



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

AGENDA

13th Meeting, 2018 (Session 5)

Wednesday 2 May 2018

The Committee will meet at 10.30 am in the Robert Burns Room (CR1).

1. **Decision to take agenda item in private:** The Committee will decide whether to take agenda item 4 in private.
2. **Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty:** The Committee will hear evidence on its inquiry from—

Nancy Clunie, Headteacher, Dalmarnock Primary School;

Kirsten Hogg, Head of Policy, Barnardo's Scotland;

Satwat Rehman, Director, One Parent Families Scotland;

Brian Scott, Commissioner, Poverty Truth Commission; and

Chelsea Stinson, Children's Voices Programme Manager, Children's Parliament.
3. **Review of evidence (in private):** The Committee will consider the evidence it heard earlier.
4. **Work programme:** The Committee will consider its work programme.

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The papers for this meeting are as follows—

Agenda Item 2

SPICe Briefing

ES/S5/18/13/1

Witness Submissions

ES/S5/18/13/2

Agenda Item 4

Work Programme (PRIVATE PAPER)

ES/S5/18/13/3 (P)

Education and Skills Committee
Impact of Poverty on School Attainment and Achievement
02 May 2018

INTRODUCTION

This paper provides suggested themes for discussion with witnesses with a particular focus on primary school. The Committee will hear from:

- Dalmarnock Primary School
- Children's Parliament
- Barnardo's Scotland
- One Parent Families Scotland
- Poverty Truth Commission

On [18th April](#) the Committee heard from CPAG Scotland, JRF, Robert Owen Centre and Education Endowment Foundation. Last week the Committee heard from the EIS, Connect, John Loughton, the Spark and the Prince's Trust Scotland.

All written submissions are available on the [Committee's webpage](#). The key themes raised in submissions were summarised in the [paper to Committee on 18 April](#). These were:

- the cost of the school day – which can limit participation in school and limit access to the full range of educational activities
- access to extra-curricular activities and wider achievement – which can in turn impact on attainment
- term structures – in particular the impact of the long summer break
- the stress of poverty – and how that can impact on the ability of families to engage with education
- the importance of early learning and childcare – focusing particularly on the gap in ability already evident before starting school

The LSE's recent [update of its 2013 'money matters' report](#), refers to two, inter-related, models of how income affects outcomes, and this may be helpful in considering the types of policies that might mitigate the impact of poverty.

- Investment Model – money affects parents' ability to invest in goods and services that contribute to healthy child development
- Family Stress Model – managing low financial resources can be stressful and have a negative impact on parents' mental health, which can have a negative impact on parenting

Theme 1: Costs of the school day

The cost of the school day is a strong theme in submissions to the Committee. In press coverage following the Committee meeting on 18 April a Scottish Government spokesperson said charging for “core” aspects of schooling should not be happening.

“All children should expect to be able to access all subjects. It is not acceptable for schools to ask pupils to pay for a core part of their curriculum.”

At last week's Committee Andrea Bradley (EIS) said that the issue was not lack of clarity about what was the core curriculum, but rather that levels of school funding are not adequate to provide for all the practical materials that would allow for the richness of experience that we would want for our children through curriculum for excellence.

The recent local government ‘benchmarking’ report showed per pupil spend on primary school education reduced by 0.6% in cash terms and 9.7% in real terms between 2010/11 and 2016/17. For secondary school education, per pupil spend had increased 1.9% in cash terms and decreased 0.4% in real terms over the same period. ([Local Government Benchmarking Report p.25-6](#))

The benefits of activities such as music tuition, sport, outward bound and youth work have been raised in terms of contributing to children’s wider achievement, which in addition to being valuable in its own right, also impacts on attainment. Charging for music tuition and the cost of school trips were discussed on 18 and 25 April. John Dickie (CPAG) referred to a survey of schools in one local authority about the P7 residential trip saying:

“on average, three or four pupils in every P7 class were not participating in the P7 residential trip. When we hear young pupils describe how big a part of P7 the trip is, we can imagine what a big impact being left behind must have on the young people’s sense of what school and education have to offer.

