

Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) for Scottish Attainment Challenge 2022/2023 – 2025/2026

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Introduction

This CRWIA focuses on the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) 2022/2023 – 2025/2026 and the particular impact on children and young people. The Scottish Government has conducted a screening exercise which determined that a CRWIA is required.

1. Which articles of the UNCRC does this policy/measure impact on?

All UNCRC rights are underpinned by the four general principles: non-discrimination; the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and the child's right to have their views given due weight. This section of the CRWIA highlights the articles of the UNCRC and Optional Protocols which are relevant to the provisions included in the CRWIA.

Article 2

Non-discrimination

Children should not be discriminated against in the enjoyment of their rights. No child should be discriminated against because of the situation or status of their parent/carer(s).

Article 3

Best interests of the child

Every decision and action taken relating to a child must be in their best interests. Governments must take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures to ensure that children have the protection and care necessary for their wellbeing - and that the institutions, services and facilities responsible for their care and protection conform with established standards.

Article 6

Life, survival and development

Every child has a right to life and to develop to their full potential.

Article 12

Respect for the views of the child

Every child has a right to express their views and have them given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity. Children should be provided with the opportunity to be heard, either directly or through a representative or appropriate body.

Article 13

Freedom of expression

Every child must be free to say what they think and to seek, receive and share information, as long as the information is not damaging to themselves or others.

Article 15

Freedom of association

Every child has the right to freedom of assembly: to meet with other children, and to join groups and organisations, as long as it does not stop others from enjoying their rights.

Article 18

Parental responsibilities and state assistance

Parents, or legal guardians, have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child, and should always consider what is best for the child. Governments must provide appropriate assistance to parents and carers to help them. Governments must take all appropriate measures to ensure the children of working parents, or legal guardians, have the right to benefit from childcare services and facilities.

Article 23

Children with disabilities

A disabled child has the right to enjoy a full and decent life in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community. Governments must recognise the right of the disabled child to special care, and ensure the disabled child has effective access to education, training, health care, rehabilitation, preparation for employment, and recreational opportunities.

Article 24

Health and health services

All children have a right to the highest attainable standard of health, and to health care services that help them to attain this. Governments must provide good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment so that children can stay healthy.

Article 28

Right to education

Every child has the right to education on an equal basis;

- making primary education compulsory and available free to all.
- encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education making them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need.
- make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means.
- make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children.
- take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.

Article 29

Goals of education

Education must aim to develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to their fullest potential. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, their origins and identity, for other cultures around the world, and for the natural environment.

Article 30

Children of minorities/indigenous groups

Every child has the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family, whether or not these are shared by the majority of people in the country where they live.

Article 31

Leisure, play and culture

Every child has a right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities, and to take part in a range of cultural and artistic activities.

Article 39

Recovery and rehabilitation of child victims

Children who have been the victims of any form of exploitation or abuse; cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or who are victims of war should receive the help they need to recover their health, dignity and self-respect, and reintegrate into society

2. What impact will your policy/measure have on children's rights?

The refresh of the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) will not introduce a new policy, but will build on existing policy for the next phase: 2022/2023 – 2025/2026. This policy has been developed in partnership with and (the funding package) agreed by COSLA and builds on the evidence set out in the Scottish Government and Education Scotland [5 year report](#) on progress towards closing the poverty-related attainment gap, the [Equity Audit](#), the [Audit Scotland report](#) on educational outcomes, and the [OECD review](#). It will continue to provide support for children and young people impacted by poverty through funding to local authorities, through Strategic Equity Funding, Pupil Equity Funding, Care Experienced Children and Young People funding and a number of national programmes. The main aim of the policy is to support recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and accelerate progress in closing the attainment gap.

This policy's mission is to use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty, with a focus on tackling the poverty-related attainment gap.

