

What Scotland Learned

100 stories of lockdown

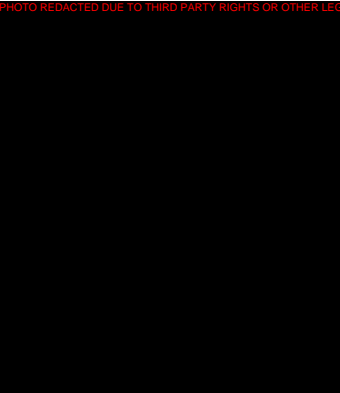
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What Scotland Learned is a collection of inspiring stories about how practitioners across Scotland responded to the COVID-19 crisis. It is structured around the five themes of How Good is OUR School?.

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Foreword



Gayle Gorman
HM Chief Inspector of Education

The COVID-19 pandemic led to the sudden closure of school buildings and other learning sites across Scotland. During this time there were many examples of extraordinary work across the entire education system to support learners and communities.

For many learners, their education was delivered entirely through distance and online platforms, with different forms of on-going contact with their teachers, childcare workers, youth workers, tutors and others. Of course, for children and young people, support from parents and carers continued to be key to their learning.

Practitioners and volunteers responded in a variety of creative and stimulating ways and this book aims to capture, and celebrate, some of the stories of lockdown learning. In this publication, we want to celebrate the amazing stories that emerged during the months March – August 2020.

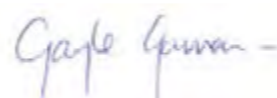
The 100 stories on the following pages have been curated from a selection submitted from practitioners, local authorities, establishments, leaders, parents, learners, partners, volunteers and others. The words are their own and unedited: we feel this captures the moment in their own voice, at the time when learning and teaching looked and felt very different.

The dedication and care shown by everyone involved in providing learning and teaching activities was nothing short of inspiring and I listened with awe and admiration as more and more stories of lockdown emerged.

When we asked for submissions for this publication, I wasn't sure how many we would receive. Everyone is back in school now and I know how busy you all are. Incredibly, we received many, many submissions and it just wasn't possible to publish all of them in this book. However, more of the stories we received are available on the Education Scotland website.

I can honestly say, I have never been more proud of Scottish education – of the practitioners, learners, partners, families and communities. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for everything that you have done, and I have no doubt, everything you will continue to do, to ensure the continuation of learning for all our children and young people.

I hope you enjoy reading the stories of lockdown learning on the following pages and take a moment to reflect on your own learning during this time, and take forward the positive and innovative approaches we saw blossom across Scotland.



Gayle Gorman
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education

Relationships

This theme is about how well everyone supported each other to work, learn and achieve success. It is about relationships amongst learners and between children and young people and the adults who work with them as part of a learning community.

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Establishment:

Allan's Nursery and Primary School

Local Authority:

Stirling Council

What we did:

We, at Allan's have a diverse catchment area with 42% of our school population living in deciles 1 to 4 and 47% living in deciles 8, 9 and 10. Therefore, we have to be extremely mindful of all our families, especially during lockdown. It was vitally important that we recognised that each family within our community would have a completely different experience.

Throughout lockdown we had our school values at the heart of everything we did – love, endeavour, respect, integrity and courage. However, the value that shone brightly was our value of love. We, as a team, had to be creative and determined to make our families feel connected and to continue our strong relationships with our families.

During session 2019-20, one of our school priorities was digital profiling. We were therefore already using a digital platform to share learning with our families. This had a huge impact on our digital engagement, as 85% of our children engaged fully in online learning during lockdown. For those children who did not engage, we provided learning packs, which were distributed every week/month and complemented this by distributing iPads, Chrome Books and dongles to families who required technologies/connectivity.

To enable us to support our community, we delivered school lunches twice a week, which was continued by our nursery team during summer holidays. Door step visits were so important as many families looked forward to the contact and were able to let us know if they needed anything or if we could support them further – we could be responsive to our families! This enabled us to deliver essential food packages and organise Food Bank referrals.

During some of the darkest lockdown days, some families needed a simple 'pick-me-up' to show that we cared about them. Our community organised Bags of Love, Pamper Packs and Family Packs. Some single parents had no one to turn to, so we offered 1:1 support for these families twice a week. Our teachers, support staff and educators made telephone calls to families to keep in touch.

To keep our school community connected, weekly virtual assemblies were presented which brought some normality to a Friday afternoon. Parents commented that they would look forward to a Friday afternoon and would play the video numerous times to engage their child. We also organised a highly successful virtual Sports Week, Meet the Teacher videos, numerous Transition Videos, and Makerspace Mondays. Our Pupil Parliament featured heavily in our videos, always giving advice, tips and demonstrating courageous pupil leadership. All these virtual transmissions deepened and enriched our lockdown relationships with our families. We produced a monthly digital newsletter giving useful updates on achievements, resources and support networks.

To find out how we could further support everyone (children, parents and staff), we issued online and face to face questionnaires which allowed us to analyse the feedback to plan our next steps. One big worry was transitioning back to school. We therefore established a transition working across nursery and school and used 3 Cs pedagogy – Calmness, Connected and Cohesion at the centre of our decision-making which was communicated across all levels. Every single task, no matter how big or small, made a significant contribution to forging everlasting, trusting relationships with our community.

Who we involved:

We worked closely with Catering Services, Youth Services, Social Work, Plus, Educational Psychology, Parent Council and Food Bank to ensure that our community was connected and well supported.

The difference it made:

We were already extremely proud of the strong relationships we had forged with our school and nursery community. However, throughout lockdown and since returning in August, our relationships have become even deeper and more meaningful which, in turn, has continued to build trust, compassion and understanding across all areas.

We based our return on 3Cs – Calmness, Connection and Cohesion coupled with our deep, meaningful relationships. Our school and nursery community have returned with ease, positivity and sense of purpose. The ethos is one of love and togetherness where everyone has a shared understanding of our values and "together, we learn for life" (our mission statement) was at the centre of our decision making throughout lockdown and beyond.

A parent stated "our community probably suffered more during lockdown due to the increased drug activity which prevented a lot of parents and children going out. The children and families really looked forward to their twice weekly visits and it was great that the team were making sure everyone was ok. I was personally extremely grateful of the 1:1 support the school gave my child twice a week. The school is always there for everybody and everything they have done has helped everyone come back to school happy and ready to learn."

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Many parents wrote testimonials to express their deep appreciation of the support they had received throughout lockdown. One parent wanted to say thanks for the bag of love she had received:

“
I am writing to express my sincere appreciation for your care and kindness to me and my family since we joined Allan’s family. I am so grateful. The bag of love we received yesterday is another testimony of your kind heart.”

Our P1 transition videos and newsletter helped our new P1 children transition to school with ease:

“
I really appreciate your phone call last night and it shows how much you all care. This definitely tells us that Allan’s is the right school for [our child]. Your dedication to the school and caring nature for the pupils shines through!”

Our efforts also made The Scottish Sunday Times on two occasions during lockdown:

“
We hear through the grapevine that our teachers are also reaching out whenever they feel they haven’t heard from a pupil for a while – making calls and checking in, offering support. They are delivering by hand packed lunches and school meals to anyone thought to need them. I am left speechless by it all. I wonder what more could possibly be done by those teams that are looking after kids in our community”. 31 May 2020.

The response in the Sunday Times to our Class of 2020 Farewell was:

“
I cannot readily put into words the depth of affection that suffused the whole affair ... I watch a playground full of families and teachers demonstrating love for one another and know which hill I will gladly die on.” 28 June 2020

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What we will do differently in the future:

The impact has been extremely significant as our community all pulled together and there was purposeful and meaningful cohesion. We were all united in a sense of belonging which helped us navigate our way through adversity with true altruism. Relationships strengthened across all aspects of school and nursery life, with our parents valuing the connection we had with our families. Trusting relationships were strengthened which enabled, and continues, to enable us to be responsive to a family’s or child’s needs.

The collaboration between nursery and school also developed, which allowed our team to recognise and use skills and abilities from across our workforce. Before lockdown, we implemented a variety of nursery/school initiatives which were initiated by our Senior Leadership Team. However

during lockdown, many team members were collaborating independently and problem solving together and this has continued since returning.

When analysing the impact of what we created during lockdown, it was highly evident that our shared values-based vision was intensified as we were “together, we learn for life”, and since returning, this feeling of cohesion and connection has reverberated within our school building and grounds, despite our parents and families being denied access to our building.

There has been a real synergy between virtual platforms, face-to-face at school gate, newsletters, parent council meetings and support from community groups. Lockdown has enabled us to build on our strong partnership approaches which has improved outcomes for learners and has allowed continued self-improvement for the school and community. We have learned that “when given lemons, let’s make lemonade”!

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Establishment:

Lundavra Nursery

Local Authority:

The Highland Council

What we did:

Lundavra Primary/Nursery is a community-based school located in an area with a high level of need and deprivation. On a normal day at nursery, our practitioners engage with and provide a lot of support to our families, be it with advice around any concerns they may have, signposting to relevant professionals or just general, supportive conversations. When lockdown was announced, we quickly recognised the need to ensure we were able to continue our communication and supportive relationships with our families in creative ways which they would respond and engage with.

Who we involved:

Parents and carers were involved in all of the activities we have highlighted. As well as this, we used our Parent Council and links with our local Morrisons store to ensure our families' needs were met and they were not struggling for food during lockdown.

The difference it made:

Having set up our closed Facebook page, we quickly realised that this was a very popular way of communicating with our parents and carers. Out of 68 children enrolled at Lundavra Nursery during lockdown, after two weeks we had the parents or carers of 61 children on our page. Only seven children didn't have a parent or carer on the Facebook page and this was due to them not having a Facebook account. These families kept in touch via email.

The difference our Facebook page made was evident in the conversations we had with our families with many commenting on how often they use the page as a tool to talk to their child about their friends and teachers. For many, it was the first time they had really had a chance to put names to the faces they heard their children talking to when they finished nursery each day.

We found that by having this regular contact with families away from the nursery setting helped us to break down barriers. We felt that families were more open and honest in their interactions with us and were extremely willing to 'have a go' at some of the suggested activities, whereas if they had received an activity grid at home on paper it may have been overlooked.

What we will do differently in the future:

Lockdown gave us the opportunity to bond with our children and their families in a different way to usual and helped us create even more supportive relationships. It also gave us an insight into their everyday lives, for example, while on Google Meets, staff were able to see inside the children's homes and 'meet' people they talk about regularly. One particular benefit we found was that we were able to connect and engage with a lot more of our 'hard to reach' fathers, some of whom we had never seen before at drop off and pick up who were now playing an active part in their child's learning.

Our commitment and hard work during lockdown also benefited us on our return to nursery, we were braced for many of our children to be upset after having such a long break away, however, to our surprise, the return was much smoother than expected. We feel this was largely down to staff continuing with regular communication and building relationships throughout lockdown. We are a nurturing school and nursery and feel the children were comfortable coming in as they were with staff who had been consistent and supportive and that they now knew even better than before. We will continue to work hard to ensure the effort we put in during lockdown is not lost and families continue to feel confident engaging with us and their child's learning.

Establishment:

Carmuir Primary School

Local Authority:

Falkirk Council

What we did:

At Carmuir we wanted to ensure our new Primary 1s and their families felt reassured and confident about starting school. Under normal circumstances, the Primary 1 teacher would have spent time in the nursery with the children over the summer term and would have met up in school with parents to share information. Due to lockdown this was not possible, but we were nevertheless determined to build relationships with the children and their families.

We set up a transition blog (which has now become the class blog) where the P1 teacher introduced herself by video and set small challenges for the children, such as to post a photo of their favourite cuddly toy. On this we shared our virtual classroom where children could watch the P1 teacher and headteacher read stories, and there was a virtual gallery where the families met the leadership team. Together with the nursery staff, the P1 teacher walked to each home and stood on the end of the pathway to say hello and deliver a transition pack with activities and sunflower seeds to plant. We used a blend of social media and socially distanced visits to build relationships and it was well worth it.

The difference it made:

The Primary 1 teacher lives near the catchment area and when out walking her dog during the summer holidays, was regularly recognised in the street by excited children out playing or with their families. Many talked about how they had been listening to the stories on the transition blog and felt excited about coming to school. Others talked about how they appreciated the socially distanced visits.

Some families proudly sent photographs of the sunflowers that they had grown from the kits dropped off during the visit. On day one at school, the children were dropped off in the school garden and felt like they knew their teacher well from the videos on the blog and from the visit. All were happy, content and pleased to be at school. The blog was so popular that it is still updated each week with videos of the children's learning for their families to see, and the virtual classroom now contains phonics and maths lessons for children if they need to self-isolate.

What we will do differently in the future:

Using online sharing tools such as Thinglink, Glow Blogs, Wakelet and Twitter strengthened the connections between home and school and highlighted new ways to learn and interact. These tools can still be utilised now we are back at school. Nothing beats face to face teaching and learning, but learning and communication can be enriched with the addition of such online tools. We will continue to use the virtual classroom on Thinglink and social media to strengthen communication. Now if school buildings ever need to close again, we are equipped and ready.

Establishment:
St Luke's High School

Local Authority:
East Renfrewshire Council

What we did:

Our School Vision to enable our young people “to flourish in a climate of high expectations, innovation and creativity” underpins all of our work and was a key driver in our approach to supporting learners during lockdown. Relationships are at the heart of our inclusive school ethos and so we were creative and innovative in our use of digital technology and communication to ensure that our learners were supported, challenged, connected and engaged.

Structures were designed to ensure teacher wellbeing and to identify what was working well through daily contact with their team. Learning activities were issued a week in advance through Google Classrooms, and parents and carers were supported with weekly planners to assist with any tensions, which resulted from parents working at home whilst managing their child's learning and access to shared devices. Weekly family newsletters were established and used to convey important information alongside celebrating learner achievements. We posted on social media, created films and made regular phone calls/socially-distanced visits and deliveries to our most vulnerable learners, so that our school ethos remained strong and we retained our sense of belonging to our school community. The building was physically closed but our Vision, Values and Aims remained vibrant.

Who we involved:

Engaging with families was pivotal to our approach. We extended our approach to include P7 children to help prepare and reassure them, and their families, for transition. The Pupil Support Team also worked in partnership with the local authority to support families living in poverty with access to food, devices, etc.

The difference it made:

Young people and families were supported to engage in learning and issues were quickly identified and addressed. Devices and IT support were extended to families who required them. Our Hot Choc Friday, which we use to celebrate how well learners demonstrate our Learner Dispositions, continued online.

Staff used their Google Classrooms to ensure not just continuity but progression in learning. For example, a focus on Numeracy in the BGE ensured that learning loss was minimised. Rigour Maths was purchased to give learners access to differentiated learning and filmed worked examples. This was supplemented by daily interaction with class teachers via Google Classrooms. Maths teachers experimented with Graphics Tablets to enable them to record talking learners through worked examples, deliver new learning and provide feedback.

High quality communications ensured that effective practice was shared. In addition, this enabled us to develop our strategies to support learners in a responsive manner as we moved from continuity (in the first two weeks) to progression in learning. Resources were provided for learners who required them to engage in more practical activities such as keyboards, mountain bikes, basketballs and art equipment. As a result, we maintained a 94% average of engagement in learning throughout lockdown.

What we will do differently in the future:

We are committed to professional learning and recognise the importance of investing in our teachers to enable our learners to thrive. Our experience of distance learning has reinforced our Vision, Values and Aims and, in particular, our commitment to, “inspire the moral purpose of learning and teaching to unleash potential, raise attainment, promote equity and transform the life chances of each and every learner, especially those most in need of support”.

As a result, we have learned many lessons from lockdown which we will continue to take advantage of. All classes now have a Google Classroom to support learning at home and facilitate learning when learners are self-isolating.

In addition, the success of using Graphics Tablets to record and post teaching of worked examples and provide digital feedback, has resulted in all teachers now using these devices across the school. Indeed, our digital professional learning has received a boost from our lockdown experiences and all teachers now have visualisers to further support learning, teaching and assessment in a Covid-safe manner. On return to school, staff provided workshops and Teach Meets on what had worked well during lockdown and many of these practices have now been adopted across the school.

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Establishment:
Aspire Education (Kilbirnie)

What we did:

Knowing how positively our young people respond to the predictability of familiar structure and routine, we felt priorities should focus on continuity of provision and opportunity for constructive engagement.

We endeavoured to ensure continuity through equitable distribution of physical resources such as sports equipment, musical instruments and bicycles as well as providing learning materials covering literacy, numeracy and a weekly focused project aimed at improving the physical, emotional and mental health and wellbeing of pupils.

Our learning activities were designed with the four contexts in mind with the aim of addressing each context in some capacity each week. Levels of engagement varied across the residential services, however each service was able to celebrate success as they excelled in a particular area.

Teaching staff were able to review the planned learning experiences in response to the changing needs of pupils. Learning resources and lessons were designed to be relevant to topical issues and current affairs. Success was celebrated weekly amongst education and care staff, with some pupils joining a Zoom call to share a PowerPoint which collated evidence from each service.

Who we involved:

Teaching, social care staff and young people. Homemakers assisted in facilitating some of the learning activities as well as challenges set by the health and wellbeing coordinator and music tutor.

The difference it made:

The experience of the pandemic allowed us to gain insight in to how resilient our pupils are. We initially expected our pupils to struggle with the uncertainty of the global situation coupled with a change in learning environment, however incidences of challenging behaviour were far less prevalent than anticipated.

Through participation in sports challenges and health and wellbeing activities, our pupils developed a greater appreciation of the outdoors and were inspired to grow their own areas of personal interest which then allowed teachers to tailor activities to improve participation.

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What we will do differently in the future:

Weekly evaluations and feedback compelled us to review our wider curriculum and tailor our offering to appeal to a broader spectrum of interests. This has included introducing Bicycle Maintenance through the BGE phase and into the Senior Phase as an SQA accredited qualification. This has taken the form of a social enterprise project refurbishing previously loved bikes and distributing them to local community groups and organisations. In addition to this project, the school's allotment and a local equestrian centre are contributing to the variety of learning experiences across the four contexts.

Through self-evaluation and as part of ongoing school improvement, we have revised our approach to planning to take account of the refreshed narrative and the significance of learning across the four contexts. This should ensure that future learning experiences are designed to encompass the totality of the curriculum.

Teachers were able to recognise that providing online remote learning opportunities would require them to improve their skills and knowledge in relation to digital technologies and approaches. As a result, we have revisited the national strategy 'Enhancing learning and teaching through the use of digital technology' and are currently exploring effective methods to facilitate these improvements.

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Establishment:
Anchor Early Action Project

Local Authority:
Shetland Islands Council

What we did:

The Anchor Early Action Project has been attached to the Sound Primary School in Shetland since April 2019. During this time, we have been working directly with a small number of families identified by the school as needing an enhanced level of support to bring about positive outcomes for families experiencing a range of challenges. During lockdown we offered these families extra support in both emotional and practical ways, for example, frequent phone calls or text messages to ensure they were managing the challenges of the early lockdown and by accessing food parcels as required.

We also highlighted what was available to them in the community, including financial support through Anchor Community Organisations or making referrals to CAB when their circumstances changed or incurring extra costs due to being home 24/7. The knowledge to signposting families when they need specialist supports has been particularly helpful in families feeling supported during this challenging time. The emotional connection during a period of isolation helped families feel cared about and not forgotten about, along with the support from the school.

Who we involved:

Support was provided from the Anchor Project Officers, who are funded via the Big Lottery, Community Fund. These workers are attached to the school and provide an enhanced level of support. They work in partnership with the Sound Primary management team to ensure families are getting the right support.

The difference it made:

Anchor supported families who would normally only have support from school services. Families were able to access practical and emotional support to achieve the best outcomes for themselves. Regular contact with families allowed them the opportunity to offload and problem solve the dynamics of lockdown and put in place strategies to overcome some of these difficulties. It also allowed the school staff to focus on supporting any issues linked to home learning and, if they did bring up other concerns, the school could liaise with the Project Officer to ensure the family received the support they needed.

Families who were often reluctant to access additional support were supported and encouraged to access food parcels as needed and vouchers for local shops. This supported parents to feel that it was ok to take the support, ease pressures within the family, therefore improving quality of life.

Parents were able to work with one service, which signposted them to other relevant services that they require to support issues in relation to poverty. This supported parents to access appropriate services, supporting their mental health and ensuring they did not feel alone.

What we will do differently in the future:

This project highlights that partnership working can lead to improved outcomes for families. Through collaboration, an increase in support can be provided and a greater awareness for families on what support they can access. The Anchor Project has allowed parents to feel supported. Often children can be negatively impacted when the parents are facing challenges. Schools sometimes are unaware of difficulties faced by the families and working in collaboration ensured that support can be accessed more readily.

The project is now developing across all schools in Shetland and allowing all families a light touch support system on their terms, allowing them to feel empowered to bring about change. As an extension of the support system already in place via the schools, it allows for a family approach. Families need to feel their school is a community resource where they can reach out to for help, before things escalate and a longer period of intervention is required. Lockdown in Shetland showed us what our communities are willing to do when crisis hits, and we should build on this moving forward.

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Establishment:
Youth, Family and Community Learning Service

Local Authority:
South Lanarkshire Council

What we did:

Across South Lanarkshire, Youth, Family and Community Learning Teams have been busy creating activity packs to support children, families and young people of all ages, including ASN, during the period of lockdown. These packs are designed to engage with new learners and to maintain well-established relationships with our communities. They can help alleviate boredom and improve the mental health of young people by giving them activities that they can carry out on their own and with their families.

The packs are bespoke, learner-centred, and are prioritised for young people and families who have limited access to technology or printing facilities. Packs are delivered directly to the homes of young people and families. This allows invaluable face-to-face contact (from a 2 metre distance) with the community and the opportunity for staff to offer support if required. Over 3,000 packs have been delivered to households since the end of March.

Activity packs have diverse content and include resources to enable young people and families to carry out the activities. Themes for packs have included: Health and Wellbeing; STEM; Family Learning; Cooking on a Budget, Music activity; Baking; Gardening and many other fun and educational activities for people of all ages.

Who we involved:

Youth, Family and Community Learning staff worked in partnership with Streetlevel and Regen:fx Youth Trust, using resources gathered through a range of sources including Fairshare, donations from local garden centres and excess consumables from schools. This enabled bespoke packs to be created to suit individual needs.

The difference it made:

It helped learners to reduce the amount of screen time they were exposed to by providing fun learning activities that families could complete together whilst developing skills. Weekly feedback from parents and learners has been extremely positive:

“I loved making the crispy cakes, please can we have more baking busy bags it's so much fun!”

(Young person)

“I think a fantastic effort has been made by all staff to ensure our children are receiving imaginative and creative activities for us to take part in as a family and individually each week. It has made a massive difference to us having the resources available to complete the activities within each bag. I cannot thank you enough for bringing a smile to my kid's faces each week.”

(Parent)

“The activity packs are fun and very good. They provide something different for the children to do other than school work. They are still learning and the variety of activities holds their interest longer. This gives us, as parents, a much needed time to relax and do other things. My child likes the dot to dots and colour by number using addition as this helps her number work.”

(Parent)

What we will do differently in the future:

A collaborative approach with schools and other services was used to make sure that families in most need were prioritised. The partnership approach with local businesses, such as garden centres that were not able to trade, meant that supplies that would have spoiled were able to be distributed to families. This highlighted that more can be achieved to benefit families by working collaboratively, using local contacts with business. It also provided an opportunity to include up-to-date information for families on accessing appropriate support including welfare rights, mental health and wellbeing and local COVID-19 humanitarian support.

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Establishment:
KEAR Campus

Local Authority:
South Lanarkshire Council

What we did:

During the summer holiday period, Youth, Family and Community Learning Service staff based within KEAR Campus, delivered weekly support to each young person from a designated keyworker and those identified as vulnerable by Social Work. Support varied in levels depending on what was required for the young person and their family.

Themed family activity packs were delivered to 191 families (294 individual young people) during each week of the summer holiday period such as:

Family Sports Day – Complete with instructions to play games with the components of the pack (skipping ropes, pedometer, hula hoops etc.) This pack also includes a food element for a family picnic including ingredients that can also be used as store cupboard staples.

Family Cook Off – This pack was food themed, aiming to increase family confidence in cooking together as well as providing various fun activities. In addition to ingredients for a hot meal, this pack included all of the ingredients required to do some non-cook family baking, enabling young people of all ages to be included in the process. Inclusion of typed menus and a link to the KEAR Youth, Family and Community Learning Service social media pages, allowed access to video instructions for young people and adults with literacy issues.

Who we involved:

Communication between parents, carers and young people with KEAR staff via phone call, text and social media check-ins. Social Work in identifying vulnerable families and support from staff across the Youth, Family and Community Learning Service.

The difference it made:

Positive feedback from parents, carers and young people via text, phone calls and social media has ranged from maintained behaviour, family engagement and development of new skills and interests, and they have praised how much it is bringing them together.

Packs were delivered to 191 families (294 individual young people).

Continuity of engagement resulted in being able to support particularly vulnerable young people and their families at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. Using social media to ‘mood check’ young people meant that staff were able to respond to concerns quickly and swiftly to ensure the young person was supported and nurtured through their situation.

Staff were able to help young people prepare for return to school and progress beyond school, linking in with Skills Development Scotland staff, and providing packs prior to the end of the summer period, including toiletries, school stationery and ingredients for a family meal will give all KEAR young people the best possible start to returning to school or moving on to their post school destination.

What we will do differently in the future:

Delivering activities and engagement through a remote process is challenging at the best of times, however for staff at KEAR, working with some of the most at risk families and young people across South Lanarkshire, the COVID-19 pandemic has increased this challenge in ensuring contact is maintained seven days a week.

The increasing reliance on technologies to support engagement has required staff to identify resources for families, as well as improve the skills of staff, to ensure continuity of support and learning.

The intense nature of contact with learners and families has resulted in a maintained positive relationship up to and beyond their return to school. This was the first time this depth of engagement was delivered across the summer period and has resulted in young people and families reporting confidence in returning to school.

The summer has also served to maintain professional relationships with KEAR’s Senior Leadership Team and the central Inclusive Education Team to enable additional support to be provided timely and where appropriate.

Future delivery will reflect the positive impact demonstrated through continuity of contact and engagement in structured learning, that meets the needs of the young people through this youth work delivery model.

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Establishment:
St Joseph's RC Primary School

Local Authority:
Fife Council

What we did:

After gathering feedback from our families, it was very obvious that parents with more than one child in the school were struggling with the variety of curricular areas they had to cover in one day. We decided that, along with Numeracy and Literacy, there would be a family learning task issued each day which would be the same curricular area for all pupils on the same day. These tasks allowed children at all stages of the school to complete the same task as a family and greatly eased the stress that home learning was having on some of the parents and children. The activities focused on art and craft, baking, health and wellbeing, outdoor learning and a whole school assembly based on our school values.

Who we involved:

All staff (PSAs and Teaching staff) were part of small sub-groups to plan and develop tasks for each day of the week. Staff also tried to take part in the tasks and challenges where possible. We linked with our cluster schools for sports challenges organised by our Active Schools Co-ordinator, the Pupil Support Service to help support one of our families and our school counsellor who supported a large number of families. We also used Twitter and the online forums to celebrate success.

The difference it made:

In the early stages of lockdown we surveyed our parents to find out how the online learning was working for our families. The results were on the whole positive, but we found out that many of our parents were struggling to work and home school, and others with larger families were finding it difficult to get all of their children online to complete tasks.

Availability of technology was also a struggle for larger families. Parents reported that the home schooling was becoming very stressful as they tried to keep up with the tasks for all of their children. When the family learning started, we were delighted with the increase in engagement from many of our families. We also had a lot of feedback to say that the tasks were manageable, less stressful and fun to do.

What we will do differently in the future:

We have completely changed the way we issue homework. Homework is now issued via Teams or SeeSaw, and part of the homework Grid that is issued consists of Family Learning Tasks which are whole school challenges that families can take part in together. There was a much stronger community spirit during lockdown and we are very keen to keep the momentum going.

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Establishment:

Holyrood Secondary School

Local Authority:

Glasgow City Council

What we did:

As a school community, we decided to keep our school 2020 Vision Statement at the forefront, to keep things focused and in relation to what is normal 'school/community' life. We are a generational school which means generations of family have gone through our school and there is a real and genuine concern for everyone's wellbeing – one parent said "they are all our children". I think the sense of community allowed us to support families truly and personally.

We were able to link up digitally given that every young person had an iPad as part of Glasgow's digital roll out strategy. This seemed an ideal solution, but we were not fully prepared for this. We all had to move fast to gain knowledge of all virtual platforms. We did this remotely as a community with our digital PT leading us through videos and daily updates.

As weeks passed, so did the confidence of our teachers and families use of digital learning. We had our first virtual whole school awards ceremony as well as our first annual 'musician of the year' ceremony giving families lots to smile about and enjoy. Digital literacy notably developed through our lockdown experience. We moved from platforms like Teams and Showbie as day-to-day business for learning and teaching to specific departments developing their use to inspire families more in learning. For example, our Business Studies department moved onto voice over lessons and podcasts. We found young people were more engaged with hearing and seeing their teachers than completing home learning tasks.

We adapted our family learning strategy to SCQF in Cake Making to virtual cake making as families. Ingredients were packaged and sent to families for them to showcase creative cakes. We linked this up across the school through STEM and 'cake in a cup' making with science and with involvement of our partners, the Science Centre, showcasing work on twitter and www.education.gov.scot.

The use of virtual praise cards to celebrate successes really helped and saw more young people engage to 'win'. The creation of staff 'Bitmoji' helped keep humour high and a light heartedness around challenging times. We saw the use of iPads rise from 30% to 70% when fun elements were introduced to learning. IDL opportunities became a more targeted approach. A good example of this is the Eiffel Tower competition between Modern Languages and Art. The task was about making a sculpture from home products. Families began to get creative around this and grow it in terms of family TikToks in making human Eiffel Towers. Our vision statement of learning for all and inclusive community was certainly obvious from the efforts of our families.

Who we involved:

This took a whole school approach. We were not ready for blended learning or digital usage going into lockdown. Our PT of Digital Learning led our school with daily updates on Twitter and our website on all platforms. Departments across the school chose their own digital platform. We continued to work with our partners, SDS, Science Centre, etc. but one of our main and most significant partners were Aberlour. Aberlour provided financial support to families losing jobs and those who were most vulnerable. In recent changing times, we have been able to reverse the support and help them with charity events to support funds being raised i.e. Wear one T-Shirt campaign.

The difference it made:

Focusing on our school vision statement 'inclusion and support for all' had a huge impact on the community helping each other in challenging times. Our connection and reconnection strategy to keep in touch with our families by far has been significant in personalising support. The main focus was nurturing/caring conversations each week.

In the beginning we had noticed families were happy to get on with things but, as things progressed, families were happy to talk and engage more fully in how they were doing, recognising the power of personalised support. Real relationships were being formed and, in some ways, we realised for many we were the only conversation that week. We issued all families with a nurture connection pack including personalised messages from a teacher who knows the family best 'one good adult approach' so they had a point of contact.

On return to school, we went forward with our reconnection strategy whereby every young person was given a wellbeing personal interview. This helped us to identify caregiving areas of priority for our families. Genuine relationships have had a strong impact on learning and engagement of learning.

What we will do differently in the future:

I think it has brought to the fore how the wellbeing of young people and families is key to how they can achieve. There is a greater understanding in our community about the importance of nurture and the link between home and school partnership for family success.

I believe we have all learned the importance of family play and family learning and the use of the many platforms that can help increase parent engagement. We realised the more fun that was involved in learning, the more learning that took place – ranging from family quizzes to pupil competition and keeping this modern for young people to hold their interest.

We quickly realised the significance of digital learning/blended learning and it has given us all a lesson on being ready going forward. We have realised the importance of the digital age. We have taken a whole school approach to CLPL around learning all platforms. I think I can speak for our parents, teachers and young people in this process.

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Establishment:
Youth Work Team

Local Authority:
Aberdeen City Council

What we did:

From the start of lockdown until schools returned in mid-August, the youth work team in Aberdeen regularly engaged with 175 young people, offering wide-ranging support to address safety and welfare, emotional health and wellbeing and confidence to continue schoolwork online.

The three Vulnerable Children's Hubs in Aberdeen were attended almost exclusively by children aged 12 and under. In Aberdeen, the youth work team also worked with schools and other partners to pilot a distinct Senior Hub where vulnerable teenagers, aged 12 to 16, could access community-based support and a range of activities to build skills and confidence.

Who we involved:

Like elsewhere in the country, the Vulnerable Children's Hubs in Aberdeen were staffed by a multi-disciplinary team – from formal Education, Social Work, Community Education and Youth Work. Other agencies such as Sport Aberdeen and local third sector youth organisations were also involved.

The difference it made:

The Hubs were well-attended by children and young people and helped to ensure their welfare through lockdown and during the summer. The Hubs also provided support to families – providing food and opportunities to seek additional support, if needed. Young people who attended the hubs saw improvements in:

- **Relationships** – peer-to-peer and with adults
- **Skills**
- **Health and wellbeing**

Importantly, the hubs also provided a unique opportunity for multi-agency collaboration and shared professional learning which made a difference to relationships and practice amongst practitioners. This was summed up by Laura Gray, a Faculty Head at St Machar Academy, who describes her experience of working in the Senior Hub as follows:

“Learners quickly established positive relationships which had a huge impact on their confidence to be involved, lead and learn new skills in a very short period of time ... It provided an opportunity to ensure that young people were safe and to respond quickly to any concerns. As an educator, I also learned a lot from other professionals and built partnerships that will have a huge impact on my practice in the classroom”.

What we will do differently in the future:

The success of the Vulnerable Children's Hubs was down to people from a range of backgrounds and professions working together with a 'can-do' spirit I have rarely seen before. COVID-19 has changed the way we live and work, but it's important to take what positives we can from our experiences and, for me, seeing the true value of proper partnership working is one of them.

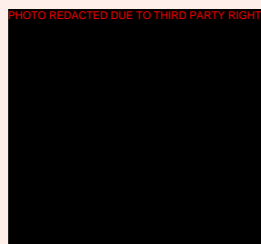
There is broad agreement about the conditions that enabled this heightened effectiveness of multi-agency working. We learned that:

- We need to pay careful attention to structures and processes that support equity of partnership.
- Some of the most powerful learning opportunities are those where practitioners can work and learn experientially side by side to build a deeper understanding and appreciation of skills and of difference.
- Partnerships are enabled when we draw out expertise in the system by enabling action research processes that are led by practitioners themselves – and facilitate dialogue, relationship building and collaborative learning.
- Appropriate, timely, comprehensive information sharing is key.
- Partnerships thrive where there are frequent opportunities for feedback – and there is flexibility to redefine priorities and process in light of new learning.

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Professional Thought Piece



Andy Hargreaves,
Research Professor,
Boston College

How is Scotland (and other countries) responding to the Pandemic?

There are two types of categories of how different countries have dealt with the pandemic overall.

Category 1: countries that have been most decisive, evidence-led, open, transparent and collaborative have been the ones that have had some kind of control over the pandemic. There has been a strong collaborative relationship where everyone is working together effectively. For example, South Korea and Uruguay. Scotland is more in this category.

Category 2 – countries where leadership at the top is not together, not co-ordinated, driven much more by ideology than it is by evidence. It is top down rather than collaborative or it responds to the moment rather than having an overall strategy on how to deal with the pandemic. A lot of US states, a couple of Canadian provinces, and England all fit the bill here.

When it comes to education, it depends on how collaboratively the government works with teacher organisations, parents and community organisations, building an agreed strategy. When there is a mistake, everyone needs to own up to it and learn from it.

There are differences in effectiveness and different choices in style of delivery in different countries. Countries like South Korea went online totally very early. Other countries used blended learning. A lot depends on the normal nature of the pedagogy. For Scotland, teaching is an emotional-relational practice as well as a cognitive-behavioural practice. This emotional aspect to the profession is a very important part and was one of the hardest things to address in a remote learning environment.

Importantly, I think we tend to think about what we are losing, and we have all lost a lot. However, we also have to think harder about the things that are important like co-operation, relationships and figure out other ways to get to those who are not second best but different.

What needs do you identify as most critical for the education system at this time?

The needs are in this order:

- Wellbeing: People are now talking about generation C which is the COVID-19 Generation and how the pandemic has affected them emotionally. Teenagers are particularly vulnerable. But let's not stereotype an entire generation either. Kids have experienced COVID-19 under highly variable circumstances. We also need to focus on teachers' and principals' wellbeing. They need this for themselves and because they have to support the kids.
- Anxiety: Teenagers 16 years and older are worrying about the future and the fairness of exams. Will they get into universities or will there be jobs? We should be thinking now about strategies to deal with these issues.
- Learning Loss: Important to think later about how we can accelerate learning. Easier for kids to catch up on the skills rather than focus on the content all the time. For three years, could we offer young people an extra year in high school if they want it?
- Inequity of learning - as well as learning loss for some kids, others have been forging ahead. Some of that is good, as learning is about self-regulated learning. But the value of schools is that it's not all about the individual but also about the class, the team and the group in a diverse setting.

What are the features of effective system leadership during this time?

The first thing is to understand that you are not a bad leader if your first thought is that I have no idea what to do. The second thought is that I still have to do something. The third thought is who can help me. Often it is being a forensic leader to figure out where is the information you need, and also collaborating more.

Is there an education silver lining to this crisis?

- Collaboration - people have been collaborating more not less.
- Importance of self-regulation - focus attention on self-regulated and self-directed learning and how we can consciously develop it.
- The significance of wellbeing - Wellbeing is paramount. If you can't sleep, are hungry and feel unsafe you either can't or will find it extremely hard to learn.
- Speed of change - We always thought that change takes time. We have learned that when things are really hitting us hard, we can actually be nimble and change quite quickly.
- How do we share with parents effectively in an ongoing way what we are doing with their children?
- Changing assessment - lots of countries are rethinking assessment just now. Think about great end products that are authentic, inclusive, with a lot more continuous assessment. Then build from this.
- Importance of digital technology - important that rather than say we want technology or we don't want technology that we really start looking at standards for using technology as guides for effective use in schools.

“ I think we tend to think about what we are losing and we have all lost a lot. However, we also have to think harder about the things that are important like co-operation, relationships and figure out other ways to get to those who are not second best but different.”

Professional Thought Piece



John Swinney,
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

In March, as the COVID-19 pandemic took hold across Europe, we found ourselves in a position where schools closed within a very short timeframe. COVID-19 was about to have a massive impact on every aspect of our lives. Within Scottish education, our shared sense of duty to our children and young people ensured we worked together to mitigate its worst effects on our learners.

Our immediate priority was to support our vulnerable children and families: we could not cut adrift those who often relied on school life for hot meals or for a safe, nurturing and supportive environment. Across Scotland, the education community demonstrated their determination to reduce the harms of school closure as much as possible. Food parcels and essential learning resources, including devices and stationery, were delivered to those who needed them most. Staff worked tirelessly to protect the interests of our children and young people and to ensure ongoing provision of free school meals.

The impressive speed with which local authority teams established childcare hubs for children of key workers, to allow their parents or carers to participate in the national response to COVID-19, was matched by the willingness of school staff to volunteer to support these hubs. This dedication continued throughout the summer term and school holidays.

The rapid shift in ways of working brought about new and strengthened relationships between school and local authority staff, CLD practitioners and allied professionals. The common goal and shared commitment to identify and target support to the more vulnerable children, young people and families in our communities ensured vital services were available to those who needed them most.

We sought to ensure as much educational continuity as possible for our children. Teachers responded in a variety of imaginative, creative and stimulating ways to support their pupils and

deliver remote learning. For many teachers, there was a rapid transition into digital approaches. Young people adapted admirably to these changes, working with their teachers and classmates in, what was for some, very difficult circumstances. The skills developed during this period are continuing to benefit learners.

The collegiate manner in which the whole profession has worked together to find a way to return to full-time schooling has been inspirational. The Covid Education Recovery Group (CERG), and wider stakeholders who fed into the discussions, demonstrated the determination and flexibility required to get and keep Scotland's schools open despite the ongoing Coronavirus epidemic. I have also been grateful for the ongoing advice of the International Council of Education Advisors, as we have looked to draw from best practice elsewhere.

Teachers across Scotland have welcomed children and young people back into schools. Pupils are once again able to see their friends, have social contact and benefit from the learning, care and support that schools provide. Children have been reassured by reconnecting with normal patterns and routines. Despite the ongoing effects of the virus, pupil attendance currently remains at around 93%, testament to the additional safety measures and mitigations that staff have worked hard to put in place.

Our collective response to COVID-19 has demonstrated to the nation what I always knew to be the strengths of our education system. I sincerely appreciate the extraordinary work and efforts of all staff in our schools and childcare settings. Most importantly, I would like to thank all of Scotland's children, young people and their families for the incredible resilience they have shown throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Learning and teaching

This theme is about how well learners and families were supported to learn and achieve. It highlights the importance of effective learning and teaching, having quality resources and the range of learning opportunities which were provided.

