



**CATHERINE
MCEWAN
FOUNDATION
SCHOLARSHIP**
ALL IN FOR EDUCATION



Impact report

Academic years 2022 to 2023



**Saturday
School Ltd.**

Introduction

The Catherine McEwan Foundation is pleased to publish its latest impact report, combined for academic years 2021/22 and 2022/23. The Scholarship was established in 2019 and has now completed four years of delivery with outstanding success for the young people taking part. This report will detail the impact being made for scholars, not just in terms of their educational attainment, but also in their self-confidence and development as they progress through, and indeed out of, secondary school towards their next positive destination. The report will also outline the key organisations, people and ideas behind the scholarship and the journey that scholars have been on, hearing directly from them and their parents. Finally, as the programme enters year five, it will reveal the plans for the ongoing expansion of the scholarship to reach more scholars in more places, changing the lives and futures for an increasing number of young people in Scotland.

Who is the Catherine McEwan Foundation?

The Catherine McEwan Foundation helps people living with Crohn's and Colitis access better treatment and better care to improve their lives, supporting them to successfully live with their condition. The Foundation helps change the lives of children, young people and adults with inflammatory bowel disease by funding much-needed improvements in IBD healthcare across Scotland; investing in pioneering research and directly funding the educational support and recovery for young people via the scholarship programme.

Being diagnosed with IBD can have a huge impact on people and for young people in particular, their education can be seriously affected. They can often miss out on key learning and development opportunities at school due to low attendance or inability to fully concentrate for the entirety of the school day. The Foundation, in collaboration with The Royal Hospital for Children in Glasgow and Saturday School Ltd, is providing a solution for those young people who are affected at such a crucial stage in their lives.

The idea behind the scholarship

As a registered charity, the Catherine McEwan Foundation is constantly seeking ways to expand and support more people in new and pioneering ways. After a long period of research and exploration, The Foundation - aware of the impact that IBD can have on anyone - returned to an area that they had always looked to offer enhanced support in, education.

"We were always very aware, through the younger people we worked with, that schoolwork can take a massive hit, teenagers in high school for example will simply miss huge portions of school, and this results in them attaining poorer grades in exams or dropping out of subjects completely through no fault of their own. I was aware of Saturday School and the work they do with young people taking SQA exams and quickly realised that with the support of The Royal Hospital, all three organisations could work together to create something very special, from what we can see, there is nothing like this being done anywhere in the UK, and we are incredibly proud of the impact it is making for our scholars".



[Derek McEwan, CEO and Founder of the Catherine McEwan Foundation]

What exactly is The Scholarship?

The Catherine McEwan Foundation Scholarship was founded in 2019 with the aim of improving educational outcomes in the senior phase of secondary school for young people living with Crohn's Disease and Colitis. The Scholarship is devised and led by the Foundation, delivered in partnership with Saturday School Ltd; an SQA Approved Centre and tutoring school offering tuition, revision, qualifications and of course scholarships. Specific support is targeted at young people taking SQA National 5 and Higher Qualifications however scholars can join the programme anytime between S3 and S6. In simple terms, scholars attend Saturday School on a regular basis to catch up on work missed through illness, and to develop their subject knowledge and understanding to maximise their chances of success in SQA exams. This fully funded educational intervention, backed by a team of generous donors, offers learners unlimited access to Saturday School's highly successful and long-standing portfolio of support:

- Weekly Lessons, 80-minute masterclasses in selected key areas for each subject
- Grade Booster Days, 4-hour intensive exam revision courses
- Online support, unlimited 24/7 support and guidance from tutors via Google Classroom.

Educational support and advice is also given to scholars and their parents/carers to ensure they are fully aware of the options, choices and entitlements they can expect from their education both at Saturday School and their own school.

The Catherine McEwan Foundation Scholarship has successfully assisted learners who, in some cases, would not have gone on to gain qualifications at all. Saturday School, backed by the Foundation, support young people and their parents to stabilise their educational progress, in some cases looking simply to reconnect with education after long periods of illness; outlining the specific steps needed before looking ahead to securing the relevant qualifications. The initial fundamental aim is to support learners to gain qualifications. When they are on course for this, the focus and drive changes to securing the highest possible grades across subjects.

Potential scholars apply for a via the Catherine McEwan Foundation website. In most cases, interested young people will have learned about the opportunity via their NHS IBD healthcare professional who supports the programme. In fact, these very people are key stakeholders and original co-designers of the scholarship. Applications require:

- scholarship personal statement from the student
- supporting statement from their parent or carer
- reference from their IBD Nurse
- reference Pastoral Care/Guidance teacher from their school.

