to this. We are calling on Scottish Government to:
 - a. Support testing, robust evaluation and sharing of what works to support parents
 - b. Use learning from Save the Children's Families Connect¹²³ and Families and Schools Together (FAST)¹²⁴ programmes as tested and proven ways of supporting parents in Scotland to engage effectively in their children's learning
 - c. Deliver a policy and legislative framework to help drive further progress
 - d. Challenge all agencies working with families, including schools and early learning and childcare services, to play their role in supporting parental engagement in children's learning.
2. **To address the poverty-related attainment gap in the long-term, we must take a preventative approach starting in the early years** as we know the gap is evident by a very early age. Scottish Government has taken welcome steps to improve support in the early years. We'd like to see these linked more clearly to tackling the poverty-related attainment gap – including delivering high quality early learning and childcare, and providing sufficient funding to enable schools to provide the additional support for pupils experiencing poverty.

What works – supporting parental engagement in children's learning

Closing the poverty-related educational attainment gap requires a focus on support for children's learning beyond the school gates. There is a strong and growing body of

¹²³ Save the Children, [Families Connect](#)

¹²⁴ Save the Children, [Families and Schools Together](#)

evidence demonstrating the ways in which a strong home learning environment, and parents who are engaged in their child's learning, can make a significant difference in helping children to reach their educational potential.¹²⁵ This is particularly true for children living in poverty, which helps to tackle the attainment gap.

Effective parental engagement is the ways in which parents engage with and support their child's learning, including practical activities such as sharing stories, helping with homework, and providing emotional support. Sharing these types of activities helps the child learn from the content of the activity, encourages quality contact time between the parent and child to help attachment and bonding, and has an impact on children's learning, development and educational attainment.

Parents are the first and on-going educators of their own children and should receive information and support to help develop their children's learning at home and in the community. This includes advice and support for new parents, throughout children's early years, and in engagement with formal learning services such as nurseries and schools. There must also be investment in helping parents develop the skills and confidence they need to support their child's learning at home. In some cases, Scottish Attainment Challenge and Pupil Equity Funding have been used to support programmes and interventions that work with families to achieve this, and this should be encouraged.

Save the Children has long championed a greater focus on parental engagement. Over the past nine years we have developed and tested programmes on the best ways to achieve this. We have campaigned for a robust policy and legislative framework to drive action, to ensure all agencies working with families strengthen their role in supporting parents to engage in their children's learning, and that parents who would benefit from additional support are able to access it.

Families Connect

Save the Children's Families Connect programme focuses on supporting parents and children to learn together. It helps parents to support their children's learning in three key areas: literacy and language development, numeracy, and social and emotional development. The eight-week programme provides a series of activities, techniques and games that families can participate in together, can be easily applied at home and that complement children's learning in school. Since 2016 Scottish Government has supported the delivery of Families Connect as the outreach arm of its Read Write Count programme, demonstrating the programme's clear link to tackling the attainment gap. To date we have delivered 76 cycles of Families Connect in 70 schools, in 12 local authorities¹²⁶ across Scotland.

The intended long-term effects of Families Connect are that children will have a greater chance of achieving their potential and do better at school. We achieve this by developing the skills and confidence of the parents and carers who take part, and providing them with the resources needed to actively engage their child in learning in the home. Families Connect has a strong evidence base and robust monitoring and

¹²⁵ Ellis and Sosu (2014) [Closing the attainment gap in Scottish education](#)

¹²⁶ Edinburgh, Glasgow, Fife, North Ayrshire, Midlothian, West Lothian, Inverclyde, Perth, Dundee, Clackmannanshire, Stirling, South Lanarkshire

evaluation is carried out to demonstrate the programme's impact. Some key impact measures include¹²⁷:

- Children succeeded at school – evaluation has shown significant improvements in overall academic ability (27%), in reading (25%) and in maths (22%), as well as improved behaviour
- Children displayed increased confidence and focus and showed increased motivation and interest in reading and writing
- Parents reported significantly increased self-esteem, improved perceptions of their own efficacy, and increased engagement and interest in their children's learning
- Parents also reported improvements in parent-school relationships and interaction.

2. Characteristics of practice likely to support effective parental engagement

3. From the research evidence and our own practice¹²⁸, we have identified several characteristics of interventions likely to support effective parental engagement:
 - An assets-based approach which builds confidence and develops existing skills
 - Programmes which are inclusive and non-stigmatising (some may be delivered universally to avoid stigma, but more targeted support can also be provided for those families who need it)
 - Play-based and interactive family learning opportunities, using activities which are accessible and enjoyable for families who might experience barriers such as poverty and literacy issues
 - Overcoming barriers to participation, such as travel costs and childcare requirements
 - Services engaging with parents to understand their needs in order to shape provision
 - Developing trusting relationships between parents, practitioners and services where parents feel respected, welcome, included, valued and supported
 - Opportunities for modelling, observation and involvement in activities
 - Using transitions as key opportunities for engagement.

What else is needed

4. To strengthen parental engagement in children's learning

Our programmes are proving to have impact for the children and families we are able to reach, and they are a key part of the jigsaw to demonstrate and share good practice; helping schools to embed parental engagement into their work. Yet we know that on their own they are not enough to achieve the change we want to see for Scotland's children. We want to see a broader framework to embed support for parental engagement in children's learning to help drive further progress, including:

¹²⁷ Save the Children (2018) [Families Connect: Spring 2017 evaluation](#)

¹²⁸ Chapman et al. (2014) [FAST Forward: Families Engagement in Children's Learning – Findings from Families and Schools Together \(FAST\) programme in Scotland](#)

A clear policy and practice focus and commitment to act

A clear focus on parental engagement is required at national, regional and local level to ensure it is prioritised. This include clear policy and legislative commitments focussed on parental engagement, (not just formal parental involvement), clear accountability for delivery, and requirements in relevant quality standards and inspection schedules. We hope to see these reflected in the forthcoming Education (Scotland) Bill¹²⁹ and National Action Plan on Parental Engagement and Family Learning¹³⁰.

Support for the workforce

The workforce, including all teachers and early learning practitioners, should receive initial and career-long training and development on how to encourage and facilitate strong parental engagement in children's learning, and guidance and support on practical tools to help deliver effective approaches. Practitioners working with families need the skills and confidence to build trusting and respectful relationships with parents, and the resources and infrastructure necessary to deliver effective interventions.

Funding to support programmes and interventions

Sufficient additional, targeted funding is required to enable schools and other services, such as early learning and childcare settings, to support activities that promote or support parental engagement.

Improvement advice and support

Schools and early learning and childcare settings should have access to improvement support from Education Scotland, Local Authorities, Regional Improvement Collaboratives and Attainment Advisors to provide them with advice regarding best practice.

Evaluation and shared learning

There needs to be robust evaluation of programmes and interventions seeking to tackle the attainment gap, especially those funded by public money, to ensure that resources are being used appropriately to support these efforts. This will be vital to help build the evidence-base in Scotland of what works and to ensure that learning can be shared across the country to inform future plans.

5. The need to start early to tackle the poverty-related attainment gap

To eliminate the gap we need to take a long-term preventative approach alongside supporting children who may already be behind. There is long-standing, consistent and robust evidence that shows a significant relationship between poverty and children's learning outcomes, particularly early cognitive development. Early childhood is a particularly critical period because it is when the family context dominates children's everyday lives; a context that is significantly affected by socioeconomic status. The gap in learning outcomes is evident from children's

¹²⁹ Scottish Government (2017), [Empowering Schools: A Consultation on the Provisions of the Education \(Scotland\) Bill](#), p18

¹³⁰ Scottish Government (2017) [A Nation with Ambition: The Government's Programme for Scotland 2017-18](#), p74

earliest years^{131,132}, and remains persistent as children grow up¹³³. It is the basis of the poverty-related attainment gap that has such a damaging effect on children's achievement at school and into adulthood. Given the importance of children's early learning outcomes in shaping future attainment, Save the Children believes that support for children's early cognitive and language development; at home, in early learning and childcare settings and schools, and in the wider community, should be a greater priority for action and investment. That is why we campaign for high quality early learning and childcare provision, and sufficient additional, targeted funding to enable schools to provide the necessary package of additional support for pupils experiencing poverty.

¹³¹ Information Services Division (2017), [Child Health 27-30 Month Review Statistics: Scotland 2015/16](#)

¹³² Growing up in Scotland (2015), [Tackling inequalities in the early years: Key messages from 10 years of the Growing Up in Scotland study](#)

¹³³ Save the Children (2016), [Ready to Read: Scotland](#)

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Scottish Youth Parliament

Response to the Scottish Parliament Education and Skills Committee Inquiry: Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

March 2018

Introduction

The Scottish Youth Parliament represents Scotland's young people. Our vision for Scotland is of a nation that actively listens to and values the meaningful participation of its children and young people. Our goal is to make this vision a reality, in order to ensure Scotland is the best place in the world to grow up.

Our democratically elected members listen to and recognise the issues that are most important to young people, ensuring that their voices are heard by decision-makers. We exist to provide a national platform for young people to discuss the issues that are important to them, and campaign to effect the change they wish to see.

SYP's Values are:

Democracy – We are youth-led and accountable to young people aged 12 to 25. Our democratic structure, and the scale of our engagement across Scotland, gives us a mandate that sets us apart from other organisations.

Rights – We are a fundamentally rights-based organisation. We are passionate about making young people aware of their rights, and ensuring that local and national government deliver policies that allow those rights to be upheld.

Inclusion – We are committed to being truly inclusive and work tirelessly to ensure the voices of every young person from every community and background in Scotland are heard.

Political Impartiality – We are independent from all political parties. By working with all stakeholders, groups, and individuals who share our values, we can deliver the policies that are most important to young people.

Our approach

SYP welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Committees inquiry into poverty and attainment.

As a youth-led organisation whose mission is to ensure that the young people of Scotland's voices are heard, our response is focused on question 4: 'What else could be done to support the attainment /achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?'

Unfortunately, given the timescales of the consultation and SYP's capacity, it was not possible to fully consult the membership on this particular inquiry. The response is based on SYP's report [Child Poverty Bill for Scotland: young people's views](#); SYPs Youth Manifesto [Lead the Way](#)¹³⁴; and official [SYP Policy](#) which comes from the collective voice of Scotland's young people.

¹³⁴ *Lead the way* received 72,744 consultation responses from young people all over Scotland, and provides SYP with an incredible mandate to represent the views of young people. The Manifesto itself can be found [here](#).

SYPs report on Child Poverty was the result of consultation with young people on the topic of child poverty in Scotland, based on the proposals of the Scottish Government set out in 'Consultation on a Child Poverty Bill for Scotland'. The SYP staff team facilitated two small discussion groups on the 23rd September to carry out this consultation. These groups made up of 15 young people between the ages of 14 and 25, with mixed experiences of poverty. The SYP Advocacy and Campaigns and Youth Engagement teams worked with the Scottish Government to develop an agenda and session plan for the focus group.

For more information on the demographic of SYP's current membership, please see [here](#). Our members represent all 32 Local Authorities across Scotland as well as 11 National Voluntary Organisations, and therefore, we have a unique democratic mandate to create SYP Policy and influence change. In this light, this response is fundamentally shaped by the genuine views of young people. It should be noted that, however, as our membership represents young people aged 12-25, SYP's response is not representative of children below the age of 12.

Question 4: What else could be done to support the attainment /achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

SYP welcomes this inquiry into the issue of attainment and poverty, as this is an issue which has been raised with us in several ways, including in our Manifesto where 69% of the 72,744 responses agreed that

The educational attainment gap needs to be narrowed. To support this, the impact of poverty on pupils and students should be minimised, financial barriers to participation should be removed, and the cost of the school day should be addressed.

From our current policy and our research into young people's views on poverty, young people have highlighted the following area that they believe work well in tackling this issue as well as making several suggestions as to what other support could be offered:

Removal of financial barriers at school

Participants from our poverty focus groups noted that high costs of education and associated resources presented a major problem - including textbooks, school meals, uniforms, and trips¹³⁵. Additional monetary support or cost reduction in these areas would help to ensure that those who experience poverty do not let their financial position effect their ability to engage in education.

This is backed up by SYP policy which states:

The Scottish Youth Parliament believes that the price of school meals should be maintained at an affordable level. (Policy Statement, 83% agreement, October 2017, Members' Motion by Ryan Kelly MSYP).

The Scottish Youth Parliament believes that the SQA policy to charge a fee for exam re-marking and full reviews should be reviewed to ensure that young people from all socioeconomic backgrounds have equal access to the appeals process. (Policy Statement, 93% agreement, March 2016, Committee Motion by the Education and Lifelong Learning Subject Committee).

¹³⁵ The Scottish Youth Parliament, *Child Poverty Bill for Scotland: young people's views*, 2016; p4

It is important again emphasise our Manifesto statement on the importance of reducing the cost of the school day as well:

The educational attainment gap needs to be narrowed. To support this, the impact of poverty on pupils and students should be minimised, financial barriers to participation should be removed, and the cost of the school day should be addressed. (Manifesto commitment, 69%, March 2016).

Provision of correct support at school

Participants from our poverty focus groups also highlighted the issues surrounding the ability of schools in deprived areas to recruit and retain teachers, as well as to provide guidance and pupil support (including mental health support)¹³⁶. Young people also asserted that it is important that schools can provide this additional support to those experiencing poverty.¹³⁷

Use of schemes such as the Social Mobility Program

MSYPs passed the following policy after consulting with their constituents and hearing of the benefit of this scheme to constituents in Glasgow:

The Scottish Youth Parliament supports the work of the Social Mobility Foundation which provides academic opportunities to young people from low-income backgrounds. (Policy Statement, 93% agreement, October 2017, Members' Motion by Jack Campbell MSYP and Danyaal Raja MSYP).

We recommend the committee considers this programme, its benefits, and how it or projects like it could be utilised more widely in this inquiry. More information on the Social Mobility Foundation can be found [here](#).

Equal Access to Internet for all Pupils

MSYPs passed the following policy, with several members citing that many of their constituents may not have any/reliable internet access at home and therefore be at a disadvantage when carrying out work:

The Scottish Youth Parliament believes that all high school pupils in Scotland should be able to access fast and reliable WiFi in school to allow them to access and complete their homework, resources and exam coursework. (Policy Statement, 79% agreement, October 2017, Members' Motion by Adam Paton MSYP and Caitie Dundas MSYP).

Availability of training and work experience programs

SYP also believes that vocational training, modern apprenticeships and other work experience opportunities have a role to play in helping those of a school age improve their attainment:

Youth unemployment should be tackled through job creation and access to training programmes, modern apprenticeships, vocational training, work placements, quality work experience, and paid internships. (Manifesto commitment, 78%, March 2016).

¹³⁶ *ibid*; p6

¹³⁷ *ibid*; p10

The Scottish Youth Parliament believes more effort and resources should be dedicated to ensuring an equal gender balance in the promotion and allocation of modern apprenticeship places. (Policy Statement, 56% agreement, March 2015, Committee Motion by the Jobs and Economy and Equalities Subject Committees).

Contact

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OTHER ORGANISATIONS WORKING WITH CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Apex Scotland

Responses

Parents/Carers/Guardians

1. How your children have been supported (in school or outside school)?

Written comments extracted from a Performance Review. The question asked was:
'What are your views on the support offered by Apex?'

"Having the Inclusion Unit (referencing the RE:SET service, formerly known as 'Inclusion Unit') has helped my child with anxiety, increased self-esteem and confidence.....I've seen a positive difference in my daughter's overall mood and behaviour since she's been in the girl's group – she's much happier."

"My children have never been in Apex but having them in XXXX High has helped them, because kids in their class who have misbehaved, disrupted their learning or needed support, have been taken out, which has allowed my children to be taught the curriculum and achieve their potential."

"I'm a foster carer and I would not have coped without the support of the Inclusion Unit in XXX High School. XXX has had multiple placements.....I won't be her last. She feels part of the school by attending Apex. Her needs are very particular, and she does not cope in mainstream classes.....she upsets teachers and other kids.....they don't understand her - it's tricky! Having a space for her to take part in school with specialists (referring to Apex), lets her mix with peers without being a target. She is the best she's ever been by having this support – and we've had lots of experience of 'support.'"

"XXX's attendance at school was bad. I just couldn't get him to go. He was mucking about with older people and got into trouble with police. He had a SACRO worker, who was good, but that's finished now. Because he doesn't muck about with his old pals anymore, he just sits in his bedroom and doesn't want to go to school because of the stuff he's done. The school put him on a reduced timetable, which he's been sticking to because he is to go to Apex, rather than classes and do his work. They do other work with him that's made a difference.....He says he gets more respect and respects them (Apex staff) cause of how they speak to him and the stuff they learn. I know other schools don't have this (support) so know we're lucky."

"Having Alternative to Exclusion is a good support as we don't all leave the house in the morning on an equal playing field.....I think this support is good."

“Doing the work with Apex and the Food bank has helped my relationship with XXX. I see a different side of him when he’s helping out and we get to spend 121 time together, which doesn’t really happen. I think it’s good the school supports this type of thing as I know it means a lot to XXX.

2. What was good about it and what could have been better?

“I like how kids have the chance to understand their behaviour and feelings, but it would be good for EVERY child to have the opportunity to access this support – not just the ‘troubled’ kids, as it may help other with future career choices, experience, etc.....I don’t think social education classes are enough anymore.”

“The worker who brings XXX and the others to the Food bank is really good, but because there’s only one of them, they can’t always make it because they’ve got other kids to work with (back at school) and can’t leave them, which means XXX misses out. XXX is disappointed when this happens, so it would be better if there was more of them.”

“By the time XXX was referred to the Inclusion Unit, a lot of stuff had happened that might not have, if he’d had support sooner. I’d heard of the Inclusion Unit, but wasn’t really sure what it was. If I’d known then, what I know now, things wouldn’t have got so bad.....communication of support available could be better.”

“The support has been really good, but because they’re (Apex) a charity, funding is always an issue. I worry my child builds a strong relationship with the staff member, and puts her trust in them and they lose their funding and no longer be there. The impact on XXX would be massive.”

“It was good to hear positive feedback about XXX from the school (Apex). I normally dread phone calls or letters about his behaviour, but at his (return from) Inclusion meeting they spoke about XXX’s time with Apex going well and all the milestones he’d achieved. (As a parent), I felt ‘part of the school.’”

“The support Apex give children in school is good, but why do they not work in the community as well? I think if there was a closer school/community link that would be better.”

“As a single parent, childcare is a constant problem, so if XXX isn’t at school it causes lots more (problems). When XXX has been on alternative to exclusion, I know he is being helped and still doing school work. If I talk to him about consequences at home, I know he’s being talked about consequences at school. Sometimes the message hits home when it comes from someone different, not me or a teacher. Before (Apex), I had issues getting XXX to school every day, but it’s not bad anymore. It would be good for Apex to share their tips with parents and maybe I could do more with him at home,”

“Mentoring approach is good, and good to see schools working with people (Apex) who use that style. Perhaps more training for pupils/staff?”

3. How has this impacted on what the children in your family have achieved?

“XXX would never have made it to 4th year and got qualifications without the Inclusion Unit. He was always getting excluded and didn’t get on with his teachers, so people didn’t think he’d do anything good. He was put on a flexible timetable and worked with PDM (Apex staff) who helped him in and out of school. He got Nationals 3 and 4 and got a place at college.....He can be hard work, but he’s made huge changes that you might not see on a certificate.....Things are better at home too.”

“XXX increased her attendance from 47% to 91%. After looking like she wasn’t going to get any qualifications, she got 4 Nat 4’s and 1 Nat 5 and got a place at college.”

XXX increased his attendance from 61% to 70% and now attends 80% of his (mainstream) classes. He is working towards achieving Nat 4’s. Before Inclusion (Apex), XXX was skiving and things at home were a nightmare. XXX didn’t respect me.....He was drinking and staying out.....I know he was using drugs....I think his main achievement has been opening up about what happened to him and what’s going on in his head.”

“Both my children have left school now, but when they were there, I thought I would never have Mr XXX (Depute Rector) off the phone. When XXX (Oldest sibling) started to calm down and get on at school, XXX (younger sibling) started to kick-off! When XXX (Older sibling) started working with Inclusion (Apex) she was there for alternative to exclusion for fighting and not doing what the teachers asked and being cheeky. I think she went there about 3 times and then went in to the groups. She did anger management, work on emotions and went to the prison. She took part in lots of community activities, visited parliament and went to an awards ceremony. People would have given up on XXX but the school and Inclusion (Apex) didn’t. If the school had run out of ideas for what they could do, they asked Apex and they came up with something different. They worked together. XXX left with standard grades, got a job (and kept it), has a family of her own, has a mortgage and enjoying life. It could all have been very different if it hadn’t been handled in the right way. Her sister saw everything XXX went through and followed the same path, although a bit wilder!! Again she was in for alternative to exclusion, but moved into the groups and became a peer mentor. She also won awards, presented at parliament and at big events. XXX also got her qualifications in 4th year and went to college. She didn’t last at college, but she went for a couple of years before getting a good job (and keeping it). She has a flat with her boyfriend and is involved in lots of local activities and has lots of interests and different friends. I couldn’t be more proud of my girls for the women they’ve grown into. I believe the relationship they both had with the workers at Apex had the biggest impact on their achievements at school. They still keep in touch with them.....They still talk about advice they got or tell me ‘remember when....’ I know this support changed my children’s lives for the better.”

4. What other things might support your children in achieving at school?

“Having more in-school support for children. Guidance teachers are not always the answer, because as good as they are, they don’t have time to deal with everyone as

some are still teaching. It's an unfair expectation and they can be hard to get a hold of."

"If things aren't going well in school they (the school) want to put them off campus. Support them to stay in school, putting them out makes it much more difficult to bring them back in, they become more detached, not less."

"Let teachers teach! Let people do the job they trained to do and inspire and educate our young learners. If other organisations have a particular skillset that is needed to support young people in school, let them do it! Schools cannot do everything on their own. I would like my son's maths teacher to teach him maths. I would like my son's chemistry teacher to teach him chemistry. I don't want, need or expect teachers to be all things to all people, but I need to know that the teachers are supported to do their job and deliver on the primary aspect of their role, because that's what our young people need, that's why we have schools – so our young people are prepared for the future. I fully appreciate not every teacher (like any profession) are going to be the full-package, but let's help them master the classroom as a minimum standard! Let's make sure they have sufficient support for them to learn and offload, as well as our young people....."

"More peer to peer support where children can communicate face to face with each other rather than through a screen. Understanding people and having social skills is just as important as qualifications. I see young people in my work and they don't have basic social skills, but will engage with a phone!"

"Decent careers advisors are important.....My son and his friends had poor experiences with careers and never went back. It took ages to get him back on track. It only takes one person to build you up, but just the same to bring you down..."

"Proper awareness of the impact of social media.....My daughter and her friends are always posting and on snapchat and I worry what they're putting out there.....I don't think support for the impact of social media and the internet has caught up with the present danger, which worries me for when she goes to get a job."

"More support with mental health."

"More gender specific support. Why do boys commit more crime? Why are girls considered more anxious and likely to access mental health services?"

"Education on crime and actions/impact of children's behaviour. Some children don't understand their actions have serious consequences on their futures.'

"More family-centred learning."

Children and Young People (Aged 12 – 16 years)

1. How have you been supported (in school or outside school)?

Mixture of questionnaire responses (Performance Review), service user engagement feedback and face to face questions were asked to a cohort of 24 young people. The

cohort was aged between 12-16 years and reflective of Scotland and its culture of equality and diversity.

"I go to Inclusion, I mean RE:SET, every day. I used to be in the groups, but now I keep contact with staff just to check-in and know I can speak to PDM (Apex staff) if I need to. I thought Apex was just for people who misbehaved, but after I started coming here as part of Focus on Your Future, I learned so much about myself and the people I thought were 'bad'.....I hadn't judged them right.....Apex has helped me in and out of school as the work we do on social media, choices and consequences, mindfulness, PX2, Princes Trust, emotions and that, has not only helped with people in school, but also outside."

"Although I've never been excluded, people in my regi class have. But if they've went to Alternative to Exclusion, they're taken off their timetable for 1 week, until they come back. Sometimes you don't see a difference, not straight away, but I've seen people change after being in RE:SET."

"I've been supported in school by PDM (Apex staff) since 1st year. To start with I gave her cheek, as I thought she'd be like all the other teachers, but after being in alternative to exclusion a couple of times, she was 'dyno.' She didn't take any c**p (from me), but it was different to a normal classroom and she was different to a normal teacher. We talked about loads of stuff, but I think it's more what she says and does that works...the Foodbank, sailing, gardening...School would be worse without her."

"The support I've had in school has helped me outside school – it's both. I went to the All About Me group and learned loads. Things are much better at home.....I have a better relationship with my carer. Things are better in school too, I get on much better with teachers."

"I don't go to French anymore, and go to Apex instead. It's on my timetable to go there. I was removed from French and sat outside the Depute's office, but now I go to Apex and it's much better. We do stuff about choices, work on resilience and our futures and help the first years by giving them advice on what to do, who to speak to and how to stay out of trouble...."

"I came out as transgender...and the only reason that I did is because of that Inclusion Unit, they have just helped me through everything...so it's just phenomenal to feel that you can be you, in a room for 50 minutes. It just is mental and amazing."

2. What was good about it? What could have been better?

"She wasn't being nosy about my life. I didn't feel pressured to tell her stuff, she didn't even ask, she just knew – she could tell...She was there, not just in school for half an hour (referring to appointment). I wanted to tell her things because she was interested in me. She always makes time for me, even when she's busy."

They're honest. At least when you tell them something, they do something about it, not f*****g, sorry, p*****g, sorry, eh hh mucking about, getting all hyped up and speaking to me like I'm stupid.....It's just different. You feel good

there.....understood. If I've been kicked out (my house) and Mr XXX goes mental at me for not having a tie on, I just can't be a***d and tell him to f**k off. I don't even mean it. I couldn't even tell you where my tie is?....Nobody asks though, just get on my case about a tie. I can't be bothered with it.....that's why I don't come (to school) half the time, cause I know I'll get in trouble.....It would be better if people didn't speak to me like I was a problem all the time, they (teachers) don't do it with other people in my class..."

"They're always there in school (Apex), so I know I have that to keep me from going mental.....It was better when XXX and XXX (university students) were there as if PDM (Apex staff) was busy, they could help us....more people would be good"

"I feel part of the school.....I didn't before.....What's changed is that I have more confidence and people I can talk to, and like trust."

"I achieved things I didn't think I would. I took part in Princes Trust (Skills for School) and we were the first people in Scotland, I think, to do it and it really helped....I'm proud of myself....I wish the course or the groups could be longer, or I could go on another one...."

"She (Apex staff) is one of the biggest reasons why I am who I am today."

"They (Apex) didn't treat you like, not so much a child, because we were children but like....they spoke to you like a normal person...they didn't treat you like you were stupid."

"I've never really had a bad experience in there...the only thing that is negative for me is when somebody leaves...so I am always nervous...and got my walls up."

"It hit me like a tonne of bricks when she left."

"I caught up on all my school work and sitting National 4's and 5's. I wouldn't have done that if I didn't go to RE:SET. She believed in me and worked with my teachers to get me the work I missed....She fought my corner....I'll miss not seeing her when I leave."

3. How has this impacted on how you get on at school including achievements?

"I wouldn't have went to school at all, definitely" (started Inclusion Unit in Year 1).

"My mum can't really help me through school, but PDM (Apex staff) can."

"I went through a really hard stage, I might never have been here if that Inclusion Unit wasn't there.....or anything...like not even that deep, but like, what could have happened, the way I was getting bullied...wouldn't have come to school, wouldn't have got an education....I really kind of couldn't do a lot of things if that unit wasn't there"

"I'd skived (truanted) a lot, so I'd lost it (hope) for getting any qualifications at school. By coming here (Apex), I've been able to come back to school and go to my

classes.....Obviously it's hard because people still want you to skive (truant) and teachers know you've skived (truanted), so people have an opinion of you. My mum is para (paranoid) and I lost her trust because I'd say I was at school when I wasn't, so she felt stupid telling the school I was there, and that they were wrong, when I'd lied to her.....That was the worst bit, when she said she was disappointed in me.....I think now I get on better with teachers, and I've built the trust up with them and my mum, so it's helped me get on better at school, because I don't have the same stress about getting caught, having teachers on my back....I think I was daft not coming to school, because I missed out on a lot and I'll never get that time back....I go to classes and still have contact with PDM (Apex staff) to tell her about doing the boxing, passing a test, handing in homework...."

"My mum said if it wasn't for Apex she would have lost her job by now, for all the times I got excluded. She said her boss let her take time off for meetings, or leaving early to get my sister, or whatever, but when she needed to phone in to be off her work, cause I got excluded, they were never happy.....I'd feel bad about it, but then something else would happen, and I'd just kick off and get excluded again....I think I came here 8 times before I changed....I don't know what made me stop? I think it was after doing the course on anger and being in a group with other people, I got the same chat, but I must've heard it in a different way."

"I'm less distracted."

"I don't self-harm anymore, I know when I feel stressed and speak about it."

"I have a chance to learn in a way that's best for me."

"I've learned life skills I might not have learned in the classroom."

"I'm not cut out of the school."

"I'm more confident after doing the groups."

"I feel less stressed and anxious."

"I'm more positive."

4. What other things would support you to achieve at school?

Young people found this the most difficult question to answer, but conversation mainly focussed on being active, having more onsite support in school and delivery of practical life skills. They felt if they weren't worried about lots of other issues ranging from food and money to relationships to social media to alcohol, drugs, sex, etc., they could focus their mind. They spoke about being able to talk to someone, like a counsellor, or Apex worker, without feeling judged.

"The only thing that I wish would be more able to happen....is, I'd love to run a wee group, just of some sort, like self-esteem...but my own twist on it."

“I don’t know? Sometimes I feel like there’s too much support, too much choice, but when I need it, I just come here (Apex), so I’m not sure? Other schools don’t have this, so maybe other people would like Apex.”

“I think having more support for mental health would help people achieve....like having a counsellor who’s there all the time.”

“More focus on fitness and PE – healthy body, healthy mind.”

“I don’t know how to sew anything, knit or put on a washing machine, or iron clothes. I’m not joking, I worry about that. What’s the point in having loads of qualifications, if I can’t even get out the door, because I’ve got dirty or holey clothes...?”

“Fresh air, more challenges....”

Apex Scotland

1. How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

Apex Scotland has been delivering its early intervention and prevention work in secondary schools since 2007. One of the most successful and impactful interventions is the Alternative to Exclusion service delivered by our **RE:SET – RE**vising youth mind**SET** team (formerly known as Apex Inclusion). Over the last 11 years we have supported thousands of young people ‘at risk’ to remain or re-engage with education, with correlation to supporting and improving educational attainment. Our flex-fit model tailors provision to the needs of schools and the young people they serve, removing the ‘off the shelf’ approach and fixed service design to encouraging a person-centred approach. This model has been highlighted as good practice with numerous schools (primaries and secondaries) visiting to observe. In 2017, representatives from Kirkintilloch High referred to what they witnessed as “mind-blowing” and “had no idea something like this existed” among many other positive observations from the Scottish Government, Education Scotland and dignitaries.

The model is successful as it can be applied in different settings and is wholly transferrable. It is the delivery and engagement that is unique to Apex Scotland, driven by our Vision: supporting people to aim higher, behave differently and change their future. We contribute to a Scotland that is fair and just and safe from crime: and backed up by 30 years’ experience and resources.

Apex Scotland’s school services contribute to that Vision, reflected in our Purpose: To be a leading not for profit organisation working with people of all ages and backgrounds who are the most disadvantaged and disengaged from society, and who are at risk of (re)offending, in a way which promotes desistance and enables them to re-engage and work towards a positive future.

In turn this begs the question of why these services exist. This question is answered by the growing body of research which evidences that the negative impact of school

exclusion goes well beyond the (dis)engagement with formal education. We know the experience of exclusion from school may contribute to later social exclusion, involvement in criminal behaviours, the criminal justice system, and resultant lifelong adverse impact; connected to what we now term as Adverse Childhood Experiences; perpetuating an infiltrative public health crisis, which cuts through poverty, affecting anyone who has experienced trauma – irrespective of their social or economic background.

The Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime, shows school exclusion to be one of the most important predictors of future criminal behaviour. In this longitudinal tracking study of over 4,000 young people those excluded by their 3rd year of secondary education were almost two-and-a-half times more likely than those not excluded in this period to have a criminal record by age 19.

The average cost per pupil of school exclusion to education has been estimated at about double the cost of normal mainstream education. This is based on a model that investigated the immediate additional costs following exclusion, including the administrative costs of managing the exclusion process (administration etc.), support (e.g. educational psychologists) and replacement education. Approximately 21 per cent of the expenditure was on managing the exclusion process; and 68 per cent was devoted to delivering the replacement education. (Parsons and Frances, 1998)

'Cost shunting' as a direct result of exclusion must be considered. This means that other parts of the education system and other services, particularly social services, bear some costs of supporting the child, with the costs for residential out of area education being the most expensive. Furthermore, police costs for a proportion of excluded children are very high. Though not solely attributable to the act of exclusion, it is reasonable to argue that costs would be lower if the child were maintained within school.

While the costs to the other agencies are not directly attributable to the young person being permanently excluded from school, it is reasonable to assume that this group, particularly older excluded pupils, are vulnerable to increased problematic behaviour in the community. Being excluded is an alienating experience and is likely to push the young person further in that direction, providing time in unstructured and unsupervised environments. Maintaining pupils in school would reduce the likelihood of these developments and help prevent and divert young people from formal measures.

As well as actual costs associated with exclusions from school, consideration must be given to the young persons outcomes. It is well known that the damage from exclusion persists beyond the immediate period. The longer-term costs may be high if continued full-time education is not assured for young people to equip them to become citizens. Therefore the work of Apex Scotland has been successful not only in improving short-term outcomes for children and young people and reducing exclusion but through lasting impact by informing culture change, addressing savings to the economy (both short and long-term) and probably most importantly by improving life outcomes and lifestyle choices which affect the life course of individuals.

Barriers to success are aligned to the following:

The annularity of funding – children, young people, their families, teachers and school staff, community partners and staff employed to resource the service fear discontinuation of service provision. A positive relationship with one consistent individual can be the lifeline for many children and young people. There is some evidence to indicate that these programmes are very helpful both in terms of social and emotional learning, [but they also can improve attainment as well.](#)

Culture/Environment – With any service that is going to introduce culture change, there has to be whole-school or organisational ‘buy-in,’ particularly driven forward by the Senior Leadership Team. Operating a service, which delivers Alternative to Exclusion, can be ‘topical’ for those who do not endorse its principles and ethos, and are of a particular mindset. Alternative to Exclusion is not a ‘soft option.’ It does not ‘distance’ the young person from their misdemeanor, by separating them from their action(s) – it brings them close to them. It teaches them accountability, and when you’re accountable, you have to bear responsibility, and this can be difficult, particularly for children and young people who harbor unthinkable responsibilities already. For many children and young people, negative behavior is the tip of the iceberg, and we are more vested in the drivers behind that. In reality, this means there is a strong likelihood that young people will misbehave again, therefore expectations of miracle cures for ingrained beliefs, values and attitudes, which are displayed through actions and behaviors is not realistic short-term. It is an investment for the future, which can be difficult for some staff to comprehend as they want to see retribution, which may not deliver on reparation, but feels ‘justifiable.’

Left Out - Third sector staff who work in partnership with schools can be missed or not consulted on meetings taking place on a young person worked with, or their views and experience are not taken into account. For example, staff may have worked with a young person full-time (35 hours) in school for a period of 6 weeks, worked with them on a timetabled and ad-hoc basis for 3 or 4 years, or any number of varying intervention lengths in between but are not included in the ongoing support strategy or lines of communication as part of the formal process. Staff learn of meetings or changes to the young person’s care either by the young person themselves or after they have taken place when being informed of a change to the young person’s circumstances. Quite often the role of third sector staff are the most continuous and consistent presence in a child or young person’s life, but staff can feel their role is viewed as the poor relation.

2. Are there any services that you / your organisation has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

There are a number of services, projects and partnerships that Apex Scotland’s RE:SET team would like to take forward As referenced in our 2011 external evaluation, services delivered by Apex Scotland, changed the culture of the school it worked in. Differences were witnessed in the approach from dinner ladies, school office staff and teachers who modelled similar approaches, instigated by Apex provision and endorsed by school staff. The language and engagement adopted by staff became mainstream practise when working with any young person in school, but was particularly effective when engaging with those who were distressed or requiring additional support. It is cultural change within education that will achieve impact and allow children and young people to achieve their potential. Therefore as part of our

work, which has always been 'trauma-sensitive' we would like to more widely inform and support staff in school with this approach. Similarly, we would like to more exclusively support parents/carers with this practise also, and affect positive cultural change within the home.

When provided a basic overview of the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACE Study), Apex Scotland wanted to develop its school interventions to work closer with the families and communities of the young people we were working with - quickly seeing how our model could be seen as a way of building community resilience and reducing adversity for our most excluded and marginalised members. We are striving for a transparent community model that engages all aspects of the community, with families and education at the core. If applying ACEs science can help us achieve improvement in education within our model, we welcome this success.

With rising adversity and reduction of community resources and support, even where there is improvement to the local economy, human issue or trauma will remain, therefore mental ill health and employee absence will remain high. By Apex employing more resources in the community using our model and engagement, we hope to create a family culture of community give-back. Many will be unaware about the link between childhood trauma and the adult onset of chronic disease, mental illness, violence and being a victim of violence – but knowing and thinking differently in response to this is powerful. We wish to work with schools and communities to foster opportunity for individuals to understand themselves better; increasing cognition to understand themselves in an educational and wider social context; increasing their ability to engage in formal and informal learning environments; undertake activities resulting in: improved attendance, motivation, attainment and adoption of positive opportunities pertaining to relationships, employment, sports and recreation. All activities are proven to mitigate the impact of poverty, exclusion and disadvantage; supporting prevention of their future lifecycles.

3. If you work with schools/local authorities/others to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on this issue easy/difficult?

In our experience collaboration works best when the local authority are aware and supportive of the activity in their school(s) but do not overly interfere with its operation; allowing the school to work autonomously with its local community and its partners.

Ultimately it is the senior leadership team and Headship of the school who determine the direction of the school and who they will work with to achieve their overarching aims. Therefore, if a particular school's aims, ethos and culture aligns well with an organisation, this makes collaboration easy. It's important to see and clearly evidence the complementary element(s) in the partnership for attribution's sake and reporting, but equally important for beneficiaries to be aware of the difference.

Collaboration can be difficult when there are disparate views within a school, or even worse when schools are juxtaposed to the operational centre. For a contracted organisation this can put any chance of a successful collaboration in the midst of unhealthy tension, at risk. What the contracting school/local authority view as the priority may not be what the other views. Similarly, within schools, overriding issues

within the staff team can affect success as what teachers believe will support the school to address attainment, is not reflected by the senior management team, and vice versa. Quite often organisations are required to provide copious amounts of data, reporting and supporting information to satisfy opposing criteria. Meaningful collaboration has to understand that each organisation is best placed to deliver on their outcomes, and where the joining occurs. Difficulties arise when either party believes it can take on the role of another and absorb any cost into their own organisation. Absorbing services delivered by third sector organisations is understandable at a time when budgets are tight, but value and impact is undermined for beneficiaries. Schools can't be expected to deliver on all things. Embracing those in the community to be part of a campus model will bring success to schools to bring about increased attainment and wider achievement.

Collaboration is made easier when schools are inviting of contracted organisations. The most successful experiences we've had is when Apex staff are continuously involved/included in the ongoing management and reviews with a young person. Quite often, Apex staff will have the most contact, information and influence with a young person. However, can be overlooked for attendance at meetings and information is not gathered/included in formal reporting and outcomes from these meetings are shared by the young person, after the event, which makes collaboration difficult.

Above all best practice research has found that "it is a combination of strategies and approaches including multi-agency and partnership working under strong leadership that can lead to reduction in the need to exclude," which is the belief of Apex Scotland who continue to seek opportunities that support children and young people to achieve their potential; delivering on our Purpose.

4. What else could be done to support the attainment /achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

Science, research and experience as a service provider tell us the impact of child poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage on adult outcomes occurs through the accumulation and interaction of multiple factors over time. Therefore much of the scaffolding supporting poverty and disadvantage are fixed, with many rooted in foundations of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), which are more complex to untangle later in life – often manifested in offending, addiction, mental ill health and the cycle of poverty and neglect. It is during the stage from conception to adolescence that the foundation of the lifelong accumulation of risks and protective factors is built, meaning opportunities for Apex to reduce the impact of inequalities at a baseline of 11 or 16 years are reduced, in comparison to earlier intervention.

After 11 years delivering our award winning RE:SET service to young people in schools, we are confident of our ability to reduce the impact of poverty; helping to break intergenerational cycles of ACEs through our provision.

To make a difference to these inequalities, we must 'undo' the fundamental causes of inequality by addressing poverty, marginalisation and discrimination. We must 'prevent' any negative impact by the wider environmental influences, such as the availability of good-quality housing, work, education and learning opportunities, as well as access to services and social and cultural opportunities in communities. Together, we can also 'mitigate' against negative individual experiences in accessing

services that provide these opportunities. The links to the determinants of poverty also strongly lend themselves to the hope, recovery and eventual resilience that the people involved in Apex services need to effectively reintegrate.

More practical support for parents would support attainment/achievement of young people. As a society, if things get broken, we often discard the items, without an attempt to fix them. In turn this is costly and teaches little about preservation and maintenance – encouraging the ‘insta’ culture where gratification – any kind of indulgence - is so readily available, but not always necessary or realistic, and can add to a negative cycle of behaviours and ultimately circumstance. When speaking with parents/carers and young people, surprisingly some of the messages coming through were a wish for things to ‘slow down.’ People felt overwhelmed by having to attend appointments because there was support for so many different things. They were quite keen to explore things on their own or be given the tools and space to allow them to manage their own lives. At times they felt overloaded and social media was a way to disconnect or distract from what was going on, which they recognised was not always a good thing. Feedback included not knowing themselves, or indeed knowing anyone who could stitch clothing, knit cardigans, use a sewing machine, clean the filter on their Hoover, clean the washing machine, fold clothes, manage the washing cycle, get the most out of their meals, budget, etc. However the peer-peer approach was more appealing than formal parenting programmes, as it was felt at times they could be disempowering. Interestingly similar themes were echoed by young people.

Re-designing or shifting the thinking within teacher training. So many people joining the profession substitute one educational institution for another. Equipping those entering education whilst undertaking their training, with the right skills and mind-set, is vital to how their practice will be initiated and developed. Incorporating trauma sensitive approaches will support how teachers in training will deliver the curriculum to children and young people impacted by adverse childhood experiences. Informing a trauma informed culture at this stage will be instrumental to the positive progression of young people attaining an achieving within education.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

The Church of Scotland Church and Society Council

The Church of Scotland Church and Society Council has responded to the questions for 'other people who work to support young people who experience poverty'.

Question 1. How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

Across the Church of Scotland various congregations work with children experiencing poverty. The Church of Scotland believes that a 'priority for the poorest and the most marginalised is the gospel imperative facing the whole Church, not just the Church in the poorest places'. Through our Priority Areas Committee we seek to support congregations in some of the poorest areas in Scotland in tackling some of the causes of poverty. In addition, through the Church of Scotland's GoFort Fund, which funds change in both the church and communities, we support a number of projects working with school aged children experiencing poverty. Two of these projects (St Paul's Youth Forum and Arran Youth Foundation) recently won national Youth-Link Scotland awards.

Specific initiatives that church offers or supports include:

- [Church House Bridgeton](#) which encourages young people to grow and develop, at their own pace, into young adults.
- [Possibilities for Each and Every Kid \(Peek\)](#) which offers training for young people (aged 12-25) to deliver a programme of creative activities to educate their peers about a chosen issue affecting their local community.
- [St Paul's Youth Forum](#) which enables young people in Provanmill to lead healthier lives, by providing weekly physical activity sessions, cookery classes and running a local radio station (Bolt FM) as well as visiting schools and doing detached work.
- [St Columba's Church](#) in Lochside which last summer collaborated with the local council to offer free lunches to children during the school holidays, one of many church-based initiatives tackling holiday hunger.
- [Richmond's Hope](#) which provides counselling, play therapy and support to children and young people who have suffered a traumatic loss, often the bereavement of a parent or sibling.

Alongside this work outwith and around schools, the Church also has school chaplains operating in schools across Scotland who offer pastoral and practical support to school-aged children.

These are a few examples of initiatives that the Church of Scotland is involved in to enable the flourishing of Scotland's young people.

Much of the Church of Scotland's work with children and young people is deliberately focused on supporting children in the earliest years and young families; this is where the evidence suggests the greatest impact can be made on the life chances of children. From our experience initiatives are most successful when they are based on an identified need by the local community; when they make the most of the skills and talents within that community, while at the same time linking in with national structures; and most importantly where young people are empowered to play a significant part in shaping and directing the initiatives that affect them. In St Paul's Youth Work Forum, young people are directly responsible for the management of the project.

Through its congregations, particularly those located within Priority Areas, the Church of Scotland is able to be directed by the concerns, needs and talents of local communities, while also having a national reach and voice. Examples such as the free lunch and activity collaboration between South Ayrshire Council and St Columba's Church in Lochside show where this dynamic works at its best. By contrast work is often much less effective when initiatives are not embedded within the local community and are therefore unsustainable and struggle to reach the individuals they are most concerned for.

Question 2. Are there any services that you / your organisation has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

Currently a weight of evidence suggests that the greatest impact to the life chances and flourishing of Scotland's young people will come from positive intervention at the earliest years¹³⁸. This does not preclude all the good existing work with school-aged children but does suggest that supporting educational attainment and achievement will require our focus to be broader than just education and school aged children. While the Scottish Government has stated its intention to double the hours of nursery education by 2020, there are concerns that this initiative has a greater concern for child care than child development. To ensure that young people in Scotland have the greatest opportunity to achieve, the Church and Society Council believes that we need to take a long term approach which focuses on supporting parents to invest positively in their young children. It is also important that the state does not provide services which local communities are often able to provide more effectively.

Question 3. If you work with schools/local authorities/others to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on this issue easy/difficult?

The Church of Scotland has school chaplains and representatives that sit on local authority education committees. Within these two areas there are many examples of very good practice and great potential for greater collaboration with local congregations. Often school chaplains will spend many hours supporting pupils and staff in local associated schools, while through initiatives such as, [Serve your local School](#), many local church members assist their local school by helping in schemes

¹³⁸ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/default/files/jrf/migrated/files/education-attainment-scotland-summary.pdf>

such as 'paired reading'. Collaboration in these ways is best where there are positive relationships, open communication and a shared understanding of what both parties are seeking to achieve. Difficulties tend to arise when time is not invested into these three things. It also occurs when the needs and opportunities of young people are not placed at the heart of the process.

Question 4. What else could be done to support the attainment

As per our answer to question 2, we feel that the issue of attainment and achievement requires a much longer lens than it is currently being offered. For children currently of school age a focus should be on enabling grass roots initiatives that empower local communities and the young people within them to shape initiatives that give them opportunities to thrive. Going forward, a focus on investing in local initiatives that support young parents and young children should be a priority but one that must be given adequate time to produce results. Whilst schools have, and will continue to have, a critical role in narrowing the attainment gap, there is a need for policy, practice and resources to more adequately recognise that children do not spend most of their early years in schools: they spend them in their homes and in their local communities. The greatest change will occur when these areas of children's lives are more adequately resourced and supported.

Andrew Tomlinson
Associate Secretary, Church and Society Council
The Church of Scotland
22 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

CLD Standards Council Scotland

Question 1: *How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?*

The CLD Standards Council seeks to ensure that the communities and people of Scotland are served by CLD practitioners who are recognised as competent, confident and committed to equality, empowerment and life-wide learning for all. It drives high standards of professional practice in the CLD sector by the approval of courses, qualifications and professional learning, registration of practitioners and enabling professional development.

CLD professional practice, some key components of which are outlined below, requires high-level skills, knowledge and understanding. The CLD Standards Council has an essential role in growing a professional learning culture that enables the development of these competences, and in assuring standards.

The values of CLD and its methods of practice give it a clear focus on the attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty:

- CLD prioritises people who are disadvantaged, and areas where poverty is concentrated.
- A primary feature of CLD principles and methodology is to start from the interests, aspirations and needs of the people and communities we work with. This means that it can engage successfully with those that the formal education system has difficulty in engaging with.

Evidence from HMIE inspections indicates strong performance by CLD providers¹³⁹. High quality CLD practice does not provide a “quick fix” for improving the attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty, but it does provide a key part of a realistic strategy for doing this.

Specifically relevant aspects of the CLD role include:

- Youth work:
 - Raises confidence and motivation of children and young people and enables them to engage with learning.
 - Enables and supports young peoples’ achievement through awards schemes, outdoor learning, community activity, volunteering.
 - Enables and supports young peoples’ achievement and attainment in more formal curriculum areas – e.g. STEM.
- Literacy and numeracy work with young people, engaging some of those who are most excluded to engage with learning.

¹³⁹ <https://education.gov.scot/Documents/QuISeCommunity%20learning%20and%20development.pdf>

- Family learning: enabling parents, particularly those who have had negative experiences of the education system themselves, to support their children to engage positively in learning, and to do so themselves.
- Adult learning that develops parents' and carers' confidence and capability to assist with young peoples' learning and promotes a learning culture.
- Adult learning/community capacity building that develops parents' and carers' confidence and capability to communicate and engage with schools.
- Community development support for communities to:
 - Develop support and learning opportunities for children and young people (e.g. through out-of-school care/clubs, school holiday provision, youth clubs and activities).
 - Engage and communicate with schools.
 - Engage effectively and assertively in partnership work to address poverty issues and improve educational provision.
- Collaboration with other, across agencies, sectors and disciplines to build the confidence and capacity of individuals and communities.

The CLD Standards Council's Approvals system supports professional learning pathways from development of CLD skills in community involvement, youth leadership or volunteer tutoring through to degree level and beyond. It provides routes into professional employment for people active in their own communities who have often previously had limited engagement with the education system.

The most obvious barrier to success on a larger scale and with greater impact is the lack of sufficient resources. This is clearly an issue shared across public services, although CLD provision has been particularly severely affected by spending reductions, in part at least as a result of its statutory basis being less robust than that of comparable services.

However a more useful way to look at barriers to success is in terms of uncertainty and lack of consistency in relation to funding and the lack of means to ensure that strong and positive policy statements at national level are translated into consistent and sustained delivery.

CLD is a value-based practice defined by a set of competences underpinned by a Code of Ethics, not a "department". To realise its potential impact, service planners need to embed this practice as a core element of strategies, while organising the required provision to deliver this core role in line with local needs. In some instances this has happened, but in too many there is instead a churn of organisational structures with little or no strategic sense of how CLD can impact on key issues.

In other words, while there is a clear lack of sufficient resources for CLD provision, greater impact could be achieved even without additional resources if those available were applied in a more consistent, co-ordinated and strategic way; a relatively modest additional investment combined with this could have a major impact.

More specifically in relation to the CLD Standards Council itself, the barriers are similar. Resources are very limited in relation to the scale of the task. Equally importantly, an organisational form that is more fully fit for purpose is required. Since its inception in 2008, the CLD Standards Council has been located within host

agencies (from 2011, Education Scotland). This provided a means of establishing the Standards Council and taking forward the early stages of its key functions. However, it now needs a distinct organisational identity reflecting the nature of its functions. Establishing this would provide an important step in developing a more coherent and strategic national framework for the development and delivery of CLD.

Question 2: Are there any services that you / your organisation has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

Examples of work that the CLD Standards Council has not been able to progress as a result of limited resources and/or the need for a more appropriate organisational structure are listed below. All would contribute to the raising of standards of CLD practice and as a result to improving the effectiveness of services in raising the attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty.

- Developing the system for registration of practitioners as a more robust tool for regulation of standards.
- Wider and more systematic implementation of “developmental” approvals for CLD qualifications below degree level (e.g. HNC Working with Communities delivered by colleges).
- Expansion of the Standards Council Standards Mark to meet demand for its recognition process for continuing professional learning provision by employers.
- Increasing engagement with volunteer practitioners of CLD and their access to practice development and networking opportunities.
- Undertaking the first review of professional learning in CLD since 2001 to ensure that courses and qualifications at foundation, pre-qualifying, degree and post-qualifying (continuing professional learning) levels are fit for current purpose.
- Support for increased uptake of SVQs and Modern Apprenticeships in Youth Work and Community Development, further improving professional learning pathways.
- Enhanced partnership working with Skills Development Scotland to expand the accreditation of learning opportunities, further improving professional learning pathways.

Question 3: If you work with schools/local authorities/others to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on this issue easy/difficult?

We work with colleagues within Education Scotland and Scottish Government who are working to address school attainment and wider achievement, with a range of other national agencies and with local authorities. The main difficulty in making these collaborations productive is that colleagues working to address school attainment and wider achievement often do so within a policy, practice and conceptual framework that equates “education” with “schooling”, and, when it allows for the existence of other activities that have some relevance to education, sees their role exclusively in terms of supporting schools and/or teachers.

