

# **Scottish Attainment Challenge Challenge Programme Summary of Progress 2015-20**

## **North Lanarkshire Council**

## Summary of Progress – North Lanarkshire Council

The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) was launched in 2015 to help the Scottish Government achieve its vision of delivering equity and excellence in education. North Lanarkshire Council joined the Challenge programme in 2015.

North Lanarkshire has the 4th largest population of local authority areas in Scotland with 26% of children living in poverty compared to a national average of 24% (End Child Poverty local data 2019). Over 25% of all children and young people in North Lanarkshire live in areas of highest deprivation, categorised as Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), deciles 1 and 2. This is above the national average. There are 119 primary schools, 23 secondary schools, 23 council managed family learning centres and 13 special schools. There are approximately 54,000 children and young people.

The authority has received Attainment Scotland funding through the Challenge Authority Programme (£34,360,724), the Pupil Equity Fund (£35,581,137), the Innovation Fund (£32,800) and the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fun (£1,187,071), a total of £71,161,732 over the period 2015 to 2020.

The Education Scotland inspection of local authorities (July 2018) *How well is North Lanarkshire Council improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap?* reported that the authority was making good progress with improving learning, raising attainment and narrowing the poverty-related attainment gap. The report stated that Education Scotland were confident that the evidence and evaluation at that time indicated the following strengths:

- The clear vision and drive of the Assistant Chief Executive and her team, within North Lanarkshire's one council approach to delivery of services, leading to improvement in outcomes for children across the SAC and Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) programmes.
- The increasing use of data and developing approaches to self-evaluation were providing more rigorous evidence to plan and review SAC and PEF interventions.
- Effective CLPL and strong support for families was resulting in improvement in aspects of attainment and closing of the poverty-related attainment gap.
- The work of the educational psychology service, within the SAC programme, was having a significant impact on improved outcomes for targeted groups of children and young people.

Aspects for development were noted as:

- Further develop the Continuous Improvement Service to maximise consistency of support and challenge for SAC and PEF.
- Build on the positive start made to closing the poverty-related attainment gap for children and young people as they progress through their learning.
- Strengthen the positive engagement of elected members in working for better outcomes for children and young people across North Lanarkshire Council by continuing to provide relevant information to the Education Committee on the funding provided, and progress of Scottish Attainment Challenge and Pupil Equity Fund.

In December 2020, the Education Scotland link attainment advisor worked alongside local authority project leads to analyse data and evidence of impact which identified the following key strengths:

- An increased understanding and use of attainment data to support decisions around identifying targeted groups and the measurement of targeted interventions.
- A new leadership framework, endorsed by Education Scotland, has been developed and includes leadership programmes for new or aspiring principal teachers, depute headteachers and headteachers. This approach aims to ensure long term sustainability and with less dependency on outsourcing.
- Approaches to empowerment, including 'family groups' and the recently developed 'Empowering Clusters' operating model, which are focussed on attainment and equity.
- Approaches to learning and teaching which have resulted in an overall improving trend in the attainment for children and young people in North Lanarkshire affected by poverty. The data shows improvement over time and the poverty related attainment gap shows a steady decrease.
- The positive impact of the community learning and development team on young people and adults from the most deprived communities.
- The Winter Leavers Pathways Programme was introduced in 2019-20 and supported 90 young people most at risk of disengaging from learning into a positive post-school destination.
- The work of the North Lanarkshire Psychological Service around health and wellbeing.
- The development of North Lanarkshire's Virtual School which provides additional educational support for care experienced children.

Next steps identified include:

- Building on the recent strategic realignment and refocussing of the SAC workstreams, continue to further develop integrative practice between services with a focus on increasing impact and sustainability including through PEF.
- A number of headteachers require support in developing a rationale for use of PEF, based on a clear contextual analysis which addresses attainment, attendance, exclusion, participation and engagement.
- At a strategic level, it is important that the various teams across the local authority work together to provide a coherent support for clusters and schools.
- Ensure long term sustainability via the leadership framework whereby experienced and effective practitioners from within North Lanarkshire continue to develop and deliver professional learning sessions, with less dependency on outsourcing.
- In order to optimise outcomes for care experienced children and young people, continue to develop the virtual school with particular focus on the partnerships between the virtual school and the young people's base schools.
- At a strategic level, continue to develop further guidance for school leaders to ensure consistently strong approaches to engaging with stakeholders.

**March 2021**

**Education Scotland**

Denholm House  
Almondvale Business Park  
Almondvale Way  
Livingston EH54 6GA

T +44 (0)131 244 4330

E [enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk)

[www.education.gov.scot](http://www.education.gov.scot)

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** 10 March 2021 14:33

**To:** Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>

**Cc:** [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Feedback on the Closing the Gap Summary report

Hi Graeme

You have now received the final versions of the Closing the Gap progress report and summary report along with the Submission to DFM. I wanted to explain to you why we have not fully taken on board your feedback on an earlier version of the Summary report.