The wider scholarship team will then review all fully completed applications. If selected, these young people will be given enhanced educational support through a series of learning programmes at Saturday School to maximise their chances of success in SQA exams.

In year five of the scholarship, the programme will not just continue, it will expand. Aiming to reach even more people in more places. We will see a new partnership with the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People in Edinburgh and that will be combined with the opening of a new Saturday School delivery site in the capital.

As always, scholarship applications are open to young people via the Catherine McEwan Foundation website.

Dillon

Dillon was awarded a scholarship in academic year 21/22 when he was mid-way through S4. A *“bright boy whose education has most definitely been affected by his health”* - as stated by his mum in her application supporting statement - he had missed a lot of school and had lost confidence in himself and his academic abilities. In her application, she goes on to say, *“the scholarship would be a fantastic opportunity for Dillon to regain faith in his abilities and plug the gaps in his learning, which would hopefully in turn give him the confidence to be successful at National 5 level”*.

That’s exactly what Dillon did, going on to gain an A grade in National 5 Maths and a B grade in N5 English.



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The scholarship gave me back my self-belief and confidence in my abilities. It's now possible for me to get the grades I was actually capable of.



Dillon was welcomed back into his second year of the scholarship in 2022 and was determined to continue his excellent success as he moved on to study SQA Higher qualifications. In his original application Dillon said, *“I feel that I am struggling because I have missed so much of my learning in high school as a result of my medical condition and that I am now too far behind to pass my exams. To receive this support would be an amazing opportunity for me to improve my chances of success and I would be very grateful for it”*.

In August 2023, after a year of hard work, Dillon gained his Higher English qualification. As he enters S6, he is likely to continue with the programme, hopefully gaining even more SQA Highers before leaving school.

Katie Leigh

After a hugely successful S4 where she gained a perfect 7 National 5 Qualifications at A grade, Katie's health began deteriorating, her attendance at school fell to an alarming 30% and she was advised to think about dropping subjects from her timetable.

"I have high standards for myself at school and already feel stressed with my grades slipping, which is having a knock-on effect on my health, making it harder to catch up in school and to feel well enough to study".

Katie goes on to explain the benefits she saw in gaining a scholarship:

"I feel like this scholarship would help me to gain confidence in myself and school again despite the struggles of my health and attendance".



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There's nothing else like this scholarship, nothing else that provides this type of educational support that you need when you're in a position like this.



In August 2022 Katie achieved an A in Higher English and a B in Higher Biology.

Erin

Erin joined the scholarship programme in late 2021 whilst she was in S4 studying for her National 5 subjects. She was diagnosed with Crohn's at a young age and had missed a lot of primary school learning, something her mum believed had affected Erin's confidence with schoolwork – particularly with Maths.

"I am struggling with school and I have missed a lot of school in the past with the illness which has bumped my confidence with answering questions in class. At the moment my illness is under control but I am still missing days when my Crohn's is flaring up or I am at the hospital."



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The scholarship is boosting my results in school and is also helping my confidence when answering out in class.



Erin completed her National 5 courses in August 2022 and then was awarded a continued scholarship into her S5 studies. In August 2023 Erin gained a B in National 5 Biology.

Katie

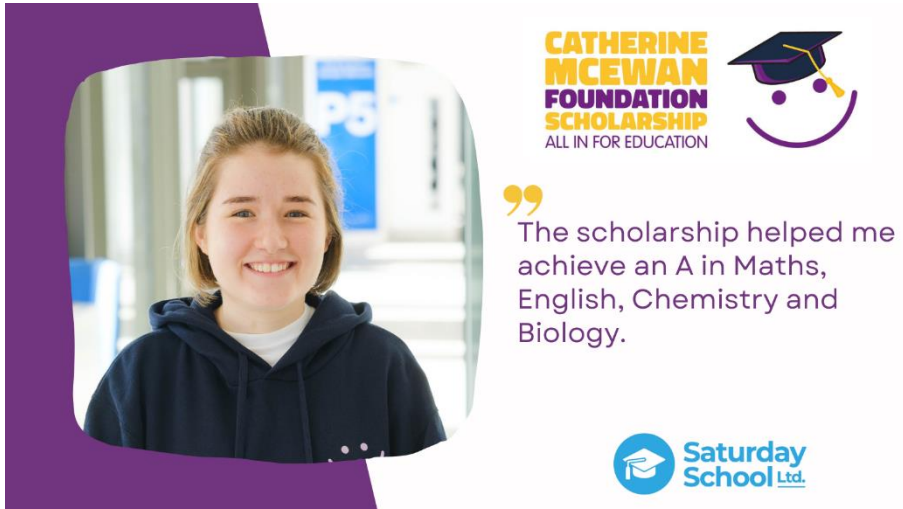
After a perfect S4, where Katie achieved straight As in her National 5s, she became very unwell. Just when she was expecting to start S5 and get to work on her SQA Higher courses, she was diagnosed with Crohn's Disease. Having previously never missed a day at school, Katie's condition cost her over half a year of school, missing vital learning at school due to illness and hospital treatment.