A related difficulty is a tendency to focus exclusively on “attainment” in the sense of exam results and to give little (or only tokenistic) attention to other forms of “achievement” that can be equally important in relation to developing the capacities

intended to be at the core of Curriculum for Excellence. Support for and recognition of wider achievement often plays an essential part in building confidence for children (and people of all ages) experiencing poverty, and in engaging them with learning.

Where local authorities, for example, are committed to holistic strategies for education and community empowerment within wider community planning processes this facilitates productive collaboration on the issue.

Question 4: What else could be done to support the attainment /achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?"

In the short to medium term,

- Recognition of CLD as a key contributor to the attainment /achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty; consistently embedded in policy, delivery and accountability processes.
- Ensuring that Regional Improvement Collaboratives recognise the importance of learning outside school as well as in school and that this recognition is reflected in their priorities and work-plans.
- Ensuring that improvement planning for education similarly recognises out-of-school learning, and that support for lifelong learning has a particular impact on the attainment /achievement of children and young people living in families *and communities* affected by poverty.
- Ensuring that links between improvement planning for education, CLD planning and community planning at local authority and more local level are strengthened.
- Ensuring that work to support the attainment /achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty, for example through the engagement of pupils and parents or the use of the Pupil Equity Fund, benefits from and is linked with work on community empowerment, co-production of services and participatory budgeting.
- Raising the profile of CLD as a named element in the Scottish Government Education and Skills portfolio and the Scottish Parliament Education and Skills Committee remit.
- Enhancing joint initiatives between the Education and Skills and Local Government and Communities Committees in relation to poverty, community empowerment and educational achievement.

In the longer term, moving from an education system heavily focused on schooling towards a lifelong learning system that:

- Values education and learning in all settings;
- Builds on the strengths of existing institutions and professional practices;
- Has a clear focus on the empowerment of communities that are disadvantaged by poverty;
- Is founded on collaborative working between all the relevant disciplines based on mutual respect and parity of esteem.

The CLD Standards Council would welcome the opportunity to attend a meeting of the Committee to explore these issues.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Duke of Edinburgh Award

Response by the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in Scotland to the Scottish Parliament's Education and Skills Committee Inquiry: Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

- Over 20,000 young people started their Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) in 2016/17.
- 17% of participants (20% in local authorities) face barriers to participation.
- 95% of learning communities in Scotland have an active DofE group.
- 80% of young people and 93% of Leaders said the DofE gave participants the ability to reflect on learning and an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses.¹⁴⁰

The DofE develops young people for life and work. It helps them to fulfil their potential and have a brighter future. For many young people, the impact can be life-changing.

DofE programmes consist of non-competitive voluntary activities for young people. Anyone aged between 14 and 24 can do a DofE programme. To achieve a DofE Award, young people undertake activities in four sections (five at Gold level): volunteering, physical, skills, expedition and a residential (Gold only).

In Scotland in 2016/17 over 20,000 young people started their DofE Award.

A significant part of the DofE's work in Scotland is focused on closing the achievement gap to ensure young people from all backgrounds and abilities are able to take part.

2016/17 saw a 3% increase in young people with barriers to participation starting their DofE Award. In total, 17% of all DofE participants in Scotland (20% participating in local authorities) face barriers and the goal is to increase the participation rate for these young people to 20% by 2020/21.¹⁴¹

The defining goal of DofE Scotland is to ensure that every young person who wants to take part in a DofE programme is able to do so. One of the main barriers to this goal is a lack of adult volunteer leaders.

Case study: increasing DofE participation for participants with barriers in a school setting

¹⁴⁰ Research conducted by The University of Northampton, supported by the Pears Foundation: <https://www.dofe.org/impact-of-the-dofe/>

¹⁴¹ The DofE considers participants with barriers to participation to be: participants who face barriers due to either having a postcode associated with a SIMD of 1, 2 or 3 or being enrolled at a DofE centre that is designated as working with young people with barriers, or having self-declared themselves as having a disability.

The staff at Glenwood High School in Fife recognised that if students achieve a DofE Award they can speak about their experiences in applications and interviews for college, higher learning, apprenticeships and jobs. This can be vital for students who may not achieve as many qualifications as their peers, so Glenwood was eager to remove any barriers to participation for these students.

The school received Scottish Attainment Challenge funding which enabled them to purchase DofE equipment and provide free DofE places so that cost was no longer a barrier to young people taking part.

A former Rector explained: *“The DofE equips young people with particular characteristics that will help them throughout their lives such as confidence building, team work, resilience, problem solving and a better sense of wellbeing. I believe this, in turn, will also impact their skills of literacy and numeracy through contextualised learning and so the DofE programme sits firmly with the Scottish Government priorities for improvements in education.”*

School refuser and Bronze participant said: *“I’m not that good in groups, so I’m trying to change that. The DofE gets you better at working in a team. It was a good thing to come back to school for.”*

Question 1: How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

- DofE Scotland provides schools with data about the equity of their DofE delivery and facilitates positive change to enable young people from all backgrounds to take part.
- The DofE positively impacts on the health and wellbeing of participants. 81% of young people identified an increase in motivation by taking part.

DofE Scotland contributes to attainment in two key areas. Firstly, through using performance management information DofE Scotland can demonstrate to schools where there is a lack of equity for their students. Schools have been supported by DofE Scotland to make positive changes to recruitment and opportunities for their students.

Secondly, increasing attention is paid to mental health concerns in young people. Achievement programmes like the DofE have a huge impact on increasing the confidence and improving the mental health of learners and that can be translated into classroom learning. Research with DofE participants shows that 96% of participants say doing a DofE programme gives them a sense of achievement and 97% feel happier because of their volunteering through the programme.¹⁴² In relation to improving attitudes to learning, 81% of young people and 92% of DofE Leaders identified an increase in motivation by taking part.¹⁴³

¹⁴² The DofE survey sourced the views of over 9,000 young people volunteering as part of their Bronze, Silver or Gold DofE programme.

¹⁴³ Research conducted by The University of Northampton, supported by the Pears Foundation:
<https://www.dofe.org/impact-of-the-dofe/>

Case study: Shawlands Academy EAL students

Many schools are now targeting young people who lack the confidence or understanding to engage in the programme. This is highlighted through the work at Shawlands Academy where a DofE group was created for English as an Additional Language (EAL) students.

Students who were new to Glasgow and joining the school in the Senior Phase were missing out on starting their DofE in S3, so a Silver group was created to enable these students to participate. The EAL teacher recognised the DofE as a great opportunity to help the students develop their English skills in addition to achieving an Award. She explained: *“It helps them to become more confident in their language skills and more confident in their inclusion in school life.”*

Question 2: Are there any services that you / your organisation has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

DofE Scotland could support further local authority provision if there was an increase in resources.

Currently, DofE Scotland provides a range of services to local authorities to assist them in their DofE provision. DofE Scotland would be able to offer more to local authorities to develop their DofE offering, but a lack of resource means that local authorities are unable to make this commitment.

The DofE in Scotland recognises that teacher shortages and the introduction of a new exams system has flattened growth as local authorities focus on recruitment and implementation.

Question 3: If you work with schools/local authorities/others to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on this issue easy/difficult?

- Collaboration with schools works well when there is a clear action plan, with links to relevant policy, supported by the senior leadership team.
- Occasionally, senior leadership does not recognise the range of positive outcomes for young people doing their DofE and is unwilling to invest in the programme long-term.

Over the last four years the DofE has supported schools directly to develop action plans to meet the demand for the programme. Collaboration is effective when all parties, including local authorities and schools, are clear on the intended outcomes and expectations. Expectations are set to ensure that senior leaders understand the support from the DofE is temporary – the aim is to build capacity and work alongside the school delivery team.

Collaboration works well when senior leaders make achievement a priority and designate a lead contact within the senior leadership team. It is also important to have a clear focus and objectives within the school improvement plan, or for senior leaders to add DofE Awards as KPIs.

Outcomes have been most effective where senior leadership understands the range of practice within Scotland and recognise that the DofE can provide a framework for NIF and DYW objectives. In these cases, DofE staff have worked with school staff to develop the best model for the school and created space for staff to lead development. By taking a tailored approach to DofE delivery, the number of schools offering the DofE to students has increased to 86% - an additional 21 schools in the last 12 months. When DofE centres outside of schools are considered, there is an active DofE group in 95% of learning communities in Scotland.

There have been instances of disengagement from senior leadership and this has prompted the DofE Charity to develop more robust service-level agreement processes. The DofE Charity fundraises to provide free support to schools where there is ambition to grow the programme and where there is a lack of opportunity for young people. Occasionally, the senior leadership team does not reciprocate this commitment and focuses on what they can get for free rather than how they can use DofE Scotland's support to deliver better outcomes for young people in the long term.

Questions 4: What else could be done to support the attainment/achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

- A mechanism for schools to better report on non-credit rated and certificated learning.
- Consistency around PEF being used to support wider achievement.
- Schools need to develop a mind-set of celebrating achievement to recognise the totality of learning experiences within a school.
- Parents need to understand the benefits of wider achievement in developing skills for life and work in their children.

The National Improvement Framework states four key objectives and while educational establishments are designing new pathways to enable more effective curriculums for young people, this is not always the case with objectives on health and wellbeing and employability skills. Where schools are performing well or making progress there is positive engagement and discussions relating to achievement and developing employability skills. However, where progress is not being achieved, schools are resorting to historical strengths and focusing largely on attainment, at the expense of achievement and achievement programmes and outcomes.

The DofE in Scotland would like to see the education sector develop a mind-set of celebrating achievement and its contribution to changing attitudes to learning, not just on its correlation to attainment.

Attainment could also be improved by increasing consistency in how Pupil Equity Funding is used to support wider achievement programmes like the DofE. As the case study from Glenwood High School demonstrates, many barriers to participation can be removed by utilising funding to improve access for young people from all backgrounds.

There also needs to be a mechanism for schools to better report on non-credit rated and certificated learning. This could be done through consistent reporting on DofE and wider achievement in forums like Education Scotland's Parentzone and SEEMiS.

Parents of all young people need to better understand the various pathways available to their children. With some establishments focusing largely on attainment, this reinforces the messages that skills development is secondary to attainment. Parents will only value other pathways (apprenticeships/college/work) if schools reinforce that success and learning is demonstrated in a variety of ways. This work could be supported through strengthening pupil profiling, particularly to focus more on skills learned and developed across the entire curriculum.

A representative from DofE Scotland would be happy to speak with the Committee about the information included in this response.

DofE Scotland
22 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Generations Working Together

Generations Working Together would like to highlight a current project in its pilot in Perth and Kinross, led by Generations Working Together which works specifically to increase attainment for pupils at a primary and secondary level and has potential to improve attainment for pupils who are experiencing poverty.

The project organised and lead by Generations Working Together (a national charity that works to connect older and younger people together through community projects, offers training and fights ageism). It started in September 2017 and is funded by the Pupil Equity Fund and The Gannochy Trust. We asked schools in the area to let us know if they were interested and developed a programme in partnership with the school where older volunteers (over 50 years) go into classes to help raise attainment through activities such as writing, reading, maths and eco projects. This is known as intergenerational practice (where younger and older people connect with each other and learn from each other). The project will run for two years and after it's finished an intergenerational hub will be left in each school, ensuring sustainability in the community.

Although intergenerational practice is well known throughout the world, especially America, it is still done on a fairly small scale in Scotland, but the benefits for both age groups are life-changing. This includes alleviation of loneliness, increased confidence, wellbeing and attainment. There are many studies that show the importance of communities and friendships to our wellbeing, safety and health and for a relatively small investment, the project will leave behind a legacy and friendships in the area.

As part of the project, we have recruited and trained a member of staff, an intergenerational development officer who is based locally in the area and works in the Community School of Auchterarder and Perth Grammar, as well as connecting the schools with the community. The officer has recruited, trained volunteers, lead age awareness sessions and has evaluated the projects. Although in its early stage, over 150 classes per month have had volunteers and 17 older volunteers are currently supporting pupils. We have had very positive feedback from both ages and the head teachers, some quotes are below:

A volunteer at the Community School of Auchterarder said in her feedback 'I just wanted to let you know how much I'm enjoying my Tuesday afternoon sessions with P4, it's a challenge working with the children who find it so hard to focus and concentrate, but actually I look forward to it and try to think of ways to gain and keep their attention on the task in hand...I also thoroughly enjoy the few minutes I spend in the main classroom, it's always interesting to see what the teacher is doing, and how the children respond'.

A Depute headteacher of Perth Grammar School said of the project 'Generations Working Together is a great initiative which has the potential to have a real impact on

the Perth Grammar School community. It breaks down stereotypes about the generations, supports our young people to achieve more and provides the older volunteers with a sense of purpose. It is good for everyone's health and well being!'

Currently, we are looking to find ways to spread this project throughout Scotland and would be happy to receive any advice on this, or assistance with future funding ideas. The next local area we would like to work in is Glasgow and we have sent letters to all head teachers in Glasgow in February, inviting them to express interest in this project.

Kate Samuel

Communications and Policy Assistant

Generations Working Together

22 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Home-Start UK

Poverty, attainment and the home learning environment

Home-Start provides trained volunteer and staff support to families with young children across Scotland. We worked with over 3300 families in 2016/17 reaching more than 6000 children.

Our primary focus is working with parents and carers at home to reinforce and grow the strong, consistent and caring connections between young children and the adults who care for them. We do this because these connections are the foundations for lifelong wellbeing, including attainment and achievement at school.

We also work closely with schools and nurseries in several ways. Most recently with the introduction of a specific attainment focused programme Big Hopes, Big Future (BHBF) which involves work at home with caregivers and is currently funded by a range of partners including STV Children's Appeal, local authorities and schools using Pupil Equity Funding.

Much of our work focuses on enabling parents and other caregivers to create a positive home learning environment. A positive home learning environment is not a version of school at home. It's a space, a state of mind and a level of confidence and skills which enable play, including free play, outdoor play and organised play, plus positive engagement between caregiver and child to be embedded in day to day life.

We also support parents and caregivers to help children avoid or mitigate the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACES). Adverse childhood experiences are not uncommon but when children lack a person in their lives who offers the sort of consistent, warm and caring relationship that helps protect them from harm, research tells us ACES can have long-term negative impacts on health and wellbeing. These impacts are related to stress. Unfortunately, there is also good evidence that poverty, especially profound and long-term material disadvantage, is another ACE and a key driver of what researchers now call "toxic stress" responses.

"Toxic stress response can occur when a child experiences strong, frequent, and/or prolonged adversity – such as physical or emotional abuse, neglect, caregiver substance abuse or mental illness, exposure to violence, and/or the accumulated burdens of family economic hardship – without adequate adult support. This kind of prolonged activation of the stress-response systems can disrupt the development of brain architecture and other organ systems, and increase the risk for stress-related disease and cognitive impairment, well into the adult years."

Dr Nadine Burke Harris, The Deepest Well. Healing the long-term effects of childhood adversity, Pan McMillan, 2018

Home-Start UK in Scotland is focused on ensuring that “adequate adult support”, or what Burke-Harris refers to as a “buffer”, is available to as many children as possible to help build their resilience. Building resilience is not an alternative to reducing the drivers of toxic stress. For example, Scotland’s moves towards child poverty reduction are still a vitally important form of preventative action. However, the type of support Home-Start provides is an important factor in enabling children to achieve better life outcomes.

We are supportive of many initiatives designed to help close the attainment gap in school aged children but we remain strongly in favour of prioritising early intervention which focuses on parental/caregiver engagement. This is because research shows how crucial this is.

For example, a ground-breaking study published by the University of Bangor and Public Health Wales in January 2018 (*Sources of resilience and their moderating relationship with harms from adverse childhood experiences*, <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/888/news/47341>) showed that childhood resilience was associated with lifelong lower incidences of mental health problems. There is also substantial evidence highlighting that early language development, which is crucial to closing the attainment gap, requires the promotion of “positive interaction between parents and their children before they get to nursery at 2-3 years.” (*From a review of the evidence on early language development commissioned by the Education Endowment Foundation, October 2017*)

What has worked well?

BHBF is too new in Scotland to yield independently evaluated results. However, outcomes were evaluated following a substantial roll out in England. This helped inform the redesign needed to ensure the programme was appropriate for Scotland. The 2015 evaluation of 139 children supported showed between 25% and 33% improvements in the children’s school readiness across the four key areas - language and cognition, behavioural adjustment, daily living skills and *family support*. The increased ability of the parents and carers to engage in enabling the children to cope and to learn was integral to the positive outcomes. Children in families with the highest needs including those whose parents had mental health problems and were coping with complex and multiple disadvantage showed the most progress.

Our general family support also yields very positive outcomes for parents, caregivers and their children. In our latest impact report 96% of parents receiving Home-Start support said their children’s emotional health and wellbeing had improved.

What barriers have there been to success?

Securing resources for family support at home from the statutory sector is increasingly difficult. Statutory sector funding to the Home-Start network in Scotland has fallen from £2.6 million in 2012/13 to just over £2 million in 2016/17 with local authorities warning of even harder times ahead. At the same time new constraints affecting Big Lottery Funding right across the Third Sector is having a negative impact on grassroots work. The Home-Start network is already reporting difficulties in

meeting demand from referrers such as health visitors, social work teams, nurseries and schools despite a significant drive to diversify income and increase cost efficiency. There is also acute concern in some areas about the supply of suitable volunteers.

We welcome the emergent focus on tackling child poverty alongside seeking to improve attainment through the childcare element of early learning and through schools using the Pupil Equity Fund. But if this is a significant shift in focus which means, in the foreseeable future, even fewer statutory sector resources are going to be available for work with parents we have a problem. A loss of focus on the home-learning environment just as the evidence for the long-term valuable impact of such work becomes so compelling is surely a mistake.

Time spent fundraising for basic home-based volunteer support is now a significant barrier to family support services growing to meet the scale of demand.

What services haven't you been able to provide?

Growing BHBF in this financial climate using piecemeal funding from many different sources means scaling up happens much more slowly than is desirable. It also means being unable to guarantee where the work can continue from one year to the next. This not only means that real need goes unmet – it also means that evaluating at scale and/or longitudinally to measure impact becomes a huge challenge.

We have been encouraged to provide Home-Start support in several under-served parts of Scotland ranking high on the SIMD. But it is common now for local statutory sector teams to invite us in without offering any financial resource to start or to sustain a Home-Start service. Trusts and Foundations usually require charities to demonstrate that a proposed new service will be sustainable before they will grant funding so the lack of any reliable longer-term funding from a broad range of sources means we often cannot respond to need in such areas.

Collaboration

We are collaborating with several schools and local authorities around the attainment agenda. This is made easiest when the following is in place:

- a clear shared and reasonably well-evidenced understanding of levels of local need
- an understanding that referrals alone will not bring all parents/caregivers into a supportive relationship with Home-Start or any other similar provider – some relationship building work is always essential and can be quite time-consuming
- a clear agreement on funding and outcomes which is informed by the understanding that this type of relationship-based work yields best results when it is well-planned and supported by sufficient investment in staff-time to recruit, train and support the right kind of volunteers. It is ideally, therefore, funded for a minimum period two to three years but in reality is more often funded for a year or part-year.

In our experience most nursery and school staff who have engaged with us are very clear that parents must be included in work around tackling the attainment challenge and admit that they struggle to achieve this.

What else could be done?

Clearly measures for reducing child poverty are crucial and are, we hope, being addressed by means of the upcoming Child Poverty Act (Scotland) delivery plan. However, we believe more could be done. For example:

1. We are very interested in the potential for a more widespread and longer-term collaboration between family/home support focused agencies such as Home-Start, specialist mental health and substance abuse service/support providers and early learning and childcare providers including primary schools. Such a tripartite collaboration was featured in the widely screened documentary *Resilience*. The point is that poverty is both a driver and an outcome of substance abuse and of mental health problems related to stress and therefore many of Scotland's poorest children are exposed to multiple sources of toxic stress. This type of collaborative work is happening but not, we suspect, at the scale needed to show efficacy in relation to the attainment challenge.
2. Take positive steps towards investing in a transition to a play-focused kindergarten stage in the Scottish education system as espoused by the Upstart campaign and maintain and promote commitments to time for physical activity within the school day. There is a significant body of evidence pointing to the value of play in relation to lifelong wellbeing and attainment. The previously mentioned University of Bangor/Public Health Wales study also showed how participation in sports in and outside school was associated strongly with moderating the risk of poor mental health in children and in later life.

Conclusion

Home-Start UK in Scotland is pleased that the Committee is conducting an inquiry into the impact of experiencing poverty on young people at school, including on their attainment and achievement.

However, we are concerned that in focusing primarily on school-aged children some of the key and well-evidenced drivers for ameliorating the negative impacts of poverty on children and improving lifelong wellbeing might be ignored.

In the context of any discussion about the relationship between child poverty and attainment and achievement in education it is vital that the well-evidenced value of support for parents designed to improve the quality of the home-learning environment, reduce toxic stress and increase resilience is taken into account.

Shelagh Young
Director of Scotland, Home-Start UK
21 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Home-Start UK – Supplementary submission

I am writing to thank the members of the Education & Skills Committee for inviting me to give evidence today, to thank you and your colleagues for being supportive hosts and to respond to some of the requests Committee members made for more evidence.

In response to Liz Smith's interest in breakfast clubs:

There was an evaluation of relevant work in England in 2017:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/603946/Evaluation_of_Breakfast_Clubs_-_Final_Report.pdf

This found that, alongside reducing hunger and increasing concentration, the clubs improved social development and helped children broaden friendship groups. It highlights the need for consistent national level support to sustain a model for a period of time until it is embedded in the schools – I think that is where the evidence gives today agreed there was a weakness in the PEF model – funding made available for local, grassroots action can have excellent outcomes but it is often too difficult for a busy school staff team to research evidence-based models, commission partners and then evaluate interventions. Home-Start would advocate an area based rather than individual school based approach which took the sort of approach being advocated by the Children's Neighbourhoods work being explored in Glasgow – an approach founded on the idea of collaboration across public/third sector organisations.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies also looked recently at Breakfast Clubs in relation to attainment:

<https://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/Presentations/C%20Farquharson%20-%20RES%20Conference%20-%2010%20April%202017.pdf>

This quoted a 1996 study which warned of the impact on brain development of malnutrition. It is important to note that most children are protected from extreme hunger by parents doing without food. However, this does highlight the plight of pre-school age children and their parents who may well be malnourished due to poverty.

Evaluations of breakfast clubs have highlighted the challenges of sustaining the clubs :

<https://www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2006/10/breakfastclub-0632.pdf>

This study revealed that some parents did not like their children to attend because of the stigma associated with **needing** to attend. Meanwhile children really enjoyed the

social side of one of the tested models where more play was incorporated in the club's activities. The challenge was sustaining the clubs as attendance was low and securing enough volunteers challenging. Of course material disadvantage is affecting more and more families now and with 1 in 4 Scottish children living in poverty in 2018 there is a case to be made that participation rates, for the most worrying of reasons, might now be higher.

Magic Breakfast has recently extended its activities into Scotland. They draw on this evaluation as evidence of efficacy in relation to attainment and achievement:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/magic-breakfast/>

The question about poverty proofing applies here too. It appears that the social side of breakfast clubs are appreciated by children but stigma and cost is a barrier for parents. The logic would be that a free at the point of use club open to all children would help reduce stigma and maximise the range of friendships children can form - as well as being an asset for working parents who may or may not have low incomes. However, there are successful after-school clubs open to all children (subject to capacity) which use grant funding subsidies to offer free places while charging those who can afford it. The mixed approach helps avoid stigma but, to survive it is obvious that the funding levels need to be higher where there are fewer relatively wealthy parents. This can be done – funding following children in most need is the basis of PEF after all – but it takes time to embed new opportunities such as breakfast and after-school provision.

The Committee also asked about collaboration:

Investing in building effective collaborative working takes time. One question the Committee did not ask is the impact of relatively short –term funding arrangements on working better together – whether that is for pre-school age or post school age provision, between schools and Third Sector, or between any agencies seeking to achieve profound change. This is a big problem for us – we do not even know whether PEF money will be available in the medium let alone the long-term and, as I said in the session, most Home-Starts do not even know if their local authority funding will be available in 11 month's time. Some do not even know what they are getting in the current financial year. Home-Start has said that what we really need is a Children's Equity Fund looking at the path to achievement/attainment from pre-birth to adulthood – but more than that we need some cross-party agreement on levels of investment locally and nationally which can, unless there are severe unanticipated financial shocks, be sustained over a much longer period of time than the current annual to three year funding cycles allow.

I wanted to offer an example of longer-term investment in a major change programme in Denmark to show how, even allowing for local and national political changes and traditional annual budgeting cycles, it is possible to agree on a plan of action over 10 or more years which, through continual evaluation, is tested and assessed for efficacy, but not abandoned just because a new funding stream is invented or an old funding stream comes to an end.

Copenhagen's House of Food secured a contract in 2007 to bring healthier, more nutritious, mainly organic food into Copenhagen's public sector catering. It was agreed that converting all schools, nurseries, retirement homes etc. to a new way of catering was a massive cultural change which could never be achieved in the very short-term. The goal was to be 90% organic over 10 years. The House of Food had to show agreed progress annually to retain funding and, of course, any major changes to the city's economic wellbeing could have led to a budget cut. The significant change they have achieved is in no small part to the promise of 10 year investment and the ability to plan for instigating and then sustaining behaviour change in the various institutions with which they worked. More information here:

<http://en.kbhmadhus.dk/organic-conversion/organic-conversion-%E2%80%93-a-plan-for-the-future>

If we all agree with our National Parenting Strategy that rested on the research that says “parents are the biggest single influence on a child’s educational aspiration and attainment through life” then we have to invest in parents and involve parents – before nursery and school and with nursery and school. We heard from the Home-Start volunteer in the informal session about new parents whose felt their parents were “crap” – helping them break that cycle is a long-term behaviour change goal and we don’t feel that current funding models are fit for the job of achieving long-term change.

I also wish to highlight a piece of research which evidences the efficacy of pre-school family support and the reasons why we also need to address the loneliness epidemic (49% of parents working with Home-Start cite loneliness as a problem, 93% say our work leads them to feel less isolated):

University of Netherlands study into impact of Home-Start support which found positive outcomes over three years after the support was given:

<https://www.home-start.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=b40e3080-5de3-4841-8648-b4129b26e92d>

Parenting programmes

Parenting programmes are an option some schools might favour when thinking about deploying PEF money if their concern is the “readiness” of children entering school.

It is a thorny issue as the drop-out rates can be very high (50% in the case of Triple P in Glasgow – see link below) but the predictable costs of a defined and relatively easy to evaluate set programme can be very attractive to funders.

It would be unfair to characterise all parenting programmes as “one size fits all” sitting at the opposite end of the spectrum from the person-centred Home-Start work our volunteer described during the informal session with the Committee on 9 May. However, volunteer visits focused on parents at home are intended to be flexible to meet their capacity at any given time and of longer duration than most parenting programmes because we take time to build trust and a caring relationship. However, the most recent piece of independent evaluative evidence relating to a parenting programme in Scotland that I could find is here and it isn’t very positive:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5282654/>

It concluded that:

“No significant improvement was found in the social, emotional and behavioural difficulties of preschool aged children between 2010 and 2015, suggesting that Triple P had no impact on population-level mental health problems in children in Glasgow City during this period.”

Our Big Hopes, Big Future programme sits between our traditional more open-ended home-visiting and a very tightly defined parenting course. But it is also home-based to put parents at ease. Where referrals have come from schools they have sometimes been of families who are really struggling in so many dimensions that the rigour of an intensive piece of work is not quite possible for them. This points to another issue raised with the Committee today – are schools always clear enough about family circumstances to make the right referral or choose the best sort of supportive intervention? Our experiences suggests not always.

Shelagh Young
Director of Scotland, Home-Start UK
9 May 2018

Education and Skills Committee

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Home Start- Edinburgh West and South

At Home-Start Edinburgh West and South West we firmly believe that community support to help families attain and achieve begins at the very start of life. We are increasingly involved in Peep delivery including the Peep Progression Pathway where parents/carers can complete a portfolio for an SCQF. Our classes currently concentrate on the age ranges 0-3. Peep is included as a good example of family learning (see p28 <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/Family-Learning-Report-full-document.pdf>) Some of our case studies will shortly be shared by Peeple and we hope also to award 5 young parents SCQFs at level 4. We understand this maybe the highest level of award achieved by these young adults to date. Due to negative experiences of education and learning many of these parents struggle with traditional learning methods and environments. These barriers to learning will have an ongoing impact on their families.

We have just completed an application to be considered for the PEF funding Framework in Edinburgh and this application has focussed on the importance of family learning with the following overview:

The National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan for Scottish Education recognises that parental and family engagement is a key factor in helping all children achieve the highest standards whilst reducing inequity and closing the attainment gap. Research shows that when parents/carers are fully involved in their child's learning we see better outcomes for children, parents and schools. Peep is a well evaluated and flexible family learning programme that helps parents overcome some of the barriers that prevent parents/carers from becoming involved in their child's learning eg poverty and lack of confidence.

Home-Start Edinburgh West and South West (HSEWSW) is recognised by Peep Learning Ltd as a Peep Delivery Centre. We are the only voluntary sector organisation in Scotland to have achieved this. The Peep programme is recognised in the Supporting Parent and Carers in Edinburgh Framework 2017-2020. We offer a range of Peep activities that support family learning

- Peep learning together classes for up to 12 adults and their child facilitated by trained facilitators
- Access to the Peep Progression Pathway units for groups of up to 6 parents/carers and their child(ren). This offers the opportunity to complete a workbook for assessment. The units are nationally recognised by the SQA at SCQF credit levels 3, 4 or 5 according to ability.
- Option for parents/carers to train to assist with a group
- Opportunities for parents/carers to progress to train as a group facilitator (funding dependant) and support to complete a portfolio for submission to gain a Peep City and Guilds unit (level3)

There are well documented examples of how participation in Peep family learning opportunities can have a positive impact on children's learning outcomes and their ability to settle into school. In addition, the opportunity impacts on the parents/carers who have a greater understanding and confidence in how they can support their children's' learning at home. An improvement can be seen in the family-school relationship. The Home-Start ESWW model also provides parents/carers with the opportunity to gain skills in a supportive volunteer environment. All volunteers are recruited, trained, supported by staff and vetted using safe recruitment practice. They all join the PVG scheme.

Margot MacKenzie
Senior Co-ordinator
Home-Start UK (Edinburgh West and South)
14 May 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Learning Link Scotland

How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

Learning Link Scotland is an intermediary organisation supporting adult education projects in the third sector, as such we have an overview of the sorts of impact adult education makes on policy and practice across Scotland.

Adult education supports educational attainment in children, not just adult education focussed on parenting skills or family learning but also adults learning for their own purposes has a positive effect on children's learning, creating a learning environment in the home where study and homework are normal and formal education is seen as a positive thing. Community based adult education works toward engaging traditional non-participants of education who are usually also those who do not engage in their children's school in a positive way. Adults who have had poor experiences at school are less likely to have productive relationships with school staff, adult educators can work with schools to help them engage families who do not usually have contact with the school.

Barriers to successful working include a lack of understanding of the methodologies and purpose of adult education and challenges engaging school staff. The focus of raising attainment within schools neglects the importance of raising attainment for adult learners and the positive impact that can make on children, the community and economy.

Learning Link Scotland currently co-ordinates a Home School Links project funded by the Scottish Government's Children Young People and Families Early Intervention – Adult Learning Empowering Communities fund. Our project brings children's and adults' educators together to create awareness raising and training materials on how best to engage those hard to reach adults in the education of their children. We are doing this by piloting adult and family learning opportunities within areas identified as having multiple deprivation and using the results of our pilots to create the awareness raising and training materials. These materials will then be available to attainment officers, teachers and other professionals to use to improve their engagement with adults.

Are there any services that you / your organisation has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

Our Home School Links project referred to above is a powerful but small project, more services where adult educators and school staff work together to support adult and children's learning would work. It would be useful to pick up specific areas such as working with families with disabilities, BME communities, LGBT communities, refugees and asylum seekers as well as communities of multiple deprivation.

Many projects could support raising attainment of children, here are a few suggestions:

- Intergenerational projects linking older adults to schools can also be particularly powerful in the impact of their work in addressing engagement and attainment within schools and isolation and loneliness in older adults.
- Family learning projects with a subject focus such as science, digital skills or health and wellbeing also have very positive results. These projects can link schools to the families and wider communities as well as potential workplaces or local colleges and universities.
- Prison family learning project focussing on homework clubs can be really useful for helping raise attainment, engaging adults in positive interaction with their children and reducing the breakup of relationships.
- We see a lot of positive results developing from partnership working and more cross-sector professional development for primary school, secondary school, college and adult education staff could be a great opportunity to create and develop successful partnerships. For example, in developing a STEM or health and Wellbeing agenda or we could run cross-sector training.

If you work with schools/local authorities/others to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on this issue easy/difficult?

The factors which make good collaboration easy are a mutual respect and understanding of the culture, methodologies and practice of all sectors involved in partnership working. School staff who are able to work with parents and the wider community in a welcoming and energetic manner are very helpful. Schools that allow premises to be used in the evening, at weekends and through holidays are helpful. Links with out of school projects and pre-school groups are very useful as are links to local colleges, universities and community resources.

The factors which make collaboration challenging are where schools and local authorities are closed to working with groups outside of the school environment. It is often very difficult for third sector organisation to contribute to the development of such school communities. School workers with little or no respect for parents or carers and little understanding of the challenging circumstances in which some families live. Adult learning workers with little understanding of the pressures of the teachers' workload. Lack of resources is also a challenge.

What else could be done to support the attainment /achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

Raising the profile of adult education can help create a learning society where all ages participate in a positive manner with education. In an ever changing world, adult need to train and re-training frequently so for Scotland to be a successful country we need a flexible workforce willing to learn new ways of working. A campaign to raise the positive profile of adult and community learning could impact in a very positive way on children's learning.

Jackie Howie

Lead Officer, Learning Link Scotland, 22 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

The Prince's Trust Scotland

The Prince's Trust is the UK's leading youth charity, supporting young people to transform their lives. We help disadvantaged young people aged 11 to 30 to build their confidence, increase their motivation and improve their employability and enterprise skills.

We support over 10,000 of the most excluded young Scots who are the furthest from education and life in work each year. We've helped them to overcome their personal barriers and develop life and social skills. Three in four young people supported by The Prince's Trust move into work, education and training.

"I moved schools four times, but I was always dealing with bullying. I got out and left as soon as I could. I didn't stick around for my exams. [...] I struggle to think about where I would be if it wasn't for The Prince's Trust. They took me on and gave me the chance everyone deserves, and they always wanted me to succeed," says one of our Young Achiever of the Year from our Edinburgh Awards.

In partnership with schools across Scotland we helped over 1,600 vulnerable young people through our education programme last year and aim to support even more in 2018 and beyond. Last year, we launched our new campaign – Youth Can Do It – to unite the nation to get behind young people. We also leverage direct support from many of Scotland's leading businesses, working with them to identify skills gaps and ensure that young people are job ready when they leave school.

INTRODUCTION

The Prince's Trust Scotland welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Scottish Government inquiry on the impact that poverty can have on a young person's time at school, including their attainment and achievement. It's important that all young people are given the same opportunities from a young age to ensure that they're able to reach their full potential, no matter what their background.

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Q1: How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

The Prince's Trust Achieve programme, which is a personal development course for 11-19-year-olds, has made significant headway in supporting the educational achievement of young people. It helps young people fulfil their potential by giving them the tools to succeed through a practical approach to learning.

Across Scotland, the programme works in partnership with over 125 schools and their 170 clubs. As part of the programme, young people are encouraged to explore personal and social development, life skills and prepare themselves for work. It offers

a practical approach to learning, through a hands-on approach. A teacher in Paisley who has delivered the Achieve programme for the second year has found that the programme has helped many of their pupils in education, along with helping them to find secure employment following this.

“Some of my pupils from last year used the CVs and cover letters they created for their Career Planning unit to apply for jobs. One S4 pupil in particular was successful in applying for and securing a full-time job and mentioned that some of her interview questions had been similar to the ones in the mock interview she did with our business mentor in Achieve. Applying for the job was a huge step for a girl who previously lacked confidence in herself and her abilities. The pupil in question had expressed doubt about returning to school for S5 as she wanted to leave school and start work, and I firmly believe that the Achieve programme provided her with the extra confidence and knowledge to feel ready to do so.

“I would definitely recommend the Achieve programme to other schools. I believe the programme supports pupils to develop transferable skills that they can apply across the curriculum. For example, in two of my classes last year, within the smaller class group and more relaxed environment that Achieve provides, pupils felt able to deliver a presentation for the Presentation Skills unit. This was something that by their own admission, they had previously found themselves unable to do elsewhere. Some pupils overcame significant additional support needs, including ASD, to be able to speak in front of others in this way.”

Alongside our core programmes, we offer formal qualifications which seek to ensure learners have every opportunity to gain formal recognition of their skills and achievements. We also equip young people with a Certificate and Diploma in Personal Development and Employability Skills (PDE) which recognises the breadth of personal skills, qualities and attitudes required by employers across a range of sectors. This helps give schools Scottish Credit and Qualifications (SCQF) framework indications and insight points too. To date, the PDE has a 73% pass rate and 430 young people have gained this qualification since August 2017 in Scotland. This is significant milestone and the qualification greatly helps support the educational achievement of young people in Scotland, especially those from poorer backgrounds.

Despite this progress, there are still barriers to overcome and across all our work a common theme is that young people all too often, no matter what their background, are hindered in education due to a lack of self-belief. Our eighth Youth Index report found that an alarming number of young people hid their problems and lacked self-confidence while they were at school or college which is likely to affect their attainment. Half of young people (48%) experienced problems during their school or college years which prevented them from focusing on their studies.

We're concerned that young people could be held back without the right platform and confidence to achieve, showing just how important soft skill development is, including motivation, focus and determination. Any negative feelings will undoubtedly impact on a child's education attainment and development at school, whether they are in poverty or not.

Q2: Are there any services that you / your organisation has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

The education space is a crowded environment which means that while there are many fantastic initiatives that aim to ensure young people living in poverty get the education they deserve, it also means that there are a lot of different organisations competing for funding and recognition. This can make the management of these relationships challenging.

As a result, we strongly encourage organisations and local authorities helping young people to share their best practice amongst each other. While there is a no one size fits all approach, it is often worthwhile for education organisations to share initiatives that have both successful and unsuccessful outcomes. If we don't all build on these relationships we worry that young people will be left behind, resulting in a fragmented service and young people who are being failed by the education system.

Q3: If you work with schools/local authorities/others to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on this issue easy/difficult?

The Prince's Trust Scotland places particular importance on collaboration with schools, local authorities and third sector partners to address school attainment challenges. Our Achieve programme offers flexibility to create a more bespoke offering which can cater for different needs in a school by school basis. This model has proved very popular with the programme now active in a third of all Scottish secondary schools. The PDE qualification we equip young people with is an excellent example of us working in schools to address school attainment. It also has a hard outcome, delivering for schools and most importantly, the young people themselves.

While we have strong and longstanding investment partnerships with a number of local authorities our shared ambition to enhance quality support to young people is regularly challenged by single year local government budgets and persistent funding uncertainty. The Trust acknowledges the growing prominence of the Pupil Equity Fund and its merits. However, its introduction presents a sizeable challenge to ensure that we have the resource and capacity to sustain our current delivery across Scotland. With 125 existing secondary school partnerships and an additional 234 schools to engage it would be very difficult to develop and co-ordinate strategic activity without quickly losing momentum.

Visibility of other third party services, delivered locally/nationally, would be a useful tool for providers and for teachers accessing services. Development of Education Scotland's Improvement Hub may support this objective, or further development of World of Work. Visibility would also offer service providers to reach out to other potential partners: improving collaboration and providing a more joined up approach to schools and young people.

The additional presence of the Attainment Challenge Fund and Regional Improvement Collaboratives has led to significant change in relationships among the third sector, Scottish Government, Education, local government and local head teachers. Priorities are diverse (and in some cases competing) in terms of effecting policy which has resulted in a lack of cohesion, particularly across the third sector, as

well as national engagement around attainment and provision of services and resources to schools and eligible pupils. We are now building engagement with Education Scotland to bridge the gap among education focused third sector bodies and local, regional and national education partners.

Q4: What else could be done to support the attainment/achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

The Prince's Trust is an advocate of working closely with similar youth organisations and we think more joint working across Scotland and the UK should be encouraged. We can share best practice, learn from one another and often provide a young person with far more tools to succeed.

While we are active in over 120 secondary schools we can improve our presence in areas of under-representation where a significant number of young people can benefit from support. The Prince's Trust Scotland does not claim to offer the most suitable solution to every challenge facing every young person but is a willing partner to other providers who could be better placed to support a young person access the right opportunity for them.

In addition, from working with over 10,000 young people each year we know that poor educational attainment is often linked to low wellbeing and a lack of resilience. This can affect the confidence, motivation and self-esteem of young people achieving at school. More than one third of young people (34%) in our Youth Index say keeping themselves motivated when they experience setbacks is a challenge, so positive mental health is a key driver in young people achieving success in education and then securing a good quality job following this. Wellbeing and resilience should be treated with the same importance as physical health from a young age.

At The Prince's Trust Scotland we recognise that everyone has ups and downs, but when this impacts on a young person's wellbeing it's important for them to know where they can go for help so that it doesn't impact on their education. We need to empower young people to develop their skills and coping mechanisms they need to succeed in education, which will also help them later in life when they come to look for training and work opportunities.

We also need to focus more on closing the gap between those children who have these core skills and those who don't. Young people need to be confident, engaged and motivated if they are attending school to have the right foundation for their futures. The Prince's Trust Achieve programme can provide that support to young people to help them fulfil their potential at school, despite a potentially challenging home life.

CASE STUDY *(Name has been changed.)*

Ross is one young person who has benefitted from being on The Prince's Trust Achieve programme. He was referred to the programme in May 2017 by his pastoral care teacher. Ross was refusing to attend school due to bullying and social anxiety issues, which resulted in him withdrawing from education for two years.

Ross engaged well with his key worker, setting himself some short-term goals before he started the programme. "Getting on with people my own age, making good decisions and making more of an effort" were some of these. Ross also identified that building his confidence was his main goal.

He attended The Prince's Trust Achieve course every day and worked hard to achieve all of his goals on the course. Ross was a key member of the team, showing that he could really push himself and he showed good communication skills, interacting and being open in group discussions which was a big step for him. Staff feedback during the Life Skills week of the programme was "You did exceptionally well on the course, engaging in all the activities, listening and answering questions."

The programme steadily increased Ross's confidence and this gave him the opportunity to take ownership of his goals. He was aware of other group members which had a huge impact on his teamwork as well as his leadership skills. He gave 100% and was open to other opportunities within the Prince's Trust.

Ross was referred to our 1:1 Language, Literacy and Numeracy service as he identified he wanted to work on his literacy and numeracy skills. He worked through an individual learning plan, completing Level 2 English and gaining 68%. This was a huge achievement for him and one he was very proud of.

Ross was turning 16 and was keen to further develop his skills and learning. His keyworker identified that the Team programme would be an excellent opportunity for him to transfer his skills but decided it would be a good idea for him to attend Activity Agreement nurture groups until this time. Ross was keen to attend these and started engaging straight away. He then went onto the Team programme in August 2017, which he is currently still attending. His 12 weeks are coming to an end but Ross has already started to think about what he wants to do next. He has applied for a community jobs fund post with the Bike Station in the West of the city and is waiting to hear the outcome.

On exiting The Prince's Trust Achieve programme, Ross identified that his confidence had gone from a 3/6 to 6/6 and his ability to set and achieve goals also increased from 3/6 to 6/6. He said he enjoyed everything because he was more active and the course helped him look at his future more positively.

The Prince's Trust Scotland
21 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Reading Wise

ReadingWise - Introduction

ReadingWise welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Scottish Parliament Education and Skills Committee's call for evidence on the attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty. We would be pleased to brief the Committee in person on the issues we raise in this submission and eager to arrange a Committee visit to a Scottish school to see the ReadingWise initiative in action, should this be considered useful.

We welcome the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government's continued interest in improving reading, highlighted by this week's announcement of the extension of the First Minister's Reading Challenge. The desire to improve attainment for school children experiencing poverty aligns particularly well with ReadingWise.

The focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap, placing excellence and equality at the heart of Scottish education, will help to ensure that there are many opportunities to accelerate targeted improvement in literacy.

Therefore, we have focused our submission on what we view as the opportunities for Scotland, based on our experiences in schools across the UK, including in Scotland.

ReadingWise – About

Founded in 2009 and operating in Scotland since 2015, ReadingWise is a collaborative programme which helps school children who have struggled to learn to read.

The ReadingWise programme:

- Is proven to rapidly improve reading age and self-esteem
- Can progress reading age by at least nine months in 20 hours (Scottish evidence is ahead of this average)
- Has helped over 16,000 pupils across the UK improve their reading
- Is currently used in over 100 Scottish schools, helping the lowest 20% of performers at reading
- Is a highly collaborative programme, delivered by schools for schools, and implemented by existing teaching assistants
- Is an empowering programme – no ReadingWise personnel are in the school, staff are trained and skills embedded
- Uses unique techniques – it is much more than phonics, and improvement is not simply a case of doing more of the same
- Can cost as little as £35 per pupil, if delivered at scale

ReadingWise in Scotland:

- ReadingWise is currently being delivered to varying degrees in 15 local authority areas in Scotland
- It is being used by 106 primary and secondary schools
- ReadingWise has improved the reading age of 4,631 Scottish pupils
- The average reading age of Scottish pupils has increased by 9.3 months after only 10 hours of ReadingWise activity

ReadingWise is well placed for use in Scottish schools to the benefit of struggling pupils. It fits in neatly with the Scottish Attainment Challenge and is ideal expenditure for a school under the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF). ReadingWise can help Scottish schools to ensure that literacy skills are prioritised, while streamlining and decreasing teacher workload pressure.

ReadingWise – supporting the educational attainment of children and young people, what has worked well and barriers to success

Good literacy unlocks other areas of the curriculum. It is therefore widely recognised as the most important educational outcome for children. However, with poor literacy, children are locked out and their attainment suffers.

The work of ReadingWise in Scotland has supported over 4,600 pupils, identified as struggling with poor literacy, to improve their reading ability and therefore improve their educational attainment more widely. In addition to the quantitative data is the significant improvement in self-esteem and associated engagement across the school, with improved behaviour and motivation consistently reported.

The first criterion of success in our work is the people we work with to deliver our programmes. These people range from local authority Quality Improvement Officers, to headteachers, to teaching assistants. It is these people who are a critical resource, and their hard work and belief drives the success of the children we work with.

Conversely, where staff lack belief or motivation, we see a reduction in the positive benefits to struggling readers. This lack of belief should be considered a key barrier to success, one which we overcome through quality training and evidence-basing of our programme. As our programmes begin to take, the motivation and belief is self-reinforcing as staff see for themselves the step change in their pupils' reading, their attitude and their self-belief. The success is then amplified as teachers communicate across clusters and local authorities.

Another factor in our success is efficiency. Teacher workload is a serious problem, in part responsible for the recruitment issues facing Scottish schools. We work to minimise workload, allowing teachers to focus on the pupils. Reporting and accountability are handled by the system in a robust and streamlined way.

ReadingWise – services that we have not been able to provide that we believe would work

ReadingWise is currently being delivered in 15 local authority areas in Scotland and is being used by 106 primary and secondary schools. However, we believe that we could reach many more and the programme is designed to offer a viable national initiative where useful.

The primary factor preventing us from a more significant expansion in Scotland is the difficulty we have in reaching headteachers, which is the flip-side of the lack of visibility headteachers themselves have of the range of options available to them under PEF.

Furthermore, the lack of consistency over how much autonomy a headteacher has over the spending of PEF, which appears to vary by local authority, provides a significant barrier to efficient access for ReadingWise and other providers. This is, ultimately, detrimental to pupils, who are not currently exposed to the full range of educational solutions available in this thriving sector.

ReadingWise - our work with schools and local authorities to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on this issue easy/difficult

ReadingWise's work with schools is often in partnership with the local authority. The key factor in working successfully with schools are positive relationships amongst colleagues. For example, a successful initiative needs the buy in of both school leaders and teachers.

We have learnt that pilot phases can prove effective to support this. Once a small, but influential, group of headteachers or teachers are seeing positive outcomes, then scaling the programme to other schools becomes much more effective.

Conversely, we believe that it can be a mistake for a local authority to buy in resources centrally if there is not a very clear understanding of what is needed across its group of schools. Successful local authority roll-outs involve collaborative and inclusive processes, whereas unsuccessful roll-outs are often characterised by a centralised, top-down approach where the fit between solution and problem is less clear, and the backing of those teachers who will deliver is less certain. We have found that this often leads to resentment or reluctance to deliver the programmes effectively – which can have negative consequences on the efficacy of the programme and therefore the impact on pupils' education.

ReadingWise - What we believe could be done to support the attainment/achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty

The political focus on supporting the attainment and achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty is very welcome.

Technology provides many great opportunities to ensure that the right literacy programmes are reaching the right pupils quickly and efficiently. Programmes like ReadingWise reduce teacher workload and increase the number of pupils reached by allowing a single teaching assistant to work with ten children at a time. This saves

time and money and greatly extends the reach of literacy programmes, leading to better outcomes for a greater number of pupils.

There is the opportunity to capitalise on the benefits offered by technology to this group of children and young people. However, this requires bold action. There is often a reluctance to be bold and instead rely on antiquated approaches to solving the literacy problem. Such outdated approaches cannot reach the numbers required, and often add to teacher workload – leading to poor outcomes and staff dissatisfaction.

ReadingWise – Conclusion

ReadingWise welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission to the Committee and highlight, from our perspective, the opportunities for Scotland to improve attainment for school children experiencing poverty.

At present, we believe that independent initiatives, such as ReadingWise, present invaluable solutions to Scottish schools.

However, there is significant room for improvement in terms of encouraging, facilitating and supporting schools in empowering them to be confident, take bold steps to bolster attainment and help overcome the debilitating consequences of poverty.

Jamie Fries
ReadingWise
22 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Scouts Scotland

Re. Scottish Parliament Education & Skills Committee Inquiry into attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

I write to respond to the committee's inquiry on behalf of Scouts Scotland.

1. How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

Scouting exists to engage and support young people in their personal development, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society. We were established in 1907 and now support almost 40,000 young people (girls, boys, young women and men between 6 and 25 years of age) through more than 11,000 adult volunteers in Scotland.

We deliver a programme that develops young people physically, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Everything we do is underpinned by our Fundamentals – a series of constructs that outline what we do, how we act and what we believe.

Programmes that enable an individual to develop resilience and capability have a positive effect on outcomes in youth (Larson, 2000: pp.170-83). In particular, programmes that centre on 'positive youth development' (Damon, 2004: pp.13-24), developing social, vocational and cognitive competence, developing self-confidence, developing respect for societal and cultural rules connection to others and developing caring and compassion (Lerner et al., 2005: pp.17-71). Programmes offered by organisations like Scouts Scotland are effective and cost-efficient interventions, known to develop young people in these areas. The ethos and activities of Scouting – particularly at the Explorer age of between 14 and 18 years old – underpin the acquisition of a broad range of soft skills (Birdwell & Wybron, 2014, p.11).

Scouting is an example of non-formal learning. This has been defined by the think-tank Demos as learning that:

- can take place either outside school, or in particular school settings
- involves particular activities, which are either relatively unstructured, or structured but not in a school setting
- achieves particular outcomes, often with a focus on character development (Birdwell et al., 2015)

As a charity, our work supporting the educational attainment of young people is not just limited to those who are members. We are one of the largest providers of outdoor learning experiences in Scotland through our three National Activity Centres. We work with Duke of Edinburgh participants, local authorities and individual schools. The benefits of an effective residential experience have been evidenced through Learning Away's *Brilliant Residentials* campaign – further information can be found here: <http://learningaway.org.uk/residentials/>.

Non-formal learning has been shown to benefit the character of young people who take part in these activities. *Character by Doing* was a six-month pilot project undertaken by The Scout Association, funded by the Department for Education's Character Grants scheme and evaluated by Demos. Young people aged between 8-10 years old took part in Cub activities and a residential experience. The study found a statistically significant increase in leadership skills compared to the control group, improvements in confidence resilience and cooperation, and schools highlighting an improvement in pupils' attendance, behaviour and academic performance thanks to participation in the programme (Scott et al., 2016).

Specific to Scotland, our experience has shown that Curriculum for Excellence can lead to a high level of cooperation between schools and non-formal learning providers. One example is the partnership between Queen Anne High School, the 83rd Cairneyhill Scout Group and the Scottish Qualification Authority where Scouting is embedded in the curriculum. Pupils from the Scout group have the opportunity to formally link their Scouting activities to qualifications through an SQA scheme. By gathering evidence and conducting self-assessments, Scouts can translate their Scouting activities into an SQA Leadership Award into the equivalent level of a higher grade qualification (Birdwell et al., 2015, p.77). At present a formal process that enables organisations like Scouts Scotland to work in partnership with every school or Local Authority is missing. This could fill service gaps through the development of either tested or new solutions, creating innovation in the education system.

