

## **E-mail chain between Learning Analysis and National Performance Unit**

**From:** [redacted]  
**Sent:** 14 February 2019 11:36  
**To:** [redacted]  
**Cc:** [redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Educational attainment

Hi [redacted],

Apologies for not getting back to you sooner, I've been trying to look into the background of the indicator and how we got to this point. I've attached an e-mail chain which I found useful and may also shed some light on things for you, assuming you've not already seen it. It explains the decision to use 7 measures for educational attainment.

I've made some changes to the technical proforma. Let me know if you're content. I've not expressed a firm view on how the data should be displayed but have offered some options – there may be others.

[redacted] has also completed the table below with the dates the data will become available.

Happy to discuss.

Kind regards  
[redacted]

**From:** [redacted]  
**Sent:** 05 February 2019 13:11  
**To:** [redacted]  
**Cc:** [redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Educational attainment

Hi [redacted],

I hope all is well.

I wanted to ask if you were happy with what we proposed in the email below sent in January. If you need anything from us please let me know.  
Many thanks for your time.

Kind regards,  
[redacted]

**From:** [redacted]  
**Sent:** 24 January 2019 14:02  
**To:** [redacted]  
**Cc:** [redacted]  
**Subject:** Educational attainment

Hi [redacted],

Thank you for travelling to SAH on Tuesday.

It was good to get a baseline of where we are with the Educational Attainment indicator, understanding the difficulties associated with measuring it and knowing that we need to move forward in how we assess change and display it. NPFTAG (formerly SPTAG) will offer guidance on this too.

I had a look through the technical proforma which details the elements of measuring change. At the meeting you mentioned that overall performance for the indicator would be taken based on four of the indicators having a similar status (i.e. 4 improving = indicator improving overall). There may be some issues when say 3 measures are improving, 3 maintaining, 1 worsening however. It would be very helpful if you could please add to the technical note, the decisions and reasoning behind categorising performance change.

Also, regarding display of the indicator. This indicator is not a composite measure in the general sense i.e. 7 measures creating one. Can you also please add some more background to the technical note about the reasoning behind not combining the measures and your preferred method of displaying the indicator. I know we discussed some of these in the meeting.

I have made some notes to the technical proforma attached. Please feel free to edit in eRDM. We can take this to NPFTAG and get the ball rolling.

Some general 'housekeeping' from our side: Can I just check that the information in the table below is correct please?

<b>Educational Attainment</b>				
<b>Submeasure</b>	<b>data source</b>	<b>Dates for data</b>	<b>last updated</b>	<b>next update</b>
Proportion of Primary pupils achieving expected levels in all three Literacy organisers	Achievement of CfE Level (ACEL) statistics	2016/17 - 2017/2018	Dec-18	Dec-19
Proportion of S3 pupils achieving Third Level or better in all three Literacy organisers	Achievement of CfE Level (ACEL) statistics	2016/17 - 2017/2018	Dec-18	Dec-19
Proportion of Primary pupils achieving expected levels in Numeracy	Achievement of CfE Level (ACEL) statistics	2016/17 - 2017/2018	Dec-18	Dec-19
Proportion of S3 pupils achieving Third Level or better in Numeracy	Achievement of CfE Level (ACEL) statistics	2016/17 - 2017/2018	Dec-18	Dec-19

Proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more award at SCQF Level 4 or above	School leaver attainment statistics	2009/10-2016/17	<del>May-18</del> <del>Jun-19</del>	Feb-19
Proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more award at SCQF Level 5 or above	School leaver attainment statistics	2009/10-2016/17	<del>May-18</del> <del>Jun-19</del>	Feb-19
Proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more award at SCQF Level 6 or above	School leaver attainment statistics	2009/10-2016/17	<del>May-18</del> <del>Jun-19</del>	Feb-19

Again, a huge thank you for meeting up with this and helping push this forward. We appreciate your time. Please let me know if you need any more information.

