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# **Towards best practice in educating and supporting separated children in Scotland**

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September 2019







Funded by:





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# ABOUT THIS PROJECT

*Towards Best Practice in Educating Separated Children (16-18)* is a project led by Scottish Refugee Council, Aberlour Childcare Trust and Glasgow Clyde College with Stirling University as academic partner. For over a decade, the college has developed and delivered a language and education course, the “16+ESOL” programme, to separated children aged 16-18 arriving in Scotland alone. During this time, lecturers have worked closely with staff from the Scottish Guardianship Service, a long-standing partnership between Scotland’s refugee charity and Scotland’s children’s charity, to support the welfare and well-being needs of these young people.

The aims of the project are to reflect on and document the teaching practice, curriculum and resources of the “16+ESOL” programme and to research the educational and well-being needs of separated children, considering how these needs are being met inside and outside the classroom as well as considering the “16+ESOL” programme against international practice.

The project team are Gary Christie, Head of Policy at the Scottish Refugee Council; Catriona MacSween, Service Manager, Aberlour Childcare Trust, Lyn Ma, Senior Lecturer, and Mercedes Richardson, Lecturer at Glasgow Clyde College.

The research team at Stirling University commissioned by Scottish Refugee Council are Dr Siân Lucas, Dr Maggie Grant and Andrew Burns.

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## Research

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## Practice, Curriculum & Teaching Resources

Ma, L. and Richardson, M. (2019) *ESOL 16+ Routes to Learning*. Scottish Refugee Council. Available at: [www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk)

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# TERMINOLOGY

- **Children/young people:** individuals up to age 18
- **CfE:** The Curriculum for Excellence
- **EAL:** English as an additional language
- **ECHR:** European Convention on Human Rights
- **ESOL:** English for Speakers of Other Languages
- **FE:** Further Education
- **GIRFEC:** refers to 'Getting it Right for Every Child'
- **Programme:** We use the term the 'Programme' when referring to the ESOL 16+ Programme at Glasgow Clyde College
- **SHANARRI:** part of Getting it Right for Every Child approach; that all children will be Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible Included
- **SQA:** Scottish Qualifications Authority
- **Separated children:** children and young people who have migrated to the UK and who are currently separated from their parents or caregivers and/or who have been trafficked. These individuals may be in the process of applying for asylum or may have been granted asylum. Within UK legislation the term 'unaccompanied asylum seeking children' (UASC) is often used and we use this term when referring to specific documents that use this term
- **UDHR:** Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- **UNCRC:** United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research forms part of the project: *Towards Best Practice in Educating Separated Children in Scotland (16-18)*. The project's goals were threefold: to assess the educational and well-being needs of separated children in Scotland (aged 16-18 years), consider how the "ESOL 16+" Programme (English for Speakers of Other Languages) at Glasgow Clyde College and its partners are meeting these needs inside and outside the classroom, and compare it to international good practice.

The project was organised into two work packages (WP). In this report we present research from WP1, in which we evaluated the language, education and wellbeing needs of separated children and the extent to which these needs are being met by Glasgow Clyde College's ESOL 16+ Programme. WP2 provided an opportunity for the lecturing staff on the ESOL 16+ Programme to reflect on their ways of educating and supporting separated children and to document, develop and refine the ESOL 16+ Programme curriculum and teaching resources. The key output of this work is the *ESOL 16+ Routes to Learning* document, which provides a useful tool for those involved in teaching separated children in multiple settings.

The number of separated young people seeking asylum has increased significantly across the world (UNICEF, 2016) and Glasgow continues to receive the majority of separated children in Scotland. Education is a right for every child, but difficulties with access and suitability of educational opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers have been identified across UK nations (UNICEF, 2019). The New Scots: Refugee Integration Strategy (2018-2022) identifies education and English language skills as key components of integration, and the Scottish Government (2015) recognises that "...without adequate language skills, people can neither fully participate in their local and national communities nor can they meet their full potential".

Separated children have been shown to demonstrate resilience and a range of strengths that can help them to take advantage of opportunities and to overcome barriers (Boyden and Hart, 2007; Hopkins and Hill, 2010). However, disrupted education may mean that separated children have particular learning needs that have to be taken into account to enable them to reach their potential (Abunimah and Blower, 2010).

The ESOL 16+ Programme is a specialist education programme for separated children between the ages of 16-19 and offers Elementary level (National 2) and Pre-Intermediate level (National 3) teaching covering English, IT and maths. The programme takes 2 years to complete and incorporates creative pedagogical methods and therapeutic elements, including study skills, language and personal and social development, peer support mechanisms and positive role modelling, all of which are commensurate with students' age and circumstances. Many young people achieve the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) ESOL qualification which enables them to progress to further study and/or employment. The programme aims to provide students with routine and a sense of belonging, and recognises that these factors help to reduce isolation. Lecturers monitor students' wellbeing, attendance, and progress. They also liaise with external agencies and partners, support students to access emotional support and legal guidance, and encourage students to engage in activities and groups outside the college.

The research used pluralist methods to explore the research questions, based on a literature review, secondary analysis of student data from Glasgow Clyde College and the Scottish Guardianship service, focus groups with current and former students on the ESOL 16+ Programme, classroom observations, and telephone interviews (with programme stakeholders; professionals working with separated children in other areas of Scotland; and education professionals in Germany, Italy and Greece).

The key findings according to each research question are as follows and are expanded in the report.

**1. What are the educational and wellbeing needs of 16-18 year old separated children arriving in Scotland (entering directly into college or transitioning to college from schools with 1-2 years education)?**

Separated children have needs that are shared with all children and young people, as well as needs that are specific to them and their circumstances. Language learning forms part of a wider set of education needs recognised within an ecological model of wellbeing (Scottish Government, 2012).

Four inter-related themes emerged from the focus groups with current and former students. Educational-language needs include language learning alongside the opportunity to try other subjects and activities, in a supportive and encouraging environment. Sociocultural learning needs include understanding the local/national culture, as well as structure and responsibility within the classroom. Psychological/emotional needs include safety and an approach that helps students deal with anxiety and the impact of trauma. Social needs include opportunities to build friendships within and outside the college.

**2. To what extent does the model, curriculum and pedagogy provided by Glasgow Clyde College meet these needs?**

The classroom environment and the range of activities provided made the programme interesting and relevant to the young people's learning needs, ongoing integration and peer relationships. The programme provides opportunities for students to learn English and to accomplish their learning objectives. Throughout the programme students have opportunities to build friendships, both with classroom peers and in the local community. The trusted relationships with lecturers and the development of friendships created an environment in which the young people felt safe.

Data from focus groups, observations and stakeholder interviews suggest that the safe and caring learning environment provides a base from which young people can build their confidence, self-esteem, and their social networks. The caring attitude of the lecturers was a key feature of the programme and provided an essential foundation for learning. Students valued lecturers who took time to know students' individual needs and offered encouragement and guidance. Stakeholders recognised the commitment of lecturers to the programme and said that they often go "*above and beyond*" for the students.

**3. How does the Glasgow Clyde College model of 16-18 year old education for separated children compare to international good practice?**

The following factors were identified from a range of perspectives as important elements of good practice in education for separated children:

- Building relationships: between teachers/lecturers and students, but also teamwork between colleagues and positive links with external networks
- Recognising the importance of wider socio-cultural learning
- Individual planning with young people
- Supporting opportunities for young people to spend times with peers in their local community
- Sustaining consistency and continuity to allow programmes to develop and staff to gain experience in supporting separated children

The ESOL 16+ curriculum is designed to include topics and examples relevant to students' lives and allows them to be immersed in the host language supporting socio-cultural as well as language/subject learning. Individualised tailored support is offered to students and teaching makes references to students' identities, histories and current circumstances, as well as their strengths, potential and aspirations. The trust of lecturers and connectedness to organisations encourages students to establish and build

links in the wider community. Lecturers' commitment to, and empathy with, separated children were identified as fundamental to their ability to support young people.

The programme helps students to adapt to or re-acquaint themselves with classroom-based teaching. Lecturers balance the need to maintain expectations within the learning environment, while being flexible around the potential for disruptions to the college day, for example for students to attend appointments.

#### **4. In addition to the Glasgow Clyde College model what is required to meet the educational and wellbeing needs of these young people?**

In addition to personal commitment, the programme and staff are supported by the college structures and work alongside a range of other professionals and organisations. Because of this, lecturers have the opportunity to develop informal and formal support networks; this has direct benefits to the students who are able to access wider services. It is important that support is offered to enable lecturing staff to gain experience, develop and adapt programmes around young people's needs and to build networks that will support students' broader needs.

While English language is recognised as a key means to integration, it is important to recognise the significance of the maintenance and development of young people's home languages in order to ensure students feel equal and valued members of the learning community and that integration is a two-way process (Ager and Strang 2004; 2008; Scottish Government, 2018a).

Students' future trajectories, regardless of whether or not they move on to further training, education or work, are influenced by a range of variables, including the decisions made about their asylum claims. An important area for further exploration, which was not within the scope of the current research, is students' pathways after completing or withdrawing from the ESOL 16+ programme or other courses.

#### **5. How can the curriculum, techniques and model be adopted across Scotland where there are smaller populations of separated children?**

Not all separated children in Scotland live in large urban areas like Glasgow, a situation that may become more prevalent once policy measures such as the UK Government's National Transfer Scheme become fully operational and embedded. Scotland's unique geography and population distribution can present challenges for the delivery of services such as education and social care. It was important, therefore, to gain the views of professionals working in authorities with smaller populations of separated children in order to understand how learning from the ESOL 16+ programme may be effectively adapted to meet the needs of such populations.

Interviewees in areas with smaller populations of separated children described how collaborations and partnerships can be effective in meeting the needs of separated children. For education staff who are new to working with separated children and/or working with small groups, access to a network of peers working with separated children may be useful in accessing information, guidance, and support.

As well as ESOL teaching skills and knowledge, educators would benefit from up-to-date knowledge of broader issues such as law and policy changes and their potential impact on students. The curriculum materials that will be made available as part of the broader project could also be usefully complemented by training that draws on the expertise developed on the ESOL 16+ Programme beyond language teaching.

# INTRODUCTION

This research forms part of the project: *Towards Best Practice in Educating Separated Children in Scotland (16-18)*. The project's goals were threefold; to assess the educational and well-being needs of separated children in Scotland (aged 16-18 years), consider how the “ESOL 16+” Programme (English for Speakers of Other Languages) at Glasgow Clyde College and its partners are meeting these needs inside and outside the classroom, and compare it to international good practice.

The project was organised into two work packages (WP). In this report we present research from WP1, which evaluated the language, education and wellbeing needs of separated children and the extent to which these needs are being met by Glasgow Clyde College's ESOL 16+ Programme. We present literature to identify evidence in relation to the wellbeing and educational needs of separated children in relation to the ESOL 16+ Programme. We consider developments in international good practice in education for separated children, particularly in the 16 – 18 year age group; and the changing political, policy and legislative contexts for separated children in Scotland, and how these intersect with educational professionals' practice. We report on the research methods used, which included secondary data analysis of student data, classroom observations, focus group interviews and telephone interviews with professionals.

Research findings are organised into four sections. First, we present contextual secondary data about separated children on the ESOL 16+ Programme and from the Scottish Guardianship Service. Second, we present empirical data from three focus group interviews with 24 young people (current and former students) to explore their perspectives on their education and wellbeing needs, their experiences of the ESOL 16+ programme, including guidance, peer support and pastoral aspects. Third, we present observation data from two days of on-site visits to the classes. We provide an overview of the methods and approaches used by educators and interactions between students and lecturers.

The observed sessions included ITC, English and creative arts approaches. In the fourth section, we present data from five telephone interviews with educators at the college, external education and stakeholder professionals involved with the programme. These data illustrate how the programme addresses the range of young people's needs, including language learning, guidance and pastoral care, while balancing the needs of individual students and the group as a whole.

We also present data from seven professionals from areas with smaller populations of separated children in Scotland, exploring their experiences of providing education for separated children and how the ESOL 16+ model could be adopted more widely. We also present data from interviews with three teachers/lecturers working in other European countries, to identify international perspectives on good practice in education and broader support for separated children and how these compare the Glasgow Clyde College model. In the final part of the report we discuss the findings and consider the implications and provide recommendations drawing on this research.



# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Pluralist methods were used to address the overarching research questions. We made good use of the advisory board and expertise from the lecturing staff to prepare research documents for participants and design the interview schedules (see appendix items).

## Research Questions

1. What are the educational and wellbeing needs of 16-18 year old separated children arriving in Scotland (entering directly into college or transitioning to college from schools with 1-2 years education)?
2. To what extent does the model, curriculum and pedagogy provided by Glasgow Clyde College meet these needs?
3. How does the Glasgow Clyde College model of 16-18 year old education for separated children compare to international good practice?
4. In addition to the Glasgow Clyde College model what is required to meet the educational and wellbeing needs of these young people?
5. How can the curriculum, techniques and model be adopted across Scotland where there are smaller populations of separated children?

## Review of literature

We reviewed international and national literature, policy/legislation/other contextual materials to identify evidence in relation to the wellbeing and educational needs of separated children. The review is organised into four sections: 1) separated children, refugees and asylum seekers, 2) education needs and practice, 3) developments in international good practice in education for separated children and 4) the political, policy and legislative contexts for separated children in Scotland. In addition to literature recommended by the advisory board, searches for key terms were used to identify literature through the University of Stirling Library Catalogue (which searches a number of relevant databases) and other relevant sites such as Scottish and UK Government websites. 333 articles or reports were initially screened by title, 140 by abstract or introduction before a selection of 81 was made for full reading.

## Secondary data analysis

We collated and analysed the ESOL 16+ Programme materials and anonymised data from Glasgow Clyde College and the Scottish Guardianship Service. This included the following items:

- policies, curriculum and teaching materials from the 16+ ESOL programme;
- data on education pathways, assessments, retention and outcomes.

## Sampling

Purposive sampling was used to access students via observations and focus group participants, to ensure that there was a variety of perspectives and experiences within the sample. Attempts were made to gain access to a wide range of individuals (students and professionals in different areas and sectors) to include different perspectives and to observe different classroom activities.

Professionals were identified by a snowball sample, in which teaching staff, members of the advisory board and others suggested key professionals who were involved with the teaching programme. International

teaching professionals were identified in a similar way, through word of mouth and by contacting key people from literature about international education for separated children. We approached six stakeholders working with young people who attend/had attended the ESOL 16+ Programme (five external, one internal) and all except one participated. For the areas of Scotland with smaller populations of separated children, we contacted different professionals in seven Local Authorities. Seven professionals (4 Education and 3 Social Work) in four different authorities participated, this included five telephone interviews and two written responses. We approached six education professionals working in different European countries and completed Skype interviews with three of them.