Scouting has huge reach across the UK and it is a cost-effective programme - £550 is sufficient to create a place for a young person which lasts at least four years. Compared with other youth activities, our volunteer led model is incredibly cost-effective, however there are costs attached. With sustainable funding in place we can develop new provision. Having a proven model of Government funded projects to establish Scouting in areas of deprivation, we are well placed to create provision in areas of high need.

2. Are there any services that you / your organisation has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

Scouting in Scotland is vibrant – we have had twelve years of continuous growth. We believe that everyone who wants to be a member should have the opportunity to join, and we are making a concerted effort to expand into communities where there is no existing provision, for example in communities of deprivation and rural Scotland. We have Local Development Officers in some of these communities, setting up sections and recruiting new volunteers to lead and run groups. While Scouting is delivered by volunteers, there are costs associated with a group, such as hiring venues, providing resources and adult training. There is evidence of young people being dissuaded

from joining their local group even by a modest membership fee. With additional resource or support we can expand Scouting further and deliver our programme to more young people.

Furthermore, we believe that there is more we can do around provision of Scouting in the school holidays. Mainstream Scouting takes place during the school term and during school holidays our Leaders take a break from their responsibilities. To achieve this it would require Scouting to be more flexible than present and an additional, focused resource of Leaders to provide Scouting in the holiday periods.

Beyond those who are currently not part of Scouting, we would welcome the opportunity to work with government to explore how we can work in partnership to develop innovative and sustainable solutions through the Scottish Attainment Challenge and Pupil Equity Funding. For example, this could be working in partnership to deliver Summer School residential experiences based on our existing programme, which is mapped to Curriculum for Excellence. While we already have a number of schools that visit our National Activity Centres as clients, with their trips partly funded through Pupil Equity Funding, teachers inform us that evidencing the benefits of outdoor and non-formal learning remains difficult.

In addition, we believe there is potential for parents/carers and families to take part in family learning opportunities or more targeted family support. For example, our teams have the qualifications and experience to deliver bush craft and camping skills training to parents in local settings or as part of a residential programme. The simple skills learned in these sessions increase the confidence of parents or carers to explore their local wild areas or travel further afield to camp – a relatively cheap activity, with a great many associated benefits. This could be delivered in partnership with schools and local authorities during holiday and transition periods.

Finally, there is also an opportunity for a continuum of outdoor learning and residential experiences amongst school children of all ages. Young people from Early Years to High School enjoy elements of our programme through single-day or residential experiences at our National Activity Centres. In Scouting there is progression for young people, starting with a single night away as a Beaver or a Cub, graduating to longer periods away in the UK and further afield as continue through Scouting. This progression does not happen through school provided activity, with children in the same local authority having potentially very different experiences depending on the authority, school and headteacher.

3. If you work with schools/local authorities/others to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on this issue easy/difficult?

We have good relationships with other charities and for example have worked effectively with Youth Scotland, Girlguiding Scotland, The Boys Brigade and The Girls Brigade over a number of years to deliver *Cashback for Communities* projects. When collaborating with other charities the issues we encounter are around the restrictive nature of the available funding. Our provision is universal and this model causes complications when applying for funding as funders wish to direct their resource at specific groups.

With regards local authorities, there are pockets where we have very productive relationships with Councils and individual schools and both sides gain value. There is support within the teaching profession for non-formal learning. Across the UK nine out of ten teachers have favourable attitudes to non-formal learning, while 51% strongly agreed their students would benefit from non-formal education opportunities (Birdwell et al., 2015, p.16). The time a child or young person spends outside of the classroom is significantly more influential on their attainment than the time spent in the classroom - 79% of secondary-age students indicated that taking part in a residential had made them realise that what they learn at school is important to them (Learning Away, 2015, p.8).

The main difficulty working with local authorities concerns the tendering processes for our National Activity Centres to provide these experiences. In spite of our activities being regulated by legislation and inspected annually by Government, there is no uniformity in their procurement processes. Once we become an approved provider we feel that this is not communicated effectively to individual schools, preventing them making an informed decision about how they deliver outdoor learning. This is an issue across the sector and solving this would enable us to forge genuine partnerships with both sides getting the best value.

4. What else could be done to support the attainment /achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

First, we would welcome the opportunity to work with government to explore how non-formal education can be supported to work within the Scottish school setting. As discussed, the benefits of non-formal learning are clear and supported by education professionals. However, while there are some pockets of very good practice, schools do not offer the same progression in outdoor learning as Scouting. We believe there is space within the Scottish education system for innovative solutions within the context of Curriculum for Excellence. Increasing the evidence base for non-formal education would be of benefit to policy makers in government and decision makers in schools. As previously discussed, a similar study was carried out in England through the Character Grants programme by The Scout Association and Demos, with schools in deprived areas receiving a programme based on the existing Cub programme. The programme received high levels of approval from participants and teachers, with a significant positive impact in leadership and perceived growth in resilience, confidence and cooperation.

Second, we believe the process of accessing public buildings can be simplified and the associated costs reduced – enabling youth organisations to access the communities affected by poverty. For example, where we have existing provision there is likely to be a Scout Hall or a long-term relationship with a venue provider. When trying to access a new community, many public buildings have been closed by local authorities and access to schools for community use is at the discretion of the headteacher. Local authorities often operate a profit centred model, leading to high venue costs. We have already seen young people in deprived communities dissuaded by a £2 per week membership fee. Creating access to those communities affected by poverty, through their public buildings, would benefit all organisations working with young people.

Katie Docherty
Chief Executive
Scouts Scotland

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EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Scottish Outdoor Education Centres

How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

1.1 Residential experiences combined with outdoor learning (**REOL**) is a hugely powerful pedagogy that contributes significantly to both achievement and attainment. Partnership working produces the best results. It adds-value for teachers, as implied in the statement, ***“Careful planning and preparation, including work undertaken with children and young people before and after the residential experience, is key to the relevance, coherence, breadth and depth of learning” (CfE Through Outdoor Learning, 2010)***

1.2 Close collaboration between teachers and outdoor educators creates opportunities to: develop a shared understanding of the potential of the immersive residential experience; identify the specific needs of pupils so they can be addressed more incisively; and refine their intended, learning outcomes which can range across the curriculum.

1.3 The permutations of programmes are enormous: Transition to Secondary or to Work; Eco-literacy and Field studies; use of adventure activities and expeditions. Bespoke programmes requested include: confidence, healthy lifestyles and rivers; Transition to Secondary with French; and to “enable young people to re-examine their values to become more independent people in learning and life.” Nevertheless, all programmes can support progression in terms of complexity of concepts as well as the progression of pupils’ knowledge, understanding and skills development within the subject areas.

1.4 Pre-residential professional dialogue is an opportunity to consider learning styles, responsibilities, setting targets, reviewing and the value of a strong rapport with the group. The skill of the outdoor tutor is to judge the correct level of challenge for different activities, for the group and individuals within the group, and to do this 20-30 times during the week. This progression ensures positive outcomes. The effectiveness of programmes is linked to the relationship between tutors and visiting pupils and teachers.

1.5 Teachers also know the residential is a great opportunity to establish their relationship with pupils, or to change their dynamic if required. ***“The outdoor environment encourages staff and students to see each other in a different light (CfE Through Outdoor Learning, 2010).*** The residential is a fabulous opportunity to forge positive relationships through sharing experiences and challenges together. Attainment is enhanced by positive teacher/pupil relationships that are taken back into the classroom

1.6 The visit creates opportunities for development and assessment of skills and their application of pupils e.g.:

- Numeracy – is embedded in many activities: use of coordinates when map reading, exploring time, speed and distance on a zip wire, expedition planning, or counting species in a river correlated to speed of water flow.
- Literacy – is essential for team work and problem solving. For pupils who are mostly urban-dwellers, the outdoor environment stimulates descriptive language. Active learning is evident as pupils engage in learning through the environment.
- Health and Wellbeing – e.g. building confidence and from connectedness to the environment. Emotional and mental health and well-being outcomes are not easy to assess, yet teachers often report evidence of growth in confidence, self-esteem, and general happiness of young people following a visit. This can trigger changes in pupils that can be further developed back at school.
- With the outdoor educator responsible for the pupils during activities, teachers benefits from teacher/pupils ration of 1:12 or less and effectively have protected time to observe and assess their pupils across a range of experiences and outcomes.
- Evaluation is a skill that educators focus on developing in children and young people within CfE. The **REOL** provides new contexts for pupils to discuss the learning intentions and success criteria of an activity or task, and then to evaluate their attainment and achievement before identifying next steps. **REOL** supports interdisciplinary experiences where skills are transferred across subject boundaries.
- Also much debated is risk. In the classroom, theory can be discussed and taught, and scenarios given to develop knowledge and understanding of risk. **REOL** creates opportunities for young people to switch-on their safety consciousness and engage in risk assessment, for both themselves and their group, in meaningful contexts. This is facilitated by being away from the ultra-safe school environment, and by working with specialist outdoor educators who, through constant use of adventurous activities, develop high levels of expertise and judgment.

Are there any services that you / your organisation has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

1.7 Perhaps the question here is, if it can deliver such benefits to such high standards, why is there not more of it? Why is a residential experience out of reach for some pupils and particularly pupils from poorer areas?

1.8 In response we might first consider a future scenario for Scotland. We can perhaps envisage a future where young people in Scotland are successful in attainment and achievement and this will, in part, be attributed to pupils experiencing different types of outdoor learning regularly and frequently in their school years. We might imagine young people taking a diversity of pathways of experience from woodland nurseries and outdoor learning in the school grounds, to the use of local green spaces and woodlands perhaps with scouts or guides every week; to residential at primary and again at secondary; to expedition in Scotland and expedition abroad. In this future, the aim is not that young people benefit from one such experience, rather they benefit from a diversity of experiences that are linked

through continuity and progression.

1.9 Young people who undertake such pathways would be very different from those leaving school today. They would be more confident and resilient; more self-reliant, and better at self-management, better communicators, team players and problem solvers. They would have developed a 'can-do', growth mind set and have the confidence of understanding better their own potential. They would have started to acquire the skills of leadership. In short, they would have more of the qualities and skills that Parliamentarians, business leaders and others have identified as being essential for our young people.

1.10 This is one vision of the future but perhaps it deserves to be seen less as an option but more as an urgent necessity. Against drivers for change such as climate warming, technological development and globalisation, and the impacts of these drivers on society and in the world of work, these are the qualities and skills that our children and young people will need if they are to survive and thrive in their future; in a world of rapid change.

1.11 This is what some residential providers set out to do and we are successful at it. We can redirect young people away from behaviours that impede their learning and personal and social development. When research shows that large numbers of young people lack confidence, and are pessimistic about their future, high quality **REOL** experiences are powerful triggers of change in a child's self-perception and self-belief. To see what is possible through partnership working, please see the Transition to Work programme for school leavers with autistic spectrum diagnoses available on the SOEC website.

If you work with schools/local authorities/others to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on this issue easy/difficult?

1.12 SOEC has supported teachers for over 75 years. We work with over 150 schools and around 12,000 young people providing over 100,000 learning days (school days equivalent). We want to work with 30,000 young people in the future.

1.13 However many local authorities are questioning their future ability to provide **REOL** and this affects us all. It creates a mismatch of perception. It raises doubts over the value of **REOL** yet many teachers and parents cannot understand why its value is not recognised.

1.14 The Government has endorsed it, ***"Progressive outdoor learning experiences are best delivered through a combination of school-based outdoor learning and residential programmes."*** Minister for Schools and Skills, **CfE Through Outdoor Learning, May 2010** However this endorsement dissipates as it filters down through the Education Agency and Local Authorities.

1.15 Scotland has a mixed economy of providers. It might be argued this has advantages but it is currently hard to see this is the case. The sector lacks a shared vision or clarity in strategic implementation and the lack of a level playing field results in some providers being frequently disadvantaged.

1.16 Of course in the market economy we are competing but the nature and value of competition is poorly understood. As a result, it cuts across strategic considerations, directs the focus toward fun and distraction rather than quality of development and education outcomes, and undermines opportunities for partnership working.

1.17 A few local authorities retain Residential Centres but they can treat outdoor learning as a zero-sum game in which working with an external partner is prevented as it is seen to undermine their own capability to provide services. It is not unknown for local authorities to create financial mechanisms that favour their own provision. This suppresses discussion and trust – the pre-requisites on which any partnership is built.

1.18 We seem to develop initiatives for ideal circumstances which struggle in a flagging economy. 'Teaching teachers to teach out of doors' is a great idea. It works less well when teachers are under pressure from the exam timetable; when there is no money or time for them to go on training courses to gain NGB awards to take groups safely into the outdoors; and when there is no money for staff cover, or of course to take pupils out.

1.19 Head Teachers will determine whether a school will attend an Outdoor Centre but they also face challenges. They may look first for a steer from their local authority's but only 12 of 32 operate a vetting procedure. Teachers know the value of partnership working but the time constraints in 3.7 above also impede professional dialogue.

What else could be done to support the attainment /achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

1.20 The **REOL** is an invaluable opportunity for all children and young people. It reduces the gap for many. It is particularly valuable for vulnerable young people and those from areas of deprivation. In one SOEC survey, over 90% of teachers referred to the pupil who is not gregarious and performing well in class but who is transformed during the residential.

1.21 If Scotland is to retain the contribution that **REOL** can make in education, we will need to do things differently. People from different sectors and different backgrounds, working in partnership, stimulate a tremendously creative process and can produce innovative solutions to tenacious problems. Partnerships provide the best outcomes and we need to architecture in which collaboration can flourish.

1.22 As local authorities extract from the provision of outdoor learning, is it to be left to the market? What is the role of Third Sector providers such as SOEC? Is there a role for Parliament in this? Which approach will create the endorsement and the architecture for partnership working?

1.23 We need to create a vision that Scotland is a great place for all young people and embrace a culture of being in the outdoors for the myriad of social, economic and environmental benefits that generates.

1.24 **REOL** within pathways of outdoor experiences has great potential but we must look to secure its sustainability. It needs recognition of its potential; widespread endorsement of its role in education; a more cohesive core in leadership and clarity in strategic direction.

1.25 This is not a call for vast additional resources. Nor is it a plea for more money. This is about **REOL** how it is seen, managed and led, because its potential is huge for schools, for achievement and attainment, and for all children and young people.

The Committee's call for evidence also requested other documentation for Members interest. I would therefore highlight a report of an innovative, Transition to Work programme for young people with autistic spectrum diagnosis.

This report exemplifies what can be achieved through partnership working. It is available at: www.soec.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/LAS-Transition-to-Work-2015-16-Final-Report-1.pdf

Dave Spence
Chief Executive
Scottish Outdoor Education Centres
22 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Stretch a Nickel Foundation

The feedback in this document was provided by children, parents/guardians, school staff and volunteer tutors. It focuses on our Bright Sparks programme created 4 years ago following a six week pilot that gave us enough evidence on behalf of the **Stretch a Nickel Foundation** to approach the Education Authority and get permission to take children out of school one morning or one afternoon a week to work on their numeracy and literacy skills with volunteer tutors. The first year we were in one school, the second year we expanded to four schools. The last two years we have been in three schools simply due to a shortage of volunteers. We have two other schools considering Bright Sparks for 2018-2019 school year. This programme is based on the Joseph Rowntree report which states: "The gap between children from low-income and high-income households starts early. By age 5, it is 10-13 months. Lower attainment in literacy and numeracy is linked to deprivation throughout primary school.....Children from deprived households leave school earlier."

For the last three years this programme has been funded through Community Planning Partnership funding which has enabled us to gather resources, provide snacks for the children, transport children from school to local community hubs and celebrate our volunteers. Next year, the schools will share the costs of our only remaining expense, transport, so Bright Sparks has moved into a more sustainable model. The reason transport is needed is that; unfortunately, schools have no extra space to work with small groups of children. Most new schools are built too small with little foresight of future housing schemes construction planned taken into consideration. Hence, why community hubs are great resources for schools. We have also experienced an increase in parental engagement when schools work in partnership with us using community hubs for parental engagement programmes that we also run, like '*Building Blocks*' and '*Pajama Party*'. The schools we partner with have agreed that parental engagement increases for them when using an 'off campus' venue.

We believe that education is a partnership between school, home and community. Children benefit the most when all of these partners are working together. In addition, families are more supported as well. If each partner willingly shares their time, talents and resources then we can multiply our efforts to transform the lives of children and families in our communities.

Becky Frank
Founding Director, Stretch a Nickel Foundation

Feedback from parents/carers/guardians of children attending Bright Sparks:

1. How your children have been supported in this programme?

"Bright Sparks! What can I say; my son has ADHD and the work and effort from the staff has made such a difference in his life. I am glad in a way, that he has been

picked to come back as he has lost about 4 years in school as he wasn't able to settle and learn. Great strategies for learning. Thank you"

"I feel that my son has been doing better thanks to the Bright Sparks club. Before if he was stuck or struggling in class he wouldn't ask for help whereas now he will do so confidently. Bright Sparks has helped him both at school and with his confidence. He really loves Tues mornings and feels it helps him as well. I believe Bright Sparks is a great help and really makes a difference for the kids."

"Since my son joined Bright Sparks I have noticed a marked improvement in his confidence leading to improvements in maths and language work. He seems more open to trying and even seems to enjoy maths now."

"Bright Sparks has been really supportive of my son's learning needs. He has become more confident in his work and being able to ask for help if he doesn't understand something. Now feeling less stressed, he's looking forward to secondary school and any challenges he may face. I think it's great that there will now be more schools taking part in this wonderful group, as every child needs a little help now and again."

"I am very pleased to say that my son is really enjoying Bright Sparks, every Tuesday is something he will often mention at home, and I am pleased to say I have noticed a huge improvement in his work with maths, computer work and also his written work. I'm happy to see my son continue next year's session. Many thanks to all the team at Bright Sparks."

2. What was good about it and what could have been better?

"My son is a lot more confident now. I think it would benefit other children."

"My children love going to Bright Sparks. They have improved in Maths and English. Thank you."

"Our son's reading has vastly improved. While he does his maths he is confident. We feel his overall confidence has also come on."

3. How has this impacted on what the children in your family have achieved?

"Our son is doing better since he started in Bright Sparks. He enjoys going and feels it's made a difference with some of the things he struggles with. It has helped him become more confident with reading and maths. It's also been good for us to be able to come along to the Parent Open House and see what they're doing. We are glad Bright Sparks is around."

"I like my son going to Bright Sparks because they help him with his reading, writing and maths; it also builds his confidence."

Feedback from children and young people of school age experiencing poverty:
We interviewed 36 pupils ranging in ages from P3-P7 who participate in our Bright Sparks programme.

1. How have you been supported outside school by coming to Bright Sparks during the school day?

It makes me feel good, more confident
It helped me improve my maths

The teachers taught me different ways to work
When I make a mistake an adult helps me
I feel I'm learning well
Everyone gets the same treatment
I'm helped to overcome obstacles
Sometimes I get challenged which I like
Even if you try your best you get help
I like learning with my friends
Teachers can help us because we are in small groups
You can get help when you are stuck
Pupils give us thumbs up when we get an answer
We get interesting tasks
Bright Sparks is funner than school
The games give us lots of extra practice and are fun
Tricky word bingo helps me read harder books
I like the games cause you can keep practicing and can beat other people sometimes

2. What was good about it?

I can concentrate better in small groups
I like my wee group
I don't worry about answers
Learning more- about reading; different ways to spell; tell the difference between b/d;
how to join words together
Learning in different ways to work things out
Staff are nice and fair
We know when we've done wrong
The snacks are good and we get to sit down and talk when eating
We feel happy, safe, special, confident
Talking with adults
Getting help
Playing games
It's fun and we get to play maths games and tricky words bingo
Great snacks from Greggs
We get to learn with other pupils from our school that we don't usually learn with.
Playing games on the tablet
Making new friends
The literacy games have helped me with my reading
Tricky word bingo makes me feel happy
I love the books we read cause they're different from the ones we read in school

What could have been better?

New maths and language games. I learn better that way.
To have more time at Bright Sparks for activities, games and choice
Tablets to play maths games
I would like to have tables with more subjects- history, science
A third learning activity- handwriting
More writing
Leave school earlier
More food- energy for the brain!

More time at each station
More tutors

3. How has this impacted on how you get on at school including achievements

Helped me learn stuff like fractions
I don't make as many mistakes at school
Learn ways to get better at school
If I find things difficult at school I can get help here
Helped with times tables and spelling
More confident with reading, I used to hate reading out in class
Helped me feel more confident at asking questions
Helpful making me like school better
I don't worry about lessons so much
I know more sums now.
It's helped me to be smart and it makes learning fun..
I can do more now.
I used to think that I should give up when it is hard but I learned at Bright Sparks that I don't need to give up.
It has helped me to listen better in class.
It helped me to focus more in school
It helped me to read harder books by using the decoding skills I learned in Bright Sparks
The extra practice has helped me in my maths and fractions
Place value used to be hard in school, but now it's easy because I've had extra practice.
I can add 10 better to other numbers now.

4. What other things would support you to achieve at school?

Time to work on your own using new strategies
Working on Tablets
More work on division, focus on times tables, reading, language
More maths games and online games
Smaller groups
Less noise
Less interruptions.

Feedback from teachers and other school staff:

1. What has your school done to support children from families affected by poverty? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

Links with 3rd sector and charitable organisations and volunteers supports the work of the school and supports families and young people.

We have worked with Stretch a Nickel Foundation to provide identified groups of children for small group work to enhance learning in numeracy and mathematics. This takes place outside the school building in a local church. Links to this church have also allowed us to run after school clubs that support emotional well-being, events to support family learning out with the school environment, volunteer workers and church staff who come to the school and are able to support us with

supporting individuals, families and school priorities as well as forming closer links to enable us to better support families.

Additional staffing (when available) has allowed us to focus on children who due to background and earlier and existing child hood experiences are not on progress with the learning and or emotional well-being. We can give small group/1:1 support, monitor and track initiatives more closely to ensure they are having an impact and if not adapt and change. Additional staffing has also meant we have been able to run effectively parental engagement and learning activities in and out of school.

Continued professional learning for all staff to raise awareness of potential barriers and to continue to improve learning and teaching for all.

Parents reluctant to work with the school and/or support their child at home with experiences that would enhance their well-being and learning. This can be due to mental health, addiction and/o capability or their own school experiences.

Very challenging behaviour of some pupils which then takes the majority of staff time to support this and away from working with other pupils and families. No additional staffing can be put in place to support this due to funding and lack of availability. Training is very useful for staff but in some circumstances the support the child needs can be difficult to give when managing up to 32 other children in a class.

2. Are there any services that your school has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

Partnerships with 3rd sector partners has allowed us to provide, at little or no cost, additional support for children's learning and family learning activities that would have been more difficult to organise or provide at school level.

Trained counsellors working with individuals and families when needed.

While PEF money has been provided, in our case the cost of a full time counsellor would not be value for money due to lower number of referrals we would be likely to have (initially). Also available services that I am aware of work 1:1 with children and not the whole family.

Due to staffing situation in education we have not been able to have the number of staff we would have wanted or to cover absences; this has a knock on effect on the service we are able to deliver.

3. How do services provided outside of school support families who are affected by poverty help with educational attainment?

As before: Links with 3rd sector and charitable organisations and volunteers supports the work of the school and supports families and young people.

We have worked with Stretch a Nickel Foundation to provide identified groups of children small group work to enhance learning in numeracy and mathematics. This takes place outside the school building in a local church. Links to this church have also allowed us to run after school clubs that support emotional well-being, events to support family learning out with the school environment, volunteer workers and church staff who come to the school and are able to support us with supporting individuals, families and school priorities as well as forming closer links to enable us to better support families.

Health are invaluable to support children particularly where there are concerns over mental health and well-being or language and communication difficulties. Unfortunately this is a resource that can be very hard to access and often involves long waiting periods.

4. What else could be done to support the attainment of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

A concerted effort by government and all public bodies and voluntary/charity sector to work with families from pre-birth onwards to ensure all is done to support parenting, mental health, housing and physical health and nutrition before a child starts formal education. No sector should be able to disengage from support.

Use of the 3rd sector is underused and piece meal. Bringing this together in local areas to support the families before school even starts and post school would be beneficial to Scotland's society.

Other people who work to support young people who experience poverty, including work that helps attainment and achievement at school (this could be work that links in with a school or totally separate to school life):

We interviewed 12 tutors who volunteer in our Bright Sparks programme for ages P3-P7. Children are transported from schools to local centres for two hour sessions and nurture snack break with tutors. Many of these tutors have been involved in our programme for the last four years at no cost to the schools. Most of the tutors are retired teachers (both primary and secondary).

1. How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

We have supported the children with literacy and numeracy, helping them to identify their difficulties and teaching them strategies to overcome them. The ratio of adults to children (1:4) and the organisation of the sessions allows the children to develop greater confidence in their abilities by creating a situation in which they feel secure enough to make mistakes and ask for help as well as ask questions.

The relaxed atmosphere, with time built in for snacks and games, provides opportunities to develop their social and emotional skills. Meeting with children on a weekly basis has nurtured relationship with them which is also an attributing factor to their improved confidence and self-esteem. Working in small groups with pupils means that the children focus on tasks. Lots of positive praise increases their confidence. Building confidence in many children who have originally been hesitant in responding.

Devising different strategies for a range of skills so that children gain satisfaction from their work. Children receive more targeted and focussed support. Tasks are tailored to individual needs.

We have time to listen and respond to where the children are at on the day. I can adjust how I teach to suit that child and try and be innovative in my approach. We have a freedom to use various methods to help the children learn in a way they understand.

Barriers are low self-esteem and lack of home support. Erratic attendance makes learning difficult for some children because of lack of continuity which hinders progress.

2. Are there any services that you/your organisation has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

The most useful service we could provide would be to recruit more volunteer tutors to run similar groups for additional schools. Currently, we have recruited the volunteer base to support groups in three schools. Our current volunteers were recruited relationally, as one tutor heard about it and recruited all her friends.

The earlier we are able to intervene and support children, the more effective we can be.

3. If you work with schools/local authorities/others to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on this issue easy/difficult?

Thanks to the consistent cooperation and support from the Headteachers, school management and teachers, collaboration has been very easy as we all realise that raising attainment and wider achievement is our common goal.

Regular meetings with the class teachers of pupils attending Bright Sparks ensures that everyone is working towards same targets.

Limited or no contact with outside agencies that have dealings with children and their families can be a barrier to progress. Research shows that children engaged in education only spend 25% of their time in school, while 75% of their time is out with school, mainly in their communities. Stronger community ties with schools can provide more targeted support for children and families.

4. What else could be done to support the attainment/achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

To replicate the Bright Sparks model in other areas of deprivation.

Support for vulnerable families should be targeted from a very young age, pre nursery.

Children should be measured against their own attainments rather than national norms. Support for parents, especially in the early years is crucial to a child's continued development and achievement. More focused support within families to support their own child is essential.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

The Spark

1. How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?
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The Spark is a highly respected charity, committed to Early Intervention and Prevention, and providing support to families across Scotland. We are one of the leading providers supporting Health and Wellbeing in schools with a well-developed range of counselling and education programmes supporting Children & Young People, their parents/carers and teachers in primary, secondary and ASN schools as well as in community settings.

In the 3 years, 2014-2016, our Children and Young People's team worked with 21 primary schools and 13 secondary schools in some of the most deprived communities in Scotland. Our service has grown so that we are now delivering in around 40 schools across 8 Local Authorities in 2017/18. These local authorities include the Scottish Attainment Challenge Authorities of Clackmannanshire, North Lanarkshire, Glasgow, Inverclyde and West Dunbartonshire.

Good emotional health and positive mental wellbeing is fundamental to learning. The Scottish Attainment Challenge has highlighted this and, in our experience, there is a good understanding of this among teachers and senior staff in schools.

Children need to be in the right place to learn and having a counsellor embedded in the school staff team means we can respond to challenges as and when they occur. School staff benefit from regular contact with a named professional and there is the opportunity to share knowledge in support of the pupil.

We have found some of the Procurement Processes challenging to navigate and they can be a real barrier for schools wanting to work with us. Not all Local Authorities have given autonomy to local schools so that they can make their own decisions about who they choose to work with. We have an example of the Procurement Department in at least one Local Authority who delayed us working with a school for over a year despite the school deciding they wanted to work with us. In another Council area a school was prevented from buying counselling services from us by their Procurement Team.

We understand the value of Procurement rules in providing a level playing field for all and ensure fairness and competitiveness. Although it is the Scottish Government's view that schools should make the decisions that suit their particular situation it is our experience that some schools are being prevented from doing this.

The other main barrier to success is unrealistic expectations about what can be achieved by a Schools Counselling service. Pupils referred from counselling are

likely to have experienced trauma, abuse or neglect yet often the expectation is that counsellors can wave a 'magic wand' and resolve things quickly.

We have plenty of evidence that schools based counselling is effective and impacts positively on pupils' behaviour and performance. However, children who are traumatised and who have difficult home circumstances often need long term support.

2. Are there any services that you / your organisation has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

There is widespread recognition that around 20% of the mental health problems experienced by young people come from the school environment. 80% of the challenges that children and young people face come from the home.

Pupil Equity Fund is mainly targeted at support for pupils. In our case this generally revolves around counselling for the children and young people themselves allied with education programmes like our 'Relationship Resilience' and 'Tackling Violence' workshops. We are also asked to provide CPD support to teachers, such as our licensed 'Relationship First Aid' programme.

We strongly believe that some of the problems experienced by children are so entrenched in the home that systemic family counselling is necessary yet funding for this is beyond the remit of individual school's Pupil Equity Fund. There are also a number of Family Support initiatives working in and around schools yet they don't provide the deep level of support needed in families where trauma is evident.

3. If you work with schools/local authorities/others to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on this issue easy/difficult?

We work methodically from the earliest stages with schools to build shared understanding of the counselling service in the school and the problems and issues that pupils face. Through regular contact with school staff both at an operational level and at senior management we can build a picture of the effectiveness of our interventions. We build regular monitoring into our programme of activity and periodic evaluation reports are used to continuously improve the service we provide.

A key part of this is helping the schools to recognise pupils that can benefit the most from counselling. It is not the children and young people with the highest of tariffs that can benefit most. CAHMS is set up to help them. There is a big issue in CAHMS of waiting lists and there is also increased awareness of the significance of Children and Young People's Mental Health.

It can be the quiet, withdrawn child who needs counselling help most. Perhaps there has been a family bereavement or parents are having relationship difficulties. An early counselling intervention can help improve the situation before the child exhibits more externalised behaviour and emotions.

It's a learning process for all.

4. What else could be done to support the attainment /achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

We are experiencing an increasing demand for our Schools Counselling service. Many schools are increasing the number of days that our counsellor is in attendance. Collaboration between third sector providers is essential and often a multi-agency approach provides real benefit for Emotional Wellbeing in the school.

Procurement and finance initiatives shouldn't be restrictive. Initiatives need to be led by the needs of each school and their pupils.

The Spark
22 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Young Scot

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty Young Scot's work with young people experiencing poverty

Young Scot is the national youth information and citizenship charity. We provide young people, aged 11 - 26, with a mixture of information, ideas and incentives to help them become confident, informed and active citizens.

Young Scot is delivering a project funded by the Scottish Government to help close the attainment gap in partnership with six Scottish local authorities over a three-year period, the first three of which are Renfrewshire, North Ayrshire and Highland.

This project aims to harness the smart technology in the Young Scot National Entitlement Card (Young Scot NEC), together with our model of information, rewards and discounts to provide targeted support to disadvantaged young people, particularly those in the younger years of secondary education.

The project comprises:

- » A universal element in which new locally relevant information, rewards and discounts aims to improve the situation of all young people in the target local authorities – with a focus on health and wellbeing
- » A targeted element through which disadvantaged young people will receive new and enhanced entitlements using the Young Scot NEC to improve their attainment – we aim to provide enhanced entitlements around travel/transport, food poverty, cost of the school day and access to leisure and extra-curricular opportunities.

This project is currently in the process of finalising pilot projects and work plans, and therefore the local authorities have not yet started to implement their work. As such, we do not yet have results from our own work tackling the attainment gap. However, we can share the learning that has informed the planning of our work on this project.

Support without stigma

Assistance that is targeted to disadvantaged young people is likely to be part of any cost-effective plan to tackle the attainment gap. However, uptake of that assistance can be limited as young people may feel stigma from receiving a benefit based on poverty or disadvantage.

One solution to this can be demonstrated in schools where the Young Scot NEC can give entitlement to free school meals for some young people, while others use the same Young Scot card to spend money topped-up by their parents/carers.

The ultimate vision of our attainment work is to expand that principle to other targeted assistance so that disadvantaged young people can use the Young Scot NEC to show eligibility for services such as food, transport or leisure facilities, while other young people use the card for Young Scot's rewards and discounts.

In this way disadvantaged young people, including those living in poverty, can reduce the cost of the school day and improve health and wellbeing without feeling the stigma associated with traditional targeted service provision.

Insights from Young Scot's Co-design work

Young Scot plays a key role in supporting partners to engage and consult with young people across Scotland, helping them to influence the design and delivery of policy and services.

Our co-design service involves young people systematically co-creating, co-producing, co-designing and co-delivering solutions. Young people are involved much earlier in decision making through a highly participative approach, developing informed insights, ideas, recommendations and solutions for policy and practice. In this work, Young Scot has supported young people to speak about a number of areas related to attainment and the barriers created by poverty.

Excite.Ed

The Excite.Ed project was part of a review by the Scottish Government seeking views into 'how to deliver excellence and equity in Scottish Education'. The project partners Young Scot, Children in Scotland and the Scottish Youth Parliament delivered Excite.Ed between September 2016 and January 2017.

Over 1,000 young people contributed to its findings and helped to identify the changes needed for an improved and fairer education system in Scotland.

This work showed young people wanted to be more involved in decisions that affect them, as well as the ability to clearly articulate practical methods for doing so. The recommendations about equal opportunities may be particularly relevant to the Committee:

- » They felt that smaller and more rural schools should be getting **access** to the same classes, tech and teachers as larger ones.
- » Teachers **understanding** the needs of the pupils in their class and giving support fairly. Not ignoring both the people who do not need support and those who do.
- » Young people want to see a **fair split** of resources and look for new ways that money can be saved – like sharing text books and online learning.
- » **LGBT training and support** should be mandatory in schools - Not speaking about LGBT only exacerbates misunderstandings
- » Everybody should be in the same class and **not separated** into highest and lowest/streams.
- » More should be done to **support** pupils who are not taking the academic route after school and that other routes do not necessarily mean the young person is not capable.

LevelUp

In another project called LevelUp, SQA, in partnership with Young Scot, was commissioned by the Scottish Government to co-design and deliver research into young people's experience of the education and training system in Scotland.

A total of 210 young people were engaged from a broad range of backgrounds. The depth of engagement was high, generating a combined total of 1,100 volunteer hours – an average of five hours per participant.

Key findings:

- » The study found that poor attendance and low attainment were often the result of **personal and social issues**, such as mental and physical health problems, family breakdown, bereavement and caring responsibilities.
- » There is a perceived **lack of parity of esteem** between academic and vocational career pathways, with fewer options available to those who want

to pursue technical subjects in the senior phase of secondary school, and an assumption that those who do well academically should go to university.

- » **Parents** are key influencers on young people's career choices and learner journeys, both directly and indirectly.
- » For disengaged young people with unstable family backgrounds, **grandparents** can be a positive and stabilising influence.
- » Young people's learner journeys are often influenced by **personal and social issues**, such as their own and family member's health problems, economic drivers (a need to earn money) and the skills and confidence gained through sports and other hobbies.
- » **Work experience** can have a profound impact on career choices, but young people report limited opportunities to access good quality placements.
- » Overcoming **bias of choices** – young people are aware of biases surrounding different post-school routes. University is positioned as the 'gold standard' for those who achieve well academically, with alternative options and routes rarely considered or discussed with this cohort. Vocational pathways, including apprenticeships and other types of training, were perceived as being a lesser option. Young people said that they would like to be given impartial information on all available pathways in order to make informed choices.

Child Poverty*

**please note that this information has not yet been published by Scottish Government, but we do have permission to include in our response:*

Young Scot recently held a workshop on child poverty with the Scottish Government Social Justice Strategy Unit in which 13 young people aged between 16 and 21 attended from across Scotland.

One exercise asked the group to consider barriers young people face in relation to child poverty. The most common barriers described were:

- » **Limited Opportunities** – The group felt that there were limited opportunities for young people in Scotland to participate in. Depending on your location some opportunities came at a cost and if you didn't have the money to engage you would miss out. Additionally, due to rural isolation opportunities were perhaps too far afield to participate in and if these do not include free travel young people wouldn't be able to take part.
- » **Exclusion in School** – The young people said that exclusion in school was a big issue as some schools deem it necessary to wear school uniform. However, if you or your parents are unable to fund this the schools would exclude you.
- » **Text books** - Also, to be able to study for exams you are required to pay for or buy text books. If money is hard to come by this lowers the chances of young people having a fair chance at passing exams.
- » **Money issues** – The whole group agreed with money being a big issue for young people in Scotland. The all said that money is needed to participate in anything and without this young people can feel isolated. They also felt that if you are from a low-income area or family that you often felt insecure about the way you look and that this leads to young people distancing themselves from others.
- » **Transport** – Transport was a big issue for the group. Due to cost of travel from certain areas, specifically more rural areas, young people are less likely

to gain positive life experiences. They also said that no matter what your background or circumstances are child fares are often too high and this makes it impossible to travel to places or meet up with friends. The group felt that it was wrong to charge high prices because of the distance you live from a town centre or major city. They felt that all bus companies should have the same fares for young people.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

YouthLink Scotland

Response by YouthLink Scotland to Scottish Parliament Education and Skills Committee Inquiry: Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

YouthLink Scotland is the national agency for youth work. We are a membership organisation, representing regional and national youth organisations from both the voluntary and statutory sectors. We champion the role and value of youth work and represent the interests and aspirations of our sector. Youth work is part of the wider grouping of informal and non-formal learning which is known as Community Learning and Development. Our sector has a workforce in excess of 75,000 – including over 70,000 adult volunteers. We reach in excess of 380,000 young people in youth work opportunities each week. Youth work has three essential and definitive features:

- Young people choose to participate
- Youth work must build from where young people are
- Youth work recognises the young person and the youth worker as partners in a learning process

This response is informed by YouthLink Scotland members, and we support the submissions made by individual members of YouthLink Scotland. We would be happy to speak with the committee further regarding this matter and to represent the views of the youth work sector.

Question 1: How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

Youth work is taking place in many of Scotland's primary and secondary schools: supporting vulnerable young people, providing an alternative curriculum, enhancing learning through youth awards, providing opportunities for achievement, intervening at times of transition, and in developing the young workforce. YouthLink Scotland believes that youth work can support the closing of the educational attainment gap in 5 ways¹⁴⁴.

- Increases social and emotional wellbeing
- Supports targeted approaches to literacy and numeracy
- Gain qualifications and skills for employability
- Differentiated support
- Engaging beyond the school

¹⁴⁴ YouthLink Scotland (2017) 5 Ways Youth Work is Closing the Attainment Gap, YouthLink Scotland: Edinburgh

The diversity within the youth work sector makes us well placed to respond to local need and priorities – we have within our membership a range of organisations providing specialisms in, for example: outdoor learning, equalities, accredited learning, youth achievement, youth participation, mental health, mentoring, advocacy, and employability. Irrespective of which organisation or which approach is being taken the commonality of ‘what works’ is based on effective and trusting relationships between the youth work organisation and the school leadership team. We would direct you to the evidence submissions of our individual members to understand what works at a programme delivery level.

To profile just a few examples for the committee – we have included case studies of youth workers working to close the attainment gap. These three examples were all finalists in the recent YouthLink Scotland, National Youth Work Awards. The first two examples show the importance of personalised and tailored support for young people who are experiencing difficulties learning; through poor attendance and undiagnosed supported needs. The role of the youth worker in these examples is to deliver sustained and committed relationships with young people, which are led by the young person and which meet their needs. In these circumstances, the young people went on to attain qualifications and to achieve in learning and volunteering. In the third example, characterised by the essential and definitive features of youth work has delivered achievement outcomes for young people, in particular The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award. We would draw the committee’s attention to the evidence submitted by The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award Scotland and the Youth Awards Network of the value of achievement awards. We would also ask the committee to note [our response](#)¹⁴⁵ to the Scottish Government’s consultation on measuring the attainment gap.

Prince’s Trust Scotland – Achieve In-Centre (Names have been changed)

Youth worker, Morag has supported John, a pupil at a Glasgow secondary school. Just over a year ago John’s attendance at school was below 80% and she spent most of her time drinking. *“I hated looking at myself in the mirror. I hated myself full stop. My dad committed suicide when I was younger, and it affected my mental health. I would get angry and totally flip out and then cry, but I didn’t know why. It affected every part of my life. I felt like I didn’t fit, so I stopped trying.”*

John was persuaded by her school to attend **Achieve In-centre**, a personal development programme that helps young people reach their potential through practical, activity-based learning. *“I went to Achieve for six weeks and was completely out of my comfort zone, but it was fun. It helped me manage my feelings and talk about my past, and that felt really good.”* Within two weeks, John was given the opportunity to go back to school and, for the first time, she enjoyed it. *“I changed my whole lifestyle. I moved away from bad friendships, I went back to school and I’ve been accepted on an access*

¹⁴⁵ YouthLink Scotland (2017), Consultation on Measuring the Attainment Gap and Milestones Towards Closing It: Response by YouthLink Scotland. YouthLink Scotland: Edinburgh

East Ayrshire Council - Vibrant Communities Youth Work Team

Youth worker, Mhairi, became the key community worker to Auchinleck Academy, she was asked to support a care experienced young person who is also a school refuser and who was in S3 to return to school. This pupil had stopped attending school after the first week of first year and refused to return to the school building and engage in education. The young person suffered with extremely high levels of anxiety and social and emotional and social difficulties.

Mhairi began to build a rapport with the young person, meeting him in the community centre one afternoon a week. Building his trust and being a real support for him, someone who he can talk to and rely on to be there. Mhairi began to notice his struggles with social situations, and how he would withdraw eye contact and from conversation. Mhairi's professional judgment enabled her to discuss with the school and the young person the possibility of having him assessed for Autism, this led to an assessment of being on the autistic spectrum. This condition had been missed for many years and only now would he be able to have the support he needed.

Over the next year, Mhairi has supported him to become more confident and improve his self-esteem. Mhairi continued to support him at the community centre and worked with him to complete coursework for National Qualifications. Although never returning to school, the young person with the help of Mhairi has changed his future path way.

Renfrewshire Council Outdoor Learning Team

The outdoor learning team have really pushed the boundaries with young people who often struggle to cope within a school environment. The team provide an alternative learning environment through the provision of a "classroom without walls" young people achieve meaningful and positive outcomes as a result. The young people develop real self-esteem and self belief through learning fairly complex sets of skills and knowledge around bush- craft and survival skills.

Award or by improving attendance and engagement within the wider school community. The team focus their efforts on ensuring that young people are given lots of opportunity to participate at a level which is appropriate to their learning needs. Team members' belief in encouraging young people to develop from their individual starting point; and are dedicated to working without prejudice and with great patience. They are motivated by providing a really interesting and nurturing environment where young people can achieve in an alternative learning setting.

The outdoor classroom is being experienced by six secondary schools in the authority and there is a growing demand for this approach because it is seen to be so effective at helping young people to achieve in alternative

Question 2: Are there any services that you / your organisation has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

YouthLink Scotland believes that youth work can make a meaningful impact on 'summer learning loss' and 'holiday hunger'. A recent report¹⁴⁶ by RAND education in America "Make Summer Count" demonstrated that lower income groups suffer disproportionately by missing the summer learning opportunities their peers have. In short, the attainment gap widens over the summer. The report found that holiday learning provision worked best when involving community organisations in their delivery. It is our view that youth work organisations are well placed to deliver this – and to expand existing residential and day programmes that exist, ensuring that those young people experiencing poverty can be included at no cost and without stigma.

We have welcomed the increased recognition of youth work, informal learning, and community learning and development within recent policy drivers for education; however we still believe there is more to be done and we would draw attention to the [National Youth Work Outcomes](#) which have been developed by our sector. These outcomes bring clarity and consistency to the youth work offer and provides a useful framework for communicating youth work's impact with partners in schools. We would seek support from Scottish Government and Education Scotland to explore how this framework is acknowledged in contemporary education policy.

Question 3: If you work with schools/local authorities/others to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on this issue easy/difficult?

Our members tell us that successful collaboration comes when:

- There are opportunities for joint and shared planning; and a clear understanding of the need of the learners, school or community
- Youth work programmes are evaluated and there is evidence of impact
- Youth workers are trusted partners in the life and ethos of the school; and where their professional identity is understood and valued
- There is strong and effective school leadership which values and welcomes partnership working with local authority youth services or third sector youth work organisations

One of our member organisations, Youth Scotland, conducted research with community based youth work organisations regarding their experience of engaging schools for the delivery of Pupil Equity Funds; and in their report a youth worker said:

"We found it a very welcoming approach from our local high school because of our track record of achievement with them in the past and the fact the school know we work well with those young people who are being excluded or within the poverty deciles that the school welcome a youth work approach as they

¹⁴⁶ Sloan McCombs et al. (2011) Making Summer Count: how summer programs can boost children's learning <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Making-Summer-Count-How-Summer-Programs-Can-Boost-Childrens-Learning.pdf>

see that we have positive relationships with a lot of the young people they struggle to engage with.”

The experience of successful youth work and school partnerships for delivery of Pupil Equity Funds and Scottish Attainment Challenge is not without its difficulties and our members regularly tell us of their frustrations and barriers they face.

- **Not being known** – if youth work organisations do not have established working relationships within the community it is much more difficult for their services to be engaged to support pupils. This is particularly challenging for national youth organisations; who would have previously engaged with the local authority to establish a relationship/service level agreement and set out their youth work offer; this is increasingly now required to take place at school level and most national third sector youth work organisations simply do not have the capacity to deliver this.
- We are also hearing anecdotally that some Headteachers are **wary of third sector organisations**, and believe that they are on a ‘sales pitch’ - to counter this we have worked with Education Scotland, Scottish Government and other national intermediaries to produce [national guidance](#), which states:

“The third sector has experience in delivering projects which address each of the three priorities identified for the Scottish Attainment Challenge but is particularly well placed to support improvements to health and well-being and to improve employability skills and school leaver destinations.”

- Lack of transparency of how schools publish their **School Improvement Plans**. Schools are not required to publish their School Improvement Plans in any consistent way – this makes it difficult for youth work organisations to find out what the attainment needs of the school is, and to tailor a programme of support which would meet learners’ needs.
- Lack of awareness by other educationalists of **youth work’s professional values** and contribution that a youth worker can have on the ethos of the school. Many head teachers do not know what a youth worker does, or the skills and approach they could bring to their school. We know there is a shortage of teachers and schools are having difficulties in recruiting – we believe that in some circumstance they could appoint a suitably qualified Youth Worker – particularly for matters related to attendance, achievement and community partnerships. We would welcome further political and senior strategic leadership which explicitly recognises and values the professional skills and competences of youth workers as non formal educators.

Question 4: What else could be done to support the attainment /achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

YouthLink Scotland would welcome further opportunities and financial resources for **community based learning** (alternative provision, evening, weekends, and during school holidays) for young people to be supported to both attain and achieve. Youth work organisations are well placed to deliver this.

YouthLink Scotland would welcome financial investment and support for **evaluating and researching youth work's impact on closing the attainment gap**. We currently have a range of programme specific evaluations, and we would value the opportunity for investment to further our national research and evidence base.

Our members have told us that the young people that they work with, who are living in poverty, need **more financial support**. The cost of school uniform, school excursion, menstrual hygiene products, curricular costs, textbook costs, and travel to and from school etc. are impacting on their ability to achieve and attain. Ways in which we believe this could be addressed is through:

- Increase in the value of Education Maintenance Allowance
- Increased value and frequency of payment for the School Clothing Grant
- Free menstrual hygiene products in schools and community settings
- Reducing the costs of the school day

We would also welcome increased **access to school and community premises for learners 'out of hours'** where learners can get access to reliable internet connection and IT equipment. We cannot assume that young people living in poverty have **digital access**; and increasingly class content, advice and support is being communicated via digital education platforms and social media.

Ultimately, we believe that the **root causes of poverty** must be addressed – as education alone will not be able to close the gap.

Susan Hunter
Senior Development Officer (Policy and Research),
YouthLink Scotland
22 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Youth Scotland

Youth Scotland would like to thank the Scottish Parliament Education Committee for the opportunity to contribute towards this Inquiry. Youth Scotland is Scotland's national charity supporting the delivery of community-based youth work. We believe that every young person has potential and high quality community-based youth work helps young people to realise their potential. We deliver a range of projects and services which support a network of over 1,100 youth groups running in diverse communities the length and breadth of Scotland. These groups work with over 64,000 young people aged 8 – 25 years old. Young people are supported by more than 7,500 passionate and committed youth workers, of whom nearly 5,000 are volunteers.

1. How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

Community-based youth work is well placed to support the objective of closing the attainment gap because of the holistic approach which underpins quality youth work. We know it is this long term approach based on building relationships that lays the foundation for good youth work, as outlined in the defining nature and purpose of youth work:

- Young people choose to participate
- The work must build from where young people are
- Youth work recognises the young person and the worker as partners in the learning process

A relationship between a young person and youth work is different from those with parents and teachers. Through these relationships youth workers are able to work with young people to support them, wherever possible, to overcome the issues that are impacting on their ability to succeed. This can range from supporting young people to re-engage in school or to identify alternative learner pathways that will enable them to attain qualifications and achieve their potential.

Youth work offers an opportunity for young people to participate on their own terms, when they want to and where they want to. A good youth worker is clear about their intent and understands their role as an informal educator. They believe that all children and young people want to learn but we need to create the right conditions for them to do so. This may be about providing a listening ear when things are tough at home, creating a bit of time out away from the community in which they live or creating a group work programme where they can learn along with their peers in an informal setting.

Dona Milne, Youth Scotland Chair and Consultant in Public Health

A recently published systematic review of research¹⁴⁷ found that universal youth work can lead to positive health and wellbeing outcomes for young people through providing “safe yet challenging spaces for personal and social development and intercultural learning” (2015: 74).

Youth Scotland supports our member groups, youth workers and young people through:

- High quality training and development programmes for youth workers
- Support to set-up youth groups
- Leadership programmes for young people
- National youth work projects for young people
- Nationally recognised accreditation for young people’s achievements through
 - Hi5 Awards for children aged 5+;
 - Dynamic Youth Awards which are for young people aged 10+; and
 - Youth Achievement Awards at levels Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum which are for young people aged 14+ (16+ for Platinum).

Through completing these awards, young people develop a range of personal and social skills, increasing their confidence, self-esteem, teamwork, communication, problem solving and leadership skills. They also develop study skills through planning, recording, reviewing and evidencing their learning.

Youth Scotland’s Awards are externally quality assured by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and levelled on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) from levels 2 (Hi5 Award) through to level 7 (Platinum Youth Achievement Award). The Youth Achievement Awards are an SQA customised-award which means their achievement is included in a young person’s SQA Scottish Qualifications Certificate. Between 2002 and 31 March 2017, we have recognised the achievements of young people with over 46,000 awards being achieved.

Young people have told us themselves what difference achieving a Youth Scotland Award has had on their lives, from inspiring them to go on to University, to giving them the confidence that they can achieve even if they have not done well in school. A selection of these stories and videos can be found on our website and YouTube channel at:

<https://www.youthscotland.org.uk/media/1224/ys-awards-supporting-young-people-to-achieve-their-potential-their-stories-web.pdf>

<https://www.youthscotland.org.uk/about-us/our-stories/youth-scotland-s-awards-their-stories/>

2. Are there any services that you / your organisation has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

¹⁴⁷ McGregor, C. (2015). Universal Youth Work: A critical review of the literature. University of Edinburgh. Edinburgh

We know from our members' feedback that there are missed opportunities for schools to work in partnership with community-based youth groups in their local area. Further detail is provided in question 3 below.

3. If you work with schools/local authorities/others to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on this issue easy/difficult?

In our recent members' survey, we asked youth groups to share with us their knowledge of and experience of being involved in efforts to close the attainment gap. While all of those who responded stated their desire and readiness to work with schools to support young people to fulfil their potential, there was only a very small number who reported that they are working in partnership with schools. It was clear from the responses of those people who have been successful in developing partnerships with schools that this has been the result of existing awareness and positive relationships at local levels. (A copy of our survey report is included with this response).

We also know from our direct delivery of projects and youth awards that relationships with key personnel in schools and local authorities are an important factor in working together to tackle the attainment gap. From our experience, the value of our Awards is helpful as their achievement makes a clear and measurable contribution towards closing the attainment gap, through their levelling on the Credit and Qualifications Framework and associated Insight Tariff points.