Kind regards,  
[redacted]

[redacted] | [redacted]

Outcomes and Sustainable Development Goals  
2W St Andrew's House|Regent Road|Edinburgh|EH1 3DG

[redacted]  
[redacted]



Twitter: [@ScotGovOutcomes](https://twitter.com/ScotGovOutcomes)

## Scotland Performs National Indicator technical text template

Please complete this template and send to [redacted] and [redacted], copying [ScotlandPerformsUpdates@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ScotlandPerformsUpdates@scotland.gsi.gov.uk). Under the text section please give details according to the respective headings – “Description”, “Source”, “Definitions”, “Criteria for recent change” and “Justification”. For guidance on how similar text was previously set out please visit: <http://www.gov.scot/About/Performance/scotPerforms>

Indicator name (What is the name of the National Indicator)

Education Attainment

Description (A description of the measure)

This indicator is comprised of seven sub-measures mirroring the National Improvement Framework for Education key measures for monitoring the attainment gap, and covering the key components of Curriculum for Excellence and key stages of school education:

- Proportion of Primary pupils achieving expected levels in all three Literacy organisers
- Proportion of S3 pupils achieving Third Level or better in all three Literacy organisers
- Proportion of Primary pupils achieving expected levels in Numeracy
- Proportion of S3 pupils achieving Third Level or better in Numeracy
- Proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more award at SCQF Level 4 or above
- Proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more award at SCQF Level 5 or above
- Proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more award at SCQF Level 6 or above

Source (The data source)

[Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Level statistics](#)  
[School leaver attainment statistics](#)

Definitions (Descriptions of terminology used)

Proportion of pupils achieving expected levels in Literacy and Numeracy is based on the Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels data collection.

The annual Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Levels data collection includes all Primary 1, Primary 4, Primary 7 and Secondary 3 pupils in publicly funded mainstream schools, and all pupils based in publicly funded special schools/units.

The collection covers performance in the three literacy organisers (i.e. reading, writing, and listening and talking) and numeracy, and reports on the proportion of pupils who have achieved the expected CfE Level, based on teacher professional judgements, relevant to their stage. The Primary measures included in the National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education and the National Performance Framework are based on a calculation derived from combining the P1, P4 and P7 data. The Literacy measure is calculated based on pupils achieving all three literacy organisers.

Proportion of school leaver attaining 1 or more award at Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) Level 4 or above, Level 5 or above and Level 6 or above are from school leaver attainment statistics. The presentation of school leaver attainment data by Scottish Government takes an outcomes-based approach; leavers are classified by identifying the highest SCQF Level at which they achieved one or more passes by the time they leave school.

#### Criteria for change (What change in the data constitutes a change in performance)

The evaluation is based on: any difference within +/- 1 percentage points of last years' figures suggests that the position is more likely to be stable. A change of more than +/- 1 percentage will be classified an increase/decrease.

The overall Education [PZ(1)]Attainment indicator arrow will reflect the underlying sub-measures e.g. if the majority of sub-measures have seen an increase, the Education Attainment indicator arrow will show Performance Improving.

Achievement of CfE [PZ(2)]Levels data are currently not directly comparable between years due to ongoing improvements in the underlying data quality. The data are currently classified as Experimental Statistics; comparisons across local authorities should not be made without full knowledge of local authorities' underlying approach to assessment.

#### Justification (Why has this indicator been chosen/ What's it's importance)

The Scottish Government vision for education in Scotland is

- Excellence through raising attainment: ensuring that every child achieves the highest standards in literacy and numeracy, set out within Curriculum for Excellence levels, and the right range of skills, qualifications and achievements to allow them to succeed; and
- Achieving equity: ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

As part of the development of the National Improvement Framework (NIF), Scottish Government worked with key stakeholders to explore and agree what specific measures were felt to drive improvement most usefully across all stages of a child or young person's life. The National Improvement Framework includes a basket of key measures based on this work. The measures chosen for this indicator are a subset of the attainment measures in the NIF.