[...]

“ If the P7 residential trip is a core part of primary education—and it is—it could be made absolutely clear at a national level that it is unacceptable that any child should miss out on the trip because of financial barriers. ([OR, 18 April col 21-22](#)).

Last week Eileen Prior (Connect) said that schools could adapt their policies, noting that:

“we don’t have to have exotic school trips, we don’t have to have school uniforms with braiding that changes every year.”

The Scottish Government [Child Poverty Delivery Plan](#) includes £9m for the [Youth Music Initiative](#), £31,000 for CPAG’s cost of the school day activity, a commitment to introduce a minimum school clothing grant and guidance for local authorities.

The Committee may wish to discuss:

- **how the cost of the school day affects pupils’ attainment**
- **whether Curriculum for Excellence has widened what should be considered the core elements of primary school education**
- **the adequacy of budgets at a school level to fully fund the curriculum**
- **whether schools should subsidise costs for disadvantaged pupils, or whether they should ensure that no charges are made to any pupils**

Theme 2: Financial assistance

Separately from costs directly associated with the curriculum, are the well established schemes to provide financial assistance with education related costs. These are:

- free school meals
- school clothing grants
- Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) (for 16 – 19 year olds)

Recent changes include the creation of a £610 per month income threshold for free school meals for those on Universal Credit and several policies set out in the Child Poverty Delivery Plan including:

- extending free school meals to all those in early learning and childcare to co-incide with the increase to 1,140 hours per year
- creating a new minimum level of school clothing grant
- providing new guidance to local authorities referring to automatic payments and single application forms for local authority administered benefits
- considering what else can be done to strengthen the system for providing EMA

In the informal session prior to last week's meeting there was considerable discussion about the nutritional value of a healthy school meal, the impact in terms of stigma and poor food choices of letting children out of school at lunchtime and the impact on attainment of good nutrition.

The EIS told the Committee that they supported universal free school meals for all school pupils.

The Committee may wish to discuss:

- **whether and how more should be done at a national or local level to increase uptake of, or extend eligibility for, free school meals and school clothing grants**
- **whether and how such changes might impact on the attainment gap**

Theme 3: Teaching approaches and teacher quality

Danielle Mason, (Education Endowment Foundation) (18 April) stressed the importance of teacher quality, saying that removing cost barriers was "necessary but not sufficient". Rather it was by improving the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom that improvements in attainment would be achieved. She referred to:

- high quality teaching in deprived areas
- high quality early years provision
- targeted, evidence based interventions in the classroom for children who are falling behind

A last week's Committee, Andrea Bradley (EIS) described how she and colleagues had used mixed ability teaching up to the end of S4, and the beneficial impact this had had on

attainment. This was in a school in an area of high deprivation. Approaches also included smaller class sizes and use of co-operative teaching.

“that was down to a core of us individuals who were prepared to negotiate and argue for additional resourcing”

She referred to the need for professional learning about the causes and consequences of poverty and about the kinds of interventions that research shows make a difference to kids who are disadvantaged.

Professional learning is also raised in the submission this week from Barnardo’s who 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.”

Another, almost universal teaching strategy is to set homework. Part of the ‘cost of the school day’ work has highlighted difficulties around homework, which can rely on children having internet access at home and a quiet place to study. The EEF looked at the evidence on homework in primary schools and found that:

“Overall, homework in primary schools does not appear to lead to large increases in learning.” ([EEF Toolkit](#))

A recent EEF publication on the [attainment gap \(January 2018\)](#), the EEF stress the focus on teacher quality:

“closing the attainment gap will be hard work. However, [...] it is possible. [...] The challenge is to mobilise the effective practice in a minority of schools: to reduce the variability in pupil outcomes we currently see and to increase consistency across the schools system. Put simply, it is about more good teaching for all pupils, as this will especially benefit the most disadvantaged.”

Education Scotland provide advice on use of pupil equity funding and give examples of interventions through their [‘interventions for equity’ framework](#). There is also a [Scottish version of the Education Endowment’s Foundations toolkit](#), which summarises the cost effectiveness of various interventions.

