

# **The Scottish Attainment Challenge - 2022/2023 - 2025/2026**

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

**March 2022**



**Scottish Government**  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
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## Equality Impact Assessment - The Scottish Attainment Challenge - 2022/2023 – 2025/2026

Title of Policy	The Scottish Attainment Challenge 2022/2023 – 2025/2026
Summary of aims and desired outcomes of Policy	The Scottish Attainment Challenge aims to help achieve equity in educational outcomes with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap
Directorate: Division: Team	Directorate for Learning: Improvement, Attainment and Wellbeing: The Scottish Attainment Challenge Policy Unit

### Executive summary

The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) was launched in 2015 to help achieve equity in educational outcomes, and its refreshed 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*.

The Scottish Government and Education Scotland jointly deliver this programme. The Scottish Government is responsible for the development and implementation of the policy, allocation and distribution of funding, and evaluating impact nationally. Alongside this Education Scotland provides guidance and support to local authorities and schools via Attainment Advisors (AAs) and Senior Regional Advisors (SRAs) in terms of the implementation of approaches locally, identifying appropriate outcomes and measures, professional learning and sharing good practice. As part of their inspection function, Education Scotland evaluates the quality of learning and teaching in Scottish schools and education services.

Closing the poverty-related attainment gap is a key focus of the Scottish Government and speaks to its wider mission to reduce child poverty.

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 Adverse Childhood Experiences (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.

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. 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](#)) with knock on, detrimental consequences across the course of life.

Education is one of the most effective means we have to improve the life chances of all of our young people. That has not changed. If anything, the disproportionate impact that closing our school buildings due to COVID-19 had on the most disadvantaged in our society has demonstrated even more clearly the vital role that it can play.

The refreshed SAC will not introduce a new policy, but will build on existing policy for the next phase: 2022/2023 – 2025/2026. Evidence of progress over the first 5 years of the SAC and the impact of COVID-19 has informed the next phase of the programme.

The SAC is related to a number of Scottish Government programmes such as Early Learning and Childcare, Tackling Child Poverty and Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC). GIRFEC in particular has established a national practise model to help the development of consistency in practises to support children, young people, and their families' overall welfare and developmental growth. GIRFEC's overall aim is to offer consistent and holistic support that is rights-based, child and family-centred, and early coordinated.

Following a range of consultations and analysis of data, funding will now be distributed to all 32 local authorities using Children in Low Income Families (CILIF) data to distribute in a targeted way. This recognises the impact of the pandemic and poverty on all pupils touching those in urban and rural communities alike.

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 on a multi-year basis until the end of the Parliamentary term, giving local authorities and schools certainty to support long term planning.

This document will demonstrate how the programme and wider efforts will continue to provide support for children and young people impacted by poverty through additional funding to local authorities, schools and other key partners, and assess the impacts on groups with protected characteristics. This takes into consideration the accompanying:

- Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment (FSDA)
- Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA)
- Screening Template of Island Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA)

These documents will be reviewed and updated in line with any material changes to the policy, and any future iterations will reflect our increased understanding of these impacts as the amount of data and research available continues to become available.

### **The Refreshed Programme – Distribution of Funding**

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 (ASF) 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 in the form of Strategic Equity Funding. The distribution of funding can be found on [gov.scot](http://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. The 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.

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. Using this place-based measure alone to allocate funding is 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 CILIF data.

By directly measuring household income at the individual level, CILIF data provides a precise count of deprived children and therefore effectively reflects the needs of individuals in each local authority. This contrasts to SIMD, which by design focuses on a geographic area's overall deprivation relative to others, which does not always best represent need in rural communities.

From 2022/23, the focus of the SAC will be to reflect the needs of individuals in each local authority. CILIF 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 refreshed SAC programme, 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.

The CILIF dataset has already been used in funding allocations for several Scottish Government policies, including School Clothing Grant, the Get in to Summer 2022 programme and the Parental Employment Support Fund. CILIF is also the main indicator of poverty used by SOLACE (LA Chief Executives) and the Improvement Service, as a measure of child poverty in their Community Outcomes Profile. CILIF is also a key indicator (often the headline measure of local child poverty) used by local community planning partnerships in developing their Local Child Poverty Action Reports.

The strategy for allocating, approving and monitoring funding is based on a number of broad principles including:

- **Transparency:** greater transparency of the costs associated with delivering the Attainment fund interventions to foster an open debate about relative priorities. Transparency will also help authorities and schools plan for delivery and build capacity in order to develop sustainability;
- **Fairness:** monies allocated in an equitable fashion so that authorities and schools receive a 'fair share' of central resources whilst rewarding innovation and 'incentivising' good practice;
- **Alignment of Accountability:** authorities and schools having a greater degree of accountability and alignment with the outcomes and benefits of the SAC programme;
- **Clarity:** greater clarity regarding the most appropriate funding approach for future interventions. This should help to ensure that all parties are signed up to funding a programme before resources are committed.

Alongside this, the Schools Programme, which distributed £7 million between 73 schools in 12 local authorities (outwith the 9 Challenge Authorities) will stop from 2022/23. Whilst this will see those schools receiving less funding directly than they currently do, their local authorities will benefit from access to SEF, whilst the schools

will also continue to receive PEF. The £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.

With these changes will be the introduction of a Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress (the Framework), which will see more consistent local planning, including the setting of locally identified stretch aims for progress toward the mission of the SAC. It also sets clear expectations for support and challenge at all levels of the system and for collaboration between local authorities and schools. Further, it recognises that the impacts of socio-economic disadvantage in relation to attainment and health and wellbeing cannot be tackled by education alone, and the Framework sets out a clear expectation that appropriate links are made between local authority and school improvement plans and other relevant plans such as Children's Services Plans and Child Poverty Action Plans.

Accompanying the funding and the Framework will be a suite of guidance and support from the Scottish Government and Education Scotland.

The refreshed approach was announced by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills on 23 November 2022. The refreshed programme will launch in April 2022.