Curriculum for Excellence is intended to help children and young people gain the knowledge, skills and attributes needed for life in the 21st century, including skills for learning, life and work. This indicator reflects progress towards one of the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence – successful learners.

#### The use of 7 sub-measures (not a composite)

Achievement of CfE Levels data are currently not directly comparable between years due to ongoing improvements in the underlying data quality. The data are currently classified as Experimental Statistics; comparisons across local authorities should not be made without full knowledge of local authorities' underlying approach to assessment.

### Displaying the data

- guidance needed on creating an accurate display of this indicator to describe oover all performance

- no one sub-measure is more important that the other, therefore displaying one would lead to a false picture

**From:** Wilson M (Mick) <[Mick.Wilson@gov.scot](mailto:Mick.Wilson@gov.scot)>  
**Sent:** 03 May 2018 20:41  
**To:** Halliday R (Roger) <[Roger.Halliday@gov.scot](mailto:Roger.Halliday@gov.scot)>; [redacted]  
**Cc:** Bruce A (Andrew) <[Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot](mailto:Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot)>; [redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: National Performance Framework Review - National Indicator text for Scotland Performs

On the face of it, that sort of approach feels like the right idea. Needs a bit of thought.

We'd want to think about which of the NIF "basket" we really need (could be all or fewer) and then how to brigade them as [redacted] says. We'll put our minds to it and discuss with your team Roger, of course.

M

Mick Wilson  
Deputy Director, Education Analysis  
[redacted]

**From:** Halliday R (Roger)  
**Sent:** 03 May 2018 16:13  
**To:** [redacted]Wilson M (Mick)  
**Cc:** Bruce A (Andrew); [redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: National Performance Framework Review - National Indicator text for Scotland Performs

Hi [redacted]

Without knowing the detail behind each measure and whether each has equal status, this seems a really sensible suggestion. Will be good to know what Mick and Andy think.

Roger

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Roger Halliday  
Chief Statistician & Data Officer, Scottish Government, Room 2W.02, St. Andrews House, Edinburgh. EH1 3DG  
t: [redacted], e: [roger.halliday@gov.scot](mailto:roger.halliday@gov.scot) [redacted]

**From:** [redacted]  
**Sent:** 03 May 2018 11:48  
**To:** Halliday R (Roger) <[Roger.Halliday@gov.scot](mailto:Roger.Halliday@gov.scot)>; Wilson M (Mick) <[Mick.Wilson@gov.scot](mailto:Mick.Wilson@gov.scot)>  
**Cc:** Bruce A (Andrew) <[Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot](mailto:Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot)>; [redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: National Performance Framework Review - National Indicator text for Scotland Performs

Happy to include the basket of NIF measures and capture them under a single measure and can discuss with Mick how we would do this.

One possibility is we could do something similar to what we did for health indicators where we had a large quantity of indicators around drinking, smoking, diet, which we amalgamated and included as a single indicator of "Health risk behaviours", which looks at how many of these behaviours people undertake.

Could we do something where we look at the primary literacy, primary numeracy, secondary literacy, secondary numeracy and the 3 school leaver qualifications measures, and base the performance of the single educational attainment measure on how many of these are improving/maintaining/worsening to give an overall performance arrow.

For example we could have if 4 or more of the NIF measures were improving, we'd report improving, if 4 or more were worsening = worsening. Else = maintaining. Just a thought but might not be sensible at all.

Happy to discuss.

Thanks,  
[redacted]

[redacted]  
[redacted] | National Performance Framework  
Data, Statistics & Outcomes Division | Scottish Government  
St Andrews House 2W | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG  
Tel: [redacted]

**From:** Halliday R (Roger)  
**Sent:** 02 May 2018 17:11  
**To:** Wilson M (Mick) <[Mick.Wilson@gov.scot](mailto:Mick.Wilson@gov.scot)>; [redacted]  
**Cc:** Bruce A (Andrew) <[Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot](mailto:Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot)>; [redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: National Performance Framework Review - National Indicator text for Scotland Performs

[redacted], Mick

I've just talked to Andy about a way forward with this. We felt that we need to preserve the basket of measures around educational attainment included in the National Improvement Framework for education, and have an overall arrow to fit with the NPF methodology.