In summary the plans are that with the support of £1 billion over this parliamentary term – increased from £750 million during the last parliament – the refreshed SAC programme, from 2022/23, will include:

- an annual investment of up to £200 million in 2022/2023 to support children and young people impacted by poverty;
- continued empowerment of headteachers through Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) as the primary model for distributing funding to the education system, with funding of approximately £130 million annually to be allocated to 97% of schools;
- continued investment to support Care Experienced Children and Young People (CECYP funding), contributing to keeping [the Promise](#);
- the introduction of Strategic Equity Funding (SEF) of over £43 million, which will be distributed annually to every local authority based on Children in Low Income Families Data;
- investment in national programmes to enhance supports across the system, supporting a range of national initiatives such as youth work and mentoring; and
- a broader recognition of children and young people's achievements and attainment through the refreshed mission

Funding allocations for PEF and SEF are confirmed for the until the end of the Parliamentary term, giving local authorities and schools certainty to support long term planning.

The SAC is underpinned by the principles of Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC), the Scottish Government's national approach to improving outcomes for babies, children, young people and families. At its heart, it is rooted in Children's Rights. The shared model and language enables children, young people, families and practitioners to work across services so that support is well-planned, joined-up and streamlined, helping to prevent or mitigate childhood adversity and trauma.

3. Will there be different impacts on different groups of children and young people?

The SAC is intended to be inclusive while targeted. Targeting resources, through the Attainment Scotland Fund (ASF), to support the health and wellbeing, educational attainment and outcomes of children and young people living in poverty, including those with protected characteristics. The Scottish Government has published a full Equality Impact Assessment which provides an in-depth analysis of the impact of the SAC on these protected characteristics; and a Fairer Scotland Duty assessment which considers the impact of SAC to reduce the 'inequalities of outcome' caused by 'socio-economic disadvantage'.

The way some Attainment Scotland Funding to local authorities is distributed has been reassessed in response to stakeholder feedback and the findings of the Audit Scotland report which highlighted “*The way that (Attainment) funding has been targeted does not fully capture pupils living in poverty. The economic consequences of COVID-19 require a fresh assessment of the criteria for targeting poverty-related funds.*”¹

Recognising the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and poverty on children and young people in all local authorities across Scotland, and following a range of engagement with the education system and analysis of data; and in agreement with COSLA, £43 million in funding from the Attainment Scotland Fund currently distributed to 9 local authorities with the highest concentrations of deprivation based on SIMD (Challenge Authorities) will, from 2022/23, be distributed to all 32 local authorities. The distribution of funding can be found on [gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot) and is based on the DWP/ HMRC [Children in Low Income Families](#) (CILIF) dataset.

This dataset is based on robust administrative data from Universal Credit and Tax Credits systems and provides a consistent definition of child poverty across the country. Our method of allocation uses the 2019/20 relative low-income dataset, defined as children living in families with equivalised income of less than 60% of the UK median income before housing costs. This approach has important benefits relative to previous funding methods, such as that used by the Challenge Authorities programme.

Challenge Authorities were selected based on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). Data from SIMD is valuable when it comes to identifying deprivation for particular places, such as in which small geographic areas deprivation is most concentrated. However, many children in poverty live outside of these areas. Where small pockets of low-income families live in less deprived geographic areas, using SIMD ranking alone to allocate funding will not provide sufficient support to these families. As an example of this, the SIMD user guide (available [here](#)) highlights that around 2 out of 3 people on low incomes do not live in the 15% most deprived areas in Scotland. Using this place-based measure alone to allocate funding is

¹ ["Improving outcomes for young people through school education" - Audit Scotland](#), pg. 30

particularly problematic for rural local authorities, where smaller settlement sizes mean geographic datazones are more likely to include a mix of households experiencing different levels of deprivation. Neither the Shetland Islands, Orkney Islands or Eilean Siar had any geographic areas in the most deprived quintile of SIMD areas, but together had around 2,000 children in poverty as shown by CILF data.

From 2022/23, the focus of the SAC will be to reflect the needs of individuals in each local authority. CILF data shows that, of 206,000 children in relative poverty before housing costs across Scotland in 2019/20, 122,000, or 59% lived **outside** of Challenge Authorities. When developing the refresh of SAC, there has been a conscious decision to move away from a funding model that recognises only a subset of child poverty across Scotland, to a model that provides every local authority with the funding they need to implement targeted programmes that benefit children living in poverty in their council areas.