## **Background and Scope of Equality Impact Assessment**

### Background

The SAC was originally launched in 2015 with over £750m provided since then to tackle the poverty-related attainment gap in schools.

The [Programme for Government](#) commitments for 2021-2022 included a commitment to invest a further £1bn to support education recovery and tackle the poverty-related attainment gap over this parliamentary term. In light of the Scottish Government's own [evaluation of the programme](#) and [Audit Scotland's report](#), a refreshed programme was agreed.

A key change in the refreshed programme is a revised mission so that its link to wider work to tackle child poverty is clear, while retaining the focus on improving educational attainment:

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

Headteachers will continue to be empowered to invest PEF; and there will be a continuation of the CECYP funding, contributing to keeping [the Promise](#).

[Summary Statistics For Schools In Scotland 2021](#) shows the gap between the proportion of primary pupils (P1, P4 and P7 combined) from the most and least deprived areas (based on the Scottish Index for Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)) who achieved their expected level in literacy has increased from 20.7 percentage points in 2018/19 to 24.7 percentage points in 2020/21. The gap between the proportion of primary pupils (P1, P4 and P7 combined) from the most and least deprived areas who achieved their expected level in numeracy increased from 16.8 percentage

points in 2018/19 to 21.4 percentage points in 2020/21. For both primary literacy and primary numeracy, the sizes of the gaps in 2020/21 were larger than at any previous point since 2016/17 (the first year for which comparable data is available).

Around half of young people thought it was harder to learn at home during the second school closure, compared to the first school closure. Respondents in areas of higher deprivation were more likely to say that they found it harder to learn than those in areas of lower deprivation. Older respondents (age 16-18) were more likely to select this option than younger respondents. Source: Lockdown Lowdown 3, [Young Scot Nov2021-LockdownLowdown-Survey](#).

### Scope

This EQIA has considered the potential impact of the SAC on children and young people with protected characteristics in school education to identify possible chances to advance equalities of opportunity for children and young people with protected characteristics. As the SAC targets activity and resources to children and young people affected by poverty, this is a particular focus of the analysis. It is acknowledged that the SAC has the potential to impact on all children and young people in school education and in particular on those children and young people with protected characteristics who are more likely to be within the targeted work.

This EQIA considers how the key changes to the SAC programme from 2022/2023 to 2025/26 will impact on children and young people with protected characteristics whilst identifying potential opportunities to advance equality of opportunity for children and young people.

The EQIA process identified that some protected characteristics, for example some ethnic minority groups and those with disabilities, are over represented in the lower SIMD quintiles. Evidence also shows that some children with protected characteristics, and children and young people living in areas of deprivation, perform less well than the general school population. Therefore, some children and young people have significant barriers to learning because of how they are affected by deprivation and may also face additional barriers as a result of protected characteristics.

The EQIA process did not identify any direct or indirect discrimination through the policy intention, design or activity being implemented as part of the SAC and has identified some areas where opportunities for children and young people with protected characteristics might be advanced. The SAC is designed to be inclusive. Targeting resources, through the ASF, to children and young people is expected to have a positive impact on the lives of children and young people affected by poverty, including those in the protected characteristics.

A number of actions are underway to ensure that the SAC promotes the duties of the Equality Act. For example:

- 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.

- The refreshed [2022 PEF National Operational Guidance](#) and [SEF National Operational Guidance](#) set out the importance of taking into account equity when planning and implementing local strategies and interventions. The grant conditions attached to these funding streams will, when issued, require that schools and authorities promote equity by taking into account protected characteristics when planning support and interventions.
- The National Operational Guidance documents referred to above state that evidence shows that some children and young people from equalities groups can be disproportionately affected by deprivation and can therefore face significant additional barriers to learning. Local authorities and Education Scotland have a responsibility to actively address inequality and the promotion of equity is a shared responsibility held by all staff, partners and stakeholders. In this context, the guidance is clear that local authorities and headteachers should consider additional steps that might be required to close the educational attainment gap for children and young people affected by poverty who may also experience disadvantage for other reasons. For example, disadvantage relating to; a protected characteristic (disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation); a need for which they require additional support; being looked after; or having caring responsibilities.
- In line with that guidance, the grant terms and conditions for PEF and SEF from 2022/23 (as is currently the case for PEF) will state that in utilising PEF, the Grantee should consider additional steps that might be required to close the educational attainment gap for children and young people affected by poverty who also experience disadvantage for other reasons. For example, disadvantage related to; a protected characteristic (as defined in the Equality Act 2010); a need for which they require additional support; being looked after; or having caring responsibilities.
- The SAC is underpinned by the principles of GIRFEC. GIRFEC is our 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.
- Tools and resources on Education Scotland's [National Improvement Hub](#) include examples of effective interventions that apply to all children and young people, including those in protected characteristics.
- Education Scotland is working to enhance this support via a new Equity Toolkit which will host a suite of supportive guidance and materials. This is expected to be available to the education system from summer 2022.
- The toolkit will include information and links across sections, including learning, teaching, assessment and curriculum, leadership and families and communities to support practitioners with the following:
  - What can we do to support recovery and accelerating progress?