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Establishment:

e-Sgoil

Local Authority:

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

What we did:

Since its inception in 2016, e-Sgoil's main driver has been to enhance equity in terms of subject choice for all pupils, irrespective of geographic location. Utilising digital tools, e-Sgoil has sought to enhance and enrich the pupil experience by looking to remove barriers that restrict choice. e-Sgoil was therefore well placed to respond promptly to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions and was quick to offer the young people of Scotland access to high quality, real-time lessons from their own homes.

The initiative succeeded in supporting and augmenting the work of class teachers in providing rich and varied live, teacher-led learning experiences for pupils during the period of lockdown. Over 3,500 young people benefited from this provision, covering a comprehensive range of subjects at Broad General Education and Senior Phase levels.

This included support to young people studying National Qualifications, as well as a series of taster sessions the young people would not normally experience – from Climate Ready Classrooms to Give it a Go Italian, Beginners Gaelic to Pocket Gardens. There were many exciting options for the young people to choose. Classes were taught by experienced GTCS-registered teachers and partners using a secure video-conferencing platform supplemented by materials and hosted in Glow.

Who we involved:

e-Sgoil worked closely with Scholar, Scotland's National Centre for Languages (SCILT) and Keep Scotland Beautiful to offer young people across the country a selection of exciting and engaging remote learning and teaching opportunities. e-Sgoil also supported schools to ensure young people had their Glow credentials to access this learning.

The difference it made:

For many young people, this was their first experience of remote learning and teaching. Not only was e-Sgoil able to offer access to live, real-time lessons to complement the work of schools, it also offered young people the opportunity to develop digital skills essential for learning, life and work.

e-Sgoil staff drew on their expertise and experience to produce a series of 'Nutshell' guides as the Scottish Education Community adapted to their new normal. These guides – produced for pupils, parents, schools and practitioners – shared advice to all stakeholders on how to maximise remote learning and teaching. This gave teaching staff across the nation valuable tried and tested techniques to adopt as they adapted their provision in response to lockdown – building capability and confidence.

e-Sgoil staff also hosted a number of live, remote learning and teaching pedagogy sessions, which were broadcast online, attracting an international audience of practitioners keen to enrich their own remote learning and teaching skills and impact.

Feedback from young people included:



The sessions are very interactive, I am really enjoying them!"



The lessons are really effective, they are helping me catch-up on work I have missed."



I find the lessons very helpful and the delivery is excellent and enjoyable."

What we will do differently in the future:

Building on the success of this lockdown provision, e-Sgoil, working in partnership with Education Scotland and ADES, has developed a National e-Learning offer to complement the work of schools through remote learning and teaching.

A comprehensive package of early evening Study Support live webinar lessons, covering a range of Advanced Higher, Higher and National 5 courses, has been made available to the young people of Scotland. Thousands of young people from across all 32 local authorities have benefited from this free provision delivered by specialist teaching staff through Glow.

e-Sgoil is also offering a set of Broad General Education programmes for P2 to S3, designed to further complement the curriculum being

provided by schools and local authorities across Scotland. This daytime remote learning provision has catered for individuals, classes, sub-cohorts and schools as required. A programme for the Senior Phase is in development and will be published shortly.

e-Sgoil strives to be at the forefront of national developments in order to ensure equity of access to course choice, and continues to innovate with the use of digital technology and remote learning and teaching pedagogy.



It is great that we are able to experience live learning during this point of time."

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Establishment:
WEA Scotland

What we did:

WEA Scotland delivers adult learning to some of the most disadvantaged individuals and communities in Scotland. Prior to lockdown the vast majority of this learning was delivered face to face in community settings. Although the WEA did have a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), learning delivered via this mode was limited.

Within three months of lockdown, WEA Scotland transformed its service provision to become a virtual learning organisation with almost all of its provision accessible via ZOOM [a virtual classroom] or its virtual learning environment: CANVAS. Learning is also delivered via Facebook and other social media outlets and some programme areas established their own YouTube Channel. WEA Scotland has also been an advocate for digital access and successfully secured devices for a number of its learners who were suffering from digital poverty

The degree and pace of change and the level of organisation adaptation has been incredible and ensured continuity of service and support for learners. New online learning material and assessments have been created, films and videos produced, online networking events organised with large amounts of this content being translated into different languages to enable access by New Scots.

Who we involved:

WEA Scotland works with numerous community partners and employers across Scotland, many of whom commission the WEA to deliver adult learning services to their clients. All partners have been consulted and involved in the changes to the delivery of learning to ensure the adapted provision would meet their learners needs

The difference it made:

Vulnerable learners with multiple barriers to employment in local job centres across Scotland have been supplied with devices and data to continue to develop their employability skills.

Online language assessments have been developed in several languages that enable every new ESOL learner to be placed in the correct level of class.

Learners with significant physical and mental health issues have continued to maintain contact with their class groups through online art classes, walking groups, gardening and gaming.

Older adults and those in rural communities at risk of loneliness and isolation continue to be active and engaged with their learning peers through a programme of creative writing, art and history.

Personal assistants who provide care in peoples' homes have been enabled to access Continued Professional Development (CPD) and support through an online events network.

Trade unions have been enabled to continue their staff training through online learning more cost effectively and flexibly than pre lockdown.

Without the constraints of delivering in a set location, individuals and communities have access to a wider range of learning opportunities that can be delivered more flexibly.

What we will do differently in the future:

Prior to lockdown, there was a generally accepted view that virtual learning was not appropriate for many of the WEA's service users and that face to face learning was the optimal mode of delivery. This is clearly not the case. While face to face learning will rightly remain a significant part of the WEA's delivery portfolio, it is likely it will be part of a blended learning solution.

Far from being challenged and resistant to virtual delivery, many learners after some initial trepidation have indicated they prefer virtual learning. They enjoy the flexibility of choosing when and where to learn instead of a fixed class at a set time. They welcome the range

of resources and materials that are available. In addition to the subject they are learning, they are also acquiring new digital skills that are enhancing their work and life opportunities.

For partners and those who commission the WEA's services, virtual learning provides a more flexible and cost effective means of achieving their objectives. This may enable them to extend their reach support more people and achieve better value for money.

From the WEA's perspective, we have achieved our five year virtual learning target in six months. This is a lesson for us in change management organisation ambition This will lead to a sustained transformational change in our education practice.

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Establishment:
Langlees Primary School

Local Authority:
Falkirk Council

What we did:

We prioritised the use of Seesaw for all staff, pupils and families to provide one safe space for all communication, teaching and learning and family learning opportunities. Prior to school closures, we ensured we had notified all parents of this and offered drop-in technology support sessions to ensure families could engage, which were well attended. We supported families with iPad's and Internet connectivity, funded through PEF. We monitored engagement weekly and contacted those families who were not using the platform and supported them individually.

On a sample week in February, we had 21 visits to the Seesaw site and 163 connected families in total. By the end of March on a sample week, this had increased to 939 visits to the site and 189 connected families. Before school closure, sample dates highlighted an average of eight parent comments in a week. From March onwards, we had over/around 2,000 comments from parents weekly. The total number of uploads/items throughout lockdown was 19,386. This was instrumental in enabling the school to improve parental engagement, promote family learning opportunities and offer a safe environment for parents to contact the school regarding the sharing of sensitive family matters.

Who we involved:

Senior Leadership Team, all class teachers and HWB support workers were included within the class Seesaw groups. We were able to regularly notify all families and signpost them to ongoing food, energy and financial supports. Our Nurture pupil group were also able to access support from our Creative Arts specialist to continue art therapy and arrange meetings for face to face HWB support. Families posted lots of pictures and video clips of family and individual learning they undertook at home.

The difference it made:

Primarily, this had a massive impact on our Parental Communication and Engagement. It allowed open, honest and transparent 2-way communication between teachers and pupils, teachers and parents, pupils to pupils and the Senior Leadership Team with all pupils and parents.

Teachers were able to continue differentiated teaching and learning for all pupils and also support parental knowledge and understanding of how best to support their child's learning. This was through individualised 'how to' support videos and conversations. Relationships strengthened throughout, and we were able to have an 'eyes on' approach to continue our strong nurturing and supportive ethos for families. We were also able to continue to raise awareness of the school improvement priorities through whole school focus on our Global Goals campaigns, our Sustainability work and visible learner characteristics.

What we will do differently in the future:

We have gathered feedback from parents which has been highly positive and indicates this is the preferred method of communication and engagement for our school. We have used this to deliver a bespoke transition package for our current P1s and all other classes moving to a new teacher/room to minimise anxieties and meet pupil need.

To ensure we continue our high level of personalised support, we have additional classes for targeted interventions, e.g. Nurture group and Reading Recovery group to support a sense of belonging, share ongoing improvement work with parents and develop parental knowledge and understanding of how to best support their child's learning at home.

We plan to continue to build upon the success of the use of Seesaw through building staff knowledge and capacity and taking on board parent and pupil feedback. Our pupils are now actively asking if they can share work from school on Seesaw with their parents. We aim to have 100% of parents using this to engage with school. This has been more effective in terms of parental reach than any of the engagement tools and sessions we have trialled before. We are beginning to use this as alternatives to Open Afternoons, Sharing the Learning Events, Meet the Teacher sessions and to arrange Parent consultations and promptly address any issues or concerns.

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Establishment:
Falkirk High School

Local Authority:
Falkirk Council

What we did:

All staff and pupils faced a steep learning curve when adapting to home learning during lockdown. We recognised the need to support staff with skills and confidence to embrace the digital and virtual learning environment we now found ourselves in and, therefore, created our very own in-house Virtual CPD Programme. This was led by staff for staff, to open up and embrace this new way of working from home.

Over 18 sessions throughout May and June were delivered with almost all staff participating in one or more sessions, some as many as 10, from 'closing the gap' to Microsoft Teams, to Kahoot and Mentimeter. Each session was researched, planned and prepared by our own staff in areas of their own professional and personal expertise and included follow-up support materials and a Q&A after each session to share best practice amongst each other.

A staff survey using Google Forms was completed to measure participation and engagement and to support planning for the next session. (50 out of 80 staff completed the survey).

Who we involved:

The whole programme was coordinated online via Microsoft Teams and involved a team of 14 staff to organise and deliver the sessions.

The difference it made:

The overwhelming difference, evidenced by our staff survey, came from staff commenting on their improved skillset with digital tools to support learning:

“
It's been fantastic. The CPD has addressed issues affecting me right now and given me solutions ... the support information afterwards is great.”

“
It has been great to have the time to participate in the CPD opportunities and I have improved my ICT skills immensely in a very short time.”

However, the most significant difference was staff confidence and having the opportunity and now the ability to experiment with new pedagogical approaches to support our digital learning priorities as a school. As an authority, we are fortunate to be moving to a 1:1 device by December 2020, so lockdown learning has allowed our school community to be ready, willing and able to confidently use digital learning within and outside of the classroom.

“
....has had a huge impact on my ICT skills and much improved confidence to design and plan my lessons for pupils.”

With staff being isolated in their own homes, our in-house CLPL programme provided the opportunity for staff to support each other, but also a forum for them to discuss concerns, collaborate and share best practice across all subjects and faculties. The sessions also allowed for staff to connect socially and emotionally with each other which also supported their own wellbeing.

What we will do differently in the future:

In terms of mind-set, our staff reflected and learned so much about themselves, each other and our young people, that there is now an overwhelming shift to continue this way of working within the school, to support not only Learning and Teaching and on-going staff CLPL, but also societal and pupil need.

In line with our school improvement priority of striving for 'Excellence in Learning and Teaching', in particular, increasing capacity and confidence in staff to improve the consistency and quality of the learner experience, we have launched our in-house virtual CLPL programme for this session. With over 20 sessions on offer from now until January, staff can sign up to lead, participate and support each other in areas reflected within our school recovery plan in terms of Health and Wellbeing, loss of learning/moving learning on and transitions.

In line with this, we are opening up this programme to provide support to our cluster colleagues in terms of their digital literacies and confidence to use these to not only substitute, but begin to modify and redefine digital tools and resources to enhance the learning and teaching experience in their classrooms too.

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Establishment:
Western Isles Education Department

Local Authority:
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

What we did:

Our Instrumental Music service team (IMS) engaged in a range of activities to enable and support our pupils learning, their health and well-being and musical performances. There were three main areas of activity:

Continuity of learning: From day one and right through lockdown, our staff engaged with pupils online. An 85% pupil engagement suggests staff input was valued by pupils and parents.

Performance platforms: These provided a focus for pupils learning and, in so doing, opportunities for engagement with friends, family and the wider community.

'e-Cèilidh' and 'e-Cèilidh nan Òg' broadcasts – In collaboration with the CnES Multimedia Unit, IMS staff conceived, presented, and delivered seven online broadcasts of recorded performances of these specially commissioned programmes.

Thursday night tributes – Staff and pupils took part in weekly Thursday night performances in support of the NHS.

Music video productions – Staff prepared and submitted pupil contributions to local, national and international music video productions.

National commemorative events – Staff prepared pupils for participation in national, socially distanced commemorative events such as V.E Day and St Valery.

Virtual competitions – Pupils participated in virtual competitions organised by staff.

Sharing good practice – Staff shared experiences on education department platforms, nationally on umbrella organisation committees and webinars.

Who we involved:

All six activities involved staff teaching pupils who, in turn, had the opportunity to share their learning in a variety of different ways. These performances were hugely important in supporting our pupils in local, national and international contexts and enabled positivity to be spread at a time of international crisis.

The difference it made:

“

Online lessons:

These lessons were a lifeline to my child. Some days it was the only reason they got up and dressed”

Anonymous parent.

“

Thanks for everything you have done during lockdown”

Anonymous pupil.

“

'e-Cèilidh' and 'e-Cèilidh nan Òg':

If possible it would be great to retain the e-ceilidhs on a regular basis as it encourages kids to practise for a purpose and it's lovely to hear all the other talented people on our islands”

Parent (globally 90k views).

“

Thursday Night tributes:

Having tunes to learn and playing on Thursday nights...has helped to maintain focus and concentration”

AM.

“

National Commemorations:

It was a very moving occasion, which marked appropriately the sacrifices of our former pupils and members of this community who fell or were captured at St Valery on June 12th 1940”

Frances Murray, Headteacher, The Nicolson Institute.

“

...despite the current COVID-19 restrictions, school pupils were able to play an important role in participating as buglers and pipers at the recent VE, VJ and St Valery anniversary commemorations ... Their presence at such significant community events adds to the occasion, much appreciated by the public and provides the pupils with invaluable experience of performing at ceremonial events”

Lord Lieutenant, Western Isles.

What we will do differently in the future:

Staff and pupils quickly adapted to a new way of working using software such as Microsoft Teams, not only as a method of teaching and communicating effectively, but also as an easy-access storage area for a huge bank of resources built up during lockdown.

The music service displayed news and videos of performances, not only through social media and the e-Cèilidh, but through a blog specially created during lockdown. Going forward, we will continue to use the blog to communicate with parents, pupils and the wider public and to enable pupil performances to be displayed, shared and enjoyed.

Valuable advice and support were shared collaboratively through a two-way interaction with national organisations such as the 'Music Education Partnership Group', 'Heads of Instrumental Teaching Services' and with other Local Authority music services. This enabled music service staff to develop a national/international perspective on issues and solutions about music education and the pandemic and to share our knowledge with others.

Staff are continuing to build on innovations developed during the lockdown, through their efforts and by sharing good practice. We envisage using these tools, resources and collaborative working methods to build on successes achieved during the lockdown and well into the future.

Establishment:
Glasgow Improvement Challenge

Local Authority:
City of Glasgow Council

What we did:

During the initial stages of lockdown, Glasgow's Improvement Challenge team (GIC) worked in partnership with the Glasgow Evening Times newspaper to publish a wide range of learning resources and activities to support learning at home across the city, three times per week as a double page spread. Included were a selection of literacy and numeracy family-friendly resources from early to second level to encourage and engage with Glasgow's children and beyond. One of the most reassuring items of feedback was to see teachers across Glasgow and other local authorities exploring and sharing these ideas on their school Twitter feed for their children.

As lockdown continued, the GIC leadership team and attainment adviser became more concerned about the reach of remote learning activities on our targeted learners, who had previously been receiving additional bespoke support from our Challenge Leaders of Learning (CLOLs). This led to the newspaper offer being developed further to provide bespoke learning packs for individual groups of children.

The key driver for this project was to encourage and engage children to participate in learning at home, making it fun and accessible to all. The activities developed key learning themes and were differentiated by level, through numeracy games, writing materials, books, measuring tools, character puppets and essential stationery items. The Thistle family have been the logo for the project, and their adventures are frequently the contexts for the activities. The materials promoted active learning, using items from around the home and also encouraging children and families to take their learning outside. It reaches both pre-five and primary school children.

Who we involved:

The GIC team worked in collaboration with PE development officers, English as an Additional Language and Glasgow Psychological Services to develop the newspaper spreads. Volunteers from the wider GIC team and Glasgow Libraries volunteered to collate and distribute the materials to schools and families during and post lockdown. The initial set of packs was funded by the City's SAC grant and the project has continued as a result of significant donations from business partners across the city including Harper Collins, Farmfoods and a private benefactor. This has enabled the purchase of high quality materials and books to support the learning resources devised by the GIC team.

The difference it made:

The fifth pack of resources being issued during October 2020, was developed in response to feedback on how much the children were enjoying receiving books to read. This has progressed to the 'Glasgow Loves Reading Campaign' which is both a targeted and universal offer to promote reading for enjoyment across Glasgow's 140 primary schools. Again there has been a gifting offer of books for children to read at home, as well as a universal offer of hard copy books, e-books and teacher resources delivered to all schools. This initiative has also been supported and encouraged daily via Twitter with a sharing and reading of their favourite books by Glasgow celebrities. The first one read by Professor Jason Leitch receiving more than 1,500 views. High levels of engagement from schools has been demonstrated via our Twitter channel @GlasgowLOL. Our teachers have been sharing their pupils' engagement with the initiative and we have seen Glasgow's children leading on the campaign within their schools and sharing via Twitter.

Targeted learners continue to receive bespoke learning packs post the return to full time schooling. These have continued to develop literacy and numeracy, most recently extending the offer across all schools with a Scots Language pack.

“

The questioning sheets for the books were fab as they were easy to read and I think universally accessible to parents” LPA Penilee Nursery School.

In the autumn pack, six will be launched in partnership with the STEM team at Glasgow Science Centre providing stimulating ideas and resources for mini scientists at home. The reach of engagement with this initiative has more than doubled since the initial stages, and early years engagement has risen from 600+ children to 900+. There are now 2,000+ primary age children receiving these additional learning at home materials, building from the initial 700.

“

At Parkview Primary we are delighted with the learning packs being provided and recognise the huge amount of work that has gone into creating and resourcing them ... They are proving to be of great value in supporting learning at home ... Look forward to receiving the final set” Parkview Primary School.

All of the high quality resources have now been added to the GIC Glow Tile for universal use across all pre-five and primary establishments. The impact of packs on the groups of children has been illustrated in positive feedback from all stakeholders.

“

Thank you so much for these again. They're making a massive difference for our children” Cranhill Primary School.

What we will do differently in the future:

We continued to reflect on the feedback from schools, and the positivity and engagement with this initiative has led to the team developing a wide range of further support as a universal offer to all schools. The materials complement Glasgow's literacy and numeracy progression frameworks and follow the descriptions of activities previously outlined above to engage and encourage our children at home. The materials are also providing Glasgow's teachers with effective, relevant examples of activities for engaging homework and the legacy to continue to support future home learning post pandemic.

The positive feedback from schools and teachers has led to a similar approach for taking literacy and numeracy outdoors. (Glasgow Outdoors) across pre-five and primary. The key driver of this is to further enhance the learning experience and promote engagement from staff and children. The GIC leaders of learning have delivered CLPL to support all staff in engaging with both sets of materials. Each initiative is a step further in enhancing engagement in learning at home for often reluctant participants. The activities can also be developed within the classroom, again enhancing the teaching and learning offer.

Each set of materials aims to support contingency plans for learning at home, periods of pupil isolation and any future need for a blended learning approach. Now more than ever, we are continually endeavouring to hold on to national and local priorities and the aims of Glasgow's Improvement Challenge, as we strive to mitigate additional gaps in learning post the impact of the recent lockdown.

Establishment:
St Andrew's Primary School

Local Authority:
Dumfries and Galloway Council

What we did:

A collaborative project during lockdown, between the Scots Language children's author, Susi Briggs, and my Primary Two class. Every single child in my class took part.

When we first read the Nip Nebs story, there were a number of words that we needed to translate to help us understand the story better. We worked with Susi to create a video of the Scots words that we weren't sure of and asked Susi to help us with their meaning. Each child in the class was given a word or phrase from the story and they created a poster with a video asking Susi what their word or phrase meant. Susi then very kindly recorded herself answering each child, and the Nip Nebs Virtual Glossary was born!

Who we involved:

Myself, my Primary Two Class, Susi Briggs and Talia Carter, additional support for learning assistant.

The difference it made:

I think that having a creative project such as this really helped me to continue to engage with the children and families in my class during lockdown. Joining together to work on a special project with them ensured 100% involvement from all the children in my class, as every child contributed brilliantly to the video. Their delight and excitement that the 'real life' author of the story they were currently reading had taken the time to answer their questions was almost tangible!

The fact that Susi is local to Dumfries and Galloway made it all the more relevant and real to the children. In addition, it prompted the children to question further the meaning of the words in the story and extended their knowledge of both Scots language and the English language, as Susi's writing is very rich and descriptive. It also meant that we were making use of IT in a creative way, which motivated the children.

What we will do differently in the future:

I am always looking for ways to be creative and engaging as a teacher. If I am honest, IT was an area that I tended to veer away from. I found it a necessary part of the curriculum, but not one that I particularly relished. However, having to think of creative ways to engage students during lockdown, I really started to appreciate the value of IT and this video idea would not have been created but for the lockdown situation. So going forward, it has changed my outlook, and creative ideas involving IT will certainly feature more in my teaching in the longer term.

Establishment:
Wood Foundation (RAISE – Raising Aspirations in STEM Education)

What we did:

An online Science Planning Resource, in partnership with Education Scotland, was strategically released during the lockdown period to support primary school practitioners with clear lesson plans, inspiration, and learning and teaching strategies for STEM learning experiences which could be delivered at home, in school, or as part of a blended model.

RAiSE's delivery officer, Primary Science Development Officers (PSDOs), swiftly moved to online professional learning and support models for practitioners, recognising the need to remain proactive in their delivery and adapt to suit the new context.

The difference it made:

The all-encompassing support from RAiSE, from individualised support, through to professional learning and online resources, built practitioner confidence in delivering primary STEM through a challenging period.

Not only did the team address immediate opportunities, but supported practitioners in developing strategies for incorporating STEM into their models of practice upon return to school.

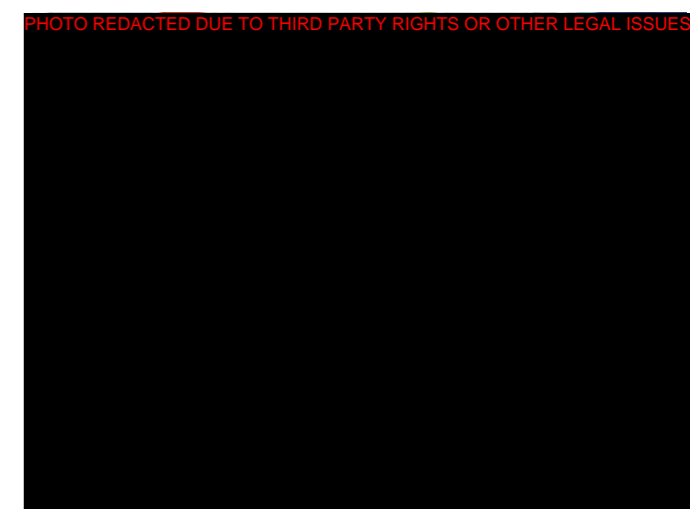
Recognising the pressures that would face school, and the key educational and wellbeing drivers which would be a focus, the RAiSE network provided consistent ideas, support, inspiration and network opportunities for developing innovative and engaging learning experiences which supported STEM's role in achieving these outcomes.

What we will do differently in the future:

There has yet to be a full return to in-person professional learning. The models, websites, resources, and support structures put in place during lockdown continue to heavily inform their practice.

The virtual space increased the PSDOs' ability to create additional engagement opportunities with practitioners already engaged with the programme, as well as new practitioners. One authority, new to the programme in January 2020, managed to increase its engagement from 114 in Term 3 2019/20 to 1,200 in Term 4 2019/20. A high level of engagement has continued into Term 1 2020/21.

The online Science Planning Resource has been well-received by practitioners throughout Scotland. This is a live resource and will continue to have additional resources added to it. The use of online tools and industry partnerships will be further brought online to increase equity and accessibility.



Establishment:
Glasgow CREATE

Local Authority:
Glasgow City Council

What we did:

Glasgow CREATE adapted to establish online platforms to communicate effectively with parents and families, and continue to engage children and young people in expressive arts and creative learning. The new platforms include a CREATE website, YouTube and Facebook, and Blogs for the Instrumental Music and Youth Music Initiative Services. As well as offering access to lesson materials and demonstration videos, these platforms were used to run campaigns to inspire and motivate learners to engage in activities which promote positivity and creativity during a very difficult period.

The '30 Days of Creativity' campaign provided daily creative challenges for children to complete using digital tools. The 'Love from Glasgow' composing competition invited children and young people to write a piece of music as a message of positivity to family, friends or the community. Continuing to promote a culture of positivity, secondary pupils were asked to create a YouTube-style video sharing what they love about drama and advice for upcoming S1 pupils. With the absence of end of year concerts, our digital platforms hosted a 'Glasgow Schools Young Musician Celebration' which gave children and young people an opportunity to showcase their talents and skills developed over the past year.

Who we involved:

Glasgow Education Services' 'CREATE' (creativity and expressive arts transforming education), which includes the Instrumental Music Service and Youth Music Initiative programme. Teachers, Music Instructors, children and young people from across Glasgow Primary and Secondary schools. Partnerships with Apple, Glasgow's Digital Learning programme, Haydock Music, Glasgow Times and the Benedetti Foundation.

The difference it made:

Children and young people were able to access high quality and engaging learning experiences at home via the online platforms. Families without internet accessed home learning ideas for Music, Drama and creativity via Glasgow Times' articles and packs sent to Hub schools. Teachers were able to access materials to support expressive arts and creative learning, which were shared via school digital learning platforms and used to engage children in Hub schools.

The use of digital tools has enabled children and young people to continue to receive instrumental tuition and access individualised lesson materials and regular feedback from instructors. With over 60 participants, virtual concerts allowed young people to celebrate their successes.

The daily videos for '30 Days of Creativity', shared via YouTube, Twitter and Facebook, received high levels of engagement with 27.8K views and 244 subscribers on YouTube; on Twitter, we had 572.3K impressions, 3.9K link clicks and 1.2K retweets, with creative responses to the challenges shared by children and teachers across the city. The 'Love from Glasgow' competition engaged primary and secondary pupils from across the city in song writing and composition, with the winning entries receiving prize vouchers from Haydock Music in celebration of their creativity.

What we will do differently in the future:

Over the past six months, there has been a complete re-think about how music and instrumental lessons are delivered. Demonstrating commitment and creativity, all 80 instructors adapted their practice and enhanced their skills using digital technology to deliver lessons via Teams during lockdown and continue to provide individualised support for young people through blended learning. The use of digital tools to facilitate team meetings will have a impact long term, having increased communication and collaboration between members of a large peripatetic team and enabled further opportunities for sharing practice.

Due to the success of the '30 Days of Creativity' project and partnership with Apple, this approach will be implemented in the future to continue to promote creativity and digital innovation across the curriculum.

CREATE is committed to developing a comprehensive online resource which will have an impact in the short and long term on the support available for teachers to deliver the expressive arts curriculum. A progression framework, resources, videos and live stream lessons will widen the reach of the service, providing regular high-quality learning experiences. This equitable approach will ensure all children and young people access a progressive, expressive arts programme, which is sustainable moving forwards.

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Establishment:

Speech and Language Therapy and Early Years Education Support

Local Authority:

The Highland Council

What we did:

'Words Up Wednesday' sessions were jointly planned between the Speech and Language Therapy and Early Years Education Support Officer Teams. It ran weekly for the last six weeks of term. This was an online CPD offering for practitioners working mainly within Early Level. These sessions were hosted by members of the Speech and Language Therapy Team and advertised and supported by the Early Years Education Support Officers Team.

'Words Up: Early' is Highland's approach to supporting adults to use high quality interaction within the environment that promotes the best opportunities for language development for all children. It is a universal approach. The timing of the sessions tied into the launch of 'Realising The Ambition'. RTA firmly anchors interactions as a key component of an effective environment for early stage.

We created videos of the six 'Words Up: Early' key messages that practitioners could watch before each session which lasted 45 minutes. During the online sessions, practitioners were encouraged to reflect on the 'Words Up: Early' key message and consider their practice and setting. They had the opportunity to ask questions and listen to discussions where the focus was on sharing and finding solutions.

Who we involved:

The Sessions were jointly planned between the Speech and Language Therapy Team and the Early Years Education Support Officers Team. Our target audience was early level practitioners. Participants joined from across the remote and rural Highland patch, from Highland Council and private early years settings and early primary teams.

The difference it made:

The sessions attracted between 60-160 participants each, from a range of roles (including EYPs, EYESO, Teachers, PSAs, AHPs) across Highland and beyond. There has been positive feedback through comments shared by the EYESO team and through requests for further sessions. Feedback comments show that the practitioners were using the online resources and increased confidence to share the key messages around interaction with parents of the children in the setting.



Please pass on my thanks to all the Speech and Language team for the excellent training that they have prepared these last 6 weeks, it has been excellent and I have shared all the you tube video clips weekly for our parents on the nursery class dojo page".

Delivering training online, through 'Words Up Wednesday', enabled us to reach more practitioners in a timely fashion, and delivery of training was more equitable across the geographical area that we cover. Without the need to build in travel time, we can deliver shorter, more frequent sessions that build in opportunities for reflective coaching conversations as practitioners embed the interaction key messages in their practice.

What we will do differently in the future:

Running the 'Words Up Wednesday' online sessions, and the participation and feedback from this, has changed the way that we will deliver training and support in the future.

We had already begun to make changes from the previous improvement work we had undertaken; realising that it is better to deliver training in smaller, bite-sized chunks with time built in, in-between sessions, for discussion, reflection and practice, to enable participants to embed change to their practice within their environments.

Our plan for this academic year is to increase our online offering of short information-giving training videos which will be accessible to all education and partner agencies. We will continue to offer online question and answer 'Words Up Wednesday' sessions to support practitioners to reflect and embed the information in this online content in their practice. These sessions will be recorded so that practitioners can access them at a time that suits them. They will cover a range of topics with the underlying theme of using adult/child interaction to support developing language and communication in these areas.

We plan to collect more data on impact on practice as we continue this model this school year.

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Establishment:
Nature Nudge

Local Authority:
Shetland Islands Council

What we did:

We created 10 'Nature Nudge' videos, for learners in lockdown in Shetland.

Noticing that most learning was moving online, a biology teacher and I had the idea to 'nudge' pupils outdoors to learn in nature.

We released a video a week with accompanying activity sheets and links. We also developed a page for community submissions.

'Nature Nudge' committed to:

- Connect children and families with Shetland nature;
- Provide a sense of community for learners in lockdown;
- Boost physical activity and health and wellbeing;
- Improve skills like food growing and identification of plants and animals;
- Support existing curriculum learning outcomes.

'Nature Nudge' was a huge success against all these outcomes. The project connected all ages with their local landscape and wildlife, provided a sense of community and increased the chances of a good engagement with education during this unusual time

Who we involved:

'Nature Nudge' videos were hosted on the Shetland Island Council's Digital School Hub and were accessible to all primary and secondary pupils and their families during lockdown. We also pulled in a number of local experts to cover a broad range of nature topics.

The difference it made:

'Nature Nudge' lifted spirits in the Shetland community. Nature wasn't in lockdown and it was a real pleasure guiding people to notice what was going on outdoors.

Teachers started referring children to the videos and tasks and parents found the activities a relief from being indoors where they were more likely to try and replicate a school day. One dad was so pleased to "have something to focus on that wasn't COVID-19". He told us: "Nature Nudge was a great reason to do things together and outside, we learnt so much, as a family".

One mum told us it made lockdown bearable for her nine year old: "My son finds all the school stuff a complete drag but is so excited about Nature Nudge! He looked at the NN blog and thought he'd never find anything as brilliant as everyone else. And then you posted his picture and he was over the moon. And then you gave him a wee job and he could not believe that he would actually be on NN! And it's just been a joy every week! I love seeing him learn/engage with the love of it all!"

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What we will do differently in the future:

During 'Nature Nudge' children became authors of their own learning, and seeing what they produced reinforced the idea that if you give pupils ownership of their learning, they never cease to amaze. Long-term this should increase their self-esteem, confidence and willingness to learn.

This project took learning outside but it also inspired a wider family learning. The higher viewership of videos when children were presenting, told us that there was a great excitement in sharing with grandparents and friends. We really loved this intergenerational learning and it's something we want to think about more in the future.

We were surprised at how much we learned as we were preparing and collaborating on what to film next. It's probably a skill as old as time – to seek pattern or sustenance in nature and come home from the search and tell people what you've found. As well as doing this ourselves, we were also encouraging children to tell their own nature stories. We will be giving children more opportunities to enjoy that process as we go on. 'Nature Nudge' has certainly proven that you can teach any curriculum area outdoors and that nature never runs out of inspiration.

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Establishment:
The Donaldson Trust

What we did:

Individual support packages were created for each of our children, who have complex needs. This included resource packs sent home, log-ins to the educational websites we use in school, daily assigned videos to pupils setting a task, so the work came from the teacher or therapist, not a parent, increasing the likelihood of engagement. These pre-recorded videos worked better than live chat, which was too overwhelming. As lockdown progressed, fresh tasks/resources were emailed/posted to support the video tasks.

- Tasks were designed to encourage communication and interaction, physical exercise, wellbeing and life skills.
- Regular feedback from parents allowed us to focus on what was successful to reduce pressure on parents and children. The most important factor was maintaining routines, structures and emotional wellbeing.
- Easter craft tasks for all children, staff and families sent out, and we asked for photos to be submitted. From these we created a virtual Easter Assembly for everyone to watch.
- A reduced school service restarted at the beginning of May, after feedback from parents highlighted the extreme challenges of life in lockdown with children with complex needs. This was a blended learning package of two days in school and three days continuing with activities at home supplied by teachers.

Who we involved:

Staff, children and parents. Our usual partners who provide a range of activities were closed and many staff furloughed. This is still the case for some, others are now back and have worked closely with us on planning and risk assessment related to COVID-19 safety. Most services accessed by parents for respite were also closed during lockdown.

The difference it made:

The continual contact with parents throughout lockdown and the Easter holiday provided a means of support in the absence of the usual support mechanisms relied on by parents (respite, community support workers, grandparents were all unavailable). Some families were close to breaking point during lockdown with no physical support, whilst trying to work from home and care for a child with complex needs alongside siblings.

Most children enjoyed the tasks and it gave the families a focus during the day. Some children struggled with the concept of doing school work at home. We made it clear that the tasks were there as a means of offering structure and engagement, but if they caused more anxiety, they were not compulsory.

Some children showed increased independence skills at home that transferred back to school. Some children benefitted from smaller groups back at school.

When we returned in May, the staff and children were split into two teams, each team attending on two separate days a week. The children missed seeing peers from the other team. We sent video challenges from one team to the other and they were delighted to see videos of each other and engage in joint challenges.

What we will do differently in the future:

Children and staff returned full time in August but remain in two separate zones within the building. Children come together for regular outdoor activities and playtimes. We've adapted our review meetings to allow parents to come into an allocated meeting room in the school. External professionals join via video link. This has proved an important opportunity for parents to speak up about gaps in vital services: one child's respite services were halved and not reinstated, another child experienced delays to his transition process – both situations have had an impact on the whole family. In both cases, external professionals were in attendance virtually and able to take matters forward.

Some changes to practice have been really positive – pupils enjoyed setting up their own work areas and resources trays/bags in class so they are developing increased organisational skills. When staff were split into two teams upon return in May, we were unable to use our staff expertise across both teams. Since August, our staff with expertise deliver sessions to children in the other zone either via video link (Yoga, BSL) or through joint outdoor lessons (CDT, cricket). Hygiene practices have improved and this is hopefully well embedded!

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Establishment:
Early Years Education Support

Local Authority:
The Highland Council

What we did:

We created an innovative approach to training and improvement using short, snappy and interactive bite-size sessions tailored to the changing needs of early years' staff during the pandemic. These were created and delivered online using G-Suite tools by a collaborative team including a wide range of different professional groups and community organisations. At a time when teams were unable to work face to face and many practitioners were feeling isolated, these sessions provided opportunities for connection and professional learning.

The sessions were also recorded and uploaded to The Highland Digital Schools Hub along with additional resources to support learning, enabling staff to access them flexibly. This approach allowed staff working from home or in key worker hubs with varying work patterns to access quality CPL opportunities. In excess of 250 practitioners attended some of the sessions, resulting in other sessions being delivered to meet the demand. Since returning to settings the bite-size sessions continue to provide a source of connection and information in the key areas of Realising the Ambition and Outdoor Play and Learning and support the implementation of the recovery curriculum.

Who we involved:

Collaborative team consisting of Early Years Education Support Officers, Allied Health Professionals, Early Years Educational Psychologist, teaching staff, Excellence and Equity Leads, Early Years Practitioners and Stramash Social Enterprise.

The difference it made:

Ongoing evaluation of the impact of co-produced bite-size training is continuing, but impacts noted to date include:

- Staff were able to access quality CPL opportunities in the areas of Learning Environments, Responsive and Intentional Learning, Family Learning, Self and Team Care and Outdoor Play and Learning;
- Reduced isolation and increased connection;
- Reached wide audiences;
- Sharing across a wide geographical area;
- Enhanced the use of and skills in using digital tools;
- Increased awareness and depth of play pedagogy in ELC and early primary;
- Sharing of good practice;
- Strengthened self-evaluation;
- Increased practitioner confidence;
- Connections made with wider networks;
- Highland examples of good practice in outdoor learning shared between local authorities within our Regional Improvement Collaborative.

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Preliminary evidence from settings suggests that children are spending more time outdoors and staff are happier being outdoors. Staff are also observing learning outdoors that they have never seen before. Staff are planning more responsively and children are more involved in leading their learning. Staff are exploring different ways of engaging with families. More robust evaluation will follow once it is possible to visit settings, and gather evidence of how they are using the bite-size sessions to implement the vision of 'Realising the Ambition'.

What we will do differently in the future:

We have reimaged our approach to delivery of professional learning opportunities by utilising digital technologies. This approach will enable continued engagement with large numbers across a very wide geographical area and will strengthen connections between practitioners and settings while COVID-19 restrictions are still in place and beyond.

Leadership roles for outdoor play and learning have been created in order to support ongoing development in each area of Highland. A collaborative approach added value to the quality of the sessions and ensured consistent, joined up messages. This successful approach will continue to be developed. The development of IT skills and confidence in using digital technology will have a long term positive impact on all involved in the sessions. The delivery team has the skills to continue providing opportunities for professional development and networking digitally. Practitioners now have the skills to access online training and communicate with other settings to share good practice. This will be of benefit to all, particularly lone workers and those working in remote areas.

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Establishment:

CLD Literacy

Local Authority:

South Ayrshire Council

What we did:

Over lockdown, there was real concern for our literacies learners. Many live in rural settings with limited skills to access ICT. They are distanced from the world of work and many live in isolation not linked to COVID-19. Their interaction with the literacies support can be the only human interface in their lives. This situation was made more acute by lockdown forcing us to look at how we can reach out and ensure some continuity of provision.

As reading is a core literacies function we decided to deliver some easy readers. The distribution was done by tutors and volunteers, often door to door. The follow up activity was to call the learner to discuss the book and for a few there was some online interaction. We used this connection to survey the learners, finding out if they needed anything, chatting about how lockdown was impacting and planning for the future.

The feedback told us that mental health was impacted greatly by being indoors and no human contact. From this point we decided, as restrictions lifted, to bring the learners together, socially distanced and masked, for a walking group. In all weathers, they met for an hour, chatting about their books, how far they were walking (numeracy) and agreeing to write a short reflection (communications) about COVID-19 and how they were feeling.

The sharing of experience with the books as a focus has led the tutors to look at developing a virtual book club. The challenges of devices and platforms are enhanced for such marginalised groups but the creativity is palpable.