### **Focus Groups with students**

Three focus groups were held between February and March 2019 with current and former ESOL 16+ students. The focus groups lasted on average 1 hour and took place at the college and, in consultation with the lecturers and after giving students the opportunity to use interpreters, they all took place in English. Focus groups 1 and 2 included current students on the ESOL 16+ Elementary and Pre-Intermediate courses and students who had moved on to other ESOL levels at the College; focus group 3 involved students who had completed the programme and ESOL generally, and had progressed to different areas of study at college and University. We explored participants' perspectives on their education and wellbeing needs, their experiences of the ESOL 16+ programme (including guidance, peer support and pastoral aspects) and their education experiences prior to starting at Glasgow Clyde College (both in other countries and in the UK). We adopted the present first, past second, future third approach (Kohli, 2007) in order to help the young people to feel comfortable with the interview setting before then talking about future needs, which for many may be uncertain and difficult to talk about. This meant we structured the interviews by starting with questions about present education experiences, then past education experiences and finally the future. We adapted the interview schedule for each of the three groups to reflect their current statuses in relation to the course, and deviated from this in line with the discussions generated.

### **Observations**

We conducted two days of observations of the programme, on different days of the week; four different classes and lecturers. We developed an observation schema (see appendix 4) which details the criteria that were examined. Brief field notes were taken during the sessions and written up in full at the end of the day. Notes consisted of descriptions of direct teaching, discussions between lecturer and students, and peer-to-peer dialogue. These data were complemented by conversations with lecturers after the sessions and students during the sessions and breaks.

The type of observation can be considered 'observer-as-participant' (Bryman, 2008), where much of the role involved observation rather than participation. We sat in the classroom and responded to the classroom environment; when there was physical movement from group activity we moved to different parts of the classroom. We listened to what was said in conversations between students, and between students and lecturers, and also asked questions to students and lecturers. We observed the behaviour of students in the classroom setting and collected photographs of decorations on the wall and collected blank copies of classroom activity tasks. The 2 days of observations gave us some understanding of the culture of the group and student and lecturers' behaviour within the context of the teaching and learning culture. The findings section offers detailed accounts of the settings, organised into five themes: 1) care; 2) expectations (of the learning environment, students and lecturers); 3) learning environment; 4) relationships; 5) teaching methods or approaches.

### **Telephone interviews with key stakeholders and educators in other contexts**

We carried out 13 telephone interviews and received two additional written responses. Five interviews were with key external and internal stakeholders, including multidisciplinary staff whom educators regularly liaise with, as identified by the lecturers themselves. In these interviews we explored how the programme addresses the range of young people's needs, including language learning, guidance and pastoral care.

We also sought the views of professionals (in education and some in social work) in four other local authority areas of Scotland, to identify how the curriculum, techniques and model could be adapted to other educational contexts with much smaller populations of separated children. In total five professionals participated in telephone interviews and two further participants provided written responses.

Finally, we carried out three interviews by Skype with teachers working with separated children in Germany, Italy and Greece, to explore good practice and understand how the ESOL 16+ Programme compared with other international contexts.

For each of the three groups (ESOL 16+ programme stakeholders, professionals in areas of Scotland with smaller populations of separated children, teachers in other international contexts), a semi-structured interview schedule was developed that allowed for data to be collected on core topics and on additional points raised spontaneously by interviewees.

## **Analysis & Evaluation**

We used a thematic analysis approach following Braun and Clark (2006). For the focus group analysis two members of the research team carried out the focus groups. Audio recordings were transcribed and cleaned and the researchers independently coded the transcripts, coming together to develop themes. The process involved listening to the audios, becoming familiar with the data, initial free coding, searching for themes, agreeing, reviewing and defining the themes. We present findings thematically and use quotations from across the three focus groups.

The telephone interviews were recorded and the relevant researcher listened to the audio and made notes for each question based on the recording. The notes were analysed thematically and the themes reviewed and agreed by the two researchers who had carried out the telephone interviews.

In the discussion we explore the data collected from young people and stakeholder professionals, and then integrate the findings with themes from the literature review and law, policy and procedures (1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child; European Union Agenda for the Rights of the Child; National Improvement Framework, Education Scotland, The New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2018 - 2022 (Scottish Government, 2018a), Curriculum for Excellence, GIRFEC, Developing the Young Workforce) to identify what else (external agencies or factors) helps to meet the educational and wellbeing needs of separated young people.

## **Ethical considerations**

Ethical approval was granted from the University of Stirling's General University Ethics Committee. Appropriate steps were taken to ensure that child protection and safeguarding, as well as the safety of all research participants and researchers, were embedded in all aspects of the project.

The research team consulted with the educators and advisory board members (including young people) to develop participant information sheets and consent forms that were accessible to young people while clearly explaining the purpose of the study and expectations for participation (see included content in Appendix 1&2<sup>1</sup>). Access was granted with support from lecturing staff, who had already sought higher level permission from the college for the research to take place.

Informed consent was secured from all students and professionals. Care was taken to ensure that all participants understood the research processes and that they did not feel obliged to participate. Steps were taken to ensure that students fully understood what the research was about, giving them a choice to opt in. We made it clear that their involvement in the research would not interfere with their treatment or assessment of work.

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1 Appendix 1 shows the main content only. The original document was in colour and included photos of the researchers.

The research team had an introductory visit to the college before data collection, where we introduced ourselves to students and staff and talked about the study. We prepared a short PowerPoint presentation which gave an overview of the study and, prior to data collection, educators spent time in class familiarising students with the terminology used in the consent form. We gained written consent from all participants and spent time answering questions before the observation and interviews began.

The focus groups took place in a room within the college, a familiar environment to the participants. A lecturer was available at the end of the group to offer support to participants if needed. Participants gave permission for the interview to be audio recorded and were made aware that we would take care to ensure that they would not be identifiable in the report. Participants did not have to answer all questions and could take breaks if needed. An appreciation voucher was given to all those who participated in the focus group.

Students were advised of the dates and times of the observations and had the opportunity to ask questions before the session began. We gained written consent from all students before the observations took place. Latecomers were spoken to individually by the lecturer to remind them that the observation was taking place and to gain consent.

Interviews with professionals were carried out by telephone or Skype (audio only) and permission was sought for these to be audio-recorded. Written informed consent was gained prior to interviews taking place.

Personal data and research data were treated in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation policies and procedures and information and data were anonymized and stored securely.

While the information about the methodology and ethical considerations highlight the steps that were taken to ensure rigour, gain informed consent and to protect participants from distress, there are potential limitations which are considered below.

## **Limitations**

- We accessed participants who were in contact with the college and Scottish Guardianship Service, thus the sample is limited. Focus groups were carried out at the college. It is possible that those who did not complete their studies or did not stay in contact with the college did not have a chance to participate in this study. While we gave the young people the option of there being an interpreter to mediate communication during the focus groups, we were advised that young people would prefer to speak English and thus the interviews were conducted in English. It is possible that the young people were not able to express themselves as comprehensively as they would have been able to if they were able to speak in their first language. We were only able to access limited statistical data and anecdotal examples from stakeholders about students' pathways after the programme.
- We carried out two observations and were therefore not 'immersed in the field'. There are arguments that the relatively limited period of observation also carries the risk of not understanding the social setting and people (Gold, 1958). There is the possibility that 'observer bias' may have occurred during the classroom observations, and this may have impacted on what the participants felt able to share and may have influenced the students and lecturers' behaviour.
- In the focus groups it is possible that students may have worried about what they said, did, and the possibility that this may get back to the lecturers. This may have influenced what the participants shared with us.
- We chose to include a range of multidisciplinary stakeholders and education professionals in other contexts, which helped bring a broad range of perspectives but potentially limited the depth in which we could explore particular issues.



# LITERATURE REVIEW

In this review we include recent statistics about separated children and refugees, before considering wellbeing, language and education needs, the legislative context and two examples of international ‘good practice’ in meeting the educational needs of separated children. The review is specifically focussed on the needs of separated children and how these may be met, rather than on the technical aspects of delivering courses such as ESOL.

## Separated children, refugees and asylum-seekers

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2019) estimates that 70.8 million people were displaced globally in 2018. The majority (84%) of refugees are hosted by developing countries with European countries (excluding Turkey) hosting approximately 2.8 million in 2018 (ibid). Children make up just over half of the refugee population globally including an estimated 138,600 separated children (UNHCR, 2019).

In the European Union, 19,700 first time asylum applications from separated children were made during 2018 (Eurostat, 2019) down from 31,400 in 2017 (Eurostat, 2018). The UK considered 2,872 first time asylum applications in 2018 from separated children, up from 2,206 in 2017 (Refugee Council, 2019). Applications from children from Sudan and Vietnam have continued to increase since 2016, though Eritrea was the country of origin with the largest number of separated children in 2018. 89% of all UK applications were from males (ibid). There are no age statistics available for these applications at the time of writing, however, in 2017 71% were aged 16-17 (Refugee Council, 2018). Initial decisions resulted in an outright refusal rate of around 14% for those age 17 and under, and 60% for those who had reached the age of 18 by the time of the decision (Refugee Council, 2019).

The number of separated children entering Scotland has previously been estimated to be at least five per month (Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre, 2016) however, it is difficult to give precise figures because the Home Office does not publish child refugee numbers by nation or region in relation to asylum applications (Rigby et al, 2018). We do know that the ESOL 16+ Programme is oversubscribed and between 2010 and 2018, 410 separated children have been referred to the Scottish Guardianship Service with 64% of those being looked after by Glasgow City Council (ibid).

Two new schemes created under the Immigration Act 2016 have resulted in a small number of separated children coming to Scotland and the potential for larger numbers in the future. One is the National Transfer Scheme for UASC, whereby unaccompanied children could be dispersed to Local Authorities throughout England (Home Office, 2018). This has been extended to the Devolved Nations of the UK via The Transfer of Responsibility for Relevant Children (Extension to Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) Regulations 2018. However, the protocols in Scotland only became operational in April 2018 (COSLA, 2018) and there are no statistics available yet regarding the number of official transfers to Scotland under this scheme. The Immigration Act 2016 also included what is known as the ‘Dubs Amendment’, whereby unaccompanied children already in Europe can be resettled in the UK. Small numbers of children are understood to have been brought to Scotland under this scheme (COSLA Strategic Migration Partnership, n.d.), although exact figures are not available.

## Educational needs

Education provision for separated children in the UK includes specialist programmes, individual, small group tuition, mainstream school, mixed age-group ESOL classes, orientation and transition programmes. At a policy level, The New Scots: Refugee Integration Strategy (2018-2022) (Scottish Government, 2018a) identifies education and English language skills as key components of integration. The Scottish Government (2015) notes that “...without adequate language skills, people can neither fully participate in their

*local and national communities nor can they meet their full potential”.*

The Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) is the underpinning educational framework in Scotland. The curriculum is an approach that supports young people as they learn and develop across four capacities: successful learners; confident individuals; responsible citizens; and effective contributors.

The CfE recognises the breadth of educational opportunities for children and young people and their contributions to personal development, preparedness for continued learning, work and life. It also established an entitlement to recognition of achievements by young people. Some of the awards featured in ‘Amazing Things’ (Youth Scotland, 2017) lead to recognised formal qualifications.

While education is a right for all children, there are reports that educational opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers are problematic in terms of the availability and suitability of provision (UNICEF, 2019). The New Scots Integration Strategy (2018a) highlights the need to increase awareness and understanding of entitlement to learning and education, and there continues to be work done to challenge barriers to access. Some of the concerns highlighted in the report include:

- Confusion about the meaning of immigration status by education professionals leading to conflicting advice.
- Limited criteria to access Higher Education for asylum seekers.
- Lack of recognition of prior learning qualification, skills and knowledge.
- Restrictions on Student Support Funding and educational barriers due to limited funding.
- Timescales to receive funding awards through SAAS/Colleges do not match with students’ learning journeys.
- Lack of information on progression routes.
- Lack of access to childcare.

In Scotland, asylum seeking children are eligible to be considered for a fee waiver for college courses, although with some restrictions (Scottish Funding Council, 2018c; Scottish Government, 2018a). In terms of progression, asylum seekers are not eligible to apply for national student support for higher education (Scottish Government, 2018a), although individual universities may offer bursaries or other support.

The Care Experienced bursary should be offered to students studying in Scotland who have ever, at any time in their lives, been looked after by a Local Authority in the UK. However, the Scottish Funding Council notes that:

*young unaccompanied asylum seekers who are under the care of the Local Authority cannot be allocated the full Care Experienced bursary, but should be supported as asylum seekers. However, if refugee status is granted to the young person or if they meet the ‘long residency’ rule, then they will then become eligible for the Care Experienced bursary (SFC, 2018b).*

## **Wellbeing needs**

Wellbeing is a contested and often ambiguous term (cf. McAllister, 2005; Dodge et al, 2012). In Scotland, the wellbeing of children and young people is considered within the GIRFEC<sup>2</sup> policy framework, which seeks to promote the wellbeing of *all children* in Scotland. Wellbeing is defined in terms of eight indicators: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible, and included (SHANARRI) (Scottish Government, 2018c). By incorporating the indicators into their policy framework,

the Scottish Government has sought to ensure a common understanding and shared language in relation to wellbeing (ibid).

Wellbeing has generally included both objective (external) and subjective (internal) measures (McAllister, 2005). In trying to determine wellbeing, both policy-makers and practitioners have identified intrinsic and extrinsic factors that either contribute to wellbeing or create barriers to it. When considering the wellbeing needs of children, it is important to recognise that not all children respond to the same risks in the same way (Abunimah and Blower, 2010) and this is due to the complex interaction between internal and external factors for each individual child.

### **Separated children: Wellbeing – barriers and opportunities**

It is broadly accepted that separated children have needs that are shared with all children and young people, as well as needs that are specific to them and their circumstances (Kohli, 2006; Abunimah and Blower, 2010; Hopkins and Hill, 2010). Separated children have been shown to demonstrate resilience and a range of strengths that can help them to take advantage of opportunities and to overcome barriers (Boyden and Hart, 2007; Hopkins and Hill, 2010). Separated children have also been found to have better educational outcomes than their peers in care in the UK, although still less well than the general population (O'Higgins, 2018).

There are numerous reports about the particular stressors that face separated children. Boyden and Hart (2007) detail the psychological, emotional, and social difficulties involved for young people in having to leave their home country. A series of mainly negative and traumatic experiences can interact and have cumulative effects that exacerbate the vulnerability of young people (Hopkins and Hill, 2008). On arrival to the host country, there may be other difficulties such as psychosocial and economic barriers (Kanu, 2009), the interaction of cultural factors and systemic processes (McKeary and Newbold, 2010), and the 'cultural distance' between the host country and the country of origin (Beiser, Puente-Duran and Hou, 2015) which create challenges for young people. These challenges may have lasting effects in terms of ongoing socioeconomic status such as incorporation and performance in the labour market (Çelikaksoy and Wadensjö, 2017).