Last week, Andrea Bradely (EIS) said that there was an element of ‘cart before the horse’ with PEF funding where money has been distributed to schools, to spend on initiatives that are supposed to bring about reductions in the impact of poverty but without the ground work being done to best equip schools and head teachers to make those decisions.

The Committee may wish to discuss:

- **whether teaching approaches are likely to have a greater impact on addressing the poverty related attainment gap than removing financial barriers or providing family support**

- **whether there are particular approaches to teaching being used that might exacerbate or entrench the existing attainment gap – for example, setting homework in primary schools, setting or streaming by ability**
- **are there any changes to PEF/Attainment Challenge funding or guidance needed that would enable it to be more effective in supporting best practice**

Theme 4: Culture and Leadership

School ethos and culture could affect the openness to involving other organisations and services. There is also the culture and ethos of the relationship between teachers, families and pupils.

The submission from Barnardo's states:

"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."

Later in their submission they state that:

"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."

[...]

"the key to collaboration and successful joint working is a strong school-wide culture which is trauma –informed, nurturing, and rooted in attachment. [...] 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."

Echoing this, one of the individual examples provided by the Poverty Truth Commission referred to teacher attitudes:

"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."

Another parent said:

"there most definitely exists a class system within the school"

She referred to her son's difficulties at school saying:

"school for him is very impersonal , almost on a treadmill to achieve results."

The submission from the Children's Parliament provides views of children about school and poverty, and notes that:

“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?”

The Children’s Parliament refer to their [Doing Our Best](#) programme, which is profiled on the National Improvement Hub. This was piloted in Aberdeenshire and developed using Scottish Attainment Challenge funding. The [Programme Report](#) describes how it uses a rights based approach to help children consider their self-perception as learners and develop rights based relationships. The report of the programme concludes that:

“To learn, and to be the best learner, children need to be in an environment where relationships are based on human dignity, empathy, kindness and trust. These are rights-based relationships. To understand and experience rights-based relationships these must be modelled by adults in the learning environment.”

Last week John Loughton described how the different approach of youth work encourages young people to engage. When he asked young people why they came to his project but wouldn’t go to school they said:

“you understand me, you respect me, you listen to me, you treat me like an adult. It’s not about bad teaching it’s about a different dynamic.”

During the Committee’s recent visit to Finland, it was observed that there is a culture of trust between local authorities and teachers, between teachers and between teachers and pupils and this affected the learning culture in the school.

The Committee may wish to discuss:

- **whether school culture and ethos are an important part of addressing the attainment gap**
- **if so, what particular elements characterise such a culture or ethos**
- **the factors that contribute to the development of such a school culture and the factors that would hinder it**
- **what impact national education policy has on the culture of a school**

Theme 5: Collaboration, parental engagement and family support

Throughout the written, oral and informal evidence there has been an emphasis on how schools cannot tackle the attainment gap themselves, but that there is much they can do.

Last week for example, the Committee heard about the contribution of third sector organisations in helping young people who are disengaged with school, and those who need extra support for their wellbeing. The submissions from witnesses this week also emphasise collaboration.

Collaborations can be with other teachers, other schools, with parents and families and with a range of other services.

For example, the submission from Dalmarnock Primary School describes how:

“long before PEF money was given to [the] 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.”

Their summer holiday club was part of a bigger project led by Children in Scotland – Food, Families Futures. (An overview of the wider project is available [here](#).) Axiom Consulting evaluated provision in Dalmarnock and the local community centre 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. Researchers found a range of things that parents and children enjoyed about the programmes, which included that taking part in the programmes encourage children to go to school. It also encouraged outside play, doing homework, eating a wider variety of foods, enabling parents to meet socially and to work together to benefit the community.

The evaluation notes that particular strengths of the programme include the ‘grass roots’ approach (co-production approach), and the ‘can do’ attitude of the head teacher. It concludes that it is too early to tell whether there is an impact on attainment.

“However this initial assessment suggests that it has been instrumental in delivering key outcomes relating to social capital, resilience, social networking and attendance as well as supporting improved family relationships and interactions.”