Who we involved:

Literacies tutors and literacies volunteers have been working collaboratively on this. The idea of walking groups has been shared with other areas of adult learning.

The difference it made:

Measuring impact at this stage is somewhat anecdotal. The attendance for the walking groups has been consistent and the enthusiasm for the virtual book groups has been shared by both staff and learners.

It is vital to note that impact and positivity for the activity has affected both staff and learners. Volunteers have given feedback to say that being involved in the book trail, which was getting the books out to learners, then the follow up calls, messages and finally the walking groups gave them some structure. They felt engaged and needed. They have developed their IT skills looking at platforms for learning, especially in the plans for the virtual book club. This network of tutors has facilitated a formal survey of need with responses that are current and informative all embedded in a community activity.

What we will do differently in the future:

This activity has confirmed that, going forward, literacies activity does not need to be based in one geographical designated centre. It has highlighted that volunteers are core not only to delivery but also in planning and influencing programme development. There is also a greater awareness of the vulnerable state that isolation creates for those who are already marginalised by a lack of literacy skills in our community.

Long term, we need to ensure that the mental health of our learners, staff and volunteers is central to all activity planning. We have already collated the rich data from the survey and shared the findings with partner services and education colleagues. Projects should have a learning focus but that opportunity to interact safely, to communicate and to be valued by others will be an integral part of how we deliver adult literacies in the future.

Establishment:

Syrian Resettlement Project

Local Authority:

City of Edinburgh Council

What we did:

We created an exciting new learning resource called 'English Snacks' which we specifically designed to help existing Syrian learners, as well as the newest arrivals, to learn English at home during Lockdown.

Many existing online resources were either difficult to navigate or included too much metalanguage which can be confusing for learners new to ESOL. Over 75% of our learners are ESOL literacies learners, with many facing complex barriers to learning, so we tailor made an English language resource for them.

We based the choice of topics on previous learner feedback and learner requests for everyday English. We ran a pilot with a focus group of 10 Syrian learners, and their views informed the development of the resource, (e.g. requests for links to be sent by text rather than email, requests for specific topics, and longer videos at Beginner level).

We telephoned students to explain the resource to them and to obtain consent for us to send weekly links to it. We sent weekly links to specific topics to learners depending on their ESOL level, and at the same time kept the tutors informed. We created playlists for learners for further self-study.

Who we involved:

Eight experienced SRP ESOL tutors collaborated remotely to create the YouTube resource 'English Snacks', and accompanying worksheets. After the success of the pilot, we were happy to share the link with SRP partners, local agencies and other local authorities.

The difference it made:

Newly arrived learners became familiar with their tutors, and existing students maintained an important link with their tutors and the project. Learners built their confidence as independent learners, and many explored suggested playlists as well as links to other relevant ESOL web pages.

Learners enjoy following a progressive learning route, as each topic stacks up to a more challenging level. Weekly texts sending links, as well as follow up texts and phone calls maintains the connection between tutors and learners. Tutors are proud of the 'English Snacks' resource and remain committed to the project. The easy one-click to the link to our YouTube 'English Snacks' offers learners the opportunity to take ownership of their learning and develop their independent self-study skills.

The 'English Snacks' resource currently has 58 videos with a total of 5,800 views, and 61 subscribers. The number of viewers spikes when new videos are uploaded and in the 24 hours after weekly text messages are sent to learners. Learners are 'liking' and commenting on videos and requesting new topics, showing that they are actively engaging with the resource and are motivated to continue using it to learn.

What we will do differently in the future:

This resource has become integral to our ESOL teaching practice. Each topic will have accompanying worksheets which will be emailed/posted out to learners, and will be used in classrooms too. Learners who can't manage to get to classes regularly will be able to continue to learn at home.

Establishment:
RAiSE (Raising Aspirations in STEM Education)

Local Authority:
Falkirk Council

What we did:

We had been in post as RAiSE (Raising Aspirations in STEM Education) Officers for Falkirk Council since January 2020. We had spent time getting to know our authority and practitioners by visiting schools and researching needs for support. We had also been meeting various agencies to establish what provision they could and do make to the authority.

When we went into lockdown we had just completed summarising all of our research and creating a targeted Action Plan to take our work forward. We very quickly realised that several of our ambitions would no longer be possible in the form we had planned, so we had to think creatively and adapt. Our most successful adaptation has been our online CLPL offering. We have been on a huge learning curve with regards to creating and providing this CLPL. On reflection, deciding to go down this route has offered us brilliant opportunities to develop ourselves and create a sustainable legacy.

Who we involved:

Feedback from practitioners who completed our RAiSE survey informed which topics we created CLPL videos on. We looked at the areas of development required and made a plan of support considering how to involve our families and colleagues in the creation of these videos. We utilised resources created and made available to us through the RAiSE network in Scotland and we contacted colleagues in Education Scotland to create CLPL videos for us to complement our work.

A timetable for the release of our CLPL videos was created and we decided we would support practitioners with their engagement by providing a live Q&A session via Microsoft Teams on each of the videos at the end of the week the video was released. Practitioners had a full week to watch

the videos whenever was convenient for them. We provided a padlet and a Teams group chat for practitioners to ask questions prior to the live Q&A or if they could not attend.

The live Q&A sessions were well attended and became a great place for discussion and sharing of good practice. We minuted these sessions and shared the minutes with those who could not attend. These CLPL videos now remain available to our practitioners and the rest of the RAiSE network and we are currently adding to them with two more CLPLs being released just after the October break.

The difference it made:

Online CLPL session YouTube videos have been watched 592 times in total, our Teams group is now accessed by 78 practitioners from 20 different schools, we've had 47 attendees from six schools at our live Q&A sessions and 1,504 new views to our blog page. Feedback from these sessions has included:

“**Electricity has been the area of Science which I have had least confidence in delivering. I enjoyed all of your videos and found them very informative. The progression from Early to Second Level is clear and the experiments and science behind each part explained well. This has definitely given me the confidence to use these experiments with my class, depending on the stage. I can always refer back to the videos and resources if I need too.**”

“**Really great, practical examples of activities to do and the language we should be using with pupils. Through discussion in the open area and observation this would lead into STEM stories and activities once the children have looked at forces in a familiar setting and allowing them bring that knowledge and understanding and see it being used in a different context.**”

“**Thank you so much, Laura, Barbara and Gayle. You have made STEM very accessible. The sessions have been really enjoyable.**”

“**Really enjoyed that today. I love the videos, so simple and informative. Just what I need. Question and answer sessions gave me loads of practical advice again.**”

“**I've had a quick look at some of the resources in the folders. Wow, so many topics for each area and so well resourced. It makes it much easier to be flexible and follow what the children are interested in as a topic develops. It's the first time I've done training like this. I really like the format.**”

What we will do differently in the future:

We have learned and continue to learn so much from this way of working. We have managed to adapt to continue to engage our practitioners even in these ever-changing circumstances. Our digital skills have had to improve as we have learned how to create and edit videos, curate a blog and online video channel. A communications' strategy was developed to keep our profile high and engage as many practitioners as possible.

Tracking analytics was another learning experience we had to undertake to check the success of our work. As this model had been successful, we are now in the process of adding to our bank of videos. We then plan to offer a bespoke Q&A session on these videos to our schools at their request. The skills we have developed have allowed us to think differently about all our work. We have a project to promote the science resources available through our library services. We are now looking at how we could help pupils/teachers create videos of the work they do with these resources and these videos become a bank of project ideas linked to the resource box. All these video resources and our video CLPL will be a lasting legacy of our RAiSE project.

Establishment:
Cathkin Community Nursery

Local Authority:
South Lanarkshire Council

What we did:

Teachers compiled active learning activity packs with lots of good examples of active learning including recipes and photos of how to do activities. These were sent home to families.

Staff kept in touch with their keyworker group using learning journals, posting videos and challenges for families to take part in. We had a 'Focussed Friday Family Fun Challenge', encouraging everyone to join in and gain their certificate which was sent digitally when complete. Videos were uploaded to our closed Facebook page of staff reading stories, singing songs (some using Makaton) with links to other websites they could get good ideas from. Some families gave staff challenges too. We recommended apps e.g. Book bug. Staff did a bake off challenge which families voted on.

Weekly Facebook updates were posted and responded to. Staff took the opportunity to complete Open University courses online (some taking 14 weeks). They participated in online learning and took part in webinars, updating and improving our skills. We all took part in self-evaluation of QI 2.3 Learning, Teaching and assessment and planning tracking and monitoring focussing on meaningful next steps in learning. An action plan was made and we are putting this in place.

Graduating children were given a socially distanced doorstep graduation, given a USB with a graduation video, pictures of their time with us, print out of their learning journals and a pack to help them with skills for school including scissor skills, whiteboard and pens and emotions cards with getting ready for school activities and links. Rainbow transitions with additional information about the children were sent to schools and returning parents were asked to fill these in for us to let us know how much their children had learned and new skills mastered during the lockdown.

Teacher had her own closed Facebook page giving ideas on active learning from early years throughout primary. She advertised this on our Facebook and 10 parents joined this group too.

Who we involved:

We feel through digital platforms we kept in touch with our families well and encouraged them to share their learning from home. We were able to recommend websites, apps etc. for people to use. Open university free courses were used well with the majority of staff undertaking at least one of these.

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The difference it made:

We feel that the additions of learning videos kept families interested throughout lockdown. With all staff being involved with videos, all children responded well to these and we were receiving feedback through messages and families sending photos of what they had been busy with.

The weekly update on Facebook always generated responses in messages and photographs from our families. Families were taking ownership of the content and after our challenges, a few families sent tasks for their child's keyworker to do. Real life learning took place in an active way and, as we kept in contact so well through learning journals online and on Facebook, we kept up the enthusiasm for learning. Our families enjoyed taking part in challenges and gaining their digital certificates

What we will do differently in the future:

I think that working from home has helped us as a whole staff team to realise what a brilliant resource online journals are and how we can actively engage our families with learning. From coming back, we have been speaking to parents and highlighting the importance of logging on the learning journals and checking the Facebook page, as these are our main forms of communication at present. We put our learning leaflets, newsletters and messages on these platforms. We are enjoying our socially distanced drop offs where we can catch up.

Staff have also started a termly keyworker child phone call so we can speak to parents for a short call to catch up and answer any questions. Parents are aware to call in or email in with any questions or queries too.

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Establishment:
The Usual Place

Local Authority:
Dumfries and Galloway Council

What we did:

The Usual Place (TUP) is an award-winning values-based organisation which pushes boundaries in delivering life-changing vocational learning opportunities for employment for young people with Additional Support Needs aged between 14 and 26 in Dumfries and Galloway. Trainees are enabled to gain vital skills and complete SVQs.

Throughout lockdown, The Usual Place was closed due to Government restrictions. As part of a weekly Trainee Engagement Programme during lockdown, trainees were enabled to develop their I.T. literacy skills, specifically becoming proficient in the Zoom videoconferencing tool. They learned Zoom etiquette, utilised a wide variety of tools, engaged in online training and took part in activities including a Zoom cookery lesson.

Trainees engaged with their peers and stakeholders updating them on what activities they had taken part in. This encouraged individual participation in other online and offline activities and enabled growing confidence in speaking online. One trainee subsequently delivered a presentation to Inspiring Scotland, various Autism charities and Scottish Government representatives.

10 trainees have completed Dynamic Youth Awards based on their learning during lockdown and are awaiting accreditation.

The weekly Trainee Engagement Programme has significantly reduced individual digital exclusion, promoted competency and confidence in online learning and reduced social isolation.

Who we involved:

The Usual Place's Autism Awareness Officer coordinated and led the project in partnership with Inspiring Scotland. Dumfries and Galloway College facilitated the successful online cookery lesson. The Usual Place staff participated in the Trainee Engagement Programme, enabling young people to use their new skills to teach others.

The difference it made:

We had tremendous feedback from trainees and their families. Digital Inclusion is always important, but became vital during lockdown to access key services and reduce social isolation. One trainee said: "I enjoyed meeting people and I loved being on Zoom because I had somebody to talk to through the challenging times".

Several trainees didn't have the confidence to access services digitally previously. One trainee wrote: "After having the training in how to use Zoom I have used it on other activities such as Music and Training. If I never had the training I wouldn't have taken part in the other activities that I enjoy".

Trainees are now confident speaking to others online and many have taught others, further promoting their abilities. One trainee said: "I have learned that I can do more than I think I can. I love doing challenges and pushing myself in the world".

10 trainees have now completed a Dynamic Youth Award based on their learning and development during lockdown. One remarked: "I felt more happy and more independent". Another said: "My confidence has got a lot stronger. I am much better at talking on the computer".

What we will do differently in the future:

Our Trainees have demonstrated a high degree of resilience in very challenging times. Enabling the trainees' individual achievements in I.T. literacy has provided TUP with an opportunity to develop a variety of collective and individual online approaches to learning and teaching which complement our existing face to face practice.

We identified early on that several trainees had a very low level of I.T. literacy and confidence. Trainees have gained vital digital skills and significant confidence in speaking online. Individuals are now able to present to groups online and share their skills with others and will be able to take part in future online and face to face awareness raising, presentations and training sessions we deliver.

Young people tell us that negative public perceptions hold them back, as evidenced in the report 'Scotland's invisible people: Support and opportunities for adults with learning disabilities (University of Strathclyde)'. Our Trainees' digital literacy achievements have demonstrated that with the right enabling approach, young people with additional support needs can achieve digital inclusion. This will in turn help change public perception.

Young people have yet again demonstrated the importance of high expectations of success, aspirational approaches to promoting ambition, and achievement in skills development.

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Establishment:
The Good Shepherd Centre

What we did:

At the Centre we recognise the value in taking every opportunity to celebrate the achievements our young people have accomplished during their stay with us. In June, our young people experienced an activity week with a difference. This consisted of a Ready Steady Cook competition, sports day, virtual quiz, magician workshops, virtual reality experiences, a cinema, mixed sports opportunities including trampolining and archery, and an awards ceremony.

Due to the uncertainty surrounding restrictions in June, we had to postpone our annual 'G in the Park' event, however with careful planning we were able to re-brand this 'G in the Hoose' this September. The whole event was streamed and consisted of a reflection on the events of the year, messages from local celebrities, a Masked Singer performance (after careful consultation with the Scottish Government), a virtual quiz and distribution of certificates to young people highlighting achievements.

In early October, we celebrated the launch of the National Secure Care Pathway and Standards. Our young people learned about the standards, designed poster entries for the national publication, created window display depicting what the national standards meant to them and took part in a number of games linked to the newly published standards.

Who we involved:

Our events include all staff across the centre such as members of the education team, care staff, wellbeing team, senior leadership team, admin support, janitorial and domestic staff.

The difference it made:

Carrying out events within the limitations of the pandemic has cemented the strong bond between our staff who have admirably displayed a 'we are all in this together' can-do attitude throughout. From the onset, we have endeavoured to ensure that young people within our care during this difficult time were shielded where possible from adverse impacts and experienced the same high quality care and education we strive for during normal circumstances, and encouragingly our young people have regularly professed that we have done so. Some have even went so far as to say they feel lucky to be accommodated at the Centre during this time.

Continuing to celebrate success through fun and engaging events allowed our young people to interact virtually during what could otherwise have been a period of heightened feelings of isolation due to the restrictions placed on mixing households. Providing a platform for achievements to be recognised fostered a community spirit across the Centre as peers applauded and complimented each other with one young person even stating "this is the best day of my life" following the distribution of certificates. Building confidence and cultivating hope during unprecedented and uncertain times has been a privilege.

What we will do differently in the future:

Our success has always been a consequence of strong relationships with our young people and this has traditionally relied on a degree of proximity. However, in the current climate we have had to work hard to convey the same feelings of nurture without the luxury of physical caring gestures. The use of carefully chosen language within verbal communication and ensuring regular discourse has become paramount. In simple terms, we have had to tell young people we care and provide praise verbally where we haven't been able to show them through the usual hugs, high-fives and fist pumps. This has undoubtedly been the most difficult adjustment.

Like everyone else, we are becoming increasingly aware that this destructive virus may be a part of our lives for some time to come, however we can seek solace in the fact that we continue to provide the same opportunities, structure and routine our young people thrive on through slight adjustments in our operations.

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Establishment:
Scottish Book Trust

What we did:

Adapting a live children's book tour visiting schools all over the UK each year, to lockdown and bringing children's authors, illustrators, poets, rappers and other creatives into an online space.

Creating and providing entertaining and educational videos to engage with children, young people, families and educators. Content covered a range of themes such as mental health awareness, storytelling, story-building, numeracy and STEM. The focus of these videos was to encourage people to write, draw, create every day as well as providing support for the target audiences through activities with clear educational links, but with an overarching focus on reading, writing and drawing for pleasure and as creative distraction.

Between April and end of June we programmed and delivered:

- 18 new bespoke virtual tour videos.
- 10 re-edited archive videos from locations around Scotland from previous tours.

When schools re-opened, we switched our focus from pre-recorded videos on social media to live interactive workshops in classrooms. Our first week-long virtual tour featured:

- Eight virtual workshops, three bespoke videos for 13 schools from eight different local authorities across Scotland.
- Our second week-long tour is due to take place during Book Week Scotland and will visit 62 schools from 22 different local authorities.

Who we involved:

Early Years settings, primary and secondary schools across Scotland, Scottish Friendly, Maths Week Scotland, Book Week Scotland, local authority professionals, educators, parents and families.

The difference it made:

Videos have to date been viewed 82,000 times. Income and promotion for authors who ordinarily would have been making the vast majority of their income from school and festival visits.

We had an impact on teachers as well as their pupils: "The introduction was quite emotive for me, I mentioned both my daughters are dyslexic and struggling their way through biology degrees. On reflection I wish now they had had more opportunity to develop skills they really enjoy".

Our Maths Week tour had an emphasis on dyslexia, which the author and illustrator suffered from. The event gave a positive message to children who also struggle and also reminded them that there is a bigger world out there: "As we are not allowed visitors in school just now, having you in our classroom through Teams was a great way to give the children a sense that they belong to a bigger world again. My two pupils with dyslexia were given a very positive message. One in particular appeared to have a light bulb moment – you CAN be successful! An invaluable message".

What we will do differently in the future:

We have spent the past 20 years delivering the Scottish Friendly Children's Book Tour directly to children in schools all across the UK, seeing over 100,000 children in that time. This enforced change in the way our programme works has highlighted how some of the barriers and limitations we face in visiting face to face such as geography and volume of applications are alleviated by the use of digital. Instead of seeing just one or two schools per event, we can see dozens via video conferencing software.

We can work with authors from all over the globe without the environmental or monetary costs of flying them to Scotland! Long-term, we would never look to replace our existing offer, as the power of an author visit and the magic of meeting an author in person can't be replicated online. However, we will look to make better use of the digital platforms we've explored during lockdown to further broaden our reach.

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Establishment:
Community Learning and Development

Local Authority:
Aberdeenshire Council

What we did:

CLD adapted to deliver an online learning offer using the G-Suite platform, using Google Meet for visual communication and Google Classroom as a virtual learning environment. We supported our learners to gain access to the G Suite platform and used WhatsApp to continue sharing resources, supporting learners in a person-centred approach, continuation of learning, and the gathering of learner voice in our transition to an online environment. We were able to transition to the online learning environment due to an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) pilot project we ran from January 2020 to March 2020 with e-Sgoil, the national digital school.

Over 100 ESOL learners joined our online provision across Aberdeenshire and we emailed, spoke to, or sent letters to another 250 learners to encourage them to join in. We linked in with the Connecting Scotland scheme and offered support and ongoing learning to over 140 learners and community members.

CLD workers were able to deliver literacy and numeracy support alongside ITC and employability online to learners. We further rolled out a number of 'Power Tools' sessions covering topics focused on wellbeing & health such as 'Mindfulness, moods and mindset and self-belief and self-talk'.

Who we involved:

e-Sgoil the national digital school ESOL pilot project allowed Aberdeenshire CLD to leverage that learning and experience to recreate our own online provision for Adult Learners, Young People and community members. Other partners included the wider Education Department and Google for Education Scotland team.

The difference it made:

Adult learners were able to continue participating in their learning, access information, resources, and support. Learners continued their English learning and preparation for future SQA accreditation. Learners were able to have a safe space for formal accredited learning, and also time for more informal learning and support i.e. language around COVID-19, signposting for help, food parcels or requests for internet and devices. Learners were given time and space to talk to one another and support one another in an online community-based approach that was supported by CLD staff. i.e. help with home learning for children, accessing technology and supporting one another through COVID-19.

Learners were incredibly appreciative of the support and effort staff went to, offering a continuation of learning but also a means of contact and support for one another. Learners have been better able to support their families, engage with other online learning opportunities, and the online offer has made our provision more sustainable in the long run.

Our e-Sgoil experience helped lay the foundation for our online provision. It helped us test out what worked and what didn't work in an online blended environment. It helped us ensure that the courses we transitioned to the online environment were engaging.

What we will do differently in the future:

Our online CLD services have increased the sustainability and flexibility of our offer, as we can now cross local community boundaries and offer more learners the opportunity to join our provision online or in a blended learning environment. This will allow us to support more learners, offer further accreditation and ensure a flexible timetable of delivery.

The online provision has removed barriers around time, distance, and locations of physical classes. It has allowed us to offer a provision that spans morning, afternoon and evening classes, catering to as wide a pool of learners as possible.

Our approach was based on Kolb's model of experiential learning where we want to ensure that learners can plan, do and reflect/review their learning in the online environment. G Suite provides us with a single platform that allows us to meet with and work with learners through a single sign-in process, reducing the need for multiple accounts or multiple platforms. It is also familiar to parents as their children will use Glow. Our online learning environment also helps build the skills and knowledge that learners require in the digital world.

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Establishment:

St Ninian's Primary School and Nursery

Local Authority:

Stirling Council

What we did:

On Friday 20 March, parents received an email giving words of reassurance and a plan of how learning was going to work with advice around routines, tips and additional learning resources categorised into curricular areas for extension. In the weeks previous, staff prepared for this possibility with resources and school planning progressions placed on shared drives. From Monday morning, staff provided continuity through differentiated learning, following progressions and using our Seesaw and Google Classroom digital platforms in the core areas of Literacy and Numeracy. iPads or Chromebooks were set up ready for use and delivered to families who required them.

Following a sustained period of core learning, a cohesive four-week programme was created and shared with parents detailing our rationale for the final month and ensuring a planned well thought-out period in the lead up to summer. The four weeks each had a focus, HWB, transition, reflections on learning during lockdown using the four contexts and saying goodbye to this school year with fun, and in each week, a focus on one or two of our school values and resilience. Resources including printed copies of work, jotters, pencils etc. were placed outside the school for families to access. Surveys were distributed to parents, staff and children to gather views, with high response rates and very positive feedback. Staff wellbeing was also taken into consideration, a weekly text check-up code was created and staff were assigned a key SLT who called them if they wished and information was shared re council support services.

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Who we involved:

The evening of 20 March and that weekend, our community and partners; Active Stirling, Stirling Inclusion Support Staff (SISS) and Fleet transformed St Ninian's into a care hub, the largest in Stirling. Our SLT were key in leading the hub for the next 13 weeks while also supporting staff members who volunteered as well as provided learning. SLT from our learning community and across Stirling, along with SISS came together in the hub, developing relationships, sharing resources, ideas, pedagogy and supporting each other throughout lockdown.

Our staff worked in partnership with each other to ensure our learners had other experiences beyond literacy and numeracy each week. All staff came together to provide our P7s with a surprise doorstep graduation and goody bag that included a surprise group photo provided by our local photographer. Staff visited the doorsteps of each of our new P1s, who were presented with a teddy in a school jumper, knitted by staff and families.

Our nursery team did doorstep visits as well as being regular volunteers in the hub and created fabulous fun activities for families in a closed Facebook page. SLT called every family to chat and contacted our more vulnerable families weekly. Easter eggs and food packages, provided by community groups, were collected and delivered to families by school staff. Children were taken by Family Support Service and school staff to hubs. Our uniform bank was developed even further, run by two committed parents. Our parent council supported the school throughout, the Chair in regular communication, sharing views and organised meetings where they could ask questions of SLT.

The difference it made:

The school as a hub made an immeasurable difference for families – they had care without stress, cost or worry; children were supported physically, emotionally and with learning. Our digital platforms that were well established, provided connection and continuity for our learners and families. Daily core content enabled families to have routine, to pace their time and kept learning going. Parents commented on the quality of communication and learning from the school and the commitment of the staff, strengthening relationships.

The four-week programme brought the school back together as a community before summer, brightening everyone up with activities that involved the whole community and were shared. Staff created a range of videos e.g. reading stories, or teaching a maths concept, and demonstrated sports day activities and health and wellbeing relaxation exercises, all to ensure the wellbeing of our children and families was forefront. 88% of our children engaged in learning over lockdown due to the relentless support of staff.

Parents are much more aware of their own children's learning, some parents even commented on understanding concepts better themselves, so being able to support better! Transition ensured that, where possible, children were prepared for the new term. A transition programme was created with our nursery and school together and a google classroom created to support activities, this was greatly appreciated by families new to the school who did not have the opportunity for visits, virtual tours of the school were included.

What we will do differently in the future:

Staff at St Ninian's went above and beyond for our children and families, as always. Every teacher completed 'Ambassador' training over the first weekend, to enable additional features to be released to them in our digital platforms. They did online lessons and shared their learning with each other, ensuring that the skills of every staff member were hugely developed. This was very beneficial, as staff confidence increased, the quality of what was provided was amazing and continues in day to day practice.

Stirling Learning Community headteachers continue to be in much more regular contact with each other, virtual skills learned in lockdown are now a regular feature in weekly Teams meetings, sharing and agreeing practice, resulting in continuity of experiences, pedagogy and a more joined up approach across the LC.

The experiences of lockdown, although tough and hard, have built very strong relationships and a real sense of togetherness in our community. Networking while in the hubs has created connections that would never have been there before. Children have become more used to the online platforms and can navigate with ease. They are sharing more of their learning by themselves. Our children settled back into school very well, we believe that is due to the well planned and considered learning and curriculum over lockdown. Lockdown and returning to school has proven that St Ninian's are ready for anything and that our vision and values are absolutely at the heart of all we do.

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Establishment:
Rosslyn School

Local Authority:
Fife Council

What we did:

There are five Special schools in Fife. When lockdown happened, two hubs were created, one of which brought four smaller special schools together to share the same facility (hub). Rosslyn school in Kirkcaldy became the base for the most vulnerable young people in our locality.

Each special school has its own headteacher, and we immediately seized the opportunity to collaborate and support each other. We decided to develop a YouTube (closed) channel to share good examples of learning activities for families with young people working within the Foundation Milestones (complex needs), to Early and First level.

The challenge for the special school sector was presenting materials to learners who need interactive and multi-sensory experiences. Often lessons are heavily resourced with symbols, objects of reference, and other sensory cues. Staff were so creative in finding ways of presenting the materials to families by displaying the symbol on the screen, introducing the resources they would need that could be found around the home, and keeping the language short using key words and signing. One of the PSA staff from Rosslyn presented a series of music videos that were familiar to our learners. Families reported that this was a lifeline at times. It helped their young people to stay connected as they listened to familiar voices and songs.

Who we involved:

This project included four special schools – Rosslyn in Kirkcaldy, John Fergus in Glenrothes, Kilmarnock in Cupar, and Hynhead in Buckhaven. All staff were involved: teachers and PSA staff.

The difference it made:

Family engagement stayed about the same throughout lockdown with approx. 40% fully engaged, 30% partially engaged and 30% not engaged week on week. Some families reported that any school work became a trigger, as learners associated certain tasks only with school. Other families reported that the YouTube channel helped learners to stay connected as they smiled at and watched staff telling stories and singing songs.

Over the past six months this private channel has had 4,200 views. This is a specifically targeted audience and these figures are not impacted by random members of the public. Our families have watched a total of 187.7 hours of learning. The channel peaked in May, however it has continued to have peaks through July and August. This has evidenced what a valuable resource this has become in that families have continued to use it over the summer.

What we will do differently in the future:

Families often report that holiday times are challenging. They struggle with ideas and resources to keep their young people busy. The fact that the channel continued to get views over the summer period when the hub was closed evidence their engagement in this resource. This has taught us that our families need our support, and that we can continue to offer support over the holidays via the channel. Staff continue to get time to post video ideas and the channel will be updated before each holiday break.

We now have a recovery teacher in post for each school until June 2021. Part of this remit is to continue to ensure that the channel meets the needs of our families. Should we have to move into a blended model, this resource will be ready to go. It continues to be a work in progress and we are looking at giving families more guidance in relation to the curriculum level and CfE level for each activity.

Establishment:
Kibble Education and Care Centre

Local Authority:
Renfrewshire Council

What we did:

When news of lockdown came, the Creative Arts Department at Kibble Education and Care Centre were determined to find a way of engaging learners in a way that was inclusive and nurturing as well as ensuring attainment, engagement and most importantly, enjoyment.

We knew that to ensure engagement and excitement over a new project, a level of learner agency would be required. We reflected on information gathered in previous student steer groups and made phone calls to students whom we knew would be forthcoming with ideas. The idea of a Fashion Show came to light and it became our mission to bring this to fruition amid a pandemic and all the challenges that this would bring.

Learners worked together with the staff in each of Kibble's residential houses to create costumes, learn new skills in sewing, fabric design and dying as well as theatrical special effects like projection mapping.

Our resulting Virtual Fashion Show cumulated in a 75-minute event which was a mixture of live and pre-recorded footage that was streamed across Kibble's residential houses, celebrating all our pupils' and colleagues' achievements of learning throughout this time.

Who we involved:

We were delighted that each of Kibble's education provisions were able to be involved in our Virtual Fashion Show. Additionally, pupils who access our education service but stay externally to Kibble were also involved. We were kindly donated iPads by charity, Children's Aid and Re:Mode not only generously donated unwanted clothes to be upcycled, but provided access to online sewing tutorials for our students.

The difference it made:

During lockdown, the focus for us was on inclusivity, engagement and attainment, ensuring we were allowing our learners to maximise this experience in the best way possible. However, on reflection it is apparent we were doing more than that – it was interesting to watch the evident therapeutic benefits for students as well as staff. Working towards a goal, creating and making in a safe environment, all as part of a team was a clear focus for some, many who required a level of escapism in a time which was unexpected, in a world that seemed so unsteady and insecure.

“
I can't believe I walked on a catwalk! It was weird seeing myself on TV, nice that I had people I was comfortable with when I was doing it though”

3rd year pupil.

The Fashion Show not only boosted our learners' self-esteem and confidence but ensured the attainment of many skills required for our ever-changing world, including communication, collaboration, problem solving and self-regulation.

“
Working on making costumes for my staff members and learning to tie-dye were the favourite parts of the fashion show, it was nice that I could get up and do something fun every day”

5th Year pupil.

What we will do differently in the future:

Our outlook as practitioners has widened, we were able to see the delivery of the curriculum through a different lens, one that included a digital component. This was interesting and intriguing, it has allowed us to see the avenues we can future follow to educate our learners.

We overcame many barriers, including technology, which has given our practice another dimension, we can now stream Kibble's Creative Arts Department events online, meaning we can access more of our learners. Having this platform will be invaluable and can be built on as time goes on.

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Establishment:
CLD ESOL

Local Authority:
South Ayrshire Council

What we did:

Community ESOL focused on maintaining engagement with learners. As ESOL depends greatly on group interaction, we developed a programme of videos made by the learners in their own homes. The activity involved the whole family including children. The families made a cookery video, preparing and presenting 'A dish from home'. The videos were then collated and shared with the group.

Follow-up activity supported speaking and listening in the form of questions to the chef. Lessons included online shopping for ingredients, costing, weighing and written tasks to present the recipes. The guests asked questions about ingredients and were given some background as to what to expect when you visit a family in Syria/Afghanistan/Spain/Serbia/etc. The activity was supported by volunteers who edited the footage and gave 1:1 follow-up sessions with learners online.

Who we involved:

CLD Literacies/ESOL tutors and learners as well as volunteers. IT technicians supported the collating and saving of clips.

The difference it made:

Families were engaged in the entire process. The children helped with the cooking but used their bi-lingual ability to translate for parents. There was a sense of fun making the videos and then sharing with the group.

There was an element of competition and focus that contextualised the ESOL learning but was clearly a distraction from COVID-19 isolation. This activity impacted on a wider cultural sharing. The families took great pride in sharing not just the process of making the food but giving a real

feeling of being a guest in each other's homes and the customs linked to cultural identity that they would experience. This was real awareness raising and a natural opportunity for us all to learn first-hand, not just about tastes and new ingredients, but what it would be like to visit and the etiquette embedded in the rich cultures we share.

What we will do differently in the future:

The lockdown restrictions forced the service to look at methodology to support learning but more importantly to sustain engagement. We had a new need to look at delivery that would not just meet language needs, but also that human need of being in contact. We had already planned for online delivery that would facilitate face to face contact with tutor/volunteer and learner but we quickly identified that there was clearly a gap in this interface. Learners need social interaction especially with other learners that they had already formed relationships with. They needed to know that the group dynamic was sustainable.

This experience, on reflection, gives us as educators a clearer vision of how learning can be facilitated remotely and be effective. It also, however, reinforces that element of adult learning that can only be developed by the wider concept of connection with others in the same situation, with the same challenges. We need to plan for a blended approach that ensures wider interaction not just for learning but for overall wellbeing and mental health.

Establishment:
Lifelong Learning

Local Authority:
City of Edinburgh Council

What we did:

During lockdown we had to adapt from being a purely face to face service to having an online and digital presence. This included creating a social media presence on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. This has given us a new focus and enabled us to engage with learners and tutors in new ways. It has afforded the opportunity to reach a wider demographic too. We created YouTube courses which were delivered to learners, enabling them to stay connected and engage with one another and still engage in learning opportunities.

Who we involved:

Existing students, wider Edinburgh residents, tutors and our staff.

The difference it made:

This kept people engaged through lockdown and provided them opportunities for health and wellbeing activities, including Yoga and Pilates along with other creative outlets such as writing, poetry and photography. An online platform enabled students to continue to engage with members of their learning community, as well as meeting with new people.

The opportunities were created for staff and tutors to learn new ways to deliver adult education courses. A chance to widen the adult learning audience and allow for creativity to diversify and develop the adult education programme. An online presence will now be part of future programmes we offer to local people.

What we will do differently in the future:

We have embarked on a huge learning curve, had to be very proactive and adaptable and remain positive. We have all had to learn new skills and be very self-motivated. Learn new Digital skills and new ways of working.

Long term impact will be to change the AEP - it has undoubtedly broadened our outlook and motivated us to find new ways of working. As we continue to have limited access to buildings, it presents an opportunity to still offer a service to students. Tutors have been able to develop their practice too. YouTube videos, led to a pilot of online courses - delivered digitally, which now allows us to move forward and develop an online programme.

Professional Thought Piece



Ian Munro, Rector,
Dollar Academy

How did Dollar Academy respond to the Pandemic?

In terms of learning and teaching, the immediate challenge was to ensure continuity of education and still have meaningful daily contact with our pupils whilst they were not in our school buildings.

Our aim was to digitalise the curriculum, which created a need for staff training at different levels depending on their digital skills. This ranged from refresher sessions on TEAMS to post-grad level study in instructional design. Pupil engagement with the resulting digital provision was strong. We did, however, then worry that our youngsters were perhaps spending too much time online and, after surveying the pupils and parents, we introduced some activities that took pupils away from the computer screen, such as exercise sessions and nature challenges.

It was also important to promote a sense of connectedness by creating online social spaces for pupils and staff. We had Zoom sessions where form and year groups could get together, quiz nights and learning communities for colleagues, and an online prizegiving at the end of term. Social media was also used to connect and communicate with pupils and parents in new ways, such as short video messages from senior staff.

With our boarders, we had an immediate challenge in getting them home safely, as international borders kept closing. We were conscious that if we didn't move quickly to put in place travel plans, we would be unable to reunite boarders with their families for an indefinite period. Thankfully, we got everyone home safe and sound.

What needs do you identify as most critical for the education system at this time?

We were certainly alert to the potential health and wellbeing issues associated with temporary school closures. Perhaps we underestimate just how important the informal social interactions that we create time and space for in schools are to pupils and colleagues, and, realistically, these cannot all be easily recreated digitally.

When the regular structure and support of the school day was lost, some of our vulnerable children found things quite challenging. We paid close attention to this, providing online support and counselling where appropriate. When the school reopened, we also put in place several virtual and physical refamiliarisation events and tours.

What are the features of effective system leadership during this time?

For us, it was open communication with pupils, parents and colleagues; reading as widely as possible around all issues connected to the pandemic; capitalising on interesting opportunities when they arose; and, at all times, showing compassion.

I think dealing with a pandemic pushed leadership teams around the country outside their comfort zone, and we too had to quickly adapt and establish new ways of working. For example, daily Zoom meetings and online collaboration tools quickly became the norm.

Although challenging, it has also been a very rewarding time to lead, as there has been lots to learn and many challenges to overcome on a daily basis. The requirement to make important decisions quickly has been good for our collective mental agility.

Compassion is critically important, as the pandemic has touched everyone in one way or another, and you never really know what the person opposite you is feeling. Whether it be checking in on a self-isolating peer or asking a colleague to go on a lunchtime walk, we have encouraged everyone at the school to help promote the physical, emotional and mental health of others.

Is there an education silver lining to this crisis?

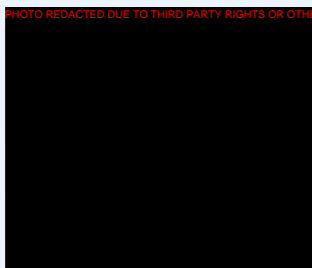
Throughout lockdown, we tried to make the best of what was a difficult national situation through nimble and creative thinking. This actually led us to consider what action we could take to reduce inequities in the existing education system. To address some of these, we launched a new online platform named Dollar Discovers (<https://www.dollardiscovers.org/>) to share the digital content we created during lockdown with young people throughout Scotland for free.

We started by offering Higher Politics, as this is not taught in many schools, and in a few weeks 40 pupils from the length and breadth of Scotland signed up. We then created courses that are endorsed by industry, as opposed to the SQA, that focused on the UN's sustainability development goals. This initiative was an example of building good relationships and learning at an organisational level at a moment in time when the mantra was 'build back better' and people were perhaps more open to collaboration.

Dollar Discovers is now developing new content and going from strength to strength. The initiative, and the pandemic, certainly allowed us to re-evaluate and extend the reach of our charitable purpose.

“Although challenging, it has also been a very rewarding time to lead, as there has been lots to learn and many challenges to overcome on a daily basis.”

Professional Thought Piece



Graeme Logan,
Director of Learning, Learning
Directorate, Scottish Government

How are countries including Scotland responding to the Pandemic?

We are working across different disciplines to respond to this health crisis, reduce harm, protect people and save lives. We are taking a very balanced approach across the four harms to make sure, for example, that we take into account the social impact of restrictions and mitigations. In education, we are keen to keep schools safe to ensure children and young people's progress, development and wellbeing. We have been working very closely with stakeholders and key partners through our Education Recovery Group, which currently meets weekly and is chaired by the Deputy First Minister. Overall our school safety guidance is working well and this has been verified by the Health and Safety Executive who have engaged with 500 schools on approaches to implementation.

It is really important that school communities are empowered to work together to support each other. Learning and teaching should continue and we need to do all that we can to support children's wellbeing. The flexibility we have in the Curriculum for Excellence framework ensures that teachers can very much adapt their learning and teaching to take account of the needs of their learners and the current circumstances in an appropriate age and stage way.

What needs do you identify as the most critical?

For children and young people and staff it has to be about protecting and supporting health and wellbeing. I was really pleased that our education recovery partners worked together on our recovery curriculum guidance which emphasised strongly the need for wellbeing to be a central feature of school re-opening in August. We see lots of really heartening examples where people are looking at principles of nurture and improving

resilience to help children and young people to work through what we are living through during the epidemic.

There has been a strong focus on reconnection and renewal with families and communities. It is important that we assess where children are, sensitively and carefully, and continue to ensure that we focus on achieving excellence and equity for all learners. Teachers in Scotland are very skilled in assessing children's progress as part of normal learning and teaching activities. In addition, we need to use the range of evidence to inform the overall judgement of teachers on how to intensify support for children who need our help the most at this time; whether they are vulnerable and/or have had a less positive experience in lockdown. I also think it is more important than ever for the education system to work with other multi-agency partners to understand the needs of children and families and to help them to make progress.

What are the features of effective system leadership during this time?

We need to do everything we can to support practitioners and leaders on the front line and to ensure they get the professional learning they need at this time. We need to, where possible, remove anything that adds to workload unnecessarily.

We need simplicity and clarity. System leaders need to be working really well with national and local partners and with colleagues in health. We need to continue to keep our guidance and range of mitigations under review so that children, young people and staff within the education system as safe as possible. We also need very authentic, calm, reassuring and affirming leadership from those working at a system level.