- Conditions for success and sustainability
  - Exemplars
  - Reflective questions
  - Useful resources
  - Research and articles
- The Framework to support the implementation of the SAC by local authorities and schools will continue to be updated and developed.
  - There is also evidence from ongoing SAC activity to demonstrate that reasonable adjustments are being made to support children and young people with protected characteristics. For example, investment in speech and language development, additional support for speakers of English as an Additional Language, Educational Psychologists and the development of counsellors and nurture bases. Evidence from the [ASF evaluation: fourth interim report - year 5](#) shows that there were a considerable number of interventions that were provided universally and a smaller number of interventions were targeted according to another criteria; for example, children and young people with additional support needs or English as an additional language.
  - Almost all strategies deployed in the SAC such as reciprocal reading, communication support from speech and language therapists, nurturing approaches, provide targeted help for children and young people with additional support needs. So it is clear that the work of the SAC should prove beneficial and that schools and local authorities are expected take account of their specific needs when considering the use of the ASF.
  - One of the aims of the SAC is to increase professional learning opportunities for teachers and other staff. It is providing support to enable practitioners with access to training, encouraging a reflection on skills, increased professional dialogue, improved collaboration and providing opportunities to mentor, network and lead on new approaches. There is extensive evidence from the [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development \(OECD\)](#), the [Education Endowment Foundation](#) and elsewhere, that such interventions improve the quality of learning and teaching and can make a significant impact on improving the educational outcomes for all children, whether or not they are part of a targeted group.
  - [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.
  - 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 by the Equality Unit within Scottish Government 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.

## **SAC Evaluation**

The SAC Programme is evaluated through the 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 refreshed 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 was published 30<sup>th</sup> March 2022. 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.

## **Equity Audit**

The Scottish Government and Education Scotland published the [Equity Audit](#) in January 2021 to share 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 focussed 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 Equity Audit involved an evidence review of local, national and international literature, along with a representative sample of 54 schools in Scotland, looking at a range of measures put in place by schools, local authorities and other partners to mitigate the impacts, 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:

### **1. Health and wellbeing support**

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

### **2. Digital infrastructure and connectivity**

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

### **3. 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 children and young people. Collaboration with partners proved essential in enabling schools to better identify vulnerable families and put in place tailored support.

### **4. Teaching provision and the quality of learning**

International evidence generally shows that school building closures are likely to have had a negative effect on children and young people progress and attainment, with children and young people 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.

### **5. Support for teachers and the wider workforce**

Additional support for staff, parents and children and young people 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.

## **Summary**

In response to the extraordinary situation caused by the pandemic, the education system in Scotland - like so many world-wide - responded quickly by moving to online and remote learning so that children and young people could continue their education. The immediate priority became the need to ensure support was provided urgently to the most vulnerable children and families, many of whom relied on schools to provide a safe, nurturing, and supportive environment.

Closing the poverty-related attainment gap remains a key focus of the Scottish Government. Education remains, by far, the most effective means we have to improve the life chances of all of our young people. That has not changed. If anything, 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.

The work to close the poverty-related attainment gap remains a long term goal. To deliver this, a renewed focus is required, which the refreshed SAC programme seeks to deliver. The reports mentioned demonstrate that whilst the attainment data indicates variation in the pace of progress across the country, good progress has been made in a number of foundational strengths that the system can build on. The opportunity ahead, through the refreshed SAC programme, is to build on these foundations and accelerate.

## **SAC Fund**

The SAC will not introduce a new policy, but will build on existing policy for the next phase: 2022/2023 – 2025/2026, it comprises of the following elements:

1. Strategic Equity Funding
2. Pupil Equity Funding
3. Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund
4. National Programmes
5. Universal support, including:
  - Attainment Advisors
  - The National Improvement Hub
  - Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative (CYPIC)

## 1. Strategic Equity Funding

- Initially focusing on improvement activity in primary schools, the reach of the SAC is now far wider, with targeted activity being delivered across both primary and secondary sectors and beyond.
- Recognising that poverty exists in every local authority area in Scotland – and that this has been exacerbated by the pandemic – the significant change due to be carried out in the refresh of SAC is to stop the Challenge Authorities (£43m) and Schools' Programmes (£7m) and redistribute that funding across all 32 local authorities (£43m) and use £7m to meet the increasing cost of PEF.
- This responds to consistent feedback from the system via extensive stakeholder engagement that all 32 local authorities should have a clear and funded role in the SAC, rather than just the 9 Challenge Authorities. This role for all 32 local authorities is designed to enable all local authorities to:
  - pro-actively support and enable the empowerment of headteachers in the context of SAC;
  - include a clearly defined role for local authorities to work collaboratively with headteachers, providing support and challenge for local progress in tackling the poverty-related attainment gap;
  - create a mechanism for greater national line of sight for the use of all ASF monies and the impact it is having;
  - link clearly with activity across Regional Improvement Collaboratives; and,
  - set a strategic direction to using education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty across each local authority, drawing in other local authority services to create conditions for school leaders to better access those.
- COSLA agreed to this approach, which will see the redistribution of that £43m take place gradually over four of years minimising disruption for the 9 local authorities whose allocations will reduce and supporting the other 23 local authorities to gradually scale up their plans over time. This redistribution will be based on CILIF.

## 2. Pupil Equity Funding

- PEF was introduced in 2017/18 and having begun at providing £120 million to schools, now provides 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. Underspends at school level are retained and carried forward to the next year and in exceptional circumstances, with local authority agreement, into the next academic year. In 2021/22, a one-year only £20 million PEF Premium was added to schools' PEF allocations to 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.

- Schools continue to use PEF in innovative ways to support improvements in children's literacy, numeracy and improved health and wellbeing. Support through PEF in the pandemic has been integral in helping support the most disadvantaged children and young people in ways such as access digital equipment and connectivity solutions along with additional focussed learning support services.
- Within the guidance for the key funding streams to local authorities and schools via the SAC, SEF, PEF and CECYP 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, including a bespoke PEF report '[Pupil Equity Funding: Looking inwards, outwards, forwards – sharing effective practice to maximise support for learners and practitioners](#)' 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.

### 3. CECYP Funding

- [The CECYP Fund](#) was introduced in 2018/19 with funding allocated to all local authorities based on the number of looked after children they have in their care or schools. The funding benefits a much wider group than those currently 'looked after' in a local authority, with CECYP from birth to the age of 26, being eligible for the fund. That means anyone currently in care, or who has been at any stage in their life, no matter how short, is eligible for support.
- Grant allocations are issued across academic rather than financial years and payments drawn down based on actual spend. Over £33 million was made available during the last parliamentary term, with over £11.5m being provided to local authorities over the 21/22 academic year. The voices of CECYP are integral to the use of this funding. Funding is provided directly to local authorities, with spending directed collaboratively by Chief Social Work and Education Officers, in conjunction with key planning partners – including CECYP and their families. This additional funding has helped support young people with their learning and their wellbeing, through mentoring programmes, outdoor learning, play activities and the implementation of a Virtual Head Teacher role in local authorities to ensure a strong continued focus on CECYP.