In her application, written in January 2022, Katie's mum explained:

"Her disease has thrown her completely into unknown territory, she's hoping to return to school part-time next week. She has missed her prelims and she is anxious about not having evidence should formal exams be cancelled. I believe Saturday school would give Katie a much-needed boost generally and get her back on track".

Katie has not only recovered her education with incredible success, but she has used her condition as an inspiration for her future career and study:

"I'd love to go to Saturday School to catch up on all the classes I've missed. It would be great if I could meet someone my age with Crohn's too. I've been inspired by my medical team - my aim is to get 5As, go to Glasgow University and embark on a career in research for Crohn's Disease".



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” The scholarship helped me achieve an A in Maths, English, Chemistry and Biology.

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In August 2022 Katie sat Higher Maths, English, Biology, Chemistry and Spanish. She got 5 As.

Holly

Holly was awarded a scholarship at the start of S5 and embraced the offer with incredible effort – gaining support with four of her Highers: Maths, English, Biology and Chemistry. Described by her IBD Nurse as “extremely motivated”, she certainly proved this to be the case, taking maximum advantage of the support on offer.

Demonstrating her personal high standards and determination, Holly explains the common vicious circle that young people with IBD suffer from, where one negative leads to another:

“I have fallen behind in some of my school subjects. I was really proud of my National 5 achievements but have missed a lot of school since then, hence the reason I have fallen behind. The pace of learning moves so quickly and I get overwhelmed/anxious, which in turn affects my Crohn’s symptoms - meaning I am ill and miss more school”.

In her application, Holly’s mum also explained:

“She has always achieved great results throughout her school years but since her diagnosis, her schoolwork has suffered due to illness and time lost in the classroom”.



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The scholarship has helped me catch up on missed classwork. I have a deeper understanding in subjects I previously wasn't so great at.



In August 2023, Holly gained a B in Higher English and a C in for Higher Biology. We hope to see Holly return to the programme as she enters S6 to give her further support to gain even more SQA Highers.

Robert

Robert joined the scholarship programme in early 2023 when he was mid-way through S4, working on his National 5 qualifications. He gained additional support in Maths, English, Biology and Chemistry through a series of Weekly Lessons and Grade Booster Days. Like all Scholars, his motivation to apply for a scholarship was sparked by his own personal concerns over his school performance and how his illness was impacting his self-confidence:

“As someone who has been diagnosed with ulcerative colitis, I believe this scholarship will help me progress through my studies, and more importantly my personal life, this would really support me as I miss school a lot due to my condition”.

Robert’s mum also explained why he would benefit from the incredible support the scholarship offers, explaining how dedicated and determined he is to his learning.

“He has worked really hard to catch up over the last couple of years and would really benefit from the extra help for his upcoming exams this year, he has spent countless nights staying in and catching up with work he has missed when off when his friends have been out.”



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The scholarship has such a level of expertise and care for a student's academic excellence.



In August 2023, Robert gained an outstanding set of results for his National 5 courses, getting B in Maths, Chemistry and English, and an A in Biology. We hope to see him back with us in S5 as he embarks on his SQA Highers.

Amy

Amy was given a Scholarship as she was in S4, working on her National 5 courses. In her application, Amy outlined her dedication and determination to succeed, again pointing out the impact that IBD can have on learning:

“I feel this would be of benefit to me as I am struggling with schoolwork since my diagnosis last year, I know this is a really important year for me being my first exams and would appreciate any extra help that is available to me. Before being diagnosed I was coping very well at school and believe my confidence has been greatly reduced due to my illness, not to mention the fatigue the ongoing treatment causes”.



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The scholarship is having a positive impact for me, on my schoolwork and feeling more comfortable within school.



For her SQA exam results in August 2023, Amy achieved great success with a B in Biology and an A in English. Amy is already making plans to return for year 2 of her scholarship as she sets off on her SQA Highers in S5.

Luke

Luke joined the scholarship programme mid-way through his N5 courses in S4. Like most scholars, he had been on a long hard journey with his health, balancing his education with the ongoing effects of Crohn's:

"I have had a few days off because of my Crohn's and have to get an infusion every 4 weeks so I miss school for that too. The scholarship would help me a lot. I want to go on to do Highers next year, so the extra tuition would help."

A hard-working and dedicated student, Luke attended multiple classes from January right through to the exam diet in April, never missing a session. Supporting his application, Luke's mum explains:

"Luke is a bright boy, but the time off school has impacted his learning. National 5 exams are the foundation for all future exams and the help at this stage would benefit Luke tremendously".