PEF will continue providing over £130 million directly to 97% of schools in Scotland, based on the number of P1-S3 pupils registered for free school meals, used as a proxy measure for socio-economic disadvantage. PEF allocations provide further resource to schools to tackle the poverty-related attainment gap and support recovery, recognising the additional challenges that schools and their children and young people face due to COVID-19. To help aid planning for the short and medium term – allocations will be fixed for 4 years from 2022/23 and schools are protected from receiving less than 90% of their previous year's allocations (prior to any top-ups). In addition, recognising the fluctuating demand as a result of the pandemic, there is an uplift of PEF per pupil from £1,200 up to £1,225.

CECYP funding will continue in the refreshed SAC programme with approximately £11.5m each year available to support local authorities' work to improve the educational and wellbeing outcomes of care experienced young people. This is in recognition that care experienced children and young people need additional support. The continuation of this funding will enable local authorities to target additional resources to support young people with their learning and their wellbeing, through mentoring programmes, outdoor learning, play activities and the implementation of a Virtual Headteacher role across a number of local authorities, all ensuring a strong continued focus on care experienced children and young people.

A number of actions are being taken to ensure that the SAC does not directly or indirectly, unlawfully discriminate.

For example:

- The refreshed [2022 PEF National Operational Guidance](#) and the grant terms and conditions for the use of PEF, makes clear that resources should promote equity by taking into account protected characteristics when planning support and interventions. Although the PEF is allocated on the basis of free school meal registration, headteachers can use their professional judgement to bring additional children in to benefit from the targeted interventions and approaches.

- Additionally, the use of PEF should be planned for and monitored via existing planning and reporting processes. Schools must have plans in place at the outset to evaluate the impact of the funding. Clear outcomes must be planned for each key priority. These plans should outline clear outcomes to be achieved and how progress towards these, and the impact on closing the poverty-related attainment gap, will be measured. The guidance around this process makes clear links to How Good is Our School (Edition 4), which contains an equality indicator.
- [The National Improvement Plan](#) sets out a basket of 11 key measures, supported by 15 sub-measures that will be used to monitor progress towards the goal of closing the poverty-related attainment gap. We will continue to use the data that is published each year in the National Improvement Framework Evidence Report to show the poverty-related attainment gap at different stages of school and across literacy, numeracy and health & wellbeing.
- Education Scotland are working on a new Equity Toolkit and a suite of supportive guidance and materials, which is to support local leaders through a range of key considerations for such engagement and provides examples of this type of engagement being done effectively in local settings that apply to all children and young people, including those in protected characteristics. This guidance includes amongst its six key stages (developed originally by Children in Scotland) “feedback, evaluation and next steps”. These materials will be shared on the [National Equity Improvement hub](#). The framework to support the implementation of the SAC by local authorities and schools will continue to be updated and developed.
- We know that Gypsy Travellers tend not to self-identify. [Traveller Guidance](#) has been produced by the Scottish Government and was published in December 2018. The guidance advocates that action is required at local authority/ school/ classroom/individual children and young people levels. This will undoubtedly include resources funded by the ASF. Inclusive approaches which support individual children and young people and support families to engage are the starting point.
- A Gypsy/Traveller Ministerial Working Group (GTMWG) has been established to improve the lives of Gypsy/Traveller communities in Scotland. This Group consider the guidance – as part of a wider discussion about improving education for Gypsy/Travellers at their ongoing meetings.
- We will continue to monitor the impact of the SAC on children and young people in school education with protected characteristics through national data sources where they exist (i.e. age, gender, disability and race). Where it is not possible to monitor the impact through national data, we will work with local government and other stakeholders to identify any local activity that we may be able to draw evidence from.

4. If a negative impact is assessed for any area of rights or any group of children and young people, can you explain why this is necessary and proportionate? What options have you considered to modify the proposal, or mitigate the impact?