4. What else could be done to support the attainment /achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

Looking beyond the school gate

If we are to achieve our objective of closing the attainment gap, then reforms need to account for the fact that a significant proportion (estimated to be between 80-85%) of a young person's learning happens outwith classroom and school settings.

Young people have a range of learning styles and there needs to be recognition of how community- based youth work contributes towards young people being able to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. These skills will not solely be developed in the classroom. Youth Scotland's Awards provide a valuable measure of young people's learning and personal development, with many young people taking a pathway through the levels of award, from Dynamic Youth (at level 3) through to Platinum Youth Achievement (at level 7). In many cases, these awards recognise and accredit young people's informal learning opportunities and there are numerous examples of young people, particularly those living in areas of deprivation, achieving higher level Youth Achievement Awards at SCQF levels 5, 6 and 7 who do not always achieve equivalent qualifications through formal education. These, and other youth awards, must be taken into account when measuring progress in closing the attainment gap.

The proposals for establishing a Headteachers' Charter and requirements for Pupil Participation should also include specific recognition of young people's experiences and achievements outwith school in youth work settings and how this positively

benefits their attainment within school. Going forward, it is essential that schools and community-based youth groups are supported to develop effective partnerships which can enable young people to achieve their potential, including attaining qualifications in and achieving beyond school. Therefore it is vital that the final suite of performance measures for closing the attainment gap does not inadvertently lead to these relationships being stifled or unnecessary obstacles put in their way. It would be an indicator of clear progress in recognising the value of community-based youth work if the performance measures sought to reinforce partnership working between schools and youth groups.

Alongside this written submission, we would also draw the committee's attention to a short [report on a survey of youth groups' experience of engaging in the Attainment Challenge](#) along with young people's stories of the impact of completing youth awards at the following link:

<https://www.youthscotland.org.uk/about-us/our-stories/youth-scotland-s-awards-their-stories/>

Mark McGeachie
Head of Partnerships & Sustainability
Youth Scotland
22 March 2018

SUBMISSIONS FROM FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Colleges Scotland

Response to the Inquiry on Attainment and Achievement of School Aged Children Experiencing Poverty

Introduction

Colleges Scotland is the membership body for all Scotland's 26 colleges, sited in our local communities and providing education, skills and training in the right place at the right time to support the needs of individuals, their communities, and the labour market. Colleges Scotland is grateful to the committee for the opportunity to respond to this inquiry on the attainment and achievement of school-aged children experiencing poverty. Our responses to the committee's questions are below.

Response to Questions

1. How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

Colleges are a first choice and a second chance for many people. Scotland's college sector extends across the length and breadth of the country, with our estate sited in the communities we serve, whilst also offering distance learning opportunities. Colleges are the destination of choice for school leavers, providing education and skills training across all levels from Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) level 1 to level 12, National 1 to Doctoral Degree.

Whilst acknowledging Scotland's colleges as the first-choice destination for school leavers, it is important to consider the role of the college sector in providing pathways through education and in the context of the committee's inquiry, with particular thought given to senior phase pupils and young people who are not being retained at school. Locally and regionally, colleges are working with schools, training providers, local authorities, employers and other partners to ensure that opportunities exist for individuals to develop skills and competencies which they can use to progress in education, or into employment.

Some live examples of these opportunities include school-college partnerships which give young people in the senior phase of school the opportunity to undertake a variety of vocational learning courses at college, timetabled into their school curriculum. Another example is the relatively new Foundation Apprenticeship, which provides senior phase pupils with a vocational training opportunity spanning two years and qualification delivered in college as part of the school curriculum. Edinburgh College's [College Courses for Senior Phase Pupils \(S4-S6\)](#) illustrates some of the offers available to pupils in the senior phase, in the Edinburgh region. With both of

these models, the introduction of the college as a delivery vehicle for education and skills training has the added value of demystifying college for young people and introducing the facilities, equipment and opportunities that they may not have been aware of before. In order to make this approach a consistent offer across the country, consideration should be given to including colleges in the senior phase planning and delivery process.

Scotland's colleges have extensive technical and professional education and training provision, and our sector is clear that for young people leaving school (and indeed for adult returners) a college pathway is of equal standing and value to any other post-16 opportunity. However, the college sector remains concerned that this may not be the view of key influencers in a young person's life and would be supportive of further work on this with children, their parents and carers, teachers and other influencers. Our inclusive and supportive delivery model, combined with local provision, means proportionally more of our student population come from socio-economic disadvantage as compared to the university student population. As the Scottish Funding Council's [Higher Education Students and Qualifiers at Scottish Institutions 2016-17 Report](#) outlines, 23.2% of all higher education students from the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland are studying at colleges.

An excellent and timely example of work which has worked well to support the educational attainment of children and young people has been the step-change in identifying and supporting care experienced students into college.

Although the college application form will ask if the applicant is care experienced, there is no obligation on the student to declare their background. Through concerted efforts and campaigns to ensure applicants understand that the purpose of the tick box is to provide those eligible with additional support, there are now more declarations of care experience, but there is a risk that some applicants with care experience still choose not to declare.

Scotland's colleges were already providing enhanced support to care experienced applicants and students (underpinned by the Buttle Quality Mark) before the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act was passed in 2014. With this legislation in place, and the responsibility on colleges as Corporate Parents, there has been a notable correlating rise in care experienced individuals declaring their status to the college, which has allowed for support structures to be put into place proactively in time for these students beginning their course in collaboration with other services supporting each individual student.

Although it is still early in this process to evidence the overall impact on outcomes, anecdotally it has been suggested that retention and attainment has seen a marked improvement in the college sector for these students. It is clear that sharing information between corporate parents and supporting services has improved communication, awareness and access to this support to give these students everything they need to learn and succeed.

In providing a range of education and skills training opportunities, at all levels of education, and with a holistic and evidence-based approach to supporting students

with a range of needs, the college sector has been crucial to the educational attainment of children and young people regardless of their prior attainment.

2. Are there any services that you / your organisation has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

For children and young people at school living in low income households, their parents or carers can make an application to the local authority for financial help to buy school uniforms, and for the child to receive free school meals (which can in some local authorities include breakfast). However, this local authority provision does not extend to young people who could otherwise be at school but who are undertaking their education or skills training in a college. Ensuring that children and young people are equipped for the day is essential for successful learning, and this must include alleviation of hunger. Good practice in this regard exists within the college sector, for example, at Dumfries and Galloway College, which has provided a breakfast club for students to ensure they have access to food.

Good practice exists across the education sector for supporting children and young people into, and through, education. There is an opportunity for closer alignment between schools, colleges, universities and third sector organisations to ensure cohesive support is applied consistently and collaboratively.

It should be considered by the committee that in times of challenging financial constraints, often the impact felt by efficiency savings on support systems is particularly acute. In order to underpin inclusion, and support retaining students in education and attaining qualifications, support services are essential and require to be funded. These support systems might include (but are not limited to) direct staff support, assistance with transport provision to and from college, and investment into expanding digital capacities to underpin distance learning.

3. If you work with schools/local authorities/others to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on this issue easy/difficult?

Infrastructure supporting partnership working between schools, local authorities and colleges is not consistent between regions and nationally, meaning that the offer to the learner is not consistent from school to school. This can make collaboration more challenging as examples of good practice in some partnership arrangements may be difficult to implement in other contexts. Colleges Scotland recognises that the new Regional Improvement Collaboratives may provide a platform for more strategic alignment and collaboration.

An example of good collaboration is the school-college partnership arrangements where education and training opportunities are made available in college for pupils in the senior phase to explore a range of subjects which are not available in the school setting. Not only does this provide other areas of interest for school-age students, but this provision gives learners responsibility for getting to the college, being on time, and directing their learning.

Finally, opportunities and pathways available to today's school learners are markedly more advanced than a generation ago. It is critical that the influencers in children and young people's lives are up-to-date with these changes, and that they are empowered to help their charges while they are assessing which opportunity may be best for them. A challenge to collaboration, particularly in encouraging children and young people to consider newer pathways (for example the newer apprenticeship pathways, or college qualifications which articulate into university with full recognition of prior learning), is that key influencers may reflect on the opportunities which were available during their own school experience and which are not reflective of the opportunities available today.

4. What else could be done to support the attainment /achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

At present, the totality of an applicant's previous history available to the college is contained on the application form. This will give the college insight as to the SIMD ranking of the applicant's home address at the time of application, but SIMD does not indicate household income and although it is a helpful indicator of deprivation, it is not a specific tool which can be individualised to each learner.

With this in mind, it should be noted that colleges do not have access to any information about a college student's history until they have enrolled and, although at that point the college will have access to Skills Development Scotland's Data Hub, it is likely the college will have gleaned that information from the student already and the data hub serves mainly to confirm that information, rather than as a tool to allow colleges to plan support effectively in advance of the course commencing.

Colleges Scotland understands that this decision was made by the Information Commissioner reflecting concerns that an individual could apply to multiple colleges before securing a place and, by waiting until the student has enrolled, this protects the student's data being held by institutions that they will not attend. It should be noted that in consulting with Colleges Scotland members, they noted that gathering effective and up-to-date information is the 'easy' part. Having the time, staff capacity and resource to get the right intervention in place is where the value would happen.

Colleges Scotland is supportive of the introduction of the Pupil Equity Fund, and the clear guidance to target the poverty-related attainment gap. Currently, allocation is calculated on students up to and including S3 who are eligible and registered for free school meals using the latest available data. Colleges Scotland believes that expanding the Pupil Equity Fund into the senior phase of school would provide resource and funding which could underpin innovative partnership projects to support attainment of young people at a key decision-making phase of school.

Thoughtful consideration must be given to the financial needs of children and young people. Colleges Scotland recognises that the Student Support Review recommendations are under consideration and would advocate for any changes to the student support system, and the guidance underpinning delivery, to prioritise the needs of the most financially vulnerable students.

Additional Information

The committee may wish to reflect on two particular pieces of research conducted recently on behalf of the Scottish Funding Council in considering this issue:

1. Croll, N et al (2016) [*The University of Glasgow and West of Scotland Local Authority Partners: how to engage with MD40 pupils in higher progression schools – SFC Impact for Access Project report*](#)

This report evaluated that although the residential postcode of the pupil was a factor in attainment regardless of school attended, students from SIMD40 backgrounds attending schools with high levels of progression to university were progressing onto higher education study and attaining qualifications at a *lower* rate in comparison to their peers from wealthier backgrounds, and that this gap was larger than for students from SIMD40 backgrounds in schools with lower levels of progression to university.

2. Gorard, S. and Siddiqui, N. and Boliver, V. (2017) [*An analysis of school-based contextual indicators for possible use in widening participation.*](#)

This research found that although eligibility and receipt of free school meals was the best indicator of deprivation, cognisance must be taken of the length of time an individual has been entitled to free school meals as the longer a student has been entitled to free school meals has a negative impact on their attainment.

Colleges Scotland
March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Heriot-Watt University

Introduction

Heriot-Watt is a university which is committed to rigorous selection of students on competitive merit; and is by history and ethos averse to social exclusivity and every other form of discrimination. For a university of our type, and with a recruitment catchment for Scottish students mainly in the southeast of the country, we have already made good progress towards a student profile that is socially inclusive. In particular, over the period 2012-2016 the University achieved step changes in terms of entrants from SIMD20/40 (the 20% and 40% most disadvantaged neighborhood's in Scotland as identified by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) and also in entrants articulating with full credit for Higher National qualifications achieved at Colleges in Scotland.

Heriot-Watt University's current intake from disadvantaged communities includes 342 students from SIMD40 (of which 156 are from the most disadvantaged communities – SIMD20) – an increase of over 100 from 2012/13. Our aim is to continue to grow these numbers to 400 entrants from SIMD40 by 2021/22.

Building on our experience and track record, we will seek over the next three years and beyond to achieve further progress in all aspects of widening access, recognising the long- term aspiration voiced by the First Minister for fully “equal access” and the targets and milestones identified in the report of the Scottish Commission on Widening Access. Our principal strategies over the coming years will continue to include:

- Effective outreach – to target schools, colleges and communities, to increase aspiration and motivation to access Higher Education, and help applicants make informed choices and support them through the transition to university.
- Development of contextual admissions – recognising nuances in the achievement of formal qualifications in disadvantaged as compared with relatively advantaged circumstances, and also where appropriate other indicators of potential to excel on an individual case by case basis, in line with developing best practice in admissions.
- Appropriate support for applicants and entrants in target groups – including expert advice and counselling services, preparatory and bridging activities where required including summer schools and enhanced induction and mentoring, and practical financial help through targeted bursaries and scholarships, both University-funded and externally financed, including valuable support from the Robertson Trust.

Specific questions

1. *How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?*

Heriot-Watt has run the Brightest Watt Summer Week Programme since 2010. It began as a partnership between the university, West Lothian Council and Baillie Gifford but has since expanded to take applicants from across the Lothian's, Fife, Forth Valley and the wider Lothian's region. The Brightest Watts 2017 programme ran from Monday 24th to Friday 28th July with 65 pupils taking part.

The programme offers pupils a range of workshop options covering diverse subjects such as Actuarial Science, Civil Engineering, British Sign Language along with other STEM subjects.

Feedback from the participant's evaluation forms was been very positive with many participants stating that they had gained a lot of confidence in considering attending a University and studying towards a degree, with comments such as; "The summer week helps a lot with confidence and future education. Overall Brightest Watts was a great experience."; "I got a lot of information about uni and helped me choose what I want to do".

Another important element of the programme's success is broadening participant's horizons and opening up new areas of study which they may never have considered. One participant commented on the Architectural Engineering workshop, "Very enjoyable, very interesting, wish there was more time" and another for Civil was, "It was amazing! Never thought of it before but now strongly considering it".

Since 2015 in addition to the series of activities around the Brightest Watts Summer Week, we have also developed a programme of activities with S1 pupils. This activity is primarily focused around one of our local schools with low rates of progression to higher education. For 2017/ 2018 we will be piloting activities over both S1 and S2 with this school, with two hands on workshops in school during S1, the Wheely Windy Challenge (an engineering activity) and Watts in a Language (a language activity with current students). New for this year the S2 pupils will take part in an in school workshop on Watts Uni All About (an introduction to options after school) and a visit to the Heriot-Watt campus. The idea is that a continuous intervention approach has more of a long term impact for the pupils. Keeping the programme to four interventions over the two years also means that from a resource point of view this is manageable, and gives the programme potential to be replicated in another school.

2. *Are there any services that you / your organisation has not been able to provide that you believe would work?*

Resourcing of services continues to be an issue across the University sector. The sustained funding from the Scottish Government is vital to the continuation of the programmes the University has put in place.

3. *If you work with schools/local authorities/others to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on this issue easy/difficult?*

Effective outreach is critical to the success of the University to attract and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Heriot-Watt University targets schools,

colleges and communities, to increase aspiration and motivation to access Higher Education, and help applicants make informed choices and support them through the transition to university.

A primary element of delivery of HWU's Wider Access strategy for Schools is to work collaboratively with other local partners and providers through the Lothian Equal Access Programme for Schools (LEAPS) programme. HWU is one of eleven subscribing partners to the LEAPS partnership, which includes all four Universities based in South-East Scotland, all local Councils and Skills Development Scotland. In recent years, over 100 LEAPS eligible students entered Heriot-Watt University per annum during 2013 (133 students), 2014 (127 students) and 2015 (107). Additionally around 10 to 15 students each year undertake the LEAPS Summer School in preparation for study at the University.

Heriot-Watt University offers a wide range of access points, and for many this means entering through College HNC and HND qualifications. The University was recently commended by the Commissioner for Fair Access, Sir Peter Scott, for offering 'true' articulation from College which offers the maximum exemptions for Advanced Entry to our degree programmes.

Over recent years we have more than doubled fully-articulating entrant numbers from Colleges and now seek to steadily increase this very positive flow towards 200 over the next 3-5 years.

The University continues to work in close partnership with colleges in our region – Fife, Forth Valley, West Lothian, Edinburgh and Borders. Over the coming years we will be looking at new possibilities for collaborative working offered by the Skills strands of the Edinburgh and Southeast Scotland City Region Deal, with a strong emphasis on STEM, awareness of regional skills plans, and potential for closer co-operative engagement also with schools and employers.

4. What else could be done to support the attainment /achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

Heriot-Watt believes that students require individual support. The University delivers tailored support for students requiring individual attention and support in the recruitment, application and admission process. Particular attention is currently being given to overcoming perceived obstacles and possible stigma associated with disclosing "care experience" so that applicants and students can benefit from support, and to educating staff and students on the different backgrounds and types of care experience. This forms part of the development of a Corporate Parenting policy and plan with advice from "Who Cares? Scotland".

Applicants and entrants declaring care-experience increased sharply in 2016 and 2017 and we will continue to engage positively with initiatives to promote opportunities and address barriers in this sector, taking an active role in the educational practitioners group (the Care Experience, Estranged and Carers East Forum) and supporting the regional hub.

Heriot-Watt University is committed to student retention through:

- Personal Tutoring: We have introduced a new Personal Tutoring system (previously academic mentoring) with enhanced guidance, training and support for academic staff undertaking the role and increased consistency of approach across the University. New arrangements are designed to ensure early student engagement with the personal tutor and then provide a minimum set schedule of meetings throughout the academic year.
- “Thinking of Leaving” service: This offers guidance and support to students considering leaving the University early. The visibility of the service has been much increased and student uptake has increased by two thirds in the first semester of 2016/17 compared with the previous year. 80% of students consulting the service continue at Heriot-Watt.
- New Student Induction: A new model of Induction has been developed, drawing on sectoral and institutional best practice, to ensure student integration in the crucial first weeks, and to promote development of a range of student social networks. The model will be fully rolled out in autumn 2017.
-

Further developments will be enabled from 2018 when enhancements of our student records information systems will allow more detailed analysis and proactive intervention.

Supplementing these approaches, which benefit all students, the Student Induction and Transition Office, established in 2013 to support the recent growth in wider access numbers, helps sign-post, tailor and personalise services to students from diverse backgrounds. A recent initiative is a short Summer School immediately before Freshers’ Week offered for entrants from SIMD40, SHEP schools, mature students from SWAP, College articulation students, care leavers, carers and others to give a head start in developing new academic skills and provide an early opportunity to find out about available support and resources.

Heriot-Watt University

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Universities Scotland

We welcome the Committee's focus on this area. Progressing to university is only one of many positive destinations pupils might take on leaving school. Moving straight into employment and into college are important and equitable markers of attainment. However, Scotland is also focused on widening access to university to those from all socio-economic backgrounds. Given that goal, we want to see every action taken to reinforce the commitment to a holistic approach to this issue. Joining-up the issues of attainment and achievement of school-age children experiencing poverty with widening access to university is one way to do this and something we very much support.

For this inquiry, we recognise that the Committee is particularly interested in hearing from young people themselves, their parents and carers and from teachers and schools. With that in mind, we limit our contribution to a few points:

The Committee's inquiry specifically asked: How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

Universities¹⁴⁸ are very active in engaging with schools and school-age children to support attainment. A recent audit of university-run bridging programmes found there to be over 100 in place that matched a specific definition¹⁴⁹ and delivered for pupils as young as four years of age through to adult learners.

We recognise that the sheer scale of these initiatives is likely to be overwhelming and create a difficult landscape for schools, parents and others to navigate. We see the benefits in trying to achieve better coordination of bridging programmes and have committed to actions in [Working to Widen Access](#) which would improve the national coherence of bridging programmes. Actions 12-14 are very relevant here. We would be happy to keep the Committee informed of progress.

Many university initiatives in schools or with school-age children are long running and very successful. As we are not the custodians of individual initiatives we have not provided details here but we hope that universities will take the opportunity to submit evidence of the positive impact of their support services and initiatives.

The Framework for Fair Access is highly relevant to this inquiry

We welcome the Committee's emphasis on evaluating the success of initiatives to support pupil attainment and achievement. We see the development, throughout 2018, of a Framework for Fair Access for Scotland as highly relevant in this context. The

¹⁴⁸ By which we mean universities and higher education institutions. There are 19 in Scotland.

¹⁴⁹ The definition of 'bridging programme' that we used can be found in Universities Scotland (2017) [Working to Widen Access](#), p28. It was defined as: "The essential purpose of a bridging programme is to help a learner overcome a gap in knowledge, skill, experience or aspiration or to help overcome a barrier between one place and other. That could be the transition between school, college or employment into higher education. Bridging programmes are systematic and are not just a one-off engagement."

Framework was recommendation number 2 in the *Blueprint for Fairness* report from Commission on Widening Access. Whilst this means it is probably most associated with universities and widening access, the Commission intended this to be useful from the early-years, onwards to university. The Framework is meant to focus on evaluation and share best practice. The *Blueprint* states that the Framework is due for publication in 2018.

The language in the recommendation is clear about its relevance to education at all levels:

“This authoritative, evidence based Framework should identify the most impactful forms of access activity at each stage of the learner journey, from early learning through to higher education and provide best practice guidelines on its delivery and evaluation.”

A tender for the development of the Framework went out in December 2017, and has subsequently been re-tendered by SFC in the absence of a satisfactory bid. If the Committee’s inquiry has scope, it might be valuable to look into the development of the Framework and ensure that it will deliver holistically. The Committee’s responsibility for early-year education, schools, colleges and universities makes it ideally placed to do so.

Scotland needs data that tracks progress into higher education

The Scottish Government’s recent consultation on the National Improvement Framework: [Measuring the Attainment Gap and Milestones Towards Closing it](#) proposed eight measures of the attainment gap. Our concern is that the only measure proposed for the senior phase (1 or more SCQF level 6 or above on leaving school)¹⁵⁰ does not get close enough to the attainment level needed to progress to university. Adding an additional measure in the senior phase would complement the objectives and support the Scottish Government’s other commitment on access, which is that by 2030 20 per cent of entrants to university should be from the 20 per cent most deprived neighbourhoods.

We recognise that there are many successful destinations after school. Therefore, the measures need to work for many stakeholders and serve many purposes. But we feel there is an important opportunity, currently missed, to also make the attainment gap measures work for the Government’s own access goals in university. We would like to see an additional measure of learners in SIMD20 and SIMD80+ who achieve four SCQF level 6 qualifications. We would like a grade profile to be specified in the measure but we would be happy to discuss the appropriate level with the Scottish Government. We feel that the level chosen should be consistent with the university sector’s work to adjust grades as part of contextualised admissions to support the goal of widening access. Including this would establish a baseline and then allow all stakeholders to track the proportion of SIMD20 school-leavers who qualify, or come very close to qualifying, for entry to university.

We have made this point more fully in [our response](#) to the Scottish Government’s consultation on the National Performance Framework.

¹⁵⁰ Scottish Government (2017) [National Improvement Framework Consultation](#), table 1, pg 5.

Universities are taking short-term actions to recognise achievement in other ways

Long-term, we absolutely agree that the goal that Scotland needs to achieve is to close the attainment gap at all levels and to have removed inequality of achievement, by socio-economic factors and protected characteristic. This is both a societal and generational goal and will have positive outcomes for those pursuing all post-school destinations be it employment or further study, including university. Yet, there are shorter-term measures, linked to recognising achievement that universities have committed to take which don't wait for that.

Scotland's 19 universities have agreed to make automatic offers to care experienced applicants who meet the minimum entry requirements for undergraduate study. This recognises the correlation between care experience and educational attainment. Data on the educational attainment of those with care experience is limited, but figures show only 15% of 'looked after' school leavers¹⁵¹ achieve one or more SCQF level 6 qualification, equivalent to a Higher, compared to an average of 62% of all school leavers.¹⁵² In the face of this substantial inequality, we feel it is only right to recognise the achievement of people with experience of care who succeed in reaching minimum entry requirements. It will begin from academic year 2019/20 once universities have set minimum entry requirements for their courses. This is action number 4 in our set of 15 actions as part of [Working to Widen Access](#).

Susannah Lane
Head of Public Affairs
Universities Scotland
21 March 2018

¹⁵¹ Universities Scotland prefers to consistently use the definition of care experience but the data set uses the definition 'looked after children'.

¹⁵² [Scottish Government \(2015/16\) Educational Outcomes for Looked After Children](#) p6, table 1.1.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

University of Stirling

Response from the University of Stirling on the attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

1. How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

The University of Stirling is committed to widening access to education, and our commitment to excelling in this area is set out in our Strategic Plan 2016-2021. The University deploys a multifaceted approach to engagement with children and young people in seeking to widen access and support attainment.

University of Stirling programmes often incorporate skills development sessions and outreach activities – to support the young person’s academic abilities and to provide young people the opportunity to spend time on a university campus.

In 2016, the University received funding from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) to develop and carry out a project on widening access and its inter-relationship with gender. The University collaborated with the Students’ Union on the project to engage with and encourage pupils from local secondary schools to consider the benefits of further and higher education. As well as making more visible the pathways to education that exist, the University also focussed on challenging gender stereotypes in education. Students who engaged with the project through 2016 and 2017 were considered for a contextualised offer of admission.

The project included outreach activity and a research project.

As part of the project, a two-day student-led event took place, which brought over 200 S4 pupils from secondary schools in the local community onto the University campus to experience, first hand, what studying at university could be like. This event was very successful, with 97% stating that they enjoyed the event and 91% willing to come back for another event.

It was clear from the research that further work needs to be undertaken to ‘influence the influencers’, as pupils said the biggest influence on future ambitions was the opinions of family members (76%), friends (21%) and teachers (16%). The capacity for universities to successfully engage parents and guardians for students from widening access backgrounds – who are less likely to have attended university themselves – is a particular challenge.

2. If you work with schools/local authorities/others to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on this issue easy/difficult?

The responsibility for pupil attainment rests with schools and local authorities, though

the FE and HE sector can support improved attainment and work closely in partnership. A key challenge in delivering impactful initiatives in an innovative, post-16 collaboration is the rigid funding streams and lack of access to project-based strategic funding across the education sector. If there was flexibility in the funding available, a more multidisciplinary approach could be taken to improve the achievement and attainment of children experiencing poverty.

3. What else could be done to support the attainment /achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

A critical barrier to overcoming attainment challenges is the ability to monitor impact and therefore drive investment to the most critical activities.

The University engages with many young people, not just those who apply to the University of Stirling, meaning that the subsequent attainment and progression of those pupils who do not apply to Stirling cannot be monitored. The introduction of a universal learner number which could support longitudinal studies of school attainment, interventions, access to and success in university study would be extremely beneficial.

As noted in the Universities Scotland submission, there is also a requirement for better data on attainment. The University of Stirling endorses this request:

“Only measure proposed for the senior phase (1 or more SCQF level 6 or above on leaving school) does not get close enough to the attainment level needed to progress to university. Adding an additional measure in the senior phase would complement the objectives and support the Scottish Government’s other commitment on access, which is that by 2030 20 per cent of entrants to university should be from the 20 per cent most deprived neighbourhoods.

We would like to see an additional measure of learners in SIMD20 and SIMD80+ who achieve four SCQF level 6 qualifications.”

The review should also consider intersectionality and the various levers to drive positive behaviour. For example, young people with care experience have far lower average attainment levels but are a critical group for engagement to improve attainment and to widen access to university. The University of Stirling provide individualised support for admission to university. In the admissions process, all applicants who have identified as ‘care experienced’ are contacted by the Widening Participation Officer to offer one-to-one support. This support can include a contextual offer of admission, guidance in student support funding application, invitation to campus and student residence tours and ongoing support. The population of care-experienced students has increased significantly in the past few years from 17 students with a declared care experience in 2013/14 to 128 in 2017. This is in large part due to contextual offers of admissions being given to students to recognise their capability for learning.

University of Stirling
23 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

University of Strathclyde

What is the relationship between poverty and educational attainment in children?

Before considering this question, it is important to make the point that, like all social outcomes, educational performance is shaped by a complex set of influences. Intellectual capacity is not just determined by genetics, but can be strongly influenced by external factors like prenatal drug use, environmental toxins, poor nutrition, and exposure to stress and domestic violence. All of these are more prevalent in low-income households, and affect cognitive development from before birth through to adulthood. If we are to improve educational attainment, it is likely that all these adverse influences need to be tackled. We would miss the opportunity for real improvement if we concentrated solely on schools.

Stress and brain development

Children living in poverty often experience life as a series of volatile situations over which neither they nor their caregivers have much control. Regular experience of such situations increases release of stress hormones which can impair development of neural connections in the brain. Inhibition of early development of the neural connections that enable executive function, leave children with academic and behavioural problems. Studies carried out in Scotland confirm poor emotional regulation, impulsive behaviour, poor attention and reduced working memory. These children are more likely to get into trouble in school and are less well able to learn.

These children fail to develop a sense of themselves as free individuals capable of making choices and acting on them to determine their lives. Instead, they react to crises that are magnified by their poor ability to plan ahead or reflect. This doesn't just affect educational success – studies have shown that a low sense of control over one's life has major health impacts in all areas, including health, educational outcome, offending and employment.

The effect of social context on struggling children.

Children from poor households are handicapped in many ways. A famous study carried out in 1995 in the US demonstrated that, by the age of four, children from poor households will have heard 32 million fewer spoken words than better-off children. More recent research has shown that quality of conversation differs as well. Parents with higher education and income are more likely to engage children with questions and dialogue that invite creative responses, while parents struggling with poverty often lack the time and energy for anything more than simple, goal-oriented commands.

In past decades, the availability of well-paid unskilled jobs created a virtuous cycle that allowed families of factory workers to raise stable families and send their children to university. In today's knowledge-based economy, moving out of poverty is far more difficult. With more competition for unskilled work and a minimum wage that has not kept up with inflation, attaining economic independence requires more education, planning, and interpersonal skills – precisely the areas in which low-income individuals are disadvantaged to begin with.

The reality for many families in poverty is an intergenerational pattern in which unstable and stressful early childhood environments lead to poor academic progress and difficult behavioural issues. The result is higher dropout rates from school, increased criminal convictions, teenage pregnancies and increased prevalence of substance misuse.

Tackling the problem of low attainment

Education is undoubtedly the key to escaping poverty, but poverty and the stresses associated with it remain the biggest obstacles to educational success. Harnessing the growing body of neuroscience knowledge is an effective and practical way of breaking the vicious cycle. Increasing insight into the neuroscience confirms that children who have experienced adverse early years can have the damage mitigated by supportive environments. The school and learning environments seem to be key to this process.

How do we design such support? There is plenty evidence that we are not using the best methods for improvement.

The use of targets and standards to improve public services can, in some circumstances, help. However, what we are seeing in many cases is unreasonable concentration on process targets and not enough understanding of outcomes and what causes them. Improvement methods which allow the whole system to be influenced by small tests of change and then implementing what front line staff have found to work, are far more effective in improving outcomes of complex systems than target driven methods which simply focus on isolated parts of the system.

Instead of pushing nationwide testing and higher standards across the board, education reform should focus on schools in poor neighbourhoods with targeted investments designed to counteract the effects of poverty on educational achievement. This process might involve such diverse activities as preschool and extended school hours, nutrition support, health care involvement, particularly for mental health issues, as well as parental training and mentoring programs to improve household stability. In effect, poor educational attainment is an issue for **all** public services and cannot be solved by schools alone.

Whether they target children or parents, programs must be implemented in a way that takes into account the difficulties that children and their parents face with coping with complex issues. Flexible scheduling, simple instructions, more incremental steps, reduced paperwork, and minimal penalties for participation lapses build trust and enhance willingness of parents to engage.

Additional comments from colleagues working in Educational Research include:

Recognise that learning happens in complex systems and needs to be assessed using appropriate methods

Test items may be proxy measures for core problems located elsewhere, so poor writing scores may mean that teachers are not reading stories aloud to the class. Weak data-use takes test items at face value and plugs the gaps. Strong data-use uses professional knowledge to determine possible pathways of influence and then how to intervene. Learning is social; effective interventions may need to make the whole learning environment better, not just be targeted at particular individuals or groups.

Pupil performance data should help professionals question the system and ask what is working, for whom. Knowing what to do requires analysis. Providing a 'skills based curriculum' to children with low scores creates a grad-grind 'pedagogy of poverty' and even slower progress. They need a curriculum that is **more** connected, interesting, challenging.

Don't expect parents to all be able to help equally well— parents in poverty are already under enough stress and tend to have lower academic qualifications and networks to help their children learning. Homework is not a level playing field. See: <https://www.bera.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Insights-Achievement-Gap-revised-v3.pdf>

HMIE need specific curricular knowledge and training, particularly in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They have new inspection routines. Perhaps discussion with experts would ensure that new inspection criteria are targeting things likely to make a difference to children in poverty?

What can be a problem?

- **Equitable staffing levels** and equitable distribution of permanent / more experienced teachers to advantaged and disadvantaged pupils. Pupils living in poverty are more susceptible to teacher quality and one year with a good teacher can add 1.5 years to attainment. Make sure that those classes with the poorest pupils don't go longest without a permanent teacher, or with a teacher teaching beyond his/her area of specific expertise. Scotland should routinely collect data on this. Particularly an issue in times of teacher shortage (like now). HMIE should comment on this.
- **Equitable range of subjects on offer** at different schools. We don't know if it is the case that schools serving poorer catchments have stopped offering Higher/Advanced Higher STEM subjects, for example, because no one is tracking this but HMIE should be commenting on it. How can there be equality of opportunity if fundamental subjects aren't on offer.
- **Setting and streaming** in primary and secondary sectors enshrines disadvantage: Children in poverty tend to be placed in low attainment groups and make less progress and often suffer a 'pedagogy of poverty' (low teacher expectations, a repetitive, grad-grind curriculum; dependency culture; labeling by peers and self...) so are doubly disadvantaged. Prof Becky Francis at UCL has a project on this for secondary. Some primaries are mistakenly streaming

children (putting them permanently into different classes) or setting children for literacy and numeracy. HMIE should notice and monitor and watch their language on this: 'high attainment' is not the same as 'high ability'.

- **RCTs don't provide sufficient evidence for action.** Scotland should look to MRC guidance on 'Developing and Evaluating Complex Interventions' – educators deserve implementation trials and field trials to understand complexity. S.Govt has bought, and is promoting, the EEF 'What Works' package based entirely on RCTs, but Scotland needs to focus teachers on the learning mix, not atomistic programmes.
- **Ethical data use and monitoring systems.** Both generation and interpretation of data raise ethical issues. Need specific guidance (and protection for teachers) if schools/ local authorities 'massage figures' (sometimes for the best of motivations) by pre-testing and then re-teaching aspects / not putting some children up for the test or ask teachers to 'review' professional judgments to meet targets (which was what did for the old 5-14 testing system). In interpreting test data and responding, the issues are: understanding statistical significance; over-claiming impact; setting or streaming on the basis of test results; putting all low-scoring children onto the same programme with no further analysis about whether it is right for them; any response based on 'plugging gaps' or does not consider and address contributing factors.
- **We need more research on the curriculum.** For example, why do children in poverty drop out of STEM subjects? It may be about issues like deferred gratification, it may be about the quality and appeal of the S1-3 curriculum.

Sir Harry Burns

May 2018

OTHER ORGANISATIONS

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

The Awards Network

Background

The Awards Network welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this important Inquiry. Youth awards have a vital role to play in encouraging young people to learn; recognising and celebrating achievement; and raising attainment. Awards Network members work together to raise awareness of the range and impact of awards accrediting learning and achievements of young people aged 10 to 25. It recognises awards that use youth work approaches and are available throughout Scotland. Its Vision is that '*Youth Awards are widely valued and recognised as critical evidence of every young person's learning and achievement*'.

The Awards Network's latest [*Amazing Things – a guide to youth awards in Scotland*](#) features 48 youth awards / award programmes, including some that are SCQF credit-rated and others that are otherwise recognised and highly valued by participants, employers, colleges / universities and by society at large. All recognise and testify to personal achievement and attainment of a wide range of skills that improve the learning, life and work chances of those who both participate in the programmes and who achieve the awards. Indeed key skills acquired through youth awards are highly prized by employers, often more so than academic qualifications alone.

This response from the Awards Network has been informed by views and experiences of members. Some members are also responding directly to the Committee and we commend those responses for the evidence and examples they provide of the positive impact of youth awards and the challenges that members have encountered in making these awards more widely available.

Question 1: How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

There is a growing body of evidence establishing how youth awards can support improvements in levels of attainment and achievement. An Aspect [*Review of Youth Awards*](#) in Scotland published by Education Scotland in 2015 noted key strengths to include:

- Young people gain a wide range of skills such as confidence, interpersonal, team working, leadership and employability through participation in youth awards.
- Youth awards support young people in their learning and to progress to further and higher education, training and employment on leaving school.
- For some young people facing additional challenges participation in youth awards is life changing.

The Review noted that *‘Participation in youth awards is encouraging some young people to remain engaged in learning for longer and for some who are disengaged from education participation in an award is a first step towards personal achievement and an increase in their self-belief and sense of ambition.’*

The Awards Network has been working to grow awareness amongst key stakeholders of the range, learning opportunities and potential impact of youth awards. This is designed to prompt responses and actions that will increase the recognition and value of youth awards, leading to consequential expansion of opportunities for more young people to access, achieve and benefit from such awards. To support this, the 4th edition of Amazing Things was launched at the Scottish Learning Festival in September 2017. To date over 3,500 copies have been distributed to all secondary schools in Scotland, DYW groups, CLD practitioners, youth work organisations, education authorities, representative industry / employer / parent / third sector groups and others. An [Awards Aware](#) scheme has been launched to help schools, employers and others become familiar with youth awards and reflect on practice to promote, recognise and celebrate wider achievement. This links to an expanding web resource launched last year, to include on-line award search.

Recent Research and Impact Reports from some Awards Network Members highlight the potential of youth awards to support attainment and to equip young people with key employability skills. As examples, a survey of Senior Managers commissioned by the [Duke of Edinburgh’s Award](#) points to the importance of soft skills developed through youth awards, with 1 in 3 viewing such skills as more important than academic qualifications. A [Prince’s Trust](#) 2017 Skills for Life Report reveals 91% of teachers feel schools need to be doing more to help young people develop these soft skills. The Skillforce Social Impact Report 2017 highlights improvement in attitude to learning amongst 93% of programme participants in Scottish schools; 95% of participants in the [Young Enterprise](#) Company Programme reported improvement in at least one core employability competency.

The best evidence is provided by young people themselves. A report on [Youth Scotland](#) awards provides personal testimony of impact. Speaking at an Awards Network Parliamentary Reception in January, Sally (20) related the huge impact of her award journey: the skills acquired, the sense of achievement, personal esteem

and confidence and the influence of her award on future learning choices; John (17) told of how achievement through youth awards helped him address limited academic success and become a positive and effective contributor within his community and beyond; Jennifer (16) highlighted the critical importance of youth award success and accreditation to securing a Modern Apprenticeship; Sandra (24) spoke of being empowered through her award journey to reach levels of personal achievement she could not have otherwise envisaged or thought possible.¹⁵³

Question 2: Are there any services that you / your organisation has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

The ability of youth award programmes to positively impact on young people is beyond question. As a general observation, we are convinced that opportunities are nevertheless being missed for partnership and collaboration between youth award organisations and schools that might aid capture and recognition of the totality of learning of a young person from both within and outside school. Ignorance of youth awards, or unhelpful attitudes towards non-formal learning and / or non-accredited programmes, may also result in a failure of opportunity to fully engage all young people in learning pathways that are appropriate to their needs and aspirations.

Consequently, some members have reported frustrations in endeavours to engage with some schools. Some report schools focused on qualifications and the gathering of Insight points, closing off opportunities for pupils to benefit from alternative / additional learning opportunities. Securing a meeting of minds is, however, a two-way street. More opportunities for Awards Network members to engage with teachers through in-service training / CPD around wider achievement would be beneficial in helping both to understand possibilities and overcome constraints.

Question 3: If you work with schools/local authorities/others to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on this issue easy/difficult?

Youth awards contribute strongly to delivering health and wellbeing experiences and outcomes. They can also support and motivate young people towards improved numeracy and literacy. However, whilst recognition of wider achievements, as reflected by youth awards, is central to Curriculum for Excellence, there remains a significant challenge in securing such recognition in a manner equitable with that for formal qualifications. This is exacerbated for achievements gained through the estimated 85% of learning that takes place outside of the classroom and thus beyond school 'ownership' and control.

¹⁵³ Names of the young people changed.

Successful collaboration is welcomed where the leadership team ‘gets’ wider achievement. Similarly where a school is open to innovation, is aware of what is available in its wider community setting and recognises that educational expertise is not the preserve of a single profession. For some the relationship is simply that of provider of products. Some Awards Network members work successfully with schools to provide discrete experiences, such as outdoor learning and related awards. Some have developed very successful collaboration targeted at specific groups of learners, designed to meet particular objectives such as improved employability, inclusion or integration. Success requires understanding, shared objectives, a commitment to quality and measureable outcomes, underpinned by mutual respect.

Issues Awards Network members report as undermining the ability to develop partnership and collaboration include lack of awareness of what youth awards are available and the outcomes they can deliver; mutual failure to understand partner capability, capacity and constraints; prioritisation of attainment over achievement; access segmentation by perceived attainment ability rather than capacity to achieve; choices limited by a focus on formal accreditation rather than learner needs and aspirations.

The latter is compounded by the chase for points arising as a perverse incentive from Insight, the senior phase benchmarking tool, which only captures attainment of SCQF-levelled qualifications and awards. This has led some schools to exclude from learner choices valued youth awards that are ungraded and attract limited Insight points or un-levelled and thus deliver no points at all.

A recent commitment towards a more equitable approach to ‘scoring’ of ungraded awards is to be welcomed. A more structured approach to recognising and capturing all such learning awards, irrespective of Insight points, would raise the value attributed to such awards and would doubtless lead to an increase in availability and use of such awards and in their impact on attainment and achievement. We commend [Kingussie High School](#) for its systematic approach to profiling wider achievement, valuing achievements and harnessing learning from within and outside the school. It believes that *curriculum drives attainment* rather than focus on grades and backs this up by measurable improvement.

Opportunities for partnership and collaboration are increasing as a consequence of SAC / PEF monies being made available. It has to be recognised, however, that whilst additional resources to combat the largely poverty related attainment gap are to be hugely welcomed, ensuring successful and adroit application of these funds places additional responsibilities on school leaders. Recently issued [guidance](#) to schools on developing partnerships with the third sector, to include providers of youth awards, should help develop understanding and instil confidence that successful working can be secured. Being [Awards Aware](#) can help schools to make informed choices and open up more opportunities for attainment and achievement for their pupils

Question 4: What else could be done to support the attainment /achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

The Awards Network acknowledges that youth awards in isolation cannot redress the root causes of poverty. Nevertheless, the skills, motivation and sense of achievement that awards can deliver have the power to help more young people overcome barriers to learning and attainment (perceived and real) that limit choices and opportunity to realise their full potential. Greater access to youth awards for more learners can make a bigger contribution to improving attainment and achievement than is currently the case.

Monies provided through PEF can help schools address some of the financial constraints poverty imposes on opportunity, but there remains much work to do to address other major barriers, not least of which are prejudicial attitudes towards non-formal learning awards as valid components of a learner journey alongside traditional academic qualifications.

There is a need to reinforce the commitment of Curriculum for Excellence to learner designed pathways. A re-balancing is required to recognition of wider achievement alongside attainment of formal qualifications. In order that more young people can access the beneficial opportunities provided by youth awards, schools, parents and young people themselves need to believe that such awards are valued, recognised, respected, recorded and accepted as evidence of learning that can open doors to further learning and employment.

To that end, an explicit restatement of the centrality of wider achievement to CfE would be welcomed, led by Government and further endorsed by leaders of key stakeholder groups.

A requirement to record wider achievement will change how such achievements are valued and perhaps encourage a more informed and enlightened attitude towards learner choice and different learning pathways to secure positive destinations and routes out of poverty.

Jim Duffy
Secretary
Awards Network
22 March 2018

Evidencing impact of intensive engagement with whole school community via co-production

Summary of report by

**Axiom Consultancy (Scotland) Ltd
(November 2017)**

Background

Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership and Glasgow City Council Education Services wanted to find out how activities provided locally in Dalmarnock Primary School and in the local Community Centre were helping local families and their children. An independent company was asked to speak with local families and some of the agencies who had been involved in the activities to find out what they thought of them.

A researcher from the Company visited the School and the Bridgeton Community Learning Campus several times to speak to staff, parents and their children to find out what they thought of the Breakfast Club, the Family Meal and Homework Club, the Summer Club, language support, the Blether and the Health Issues in the Community course.

This report is based on the feedback from parents who took part in the research and tells the difference the programme has made to their lives. Their feedback is presented in a way which does not identify anyone and tells the stories of the difference it has made to them, to their families and to their local community. Their examples of what they have done indicate not only higher self-esteem and self-confidence but also a sense of pride.

Findings

All of the parents got involved with the programme to help their children and to give them more contact with other parents locally.

Parents who had children who had attended the School for some time spoke at length about how the School Head Teacher had talked to them about what they wanted to do and encouraged them to come up with ideas. They spoke about how they were asked what they wanted to do in the Family Meal and Homework Club, the Summer Club and The Blether and how the organisations involved in delivering the activities had made it happen.

The parents, and their children, talked about a number of different ways in which they think they have benefitted from the activities run in the School. The parents mentioned learning to make meals in the Family Meal and Homework Club and the Summer Club using food they and their family would not have eaten before and how they had started cooking these meals at home, with the help of their children. They laughed while telling stories of how their children now love fruit and vegetables, soup, chilli and stir fries.

The activities also gave parents the chance to get to know other parents. Although many had been born and grown up in the area very few knew each other before involvement in the programme. Smaller groups of parents were created to let them cook together (allowing parents to share recipes and ideas) and The Blether them to talk about their issues with other parents who understood what they were going through. Several of the parents spoke about getting to know other parents for the first time from different communities in the local area.

The parents spoke of benefits to their families as well. The Health in the Community training also helped some of the parents to obtain their Royal Environmental Health Institute for Scotland (REHIS) qualification – enabling them to get jobs in food preparation outlets and restaurants in the City.

The programme also allowed parents and children to do things as a family, with parents joining in games and trips. The parents also spoke of using the school rules to help them get their children into a routine where homework was done before play – some things which had always created arguments before.

The parents also talked of the way in which taking part in the programme was helping encourage their children to go to school, including those who had not wanted to go to school in the past. The children agreed that they were very keen to get to school to take part in the play, games and activities and knew that if they did not go to school and did not do their homework they would not be allowed to join in the fun.

The children were also very keen to get involved in the outside play and the parents found that they were more keen to play outside when at home than they had been before. They were also pleased about the involvement of children and parents from Sacred Heart Primary in the homework club was helping the older primary children make new friendships before they attend "the big school".

The parents were also very proud of the fact that, as a result of the programme, they had been able to do something which helped their whole community. The campaign by the Chinese parents about problems with local road safety which had resulted in them pressing the local Council to reduce the road speed across a main road which families had to cross to get to the school. The parents involved were very clear that they would not have even considered doing that had it not been for the programme.

In their own words

"It's a great atmosphere and everyone helps everyone else."

"We are always asked what we want to do – and do you know – it happens!! It's fantastic – we tell them something and they do something about it. That's never happened before, that's for sure!!"

"If I wasn't here I would be sitting at home myself – with no-one to talk to but the . I have met other people here which has helped me feel less lonely".

"They love the fish nuggets – and they are cheap to do. The only fish they had before was out the chippie!"

"Mum makes our food – I love the soups....it's better than sandwiches which is what we had before".

"It's safe here - you can say what you feel and no-one says you are right or wrong - it's just how you feel. If you want help you can get it - if you just want to get it off your chest - then that's OK too. It's better than bottling everything up which I did before. Plus I always thought it was just me - but other people have said they feel the same too. That makes you feel better as well I think"

"I get to play outside I never used to do that. Mum said it wasn't safe".

"I've made it plain.... no homework, no coming to play. They even get up in the morning and get ready for school.. They are actually standing at the door waiting to go - cannae believe it!!"

"We need to do our homework – we can't play unless we do. So we get the homework done quickly and then it's out to play!"

"Nancy (the Head Teacher) is brilliant. You can ask her anything – nothing is a bother. She is also great with the kids – she tells them don't talk back to your Mum, pay attention and behave And they know if they don't - they don't get to play."

"We mentioned in the School that the road was hard to cross and we were worried about the children we never thought anyone would listen to us and now we are in the newspapers!!"

ANNEXE B

Anonymised case studies

Susan

"Susan" is a local resident who was born and brought up in the area. She lives locally with her husband and children, some of whom are at Dalmarnock Primary School and some which are now at the local secondary school.

Susan was an irregular attender at school and, as a result, left with no qualifications. She has mobility issues, limiting her availability for employment. Like many long standing local residents, Susan knew her closest neighbours but was not familiar with people who lived outside of the streets closest to her house. She spends almost all of her time in the area closest to her house and had limited experience or knowledge of areas outwith her immediate locale.

Her experience with the programme shows a transformation in her attitudes towards the school and the people in it.

"Ah've lived in this area all my life - born here, went to school here - now live with my man and my kids here. Ah hated school - to be honest ah wisnae there much and ah would never have thought ah would come here every week. Nancy (the head teacher) makes us feel so welcome."

Susan has been involved with the programme since it started with the Family Meal and Homework Club and is very enthusiastic about what it has achieved, particularly in encouraging her to cook.

"The homework club is brilliant. Fourteen of us (parents) cook here every week - 2 to a station. We make the meals for us and for our kids who come to the club. While we are doing that the other Mum's and Dad's are cooking for everyone - big pots of stuff. It's a soup and a main course."

She has also taken the opportunity to use the rules from the school to reinforce how the children need to behave at home, particularly ensuring that they do their homework regularly. Before the Homework Club, Susan had found it difficult to get the children into a routine and to enforce rules – often resulting in family arguments and Susan becoming very stressed.

"But the kids must do their homework to get out to play - ah love this it gives a break from having to help with their homework. This was always a pure battle before. The kids want to do their homework now - they know no homework, no play."

"PEEK have been brilliant as well. The kids love them - they get out to play - a thing they never did before. Ah could never get them away from their PS4s. Now ah tell them - you only get to play with that once you have done your homework."

Susan has also found the programme to have benefitted her personally, encouraging her to get more involved in the activities as they have developed and also to encourage other families to come along. It has also given her the chance to meet and get to know other people.

"The company is great as well. It's nice to talk to other adults for a change.... not just the weans."

Susan spoke at length about how much she enjoys the cooking aspect of the activities and how she is using her learning at home and how much it has increased her confidence.

"The cooking is great. Do you know we made up a recipe book with all the meals we liked? Imagine!! A recipe book!!"

We also got to do a certificate for food hygiene - ah had to write an essay. Ah did it at the Barrowfield Centre - never had a certificate before."

Her feedback also demonstrates how the learning is helping develop closer family relationships as well as broadening their opportunities to create and eat healthy food.

“We do the cooking we learn here at home now - ah get the kids to help too. They help me prepare the food. They love the mince and tatties and the chicken nuggets. They are actually better than the shop bought ones - they were the ones ah used to buy for them cos that was all they would eat. The kids eat nearly everything they get here - apart from kidney beans.. they don't like them... but ah just don't put them in when I make the chilli at home.”

“Ah am actually cooking.... and ah love it.”

Summary

Susan's feedback demonstrates the programme's impact in:

- Reducing her social isolation by giving her opportunities to meet with other adults on a regular basis
- Increasing her confidence and self-esteem by giving her the chance to earn a certificate which also encourages her to apply her learning on family health
- Improving family bonding and relationships through encouraging family activities
- Improving healthy eating and family budgeting by enabling her to prepare healthy meals as cheaply as possible
- Developing family structure and routines through the application of key influencing strategies learned at the programme
- Increasing her children's opportunities for greater education attainment through encouraging regular school attendance and completion of homework

Jane (Mum from an Ethnic Minority)

(with the help of an interpreter)

“Jane” is a young mum who moved to the Dalmarnock area two years ago with her husband and her children who were all aged under 10. Her husband works in Glasgow City and speaks limited English, however Jane could not speak, read or write English when she arrived in the area and, as a result, she did not speak or socialise with anyone outside of the local Cantonese community.

She had no knowledge of the local area when she arrived and tended to shop in local Chinese food stores where she was more familiar with the produce and she could speak to the shop owners. Other than this, she had little contact other than her immediate family.

She lives with her husband and children in the flats in the “Commonwealth Village”. Her older children all attend Dalmarnock Primary and she walks them to the School each day.

"I have been coming to the homework club and the Summer Club with my children. I am not from here - I moved here with my children and my husband two years ago. I did not speak any English at all and really only spoke to other families who spoke Cantonese."

She found out about the programme from her children who wanted to go to the activities with their friends and she and her husband felt that it was a good opportunity to help their children with their schooling.

"My children went to the homework club - we wanted them to come so that they would get good marks at school and would learn good English. They get help from a teacher with their English and I come along to the school once a week as well."

Jane also found the activities helped her get to know other people in the local community and she started taking the children to the Summer Club as well as the Homework Club.

"We went to the Summer Club for the last two years. Some of the parents cook. I didn't cook but my husband did with some of the other dads."