In your feedback you suggested that we bring some key messages to the front of the Summary – which we have done. You also suggested that we highlight the ES Inspection reports on the 9 Challenge Authorities and provide links, again at the front of the Summary report. We discussed this with [REDACTED] and with [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and decided not to specifically highlight the Inspection reports for the following reasons.

- The inspections took place in 2018 and were reported late 2018 and early 2019 – so the information is now at least 2 year old
- The inspections were focused on how well the CAs had organised themselves and were getting on with the task of closing the attainment gap (process and systems) – not on how well they had actually closed the gap (outcomes)
- Each CA has made progress since 2018 and therefore the ratings may no longer be appropriate
- We are publishing the profiles of each of the CAs in the full report based on the current impact reports from the AAs, which includes a comment on progress since the published inspection evidence

We think there was a risk of inflaming CAs unnecessarily based on historical, previously published, evaluation which had a different focus.. However we do feel that CAs should be accountable for the significant investment made in them. We have published all the CA data in the analytical tables, highlighted the CA profiles and consistently commented on the variable performance across the country.

Happy to discuss this with you

[REDACTED]

**[REDACTED]**

**Head of Raising Attainment / Attainment Challenge**

Learning Directorate

Scottish Government

2-C North \ Victoria Quay \ EDINBURGH \ EH6 6QQ

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Mobile: [REDACTED]

e-mail: [REDACTED]

**THE SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE**

*Tackling educational inequity*



**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 16 March 2021 15:59  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Progress report on closing the gap  
**Importance:** High

Hi [REDACTED]

Please see a draft quote for the Progress Report from Gayle for your approval.  
Thanks.

Gayle Gorman, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Chief Executive of Education Scotland, said:

"We are happy to see the improvements detailed in the report and it is heartening that almost nine out of ten schools have seen a recent improvement in closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

"The Scottish Attainment Challenge has been a core element of Education Scotland's work for the past five years. We recognise this work is more important than ever and the evidence from this report and the Equity Audit will inform the Scottish Attainment Challenge moving forward.

"We are very clear about directing our efforts towards doing whatever we can to mitigate against the widening of the gap between the least and most deprived in our society. Our Attainment Advisors have strong partnerships with every local authority and remain focused on working collaboratively with them and our schools to ensure our most disadvantaged learners continue to be supported. Our understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on the poverty related attainment gap is continually evolving as are the most effective approaches to provide the intensified support learners require. This is a long-term commitment that has been supported by a system-wide, collaborative endeavour across Scottish education to make Scotland the best place to grow and learn."

Kind regards,  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
Media & Communications Officer  
Education Scotland | Foghlam Alba

Education Scotland is following UK and Scottish Government guidelines.

[www.education.gov.scot](http://www.education.gov.scot)



**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 15 March 2021 15:50  
**To:** [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FW: Progress report on closing the gap  
**Importance:** High

Hi Ladies

See email trail below. Are you able to work together please on getting a quote from Gayle drafted and signed off for [REDACTED] please?

Can you keep me copied in.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 15 March 2021 15:10  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FW: Progress report on closing the gap  
**Importance:** High

Hi [REDACTED]

Can you or [REDACTED] pick this up please, liaising with [REDACTED] as appropriate.

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED] **On Behalf Of** OCEX Hub  
**Sent:** 15 March 2021 15:07  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FW: Progress report on closing the gap  
**Importance:** High

Hi [REDACTED]

Please see emails below for your attention.

Many thanks / Mòran taing.

---

[REDACTED] | Corporate Support Administrator | Education Scotland | Foghlam Alba

---

Tel: [REDACTED]

Address: Denholm House, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA

Web: [www.education.gov.scot](http://www.education.gov.scot)

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** 15 March 2021 14:48

**To:** OCEX Hub <[EdS\\_OCEX@educationscotland.gov.scot](mailto:EdS_OCEX@educationscotland.gov.scot)>

**Subject:** FW: Progress report on closing the gap

Colleagues

See below request for quote from Gayle in relation to the SG/ES joint SAC 5 year report which is due to be published on Thursday. Comms have the draft report and are working with SG on the complete comms package.

Can you help please? Let me know if you need anything from me.

Dùrachdan/Best wishes

**[REDACTED]**

---

[REDACTED], HMIE | Strategic Director (interim) | Education Scotland - Foghlam Alba

---

Tel: [REDACTED] Mob: [REDACTED]

Address: Endeavour House, 1 Greenmarket, DUNDEE, DD1 4QB

Web: [www.educationscotland.gov.uk](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk)

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** 15 March 2021 14:40

**To:** [REDACTED]

**Cc:** [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Progress report on closing the gap

Hi [REDACTED]

I hope you had a nice weekend.

Would it be possible for you to secure a quote from Gayle to go with the comms package for the publication of the report on Thursday? Graeme was keen that we had one from the Chief Exec of Education Scotland! As soon as possible would be great!