Recognising that poverty exists in every community – funding of more than £43m will be extended from 9 local authorities to all Scottish local authorities in 2022/23. This approach was developed with partners including local government and headteachers. The refreshed programme, from 2022/23, changes the methodology on how local authorities are funded under the programme.

The investment previously allocated to 9 “Challenge Authorities” is now being redistributed to all 32 local authorities, allocated equitably, based on [Children in Low Income Families data](#). Careful consideration has been given to this change, with the re-distribution tapering over 4 years to help manage the transition in the reduction in funding to Challenge Authorities. This change will result in funding being distributed equitably and benefit 23 local authorities, who will receive direct and targeted local authority SAC investment for the first time, enabling them to target resources to tackle the attainment gap where it is needed most.

We also recognise the challenges of stopping the Schools’ Programme, which distributed £7 million between 73 schools in 12 local authorities (outwith the 9 Challenge Authorities) will present for those schools. Whilst this will see those schools directly receiving less funding than they currently do, their local authorities will benefit from access to SEF, whilst the schools will continue to receive PEF (which they did not receive when Schools’ Programme was originally introduced in 2016/17). That £7 million will support the rising cost of PEF, which when first issued was £120 million and in 2022/23 will be £130.5 million. This change was made on the back of the engagement and analysis set out above and was also agreed by COSLA.

The Scottish Government understands that there may be unintended consequences of its policies and as part of the monitoring and review of this area we will consider any appropriate modifications and mitigations.

5. How will the policy/measure give better or further effect to the implementation of the UNCRC in Scotland?

Education is one of the most effective means we have to improve the life chances of all of our young people and the right to and goals of education are enshrined in the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#). The COVID-19 pandemic has in many ways highlighted the importance of school based education. The COVID-19 pandemic has – as set out in the Scottish Government and Education Scotland [Equity Audit](#) of January 2021 and a range of other research and evidence – had a disproportionate impact on children and young people affected by poverty. This reinforces the moral imperative to do everything we can to support the best possible outcomes for our future generations by focusing resources on recovery and tackling the poverty-related attainment gap – an imperative borne of our commitment to a human rights based approach to children and young people’s care, support and education.

In November 2021, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills [set out plans](#) for a refreshed SAC from April 2022. The mission of this refreshed Challenge is:

to use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty, with a focus on tackling the poverty-related attainment gap.

This mission recognises the need to reflect the breadth of achievements and experiences that contribute to improved outcomes for children and young people including through improved post-school participation in positive destinations. This represents strengthened alignment with the Curriculum for Excellence and the findings of the [OECD](#) and [Audit Scotland](#) reports of 2021, which indicate the need for stronger national and local data on the wider benefits of Scottish education; and acknowledges [Article 29](#) and [Article 31](#) of the UNCRC.

Since March 2021, articles of the UNCRC have been embedded in the refreshed operational guidance of the [SEF, PEF and CECYP](#). We recognise that poverty can have a significant impact on the attainment and opportunities for children and young people. The SAC programme seeks to look to mitigate the impact of poverty on children and young people’s education with interventions to provide all children and young people with equity in education, which specifically relate to [Article 28](#), right to education and [Article 29](#), aims of education. SAC also seeks to support children and young people’s health and wellbeing which relates to [Article 31](#), the right to leisure, play and participation in cultural and artistic activities.

The SAC focuses on supporting additional improvement activities and support in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing across every local authority and all of schools in Scotland. Health and wellbeing is also about ensuring that pupils are able to make the most of their educational opportunities regardless of their background or financial circumstances and through promotion of attendance at school. For example, in relation to CECYP, a paragraph in the operational guidance states:

As a result of the Bill recognising and realising children’s rights are now a legal requirement and not just good practice. The 54 Articles of the

Convention outline how children should be protected, provided for, and given the opportunity to participate in decisions made about them.

The principles of UNCRC are further embedded in the guidance with descriptions of how the Articles can be practically implemented:

All support should be planned through a trauma responsive lens, with acknowledgement that most Care Experienced Children have experienced developmental trauma and are protected under [article 39](#) of the UNCRC: Article 39 (recovery from trauma and reintegration).

