

Scottish Attainment Challenge 2022/2023 - 2025/2026

Fairer Scotland Duty Summary

March 2022

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Title of Policy	Scottish Attainment Challenge 2022/2023 – 2025/2026
<p>Summary of aims and expected outcomes of strategy, proposal, programme or policy</p>	<p>The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) refresh 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 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.</p> <p>This policy’s mission is <i>to use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty, with a focus on tackling the poverty-related attainment gap</i>. 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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>Funding allocations for PEF and SEF are confirmed until the end of the Parliamentary term, giving local authorities and schools certainty to support long-term planning.</p>

	<p>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.</p>
<p>Summary of evidence</p>	<p>This Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment has been developed drawing on a range of evidence gathered from primary research, including internal and external engagements as well as data provided from Scottish Government Educational Analytical Services and recently published reports within Scottish education.</p> <p>We published a full Equalities Impact Assessment which provides an in-depth analysis of the impact of the SAC on these protected characteristics and also broadened it out to include care experienced young people. We have also published a Child Rights Wellbeing Impact Assessment which provides an analysis of the impact of the SAC on the wellbeing and rights of children in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.</p> <p>There is an evidence base on the impact of the policy in its current phase:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Scottish Government and Education Scotland 5 year report on progress towards closing the poverty-related attainment gap: Closing the poverty-related attainment gap: progress report 2016 to 2021 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot); • the Equity Audit: Equity Audit Scottish Attainment Challenge 2020-21: Equity in education Resources for practitioners Scotland Learns National Improvement Hub; • the Audit Scotland report on educational outcomes: Improving outcomes for young people through school education Audit Scotland (audit-scotland.gov.uk); and • the OECD review: Scotland’s Curriculum for Excellence: Into the Future en OECD. <p>Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Level (ACEL) data for 2021 and qualifications information are also readily available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the year-on-year trend in ACEL data was positive; in the two-year period between 2016/17 and 2018/19 the proportions of primary school pupils achieving the expected levels in literacy had increased by 3.1 percentage points, while in numeracy there had been an increase of 2.7 percentage points. • While down very slightly on 2020 – which was itself an exceptional year – National Qualification pass rates in 2021 were higher than in 2019.

- The pass rate for National 5 in 2021 was up 7.5 percentage points on 2019 (while down 3.3 percentage points from 2020).
- The pass rate for Highers in 2021 was up 12.4 percentage points on 2019 (albeit down 2.0 percentage points from 2020).
- In 2021, 92.2% of young adults (16-19 year olds) in Scotland were participating in education, training or employment, the highest percentage ever reported. This was up slightly compared to 2020 (92.1%) and 1.8 percentage points higher than in 2016 (90.4%).
- The gap between the proportion of young people from the most and least deprived areas of Scotland who were participating narrowed to 9.3 percentage points (pp) in 2021, down from 9.9pp in 2020 and from 12.9pp in 2016.

Link between poverty, socio-economic disadvantage and attainment

Evidence shows that children and young people from lower-income households in Scotland do significantly worse at all levels of the education system than those from better-off homes¹. The socio-economic attainment gap starts early - children from less advantaged families at age 3 perform less well than children from more advantaged backgrounds.²

For an understanding of the current picture in Scottish education and attainment we have drawn from the Scottish Government's publication of the results of the curriculum for excellence (CfE) levels 2020 to 2021. This 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).³ This is reflective of the disproportionate impact

¹ Closing the attainment gap in Scottish education, The Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2014, [Closing the attainment gap in Scottish education](#)

² Scottish Government, Growing up in Scotland: the impact of children's early activities on cognitive development [Growing up in Scotland: the impact of children's early activities on cognitive development - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

³ Scottish Government, Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Levels 2020-21 [Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence \(CfE\) Levels 2020-21 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Secondary school and special school ACEL data was not collected due to COVID-19 pandemic related pressures on these schools, including implementation of the SQA National Qualifications Alternative Certification Model which was used to award National 5s, Highers and Advanced Highers in 2021.