(A copy of the evaluation report is available to Members on request from the Committee Clerks).

These projects were developed as part of ‘Thriving Places’. [Dalmarnock, Parkhead and Dalmachie](#) is one of nine ‘[Thriving Places](#)’ which are

"Glasgow Community Planning Partnerships' intensive neighbourhood approach which targets specific areas of the city making better use of existing assets and resources and creating more effective working across partners."

Barnardo’s submission also stresses the importance of collaboration with agencies outwith school. Their website describes their work on attainment:

“To close the educational attainment gap, Barnardo's Scotland focus on promoting secure attachment, promoting recovery from toxic stress (trauma) and building resilient communities working across Scotland. We do this by working in partnership with parents, nurseries, primary and secondary schools.”

In their submission they refer to ‘adverse childhood experiences’ and;

“the important role that family support services play in actively mitigating against the impact of poverty.”

Barnardo’s have provided family support workers linked to primary and secondary schools using Attainment Challenge Funding. They also deliver workshops for teaching staff on adverse childhood experiences, in order that teachers can adapt their teaching to suit the child’s needs. Their submission refers to the importance of a collaborative approach with services and also with parents – “creating a partnership where home and school can work together.”

The Scottish Government's education reform proposals include that: every school will have access to a 'home to school' link worker to support parents and families ([Scottish Government news release 15 June 2017](#)).

Last week the Committee heard about difficulties with procurement when seeking to contract other services to deliver PEF initiatives, although Andrea Bradley (EIS) cautioned that there did need to be 'checks and balances.'

The [evaluation of the first two years of the Attainment Challenge](#) noted that bureaucracy and tight timescales had been a problem. The programme underspent by 28% across the two years and by 50% in the challenge authorities in year 1. The total allocation from 2015 to 2017 was £51.9m of which £37.2m was spent.

The Committee may wish to discuss:

- **how the local infrastructure of services impacts on schools' ability to address the attainment gap**
- **how schools should involve parents and pupils in designing approaches that will address the attainment gap**
- **how the small size of some primary schools affects collaborative working**
- **whether proposed reforms to education (head teachers' charter and Regional Improvement Collaboratives) will affect the ability of schools to collaborate with other teachers, other services, with parents and with other schools**
- **whether any changes are needed to the PEF/Attainment Challenge to make collaborative work easier**

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

13th Meeting, 2018 (Session 5), Wednesday, 2 May 2018

Attainment and achievement of school aged children experiencing poverty

Witness submissions

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the submissions received from the four witness organisations that will be giving evidence to the Committee.

Witness submissions

2. Submissions have been received from four of the five witnesses on this week's panel.

- [Barnardo's Scotland](#)
- [Children's Parliament](#)
- [Dalmarnock Primary School](#)
- [Poverty Truth Commission](#)

Annexe A

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.¹ 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.² 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.³

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

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

² <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2010/04/26095519/0>

³ <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.⁴

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.⁵ 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.⁶ 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

⁴ <http://www.ccpscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Family-support-research-project-Part-1.pdf> (25)

⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2010/feb/15/poor-children-behind-sutton-trust>

⁶ http://www.heraldscotland.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.⁷

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.

⁷ <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 Framework⁸ 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 – [Appendix] A.

⁸ <http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/media/3971582/nationaltraumatrainingframework.pdf>

Appendix 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'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*⁹, 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

⁹ What Kind of Scotland <https://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/about-us/publications/>

uniform at the start of each school year or replacing lost or outgrown items might 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 Hub¹⁰.

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.

¹⁰ Doing Our Best <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/practice-exemplars/Doing%20Our%20Best>

(Teacher)

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 food bank because they don’t want to look weak. They want to be seen as strong.”
(Age 10)

**Children’s Parliament
20 March 2018**

Annexe C**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.¹¹

Nancy Clunie, HT
Dalmarnock Primary

20 March 2018

APPENDIX A

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.

¹¹ Members may request a copy of the full report from the clerk.

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 frys.

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!!"

APPENDIX 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.

Annexe D**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 yearlong 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 out with 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 Dobbie's 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
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