Through encouragement from some of the programme staff, Jane gradually got more involved with the activities and the other parents who came along on a regular basis.

"We asked if we could make a Chinese meal for lunch one day for everyone. We all sat around the table and got the food ready and then the others cooked it whilst the children played. Everyone said they enjoyed it - some of the Mums said they were surprised that the children ate everything. It was funny - we had Pak Choi and a lot of the people had never had that before but they all ate it."

"It has been good fun meeting people. The children all have local friends and they love playing with them."

Her family has also benefited from the programme. Her husband studied the REHIS training and achieved his certificate enabling him to get employment.

"My husband did a course on food hygiene - he is working in a restaurant now."

Jane's feedback also demonstrated how they have been able to help their local community as a result of the programme.

"The people here have been great. They helped us talk to the Council about the speed people drive on the Clyde Gateway road. It's not safe for the children to cross - they drive far too fast."

We got people to sign their names asking for the road speed to be slower and for signs to be put up. We got into the local paper and we went to a meeting in the Council. We spoke to the police as well. They are going to slow the road down now.”

Summary

Jane’s feedback demonstrates the programme’s impact in:

- Reducing her social isolation and those of her family through encouraging initial contact and then friendships with other families in the area
- Increasing her and her family’s capacity through developing skills and confidence which has resulted in employment
- Increasing her and her family’s confidence and self belief, resulting in them acting (with others) as agents for change in their local community.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

CELCIS

CELCIS (Centre for excellence for looked after children in Scotland), based at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, is committed to making positive and lasting improvements in the wellbeing of Scotland's children living in and on the edges of care. We welcome this opportunity to highlight how experiencing poverty affects vulnerable children and young people at school, including their attainment and their achievement, and consider what can be done to further support children and their families.

Poverty and children in and on the edges of care

A 2016 Joseph Rowntree Foundation evidence review on the relationship between poverty, child abuse and neglect found a strong association between families' socio-economic circumstances and the chances that children will experience child abuse and neglect.¹⁵⁴ The review highlighted that poverty is overlooked as a factor contributing to children who become looked after, and that being looked after as a child can have a sustained impact on a number of socio-economic outcomes (including lower socio-economic status, reduced educational attainment, homelessness and unemployment).

Over 15,000 children are 'looked after' by Scottish local authorities; and whilst there are many reasons why compulsory measures of care are required, a significant number of children will have experienced abuse and neglect.¹⁵⁵ In 2016, approximately 2,700 children were 'at risk of significant harm' thus on a Child Protection Register.¹⁵⁶ Research indicates that children in the most deprived 10% of small neighbourhoods in Scotland are nearly 20 times more likely to be 'looked after' or on the child protection register than children in the least deprived neighbourhoods.¹⁵⁷ CELCIS analysis of Scottish Government child poverty statistics and the Children's Social Work statistics indicate a correlation between the proportion of looked after children and levels of child poverty in Scottish local authorities. The chart in Appendix 1 illustrates that the percentage of 0-17 year olds who are looked after generally rises as the percentage of children in poverty increases.

Education and looked after children

¹⁵⁴ Bywaters, P, et al., (2016) [The relationship between poverty, child abuse and neglect: an evidence review](#), York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Pg.3

¹⁵⁵ Scottish Government (2017) [Children's Social Work Statistics Scotland 2015/16](#), Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Bywaters, P. et al. (2017) [Identifying and Understanding Inequalities in Child Welfare Intervention Rates: comparative studies in four UK countries. Briefing Paper 4: Scotland](#)

The biggest driver of future poverty is the educational attainment of children when they leave full-time education.¹⁵⁸ Educational outcome indicators show that the gap between looked after children's attainment and achievement in school, and that of all children, remains unacceptably large.¹⁵⁹ Looked after children are more likely to leave school at the earliest opportunity (73% leave school aged 16 or under, compared to 27% of all pupils); and, taken as a whole group, obtain lower qualifications than all school leavers. Children who are looked after 'at home' (those who continue to live with their birth parent(s) under compulsory social work supervision) experience some of the poorest outcomes, with 26% leaving school with no qualifications (compared to 2% of all children). Outcome indicators also give insight into the experiences of looked after children in school, for example, children who are looked after are excluded from school at a rate eight times higher than the whole school population.¹⁶⁰

Children in and on the edges of care must be of critical consideration in this inquiry. They are acutely vulnerable, being both at increased risk of experiencing deprivation, and without the same positive outcomes and experiences in education as all children.

Question 1: How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

CELCIS Education Team support the implementation of policy, legislation and evidence in a range of education settings, this work is informed by evidence of what is effective in improving educational experiences and outcomes for children and young people living in and on the edges of care.¹⁶¹ Engagement with parents and carers, supporting teachers, and ensuring teachers and other staff have an understanding of attachment, trauma and resilience are essential areas of focus. This complex work requires a nuanced understanding of the challenges that exist for vulnerable children, young people and their families. Initial Teacher Education (ITE) does not, as part of the core curriculum, have any input on needs and vulnerabilities specific to looked after children, which is incompatible with the skills required to support these children to fully access their education.

Our '[Addressing Neglect and Enhancing Wellbeing](#)' and '[Transforming Pathways](#)' programmes seek to mitigate the effects of poverty on children and families lives, in turn supporting educational attainment. Working closely with local areas, and using evidence on what it takes to effect sustainable and scalable practice change in systems, the ambition of

¹⁵⁸ Barnard, H. et al (2017) UK Poverty 2017, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

¹⁵⁹ Scottish Government (2017) [Education Outcomes for Looked After Children 2015/16](#), Edinburgh: Scottish Government

¹⁶⁰ Scottish Government (2016) [Education Outcomes for Looked After Children 2014/15](#), Edinburgh: Scottish Government

¹⁶¹ CELCIS (2015) Looked After and Learning: Improving the learner journey of looked after children, Glasgow: University of Strathclyde

these programmes is to shift practice within universal services from crisis (or reactive) intervention, to consistently ensure access to early help for families.¹⁶² For children to be ready to learn in the classroom, they must have the opportunity for optimal development from birth and through infancy. Therefore, improving practice and services focussed on the foundations of child development, and the building blocks that will have subsequent effects on educational and employment opportunities children will be able to access, is imperative.¹⁶³ An additional priority identified in each local area is strengthening families' access to resources and support to meet children's basic needs. Many families living with poverty experience hunger, limited resources for clothing (such as P.E. kits, coats and shoes), poor housing conditions, and a lack of community resources. Local practitioners are acutely aware that without addressing these fundamental needs, children experience barriers to accessing the curriculum, including stigma, and the impact of family stress on concentration, behaviour and attendance.

A key enabler to this work has been taking a broad perspective which looks beyond individual parts of the public service system (e.g. schools only) and considers how the whole system interacts to produce conditions and opportunities which can enhance children's wellbeing in local neighbourhoods and communities. The shared language and framework of [Getting It Right For Every Child](#) (Girfec) has been helpful in this context. Barriers we have observed to the consistent integration of early intervention approaches include the devolvement of decisions about expenditure in schools. Where short timeframes exist for expenditure and investment in supports linked to schooling (e.g. the Pupil Equity Fund), opportunities to carefully appraise what is likely to bring the strongest improvements for children and families, and ensure this is sustainable, are limited.

Question 3: If you work with schools/local authorities/others to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on this issue easy/difficult?

The Education Team have worked with two local areas to support the implementation of a parent/carer and community engagement project ['Parents in Partnership'](#) targeted to families living in SIMD deciles 1 and 2. Parents In Partnership utilises colocation of supportive community services, and through a trusted point of contact allows parents and carers to experience a day in high school life, and also provides inputs from community partners to promote access to existing services. Success of the project is attributed to leadership at all levels in schools, willingness to work collaboratively with community partners, and commitment to

¹⁶² Fixsen, D. L., Naoom, S. F., Blase, K. A., Friedman, R. M. & Wallace, F. (2005). Implementation Research: A Synthesis of the Literature. Tampa, FL: University of South Florida, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, The National Implementation Research Network (FMHI Publication #231).

¹⁶³ Conti G., Heckman J.J. (2014) Economics of Child Well-Being. In: Ben-Arieh A., Casas F., Frønes I., Korbin J. (eds) Handbook of Child Well-Being. Springer, Dordrecht

providing time and training for staff involved. In schools which have sustained the programme, collaboration and coproduction have been crucial in establishing and maintaining parental engagement.

In the 'Addressing Neglect and Enhancing Wellbeing' and 'Transforming Pathways' programmes, a number of factors have been seen to enhance collaboration. Namely: shared values and goals held by all stakeholders; interdisciplinary professional respect and role clarity; motivation to support families; growing awareness of the need to *holistically* address families' needs; and spending purposeful time with other stakeholders to focus on issues and solutions. Factors impeding collaboration include: differing perceptions of success (competing agendas tied to professional roles rather than holistic wellbeing); confusion and uncertainty about sharing information on the basis of wellbeing; difficulties translating multi-agency assessment and planning into practice (where each agency's role is clearly understood and regularly reviewed); and the complex legislative and policy context, in which national and local accountability and responsibility is not always clear.¹⁶⁴

Question 4: What else could be done to support the attainment /achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

Addressing structural inequalities

In listening to the challenges that families are experiencing and that public services are attempting to address, the need to address the underpinning causes – the structural inequalities that exist within society and communities in Scotland – is apparent. Without attending to this, we can only mitigate, rather than address, the profound effects of those inequalities (the health and wellbeing, educational and employment outcomes), on adults and children who are living within circumstances that are compounded by multiple disadvantages. There is a limitation in using only income-related measures for understanding poverty. Children and families' experience of poverty will be broader than this and, as articulated in Scottish Government's [Child Poverty Strategy](#) (2014-2017), include underlying social and economic determinants of poverty, the circumstances in which children grow up, and the physical, social and economic environments in communities.

Implementing Change

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation report '[Closing the Attainment Gap in Scottish Education](#)' (2014, p5) highlights the need to draw on the evidence base of 'what works, for whom, in which contexts, and why' to enable implementation of effective change to narrow the attainment gap. The report features key recommendations for stakeholders at all levels of the system. Consideration of progress against these recommendations in the

¹⁶⁴ Brock, J. (2016) The Brock Report: Safeguarding Scotland's vulnerable children from child abuse: A review of the Scottish system, Edinburgh: Children in Scotland

period since the report's publication may highlight the need for further concerted implementation support.

Holistic understanding and workforce skills

To narrow the attainment gap, policy must focus on factors which affect children's educational outcomes, rather than the outcomes themselves, such as respect, dignity, understanding, inclusion and participation within school.¹⁶⁵ Educational leaders and the teaching workforce require a holistic understanding of the causes and impact of poverty on a child's experience of education and their wider world, and of the interventions that schools can use to reduce the impact. To contribute to this, this subject matter should be included in ITE, alongside commitment to creating space within existing structures for ongoing meaningful coaching, formal support and supervision of teachers. Educational attainment is strongly correlated with a teacher's skills, including how to adapt and modify their approach in response to the varied needs and learning styles of different children.¹⁶⁶

These skills require both an adaptive and technical understanding of how to engage with children, some of whom will have experienced trauma, which shapes their engagement and interaction with the world, including school. A teacher must be able to connect with all children, and utilise their skills to nurture the child's learning.

Early Learning and Childcare

The Poverty and Equality Commission's [Advice to the Scottish Government's Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2018](#) highlights that the poverty related attainment gap has already opened up prior to children starting school, and link this to the importance of quality early learning and childcare provision. Whilst the take-up of funded provision is high for 3 and 4 year old children (of whom all are eligible), only 10% of 2 year old children are accessing funded provision.¹⁶⁷ Two year old children are eligible for funded provision if their parents are in receipt of qualifying benefits, or if they are looked after by a local authority, are the subject of a kinship care order, or have a parent-appointed guardian. This is 25% of all two year olds. Many parents (22%) cite the reason they are not accessing early learning and childcare as being unaware of their child's eligibility, suggesting a need to raise awareness and improve accessibility for vulnerable families.

Nurturing ethos

Embedding an ethos which emphasises nurture in schools (with both children, and their wider families) may enhance early access to the right help at the right time for families. Parents and children experiencing a systematically inclusive and nurturing environment may reduce barriers to

¹⁶⁵ Treanor, M. (2017) Can we put the 'poverty of aspiration' myth to bed now?, Edinburgh: Centre for Research on Families and Relationships

¹⁶⁶ Hattie, J. (2011). Visible Learning for Teachers: Maximizing Impact on Learning. New York, NY: Routledge.

¹⁶⁷ Scottish Government (2017) [The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare: Evaluation Report 2017](#), Edinburgh: Scottish Government

seeking help, and strengthen the relational aspects of school staff interaction with parents. As with the successful implementation of any change, embedding a nurturing approach requires sufficient attention to a number of factors in order to be effective, for example teacher supervision, coaching and mentoring.¹⁶⁸

Targeting resources

The effects of criteria used to allocate resources should be considered. Allocations based on SIMD classification can be problematic. Whilst the poverty related attainment gap is a significant visible challenge within Scotland, and research has shown that targeting funding towards children from the most deprived areas will have an effect on attainment¹⁶⁹, we urge caution in focusing additional resource solely on this group. A concerning attainment gap exists for looked after children, and whilst many children living in and on the edges of care also reside in areas of high deprivation, some do not, a simple example being those children who are looked after and accommodated in kinship or foster care in areas of low deprivation. SIMD classification should not be used as the sole determinant of any targeted funding.

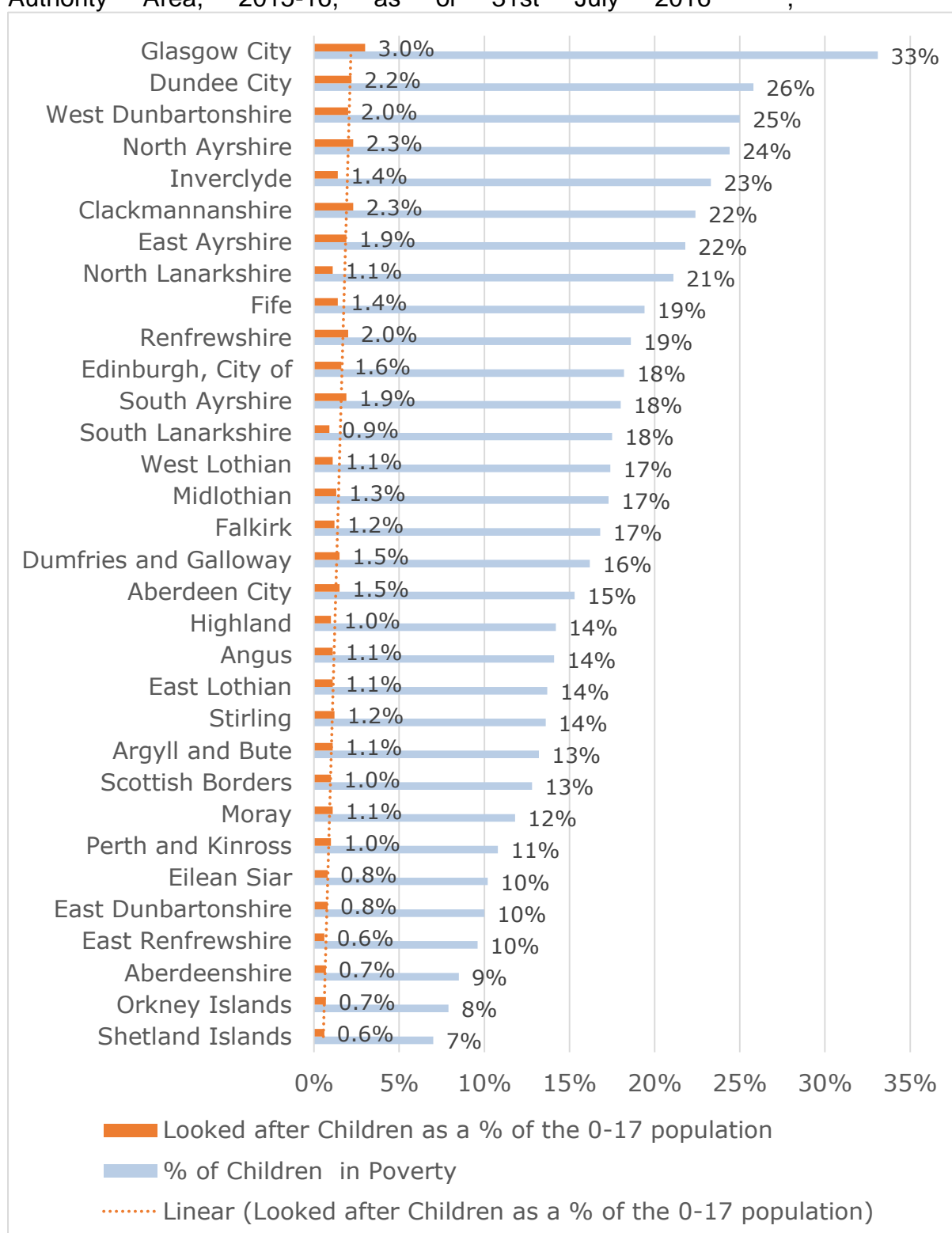
Thank you for providing us with this opportunity to respond. We hope the feedback is helpful; we would be happy to discuss any aspect in further detail.

Lizzie Morton
Policy Associate
CELCIS
22 March 2018 ⁱ

¹⁶⁸ Boorn, C., Hopkins Dunn, P., & Page, C. (2010). Growing a nurturing classroom. *Educational and Behavioural Difficulties*, 15(4), 311–321.

¹⁶⁹ OECD (2015) Improving Schools In Scotland: An OECD Perspective <http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/improving-schools-in-scotland.htm>

Appendix 1: % of Children in Poverty compared to % of LAC, by Local Authority Area, 2015-16, as of 31st July 2016¹⁷⁰, ¹⁷¹



¹⁷⁰ Scottish Government (2012) [Local authority Level Child Poverty data from HMRC](#)

¹⁷¹ Scottish Government (2017) [Children's Social Work Statistics Additional Tables 2015-16](#);

Table 3.1: Children starting and ceasing to be looked after, by local authority, 2015-16

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER)

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Dear Convener,

I am writing from the Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER), a Scottish strategic anti-racism charity based in Glasgow. Our primary concern in relation to the committee's inquiry into the attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty is highlighting the unique experience of Black and minority ethnic (BME) children.

Poverty and Ethnicity

In Scotland, people from BME groups are nearly twice as likely to be in poverty compared to those from the white British group. Before housing costs, 30% of people from BME backgrounds were in poverty compared to 16% of those in the white British group; this increases to 36% of people from BME backgrounds living in poverty after housing costs versus 18% of the white British population.¹⁷²

Furthermore, children from BME backgrounds are significantly more likely to be living in disadvantaged circumstances than white children, with 36% of BME children living in a household with an annual income in the lowest quintiles compared to 22% of white children.¹⁷³

Given the substantial disadvantage faced by BME groups, work taken forward to mitigate the ill effects of poverty must consider the role of race and ethnicity.

Attainment and Ethnicity

Overall, while there are variations based on ethnic group, BME school leavers demonstrate higher educational attainment than their white Scottish and white non-Scottish counterparts.

Leaver attainment by ethnicity, 2015-2016

	1 or more at SCQF level 4 or better (%)	1 or more at SCQF level 5 or better (%)	1 or more at SCQF level 6 or better (%)
White – Scottish	96.3	85.4	61.1

¹⁷² Scottish Government (2018). [Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2014-2017](#).

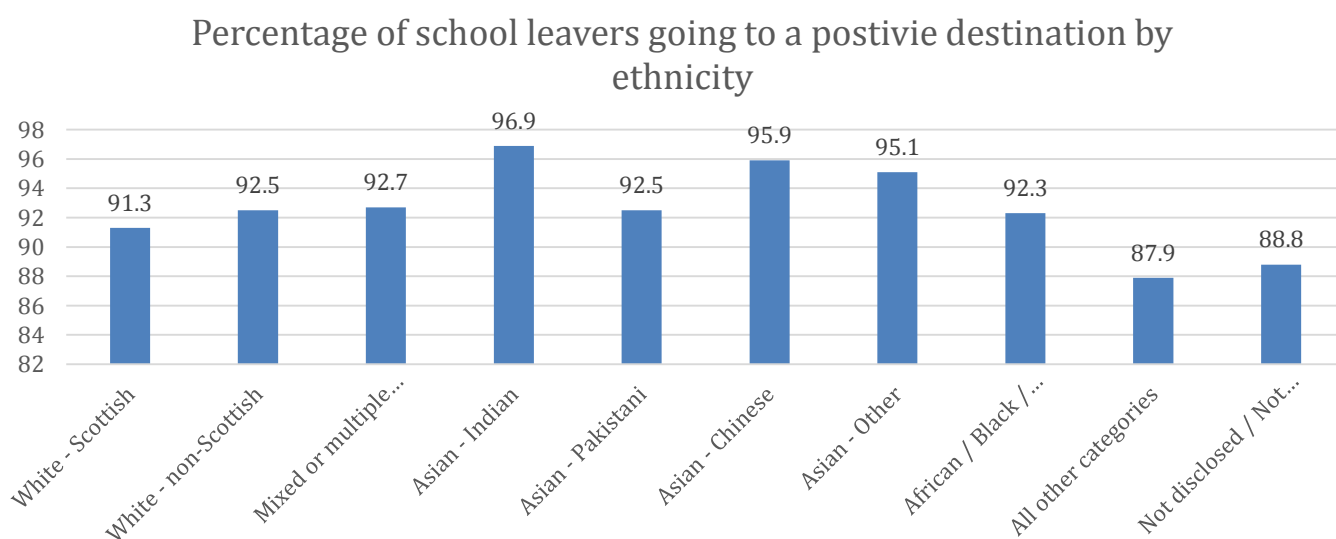
¹⁷³ Scottish Government (2013). [Growing Up in Scotland: Birth Cohort 2 – Results from the first year](#).

White – non-Scottish	96.1	85.6	62.3
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	96.4	88.9	72.2
Asian – Indian	98.7	94.2	76.5
Asian – Pakistani	99.0	92.1	73.2
Asian – Chinese	99.5	96.4	91.8
Asian – Other	97.8	92.2	76.9
African / Black / Caribbean	99.7	95.4	76.6
All other categories	94.3	82.9	61.7
Not disclosed / Not known	93.6	79.9	55.7

[Scottish Government – Summary Statistics for Attainment, Leaver Destinations, and Healthy Living](#)

In achieving at SCQF level 6 or better, BME school leavers outperform their white counterparts for every ethnic group, with particularly high achievement for Asian - Chinese, Asian – Other, African/ Black/Caribbean, and Asian – Indian groups.

Similarly, BME school leavers are more likely than their white peers to go onto positive destinations (e.g. further or higher education, training, employment).



[Scottish Government – Summary Statistics for Attainment, Leaver Destinations, and Healthy Living](#)

This particular dataset, however, overlooks the experiences for some particular ethnic groups. Gypsy/Travellers, for example, are here included in the white non-Scottish categories, which obscures evidence which demonstrates that this group has some of the lowest attainment levels in Scotland.¹⁷⁴ The amalgamation of African, Black, and Caribbean ethnic

¹⁷⁴ The Scottish Government (2017). [Improving educational outcomes for children and young people from travelling cultures: consultation paper](#).

groups into a singular category also conceals the lower attainment among Black and Caribbean groups, masked by the exceptionally high attainment of African groups.¹⁷⁵

Setting these exceptions aside, however, the evidence demonstrates that despite higher rates of poverty, BME groups consistently achieve high levels of attainment and continuation to positive destinations.

In contrast to their white peers, BME school leavers and graduates are most disadvantaged not in education, but in the years following formal education. White ethnic groups, who have overall lower rates of attainment, enjoy higher rates of employment following education. For people aged 16-24, white groups are significantly more likely to be in employment (52.1%) than their BME counterparts (24.9%).¹⁷⁶ The employment rate for white groups is 74.2%, compared to 58.5% for BME groups, with BME individuals twice as likely to be unemployed as people from white communities.¹⁷⁷

Overall, despite their high attainment, minority ethnic individuals still face discrimination, barriers, and inequality in employment and income, which perpetuates the poverty experienced by these communities.

Emerging Issues

CRER notes that, as the committee considers the impact of poverty on young people at school, the unique experience of BME children may be lost in the focus on attainment and achievement.

While overall, BME groups make up 4.0% of the Scottish population, this is changing, especially for children and young people. Over 7.4% of those aged 20 to 24 are BME, alongside 7.3% of those aged 0 to 4 at the time of the 2011 Scottish Census.¹⁷⁸ This growing population should have their experiences and realities included in discussion on attainment and the effects of poverty on children and young people.

There is something particular happening within BME communities that allows children to achieve at school and continue onto positive destinations, despite growing up in poverty. To gather a full picture of the situation, we ask that the committee remember that race plays a role and consider looking further into this issue.

CRER is also concerned that a focus on raising educational attainment will leave BME groups behind. The challenge for BME children and young people is not achievement at school, but in accessing equal opportunities in the workforce. Consideration should also be given to the educational and employment patterns of BME young people transitioning from secondary

¹⁷⁵ Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (2014). [State of the Nation: Education](#).

¹⁷⁶ Scottish Parliament Information Centre. [SPICe Briefing: Ethnicity and Employment](#).

¹⁷⁷ Scottish Census 2011.

¹⁷⁸ Scottish Census 2011.

school to further and higher education and employment, as this is where these groups are the most disadvantaged.

For Scotland to be the best place to grow up for every child, including those from BME backgrounds, the focus must extend past education attainment to a holistic picture of educational and employment journeys, which considers the unique experience of BME children and young people who live in poverty.

CRER is hopeful that the Education and Skills Committee will take this into account and look further into the experiences of BME children and young people, within and out with this specific inquiry.

We would be delighted to have the opportunity to discuss this matter with you further.

Yours sincerely,
Rebecca Marek
Parliamentary and Policy Officer
Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Culture Counts

How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

- 1 Culture Counts works on behalf of a group of core members to place culture at the heart of policy making. The organisation and its members are committed to working openly and collaboratively.
- 2 We understand that the Scottish Government are working to close the gap in attainment particularly where there is a significant gap between those living in the most disadvantaged areas (bottom 20% SIMD) and the least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD). We were shocked to see an 80% gap in exclusion rates between the most disadvantaged (95.2%) and least disadvantaged (15.2%) in secondary school age children. The cultural sector has an important role to play in Education and we can contribute to attainment in English and Maths; while making an important contribution to improving the mental health of young people which we understand to be a major part of how exclusion happens¹. Cultural education is not an additional but an essential component to ensuring that our young people achieve and that they are confident, responsible effective contributors who can express themselves well and in a range of ways.
- 3 The charity Sistema Scotland works in deprived areas of Glasgow, Stirling and Aberdeen. It provides an intensive orchestral programme for school-age children and young people with the aim of changing lives fostering confidence, discipline, teamwork, pride and aspiration in those taking part. Entry to and participation in the programme is free and includes instruments, lessons, snacks and day trips. The key findings of a recent evaluation were that participation in the programme increased school attendance and attainment rates, improved emotional wellbeing and aspirations to healthy living, and supported the acquisition of skills for work and life including self-discipline, time management and organisation².

1 <https://www.ippr.org/files/2017-10/making-the-difference-summary-october-2017.pdf>

2 http://www.qcph.co.uk/assets/0000/5059/Sistema_summary_updated.pdf

- 4 The Scottish Government allocates £10 million per year to deliver the Youth Music Initiative. This aims to create access to high-quality music-making opportunities for young people aged 0-25 years, particularly for those who would not normally have the chance to participate. A recent evaluation of the YMI concluded that it is contributing to building a fairer Scotland and tackling inequalities by engaging those who wouldn't normally get involved, particularly young people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage³.
- 5 There remains a disparity of opportunity in one-to-one instrumental music instruction (for those studying for standard grade and higher grades) at secondary school level. Music as a subject is non-statutory; this creates localised disparity of opportunity as those in more affluent areas enjoy music instruction as paid for by parents and guardians whereas those in areas of deprivation have little access to one-to-one tuition⁴. Scottish Government Teacher Census data shows that Scottish schools have lost over three hundred and fifty music instruction teachers since 2007⁵.
- 6 Evidence points to gains in attainment in a range of subjects because of studying the arts. A 2015 literature review commissioned by CASE found that the evidence points to a positive relationship between arts and educational impacts⁶. This study highlights a link between increased self-esteem and attitudes towards education, improved educational values and relationships with teachers.
 One-third of young people in the youth justice system who completed Summer Arts Colleges moved up a level in literacy and numeracy⁷.
 Young people using libraries read above the expected level for their age; young people who don't use libraries read below the expected level⁸.
 In the US, large cohort studies of 25,000 students undertaken by James Catterall show that taking part in arts activities increases student attainment in maths and literacy, with particularly striking results for students from low- income families^{9&10}.
 Teenagers and young adults of low socio-economic status (SES) who have a history of in-depth arts involvement show better academic outcomes than do low-SES youth who have less arts involvement. They earn better grades and demonstrate higher rates of college enrolment and attainment¹¹.
 Other studies echo these results, with Ruppert finding that students who take arts classes have higher maths and verbal SAT scores than students who take no arts classes¹².

3 http://www.creativescotland.com/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/32754/YMI-Evaluation-ExecutiveSummary.pdf

4 EIS Councillor Briefing Music in Schools January 2018

5 <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/teachcenssuppdata>

6

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/416279/A_review_of_the_Social_Impacts_of_Culture_and_Sport.pdf

7 Stephenson, Martin, Adams, Maree and Tarling, Roger. *The Art of Engagement: Outcomes and Impact of the Summer Arts College Programme 2007 to twelve* (Norwich: Unitas, 2014) Page 83

8 <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED515944.pdf>

9 https://ncfy.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/docs/21545-Doing_Well_and_Doing_Good.pdf

10 <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/Arts-At-Risk-Youth.pdf>

11 <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED529766.pdf>

12 <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ695662.pdf>

Are there any services that you / your organisation has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

Those working across the cultural sector are frequently brought-in (as additional support) for short-term or one-off visits within the education system. Culture Counts members would like to work more closely and strategically with the education sector to enable practitioners to work for longer with targeted young people so that they are able to pass on skills as well as the opportunity to experience and participate (in a long-term accessible structured way). Young people who are part of the exclusion statistics are less likely to choose arts subjects which is unfortunate as they could possibly have the most to gain from taking part¹³.

Culture Counts would be interested in working with the Education and Skills Committee to try to better align equality of access to cultural skills; supporting the sector to work regularly, strategically and long-term within the most deprived areas within Scotland would be to the benefit of everyone.

13 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jun/25/squeezing-out-arts-for-commercially-useful-subjects-will-make-our-culture-poorer>

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Edinburgh International Science Festival

Response prepared by Joan Davidson, Head of Education, Edinburgh International Science Festival. Joan is happy to meet and provide any more information.

- 1. How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?*

Edinburgh International Science Festival has two large scale education programmes; [Generation Science](#) and [Careers Hive](#) that work with primary aged pupils in the former and secondary aged pupils in the latter.

Generation Science

This programme of 16 shows and workshops are all linked to learning outcomes and lines of development in the Curriculum for Excellence across Science and Technologies to support teachers with subject and topics they may be unconfident in covering or are looking for different ways to develop learning journeys for the young people they work with. We actively target schools in SIMD areas. In 2017, this equated to:

- 25% of all schools visited can be found in the top most deprived 30% of SIMD data zones
- 46% of all schools visited can be found in the top most deprived 50% of SIMD data zones
- 19% of schools are found in the top quintile ranking of SIMD (rank 1)
- 58% of schools visited have FME greater than 50%
- 61% of the total number of pupils attend schools where FME is greater than 50%

Schools visited:

- Schools in an urban environment were 49% of the schools visited
- Schools in an overall rural environment were 51% of the schools visited; of this 51%, 52% were classed as accessible rural and 48% were classed as remote

Pupils visited:

- 67% of pupils visited attend school in an urban environment
- 43% of pupils visited attend school in an overall rural environment where 61% live in accessible rural areas and the remaining 39% live in areas classed as remote (13% of total pupils)

We support schools with follow up materials and on any particular project or subject week where we can. A number of schools that we visit are those marked as Attainment Challenge schools. We visit around 600 primary schools across the 32 local authorities, seeing 58,000 pupils and around 2,500 teachers between January and May every year. We have been supporting schools in this way since 1991 with full endorsement from local and national government.

Careers Hive

This is aimed at S1-S3 pupils encouraging them to take STEM subjects by demonstrating to them the wide world of work and opportunities open to them should they continue studying STEM. We expose the students to real life examples of STEM professionals from a wide variety of backgrounds and STEM areas. We developed this project as the 3-18 Careers Standard was launched and continue to refresh and address elements of the Careers Standard in order to support teachers with this element of the curriculum. We also encourage teachers throughout the 3-hour guided visit to make links with the STEM professionals and the companies in order to enrich their knowledge of the world of work as well as providing real and current example of life in the STEM workplace for their pupils. This project is only 3 years old but is well attended and oversubscribed by schools across Scotland although it is currently only held in Edinburgh. We employ a proactive approach with regard to schools in SIMD areas.

As Generation Science has been running since 1991 and has continued to develop its portfolio of shows and workshops with the changing needs of pupils in school we would say that it has been successful and continues to be as we build up to almost 30 years in schools. It works well as we go to the schools themselves in order to save on the organisation of trips out of school including the costs and consents for this. We seek feedback from all the visits we make in order to continually update and tailor what we deliver to the schools that we visit. As we are the UK's largest provider of primary school science outreach we have the ability to do and see more schools— our barrier to this is purely financial.

Similarly Careers Hive is currently a 6 day programme and we are encouraged to do a longer run by the current supporters we have as their staff, the STEM professionals, also use this as professional development of their own. By encouraging staff of at all levels and of different backgrounds this adds to the potential of the students meeting someone just like them in a role that they can aim for and indeed achieve. As a dynamic organisation we can respond to most requests from both industry and schools but again comes down to financial support in order to make sure these projects are sustainable as the will within the organisation is never lacking.

2. Are there any services that you / your organisation has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

We would like to add and then lead in the area of teacher CPD especially at early years and primary school level across the country. We work with a large number of attainment schools already and have a long relationship with many more. By adding this to the support we provide schools we would be able to develop a deeper support system which would be robust enough to deal with school changes in terms of staffing and priorities that vary from school to school. An element of this is the development of confidence in their own knowledge and ability across STEM and the progression in the lines of development of the Curriculum for Excellence in real time and for all learners. This would not only benefit science and technology lessons in the schools but provide cross-curricular benefit with all subjects and topics especially another Curriculum for Excellence key tenet of health and wellbeing.

We are often asked to consult and/or provide support to the wider school community with parental or community engagement with STEM. At present we do what we can. These opportunities would present us with the ability to develop a deeper understanding of what is needed school to school but also provide a framework for these schools to flourish and address more than solely parental/community engagement with STEM. By exposing the whole community to STEM we would also be able to expose them to STEM professionals, associated industries and the opportunities that these industries present. As we are a national organisation it is important that any learning or development is open to any school wherever they may be found. The ability to support schools that are socio-economically deprived and/or geographically is very important to the organisation. We have a well-earned and internationally recognised reputation of making links with industry and academia and developing projects, programmes and events that engage and inspire with STEM. This would combine many facets of the work that we have undertaken over the 30 years since our first Science festival.

3. If you work with schools/local authorities/others to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on this issue easy/difficult?

Local authorities engage with our projects to varying degrees. We do have support from them in terms of the engagement we have with the schools and in a number of local authorities we share information regarding our projects with their schools on an ongoing basis. We have in the past also worked to target schools that are less engaged with STEM or a national priority to assist where possible. We do what we can but are led by what individual school decision makers feel our role is. A number of schools would like to engage with us in a yearlong capacity which is something we are currently unable to do. It is neither easy nor difficult working across the number of schools we do engage with but as schools have a number of competing priorities it can be a difficult balance for senior leaders within schools. We would like to be able to make this easier for the schools if we could.

4. What else could be done to support the attainment /achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

Intervention for some of our most affected families and young people in terms of engagement with 'school' and 'culture'. Perhaps start nursery provision earlier that is combined with whole family learning opportunities whether that is for the parents or children but always have a cross over to show both sides that learning is lifelong. We know from some of the community work that we have embarked on that there can be so many barriers which limit engagement with opportunities, however small, that would support families and young people. There needs to be more done to ensure equal access regardless of postcode to help and support. Schools are usually found in the centre of communities but these building and people's experience inside of them vary. We have community learning so perhaps it is this idea of family learning – out with school and it's environments that is needed. Supported by local organisations to provide a long term scheme or relationship that will become part of the families everyday lives.

Evaluation and feedback for Generation Science (2017):

- 100% of teachers agreed that Generation Science is relevant to A Curriculum for Excellence
- 100% agreed that pupils demonstrated a better understanding of the science topics covered by Generation Science after taking part in the workshop
- 100% agreed that pupils demonstrated an increased enthusiasm for learning science after taking part in the workshop
- 100% agreed that Generation Science demonstrates to pupils that science can be fun
- 97% agreed that Generation Science engaged pupils who don't normally show an interest in science
- 100% of teachers said they would book Generation Science again

Comments from teachers:

This was a fantastic workshop that engaged the children. It covered literacy - following instructions, numeracy - position and movement also, as well as science Teacher – St Patrick's PS, Falkirk

We are in a rural school in an area of high deprivation so we value these workshops as these experiences can be brought to us and so many of our school community members. Teacher –St Palladius PS, Dalry, N Ayrshire

Excellent workshop. Well delivered. Engaged children from start to finish. As always 10/10 for Generation Science! Teacher - Kellis PS, Isle of Islay

I thought this workshop was amazing. It allowed me to see how hands on experiments can be setup with children. Children were engaged and really enjoyed it. They enjoyed using the equipment and completing experiments. We don't have the equipment to do this, however after seeing this workshop I realise it can be easy to set up and not daunting. Workshop leaders were great with the children. Thank you! Teacher – Stow PS, Scottish Borders

How engaging! Thanks James + Polly, you were keeping children interested (not so easy with some) liked the fact it was all active with children up + down from carpet. Great science + storytelling and links to Scotland's heritage

Teacher – Pairc PS, Isle of Lewis

Very positive experience! All equipment/resources used during the workshop increased pupil engagement. Staff were very passionate + developed great discussion. It was very memorable experience for pupils. Continue to support teachers in developing scientifically literate classes. Thank you. Teacher – Foulford PS, Fife

A great workshop, very relevant to CFE outcomes. The teachers notes are a great support for teachers to provide follow up ideas. Teacher- St Martin's PS, Renton

Darrell Williams
Chief Operating Officer
Edinburgh International Science Festival
21 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society

How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe is the largest arts festival in the world, taking place annually in Edinburgh. The Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society is the organisation which underpins the Fringe providing support to everyone who wants to take part in the festival. We believe that exposure to the arts is fundamental to the development of children and young people and to their educational attainment and we work to make this happen in several different ways. We run schemes to eradicate poverty as a barrier to attending the Fringe for children and young people, as well as working with schools to raise awareness of the festival.

Fringe Schools Poster Competition

Since 1980, the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society has run a schools' poster competition, asking school children in Scotland to create a poster which represents the Fringe. Over 100,000 children have taken part in the competition and it has undergone several changes to fit the requirements of the Curriculum for Excellence, and to clearly demonstrate the connections between the Fringe and creativity outcomes. This poster competition is the main way we engage with schools, and we believe it feeds into the educational attainment of children by increasing their awareness of arts and culture in Scotland, developing their confidence, as well as their visual arts skills.

In 2016 and 2017, we have run CPD events for Edinburgh teachers, aimed at developing their confidence in teaching visual arts. By working with teachers, we hope to influence the attainment of a greater number of children. In this time, we have also run workshops with local primary schools and local artists, focusing on increasing their ability to think creatively, and on building their confidence.

The main barrier we face when working with schools in Scotland is communicating with schools, and the heavy workload which teachers face. This is why we want the Fringe to be something that supports teachers to deliver the outcomes they need and want to deliver, rather than an additional burden. In our new five year plan we have identified creation of a "Learning Fringe" as a core objective with a serious ambition to use our access to the

world's biggest creative network to enhance the creative learning offer for young people in Scotland.

Access Fringe: Children and Young People

We also work with the City of Edinburgh Council, EVOC, and Fringe participants to make Fringe tickets available to vulnerable children and young people who would not otherwise be able to attend the Fringe. This programme has been in place since 2015, and in that time has made over 50,000 tickets available. The programme initially was for children and young people in the City of Edinburgh corporate parenting scheme and has since expanded to vulnerable children and young people in Edinburgh. We feel this is a valuable way of supporting the educational attainment of children and young people, as it opens doors to the theatre, music, dance, comedy, and all the art forms presented at the Fringe, it builds the confidence of children and young people in Edinburgh by encouraging them to be part of an integral facet of the cultural life of Edinburgh. The main barriers to this programme are ensuring that people eligible for the tickets can access them and helping people to navigate their way through the programme of shows on offer.

Fringe Days Out

In 2017, the Fringe Society gifted Fringe Day Out experiences to the value of £35,000 to 26 charities and community groups across the city. 18 of these organisations work with young people or families, with over half of these being in the 20% most deprived areas of Scotland, according to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

A Fringe Day Out consisted of Fringe vouchers and Lothian Buses day passes. The charities chosen represented a wide a range of people who may not have engaged with the Fringe before. Charities who benefited included: Fet-Lor Youth Club (which exists to improve the lives of the people in north Edinburgh by empowering and inspiring young people through early and ongoing engagement), the Multi-Cultural Families Base (which promotes the well-being and life opportunities of vulnerable and disadvantaged children, young people and families), and With Kids Edinburgh (which works with children and families experiencing poverty).

The Fringe Days Out were extremely well received, with organisations commenting on how useful it was to receive the bus tickets as transport can be as much of a barrier to accessing the Fringe as ticket costs.

A sample of the feedback we received:

“We were fortunate enough to receive a very generous donation of Fringe festival tickets and bus tickets for children, young people and families we work with. This has made a positive difference to so many families and children ...None of the parents or their children had attended the Fringe before, despite living in Edinburgh. In addition, the

bus tickets have made it more helpful for families to get into the centre of Edinburgh and access Fringe performances.”
(Citadel Youth Centre)

“...One young woman who is a single parent said she couldn’t believe she was receiving free vouchers for shows plus bus tickets...”

Sikh Sanjog passed on vouchers to the Minority Ethnic Health Inclusion Service (MEHIS) who we work in partnership with. They passed their vouchers to families who access their service. Again this brought such joy and having the bus tickets made the whole experience so much easier...The vouchers given to Sikh Sanjog have allowed around approx. 50 BME women, men and children to experience the Edinburgh Fringe for the first time.”
(Sikh Sanjog)

Are there any services that you / your organisation has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

We want to work further with schools and to connect them with the performers who take part in the Fringe. We believe that the Edinburgh Festival Fringe presents an exciting opportunity for children to learn through the arts, to build their confidence, to develop their personal and social skills, and to become confident arts creators and consumers. We are now speaking to teachers and educational professionals around Scotland to find out how the Fringe Society can best support children in Scotland and their educational attainment. We want to make sure we are filling a real gap in the education of Scottish children, supporting teachers and children to build creative learning, creative thinking and processes, and opportunities for creative expression into their education experience.

We plan to build on our free ticket and Fringe voucher giveaway schemes to remove more barriers preventing people from enjoying the Fringe by providing funds for transport and refreshments as well as tickets themselves. We want to find ways to help new Fringe visitors to navigate the programme and to encourage a legacy of Fringe going, by enhancing knowledge and understanding of the Fringe.

If you work with schools/local authorities/others to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on this issue easy/difficult?

Education Scotland’s Creativity Network has been extremely useful to us in our work with schools, as have the City of Edinburgh Council’s creative learning team. Closer working with the creative learning teams in other local authorities throughout Scotland would be greatly beneficial to us. Collaboration would be easier if we had a clear pathway to accessing Glow, which is proving difficult.

What else could be done to support the attainment /achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

The Fringe Society plan to occupy new premises in the next five years. From our new home, we plan to extend our learning offer to schools and community groups, offering year-round engagement with the arts and creative learning. Having this base from which to offer workshops, will allow us to extend the works we can do with school aged children, and ensure we can create further opportunities for engagement with the Fringe and the opportunities it offers, not only in the development of soft skills, but also the career prospects.

Finally, more direction from government agencies such as Education Scotland as well as Creative Scotland would help to support the attainment and achievement of children and young people, as well as more targeted funding. The national cultural strategy should make access to culture and creative learning an entitlement/requirement for every young person in Scotland and all institutions involved in young people's education should have measurable targets for cultural access and creative learning.

Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society

22 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

The Equality & Human Rights Commission

The Equality & Human Rights Commission (EHRC) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Education & Skills Committee inquiry into the attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty.

The EHRC supports the Governments initiative to boost the educational attainment of children living in the most deprived parts of Scotland through the Attainment Challenge. The EHRC's remit includes the recently enacted Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010 (the "Fairer Scotland" or "Socio Economic Duty"). The Duty will require both the Government and Local Authorities to, "when making decisions of a strategic nature about how to exercise its functions, have due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage". The Duty will assist public bodies in Scotland to critically appraise their strategic policies to ensure that they are delivered in a way which narrows the attainment gap between the most and least deprived parts of Scotland.

The EHRC is concerned that in developing the Attainment Challenge the Scottish Government has paid insufficient attention to equality, focusing the benefits of the policy on inequality (deprivation) and not making the connection to equality (protected characteristics).

Taking the example of race, we know from official data that ethnic minorities are twice as likely to live in poverty than White Scots. However many ethnic minorities (particularly Asian and Chinese communities) are not as clustered in the most deprived areas as white people meaning that the focus on delivery by postcode could inadvertently mean that fewer ethnic minority pupils could benefit from the policy. Similarly, we know that boys perform worse than girls, and that disabled pupils, Gypsy/Travellers and looked after children all have far lower attainment scores than the pupils living in the most deprived wards of Scotland. The EHRC is concerned that without a specific focus on equality the Attainment Challenge could inadvertently widen the gaps between the these groups, defined by their protected characteristic, and those pupils attending schools in the most deprived postcodes.

The EHRC has raised these concerns with the Scottish Government who are now conducting a full equality impact assessment on the policy. We expect to see the completed Impact Assessment by the end of March 2018.

Currently neither Local Authorities nor schools are required to set out which protected groups they intend their work under the Attainment Challenge to benefit. Similarly there are no monitoring requirements in place which require

these bodies to either monitor or assess the extent to which pupils with, or who share protected characteristics, are benefiting from the policy equitably.

In the last month the Scottish Government has issued guidance to head teachers “Pupil Equity Funding – National Operational Guidance – 2018” which for the first time asks schools to “consider” equality when developing Equity Fund projects:

“Evidence shows that some children and young people from equalities groups can be disproportionately affected by deprivation and can therefore face significant additional barriers to learning. Education authorities have responsibilities to actively address inequality and the promotion of equity is a shared responsibility held by all staff, partners and stakeholders. In this context, headteachers should consider additional steps that might be required to close the educational attainment gap for pupils affected by poverty who may also experience disadvantage for other reasons. For example, disadvantage related to; a protected characteristic (disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation); a need for which they require additional support; being looked after; or having caring responsibilities”.

The EHRC would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further with the Committee to ensure that all pupils experiencing poverty irrespective of their postcode can benefit equally from this significant investment in our children’s future.

Chris Oswald
Head of Policy & Communication
22 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Glasgow Centre for Population Health

The Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) welcomes this important consultation and the opportunity it gives for stakeholders to contribute to the development of effective policy responses and interventions that can tackle the impact of poverty on the educational attainment of school aged children.

Our submission will focus on relevant GCPH evidence within three main areas as requested by the Chair of the Committee, namely:

- 1. Building understanding of the impact of poverty on educational attainment**
- 2. Tackling the impact of poverty - evidence of effective interventions**
- 3. Barriers to success**

1. Building understanding of the impact of poverty on educational attainment

GCPH has undertaken a wide range of research and analysis to monitor trends and patterns in health and life circumstances within and beyond Glasgow. The Understanding Glasgow [website](#) presents information about the wellbeing of Glasgow's population across a range of domains, including poverty and educational attainment. This work highlights the importance of reducing child poverty to support educational attainment which will in turn support a child's future health, longevity and quality of life.

Although attainment levels in the city have been steadily rising, [one in three children](#) still live in poverty and [wide variations by deprivation in qualifications](#) exist. [Predictions](#) are that child poverty levels are set to increase, and the nature of poverty is also changing, with a rise in 'in-work' poverty and in lone parent households, both of which impact on children.

In terms of educational attainment, evidence generated by [GCPH](#) and from [elsewhere](#) demonstrates that the gap between children from low-income and high-income households starts early. Lower attainment in literacy and numeracy is linked to deprivation throughout primary school. By age 12–14 (S2), pupils from better-off areas are more than twice as likely as those from the most deprived areas to do well in numeracy. These data highlight the importance of effective interventions and policies that can support and nurture the physical, social and emotional development of babies and young children prior to entering the school system through health and social care pathways, appropriate family/parenting support and equitable access to high quality early learning and childcare. [GCPH research](#) exploring practitioners' views regarding the parenting landscape in Greater Glasgow and Clyde found that

although there was agreement that parenting support programmes were firmly embedded as an important component of early intervention across the statutory and third sector there was growing recognition of the importance of family support which can take account of and respond to a family's economic, social and cultural context.

Families living in poverty are more likely to live in poor quality housing. Evidence from the GoWell research and learning programme has highlighted the negative impact of poor housing on children's health and their ability to study at home, and associations between attainment and the social mix of a pupil's home neighbourhood. Children and young people living in damp, mouldy homes are more prone to respiratory conditions than those in dry homes. Such symptoms can lead to sleep loss and restrictions on children's daily activities. Living in cold, damp housing may also have an impact on mental health, increasing children's chances of experiencing stress, anxiety and depression. The space available within a home can also impact on educational attainment, for example if there is insufficient quiet, warm space for children to do their homework¹⁷⁹.

2. Tackling the impact of poverty - evidence of effective interventions

The [Healthier, Wealthier Children](#) (HWC) project is an example of an effective early intervention and NHS partnership approach to maximise income for pregnant woman and families experiencing, or at risk of, child poverty. Between 2010 and 2017, the HWC project developed referral pathways between early years health service and money advice services for pregnant women and families with young children who were experiencing or at risk of child poverty. Early years health staff and welfare advice staff working across Greater Glasgow and Clyde achieved 15,238 HWC advice referrals that led to families receiving £17.6 million gains, as a result. Evaluation learning showed that many were unaware of their rights to entitled financial support.

Lone parents were key beneficiaries of HWC and represent four out of 10 families with children in Glasgow, the highest Scottish local authority rate and expected to rise over the next 20 years. Many lone parent families experience health, social and economic inequalities that can influence their children's educational attainment. From 2013 onwards, GCPH developed strong partnership links to create various [learning outputs](#) to help tackle these inequalities. In 2014, the [Glasgow Lone Parent Project](#) was set up to improve the way mainstream services support parents. Key successes and outcomes that the project contributed to included low income families automatically receiving a school clothing grant, instead of having to apply, tackling stigma and ensuring parents' voices influenced work, such as the review of Lifelong Learning undertaken by Glasgow Life.

¹⁷⁹ Lawson L, Kearns A. Changing contexts and critical moments: interim outcomes for children and young people living through involuntary relocation. Unpublished manuscript, 2016.

The [Building Connections](#) programme run by GCPH and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation is a more recent example of an effective intervention to tackle the impact of poverty. The programme built on approaches to delivering advice services in two general practices and two job centres in north east Glasgow. The services included: financial and debt advice; mental health and addictions support; social security advice; and modern apprenticeship schemes for ethnic minority communities, with the main focus of the programme to improve social and economic outcomes for people living in deprived communities. Nearly £1 million worth of financial gain has been secured through supporting people to access social security payments and £213,000 of debt was identified. This programme has led to a [commitment by the Scottish Government](#) to co-locate the Social Security's local services with other advice organisations

The [Cost of the School Day](#) (CSD) and [Cost of the School Holidays](#) (CSH), both led by Child Poverty Action Group (Scotland), are two educational projects that GCPH has supported from the outset. CSD involved children, parents and staff identifying cost barriers and taking practical steps to remove them, such as improving communication with parents about financial support, making approaches to lending resources consistent, starting homework clubs with computer access and removing the need for expensive badged sweatshirts. CSD has been extended beyond Glasgow and is a recommended intervention in the Pupil *Equity Fund* national guidance. The CSH study also showed that school holidays can be difficult for low-income families and may lead to the attainment gap being widened. High quality summer programmes, providing reliable and flexible childcare - particularly for lone parents and those with older children - and preventing holiday malnourishment, especially among children normally receiving free school meals, could help narrow the gap. It is worth noting that North Lanarkshire council has announced that it plans to address holiday hunger through the ["Food 365" programme](#).