The participation of children and young people is fundamental to the operation of the fund and this is outlined in the key principles of the operational guidance:

Decisions should be informed by robust data (high quality, timely and complete) and take account of care experienced voices (voices of CECYP, their families and /or those who know them best) in order to ensure that the use of funds is centred on overcoming the key barriers to achieving the best outcomes for their care experienced children and young people.

Another example for PEF is that [Article 28](#) states Parties recognise the right of child to education and should take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;

One key principle of PEF states:

Funding must provide targeted support for children and young people (and their families if appropriate) affected by poverty to achieve their full potential, focusing on targeted improvement activity in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.

In relation to [Article 12](#) where “children to be given the opportunity to participate in decisions made about them.” PEF incorporates this as a key principle:

Teachers, parents and carers, children and young people and other key stakeholders should be meaningfully involved throughout the processes of planning, implementing and evaluating approaches.

6. How have you consulted with relevant stakeholders, including involving children and young people in the development of the policy/measure?

As part of the stakeholder engagement that informed the refresh SAC programme, Scottish Government and Education Scotland convened an advisory group, including a range of different stakeholders across the education system to provide their views and inform advice to Ministers, they included: Directors of Education, COSLA, academics, third sector organisations and school leaders and practitioners.

In addition, we have hosted a number of bilateral engagements with external partners, not represented on the advisory group including:

- national and local/community-based third sector organisations;
- local authority Community Learning and Development Network;
- COSLA;
- ADES;
- professional associations;
- a range of third sector partners;
- a wide range of engagement to capture the voices of children, young people and families; and
- drawing upon published evidence and material that has captured young people's views, such as YouthLink Scotland's [Lockdown Lowdown](#)

Further, extensive engagement has been undertaken internally across a range of related policy areas.

Children and Young people online survey and discussion

Scottish Attainment Challenge Policy Unit and Education Scotland in collaboration with Community Learning & Development Managers Scotland undertook an small engagement survey with children and young people from July to September of 2021, which captured views from 322 young people living throughout 16 local authorities.

The survey was designed to give a snapshot of views on learning experiences in and out of school, from secondary school aged young people aged 11 – 18 years. The key findings from this survey are below.

- The majority (74%) of online participants agreed or strongly agreed that they had all the right people and resources available to help them learn at school.
- Half of the young people (50%) stated that they were able to contribute to decisions made about their learning.
- A majority (55%) agree or strongly agree that they get the support to express their views is good and helps them achieve.
- The support the majority (60%) of young people get with learning outside of school is noted as good and does help young people to achieve. A majority (65%) also agreed that they had appropriate opportunities to take part in activities outside of school where they live.

7. What evidence have you used to inform your assessment?

We have drawn on a number of reports and surveys to inform the SAC 2022/23 – 2025/26, including a range of reports that have been published looking at the impact and progress to date of SAC and the progress towards closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

- The Scottish Government and Education Scotland [5 year report on progress towards closing the poverty-related attainment gap](#).
- The [Equity Audit](#).
- The [Attainment Scotland Fund Evaluation - Headteacher Survey: 2020 report](#).
- The [Attainment Scotland Fund evaluation: fourth interim report - year 5](#).
- The [Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence \(CfE\) Levels 2020-21](#).
- The [Audit Scotland report: Improving outcomes for young people through school education](#).
- Education Scotland summary report on [How well are the Scottish Attainment Challenge authorities improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap?](#) June 2019.
- [Addressing the poverty-related attainment gap 2018-20 | School inspection findings | HM Chief Inspector Report](#).
- The [Robertson Trust report - The Poverty-related Attainment Gap: Evidence Review](#).
- The [International Council of Education Advisers 2020 report](#).