Could you work up a proposition about how we combine the individual measures from the NIF to give criteria for improvement or worsening please. Happy to be involved in this conversation if you think that would be useful.

Roger

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Roger Halliday  
Chief Statistician & Data Officer, Scottish Government, Room 2W.02, St. Andrews House, Edinburgh. EH1 3DG  
[redacted]e: [roger.halliday@gov.scot](mailto:roger.halliday@gov.scot) [redacted]

**From:** Bruce A (Andrew)  
**Sent:** 01 May 2018 11:10  
**To:** Halliday R (Roger) <[Roger.Halliday@gov.scot](mailto:Roger.Halliday@gov.scot)>; [redacted]  
**Cc:** Wilson M (Mick) <[Mick.Wilson@gov.scot](mailto:Mick.Wilson@gov.scot)>  
**Subject:** RE: National Performance Framework Review - National Indicator text for Scotland Performs

[redacted], Roger,

Mick and I have picked up the discussion between our teams (below) on the current request for text and initial data for the proposed new NPF indicators. This discussion has surfaced a difficulty in terms of the *Educational Attainment* indicator.

The discussion clearly highlights the expectation that a single measure is used – to my knowledge we have not had that discussion prior to the current exchange. Our intention had been that this *indicator* should consist of a number of *measures* so that it can adequately reflect the range of attainment issues, and the extensive work that SG and the wider education sector has recently undertaken to set out how we should measure attainment of school pupils. Looking again at exchanges on this, I think we have been consistent in that view. The DFM and the sector itself have been adamant that a single measure is inappropriate and inadequate.

Our view – and, we believe, that of DFM – is that any attempt to move to a single measure for NPF purposes is unacceptable. Whilst [redacted] logic is sound, we cannot develop a new indicator to satisfy NPF requirements, and have actively sought to prevent the use of a single measure of any kind in any framework. DFM signed up to this specific approach in March. The NPF risks looking quite unbalanced between “harder-edged” educational outcomes and wider (H&WB) measures if we made such a move. We could perhaps, collectively, have been smarter in resolving this earlier.

Whilst I think we might be able to move some way to reducing the overall number of measures (albeit with some resistance), there will be a real objection, including by DFM, to a move to a single one. In light of that, can you confirm that we can revert to our original intention of linking the ‘school attainment’ indicator to the relevant measures included in the National Improvement Framework for education?

Thanks

Mick Wilson and Andy Bruce

**Mick Wilson**  
Deputy Director, Education Analysis  
[redacted]

**Andy Bruce**  
Deputy Director | Leas-Stiùiriche  
Curriculum, Qualifications and Gaelic | Curraicealam, Teisteanas agus Gàidhlig  
[redacted]  
[andrew.bruce@gov.scot](mailto:andrew.bruce@gov.scot)

**From:** [redacted]  
**Sent:** 27 April 2018 11:13  
**To:** [redacted]  
**Cc:** [redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: National Performance Framework Review - National Indicator text for Scotland Performs

Hi [redacted],  
(cc [redacted])

Typically in the NPF we have a single measure sitting under each of the indicators. We have no other composite indicators in the NPF, and I know Roger is fairly keen to avoid using multiple measures beneath an indicator. I'm happy for us to move away from the current PISA measure and move towards something from the NIF, but I can see the problem with only selecting one of these measures. On the other side of the coin, we are unable to add additional indicators as the NPF is currently sitting in parliament undergoing scrutiny.