### 4. National Programmes

The ASF invests in a suite of national programmes delivered through third sector and other partner organisations. These are:

## **Young Scot**

- In light of the refreshed SAC, Young Scot will build and expand on the highly successful outcomes of the #YSAttain 'Attainment Challenge: National Strategic Partnership' between the Scottish Government and Young Scot to continue to tackle child poverty, improve attainment and have a positive impact on health and wellbeing of young people in a non-stigmatising way.
- In 2018, Young Scot launched the 'Attainment Challenge: National Strategic Partnership' alongside Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, Improvement Service, local authorities, and the National Entitlement Card Programme Office (NECPO) to help close the poverty-related attainment gap and to tackle food insecurity and rural poverty.
- Across local authorities, young people have been able to access a range of entitlements aimed at supporting their health and wellbeing. Local authorities chose which entitlements to offer based on local needs, with the views of young people at the heart of decision-making.

## **Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG)**

- The Cost of the School Day (COSD) programme was developed by the Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland (CPAG). The aim of the programme is to mitigate the impacts of poverty on school children and contribute to equity in education, by reducing or removing financial barriers to full participation in school and poverty-related stigma that some children may experience. It achieves this by encouraging school level action, following research/engagement with parents, children and young people and staff within individual schools.

## **YouthLink Scotland**

- YouthLink Scotland operates a Youth Work and Schools Partnerships Programme - a national capacity-building programme supported through ASF funding of two posts within YouthLink Scotland. It aims to strengthen collaboration between youth work and schools in closing the attainment gap and to provide capacity to measure and communicate impact.

## **CELCIS**

- CELCIS convene a network of colleagues from local authorities who are using the Virtual School Head Teacher (VSHT) model or similar. This network has expanded to over half of the 32 local authorities in Scotland choosing to allocate funding from the CECYP fund towards the establishment and development of a VSHT role, or a Care Experienced Team to ensure a strong continued focus on CECYP.

## Hunter Foundation Partnership

- The Scottish Government, partly funded through the ASF, support's MCR Pathways in order to roll out its Young Scottish Talent mentoring programme in local authorities who wish to participate. Columba 1400 are also being supported through this programme.

## 5. Universal Support

Universal support is available to all local authorities and schools across Scotland to increase the educational attainment levels of the most disadvantaged young people. Universal support includes:

### Attainment Advisors

- All local authorities have direct access to a named Attainment Advisor employed by Education Scotland, who works collaboratively alongside local authority staff on agreed priorities which support the SAC. Over time, the reach and impact of the Attainment Advisors has been extended, through regional alignment to promote collaboration and joint delivery across local authorities. The Attainment Advisor team works directly with schools where they can make the biggest difference to accelerate efforts to close the gap.

### The National Improvement Hub

- The [National Improvement Hub](#) is a virtual centre of educational expertise that supports the SAC. It plays a key role in moving the knowledge to action around the education system. It provides practitioners examples to support a self-improving education system. It includes specific learning and teaching tools and strategies which are proven to help close the poverty-related attainment gap.
- Further developments, moving forward, will be shared through the National Equity toolkit housed on the Education Scotland National Improvement Hub. Local authorities are also encouraged to share good practice on capturing children and young people's views and opinions and place these in the (currently under development by Education Scotland) National Equity toolkit as we progress.

### Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative

- The Scottish Government established the Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative (CYPIC), which joined up the Early Years Collaborative and the Raising Attainment for All Programme (a precursor to the SAC) to bring focus, connection and method where it is most needed to improve the wellbeing and life chances of children in Scotland. With reach across all children's services, CYPIC focuses on evidence-based priorities, connecting people and sharing learning to accelerate improvement. CYPIC



supports the systematic use of the quality improvement journey to accelerate improvement in outcomes and help close the poverty-related attainment gap.

## Methodology

A desk-based evaluation of evidence was conducted. This took into account a variety of statistical surveys, reports and other publications including:

- Pupil Census, 2019, Scottish Government (1)
- National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education - 2016 Evidence Report (2)
- Child Health 27-30 Month Review Statistics Scotland 2017/18, ISD Scotland (3)
- School level summary statistics 2019, Scottish Government (4)
- Additional analysis of poverty in Scotland 2015/16 (5)
- Prejudice-based bullying in Scottish schools: a research report, Equality and Human Rights Commission, March 2015 (6)
- Scottish Government Equality Outcomes: Gender evidence review, 2013 (7)
- ISD Scotland, Teenage Pregnancy - Year of conception ending 31 December 2014 (8)
- State of the Nation Report: Race and Racism in Scottish Education, 2013 (9)
- National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education - 2017 Evidence Report (10)
- National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education – 2018 Evidence Report (11)
- The Cost of Learning in Lockdown – 2020 Evidence Report (12)
- Exploring the UK's digital divide – 2019 Evidence Report (13)

In addition, an internal Scottish Government workshop and a number of stakeholder discussions with representatives from relevant organisations including the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Enable, BEMIS, Engender, LGBT Youth Scotland, Stonewall Scotland, the Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Organisations Scotland, helped to inform the preceding version of this EQIA. These inputs remain highly relevant to current version of the EQIA given the primary policy development since these have taken place is the introduction of the SEF.