'Bonding relationships' and family are argued to be crucial for wellbeing (Beiser et al, 2015; Buchanan et al, 2018) and integration (Strang and Ager, 2010), and, by implication, children who arrive unaccompanied are not in receipt of these contributing wellbeing factors. The fact that children have arrived unaccompanied in the host country may point to their particular capabilities and internal resources (Morantz et al, 2011).

### **Education and language**

Education has been highlighted as a central feature that supports both language learning and the integration and adaptation of separated children. Education is a key area of socialisation, integration, and in promoting the health and wellbeing of separated children (Pastoor, 2015). Achievements in education and peer relationships are key determinants of success and future mental health (Viner et al., 2012). Separated children have been found to demonstrate qualities such as respect and commitment to education (Kohli, 2007). However, education can be disrupted by on-going trauma, uncertainty about the future and concern about the fate of family and friends in their country of origin (Rigby, 2011, Crawley and Kohli, 2013; Forbes and Sime, 2016).

Longitudinal research suggests that often separated children succeed in education and subsequent employment, given their capacity for hard work (Hopkins and Hill, 2010). These achievements must be considered within the context of the socio-political climate and the availability of provision for separated children at the structural level. Mainstream provision may be unsuitable for the specific needs of separated children and may present additional barriers such as forms of discrimination (Kanu, 2009; UNICEF, 2019). Moreover, disrupted education may mean that separated children have particular learning needs that have to be taken into account to enable them to reach their potential (Abunimah and Blower, 2010). There are

reports of unsuitable and unavailable provision for UASC and limited understanding of students' mental health needs and how they may affect attainment and engagement (UNICEF, 2019).

When considering educational experiences, attainment and wellbeing, it is crucial to locate these in a children's rights framework that recognises children's right to learn and to acknowledge the impact of disruption and separation, contextual factors, sociocultural and political contexts (past and present) on students' learning and attainment (UNICEF, 2019). Following the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), children are entitled to protection, support and all the rights enshrined in the Convention. According to UNICEF (2016), *"children have a right to be protected, to keep learning and to receive the care and services they need to reach their full potential"*.

Popov and Stureson (2015) carried out research about education provision for separated children in Swedish schools and found that the curriculum incorporated language learning, socialisation and cultural integration. They argue that additional resources and specialist training should be made available to enable mainstream schools to fulfil these functions. Further considerations about education for separated children within mainstream schools relate to whether the provision is 'added-in' (i.e. embedded) or 'added-on' to mainstream provision. Borsch et al (2019) identified that intensive language instruction; the promotion of inter-ethnic relationships, collective responsibility and an inclusive ethos (social capital) were important elements for refugee children within the context of a 'folk school' in Denmark.

Language learning forms part of a wider set of educational needs which are recognised within the ecological model of wellbeing used across the Scottish Government's GIRFEC policy framework. English language competency is often necessary for future vocational training or Higher Education, moreover English language proficiency is considered a major indicator of the integration of migrants (Ager and Strang, 2004; 2008). Proficiency in the language of the host country is an important factor in enabling individuals to exercise their rights, achieve legal status (da Lomba, 2010), and access health services (McKeary and Newbold, 2010) and to integrate socially (Morantz et al, 2011). However, there are criticisms about assimilationist practices and the emphasis on English language learning and the unavailability of interpreting services and support for people who are emergent bilinguals within public services (Lucas, 2016; Piller, 2012).

## **Legal status**

Until granted the status of 'refugee', separated children's legal standing and position in the UK remains precarious. However, this status can be a key contributor to integration as detailed in Ager and Strang's (2004) framework where it is included as the 'foundational' concept of 'rights and citizenship'. Indeed, Allsopp et al (2014) linked wellbeing to a forward trajectory of personhood; of being able to plan for the future and to think about becoming. The precarity of legal status can prevent integration and present a barrier to wellbeing, particularly for those individuals who have the threat of being returned unwillingly to their country of origin (da Lomba, 2010). Moreover, the determination of an individual's age via 'age assessment' is a significant factor that can affect whether or not education provision is made available (UNICEF, 2019).

The low success rates of successful asylum claims and related uncertainty has implications for education and wellbeing (Kohli, 2011). The power dynamic within the legal system can exacerbate issues of mistrust of professionals and public services for separated children (Raghallaigh, 2010) whereby children may selectively disclose information about themselves (Chase, 2010). Because of this, it should be recognised that some separated children may have wellbeing needs that have not been disclosed.

## **Legislative and policy context**

The legal and policy context for separated children in Scotland is complex and dynamic because it bridges two distinct, and often conflicting (Giner, 2007), policy areas: immigration and children. This is further complicated by the multi-level governmental system in the UK in which immigration is a reserved



responsibility at UK level, while the Scottish Government are responsible for education and other policy areas related to child welfare. For the purpose of this report, we focus on legislation in relation to separated children.

A significant policy development in Scotland is the Scottish Guardianship Service, which was established in 2010 following increased concern about child trafficking and children seeking asylum (Crawley and Kohli, 2013). This service assists separated children in navigating the welfare and immigration systems. Students on the ESOL 16+ programme will have a Guardian if they are in the process of applying for asylum or if they have been trafficked.

In addition to the rights set forth in The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), the specific rights of children are laid out in the 54 Articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which is *“the most complete statement of children’s rights ever produced and is the most widely-ratified international human rights treaty in history”* (UNICEF, nd). The UNCRC is wide ranging and all of the articles are related with no right being more important than any other. However, four articles are viewed as special: Non-discrimination (article 2); Best interest of the child (article 3); Right to life survival and development (article 6); Right to be heard (article 12) (ibid).

The UNCRC was ratified by the UK in 1991 (though it initially opted out of article 12) and it sets out the State’s general obligations to children including their education. Its influence can be seen in subsequent domestic legislation relating to children such as the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. This Act and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 are key pieces of legislation because separated children are considered to be ‘looked after’ by the Local Authority where they reside. In Scotland, the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 requires Local Authorities to become corporate parents of unaccompanied children and young people while the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 sets out the duties Local Authorities have to separated children as looked after children until the age of 18 (and as care leavers after they turn 18) including to:

[...] *provide accommodation and support through and beyond their asylum application, including access to education, ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and other services, which supports integration into their local communities* (Scottish Government, 2018a, p.26).

For children and young people who need extra support, this is provided under the GIRFEC approach (Scottish Government, 2018b). The principles and values that underpin the GIRFEC approach reflect the rights outlined in the UNCRC while also incorporating a focus on understanding and promoting the wellbeing of children, as was outlined earlier. This dual focus on rights and wellbeing has been critiqued by Tisdall (2015, p.818) for adding to *“a confusing complexity of policy priorities”* because the two are conceptually, methodologically, and practically different.

To conclude this section, there exists, therefore, a tension between legislative approaches to immigration and to children. The former is largely predicated on suspicion, restriction and detention, while the latter is based on inclusion and the promotions of rights (Giner, 2007). Mulvey (2015) identifies asylum-seeking children as an example of how complex and controversial migration policy is within the context of a multi-level governmental system.

## **International ‘good practice’ in meeting the educational and wellbeing needs of separated children**

We carried out a review of literature about good practice in order to help answer research question 3:

### **3. How does the Glasgow Clyde College model of 16-18 year old education for separated children compare to international good practice?**

Perhaps because it is still a developing area of research, finding literature on ‘good practice’ in meeting the educational and wellbeing needs for the particular age group of separated children in this study was challenging, not least because the definition of ‘good practice’ is not universally accepted. Unlike the ESOL 16+ Programme, which is delivered in a Further Education college, much of the international literature in relation to educational needs focuses on schools. In addition, much of the international literature combines ‘accompanied’ and ‘unaccompanied’ children, making it difficult to identify good practice in relation to separated children specifically.

Two examples were chosen to highlight practice issues in an international context. The first is an evaluation of a schools-based system in Sweden (Rydin et al, 2011) which has a different systemic context from the UK in relation to Education, Inspection and Local Government including specific legislative recommendations for the provision of education for newly arrived pupils. Although school-based, this evaluation report includes a case study of an ‘upper secondary’ school for young people aged 16-18 and is particularly detailed in its description of services available and the practices used.

The second example is a more recent (Augelli et al, 2018) evaluation of several school-based programmes in Italy. Again, this includes a comprehensive description of the programmes and practice; and relates specifically to the needs of separated children in Italy. The research team were able to speak directly with the lead author of this paper and further details of the programmes can be found in the section entitled ‘Education for separated children in other European countries’.

The themes in both examples had similarities to literature already reviewed and each other, as follows:

- The importance of language in education and integration including the development of relationships and the ability to develop emotionally and cognitively.
- The importance of assessing and taking account of the individual needs and strengths of each child or young person.
- Effective co-operation and collaboration with a range of other services and communities can assist in meeting the needs and recognising the strengths of separated children.
- The importance of opportunities for practitioners to develop knowledge and skills, including support to be reflexive about the nature of their practice; its challenges and significance.

## **Literature review summary**

- Geopolitical events continue to drive the displacement of people globally including separated children, though the numbers arriving in the UK have fallen in recent years.
- The wellbeing of children in Scotland is considered within the GIRFEC policy of the Scottish Government, though there is recognition that separated children will have a range of specific needs and strengths associated with their unique experiences.
- It is broadly accepted that separated children have needs that are shared with all children and young people, as well as needs that are specific to them and their circumstances (Kohli, 2006; Abunimah and Blower, 2010; Hopkins and Hill, 2010). Language and education contribute to overall wellbeing and are considered to be key drivers in the integration of separated children within their host communities.
- There is conflict between the legislative and policy frameworks relating to immigration and to children in the UK, and the legal status of separated children can present as a barrier to wellbeing and integration.
- Practice in relation to separated children is developing internationally though comparison is complicated by the different legal and political contexts that exist in individual countries.

# FINDINGS

## SECONDARY DATA

To help us contextualise the data from our research, we obtained secondary data from the Scottish Guardianship Service and Glasgow Clyde College about separated children in Scotland.

The Scottish Guardianship Service collated data on 131 young people who had been referred to their service between September 2017 and May 2019. As it is a national service, the data related to young people accessing a range of education provision across Scotland. Courses included those with particular experience of working with separated children, such as the ESOL 16+ Programme or at Edinburgh College (Sighthill Campus), as well as community-based ESOL, school and other programmes.

Forty-nine young people's country of origin was Vietnam, followed by Iran (n=23), Sudan (n=13) and Iraq (n=12). Their average age at referral to the service was 16 years, with the youngest 13 years and the oldest 18 years old; 109 were male and 22 were female.

Education types, including current and previous education, were recorded as follows: 49 young people at the ESOL 16+ Programme at Glasgow Clyde College; 22 in mainstream schools (of which 16 were specified as high schools and one as primary school); 12 at colleges in Edinburgh, 10 awaiting placements or the start of courses following enrolment; eight on the British Red Cross Chrysalis programme (a 10-week programme for young refugees who are not yet engaged in education); seven on other college courses and five on community ESOL courses.

Where educational outcomes were recorded (n=47), nine were attending well or making good progress, 18 were still engaged/attending; four had 'poor attendance'; six had stopped attending; six were waiting for or had been offered places; two were on maternity leave; and two were working. Among the six young people who had stopped attending, four were recorded as having stopped attending school or community ESOL classes due to feeling the course structure did not help them make progress; of these two had enrolled at college and one was planning to do so shortly.

Glasgow Clyde College provided data on 201 former students who had been enrolled in the ESOL 16+ Programme between 2014 and 2018. Data for previous years was not available as Glasgow Clyde College was formed from the merger of three colleges in 2013, including Anniesland College where the course originally started. Students' results are recorded as 'successful', 'unsuccessful' or 'withdrawn'. As former students in our focus groups noted, withdrawals could include students who needed to withdraw temporarily to give themselves time to deal with difficulties before re-enrolling the following year. Although a further breakdown of reasons for withdrawal was not provided in the data for this research, the college records reasons for withdrawal from 26 possible categories, including personal/family reasons, illness, failed asylum claim, and a range of education or employment-related reasons.

Categorical data on students' destinations after the course is collected from a range of sources, including enrollment data from other courses in the college, external partner agencies and contacting students directly.

For the current teaching year of 2018-2019, 23 students had been enrolled in the Elementary course and 26 students in the Pre-Intermediate course. However, these figures are for all registrations, including some students who may have withdrawn prior to the start of term and whose spaces were then re-allocated. The average age for Elementary students was 17 years and for Pre-Intermediate students nearly 18 years. At the point that data was provided (close to the end of the college year), four students were recorded as having withdrawn from each course. Of the 98 students who had enrolled in the Elementary course between 2014-2017, 73 had successfully completed (74%), six had been unsuccessful and 19 had withdrawn. Of the students who had been successful, 53 were recorded as 'engaged in full-time study, training or research',



five were unconfirmed and 15 were recorded as N/A. Students came from a wide range of countries, including Vietnam (n=14), Eritrea (n=13), Syrian Arab Republic (n=9), China (n=8) and Afghanistan (n=7). The average age of students at the point of enrollment was 17 years (range 16 to 21 years).

Of the 103 students who had enrolled in the Pre-Intermediate course, 64 had successfully completed, 13 had been unsuccessful and 26 had withdrawn. Of the students who had been successful, 43 were recorded as 'engaged in full-time study, training or research', one was recorded as 'not engaged in full-time study, training or research', one was in full-time employment, one was unemployed and looking for work, eight were unconfirmed and 10 were recorded as N/A. Students, including some who had attended the Elementary course in previous years, came from Vietnam (n=23), Eritrea (n=14), China (n=14), Sudan (n=6), Afghanistan (n=6), Iran (n=5) and a range of other countries. The average age of students at the point of enrollment was just under 17.5 years (range 16 to 21 years).

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## FOCUS GROUPS

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Focus group data are presented to identify the ways that the ESOL 16+ programme supports students to maximise cognitive, emotional and social development. We also explore the ethos and culture at Glasgow Clyde College, and pay attention to aspects of inclusion, participation and positive relationships in the learning community. Due to the relatively small number of separated young people in Scotland we provide general demographic data to avoid the possibility of identification.