Achievement covers learning in other areas outside school, and in the variety of activities children and young people are involved in. Through these activities, they develop important skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work that can be of real value to them as they grow up. We therefore welcome the Scottish Government's recognition of the importance placed on learning from activities outside the classroom. Since 2013, GCPH has been leading the evaluation of [Sistema Scotland's Big Noise programme](#). The programme uses music-making to foster confidence, discipline, teamwork, pride and aspiration in the children taking part, their families and across their wider community. There is early evidence of improvement in academic-related skills and behaviours and performance in the school setting. The [GCPH survey of the Glasgow 2014 Clyde-sider volunteer programme](#) also showed that those aged 16-24 were more likely than older volunteers (25+) to report positive skill-based outcomes after participating, including skills such as communication, organisation and problem solving.

The [Children's Neighbourhood Scotland project](#), currently being developed in Bridgeton and Dalmarnock, is a distinctive place-based approach to improving

outcomes for all children and young people in neighbourhoods with high levels of poverty, based on experience and practice internationally¹⁸⁰. It aims to place a clear area-wide strategic focus on joining up efforts across services and sectors to ensure better coordination, integration of local support systems and a coherent set of networks for children and families and the communities in which they live.

3. Barriers to success

A [GCPH review of evidence](#) on early years, children and young people demonstrates that parental life circumstances and socioeconomic contexts have a fundamental bearing on the early years and children's outcomes. These factors are also critically related to parents' health and wellbeing, which in turn impact on early years and childhood outcomes. Hence, the health and wellbeing of children cannot be addressed in isolation from the health and wellbeing of parents. Recognising the excess ill-health experienced by young working-age adults in Scotland documented by [GCPH data analysis](#), there is a particular need for services and approaches to be inter-generational, affecting parents/carers as well as children, to reduce the inter-generational transmission of disadvantage. In particular, it is important to support lone mothers since they are more likely to report poor mental health or physical health, than mothers who have partners.

In relation to the health and wellbeing of young people themselves, a [recent GCPH study](#) found that almost 1-in-8 secondary pupils in Glasgow reported providing care, with a third of these stating that no one knew about it. More likely to receive free school meals, live with a lone parent, young carers reported poorer health than non-carers, particularly when caring for someone with mental health or addictions issues. They were also less likely to see themselves entering further or higher education, even when important background factors were taken into account. Local authority and health board requirement to provide a 'Young Carer Statement' could be an important platform to address this particular attainment challenge of ensuring that all school pupils identified as providing care are offered timely and appropriate support to realise their full potential.

[Exposure to adverse childhood experiences](#) (ACEs) represents a direct threat to children and young people's health and wellbeing, attainment and ability to lead a fulfilled adult life. ACEs refer to stressful events occurring in childhood such as abuse, neglect, family conflict, parental drug or alcohol addiction. ACEs can create dangerous levels of stress and derail healthy brain development, which can result in long-term effects on learning, behaviour and health. There is a connection between child poverty, family stress and the likelihood of children experiencing ACEs. There is also clear evidence that family stress is being exacerbated by austerity and welfare reform. We support the Scottish Government commitment to tackling ACEs in the current [Programme for Government](#) and through the [Justice Strategy](#). As a member of the national [ACEs advisory hub](#), GCPH has contributed to the publication of

¹⁸⁰ [Henig et al., \(2015\) Putting collective impact in context EPSA: Columbia University](#)

[guidance for education colleagues](#) on the use of the Pupil Equity Fund to tackle the attainment gap – this guidance sets out a range of practical approaches and actions that will help support children and mitigate some of the effects that ACEs may have on their learning and development.

GCPH is the lead evaluation partner in a 3 year project, [Childcare and Nurture in Glasgow East \(CHANGE\)](#) which aims to establish improved, affordable and sustainable childcare in three Glasgow East communities. Our emerging findings based on surveys, interviews and focus groups with parents/carers and professionals indicate that barriers to accessing child care include: a lack of information of available childcare, flexibility, affordability, availability, and provision for children with additional support needs. We welcome the commitment by the Scottish Government to increase free access to early learning and childcare but highlight the importance of affordable provision that provides the flexibility and accessibility that parents and families need if they are to be able to take advantage of the childcare offer in their neighbourhood.

In conclusion, GCPH believes that child poverty negatively impacts on a child's health, educational attainment, future prospects and health in adulthood. This response has presented a range of effective and promising approaches and interventions that can help ameliorate these impacts. However, we propose that efforts to tackle poverty and improve attainment need to consider all spheres of children's lives drawing on the principles and approach set out in [Getting it Right for Every Child](#). This includes children's family and parental environment, learning environment, neighbourhood, and crucially the socioeconomic circumstances in which they are growing up. We look forward to the findings of the Parliamentary Inquiry in this regard.

Glasgow Centre for Population Health
20 March 2018

Education and Skills Committee

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Inch Youth Club

About this letter

Inch Youth Club is a youth club run and supported by staff and resources from City of Edinburgh Council, LifeLong Learning Service, Communities and Families Department.

It sits within a range of provision delivered within South East Locality of Edinburgh which ranges in approach, focus, numbers attending each individual piece of provision, termly theme etc. as it responds to local issues and wishes of local young people. The group which offer this submission meet on a weekly basis, as a youth club attended by between 10-15 young people aged 11-15 years old.

The submission was compiled as a "working document" where the group were supported by part time youth work staff and the Life Long Learning Worker to articulate their thoughts onto a paper to be submitted to any relevant parties re Education & Skill's Committee's Inquiry in to Poverty & Attainment.

Letter

To the people who run education

You're very rude to kids - you won't let kids be kids!

Yes! You might be in charge of people but you do not help, or let, kids have fun - and this is important! **If we do not get a chance to play and experience fun, kids end up being scarred and crushed their whole life!**

Yes! You may mean things for a good cause but it is important for the kids to have fun with each other as well as what the adults we should be doing. We want kids to have as much fun as they can because, every time we walk through our neighborhood, kids look sad, unhappy and depressed. You could help us with more things to do instead of leaving us on the streets and provide us with more spaces to go to e.g. youth clubs! You could also be building more playgrounds and more parks!

As the government you make us feel like we are chained-up to a wall and we hate you for this! We feel we are trapped in school, and exams, and studying after school with no time of our own to develop. We don't get a chance to explore our own new ideas and to test and process all the things we find.

You have stupid rules against kids and against people. And you might be doing some good things with kids but there are lots we do not agree with. School, for example is ok but we do not like how early we have to wake up to

go there - we should not start until at least 10.30am! It's how our brains work best but it's even more important, and has even more meaning, for kids who have to travel a long way just to get to school because they have to get up even earlier. This is unfair because there are no private coaches for us when there are for some! Certain schools provide buses for young people why not all schools? You should provide more buses for all schools. Not everybody is able to be dropped off either as some parents can't afford or don't have a car or need to work so can't do this for their children! We don't think this is fair for kids whose parents do not have much money and there is more examples of now being able to do things if their parents don't have as much money. For example there's a good chance they wouldn't get to go on trips and longer camps and school breaks or would even be too embarrassed to ask for help to go or mention it to their parents. Things like this also happen with other activities or not having enough money for school uniforms and we get bullied for it – everybody should be issued with a free school uniform and PE kit. If we don't have a PE kit, staff don't listen or believe us and we get in trouble or detentions from them. It's also not fair how they hand out iPads because this isn't the same in all schools and in ours you have to turn up in school uniform all the time to get one to use higher years. Not everyone can afford their own computer or has one in the house.

Lunchtime is unfair for lots of reasons such as people not being able to stay with their friends to go to the shop for lunch or the church's toastie lunch club if they get free school meals and not everybody goes for their free school. We think it would be a good idea if we could withdraw it as money so we had the choice to be with and do the same as our friends. It is also not fair if your last in the queue – lunchtime should be longer so people are not disadvantaged!

There should be more lessons in the schools about stopping bullying which happens because we do not have the latest stuff. We need to stop homophobia, racism, sexism and bullying because we keep hearing "that so gay", "you're so ugly cause you're black", "you can't touch and do that cause you're a girl", "I am gonna kick you, you're a dweeb and you're ugly". We wish we were helped more to "love ourselves" and so we should have more talks about ways to prevent bullying and racism! They should be helping young women and men do what they want instead of what they are lead into and are bullied because they are different. We need to be encouragement and support for each of us to be creative.

You should be making schools better for children to stay safer and for them to be fun! If kids do not like going to school, you force them to go and can take them away from their parents, when it is not their fault – it is yours because you did not listen & give us our rights!

You should provide money for young people to have extra youth clubs or activities to keep us off the streets. We are being called idiots and hooligans because we wander the streets when we should be provided with more clubs instead of being treating like idiots. At youth clubs, we learn lots of things like team building and how get on with each other and make friends and stuff. But this costs money!

High schools should teach us stuff about our dream jobs - like what college to choose to get these dream jobs. They should put more importance in schools for the future. As well as teaching us how to get jobs we want for example everyone should also be being taught more serious stuff in classes - like how to pay our more mortgage, how to pay rent or taxes but really how to manage money. We should be taught about Human Rights but we also agree with a lot of what is said in the track by Boy In The Band – Don't Stay in School:

<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/boyinaband/dontstayinschool.html>

Students at high school should also be provided with driving lessons!

As young people, we deserve at least as much respect as grown-ups because we might be young now but we are strong and in the future we'll be the same ages as you are and want the same things for the country.

We expect a little back from you telling us all the things and the reasons you are doing this to us otherwise we will be unhappy!

Members of Inch Youth Club members (P6-S3)

c/o Callum McLeod

Lifelong Learning Locality Development Worker (CLD)

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

National Theatre of Scotland

SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS DESIGNED TO SUPPORT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO EXPERIENCE POVERTY THAT HAVE WORKED WELL IN SUPPORTING EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT.

The National Theatre of Scotland is committed to breaking down barriers that prevent young people and children from participating in theatre attendance and arts activity.

There are a number of pioneering models and initiatives that have made inroads into tackling poverty, social exclusion, specifically related to educational attainment.

THEATRE IN SCHOOLS SCOTLAND

Currently in its three year pilot stage, TiSS has been developed by National Theatre of Scotland and Imagineate, in partnership with Visible Fictions, Catherine Wheels and Starcatchers. The project aims to create a sustainable touring and producing model to ensure that every child in Scotland will receive a high quality piece of theatre work in their school every year. Many children will not attend theatre performances due to lack of money so by bringing theatre into their school, this creates equality of opportunity for all.

The research at this stage in the project is based on direct feedback from teachers and head teachers.

Gigha Primary School Head Teacher – Theatre in Schools Scotland

“The impact of the visit has been utterly transformational for us. For most of our children (many of whom experience rural or social/financial deprivation) this was their first (and probably only) experience of live theatre. Their learning, growth and development have been significantly impacted by the visit in terms of their raised aspirations, interest in the arts and focus on achievement. Our small school budgets are extremely small and mostly already dedicated to covering the cost of our photocopier etc. There is not money in our budgets for trips and visits and we also often struggle to get folks interested in coming so far away from the big cities. Your funding made all the difference to being able to have theatre here and to make it accessible to so many families”

The company also offers technical theatre training in schools- A programme piloted in Grangemouth High Schools teaching teachers and pupils in professional approaches to technical theatre, lighting and sound design with the resources at their disposal. This scheme is due to extend and to offer access to students to learn about employability and career choices within the creative industries.

TRANSFORM

Transform was developed and delivered by the National Theatre of Scotland with financial support from Scottish Power Learning and the Scottish Government Determined to Succeed (DtS) programme. Transform brought together schools and communities with theatre professionals to create high impact theatre events through a series of projects across Scotland. Each Transform project involved secondary school pupils (mainly S3) and members of the wider community to develop a theatre production from start to finish and across the full range of activities involved in a production (from costume design and stage management to video production and marketing/PR). Children from lower socio-economic backgrounds were involved across the country in each of the Transform projects.

On average, each of the ten Transform projects delivered approximately 230 two hour workshops with total attendances of over 50,000. More than 935 pupils and 201 community members were involved in the performances with many more also involved 'behind the scenes' in the production process. The performances attracted a combined audience of almost 6,000.

The evaluation identified a range of impacts on pupils, schools teachers and the wider communities as well as for the National Theatre of Scotland itself.

Impacts on **pupils** were:

- increased self-confidence and belief in their own abilities;
- improved self-esteem;
- learning and development of new skills;
- increased interest in the art and creative activity; and
- improved attitudes toward learning.

The range of activities covered in the projects enabled a wide range of pupils to participate, many of whom would not otherwise take part in arts activities. From the feedback, it is also clear that the experience was highly valued by the pupils, and helped to break down existing social barriers and build cohesion amongst year groups.

For **schools**, Transform helped raise the profile of arts and creative activities and demonstrated the potential for learning in varied contexts. In some cases, the Transform projects encouraged cross-departmental working in schools and helped to build relationships with the wider community. The Transform projects were also widely felt to have demonstrated the principles of the new *Curriculum for Excellence* in practice, prompting valuable reflection on wider teaching practice.

One Headteacher reported back a 17% rise in attainment levels due to the Transform project being in his school: a single year group spiked on the graph and this was the group that the National Theatre of Scotland worked with.

JUMP

A programme designed to engage at risk and hard to reach young men. Originally delivered in conjunction with Police Scotland, Education Scotland and Community safety. The programme was so successful it is now being rolled out internationally. The Scottish Association of Mental Health has now joined the Company in a future strategy to deploy the programme for positive mental wellbeing in Scotland. **Jump For Girls-** a female equivalent of “Jump” working with *Maslaha*, an organisation that promotes positive perceptions of the Muslim community.

The original JUMP projects took place in Easterhouse, Glasgow and Fife.

National Theatre of Scotland
21 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

NHS Scotland- Facing up to Poverty Practice Network

Response to the call for evidence on the *Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty*

Submitted on behalf of the Facing Up to Child Poverty Practice Network
Kerry McKenzie, Chairperson, Facing Up to Child Poverty Practice Network
NHS Health Scotland, kerry.mckenzie@nhs.net

1. As part of NHS Health Scotland's work to focus on the impact of child poverty on health and wellbeing, we have focused effort in scaling up effort to reduce the cost barriers of school. School costs can put pressure on low-income families and put children at risk of missing out on opportunities and feeling different, excluded and unhappy. This can undermine their wellbeing and potential attainment at school. There are practical steps that schools and local authorities can take to mitigate the effects of poverty and ensure they are not contributing further to the stigma, discrimination and exclusion of children living in poverty while in school.
2. By focusing on the '*costs of the school day*', the following 2 questions are addressed:
 - how do education policies and school practices impact on the participation and school experiences of children and young people from low income households?
 - how can education policies and school practices be designed to reduce or remove stigma, exclusion or disadvantage for children and young people from low income households?
3. This means adopting a 'whole-school' approach that involves children, teachers and parents in the process, identifying and minimising the impact of school costs and tackling the stigma around poverty and a need to ensure equal access to resources, such as school clothing, classroom materials and transport, as well as extra-curricular activities, at a school, local authority and national level.
4. We established the ***Facing up to child poverty in schools practice network*** in 2017/18 following a recommendation from our [national event](#) that focused on the impact of school costs on child poverty in their area through highlighting projects and approaches that have reduced barriers and increased equality and participation for low income families in schools in parts of Scotland. The event aimed to encourage areas to take further action by developing local approaches to reduce school costs using learning from Glasgow's Cost of the School Day project and the '1 in 5: Raising Awareness of Child Poverty

in Edinburgh' project. To date, membership includes 25 out of 32 local authorities with representatives holding an Education Officer type of role, including some with Attainment Challenge and Pupil Equity Fund responsibilities. We provide the secretariat function of the Practice Network. There has been 2 meetings in 2017/18, with a further 4 meetings scheduled for 2018/19.

5. The Practice Network provides a forum for local authority representatives and partners to share, and build on, national and local policy and practice developments to scale up efforts across Scotland to address the cost barriers of school. We are influencing the strategic leads in Council Education Services to strengthen local partnership action on child poverty as per Child Poverty (Scotland) Act, namely, the role of universal education services to poverty-proof the school day. Impact will be evidenced through examples of changes to policy and practice and adoption of national resources at a local level. The Network also engages with other national partner organisations to consider action required at a national level e.g. National Parent Forum of Scotland, EIS, Education Scotland, Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative, COSLA. Examples of practice-sharing include:

- *Glasgow City Council's initiative to increase the uptake of school clothing grant entitlement by introducing an automated system resulting in a 97% uptake rate. One Council rep in the Network has already taken this model and introduced a similar approach with others initiating local feasibility discussions.*
- *A survey of poverty-proofing practice examples taken by schools and education departments has been undertaken and the results are being collated by CPAG Scotland and will be available online in due course.*
- *A cluster of schools in Edinburgh using their Pupil Equity Fund to fund welfare rights advisor sessions in school so providing access to income maximisation services for families in a non-stigmatising way.*

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

NHS Health Scotland

About Us

NHS Health Scotland is a national Health Board working with public, private and third sectors to reduce health inequalities and improve health.

Our corporate strategy, [A Fairer Healthier Scotland](#), sets out our vision of a Scotland in which all of our people and communities have a fairer share of the opportunities, resources and confidence to live longer, healthier lives.

Our mission is to reduce health inequalities and improve health. To do this we influence policy and practice, informed by evidence, and promotes action across public services to deliver greater equality and improved health for all in Scotland.

We are content for our response to be made available to the public and to be contacted in the future.

Key messages:

- A child's right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health is a fundamental human right. Education is one of the social determinants of health and as such affects healthy life expectancy.
- There is causal evidence of the effect that money has on cognitive, social-behavioural and health outcomes for children: children living in poverty have worse outcomes across these domains.
- Lower educational attainment has been found to be linked with aspects of children and young people's physical environment such as living in overcrowded housing, in an inadequately heated home and/or in a disadvantaged neighbourhood.
- Health inequalities are unfair and avoidable differences in the health of the population that occur across and between social classes or population groups. They are largely determined by social and economic factors and the way that the resources of income, poverty and wealth are distributed. In order to reduce health inequalities, we need to act across a range of public policy areas with policies to tackle economic and social inequalities alongside actions with a specific focus on disadvantaged groups and deprived areas¹⁸¹. This includes ensuring a fair and equitable access to good quality education.

¹⁸¹ NHS Health Scotland. Health inequalities: what are they? How do we reduce them? Edinburgh: NHS Health Scotland, 2016.

- A child's right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health is a fundamental human right. The persistence of health inequalities means that not everyone is enjoying their human right to the highest possible standard of health in Scotland. NHS Health Scotland is responding to the Committee's call for evidence because education is one of the social determinants of health and as such affects healthy life expectancy.
- We have summarised some of the key evidence points that link health and educational inequalities and what can support educational attainment, some of which is drawn from our published¹⁸² and forthcoming¹⁸³ papers:
- Many children and young people living in disadvantaged circumstances do well¹⁸⁴. The quality of the social and physical circumstances do well¹⁸⁵. The quality of the social and physical environments that they experience as they grow up is key^{186, 187, 188}. A combination and accumulation of these experiences can enhance or hinder children and young people's educational outcomes. These social and physical environments are shaped by parental income and education.
- There is causal evidence of the effect that money has on cognitive, social-behavioural and health outcomes for children: children living in poverty have worse outcomes across these domains.¹⁸⁹
- Parental income is important for educational outcomes^{190, 191}. Lack of money can limit the availability of resources for learning, as well as

¹⁸² White, J. Reducing the attainment gap: the role of health and wellbeing interventions in schools. Edinburgh: NHS Health Scotland, 2017. Available from: <http://www.healthscotland.scot/publications/health-and-wellbeing-interventions-in-a-school-setting>

¹⁸³ White, J. Childhood Circumstances and Educational Outcomes. Edinburgh: NHS Health Scotland, (forthcoming)

¹⁸⁴ Kiernan, K.E. & Mensah, F.K. Poverty, family resources and children's early education attainment; the mediating role of parenting. *British Educational Research Journal*. 2011; 37(2), 317-36.

¹⁸⁵ Kiernan, K.E. & Mensah, F.K. Poverty, family resources and children's early education attainment; the mediating role of parenting. *British Educational Research Journal*. 2011; 37(2), 317-36.

¹⁸⁶ Dyson, A., Hertzman, C., Roberts, H., Tunstill, J. & Vaghri, Z. Childhood Development, Education and Health Inequalities. Task Group Report to the Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England Post 2010 (Marmot Review). London: University College London, 2009.

¹⁸⁷ Moore, T.G., McDonald, M., Carlon, L. & O'Rourke, K. Early childhood development and the social determinants of health inequities. *Health Promotion International*. 2015; 30(S2), ii102-15.

¹⁸⁸ Letourneau, N.L., Duffett-Leger, L., Levac, L., Watson, B. & Young-Morris, C. Socio-economic status and child development: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioural Disorders*. 2011; 21(3), 211-24

¹⁸⁹ Cooper, K. & Stewart, K. Does Money Affect Children's Outcomes? An Update. CASE/203 London: Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, London School of Economics, 2017.

adversely affecting the family social environment through the impact of financial vulnerability on parental mental health¹⁹². Strong family relationships and supportive parenting can help mitigate the effects on educational outcomes of living in disadvantaged circumstances¹⁹³.

- Lower educational attainment has been found to be linked with aspects of children and young people's physical environment such as living in overcrowded housing, in an inadequately heated home and/or in a disadvantaged neighbourhood¹⁹⁴.
- High aspirations for continuing onto higher or further education have been reported among parents and children across the spectrum of socio-economic backgrounds. Rather than innate characteristic, aspirations are shaped by a broad range of influences including family, neighbourhood, school and wider social factors which interact in complex ways^{195 196 197 198}.
- School is both important to, and for, children from low income households. Parents from low income households value school and want to help their children but are less likely to know what that looks like or how to achieve it.¹⁹⁹
- The social environment within schools can play a role in mediating the relationship between children and young people's

¹⁹⁰ Connelly, R., Sullivan, A. & Jerrim, J. Primary and Secondary Education and Poverty Review. London: Centre for Longitudinal Studies, University of London, 2014.

¹⁹¹ Schoon, I., Jones, E., Cheng, H. & Maughan, B. Family hardship, family instability and cognitive development. *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health*. 2012; 66, 716-22

¹⁹² Treanor, M. Financial Vulnerability, Mothers' Emotional Distress and Child Wellbeing. Research Briefing 81 Edinburgh: Centre for Research on Families and Relationships, 201

¹⁹³ Duckworth, K. The Influence of Context on Attainment in Primary School. Interactions between Children, Family and School Contexts. London: Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning, 2008.

¹⁹⁴ Dockery, A.M., Ong, R., Colquhoun, S., Li, J. & Kendall, G. Housing and Children's Development and Wellbeing: Evidence from Australian Data. AHURI Final Report No. 201 Melbourne: Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, 2013.

¹⁹⁵ Baker, W., Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I., Sylva, K., Melhuish, E.C. & Taggart, B. Aspirations, education and inequality in England: Insights from the effective provision of pre-school, primary and secondary education project. *Oxford Review of Education*. 2014; 40(5), 525-42.

¹⁹⁶ Social Exclusion Task Force. Aspiration and Attainment Amongst Young People in Deprived Communities. London: Social Exclusion Task Force, 2008.

¹⁹⁷ Sosu, E.M. Predicting maternal aspirations for their children's education: The role of parental and child characteristics. *International Journal of Educational Research*. 2014; 67, 67-7

¹⁹⁸ Hartas, D. Young people's educational aspirations: Psychosocial factors and the home environment. *Journal of Youth Studies*. 2016; 19(9), 1145-63.

¹⁹⁹ Treanor, M. Can we put the poverty of aspiration myth to bed now? Centre on Research on Families and Relationships Briefing 91, Edinburgh, 2017. Available from: <https://www.era.lib.ed.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/1842/25787/CRFR%20briefing%2091%20-%20Treanor.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

circumstances and educational outcomes²⁰⁰. Children and young people attending a school with a positive climate have been found to do better than might be expected based on their socio-economic background²⁰¹.

- Supporting the learning and development of staff that are in contact with children and young people to understand the causes, consequences and impact of poverty so they can deliver services that are sensitive in addressing stigma and discrimination²⁰².
6. In terms of what can be done to support attainment of children and young people affected by poverty, we have been working with Education Scotland to produce evidence on 'what works' with regard to health and the impact of poverty. This will help head teachers and their partners think more broadly about how they use Pupil Equity Funding to reduce the health and attainment impact of poverty.
 7. We know that school costs can put pressure on low-income families and put children at risk of missing out on opportunities and feeling different, excluded and unhappy. This can undermine their wellbeing and potential attainment at school. There are practical steps (see below) that schools and local authorities can take to mitigate the effects of poverty and ensure they are not contributing further to the stigma, discrimination and exclusion of children living in poverty while in school.
 8. By focusing on the 'costs of the school day', the following 2 questions are addressed:
 - how do education policies and school practices impact on the participation and school experiences of children and young people from low income households?
 - how can education policies and school practices be designed to reduce or remove stigma, exclusion or disadvantage for children and young people from low income households?
 9. This means adopting a 'whole-school' approach that involves children, teachers and parents in the process of minimising the impact of school costs and tackling the stigma around poverty and a need to ensure equal access to resources, such as school clothing, classroom materials and transport, as well as extra-curricular activities, at a school, local authority and national level. For example, an action could

²⁰⁰ Department for Children, Schools and Families. Deprivation and Education. the Evidence on Pupils in England, Foundation Stage to Key Stage 4. London: Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2009

²⁰¹ Berkowitz, R., Moore, H., Aston, R.A. & Benbenishty, R. A research synthesis of the associations between socioeconomic background, inequality, school climate and academic achievement. Review of Educational Research. 2017; 87(2), 425-69.

²⁰² White, J. Childhood Circumstances and Educational Outcomes. Edinburgh: NHS Health Scotland, (forthcoming)

be eliminating the need for badged uniforms or setting a maximum limit that schools can charge for such items.

10. As part of our work to focus on the impact of child poverty on health and wellbeing, we have focused effort in scaling up effort to reduce the cost barriers of school. We established the ***Facing up to child poverty in schools practice network*** in 2017/18 following a recommendation from our national event²⁰³ that focused on the impact of school costs on child poverty in their area through highlighting projects and approaches that have reduced barriers and increased equality and participation for low income families in schools in parts of Scotland. The event aimed to encourage areas to take further action by developing local approaches to reduce school costs using learning from Glasgow's Cost of the School Day project and the '1 in 5: Raising Awareness of Child Poverty in Edinburgh' project. To date, membership includes 25 out of 32 local authorities with representatives holding an Education Officer type of role, including some with Attainment Challenge and Pupil Equity Fund responsibilities. We provide the chairing and secretariat function of the Practice Network. There have been 2 meetings in 2017/18, with a further 4 meetings scheduled for 2018/19. Examples of practice-sharing to date that has led to other Councils considering adopting similar models include:

- Glasgow City Council's initiative to increase the uptake of school clothing grant entitlement by introducing an automated system, using Council-held data on Housing Benefit and Council Tax reduction to identify eligible families, resulting in a 97% uptake rate. One Council rep in the Network has already taken this model and introduced a similar approach with others initiating local feasibility discussions.
- A cluster of schools in Edinburgh using their Pupil Equity Fund to fund welfare rights advisor sessions in school so providing access to a range of financial inclusion support, including income maximisation and debt management, for families in a non-stigmatising way.
- Dumfries & Galloway Council has removed Home Economics curriculum costs

11. The Practice Network provides a forum for local authority representatives and partners to share and build on national and local policy and practice developments to scale up efforts across Scotland to address the cost barriers of school. We are influencing the strategic leads in Council Education Services to strengthen local partnership

²⁰³ Facing up to child poverty in schools – what can be done to reduce the cost barriers of school? A national learning and dissemination event <http://www.maternal-and-early-years.org.uk/facing-up-to-child-poverty-in-schools-what-can-be-done-to-reduce-the-cost-barriers-of-school-a-national-learning-and-dissemination-event>

action on child poverty as per Child Poverty (Scotland) Act, namely, the role of universal education services to poverty-proof the school day. Impact will be evidenced through examples of changes to policy and practice and adoption of national resources at a local level. The Network also engages with other national partner organisations to consider action required at a national level e.g. National Parent Forum of Scotland, EIS, Education Scotland, Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative, COSLA.

12. A survey of poverty-proofing practice examples taken by schools and education departments has been commissioned by NHS Health Scotland and the results are being collated by CPAG Scotland. This resource will be available online on CPAG Scotland's website and linked to Education Scotland's GLOW site by end of April 2018.
13. The Poverty and Inequality Commission has provided advice²⁰⁴ to the Scottish Government, recommending that they establish a minimum rate for school clothing grants and work with local authorities to find easier ways of making the application process for Educational Maintenance Allowance easier and quicker, and providing free transport to school until payment has been processed.

²⁰⁴Poverty and Inequality Commission. Advice on the Scottish Government's Child Poverty Delivery Plan, 2018 Available from: <https://povertyinequality.scot/publication/advice-scottish-governments-child-poverty-delivery-plan-2018/#more-384>

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

RSE

**Advice Paper 18-11
April 2018**

Attainment and achievement of school-aged children experiencing poverty: a response from the RSE Education Committee to the Scottish Parliament's Education and Skills Committee

Summary

- It is clear that across the world, poverty is strongly correlated with unsatisfactory educational attainment; with a low level of educational attainment being an accurate predictor of future poverty.
- It is essential to develop a better understanding of the attainment 'gap', and how poverty and other factors, including family social capital, culture, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and disability, interact and lead to poorer educational outcomes.
- The focus of the current inquiry is on the educational impact of disadvantage on school learners. While schools undoubtedly have a significant role in supporting the needs of disadvantaged learners, school-based interventions in isolation will not address the wider determinants of educational underachievement.
- At the school level, the quality of teachers and teaching, and school leadership are key factors. This demonstrates the importance of ensuring that continuing effort is made to build the capacity of the teaching profession and to develop a powerful and inclusive leadership culture. These ingredients also underpin schools' ability to foster resilience among their learners, which has been identified as a key factor in delivering positive education outcomes for disadvantaged children.
- There is considerable evidence that, by the start of primary school, disadvantaged young children are already well behind the development of their peer group. This highlights the importance that interventions with this group should take place from birth and well before entry to nursery school. It will be important to ensure that a focus on resourcing the expansion of funded early learning and childcare does not inadvertently diminish the quality of provision.
- The evidence supports those interventions focussed on closely monitored parental involvement in children's education as the most likely to improve educational outcomes. A key issue is the need to support the parents of

children experiencing poverty so that they can engage in their children's learning.

- We have concerns that the National Improvement Framework's overriding focus on literacy and numeracy, including the standardised assessments, could lead to performance in these areas being regarded as proxies for attainment, and consequently drive behaviour in the education system. It will be important to ensure that what constitutes attainment and achievement is not restricted to those things that are capable of easy measurement.
- Consideration needs to be given to how the Scottish Government's Education Research Strategy can be used to support and inform developments in this area. Delivery of the strategy should be informed by input from independent education researchers. Building-up high-quality empirical research capacity in Scotland requires long-term commitment and investment.

Introduction

1. The Royal Society of Edinburgh's Education Committee recognises the high priority afforded to closing the attainment gap. We welcome the opportunity to respond to the Scottish Parliament Education and Skills Committee's inquiry on attainment and achievement of school-aged children experiencing poverty. We hope our comments will complement those with direct experiences to share.

Background

2. While the relationship between poverty and educational attainment is by no means fully understood, it is clear that across the world, poverty is strongly correlated with unsatisfactory educational attainment. Similarly, a low level of educational attainment is an accurate predictor of future poverty, especially material deprivation. The concern is therefore not only about the immediate learner destination, but also about the life-time implications of deprivation. It is also known that, other things being equal, the factors that have an impact on children's levels of attainment include parents' (especially fathers') education level, crowding within the household, parental employment status, worklessness, single parentage and household finance.²⁰⁵ Conversely, home learning activities, good health and nutrition have been shown to have positive effects on attainment.
3. It is important to emphasise that there is not one 'gap' to be closed and this reinforces the complexity of what is a multi-faceted issue. It is essential to develop a better understanding of the 'gap' and how poverty

²⁰⁵ *How do childhood circumstances affect poverty and deprivation as an adult?*; Office for National Statistics; September 2014

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/household-income/intergenerational-transmission-of-poverty-in-the-uk---eu/2014/sty-causes-of-poverty-uk.html>

and other factors, including family social capital, culture, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, gender, and disability, interact and lead to poorer educational outcomes.

4. The focus of the current inquiry is on the educational impact of disadvantage on school learners. While schools undoubtedly have a significant role in helping to address attainment and achievement related gaps, especially in supporting the needs of disadvantaged learners, school-based interventions in isolation will not address the wider determinants of educational underachievement.

Evidence on interventions for improving educational outcomes

Early intervention

5. There is considerable evidence that, by the start of primary school, disadvantaged young children are already well behind the development of their peer group. Research funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) has shown that in the UK by the age of three there is already a significant difference in test scores between children in the poorest fifth of the population compared with those from more affluent backgrounds.²⁰⁶ This highlights the importance that interventions with this group should take place from birth and well before entry to nursery school. A wide-ranging literature review commissioned by the National Audit Office concluded that for disadvantaged children under three years of age, high quality early years provision produces benefits for cognitive, language and social development, while low quality provision is less likely to produce clear benefits.²⁰⁷ Work undertaken by the House of Lords Select Committee on Affordable Childcare confirms that there is a sound evidence base to support the value of high quality early education for improving child outcomes for disadvantaged three and four year-olds.²⁰⁸
6. The Scottish Government is committed to the near doubling of entitlement to funded early learning and childcare (ELC) to 1140 hours a year by 2020 for all three and four-year olds and two-year olds from disadvantaged backgrounds. This reflects the importance of ensuring that children who need it most benefit from an enhanced ELC offer. The key challenges will be to ensure that a focus on resourcing the expansion in ELC does not inadvertently diminish the quality of provision; and improving the uptake of ELC among the most disadvantaged families.

²⁰⁶ *Poorer children's educational attainment: how important are attitudes and behaviour?*; A. Goodman, P. Gregg, H. Chowdry, C. Crawford, L. Dearden, R. Joyce, L. Sibieta, K. Sylva and E. Washbrook; Joseph Rowntree Foundation; March 2010
<http://www.jrf.org.uk/system/files/poorer-children-education-full.pdf>

²⁰⁷ Edward C. Melhuish; *A Literature Review of the Impact of Early Years Provision on Young Children, with Emphasis Given to Children from Disadvantaged Backgrounds*; Institute for the Study of Children, Families & Social Issues; Birkbeck, University of London; Prepared for the National Audit Office; 2004
http://media.nao.org.uk/uploads/2004/02/268_literaturereview.pdf

²⁰⁸ House of Lords Select Committee Report on Affordable Childcare; February 2015
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201415/ldselect/ldaffchild/117/117.pdf>

Parental involvement

7. The evidence supports those interventions focused on closely monitored parental involvement in children's education as the most likely to improve educational outcomes. The JRF has identified four broad areas: improving at-home parenting, involving parents in school, engaging parents in their children's learning and in their own learning, and aligning school-home expectations.²⁰⁹ These depend on parents who are able and willing to put in the necessary time and effort and on good two-way exchange of information. Recent research undertaken by the University of Stirling makes clear that parents of children experiencing poverty want the best for their children. However, compared to families not experiencing poverty, they are less likely to know how they can support their children's education.²¹⁰ A key issue therefore relates to the need to support these parents to engage in their children's learning.

Schools

8. As made clear in the SPICe Briefing: *Closing the Attainment Gap: What Can Schools Do?*, a key factor is the quality of teachers and teaching, coupled with the quality of school leadership.²¹¹ The Accounts Commission report on school education stated that the local authorities that have made the most improvement in attainment have focussed on improvements in these areas.²¹² This evidence demonstrates the importance of ensuring that continuing effort is made to build the capacity of the teaching profession and to develop a powerful and inclusive leadership culture. These are the fundamental building blocks of high quality education provision. These ingredients also underpin schools' ability to foster resilience among their learners, which has been identified as a key factor in delivering positive education outcomes for disadvantaged children. Connected to this, the SPICe briefing makes clear that the most successful schools promote an ethos of high attainment for all pupils irrespective of background. They focus on meeting the individual needs of children and avoid stereotyping disadvantaged learners. This latter point emphasises that care needs to be taken that disadvantaged learners are not simply seen as having 'gaps' in learning that need to be 'plugged'.
9. Drawing upon educational research, the SPICe briefing indicates that the following approaches have been found to be effective in closing the

²⁰⁹ *The Role of Aspiration, Attitudes and Behaviour in Closing the Educational Attainment Gap*; Carter-Wall and Whitfield; Joseph Rowntree Foundation; April 2012

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/education-achievement-poverty-summary.pdf>

²¹⁰ Treanor MC (2017); Can we put the poverty of aspirations myth to bed now?. Centre for Research on Families and Relationships. Kelly L (ed.). CRFR Research briefing, 91. Centre for Research on Families and Relationships.

²¹¹ Geetha Marcus; *Closing the Attainment Gap: What Can Schools Do?*; SPICe; August 2016
http://www.parliament.scot/ResearchBriefingsAndFactsheets/S5/SB_16-68_Closing_The_Attainment_Gap_What_Can_Schools_Do.pdf

²¹² School Education; Accounts Commission Report prepared by Audit Scotland; June 2014
<http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/report/school-education>

attainment gap: whole class interactive teaching, peer tutoring, collaborative small group activities, and the development of problem solving and thinking skills. Research evidence clearly demonstrates that grouping by ability exacerbates inequalities. The Committee might find it instructive to consider the research-inspired University of Cambridge *Learning without Limits* project where learning and teaching does not rely on fixed beliefs about ability.²¹³ It is, however, important to emphasise that this is a very complex landscape and it should not be assumed that these approaches will be effective all of the time and in all schools. As the preceding paragraph states, the success or otherwise of these approaches depends heavily on the skill of the classroom teacher and the leadership culture within the school.

10. The JRF has sought to identify the components of an effective strategy to support schools in addressing poverty-related educational inequalities²¹⁴:

Advice about developing the curriculum, improving educational outcomes for all pupils and inspecting schools should explicitly provide guidance on reducing the link between poverty and attainment; lack of data, research and evaluation evidence for schools and local authorities currently hampers progress. The Scottish education community needs a national evidence base of what works and professional development in how to use evidence. This will help practitioners differentiate proven, promising and unproven approaches and inform choices about: appropriate curriculum design, resource allocation and how to monitor and evaluate practice for impact.

11. Synthesising the available research, the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)²¹⁵ has identified the following features of successful school-based interventions for supporting parental engagement, with a particular focus on closing gaps in attainment for disadvantaged pupils:

- They are based on the best available evidence
- They state explicitly what change they anticipate achieving, and define their criteria for success or failure
- The planning of activities is informed by research into local needs and circumstances
- They are properly resourced, with sufficient capacity to develop the intervention
- Senior staff are engaged with and committed to the intervention
- Measures are taken to overcome potential participants' barriers to accessing the intervention

²¹³ Learning Without Limits: <https://learningwithoutlimits.educ.cam.ac.uk/>

²¹⁴ *Closing the Attainment Gap in Scottish Education*; Sosu and Ellis; Joseph Rowntree Foundation; May 2014 <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/education-attainment-scotland-summary.pdf>

²¹⁵ Grayson, H. (2013); Rapid Review of Parental Engagement and Narrowing the Gap in Attainment for Disadvantaged Children. Slough and Oxford: NFER and Oxford University Press <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/OUPP01/OUPP01.pdf>

- A robust evaluation design is built into the programme from the outset
 - They are sustainable; development should not cease when a specific piece of work concludes.
12. The RSE very much supports the strategic and evidence-based approach advocated by the JRF and the NFER. It is notable that the London Challenge was underpinned by the rigorous collection, management and systematic use of data.
 13. We are conscious that recent developments include the adoption in Scotland of the Education Endowment Foundation's (EEF) Learning and Teaching Toolkit²¹⁶ to address the issue of a lack of evidence on 'what works'. The toolkit is a meta-analysis of education research, presented to practitioners in an easily accessible and user-friendly way, thereby helping to bridge the gap between education research and classroom practice. It contains 34 teaching approaches and interventions, each summarised in terms of their average impact on attainment, the strength of the evidence supporting them and their cost. The EEF does, however, accept that there are risks to an approach that synthesises and simplifies a large volume of complex research evidence. It is also important to note that the Toolkit considers the impact of interventions on all children, not only those suffering from poverty-related disadvantage. Consideration could be given to the potential of adopting approaches that facilitate partnership working among researchers, local authorities and schools in relation to supporting the provision of research-based practice in schools.
 14. The Education and Skills Committee could consider how the Scottish Government's Education Research Strategy²¹⁷, which has as its focus the priority to close the attainment gap, can be used to support and inform these developments. The RSE has emphasised the importance of ensuring that delivery of the strategy is informed by the professional input of independent education researchers. The RSE would be pleased to contribute to the plans for implementing the Scottish Government's strategy.

Measuring Attainment

15. Valid and reliable assessments of attainment can only be made if there are appropriate measurement tools and data. In our recent response to the Scottish Government's proposals for measuring the attainment gap, the RSE commented that as an area-based measure of deprivation, unless it is supplemented with individual-level data, the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is incapable of identifying the most and least disadvantaged young people.²¹⁸

²¹⁶ Education Endowment Foundation's Learning and Teaching Toolkit <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit/>

²¹⁷ A Research Strategy for Scottish Education; Scottish Government; 2017 <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/04/8907>

²¹⁸ RSE response to Scottish Government consultation on Measuring the Attainment Gap; November 2017 https://www.rse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/AP17_26.pdf

16. There is also the potential for unintended consequences. It was envisaged that Curriculum for Excellence would provide for a greater breadth of experiences and outcomes as encapsulated in the four capacities. We are, however, concerned that the National Improvement Framework's overriding focus on literacy and numeracy, including the use of standardised assessments, could lead to performance in these areas being regarded as proxies for attainment, and consequently drive behaviour in the education system. It will be important to ensure that what constitutes attainment and achievement is not restricted to those things that are capable of easy measurement. The RSE recommended that the Scottish Government reflect further on potential measurement tools, rather than risk implementing unsuitable approaches that could undermine its commitments on closing the attainment gap.

Additional Information

This Advice Paper has been signed off by the General Secretary of the RSE. Any enquiries about this Advice Paper should be addressed to Mr William Hardie (email: whardie@theRSE.org.uk)

Responses are published on the RSE website (<https://www.rse.org.uk/>)

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EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Scottish Library and Information Council

Dear Mr Dorman,

Thank you for inviting responses to your inquiry into Poverty and Attainment. The Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) is pleased to be able to submit a response. SLIC is the independent advisory body to the Scottish Government in matters relating to libraries. Access to information and knowledge is central to the library offer. SLIC works with its member library services to remove barriers to accessing library services and ensure that people, no matter where they live, have access to information and reading materials to allow them to make informed decisions.

- How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

Scotland's first Public Library Strategy – *Ambition and Opportunity – A Strategy for Public Libraries in Scotland 2015 -2020* – has as one of its Strategic Aims *Libraries promoting Reading, Literacy and Learning*. We see reading and literacy as the bedrock of attainment. One of the key strengths of the public library offer is that the core service is free and available to everyone. The Early Years programmes run in public libraries, such as Bookbug and Rhyme Times, support equal chances for all children and young people by developing their language skills, motor skills and concentration skills. Participating in these programmes supports children to be school ready thus improving attainment opportunity regardless of background.

As a result of the Strategy for Public Libraries, Every Child A Library Member (ECALM) has been rolled out across Scotland to ensure every single child has a library membership card. Public Libraries are there to support people literally from the cradle to the grave. Last year in Scotland over 6,000,000 books were borrowed by children from Scotland's public libraries. Yet despite this, the evidence shows that there are children who struggle with reading, are not taken to the local library and may live in a house where there are no books.

There is a direct correlation between literacy and attainment so where children are not supported with their ability to read it follows that attainment suffers.

Scotland's public libraries provide a Summer Reading Challenge which encourages and incentivises children to read throughout the school holidays. This ensures that the child's reading age does not drop while not attending formal education.

SLIC argues that Public Libraries should continue to offer family programmes and target families who are not regular library users. However other professionals, such as health visitors and social workers who do interact with families who are experiencing poverty should encourage participation in the local public library offer.

Collaboration between agencies can provide better opportunities for clients. SLIC promotes this interagency collaboration as being central to supporting children in poverty.

SLIC also maintains that the public library offer supports families and children who are experiencing poverty by ensuring they have access to a breadth of reading materials and information and are digitally included through providing supported access to free public wifi, internet enabled PCs and 3D printers.

- What else could be done to support the attainment /achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

The Deputy First Minister, Mr John Swinney MSP stated in the Scottish Parliament last year that it was his intention to formulate a National Strategy for School Libraries. SLIC has been asked to support the development of this strategy which will be unveiled by the Summer of 2018. School Library provision across Scotland is patchy with some primary and secondary schools offering no library service at all.

Children, especially those living in poverty, need access to reading materials to ensure they have equal opportunity to reach their full potential within the school environment. SLIC believes that the School Library is that important trusted space for pupils where they can access information and reading materials for pleasure. The whole school offer is so important to improving attainment and the School Library is a central part of that offer.

The School Library offer provides a more valuable experience where opportunities for family learning exist. SLIC is working with schools to understand what the family offer looks like and how far the reach of this offer goes.

SLIC is carrying out a Scotland wide survey to establish baseline School Library provision however what we do know is that leadership within the school is key to the importance which is placed on the School Library. Where reading and literacy is valued within the school, there is a vibrant offer from the School Library – less so where this is not the case.

The development of a national Strategy for School Libraries will go a long way to improving literacy levels especially for pupils who find themselves living in poverty. As a consequence of this, it follows that attainment should also improve with the implementation of the strategy.

The evaluation of the initial year of the First Minister's Reading Challenge demonstrated a positive impact in confidence in reading for the pupils who participated.

SLIC welcomes the expansion of the First Minister's Reading Challenge and would encourage all schools to participate in it.

There is a correlation between poverty and literacy. SLIC sees improvement in literacy levels for children and young people as a route out of poverty.

Pamela Tulloch
CEO
Scottish Library and Information Council
22 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Social Work Scotland

Evidence to the Scottish Parliament Education and Skills Committee

Poverty and attainment inquiry

How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

Social work continues to support the most vulnerable children and young people and their families in the community within Scotland. We know that up to 80% of a child's outcomes are determined by what happens outside of school²¹⁹ and the ability to achieve educational potential is dependent on wellbeing needs being met. This is of particular importance for looked after children and young people who continue to perform poorly in comparison to their peers and are more likely to leave school early.

For a number of years social work services have supported and been direct contributors to efforts to close the attainment gap as we recognise that to change the future for these children, attainment in its widest definition gives them a pathway out of services. This includes direct work with families as well as commissioning community based services to deliver relationship based interventions and evidence based programmes to improve family functioning which can have a positive impact on children's wellbeing. Some progress has been made, however more needs to be done. We know that our looked after and accommodated children and young people in the longer term do better than those who are in need but remain at home or in communities²²⁰. It is important that we concentrate our efforts on those children who remain living with their family and that we view community based supports as integral and not additional to improving educational outcomes for children. This is difficult for social work to do alone, and/or within current budget allocation, particularly in an environment of spending reductions and increased demand. There are risks that reducing costs further could affect the quality of services²²¹. It requires a corporate team approach that reports and is accountable to community planning structures.

Are there any services that you / your organisation has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

²¹⁹ Rasbash, J., Leckie, G., Pillinger, R. & Jenkins, J. 2010. Children's educational progress: partitioning family, school and area effects. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series A (Statistics in Society)*, 173, 657-682.

²²⁰ <http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/educational-progress-looked-after-children>

²²¹ http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/uploads/docs/report/2016/nr_160922_social_work.pdf

In recent times, there has been a clear shift across children's services towards providing earlier and community based support. We know that early intervention to support families in poverty is key²²². The ability to support a family in the early years and /or before any crisis has occurred is crucial to preventing the need for further measures of care. However, local partnerships are finding it increasingly challenging to identify resources to invest in new approaches despite recognising that this could produce longer term savings²²³. The reduction in budgets needs to be addressed as it impacts on the ability of statutory and commissioned services to provide support to vulnerable children and their families. The inability to invest in early support leads to an increased use of costly interventions later, often resulting in poorer outcomes.

There are existing investment opportunities which under the auspices of local children's planning structures partners could perhaps make better use of. We understand that parents have advised that the additional monies for early learning for 2 year olds have had a limited impact on their ability to work²²⁴. For families with additional vulnerabilities and/or who require high levels of support, a better approach might be to invest in flexible family based support to work with parents in their homes which recognises and addresses trauma and the importance of establishing good routines for children. This can create the environmental and physical conditions for children to be ready to learn and consequently strengthen the parent's emotional ability to also engage in education/ work.

If you work with schools/local authorities/others to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on this issue easy/difficult?

The recent restrictions around some of the education funding such as the Pupil Equity Fund has made it more challenging for social work to be able to engage and influence targeting of this funding to the most vulnerable children. There is a concern that the possible changes to education governance will move further away from partnership working. Partnership working should be strengthened under the Children and Young People Act (2014) as it places the statutory responsibility on partners to develop a strategic children's plan which evidences a whole system approach under "Getting it Right For Every Child". As Pupil Equity Funding sits outside this, there is very little opportunity to bring the plan alive to strategically commission services that will close the attainment gap for children and young people in their own communities.

What else could be done to support the attainment /achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

²²² <https://www.theguardian.com/social-care-network/2012/aug/10/supporting-families-poverty-early-intervention>

²²³ <http://www.careinspectorate.com/index.php/news/3362-joint-inspections-of-services-for-children-and-young-people-2014-16>

²²⁴ http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/uploads/docs/report/2018/nr_180215_early_learning.pdf

Poverty is a multidimensional issue and we need to address its roots. However, the current UK wide programme of welfare reform and austerity measures will continue to impact on the effectiveness of Scottish policy²²⁵. At the very least, a greater focus needs to be on income maximisation by all partner agencies, particularly when we know that poverty not only affects children's attainment, but also their likelihood of becoming subject to child protection measures²²⁶ or becoming involved in crime, come to the attention of mental health services, more likely to be referred to the hearings system and made subject to statutory supervision²²⁷. Provision of local income maximisation has to be married to the Scottish Government National Standards for Advice and Information Providers. The Scottish Government should look to standardise reporting on these matters across all providers and should consider funding a universal reporting tool.

In applying thresholds for support, poverty needs to be recognised in its widest sense. There are hidden costs for those living in poverty related to basic needs such as housing and fuel costs. The levels of indebtedness for those living in or just above the poverty line needs to also be considered as access to credit comes at a significantly higher cost to those on a low income despite the fact that these families already have little to no economic resilience. Policy needs to address this poverty premium. We know that deeper poverty has a more severe impact on children and young people's life chances²²⁸. With respect to those in receipt of benefits, households with children affected by benefit sanctions should be subject to national scrutiny. The Scottish Government should fully implement the recommendations of the Oakley report²²⁹ and consider non-financial alternatives to benefit sanctions.

If the intention is to continue to provide restricted, targeted funding along the lines of the Pupil Equity Fund, consideration should be given to providing similar specifically for Looked After children and young people to address their wellbeing needs. This is in consideration of both the attainment data and what we know about what contributes to positive outcomes outside of the school gates.

Measures are required to poverty proof the cost of the school day. Evidence shows that pupils are less likely to participate in activities which incur a cost²³⁰. Guidelines are required at both a national and local level to address the school day costs. Examples of good practice can be found in Child Poverty Action Group 2017 report "The cost of the school day"²³¹. Not all people eligible for free school meals or free school uniforms apply. Consideration should also be given to automation of services e.g. a claim to Housing Benefit/Council Tax reduction gives details of household income,

²²⁵ <https://news.gov.scot/news/tackling-child-poverty-2>

²²⁶ <http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/inequalities-child-welfare-intervention-rates>

²²⁷ <http://www.criminallawandjustice.co.uk/features/Link-Between-Poverty-and-Crime>

²²⁸ <http://www.cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/CPAG-Poverty143-relative-pov-measure.pdf>

²²⁹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335144/jsa-sanctions-independent-review.pdf

²³⁰ www.sccyp.org.uk/ufiles/Learning-Lessons.pdf

²³¹ [http://www.cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/CPAG-Scot-Cost-Of-School-Day-Report \(Oct15\) _1.pdf](http://www.cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/CPAG-Scot-Cost-Of-School-Day-Report%20(Oct15)%20_1.pdf)

which could be used to provide school provisions as an entitlement rather than by a separate application. Cardless payment systems should also be adopted nationally to reduce the stigma of a free school meal.

Community Planning Partnerships have a key role to play in addressing child poverty. The way that employability services, education, income maximisation services, money advice services, housing, childcare and local health services are delivered can act either to reinforce the poverty experienced by children or to prevent poverty and support families out of poverty. There needs to be a clearer focus on and recognition of the strategic children's plans as a means of ensuring that action to address poverty cuts across wider action to support and protect children's wellbeing. This needs to be informed by robust data on the prevalence of poverty. Against a background of reducing budgets, many local authorities cannot collate all the data required on local incidences of poverty moreover data is more likely to tell you what you already know if we continue to gather it in the same way. Reporting on child poverty should be linked to the local outcomes in education, health improvement, child protection, housing and income maximisation etc. The Scottish Government should take the lead on this and collate local information and the analysis of poverty throughout Scotland as if we continue a culture of silo reporting within the spectrum of inequity of local resource provision across Scotland, we will be where we are now and not where we want to be. This will increase the inequalities of opportunity for all of us to nationally target our most vulnerable children.