## Key findings – evidence

1. [Summary statistics for schools in Scotland no. 10: 2019 edition](#)
2. [National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education - 2016 Evidence Report](#)
3. [Child Health 27-30 Month Review Statistics - Scotland 2017/18](#)
4. [School level summary statistics/](#)
5. [Analysis on trends in poverty covering various factors affecting the risk of poverty](#)
6. [Equality and Human Rights Commission - Prejudice-based bullying in Scottish schools](#)
7. [Scottish Government - Equality Outcomes: Gender - Evidence Review](#)
8. [National Statistics - Teenage Pregnancy - Year of conception ending 31 December 2014](#)

9. [The State of the Nation - Race & Racism in Scotland - 2nd Edition 2013, Vol 2](#)
10. [2017 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan](#)
11. [2018 national improvement framework and improvement plan](#)
12. [The Cost of Learning in Lockdown – 2020 Evidence Report](#)
13. [Exploring the UK's digital divide - Office for National Statistics](#)

The EQIA process identified that some protected characteristics, for example some ethnic minority groups and those with disabilities, are disproportionately represented in the lower SIMD quintiles and therefore part of the targeted group for this work.

The evidence shows that children and young people living in areas of multiple deprivation perform less well than the general school population. This is illustrated in the Tables below. Note the data for Tables 5, 7, 9 and 11 was not collected for 2019/20 and 2020/21 due to COVID-19, the 2018/19 data remains the latest available.

Table 1 shows that the percentages of school leavers attaining at SCQF levels 4 to 6 are lower for those from the most deprived areas than for those in the least deprived areas. Further, Table 3 shows that the percentage of school leavers in positive initial destinations was lower for those from the most deprived areas than those from the least deprived areas (90.0% compared to 96.3%). The size of this gap has decreased by 1.6 percentage points between 2015/16 and 2019/20 due to a combination of an increase in the proportion of school leavers from the most deprived areas entering a positive destination and a decrease in the proportion of school leavers from the least deprived areas entering a positive destination.

In addition, the evidence shows that some children and young people with protected characteristics perform less well than the general school population, and the figures show a similar negative pattern for the impact of deprivation on their attainment. For example, Tables 4 & 5 show that the proportions of boys achieving the expected Curriculum for Excellence Levels in literacy and numeracy are lower than the proportions of girls across all SIMD quintiles and that the percentages of both sexes achieving the expected levels are lower for those in the lower quintiles.

Similarly, Tables 6 & 7 show that the proportions of pupils with additional support needs who achieved the expected CfE Levels in literacy and numeracy were lower than for those without additional support needs and that performance varies across the SIMD quintiles.

Tables 8-11 provide information on the proportions of pupils achieving the expected CfE Levels in literacy and numeracy broken down by ethnicity and show a mixed picture with some ethnic groups performing better than the general population and some, particularly gypsy travellers, performing worse (note that the numbers of gypsy travellers represented in these Tables are very small meaning that the figures can fluctuate)., Performance across all ethnicities varies across the SIMD quintiles.

**Table 1: Percentage of school leavers attaining at SCQF level 4 to 6, by SIMD<sup>1</sup>, 2018/19 and 2019/20**

SIMD	2018/19			2019/20		
	1 or more at SCQF level 4 or better	1 or more at SCQF level 5 or better	1 or more at SCQF level 6 or better	1 or more at SCQF level 4 or better	1 or more at SCQF level 5 or better	1 or more at SCQF level 6 or better
0-20% (most deprived)	92.1	74.4	43.5	91.7	74.5	46.6
20-40%	94.6	80.1	50.8	94.8	81.5	54.7
40-60%	96.7	86.2	60.2	96.7	87.8	65.7
60-80%	97.7	90.8	70	97.4	90.9	71.7
80-100% (least deprived)	98.8	94.6	79.3	98.8	95.3	82.7
All Leavers	95.9	85.1	60.5	95.8	85.7	63.9

1. Based on SIMD 2016 for 2018/19 & 2019/20. More information on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation can be found at: [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot/publications/scsimd2016/pages/introduction.aspx).

2. A dashed line break has been placed between the attainment figures for 2018/19 and 2019/20 school leavers reflecting the impact of the change to the assessment approach in 2020 on 2019/20 school leaver attainment as national examinations were cancelled due to COVID-19.

3. For information on how the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has affected these statistics, see section 1.1 of the publication. [Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations, No. 3: 2021 Edition - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot/publications/summary-statistics-for-attainment-and-initial-leaver-destinations-no-3-2021-edition/pages/introduction.aspx)

**Table 2: Percentage of pupils who are assessed or declared as having a disability, by SIMD quintiles, 2019**

	SIMD Quintile					
	1	2	3	4	5	Missing
All Pupils	22.7	19.5	18.6	19.3	19.8	0.1
Total assessed and/or declared as having a disability	27.6	21.2	19.6	16.2	14.7	0.6
Assessed as having a disability <sup>(1)</sup>	28.0	20.8	19.4	16.2	14.8	0.8
Declared as having a disability but not assessed	25.6	23.2	20.8	16.2	14.1	0.1
Assessed requirement of adaptation to school provision <sup>(2)(3)</sup> :						
Physical adaption	24.8	19.7	20.9	17.9	16.5	0.1
Communication adaption	30.3	21.4	18.0	15.6	14.5	0.1
Curriculum adaption	28.1	21.1	19.4	16.3	14.8	0.2

*(1) Irrespective of whether a pupil is declared as disabled.*

*(2) Occurrences. Pupils with more than one adaptation requirement will appear multiple times.*

*(3) 1,032 assessed disabled pupils had no adaption recorded. This includes all disabled pupils at grant aided special schools.*

**Table 3: Percentage of school leavers in a positive initial<sup>1</sup> destination by SIMD<sup>2</sup> and pupil characteristics, 2019/20**