Three focus groups were held at Glasgow Clyde College with twenty four current and former students from the ESOL 16+ Programme. There were 8 women and sixteen men in the sample, aged between 17-28. Participants originated from ten different countries: Afghanistan, China, Congo, Eritrea, Guinea, Iran, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan and Syria and 11 different language varieties were used amongst the young people in addition to English. Participants in focus group 3 were former students and were enrolled on the ESOL 16+ Programme from 2007-2018. These individuals were in various education settings at university and college, studying diverse subjects from health care, pharmacology, science, and art and design.

There were 9 participants in focus group one, made up of students from the Pre-Intermediate class. Focus group two was made up of 8 students still studying at the college who had completed the ESOL 16+ Programme and moved on to mainstream ESOL provision. The third focus group comprised of 7 young people who had completed the programme and had moved on to other educational courses and/or employment.

The present first, past second, future third approach described by Kohli (2007) was used to structure the discussions in the focus groups in order to explore the young people's perspectives on their education and wellbeing needs, and their experiences of the ESOL 16+ programme. The data gathered aimed to address two research questions:

- 1. What are the educational and wellbeing needs of 16-18 year old separated children arriving in Scotland (entering directly into college or transitioning to college from schools within 1-2 years education)?**
- 2. To what extent does the model, curriculum and pedagogy provided by Glasgow Clyde College meet these needs?**

Following transcription, the data were independently coded by two of the research team, a unified coding structure was agreed that was then used in a thematic analysis similar to that described by Braun and Clarke (2006). While these authors argue that thematic analysis is either inductive (bottom up) or deductive (top down) the approach used in this analysis incorporated both. Clearly the research questions had a focus on educational and wellbeing needs and so both data collection and subsequent coding focused on these areas, using a deductive approach. However, terms that are broad and contested such as 'wellbeing', required the researchers to be open to any themes that were emerging from the data and so there were also elements of inductive analysis.

Four broad themes were identified across the focus group data: **Educational-Language Needs, Sociocultural Learning Needs, Psychological/Emotional Needs, and Social Needs.** Broader educational needs were also discussed in relation to subjects other than ESOL, with the points raised (career-planning and confidence) positioned in this section between sociocultural and psychological/emotional needs. Given the two research questions noted above are interrelated, the report will introduce each of these themes by presenting first the needs that were identified from the perspective of the young people and then their viewpoint on whether these needs were met by the ESOL 16+ Programme.

## **Educational/Language needs**

Across all three focus groups, the priority of learning English came across clearly. This is in keeping with UK and international literature, which highlights the importance of learning the host language because this acts like a ‘key’ for other learning and integration. The young people in all three focus groups discussed the importance of learning English for them.

*Applying to come into college. I need to learn English and communicate with people because if I’m staying at home, I cannot learn English. I cannot understand people, what they’re saying. That’s my problem ...*  
(Abrihet - Focus group 1)

*... we have different friends from different countries, so the only language we can use is the English language. Yes, he’s from China and we’re supposed to use the English language because it’s now something in common between us. The only way is English.* (Feven - Focus group 2)

The young people in all of the focus groups were able to recognise their own progress and to identify a number of aspects of the programme that they felt helped them to learn English. These included the range of topics covered in English classes, the use of different activities to aid learning in class, the teaching methods, the lecturer’s personal characteristics and approach, out of class activities, the multi-cultural nature of the class, the age range of those enrolled in the programme, being at a similar level of English proficiency as others in the class, and a relaxed learning environment. Participants in focus group 3 (former students) were able to look back at their time on the ESOL 16+ Programme, identify the progress they had made as well as the difficulties that they faced in learning English language at the start of the programme.

The range of topics covered on the programme made learning interesting and the students talk about interests in history, nature, culture, art and science. English was still key though – as Mary said “...even if you are good at science you need to be able to ‘do it’ in English.” The use of different activities such as art were seen to ‘take the pressure off’ and make learning easier by being more relaxed. These activities were also felt to help students identify what they are good at and what they may like to go on to do after finishing the programme. In all three focus groups, the participants discussed how much they liked to work in pairs and in groups, where they had the opportunity to help each other and to develop friendships. Out of class activities such as trips and events were seen to be beneficial for learning English as well as for supporting wider sociocultural learning and integration.

The multi-cultural nature of class groupings meant that English was the common language between students, and this encouraged the use of this language over others in class. This combined positively with the fact that all of the participants were of a similar age and had been placed in classes where they were all at a similar level of proficiency. This helped students to develop friendships and was seen as distinctive to other courses where there may be varying age ranges.

*...you know when you come to ESOL, you...get...friend[s] and the people around the same age as you and same level of English that you can communicate...it improves your friendship.*

*The [other] courses will not allow you to [mix with other students of similar age and backgrounds]. You need to apply through the online and then you just get on a course, and it doesn't matter what age, but I remember when I was [in 16+] we were all under 25 so out of principle we were all similar, so that has helped us a lot as well. (Jean Paul - Focus Group 3)*

Lecturers on the programme received very positive feedback and words used to describe lecturers and the programme included 'brilliant', 'kind', 'fantastic'. As already mentioned the variety of activities and methods used were seen to make the course interesting and suited the learning needs of the young people. There was a sense that the lecturers understood them and listened to them. Some young people, particularly in focus group 3, noted that lecturers would change and adapt class activities in order to meet their needs and interests. However, young people in focus group 1 seemed perplexed by the concept of student choice and said they enjoyed and completed whatever the lecturer asked them to do. This may represent an area of sociocultural learning, in terms of evaluation and students giving feedback, which may increase as they progress through the programme.

The college facilities were seen to support English language learning through access to resources and opportunities to socialise. Being able to access the library and, in particular, the use of computers and free Wi-Fi meant that students could take up a range of self-directed learning activities and complete homework.

In identifying English as their key learning objective, the young people described their high levels of motivation. While they identified a range of aspects of the programme that they found helpful for learning English, they also brought with them their own motivation and determination to succeed. This was particularly evident in the range of self-directed learning activities that students took part in which included: using English audio-visual resources (YouTube videos, TV, films, and music) in their own time, taking part in extra-curricular activities such as sports or other groups, and using English on social media sites.

## **Sociocultural learning needs**

For the young people, sociocultural needs appeared to be entangled with language needs and also with emotional and identity needs. The students wanted to 'settle in' and understand how the local society and culture operated. Again, being with other young people in a similar situation was identified as helpful in this process because they were able to help each other to understand different aspects of the local culture.

Out of class activities were identified as particularly helpful for sociocultural learning as they would often go to local museums or other areas of Scotland and, during these times, they would interact with a variety of people. One trip in particular was highlighted as very useful and showed some of the 'two-way integration' that is referred to in much of the literature and policy (cf. Ager and Strang, 2008).

*We had two, three [trips] [which] for our team-building mentality was great. But the best was...at the end of the year...to meet these Irish student...the same age, but they were quite interesting. One of them had never been in contact, I mean spending time with the asylum seekers. (Jean Paul - Focus group 3)*

Community outings were also a way of getting used to the local Glaswegian accent. This was noted by all groups as a barrier to learning English however, when mastered, it represented an achievement and a source of pride, as discussed in focus group 3.

*Researcher: ... do you use languages other than English outside of college in day-to-day life, do you use other languages?*

*Jean Paul: Glaswegian.*

*[Group laughter]*

*Researcher: Yes, I heard you say, 'How you doing man?'. Glaswegian is one yes, you sound quite proficient in Glaswegian actually.*

*Jean Paul: Expert in it.*

Part of the reason this young man had become an 'expert' in Glaswegian was from the ESOL+ programme and his involvement with different football clubs where he got to mix with young people from the local area and work with local coaches. Some of these activities were facilitated by the college while others had been sought out by the young man himself. Some of the young people expressed a desire for more integration with Scottish students at the college such as in classes like maths. They felt that this would help them to integrate and build up relationships with 'native speakers'. Others, however, were less keen on this as they felt that it would make them nervous or embarrassed by their level of English and that they would feel 'intimidated' and would worry about making mistakes.

Another area of sociocultural learning was around structure and responsibility. Although sometimes difficult at first, the young people appreciated the expectations that were placed on them during the course such as being on time and concentrating while in class. They contextualised this in terms of the lecturer caring for them and being concerned for them, as well as beginning to understand their responsibilities to themselves and others.

*When I first came here, I didn't know the purpose of time. 'Be on time', okay, I'll turn up whenever I'm ready, and it was very nice that - they would say you came late today, tomorrow, the next day. Then they would pull you out of class, and they would be like, 'What's wrong, why are you coming late? Is there a problem?' If you say it's the bus, then there is no problem, because other students get a bus as well and they're here on time. So they advise you, they tell you the importance of being on time and they help you to face the outside world, because after that I went to work and it was very important to be on time when you're working, because if you're late you're going to be sacked. So it was very important that they acknowledged that you came in late and they spoke to you after that, whereas other classes you can be like okay, whatever, you're a student, you're a grown up, it's okay. So it's very important to make the teacher following you up and seeing why you come in late, what's the problem and how - when they talk to you multiple times, it clicks as a human being. You're like, oh so it's important to come in very early and with time, that's going to help you with your education, with work, with all the different thing that you are going to do in the future. (Azad - Focus Group 3)*

## **Broader educational needs**

The participants identified that the range of activities on offer in the programme were helpful to identify their strengths and interests. This included subjects such as maths (discussed in further detail later in this report) and art. Being able to find out what they liked and what interested them, helped them to decide on pathways after finishing the course. This was greatly aided by the pastoral care offered by the teaching staff on the programme. Participants said they felt listened to and cared about when the lecturer took time to explore their interests and aspirations for the future. Lecturers offered guidance on future possibilities, encouraging students to draw upon their interests and talents that had been acquired or discovered during the course of the programme. The young people said the lecturers support, advice and encouragement gave them hope, confidence, and positively contributed to their self-esteem:

*So when I got that Teacher 1's class and build my confidence - she help me to encourage me, and she, yes. I find it here, I got the hope about the future. You can do something else, yes. I think to me that's the major difference between the 16+ and other ESOL classes, [...] They might be really good at art and when you tell them they're like, 'No, I'm not', but with time, then they get to see, oh I'm actually really good at this, maybe I should pursue this, and I enjoy it or - it gives people a view in what they would like to do maybe in the future. (Girma - Focus Group 3)*

## **Psychological/Emotional needs**

Needs such as safety, self-esteem, self-confidence, identity, and self-efficacy were identified across the focus groups. The issue of safety was prominent in the data and was often linked to the precarious legal status of the young people. Meetings with the Home Office were anxiety-provoking and had a direct impact on mental health and on the ability to learn with one student noting that he had to take 6 months out of the programme until his situation became more stable. The college was seen as a safe place for the young people where they could meet up with friends and feel protected from some of the threats that existed for them including precarious status and the threat of return to an unsafe place.

*College was kind of like a place for a safety. I just wanted to go somewhere where nobody can know I was there, because I was dealing with a lot of thing, basically with the Home Office...So that's why I came in here...Just for a place to stay [where] nobody would touch me. (Jean Paul - Focus Group 3)*

Despite this, for some young people, their precarious status could mean even coming to college was difficult. In Focus Group 3, Azad was worried about coming to college when another asylum seeker was removed by the Home Office after he had started a course with him:

*I think if, and people deal differently with this concept of safety. Like, even myself. If I don't feel safe, I won't come to, well, college is going to be the last thing...that we think of. So I think, this is one example. We started a course with one of my neighbour who were living as three in one flat in [a housing support service in Glasgow]. One of the guy, he was taken by the Home Office. Seeing that, we said, 'Oh, my God. That's, it's not worth it, to come to college'.*

Starting the course involved a level of anxiety for the young people and they discussed lacking in confidence, not knowing anybody, and worrying about whether they would be able to complete the programme. The initial assessment carried out by staff at the college was described in a positive light because it ensured the young people were assigned the appropriate class according to their level of English and were unable to begin if they did not meet the desired standard. The approach of the lecturer carrying out the assessment was described to be caring and genuine and this helped to alleviate the young people's anxieties about starting the course.



## Social needs

The importance of friendships was particularly prominent across all of the three focus groups and students appeared to have formed strong bonds with one another. Being of a similar age and in similar circumstances in terms of immigration status and English proficiency were contributory factors in the development of these bonds. Indeed, the social aspects of the course were given as reasons that it was viewed so positively.

*You wouldn't really say that about education, like, 'Oh it's a fantastic course, I love studying'. I don't know, I wouldn't say that about it, it's the experience around it, it's the friends you make, it's the little things that you do with the people that are in the actual course.* (Mary - Focus Group 3)

The young people made use of college facilities such as the café, the library and the gym for socialising; they also identified trips and extracurricular activities as helping with socialising in a more relaxed and fun way. Building friendships on the course led to other social networks where they would be introduced to other activities and communities by their peers. The relationships were important for ameliorating isolation.

*Actually, for me, I'm home alone and nobody is near, you've got no friends around. When I'm in college I least I will have my friends around me.* (Nafisa - Focus Group 2)

## Summary of focus group findings

- Learning English was the primary objective of the young people and they felt that the ESOL 16+ Programme was effective in helping them to meet this.
- The young people identified a number of aspects about the model, programme, and pedagogy that they felt contributed to the effectiveness of the programme including: the range of topics and activities in class, the teaching methods, the lecturers' personal characteristics and approach, field trips, the multi-cultural nature of the class, the age range of those enrolled in the programme, being at a similar level of English proficiency as others in the class, and a relaxed and safe learning environment.
- One of main drivers for learning English was about integration and the young people identified elements of the programme that helped with sociocultural learning including the structure and responsibility that came from attending.
- Pastoral care was seen as important in meeting the psychological and emotional needs of the young people including helping them to feel safe and to build their confidence.
- Friendships are important and there are elements of the programme that were felt to facilitate the building of these.
- Participants were positive about the new maths module and expressed interest in additional curriculum subjects.
- Students in focus groups 1 and 2 may have found it difficult to reflect on the course when they were in the process of completing it. The participants in focus group 3 had completed the programme and were able to reflect on their experience.

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## OBSERVATION OF CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

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### Teaching methodology: model, curriculum and pedagogy

The ESOL 16+ Programme is a specialist programme designed for separated children. There are two ESOL+ classes: Elementary (National 2) and Pre-Intermediate level (National 3) which run Monday-Friday from 9.15-12.15. The curriculum is underpinned by the SQA, Access 2 & 3, The Curriculum for Excellence (Scottish Government, 2017a) and GIRFEC. There are 6 curriculum topics: *my new home, my best me, heroes, celebrations, the natural world, my future and me*. The same grammar is used throughout the topics. The timings of the topics may be linked to particular days in the calendar e.g. Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks. The programme includes a variety of subject areas; creative arts, outdoor learning with the John Muir Conservation Trust and work with the Forestry Commission. This reflects the wider achievements that young people can access in addition to SCQF accreditation.