Is there an education silver lining to this crisis?

- Our use of technologies to support learning has advanced significantly. We now know how it feels to be working remotely and therefore have a new level of understanding on how it feels to be remote and/or isolated.
- More than ever, we need a strong commitment around fairness and equity.
- We continue to be united as a system around the mission of excellence and equity for all learners.
- We have learned to work even more effectively together and at real pace. There is lots to learn about managing change and pace of change.
- It has helped that we have a curriculum framework which is flexible. We have started a review of Curriculum for Excellence with the OECD. How do we learn from this experience so that in the future we can make better use of learning online or learning outdoors and have as much flexibility in the curriculum as we need? Moving forward, what needs to be consistent in the curriculum experienced by all learners in Scotland and what can be flexible and responsive to local needs?

“
Teachers in Scotland are very skilled in assessing children's progress as part of normal learning and teaching activities.”

“**What Scotland Learned truly is a vibrant celebration of the success of our collective endeavours to do our best for the children and young people of Scotland. Moving forward, it is important that we continue to build on the legacy of the last few months. We should extend and strengthen our collaborative efforts to capitalise on the learning, innovation and achievements to build a system which supports excellence and equity for all learners in Scotland.**”

School and community

This theme is about the school and community as a place of learning. Places of learning changed during school closures but facilities and resources were still available for learners. This theme also celebrates how well schools connected with their local communities.

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Establishment:
Fèisean nan Gàidheal

What we did:

Under the banner #cleachdi aig an taigh, we organised a range of activities to strengthen the use of Gaelic among young people while at home during lockdown. These included:

- Early years song and games; Gaelic medium activities
- Gaelic drama workshops
- Gaelic language lessons for learners and children in Gaelic medium education (GME)
- Beairteas gnàthasan-cainnt sessions to enrich young people's vocabulary
- A weekly online café with guests to inspire teenagers to use their Gaelic
- Gaelic singing sessions for all ages
- A programme of Gaelic medium musical instrument lessons
- Presentations on Gaelic culture
- 'Caraidean Còmhraidh' sessions with small groups ensuring young people used Gaelic

Our Oide online teaching resource was offered free and we released Ceòl nam Fèis as an e-book.

Elements of the Gaelic Drama Summer School and Fèis Alba proceeded online, with performances at the end of each. Fuaran continued and we added songs weekly to our 'Year of Coasts and Waters' Gaelic song archive. To the end of June, our online videos had been viewed by 19,000 plus and 4,000 plus people had taken part in activities.

During the summer holidays, we collaborated with local Fèisean to ensure there was one online Fèis each week.

Who we involved:

Funded by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Creative Scotland and HIE, organised and run by Fèisean nan Gàidheal in collaboration with local Fèisean, offered to all schools where Gaelic is taught as L2 and all Gaelic medium schools and departments. A number of freelance tutors were employed.

The difference it made:

From the understanding that schools could be impacted indefinitely came the realisation that children in GME settings could be disproportionately disadvantaged if they didn't live in a Gaelic-speaking home. By offering a wide-range of Gaelic-based activities, the main benefit from the programme was the ability it offered participants to continue using Gaelic while not attending school. Continuity is essential in language transmission, where the language of education may be a second or third language for most pupils.

In addition to that important element, the work we carried out strengthened the delivery of the curriculum, particularly in relation to the Gaelic language and expressive arts, at a time when pupils were at home.

Another benefit was the employment the programme provided for freelance tutors at a time when many of them had regular work cancelled.

As an organisation, we learned a lot about online delivery, what works well and what is more challenging. This will influence our delivery in future.

What we will do differently in the future:

There is no doubt the COVID-19 crisis resulted in all organisations having to rethink how they deliver their programmes of work. While the circumstances which forced this were certainly not ideal, it did little harm to examine how we could better use online platforms to deliver work.

While we contend that face-to-face teaching is best in transmitting language and music tuition, and that will always be the case, as a stop-gap measure, online delivery has been well received and worked well on the whole. Some tutors felt that young people had fewer distractions online, than might be the case in a group environment, and that their progress in music learning was not adversely affected by the online nature of tuition.

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Buidheann: Fèisean nan Gàidheal

Na rinn sinn:

Fon bhratach “#cleachdi aig an taigh”, chuir sinn air dòigh raon de ghnìomhachdan gus cleachdadh na Gàidhlig am measg òigrìdh a neartachadh fhad ‘s a bhathar ag ionnsachadh san dachaigh rè a’ ghlasaidh-shluaigh. Bha sin a’ gabhail a-steach:

- òrain, geamannan agus gnìomhachdan eile tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig airson clann a tha aig an ìre ionnsachaidh làn-bhogadh
- bùithtean-obrach dràma tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig
- leasain Ghàidhlig airson luchd-ionnsachaidh agus clann ann am FtG
- seiseanan Bearrteis air gnàthasan-cainnt gus briathrachas na h-òigrìdh a shaoibhreachadh
- cafaidh air-loidhne gach seachdain le aoighean gus deugairean a bhrosnachadh an cuid Gàidhlig a chleachdadh
- seiseanan seinn sa Ghàidhlig airson a h-uile aois
- prògram de leasain ionnsramaid-ciùil tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig
- taisbeanaidhean air cultar Gàidhlig
- seiseanan ‘Caraidean Còmhradh’ le buidhnean beaga gus dèanamh cinnteach gun robh òigrìdh a’ cleachdadh Gàidhlig.

Chaidh an goireas air-loidhne againn Oide a thairgsinn saor an-asgaidh agus dh’fhoillsich sinn Ceòl nam Fèis mar leabhar-d.

Chaidh eileamaidean de Sgoil-shamhradh Dràma Gàidhlig agus de dh’Fhèis Alba air adhart air-loidhne, agus taisbeanadh ga chur air dòigh aig deireadh an dà thachartais. Lean Fuaran air, agus chuir sinn òrain ris an tasglann Ghàidhlig againn gach seachdain airson Bliadhna Chladaichean is Uisgeachan. Gu ruige deireadh an Ògmhios, chunnacas na bhidiothan air-loidhne againn le 19,000+ agus bha 4,000+ air pàirt a ghabhail ann an gnìomhachdan.

Rè saor-làithean an t-samhraidh, bha sinn ag obair ann an co-bhann ri Fèisean ionadail gus dèanamh cinnteach gun robh aon Fhèis air-loidhne gach seachdain. Bha seo a’ cuideachadh clann gus am misneachd is fileantas sa Ghàidhlig a chumail suas agus a’ cur taic ri eadar-ghluasadan.

Cò bha sinn a’ gabhail a-steach:

Air am maoineachadh le Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Alba Cruthachail agus HIE, air an cur air dòigh le Fèisean nan Gàidheal ann an co-bhann ri Fèisean ionadail, bhathar gan tairgse don h-uile sgoil far a bheil a’ teagasg Gàidhlig mar chiad chànan a bharrachd agus don h-uile sgoil is roinn a bhios a’ toirt seachad foghlam tron Ghàidhlig. Chaidh grunn oidean fhastadh ag obair air an urra fhèin.

An diofar a rinn e:

A’ tuigsinn gum faodadh droch bhuaidh gun sgur a bhith air sgoiltean, bhathar a’ co-dhùnadh gum faodadh clann ann an suidheachaidhean FtG a bhith fo anacothrom mì-chuibheasach ma bha iad a’ fuireach ann an taigh far nach robh Gàidhlig air a bruidhinn. Le bhith a’ tairgse raon farsaing de ghnìomhachdan stèidhte air Gàidhlig, b’ e am prìomh leas bhon phrògram gun robhar a’ tairgse don luchd-pàirteachaidh gum b’ urrainn dhaibh leantainn orra a’ cleachdadh Gàidhlig fhad ‘s a bha iad far na sgoile. Tha leantainneachd riatanach ann an tar-chur cànan, far a bheil cànan an fhoghlaim na dhàrna no na threas cànan airson na mòr-chuid de sgoilearan. A bharrachd air an eileamaid chudromaich sin, bha an obair a rinn sinn a’ neartachadh libhrigeadh a’ churraicealaim, gu h-àraid a thaobh Gàidhlig agus nan ealan chruthachail, aig àm nuair a bha sgoilearan aig an dachaigh.

Mar shochair eile, bha am prògram a’ toirt fastadh do dh’oidean ag obair air an urra fhèin aig àm nuair a bha mòran dhiubh air an obair chunbhalach aca a chall.

Mar bhuidheann, dh’ionnsaich sinn tòrr mu dheidhinn libhrigeadh air-loidhne, dè tha ag obair gu math agus dè tha nas dùbhланаiche. Bidh seo a’ toirt buaidh air an libhrigeadh againn sam àm ri teachd.

Na nì sinn diofraichte san àm ri teachd:

Chan eil teagamh ann gu bheil an èiginn Covid-19 air adhbharachadh gum feum a h-uile buidheann ath-smuainteachadh air mar a bhios iad a’ libhrigeadh an cuid phrògraman-obrach. Ged nach robh an suidheachadh a dh’adhbharaich seo idir foirfe, cha do rinn e mòran cron a bhith ag ath-sgrùdadh mar a dh’fhaodamaid innealan air-loidhne a chleachdadh na b’ fhèarr gus obair a libhrigeadh.

Ged a bhios sinn ag argamaid gur e teagasg aghaidh-ri-aghaidh an dòigh as fhèarr airson oideachas cànan is ciùil a thar-chur, agus gum bi sin daonnan fìor, mar ghnìomh a lìonas beàrn chaidh libhrigeadh air-loidhne a ghabhail ris gu math agus dh’obraich e gu math san fharsaingeachd. Bha feadhainn de na h-oidean a’ faireachdainn nach robh uimhir ann a bha a’ tarraing aire na cloinne air falbh nuair a bha iad air-loidhne, an coimeas ri bhith ag ionnsachadh mar phàirt de bhuidheann còmhla, agus nach robh an t-oideas air-loidhne a’ toirt droch bhuaidh air an adhartas a bha iad a’ dèanamh ann an ionnsachadh ciùil.

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Establishment:

Youth Work Team

Local Authority:

North Ayrshire Council

What we did:

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, North Ayrshire Councils Youth Work Team were fast in creating a full interactive digital programme under the branding of #DigiDReam. The programme gave the team and partners a platform to engage and work with young people and families throughout lockdown.

Highlights:

- 105 separate activities and challenges for young people to take part in.
- The two programmes' social media engagements showed engagement with over 71,000 people in 13 weeks .
- The weekly online family quiz ran for the full duration with young people, friends and family groups. We also adapted the quiz to bring on two British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters for young people who were deaf to be able to participate.
- Working with our countryside rangers, we distributed over 300 plants to young people to grow their own vegetable gardens.
- Created lockdown isolation packs for young people which were delivered to their homes.
- Created large weekly events including July step challenge with young people and families – with over 1.7 million steps walked, equating to 800 miles.
- Worked with Education to create digital back to school content for pupils ahead of their return with our young people.
- Created a consultation with young people to gather their views on access to digital resources during lockdown.
- Collated young people's views on their mental health and wellbeing during lockdown to plan activities to help.

Who we involved:

Community Development

The difference it made:

During a period of uncertainty, loneliness and isolation, this project aimed to provide activities and events that gave young people and their families a common goal, a feeling of community and helped them overcome feelings of low mood and isolation. By being as inclusive as possible it allowed young people from the furthest and most rural areas of North Ayrshire to join in, it was inclusive of BSL, ESOL and young people of all ages and ability.

The family learning approach gave families joint projects to work on, increased confidence, feelings of belonging and most importantly was fun. It created stronger partnerships and a more cohesive approach to the needs and wants of these young people and their families

Young people were part of the process from the planning and delivery – ensuring it gave these communities what they wanted.

What we will do differently in the future:

The consultation provided invaluable data to young people's concerns and worries and allowed us to adapt our programme and share the information with key decision makers to ensure that they provided support and guidance through a particularly difficult time. It has also shaped our service delivery for the COVID-19 recovery period.

During the COVID-19 recovery period, we are keen to see the continuation of some of our digital youth work, and it will feature in our future delivery – this includes upskilling staff and having young people at the heart of the planning process.

Adapting our youth work approach digitally has brought many benefits to our team – being able to take youth groups online, connecting through digital platforms, the provision of activities and providing a trusted source for information, guidance and support for young people in a language that speaks to them.

We have also seen the strengthening of partnerships and a much wider network of people working more closely with young people on projects and shared goals.

During this time, we have discovered new ways to work, strengthened connections and maximised our presence in the digital world.

From the consultation responses gathered through 'Get Connected', we have highlighted the real concerns for young people which will shape future working and engagements with our young people.

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Establishment:
The Wood Foundation

Establishment:
Bainsford Primary School

Local Authority:
Falkirk Council

What we did:

'Your Community Fund' (YCF) – an adaptation to the 'Youth and Philanthropy Initiative' (YPI). Students who did not have the opportunity to complete their YPI experience due to school closures, were empowered to advocate on behalf of their communities' responses to COVID-19. One hundred digital team presentations were submitted from throughout Scotland, with 50 each securing a £4,000 grant. Applied youth voice, community connections, and skills development were key successes of the campaign.

The difference it made:

- Vital delegated grant making, allowing young people to meaningfully contribute to COVID-19 efforts.
- Developed key skills including communication, digital, teamwork, creativity, and better understanding of community challenges and solutions.
- An opportunity to support our schools with a ready-made programme of activity.

What we will do differently in the future:

We have taken learning from YCF and used it to inform an adapted YPI programme for 2020/21, Mindful of the constraints still presented by COVID-19, YCF gave us the chance to also see the opportunities and reinforce the beneficial learning experience and community connections an adapted programme can continue to inform in context.

What we did:

One of our P7 pupils, Ella, spent time during lockdown chalking games around her local area for other children to enjoy playing whilst they were out on their daily walk with their families.

Who we involved:

Ella did this with her family.

The difference it made:

This initiative meant that lots of children enjoyed being out of the house each day, playing on the games and cycling around the tracks she made.

This was a simple idea executed at a time when families were under the strain of being in lockdown. Ella has always been a thoughtful girl and was our school captain. This is a fine example of a school captain continuing her duties and helping younger children in her community even when the school was closed.

Establishment:
The Good Shepherd Centre

Local Authority:
Renfrewshire Council

What we did:

When one of our chefs, Martin, came up with the idea of sending snack bags out to local keyworkers during lockdown, our young people were very keen to help and make this their own project. A team was created to decide upon and procure the bags and the contents.

They filled the bags with packets of crisps, confectionary, bottles of water, pieces of fruit and little thankyou notes with messages such as: "You are a Hero!", "Stay Safe!" and "You are doing an amazing job!" These goody bags were then delivered to the frontline staff in local hospitals and care homes.

Our young people were keen to continue supporting the local community through the pandemic. They were delighted to be asked to partner with Inverclyde charities for the 'Keep the Story Going' project. They built small post boxes from recycled wood and decorated them to place around the community. These post boxes allow people to post photos, letters and stories of loved ones lost to COVID-19 to keep their memories alive. These stories will later become part of a heritage project to inspire and pass on valuable lessons to those who come after us and keep legacies alive.

Who we involved:

The young people of the Good Shepherd Centre, the Good Shepherd Centre chef, frontline workers from local hospitals and care homes, Inverclyde charity: ICARG.

The difference it made:

Our young people have spoken powerfully, particularly about missing family and loved ones and shared their insight into other impacts of COVID-19, including physical distancing. Being able to contribute to the community has become a

'silver lining' during the pandemic. The sense of community between our staff and young people has been inspiring, and the staff team at the Good Shepherd Centre have been deeply impressed by our young people's understanding and empathy.

Our chef now continues to work with the young people as part of the school curriculum as a result of the mutual respect and enjoyment experienced during the goody bag project. Our young people also gained the opportunity to understand the impact COVID-19 has had on the wider community.

We have received many messages of thanks, including a letter from one of the care homes saying a huge thank you. They told us about one of their residents, a Captain, who was about to turn 105. This was lovely to hear and it was great for the young people to realise the positive impact of doing something nice for people who are struggling.

What we will do differently in the future:

Our team at the Good Shepherd Centre continue to actively seek out ways to help the local community through the pandemic. We are currently beginning a project where our young people write letters, make cards and pieces of artwork for another local care home. They will cook and bake some delicious treats from our homegrown produce to deliver alongside the letters.

By doing this, we hope to bring some comfort to the residents of the care home during such an isolating time. Participating in such projects also encourages and inspires our young people to become responsible citizens who take an active role in the local community.

Establishment:
Youth Work Team

Local Authority:
Dumfries and Galloway Council

What we did:

The youth work team in Dumfries and Galloway developed a wide-ranging, creative response to meet the diverse needs of young people through lockdown and the summer. Initially, in line with guidance, we provided support digitally, and also via resources delivered directly to 4,500 young people in their homes. Over the course of lockdown and the summer, we have provided virtual support on 14 digital platforms, regularly engaging with 300 young people on line.

Alongside this universal support, the youth work team supported a further 361 young people through their targeted 'Blether' programme through the lockdown period. Young people from all 16 secondary schools had already begun participating in this programme to access support with their mental health prior to lockdown. As soon as restrictions were enforced, face-to-face meetings were replaced with one-to-one support either by phone or online as often as young people needed it – which, for some, meant daily.

As lockdown eased, youth workers across the region also began to offer face-to-face detached youth work outdoors in communities. 760 young people accessed information and advice, participated in outdoor learning opportunities through this period. From early June until early August, we also led on the delivery of 'Youth Work Hubs' for young people aged 11-18.

Who we involved:

We worked closely with colleagues in education and social work teams to ensure they reached as many of the most vulnerable young people as possible during lockdown and through the summer. Young people were connected to the 'Youth Work Hubs' via a multi-agency referral system.

The difference it made:

Over the course of lockdown and the summer, youth workers in Dumfries and Galloway had regular contact, online and in person, with 6,216 young people

- 94% of young people developed their skills as a result of their engagement with youth work – particularly social and emotional skills
- 86% of young people saw an improvement in their engagement in learning
- 88% of young people were supported to overcome barriers to learning
- Where wellbeing was monitored, 100% of young people saw improvements in their mental health
- Nearly 200 young people worked towards an accredited award through this challenging period
- Many young people feel better prepared to go back to school – or to make the transition to further education

“

I can cope with situations better now. The sessions have made me calmer and I have some useful coping strategies – they have been really helpful”

“

I am now good at planning my work and identifying what I need to do first. I have caught up on my work. I am not worried about school anymore.”

“

When I have been coming to this group I've made new friends and learned new skills. I can now speak to people I didn't know and when I go to college I will be more confident.”

What we will do differently in the future:

We noticed that young people who have participated in digital youth work built confidence to join face-to-face sessions as these got back up and running, as lockdown restrictions eased. Families report that participating in activities together online and through the resources provided by the youth work team has helped to build positive relationships – between parents and young people and between siblings. We learned a lot about how to deliver effective youth work online out of necessity through lockdown, and we will continue to develop our approach for the future, as it has proved to be such a valuable lifeline for so many young people and families.

We worked in very close partnership with colleagues in formal education through the lockdown period to ensure that we reached young people in the greatest need of support. These stronger relationships will be crucial to the support we can offer going forward – not just in identifying young people who can benefit from youth work, but in working collaboratively with schools to improve attainment outcomes.

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Establishment:
Station House Media Unit

Local Authority:
Aberdeen City Council

What we did:

Station House Media Unit is a community media charity serving Aberdeen and the regeneration areas. Our community radio station, 'shmuFM' and local community magazines are presented and produced by volunteers. Many of our readers and listeners do not have internet access and describe our radio programmes and magazines as lifeline services.

We provided a wide variety of radio shows which were both informative and entertaining, and created new shows such as request shows for people to leave thank you messages for those helping in their communities – from NHS staff to delivery drivers.

Similarly, we offered a Newsdesk 'Tell Us' to allow people to inform us of things still happening locally, specifically support services operating such as foodbanks and agencies whose doors were closed now providing online advice and support.

Additionally, we created a communications group to regularly update our social media platforms with topical information from mental health support available to promotion of our new radio shows, designed to support people through lockdown by connecting people with their communities.

During this period, our volunteers received The Queen's Award for their outstanding contributions to their communities, the highest award achievable for volunteering and a richly deserved achievement.

Who we involved:

We worked collaboratively with agencies across Aberdeen including third sector services, schools, shops, local councils, churches and community hubs. These agencies also benefited from promoting their own work in our magazines and on our radio, which included staff being interviewed online to highlight what they could offer to our communities.

The difference it made:

We undertook a digital audit to ensure our volunteers had adequate equipment to undertake their usual activities from home and secured funding to provide it. This also had the unintended outcome of upskilling our volunteers.

All community households received their 'shmu' magazine and local people told us that having this information in a time of crisis was comforting and reassuring. Likewise, feedback on our radio shows, including the presenters and guests, typically commented on how having access to these shows cheered people up and gave them something to look forward to. This was particularly true of many elderly people who were shielding and could not see family or friends.

Although 'shmu' has always been a trusted and respected service in the community, other services using our platforms told us they could not have accessed as many people through their own channels and the cumulative effect was that we could get local information, advice and entertainment directly into people's homes irrespective of whether or not they had internet, IT equipment or mobile phones. Our radio/ magazines gave people something to look forward to and helped create some sense of normality in what was an unsettling and worrying time.

What we will do differently in the future:

Prior to lockdown our work predominantly took place in our building. It was a revelation that so much could still be achieved working remotely. Our staff provided technical support to our volunteers, which also helped consolidate their working relationships. Everyone had to learn how to use programmes and apps unfamiliar to us which helped create a non-hierarchical working ethos.

Staff have less commuting to meetings and can therefore attend more partnership meetings with no travel time or mileage expense costs to the organisation. In the longer term, we anticipate a blended approach to our work incorporating more home working for the strategic staff particularly.

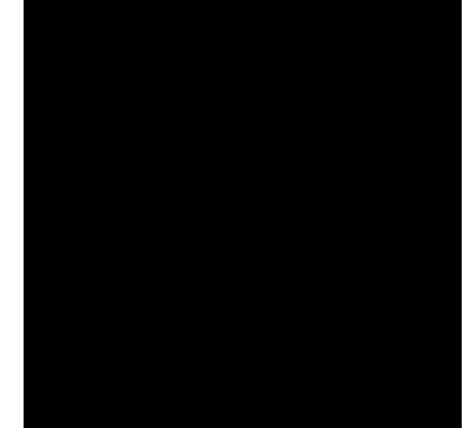
We can also include more volunteers with mobility/disability issues to contribute from their homes. Likewise, where we had been reviewing the need for hard copy publications, we now know these were considered vital during lockdown.

We have learned new ways to be innovative, expanded our horizons and given our staff more trust and autonomy. Service demand has increased, testament to efficient adaptation to the changes necessary to work safely whilst still maintaining the quality of work 'shmu' is known and valued for.

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Establishment:
St Mun's Primary School

Local Authority:
Argyll and Bute Council

What we did:

When working at the Cowal HUB for keyworker children, staff discussed creating activities that could be used across the school cluster when pupils returned after the Easter break. We knew our pupils were missing seeing and visiting their favourite places across Cowal. To address this issue, I created a challenge that all primary pupils from the cluster could enter – 'Let's Build Cowal'.

Pupils were asked to create a 3-D model of their favourite local place. They could use any material they had available in the house – wood blocks, cardboard, food, LEGO, paper & string, pillows & blankets, pool noodles, lollipop sticks or recycling items. The model didn't need to be to scale. Children could submit either an individual or a family entry.

During discussions with the cluster headteachers (HT), the secondary HT arranged to include the challenge as part of the Primary 7 transition programme. He offered three vouchers to the top entries. I then approached our local business cooperative, 'Dunoon Presents', and they agreed to sponsor the top family entry and the top entries in the Primary 1 to Primary 6 category. The local paper published a report and photos of the winning submissions.

Who we involved:

All families who had children attending any of the Cowal cluster schools were invited to submit an entry – 10 primary schools and 1 secondary (Dunoon Grammar). Winners were chosen by 'Dunoon Presents' – local business cooperative and published in the local paper, 'Dunoon Observer'.

The difference it made:

The 'Let's Build Cowal' challenge brought together families from across the whole of our cluster, creating a buzz on social media channels as pupils chatted with their peers about what they might build, why and how. Different entry options allowed everyone to be involved – older siblings could support their younger brothers and sisters.

The judging panels were impressed with the total number of entries received – over 150 – and the variety of places creatively depicted. We had everything from Strachur Petrol Station to Toward Sailing Club. Lots of children chose to use LEGO or bricks to build their models but we also had entries that used Minecraft, cakes and biscuits and even cut grass.

The wider community enjoyed seeing the pictures of the winning entries. Feedback from the project was very positive, including the pupils who thought it was "great fun"; parents who felt "it was a great way of engaging their child in their learning". The business community were happy to sponsor the challenge and offer their support and encouragement to our children during these very unusual times.

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What we will do differently in the future:

The challenge allowed the Cowal cluster to develop an understanding of the places our children see as being important to them within the local community. The project allowed pupils to showcase their creativity and talents, developing and applying their skills for learning and life. For example, the winning individual entry for the Primary 1 to 6 category produced an animated movie of their entry.

The partnership approach brought together the whole of the Cowal community and we were able to celebrate the successes of all entries within the local schools and across the business community.

Schools are keen to continue working collaboratively, providing learning opportunities to year groups or across levels. The challenge was set over a two week period during lockdown. Having all pupils able to access the same project freed up teaching staff time to focus on supporting other areas of the curriculum or assisting individual families.

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Establishment:
St Joseph's RC Primary School

Local Authority:
Fife Council

What we did:

During lockdown I was teaching a P7 class. Our Educational Psychologist suggested that I create a school newsletter, which might be an engaging project for the children to get involved with. From this idea I worked with a group of mainly P6 and P7 children to create the 'St Joseph's Times'. We produced a weekly newspaper throughout lockdown that had school news and community news. The children all took responsibility for a different area of the newspaper. They researched and presented the articles and features themselves. They contacted members of the local community for local news and interviewed people from as far away as China to find out the impact COVID-19 was having on their lives.

We set up our own Newspaper Team through Microsoft Office and held weekly Monday morning news team meetings. As the project continued, the children were able to take control of these meetings themselves. The children involved came to the project from very different stages – some were needing to be challenged and this type of personal research and independent study gave them that challenge. Others were finding it difficult to engage with the normal classroom work and this hooked them in and kept them involved in learning. The paper was real life for them and had lots of positive feedback, so they wanted to make it better and better every issue. The newspaper allowed the children to develop their literacy skills, independent learning, research, ICT skills because they had to use Teams, email and SWAY.

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The difference it made:

The newspaper made a big difference to our pupils, families and local community. Some children were looking for a challenge and they found it by taking control of their own research and producing news articles. Some children were totally disengaged from the routine classwork and the newspaper hooked them in and encouraged them to take part. It also strengthened our links with the parents as they received weekly updates from the school. The newspaper was widely read in the local community and we are now working with the local community council to incorporate their news into the newspaper.

What we will do differently in the future:

Personally, the newspaper project made me upskill my ICT skills and provided me with an enjoyable and worthwhile project during the difficult lockdown period. I was part of an improvement project gathering data about engagement of children throughout lockdown and it was apparent that some children in P7 across the region were difficult to engage in online learning. One of the changes that did make a difference to my data was introducing the newspaper. The children worked so hard every week – their confidence grew and they were always looking for the next story. The real-life context made it an important and worthwhile project for them. The newspaper is going to continue in St Joseph's on a monthly basis. We are linking closely with the community council to share their news in the community. The feedback from our school families and local community was so positive and it is something we definitely want to continue.

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I think the paper is brilliant! I honestly can't believe how good it is! The amount of effort that the kids and Mrs Anderson must have put into this is commendable. They should all be so proud of themselves. I know how hard my daughter Caitlin has been working from a personal perspective.

I learned a lot from reading this paper, there were lots of amazing facts and even things to do ie play games. Honestly, I am really impressed that they all took the time to research the information and put it all together so professionally.

All in all, massive well done, I'm sure the experience for everyone will be one to remember and one to go down in St Joseph's Primary history!

Establishment:
Ardler Primary School

Local Authority:
Dundee City Council

What we did:

Ardler Primary School used creative methods to deliver virtual learning and support through Twitter, Microsoft Teams, Class Dojo and Google Classroom. Teaching staff developed learning packs which included resources to support families that did not have access to the internet. Online learning was a learning curve for both members of staff and families. Specific activities which engaged learners were family learning grids, virtual sports day in partnership with active schools, virtual Bookbug sessions, online cooking sessions, Ardler together grids and recommendations for learning websites. Weekly assemblies were delivered on Class Dojo and Twitter with videos from staff doing various activities.

Support was offered to families who needed financial support and provided information to grants as benefits available. School and family development worker engaged with community partners to bring together organisations to offer a partnership approach to services and information, which allowed families to access a range of services. Members of staff made regular contact with families to support with health and wellbeing.

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Who we involved:

Ardler Primary school identified families who they were aware were vulnerable and made direct referrals for support when appropriate. Child Poverty Action group worked in partnership with school and family development worker to put together a video about the best start grant and food bank referrals. Chalmers Ardler Church, in partnership with Dundee Bairns, provided lunches to families. St Lukes Church provided food deliveries to families that were struggling, hot lunches were delivered to some families. Greggs foundation provided funding to the school to provide Tesco vouchers to families experiencing financial difficulties and leisure and culture supported with food deliveries.

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The difference it made:

Although the school buildings were closed, the school community very much remained open as school staff were in regular contact with families and were able to access learning, information and support while they were at home.

Children and families were able to engage in learning and family learning activities from home, alleviating boredom and isolation. Children and parents spent quality time together as a family and this supported attachment and positive relationships.

Parents were able to contact the school via phone, Dojo, Teams. The school community signposted them to other services to provide support and to remove barriers to learning and support with any financial difficulties.

Activities provided increased the happiness of the children and when children returned to school they were able to discuss memories of lockdown which were created by the school community.

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What we will do differently in the future:

It made us realise that the school is more than just a building, it is a community and in difficult times we can all support one another. We have continued to use Microsoft Teams and there has been increased engagement in online platforms. We have continued to do virtual assemblies and have planned to do online cooking classes.

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Establishment:
Laurencekirk Primary School

Local Authority:
Aberdeenshire Council

What we did:

I became acting headteacher during lockdown and saw the value in the school and community collaborating. Some of the activities we worked on together included:

- Creating a community treasure trail linked to the Hungry Caterpillar – families could follow the clues and caterpillar and locate the hand painted stones.
- They contacted the community to support the school marking the end of Primary 7. The community responded by cutting ‘Good Luck’ on the grass in the park, people playing bagpipes at the end of the last day and shopkeepers putting up signs in shops wishing the P7s good luck. A video was compiled of the many contributions.
- The headteacher held weekly assemblies on YouTube to keep the school community feeling connected.
- Using learning from the ‘Cost of the School Day’ we made the school the first place for uniform to be sourced, created boxes with food and school supplies which were put in accessible places for parents.
- The beautiful stones created during lockdown to form the community caterpillar will be shaped into a butterfly with a time capsule beneath, full of our lockdown memories. The butterfly is symbolic of when our school building went quiet but emerged stronger and more beautiful than ever before.

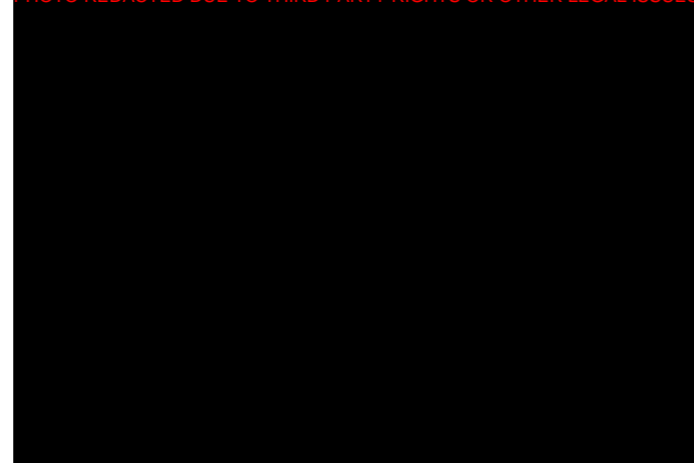
Who we involved:

We worked on all of this with our Parent Council, local businesses and our parents.

The difference it made:

Our school has continued to feel as if it is at the heart of the community – we were able to be visible even though we were not face to face. Aspects like the weekly assemblies have continued even though we are no longer in lockdown. We have been able to reinforce the importance of the school to the community and in everyone’s lives.

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What we will do differently in the future:

Other activities planned include:

- The school and Parent Council are now working on a Community Asset Transfer for some land at the back of the school which they plan to use to build an outdoor classroom – a resource the community can use too!
- The boxes with food and school supplies are well used and will remain an important feature moving forward. The headteacher’s weekly assemblies on YouTube have continued after lockdown and remain an important part of rebuilding and reconnecting.
- We are keen to continue to work in a reciprocal way with our community and build on our scavenger hunt success by planning a village wide pumpkin trail. Plans are also well underway to offer a virtual Santa’s Grotto so young people don’t miss out on this well-loved village tradition.
- At a time when we were physically apart, our relationships were strengthened and we emerged through this experience stronger than ever before.
- We have all learned that “The school is not a building, it is so much more” and that “We need to pull together to get the best for the young people”. We can continue to be at the heart of the community. Together we can achieve great things.

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Establishment:
CLD Youth Team

Local Authority:
North Lanarkshire Council

What we did:

During the last few months, our youth team have been involved with some innovative projects, one being 'Airdrie Action Partnership'. When lockdown was introduced in March, we knew that vulnerable young people and their families would find this a difficult time for various reasons and so we wanted to be at the forefront of any community response. Our universal offer of youth work had to close down, with an introduction of online services and so we quickly began to liaise with local community groups, third sector organisation and local authority representatives from Education and Social Work to identify and prioritise the most vulnerable families based on need before creating a streamline system for support. This model was very effective and helped to mitigate any duplication.

This group collectively applied for, and secured, £30,000 funding from the Big Lottery. This money made a considerable difference to families who, during this time, needed support with food, home schooling, financial and or benefit advice, mobile phone cards and even cookers and fridges for some families. Collaborative working in this way has helped us to build good links across multi agencies, provide sustainable outcomes for vulnerable children and families and promoting positive community action.

Who we involved:

Ourselves along with deputy headteachers from the local high schools took responsibility for identifying vulnerable families. Whinhall Action group and Whinhall Allotments hosted the funding applications; Lanarkshire community food and health partnerships provided the food we needed for deliveries; North Lanarkshire Council's financial inclusion team and Citizens Advice Bureau provided support around finances and benefits, and a variety of community groups across Airdrie took responsibility to deliver food

packages to any referrals within their local area. All agencies, including social work, would refer families to the financial inclusion team, initially for them to identify what support is needed.

The difference it made:

The families and young people we have supported during the past few months have all continued to engage with services we put in place for them. We have gathered both qualitative and quantitative data throughout this process, collating the numbers of food referrals that have been made to Lanarkshire community food and the Foodbank.

In the process, we have engaged with over 200 families/individuals from which we have identified three families who would need continued support with food, as they are not entitled to any public funds or financial support. This approach also allowed us to build meaningful relationships with families, with the youth work team acting as a mediator between families and schools. The young people and parents could see that school staff were involved in creating a package of support for them and in turn we have seen parents communicate with teaching staff more effectively and children returning to school who had less than 20% attendance before lockdown. Furthermore, we have had various communications from young people, parents and others thanking us for the continued support and stating how much they appreciate the services they have received.

What we will do differently in the future:

Being involved in this type of community response has been a great learning experience. Our youth work staff have been able to build a better understanding of the wider community, receiving requests for assistance applications for vulnerable young people who had not accessed youth work provision prior to lockdown. It helped us to gain better links with schools, social work and community organisations. I would welcome this cluster model of working and will work to continue to advocate this approach as it provides an overall package of support for vulnerable families, utilising varied skills and knowledge whilst offering opportunities to access external funding.

I do believe that by regularly sharing skills, knowledge and resources, this can help everyone to gain a better understanding of each agency's role within a community and provide a clear plan of support for young people and families. This engagement can work to ensure better outcomes not only for young people and their families, but also the wider community. They have become much more involved in deciding future projects, having being involved with 'Airdrie Action Partnership' and witnessed the positive outcomes for young people and their families. I would promote this way to working.

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Establishment:
Scottish Book Trust

What we did:

Bookbug Sessions in libraries and community venues are an integral part of our programme. They offer every family a safe space to come and enjoy stories, songs and rhymes with their babies and young children.

When libraries went into lockdown, all Bookbug Sessions across Scotland were cancelled. We acted quickly to pool resources for families to share at home, including colouring-in sheets, author read-along videos and links to the free Bookbug songs and rhymes app. All of these were integrated into Scottish Book Trust's online Home Activities Hub.

Our flagship offer to families, however, was the introduction of Facebook Live Bookbug Sessions. These 30-minute sessions were hosted by one of our experienced early years trainers every Friday morning, and showcased not only new and classic songs and rhymes, but also introduced a different story each week. Families could watch live (or later) with their young children, and many families interacted with us directly through the Facebook chat function to share their own children's favourites.

The online sessions gave us the opportunity to share key messages around the importance of sharing stories and books at home, as well as giving families the space to spend quality, relaxing time together.

Who we involved:

Guest Bookbug Session hosts included partners from Inverclyde Libraries, South Ayrshire Libraries, and Bookbug with Makaton in Aberdeenshire. Having these valuable partners involved was a fantastic way to make connections back to libraries, and also to ensure that our digital offer was as accessible as possible for all families.

The difference it made:

Our online Bookbug Session audience figures exceeded anything we could have imagined at the start of lockdown. At their peak in May, over 500 viewers tuned in to one particular session to share stories, songs and rhymes (a further 1,100 watched afterwards).

Not only have they enabled new parents and carers to experience Bookbug from the comfort of home, but they are now enjoyed by many nursery groups too – helping to plug the gap in the curriculum that the restrictions on music and singing have created.

Each online session involved a focus on action songs to encourage movement and coordination skills; simple rhymes – including finger rhymes – to support language development and fine motor control; and plenty of tickles and cuddles to encourage bonding and positive relationships. On top of this, the weekly story modelled book sharing and the benefits of reading to young children, as well as introducing families and nursery settings to new authors and illustrators.

At a time when families with young children may have felt isolated, we believe that our online Bookbug Sessions provided a sense of community and connection. They reminded people of the joy that reading and stories can bring, particularly at times of uncertainty.

What we will do differently in the future:

Online Bookbug Sessions were just one of the digital developments that came out of the lockdown – but they will possibly be the one with the greatest impact longer-term. Although we look forward to welcoming families back to face-to-face sessions in libraries and other community venues, we acknowledge that there is also a demand for a digital alternative.

Some families face barriers in attending regular Bookbug Sessions. For reasons including geographical isolation, lack of confidence, or work commitments, they may be missing out on some key messages around the benefits of stories, songs and rhymes. For some of these families, a regular online Bookbug Session will be of significant value, even after the restrictions caused by the Coronavirus pandemic have lifted.

The ability to invite partners to host online sessions with us has also impacted positively on our work. As well as the Makaton session hosted in the summer, we have a Gaelic Bookbug Session broadcasting in the autumn, reaching many families who wouldn't previously have had access to this in their local area. This not only strengthens our own links with partners across Scotland, but also benefits nurseries, childminders and other early years settings who join us online.

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Establishment:
Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO)

What we did:

#RSNOchallenge, supported by our transport partner ScotRail: We created free, fun, and educational content to homes across Scotland every Wednesday as soon as lockdown began, for 14 weeks. Families across Scotland shared videos and photos using the hashtag when posting online.

RSNO Friday Night Club: The RSNO produced 15 free online concerts available internationally. The concerts are still on YouTube and Facebook and brought culture and music into thousands of homes. The concerts have been viewed around 250,000 times.

Going Places: Due to COVID-19 restrictions the RSNO's annual 'Takeover' work experience programme looked like it could not go ahead, but the organisation's learning and engagement team quickly adapted the experience to be carried out online. Over eight weeks, a group of 22 young people from all over Scotland have been working with American composer, Nathan Hall, to create music and art together. The group has used video conferencing and email to communicate and share ideas across continents and time zones. The result of the collaborative work is a composition called 'Going Places', available on YouTube.

Sunday Sounds: A series of weekend performances streaming online for free. Sunday Sounds featured a different RSNO musician performing from home each week.

Who we involved:

RSNO musicians and staff, corporate partners including ScotRail, Capital Document Solutions, several Trusts also.

The difference it made:

#RSNOchallenge provided structured, fun, music education activities for all ages and abilities, with schools across the UK advising parents and pupils to take part in the activity. It helped provide practical music learning at a time when schools were shut completely and families may have struggled to fill the gap.