	Sex	SIMD Quintile 1 - Most deprived	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 3	SIMD Quintile 4	SIMD Quintile 5 - Least deprived
	Female	91.8	93.0	95.5	96.3	96.9
	Male	88.2	90.3	92.7	94.0	95.6
	All leavers	90.0	91.6	94.1	95.1	96.3
<b>Disability Status</b>						
	Not declared or assessed disabled	90.0	91.7	94.2	95.3	96.3
	Declared or assessed disabled	88.5	88.8	90.3	90.4	93.3
	All leavers	90.0	91.6	94.1	95.1	96.3
<b>Ethnic Background</b>						
	White – Scottish	89.3	91.6	94.1	95.2	96.2
	White – Other British	89.5	87.3	94.3	92.6	97.4
	White – Irish	87.5	92.3	95.2	*	*
	White – Polish	95.7	94.6	95.7	97.5	97.6
	White – Gypsy/Traveller	60.0	62.5	87.5	*	*
	White – Other	92.2	92.5	93.0	94.9	95.3
	Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	89.4	94.3	85.9	94.5	95.7
	Asian - Indian	92.3	94.0	97.8	95.5	96.5
	Asian - Pakistani	96.6	95.1	97.0	99.4	98.2
	Asian - Chinese	100.0	100.0	96.7	98.0	96.5
	Asian – Other	94.7	95.2	95.9	100.0	91.4
	African/Black/Caribbean	95.4	94.5	85.7	93.8	100.0
	All other categories	88.9	93.9	97.8	97.7	100.0
	Not Disclosed/Not known	90.2	85.8	92.2	94.3	98.3
	All leavers	90.0	91.6	94.1	95.1	96.3

1. Positive Destinations include: Higher Education, Further Education, Employment, Activity Agreement, Personal Skills Development, Training and Voluntary Work.

2. Based on SIMD 2016 for 2018/19 & 2019/20. More information on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation can be found at: [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-index-of-multiple-deprivation-2020/pages/introduction.aspx).

3. The categories used to collect ethnicity and national identity data changed in the 2011 pupil census to agree with the categories used in the main population census. This means they are not directly comparable with information collected in previous years. 'White – UK' and 'White – Other' could not be calculated for more recent years so are represented by N/A, and 'White-Scottish' and 'White-non-Scottish' could not be calculated for 2009/10 and 2010/11. Some categories have been grouped

*together due to small numbers. Some categories (typically 'Asian – Indian', 'Asian – Chinese' contain between 100-200 leavers and due to relatively small numbers may be subject to fluctuation. Comparisons between groups should take this into account.*

*4. For 2011/12 to 2019/20 the 'African/ Black/ Caribbean' category includes 'African', 'African - Other', and the 'Caribbean or Black' categories.*

*5. Pupils who have a CSP, IEP, Child's Plan are assessed or declared disabled or have another need.*

*6. For information on how the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has affected these statistics, see section 1.1 of the publication. [Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations, No. 3: 2021 Edition - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/summary-statistics-for-attainment-and-initial-leaver-destinations-no-3-2021-edition/pages/1-1.aspx)*

*\* - information was suppressed due to small numbers*

*Source: School leavers data, Scottish Government*

**Table 4: Percentage of primary<sup>1</sup> pupils achieving expected level in literacy<sup>2</sup> and numeracy by sex and SIMD<sup>3</sup>- 2020/21**

SIMD	Female Literacy	Female Numeracy	Male Literacy	Male Numeracy
SIMD Quintile 1 - Most Deprived	62	66	50	64
SIMD Quintile 2	67	71	56	70
SIMD Quintile 3	72	75	60	73
SIMD Quintile 4	79	81	68	80
SIMD Quintile - Least Deprived	85	87	77	86
SIMD - Unknown	57	61	50	65
Total	72	75	61	74

**Table 5: Percentage of secondary pupils achieving Third Level or better in literacy <sup>2</sup> and numeracy by sex and SIMD <sup>3</sup> - 2018/19**

SIMD	Female Literacy	Female Numeracy	Male Literacy	Male Numeracy
SIMD Quintile 1 - Most Deprived	86	85	76	81
SIMD Quintile 2	89	90	81	86
SIMD Quintile 3	93	93	86	90
SIMD Quintile 4	95	94	88	93
SIMD Quintile - Least Deprived	97	97	93	96
SIMD - Unknown	77	84	65	81
Total	92	91	84	89



**Table 6: Percentage of primary<sup>1</sup> pupils achieving expected level in literacy<sup>2</sup> and numeracy by additional support needs and SIMD<sup>3</sup> – 2020/21**

SIMD	Additional Support Needs		No additional support needs		Additional support needs - unknown	
	Literacy	Numeracy	Literacy	Numeracy	Literacy	Numeracy
SIMD Quintile 1 - Most Deprived	38	49	65	73	n/a	n/a
SIMD Quintile 2	39	50	71	79	n/a	n/a
SIMD Quintile 3	40	52	75	82	n/a	n/a
SIMD Quintile 4	46	57	81	87	n/a	n/a
SIMD Quintile - Least Deprived	53	65	87	91	n/a	n/a
SIMD - Unknown	43	43	66	69	53	63
Total	42	53	76	83	53	63

**Table 7: Percentage of secondary pupils achieving Third Level or better in literacy<sup>2</sup> and numeracy by additional support needs and SIMD<sup>3</sup> – 2018/19**

SIMD	Additional Support Needs		No additional support needs		Additional Support Needs - Unknown	
	Literacy	Numeracy	Literacy	Numeracy	Literacy	Numeracy
SIMD Quintile 1 - Most Deprived	68	72	90	90	n/a	n/a
SIMD Quintile 2	74	78	91	94	n/a	n/a
SIMD Quintile 3	77	80	95	97	n/a	n/a
SIMD Quintile 4	78	83	96	98	n/a	n/a
SIMD Quintile - Least Deprived	85	89	98	99	n/a	n/a
SIMD - Unknown	68	78	95	97	68	81
Total	75	79	94	96	68	81

*Notes:*

*a. ACEL 2020/21 publication covers Primary school children (P1, P4 and P7). Secondary school and special school data were not collected; the 2018/19 data remains the latest available.*

*b. The time period covered by these statistics means that the results will be affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and this should be kept in mind when interpreting results.*