Key findings from these sources include:

- Whilst progress has been made in closing the poverty-related attainment gap, this has been variable across the country and across age-groups – highlighted in the 5 year report and the Audit Scotland report. We need to understand and address that. ([5 year report on progress towards closing the poverty-related attainment gap](#) and [Audit Scotland report: Improving outcomes for young people through school education](#))
- Audit Scotland highlighted a need to have clearer outcomes and greater prominence on broader outcome measures in public reporting and messaging – further promoting the importance of the different pathways, qualifications and awards available to young people. ([Audit Scotland report: Improving outcomes for young people through school education](#))
- Ensure future methods for targeting support to address inequities reflect broader demographic issues, which are not fully reflected in SIMD; and account for the impact of COVID-19 on communities. ([Robertson Trust report - The Poverty-related Attainment Gap: Evidence Review](#))
- Build on the positive examples of successful innovation and learning in responses to COVID-19. ([Equity Audit](#))
- Co-ordinate policy and action across government and sectors to improve long term outcomes for children and young people and delivery of the education

recovery response to the impacts of COVID-19. ([Audit Scotland report: Improving outcomes for young people through school education](#))

- There is a lack of synthesised evidence on what interventions or approaches are being used with groups of young people and which are most impactful – particularly in relation to PEF. ([Robertson Trust report - The Poverty-related Attainment Gap: Evidence Review](#))
- There are improved ways of working to deliver equity: enhanced learning and teaching and using data for improvement; focus on health and wellbeing; collaborative working; and working with families and communities. We should build on these. ([5 year report on progress towards closing the poverty-related attainment gap](#))
- A key risk as a result of COVID-19 is that the poverty-related attainment gap grows as direct face-to-face school based learning and teaching has reduced and the ASF will be a key factor in mitigating this risk. ([Attainment Scotland Fund Evaluation - Headteacher Survey: 2020 report](#))
- Health and wellbeing support; digital infrastructure and connectivity; support to parents and families; teaching provision and quality of learning; and support for teachers and the wider workforce were the key themes to emerge from the Equity Audit. ([Equity Audit](#))

In March 2021, Audit Scotland published [Improving outcomes for young people through school education](#), which covered progress on the SAC. At the same time, the Scottish Government also published a progress report, [Closing the poverty-related attainment gap: a report on progress 2016-2021](#).

The two reports reached similar conclusions: some progress has been made towards reducing the poverty-related attainment gap in a context in which attainment generally has improved. However, the gap is not yet closing fast enough and there is too much variation in progress within schools and between council areas. COVID-19 has exacerbated this challenge, as it has others that relate to the differential impact of poverty on people's wellbeing.

The SAC is evaluated by Education Analytical Services, with an evaluation report published annually.

Equity Audit

We published the [Equity Audit](#) in January 2021 to deepen our understanding of the impact that COVID-19 and school building closures had on children from disadvantaged backgrounds, and set clear areas of focus for accelerating recovery and support how we implement the SAC in 2021/22 and beyond.

The Equity Audit focuses particularly on the impact of the school building closures from 20 March 2020 to the early stages of re-opening of schools on 11 August 2020. The audit provides some examples of what sample schools have done to mitigate the impact, with a focus on health and wellbeing and intensifying support.

A number of key themes emerged from the evidence review and from the school-based interviews conducted as part of the Equity Audit. These themes; or key factors

behind educational experiences and attainment during this period, have been broadly categorised as follows:

I. Health and wellbeing support

Most Scottish stakeholders, along with the published evidence, identified that both the mental and physical health and wellbeing of pupils may have been negatively impacted during school building closure. Pupils reported missing the social aspect of school and the daily interactions with friends and teachers.

II. Digital infrastructure and connectivity

Evidence pointed to the importance of access to technology (devices and connectivity) for pupils. Where there were gaps in such access – with socio-economically disadvantaged pupils potentially being most negatively affected - this had a direct impact on the home learning experience and the engagement of children and young people.

III. Support to parents and families

Remote learning was effective in some cases; this was dependent on specific conditions such as parental support and access to digital devices and connectivity. Effective communication between schools and families was key to the ongoing support for pupils. Collaboration with partners proved essential in enabling schools to better identify vulnerable families and put in place tailored support.