Measuring the impact on socio-economic disadvantage and the key inequalities of outcome

Extensive engagement has been undertaken to gather the views of stakeholders and partners across the Scottish education system to inform the next phase of the SAC from 2022/23. As part of this range of engagement, it was clear that the views of children and young people – ultimately those whom the SAC is designed to benefit – would be key to informing the refresh of the programme. As is clear in the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), “every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously” (Article 12, UNCRC).⁴

To take account of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and how we address recovery, further evidence is required. Findings have therefore been drawn from the [2020-21 Equity Audit](#), the [Audit Scotland report](#), [PISA’s OECD review](#), [The MCR Pathways Lockdown Survey](#), [Youthlink’s LockdownLowdown](#) surveys and a snapshot survey carried out in partnership with Community Learning and Development (CLD) Managers Scotland, Scottish Government and Education Scotland on learner engagement and experiences.

One of the key recommendations of the [Audit Scotland report on education outcomes](#) published in March 2021 was the need for more consistent and robust national data that reflects the ambitions of the national curriculum, national policy priorities such as health and wellbeing and confidence, and key priorities for COVID-19 recovery and improvement. In the 2018 National Improvement Framework (NIF) and Improvement Plan, an approach was set out to measuring the poverty-related attainment gap between children and young people from the least and most disadvantaged communities. After a consultation process, 11 key measures ([Annex A](#)) were identified to assess progress, and a further 15 sub-measures that reflect the key stages of the learner journey and the breadth of issues that can impact on attainment, particularly children and young people’s health and wellbeing

⁴ The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child [Layout 1 \(unicef.org.uk\)](#)

The Scottish Government's [Equity Audit](#) provided evidence to show negative impact of COVID-19 in terms of children and young peoples' mental and physical health, gaps in access to digital infrastructure negatively affected the experience of socio-economically deprived children and young people of remote learning especially in comparison to less deprived children and young people. There was also evidence of negative impact on pupil progress and attainment for socio-economically deprived children and young people. For example, using data gathered from the UK Household Longitudinal Study, Pensiero et al estimated that the 'educational loss' caused by the transition to remote learning will be higher for children from lower socio-economic backgrounds⁵, with a lack of access to their own device at home an important factor.

The [MCR Pathways Lockdown Survey](#) captured the voices of children and young people through online surveys. The findings are representative of the views of Scotland's children and young people, with responses from those living in cities, towns, rural, and island areas all included. Findings revealed in March 2020 that children and young people are worried about their health and re-establishing relationships with peers and teachers following the move to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most young people also mentioned meeting their mentor more regularly would help them, with about 50% of young people saying they are now more stressed and anxious than they were before the COVID-19 pandemic. Support for mentoring services such as MCR Pathways is, and will continue to be, a key feature of the SAC through national programmes and third sector funding.

We also know that social inequalities such as poverty can influence levels of childhood adversity and trauma along with people's ability to overcome such experiences. Further to the findings highlighted above, 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

⁵ Learning inequalities during the COVID-19 pandemic: how families cope with home schooling, Pensiero, Nicola, Kelly, Anthony and Bokhave, 2020

likely as their peers to leave school without educational qualifications (Hardcastle et al., 2018) with knock on, detrimental consequences across the life course.⁶

The role of schools, teachers and wider staff in preventing and mitigating these effects is crucial. We know that children and young people who do well despite adversity have at least one stable committed relationship with a supportive parent, caregiver or other adult. Teachers are key figures in a child or young person's life who can provide these crucial relationships – helping to prevent negative impacts (including the negative beliefs and expectations that a child or young person might develop about themselves).

During the first half of 2022 a formal consultation process will be carried out to review the key measures and sub-measures to ensure they remain relevant, are comprehensive and, as recommended by Audit Scotland, provide an accurate understanding of the wide range of learners' achievement, support a fuller understanding of the gaps in achievement and life chances between different groups of learners, and how this is captured across the full learner journey. The revised measures will be in place for the 2023 NIF in December 2022.⁷

As previously highlighted, we know that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and school building closures has been felt disproportionately by children and young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. COVID-19 has also had a disproportionate impact on single parents and low-income households. Emerging evidence shows the negative impacts of COVID-19 on children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and their educational outcomes due to the digital divide and a lack of access to Educational-related resources.