*For more information, please see [Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence \(CfE\) Levels 2020-21 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)*

*1. Primary pupil is combined P1, P4 and P7, where pupil achieved expected CFE level for their stage*

*2. Literacy is the combination of reading, writing and listening and talking organisers*

*3. Based on SIMD 2016 for 2018/19 & on SIMD 2020 for 2020/21. More information on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation can be found at: [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#).*

**Table 8: Percentage of primary <sup>1</sup> pupils achieving expected level in literacy <sup>2</sup> by ethnicity and SIMD<sup>3</sup>- 2020/21**

Ethnicity	SIMD Quintile 1 - Most deprived	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 3	SIMD Quintile 4	SIMD Quintile 5 - Least deprived	SIMD - Unknown
White – Scottish	55	61	66	73	80	60
White - Other British	55	61	67	75	83	63
White - Irish	*	*	67	78	80	-
White - Polish	64	64	64	72	*	*
White - Gypsy/Traveller	14	23	27	25	*	*
White - Other	60	64	*	77	84	*
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	64	*	75	80	85	*
Asian - Indian	*	73	77	80	86	*
Asian - Pakistani	59	63	*	69	74	*
Asian - Chinese	78	74	75	79	81	-
Asian – Other	65	62	*	74	75	*
African/ Black/ Caribbean <sup>4</sup>	69	68	72	*	74	*
All other categories <sup>5</sup>	45	46	61	*	75	*
Not Disclosed/Not known	55	60	64	75	84	53
Total	56	61	66	73	81	53

**Table 9: Percentage of secondary pupils achieving Third Level or better in literacy<sup>2</sup> by ethnicity and SIMD<sup>3</sup> - 2018/19**

Ethnicity	<i>SIMD Quintile 1 - Most deprived</i>	<i>SIMD Quintile 2</i>	<i>SIMD Quintile 3</i>	<i>SIMD Quintile 4</i>	<i>SIMD Quintile 5 - Least deprived</i>	<i>SIMD - Unknown</i>
White – Scottish	81	85	89	91	95	88
White - Other British	78	80	89	91	94	95
White - Irish	*	*	*	*	81-100%	-
White - Polish	81	87	84	88	89-100%	-
White - Gypsy/Traveller	*	*	*	*	-	-
White - Other	81	80	*	90	93	*
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	86	*	87	94	94	*
Asian - Indian	88	92-100%	92-100%	91-100%	94-100%	-
Asian - Pakistani	91	92	91	*	94	*
Asian - Chinese	89	77-100%	83-100%	90-100%	93-100%	-
Asian – Other	87	86	88	91	91-100%	-
African/ Black/ Caribbean <sup>4</sup>	88	94	91	91-100%	91	-
All other categories <sup>5</sup>	66	63	77	85	91-100%	-
Not Disclosed/Not known	74	75	84	86	90	68
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>70</b>

**Table 10: Percentage of primary<sup>1</sup> pupils achieving expected level in numeracy by ethnicity and SIMD<sup>3</sup> – 2020/21**

Ethnicity	SIMD Quintile 1 - Most deprived	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 3	SIMD Quintile 4	SIMD Quintile 5 - Least deprived	SIMD - Unknown
White – Scottish	63	70	73	80	86	64
White - Other British	64	71	74	81	88	75
White - Irish	*	*	70	81	87	-
White - Polish	78	78	78	84	*	*
White - Gypsy/Traveller	18	32	37	22	*	*
White - Other	69	73	*	84	89	*
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	73	*	83	87	90	*
Asian - Indian	*	77	82	87	90	*
Asian - Pakistani	68	72	*	77	78	*
Asian - Chinese	91	87	89	89	89	-
Asian – Other	72	76	*	81	86	*
African/ Black/ Caribbean <sup>4</sup>	74	75	76	*	83	*
All other categories <sup>5</sup>	60	62	72	*	83	*
Not Disclosed/Not known	67	71	75	82	89	63
Total	65	70	74	80	86	63

**Table 11: Percentage of secondary pupils who achieved Third Level or better in numeracy by ethnicity and SIMD<sup>3</sup> - 2018/19<sup>a</sup>**

Ethnicity	SIMD Quintile 1 - Most deprived	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 3	SIMD Quintile 4	SIMD Quintile 5 - Least deprived	SIMD - Unknown
White – Scottish	82	88	91	93	96	94
White - Other British	77	85	89	92	98	90
White - Irish	*	*	*	*	81-100%	-
White - Polish	91	93	96-100%	91	89-100%	-
White - Gypsy/Traveller	*	*	*	*	-	-
White - Other	87	91	*	94	97	*
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	88	*	90	96	95	*
Asian - Indian	90-100%	92-100%	92-100%	91-100%	94-100%	-
Asian - Pakistani	90	94	91	*	93	*
Asian - Chinese	91-100%	77-100%	83-100%	90-100%	93-100%	-
Asian – Other	93	94-100%	90-100%	91-100%	91-100%	-
African/ Black/ Caribbean <sup>4</sup>	93	92	93-100%	91-100%	91-100%	-
All other categories <sup>5</sup>	79	78	79	89-100%	91-100%	-
Not Disclosed/Not known	83	89	85	89	94-100%	81
Total	83	88	91	93	96	82

**Notes:**

a. ACEL 2020/21 publication covers Primary school children (P1, P4 and P7). Secondary school and special school data were not collected; the 2018/19 data remains the latest available.

b. The time period covered by these statistics means that the results will be affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and this should be kept in mind when interpreting results.

For more information, please see [Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence \(CfE\) Levels 2020-21 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/CFE/Levels/2020-21)

1. Primary pupil is combined P1, P4 and P7, where pupil achieved expected CFE level for their stage

2. Literacy is the combination of reading, writing and listening and talking organisers

3. Based on SIMD 2016 for 2018/19 & on SIMD 2020 for 2020/021. More information on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation can be found at:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SIMD>.