IV. Teaching provision and the quality of learning

International evidence generally shows that school building closures are likely to have had a negative effect on pupil progress and attainment, with pupils who are affected by socio-economic disadvantage being amongst those who may have been most affected. Moving to models of online learning required schools to adapt teaching and learning practices. Children in the early years of primary or those starting secondary were most likely to see a negative impact on their progress.

V. Support for teachers and the wider workforce

Additional support for staff, parents and pupils increased confidence and knowledge regarding the use of digital technology; this remains a priority. In addition, for staff, digital pedagogy remains an additional focus for continued professional learning.

Further, the Equity Audit found that education remains, by far, the most effective means we have to improve the life chances of all of our young people; and the disproportionate impact that closing our schools had on the most disadvantaged in our society has demonstrated even more clearly the vital role that they play in supporting the health and wellbeing of children and young people.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

It has long been recognised that stressful events occurring in childhood can impact profoundly on children and young people's development and outcomes including the capacity to learn, achieve academically and participate fully in school life. ACEs and trauma can create high levels of stress which can derail healthy brain development and result in difficult, challenging or withdrawn behaviour in a school environment.

Children and young people who have had such experiences can perform poorly in educational terms compared to their peers. For example, young people who have experienced four or more ACEs are twice as likely as their peers to leave school without educational qualifications (Hardcastle et al., 2018)² with knock on, detrimental consequences across the life course.

Social inequalities such as poverty can influence levels of childhood adversity and trauma along with people's ability to overcome such experiences. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated such inequalities and in some cases, led to an increase in ACEs and trauma (including abuse, bereavement and domestic abuse). For some children and young people this will impact directly on their ability to learn and thrive at school, in some cases for the first time, and they will need additional help and support to overcome these experiences.

² [Adverse childhood experiences and sources of childhood resilience: a retrospective study of their combined relationships with child health and educational attendance \(bangor.ac.uk\)](https://www.bangor.ac.uk/research/centres/centre-for-childhood-resilience/research/adverse-childhood-experiences-and-sources-of-childhood-resilience-a-retrospective-study-of-their-combined-relationships-with-child-health-and-educational-attendance)

8. How will the impact of the policy/measure be monitored?

The impact of the ASF will be monitored by a range of reporting methods to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty, with a focus on reducing the poverty-related attainment gap will be through mechanisms which already exist within the education system or through current funding reporting processes.

National Improvement Measures

The [National Improvement Framework](#) (NIF) aims to ensure children and young people develop a broad range of skills and capacities, whilst supporting them to thrive, regardless of their social circumstances or additional needs. The [national improvement framework and improvement plan](#) for Scottish education is designed to help deliver the twin aims of excellence and equity in education.

The NIF will continue to form the key national measures of success. These measures alone however are not all that a local authority should consider in their local approaches to achieving the mission of the SAC.

Reporting

Schools and local authorities will use existing reporting processes which already exist within the education system.

For schools, in line with arrangements for Pupil Equity Funding since its roll-out in 2017/18, schools are expected to incorporate details of their Pupil Equity Funding plans and explicitly report on the impact on outcomes for learners impacted by poverty within existing reporting processes to their Parent Council and Forum, including in their annual Standards and Quality Reports.

These reports should be made publicly available so that parents can understand what is happening in their school.

Scottish Government and Education Scotland will sample these reports annually to continue to inform our understanding of the approaches to tackling the poverty-related attainment gap.

Key findings from this sampling will be made available to local authorities and schools.

For local authorities, reporting should be done through the existing requirement for local authority Education Standards and Quality Reports (or local equivalent reports). These reports, whilst covering the overall progress and impact of local authority service improvement plans and school improvement plans, should for the Scottish Attainment Challenge (considering the impact across all funding streams) have specific details on:

- the original stretch aims set out in the local authority education service improvement plan and the extent to which they have been achieved;
- the measures described in the local authority education service improvement plan and any additional data to report on the impact on children and young

people affected by poverty. Both qualitative and quantitative data should be used to detail whether the expected impact was achieved – with clear quantitative progress against the NIF measures included; and

- examples of supports and interventions which have been effective.