Thanks

[REDACTED]

**[REDACTED]**

**Head of Raising Attainment / Attainment Challenge**

Learning Directorate  
Scottish Government  
2-C North \ Victoria Quay \ EDINBURGH \ EH6 6QQ

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Mobile: [REDACTED]

e-mail: [REDACTED]

**THE SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE**

*Tackling educational inequality*



**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 15 March 2021 10:44  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Request: Input on Committee update, due 19 March

Hey [REDACTED]

That suits perfectly. Thanks a mil

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

Learning Directorate | Scottish Attainment Challenge Policy Unit | Area 2C North | Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ [REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 15 March 2021 10:42  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Request: Input on Committee update, due 19 March

Hi [REDACTED]

I am updating the Q&A for the PfG 5 year report today along with our analysts, so I should be able to provide some lines tomorrow or weds if that suits?

Thanks  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | Policy Manager | Scottish Attainment Challenge Policy Unit | Scottish Government | Area 2C North, Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED]

**THE SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE**  
*Tackling educational inequity*



**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 15 March 2021 10:35  
**To:** [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Request: Input on Committee update, due 19 March

Hey Both,

I've been asked to pull an update together for the committee scrutiny report (attached)

What I have so far is thus:

Scottish Attainment Challenge  
update for the Poverty and Inequality Commission.

**COVID response activity**

- To improve access to digital devices the Scottish Government is investing £25m to provide around 70,000 devices and 18,000 connectivity solutions for disadvantaged children and young people.
- To ensure there is sufficient teaching staff within schools the Scottish Government is investing £75m to councils to recruit additional teachers, as well as £5m to recruit teaching assistants or other education support staff and is investing a further £25m to support the provision of additional teachers to the end of the school year.
- To improve professional development to teachers, Education Scotland has expanded its professional development support, delivering 45 webinars to around 5,000 practitioners since March 2020.
- To ensure that parents are provided with advice and support, the Scottish Government commissioned the National Parent Forum of Scotland to develop a Nutshell guide on blended learning.
- The Scottish Government has developed a range of information and guidance, to help support all children and young people, including those with autism when learning at home. This includes: comprehensive guidance to help support continuity for children and young people's learning for the term ahead; updating the Autism Toolbox to include a section on coronavirus, which provides information and signposting on supporting autistic learners at home, information on the Parent Club website specifically for parents and carers and guidance on the re-opening of schools.
- The additional education recovery funding committed to date is £90m to support school logistics to ensure schools can operate safely in line with covid-19 guidance.
- We have confirmed £182 million in Attainment Scotland Funding in 2021/22 including over £127 million in Pupil Equity Funding going direct to 97% of head teachers in Scotland..
- The Deputy First Minister committed to the implementation of an Equity Audit to deepen our understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on children from disadvantaged backgrounds, and set clear areas of focus for accelerating recovery. The Equity Audit was published on 13 January 2021.
- The collective skills and expertise of Attainment Advisors working with others across Education Scotland will support schools and local authorities over session 2020-21 to continue to maximise progress with closing the poverty related attainment gap within the context of COVID-19 educational recovery
- Schools' Programme & Challenge Authorities funding has been agreed for 2021/22 at the same levels available as 2020/21.
- We have ensured councils and schools can redirect Attainment Scotland Funding to help mitigate the impact of school closures on our most disadvantaged families.

**Impact of activity in year and expected impact over time**

- The additional funding and extension of the SAC in 2021 will provide schools in need with the resources and security they require to continue their work in reducing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap while the future aims, priorities and policies of the SAC are developed for the next iteration of the challenge, starting in 2022.

- Funding flexibility gifted to councils and schools may be used flexibly by councils to recruit additional staff, purchase additional digital devices and connectivity solutions, and to provide additional family support. These are interventions which will directly support individuals and families to engage effectively, particularly in situations where vulnerability and deprivation are factors.

### **Published analysis / evaluation for further information**

The SAC 5-year annual report (Link to be added post publication)

Equity Audit link

PfG report link

[REDACTED] mentioned you were doing a FAQ on the 5 year that might help inform the second section on Impact of activity in year and expected impact over time.

Do you have anything that would be useful for me to include here or suggestions for the rest of the update?

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

Learning Directorate | Scottish Attainment Challenge Policy Unit | Area 2C North | Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ | [REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 11 March 2021 16:21  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** SACLA Summaries

Hi [REDACTED]

Please see attached the amended Summary of Progress reports for each LA.

I have updated the total funding received for each LA (CA, PEF, CECYP and the Innovation Fund), according to the actual amount claimed since 2015. Please note, the 2020-21 funding for CA and CECYP overlaps into 2021, I have therefore included all planned spend until the end of March 2021.

I also noticed on the North Ayrshire Summary, it just shows the total SAC funding rather than a breakdown of each funding stream. I wasn't sure if this should be added to the text however I've provided a breakdown just in case.

North Ayrshire:

- Challenge Authority – £24,418,226
- PEF – £17,567,971
- CECYP – £1,115,264
- Innovation Fund - £85,951

Hope that all makes sense, please let me know if you need anything further.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

.....

...

[REDACTED] | Policy Officer | Scottish Attainment Challenge Policy Unit | Scottish Government |  
Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ | [REDACTED] |