There is one in-take per year and there is more demand than there are places. The college requires 90% attendance; however if staff are aware of student having difficulties or unavoidable reasons that affect attendance they can record an authorised absence so that students are not penalised.

Students have access to a Virtual Learning Environment and a range of books that are regularly replenished; lecturers use a range of mediums such as 'Kahoot' online quiz and the Smart Board - this has the benefit of displaying handwriting, which lecturers acknowledged is important given the broader culture of electronic communication. At the time of the research, the lecturers said they are in the process of developing a complementary app that students can access on their phones. There are staff-student meetings where class representatives give feedback on behalf of the class and students' individual responses to evaluation questionnaires are discussed. A 'traffic light' feedback system is used two to three times a year and lecturers said that students' ongoing reflection about their learning styles and progress are encouraged.

Staff have the option of supervision with a clinical psychologist and they made reference to supportive internal and external networks that assisted with their own continuing professional development.

Classroom observations, as described earlier, were carried out in order for us to address the following research questions:

- 1. What are the educational and wellbeing needs of 16-18 year old separated children arriving in Scotland (entering directly into college or transitioning to college from schools with 1-2 years education)?**
- 2. To what extent does the model, curriculum and pedagogy provided by Glasgow Clyde College meet these needs?**

### Description of the classroom environment

At first glance, the two ESOL 16+ classrooms looked like any other at a Further Education college. Entering the classroom, there were chairs and desks in rows facing the lecturer's desk, computer and whiteboard, and a range of information displayed on the walls. But looking a little closer, the set-up and materials on display indicated that this was a 'home classroom' (i.e. used by a particular group of students, rather than lots of different groups). The classrooms were bright, inviting spaces.

At the back of one classroom was a large banner constructed of individual collages made by students. On the side walls were posters with animals (a topic covered in a previous lesson), flags, a map showing students' countries/areas of origin, maths symbols (plus, divide etc.) with labels translated into other languages, and 'Hello' written in the 'language of the week' plus 4-5 other languages. An article from the *Sunday National* newspaper about the ESOL 16+ Programme was displayed at the front of one of the classrooms.

## **Description of observed sessions**

The observed teaching sessions took place in the classrooms and computer suite and were comprised of individual and small group tasks, and activities with the whole class. Activities were led by the lecturers and there were opportunities for student choice and comment. The interactive whiteboard, PowerPoint and handouts were used and students were encouraged to consult with one another and use paper dictionaries. In two sessions students were given permission to use their phone and the internet on the PC to complete tasks. Materials used in the classes included: video, worksheets, discussion, making, writing, quizzes, group work, individual exercises, paper books, literature and IT.

### **Session 1: Pre-intermediate, Lecturer 4. Introduction to PowerPoint**

The lecturer speculated that some students may be late due to adverse weather. There were 13 students, 3 female, 10 male. The lecturer said that there were around 20 students in the class but it was rare for the whole class to attend due to meetings and appointments. The session took place in a computer suite.

### **Session 2: Lecturer 3 lower level elementary. Grammar**

There were 16 students in the class: 2 female and 14 male. The lecturer said there are usually 18 students. This was the second part of the morning session, and there were no late-comers.

### **Session 3: Lecturer 2, Lower level elementary. Rosa Parks/civil rights**

There were 18 students: 15 male, 3 female. None of the girls were sitting together. Some students were sitting next to other students with a shared language other than English, but there was no particular pattern.

### **Session 4: Lecturer 1, Pre-intermediate. Heroes – adjectives, describing a person's life and characteristics**

There were 16 males, 4 females (all sitting together, not divided by gender). This was the second part of the morning session, and there were no late-comers.

## **Student participation**

Students completed tasks at their own pace and level. The lecturers were responsive to the students who needed extra support by offering individual assistance. In session 2, students worked in small groups to complete a handout which included questions and words likely to be used in everyday life. Students worked together, amending, clarifying and building on their existing knowledge. They asked one another and the lecturer questions.

In all sessions, lots of positive feedback was given (e.g. *'good'* *'yes, that's right'*) and corrections were made gently with students not seeming embarrassed or ashamed if their answer was incorrect. The lecturers gave various students the option to give the answer and then there was a discussion in which the lecturer built on the example given, often with examples linked to everyday life. Lecturers gave advice on techniques to remember grammatical rules, clarified meaning and explained why certain answers were incorrect.

There was evidence of incremental learning throughout the sessions as the lecturer made links to previous learning and forthcoming work. In session 4, the task built on work they had done previously in reading about 'Heroes', and also helped them prepare for a forthcoming PowerPoint presentation, building on technical skills that had also been developed in a previous session. Students reviewed vocabulary and were given clear instruction about the next stages of the task. Making connections between activities was therefore important for students and lecturers, allowing them to note and evaluate their own progress and the way in which small group activities contribute to learning as a whole.

Across all the sessions there was a sense of students putting new words into practice, in their interactions with one another as well as formally through their engagement with the activities. The lecturers supported this process and linked words, phrases and processes to things they had learned previously. In session 4, the lecturer highlighted when new words were used *"this is a new word for us"*, this gave a sense of

encouragement, and awareness of level and collective learning. The class worked through exercises collectively and students were encouraged to pool their knowledge. There was a feeling that it was OK to make mistakes and in fact that mistakes allowed the group to engage in learning at a deeper level.

### **Examples of activities**

**Session 1:** all students participated in the task and completed it at their own pace. They completed the task and replicated the lecturer's PowerPoint slides and two slides of their own – searching for information, checking spelling and grammar, formulating short sentences, saving work. The lecturer was responsive to the students who needed extra support.

**Session 2:** students responded positively to the cognitive challenges associated with the task. The group completed the handout together, amending, clarifying and building on their existing knowledge. Students (for the most part) communicated in English, asking questions and responding to one another and the lecturer.

**Session 3:** the students had clear exercises to complete, and they spent some time on this alone and then shared answers and completed the exercise as a group via the interactive whiteboard. Students were taught new words and the lecturer made reference to things they had learned previously.

**Session 4:** the task built on previous reading about 'Heroes' and the group reviewed vocabulary from a previous session. Students were told clearly about what they would do next e.g. find pictures to complete the portrait of their chosen hero. At the end of the class the lecturer reviewed what they had done, what they had learned in the session and what they would do next. This recap emphasised a sense of progression.

### **Method, approaches and skill development**

In session 1 the lecturer showed the students a completed PowerPoint presentation, focusing on two slides showing cuisine of Scotland (haggis, neeps and tatties, fish and chips) and description about these. The students were instructed to recreate these two slides, this allowed the lecturer to show how to create a presentation, to select a particular layout, to search for and insert photos, to copy text, use bulleted lists, choose the layout, and save the work. The subsequent task was to use the skills and format provided to create two slides showing photos of two dishes from their own countries – creating new slides, and formulating descriptive sentences. The lecturer and students referred back to previous computer sessions where they had used Microsoft Word – the lecturer pointed out some of the similarities between the programmes and referred to a previous session in which they were taught to search for online images.

In session 2 students worked on completing a paper handout which was also shown on the smart board. The task was comprised of two parts: i) match the correct question type from a list of question types given (at the top of the handout) to half completed sentences, and ii) select the corresponding answer from a list of possible answers. There was individual and small group work and then the lecturer asked individual students for the answers and wrote these onto the handout (displayed on the smart board). In this way, the class worked together and problem solved as a group.

### **Expectations**

Lecturers made direct reference to expected behaviour throughout the observed sessions and 'classroom expectations' were pinned on the wall. They gave individual students attention while also maintaining a relatively quiet and engaged atmosphere in the classroom as a whole. For example, students were given time to complete tasks alone or in pairs, with the lecturer moving around between them, answering questions and reminding students in other parts of the room to focus on the task or to speak in English.

Punctuality was an important marker of lecturers' expectations and their flexibility. With the exception

of one class where bad weather had caused transport disruptions, classes started on time. One or two students were late for each class, and the lecturer acknowledged them and, if necessary, explained what had already been covered in class. At an appropriate point, for example when the class were working on tasks at their desks, the lecturer then followed up with the student privately either by asking them to step outside the classroom briefly, or by speaking to them quietly in class.

In debrief discussions with the lecturers after the observations, they noted that there was a balancing act in deciding whether or not to speak directly to students to see if they needed support or to challenge them. These decisions relied partly on lecturers' knowledge of what was happening for students outside of the classroom, with examples of students who had disclosed that they were dealing with physical or mental health difficulties, had reached critical points in their asylum application process, or were struggling more than usual. The ethical process of sharing information with external stakeholders is discussed later in the report.

The issue of indicating 'extenuating circumstances' was also informed by the lecturers' knowledge and understanding of students' reasons for lateness and absence. There were consequences of having below 90% attendance, which could affect students' entitlement to Care Experienced Student Bursary, for students who were 'looked after' and, similarly, affect asylum seekers' entitlement to a bus pass, thus limiting educational opportunities. The Scottish Funding Council (2018a: 2) indicate that:

*'...colleges are **not** expected to operate a "100% attendance" requirement and to emphasise the flexibilities that exist within SFC's attendance conditions. Specifically, the college should take into account students' wider circumstances and, as long as students are engaging in their learning, the college can allocate funding'*

During all observations, classes were completed with relatively little disruption. It is possible that the researchers' presence in the classroom may have led students to be quieter and display less strong emotions than at other times. But we also noted that students who were feeling restless seemed comfortable getting up and moving around, for example to go and fetch some water or to briefly leave the classroom. At some points the lecturer would follow up, asking why they had left or if anything was wrong, but at other times this was allowed without question. One student whose restlessness was becoming disruptive to other students was asked to help collect up the dictionaries, which he did willingly. This allowed him to get up and move around the classroom. As the lecturers acknowledged in subsequent discussions, sitting still and concentrating for long periods can be difficult for anyone, but may be particularly challenging when students are feeling anxious, overwhelmed or angry, or are either new to or have had long periods away from a classroom setting.

## **Blended learning**

There is a need for the education setting to respond to technological advances and the opportunities and challenges that they present. The use of technology was demonstrated through the use of the whiteboard and direct PowerPoint teaching, and students were allowed to use their personal mobile phones in two of the observed sessions. In session 1, students used 'Google Translate' on their phones to describe features of the food or the cooking method. A student found a YouTube video to watch the process of cooking a traditional dish from his country. The lecturer watched the video with him, discussing the tastes and cooking methods, while they translated words into English. The lecturer reminded students several times not to look at/use their phones (outside of exercises) or would say "*I hope you're using the dictionary*". Students were seen to be using social media as well as focusing on the task by looking up words. As reported in the focus group findings, students found it useful to be able to use their personal phones to check meanings and pronunciations.

In session 3, students' phones were put in a box at the front of the class at start of the session; dictionaries were available on each set of desks if they needed to look up a word. In session 4, students were allowed to use phones in this lesson to look up words – from back of the class all the visible phone use was relevant,



e.g. looking at Martin Luther King on Wikipedia, using voice software to look up the word ‘homophobia’. Lecturer 4 said that mostly students’ speaking and reading proficiencies are stronger than their writing skills and there is reluctance amongst some students to write. She said that students are familiar with texting and using the voice function through the use of translation services, which means that they do not have regular writing practice.

## Encouragement

Learning and using a new language can be exposing and practicing how to speak and understand English inevitably requires students to make mistakes. Encouragement and creating a relaxed environment are particularly important in this context. Our notes made during the observations include words such as ‘friendly’, ‘respectful’, ‘patient’, ‘understanding’, ‘responsive’ to describe lecturers’ interactions with students. Lecturers offered regular encouragement by smiling, nodding and occasional gentle teasing, and frequently used students’ names. When students made a mistake, lecturers corrected them gently. There were very few moments when the lecturers were not directly engaged with students, either individually or as a whole class. One measure of students’ engagement in the classroom is that in all sessions students volunteered to come to the front of the class to use the whiteboard, to read aloud or respond to the lecturers’ questions.

The encouragement of the lecturer and consolidation of existing knowledge could contribute to students’ sense of wellbeing and confidence in English. Familiarity was also exercised in terms of the lecturer’s knowledge of individual student needs and the relationship between students and lecturers. In session 2, following small group work on a handout, a student volunteered an answer to the class, which was incorrect. He said: “*everything is wrong*” and crossed out the answers he had written. The lecturer acknowledged that the task was difficult and that some grammatical formations are “*just difficult to know*”. This may be associated with the focus group findings in which students acknowledged that they felt comfortable with others who were “*in the same situation*” – not just in relation to being separated children, but in relation to the relatively early stages of learning a new language.

## Making links with students’ lives

In the debrief, a lecturer said that there is a mini library at the back of the classroom and some of the sessions include quiet reading to help students “*calm down*”. She said that some students had adopted this practice and would pick up books, and opt to have quiet time. She hoped students would continue this practice at home.

The lecturers illustrated words or concepts by giving examples relevant to the students’ lives in clear and straightforward English.

- Examples were given to illustrate words that were relevant to students’ lives: spending time with friends, getting a driver’s licence.
- Activities and discussions were based around Glasgow, Scotland, the UK: for example, learning about justice systems or symbols of Glasgow.
- Activity related to food – learning about Scottish food but also students using examples from their countries of origin to make their PowerPoint presentations.
- Examples of people for the ‘Heroes’ activity included people from around the world and contemporary examples.
- Discussion touched on topics about the treatment of older people and the possibility that older people may be treated better in students’ countries of origin than in Scotland.

### Examples linked to everyday circumstances

**Session 2:** The lecturer spotted grammatical errors on the handout and explained these to the group. This example may give students the message that anyone can make mistakes and even ‘professional’ forms may contain errors. It also gave the message that students could challenge the lecturer, and that students should use their knowledge and skills to spot such errors.

**Session 3:** The lecturer gave examples that were linked to their own lives – e.g. explaining ‘give up’, she used the example that sometimes life is difficult and you might want to just curl up in your bed and pull the covers over you (she acted this out).

**Session 4:** Lecturer used examples to help students guess unfamiliar words e.g. ‘reliable’ – she used an example that student X is meeting her friend student Y (using names of real students in class) at 10am and the student will be there at 10am because he is ‘reliable’. ‘Determined’ – X was determined to pass his driving test so he kept learning.

The relevance to everyday situations and cultural connections appear to be ways for the lecturers to acknowledge relevance and move from abstract to connect to real-world knowledge. This is summarised by the lecturer during the debrief, who said: “...*we teach for their lives, not the curriculum*” (Lecturer 1).