Parental engagement and the engagement of children and young people during the COVID-19 pandemic is another important point to consider. The Sutton Trust 2020 report for example pointed to low confidence among low-income parents in supporting home learning.⁸ The Centre of Economic Performance estimated that due to disruption to schooling between March 2020 and April 2021, the maximum number of classroom days lost in Scotland was 119 days, and that this would translate to a learning loss of 64 days of schooling.⁹

⁶ Hardcastle et al., 2018 [Adverse childhood experiences and sources of childhood resilience: a retrospective study of their combined relationships with child health and educational attendance \(bangor.ac.uk\)](#)

⁷ Scottish Government, Achieving Excellence and Equity: 2022 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan [Education - Achieving Excellence and Equity: national improvement framework and improvement plan 2022 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

⁸ School Closures Parent Polling, 2020, [School Closures Parent Polling - Sutton Trust](#)

⁹ Learning loss since lockdown: variation across the home nations, Centre for Economic Performance, July 2021

Health and wellbeing support is one of the key themes that emerged from the review of evidence and research carried out. The concern teachers have for the mental as well as physical wellbeing of children is highlighted in a UK-wide study by Lundie and Law (2020)¹⁰. They found over one-third of teachers expected many more of their children to be labelled 'at risk' or have interventions from social services by the end of the lockdown, and this rose to around two-thirds for teachers working with more deprived populations.

Further to this, OECD's [PISA](#) report expands on the socio-economic gap, pointing to "considerable disparities between advantaged and disadvantaged schools globally related to shortages of education staff and material resources, including digital resources"; they highlight the difference made by provision of school space to do homework (which children from disadvantaged backgrounds often lack at home) and recommend that "Ensuring that all schools have adequate and high-quality material resources, and the appropriate support, is key if students from all backgrounds are to be given equal opportunities to learn and succeed at school".¹¹

The cost of learning in lockdown, 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.¹² However, some pupils may be disadvantaged in comparison to their peers through not having access to digital devices, particularly children from low income households or 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. However in 2019, 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

¹⁰ Lundie, D. and Law, J. (2020) Teachers' Responses & Expectations in the COVID-19 School Shutdown period in the UK. Research and Policy Briefing College of Social Sciences, University of Glasgow. Available at:

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/General%20Documents/20200526University_of_Glasgow_Scotland_teachers__Survey_Report_Final.pdf

¹¹ OECD, PISA 2018 Results – Effective Policies, Successful Schools Volume V [ca768d40-en.pdf](#) (oecd-ilibrary.org)

¹² THE COST OF LEARNING IN LOCKDOWN FAMILY EXPERIENCES OF SCHOOL CLOSURES June 2020 [Microsoft Word - The-cost-of-learning-in-lockdown-UK-FINAL.docx](#) (cpag.org.uk)

¹³ Exploring the UK's digital divide, 2019, [Exploring the UK's digital divide - Office for National Statistics](#) (ons.gov.uk)

	<p>It is outlined in the following section of this assessment how the next phase of the SAC is targeting those facing socio-economic disadvantage to reduce inequalities amongst children and young people. In developing this refreshed policy Scottish Government and Education Scotland officials, in consultation with local government, practitioners, members of professional associations, the third sector and researchers have focused on the need to address education recovery, increase pace of progress and reduce variation in progress in tackling the poverty-related attainment gap.</p>
<p>Summary of assessment findings</p>	<p>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 and is based on the DWP/ HMRC Children in Low Income Families (CILIF) dataset.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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</p>

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.

Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress

Included in key findings of the Audit Scotland report on education outcomes are that "the level of improvement across councils varies significantly" (p16), and "the Scottish Government needs to be

clearer about the anticipated pace of change, identify and measure against appropriate milestones.”

These findings have now been addressed in the development a “Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress” (the Framework) for the refreshed SAC programme. Part of this Framework includes the introduction of local stretch aims. Stretch aims for improvement purposes are specifically focussed on the improvement in which a system needs to make in order to reach a particular goal i.e. closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

Local authority plans and stretch aims for the SAC will be embedded within existing local authority service improvement plans *to use education to improve outcomes for children and young people affected by poverty, with a focus on tackling the poverty-related attainment gap.*

These stretch aims will focus on core attainment measures and specific aims which, informed by local evidence and data, are identified as local priority areas for improvement. These stretch aims should be both ambitious and achievable within local contexts.

At a minimum, these should include stretch aims for progress in reducing the poverty-related attainment gap in:

- Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (literacy combined and numeracy combined);
- the proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more pass at SCQF level 5 and 6 based on the “Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations” publication;
- the proportion of 16-19 olds participating in education, employment or training based on the Annual Participation Measure produced by Skills Development Scotland; and
- a locally identified aim for health and wellbeing, to be measured using local datasets.