Going Places had a major positive impact on participants including these two young people who said: Jacob – "This adventure has allowed me to explore new musical avenues and gain experience in new techniques. I have expanded my knowledge during the lockdown, which I am hoping to share with my peers on return to school." Emily – "The creative experience of the Going Places project has allowed me to meet new people from all over Scotland and create music with them, as well as working with an international composer! It has given me a different challenge during lockdown and I have had the opportunity to try things I have never done before."

Our Friday Night Club Concerts and Sunday Sounds series were met with great reception from audiences, and provided a safe and fun social activity for those struggling with loneliness and isolation. The comments section of our concert on Facebook became like a small community. When we announced a return to online concerts with our Digital Season, the feedback was just as positive: "Wonderful to see you back playing again!" "I could greet" "This gives us all hope!"

What we will do differently in the future:

The Takeover project moving online has already evolved into 'Young Creatives,' From the end of October over the course of eight weeks, a group of 20 young musicians aged 14-18 will work with a professional performer and director, along with the Orchestra's musicians, to produce a radio-show-style music podcast. Due to ongoing safe working conditions, the Young Creatives project will take place online via video conferencing to ensure the safety of all participants and staff involved. Young Creatives will give young musicians a chance to experience new arts opportunities including composition, writing, interviewing, and recording. The sessions will run for eight weeks and will culminate with the launch of the original broadcast.

Our experience in lockdown has been a catalyst for us to produce accessible, cultural digital content. Our new Digital Season of 10 concerts has a concession price of £3 per show so as many people can enjoy the new concerts as possible, whilst still supporting the Orchestra. We also have plans to keep producing free music and cultural content to distribute online.

We are also this month launching a free concert for nursery and young primary school children, and will continue to work with schools to provide digital music learning resources.

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Establishment:
Community Learning and Development

Local Authority:
Falkirk Council

What we did:

Falkirk Summer Takeaway Was More Than Just About Food ...

“

Youth work delivered by Community Learning and Development Service is an essential part of our school team and our offer to pupils and their families.”

Stuart Kelly, Head Teacher, Falkirk High School

COVID-19, Learning Loss and Food Insecurity.

The closure of Falkirk Council schools during the initial months of the COVID-19 pandemic raised concerns that the poverty-related attainment gap would increase.

Most pupils who attended Falkirk High School were at home during the lockdown period with the pupils receiving a mixture of parent-led learning and school-provided resources and support. Pupils who faced significant challenges were identified as being at particular risk of falling further behind as they did not have access to online learning, or even any education at all.

It has been recognised within Falkirk High School that some pupils who face significant challenges also face 'learning loss' during school holiday periods, together with food insecurity as result of not being able to access free school meals entitlement. This was further exacerbated for these pupils by COVID-19.

Who we involved:

YouthLink School and Youth Work Partnership funding could not have come at a more important time for Falkirk High School pupils, their families and staff. Youth workers, teachers, Barnardo's staff and Youth Scotland staff invited pupils and families to be involved in the Summer Takeaway and together they created a six week programme of activities.

The difference it made:

The pupils, families and staff agreed that the purpose of the activities was to encourage cooperation and learning within the family. The provision of food and digital devices were approaches to support the cooperation and learning that could take place for the pupils and their families. The pupils and their families all agreed to create experiences that people were keen to be a part of and comfortable and proud to share with others including their successes and 'disasters' (rubber eggs that didn't bounce).

Families shared with youth workers that family life can be very busy. It was agreed with pupils and families that the activities required would offer opportunities for family empowerment, flexibility, with no set times or days to participate, and importantly with support "on tap, not on top".

Youth workers provided all the resources that the pupils and their family would need to do each activity. These were packaged up and delivered on a weekly basis, together with a shopping voucher to support the family to buy additional food for recipes that they have learned or wanted to experiment with. Homemade tuna and banana pizza was one of the surprise additions to our recipe collections.

Working with the pupils and families/carers, youth workers demonstrated the recipes or tasks via social media videos which were uploaded to the group and then the families could, if they wanted, show how it went in their homes. The pupils were able to support their parents with some aspects of digital technology.

What we will do differently in the future:

Falkirk's Summer Takeaway has enabled partners to test out the resilience of family learning delivery within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Partners worked extremely closely to ensure that disadvantaged families has access to digital devices and connectivity, as this was central to the participation of pupils and families/carers within the Summer Takeaway. Detailed below are the next steps for Falkirk's Summer Takeaway:

- Eight families have committed to continue to take part with family learning as a direct result of their experiences of Falkirk High School Summer Takeaway.
- Falkirk High School has committed to the Connecting Falkirk Project which will ensure that pupils who face significant challenges are connected digitally so that they can access online learning and support.
- The positive experience of the Summer Takeaway has resulted in Falkirk High School committing to invest in a full time CLD Worker to focus on the delivery of youth work and family learning.

“

Relationships with and within families are critical for our school. We see youth work and family learning as key to developing these relationships and our holistic approach to learning and development.”

Jennifer Macpherson,
Depute Headteacher, Falkirk High School

- Learning from Falkirk High School Summer Takeaway will be disseminated within Falkirk Council, Forth Valley and West Lothian Regional Improvement Collaborative and national networks.

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Establishment:
Daniel Cowie, Pupil

Local Authority:
Stirling Council

What we did:

During lockdown, me and my brother did 'BBatHome' activities provided by the Boys' Brigade. We looked out for others in our community of Dunblane (delivering BB band CDs and writing letters to the elderly and vulnerable in Dunblane), I made weekly music videos on my clarinet to be used in online church services, and got involved in BB activities to support our own health and wellbeing during lockdown (BB bake off competition, fun games, reflections, and BB weekly Zoom meetings).

The difference it made:

Lockdown was a chance for us to get involved in supporting people in Dunblane as well as make sure we supported each other with our own mental and physical health. The 'BBatHome' activities were great in giving us ways in which we could do this. It is important to look after each other during COVID-19 and in normal times, and the activities gave us ideas for how we might do this now and after COVID-19.

What we will do differently in the future:

We already do the JASS awards through the Boys' Brigade which involves engaging with the community. I am working towards my Gold award and my brother is working towards his Bronze award. We are still writing letters to the elderly in Dunblane, and when we are allowed again, we will go and visit some of them face to face. It is very important to be kind and helpful, especially when people need our help. We are trying to make sure we show kindness and are helpful every day.

Daniel Cowie, aged 12

Establishment:
Clydebank High School

Local Authority:
West Dunbartonshire Council

What we did:

During lockdown, I was worried about pupils falling behind with their work, but also that they might lose a bit of passion/interest in their studies. So, I organised something of a 'call to arms' on social media and launched 'Past Conversations'. The project has allowed me to create content that pupils (and anyone interested) can engage with.

It has been great chatting with folk from the worlds of history, archaeology and heritage (19 so far); all uploaded to the PC website, YouTube channel and socials;

- <https://twitter.com/pastconv>
- <https://www.facebook.com/PastConversations/>
- https://www.instagram.com/past_conversations/

Who we involved:

Recording conversations [about history] ("talking about the past") with a range of individuals from across Scotland, the UK and Europe.

The difference it made:

Not only did it provide pupils, their families and the wider community with educational content, but it ensured that learning was still able to take place – albeit in a very different way! It also [hopefully] helped to illustrate the many career pathways open to young people who study history – heritage, archaeology and much more.

What we will do differently in the future:

It has significantly increased the number of individuals with whom I now regularly network with as a classroom teacher, and highlighted to me how schools are much more than bricks and mortar – learning can indeed take place in all sorts of places and in all sorts of ways!

Establishment:
Lifelong Learning

Local Authority:
City of Edinburgh Council

What we did:

We adapted our Family Learning Primary 1 transition course to deliver online with families. We decided to run the course with three different groups. Each group was facilitated by two family learning workers (with Arabic language support). The course ran over six weeks. Learning packs were developed which included supplies such as stationery and basic equipment to support families to partake in activities without having to buy or print out resources.

The first session was about finding out how families were feeling and reflect on their own experience of school. We then covered topics around numeracy, literacy, health and wellbeing, storytelling and everyday learning opportunities. During the sessions, families discovered the learning approaches that are being used in school and came up with ideas around how they could support their children learning at home. Parents were also able to reflect on their concerns and share ideas around preparing for school. At the end of each session, families were given weekly challenges to complete and had to share the completed challenge at the beginning of each session.

The difference it made:

- Families were able to access learning, information and resources to support learning at home.
- Families felt supported and less isolated during lockdown.
- The families discovered the learning approaches being used in schools.
- Children and parents came up with different learning ideas around literacy and numeracy at home.
- Families were able to meet and interact with other families and build supportive relationships during lockdown.

What we will do differently in the future:

The focus for these sessions was to create a new way of engaging and supporting families online during this pandemic. It emphasised to us the importance of communication with families, and the value of having platforms for discussions, sharing ideas and supporting one another.

This programme of work highlighted that more can and should be done to engage and support families during this difficult time and after. This is particularly so when the goal is to involve families in their children's learning. Family learning is a powerful method that, when applied, can be used to empower parents and encourage them to strengthen their role in their children's learning journey.

Establishment:

Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu/Glasgow Gaelic School

Local Authority:

Glasgow City Council

What we did:

Over lockdown, we created a series of podcasts in Gaelic to promote and support Gaelic talking and listening across the whole school and its community. The podcasts were created to provide a further connection to the Gaelic community across Glasgow and provide an opportunity for pupils and families to hear their language of learning in a fun setting with familiar voices, as well as communicating with pupils and staff. The podcasts included interviews with pupils and staff, a quiz and a weekly art and craft activity for families to recreate together.

Additionally, the podcast provided our P7 with an opportunity to deliver a special transition podcast where they got to say their goodbyes and thank you to the school, supporting their health and wellbeing and transition at this difficult time. The podcast provided us with a new way of communicating, directly to families and further opportunity for exposure to the Gaelic language, as many pupils do not have this in their home. With the podcast now established, this has now provided us with further opportunities to develop researching, recording and editing skills with our pupils to work towards producing their own school podcasts.

Who we involved:

The podcasts were created by teachers with weekly input from pupils from nursery to S5 and from teachers. There was also input from professionals who use Gaelic in their daily work, providing relevance and encouragement for our pupils to use and be proud of their language.

The difference it made:

This provided a connection to the language in a fun way which didn't feel like school work for our pupils. They could listen and hear their friends, hear from their teachers and play along with the quiz – all whilst using Gaelic in a way they maybe hadn't been able to, since physically being in school. It provided opportunities to strengthen the pupils' Gaelic language skills, a prime focus to podcast, whilst offering a chance to check in on pupils' wellbeing. We had updates from different pupils throughout the series on how they were doing during lockdown and what they had been up to during lockdown, providing a positive attitude.

Parents and pupils commented that the podcast was a great addition to our home learning, with pupils getting in touch asking to be included in the next episode and offering ways in which they could join in and contribute.

Establishing the podcast has allowed us to continue this as a new school project, improving digital literacy skills for the staff and pupils and further developing their language skills in talking and listening and increasing oral competence.

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What we will do differently in the future:

The podcast has given us a platform to positively communicate with our families and school community. Having continued with the podcast since our return, feedback has been very encouraging and pupils have had the opportunity to listen to it in class as well as at home, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to access it.

We hope to provide the pupils with the skills to produce their own podcast, which will immensely improve their digital literacy skills and encourage further development of their research and language skills. We are keen to link with Gaelic media such as freelance social media personalities and BBC Alba to develop media skills. There is scope to progress the podcast further and make it a weekly or bi-weekly podcast, providing updates about school and pupil successes, upcoming events, and a class focus. Through the podcast, the pupils could establish relationships with other Gaelic Medium Schools, connecting digitally and meeting Gaelic language pupils across Scotland.

The focus of the podcast would remain as an opportunity to enhance Gaelic language skills but with the additional benefit of improving digital literacy skills, provide a platform for recognition and communication with our school community.

Gaelic Version

Rè àm a' ghlaisidh-shluaigh, chruthaich sinn sreath de phod-chraolaidhean sa Ghàidhlig airson èisteachd is labhairt tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig a chur air adhart san sgoil air fad agus sa choimhearsnachd aice. Chaidh na pod-chraolaidhean a dhèanamh airson ceangal a bharrachd a chur air bhonn le coimhearsnachd na Gàidhlig air feadh Ghlaschu agus airson cothrom a chur air dòigh airson sgoilearan is an teaghlaichean a bhith a' cluinntinn a' chànan ionnsachaidh aca ann an suidheachadh dibhearsaineach le guthan air a bheil iad eòlach, agus airson a bhith a' conaltradh le sgoilearan is an luchd-obrach. An cois nam pod-chraolaidhean bha agallamhan le sgoilearan is luchd-obrach, farpais-cheist, agus gnìomhachd ealain is ciùird sheachdaineil airson teaghlaichean a bhith a' cur seachad tìde còmhla air an socair. A bharrachd, leig am pod-chraoladh leis a' C7 againn pod-chraoladh sònraichte eadar-ghluasaid a libhrigeadh anns am b' urrainn dhaibh an soraidh slàn fhàgail agus taing a ràdh ris an sgoil. Bha seo a' cumail taic ri an Slàinte is Sunnd agus eadar-ghluasad aig an àm dhuilich seo. Thug am pod-chraoladh dhuinn dòigh ùr conaltraidh, gu dìreach ri teaghlaichean, agus thug e dhuinn cothrom eile air Gàidhlig a thoirt a-steach don dachaigh, leis nach eil seo aig cuid mhòr de na sgoilearan. Nise agus gu bheil am pod-chraoladh ann, tha seo air cothrom eile a thoirt dhuinn sgilean rannsachaidh, clàraidh is deasachaidh a leasachadh leis na sgoilearan againn agus obair air a bhith ag ullachadh an cuid phod-chraolaidhean sgoile fhèin.

Chaidh na pod-chraolaidhean a dhèanamh le tidsearan agus sgoilearan bho Sgoil-àraich suas gu ÀS5 a' cur riutha gach seachdain. Bha luchd-dreuchd a bhios a' cleachdadh na Gàidhlig san obair làitheil aca a' gabhail pàirt cuideachd, a' toirt buntanas agus brosnachadh do na sgoilearan againn a bhith a' cleachdadh an cànan agus a bhith pròiseil às. Thug seo seachad ceangal don

chànan ann an dòigh a bha spòrsail is nach robh coltach ri obair sgoile do na sgoilearan againn. B' urrainn dhaibh èisteachd agus an caraidean a chluinntinn, cluinntinn bhon luchd-teagaisg aca is pàirt a ghabhail san fharpais-cheist – agus iad a' cur Gàidhlig gu feum ann an dòigh nach robh air a bhith comasach dhaibh, bhon a bha iad an làthair san sgoil. Thug seo cothroman do na sgoilearan an comas cànan ann an Gàidhlig a neartachadh, rud a bha na phrìomhachas airson nam pod-chraolaidhean, agus thug e cothrom dhuinn a bhith a' cumail sùil air sunnd nan sgoilearan. Bhiodh sgoilearan eadar-dhealaichte a' cur fios thugainn tron ghlasadh-shluaigh ag innse dhuinn ciamar a bha a' dol dhaibh agus dè bha iad ris, gam fàgail le beachd aigheach.

A rèir nam pàrantan is nan sgoilearan, chuir am pod-chraoladh gu mòr ri ionnsachadh aig an dachaigh, leis gum biodh na sgoilearan a' cur fios thugainn is ag iarraidh pàirt a ghabhail san ath chraoladh agus a' moladh dhòighean san deigheadh aca air com-pàirteachadh ann is cur ris.

Faodaidh sinn leantainn oirnn leis a' phod-chraoladh seo mar phròiseact sgoile ùr, rud a tha a' toirt piseach air sgilean litearrach didseatach an luchd-obrach is nan sgoilearan. Bidh e a' leasachadh an sgilean cànan a thaobh èisteachd is labhairt agus a' cur an comasan còmhraidh am feabhas.

Thug am pod-chraoladh stèidh dhuinn far an tèid againn air conaltradh gu math leis na teaghlaichean againn is coimhearsnachd na sgoile. Le bhith a' leantainn oirnn leis a' phod-chraoladh bhon a thill sinn, tha sinn air beachdan brosnachail fhaighinn air ais. Tha cothrom air a bhith aig na sgoilearan èisteachd ris sa chlasrum a bharrachd air aig an dachaigh, agus tha seo a' ciallachadh gu bheil an cothrom aig a h-uile duine a bhith ag èisteachd ris.

Tha sinn an dòchas gun tèid againn air sgilean nan sgoilearan a leasachadh a bhith a' cruthachadh am pod-chraolaidh fhèin, nì a chuireas ris an sgilean litearrach didseatach gu mòr, agus a bhrosnaicheas iad a bhith a' leasachadh an sgilean rannsachaidh is cànan barrachd. Bu mhath leinn ceangal a dhèanamh le meadhanan Gàidhlig a leithid luchd-iomraiteach a tha air an urra fhèin agus BBC Alba, gus sgilean nam meadhanan a leasachadh. Dh'fhaodte gun tèid againn air am pod-chraoladh a thoirt air adhart agus a dhèanamh gu seachdaineil no gach dàrnacha seachdain, a' toirt seachad naidheachdan mu shoirbheasan na sgoile is nan sgoilearan, tachartasan ri teachd, agus fòcas air clasaichean. Tron phod-chraoladh, dh'fhaodadh na sgoilearan càirdeas a thòiseachadh le Sgoiltean Gàidhlig eile, a' ceangal gu didseatach agus a' coinneachadh ri sgoilearan na Gàidhlig air feadh Alba. Dh'fhanadh fòcas a' phod-chraolaidh mar chothrom a bhith a' cur sgilean cànan na Gàidhlig am feabhas leis a' bhuannachd a bharrachd gum bite a' toirt piseach air sgilean litearrach didseatach, a' stèidheachadh ùrlar aithneachaidh agus a' conaltradh le coimhearsnachd na sgoile againn.

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Establishment:
Badcaul and Scoraig Primaries

Local Authority:
The Highland Council

What we did:

During lockdown, we focused on activities to build community between the schools and reinforce that we were together despite being apart. Events included a remote author visit, Bake Off competition, talent competition, taking part in the World's Largest Art Lesson and shared sports week.

One of the lasting activities, however, was the creation of a joint school quilt. Everyone was invited to decorate fabric, showing something that made them happy. There are just 14 pupils across the schools and the individual pieces were transformed by a local lady into a Little Loch Broom Schools Quilt. Creativity is one of our school values and this is so wonderfully creative, showing how such different ideas can come together to produce something very special.

Who we involved:

This involved our children and staff, parental and community support. Some of the contributions are from the youngest nursery children. The quilt was assembled by a local who is part of the school community through the inter-generational games sessions under normal circumstances.

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The difference it made:

The quilt is a lasting reminder of lockdown and the things that made us happy during that time. There is a sense of accomplishment in what we have created: personal achievement alongside collaboration. It will be displayed on rotation in each school and used for community events.

What we will do differently in the future:

Since our return, some of the children have shown an increased interest in sewing, creating their own Mindfulness Monsters and cross stitches in class. One of them is currently making their own quilt at home showing all of the local pets. Long term, we hope the events signpost increased collaboration between the schools, even when we can't get together.

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Establishment:
Rosewell Primary School

Local Authority:
Midlothian Council

What we did:

Senior Leadership Team (SLT) met with the Parent Council (PC) to discuss a partnership approach to teaching and learning and to support health and wellbeing in the community. We adopted the tagline #WeAreRosewell #WeAreResilient. We focused on coming out of the situation having built a stronger community.

Overnight, we provided learning and communication through Facebook, School App, Twitter, Seesaw and Google Classrooms. Some of these were new platforms so we had to quickly adapt and upskill both parents/carers and staff. SLT offered personal support over the telephone or on the doorstep to ensure everyone in the community had access to on-line learning and to the latest information.

Families were supported through 'Rosewell Shares' which was set up by the PC and they received regular food boxes and other financial support. The school used a 'Cash For Kids' grant and supplemented food boxes with a 'hot meal treat' including a recipe card that encouraged families to cook together.

In collaboration with the school, The PC posted weekly activities on their Facebook page. They were focused on spreading positivity in our community. Some of these attracted attention from national press.

SLT and PC communicated daily to identify where support was needed most.

Who we involved:

Rosewell Primary School and the PC initially set up a joint community approach. 'Rosewell Shares' was set up by parents from the PC and linked with local church. 'Cash for Kids' provided extra funding. The local shops provided prizes for events and were drop-off and collection points for resources.

The difference it made:

Being in a rural area, with one bus service in and out of the village, some families felt particularly isolated. With the closure of non-essential shops and travel bans imposed, this was a very challenging time for some of our families. Sometimes all we did was provide a 'listening ear' on the doorstep or at the end of a telephone.

We made sure that we had daily contact, over seven days, with some of our more vulnerable families. This meant we could respond immediately and get support, when required. The PC also acted as a gatekeeper and referred families onto us. A robust tracking system meant that no-one was left feeling alone or without support.

We encouraged families to engage with creative and innovative approaches to on-line learning. Many of our joint activities were based on the outdoors and encouraged families to get out and about into the local community. This supported the overall mental and physical health and wellbeing of everyone.

We promoted the coming together of the community by linking with as many organisations and companies as possible. The biggest difference was the community acting as one in the face of adversity. We became more resilient.

What we will do differently in the future:

Rosewell is a community that is experiencing rapid change with the number of new build houses in and around the very traditional ex-mining village. This has been challenging for some residents. Previous attempts to include all members of the school and community have met with a mixed response.

As a result of our experience, we have seen, by working collaboratively together, how we can identify needs and put supports in place using a variety of approaches. Social media was extremely beneficial in communicating and connecting with our families and the wider community. Long-term, we intend to explore how we can ensure equity for all our families and develop skills in digital learning for all.

The doors to the food bank closed. However, monetary donations are still welcome. Families in need know that support is still there. 'Rosewell Shares' is firmly embedded in the community.

The impact is summed up by Kristen Hunter, Parent and Founder of Rosewell Shares: "It has been great to see the community spring to action when we needed and help one another through the many acts of kindness that were shown throughout Rosewell. It has been heart-warming to see such great community spirit and resilience."

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Buidheann: Comann nam Pàrant

What we did:

At the start of lockdown, we realised that the sudden closure of schools would be particularly challenging for parents, especially those with no Gaelic speakers in the home, whose children were in Gaelic medium education. The response of the Gaelic speaking community was amazing with numerous new resources created in a very short space of time. However, we quickly realised that parents were struggling to cope with the sheer volume of resources that were appearing on a number of different platforms and often didn't know what was appropriate for their child. Along with a number of other organisations, we attempted to make it easier for parents by listing or timetabling resources and events in an age-appropriate format.

We introduced COVID-19 resources pages on our website which we updated regularly with resources from pre-school to secondary stage. We included a short description of each resource for parents.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig published a table, updated weekly, under '#cleachdi at home' with interactive resources and after-school events for young people. This covered activities from a number of different organisations which supported families to hear and use Gaelic in the home which was essential for children and young people.

Who we involved:

The #cleachdi aig an taigh initiative organised by Bòrd na Gàidhlig was principally activities organised by Gaelic arts agency Fèisean na Gàidheal and the Gaelic youth organisation Comunn na Gàidhlig. Our COVID-19 resources pages included activities from a wide range of partners and community groups.

The difference it made:

It enabled families to continue to access activities through the medium of Gaelic in support of their child's education and Gaelic language development. Many of the activities were provided by Comunn na Gàidhlig local development officers who work closely with schools providing a range of after-school activities. They had to familiarise themselves with online platforms and adapt their activities to fit the new model of online delivery. The team proved how creative they could be, coming up with new ideas for activities. They included quizzes and writing competitions, videos, games and many other activities whose whole focus was on engaging and enthusing young Gaelic speakers.

Throughout lockdown, parents were concerned that their children had few opportunities to use Gaelic and particularly welcomed activities where their children were able to participate and interact with fluent Gaelic speakers.

Although young people were not able to come together in their own communities, new online Gaelic speaking communities have been created.

What we will do differently in the future:

We have learnt a lot from the challenges of this time, skills and knowledge which will be very useful in the years to come. Online delivery meant that activities were in many cases accessible to a wider geographical range of families and recorded activities could be viewed at times which suited families. Although 'face to face' delivery will always be the preferable option in language development, it is now clear that there is a place for a greater online presence in our work. We know, for example, that many parents are now keen to take up online learning opportunities for themselves.

We have asked families about their experience through an online parental survey. The high response to the survey indicates how engaged parents currently are and hopefully this good level of engagement can be built on for the future. Many families report a positive experience during lockdown with support from teachers and schools cited as the most important factor in their experience. Disappointingly, this was not everyone's experience and we need to address some of the issues highlighted if we are to have equity and consistency in provision. Through partnership working, we have an opportunity to 'build back better'.

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Establishment:
Comann nam Pàrant

Na rinn sinn:

Aig toiseach a' ghlasaidh-shluaigh, dh'aithnich sinn gum biodh grad-dhùnadh nan sgoiltean gu h-àraid dùbhlannach airson nam pàrantan, gu h-àraid far nach robh neach-bruidhinn Gàidhlig san dachaigh agus clann ann am Foghlam tron Ghàidhlig. Bha an fhreagairt a thàinig bho choimhearsnachd nan Gàidheal mìorbhaileach, agus tòrr ghoireasan ùra gan cruthachadh ann an ùine glè bheag. Ach dh'aithnich sinn gu luath gun robh e doirbh airson nam pàrantan a bhith a' dèiligeadh ris an uimhir de ghoireasan a bha a' nochdadh air grunn diofar àitichean air-loidhne agus gum bu tric nach robh iad eòlach air dè bha freagarrach airson am pàiste-san. Còmhla ri grunn bhuidhnean eile, rinn sinn oidhirp gus an gnothach a dhèanamh nas fhasa airson phàrantan le bhith a' liostadh ghoireasan is tachartasan, agus gan cur air clàr-ama, ann an cruth a bha freagarrach airson aois.

Chuir sinn air dòigh air an làrach-lìn againn duilleagan airson goireasan Covid-19, a chaidh ath-ùrachadh gu cunbhalach le goireasan bho ro-sgoil gu ìre àrd-sgoile. Airson gach goireas bha tuairisgeul goirid airson phàrantan.

Dh'fhoillsich Bòrd na Gàidhlig clàr, a chaidh ath-ùrachadh gach seachdain, fo '#cleachd i aig an taigh', le goireasan eadar-ghnìomhach agus tachartasan an dèidh sgoile airson òigridh. Bha seo a' gabhail a-steach gnìomhachdan bho ghrunn diofar bhuidhnean a bha a' toirt taic do theaghlachan gus Gàidhlig a chluinntinn agus a chleachdadh aig an taigh, nì a tha riatanach airson clann agus òigridh.

Cò bha sinn a' gabhail a-steach:

Bha an iomairt '#cleachd i aig an taigh', air a cur air dòigh le Bòrd na Gàidhlig, gu sònraichte airson gnìomhachdan air an cur air dòigh leis a' bhuidheann ealain Fèisean nan Gàidheal agus a' bhuidheann òigridh Comunn na Gàidhlig. Bha

na duilleagan againn air goireasan Covid-19 a' gabhail a-steach gnìomhachdan bho raon farsaing de chom-pàirtichean agus buidhnean coimhearsnachd.

An diofar a rinn e:

Bha e a' leigeil le teaghlachan a chumail orra cothrom fhaighinn air gnìomhachdan tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig a bheireadh taic do fhoghlam an cuid chloinne agus don leasachadh cànan aca. Chaidh mòran de na gnìomhachdan a chur air dòigh leis na h-oifigearan leasachaidh ionadail aig Comunn na Gàidhlig, a bhios ag obair gu dlùth le sgoiltean gus raon de gnìomhachdan a thabhann an dèidh sgoile. B' fheudar dhaibh fàs eòlach air làraichean air-loidhne agus na gnìomhachdan aca a fhreagarrachadh ris a' mhodail ùr de libhrigeadh air-loidhne. Nochd an sgioba cho cruthachail 's a tha iad le bhith a' cruthachadh gnìomhachdan ùra. Bha sin a' gabhail a-steach farpaisean-ceist, farpaisean sgrìobhaidh, bhidiothan, geamaichean agus iomadh gnìomhachd eile ag amas air conaltradh ri Gàidheil òga agus gam brosnachadh.

Air feadh a' ghlasaidh-shluaigh, bha dragh air pàrantan nach robh ann ach glè bheag de chothroman aig an cuid chloinne Gàidhlig a chleachdadh, agus chuir iad fàilte mhòr air gnìomhachdan far am b' urrainn don chloinn pàirt a gabhail annta agus co-luadar a dhèanamh ri Gàidheil eile.

Ged nach b' urrainn do dhaoine òga tighinn ri chèile sna coimhearsnachdan aca fhèin, chaidh coimhearsnachdan Gàidhlig ùra a chruthachadh.

Na nì sinn diofraichte san àm ri teachd:

Dh'ionnsaich sinn tòrr bho na dùbhlain a' dh'èirich aig an àm seo, a bharrachd air sgilean agus eòlas a bhios glè fheumail sna bliadhnaichean ri teachd. Mar thoradh air libhrigeadh air-loidhne, bha gnìomhachdan gu tric so-ruigsinneach do raon nas farsaing de theaghlachan air feadh na dùthcha, agus b' urrainn dhaibh na gnìomhachdan a chlàradh airson coimhead aig àm a bha freagarrach dhaibh fhèin. Ged a bhios libhrigeadh 'aghaidh ri aghaidh' daonnan ion-roghnaichte mar roghainn airson leasachadh cànan, tha e a-nis soilleir gu bheil àite ann airson làthaireachd air-loidhne a bu mhotha airson ar n-obrach. Tha fhios againn, mar eisimpleir, gu bheil mòran phàrantan togarrach air cothroman ionnsachaidh air-loidhne a ghabhail os làimh dhaibh fhèin.

Tro shuirbhidh phàrantan air-loidhne, tha sinn air faighneachd de theaghlachan ciamar a chaidh dhaibh. Tha an ìre àrd de fhreagairtean don t-suirbhidh a' nochdadh cho com-pàirteach 's a tha pàrantan an-dràsta, agus thathar an dòchas gum faod sinn togail air an ìre seo de chom-pàirteachas san àm ri teachd. Dh'aithris mòran teaghlachan gun deach cùisean gu math leotha rè a' ghlasaidh-shluaigh, agus taic bho luchd-teagaisg ga h-ainmeachadh mar an rud a bu chudromaiche. Bha e na bhriseadh-dùil nach robh cùisean mar seo don h-uile duine, agus feumaidh sinn dèiligeadh ri cuid de na cùisean a chaidh a thogail ma tha cunbhalachd agus cothromas gu bhith ann an solar sheirbheisean. Tro bhith ag obair ann an com-pàirteachas, tha cothrom againn air 'togail air ais nas fheàrr'.

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Establishment:

Saint Roch's Primary and Deaf School

Local Authority:

Glasgow City Council

What we did:

When schools across the country went into lockdown in March 2020 due to the Coronavirus pandemic, staff at Saint Roch's Primary and Deaf School engaged with learners and families in a variety of ways, including digital learning platforms such as Seesaw and Showbie, weekly phone calls and targeted interventions for vulnerable families. As a result of this on-going engagement and to enable families to stay reconnected with learning and personal support, a Summer Programme was developed by staff, the Glasgow Life Family Support and Engagement Worker, the school's Family Learning Officer, and other third sector partners of Saint Roch's. The aim of this programme was to provide safe outdoor play sessions and home family learning activities for isolated families in Royston Glasgow who were greatly affected by this pandemic.

Two afternoon sessions per week for four weeks were held in the school playground, with a total of 37 different families attending over the eight sessions. Our registers show 72 different children and 38 different adults took part, with a total of 414 attendances. One of the sessions provided play and activity packs for families to support them to learn and reconnect with English together, while the other session offered play and general family activity packs to support health and wellbeing. The packs and sessions were developed in response to our on-going family support since school closures in March. Parents had told us 'I am worried I am losing my English', and 'The school holidays will be really difficult. There will be even less to do this year'.

The intended outcomes and benefits of the sessions were:

- To provide family learning activity packs which support Health and Wellbeing and Family ESOL.
- To provide a safe environment for outdoor play during a period of enhanced isolation.
- To provide regular contact for family support, offering reassurance, information, and signposting during a particularly unsettling period.
- To liaise with school staff as appropriate, thereby enhancing home school relationships.

The sessions were coordinated by the Family Support and Engagement Worker (FSEW) with support from the Family Learning Officer (FLO), a Glasgow Life ESOL Tutor, three Volunteers, two Class Teachers, the Royston Food Hub Manager, and the Co-ordinator from a social enterprise called Mhor Outdoor which supports people who are at risk of stress, depression or anxiety and can be empowered through outdoor adventure. Physical resources and funds were provided by our following partners:

- Glasgow City Council playground - let and pack lunches.
- Glasgow Life ESOL Strategy Fund - £250 for ESOL activity bags.
- Glasgow Life ESOL Tutor - design of four themed Family ESOL Packs.
- Outside the Box Community Development - £200 to supplement Health and Wellbeing Packs.
- Play Scotland - 'Home Play' books for sacks.
- Celtic Foundation - stationery and art items for activity packs.
- Royston Youth Action - 40 x £20 food vouchers plus donations of books and toys.

- The school janitor donated £100 of his own money and another community member contributed £40, which was used to buy resources for the packs and additional food and phone vouchers for families in need.
- Operation Play Outdoors - Den Building Session (unfortunately cancelled due to bad weather).

As a side note, the FSEW and FLO have recorded help from a total of 40 friends, neighbours and staff from March to August in the form of designing resources for packs, translating, photocopying, buying of play equipment, and donations of food, toys, games and household items for families.

The summer sessions involved three families at a time being given a half hour slot in the playground where they could play, talk to staff for support, receive pack lunches, activity packs and donations of toys and books, and spend time with an ESOL Tutor or Teacher who would discuss the learning that took place at home with the packs. A Teacher also offered Family Stem activities on the Thursday, and volunteers arranged active play activities in the playground. The FLO and FSEW were responsible for writing a risk assessment and ensuring that activities were carried out within the current COVID guidelines.

Parent feedback was very positive with impact statements gathered from participants throughout. A sample is as follows:

Family ESOL Packs:

- After making some food we play together. My wife is learning some new English words.
- Me and my son learn together. I learned new words. I liked it.
- We liked all the activities, especially my daughter who is nine. She has been at home for four months so every Tuesday she is excited to come. We have researched new words with the packs.

- It's good to practise our English and speak to Margaret, Laura and Karen. At home we speak Kurdish.
- Child feedback - 'I learned all the names, like ladybird, mosquito and daddy long legs'.

Family Health and Wellbeing Packs:

- We go outside with the bag every week.
- The packs have been great to do together because every week has been the same and they gave us something different to do together.
- We did a bit of science at home with the bag because it gave us ideas.

Playground Play:

- Coming to the playground has been good for us....it helps the children to look forward to school and feel less anxious.
- Without this my daughter would not see any friends to play with.
- This has helped me feel young again. I felt like a teenager. I love playing.
- It is good to have the playground because we are often at home...it changes your mind (how you think mentally), and I think during lockdown many people get depressed.

Family Support:

- Coming here was really helpful. I was struggling at home for two months solid. Margaret contacted me about this activity and the first time I was scared. I like it because we are living in the high rise flats. It is good for the kids to get exercise and see other people, other families. We really appreciated the voucher. It helped a lot.
- The pandemic was a scary time. These sessions give me the confidence to go out again as I didn't want to go out at first. The vouchers are so helpful for electricity and food.

- You have helped me so much to sort my money. I was worried before.
- The support is very important... it's safe. No virus. The children can play.
- It was good to volunteer. My son and I have been home alone. It was good to be able to help on a Tuesday and to meet other people. I felt better.

Signposting, advice and support was given to 12 parents for the uniform grant, 8 to the pre loved uniform service, 12 to Glasgow Life Online ESOL resources, 2 for council tax rebate, 1 to football clubs, 6 to cleaning and catering jobs, 1 to Number One Baby Bank, 1 for housing application form completion, 5 for £50 Lone Parent Families heating grant, 1 to Positive Action in Housing for phone voucher, 2 to college ESOL courses, and 1 to Saint Roch's Day Care for a free session to enable dad to attend hospital.

Further connections have been made for families as a result of the sessions; three parents have since gone on their first ever hill walk with staff from Mhor Outdoors. One of the parents said 'All through COVID I have spent all my energy in looking after others, it is so lovely to have a day for me.' As a result of this, a parent walking group is going to be started. Six families have also joined an allotment group as a result of a visit from the Royston Food Hub Manager, and most families received information and took part in discussions with class teachers about home learning and how the new school term will operate. The Family Learning Officer staff from Royston Youth Action are also planning a few open mornings for parents in the RYA garden, so that they can continue to meet socially and hear about all of the services RYA has to offer.

Overall, this programme has been successful in building on the relationships between children, parents, staff and volunteers, strengthening the connections that have been forming over months and in some cases years, in order to sustain what one volunteer observed as 'a real feeling of community' during a very unique and challenging period.

Establishment:
Family Learning In Clackmannanshire

Local Authority:
Clackmannanshire Council

What we did:

Pre-Lockdown

CLD family engagement team was formed in 2018 from external SAC funding, after the first year and some staff changes in 2019 the team now consists of one full time CLD worker and a full time development worker. During this time we have made great progress in building relationships with other organisations and have successfully delivered a number of programmes and groups which support family learning.

These include:

- Delivering four Columba 1400, three day leadership programmes. Two parent only groups and two primary 7 transition and parent groups. Enabling the participants to look at values, leadership, reflect on past experiences and plan for the future. Participants felt empowered and able to pursue new opportunities as a result of their attendance.
- Establishing a local family learning group called WOW (Weekly on Wednesday) where families can come together and meet socially and participate in family learning activities. The programmes are developed in partnership with the families and staff to give a sense of ownership. Input from the local primary school and boxing gym has meant a good range of physical and educational activities have been on offer. Parents have reported that they have gained confidence and are more able to support their child's learning.

The difference it made:

- Working in partnership with NHS, Education and Social Work we delivered the THRIVE programme in Sauchie to 12 adults. This 16 week programme targeted parents who have low self-esteem, mild mental health issues and are living in areas of deprivation. The programme enabled parents to address and cope with their own health and wellbeing concern which in turn enables them to support their child's learning. Unfortunately due to lockdown the programme only ran for six weeks, although virtual support was put in place straight away.
- Developed Clax 1400, a community based group of parents who have taken forward the development of a community cafe. They invite partners to attend and provide information to local people, have provided volunteer opportunities for local young people in the cafe and have supported wider family learning programmes in the area. These programmes raised confidence and knowledge amongst parents which enables them to support their child's learning.
- Developed holiday programmes to continue family learning opportunities throughout the school holidays. These included Family Fun Fridays and Super Sunday activities in partnership with Wimpy Park community group. This ensured engagement continued beyond term time and extra support was easily accessed in relation to the food poverty agenda.
- We delivered three The Cant Cook, Wont Cook programmes in partnership with Sauchie Active 8. The programme was delivered over a six week period and families came together to share this experience and developed new skills in the kitchen. Learning outcomes - increase in confidence, numeracy and literacy skills and health and wellbeing improved.

During Lockdown

At the start of lockdown, we developed a Google classroom for family learning. Families were able to access sessions which included cooking recipes, arts and crafts and physical activities. We contacted the families with details of the Google classroom and due to the uptake we soon realised that families were struggling. They had issues with devices and the internet as well as mounting pressure regarding home schooling.

Therefore, the first few weeks were spent supporting parents to make sure that they had the correct equipment and were able to access their children's Google classroom platforms. We spent time on the phone and through our social media group supporting this process and reassuring them that what they were doing was enough.

We quickly realised that this was going to be a challenging time for the community and our families, as being at home meant extra pressures for everyone in relation to basic essentials such as food and utilities. In partnership with Wimpy Park community group, we responded to this by providing food, top up vouchers and vouchers for Tesco to 60 households within the community.

Further in partnership with Wimpy Park community group and Sauchie Active, eight we delivered fruit and vegetables every week for eight weeks to 150 households. To help identify those in the greatest need, we put leaflets out to every household within the communities, advertised on social media, linked in with local schools and Clackmannanshire Councils COVID response helpline.

Due to such a high response from this work we decided to look at widening the WOW programme to incorporate families that were most at need. The feedback in relation to the Google classroom had been that it was just too much for parents on top of everything else. The new approach was to deliver the programme virtually using Facebook

as the platform which the families already used to communicate with us.

Using the fruit and vegetable delivery list, we looked at families with children under 12 years of age as a basis of engagements, as well as the original WOW participants and anyone who had been involved in family learning programmes previously. This led to us having 50 families participating in the programme each week. We delivered ingredient packs, recipes and an art and craft activity to ensure that families had the resources needed to participate.