### Care in (and beyond) the classroom

There was a sense of familiarity amongst students and lecturers. Students were referred to by name and in each class the lecturer walked around the room to make sure they could be seen and contacted. Lecturers demonstrated familiarity with the learning needs of the young people individually and as a group as a whole. This knowledge and skill was not only in relation to facilitating students to learn English, but also in their understanding and knowledge of key processes and the related emotions that they experienced in relation to applying for asylum, managing finances and dealing with other professional groups. One striking aspect during the observations was what happened beyond the teaching. After one class, a number of students were waiting to see the lecturer for various reasons; seeking help to apply for the bursary for care experienced students, support to liaise with student services, and a personal statement request from a former student. This observation links to the focus groups as students talked about the helpful nature of the lecturers and the data from telephone interviews with stakeholders, who referred to lecturers going “*above and beyond*” to meet student’s needs, while paying attention to young people’s broader needs.

### Examples of caring

- Caring was displayed amongst the class members as they used their own initiative to support others.
- The lecturer and students listened to one another. Turn-taking amongst students was evident and there were very few interruptions.
- In small group work students appeared to be considerate to one another by listening and working together to agree on answers.
- Students were asked to place their phones at the front of the class during the lesson to reduce distraction (from speaking with the lecturer afterwards, some students told her they like this as it helps them concentrate).

## Relationships

It appeared that the care demonstrated by lecturers lay the groundwork for relationships of trust to be built. In the debrief the lecturers said that a lot of time is spent on one-to-one guidance and this is where really valuable information comes out, which helps them to build an understanding of the students' learning needs and the contextual issues that may affect this process. They emphasised that the relationship-building takes time, as some young people are very mistrustful of adults and professionals. Lecturer 1 said that one difference with social workers/Guardians is that students do not have to share personal information with lecturers and they have a choice about whether or not to make disclosures.

In addition, lecturers described additional work that had gone into supporting students' peer relationships. The New Young Peers Scotland project (NYPS, nd) was set up in 2017 by the college, Ypeople (a support charity working with young people) and Glasgow City Council social work department. The 'new young peers' are a group of current and former students from the ESOL 16+ programme who meet weekly at the college. The project has carried out a number of different activities, including supporting the young people to develop a 'First Aid Mental Health' kit with materials available in a range of different languages. A number of students on the programme also attend the activity evenings held twice a week at the Scottish Guardianship project, which allows them to spend time with and build friendships with other separated children including those not on the ESOL 16+ programme.

## Summary of observation findings

The key themes from the observations were: **care, teaching and learning relevant to everyday life, support in and out of the classroom, clear expectations.**

- The physical learning environment was personalised with student artwork and images that represented their identities. Classroom material was varied and lecturers' active contributions and attentiveness meant that all students were engaged in tasks and activities.
- Careful planning and preparation was noted. For example, in the 'Heroes' exercise, there was awareness that not all heroes are universal and may be contested within the group.
- Lecturers had knowledge of ongoing difficulties and challenges in students' lives and were aware of how this may affect engagement.
- Clear expectations and the facilitation of peer support, aids not only English language development and future learning or employment trajectory, but also supports students' wellbeing in terms of settling into a new society. This included cultural knowledge of Scotland and the UK, an awareness of global and political events and circumstances, human rights, identity development and emotional support, and connections with organisations and groups.

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## TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS

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### Programme stakeholders

We interviewed five stakeholders: a manager and a keyworker for two separate housing providers, a psychologist whose remit includes working with separated children and supporting teaching professionals, a Guardian from the Scottish Guardianship Service, and a lecturer who co-developed the maths module for the ESOL 16+ Programme.

A recurring theme across the five interviews with stakeholders was the relationships with lecturers. These relationships were highly valued for their consistency and continuity. When asked what they thought worked particularly well about the ESOL 16+ Programme, interviewees highlighted that lecturers had created an environment that was comfortable, accepting and secure for young people. Their commitment to the young people and interest in their lives were felt to be genuine. This supportive approach applied

equally for students who were struggling. One interviewee gave an example of a young person who found language learning particularly difficult, and had now reached the end of the funding available for her to attend the ESOL 16+ Programme. Although it seemed likely the young person would have to move to another programme, the interviewee described lecturers as having gone “*above and beyond*” to support the young person and, ultimately, try to find alternatives for her.

Interviewees indicated high levels of trust in the lecturers. As a result, they felt comfortable contacting lecturers to ensure young people received adequate support. This was especially important during periods where young people were at critical points in their asylum claim and/or experiencing distress. Sometimes stakeholders helped young people to do this themselves, for example, by sitting with them while they called the lecturer to explain if they would be absent due to an appointment or meeting. At other times interviewees described using their professional judgement to share information without breaking confidentiality, for example to let the lecturer know that a young person needed time off for medical care, without going into further details. One organisation had a member of staff who met with lecturers every six months for updates on young people’s progress, but generally stakeholders described communication taking place as and when it was required.

The stakeholders’ perspectives were underpinned by what they had observed and been told by young people who were on, or who had completed the programme. Interviewees noted that because young people generally enjoyed the programme and had good relationships with the lecturers, this helped them to sustain their engagement and progress in education.

*We see that when we go to visit and all the young people have kind words about [the programme]. They say the lecturers are fun, they enjoy it, they’re nice. (Interview 3)*

Interviewees were generally not aware of the detail of teaching methodology, and so did not comment on the curriculum or pedagogy. However, the mixture of activities and the teaching approaches were felt to benefit students, by taking account of students’ individual learning needs and circumstances. Educational progress was also linked to broader positive outcomes, in particular confidence and social integration.

*The benefits of [the programme] for our young guys are not just about speaking English, not just about words and sentences – but also social skills, confidence building. Being able to communicate a wee bit helps to instill a sense of confidence and achievement for young people. The outcome isn’t just about being able to speak English, it’s about more than that. (Interview 1)*

Two interviewees highlighted the assessment process for students entering the college, as young people’s learning capabilities are individually assessed by the Principal Lecturer. As one interviewee described it, “...rather than just shoe-horning young people onto the courses that need to be filled or are available” (Interview 1), young people are tested for the level that would suit them. Lecturers were seen as flexible and accommodating. If there were no places available at the time of assessment, they would “*find a way to find a space*” on another course initially, to help students get used to the college environment before starting on the ESOL 16+ Programme at the next available opportunity.

One interviewee suggested that more places should be made available on the ESOL 16+ Programme, while recognising that numbers were likely limited due to practical and financial constraints.

## **Programme development**

The lecturers referred to a number of ongoing initiatives and developments of the Programme, one on which was a new maths module (linked to SQA Access Level 3). Although previous students had attended maths classes elsewhere in the college, with mixed experience, this was the first time a maths module developed for separated children had been included directly in the ESOL 16+ programme. It had been incorporated into the existing teaching time and thus ESOL teaching had been re-arranged to accommodate this addition.

The module focused mostly on numeracy and had been introduced in the current year of teaching. All students were screened at the beginning of term using a mix of questions involving words (for example, write this number in words) and numbers and students were divided into two groups according to ability. Young people's overall level of language did not necessarily correlate with their existing level of maths, and both aspects needed to be taken into account.

The maths lecturer highlighted the links between language and learning other subjects. Students need to be able to retain vocabulary used in previous lessons in order to understand concepts taught in subsequent lessons, so vocabulary revision needs to be regularly included in lesson-planning. The lecturers were using the same approach for maths as the other two modules within the ESOL 16+ Programme, by making links with the students' lives. For example, an upcoming lesson on bar charts was to use data from the students' experiences on the John Muir Award scheme, so the information would already be familiar and meaningful to them. Students had also made connections with previous experiences of previous learning (for example, remembering how many days each month has by using their knuckles and the spaces in between).

Learning numeracy – or for some, re-learning it in a new language – is important not only in itself but to meet the entry requirements for the general education programme that some students move onto after completing the ESOL 16+ Programme. The lecturer felt that important insights had been gained within the first year of teaching. For example, students with higher levels of maths may still need to acquire specific vocabulary, and some find this frustrating. In the focus groups, students spoke positively about the maths module, with reference to a student from the ESOL 16+ group who had gained the highest score on record in the college.

### **After the ESOL 16+ Programme**

As noted earlier in the report, young people had developed relationships with the lecturers and with each other, and felt secure within the environment created at the college and within their class group. As a result, one stakeholder highlighted that leaving the ESOL 16+ Programme was a difficult transition for some young people.

Interviewees reported a range of anecdotal outcomes for young people who had completed the programme. Some had moved on to further or Higher Education, including achieving HNDs and degrees. One interviewee stressed that the “*vast majority*” of ESOL 16+ students were keen to find employment, and their motivation to learn English was to enable them to begin earning money. Some young people whom interviewees had worked with preferred to keep their future plans private. Others were keen to use any available sources of support to help find future opportunities for education or work.

One interviewee noted that students who engage with the programme often “*flourish*” and the lecturers can help them to identify and apply for subsequent courses. Careers advice for all students would be welcomed, although interviewees were clear that this was not the primary responsibility of lecturers.



## Summary of findings from programme stakeholders

- Interviewees indicated that young people's wellbeing needs were addressed as a core rather than secondary aspect of the ESOL 16+ Programme, and that this made it distinctive compared to other provision for separated children, such as mainstream education and community ESOL classes. In this respect, stakeholders' perspectives on the programme echoed young people's descriptions in the focus groups.
- Lecturers' commitment to young people was widely praised, and in particular their knowledge and understanding of young people's circumstances and how these might influence behaviour and attainment.
- Benefits for students were described as interlinked: positive experiences in the classroom led to improved language skills, which helped increase young people's confidence and ability to engage socially outside of the classroom.
- The inclusion of the maths module had further developed the ESOL 16+ Programme and was largely described as successful by both the students and the lecturers. As students' language and other subject abilities were not necessarily congruent, additional assessments and screening had been required.
- Information about what young people did after they had left the programme was mostly anecdotal. Some young people were known to have moved on to Further or Higher Education or to find work, but stakeholders described some individuals who had faced difficulties.

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## PROFESSIONALS IN AREAS WITH SMALLER POPULATIONS OF SEPARATED CHILDREN

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Telephone interviews were conducted with professionals involved with the support and education of separated children in four Local Authorities that have substantially smaller populations (all less than 20) of this group than Glasgow. In one of these authorities the research team conducted interviews with both Further Education (FE) and Social Work professionals, while in another an interview with a Social Work professional and a written response from an FE Education professional were obtained. In one authority interviews were carried out with two school-based Education professionals and the final authority provided a written response from Social Work. A thematic analysis was carried out using the notes researchers made from audio recordings of the interviews.

Across all of the interviews and written responses, the interviewees identified a range of benefits and challenges that were created by virtue of having such small populations of separated children. Having a small population of separated children meant that those involved in their education and support were able to develop knowledge and awareness of the entire group. Participants from these areas felt this brought benefits in terms of making appropriate connections between different group members and other young people in order to build peer and community support networks. It also made trips and other sociocultural learning events easier to organise and promote. One Education professional felt that it had benefits in terms of learning English because the separated children tended to integrate more quickly with the general college population as there were no opportunities to sit within other language groups.

Local partnerships have developed between services in some of the authorities, which has allowed them to adapt generic and specialist services to try and meet the needs of the separated children in their area. For example, in one authority ESOL is available from a range of providers depending on the level and availability of the students. The local FE college, Youth Services, and Voluntary Organisations all contribute to this provision and a Social Work professional (with a specific remit in relation to separated children) now co-ordinates this to prevent overlap. This means that they can select from a range of courses depending on the young person's needs and they can provide ESOL at a range of levels with additional elements such as numeracy and social development. A similar arrangement was in place in another authority, which also had dedicated Social Work provision for separated children. The professionals in both of these authorities noted a commitment to separated children at the institutional level, hence they had dedicated teams or

professionals that were able to co-ordinate the different aspects of educational and support services in their areas.

Unfortunately, this was not the case in all areas and professionals in one authority area felt that there was a lack of co-ordination, training, and guidance in relation to separated children. While they had been able to work with some separated children to effect good outcomes, this appeared largely down to personal commitment on their part and a process of *“figuring things out as they went along”* (such as immigration processes). Where there were small numbers of separated children, there also tended to be small numbers of service staff who had experience working with them. This meant staff could feel somewhat isolated and were lacking adequate peer and other support structures in relation to the specific issues they were dealing with.

Another challenge for these Local Authorities was the draw of the bigger cities for the young people. Commonly, young people were travelling to Glasgow or Edinburgh in order to access community resources such as particular churches or mosques, or to attend groups and events. Practical and financial support was on offer to the young people to help facilitate their engagement in these activities though often the young people expressed a desire to move to the city rather than commute. It was also raised that the young people are sometimes required to travel to the cities for specialist services such as legal advice. It was noted by one professional in particular that they had some good local specialist services available such as in health or law, but that these were precarious. It was typically one individual who provided this and should they become ill, or leave for another post for example, then this service would be lost at least in the short term.

### **Summary of findings from professionals in areas with smaller populations of separated children**

- There are both benefits and challenges to working with smaller populations of separated children from a professional point of view.
- Interviewees felt that flexible collaborations and partnerships can be effective at meeting the needs of the population within the context of limited resources.
- Having access to a network of professionals working with separated children may be useful in accessing information, guidance, and support.

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## EDUCATION FOR SEPARATED CHILDREN IN OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

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Of the international contacts interviewed, only one other (in Germany) provided a specialist course for separated young people as their main source of education, rather than a course designed to supplement other school/college courses. Further examples from Italy and Greece are included to give examples of other contexts within Europe, and to identify where different approaches converged in relation to their aims and activities undertaken to meet separated children's education and well-being needs. The interviews with international participants focused on the following three models that included targeted, supplementary and interim education provision for separated children.

**GERMANY:** a specialist college course for separated children in a vocational college in Nuremberg. Students are generally aged between 14 and 18 years, and undertake two years of German language, followed by a year of 'professional orientation' to prepare them for vocational courses or further work-based training. The third year focuses on identifying young people's strengths and weaknesses, exploring options and preparing them to attend vocational training (which can last another 2 – 3 years).

The course was developed specifically for separated children, starting in 2012. In 2015, there were 40 classes of between 25 and 30 students, although numbers have dropped since then. Classes take place every morning from Monday to Friday. In the first and second years of language training, the classes are only for separated children (and a small number of other refugee children). During the third year, separated children are in mixed classes alongside German students.

**ITALY:** an experimental socio-educational model of supplementary education projects for separated children in seven different schools across Emilia-Romagna, a region in Northern Italy. By law, separated children should attend secondary school with their Italian peers but most attend Italian language courses with adult migrants. The language courses are designed for a wider population, which makes planning for separated children and their individual needs difficult. These socio-educational projects are offered for separated children as supplementary courses in schools.