There should be clear narrative on how Attainment Scotland Funding (PEF, SEF and CECYP funding) contributed to local approaches to meeting locally identified stretch aims. There should be evidence of strategic coherence and alignment to the use of these funding streams.

Local authority Education Standards and Quality reports (or local equivalents) should be published online on local authority websites (or if not fully agreed within local systems, shared with Scottish Government and Education Scotland) by the end of December annually.

For CECYP funding, arrangements will continue as they have done since its roll-out in 2018/19 as part of existing relevant authority reporting requirements, with reports shared with the Scottish Government and Education Scotland at the end of the academic year, highlighting evidence of impact through both qualitative and quantitative information. Separate CECYP guidance sets this out in full.

Those areas committed to the [Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative](#) (CYPIC) improvement collaborative are expected to measure data over time to increase understanding of what works, and share this to contribute to the broader national learning. Schools and local authorities with developing capability in quality improvement are encouraged to track their local stretch aims over time to enable real time learning and opportunities for improvement.

SAC Evaluation

The SAC Programme is evaluated through the Attainment Scotland Fund (ASF) Evaluation. The SAC Programme Logic Model underpins the ASF Evaluation Strategy. The current SAC Logic Model requires to be adapted for the SAC Refresh for 2022/23. It will be adapted to incorporate the refreshed SAC with the long term programme outcomes reflecting the mission, which encompasses child poverty, broader achievement and an increased focus on health and wellbeing and family and community support.

A logic model is a diagrammatic planning tool that shows how a programme produces change - they can help bring detail to programme goals, help in planning, evaluation, implementation and communication. They can't contain detail about everything that happens but summarise the aspects that are critically important in explaining how the programme produces the changes that it is aiming to achieve. They identify the resources required, the main activities that need to happen and the intended outcomes in the short, medium and long-term

Logic Model Review

A full review of the Logic Model has been carried out by Learning Research Analysts on a collaborative basis through a series of workshops and consultations with internal and external stakeholders.

The key aims of the review were to produce a new SAC Programme Logic Model which has been published. By engaging widely with stakeholders to develop this updated Logic Model, efforts have been made to build consensus and awareness of the new programme and its associated Logic Model.

The development of the SAC refresh Evaluation Strategy will follow on from the agreed Logic Model and will continue to be carried out internally by Learning Research Analysts, working closely with SAC Policy Unit and Education Scotland. This will provide an opportunity for all key stakeholders to share their views on the measures they would like to see, with wide communication and engagement with key stakeholders planned.

9. How will you communicate to children and young people the impact of the policy/measure on their rights?

The SAC refresh will look to communicate the impact of the policy to children and young people in a range of ways. One of the ways we hope to do this is through National Programmes the SAC refresh continues to support YouthLink Scotland (YLS), Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG), CELCIS and Young Scot (YS) who work closely with children and young people.

There will be a suite of materials including the Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress and operational guidance for the core funding streams of the SAC which reaffirm an expectation that schools and local authorities take steps to engage children and young people in the development of their local approaches to achieving the mission of the Challenge.

Within the guidance for the key funding streams to local authorities and schools via the SAC (SEF, PEF and CECYP funding) is an expectation children and young people (and their families) have the opportunity to influence local decision making on and planning of approaches to achieving the mission of SAC. The guidance will sign post key support documents for local leaders to consult, including a bespoke resource developed by Education Scotland which guides local leaders through a range of key considerations for such engagement and provides examples of this type of engagement being done effectively in local settings. This guidance includes amongst its six key stages (developed originally by Children in Scotland) “feedback, evaluation and next steps”.

Further developments will be shared through Education Scotland’s the National Improvement Hub. We will also be encouraging local authorities to share good practice on capturing children and young people’s views and opinions.

10. Sign & Date

Policy Lead Signature & Date of Sign Off: Learning Directorate: Scottish Attainment Challenge Policy Unit – 22 March 2022

Deputy Director Signature & Date of Sign Off: Alison Taylor, Deputy Director, Improvement, Attainment and Wellbeing - 22 March 2022



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