In Social Work Scotland's view, there is an urgent need to take a whole system approach to address the roots of poverty and make it possible for children to achieve their potential. Recognising the impact of trauma on a child's ability to attain, we require to appropriately fund relationship based family support which is delivered on the basis of need, informed by robust data rather than notions of deprived areas²³². At the same time, we need to tackle the welfare system and structural issues to ensure that children either in or at the edges of poverty have their needs prioritised and met, using what strategic levers we can to achieve this.

Social Work Scotland
March 2018

²³² <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-43402295>

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Sumdog

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Sumdog is an Edinburgh-based education technology company that offers a games-based numeracy learning service which aims to close the poverty-related attainment gap. In this context, we are very pleased to have the opportunity to submit the following as evidence to the Education and Skills Committee's above-mentioned inquiry on the impact of experiencing poverty on young people at school, including their attainment and their achievement.

Specifically, we have sought to provide a response to those questions addressed to other people who work to support young people who experience poverty, including work that helps attainment and achievement at school.

1. How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

- Sumdog is an Edinburgh-based education technology company that, using its highly- engaging learning and intervention platform, aligned to the Curriculum for Excellence, has a core mission to close the poverty-related attainment gap and to help all children reach their full potential;
- One of Sumdog's key attractions as a tool in the classroom is its ability to motivate pupils in a way that makes learning fun, even for those most disengaged pupils from the most deprived areas. Sumdog's online learning system can be shown to have had a measurable impact in accelerating learning and thereby actively supporting the educational attainment of children and young people;
- Specifically, a six-month study of the use of Sumdog in Glasgow primary schools, found that pupils averaging over one hour's Sumdog use weekly made 1.5 year's progress through Sumdog's curriculum over that six month period¹;
- As part of this study, there is also evidence to suggest that those at the most deprived 50% of schools made faster progress through our curriculum than those at other schools (based on free school meals data);
- Sumdog provides teachers/schools/local authorities with a way of tracking individual students' progress, and therefore progress towards closing the attainment gap, without being labour-intensive;

- The general availability of technology can be a potential barrier to success. To maximise accessibility, we work very hard to ensure Sumdog is compatible with as broad a range of technology platforms as possible. By making Sumdog equally available and accessible on computers, tablets, iPads and phones, pupils are able to access Sumdog using whichever platform and in whatever location (be that at school, at home or in libraries) that is most suitable and easily available for them;
 - In the process of forging collaborative partnerships with a number of local authorities in Scotland, we have quickly realised that, to be able to make best use of Sumdog as a teaching and learning tool, teachers need to have access to relevant training and support. To this end, we are now for instance providing additional free teacher training to teachers teaching in schools located in the most deprived areas of Glasgow as part of a roll-out of Sumdog use across all Glasgow City Council schools, from P2 to S3 level. Any special schools in Glasgow have also been offered a free subscription to Sumdog.
2. Are there any services that you / your organisation has not been able to provide that you believe would work?
- The challenge we face is less about the services we are able to provide, and more about the level of coverage across Scottish schools we are able to achieve. Sumdog is now regularly used in 70% of Scottish schools but we are always looking for opportunities to expand our services into even more schools. The broader coverage we are able to provide, the more data we are able to produce that could be incredibly useful for teachers and policy makers in helping to monitor and measure the impact of individual interventions aimed at closing the poverty-related attainment gap.
3. If you work with schools/local authorities/others to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on this issue easy/difficult?
- Our experience is that many teachers understand and appreciate the benefits of Sumdog as a teaching tool, as a means of monitoring and measuring the progress of individual pupils, and as a means of motivating even the most disengaged pupils in the class to progress their learning.
 - However, there can be significant issues with data sharing between schools and local authorities on the one hand and external organisations such as Sumdog on the other, which can be a substantial barrier to closer collaboration.

- Before money and time are devoted to specific educational interventions such as Sumdog by schools and teachers, it must be clear that there is the highest likelihood of a measurable impact.
 - In order for us to measure the effectiveness of Sumdog for particular groups of students (e.g. the most disadvantaged), access to data on an individual student-level is necessary. Getting access to this data is very difficult, due to its sensitive nature.
 - More open access to this sort of data would allow us to monitor more effectively the value of our service, and therefore where our efforts should be focused in working towards closing the poverty-related attainment gap in Scotland.
4. What else could be done to support the attainment /achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?
- Better access to technology – both at home and also in the classroom.
 - More training for teachers to enable them to make the most of Sumdog as a powerful teaching tool – and also for monitoring and measuring the performance of individual pupils and tailoring their teaching accordingly.
 - Better provision of fast internet connections – particularly in more remote areas of Scotland.

I hope that this submission provides useful input to the Education and Skills Committee's inquiry. If there is any aspect of this evidence on which you would like us to expand further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Andrew Hall
Sumdog
20 March 2018

SUBMISSIONS FROM ACADEMICS/ EXPERTS

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Dr Lynne Duncan and Dr Sarah McGeown

Submission based on *Scottish Universities Insight Institute* Knowledge Exchange programme:

Conversations about Language and Literacy: Promoting equity and attainment through engagement

Background

Dr Lynne Duncan (Psychology, University of Dundee) and Dr Sarah McGeown (Education, University of Edinburgh) currently hold funding from the Scottish Universities Insight Institute (SUII) for a knowledge exchange programme entitled, *Conversations about language and literacy: promoting equity and attainment through engagement*.

The goal of this programme is to create more opportunities in Scotland for multidisciplinary exchange between academic researchers, policy-makers, practitioners and communities in order to tackle the poverty-related attainment gap. The need for this type of exchange between existing hubs of knowledge in Scotland has been highlighted by the OECD (2015)²³³:

“There is extensive professional knowledge but this is not balanced by large-scale research or evaluation projectsThe research community could make an invaluable contribution, including on helping to design schooling so as to engage those most at risk of disengagement.”

Following these recommendations, the Scottish Government formulated *A Research Strategy for Scottish Education*, the purpose of which is to help deliver the priorities of the *2017 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan* “by developing the research infrastructure, a knowledge base of “what works” and the capacity of the system to use evidence”.

Our knowledge exchange programme is designed to feed into this strategy by establishing a new **Scottish Interdisciplinary Language and Literacy network**, which will be an inclusive forum to facilitate the coproduction and dissemination of research evidence.

A workshop series forms the basis of this knowledge exchange programme:
Workshop 1: Developing and enhancing early language through reading 15th December, 2017

Workshop 2: Improving early reading acquisition and development 26th January, 2018

Workshop 3: Understanding and supporting multilingual language and literacy 16th March, 2018

Workshop 4: Motivating and sustaining reading for pleasure 20th April, 2018

²³³ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2015) *Improving schools in Scotland: an OECD perspective*. Report, OECD, Paris.

For further details and workshop materials:

<https://www.scottishinsight.ac.uk/Programmes/ViewProgramme/tabid/5828/pid/139/rdid/5827/Default.aspx>

The programme team is made up of representatives from the *National Parent Forum Scotland*, *Fife Council Education and Children's Services*, the *Scottish Book Trust* and *University of Strathclyde School of Education*. The programme also benefits from input by literacy leads from the *Scottish Government and Education Scotland*.

Themes emerging from knowledge exchange events

The workshop series is timely in the Scottish context, where national statistics indicate that speech, language and communication continue to be the developmental domains where most concerns are identified (Information Services Division, 2017)²³⁴. The reading performance of P4 and P7 pupils has declined slightly between 2012 and 2016, with the size of the attainment gap between the most and least deprived pupils in reading and writing performance proving resistant to change (Scottish Government, 2017)²³⁵. Input from the Scottish Government and Education Scotland has helped to embed workshop conversations about language and literacy within the rich policy and practice framework surrounding literacy attainment that has developed in recent years. National guidance covers the period between early pregnancy and the age of 3 years (*Pre- Birth to Three: Positive Outcomes for Scotland's Children and Families*) and then from 3 years onwards when children become entitled to a broad general education (*Curriculum for Excellence: Literacy and English*). The *National Improvement Hub* and *Glow* provide online platforms for professional learning and collaboration, together with advice via legislation such as *National Practice Guidance on Early Learning and Childcare Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*. Programmes developed by the Scottish Government (*PlayTalkRead*, *Read, Write, Count*) and in collaboration with the Scottish Book Trust (*Bookbug*) encourage parental involvement in language and literacy development. Meeting the *Scottish Attainment Challenge* has also led to the expansion of early learning and childcare, a focus on family learning and initiatives such as the *Attainment Scotland Fund* and the *First Minister's Reading Challenge*. Stakeholders (academics, parents, children, policy-makers, practitioners, speech and language therapists, third-sector organisations, librarians) invited to the knowledge exchange workshops highlighted the following issues in discussing what has worked well and what barriers exist to success within this framework:

1. Early intervention

The influence of early language and communication was recognised as extending beyond school attainment to encompass later health and wellbeing. Links with Universities were thought to be important for conducting Action research more widely in Scotland, especially for research aimed at integrating family learning, parental involvement and Early Years education.

²³⁴ Information Services Division (2017). *Child Health 27-30 Month Review Statistics: Scotland 2015/16*. NHS Scotland publication.

²³⁵ Scottish Government (2017). *Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy 2016*. Scottish Government publication.

2. Methods for communicating professional knowledge

The importance of developing reliable, contextually-based assessments was highlighted for use in screening at-risk children for early intervention and for stimulating practitioner and family discussion around language and literacy

3. Intervention quality and sustainability

While many interventions exist and can be disseminated, stakeholders were not clear how to decide between them to ensure that high-quality educational experiences (early language, pre-reading, initial reading instruction) are delivered. Value was placed on longitudinal studies over extended period to enable impact to be demonstrated. However, issues such as how to support best practice project work in order that it can be evaluated rigorously and become sustainable, and how we can move from research design conditions to real life remain challenging.

4. Access to research findings

Teachers, third sector organisations and community groups would like more access to research findings. There was also interest in a greater emphasis on language and literacy development in practitioner training and professional development, especially further opportunities that create a deeper understanding of language and literacy acquisition so that professionals can generalise from this knowledge base to their own practice.

5. Coordination across stakeholders

This was a strong theme that emerged over and over again in slightly different forms during the discussions: there was a need to distil messages so that all organisations are using a common language; the idea that building relationships was key to language development within families but importantly also between families and partners; and how important it was to see the big picture and how inter-related situations are in cause and effect.

The final workshop is still to take place and will address the goal of **embedding reading for pleasure**, which has particular relevance for the *First Minister's Reading Challenge*. This event will encourage knowledge exchange around social attitudes to reading among children, young people and their families, and share research on reading motivation alongside studies of the feelings underlying children's cognitive and cultural dis/engagement with reading.

Conclusions related to 'A Research Strategy for Scottish Education'

Academic researchers in language and literacy development at Scottish Universities are currently an under-used resource, although they can offer:

1. An academic skill set suitable for the scientific evaluation of *Scottish Attainment Challenge* interventions
2. Public engagement and knowledge exchange skills, which are now embedded in academic research practice, and which circumvent the need for training other professionals to disseminate academic research

3. Academic expertise to co-produce research in a Scottish context to establish a rigorous evidence base relevant to local and global stakeholders
4. Input about international research evidence and research methodology to assist with practitioner training and professional development

A ***Scottish Interdisciplinary Language and Literacy network*** can establish a forum for the co-production of research and training to ensure that academic language and literacy research at Scottish Universities is guided by input from Scottish policy and practice, third-sector organisations and communities to address the attainment gap. This has the potential to highlight Scotland's commitment to equity in educational attainment, and to finding solutions for the Scottish context that will also be of benefit internationally.

Summary of current challenges for language and literacy attainment

1. Few opportunities for multi-disciplinary exchange to promote discussion and the co-production of cross-cutting research.
2. Stronger policy and practice links with academic research at Scottish Universities need to be developed.
3. Integrated guidance and consultation throughout the process of creating new evidence-based interventions is required.
4. Research evidence based on the Scottish context is scarce.
5. Limited access to academic research of international standing for training and professional development.

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Dr Lynne G. Duncan
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University of Edinburgh

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Senior Lecturer
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University of Dundee

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Professor Stephen Gorard FRSA FAcSS

In response to the Committee's inquiry please find below some ideas on overcoming poverty gap in Scotland. This is a short summary of what the evidence suggests is the best way forward. If necessary, I can provide a summary of the research underpinning these recommendations on request.

- Apparent differences in attainment between regions and home countries can be almost entirely explained by consideration of the background characteristics and prior attainment of students in each region.
- This approach should take into account more detailed variables representing background, such as the proportion of time at school that any child has spent in poverty, and issues such as their age-in-year which is strongly linked to misdiagnoses of SEN.
- Funding should not go to areas. It is not the areas that have the problem but the children within them.
- In order to help overcome differences between social groups (and so between areas), some additional funding should follow the disadvantaged students (as per Pupil Premium in England), but it should be linked to the chronic nature of disadvantage and so distinguish between levels of disadvantage within threshold indicators such as eligibility for FSM.
- This extra funding must be used to support interventions that specifically address the average gap in attainment between advantaged and disadvantaged pupils.
- These interventions must have been tested and replicated, and been shown to both improve attainment, and to reduce the gap.
- Interventions that have not been tested, or where the testing is not convincing, or where the results show no benefit (or even harm) must not be used.
- From the set of tested, convincing interventions schools should have a choice based on context and professional objectives, but only within this set.
- This requires a clear (and growing) Toolkit of interventions. Unlike the EEF toolkit it must only include the tested, secure, beneficial ones. The

others tend to confuse practitioners who find it hard to distinguish between impact, scale, security, and so on.

I also attach²³⁶ an extract of my new book which is due to be published later this summer. The extract looks at some of the patterns of attainment, such as by sex and area of residence. I have assessed how these patterns change over time, over the lifetime of an individual and how they vary by level of education. All of these factors give further clues as to why the patterns themselves exist and what might usefully be done about them.

Professor Stephen Gorard FRSA FAcSS
Director of the Durham University Evidence Centre for Education (DECE)
16 March 2018

²³⁶ The extract is available to Members on request from the clerk.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Andrew Green

The Education and Skills Committee have elicited responses to their inquiry focusing on the impact of poverty on the attainment of young people at school. The inquiry's remit is to explore, "the types of interventions to mitigate the impact of poverty on attainment inside and outside school, including what works well and any barriers to success." The question has been posited, "what else could be done to support the attainment/achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?"

This paper responds to that part of the inquiry's remit focusing on, "barriers to success." It is approached from the perspective of a professionally qualified (JNC/NYA recognised) Youth Worker (with Community Work training); the views expressed are my own, and they do not represent those of any professional or official body, employer or trade union, or any other formally or informally constituted body.

Eurostat (2011) claimed that '24% of the EU population (over 120 million people) were at risk of poverty or social exclusion including 27% of all children in Europe'. EU leaders responded to these claims by pledging to bring at least 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion by 2020 [Europe 2020 (Strategy for 'smart, sustainable and inclusive growth')]. Whilst the Europe 2020 initiative is welcome - by implication - structural poverty or social exclusion will continue to impinge on over 100 million of the EU population, and by abstraction, this rather dismal response is an infraction of UK legislation [The Children Act (2004) legislated for, "improving the well-being of children ... so far as relating to — ... (e) social and economic well-being," (Part Two - General - Section 10 - Paragraph 2)]. The Office for National Statistics identified that 'for the period July to September 2016 there was an 11.9% increase in the number of 16 to 24 year olds classed as economically inactive. This took the number of NEET's to 857,000' (24th November 2016) - and by abstraction with the Europe 2020 strategy - if one sixth of this number are brought out of poverty and social exclusion by 2020, this will still leave a potential 714,166 individuals experiencing a myriad of social challenges that are not confined to individuals, but to families, neighbourhoods, communities, nation states and the European Union. From this perspective, ethical challenges are presented to the European Union, nation states, and devolved assemblies, whilst a myriad of curricula challenges are presented to communities of practice e.g., should curricula responses focus on wellbeing and development, social justice and human rights, or poverty and social protection? Moreover, if the number of economically inactive 16 to 24 year olds is compared/contrasted with, "nett long-term international migration ... estimated to be ... 588,000," [Office for National Statistics (August 2017) Migration Statistics Quarterly Report: August

2017] there would appear to exist an ethical argument to consider promoting economic activities for UK citizens before do so for those individuals from other countries. In this context, what impact or bearing might this have on young people, households, urban and rural communities, productivity, balance of payments and future migration policies and practices?

From a European Union perspective, poverty coexists with the rather nebulous spatial concept that has become known as ‘social exclusion’. However, ‘social exclusion’ contemporaneously lacks an over-arching definitional focus (Boughanemi and Dewandre, 1995); distorts data pertaining to poverty; diminishes the effectiveness of anti-poverty measures. Hegel’s (1821) ‘notion of alienation from a realm of universal altruism’ has been widely acknowledged with conceptualising ‘social exclusion’. Thereafter, associations have been made between alienation from ‘economic, social, organismic, ethical, and psychic’ frameworks (Glock and Stark, 1965). Such thinking has given rise to a myriad of theorisations [Lenoir (1974) employed the term ‘*les exclus*’ to describe ‘individuals not covered by social security systems, e.g., single mothers, substance users and individuals with physical and/or mental disabilities’; subsequent expansion of the term ‘social exclusion’ contemporaneously extends to unemployed and homeless individuals]. Such themes - and their constituents - have been explored/examined by representatives of different academic disciplines and a burgeoning corpus of ‘social exclusion’ literature has emerged [Silver (1994); Atkinson (1998); Burchardt, Le Grand, and Piachaud (2000; 2002); Hills, Le Grand, and Piachaud (2002); *et al*]. In this context, whilst social policy discourse may be attributed with bringing into focus the problem statement that, an over-arching definitional focus that explains ‘what social exclusion is’ (Boughanemi and Dewandre, 1995) has not yet been identified, ‘social exclusion’ literature has brought into focus the problem statement that, obstacles and barriers inhibit ‘how measurements of social exclusion might be obtained’ (Le Grand, 2002). Therefore, in the absence of an over-arching definition, and obstacles and barriers that inhibit ‘how measurements of social exclusion might be obtained’ (Op Cit), ‘social exclusion’ can neither be quantified or discerned from the phenomenon of poverty. In consequence, the scope and the scale of poverty appears misrepresented and, whilst datasets pertaining to employment arguably provide a degree of accuracy, those pertaining to unemployment appear less reliable in consequence of different causes of worklessness, different welfare benefits (including means tested), and a rather fluid relationship between the medical - or functional-limitation - model of disability and the social model of disability. Moreover, deprivation indices encompassing indicators of deprivation alongside ‘quality of life’ frameworks misrepresent poverty, and plausibly misrepresent ‘social exclusion’.

Preceding narrative seeks to bring into focus, “a change in perspective from a static to a dynamic approach - from a one dimensional to a multidimensional - and from a distributional to a relational focus,” (Saraceno, 2001). In this context, concerns for - and about - secularisation (Hegel, 1821) have been substituted by secular theorisations of ‘social exclusion’ that orient towards

notions of social justice and social cohesion (Glock and Stark, 1965; Lenoir, 1974; *et al*). However, two further concerns prevail.

- Multilateral and unilateral social policies have posited and advanced a corollary between poverty and 'social exclusion' and, whilst a corollary arguably does prevail between poverty and notions of disequilibria in - or the inequitable distribution of - the provision of individual and societal 'goods', Sen's (1979) concept of 'capability deprivation' refutes the notion of a corollary between poverty and 'social exclusion'. In this context, Sen (1979) qualified notions of financial, physical, human and social capital, whilst also discerning notions of economies and poverty from notions of individual's well being and inclusion. Accordingly, if Sen's (1979) cogent reasoning is upheld, the phenomenon of poverty - so called because it encompasses a definite existence in reality - is a separate entity to the concept of 'social exclusion' that emerges out of knowledge of common properties contained in a collection of phenomena, e.g., generalized ideas of alienation from religious (Hegel, 1821), economic, social, organismic, ethical, and psychic frameworks (Glock and Stark, 1965).
- An implicit supposition pervades 'social exclusion' literature that equates notions of citizenship, welfare and equality with 'a realm of universal altruism' (Hegel, 1821). Germane to such thinking is - I suspect - Boughanemi and Dewandre's (1995) approach to 'social exclusion'. Boughanemi and Dewandre represented the European Union; the European Union affords all citizens comparable citizenship, welfare and equality rights; the European Union recognises and acknowledges member state's additional and diverse interpretations of civil liberties, human rights, etc. From the latter perspective, notions of homogeneity/universality cannot be upheld, and different models of welfare that rely on systems of compulsory taxation to pay for social insurance (Bismarck, 1871-90; Beveridge, 1942-4) cannot be considered altruistic. Moreover, different genres, causations and effects of deprivation and alienation contradict this supposition, whilst eroding differences between dependent and confounding variables. Accordingly, a persuasive argument appears to exist to: qualify and quantify 'social exclusion'; disaggregate poverty and 'social exclusion'; redefine poverty in its widest possible sense.

Shifting the focus on to adolescents in transition from compulsory education to early adulthood, the age-specific concept of 'adolescence' has been afforded considerable currency [Circular 1486 (1939), Jephcott (1954) ... Oliver (2006), Levitt, Silver & Santos (2007), *et al*], and concerns endure for - and about - their transitions. This period of human development between two relatively stable states is often associated with changes that contribute instability e.g., delayed or broken transitions, labour market and life course precarities. Moreover, Smith (1988) elucidated that:

Every society is faced with the problem of how to ensure that successive generations are socialized into ways of thinking and behaving which serve the community or the needs of particular groups within it. This process is open to eternal debate and the sort of answers given will

depend, to a large extent, on the position occupied within that community. For the individual there is the problem of making the transition from some state known as childhood to another known as adulthood, between or overlapping which there is something known as youth or adolescence. Within these states there appear to be differing expectations concerning dependency and responsibility. One way of conceptualizing the transition is to see it as a movement from relationships characterized by a high degree of dependency to ones which contain a greater degree of independence. Thus, young children are initially dependent on older family members for the most part for the satisfaction of their needs. As they grow older in Western societies, they move outside their family, first at school and in their peer groups they join, then perhaps through further education, training or work. At some point they are likely to leave the family and set up a household of their 'own'. Another, and related, way of viewing the transition is to think in terms of changing responsibilities both for oneself and for others. Youth is therefore a period when more and more responsibilities are taken on. This position is reflected in legal terms by the differing ages at which people are seen as being able to take responsibility for their actions.

People make this transition at different rates and in different ways. Age is only one factor in determining experiences. Class, geographical location, gender, ethnicity and physical and mental 'ability' all can have a major bearing (Jefferies and Smith, 1988b). In many societies transitions may be marked by explicit rituals or 'rites of passage', e.g. birth, naming children, attaining adulthood, marriage and death. Thus initiation rituals remove people from the status of child and place upon them the new position of 'marriageable adult'. To mark this fundamental transition, both psychologically and socially:

The novice is first physically separated from, and systematically divested of, his old position as child. He has ritually to put away childish things, and is frequently spirited off to a conditioning camp in the wilderness, that inexhaustible fount of mystical energy and renewal. There he is symbolically stripped of his old personality and enters a transitory limbo. Finally purged of his old social personality, the new recruit is eased into his position in adult society with an appropriate ritual accompaniment. (Lewis, 1976: 131)

Within industrialized societies the rituals and symbols of transition are less marked or, rather, do not play such a powerful role in communal life. Further, the length of the transitory limbo has grown. Hence, ... we saw how specifically male and female conceptions of adolescence came to be constructed. Adolescence was also shown to be the product of particular circumstances at a specific moment of history and not a universal condition. While there may have been some conception of 'youth' and even a period of transition, what Victorian middle-class social reformers wanted to impose on young people was new in many respects. This was a period of enforced and extended dependence on

adults, not just a symbolic moment of transition. It was a time which had to be traversed in order that maturity may be achieved. The way in which such thinking has been reflected in the theory and practice of youth work can be seen to disadvantage young people in a number of respects.

First there is the ever-present tendency to undervalue people as they are now. In Milson's memorable phrase, young people must be valued as human beings, for what they are now, not only for what they may become (Milson, 1970: 85). It is all too easy to look at behaviours that are labelled 'temporary' or the 'excesses of youth' and fail to understand how real they are to those that are experiencing them or, indeed, to recognize their inherent value and importance. This is not restricted to youth. If workers are seeking to achieve any sort of change in people then there is a danger of under-valuing people as they are: both denying the expertise and competencies that they already possess, and the logic of their behaviour and ideas at that moment.

Secondly, the association of particular types of behaviour with age has contributed to a paternalism and a growing dependency. Clearly, there has been a significant increase in the length of time that young people remain dependent upon their family for shelter, food and disposable income since the mid-nineteenth century. This has been combined with a growing uniformity in the timing of major life transitions. Thus, young people have been able to be more precise in their age expectations. At the same time the status associated with 'growing up', the movement away from dependency, has meant that the next stage is highly aspirational for young people, but in many adults' eyes, progress towards it has to be slow. As Macleod has commented in the context of early work on boys in the US, this has profound implications for practice:

Programs would have been unthinkable without a constituency of dependent adolescents in need of recreation; yet the boys' sensitivity to age differences made them hard to hold. Pervasive age grading had reoriented the issue between adults and boys; instead of a few convulsive struggles for autonomy, there were endless little tests along a finely calibrated course. The boys wanted more tokens of maturity, yet had no intention of demanding total independence. Adults wanted to hold the boys back but not cripple their initiative (Macleod, 1983:28).

The upshot of this is, that within youth work, age-related expectations have contributed towards dependency in practice. There has been an emphasis on provision for young people rather than by them. Furthermore, a great deal of effort has been directed at seeking to restrain young people from progressing too fast to the next stage, e.g. in terms of sexual behaviour, drinking and unsupervised leisure. Much 'social education' has, therefore, been aimed at getting young people to appreciate and conform to age-related, rather than competency-related, definitions of acceptable behaviours.

Thirdly, the focus on youth as *the* period of transition can lead to a lopsided practice, as life itself is 'transitional'. Within the category 'adult' there are many moments of change. Parenthood, the impact of the ageing process, changes in relationships, the death of parents and friends, changes in work - all of these affect the way we see ourselves and the way that others see us. This is not to say that practitioners should not concern themselves with change, for patently they should, rather than plead for a sense of fluidity and criticism. Where social education is seen as synonymous with social and personal development, it is difficult to sustain the case for linking its definition to particular age ranges.

Fourthly, there are real doubts about the nature of the transition stage, the state which is to be traversed. While the ideology of adolescence was applied to middle-class youth by early commentators with great success, on the whole, working-class traditions and cultures were far less easy to control and penetrate. Crucially, this failure to elicit the required response from working-class young people did not lead to the abandonment of the concept of adolescence:

Instead it was stretched to explain 'precociousness' and 'antisocial' forms of behaviour by reference to the incompetence of working class parents, who it was frequently claimed, failed to treat their children with the correct affectionate and authoritarian control during this traumatic stage in life (Humphries, 1981: 18).

Much of the theory that has informed the use of the concept of adolescence within youth work, both psychological and sociological, has characterised it as a time of disturbance, storm and stress. As NAYC argued in its evidence to the Youth Service Review, this way of thinking about adolescence 'has been empirically unsound and as a consequence has been a considerable blockage to thinking about appropriate provision for young people' (National Association of Youth Clubs, 1981: 4). The reality is, of course, that the vast bulk of young people do not show signs of disturbance and, that those who do, form a proportion of the age range in line with both the child and adult population. The important difference being that, during this age period, problems tend to be of other types, with depression being the most prevalent. Thus, 'adolescence needs a theory, not of abnormality, but of normality' (Coleman, 1980: 182). [Smith, M (1988) *Developing Youth Work*, Open University Press, p. 94-97]

Constructing on - or around - such notions, Jeffs and Smith (1992) elucidated:

As Coleman and Husen note, 'there is a growing recognition that something fundamentally new is occurring in the transition to adulthood ... a rather blurred borderline between youth and adulthood. This blurring arises because age corresponds less to life-style than in the past (1985, p.11). That analysis, while helpful, remains one-dimensional

in that it ignores the reverse process by which so-called adult norms and life-styles intrude into the experiences of young people and 'children', blurring the distinction by making them older and more 'mature'.

This argument relates closely to that of Postman (1985) who posits that childhood itself is fast disappearing under the impact of new technology and a linked restructuring of the leisure and recreation patterns of both adults and young people, producing an increasing coterminosity between the two, whereby we are 'in the process of exorcising a two-hundred-year-old image of the young as child and replacing it with the imagery of the young as adult' (ibid., p.125). Fast being eaten away are the old certainties regarding childhood and adolescence. Crude notions of transition from adolescence to maturity, dependence to independence, school to work begin to look frayed and outmoded. When the 'transition stretches from years into decades, when career changes and re-training take place periodically throughout the working life; when separation, divorce and home-making are being undertaken or experienced by those of every age; when dependency becomes a lot more of the old than of the young: then much of the uniqueness of adolescence fades into insignificance and the question must invariably arise as to whether it is a unique stage or simply part of a seamless web? The evidence would suggest the latter.

Musgrave argued that adolescence was 'created along with the steam engine' (1964, p.33), that it was a by-product of industrialisation and the forces it unleashed. It is a theory to which much research into the history of childhood and adolescence has lent credence (see for example, Walvin, 1982; Springhall, 1986). If, as Postman argues, 'childhood is solely a creation of culture' (1985, p. 144) and adolescence the epiphenomenon of a form of industrialisation, then it becomes a clear possibility that both are transitory. Not only may the cultural and social forms which adolescence takes be transformed, but new social relationships and industrial forces may so change the context and environment that the word loses its meaning and value, or becomes a synonym for puberty and physiological change. In this we should not lose sight of the fact that the terms 'youth' and 'adolescence' are not strictly interchangeable or that 'adolescence' really only came into general usage at the turn of the century (Springhall, 1986). Certainly, it is not merely demographic change, falling numbers - that imperil the Youth Service in its present form. For those changes may be no more than a surface manifestation of much more fundamental shifts that are impairing the *raison d'être* upon which it is constructed, the very notions of adolescence, youth and, by implication, transition itself. [Jeffs, T and Smith, M (eds) (1992) *Young people, inequality and Youth Work*, The Macmillan Press Ltd, p. 44-6].

MacDonald (2011) noted that, "transitions were extraordinarily complex," and this evolving period of human development would appear to necessitate constant revision that not only affords cognizance to individual's inabilities to find a place in the salary nexus, but which affords

comparable parity of esteem to adolescent's limited or unrecognised rights to social citizenship, e.g., individual's family circumstances; disability and/or other health issues; social and/or emotional factors; learning and achievement gaps; and structural factors that arguably reflect disequilibria in supply and demand arrangements and/or under-investment in vocational education and training, lifelong learning, regeneration activities, etc. Arguably such personal and social factors coalesce and give rise to various permutations and combinations of factors contributing to delayed or broken transitions, and the constructs of delayed or broken transitions appear to reflect the cause and effect of 'social exclusion' such that, adolescent's delayed or broken transitions might be viewed as an age-specific genre of 'social exclusion'. Ergo, coterminous with poverty, at the very least a duality, but more probably a plurality of personal and social determinants manifest in the guise of deprivation and alienation. Accordingly, a compelling and persuasive rationale appears to exist for new, innovative and original research to inform policy and practice responses to poverty, 'social exclusion' and adolescents in transition. Policy responses would be greatly enhanced by elected representatives recognising and acknowledging the training and professionalism of multidisciplinary practitioners, and practice responses would be greatly enhanced by being appropriately and adequately resourced. From these perspectives, the co-production of policy responses would appear to offer one meaningful and tangible route out of poverty and alienation, whilst practice responses - particularly in relation to *informal* educators whether in the NHS or in other forms of Community Learning and Development - urgently require an expanse of new employment opportunities, new monies and new opportunities to respond to a myriad of individual and social challenges if the negative connotations of poverty and/or 'social exclusion' are to be mitigated.

Andrew J Green, B.A, M.A.
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EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

**Professor Grant Jarvie
University of Edinburgh – Academy of Sport**

Introduction

Widening Access to Education through Sport

1. The University of Edinburgh Academy of Sport, as one of the few international and national think tanks dedicated to observing sport, is pleased to respond to the Scottish Parliament's Education and Skills Committee inquiry into the impact of experiencing poverty on the attainment and wider achievement of school aged children.
2. The brief for the Academy of Sport is built around two premises: that sport has a part to play in addressing the challenges that face humanity in the 21st Century and to be seen to be actively addressing such challenges by working with and in communities.
3. Since the Academy's mission includes widening access to the University of Edinburgh and activating the potential of sport to reach disadvantaged communities, it is well placed to make a contribution to this inquiry.
4. This short briefing limits itself to sharing information and tracking data from our education through football programmes that have been taken up both nationally and internationally. The three interventions are: (i) Football More than a Game (non- credit but certificated); Football More than a Game (with SCQF credit) and Education Pass.

Sport, Poverty and Education

5. International evidence shows that sport can help with education outcomes, engaging disenfranchised learners, help with educational infrastructure and develop capabilities.
6. Our move to develop targeted education through football interventions emerged in 2004 when the University of Edinburgh was approached by Ayr United Football Club which wanted to engage its youth squad players in education. Subsequently the Scottish Funding Council's report on Gender in Scottish Higher Education: 'What's the Issue', highlighted a concern about the under achievement of 13-16-year-old boys. In 2006 we secured one year's funding from the South East Forum and were able to advance the Educated Pass initiative.
7. Educated Pass addresses the academic underachievement of boys aged 13-16. It builds upon the boys' interest in football to generate interest in,

and commitment to, education. The University of Edinburgh leads the programme which has received funding from The Sutton Trust since 2008 and works in partnership with local colleges, boy's clubs, football clubs and the Scottish Youth Football Association.

8. In 2014 we launched [*Football More than a Game*](#), probably the world's first football Massive Open Online Course (MOOC). More than 40,000 learners have taken the course, engaging communities, widening access locally and internationally and creating opportunities for people from all walks of life. Its reach and development encourages participants into other forms of educational provision.
9. In December 2015 the University, through the Academy of Sport, was invited to host the World Sports Values Summit in Cape Town. Kids from one of the local township football teams excitedly reported that they had taken the football MOOC as part of an offering provided through their local community education programme.
10. This is free access to education, facilitated through the Football MOOC, taken up in some of the world's most challenged communities.
11. It has led to a number of sports leaders and community activists from, for example, Egypt, Palestine, Ecuador, Chile, South Africa, India, and Scotland coming to Edinburgh for post-graduate study through the MSC in Sports Policy, Management and International Development; also the summer school on the Global Impact of Sport.
12. For the Scottish 2016 elections we provided a briefing paper on *Sport, Poverty and Education* aimed at highlighting and evidencing sports contribution to both formal and informal education.
13. In 2017 we piloted a face to face version of Football More than a Game carrying 5 SCQF credits at level 7.

Educated Pass

14. The decision to develop tracking data was taken early on. A series of annual reports are produced with the latest available report being for 2015 (the data analysis for 2016/17 is almost complete).
15. The key findings that might be of interest to the Education and Skills Committee are as follows:
 - The Educated Pass cohort had a higher staying on? retention? rate at S5 (87%) than the rate for male pupils across Scotland (84%).
 - The same was found for S6 where again the Educated Pass cohort had a higher
 - retention rate (61%), compared with male pupils across Scotland (55%).

- 27% of the Educated Pass cohort who reported their S5 grades achieved 3 or more A-
- C Highers, which was greater than the 24% of males across Scotland gaining 3 or more SCQF level 6 qualifications.
- The proportion of the Educated Pass cohort in positive destinations (98%), which
- include Higher and Further Education, training/apprentice or employment, was higher than for Edinburgh City and Scotland as a whole (both 91%). This was also higher than for the proportion of males across Scotland in positive destinations (89%) and females (92%).
- The cohort maintained a strong interest in both education and sport with 75% taking
- PE as a Standard Grade in S4 or a Higher in S5 and 47% still playing competitive football.
- Educated Pass participants were approximately 10 times more likely to study at
- degree level than become a professional footballer.
- A total of 24.3% of Educated Pass participants were from SIMD40. This is
- comparable to Edinburgh City SIMD40 of 26% - which is the geographical location of the participants in this tracking report (i.e., before we expanded to North Lanarkshire).
- 25% of Educated Pass participants attended a LEAPS group 1 school.

Football More than a Game

16. The investment in developing resources for the non-credit bearing version of Football More than a Game (MOOC) was made in the full knowledge that these could be accessed by local authorities, colleges and the public. The materials have been used to facilitate other access courses, for example at Newbattle College in West Lothian.
17. The original intention was always to make University of Edinburgh credit and non-credit bearing education available through football in local communities. In 2015 we validated a credit bearing version of Football More than a Game and have been working with local football clubs to deliver this for (a) adult learners; (b) girls and (c) cohorts from SIMD 40 identified through the local football clubs. The programme, for example, was delivered in November 2017 to a cohort of 20 adult learners through the learning centre at Easter Road – the home of Hibernian Football Club.
18. The credit bearing version of Football More than a Game can be delivered through football grounds in or close to areas of multiple deprivation in Scotland.
19. The 6-9-week course facilitates the development of digital literacy, data literacy, health education, finance and social inequality messaging. So, for example, we use the examples of the Men's World Cup, the Women's

World Cup and the Homeless World Cup to develop data analysis skills, IT skills and challenge stereotypes.

Sport, Equitable Quality Education and Agenda 2030

20. The United Nations Agenda 2030 has given sport a significant mandate within the delivery of the 2030 sustainable development goals. A mandate to actively contribute to social change. A mandate that is outcome driven with SDG 4 being to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
21. An evidence base for policy makers seeking to use sport as a social tool to advance education outcomes is provided in *Sport for Development and Peace and the 2030 agenda for sustainable development* produced by the Commonwealth Secretariat (2015). We commend its reading to the committee.
22. One of the few robust, comprehensive and recent studies of the challenges in accessing sport for youths who live in poverty can be found in the London School of Economics Report *Moving the Goalposts: Poverty and Access to Sport for Young People* (2015). We commend it to the committee.

Conclusion: Moving Forward

23. Edinburgh's capacity to open up opportunities and provide alternative education through football and sport is popular and is making a difference. It offers opportunities on to the Global Impact of Sport Summer School and other education pathways into University. It can assist the Edinburgh City Deal to advance digital and data literacy for Edinburgh citizens. The University of Edinburgh community engagement provision provides an avenue for community led groups to access modest funding. We work closely with the Scottish Football Association to assist with the good work that goes on accessing education through football. Internationally we continue to work with the Commonwealth Secretariat to advance outcomes through sport.

Professor Grant Jarvie
University of Edinburgh
23 March 2018

Education and Skills Committee

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Dr Morag Treanor

Introduction

It is important to note that schools do not hold all the levers to improve the lives of children living in poverty. It is important to note too that what affects families' socio-economic circumstances, namely the labour market and the social security system (among other areas), as controlled by UK central government and, to a lesser extent, the Scottish government, are outwith the control of educators. However, with a stronger understanding and appreciation of how these impact on families living in poverty, and how they serve to present difficulties and barriers to children living in poverty fully participating in education, educators can do much to support the education and aspirations of children living in poverty.

Research on poverty of aspirations

A recent briefing paper I wrote called "[Can we put the 'poverty of aspiration n' myth to bed now?](#)" discusses how aspirations have become a key educational policy driver in Scotland and the rest of the UK and are seen as critical levers for closing the attainment gap between children and young people of high and low socioeconomic backgrounds.

The paper uses approximately 3,500 responses from Growing Up in Scotland (GUS) data. Parents' responses to questions on the aspirations they hold for their children and their confidence in their ability to influence their children's schooling were analysed. Children's experiences of education in relation to enjoyment of learning, and of school itself, for different lengths of time lived in poverty, were also explored.

Research results

For children there were no statistically significant differences in their enjoyment of learning or of school by the length of time they had lived poverty. This means that children at this age (7/8 years old) do not experience different enjoyment of school based on their socioeconomic background. That is not to say that their ability to participate fully in school, or their ability to make equal use of what is available to them, or indeed their response to or conduct in school will be the same. Rather it shows that in spite of differences perceived by teachers or felt by children in the classroom, children in poverty value school as much as their better off peers.

For parents, there were statistically significant differences in the types of aspirations parents hold for their children according to their experience of poverty. However, there was no 'lack' of aspiration per se. The evidence shows that poorer parents are more likely to aspire to apprenticeships/training/further education and less likely to aspire to higher

education for their children. Parents' aspirations may differ by poverty experience, but can only be thought of as 'high' aspirations.

So what does influence aspirations?

Aspirations are a construct of parents' own knowledge, understanding and experience. Each of us is a creation of our past and present experiences as well as our acquired skills, knowledge and education. Those of us with no experience of sailing in the Mediterranean do not aspire to yacht ownership on the Côte d'Azur. That does not make us deficient in aspiration; rather, we aspire to what we have experience of, what we know we can influence, and what we believe we can achieve.

So what is happening with aspirations if not a 'lack of'?

Previous evidence shows that children do not start off with low expectations. When they are younger they have the same hopes and dreams as all children, however, their confidence in their ability to attain their aspirations becomes diminished over time. Aspirations, even in communities struggling with poverty, are very high – the missing element is the knowledge of how to make these aspirations real and obtainable.

Parents living in poverty also have high aspirations for their children but feel unable to engage with their child's learning in the home and feel inadequate in their knowledge and experience to help their children. There is no crisis in aspirations but rather difficulty for poor parents 'to sustain those aspirations over time or turn them into reality'. Yet, it is not only politicians that suggest parents have low aspirations for their children. Teachers too cite low aspirations on the part of parents for children's poorer educational attainment. This has an effect on how teachers and school staff engage with children and parents living in poverty.

Previous research shows that education staff lack knowledge about the causes and consequences of poverty, often conflating the two. Education staff often see the diminishing of aspirations, the difficulty in expressing an aspiration, the lack of knowledge and lack of confidence, and mistake it as an absence of aspirations per se.

As a former teacher myself, and with 17 years' or work with people living in poverty, I have never come across parents without aspirations for their children, but I did come across acute and chronic shortages of knowledge and confidence.

So how does this affect what happens in schools?

1. Educators are not familiar with the difference between the causes and consequences of poverty and so can sometimes hold inaccurate, and even pejorative, views of poor parents.
2. This affects what is done in schools. It can adversely affect relationships with parents living in poverty. More importantly, it can

negatively affect relationships with children living in poverty. With children living in poverty often feeling ashamed and stigmatised, sometimes looked down upon, and often out-of-place in the school environment, they cannot begin to engage effectively or participate fully in their education.

3. While educators believe in the poverty of aspirations they will try to fix the wrong thing. Rather than work with children and parents to develop, understand, support and maintain aspirations, they are assuming deficiency and, therefore, risk the non-engagement of parents and pupils.

So what can be done?

1. To close the attainment gap, schools should improve and enhance the everyday experience of school for children living in poverty.
2. This would begin by educating teachers and other school staff on the risks, causes and consequences of poverty (as per Edinburgh's 1 in 5 project), which are often conflated and misconstrued. There is also a gap in the initial teacher education in the area of poverty which could be rectified.
3. The attainment gap will be neither narrowed nor closed so long as policy focuses on children's educational outcomes rather than the factors that affect their outcomes: value, respect, dignity, understanding, inclusion, appreciation, and participation within school.
4. Schools should make careful use of the Pupil Equity Fund, for example for Home/School development/support staff.

Policy implications:

1. Policy will be strengthened if policy makers have a more sophisticated understanding of how their own views of aspirations and those of others are shaped by their socio-economic circumstances.
2. It is important to promote policies which open up knowledge of the whole range of opportunities available to parents and children in poverty including routes into higher education.
3. Parents and children need knowledge of both the opportunities and the route to achieving their aspirations.

Practice recommendations:

1. Support parents and children to understand the opportunities available to them and give them the knowledge necessary to achieve them.
2. Focus on the mechanisms by which aspirations can diminish over time for young people.
3. Focus on keeping young people's aspirations on track rather than just 'inspiring' them.
4. Dismantle the local and structural barriers to high aspirations.

Dr Morag Treanor
Senior Lecturer
Sociology, Social Policy and Criminology

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Dr Terry Wrigley

The need for a comprehensive strategy within and beyond schools

Author: Dr Terry Wrigley. I am editor of the international journal Improving Schools and Visiting Professor at Northumbria University. Before retiring, I was a Senior Lecturer at the University of Edinburgh. I co-authored the book 'Living on the edge: rethinking poverty, class and schooling' (2nd edition 2018). I live in Edinburgh and am very happy to meet with committee members.

I believe that Scottish Parliament and Government are making serious efforts to overcome educational disadvantages related to poverty. This note is intended to strengthen this development by highlighting some strengths and concerns.

Closing the gap: The statistical data shows very clearly the link between socio-economic factors and school attainment. Scotland has prided itself on inclusive educational values, but not yet found the pathway to greater equality of outcomes. In part this is due to a succession of short-lived initiatives (eg New Community Schools, small P1-2 classes, Literacy Hubs) but also relates to the economic situation.

The prime reason why Scotland's educational outcomes are just as unequal as England's, despite some significant differences in the education system, is economic inequality. Both countries have suffered deindustrialisation, a lack of industrial strategy, seemingly endless austerity policy, wide and increasing pay differences, insecure working contracts and benefit cuts. It is significant that the London Challenge occurred in a context of a dynamic economy. *Closing the gap is unlikely without serious economic change.*

Even then, eliminating the gap would not be immediate or automatic. Social hierarchies are partly reproduced through 'cultural capital'. Families have different intergenerational legacies in terms of years in education, qualifications, intellectual demands of work, reflected in language (vocabulary, complexity, style) and academic engagement. This substantially coincides with current economic position, though it is also important not to fall into a deficit view of families in poverty, and also to recognise positive cultural and intellectual assets. It is certainly not to be defeatist, but to recognise the barriers we face in 'gap closing'. Above all, it highlights the need for a *multidimensional strategy*.

Building a multidimensional strategy: Schools can do a lot but it would be a mistake to place too great a share of responsibility or engage in blame. Since Scottish Government funds undergraduate courses in *universities*, it

should set a *quota for recruitment from more disadvantaged households*. To achieve targets, it could also place expectations on universities to enhance the education of 14-18 year olds by providing Easter and summer schools, including residential, sporting and cultural experiences.

In addition, the long summer break brings serious difficulties to families who can afford neither holidays nor activity schemes. Many learners fall behind in school-related skills during this period. Strategy should be developed for free provision of *activity schemes, and especially for disadvantaged families and areas*, with a mix of physical and leisure activity, excursions, help with literacy and numeracy, library, lego, challenging computer games and so on.

Early years provision has increased, but to reap the benefit it is vital for staff to be well qualified. Staff development is needed to enhance play and language development, as well as engagement with parents.

Material effects of poverty: Research has shown the multiple effects of poverty on children, including *health, housing, relationships, nutrition, physical activity*. Not having the 'right clothes' or money for swimming and cinema impacts on *friendship* formation and *self-esteem*. Poverty contributes to family stress, insecurity and breakdown. Many children in poverty have to care for siblings or even parents.

This is often exacerbated by the assumptions made by schools. Letters are sent home requiring payment for school trips or residentials with no acknowledgement that many families cannot afford it. Sometimes pupils are expected to bring materials such as ingredients for cooking, and even when provided free to poorer pupils, insufficient care is taken to prevent stigma.

Policy is improving on such issues, but more needs to be done to sensitize teachers and heads. The problems occur from lack of awareness. We could learn from the exemplary model developed by *Children North East* [Newcastle area] known as '*poverty proofing*' which uses school audits, classroom visits and pupil focus groups to raise awareness.

Psychological effects - negative stereotypes and self-esteem: Growing up in poverty has many psychological effects which damage self-esteem and cause demoralisation. In my recent book, I summarise these as a sense of (i) *shame* and (ii) *futility*.

Shame has many causes, including situations which bring stigma such as using food banks. *Futility* occurs whenever families have to abandon plans because of a fuel bill or a cut in working hours. It increases during adolescence when young people see older siblings or friends striving to achieve goals but thwarted by circumstances (eg completing training courses but unable to get suitable employment).

All this has been exacerbated by the political and media assault on benefit claimants, including from Westminster. The 'benefit scrounger' discourse inevitably seeps into schools, including staffroom conversations, and must

have some impact on *how pupils and families are viewed*. We need more research on this, and how to help teachers become more reflective about these issues.

Schools which are successful 'against the odds' are generally characterised by an *ethos of respect and hope*, consciously achieved in classrooms and across the whole of school life.

The aspirations issue: Aspirations are clearly important, but they should not be seen purely as a matter of individual will power. Firstly, aspirations cannot survive without genuine opportunities. This makes it important to multiply the number of good *apprenticeships* and employment with *training*. Secondly, some good research has refuted the idea that families facing poverty lack aspirations for their children; rather they lack either the means, or a sense that obstacles can be overcome. They also lack a 'road map' of how ambitions might be achieved.

We can learn from independent schools which arrange careers talks by former pupils and have active links with universities. Visits to universities are important, as many young people have misconceptions. For example, they often assume there will be a high risk of being thrown out part way through a degree because of low marks.

Relying on pupils to arrange their own *work experience* increases disadvantage, since poorer families are unlikely to have the connections to fix up more ambitious placements.

The curriculum and teaching - avoiding 'pedagogies of poverty': Curriculum for Excellence serves as a general framework and set of aims, but the curriculum as experienced varies school by school and class by class. Researchers in the USA have observed that pupils in poorer areas, as well as lower streams, experience a narrower curriculum which limits their learning. They call this a '*pedagogy of poverty*'. Interesting and challenging issues are avoided, and there is overwhelming attention on narrow literacy and numeracy procedures. Teaching styles are marked by closed questions requiring simple factual answers, gap-filling on worksheets, rote learning and decontextualised exercises.

Without imposing an 'approved' way to teach, Scotland needs a sense of direction - some notion of '*teaching for excellence*' which gets pupils thinking harder and more critically, taking initiatives, solving problems, developing creativity. Many children in poverty need extra attention to basic skills, but this should be done in the context of interesting and challenging activities.

They also need to experience more engagement with learning. Too much school learning is a kind of '*alienated labour*': you are told exactly what to do, for how long, then hand it over for marking and get a number or grade in return. A different kind of thoughtfulness, energy and satisfaction is generated when learners are involved in planning tasks and learning leads to a

performance, presentation or product. This is one reason why disadvantaged pupils benefit from creative arts and technologies.

Thought is rightly being given to increasing vocational courses, but we should also ensure that all pupils retain a broad entitlement including courses that develop their understanding of the world. It is noticeable, for example, that PISA scores for science in Scotland are lower than in England, where most pupils study a double-weighted science course to age 16.

Literacy is a key concern, and national bodies and local authorities need to work with university faculties to develop strategy. There have been accusations that P1-2 teachers don't know how to teach reading or should adopt a specific phonics method; in fact, phonics is strongly emphasised in our primary schools. What is widely lacking, however, and reflected in the dip in literacy scores at S2, is an understanding of strategies for grappling with *non-fiction texts* in upper primary and lower secondary.

Parents and communities: Some good moves are being undertaken on parental involvement but from a low starting point. It is normal for parents to hand over and collect children in the playground, with occasional invitations into classrooms and limited communication between teachers and parents.

Parental involvement is particularly vital in nurseries, and we need more to follow the Children's Centre or Family Centre model. More nurseries should provide a context where parents can acquire more developmental ways of relating to children, and where staff learn from parents about each child, as well as providing resources such as book and toy libraries.

Families in poverty suffer from generalised assumptions about poor parenting, which is unhelpful. However schools could gain by finding out about talents, interests and sources of support within the immediate and extended family. More community schools are needed where adults could develop their own skills, and along with that the capacity to help their children.

In cases where there is no quiet space in the home, and parents lack the knowledge to help with homework, schools should consider after school or lunchtime homework centres.

Two chronic problems: Finally, our schools suffer from two longstanding but little noticed problems:

a) Pupils are often segregated into different sets or 'ability groups', even at an early age, with children in poverty overrepresented in lower groups. These pupils are denied the influence of other pupils' knowledge and language skills, and acquire a sense of limited ability and potential. Patterns which assume that ability is fixed need to be changed. Such segregation is unknown in Scandinavia.

b) The data suggests that many pupils fall behind after entering secondary school. One cause may be the many different teachers for each S1 or S2

class - generally 12-15 - which limits stability, and each teacher's capacity to relate to pupils and know their needs. HMIE challenged this 20 years ago, but with little impact. It is time to experiment with less specialisation at this age, in the interest of greater connectedness. A very different model operates in Norway, for example, where schools are smaller and each year group taught by a team of 5 or 6 teachers; between them, they have sufficient specialist knowledge to cover all the subjects and to provide pastoral and special needs support.