The difference it made:

We have been recording each session on Facebook live every Wednesday at 5pm on Clacks youth voice page. The video remains on the page for anyone to view making it available to all users. The programme is becoming more popular, with videos now reaching over 1 thousand views from 486 views when it was first started. Feedback has been positive with everyone sending in pictures and completing the online evaluation forms.

“

I think it's lovely that we all still can connect even if it's virtually. Also, so kind giving us the food to cook with and the fun activities thank you.”

“

Really enjoyed making the homemade pizza from scratch and the kids enjoyed the responsibility of making it themselves with my supervision. This is a great thing to get families to work together.”

“

The group have done amazing giving children and family things to look forward to and encouraging us to spend more time together.”

“

Kids were so excited to be able to help prepare dinner.. Kept asking was it time yet.. Wimpy group are fantastic deserve all the praise in the world. From a Mum that can't cook it was easy to follow and a tasty dinner for all. The kids have asked if we can make it again so was a hit with them.”

What we will do differently in the future:

Due to the success of the online cooking we have decided to continue this until at least Christmas - although after the October holidays we have arranged to carry out the arts and crafts activity in the community centre. The families will come after school to participate at stations which will be set out in a hall where we can adhere to COVID19 guidelines. Once the session is complete they will then pick up their ingredients and head home to do the online cooking session.

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Establishment:

Adult Learning

Local Authority:

North Lanarkshire Council

What we did:

Learning Packs

Learning packs were delivered to doorsteps. These contained a variety of resources, such as puzzle books, writing activities, Summer Reading Programme, ESOL-photo dictionaries, SQA materials and worksheets.

Wednesday Walk

A weekly virtual walking activity with a theme, promoted via text and social media. Participants take photos on a positive theme while enjoying a solo walk. Recent topics have included trees and bees and maths in the natural world. Photos are then shared on social media. Nature themed topics have been extended with links to materials and activities from Cumbernauld Living Landscapes to encourage further learning.

Online Learning and the use of social media

Secure and private online groups and rooms, e.g. Gaelic Culture Group meet every Tuesday from 1-3pm for a video chat and to practise their language skills. Other learners are working on ALN, accreditation and improving IT skills.

ESOL Online

Delivered by CLD Workers and support workers. This includes weekly video calls and lessons for each learner either in a group or one to one setting.

Pivot Garden

Updates posted on progress of the garden and seedlings. Learners are able to access garden individually and the CLD Worker posts updates on social media. Seedlings are delivered to learners for planting.

Who we involved:

North Lanarkshire Council CLD and partners including social work and NHS. Local community groups such as, Pivot Community Garden, Cumbernauld Living Landscapes.

The difference it made:

Online learning and increased use of social media has helped reduce feelings of social isolation and supported learners to learn new digital skills. Outdoor learning has encouraged learners to be more physically active and have an improved awareness of their own and others' mental health and wellbeing.

Some learners have been able to take part because the learning is online, e.g. one group member who had been housebound over the last term has enjoyed being able to re-join her group.

Through adapting engagement methods the adult learning team has been able to continue to keep in touch with learners. Learners have been able to continue to build on employability, Health and Wellbeing, ALN and ESOL skills through online learning, peer support and virtual group activities. This has been especially important through a time of uncertainty around physical and mental health, employment and inclusion.

What we will do differently in the future:

One of the main issues identified during lockdown was the potential and challenges of digital learning. We identified a need for access to broadband and digital equipment and for the need to provide digital learning opportunities. This is now the focus as we re-engage face to face. Lockdown has also highlighted the value and potential of volunteering. A recent recruitment has increased the number of volunteers and they will now factor into future planning.

CLD practice has adapted to include a wider variety of engagement methods and the opportunity to provide learning in different settings. Not all learning has to be in a community centre but can be outdoors and online.

Overall the biggest changes have been to include a blended approach to learning across CLD and provision of digital learning for learners and staff. This has been a time of innovation and experimentation that has opened up the learning provision to new and exciting opportunities.

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Establishment:
Education Refugee Team

Local Authority:
Clackmannanshire Council

What we did:

Pre-lockdown:

The Education Refugee Team provides an innovative service delivery model to improve wellbeing and learning outcomes for the Syrian refugees resettled into Clackmannanshire. Supports introduced include wellbeing support, English language support, employability support, mother and baby groups, and targeted youth work/holiday programmes. This bespoke partnership results in a well-coordinated 'Team Around the Family' approach and a clear pathway of support which promotes diversity and inclusion. It has been creative and ambitious at every opportunity, in driving forward change in outcomes for all.

Clackmannanshire currently has 24 resettled Syrian refugee families. They have all arrived into the Local Authority at varying times over the past four years and family composition is varied.

The Education Refugee Team consists of:

- Education Community Learning Development Team
- Clackmannanshire Schools' Support Service Outreach Team
- Educational Psychology Teams.

The Team also liaises regularly with other partners including Housing Support, Social Services, Community Police and Health. There is now a clear plan shared amongst partner agencies to provide support and appropriate interventions to improve outcomes for all. Previously the Syrian refugee families would have to source disjointed support from various agencies themselves.

The successful partnership model embraces a holistic needs led approach in delivering:

- ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) for adult learners.

- EAL (English as an Additional Language) and targeted wellbeing support for school aged children and young people.
Note: both ESOL & EAL provision is differentiated to meet individual needs following initial and ongoing assessments.
- Therapeutic support for children and young people to address trauma and loss.
- Signposting to other agencies for additional support.

The partnership approach set out to:

- Increase employability/volunteering skills.
- Increase adult engagement with community ESOL(English for Speakers of Other Languages) programmes and further education.
- Improve school attendance and attainment.
- Increase engagement in school education.
- Improve wellbeing.
- Reduce PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) scores.

All of the intervention mentioned above is delivered face to face.

Lockdown:

Due to the unprecedented nature and impact of COVID-19 on communities throughout Scotland, including Clackmannanshire. The Education Refugee Team has had to adapt the way they support Syrian refugee families during this crisis. It has been imperative that the support for these families has continued during lockdown, given their vulnerabilities due to social isolation, communication barriers and experiences of trauma and loss. The Team has had to be creative and solution focussed in the way they have adapted their approach to provide continued support to service users.

The Team embarked on in depth planning for lockdown weeks before it began. Ongoing communication plans (including welfare check ins) were considered highly important throughout lockdown. The Team established a 'red, amber, green' system, where all 24 families were placed into one of these categories. This determined the level of communication with them each week during lockdown based on their needs and vulnerabilities. All communication is recorded into a centralised database accessible by all members of the Team and any significant information/concerns are recorded and escalated to Line Managers as necessary. This allows for shared communication between staff and means information is accessible at all times, even if staff are absent from work.

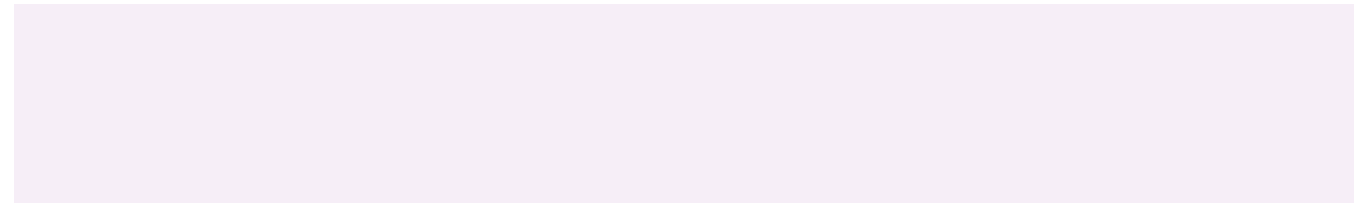
Regular communication with all of our families has meant we have been available to offer advice and support in relation to the day to day challenges the families are facing as a result of COVID-19. The Team have carried out house calls and video calls to support with accessing IT, carrying out food deliveries for those shielding or self isolating and providing school work and resources for children and young people. The Team are also able to sign post families effectively to other services they may require support from during lock down (e.g. Housing, Social Services, Health).

“
Thank you for all your efforts with us.”

“
You are a great team.”

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The ESOL provision for adult learners has continued but moved to an online platform using Google Classroom. Learners have been invited to specific online classrooms reflecting their current ESOL level. Using this virtual learning platform has allowed the provision to continue offering an individualised learning opportunity for each learner. It allows flexibility for the learner in terms of when they choose to study, this was an important consideration as we were mindful that families would now have their children at home full time and would therefore need to fit in studying around caring for their children. IT literacy skills are often a challenge for our families, however introducing Google Classroom to them has allowed learners to become more comfortable navigating virtually and developing their IT skills at home. This has resulted in learners developing their confidence with IT. It has also provided a useful mechanism for continued communication with all learners; also allowing the Team to closely monitor engagement in learning. The Team plan



to continue using this virtual learning platform in the future once face-to-face classes return.

Currently the team has a 100% contact record with all families during this period.

We have also successfully engaged 69% of our adult learners in our online platform since the start of lockdown. This number reflects those learners who regularly attend our ESOL classes and excludes individuals who are over 65 years, already in employment, registered carers, registered disabled and women with children under the age of two years.

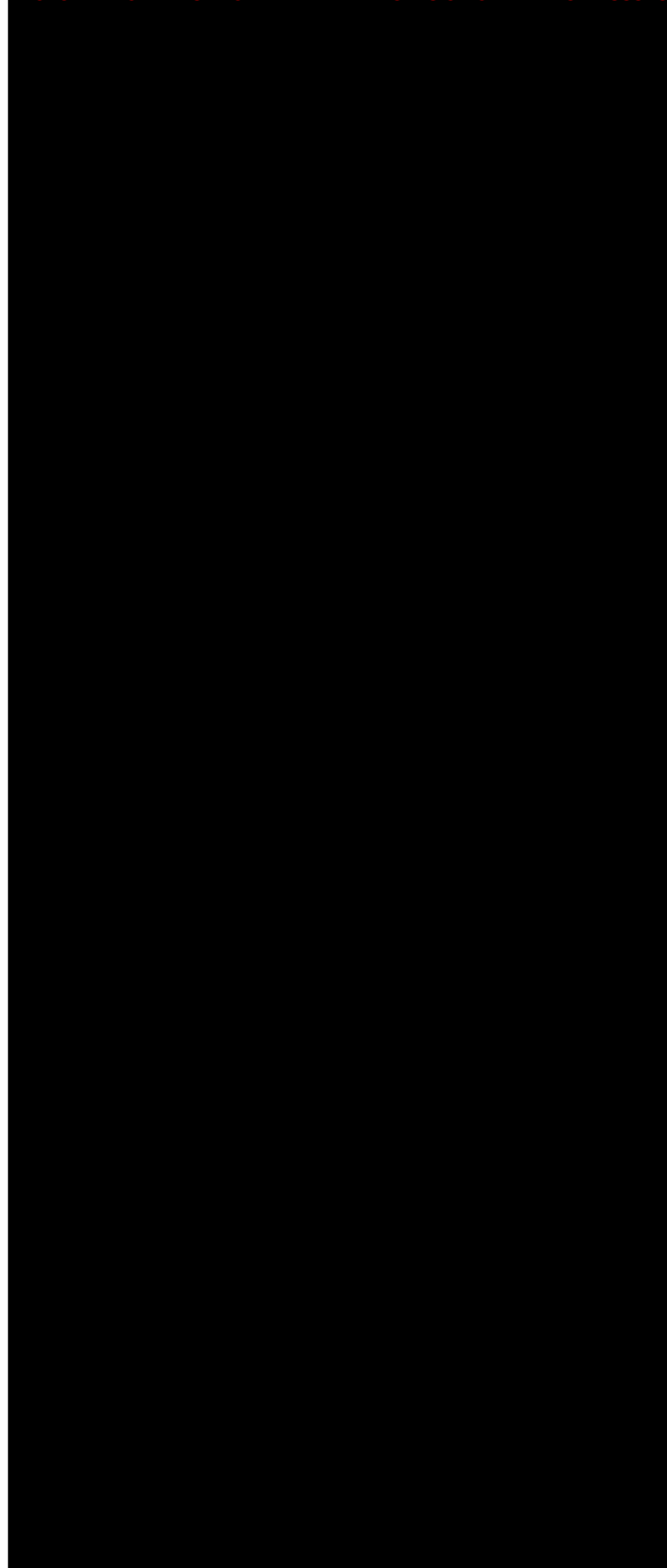
The Education Refugee Team is consistently committed to delivering the highest possible standard of support to Syrian families during the COVID-19 crisis. They go above and beyond on a daily basis to deliver an exemplary service which strives to make a difference in the lives of Syrian refugees living within Clackmannanshire.

“
You have given us important information.”

“
The video you sent made me happy, I watched it 5 times!”

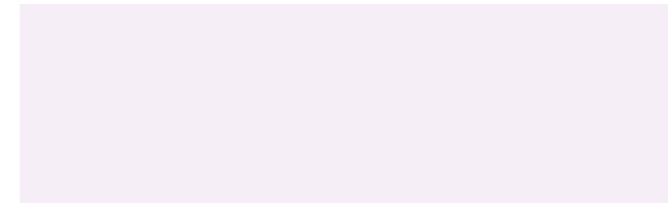
“
Thank you for remembering us.”

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Establishment:
Possibilities

Local Authority:
Glasgow City Council



What we did:

Facetime on Facebook Messenger, Zoom, email, phone calls, posting resources and online quizzes.

Who we involved:

Members of the disability centre who are learners, their families, support workers and managers from community care organisations such as Social Work, Stepdown, Community Lifestyle and Leonard Cheshire. Funding for tutoring came from WEA and once that ceased then it came from Lottery Communities Fund.

The difference it made:

The National Lottery Communities funding came through networking on Zoom meetings, which North West Glasgow Voluntary Sector Network (NWGVSN) organised weekly. I at first tried Zoom for learning remotely but only one learner could do this and some face-to-face remote learning was carried out through social media video calls, some through emails and some through printing and posting resources.

Training for me on Zoom and Canvas came from WEA, digital skills training for a volunteer tutor from West of Scotland college, a new learner (volunteer for Possibilities) received digital skills training and a tablet with internet from Leonard Cheshire. NWGVSN arrange for computers, internet and iPads for some of our volunteers who were studying at university and had no equipment. I started working in the office two days weekly and was able to (after receiving funding from the Lottery) print resources (various levels) and post them to each learner. I also arranged one to one face time meetings for some and phone communication for others.

WEA ran Zoom training, which I advertised for them to the members of Possibilities and which they ran for a group of members. Lots of online activities for members (including learners) daily and some ‘live’ by other staff members of Possibilities ensured those given digital skills training were involved and not isolated. Learning was able to continue remotely, they felt supported and included and therefore isolation was kept at bay. Some of their families, carers and guardians got involved in the learning as well as online activities.

What we will do differently in the future:

I was not very confident about digital skills and feel I have a lot more to learn and practice. Some learners have low levels of learning skills and it has been frustrating to try to support them into online communication. Having others support them in this has been good. Face-to-face learning is best with my group but in the meantime my approach seems to be adequate.

I attend Zoom meetings regarding how to engage fully with learners but remotely. I am involving volunteer tutors (who haven’t been involved much recently) to see how we can put online tutorials so that current and new learners can access them at their own pace and time. So, changing how we tutor is definitely having an impact. I am looking at a literacy app to see how I can embed that into the learning programme but know some learners will need face-to-face support so won’t be able to access it. Having families and others involved will also help.

Professional Thought Piece



Professor Christopher Chapman
 Director, Policy Scotland
 College of Social Sciences
 University of Glasgow

How are Scotland (and other countries) responding to the pandemic?

Different systems have dealt with the pandemic in different ways and have also attempted to learn from others who are ahead of them in terms of dealing with higher numbers of cases and R values. However, rather than blindly borrowing approaches it is important to learn the lessons from systems with similar contextual and cultural features. There is a need for both quantitative and qualitative evidence. There has been an abundance of surveys, but in Scotland, Children's Neighbourhoods have undertaken a considerable amount of qualitative research on the pandemic, particularly during the initial lockdown <https://childrensneighbourhoods.scot/home/covid-19/> as has Policy Scotland <https://policyscotland.gla.ac.uk/category/publications/briefing/>. It will be important to document and research the short, medium and longer-term responses to, and impacts of, COVID-19 on education systems, children and their families.

In my view the teaching profession stepped up massively in terms of their focus on health and wellbeing, especially in looking after vulnerable children. There appeared to be more variation in responses to taking learning and teaching online, with good practice emerging very quickly in some places but practice being less responsive in others. In my view the pandemic shone a spotlight on variations in a number of areas, for example, in terms of expectations and practice between the state and the private sector and this was picked up in the media, to some extent. Evidence from south of the border (Ofsted report) talks about a few hours a week of meaningful learning. My experience would suggest that this was also the picture in some cases in Scotland.

As schools have reopened some senior phase students are being over tested in an attempt to gather evidence so that teachers can be confident about estimated grades. There is a danger that tests under examination conditions within schools become the gold standard of evidence. This is a

perverse consequence of removing the National 5 exam diet and could potentially undermine a refreshed Curriculum for Excellence and other forms of assessed work.

What needs do you identify as most critical for the education system at this time?

The first issue is health and wellbeing. Survey results on children and young people both in Australia and Edinburgh report similar messages. There are higher levels of depression and anxiety being expressed than pre-pandemic surveys. The University of Edinburgh survey highlighted that girls in the upper teens are expressing feelings of isolation and loneliness significantly more than their male counterparts. We are on the edge of a mental health cliff and if we can't keep schools open that is likely to have drastic consequences.

The second issue is ensuring that all children have equal access to high quality educational experiences. This is particularly important as self-isolation and partial school closures may increase the levels and range of different models of blended and online learning. This will make ensuring that all children have access to high quality provision even more important.

Throughout the lockdown there was a recalibration of relationships between the public and the third sector. Both local authorities and the third sector really rose to the challenge. Local policy and practice innovated and found new ways to collaborate very quickly. Practice in these settings evolved very quickly and understandably, faster than national policy because of the need to respond on the ground in real time. This demonstrated that some of the more bureaucratic and inflexible practices that exist within the system can be overcome.

What are the features of effective system leadership during this time?

System leadership came in varying degrees from agencies, directors and Headteachers during lockdown. It was a highly responsive and reactive

'survival mode' of leadership. Understandably, given the extreme pressures within the system it was hard, both nationally and locally, for leaders to think beyond the immediate challenges they faced. Now is the time for us to be lifting our heads and taking a more long-term and strategic view, whilst also dealing tactically with the short-term day-to-day issues presented by the pandemic. We need to take a step back, hold our breath and look more to the medium and long-term.

Is there an education silver lining to this crisis?

The pandemic has highlighted the system's strength and capability for working with more vulnerable and disadvantaged children and families. The pandemic highlighted the fact that we have some brilliant teachers and other professionals who responded amazingly and were working in very challenging situations. There is, however, also an issue around variations in expectations. For example, some have chosen to focus on health and wellbeing rather than learning and teaching but this is a false dichotomy. One needs to focus on both if one is to support all children to achieve their full potential, particularly in these challenging and extraordinary times.

In my view the agility demonstrated by local government and the third sector was a success of the pandemic. This might provide the catalyst to stimulate new ways of working and a rethinking of roles and responsibilities within the system. There must be a sense of optimism that we can learn from our COVID-19 experiences to improve the system. One challenge will be to resist the forces of conservatism that may send us back to where we were - the "old normal" - rather than using the pandemic as an opportunity to lever change to create a resilient "new normal" that is fit for purpose in a post-COVID world. Without a doubt there is an opportunity, and I really hope that as a system we can take the opportunity.

“
 In my view
 the teaching
 profession
 stepped up
 massively in
 terms of their
 focus on health
 and wellbeing,
 especially in
 looking after
 vulnerable
 children.”

Professional Thought Piece



Gayle Gorman,
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of
Education

In your role, how are you responding to the pandemic?

Education Scotland took a proactive approach, even before lockdown commenced, by leading conversations with Government colleagues on worse case scenarios and looking internationally at responses.

Faced with the decision that schools would close, rapid decision making took place - talking to professional associations, local government partners and health colleagues, about the impact on education and children and young people. Working collaboratively has been a key theme of COVID.

The role of Education Scotland is to represent the profession, our children and young people. There was, and continues to be, constant communication and representing these groups in national forums and reflecting their views at a national level, including the CERG group, which was established very quickly.

We urgently developed and supported the extension of online learning, including through establishing a partnership with e-Sgoil. This is helping to support children and young people's learning in a range of ways.

We have offered headspace sessions for headteachers, who expressed a desire to connect with one another. We provided the technology, the space and facilitation for hundreds of headteachers. We also provided a series of blethers aimed at supporting leaders at all levels; headteachers, depute headteachers, principal teachers, teachers, and local authority wider staff.

We now have a clear strategy in place to allow us to support the profession in response to the pandemic. Our priorities were reviewed and set out in our refreshed Corporate Plan and to deliver on the priority themes, our work was organised into two broad areas: People and Place.

What needs do you identify as most critical for the education system at this time?

One of the things that we need to do is create hope. I'm really concerned about the impact on children and young people's mental health as this pandemic continues to be long and drawn out.

It's important for the system to be agile and responsive, in a way that education is not known for. This is also true for Education Scotland. I think we have demonstrated flexibility in how we have offered support and advice to the system when it was needed.

We also need to be thinking about moving forward. The move to blended learning, approaches to the use of digital technology, involvement and engagement of parents – all of these accomplishments, and more, have been substantial and it's important to build on these successes.

What are the features of effective system leadership during this time?

Firstly, communication has been absolutely key and central; there is a clear correlation with effective communication and the ability of citizens to cope, which is reflected worldwide. Collaboration and communication are intrinsically linked. Strong and effective working relationships have supported communication in an online environment.

Secondly, the dedication of professionals involved in supporting recovery, working timeously and making decisions has been a central feature of system leadership. A positive feature has been when faced with challenges, collaborative decision making can work. This is a real strength of an improving system. A real learning point is that, as a leader, stepping away from routines and processes, can still come to very sound decisions on a common focus and principle.

Finally, a lot of learning and reflection has been undertaken by leaders, as educators and at individual level. We've seen real strength in leadership in a crisis, demonstrating a real resilience and showing adaptive leadership responses that reflect a context as it evolves over time.

Is there an education silver lining to this crisis?

We have seen different views of empowerment during this crisis. Teachers have demonstrated a strong degree of agency – when they decided what they were going to do online, forms of engagement with their young people, levels of support, designing activities, etc. An individual classroom approach embodies teacher agency.

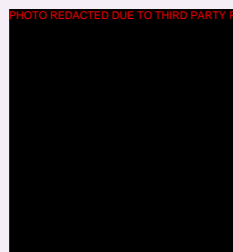
Digital technology and integrated 21st century learning is a silver lining and this should be built on. We've seen transformational use of technology used by teachers across Scotland.

Parental engagement that is meaningful and involves the learning has been evident. Parents have been seen as real partners.

Finally, globally, people value teachers. Through the adversity of the lockdown, the work of the profession was recognised and valued. The expertise and skill of the profession has been welcome and positive. That's a real and welcome silver lining.

“The dedication of professionals involved in supporting recovery, working timeously and making decisions has been a central feature of system leadership.”

Professional Thought Piece



Laurence Findlay,
Director of Education and Children's Services, Aberdeenshire Council

In your role, how are you responding to the pandemic?

One thing that was vital from the beginning was to ensure regular communication and consistent messaging round about the response to the pandemic.

We put in place meetings three times weekly with headteachers to provide them with key messages regarding COVID and updates. This arrangement was reviewed and moved to a weekly basis until the end of the year. This helps to ensure that everyone has the same consistent message and also offers the opportunity for headteachers to engage in dialogue and ask questions. This has been very well received with headteachers commenting positively on visible leadership demonstrated by the Director of Education who leads these sessions.

There were a number of phases involved in the use of digital technology as a response to lockdown. These included an analysis of need including broadband capacity in rural areas; providing professional learning for staff; and providing the kit to professionals. The Incident Management Team, now the Recovery Management Team, are looking at how we recover from this pandemic.

Ultimately we are ensuring that a participative approach is adopted, given the number of schools in Aberdeenshire. Forward thinking is also evolving in terms of how services are reshaped with an education system to meet the needs of children and families moving forward.

What needs do you identify as most critical for the education system at this time?

Relationships have been front and centre of the approach taken. As a Director with 10,000 employees in total across all the services, there is a greater level of connection now. The opportunity for headteachers to hear regularly, on a weekly basis from the Director, has been welcomed by all. This has strengthened relationships across the local authority.

Health and wellbeing is central as a priority. We have reiterated the importance of having a work life balance and this has been appreciated by those working across a number of services.

We set up an educational rota system to support headteachers during the pandemic. On a daily basis, there is a local authority officer on duty to support headteachers out of hours in the event that there is a case of COVID in their respective establishments. This is providing reassurance to headteachers. Also, through the educational psychology service, we provided a confidential phone line throughout the first few months of the pandemic for parents who were struggling.

What are the features of effective system leadership during this time?

Relational and compassionate leadership are important during this time. Good communication has never been so important with clarity of purpose and clarity of messaging.

We need to enhance how we lead digitally and remotely as practice varies. The importance of how to facilitate conversations digitally is a real challenge. It requires a different skillset in how you lead change effectively.

Is there an education silver lining to this crisis?

As part of the Northern Alliance Equity Week, a workshop was run across the alliance on 'reimagining the skills agenda and DYW'. Facing unprecedented unemployment, with huge reliance on gas and oil, many people have been furloughed. It is important that schools play a key role in supporting efforts or else we have a lost generation. There is a real opportunity to look at the curriculum, ensuring that we adhere to the design principles, exploring parity of esteem with skills and the traditional curriculum, engaging with employers, etc. This is an opportunity to radically reshape the curriculum rather than tinker around the edges, which has been a feature of former practice. Many features of digital innovation across Aberdeenshire should be retained.

Education Scotland has developed very strong relationships with Aberdeenshire and across the Northern Alliance. This is a key strength.

I see this as an opportune time to review school inspections and reshape the quality framework, including the quality indicators, given recent changes. Perhaps it is time to take a more thematic approach to inspection and review as was piloted in Moray with Developing the Workforce.

“
Health and wellbeing is central as a priority. We have reiterated the importance of having a work life balance and this has been appreciated by those working across a number of services.”

Health and wellbeing

This theme is about how well establishments and others supported healthy attitudes and behaviours, positive self-esteem and confidence during lockdown.

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Establishment:

Claypotts Castle Primary School

Local Authority:

Dundee City Council

What we did:

We put together a CALM box filled with worry dolls, playdough, mindfulness colouring in, bubbles, breathing sticks and teddy bears for all 390 children in our school. We provided a script and suggestions about how the children could use these to help them regulate stress whilst in lockdown. We built our curriculum rationale around this focus on relational practice and called it TRUST IN ME LEARNING with the day in school organised around TIME – Time to learn, Time to grow, Time to play, Time to talk, Time to think and Time to regulate.

One key feature of the intervention over the summer was asking the children to place the teddy bear in the top floor window of their home. Then when the families were allowed to daily exercise around the streets in our community, they could count the teddies and reinforce the sense of belonging we wanted to promote whilst we were apart. One child achieved over 100! When the children returned we ensured each day was spent developing awareness of breathing, relaxation and stress regulation.

Who we involved:

We involved the school, the local church (who helped deliver the learning packs and CALM boxes), a local charity and our parent council who funded the CALM boxes. We benefitted from the Connected and Compassionate classroom resource from Education Scotland to influence our planning upon return to school, building upon the summer experience.

The difference it made:

The focus has been on developing the ideas of learning and wellbeing across the community. The focus for this part of our curriculum rationale has been socio-emotional learning.

When the children returned, we ensured each day was spent developing awareness of breathing, relaxation and stress regulation. We developed grounding techniques and mindfulness. The school is calm and children are able to enact an internal locus of control when faced with stressors. The focus has been on learner agency/children doing things for themselves. We have been able to link our check-ins which happen several times across the day to using the strategies the children were developing in and out of school. We have been able to support families by developing awareness of these strategies at home through regular feedback. Regular reflection allows the children to learn how to apply the strategies in different circumstances.

What we will do differently in the future:

This project has allowed us to develop our focus on the synergy between learning and wellbeing through learner agency. More specifically it has allowed us to build upon the child and family understanding of using strategies for learning and for wellbeing. Upon return to school we hosted a whole school learners' conference and asked the question: "What do you do when things get difficult in your learning?" We received all 390 responses and our children selected whole school "stuck strategies" so children know what to do when they don't know what to do. This applies whether it is socio-emotional learning or academic learning, in and out of school.

Establishment:

Wick High School

Local Authority:

The Highland Council

What we did:

Youth workers delivered daily, online, after school activities on the school's Google Classroom. These included:

- **Monday Motivation** – Setting weekly fitness challenges and setting intentions and goals for the week;
- **Tuesday** – Working with a local art centre to produce a lockdown film with our young people;
- **Wednesday** – Art Factory – Researched art history and designed window panes for a community art project;
- **Thursday Quiz Night** – youth workers hosted a weekly online quiz;
- **Friday** – Young people could vlog or blog about a film they had watched and would review.

Who we involved:

Young people were involved with community art projects and intergenerational work with a local care home.

The difference it made:

With our mental health Google Classroom, 84% of a particular cohort engaged. Weekly one-to-one sessions were delivered using Google Hangouts, with a weekly average of 71% of the school roll having this contact.

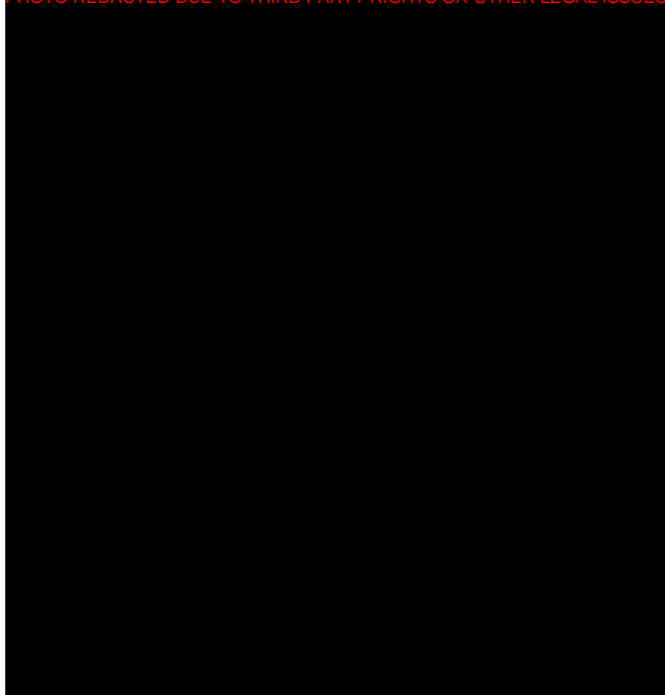
Youth work is very much part of our recovery planning in Wick High School – helping young people reconnect with learning, supporting our continued focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap and raising attainment.

What we will do differently in the future:

The quality of raising the volume and validity of pupil voice and fostering leadership at all levels has impacted positively on progress. In building positive relationships and having ready access to a youth work team through Hangouts, observed engagement in learning has improved in online classes. Since school has returned, this has laid the foundations for the attendance gap to narrow by 3% and exclusions have reduced to almost zero.

Having youth workers in partnership with Wick High School has: helped to build relationships with young people; ensured support is available when and where young people need it; and has created a sustainable approach to closing the poverty related attainment gap. Throughout lockdown this contact was crucial to ensure the health and wellbeing of our young people was supported.

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Establishment:

Ayr Academy

Local Authority:

South Ayrshire Council

What we did:

Active Schools worked in partnership with various funding partners, local sports clubs, organisations, businesses and National Governing Bodies to offer sports equipment packs for families who needed support to engage in physical activity and sport at home. The funding and equipment donations allowed us to work with schools to identify families who required support to be active at home and provide packs for indoor activities, football, handball, fitness, tennis and badminton. These equipment packs linked with the online resources developed by Active Schools, offering ideas to families on how to stay engaged in sport whilst in lockdown. The project brought funders and local partners from the communities together to promote positive partnerships, and to encourage families to stay active during COVID-19 to support positive physical and mental health.

Who we involved:

Active Schools and partners; William Grant & Sons; Scottish Football Association; Scottish Handball Association; Troon Community Sports Hub; New Life Church, Prestwick; Glenburn Miners Welfare Football Club; Foundation Scotland; Ayr Rugby Football Club; Hillhouse Quarry Group; Castlehill Church, Ayr; Whitletts Victoria Football Club.

The difference it made:

The project was really important to allow us to continue to support families to remain active during COVID-19. The fantastic support from local and national partners has been really positive and will make a real difference in our communities across South Ayrshire. The project resulted in the following:

- 691 packs distributed in partnership with 37 South Ayrshire schools and nurseries.
- 570 families supported to stay active at home and in their community including 26 care experienced young people.
- 309 pupils in receipt of free school meals, 256 pupils from SIMD 1 and 2 and 27 pupils with additional support needs.

What we will do differently in the future:

The partnerships created during lockdown to fund and deliver this project will remain and have created a real focus around some of our most deprived communities. Continuing discussions with local sports clubs are happening to ensure young people receiving equipment packs are being supported to access club sport where appropriate. An understanding of the barriers to participation are resulting in good local examples such as free places for target pupils etc. This Changing Lives approach to sport is really beneficial locally in understanding the needs of our hardest to reach and least active young people, and embedding a culture of compassion and support in sport locally.

Establishment:
Scottish Centre for Children
with Motor Impairment

What we did:

In response to lockdown we remained open for our children. Staff supported this decision and mutually agreed working arrangements were put in place. Mostly, staff worked on site to provide direct learning and therapy. Our multidisciplinary team developed adaptable and individualised plans for each child to support their learning, maintain their skills and abilities and promote their general health. Individualised timetables were created to allow learning and therapy to be delivered on a one to one basis.

While continuing to provide onsite services, we developed our online/technological support by way of a virtual classroom using video conferencing (small group), interactive individual directed therapy and learning sessions. We recorded stories from familiar staff, read in their familiar class environment; and sing-along songs – familiar and new songs to learn, sung by familiar staff. We delivered a whole school Zoom assembly every fortnight, which brought our whole school community together along with their parents and siblings. Working closely with our families we developed a new temporary support service for three families where we not only supported their disabled child but also provided individual play sessions for siblings. We established a closed Facebook page to build community between our families and provided open access telephone and scheduled video conferencing with parents.

Who we involved:

Children, families and staff. North Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnership supplied us with the necessary PPE. Our chef used our kitchen facilities, supported by Tesco and the Carbrain and Hillcrest Community Council, to produce meals for Cumbernauld residents in need. Local gardening companies were used to enhance the outdoor area.

The difference it made:

Our school community has been strengthened. Relationships amongst staff and with parents have flourished due to the mutual trust built in the face of adversity. New skills have been developed and supported where necessary, particularly in technology. We learned to think and work differently, opening up previously unexplored or under developed opportunities in terms of use of IT and practitioner directed, but parent led, learning and therapy.

Continuing to provide learning and therapy was essential to our children and supported the holistic wellbeing of families. Due to the severe and complex needs of our children, a critical objective was to reduce the chance of deterioration in the health of our children that may lead to hospital admission when hospitals were extremely busy dealing with coronavirus. The custom packages created for our children and families enhanced their emotional health and provided the sensory stimulation to meet their needs. This gave them a much needed sense of normality – it provided a lifeline for our families. The development of our outdoor area provided the opportunity for a number of children concurrently to access therapy, sensory stimulation, play, learning and distanced social interaction with their friends.

What we will do differently in the future:

Many of our children have life limiting and life threatening conditions. There has been a palpable strength in our partnerships with parents throughout this crisis – we were responsive to individual needs, acknowledging the understandable stresses they were under. We continue to build on this through blended learning and therapy approaches. Now when a child is unable to attend school due to their wellbeing, we work closely with the family to maximise engagement via technology and online platforms. Absence is no longer a barrier to engaging in learning and therapy.

Our weekly socially distanced assembly is offered via Zoom. Parents are also invited, even when their child is at school, to involve the whole school community. Children and families being integral to our collaborative planning means learning and therapy is extended between school and home. This holistic planning approach has given us further insight into the needs of the child. As well as chronological age, we are moving towards grouping children in the most efficient and effective way to address barriers to learning, maximise on engagement with learning, provide for social interaction, maximise therapeutic benefit and provide the most stimulating and enjoyable experiences, thus ensuring the best outcomes for them.

To reduce the risk of infection, local authorities stopped the usual transport and families were now transporting children at a cost to themselves. To ensure that this additional cost was not a barrier to children accessing services, we introduced a system for families to recover their travel costs directly from the Centre. Similarly we recognised that children previously accessed school meals at the Centre and families were now providing these. We introduced a scheme to ensure families were not out of pocket in providing meals for children.

We also developed a new service, individual parent led aquatic therapy sessions. The swimming pool, due to chlorine type sterilisation and ease of hosing down with chemicals, is very safe. These sessions were hugely welcomed by families in this very difficult time when they had almost no access to regular support. Parents led these therapy sessions in the hydrotherapy pool with their child and the sessions were accessible to their whole family.

The school and the Centre would normally close for two weeks over the Easter period. However with the reduced input to children over the last few weeks of March and the reality of a significantly reduced programme over the next three or more months, we took the decision to remain open over the usual Easter two week break to make sure a steady stream of support was available. We also remained open for our children and families over the first two weeks during the summer holidays.

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Establishment:
The Donaldson Trust

What we did:

Individual support packages were created for each of our children, who have complex needs: resource packs were sent home, log-ins created for the educational websites we use in school, daily signed videos sent to pupils setting a task, so the work came from the teacher or therapist, not a parent, increasing the likelihood of engagement. These pre-recorded videos worked better than live chat, which was too overwhelming. As lockdown progressed, fresh tasks/resources were emailed/posted to support the video tasks.

Tasks were designed to encourage communication and interaction, physical exercise, wellbeing and life skills. Regular feedback from parents allowed us to focus on what was successful to reduce pressure on parents and children. The most important factor was maintaining routines, structures and emotional wellbeing.

Easter craft tasks for all children, staff and families were sent out, and we asked for photos to be submitted. From these we created a virtual Easter Assembly for everyone to watch.

A reduced school service restarted at the beginning of May, after feedback from parents highlighted the extreme challenges of life in lockdown with children with complex needs. This was a blended learning package of two days in school and three days continuing with activities at home supplied by teachers.

Who we involved:

Staff, children, parents. Our usual partners who provide a range of activities were closed and many staff furloughed. This is still the case for some; others are now back and have worked closely with us on planning and risk assessments related to Covid-19 safety. Most services accessed by parents for respite were also closed during lockdown.

The difference it made:

The continual contact with parents, throughout lockdown and the Easter holiday, provided a means of support in the absence of the usual support mechanisms relied on by parents (respite, community support workers, grandparents were all unavailable). Some families were close to breaking point during lockdown with no physical support, whilst trying to work from home and care for a child with complex needs alongside siblings.

Most children enjoyed the tasks and it gave the families a focus during the day. Some children struggled with the concept of doing school work at home. We made it clear that the tasks were there as a means of offering structure and engagement, but if they caused more anxiety, they were not compulsory. Some children showed increased independence skills at home that transferred back to school. Some children benefitted from smaller groups back at school.

When we returned in May, the staff and children were split into two teams, each team attending on two separate days a week. The children missed seeing peers from the other team. We sent video challenges from one team to the other and they were delighted to see videos of each other and engage in joint challenges.

What we will do differently in the future:

Children and staff returned full time in August but remain in two separate zones within the building. Children come together for regular outdoor activities and playtimes.

We've adapted our review meetings to allow parents to come into an allocated meeting room in the school. External professionals join via video link. This has proved an important opportunity for parents to speak up about gaps in vital services: one child's respite services were halved and not reinstated, another child experienced delays to his transition process – both situations have had an impact on the whole family. In both cases, external professionals were in attendance virtually and able to take matters forward.

Some changes to practice have been really positive – pupils enjoyed setting up their own work areas and resources trays/bags in class so they are developing increased organisational skills.

When staff were split into two teams upon return in May, we were unable to use our staff expertise across both teams. Since August, our staff with expertise deliver sessions to children in the other zone either via video link (Yoga, BSL) or through joint outdoor lessons (CDT, cricket).

Hygiene practices have improved and this is hopefully well embedded!

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Establishment:
The Frisson Foundation

What we did:

The first two weeks of lockdown were spent re-planning and negotiating with Scotland's very understanding theatres and others within the performing arts sector as we cancelled 18 sell out events. During that time feedback from children, parents and teachers indicated that the Glee challenge and the benefits of music and song that it brings would be sorely missed. Following various discussions we tested the idea of a 'Virtual Glee Choir Challenge' on our Facebook pages and to our surprise over 700 people responded.