I think we've had the issue in many areas of selecting one measure to be represented in the NPF, and generally we've stated that the NPF shouldn't be an amalgamation of all the relevant measures that best measure progress towards the Outcome, more that these are selected as being the best measures to look at, and we have had to be quite ruthless with the selection of these. Last week at the Local Government and Communities committee Roger got asked a similar question about including additional measures and gave the below response.

"I needed to be relatively ruthless with the number of indicators. Most other countries that have a similar framework have fewer than 50 indicators. Earlier this week, I spoke to people from New Zealand, England, Wales and Northern Ireland, each of which has fewer than 50. If you have too many indicators, it becomes difficult to see what is going on. I think that 79 is on the upper bounds of that. I was conscious that I did not want to have indicators on similar things within the framework and that we needed to pick the strongest indicator for a particular concept and go with that."

For indicators that are aiming to capture a complex picture, we usually use index's for the indicator e.g. (Biodiversity index, Natural Capital index), and I know the current PISA line captures literacy, numeracy and science. From here I think there are two options:

- 1) Develop a new indicator which acts as an index capturing multiple measures across NIF.
- 2) Select the measure that is most appropriate to include in the NPF and make links on the NPF website to the NIF. I don't think anyone will be accused of a too narrow focus, as again it is not the purpose of the NPF to include all the measures.

On the bottom point, we usually leave this to the analysts discretion. For some indicators it is appropriate to use statistical significance for identifying a change in performance, however in some indicators this has presented a problem if there are underlying causes that are known to affect the trends. Once the data has been collected and you have done some initial analysis I'm sure we'll be able to better decide what is an appropriate criteria for change. We have our Scotland Performs Technical Assessment Group (SPTAG) also, who will help with the scrutiny of the indicator if there remains some uncertainty over the criteria when the time comes. I don't think it is possible currently to determine what a significant change would be without knowledge of the data.

Sorry for the delayed long and rambling response but happy to discuss.

Thanks,  
[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] | National Performance Framework  
Data, Statistics & Outcomes Division | Scottish Government  
St Andrews House 2W | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG  
Tel: [redacted]

**From:** [redacted]

**Sent:** 23 April 2018 13:23

**To:** [redacted]

**Cc:** [redacted]

**Subject:** RE: National Performance Framework Review - National Indicator text for Scotland Performs

Hi [redacted]

Another couple of questions...

It was agreed earlier in this process that we would replace the attainment measure in the current NPF with ones that are consistent with the closing the gap measures in the National Improvement Framework (NIF). There are 7 measures that can be described as attainment related in the NIF – primary literacy, primary numeracy, secondary literacy, secondary numeracy and 3 school leaver qualifications measures at different qualification levels. Our initial thinking was that we would include all these in the NPF but, we can see you might view this as too many, especially with the disaggregation included.

Are you content with us including a number of measures for the indicator? I think realistically we would need to include at least 3 – primary literacy, primary numeracy and one school leaver attainment measure. There are arguments for including more than one school leaver measure, so it captures the range of achievement by school leavers, but we could choose one if you prefer to minimise the number of indicators. We will be able to point to the NIF measures if we are criticised for a narrow focus. I'd be grateful for your views on this.

Secondly, do you have any guidance on criteria for change, to help people take a consistent approach? A number of our indicators do not yet have data available, or the statistics are still at experimental stage. For these we feel it would not be appropriate to define a change in performance at this stage as we have insufficient knowledge to make a decision. Could you let me know if you would be content with that approach in the template for the indicators with no or limited data currently available?

Thanks for your help.

[redacted]

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Indicator name (What is the name of the National Indicator)

Education Attainment

Description (A description of the measure)

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- Proportion of S3 pupils achieving Third Level or better in all three Literacy organisers
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- Proportion of S3 pupils achieving Third Level or better in Numeracy
- Proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more award at SCQF Level 4 or above
- Proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more award at SCQF Level 5 or above
- Proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more award at SCQF Level 6 or above

Source (The data source)

[Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Level statistics](#)  
[School leaver attainment statistics](#)

Definitions (Descriptions of terminology used)

Proportion of pupils achieving expected levels in Literacy and Numeracy is based on the Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels data collection.