The project includes language, creative and practical components. They aim to allow children space to express themselves and use creative and practical activities that may be useful for social development and employability. The inclusion of varied topics was said to reveal individual's previously unidentified talents, such as photography. An evaluation of these projects has been published (cf. Augelli, Lombi and Triani, 2018).

**GREECE:** a model of preparatory and supplementary education for young migrants living in a refugee camp in Athens, including a minority of separated children. The project aims to build education activities incrementally to prepare children for attending school in Greece (including behaviour management and adjusting to classroom environment) or to help support their learning once they are attending school.

Activities for 16+ age group include homework club, run every day and staffed by volunteers, and 'Team Time' discussion group. 'Team Time' topics are suggested by young people and also include opportunities to learn about Greek society and to 'let off steam' about daily experiences. Camp residents have been closely involved in developing services and some young people have gone on to volunteer on the project.

From the interview data, and the international practice identified in the literature review (Rydin et al, 2011; Pastoor, 2015; Augelli, Lombi and Triani, 2018; Borsch, Skovdal and Jervelund, 2019), the following themes were identified in relation to education and support for separated children in the 16+ age group.

- **Relationships:** All three interviewees cited the importance of teachers/lecturers with a high level of commitment to, and empathy with, separated young people, with two noting that not all teachers would have the values and attributes to fulfil this specific role. In addition, teamwork between colleagues and with external stakeholders was important. Support from colleagues helped sustain teachers when difficulties arose and provided a means to share learning. External networks helped to draw in additional skills and experience to support young people. For example, in Germany, teachers were closely involved with finding vocational training or work-based training opportunities for young people after they had finished the Programme. The classroom is more than a place where students learn languages or other subjects; it is also where wider **socio-cultural learning** takes place. Young people may need to (re)learn to work together with individuals or in a group or be (re)introduced to boundaries around communication, time and behaviour towards others. This type of learning takes time. One interviewee suggested that one good class cannot be expected to undo a year or more of trauma. The importance of socio-cultural learning was also highlighted by students in the focus groups for our study.
- **Individual planning** with young people helped educators to understand their previous experiences of education, their current levels of languages/other subjects and their goals for the future. It also enabled teachers and other professionals to recognise young people's strengths and abilities. Again, this theme was replicated in the focus groups for this project, as well as interviews with stakeholders of the ESOL 16+ programme.
- There were clear advantages to education and support designed specifically to meet separated children's needs. However, this also meant that opportunities for young people to spend time and make friends with **peers in the local community** could be somewhat limited. In Italy, many of the young people lived in residential care facilities with other separated children, and their education was also with other migrants: either adults in Italian language classes, or other separated children on the supplementary courses. Young people had expressed a desire to be able to meet and make friends with Italian peers, echoing the findings from our focus groups with young people in Glasgow.
- Sustaining **consistency and continuity** allowed programmes to develop and staff to gain experience in supporting separated children, but this had proved challenging in some contexts. For example, in Italy, some courses that had worked well had stopped or been suspended due to short-term funding. In Greece, some parts of the project relied heavily on volunteers, who often changed every month or so, creating another transition for young people to navigate. In Germany, as with the ESOL 16+ Programme, continuity over a period of years had allowed teachers to build on previous experience and develop wider support networks, such as links with potential employers.

# DISCUSSION

In the discussion we bring together the findings from the data collected from young people, stakeholder professionals, education professionals working in other parts of Scotland and internationally, and then seek to integrate these findings with themes from the literature review and relevant law, policy and procedures to address the research questions. We also offer recommendations based on the findings from this research.

## **Meeting the educational and wellbeing needs of separated children aged 16-18 years**

The data collected on the educational and wellbeing needs of separated children in this study echo findings from research identified in the literature review. The importance of learning the host language (in this case English) is a recurring topic in the literature and was clearly identified in focus groups with young people and across the range of interviews. Learning English was the primary objective of the young people interviewed in the focus groups and they felt that the ESOL 16+ Programme was effective in helping them to achieve this. The variety of curriculum subjects and pedagogical methods allowed students to engage in a wide range of activities and to develop friendships, which helped to facilitate students' sense of wellbeing. Pastoral care and dedicated support from the lecturers was seen as important in meeting the psychological and emotional needs of the young people including helping them to feel safe, to build their confidence, and think and plan for the future. The observation data highlight various pedagogical methods used on the programme to achieve this objective, which were reviewed positively by young people. Stakeholders also commented on observing young people's English skills and their confidence develop through attending the programme, and how this enabled broader social engagement outside the classroom.

Prominent among the factors that supported learning was the level of care shown to students by the lecturers. The young people noticed this from their first contact with the lecturer when having their English levels assessed before beginning on the course, and many stated that the caring attitude of the lecturers was a key feature of the programme. Stakeholders recognised the commitment of lecturers to their students and that they often go "*above and beyond*" for them. During observations the level of care and the relationships lecturers had built with young people were evident. There also appears to be a supportive network for lecturers on the programme, who have contact with a psychologist and access supervision and training, for example trauma-training, to help them to process their own feelings in relation to their work with separated children.

A theme to emerge from both focus group and observation data is that care can be demonstrated through flexibility and nurture, but also through responsibility and structure. While lecturers were seen to be flexible, caring, and responsive to individual needs and experiences, they also required students to take responsibility for their learning such as being on time and actively participating in the class. This balance, which involved skilled judgement, contributed positively to meeting the young people's needs across all of the categories identified.

The importance of the pastoral care points to the fact that the psychosocial needs of the students need to be taken into account, which is reflected in the ecological systems approach to wellbeing adopted by the Scottish Government (2012) and the range of the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators. The wider psychological and social needs of separated children are frequently discussed in the literature and by participants in this study. Indeed, in the data collected here, the focus on learning English is for the purpose of adjusting and settling in their new country where new relationships are made and new social and cultural norms have to be navigated. The classroom environment and the range of in-class activities made the course interesting and relevant to the young people while also meeting some of their psychosocial needs. Young people in all three focus groups talked about how much they liked to work in pairs and in groups because this



gave them the opportunity to help each other and to develop friendships. The young people were able to express their own sense of identity and history in class through presentations and interest from lecturers, about the culture in their country of origin, and some of this was illustrated on a map on the wall of the home classrooms. The lecturers facilitated a learning environment where the young people felt safe to make mistakes and to enjoy the tasks that they were set. They received a lot of encouragement and were frequently reminded of their progress.

Being a targeted programme brought benefits in terms of meeting the social needs of the young people including tailoring the content to the student's age and stage of development. The fact that they were all of similar age and had shared experience of seeking asylum as young people without family appeared to contribute to the ease with which they developed friendships, and to the strength of those friendships.

Understanding that each child or young person will have individual needs and strengths is a theme in the literature and the ESOL 16+ Programme appeared to be effective in this area. Initial assessments ensured students in each class were at a similar level of English proficiency and the lecturers took time to get to know each young person, adapting activities to meet different needs and interests, while maintaining awareness of age appropriate content and culturally sensitive content. The lecturers communicated regularly with staff from other agencies and were aware of circumstances outwith college such as the immigration processes that the young people were engaged in. This meant that they were able to offer support or adjust their approach depending on the needs of students at particular points in time.

In addition to in-class activities, the programme includes a range of out-of-class activities such as trips to museums, parks, or other areas of Scotland. These activities were reviewed very positively by the young people who felt that this helped with learning English and with developing their understanding of the local environment. These activities also provided further opportunities for them to develop friendships with each other and with other groups that they interacted with.

The trusted relationships with lecturers and the development of friendships with each other created a college environment where the young people felt safe. Safety was a particularly prized commodity given that other areas of life could feel precarious. Data from focus groups, observations, and from stakeholder interviews suggest that this safe and caring environment provides a base from which young people can build their confidence, self-esteem, and their social networks.

Finally, it is important to recognise that transitions in the lifecourse, from late adolescence to early adulthood as well as the experience of leaving a particular programme can be difficult for all students. As discussed earlier, separated children have experiences that are shared with other children and those that arise from their specific circumstances (cf. Kohli, 2006). As with other children and adults who have experienced loss, endings and transitions can be difficult and need to be carefully planned and managed (cf. Seden, 2005; SWIA, 2006).

## **International good practice**

Based on the data gathered about the ESOL 16+ Programme, interviews with education professionals working in other European countries with separated children and review of the literature helped us to identify a number of aspects of good practice.

The most prominent theme was relationships, in three particular ways. First, lecturers' commitment to working with separated young people and ability to engage with the reality of their lives were fundamental. Second, supportive relationships with other teaching colleagues, both within and between institutions, helped teaching practice to develop and adapt over time. Third, good relationships with staff in external organisations across a range of disciplines helped to ensure there was integrated and joined-up support for young people. In the example of Nuremberg, this included particularly strong links with employers and training to provide young people with potential pathways following the programme.

Separated children's broader needs also have to be taken into account, for example in designing curricula with topics and examples relevant to students' lives. Socio-cultural learning is an important aspect of pedagogy for separated children to help them understand their new country and local communities. Students may need time to adapt to or re-acquaint themselves with classroom-based teaching, and a teaching approach that recognises the practical and emotional realities of their lives, including the effects of mental health difficulties, and how traumatic experiences and the anxiety provoked by the asylum process and other systemic and contextual barriers may affect their engagement and attainment. Educators need to be able to maintain expectations within the learning environment, while being flexible around the potential for disruptions to students' learning, for example allowing students to take breaks during teaching and to attend appointments.

Alongside this, opportunities to build friendships, both with classroom peers and in the local community, should be included. In Glasgow, the New Young Peers Scotland project and the activity groups offered by the Guardianship Service enabled young people to build strong peer networks. As highlighted in the focus groups, activities that helped them to meet peers in the local community, were also welcomed by young people.

Individual planning with separated children should take account of their personal histories and current circumstances, as well as their strengths, potential and aspirations. This can be particularly complex given that many young people are subject to on-going asylum processes and uncertainty about the future. However, lecturers' knowledge of individual circumstances was cited frequently as an important contributor to students' enjoyment of and success in learning. Finally, support is needed to allow lecturing staff on education programmes for separated children to access networks and to gain confidence in developing and adapting specialist programmes to meet young people's needs.

### **Additional requirements to meet separated children's needs**

In addition to personal commitment from lecturers, the programme and the staff are supported by the college structures and work alongside a range of other professionals and organisations. Because of this, lecturers have the opportunity to develop informal and formal support networks and this has direct benefits to the students as well as lecturers. It is important that continued support is offered to enable lecturing staff to gain experience, develop and expand programmes around young people's needs and to build networks that will support students' broader needs.

The future trajectories of students, whether they move on to work, vocational training, Further or Higher Education, are influenced by a range of variables, including the decisions made about young people's asylum claims. Although stakeholders suggested that career advice for separated children would be welcomed, they acknowledged that this is an area that goes beyond the remit of any individual teaching programme. There is work underway that would usefully inform further exploration of this, including the 15-24 Learner Journey Review, the National Youth Work Strategy (Education Scotland, 2014) and the Developing the Young Workforce (2014-2021) (Education Scotland, nd) work programme.

While English language is recognised as a key means to integration, education, and wellbeing, it is important to recognise the value of the maintenance and development of young people's home languages and the opportunities to practice these in order to celebrate multilingualism in Scotland. In terms of the key literature Ager and Strang (2004; 2008) make the case that integration is a two-way process in which all peoples ought to change in relation to each other and this is echoed in the New Scots strategy (2018). This orientation may be useful for education providers to critically consider how the programme and wider educational institution can adapt to separated children, to ensure students feel equal and valued members of the learning community and that integration is a two-way process.

A limitation of this research is that we were not able to explore in depth students' pathways after completing, or for some withdrawing from, the ESOL 16+ Programme. Former students who participated in the focus groups were drawn from those who were in contact with either the college or the Scottish Guardianship

Service. The quantitative data available on students' pathways was limited. From stakeholders' anecdotal accounts, they were aware of students who had "*flourished*" and a small minority who had struggled, mostly due to other circumstances that made it difficult to engage with learning.

### **Adopting the model in areas with smaller populations of separated children**

Collaborations and partnerships can be effective in meeting the needs of separated children, although our findings underline the importance of specialist knowledge and experience. For education staff who are new to working with separated children and/or working with small groups, access to a network of professionals working with separated children may be useful in accessing information, guidance, and support. As well as ESOL teaching skills and knowledge, educators may benefit from up-to-date knowledge of broader issues such as law and policy changes and their potential impact on students. The importance of lecturers' skills and knowledge to support students appropriately was highlighted from multiple perspectives within this research. In addition to teaching, lecturers provided individual pastoral care for students, provided guidance to colleagues within the college and liaised with external partners. Sufficient time needs to be given within lecturers' work schedules to carry out these tasks, and appropriate supervision and support provided that recognises the types of issues they will be dealing with.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## **Recommendations: to meet separated children's educational and wellbeing needs**

- The systems in place to support children's well-being and education should be flexible enough to cater to separated children's specific needs as well as the needs they share with other children. This approach is necessary to accord with GIRFEC's commitments to children and young people, as well as the two-way approach to integration that underpins the New Scots Integration Strategy (Scottish Government, 2018a), and is supported by previous research (Ager and Strang, 2004, 2008; Kohli, 2007). Our research identified examples of potential barriers that seemed at odds with these policy aims, including in relation to college attendance, funding for education and other vital financial support to ensure separated children can access education and learning opportunities.
- Further research and work should be undertaken to better understand students' pathways and long-term integration after completing or withdrawing from the ESOL 16+ Programme or other courses in Scotland. This includes exploring the availability and provision of careers advice and related support for separated children.

## **At Glasgow Clyde College**

- Glasgow Clyde College could consider seeking to collect additional data on separated children's destinations after the ESOL 16+ Programme, in addition to the standard data collected for all students. The purpose of this would be to understand if young people are getting appropriate support after completing the programme, rather than solely recording destinations.
- At appropriate points in the ESOL 16+ curriculum, previous students' progress and their varied destinations at the end of the programme could be highlighted.
- The ESOL 16+ programme provides a breadth of opportunities for formal and non-formal learning opportunities and accreditation. Students spoke highly about the new maths (numeracy) module and extra-curricular activities. Additional subject based learning, such as science, technology, engineering and maths related subjects, in line with the Scottish Government's STEM Education and Training Strategy for Scotland (Scottish Government, 2017b), should be explored. This approach should be an expansion to the current programme rather than replacing modules that have been shown to work well.

## **Recommendations: to adopt the model in areas with smaller populations of separated children**

The *ESOL 16+ Routes to Learning* materials being developed in work package 2 (Ma and Richardson, 2019) are available as part of the broader project. Additionally we recommend that support should be offered in the form of training for educators. This could include how the materials can be used and adapted for different situations, but also draw on learning from the ESOL 16+ Programme about meeting separated children's sociocultural needs, psychological/emotional needs and social needs.