The 'Virtual Glee Challenge' was born, web pages constructed, email address and Facebook page established and child protection strategies put in place. We ran a series of mini-challenges, quizzes, on-line tutorials and workshops, even a weekend based Glee-o-vision event (watched by a combined audience of over 4,000 people) and designed to coincide with BBC's Eurovision event. The goal was the premiering of 'Virtual Glee Choir Concert' on 'Make Music Day' on 21st June 2020. Over 100 days of lockdown, 700 people registered, 450 engaged on our designated Facebook page, 25 online workshops (including sing-alongs) were held, 160 videos were submitted and over 1,800 people viewed the premiere. We concluded the whole lockdown with a teachers' Glee Choir performance.

Who we involved:

We involved our volunteers, our freelance tutors, our patron, teachers and school staff who helped spread the word, children, young people and families who took part. One of our volunteers committed to hundreds of hours of editing. We also partnered with Children 1st to raise awareness of their cause and funds.

The difference it made:

The project has helped us to reach out to children and parents, convey the benefits of music and song and encouraged continuing engagement. Many children and their parents saw the positive benefits of music and song during what was a very testing time. It provided a useful focus for many children and helped to complement, filling gaps in some cases, and inform formal education. The process helped us recognise that an online approach, with careful consideration, can be a valid, powerful and engaging methodology. Numerous parents and children fed back to us how valuable they had found the exercise.

“

Thank you so much for all you do and continuing to do during these strange times. We have been so grateful for Glee for the confidence it has instilled in our girls and the opportunity they have had to have the thrill of performing. We love, love, love the inclusivity and equity you promote.”

“

Thank you for giving such personal lovely feedback, this has really brightened up xxxx's day! She loves her certificate! She has actually documented her recording process to be counted towards her Brownie performance badge as well.”

“

Thanks for making my girl smile.”

What we will do differently in the future:

Prior to lockdown our work in the primary school 'Glee Challenge' was through the school teachers/choir leaders. Working directly with young children and parents/carers provided us with a different lens from which to approach what we do. It highlighted a strong appetite for music and song and an understanding of the benefits of song and music within school communities. It also demonstrated that children and young people need support for and safe platforms to develop and showcase their strengths and talents. In the same vein we discovered that not all children wish to be videoed and have their work available for others to see.

It has also highlighted issues of digital access and therefore is encouraging us to find creative and inclusive approaches to fit with our broad aim of inclusivity. We feel it has strengthened our partnership with our Glee family based on our willingness to be flexible and inclusive.. Through analysis of the Facebook contributions, on-going correspondence and continued engagement with our Glee family we should be able to gain a stronger understanding of their needs and develop new offers and support that schools may find useful. It will help us in our discussions with schools, helping to create appropriate pathways and ideas which recognise the skills, successes and achievements of our children.

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Establishment:

Youth Work Team, Buckie High School

Local Authority:

Moray Council

What we did:

Traditionally the Buckie Youth Engagement team has a large role in the Buckie High School transition programme. This year however COVID-19 meant dramatic changes had to take place to ensure the P7 pupils had the best experience possible to support their positive health and wellbeing during the move from primary to secondary school.

Who we involved:

Buckie High depute headteacher, youth workers from the youth team senior pupil volunteers, young people moving from P7 to S1, guidance teachers and school management, individual school departments.

The difference it made:

The involvement of the whole partnership made this transition a success. The school had a week-long programme of events planned with the various school departments. The live sessions with the youth team went from one to three along with a small amount of activities to lots and lots.

Each on-line session was well attended with 60 plus P7 pupils each time, with lots of activities being posted after completion. The senior pupils worked hard making posters, movies and activities way above what was initially expected and were in daily contact with the youth work team organising the challenges. The live sessions felt dynamic, with so much engagement and participation it was hard to keep up with them.

The feedback from school, pupils, teachers and volunteers was all very positive. The seniors who supported were amazing. A very different transition experience for everyone.

Back to Normal by Calum Tait, Buckie High school, P7/S1 Transition Poetry Challenge

Back to normal? What is that?
 Its' been so long, I now own a cat.
 I've forgotten what its' like to mingle
 with friends
 Sometimes I think, I'm going round the bend.

Whilst doing my homework, I gaze outside
 But at home, I still have to bide.
 Until the day, that I am free
 To be the person, I'm supposed to be.

I'll sit and think about all the things
 That being free, and the wonders it brings.
 Playing outside with friends after dark
 And playing football, over at the park

Doon to the harbour, for a dook or a swim
 Or even going, to the complex gym.
 I might go to the cinema, to see a new flick
 But to be honest, I think I've had my share
 of Netflix

I'll visit my dad, down in Grangemouth town
 Its' good to see him, and we chat
 all the way down.
 When I'm in Grangemouth, I love to see
 The famous two heads, of the Grangemouth
 Kelpies

But it's always good, to get back home
 Because Cullen is the place, that I call home.
 Doing normal things, make me feel happy
 I just love being, a happy chappie.

What we will do differently in the future:

There were so many lessons learned mainly because COVID-19 made it necessary for youth workers and the senior volunteers to come out of their comfort zone. It definitely improved IT skills for everyone.

Social media had a big role in advertising the online challenges and events.

Using Teams to plan with the volunteers and have the challenges able to be posted each day in a secure website was invaluable. The working together aspect to make things happen was inspiring and empowering.

Although the initial drop-in partly happened, and the online events were very successful they still wanted to meet socially. The 'Dancing in the Dark' event being cancelled was missed and requested often. We could only say that when we can do it, we will.

Whilst young people enjoyed the on-line aspect, they still want the face-to-face social side as well. So perhaps a combination of the two is the way forward.

The team would like to recognise the significant contribution of Barbara Leitch, Senior Youth Worker who recently retired after 24 years of service.

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Establishment:
Comunn na Gàidhlig

Local Authority:
The Highland Council

What we did:

As outreach on behalf of Comunn na Gàidhlig (CnaG), we created a number of Gaelic-medium (GM) films for young Gaelic speakers and learners of Scottish Gaelic. These films were based largely on the cultural and natural heritage of Gaelic Scotland. For example, one video deals with lambing on the croft and another with shearing the sheep. In Scotland's Year of Coasts and Waters, a further film features wild foraging 'from shore to plate'. Over and above the films, we did many 'Facebook live' GM sessions. These each dealt with a specific topic – seabirds; garden birds; birds of prey; owls; swans; geese and ducks; wild animals; Scotland's trees; spring wildflowers; summer wildflowers, and Gaelic place-names.

Along with young people we also made baking videos and Disney live quizzes. The aim was to build capacity in Gaelic vocabulary with an inherent challenge relating to perhaps numbers or an inter-generational quest, some outputs were disseminated via a YouTube platform (Sine Ghilleasbuig). Others remain live on a Facebook page (CnaG an Eilein Sgitheanaich – Lasair). My endeavour has been to also assist GM teaching staff and Gaelic learners during a very challenging time.

Who we involved:

We received technical assistance from young people in the community. Outputs were directed at young Gaelic speakers. Within Skye – GM primary schools and Portree High School, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. Videos were disseminated to a national database including #CleachdIAigAnTaigh, CnaG and Bord na Gaidhlig. Outputs were shared with Education Scotland, Gaelic4parents, Stòrlann, Misneachd.

The difference it made:

At CnaG we aim to provide extra-curricular fun activities through the medium of Gaelic for school-aged children throughout Scotland. Our team focuses where possible on the outdoors as our chosen educational environment. During lockdown, we aimed to bring the outdoors to schoolchildren in a virtual way. A significant percentage of children in GM education have nobody with whom they can speak Gaelic outwith school.

Feedback from GM teachers confirmed that the videos represented a welcome opportunity for families to engage with the Gaelic language at a time when Scotland's schools and communities were concerned that children might lose their interest and ability in the language. Feedback from families indicates that their children enjoyed the materials which encouraged listeners to go outside and stimulate health, learning and exploration. We hope that the videos alleviated to a small extent the additional challenges faced by GM teachers.

One key aim was to boost the Gaelic vocabulary associated with Scotland's natural world. Feedback indicates that teachers welcomed this additional support. Feedback from the community demonstrated that the materials provided a mental boost at a challenging time.

What we will do differently in the future:

We continue to be of the conviction that outdoor education is a very powerful means of learning for which there is no real substitute. Whilst engaging in outdoor activities, young people hear the birds, smell the flowers, see animals in their natural habitats and witness with all their senses the changes that the seasons bring. Their learning experiences alongside CnaG and Spòrs Gàidhlig over the years have been meaningful and memorable and they bring the Gaelic language to life.

Prior to lockdown, we had never made a video but we embraced a new skill. We sought new opportunities to engage with young people and communities whilst adhering to social distancing regulations. By utilising technology, we have reached out to young people through a medium that they respond to, while bringing to their attention aspects of their heritage in a new way. The materials have a wider impact as they are available to an audience that includes adult Gaelic learners. Technology has a role to play in uncertain times, but it would be a mistake to substitute e-learning for live engagement. The balance of delivery should be in favour of the latter and we should continue to use our imagination to achieve that.

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Establishment:

Comunn na Gàidhlig

Local Authority:

Gàidhealtachd

Na rinn sinn:

Mar fhor-ruigseachd às leth Comunn na Gàidhlig (CnaG), chruthaich mi grunn fhilmichean tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig airson luchd-bruidhinn is luchd-ionnsachaidh òga na Gàidhlig. Gu ìre mhòr, bha na filmichean stèidhte air dualchas cultarach is nàdarra Gàidheil na h-Alba. Mar eisimpleir, tha aon bhidio a' dèiligeadh ri àm nan uan air a' chroit agus bha bhidio eile mu dheidhinn rùsgadh nan caorach. Mar phàirt de Bhliadhna Cladaichean is Uisgeachan na h-Alba, tha film eile mu dheidhinn lorgachadh lòn 'bhon tràigh chun an truinnseir'. A bharrachd air na filmichean, rinn mi iomadh seisean 'Facebook beò' tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig. Bha gach fear dhiubh seo a' dèiligeadh ri cuspair eadar-dhealaichte: eòin-mhara; eòin gàrraidh; eòin creachaidh; caillich-oidhche; ealachan; geòidh agus tunnagan; fiadh-bheathaichean; craobhan na h-Alba; flùraichean-fiadhaich an earraich; flùraichean-fiadhaich an t-samhraidh; agus ainmean-àite Gàidhlig. Còmhla ris an òigridh, rinn mi bhidiothan bèicearachd agus farpaisean-ceist beò air Disney. B' e an t-amas a bhith a' togail comas ann am briathrachas Gàidhlig le dùbhlàn na lùib ceangailte ri, mar eisimpleir, àireamhan no rudeigin a dh'fheumas còmhradh eadar na ginealaichean. Bha cuid de na chuir sinn a-mach gan sgaoileadh tro YouTube (Sine Ghilleasbuig). Tha cuid fhathast beò air duilleag Facebook (CnaG an Eilein Sgitheanaich - Lasair). Tha mi air oidhirp a dhèanamh cuideachd gus luchd-teagaisg a chuideachadh ann am Foghlam tron Ghàidhlig (FtG) agus Foghlam Luchd-ionnsachaidh (FLi) rè àm a bha dùbhlànach dha-rìribh.

Cò bha sinn a' gabhail a-steach:

Fhuair mi cobhair theicnigeach bho dhaoine òga sa choimhearsnachd. Bha na chuir sinn a-mach ag amas air luchd-bruidhinn Gàidhlig òga. Air an Eilean Sgitheanach, bha bun-sgoiltean foghlam tron Ghàidhlig, Àrd-sgoil Phort Rìgh agus Sabhal

Mòr Ostaig air an gabhail a-steach. Chaidh bhidiothan a sgaoileadh gu stòr-dàta nàiseanta, a' gabhail a-steach #CleachdIAigAnTaigh, CnaG agus BnaG. Chaidh na chuir sinn a-mach a cho-phàirteachadh ri Foghlam Alba, Gaelic4Parents, Stòrlann agus Misneachd.

An diofar a rinn e:

Aig CnaG, tha sinn ag amas air gnìomhachdan spòrsail seach-curraicealach a thabhann tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig airson clann aois sgoile air feadh Alba. Tha an sgioba againn ag amas air, far an gabh a dhèanamh, a' bhlàr a-muigh mar an àrainneachd foghlaim taghte againn. Rè a' ghlasaidh-shluaigh, bha mi ag amas air am blàr a-muigh a thoirt do chlann-sgoile ann an dòigh bhiorail. Tha uimhir shusbainteach de chlann ann am FtG gun duine sam bith leis am faod iad bruidhinn sa Ghàidhlig taobh a-muigh na sgoile. Bha fios air ais bho luchd-teagaisg FtG a' dearbhadh gun robh fàilte ga cur air na bhidiothan mar chothrom airson teaghlaichean a bhith an sàs sa Ghàidhlig aig àm nuair a bha dragh air sgoiltean is coimhearsnachdan na h-Alba gum biodh clann a' call ùidh is comas sa chànan. Tha fios air ais bho theaghlaichean a' sealltainn gun robh na stuthan, a bha a' brosnachadh luchd-èisteachd a dhol a-mach agus a bha a' piobrachadh slàinte, ionnsachadh is rùrachadh, a' còrdadh ris an cuid chloinne. Tha mi an dòchas gun robh na bhidiothan, gu ìre bhig co-dhiù, a' faothachadh nan dùbhlàn a bha ro luchd-teagaisg FtG. B' e aon de na prìomh amasan a bhith a' cur air adhart briathrachas Gàidhlig ceangailte ri saoghal an nàdair ann an Alba. Tha fios air ais a' nochdadh gun robh luchd-teagaisg a' cur fàilte air an taic a bharrachd seo. Bha fios air ais bhon choimhearsnachd a' dearbhadh gun robh na stuthan a' toirt spionnadh do shlàinte inntinn aig àm a bha dùbhlànach.

Na nì sinn diofraichte san àm ri teachd:

Tha mi a' cumail orm a bhith làn-chinnteach às gu bheil foghlam air a' bhlàr a-muigh na mheadhan ionnsachaidh cumhachdach air nach gabh nì sam bith eile a chur na àite. Fhad 's a tha iad an sàs ann an gnìomhachd air a' bhlàr a-muigh, bidh an òigridh a' cluinntinn nan eun, a' faighinn fàileadh nam flùraichean, a' faicinn nan ainmhidhean san àrainnean nàdarra agus leis an ciad-fàthan fhèin ag aithneachadh nan atharrachaidhean a bheirear leis na ràithean. Tha an t-oideas a dh'fhiosraich iad aig tachartasan ChnaG agus Spòrs Gàidhlig thar nam bliadhnachan air a bhith brioghmhor agus drùidhteach, agus tha iad a' toirt Gàidhlig beò. Ron ghlasaidh-shluaigh, cha do rinn mi bhidio riamh, ach ghabh mi ri sgil ùr. Bha mi a' sireadh chothroman ùra gus conaltradh a dhèanamh ri daoine òga agus coimhearsnachdan am feadh a bha sinn a' cumail ri riaghailtean air astarachadh sòisealta. Le bhith ag ùisneachadh teicneòlas, tha sinn air a bhith a' ruigsinn a-mach gu daoine òga tro mheadhan ris am bi iad fhèin a' freagairt, agus sinn a' togail an aire air cuid den dualchas aca ann an dòigh ùr. Bidh buaidh nas fharsainge aig na stuthan a rinn sinn agus iad rim faotainn airson luchd-amais eile, leithid luchd-ionnsachaidh inbheach na Gàidhlig. Bidh pàirt aig teicneòlas ri chluiche ann an amannan cugallach, ach bhiodh sinn a' dèanamh mearachd nan robh sinn a' cleachdadh oideachadh air-loidhne an àite ionnsachadh an làthair. Ann an cothromachadh chùisean, bu chòir gu bheilear a' cur cuideim air ionnsachadh aghaidh-ri-aghaidh, agus bu chòir dhuinn cumail oirnn ar mac-meanma a chleachdadh gus sin a choileanadh.

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Establishment:
Connected Communities

Local Authority:
East Lothian Council

What we did:

The focus was on developing face to face services for care experienced young people that met their needs during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown. The aim was to put in place creative solutions that focused on care around the child. The project aims were to reduce isolation, increase social engagement and emotional support and offer positive activity choices including new opportunities. There were 14 groups including football, arts, music, walking etc. taking place in different towns in East Lothian. Accessing spaces was challenging as community facilities and schools were shut. This limited where and when activities could take place. The partnership had to be creative in working together to identify suitable spaces often using the outdoors.

An exciting new opportunity that arose from this group was Biking North, led by Outdoor Learning in session 20/21. This is a weekly Biking Day for six care experienced young people, leading to a five day expedition in the Highlands. We had 28 initial notes of interest from young people. Our flexible team approach enabled us to then create a Biking East Lothian opportunity for 12 of those who maintained their interest, which is a four week Biking Programme. These have started with excellent engagement from young people.

The success of the art group has led to the creation of a new art group, funded jointly by Arts Service and CLD, with referrals invited from social workers and schools.

One third sector organisation that has been involved (Heavy Sound) are continuing to work two days a week with the individuals they worked with on their CRIB (music bus) and have extended their offer to include wider education opportunities for young people who are disengaged from school.

A local community youth group provider are keen to continue the success of their work with the 24 vulnerable young people they worked with through the initiative

Who we involved:

This was very much a partnership approach to working, led by Children's Services but supported by a number of council departments for example Connected Communities and part time youth work staff, Active Schools, Arts Service and third sector youth organisations i.e. Heavy Sound and North Berwick Youth Project.

The difference it made:

Fourteen groups were established. These were mainly for three to six young people. Nine young people were offered an individual weekly engagement session. An average of 67 sessions were offered per week. There was a high attendance rates of care experienced children maintained throughout, ranging from 59% to 73%. This flexible approach meant that there was agreement about reducing and increasing services in line with young people's declared interests and wishes and that activities were delivered close to home, reducing the need for transportation. Desired outcomes were identified through discussion in each group and with the young people.

What went well is the continuation of new provision to care experienced young people in the new academic session, through sustaining multi-service delivery and reallocation of budgets to match the new needs identified. Regular fortnightly meetings of leaders from the 12 groups created a new team identity and ensured a strong collegiate approach to the work continued throughout the initiative.

What we will do differently in the future:

A number of services across East Lothian Council, including partner organisations and third sector youth organisations, came together and worked together for a common goal to support our most vulnerable children and young people in our communities. This approach has been highly valued by all involved with each service requesting that this continue into the new session. In particular, the importance of having the opportunity to discuss emerging needs and being able to work in partnership to address them.

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Establishment:
Comely Park Primary School

Local Authority:
Falkirk Council

What we did:

Parker's Positive Poetry – a whole school health and wellbeing/literacy project that was carried out remotely.

We identified three main needs while on lockdown: to foster a sense of community; to promote a positive mental health message and to promote family engagement with literacy. We took on the persona of our school mascot, Parker the Bear, and wrote the children a rainbow based poem about missing them, positive lockdown experiences and hope for the future. As Parker we challenged them to compose a poem and to send it to me. The response was overwhelming, with around 150 pieces submitted via Teams from P1 to P7. These were published on our Patron of Reading's blog (author Lynne Rickards), on Twitter and also collated into a Borrowbox book by Maggie Burns at Falkirk Learning Resource Service (LRS) which children could access via Glow. It is hoped that Falkirk LRS may also be able to produce a physical copy.

Who we involved:

The whole school and their families, our Patron of Reading (author Lynne Rickards) and Falkirk LRS.

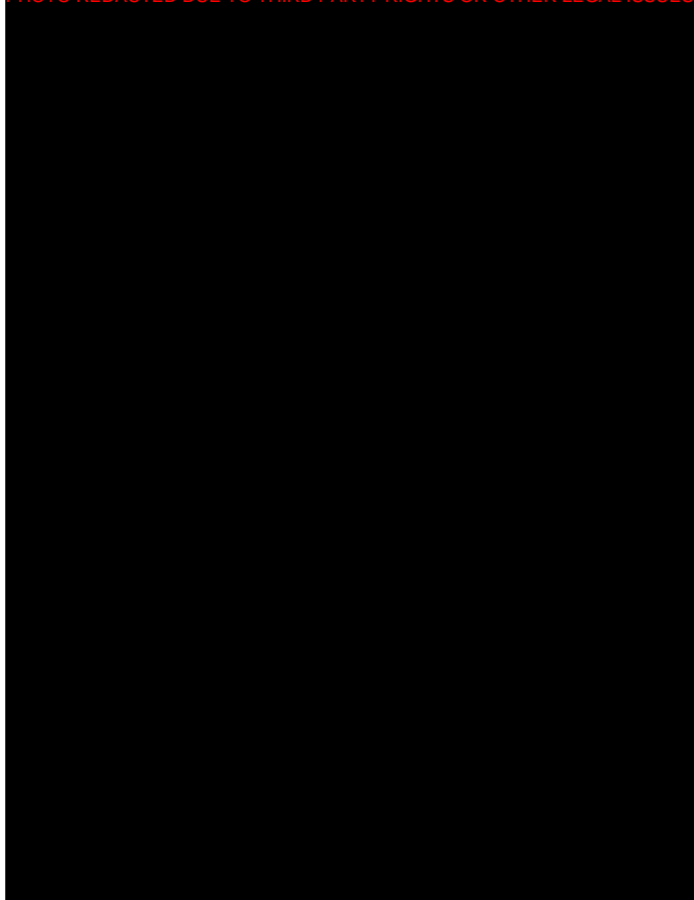
The difference it made:

This project created a positive buzz over Twitter and Teams, with parents commenting on enjoying working with their children and sharing their published work with family members they could not physically visit. The engagement with literacy was overwhelming, and the positive response to the lockdown experience and expression of feelings and hopes for the future were extremely touching and moving.

What we will do differently in the future:

We might pretend to be a bear more often if this is the response you get! Seriously though, it broke down barriers that existed in my own mind regarding the possibilities of remote learning and teaching and encouraged me to be a bit more brave and creative in my thinking about how to utilise technology during very difficult circumstances.

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Establishment:
Gracemount High School

Local Authority:
City of Edinburgh Council

What we did:

During lockdown we worked together to provide a community food and hygiene bank called the 'Lunch Stop.' We served up to 250 families a day offering support to anyone in the community during a difficult time. This included, packed lunches, fresh ready meals, store cupboard essentials, toiletries and cleaning products.

Who we involved:

Gracemount secondary and primary school, Dunedin Canmore Youth Projects and volunteers from the community garden worked with charities such as the Cyrenians, Edinburgh Social, Social Bite and Fareshare, as well as the local food bank.

The difference it made:

This community support has been integral in tackling food poverty. Gracemount is an area of multiple deprivation and many families were already struggling before the pandemic. With so many people losing their jobs and without the support from schools such as breakfast clubs and free school meals families were hit hard. The 'Lunch Stop' provided a life line to so many and also helped to bring the community together to support each other.

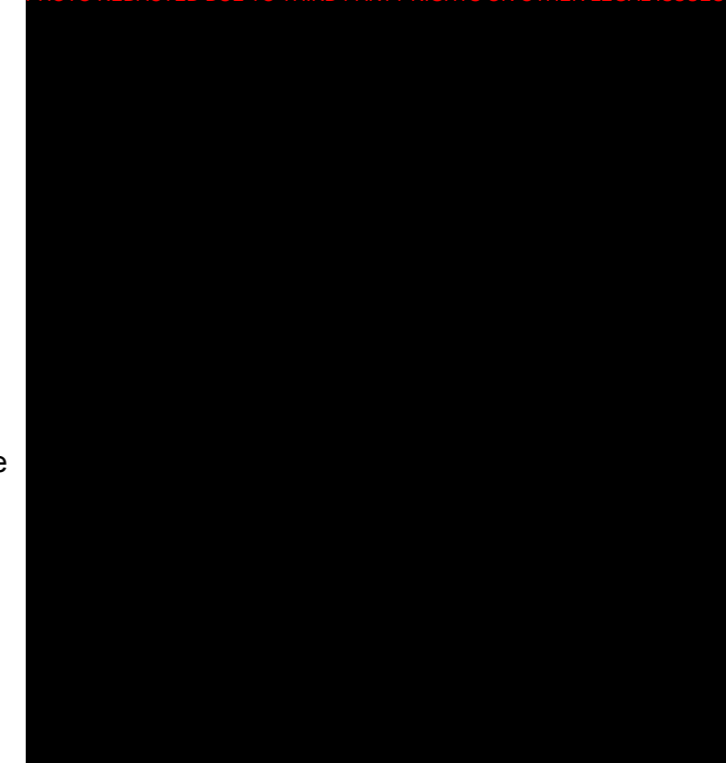
Dunedin Canmore Youth Projects worked hard to involve young people in the community support. Young people volunteered at the 'Lunch Stop' during lockdown which helped to build important life skills, gave a sense of purpose and allowed them to build up volunteering hours so that they could achieve the Saltire Award. Pupil engagement was also vital in keeping the young people away from negative outside influences and provided them with positive role models.

What we will do differently in the future:

We decided that with the ongoing pandemic it was essential that this support continued and so as a community group we started the 'Grab and Go' service. This operates once a week and provides a bag of food/household essentials for families in need. It runs every Thursday and we are supplying a minimum of 70 bags per week. At the secondary school we are also offering a delivery service to families who are struggling to attend the 'Grab and Go'.

This community work has shown me the importance of working collaboratively with stakeholders. We have formed positive relationships with community organisations and partners. Bringing the community together in this way will hopefully improve parental engagement and show pupils that they can contribute positively to their community.

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Establishment: Bazooka Arts

What we did:

We delivered a remote programme of support for 90 vulnerable children and adults who are affected by severe and enduring mental ill-health. Our clients have participated remotely in a programme of therapeutic arts activities, designed to regulate stress and anxiety, developed by our arts therapists and therapeutic artists. The programme was structured to help participants develop a sense of purpose and direction and to decrease the risk of worsening mental ill-health. Participants are a combination of existing Bazooka Arts clients, and new referrals from local services.

Participants have connected into weekly workshops on Zoom and shared images of their artwork, using a secure and regulated online platform called 'Cluster' – helping to keep our community active, creative and connected. We have provided creative wellbeing kits for all participants, containing arts supplies and information about keeping well, replenishing materials and providing new resources throughout the programme. We provide regular wellbeing checks for all project participants and give 1:1 therapeutic support to clients in crisis.

We have also delivered a therapeutic arts programme for families. Through the general therapeutic arts programme we identified a need to support some households through bespoke therapeutic family work.

Who we involved:

We gained new referrals and delivered this programme in partnership with organisations such as: Kirkshaws Neighbourhood Centre, Communities Together Bellshill, Ubuntu Women's Shelter, North Lanarkshire Community Learning and Development, educational psychologists working for the North Lanarkshire Psychological Service, schools, and speech and language therapists under NHS Lanarkshire.

The difference it made:

Children and adults were able to effectively continue with their therapeutic arts support from home. The remotely delivered programme supported our community to remain active, creative and connected. Participants have engaged in a vibrant and dynamic process of learning, developing confidence through a range of new or existing skills, in particular, creative and digital skills.

Families who were given bespoke therapeutic support were also able to access and benefit from a similar process of learning, through engaging in ongoing educational activities for children at different developmental stages. This helped families to strengthen attachments and further develop healthy relationships with each other and the wider community.

We recently evaluated our COVID-19 response and delivery – as part of this, participants completed a survey. When asked "Do you feel that the Bazooka Arts response to the COVID-19 pandemic has helped to support your mental health and wellbeing during lockdown?", 100% of respondents answered 'yes'. When asked, "If you received art packs/creative wellbeing kits, how would you rate the contents of these kits?", 100% responded with "Excellent". When asked, "If you have been engaging with the 'Summer programme' on Cluster, how would you rate the content and activities?", over 90% answered "Excellent."

What we will do differently in the future:

Our focus during this time has been to work collaboratively with participants, volunteers and local services/professionals, to design, develop and deliver programmes that address the needs and aspirations of our community. The process of delivering our COVID-19 response work has highlighted the importance of collaborative working. We have learned a huge amount from our community during this time and will continue to develop our processes of collaborative working going forward.

This work has removed geographical barriers – prior to COVID-19 group delivery was usually determined by participant location. Developing a remote programme of delivery has allowed us to form groups based on need instead of location. Going forward and as restrictions ease, we will continue to provide remote programmes of delivery alongside physical groups. This will allow us to be more inclusive and to effectively reach those who may face practical or physical barriers to attending in-person workshops and events.

When face-to-face groups resume, participants will have access to resources to continue with therapeutic arts work and creative learning opportunities from home, in addition to in-person support.

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Establishment:
Senior Phase and Youth Participation Team

Local Authority:
Stirling Council

What we did:

In January 2020, Stirling Council Senior Phase and Youth Participation Team worked with local primary schools to pilot ‘Resilience Group’ for young people aged 9-11, offering a combination of outdoor learning, community-based activities, local trips and activities at a local youth centre. Youth workers worked with schools to co-design the programme and schools helped to identify young people who would benefit – young people facing a range of challenges, particularly those struggling with confidence and self-esteem.

The main focus of the group was to enable young people to build relationships with their peers and with youth workers – and develop skills and confidence to work with others in a group setting. Face-to-face group work was cut short in March, but the vulnerabilities of the group meant that it was important to maintain contact. Youth workers continued with doorstep visits each week, where they delivered activities to promote health and wellbeing. If young people received free school meals, youth workers also delivered these to the door. This allowed youth workers to do welfare checks on young people and offer advice and support for families and young people.

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Who we involved:

Working closely with a local primary school, eight young people aged 9-11, parents and youth workers.

The difference it made:

All eight young people involved in the programme showed improvements in health and wellbeing, engagement in learning and all developed new skills. All had to overcome some barriers to learning in order to participate fully. Feedback suggests that the support from youth workers also helped them to feel more confident about returning to school in August and that it helped with attendance and attainment.

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What we will do differently in the future:

During lockdown, due to Scottish Government restrictions, we had to do doorstep visits with two members of staff and change and adapt the programme to suit the needs of the young people during lockdown. Since returning back to face to face work, the focus of the work is around coping mechanisms, resilience, outdoor learning and working together, building connections and relationships. Lockdown has highlighted the need for this kind of intervention more than ever, and has focused our practice moving forward in the short term.

“The Youth Participation Team have worked alongside primary schools during term 3 and throughout school closure supporting our vulnerable children. They have delivered a resilience programme which has been effective in supporting the school to deliver an alternative curriculum for a targeted group of children. The team built up strong relationships with our children and their families which was pivotal in raising their self – esteem and self-worth. This then impacted positively on their engagement in class which led to raised attainment. This project has been so successful that we are using a portion of our Pupil Equity Funding to deliver a similar project in 2020/21.”

Feedback from Headteacher

“Y was not confident in social situations. We had tried various groups and clubs over the years with no success..... [The youth workers] working with him in school gave him the confidence to go to the group...even going himself which is a huge deal for him... [The youth workers] understand Y so well and have helped linking up with school too.”

Feedback from parents

“Young people made friends from other schools and these social connections proved vital through lockdown. Parents and families also benefited from the support – before lockdown we had no contact with the families, only the young people. We now have a great relationship with all families.”

Ricky Williamson, Youth Worker

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Establishment:
Service & School Improvement Team

Local Authority:
Falkirk Council

What we did:

Maintaining connection and providing support for our senior leaders was considered by the service as a high priority for Term 4. There was therefore a requirement to adapt planned headteacher (HT) and deputy headteacher (DHT) sessions and re-imagine how this support for senior leaders would be designed and delivered.

DHTs who were already engaged in our 2019-2020 DHT programme were invited to attend a facilitated online session during Term 4. These sessions were called 'Break, Create, Transform' and provided an opportunity for DHTs to reflect on how leading in lockdown had impacted on both themselves and their school teams.

HTs were invited to facilitated online sessions with a group of up to five peers. These sessions, 'Leading Well – From Uncertainty to Beyond' aimed to support HTs in responding to the impact of leading school communities during lockdown by:

Bringing groups of peer HTs together to reflect on the changes they have experienced and the impact on them and their settings;

Exploring personal and professional achievements during the period from March 2020;

Considering the leadership qualities that will be required of them as they prepare for and open schools in August – sharing what they consider to be the most challenging aspects and where they can build on strengths, and

Developing and sharing strategies for keeping well during these challenging times.

Who we involved:

The sessions involved groups of HTs and DHTs joining sessions which were facilitated by one of our team managers and support officer for professional development. Working alongside the authority to lead the development of these programmes, was a key authority partner, Jane Mudd from The Mudd Partnership.

The difference it made:

“As a new Acting HT, for me, the main value of participating in the Leading Well session was the reassurance that we are all in the same position, with the same uncertainties ... having an opportunity to share successes reminded me of how far we have come and what has been achieved.”

“... protected time to hear the strategies others are using to support this situation was really beneficial, but also served to remind me that we don't have to respond in the same way.”

“...we were able to speak honestly and openly about our school experiences and personal experiences which have impacted on our role at present. The focus on what we had achieved was positive and uplifting.”

“After the session I felt positive and went on to e-mail staff with a list of what we had achieved to date and that they should feel proud of this. An excellent session, thank you for organising.”

“I found the session very worthwhile and useful I came away with a few good ideas which I implemented with my teams. It was also good to know that my worries are not mine alone! I did leave the session knowing that I was doing a good job, that I had ideas about further improvement in my practice and I could contact other HTs if I had any other questions.”

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What we will do differently in the future:

The HT and DHT sessions were oversubscribed and evaluated positively. HTs requested further sessions beyond the summer and in September and October, the second offer in this series has been successfully delivered. These sessions were entitled 'Leading Well – Navigating Complexity' and supported HTs in understanding the new realities and challenges of leading their school community. Focusing on emotional intelligence and exploring the paradoxes of leadership in the current climate, these sessions were responsive to the needs of the participants involved in each session.

As an authority, the experience of supporting senior leaders during lockdown has resulted in a more responsive and flexible approach to planning leadership programmes. Connecting leadership skills and issues from outwith education during a time of global crisis has added an extra dimension to our programmes.

Further sessions will be facilitated over the course of the year, as appropriate. These sessions will be designed to complement other professional learning programmes for senior leaders and the content will be planned to reflect the changing recovery phase. Feedback from the participants in our lockdown sessions has overwhelmingly identified the communicative space as being a key benefit for them. Future work will look to protect this time and space for senior leaders to share experiences and reflections with their peers.

Establishment:
Vibrant Communities

Local Authority:
East Ayrshire Council

What we did:

Learners were engaged in weekly music performance sessions on Zoom.

Who we involved:

The ‘Strings n Things’ members who would normally meet weekly in Auchinleck are amateur musicians who enjoy performing for each other and also for external groups within the community.

The difference it made:

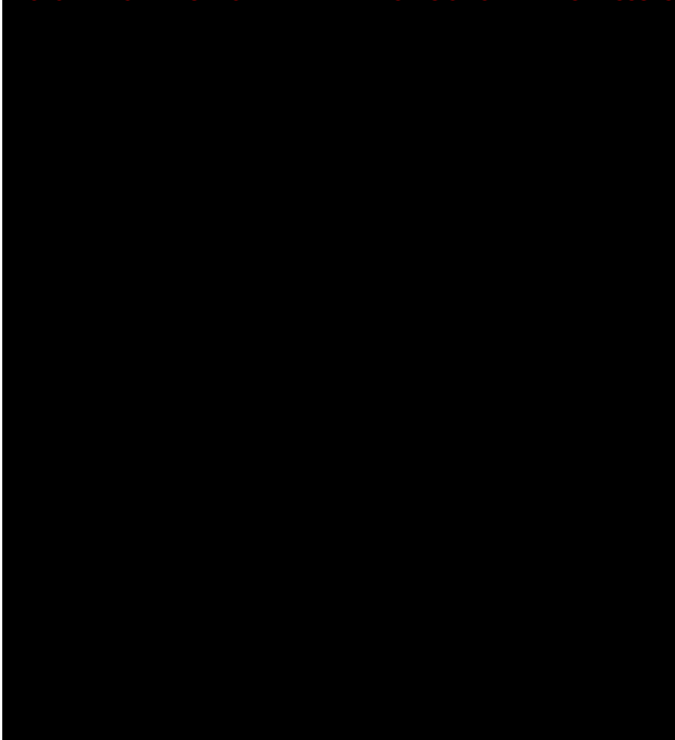
Music and performance is currently not allowed under the guidelines. This activity is essential for the members’ health and wellbeing. Many of the members struggle with depression, anxiety and confidence issues and being part of the group improves their mental health immensely. The weekly Zoom room session allows the members to feel valued and nurtures a sense of belonging. Fun and laughter is a key element for the sessions with themes each week for members to research their songs choice and motivate them. Creepy Crawlies theme provided many laughs at the recent Zoom session, all assisting with social isolation and health and wellbeing issues.

What we will do differently in the future:

The ‘Strings n Things’ group have received devices from Rural Communities fund to allow other members who have not been able to attend the sessions to be able to participate. The group understands that this situation is the new normal and will strive to continue to include and support members wherever possible.

Sir James McMillan and Scottish Opera will be working with the group and other local groups to produce concert pieces in 2021. Online contact with the group will be crucial to the success of this exciting project which maps the demise of the coalfields in the Cumnock area.

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Establishment:
Ayrshire College

Local Authority:
East Ayrshire Council

What we did:

Once lockdown was announced and students were to finish the 2019/20 session remotely, there were discussions held between lecturing staff surrounding how best to keep their students engaged with the make-up artistry courses. They decided to do Instagram make-up challenges every other day and the students could pick the theme.

Who we involved:

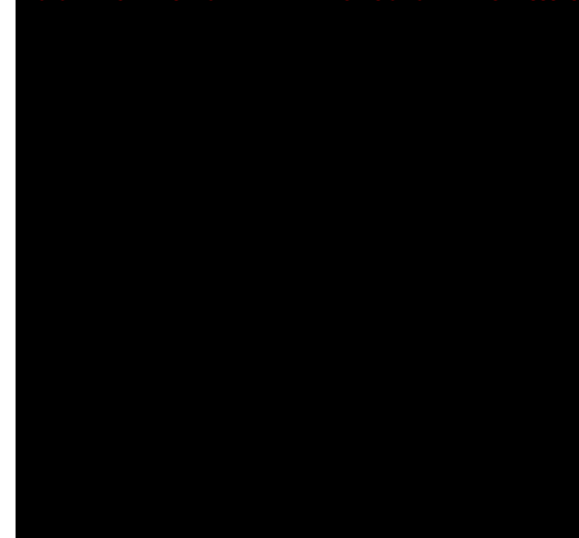
Students on make-up artistry courses at Ayrshire College.

The difference it made:

Make-up Artistry lecturer Alana Pignatiello said: “The only thing that was niggling at me, and everyone else I’m sure, was how am I going to keep my students engaged remotely? How do we keep them motivated and not going into a depression?”

“It was a great success and a lot of the students and lecturers got involved and would be messaging as to when and what the next challenge was.”

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What we will do differently in the future:

Make-Up Artistry students at Ayrshire College are to be taught digital marketing skills this year as part of their course, so taking part in an online challenge like this was great preparation for this year.

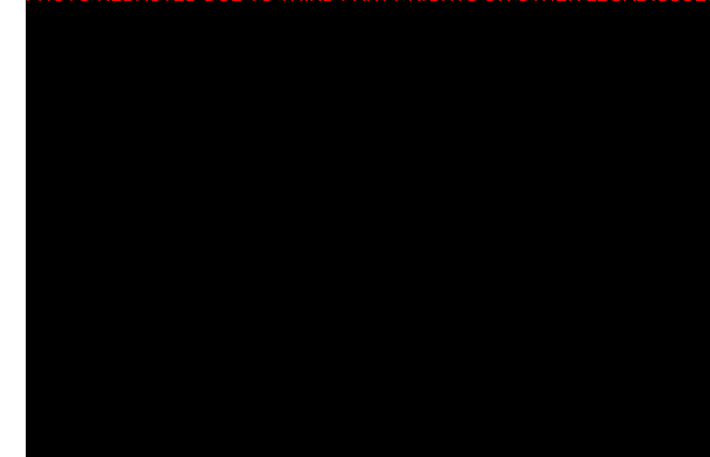
With social media platforms proving to be a major business tool for make-up artists over the years, the SQA has revamped its HNC and HND Make-Up Artistry courses to introduce a new digital marketing unit.

Alana said: “We started to use Instagram to engage with the students when we went into lockdown as this was a platform they all used.

“All of our students use social media platforms and this unit will help them understand how to use it properly as a business tool to help promote their business.

“Most people go to artists’ social media pages before their websites now, so it’s important for the students to learn how to find their target audience and how to generate social media content, among other things. To get noticed on social media, the right people need to see it so it is important to tag the right people and use the right hashtags.”