Each identified stretch aim will clearly articulate the overall aim for narrowing the poverty-related attainment gap in 2022/23. Nationally, these aims will be reviewed to enable a national understanding of the aims for progress in tackling the poverty-related attainment gap.

Local plans should also include additional stretch aims for priorities for progress specific to the local authority’s own context and datasets. These could include, for example: wider achievement aims; aims regarding readiness to learn; or cost of the school day aims and measures.

It is also recognised 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.

Quality Improvement as a method for accelerating pace

The Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative (CYPIC) uses quality improvement to address the poverty-related attainment gap, and contributes to the overall ambition of the SAC. This team brings focus, connection and method (quality improvement) where it is most needed to improve the wellbeing and life chances of children in Scotland.

By applying a systematic approach to priority areas local authorities can accelerate their learning of what works. CYPIC enables this collaboration at a national scale and those evidencing the most substantial gaps in outcomes will be invited to join targeted national improvement programmes. Aligned programmes include improving attendance and engagement, and addressing the literacy gap in First Level writing evident in the 2021 ACEL data. Additional national priorities around The Promise, mental wellbeing, increasing time children in ELC spend outdoors and early years language development will also contribute to broader SAC outcomes.

The CYPIC team is distinct in its rigorous application of quality improvement methodology and can make a contribution to development of ambitious stretch aims, understanding of data, mechanisms to quickly learn what changes lead to improvement and the development of learning communities to share what works.

Further to this a range of Scottish Government policies are interlinked with the SAC such as GIRFEC which, for example, has provided a national practice model to aid the development of consistency in practices to support overall wellbeing and developmental progress of children, young people and their families. GIRFEC in its totality aims to provide consistent and holistic, rights-based, child and family-centred and early co-ordinated support.

Planning and evaluation

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.

The current 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 has been updated to align with the refreshed SAC programme, 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. The Logic Model will be a resource available to the local authorities, headteachers and practitioners to aid planning processes, including the development of stretch aims, and assist when reviewing progress at a local and national level and raise awareness of programme aims.

The review of the Logic Model has been carried out by Scottish Government 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, updated Logic Model which was published on the launch date of 30 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

Guidance to local authorities and schools

Within the guidance for the key funding streams to local authorities and schools via the SAC (Strategic Equity Funding, Pupil Equity Funding and Care Experienced Children and Young People 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 the SAC. The guidance will sign post key supporting 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, 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.

Progress and outlook for children and young people facing socio-economic disadvantage

There is a strong body of evidence that shows good progress has 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. As set out in the ASF evaluation, almost nine out of ten schools (which responded) 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% of those who responded) felt that they had a good awareness of the range of approaches that can help close the poverty-related attainment gap, while 93% (of those who responded) felt confident about selecting the approach most effective for their school.¹⁴

The SAC will continue to reduce socio-economic disadvantage and the key inequalities of outcome in the next phase. 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 both within schools and with external partners impacts beyond the immediate target group of children affected by poverty and significantly 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 line of communication with the families of children and young people who will benefit from the resources or activities through the SAC, and the children and young people themselves. There is also evidence from recent SAC activity to

¹⁴ The Scottish Government, Closing the poverty-related attainment gap: progress report 2016 to 2021 [Closing the poverty-related attainment gap: progress report 2016 to 2021 - gov.scot](#) (www.gov.scot)

	<p>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, and/or fund Educational Psychologists, counsellors and nurture bases.</p> <p>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. Senior Regional Advisors (SRAs) will work closely with the strategic lead for each of the Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs) 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.</p> <p>Education Scotland will further evaluate the impact of their support through their own corporate plan and its measures and through the ASF evaluation by Scottish Government.</p> <p>Through the Education Scotland scrutiny programme, 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.</p>
<p>Sign off</p>	<p>Name: Alison Taylor</p> <p>Job title: Deputy Director: Improvement Attainment and Wellbeing</p>

Annex A – National Improvement Framework - 11 key measures

27-30 month review
HWB total difficulties score: age 4 – 12
HWB total difficulties score: age 13 & 15
ACEL Primary – literacy – P1, P4 & P7 combined
ACEL Primary – numeracy – P1, P4 & P7 combined
ACEL Secondary – literacy – S3 3 rd level or better
ACEL Secondary – numeracy – S3 3 rd level or better
SCQF level 4 or above – 1 or more on leaving school
SCQF level 5 or above – 1 or more on leaving school
SCQF level 6 or above – 1 or more on leaving school
Participation measure



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