

PEN PICTURE: Good Shepherd Centre

The Good Shepherd Centre is a Secure and Close Support Unit for vulnerable young people placed with us by the Children's Hearing or Criminal Justice System. Young people placed in the Good Shepherd can have a number of negative factors that may result in extremely low levels of wellbeing. These can include alcohol and drug misuse, self-harming, offending, trauma, difficulties in primary attachments and a profound lack of hope.

We believe that all young people should have hope and be hopeful. In order to raise hope we endeavour to build positive relationships, promote resilience and provide the capability to achieve goals. We have high expectations of our young people and aim to increase attainment, develop self-esteem and improve motivation to achieve positive changes. Our approach is to share learning experiences across care and education which are motivating and challenge our young people to re-engage in education.

We believe that it is crucial for our young people to learn the skills and attributes to be digitally literate in order to achieve their full potential. To support this we have invested heavily in ensuring there is a range of technology made available throughout the curriculum. The centre hosts two fully equipped computer suites, one with PCs and one with Macs. Each classroom also has its own iPads which are used to bring learning to life in ways that wouldn't have previously been possible. This abundance of accessible technology enables our young people to become comfortable with current systems and develop transferrable skills across platforms.

Historically, young people in secure accommodation have been excluded from certain aspects of digital technology due to the over-riding security restrictions regarding accessing un-moderated, on-line content. Due to this, the new Glow platform was prohibited. The Good Shepherd thought it prudent that we should benefit from the use of Glow and therefore initiated a consultation to develop a bespoke version in partnership with Education Scotland. As a result, our teachers now have full access to Glow and our young people have access to areas which can be moderated.

Using technology is now second nature throughout our curriculum and is particularly valuable in inter-disciplinary activities. In one of our current projects, our young people have designed a sensory garden using CAD software in the Media classroom. This will inform the development of the [GSC] garden which can be used to enhance the Science curriculum and as a therapeutic space.

Good Shepherd Centre <http://www.gsc.scot/>