

**Education, Children and Young People Committee**  
**Attainment inquiry visit to Barnardo's Centre, Greenock**  
**Monday 28 March 2022**

**In attendance:**

Stephen Kerr MSP

Kaukab Stewart MSP

Stephanie Callaghan MSP

7 pupils from S1-S4

**Note of discussion:**

**Group 1**

- The young people spoke about their desire for more guidance teachers or support workers in school who have a specific job of supporting young people.
- Discussed the challenges of lockdown learning, specifically challenges with online lessons with little face to face contact, unreasonable deadlines being set out without enough support or understanding for circumstances at the home.
- Young people felt there was sometimes a lack of subject choice or opportunities for extracurricular activities.
- Extra support is needed for pupils with dyslexia – young people described not having access to their own laptop or individual scribe to assist with dyslexia because of lack of resources.
- Discussion was had about the desire for more practical subjects as well as active learning – young people commented that everyone is different so assessment and learning should be adapted.
- Young people want to be treated with respect but they emphasised that they are still young people – not adults - and they also want fun/outdoor learning to be incorporated into their lessons.

**Group 2**

- Young people spoke about the extra support needed for pupils with autism and how they have benefitted from this, helping them to understand how life is different for someone with autism and how important it is to have someone helping them that they can trust and open up to.
- Discussed the importance of relationships, having a support worker to listen and to help, to accept and understand. Not just in school but in community and at home too. Direct contact important to help build relationship and trust, as well as contact with parents.
- Building relationships takes time, took one young person a year to open up to their support worker. Need resources and services that are more sustainable to support this.

- Choice is important for the young people to get the right support – for example, when and where sessions with support workers happen. School can be a very draining place for people with autism and having choice helps to manage this better. It's good when schools support this in a flexible way.
- Schools need to look at altering bullying policies to make sure staff are aware and can manage situations appropriately. Needs a restorative approach. Bullying makes pupils not want to be in school and acceptance is not ok.
- There is concern for the young people at the thought of services being taken away and what will happen when they turn 16.
- School has a hub for 'cool downs' or others who need support to be out of class. But, some pupils have been abusing it which has ruined it for others. Not as easy to access this support now.