A forum for educators working with separated children would provide a useful basis for practitioners to engage in critical reflexive discussion, to share good practice and up-to-date information about changes in legislation, policy or practice that affect separated children. This type of practitioner peer support could make a substantial difference, particularly for practitioners who are new to working with separated children. It would also allow opportunities for practitioners who have built up expertise in working with smaller groups of separated children in less multi-culturally diverse environments to share their knowledge and learning. Existing education networks, such as the Regional Improvement Collaborations, offer a potential route for taking this recommendation forward.

As the *ESOL 16+ Routes to Learning* documents will be freely available, it is worth considering whether other professions working and caring for separated children could benefit from using these to help them support young people's learning. Since separated children are 'looked after' by the local authority, this includes social workers, carers (host families, residential workers, foster carers) as well as specialist workers such as Guardians.



# CONCLUSION

Education is a right for all children and an essential service to meet children's wellbeing needs. The ESOL 16+ Programme at Glasgow Clyde College is a good quality example of specialist education for separated children. The experience of educators, infrastructure support, and established networks with partner agencies enable the college to offer a programme that is effective in meeting the language and wellbeing needs of students. The focus on English language and opportunity to practice in a range of settings beyond the classroom provides a useful way for students to gain confidence and proficiency and this enables them to develop friendships with other English language speakers.

The research has underlined the extent to which education and wellbeing needs are inter-related for separated children, and that they coalesce around four main areas: education-language, socio-cultural learning, psychological/emotional, and social. In order to address these needs, different groups of stakeholders highlighted the importance of building relationships (including the commitment of lecturers working with separated children, teamwork between colleagues, and working with external networks); recognising sociocultural learning as part of education; individual work with and planning for young people; providing or connecting to opportunities to meet peers in their local communities; and sustaining consistency and continuity to enable programmes to develop and staff to gain experience in supporting separated children.

Overall, our findings emphasise how the value of education reaches beyond developing language proficiency. Positive experiences of education can be transformational. As one young person described, reflecting on the impact of the programme: *'I didn't have any hope what was going to happen for my future ... I find it here, I got the hope about the future.'*

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# APPENDIX 1:

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## PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (FOCUS GROUPS)

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### We are researchers from the University of Stirling

Siân Lucas; Maggie Grant; Andrew Burns.

### What is the research about?

- We are working on research about the 16+ ESOL programme at Glasgow Clyde College. We want to find out about how young asylum seekers and refugees learn English - what helps you to learn, what doesn't help and how you feel about it.
- This research is for people to understand about teaching English to young asylum seekers and refugees. It is important to understand this so colleges can help other young people who are arriving in the UK and other countries.
- The funders are Glasgow Clyde College and Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

### FOCUS GROUPS

Andrew and Siân will talk to three groups of students and ex-students. We will ask about your experiences at college, what helped you, what could be better and what you would like to do in the future.

We will record the focus group. They will be transcribed and then we will destroy the recording. We won't write down your names or other things that might identify you. If we are worried about anything you tell us we will talk to Lyn or Mercedes.

### Information about you (Personal data)

We will collect information about:

- Your age
- Your gender
- Which country you come from (and your ethnic group)
- Who helps you (social worker, key worker) – but not their names

We will follow the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) so the information about you is confidential.

### After the research

- We will write reports and do presentations about the things you and other people told us.
- Other people will read the reports, but they won't know your name or be able to identify you.
- We can send you a copy of the report if you want one.

## Your Rights

- You can chose not to be in the focus group.
- You can leave the focus group at any time. We won't ask you why. You can also have a break.
- If you change your mind after the research please tell Lyn or Mercedes within **one week**.
- If you are worried about anything to do with the research you can talk to Lyn or Mercedes.
- We will give you a £10 voucher to say thank you.
- Thank you. If you have any questions you can contact Sian Lucas *s.e.lucas@stir.ac.uk*, 01786 467980
- Please take a copy of this presentation and the consent form.
- Please tell Lyn or Mercedes if you have any complaints. They can talk to people at the university.

# APPENDIX 2

## CONSENT FORM (YOUNG PEOPLE)

Participant number: \_\_\_\_\_

### Project title: Towards Best Practice in Educating and Supporting Separated Children in Scotland

	Please tick box
<i>I have understood the information about the research project and asked any questions I had.</i>	
<i>I understand I can leave the focus group at any time and I don't have to say why.</i>	
<i>If I change my mind I will tell Lyn or Mercedes (my teacher) within one week.</i>	
<i>I understand that the researchers will write reports about the things I and other people say.</i>	
<i>I understand that the researchers will not use my name or other identifying information.</i>	
<i>I agree for the focus group to be recorded and transcribed.</i>	
<i>I understand that my personal details will be safely stored by the researchers during the project.</i>	
<i>I agree that if the researchers are worried about anything I tell them they will speak to Lyn or Mercedes, or another appropriate person.</i>	
<i>I agree to take part in the focus group.</i>	

Name of Participant \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Researcher \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# APPENDIX 3

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## FOCUS GROUP 3 INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

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### Introduction to study

Ice breaker

### Present

- What are you doing now?
- Do you use languages other than English outside college, is this important to you & why?
- Are you still in contact with people from your class? How do you keep in touch?

### Past

- Did you complete the ESOL+ programme – what did you do afterwards?
- Can you remember what or who helped you when you first came to the college? Who told you about the programme? What did you want from college?
- Did you go to school in your country? What was it like? Similarities/differences?
- Which activities on the programme were most useful to you? Which were least useful?
- What did you like doing in class?
- What didn't you like doing in class?
- What were the teachers like?
- Did you come to class every day/ on time? Why not?
- What, if anything made it difficult to come to class?
- Thinking back to when you were on the ESOL 16+ Programme, what made it easy to learn, what made it difficult to learn? (was it useful to have students similar age/going through some of the same processes e.g. asylum, making new friends)
- How did you learn and remember English? Were you taught any techniques?
- Did you use other languages in college?
- Did you use languages other than English in the classroom?
- Were you involved with other activities/groups in the wider college? How easy was it to get involved?
- Did you need English to interact in the wider college?
- How did you spend time after class and during holidays?
- Were there any challenges/difficulties that were going on for you while you were a student on the ESOL+ class? age/status/private issues, other reasons. Was any support offered from teachers/other students/college? Were you able to concentrate/study?
- How did you feel in class? Happy? Tired? Angry? Sad? Why?
- How did you feel in the wider college?

- Did you join any groups – which/why not?
- Did you get to know other students who were not on ESOL + programme?
- Do you feel welcome at college?
- If you were not happy with something in class at college what would you do? Did this ever happen?

**Future**

- What are you better at doing because of ESOL 16+?
- If your friend wanted to learn English, what would you say about the ESOL+ programme at Glasgow Clyde? (difficult, easy, you need to work hard, don't do it) or what advice would you give to students thinking about starting the ESOL+ at Glasgow Clyde?

**Any other comments/questions**

Thank you.



# APPENDIX 4

## OBSERVATION SCHEMA

*Research questions for observation:*

- 1. What are the educational and wellbeing needs of 16-18 year old separated children arriving in Scotland (entering directly into college or transitioning to college from schools with 1-2 years education)?**
- 2. To what extent does the model, curriculum and pedagogy provided by Glasgow Clyde College meet these needs?**

*Aim of observation:*

Conduct two on-site observations to gather contextual data on the ‘real world’ context of the programme, including the complexities of teaching and supporting young people with diverse and often disrupted previous experiences of education and circumstances. This will also provide an opportunity to observe the use of methods and approaches used by educators, for example, in creative arts approaches to exploring personal and social development themes.

*Also links to focus groups:*

Focus group data will be used to identify the ways that the programme supports learners to maximise cognitive, emotional and social development while highlighting the political, policy and legislative contexts and how they intersect with the delivery of the programme. We will also explore the ethos and culture at Glasgow Clyde College, with particularly attention to aspects of inclusion, participation and positive relationships across the learning community and how this impacts on learners’ needs, overall experience and future aspirations

Researcher:	Date: Time:
Activity being observed:	
Session 1 (lecturer/level/topic):	
Breaks/end of session:	

General description of classroom/college environment. Give examples – e.g. materials on the wall.

Teaching materials – what kind of materials were used in class? How were these adapted for the needs of different students?

Teaching delivery – for example, how did lecturers balance individual needs of different students? How were difficult concepts/words explained?

Lecturer-student interaction – what seemed to work well, what seemed to work less well?

How did lecturers help students to feel included, to participate and to build/maintain positive relationships?

Did you observe any situations where students appeared less engaged? How did the lecturer respond?

How did students interact with each other during lesson? e.g. use of notes, paper, mobile phones etc.

Examples of how students' wellbeing needs were met.  
SHANARRI indicators: Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, Included

Participation in task (if applicable) – how was this introduced to students? What did you do? How did this add to or change what you observed?

Comments arising from any interactions with students (*please anonymise*)

Debrief with lecturer(s) at the end of the session

- How did this session fit into overall plan (shared previously)? Were aims and objectives clear?
- How does this session link to other teaching formats e.g. creative approaches?

How do you think your presence as an observer may have influenced/changed the activities and behaviour you observed?

Any other comments/reflections

# APPENDIX 5

## PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (PROFESSIONALS)



### **Project title: Towards Best Practice in Educating and Supporting Separated Children in Scotland**

#### **1. Background and aims of the project**

Our names are Siân Lucas & Maggie Grant. We work at the University of Stirling. Over the past 10 years, Glasgow Clyde College has developed a specialist ESOL programme for separated children and young people aged 16-18 years (who have arrived in the UK unaccompanied to seek asylum or having been trafficked). Feedback from learners and anecdotal evidence of young people's subsequent pathways are positive, but to date no independent evaluation has been undertaken.

From October 2018 - June 2019, we will be carrying out research to assess the educational and well-being needs of separated children and young people in Scotland aged 16-18 years, and the extent to which the Glasgow Clyde College programme and its partners are meeting these needs.

We will be speaking with lecturers and other professionals to understand their thoughts about the ESOL 16+ Programme and what they expect. We want to know what works well and what more can be done to support young people on the programme.

We will be carrying out focus groups with young people as well as observing teaching at Glasgow Clyde College.

[delete as appropriate] We would like to invite you to take part in a telephone interview or we would like to observe ESOL teaching.

#### **2. Why have I been invited to take part?**

You have been invited because you are involved in teaching at Glasgow Clyde College, you are a professional working with separated young people in another context.

#### **3. Do I have to take part?**

No. You do not have to take part and this will not affect your relationship with Scottish Refugee Council, Glasgow Clyde College or the Guardianship service. If you do decide to take part, you can withdraw your participation at any time without needing to explain and without penalty by advising the researchers of this decision. You can also withdraw your data by [insert date].

You will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form.

#### **4. What will happen if I take part?**

**Telephone interview:** We want to speak with professionals involved in teaching the ESOL 16+ programme at Glasgow Clyde College as well as professionals who support the programme or those who work at other further education colleges. We will invite you to take part in an interview. The purpose of the interview is to share your experiences of being involved with the ESOL 16+ programme and the young people concerned

or to hear about your work in a different educational setting outwith Glasgow. The interview will take place on [insert date]. [insert name] will confirm the dates and find a time suitable time. The interview will take up to 45 minutes. We will seek your permission for the interview to be audio-recorded.

You will have the opportunity to see some of the main findings from the research.

#### **5. Are there any potential risks in taking part?**

To help prevent risks relating to your involvement, the researchers will:

- give you the opportunity to ask questions about the study before the interviews begin;
- allow you to have breaks as necessary;
- allow you to stop the interview and only continue if you choose to;

#### **6. Are there any benefits in taking part?**

It is hoped that through your participation in the study you would be contributing to better understanding the support that other separated young people need to engage with education.

#### **7. Legal basis for processing personal data**

As part of the project we will be recording personal data relating to you. This will be processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Under GDPR the legal basis for processing your personal data will be public interest/the official authority of the University.

#### **8. What happens to the data I provide?**

The research data will be kept anonymous by using pseudonyms for participants and by not identifying any locations or other identifiable details.

Personal/confidential information will be stored on a password protected document which only the researchers have access to.

The researcher team will be working with a transcriber, who will not be given any of your personal details and will have signed a confidentiality agreement. Your personal data will be kept for 6 months after the project end date [insert date] and then will be securely destroyed.

You will indicate whether you give permission for us to use direct quotes in future publications.

We will safeguard the confidentiality of the research data. If information is shared that could affect the safety of yourself or others, we will be obliged to share this information with relevant professionals.

Within UK law it would be necessary to break confidentiality due to disclosures in relation to child protection offences, the physical abuse of vulnerable adults, money laundering and crimes covered by the prevention of terrorism legislation.

#### **9. Recorded media**

We will seek your permission to audio record the interview, the recordings will be transcribed and then permanently destroyed.

#### **10. Will the research be published?**

The research will be published in academic journals as well as a summary report. You will not be identifiable in any report or publication.

The findings from this research will be presented at academic and practice conferences and in academic journal articles.

You will be able to access a copy of the published results. The University of Stirling is committed to making the outputs of research publically accessible and supports this commitment through our online open access repository STORRE.

#### **11. Who is organising and funding the research?**

The project is funded by Glasgow Clyde Education Foundation and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. The project is commissioned by the Scottish Refugee Council and Aberlour Childcare Trust in partnership with Glasgow Clyde College.

#### **12. Who has reviewed this research project?**

This project has been ethically approved via The University of Stirling General University Ethics Panel.

#### **13. Your rights**

You have the right to request to see a copy of the information we hold about you and to request corrections or deletions of the information that is no longer required. You have the right to withdraw from this project at any time without giving reasons and without consequences to you. You also have the right to object to us processing relevant personal data however, please note that once the data are being analysed and/or results published it may not be possible to remove your data from the study.

#### **14. Who do I contact if I have concerns about this study or I wish to complain?**

If you would like to discuss the research with someone please contact:

Dr Siân Lucas, Room 4S33, Colin Bell Building, University of Stirling, Stirling, FK9 4LA.  
*s.e.lucas@stir.ac.uk* 01786 467980

If you have any complaints about the project please contact Professor Alison Bowes, Dean of Faculty of Social Sciences, *ExecutivePAFoSS@stir.ac.uk*, 01786 467681

**You have the right to lodge a complaint against the University regarding data protection issues with the Information Commissioner's Office (<https://ico.org.uk/concerns/>).**

The University's Data Protection Officer is Joanna Morrow, Deputy Secretary. If you have any questions relating to data protection these can be addressed to *data.protection@stir.ac.uk* in the first instance.

**You will be given a copy of this information sheet to keep.**

**Thank you for your participation.**











