

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

**Islands Communities impact assessment  
screening**

**March 2022**

## Islands Communities impact assessment screening

### Develop a clear understanding of your objectives

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are the objectives of the policy, strategy or service?</li><br/><li>• Do you need to consult?</li><br/><li>• How are islands identified for the purpose of the policy, strategy or service?</li><br/><li>• What are the intended impacts / outcomes and how do these potentially differ in the islands?</li></ul> | <p>Scottish Attainment Challenge 2022/2023 – 2025/2026 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 <a href="#">5 year report</a> on progress towards closing the poverty related attainment gap, the <a href="#">Equity Audit</a>, the <a href="#">Audit Scotland report</a> on educational outcomes, and the <a href="#">OECD review</a>. This policy's mission is to use education to <i>improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty with a focus on tackling the poverty-related attainment gap.</i></p> <p>Members of the SAC policy unit have had discussions through advisory group meetings and stakeholder engagements. This included face to face meetings with all 32 of the local authorities in Scotland where proposals were shared and discussed with feedback received.</p> <p>No specific areas of concern were raised by representatives of the island communities during this process.</p> <p>The <a href="#">Islands Strategic Group</a> was established to consider strategic issues affecting the inhabited island communities of Scotland and to ensure greater involvement of the relevant councils in helping to identify and design solutions to the unique needs and challenges these communities face.</p> <p>The SAC's mission is to use education to improve outcomes for</p> |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the policy, strategy or service new?</li> </ul> | <p>children and young people impacted by poverty with a focus on tackling the poverty related attainment gap.</p> <p>We are determined to maintain a focus on excellence and equity for all our children and young people, and have committed to investing a further £1bn to support education recovery and tackle the poverty related attainment gap through the SAC.</p> <p>It will continue to provide support for children and young people impacted by poverty through funding to all local authorities, Pupil Equity Funding, Care Experienced Children and Young People (CECYP) funding and a number of national programmes. In addition we are introducing the Strategic Equity Funding (SEF)</p> <p>The SEF is available across Scotland to all 32 local authorities. Children and young people who are resident on the islands may experience a greater benefit relative to their mainland counterparts. This is because they will almost certainly incur significant costs if the SAC fund did not exist. Items that may have an impact are the likes of transport, recruitment and digital connectivity. The same would not usually be true for those living on the mainland as they would generally have easier access.</p> <p>A key component of the refreshed policy will be the introduction of stretch aims across all 32 local authorities. These stretch aims will be determined locally and may, therefore, vary between regions however they will be specific and relevant to the circumstances of the populations they are intended to support.</p> |
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|  | The refreshed SAC will not introduce new policy but will build on existing policy. |
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**Gather your data and identify your stakeholders**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What data is available about the current situation in the islands?</li> </ul> | <p>Extensive engagement has been undertaken over the course of 2021 to gather the views of stakeholders and partners across the Scottish education system to inform the next phase of the Challenge 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 Challenge is designed to benefit – would be key to informing the refresh of the programme.</p> <p>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 <a href="#">2020-21 Equity Audit</a>.</p> <p>The Scottish Government’s <a href="#">Equity Audit</a> 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 <a href="#">UK Household Longitudinal Study</a>, Pensiero et al estimated that the ‘educational loss’ caused by the transition to remote learning will be higher for children from lower socio-economic backgrounds, with a lack of</p> |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does any existing data differ between islands?</li> </ul> | <p>access to their own device at home an important factor.</p> <p>The impact of rural poverty was also an area the review sought to examine but again there was little specific evidence uncovered through the search.</p> <p>The selection aimed to capture a wide range of demographics, including key features such as rural/urban locations, those with high levels of ethnic diversity and those in areas of deprivation, as defined by 70% of pupils living in SIMD deciles one and two. Each of the 32 local authorities had at least one school selected which ensured sufficient representation.</p> <p>Barrier’s Island communities are currently faced with are:</p> <p><b>Digital Equity</b></p> <p>Digital connectivity is a key enabler for education in general, particularly in Scotland’s more remote, rural and island areas. The importance of this has been magnified through the requirement for home schooling owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, and where necessary for pupils to self-isolate. School staff will be dependent on digital connectivity to be able to carry out their jobs in these circumstances.</p> <p>The <a href="#">National Islands Plan</a> recognises that access to good quality digital infrastructure for all is essential to improving the educational outcomes for children and young people on the islands.</p> <p>Furthermore, some pupils may be disadvantaged in comparison to their peers through not having access to digital devices, particularly younger</p> |
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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.

To help ensure as many children and young people as possible are able to connect with their schools, continue their learning, access support and engage with their peers, we are investing an initial £9m that will provide devices and connectivity for 25,000 learners across Scotland. We are committed to delivering digital equity for our most disadvantaged children and young people and this is the first phase of our £30m commitment to support digital inclusion for children and young people. We are working closely with local authority partners to deliver this. A separate impact assessment is being developed specific to this area of policy, and will be published in due course.