The annual Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Levels data collection includes all Primary 1, Primary 4, Primary 7 and Secondary 3 pupils in publicly funded mainstream schools, and all pupils based in publicly funded special schools/units.

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school leaver attainment statistics. The presentation of school leaver attainment data by Scottish Government takes an outcomes-based approach; leavers are classified by identifying the highest SCQF Level at which they achieved one or more passes by the time they leave school.

#### Criteria for change (What change in the data constitutes a change in performance)

The evaluation is based on: any difference within +/- 1 percentage points of last years' figures suggests that the position is more likely to be stable. A change of more than +/- 1 percentage will be classified an increase/decrease.

The overall Education [PZ(1)]Attainment indicator arrow will reflect the underlying sub-measures. e.g. if the majority of sub-measures have seen an increase, the Education Attainment indicator arrow will show Performance Improving. If the majority of sub-measures have seen a decrease the indicator arrow will show Performance Worsening. In all other cases the indicator arrow will show Performance Maintaining.

The Achievement of CfE Level data are currently classified as Experimental Statistics. Achievement of CfE Level data continue to be data under development and caution should be applied when making comparisons to previous Achievement of CfE Level results. Comparisons across local authorities should not be made without full knowledge of local authorities' underlying approach to CfE. Achievement of CfE [PZ(2)]Levels data are currently not directly comparable between years due to ongoing improvements in the underlying data quality. The data are currently classified as Experimental Statistics; comparisons across local authorities should not be made without full knowledge of local authorities' underlying approach to assessment.

#### Justification (Why has this indicator been chosen/ What's it's importance)

The Scottish Government vision for education in Scotland is

- Excellence through raising attainment: ensuring that every child achieves the highest standards in literacy and numeracy, set out within Curriculum for Excellence levels, and the right range of skills, qualifications and achievements to allow them to succeed; and
- Achieving equity: ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

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Curriculum for Excellence is intended to help children and young people gain the knowledge, skills and attributes needed for life in the 21st century, including skills for learning, life and work. This indicator reflects progress towards one of the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence – successful learners.

The use of 7 sub-measures (not a composite)

During the development of the NIF, and based on discussions with stakeholders, a number of key principles emerged relating to the way in which Educational attainment should be monitored. These included:

- The focus should be across all age ranges – from 3-18;
- Focusing on a single measure could provide a false and limited picture;
- They should be a credible set of measures – understood to fairly reflect progress

In particular it was determined that it was not possible to assess Educational attainment via a single measure. Such a measure, for example one focused on senior phase or leavers' data, would not be sufficient to demonstrate progress across Educational attainment as a whole. Similarly, the approach of using a complex algorithm to bring together a range of measures to produce a single indicator of progress was seen as being neither straightforward nor transparent.

For that reason, the educational attainment indicator consists of a range of measures that reflect the breadth of issues that can impact on attainment. These measures allow for assessment of progress across the 3-18 age range.

The Achievement of CfE Level data are currently classified as Experimental Statistics. Achievement of CfE Level data continue to be data under development and caution should be applied when making comparisons to previous Achievement of CfE Level results. Achievement of CfE Levels data are currently not directly comparable between years due to ongoing improvements in the underlying data quality. The data are currently classified as Experimental Statistics; Comparisons across local authorities should not be made without full knowledge of local authorities' underlying approach to assessment CfE.

Displaying the data

- guidance needed on creating an accurate display of this indicator to describe overall performance

- no one sub-measure is more important than the other, therefore displaying one would lead to a false picture

Options for displaying the data include:

- displaying all 7 measures on 7 separate charts;
- displaying all 7 measures across, perhaps, 2 charts with multiple measures on each chart
- possibly displaying the aggregate performance of **the indicator** which might display how many measures are improving, worsening or maintaining. [WA(3]