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Establishment:

Adult Learning Services

Local Authority:

East Renfrewshire Council

What we did:

During lockdown, we transformed our service to meet the needs of adult learners. Staff created online learning provision for those who had digital access. Many adult learners only had phones and we had to take this into account to ensure our support remained inclusive. The work that was carried out is a great testament to the CLD staff who have been creative, resourceful and enthusiastic about maintaining links with the community. There has been a strong focus on wellbeing during this difficult time. As a team, we felt it was important to look after our own wellbeing, as well as offering a range of support for adult learners. We created Wellbeing Hours and Development Days for staff. Wellbeing is at the heart of everything that we offer as a CLD Adult Learning Service. Working in partnership with West College Scotland, we were offering SQA Wellbeing units. In August 2019, we delivered the first unit, Exploring Wellbeing; SCQF: level 4. The group progressed to the next unit, Improving Wellbeing SCQF: level 4 in January 2020. The group successfully completed their SQA Exploring Wellbeing unit during lockdown and were elated to receive their certificates.

Who we involved:

We have a positive partnership with West College Scotland to deliver accredited courses, including the Wellbeing for adult learners living in East Renfrewshire Council.

The difference it made:

When we were informed of lockdown the group were disappointed and hoping for a quick return to face to face provision. We created a WhatsApp group to stay connected and for peer support. Staff ensured that everyone had all of the information and support they required during lockdown which made a positive impact. Working towards achieving accreditation provided a valuable focus for learners during this time. They received support from the CLD worker and the college lecturer; including phone calls, emails and online video meetings. In addition to achieving a qualification, another difference for the group has been keeping people connected. Some of the group members live by themselves and keeping in touch with others has been a huge help throughout this difficult time. Positive quotes posted on the group chat, supportive comments and just being able to chat to others has been a huge motivator for the learners and the staff members. The group also reached out to a local nursing home and wrote letters to residents who were struggling with the isolation of lockdown. This in turn helped the group's wellbeing as they were able to make connections wider than the group to help brighten someone's day.

What we will do differently in the future:

Lockdown has highlighted many positive aspects of our CLD approach. Relationships are key in supporting people through this difficult time. The resilience and flexibility of CLD practitioners has been key to meeting the community's needs under changing circumstances. We are focussing on supporting staff and further developing staff wellbeing practices. Our effective partnerships have been important to ensure that we share up to date information with adult learners on current restrictions, access to health services, money and benefit support services, all of which can have an effect on individual and family wellbeing.

We are continuing to develop remote learning opportunities to ensure an inclusive and positive learning experience for all. Through our Individual Learning Plan and Review processes, we are encouraging people to reflect, recognising achievements and looking ahead to the future. Connecting Scotland has provided many people with the devices and connectivity to engage online but there is a long way to go in terms of digital support and learning which is resource intensive. Learning has been a lifeline for almost all adult learners during lockdown. We continue to work with West College Scotland to offer accredited online courses with two new wellbeing units starting this month.

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Establishment:

Youth, Family and Community Learning Service

Local Authority:

South Lanarkshire Council

What we did:

'Vertigo Theatre for Youth', a group based at East Kilbride Universal Connections and supported by South Lanarkshire's Youth, Family and Community Service, have been undertaking a few initiatives since the beginning of the lockdown period. Every Thursday evening, an average of 32 young people from the senior group have been coming together online to talk about how they are feeling, take part in interactive drama sessions and discuss and plan projects that they can undertake to keep themselves creatively engaged and entertain families and other young people within South Lanarkshire.

These projects included story-telling videos for children and families, as well as stories told in BSL and Makaton, that have been published weekly. The young people have also been producing videos of themselves performing music from their homes. The work the young people have done is posted on their Facebook page.

The young people are currently working on three projects: an advert relating to COVID safety from a young person's point of view; a showcase of songs and sketches to be published online and a Christmas programme of songs and stories for families to entertain and bring festive cheer to the dark nights leading up to Christmas.

Who we involved:

The Vertigo Committee of young people have been meeting regularly and are making contact with the younger members of the group who do not use social media so that they don't become excluded. Weekly 3-hour sessions over Zoom have included drama games, improvisation, script writing, script reading and a lot of discussion. In addition, young people have requested and have been attending an earlier session each Thursday to talk about their feelings and difficulties they are experiencing at this time including mental health issues, issues around losing and trying to gain new employment and also being back at school and college.

The difference it made:

These initiatives have all encouraged young people to help support each other's mental health, and to create a support network for young people during the current crisis. Working as a team creatively, through digital communication, has given a focus to young people and has enabled them to socialise with each other and express their feelings about the COVID situation through the medium of drama. Response to the story telling videos from families within the community have been very positive, as have the music videos.

What we will do differently in the future:

The facilitation of weekly drama workshops on social media is extremely challenging. The group members themselves have become very involved with session content and delivery to help keep it fresh and enjoyable.

Script writing has worked very effectively in small groups on Zoom and committee meetings have also been very effective due to the immediate nature of the meetings and decision making. The young people have also been meeting out with

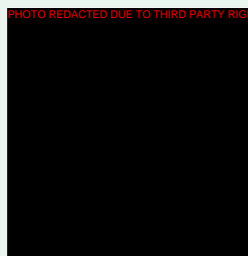
the main sessions on social media to move things forward and this has also caused the work they are doing to progress quickly.

In terms of practice change, these kinds of meetings will continue to take place in digital form to maximise their effectiveness, as will the posting of work on social media.

Drama is, however, a social experience that requires physical and emotional interaction between people and, of course, an audience. The group are looking forward to a time when they all can come back in the flesh to rehearse and perform together as well as to take part in fully interactive classes.

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Professional Thought Piece



Pak Tee Ng,
Associate Professor, National Institute of Education, Singapore

“There are great things in the education system that we should affirm in the tides of change. Firstly, we do have a robust education system and we should avoid knee jerk reactions in reforming it. Today, we are hit by the coronavirus. If we simply react by shifting all education online, tomorrow, we can be hit by a computer virus! So, there is a time to change quickly to adapt to changing circumstances. There is also a time to change in a steady, reflective and balanced manner. COVID-19 is a great disruption. But it is not the only challenge to come. Therefore, we should use this opportunity to construct a robust system for the long-term future and not just solve problems for now.” (Pak Tee Ng, 2020)¹

How has Singapore responded to the pandemic?

There are two aspects to how Singapore responded to the pandemic. First, in terms of how Singapore responded to the pandemic in a general sense and second, in the education system.

We had to react very quickly with a sense of urgency to keep the country safe but also cautiously by monitoring the situation and making appropriate adjustments along the way. It is about striking a balance and having these co-exist. We also need to offer a lot of support and help to people who have been adversely affected by the pandemic.

On the educational front, home based learning was implemented throughout the country during the Circuit Breaker period. Using online learning tools, teachers and students could carry on teaching and learning at home. It is important to note that learning can take place in areas outside school and even the home. Learning can take place anytime, anywhere.

Moving forward, we are capitalising on the teachers' and students' familiarity with online tools to move towards blended learning. In this new educational landscape, some regular home-based learning would complement classroom lessons. Using this blended learning approach, we hope students will learn to take charge of their own learning and engage in some topics outside the curriculum.

As part of the response to tackle the digital divide, the government announced that all secondary school students would receive a personal laptop or tablet for learning by 2021. This plan was made before the pandemic, but the target implementation date was brought forward by seven years. Considering the enormous economic challenges that my country is currently facing, this positive step indicates how seriously we view education and how much we are willing to invest in it.

What needs do you identify as most critical for the education system at this time?

Globally, different education systems have responded in different ways and even within the same country there are variations among regions. In very general terms, the wellbeing of teachers, students and their families is paramount, especially when the number of cases of COVID-19 is high. By wellbeing, I do not mean that learning should stop. If learning can continue in one way or another, then it should. It doesn't mean schooling in the normal sense. Schooling can lead to learning but learning doesn't necessarily mean within the confines of the classroom. But, wellbeing here means we have to be a lot more mindful of the health and psychological impact on people due to the pandemic. There is a need for greater empathy for people who may be affected in different ways in their lives.

Is there an education silver lining to this crisis?

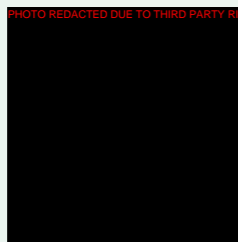
It forces us to rethink the “why” and “what” of education and the grammar of schooling. It makes us reflect on whether we ought to change our focus from the traditional academic content and qualifications to lifelong learning and deep skills. Teach less, learn more actually applies even more during a pandemic. This is because the normal way of teaching can't take place during this time. This is an opportunity to be more creative in pedagogies to enhance the way children learn.

Some parents, who were exhausted with just managing their children at home when schools were closed, could not wait for schools to reopen and hand their children back to the teachers! Hopefully, these parents and the society in general will come to appreciate teachers more. During this difficult time, teachers are doing their best to continue teaching their students, managing them and keeping them safe. We should affirm that teachers, school leaders and schools matter to the nation.

“It is important to note that learning can take place in areas outside school and even the home. Learning can take place anytime, anywhere.”

¹ Ng, P.T. (2020). Timely change and timeless constants: COVID-19 and educational change in Singapore. *Educational Research for Policy and Practice*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10671-020-09285-3>

Professional Thought Piece



Derek Brown,
Executive Director of Education and Families, North Lanarkshire Council

How is North Lanarkshire responding to the pandemic?

We have been fortunate that we enjoy good relationships with staff groups and key partners such as trade unions and NHS Lanarkshire. We drew extensively on these.

In the response phase, we provided remote supports for vulnerable pupils through our Virtual School for Looked After Children which advanced our digital learning skills. This was part of the council's wider Supporting People and economic response.

Schools worked really hard to reach their communities. In Community Hubs, they built teams and relationships across schools which made amazing things happen. Looking back we would benefit from maybe more consistency operating across the school communities and learning from the best examples of our work. But empowering people and enabling creativity was a feature of the response.

Subsequently, in Recovery, our Digital School has moved all Higher and Advanced Higher Consortium Arrangements to full on-line delivery (15 groups / 250 pupils).

Our people are genuinely proud of their response to the pandemic, although we are not yet at the stage of fully reviewing this, as it has never really stopped.

What needs do you identify as most critical for the education system at this time?

The health and wellbeing of children and staff has been at the core of our planning. We are carrying out an authority-wide survey to give us a population-wide reading of the health and wellbeing of all the children in primary and secondary schools to compare with the period before the pandemic to give us a robust way forward.

Dealing with learning loss is also really important. We are planning on looking at the data to get a fix on learning loss across our schools.

By quantifying health and wellbeing and learning loss, we will secure our evidence base for future planning across the wider children service partnership.

We are also trying to understand how increased poverty is affecting children. We are expecting a big uplift in the number of free school meals we need to provide.

Our colleagues in Criminal Justice have highlighted increases in domestic violence in the lockdown context, which creates challenges.

Child protection concerns have exercised us as we had to reflect on ways to get "eyes on the children" during lockdown, where we had specific concerns.

Reports by headteachers of the readiness of children coming into P1 and S1 is an issue our schools have reported, due to the lack of school and nursery based preparation these children received during lockdown.

What are the features of effective system leadership during this time?

Visible Leadership is important. Our senior team regularly visited hubs throughout the response phase and in the recovery period have been in primary and secondary schools. In the pandemic, we put out strong messages about the value of local leadership and had clear expectations regarding community partnerships. I have been emphasising to colleagues the importance of conviction, composure and energising people; managing the balance between realism and positivity in working with teams.

For me the pandemic leadership challenge has been making decisions under pressure, which are sustainable, which build trust and confidence and which people around about you think were actually the right calls. This would include:

- The Day 1 establishment of our Community Hubs on March 24th.
- The creation of our Digital School to improve our offering to staff and pupils.
- Our restructuring of the secondary timetables across the authority to enable universal provision of big blocks of learning.
- Our June TU agreement to have one in-service day in August so we could have another one in September.
- Our immediate establishment of an e-voucher system for free school meals for families in March.

Is there an education silver lining to this crisis?

The system has shifted in a creative way in line with what we probably wanted to do over a longer period – but the crisis forced us to speed up some plans. The attitude of staff to do their best in schools has been great – our attendance levels for staff are high, COVID notwithstanding.

Dealing with the pandemic pulled the council together; we are clearly one team. The central team has increased trust from education establishments. This really helps discussions with public health. Schools are much more informed through slicker communications. Improved mechanisms for engaging with stakeholders are now in place, including more regular stakeholder forums.

“
The health and wellbeing of children and staff has been at the core of our planning.”

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Sam Albrow

Hi, I'm Sam Albrow. I'm 16 and a young adult carer, I help care for my younger brother, Ben, who has profound autism, learning difficulties and epilepsy. I've helped care for as long as I can remember. However, I'm one of the lucky carers, I'm able to sit here writing this. My parents have been really good with trying to let me have as much of a "normal" life as I can.

Before lockdown I was in S4 doing my Nat5's. I would usually kayak once a week at my local watersports centre and was an outdoorsy person. Now, the lockdown was a challenging time for all. For me going from being quite an outdoorsy person to not being able to go out; kayaking, seeing friends or even being able to go to school was really difficult.

As a carer in education, I love school. Now that might sound like a strange concept to some, a pupil actually liking school. School is a respite for carers, a time to focus on something other than your caring role and give yourself time to try to relax. However, during lockdown that was taken away. I found myself having no motivation to do schoolwork and the stress was building, not only for me, for the whole family. All my coping mechanisms were taken away from me, and most carers were in similar positions to myself.

The first weeks were the honeymoon period, only thinking it would be a month or so... it turned into five or so months. Five or so months without my tried and tested coping mechanisms. It was time to find some new ones. It was never a constant up or down, it was always an emotional roller coaster. Having the ups and having the downs.

To add on to this, we thought my brother's seizures were going away. We thought we had a grasp on them. Until one night I heard my parents shouting, their voices scared. I ran downstairs and had to switch straight away from being my teenage self into that first aid role. Making sure he was still breathing and wasn't going to hurt himself. One of the most common things I hear is that I'm mature for my age, those types of situations are why, as a young carer you need to grow up quickly. Ben was okay, after about 30 seconds he had stopped, and he went to

sleep. The next day, Monday, he was back to his normal self.

Although... nothing was normal. It was a Monday, we should've all been at school. Ben loves school, and he loves his community centre, buddies, which is specifically for kids with special needs. But everything had been shut. So too had all the things I loved, the centre I kayaked at closed, school closed. But I know it had to be done and it was for a good reason.

Even with all the bad things it brought, if I'm now asked how I found the lockdown, I think it happened at the right time for me as strange as that sounds. I was very close to burning out, exams coming close, the pressure from school building. Halfway through the lockdown, I decided to start working on myself. Trying to become a better person, both physically and mentally. I have started reading again, I bought a bike with my carer's grant. And since June I've ridden about 1,600 km (in other words, 1,000 miles). I've got my sights set on a couple of races next year and in general, I feel more confident than ever.

However, it's not all good as I've said before. One of the big things I'm worried about is my schoolwork. I've never been an "academic" pupil, I'll be the first to admit that. I'm way more creative, and with the subjects I've taken this year, I am finding it difficult to focus and study. I'm finding it difficult to keep up with the work I'm being given and I know it can only get harder. Even with changes to the higher courses, I'm being stretched.

If I were to make a prediction, there will be a dramatic rise in mental health cases around December/early January time around prelims and an even bigger increase April/May time.

You reading this can make a difference, no matter what it is, from helping someone cope with their mental health to helping shape academic courses for years to come.

Thank you.

Successes and achievements

This theme is about how well learners were supported to have opportunities to develop interests, skills and talents both within the curriculum and beyond. It focuses on how well everyone achieved success.

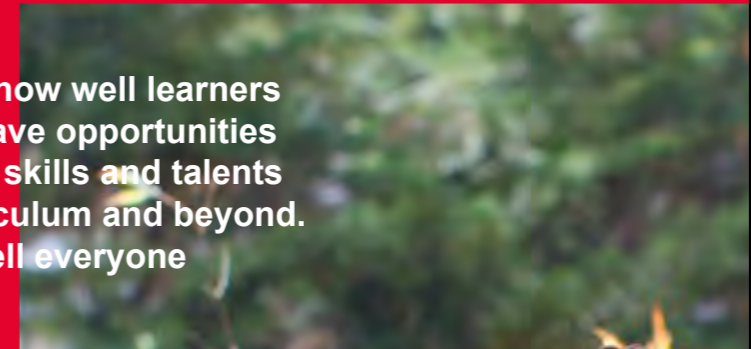


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Establishment:

Woodhill House

Local Authority:

Aberdeenshire Council

What we did:

Aberdeenshire Council created a Google site called “Shine a Light on Lockdown”. This was created to change the narrative about lockdown and to focus and highlight the positive things that were happening across Aberdeenshire. It was also created to create an archival record of a unique time in history. The site contains examples of young people learning new skills, doing things as a family or supporting their local community. Schools, parents and young people could submit entries as could Aberdeenshire Council staff. Many parents shared that they enjoyed reading the entries with their young people and some of our care homes engaged with the website with their residents. Some schools are now using the site to reflect on what we have learned from lockdown in terms of looking after our physical and mental wellbeing and Children’s Rights.

Who we involved:

The site was open to parents and young people, school staff and other council employees and members of the community.

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The difference it made:

It allowed many young people to share new skills and showcased some of the creative things that young people, parents and schools were doing during lockdown. It also allowed young people to reflect on what they were not currently able to do and how much they would value having such things return.

What we will do differently in the future:

We intend to archive some of the material from the site as a record of this unique time in history. We also intend to use the site for further reflection as the situation changes with COVID-19 – as a record of 2020 and how we had to adapt to a new way of living. We will continue to promote the site for parents, young people and members of the community to share inspiring stories of how Aberdeenshire residents have responded to the pandemic.

Establishment:

St Francis Xavier’s Primary School

Local Authority:

Falkirk Council

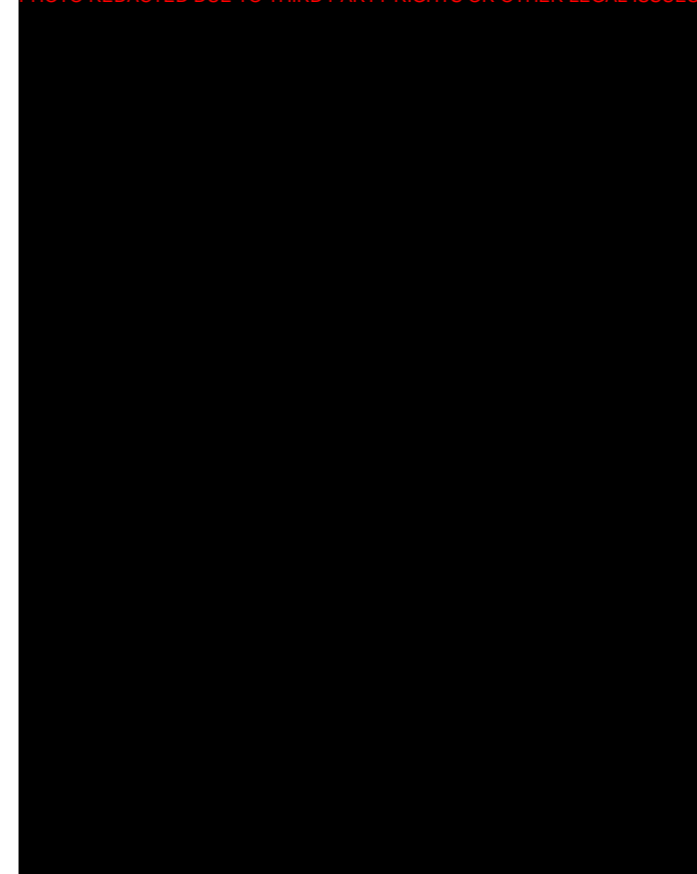
What we did:

Over lockdown our school carried out an online talent show to celebrate 60 years of our school. We held a talent show online with auditions and the finalists were shown. The whole school watched the YouTube premiere over three days from the comfort of their own homes. They then took to their class teams to vote for their favourite act. This was shared via Twitter and the winners were selected and announced by Susan Boyle.

Who we involved:

This involved all pupils. Parents joined to watch, vote and comment and the talent show was a huge hit online with the Falkirk Community. We even had some shares in the USA from Susan Boyle’s fan site.

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The difference it made:

This was an exciting time for all of our families as the talent show - St Francis Goes to Hollywood - is something that the children look forward to every year. The children were all welcome to participate and all entries were viewed by our judges and sent straight to the finals. This is something which we can never do in the live shows at school as there are always too many acts to fit into an afternoon. This gave so many more children an opportunity to participate. We had entries that would never have entered if they had to dance on a huge stage in school in front of 500 people. Parents commented on this too and mentioned they couldn’t believe how happy getting to be part of the show has for their pupils.

We had 400 live views on the day we released the first show and hundreds more who have watched YouTube on catch up. The children all left positive feedback via Teams and Twitter and shared their votes online. We feel this had a huge impact on our community’s health and wellbeing as children were able to connect with the acts in their class. The sense of togetherness in the final week of term was incredible and spirits were most definitely lifted.

What we will do differently in the future:

We will continue to use Teams as a springboard for sharing our learning and homework tasks. We created our own school YouTube channel which we will continue to use. We shared talents of individual children who may never have had the confidence to perform in front of a live audience. We will now for the first time ever look at video entries for our talent show as an option to give more opportunities for those who find the process overwhelming. We will share our next talent show again online, even when we are allowed back on stage as this will be a great way to share without wider community.

Establishment:

Youth, Family and Community Learning Service

Local Authority:

South Lanarkshire Council

What we did:

During the summer holiday period, Youth, Family and Community Learning Service delivered the emergency childcare provision across South Lanarkshire. 423 children aged between 3-13 years attended, benefiting from a full range of activities delivered through a youth work approach.

In order to meet the needs of a wide age range of children in each location, care was taken to ensure that activities were age and ability appropriate to promote participant engagement.

Activities and themes were explored and agreed with participants at the beginning of the programme and included:

- Arts and crafts
- Films
- Physical activities
- Fitness fun sessions
- Planting sunflower seeds and growing plants
- Treasure hunts
- Stop frame animation
- Old school games (skipping, hula hoops etc.)
- Group games
- Non bake baking
- Rainforest Forest school
- Science and Space
- Harry Potter
- Superheroes
- STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics).

The Youth Scotland Hi5 award and Dynamic Youth Award was offered to participants aged five and above that attended Summer Sessions.

Participants across all of the provisions engaged in the creation of a keepsake DVD recording of their summer sessions experience as well as designing their own t-shirt which captured their experiences and memories of 'Summer Sessions life'.

Who we involved:

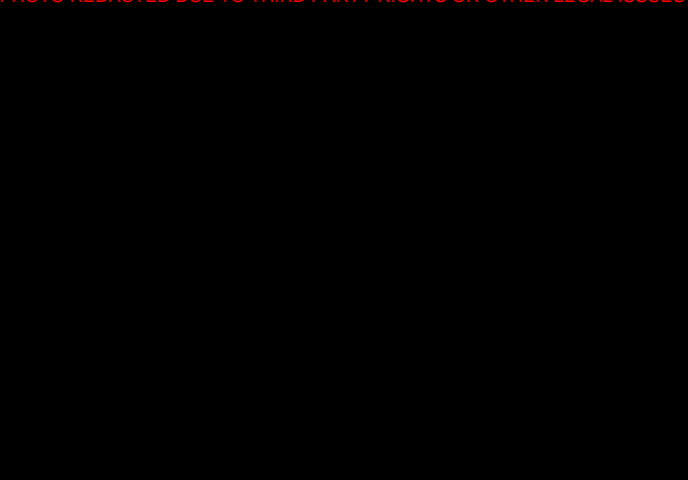
Ten locations identified to host the provision and staff from a range of disciplines: Youth, Family and Community Learning, Early Years and Childcare, Facilities, SLC Aspire Employability and school based non – teaching. Awards aware training was delivered by Youth Scotland to maximise the ability of participation in awards.

The difference it made:

Positive feedback from parents, carers and children has ranged from improvements in speech, language skills and behaviour, to enjoyment and scope of activities on offer.

388 Hi5 Awards were achieved with 23,782 hours being recorded. Four Dynamic Youth Awards were achieved with 187 hours recorded.

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“

He has made more progress with you guys than he has since around Christmas time. Language, eye contact, negotiating skills, balance, fewer meltdowns, calmer at home. Has learned to walk away from difficult situations more rather than hit out as much.”

Parent

“

I just wanted to take the opportunity to say thank you to all staff involved with any aspect of the emergency care provision, without it we would have found it incredibly difficult to attend our places of work. The children have loved their time in the hub and it provided a much needed distraction and reassurance for them in these unsettling times. I have found the whole process very easy to access from start to finish which is quite an achievement given that the world we knew changed almost overnight!”

Parent

“

I enjoyed the games room, gym hall and going outside when it wasn't raining.”

Learner

“

I want to stay till 5!”

Learner

What we will do differently in the future:

The opportunity to bring different disciplines together through a Youth Work delivery model has presented continuous personal development growth, skill progression, improved partnership working and continuity in work practice during the challenges presented during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown measures. Indeed, non-CLD staff have expressed a wish to engage with Youth, Family and Community Learning Services further in addition to registering an interest to participate in future summer holiday provision.

Staff working together, who in many cases had never met each other, under the CLD approach of youth work, flourished and rose up to meet the challenges placed on communities and families. This level of commitment meant that children attending were provided with a safe, nurturing and engaging environment during what would normally be their summer – playing with friends and families, with all the freedoms that people would expect.

In replicating this model of delivery in the future we have identified the need to broaden the availability of the Awards Aware training as not everyone was able to participate. Volunteering is another area of development that will be explored further, as this year allowed us to consider young people helping younger children to participate in the provision – a good practice model.

Establishment:
Social Enterprise Academy

Local Authority:
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

What we did:

Many schools had to cease their social enterprise activities when lockdown came. Social Enterprise Academy's (SEA) education team created an opportunity for schools to win a Community Champions Award and encourage children and young people to find safe and innovative ways to continue making positive impact in their communities. 55 schools in all were awarded for their wonderful work and a virtual awards ceremony was designed for them using Google Apps. Each school was issued with a code to enter a virtual room where they could listen to a message from John Swinney, a personalised message from their SEA tutor, receive their award, take a look around the virtual marketplace and view other schools activities.

Schools from across Scotland became involved, including pupils from primary schools in Uist and Barra who were among those using their skills and talents to write letters and draw pictures for the vulnerable and isolated members of their Gaelic community. One particular example was of a child writing a letter in Gaelic to a member of their community who found herself stranded in Australia. Unable to travel, she recounted how it brought great comfort to receive a letter from home, particularly in her mother tongue.

Who we involved:

The Awards were open to teachers, young people, parents, carers, supporters, community members and stakeholders, supported by The Scottish Government and sponsored by Kibble, Link Group, SAP and Big Issue Invest.

The difference it made:

Our Community Champions Award gave schools an opportunity to celebrate all the wonderful community benefit they provided during lockdown and to encourage children and young people, many of whom were feeling anxious and helpless, to find ways to make a positive difference in their communities, giving them a sense of value and purpose. Receiving the award, hearing a special message from the Deputy First Minister and a message too from their tutor, given in Gaelic when appropriate, offered the children and young people a personal sense of achievement, knowing the difference they had made to others was being celebrated.

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What we will do differently in the future:

This helped us with a fresh understanding of the many ways in which social enterprise activity in schools is empowering children and young people to create solutions to problems that matter to them and how we might best continue to provide them with support during Covid-19 and beyond. It helped us to find innovative ways to celebrate young people who are making such positive impact in their local communities. It substantiated our understanding of the value of the Gaelic language within communities and we have plans to provide Gaelic speaking pupils with online workshops, new materials and an opportunity to win a Social Enterprise in Education award and funding to support their ongoing school social enterprise activities. As pupils continue to use their skills to make a difference to the isolated and elderly members within their communities the impact to the beneficiaries of the children's activities is ongoing as the young people's skills for life, learning and work are developed.

Schools across Scotland are keen to help us develop new ways of delivering our support to pupils via Teams, Google Meet as well as outdoor learning and we have now successfully delivered our first sessions via e-Sgoil.

Establishment:
Ailish Forbes, Pupil, Bankhead Primary School

Local Authority:
Glasgow City Council

What we did:

I started a blog on St Patrick's Day 2020 and in it I described what I was doing every day and how I was coping with lockdown and home learning. I added a Covid-19 update every few days and wrote about my feelings on how lockdown was affecting me, my family and my life. My blog was written about in the national newspaper (The Evening Times).

Who we involved:

My mum, the school and my family.

The difference it made:

My personal achievement was that I learned how to write a blog and to use Google Sites. I learned how to write in an active and engaging way. I achieved a Blue Peter badge because of my blog, and they were very impressed with it!

Writing the blog helped my mental wellbeing because putting my feelings down helped me to cope with the lockdown and the not being to see my grandparents or my friends.

What we will do differently in the future:

I am still writing my blog and I intend to keep writing it even after COVID-19 is over. I enjoy it and am now more confident with technology and the use of Google sites.

Establishment:

Anndra Monk, Sgoil Ghaidhlig Ghlaschu/
Glasgow Gaelic School

Local Authority:

Glasgow City Council

What we did:**Home Economics - learning to cook at home**

Over the lockdown, my family and I started cooking for each other every week. My mum had this thought when we were having dinner. We all thought it was a good idea and we tried it. It was a lot of fun making the dinners because we did not do anything like this before lockdown. We chose a day to cook and went to the shops instead of my parents doing everything.

I did this with my big brother. We worked in pairs and when we went shopping we were in pairs too. It was a great idea to work in pairs as you can help each other and we were just together.

This is my big brother and my usual cooking day. I think a lot more about "What time is it?", "How long is this going to take?" and "Do I have time to do this?" I'm more responsible with what I do and I've learned a lot of things like how to use the cooking utensils and it has helped me work in a team too. In addition, Sausage Ragu is now on the menu at our home along with a few more new recipes.

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Buidheann:

Anndra Monk, Pupil,
Sgoil Ghaidhlig Ghlaschu/Glasgow Gaelic School

Ùghdarras Ionadail:

Glasgow City Council

What we did:**Eaconamas Dachaigh – ag ionnsachadh còcaireachd aig an dachaigh**

Thairis air a' ghlasadh-sluaigh, thòisich mi fhèin is mo theaghlach a' còcaireachd airson a chèile gach seachdain. Smaoinich mo mhàthair mu dheidhinn seo nuair a bha sinn a' gabhail dinnear. Bha sinn uile a' smaoineachadh gur e beachd math a bh' ann is dh'fheuch sinn e. Bha e gu math spòrsail a bhith a' dèanamh na dinnearan air sgàth 's nach robh sinn a' dèanamh sian mar seo ron ghlasadh. Thagh sinn latha airson a bhith a' còcaireachd is chaidh sinn dhan bhùth an àite mo phàrantan a' dèanamh a h-uile sian.

Rinn mi seo le mo bhràthair mòr. Dh'obraich sinn ann an dithisean is nuair a bha sinn a' dol gu na bùithtean bha sinn anns na dithisean cuideachd. 'S e smuain mhath a bh' ann airson a bhith ag obrachadh ann an dithisean oir 's urrainn dhut cuideachadh a chèile is bha sinn dìreach còmhla.

Tha seo air an latha àbhaisteach còcaireachd agam fhìn is mo bhràthair mòr. Bidh mi a' smaointinn tòrr a bharrachd mu dheidhinn "Dè an uair a tha e?", "Dè cho fada is a tha seo a' dol a thoirt?" is "A bheil ùine agam seo a dhèanamh?" Tha barrachd uallach agam le dè bhios mi a' dèanamh is tha mi air tòrr rudan ionnsachadh mar ciamar a tha mi a' cleachdadh na h-innealan còcaireachd agus tha e air mo chuideachadh le bhith ag obair ann an sgioba cuideachd. A bharrachd air sin, tha Ragu Isbein a nis air a' chlàr-bìdh aig an taigh againn agus reasabaidh ùr no dhà eile cuideachd.

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Professional Thought Piece



Janie McManus,
Strategic Director: Scrutiny
Education Scotland

How is Scotland responding to the pandemic?

In March, shortly before the closure of institutions, we took the decision to postpone our scrutiny activity to ensure that colleagues across the education system were able to focus on the immediate impact of the pandemic. We appreciated the pressure and uncertainty that the education system was under and we recognised the effort that would be required to continue to support children's and young people's learning while buildings were closed.

It was absolutely the right decision to make and schools who were going to be inspected gave us very positive comments around this.

As nearly all our scrutiny work had suspended, our team of inspectors had to be available to respond with agility to whatever the need was in the system. This involved lots of collaboration, building on our positive relationships with stakeholders. Some inspectors were working at national level deployed to the CERG work streams as they were developing their guidance on school closures and blended learning. Inspectors were deployed to support the development of national resources and delivered professional learning through a series of webinars. We also developed Scotland Learns, a resource bank of learning activities to support learning at home. Link inspectors are continuing to offer advice and support to individual colleges and independent schools.

At the request of Scottish Ministers inspectors carried out a review of local authority recovery plans, providing each of the 32 authorities with a summary report to support them in developing their plans further where appropriate. HMIE also provided the Scottish Government with a national overview report.

Inspectors are now supporting the education system through recovery in consultation with local authorities. This enables us to respond to the needs of individual establishments, clusters, local authorities and regions to provide tailored support and build capacity.

What needs do you identify as most critical for the education system at this time?

It is critical for the education system to celebrate success. One of the areas of work we are focusing on is working with schools who we knew had highly effective practice and to illustrate how they applied this effective practice during the period of recovery. This has gone down really well with schools saying that it has really lifted their spirits.

It is also important to recognise the challenges around health and wellbeing and resilience of people who are working on the front line and put all the support we can in place. We need to continue to be flexible, agile and responsive.

What are the features of effective system leadership during this time?

A key element is to adapt your leadership style to the situation. Internally, this has required providing colleagues with support to help them to deal with the current challenges and pressures.

Also being open, clear, honest and real with people is important for me as a leader. Saying to people what I am finding challenging. If I can be open and honest then I am modelling that they can have the confidence to tell me how they are feeling.

It is important when dealing with the level of uncertainty that we help others understand what is most important right now. Never has there been a greater need than now to foster curiosity and encourage creativity. It is also important to provide clarity, be upbeat and lead with confidence.

Externally, it has to be about joint endeavours, that no-one can do this on their own, that we need everyone contributing. Recognising the moral imperative across different layers of education to achieve the very best for children, young people and communities. The emphasis is on collaboration, listening to different perspectives and reaching decisions together.

Is there an education silver lining to this crisis?

- The national bodies and parties worked really well together. We need to build on this and see it as a way of working going forward.
- How can we embed the progress we have made around the technologies? Opportunities for delivering professional learning remotely and digitally gives the potential to reach more people.
- As a system we have relied on parents and we need to learn from.
- It's really important to recognise innovation and continue to build on this.
- We have to be mindful of the challenges the system has faced and not overwhelm it.

“It is important when dealing with the level of uncertainty that we help others understand what is most important right now. Never has there been a greater need than now to foster curiosity and encourage creativity.”

Professional Thought Piece



Kit Wyeth,
COVID-19 Education Recovery Group
(CERG) Secretariat

How are countries including Scotland responding to the pandemic?

The CERG was established to consider how children and young people should return to schools, once it was considered safe to do so, and led on guidance for schools and local authorities on the re-opening of schools.

The decision to establish the CERG was made soon after the one to close schools. It brought together leaders from across Scottish education to work out how to plan and prepare for the re-opening of schools. Everyone on the group worked really well together to develop plans to minimise the impact on children and young people of missing so much school. Ten workstreams were quickly established to take forward much of the detailed work and a real community, can-do spirit was built up among all of those involved. People were really committed to this work and most of the workstreams finished their work in a matter of weeks. In addition, the main re-opening schools guidance was soon in development. The level of commitment and partnership working remains impressive, attendance at CERG meetings has been high throughout with members also regularly contributing comments in correspondence, often at very short notice.

There was a fantastic response from teachers and others wanting to work in the hubs – they were hugely oversubscribed by people volunteering to help the most vulnerable children and children of key workers during lockdown. The way Scotland reacted to the pandemic was a clear demonstration of the “all hands to the pump” culture.

The wider school community, such as non-teaching staff have been so important in supporting children and young people to learn since March. The role of parents, janitors and cleaning staff has been crucial alongside teachers, children and young people in supporting the reopening of schools – it has been very much a combined community effort.

What needs do you identify as most critical for the education system at this time?

Health and wellbeing is really important. When you need to balance the four harms that the Government talks about there is no doubt that keeping the schools open is good for the mental health of children and young people, for families space from one another and the ability for parents to work. There is also a learning and teaching element and the need to ensure that any lost learning is made up is really key too.

There was also a concern about the safety of some children with “no eyes” on them during the period of school closure. We know there has been a significant reduction in CAMHS referrals during lockdown despite an increase in concerns about young people’s mental health. It could be years before we know the full impact of the pandemic on the safety of children and young people.

What are the features of effective system leadership during this time?

Collective leadership from the Scottish Government, local government, professional associations and others has been really important and effective at both national and local levels. For example developing the reopening schools guidance was a collective effort through CERG, implementing it has been a joint effort at local level.

Communication is really key and we have tried to ensure that the work of the CERG and its key outputs, like the guidance, are as open and transparent as possible. Effective communication, for example with parents and other parts of the Government (eg health, COVID response, Parent Club), were helpful in ensuring as effective communication as possible.

Is there an education silver lining to this crisis?

It’s quite hard to see a silver lining just now. There was a hope at the start of this that we would not just go back to where we were but have the opportunity to think afresh about what is the best thing for Scottish Education after the lockdown. This is still an ongoing process as we continue to manage the impact of the pandemic.

There’s no doubt that the quality and availability of digital learning has improved. We also know that some children and young people have benefited from increased autonomy and independence in their learning while they were at home.

“
The wider school community, such as non teaching staff have been so important in supporting children and young people to learn since March.”

Reflection

As you read the stories in this book, the care, commitment and courage shown by people across Scotland is very clear. Everyone pulled together to do their best for children, young people and their families during this very challenging time. This book gives you the opportunity to engage with personal accounts from experiences across early years, through primary and secondary schools, special schools, colleges and the wider community.

Determination and resilience shine through the text in every story. The clear descriptions of the action taken, the wide range of people involved and the difference made capture beautifully the team efforts across Scotland.

What has Scotland learned during lockdown and how do we learn from this experience as we build back better? A number of themes have emerged.

Colleagues in schools and settings across Scotland rallied towards achieving a **common goal**; supporting children and young people to learn, keep safe and be healthy. This required **collaboration** within schools, across schools, communities and local authorities and across the country as we all grappled with new challenges on a daily basis. In various teams, **agility** in leading and managing change was evident. The need to respond and act quickly required an increase in the **pace of change** and decision making, ensuring that communication with stakeholders was clear and succinct. The collective response to the pandemic led to **system leadership** where we acknowledge that we don't know it all: we learn together and we learn from others; we learn from mistakes and we act quickly to find solutions.

Practitioners at all levels grasped the opportunity to improve their confidence, skills and knowledge in using a plethora of **digital tools and platforms**. For many, this took them well beyond their comfort zone and required considerable energy and commitment. Many people are left wondering how they managed before! The **professional learning experiences** in this area leave us well placed to continue to consider new ways of working during recovery and beyond.

During lockdown new ways of reaching and **working with parents** were explored and developed. Effective approaches ensured that schools and centres did not lose touch with children and their families. However, a reliance on digital tools is a further reminder of the continuing **inequity** faced by children and young people and their families, and emphasises our ongoing challenge in **closing learning gaps**.

Curriculum for Excellence offers schools and settings the opportunity and **flexibility** to develop and provide high quality learning experiences that meet the needs of all learners in their own unique setting and context. Schools took steps to ensure children felt safe, had fun, kept healthy and made progress in their learning. Practitioners adapted approaches to learning, teaching and assessment to take account of children and young people's experiences, including illness and loss. **Celebration of success remains** central to school life.

“
Thank you to
everyone who
gave of their time
to contribute and
thank you for
the honest and
frank reflections
in relation to
future plans.”

Thanks also go to those who contributed the thought pieces and interviews. The insightful observations support further reflection and learning. To support our shared learning, Education Scotland has also published a professional learning resource and is planning a series of professional learning events to accompany the resource. Details of those are available on the Education Scotland website.

What Scotland Learned truly is a vibrant celebration of the success of our collective endeavours to do our best for the children and young people of Scotland. Moving forward, it is important that we continue to build on the legacy of the last few months. We should extend and strengthen our collaborative efforts to capitalise on the learning, innovation and achievements to build a system which supports excellence and equity for all learners in Scotland.



For Scotland's learners, with Scotland's educators

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