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The scholarship really has made me feel more confident for my exams and I now have much less doubt about them.



Despite his many health setbacks, Luke showed his aspiration and determination and sat N5 exams in the 2023 diet. Perhaps not achieving the success he had been hoping for, he has not let this dishearten him and he will repeat these courses in S5, of course with the offer of a year 2 scholarship. His mum, hoping for a more stable year for Luke:

"I'm just praying he's not off school as much this year and that his new medication works a lot better".

The Foundation will continue to support Luke every step of the way.

Jack

Jack has been on the scholarship programme since S3 – becoming one of two scholars to pilot the model of earlier intervention, gaining support a year earlier than those who have come before him. The thinking behind this earlier awarding of scholarships was to allow a year of learning and development to take place before the young person actually begins their S4 courses in the senior phase. Jack, along with George who we will meet on the next page, proved this model to be a hugely successful idea. In S3, back in 2022, Jack explained to The Foundation that he was missing a lot of school due to his condition, with key gaps in his learning. His mum supported his application, giving the all-too-common scenario that our scholars face:

“Jack has had a really difficult time with his health over the last year and he is still not on the right path with finding a medication that is putting him into remission. Jack is keen to go to school but due to his illness misses a lot of days or has to go in late - worsened by the fatigue of Crohn's disease and is an extra hurdle when trying to catch up with missed work”.



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The scholarship has helped me with studying and catching up with school work as I have missed so much.



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In August 2023 Jack gained a C for Chemistry and a B for English in his National 5 results. We hope to see him return for further support as he progresses into S5.

George

In S3, George joined Jack (mentioned above), to help explore how bringing the entry stage of the scholarship forward by one year might enhance the impact of the programme. Many students start learning National 5 content in S3 as they prepare for the senior phase and exams in S4 so this made George the ideal candidate to work with. George made his passion for education clear in his application and was awarded a scholarship back in 2022 as he was halfway through S3.

“Since my recent health experience and life-changing events, I am keen to explore a possible career in medicine. I have always enjoyed school and didn't realise how much I missed education until I couldn't go. I would love the opportunity to be awarded this scholarship as it would help me achieve good grades to give me more choices for my future”.

George's mum has not only supported her son through the scholarship but she has even joined up with The Catherine McEwan Foundation; aware of how IBD impacts not just physical but also mental health, she now provided vital support to patients in this area.

“George was diagnosed with Crohn's in 2019 and since diagnosis, he steadily declined physically and emotionally. Resulting in numerous hospital admissions, weight loss, chronic pain, and an array of different treatments. This has resulted in lots of school time missed impacting his education and grades”.

On joining the scholarship programme and coming to classes at Saturday School, George immediately excelled, making incredible progress and showing his outstanding positive attitude to learning and clear academic ability.



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I'm a lot more confident in the subjects I was previously unsure about, I'm also more prepared for my National 5 exams.



In August 2023 George got his National 5 results, gaining As in English and Chemistry and a B for Maths. We hope to see George continue into year 3 with us as he commences his SQA Highers.

Alexandra

Alexandra was in S5 working on her Higher courses when she was awarded a scholarship to support her with Maths, English and Biology. In her application she showed just how focussed she is to succeed in education and had clearly identified plans for success, not just in S5 but as she prepared to move beyond high school into higher education at University.

“I have been suffering from Crohn's disease for several years and normally manage it quite well. The past year has been difficult at school and found my National 5 exams difficult with the time I needed off school to get my infusions and feeling so unwell at times”.

As with many Catherine McEwan Scholars, Alexandra used her condition as a driver for her career aspirations, like many before her, choosing to take a route into the healthcare profession, setting her sights on a job as a paramedic.

Alex's mum also identified the difficult journey she had been on in her education but how her resilience is pushing her on:

“Alex has had a tough time in secondary school with her Infliximab infusions – but we try to not to let her Crohn's define her. The past year or so has been incredibly tough on Alex as she has felt so bad, dragged herself into school and been sent home”.



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The scholarship has been amazing, allowing me to not fall behind in class and be more confident going into my exams.



In August 2023, Alex gained outstanding success for Higher Maths, English and Biology, getting Bs for all three subjects.

We give the final words of this case study to Alex's mum, who perfectly explains how and why The Catherine McEwan Foundation do what they do:

“Because she got this additional support, she has managed to secure a place at university to do paramedic science. I think it is important to know how your funding is helping children with IBD secure places at college and university. Alex was off school the most ever this year with her Crohn's and the additional classes helped her so much. Thank you so much for setting up this funding for children like Alex”.