



Young People's Rights Review

Cadely Paton MSYP - The Right to Play

My name is Cadely Paton MSYP from Cunninghame North - and in conjunction with North Ayrshire Council I have consulted with around 360 young people in my constituency through school visits, online surveys and social media. A rights issue which was raised, was that many young people felt that outwith Education, they had nothing to do in their community. Cunninghame North is a fairly rural community and consequently, when young people are not in school they found that accessing services that allowed them to socialise, which falls within the scope of the right to play, was problematic, poorly maintained or in some cases non-existent.

During consultations, a number of views were expressed, including: 'me and my friends like to go out on our bikes, but some of the bike paths around here are overgrown. We could go to Largs but that involves getting a train and we don't always have the money for it'

And a popular view was: "there are a few play parks in my area but most of them are run down and designed for younger kids"

Whilst we are delighted to see that measures to promote play and reduce barriers to participation in sport is included in the draft Young's Peoples Rights Action plan, in 7.14 and 7.19 respectively, I feel that further focus has to be on Scotland's rural areas and small towns, in relation to young people accessing sports and general play activities. As highlighted by the views expressed, living in small towns creates a barrier to accessing play activities and in getting to larger towns and cities where activities may be available, due to the cost of public transport.

To sum up, the draft Children and Young People's Rights Action Plan should be amended to better take into account the many diverse communities that young people live in, by providing more places to play in, better public transport to access these and involving us in their development. With the increase in Scotland's young people suffering from poor mental health and rising obesity rates, it is vital that my constituents have equal opportunities to socialise, take part in sport and access activities as our counterparts in larger towns and cities. It is especially important that all young people get the same opportunities to play and access sport, regardless of the location that they come from. Young people should not enjoy their rights any less just because of where they live - there should be no postcode lottery on accessing our rights to play.