4. *African/Black/Caribbean' category includes 'African', 'African - Other', and the 'Caribbean or Black' categories.*

5. *'All other categories' includes 'Other - other' and 'Other - Arab'.*

*n/a = not applicable*

*\* = suppression due to small numbers*

*- = nil*

Although there is very limited evidence available for some of the protected characteristics pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, sexual orientation and religion and belief), the evidence also showed:

#### *Age*

- From the [Child Health 27-30 Month Review Statistics Scotland 2017/18](#) one in five children from the more deprived areas (22%) had at least one developmental concern identified in the 27-30 month review compared to one in ten for the least deprived areas (9%).
- The difference between the percentage of pupils achieving the expected CfE level generally increases as children progress through the primary and secondary stages.

#### *Gender*

- A higher percentage of girls consistently achieve the expected CfE level compared to boys across all stages and curriculum areas regardless of where they live.
- The difference in the percentage of girls and boys achieving CfE levels becomes smaller for children living in less deprived areas.

#### *Pregnancy and maternity*

- There is a strong correlation between deprivation and teenage pregnancy. In the most deprived areas in 2014, the rate of teenage pregnancy in the under 16 age group was 5.2 times the rate in the least deprived areas (8.2 and 1.6 per 1,000 women respectively).
- UK level figures suggest that teenage mothers are 20% more likely to have no qualifications than older mothers.

#### *Gender reassignment, sexual orientation and religion and belief*

- Although the exact numbers of children and young people under these categories is not known, bullying and other barriers to learning are known to disproportionately impact on the outcomes of children and young people.

## Digital Equity

The cost of learning in lockdown ([12](#)), a June 2020 report by Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland (CPAG) showed that families with access to resources such as Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams and Show my Homework amongst others, were grateful for the continued tasks, ideas, learning and support from schools that this enabled.

However, some pupils may be disadvantaged in comparison to their peers through not having access to digital devices, particularly younger children who are more likely to have to share devices with other members of the household. Through accessing the internet, pupils are able to access learning resources, as well as interact with school staff and peers. This is applicable to the period of school closures from March 2020, and will continue to apply if blended learning were to be introduced. In 2018, the ONS reported that 12% of those aged between 11 and 18 years in the UK (700,000) reported having no internet access at home from a computer or tablet, while a further 60,000 reported having no home internet access at all ([13](#)).

To help ensure as many children and young people as possible were able to connect with their schools, continue their learning, access support and engage with their peers, Scottish Government invested £25m during 2020/21 that will provide devices for over 72,000 learners and connectivity for over 14,000 learners across Scotland. We have now committed to ensuring that every school-aged child in Scotland has access to an appropriate device and connectivity to support their learning by the end of this parliament. We are working closely with local authority partners to deliver this.

## Conclusion

There is a strong body of evidence that shows good progress has been made towards closing the poverty-related attainment gap and that the SAC supported by the £750 million ASF over the course of the last parliamentary term, and by £1 billion ASF over the course of this parliamentary term, is having a positive impact on reducing inequalities of outcome. The Scottish Government published a progress report, [Closing the poverty-related attainment gap: a report on progress 2016-2021](#) which shows almost nine out of ten schools reported that they have seen an improvement in closing the poverty-related gap in attainment and/or health and wellbeing as a result of ASF supported approaches. A great majority of headteachers (96%) felt that they had a good awareness of the range of approaches that can help close the poverty-related attainment gap, while 93% felt confident about selecting the approach most effective for their school.

The SAC will mitigate the impact of socio-economic disadvantage on the health and wellbeing, attainment and educational outcomes of children and young people impacted by poverty. This will be achieved by providing training and resources for schools and teachers suitable to addressing the needs of children in equalities groups and helping to address the poverty-related attainment gap. The enhanced professional development and leadership opportunities, better use of data to drive improvements and the increased level of collaboration within and across schools and local authorities, and with external partners impacts beyond the immediate target



group of children affected by poverty and improves educational outcomes for all children and young people.

The SAC also promotes good community relationships. It encourages professionals working with children and young people to maintain a clear lines of communication with the families of children and young people who will benefit from the resources or activities under the SAC, and the children and young people themselves. There is also evidence from recent SAC activity to demonstrate that reasonable adjustments are being made to support children and young people with protected characteristics. For example, investment in speech and language development, additional support for speakers of English as an Additional Language, recruitment of educational psychologists, counsellors and investment in nurture bases.

Following the launch of the refresh of the SAC Scottish Government and Education Scotland will continue to support local authorities to understand any barriers to uptake and opportunities to reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage (as well as wider inequalities linked to protected characteristics) through sharing best practice. SRAs will work closely with the strategic lead for each of the Regional Improvement Collaboratives to support the improvement priorities outlined within local authorities' plans and share best practice. SRAs also work in partnership with local authority Directors of Education in their region as well as other central staff, providing professional advice and support and leading improvement.

Education Scotland will further evaluate the impact of their support through their own corporate plan and its measures adding evidence into the annual ASF evaluation led by Scottish Government.

HM Inspectors of Education will gather evidence of what is working well in the system and areas where further development is needed, including a focus on approaches to tackling the poverty-related attainment gap in the annual cycle of school inspections.

The EQIA process for the SAC did not identify indirect or direct discrimination through the policy intention and identified a number of actions being taken to ensure that the SAC does not directly or indirectly, unlawfully discriminate.

This EQIA analysis will be kept under regular review, with any new data or evidence analysed as it becomes available to monitor the on-going impact of the SAC on protected characteristics.

We welcome your views and evidence. If you are in regular contact with policy makers in the Scottish Government, please feel free to use your normal routes of engagement to provide further evidence or comments. If you are not in regular contact with policy makers in the Scottish Government or have any more general comments on both the assessment and mitigation activities please send them to [ScottishAttainmentChallenge@gov.scot](mailto:ScottishAttainmentChallenge@gov.scot).



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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at

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