As well as those living in socio-economically disadvantaged communities, connectivity was a particular issue for remote/rural communities.

### **Transportation**

Island and rural communities generally have less frequent public transport routes in their communities,

and pupils may be required to undertake longer journeys each day.

When considering the teacher workforce, staff working in rural locations, including on islands, will need to be taken into consideration at a local authority level. This may be a particular issue when a member of staff is required to undertake interisland travel in order to get to work, if restrictions are required on public transport.

Meetings have been held with the following local authorities to discuss the impact of the refresh of the SAC in their island communities:

- Argyll and Bute Council
- Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
- Highland Council
- North Ayrshire Council
- Orkney Islands Council
- Shetland Islands Council

Directors of Education have welcomed the redistribution of funding to all 32 local authorities to support children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in these island communities.

The [MCR Pathways Lockdown Survey](#) captured the voices of children and young people through online surveys. The findings are fully representative of the views of Scotland's most disadvantaged 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 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





## Assessment

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| <p>A Full Islands Community Impact Assessment is <b>NOT</b> required In preparing the ICIA.</p> | <p>An opinion has been formed that our existing policy, strategy or service is NOT likely to have an effect on an island community which is significantly different from its effect on other communities (including other island communities).</p> <p>The reason for not completing a full Islands Communities Impact Assessment: This screening for the ICIA has been prepared and will be published, which satisfactorily addresses the islands communities impacts of the refreshed Attainment Challenge which is in line with available evidence and consultation input.</p> <p>Based on the available data and evidence from stakeholder engagement, our view is that there would be no adverse differential impact for island communities compared to mainland Scotland and we do not require to carry out a full ICIA.</p> |
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## Making adjustments to your work

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Should delivery mechanisms/mitigations vary in different communities?</li><li>• Do you need to consult with island communities in respect of mechanisms or mitigations?</li><li>• Have any island-specific indicators/targets been identified that require monitoring?</li><li>• How will outcomes be measured on the islands?</li></ul> | <p>At the moment we do not consider that delivery mechanisms/mitigations need to vary.</p> <p>Members of the SAC policy unit have had discussions through advisory group meetings and stakeholder engagements.</p> <p>No – but will be considered over the course of the refreshed Attainment Challenge as local authorities will be providing local stretch aims specific to their areas.</p> <p>One of the key recommendations of the <a href="#">Audit Scotland report on education outcomes</a> 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 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 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.</p> <p>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,</p> |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How has the policy, strategy or service affected island communities?</li> </ul> | <p>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.</p> <p>There will also be a suite of materials including the Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress and operational guidance for the core funding streams of the SAC which reaffirm an expectation that schools and local authorities take steps to engage children and young people in the development of their local approaches to achieving the mission of the Challenge. Importantly, parents and carers, children and young people and other key stakeholders should be meaningfully involved throughout the process of planning, evaluation and any future developments for SEF, PEF and CECYP funding.</p> <p>Within the guidance for the key funding streams to local authorities and schools via the SAC (SEF, PEF and CECYP funding) is an expectation children and young people (and their families) have the opportunity to influence local decision making on and planning of approaches to achieving the mission of SAC. The guidance will sign post key support documents for local leaders to consult, including a bespoke resource developed by ES 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".</p> |
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|  | <p>The Refreshed Attainment Challenge will continue to focus on and accelerate targeted improvement activity in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing for children and young people impacted by poverty.</p> <p>The next phase of the Attainment Challenge is targeting those facing socio-economic disadvantage to reduce inequalities amongst children and young people. 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.</p> |
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### **Publishing of ICIA**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you presented your ICIA in an Easy Read format?</li> <li>• Does it need to be presented in Gaelic or any other language?</li> <li>• Where will you publish your ICIA and will relevant stakeholders be able to easily access it?</li> <li>• Who will sign-off your final ICIA and why?</li> </ul> | <p>The Island Community Impact Assessment (ICIA) is written in an easy-to-read format.</p> <p>The ICIA will be published on 30<sup>th</sup> March, and will be translated into Gaelic at a later date.</p> <p>The (ICIA) will be published on the Scottish Government website. Therefore, all relevant stakeholders will be able to access it easily.</p> <p>David Leng - Head of Scottish Attainment Challenge Policy Unit</p> |
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| ICIA Completed by  | Hassan Ahmed                                      |
| Position           | Policy Officer                                    |
| Signature          | Hassan Ahmed                                      |
| Date Completed     | 23/03/22  |
| ICIA Authorised by | David Leng  |
| Position           | Head of Scottish Attainment Challenge Policy Unit |
| Signature          | David Leng  |
| Date Completed     | 23/03/22  |



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