Dr Terry Wrigley
22 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Lindsey Graham

Letter from Lindsay Graham
Child Food Poverty Policy Advisor

Dear Mr. Doran

Education and Skills Committee Inquiry into attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

I received the committee's invitation to submit a statement about my work in relation to child hunger in the school holidays.

I should like to thank the committee for inviting me to share my knowledge and experience of this issue and how I perceive it impacts on children's ability to learn.

For the last 6 years I have been interested in the issue of what is commonly termed as 'Holiday Hunger' that gap in time when free school meals children do not access their daily hot meal because the schools are closed for holidays. I am acutely aware that the school holidays can be a very difficult time for children living in poverty and many of the struggles they contend with go way beyond having access to healthy food.

After almost 40 years of service to my community in health, education and voluntary sectors I have never been more convinced that the poverty gap needs radical thinking and new ways of working if we are to at least halt the rise of child poverty let alone decrease it so that our children can achieve. We have a crisis in childhood obesity and dental caries rates that are shameful, both of which can be attributed in part to poverty related issues.

Because of my learning in this particular child poverty issue, part of the solution to support educational attainment I strongly believe has to lie the way we utilize current assets and systems and reshape them to be better fit for purpose.

I have been in touch with Scottish civil servants on the topic of Holiday Hunger since 2013 to try and raise this issue at national level. The holiday gap in food, activities, fuel, travel and (for those who work) childcare to families already struggling with debt can be

overwhelming and a new uniform or pair of shoes alone can mean the difference of a parent eating or not. Families whose children are in receipt of free school meals in term time receive no extra financial help in school holidays.

I was fortunate enough to undertake a Winston Churchill Fellowship to the USA to look at the USDA's Summer Meals programmes. The government there invests in community led initiatives that are supported by the school meals services. Funding of around \$2 per child between the ages of 2 years to 18 years is allocated for breakfast, lunch or supper. The programme has been running for 40 years and is a valued community service that helps to keep millions of children food secure. What the USA didn't do was the added vital element of enrichment, activities and give access to services normally insitu during term time. For children living in poverty the food and these services are crucial to their wellbeing and their ability to return to school to achieve and attain.

Such programmes are now springing up all over the UK. According to the 2017 Northumbria University mapping there were a total of 67 projects in Scotland. I understand that COSLA has recently surveyed Scottish Local Authorities on the issue of Holiday Provision. This is something I really welcome as it will give Scottish Government a bench mark from which to measure progress.

While I believe that the provision of holiday meals is essential for children who normally access them in term time, the committee should note that there is currently a lot of research in the USA about summer 'learning loss'. The gap and lag in time when children's wellbeing, nourishment safety and support mechanisms stop and then restart 6 to 8 weeks later. Many of those living in poverty may have been social isolated , not had access to regular meals, limited outside play or physical activity and little of the 'fun' that other more privileged children might experience during the breaks. We know from early research here in the UK that the combination of these stressors does affect children's ability to learn. Also time taken by teachers to bring children living in poverty back up to speed often can take weeks and impacts on whole class achievement. The learning loss can be accumulative and result in the children falling behind their peers considerable by the time they leave school.

This issue of children going hungry in school holidays is not a new one. What is new is the worrying increase of children accessing foodbanks and the number of Holiday Hunger programmes being run without guidance , training , clear policy and evaluation of

impact. This should be a concern for us all. It was the topic of a cross part Inquiry into the issue in 2017 which resulted in a report called 'Hungry Holidays'. I would urge the committee to look at that report as part of its evidence review.

I was pleased to see the Scottish Governments Fair Food Fund announcement of £1 million over the next two years to look at innovation and practice in Holiday Provision. It is indeed a welcome more. However much more needs to be done to support children and families living in poverty. I have now visited and connected with hundreds of projects in the UK and beyond. Some of which are sighted in Hungry Holidays are from Scotland and I do respectfully suggest that a radical rethink of term times and the use of school premises is something the committee should consider. Our current approaches to child poverty are not working and if we are to improve education attainment in Scottish Schools then we need to look beyond the school gates to help children stay well, happy and engaged in their communities. I also welcome the Scottish Governments recently published Child Poverty Delivery Plan as I feel it will go some way to addressing the issues faced by families over the school holidays.

Our school holidays were set in motion over 100 years ago to suit timings with harvests. In a modern society this is no longer the norm yet we still have long holiday spells where children become disengaged from social support and the will to learn. We also have long periods when some of our best equipped and most child friendly community assets lie empty. I think that is a travesty and missed opportunity for Scotland to reclaim its world standing in Education.

I would also like to draw the committee's attention to a Westminster Cross Party Children's Inquiry into the Future of Food Policy and Food Security. Launched in November last year it will be seeking the views of children and young people across the UK about how they think we should improve their access to food and make suggestions for policy in how to keep them food secure. It is being supported in Scotland by the Children's Commissioner and Children in Scotland.

Such is the concern for holiday hunger in the UK there are now 8 universities and 6 PhDs underway investigating the issue of Holiday Hunger all based in England. This level of interest by the academic world is a clear indication that better policy is needed.

I would therefore kindly suggest that the committee might like to consider:

- Reviewing the recommendations of the cross party 'Hungry Holidays' report and implement them fully in Scotland.
 - Investment in research into successful support projects 'beyond the school day' for children living in poverty. They may wish to start with research into summer enrichment activities with meals especially in rural areas and with a particular focus on areas of disadvantage and for children with additional needs.
 - Review the positioning and timings of school holidays are they fit for purpose in 2018.
 - Produce a clear national policy with cross sector guidance and training for any organisation involved in the provision of meals and activities in line with the Hungry Holidays Report.
 - Supporting the Scotland element of Childrens Future Food Inquiry
- 6.
- Liaise with COSLA over its recent survey of Scottish local authority's holiday provision projects.
 - Trialing a holiday benefit increase to families whose children are on FSM (akin to the winter fuel payment as an extra help to costs)

I hope these thoughts will be of some use to the committee and I would be happy to provide any further information needed as well as introductions to researchers and Holiday Provision Projects that they may be interested in.

Yours sincerely

Ms. Lindsay Graham

SUBMISSIONS FROM INDIVIDUALS

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Caroline Farquhar

1. How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

I created & ran Health & Well-being teacher training resources, researched by The University of Dundee until 2 years ago when I moved location due to personal reasons. When I moved I contacted the local authority to replicate what had worked well in other regions but this was not well received by them so I'm currently working as a parent volunteer with my son's primary school on their successful Mental Health Area Team Partnership in conjunction with connect Scotland (SPTC), the work being done is widely acknowledged as innovative & creative.

2. Are there any services that you / your organisation has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

Too much red tape within local authorities, when schools are crying out for Health & Well-being support for staff & pupils yet can not readily access the resources because local authorities are unreceptive.

3. If you work with schools/local authorities/others to address school attainment and wider achievement, what makes collaboration on this issue easy/difficult?

Proactive Head Teachers can make a huge difference to raising attainment & offer opportunities for everyone - staff, pupils & the wider community alike. In my experience local authorities & some Head Teachers put barriers to progress in place because they have their own agenda.

4. What else could be done to support the attainment /achievement of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

Create opportunities for everyone, poverty is not directly linked to attainment but the same opportunities to take part aren't always available to families experiencing poverty. Schools can help by working with families & communities to build support networks, think outside the box & provide soft life skills that support the 'whole person'.

Caroline Farquhar
19 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Maggie Hodge

I work as an ASN Auxiliary in a primary school in an catchment which takes in an area of multiple deprivation.

It is good that the committee are reviewing what has been put in place so far to improve education outcomes for children living in poverty. And hopefully feedback received will help shape future initiatives.

Although I work in a school my comment is more a general one about this issue. If poverty is seen as a significant obstacle to children learning then something needs to be done about that root cause. Initiatives in school are only likely to have a limited, if any, affect. I know the Scottish Government's hands are tied on many major economic levers but what about raising low wage levels where they can - in the Public Sector. A lot of poor families are working families but they have low paid jobs. For example, many people that I work with in school - cleaners, dining room staff, classroom assistants and some ASNs are paid less than £10 an hour. For some reason these "front line" jobs aren't valued. My son is looking at options for when he leaves school. He could start a Modern Apprentice in a government department on £17K a year. That's what I'm paid (pro rata) after years of experience! That makes me quite angry! Even with extra support many children will not be high academic achievers and will likely end up jobs which, although very important, at the moment our society doesn't feel need to be rewarded well financially. I feel an economic/attitudinal switch is needed to make a real difference.

I also feel that teachers (and other school staff) are over- stretched. We deal with a lot of demanding behavioural issues and needs on top of covering the curriculum. Extra staff would be one way of being able to give more support to individuals and groups of pupils who need help - including those where poverty is an issue. More teachers/support staff in schools would also prevent teachers becoming burnt out so quickly and therefore leaving the profession. Investing in core staff rather than a lot of extra initiatives might be the way forward.

Sorry this is a bit rambling. I hope it is useful to your debate.

Maggie Hodge

21 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Niall MacKinnon

I write in a personal capacity informed by my professional and wider experience (teacher 25 years including head teacher 14 years, social researcher 8 years separately, and additionally within teaching posts).

The central factor pertaining to non-organic dispositions of children regarding learning and personal development, on to social disposition and societal well-being, is nurture not poverty. Poverty is to some degree associated with deficiencies of nurture but it is not causal. There can even be inverse effects where those who are financially poorer value education in contrast to other social groups of higher material means who come to adopt rights-based confrontational and exclusionary attitudes. Likewise an over-focus on attainment or achievement, including within education settings, can be counter-productive, where more holistic pathways to promoting well-being, awareness, capability, sensibility, responsibility, confidence, contribution, respect, application, cooperation, participation, identity and insight are as or more appropriate. What disposes towards well-rounded, prepared, motivated, integrated 21st century citizens on leaving school and far beyond is far, far more than attainment and achievement. Building knowledge, team work and integration of purpose in and as learning are perhaps more important than attainment and achievement, but not so readily perceived.

The mode of thinking on which I draw is that which spawned the 2004 Curriculum Review. It is framed around Four Capacities of children's potentials. These were set in a Scottish Education Weave of layered conceptual and operational components. That is before the 'for excellence' mantra was applied and set in as an exceptionalist absolute and far off mythical destination, rather than an achievable quality about excelling in the here and now, for all.

I place this preamble because the central task for those supporting as well as those enabling or enacting learning activity are to discern the factors disposing towards or against the fostering of the capacities of children's potentials. Poverty is certainly an important element, but to focus on it in a stand-alone sense is reductive and potentially harmful. It needs to be understood in the context of purpose along with all the other factors which dispose towards or against fulfilment of potentials and the means by which those occur, including interaction of factors. Poverty can be an associated variable yet with low causality, where factors disposing towards poverty for individuals or groups also dispose towards low fulfilment of potentials. Thus it is important to discern processes as related to meaning and purpose. That is subtle.

To draw a conclusion related to the central question of this consultation, what has disposed to assist me in my job as teacher and manager, are all those who assist in enhancing understanding and providing support where that has meant genuine engagement with local circumstances and responding appropriately and in collegiate manner. All those who have sought to impose fixed ways of thinking, or apply blanket templates or judgments, or worse as occurred, forced direction away from sensitive, sophisticated locally constructed developmental pathways, have been harmful. Sadly the latter are dominant and becoming more so. The need has been to construct understanding, for educators as much as pupils, and onto those in the management and support structures beyond schools. The need is to embrace complexity and absorb variety. From that perspective, those framing this consultation in seeking to learn and become more aware are helpful just as those who impose an 'attainment challenge' or 'improvement framework' are not.

What was and very much still is needed is to release the 2004 Curriculum Review from the shackles of the performativity methods, mindset and the vast control apparatus, stifling innovation and adaptive practice to rapidly changing norms, technologies and conditions. What worked best was the Health Promoting Schools initiative - 'health' conceived of in a broad holistic sense – in tandem with services such as support for learning, mental health, psychological, family liaison and others in 'Building the Curriculum'. What has worked least well, and has been harmful, has been the gamut of 'quality assurance', 'quality improvement', audit indication, inspection and performance management. These have worked counter to the insights and processes needed to identify need and potential and pathways forward. Inspection prior to audit indication and performance management operated quite differently and could be regarded as in the helpful category. I would go so far to say as a few years after the Millennium what emerged *de facto* was a Health Destructing Schools initiative, gumming schools up in performative goo. Children with additional support needs, and wider dispositions of learning potential were seen as an inconvenience. Worse, those attending diligently to such needs came to be viewed as hindering 'improvement' or 'excellence' or lacking in 'leadership' when what was in contention were definitions and concepts, overridden by power relationships.

A section of my initial response to the Education Bill in 2015 is directly akin to this consultation, which now follows in abridged form relevant to the focus here. Attached separately²³⁷ is my response to the Scottish Government consultation on 'closing the attainment gap', which is also directly applicable. Thus the need is to discern the factors disposing towards or against fulfilling potentials, and to grasp that poverty as a concept and complex social reality sits within that and must be considered within appropriate systemic wholes. Children do not experience poverty; they experience life. Some, if not many, within conditions definable as poverty, experience very rich young lives, a quality which is noted and commonplace in preceding generations, for children who now as adults thrived then and now perhaps as much because

²³⁷ Available to Members on request from the clerks.

of rather than despite their social and economic circumstances. What was important were the conditions of nurture within their families, communities and educational settings, rather than material economic levels, even when those have a bearing on well-being.

I made a submission to the Education and Culture Committee regarding the 2015 consultation on the Education (Scotland) Bill. It is relevant to this consultation and can be found here:

[http://www.parliament.scot/S4_EducationandCultureCommittee/Education%20\(Scotland\)%20Bill/MacKinnon_Niall.pdf](http://www.parliament.scot/S4_EducationandCultureCommittee/Education%20(Scotland)%20Bill/MacKinnon_Niall.pdf)

Niall MacKinnon
22 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Lorna Walker

My response is based on a lifetime experience working at all levels in mainstream and special schools, residential special schools (known as school/secure care accommodation) and across the care sector. I have inspected the range of schools across Scotland as one of Her Majesty's Inspector of Education and have since worked with local authorities, school care/secure accommodation services and other relevant agencies that support young people.

At the outset, it is important to state that my belief, shared by many colleagues, is that weak attainment does not simply stem from poverty. Children and young people with a range of additional needs²³⁸ (ASN) also have weak attainment that can be improved over time when the appropriate support and learning environments are in place. Much of the work I have undertaken focused on children and young people with additional support needs, who are looked after and accommodated in school/secure care accommodation. Their needs have not been met in mainstream and sometimes special schools. This in many cases has happened in spite of some excellent work undertaken by dedicated teachers in their previous schools. Whilst poverty has been a factor in a few cases, the issues which impact on many but not all of these unfortunate children arise in the main from families, often split, whose lives are chaotic as a result of drugs or alcohol, abuse and trauma, and mental health issues. Whether you can equate this with poverty per se is a moot point. The point is by legal definition, these children have additional support needs. Sadly, budget constraints across all local authorities have impacted most significantly on children and young people with additional support needs, some of whom, but not all, live in poverty and are therefore doubly disadvantaged.

Also important when discussing attainment is the apparent lack of recognition of strategies for our most able pupils, whose achievement of high levels of attainment is essential to ensure a prosperous future Scotland with able leaders across all spheres. Our education system therefore requires to be able to respond to a very wide range of abilities, needs and backgrounds. A significant message is that we need to redress the balance from the narrow focus on poverty as the means to raising attainment and achievement by revisiting and knowing how to deliver the concept of Achievement for All. ***This is equality*** but achieving this is no easy task. Scotland used to do it. And we did it well. So what has gone wrong?

238 Additional support needs (ASN) must not be equated with special educational needs. Our legislation, 2004, states that a child may need extra help with their education for a wide variety of reasons. A child's education could be affected by issues resulting from: Social or emotional difficulties, Behavioural difficulties, Problems at home, Bullying, Being particularly gifted, A sensory impairment or communication problem, A physical disability, A learning difficulty, Being a young carer, Moving frequently, Having English as an additional language

I am a fervent supporter of inclusive education. Fifteen to twenty years ago it was fair to say that the North, East and South of Scotland (in part to do with rurality in these authorities) led the world in inclusive education. I can state this from experience of study visits across Europe and beyond. Our success was due mostly to our cohort of highly trained and qualified Support for Learning (SfL)/specialist teachers, who used their defined 5 roles to support hard working mainstream teachers to ensure the needs of all children were met as fully as possible. In best practice, SfL teachers worked closely with Guidance teachers whose valuable roles at that time were largely focused on the social and emotional development of children from all backgrounds who were struggling with a range of issues. Effective inclusive education was also more deliverable due to the 5-14 curriculum which could be planned, assessed and differentiated to meet the range of needs within each class, with relative ease. Critics who maligned its prescriptive presentation did not realise its potential in terms of it being delivered in an imaginative and active manner that motivated all children.

Short sighted lack of succession planning did not recognise the large scale retirement and consequent loss of skills of SfL teachers many of whom from the 1980's to early 2000's had accessed significant post graduate training, which for some was gained through a year's secondment. The diminution over time of these valuable highly trained Support for Learning teachers and the current lack of availability of rigorous training and issues of cost of training for existing SfL teachers is catastrophic.

Ever changing advice about the implementation of the unwieldy and overly complex Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) introduced in 2004, only implemented by all schools in 2010, even then reluctantly by some, has bewildered teachers. Many teachers found it hard as they tried to move from a relatively prescriptive curriculum (5-14) to the greater teacher autonomy allowed by CfE. Teachers of children with severe and complex needs operating below Early Level have had no helpful national guidance about an appropriate curriculum. When we ditched 5-14 we threw out the baby along with the bathwater. Never a good idea. Whilst few can argue with the principles and aims of CfE, the continuing efforts to make manageable our approaches to assessment and reporting progress within CfE and within the 'new' National Qualifications speak volumes about the complexity of CfE. How many assessment methodologies have been introduced to our ever more disaffected teachers during the past 10 years? (Assessment is for Learning, Building the Curriculum 5, Significant aspects of learning, Use of portfolios, Benchmarks and now Standardised Assessments). And do teachers know which to use and how to use this plethora of guidance?

Getting it right for Every Child (GIRFEC) emerged from a review of the Children's Hearing System that highlighted a dramatic increase in identified children with multiple needs. From 2004, GIRFEC was rolled out and continues to roll out. In many authorities GIRFEC has caused huge challenges, including time management, for schools and other agencies. While the core principle of improving collaboration among services for

vulnerable children is sound, this GIRFEC principle simply clarifies what was existing good practice, but it requires procedures and documentation that drown practitioners. It also skews the balance between the (albeit important) development of health and wellbeing and learning and requires some headteachers and practitioners to spend a disproportionate time in meetings about meetings without practical solutions or the means to respond to even the highest level of needs. The amount of money spent developing and implementing GIRFEC, including the appointment of designated officers, is huge. Can we see the impact of GIRFEC in increasing attainment and achievement? And has the lot of our most vulnerable young people improved?

At a time when there is greater recognition, including formal diagnosis, of the wide range of needs of our children, and when parents and young people are increasingly exercising their rights to ensure the needs of their children are met, a manageable curriculum - able to be assessed through professional judgement with children's 'levels' reported to parents - and the very services able to meet these challenging range of needs have all but disappeared. The word 'inclusion' is bandied about as if it can simply happen at a time when our resources and additional skills and indeed professional commitment are at an all time low, and expectations are at an all time high. It does not recognise that the concept of inclusion while laudable is expensive and requires additional specialist skills, strategies and knowledge that mainstream teachers cannot be expected to have for each child in a class of 30 children. Personalisation is a commendable principle of CfE, but one that is close to impossible to deliver in a class of 30 where 10% or more children will have an assessed learning and/or emotional need and others will have a specific diagnosis.

Complex needs require complex responses that generally involve a range of practitioners including teachers and teaching assistants, social workers, educational psychologists, health staff with expertise in disability, resilience and mental health. Coordinating additional support requires time, knowledge and commitment, and best practice requires tight solution focused discussion and practical solutions, not a plethora of unfathomable paperwork. The consequence is that mainstream teachers are being asked to do the impossible. This is one explanation for low morale in the teaching force, teachers leaving the work force and the reluctance of many to apply for promoted posts. Put simply, we are asking too much of even our best teachers. We need to recognise the limitations of what can be delivered in busy classrooms. Teaching 'hard to reach' children and their parents, alongside teaching the wide range of learning needs including our most able children, is a formidable task. But we used to do it better.

There are no easy answers and sadly there are no quick fixes. Nor does it come cheaply. Scotland's world renowned education has been eroded over time. Without **strategic change**, as opposed to tinkering at the edges of a well nigh broken system, such as using Pupil Equity funding to invent some probably fleeting operational improvement and devising new 'tricks of the trade', we will not raise the attainment of all of our children. Only through taking brave decisions, admitting we have got it wrong, and having agreement

that raising attainment and achievement for **all** of our children – each one equally important – will require very significant financial investment. We cannot have a successful Scotland of the future 'on the cheap'. The alternative is to regress 30 years and open many more special schools (also not a cheap option) where there is small group specialist teaching with the consequent stigmatisation of swathes of our population. This is not equality and this cannot be Scotland's future. So what needs to happen?

We need to:

- **think strategically and be brave;**
- 'declutter' the overly complex CfE curriculum (the original plan for CfE was to declutter 5-14) so we can revert to using **good professional judgement** to assess progress and report on levels achieved by each child as opposed to imposing an assessment system, not specifically based on the Scottish curriculum and, embarrassingly, bought in from Australia;
- ensure there is specific *curricular* guidance for CfE for children of all ages with additional complex needs;
- 'declutter' GIRFEC with its burdensome procedures and return the emphasis from social and emotional development to learning and teaching for almost all children (for all that some of GIRFEC practice – which has always existed among effective practitioners - is necessary and correct for *some* children); So it's the Emperor's new clothes scenario at shocking expense;
- agree what constitutes inclusion (not define it) to ensure needs are met;
- recognise the enormity of the post of headteacher and reinstate suitable management structures;
- *not* assume that all teachers can meet all needs, even after professional development and/or improved initial teacher training;
- ring fence funds for authorities to provide additional support - SfL/specialist teachers and guidance staff with reinstated roles - with the main aim of raising attainment and achievement *for all*;
- revive and fund post graduate qualifications for teachers who provide additional support, that recognise what it takes to respond to the range of very different needs whether or not they arise from poverty;
- resource our mainstream classrooms with additional **skilled/ trained** support/specialist teachers who can assess and clarify needs and help devise relevant differentiated curriculum pathways, so that teachers can get closer to delivering personalisation; and in line with legislation, those young people requiring additional support receive it;
- ensure inspection and internal quality assurance recognises the starting points of each child so that their progress in attainment and achievement are relative and acceptable to their starting point;
- consider different school term patterns so that learning is not 'lost' during long summer holidays;
- pay greater heed and think imaginatively about how to respond to the learning and social needs of children and young people who are looked after at home or who are in kinship care;

- invest in a range of creative additional support for families in chaos and lacking in aspiration, not necessarily living in poverty, whose children are at risk of weak attainment and lack of achievement;
- for *some* children, ensure breakfast and after school provision is in place; and
- revive the excellent work undertaken by some youth workers/community workers whose evening and weekend and residential activities (and in some schools during the day activities) were the life blood for some vulnerable young people and their families.

'Education is simply the soul of a society as it passes from one generation to another'. (G. K. Chesterton).

Might our Regional Improvement Collaboratives have the courage to drive and implement the strategic change that is needed to ensure that each and every child in Scotland is supported as needed to promote their attainment and achievement, so that they can be the best they can be, and equipped to access very good future opportunities?

Lorna Walker
16 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Mrs Carol H Aljundi

My child lacks support from the school management. He doesn't have any support in place! His Wellbeing Assessment Plan is lacking and irrelevant for my son. It is only there because of Speech and Language Therapist as told by the school; which only target communication, it doesn't target any part of the curriculum.

The school management are refusing to listen to our views and I have proof of that if required! The headteacher told me he is working in a group and therefore he doesn't even need any Well Being Assessment Plan, even though they know he cannot add 10+1 in Primary 3 and I know he is under achieving in numeracy and literacy. I have evidence of this!

My child suffers from Impairment of Language Acquisition and Language Development, General Developmental Delay and I had no choice but to contact Dyslexia Scotland to request for a Register Private Educational Psychologist who diagnosed Dyscalculia and Dyslexia (mild). As the school Educational Psychologist told us she doesn't do 1-1 or any cognitive assessment.

The school management has all of these reports and until now they have not put the right support and never updated his Wellbeing Assessment Plan. So practically, I wasted my savings on getting the private educational psychologist report.

Mrs Carol H Aljundi
20 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Vijay Kumar

Questions for parents/carers/guardians:

1. How your children have been supported (in school or outside school)?

My children school supports outside school sports activities, some are free and some are paid services.

2. What was good about it and what could have been better?

I would suggest that all extra circular activities outside school should be a free service as this will encourage pupils to take active part and as a nation it helps for the well-being of the pupils. There should also be consideration for all pupils to be given free swim classes until they are qualified swimmers. Currently it is provided only for 10 lessons.

3. How has this impacted on what the children in your family have achieved?

The free trials classes have positive impact on children to be happy & enjoy being part of it.

4. What other things might support your children in achieving at school?

I somewhat feel the current curriculum thought throughout the Scotland lacks to prepare individual pupils as a global citizen. For example :Teaching international languages as a mandatory subject at a very early stages of school would equip pupils with those extra communicational skills.

Vijay Kumar
20 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Shelagh Campbell

What I am going to say to you may not be understandable as there appears to be an unawareness of stable home life in this era.

I thoroughly agree that children are impoverished, however I'm not sure the lack of wealth is the biggest problem.

Every child from the day they come into this world needs stability, best two loving parents however circumstances sometimes deny this which puts a huge burden on one parent. Now this stability consists of a parent being present to that child for the vast majority of the first five years of their life, these first five years are hugely important for a mother or father to teach their child life skills, manners, acceptable behaviour, family interaction, strong bond forming skills, to nurture and love that child into a strong and loving being, equipped to deal with the world that surrounds them. Play schools can be a nice wee bit of support and often in the past were really helpful to parents that felt a little lonely as parenthood is a time when a selfless lifestyle is essential. I am afraid the situation whereby a three year old is starting their school life is the cruellest state of affairs that has come into being and thankfully I was not subjected to my babies having to grow up at three. If the government really wish to help children do not open any more clubs for babies do not encourage folks to give responsibility of their child to others help at least one parent to stay home, make a home, give their child a stable home life live as a family and if that means they need financial help to do this then provide it within reason. If folks want children to farm out to others then help them to understand a child is not a suitable piece of equipment to use in this way, every child needs love and nurture first, if there environment is stable and they feel secure learning will be little problem with the relevant teaching methods and commitment from those teaching. When such instability is present in a country and whether you like to agree with me or not the people who suffer most are the young and the old and in my 59 years I have never seen such suffering as is present at the moment. I was fortunate to have been able to bring up my four children and work from home, I however do know I still neglected spending as much time with them as they grew older through work commitments, there is no group, club, or any other entertainment provided that can replace the time spent in family life and it is high time this country got back to some realistic way to live and grow wise, well-mannered future generations before a civilised way of life becomes a distant memory.

Shelagh Campbell
18 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Suzanne Ensom (English Speaking Union) & Nick Bibby

Within the context of your current inquiry, there are two particular projects – both working with students from schools in areas of multiple deprivation – which might be of interest. Like other debating organisations, we've struggled to capture the impact of our work on individual pupil outcomes (especially long-term) but, with one of these, described below, we have feedback from participants and their teachers.

By way of background, it is also worth mentioning that debating is gradually being recognised as not just a hobby a means of rewarding social capital, but for what it is- a powerful tool in equipping young people with valuable skills ([see chapter 3](#) of *The state of Speaking in Our Schools*). In areas of deprivation, 50% of children enter school with below average speaking skills. This can have a huge impact on future success, and helping young people develop self-confidence and will enhance their life chances, according to the Sutton Trust.

The first programme, *Debate...discover!* (branded 'Determined to Debate/Speak up Glasgow' by the employability team at Glasgow City Council's Education department which funds the programme) has been running successfully in Glasgow for the past five years, and has attracted increasing numbers of schools, both primary and secondary. It focuses on developing the skills of both teachers and pupils in using debate as a classroom activity, and comprises training for teachers, workshops for pupils, teaching resources and a competition. This year's programme has been so popular, with 23 schools participating in at least one stage of the programme, that we have had to run two competitions this week! 120 children took part in this year's programme. We are still to gather the final feedback but teachers from the event today said that it was a "real confidence boost" and "outstanding learning opportunity" for the children, that it developed their critical thinking skills, and that she planned to go back and rewrite next year's plan to include far more debating. This final comment received an enthusiastic response from her pupils. What we know from previous years is that activities such as these really offer the opportunity to engage with the experiences and outcomes of CfE, especially in developing literacy. This particular programme has led us to look at working with Glasgow's Attainment Challenge to look much deeper into the long-term benefits of debating. We are also expanding this programme into Edinburgh schools next term with Edinburgh University's Alwaleed Centre.

Research ([Debating the Evidence, 2011, The English-Speaking Union & CfBT Education Trust](#)) shows that debating teaches key skills such as critical thinking, the ability to assimilate and present data and effective listening, as well as encouraging those who take part to be more active and engaged

citizens. Debating activities also promote the experiences and outcomes specified in Curriculum for Excellence, especially in the Talking and Listening section in Literacy, but across all subject areas. Furthermore, projects such as these equip young people with a powerful set of communication and thinking tools, too often overlooked in the perception of debate in the public imagination. It gives young people the experience of being heard, of understanding what arguments are and how they work, of taking the perspective of others and learning how to persuade and be persuaded.

Anecdotal evidence also indicates that debating can be a means to achieve real social mobility and develop resilience, and these are areas on which we really want to focus in terms of measuring the impact of our programmes.

Our other outreach project, Debate League, focuses on extra-curricular debate clubs, sending university student mentors into schools in areas of multiple deprivation for a longer-term intervention. We do not have so much data on the long-term impact of this programme and this is an area we really wish to develop as we look at how best to structure this programme in the next few years. In addition, there is no particular reason to limit debate to schools and we believe that Debate League could expand further into the community than has previously been the case. Too often we assume that the only real place to give young people the skills they need to be citizens should be in the classroom. Yet, these are skills that transcend academic boundaries and a classroom setting tends to exclude those who have had issues with formal education – it is worth remembering that Scotland has a rich tradition of debating societies that extend well beyond its schools and universities.

As part of a joined-up approach, debating really does have the capacity to give people the power to be heard. In doing so it can play a role in addressing some of the alienation and exclusion that all too often accompanies poverty.

Suzanne Ensom (English Speaking Union) & Nick Bibby
21 March 2018

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Simon Needham

It would seem reasonable in this issue of the attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty, that poverty pertains to an individual child, both for emotional and physical poverty.

Physical – Clothing, nutrition, hygiene,

Emotional – Family love and support, friends.

You can have 3 families in the same financial situations.

Family 1 – Ensures that the child has full Physical and emotional support.

Family 2 – Gives full physical support but not emotional.

Family 3 – Gives neither physical or emotional support.

In these cases, it is the child from families 2 and 3 that would possibly need support.

If the financial situation drops below the ability of Family 1 to physically support their child. They, and the other two families, would be classed as requiring support. Emotional poverty can be experienced by children of any family regardless of financial situations

Identification

It can be difficult for staff to identify pupils experiencing poverty.

Some can be identified by direct observation. Staff can find out if the pupils are on school lunches or clothing allowance, or by contacting guidance within the school, if they feel that they need further information. This may well only indicate a child's physical poverty. One staff member suggested observing pupils eating habits at breakfast club.

Solutions!

In addition to free school lunches, possibly, schools running breakfast and after school clubs that are funded to ensure that food is available, as part of the club, to ensure that the nutritional well being of children is available. It would be an opportunity for the staff of the clubs, to be able give emotional support and personal interest in the pupils attending. Clubs would be accessed by all pupils, one would hope that pupils would take up on the offer of a nurturing environment.

A 'Pupil support fund' could be instituted so that it could be accessed by the schools to enable them to help pupils attend, extracurricular clubs and events.

Summary

Increasing funding to families would mainly help 'Family 1' but identifying family situations would be too intrusive. That is why I feel that providing a nurturing environment directly to the pupils by schools ensures that there is a better chance that the individuals will benefit.

Anonymous Submissions

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Parent 1

For parents/carers/guardians experiencing poverty, if you want to could you share:

1. How your children have been supported (in school or outside school)?

In school, in regards to the barriers faced by children from families with financial difficulties, not at all. They are regularly left out of events in school hours, trips because we cannot afford to 'donate' or pay for them. Outside of school, Children's First and The Young Carers Trust support our children in the very best way, not only emotionally, but by making life inclusive for them where it is not at their school. Bridging the gaps in my abilities to give them a fulfilled and equality they do not get at school.

2. What was good about it and what could have been better?

Nothing positive to say about the school, but the charities have been a lifeline for my kids!

3. How has this impacted on what the children in your family have achieved?

My children started off with difficulty at school, punishments for late homework and for not donating. However raising complaints with the school, the education board, my MP and working with the charities has helped our children improve at school because the school is being forced to change.

4. What other things might support your children in achieving at school?

Real equality. Where NO child is left out because they cannot afford to pay/donate/contribute. Breakfast clubs throughout Scotland, a small fee or supply a box of cereal / loaf - this won't just help children in poverty, but it will also help working parents, even for that extra hour. In-school after school care to aid with homework for parents like myself who suffers great pain and struggles to keep up, and as a form of childcare for working parents. Giving the maximum support and opportunities to earn,

Child /Young Person 1

(Names changed.)

For children and young people of school age experiencing poverty:

1. How have you been supported (in school or outside school)?

Outside school Paul (from the young carers trust) and Georgina (from Children First) help us with homework when Mummy is really sore, take us places Mummy can't go to and telling the teachers to stop being unfair.

2. What was good about it? What could have been better?

It helps us feel like we are important too.

3. How has this impacted on how you get on at school including achievements?

I don't lose my golden time now I can do my homework on time even if Mummy is really sore or in hospital.

4. What other things would support you to achieve at school?

To not be left out if Mummy & Daddy can't pay for the parent council.
Not to be forced in to another class because my parents can't pay.

Child /Young Person 2

My experience of being a school pupil in Glasgow is that I feel very socially segregated as pupils who are better off each packed lunches or go out of school and poorer people go for school dinners. I feel that it makes me feel like part of an underclass and I wish everyone ate their lunch together. Particularly as I don't have the choice to hang around with my friends I have to go alone to the dinner hall.

Anonymous

Teacher 1

Acting PT Guidance & Teacher of Modern Studies

What has your school done to support children from families affected by poverty? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

- FSMs
- Targeted study support for pupils in SMID 1/2 and LAC pupils
- Additional PSW time allocated to pupils from deprived background to help with health and wellbeing concerns in order to try and positively raise attainment.

Are there any services that your school has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

- One to one ICT support for pupils to expand their learning - cost and council cooperation has stopped this
- Smaller Class sizes
- More classes available for less able pupils in senior school - bi-level classes do not work, even more so with the changes in the curriculum again this disadvantages lower ability pupils more and they are the ones who tend to be most likely from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- More time and resources to develop for the new curriculums/stop changes to curriculum. Teachers do not have enough time.

How do services provided outside of school support families who are affected by poverty help with educational attainment?

- Provide support
- Provide stability

What else could be done to support the attainment of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

- More funding for schools
- More time for teachers
- Less emphasis on SQA bureaucracy
- Teachers actually being involved not just consulted on changes in the curriculum
- More support staff in school

Teacher 2

I am a secondary school teacher, but not a Guidance teacher, so this reply is from that perspective. It is also a **personal** response and not one from my school.

1. What has your school done to support children from families affected by poverty? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

The school I am in does its level best to alleviate the effects of poverty through a variety of initiatives and policies. There is a lot of partnership work with school link workers, social services, Outreach and so on. It works very well but this is not to say we are complacent. We know there is always more we can do.

I do not know the specifics because it is not my area but I do know that any concerns expressed about a child are always investigated and acted on if appropriate.

The outreach and working with partners has been very successful in my opinion. The pupils know that they matter as this work reaches in to their lives, not just their school lives. It's not a lip-service concern.

However, I feel that there is still a silent minority of pupils who would not say there were problems and as they are generally quiet pupils, they are not necessarily on our radar.

2. Are there any services that your school has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

This is probably pie in the sky thinking, but if children are living in poverty, there may not be enough facilities / funds at home to do things such as wash clothes or shower. Enabling pupils to access such things as laundry / shower facilities at school may help them feel more comfortable amongst their peer group.

Access to laundry powders / liquids, soap, towels and so on would need to be factored in to the above. It is good all girls now have free access to sanitary protection. It would be wonderful if children in poverty also had access to a store of personal grooming products, including toothpaste and toothbrushes, new underwear, sets of clothing suitable for school, school supplies and so on. These are the little things that most of us take for granted. That cannot be assumed for children living in poverty.

3. How do services provided outside of school support families who are affected by poverty help with educational attainment?

I cannot truly answer this because I genuinely have little experience of this, but surely if pupils realise they are truly valued, that we DO see them as our future, it will impact on their self-worth and therefore, their attainment. Hopefully, they can see the point of working to achieve the best they can and not simply write themselves off as not mattering.

4. What else could be done to support the attainment of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

I do have a concern re: school meals. It is a frequent occurrence in our school that the pupils clear the food in the canteen like a plague of locusts and it's all gone very quickly. That's good – teenagers are meant to eat like that. But what about the children who depend on this meal as their main meal of the day? Are they getting a meal or are they too slow on the uptake? I've raised it and it's being looked into at our school because this has the potential to be a bit of a serious worry.

Could we find the money to fund breakfast for all FSM pupils? Proper breakfast, not just carbohydrates?

I am delighted to read the news re: school lunches over the holidays.

The final concern I would like to express to the committee is in respect of the poverty of aspiration shown by many pupils. This is a wider societal concern. Pupils' lives are lived so vicariously now through various electronic media and many of them appear to worship the cult of vacuity exemplified by YouTube Bloggers, base reality TV and so on. This is not something schools can counter on their own – that has to come from home.

I have no doubt that many reading this will assume that I am just another middle-class eejit with no real idea. However, I was one of these teenage children in the very harsh environment of the East End of Glasgow in the 1970s, the eldest of four of a single-mother in a time when divorced women were stigmatised. Believe me, it was not easy and I do know what I am talking about. My mother took her parenting seriously. The value of education was drummed in to us – from home and school – all of us are professional people now. I want that same level of aspiration and parenting for the pupils I now teach.

Teacher 3

I am the Head of English in a large Secondary School in a large city in the central belt which serves an affluent catchment area. I would like my name NOT to appear publically because it would then be simple to identify the school.

Here are some insights that I have that I believe may help the committee in its inquiry.

- The families affected by poverty living in catchment areas of schools like mine are often the hardest to identify and reach. The main reason is that SIMD is a blunt and unsatisfactory instrument to measure poverty but it is the only one used in the Scottish education system's attainment measuring tool, INSIGHT. So we have families living in the richest deciles who are poor. Our school's SIMD profile makes it look like we are working with fewer children affected by poverty than we actually are. The current measure of the national poverty attainment gap is flawed – it is probably much worse than we currently think.
- We need to be able to examine and collect data on other 'criteria' to define poverty. Parents' level of education, whether they were looked after, fostered or adopted when they were children, whether they are single parents – all these measures can be important in affecting a family's income and financial status.
- Connected to this is a need to have a wider definition of 'teenage poverty' – the young people in my school who are the most deeply disturbed, disaffected and disruptive are nearly all fostered or adopted. Technically, now, they are living with families who are financially rich and emotionally stable. But they have suffered terrible childhood traumas and they are emotionally deprived. The school's ability to support them is severely hampered by the huge cuts to the specialist services we have seen over recent years. But they don't fit the criteria for Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) money. We need a way for money to follow children from where they were when they were born and in their infancy and we need to track what happened to them in those early years. These young people probably started life within the most deprived families and then suffered their traumas. Just because they are now in safer, richer, environments does not mean that the effects of that early poverty have been dealt with and solved. They are disengaging in disturbing ways in their teenage years and schools need funds to support them properly. The Committee needs to recommend innovative ways of determining who deserves the SG PEF money.
- Currently Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) money to support children affected by poverty is dependent on Free School Meals (FSM) – but it is my contention that the Scottish Government must be measuring FSM take-up, based on families' applications for, and 'awarding' of free meals,

and not on FSM automatic entitlement as based on families' receipt of certain UK government benefits. Poorer children and families in schools like mine are under an extra social pressure not to apply for or to be seen to take the FSM they are entitled to, and in my school we are convinced that somehow the PEF calculation is missing these families. This shouldn't be the case – the Committee needs to highlight that the Scottish Government needs to have, and to use for the awarding of PEF money, the UK government's data on families in receipt of the benefits that entitle them to FSM, and NOT the SG's data on who has applied and been given FSM. Only in that way will schools like mine get the full PEF they need to serve the poorest children. I would like the Committee to look into this PEF 'gap' caused by apparent lack of joined-up data collection with some urgency.

- We need also need to find ways to encourage poor families living in affluent areas to apply for the UK benefits they are entitled to in the first place – what do we know about those not applying for and taking up benefits, their reasons for not doing so, where they live?
- Finally it is important to state that the PEF money is a sticking plaster – it is merely a re-injection of the money that has been stripped out of Scottish Education over the past decade, and even then it is not a permanent re-injection. The stresses in our system and on our teachers will only be addressed by a massive funding effort, a significant pay rise to draw more teachers in so that more non-contact time can be given to do the job properly. Measures like Standardised Tests and Governance reviews are a massive distraction, and merely add to stress. The attempt to close the poverty attainment gap is doomed to failure unless the Scottish Government listens to teachers, and its international board of expert advisers, when they say that the current direction of travel is entirely the wrong one.

Teacher 4

I am a teacher in a large Secondary School in a large city in the central belt that serves an affluent catchment area. I would like my name NOT to appear publically so as to avoid identifying the school.

These are my thoughts in answer to some of the questions posed for teachers.

- Data gathering/sharing – we are at the mercy of a single piece of data for identifying students living with poverty (SIMD), which doesn't accurately provide us with the real number. Because of the nature of catchment areas, it is almost impossible to tell if a child's situation constitutes 'poverty.' We need much more data sharing, particularly within local councils, as there is far more data out there on children than we have access to as teachers. There are confidentiality issues, understandably, but we are forced to use a blunt instrument when there is more specific and beneficial data at an institutional level.
- Early Years and the effects of poverty – the focus for closing the attainment gap needs to be on Early Years. It is chronically underfunded and, arguably, the area where colleagues need to be the most qualified. I believe it is the most crucial place for identifying families in need; students at secondary level, in my experience, are usually adept at masking their real situation and are very good at avoidance strategies. Additionally, childhood acquisition of language happens most rapidly at the earliest levels of education: if a child is stalled in some way at this age, it becomes nearly impossible to close this gap later on, particularly at secondary school level. This impacts on all forms of literacy and means that young people rarely catch up with their more advantaged peers. In turn, this affects their attainment in almost every area, since poor language skills are a massive barrier to accessing all of the curriculum. Far more funding needs to be directed towards early language acquisition and developing pre-reading skills.
- Literacy is an add-on at secondary level; it is 'lumped in' with English teaching and it is very difficult to develop literacy as well as teach course content and focus on BGE and CfE. Early intervention, specifically for those with lower literacy, is essential in closing the gap, for reasons similar to those mentioned above. It is not effective to do this instead of English, since the skills are different and still valuable.
- Homework is an area that often concerns me in terms of closing the gap. There is little equity possible with the current model of homework and I can see no evidence that this closes the gap. Increasingly, homework and support materials are being distributed online, with the assumption that all/most young people have access to the internet. Young people living with poverty do not have access to the same materials as more advantaged children. There may be no one at home

during the evening to help with homework and so young people are left to struggle alone. English may not be the language spoken at home. It means that students with well-educated parents, access to better resources or tutoring hours are achieving much more than those living with poverty. This add-on education widens the gap, especially for senior years working towards National Qualifications. It would be beneficial for tutoring to be made available to those living with poverty through supplementary funding.

- I also feel that we are not educating all students well enough on poverty. In order to close the gap, I believe that we need to shift perceptions among young people so that there is no shame or stigma around poverty, which at the moment does exist. It is particularly prominent in schools with the most affluent catchments. We need to encourage a greater sense of empathy and equality amongst young people. This could work to make those living with poverty feel safer and more valued at school, helping them to engage.
- There is a chance that any child from a low income family who are on or just above the poverty line may miss out on assistance and entitlements from school because of a lack of qualifying benefit claims. It would be useful for parents to be well-informed about the kind of support that schools can offer their children so that they do not 'fall through the cracks.'
- PEF money is not equivalent to the funding that has been cut in schools and is a temporary measure. There may come a time when this money (which is not sufficient in the first instance to close a widening social gap) is no longer awarded. It is concerning that the effects of PEF may prove just as temporary.
- Nutrition does play a role in how well young people are able to learn. There are many students who come to school without having eaten. Their FSM entitlement does not necessarily cover breakfast and this impacts on their learning throughout the day.

Teacher 5

I am a Guidance Teacher working at a High School. I do not want to be identified as part of the study.

My city has the highest drug death rate in Europe. Many of our pupils live in poverty. Having worked in the same school and city for 13 years, I feel that poverty has increased and is impacting on the wellbeing of children on a daily basis. Mental health issues are a growing problem as is lack of support for these children. They have to wait for over a year to be seen by CAMHS. There are many children refusing to attend school. There is a distinct lack of services to help these children. They cannot attain if we cannot get them to engage in education.

Staff such as myself visit homes and offer to bring these kids into school. Social work services have been cut massively and increasing families turn to school for support, however we often cannot provide the support at home that the families need. I have 200 children that I'm the named person for. A third of these children have some sort of additional support at school for many different reasons. I teach Art, PSE, Skills, RE and also have to cover other classes as we are constantly short staffed. During non contact time I currently spend 3 periods a week doing one to one support work with a two bereaved children and one girl who has developed an eating disorder but is still on the CAMHS waiting list. The rest of my week is spent organising and having team around the child meetings and administration.

Bereavement is a massive issue in my school. I feel the Scottish Government should be making a cohesive approach to policy making throughout Scottish Schools. My council does not have a bereavement policy for children, just a leaflet. Glasgow has an excellent one. Many of my young people have lost family members. One girl has lost both parents and her sister in 4 years, all as a direct result of the problems that surround poverty. Again, it's me that supports these children.

My school has some of the highest attaining results for young people living in poverty in Scotland. We have an excellent support for pupils team who closely track the progress and aspirations of children. We work one to one with these children to help them.

We have a daily breakfast club which is free for our pupils. We have a cupboard full of clothing that we can give to pupils. Staff donate clothing to children very often. I've had pupils not attending school because they don't have shoes or uniform. I've bought jackets for children who don't have one.

Every Christmas our staff donate hundreds of gifts and food hampers to our families. I've had a parent phoning me in tears as her benefits were stopped and she had no food or present for her boy at Christmas. My Depute Head and I went to tesco and bought the family a Christmas dinner and gifts for the family.

I would love a Government Minister to come to my school and shadow me for a week. That would give you an insight into poverty in Scotland and how front line services are being stretched to their limits.

My workload is totally overwhelming these days. We are in work from 7.30am, work through our breaks late into the evenings. We are now social workers, mental health workers as well as Teachers. I never feel like I do anything well but my pupils are my priority and I'd do anything to help them.

My advice would be take away Guidance Teachers teaching commitments, to allow us more time to support these pupils. Target helping the school refusers and more needs to be invested into helping to support young people with mental health issues and bereavement.

I think the Government should be recognising how much extra we do to support our pupils. Teachers feel grossly undervalued, underpaid and demoralised.

Teacher 6

- 1. What has your school done to support children from families affected by poverty? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?**
2. My current school employs child & family support workers to connect with parents and support issues in the home. They may support parents with transport to and from school meetings and events, but also to appointments out with school (for example, CAMHS). We have 'settled start' in the mornings, where pupils can access breakfast and staff can check-in to see how their evening/morning has been. We have offered family learning sessions for various things, including cooking, play and curriculum developments. School staff have regular contact with families and may signpost them to other community supports. Our school is attachment-led and provides greater levels of emotional support than a mainstream school (I.e. nurture provision, key teachers who check in with specific pupils every day, individualised curriculums with opportunities for outdoor learning and wider achievements) I have previously worked in a different local authority as part of a homelink team working with parents/carers of children under 'looked after and accommodated at home' status. We were trained to deliver the Triple P parenting course to groups or individuals. Members of the team carried out home visits, particularly where school attendance was concerning. We provided transport support in the short term for some pupils to get to school and workers also supported families to access food banks, recycled furniture suppliers etc. Although the remit of the team was to improve educational attainment, it was clear that families could not address this without their basic needs being addressed first (Maslow's hierarchy stuff). I feel support works well when it's at a community level, non-judgemental and there is an expectation that families will require an element of emotional support. This is mirrored by the support pupils require in school. If we do not address the health and well-being of children and families first, they will not be in a position that engages in anything wider.
- 3. Are there any services that your school has not been able to provide that you believe would work?**
4. Currently, we do not have a school counselling service or direct access to one. The majority (if not all) of our pupils have experienced trauma. 55% have 4 or more adverse childhood experiences (87% have 2 or more) and many have diagnosed conditions such as ASD or ADHD. 69% of families live in SIMD 1-4 and many of the others are looked after away from home (therefore living in accommodation in areas 4+ but not necessarily from these areas). I know of very few children who are engaging in any regular work with psychological services, despite their emotional wellbeing/behaviour being a huge barrier to their educational engagement. Many of these young people are already in the youth justice system. Two are on orders which require tags. I am

continually concerned about the lack of access to psychological services, counselling etc. Many are discharged as a result of non-engagement, but as a professional who has contact with them every school day, building trusting relationships is key. We can access some services via the local authority, but it has a large waiting list and therefore limited time for practitioners to attempt to make progress with reluctant children. I would also be concerned about the level of psychological support parents are able to access in order to support their children, as they are clearly affected by not only poverty-related issues themselves, but the subsequent impact on their child.

5. How do services provided outside of school support families who are affected by poverty help with educational attainment?

6. The benefits system seems to be a real nightmare for many families, with sanctions being placed and processes adding to stress and trauma. I know of a single mother who has experienced domestic abuse and finds her sons very challenging at home (one has an ADHD diagnosis and is in a specialist school provision for his behaviour). The family are engaging in work with women's aid and the mother is trying unbelievably hard to turn things around. However, one morning she called the school to say that she would not be eating for a week due to issues receiving money. She would make sure her boys had enough, but she would go without. We tried to support her to a Food bank, but the stigma was too much for her. Unsurprisingly, there was a serious incident involving her and her son that weekend. If we can't support these families with the basics, educational attainment will be too far along the list of priorities.

7. What else could be done to support the attainment of children and young people from families affected by poverty?

8. Better, clearer multi-agency working between school, health and social work. Often when educational progress is seen in pupils, changes in their home life can impact hugely and we see regression. They do not have the resilience to 'bounce back' due to their early life experiences and decision-making in the social work/care system can be slow, which results in schools struggling to meet the child's needs in an interim or long term basis. Social work teams seem to be overloaded so do not have as much face to face contact with families and therefore cannot support them. Family learning is highlighted in HGIOS 4, but more needs to be done to ensure a consistent national picture will look like (i.e. some early years family hubs are doing excellent work, that does not link in to Primary or secondary so families are 'lost'). Schools need effective resources and strong links to other agencies to do family learning well and more needs to be done to ensure that schools and teachers understand the impact. More research needs to be done into measuring holistic impact of family learning, as the majority is literacy-based. Many examples of effective Scottish family learning are case studies and there is less empirical data.

9. Research into adverse childhood experiences would be welcomed by professionals in Scotland, particularly looking at how this lens can benefit learning approaches.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Teacher 7

I am a teacher and I feel that i) relationships between staff and pupils and ii) food and nutrition are both vital factors in making school a safe, supportive and nurturing environment for children at primary and secondary level.

I would therefore recommend that school lunch times are 'part of the curriculum' and are used to help child experience sitting at a table, using cutlery, having conversations etc. And I think that relations between teachers and pupils would be enhanced by this because at times school seems quite 'adversarial' and teachers and pupils struggle to see each other as 'people'. Eating together would help overcome this, slowly and on a daily basis. I have spoken with other teaching colleagues and, although there is some concern over loss of break times, an 'opt-in' approach where teachers receive free meals, would be a great incentive for teachers to sit and interact with pupils over lunch. This would be in line with the approach taken in places such as Sweden, where ALL school pupils are entitled to free meals and the schools offer staggered lunch breaks to ensure that all pupils and teachers get a chance to sit and eat together in cohorts. This allows for informal dialogue and communication between pupils and teachers and means that things such as bullying are less likely. See here for an example https://www.livsmedelsverket.se/globalassets/english/food-habits-health-environment/public-meals/good_school_meals.pdf
